

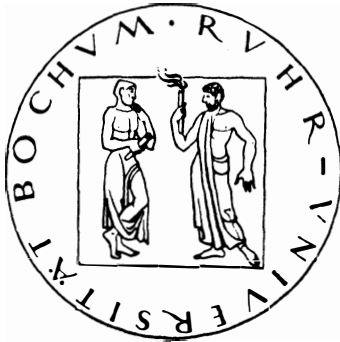
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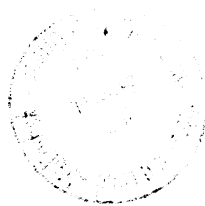


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The Oghuz split: the emergence of Turc Ajämi as a written idiom

The subject of the present paper is the early development of the written idiom within the Oghuz branch of Turkic languages. Traditionally Ottoman and Chagatay have been considered as the two literary languages of the Islamic Turkic peoples for centuries. However, occasionally scholars noted the existence of works which display western Turkic/Oghuz features but cannot be classified as Ottoman works, on account of their provenance or the period in which they were written.¹

Such works have either been mistakenly classified as Eastern Turkic, or somewhat cautiously described as Turkish with Azeri features. It will be argued here, that a number of texts produced after the middle of the fifteenth century, i.e. after the end of the the Old Anatolian Turkish (OAT) period actually display grammatical features very similar to Old Anatolian texts. In addition, these texts were usually produced away from the major Ottoman centres, i.e. in Eastern Anatolia or in Iran. Therefore the language of these texts cannot be considered as manifestations of OAT. They appear to be the expressions of the emerging third Turkic literary idiom, which will be called here Turc Ajämi. This literary language, although never so elaborate and subtle as either Ottoman or Chagatay was cultivated by a number of authors and retained its closeness to the colloquial language throughout its history. These texts can be considered as the first written expressions of a western Turkic dialect that later became known as modern Azerbaijani. It is not argued here that there was a sudden split between Ottoman and Azeri as early as the end of the fifteenth century. On the contrary, it is argued that while the Ottoman literary language gradually emerged from OAT the latter did not simply disappear but survived not only in local dialects but also as a written idiom. Turc Ajämi is defined not in terms of newly developed characteristics. On the contrary it is recognizable through those archaic features which would put them in the category of OAT had they been produced in Anatolia prior to the middle of the fifteenth

¹ From the point of view of language development the period of Old Anatolian Turkish ends in the middle of the fifteenth century. Works produced in Anatolia but dating from a later period are regarded as Ottoman. Works considered as representing the early stages of development of Turc Ajämi are as follows: 14th century: Kādi Burhāneddīn's poetry (Kadi Burhanettin 1943); Nāsīmī's poetry (Gāhrāmanov 1963); 15th century: the unpublished manuscript of the Hidāyat (Minorsky 1958:1-3); the unpublished manuscript of the Tārīkh-i Khatā'ī (Browne 1900:90); Asrārnāmā (Gāhrāmanov 1964); the poetry of Jihān Shāh (Minorsky 1954); 16th century: the unpublished manuscript of Nashāṭī (Rieu 1888:281); the Dede Korkut kitabi (Ergin 1963); Shah Ismā'īl's poetry (Gandjei 1959); the Şühādānāmā as quoted by Rāhimov (1965) and Fuẓūlī's Turkish poetry (Gölpınarlı 1961).

century.²

Terminology

First of all it is necessary to discuss the problem posed by terminology. Confusing terminology used by authors and translators writing in this language proves that, since the emergence of a written idiom is usually an unconscious process, these authors were not creating a new literary language but simply tried to use the spoken language in writing.

For example, the translator of a late fifteenth century text produced in Ardistan³ describes its language as Turkī, which must have persuaded E.G. Browne to identify it as Eastern Turkic (Browne 1900:90). This was probably because the term turkī in western scholarly literature was usually used to denote Eastern Turkic or Chagatay.

In the Islamic world the terms turkī, türk dili, türkçe dili were often used to describe any Turkic languages as opposed to Persian and Arabic. Thus these terms were also used to describe the Chagatay language (Eckmann 1966:4). Speakers of modern Azeri today describe their own language as turki or türk dili which is in accordance with the term used by the translator of the TKH (Ligeti 1957:111).

