
MARCANTONIO, Angela

The Linguistic Influence of Turkic on Hungarian

Hungarian is usually classified as a pure Uralic language, with a great deal of Turkic borrowing. However, the historical sources from the 9th/10th century all agree that the Magyars were a nomadic people of the steppes, living within multi-lingual and multi-ethnic Turkic tribal confederations. This evidence is in contradiction with the Uralic linguistic model, and so, in conventional Hungarian historiography, the original sources have been re-interpreted to the point of misrepresentation.

1. Introduction*

It is a well known fact in linguistic studies that when two or more languages come into contact they typically either mutually influence each other, or at least one of the languages exercise influence on the other(s). This influence normally translates mainly into borrowing of words, as well as of grammatical and /or morpho-syntactic /structural elements, depending usually on the intensity and the length of the contacts. In turn, the potential mutual influence or, alternatively, the potential 'one way influence' (so to say) typically depend on several extra linguistic factors, the most relevant of which are: a) the status of the languages involved (is one of them a 'prestigious' language?); b) the sheer number of peoples speaking, supporting and maintaining them and /or the level of military, political power of the peoples in question, or the power and influence naturally arising from being in possess of a cutting-edge technological or economical advantage, etc. It is also well known that in a contact situation a 'minority language', that is a language spoken by a minority of peoples within a given linguistic area, and/or a language that, for whatever reason, is not gifted with any of the socio-economical advantages mentioned above, rather than borrowing intensively, tends to be assimilated by the surrounding (more numerous and / or powerful) population, and therefore, ultimately, to disappear – unless, of course, the speakers in question make a conscious, constant effort to preserve their language (and culture) through any available means¹ (see [1], [2] etc.).

The veracity of the above depicted scenario is supported by many recent and past instances of languages that either have heavily borrowed from other languages, at the point of strongly modifying their original nature and structure, and therefore becoming what can be called (through a loose,

* I wish to thank E. Ragagnin, J. Janhunen and L. Marác for their insightful comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this article.

¹ This is for example the case of the little Albanian community that lives in 'Piana degli Albanesi', near Palermo (Sicily), since the time of the occupation of the Balkans by the Ottoman Empire.

comprehensive term) a 'mixed² language' (see [3], [4], [5]), or died altogether under the pressure of more powerful, expansive languages. For example, several, more or less different, neighbouring languages may 'converge', by sharing numerous similarities, variously picking up features from one another – the so-called 'linguistic area' (/ *Sprachbund*), such as the paradigmatic Balkanic area. In other circumstances, 'mixed' languages (in a stricter sense of the term) may form, such as Romani and Domari, descendent of Central (Old / Middle) Indo-Aryan languages [6]. Similarly, in the areas and during the period of colonial domination, the so-called (French or English based) 'pidgin / creole' languages came into being (see again [4]). At other times and contexts languages have in fact died out, often leaving behind some traces of themselves, such as some words, names, some structural elements, influences on pronunciation, etc. Among famous examples of extinct languages one could quote here the case of Etruscan, assimilated by the neighbouring, expanding Romans – although some bits of the language, particularly proper names and a few morphemes, survive in the numerous inscriptions in tombs and grave stones. Finally, one could mention the following two historical/linguistic, well known events, whereby the minority language of the peoples occupying a foreign territory did not manage to impose their own language, despite their position of power and prestige. First, the case of the Scandinavian peoples known as *Varangians / Rus'*, who imposed themselves as the rulers in the area of Novgorod first and then Kiev, and then expanded in the rest of Russia. They bequeathed the peoples they dominated with their name, without however causing them to switch their original language for that of the newcomers. Second, the case of the Norman French peoples, who invaded England and, whilst greatly influencing its language, did not succeed in spreading their 'Norman French' language to their subjects.

Turning now to a linguistic area in Europe that has been in the past the theatre of expansion of those peoples that could be called, globally, 'Eurasian steppe peoples', or 'Inner Asia' peoples, we observe several examples of 'extinct' languages. It is well known that the (European) Huns founded an empire in the Carpathian Basin, empire that crumbled, together with its languages, after the death of its chief, Attila, in 453 AD – after which the Huns disappeared from the scene of history. Similarly, the Avars lived in the Carpathian Basin until their empire was crashed at the hands of the Franks toward the end of 800s, and their peoples (and language) were assimilated (as well as converted to Christianity) by the expanding Slavic peoples. Indeed, the vast Hungarian lowland called '*Alföld*'³ in some Latin sources is

² According to some classifications, a 'mixed language' combines the grammatical elements of one language and the lexical items of another. More generally, it is a language "which does not descend from a single ancestor in the normal way, but which has instead been assembled by combining large chunks of material from two (or more) existing languages" ([3, 214]). Typically, there is bilingualism in one of the speech communities involved, though this is not a requirement. There are certainly ambiguities and problems of definition regarding the use of the term 'mixed', also because every language is mixed to a certain extent, and every linguistic element (lexical, grammatical etc.) can in principle be borrowed, given the right circumstances. Thus, it is rather an issue of 'degree' of mixture that is at stake. Whatever the case, this debate is not of relevance here, and by 'mixed' I loosely refer to a language that combines material from two (or more) existing languages.

³ Despite the fact that the Avars lived exactly in that stretch of land that is now the home land of the Hungarians, RT&B ([7, II:1164]) claim that: "No Avar-speaking group of major importance witnessed the Hungarian Conquest of the Carpathian Basin. However, this does not necessarily mean that the Slavicized Avars fully lost their ethnic identity. Even a few words may have been transmitted, but we can safely exclude an Avar impact on the Hungarian language". According to the authors, all historical data support this thesis (although they do not tell us what the data in question are). This claim can be maintained if one believes in the conventional date of the Hungarian home conquest, officially assumed to have taken place between 895 and 902 AD, thesis that, however, has been challenged by several scholar. For example, László ([11]), on the basis of archaeological findings,

named '*solitudo avarorum*'. There is a small corpus of Avar words (in Latin and Byzantine sources) that contain some names and titles also present in the Hungarian language, such as the title *tarkan*, that occurs frequently as a Hungarian geographical name in the form *Tarján ~ Tárkány*⁴. This term is also a (chief) clan name of one of the seven Hungarian tribes featuring in the text by Constantine Porphyrogenitus (see [7, II:1163-4]), [8, 406] and discussion below). However, the precise ethnic origin of the Avars⁵ is disputed: were they Turkic, or Mongolian, or migrated from other Inner-Asia areas? (see again [7] for the debate). Finally, there is the case of the so-called 'Danubian' Bulghar Turkic population, that is, that branch of the Bulghar Turkic peoples that left their dwelling place in the area of the Volga River (the so-called 'Volga Bulgars') to move westward and settle, again, in the area of the Carpathian Basin, in the lower Danube valley (the 'Danubian Bulgharia', or 'Danube Bulgharian Empire'), round about 679 AD. Here they founded their new home as well as their center of power; nevertheless they too, like the Avars, were subsequently assimilated by the expanding Slavic peoples and languages. The Bulghar language became extinct, but the name survived: *Bulgharian*, the noun that nowadays indicates the 'Slavic' language and peoples of Bulgharia. In addition to the name, also some scanty Bulgharian material survived: the *List of the Bulghar Princes* [9], whose original goes back to the 10th C.), and the *Danube Bulgharian Inscriptions* [10], written in Greek. Like in the case of the small corpus of Avar words, the Bulgharian Inscriptions contain titles, names, technical terms, etc., some of which are present in Hungarian, such as *bīlā*, "a late form of *boyla > buyla > būle > béla*", the latter being the name of the Hungarian king *Béla* (RT&B (II:1166; 1168-75)). It is worth recalling at this point that the Bulgharic languages (or rather, what remains of them) are unanimously classified as the 'Oguric' branch of Turkic: one dialect was spoken by the Danube Bulgars, the other by the Volga Bulgars⁶ (whose material is four hundred years younger than the Danube Bulghar records), and, of course, the third is represented by (Old) Chuvash⁷, the only surviving language (whose earliest written material goes back to the beginning of the 18th C.).

claims that those Magyars who entered the Carpathian Basin in the 900s were only the last wave of a series of two or more waves of migrations. Hence, the Magyars would have been dwelling there much earlier than the conventionally established date.

