

### 3. THE ALTAIC THEORY

3.1. The first hypotheses with regard to the relations between the Altaic and some other languages date from the first half of the XVIII century. The first scholar who noticed certain similarities existing between Turkic, Mongolian, and Manchu-Tungus was Johann von Strahlenberg (Tabbert), a Swedish officer, who had been taken prisoner of war during the battle of Poltava, one of the decisive battles of the Great Northern War. Von Strahlenberg spent many years in various parts of Eastern Russia and investigated some Finno-Ugric, Turkic, Mongolian, and other languages. One of his achievements was the compilation of the first dictionary of the Kalmuck language. He was the first to notice similarities in the structures of a large number of languages which he called "the Tatar languages" classified by him in six groups. These six groups of speakers of the languages in question are: 1. the Uighurs as he calls the Finno-Ugric peoples, the Baraba Tatars, and the Huns; 2. the Turco-Tatar peoples; 3. the Samoyeds; 4. the Mongols and Manchu; 5. the Tungus; and 6. "the tribes living between the Black and Caspian sea". This classification cannot be accepted at the present time because it is inconsistent and contains errors: the Finno-Ugric peoples do not belong to the same group as the Baraba who are a Turkic tribe, and the tribes living between the seas mentioned include Turks, Iranians, and Caucasians who have nothing in common. However, von Strahlenberg's classification deserves mentioning as the first attempt at classification of a large number of languages some of which are Altaic.

#### Bibliography:

von Strahlenberg, Phillip Johann, *Das nord- und östliche Theil von Europa und Asia, insoweit das gantze Russische Reich mit Sibirien und grossen Tatarei in sich begreiffet*, etc., Stockholm 1730.

3.2. The problem of the affinity of the Altaic languages was treated again, one hundred years after von Strahlenberg, by the famous Danish linguist Rasmus Rask. He renamed the "Tatar languages" and gave them the name of "the Scythian languages", having added to them also the languages spoken in Greenland, North America, all of Northern Asia and Europe, and in the Caucasus. He also included in the Scythian group the non-Indo-European language spoken in Spain (Basque). Consequently, the Scythian group included Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, Turkic, Finno-Ugric (or even Uralic), Eskimo, the Palaeo-Asiatic languages, the Caucasian languages, and the languages of the ancient, non-Indo-European inhabitants of Europe.

#### Bibliography:

Rask, R. K., "Den skytiske Sproget", *Sammlede tilldels forhen utrykte Afhandlingene* I, København 1834.

3.3 In the middle of the XIX century linguistics were in such an advanced stage that comparative language studies could be conducted on a relatively solid foundation, once the Indo-European comparative linguistics had been established. One of the criteria for establishing language affinity was the morphological structure. The inflective structure being characteristic of the Indo-European languages, the agglutinative grammatical structure of the Altaic and a vast number of other languages was elevated to the main principle for judging what languages should be regarded as related. On the basis of the agglutinative features of a large number of languages, Max Müller included in the groups postulated by von Strahlenberg and Rask also Siamese, Tibetan, Dravidian, and Malayan. This expanded group was given the name of "the Turanian languages", because the center of the thus established linguistic area was Turan, i.e., part of Inner Asia, the hypothetic homeland of the Turks.

The Turanian hypothesis added little to Rask's Scythian hypothesis. It only involved a still larger number of languages.

Occupying a vast territory, the Turanian languages could impossibly be regarded as possessing features as clearly and distinctly defined as those of the Indo-European or Semitic languages. Therefore, Max Müller believed that different methods should be applied in research in the Turanian languages. Whereas the Indo-European and Semitic languages were *political languages*, as Max Müller defined them, the Turanian languages were only *nomadic languages*. He felt that the ties uniting the latter could not be as strong as those between the "political languages", and therefore, he rarely used the term *language family* with regard to the „nomadic languages" and preferred the term "language group".

In general, the problems set by Max Müller were never solved, and his own statements with regard to the languages concerned were rather vague.

### Bibliography:

Müller, Max, *Essays I*, Leipzig 1869.

— *The Languages of the Seat of War in the East*, With a Survey of Three Families of Languages, Semitic, Arian, and Turanian, London-Edinburgh-Leipzig 1855.

