

The many editorial shortcomings notwithstanding, the new handbook will certainly remain as a bold and significant achievement in the history of Uralic studies. Being the most up-to-date presentation of the entire field, it can be favourably compared with the earlier one-man handbooks by BJÖRN COLLINDER and PÉTER HAJDÚ. Its only predecessor as a collective work was the Russian *Osnovy finno-ugorskogo yazykoznanija*, which, however, had the serious drawback of lacking Samoyedic competence altogether. There is no doubt that a considerable period of time will elapse before Sinor's handbook gets a successor. Until then, a generation of Uralists and non-Uralists will rely on this volume for information on a variety of material and interpretational questions. In some cases they will

find the work useful and get the information they are looking for, while in many other cases they will have to find more modern sources. This is really the most acute problem of all handbooks in our time: new ideas and solutions are being presented at such a speed that no editor can catch up with the development.

In one sense, then, Sinor may have produced the ultimate handbook of Uralic studies. With recent progress in data technology in mind, it is quite possible that nobody will ever undertake the editing of another similar work in book form. Instead, the next stage may well be an electronic data network, with constant input by those who are doing the active research.

JUHA JANHUNEN

Current issues in Jurchen studies

Jurchen studies has long been the most neglected field of Tungusology. This situation is currently changing for three reasons. Firstly, after the lengthy stagnation caused by the Cultural Revolution there is a growing interest in China in any non-Han contributions to the Chinese cultural heritage. This interest is particularly

intensively directed towards the history of the three mediaeval states of Liao, Jin and Xixia, formed around the ethnic cores of the Khitan (*Qidan*), Jurchen (*Nüzhen*) and Tangut (*Dangxiang*), respectively. Secondly, the archaeological discoveries made in the Russian Far East, are continuously increasing our

knowledge of the northern limits of the Jin state, and of the culture of the Jurchen, in general. The importance of the work of the Far Eastern Russian archaeologists is enhanced by their use of exact laboratory methods of analysis and dating. Thirdly, in Western and Japanese scholarship also, more and more efforts are being devoted to the problems concerning the ethnic and linguistic identity of the Jurchen. In this context, a central task is that of the analysis and interpretation of all the surviving documents written in Jurchen script.

For long, the single standard source on the Jurchen language and script was the publication by WILHELM GRUBE (1896) of the Ming dynasty Jurchen vocabulary prepared by the so-called "Bureau of Translators". Although significant progress in the study of this material has later been made by, in particular, KIYOSE GISABURO (1977) and JIN QICONG (1984), it is still common even in a Tungusological context to quote Jurchen lexical material in the awkward transcription used by Grube. It seems, however, that the publication of another Ming dynasty vocabulary has finally brought the Jurchen language within reach of the general Tungusologist, allowing lexical material from Jurchen to be quoted in a simple and phonologically adequate transcription. The vocabulary in question was originally prepared by the so-called "Bureau of Interpreters", and it has now been published by DANIEL KANE:

DANIEL KANE, *The Sino-Jurchen vocabulary of the Bureau of Interpreters*. (Uralic and Altaic Series, vol. 153.) Bloomington: Indiana University, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1989. xi+461 pp.

This publication is based on what is known as the "Awanokuni manuscript", itself destroyed by fire but fortunately preserved in a photographic copy, as reproduced in the appendix to the volume. With 1154 entries it is the largest corpus of Jurchen lexical material easily accessible to date. Each entry in the publication contains the original Chinese and Jurchen glosses in Chinese characters as well as in romanization, references to the publications of Grube and Kiyose, cognates in Written and Spoken Manchu, and a phonological reconstruction of the Jurchen item. The reconstructions are based on a consideration of all the relevant linguistic and philological facts, and they may be regarded as a good approximation of what the structure of the Jurchen words must once have been like. Some additional explanations and motivations are presented by Kane in an introductory chapter on Jurchen phonology and grammar. Of course, there are one or two points that might require a more detailed discussion and, possibly, modifications in the future, but generally Kane has succeeded in rendering the Jurchen lexical items in a shape which allows them to be con-

veniently handled within the general context of comparative Tungusology. The use of the vocabulary is further facilitated by the presence of an English index.

