

Review of Lars Johanson and Christiane Bulut (eds)
Turkic-Iranian Contact Areas. Historical and Linguistic Aspects

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The volume under review deals with some cultural, literary, and linguistic aspects of a number of historical and contemporary situations which emerged from long and intensive interactions between Turkic-speaking and Iranian-speaking peoples. Most of the articles presented in this volume are based on contributions to two international conferences held in December 1998 and January 2002 by the Turcological project “Turkic Varieties of South Anatolian and West Iranian Contact Areas in their Relationship to Normative Centres” (principal investigators: Prof. Lars Johanson and Prof. Hendrik Boeschoten), which was one of the research projects established in 1997 at the Collaborative Research Center “Linguistic and Cultural Contacts in South West Asia and North East Africa” (Sonderforschungsbereich 295) at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany.

After an editorial preface, the volume starts with a comprehensive account of the individual articles, entitled “Historical and linguistic aspects of Turkic-Iranian contiguity” by Lars Johanson. The volume is organized into three thematic chapters: “Historical, cultural and literary aspects” including four articles; “Linguistic aspects: The Turkic perspective” including eight articles; and “Linguistic aspects: The Iranian perspective”, which includes five articles.

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The first chapter, on historical, cultural, and literary aspects, begins with an article entitled “Turks and Iranians: An historical sketch” by Peter B. Golden. Golden, a well-known specialist in Central Asian history, provides a substantial account of the historical developments from the mid-fourth century on. He examines the special interactions between Turkic and Iranian peoples, which extend deep into the past, and defines a pattern of contact from the earliest known periods of Turkic history.

The second article, entitled “Das Persische als Hegemonialsprache in der islamischen Geschichte: Überlegungen zur Definition eines innerislamischen Kulturraums”, by Bert G. Fragner, is similarly rich in historical and cultural details. It discusses the functions of New Persian from the 10th until the 19th century, in different periods of the cultural history of Islam. The author frames the role of New Persian as a hegemonic language which early on came to complement Arabic, contributing in particular to history, poetry, and epics. New Persian served as a medium through which Central Asian Turkic people became acquainted with Islam and which they used, among others, as an administrative language.

The next article, “Old Anatolian Turkish poetry in its relationship to the Persian tradition”, by Barbara Flemming, is particularly concerned with the literary status of the Old Anatolian Turkish mesnevi *Xusrev u Šīrīn*, which was written in 1397 by Faxreddīn Ya‘qūb. This is one of the adaptations of Nizāmī’s famous epic poem in Persian.

The first chapter ends with an article by Hendrik Boeschoten on translations of the Koran into Turkic varieties. Boeschoten, (co-)editor of some important East and West Middle Turkic texts, discusses in this article the linguistic relevance of medieval Koran translations for comparative and historical studies in Turcology. As is well known, some of these translations are

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trilingual, containing both Turkic and Persian translations of the Arabic original.

The second chapter, concerned with linguistic aspects of Turkic-Iranian contacts from the Turkic perspective, starts with an account by Gerhard Doerfer, an eminent Turcologist, who has carried out a great deal of research on Turkic languages and varieties spoken in Iran. His overview article with the title “Irano-Turkic”, which provides a pregnant comparative-linguistic description (phonology, nominal morphology, pronouns, comparison of adjectives, predicative suffixes, tenses, moods, and lexicon) of Turkic varieties spoken in Iran and the Afšar dialect of Kabul, is one of the most important contributions to the volume. The survey is based on materials from 108 different points of “Irano-Turkic”, which include various dialects of Oghuz Turkic varieties: Azerbaijanian (Central Oghuz), Qašqā’ī (South Oghuz), Khorāsān Turkic (East Oghuz), and Turkmen (North Oghuz), as well as the dialects of Khalaj, which is the only non-Oghuz language of Iran. The Oghuz dialects are contrasted with Turkish (West Oghuz). The main bulk of the material dealt with in the article was gathered during expeditions conducted by the Institute for Turkic and Central Asian Studies, Göttingen, Germany.

The next article, penned by Peter Zieme, is concerned with hybrid personal names among the Old Turks and Ancient Uyghurs as a special device of Central Asian naming. Zieme considers some groups of these hybrid names, which consist of at least one element of Middle Iranian or New Persian origin, and remarks that knowledge about naming practices offers important clues both for the cultural history of Turkic people and for language contacts in ancient Central Asia.

The next article, under the heading “The palatal glide in Oghuz Turkic and Western Iranian morphophonemics” by Marcel Erdal, is concerned with the

consonant glide /y/ occurring in morpheme junctures as a “bridging” consonant in several languages in the Near East. Erdal concludes his discussion by ascribing the emergence of this phenomenon in the Western Oghuz branch of Turkic to the areal influence of Western Iranian languages, which widely resort to consonantal hiatus bridgers. The ideas of the so-called “connective” phonemes and Erdal’s view of an areal influence of Western Iranian languages on Western Oghuz have been discussed by Lars Johanson. Johanson (2011) remarks that claims based on the concept of “connective” vowels, which are thought to have been inserted between stem-final consonants and consonant-initial suffixes, and the concept of “bridging” or “buffer” consonants, which are thought to have been inserted between stem-final vowels and vowel-initial suffixes, are historically not supportable and convincing. He argues that this kind of suffix allomorphy in contemporary West Oghuz Turkic relies on earlier morphological structures that have changed mainly through consonantal deletion and subsequent contractions, including vowel assimilations.

Heidi Stein’s article explores the occurrence of palatal vs. velar vowels in loanwords from Arabic-Persian in 16th century Ottoman Turkish, by presenting examples from the Middle Ottoman transcription text of Hieronymus Megiser (1612), which reflects the everyday speech of the western part of the Ottoman empire.