⁴ The plural of this term is *Tarkat*, therefore it is ultimately (probably) of Iranian origin.

⁵ The Avars, the Huns and the Bulgars were not the only Asiatic peoples that dwelt in the Carpathian Basin. Pecheneg groups moved there from the 11th C., and the Cumans moved into the area east of the Carpathian more or less at the same time, maintaining good political and trading relations with the Hungarians. Also (Indo-)European peoples lived in the area, such as the Gepidae and the Longobards. All this before the influx of the Slavs.

⁶ A large portion of the Volga Bulgars was absorbed by the Tatars and Bashkirs.

⁷ 'Bulghar-Turkic', 'Oguric' or also 'Chuvash-type Turkic', or 'r-Turkic' (because of the presence of r instead of z, occurring in Eastern Turkic; see below), all denote the same group of languages.

2. The position of Hungarian in the Eurasiatic steppe.

2.1. The testimony of the historical sources

Against this background stands as a sharp contrast the case of the migration of the Magyars from their original (assumed) Uralic homeland (located in a non-better specified area nearby the Ural Mountains, perhaps South Urals) to their present home land. In fact, according to the Uralic theory, the Magyars, whose language is classified as Uralic / Finno-Ugric, after separating from their Uralic proto-community, moved westward, through the area called *Magna Hungaria* (located east of the Volga River), to move then further westward, dwelling for quite a time in areas highly populated by steppe (particularly Turkic) peoples, such as the Khazars (see below), to finally 'occupy' and settle – they too! – in the Carpathian Basin, in the year 985 or 987 (the official date of the *honfoglalás*, literally 'home (land) occupation'; but see a different opinion in László ([11])). Thus, the Magyars would have migrated more or less in contemporary with the steppe / Inner Asia peoples mentioned above, into exactly the same territories, with similar modalities and similar conditions and in similar historical, socio-economic circumstances, but neither the peoples nor the language died out. In other words, there was no assimilation of these (supposed) Uralic peoples, speaking a Uralic language, at the hands of the surrounding, non-Uralic peoples with whom they constantly mingled – by also forming tribal confederations -- 'before' as well as 'after' they settled in their new home land. Within this scenario, the Hungarian migrations and home conquest appear to have been a “highly a-typical, one might almost say, unique” event (to use Dreisziger's [12] words).

More in details, the following major events would have taken place, as 'reconstructed' according to the conventional Hungarian historiography, in turn based on the conventional Uralic linguistic model. The Magyars, after leaving their Uralic homeland (event for which there is neither proof, nor a documented time, or motivation) would have lived in contact, actually, in 'symbiosis', with Turkic peoples for about three, perhaps four centuries. This symbiosis would have started from about the 5th C. of our era and would have taken place mainly in the territories dominated by the Turkic Khazars Empire. As RT&B [7, II:1175] put it: "Three languages were surely spoken in the Khazar Empire: Bulghar Turkic, Khazar and Hungarian" (although the classification of Khazar is disputed; see [13]). Apart from this assumed three centuries long symbiosis with Turkic (/Khazars) peoples, the Magyars are actually found to be living in an area that, once again, is populated by Inner Asia peoples, including Turkic peoples, the so-called *Magna Hungaria* (as mentioned), located in the land stretching from the Volga to the Kama River – basically, the land of the modern Bashkirs. This event, unlike the previous one, is not a historical reconstruction, but a documented fact (although scholars debate whether it took place 'before' the Magyars migrated into the land of the Turks first and the Carpathian Basin afterwards, or 'after' these migrations; see note (11) below). As a matter of fact, it is in this area that the Hungarian monk Julianus visited the Hungarians, the so-called 'Volga Hungarians', in the year 1235-6, and spoke to them in Hungarian. This testimony is in turn confirmed by the testimony of another traveller: in 1247-52 Plano Carpini, who visited the Mongols, wrote about the Volga territory in his book (written between 1247 and 1252) saying: "*Baschart id est hungariam magnam*". In addition to this, there is the coherent testimony of both linguistics and archaeology. First, the area in question preserves many toponyms / ethnonyms in the form *Muchar* (/mučar/), *Mozhar* (/možar/) and similar variants, variants that can all be traced back to a

form **maj̄ar*, that is: *magyar*. Second, recently the term *majar* has actually been found in an inscription on a tomb of 1311, near the Kama river, in the cemetery of Chistopol (a Volga Bulghar inscription featuring this name as a name of a man; Zimonyi [41, 49]). The change: **majar* > *možar* ~ *magyar* (/mãd'ãr/) is recognized to be a normal, regular sound change within Hungarian (also by RT&B [7, I: 29]). Similarly, the Bashkirian toponyms /ethnonyms *Mišer* ~ *Mišar* ~ *Mišär* ~ *Meščer* ~ *Mižer* ~ *Mižar* ~ *Mižär*, considered to be equivalent, to 'correspond' to the Hungarian toponym and ethnonym *megyer* (for which see discussion below) were attested in the Bashkir region in the 15th and 16th Cs (according to Russian sources; see also [14]), whilst *Mišer* still occurs nowadays as a family name in Hungary⁸. These data are well known within Uralic /Hungarian studies; actually, they are recognized to represent an item of evidence counter to the Uralic origin of Hungarian, at the point of having attracted a label in the specialist literature: the "Bashkiro-Hungarian complex", as well as an intense but seemingly unresolved debate⁹. In fact, it is difficult to justify how and why the Uralic Magyars would have used a Bashkir ethnonym for their self-denomination, as well as other Bashkir ethnonyms and toponyms. Not only, these 'Volga Magyars', as mentioned, were living *east* of the Volga (the beginning of the Inner-Asia region) whilst, according to the conventional model, they would have been in contact, in symbiosis, mainly with Turkic peoples living *west* of the Volga, the so-called 'West Old Turkic' peoples – from whom also the great majority of Turkic loan words would have derived (the aforementioned (Old) Chuvash, Khazar, and other Bulgharic languages). There are other sources, including Arabic sources, that clearly mention the presence of the Magyars east of the Volga, between the homeland of the Volga Bulgars and that of the Pechenegs, in the late 9th C. and during the 10th C. The fact that the Hungarian peoples (also) dwelt in the areas east of the Volga, until the 13th C., led some scholars to believe that this was, indeed, their original homeland¹⁰, instead of the conventional Uralic homeland. However, this thesis has been rejected by the supporters of the Uralic theory¹¹.

⁸ For example, in the 16th C. there was a *Miser* family (*s* = /š/) in Szeged (see [14]).

⁹ Ligeti [26, 375] states that the Magyar / Bashkir connection 'belongs to the open questions of Hungarian pre-history' ("a magyar őstörténet nyitott kérdései közé tartozik"). See also [41, 52 ff.]

¹⁰ For example, Róna-Tas ([23, 272]) states that: "When, in the 5th century A.D., the Turks appeared from the east, from the Kazakh steppe, the Hungarians lived in the southern part of the Urals and not what is to-day Bashkiria". However, as far as I know, there is no evidence that "the Hungarians lived in the southern part of the Urals"; this appears to be an assumption, derived in turn from the assumed existence of the Uralic proto-community (see also note (11) below).

¹¹ The steppe belt east of the Volga (up to Manchuria), is generally considered to be the beginning of the 'Inner-Asia' region, whilst the steppe region of Eastern Europe, west of the Volga, would not form part of the original Turkic world. The 'fact' that the Hungarians lived east of the Volga is not really in line with the Uralic theory, and several interpretations of the relevant sources have been put forward, that are consistent with it. For ex., Zimonyi ([19, 208-9]) observes that in the Muslim sources the Hungarians were listed among that group of peoples who formed tribal confederations under the rule of the Türk Khagans – living in the steppe zone of Inner-Asia, speaking similar Turkic languages and having the same nomadic life style. This account of the events, however, would be wrong according to the author, for the following reason (ibidem): "A minor group of Hungarians or Turkic Bashkirs who had been identified as Hungarians lived east of the Volga [...]. The Muslim authors identified these eastern Hungarians with the bulk of the Hungarians living north of the Black Sea and later in the Carpathian Basin. The western Hungarians were regarded as one of the Turkic peoples who had migrated there from Inner Asia similarly to the Pechenegs". Similarly, RT&B ([7, I:30]) 'assume' that the Uralic Magyars moved into the Inner-Asia region from Hungary, after the 'home conquest': "[...] the Volga Hungarians are not those who remained there, but they migrated there from the south and arrived in the territory of Bolshie Tigani in the 9th century [italics is added]".

