The Turkic languages are spoken today in a vast geographical area stretching from southern Iran to the Arctic Ocean and from the Balkans to the great wall of China. There are currently 20 literary languages in the group, the most important among them being Turkish with over 70 million speakers; other major languages covered include Azeri, Bashkir, Chuvash, Gagauz, Karakalpak, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Noghay, Tatar, Turkmen, Uyghur, Uzbek, Yakut, Yellow Uyghur and languages of Iran and South Siberia.

The Turkic Languages is a reference book which brings together detailed discussions of the historical development and specialized linguistic structures and features of the languages in the Turkic family. Seen from a linguistic typology point of view, Turkic languages are particularly interesting because of their astonishing morphosyntactic regularity, their vast geographical distribution, and their great stability over time.

This volume builds upon a work which has already become a defining classic of Turkic language study. The present, thoroughly revised edition updates and augments those authoritative accounts and reflects recent and ongoing developments in the languages themselves, as well as our further enhanced understanding of the relations and patterns of influence between them. The result is the fruit of decades-long experience in the teaching of the Turkic languages, their philology and literature, and also of a wealth of new insights into the linguistic phenomena and cultural interactions defining their development and use, both historically and in the present day.

Each chapter combines modern linguistic analysis with traditional historical linguistics; a uniform structure allows for easy typological comparison between the individual languages. Written by an international team of experts, The Turkic Languages will be invaluable to students and researchers within linguistics, Turcology, and Near Eastern and Oriental Studies.

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THE TURKIC
LANGUAGES

Second Edition

Edited by Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató
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A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE TURKIC FAMILY

The purpose of this volume is to present synchronic and diachronic data to characterize Turkic, one of the world’s major language families. The book aims at achieving a reasonable coverage of the diversity of both ancient and modern languages, focusing on key aspects of their structure and history.

This introduction differs from previous surveys of the Turkic languages by trying to meet the requirements not only of Turcologists but of a variety of readers. It is intended to be accessible to a wide readership without any previous knowledge of Turcology. The theoretical basis is relatively neutral; less widely known terms are explained.

The book is designed to serve as a general source of reference for all readers with an interest in the Turkic family. It is also intended as a textbook for undergraduate or graduate courses in Turcology and linguistics. Furthermore, it is hoped that the book will offer information of value to scholars in various disciplines, such as general linguistics, typology, and historical linguistics. The volume may also be useful for Turcologists searching for information on languages different from the ones with which they are already familiar. Finally, the information offered may prove helpful as background knowledge to a study of Oriental history and literature. The editors have tried to ensure that the book provides an up-to-date survey of current knowledge in the entire field covered. This is sufficiently clear and expository for all the purposes mentioned here.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE VOLUME

All chapters in this volume are written by specialists – several of them being native speakers of the language they describe – in the respective fields. Most chapters are devoted to individual contemporary languages, whereas some deal with a whole branch or sub-branch. The attention accorded to each language has been determined on purely linguistic and historical grounds, independent of external political considerations. The remaining chapters deal with the distribution and history of the Turkic-speaking peoples, the salient structural features of Turkic, extinct written languages, alphabets and transcription problems, the Turkish language reform, and the Turkic languages spoken in Iran. Diachronic issues are limited to two chapters, one on the reconstruction of an ancestor of the Turkic languages – with a brief discussion of the controversial question of the Altaic linguistic unity – and one on the history of Turkic.

The descriptive chapters have been organized according to structural linguistic criteria. A similar range of core topics is covered in all of them. The order of sections is also as similar as possible to make it easier to find comparable information on each of the languages.
CHANGES

The second edition of the volume has undergone essential changes. Of the previous authors, Árpád Berta, Gerhard Doerfer, Claus Schöning, and Mark Vandamme have passed away since the first edition. The authors Aynur Abish, Klára Agyagási, Christiane Bulut, Éva A. Csató, Kenjegül Kalieva, Birsel Karakoç, László Károly, Astrid Menz, Vladimir Monastyrev, Elisabetta Ragagnin, Martine Robbeets, and Abdurishid Yakup have delivered new contributions. Larry Clark’s, Marcel Erdal’s, Reinhard F. Hahn’s, Mark Kirchner’s, and Marek Stachowski’s valuable contributions in previous editions are respectfully recalled to memory.

In the previous editions, authors used their own transcriptions, which made comparisons between the languages difficult. A cohesive broad Turcological transcription is now employed.

In addition to an article on East Old Turkic, earlier called Old Turkic, there is a chapter on West Old Turkic, a new concept introduced by András Róna-Tas and Árpád Berta (2011). Róna-Tas and Berta understand West Old Turkic as opposed to East Old Turkic, the language of runiform, Uyghur, and Khotanese texts. Old Turkic groups from the East arrived in the Eastern part of Europe in the fifth century and became speakers of West Old Turkic. The linguistic copying processes in Eastern Europe includes Oghurs, Bulghars, Khazars, and Hungarians.

LIMITATIONS

The natural length restrictions within a volume of this kind have often faced the authors and the editors with difficult choices as to which aspects should be included. However, the authors have also been confronted with another difficulty: the incontrovertible fact that the Turkic family as a whole is not yet sufficiently investigated and that much of the necessary detailed linguistic analysis has not yet been carried out.

Possible deficiencies of these kinds may, however, serve to highlight areas for potential future research to stimulate new investigations into the rich data offered by the Turkic languages. This family forms a rather homogeneous group, ideal for comparative and typological work and offering ample evidence for the reconstruction of its historical evolution.

DIVERSITY AND HARMONIZATION

The multiple authorship inevitably conditions a certain diversity according to the contributors’ differing perspectives and ranges of interest. The individual chapters differ somewhat from each other in the relative balance between the sections and in the selection of the topics in detail. There are obvious differences of emphasis and presentation.

The editors have allowed different perspectives to stand side by side. Many linguistic problems have necessarily been left unsolved. Some questions are of such a nature that they cannot get clear-cut and unanimous answers, e.g. the issue of the genealogical relationship. The book aims at documenting the results of current and previous work in a realistic way, reflecting the factual situation in linguistic Turcology.

In view of the handbook character, a certain harmonization or standardization has been necessary. The aim has been to employ, as far as possible, a unified terminology without all too idiosyncratic expressions used exclusively in Turcological writings.
Indications of further sources in English and other widely read languages are provided under References and further reading at the end of each chapter. These references have been kept to a minimum, but a number of titles relevant for most chapters have been listed in Chapter 6, ‘The History of Turkic’. For the present geographical location of the Turkic languages, we refer to Map 0.1.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors would like to acknowledge the cooperation of all individual contributors, thanking them most sincerely for their openness and readiness to accept the teamwork conditions of this enterprise. Our special thanks are due to Bernard Comrie, who originally suggested the publication of the first edition and scrutinized our proposal for it. The editors are extremely grateful to the editorial staff at Routledge for their highly positive attitude and wonderful patience during the preparation of this version of the book.

Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató
TRANSCRIPTION AND NOTATIONS

ACTANTS

The term ‘actant’ is used here to denote the potential properties of dependence-based participants, which can be morphologically realized as subjects, direct objects, and indirect objects. Dependency grammars often use the term ‘argument’ instead of actant.

A first actant can be unmarked, e.g. Turkish 〈Yazıyor〉 ‘X writes’ or realized as a nominative subject phrase, e.g. 〈Ali yazıyor〉. Turkish 〈Yazıyorum〉 ‘I write’ contains the personal suffix, which represents the first actant, without being the subject.

A second actant is found in Turkish 〈Mektubu yazıyor〉 ‘X writes the letter’, for which the accusative object case is realized.

A third actant is found in 〈Ali sana mektup yazıyor〉 ‘Ali writes letters to you’ and realized by the dative case, 〈sana〉 of the pronoun 〈sen〉 ‘you’.

NAME FORMS

Given the considerable and confusing variation in the practices of writing names of Turkic peoples and languages, the forms of those names have been unified, e.g. Kirghiz instead of Kyrgyz, Azeri instead of Azerbaijanian or Azerbaijani, and Yakut instead of Sakha. The English ending 〈-ic〉 is used when referring to a whole language family, e.g. Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic.

TRANSCRIPTION

For the citation of examples from modern Turkish the official orthography of the Republic of Turkey is used. For other Turkic languages, a variety of alphabets and orthographical conventions are applied. A transliteration of the Cyrillic, Arabic, and non-Turkish Latin scripts, which have recently been introduced for Azeri, Turkmen, Kazakh, and Uzbek and differ considerably from each other, would distort the phonetic shape and make comparison between the languages difficult. All examples from languages other than Turkish are therefore presented in a standardized Turcological notation basically identical to the traditional “Fundamenta transcription system” (see Deny et al. [1959] Philologiae turcicae fundamenta, Wiesbaden: Steiner, pp. xiv–xv). Some earlier variations and inconsistencies due to different opinions have been eliminated in this edition.

Descriptions of the phonological systems include remarks on the inventory of phonemes, that is, the sound types that can distinguish words in the given language. The transcription will in general not only represent phonemes but also major allophones. The transcription is relatively broad. Wherever necessary, finer phonetic details are given in the transcription of the International Phonetic Association (IPA).
Angle chevrons of the type ‹ › are used to represent official orthographies and other cited graphic forms, e.g. Turkish ‹ açık › ‘open’, Tatar ‹ юнь › ‘cheap’, Turkmen ‹ soň › ‘end’, Uzbek ‹ ot › ‘horse’. Standard Turkish examples are, as a rule, rendered in their relatively well-known orthography. Angle brackets of the type { } are used for glosses, e.g. at-lar {horse-pl} ‘horses’.

In our suffix notations, capital letters indicate morphophonemes, e.g. vowel alternants due to intersyllabic sound harmony variation and consonant alternants due to contact assimilation. The signs {C}, {V}, and {Ø} mean consonant, vowel, and zero.

The sign ° will be used for reconstructed lax vowels of undetermined qualities. Central vowels denoted by an over-dot, e.g., ü and ö for retracted ü and ö. In diphthongs, the weaker element can be marked with a raised letter, e.g. ĭa, iä, uo, and üö. Long vowels are not indicated by a macron but by the triangular colon sign :, e.g. aː. Semi-long vowels are signed with a half triangular colon, e.g. aˑ. Reduced vowels can be written with a diacritic breve, e.g. ă and ĕ.

VOWELS

Basic vowels

The basic vowel signs are the following:

• A front unrounded high vowel i
• A back unrounded vowel i [ɯ], in Turkish orthography i
• A front rounded high vowel ü
• A back rounded high vowel u
• A back rounded low vowel o
• A back unrounded low vowel a
• A labialized variant å
• An unrounded low front vowel ā
• An unrounded lower vowel ā
• An unrounded mid front vowel e

The morphophonemes are the following. The alternant number may be indicated by raised numerical symbols, e.g. {A²} and {A⁴}.

• {A} alternation of low vowels
  {A²} twofold alternation of low unrounded vowels, a, ā
  {A⁴} fourfold alternation of low unrounded and rounded vowels, a, ā, o, ö
• {I} alternation of high vowels
  {I²} twofold alternation of high unrounded vowels, i, į
  {I⁴} fourfold alternation of high unrounded and rounded vowels, i, į, ü, u
• {U} alternation of high rounded vowels, ü, u
• {O} alternation of rounded low vowels, o, ö

Examples: the Turkish dative suffix is {-(y)A}, e.g. araba-ya › ‘to a/the car’ vs. kardeş-e › ‘to a/the brother’. The Turkmen present suffix is {-(y)A:r} as in Gül-yäːr-ịn ‘I laugh’ vs. Al-yaːr-ị̈n ‘I take’. The alternation may also be three- or fourfold, comprising the rounded variants o and ö, e.g. the Turkmen plural suffix {+lAr} as in -lar, -ler, -lor, and -för.
Non-prime vowels

Turkic short non-prime or suffix vowels are near-high, lax, centralized vowels ị, ĭ, ụ̈, and ụ, formerly written 〈ē, ā, ō, ō〉.

