

Eurasia Calling: Political context of scientific Turanism in the writings of Max Müller and Yrjö Koskinen, and its development into the 20th century Pan-Turanism



"Map of Iran and Turan" (1843) by Adolf Stieler

Abstract

Turanism was a 19th century ethnolinguistic theory and a pan-nationalist idea which argued that there was an ancient relation between Finnish, Hungarian and North-Asian languages and peoples. The theory assumed a linguistic relatedness between nations included in it, as well as a shared ancient land from which these nations spread out. Its earliest formulation can be found in the writings of the Finnish linguist Matthias Castrén, but it was later popularized by the German philologist Max Müller. Often mistakenly understood as merely pan-Turkism or pan-Magyarism, it had greater international reach than often perceived. In this paper I ask to what extent was Müller's theory of Turanism politically conceived and how was the theory interpreted by its later followers, such as Yrjö-Koskinen? To what degree were these subsequent interpretations politically tinted? While I agree with much of the existing literature that describe the nature of 20th century pan-Turanism, here I argue that the scholarly work in the 19th century was also politically motivated and had political utility in its process of establishing a new philological field. I explore and trace the concept in the 19th century intellectual works, mostly by comparing and contextualizing Müller's *Languages of the Seat of War* and Finnish historian Yrjö-Koskinen's historical work on the roots of the Finnish nation. My main argument is that Turanism was established as linguistic and ethnographic field in the mid 1800s, became a historical and history political discipline in latter half of the 19th century, but ultimately in the early 20th century it had transformed into a greater political idea.

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Introduction

Turanism was a 19th century ethnolinguistic theory and a pan-nationalist idea which argued that there was an ancient ethnolinguistic relation between Finnish, Hungarian and North-Asian languages and peoples. The theory had several variations, while sharing some commonalities. The theory assumed a linguistic relatedness between nations included in it, as well as a shared ancient land and/or nation from which these nations spread out. Its earliest formulation can be found in the writings of the Finnish linguist Matthias Castrén, but it was later popularized by the German philologist Max Müller. Often mistakenly understood as pan-Turkism or pan-Magyarism, it had in-fact greater international spread. Simultaneously, it is an interesting example of how linguistics and ethnology affected not only larger pan-nationalisms, such as pan-Slavism, but also more peripheral ones. Its most explicit legacy can be found on contemporary Hungarian and Turkish nationalisms. More implicitly, the linguistic side of the theory prompted many “Turanic” academics to look at the Far-Eastern languages such as Mongolian and Korean, contributing to establishment of fields such as Altaic studies.

This paper examines the political context around scientific Turanist theories. I argue that political concerns partly motivated the development of scientific theories of Turanism already as in its early iterations in the 1850-1860s. It was never purely a linguistic theory, but a theory that was put to serve different political ends. The way Turanist theories were used varied from time to time. My main argument is that Turanism appeared first as an ethnolinguistic taxonomy in the mid 19th-century. In the latter half of the century, it received historical and history political functions, but remained as an intellectual idea. Finally, in the early 20th century it emerged as a pan-ideology that could be used by states for political mobilization.

The research is done by studying the politics of Max Müller's work, mainly in *Languages of the Seat of War* (1855), while comparing it and its Turanist concept to subsequent works that were influenced by his theory. The focus is specifically on the Finnish historian and later politician, Yrjö-Koskinen and his interpretation of Turanism (first presented in 1862), as his work is an early example of Turanian history. Lastly, I examine Turanism's role in Hungary and Turkey in the early 20th century. I attempt to find out to what extent Müller's theory of Turanism was politically conceived and how was the theory interpreted by its later followers. Furthermore, to what degree were these subsequent interpretations politically motivated?

One of the major works on the 19th century intellectual history that are discussed especially in the first chapter is Tomoko Masuzawa's work on philological history of European modernity, *The Invention of World Religions*. What is relevant is her discussion on Turanism and Müller, depicting the scholar's struggle to keep the philological science separate from the racial scientific trends of his time.¹ Dorothy Figueria's *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins* also covers a similar issue, but offers a rather critical outlook on Müller's contributions to racial classifications he supposedly wanted to avoid.² I agree with both with certain reservations. Overall, I find their work to be complimentary, and combined with primary sources they are helpful on contextualizing Müller's work on Turanism. Additionally, Edward Said's *Orientalism* is occasionally used as a framework to understand Turanism as an Oriental field, specifically the use of philology and Orientalism's shift into instrumentality.

Wider literature shows that the concept of Turanism is often difficult to generally define and describe with all its different forms. Instead of a debate on its nature and development as a general concept, it is often studied alongside with specific national political movements or 19th century linguistic or ethnological theories. Furthermore, there is a glaring lack of monographs

¹ Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 2005), 238.

² Dorothy Figueria, *Aryans, Jews, Brahmins: Theorizing authority through myths of identity* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2002), 46.

solely focusing on Turanism. That said, this research does not try to define Turanism conclusively, but to offer an explanation how and why Turanism was attractive concept to certain authors and what kind of political factors were involved. Therefore, this research is interested in tracing the concept transnationally.

There is a variety of interpretations on the role of politics in Turanism. Jukka Kiho, who talks about Turanism mostly in the 20th century, characterizes Turanism as a prominently politically oriented movement.³ My argument is inline with this, with the clarification that it was primarily a political movement only in the 20th century. Alexander J. Motyl, in his *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, relates Turanism strongly to Pan-Turkism, especially to those ideas laid out by the Turkish sociologist Ziya Gökalp.⁴ I argue that Motyl puts too much importance on Gökalp's role, and this I will demonstrate in the third chapter. Preetham Sridharan, on the other hand, makes a distinction between the Turanist theory and pan-Turanism, which he dates to the 1890s.⁵ This distinction, and especially the dating of the political organisation, seems to pay attention to only certain pan-Turanist movements in Hungary and Turkey. Both Motyl's and Sridharan's views do not give much attention to the political motivators in Turanist research, and instead talk about its politics only in the context of Turanism as a pan-ideology. I will demonstrate, however, that political Turanism took hold in parts of the European intellectual world even before the 1890s.

Turanism is closely related to the history of racial science. Harri Sallinen cites Johann Blumenbach and his racial science as one of the intellectual works that had strong resonance in Turanism.⁶ Anssi Halmesvirta's study briefly talked about racism in Swedish-speaking Finns'

³ Jukka Kiho, *Sukulaissiteiden lujittamista ja kulttuuriin puettua politiikkaa* (MA Thesis) (Tampere: Tampereen yliopisto, 2008), 18.

⁴ Alexander J. Motyl, *Encyclopedia of Nationalism, Two-Volume Set Volume Vol. II* (California: Academic Press, 2002), 402.

⁵ Preetham Sridharan, "Agglutinating" a Family: Friedrich Max Müller and the Development of the Turanian Language Family Theory in Nineteenth-Century European Linguistics and Other Human Sciences (MA thesis) (Portland: Portland State University, 2018), 156.

