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My Publications

This chapter, dealing with my publications, will represent a kind of brief annotated bibliography. I will arrange my works into two categories, linguistics and philology, and I will briefly describe their contents. Readers who are specialists in Altaic Studies will probably have my bibliographies. The latest and most complete bibliography is Arista Maria Cirtautas, *Nicholas Poppe: Bibliography of Publications from 1924 to 1977*.¹ However, this one, like previous bibliographies, gives only titles without any annotations, thus making it difficult for readers unfamiliar with Altaic Studies to get a good idea about my research fields.

Another reason for discussing my publications is the fact that science does not stand still but is in constant motion, discovering new facts and leading to new conclusions. Today's facts and theories may not be valid tomorrow, and to be honest I must admit that today I would write several of my works in a different way. I am certain that my predecessors, too, would have written their works differently today had they lived long enough. It is, therefore, unfair to speak contemptuously about their mistakes, but we should always remember that without their works, our task of improving science would have been harder.

I will proceed on the assumption that the reader will expect me to point out my own mistakes but also to say something about the validity of some views expressed in my publications. I will also try to demonstrate to what degree my respective works have

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enriched our knowledge and advanced Asian Studies in general and Mongolian Studies in particular.

I shall begin with works on linguistics. I mentioned at the beginning of this book that I became fascinated by languages when I was only a boy. Perhaps it was only natural that when I started my scholarly career I continued to be interested in spoken languages. At that time universities taught only literary languages, neglecting the spoken languages. When I began my university studies of Mongolian in 1918, there were not only no grammars of Khalkha, the main language spoken in what is now the Mongolian People's Republic, but almost no other scholarly works on that language. The sole exceptions were Ramstedt's comparative phonology of Khalkha and Written Mongolian, i.e., the old literary language, and his Khalkha conjugation.² Since these two books were unsuitable as teaching aids, I resolved to create teaching materials on Khalkha as soon as I had an opportunity to do so. That opportunity came in 1926, 1927, and 1929 when I traveled to the Mongolian People's Republic. There I collected much material, including some folklore texts which I published with German translations in 1955.³ I used these and other materials for my manual of Khalkha in Russian which was published in 1931.⁴ This was a graded reader with exercises, combined with a grammatical outline and an index of forms. Much later, in 1951, I published a theoretical grammar of Khalkha, with texts and a glossary.⁵

This book was the first complete grammar, including phonology, morphology, and syntax. The grammar gives all the necessary facts and is free from errors. It closed the enormous gap that existed at the time when I was a university student. In subsequent years I also published a Mongolian handbook,⁶ which is based partly on the grammar just discussed and partly on Street's *Khalkha Structure*.

An important major Mongolian language is Buryat which is spoken in Eastern Siberia, particularly in the area around Lake Baikal, and in Northwestern Manchuria. It is a language particularly interesting to linguists because it is divided into numerous dialects and has preserved some ancient traits. Some of these traits are

personal endings at verbal forms, like *yerebeb* 'I have come' (cf. Middle Mongolian *irebe bi* same) and ancient words like *ziikheli* 'the hide of a sacrificial animal with head and legs, hanging from a long pole' (cf. *jügel* in the *Secret History*, written in 1240).

Before I started my study of Buryat in 1928, there existed Castrén's excellent grammar (1857),⁷ but it deals only with the Selenga and Nizhneudinsk dialects. There was also Rudnev's work on the Khorí dialect which is also good but still leaves many dialects uninvestigated.⁸ I started my Buryat studies with an investigation of the Alar dialect spoken west of Lake Baikal. I collected a number of texts, mostly folklore, such as epics, tales, songs, and riddles. Part of this material was incorporated in my two-volume work on the Alar dialect.⁹ Two years later I went to the Aga Buryats who live close to the Manchurian border. There I collected interesting materials such as tales about everyday life, songs, riddles, fairy tales, and shamanist incantations. The results were published in the form of an article on the phonological features of the Aga dialect,¹⁰ While in Ulaanbaatar in the summer of 1929, I collected, *inter alia*, material on the Bargu dialect spoken in Northwestern Manchuria. This dialect has preserved some ancient features, e.g. the ablative case ending *-āha* (= *-hā* in other dialects) and the affricate *j* (= *dzh*).¹¹ In 1931 I investigated the Tsongol dialect in the Selenga region, and in 1932 the dialect of the Ekhirít in the Barguzin area.