The vowel is ĭ when the preceding syllable is front and its vowel unrounded (i, ā).
The vowel is ĭ when the preceding syllable is back and its vowel unrounded (i, a).
The vowel is ụ when the preceding syllable is front and its vowel rounded (u, o).
The vowel is ụ when the preceding syllable is front and its vowel rounded (u, ō).

The morphophonemes are the following:

• 〈{Ị}〉 alternation of near-high lax vowels
  〈{Ị}2〉 twofold alternation of near-high lax vowels, ĭ, ĭ
  〈{Ị}4〉 fourfold alternation of near-high lax vowels, ĭ, ĭ, ụ̈, ụ. Examples: Turkmen 〈-dIK〉 as in -dịk, -dï ̣ḳ, -dụ̈k, and -dụḳ. The third-person possessive suffix 〈+(s)İ(n)〉 is realized in Turkish 〈araba-sı〉 ‘his/her car’, 〈kardeş-i〉 ‘his/her brother’, 〈üzüntü-sü〉 ‘his/her worry’, and 〈kuş-u〉 ‘his/her bird’.

• 〈{Ụ}〉 alternation of near-high lax vowels, ụ, ụ̈

The sign 〈{°}〉 may stand for unidentified East Old Turkic lax vowels, e.g. the accusative suffix 〈-(°)G〉 as in at-°ɣ ‘horse’ vs. sü-g ‘army’.

CONSONANTS

The capital letter 〈C〉 stands for any consonant. One type of consonant alternation in suffixes depends on whether the last sound of the stem is voiced or voiceless. Members of consonant clusters often undergo progressive assimilation with respect to voice.

The capital letter 〈D〉 mostly denotes the alternation of voiced 〈d〉 and unvoiced 〈t〉, e.g. the Turkish locative suffix 〈+DA〉 as in 〈yol-da〉 ‘on a/the way’, but 〈süt-te〉 ‘in (the) milk’.

The capital letter 〈J̌ 〉 denotes the twofold alternation of voiced 〈ǰ〉 and unvoiced 〈č〉, e.g. the Turkish derivation suffix in 〈yol-cu〉 ‘traveler’ vs. 〈süt-çü〉 ‘milkman’.

The capital letter 〈G〉 can stand for fourfold suffix-initial alternations of the front vs. back and voiced vs. unvoiced consonants 〈g〉, 〈χ〉, 〈k〉, 〈ḳ〉, e.g. the Kazakh suffix 〈-GAn〉 or the Chaghatay dative suffix 〈-GA〉.

〈G〉 may signal a twofold alternation between 〈g〉 and 〈k〉, e.g. the Turkish deverbal derivative suffix 〈-GI〉 in 〈sev-gi〉 ‘affection’ vs. 〈çiğ-kı〉 ‘drink’.

The capital letter 〈K〉 indicates the twofold alternation of front and back dorsal stops 〈k〉 and 〈ḳ〉, e.g. Turkish 〈-mAK-tA〉 as in 〈gel-mek-te〉 ‘coming’ vs. 〈al-mak-ta〉 ‘taking’. 〈K〉 also stands for fourfold suffix-final alternations of front vs. back and voiced vs. unvoiced sounds, e.g. Noghay prospective 〈-(A)yAK〉 with the alternants 〈g, y, k, ḫ〉.

The Turkish alternation is represented orthographically by 〈ğ〉 and 〈k〉. Forms of the derivative suffix 〈+ỊK〉 are 〈çift-liğ-i〉 ‘his/her farm’ ← 〈çift-lık〉, 〈ay-liğ-i〉 ‘his/her monthly salary’ ← 〈ay-lık〉, of the prospective suffix 〈-(y)AJAK〉, e.g. 〈Yaz-acağ-im〉 ‘I will/shall write’ ← 〈yaz-acak〉.

The capital letter 〈L〉 indicates alternants such as 〈l, n, d, t〉. A plural suffix such as 〈+LAr〉 may thus maximally have the variants 〈-lar, -lär, -lor, -lör〉, 〈-nar, -när, -nor, -nör〉, 〈-dar, -där, -dör, -dör, -tar, -tär, -tor, and -tor.〉
In Chuvash suffixes, the capital letter {R} may stand for t and r. The locative suffix \{+RA\} includes the alternants -rA, -tA, the ablative suffix {+RAn} -rAn, -tAn, and the 1sg past {-R-İM} -rỊ̇-m, -t-Ị̇-m. In Kumyk, {R} stands for the alternation between r and loss of r, e.g. plural nominative -lär vs. dative plural -lä-gä.

Language-specific alternations will be discussed in the individual chapters.

IPA correspondences are given in square brackets []. Front g and k will, irrespective of their phonemic status, be written as g and k, whereas their back equivalents will be rendered as ğ and matter. The phonetic difference between a front l and a back l will normally not be marked. Palatalization is marked with an apostrophe, e.g. k’. Small capitals are used for lenis variants with reduced voice, e.g. Chuvash ābir ‘we’. Strong aspiration is indicated with a superscript h, e.g. ph. The acute accent sign marks high pitch accent, e.g. āt. The vertical stroke ‘indicates stress accent on the following syllable’.

**SUFFIX NOTATIONS**

Sections on morphophonology deal with ways in which the shape of an item can change in morphological forms. Suffixes have different phonologically predictable realizations depending on the phonotactic properties of stems. They may be cited in standardized morphophonemic forms that summarize the realizations.

**Parentheses**

Curly brackets of the type {} are used for morphophonemic formulas, e.g. \{C\} consonant, \{V\} vowel, \{A\} low vowels, \{İ\} high vowels, \{İI\} near-high lax vowels, \{U\} high rounded vowels, and \{Ụ\} near-high lax rounded vowels. They contain forms written in the Turcological notation, summarizing the possible realizations of bound morphemes. Deverbal suffixes are marked with a minus sign and other suffixes with a plus sign. Brackets of the type () concern segments that occur in certain environments and are lacking in others, depending on the stems to which they are attached.

Parentheses around an initial vowel of a suffix indicate that this vowel is dropped when the suffix is added to a vowel-final stem. The Turkish possessive suffix \{+(İ)İm\} has the form kardeş-im ‘my brother’; the vowel is realized only if the suffix follows a consonant, e.g. araba-m ‘my car’.

<table>
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<th>Table 0.1 Consonants</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Labial</strong></td>
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<td>Stop</td>
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Parentheses around the initial consonant of a suffix indicate that this consonant occurs only if the suffix is added to a vowel-final stem, e.g. the Turkish dative suffix \{+(y)A\} in \{araba-ya\} ‘to a/the car’, but \{kardeş-e\} ‘to a/the brother’.

Parentheses around a final consonant of a suffix indicate that this consonant occurs before case suffixes, e.g. Turkish \{(s)I(n)\} in \{ev-in-den\} ‘from his/her house’.

Parentheses around an initial zero sign (Ø) indicate that the final vowel of the stem drops when the suffix is added, e.g. the present stems in Chuvash \{(Ø)At\} and Turkish \{-Ø(l)yor\}, e.g. \{gel-iyor\} ← \{gel-\} ‘to come’, but \{bekl-iyor\} ← \{bekle-\} ‘to wait’.

Parentheses around a triangular colon (ː) in a suffix indicate that the addition of the suffix to a stem-final vowel yields length, e.g. Turkmen \{-A(ː)n\}, e.g. \{okoːn\} ‘having read’ ← \{oko-\} ‘to read’, but \{gel-en\} ‘having come’ ← \{gel-\} ‘to come’.

**Other signs**

A dash to the right of a word signifies a verbal stem, e.g. Turkish \{git-\} ‘to go’. In the morphophonemic formulas, a minus or a plus to the left signifies a verbal or a nominal suffix, e.g. \{-DỊ\} and \{+lỊ\}. Simple arrows are used for derivation; thus ← means ‘is derived from’ and → means ‘is derived as’. Double arrows are used for copying of foreign elements; thus ⇐ means ‘is copied from’, and ⇒ means ‘is copied as’. The sign < means ‘has developed from’, and > means ‘has developed into’. In diachronic contexts, the asterisk * is usable for unattested forms. In descriptive contexts, it is the sign for unacceptable forms. Square brackets [] are used for phonetic transcriptions and slashes // for phonemic representations. In translations, X is used as a shorthand for the 3sg personal pronouns ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’, ‘him’, and ‘her’.

Deverbal suffixes are marked with a minus sign, e.g. the Turkish 3sg voluntative suffix \{-sỊn\}. Suffixes normally followed by other morphemes may be cited as the passive suffix \{-lỊ\}. Other suffixes are marked with a plus sign, e.g. the Turkish locative marker \{+DA\}. 


ABBREVIATIONS IN GLOSSES

(A) converb marker of the vowel-final type
(ABL) ablative
(ACC) accusative
(ACC.DAT) accusative-dative
(AN) action nominal
(AOR) aorist
(B) converb marker of the labial-final type
(CAUS) causative
(COLL) collective
(COM) comitative, comitative-sociative
(COMP) comparative
(CONV) converb
(COOP) cooperative-reciprocal
(COP) copular
(DAT) dative
(DER) derivational marker
(DIR) directive
(GEN) genitive
(HYP) hypothetical
(H.INTRA) high focal intraterminal
(IMP) imperative
(INSTR) instrumental
(INT) intention
(INTRA) intraterminal
(IZ) izafet marker
(LIM) limitative
(L.INTRA) low focal intraterminal
(LOC) locative
(MULT) multiplicative
(NEC) necessitative
(NEG) negation
(OBJ) object
(PASS) passive
(PCOP) past copula
(PL) plural
(PN) participant nominal
(PT) partitive
(POSS) possessive
〈POST〉 postterminal
〈PRES〉 present
〈PRO〉 prospective (‘future’)  
〈PTCL〉 particle  
〈REC〉 reciprocal  
〈REFL〉 reflexive  
〈Q〉 question particle  
〈SG〉 singular  
〈TERM〉 terminal  
〈VN〉 verbal nominal  
〈VOL〉 voluntative-potential
CHAPTER 1

THE SPEAKERS OF TURKIC LANGUAGES

Hendrik Boeschoten

INTRODUCTION

As will become apparent from the following chapters in this book, it is not difficult to show that the languages spoken by the different Turkic peoples are genealogically related. The often spectacular differences between the subdivisions of the Indo-European language family are not echoed in the Turkic case. Cultural patterns among the Turkic peoples are submerged in larger wholes. There is no intra-Turkic unifying factor, apart from the shared linguistic background. Nevertheless, much of the formation of the modern languages took place in the context of Islamic civilization, which at the same time reinforced the common linguistic background of most of the tribes. The Islamic states eventually provided the basis for many of today’s nationalities, although these did not emerge until the eighteenth century, ultimately to be shaped by the Atatürkist revolution in the case of Turkey and by the socialist systems of the Soviet Union and China elsewhere.

Thus, the bulk of speakers of Turkic languages live in the old Islamic heartland, and in terms of numbers and economic importance, the other Turkic peoples can be viewed as peripheral. From the perspective of Turkic studies, however, these other peoples carry their own weight. In modern times, there are other poles of identification as well. Turkey has always been partly a European country and has had a strong Western orientation ever since the Republic of Turkey came into being.

The Turkic peoples in the former Soviet Union, on the other hand, formed part of the community of Soviet peoples for generations. In the 1990s, we witnessed a process of reorientation, with diverging and unsettled outcomes in the different republics, while Islamist ideology asserted itself to a certain extent even in Turkey. Note that allegiance to ideological and political systems at large is symbolized by choices of different alphabets for the literary languages; today the main choices are between a Latin, a Cyrillic, or an Arabic alphabet as the basis for writing systems. Some smaller languages are under the heavy pressure of dominant languages surrounding them, such as some of the languages in South Siberia and Yellow Uyghur in China. At least some languages, such as Karaim, spoken by a small group in Lithuania and Fuyū in China, are on the brink of extinction.

