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## Discoveries on the Turkic Linguistic Map



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## **Prefatory Note**

The present publication contains a considerably expanded version of a lecture delivered in Stockholm by Professor Lars Johanson, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, on the occasion of the ninetieth birthday of Professor Gunnar Jarring on October 20, 1997. This inaugurated the “Jarring Lectures” series arranged by the Swedish Research Institute of Istanbul (SFII), and it is planned that, after a second lecture by Professor Staffan Rosén in 1999 and a third one by Dr. Bernt Brendemoen in 2000, the series will continue on a regular, annual, basis.

*The Editors*

# **Discoveries on the Turkic Linguistic Map**

## **Linguistic documentation in the field**

The topic of the present contribution, dedicated to my dear and admired colleague Gunnar Jarring, is linguistic field research, journeys of discovery aiming to draw the map of the Turkic linguistic world in a more detailed and adequate way than done before. The survey will start with the period of the classical pioneering achievements, particularly from the perspective of Scandinavian Turcology. It will then proceed to current aspects of language documentation, commenting briefly on a number of ongoing projects that the author is particularly familiar with. The focus will be on projects carried out by Turcologists active at my own university, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, and by associated or cooperating researchers (cf. Johanson 1998 b).

## **Turkic languages and the Turkic linguistic map**

The Turkic languages are commonly considered interesting because of their vast geographical distribution, their contacts with many different types of languages, their relative stability over time, and their regularity in morphology and syntax. Due to their development at the end of the twentieth century, many Turkic languages have recently acquired increased political importance. See, e.g., the surveys in Johanson 1992 a and Johanson & Csató (eds.) 1998.

The Turkic linguistic map, on which our journeys of discovery will take place, is comprehensive. It extends from the Southwest, Turkey and her neighbors, to the Southeast, to Eastern Turkistan and farther into China. From here it stretches to the Northeast, via South and North Siberia up to the Arctic Ocean, and finally to the Northwest, across West Siberia and East Europe.

The area comprises a great number of different peoples and languages—after the breakdown of the Soviet Union also a set of new autonomous states with Turkic national languages. The regions in which Turkic languages are spoken include Anatolia, Azerbaijan, the Caucasus region, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, the immense areas of West and East Turkistan, South, North and West Siberia and the Volga region. In the past, the Turkic-speaking world also included compact areas in the Ponto–Caspian steppes, the Crimea, the Balkans, etc.

A total of at least 125 million speakers of Turkic languages live today predominantly in Turkey, the CIS republics, Iran, Afghanistan, China, several countries in Northwestern Europe and other parts of the world. There are currently twenty Turkic standard languages, the most important ones being Turkish, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Kazak, Karakalpak, Kirghiz, Uzbek, Uyghur, Tuvan, Yakut, Tatar, Bashkir and Chuvash. However, on our round-trip in the Turkic world we shall essentially be concerned with its peripheral parts, with languages and dialects that have so far been insufficiently investigated.

### **The beginnings of the Swedish research tradition**

Let me start this survey with the Swedish tradition, which has, to a considerable degree, formed my own interest in the field of Turcological research. Swedes rather early came to play an active role in the exploration of the Turkic linguistic world. For Swedish linguistic research on Central Asia, see Johanson 1994. The earliest, pre-scientific Swedish research on Central Asia belongs to what Gunnar Jarring has referred to as the “apocryphal” period (1994: 18–19). It may be exemplified with Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld’s curious idea launched in the seventeenth century, suggesting that Odin (Woden), one of the principal gods in Norse mythology, originally came from Kashgar, which he identified with Asgard, the dwellingplace of the gods. Another weird example is an eighteenth century treatise on alleged similarities between Swedish and Turkic.

The Swedish tradition of field research in the Turkic world begins with the research carried out by so-called Caroleans—Swedish officers of Charles XII’s army—who had fallen into captivity in Siberia after the battle of Poltava (1709). With his zealous scientific activity in Sibe-

ria, his discoveries of inscriptions and manuscripts, Filip Johan von Stralenberg (1676–1747; German name form: Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg) stands out as a kind of progenitor of Turcology or even Uralo–Altaistics. His monumental work *Das Nord- und Ostliche Theil von Europa und Asia* was printed in Stockholm in 1730.

On the upper course of the Yenisey, Stralenberg and others had found burial-places and stone inscriptions written in an enigmatic script whose letters were similar to Nordic runes. In 1721, another Carolean prisoner, Karl Schulman, made sketches of several of these inscriptions. Later, the language of the inscriptions turned out to be what has been called “Old Turkic”. The Turkic so-called “Runic script” was thus known as early as at the beginning of the eighteenth century, though it was to remain undeciphered until the end of the nineteenth century.

### **The Orkhon inscriptions**

A natural point of departure for our journeys on the Turkic linguistic map is the Orkhon valley in today’s Mongolia, where the greatest discovery in the history of Turcology was made 111 years ago. In the summer of 1889, a scientific expedition conducted by Nikolaj Jadrincev visited Mongolia to carry out archaeological explorations on the upper course of the Yenisey River. On 18 July, Jadrincev by chance—thanks to hints given by local Mongols—came to discover a number of big stone stelae covered with inscriptions. The texts were written with signs of the same runiform type that was already known from stones found by Stralenberg and others.

The discovery was reported very quickly, and the learned world began to take intense interest in the problem of the “runes”. A Finnish expedition was soon sent off to the Orkhon valley, since it was supposed in Helsinki that the inscriptions might be Finno–Ugric. And in 1891, the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg sent out an expedition led by the Prussian Turcologist Wilhelm Radloff.

On December 15, 1893, the well-known Danish professor of comparative linguistics Vilhelm Thomsen announced that he had succeeded in deciphering the enigmatic script. It was suddenly possible to read Eastern Old Turkic texts of the eighth century dedicated to the rulers of the Turk empire and glorifying their military achievements.

## **Comparative Turcology**

The decipherment of the runiform script provided the prerequisites for a scientific comparative Turcology.

One of the most important scholars involved in the comparative work that started now was the above-mentioned Wilhelm Radloff in St. Petersburg. He was born in Berlin, but went to Russia in 1858, where he first worked as a teacher in the Altay region and in the Tatar capital Kazan. He is certainly the most meritorious Turcologist in the field of linguistic documentation. Radloff became acquainted with numerous Turkic groups and their spoken varieties in their own regions. He devoted his life to exploring and recording Siberian Turkic dialects. To this pioneer, Turcology owes huge collections of text and lexical materials from various Turkic varieties. After the expedition to the Orkhon valley in 1891, Radloff began to dedicate himself ardently to the problem of the runiform script, competing with Vilhelm Thomsen in deciphering it. When Thomsen won the contest, Radloff took this victory as a personal defeat, and a bitter feud began between the two scholars.

The foremost scholar among those who now began to develop a comparative linguistic Turcology was Willi Bang (Bang-Kaup) of Berlin, originally a professor of English philology at Louvain, Belgium, who now chose Turcology as his primary scientific task in his life. From now on, there was a “Berlin school” zealously combating the “Petersburg school”. This was actually the beginning of a Western European front against Russian Turcology that came to dominate for decades. One of the Western scholars who finally succeeded in breaking through this front and establishing constructive contacts was Gunnar Jarring, who built up fruitful relations to the Turcologists in Moscow during his time as an ambassador to the USSR from 1964 to 1973.

## **Eastern Turkistan**

The history of explorations continues farther down on our map, in Eastern Turkistan, today’s Xinjiang (Sinkiang). In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, glorious expeditions were sent off here, first Russian, then German, French, British, Swedish and Japa-

nese ones, under the guidance of men such as Nikolaj M. Prževalskij, Aurel Stein, Albert Grünwedel, Albert von Le Coq, Paul Pelliot, Sven Hedin and others. As regards the Swedish interest in Eastern Turkistan, a productive period was introduced with Hedin's first journey in 1893 and culminated in his last great expedition of 1927–1935.

The explorers made sensational finds and brought rich treasures to their home countries, in particular materials from the powerful state which was established by the Turkic-speaking Old Uyghurs—after the collapse of their steppe empire in the ninth century—and whose centers were Beshbalik in the Dzungarian basin and Qocho in the Turfan oasis. The finds included manuscripts documenting languages and language stages that had been unknown before. The comprehensive Old Uyghur materials found by the explorers provided a still better basis for comparative linguistic studies and triggered intense research activities.

### **Swedish research in Eastern Turkistan**

Proceeding to the modern period, we shall dwell in Eastern Turkistan for a while. In the twentieth century, Swedish Turcology came to play a leading part in the investigation of the dialects spoken there. The research was started by Gustaf Raquette, who had spent many years as a medical missionary in Yarkand and Kashgar and, after his return to Sweden, took up a lectureship at the University of Lund. Raquette became the unrivalled expert in the language referred to as “Eastern Turki”, the predecessor of modern Uyghur.

The research was continued by Raquette's pupil Gunnar Jönsson, later known as Gunnar Jarring. After studies at the University of Lund in German, Scandinavian and Slavic philology, Sanskrit and comparative linguistics, and finally Turkic linguistics, this young man had decided to take his doctoral (“licentiate”) degree in the latter discipline. Jarring himself writes the following about this decision: “Many of my friends thought that I was absolutely crazy for considering something as bizarre as Turkish. Getting a few credits in the subject was acceptable—or no more than mildly eccentric—but to work for a higher



degree in something one could not expect to earn a living with was considered foolhardy” (1986: 52).<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the young Swedish Turcologist went to the Oriental Seminar in Berlin in 1928 to study with Willi Bang, the absolute authority in general Turkic linguistics. In the same year, Sven Hedin came to Berlin, directly from his fieldwork in Central Asia. The young scholar was tempted to pay Hedin a visit to ask if he could participate in the next expedition as a linguist. The goal of the expedition was exactly the linguistic area in which he was interested. Joining the expedition would have granted the possibility to carry out active fieldwork “directly among Turkic peoples whose dialects were completely unknown” (1986: 54).

