

The Turkification of Azerbaijan: Review of Turkish Historiography

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Shortly after the establishment of the USSR, the country undertook process of isolating the country from other *imperialist states*. Restrictions were placed on bringing scientific literature and the press published abroad into the country. The Cold War that began after the Second World War reduced contacts with the outside world to a minimum. In such conditions academic exchange between scholars weakened. It is interesting to examine to what extent the scholarly results produced by historians from different countries who studied the same problem in this period overlapped. In this article I will compare the scholarly results that Azerbaijani and Turkish historiography reached in the first half of the previous century about the Turkification of Azerbaijan.

Although deprived of the possibility of scholarly exchange, Azerbaijani and Turkish scholars used the same sources and the same research methods. Logically the scholarly results of the two countries regarding the Turkification of Azerbaijan should match. I argue that although historians in both countries linked the Turkification of Azerbaijan to the Seljuk conquests, they divided this process into different stages. Azerbaijani scholars saw the Turkification of Azerbaijan as a single process. They believed that it began with the Seljuk conquests and ended precisely with these conquests. Turkish scholars divided the Turkification of Azerbaijan into three stages. In their view the process began with the Seljuks, intensified under the Mongols, and finally ended in the Safavid period.

To support this claim I will clarify the concept of

Turkification presented in historical works written in Azerbaijan in the early twentieth century. For the analysis of Azerbaijani historiography, I will examine only one academic study – the first volume of the three volume *History of Azerbaijan* published in the 1950s and 1960s. Since the book was written by the staff of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR, it shaped the main theses of Soviet historiography regarding the ethnogenesis of Azerbaijanis. I will then analyze the views developed in Turkish historiography on the same issue.

The Ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani People in Soviet Historiography

Because historical scholarship in the USSR was considered the ideological weapon of the worker-peasant government, the creation of history took place directly under the control, recommendations and instructions of the Communist Party. The creation of the history of Azerbaijan also took place with the close involvement of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijani Communist Party.

In 1955 a large meeting was held with the participation of Imam Mustafayev, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijani Communist Party, and the secretaries of the Central Committee. Historians and archive workers were invited to this meeting which was held to prepare the two volume *History of Azerbaijan* that later became a three-volume work. The main subject of discussion was the creation of the official thesis of the history of the Azerbaijani people. The decisions reached at the end of the discussion required historians to prove that (1) Media belonged to Azerbaijan when interpreting the ancient history and ethnogenesis of Azerbaijan and to consider only one tribe, the Arizants, to be Aryan and to reject the Iranian origin of other tribes. They also had to prove that (2) Manna and Media were created by tribes that lived in Azerbaijan and that these were the early Azerbaijani states. Moreover, they had to declare (3) the

Albanians to be the ancestors of Azerbaijanis. They had to state that (4) Azerbaijanis descended from the Medes and that the Albanians later joined this process. Finally, they had to form (5) a unified view about the language, borders and ethnic origin of the Safavid state. As we can see, the discussion did not task historians with Turkifying the Azerbaijani people.

In 1958 the first volume of the *History of Azerbaijan* prepared by the staff of the Institute of History was published by the Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR. The book claimed that “the languages of the tribal unions and ancient states that arose in the territory of Azerbaijan^[i] were the Kutian-Lullubean languages.”^[ii] According to the book, the oldest state in the territory of Azerbaijan was Manna which consisted of small Kutian-Lullubean states. The Medes who were not originally Iranian speaking “were later forcibly Iranized.”^[iii] The authors stated that the formation of the Azerbaijani people began in the third to first millennia BCE. and that many tribes that lived in the region took part in this process, including “the Mannaians, the Caspians, the Cadusians, part of the Medes and many others about whom history has preserved no reliable information.”^[iv] In the territory of Albania which was considered the oldest state in the territory of the Azerbaijan SSR “the largest tribe were the Albanians. Besides them the Gargar, the Hill (Hell), and the Lih (Leh) tribes lived in the territory of this state.”^[v]