LITERARY LANGUAGES

Literary languages in general are relatively recent creations. Some written idioms emerged, or branched off as national varieties, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from earlier stages that developed in an Islamic context, e.g. modern Turkish
from Ottoman Turkish and Uzbek, Kazakh, Tatar, and Turkmen from Chaghatay. Other literary languages were created, first by Turcologists and missionaries and later by agencies in the Soviet Union. Soviet policies on nationalities have led to wholesale manipulation of language issues.

Among other things, the Karakalpak, closely related to the Kazakh, attained their own autonomous republic inside the borders of the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan – not Kazakhstan – and their own literary language. The Karachay and Balkar peoples, who share the same written language, were separated by placing the Karachay in an autonomous republic together with the Cherkessians and putting the Balkars in a separate autonomous republic together with another Caucasian people, the Kabardinians. At the same time, the differences between the dialects of these two groups were greatly amplified in two separate literary languages. Conversely, the dialects subsumed under the Uzbek literary language belong historically to three different branches of the Turkic language family.

DIVIDING FACTORS

At the same time, the cultural and political history of the regions concerned have developed in such a way that the old tribal entities have still retained some relevance in certain cases. This is notably true for the Oghuz peoples. Not only do the languages of these peoples form a clearly discernible, closely related block, but their cultural and political history has also linked them more closely right up to the modern age.

Two moments in history have been decisive in shaping the modern nations. First, the rise of Shīʿism as a state religion in Iran in the sixteenth century, and the ensuing hostility between the Shīʿite Oghuz tribes and the Ottoman state, have ultimately led to the modern situation in which the Azerbaijanians are wedged between the overwhelmingly Sunnī Turks of Turkey and the Turkmens. Turkish, Azerbaijanian, and Turkmen are three large Oghuz languages of today.

Later, Soviet isolationism rendered close cross-border contacts between Turkey and the Soviet republics impossible.

The other tribal denotation often used is that of Kipchak, a generic term for a variety of mainly Islamic peoples of the steppe belt in west-central Eurasia. The numerically and culturally most important peoples of Central Asia or Turkestan proper, e.g. the Uzbeks and Uyghurs, have for centuries been so ethnically mixed that they cannot be linked in any linguistically meaningful way to a specific larger tribal entity.

LANGUAGES AND ETHNIC GROUPS

Proceeding to the various Turkic-speaking peoples, the reader should keep in mind that, until recently, the larger groups lived in multiethnic empires, and that, in general, contact with other languages continues to be a characteristic of many Turkic languages, spread as they are over the vast area of Eurasia. While we will describe the whereabouts of the different peoples and provide their numbers of speakers, one should remember that there is no automatic match between ethnic groups and languages and that boundaries may be very ill-defined.

Relationships within Turkic may also be quite complex, but these are usually problems of a linguistic nature, which can be kept apart rather easily from problems of ethnic allegiance. Thus, all numbers listed are intended to give a fair indication of first-language speakers in all cases and are not to be taken as absolute truth. For Turkey, for instance, there are no statistics about the small refugee groups who speak Turkic languages other
than Turkish. Quite apart from the impossibility of verifying fully all sources, we simply do not know enough about the patterns of language shift to be encountered in different places.

**SPEAKERS IN TURKEY**

As a case in point, the most important single language is Turkish. To distinguish the modern language from earlier versions, i.e. Ottoman Turkish, and from the other Turkic languages, the term ‘Republican Turkish’ has been employed by some Turcologists, but this usage is unsatisfactory because there are now several Turkic republics and Turkish is also spoken outside Turkey. Turkish has been written since 1928 with a Latin alphabet that supplanted the Arabic alphabet used for Ottoman.

Turkish is spoken as a first language by approximately 70 million people. The total population of Turkey numbers 83 million, but an unknown number are not first-language speakers of Turkish but speak Turkish as a second language.

Kurds, speaking either Kurmanji or Zaza, are the most important linguistic minority, making up about 12 million of the total population. There is, however, no reliable information about patterns of language choice and language acquisition among the Kurds, nor among other linguistic groups or dialects.

Many other smaller ethnic groups, living all over Turkey, have preserved their own languages. These include Indo-European languages such as Greek, Judeo-Spanish, Armenian, and Serbo-Croat; Caucasian languages such as Cherkes, Georgian, and Laz; and the Semitic languages Arabic and Syriac but also some Turkic languages spoken by refugees from the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union and their descendants. The reader is referred to Andrews (1989) for details on the language situation in Turkey. No exact figures can be given on the numbers of speakers of any language in Turkey because no census figures are available. The same is true for Turkish emigrant communities, such as in Germany. Only in Australia has an effort been made to put the home languages on record.

The linguistic Turkification of Turkey is a process that has been going on since the times of the first principalities in the Middle Ages and has been sped up after World War I as a result of the republican language policy.

**TURKISH SPEAKERS OUTSIDE TURKEY**

Outside Turkey, Turkish is spoken in different areas of the Balkans. The language is under pressure for political reasons, notably in the Greek province of Western Thrace. In Kosovo, where a large group of Albanians adopted Turkish as their mother tongue in Ottoman times, the future of the language does not look bright at the present. In Macedonia, a country where Turkish used to have a strong position, today only 4% of the population speaks it according to the official figures.

The only country in the Balkans where the position of Turkish is still strong is Bulgaria. Official attitudes toward the language during the last decades have varied from very oppressive to tolerant. There must be about a million first-language speakers of Turkish in Bulgaria. The position of the language is strengthened by the fact that a large group of Muslim Roma also speak Turkish as their first language.

The Turks of Cyprus were settled there by the Ottoman government in the sixteenth century. The protection of their minority rights in the Republic of Cyprus proved to be a precarious matter, and the attempts to attain unification with Greece resulted in the 1970s in the breakaway Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, under the protection of Turkey.
A Turkish-speaking group, numbering today several hundred thousand persons, from the region in Georgia that borders on Turkey, the so-called Meshkheti (self-designation: Ahıskə), were deported to Central Asia in Stalinist times. They featured in the news early on in the break-up of the Soviet Union, when ethnic violence was directed against them. Nowadays, most Meshkhetian Turks live dispersed over different Turkic-speaking post-Soviet republics and Turkey, and they are not welcome back in Georgia. Their language is Turkish; they originally spoke an eastern Anatolian dialect. No figures are available on the measure in which they maintain their Turkish.

Finally, the migrant workers who went to western, central, and northern Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, their families, and their offspring form another large group of speakers of Turkish, a total of more than 3 million people. Various groups of these migrants turned immigrants live scattered over industrial cities in Germany, the Netherlands, and France, and in smaller numbers in Austria, Belgium, and the Scandinavian countries. Patterns of maintenance or loss of Turkish are varied, but it looks as if at least a considerable part of the immigrants will retain Turkish as their first language in the immediate future. Sizeable groups of recent Turkish migrants also live in Australia. Although the Turkish varieties in these different localities have quite different characteristics in some respects, they all share the same standard language, i.e. the standard variety of Turkey.

**GAGAUZ**

A different people, the Gagauz, speak a language intimately related to Turkish. This small group, numbering some 130,000 speakers in southern Moldova, about 32,000 speakers in southwestern Ukraine, about 14,000 in the Russian Federation, 1,000 in Kazakhstan, and a few speakers in northern Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, and Greece, adhere to the Orthodox faith and have their own history.

**AZERBAIJANIANS**

Another language that is closely related to Turkish is Azeri. As mentioned, Azeri and Ottoman Turkish have developed in more or less separate contexts during the last few centuries. A further split separated the two main bodies of the Azeri speakers, when some were included in the Russian empire, while the rest came to live in Iran. Intensive contact with Iranian languages, notably with Persian, over the centuries has been a major factor in shaping the language. About 10 million speakers of Azeris live in the Republic of Azerbaijan. This has been a major oil-producing country ever since the beginning of this century. Modernizing, i.e. secularist, tendencies have been much stronger there than in Iranian Azerbaijan. The literary language of Azerbaijan was standardized in Soviet times. A Latin alphabet similar to the one used for Turkish was introduced in 1992. The Azerbaijanians living in northern Iran, with Tabriz as their main city, number at least 16 million speakers and make up about one quarter of the population of Iran as a whole. It may be, however, that a large number of them are not actually first-language speakers of Azeri but of Persian. A sizable Azerbaijanian minority of more than 200,000 speakers lives in Georgia. The Azerbaijanian minority in Armenia of similar size has been obliterated by successive stages of ethnic cleansing by the Bolsheviks, Stalin, and in the Republic of Armenia.
TURKMENS

The main body of Turkmens live in the republic of Turkmenistan and number 4 million to 5 million people. Turkmens have retained at least a certain resemblance of tribal organization. The standard language is mainly based on the dialect of the Teke tribe. There is also a sizeable Turkmen population in northeastern Iran (Chapter 19). Turkmen herdsmen and villagers are also numerous in the region of Maimana in northwestern Afghanistan. The ethnonym Turkmen is also used for other groups, such as the Azeri-speaking minorities in Iraq and Syria, about 400,000 speakers, and to Turkish-speaking nomads in Anatolia.

FURTHER GROUPS IN THE SOUTH

Along the southern edge of the Turkic world we find, in the midst of a large sedentary population, groups of semi-nomads who have retained forms of tribal organization. There is a Turkish- or rather Azeri-speaking part of the population of northern Iraq that is sometimes called ‘Turkmen’, similar to the Yürük tribes in the Balkans and in Anatolia. Oghuz peoples of Iran include the important and large confederation of the Kashkay (Qašqā’i), numbering up to 1 million, who until quite recently were semi-nomads in the provinces of Fars and Khuzistan and have an identity quite separate from the Azerbaijanians. Besides the Kashkay, there are the Aynallu and, in Afghanistan, the Afshar, who also speak an Oghuz language.

In northeastern Iran, we find Khorasan Turks, numbering an estimated group of at least 900,000, who are not Turkmens but form a separate entity, linguistically and in their own conception. A very different group is the small Khalaj population in central Iran. Khalaj is spoken by an estimated group of 30,000 people who live in isolated villages, lacking clear cohesion.

For a more detailed account of Turkic languages in Iran, see Chapter 19.

THE CAUCASUS AREA

In the central and northern Caucasus, several small Kipchak nations live amongst their Caucasian neighbors. The Kumyk language is spoken by approximately 300,000 people in the northeastern area of the Caucasus. The Karachay and Balkar (Malqar, Bolqar) peoples appear in historical sources at approximately the same period in the seventeenth century. The ethnonym Balkar has erroneously been associated with the name of the Bulghars in the Kuban region. Tradition has it that the ancestors of the Karachay and Balkar peoples lived on the northern slopes of the Caucasus and the plain beyond them and moved into the mountains as late as the Mongol period. They were strongly influenced by the Alans until the eleventh century.

The number of Karachays inhabiting the triangle formed by the Taberda and Kuban Rivers as well as the high Caucasus can be estimated at almost 70,000. The Balkars live to the south and southeast of them and may number as many as 40,000. In 1944, both peoples were deported to Siberia, and it was only after 1957 that they were permitted to return to their homeland in the Caucasian region. Small groups of Karachays live in Turkey, where they show a strong desire to preserve their language – in contrast to other Turkic groups, who are usually quickly Turkicized.
NOGHAY GROUPS

A tribal confederation of Kipchak and Kipchakicized Mongol clans called Noghay first became known in the fifteenth century and have played an important role in the history of the steppe ever since. The Noghay identity has remained tribal and has not led to national consciousness. The remnants of the Noghay, numbering a group of 77,000 speakers, live in three different areas. The Black Noghay in Daghestan are under strong Kumyk influence. The White Noghay in the Karachay-Cherkessian republic and in Chechenia are under Cherkessian influence. A third Noghay group lives in the region of Stavropol, north of the Caucasus. Other Noghay scattered groupings have been absorbed by various Tatar ethnic units in the Black Sea area and in Turkey.

