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*Die Zahl der in Sibirien befindlichen Tungusen
wird nach neuern statistischen Angaben [1854]
auf 35-40,000 Seelen beiderlei Geschlechts
geschätzt (Schieffner in Castrén 1856: 1)*

Long awaited and long delayed (see p. xix), the above bibliographically described collectively authored monograph finally saw the light of the day in print with the © date of publication as indicated. Edited by three prominent specialists in the language area covered, the volume offers six (four following the front matter and two, preceding the “Index” (538-41) and concluding the core of the book) chapters-studies providing general information on the family in question in its entirety and fourteen chapters-descriptive sketches presenting individual languages, by sixteen authors.

Except for the detailed table of “Contents” (v-xii), the front matter includes an indispensable list of 112 “Tables” (xiii-xv), a list of “Contributors” (xvi-xvii; three of them deceased in 2020-2022), “Preface and Acknowledgements” (xviii-xix), “Technical Notes” (xx-xxi), a list of “Abbreviations” (xxii-xxiii), a “Chart of the Manchu Script” (xxiv-xxvi; tabularized but absent from the list afore mentioned), and a “Language Map” of the area involved (xxvii-xxiii). All this, together with the book-final index, make the volume very user-friendly indeed.

The initial chapters are consecutively devoted to: (1) introducing “Tungusic as a language family” (Janhunen, 1-18; here we have sections informing on “Ethnic nomenclature” (*i.a.* dealing with the ethno- and glottonyms <Manchu-Tungusic> ~ <Tungus-Manchu> but mainly clarifying Russian (old and new) and Chinese ethnonyms) but also such structurally organizing further chapters, like e.g. “Data and sources”, “Typological profile”, “Grammatical framework”, “References and further reading” (see below); (2) “Early

Far-Eastern sources on Tungusic” (Vovin, 19-25); (3) “Early Western sources on Tungusic” (Alonso de la Fuente, 26-34), and (4) “Proto-Tungusic” (Janhunen, 35-75). The concluding “general” chapters deal with (19) “Sociolinguistic aspects of Tungusic” (Mamontova, 501-16; here e.g. “Demographic background” legislation, education, public sphere, ..., “Future prospects”) and (20) “Tungusic in time and space” (Janhunen, 517-37; discussing i.a. the “Altaic”~“Macro-Altaic”~“Ural-Altaic hypotheses”, “Altaicization” vs. “deAltaicization”, Tungusic and Amuric (here interrelations with Gilyak~Nivkh), “the future of the Tungusic language family (which “looks bleak. The total number of Tungusic speakers in the world today is hardly more than 30,000 people, while the number of people transmitting the language to the next generation is probably in the hundreds, rather than thousands” (p. 532¹); solely Solon is named as the language which “would seem to have the best chances of survival” [...], “somewhat surprisingly” (*ib.*), also for this reviewer).

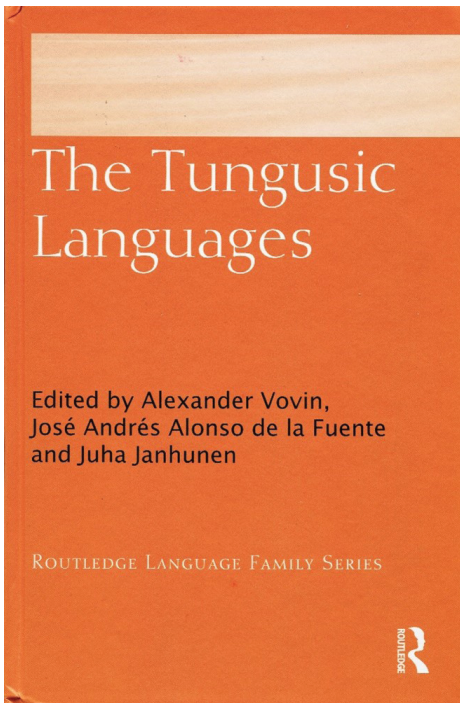
Chapters 5-18, in turn, have been dedicated each to one language: (5) extinct Jurchen (Kane & Miyake, 76-102); (6) Written Manchu (Vovin, 103-38); (7) Siberian Ewenki (Janhunen, 139-83); (8) Orochen (Chinese *Oroqen~Oroqon~Elunchun* (-zu ethnonym 鄂伦春族, -yu glottonym 鄂伦春语; Whaley, 184-205); (9) Solon (Baek 白尚燁, 206-33); (10) Neghidal (Oskolskaya, 234-59), (11) Ewen (Malchukov, 260-93); (12) Oroch (Kazama 風間伸次郎, 294-325); (13) Udihe (~Udeghe~Udege~Ude~...; Perekhval'skaya & Janhunen, 326-63); (14) Nanai (~Nanay(an)~Chinese *Hezhe* (-zu, -yu 赫哲族/-语; Kazama, 364-406); (15) Ulcha (~Olcha~Mangun~Santa(n); Kazama, 407-35); (16) Uilta (~Orok; Tsumagari & Yamada, 436-62); (17) Spoken Manchu (Zikmundová & Gao, 463-82, quotation: “According to information from 2017 no speakers use Manchu as a means of communication, but several individuals are capable of carrying a simple conversation, translating sentences from Chinese, or repeating short narratives they have memorized for the purpose of interviews². [...] As of 2019, only one fluent speaker was believed to remain in the [Anhui] area”, p. 464); (18) Sibe (~Xibe~Sibo~Xibo; Zikmundová, 483-500).