These investigations culminated in a complete grammar of the Buryat language, published in 1938.¹² It takes into account most dialects of the Buryat language and is, to a certain extent, a comparative grammar of the Buryat dialects. Later, in 1958, I wrote a structural grammar of the modern literary Buryat language and published it in 1960.¹³

In consequence of all these studies, the Buryat language as early as 1938 became one of the best explored Mongolian languages. However, many other Mongolian languages still remained almost unexplored. One such language was Dagur in Northern Manchuria. It had been commonly regarded as a Tungus language, and Ramstedt called it a "mixed Manchu-Mongolian dialect." I investigated it in 1927 and published a book in 1930¹⁴ and an article in 1934.¹⁵ As a

result of these publications Dagur was recognized as a conservative, archaic Mongolian language which had preserved some Middle Mongolian (twelfth to sixteenth centuries) features. For example, it preserved *e which has developed in some positions into *ö* in Modern Mongolian, like *emes-* "to dress oneself, to put on" to Khalkha *öms-*. It also preserved *au* and *eü* which became *ū* and *ü* respectively in Modern Mongolian, as in *aula* "mountain" to Khalkha *uul*.

Mongolian was not the only Altaic language I was interested in. Another Altaic language group is Manchu-Tungus. It comprises a large number of languages, each spoken by relatively few people. Some of them are about 2,000 speakers of Manchu in Manchuria, 10,000 Nanai (or Goldi) on the Amur River, 5,000 Solons in Northwestern Manchuria, and 30,000 Evenki in Eastern Siberia. With the exception of Manchu which is very well known and is represented in excellent dictionaries and grammars, this language group was scarcely explored.

I was particularly interested in Evenki, one of whose dialects had been investigated by Castrén. I became first acquainted with Evenki, one of the relatively widespread Tungus languages, in 1925 in Leningrad where I had found a young Evenki man who was studying at the Institute of the Peoples of the North. I published the material gathered in 1927.¹⁶ Later, in 1932, I made a trip to my informant's homeland, the area called Derēn to the east of Lake Baikal, to collect more material, but this has remained unpublished.

In 1929 I met several Solons in Ulaanbaatar. The Solons call themselves Evenki, live in northwestern Manchuria, and speak a Tungus language close to Evenki but not identical with it. A book, containing texts with Russian translations, a Solon-Russian glossary, and a grammar, was published in 1931.¹⁷ It supplements A. O. Ivanovskii's obsolete and rather unreliable *Mandjurica* published in 1894, considerably.¹⁸

In connection with my linguistic research, I should also mention the grammars I compiled for students. Although they are based on older works done by other scholars, the interpretation is often mine, and the methods applied are those of modern linguistics. In 1937 I published in Russian a grammar of Written

Mongolian.¹⁹ What was new in it was the phonemic distinction between short and long vowels, e.g. *daya-* "to follow," *dayā-* "to be able to lift;" *baγa* "small", *baγā* "to empty one's bowels." Some grammatical forms are treated in a manner different from older grammars (Bobrovnikov, Kotwicz, Rudnev and others). In 1954 I published a grammar of Written Mongolian in English,²⁰ and two newer editions appeared in 1964 and 1974. This grammar is more complete than its predecessors. Word formation is discussed in more detail, and suffixes, missing in my Russian edition, are given.

The very first grammar for students I ever wrote is a Yakut grammar, which my professor, A. N. Samoilovich, recommended I compile for teachers of Yakut in Yakut schools.²¹ I based it on the older grammars by Böhtlingk (1851)²² and S. V. Yastremskii (1900),²³ but my treatment of some grammatical forms is different, e.g. the form with *-ta* (*ūta* "some water") is called *partitive* instead of *indefinite accusative*.

At a later time I wrote a Tatar and a Bashkir manual for university students.²⁴ These manuals are structural grammars. They make a strong distinction between phonemes and allophones, the grammatical terms are treated in accordance with their forms which is not done in traditional grammars. Thus the Tatar word *kə̃m* "who" is not classified as an interrogative pronoun but as an interrogative noun because its declension is nominal and it also has the same plural form as any noun. An example would be *kə̃mnär* "who" when referring to more than one person. Likewise, the negative *yoq* is not classified as a negative particle but as a negative noun which actually means "absence" and can be declined.

