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Modernization of humanities and political sciences in Turkiye in the works of Zeki Velidi Togan

Abstract. *This article examines Z.V. Togan's intellectual development and thoughts about Turkic unity as a scientist who made significant contributions to the development of Turkish historical science. He is recognized as one of the most well-known historians of Turkiye and the Turkic peoples in general. He was a pioneer in the development of historical science in the Republic of Turkiye. The articles of Türk Yurdu journal need special attention because they explain his research methodologies in detail. He underlined the need of working with multinational experts and understanding several languages. Z.V. Togan traveled to Europe for political reasons and found great success. After achieving international renown, he returned to Turkiye to teach at Istanbul University. This accelerated the evolution of Turkish historiography. Z.V. Togan urged that Turkish historians' works to be translated into Western languages and be objective in their coverage of historical events. He is a scientist who was well-versed in Turkic history and worked for their cultural unity. His ideas and concepts are well tracked in his essays in such journals as Türk Yurdu, Yurt Bilgisi, Orhun. His work titled Tarihte Usul is now a reference book for many scientists, highlighting theories and approaches for examining genuine historical problems.*

Keywords: *Z.V.Togan, historiography, culture, Turkiye, Turks, science, methodology.*

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Introduction

Z.V. Togan devoted nearly his whole life fighting for the future of Turkic peoples, which resulted in the establishment of Turkish historiography. In this regard, he became the academic who taught his disciples how to study history after writing the first book on the technique of history in Turkiye. He also contributed significantly to the construction and development of broad Turkic historiography in Turkiye.

Numerous research have been conducted on Z.V. Togan's life and scientific activity. Among all scientific references on him, including as scientific journals, dissertations, and books, two scientists stand out: Serkan Acar and Ahmet Kanlidere. Acar presents excellent material that highlights numerous characteristics that describe

Z.V. Togan in his book *Zeki Velidi Togan: His Scientific Life, Inventiveness, Political Action, and Memories*. In his publications, Ahmet Kanlidere emphasizes the variables that shaped Z.V. Togan's intellectual development. He attempted to determine Z.V.Togan's evolution and formation as a scholar by evaluating the influence of his family environment, his early interactions, the books he read, and the works he created in Russia. As a result, we can conclude that Z.V. Togan's beliefs evolved first as Reformist Islamic concepts influenced by the Tatar intellectuals, then as socialist and populist ideas influenced by Russian Orientalists, and ultimately as Turkism ideas during the October Revolution [1, p. 216]. Z.V. Togan demonstrated his comprehensive approach to Turkish history in his work titled

Introduction to the General History of the Turks [2, p. 161-180].

Z.V. Togan has been interested in historical science since 1911. Notwithstanding Russia's revolutionary mood, his scientific work grew quickly. This study drew findings on Togan's historiography in the context of his works in the journal *Türk Yurdu*, which played an important role in Turkish historical science. His approaches and methodologies for studying the history of Turkic peoples contributed significantly to the modernization of Turkish historical science as a whole. Z.V. Togan established a system of compulsory study of one eastern and one western language as part of the future expert historian. Under his direction, a great number of doctoral students were defended, who are the heirs of his historical science theories and techniques. These articles not only capture the substance of the concepts he expressed in his scientific work, but also aid in understanding his historiography. The goal of this work is not only to evaluate his contribution to the modernization and development of historical science in Turkiye, but also to highlight his ideas on historical methodology, the importance of knowing foreign languages, exchanging experience with foreign scientists, and participating in international congresses.

Research methods

This article is based on a retrospective analysis of the works of Z.V. Togan, published in the journal titled *Türk Yurdu*, from which the methodology of his research becomes clear. The articles and books of Z.V. Togan and other Turkish scholars, such as Serkan Akar, Tuncer Baykara, Halil Inalchik, Ahmet Kanlidere were used in the work. This made it possible to identify the contribution of Z.V. Togan in the transformation of historical science of the Republic of Turkiye. The main direction of research methodology was the content analysis of the problems of historical science in Turkiye in the first half of the 20th century. Used materials were tested and translated into English. The etymological method was used for a complete study of the works of Z.V. Togan, as his scientific research was based on Arabic and Persian scripts.

