

# THE STATUS AND ROLES OF WOMEN IN TERMS OF GENDER IN ANCIENT TURKISH HISTORY AND CULTURE BASED ON THE *DİWĀN LUGHĀT AL-TURK* – THE FIRST TURKISH DICTIONARY

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**Abstract:** In this paper, based on the *Diwan Lughat al-Turk* – the first Turkish dictionary – the female gender is analysed through the categories of ‘women and their social status’, ‘perception of women from the perspective of gender’, ‘woman–man relationships and family structure’, ‘responsibilities of women’, and ‘clothes and belongings of women’. These categories are determined in the context of the data provided by the definitions of the words related to women in the dictionary. It can be seen from the dictionary that women are classified in terms of social status and that they are part of a hierarchical structure. On the other hand, a woman is perceived as the representative of beauty and aesthetics by being described in terms of physical and inner beauty. In addition, a woman is also described as being coquettish, flirtatious, and crafty. In the dictionary, where it seems that a woman is respected as a wife and mother, it was discovered that marriage and family were highly esteemed, that many cultural rituals were practised in the processes of becoming a bride, that having and raising children was considered important, and that there were relations between spouses based on mutual rights

and responsibilities. When the dictionary is analysed in terms of women's clothing and belongings, it can be seen that a great number of things and ways of adornment are mentioned and that being beautiful is highly esteemed.

**Keywords:** *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, family, gender, marriage, social status, woman-man relations

## INTRODUCTION

The elements of culture might show properties that vary from one society to another or even based on time in the same society. For this reason, the expectations of women and men might differ, depending on the culture. Both genders try to realise these expectations and carry out their social roles to provide continuity in the social order. In this sense, how genders are perceived by society, the expectations of society about their roles, and the values and responsibilities given by society to women and men, are features of the concept of gender. Gender is a part of a culture, and it can be described as the woman-man interaction and its results in the context of the personal characteristics and social positions attached by members of a society to being female or male (Macionis 2018 [1987]: 347). In addition, the perception of gender is learnt during socialisation involving gender as a social acknowledgement on the part of the members of both sexes, depending on the roles acted out by them in social life.

Describing historically or culturally, especially the role, social relationships, interactions, and responsibilities of the female gender within gender perception are significant in understanding culture and the sustainability of social order and organisation. In addition, the element of 'language' can be expressed as the most critical determinant of the social construction of culture and gender. Consequently, the expression of culture and gender perception has correspondence and can be interpreted in language. Opportunities provided by a language are unlimited, and such opportunities cannot be expressed entirely in a single work. However, a well-prepared dictionary contains a large part of the opportunities for language. Such a dictionary is like a work that perfectly shelters cultural elements. Within this framework, *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, the first Turkish dictionary to be known, is used as the primary source of this paper. This book is like a Turkish-Arabic encyclopaedic dictionary belonging to the Qarakhanid era. Mahmud Al-Kashgari began compiling it in 1072, and it was completed in 1074 or, according to some historians, 1077. However, *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* is a comprehensive work that is more than a dictionary. It is a book that sheds light on the Turkish culture of the time, together with grammatical explanations, information about the Turkish tribes and their dialects, the names of

places belonging to the Turkish region, personal names, cultural data, medicinal information, proverbs, poems, and historical data (Ercilasun & Akkoyunlu 2015: xvii–xx; Atalay 1985: ix–xv; Kaçalin 1994: 446–448).<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the dictionary is the primary source for women's studies in Turkish history and culture. As a result, it is essential to analyse this resource from the point of view of women's position in Turkish society, their roles and responsibilities, the perception of women, and any other determinants about women.

In addition to *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, there are other historical Turkish sources related to the dictionary, including supportive information about women. One of them is *Kutadgu Bilig*, a book written by Yusuf Has Hâcib, which also belongs to the Qarakhanid era. This book was the product of eighteen months of study and was completed in 1069 or 1070. *Kutadgu Bilig* is a work in verse, in which the ideal state order and social structure are explained, and the knowledge of being blessed in the world and the afterlife is presented (Arat 1979: xx–xxviii; DIA 2002: 478). In addition to these sources, *Atabat al-Haqa'iq* is another source that proved beneficial. It is a work in verse written by Adib Ahmad al-Yugnaki, who lived at the end of the eleventh century and in the first half of the twelfth century. It is an example of Qarakhanid Turkish, and in it morality is studied (Çakan 2017: v–vi; Gülensoy 1991: 50–51). Another source referred to in this paper is the *Orkhon Inscriptions*. These monuments contain inscriptions from the Kok Turks era and are products of the Bilge Kaghan era. The first inscription was made for Kul Tigin by his brother Bilge Kaghan in 732. The second one was made for Bilge Kaghan by his son in 735, and the third one for Tonyukuk by himself between 720 and 725 (or 716–734) (Ergin 2016: 15–17; Kaçalin 2007: 390–391). The *Orkhon Inscriptions* include information about Turkish history and the structure of the state and society in those days. The sources mentioned above are referred to in the article to give similar information and examples about some views and points related to women in the dictionary.