TATARS AND BASHKIRS

The ethnonym Tatar is problematic in itself. Today, several Turkic groups are called Tatar. Originally, it was probably a Mongolian tribal name, but after Chingis Khan, the term became increasingly associated with the, at least numerically, increasingly dominant Kipchak Turkic element in the armies of his successors. This is notably true for the Russian usage of the term; the Russians tended to call all Turkic peoples in their empire Tatar. Kazan was firmly established as the capital of the Tatars during the last century. The Russians cooperated with the local intellectual elite in a program of modernization of the Islamic peoples within the empire. In fact, the important nations of the Kazakhs and Kirghiz were only effectively Islamicized by missionary work directed from Kazan during the nineteenth century. New ideas coming from Kazan were highly influential in Central Asia. At the same time, exchange of ideas with the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Tatars never ceased.

In the Soviet Union, the Tatars from the Volga region attained their own autonomous republic, though not a separate Soviet republic. Today, the Tatars in that region, who make up about half the population of Tatarstan, are trying to establish greater autonomy. They constitute 2 million speakers, and 1 million Volga Tatars live in the neighboring republic of Bashkiria. Ethnically, the modern Tatars are a mixture of Turkic, Mongolic, and other elements. The Mishar Tatars are a distinct group with a strong Finno-Ugric element. In the center of the Tatar territory, we find the main body of the Tatars, often called Kazan Tatars. Theirs is a flourishing literary language. Farther east, we find scattered groups of Tatars in western Siberia, along the Tara, Tobol, Ishim, and Irtysh rivers, and in the Baraba steppe, as well as in the region of Tomsk. These groups number an estimated group of 200,000 speakers. Another Tatar people are the Crimean Tatars.

The Bashkirs, who live farther to the north on the southern slopes of the Urals, are often presented as a people group that is hardly distinguishable from the Tatars, and it is believed that the Russians more or less artificially divided the Tatars and Bashkirs, who attained their own autonomous republic with Ufa, the former Orenburg, as its capital. However, although the Bashkirs have over the centuries been under strong Tatar cultural influence, they have a strong sense of their own ethnic identity. The Bashkirs form a minority in their own republic, about one quarter of the population (1.2 million speakers).

CHUVASH

Another Turkic people in the Volga area are the Chuvash, who, like the Tatars, regard themselves as descendants of the Volga Bulghars in the historical and cultural sense. It is
clear that Chuvash belongs to the Oghur branch of Turkic, as the language of the Volga Bulghars did, but no direct evidence for diachronic development between the two has been established. As there were several distinct Oghur languages in the Middle Ages, Volga Bulghar could represent one of these and Chuvash another.

The Russian Orthodox Chuvash have quite a different history from that of their neighbors, the Tatars. But they have nevertheless been in close cultural contact with the Tatars, as is clear from linguistic evidence. About half of the Chuvash live in the Chuvash Republic, the capital of which is Cheboksary, Šupaškar in Chuvash, in the southwest corner of the great bend in the Volga river. According to the 2010 census, 1.4 million Chuvash lived in the Russian Federation. About half of the Chuvash live in the Chuvash Republic, where they form the majority of its population. However, slightly more than half live outside the republic, mostly in the southern districts of the Tatar Republic, the central and western districts of the Bashkir Republic, and the Samar and Ulyanovsk oblasts. Eleven thousand Chuvash live in the Ukraine, and 22,000 live in Kazakhstan.

KARAIMS

The Karaims are a small Kipchak people, whose most important and still inhabited settlement is in the Lithuanian town of Trakai, Polish Troki. Their settlement in the Ukrainian town of Halič in Galicia is today practically abandoned. The Crimean peninsula originally was their center, but the remaining Crimean Karaims do not speak Karaim any more. The term ‘Karaim’ refers to both a people and to followers of a religious system. Karaims are believers in the Old Testament but consider themselves to be of Turkic ethnic origin. They have traditionally used the Hebrew alphabet for writing their language. Hebrew has also been used for ceremonial purposes. Their national identity includes a possible connection with the Khazars and the Khazar Khanate, whose ruling house converted to Judaism around the year 800. The Karaim language is on the brink of extinction, as only the oldest generation still speaks it. The Lithuanian Karaim community, including about 200 members, is making efforts to revitalize the language. Today, there are only 20–30 speakers of the Northwest dialect and only a couple of isolated speakers of the Southwest dialect. A few Karaims still having some knowledge of the language live in Poland.

CRIMEAN TATARS

As their name indicates, the Crimean Tatars lived in the Crimea until World War II, before the entire nation was deported to Central Asia. Today, the Crimean Tatars number about half a million speakers. Almost half of them have managed to return to the Crimea, but their situation is made difficult by the annexation of the Crimea by Russia in 2014. An estimated group of 150,000 Crimean Tatars still live in rural areas of Uzbekistan and about 100,000 in Turkey. Both groups seem to be undergoing a process of language loss. Crimean language use, as reported from the time before the exile, shows complex patterns of interaction between varieties that had been influenced to different degrees by Ottoman Turkish.

UZBEKS

If we turn our attention to Central Asia, a large part of Transoxania, beyond the river Oxus, i.e. Amu Darya, is covered by the Republic of Uzbekistan, where most of the
Uzbeks live. First-language speakers of Uzbek number a total of about 30 million. That means more than 80% of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan (27 million), smaller groups in adjacent areas of Northern Afghanistan (3.8 million) – a substantial number staying in Pakistan as refugees – Tajikistan (900,000), Kirghizstan (1 million), Kazakhstan (500,000), Turkmenistan (500,000), and Xinjiang, a small group of 11,000.

As contact with other languages has been, and still is, significant for several features of modern Uzbek, it is important to mention the other major language groups in Uzbekistan: out of the total 30 million of its inhabitants, at least 5% speak Tajik, a northern Iranian language, mainly in the oases of Bukhara and Samarkand, and in the Ferghana valley to the east, 2% speak Russian, mainly in the capital Tashkent. The Turkic languages represented are from the Kipchak family: 3% Karakalpak, mainly in the Karakalpak autonomous region, 3% Kazakh, and 0.5% Crimean Tatar.

The language situation of Uzbek is complex for several reasons. In the first place, the language has inherited the mixed character of its predecessor as a literary language, Chaghatai. This is not just a linguistic matter: The complex ethnic make-up of the Uzbek nation is reflected in a much broader way.

The ethnonym Uzbek derives from the Kipchak Uzbeks, who were actually the latest group to arrive in Central Asia but who have been dominant politically ever since. The original Turkic population, that spoke a different brand of Turkic associated with the Karluk and Chighil tribes, actually sustained closer ties with the Iranian speaking Tajiks, both in the cities and in rural areas, well into this century. Nevertheless, their brand of Turkic has made the largest contribution to the structure of standard Uzbek. A third linguistic group are the so-called Oghuz Uzbeks, who live in Khwarezm and in adjacent areas in Karakalpakistan and Turkmenistan. All these varieties function in relationship to one literary language, modern standard Uzbek.

The economy of Uzbekistan in the Soviet era was based on the production of cotton. The republic has inherited severe problems connected with the monoculture of this crop: Problems with the management of water – the huge Lake Aral has almost completely dried up – and health problems in rural areas caused by the widespread use of insecticides.

UYGHURS AND OTHER GROUPS IN CHINA

The number of persons who use Uyghur as their first language is estimated at 10 million. The vast majority live in the oases of the Chinese-administered Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, where their former ethnic and linguistic dominance is now being challenged as a result of large-scale immigration of non-Turkic people from eastern China. In reaction to this, there is among the Uyghur a tendency to emphasize their social and cultural identity, which finds its expression, among other things, in their preference for the Arabic alphabet. Sizeable Uyghur groups are also found in Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, and Uzbekistan. The Uyghurs, historically, culturally, and linguistically, are closely related to the Uzbeks.

A very different group are the Yellow Uyghur, or Yughur, in the Hexi corridor of China’s Gansu province. This small group of approximately 14,000 people, who are traditionally Buddhist in faith, are almost equally divided into speakers of Turkic, Mongolic, and Chinese. Turkic Yellow Uyghur is spoken in the western part of this region.

Most of the Salar, numbering approximately 130,000 speakers, are Muslim and inhabit farming communities along the Yellow River, in the Xunhua Autonomous County and in the Hualong Hui Autonomous County in Gansu. Smaller Salar-speaking enclaves
are found in Xinjiang, approximately 3,700. For more details about the Turkic groups in China, see Chapter 26 and 27.

KAZAKHS AND KARAKALPAKS

The northwestern part of Uzbekistan, to the east of the Amu Darya, and to the south of Lake Aral, is formed by Karakalpakstan, formerly an autonomous Soviet republic, nowadays an area with a special status within the Uzbek republic. This region is more than 30% inhabited by Karakalpaks, who are, as has been mentioned, closely related to the Kazakhs.

The main body of the Kazakhs live in the vast territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the steppe belt between the Caspian Sea and the Altay area, with a higher degree of density in the southern parts. The Kazakhs make up roughly half the population of the republic. In the northern and northeastern parts of the country, we find Russian and Ukrainian settlers as well as so-called Volga Germans and other groups who were exiled there in Stalin’s time. The Kazakhs were Islamicized relatively late, something that was mainly achieved by Tatar missionary work during the last century. Of the large Turkic peoples, the Kazakh, together with the Turkmen, have retained longest the traditional socioeconomic way of life as nomadic herdsmen.

Considerable Kazakh minorities can be found in the northern regions of the Chinese province of Xinjiang, in the Russian Federation and in Uzbekistan. Smaller minorities live in western Mongolia and Turkmenistan. Since the independence of Kazakhstan in 1991, a trend can be noticed of Kazakhs leaving their diaspora countries, especially Mongolia, to settle in Kazakhstan, where they take the places left behind by Russians and Germans leaving the republic. Although the demographic situation in Kazakhstan seems to imply otherwise, there are reports about a rapid process of shift to Russian among the Kazakhs. This means that in spite of the changes in the population structure in favor of the Kazakhs, the process of regression of the Kazakh language has not yet come to an end.

KIRGHIZ

About 4.5 million of the approximately 5 million Kirghiz live in the independent Republics of Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Almost 200,000 Kirghiz live in the Autonomous District of Qizilsu in the far west of the Chinese Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. A small group called Fuyu “Kirghiz”, who were deported to Manchuria in the seventeenth century, managed to retain their Turkic language well into this century. Their language seems to originate from South Siberia, and their ethnic ties with the Kirghiz are unclear. Another small but nevertheless famous Kirghiz community from the Pamir mountains in Northern Afghanistan fled to Pakistan and eventually settled in the Van area of Turkey.

PEOPLES OF SOUTH SIBERIA

Several small Turkic-speaking groups live in the Altay Mountains and neighboring parts of South Siberia.

The Altay Turks (74,000 speakers), formerly called Oyrot, live in the Altay Mountains. Their southern tribes are pastoral nomads and show close connections with the
Kazakhs and Kirghiz. The northern ones are basically forest hunters and have, like most other tribes in South Siberia, a different ethnic composition.

In the Novokuznetsk region and the southern region of the Krasnoyarsk district, we find Turkic groups that, until recently, have absorbed Yeniseyic, Samoyedic, and other elements. The ethnonym Khakas, with 65,000 speakers, also the name of one of the two literary languages in the area, was adopted by the local intelligentsia after 1917. The other language, Shor, is presently one of the endangered Turkic tongues, with about 10,000 estimated speakers.

Small groups of the so-called Chulym Turks have lived long on the Chulym River, but their language and culture now seem to be extinct.