After all, the young research student shrank from approaching his famous fellow-countryman. In the spring of 1929, when he had chosen the topic of his dissertation, he found another possibility to get to Eastern Turkistan. He joined a small group of missionaries who were sent out to serve in that region and who found their way to Kashgar on the old caravan road across the Pamir Mountains.

The final result of his work was the dissertation *Studien zu einer ost-türkischen Lautlehre*, which in 1933 brought him a position as a university lecturer (“docent”) at the university of Lund. It was followed by a set of publications, the outcome of strenuous field work, e.g. texts from regions in Chinese and Afghan Turkistan that soon afterwards became inaccessible. The research continued in spite of Gunnar Jarring’s new onerous tasks in Swedish diplomatic service. From 1946 until 1951 he published a comprehensive collection of unique texts from Eastern Turkistan in four volumes, *Materials to the knowledge of Eastern Turki*, and in 1964 an Eastern Turki–English dictionary. Though the young scholar’s dream to join Sven Hedin had not come true, Jarring’s subsequent linguistic contributions to the evaluation of the materials of the Hedin expeditions were substantial. In 1997, at the age of 90, he published a huge volume containing most valuable classificatory and etymological comments on Turkic place-names collected by Hedin in Eastern Turkistan. For Jarring’s numerous publications on other topics, see Toll & Ehrensivärd (eds.) 1977; cf. Johanson 1977; Ehrensivärd 1988, 1997.

Gunnar Jarring is internationally recognized as a pioneering explorer of unknown Turkic dialects in Central Asia. The field work activities he initiated has opened new grounds. In fact, he may rightly be considered the first modern dialectologist in the field. His studies are based on solid linguistic data and sound descriptive principles. His notations respect linguistic variation, carefully mirroring a living linguistic reality, never giving way to the standardization so common in previous work. For the first time in Turcology, the International Phonetic Alphabet was used. The evaluation of previously published dialect materials is often difficult because of the idiosyncratic transcription principles applied.

### **Time for new discoveries**

What primarily interests us here, however, are the further steps on the paths cleared by Jarring and other pioneers. Here I will not try to summarize the later contributions to Turkic dialectology. Suffice it to say that, despite harsh political restrictions in many Turkic areas during the twentieth century, a great deal of good work has been achieved: in Soviet Turcology, in the dialectology of Turkey,<sup>2</sup> the Balkans, etc. One white spot after another has disappeared on the Turkic linguistic map.

Today we are facing new exciting possibilities. Gunnar Jarring himself has pointed out that, even if the time of exploration in the old classical sense is over today, “the time for discoveries is not over” (1986: 220). The need for linguistic documentation is great. We not only need data from well-established Turkic languages, but also from less known vernacular varieties, peripheral languages, endangered languages, languages strongly influenced by contact, isolated languages

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<sup>1</sup> “Det var många av mina studiekamrater som tyckte jag var heltokig som gav mig på något så bisarrt som turkiska, [...] att licentiera i ett ämne som rimligen inte kunde ge någon försörjning, det stod på gränsen till äventyrlighet” (1979: 65).

<sup>2</sup> In Turkey, dialectology has been less *comme-il-faut* during some periods, since work on linguistic variation has been thought to be at variance with the consolidation of the standard language.

displaying both archaic and innovative features, etc. New discoveries may again lead to considerable re-evaluations in Turkic linguistics.

In a programmatic talk given in 1975, Horst Wilfrid Brands, then professor of Turcology at the University of Frankfurt, expressed his conviction that field research might bring about further important discoveries. Ten years earlier, he said, optimists who assumed the Turkic linguistic map of that time to be incomplete had been ridiculed. Since then, however, several rooted ideas about the distribution and classification of the Turkic languages had been shaken loose by Gerhard Doerfer's field research in Iran. Brands anticipated similar surprises from Afghanistan, and he also emphasized that the Turkic groups of China and Mongolia were far from sufficiently investigated.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent developments have verified Brands' expectations. The political situation now makes it possible to carry out linguistic fieldwork on the spot, to continue the work initiated in the 1920s and 1930s. Most of the previous severe restrictions against studying the genuine cultural life of Turkic minorities have been suspended.

### **Ongoing field research**

There is presently much ongoing linguistic field research to report on. I will present some examples of current work, in particular projects that my institute at Mainz takes part in or is in close contact with. Most of the results have been, or will be, published in the series "Turcologica" or the journal *Turkic Languages*.

<sup>3</sup> "Es ist sicher keine Phantasterie, wenn man bedeutende Entdeckungen und Lückenergänzungen auch in den kommenden Jahren erwartet, nicht nur auf dem Gebiet der Feldforschung. Wer vor etwa 10 Jahren in dieser Hinsicht erwartungsvollen Optimismus zeigte, etwa mit der These, die Sprachenkarte in Phil. Turc. Fundamenta I (die dem damaligen Stand der Forschung entsprach) sei vermutlich sehr lückenhaft, wurde doch gelegentlich etwas belächelt. Durch die Initiative Doerfers sind seither, allein von Iran aus, manche festgefügtten Vorstellungen über die Türksprachen, ihre Verteilung und Klassifizierung, ins Wanken geraten [...]. Was aber für Iran gilt, muß wohl auch für Afghanistan gelten: auch von dort dürfen wir mit einiger Sicherheit Überraschungen erwarten. Und dies ist noch lange nicht alles; z.B. sind die türkischen Volksgruppen Chinas und der MVR nicht annähernd erforscht." (1977, 1124).

These exciting activities comprise languages and varieties of highly different profiles and cultural backgrounds. There is a gradually developing network of persons engaged in the front line of this hunt for fresh primary data. The typical features of the current activities may be summarized in five points:

- (i) The focus is on linguistic data.
- (ii) The linguistic data are gained through field research.
- (iii) Linguistic variation is absolutely respected.
- (iv) Attention is paid to typological and areal aspects.
- (v) The research is based on texts whose content is also essential from cultural, ethnological, folkloristic or historical points of view.

### **Contact-induced influence**

A few preliminary remarks may be necessary as an introduction to the following survey. The speakers of many Turkic varieties to be discussed have separated relatively early from the main bulk of their speech community. In their isolation, the varieties have retained archaic features and developed innovative features. The latter have partly emerged through contact with other languages. Code-copying has taken place: copying of elements of one linguistic code into another linguistic code (see below).

There are two kinds of copying with respect to the direction:

- (i) **ADOPTION**: Speakers of a Turkic variety take over copies of elements from another language: “borrowing” of foreign words, “calquing” of foreign structures, etc.;
- (ii) **IMPOSITION**: Speakers of a non-Turkic variety start to speak a Turkic language and carry over copies of elements of their primary language to their new Turkic variety; articulatory habits, idiomatic expressions, syntactic structures, etc. Imposition is often connected with language shift of originally non-Turkic groups. Under the surface of numerous Turkic varieties foreign substrata may be assumed: Iranian, Greek, Finno-Ugric, Samoyedic, Yeniseyic, Mongolic, Tungusic and other layers which have exerted their influence to a higher or lower degree.

## **The Southwest**

The survey of ongoing linguistic field research will proceed counter-clockwise on the map, highlighting some noteworthy points on it. It starts in the Southwest of the Turkic-speaking world.

## **The Mainz project**

In 1997, a long-term interdisciplinary research project (“Sonderforschungsbereich”) financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft was established at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. Its general topic is cultural and linguistic contacts in southwestern Asia and northeastern Africa (“Kulturelle und sprachliche Kontakte in Südwestasien und Nordostafrika”). The research goal is to investigate processes of cultural and linguistic change under various aspects and from the perspectives of different disciplines, e.g. history, archaeology, linguistics and ethnology.

One of the components is a Turcological project concerning contact-induced linguistic processes in southern Anatolia and western Iran. Christine Bulut and Filiz Kırıl are working on the topic “Turkic dialects of South Anatolian and West Iranian contact areas in their relation to centers of linguistic standardization”.

The region in question exhibits an ethnolinguistically variegated picture with multiethnic contact zones in which linguistic, cultural and political phenomena interact. It is politically divided into a Turkish part in the west and an Iranian part in the east.<sup>4</sup> In both parts, Turkic and Iranian have been spoken side by side for almost a millennium. The area is thus characterized by intense Turkic–Iranian language contacts. Traditionally it has a high proportion of bi- or trilingual speakers. In the western part, many speakers speak an Iranian, mostly Kurdish primary language. In the eastern part, many speakers are plurilingual. The complex, multi-layered contacts between Turkic and Iranian speech communities have had a strong formative influence on the cultural and linguistic developments.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For ethnic groups in Turkey, see Andrews 1989; for the ethnic differentiation of the population of Eastern Turkey, see Nestmann 1989.

<sup>5</sup> See Bulut 1997, 1998, 2000 a, 2000 b, 2000 c, Bulut & Kırıl 2000, Johanson 1998.

## Issues of the Mainz project

The Mainz project on language contacts deals with dialectology, areal typology and ethnolinguistics. The role of contact-induced influence in the area has not been thoroughly investigated before. The aim is to describe mutual influences observed in encounters of languages representing different types and families. One central issue concerns linguistic change due to copying of structures, e.g. clause-combining devices.