Apart from the competence of authors, worth emphasizing are the structure pattern of the individual language chapters (e.g., each, “Proto-Tungusic”, “Tungusic as a language family”, and the concluding chapter 20 included, either beginning with a section “Data and sources”, or placing it second (six cases) or third (two, Siberian Ewenki and chapter 19, cases; *each chapter* ending with the bibliographical list of “references and further reading” mentioned; perhaps needless to stress, all language descriptions arranged in basically the same pattern allowing easy comparative reading and at the same time

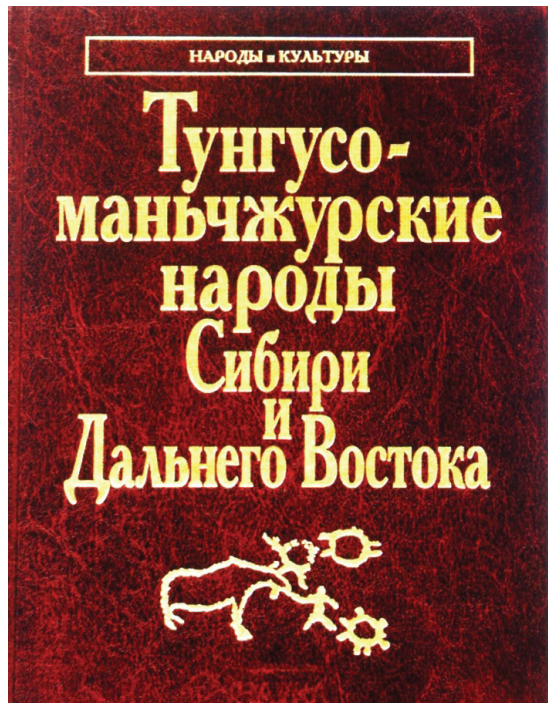
¹ Cf. the *motto* above, being the very first sentence in Schiefner's introduction to (and the first page in) Carstén 1856.

² It concerns Sanjiazi, “a relatively compact settlement, where Manchu was still used in everyday communication by c. 300 individuals in the 1960s” (*ibid.*). Interestingly, the process of dying out of the living (spoken) Manchu in its final phase resulted in the growing demand for, and proliferation of various handbooks of the tongue, readers, grammars, dictionaries of varying size and quality levels, including practical learning tools of the type “learn one phrase each day” (like He Rongwei's *Manyu 365 Ju* [365 Manchu phrases (like ‘hello’, ‘how are you’, ‘everybody in family/home OK’, ‘goodbye’, ‘do you speak Manchu?’, ‘I know it a little’, ‘he can speak and write’, ‘when was the Manchu script created?’, etc.] (何荣伟编 2009, 2012. 满语365句 一天一句学满语. 沈阳: 辽宁民族出版社)).

enriched with language specific material (e.g., “Taxonomic status”, “Dialectal division”, “Notational conventions” when appropriate), very similar to that implemented in Janhunen 2003³), “language-barrier-lessness” of source material and further-reading recommendations⁴, and much updated state of the art in Tungusic studies than any other publication in the field (this reviewer noticed with great satisfaction references to Bronisław Piłsudski’s pioneering contributions to Tungusic studies with his Uilta~Orok and Ulchan data (but seemingly his Nanaian lexical material passed unnoticed in the respective chapter) made accessible to a wider audience only in 2011 as CWBP-4 as well as to Simonow-Kyalundzyuga Udeghe dictionary, now a rarity on the shelves of researchers⁵).



Book under review (cover)



Missonova & Sirina 2022 (cover)

Thus, “thinking positively”, the delay in (as well as other, described in the preface, p. xix, serious perturbations and tragedies preceding) the publication of the book brought about unquestionable added value. It will take perhaps years to detect any possible (and

³ Except for “Index”, much better and more than twice as long (13 pp.) as that in the Tungusic volume (6 pp.) under scrutiny here.

⁴ Most of literature on Tungusic tongues has been published in Russian, Japanese, Chinese (in the case of China’s minority languages), and (understandably) in English but the authors quote or mention also works in German, and (rather rarities) Korean, French, Italian, Turkish, Polish, published in various countries.