Another term denoting the same language was used by Navā'i, the

² A detailed description of the features which prove the survival of OAT elements in text produced after the middle of the fifteenth century and therefore prove the existence of a third Turcic literary idiom, i.e. Turc Ajāmi will be done in another publication. Here only a brief summary of some of the features shared by OAT and Turc Ajāmi will be given: disregard of labial harmony in the vocalism of suffixes; preference for word initial /b/ to /p/; /b-/>/p-/ change; the dominance of the suffix initial dental stop /d/ in the locative, ablative, preterite and predicative suffixes; the spirantization of medial and final /q/; the sonorization of the voiceless spirant /x/>/g/; the preservation of the back velar nasal ŋ; the presence of the au diphthong; the preference of velar suffixes after palatal stems; the -am, -ām 1st pers. predicative suffix; the use of the plural suffix after a noun preceded by a cardinal numeral from two upwards; objective case suffix in -i, -i, -ni, -ni the use of the locative ending instead of the ablative and dative; the preservation of archaic constructions (e.g. "yerlü yerincä"); the exclusively nominal but never predicative occurrence of the necessitative in -malu, -mälü; the direct attachment of the 2nd pers. pl. imper. suffix to the vocalic stem; 1st pers. plur. predic. suffix in -vuz, -vüz>-uz, -üz; the intensifying usage of the suffix -lu, -lü ("gäräklü"; "härkäslü"); the use of ingän and qatı as superlative markers; the presence of the -uban, -übän extended copulative gerund suffix, etc.

³ Tārīkh-i Khata'ī (TKH) Cambridge University Library Dd.12.6

most prominent representative of the Chagatay literary language and its literature. He noted that the fourteenth century poet Näsīmī wrote poems both in Turkmānī and Rūmī, the former meaning the forerunner of modern Azeri, the latter referring to Ottoman (Köprülü 1943:130). Minorsky also refers to Azeri texts as Turcoman (Minorsky 1943:188; 1954:283). It has been noted that the term kızılbaş was also used to describe the texts with Azeri features, which is a curious example of how a language can be renamed according to the religious-political convictions of its speakers (Gandjei 1986b:124).

More recently, yet another term denoting the same language has been revived. The expression Turc Ajāmi was used by a Capuchin missionary, Raphael du Mans in his Estat de la Perse en 1660 (Schefer 1890:134-5; Gandjei 1989:1; Johanson 1985:145). This term seems to be more appropriate than the confusing turkī or the term historical Azerbaijani literary language. It is appropriate because, firstly, it has not been used to describe any other written Turkic idiom, and therefore it is unambiguous. Secondly, it allows a wider geographical scope for the language in question, since its use was by no means limited to Azerbaijan proper as the second term would suggest.⁴ Thirdly, being derived from a seventeenth century author, it also carries an appropriate historical flavour, somewhat akin to the term Ottoman as opposed to Turkish. This immediately makes it clear that it refers to the written version of the Azeri dialect, as used in historical times only.

In what follows the term Turc Ajāmi will be used to denote the direct predecessor of modern Azeri as it is represented in written documents from the beginnings.

Classification

The various attempts to classify Turkic languages have rarely concerned themselves with the western Turkic or Oghuz group. Both those who based their classification on purely linguistic criteria, and those who also took into account historical development and geographical distribution, agree that the Oğuz group includes Ottoman/modern Turkish, Azerbaijani Turkic, Türkmen and Gagauz (Deny 1959:5-6; Dilâçar 1964:90). In other words, this group seemed to be the least problematic and the best studied.

⁴ For example see the evidence of the TKH which was produced outside Azerbaijan proper. However, the notion of Turc Ajāmi is not seen here in Köprülü's sense who claims that the Azeri literary language was widely used well beyond the boundaries of Iran, since we have not enough textual evidence (Köprülü 1943:119). It seems that Gandjei's definition which limits the use of this literary language to Azerbaijan and Iran only is more realistic (Gandjei 1986b:120).

⁵ A good summary of various classifications of the Turkic languages may be found in Dilâçar 1964:90-3.