2.2. The interpretation of the historical sources

Let us now come back to the issue of the three/four centuries long symbiosis between Hungarian and (mainly West Old) Turkic peoples, symbiosis that would have taken place within the Khazar empire, starting from about the 5th C. AD. This is a widely accepted thesis in Uralic and Hungarian (pre-)history studies, at the point that, as we have seen, RT&B [7, II:1175] can state: "three languages were *surely* spoken in the Khazar Empire: Bulghar Turkic, Khazar and Hungarian" [*italics is added*]. However, this statement is not based on a clear cut item of (historical and / or linguistic) information, but on an 'interpretation' of the relevant sources. In fact, as far as I know, there is no 'direct evidence' from the sources in question that Hungarian as an Uralic language (as is here understood by the authors) was actually spoken in the Khazar Empire, and that, therefore, the 'Uralic Hungarian' peoples 'as such' were living within the sphere of influence of the Turkic Khazars. The relevant source is the famous text *De Administrando Imperio*, written (in Greek) round about 950 AD, by the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and is widely considered to be the most important, early source mentioning the (Uralic) Hungarians /Magyars. In reality, the text describes events that refer to what the Emperor unambiguously defines as the 'Nation of the Turks', and not the Hungarians – certainly *not* the Hungarian peoples and language as purported by the Uralic theory. Having said that, the text does make mention of several names, including the proper name of several 'Turkic' clans / clan chiefs, that also occur in Hungarian (as well as in Bashkir; see above), as ethnonyms, toponyms and ordinary words. In particular, in the list of 'Turkic clan' names it is mentioned the name *megyer* (Μεγέρη in the Greek script, usually read as *Megyeri*), a name present in several Hungarian toponyms, such as *puszta-megyer*, and widely considered to be a variant of the Hungarian self-denomination: *magyar*. Hence, presumably, the 'interpretation' on behalf of Hungarian historians and linguists that the emperor is describing *also* the events regarding those Magyars living in the territories dominated by the (West) Turkic peoples¹². This is certainly a plausible interpretation, in principle. However, one must not forget that: a) as mentioned, the emperor is referring to what he defines (rightly or wrongly) as 'Turkic clans'; b) nowhere the Hungarians, as understood nowadays, are mentioned in the text, neither is there any mention of 'Uralic nations' or 'Uralic languages' -- let alone any reference to the assumed Uralic origin of the *megyer* (~ *magyar*) clan -- as is often, implicitly or explicitly, stated. The conventional interpretation in turn is in accordance with one of the tenets of the Uralic theory, as established about two hundred years ago, as the result of a long and intense academic debate, so-called 'Ugric-Turkic Battle'¹³ (see [15] and [16]): Hungarian is not a Turkic language, but a Uralic/Finno-Ugric one, although it has been heavily influenced by Turkic, through the 'borrowing' of many words, as an 'obvious result' of the long standing contacts. It goes without saying that, just because the *megyer* (~ *magyar*) clan is referred to as 'Turkic' and is listed among other clan names of Turkic origin (see below), it does not necessarily mean that the clan itself was ethnically, and / or linguistically, Turkic, and this for two main reasons. First, in Byzantine historiography there was the habit of globally defining as 'Turkic' any no better identified or known peoples (of the tribal confederations), those kind of peoples that in Old Greek times would be dubbed

12 Just to put the record straight, it is worth mentioning here that the term *magyar* (or, better, Greek *magyarôî*) itself does not actually occur in the text, but only *megyer*.

13 The debate revolved around the issue of whether, within the wide 'Altaic Family', Hungarian belonged to the Turkic branch or the 'Ugric' (today 'Finno-Ugric') branch.

with the global name '*barbarôî*', or those kind of peoples living along the border of, and constantly menacing China, dubbed by the Chinese Annals as *Hsiung-nu* (see [17]) – just to give an idea of the way accounting for these events typically took place in those times. Second, in view of the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic nature of the tribal confederations (see [18], [19], etc.), no safe, precise identification could have been made then, and can be made now.

That this is a faithful scenario can be easily verified by having a look first at the relevant, original passages of the text by Constantine (from the edition by Moravcsik & Jenkins ([20]) with English translation by Jenkins¹⁴), and then at the interpretations these passages have received.

The first, widely quoted relevant passage is from the famous Chapter 38, titled: 'Of the genealogy of the nation of the Turks, and whence they are descended' (p. 171 ff.). Here the emperor states that:

The nation of the Turks had of old their dwelling next to Chazaria, in the place called Lebedia [...]. The Turks were seven clans [...]. They lived together with the Chazars for three years, and fought in alliance with the Chazars in all their wars¹⁵ [italics is added]

This simple, unambiguous passage is usually interpreted as follows:

'The [*Turkic*] *Magyars* [...] lived together with the Khazars for *three hundred years*'

The phrase: '[*Turkic*] *Magyars*', that is '[*Toûrkoî*] *magyarôî*' in Greek, is often reported within Hungarian and Uralic studies as occurring 'as such' in the text (see for example [7, I:27, 32]); however, as is clear, this is not true (see note (12)). Within the context of the conventional model, the given interpretation of this phrase is that the *Magyars* were not *Toûrkoî* themselves, but were *confused* with them, because the two populations lived indeed in symbiosis with one another, and it was difficult, if not impossible, to tell them apart. This interpretation is, of course, quite plausible, for the reasons just expounded above; however, even if it were so, this does not in itself support the thesis of the Uralic origin of the *Magyars*. As to the 'three' years, it is most often interpreted as 'three hundreds', presumably because three years of contact, however much intense, might not be a long enough time for a language to be so heavily influenced by another language, as is the case of the influence of *Turkic* on Hungarian (see [21, 47] for details on the issue of 'three' vs 'three hundreds'). This overall conventional interpretation is, once again, plausible in principle, but one must bear in mind that it remains an interpretation nevertheless, and not a proven beyond doubt fact, as is instead typically presented in Hungarian /Uralic

¹⁴ This edition reports the Greek text next to the English one, so that it is easy to verify the faithfulness of the translation.

¹⁵ The text then also mentions twice the Hungarian figure and name *Árpád*, who was chosen at some point as chief of the *Turks*. This figure is considered to be the head of the Hungarian confederation of the 9th C., that would have accomplished the Hungarian home conquest.

studies. In other words, neither the Turkic origin, nor the claimed Uralic origin of the magyar peoples and language can be safely stated on the basis of the passages reported above.

The second, relevant, famous passage is from chapter 39, titled: 'Of the nation of the Kabaroi', and reads as follows:

The so-called Kabaroi were of the race of the Chazars. Now it fell out that a secession was made by them to their government, and when a civil war broke out, their first government prevailed, and some of them were slain, but others escaped and came and settled with the Turks in the land of the Pechenegs, and they made friends with one another, and were called 'Kabaroi'. *And so to these Turks they taught also the tongue of the Chazars, and to this day they have this same language, but they have also the other tongue of the Turks* [italics is added]

The passage of relevance here – the one marked in italics – is interpreted by Róna-Tas [22, 2:129-30] as follows (see also [23]):

Der schon zitierte Konstantin, [...] berichtet, daß die *Ungarn* die Sprache der Khasaren lernten, und "sie benutzen bis heute (d.i. bis 950) sowohl die Sprache der Khasaren, als auch ihre andere (*ungarische*) Sprache" [italics is added]

As one can see, Róna-Tas has 'interpolated' twice the term 'Ungarn' into the text, without warning the reader of this, although the second time he puts the term within round brackets, perhaps to hint at this fact. Even so, if the original text is not available, the reader certainly gets the impression that the text does mention indeed the Hungarians as we understand them nowadays, and that they were bilingual with their own (Uralic) Hungarian language and the language of the Khazars. However, as is clear, there is no evidence in this passage (as well as in the other quoted passages) that the Emperor is referring to the '(Uralic) Hungarians' – as is also confirmed by the subsequent chapter.