Kane's work is, however, much more than a mere philological treatment of the specific corpus in question. As a matter of fact, only the last two chapters in the volume are directly concerned with the vocabulary of the „Bureau of Interpreters”, while the first seven chapters contain a most interesting general survey of the historical setting of the Jurchen language. Here Kane reviews the question concerning the origin of the Jurchen script, lists the known inscriptions and other sources of Jurchen language material, and gives a brief history of Jurchen studies up to the present day. The volume also contains a fairly complete bibliography of Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and Western works pertaining to Jurchen studies, with an emphasis on the philological aspect.

The excellent survey provided by Kane illustrates particularly well those spheres of problems which still remain to be dealt with by future research. Without going into detail, we may just briefly mention a few relevant issues. A major problem concerns the relationship between Jurchen and Manchu. As more and more material is becoming available on Jurchen, it seems increasingly clear that Jurchen and Manchu should not be regarded simply as two chronologically successive stages of one and the same language. In fact,

both do show a number of independent innovations, which means that, for some time at least, they must have coexisted as two parallel idioms, with speakers representing two different parts of Manchuria. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the differences between Jurchen and Manchu never seriously affected mutual intelligibility, so that it was always a question of two closely-related dialects of a single language. From this point of view, it is actually incorrect to speak of any Jurchen *language*, as distinct from the Manchu *language*. Linguistically speaking, we only know one language of the Jurchen-Manchu branch of Tungusic. Jurchen would obviously best be characterized as an extinct dialectal form of this language, whose later and better-known manifestation was, and is, Manchu.

Another problem concerns the periodization of the available Jurchen language material. The situation referred to above, involving Jurchen and Manchu as two contemporaneous dialects of a single language, was apparently valid for the last stage in the history of Jurchen, a stage that may be chronologically placed in the 15th to 16th centuries. As far as the earlier stages of Jurchen are concerned, however, they may actually have represented an idiom which was still essentially identical with the undifferentiated ancestor dialect of both Jurchen and Manchu. Unfortunately, it is still far from clear to what extent exactly the language recorded in the Jin dynasty

Jurchen inscriptions and manuscripts of the 12th to 13th centuries differs from that of the Ming dynasty sources, as exemplified by the vocabularies of the two "Bureaux". Kane correctly implies that any future progress in Jurchen studies will very much depend on what results can be achieved in the analysis of the earliest sources of Jurchen language material. This, in turn, is a task which presupposes an understanding of the Jurchen system of writing.

From Kane's presentation it becomes clear that we are still very far from being able to read documents written in Jurchen script with any reliability. The vocabulary of the "Bureau of Interpreters" actually provides no direct help at all, for it only uses Chinese characters to transcribe Jurchen. However, even the vocabulary of the "Bureau of Translators", with its relatively abundant corpus of items written in Jurchen script, does not explain the many obscure archaic or variant characters and readings as well as cursive forms occurring in earlier texts. There are several other practical problems, reminiscent of those met in the deciphering of other unknown scripts: the small size of the overall corpus, the scarcity of bilinguals, and the poor physical state of preservation of many documents.

Kane also considers the problem of the possibility of a material connection between the Khitan and Jurchen systems of writing. While this is an important line of study, especially in view of the differen-

tiation between the so-called large and small varieties of script, it seems that in future even more attention should be paid to the functioning of the Khitan and Jurchen graphemic systems as a whole. What was the basic logic of these scripts? What was their degree of complexity from the point of view of the actual user? It is curious that we "know" so many Jurchen characters in their various ideogrammatic and syllabic functions, although we have almost no idea of the underlying graphemic principles, which must have been of central importance in the practical learning of the script. Future students of the problem would perhaps do wisely, if they practised some common-sense critique of the type as has been suggested for Tangut by LUC KWANTEN (1988).¹ The latter argues that the generally accepted "readings" of the Tangut characters would imply a system of writing of such complexity that it could never have existed in actual use: therefore, simpler solutions should be sought in the future analysis of the Tangut script.