As for linguistic works based entirely on my own research, I should like to mention works on the history of languages. My very first work in this category dealt with the list of animal names in the work of Ḥamd'ullāh Qazwīnī, compiled in 1339. This work was written in Arabic, and in one of its chapters there is a list of animal and plant names in Mongolian. V. V. Bartol'd had excerpted this list and given it to Vladimirtsov who passed it on to me. I investigated those names and, with Bartol'd's kind permission, published it in 1925.²⁵

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A work dealing with two glossaries, namely a Mongolian-Persian and an Arabic-Mongolian of 1343 was investigated by me later. I received photostats of the two glossaries, which are contained in a manuscript at the Leiden Library, from Professor Willi Bang-Kaup, and wrote an article for the Bulletin of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1927-28.²⁶ The Turkic part of the manuscript had been investigated by M. Th. Houtsma²⁷ but he misread the date as 1245. I took this date from Houtsma without checking it and, therefore, the date in my article is wrong. It is strange that such a great scholar as Houtsma could misread a date.

The largest collection of Middle Mongolian words including numerous sentences, written in Arabic script, with Chaghatay Turkic, Arabic, and Persian translations is a manuscript of the famous dictionary *Muqaddimat al-Adab*, compiled by al-Zamakhshari who died in 1156. Later Chaghatay Turkic and still later Mongolian equivalents of Arabic words and sentences were added. The copy containing the Chaghatay and Mongolian materials dates from 1492 but the original must have been older, going back to the fourteenth century. This copy had belonged to the palace library of the Emir of Bukhara whose librarian had been the well-known Uzbek writer and scholar Abd ar-Ra'uf Fitrat. After the revolution the library became a state library and was renamed the Avicenna Library.

With Fitrat's help I received an excellent copy of the library manuscript and was in a position to do my research on this valuable material. I arranged all words and sentences in alphabetical order and made indexes of the non-initial words in sentences, translated the Mongolian and Chaghatay Turkic words and sentences into Russian, and wrote a grammar in which the Mongolian words and forms are compared with Written Mongolian and Modern Mongolian forms.

A more specialized article on the functions of the Mongolian case forms occurring in the dictionary *Muqaddimat al-Adab* was published by me in 1953,²⁸ and an analysis of the Chaghatay Turkic materials in that work appeared in 1951.²⁹

The medieval Arabic-Mongolian glossaries mentioned above have greatly increased our knowledge of Mongolian of that time.

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Before the publication of these sources, only a few brief lists of Mongolian words in some Armenian and Georgian manuscripts and Ibn Muhauna's glossary of the fourteenth century were known. The Mongolian material contained in Moslem sources represents either colloquial Mongolian or Written Mongolian as read at that time. The Arabic alphabet contains letters for sounds which cannot be rendered precisely in the Mongolian alphabet. The Mongolian words written in Arabic transcription are, therefore, an important primary source for the history of the Mongolian language. It is a known fact that foreigners often render the words of another language better in their own script than the native speakers who keep to the traditional orthography.

In 1269 the Emperor Kublai Khan (Qubilai) introduced a new script for all languages spoken in the Mongol empire. That script had been created by a Tibetan named the ḥP'ags-pa Lama "The Venerable Lama" and, therefore, the script is called ḥP'ags-pa script, or square script after the shape of its letters which were based on the Tibetan alphabet. The script was used until the end of the Yüan dynasty in 1368. I published a monograph on the ḥP'ags-pa script and the language of the texts written in that script in Russian in 1941. The book appeared a few days after the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and therefore never reached the Western world. I have one copy in my possession. It was translated into English in 1955-56 by John R. Krueger, who was at that time my graduate student, and was published in 1957.³⁰ The texts are mostly inscriptions on steles, granting the clergy exemption from taxes. It is interesting to note that on one stele the Mongolian and Chinese texts clearly differ. The latter says that the monks of a particular temple are free from all taxes after which words there is a gap on the stele. The Mongolian text says, however, that they are free from all taxes except some particular tax. It is clear that the gap in the Chinese inscription on the same stele is the result of erasure of some characters, presumably by the monks. The Chinese tax collectors did not know Mongolian and, therefore, the monks did not bother to change the Mongolian text. As for the language of the documents in ḥP'ags-pa script, it is Written Mongolian, but in a

rendition approaching the colloquial pronunciation of Middle Mongolian.