Concerning other relevant works related to the topic of this paper, we were able to find only two articles that directly focus on the concepts related to women in *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*. In her article, Özdarıcı classifies the words related to women under several titles. Her classification includes a comprehensive list of words. However, her study is not very systematically accomplished in terms of analysis and interpretation, and it largely presents a vocabulary list including the definitions given by the dictionary (Özdarıcı 2011). Similarly, Erdoğan mentions many words related to women under different titles. However, he gives the definitions from the dictionary and hardly ever presents analysis and interpretation (Erdoğan 2016). Apart from these articles, Alkan just considers the qualificative adjectives used for women, men, both genders, and children

in *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* (Alkan 2013). All these articles are works in which the dictionary is studied in terms of Turkish vocabulary.

In this paper, women and their place in social processes are considered in various aspects that *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* focused on, and all words directly relatable to women are considered.<sup>2</sup> In this context, it is tried to interpret these words differently to show the perception of women in ancient Turkish society based upon the sources mentioned above. For this purpose, the words are classified in terms of their relationship and content integrity.<sup>3</sup> The categories subject to examination are determined through this classification, and women and processes about women are analysed and evaluated in the light of these categories. In this sense, it can be said that all data that might be obtained from the dictionary can be expressed through these categories. They can be listed as follows:

- Women and their social status;
- Perception of women from the perspective of gender;
- Woman-man relationships and family structure;
- Responsibilities of women;
- Clothes and belongings of women.

The findings in every category are examined as systematically as possible, and integrity is provided by partly linking these categories with the findings in other categories. In this sense, it can be said that the work consists of analysis, synthesis, interpretation, and evaluation. Within this framework, similar elements are identified through subject-oriented partial comparison, and an attempt has been made to provide deep, detailed, and proven findings concerning the subject matter with the help of other works.

In the paper, contemporary discussions, problems of gender, and women's studies are touched upon in a limited way. This limitation is a conscious decision not to become disconnected from the context of the era in which the work was written. As far as the conclusion is concerned, the present-day Turkish society is considered by offering a contemporary interpretation of the findings. Consequently, partial comparisons concerning the perception of women are offered in this part.

This work can be evaluated within the scope of historical and cultural studies. Such an approach involves handling the understanding of gender in Turkish culture by analysing *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* – one of the major works of Turkish culture – and other sources. In this way, it is possible to form a basis for contributing to contemporary concepts and discussions related to gender by referring to data about the historical structure of an ancient Turkish culture as the main elements which underlie the importance of the work. Thus, through

this paper, the historical and cultural roots of the gender perceptions of the present Turkish society are set forth by considering the works in question, and the relationality between past and present is described.

## FINDINGS RELATING TO FEMALE GENDER

The findings obtained from the dictionary, classified according to the categories mentioned above, are explained and analysed as follows.

### Women and their social status

When *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* is analysed in terms of women's social status, it can be seen that women are referred to in various ways, depending on the particular conditions the individual is facing and on her social status. In Table 1, primary names and their meanings are given.

*Table 1. Names concerning women's status in Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk (Mahmud 2015: 37–38, 51, 157, 171, 205–206, 218, 319, 416, 443, 445, 449).*

Name	Meaning
<i>Uragut</i>	A common term for a woman
<i>İşler</i>	Woman, lady (singular and plural)
<i>Kişi</i>	Woman, wife
<i>Ās</i>	Handmaiden
<i>Kirna.k</i>	Handmaiden
<i>Altun tarım</i>	The title of a Sultana
<i>Kaça.ç</i>	Handmaiden
<i>Ekek<sup>4</sup>/ersek<sup>5</sup> işler</i>	Prostitute(s)
<i>Tayak</i>	Handmaiden or slave who helps bride dismount from a horse
<i>Kođuz<sup>6</sup>/Tugsa.k</i>	Widow
<i>Karaba.ş</i>	The name given to male or female slaves
<i>Küni</i>	Second wife
<i>Kunçuy</i>	Noblewoman, lower than khatun <sup>9</sup>
<i>Yinçge kız<sup>7</sup></i>	Purchased odalisque, handmaiden
<i>Kapaklıg kıl.z<sup>8</sup></i>	Maiden

In the dictionary, it can be seen that the name *uragut* is extensively used for designating the female gender in general. However, the word *işler*, meaning ‘woman’, is also frequently used. These names seem to have been common expressions when defining the female gender, and they do not indicate any special status difference. When the complete work is analysed, it can also be seen that the names defining women are differentiated, depending on a woman’s special status. The essential qualifications determining such differentiation can be classified as follows:

- Being married, single, or divorced;
- Being noble or not;
- Being free or a slave;
- Being a prostitute.