Relying on historical sources Azerbaijani scholars linked the Turkification of Azerbaijan directly to the Seljuk conquests. The authors wrote that before the Seljuk people in the south of Azerbaijan spoke the Azari language and, in the north, they spoke the Aran language. The Azari language “was close to the language of the Talysh who now live in the southern districts of Azerbaijan.”^[vi] Through this explanation the historians made clear to the reader that there was no single language in Azerbaijan before the Seljuk conquests. The emergence of a single language in Azerbaijan and the fact that that language

was Turkic were the result of the Seljuk conquests. [\[vii\]](#) The researchers also explained the reason for this. "From the beginning of the Christian era Azerbaijan was exposed to the ceaseless attacks of Turkic-speaking nomadic tribes." These tribes "entered the territory of Azerbaijan in larger and more concentrated numbers twice, in the fifth to seventh centuries and in the eleventh to twelfth centuries." [\[viii\]](#) The second reason for Turkification was the close contact of the Seljuk Turks, who were nomadic, with the sedentary population of Azerbaijan. As they were nomadic and constantly searched for new pastures the newcomers had to communicate with the locals, and this caused the locals to adopt their language. [\[ix\]](#)

The book did not explain why the locals adopted the language of the newcomers instead of the newcomers adopting the local language. I think at least two reasons could be suggested. First, the newcomers possessed political superiority. They occupied the territories and held a dominant position. Second, the newcomers were more numerous than the local population. The book explained the adoption of the Turkish language (the book calls it "the Azerbaijani language" and thus calls the Seljuk language Azerbaijani) by stating that it was easy and simple. The authors therefore reached the conclusion that as in most states the local population in Azerbaijan adopted the language of the newcomers and conquerors.

The researchers did not deny that the Seljuks came to the region as conquerors, that they forced the local states to submit through military superiority and that tense relations existed between the newcomers and the local population. The book states that the first Seljuk incursions into Azerbaijan began in 1009 and that during the reign of Malik Shah (1072 to 1092) "Ganja and all of Aran fell under the domination of the Seljuks. Fearing a popular uprising the foreigners kept an army of forty-eight thousand at the expense of the population." [\[x\]](#) The book gives information about the "mass migrations of the Seljuks" to Azerbaijan from the beginning to the end of the eleventh century. Based on Arab sources it

speaks of “the spread of the Turks in the plains, mountains and castles like locusts” when Malik Shah sent Turks to Mughan and Aran in 1086. Referring to Yaqut al Hamawi it states that “Mughan was a province with many villages and pastures. The Turks now occupy it to graze their animals.”[\[xi\]](#)

Thus, according to the concept of Soviet historiography many tribes that lived in the region or came by migration and incursions took part in the formation of the Azerbaijani people. In ancient times, before Christ, the inhabitants of these territories were not Turkic speaking. The first large incursions of Turks into these territories took place in the early Middle Ages. The Turkification of Azerbaijan took place as a result of the Seljuk conquests.

How Does Turkish Historiography Explain the Turkification of Azerbaijan?

Research on the Turkification of Azerbaijan is rare in Turkish historiography. Scholars addressed this issue mainly when studying important problems of Turkish history such as the Turkification of Anatolia, the role of Anatolian Turks in the formation of the Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu and Safavid states, and the Ottoman Safavid wars. In addition, many Azerbaijani and other Turkic scholars who migrated from the Russian Empire to Türkiye in the early twentieth century carried out research on the historical geography, language and folklore of Azerbaijan. These studies indirectly helped to clarify the issue of the Turkification of Azerbaijan.

Unlike Soviet Azerbaijan, the Turkish government in the early twentieth century assigned historians the task of making the history of the Turkish nation as ancient and as Turkic as possible. This message came directly from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the republic. Ahmad Bey Ağaoğlu is considered the main creator of this concept which was known as the *Turkish History Thesis*. The concept was based on the Turkification of the Hittites who were considered the most

ancient civilization of Western Asia.[\[xii\]](#) Most Turkish historians did not accept this thesis and therefore lost their academic positions. The scholars mentioned in this article belonged to that category.