The third relevant passage is from chapter 40, titled: 'Of the clans of the Kabaroi and the Turks', and reads as follows:

The first is this aforesaid clan of the Kabaroi which split off from the Chazars; the second, of Nekis; the third, of *Megeris*, the fourth, of Kourtougermatos, the fifth, of Tarianos; the sixth, Genach, the seventh, Kari, the eighth, Kasi¹⁶. Having thus combined with one another, the Kabaroi dwelt with the Turks in the land of the Pechenegs [italics is added]

¹⁶ *Germatos* corresponds to Modern Hungarian (MH) *Gyarmat* and to the Bashkir clan name *Jurmatī ~ Yurmatī*; *Genach* corresponds to MH *Jenő* < Old H *Jeneγ*, in turn equivalent to the Bashkir clan name *Jenej ~ Yänäy ~ Yeney*; *Nekis* corresponds to MH *Nyék*, parallel to the Bashkir clan name *Neg-men ~ Näg-män*; *Kasi* corresponds to MH *Keszi* < Old H *Keszeγ ~ Kesző*, equivalent to the Bashkir clan name *Kese* < **Kesey* (recall that *sz* stands for /s/).

This is the famous passage where, supposedly, the emperor would refer to the *Toûrkoï Magyarôï*, wrongly identifying them with Turkic peoples, as mentioned. However, as one can see, the emperor is simply listing the clans, including the clan of *Μεγέρη* (*Megyeri ~ megyer*), that altogether form what he identifies as being the nation of the Turks, according to the knowledge, the modalities and the stylistic stereotypes of his time. Thus, it is quite possible that the emperor was mistaken, or just too vague in using such a definition (as widely claimed). However, once again, even if this were the case, it cannot be considered *ipso facto* as a proof that the *megyer* clan was of Uralic origin – also because, as we shall see below, the name *megyer* itself has been classified by several scholars as being of Turkic origin.

3. *The influence of Turkic on Hungarian*

3.1. A riddle solved?

Let us now assume, in line with the conventional linguistic classification, that the Magyars were a Uralic population, speaking a Uralic language (or even any other type of language). It is difficult to figure out how the language would have managed to survive, rather than being assimilated, in the absence of those factors that could have allowed it to survive. As a matter of fact, there does not appear to be any evidence, or any hint that these Magyars (whoever they might have been in origin) had any military superiority, or any cutting edge (technological) innovation, or, better, a strong willingness to preserve their language, identity and original way of life. Furthermore, recent genetic studies have confirmed what was already known from other areas of study, that is: the size of certainly the Magyars that arrived at the Carpathian Basin¹⁷ toward the end of the 9th C. was pretty small [24]. Not only, the fact that the language did survive raises another, fundamental question, question that, however, in my opinion, does not appear to have received enough attention within Hungarian or Uralic studies: how is it possible that the assumed Uralic (or other) nature of the magyar language has been preserved basically intact – apart from the expected influx of (mainly) Turkic loanwords – as firmly claimed by Uralists? In other words, why is Hungarian still classified purely and simply as a Uralic / Finno-Ugric language, rather than as a sort of 'mixed' language¹⁸? The traditional classification is, in fact, also in principle difficult to maintain, given the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic nature of the tribal confederations (as discussed).

¹⁷ Here it could be correctly objected that it was probably the very multi-lingualism of the tribal confederations that could have helped the magyar language to survive, since the various languages of a confederation were all used and maintained at the same time. However, even if this were the case, their overall life style and, as a consequence, linguistic situation must have changed when the Magyars settled in the Carpathian Basin – indeed, the language(s) of the other Asiatic steppe confederations already settled there became extinct, as discussed.

¹⁸ Precisely, the magyar language would be mixed with Inner-Asia languages first and, also, with (Indo-)European languages after their home conquest.

There are studies that have addressed the issue of the 'survival' of Hungarian, the most important of which can be considered that of Róna-Tas, already quoted. The author [22,129] poses himself the question of whether:

Waren die Ungarn Türken oder Finno-Ugrier? Waren sie türkisierte Finno-Ugrier oder finno-ugrisierte Türken?

The author (*ibidem*) frames his answer as follows:

Die *finnish-ugrisch* *sprechenden Ungarn* schlossen sich an einen türkischen Stammesverband an. [...] sie während einer längeren Zeit *zweisprachig* geworden sind [italics is added].

Róna-Tas then continues by saying that this bilingualism of the Hungarians is not just an assumption, but is actually an event reported by the sources, with this referring to the passage by Constantine quoted above, in paragraph (2.2.). Thus, the 'facts' that the Hungarians were living within Turkic tribal confederations, and were, as expected (at least) bilingual, would be precisely the reason why the historical sources consistently, but wrongly, referred to them as 'Turks' (as already discussed). Róna-Tas further claims that the thesis of the Uralic origin of the Magyars is also supported by the results of linguistic investigation: historical linguistics is a 'scientific' discipline, and, as such, it can and has to 'trump' the results of other disciplines, if they are in contradiction with its results, as is indeed the case here. In other words, historical linguistics has established that Hungarian belongs to the Uralic / Finno-Ugric language family, and so it must be, despite any odds. Compare the following quotes ([22,130]):

Die Sprache selbst war finnisch-ugrischen Ursprungs, aber *das Ethnos* war ein *türkisiertes finno-ugrisches* (italics is added)

Die Ungarn haben sich der politischen und ökonomischen Umwelt der Türken angeglichen, aber ethnisch wurden sie *nicht assimiliert*, sondern *blieben Finno-Ugrier*. [...] Die zwei Komponenten [das "Türkische" und das "Finno-Ugrische"] lebten zusammen [italics is added]

Having stated that, Róna-Tas ([22,130-1]) affirms that, within linguistics, the strongest proof of the Uralic / Finno-Ugric origin of Hungarian is provided by the etymology of *magyar*, which is – significantly – of Uralic origin, whilst the other clan names reported by Constantine are of Turkic origin (see par. (2.2.)). Indeed, *magyar*, according to the etymological dictionaries (see [25, 866]), would be 'cognate', that is, genetically related with the term *Mańsí*, the self-denomination of the Voguls, and the term *Moś*, the self-denomination of the largest part of the Ostyaks, the Voguls and Ostyaks being in turn other

languages and peoples¹⁹ classified as belonging to the Uralic family (see note (20) for the details of this etymology²⁰). Róna-Tas has recently re-affirmed the soundness of the etymology ([7, I: 30-1]), and, therefore, the Uralic origin of the terms in question, despite the testimony of those toponyms and ethnonyms occurring in the Volga-Kama area, that are clearly connected to *magyar* – as pointed out by the author himself²¹ (see par. (2.1.) above; see also Ligeti [26, 400], who proposes a Turkic origin for this name).

This overall interpretation of the historical sources, and the related 'reconstruction' of pre-historical and historical events, as proposed by Róna-Tas, represent now the 'official' version of the origin of the Hungarian language and peoples. However, this interpretation can be called into question, on several accounts. First, the issue of the bilingualism of the Hungarians is not really a 'fact' reported by the historical sources, as claimed by Róna-Tas, but an 'interpolation' on his behalf. Second, etymologies, like any other linguistic reconstructions, if not supported by (a plenitude of) actual linguistic data, can easily be *ad-hoc*, that is, an 'artefact' of the method of analysis or (as is at times called within linguistics), an 'etymology build up in a laboratory', having no connection whatsoever with the extra-linguistic reality it is purported to reflect. More in general, it can be dangerous to 'infer', to 'reconstruct' pre-history on the basis of linguistic analysis, linguistic classifications only, mainly because, assessing similarities and differences among languages – on which the establishment of language families is based – is in itself a difficult, often slippery task²² (see [27]). We have seen an example of this with the etymology of *magyar*,

¹⁹ These languages are spoken on the eastern side of the Ural Mountains (in the same way as the Samoyedic peoples), along the River Ob, and are claimed to be the closest relatives of the Magyars within the family, also because of the etymological connection of their ethnonyms.