Our Far Eastern Russian colleagues have also occasionally contributed to the study of the Jurchen characters and their use in everyday life during the Jin dynasty. Of particular interest in this respect is a work by A. L. IVLIYEV (1978) about the inscriptions found on Jin dynasty bronze mirrors. Bronze mirrors are, incidentally, an important category among the material relics left by the Jurchen in the territory of the

Russian Far East. In fact, it is mainly to Russian specialists that we owe our knowledge concerning the dating and general typology of Jin dynasty mirrors. A pioneer in this field is E. V. SHAVKUNOV, the author of several descriptive and analytic publications concerning mirrors dating archaeologically to the Jurchen period. One of his more recent papers, coauthored by L. V. KON'KOVA and V. A. XOREV (1987), deals with the archaeological, stylistic and metallographic description of the corpus of bronze mirrors deriving from the important Jurchen site at Anan'yevo (*Anan'yevskoye gorodishche*).

Also known for his monograph (1968) on the culture of the pre-Jurchen Bohai state in Manchuria, Shavkunov has now published another general work, devoted to the culture of the Jurchen:

E. V. SHAVKUNOV, *Kul'tura chzhurchzhènei-udigè XII-XIII vv. i problema proisxozhdeniya tungusskix narodov Dal'nego Vostoka*. Moskva: Nauka, Glavnaya redakciya vostochnoi literatury, 1990. 283 pp.

The new monograph is the second recent work on the theme, for just a few years ago V. YE. MEDVEDEV (1986) also published a general survey of Jurchen culture in the Russian Far East. The difference between the two authors, who seem to have a rather polemic relationship with each other, is that Shavkunov considers the northern sphere of Jin dynasty Jurchen culture to have been

limited to the Maritime Province (*Primor'ye*) in the eastern part of the Russian Far East, while Medvedev identifies the contemporary population of the Middle Amur basin also as ethnic Jurchen. Shavkunov may be right in his argumentation according to which the so-called "Amur Jurchen" actually belonged to the context of Khitan culture and were perhaps speakers of an early Mongolic language. It would be tempting to see here the ancestors of the modern Dagur.

Generally, Shavkunov is a versatile scholar, who wishes to place the archaeological corpus in a large-scale ethnohistorical framework. Focusing on the northern and eastern Jurchen, whom he calls the "Jurchen-Udige", he follows the formation and development of ancient cultures and political states in Manchuria, making interesting suggestions about the early relationships of the later Tungusic, Mongolic, Korean, and Nivkh populations in the region. Although, as far as his linguistic operations are concerned, he often shows excessive boldness and presents assertions which could never stand up to serious critique. For instance, he considers the modern Amur Tungusic peoples to be ethnolinguistically more or less identical with the remnants of the mediaeval local Jurchen. From the linguistic point of view this is hardly possible, for the genetic differentiation between Jurchen-Manchu and Amur Tungusic seems so fundamental that it must be of an older date.

Shavkunov is, however, right in paying attention to the question concerning the relationships of the Amur Tungusic peoples with the Jurchen. This is a topic which should be analyzed in more detail from the points of view of both culture and language. Although the linguistic relationships are more complicated than implied by Shavkunov, there must be some cultural continuity from the local Jurchen to the modern Amur Tungus in fields such as society and material culture. Neither should it be forgotten that the ancestors of the Amur Tungus themselves must have made concrete contributions to the mediaeval culture of the local Jurchen. After all, archaeological material alone can never exactly reveal, to what extent the "Jurchen-Udige" were actually Jurchen-speaking. Most probably, there were both Amur Tungusic and other local elements among them.

