Cultural and Religious Studies, May 2020, Vol. 8, No. 5, 274-283

doi: 10.17265/2328-2177/2020.05.002



# "Kutadgu Bilig", Philosophical-Legal Political Treatise (Book of Government) of the History of Turkish-Islamic Culture of the 11th Century

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Kutadgu Bilig (Gracious Knowledge), a common cultural monument of modern Turkic peoples, is a valuable historical, theoretical, and methodological source that reveals the artistic and political thinking of the 11th century, shapes the life and spiritual culture of society, and explains the prospects for governing the state. In this work, which is a philosophical and legal political treatise (Book of Government) of the history of Turkish-Islamic culture of the 11th century, the general terms of the government strategy, which forms the basis of public administration, are widely interpreted from different aspects. Kutadgu Bilig, which reveals the unique artistic treasures of the Turkish language and Turkish artistic and political thinking, shows that the proper regulation of relations between the people and the government is the most important factor in public administration. Kutadgu Bilig, a philosophical and legal political treatise of the Turkish-Islamic cultural history of the 11th century, which contains very important theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of state building and administration, has not lost its actuality since it reflects the theoretical and methodological principles of public administration.

Keywords: Kutadgu Bilig, Turk, Yusuf Khass Hajib Balasaguni, Islam, philosophical-legal, political treatise, state

## Introduction

Research on the study of the National Heritage reveals the inheritance of the rich culture; in particular, each page of the history of the Turkic-Islamic medieval culture shows the important role of the Turkish people in the overall picture of ethnic geography. Studies on ancient written monuments show that the statehood of the Turkish people has an ancient and glorious history based on great culture. To take a brief look at the ancient historical periods when these values of statehood were first instilled, it is important to study the ancient written monuments that reflect the historical culture and rich statehood traditions of the Turks, who built 16 great empires from ancient times to the present day.

Many of the ancient monuments left by statesmen, especially lawyers, who have lived and worked for centuries, are works that reflect the philosophical, legal, and political culture of Turkish history. However, it should be noted with regret that the necessary research on the ancient Turkish statehood and the government of this state has not been carried out and the legal issues of the ancient state building reflected in the ancient monuments written on this subject have been left out of the studies. In this regard, the work "Kutadgu Bilig"

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(Gracious Knowledge) written by Yusuf Khas Hajib Balasaguni, a written chronicle of the political history of ancient Turkish statehood, an invaluable treasure of Turkish artistic and political thought, is of particular interest.

# Overview of the Research History of "Kutadgu Bilig"

"Kutadgu Bilig" is the first magnificent monument of Turkish-Islamic culture written in 1069 during the Karakhanid state. The first great work of Turkish political literature of the kara-khanid period "Kutadgu Bilig" written by Yusuf Khas Hajib in Balasaguni, in 1069-1070 was completed in Kashgar (city) and presented to Tavgach Bughra Gara Khan Abu Ali Hasan bin Arslan. The monument of the 11th century, the siyasatnama "Kutadgu Bilig" written in the style of masnavi, is a magnificent monument that expresses the sacred ideals of the Turkish people, such as freedom, independence, and national statehood. The work begins with a praise of God and the Prophet like all Islamic works. This work, which is an artistic and political expression of religious and national values and is based on very interesting judgments, attracts attention with its originality in terms of structure and content. According to all its features, "Kutadgu Bilig" is a masnavi in the genres of semi-narrative and semi-fable, dominated by the styles of narration, wisdom, and dialogue.

Yusuf Khas Hajib Balasaguni preferred four basic concepts based on the negotiations of four people for the management of the state and society and the protection of the traditions of statehood in the content of the work. In the example of man, the main target of *Kutadgu Bilig*, the first example of siyasetnama in the history of world culture is that the relations between society and the state are discussed in all its aspects. Although Yusuf Khas Hajib Balasaguni evaluated all the attributes of public administration according to religious and social criteria, such as "justice" personified by the *ruler* Kün-*Toğdi* [Rising-Sun], "luck" in the example of the vizier Ay-Toldi [Full-Moon], "intelligence" embodied by the vizier's son Ogdulmush [Praiseworthy], and "fate" represented by the brother of the vizier Odgurmish [Awakener], he stressed that these four criteria are the main ones in state building and administration.