One of the scholars who refused to accept the thesis supported by the government and suffered as a result was Ahmed Zeki Velidi Togan. Velidi was ethnically Bashkir. In a series of articles in the periodical *Azərbaycan Yurt Bilgisi* he provided information about the towns and states that existed in the region, their population and their language.[\[xiii\]](#) Velidi wrote: "Near the end of the rule of Qubad ibn Firuz (488 to 531) in Iran, the Sasanian army crossed the Araz and then the Kura rivers. Under Nushiravan when they occupied the whole of Albania up to Derbent these places remained under the rule of the Khazars [the Khazars were a Turkic speaking tribe] or more precisely under the rule of the Huns."[\[xiv\]](#) Describing Qabala, one of the central towns of Aran, Velidi stressed that the ninth century author al Balazuri presented it as a Khazar town and that after the town was occupied by the Arabs in 646, Turks were settled there. By "Aran" Velidi meant the territory of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan. According to Velidi, some of the Turks who came to Aran were from Turkestan.[\[xv\]](#) Referring to the tenth century Arab author al Masudi, Velidi wrote that although the town was settled by Muslims all the surrounding population consisted of non-Muslims. Writing about the eleventh-century Shaki, Velidi again relied on Arab sources. He stated that both the population and the ruling dynasty of the town were non-Turkic and non-Muslim and that the province belonged to Armenia. Velidi also wrote that the valleys of Qanig (Alazan) and Qobur, which were adjacent to Shaki, "were settled by Christian and non-Turkic elements before the Mongols."[\[xvi\]](#)

Thus, Velidi linked the first migration of Turkic tribes to Azerbaijan to the early Middle Ages, the fifth to seventh centuries, but stated that in this period they were not the dominant group in the region. We see this in his comments on

Aran. Referring to the Arab authors Maqdisi and Istakhri, he wrote that in the period of the Arab conquests the population of the province called Aran “spoke the Aran language and were like brothers to the Armenians.” Velidi also stated that since Barda was for a certain period “the center of the province formed from the territories of all Azerbaijan, Aran and Armenia” some primary sources (for example the anonymous author of *Hudud al Alam* and al Biruni) “considered the towns of Shirvan part of the province of ‘Armenia.’”[\[xvii\]](#) Although the number of Turks who migrated to the territory of Aran in the eleventh and twelfth centuries sharply increased, only some of them, especially those “who came from the side of Azerbaijan, were able to preserve their positions (...) Others either left voluntarily or were moved to other places by the governments.”[\[xviii\]](#) Thus, according to Velidi, although the strongest Turkic influx into the territory of Azerbaijan began in the Seljuk period, the region did not become completely Turkic in that period. The process ended after the Mongol period.

Although Mükrimin Halil Yinanc had deep sympathy for the Turks his research did not correspond to the thesis supported by the Turkish government. Yinanc addressed the Turkification of Aran (the modern Republic of Azerbaijan) and Azerbaijan (Iranian Azerbaijan) in several studies. [\[xix\]](#) He used a wide range of Arab, Persian, Syriac, Armenian, Byzantine and Western sources. He pointed out that the Seljuks did not produce written sources for a long time and that therefore there were few Turkic language sources on this subject. Halil Yinanc linked the first stage of the settlement of Turks in modern Azerbaijan to the entry of Turkmens into the territory of the small Muslim emirate of the Shaddadids between 1018 and 1021. They first seized Nakhchivan and then crossed the Araz and occupied Dvin. [\[xx\]](#)

After Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi arrested Arslan Beg bin Seljuk in 1025 he moved the tribes and clans subordinated to him to Khorasan. But these Turkmens soon rebelled against the

governor of Khorasan. Sultan Mahmud came to Khorasan in person to suppress the revolt and defeated the rebellious Turkmens. Halil Yinanc wrote that these Turkmens, who consisted of about two thousand tents, scattered into the mountains and deserts in search of a new homeland and were finally accepted under the protection of Vahsudan, the ruler of Azerbaijan (a representative of the Rawadid dynasty), who needed armed forces to defend against Byzantine attacks.[\[xxi\]](#) After a time, these Turkmens crossed the Byzantine border and spread into those territories.

