Ruth Bartholomä

Orient-Institut Istanbul, Turkey
bartholomae@oiist.org

*Zaur Gasimov**

Turkish-German University Istanbul, Turkey
gasimov@uni-mainz.de;
zaur.gasimov@tau.edu.tr

Negotiating the Borders of a Turkic World: The Journal *Türk Amacı* (1942–1943)

Abstract

The journal *Türk Amacı*, published in Istanbul between 1942 and 1943, was – according to its subtitle – intended as a 'propagator of Turkic cultural unity.' As such, it is an outstanding example of the discourse of the time and offers interesting insights into how the editor and the authors constructed and negotiated the borders of the 'Turkic world' they had in mind. In a close qualitative discourse analysis, which also considers the political and social conditions of that time, this article will show how debates about the history, language, literature, and culture of the Turkic people(s) and neighbouring communities – as well as the existing ideologies of Pan-Turkism – influenced the journal. To this end, it focusses on how Turkic culture and geographical aspects are combined, how the various (sub)groups are represented in the contributions and how the authors deal with issues of language(s). Through their selection of topics and the wording used, the articles in the journal constructed a more or less unified cultural and linguistic space, a 'Turkic world,' that largely ignored the question of real existing borders.

Key words: Turkic world, Turan, borders, discourse, nationalism, exile

1. Introduction

Intellectual discourse concerning an ethnically and linguistically defined Turkic 'imagined community' originating in Turan, supposed homeland of the ancient Turks in Central Asia, began in the late 19th century in Turkic societies across Eurasia, and especially in Turkey. Turkey's intellectual hubs – primarily Istanbul, with its eminent educational institutions, influential academic circles and vivid media landscape – became important settings for heated debates about what constituted the 'Turkic world' and about where the borders between that world and other cultures and civilizational spaces should be drawn. During World War II, the temporal focus of this article, the debates took place predominantly in Istanbul, more precisely in the milieu of the authors of *Türk Amacı*. It was a heterogeneous group of philologists, historians, literati, and political activists who enriched the discussions with their knowledge and personal experience.

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Türk Amacı, edited by Ahmet Caferoğlu (1899–1975) and published in eight numbers between July 1942 and February 1943, is an outstanding example of interdisciplinary collaboration of Turkish and Turkic exile scholars born and socialized both in Ottoman lands as well as in the formerly Tsarist (then Soviet) Caucasus, the Volga region, and Central Asia. The journal posited a transboundary cultural unity of Turkic communities that populated a vast geographic area from the Balkans to West China. To this end, the journal largely ignored existing state borders between Turkey, the Soviet Union, and China, as well as the Soviet state-, nation- and language-building efforts in the peripheries inhabited by largely non-Russian groups. *Türk Amacı* boosted the narrative of a cultural unity, drawing on ethnic and linguistic ties which dated back even to pre-Islamic times.

This article analyses the articles in *Türk Amacı* using qualitative discourse analysis, focussing on how the authors of the journal constructed a 'Turkic world' and its borders. We begin with some observations on the theoretical and methodological background followed by information on the historical, political, and social context, as well as some details on the editor and the journal itself. The focus will be on the construction of the spatial aspects of a 'Turkic world' through relevant keywords and topics in the journal's articles. The article ends by drawing conclusions.

2. Theoretical and Methodological Background

2.1 Theoretical Background

We intend to show how the authors of the journal *Türk Amacı* contributed to the discursive construction of a 'Turkic world,' with 'the Turks' being a – more or less – ethnically, linguistically, and culturally homogenous group. How ethnic groups and nations are constructed and negotiated discursively has been demonstrated by several groundbreaking contributions including – to name just a few – studies by Benedict Anderson, Anthony D. Smith or Ruth Wodak et al.[1] It must be noted, however, that this constructivist approach contrasts starkly with the essentialist understanding of Turkic ethnic identity by the *Türk Amacı* authors themselves: In their eyes, ethnicity was acquired through birth and thus not negotiable.

The process of identification with a certain group is closely linked to the drawing of boundaries to others.[2] While the members of a certain group often perceive these dividing lines as something long-existing, fixed and firm, it must be assumed that these are also constructed. In many cases, language plays an important role in this negotiation of identity, and borders, especially national borders, are sometimes used to create 'situations in which dialect continua over generations become ever more discontinuous.'[3] However, these borders can be negotiated or ignored when this would

1 Anderson 1991 [1983], Smith 1986 or Wodak et al. 2009.
2 Barth 1969.
3 Watt and Llamas 2014, 3.

serve the purpose of constructing a homogenous group, as we will see for the case of *Türk Amacı*.

The approach of the Cambridge School of Intellectual History (CSIH) offers important tools for analysing the discourses which appear in *Türk Amacı*. One of the CSIH's founding theoreticians, Quentin Skinner, demonstrated the importance of carefully focussing in parallel on the texts themselves and on the background of the authors.[4] His introduction to a new translation of *Il Principe*[5] showed the link between the text and the personal socialization and background of the text's author, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527). Inspired by the question 'who writes what for whom,' we aim to show the link between the texts of the articles in *Türk Amacı* and the biography of the participants of those discourses. Considering these aspects, we attempt to elaborate on the borders of the Turkic 'imagined community' portrayed within *Türk Amacı*.

The notion of border is understood as a blurred line encircling a certain space: the authors of the journal reconstructed this space's components, its sub-regions, by elaborating on various Turkic personalities, literatures, arts etc. rather than by referring to concrete (border)lines and attributing irreconcilable differences to them.