3.4. A new period began with Castrén's appearance on the stage. Castrén was the first to apply *linguistic criteria* to languages supposed to belong to the same family. He was not satisfied with conglomerating vast numbers of languages almost unknown or very little investigated. The agglutinative grammatical structure alone was insufficient, in his opinion, to prove the affinity of languages, and he believed that identity of morphemes was essential. Castrén included in one group only the Finno-Ugric, Samoyed, Turkic, Mongolian, and Manchu-Tungus languages, and he excluded from that group all the other languages. Castrén demonstrated the identity of the personal suffixes in the languages mentioned but he formulated his findings in a cautious manner. His opinion was that one could not find in the Altaic languages as much similarity as within the Indo-European family. However, whether the similarities are as significant as to enable the linguists to assign all the languages concerned to

one family was, in his opinion, a question which could be answered only in the future.

The languages called Altaic by Castrén are now called Ural-Altaic languages comprising two groups: the Uralic (Finno-Ugric-Samoyed) whose affinity was proven long ago, and the Altaic languages (Turkic, Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, and Korean) whose mutual relations are still debated. What was called Altaic by Castrén and is still called so are two different things: in Castrén's writings Altaic means Ural-Altaic. At the present time only Turkic, Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, and, with certain reservations and even reluctance, Korean are counted among the Altaic languages.

#### Bibliography:

- Castrén, M. A., "Über die Personalaffixe in den altaischen Sprachen", *Kleinere Schriften*, St. Petersburg 1862.  
 — *Reiseberichte und Briefe aus den Jahren 1845–49*, St. Petersburg 1856.

3.5. Since Castrén the Ural-Altaic theory has been uniting, in general, four language families, namely, Uralic (comprising Samoyed and Finno-Ugric), Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, and Turkic. However, relapses into the previous stages occurred from time to time for a long period. Thus, several unsuccessful attempts at including Japanese were made. On the other hand, some extinct ancient languages were declared as belonging to the Ural-Altaic group, and even the name of Turanian reappeared for brief periods.

#### Bibliography:

- Boller, "Die Wurzelsuffixe in den ural-altaischen Sprachen", *SWAW* 22: 1 (1856), pp. 91–180.  
 — *Nachweis, daß das Japanische zum ural-altaischen Stamme gehört*, Wien 1857.  
 Lenormant, Fr., *La magie chez les chaldéens et les origines accadiennes*, Paris 1874.  
 — *La langue primitive de la Chaldée et les idiomes touraniens*, Paris 1875.  
 Pröhle, W., "Studien zur Vergleichung des Japanischen mit den uralischen und altaischen Sprachen", *KSz* 17, pp. 147 ff.  
 Winkler, H., *Der ural-altaische Sprachenstamm, das Finnische und das Japanische*, Berlin 1909.

3.6. Serious investigation of the Ural-Altaic languages and their mutual relations on the basis of comparative linguistic studies began with the appearance of Schott's works.

Whereas most of his predecessors and contemporaries, with the exception of Castrén, had confined themselves to general observations and conclusions drawn from structural resemblances of the Ural-Altaic languages, Schott based his observations on correspondences in vocabulary, not neglecting, however, morphology. Schott limited his investigations to the Chudic (his term for Finno-Ugric) and Tatar (his term for Turkic, Mongolian, and Manchu-Tungus) languages and called this large group the Altaic or Chudic-Tatar group.

Like Castrén, Schott believed that the affinity of the different branches of the Ural-Altaic (in his terminology, Chudic-Tatar) languages varied in degree. The languages related to each other in the closest manner are, in his opinion, Samoyed and Finno-Ugric. This family was called by him "Finnic" or "Chudic". As for the remaining languages, i.e., the "Tatar" languages, Schott did not attempt at defining their mutual relations in a precise manner.

Schott was not only a ural-altaicist but he paid also much attention to the mutual relations of the Turkic, Mongolian, and Tungus languages. He also established many correspondences between Chuvash and Turkic and made the correct observation that Chuvash is closest to the Turkic languages. He was the first scholar who integrated the Chuvash language into Altaic comparative studies.

### Bibliography:

Schott, W., *Über das altaische oder finnisch-tatarische Sprachengeschlecht*, Berlin 1849.

— *Das Zahlwort in der tschudischen Sprachenklasse, wie auch im Türkischen, Tungusischen und Mongolischen*, Berlin 1853.

— *Altaische Studien oder Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der Altai-Sprachen*, Berlin 1860.

— *De lingua tschuwaschorum*, Berolini (s. a.).

3.7. After Schott, attention was paid chiefly to the mutual relations of languages either within the Uralic or Altaic group. The linguists became more interested in phonetic and morphologic correspondences in Finno-Ugric-Samoyed or Mongolian-Tungus-Turkic groups, and comparative studies on Uralic and Altaic became less popular. However, Ural-Altaic comparative studies have never ceased completely.

Before proceeding to the Altaic theory, a brief outline of history of the Ural-Altaic theory after Schott will be given.