²⁰ The standard Uralic etymology is as follows ([25, 866]): *magy-ar* consists of two elements. The first, *magy-* would derive from Ugric **mańćz* 'man, human being', from which also the self-denominations of the Voguls (/Mansi) and the self-denomination of one the Ostyak (/Hanty) clans, *mańt' ~ mońt' ~ maś*, is derived. The second element *-ar* (~ *-ér*, *-ër*) 'man', is claimed to be the same component found for example in Hungarian *emb-ër* 'man'. This element in turn would be connected with Finnish *yr-kä* 'bachelor', *yr-kö* 'man' < Finno-Ugric **irkä* (~ **ürkä*) (according to UEW 84). However, this analysis is fraught with problems. The segmentation *magy-ar* does not have any independent linguistic justification, because neither of the two components (*magy-* and *-ar*) are ever found as stand-alone elements; the same holds true for (*emb-ër*). This is therefore an *ad-hoc* segmentation. Even UEW ([25, 84, 866]) has to recognize that the compound nature of the etymology is no longer retrievable: the compound would have now become 'opaque, obscure' -- of course, there is no way to verify this. Linguists usually point out that the Hungarian sound *-gy-* (/d'/) of *magyar* (in internal position) is a 'regular' development from a proto-Uralic sequence of sounds **-ńć-*. This in turn would be a factor in support of the soundness of the etymology, according to the requirements of the comparative method (although *-gy-* may be the reflex also of other assumed Uralic proto-sounds). It could be also observed that Hungarian and Vogul share several features absent in all other Uralic languages, such as the term for '3' and '8', a few case endings, etc., factors that, again, could support the Uralic connection. On the other hand, there is a word *är* present in Turkic (and Indo-Iranian), meaning 'man'. There is also a Bulghar Turkic plural ending *-ar* (ultimately < **-s*), common in tribal names and present in, for instance, *Bulgh-ar* – this component being probably a better candidate for the etymology, if the segmentation *magy-ar* is maintained (J. Janhunen, personal communication, 2014).

²¹ Róna-Tas acknowledges this, but affirms that the Uralic etymology of *magyar* is the correct one.

²² As is well known among linguists, the assessment of the similarities and differences among two or more languages, in order to try to find out their possible origin and establish language families, is carried out through the comparative method, supposedly a 'scientific' method of analysis. The Uralic/ Finno-Ugric theory too and related language family, supposedly, has been established through the adoption of this method. This, in turn, would play in favour of the validity, and, according to some interpretations, the actual pre-historical existence of this family. However, the situation is not so clear cut, also because the comparative method itself is of difficult application in the total absence of (old) records, as is indeed the case for the Uralic

whereby, in the absence of old documents, it is difficult to establish which of the proposed, alternative analyses is the correct one. Third, and most importantly, it has recently been argued (again) within Hungarian studies that also the ethnonym *magyar* is of Turkic origin. According to Berta ([28,175]) *magyar*:

admit of the same analysis as the names of the other Hungarian tribes, which, ultimately, can be traced back to Turkic military terminology

Specifically, *magyar* is traced back to a Turkic compound noun: *Ban ĵer*, meaning 'chief, central place', whereby *Ban ĵer* (> *Men ĵer*) would regularly change in "Ancient Hungarian" into *Medĵer*. Thus, as a tribal name, this must be considered among the most archaic, Turkic stratum names, in the same way as *Nyék*, *Kürt* and *Gyarmat* (see [28, 182-184]). Interestingly enough, in the Róna-Tas & Berta dictionary, the author of the section dealing with "The names of the Hungarians" ([7, I: 27-31]), that is Róna-Tas, does not mention the Turkic etymology proposed by Berta, his co-author for the compilation of the dictionary (even if the 1998 edition²³ of Berta's article is quoted in 'Bibliography'). Róna-Tas therefore re-proposes the Uralic etymology, although he admits that it is a little problematic.

3.2. Hungarian as a 'mixed' language?

Having attempted to present the linguistic and historical facts reported by the relevant records, as well as, separately, their conventional interpretations, as faithfully and objectively as possible, I leave it to the reader to make up his/her mind regarding the issue of the origin of the Hungarian peoples. However, as a linguist, I believe I can argue that the Hungarian language, if it had been in origin a Uralic language, it has certainly become what could be defined as an 'aberrant' Uralic language²⁴, for the reasons exposed below.

The great majority of the Hungarian basic lexicon, including kinship and body part terms (such as 'ankle', 'mucus', 'arm', 'sperm', 'navel', 'twin', 'uncle / nephew', 'younger brother' etc.), adjectives expressing basic adjectival concepts (such as 'small', 'blue', 'sad', etc.) and verbs expressing basic actions (such as 'to rejoice', 'to have sexual intercourse', 'to hate', 'to feed/nourish', etc.), are of undisputed Turkic origin – not to count the pervasive presence of words of Turkic origin in any other semantic domain²⁵ (as

languages. As a matter of fact, the issue of the strengths and weaknesses of the comparative method has attracted a lot of attention and debate within linguistics. The reader may want to consult Marcantonio ([21]) with regard to the way in which the comparative method has been applied to the Uralic languages, and the related issue of the validity, or otherwise, of the standard Uralic theory. One may also consult Clackson ([27, 9 ff.) for a balanced assessment of the *pro-s et contra-s* of the comparative method in general and as applied to Indo-European.

²³ This article by Berta has first been published in 1998, in *Turkic Languages* 2: 32-48; then it has been published again in 2010, in *Studies in Turkic Etymology* [28], a collection of articles by Berta brought together in a volume of which Róna-Tas is co-editor.

²⁴ I am grateful to Prof. Juha Janhunen for having suggested me this definition (personal communication, 2012).

²⁵ Usually, textbooks, when reporting the existence of the Turkic loan-words present in Hungarian, report the so-called 'cultural' loans only, and omit to mention that also the domain of basic lexicon is pervaded by Turkic loan words. This is presumably

is clearly shown by the comprehensive list of words assembled in the two volumes of RT&B [7]). Similarly, the great majority of the so-called 'derivational' morphology, that is, the set of those morphological elements (in this case suffixes), through which speakers may 'derive' adjectives and verbs from nouns, nouns from verbs and adjectives, verbs from nouns, etc., is of undisputed Turkic origin (as is clearly shown, once again, by the long list of Hungarian suffixes of Turkic origin accurately reported in RT&B ([7, II:1125-36])). Compare, for example, the Hungarian verb *őrül* 'to become mad', from West Old Turkic (reconstructed) **evril-*, or East Old Turkic *ävri-* 'to revolve', in turn deriving from *ävri-* 'to turn' + suffix *-(X)l-* (RT&B (II: 679-81); see also below). In addition, as is well known, Hungarian and Turkic share a great deal of what is defined as 'typological / structural' similarities, that is, the way words, phrases, sentences are build, structured and combined together (this being particularly evident, for example, if one compares the structure of the Hungarian stem with that of Finnish²⁶; see [29], [30] and [31]). In parallel, and, I would add, consistently, there is plenty of studies ([32], [33], [21], [34]; see also Lehtisalo²⁷ ([35])), that point out the paucity of the 'Uralic component' present in Hungarian, both at the level of lexicon / phonology and at the level of morphology (derivational, functional and grammatical morphology) – not to count the uncertain, at times even 'artificial' nature of many of the proposed etymologies (see the case of *magyar*). The supporters of the Uralic theory interpret the issue of the poor quality and quantity of the correlations among the Uralic languages as a sign of the 'great antiquity' of the language family, antiquity that would have erased most of the originally occurring correlations. This is, of course, quite a plausible interpretation, however much difficult to verify.