⁶ Harri Sallinen, *Metsäläisistä maailmanparantajiksi: Suomalaisen itsetunnon kehityshistoriaa* (Helsinki: Books on Demand, 2019), 113.

interpretation of history, in which some Sweden Finns saw their Finnish-speaking fellows as “incapable of forming an orderly society” due to their Turanian background.⁷ Halmesvirta’s analysis, although mainly national history without much attention to grander Turanism, is especially interesting due to its regard to history politics, a theme which will be examined in the second chapter.

The research belongs in conceptual history. Thus, Turanism as a concept, and how it was conceived and explained by different authors is of primary interest. The concept is traced and analysed in three parts. In the first chapter, I discuss Müller’s and the origins of the Turanist concept drafted in his *Languages of The Seat of War* in the 1855. The book was written “at the suggestion” of the British civil servant Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan during the Crimean War.⁸ I attempt to identify the political elements of Müller’s work and its background, by researching the purpose of the book, Müller’s opinion of the Crimean War as well as his stake in the conflict. For a deeper understanding of the man himself and the context of his academic contribution, Müller’s letters are also studied.

The second part focuses on Finnish Historian and politician Yrjö-Koskinen’s (1830–1903) written work mostly in the 1860s, with the main topic being historical Turanism. Koskinen had enthusiasm for Müller’s Turanist theory to the degree that was rare among Finnish intellectuals. His doctoral paper *Tiedot Suomen suvun muinaisuudesta* (1862) [*Knowledge on the ancient nature of the Finnic family*] is thus rather unique in adopting Turanist ideals. Koskinen’s role as a Fennoman also played a part in his historical views, more explored in his book *Johtavat aatteet ihmiskunnan historiassa* [*Leading ideas in human history*]. These sources then include both ethnographic and political uses of the topic, while still being connected to Müller’s original material. Since Turanism includes certain interpretations

⁷ Anssi Halmesvirta, *The British conception of the Finnish 'race', nation and culture, 1760-1918* (Helsinki: Suomen historiallinen seura, 1990), 98.

⁸ Max Müller, *The Languages of the Seat of War in the East. With a survey of the three families of language, Semitic, Arian and Turanian* (Oxford: Indian Institute, 1855), 1.

of the past, they were sometimes mobilized for political purposes. As Dorothy Figueira remarks, when historicity is brought into narratives, a trait shared by most if not all interpretations of Turanism, “the past [...] possesses socio-political instrumentality.” This instrumentality is studied in the context of the Finnish nationalism in the Grand Duchy. The goal is to see whether Turanist classification established in the first chapter played a part in the nation-building in Finland, thus including a comparative element to Müller’s work.

In the last part, there is a jump to the first quarter of the 20th century to examine Turanism’s political interpretations. The main theme of the chapter is Turanism’s shift to instrumentality at the turn of the century and its political applications. Said’s Orientalism is used as a framework for understanding this shift. Then I discuss pan-Turanism as a political ideology in its Turkish and Hungarian manifestations, focusing on Ziya Gökalp and Ármin Vámbéry respectively. Relevant to the discussion on Gökalp is a 200-page ethnographic outline of the Turanian peoples called *Manual on the Turanians and Pan-Turanianism* (1918), issued by the British Naval Intelligence. Gökalp’s ideology is presented as the *raison d’être* for the Manual. The book is relevant not only for its reproduction of the concept and geopolitical use, but also for its relatively late publication date, revealing one of the later forms of Turanist interpretations. I contextualize these 20th century political strains of Turanism in the 19th century writings and their timely geopolitical setting, arguing that they should be understood as a part of the competition over the former Russian Imperial lands and the Eurasian landscape. Finally, the conclusion hopes to bring clarity on the development of Turanism, filling some of the gaps the historiography has so far left bare by illuminating the politics of this 19th century anomaly.

I. Max Müller and the making of the Turanian world

In this first chapter, we study Müller's book with a survey on Turanist languages to contextualize it in its timely politics and inspect whether these politics had part in his work on Turanist philology. The chapter argues that there was indeed high politics present, but not yet a political movement around the concept. The book in question, *The Languages of the Seat of War in the East*, was published in 1855. Taking material from Müller's previous work, it was meant as a philological overview with a very practical utility. It was during the Crimean War when the British civil servant Sir Charles Trevelyan decided to invite Müller, then already working in the British academia, to write this linguistic piece.

The mission statement for this work, given in a letter by Trevelyan (20th March, 1854 – a few days before the war was declared) is to teach the officers deployed in the East one Eastern language.⁹ Trevelyan remarks that knowledge of the native languages is a requisite for “understanding and taking interest in native races, as well as acquiring their good will and gaining influence over them.”¹⁰ It is unclear who these peoples were exactly, as he also points out that the length and the geographical extent of the war was not yet certain, thus it was important to have a comprehensive guide for communicating with the peoples of the Balkans and the Near-East.¹¹ For him, language learning is thus something to accompany the war effort, and accordingly, the book in question was to be written “under war pressure.”¹²

A practical issue for Müller was that many of the languages Trevelyan specifically requested to be included, that is those spoken in northern Ottoman Empire and nearby Russian

⁹ Max Müller, *The Languages of the Seat of War in the East. With a survey of the three families of language, Semitic, Arian and Turanian*, IV.

¹⁰ Müller, *The Languages of the Seat of War in the East. With a survey of the three families of language, Semitic, Arian and Turanian*, IV.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., V.

provinces, did not have established grammars in Western academia, demanding a lot fieldwork to be done.¹³ Regardless, Müller saw it as fitting job, for according to him it was “high time that something should be done to encourage the study of Oriental languages in England.”¹⁴ However, it was not his work for the book that he considered to be innovative, but precisely the predicament for fieldwork that this project would hopefully encourage.¹⁵ Furthermore, at the end of his reply to Trevelyan, Müller does not hesitate to suggest additional finances and opportunities for language studies in his university of Oxford.¹⁶ If these were part of the intellectual and professional motivators for a project that was to a large extent purposed to be a military tool, to what extent was the substance of this work also influenced by the ongoing military affairs?

In addressing this question, something must be said about Müller’s opinion of the Russian Empire and its cause in the war. In his New Years greeting to an acquaintance in 1854, three days before the British and French fleets arrived to protect the Turkish coast, Müller pronounces his standing on the war loud and clear: “[...] and may [The New Year] above all things teach the Russians and the Russophiles that Europe would prefer to see the Crescent at Petersburg to the Russian Cross at Constantinople.”¹⁷ He saw the war necessary, seeing Russia and its influence in Europe and “especially” in Germany as a threat to be countered.¹⁸

For many anti-Russians among the British what was at stake in an expansion of Russian influence would have been the British India.¹⁹ Indian philology and religion had been major subjects in Müller’s career, and his work in the British academia do give him some vested

¹³ Ibid., IV and IX.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., IX.

¹⁶ Max Müller, *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller*, ed. Georgina Grenfell, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1902), XI.

¹⁷ Ibid., 157.

¹⁸ Ibid., 163.