One of my minor works dealing with Middle Mongolian is an article on the passive constructions in the *Secret History* (1240). The constructions in question resemble English expressions like "I was shown a beautiful picture," i.e. the passive verb governing a direct object. English has a few expressions like "I was given a book," and "I was told a story," but no constructions, frequently found in Mongolian, like "we were driven away our cattle," meaning we have become victims of somebody's driving away our cattle. I should note that the use of such constructions seems to be limited to unpleasant experiences suffered by the grammatical subject. At least I have not encountered sentences of the type "we were given precious gifts." My article on this subject appeared in 1964.³¹ Another article on the identity of the language of the *Secret History* and that of the ᠬᠢᠯᠠᠭ᠎ᠠ script appeared in 1944.³²

The method of reconstructing older forms of a language on the basis of its loan words in another language is widely used. A good example is so-called Sino-Korean which reflects the Chinese sounds of the eighth and ninth centuries and, therefore, is an excellent source for reconstructing the Chinese finals *-p*, *-t*, and *-k*.³³ An example from Europe would be the Germanic loan words in Finnish. They are so archaic that their forms could have never been reconstructed on the basis of Germanic data alone, e.g., Finnish *rengas* 'ring' < Germanic **hrengaz* (cf. Gothic *hriggs*, German *Ring*, Old English *hring*).³⁴

The Middle Mongolian period started around the beginning of the twelfth century. There are no texts from the preceding Ancient Mongolian period because the Mongols did not have a writing system then. However, Ancient Mongolian can be reconstructed on the basis of Ancient Mongolian loan words extant in Evenki and Jurchen. Some Mongolian borrowings in Evenki have preserved *t* and *d* before **i* whereas the respective words in Middle Mongolian have *č* and *j*, e.g. Ev. *gutin* "thirty," *kadiwun* "scythe," etc. My articles on Ancient Mongolian loan words in Tungus were published in 1966 and 1972.³⁵ Additional material was presented in my article on Jurchen

and Mongolian.³⁶ Jurchen is the language of the Manchus' predecessors and is actually an older form of Manchu. The Jurchen first appeared prominently on the historical stage in 1115 when they set off on the campaigns which led to their conquest of Southern Manchuria and then North China. They remained in power there until 1234 when the Mongols defeated them. The Jurchen language has many borrowings from Mongolian, most of which entered into the language during the Ancient Mongolian period, i.e., before the twelfth century.

One of the tasks involved in studying a language group is the investigation of the relationships of sounds and grammatical forms among the members of that group. The comparative study of languages which belong to any specific language group is of great importance, because such a study enables linguists to distinguish loan words from the words of the old stock common to all members of the language group in question. Then, loan words can shed light upon the ancient history of the peoples by revealing contacts for which there may be no historical evidence. Books discussing the sound correspondences and grammatical forms of related languages are called comparative grammars. The only previous comparative grammar of the Mongolian languages had been Vladimirtsov's book which appeared in 1929.³⁷ It very soon became obsolete because of Antoine Mostaert's works on Ordos Mongolian and Monguor.³⁸ My works on Dagur and Middle Mongolian appeared after Vladimirtsov's book had been published, and they contained much new material which had not been known to Vladimirtsov.

My comparative study appeared in 1955.³⁹ It sets forth the sound correspondences among Khalkha, Ordos, Buryat, Kalmuck, Dagur, Moghol in Afghanistan, Monguor in Kansu, the language of the ᠬᠦᠫᠬᠠ script and *Secret History*, Middle Mongolian, and Written Mongolian, and it gives a brief comparative morphology. It also deals with both vowels and consonants, while Vladimirtsov's work had neglected consonants. It is in the main still usable, with one serious reservation: when it was published the existence of primary long vowels in Common Mongolian was still unknown. Therefore my later articles on the long vowels in Common Mongolian⁴⁰ must be

taken into consideration when using my earlier comparative study. The disappearance of the consonants *b*, *g*, *γ*, *ᠨ*, and *m* occurs only before a long vowel, e.g., Common Mongolian **dabāri*- "to pass by, to attack," Written Mongolian *daγari*-, Buryat *dāri*-, etc. It should be added that the two articles mentioned were instantly criticized by the German Altaicist Gerhard Doerfer who refused to accept Common Mongolian long vowels, although he does not offer any other explanation for such correspondences as *ā* = *ā* and *a* = *a* in various Mongolian languages. Thus Dagur *tāun* 'five' corresponds to Monguor *tāwen* and Moghol *tābun*, Dagur (from Ivanovskii's work) *gāγ* 'hog' corresponds to Mogh. (from Ramstedt) *γōq ei*, and Dagur (Ivanovskii) *gāli* 'fire' corresponds to Moghol *γāl*. On the other hand, the following correspondences should be noted: Dag. *am* 'mouth' = Monguor *ama*, Mog. *aman*; Dag. *bari*, 'to take' = Monguor *bari*-, Mogh. *bari*- and Dag. *xari*- 'to return' = Monguor *xari*- and Mogh. *qari*-. It is quite obvious that we have here two different vowels, namely, a long *ā* and a short *a*. One must be blind not to see the pattern in these correspondences.