Whatever the case, I personally believe that the classification of Hungarian as 'a type of mixed' language – Uralic and (mainly) Turkic – would certainly be more appropriate and more adherent to the linguistic data than its classification as purely and simply a Uralic language. Notice at this point that Hungarian and Turkic *do not* share either functional morphology (case suffixes such as genitive, dative, ablative, locative, etc.), or grammatical morphology²⁸ (such as the suffixes for plurality, tense, mood; see [36]).

because basic lexicon is typically quite resistant to borrowing; it would therefore be difficult to justify its rich presence if the thesis of the rather 'pure' Uralic nature of Hungarian is maintained.

²⁶ Synchronically, the (mono-morphemic) stem of Hungarian words (particularly verbs) is typically mono-syllable, with a basic (C)VC(C) structure, and it is 'invariant', just like the Turkic stem. In contrast, the (mono-morphemic) stem of Finnish is typically bi-syllable, with a basic structure CVCV, and it is 'variable', undergoing morpho-phonological alternations ('consonant gradation'), as the word is inflected (see for details [29] and [30, 35 ff.]).

²⁷ Lehtisalo reports a comprehensive list of what he calls the 'primary derivative' suffixes of Uralic, among which those present also in Hungarian are a very small number. This is the case despite the following facts. First, at times the criteria for assessing the identified similarities among suffixes are rather loose. Second, and most relevant, often the suffixes in question are too short, consisting of one or maximum two basic, unmarked sounds, such as a basic, neutral consonant and /or vowel (C(V)), sounds that we would find, for this very reason, occurring in the suffixes / morphemes of many, different languages. Thus, it is difficult to carry out a proper comparative analysis on these simple morphemes (see [21, 200 ff.] and [36]).

²⁸ Much attention is drawn to this fact by scholars who deny a possible genetic connection between Turkic and Hungarian, claiming that sharing these morphological features is vital for establishing this type of connection. This is fine. However, these scholars omit to acknowledge the relevant fact that Hungarian does not share functional and grammatical (complex) morphemes with Finnish or the other Uralic languages either (see [21, 204 ff.]), so that this argument does not prove anything either way. Actually, in my opinion, the role of both functional and derivational morphology for the purpose of assessing

3.3. Contact vs inheritance

Having remarked that Hungarian could be more appropriately classified as a type of mixed language, attention should be drawn now to the fact that this classification, in turn, presupposes that basically all the elements of Turkic origin present in Hungarian have actually been 'borrowed' – as indeed firmly claimed within the conventional model. In particular²⁹, according to RT&B [7], these Hungarian words and suffixes of Turkic origin are borrowed from the West Old Turkic languages (as listed in par. (1) and (2.1)). This is certainly a plausible interpretation both of the historical sources and the linguistic data, but it remains an interpretation nevertheless, and alternative interpretations cannot be excluded *a priori*. For example, as is clear from the relevant testimony of the Byzantine source, nowhere it is actually reported, precisely, the information that 'the Uralic Magyars *came into contact* with Turkic peoples' – neither could this have been documented (be it false or true), because of the rather vague, confused way in which the variegated world of the steppe peoples is referred to in this historiography – as already pointed out. This being the case, the interpretation that these Magyars might have actually been themselves 'a type' of 'steppe peoples' can also be reasonably put forward. This interpretation, in turn, appears to be supported at least by the two following factors – in addition to the 'Turkic flavour', so to say, of the Hungarian language. First, the fact that the language was not assimilated, this being a possible outcome for an 'Inner-Asia' language (and /or peoples) mingling up with other, more or less similar Inner-Asia languages, both in the Eurasiatic steppe and in the Carpathian Basin (see note (30) for details³⁰). Second, the thesis that the assumed 'borrowing' took place (almost) exclusively from West Old Turkic, so much important for the conventional model and so much emphasized also in RT&B³¹, is contradicted by the very data the authors accurately report. In fact, for each single Hungarian word as well as derivational suffix of Turkic origin listed in their dictionary, RT&B [7] provide a West Old Turkic 'reconstruction'³², a West Old Turkic etymology, claiming that this reconstruction is at the origin of the Hungarian word (see for example the suffix *-(X)l* in the Hungarian verb *őrül*, in the previous paragraph, and note (33)). In

genetic (or other type of) correlations within Eurasia needs revisiting – in particular abandoning the strait-jacket of the Indo-European morphological model.

²⁹ The strong influence of Turkic on Hungarian has long been known to the Hungarian 'Orientalists', such as the quoted Ligeti. This state of the art has recently been re-affirmed and re-enforced by the results of the detailed, comprehensive study cited here many times by now: the two volumes of Róna-Tas & Berta's dictionary, that list *all* the Hungarian words and derivational suffixes long known and /or recently assessed as being of Turkic origin.

³⁰ In other words, it is possible, in principle, that Hungarian survived because, as an originally steppe peoples language, it was sustained and reinvigorated by mixing with other steppe speech communities. It could even be reasonably assumed that those Asiatic-steppe languages once present in the Carpathian Basin and now extinct, did not really die out completely (through assimilation), but actually flowed into Hungarian, contributing in the forming and maintaining of the language. Thus, when the (small group of) Magyars, whoever they might have been ethnically, arrived at the Carpathian Basin (in one or more waves of migration), and occupied exactly those same territories already inhabited by other steppe peoples, their language was replenished, fact that prevented its assimilation. That this is a plausible scenario appears to be confirmed by the fact that Hungarian contains many basic lexicon words classified as of 'unknown' origin (that is, neither Turkic nor Uralic), such as the term for 'belly', 'younger sister', 'family', etc.

³¹ This is, presumably, because the thesis of Hungarian borrowing from West Turkic languages, whilst migrating indeed westward, is compatible with the thesis of its Uralic origin, whilst the thesis of borrowing from East Turkic languages is more problematic.

³² Recall that RT&B ([7]) provide a reconstruction also because the West Old Turkic / Oguric languages are scarcely attested, apart from Chuvash.

addition, given that the authors of the dictionary, scrupulously, also and always report the corresponding East Old Turkic parallel(s) if available – real words and suffixes in this case, and not reconstructions – it becomes self evident that, in the great majority of cases, there is hardly any difference between the 'reconstructed' West Turkic word or suffix, and the 'attested' East Turkic word(s) / suffix(es)³³. How can it then be argued that West Turkic was basically the 'only source' of the Hungarian linguistic elements of Turkic origin? It is certainly true that several of them do indeed present phonological features that are characteristic of the West Turkic, Bulgharic languages, the so-called 'rhotacism' and 'lambdacism' isogloss, that is, the occurrence in Hungarian and (essentially) Chuvash (as well as, at times, Mongolian) of *r* and *l* as against the occurrence of *z* and *š* in all the other Turkic ('Common Turkic') languages, respectively (see [37] and [38]). However, there are plenty of relevant words or suffixes that, obviously, do not contain these sounds, or any other 'Chuvash criteria', so to say, and therefore it is not always possible to apply them for assessing the presumed Bulgharic nature of the loan word in question. This is also at times recognized in the specialistic literature; see for example Zimonyi ([41,84 ff.]) and Ligeti ([26, 36-48]). Even RT&B – who, as we have seen, *always* reconstruct a West Old Turkic /Bulgharic form for the listed Turkic loan words of their dictionary – report 268 loan words that display no relevant criteria as against 199 loan words that display Chuvash criteria. Not to count that the rhotacism and lambdacism isogloss, like any other phonetic / phonological (or any other type of) process in languages, are not always implemented regularly (see some examples of 'irregularity' in note (33) and (34)³⁴). Last, but certainly not least, one must not forget that telling apart borrowed from inherited elements is a very hard task in general, as is well known within linguistics, because borrowed elements tend to adapt, sooner or later, to the sound structure, as well as the overall structure of the receiving language, at the point of becoming indistinguishable from inherited elements³⁵ (unless there are relevant records that could prove otherwise; see [39]). Of course, the older the borrowing, the more integrated it tends to be, particularly if the donor and the receiving languages are very similar to one another phonetically/ phonologically and structurally / typologically, as is indeed the case for Hungarian and Turkic. Whatever the case, Róna-Tas & Berta model – whereby (almost) each single loan word is borrowed 'systematically' from West Turkic – is not plausible on theoretical grounds either: it is too rigid and unrealistic. Languages do not diffuse, develop, change or mix with other languages in such an orderly, mechanical, basically regular way, as purported by the authors. This applies equally well to both the development and changes taking place during the process of genetic transmission (from parents to child), and those taking place during the process of borrowing from, or converging with, other

³³ Here is couple of examples. Hungarian *köldök* 'navel, *umbilicus*', Old Hungarian *kedek*; according to RT&B ([7, I:584-86]) it derives from West Old Turkic reconstructed **kindik*, but compare also East Old Turkic *kindik* 'navel', Chu. *kěntěk*. Hungarian *gyomor* (/d'omor/) 'stomach, bowels'; according to RT&B ([7,I: 398-9]) it derives from West Old Turkic reconstructed **jumur*, but compare East Old Turkic *yumur*. Notice here the occurrence of *r* in both West and East Turkic: the rhotacism isogloss has not materialized; see also note (34).