The focus is on Turkic varieties in contact with Iranian and also Semitic languages, particularly in the Diyarbekir and Urfa regions in Eastern Anatolia, in the Adana region, a linguistic melting-pot with Kurdish and Arabic sub- and adstrates, and in Iran, e.g. Khalaj of Baharestan and Kashghay (Qaşqā'i), an Oghuz variety spoken in Nurabad and Firuzabad. The research group is collecting new data from less known or unknown non-written varieties, e.g. the Afshar dialect of Beyadistan in the Hamadan region, varieties of Nurabad and Firuzabad, the Sonqor enclave northeast of Kermanshah and Iraqi Turkic of the so-called "Turkmen belt". Previous specimens, if existing at all, are often insufficient, since they tend to render the varieties in normalized forms that conceal essential characteristics. The group has also succeeded in acquiring comprehensive data from female speakers, who are often monolingual and thus less influenced by the contact languages. Their lects are generally not represented in previous text collections.

Little attention has been paid earlier to the spoken varieties of the transitional area between the spheres of influence of the two Oghuz prestige languages Turkish and Azerbaijanian, i.e. the area extending from Eastern Anatolia into Iraq and Western Iran. The affiliation of minor local varieties to dialect groups and their mutual relations have

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For Turkic–Iranian language contacts in East Anatolian dialects, see also Brendemoen forthcoming b. Cf. the proceedings of the symposium on Turkic–Iranian language contacts ("Türkisch–iranische Sprachkontakte"), Mainz, 4.–5.12.1998, Johanson et alii forthcoming.

only been vaguely described. The analysis of older and new data will allow a more precise areal typology and a more differentiated classification.

One aim is to study the impact of historical and political factors on language, the roles of normative centers and lingua francas, changes of prestige languages in the respective regions, adjustment of state boundaries etc. The linguistic situation mirrors the historical development. Most speakers of Turkic are descendants of the Oghuz Saljuks. As for the prestige languages of the region, Persian was the medium of administration and culture in the early Oghuz states, whereas Turkic began to establish itself in the Aqqoyunlı and Qaraqoyunlı states of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Azerbaijanian became a prestige language in the region by the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the West, Ottoman developed as the dominant prestige language, subject to strong Persian influences. The status of Persian as a prestige language continued in the Ottoman Empire up to modern times. (See Bulut 2000 a.)

### **Iraqi Turkic**

The Iraqi Turkic varieties of the “Turkmen belt” occupy an interesting intermediary position. They have a complex background and present a rather heterogeneous picture, displaying connections in various directions.

The region has an ever-changing history of settlement with Turkic groups moving into the region in various waves from the early Muslim period on. It still has a high proportion of bi- or trilinguals with Arabic and Kurdish in various constellations. It has belonged to different zones of influence, reigned by Omayyads, Abbasids, Saljuks, Mongols, Elkhans, Jalayirids, Aqqoyunlı, Qaraqoyunlı, Safavids and Ottomans. It has experienced repeated changes of prestige languages, particularly Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman. The modern Turkish influence was strong until Arabic became the new official language in the 1930s. A certain diglossia Turkish vs. Iraqi Turkic is still observable.

In the Mainz project, more recent recordings of spoken varieties are analyzed and compared with data collected in neighboring regions of Turkey and Iran. No older sources are available for the spoken

varieties. In a recent study (2000 a), Christiane Bulut discusses the classification of the Iraqi Turkic varieties, comparing them to Anatolian and Irano–Turkic dialects of the Azerbaijanian and Afshar types. She concludes that the dialects originally display numerous features of the Afshar or Southern Oghuz group but also exhibit similarities with certain southeastern Anatolian dialects as those of Urfa and Diyarbakir. Turkish as prestige language has exerted profound influence on Iraqi Turkic. Thus, the syntax differs sharply from neighboring Irano–Turkic varieties.

### **Dialects in Turkey**

Turkey is a most promising area for linguistic field research, because dialectal variation is, in spite of the leveling influence of TV and radio, still considerable. Research on spoken Turkish is discussed in Johanson 1975. For a survey of Turkish dialectology, see Boeschoten 1991. On Anatolian dialects, on Greek and Turkish language encounters in Anatolia etc., see Brendemoen 1998 b and 1999.

Important projects are being carried out by Turkish scholars, who are also planning the publication of a dialect atlas; see Özsoy & Taylan (eds.) 2000. Interesting dialects spoken by Yörük groups in the province of Alanya are currently studied by Nurettin Demir of Gazimagusa, formerly of Mainz and Leipzig; see, e.g. 1993; cf. Johanson 1993 b. Turkey is also the home of numerous “transplanted groups” from Central Asia and other parts of the Turkic world. One result of fieldwork among such groups is Mark Kirchner’s phonetic and phonological description of a variety spoken by Kazaks in Istanbul (1992).

### **Eastern Black Sea coast dialects**

The dialects of the Eastern Black Sea coast present many noteworthy features. Particularly remarkable are some dialects of the province of Trabzon, described by Bernt Brendemoen, Oslo, who for many years has carried out thorough field studies in the region. Sample texts of the dialects of Trabzon are presented in Brendemoen 1980. Some of the dialects exhibit interesting cases of imposition (substrate influence), mostly copies of Greek structures in phonology and syntax. Brendemoen has studied the Greek influence in vowel harmony



(1992), pronominal syntax (1993), the use of the *-mİy* past (1997), word order (1998 a), etc. A survey of phonological aspects of Greek–Turkish language contact in Trabzon is found in Brendemoen forthcoming a. In particular cases, Kartvelian (South Caucasian) influence may be assumed; see Brendemoen 1990, 1996. A comprehensive phonological study of the Turkish dialects of Trabzon will be presented in a monograph (Brendemoen forthcoming c).

### **Meskhethian Turkish**

One of the interesting Turkish varieties spoken outside Turkey is Meskhethian. Up to 1944, the Meskhethians (also called *axıska* or *adıgün*) lived in a number of villages in the southern and southwestern uplands of Georgia, not far from the city of Batumi. Meskhethia, which had belonged to the Ottoman Empire, was transferred to Russia in 1829. The Meskhethians, originally Christians and possibly Georgians by descent, had adopted Turkish as their primary language during the Ottoman period. In 1944, the whole group, consisting of nearly 160,000 people, was evicted from Meskhethia and deported to Central Asia.

In 1956, the Meskhethians were rehabilitated, though not allowed to return to their homeland. Due to conflicts culminating in 1989, they were also evicted from Uzbekistan and left for various provinces of Russia. Though a sizeable portion of a total population of over 200,000 returned to the Caucasus region, only a few hundred could resettle in Meskhethia. Some live in Azerbaijan, where their language, a variety with interesting contact-induced imposition features, will be investigated by Vügar Sultanzade, Baku, a researcher at the Linguistic Institute of the Azerbaijanian Academy of Sciences and presently visiting researcher at Mainz.

### **Iran**

As we have already noted, many remarkable Turkic varieties are spoken within the borders of Iran.

Even several varieties of Iranian Azerbaijanian are still terra incognita, calling for documentation and description. The syntax of the

Tebriz vernacular, which is strongly influenced by Persian, has been studied in a doctoral dissertation by Filiz Kırıl (2000 a).

Khalaj (Xalaj), spoken in central Iran, is the most important discovery on the Turkic linguistic map during the last decades. It is a language that detached itself from its cognate varieties rather early, probably in the thirteenth century, and subsequently developed in a predominantly Persian surrounding. It has retained numerous archaic features and, at the same time, undergone remarkable typological changes. The fieldwork and descriptive work that led to the scholarly sensation of identifying and evaluating Khalaj was carried out by Gerhard Doerfer, Göttingen, and his associates, Wolfram Hesse, Semih Tezcan and others. See, e.g., the grammatical description in Doerfer 1988 (cf. Johanson 1991 b) and the texts published in Doerfer & Tezcan 1994. This work is now continued; see Tezcan 1999. The above-mentioned Filiz Kırıl, Mainz, has repeatedly carried out own fieldwork among the Khalaj (Kırıl 2000 b and 2000 c). She has also succeeded in documenting, for the first time, the rather conservative lects of female speakers, which had remained inaccessible to the male researchers previously active in the region.

The Kashghay (Qaşqā'ī) language of Iran is another fascinating case of a Turkic language that has been strongly influenced by Persian, changing its typological habitus to a great extent and losing many genuinely Turkic features. A good deal of data has been collected. Materials recorded by Gunnar Jarring in the 1940s are now being analyzed and edited by Éva Á. Csató, Uppsala.

These are only some examples of current activities. Researchers in Göttingen and elsewhere have investigated several other varieties in Iran and Afghanistan; see, e.g., Doerfer & Hesse 1989 and 1993, Doerfer & alii 1990; cf. Johanson 1990, 1997, 1992 b. Still much remains to be done. Iran is a rich reservoir of insufficiently known Turkic varieties. Gerhard Doerfer himself summarizes the situation as follows: "For Turcologists Iran is still a land of future discoveries" (1998: 281).

## **The Southeast**

Proceeding to the southeastern part of the Turkic world, we first pass through the huge complex of Uzbek dialects. I will here confine my-

self to referring to the recent survey by Aziz Džuraev, Tashkent, of “the Uzbek language massif” with its criticism of traditional dialect studies in the area (1991). Mention should also be made of the fine descriptive work done by Rémy Dor, Paris, on Kirghiz as previously spoken in the Pamir region of Afghanistan (see, e.g., 1981). For a brief survey of the Turkic and other Altaic linguistic groups in China, see Svanberg 1988.

Our first station in the Southeast is Eastern Turkistan, China’s Uyghur Autonomous Region. During the Cultural Revolution in China, field research was impossible in Eastern Turkistan, and much genuine Uyghur material was destroyed. In this part of the Turkic world, the present conditions are also rather favorable. The last decades have seen a considerable development of Turkic linguistics, e.g. at Xinjiang University, with remarkable activities of indigenous field researchers. In addition, foreign, e.g. Japanese, scholars take a growing interest in field research in the region.