The Mongolian language group is, in its turn, related to the Turkic and Manchu-Tungus language groups, and to Korean. This larger group is called the Altaic family of languages. The history of Altaic comparative studies is old and begins with Mathias Alexander Castrén's scholarly activities which impressed me when I was a teenager, but it was the other Finnish scholar, Gustav John Ramstedt, who applied the methods of modern comparative linguistics introduced by the neogrammarians, to Altaic comparative studies. Ramstedt made comparative studies of Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, Turkic, and Korean, and he was among the first to believe that Japanese was also related to the Altaic family of languages.

I shall mention here only a few of my works in Altaic comparative linguistics. Like Ramstedt and his Finnish students Pentti Aalto, Aulis Joki, and Martti Räsänen, like Vladimirtsov and contemporary Soviet scholars such as Baskakov, Tsintsius, Novikova, Kolesnikova, like Karl H. Menges, and Omeljan Pritsak, I strongly believe in the genetic affinity of Altaic languages, and I am glad to have strong supporters in my work. The argument that the Altaic

languages do not have numerals in common is not serious. Negative evidence is not proof. If we used lack of something as a criterion, English should be excluded from the Indo-European family of languages, because it lacks the category of gender (*magnus, magna, magnum*) and has no personal conjugation (*amabam, amabas, amabat*) except for third person singular. Yet English is a Germanic language and rightfully belongs to the Indo-European language family because it shares many phonological and morphological features with other languages belonging to this family. What matters is that there are numerous features common to most Altaic languages. There is the negative verb, as in Evenki *e-si-m dukura* 'I do not write' and Mongolian *e-se medemüi* 'I do not know.' There are possessive suffixes denoting the owner of an object, as in Ev. *amin-mi* 'my father,' Buryat *esege-mni* same, and Turkish *ata-m* same. There is the cumulation of suffixes, as in Ev. *ǰū-du* 'at home,' *ǰū-lā* 'to the house,' *oror-du-lā* 'to the reindeers'; Mongolian *ax-ǰn* 'of the elder brother' and *ax-ǰn-da* 'at the elder brother's' (i.e., at his home), Turkic Karakhanide (eleventh to thirteenth century) *biz-iṅ-dā* 'at our's' (i.e., at our home) where *-iṅ* is the genitive suffix and *-dā* is the locative suffix. In addition, the Altaic languages have numerous regular sound correspondences.

I agree, however, that these relationships among Altaic languages are not as close as those among most of the Indo-European languages. Mongolian and Turkic are not related in the same manner as Latin to German but rather like Swedish to Modern Greek.

I presented my observations of the relationship of the Altaic languages in a book published in 1960,⁴¹ which received some good reviews, like Aalto's, but mostly negative ones. The detractors found fault with almost everything in the book. Thus, Doerfer regarded all words common to Altaic languages as borrowings, and Sinor criticized the book because I work with reconstructed forms. This latter criticism came as a great surprise to me because in comparative linguistics only reconstructed, older forms are compared. Thus, English *head* cannot be connected directly with Proto-Indo-European **kap-ut* 'head' but, together with correspondences in other Germanic languages, ancient and modern, it goes back

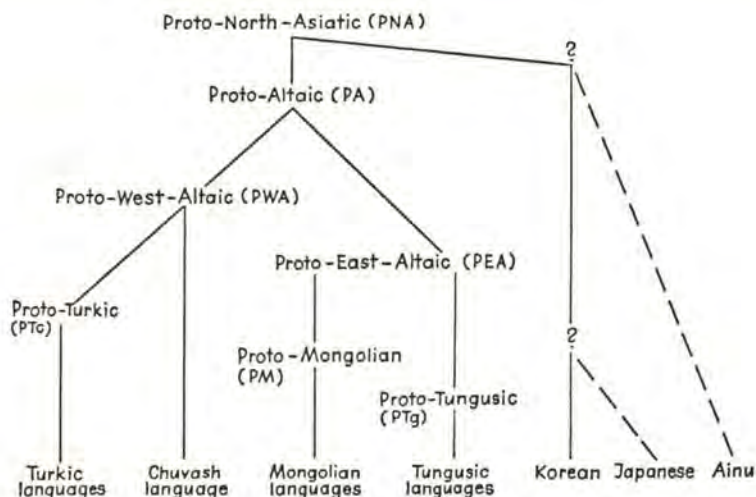
to the *reconstructed* common Germanic form **haub-uða*, the latter going back to Pre-Germanic **kaup-ut* and Proto-Indo-European **kap-ut*. Therefore Sinor's objections are absolutely unacceptable, and I must say that even Doerfer, the most outspoken objector, has never criticized my reconstructions. Instead he regards my reconstructed Proto-Altaic forms as Proto-Turkic loan words in Mongolian and Tungus.