¹⁹ Although this view did not necessarily correspond with reality. Figes Orlando, *The Crimean War: A History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), 120.

interest in India.²⁰ Historian John R. Davis remarks that while the British had interest in German philology, the German migrants in Britain were often interested in “British-owned colonial in primary sources.”²¹ Müller’s work in London was mostly based on these colonial sources.²² Whether in reality this consideration played a part in Müller’s anti-Russian stance is, of course, difficult to say, but this factor should not be overlooked.

Despite this interest, Müller credits Russia for their contribution in oriental philology: “Scientific expeditions are sent out to different parts of the world, travellers supported and encouraged, and their works, grammars or dictionaries, printed at the expense of Government.”²³ This can be partly seen as a sly way to request for extra funding for the English academia, in order for it to establish its leadership in Oriental philology.²⁴ Contrasting Russian and English traditions in philology was a decent way to frame the discipline as something that was a front of its own in the war.

While it is unclear who Müller had in mind, one of the major travellers – and a major philologist – came from an autonomous region of the Russian Empire, namely the Grand Duchy of Finland. Finnish philologist and an avid traveller, Matthias Castrén was one of the pioneers of the Ural-Altai theory, and consequently, in his lecture on the origins of the Finns (1849), he proclaimed his countrymen to have been Turanians originally from the East.²⁵ Although Castrén is discussed more in the next chapter, it is good to note that Müller was not only aware of Castrén, whom he had even called the “heroic grammarian,” but in fact cited him

²⁰ He was indeed populariser of India at Oxford University and elsewhere. John R. Davis, “Friedrich Max Müller and the British Empire: A German Philologist and Imperial Culture in the Nineteenth Century,” *Transnational Networks: German Migrants in the British Empire, 1670-1914* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 8.

²¹ John R. Davis, “Friedrich Max Müller and the British Empire: A German Philologist and Imperial Culture in the Nineteenth Century,” 84.

²² Ibid. 86.

²³ Ibid. 157. Russia had been for a long time an important contributor to oriental languages, being a forerunner in many of them.

²⁴ Müller, *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller*, XII.

²⁵ Matthias Castrén, *Archaeologica et historica; Universitaria*, ed. Timo Salminen (Helsinki: Finno-Ugrian Society, 2017), 110.

frequently.²⁶ After Castrén's bombastic lecture (later published in print) in Finland, groundwork was ready for further studies in Turanism.

From this groundwork Müller continued by positioning the Turanic languages to other two major language families.²⁷ He considered the development of the Turanian family to be different to that of the two others, Aryan and Semitic. This is a major point, for these differentiations were more than just mere linguistic classifications, but part of a more fundamental taxonomy of peoples. There were two major features that differentiated Turanian family from the others.

The first point is the agglutinative grammar. The other two language families had gone through the "process of handing down a language through centuries without break or loss" which is only possible in societies "whose history runs on in one main stream," and where culture is contained in well-defined borders.²⁸ This is not the case for Turanians, who have scattered all across Eurasia, and who, according to Müller, never managed to consolidate a lasting civilization.²⁹ The languages in question are numerous, including Turkic, Mongolic and Finnic languages.³⁰ What then, gives him the reason to assume such a heterogenous language family? Müller explains that it is partly the numerals and pronouns that can be traced back to a common source, although still with less 'tenacity' than the 'political languages' of Europe and Asia.³¹ Yet, most importantly it is the agglutination, the trademark of Turanian languages, that makes these nomadic languages stand out.³²

²⁶ Max Müller and C.C.J Brunsen, *Letters to Chevalier Bunsen on the classification of the Turanian languages* (London: A. & G.A. Spottiswoode, 1854), 14.

²⁷ Müller and Brunsen, *Letters to Chevalier Bunsen on the classification of the Turanian languages*, 14.

²⁸ Müller, *The Languages of the Seat of War in the East. With a survey of the three families of language, Semitic, Arian and Turanian*, 87

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ The branches of the Turanian language family according to Müller, in order of their appearance in the book: Tungusic, Mongolic, 'Turkic or Tataric,' Finnic, Bulgaric, Permian, Ugric, Georgic, Lesghic.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

The second quality of these languages is their organisation. According to Müller, the most advanced ones of these languages, Hungarian and Finnish, used to be nomadic – conforming to requirements of the nomadic life – but had now risen to a proper level of sedentary organisation and thus become *political*, approaching to that of the Aryan kind.³³ They are fixed with “literary works of national character,” and are therefore impossible to be altered without political action.³⁴ Turkish, despite Müller’s enthusiasm for this Turanic language, he did not consider to be as advanced.³⁵ Indeed, in the 19th century philology, the morphological classifications had immense influence in defining languages and its speakers.³⁶

The agglutinative group, being distant and dispersed, suggests that it was an unattractive subject for the European philological tradition. Taking note of Edward Said’s Orientalism, we can argue that its unique status was partly due to their political standing – that is, most Turanians had no colonial or other political relevance in the minds of Europeans.³⁷ In this light, Müller’s book had a double-edged function: not only it could expand the academic and general knowledge of these languages for the enjoyment of both diplomacy and military, but it could also be part of *creating* this philology which Turanic languages were lacking. The Crimean War offered an apt chance for fulfilling this project.

As Said also explains, the process of establishing a philological field was a powerful tool in creating identities and perspectives on different nations.³⁸ Sometimes this also included racial views, although Müller’s definition of race is convoluted. One of the most explicit connections Müller makes between language and race appears in his lecture on ancient religions: “[...] the blood that runs through our thoughts, I mean our language, [...] and that

³³ Ibid., 92 – 94.

³⁴ Ibid., 94.

³⁵ Müller considers it “a real pleasure to read Turkish grammar.” Yet he does not mention it in regard to ‘the most advanced’ languages, Finnish and Hungarian. Ibid., 108.

³⁶ Geoffrey Sampson, *Schools of Linguistics: Competition and evolution* (London: Hutchinson, 2007), 23-29.

³⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) 11.

³⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 39. Notice also: “Almost without exception, every Orientalist began his career as a philologist [...].”

language has more to do with ourselves than the blood that feeds our body [...].”³⁹ He thus makes a distinction between language and physiological conditions. However, in his history of Sanskrit literature, he goes to call Africans and Native Americans “really barbarous tribes,” whereas “Aryans of the Seven Rivers are far above those races.”⁴⁰ Regardless of Müller’s crude language, his classifications were most likely not based on biological race, as he later explicitly condemned such notions several times. Figueira sees Müller using race as a metaphor, in which Aryan meant “means of describing the ideal Self.”⁴¹ The Other was lacking something that the Self had, but nothing that was essentially based on biological race.⁴²

Figueira further points out that Müller was prone to Romanticism, while remaining quite far from the 19th century racial science.⁴³ Müller’s admiration of ancient Indian literature, for example, was something that resembled more Romanticism than sentiments of racial superiority. Masuzawa ends up with a similar point, calling him “stubbornly out of step with the times.”⁴⁴ I agree that Müller’s philology was conservative in his early 19th century view of language, and continuously resistant to increasingly popular racial science, even if his own language was not always clear on this.⁴⁵ However, the concept of race in some of his works remains dubious, and this should be kept in mind.