2.2 Methodological Background

As a methodological tool for analysing *Türk Amacı*, we used linguistic discourse analysis, namely the DIMEAN model[6] developed by German linguists Jürgen Spitzmüller and Ingo H. Warnke.[7] Three basic layers are examined to identify so-called 'discourse-relevant phenomena'[8]: the intratextual layer (*texts*), the agent layer (*actors*) and the transtextual layer (*knowledge*).[9] While the intratextual layer takes different phenomena within each individual text into consideration (in a word-, a proposition- and a text-oriented analysis), the transtextual layer is 'a research for *patterns* that emerge from multiple texts,' reveals '*recurrent* phenomena' and thus represents 'the actual goal of discourse analysis.'[10] The agent layer mediates between the two aforementioned layers.

We searched the 71 articles published in *Türk Amacı* for certain keywords, with a special focus on the spatial dimensions of 'Turkic culture' (*Türk kültürü*) which was the journal's principal theme. We paid attention to words designating geographical places, spaces, ethnonyms and to instances of a spatial othering of non-Turkic neighbouring communities as well as the geographical acquisition of space. Subsequently, we looked

4 For more information, see Skinner 1969.
5 Skinner and Price 1988.
6 DIMEAN is an acronym for German *Diskurslinguistische Mehrebenenanalyse* ('discourse-linguistic multilayered analysis'; Spitzmüller and Warnke 2011a: 81).
7 Spitzmüller and Warnke 2011a; Spitzmüller and Warnke 2011b.
8 Spitzmüller and Warnke 2011a, 78.
9 *ibid*., 81–2.
10 *ibid*., 86–7 (emphases in the original).

for recurring patterns and took into account details on the authors as well as the social, political, and historical circumstances.

3. Historical Background

3.1 Turan, Turanism, and Pan-Turkism in Oriental Studies in Europe

As a certain combination of ethnicity, language, culture and historical ties, the concept of *Türk*[11] (sometimes also *Turk* or *Tork*) and ethnonyms like *Tatar*, *Kazak* etc. appear (together with *Turan*) to be have been the most frequently debated notions within Turkic societies since the end of the 19th century. The geographical-ethnic term 'Turan' originally traces back to the Persian epos *Shāh-nāmeh* ('Book of Kings'), written by the Persian poet Firdawsī (940–1020).[12] In the *Shāh-nāmeh*, Turan designated the land to the north-east of Iran, a region often associated with a nomadic lifestyle in contrast to the sedentary lifestyle of central Iran. In later sources it was also referred to as 'Turkestan' or 'Central Asia,' although these terms have been used over time in different contexts and to designate different regions. As Davis states, 'for Firdawsī, "Turanian" is virtually synonymous with "Turk".'[13] However, European authors of the 19th century considered Turan the original homeland of different ethnic groups, including not only various Turkic peoples, but also Hungarians, Finno-Ugric groups and others.[14] The emerging Turanism (or Pan-Turanism) is generally understood as a movement that had the goal of uniting all these different groups, whether in a political or cultural sense.

In contrast, Pan-Turkism 'usually refers to the movement, cultural or political, which aims to bring together all people of Turkic origins.'[15] Those talking about an intended unity defined as key factors the relatedness of the Turkic languages (all of them going back to Old Turkic or an even older, non-documented language variety) as well as common historic origins and traditions, although these were partly also not documented, but the result of the imagination of the participants in these debates. A leading representative of European Oriental studies and Turkology in the late 19th century, the Hungarian traveller and scholar Arminius Vámbéry[16], saw physiognomy as another decisive factor, although it was not reliable in certain circumstances.[17]

11 The word *Türk* can be translated into English both as 'Turkish' (referring to the Republic of Turkey, the inhabitants, language etc.) and 'Turkic' (then comprising the members of all communities of Turkic origin, their language and the like). See also fn. 44.
12 Davis 2000; Feuillebois 2017.
13 Davis 2000, 672.
14 Pekesen 2019.
15 Landau 1983, 333.
16 About Vámbéry (1832–1913), see Bartholomä 2006; Mandler 2016; for a comprehensive bibliography of works written by Vámbéry as well as works written about him, see Knüppel 2021.
17 Vámbéry 1868, 284.

Vámbéry was, among other Hungarian scholars, one of the first and most influential authors to pursue the thought of a common origin of Turks and Hungarians in the region designated as Turan. Vámbéry also explored the idea of a Turkic nation which shared a common past and, in the second half of the 19th century, was located over a wide territory or, as he put it, 'from the shore of the Adriatic far into China.'[18] Although Vámbéry later dismissed the idea of political unification,[19] his ideas of a common bond nevertheless proved influential, even though at first Vámbéry's ideas were not met with great enthusiasm within the Ottoman Empire.

3.2 Pan-Turanism and Pan-Turkism in Turkic Communities

Only in the late 19th and the early 20th century did politicians and intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire increasingly begin to integrate fundamental principles of Pan-Turkism into their writings and into their political and cultural activities. Over time, the Turkic element and 'the idea of Turkishness – of identity and loyalty based on the Turkish nation'[20] became more important than the Islamic factor that had dominated in the 19th century, when Pan-Islamism was an official policy in the Ottoman Empire.[21] The ideas were imported not only by European but also by Turkic, mostly Tatar and Azeri, intellectuals who gathered in Istanbul within the milieu of political emigrants and intellectuals.[22] People like Yusuf Akçura[23] (1876–1935), Ahmet Ağaoğlu (1869–1939) and Ali Bey Hüseyinzade (1864–1940) saw their common forerunner in the personality and work of the prominent Crimean Tatar 'enlightener' and educator Ismail Gaspıralı (Gasprinskiy) (1851–1914) and his journal *Tercüman–Perevodchik* ('Translator'), which he edited from 1883–1914. Gasprinski proclaimed the slogan *Dilde, işte, fikirde birlik* ('Unity in language, action, thought').[24]

Akçura, Ağaoğlu, Hüseyinzade and other emigrants in the Ottoman Empire (and later the Republic of Turkey) were active intermediaries and transfer agents of European thought and of Russian intellectual discourses into the (post-)Ottoman Turkish society. Besides their support for the Latinization of Turkish and language reform, they backed Turkish nation-building and post-Ottoman state-building. Simultaneously, they nourished the public awareness of millions of Turks living outside Turkey, mostly in Crimea or in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Volga region.