Besides the comparative grammar mentioned above, I have published an *Introduction to Altaic Linguistics*⁴² which gives classifications of the languages, the history of their investigation, and biographies of the most important scholars in the field of Altaic Studies.

In the field of comparative linguistics, I studied the Chuvash language and its relation to Turkic and Mongolian. Chuvash is spoken by 1.5 million people in the Middle Volga region of the Soviet Union. Formerly it was regarded as a language of Finno-Ugric origin, but which had been Turkicized. It is close to the Turkic languages but not so close as to be grouped together with such languages as Tatar, Kazakh, and Uzbek. In an article written in 1924-1925 I stated that Chuvash was an language intermediate between Mongolian and Turkic,⁴³ but later I gave a better definition of both Chuvash and Turkic by going back to two dialects of Pre-Turkic, Proto-Chuvash and Proto-Turkic, and arguing that the Turkic languages are descendants of the second of these.⁴⁴

Ramstedt has been mentioned above as believing that Japanese is related to the Altaic languages. It cannot be denied that it is structurally almost identical with Altaic and there are also some words which might be of common origin with Altaic correspondences. However, Japanese is by no means as close to, say, Mongolian as Tungus is. If Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, Turkic, and Korean are descended from one common language, Japanese may go back to a proto-language which has an ancestor common with Proto-Altaic. I am inclined to accept, as far as Japanese is concerned, Street's scheme reproduced on p. 147 of my *Introduction to Altaic Linguistics*:

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Consequently, I accept the respective works of Roy Andrew Miller and Karl Menges on Japanese and Dravidian, only with the same reservation, namely, that these languages are not Altaic but, together with Common Altaic, may go back to a still older proto-language. In other words, the relation of Japanese or Dravidian to the Altaic languages is possibly the same as the relation of the Uralic to Altaic languages. To this I might add that there is still so much work to be done to solve all problems revolving around the Altaic languages that I, for my part, cannot go into still wider fields such as Japanese-Dravidian-Altaic Studies.

The second group of my publications are philological works, i.e., text editions, translations, grammatical and other commentaries. Of the numerous old Mongolian literary sources only a few have been investigated. This is a serious gap. Most of them had not even been published until recently. During the past twenty years or so, the Hungarian scholar Louis Ligeti has published a number of them in the series *Monumenta Linguae Mongolicae Collecta*, but philological investigation of older texts has so far made little

progress. The texts in question are of great importance to language study. They contain words and expressions no longer found in newer literary works, and they are also grammatically different from texts of subsequent periods. In order to establish the history of the Written Mongolian language, the investigator must follow all changes in the language which occur from time to time. Mongolian Studies must include philology which has played a significant role in the investigation of the older stages of European languages.

Speaking of my works belonging to this category, I should point out that the earliest of these works, which is also one of my very first works published, deals with the linguistic features of the epic *Geser Khan* as published in I. J. Schmidt's edition of 1836.⁴⁵ This article was published in *Asia Major* in 1926.⁴⁶ The most interesting feature of this text is that the direct speech of the *dramatis personae* appears in a dialect, in other words, it does not follow the rules of the written language.

While I was still a student under Vladimirtsov I read the manuscript *Arban qoyar jokiyangyui* (The Twelve Deeds of Buddha), a biography of the Buddha. This manuscript was Shesrab Senge's fourteenth-century translation of an abbreviated Tibetan version of the famous Sanskrit work *Lalitavistara* (The Great Game). I prepared a text edition, but it remained unpublished and was lost in Leningrad during World War II. Later I obtained a microfilm of the manuscript, prepared a text edition in transcription, made a translation, and added linguistic commentaries. This work appeared as a book in 1967.⁴⁷ I also published one of the *jātakas*, i.e., rebirth stories, namely the Mongolian and Oirat versions of *Vessantara-jātaka*.⁴⁸