Toward the middle of the eleventh century during the wars among Armenia, Georgia, Aran and Byzantium, the rulers of Aran and Azerbaijan drew the Turkmens to their side. These wars gave the Turkmens the opportunity to cross the Araz and capture many towns inhabited by Armenians. The inhabitants of the devastated towns were killed or taken captive. But in 1041 Vahsudan invited about thirty clan leaders of the Turkmens to a banquet and killed them. The Turkmens then left Azerbaijan. Some moved toward Urmia and some toward Hakkari. They were defeated in battles with the Kurds and dispersed into surrounding areas.[\[xxii\]](#) Around the same years Kutulmus, the cousin of the Seljuk sultan Toghrul, occupied all of Azerbaijan. He crossed the Araz and entered Aran, modern Georgia and Armenia. Yinanc wrote that in that period besides the Armenian and Georgian kingdoms "two Muslim governments existed" in the region. One was the Shirvanshahs and the other was the government of the Shaddadids which included Nakhchivan, Dabil and Ganja. Kutulmus attacked the Shaddadids but the long siege of Ganja brought no result.[\[xxiii\]](#)

Yinanc stressed that the Turkmens captured the entire South Caucasus through heavy fighting and that battles sometimes lasted long without result. He stated that this long and painful process of migration and resettlement lasted for more than half a century; it stretched from the shores of Lake Goycha across the center of Anatolia to the banks of the Kızılırmak. In the period of the second Seljuk sultan Alp

Arslan (1029 or 1030 to 1072) the Turkmens made several incursions into the east of the Caucasus and Anatolia. As a result of these incursions, Armenians were forced to leave the Araz basin and eastern Anatolia and seek refuge in southern Anatolia and Cilicia.[\[xxiv\]](#) The Turkmens occupied all the territories abandoned by the Armenians. In the period of Kutulmus's son, the first Shah Suleyman, who founded the Seljuk state in Anatolia, the Turkification of the South Caucasus and Aran continued. Malik Shah united Aran and Azerbaijan into a single emirate to govern these territories and appointed his cousin Kutb al Din Ismail as its ruler. Since the Shaddadids managed to preserve their power in Ganja, the center of the province of Aran in this period was Beylagan.[\[xxv\]](#)

Halil Yinanc presented several reasons that made possible the Turkification of the South Caucasus, including Azerbaijan and Anatolia. He wrote that from the early Middle Ages unending wars in the region (Iran-Byzantine, Arab-Byzantine), internal conflicts during the rule of the Macedonian dynasty in Byzantium and the constant incursions of Arabs and Kipchaks destroyed towns, fortresses and strongholds and led to massacres and enslavement of the population. The sharp decline of the population reduced the taxes that reached the treasury. This forced Byzantine emperors to increase taxes and obligations drastically to fill the treasury. Byzantine emperors' oppressive and predatory administration in the context of internal conflicts and foreign incursions and religious pressure, especially the discrimination against Armenians, caused resentment among most of the population. As a result, the local population did not resist the incoming Turks but sought refuge with them in order to free themselves from the oppression of the emperors.[\[xxvi\]](#) In the South Caucasus, the main resistance to the newcomers was carried out by the Christian population and Armenian and Georgian feudal lords. But they were few and militarily weak, and they were defeated. After the submission of the South Caucasus, the

Byzantine Empire began to be conquered region by region.

Halil Yinanc believed that the migration of Turkic tribes and clans did not follow a single direction. Turks, who had moved from the Caucasus and Iran toward Anatolia, moved in the opposite direction in various periods. For example, in the twelfth century during the internal conflicts between the Seljuk states, Armenian and Georgian feudal lords achieved several victories over the Turks. As a result, Turkish tribes and clans settled in Aran migrated to Anatolia. This process continued in the period of the Mongol and Timurid conquests. Turks who could not resist the conquerors fled to Anatolia and Rumelia. From the fourteenth century the formation of Turkic tribal confederations and their successful military operations, including the occupation of most of Iran, caused migration in the opposite direction from Anatolia to Iran, Azerbaijan and Aran.[\[xxvii\]](#) After the Qara Qoyunlu lost power in Iran, their tribes and clans were persecuted by the Aq Qoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan. They therefore left Iran and returned to Anatolia. The same process took place in the early sixteenth century as a result of the successful military campaigns of the Safavids. The tribes and clans of the Shiite affiliation in Anatolia migrated to Iran and the tribes belonging to the Aq Qoyunlu alliance fled back to Anatolia. According to Yinanc's calculations, more than one million Turks migrated from Central Asia and other regions to the Caucasus and Anatolia between the tenth and eleventh centuries. Among them the number of military forces did not exceed 100-150 thousand. The rest were family members and nomadic tribes.[\[xxviii\]](#)