However, when looking at the sub-classification of this group, discrepancies and inconsistencies can be observed. It is generally accepted that the Gagauz language is a special development of Ottoman, which owes its distinctive features to strong Slav influence. This leaves us with three major languages in the same group, the Turkish of Anatolia, Azerbaijani and Türkmen. Most classifications concentrate on the linguistic features of the modern languages when setting up sub-groups within the Oghuz group. The most commonly quoted subdivision distinguishes the western from the eastern Oghuz groups, with Ottoman/modern Turkish and Azerbaijani making up the former and Türkmen the latter.⁶

However, not all scholars accept this division. F. Köprülü set up a twofold distinction within the Oghuz group and called Ottoman western Oghuz as opposed to Azerbaijani which he considered eastern Oghuz (Köprülü 1943:118-9). The same view has also been expressed by some other scholars (Ergin 1963:351). This discrepancy concerning the sub-classification of the Oghuz languages seems to have been overlooked or simply ignored as irrelevant in the literature. It appears that Ergin and Köprülü's views are based on historical considerations: their primary concern was the historical evolution of written Oghuz languages. They found the evolution of Ottoman from Old Anatolian Turkish to be of some significance by emphasizing the differences displayed in literary documents written in these respective languages. They were concerned with the first stages of the development of written Oghuz idioms, i.e. the emergence of the Ottoman and Turc Ajämi literary idioms, presumed to have taken place prior to the period of the earliest surviving Türkmen materials which date from the first half of the eighteenth century (Dilâçar 1964:106).

On the other hand, however, those scholars who call Türkmen eastern Oghuz as opposed to western Oghuz consisting of Ottoman/modern Turkish and Azeri, obviously regard the present linguistic features as their starting point. However, for example, Johanson's study of western Oghuz labial harmony is actually based on historical linguistic data, yet he places both Ottoman and Azerbaijani into the Western group (Johanson 1978-9:64). This reflects a necessary compromise which tries to simplify classification by avoiding the use of separate diachronic and synchronic subdivisions.

The fact that such differences of opinion have remained unresolved indicates that the classification of Oghuz languages is after all not completely unproblematic. The reality is that

⁶ See Menges's classification in Deny 1959:5-6; Dilâçar 1964:98. According to Doerfer the Oğuz languages comprise four dialects since he includes Khurāsān Turkic as a separate category. Thus he has a twofold system: "Türkiye türkçesi" and "Azerbaycan türkçesi" making up the western Oghuz group and "Horasan türkçesi" and "Türkmençe" forming the eastern Oghuz group. Doerfer 1969:101}.

confident generalizations can only be made about Ottoman/modern Turkish and even the terminology in common use reflects the disproportionate attention given to Ottoman; while the terms Ottoman and modern Turkish, as well as widely used terms such as Old and Middle Ottoman reflect the emphasis put on the diachronic evolution of that language, Azerbaijani is usually referred to synchronically. In other words, while Ottoman gained full scholarly attention the evolution of Azerbaijani seems to have been ignored, or, if implicitly acknowledged, neglected. Reasons for this are easy to identify. The similarity of historical Azerbaijani to Ottoman and to Chagatay, the eastern Turkic literary idiom that emerged in the fifteenth century on Timurid soil, often resulted in the erroneous description of Turc Ajämi manuscripts in catalogues as either Ottoman or Chagatay. The relatively small number of texts which have been identified as Azeri/Turc Ajämi also contributed to a neglect in research. Of course, these two reasons are closely connected. There must be many other literary documents written in this idiom scattered in various oriental collections disguised under the mistaken labels "Ottoman" or "Chagatay."

In what follows an attempt will be made to sketch the emergence and early development of this language and to clarify some points of this generally neglected area. This description is limited in its scope to a discussion of the evolution of this language from the beginnings up to the sixteenth century.

Although it is not possible to discuss the details of early Oghuz history here, background is necessary in order to bring out how this new Turkic literary idiom that we call Turc Ajämi came into being.