Another important Buddhist work is the *Vajracchedikāpraññāpāramitā* (The Diamond Sutra), which was translated into Mongolian several times. There is an anonymous version believed to go back to an original of the fourteenth century. Another version is a translation made by the famous Shiregetü Güshi Chorji in 1612, and the third translation was done by the no less famous Zaya Pandita between 1650 and 1662. The main idea going through the whole work is that each one of the Buddhist concepts is equivalent to its

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contradictory concept. Besides texts, translations, and commentaries, my book also contains two glossaries which give the Sanskrit and Tibetan equivalents of the Mongolian terms.⁴⁹

Among the numerous manuscripts in the archives of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Leningrad there are several Buryat historical works. They were practically unknown to Mongolists during my student years. I published two texts of the chronicles of the Khorī Buryat, one by Tuguldur Toboev (1863) and the other by Vandan Yumsunov (1875) in 1935.⁵⁰ The text of the chronicle of the Selenga Buryats by Lombo Tserenov (1868) followed in 1936.⁵¹ A translation of the chronicles of Toboev and Yumsunov was prepared by me and published in 1940.⁵² I also translated and published, together with my colleague A. I. Vostrikov, the chronicles of the Barguzin Buryats by Sakharov (1869-1887).⁵³

Work on some of my philological writings amounts to detective work, for I had to identify to what literary work certain manuscript fragments belonged. For example, when deciphering some fragments published by Shirō Hattori, I noticed that the text, as far as it could be read, resembled that of the Buddhist work known under the Sanskrit title *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (Entrance into the Practice of Bodhisattvas). When I compared the fragment with the passage in question, the two were almost identical.⁵⁴ I have also identified several badly damaged pages of a manuscript as fragments of a Mongolian version of the Alexander Romance. The manuscript is part of the Turfan collection preserved in the Völkermuseum in Berlin. Professor F. W. Cleaves of Harvard University had photostats of several manuscripts of that collection and kindly gave me copies. When reading those fragments, I noticed that in one of them the name *Sulqarnai* occurred many times. It resembled very much the Arabic name of Alexander the Great, *Zū'l-qarnain* which is literally "The Two-Horned." Comparison of the Völkermuseum text with the original text of the Alexander Romance produced the evidence that the various sections were indeed pieces of the Mongolian text of that name.⁵⁵ Later Cleaves published a long article on the subject.⁵⁶ The text is, however, so fragmentary that

reconstruction of it is impossible. The important point is that the fragments are valuable because they prove that the Mongols, like many other peoples, had known of the Alexander Romance.

In 1930 a team of collective farm workers was digging a hole for a silo in the former Volga German Autonomous Republic, when they found pieces of birch bark with characters on them. They were so thrilled that they took their findings to the party secretary to obtain an explanation. Of course, he could not explain the writing, so he sent it to a local museum. There was no one there who could do anything with the birch bark manuscript either, so they sent it to the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad. There the manuscript was given to Zhamtsarano for decipherment. He had succeeded in deciphering a few pages when he was arrested and murdered, and the photographs of the manuscript were given to me. The badly damaged text proved to be a song, a dialogue of a mother with her son. I succeeded in deciphering most of it and reconstructed a large portion of the poem. This was not so difficult because the Mongolian verse is characterized by two main features. One is parallelism, i.e., repetition of what is said in the first stanza in a modified way in the following stanza. The second is the alliteration of the initial syllables of a quatrain. My article on this manuscript appeared in 1941⁵⁷ shortly before the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, although still in time for it to become known in the West. I was told that the American press mentioned that finding and my work. As a matter of fact, my work evoked great interest because in the preface I pointed out that subsequent archeological excavations had shown that the place where the birch bark fragments were found had been a cemetery at the time of the Golden Horde, and the grave in question had been that of a Mongolian warrior or scribe. A brass inkpot had also been found with the birch bark fragments.