Faruk Sümer, one of the Turkish historians of the previous century, divided the Turkification of Azerbaijan into three stages which he called the Seljuk, Mongol and post Mongol periods.[\[xxix\]](#) He considered the Mongol period the most important stage in this process. Sümer used the term "Azerbaijan" to refer to "Iranian Azerbaijan." He referred to the territory of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan as "Aran

and Mughan.” Sümer wrote that in the first stage, the Seljuk period, the Turkmens were settled in all of Aran and Mughan. In the south they were settled in the west of Lake Urmia and between Iranian Kurdistan and Shahri Zor.[\[xxx\]](#) Turkmens in Southern Azerbaijan in the provinces of Tabriz, Ardabil and Khalkhal were very few and in this period Southern Azerbaijan was less Turkified than Northern Azerbaijan. These territories were therefore not subject to the Seljuks and were granted as *iqta* to the Mamluks. Sümer explained the reason for this not with the more favorable nature of Aran for the lifestyle of the Turkmens but with its geographical position. Aran was a frontier region. It was the border zone with non-Muslim states and was considered the area in which the holy wars against Christians were carried out. The Turkmens settled in Aran organized campaigns against the Georgians and seized captives and spoils and gained strength. Therefore, on the eve of the Mongol campaigns the number of Turks in this region was extremely large.[\[xxxii\]](#) The region was considered a Turkish country in that period. Sümer believed that the growth of the number of Turks in Aran was connected not only with the Oghuz migrations but also with the numerous incursions of the Turks who came with the Khwarazmshah Jalal al Din before the Mongol campaigns and with incursions of the Kipchaks who were related to them. But the Kipchaks could not establish themselves in Aran and were forced to return. Sümer therefore followed the view of Halil Yinanc and stated that although the Seljuk migration started the Turkification process in Azerbaijan the Seljuks could not establish themselves in these territories.

Sümer stated that when the Mongol conquests began the Turkmens who had settled in Aran and Azerbaijan in the Seljuk period and those who came from Khwarazm left these territories and settled in Anatolia.[\[xxxiii\]](#) He considered this the main reason for the lack of Turkic toponyms from the Seljuk period in Aran and Azerbaijan. Sümer could not find any source that confirmed the presence of Turkmens in Azerbaijan in the most powerful period of the Ilkhanid state.[\[xxxiiii\]](#) He linked this to the

custom of defeated nomadic Turks to leave their homeland with all their tribes and clans.

The second stage of Turkification took place in the Mongol period. Many Turkic toponyms appeared in the region in this period, unlike in the Seljuk period. Sümer recalled Lake Goycha as the first example. He wrote that in the period of Hulegu, the area of Karsanti north of Lake Van was known as *Aladag*. The Sevan Lake, which is located in the modern territory of Armenia, was known as *Kokche teniz* in the period of Abaqa Khan (1265 to 1282). Beginning in the period of Hulegu Khan, many place names in Azerbaijan appeared in Turkish and Mongolian in the sources. Sümer stated that since part of the tribes that took part in the Mongol conquests were Mongol and part were Turkic place names of both languages appeared. This process continued until the period of Abu Sa'id Bahadur Khan, after which the preference shifted to the Turkic language. Sümer divided the Turks who took part in the Mongol conquests into two groups. The first group consisted of Turks by origin. The second group consisted of Turkicized Mongols. The Uighurs formed the main part of the first group. After the creation of the Ilkhanid state they migrated to Iran in great numbers. Sources give extensive information on the senior positions that some of them held in the Ilkhanid government. Sümer relied on the list in the most important of these sources, the work of Abu'l Qasim Kashani who wrote the history of Olcaytu Khan. [\[xxxiv\]](#)