Although some time after the writing of "Kutadgu Bilig" was forgotten, then several times the work was copied and these copies stored in different libraries were first investigated and revealed by foreign researchers.

To date, there are three copies of *Kutadgu Bilig*, one in Uiguric and two in Arabic (Hajib, 2018a; 2018b; 2018c, p. 2). The first copy found in the city of Herat (Vienna) in 843 (1439). The Herat copy preserved in Vienna is also important in terms of studying the cultural relations between Anatolia and Turkestan in the 15th century. It is known from historical records that it was brought from Tokat in 1474 by one of the Uigur scribes, Fenarioglu Kadi Ali for Shehzadeh Abdur-rezzak Bakhshi, during the reign of Fatih Sultan Mehmet Khan II (1432-1481) (Hajib, 2018c, p. 5). The Uigur version was read differently by Vamberi, Radloff, Thomsen, and Martin Hartman. Radloff called the book "*Kutadgu Bilig*" from the Uighuric script, "Kut"- fortune, happiness, "Bilig"- science, that is, "The book of happiness" (Hajib, 2018a; 2018b; 2018c; p. 10).

Hermann Vambery (1812-1913), who found the first copy of the work in Istanbul, mentioned "*Kutadgu Bilig*" in 1870 when he gave information about the Uighurs, their language, history, country, ethnography, and social status.

The first information about this copy, consisting of 5,971 verses, was given by Pierre Amedee Jaubert in 1825 (Jaubert, 1825, pp. 39-52). After *Kutadgu Bilig* was first introduced to the world of science in 1825 by Pierre Amedee Emilien Probe Jaubert (1779-1847), it had attracted the interest of many researchers and had been studied from various angles. A Cairo copy of the work was later found by Moritz, director of the Cairo Hidiv

Library. The last was the Namangan (Fergana) copy found by Zeki Velidov in 1913 in the personal library of Mohammad Haji Ishan Laleresh in Namangan. He introduced it to the world of science with a report he wrote in 1915 (Velidov, 1915, pp. 312-313). Abdurrauf Fitrat (Abdurrauf Abdurahimov) who read this article, received a copy of Namangan from Haji Ishan Laleresh in 1924, and took it to Tashkent in 1925; he gave general information about the work and published a picture (photo) of several parts of the manuscript (Fitrat, 1925, pp. 68-74).

After the discovery of the Cairo edition of *Kutadgu Bilig* in Arabic, Wilhelm Radloff (1837-1943) published pictures of his first known writings in 1890 and he published the first part in 1900 and the second in 1910, comparing it with an article found in the Hidiv Library in Cairo. Wilhelm Radloff published a new article on *Kutadgu Bilig* in 1898. Radloff noted in the article that he received a copy of the introduction of an article written in ancient Turkish through professor Sachaun and these writings were compiled by Mortiz, the director of the Hidiv Library in Cairo, by collecting pages from a pile of manuscripts. He also noted that Moritz had given the manuscript to an Arab (Radloff, 1898, pp. 309-319). Based on the fact that the Namangan manuscript in Arabic was written in the Sulus script (the ancient form of the Arabic alphabet), Mortiz showed that this copy was older than the Cairo manuscript and it did not date back to the 13th century. The Arabic script specialist Mortiz noted that this form of Arabic letters appeared in Iran in the 6th century and this alphabet was used in Syria and Egypt (1174-1252) in the time of Ayyubids (Mortiz, 1941, pp. 498-512).

Photos of the Egyptian edition were published in 1943 by the Turkish Language Institution. According to Arat (1947), this text, which is perfect in terms of photographic technique, is the best among the copies.

After the publication of all copies by the Turkish Language Institution in 1942-1943, the critical edition of *Kutadgu Bilig* prepared by Rashid Rahmeti Arat (1900-1964) was published in 1947, and its translation in 1959. The first transcription of "*Kutadgu Bilig*" in Turkey in all three manuscripts without any changes was given by Rashid Rahmeti Arat in 1947-1959 (Dilachar, 2016, p. 9). After the death of Rashid Rahmeti Arat, many Turkish scientists conducted various researches on *Kutadgu Bilig*. "*Kutadgu Bilig*" was evaluated from the historical point of view by Dörfer, Dilachar, Kafesoghl and Ercilasun, Ölmez, and Tashstudied; it is from the linguistic point of view.