To be sure, Pan-Turanism and Pan-Turkism had much in common. However, while Pan-Turanism included the Mongol and Finno-Ugric peoples, Pan-Turkism excluded

18 Vámbéry 1864, 435.
19 Vámbéry 1906, 348.
20 Lewis 1966, 347.
21 Landau 1981, 28.
22 For more details, cf. Adam 2002; Georgeon 1980; Lazzerini 1973; Meyer 2014; Özavcı 2015; Shissler 2003.
23 For reasons of consistency, we follow the present-day Turkish orthography of proper names.
24 For more information on Gaspıralı, see Hofmeister 2017; Lazzerini 1973; Lazzerini 1998.

them, focussing entirely on the Turkic peoples. The linguistic aspect, based on the assumption of mutual intelligibility of the Turkic languages,[25] played the most crucial role for the transition of Pan-Turanism to Pan-Turkism, at least in Turkey. Pan-Turkism was on the rise in the late Ottoman Empire, profiting from 'specially propitious conditions.'[26] For the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP, İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti), which had held power (with interruptions) since 1908, Pan-Turkism became the most important ideology. In this phase, active Pan-Turkism reached 'one of its peaks,'[27] reflected also in literature.[28] Critics of Pan-Turkism, however, grew more influential, especially after the loss of large parts of Ottoman territory in the Balkan Wars (1912/13) and World War I.

After the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, Pan-Turkism was replaced by the ideology of Kemalism, and the understanding of the 'Turkish nation' (*Türk ulusu*) was now more or less restricted to those Turks living within the boundaries of the newly established state. This meant, as Landau put it, that 'Pan-Turkism was more latent than visibly active during those twenty years from the Republic's foundation in 1923,' which was why 'Pan-Turkists in Turkey limited themselves chiefly to literary and journalistic activity.'[29]

In the cultural sphere, Landau described 'a resurgence of Panturkist sentiment, largely expressed in several short-lived periodicals'[30] since the 1930s and 1940s, *Türk Amacı* being one of those. In general, the authors and editors were reluctant to share their views; however, 'references to the "Outside Turks," those people of Turkic stock living outside the political borders of Turkey,' were the 'most tangible indications.'[31]

During World War II, Turkey, despite German efforts, remained neutral until 22 February 1945 when it entered the war on the side of the Allies. In the early 1940s and especially after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, some Pan-Turk activists and publications more or less openly advocated for Turkey entering the war on the German side in support of Turks in the Soviet Union.[32] On 3 May 1944, public demonstrations, in defiance of martial law, took place in Ankara and Istanbul with the participation of already well-known Pan-Turkists and others who achieved prominence only later.[33] These demonstrations, marked by anti-Communist and pan-Turk-

25 The argument that the Turkic languages are mutually intelligible is often cited in discussions, but ignores the fact that there are also varieties that are only mutually intelligible to a limited extent or even not at all.

26 Landau 1981, 28.

27 *ibid*.

28 One example is the novel *Yeni Turan* ('New Turan') by Halide Edip (Adıvar), published in the newspaper *Tanin* in 1912 and later as a monograph (Halide Edib 1329 [1912]); for further details on the novel, see Landau 1981, 32; Meyer 2014, 161–2.

29 Landau 1981, 77.

30 Landau 1983, 333.

31 *ibid*., 334.

32 Landau 1981, 108–9.

33 Landau 1983, 334.

ist slogans, inevitably provoked open conflict with the Turkish government.[34] Ankara was still 'anxious to preserve Turkey's neutrality in the War' and therefore 'reacted swiftly and energetically' with arrests and trials;[35] however, the repression 'helped popularize Panturkism more than the Government intended.'[36]

3.3 Publication Activities among Emigrants

After the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey on 29 October 1923, the state's new elites boosted secularist politics and modernization reforms to shape a new Turkish nation from the remnants of post-Ottoman society. Interested in cooperation with Moscow, Kemalist authorities declined to support the 'Turkic cause' outside Turkey officially but tacitly tolerated the journalistic, intellectual, and academic activities of political emigrants. Akçura, Ağaoğlu, Hüseyinzade and others remained in Turkey and were naturalized. A new wave of political emigrants joined them in Turkey in the early 1920s, including the Crimean Tatar politician Cafer Seydahmet (1889–1960), the Kazan-born Tatar activist Ayaz İshaki (1878–1954), Mehmed Emin Resulzade (1884–1955), the former head of the Azeri Parliament, and many others. Resulzade set up several emigrant periodicals: His first project was a journal called *Yeni Kafkasya* ('New Caucasia,' 1923–1927), which served as a medium for Azeri political emigrants – who attacked the Soviets for their persecution of the political opposition in Baku – as well as for North Caucasian and Central Asian authors.

In the journals *Yeni Kafkasya*, *Azeri-Türk*, *Odlu Yurt*, all edited by Resulzade, and in *Azerbaycan Yurt Bilgisi* ('Azerbaijan: A Country Study'), edited by Ahmet Caferoğlu, the most prominent Turkic emigrants based in Istanbul and Ankara published essays, articles, and academic reviews addressing the history, literature, and language of their societies of origin. They dealt with the Caucasus, Crimea, the Volga region, Azerbaijan, Central Asia and to some extent Siberia. None of the authors promoted the idea that these regions should be unified politically, but most wanted the Turkish government's assistance, at least with regard to financial support for diaspora publication activities. The authorities generally tolerated articles overtly critical of Tsarist and Soviet Russian cultural and national oppression of Turkic societies. This changed after Stalingrad in February 1943, which radically changed the situation in World War II. When the Soviet Army started to retake territories which had been under the Wehrmacht's control, the attitude of the Turkish authorities towards Pan-Turkist debates changed.