Discussing the problem of the Tungusic Urheimat, Shavkunov defends the view that the Proto-Tungusic population was originally centred in the region between Lake Baikal and the Upper Amur. From here the ethnolinguistic ancestors of the Jurchen-Manchu would have spread, in the first place, to the east and south, where they met various other aboriginal groups of Manchuria. Simple though such a scheme may be, it seems that Shavkunov to some extent ignores the fact that the largest ever Tungusic population was historically formed by the Jurchen-Manchu of central and southern

Manchuria. For many reasons, it would be natural to assume that the Urheimat was located in this very region, which was so favourable for demographic expansion. The modern distribution of the Amur Tungusic and Northern Tungusic branches could be easily explained starting from a Manchurian centre of expansion. Whatever the case, the problem of the Tungusic Urheimat is by no means settled yet.

It also has to be said that Shavkunov rather stereotypically ignores almost any Chinese influence on the culture of the Jurchen. This line of argumentation, shared by surprisingly many Russian colleagues, seems to derive from the teachings of the late A. P. OKLADNIKOV, and is connected with the nationalist wish of the Russians to deny any political claims by China to the modern territory of the Russian Far East. Absurd though such a motivation may seem in a learned archaeological context, the Russian point of view can also be seen as a reaction against the Chinese tradition of interpretation according to which all of the historical "Northern Barbarians" were mere satellites to the Han Chinese culture. Apparently, the impartial truth lies somewhere between the Russian and Chinese points of view. However, even Shavkunov's own material demonstrates the fact that the Jurchen did borrow freely and extensively from the Chinese whenever they felt it was necessary for their cultural and political progress.

The Russian overemphasis on the indigenous component in the culture of the Jurchen is also, of course, connected with the practical fact that the Russians mainly work with materials deriving from the extreme north of the Jurchen territory. If cultural relics from the other parts of the Jin state are considered, it is quite impossible to deny their intimate connection with the contemporary trends of Song dynasty China. This situation is, incidentally, well illustrated by the recent overall treatment of Jin dynasty material culture by ELLEN JOHNSTON LAING (1988–89). With the appearance of her work, we now have a good point of comparison, against which the results of

Shavkunov and his Russian colleagues may be placed. Obviously, a lot of more work still has to be done, before we can hope to reach a comprehensive understanding of the whole range of Jurchen cultural affiliations, but a discussion is already possible and necessary now. We only hope that the sides involved in this discussion will find each other in a spirit of fruitful cooperation, free of preconceived ideas and political reservations.

JUHA JANHUNEN

- 1 Thanks are due to Mr. Volker Rybatzki, who first drew the author's attention to the Tangut studies of Luc Kwanten.

References

- GRUBE, WILHELM (1896). *Die Sprache und Schrift der Jučen*. Leipzig.
- IVLIYEV, A. L. (1978). O nadpisyax na bortikax srednevekovyx bronzovyx zerkal. – *Arxeologicheskiye materialy po drevnei istoriyi Dal'nego Vostoka SSSR*, 104–117. Vladivostok.
- JIN QICONG (1984). *Nüzhen wen cidian*. Beijing.
- JOHNSTON LAING, ELLEN (1988–89). Chin "Tartar" dynasty (1115–1234) material culture. – *Artibus Asiae* 49.73–126. Ascona.
- KIYOSE GISABURO (1977). *A study of the Jurchen language and script – reconstruction and decipherment*. Kyoto.
- KWANTEN, LUC (1988). The structure of the Tangut [Hsi Hsia] characters. – *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 36.69–105. Tokyo.
- MEDVEDEV, V. YE. (1986). Priamur'ye v konce I – nachale II tysyacheletiya (chzhurchzhèn'skaya epoxa). Novosibirsk.
- SHAVKUNOV, E. V. (1968). *Gosudarstvo Boxai i pamyatniki ego kul'tury v Primor'ye*. Leningrad.
- SHAVKUNOV, E. V. & L. V. KON'KOVA & V. A. XOREV (1987). *Bronzovyye zerkala Anan'yevskogo gorodishcha*. – *Voprosy arxeologii Dal'nego Vostoka SSSR*, 80–95. Vladivostok.