The major geographical core of the large area where this literary language became widespread was part of Northern Iran, historically known as Azerbaijan, hence the name Azerbaijani Turkic. These parts are known to have had a long history of nomadic Turkic populations (Morgan 1988:25). It must have been this fact that led to the far-fetched opinion expressed by some, mainly Azerbaijani scholars that the early, pre-Islamic Turks of these regions actually spoke an Oghuz-type dialect, which can be regarded as the direct forerunner of modern Azeri (Dämircizadä 1979:14). This view presupposes Azeri presence on Iranian soil as early as the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. as well as an uninterrupted continuity of this dialect there for well over a thousand years. Yet the first surviving text recording a language that can possibly be called Azeri Turkic dates from the end of the thirteenth century. But even this earliest example, namely Hasanoğlu's two surviving ghazels, owing to their very limited length, do not provide sufficient grammatical evidence for the existence of a fully developed literary language that is distinguishable from Ottoman (Bodrogligeti 1963). The above

¹ See for example Browne's description of the TKH or Rieu's description of the Turkic translation of the Şafvat al-şafā quoted and corrected by Gandjei (1986b:119).

mentioned Azerbaijani scholars, however, date the beginnings of the Azeri Turkic literary language on a purely hypothetical basis from the tenth century, thus ignoring the available textual evidence (Dämircizadə 1979:50; Mirzäzadə 1953:14).

As is well-known, apart from the early mention of the tribal confederation of the toqquz oğuz in the Orkhon Inscriptions, the first reference to the Oghuz language can be found in Mahmud Kāşğarī's Divān (11th century A.D. Dankoff 1982). The appearance of the first large Oğuz groups as far to the West as Iran is more accurately connected to the Seljuq invasion (Minorsky 1943:187; Cahen 1965:1108). It has to be added that Turkic presence in greater Khurasan before and after the Arab conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries has been proved (Frye 1983:347). It is not clear, however, whether these Turks, some of them identified with the Hephthalites whose descendants are supposed to be the Khalaj people, were speakers of an Oghuz type dialect or not (Doerfer 1971:159. Sources mention the presence of Turks in Anatolia as early as the ninth to tenth centuries (Jackson 1986:148). If some of them were Oghuz, and there is no reason to assume that they were not, then Oğuz presence in Iran can also be assumed around that time at the latest. Here, however, the emphasis must be put on the fact that the Seljuqs constituted the first numerically significant Oghuz presence in Iran in the early eleventh century. After conquering the Ghaznavids in Khurāsān, the Seljuqs established their own state and pushed its borders as far as Byzantium. As Sümer has pointed out, their success was due to the migration of new waves of people from the main Oğuz contingent around the Sir Darya (Sümer 1980:x-xiii;). From this time onwards the Oghuz continuity in Anatolia and parts of Iran has been maintained up until modern times.

This is a good point at which to interrupt the historical outline by asking the following questions:

1./ Can the southwestern or Oghuz languages be regarded as a direct continuation of the language represented by Old Turkic texts? The answer is a cautious, probable affirmative, but it has to be emphasized that Old Turkic linguistic documents are sporadic and there must have been many dialects in parallel use even at that time.⁸ The fact that the toqquz oğuz are mentioned in the Orkhon Inscriptions as one of the hostile tribes does not actually imply a linguistic difference between the attacked and the attackers.

2./ If instead of the term Old Ottoman the slightly broader notion of Old Anatolian Turkish (OAT) is accepted (Mansuroğlu 1954:257), how should the earliest documents representing the beginnings of this literary language be defined; can they be seen as representatives of common Oghuz, Seljuq or simply as an early layer of OAT ?

⁸ This could explain the lack of continuity between Old Turkic and early Oghuz vowel harmony as pointed out by Johanson (1978-9:67).

These questions are important because the formation of Turc Ajämi was closely connected to the development of OAT. In other words it seems possible to speak of an Oghuz split, i.e. the separation of Ottoman from OAT taking place around the middle of the fifteenth century. It appears, however, that this was not followed by another split. Based on the linguistic evidence displayed in literary works produced in Iran and Eastern Anatolia it is argued here that OAT simply continued to be used as a written language mirroring the vernacular in the area enclosed by Chagatay and Ottoman.