³⁴ The rhotacism isogloss, for example, means that to /z/ in Common Turkic corresponds /r/ in Chuvash and /or/ Mongolian and Hungarian (see [37,104-5], [38, 71-2], [7, II: 1107-1110], [8, 408]). Rhotacism and lambdacism, however, do not always materialize (as one would expect). For example, Chuvash *r* may also correspond to Common Turkic *r*, as in *yur* vs *qār* 'snow' respectively; Chuvash *l* may also correspond to Common Turkic *l*, as in *śul* vs *yōl* 'way' respectively.

³⁵ The task of telling apart borrowed from inherited elements is certainly difficult in this case because it appears that the borrowed Turkic elements are fully integrated into the sound structure of Hungarian, as is clear from the numerous sound (and other) correspondences occurring between Hungarian and Turkic, as accurately pointed out in the dictionary.

languages. Thus, in view of what remarked thus far, and given the multi-ethnic / multi-lingual nature of the tribal confederations, it is in principle highly unlikely that the Magyars borrowed 'only', as well as 'regularly and systematically' from West Old Turkic languages, or, more precisely, from their reconstructed forms – assuming, for the sake of the argument, that we are dealing merely with the process of borrowing.

4. Summary and conclusion

All the available historical sources consistently refer to the Magyars as 'Turks'³⁶ (see also [40] and 41). It appears that they fully shared the (semi-)nomadic life style of the Turkic tribal confederations within which they were living, as is proven by the almost exclusively Turkic origin of Hungarian words referring to environment, every-day life, instruments, military and social organization, belief, religion, clothing, etc.

In contrast, according to the Uralic theory and Hungarian historiography, the historical sources would be all consistently wrong in calling the Magyars 'Turkic' (for the reasons amply discussed above), whilst it is the conventional linguistic classification that is correct. In other words, even if there is no (extra-) linguistic evidence, either in archaeology, palaeo-anthropology, or in the mentioned sources, in support of the existence of a (proto-)Uralic / Finno-Ugric speech community, this must nevertheless be 'assumed'. The known linguistic labels 'Uralic', 'Finno-Ugric', 'Ugric', etc., even if not borne out by (pre-)historical data or facts, must nevertheless refer to 'real', pre-historical ethnies and languages. Thus, The issue of the origin of the Hungarian peoples is not so clear-cut and settled after all, contrary to what is usually reported in textbooks and specialistic literature.

With regard to the classification of Hungarian as a language, however, the following can reasonably be stated: a) if its classification as an Uralic language is maintained, it would be more appropriate to use the definition: 'aberrant' Uralic language; b) independently of whether the pervasive Turkic component present in Hungarian has been borrowed or inherited (or, most likely, a combination of the two, as is typically the case in languages), it certainly bears a clear and alive testimony of the (past) expansion of the steppe peoples and languages, including Old Turkic³⁷ (Janhunen [42]), in Eastern Europe, in particular in the area of the Carpathian Basin.

³⁶ There are many other sources that mention the Hungarians, referring to them as Inner-Asia peoples. We cannot deal with them all for lack of space, but see [22], [40] and [41].

³⁷ The author provides an outline of the expansion of the Turkic languages from their home land.

References

- ¹ Thomason, S. G. & Kaufman, T. 1988. *Language Contact, Creolization and Genetic Linguistics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- ² Koptjevskaja-Tamm, M. 2011. Language contact. In Song, J. J. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Typology*. Oxford University Press. 568-90.
- ³ Trask, R. L. 2000. *The Dictionary of Historical and Comparative linguistics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- ⁴ Bakker, P. 1997. *A language of our Own: The Genesis of Michif, the Mixed Cree-French Language of the Canadian Métis*. Oxford University Press.
- ⁵ Bakker, P. & Maarten, M. (eds) 1994. *Mixed Languages*. Amsterdam: Institute for Functional Research into Languages and Language Use.
- ⁶ Matras, Y. 2009. Defining the limits of grammatical borrowing. In A. Marcantonio (ed.), *The Indo-European Language Family: Questions about its Status*. 'Journal of Indo-European Studies, monograph n.55'. Washington DC. 11: 1-25.
- ⁷ Róna-Tas, A. & Berta, Á. 2011. *West Old Turkic. Turkic Loan Words in Hungarian*. Turcologica 84. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. I-II.
- ⁸ Schönig, C. 2003. Turko-Mongolic relations. In Janhunen, J. (ed.), *The Mongolic Languages*. London: Routledge. 403-21.
- ⁹ Pritsak, O. 1955. *Die bulgarische Fürstenliste und die Sprache der Protobulgaren*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- ¹⁰ Beševliev, V. 1963. *Die Protobulgarischen Inschriften*. Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten, 23.
- ¹¹ László Gy. 1978. *A kettős honfoglalás*. Gyorsuló Idő. Budapest: Magvető.
- ¹² Dreiszigler, N. 2009. The lessons of genomic research. *Hungarian Quarterly* 196: 50-55.
- ¹³ Erdal, M. 2007. The Khazar language. In P. B. Golden, H. Ben-Shammai & A. Róna-Tas (eds), *The World of the Khazars: New Perspectives*. Leiden/Boston: Brill. 75-109.
- ¹⁴ Sándor, B. 1963. *Az 1522. évi tizedlajstrom szegedi vezetékevei*. Budapest: A Magyar Nyelvtudományi Társaság Kiadványai 105. 49-80.
- ¹⁵ Marcantonio, A., Nummenaho, P. & Salvagni, M. 2001 The 'Ugric-Turkic battle': a critical review. *Linguistica Uralica* 2: 81-102.
- ¹⁶ Marác, L. K. 2012. Eurocentrism and the "Ugric-Turkish" question. *Turkic World Almanac*. 361-9.
- ¹⁷ Mau-Tsai, L. 1958. *Die chinesischen nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (T'u- küe)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- ¹⁸ Golden, P. B. 1998. The Turkic peoples: a historical sketch. In L. Johanson and É. Á. Csató (eds.). *The Turkic Languages*. London: Routledge. 16-29.
- ¹⁹ Zimonyi, I. 2010. Why were the Hungarians referred to as Turks in the early Muslim sources? In H. Boeschoten & J. Rentzsch (eds), *Turcology in Mainz*. Turcologica 82. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. 201-212.
- ²⁰ Moravcsik, Gy. and Jenkins, R. J. H. 1967. *Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De Administrando Imperio*. Greek
-

text edited by Moravcsik, English translation by Jenkins. Budapest: Pázmány Péter Tudományegyetemi Görök Filológiai Intézet.

