Morphological aspects of the language of the Jurchen script

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The present paper deals with the morphological (both derivational and grammatical) elements conserved in the language remains written in the so-called Smaller Jurchen script (SJS) as compared with the morphology of Classical Manchu. The discussion has two principal objectives. On the one hand, we shall examine the morphological similarities and possible dissimilarities as well as the phonological correspondences between the two idioms, which are conventionally regarded as separate languages, though close to each other. On the other hand, we shall try to use the data provided by the morphological and phonological analysis in order to appreciate the results of the work done so far in the decipherment and reconstruction of the «Jurchen language», as preserved in the written sources. On this occasion we shall also review critically some recent work, which, to our understanding, has tended to mystify the language of the Jurchen script and present it as a solution to major problems at the level of general Altaic comparisons.

On the orthography of the Jurchen script

As far as we know from the Chinese «History of the Golden Empire» (*Jin Shi*), the Smaller Jurchen script was invented at the time of the Emperor Jin Shizong (reigned 1160 to 1189 AD). The chronicles have even preserved the name of the creator of the script, Wanyan Xiyin (Larichev 1966.237, 239–240). Later, after a very short time, it went out from usage and, as is supposed, was forgotten for some centuries. In the XV to XVI centuries there was an attempt to revitalise the script. The most important achievement of this activity was the vocabulary *Hua-Yi yiyu*, which was identified and examined by Wilhelm Grube (1896). The Chinese glosses explaining Jurchen words, and the Chinese transcriptions of these words, give scholars the only opportunity to understand the correspondences between the signs of the script and the units of the language—words, morphemes and syllables. Today we are able to read and understand bilingual or trilingual texts and inscriptions, but the texts having no Chinese translation remain silent.

In the various classifications of the Tungusic languages (such as those by G. M. Vasilevich, V. I. Cincius, O. P. Sunik, V. A. Avrorin, and Western linguists), the Manchu language and the language of the SJS texts occupy a special position, but nobody has ever doubted that these two idioms are closely related to each other, as opposed to the other Tungusic languages. The language of the SJS texts has often been called the «Jurchen language». However, it is not clear what, exactly, is meant by this, for the term «Jurchen» is variously applied to the ethnic group which once spoke the language, to the political state they controlled, and to the script system they used. In the Russian volume «The Languages of the World» (*Yazyki Mira*), for instance, the language of the SJS texts is mentioned on several occasions from different points of view. O. P. Sunik and I. V. Kormushin call this language a dialect of Manchu, or an archaic form of Manchu which preceded Classical Manchu (Sunik 1997.162, Kormushin & Pyurbeev 1997.7). A. M. Pevnov, on the other hand, regards Jurchen as a separate language (Pevnov 1997.260), and, indeed, his description of Jurchen suggests a language which, at least morphologically, has little in common with Manchu or the other Tungusic languages.

Pevnov (op. cit.) also presents phonological correspondences between Jurchen and Manchu. Concerning these «correspondences» it may, however, be noted that:

• the majority of them are illustrated by a very small number (one or two) examples, which, of course, is insufficient for the purposes of serious comparative research;

• there are also numerous irregular correspondences (such as those connected with the representation of Proto-Tungusic *x), which can only be explained by assuming that there were no strict orthographical rules in the language of the SJS texts;

• some apparent peculiarities of Jurchen are nothing but misinter-pretations of the data—this is the case in, for instance, the word for 'man', read as *ñarma** by Pevnov (1997.262) instead of what should actually be *ñalma* (cf. Manchu *niyalma*).

Generally, it may be concluded that the Jurchen writing system was extremely inaccurate in its rendering of the sounds of the underlying language. This inaccurateness is particularly obvious when we consider the writing of morphological elements. Quite often, a single morpho-logical element is written by a variety of different signs. Under such circumstances, the phonological reconstruction of the language on the basis of the script is more or less impossible. The rules governing the use of the variant signs remain obscure, and there is no way of telling which variant in each given case should be considered as normative from the

point of view of the phonological reconstruction. The situation is much more confused than, for instance, in the case of the likewise vacillant orthographical traditions of Mediaeval Europe.

