Brief History of Aspirin® in Turkey

- In **1902**, an article about the medical properties of this medicine was published in a medical bulletin in Istanbul.
- During the **Republican Period** it was licensed in 1923 and started being publicly advertised in 1925.
Aspirin® Ad from the 1920s

Aspirin® Ads from the 1920s
After the Surname Law of **1934** was implemented in Turkey, some pharmacists took *surnames* similar to the names of popular drug companies. Since the name **Bayer** was among the most appropriate ones for Turkish spelling, it was often selected.
From the 1960s to the 1990s, Aspirin’s previous fame was almost forgotten due to the entrance of new analgesics with fewer side-effects into the market.

The 1990s, marked a peak in Aspirin’s popularity as new research studies suggested its previously unknown benefits. This was likely the second birth of this wonder drug after 90 years.

As of 2011, there are 27 products with acetylsalicylic acid as an active ingredient in the Turkish market. Some of them still keep the old tradition of bearing aspirin-like names, such as Asinpirine, Ataspin, Ecopirin, Pharmaspirin, etc.

Aspirin® in Turkish literature

- Bayer and its Turkish rivals;
- Aspirin’s® medical uses;
- various pharmaceutical forms and doses;
- side effects, misuse; and
- idioms, slang, and meaning differentiations
Adalet Agaoglu (1929–)

“**Turkish aspirin** did make my stomach burn. You should have **German aspirin**. Give me two; I’ll take... Veli’s wife immediately started to search one of her plastic bags.”

(The Delicate Rose of My Mind, 1976)

Nazım Hikmet (1901–1963)

“I wish I had an **aspirin**. My palms burn. My head is full with Bedreddin and Börklüce Mustafa. If I can strain myself, [I] don’t have this blinding **headache**; in the noise of ceaseless clashing of swords, the neighing of horses, ...”

(The Epic of Simavne Judge’s Son Sheikh Bedreddin, 1936)
Reşat Nuri Güntekin (1889–1956)

“Flu treatment without a doctor is well-known: Getting into bed in a guarded room after taking aspirin; and hardly sweating under a chunk of blanket, rug, coat, and whatever you find. But not catching a cold after sweating…”
(Notes of Anatolia, 1936)

Ayşe Kulin (1941–)

“What was your temperature?” asked her mother.

“Around 37 °C,” replied Füreya.

“Shall I give you aspirin?”

“I’m going out, mommy. I’ll take it when I get home,” said Füreya.”
(Fureya, 2000)
Orhan Pamuk (1952–)

“And later, as I rifled through the medicine bottles on the sideboard where Janan had directed me, looking for an aspirin, I was thinking that if I too were to get sick, then we wouldn’t have to leave the room for days.”
(The New Life, 1995)

Oktay Rifat Horozcu (1914–1988)

“Is there any aspirin?” he asked.
“Yes, there is,” I said.
“Over the toilette shelf. But take it after dissolving; it burns the stomach.”
(Mr. Lear, 1982)
Idioms, Slang, and Meaning Differentiations

Aspirin = **small car**
(i.e., Volkswagen, Citroën deux chevaux)

Aspirin = **brandy**
(around Izmir region)
Aspirin gibi her derde deva olmak: “being heal-all like Aspirin”

Aspirin tableti etkisi yapmak: [Having an Aspirin tablet effect], means “being very useful or effective”

Bosuna Aspirin yutmamak: [Not taking Aspirin in vain], means “doing things consciously”

A Turkish restaurant named after Aspirin, Istanbul, 2009
Conclusion

• Aspirin® has deeply penetrated Turkish literature as a common wonder drug.

• subject be considered with respect to different countries, different cultures, and different languages.

Aspirin’s chemical structure, painted in Turkish art of illumination (tezhip)
(H. Tekiner Collection)