Disagreement among scholars concerning OAT has centred on the linguistic classification of some early OAT documents which show many parallel grammatical forms, i.e. forms characteristic of the southwestern dialects as well as eastern Turkic features. These debated texts include Alī's Qışsa'ı Yusūf (early thirteenth century), the Behjetü'l-ḥadā'ik, the Kitāb al-Ferāiz (fourteenth century). Such early works displaying numerous parallel forms have also been referred to as texts of a "mixed language" (karışık dilli) or texts written in an "olğa-bolğa" language (Korkmaz 1972a,b. 1973; Canpolat 1967; Tekin,S. 1973-4). Thüry grouped them together with some other works written prior to the end of the fourteenth century under the name Seljuq while anything written after this time he called Ottoman (Thüry 1331:104). Köprülü strongly criticised this view and insisted that these early works considered Seljuq and Old Ottoman reflect a language which is "nothing but a developed form of the old Oghuz dialect" (Köprülü 1976:231).

Kowalski also identified Old Ottoman with these "Seljuq" works, while Ligeti maintained that drawing a line between the two is possible and necessary. However, he is unable to recommend a reliable criterion for such a distinction (Ligeti 1957:153-4).

Finally, the language of these documents has been described by Dämircizadä, the prominent Azeri scholar as Azeri (Dämircizadä 1979:88-9). This statement presupposes a well-established Azeri literary language as early as the twelfth century. Implicitly, a similar view is expressed by Ligeti, who points out the presence of many Azeri grammatical features in Anatolian dialects which, however, are not classified as Azeri (Ligeti 1957:151). His assumption is that with the first Seljuqs arriving in Anatolia there came a number of Oghuz groups who were not Seljuqs and whose presence "had a considerable impact on the linguistic map of Anatolia" (Ligeti 1957:151). On this point his opinion is very different from the view expressed by Doerfer, who named Western Seljuq/western Oghuz as the common language from which first Ottoman than Azeri separated. It seems, that the answer is to accept the Seljuq language as being very close to or more or less identical with common Oghuz. This language can be called OAT the oldest layer of which is represented by the "mixed language" documents. This must also have been the ancestor of Türkmen. Using this wide category of OAT conveniently helps to eliminate the problem of drawing a dividing line between Seljuq and Old Ottoman. It is not suggested here that such distinction did not

exist but the presently available textual evidence is not sufficient to prove it.

Let it suffice to say that here Doerfer's outline of the first stages of Oghuz linguistic development is accepted (Doerfer 1977:193). This also means that the beginnings of Old Ottoman (on Doerfer's chart "Anatolian") are dated from the thirteenth century while the first signs of the emergence of Turc Ajāmi are attributed to the second half of the fourteenth century. In other words, the Oghuz split in the West seems to have taken place in two stages, with Ottoman separating first and OAT surviving in the Eastern parts of Anatolia and Iran at least on the level of written idioms.

Doerfer's analysis, the most successful to date, puts the emphasis on the emergence of the eastern Oghuz branch. While introducing the historical category of Khurasan Turkic he also has to reclassify some well known texts as Khurasan Turkic (Doerfer 1977:132-3). This causes controversy which, however, is not unprecedented in the research of Oghuz languages. My main concern is, unlike Doerfer's, the development of western Oghuz languages which I see as including both Turc Ajāmi/modern Azeri and Ottoman/modern Turkish.

It has to be pointed out that although Doerfer's classification is considered here as basically acceptable as regards to western Oghuz development, he himself modified his view quoted above concerning the eastern Oghuz group. While in 1969 he merely added Khurāsān Turkic as a fourth member of the Oghuz group and grouped it together with Türkmen as opposed to Azeri and Ottoman (Doerfer 1969:10), in 1977 he published a modified version of this view leaving the former Azeri-Ottoman and Türkmen opposition untouched and placing Khurāsān Turkic in between these two subgroups which is credited with representing the "missing link" in Oghuz linguistic development, in other words the transition between western Oghuz and eastern Oghuz. Doerfer sees the modern Khurasan Turkic dialect spoken by approximately 800,000 people as the direct descendant of the language of the controversial "mixed language" documents (Doerfer 1977:129). The following points of Doerfer's theory are valuable and of some importance here. Firstly, Oghuz developed directly from common Turkic. Secondly, Oghuz languages further developed on Seljuq soil, following Seljuq linguistic traditions. In Doerfer's linguistic genealogy dating from 1966 Türkmen is said to have separated from common Oghuz as early as the tenth century. However, Doerfer himself agrees that the Türkmen literary language did not start to emerge independently until the eighteenth century. There is no direct evidence to prove the existence of an independent, well-definable Türkmen language prior to the sixteenth to

⁹ This does not mean that I reject Köprülü's and Ergin's above mentioned classification of Azeri as eastern Oghuz and Ottoman/Turkish as western Oğuz wholeheartedly. Their view can be accepted in a purely historical sense, within specific time limits.

seventeenth centuries. This leaves us once again with an Azeri-Ottoman dichotomy at the period in question within the southwestern group, at least on the level of literary languages.