### **Eastern Turki dialects**

As for the so-called Eastern Turki dialects, new researchers now go farther on the paths cleared by Gunnar Jarring and others. There is increasingly more information on the Urumchi–Kulja standard varieties—the northern dialect, earlier referred to as Ili Uyghur or Taranchi—and the dialects of Kashgar, Yarkand, Khotan, Kerya, Cherchen, Aqsu, Kucha, Turfan, Qumul (Hami), Kälpin, Guma, etc. However, because of the Cultural Revolution comprehensive materials collected from the 1960s on have remained unpublished.

Systematic descriptions of the dialects and comparative studies on their interrelations are still missing. It would be important to study the internal and external language contacts, especially in the insufficiently known dialects of the Tarim basin. Living dialect data will certainly shed light on older linguistic stages. Several isolated dialects still seem to display Old Uyghur or Karakhanid features alongside innovative ones.

Arienne M. Dwyer, Mainz, is currently engaged in a synchronic and diachronic study of dialects of Eastern Turkistan. She has carried out field research on phonological and contact-induced processes of Uy-

ghur and related Turkic languages spoken in China, cooperating closely with local linguists.

### **The Lopnor and Khotan dialects**

In some cases, it already seems too late to document the dialects of Eastern Turkistan. Thus the Lopnor dialect, the language of the Loplik (*loptuq, qara qoşunlar*), who formerly settled at Lake Lopnor and on the lower Tarim and later migrated upstream because of the desiccation, is practically extinct. The Lop desert area is now used for nuclear testing. The Loplik, whose origin is unknown, amounted to over 7,000 persons as late as in the 1950s. (See Svanberg 1987.)

However, dialect materials thought to have been lost during the Cultural Revolution have been found again. Therewith a most important source for modern Uyghur dialectology has become accessible after four decades. These last remainders of the Lopnor dialect are now being analyzed by the renowned dialectologist Mirsultan Osmanov, Urumchi, a member of the executive committee for language and orthography (“Aptonom rayonning til-yeziq xizmat komiteti”). The complete Lopnor data is also accessible at Mainz, where it will be subject to electronic processing and linguistic analysis in the framework of Arienne M. Dwyer’s above-mentioned project. Certain Khotan dialect materials that have recently become known will also be used in the project.

### **The Turfan dialect**

The Turfan oasis is the most important old center of Eastern Turkistan. The ruins of the cultural center of the West Uyghur Empire established here can still be seen at the Yarkhoto and Iduqut shähri sites. The local Uyghur variety spoken in the area of Turfan is of special interest, displaying some important features in phonology, lexicon and morphology. It has preserved numerous Old Uyghur words, e.g. some unique words not used in other dialects.

With the wave of Islamization following the collapse of the Yuan dynasty, the Turkic language of Eastern Turkistan was probably strongly influenced by the Karluk varieties used in the Karakhanid kingdom. Although the development of the spoken language is largely

unknown, there are some documents that are thought to mirror certain stages from the fifteenth century on. The Japanese Turcologist Masahiro Shogaito, Kyoto, has shown that the Uyghur materials (in Uyghur and Manchu script) of the vocabularies *Gao-chang-guan yi-yu* ('Translated vocabulary of the Qocho bureau') of the Ming dynasty and *Yu-zhi Wu-ti-Qing-wen-jian* ('Imperial dictionary of the five languages of the Qing Dynasty') of the Manchu dynasty reflect the Uyghur spoken in Turfan during the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively. It is possible that *Wei-wu-er-guan-yi-yu* ('Translated vocabulary of the Uyghur bureau') of the Ming period, which contains transcriptions with Chinese characters, mirrors a language of the same kind (Shogaito 1999).

The Uyghur linguist Abdurishid Yakup is, as a Humboldt research fellow at Mainz, currently working on the Turfan dialect, focusing on phonology and regional vocabulary. This project is based on materials collected in fieldwork from 1990 on in a wide area including Lukchun, Pichan, Tohsun, Buyluq, Murtuq, Yormung and Sirkip. Previous studies have been limited to specimens of one particular variety. The materials are compared with older data recorded by Turcologists in Turfan, with the materials found in the above-mentioned vocabularies, and with documents written in Turfan during the Manchu period.

## Eynu

In Eastern Turkistan, we are confronted with a further intriguing phenomenon: the so-called Eynu language in the western part of Sinkiang. Its speaker groups, estimated to be less than 30,000, are sparsely distributed along the fringe of Taklamakan, predominantly living in the area between Kashgar and Yarkand. Some groups live east of Aqsu and in the Khotan region. Villages where Eynu are reported to live are Paynap (Yengihisar), Yengihisar, Chiltanlar (Yakan), Darvishlar (Qaraqash); Gervoz (Khotan); Tamighil (Lop); Qarchun (Qeriya); Uqadi (Chariya) and Quchar. (For general information, see Lee-Smith 1996, Wurm 1997, Hayasi 2000.)

The Eynu language is characterized by an extreme form of substrate influence, a large-scale introduction of foreign elements by imposition. Its speakers have copied a mainly Persian vocabulary into

an Uyghur basic code, i.e. taken over the system of Uyghur, but partly retained the lexicon of their original primary language. The phonology, morphology and syntax are generally those of normal Uyghur, but the special vocabulary is not found there. Many of its elements belong to the basic vocabulary. Eynu is certainly an idiom formed under unusual socio-communicative conditions. Some scholars have taken it to be a “hybrid language”, produced from two different languages, but it is obviously just an Uyghur variety with a special vocabulary of non-Turkic origin.

Tooru Hayasi, Tokyo, has initiated a field research project in order to record and describe the Eynu language. Together with Sabit Rozi, Tahirjan Muhammad and Wang Jianxin he has so far carried out field-work in the villages Paynap, Tamighil and Gervoz. Hayasi (2000) has found that the speakers use it as a secret language during visits outside their own places of settlement. Previous researchers have believed that Eynu was used within the family and Uyghur outside the family. In reality, only adult men know this special language; they use it when they want to make their conversation unintelligible to outsiders, and they use normal Uyghur when this is unnecessary, e.g. at home.

Actually, the designation Eynu is only used in one village Tamighil (Khotan). Local neighbors usually call the group Abdal, a word with a strongly discriminatory implication. The Eynu groups have generally been discriminated against in their local communities. Formerly some of them worked as peddlers, circumcisers or beggars. At present, most of them engage in agriculture. The Eynu may be compared with various “Abdal” groups in Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey, formerly nomadic groups which combine a local Turkic morphosyntax with a vocabulary that is partly of Persian and partly of unknown origin (Tietze & Ladstätter 1994).

### **West China: Yellow Uyghur and Salar**

Far eastwards, close to the Great Chinese Wall, we find two highly interesting, though endangered Turkic languages. Both are of great value for comparative Turcology, and both are instructive cases with respect to language contacts and language policy in China.

The first one is the variety of the Turkic-speaking part of the Yellow Uyghurs (*sarıy yuğur*). The majority of the Yellow Uyghurs,

who were recognized as a “nationality” in 1953, live in the Yugur autonomous county of Sunan, which forms the largest part of the so-called Kansu corridor, the narrowest part of the province Kansu (Gansu); see Ståhlberg 1996. According to their primary language, the Yellow Uyghurs are classified as Turkic or “Western”, Mongolic or “Eastern”, Chinese and Tibetan. The Turkic-speaking Yellow Uyghurs number about 3,000 in the Kansu corridor.

The historical origin of the Turkic-speaking Yellow Uyghurs is not clear. They are officially Buddhists, with clear traces of shamanism. As for the affiliation of their language, it was previously believed to be an isolated dialect of Uyghur. However, it appears to be rather closely related to south Siberian languages of the Khakas group, possibly also to the Lopnor dialect already mentioned. Its relationship to Old Uyghur and Old Kirghiz is unclear. Since it has been strongly influenced by neighboring varieties of Tibetan, Chinese and Mongolic, it is highly important for studies on language contact. It is one of the least investigated Turkic languages, but it has now been thoroughly studied by Marti Roos, Leiden, on the basis of comprehensive field research (2000).

The second interesting language of the region is Salar, likewise a little known Turkic idiom. It is mainly spoken in the province of Tsinghai (Qinghai), until 1928 a part of Tibet called Amdo. About 90,000 Salars, of which at least two thirds are native speakers of the language, live in the south of the province, between the Yellow River and the Tsinghai Lake. A western dialect of Salar is spoken by over 2,000 persons in the Kulja (Ghulja) region, close to the border of Kazakhstan.

The Salars are one of China’s officially recognized ethnic minorities. Their language is not written. The Tsinghai Salars form the easternmost Muslim outpost of the Turkic-speaking world. Remarkably enough, the language seems to be of Oghuz Turkic origin, thus having its closest relatives in the southwestern part of the Turkic world, particularly in Turkmenistan (cf. the Salir tribe; Clark 1998: 8–11, 17–18). According to their own tradition, the Salars emigrated from the Samarkand region in Transoxiana at the end of the fourteenth century. Since then their main dialect has been influenced by adjacent Mongolic, Tibetan and Sinitic varieties.

The few previous studies on eastern Salar are now partly out of date. Recently, however, the language has been investigated by the above-mentioned Arienne M. Dwyer, who carried out intensive field-work in the Tsinghai province in the years 1991–1993. She collected a comprehensive unique material, which she subsequently analyzed in the project “The Salar language: Contact-induced language change and areal linguistics” during her years at Mainz as a guest researcher of the Humboldt Foundation. The results are being published in the series “Turcologica” (2000).

### **The Northeast**

When proceeding to the Northeast, we leave the Islamic domain of the Turkic world. Here we find Buddhist or officially Orthodox Christian Turkic-speaking groups, frequently with shamanist elements in their religious practice.