Thus, Sümer argued that the increase of the Turkic population in Iran, Azerbaijan and Aran took place because many Turks came to these territories under the Mongol banner. Some worked as state officials. Some served as retainers and slaves of Mongol khans, princes and noyans. Because they were numerous, Turkic gradually became the dominant language. As a result, both the Turkification of Azerbaijan and the Turkification of the Mongols took place. [\[xxxv\]](#) This process began in the north of Azerbaijan and continued in its south, especially in the areas around Maragha, Khoy and Lake Urmia. Sümer believed that

from the period of the Ilkhanids onward the migration of Turkic tribes from the Ottoman state to Iran, Aran and Mughan lasted for more than a century. The powerful influx of nomadic Turkic tribes into Azerbaijan began after the death of Abu Sa'id in 1336. Political upheaval in the region caused many Turkic tribes living in Rumelia to migrate to Azerbaijan.

Sümer stated that in the 18-year rule of the Chobanids, the majority of the army that was brought from Anatolia to Azerbaijan consisted of Turks. Sources also state that many Turkmens lived in Mughan and Aran in the period of the Chobanids and that these Turkmens mainly belonged to the Chobanli tribe.[\[xxxvii\]](#) In the late fourteenth century, during the rise of the Jalayirids, many Turkmen tribes, including the Qara Qoyunlu, seized the lands of the Mongol Sutayli tribe. They seized power in Nakhchivan, Khoy and the southern part of Lake Goycha and even reached Tabriz. But the Timurid conquests prevented the Turkmens from establishing themselves in Azerbaijan, Aran and Mughan. According to Sümer, the period between the decline of the Ilkhanid state and the rise of the Jalayirids, that is the mid XIII to mid XV centuries, was the period in which Turkification reached its highest point in Azerbaijan, Aran and Mughan. In the sources of this period, there were many Turkic place names that did not appear in earlier sources. The Turks who came from Anatolia gave the names of their abandoned homelands to the new settlements they founded in Azerbaijan and Aran.

The third stage of the Turkification of Azerbaijan was directly connected to the influx of Turkmen tribes into Azerbaijan, Aran and Mughan in the periods of the Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu and Safavids. This was the period in which the Turkification of these territories reached completion. Sümer wrote that in the period of the Qara Qoyunlu – which established a large empire that included Azerbaijan, Iran, the Iraqi Ajam, Iraqi Arab and Fars – many Turkmen tribes that had lived in eastern Anatolia migrated to Azerbaijan. Moreover, the Qara Qoyunlu ruler Jahan Shah moved part of the large

tribe called Qara Ulus from Arab Iraq to Azerbaijan. The Aq Qoyunlu, which defeated the Qara Qoyunlu, were more numerous. As a result, the Turkmens spread beyond the borders of Azerbaijan and entered wide regions including the Iraqi Ajam. The largest migration from Anatolia to Azerbaijan took place in the period of the Safavids. As a result, the number of Turkmens in Anatolia decreased sharply.[\[xxxvii\]](#) Thousands of Turkmens migrated only from Antalya to Iran in the period of the formation of the Safavid state. They were later known in Iran as the Tekeli. The migrating tribes included both nomadic Turkmens and sedentary Turks. As a result of these migrations, Turkic became the dominant language in the western part of Iran. Sümer wrote that according to Jean Chardin, the seventeenth century European traveler, in that period people spoke Persian in the towns beyond Abhar. In the towns before Abhar the language spoken by the population was Turkic, which was very close to the language spoken in the Ottoman lands.

The mass migrations from various parts of the Ottoman Empire, especially from Anatolia to Iran, Aran and Mughan, began to affect the financial situation of the Ottoman Empire. The large exodus of the tax-paying population from Ottoman territory led to the inclusion in the Treaty of Amasya of 1555, which ended the Ottoman-Safavid wars, of a clause that called for the return of the population that had left the territories of both states.[\[xxxviii\]](#) But it was impossible to stop the migration of Turks from the Ottoman Empire to Azerbaijan. These migrations continued even in the period of Shah Abbas. The largest group that migrated in this period were the Muqaddamoghullary who lived between Erzurum and Pasin, and the Iraqi Turkmens who entered the service of Shah Abbas and were known as the Shahsevens.[\[xxxix\]](#)