In another study Doerfer analyzed the development of Oghuz languages from Old Turkic to Old Ottoman. In this he tried to establish a connection between these two stages of development (Doerfer 1975-6).

Here I propose to look at a later stage, namely, the formation of the Turc Ajämi written idiom against the OAT background.

The Emergence of Turc Ajämi and Its Causes

Turc Ajämi developed and became widespread in areas which had been occupied by the Seljuqs, and covered the vast territories between Ottoman in the West and Chagatay in the East. At least at the earlier stages of development these languages were in direct contact with one another. This state of affairs is reflected in eastern Turkic/Chagatay works displaying western Oghuz features and vice versa (Schinkewitsch 1926:136; Eckmann 1971:5).

As noted above, Turc Ajämi documents have often been wrongly classified as Chagatay and Ottoman. It is therefore necessary to consider its relationship to these literary languages as well as modern Azeri and its dialects.

Let us consider the features shared by all three Turkic literary idioms. The first common feature is the general low status of Turkic as a means of literary and scholarly expression at least in early times. At the beginning Turkic was generally regarded as inferior to both Arabic and Persian. This can be amply illustrated by quotations from early Anatolian texts, in which the authors complain of the insufficient nature of Turkic to express subtle ideas, which statements simply reflect a limited knowledge and neglect of Turkic as a literary idiom (Mansuroğlu 1954:251).

On the other hand, it can also be justly pointed out that the frequent use of Turkic words, expressions and phrases in Islamic, especially Persian poetical works can be interpreted as a sign of growing influence exerted by Turkic (Gandjei 1986a). Nevertheless the prevailing tendency was to despise Turkic as unsuitable for literary purposes. It was presumably this attitude which provoked attempts to defend the status of Turkic. Early known advocates of such a defense were Edirneli Nazmî and Mahremî in the fourteenth century. Their literary attempts to write in simple and pure Turkish and to eliminate Arabic and Persian elements are known in literary history as the Türk-i Basit movement (Köprülü 1966:272). The best known literary piece written in defence of Turkic comes from Navā'î who in a work written in 1499 tried to convince other contemporary authors of the richness and beauty of Turkic and persuade them to use this language (Devereux 1966:x).

A second feature is the presence of Islam in each of the three territories. As is well known the Turks did not possess their own sacred book which would have helped their language to attain high prestige. Furthermore, when the first conversions of Turks to Islam took place the Turks encountered a well-established Islamic culture in which the Persian element was playing an increasingly important part. When entering the Muslim world, all the Turks could do was synthesize parts of their own culture thus establishing a new, Turco-Persian Islamic culture in which the Turkic element was present but hardly ever able to dominate, at least in the early phases (Canfield 1991:18). This state of affairs is reflected in the great number of Turkic loanwords assimilated into Persian and also in the emergence of the three Turkic literary idioms which were and remained truly Islamic in character throughout their history.

Now let us examine the factors lying behind the emergence of Turc Ajāmi. 1./ The great distance separating these regions from the Anatolian political centres must have been conducive to the development of local dialects in written form (Köprülü 1943:125-6). In saying that Turc Ajāmi represents a mixture of Ottoman and Chagatay features, the importance of geographical continuity between Anatolia and the Azeri and Chagatay regions has to be stressed. It fostered political and cultural contacts and must have reinforced the close genetic ties between the Turkic speakers in question.¹⁰ 2./ General prosperity under the Great Seljuqs, namely the development of crafts and trade in the prosperous urban centres resulted in the emergence of new social strata which became increasingly involved in such activities as money-changing, contract writing and juridical matters which might plausibly have given rise to a written language more comprehensible to the local population (Boyle 1968:86). It seems a fair assumption that for the less educated masses not directly involved in administration, education and religious affairs, for which Persian and Arabic were reserved, using their own language for simple transactions was a natural choice. This is certainly supported by the stylistic simplicity characteristic of Turc Ajāmi prose as opposed to Ottoman.¹¹ Furthermore, the first signs of the emergence of an independent Turc Ajāmi literary language are attested during the Mongol period, when the military elite of nomadic tribes, many of whom must have been of Turkic stock, acquired great importance. This trend continued during the Jalayirids, the Turkoman tribal confederations and under the first Şafauids (Boyle 1968:490).