There is at least one obvious reason to such orthographical variation: the influence of the Chinese hieroglyphic system of writing. The Jurchen script is basically logographic, but the logographic signs are often used phonographically to transcribe alien words, or even any words or elements for which no logographic sign was available—very much as is the case in Chinese. Reconstructing the «Jurchen language» from the Jurchen script is as difficult as it would be to trace the phonology of Chinese from the Chinese script. When we compare the language of the SJS texts with Manchu we can easily see that the only level that is more or less correctly reflected in the Jurchen script is the syllabic level. By contrast, neither the phonological nor the morphological structure of the underlying language can be reconstructed with any reliability from the Jurchen script.

On the morphological structure of Jurchen

We now come to the actual object of our study. All the examples of SJS words below are taken from the «Comparative Dictionary of the Tungusic Languages» (Cincius & al. 1975–1977), which is also the main source of the Manchu cognates. The reconstructions of the Jurchen words in this dictionary are based on their Chinese transcriptions, as published by Grube (1896). For reasons of convention, the Romanization used by Grube is also followed in the present study (in boldface). The actual phonemic readings of the Jurchen data (in italics), on the other hand, are based on a linguistic comparison of the Jurchen data with both Manchu and the other Tungusic languages.

A. Nominal derivational suffixes. The material contains a considerable number of words with several nominal derivative suffixes which have direct equivalents in Manchu and/or the other Tungusic languages. The relevant data is reviewed below:

(1) **-hah/-hei/-huo/-k'o** *-ha/-he*, expressing plurality or collectivity, attested in: **a-puh-hah** *abaha* 'leaf' = Manchu *afaha*, Nanai *abaha* id.; **ku-lah-hah** *gul(a)ha* 'shoes, boots' = Manchu *gûlha*, *gûlga* id.; **li-wah-hah** *liwaha* (?) 'fish' = Manchu *nimaha*, Nanai *imaha* id.; **woh-shih-hah** *usiha* 'star' = Manchu *usiha* id.; **wuh-mieh-hah** *umiaha* 'worm' = Manchu *umiyaha*, *imiyaha* id.; **ya-hah** *yaha* 'charcoal' = Manchu *yaha* id.; **yih-leh-hah** *il(a)ha* 'flower' = Manchu *ilha* id.;

fen-yih-li-hei *funie(l/r)he* 'hair' = Manchu *funiyehe* id.; **shih-leh-hoh[hah]** *silehe* 'dew' = Manchu *silenggi*, Udeghe *siliehe* id.; **su-hei** *suhe* 'willow', cf. Nanai dial. *sirikte*, Udeghe *siikte*, Ewenki *sirikta* id. (although it seems that the word is not attested in Manchu proper, its Manchu shape can be reconstructed as *suhe**); **yin-shuh-k'o** *(n)icuhe* 'pearl/s' = Manchu *nicuhe* id.; **woh-hei** *wehe* 'stone' = Manchu *wehe* id.; **wei-hei** *weihe* 'tooth' = Manchu *weihe* id., 'horn'; **woh-rh-huo** *orho* 'grass' = Manchu *orho* id. The suffix *-ha/-he* corresponds to (*)-*kta/-kte* in most other Tungusic languages.

(2) **-kih** *-nggi*, expressing collectivity, attested in: **fuh-leh-kih** *fulenggi* 'ashes' = Manchu *fulenggi* id.; **kih-po-kih** [sic] *giranggi* 'bones' = Manchu *giranggi* id.; **seh-kih** *senggi* 'blood' = Manchu *senggi* id.; **yih-ma-kih** *(n)imanggi* 'snow' = Manchu *nimanggi* id.; **yih-men-kih** *imengi* 'oil, butter' = Manchu *imenggi* id.; cf. also **t'uh-kih** *tugi* 'cloud' = Manchu *tugi* id., and **shih-li-hi** *silhi* 'bile' = Manchu *silhi* id. The suffix *-nggi* corresponds mainly to (*)-*ksa/-kse* in the other Tungusic languages , but we do not know whether this is a phonetic correspondence or a primary morphological difference. Interestingly, there are two cases in which the SJS data has *-nggi*, while Manchu does not: **t'ah-ma-kih** *ta(l)manggi* 'mist, fog', cf. Manchu *talman* 'mist, steam', Nanai *tamna*, *tamnaksa* id., and **seh-ma-kih** *sunggengi* (?) 'hoar-frost, rime', cf. Manchu *su-ngke-* 'to become hoary with frost', Nanai *sunggu* 'hoar-frost', Ewenki *singekse* 'hoar-frost'.