34 Landau 1981, 113.
35 Öztekin 2018.
36 Landau 1983, 334.

4. The Journal *Türk Amacı*

4.1 The Editor Ahmet Caferoğlu (1899–1975)

While Resulzade's journals *Yeni Kafkasya*, *Azeri-Türk* and *Odlu Yurt* published mostly on politics, *Azerbaycan Yurt Bilgisi*, Ahmet Caferoğlu's first journal editing project (1932–1934), intended to attract academicians, students and intellectuals on a more non-political, but cultural level. Caferoğlu was born in Ganja (in modern Azerbaijan) in 1899 and educated at Russian grammar schools in his hometown and in Samarqand, later studying at the Institute of Commerce in Kyiv.[37] In 1919, he started studying philology at the university in Baku but had to leave the country on the eve of the Bolshevik invasion. He read literature under the supervision of Mehmet Fuat Köprülü (1890–1966), an eminent figure in Turkish intellectual history, in Istanbul and went to Germany in 1925 for his doctoral studies. After graduating from the University of Breslau (then East Prussia, today Wrocław in Poland), he joined the teaching and research staff of the Turkological Institute at the University of Istanbul. Backed by his maître Köprülü, Caferoğlu had an impressive reputation and was well-connected with other historians and linguists of Turkic background.

Azerbaycan Yurt Bilgisi was closed in 1934 due to an overtly anti-Russian speech Caferoğlu held in the presence of Atatürk and a Soviet delegation during the Turkish Language Congress.[38] Caferoğlu was dismissed from his position, but in 1938 obtained an associate professorship at the University of Istanbul. He continued to cooperate with Azeri, Tatar and Turkestani political emigrants. After Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, Caferoğlu restarted his journalistic activities with the aim of raising his Turkish audience's awareness of the Turkic communities outside Turkey.

After World War II, Caferoğlu remained active both in academia and in Azeri exile activities. As a professor of the history of Turkish language at the University of Istanbul, he investigated the East Anatolian dialects of Turkish, published extensively on the history of the Turkish language and on Azerbaijani literature and maintained close contacts with political emigrants from Azerbaijan, both in Turkey and beyond, until his death in January 1975.

4.2 About the Journal Türk Amacı

As already mentioned, *Türk Amacı* was one of several short-lived publications which appeared in Turkey during the 1930s and early 1940s. In total, eight issues were pub-

37 Gasimov 2016.
38 *ibid*. for details.

lished, the first in July 1942 and the last in February 1943.[39] In 2009, the Turkish Language Society (Türk Dil Kurumu) published a reprint[40] which lacked an academic introduction. The texts were also not reformulated into modern Turkish, as other journals or monographs were.

The journal's title, *Türk Amacı* ('The Objective of the Turks'[41]), is as interesting as its subtitle. In the foreword to the first number (*TA*, 1), the editor Caferoğlu distinguished the word *amaç* ('aim,' 'goal,' 'target') explicitly from its synonyms, the (originally Persian) term *nişangâh* and the (originally Arabic) *hedef*. However, he provided no further elaboration regarding the semantics or usage of any of these words, merely noting that the word *amaç* had been used in this way since the 11th century. Caferoğlu did not explain why or how the word was used in the journal's title. Rather, he merely invoked history, as if this alone justified his use of the word. This strategy was also used in the articles discussed below.

The subtitle, 'propagator of the union of Turkish culture' (*Türk Kültür Birliği Mürevvicidir*), changed after the first issue. For the following numbers, the word *mürevviç* was replaced by *dergi*, meaning 'journal.' While the title leaves open the question of the exact meaning of both *Türk* and *amaç*, the subtitle raises the question of the definition of both *Türk* and *kültür*; we will deal with that below.

The original monthly was printed by the publishers 'Bürhaneddin Matbaası,' but the exact number of copies remains unknown. As an academic journal edited at the University of Istanbul, the journal was likely financed by the Ministry of Education.

Thematically, according to Landau, the journal 'displayed signs characteristic of a learned periodical, with well-researched articles on the civilisation of the Central Asian Turks, their history, geography, language, literature, economy, music and religion.'[42] However, as Landau also noted, the contributions were not limited to Central Asia, but dealt with other regions like the Caucasus, the Volga region, Siberia, and Thrace and thus 'followed an evident pan-Turk line,' helping 'to keep interest in the Outside Turks alive,' although 'it could not openly preach political action within a Turkey ruled by martial law, during the Second World War.'[43] The line is also reflected in the choice of cover illustrations. While only four numbers featured illustrations, three of them showed a historical personality whose sphere of activity had been outside Turkey: Sabir Tahirzade (1862–1911), an Azerbaijani poet (issue 2), Imam Shamil (Şeyh Şamil) (1797–1871), the leader of the Muslim resistance movement to Tsarist Russia

39 The journal was also noticed in Western European Turkology: Andreas Tietze, an Austrian Turkologist (1914–2003), published a short survey of the eight numbers, with table of contents, in the journal *Oriens* (see Tietze 1948). While some articles were missing in the table of contents, Tietze gave a translation (sometimes even short synopses) in brackets after each title.

40 Only the articles by Köprülü (3–5 in the original) and Caferoğlu (6–11) seem to have switched places.

41 We follow this translation, which was suggested by Landau 1981, 91.

42 Landau 1981, 91.

43 *ibid*.

in the Caucasus in the 19th century (issue 6), and Şehabettin Mercani (1818–1889), a Volga Tatar historian (issue 8). The only exception was the cover of issue 5, which showed a living person from Turkey: the then-President İsmet İnönü (1884–1973).