- ²¹ Marcantonio, A. 2002. *The Uralic Language Family: Facts, Myths and Statistics*. Oxford /Boston: Blackwell.
- ²² Róna-Tas, A. 1988. Ethnogenese und Staatsgründung. Die türkische Komponente in der Ethnogenese des Ungartums. *Studien zur Ethnogenese 2*: 107-41. Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Abh. 78. Westdeutscher Verlag.
- ²³ Róna-Tas, A. 2007. The Khazars and the Magyars. In P. B. Golden, H. Ben-Shammai & A. Róna-Tas (eds), *The World of the Khazars: New Perspectives*. Leiden: Brill. 269-78.
- ²⁴ Raskó, I. et al. 2007. Comparison of maternal lineage and biogeographic analysis of ancient and modern Hungarian populations. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 134: 354-68.
- ²⁵ UEW = *Uralisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I-VIII. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó; 1986-1991.
- ²⁶ Ligeti, L. 1986. *A magyar nyelv török kapcsolatai a honfoglalás előtt és az Árpád-korban*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- ²⁷ Clackson, J. 2007. *Indo-European Linguistics: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- ²⁸ Berta, Á. 2010. On the Turkic origin of the names of the Hungarian tribes. In Johanson, L. & Róna-Tas, A. (eds), *Studies in Turkic Etymology*. Turcologica 85: 175-187.
- ²⁹ Marcantonio, A. 2012. Czuczor és Fogarasi (CzF) gyökértelmezése a modern nyelvészet fényében. In Molnár, Zs., Marác, L. K. & Molnárné Czeglédi, C. (eds), *Fogalom, Hang, Gyök és Tanításuk*. Proceedings of the 'Nemzetközi Czuczor-Fogarasi Konferencia'. Budaörs, 2012. október 6-7. Budaörs: Magyar Anyanyelvkutató és Tanításfejlesztő, KFT. 183-90.
- ³⁰ Johanson, L. 1998b. The structure of Turkic. In L. Johanson & É. Á. Csató (eds), *The Turkic Languages*. London: Routledge. 30-66.
- ³¹ Lewis, G. 1967. *Turkish Grammar*. Oxford University Press.
- ³² Janhunen, J. 1981. On the structure of Proto-Uralic. *Finnisch-Ugrische-Forschungen* 44: 23-42.
- ³³ Häkkinen, K. 1999. Esisuomalainen pyyntikulttuuri ja maanviljely sanastohistorian kannalta. In P. Fogelberg (ed.), *Pohjan poluilla. Suomalaisten juuret nykytutkimuksen mukaan*. Helsinki: Finnish Society of Science and Letters. 159-173.
- ³⁴ Korhonen, M. 1981. Typological drift in the Finno-Ugrian languages with special reference to the case system. *The Second International Conference of Linguists: Seoul 1981*. The Korean Language Society, I. Hangeul. 678-710.
- ³⁵ Lehtisalo, T. 1936. *Über die primären ururalischen Ableitungssuffixe*. Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura 72.
- ³⁶ Janhunen, J. 2013. Ural-Altai: The polygenetic origins of nominal morphology in the Transeurasian zone. Forthcoming.
- ³⁷ Johanson, L. 1998a. The history of Turkic. In L. Johanson and É. Á. Csató (eds), *The Turkic Languages*.
-

London: Routledge. 81-125.

³⁸ Róna-Tas, A. 1998. The reconstruction of proto-Turkic and the genetic question. In L. Johanson & É. Á. Csató (eds), *The Turkic Languages*. London: Routledge. 67-80.

³⁹ Gusmani, R. 1981. *Saggi sull'Interferenza Linguistica*. Firenze: Le Lettere.

⁴⁰ Marác, L. K. 2010. A lovasnépek vallása: előítéletek, közhelyek, ideológia. In L. K. Marác & B. Obrusánszky (eds), *A szkíta népek hitvilága: Közép-Ázsiától a Kárpát- Medencéig*. Budapest: HUN-idea. 13-40.

⁴¹ Zimonyi, I. 2012. A magyarság korai történetének sarokpontjai. Elméletek az újabb irodalom tükrében. Szeged. http://real-d.mtak.hu/597/7/dc_500_12_doktori_mu.pdf.

⁴² Janhunen, J. 2010. On the Turkicization of Turkey in a Eurasian context. *Finnisch- Ugrische Mitteilungen* 32/33: 211-22.

This paper was originally published as 'The linguistic influence of Turkic on Hungarian' in the 'Turkic World Almanac', Turkic Academy of Science, Astana. 2014, pp. 1-22.

Reprinted with permission of the Turkic Academy of Science, Astana. The editors of the Journal of Eurasian Studies express their gratitude to the Turkic Academy of Science for their kind permission.



OUR AUTHORS

FARKAS, Flórián

Mr. Farkas was born in 1967 in Kolozsvár/Cluj/Klausenburg. He holds a M.Sc. degree from Technical University of Budapest, Hungary and Ecole Normale Superieure de Cachan, France and an MBA degree from Henley Management College, UK. Since 1992 he is living in the Netherlands. He cofounded the Foundation Mikes International in 2001 in The Hague, the Netherlands.

KISAMOV, Norm

Born and educated in Moldova, Mr. Kisamov spent a 40-year carrier as an industrial automation engineer. He emigrated from Russia to the USA in 1978, when the USA patronized immigration of educated people from Russia. For the last 15 years, he was the webmaster of the site <http://turkicworld.org>, which serves as a non-commercial, educational publishing outlet for the Turkologists who could not propagate their studies in Russia and whose works were unknown to the Western world. He has translated a number of Turkological books to English, most of them were posted at that site, a few were published in Russia, in post-Soviet countries, and one was supposed to be published in Germany. Mr. Kisamov was assisting the writers as a volunteer. In his 15 years of working with various aspects of Turkology, he has amassed a significant collection of Turkisms cited by various authors, who were pointing out Turkisms in English and/or Germanic languages. Tracing and verifying etymologies of the cited lexemes, he encountered numerous other cognates, which led him to assemble a draft of the article that is published abridged in this issue, and unabridged as Supplement. By that time, the volume of the lexicon far exceeded accepted criteria formulated to discern random borrowings from genetic kinship. Mr. Kisamov is not a linguist, nor does he pretend to be a scholar. However, with some kind help from the sites contributors, he was able to systemize and organize his collection, and prepare etymological comments. His interest in Turkic history arose quite accidentally, but it quickly riveted him, he was growing into it for the last 25 years, and still, after a quarter century of reading and translating, he has only scratched the surface. Previously, he has authored a couple of articles on Turkological subjects related to the Scythian history.

MARCANTONIO, Angela

Dr Angela Marcantonio is associated professor of Linguistics and Finno-Ugric Studies at the University of Rome 'La Sapienza'. Her main field of research, and teaching, is historical-comparative linguistics, with particular reference to the Finno-Ugric/Uralic languages. She is the author of many publications, several of which deal with the issue of the origin of Hungarian.

MÁTÉ, Zsuzsanna

Works as habilitation professor at the University of Szeged (Juhász Gyula Teacher Training Faculty), she teaches aesthetics and interart studies. Ms. Máté is full member of the doctoral PhD-system in philosophy of Málnási Bartók György at the University of Szeged. She received a CSc-degree in Philosophy: "The Absolute in the philosophy of art in the first half of our century", at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1996); Habilitation: "Sándor Sík – the author, the literary scientist and the aesthetician" at the University of Debrecen (2006). Her main field of research is: Hungarian history of aesthetics and other comparative questions of aesthetics. Author of several books and studies.

MIRABILE, Paul

After having travelled and worked for many years in Africa and in Europe, Mr. Mirabile enrolled at the University of Vincennes-Saint-Denis, Paris VIII where he obtained his doctoral thesis in 1986 in mediaeval History, literature and linguistics: *La Genèse de la Chanson de Roland: la Théorie de l'Entonnoir* under the direction of Bernard Cerquiglini. Since then he has taught languages and literature, philology and History either at universities or secondary schools in Turkey, South India, China, Ireland and Russia whilst doing research on the Mediaeval Eurasian Koine. He has contributed articles and essays on mediaeval History, religions and philosophy in *Stratégique* (F.E.D.N), *Contrastes*, *Liber Mirabilis*, *Nietzsche-Studien*, *Journal of Armenian Studies*, *Journal of Dravidic Studies*, *Armenian International Reporter*, *La Chine au Présent*, *Al Amanecer* (Istanbul: Judio-Spanish journal), *Chasse-Marée* and in university reviews in China and Russia. He is currently teaching in Istanbul.