### **Southern Siberia**

Southern Siberia is a region with a rich collection of native Turkic varieties exhibiting considerable internal differences, but also partly common areal typological developments. Some of them display numerous cases of imposition due to non-Turkic substrates.

### **Shor**

The Shor language is spoken by an indigenous Turkic group of Southern Siberia. Approximately 12,500 of an estimated total of 18,000 Shors live in Mountain Shoriya, the southern part of the Kemerovo region. More than three fourths of the Shors live in cities, where Russian is dominant. Only some 10,000 speak their native language; almost all of them are bilingual in Shor and Russian. The present-day language use is mainly confined to the domestic area.

Shor is one of the languages that have long been suppressed and are presently endangered. The mass influx of Russian immigrants in the 1930s constituted the most serious threat. In the period 1942–1988, Shor was not used as a written language any longer. For almost fifty years, the language was not taught at schools. Thus, the number



of speakers has diminished. Transmission of the language to the younger generations has almost ceased, except in rural areas.

Shor plays an essential role for comparative Turcology, exemplifying certain central genetic and typological problems. Its spoken varieties appear to be open to all kinds of copying from Russian. It displays profound syntactic changes; e.g. word order shifts and development of analytic clause types with copied conjunctions and other function words. Other contact languages include Khakas and Altay Turkic.

Shor is still rather insufficiently known. The only existing grammar was published in 1941, reflecting the language stage of that time. There is still no comprehensive description of the syntax. However, the last fifteen years have seen determined and forceful documentation activities. During annual expeditions into Mountain Shoriya from 1984 on, a comprehensive field material has been collected. On the basis of this material, Shor is being investigated by members of the renowned linguistic school of Novosibirsk, scholars active at the local branch of the Academy of Sciences and the State University. One of them is Irina Nevskaja, Novokuznetsk, a further visiting scholar at Mainz who has been supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The outcome of her project “Circumstantial constructions in Shor” (cf. Nevskaja 1993) will be published in the series “Turcologica”.

## Sayan Turkic

The Sayan Turkic subgroup consists of Tuvan (*tiva*, Tuvinian, Russian *tuviński jazyk*) and a small language, Tofan (*toʒa dili*), Tofalar, Karagas, Russian *tofalarskij jazyk*). The latter is spoken northeast of Tuva, on the northeast slopes of the East Sayan Mountains. In the north of this region, we find the small Tojan group (*töja*). As we shall see, Tuvan dialects are also spoken outside the core area in Southern Siberia. The speakers of Tofan had a Southern Samoyedic primary language as late as 200 years ago. Though there are only some 300–400 speakers of Tofan, a written language was created in 1989 (Schönig 1993). For details on Tofan, see Rassadin 1971 and 1978. In the framework of the Volkswagen Foundation Program for Documentation of Endangered Languages, K. David Harrison, Yale, and a research team is undertaking a comprehensive documentation of the Tofan language

and culture, cooperating with the Tofans themselves in their efforts at cultural revitalization.

### **Western Mongolia**

Tuvan is also spoken in the western part of Mongolia. About 6,000 speakers live in Hovd (Khobdo). The most comprehensive recent material of Tuvan dialects outside Southern Siberia pertains to a variety spoken by a small Turkic minority in the Altay region located in the extreme western part of Mongolia, in the Tsengel district of the Bayan-Ölgiy province. These Altay Tuvans, about 2,400 persons, who have been separated from Tuva for a long time, are still strongly characterized by the nomadic way of life. They are divided into three groups, the Gök Monjaq, the Aq Soyan and the Xara Soyan. Their variety deviates a good deal from standard Tuvan. However, recently introduced schoolbooks from Tuva have exerted a certain influence.

Erika Taube, Leipzig, visiting professor at Mainz in 1992, has in several field research trips during the last two decades collected linguistically and ethnologically highly interesting materials including fairy-tales, riddles, proverbs, shamanist texts, etc., which will all be published in “Turcologica” (Taube forthcoming).

### **Dukha**

Another isolated variety of Tuvan is spoken by a nomadic group in Mongolia’s northernmost region, northwest of Lake Khövsgöl, in an area bordering the Republic of Tuva in the west and the Republic of Buryatia in the northeast. Most of the speakers live in the Tsaaganuur district of the Khövsgöl province. The self-designation of the group is Dukha, whereas the Mongols refer to them as *tsaatan* (‘reindeer herders’). The Dukha consider themselves descendants of the Old Uyghurs.

The thirty reindeer-herding families are divided into the fourteen households of the “east taiga” (in the north) and the sixteen households to the “west taiga” (in the south). The Dukha of the “east taiga”, who probably came from the Toja region of Tuva, have been nomadizing in the area for at least 200–250 years. During the Manchu dynasty in China, when Tuva was a part of Outer Mongolia, they used

to nomadize within a much larger area. This area was later divided between Russia and Mongolia, and the border was firmly established in the 1920s. The Dukha of the “east taiga” were thus isolated from the central Tuvan culture. The group of the “west taiga” came to Mongolia much later. Many of them settled during the 1940s to escape the collectivization in Tuva.

The Dukha are highly interesting from anthropological and linguistic points of view. They are the only reindeer herders in Mongolia and live in tents made from reindeer. They have maintained many older features, for example their shamanist practices, but also adapted to the new environment. The groups are presently under strong pressure of economic and ecological forces, which endanger their reindeer-herding culture.

Their language exhibits several features that differ from standard Tuvan. The Turcologist L. Bold, Ulan Baator, has been working on the language and published some materials. Elisabetta Ragagnin, Mainz, is currently doing fieldwork with the Dukha of the “east taiga” in order to describe their variety of Tuvan.

### **Dzungarian Tuvan**

Varieties of Tuvan are also spoken in the north of the Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, close to the borders of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Mongolia. The speakers are known as Dīwa, Soyan, etc., and are called *kök mončaq*, ‘Blue Beads’ (cf. Gök Monjaq above) by their Kazak neighbors. They live in the Junggar–Altay region of the Altay prefecture, predominantly in the villages Khom and Khanas of the county of Burchin and in Aq Khawa of the county of Qaba, a region referred to by themselves as *dört ken*, ‘the four rivers’. There are also scattered groups in adjacent counties, e.g. Altay and Köktoghay. All appear to be descendants of Altay Tuvans who migrated into the region in the seventeenth century. For their history, language and culture, see Mongush 1996 b. On Tuvans in Mongolia and China, see Mongush 1996 a.





This small ethnic group, which probably does not exceed 3,000 persons, is not officially recognized as a “nationality” of its own, but dealt with as Mongols. The highly endangered Tuvan vernacular has so far been poorly documented. In 1956, the Chinese Turcologist Geng Shimin, Beijing, wrote down materials in the counties Burchin and Qaba. Since the end of the 1980s, extensive linguistic fieldwork has been carried out in the region. One of the field researchers, Talant Mawkanuli, has, under the supervision of Larry V. Clark and György Kara, Bloomington, written a doctoral thesis on the phonology and morphology of what he calls “Jungar Tuva”, spoken by less than 2,000 persons around Lake Khanas (1998). Thus, our information about Tuvan varieties is currently increasing. On the study of Tuvan in China, see Sat & Doržu 1989.

### **Fuyü Turkic**

It is even possible to proceed farther eastwards on the Turkic map, namely to the so-called Fuyü language, spoken northwest of Harbin in Manchuria, in China’s Heilungkiang (Heilongjiang) province. The Fuyü group now consists of about 1,500 persons. According to their tradition, their ancestors were deported here from the Altay region in the mid-eighteenth century.

The self-designation of the group, *gürgüz*, points to a Yenisey Kirghiz origin. Fuyü Turkic is closely related to the southern Siberian varieties Khakas and Chulym as well as to Yellow Uyghur. It is strongly influenced by Mongolian and Chinese. Since the language is now spoken by a handful of persons of poor linguistic competence, it is an extremely urgent task to document it. Though it has been studied by Hu Zhen-Hua and Guy Imart, much additional information is needed (see Schönig 1998).

### **Dolgan**

We now take a giant stride to the extreme Northeast of the Turkic world, to the Dolgans of Northern Siberia, close to the Arctic Ocean. The Dolgans, maximally 7,000 persons, live in the northern part of the Siberian lowlands: in the southern part of the large and sparsely inhabited Taimyr Peninsula, on the Khatanga and Pyasina rivers, partly

also on the Yenisey, etc. Their nearest neighbors are Nganasans, speakers of a Northern Samoyedic language.

The Dolgans were originally a Tungusic group that settled on the Vilyuy River and adopted a Yakut variety there. They probably separated from the Lena Yakuts at the end of the sixteenth century, migrating northwards up to the Taimyr, where they absorbed parts of the indigenous population. Their first self-designation was *tia kihitä* ('the taiga people'). Later, they were called *dolgan* or *dulgan*. Today they prefer the ethnonym *baka* (from the Yakut self-designation *saxa*).

Dolgan is the northernmost representative of North Siberian Turkic. It is very close to Yakut and may linguistically be considered a Yakut dialect, though it differs from other northwestern dialects of this language. For political and social reasons it is often considered an independent language.

With its non-Turkic substrates, Dolgan is a complex case of language contact. First, Evenki speakers shifted to it, establishing a variety of their own. Later, also Samoyedic groups shifted to this variety, partly via Evenki. The modern form of Dolgan emerged as a Yakut-based lingua franca used for communication between several linguistic groups. When a Dolgan ethnicity was formed about 100–150 years ago, it became a common native language. Some Dolgans are still bilingual in Dolgan and Evenki, and some still speak Nganasan. Also small Yakut groups in the Taimyr Peninsula have been Dolganized. Dolgan displays interesting cases of imposition. It has been studied by Marek Stachowski, Kraków, (e.g. 1993, 1998) and is currently being investigated by the Japanese linguist Setsu Fujishiro, Kobe, on the basis of thorough fieldwork (see, e.g., Fujishiro 1999). Dolgan has lost much of its former importance as a lingua franca and may today be regarded as an endangered language.