The Tuvans mainly live on the slopes of the Sayan Mountains but also in the Altay Mountains and northern Xinjiang. At least those living in the Autonomous Republic of Tannu-Tuva are of Buddhist belief with a strong Shamanist substratum. Most of them are sedentary cattle breeders. According to the 2010 census, the Tuvans number 260,000 speakers in their republic and 25,000 in the rest of the Russian Federation. They number about 4,000 in Xinjiang, and an estimated 5,000 live in Mongolia. Their closest relatives are the Tofans, previously called Karagas, living on the northeastern slopes of the Sayan Mountains, and the small group of the Tojans north of them. The smaller groups in the region number a few thousand speakers.

**YAKUTS AND DOLGANS**

The Yakuts, self-denominated as Sakha, are the Turkic nation that lives farthest to the east; they comprise about 480,000 persons, mainly in Yakutia, north Siberia. The capital is Yakutsk on the Lena. Some groups of Yakuts live in other territories, e.g. in South Taymyr, Sakhalin, on the Amur.

The earliest history of the Yakut people is little known. It seems clear that they did not leave their southern homeland — after which they lost contact with the other Turkic tribes — before the thirteenth century. Most scholars consider the fifteenth or sixteenth century as the period of the Yakut migration northward.

It is beyond question that the modern Yakut people consist of diverse ethnic elements. In the sixteenth century, the ancestors of the Yakuts came to their new homeland, where they met other ethnic groups. The most important of these for the further development of the Yakut people and language were Tungusic tribes. The other main substrate group was probably formed by Yeniseyic tribes.

Two facts made the Yakuts superior to all ethnic groups they encountered in Siberia: cattle and horse breeding and production of iron. Even the Russian conquest in the seventeenth century did not change the ethnic hierarchy on the Lena. It was only in the 1920s that the Russians began to dominate in the region. The small group of the Dolgans, whose language is close to Yakut, comprises about 8,000 speakers.

**UNITY AND DIVERSITY**

This short overview should have convinced the reader that the Turkic peoples are spread out over a vast territory in greatly varying surroundings. They follow different religions and are in very different stages of economic development and degrees of urbanization. The peoples in their vicinity that dominate them culturally, or are dominated by them, vary enormously from place to place.
This being the case, surprisingly naive ideas about the unity of the Turkic peoples are still entertained. In Turkish newspapers, one can often read articles about the ‘165 million people all over Eurasia who speak Turkish’. In a sense, these are echoes of the ideology of Pan-Turkism, an imitation of and reaction to the ideology of Pan-Slavism. Indeed, in the Russian Empire and later in the Soviet Union the ‘Center’ was always very concerned about the threat posed by the mass of Muslim subjects living in the southern belt of the empire, and in the context of Russia/the Soviet Union, ‘Muslim’ naturally was practically synonymous with (Muslim) Turkic. The prospect of unifying the Turkic speakers in one empire has had a superficial attraction for some Turkish and Tatar intellectuals but has never been popular among the peoples concerned.

It seems natural that old regional and super-regional patterns of cultural and economic contact will establish themselves with frontiers that are so much more open than before. Ever since the establishment of the independent Turkic-speaking republics, Turkey has been actively trying to establish cultural and economic links with them. The European parts and Kazakhstan naturally look more to the west for cooperation, and the eastern parts have close contacts with the Asian industrial nations. Republics such as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kirghizistan are more isolated. Naturally, the influence of China in Central Asia is massive and increasing.

One field in which the Turkic peoples can and should be studied as a whole quite obviously is linguistics, and the present work is an attempt to strengthen further this line of research. There are, however, other elements of a common cultural heritage shared by the Turkic peoples, the layers of which can notably be found in oral literature and certain traditions shared by peoples geographically far apart. The newly regained freedom of so many Turkic peoples has brought them to the attention of a broader public in the west. It is hoped that the present book, even if it concerns a more or less specialist field, might offer a contribution to help remove the still prevailing ignorance concerning the Turkic-speaking world.

The exact number of Turkic speaking people living around the world is difficult to estimate. Reliable information on the size of Turkic speaking groups is not always available. An additional problem is that the number of persons belonging to an ethnic group and the number of speakers are usually not distinguished.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING


CHAPTER 2

THE TURKIC PEOPLES

A historical sketch

Peter B. Golden

ORIGINS AND EARLY NOTICES

The modern Turkic peoples descend from an ancient grouping of tribes who, through conquest, interaction, and assimilation, extended its language and elements of its culture across Eurasia. Their origins and earliest history can be reconstructed only with difficulty.

Turkic belongs to the Altaic language family. The nature of this relationship, whether genetic or the result of long-standing interaction, is much debated. Recent research posits an Altaic community, whatever its origins, located in contiguous regions of Manchuria, Mongolia, and southern Siberia around 4000–3000 BC. Ancient Turkic emerged from it around 3000–500 BC. On the basis of ancient borrowings from Uralic and Indo-European, it would appear that the Turkic-speaking grouping was the westernmost of the Altaic family. The location of this earliest Turkic ‘original habitat’ is unclear. Since Indo-Europeans appear to have pioneered the development of equestrian-based pastoral nomadism in the fourth to third millennia BC, the ancestors of the earliest Turkic peoples must have inhabited regions where this technology could be transferred to them, i.e. the forest-steppe zone that ringed the Eurasian plains from the north. This original habitat has been identified with southern Siberia, from the Yenisey to the Pacific, in particular the Altay region or Trans-Baikalia, or with less certitude with the trans-Caspian zone. In the course of the first millennium before Christ, the bearers of Proto-Turkic spread over hitherto predominantly Indo-European (Iranian) central and inner Mongolia. It was in the steppe that this equestrian, pastoral, nomadic culture matured, most probably in further contact with Indo-European pastoral nomads.

Nomadism was one of the determining forces in Turkic history. Evolving out of animal husbandry specializations adapted to ecological niches that were marginal to settled society, Eurasian nomadism required interaction with the sedentary world. Given their mobility, easily translated into military advantage, the nomads raided or traded with agrarian-urban society, depending on which of these strategies brought the greater reward and least risk. Eurasian nomadic political structures were equally fluid, moving from loosely held tribal unions to conquest states as opportunities and outside stimuli presented themselves. Egalitarian in principle, nomads did not willingly submit to strong central authority and a state structure. Statelessness or loosely organized confederations of clans and tribes were their default sociopolitical organizations. Charismatic warlords and dynamic conquerors were occasionally able to impose state or state-like institutions.
on them. More often, however, nomads, having conquered already existing states, were adapted to them, not without a struggle, and in time largely sedentarized. Nomads did not necessarily seek to conquer sedentary society; rather, they sought regular access to its goods and products.

The ancestors of the Turkic-speaking peoples were, undoubtedly, part of the Hsiung-nu/Asian Hunnic union that began to trouble the borders of China in the third century BC. The ethno-linguistic affiliations of the Hsiung-nu per se – Iranian, Palaeosiberian (Yenesec), and Altaic – remain unclear. The Hsiung-nu polity, like many other Inner Asian confederations formed through tribal super-stratification, was polyethnic and polyglot. When it began to break up after suffering several serious defeats at the hands of Han China and its steppe allies in the first and second centuries AD, elements drifted toward western Eurasia, tacking on new ethnic groupings as they moved. These became the Hyôn/Xiyon of the Iranian borderlands and the Huns who, after crossing the Volga around 370 AD, proved to be disquieting neighbors of the Roman empire.

The Hsiung-nu were organized as an imperial confederacy that presented itself as a centralized state in its dealings with the outer world while remaining more loosely structured internally. Their supreme leader was the Shan-yü, perhaps rendering tårgan, jabyu/yabyu, or daruya, a heavenly mandated ruler, whose power and authority in the political, judicial, and spiritual spheres was much like that of the kaghans and khans of later Turko-Mongolian states. The overall structure of this state with its ruling charismatic clan, division into left and right wings, decimal military structure, the Täŋri ‘sky-god’ cult and imperial ideology of heavenly mandated rule, established patterns that thereafter would be followed by virtually all the Eurasian Turkic states and advanced tribal unions.

Hsiung-nu military activities touched off major migrations, such as that of the Indo-European Yüeh-chih around 176–174 BC, of Inner Asian peoples to central and western Eurasia, and undoubtedly brought about dislocations and movements among the Turkic peoples as well. Hsiung-nu dominance was followed by that of the Hsien-pi (Särbi-Mongolic) confederations, one of which, the Tabyač, Chinese T’o-pa, the founders of the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534 AD), gained control over much of northern China. Although Turkic elements were present in some of these statelets, they were not politically predominant. When the Türk people are first clearly identified in our sources, in the sixth century AD, it is within the context of relations between Tabyač China and another possibly Hsien-pi state, the Jou-jan/Avar kaghanate in Mongolia. Jou-jan/Avar ethno-linguistic affiliations remain contested. It is interesting to note, however, that the first clearly attested Turkic peoples appear before this in the western Eurasian steppes.

The European Huns, whose relationship, ethnically and linguistically, to the Asian Hsiung-nu remains problematic, arrived at the Volga ca. 350 AD, driving before them Turkic and other groupings into the Ponto-Caspian steppes. Iranian, Germanic, and other ethnic elements were added to their union. After a terrifying raid, in 395 AD, into the Sasanid and Roman empires via the Caucasus, they settled into the familiar pattern of raiding and mercenary soldiering for the two empires, exploiting their mutual enmity and domestic weaknesses. This, again, was a pattern that would be typical of the Turkic nomads who, from this point onward, replaced the Iranian tribes (Scythian, Sarmatian, Alanic) as the predominant political element in the western Eurasian steppes. It was under Attila that Hunnic raiding, based in Pannonia, began to pose a serious problem for Rome. Defeated in Gaul in 451 AD and repulsed in Italy the next year, Attila died in 453. His state immediately crumbled in the wake of rebellions by subject tribes. The Huns now faded into the background, becoming part of the various Turkic tribal unions that
were entering the steppe. The Oghur Turkic peoples (*Šarayur, Oyur, Onoyur), who had formed distinct units in the territory of today’s Kazakhstan and speaking a form of West Old Turkic that already displayed a number of important divergences from Common Turkic, e.g. the r-z and j-š shifts, appeared in the Ponto-Caspian steppes around 463 AD. They had been driven thither by the Sabirs (Hsien-pi, *Särbi), by this time a Turkic-speaking people of undetermined type, and ultimately by pressures emanating from the Avar/Joujan empire. These Oghur tribes appear to have belonged to a larger confederacy called in the Chinese sources the Ting-ling, later the T’ieh-lé, which included many of the Turkic peoples that subsequently formed part of the Türk kaghanate. In the following decades, the western Eurasian steppes appear to have been populated by a bewildering array of tribes, Kutrigurs, Utigurs, and others. Some established alliances or ententes with the Byzantine Empire, while others engaged in predatory raids into imperial territories, or did both. Constantinople responded with diplomacy, attempting to convert to Orthodox Christianity those Huns that were closest to imperial territories and seeking to foster intertribal rivalries elsewhere.

The Bulghar tribal union, first noted as an ally of Byzantium in 480 AD, was a fusion of Turkic Oghur, especially Onoghur, and Hunnic elements organized under a ruling house that claimed descent from the Attilids. By 515 AD, the Sabirs were in the Volga steppe zone and had established relations with both the Byzantine and Sasanid empires and occasionally raided Transcaucasia and Anatolia. The Ponto-Caspian nomads were overrun in the late 550s by the Avars, derived, it seems, from elements of the fugitive Jou-jan or Hephthalites, based on older War/Uar (Hsien-pi) and Hunnic groupings, who came westward after their overthrow by the Turks in 552 and 557 AD, respectively. The Turks soon arrived, driving the European Avars and some of their subject tribes into Pannonia. It is at this point that the various strands of Turkic history clearly come together in the form of the first Türk kaghanate.

