



## KĀŠEFI

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**KĀŠEFI** (d. 9th/15th century), an Ottoman poet of Iranian origin who composed the epic poem *Ġazā-nāma-ye Rum* on the lives of the Ottoman sultans Morād II (r. 1421-44 and 1446-51) and Moḥammad II (r. 1444-46 and 1451-81). The date and place of his birth and his real name are unknown. In his work, he referred to himself only as Kāšefi. According to the autobiographical elements in his work, he first visited various Arabian countries but left because of political disturbances (*enqelāb*). After a long journey and many hardships he reached Istanbul, where he lived for some time as a jester and minstrel. He was living in poverty until he met the renowned Ottoman statesman and poet Abu'l-Faẓl Aḥmad b. Wali-al-Din Pasha (d. 902/1496), who introduced him to Meḥmed (Moḥammad) Pasha, the grand vizier. The latter brought him to the palace of Sultan Moḥammad II (Meḥmed). The Sultan was very generous towards him and invited him to stay as a poet at his palace. From this time on, there is no further information on his life, and the time of his death remains unknown.

The only work of Kāšefi that has come down to us is the *Ġazā-nāma-ye Rum*. It is an epic in 1,139 couplets, probably written for Abu'l-Faẓl Aḥmed around 1456. It begins with a narration on the birth, childhood, education, and enthronement of Sultan Moḥammad II and continues with an account of the crusades of 1444 (the battle of Varna) and 1448 (the battle of Kosova), which were fought between Morād II and various European powers. The work comes to a sudden end with the wedding of Moḥammad II.

The *Ġazā-nāma-ye Rum* is one of the best Ottoman sources on the battle of



Varna (İnalçık, p. 111). The author drew on eyewitness accounts of the battle, thus providing valuable and very detailed information on strategy, weapons, and conduct of warfare. It is also equally significant as the oldest Persian work written in the style of Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma* during the Ottoman Empire. Kāşefi also used some couplets from the *Šāh-nāma*. The only known manuscript of the *Ġazā-nāma-ye Rum* is kept at the Library of Istanbul University (İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, FY, no. 1388; on the manuscript see Tauer, pp. 94-95; Sobhāni-Āqsu, pp. 601-2; Özgüdenli, p. 441). It was written in fine *nasta'liq* script probably in the 10th/16th century (Sobhāni-Āqsu, p. 601); some folios (e.g., 29b 37b) seem to be missing.

Adnan Sadık Erzi (d. 1990) worked on an edition of the *Ġazā-nāma*, but it has not been published. A Turkish translation with an introduction and the facsimile reproduction of the manuscript (pp. 46-90) was presented by Moḥammad-Ebrāhim M. Esmā'il as an MA thesis.

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