## **The Northwest**

Leaving the Northeast in the direction of the Northwest of the Turkic world, we first arrive in the Volga–Kama region. It exhibits complex contact phenomena, involving Bulgar Turkic (Chuvash), Kipchak Turkic (Tatar, Bashkir) and Finno–Ugric elements (see Johanson 2000).

It is not possible here to summarize the huge amount of fieldwork done in this area. On the Turcological side, renowned Hungarian

scholars such as András Róna-Tas, Budapest and Szeged, Árpád Berta, Szeged, and Klára Agyagási, Debrecen, have played a major role in systematizing the dialect materials (see, e.g., Berta 1989, Agyagási 1996). Both Berta and Agyagási have accomplished some of this work as Humboldt research fellows at Mainz. A monograph by Agyagási on the connections between Chuvash and Cheremis (Mari) is to appear in the series “Turcologica”.

Chuvash, which is the only living Bulgar Turkic variety and whose speakers, unlike their Muslim Turkic neighbors, are Orthodox Christians, is of eminent importance for the reconstruction of earlier stages of Turkic. Michael Dobrovolsky, Calgary, has recently carried out fieldwork on Chuvash phonology (see, e.g., 1998).

Noghay, a Turkic language spoken in Daghestan and the Caucasus area, is little known in its modern spoken form. Birsel Karakoç, Mainz, has collected remarkable data, e.g. on the complex verbal system, during her field research in the region (2000).

### **Turkish varieties in the Balkans, etc.**

Proceeding farther to the west, we reach the Balkan area, whose Turkish dialects have been studied in relative detail over the decades. Much work remains to be done. Interesting varieties spoken by Roma groups in the Balkans have now been studied, e.g. by Yaron Matras, Manchester. There are also efforts to study the last remnants of the Turkish varieties spoken in the north of Greece by so-called Surguchis (*sürgüç*), etc.

While most of the speaker groups mentioned so far are Muslims, the Gagauz are Orthodox Christians. Their language, spoken in Moldavia, Ukraine and Bulgaria is a typologically interesting case, since it is closely related to Turkish and at the same time strongly influenced by Slavic languages in pronunciation, sentence structure, etc. On the basis of fieldwork, Astrid Menz has described the characteristic syntactic structures of modern Gagauz in a Mainz dissertation (1999).

It also seems important to mention the recent contributions to the description of the development of diaspora Turkish as spoken in northwestern Europe (Johanson 1991 a). Several excellent studies on this topic have appeared, e.g. publications by Rik Boeschoten and Ad



Backus, Tilburg, on the development in the Netherlands (see, e.g., Boeschoten 1990, Backus 1992).

## **Karaim**

Let us finally go to the extreme Northwest of the Turkic-speaking world, to Karaim, which is still spoken by small groups in Lithuania and Ukraine. The speakers are Karaites, professing an Old Testament faith. This Kipchak Turkic language came here from the Crimea at least 600 years ago. It has thus been spoken for a long time in relative isolation from other Turkic languages, undergoing typologically interesting changes, in particular under Slavic influence.

Due to political measures taken in the Soviet period, the Karaim communities are now dispersed. The maintenance of their language and culture has become endangered. The number of Karaims in Lithuania is about 260, but only a fourth of them, mostly members of the oldest generation, still have a communicative competence in the language. Their center is Trakai in the neighborhood of Vilnius. The Halich dialect spoken in Ukraine is almost extinct. Numerous Karaims without any knowledge of the language live in the neighboring countries. The dialects spoken in Lithuania and Halich have been investigated by Éva Á. Csató, Uppsala, in a project financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and carried out at the Linguistics Department of the University of Cologne in Germany. The project included a fieldwork phase of three years starting in 1994. See Csató forthcoming; on various linguistic features such as contact-induced phenomena, syllabic harmony, viewpoint aspect and tense categories, syntactic code-copying, and vocabulary, see Csató 1999 a, 1999 c, 1999 d, 2000 a, 2000 b.

From a Swedish point of view it is interesting to note that Gustaf Peringer Lillieblad, a professor of the University of Uppsala, visited the Karaims at the end of the seventeenth century and, on that occasion, wrote down a couple of Karaim sentences from the translation of the Old Testament.

## **The purpose of language documentation**

So far, I have talked about all these projects as if it were self-evident why they are carried out. However, what is the purpose of language documentation? Why should we bother about these mainly peripheral languages?

## **Languages in danger**

Many of the languages mentioned above are endangered, i.e. vulnerable to extinction. Several smaller varieties have expired during the twentieth century, and some other are now vanishing. “Killer languages” such as Russian, Chinese, Persian and the stronger Turkic languages are crowding out or “eating up” the weaker languages, many of which have already “run out of time”. Most of them have been under enormous pressure from Russian.

The situation is especially acute in the European and Siberian areas. According to Wurm (1999: 32), languages such as Chulym and Tofan are “moribund” in the sense that only a handful of mostly old speakers is left. Some are “seriously endangered”, since their youngest good speakers are largely past middle age: Karaim, Crimean Tatar, Gagauz in Bulgaria and European Turkey, Shor, Teleut and Altay Turkic. Others are “endangered in various degrees”: Bashkir, Chuvash, Noghay and other Turkic languages of the Caucasian area, Gagauz in Romania, Siberian Tatar, and Khakas. According to Wurm, most local languages of Siberia, except Yakut and Dolgan, are in danger of disappearing: Uralic, Samoyedic, Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Palaeo-Siberian languages, Siberian Eskimo and Aleut.

All the threatened languages exhibit changes through heavy copying of foreign structural features. However, the reason for their weakness is not structural decay due to this copying, but loss of social functions. Languages fade away when they are not needed, i.e. when they do not have sufficient social functions in order for parents to endeavor to transmit them to their children. The endangerment starts when the young generations begin to switch over to the dominant language because they find it more attractive and prestigious. They frequently become monolingual speakers of the dominant language since they fear remaining underprivileged if they keep their own language.

Bilingualism both maintains the dominated language and allows participation in the life of the dominant society. Many smaller languages are spoken by bi- or trilinguals, e.g. in Uzbekistan. However, this very situation is often thought to have negative effects, eventually leading to the extinction of the socially weaker language. It is claimed that a minority language can exist alongside a major language only as long as it retains a strong monolingual population.

### **Mass death of languages**

Currently, increasing endangerment and death of languages is observed all over the world, a development that, like other kinds of globalization, will extinguish variation in an irrevocable way. A massive extinction is under way, the main “killer languages” being European, Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin and Indonesian. Most “victim languages” are non-European. About half of the languages in the world are believed to be endangered, even some languages with a large number of speakers, though under strong economic and cultural pressure from a dominant language. Language extinction is sometimes compared to species extinction, strong languages wiping out weak ones in the same way that man destroys rainforest species, etc.

However, why should we mourn the loss of languages? Isn't there reason to welcome reduction of inefficient diversity and variation? Why worry about the need to close down economically weak small local units? Some observers attribute the engagement in endangered language to sheer sentiment and claim that we might as well regret the loss of old costumes. Linguists, it is said, waste time lamenting the loss of fringe languages that have proved inferior and thus useless. While they may be beautiful, they cannot be preserved alive without far-reaching lifestyle changes. The increasing dominance of certain languages is inevitable. The parallels with evolutionary biology are misleading, since humanity can still function with a drastically reduced number of languages.

### **Humanistic arguments**

However, humanistic arguments for studying languages in danger are often put forward. Each language is thought to reflect a unique world-

view and cultural heritage:

Human language is the most precious multi-form cultural possession of humanity, which in its thousands of forms expresses the different ways in which their speakers have come to terms with the concrete and spiritual world around them and within them, formed their various philosophies and different world views, and put their innermost thoughts into words and communicated them to others ... (Wurm 1999: 28).

With the loss of a language, an irreplaceable unit in our understanding of human thought is lost. Thus, maintaining knowledge of non-dominant languages preserves a cultural diversity, which is just as important as maintaining the physical biodiversity in the world. Compare the following summary of the value of field research documenting endangered languages:

The pressures of life in the twentieth century are leading to increasing homogenization of humanity, with many cultures and languages in imminent danger of extinction. We owe it both to the members of these cultures or speakers of these languages and to posterity to record the contributions that these cultures and languages can make to our understanding of Man as a whole (Comrie 1988: 6).

In the last decades, large-scale programs have been established in order to save and preserve linguistic materials, e.g. “Endangered Languages of the World”, coordinated by Stephen Wurm, Canberra. The Volkswagen Foundation Program for Documentation of Endangered Languages has just initiated a number of pilot projects. The Seminar für Orientkunde of the University of Mainz is taking part in this program with a project called “Developing a documentational multimedia database prototype for endangered languages using Salar and Monguor”, carried out by Arienne Dwyer and an interdisciplinary research team.

Field researchers have a good deal to give their informants through their very interest in the specific language and culture. The informants are often persons whose life-experience is cast in the mold of this one language, the only medium by which they can express their thoughts about their traditions and community life adequately. This is something they may share with the field researcher who has learnt their language and is investigating it. One case in point is the speakers of Ukrainian Karaim, once a large community, today a group of six elder-

ly persons. On spoken Halich Karaim, see Csató 1998.

### **Revitalization and revival**

Few field linguists cherish romantic ideas about preserving species threatened by extinction, i.e. about giving languages new life by artificial respiration. A language lacking sufficient social functions cannot be given new functions through ever so much field research.