All in all, the eight numbers contained 71 articles written by 19 authors, plus four short articles for which no author was given or which were published in the name of the journal. Some of the articles appeared as series, like, e.g., the contributions by Sâdeddin Buluç and Mehmet Fahrettin Kırzıoğlu (under his pen name 'M. Fahrettin Çelik') in seven parts each. This explains the comparatively high number of articles written by relatively few authors.

4.3 The Journal's Authors

Among the journal's authors were leading Turkic philologists, literary scholars and other academics. In many cases, the authors' curricula vitae reflected the idea of a wide geography of the 'Turkic world.' Several Turkish academics had been still in the Ottoman Empire; Sâdeddin Buluç (1913–1984) and M. Fahrettin Kırzıoğlu (under the pen name 'M. Fahrettin Çelik,' 1917–2005), for instance, were born shortly before or during World War I in Van and Kars, respectively, and thus in the east Anatolian borderland where the Ottoman Empire met (then Tsarist) Russia. Kırzıoğlu and Buluç were educated by Turkic emigrants who joined the Turkological Institute and other departments in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Istanbul in the 1920s. Others were born in Tsarist Russia, like the North Caucasian author Kadircan Kaflı (born in Dagestan in 1899 or 1903, deceased in Istanbul in 1967 or 1969), Abdulla Zihni Soysal (1905–1983), born in Crimea and a graduate of the University of Cracow, and Muharrem Feyzi Togay (1877–1947), a Crimean Tatar intellectual.

Two Turkological articles authored by European Orientalists and translated into Turkish were also included. Tahir Alangu (1915–1973), one of the youngest among the contributors and still enrolled as a student at the Faculty of Literature at the University of Istanbul at that time, translated two articles authored by German scientists, Adolf Dirr (1867–1930) and Carl Friedrich Brockelmann (1868–1956). Brockelmann and Dirr, the only authors of non-Turkic origin, were well-known in the field of Turkology and Caucasian studies and were most likely included to lend additional authority to the publication.

5. The Negotiation of the Borders of a 'Turkic World,' Unity and Turkicness

5.1 'Turkic Culture' (Türk Kültürü) and Geographical Aspects

An important focus of the journal was what the authors called 'Turkic[44] culture' (*Türk kültürü*). Accordingly, the short editorial in the first issue of *Türk Amacı* proclaimed that the journal was meant to be a 'propagator of Turkic cultural unity' (*TA*, 1), also expressed in the subtitle (see Section 5.2). By explicitly stressing that unity was first and foremost cultural, the editor, Caferoğlu, likely sought to deflect charges of political Pan-Turkism. The expression *Türk kültürü* was used without giving a more precise definition of even one of its components, although it was made clear by the choice of topics for the individual articles that it was not perceived as limited to the state borders of the Republic of Turkey. It was designed as an intellectual, spiritual, and ethnic unity of an imagined community of all Turks, a 'larger Turkic community' (*büyük Türk camiası*) or a 'Turkic world' (*Türk dünyası* or *Türk âlemi*), as it was repeatedly called throughout the journal. In order to expand the geographical scope, Caferoğlu published articles that covered a large geographical area.

One of the first thematic articles that followed the editorial was a paper based on a speech delivered by Caferoğlu at the University of Istanbul on 9 February 1941 and devoted to the poetry of Mîr Ali Şîr Nevâî (1441–1501). In his article, entitled 'One of the servants of Turkic cultural unity, Mîr Ali Şîr Nevâî' (*Türk Kültür Birliği Hadimlerinden Mir-Ali-Şır Nevaî*), Caferoğlu analysed the verses of this medieval Central Asian poet, who had written in Chagatai, an Eastern Turkic variety. According to Caferoğlu, Nevâî 'served Turkish culture through his pen and his genuine cultural leadership throughout the independent Turkic lands between the Chinese border and the Aegean Sea' (*TA*, 6). The spatial description of Nevâî's alleged popularity and the wide dissemination of Turkish culture from China in the east to the Aegean seashore of the Ottoman Empire in the west was based on a transboundary ethnic understanding of space similar to Vámbéry's ideas in the 19th century.

However, in the words of Caferoğlu, the Republic of Turkey should now be considered the leading Turkic nation, as he made clear in his article about Nevâî:

> Bugün ise Türk boyları içerisinde ona, en çok değer vermesi lâzım gelen ülke, Türk kültür rehberliğini elinde tutan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti olmalıdır. (*TA*, 6)
> (Today, among the Turkish tribes, the country that should value him [i.e., Nevâî] most should be the Republic of Turkey, which has the leading role in respect to Turkish culture.)

44 As briefly mentioned before (see fn. 11), it is important to note that the word *Türk* employed in the original language of *Türk Amacı* was used by the authors both in connection with the Republic of Turkey (thus 'Turkish' when translated into English) as well as when referring to, e.g., communities of Turkic origin elsewhere, regions inhabited by them in the past and present, their language or, as in this case, a common culture uniting all Turkic groups (thus 'Turkic' in English). We have tried to reflect this distinction in our translations into English. However, we may have misinterpreted the author's intention in some cases.

This view likely derives from the fact that Turkey was the only sovereign Turkic state at this time, while most other regions inhabited by Turks were part of the Soviet Union or China. Caferoğlu and others perceived Turkey as a bulwark[45] and saw the liberation of 'Turkic regions' from other states as one of the Republic of Turkey's missions, as they wrote elsewhere (i.e., not in *Türk Amacı*).

Only a handful of articles explicitly addressed the modern Republic of Turkey or its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire. All in all, there are only seven such articles, four of which were part of a series on language reform during the so-called Tanzimat Era (1839–1876). Another article dealt with the minstrel Ârifi from Kütahya (1815–1895) (*TA*, 85–8), one was an obituary for Dr Rıza Nur (1879–1942), a physician, politician, and author (*TA*, 190–1), and one was a contribution entitled 'Nineteen Years of Our Republic' (*Cumhuriyetimizin Ondokuz Yılı*), published anonymously in the fifth number, i.e., in November 1942 (*TA*, 193–4).