If the linguistics did not imply racial features, they certainly had strong ties to religion and culture. In Müller’s work, there is a clear ‘natural connection’ between religion and vice versa.⁴⁶ Looking at his references in the *Science of Religion*, we find that – when it comes to

³⁹ Max Müller, “The Historical Relationship of Ancient Religions and Philosophies,” in *Theosophy or Psychological Religion: The Gifford Lectures Delivered before the University of London in 1892*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 71.

⁴⁰ Max Müller, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature so far as it illustrates The Primitive Religion of the Brahmans* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1860), 558.

⁴¹ Figueira, *Aryans, Jews, Brahmans: Theorizing authority through myths of identity*, 44.

⁴² Figueira is not too clear on it either, but this seems to be the verdict. *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*, 244.

⁴⁵ For his insistence on the separation of philology and racial science, see also: Müller and Brunsen, *Letters to Chevalier Bunsen on the classification of the Turanian languages*, 89.

⁴⁶ Max Müller, *Introduction to Science of Religion: Four Lectures Delivered at the Royal Institute in February and May, 1870* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1882), 143 – 144.

religious development of Turanians – he borrows heavily or even quotes directly Castrén’s literature and the findings from his expeditions. One of his peculiar implementations of Castrén’s mythology is that Müller finds the ancient Chinese and Finnish religions “curiously alike,” and considers them to have been part of the same common Turanic religion.⁴⁷ Thus, according to Müller’s classifications Turanian nations - even the geographically European states such as Hungary and Finland - are very much linked to the East in language, and with their non-European heritage, even in religion and culture.

Therefore, the establishment of new philological studies for so far understudied cultures was by no means purely scientific endeavour but had strong political precedents and pragmatics behind it. Müller’s philology was not providing just mere linguistic knowledge for the British war effort, but intel on the peoples who were at times the target of coercion, at times of subjugation. For this purpose, a scholarly construct of the orient and its peoples was needed, a taxonomy that could be used by the academia while also serving the needs of international politics. Importantly, it was this *process* of creating a philological field that had political substance – it classified Turanian nations as dispersed, distant and overall non-Western. This classification was long-lasting, for it can be found 70 years later in a geopolitical manual issued by the British Naval Intelligence, *Manual on the Turanians and Pan-Turanism*. Indeed, Müller’s creation was to serve the British military needs long after the Crimean War. This will be further discussed in the third chapter.

Arguably this holistic attitude toward newer philology would retain itself in its academic legacy, for example in Finno-Ugric studies.⁴⁸ Either way, in the mid-19th century the approach was especially highlighted by *The Languages of the Seat of War*, as well as Castrén’s material that also appeared in Müller’s work. Towards the ends of the 1800s, this trend of politicised

⁴⁷ Müller, *Introduction to Science of Religion: Four Lectures Delivered at the Royal Institute in February and May, 1870*, 144.

⁴⁸ Łukasz Sommer, ‘Historical Linguistics Applied: Finno-Ugric Narratives in Finland and Estonia’, *Hungarian Historical Review* 2 (2014), 3.

philology was to become even stronger with some of their followers. In the next chapter we will examine one of them, namely Yrjö-Koskinen.

II. Yrjö-Koskinen and the Turanian past

As we saw in the previous chapter, Müller's Turanist philology was inspired by Castrén's previous field work. Müller had established his own classification of Turanian languages, and now his writings would be used for further look into the Turanian past. With his research, the Turanist ideas were found again in Grand Duchy of Finland, although in a relatively more elaborated form. Indeed, the main argument here is that the latter half of the 19th century would mark the historicization of Turanism.

The Grand Duchy had enjoyed exceptional autonomy in the Russian Empire ever since its annexation in 1809. Separate educational institutions, laws and senate allowed for a more efficient cultivation of nationalist ideology than many other parts of the Empire. In fact, the Fennoman movement – Finnish cultural-political nationalist movement – had been established already in early 1800s, decades before the Russification attempts towards the end of the 19th century. It was thus more than just a minority nationalist movement in Imperial Russia. Indeed, one of its main objectives was the elevation of the status of Finnish, which was secondary to the governing and intellectual language of Swedish.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Anthony F. Upton, *Finnish Revolution, 1917-1918* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 4. "Yet antagonism towards the imperial power [...] was not at first the main preoccupation of the nationalist movement. The more realistic and responsible leaders of the movement recognized that as long as Russia was a great power, Finnish independence was outside the realm of possibility." See also a very brief account of the history of Finnish nationalism: Anssi Paasi, "Geographical Perspectives on Finnish National Identity," *GeoJournal* 43, No. 1 (1997), 46.

In some ways, as this chapter will elaborate, some Finnish scholars harnessed Turanism for a nation-building project that would, with the help of modern humanities such as philology, eventually contrast itself with other European pan-ideologies. In Finland, debates over identity were happening against the backdrop of Russian domestic politics, which determined how much room Finnish nationalists had for exercising their nationalist exploration. For example, in order to avoid the spread of the revolutionary spirit of 1848 into Finland, a censorship law was established in 1851. The law made the Fennoman movement and their publications to temporarily lose momentum. However, during the Crimean War, the law was barely enforced, and soon enough abolished. At the same time, Finnish language increased in prominence. For instance, the first professorship of Finnish language was established in 1850, and the first one to occupy this position was Matthias Castrén (1813 - 1852).

Castrén was a philologist who went to look for the origins of the Finnish nation with great patriotic conviction.⁵⁰ According to Timo Salminen, Castrén followed the Russian academic tradition of the 18th century, that promoted exploration of different parts of the Empire.⁵¹ Castrén felt that the Finns are to find their own historical past, something that is not defined by either foreign scholarly work or assumptions, nor with, as Timo Salminen puts it, “unrealistic aspirations to find exalted roots or ethnic relatives to help them.”⁵² However, if Salminen is correct in his characterisation of Castrén’s work, then the success of his ideals, particularly the lack of “unrealistic aspirations,” is certainly questionable.

Finnish historian Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen (1830 – 1903), may not have been a prime example of such ideals. Koskinen too was a Fennoman, even Finnicizing his name (from Swedish, previously Georg Zacharias Forsman until 1852), and his view on the national past of

⁵⁰ Matthias Castrén, *Archaeologica et historica; Universitaria*, ed. Timo Salminen, 15.

⁵¹ Timo Salminen, *M. A. Castrén and His Archaeological Research in Russia and Siberia The Finnish Antiquarian Society Iskos 21* (2016), 285.

⁵² Castrén, *Archaeologica et historica; Universitaria*, 15.

the Finns was relatively wide.⁵³ Although there a difference between pan-Turanism and Finno-Ugric nationalism, the former being, according to Kiho, scarcely popular in Finland in either century, but more so in Hungary, Koskinen was a man who to some extent had interest in both.⁵⁴ It is difficult to say why this was the case, but it seems that Turanism was more popular among those scholars who had contacts in Hungary, such as Koskinen and writer Antti Jalava.⁵⁵ This passion for poorly known Hungary can be positioned in a larger trend of increasing interest in the country and its society among Finnish intelligentsia in 1860 – 1870.⁵⁶ Finno-Ugric nationalism (*Heimoaate*), on the other hand, was more concerned with neighbouring Baltic Finnic peoples.