To conclude this section on my philological works, let me mention that besides old Mongolian texts I also edited and investigated an old Turkic text of the fifteenth century. This is a Middle Turkic text of the Christian Confession of the Faith with parallel Armenian, Arabic, and Latin translations. The original document belongs to the Medici Library in Florence and is part of the

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collection of materials related to the seventeenth Ecumenical Council which took place from 1438 to 1445 under Pope Eugene IV. Also known as the Florentine Council, it was originally convened to discuss the spread of the Catholic faith in the Orient, but instead spent most of its time on debates about whether the pope's power was superior to that of the council or vice versa. It is interesting to note here that the text of the Confession of the Faith in question consists of only two articles, although its text refers to things mentioned in all three articles. It also contains details which are missing from the Apostles' Creed, such as Christ's ascension to Heaven as witnessed by the Apostles.⁵⁸

As I mentioned in Chapter I, I have always been interested in folk poetry. The fascination caused by Karelian folk singers when I was still a schoolboy is possibly responsible for my determination to study little-known languages and oral literature. When later I chose Mongolian as one of my main subjects, this choice happened to be very fortunate because the Mongols have a rich oral literature, including tales, riddles, proverbs, songs, and even epics. In Mongolia (both the People's Republic and Chinese Mongolia) and Buryatia, oral epic literature is still alive. Work on collecting folk poetry was started at the end of the nineteenth century. The first collectors were M. N. Khangalov, a Buryat teacher, G. N. Potanin, the well-known traveler and explorer of Mongolia and Eastern Siberia, and Ts. Zhamtsarano, already mentioned in this book. They had collected much, but still more remained to be recorded, translated and investigated.

In the summer of 1931 I collected folklore material among the Tsongol Buryats in the Selenga region of Buryatia.⁵⁹ The texts were translated by me and long after published in English.⁶⁰ I had earlier published another collection of the folklore of various Buryat areas in 1936.⁶¹ These texts are quite interesting because some of them represent shamanistic incantations, ancient songs, and tales.

In more recent years I made German translations of a number of Mongolian and Buryat epics. This work has been organized by Walther Heissig's Central Asian Institute of Bonn University with financial help from the German foundation Forschungsgemeinschaft.

I have published seven volumes to date.⁶² The total number of epics contained in them is forty-four. Some of the epics are rather long and occupy up to 250 pages of printed text.

These epics have as their central theme the hero's struggle with his enemies and his ultimate wedding. It is interesting to note that the hero usually appears at the home of his future father-in-law in the shape of a ugly runny-nosed boy. Some Buryat epics sometimes contain episodes found in European epic literature. For example, the epic *Bükhe Khara Khübüün* contains an episode identical to the one about the Cyclops in the *Odyssey*. The main hero of the epic *Yerensei*, resembles very much the ancient Greek Orestes who kills his mother and her lover as revenge for their murdering his father.

I have also written in Russian a book on the Mongolian heroic epics⁶³ which was later translated by Krueger into English.⁶⁴ Although written long ago, it is still useful, though nowadays much more material is available to the investigator. This book discusses the contents of epics, the *dramatis personae*, the structure of the epics, and the figures of speech they employ. The general conclusion is that the Khalkha Mongolian epics took their present shape during the period of feudal wars, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

By way of conclusion, I would say that the works I have discussed in this chapter have closed some gaps in Altaic Studies. New materials have been investigated, older stages of the history of the Mongolian language have been worked on, and the relationships among Altaic languages have become better understood. As a result, we can now see more clearly what has been known until now and discover new aspects of and establish new relationships between objects and phenomenons. At the same time, we have also become aware of new gaps in our knowledge. The process of learning goes on forever. It is wrong to think that any work can ever give us ultimate knowledge. However, among the works a scholar produces there are always some which he likes more than others, which satisfy him more and which he believes will preserve their validity longer than others. My translations of Mongolian epics and

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collections of Khalkha, Buryat, Dagur, Solon, and Barguzin-Tungus texts will probably be used by scholars for a long time. Likewise, my grammar of Written Mongolian will be used until a better and more complete one appears.

As to works which I regard as more important than some other writings of mine, I would choose my books on Mongolian monuments in ᠬᠦᠫᠬᠠ script and on the Mongolian dictionary *Muqaddimat al-Adab* and the article on the Mongolian material in a Leiden manuscript. These three works contain materials which will always be needed and used. Together with the Buryat chronicles and their Russian translations, they are to me the most interesting books I have written because they contain important material such as linguistic samples not previously studied and aspects of Buryat history that had been previously unknown.

As for my interpretations of facts, my works in comparative Altaic linguistics will be superceded by works of other scholars. I have been one of the pioneers in this field, and what I have done is merely lay the cornerstone of an edifice that is still abuilding. Pioneering works always suffer the fate of quickly becoming obsolete, but I have no regrets. What I have achieved has to a large extent been made possible by my predecessors. This does not mean that they were, as scholars, inferior to me. On the contrary, it only means that by their achievements they paved the way for me. Without their life works, I would have achieved nothing.