THE TÜRK KAGHANATE

In 552 AD, Bumïn of the A-shih-na, leader of the Türk confederation, toppled the Jou-jan kaghanate in Mongolia and proclaimed himself Ilig Kayan, i.e. ‘polity-/realm-possessing emperor’, in Soghdian bg βwmyŋ g’g’n ‘Lord Bumïn Kaghan’. The origins and history of this tribe or tribal union before this signal event are little known. Attempts to identify them with graphically similar ethnonyms in ancient Greek and Semitic sources are highly speculative. The ethnonym, which has yet to be etymologized successfully, appears in a variety of sources: Chinese T’u-chüe = *Türküt, perhaps taken from Soghdian twrk (Türk), twrkt, twrkwt (Türkit, Türküt), Tibetan dru-gu, Khotanese tturkä, tturka, tturki (Türk), Greek Toöρκος (Tourkos), Arabic Turk, plural Atrāk. Róna-Tas, building on older theories, has suggested that Türk, which often appears in a hendiadys ärk türk (‘power/strength’ + ‘period of prime of one’s power’) was an epitheton ornans of the ruling clan which meant “strength and authority reached by somebody when he is at biological maturity” and thence “the mighty, those who have the authority, the strength”. Subsequently, Róna-Tas compared it with Khotanese Saka tturakä ‘lid’, noting Chinese accounts, which report that T’u-chüe meant ‘helmet’ in the language of the Türks. The fact that a number of the personal names of the early Türk kaghans appear not to be Turkic, e.g. Bumïn, Ištämi/Iståmi, Mukan, and Taspar/Tatpar, may point to the non-Turkic origins of the A-shih-na. This latter name, for example, Beckwith has compared with Ἀρσίλας (Arsilas) (*Aršila) of Menander, which he associates with the Tokharian title Arsilāci. More probable is a
derivation from Khotanese Saka ʻāṣṣeina/āššena ‘blue’ (cf. Kök Türk) recently put forward by Kliasshtornyj (1994). Whether the A-shih-na were originally Turkic speakers, employing or known by an East Iranian ethnonym, or subsequently became so in a Turkic milieu is unknown. Intimate ties with the Indo-European Iranians and Tokharians of Eastern Turkistan are attested by a wide variety of borrowings from very early periods. Tokharian titles and ideological formulations, e.g. Old Turkic täŋri täːg täŋridä bolmiš ‘heaven-like, heaven-conceived’, referring to the ruler, also had a clear influence on Türk usage.

The varying ethnogenetic legends reported in the Chinese sources associate the Türks with ‘mixed Hu’, a fluid term denoting northern nomads, Hsiung-nu and by the sixth century Central Asian Iranians, or with an ‘independent branch’ of the Hsiung-nu and hint at migrations that had moved them to the Kansu region, ca. 265 AD, as a consequence of buffettings in the fractured Hsiung-nu union. From there, local turbulence ca. 460 AD brought them to the Kao-ch’ang region under Jou-jan control and thence to the southern Altay, where they became the blacksmiths of the Jou-jan. With the establishment of their kaghanate, Turkic now became the predominant linguistic element in Mongolia and the steppelands around and in what is now Turkistan and extending into the Pontic zone, supplanting hitherto dominant Indo-European, around 1000 BC and 500 AD.

Having destroyed their erstwhile overlords, the Türks, from their holy ground and capital on the Orkhon, set about establishing their hegemony over the Silk Route. Under the yabgu kagan Istämi (552–575/576 AD), the brother of Bumïn, central and western Eurasia were conquered, extending Türk dominion to the borders of the Sasanid sphere of influence in Transcaucasia and the Byzantine territories in the Crimea. Diplomatic and commercial relations with these imperial neighbors were established. Meanwhile, Bumïn’s son Mukan (Chinese Mu-han, reigned 553–572 AD) “subjugated all the states beyond the border of China”. These conquests brought the Soghdians, whose commercial diasporan colonies could be found along the Silk Route, into the Türk state where they played an important role as both merchants and functionaries in the administrative apparatus. This joining of Turkic warrior and Iranian bureaucrat became a common feature of many subsequent Turkic states. The nomad-based empires, controlling and exploiting important trade routes, had great need of specialists from the sedentary world. The kaghanate was organized as a type of dual kingship, common to many Turkic polities, with the supreme rulership residing in the eastern half. The ruler was viewed as a sacral figure who ruled by heavenly mandate and by the possession of heavenly good fortune (kut). In theory, his blood could not be shed.

The Western kaghanate, led by the yabghu kaghan, would, in time, seek to assert its independence. The Türk state, and many subsequent Turkic polities, adhered to certain notions of the collective sovereignty of the ruling clan over the empire. In principle, any male of the ruling, charismatic clan capable of enforcing his claim to power could rule. Although clear lines of succession were enunciated as the ideal, ‘bloody tanistry’ was frequently the result. This rough school of politics often produced very able rulers, but it just as often led to instability, the manifestations of which were felt well into the Ottoman era.

The pro-Buddhist Taspar/Tatpar (reigned 572–581 AD) was the last ruler of a united empire. Caught up in continuing internecine strife within the extended ruling clan, the Eastern kaghanate (630 AD) fell to the T’ang dynasty (618–906 AD) of China. The Western kaghanate, which had fissured into two competing power blocs, the Tu-lu and Nu-shih-pi of the Chinese sources, termed the On Oḵ ‘Ten Arrows’ confederation, was
brought under Chinese control by 659 AD. By this time, the Türk-ruled Khazar kaghanate and the Bulghar confederation in western Eurasia had struck out on their own. Conflict between the two led to the defeat of the Bulghar union and the migration of elements of their confederation to Danubian Europe and the Balkans. Here, in 679 AD, the Balkan Bulghar state took shape. The Khazars, thus, were the successor state of the western Turks in the Ponto-Caspian steppes.

The eastern kaghanate was revived through the heroic efforts of a scion of the A-shih-na, Kutluɣ, throne-name Eːlteːriš (reigned 682–691 AD). These and the deeds of his immediate successors were recorded in the Orkhon inscriptions. His brother Kapayán (691–716 AD) is said to have “made the poor rich and the few many”. The second Türk kaghanate, however, was constantly at war with its recalcitrant subjects. In 741 AD, a revolt of subject peoples toppled the dynasty and briefly brought the Bas mêl to power in 742 supported by the Uyghurs (uyɣur) and Karluks (ḳarluḳ). In 744, the Uyghurs seized supreme power in the eastern kaghanate, driving their erstwhile allies, the Karluks, westward into central Eurasia and ushered in a new age of closer, less inimical ties with China. The Uyghurs also fell heir to the culture of the Türks. This included the runiform alphabet used in the Orkhon inscriptions as well as a cursive script. Both were derived from the Soghdian alphabet system, although this is less clear with the runiform script, ultimately going back to Eastern Aramaic/Syriac script systems. The Uyghur alphabet was later adopted by the Mongols and through them by the Manchus. The spread of writing systems was intimately intertwined with the movement of religions. Here again, the Soghdians and to a lesser extent the Tokharians played a major role. Thus, in addition to indigenous shamanism, the Täŋri ‘heaven-god’, ‘sky-god’ and other cults, Mazdaist, Buddhist, and foreign religious influences may be discerned.

The Western kaghanate, although plagued by internecine strife, provided a spirited challenge to the Arabo-Islamic advance, which had conquered much of Iranian Central Asia by the early eighth century, and the Tibetans who were expanding into Eastern Turkestan. In 751 AD, near the Talas River in Kazakhstan, a T’ang army, which had been imposing its will on the Türgäš, the leading grouping of the On Oḳ, was defeated by a Muslim force, aided by the defection of the Karluks. The revolt of An Lu-shan, a general of Soghdian and Türk origin, in 755 AD against his overlords the T’ang prevented a Chinese return to central Central Asia. This clearly delineated the Iranian Central Asian territories and their steppe borderlands as within the Islamic orbit. The Karluks benefited as well, gaining possession, by 766, of the western Türk lands and laying one of the foundation stones of the Karakhanid state.

SUCCESSOR STATES OF THE TÜRKS

The Uyghur kaghans, from their center on the Selenga River in Mongolia, vied with Tibet over Eastern Turkestan and aided by their Soghdian advisers, skillfully exploited China’s domestic weakness caused by the revolt of An Lu-shan. Periodically called in to suppress rebels, the nomads became one of the props of the T’ang. In return for this, they were richly rewarded and granted most favorable trading privileges. In 762 AD, the Uyghur ruler, Bögü kaghan, under the influence of his Soghdian courtiers, converted to Manicheanism. Here, too, we see another, subsequently familiar pattern in Irano-Turkic politico-cultural relations: Iranian intermediaries in the proselytizing of a Near-Eastern religion. The Uyghur kaghanate became a powerful and highly cultured state. In 840 AD, weakened by domestic strife, it was overrun by the Kirghiz (kïrɣïz), a Turkic or
Türkicized people of still uncertain ethnic antecedents whose primary habitat was in the Yenisey region. The Uyghurs dispersed to the Chinese borderlands, ultimately creating several statelets in East Turkistan, hitherto Tocharian and Iranian, and Kansu.

For the Kirghiz, who remained largely in their Siberian home, Mongolia, the traditional center of nomadic empires in inner Asia, did not appear to hold the same attractions. With the Uyghurs gone, the way was open for the movement in of new, largely Mongolic-speaking tribes hitherto located in eastern Mongolia and adjoining regions. Some of them had already been part of the Türk and Uyghur states. In 924, one of these tribal confederations, the Kitans, already a power in the Sino-Manchurian borderlands as the Liao dynasty (907–1125 AD), marched into the old Uyghur capital, reclaiming it in the name of traditional nomadic conquerors and even offering to allow the Uyghurs to return to their former abodes as subjects. The latter, however, already sedentarizing in East Turkistan, declined. The Kitan movements appear to have led to the Mongolization of Mongolia.

In western Eurasia, the Khazar kaghanate, a vast empire comprising Common Turkic and Oghur, as well as Iranian, Finno-Ugric, and other elements, and ultimately extending from the middle Volga to the north Caucasus and from Kiev to the Khwarezmian deserts, emerged as the successor state of the Turks around 650–680 AD. Like the Turks of central Eurasia, they were engaged in protracted warfare with the advancing Arabs. This, combined with the dictates of geopolitics and older Türk traditions, led to a Byzantine–Khazar entente. Although the Arabs, following a surprise attack, compelled the Khazar kaghan, in 737 AD, to convert briefly to Islam, they were not able to extend their power beyond Bāb al-Abwāb/Darband in the north Caucasus. In the late eighth to early ninth century, the ruling house converted to Judaism. This little influenced the Türk-derived Khazar state structure and political culture. Here, however, the kaghan became a completely sacralized figure, and the everyday affairs of state were handled by a sub-kaghan (ḳaɣan-bäːɡ, šaδ). Khazaria grew wealthy from the east–west and north–south Islamic trade. A decline in revenue, growing sedentarization, and the pressure of new opponents brought about its collapse in a series of attacks in 965–969 AD at the hands of the Rus’ allied with elements of the Western Oghuz.

Their immediate successors in the western Eurasian steppes were the Pechenegs, often in conflict with the equally aggressive Rus’, who in 1036 defeated and largely pushed them into Danubian Europe and the Byzantine Balkans. The Turks/Western Oghuz who followed them suffered a similar fate in 1060. More spirited opposition came with the advent of the Kipchaks (ḵïpčaḵ), whose origins are to be sought in the Kimek confederation and a series of movements of peoples in inner and northern central Eurasia. The Kuman-Kipchak confederation dominated the steppes from the Danube to Khwarezm and western Siberia, interacting with Rus’, Byzantium, Hungary, Georgia, the Islamic lands – the Kipchak steppe having become a major source of the ‘ghulāms’ (yulām), caliphal military slaves – both in the Middle East and the Khwārazmšāh state. Facing sedentary states that were either too weak or too divided to engage in prolonged wars of conquest with them, the Kipchaks, like the Pechenegs, never formed a state but were able to survive and retain their nomadic economic system by integrating themselves into the larger state-system through adroit diplomacy and by providing professional soldiers.