⁵ Unfortunately, a major part of the small edition stored perished in a fire and flood cataclysm in February 2003.

inevitable) flaws, errors, etc. Here, this reviewer would randomly point to only certain cases of overlooking (or deliberate omissions of) references⁶ which, in his opinion, on varying reasons, deserve at least mentioning either in the respective sections of grammatical outlines of individual languages or in the “general information” chapters. A bit astonishing to this writer was the absence of a number of Boldyrev’s bulky Ewenki dictionaries (only two Russian-Ewenki ones reported) 2000, 2009-10, 2010, 2013, (“less bulky”) 2018, and his 2007 “morphology” or Myreyeva’s 2004 Ewenki-Russian dictionary in the Ewenki chapter (144, 179-80), Robbek & Robbek 2005 Ewen-Russian dictionary in the Ewen chapter (262, 292), An’s 2007 Chinese-Manchu dictionary (if its Manchu-Chinese predecessor is referred to (105, 134)), Aisin-Gioro Ulhicun’s 1983 grammar (when her 1985 reader is listed, possibly also other Aisin-Gioro – Yingsheng and his 2004 miscellanea) or Nakajima al. 1999 and 1993-9 (characterized as “basic tools for Manchu linguistics, Chinese language, and Oriental history”)⁷ in the Written Manchu chapter, Yamamoto 1969 in the Spoken Manchu chapter (in spite of the title and languages involved⁸), Poniatowski 1923 (if Poniatowski 1966 and Simonov 1990 are (inexactly) referred to, cf. p. 328, 382, also Simonov 1991) in Nanai and Udihe chapters and Simonov & Dyachok 1995 in the Solon chapter; the reviewer could also expect to see mentioned in the delayed (hence – updated) publication works like e.g. a very reader-friendly Trofimova 2009 in Udihe chapter, Kazama 2003 for basics, or continuation of Kanchuga’s autobiographical story in Udihe after 2006 (2016 volume is within this writer’s sight); since “Orochen is among the least studied Tungusic languages” (185), this writer would draw (since “Orochen is among the least studied Tungusic language”, 185) attention of the readers of the chapter on Orochen to Tulisow 1995 and Yin 1995.

The predecessor closest in design and character to what the book presented here offers was the extensive 180-page section on Tungus-Manchu languages (“Тунгусо маньчжурские языки”) with an introduction by Orest Petrovich Sunik followed by eight grammatical sketches of Ewenki, Ewen, Neghidal, Nanai, Ulchan, Orok (Uilta) and Udihe in the fifth (and last) volume of the collective work entitled *Языки народов СССР* (pp. 53-232; see chapter 1 in the book under review, p. 5). It served for decades all those general linguists interested in, and greedy for information on, languages and linguistic structures substantially different from what they learned and studied at schools – and served well: minuscule editions of most other literature from the USSR were hardly available (and actually “too informative” for wider audience, while lan-

⁶ The index proved to be useless for cross-checking.

⁷ Perhaps also triglot Kurabayashi & Hurelbator 2006, 2008, if not other tetraglots and the famous pentaglot *Yùzhì wǔ tǐ qīngwén jiàn* 御製五體清文鑑 (“the high point of polyglot printing in the Qing dynasty”, He 2018: 58). Actually, Vovin *did* write about these and such dictionaries (20-1) but did not list them in “References and further reading” (24-5) and the index, again, does not help.

⁸ It is mentioned but only in the Sibe chapter (484, 500) in which for instance Lebedeva & Gorelova 1994 is not – so the confusion for linguists from outside the narrow field of Tungusology is mounting (again the editorial structure fails to help).

guage barrier played also its negative role). What we have now at our disposal is undoubtedly much better in every aspect⁹.

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Coincidentally, the release of the volume introduced here was published in almost the same time as another very attractive and also collective monograph (Missonova & Sirina 2022) on the peoples speaking the Tungusic languages with focus on cultural anthropology, economy, demography, etc., - the Ewenkis, Ewens, Neghidals, Uiltas, Nanais, Ulchas, Udihes, Oroches, and Tazes. Contemplating the two volumes complementing one the other, standing side by side on one shelf and neighboring 34 other impressive volumes from among those so far published in the «Peoples and cultures» series, must, however, remain in the sphere of dreams: *inter arma silent Musae, silent mores* – Academia cannot be a winner in the clash with operations classified as special.

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⁹ Apart from the insufficient index, one more editorial decision should be pronounced wrong: the sole function of commas after the author(s)' name(s) in bibliographical listing arranged alphabetically should be to signal *the inversion* of name and surname in relation to what is to be found on the title page of sources referred to and/or listed: in a book with such accumulation of information on publications in languages in which family names consistently (as a rule) precede given names, inserting or not inserting the comma makes a huge difference.

¹⁰ including parts on official (standard 规范语~written 书面语) language (here Chinese translation of Möllendorff's Manchu grammar appended), spoken language and dialects (满语口语及方言), Manchu-Chinese interactions (满语对汉语的影响), Manchu language "scavengings" (满语拾遗) and Chinese-Manchu glossary of common comparisons (汉满常用对照) – such a work, accessible in the Web, must not be left out un-commented in the book expected to "be informative for scholars and students [...] to obtain information on the Tungusic languages" (p. i; some information on Aisin Gioro Yingsheng and his two other publications can be found in the Spoken Manchu chapter, 466, 480).

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