(3) **-ku/-k'u** *-ku*, expressing instrument(ality), attested in: **fuh-seh-ku** *fusheku* 'fan' = Manchu *fusheku* id., from *fushe-* 'to use fan'; **hah-lah-k'u** *haluku* 'pants, trousers' = Manchu *halukû* '[warm] trousers' [of cotton]; **t'i-leh-k'u** *tireku*, *tiruku* 'pillow' = Manchu *cirku*, *ciruku*, *cireku* id., cf. also Nanai *tirengku*, *cirengku*, Ulcha *tireptun* id.

(4) **-hung/-fu** *-fun*, another suffix of instrument(ality), attested in: **puh-tih-hung** *butihun* 'cover, blanket', cf. Manchu *buri-* 'to cover'; **yih-rh-tih-hung** *irdifun* 'comb' = Manchu *ijifun* 'comb', from *iji-* 'to comb hair', cf. also Ewenki *igdiwun* 'comb'; **t'uh-fu** *tufun* 'stirrup' = Manchu *tufun* id. In all of these cases, the writing of the suffix in the original data involves special conventions, which make phonemic identification difficult on the basis of graphic evidence alone.

(5) **-t'eh/-t'oh-/-muh-** (with no consistent representation in the Chinese transcription) *-(p)tun/-(p)tu-* (?), a suffix used in words denoting covers, cases, or attachments, attested in: **hei-puh-t'eh** *hefe(p)tun* (?) 'decoration on saddle', cf. Manchu *hefeli* 'stomach, belly'; **sya-muh-hah** *sya(p)tuha* (?) 'ear-flaps' = Manchu *syabtun* id., from *syan* 'ear'; **su-lu-t'oh-kuo** *soroptuku* (?) 'fur garment', cf. Ewenki *soroptun* 'breastplate (on dress)'. This suffix illustrates particularly

clearly the absence of any regularity in the orthographical representation of Jurchen suffixal morphemes.

(6) **-puh-lien** -*buri*(*n*), forming deverbal action nouns (nomen actionis) attested in: **wuh-suh-hah-puh-lien** *usuhaburin, ushaburin* 'hate', cf. Manchu *usha-* 'to be angry', *osha, oshon* 'evil, angry'; **wuh-huh-puh-lien** *ulhiburin* 'declaration', cf. Manchu *ulhi-* 'to understand, to explain, to declare', *ulhibun* 'explanation'.

B. Nominal declensional suffixes. Only three suffixally marked regular case forms are unambiguously attested in the SJS material: accusative, genitive, and dative. There are, however, possible traces of separate endings for the locative and ablative cases, though the evidence remains controversial. The case suffixes are as follows:

(1) Accusative **-woh/-poh/-'oh/-huo**, suggesting an invariant phonemic shape identical with Manchu *-be* (with no vowel harmony). Selected examples: **huo-tih-woh** *hodi-be* 'son-in law', cf. Manchu *hojigon, hojihon* 'son in law, husband of sister'; **to-lo-woh** *doro-be* 'seal' (?), cf. Manchu *doron* id.; **meh[mai]-zhih-lan-poh** *mujilen-be* 'heart', cf. Manchu *mujilen* id.; **'oh-hei-poh** *ehe-be* 'vicious, bad', cf. Manchu *ehe* id.; **wei-leh-poh** *weile-be* 'work, occupation', cf. Manchu *weile-* 'to work', *weilen* 'work, skill'; **yih-rh-'oh-poh** *irge-be* 'people', cf. Manchu *irgen* id.; **hei-hei-'oh** *hehe-be* 'woman', cf. Manchu *hehe* id.; **meh-tih-'oh** *mede-be* 'rumour, hearsay', cf. Manchu *mede, medehe* 'news'; **huo-t'oh-huo** *hoto-be* 'pumpkin', cf. Manchu *hoto* 'long pumpkin'. It may be noted that the shape **-'oh** seems to be restricted to words containing the vowel *e*.