Ural-Altaic studies were continued by the German scholar Winkler. He also proposed his own division of the languages in question into two groups, one of them comprising Finno-Ugric, Samoyed, and Tungus, and the other one including Mongolian and Turkic. As for Manchu, Winkler believed it to be a link between Japanese and the Finno-Ugric-Samoyed languages. Winkler's classification did not find support among other linguists and, at the present time, only Finno-Ugric-Samoyed and Altaic are recognized.

One of the most serious works in the field of Ural-Altaic comparative studies is the book of the French linguist Sauvageot. He pointed out as the main weakness of most of the previous works in this field the indiscriminate comparison of words which somehow resembled each other. Sauvageot states that only such comparisons count which permit of establishing regular sound correspondences. However, such words being very few, the results of his own work are unconvincing.

Sauvageot's views were criticized by the Russian anthropologist Shirokogoroff who rejected Sauvageot's conclusions based on Ramstedt's theory with regard to Manchu initial  $f = x, h$ , and  $\emptyset$  (i.e., Zero) in other languages. Shi-

rokogoroff believed that  $h (> x)$  was a secondary "aspiration" with a subsequent "labialization" ( $x > f$ ), this interpretation being, however, utterly wrong.

The well-known Finnish turcologist Martti Räsänen supports the Ural-Altaic theory and gives in his book on the historical phonology of Turkic languages a number of reasons in favour of Uralic and Altaic affinity. Professor Menges is also an adherent of the Ural-Altaic theory.

The Ural-Altaic theory is regarded by many scholars as unproven, to say the least. The Swedish scholar Björn Collinder is right, however, when he warns against exaggerated scepticism and points out that Proto-Uralic, Proto-Turkic, Proto-Mongolian, Proto-Tungus, and Korean might have existed in a prehistoric period as related but already separate languages, no Proto-Altaic having ever existed. This would lead to the conclusion that there has never been a Common Ural-Altaic language. Other alternatives are no less possible, e.g., a Uralic-Turkic unity and Proto-Mongolian-Tungus side by side with Korean, etc. Collinder's conclusion is that Ural-Altaic sound correspondences should be established which would then permit drawing of conclusions.

Collinder feels that it is premature to reject the Ural-Altaic hypothesis just as it is premature to draw conclusions from similarities already observed. It should be pointed out, however, that the most outstanding altaicist in the history of Altaic comparative studies and the real founder of the latter, Ramstedt, was sceptical about the affinity of Uralic and Altaic and confined his research to the Altaic languages.

The Ural-Altaic theory is accepted by very few scholars. On the other hand, a number of linguists believe that the Uralic languages are somehow related to the Indo-European languages.

As for the attitude of the author of these lines it is strictly negative as far as the hypothesis about Indo-European and Altaic affinity is concerned, whereas the Indo-European and Uralic affinity is regarded as possible although not yet proven. The same can be said about the Ural-Altaic theory: the Uralic and Altaic languages may be distant relatives but their affinity must yet be proven.

### Bibliography:

- Buge, E., *Über die Stellung des Tungusischen zum Mongolisch-Türkischen*, Halle 1887.
- Collinder, B., "Ural-Altaisch", *UAJ* 24 (1952), pp. 1-26 (Gives not only his own ideas but also a brief history and bibliography).
- *Finno-Ugric Vocabulary*, An Etymological Dictionary of the Uralic Languages, Stockholm 1955, pp. 142-149.
- Menges, K. H., "Indo-European Influences on Ural-Altaic Languages", *Word* 1: 2 (1945).
- *Morphologische Probleme I, Zum Genitiv und Accusativ*, UAB 9 (1960).
- Räsänen, M., *Zur Lautgeschichte der türkischen Sprachen*, Helsinki 1949, pp. 9-19.
- Sauvageot, A., *Recherches sur le vocabulaire des langues ouralo-altaïques*, Paris 1930.
- Shirokogoroff, S. M., *Ethnological and Linguistical Aspects of the Ural-Altaic Hypothesis*, Peiping 1931.

Winkler, H., *Uralaltaische Völker und Sprachen*, Berlin 1884.

— *Das Uralaltaische und seine Gruppen*, Berlin 1886.

— “Tungusisch und Finno-Ugrisch I”, *JSFOu* 30: 9; II: *JSFOu* 39: 1.