Not all articles covered topics that could directly be linked to 'Turkic culture': Kadircan Kaflı wrote (*TA*, 12–5) on the Ossetian poet Kosta Hetagkati (1859–1906), although Hetagkati wrote in Russian and Ossetian, the former a Slavic and the latter an Iranian language and both therefore Indo-European (and not Turkic) languages. Kaflı quotes from Hetagkati's works in modern Turkish, without explicitly mentioning the original language (Ossetian or Russian) or the fact that these quotes had to be translated into Turkish. The article does not explain why a description of Hetagkati's life and works was included into *Türk Amacı*. The reader can only guess that he was considered an important person for the Turks in the Caucasus and thus for the 'Turkic world' as a whole. Similarly, Muharrem Feyzi Togay wrote on Imam Shamil, the leader of the Muslim resistance movement to Tsarist Russia in the Caucasus during the 19th century (*TA*, 241–7). The first paragraph reads like a justification for publishing the piece in *Türk Amacı*, as Togay describes Shamil as 'the figure that attracts the most attention in the recent history, i.e. that of the last hundred years of the Turkic regions' (*Türk illerinin yakın, yâni bir asırlık tarihinde en ziyade dikkati celbeden sima Şamildir*) (*TA*, 241) and claims that Shamil worked for forty years to defend the 'mountainous territory of the Caucasus in which the most peoples were Turkic' (*ekser halkı Türk olan Kafkasyanın dağlık arazisi*) (*TA*, 241) against Tsarist offensives. This latter claim is obviously intended to explain why *Türk Amacı* was publishing an article about Shamil, even though he did not belong to one of the Turkic ethnic groups in the Caucasus.

Besides articles about regions populated by Turkic (and in some cases also large non-Turkic) ethnic groups, several articles dealt with more general topics, most prominently the aforementioned series by Kırzıoğlu and Buluç. Kırzıoğlu dealt with the symbolic meaning of colours among Turks, mostly drawing on the pre-Islamic past, while Sâdeddin Buluç wrote on shamanism, i.e., the pre-Islamic faith of the Turkic tribes. This discourse on 'transboundary Turkic' or even 'trans-Turanic' aspects opened vistas into categories of space and time. Dealing with shamanism expanded

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the borders of Turkic geography not only to Central Asia, but also to Siberia and Yakutia. These authors, and others, sometimes reached back to pre-Islamic times, but mostly wrote about later periods, while only a few contributions dealt with contemporary topics. However, Islam and its role within Turkic culture were mentioned only rarely and in specific contexts, such as a person's identity as Twelver Shiite (*TA*, 149). Expressions such as 'a Muslim Turkic scholar' (*müslüman Türk âlimi*) (*TA*, 150) or 'the culture of Islam' (İslâm kültürü) (*TA*, 151) occur only very rarely. Thus, the authors helped shape new intellectual horizons, rethinking the former focus on Islamic times and advancing the idea of a Turkic ethnicity independent from Islam.

Most articles in *Türk Amacı* focussed on people, events, arts etc. from regions outside the borders of modern Turkey, such as Crimea, the Caucasus region, the Volga region or Central Asia. By generalizing the geography of the notion *Türk* and by avoiding commentary on its actual physical borders, the journal contributed to the notion's ambiguity. The term *Türk* was used in combinations going beyond the nation-state dimension, like *Türk illeri* ('Turkic regions') and particularly *Türk dünyası* and *Türk âlemi* (both meaning 'Turkic world'). At the same time, the journal's authors wrote about 'Western Turks' (*Garp Türkleri*) (*TA*, 241), 'Abakan Turks' (*Abakan Türkleri*) (*TA*, 204), 'Altay Turks' (*Altay Türkleri*) (*TA*, 234) and other groups when they addressed certain historical or other developments which took place in the respective region belonging to this group, indicating the authors considered them part of an (allegedly) culturally united space.

5.2 Turks, Turkic groups and the 'Turkish world'

To denote regions inhabited by Turkic groups in general, the authors mostly used the expression *Türk ili*[46] ('Turkish region') or (in the plural) *Türk illeri* ('Turkish regions'), e.g., 'towards Turkic regions' (*Türk illerine doğru*) (*TA*, 23) or 'views into the recent history of the Turkic regions' (*Türk illerinin yakın tarihine bakışlar*) (*TA*, 217). Specific regions were also denoted by *il*, such as 'the Kipchak region' (*Kıpçak ili)* (*TA*, 272).

Turkestan in Central Asia has, in modern times, been politically divided between Tsarist Russia (later the Soviet Union) on the one side and China on the other side. It was referred to as 'Eastern Turkestan' (Şarkî Türkistan) (*TA*, 217) and 'Western Turkestan' (*Garbî Türkistan)* (*TA*, 178). In his article about Atalık Gazi Yakup Bey (d. 1877), a ruler in the eastern region during the 19th century, Muharrem Feyzi Togay characterized Eastern Turkestan as 'being in the farthest corner of the present-day Turkic world' (şimdiki Türk dünyasının en uzak bir köşesi olan Şarkî Türkistanda) (*TA*, 289); on the other hand, the same author defined Kazan, a city in the Volga region, 'the most important centre of the entire Turkic world' [*bütün Türk aleminin (…) en mühim bir merkezi*] (*TA*, 22). It is somewhat surprising that Togay, who was born in Crimea

46 The term *il* is used in modern Turkish to denote an administrative unit in Turkey, best rendered in English as 'province.' Here, however, we choose 'region' to better differentiate it from this administrative meaning.

and died in Istanbul, designates a city outside Turkey as central to Turkic culture. Nevertheless, his choice of words was intended to draw a clear contrast between centre and periphery.