(2) Genitive **-(n)i/-yin**, suggesting two major allomorphs which may phonemized as *-(n)i* and *-in*, respectively. Selected examples: **han-'an-ni** *ha(ga)n-ni* 'emperor', cf. Manchu *han* 'lord, ruler'; **hei-c'e-ni** *hecen-(n)i* 'town', cf. Manchu *hecen* 'town, wall'; **kuoh-lun-ni** *gurun-ni* 'state', Manchu *gurun* id.; **'o-zhan-ni** *ejen-ni* 'master', cf. Manchu *ejen* id.; **hah-li-yin-poh** *hala-in boo* 'palace' ('clan house'), cf. Manchu *hala* 'clan, family'.

(3) Dative **-tu-/-de**, suggesting a phonemic shape *-de* (again with no vowel harmony, as in Manchu), attested in: **fuh-wan-to** *fon-de* 'time', cf. Manchu *fon* id; **t'uh-lu-wen-tu-yen** *turgundun* or *turgun-de* 'reason', cf. Manchu *turgun* id.

(4) Locative. There is no locative case in Manchu, but the SJS materials show a suffix **-lah** *-la*, which may be compared with the locative element (*)*-la* of some other Tungusic languages. The SJS suffix *-la* is, however, only attested in the unique form **tu-li-lah** *dulila* '[in] the middle', cf.

Manchu *dulin* 'half, middle'. It remains unclear whether this example really contains an old locative marker, for the element *-la* could also be identical with the Manchu nominal suffix *-la*, as in *ingga-la* 'down, small feathers', *wa-la* 'bottom'.

(5) Ablative. Pevnov (op. cit.) claims that Jurchen had an ablative marker with the shape *-ti**, which could be compared with Manchu *-ci* (ablative) and Nanai *-ci* (directive). However, although the existence of such a case form in the language of the SJS texts is entirely possible, actual examples are difficult to find. There are two words which contain the final element **-t'i** *-ti*, but their readings are unclear: **fan-t'i** (possibly *funti*) 'south', and **wuh-li-t'i** (perhaps *burgidi* or *eldi*) 'north'. Under such circumstances it is rather risky to reconstruct a separate ablative case ending for Jurchen.

The most important conclusion from the data concerning the SJS case system is that the accusative and dative case endings seem to have had a single allomorph each. The vowel **o** of the Chinese transcriptions suggests the phoneme *e* of the underlying language. It therefore appears that the two case suffixes of the language of the SJS texts were identical with the corresponding elements as known from Manchu: *-be* for the accusative and *-de* for the dative. Pevnov (1997.263), apparently following Jin Qicong (1984, Appendix 3–4), vocalizes the Jurchen case suffixes as *-ba* and *-do/-du*, respectively, but the evidence is questionable. While it is possible that early (Jin period) Jurchen still preserved traces of vowel harmony in the case endings, such traces were lost by the time of the bilingual materials noted down in Chinese transcription.

C. Verbal conjugational suffixes. According to the extant descriptions of the Jurchen «language» there is almost no similarity in the verbal paradigms of Jurchen and Manchu. A closer examination of the material shows that this is not the case. In fact, virtually all SJS verbal forms have easily recognizable parallels in Manchu. This applies both to the finite conjugation and to infinite forms (participles and gerunds).

(1) The finite present tense. The SJS materials show an ending **-pieh**, which Pevnov (op.cit.), again following Jin Qicong (1984, appendix 5) phonemizes as *-bya** (*-b'a**). In reality, however, this element may be immediately compared with the well-known Manchu present tense (aorist) ending *-mbi*, suggesting a reading *-mbi* for Jurchen also. Selected examples: **'an-c'ah-pieh** *amca-mbi* 'to pursue' = Manchu *amca-mbi* id.; **cah-fah-pieh** *jafambi* 'to seize' = Manchu *jafambi* id.; **hah-lah-pieh** *halambi* 'to change' = Manchu *halambi* id.; **pah-hah-pieh** *bahambi* 'to

reach, to get' = Manchu *bahambi* 'to find, to get'; **t'eh-pieh** *tembi* 'to sit' = Manchu *tembi* id.; **woh-mieh-pieh** *emgimbi* 'to unite', cf. ma. *emgilembi* id.; **wuh-lu-leh-pieh** *urulembi* 'to acquit' = Manchu *urulembi* id. It may be noted that the element *-bi-* in *-m-bi-* represents the Common Tungusic verbal stem for 'to be', which in the SJS texts is written with the same character as the verbal ending **-pieh**. The fact that the same character is used both for *bi-* and for *-mbi* is connected with the general lack of exact phonetic values of the Jurchen graphs. When reconstructing Jurchen phonology we should therefor not base our conclusions on the Jurchen script alone.