Discussion

At the beginning of the 20th century Turkic peoples found themselves in difficult condition as part of the Russian and Ottoman empires.

These considerations influenced not only politicians but also scholars such as Z.V. Togan. Despite the fact that he had to leave the territory of the former Soviet Union, he continued his scientific research. In his works and speeches at numerous forums, Togan always defended the idea of studying the history of Turkic peoples as a whole. As a result, he founded the historical science of Turkiye based on facts and impartiality. According to Z.V. Togan, this could show the true significance of the Turkic peoples in the history of mankind.

Z.V. Togan was born in the Russian village of Kuzyanovo, Sterlitamak district, on December 10, 1890. Z.V. Togan's educated and culturally advanced parents were influential in his life. Z.V. Togan had his primary education in his father Ahmet Shah's madrasah, where he studied ethnography, traditional culture, and listened to epic and historical stories. He is fluent in Russian, Arabic, and Persian thanks to his parents.

He attended the Kasimiye madrasah in Kazan from 1906 to 1908. He initially became acquainted with I. Gasparyal's Jadid movement here. In addition, the works of V. von Rosen, V. Bartold, and A. Vamberi influenced Z.V. Togan. On June 29, 1908, he met N. Katanov, a Russian turkologist and professor at Kazan University who had a significant influence on him [3, p. 4-47]. Contact with scientists such as M. Carullah, A. Ibrahim, and R. Fahreddin, as well as their ideas, aided Z.V. Togan in researching the culture, history, and language of Turkic peoples under Russian domination [4, p. 112-121].

Z.V. Togan was assigned to teach History of the Turks and Arabic Literature at the Kasimiye madrasah. Z.V. Togan travelled to Fergana in 1913 to do scientific research, and the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg dispatched him to the Bukhara Khanate in 1914 [3, p. 4-47].

The fate of Turkic communities, which Z.V. Togan spent his entire life researching, inspired not only his intellectual and scientific development, but also his political life. His political career began with the disintegration of the Russian Empire. Following the October Revolution, he spearheaded the political battle of the Bashkirs, serving in the Basmachi organization for three years (1920-1922). Z.V. Togan establishes the Turkestan National Union in Turkestan. Z.V. Togan's struggle in Turkestan is based on both intellectual and armed conflict. After Enver Pasha's death in August 1922, he understands that fighting in Turkestan has become hopeless, and he chooses to travel

to Europe in order to bring the Soviet Turks' situation to the international stage. He arrived in Europe in 1923 after a long voyage that spanned Iran, Afghanistan, and India. Z.V. Togan relocated to Berlin after spending time in Paris [5, p. 15-23]. There, Z.V. Togan convened a Turkestan National Union congress and concentrated on his scientific study.

Z.V. Togan contributed significantly to the advancement of historical science in Turkiye. Z.V. Togan had a dilemma in 1925: travel to Turkiye or England. Togan was called to England by Cambridge Professor E. Browne to work on the publication of Persian and Arabic works on Turkish and Iranian history, which he conceived of. But Togan decided to visit Turkiye after Kemalettin Sami Pasha, the Turkish ambassador in Berlin, gave him letters addressed to him personally from the Turkish Minister of Education, Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver. A personal invitation from the minister, as well as letters sent by Köprülüzade Fuad, Dean of Istanbul University's Faculty of Literature, swung the scales in Turkiye's favor [6, p. 27]. Z.V. Togan's future contribution to Turkish historiography confirmed that he was correct. Tanrıöver's decision made Z.V. Togan a member of the Translation Bureau (Te'lif-Tercüme Heyeti) instantly upon his arrival in Turkiye. In the "Turkish Hearths", he began to conduct discussions on the fate of the Turkic peoples. Z.V. Togan also submitted plans for the establishment of the Turkish Academy of Sciences and the Research Institute of History.