Numerous research works have been carried out on "Kutadgu Bilig" and translated into various languages, which is increasingly of great interest in the international arena. In 2019, the Turkish Language Institution and Haji Bektash Veli University held international conferences and congresses in Turkey in connection with the 950th anniversary of "Kutadgu Bilig".

The translation of the work into eastern Turkish was published in Beijing (1983), Uzbek in Tashkent (1990), Kyrgyz in Moscow (1993), Khaganian Turkish (2006), and Azerbaijani (2016) in Baku. Mehmet Ölmez also published an article about the translation of the work into different languages.

### **Main Part**

"Kutadgu Bilig", as a theoretical source of public administration, is an invaluable historical art monument in terms of studying the governance of the ancient Turkish state, being a work reflecting the historical, moral views, literature, language, philosophical outlook of its time. "Kutadgu Bilig", a historical document of public administration, shows that the history of Turkish statehood has passed a very big stage of development before Islam and plays the role of a very useful historical-theoretical source explaining to us the secrets of the systematic mechanism of government, which forms the basis of modern state building.

Kafesoğlu (1980) expressed social and philosophical views in this work evaluated the issues of statehood as follows: "It was able to introduce the socio-political foundation of the Turkish state by revealing the moral side, political and administrative views of the Turks" (p. 4).

It is worth adding Arat's opinions to Kafesoglu's statement about the work: "Yusuf analyzed the meaning of human life in this work, formed a philosophy-philosophical system of life that defines its role in society, as well as in the state" (Arat, 1979, p. 25).

Valiyev and Asgar note in the work that the philosophy of national life of the Turks, the view of the citizen and the state, the principle of the independence of the national state have not lost their significance for today and write as follows:

The laws, the constitution, the army and administration of the state are great and powerful when every citizen loves and sanctifies his state as much as his family. In terms of expressing the citizen's sense of statehood and love for the national state, *Kutadgu Bilig* has entered our history as one of the exemplary works. (Balasaguni 2006, p.7).

Mustafa S. Kaçalın (2018) noted that "Kutadgu Bilig" is a siyasatnama written in masnavi style (p. 1).

*Kutadgu Bilig*, a common cultural treasure of modern Turkic peoples, is a very valuable historical monument that reflects the richness of Turkic language of the 11th century, as well as important issues related to the life, material and spiritual culture of people and society, state building and governance.

*Kutadgu Bilig* is one of the most valuable historical monuments of Turkish culture as a historical and literary monument, reflecting the state-building of the Turkish people, the strategy and cultural features of public administration, the spiritual and moral outlook of various groups.

If we take into account the relevance of the general conditions of the public administration strategy, which is the basis of the special management system of the state in this work, written in the 11th century, then it is clear that this work is of great importance in modern public administration.

If we pay attention to the historical parallelism of many conditions that are important in modern public administration, reflected in "*Kutadgu Bilig*", then these conditions are:

- 1. State-citizen, state independence;
- 2. Guarantee of public administration;
- 3. Functions and mechanisms of public administration;
- 4. Improving the style and efficiency of public administration;
- 5. Strategic programs of public administration.

"Kutadgu Bilig", a unique treasure of the Turkish language and Turkish political thought, is the first valuable theoretical and political work in Turkish history as a source explaining how relations between the head of state and the public are regulated and the traditional functions of the state.

The work systematically discusses the main functions of domestic and foreign policy of the two main factors in the public administration. In the domestic policy of the state, the following are the main ones:

- 1. To regulate and maintain the current socio-political situation of society.
- 2. Social responsibilities, i.e., the implementation of the social program.
- 3. Tasks related to culture and education: this includes the development of education, culture, science, in short, the continuous improvement of the spiritual life of society.

The book also contains a wide range of views on foreign policy issues, primarily the protection of the country and its interests in the international arena and the maintenance of political influence on other states.

Along with the general theoretical problems of public administration, "Kutadgu Bilig" as a theoretical source which reflects the activities of administrative bodies and officials in government, as well as very important theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of state building and management related to diplomatic missions and the army, expresses the theoretical and methodological principles of modern public administration today. This proves that the 11th century monument "Kutadgu Bilig", which is the main source of public administration, is a very valuable monument that has not lost its relevance today.