The strong influence of Arabic and Persian through Islam was a feature shared by all three literary languages. This, however, also raises a very important difference between Ottoman and Turc

¹⁰ See Mazzaoui's emphasis on the lack of a well-defined border between Anatolia and Iran prior to the Şafauid succession (1972:14).

¹¹ OAT texts were also characterized by a simple style (Mundy 1955:297).

Ajāmi, which is particularly significant because it can also be seen as a factor in the emergence of an independent Turkic literary language in Iran. It has been argued that there must have been a definite correlation between the the emergence of Turc Ajāmi as opposed to Ottoman and the difference between the types of Islam adopted in Anatolia and Iran (Bombaci 1968:176). This view quite correctly emphasizes the fact that Turc Ajāmi gained full recognition under the Şafavids, whose power was directly associated with the kızılbaş movement. It is well known, that from the fourteenth century onwards shiism and sufism became directly associated with and strengthened the Şafaviyya order, which was founded around the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Most of the followers of the order were from Turkoman tribes, although there is evidence of non-Oghuz Turkic presence among the kızılbaş as well (Reid 1983:22). The kızılbaş are mainly associated with the Turkomans who spoke an Oghuz-type language and it is they who have been credited with bringing the Safavids to power. The promotion of Turc Ajāmi, which can be considered closely related to the dialect spoken by the kızılbaş is therefore probably closely connected to with these political developments. However, this role should not be exaggerated, since texts written in what have been described as Turc Ajāmi produced prior to the Safavid success prove that the formation of this literary idiom was not solely attributable to the religious divergences and political change associated with Ismā'īl's rise to power. As for Shāh Ismā'īl's use of Turc Ajāmi as a major means of poetical expression, it served a practical purpose: his religious propaganda was directly aimed at the masses and not at an educated elite. Therefore it was a must for him to use a simple and easily comprehensible language when expressing his views (Minorsky 1939-42:1008a).

However, we find other examples in the history of Turc Ajāmi when this language was used for communicating religious, and especially, heretical propaganda. The fourteenth century poet Nāsīmī's subject matter was mainly centred on unorthodox Muslim ideas such as the spreading of Ḥurūfī views (Caferoğlu 1959:637). Jihān Shāh was also unorthodox as is revealed in his Turkic poetry expressed in the same literary idiom (Minorsky 1954:273). Thus it seems nearer to the truth to say that the slow and gradual emergence of the Turc Ajāmi literary language in Iran and adjacent lands must be seen in parallel with the spread of heretical views. Authors often used this relatively newly formed literary language as their means of communicating unorthodox Muslim thoughts simply because this was a language based on the Turkic dialects spoken by many of the common people.

It is significant that, in spite of the similarities between Ottoman and Azeri, the linguistic situation was very different. This too played a part in the emergence of an independent written idiom in Iran. In Anatolia Turkish was the native tongue of the majority of the population while Arabic remained the "sacred language" and Persian acquired high status as a prestige language. In Iran the ranking of these languages was more or less the same but the basic situation was different, with Persian being more than a prestige language: it was also the language of

the majority, therefore bilinguism must have been more of an everyday phenomenon. In Anatolia, where the use of Persian and Ottoman was restricted to the educated elite, the peasants continued to speak Turkish, which was never seriously threatened. In Iran the presence of Persian in ordinary life seems to have posed a serious danger for Turkic. Therefore, it seems natural, though at the same time paradoxical, that it was here that Turkic rose to a high status equalling that of Persian as early as the first half of the sixteenth century. The greater threat seems to have provoked the development and cultivation of a written language which, together with the other factors mentioned above led to the rise of Turc Ajāmi. In contrast, in Anatolia, in spite of the increasing number of Ottoman works, Persian continued virtually unchallenged as the prestige language until the nineteenth century. To illustrate this difference in the relative evaluation of Ottoman and Azeri, the example of the Ottoman Sultan Selīm II. may be quoted. In the second half of the sixteenth century he wrote poetry in elegant Persian, whereas the first Şafavid ruler Shāh Ismā'īl, early in the sixteenth century composed Turkic verses.