The early foes of the Khazars, the Bulghar union, divided in the latter half of the seventh century. One grouping, after 679 AD, under Asparuχ settled in the Balkans, imposing themselves on an already existing Slavic tribal union. Here, they came to be deadly foes of the Byzantine Empire. Heirs to both the Attilid and Türk traditions, the Bulghar rulers
styled themselves kaghans and khans (κανάς) and continued to use the 12-year animal cycle calendar of inner Asia. In 864 AD, under Byzantine pressure, the Balkan Bulgars converted to Orthodox Christianity. Already Slavicizing by this time, Bulgaria became one of the pioneer centers of Orthodox Christian Slavic culture.

The Volga Bulgars derived from the same tribal confederation defeated by the Khazars in the seventh century. They moved to the middle Volga region by the mid-eighth or in the course of the ninth and early tenth centuries. Here, they played a prominent role in the fur trade and later rivaled the Khazar capital, Attil/Itil, their overlord, in trade with the Islamic lands. Islam came, in some measure as a counterbalance against Khazaria, in the early tenth century, resulting in a developed Islamic urban culture.

**THE TURKIC PEOPLES AND ISLAM**

After the Kitan conquest of Mongolia, the focus of Turkic history turned to the Islamic steppe borderlands of central Eurasia. Here, a new Irano-Islamic culture was taking shape under Iranian service dynasties of the Abbasid caliphs: the Tāhirids (821–873 AD), governors of Khorasan (Xurāsān), and the Samanids (819–1005 AD), governors of Transoxania (Mā warā‘n-nahr). Soghdian was being replaced by Persian (Fārsī), influenced by Islamic culture and written in the Arabic script. Islamic Neo-Persian literature was pioneered in Central Asia. Persian speech was associated with Islamic culture; the Iranian population came to be known as Tājīk ← tribal name Tayyi plus [+čik]. Islam here, although nominally Sunni, took on an Iranian cast, occasionally with a radical religious and social agenda. This was the Islam, in its folk form, that was brought to the Turkic peoples. It ultimately led to a Turko-Persian cultural symbiosis, which had a profound impact on the Islamic cultures that developed not only in Central Asia but in western, the Seljuk and Ottoman realms, and southern Asia as well. The Samanids in particular became a major source of ghulāms, who, by the mid-ninth century, began to occupy increasingly powerful military and administrative positions. Some caliphs were their virtual prisoners.

It is at this stage that the Turkic populations of central Eurasia came more fully to the attention of the Islamic sources. In addition to the tribes of the Western Türk kaghanate, we find mention of the Karluks, possessors of the western Türk centers around Êsîk Köl, the Ili, Chu, and Talas rivers, who arrived here in about 745 AD; the Oghuz, who are noted in the Şyr Darya region by the late 770s; the Čigil and Tuχsi, two subcon federations of the Karluks; the Yaghma, also associated with the Karluks, camping between Lake Balkhash; and the Ala Kül, all in the immediate environs of the Muslim forts of the region. Further away were the Kimeks, ranging across Kazakhstan and western Siberia; the Uyghurs in Eastern Turkistan; and a number of other Türkic and Turkicizing peoples. Mahmūd al-Kāsɣarī, writing in 1077, notes a clear dialect division between tribes speaking “Türki” and those speaking Oghuz Türkic. He also extols those tribes that spoke ‘pure Türkic’, as opposed to those whose speech was corrupted by contact with Persian and Soghdian speakers in the cities and yet others who spoke languages other than Türkic or Iranian, perhaps Mongolic, Palaeo-Siberian, or Tokharian. Islam spread to the Türkic tribes, already relatively sophisticated in religious matters, not so much by the sword as by the activities of merchants and later by Sufis, many of whom were Turks. Nomads living closer to the urban regions with which they traded were converted and in turn preached Islam to their more distant kinsmen. The early converts among the Oghuz and some Karluks were called “Türkmen” for reasons that are still obscure. The Karluks and Oghuz were ruled by yabghus, although after 840 AD the Karluks may have claimed the
kaghanal dignity. The Kimeks were ruled by a kaghan and others by lesser ranks. All retained some vestiges of Türk political organization.

KARAKHANIDS, GHAZNAVIDS, AND SELJUKS

The tenth century proved to be particularly fruitful for the propagation of Islam among the Turkic peoples. In the early 920s AD, the Volga Bulghars moved decisively toward Islam. Mass conversions of ‘infidel Turks’ are noted in 960 and 1043. More typical than these grandiose movements were smaller-scale conversions unrecorded by the historians. The Turks were not passive in this process. The Karakhanid dynasty, of possible A-shih-na origins but unclear affiliations, Karluk, Yaghma, or perhaps Uyghur, under Satuḳ Buyra (d. around 955 AD), adopted Islam and actively promoted it in the Türkic world. The term ‘Karakhanid’ is itself an artificial name developed by scholars. The self-designation was rather the ‘kaghanal’ (ruling house), or ‘khanal kings of the Turks’ (al-xāqāniyya, al-mulūk al-xāniyya al-atrāk). By 999 AD, the Karakhanids had driven the Samanids from much of Transoxania and were in possession of Bukhara. They, along with the Volga Bulghars, were the creators of the first Islamo-Turkic polities. The Karakhanids imposed a still imperfectly understood Turkic tetrarchic ruling structure, that is, two kaghans and two sub-kaghans, divided along east–west lines, on the pre-existing Islamo-Iranian Samanid state. Their empire extended from Western Turkistan to sizeable portions of Eastern Turkistan where Kashgar was one of their centers. Karakhanid rule brought greater numbers of Turkic tribesmen into Iranian Central Asia than ever before. At the same time, a Turkic state founded by ghulāms of the fading Samanids in 962 AD was established at Ghazni in Afghanistan. Aided by an Iranian bureaucracy, it ruled over an Iranian and north Indian peasant and urban populace and acquired great wealth through lucrative and destructive raids into Hindu India. These ‘Ghaznavids’, prototypes, in some respects, of the later Mamluk regime in the Near East, duly invested in their offices with caliphal approval, became one of the greatest powers in the Islamic world. Thus, two very different Islamo-Turkic states in Central Asia had come into being. They were soon to be joined by a third with an even more dynamic nature: the Seljuks.

The name Seljuk is a political rather than ethnic name. It derives from Sälčük, a son of Tokaḳ Tāmir, a warlord (süː bašï) from the Ḳïnïḳ tribal grouping of the Oghuz. Seljuk, in the rough and tumble of internal Oghuz politics, fled to Jand around 985 AD, after falling out with his overlord, either the Khazar kaghan or the Oghuz yabghu. Here, having converted to Islam, he ended his days as a fighter for the faith. His sons, all of whom bore Old Testament names, indicating some earlier Judaic or Christian influences, became caught up in the Karakhanid and Ghaznavid rivalry. By the mid-1030s, much of the family, now under his grandsons Toɣrul and Čaɣrï, had been dispersed by their foes and migrated to Khorasan. When the Ghaznavid sultan Mas'ūd (1031–1041) sought to end their depredations in this wealthy part of his empire, he suffered an unexpected, disastrous defeat at Dandānkān (23 May 1040). The Ghaznavid hold over eastern Iran collapsed, and the Seljuk-led Oghuz tribesmen became masters of the area. Seljuk authority advanced into western Transoxania and westward toward Transcaucasia and the Byzantine border. Relations were soon established with a weak caliphate seeking a military protector that could rid them of the fading Shi’ite Buyids who had dominated Baghdad since 945 AD. In 1055, the Seljuks entered the Abbasid capital. Toɣrul was proclaimed sultan of the Sunni Islamic world. He and Čaɣrï, who ruled in the east, in keeping with old Turkic notions of bipartite political organization, realized that Islam was the only ideology supporting their claims to universal rule that would be acceptable to both their nomadic followers
THE TURKIC PEOPLES

(very much a minority) and newly conquered sedentary populations. They now sought to strengthen their hold on the rich Islamic lands of the Near East but were not always able to control the anarchic dynamism of their tribal followers. The more troublesome of these were directed to the Byzantine frontier to engage in the already centuries-old traditions of jihād there, while the Seljuks concentrated their primary efforts on securing the Islamic heartland.

In 1071, however, Alp Arslan (1063–1072), son of Čaɣrϊ, who held supreme authority, in an unsought conflict inflicted a stunning defeat on the Byzantines at Manzikert. Anatolia now lay open to the Oghuz tribesmen who, independently of the dynasty, began to migrate thither. A branch of the Seljuk family established itself as the sultanate of Rum (Rūm, i.e., Rome, the East Roman/Byzantine Empire). In this we may see the origins of Turkey. Seljuk power under Alp Arslan and his son and successor Malikšāh (1072–1092), aided by their brilliant vezir, Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 1092) was also extended to the Karakhanid realms. The Great Seljuk state was, like the Karakhanid, a Turkic monarcho-military structure grafted onto an already existing Islamo-Iranian state with traditions extending deep into the pre-Islamic past. The dynasty, however, with its notions of collective sovereignty, faced numerous, bloody throne struggles. The nomads, never fully reconciling to a system of absolute kingship and the pressure to sedentarize, also weakened the foundations of the state. Sanjar (1118–1157), who lost Central Asia to the Kara Khitai (1141), was the last effective Great Seljuk ruler. The dynasty succumbed to the Khwarezm state in 1194. Khwarezm, inhabited by speakers of an Iranian language akin to Soghdian, had long been an important trade center, one of the links bringing the products of the Eurasian forest zone to the Islamic lands. It had come into the Seljuk orbit as early as 1042 and was ruled by descendants of Anuštegin (ca. 1077–1097), a ghulam of Oghuz origin to whom Malikšāh gave fiscal control of the region. His son, Qutb ad-Dīn Muhammad Arslan Tegin (1097–1127), took power following the brief governorship of Ekinči b. Qočqar. Either he or his father resumed the earlier title of rulers of the region: Khwārazmšāh.

THE MONGOL INVASIONS AND AFTERMATH

The Mongol conquests launched by Chingis (Čiŋgis) (1227) and completed by his sons and grandsons had, by the middle of the thirteenth century, brought virtually all of the Turkic world – as well as states such as China, Russia, and Iran – from inner Asia and Siberia to western Eurasia and the Near East under their control. The Seljuks of Rūm, conquered in 1237, became tributaries and following an abortive revolt in 1277 were
fully absorbed into the Il-Khanid realm, the Chinggisid subordinate ulus ‘appanage’, centered in Iran, which had destroyed the Abbasid caliphate in 1258. In the Near East, the Mongols were only stopped by their own internal problems and the resistance of the largely Kipchak Mamluks.

The demographic fallout of these conquests in the Turkic world was enormous. Large numbers of central Asian Oghuz tribesmen, as well as many other Turkic groupings, entered the Middle East, swelling the ranks of those that had come here in the Seljuk era. In Iranian Central Asia, the consequences were just as dramatic. The number of inner Asian nomads, overwhelmingly Turkic, as were most of the “Mongol” armies, entering the region surpassed the total number of those that had, over the centuries, preceded them, making certain the Turkicization of central Eurasia, Anatolia, and northern Iran. In the process, many of the old Turkic confederations, e.g. the Kipchaks, were broken up and dispersed, giving rise to new units, armies based on now-dispersed tribes and clans. These became the nuclei of the modern Turkic peoples. Some of these groupings took the name of the founding khan as their political name. In eastern Europe–western Eurasia (Ulus of Jočï), Central Asia (Ulus of Çağatay) and in the Near East (the Ilkhanid state), the Turkic element prevailed linguistically, absorbing the Mongol minority. In the course of the first half of the fourteenth century, the Turko-Persian Islamic culture of these regions prevailed as well.