Depending on these essential qualifications, women’s social status can differ, and a hierarchical ordering can be made based on the analysis and interpretation of the meanings of the words listed above. Accordingly, the highest-ranking ones are khatuns, also entitled *altun tarım*.<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that a woman being noble does not preclude her from marrying a man who is not a member of the nobility. It can be seen that a woman’s nobility comes from her family and continues during her marriage; even to the extent that, if the man whom she has married is not of the nobility, their child is called *inal*<sup>11</sup> (child of a noble woman and a non-noble man) (Mahmud 2015: 61). It might be the case that this name is based on the mother being noble, given that in the case where both parents are commoners, there is no separate and special name for their child.

When nobility is regarded as a fundamental determinant, a woman called *kunçu.y* is ranked below khatun (Mahmud 2015: 451). Free female commoners follow khatun and *kunçu.y* in terms of rank. There is no special name peculiar to free female commoners in the dictionary.

On the other hand, slave women follow free ones in terms of social status. In this sense, it can be seen that handmaidens are included in the slave class. Handmaidens can be bought and sold, and it is possible to establish extramarital affairs with them. Due to these characteristics, they are hierarchically lower than free women.

Another factor determining the social status of women is prostitution. Prostitutes are called *ekek / ersek işler*, and *ekeklik* is defined as looseness and shamelessness. Within this framework, a woman’s lust after a man and engaging in prostitution is called *erseklenme* (Mahmud 2015: 78, 137). The women with these characteristics are regarded as lower than those engaging in extramarital affairs.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, there are three other types of women in terms of marital status. These types are expressed by the words *kapaklıg kız* (maiden),

*koduz/tugsa.k* (widow) and *küni* (second wife). This situation shows that maidhood, widowhood, and being a second wife had different statuses in terms of sexual life in ancient Turkish society. On the other hand, although khatun is highest in the context of a woman's hierarchical social status, khan is regarded as being higher than khatun in this society. This situation is clearly expressed in the dictionary entry *kātu.n*: 'When there is khan's work, a khatun's work is not done' (Mahmud 2015: 177). It means that khan is served first.

### **Perception of women from the perspective of gender**

When the dictionary is analysed, it is seen that there are several words about the female gender. This section tries to present the perception of women from the perspective of gender through all related words that were detected in the dictionary.

One of the features of the perception of women in the dictionary is that women are evaluated in terms of 'body and beauty image' and 'inner beauty'. Accordingly, there are various words concerning the importance of a woman's beauty. The word *özök*<sup>13</sup> is the most important and means 'the purity of the essence/soul'. Apart from this, physical beauty is also essential. Within this framework, the word *ertini özök*<sup>14</sup> is used to indicate a woman possessing a body similar to a unique pearl. Possessing such a body is of great importance. In the context of physical beauty, qualities such as slimness and lankiness (*tāl bo.ḍluk*) and having a beautiful nose (*kiwa.l burun*) are also found (Mahmud 2015: 33, 178, 412). However, physical beauty is also dangerous, in such a way that a woman with a beautiful and bright face is talked about extensively, and such a woman should consequently defend herself. On the other hand, beauty also poses a danger for men.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, a beautiful woman is described as a 'trap' for men (Mahmud 2015: 140, 163). Specifically, it emphasises that a woman can bewitch and trick a man by using her beauty and attractiveness.<sup>16</sup>

Apart from beauty, there exist other qualities concerning women. These are coquettishness and flirtatiousness (*kılınc*), coyness (*tilkü*), and weakness and softness (*çanaçla*<sup>17</sup>) (Mahmud 2015: 500, 186, 482).<sup>18</sup> These names show that women are considered differently from men. Although the word *tilkü* (fox) reminds one of craftiness, it does not have this meaning, and it is used from the point of girls' being coy and mysterious. These qualifications enable girls and women to be seen as weak, sensitive, and soft by using the word *çanaçlamak*. On the other hand, a boy may be referred to as 'wolf' through the word *börü*. These expressions crop up in the process of childbearing. A newborn baby's sex is learned by asking the question, 'Is it a fox or a wolf?' (Mahmud 2015: 186). Giving birth to a wolf, that is, a boy, was widely desirable.

Together with these qualities imputed to women, it can be said that a maiden attracted more attention than other women. Even, it is stated, in terms of money called *kaliŋ*,<sup>19</sup> that is the bridewealth given to a woman on marriage, that more *kaliŋ* is given to a maiden. One of the factors leading to this situation is that maidens are regarded as young and strong. The saying ‘Do not wrestle with a girl, do not compete with a mare’ clearly supports this view (Mahmud 2015: 498, 207).

On the other hand, being a widow is also a definitive feature peculiar to a woman in ancient Turkish society. The use of the statement *er koduzlandı* for indicating a man’s marrying a widow indicates that being a widow is a distinctive qualification. Contrariwise, there is no term relating to a woman marrying a widower. Besides, in the dictionary, it is stated that it is better for a woman to be a widow than to have an always swearing husband (Mahmud 2015: 311, 402). Within this framework, it can be said that no negative meaning is attributed to widowhood. However, maidenhood is preferable.