Z.V. Togan was appointed as Instructor in Turkish History at the Faculty of Literature, Istanbul University in 1927. From 1927 to 1932, he was a teacher there. His essay, *Introduction to the General History of the Turks*, which was released as lecture notes in 1928, had a significant impact on following generations. The first section of this text, titled *Ancient Times of Turkic History* was most likely one of the materials used to launch the thesis on Turkish history. Z.V. Togan analyzes the traits of the Turkic 'race' and prehistoric migrations in this work. The First Turkish Historical Congress was held in Ankara on July 25, 1932. At it, Z.V. Togan questioned the present official Turkish history thesis, which elicited a heated reaction from several experts. According to him, the Congress has become a stumbling block between political historians and intellectual and ethical historians [7, p. 125-126]. A week later, he chooses to resign from his position at Istanbul University and return to

Europe. He ignored the roadblocks that other scientists erected in his path and focused on his scientific work [8, p. 185].

Z.V. Togan lived in Europe for seven years (1932-1939). Throughout this time, he defended his PhD dissertation and got a degree on the topic *Ibn Fadlan's Journey to the Northern Bulgarians, Turks, and Khazars* at the University of Vienna. He returned to Turkiye in 1939 and lectured at Istanbul University once more.

Z.V. Togan's key feature in his scientific approach and speeches was the presenting of historical events in the form of a great amount of material that appeared incoherent at first glance. This, together with his views on the importance of the Timurids in Turkish history, led to misinterpretation and hostility among his Turkish colleagues. However, Western historiography now acknowledges the Timurids' contribution to world culture [7, p. 125-126]. This demonstrates how Z.V. Togan's insight was ahead of its time. His entourage was mostly made up of Tatar and Azerbaijani historians, writers, and linguists. They studied in the USSR and Germany before moving to Istanbul and playing an important role in the founding and development of Turkic studies in Turkiye.

Z.V. Togan also made important contributions to nation-building and the difficulties of understanding Turkic peoples' unification utilizing Eastern and Western methodologies. Many Turkic intellectuals who arrived to Turkiye from Russia were mostly involved in scholarly studies in the fields of Turkish language and history. Some of these intellectuals also sought to develop interest in Turkic history and culture outside of Turkiye. Although they primarily studied Turkestan's history, their unifying purpose was to explore the entire Turkic world, research the relations of the Turkic provinces with one another, and therefore discover a solution to the Turkic peoples' issues.

Like other Turkic intellectuals who emigrated from Russia, Z.V. Togan placed a high value on publishing scientific articles in Turkish such journals as *Türk Yurdu*, *Yurt Bilgisi* and *Orhun*. Almost all Turkic intellectuals who emigrated to Turkiye from Russia believed in cultural unity for all Turks. Z.V. Togan defined "Turk" to encompass not only individuals who speak Turkic languages, but also those who have forgotten their language yet preserved their national identity. This sentence was most closely associated with the Turkish people. Although Turkish nationalism regards historical roots as one of the aspects that comprise a nation, he claims

that it has never adopted the anthropological principle of race as a priority factor in its national creation. He stated his position as follows: “the Turkish people regards those who enter Turkish culture without reluctance from the British, Arabs, Circassians...” [9, p. 40].

Results

Z.V. Togan’s scientific research centered mostly on the study of Turkic peoples’ history. In this light, he is regarded as one of the forefathers of broad Turkic history in Turkiye [4, p. 112-121]. In his work titled *Introduction to the General History of the Turks* (Umumi Türk Tarihine Giriş), he treated history methodically. According to him, the shared ownership system (“ülüş sistemi”) ensured the continuity of Turkish history [2, p. 161-180].

When Z.V. Togan began working at Istanbul University in 1927, he instantly stated the path to take when studying Turkish history. He also emphasized the value of understanding a foreign language when conducting historical study.

According to him, the Turkic peoples’ significance in the history of ancient and medieval Asia and Europe is equivalent to England’s global importance in the history of these two continents in the 18th and 19th centuries. In other words, studying Turkic history should be combined with studying the histories of all Asian and European peoples. He recommended studying history from two perspectives: Turkiye’s history alongside the histories of the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Europe, as well as the wider history of Turkic peoples beside the histories of Asia and Eastern Europe, particularly China, India, and Russia.