Nevertheless, there are some successful efforts to consolidate endangered languages. During the last decades there has been a re-awakening of the self-consciousness of some linguistic minority groups, e.g. some Siberian peoples. They have shown a growing interest in preserving their languages and transmitting them to new generations. The value of language as a symbol of the identity of its speakers has increased. The old oppressive language policies have changed.

For example, in southern Siberia a last attempt is being made to reanimate the Shor national culture, to restore some of the social functions of the Shor language and to reinforce the generally weak linguistic competence. This is a case of great practical interest in the current situation of language policy of the Russian Federation. The sociolinguistic situation in Shoriya is characterized by the revival of written Shor, which is again taught in a number of schools, including higher schools. Shor language teachers are again being trained to work in cities and villages. Publications in Shor, textbooks and literary works, have begun to appear (Nevskaja 1998). The case of written Tofan has already been mentioned above. Furthermore, at the beginning of the 1990s Dolgan was introduced as a language of public instruction. Since its speakers distinguish themselves rigorously from Yakuts, they tend to consider their idiom a “language” in the political sense. The possibility of revitalization of Karaim dialects is discussed in Csató 1999 b.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The “Cooperation for the maintenance of the Karaim language and culture” aims to help the Karaim community in Lithuania to maintain its culture and language by comprehensive documentation of their cultural heritage, development of teaching materials and arranging summer courses for young Karaims to who want to learn about the cultural, religious and linguistic tradition.

Revitalization in the sense of bringing endangered or almost extinct languages out of danger may thus be possible. Efforts to get speakers to (re)use moribund languages may be successful. Dialects believed extinct may also be found to still have speakers. So far, however, no attempt to revive a really extinct Turkic language has been made.<sup>7</sup>

When revitalizing a language, it is often necessary to renew its grammatical and lexical resources. The extant material may be meager or dubious. For this purpose, e.g. for the consolidation of Shor, it is an urgent task to carry out descriptive work of the kind mentioned above. Even if a language dies, records of it will be valuable for posterity. Thus, linguists are needed to study endangered or moribund languages, to document them before their last few speakers disappear.<sup>8</sup> Activities of this kind actually tend to keep the languages alive. The low status of non-standard varieties makes their maintenance difficult, but research on them can consolidate their status.

### **Comparative studies**

In what other ways can linguistic Turcology use the data collected? For example, it can use it for comparative purposes. The Turkic languages form a family with rather clear-cut internal genetic bonds and may be traced back relatively easily to prehistorical stages. On the other hand, they offer unusually rich data for the study of language contacts with Iranian, Slavic, Greek, Mongolic, Tungusic, Chinese, etc. The combination of genetic unity and varying typological changes yields a complex interplay of factors seldom observed in such an unambiguous and explicable way in other families. This is a model case for demonstrating how languages may function and develop. Its

<sup>7</sup> It is sometimes claimed that really extinct languages have been revived, e.g. Hebrew, Cornish, Tasmanian. Revivals of languages are often compared to the recreation of extinct animals in evolutionary biology. R. M. W. Dixon, however, maintains that “no language—once it has ceased to be used in everyday life—has ever been revived” (1997: 111).

<sup>8</sup> For example, the now extinct Australian language Jiwari has been documented by Peter Austin, Melbourne. The recordings published on the web page [www.linguistics.unimelb.edu.au/people/staff/austin.html](http://www.linguistics.unimelb.edu.au/people/staff/austin.html). document Jiwari as spoken by its last native speaker. The aim of initiatives such as this is to reverse the current process of the loss of the Australian aboriginal linguistic and cultural heritage.

general importance goes well beyond the domain of Turcology. The possible external genetic relations—with Mongolic, Tungusic, etc.—are still controversial, mainly because the individual languages have not been sufficiently studied.

The comparative work cannot be confined to the standard languages. It must get under the cover of uniformity and regularity that characterizes most of them, in particular those in the central areas, which have been subject to removals and processes of mixing and thus developed leveled structures. In the fringe languages, we often find deviating structures that permit us to discover deeper layers and to reconstruct older stages. They often provide invaluable pieces for the comparative puzzle.

### **Research on typology**

Today's linguistic Turcology is increasingly oriented towards typology and contact phenomena, which brings it closer to modern general linguistics. It can provide typologists with genuine data instead of the stale handbook data generally available. Conversely, it may derive inspiration from typological research. Recent typological projects involving Turkic data include “Eurotyp”, organized by the European Science Foundation (see, e.g., Dahl 2000).

For general historical linguistics, languages spoken in small, isolated communities are important since they tend to manifest various rare structural developments. Language loss means lost opportunities to gather substantial data. This is an additional argument for extensive recording of Turkic languages on the brink of extinction. Several other fringe languages have been recorded just before becoming extinct. Knowledge of such languages is invaluable for research on linguistic universals, variation in cognitive structures and their linguistic encoding. In this field, Turcologists may make important contributions.

Research on language contact has already been mentioned. Turkic-speaking parts of Eurasia exhibit numerous cases of complex areal interaction, ethnic and linguistic processes with permanent changes of boundaries, linguistic convergence, language shift, etc. Areal typology is of crucial importance in peripheries where new structures emerge through language contact. Century-old intense contacts between

languages of different origins have led to remarkable typological results. The roles of Turkic and Persian as means of interethnic communication during more than a millennium are particularly fascinating.

Language contact is one of the focal points of Turcological research at Mainz. For example, the project on Southern Anatolia and Western Iran mentioned above aims at shedding light on the emergence and development of linguistic varieties in the perspective of areal typology. Contact-induced linguistic copying is an intricate matter conditioned by various communicative needs. One goal of the Mainz project is to describe the interaction of factors more accurately and to establish a more precise contact typology. The material is analyzed according to certain theoretical and methodological principles. This approach to the study of contact phenomena has been presented in a book on structural factors in Turkic language contacts (Johanson 1992 a) and in a number of articles (e.g. Johanson 1993 a, 1999 a, 1999 b). Central ideas are the assumptions that copies are never identical to their models and that copying processes are always creative.

A rewarding cooperation on “Linguistic structure changes as a result of Irano–Turkic language contacts” has been established between Turcologists in Mainz and Iranists in Uppsala. One product is a volume on evidentials in Turkic, Iranian and neighboring languages (Johanson & Utas 2000). The above-mentioned project on Salar carried out by Arianne M. Dwyer also deals with areal linguistics and contact-induced change, describing the structure of Salar in the light of the particular contact situation obtaining in northwestern China.

### **Jarring’s choice**

It is interesting to note what motives Gunnar Jarring once had for the choice of his research field. His interest in fieldwork began in Berlin, and this interest would later dominate all of his research. He decided to focus on Eastern Turki. He had early acquired an interest for Central Asia through Sven Hedin’s book of travels. Nevertheless, the decisive factor was, as he has admitted, Willi Bang’s polemics against Wilhelm Radloff. Bang was an intellectual, a thoroughly systematized theoretician. Radloff had become famous because of his recordings of Turkic dialects. He was the field worker, who had experienced the



Turkic peoples on the spot. He had recorded words and linguistic forms which did not always agree with the grammar known at that time, and which were not to be found in reference literature. Bang considered the value of these recordings doubtful. The lectures Jarring attended with Bang in Berlin were strongly critical of Radloff. Gustaf Raquette, Jarring's teacher in Lund, had a similar attitude, i.e. he belittled the language spoken by the people, and upheld the literary language as the norm.

The result was: "Bang's and Raquette's attitude made me curious about the spoken language. I felt that it, rather than the other, should be studied. I also believed that this should be done very soon, before differences in dialect had a chance to become effaced as a result of improved communication means in Central Asia" (Jarring 1986: 54).

These considerations have gained still more importance since the 1930s. Jarring himself preferred as informants illiterate persons who spoke an archaic Eastern Turki, untouched by all modern features. In the present situation, this is hardly possible any more.

### **Empirical and theoretical work**

The picture of Radloff as the field researcher and Bang as the closet-scholar and theoretician illustrates the issue of the relation between empirical and theoretical work. After all, these two types, field linguistics and so-called "armchair linguistics", do not conflict with each other, but must go hand in hand. Empirical and theoretical research are complementary to each other. What would the discoveries of the inscriptions have been worth without Thomsen's deskwork, which made them intelligible? And what would his acumen have achieved without this database? Modern discoveries *in situ* are equally futile without systematization and theoretical analysis. There is little sense in collecting data that are not interpreted in a wider context. The empirical work should be carried out in close contact with a more general theoretical and methodological development. For work on general and comparative typological and genetic problems, the theoretical framework is crucial.

These are important lessons that we may learn from the fine Swedish tradition of great field researchers such as the Sinologist Bernhard

Karlgren (1899–1974), the Iranist Hannes Sköld (1886–1930) and the Turcologist Gunnar Jarring (1907–). Today we still need linguistically trained scholars who can produce empirically adequate and theoretically meaningful research. It is my hope that the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul might also play an active part in the work outlined here.

### **Cultural studies**

One significant aspect of linguistic field research is its vital importance for history, anthropology, ethnology, folklore, etc., i.e. for cultural research based on genuine texts. It provides invaluable information that actually cannot be acquired in other ways. For example, Gunnar Jarring's materials have played an important role in saving a vanishing Eastern Turkistan cultural world from oblivion. The same will be true of Erika Taube's Tuvan texts from Western Mongolia.

Language is the core of the Turkic cultural heritage. Recorded texts are the key to the oral literature and mythology. Loss of a language does not only mean loss of linguistic diversity, but also of the culture of which the language has been the vehicle. Linguistic problems lead us to the socio-historical contexts in which the languages are spoken. Language mirrors social circumstances, historical change, history of culture and settlement, and constellations of political dominance. Linguistic data may thus help reconstruct historical facts. The problems of emergence and development of the varieties force us to pay attention to the interaction with extralinguistic facts. Areal typology highlights historical, cultural and ethnolinguistic problems of the areas in question. Studies on linguistic contacts introduce us to the history of civilization of the peoples concerned.