On the other hand, it can be seen that bad attitudes and behaviours towards women are also found in the perceptions of the women of the era from gender. These negative attitudes are as follows (Mahmud 2015: 71, 134, 445, 236, 460, 95, 207, 297):

- The metaphor of a toy as a nickname given to a woman (*oxşa.gu*);
- To discredit women concerning certain aspects (*ekeklemek*);
- To beat women, commit violence (*emiglemek*);
- To capture a woman as a spoil of war in order to make her a wife (*kısı*);<sup>20</sup>
- Rape (*küçemek, bas*);
- Regarding the periods of menstruation and puerpera as being a bad situation for women (*alık*);
- Using the title ‘slut’ as insult (*kançık*);
- Betting handmaidens on games (*kızlaşmak*).

It can be seen that there are various forms of violence against women in terms of the bad attitudes and behaviours mentioned above. These can be regarded as bad practices directed towards the female gender.<sup>21</sup> However, the words about bad attitudes and behaviours are very few in the dictionary.

### **Woman-man relationships and family structure**

Even though various words describe women as family members and relatives, the definitions of these words do not provide enough data concerning the woman-man relationships. The relations detailed in the dictionary can be explained

essentially in terms of two processes, the process of marriage and extramarital woman-man relationships.

### ***The process of marriage and woman-man relationships***

Marriage is a valuable state, and it involves many rituals and practices. Various names concerning the place of women in this process can be enumerated as follows.

**Table 2.** Names related to the process of marriage in *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* (Mahmud 2015: 139, 171, 175, 199, 204, 216, 230, 353, 449).

Name	Meaning
<i>Didim</i>	The crown the bride wears on her wedding night
<i>Di.dek</i>	The cover of the palanquin of the bride
<i>Mandırı</i>	The place where the bride and groom sit during the wedding
<i>Tolwır</i>	The curtain of the bride's arbour
<i>Bogmak</i>	Gorget, necklace; worn on the wedding night
<i>Yöwiş</i>	The gifts that are given when the bride enters the bridal chamber
<i>Mamu</i>	Name of the woman who accompanies a bride on her wedding night
<i>Sep</i>	The dowry of the bride that she owns
<i>Mundaru</i>	Silken bride's room

When the terms above are analysed, it can be seen that great importance is given to marriage and the wedding night and that rituals are sustained by making preparations. It can be said that being a bride is essential in society in terms of the woman's role. Yusuf Has Hâcib (1998 [1959]: 177, 326) also mentions that girls should be married as soon as possible and that wedding nights are the most joyful moments for brides. Matters such as supporting brides financially, giving them jewellery, clothes, and a dowry, appointing assistants during marriage preparation, are aspects that support the importance of becoming a bride. These include the fact that a woman's dowry belonged to the woman and that the existence of a bride price builds up a woman's confidence.<sup>22</sup> Thus, a woman also has the opportunity to divorce (*yulundi*) her husband in a bad marriage. For such a divorce, the wife desists from bride price (Mahmud 2015: 377, 384, 398).

Another element in the process of marriage is the tradition of intermarriage. In this tradition, we find continuing intermarriage involving two families (*beriş, biriş, koluş*).<sup>23</sup> It can be evaluated as a situation that strengthens relationships between families (Mahmud 2015: 259, 263). Even though the idiom *kız alıp verme* (to take and give a girl as a bride) is interpreted as a result of a male-dominant perception, when it is examined in general, the fact of getting married is not only a fact defined in terms of the man during the process of marriage. Even though the husband in a marriage is likened to a governor/amir, marriage is also stated in terms of the woman's gender, and it is emphasised that a woman owns her husband through the idiom *kadın beglendi* (a woman became a woman with a husband) (Mahmud 2015: 411, 302, 307). Within this framework, it can be said that the belongingness which exists in married life is of interest to both genders.

Another critical issue in a marital relationship is children. In this context, as mentioned before, a woman giving birth to a child is seen as one of her main tasks and is regarded as an essential process.<sup>24</sup> Pregnancy is recognised as a difficult process, and it is emphasised that a mother is disburdened when the baby is born. During the postpartum period, the woman eats special meals called *ka.vu.t* and *ka.gut* (Mahmud 2015: 415, 174).<sup>25</sup> Whether a girl or a boy, a woman's first child is called *tün oglu*. The fact that the first child is bestowed with such a separate name shows the importance of the first child. In addition, speaking of a woman's first child in such a special way indicates the strength and the uniqueness of the tie between mother and child. This tie is also emphasised when speaking of the relationship between siblings. Namely, in the dictionary, there are expressions concerning how the maternal half-siblings get on with each other, while paternal half-siblings fight (*kaydaş*<sup>26</sup>) (Mahmud 2015: 403, 503). This context makes one think that the tie between mother and child develops from the mother raising her child and educating him or her. On the other hand, a similar case is cited in *Kutadgu Bilig* (Yusuf Has Hâcib 1998 [1959]: 74, 420) through the act of bearing a child and engaging in lactation, on the subject of the relationship of mother and child. According to this, the human character takes shape in the mother's womb, is transferred from the mother biologically, and continues till death.<sup>27</sup>

