

THE VOLGA BULGARS – LITERATURE

OVERVIEW

The emergence of a literary Volga Bulgar language during the 12th century enriched their culture and became a very important instrument for the new written culture after the adoption of Islam.

LITERATURE

One of the major effects of the development of a literary Volga Bulgar language was in the field of education, which, in turn, influenced the development of the literary language. Muslim schools where students received education in both religious and secular subjects soon appeared. These schools served not only to train future religious scholars (ulama) and government officials, but also provided many with at least basic literacy.



The Volga Bulgarian poet Qul Ghali and his poem *Qissa-i Yusuf* (Tale of Yusuf) written in 1212, became one of the best literary classics that appeared before the Mongol invasion.

Qul Ghali was born in the 12th century in Volga Bulgaria, and graduated from a madrasah in Khorezm. He was a highly educated poet who studied the Arabic and Persian languages and their literature.

Ghali's original poem the *Tale of Yusuf* has been lost.

Discussion/Questions

1-What was the effect of the Volga Bulgars' conversion to Islam on their literature?

Readings

1- Rorlich, A. A., *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience*, Hoover Institution Press, 1986.

2- Давлетшин Г. М., *Волжская Булгария: Духовная культура: Домонгольский период: 10-нач. 13 в.*, Казань, 1990.

3- *Historical Anthology of Kazan Verse, Voices of Eternity*, "Volga-Bulgaria to the Golden Horde: 12th-14th.. Centuries", Edited and Translated by David J. Matthews and Ravil Bukharev, Routledge, 2000, pp.41-46.

4- Feldman, A.M., "Masonry, Medicine and Monotheism: The Conversion of the Volga Bulgars in the *Kyssa'i Yusuf*, the *Risāla* of ibn Fadlān and the *Tā'rikh-i-Bulghār*", in *Diogenes*, ISSUE 8, November, 2019.