Materials on the Scythians, Huns, Pechenegs, and Ottomans were in ancient Greek and Latin, but knowledge of Chinese and Hindi was required for pan-Asian history. Arabic and Persian were required to examine the academic sources of the Middle and New Ages. Of course, no one person could master all of these languages, let alone European languages. As a result, Z.V. Togan emphasized the significance of collaborating with other expertise to achieve a similar goal [10, p. 21].

Z.V. Togan’s judgments on historiography clearly demonstrated his perspective on Turkish historiography, as well as the direction that pan-Turkic researchers will take in the future. According to him, Turkish historians could only explore the broad Turkish history

by working closely with Western researchers. Turkish historians’ scientific writings were to be translated into Western languages and critiqued by Western scholars. Western experts, in turn, would assist them in conducting fruitful research on scientific papers and documentation on the history of Turkiye and other Turkic peoples written in foreign languages. Scientists, according to Z.V. Togan, suffer from isolation and isolation [10, p. 21].

Z.V. Togan discusses how a historian should analyze events in his monumental work *Tarihte Usul*. A historian must be able to think imaginatively in order to determine how particular historical events impacted a person’s life in order to create an academic work on an event. The historian must also be able to fill in missing documents, be unbiased in classifying and illuminating events, and lastly, be capable of generalizing the results into some scientific rules [11, p. 107].

According to H. İnalçık, famous orientalist all over the world accepted Z.V. Togan’s authority in historical science. In truth, Z.V. Togan was the originator of Turkish historiography, having written the methodology of Turkish history titled *Tarihte Usul*. He devoted his entire life to researching the sources of Turkish history. He published *Ibn Fadlan’s Travel Adventures* in 1939, and at the end of his life, he had memorized the Oguz epic translated by Rashid ad-Din and had published it.

Z.V. Togan was interested in science in all settings and circumstances, and he analyzed the events of the state’s history not only from the rulers’ point of view, but also from the geographical position and living conditions of the peoples in this area.

Z.V. Togan, with his comprehensive understanding of history, was able to foresee possible future events by interpreting past events and phenomena using the method of synthesis and analysis. In this context, consider how, in several of his works, he stated that the problems that developed in Asia would be solved by the region’s economic development. He stated that this would be doable with the development of broad roadways from Istanbul to southern Asia, including Pakistan and India. These gatherings were to serve as a modern parallel to the Silk Road and play a significant role in Asia’s economic revival.

Speaking at a conference in Ankara in 1960, Z.V. Togan remarked that while researching new materials on Turkestan, he observed similarities

between his new ideas and those presented in 1929 in his book *Modern Turkestan and its Recent Past* (Bugünkü Türkili (Türkistan) ve Yakın Tarihi). This exhibited his insight and ability to analyze situations appropriately.

Z.V. Togan's publications in the *Türk Yurdu* journal show that he placed a high value on international conferences and congresses devoted to Turkish culture and history. He attempted not only to participate but also to speak at international congresses. England, Italy, and Iran were among the countries that invited Z.V. Togan to speak. Numerous reports were later published in *Türk Yurdu* [12, p. 3-6]. He also worked hard to guarantee that these scientific gatherings were conducted in Türkiye. Regardless of the fact that these congresses were underfunded, Z.V. Togan never gave up striving to improve the quality of these events, and Turkish science in general.

From March 9 to 15, 1965, a conference was held in Tehran to discuss the problem of the RCD (Regional Cooperation of Development), an organization founded jointly by Türkiye, Iran, and Pakistan. Z.V. Togan's lecture focused on the issue of the alphabet and language.

Many shared terms and expressions emerged among the peoples of these three countries as a result of natural historical ties and a common religion. And, according to Z.V. Togan, they shouldn't have become victims of language purism, or the policy of purifying the language of borrowings [13, p. 4]. It should be recalled that communists had the intention of weakening neighboring countries' political stability by separating their languages back then. As a result, Togan argued that the common culture of the countries might be preserved if the common languages were kept, so destroying the communists' intentions.

Z.V. Togan not only studied Western experts in his specialty, but he also knew numerous Turkologists who contributed significantly to the development of Turkic culture and languages. These scientists were brought together not only through conference meetings, but also by joint initiatives. Z.V. Togan wrote various publications about Western scientists' activity. One of them is Kaare Grünbech, the son of the eminent Danish philosopher and religious historian Wilhelm Grünbech. Kaare was a well-known expert in Asian languages who studied Turkic culture [14, p. 571-573].