(2) The finite future tense. The Manchu future tense (alternatively: optative mood) suffix *-ki* also seems to have a counterpart in the language of the SJS texts, although the actual data is somewhat difficult to analyze because of lexical problems. Two obvious examples are: **ku-li-kih** *ku-li-ki* 'to remove, to migrate', cf. Manchu *guri-* id.; **t'i-hai-kih** *tihagi* 'to follow', cf. Manchu *cihala-* 'to wish, to desire', Nanai *cihala-* 'to agree, to support'.

(3) The aorist participle, both in infinite and in finite use. The Manchu suffix *-ra/-re* is reflected as SJS **-lu** or (in one instance only) **-rh**. It is true, the SJS data would seem to imply a vocalism different from Manchu, possibly *-ru* or *-r*, but this difference may simply be due to the phonetic inexactitude of the sources. Selected examples: **fuh-nieh-lu** *funier(u)* 'to think', cf. Manchu *funiyangga* 'clever'; **hah-cah-lu** *hacar(u)* 'to desire', cf. Nanai *kalca-* to desire, to demand'; **hen-tu-lu** *hendur(u)* 'to say', cf. Manchu *hendu-* id.; **kai-hah-rh** *ga(a)r* (?) 'to lead', cf. Manchu *gaji-* 'to bring'. A number of examples, like **'a-c'ih-puh-lu** 'to bless' and **'a-yu-puh-lu** 'to save, rescue', contain a longer suffixal element which in the Jurchen script is written with a single character (Jin Qicong 1984.202–203). Most probably, it is a question of a combination of the causative suffix *-bu-* with a following participle suffix, though other explanations might also be possible.

(4) The past participle, both in infinite and in finite use. The Manchu suffix *-ha/-he/-ho* is reflected as SJS **-hai/-hei/-huo**, suggesting a reading identical with Manchu. Examples: **hah-fu-cah-hai** *hafujaha* 'to penetrate', cf. Manchu *hafu-* id.; **koh-nieh-hei** *genehe* 'to go away', cf. Manchu *gene-* 'to go'; **'oh-t'eh-hei** *etehe* 'to gain, to defeat', cf. Manchu *ete-* id. A few examples reveal a lexicalized adjectival meaning: **pan-tih-hai** *banjiha* 'alive', cf. Manchu *banji-* 'to be born, to appear'; **puh-c'e-hei** *bucehe* 'dead', cf. Manchu *buce-, bude-* 'to die'; **so-t'o-huo** *soktoho* 'drunk', cf. Manchu *sokto-* 'to get drunk'. Pevnov (1997. 264) reads the suffix variant **-hai** as *-hai**, assuming that there was a final glide in this allomorph. There is, however, no reason to agree with

him, for both the Manchu data and the variant **-huo** -*ho* clearly demonstrate that no glide was present. As a further confirmation, we may compare the past participle suffix -*hal/-hel/-ho* with the collective suffix -*hal/-he*. In the SJS data, the former is rendered as **-hai** (6 times), **-hah** (once), **-hei** (9 times) and **-huo** (once), while the latter is written **-hah** (8 times), **-hei** (7 times), **-huo** (2 times) and **-k'o** (once). Hence, the two suffixes must have sounded alike.