Linguistic studies also confirm the particular importance of the Mongol period in the Turkification of Azerbaijan. The Turkologist Ahmad Jafaroglu stated that the use of Mongolian words in the Azerbaijani language dates to the Ilkhanid period. In many cases these words differed from the original

version both in meaning and in pronunciation and were adapted to the harmony rules of Turkic.^[x1] Jafaroglu focused on such words as *hündür*, *həmir*, *nohur*, *tala*, *yekə*, *lap*, *şilə* and analyzed their geographical distribution. When analyzing anthroponyms in Azerbaijani, he focused on the traces left by the Mongol invasions which were foreign to the local language. He analyzed Mongolian personal names used in the Azerbaijani language such as *Qambay*, *Ulağay*, *Arçil*, and *Nogay*, terms related to state institutions such as *Qaraul*, *Yasaul*, *Darğa*, and *Ğoşun* and terms related to family relations such as *Kürəkən*.^[xli] These studies supported the view of Faruk Sümer about the simultaneous use of Turkish and Mongolian in the Mongol period and the gradual Turkification of the Mongol tribes.

Conclusion

Before the Second World War, the USSR and Türkiye did not have close relations. The Cold War that began after the war, the territorial claims of the USSR against Türkiye and the membership of Türkiye in NATO deepened tensions between the two states. Political tension also negatively affected contacts between scholars and cultural figures of the two states. Although scholars of both countries analyzed the social and political life of the other side and the processes that took place there, scholarly exchange was severely limited. Despite this many works by Turkish scholars, especially historians and linguists, on the history and socio-cultural development of the Turkic peoples of the USSR were published. One reason for this was the large émigré community from the former Russian Empire in Türkiye. Another reason was the creation of a national history for Türkiye.

Historical and philological studies conducted in a period of low scholarly exchange and political confrontation show that the academic results of the scholars of the two states did not contradict each other. The results were compatible and similar. The wider source base used by Turkish scholars and

their comparative analysis of historical narratives written in various languages gave them the possibility to conduct deeper studies and to form well-grounded theses. Both Turkish and Azerbaijani historiography linked the Turkification of Azerbaijan to the Seljuk conquests. But unlike Azerbaijani historiography, Turkish historiography argued that the Turkification of Azerbaijan did not end with the Seljuk conquests. Turkish scholars claimed that the Seljuks could not establish themselves in Azerbaijan. They claimed that the process continued in the Mongol period and ended in the Safavid period.

I think one reason for this difference was related to the aim of the studies. Azerbaijani researchers did not have the mission to Turkify the ethnic origins of the peoples living in Azerbaijan. The primary objective of Azerbaijani historiography has been to establish a cohesive thesis regarding the ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani people. This thesis posits that the formation of the Azerbaijani people was influenced by multiple ethnic groups, rejecting the notion that the process was exclusively influenced by Turkic-speaking peoples. Turkish researchers were mainly interested in the process of Turkification of Anatolia and the surrounding regions. This aim led Turkish scholars to study wider regions and longer historical periods and to analyze a large number of written sources. For this reason, Azerbaijani historiography presented Turkification as a single process while Turkish historiography presented it as a continuous process consisting of three stages.

Notes and References

[\[i\]](#)By *Azerbaijan* the book refers both to the territory of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan (the book calls this “the northern part of Azerbaijan” or “Northern Azerbaijan”) and to the territory known in scholarly literature as *Iranian*

Azerbaijan (the book calls this “the southern part of Azerbaijan” or “Southern Azerbaijan”). Iranian Azerbaijan is a historical and geographical region in the northwest of modern Iran, and it comprises three provinces of Iran today, West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan and Ardabil.