Z.V. Togan attended a congress convened by the Institute for the Study of the History and Culture of the USSR on July 24-25, 1959.

This group was founded in 1950 in Munich by Soviet exiles and was overseen by the United States. Despite the involvement of well-known scholars who dealt mostly with USSR concerns, talks were held and questions concerning the history of Turkic peoples were examined. At this meeting, Togan summarized the USSR's overall policy [15, p. 19-22].

One issue was the Society for International Cooperation in Islamic Studies, which was created in 1951 in Istanbul, the site of the 22nd International Congress of Orientalists. Due to a lack of an approved charter and funds, this organization was unable to function at full capacity. Regardless of the fact that it was meant to fall under the wing of Türkiye at the 25th International Congress of Orientalists in the USSR, there was a chance that the organization would work on Moscow's territory. The USSR might use the Society to further its own political objectives. This scenario concerned Z.V. Togan, and in his essay titled *Letter* (Bir Mektup), published in the journal *Türk Yurdu*, he emphasized his concern over Türkiye's loss of power in the world political arena [16, p. 46].

In his publications on the Turkic world's oneness, Z.V. Togan noted that numerous Turkic peoples lived separately under their tribal titles. This made it simpler to handle them in accordance with the approach 'divide and rule'. Large nations sought to expand their territory and people by annexing tiny Turkic tribes. Azerbaijan, for example, desired to include the Kumyks and Nogays in its own ranks, but the Tatars believed that the Nogays should be included as well. The Uzbeks attempted to entice the Karakalpaks, but the Kazakhs considered them theirs. Z.V. Togan argued that this caused conflicts among Turkic peoples and was an impediment to Turkic unification. After publishing his thoughts on the history of the Turkic peoples in articles, he devised a plan to create a book on the subject. Initially, he intended to title the book *History of the Turks*, but other Tatar intellectuals urged that he reduce his focus and write about the history of Kazan and the Volga area instead, which Z.V. Togan quickly refused. Finally, in 1912, he released a book in Tatar with the final title – *History of the Turks and Tatars* [17, p. 245-248]. This demonstrated his dedication to values and comprehensive perspectives on Turkic peoples' history. This work has piqued the curiosity and recognition of many scientists, including Y. Akchura, V. Bartold, I. Gaspyraly, and N. Katanov. His contributions to history

and oriental studies were recognized, and he was elected to the Kazan University Society of Archeology, History, and Ethnography [3, p. 4-47].

Z.V. Togan also shared an idea that represented his feelings about the numerous labels used to refer to Turks living outside of Türkiye. Rather than expressing himself, he underlined the need for specific terms for foreign Turks. Togan was in agreement with the expressions Egyptian Turks, Balkan Turks, or Iranian Turks and was opposed to the designations like Northern Turks and Southern Turks. Although some scholars called the Kazan Turks northern Turks, they also comprised Siberian and Chuvash Turks. Furthermore, the definition of southern Turks included Turks from Iran, India, and Afghanistan. As a result, these expressions lacked precision.

He believes that history may help address present problems by drawing on its past experiences. However, this did not eliminate the importance of studying history in isolation from the present [18, p. 64].

Conclusion

Z.V. Togan is a scientist who has pushed the bounds of the study of Turkic peoples' history, particularly Turkish history. He was able to mix his traditional and Western education. His understanding of history and technique, gained

via scientific research in European countries, together with his orientation in the geography of the Turkic peoples' past, established him as one of the leading scientists in his profession.

Z.V. Togan published numerous pieces in *Türk Yurdu* after moving to Türkiye. These books provide an opportunity to comprehend his thoughts and scientific activities. Some were text versions of his speeches delivered at various conferences. Readers were made aware of his opinions on modern science as a result of this. Examining the content of these pieces reveals the primary subjects that Togan addressed. These include history, the importance of conference participation and the admission of Turkic scientists into the international arena, Turkic peoples' unification, and close collaboration with Western scientists.