(5) The present gerund. This is one of the most abundantly-attested verbal forms in the SJS materials. The SJS ending is **-ma/-mai/-mei**, which may be compared with Manchu -*me*. On the basis of the graphic evidence Pevnov (1997.264), following Jin Qicong (1984, supplement 5), assumes that the Jurchen shape was -*mai**/-*mei**, involving two harmonic variants. This assumption is at first glance supported by the fact that the shape **-mai** predominates after back-vocalic stems, while the shape **-mei** occurs mainly after front-vocalic stems. In the general Tungusic context, however, the presence of two harmonic variants in this suffix would appear strange, and, indeed, in the light of a more careful examination of the material the difference turns out to be illusory. For one thing, there are examples of **-mai** in connection with front-vocalic stems and examples of **-mei** in connection with back-vocalic stems. Also, a transcription like '**en-ko-mai** 'saddle' for what must have have been either *enggeme* or *enggemu* (as in Manchu) shows that **-mai** need not always have stood for -*ma*. We may therefore assume that the gerund suffix had the invariable shape -*me*, which, for various reasons, had three different graphic representations. Selected examples: **ci-lah-mai** *jilame* 'to sympathize', cf. Manchu *jila-* 'to feel sorry'; **hah-tah-lah-mai** *kadalame* 'to rule', cf. Manchu *kadala-* id.; **huh-tah-sha-mai** *hudasyame* 'to trade', cf. Manchu *hudasya-* id.; **ya-lu-kuai-mai** *yarkiame*'to unite', cf. Manchu *yarkiya-* 'to captivate, to allure'; **yih-shih-mai** *isime* 'to reach', cf. Manchu *isi-* id.; **cao-lah-mai coh-'oh-lin-mei** *joolame jorime* 'to present the report to the Emperor', cf. Manchu *jo(o)la-* 'to greet, to salute', *jori-* 'to indicate'; **fuh-t'eh-mei** *fudeme* 'to conduct, to accompany', cf. Manchu *fude-* id.; **ku-li-mei** *gurime* 'to remove', cf. Manchu *guri-*id.; **pei-ye-mei** *beyeme*, *buyeme* 'to love', cf. Manchu *buye-* id.; **tao-li-mei** *durime* 'to rob', cf. Manchu *duri-* id.; **tu-ku-mei** *dugume* 'to beat, to strike', Manchu *duu-* 'to beat'; **t'eh-ye-mei** *deyeme* 'to stand up, to rise', cf. Manchu *deye-* 'to fly'; **t'uh-t'i-mei** *tutime* 'to go out', cf. Manchu *tuci-* id.; **wei-ye-mei** *wei(-ye-)me*'to rob', cf. Manchu *weile* 'crime'; **k'ang-k'oh-leh-mei** *hengkileme* 'to greet, to bow', cf. Manchu *henggile-* id.; **yoh-yoh-mei** *yuyume* 'to starve', cf. Manchu *yuyu-* id.; **t'an-sun-mei** *tomsome* 'to gather', cf. Manchu *tomso-* id.; **sah-tah-mei** *sahadame*

'to hunt' (?), cf. Manchu *sahada-* 'to hunt'; **poh-yih-sha-mei** *bayasyame* 'to thank', cf. Mongol *bayarla-* id.; **nieh-k'u-leh-mai** *nekuleme* 'to be friends', cf. Manchu *nekule-* 'to act with the assistance of friends'; **t'eh-t'eh-puh-ma** *tetebume* 'to bring the tribute', cf. Manchu *tetusye-* 'to use, to charge'. It may be concluded that the evidence does not support the postulation of allomorphic variants for the SJS gerund suffix -*me*. Also, just like the transcriptions **-hai/-hei** for the past participle suffix -*ha/-he*, the transcriptions **mai/-mei** for the gerund suffix -*me* do not imply the presence of a final glide. In fact, there are other examples of the writing of **-mai** for a simple final vowel, as in '**a-lah-mai** *alama* 'alike', cf. Ewenki *alama-* 'to imitate'.

(6) The past gerund. The Manchu suffix -*fi* has the SJS counterpart **-fei** -*fi*. Examples: **woh-fei** *ofi* 'to be', cf. Manchu *o-* 'to become, to be'; **cah-shih-fei** *jasifi* 'to distribute', cf. Manchu *jasela-* 'to establish the border line' (?).

(7) The terminative gerund. This form is attested only once and has the SJS suffix **-tu-lah** -*tala*, corresponding to Manchu -*tala/-tele/-tolo*. The example is: **wa-tu-lah** *watala* 'to kill', cf. Manchu *wa-* to kill', *wabutala* 'to the death'.