In some cases, the authors used the names of modern states to locate a certain town or region. Togay, for example, pointed to the fact that the rivers which the Kazan Tatars used for trading goods belonged to Russia at the moment of the publication (*TA*, 23), and he also used expressions like 'present-day Bulgaria and Macedonia' (şimdiki Bulgaristan ve Makedonya) (*TA*, 23). The same is true for Vahit Lütfi Salcı in his contribution on the Turks in Thrace: He also carefully used the expression 'present-day' (şimdiki), sometimes even twice in one sentence: şimdiki Bulgaristanın şimdiki Türkiye sınırı civarında ('near the border of present-day Bulgaria with present-day Turkey') (*TA*, 311). In the case of Azerbaijan, Ali Genceli reflected the current situation in his article on the poet Sabir Tahirzade when he was mentioning the political division of the region with the phrase 'in the whole of Azerbaijan (in Iran and in Caucasian Azerbaijan)' [*bütün Azerbaycanda (İranda ve Kafkas Azerbaycanında*)] (*TA*, 73). Another author used the phrase 'Iranian Azerbaijan' when talking about the city of Tabriz (İran Azarbaycanının başşehri olan Tebriz) (*TA*, 93). Originally, 'Azerbaijan' was used as a geographic name of Iran's northern provinces, not as the name of any kind of state entity.

Other states, peoples, and languages were mentioned in different contexts and roles. Thus, the Russian language played the role of a medium for 'European culture' in the case of the Azeri historian Abbaskulu Ağa Bakihanlı (d. 1846) (*TA*, 145) and the Kazakh poet Abay Kunanbayev (1845–1904) (*TA*, 152). Both learned Russian, thus acquiring knowledge of what the authors refer to as 'European culture.' At the same time, the Russian Empire was seen as a threat to the 'Turkic world' (*TA*, 22–3) and 'the Russians' as being 'against everything connected with Turkicness and Turkic culture' (*Türklüğe ve Türk kültürü ile alâkadar her şeye karşı Ruslar)* (*TA*, 344).

The authors did not, however, take up the idea of Turan as a construct including Turkic, Mongol and Finno-Ugric ethnic groups. There was a clear distinction between these groups, although they were historically linked and were therefore sometimes mentioned by the authors in the same contexts, e.g., in the articles by Buluç about shamanism. The different groups were, however, clearly separated in expressions such as *bütün Türk, Moğul ve Tunguz halkları* ('all Turkic, Mongol and Tungusic peoples') (*TA*, 46) or Şamanist Türk ve Moğol kavimleri ('the shamanist Turkic and Mongol tribes') (*TA*, 234). The authors did not use the term *Turan*, probably because they were afraid of political persecution and being charged with Pan-Turkism and Turanism (see Section 4.3).

While othering the outside world from the Turks, the authors at the same time were eager to differentiate between various Turkic communities, although they avoided sharp cleavages, instead stressing an alleged unity and common features. They used ethnonyms and toponyms to indicate certain groups within the 'Turkic world.' For this purpose, they combined adjectives, geographical denominations, or state names with the expression *Türkler* ('Turks'), for older periods, as well as *kavim* ('tribe,' 'clan') and sometimes *halk* ('folk'). The geographical terms could be a city (e.g., *Kazan*), a dis-

tinctive geographical locality such as a river (Volga, the corresponding Turkish name İdil), a mountain chain (*Altay*), a region (*Kafkas* or *Kafkasya*, *Sibirya*) or a state (İran). Another possibility was to use cardinal directions, mostly in their originally Arabic forms: *Garp* – 'West,' Şark – 'East' or Şimal – 'North.' In connection with Central Asia, Mecit Okay wrote about 'the Turks living in Turkistan' (*Türkistan'da yaşayan Türkler*) (*TA*, 250) or the 'Turkistan Turks' (*Türkistan Türkleri*) (*TA*, 250), thus stressing their Turkic identity while at the same time not using any of the 'modern' ethnonyms that were established under Soviet rule and increasingly used in the states themselves. The authors thus avoided going into the intricate details of ethnicity in the region while at the same time emphasizing ethnic unity.

The authors did use an ethnonym plus the plural suffix without the word 'Turks,' albeit rarely. The choice lay with the respective author, with the articles by Buluç about shamanism and the article by İnan about Abay Kunanbayev being the most striking examples. Buluç, e.g., used ethnonyms like 'Yellow Uyghurs' (*Sarı-Uygurlar*), 'Buryats and Kalmyks' (*Buryat ve Kalmuklar*), 'Yakuts' (*Yakutlar*) (all: *TA*, 43) or 'Kyrgyz people' (*Kırgızlar)* (*TA*, 127). Similarly, İnan in his contribution about Abay (*TA*, 151–4) consistently used the ethnonym 'Kazakhs' (*Kazaklar*), but not once 'Kazakh Turks' (*Kazak Türkleri*). The article was, as a whole, more nationalistic in tone than other pieces, with the author using expressions like 'Kazakh literature' (*Kazak edebiyatı*) (*TA*, 153) and 'Kazakh poems' (*Kazak şairleri*) (*TA*, 154).

5.3 Dealing with Questions of Language(s)

While using these expressions, İnan, on the other hand, talked about 'Kazakh Turkish' (*Kazak türkçesi*) (*TA*, 153), an expression that reinforced the view that Kazakh was merely a variety of Turkish which must not necessarily be considered an independent language.