"Kutadgu Bilig" is a useful book for modern public administration, which explains the main stature of the head of state and clarifies social, political, and economic issues, such as how to gain and protect power, protection of the state treasury, the army, the government's relationship with the people. Balasaguni (2018) showed (p. 9) that public administration was built on four strong foundations, starting from the state formation:

- 1. Justice is based on truth;
- 2. A state means happiness and fortune;
- 3. Mind is greatness;
- 4. Savings and well-being.

"Kutadgu Bilig", a common cultural treasure of modern Turkic peoples, reveals the richness of the vocabulary of Turkic language of the 11th century, and reflects the very important socio-political relations of the material, spiritual, and cultural life of society. "Kutadgu Bilig" is a very valuable historical source in the history of Turkish-Islamic culture, as well as a very valuable historical and philosophical-legal work that forms the state structure, public administration strategy, political and moral views of various groups based on the state.

The book evaluates the general conditions of the public administration strategy, which is the basis of the special system of the government, in several ways.

- 1. Proper regulation of state-citizen relations;
- 2. Independence of the state;
- 3. Ensuring public administration;
- 4. Functions of public administration; mechanism of public administration;
- 5. Identify ways of public administration and increase efficiency;
- 6. Strategic plans of public administration.

Although written in the 11th century, *Kutadgu Bilig*, a unique treasure of the Turkish language and Turkish artistic and political thought, still retains its historical significance in terms of modern public administration as a methodological tool that theoretically reflects the main functions of the state in regulating relations between the government and the people. Focusing on the integrity of domestic and foreign policy, which is the basis of the state strategy, Yusuf Khass Balasaguni interprets each of the internal and external functions separately. The internal functions of the state are as follows:

- 1. To maintain the existing political structure of the state and socio-political stability within society.
- 2. Programmed implementation of a number of social tasks in strengthening the state.
- 3. Paying special attention to cultural and educational issues: This includes the development of education, culture, science, in short, the sustainable development of the spiritual life of society.

The book also covers ideas related to the external functions of public administration, such as the defense of the country, the protection of international interests and ensuring its sovereignty. The issues related to the general theoretical problems of public administration, the activities of administrative bodies and officials, as well as the activities of diplomatic officials, the role of the army in the protection of the state are also discussed in detail.

As can be seen, "Kutadgu Bilig", which reflects extensive theoretical and practical knowledge, theoretical and methodological principles, regulation and provision of public administration, is still relevant today in terms of determining the main directions of development.

In "Kutadgu Bilig", which systematically reflects the ways of public administration in the most ancient period in terms of content and sequence, these issues coincide with the mechanism of modern public administration, which can be grouped as follows:

- 1. Socio-political issues are to ensure the development of society in a complex, complete, balanced, and peaceful environment;
  - 2. Social issues are factors that reflect the state's influence on the condition and level of people's social life;
- 3. Moral and psychological factors, which include, on the one hand, the understanding of the moral values guided by society, and, on the other hand, the increase of the moral potential of society to achieve socio-political and social goals;
- 4. Economic issues that characterize the system of economic relations are to ensure the realization of public-political and other goals;
- 5. Organizational issues are aimed at solving organizational problems in the subjects and objects of public administration. Special attention is paid to the construction of organizations in accordance with the structure of the state.

In accordance with the governing structure of the modern Turkic states, these general factors taken into account in the public administration in "Kutadgu Bilig" as general socio-legal principles of modern statehood can be considered as a continuation of the tradition of classical Turkish statehood in modern times. This confirms that the transformation of each nation's centuries-old traditions of statehood into a single system is the result of a long process of evolution. The work "Kutadgu Bilig" once again shows that through historical development, state systems have become total governance, covering the entire public system.

As can be seen from the work, the theory of public administration is based on three sciences: law, sociology and systems theory, and these factors are also the main elements of modern public administration. Thus, the legal paradigm of the modern state as a political-legal institution and the sociological paradigm as a social institution is the same as that of "Kutadgu Bilig". At the same time, as a result of the genesis, organization, operation, and management of social systems, sociology and the synthesis of the systems theory, the theory of management as a whole is embodied in the work.