D. Verbal derivational suffixes. In general, derived verbal stems are not very abundant in the SJS material, making the chances of identifying verbal derivational suffixes relatively small. It is, nevertheless, possible to find evidence for at least the causative and sociative suffixes as well as for some aspectual markers:

(1) Causative, also functioning as a passive. The SJS shape of the suffix is written as **-puh-/-poh-/-woh-** and may be read as -*bu-*, identical with Manchu -*bu-*. Examples: '**a-li-poh**, '**a-li-puh-wei** *alibu-* 'to give', cf. Manchu *alibu-* 'to force to take'; **puh-lu-woh-hei** *burubuhe* 'to lose', cf. Manchu *burubu-* 'to be lost'; **t'ah-fah-puh-ma** *tafabume* 'to connect, to transmit', cf. Orok *taw-* 'to connect, to link'.

(2) Sociative. The direct cognate of the Manchu suffix -*ndu-*, written as SJS **-tu-**, is found in two examples: '**a-c'ih-tu-lu** *acindur(u)* 'to move', cf. Manchu *acinggiya-* id.; **so-li-tu-man** *sorinduman* 'to fight, to combat', cf. Manchu *sori-* 'to shoot at each other'. In another example, '**an-tan-to** *angdandu* 'to follow, to go one's own way', the sociative suffix appears to be rendered in a more complex way.

(3) Aspect. There are relatively few examples of aspectual markers in the SJS materials, and it is difficult to determine their semantic functions. Nevertheless, most of the suffixes concerned have direct counterparts in Manchu. The following suffixes are documented:

(3a) The suffix **-c'ah-/-cah-** *-ca-*. Examples: **'an-c'ah-pieh** *amcambi* 'to chase', cf. Manchu *amca-* 'to reach, to chase'; **hah-cah-lu** *halcar(u)* 'to desire', cf. Nanai *kalca-* 'to desire, to demand'. In the latter case the suffix *-ca-* is graphically indistinguishable from the suffix *-ja-* (cf. below).

(3b) The suffix **-cah-** *-ja-*. Example: **hah-fu-cah-hai** *hafujaha* 'to penetrate', cf. Manchu *hafu-* id.

(3c) The suffix **-sha-/-sheu-** *-sya-*. Examples: **huh-tah-sha-mai** *hudasyame* 'to trade', cf. Manchu *hûdasya-* id.; **yih-lih-sheu-hai** *ili-syaha* 'to establish', cf. Manchu *ili-* 'to stand up'. Pevnov (op.cit.) takes the transcription **-sheu-** at face value and postulates a separate suffix allomorph on this basis, but this is certainly an unnecessary complication of the analysis.

(3d) The suffix **-lu-** *-ru-*, **tah-lu-pieh** in **hah-tah-lah-mai tah-lu-pieh** *kadalama darumbi* 'to lead, to rule'.

(3e) The suffix **-hia-** *-hia-/-kia-*. This suffix, expressing progressive action, has not been previously identified in Jurchen, but it is actually one of the most common aspectual markers in the SJS materials. Examples: **t'uan-hia-sun** *tuahiasun* 'to guard', Manchu *tuwakiya-* 'to keep, to guard'; **ya-lu-kuai-mai** *yarkiame* 'to unite', cf. Manchu *yarkiya-* 'to captivate, to allure'; cf. also **t'ah-li-kiang** *talkian* 'lightning' = Manchu *talkiyan* id.

Conclusion

All the evidence presented above suggests that the language of the SJS materials is identical with Manchu. Jurchen was *not* a separate Tungusic language, not even a Manchu dialect. To some extent, the early sources on Jurchen may be regarded as representing an idiom ancestral to the later forms of Manchu, but even from this point of view the differences are minimal. To put it simply: Jurchen and Manchu are a single language written with two different systems of writing.

If we now ask what the SJS materials can contribute to comparative Tungusic studies, the answer is: very little. While there is no reason to deny the historical value of the extant Jurchen documents, their linguistic value is—except for the purposes of occasional lexical documentation—close to zero, since the very same language is much more extensively documented in Manchu sources. Compared with the Smaller Jurchen script, the Manchu script offers a considerably more adequate basis to access the underlying language.

When we, on the other hand, wish to proceed towards a decipherment of the SJS signs, we must be ready to use Manchu data in order to obtain

correct readings of Jurchen words and suffixes. The conception that each Jurchen sign should always be read with an invariable phonetic value is wrong. In reality, many SJS signs have different values depending on their position in the word. Only when we accept this framework, can we go on to analyze the Jurchen script as a graphic system.

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