Koskinen’s doctoral thesis “on the ancient nature of the Finnic family” [the translation as well as all further translations from Finnish are mine] was published in 1862. He starts his thesis by honouring the late Castrén and acknowledging Müller, accepting most of their work as a foundation for his study, including the ethnographic trichotomy of Aryan, Semitic and Turanian. Yet, Koskinen attempts to go further than his predecessors, trying to find the ancient (that is, older than Castrén’s Altai Mountains) home of the “Finnic family,” meaning the very home of the Turanians.⁵⁷ The project then represents the next part in the development of Turanist theory, one concerned with history.

⁵³ The scholar’s full name is Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen, but from now on his author name, Yrjö Koskinen, is used.

⁵⁴ Jukka Kiho, *Sukulaissiteiden lujittamista ja kulttuuriin puettua politiikkaa*, 19.

⁵⁵ For Koskinen, see: Vince Robert Nagy, “Yrjö-Koskisen kirjoituksia ja tutkimuksia Unkarista vuosina 1860-1875” [Yrjö-Koskinen’s writings and studies about Hungary in the years 1860 – 1875], unpublished, (draft), 3. Academia.edu: https://www.academia.edu/37815616/Yrj%C3%B6-Koskisen_kirjoituksia_ja_tutkimuksia_Unkarista_vuosina_1860_1875?email_work_card=view-paper Accessed 17.5.2020. The source is so far a draft, but his work concerning Finnish-Hungarian exchanges is already solid and unlikely to be refuted on this point.

For Antti Jalava: Anttia Jalava, *Unkarin maa ja kansa.: Neljäkymmentä matkakirjettä [Hungary’s country and nation: Forty travel letters]* (Helsinki: 1876), 365.

⁵⁶ Nagy, “Yrjö-Koskisen kirjoituksia ja tutkimuksia Unkarista vuosina 1860-1875”, unpublished, (draft), 3. Academia.edu, Accessed 17.5.2020.

⁵⁷ Yrjö Koskinen, *Tiedot Suomen-suvun muinaisuudesta - Yliopistollinen väitöskirja* (Helsinki, 1862), 2. I use the word ‘Finnic family’ as a translation for “Suomensuku” for clarity’s sake, although it would literally translate to “Finnish family.” This is because Koskinen seems to mean those closely related to Finns, and not only the Finnish people. Other terms such as Finno-Ugric, however, are a bit misleading to the 19th century use of the word, especially in the context of Turanism.

When jumping into this great task, he admits that the field is too new for a historian to succeed in grandiose breakthroughs yet. Regardless, already at the beginning he claims that “the whole Europe was, before the arrival of the Aryans, under some Turanian natives.”⁵⁸ These natives left very little history due to their small populations and primitive nature.⁵⁹ In order to explore their legacy, the book dwells on a variety of ancient literary sources, sometimes tackling etymology, to depict ancient nations that may or may not have been part of the Finnic family as well as their possible achievements. These include, for instance, Goths, Huns, and with the work of the French-German Assyriologist Julius Oppert, he finds also Assyrians to be part of this distant family.⁶⁰ Using a lot of miscellaneous historical texts, word comparisons and at times studies from other scholars, he identifies Turanian nations and their feats in world history.

This way, Koskinen was not only interested in identifying the origins of the Finns but creating a very particular narrative of the past for human history in general. He bothers little with historiography, instead carving a historical narrative out of the findings of Müller and other philologists. The mysterious Turanian civilization that “had little appreciable national history” played no little role, even if a bit low exposure, in world history.⁶¹ Indeed, according to Koskinen, they had representation in places such as ancient Mesopotamia as well as in pre-Persian lands like Elam.⁶² Ultimately, Koskinen’s conclusions on the home of Turanians are incoherent. He believes that in Mesopotamia, even before the Assyrians, there had been some great preceding Turanian nation that left residues of their civilization to its successors.⁶³ According to him, the inhabitants of these aforementioned regions were a mix of Semitic and Turanian, and in the end “the Semitic family comes victorious and inherits that civilization

⁵⁸ Koskinen, *Tiedot Suomen-suvun muinaisuudesta - Yliopistollinen väitöskirja*, 9.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ For his rather interesting reasoning behind the Turanian Assyrians see Ibid. 6.

⁶¹ Yrjö Koskinen, *Johtavat Aatteet Ihmiskunnan Historiassa* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1879), 36: “Vaan valtiollista historiaa ei tällä Turanilaisella kansalla ole mainittavasti ollut.”

⁶² Koskinen, *Johtavat Aatteet Ihmiskunnan Historiassa*, 36.

⁶³ Koskinen, *Tiedot Suomen-suvun muinaisuudesta - Yliopistollinen väitöskirja*, 5-7.

established by the Turanians.”⁶⁴ Essentially the history of the Turanians go all the way to the ancient history, and specifically to some mysterious Turanian predecessor, perhaps the same one that can be very briefly found even in Müller’s text, one he called ‘Tur.’⁶⁵

What further complicates the historicity in Koskinen’s works is some of his philosophical complexities, somewhat similar to Müller’s. Where Müller struggled to come terms with the changing concept of race, Koskinen, although not facing such crucial misunderstandings, had also quite particular idea of language. According to him, “nationality does not live in language, but in the national spirit.” For him, language is then “like a bearer of the national spirit,” and “the realest symbol of common nationality.” In its word repertoire and structures, language is a product of the national spirit.⁶⁶ It also changes with foreign influence, he admits, and these changes cause certain deficiencies in language, that the national spirit then seeks to correct. What is important is the *aspiration* towards common language.⁶⁷ In this way he sees exchanges between the rather static national spirit and then the changing, living language. The purpose of this statement seems to be to affirm that language plays no part in whether the Finns are worthy of a national history of their own, which was still not obvious in the 1870s.⁶⁸ What is unclear, however, is that if the language is ever-changing, whereas national spirit - although sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker – remains static throughout history, how are historical linguistics helpful in finding the origins of a nation?

My answer to this question would be that precisely because language is traceable, it can lead to certain roots and therefore its ancient origins. For example, Castrén would not have

⁶⁴ Ibid., and *Johtavat Aatteet Ihmiskunnan Historiassa*, 36: “[...] mutta aikojen kuluessa Semiläinen suku tulee voitolle ja perii tuon Turanilaisten perustaman sivistyksen.”

⁶⁵ Müller, *The Languages of the Seat of War in the East. With a survey of the three families of language, Semitic, Arian and Turanian*, 87.

⁶⁶ Yrjö Koskinen, “Onko Suomen kansalla historiaa?” *Historiallinen arkisto V* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1876), 5.