Although written in the 11th century, "*Kutadgu Bilig*" clearly shows that the beginning of the success of the political mechanism of modern public administration of Turkish state is a complex system of measures on a solid foundation. From this point of view, the concept of "statehood" is used in several meanings in "*Kutadgu Bilig*", which is considered to be the political and legal work of the most ancient period:

- 1. Developing state;
- 2. "State structure", "political structure of society".

The term "statehood" in the work refers to the state-organizational form of society, which includes state-legal structures and institutions, national-state idea and social practice of their realization. This historical

work, which covers all areas related to the political, legal, military, economic, socio-cultural issues of state in the ancient Turkic states, is very valuable as a historical and theoretical source of modern public administration.

If we look at our world, we can see that each of the developing countries has reached today's level based on some traditional principles. For example, India is developing based on the principles set by Mahatma Gandhi. The US Declaration of independence reflects the principles of the American state and its people, at the same time, the traditions and principles of this country are still the main. Although the United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy, it is also based on historical ideological principles.

As can be seen, although these states differ from each other in the form of governance in modern times, they are based on their classical traditions in terms of structure and mutual relations of all state bodies, as well as their direct and indirect relations with the population. From this point of view, "Kutadgu Bilig" is a great monument in the history of world statehood as the first historical-theoretical and methodological source in terms of building and governing a democratic state.

Taking into account the social aspect of government very seriously in the work, Balasaguni clearly showed that public administration is connected with people and social interests of people. Thus, in this work, as in the ancient Turkish statehood, public administration as a whole is a field of political, legal, and social activities and relations between the state and the people. For example, "Kutadgu Bilig" pays special attention to the family and marriage, which are the main foundations of the state. The work provides information on many issues, such as the state interest, public interest, protection of personal and property rights of citizens, as well as the registration of marriage. In addition to expressing a subjective attitude to the rights and responsibilities of the spouses, it has also been touched upon the cases of divorce. The book deals with the rights and duties of spouses, motherhood, fatherhood, upbringing, and education of children, as well as other issues of the family, such as raising children in the family in the spirit of patriotism, ensuring the happy life of each child, elimination of harmful habits in family relations and instilling in children a sense of responsibility to the family and society.

Showing that the main factor in ancient Turkish statehood is the sphere of political, legal, and social activities and relations among people, as in modern times, this work also talks about the great role of family-marriage issues as the main foundation of the state. Balasaguni speaks about the need to strengthen the family, the establishment of family relations on the basis of mutual love and respect, the mutual assistance and responsibility of family members to the family. The book pays special attention to the benefits of family upbringing in the growth of children, care for their welfare and development, the great role of genetic factors, and the proper upbringing of children underage in the family.

If your handsome son or beautiful daughter is born,
Educate at home, do not entrust to another person.
Find a good and honest nurse,
So children grow up healthy and live a long life.
Teach knowledge and good manners to your son and daughter. (Balasaguni, 2018, pp. 302-304)

In addition, one of the main issues of the work is the upbringing of children in the family in the spirit of loyalty to the motherland in connection with public education, comprehensive protection of children's interests and ensuring a happy life for every child, elimination of harmful habits in family relations, the development of responsibility to the people and these issues remain relevant in modern times. By the way, the author expresses his views on the rights and responsibilities of spouses, motherhood, fatherhood, upbringing, and education of children, as well as other issues of the family.

The book fully explains the rules of conduct of the rich groups, assistants (viziers), army chiefs, diplomats (ambassadors), the state budget, as well as the people (citizens) in the protection and management of the state. "The knowledge of an educated and wise person is wealth for the country", said Balasaguni (2018, p. 164), who appreciated science and education, showed that education is very important in building an ideal society.

"Bey (nobleman) controls the people with knowledge, without knowledge, the mind is useless. Educated, intelligent and wise noblemen have a high position in two worlds" (Balasaguni, 2018, p. 153).

Along with the fact that education is very useful for the country, the valuable ideas written by Balasaguni are still relevant today and one of the most important issues in the development of the modern state.

Man who grows in knowledge, reaches fame,

He will be superior to everyone, he will be able to do everything.

An ignorant person is as an empty mold,

the place of the wise is higher than the heaven.

He saw the power of the country in the unity of science and the army:

You need a sword to capture countries, but a pen to rule.

The sword will conquer the country, it will triumph,

The pen regulates the country and fills the treasury.

It is a greater virtue for a person to be knowledgeable.