It can be seen in the dictionary that adoption also existed in ancient Turkish society. There are different expressions about the adoption of both boys and girls. In addition, it is also possible to bring up handmaidens and stepdaughters at home; these are called *öge.y kl.z* and *baldır kız* respectively (Mahmud 2015: 306–307, 61, 199). The tradition of taking a wet nurse is also seen concerning the process of child care and nourishment (*awurta*) (Mahmud 2015: 274). Also, in *Kutadgu Bilig* (Yusuf Has Hâcib 1998 [1959]: 326), there is a statement about

the need to find a good and clean woman as a wet nurse. In addition, a woman can hire a maid to help her with the marital process (*egetlen, tutuklan*) (Mahmud 2015: 129, 310).

### ***Extramarital situations and women-men relationships***

The word ‘handmaiden’ or ‘odalisque (*odalık kız*)’ primarily indicates a bond-woman, a female slave. However, these words also describe a woman in an extramarital situation. Some handmaidens serve their master in terms of his sexual needs.<sup>28</sup> In terms of status, handmaidens are below khatuns and other married women. They serve the house and provide entertainment in the home. It is indicated in the dictionary that they should be able to dance, compete with each other in playing *qopuz* (a type of Turkic fretless string instrument), and play various games (*kız büdi.di*<sup>29</sup>, *kopzas*, *yalju*<sup>30</sup>) (Mahmud 2015: 296, 460, 502).

Another group of women involved in extramarital relations is prostitutes. They prostitute themselves (*kiçin*<sup>31</sup>) and have sexual relations with someone unlawfully. These persons are called *oyna.ş*<sup>32</sup> (Mahmud 2015: 278, 59). Without any doubt, having unlawful sexual relations corresponds to adultery, and it is regarded as an improper act. Indeed, it is often emphasised in *Kutadgu Bilig* (Yusuf Has Hâcib 1998 [1959]: 105–106, 319) that one should not be involved in adultery.

### **Responsibilities of women**

When *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* is analysed, a few words about the responsibilities peculiar to women are found. According to all words detected in the dictionary, it can be stated that women seem busily engaged in affairs dealing with necessities associated with daily life. Among these, there is whipping felt (*sırıt*), sewing the felt walls of tents in which they live (*sırış*), spinning yarn (*tawrat*),<sup>33</sup> and pulling and giving shape to wool (*cöjme.k*<sup>34</sup>). The basic responsibility of women in terms of meeting nutrition requirements is to sift flour (*elgen*) and bake bread in a tandoor. Women also seem busy with adornment. In this context, stitching pictures to silk fabrics by using golden thread (*çigin çigne.di*<sup>35</sup>) means that they adorn them (Mahmud 2015: 328, 235, 259, 336, 116, 375, 473). On the other hand, childcare is the leading responsibility of women. In other words, the central role of women is motherhood. Within this framework, felt dolls called *koðurçuk* were commonly played with by girls (Mahmud 2015: 220). Therefore, it can be asserted that girls of a young age grew up thinking of themselves as future mothers.

### Clothes and the belongings of women

It can be seen in the dictionary that several items of clothing and belongings peculiar to women are mentioned. It is understood from these belongings that, concerning women, beauty and adornment are considered important. The main belongings can be enumerated as follows.

**Table 3.** Names for the clothes and belongings of women in Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk (Mahmud 2015: 51, 170, 212, 220, 223, 320, 396, 397).

Name	Meaning
<i>Ügmeg</i> <sup>36</sup>	Golden or silver link
<i>Öngig</i> <sup>37</sup>	Earlock made by women from goat hair
<i>Büküm etük</i>	Women's shoes
<i>Tolga.g</i> <sup>38</sup>	Women's earrings
<i>Büt</i>	Big chalcocite set in forelocks
<i>To.d monçuk</i> <sup>39</sup>	Beads that handmaidens wear
<i>Sara.guç</i>	Scarf
<i>Bilezük</i>	Bracelet
<i>Bagirdak</i>	Woman's plastron
<i>Bürünçük</i> <sup>40</sup>	Face veil <sup>41</sup>
<i>Terinçek</i>	Thin burqa
<i>Kaçaç</i>	A type of Chinese silk fabric

In the dictionary, there are different types of adornment peculiar to women in addition to the clothes mentioned above and belongings. The women of that era often made braiding. In addition to this, it can be seen that making forelocks and curling was also widespread. Besides, it can be seen that women pinned jewellery to their clothing and hair for adornment. Besides wearing bracelets and earrings, having jewellery such as beads is called *monçaklanmak/monçuklanmak*. Another adornment material was pearl. In this context, it is mentioned that women strung pearls together, made them into shapes, and beautified themselves. Again, information about the importance of adornment and the beautification of women is acquired from the word *kozan* (Mahmud 2015: 46, 434, 314, 275, 277). This word means ‘to beautify, put on makeup, pin jewellery and pearls’.