[\[ii\]](#) *Azərbaycan tarixi 3 cilddə, 1-ci cild, Azərbaycan SSR EA Nəşriyyatı, 1958, 40.*

[\[iii\]](#) *Ibid., pp. 42, 50.*

[\[iv\]](#) *Ibid., 62.*

[\[v\]](#) *Ibid., 65-66.*

[\[vi\]](#) *Ibid., 188.*

[\[vii\]](#) *Ibid., 186.*

[\[viii\]](#) *Ibid., 186-7.*

[\[ix\]](#) *Ibid.*

[\[x\]](#) *Ibid., 154-5.*

[\[xi\]](#) *Ibid., 157.*

[\[xii\]](#) Can Erimtan. “Hittites, Ottomans and Turks: Ağaoğlu Ahmed Bey and the Kemalist Construction of Turkish Nationhood in Anatolia”, *Anatolian Studies*, 2008, Vol. 58 (2008), pp. 141-171.

[\[xiii\]](#) Togan, Ahmet Zeki Valldi, “Azərbaycanın Tarixi Coğrafiyası,” *Azərbaycan Yurt Bilgisi*, Cilt: I, Sayı: 2, Şubat 1932, İstanbul 1932, 69-83; Sayı:3, Mart 1932, İstanbul 1932, .123-132; Sayı: 4-5, Nisan – Mayıs 1932, İstanbul 1931. 145-156.

[\[xiv\]](#) Əhməd Zəki Vəlidi. *Azərbaycanın tarixi coğrafiyası*. (Təhsil, 2009), 44.

[\[xv\]](#) Vəlidi. *Azərbaycanın tarixi coğrafiyası*, 44-5. Turkestan

is a historical region in Asia. Its territory borders the Caspian Sea in the west, the Gobi Desert in the east, Siberia in the north and Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tibet in the south.

[\[xvi\]](#) Ibid., 56-7.

[\[xvii\]](#) Ibid., 23.

[\[xviii\]](#) Ibid., 56-7.

[\[xix\]](#) Mükrimin Halil. *Türkiye Tarihi: Səlcuqku Devri. I Anadolunun fethi*. İstanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1934; Mükrimin Halil Yınanc. *Türkiye tarihi. Selcuklar Devri*. İstanbul: Bürhaneddin Matbaası, 1944.

[\[xx\]](#) Mükrimin Halil, 1934, 19.

[\[xxi\]](#) Mükrimin Halil Yınanc, 1944, 37.

[\[xxii\]](#) Ibid., 45.

[\[xxiii\]](#) Ibid., 50-1.

[\[xxiv\]](#) Ibid., 89.

[\[xxv\]](#) Ibid., 124-6.

[\[xxvi\]](#) Ibid., 169-7.

[\[xxvii\]](#) Ibid., 173, 175.

[\[xxviii\]](#) Ibid., 181.

[\[xxix\]](#) Faruk, Sümer. "Azerbaycan'ın Türkleşmesi Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış". BELLETEN 21, sy. 83 (Temmuz 1957), 429.

[\[xxx\]](#) Shahri Zor was a province of the Ottoman Empire between 1554 and 1862. Its capital was the town of Kirkuk.

[\[xxxii\]](#) Sümer. "Azerbaycan'ın Türkleşmesi, 431.

[\[xxxiii\]](#) Ibid., 435.

[\[xxxiii\]](#) Ibid.

[\[xxxiv\]](#) Ebu'l-Kasım Abdullah b. Ali. *Tarih-i Olcaytu*. [Ayasofya Kütüphanesindeki yazma nüsha]. 139a.

[\[xxxv\]](#) Sümer. "Azerbaycan'ın Türkleşmesi, 439.

[\[xxxvi\]](#) Sümer. "Azerbaycan'ın Türkleşmesi, 441.

[\[xxxvii\]](#) Faruk, Sümer. *XV. Asırdan itibaren Anadolu'dan İran'a vuku bulan göçler*, Türk Yurdu, Sayı 1 (234), 1954, s. 36- 42.

[\[xxxviii\]](#) Ibid., 90-1.

[\[xxxix\]](#) Ibid., 173.

[\[xl\]](#) Ahmet, Caferoğlu. "Azeri Lehçesinde Bazı Moğol Unsurları", *AYB. CiIt: I*, Sayı: 6-7, Haziran Tcmımız 1932, İstanbul 1932, 216.

[\[xli\]](#) Ahmet, Caferoğlu. "Azerbaycan Antroponimisine Dair Notlar". *Journal of Turkish Language and Literature*, Vol. 8, 1958: 1-7.