It is a superior virtue for a person to play the sword

A beautiful country holds a sword,

It is regulated by the pen, everyone gets what he wants. (Balasaguni, 2018, pp. 180, 195)

Kutadgu Bilig clearly states the responsibilities and attitude of the officials to the people.

Bey (nobleman) should be excellent for the people,

His words should be true, and his nature must be calm.

He should be educated, intelligent, kind, generous, satisified to the people.

He should help everyone.

He must be dignified, gentle, and noble

Such a gentleman is worthy of the people, he will be great,

A better generation will be born from him. (Balasaguni, 2018, pp. 152-153)

The book attaches great importance to the correct establishment of personnel policy in public administration.

"Gentlemen gather good people around them, things are going well, they win confidence. If he gathers the wicked, his name is mud, the work of the country is violated" (Balasaguni, 2018, p. 169).

The book pays special attention to each of the factors that determine a broad, comprehensive process, such as building a regular army, which is the first important attribute of the state, and discusses the importance of tactical exercises to increase the army's combat capability. It is widely discussed about the activity of army construction, which is the main component of state building, in protection of statehood interests and interests of the country. All the conditions for having a strong army are disclosed and having paid special attention to the personal qualities of the commander of the army and the correct construction of the military strategy, Yusuf emphasized that the guarantee of the sovereignty of the state is the army.

Explaining all the subtleties of leading the army, the main attribute of the state, this work shows the importance of courage, generosity, intelligence, humility, and resolution in the victory of the army, as well as the importance of high spirits and avoidance of arrogance. Along with proper political strategy in army

construction, moral and psychological selection of ammunition and fighters, it is also necessary to pay special attention to the fact that the army is fully equipped (Balasaguni, 2018, pp. 172-173). "If there is no chance to win, send an ambassador to ask for peace", said Balasaguni, who had a high opinion of peace, one of the issues he drew attention to in the work is the activity of diplomats in the public administration (Balasaguni, 2018, p. 174). Emphasizing the importance of construction of a regular army in the protection of the state, Balasaguni (2018) described all the merits of those who will lead the army.

To lose an enemy's sleep who doesnt want to peace,

Bey (nobleman) needs an army commander.

He should be lion-hearted, active, tough, experienced.

Commanding the army, leading the troops and defeating the enemy are important work.

This work requires a brave man.

He should be responsible, careful and awake.

He should be brave, clever, courageous and humble.

He must separate the vanguard and scout groups,

He should be vigilant.

He should correct the regiment according to the training and the rule.

First of all, he should try to get along well with others.

He must clarify the situation of the enemy.

According to the information received, he must set up his work.

The second is caution and vigilance.

If the enemy has more soldiers than you,

Take action accordingly

If you have the opportunity to talk, negotiate,

Or wear your armor and grapple. (pp. 170, 174-175)

Human and spiritual issues are widely covered in the work. Balasaguni (2018) wrote by penetrating the deepest layers of the genetic bond of morality and behaviour, giving a high assessment to human intelligence:

Ulu Khas Hajib (vizier) should be reliable, honest, truthful,

As well as a good and religious person.

His dynasty should be honour so that

Let he rises like the sun and the moon for people.

Noble people are kind,

A good person wants the best for the people.

A person who is good in deeds will fore think his words.

The work of a person who fore think his words will be very honest.

If a person is intelligent, he will not need wealth.

Even if he is educated, he will never make a mistake in his work.

It is very useful to be smart.

The mind has a share in all goodness.

A fool is like a fruitless tree.

The best people are faithful ones. (pp. 179-180)

## Conclusion

One of the advantages of "Kutadgu Bilig", the first historical source on the theory of Turkish public administration, explained the theoretical and methodological basis of public administration and the essence of the managerial influence of the state and examined the traditional two main functions of the state (internal and external functions).

The work deals with the internal functions of the state—the existing political structure, preservation of the socio-political structure of society, economic regulation, achieving economic stability, fulfillment of social responsibilities, development of education, culture, science, in short, the continuous improvement of society's spiritual life and the external functions—issues, such as the defense of the country and the protection of its interests in the international arena.

In short, although "Kutadgu Bilig" covered the theoretical and methodological bases of Turkish public administration in the 11th century, it still maintains its actuality as a historical theoretical source in terms of organization and provision of public administration and its improvement in the world in modern conditions.

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