It can also be seen that women undertook body care to become beautiful apart from adornment with materials such as jewellery and pearls. Although the word *yalrit*<sup>42</sup> refers to an action that means ‘shine’, it is also used in the meaning of ‘woman looking after herself using the depilatory plant (*kirşan*)’. Again, it is

mentioned that women epilated the hair on their faces (Mahmud 2015: 343–344, 389). Even though adornment and beautification of women are essential, the presence of women with excessive adornments was also remarkable. To refer to this kind of woman, the phrase *yaldırık<sup>43</sup> eşle.r* is used. Interestingly, the essential meaning of the word *yaldırık* is ‘tinned object’ (Mahmud 2015: 526). On the other hand, the clothes of khatuns are different from that of other women due to their higher social status. The word *kātu.nlanma.k<sup>44</sup>*, which means ‘to wear the clothes of khatun’, is a sign of this situation (Mahmud 2015: 435).

In the dictionary, a remarkable tool peculiar to women is also found. This tool is a kind of small knife carried by women under their caftans, and it is called *kezlik* (Mahmud 2015: 209). It seems that women carried such a knife for self-defence.

## CONCLUSION

The first finding to be emphasised concerning this paper, in which the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* is analysed in terms of the female gender, is the variety of concepts about women. On the one hand, this situation shows the wealth of vocabulary that makes up the Turkish language; on the other hand, it can reflect the importance of women in language.<sup>45</sup>

When the dictionary is analysed, it can be seen that women are classified in terms of social status and are accorded status based on these classifications. In this context, it can be said that women are not valued qua women. Instead, their status and perceived value depend on determinants such as nobility, freedom, and marital status, which similarly applies to men. These determinants are the basic elements of the social structure described in the dictionary. It can be observed that the distinction relating to marriage and extramarital relations is significant in terms of differences of status. While khatuns and free women have marital relationships, the others are women whose status is mentioned in terms of extramarital relationships. It can be seen in the dictionary that marriage and family are of great importance. Accordingly, this situation can be seen in the preparations for weddings and wedding nights. Everyone esteems the bride and her demands during these preparations. At this point, it can be seen that there exist many rituals and traditions concerning these processes, and they are commonly practised. It is mentioned within the framework of extramarital relationships that concubinage and prostitution exist. Handmaiden can be captured during times of war. As for prostitution, although it is within the bounds of possibility, it indicates a bad situation.

In the dictionary, where marriage and family are seen to be of great importance, it can be seen that the woman is also in a position of decision-maker in her relationship with the man in the context of marital relations. Specifically, the woman can get divorced by giving the man her bride price. In addition, it can be seen that the woman has a dowry and some goods that belong to her. These situations show that there is relative equality between partners and mutual rights. However, there is not complete equality in terms of the social positions of women and men, and it is understood that a man is in a superior position. The expression ‘while there is khan’s work, the khatun’s work is not done’ verifies this. Again, the importance given to the birth of a boy is another sign of this situation.

Another point in woman-man relations is the provision of a division of labour to share social roles and responsibilities. Within this framework, a woman’s responsibilities are associated with private space (domestic life), and the primary domestic responsibilities of a woman consist of maintaining daily life within the home, with motherhood occupying an important place in terms of these responsibilities. Craftwork such as stitching, spinning yarn, and making adornments are also responsibilities ascribed to women. It can be stated that these responsibilities are widely valid today.<sup>46</sup> However, apart from domestic responsibilities, it can be seen that noble khatuns have a share in public life and, especially, have a relatively important voice in the government.

The main point of view deduced from the dictionary concerning how women were perceived in terms of gender is that women were seen as the representative of beauty and aesthetics. However, this emphasis on beauty includes not only physical beauty but also inner beauty. It is possible to ascertain the importance placed on beauty in terms of the numerous belongings and clothes noted in the dictionary used by women for adornment. There are also other skills and characteristics peculiar to a woman in addition to the aspect of beauty. In this sense, the dictionary emphasised that women are crafty, coquettish, and flirtatious. It is seen that, in the context of both beauty and these aspects, women are regarded as being dangerous in terms of setting a ‘trap’, and it is stated that men have to be careful in this respect.

Women’s gender differences allow them to gain recognition and value, and the social environment of the time paves the way for this. Within this framework, women are positively perceived, especially regarding their status as wives and mothers. As stated before, women obtain a position in married life that is relatively equal to that of the man, regarding her rights and responsibilities. However, bad attitudes on the part of men are also displayed concerning women. These include giving bad nicknames and holding the periods of menstruation

and puerperant in contempt. In addition to these, women might also be exposed to actions involving physical violence, while women may be captured during a war, and handmaidens may be bet on in games.