In the Near East, the last effective Ilkhanid ruler, Abu Sa‘īd, died in 1335. By that time, however, dynamic Turkic statelets (beyliks) had formed on the frontier of the Turko-Islamic and Byzantine worlds in Asia Minor. One of these was led by Osman (1324), whose followers were known as Ottomans (Osmanlı). Advantageously located on the Byzantine border for the waging of γαζά’, military raids in the name of Islam, Ottoman successes attracted ghazis from other regions. In 1352, the Ottomans penetrated Europe, the isthmus of Gallipoli, and, by 1400, much of the Balkans and Asia Minor had come under their domination. It was in the latter region that they came into conflict with Tamerlane (Turkish Aksak Tämür, Persian Ṭīmūr-i Lang), the great Central Asian conqueror who, starting from his base in the Chaghatay Khanate, had sought to reestablish the Chinggisid world empire. In a battle fought at Ankara (1402), the Ottoman Bayezid I (1389–1403) was defeated and carried off to die in captivity. Tamerlane, whose repeated campaigns had brought great destruction to Central Asia, India, and the Near East, had fatally weakened the Ulus of Jočï (1405), subsequently known as the Golden Horde. He died in 1405 while preparing to invade China. The Ottomans recovered and under Mehmed the Conqueror (d. 1481) took Constantinople (1453), ushering in a new imperial age. The Ottoman Sultan was Khan, heir to the Oghuz Central Asian tradition, Basileus/Caesar, heir to the Roman-Byzantine Empire and Islamic champion. Mehmed’s control over eastern Anatolia was secured by his victory in 1473 over the Oghuz/Türkmen tribal confederation of the Akkoynulu (Ak Köyunlu). His grandson Selim I (1512–1520) defeated the Shi’ite Safavids of Iran, whose military base rested on the heterodox, Oghuz soldiery of Azerbaijan and parts of Anatolia (1514) and then went on to conquer the Mamluk state (1516–1517) and thereby gain mastery over the Arabo-Islamic heartland, including the holy cities in Arabia.

THE FORMATION OF THE MODERN TURKIC PEOPLES

While the Ottomans were transforming themselves into a world power, spanning western Asia, eastern Europe, and north Africa and reaching the zenith of their might under
Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566), the Chinggisid realms of Eurasia were in decline. The Ulus of Jöçï, fragmented into the Great Horde (*Ulûı Orda*), collapsed in 1480/1481 or 1502, depending on differing scholarly interpretations; the Khanates of the Crimea (1443); Kazan (by 1445); Kasïmov, a puppet state of Muscovy (1452); Astrakhan (by 1466); the Khanate of Sibir (early fifteenth century); the Noghay Horde; and the Uzbek (Özbek) tribal union. By 1475, the Crimean Khans became vassals of the Ottomans. The Volga khanates were conquered by Muscovy, Kazan in 1552, Astrakhan in 1556, and the Siberian khanate falling by 1598. The Noghays, prominent in the throne struggles of their Chinggisid neighbors but usually lacking central leadership, began to break up by the mid-sixteenth century, elements eventually contributing to the composition of the Bashkirs, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and Crimean Tatars. The Uzbek union, a conglomeration of Kipchak-speaking Golden Horde soldiery, came under the dynamic leadership of Abu’l-Khair Khan (d. 1468), who attempted to create a stronger central political structure. This ultimately led to the revolt of other Chinggisid princes, whose followers became the Kazakhs (*kazak ‘rebel’*). Weakened by this and by the western Mongol Oirats, who were now a powerful presence, the Uzbek horde seemed to be dissolving. Around 1500, one of Abu’l-Khair’s grandsons, Muḥammad Šaybānī (Šïbanī), brought his horde into Transoxania and conquered what is now called Uzbekistan, ending Timurid rule there and putting into place the final ethnic components of the Uzbek people of today. One of the Timurids forced out of the region was Babur (d. 1530), the founder of the Moghul (Mughal) dynasty in India. Sunni Šaybānī Uzbek Transoxania, however, was blocked off from the Sunni Muslim world of the Middle East, in particular their Ottoman allies, by Shi’ite Iran. Some have argued that this led to intellectual stagnation and the militarization of Transoxanian society. Others suggest that shifts in international trade patterns were the cause. Whatever the merits of the different arguments, the Iranian impact was felt almost immediately. Indeed, Muhammad Šaybānī himself fell in battle with Shah Ismāʿīl in 1510. This struggle also determined the modern borders of Iran and Uzbekistan. The Šaybānīd realm eventually divided into three distinct polities: Bukhara-Samarkand; Khwārezm/Khiva, which contained a strong Türkmen/Oghuz element; and later the Ferghana valley state of Khokand, with a sizeable Kirghiz population. Bukhara-Samarkand became a Russian protectorate in 1866 and was brought into the Soviet Union in 1920. A similar fate befell the Khivan khanate in 1873 and Khokand in 1876.

The Kazakhs, nemeses of the Uzbeks, comprising many of the same tribal elements that formed the Uzbek union, remained in possession of the Eastern Kipchak lands of the Jöçï ulus. In the course of the sixteenth century, political fissures surfaced among the Kazakhs as well. By the time of Haḳḳ Nazar (1538–1580), the Great, Little, and Middle Hordes had taken shape. Periodically involved in Uzbek politics, the Kazakhs also faced a dangerous foe in the Oirat union, which ultimately destroyed the Kazakh supreme khanate. Under continuing Oirat pressure, the Kazakhs accepted Russian overlordship between 1731 and 1742. Occasionally allied to the Kazakhs were the Kirghiz, who had undergone several transformations and now shared many ethnic elements with the former. Under Oirat pressure, they were increasingly pushed into the regions they presently occupy, different groupings within them coming, in time, under the overlordship of the Khokand khanate, the Xwājas of Eastern Turkistan, the Oirats, and later the Manchus. The Russian Empire absorbed them by 1876. The Turki-speaking populations of the East Turkistanian oases who had been living under semi-clerical rule, the Xwājas, since the sixteenth century, by which time the ethnonym Uyɣur was no longer in use, were brought into the Manchu Empire in 1757. Local intellectuals revived and adopted the name Uyghur in 1921.
The Ottoman realm, after 1566, entered a period of decline, punctuated by occasional revivals. The decline may be attributed to dynastic, military, and economic causes. Reform and modernization movements in the nineteenth century, which helped shape similar trends among Turkic Muslims under Tsarist rule, proved unequal to the task of preserving the failing empire. It collapsed, along with the other great, land-based empires, in World War I. The modern, democratic, secular Turkish state that came into being in Anatolia and the remaining European regions of the Ottoman Empire, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (d. 1938), despite some difficulties, has largely pursued his program of modernization. It has offered itself as a model to the newly independent Turkic Muslim states of the former Soviet Union, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kirghizistan, but these emerging states, largely building on their own traditions and the remnants of their Soviet past, are charting their own courses.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING


INTRODUCTION

Throughout their history and in spite of their huge area of distribution, Turkic languages share essential structural features. Many of them are common to Eurasian languages of the Altaic and Uralic types. While often dealt with in typologically oriented linguistic work, most aspects of Turkic structure still call for more unbiased and differentiated description. The following survey will give some examples of characteristic common features and of more language-specific phenomena.

SOUND SYSTEMS

Vowels and consonants

Many Turkic languages exhibit eight vowel phonemes, \(a, \ddot{i}, o, u, \dddot{a}, \dddot{i}, \dddot{o}, \text{ and } \dddot{u}\), which can be classified with respect to the features front vs. back, unrounded vs. rounded, and high vs. low.

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<td>High</td>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>(\dddot{a})</td>
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Some Turkic languages display fewer or less clear-cut distinctions than indicated in this scheme. Thus, modern Uyghur lacks a clear differentiation \(\dddot{i}: \dddot{i}\), while Iranicized Uzbek dialects show centralizing tendencies which affect all the distinctions \(\dddot{a}: a, \dddot{o}: o, \dddot{u}: u, \dddot{\dddot{i}}: \dddot{i}\).

On the other hand, several Turkic languages display more distinctions than shown in the scheme. Some, such as Azeri, exhibit an opposition between an open \(\dddot{a}\) and a more closed \(e\). Many languages have a phonemic contrast between long and short vowels. These length distinctions may be primary, as in Yakut, Turkmen, and Khalaj. Long vowels may also be present in loanwords or developed secondarily through consonant contractions. Long vowels are often diphthongs.

Near-high, lax vowels, on the other hand, are typical of the Volga region: Chuvash, Tatar, and Bashkir. In these languages, due to shifts dealt with in Chapter 6, the realization of vowel distinctions deviates considerably from the scheme given earlier, though the basic relations in principle remain valid.
The consonant systems are more different from each other. The phonetic realizations, with respect to the distinction front vs. back, varies a good deal. Gagauz and Karaim, which are strongly influenced by Slavic, show palatalized front consonants. The Sayan Turkic languages Tuvan and Tofan exhibit a glottal element functioning as a fortis consonant signal, e.g. aʔt ‘horse’. Atypical sounds include the fricatives f, v, ž, θ and the affricates ts and ď. Long consonants normally only emerge at morpheme boundaries but may also be found, for instance, in numerals and affective words, e.g. Uzbek ikːi ‘two’, Turkish ‹anne› ‘mother’.

**Syllable structure**

A Turkic syllable typically consists of a vowel with one preceding and/or subsequent consonant, e.g. kum-da ‘in the sand’. Vowel hiatus and initial consonant clusters are avoided. Final clusters with one nasal, liquid, or sibilant occur commonly, e.g. Türk ‘Turk’, üst ‘upper side’. When two morphs join, maximally three consonants may cluster together, e.g. Turkish ‹dost-lar› ‘friends’.

Word-initial n, m, ŋ, l, and r are avoided, the only seemingly native exception being the interrogative näʔ ‘what?’ Loanwords beginning with nasals and liquids are often provided with prothetic vowels, e.g. Kazakh orĩs ‘Russian’.

**Intrasyllabic sound harmony**

The most general sound harmony phenomenon is an intrasyllabic front vs. back harmony that affects whole syllables with their vowel and possible consonants. Each syllable is classified as front or back. The frontness or backness is signaled by both vowels and consonant segments. For example, a back syllable may be realized as kул ‘slave’, whereas its front counterpart is realized as kül ‘ashes’. There are, however, numerous exceptions to this phonetic situation. Not all consonants have clearly distinguished front and back variants. The reduced vowels of some languages do not signal frontness and backness in a clear-cut way. In loanwords, phonetically front vowels may go with back consonants and vice versa, e.g. Turkish ‹kâr› [ķaːɹ] ‘profit’ ↔ Persian. Nevertheless, the syllable as a whole is classified as phonologically front or back.

Normally, the front consonants k and g occur in front syllables, whereas the back consonants ḡ, ḋ, and γ occur in back syllables. In Yakut, however, k also occurs with high back vowels, e.g. kïːs ‘girl’, whereas χ, pronounced as an affricate [kχ], only occurs with the low vowels a and o, e.g. χaːs ‘goose’.

**Morphophonological variation in primary stems**

As regards morphophonological variation in primary stems, the second syllable of certain stems has an unstable vowel that does not appear in front of suffix-initial vowels, e.g. Tatar kürık ‘beauty’, kürk-i ‘its beauty’, Turkish ‹oğul› ‘son’, ‹oğl-u› ‘her/his son’. In primary stems with an unstable vowel, consonant assimilation may also create cases of variation, such as Tuvan ägin ‘shoulder’ vs. äk-ti-m ‘my shoulder’, the latter form going back to *ägn-im, and aːs ‘mouth’ vs. aks-im ‘my mouth’ < *ayz-im, with the syllable-final devoicing triggering progressive assimilation.

Certain Turkic languages show morphophonological variation of lenis (weak) obstruents: partial or full devoicing in syllable-final position, e.g. Turkish ‹ad› [ad] ‘name’,