⁶⁷ Koskinen, “Onko Suomen kansalla historiaa?”, 6.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 6 - 7. – Yrjö-Koskinen states that the Finnish history came to be only after 1809 (when Finland was transferred to the Russian Empire), as only after the formation of Grand Duchy of Finland the Finns “joined the stage of nations” and could write their own history. The Finnish nation thus did have the national essence, or the spirit, but lacked conceived history.

conducted his research expeditions through Siberia had he not believed that comparative linguistics could reveal something essential about the past of the Finns. Instead of traveling across Siberia, Koskinen inspected the past, although with similar methods. The view of comparative linguistics as an ethnographic tool was almost a requisite to position Finns among Turanians as well as to write history for them. And, as Koskinen concludes, if the nation “wants history for itself, ergo: it has history.”⁶⁹ For him, the fact that the Finnish nation indeed wanted its personal history, as seen in these national historical pursuits, was enough to imply that it must have had its own independent past already before the century under Russia.⁷⁰

Thus, the work of Finnish scholars is somewhat similar to the formation of Turanian philology, which Müller’s initiated by classifying those nations at the seat of war. Each of the scholars had strong utilitarian ambitions behind their philological study. And while Koskinen’s research, as Castrén’s, was tied to national formation, they were in some ways not too distant from the political goals of *the Languages of the Seat of War*. Indeed, Müller’s book brings up evident commonality between the German and Finnish scholars, namely the relation of their Turanist theories to the Russian Empire. Müller’s book was written for the British needs against the Russian Empire in the Crimean War, whereas Koskinen’s studies were seeking to enhance national identity and self-governance in the Empire. It is telling that most of the Turanic nations were situated within Russian borders.⁷¹ Now these peoples, most without nation-state or strong national identity, were classified as Turanians and identified as such in history.

Perhaps the greatest difference between Müller and the Fennomans, however, is that the purpose of their work did not share the geopolitical goals of the British. It would be a

⁶⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁰ Pekka Ahtiainen and Jukka Tervonen, *Menneisyyden tutkijat ja metodfen vartijat: Matka suomalaisen historiankirjoitukseen* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1996), 42.

⁷¹ Tracing the original trail of languages that Castrén followed in his expeditions, starting with Samoyedic languages in northern Russia and going all the way to the Chinese border, it becomes glaring how much of the Russian landscape Turanians inhabited. Nations from all the groups in Müller’s Turanist taxonomy could be found somewhere in Russia.

mischaracterisation to say that many Finnish scholars were looking for the destruction of the Empire. Instead, Finnish nationalism before the Russification efforts in 1899 was more focused on state organisation and civil identity, both of which could be manifested without independence.⁷² Moreover, Koskinen himself did not have that radical nationalist attitudes against the Empire. In some cases, he even saw that the development of his country should lean more towards East, taking use of the position of the Grand Duchy.⁷³ Indeed, I would argue that this autonomy, which gave enough room for Finns to study and promote their national history, is partly the reason why Turanism emerged in Finnish intellectual circles. As mentioned previously, Russian academic tradition adopted by Castrén also played a role.⁷⁴ Overall, taking advantage of their geographic and cultural position, they could commence on academic journeys through Russia with relative ease. Koskinen's Turanist research has then more to do with the question of identity than anti-imperialism.

Therefore, in this chapter we have found that Koskinen's history writing was pragmatic in a similar way Müller's philology had been in the Crimean War. The identity formation around ancient Eastern ties then gave peoples such as Finns and Hungarians another path to a grander identity, and as we have seen in Koskinen's writings, to history itself. The Turanist theories, in their linguistic, religious and now historical contraptions partly enabled this to happen.

The Turanic research for national history and identity inside the Empire also affected the view on the Russian geographical space. With the expeditions, usually followed by public lectures, such as those commenced by Castrén, the East itself was also recharacterized, as the lands hold by the Russian Empire was now more seen as a patchwork of different languages

⁷² Anssi Paasi, "Geographical Perspectives on Finnish National Identity," 46.

⁷³ Ilkka Liikanen, *Fennomania ja Kansa: Joukkojärjestyksen läpimurto ja Suomalaisen puolueen synty* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1995), 114.

⁷⁴ Timo Salminen, *M. A. Castrén and His Archaeological Research in Russia and Siberia The Finnish Antiquarian Society Iskos 21* (2016), 285.

and peoples. The Eurasian space was therefore appearing as more than just Russia. In early 1900s, especially after the Russian revolution, this landmass was about to be contested by pan-Turanism. The topic is examined in more detail in the next chapter.

III. Ziya Gökalp and Ármin Vámbéry: Political organisation of Turanism

I have now established that Müller's and Koskinen's work were by no means politically detached, and had political utility to some extent, thus contradicting Sridharan's statement that Turanism was politically mobilized only by the 1890s. But aside from the scholarly work with political uses, was there also organised political action around Turanism? In this chapter I look at few examples of Turanist political activity from the early 20th century Turkey and Hungary. I argue that here Turanism finally receives its purely geopolitical forms, becoming a grander political idea. But before that, we have to ask what made Turanism gain these political forms 50 years after Müller's book? I believe this question can be answered with Said's Orientalism.

The historical development of Orientalism laid out by Said corresponds with Turanism. According to Said, as Orientalism reached the 20th century, there was a shift from "from an academic to an *instrumental* attitude."⁷⁵ This change was coupled with an extension of the Orientalist identity – if for example Müller had belonged in a relatively niche collective of academics, the Orientalist had now become "the representative man of his Western culture."⁷⁶ That is, someone who embodies a link between the Orient and the Occident by asserting the

⁷⁵ Ibid, 246.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

supremacy of the West – a clear extension to the political qualities of a scholar of the 19th century.

This strengthened instrumentality of Turanism is indeed something that happened towards the end of the 1800s, but perhaps more so after the turn of the century, as the political turmoil of the First World War had left more room to mobilize the newly formed national identities. In addition, the Great War marked a change in the characteristics of who Said called “adventure-eccentrics” – traveller scholars who, as an example from this paper, would be similar to Castrén – now being replaced with “agent-Orientalists” such as T.E Lawrence.⁷⁷ The tradition of roaming intellectual-adventurers was increasingly militarised, becoming more attached to geopolitics.

One illuminating example of this geopolitical instrumentality of Turanism is *A Manual on the Turanians and pan-Turanianism* issued by the British Naval Intelligence, presumably published in 1918. This date would also coincide with the fall of both the Ottoman and Russian Empire, both of which hold lands of Turanic peoples. The Manual made clear that Turanism was not merely a concept with ethnographical and geographical dimensions, but also a geopolitical one. The book covers these features of Turanist nations, referring to scholars such as Müller and Castrén. The Manual considers Turanians as nomads who did not “cultivate the earth” and build “cities in remote antiquity,” unlike many other civilizations such as Assyrians.⁷⁸ This view is in contrast with Koskinen’s historical analysis, which as we saw in the previous chapter, not only assumed a sedentary Turanian civilization but also its residues among Assyrians. The Manual therefore makes even a starker distinction between Turanians and the other civilizations.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Admiralty (Geographical Section of the Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff), *A Manual on the Turanians and Pan-Turanianism*, 20.