When the findings obtained from an analysis of the dictionary are considered in terms of present-day Turkish society, it can be seen that the hierarchical structuring of women has been removed and that there is not such a differentiation between women.

From the past to the present, family and marriage are still crucial in Turkish society. Within this framework, the value of the woman's role in terms of motherhood is still preserved. In particular, it can be said that maidenhood is still preferred in today's marriages. It can be pointed out that, compared with the past, there has not been a change in these matters. On the other hand, women and men have equal financial opportunities and rights when it comes to divorce at present, and women's rights, as seen in the dictionary, can be regarded as archaic and favourable features of the Turkish social structure in the past.

Women's responsibilities in maintaining daily life today would appear to be one issue that corresponds with the past. It can be said that women's natural place being associated with domesticity rather than external activities is also valid at present.

Another point that can be made concerning the perception of women in today's society in Turkey is their attitude towards physical beauty and adornment. It is possible to say that women tend to be commodified in this respect today. The physical beauty and adornment that was expressed in *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* was only a part of the roles of the female gender, not a consumption-oriented practice. In terms of the data concerning other bad aspects, that is, the various psychological and physical violence elements that can be seen in the dictionary, it is a fact that these negative features continue to exist at present.

The appearance of the perception of women in terms of gender in *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* shows similarities with the perceptions of today's society in general terms. Therefore, in this context, it is possible to identify some degree of historical and cultural continuity from the past to the present in terms of the female gender's social standing.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Several analyses on *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* have been made from different perspectives. In recent years, Ersoy (2016) analysed the different uses of the word ‘face’, Rustamiy (2016) the linguistic and rhetoric aspects, Gömeç (2016) the types of Turkish food and beverages, Ergene (2018) the Turkish forms of onomatopoeic reduplications, Maralbek & Koçak (2018) the unities of measurement, Aripov (2018) the music terms, Atlı (2019) the Turkish proverbs, Yıldız-Altin (2019) the remedy practices in Turkish culture, Özbeğ (2020) an example of ellipsis, Hunutlu (2020) the similarities and differences in voice types, and Taşdelen (2020) the philosophical contents.
- <sup>2</sup> There are words directly related to women or men in the dictionary. In addition, certain words refer to human beings without indicating a particular gender. This paper refers to words directly related to women.
- <sup>3</sup> Naturally, some words are eliminated within the framework of the relationship between the main subject of the paper and particular words. Not all the words identified are included in the paper.
- <sup>4</sup> ‘Woman available to all’ (Mahmud 1985a: 78).
- <sup>5</sup> ‘Horny woman available to all’ (Mahmud 1985a: 104).
- <sup>6</sup> ‘Kudhuz’ (Mahmud 1985a: 365). (There are different editions of *Kutadgu Bilig* according to the manuscripts. Therefore, we have given hereinafter the different spellings of the words in different Turkish editions.)
- <sup>7</sup> It is read as *Yinçke kız*. It means ‘adult handmaiden who gets into bed’ (Mahmud 1985a: 326).
- <sup>8</sup> ‘*Kapıkılığ*’ (Mahmud 1985a: 496).
- <sup>9</sup> ‘Khatun’ is a word of Persian or Turkish origin that means, in the general sense, a lady, matron. Peculiarly, it is a title given to the wife of a Turkish sovereign, that is, a Khan (Steingass 1963 [1892]: 437; Özcan 1997: 499).
- <sup>10</sup> Khatun is also considered as a higher-order woman in *Orkhon Inscriptions*. It is mentioned that God charges mother khatun with state governance, even if just temporarily. In other words, God can give *kut* (happiness) to a khatun (Ergin 2016: 53, 75).
- <sup>11</sup> ‘*İnal*’ (Mahmud 1985a: 122).
- <sup>12</sup> As Özdarıcı remarks, why some women are in this position is not determined in the dictionary. It is possible to say that some prostitutes might have chosen such an occupation willingly, in consideration of the words *ekeklik* (woman’s freeness and shamelessness) and *erseklenmek* (to lust after a man with desire and passion) (Özdarıcı 2011: 129).
- <sup>13</sup> ‘*Özük*’ (Mahmud 1985a: 71).
- <sup>14</sup> ‘*Ertini özük*’ (Mahmud 1985a: 71).
- <sup>15</sup> At this point, a woman’s physical beauty and, accordingly, her danger, is mentioned in *Kutadgu Bilig*. Namely, it is remarked that men would like to marry a wealthy, beautiful, noble, or pious woman, but it is hard and hazardous to protect the beautiful. As for other features, it is emphasised that one should not get married for only richness or nobility, for this might cause a man to be at a lower level than a woman. Piousness is the feature to be preferred in an ideal marriage, for the other features are included in being pious (Yusuf Has Hâcib 1998: 324–325).