That bilinguism amongst the Turks was by no means general throughout Iran is clearly illustrated by the circumstances in which the manuscript TKH was produced: the translation of the Persian original was commissioned by the governor who knew Turki but not Persian. It has to be added that since he is described as one who knows the writing of the Persian text but not the language, he cannot be dismissed as simply uneducated. One further point, however, cannot be ignored: this translation was commissioned by the local governor of a region in the heart of Fars and not Azerbaijan. Even if we assume that he was posted there from the North, i.e. from Azerbaijan, it is significant that both the translator and the scribe are named as natives of this area. This shows that this particular written language was in use not only in Azerbaijan proper, but in other parts of Iran as well, and that it was this written idiom and not Chagatay or Ottoman that was used by Turks in Iran. This is not so surprising in view of the fact that the history of Fars had witnessed Turkic presence even prior to the times of the production of the TKH. since it was at one time part of the Great Seljuq Empire; under the Il-khans large numbers of Oghuz Turkic elements migrated here and it later became incorporated into the Aqqoyunlu confederation. Later it became part of the Şafavid Empire. Of course, Shāh Ismā'īl's formal seizure of power in the North took place only in 1501. In succeeding years his power spread to the Southern parts of Iran as well. Since the TKH and some of the other texts referred to above had been written a few years prior to the Safavid takeover, it cannot be argued that the use of Turc Ajāmi here is a direct consequence of Şafavid expansion.

Rather, the legacy of Seljuq, Mongol and Turkoman eras in combination with the gradual spread of unorthodox religious ideas were the factors promoting the use of this written language in this area. The governor of Ardistan referred to in the TKH is not otherwise conspicuous in contemporary literature. However, it is very likely that he was one of the Türkmen military aristocracy.

His not knowing Persian, the prestige language of Iran, should not surprise us. It is known that many of the Turkic speaking Mamluk aristocracy in Egypt were illiterate and often did not speak any other language apart from their mother tongue. This explains why they commissioned numerous Turkic grammars and translations from Arabic and Persian (Eckmann 1963:304). This is a suggestive parallel to the circumstances which must have surrounded the writing of the TKH, if only because in both cases we are dealing with a Turkic speaking military aristocracy surrounded by non-Turkic speaking subjects who form the majority.

It is also instructive to seek closer links between Turc Ajāmi and the dialects spoken by the Turkic population in the Isfahan region today. Although it is the Northern parts of Iran which have the largest Turkic concentration, some more isolated Turkic groups live in the Southern parts of Iran. Recent studies of the Turkic dialects of Iran reveal a great number of surviving archaisms characteristic of OAT and Turc Ajāmi (Doerfer 1989; 1990; Kowalski 1937). Although some of these groups are considered relatively late Turkic arrivals here, even the latest estimates place their arrival at the beginning of the fourteenth century (Beck 1986:42-3). It is therefore reasonable to speculate that the presence of these Turkic groups, who were not Azerbaijani but spoke languages close to the Azeri dialects, must have created favourable conditions for the adoption and cultivation of Turc Ajāmi as a written idiom. However, it cannot be assumed that these languages played a direct and fundamental part in the emergence of Turc Ajāmi.

Finally, the impact of the Mongol invasion also has to be considered. Although economically it is considered to have had disastrous effects, its importance in the promotion of Turkic elements in both political and cultural terms cannot be overemphasized. This is in line with Köprülü's argument, also supported by Minorsky who stress that the Mongol invasion reinforced Turkic presence in the area and fostered the revival of old Turkic traditions (Minorsky 1943:187-8; Köprülü 1943:125-6). As Minorsky pointed out, the Mongols and the Turks were regarded as related peoples on account of their life style and languages (Minorsky 1943:187). The religious tolerance of the Mongols did not obstruct the spreading of unorthodox Muslim ideas which, as we have seen, must have been closely associated with the emergence of Turc Ajāmi.

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