At the introduction, the manual introduces Pan-Turanism as a major ideology of the new Turkish state, led by its intellectual leader Ziya Gökalp (1876 – 1924).⁷⁹ The manual explains the goal of Pan-Turanians as to unite all the Turks, some of which were living under territories held by the British and Russians. It then considers it important to “examine the geographical, historical, ethnological, religious, and social facts bearing on the populations that may be affected by Pan-Turanian aspirations.”⁸⁰ The book then goes on to give a survey of these nations, while by no means limiting itself to the case of the Turks: also Samoyedic, Finno-Ugric, Mongolian and Tungusic peoples were included.

This great taxonomy seemingly also confused the Manual’s authors, as becomes evident when further examining the introduction. As said above, it frames the Turkish sociologist Ziya Gökalp and his pan-Turanist threat as one of the major reasons behind the publication. Inversely from Müller’s original book, which was made to counter the expansion of the Russian Empire into the Ottoman lands, the Manual is for the purpose of stopping potential Turkish expansion. For Gökalp, *Turan*, located slightly northeast of Persia, is the home for all Turks, to which Turks have “a special love for.” This love goes parallel with the love for the Ottoman land, “which is a small Muslim homeland,” as well as for “the great land of all Muslims.”⁸¹ These loves can be maintained simultaneously since he sees national, international and political ideas separate from each other, while all still being “sacred.”⁸²

Perhaps it was for this plurality of ideas why the British Naval Intelligence somewhat misinterpreted Gökalp’s writings when it comes to Turanism, as in his politics he was clearly more of a Pan-Turkist. One scholar of Gökalp’s literature, Taha Parla, has come to a similar conclusion, arguing that Gökalp’s use of the Turanist myth was misunderstood as a political

⁷⁹ Admiralty, *A Manual on the Turanians and Pan-Turanianism*, 1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Ziya Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*, ed. Niyazi Berkes (London: Allen & Unwin, 1959), 78.

⁸² Gökalp and Berkes (ed.), *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*, 78.

program: “[...] Turanism does not figure even as an ideal in any of his theoretical or political articles and essays written in a period when his literary output was prolific [...]”⁸³ Indeed, his most prolific political writings, like *The Principles of Turkism* (1923), were published right before his death, and after the publication of the Manual, which leads one to believe that the Naval Intelligence may have been mostly prompted by his less academic work with Turanian sentiments, like his poetry which embodied such themes in a rather romantic way.

Regardless, it is worth continuing with analysis on Gökbalp, since the way Parla’s statement is formulated does not convey the full story. Although Turanism does not ‘figure as an ideal’ in Gökbalp’s most political writings, *Turan* does. In the *Principles of Turkism*, Gökbalp explicitly states that “the long-range ideal of Turkism is Turan.”⁸⁴ By this he means “the descendants of Tūr, i.e. the Turks.”⁸⁵ While he acknowledges that “some European writers” attach Ural-Altai group (with Finns and Hungarians) to Turan, he excludes it from his definition.⁸⁶ Yet, “the descendants of Tūr” does not only refer to the Turks in Turkey. More generally, Gökbalp sees nation as a community united with the same education and culture, with a common language as the main medium (somewhat similar to Koskinen’s philosophy).⁸⁷ This means that only the Turks in Turkey are part of the same *nation*, but the long term “ideal of the Turkists is to unite in language, literature and culture” the other Turkic peoples, such as Tatars and Uzbeks.⁸⁸ Therefore, Pan-Turkism is a project of uniting with the descendants of Tūr – with *Turan*, but not what others have considered *Turanians*. Thus, Gökbalp was not a pan-Turanist.

This is logical in the context of the new Turkish Republic, established in 1920. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s lead had made inwards looking nationalism more prominent.⁸⁹ Atatürk had

⁸³ Taha Parla, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp 1876 – 1924* (Leiden: Brill 1985), 35.

⁸⁴ Ziya Gökalp, *Principles of Turkism*, trans. Robert Devereux (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 19.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Parla, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp 1876 – 1924*, 36.

⁸⁸ Gökalp, *Principles of Turkism*, 19.

⁸⁹ Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 74.

renounced expansionist and Turanist ideas, seeking to develop Turkey within “her national frontiers.”⁹⁰ Turkist ideals were then rather popular, and one prominent Pan-Turkist, Yusuf Akçura, even felt that the young Republic already successfully represented Pan-Turkist ideals.⁹¹ Yet, according to Gökalp, Turanism had not been without its uses. He saw that Turkism would not have spread as fast without these Turanist ideas.⁹² Indeed, for him Turanism was for Turkism what Communism was for Lenin’s collectivisation – “a very attractive phantom.”⁹³

Just like the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent renewal of identity were a catalyst for these new ideologies, the end of the Dual-Monarchy did something similar in Hungary. In Hungary, a traveller and author, Ármin Vámbéry (1832-1913), had also approached Turanism from a Turkic perspective. He was convinced that Hungary was not part of the Finno-Ugric language group, but of Turkish background.⁹⁴ Just like Koskinen, he too had a history of his own for the Hungarian people, depicted in *Origins of the Hungarians* published in 1882 – around the same time as Koskinen’s second historical work. In his book, Vámbéry sketches a history where Hungarians were initially a mix of Finno-Ugric and Turkic, but later became more Turkic than the former, a point which, as we see above, Gökalp did not agree with.⁹⁵ However, after strong criticism he later adopted Ural-Altai as a correct classification for Hungarians.⁹⁶

It was this Ural-Altai theory, originally also preached by Castrén, that enabled Turanism to take further political forms.⁹⁷ In 1910, the Hungarian Turanian Society was formed

⁹⁰ Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation*, 74.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁹² *Ibid.* 20.

⁹³ Gökalp, *Principles of Turkism*, 20.

⁹⁴ Nándor Dreisziger, “Ármin Vámbéry (1832-1913) as a Historian of Early Hungarian Settlement in the Carpathian Basin,” *Journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association*, vol. 6 (2013), 6.

⁹⁵ Dreisziger, “Ármin Vámbéry (1832-1913) as a Historian of Early Hungarian Settlement in the Carpathian Basin,” 5.

⁹⁶ Michał Kowalczyk, “Hungarian Turanism. From the Birth of the Ideology to Modernity – an Outline of the Problem,” *Historia i Polityka*, n. 20 (2017), 52.

⁹⁷ Kowalczyk, “Hungarian Turanism. From the Birth of the Ideology to Modernity – an Outline of the Problem,” 53.

by several Hungarian academics and politicians, in order to promote cooperation between Hungarians and other Ural-Altaic nations.⁹⁸ When Austria-Hungary joined the Central Powers, the society was already receiving government support.⁹⁹ Subsequently, the society was sent to other kindred nations, all the way to Finland and Japan.¹⁰⁰ During the war, a Hungarian Turanian ideologist Árpád Zempleni called Turanism “a self-defense against ‘oppressive and assimilating Aryan efforts.’”¹⁰¹ The idea received more importance in Hungary after the Treaty of Trianon (1920). Its purpose, regardless of being too absurd for many even among Hungarians, was to find new allies in the hopes of establishing some sort of a Eurasian pact that would then help to amend the losses of the treaty.¹⁰² This Eurasian image, which had been developed from the mid-19th century onwards with philological and ethnographical classifications seen in the works like those of Castrén, Müller and Koskinen, now received geopolitical dimensions. After the First World War, when the Austrian, Ottoman and Russian Empires were disbanded, this geographical space could further be redefined and reorganised.