<sup>16</sup> Similarly, while negative aspects of possessions are referred to in *Kutadgu Bilig*, an adorned bride's quality of setting a trap is mentioned. Besides, a claim that women are unreliable and changeable is also included. It is mentioned that women can be unfaithful, and many men become miserable because of women. A fickle world is likened to a coquettish and capricious girl, and women are considered through the narrative of that world (Yusuf Has Hâcib 1998: 260, 39, 258, 327, 367, 438).

<sup>17</sup> In Atalay's translation, only leanness and looseness are included. Women are not referred to (Mahmud 1986: 330).

<sup>18</sup> The quality of cowardice from *Kutadgu Bilig* can be added to these (Yusuf Has Hâcib 1998: 171).

<sup>19</sup> It is read as *kalinğ* and means 'dowery' (Mahmud 1986: 371).

<sup>20</sup> The fact that a woman might be captured as a handmaiden is a situation mentioned often in *Orkhon Inscriptions*. The reason is that nations may have been without a khan, and *töre* (morals) may have fallen into disuse. This situation of surrendering to the enemy results in daughters becoming handmaidens (Ergin 2016: 43, 45, 47, 49, 59, 67, 69, 73, 111). Therefore, it can be stated that women's freedom and the protection of their pudicity occurs by the practice and conservancy of *töre* through a khan's existence and success. On the other hand, a nation's women and girls being captured as handmaidens is undesirable. However, capturing women as handmaidens from an enemy was a fact of life. Even though capturing women was a desirable situation, it is emphasised in '*Atabat al-Haqiqi*' that desiring many goods and handmaidens is inappropriate (Yüknekî 2017: 21).

<sup>21</sup> It is mentioned in *Kutadgu Bilig* that women should not be given free rein to go outside and should be protected and hidden at home because otherwise they can cause an inappropriate situation (Yusuf Has Hâcib 1998: 104, 326–327).

<sup>22</sup> It should be noted that the dowry consists of the things that are given to the bride by her family and relatives and that belong to her, whereas the bridegroom or his family pays the bride price as financial support for the bride.

<sup>23</sup> However, there is no statement about whether these intermarriages continue throughout several generations.

<sup>24</sup> Similarly, a woman's fertility is emphasised in *Kutadgu Bilig* (Yusuf Has Hâcib 1998: 247).

<sup>25</sup> The dictionary also mentions that women eat glandular meat (*yuŋ*), which is not peculiar to the period of puerpera (Mahmud 2015: 494).

<sup>26</sup> 'Kanğdas' (Mahmud 1986: 382).

<sup>27</sup> In *Kutadgu Bilig*, the father is also regarded as responsible for educating the child and ensuring that they have good manners. The father can beat the child for discipline purposes (Yusuf Has Hâcib 1998: 94, 98, 116, 248, 326).

<sup>28</sup> For detailed information, see Aydin & Hamidullah 2002: 237–246.

<sup>29</sup> 'Büdhi-di' (Mahmud 1986: 259).

<sup>30</sup> 'Yalnğu' (Mahmud 1986: 380).

<sup>31</sup> Atalay gives the meaning of 'she became a prostitute' (Mahmud 1985b: 156).

<sup>32</sup> 'The woman who makes love with someone else' (Mahmud 1985a: 120).

<sup>33</sup> Producing and sewing felt are the responsibilities of women. A spinner is called an *egirgen* (Mahmud 2015: 81).

<sup>34</sup> ‘Çüj-di’ (Mahmud 1985b: 9).

<sup>35</sup> ‘Çikne-di’ (Mahmud 1986: 301).

<sup>36</sup> ‘Ökmek’ (Mahmud 1985a: 105).

<sup>37</sup> ‘Önük’ (Mahmud 1985a: 135).

<sup>38</sup> ‘Tolgaş’ (Mahmud 1985b: 288).

<sup>39</sup> ‘Bodh monçuk’ (Mahmud 1986: 121).

<sup>40</sup> It is read as *bürünçük* and means ‘scarf’ (Mahmud 1985a: 510).

<sup>41</sup> There is no clear statement about the necessity of covering the face in *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*. However, it is implied in *Kutadgu Bilig* that women have to cover the face, establishing a relationship between covering and chastity (Yusuf Has Hâcib 1998: 464).

<sup>42</sup> ‘Yolrat-tı’ (Mahmud 1985b: 253).

<sup>43</sup> ‘Yaldruk’ (Mahmud 1986: 432).

<sup>44</sup> ‘Wife became khatun, took after khan’s wife’ (Mahmud 1986: 206).

<sup>45</sup> Özdarıcı similarly counts the way of elaboration through the usage of the word *kız* (girl) in several forms as proof of the importance of issues about the woman at a high level of Turkish society (Özdarıcı 2011: 130).

<sup>46</sup> According to recent research made by Kadir Has University in Turkey, the rate of men who help their wives with domestic responsibilities reaches only 15% as the level of education increases. It is 6% in the male profile with a low education level. The rate of men taking care of their children is 51% (O’Neil & Çarkoğlu 2020).

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