Z.V. Togan advocated objectivity from scientists in the scientific method. He wrote in his work *Methodology of Historical Research* (Tarihte Usul) that a scholar must analyze and classify historical events impartially. These were not just words; Z.V. Togan himself spoke numerous languages, wrote several foundational works, including *Introduction to the General History of the Turks* (Umumi Türk Tarihine Giriş), *Modern Turkestan and its Recent Past*, and *Methodology of Historical Research* (Tarihte Usul), and became an inspiration to a whole generation of Turkic historians.

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Зеки Велиди Тоғанның еңбектері бойынша Түркияның гумманитарлық-саяси ғылымдарының модернизациялауы

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада Түркияның тарих ғылымының дамуына сүбелі үлес қосқан ғалым З.В. Тоғанның интеллектуалдық дамуы мен түркі бірлігі туралы идеялары талданған. Оны жалпы түркі халықтарының, соның ішінде Түркияның тарихын зерттеген көрнекті ғалымдардың бірі деуге негіз бар. Ол Түркия Республикасының қалыптасу және даму кезеңінде тарих ғылымының негізін салушы ретінде танылады. З.В. Тоғанның зерттеу әдістемесін жан-жақты түсінуге мүмкіндік беретін "Türk Yurdu" журналында жарияланған еңбектерге ерекше назар аудару қажет. Ол шетел тілдерін, әсіресе араб және парсы тілдерін білудің, шетелдік ғалымдармен тығыз ынтымақтастық орнату қажеттілігіне аса үлкен мән берген. Саяси себептермен З.В. Тоған Еуропаға барып, сонда үлкен жетістіктерге қол жеткізген. Халықаралық деңгейде танылған соң Түркияға келіп, Ыстамбұл университетінің профессоры қызметін атқарды. Бұл Түркия тарихнамасының қалыптасуына серпін береді. Көпшілігімен тығыз байланыста болған батыс түркологтарына қараған З.В. Тоған түрік тарихшыларынан олардың еңбектерінің батыс тілдеріне аударылуын, тарихи мәселелерді жариялауда өздері де бейтарап болуды талап етті. З.В. Тоған түркі халықтарының тарихын жақсы білген, олардың мәдени бірлігі үшін күрескен ғалым. Оның идеялары мен ойлары "Türk Yurdu", "Yurt Bilgisi", "Orhun" сияқты басылымдардағы мақалаларында жақсы байқалады, ал "Tarihте Usul" атты еңбегі бүгінгі тағда көптеген ғалымдардың алдында тарихтың өзекті мәселелерін зерттеуде пайдаланылатын анықтамалық кітап болып табылады.

Түйін сөздер: З.В. Тоған, тарихнама, мәдениет, Түркия, түркілер, ғылым, әдістеме.

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются интеллектуальное развитие и идеи тюркского единства З.В. Тогана как ученого, внесшего весомый вклад в развитие исторической науки Турции. Его можно считать одним из самых заметных ученых, занимавшихся историей тюркских народов в целом, и Турции в частности. Он является основателем исторической науки Турецкой Республики в период ее становления и развития. Особое внимание заслуживают труды, опубликованные в журнале "Türk Yurdu", которые позволяют всесторонне понять методологию исследования З.В. Тогана. Он отмечал важность знания иностранных языков и сотрудничество с зарубежными учеными. По политическим причинам З.В. Тоған уехал в Европу и добился больших успехов. После международного признания он приезжает в Турцию и становится профессором в Стамбульском университете. Это дает толчок становлению историографии Турции. Ориентируясь на западных тюркологов, со многими из которых он имел тесную связь, требовал от турецких историков того, чтобы их труды были переведены на

западные языки, а сами они были беспристрастны в освещении исторических событий. Зеки Велиди Тоган – ученый, который хорошо знал историю тюркских народов и боролся за их культурное единство. Его идеи хорошо прослеживаются в статьях, опубликованных в таких изданиях, как “Türk Yurdu”, “Yurt Bilgisi”, “Orhun”, а его труд “Tarihte Usul”, где освещены теории и методологии исследования актуальных проблем истории, сегодня является настольной книгой многих ученых.

Ключевые слова: З.В. Тоган, историография, культура, Турция, турки, наука, методология.

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