Eurasian notions would soon have a very practical connection to Turanism. Regardless of its actual political prominence, Turanism was taken seriously not only in Britain (as the Manual shows), but also in Russia. As historian Stephan Wiedeker has found, it was especially noted by Russian Eurasianists, a group of intellectuals in trying to build the post-revolutionary state in 1920s with a new kind of nationalism based on Eurasian geography and its historical connections.¹⁰³ Wiedeker even argues that “Eurasianism can be understood as a reaction to Pan-Turanian and Pan-Turkic ideas.” Nikolai Trubetzkoy, Russian linguist and a prominent Eurasianist, saw this ideology to be in competition with Turanism, stating that

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ See Sinan Levent’s fascinating work on Japanese Turanism. Sinan Levent, ‘Common Asianist Intellectual History in Turkey and Japan: Turanism’ *Central Asian Survey* 35, no. 1 (2016), 121–35.

¹⁰¹ Kowalczyk, “Hungarian Turanism. From the Birth of the Ideology to Modernity – an Outline of the Problem,” 51.

¹⁰² Jukka Kiho, *Sukulaissiteiden lujittamista ja kulttuuriin puettua politiikkaa*, 18.

¹⁰³ Stephan Wiedeker, “Eurasianism as a Reaction to Pan-Turkism,” trans. Barbara Keller and Ellen Simer, *Russia between East and West: Scholarly Debates on Eurasianism* (Boston: Brill, 2007) 52.

“Eurasianism, rather than [...] Pan-Turanianism for Eurasian Turanians [...] should become predominant.”¹⁰⁴ Even if Turanism did not pose too much of a political threat in practice, it is understandable that they viewed it as such. Eurasianists, who tried to unite the former imperial lands, were now competing with Turanist ideologies, which could prompt more separatist agitation and redrawing of the old imperial borders. According to Wiederkehr, for Eurasianists Turanism was almost synonymous with pan-Turkism, and indeed Turkic lands were seen highly concerning.¹⁰⁵ Wiederkehr’s thesis is also supported by the fact Turanism received attention in Japan, and unsurprisingly, in Japanese Turanism too Russia was the adversary.¹⁰⁶ For its implied conflicts between Russians and its neighbours, post-WW1 Turanism should be seen, if not purely as a Eurasian idea, at least as an ideology in a greater geopolitical competition over the Eurasian landscape.

Thus, the linguistic and ethnographic field established in the mid 1800s, became a historical and history political discipline in latter half of the 19th century, but ultimately in the early 20th century it had transformed into a greater political idea. As we have seen, Said’s Orientalism can explain this shift into instrumentality of what used to be a scholarly taxonomy. However, specifically in Turanism, this shift is more complicated and should perhaps be contextualized within greater changes in Eurasian politics, such as the collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires. Additionally, the mobilization of Turanist movements should be contrasted with the rise of Russian Eurasianists.

¹⁰⁴ Wiederkehr, “Eurasianism as a Reaction to Pan-Turkism,” 52.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰⁶ Sinan Levent, ‘Common Asianist Intellectual History in Turkey and Japan: Turanism’ *Central Asian Survey* 35, no. 1 (2016), 132.

Conclusions

In this paper I have studied politics of Turanism, starting with Max Müller's *Languages of the Seat War* and seen its utility in the context of the Crimean War. The book was used to familiarize British officers stationed in the East with the local languages for their military and political advantage. At the same time, the process of establishing philology for languages that did not have a place in the European philological traditions was used to advance the academic prowess of especially English academia, as well as to assert taxonomy over the peoples and languages of Eurasia.

Yrjö Koskinen studied history of Turanians in order to find roots of the Finns, at the time when the Finnish nation-building had been empowered by philologists such as Matthias Castrén. For both Koskinen and Castrén, patriotic sentiments were motivators for their research. While Müller's Turanist taxonomy was imposed from the outset to far-away nations, the Finnish scholars' studies on Turanism concerned their own nation and its ideological environment. Koskinen represents the historical development of the Turanic theory, becoming more popular after 1860s. With both Müller and Koskinen, I concluded that Turanism was political already before the end of the century, although closer to a scholarly pan-ideology with political elements than an established political movement.

However, as the century came to an end, political Turanism received more established forms. This transition from the academic to instrumental form in the early 20th century was explained by the militarization of Orientalism. Already in the 1910 with the Hungarian Turanist Society, but even more so after the First World War, Turanism received geopolitical interest. While in Hungary it became a state doctrine for a short while, in Turkey it was eclipsed by Pan-Turkism. Overall, I argued that the emerging pan-Turanism should be seen in the context of

contestation over Eurasian landscape and political establishment, especially Russian lands that for centuries had been under the now collapsing Czardom.

Turanism was an attempt to find a place between other pan-ideologies and power blocks in the increasingly disorderly Europe with its political tensions. Yet, it never became a political pan-ideology with substantial power in Europe or elsewhere. As such, compared to movements such as pan-Slavism and pan-Germanism, pan-Turanism was quite early forgotten.

To summarize, I asked to what extent Müller's theory of Turanism was politically conceived, how was the theory interpreted by its later followers, and to what degree were these subsequent interpretations politically motivated? The answer is, that Müller's book for which he made the Turanist taxonomy, was written for political purposes, specifically for British war effort in the Crimean War. Furthermore, the creation of Turanic philology would classify nations perceived to be Turanians for decades to come. This can be seen in subsequent research, such that of Koskinen's historical work written in the 1860s. There, historical Turanist theory was explored in order to contribute to nation-building under the Russian Empire. Thus, even in its scholarly form, it was by no means detached from the geopolitics of its time. After the turn of the century, pan-Turanism emerged as a political movement in Hungary, and as an idea in Turkey. Müller's Turanist taxonomy remained rather consistent, for 70 years after his book it was considered worth recognizing for geopolitical purposes.

All that said, for a relatively marginalized ideology Turanism left a unique legacy of its own. In the academia, the ideas that motivated Turanism and that were attached to it, such as the Ural-Altai hypothesis, also inspired different strains of philology and linguistics. Many Finnish linguistics, for example, took it as their work to study Eastern languages like Mongolian and their grammars. The Ural-Altai debate still continues, although in a more limited fashion. In terms of political legacy, pan-Turanism has recently resurfaced with Hungarian far-right party Jobbik.

With these arguments in mind, for further research I would propose studying Turanism in relation to themes and categories such as imagined geographies, Eurasian nationalisms and relations, as well as Orientalism. The transnational scholarly connections that were present in scientific Turanist theories is also something that current historiography has barely looked into. Turanism's influence on 19th century philology and its legacies in certain fields in humanities such as linguistics could also be worth studying further. With current political developments in our contemporary Europe, especially in countries like Hungary, pan-Turanism may become even more relevant in the near future.

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