In the Mainz project on Southern Anatolia and Western Iran, the interaction with extralinguistic factors plays a central role. The ethnolinguistic conditions have had profound effects on the socio-cultural and political history of the region. The project pays attention to demographic facts, the history of settlement, cultural traditions and contacts, relations between dominant and dominated groups, socio-cultural differences between the Ottoman and Persian domains, and tries to shed light upon these matters. The linguistic changes are set in relation

to possible influences of the social environments and the networks in which the speakers are integrated. Linguistic criteria may determine the historical and political affiliations of small groups not mentioned in historiographic writings. Thus, the archaic features of Khalaj show that its speakers do not share the history of the Oghuz. Phonetic characteristics of Iraqi Turkic suggest that its essential linguistic developments took place at a time when the region was in close contact with Azerbaijan, i.e. under the tribal federations Aqqoyunli ('White Sheep') and Qaraqoyunli ('Black Sheep') of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (see Bulut 2000 a).

Another example is the periphery in which Salar and Yellow Uyghur are spoken, namely a convergence area of different cultural spheres: Chinese, Mongolic, Tibetan and Turkic. Arienne M. Dwyer's above-mentioned work is also based on rich folkloristic as well as musical materials, and aims at shedding light on the development of the Turkic languages of China with respect to their cultural history. The development of these languages is seen in a contact perspective and with special regard to the history of migration and settlement.

### **Continuity and innovation**

It is exciting, particularly for young people, to take active part in documenting languages and collecting new primary data, i.e. to feel involved in pioneering achievements of the kind discussed here. However, to be able to work successfully in the field thorough preparations are usually required. They include linguistic competence, training in descriptive, historical and theoretical linguistics, practical knowledge of languages, Persian, Slavic, Chinese, Mongolic, Tungusic etc., according to area, skills in field research technique and a good knowledge of local administrative structures. The researcher must also be open to cooperation with experts in other fields.

A good deal of creativity may certainly be set free by active work which to a large extent consists of "learning by doing". However, this can never mean acting in a self-contained way, ignoring previous achievements and inventing the wheel again and again. The impressive work that started with Thomsen, Radloff, Bang and others is a necessary basis for new research. This is often forgotten today, when

Central Asia and other Turkic-speaking regions are *en vogue* again. Innovation presupposes continuity; it cannot be achieved by underestimating the complex tasks and disregarding previous work.

### **International cooperation**

Linguistic documentation is an urgent task that is best carried out in international cooperation. Scholars working in this field have shown a great interest in developing new ways of international cooperation. Thus, the recent years have seen the establishment of several projects aiming at collecting materials of endangered languages and organizing courses in field research.

As far as Turkic languages are concerned, several initiatives have been taken. Workshops on the structural development of peripheral Altaic languages with participants from Japan, China and Europe have been organized at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies by Tooru Hayasi. A panel on “Linguistic evidence from peripheral Turkic languages” was arranged at the Ninth International Conference of Turkish Linguistics, held in 1998 in Oxford; see Göksel & Kerslake (eds.) 2000, van Schaaik 1999.

### **Electronic resources**

During recent years, increasing use has been made of electronic devices that allow easy access to materials and analyses. These tools will stimulate research and education in non-standard Turkic varieties, and perhaps motivate speakers of such varieties to document their own linguistic competence.

The above-mentioned project on the documentation of spoken Karaim, includes the development and publication of a CD-Rom containing linguistic material of the dialect spoken in Lithuania. The basic work has been carried out at the Institute for the Study of the Languages and Cultures of Africa and Asia at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in Japan by Éva Á. Csató in co-operation with David Nathan and the Japanese linguists Tooru Hayasi and Makoto Minegishi.

The primary purpose of this project is to provide the Karaim community with multimedia resources to be used in the revitalization of the language. The material is intended to support the community in its

efforts to maintain its language competence and to transmit it to the youngest generation. Further purposes are to provide a companion and sound resource for the linguistic documentation of Karaim and to inform both linguists and a broader readership about this endangered Turkic language and the Karaim language community. The final version of the multimedia CD-Rom “Spoken Karaim”, published by Éva Á. Csató and David Nathan, will be available free of charge to members of the Karaim community as well as to interested Turcologists and linguists.

The material of the disk, which allows a high degree of interactive approach to information, includes written texts with English translations, a short reference grammar of Karaim, voice and video recordings, photos, other graphic elements and music. A computational dictionary links structured texts, audio and video resources together. Since texts, dictionary and grammar are interrelated, the user can search for information in different ways. Access to one component opens easy access to another. On sound, text, lexicon and “active morphology” for language learning multimedia, see Nathan 2000.<sup>9</sup> The template can be used for producing similar resources for other endangered languages.

An electronic database of Shor is being developed in a project led by Marcel Erdal, Frankfurt am Main, and Alisa Esipova, Novokuznetsk, with financial support from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Research.<sup>10</sup> The project includes interlinearization of Shor texts with Russian and German glossing, automatic conversion of Cyrillic-based into Latin-based script, etc.

Turcological projects aiming at establishing interactive Internet databases are also being developed. The international project “Turkic Dialect Corpus” (DILEK), initiated at Uppsala University, aims at developing tools necessary for establishing an interactive multimedia databases on varieties of Turkic languages. A sample database with texts representing varieties spoken in Cyprus, Southern Anatolia, Iran

<sup>9</sup> Internet address: <http://www.afro.uu.se/forskning/turkforsk/evacsato.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> “Ein schorisches Textkorpus: Dokumentation literarischer und gesprochener Texte zur Sicherstellung von Materialien aus einer bedrohten Sprache und ihre linguistische

and Uzbekistan will be made available for test purposes. Users will have access to the text files in phonetic transcription and morphological glossing, corresponding sound files, English translations, short vocabulary lists and grammatical information. The above-mentioned project on Uyghur dialects will also create interactive Internet databases with audio documents that can be used freely for further research.

The projects mentioned bring together researchers working in different contexts with spoken data to discuss issues of transcription, encoding, analysis, e.g. automated analysis, and exchange of data. A good deal can be learned from already completed or ongoing projects on Turkic standard languages, e.g. the “Central Asian Languages Corpora” (CALC) project carried out at the University of Utrecht by Marc Vandamme and Hansje Braam (Vandamme & Braam 1997). A further electronic database is the “Turkish Electronic Living Lexicon” (TELL), developed by John B. Lowe, Aylin Küntay and Orhan Orgun under the direction of Sharon Inkelas, Berkeley. It contains a comprehensive list of words of Standard Istanbul Turkish. Since it reflects individual lexicons and actual pronunciations and is designed specifically for the phonologist interested in the actual sound patterns in Turkish words, it will be useful to linguists interested in description rather than prescription. The database will be available on the Internet for interactive access when completed.

### **The old and the new situation**

In many respects, today’s linguistic fieldworkers are in a far better situation, morally and materially, than the discoverers of the old days.

Their work is not governed by, or associated with, political and strategic interests of great powers, as the old exploring expeditions often were. The field workers do not steal any materials; they do not commit vandalism. The old research expeditions to Central Asia removed huge amounts of antiquities—manuscripts and art objects—from the ruin sites. The sad holes left after wall paintings brutally sawn out of the walls can still be observed in the Turfan area. It will not be

discussed here whether these activities were thefts, as the locals claim, or culture-saving achievements. After all, it was through the discovery, preservation and interpretation of the finds by experts from outside that we came to know the Old Uyghur language and culture. Our knowledge of Central Asia would be highly incomplete without these materials. In any case, the effects are crucially different from those of the field research under discussion here.

When it comes to the material conditions, we can only state that earlier journeys of discovery with the aim of deleting white spots on the Turkic linguistic map were mostly connected with extreme exertions in deserts and mountains. Gunnar Jarring himself caught typhoid fever in a caravansary on his journey across the Taklamakan desert. Only after a month did he regain consciousness, emaciated beyond recognition. He comments on this loss of time in the following typical way: “So I had to forego Khotan. It was unfortunate because the dialect spoken there was just about unknown at that time” (1986: 132). Today’s field research is most often less connected with hardship. When Jarring visited Eastern Turkistan again in 1978, half a century later, this time by air, he noticed that he traveled “as though from the Middle Ages to the present” (1986: xi).

It is typical that he, at the age of 71, after a long career as a scholar and diplomat, was tempted to accept an invitation to conduct fieldwork in Aqsu. The offer was, he says, “certainly very tempting for an old linguist who knew that the Aq-su Uighur dialect was entirely unknown and could uncover many secrets about the oldest of the Uighur dialects”. However, he had to thank his hosts for the invitation as politely as possible and “postpone acceptance to a very dubious future”. “Therefore”, he adds, “I did not bother Aq-su’s 90,000 inhabitants with my linguistic research activities” (1986: 45).

Though times have changed, even today’s field researchers may need some of Jarring’s youthful courage; and they can find valuable tips in his publications. In his book *Return to Kashgar* he says, on the basis of the experience from preparations for his first trip (1929), that you should get vaccinated against all conceivable diseases, trust your lucky stars and—perhaps the most important piece of advice—simply “be in good spirits”. Typically, he adds, “The latter was easy for me” (1986: 58).<sup>11</sup> Field researchers who want to make new discoveries on

the Turkic linguistic map today can certainly learn a good deal from this attitude.

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<sup>11</sup> “För övrigt var det bara att ta Gud i hågen och ha gott humör. Det senare saknade jag inte” (1979: 72).



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