The next article, entitled “Same source – different paths. Remarks on temporal clauses in Turkish, Azerbaijani and Persian”, by Mark Kirchner compares the structures of temporal clauses of simultaneity in Ottoman Turkish, Azerbaijani, and Persian by demonstrating the development of coding devices in Ottoman Turkish and Azerbaijani, both of which were exposed to strong influence from Persian. Kirchner shows that these Turkic

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varieties each differ in the coding of temporal relations and ascribes this to different conditions of their contact with Persian.

Christiane Bulut presents a consideration of output from the studies conducted in the research project “Turkic Varieties of South Anatolian and West Iranian Contact Areas in their Relationship to Normative Centres”, of which she was a collaborator. Her article provides a survey of contact-induced patterns of relativization in Turkic varieties spoken in East Anatolia, Iraq, and West Iran, a region characterized by intensive contact between a number of different Turkic and Iranian varieties. Taking a diachronic perspective into account, Bulut also analyzes examples from Old Anatolian Turkish and Ottoman Turkish in order to reconstruct some aspects of the historical changes of syntactic code-copying.

The next contribution in this chapter is from Éva Á. Csató, who has authored some studies on the scarcely-investigated Kashkay language, which comprises Oghuz Turkic varieties spoken in the Kashkay confederation in the southwestern part of Iran. In this article, entitled “Gunnar Jarring’s Kashkay materials”, Csató presents and linguistically describes some materials from a corpus gathered by Swedish diplomat and scholar Gunnar Jarring during the years 1943 -1944.

The chapter on linguistic aspects from a Turkic perspective ends with an article entitled “Ottoman or Iranian? An example of Turkic-Iranian language contact in East Anatolian dialects” by Bernt Brendemoen, a specialist on the Eastern Black Sea Coast dialects of Turkish. Brendemoen’s subject is similar to that of Heidi Stein: the pronunciation of vowel phonemes in loanwords of Arabic origin in Turkish. He investigates this issue in Turkish dialect groups and remarks that the vocalism feature of these words is shared by the East Anatolian and Eastern Black Sea dialects, although, linguistically, there is

otherwise a sharp borderline between these dialect groups. The realization patterns in these dialect groups differ from those found in West Anatolian dialects, but are similar to those found in Azerbaijani. To explain the vocalism found in East Anatolian dialect groups and in Azerbaijani as a result of code-copying from Persian is straightforward, as they share most other linguistic features thanks to the strong influence of this latter language.

However, the occurrence of the same kind of vocalism in Eastern Black Sea dialects needs an explanation. Brendemoen suggests that the diffusion of the vocalism feature in both these Turkish dialect groups might reflect a tradition going back to a period when the Akkoyunlu state played a decisive role in the region in question.

The third chapter, “Linguistic aspects: the Iranian perspective”, begins with the enticing title “A multiethnic origin of New Persian?” by Bo Utas. Utas, an eminent scholar in Iranian studies, deals with the origin of New Persian, a written language for more than one thousand years. It has been claimed that New Persian emerged in Eastern Iran through adaptation of the spoken Sasanian Middle Persian “court language”. Utas, however, asks whether the development of the New Persian language could have been due to fundamental sociolinguistic changes in a heterogeneous linguistic area. He argues that written New Persian is not a linear continuation of a specific spoken variety, but rather a new multicultural construction involving many different languages, including Turkic.

The next article with the title “Language change and modeling modal axes: Irano-Turkic convergence” is penned by Gernot Windfuhr. Windfuhr presents a new model for the synoptic mapping of verb systems in different Iranian languages, namely Persian in Iran, Tat in the southeast Caucasus, and Tajik in Central Asia. The latter two varieties have been in contact with Turkic

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languages and expanded their verb systems, as Windfuhr shows, by developing evidential and progressive categories that are typical of the linguistic systems of the surrounding Turkic languages.

Next, in a comparative and for the most part synchronic study, Geoffrey Haig presents original data from Kurmanji as spoken in the East Anatolian province Tunceli. He describes eight innovative phenomena in which Turkish influence appears to be most evident. The phenomena typical of this dialect of Kurmanji are not attested to a similar extent in either standard Kurmanji, a written form based on the dialect of Cezir and Botan, or in other varieties of Kurmanji.

The next paper, like Haig's, presents a synchronic study on Kurmanji. Turkish linguists A. Sumru Özsoy and Yektan Türkyılmaz deal with five dialects of Kurmanji spoken in different districts of southeast Turkey, giving an account of some phonological findings of a research project conducted at the Boğaziçi University in Turkey.

The final contribution in the volume is from Donald L. Stilo, who has been carrying out areal typological studies at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig. In his well-organized comparative-typological study, entitled "Circumpositions as an areal response: The case study of the Iranian zone", Stilo investigates the distribution of "split" adpositional patterns over a large area where (among others) various Iranian and Turkic languages are spoken in close proximity. Languages spoken in the area in question provide two opposite word-order patterns: postpositional vs. prepositional. Between these two sets of languages with consistently postpositional or prepositional typology, a third group appears in a "buffer" zone. These languages either alternately use prepositions and postpositions or merge these two opposites into one hybridized pattern of circumpositions. The

author intends to develop a framework that can explain and predict the existence of alternating or hybridized types as a universal tendency. A new version of this article has been published in *Turkic Languages* 13, pp. 3 -33.

Finally, on a personal note, it has been most enjoyable to read a collection of articles that present such interesting range of historical and contemporary issues from the field of this long-lasting Turkic-Iranian symbiosis.

Reference

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