Overall, the authors often used the expressions *Türk dili* and *Türkçe*, both meaning 'Turkish language.' The terms, however, sometimes referred to older stages or other varieties of the language and could then be translated, according to the respective context, with '(Old-) Turkic language' or more specific designations. However, it is noteworthy that the authors used *Türk dili* only in the singular while the plural *Türk dilleri*, 'Turkic languages,' cannot be found, which indicates that – in the view of the authors – there was only one language. Different language varieties were designated with the help of terms like şive ('idiom,' 'vernacular') or *ağız* ('dialect'), with şive used as a generic term for *ağız* (i.e., a şive consists of several *ağız*; see, e.g., *TA*, 206). Both terms were employed, şive often in combination with ethnonyms to define specific language varieties, similar to the designations for certain groups (see above). Caferoğlu, for instance, refers to the 'Chagatai literature and dialect' (Çagatay edebiyatı ve şivesi) (*TA*, 6–7) and Genceli to the 'Azeri dialect of Turkish' (*Türkçenin azeri şivesi*) (*TA*, 33) or the 'Azerbaijan dialect' (*Azerbaycan şivesi*) (*TA*, 35–6). In other cases, the authors used *lehçe* ('dialect'), e.g., in the expression 'in different Altay dialects' (*muhtelif Altay lehçelerinde*) (*TA*, 204), while they deliberately avoided the use of 'language' (*dil*) in

connection with terms other than *Türk*. The aim was probably to stress their view of Turkic unity (*Türk birliği*) based on a common language which displayed only minor differences in modern times. These, in turn, could be attributed to the wide geographical spread and the mostly oral nature of the varieties. In his editorial to the first issue, Caferoğlu described the situation as follows:

> [...] çok geniş bir sahaya yayılmış ve bu yüzden bir çok Türk ulus ve illeri arasında muhtelif şiveler türemiş ve her bir Türk ili için ayrı ayrı tarihler bile yazılmışsa da; bu ayrılıklar ancak coğrafi durum bakımından dikkat nazarına alınabilinir. (*TA*, 1) (Although it [the Turkic nation] has spread over a very wide area and therefore various dialects have emerged among many Turkic nations and regions, and even separate histories have been written for each Turkish region, these differences can only be taken into consideration in terms of the geographical situation.)

He thus expressed the view that the 'dialects' were mutually intelligible. There are, however, quotes in some articles in which the original was given in a Turkic language other than modern Turkish, but then Turkish expressions for some words were added, or the quotes as a whole were translated into modern Turkish. To name just some examples: In an article by Muharrem Feyzi Togay about the Tatar historian and scholar Kayyum Nâsırî, the author added Turkish terms in brackets as a translation for some words used by Nâsırî (*TA*, 170). In an article by Mehmed Fuat Köprülü about the Khakas (*Abakan Türkleri*), there are quotes in the original language called *Sağay ağzı ile* ['in the Sagay dialect' (a dialect of the Khakas language)] (*TA*, 204, 208) as well as a translation into modern Turkish (*Türkiye türkçesi ile*) (*TA*, 204, 208). The reason for giving such explanations and translations could have been that these 'dialects' (or at least some words) were difficult or even impossible to understand for the average reader of the journal *Türk Amacı* who was not educated in linguistics. The translation was almost certainly not intended to highlight these differences, as this would have contradicted the idea of a homogenous Turkic culture and language.

6. Conclusion

Between 1918 and the early 1940s, the lives of Turkic communities both in Turkey and the Soviet Union underwent a radical transformation. Besides immense territorial changes and shifts in the political systems, there were far-reaching transformations in other spheres, for instance script and language reforms in support of nation-building processes which were imposed top-down.

The authors of *Türk Amacı* rejected the Soviet-backed promotion of these processes in the Soviet Socialist Republics and autonomous regions, which were named after the respective dominant Turkic groups. They largely avoided ethnonyms such as Azerbaijani, Uzbek, Kazakh and Kyrgyz. Many of the authors of *Türk Amacı* cited academic publications from the Soviet Union, but refused to use their ethnonym and toponym system or, even if they did so, put *Türk* ('Turk' or 'Turkic') or *Türkler* ('Turks') right after it.

'Turkic world' and 'Turan' were used as symbols for the posited entity in which *Türk kültürü* ('Turkic culture') disseminated. At the same time, authors did not clearly delineate the borders of these spatial categories. However, the choice of subjects showed that the authors of *Türk Amacı* thought of Turkic culture as having been widespread for centuries across the Balkans, Anatolia, Crimea, the Caucasus, northern Iran and Iraq, and Central Asia. *Türk Amacı* did not publish a single article focussing on Islam, only a series of articles on shamanism. Islam and its influences, as well as the differences between different Islamic confessions, Shias and Sunnites, were obviously not of importance for them. These authors located the origin of *Türk kültürü* in the pre-Islamic times, and accorded a decisive role to Turkic literature of the late Middle Ages. By constantly stressing the alleged unity of the 'Turkic world' while at the same time overemphasizing the reciprocal intelligibility of Turkic languages, the authors implied that the linguistic, cultural and state borders within the imagined Turkic world were blurred, irrelevant, or even non-existent.

Perhaps the stringent anti-Communism and disapproval of Russia, Russian language and culture induced the authors of *Türk Amacı* to ignore existing borders between the regions inhabited by Turks. It is thus paradoxical that, even though some authors on other occasions advocated the idea of Azerbaijani or Crimean independence from Moscow, the issue of languages was seen through the lens of one 'united and indivisible Turkish language.' The term *dil* ('language') was therefore applied only to an idealized Turkish (or: Turkic) that was spoken across the entire space and time, represented by an 'Azeri dialect,' 'Kazakh Turkish' etc. Most authors of *Türk Amacı* had been living in Istanbul for decades when *Türk Amacı* was set up. They had crossed the Soviet-Turkish border and were destined to remain political émigrés forever. While that border would prove impossible for them to overcome, they did their best, at least in their writings, to promote the idea of 'no internal borders' and a united Turkic world.

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