3.8. Proceeding to the Altaic theory, i.e., the theory about the affinity of Chuvash-Turkic, Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, and possibly Korean, it should be remarked that by the end of the XIX century the study of Chuvash-Turkic, Mongolian, and Manchu-Tungus had achieved such results that comparative linguistic studies on a limited basis became possible, such as establishing of individual sound-correspondences or studies in morphology, e.g., declension, conjugation, verb or noun derivation, etc. The field was, however, still too little prepared for general works of the type of comparative grammars. Therefore, the comparative grammar by Grunzel was premature and, as Ramstedt said, presented a deterrent example.

### Bibliography:

Grunzel, J., *Entwurf einer vergleichenden Grammatik der altaischen Sprachen nebst einem vergleichenden Wörterbuch*, Leipzig 1895.

3.9. The beginning of Altaic comparative linguistics is associated with the name of Ramstedt, the founder of modern Mongolian linguistics and a prominent turcologist.

Ramstedt started as a finno-ugricist but in 1898 he went to Outer Mongolia, in order to collect material on spoken Mongolian dialects. Later on, he spent a long time in studying Kalmuck and investigated the Mogol language. A finno-ugricist by university training and a brilliant mongolist and turcologist, Ramstedt knew the Finno-Ugric and several Altaic languages not only theoretically but he spoke Finnish (his native language), Cheremis (which he had studied on the spot), Hungarian (which he had studied at the university), and Khalkha-Mongolian and Kalmuck (which he had studied during his field work). Consequently, his negative attitude towards the Ural-Altaic theory was not the result of inadequate knowledge of the languages in question, limited to what one could find in grammars and dictionaries which at that time were rather incomplete, but it sprang up from a profound first-hand knowledge of the material.

Like many scholars, Ramstedt underwent evolution as far as his views were concerned. At the beginning, he was sceptical about protolanguages such as Common Altaic (Proto-Altaic) and he believed that the common elements in Mongolian and Turkic were the results of cross borrowing which had been taking place through centuries (*vide: Über die Konjugation des Khalkha-Mongolischen*, p. VII; “Über die Zahlwörter der altaischen Sprachen”, p. 1). Later on, however, he renounced this view and came to the conclusion that Mongolian, Turkic, and Manchu-Tungus were genetically related to each other and had originated from one common source, i.e., Common Altaic (*vide* “Ein anlautender stimmloser Labial in der mongolisch-türkischen Ursprache”, p. 1.).

Ramstedt established a number of sound correspondences in the Altaic languages. He was the first to notice the correspondence of Mongolian *r* to Tur-

kie *z*, and Mongolian *l* to Turkic *š* (*Über die Konjugation des Khalkha-Mongolischen*) analogous to Chuvash *r* and *l* = Turkic *z* and *š* respectively which latter correspondences had been known since Schott. At the beginning, Ramstedt, like his predecessors, believed that Mongolian *r* had originated from *\*z*, and Mongolian *l* < *\*š* but later he came to the conclusion that Mongolian and Chuvash *r* and *l* were older than Turkic *z* and *š*, the latter having developed from *\*r* and *\*l* respectively (*vide* "Zur Frage nach der Stellung des Tschuwassischen", p. 29). At the present time this latter view is shared by most of the altaicists, and only a few scholars still adhere to the old concept. He also found that the Mongolian initial *n*, *d*, *ǰ*, *y* corresponded to Chuvash *ś* and Turkic *\*y* in which the former four consonants had converged. Ramstedt established the correspondence Turk. *-p-*, *-b-* = Written Mongolian *γ* on the one side, and Turk. Ø (zero) = Middle Mongolian *h-* = Manchu *f-*, Goldi (Nanai) *p-*, Evenki and Lamut *h-* on the other hand.

Ramstedt did not confine himself to phonetic correspondences but he studied also a number of problems of morphology. Although his work on Khalkha conjugation is now to be regarded as obsolete, many sections of it are still valid. His comparative study of verb formation in Mongolian and Turkic is still one of the most important works in the Altaic field. In addition, Ramstedt published a large number of articles dealing with individual problems of Altaic comparative studies, such as the deverbal noun in *-i*, the deverbal noun in *-m*, etc.

A work summarizing all the observations made by him in the field of Altaic comparative linguistics is Ramstedt's comparative grammar consisting of a comparative phonology and morphology of Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, Korean, and Turkic. Leaving aside Ramstedt's works on Korean and the latter's relation to Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, and Turkic languages, and not going into a discussion of what Ramstedt says about Korean in his comparative grammar, it should be stated that his comparative grammar is the basis on which all future work will be conducted. As for Ramstedt's Korean comparative studies, they will be dealt with *infra*, in connection with the history of the Korean problem.

In conclusion, it should be remarked that Ramstedt has left a rich heritage: firmly established sound-correspondences, numerous works on morphology, and a well-corroborated theory about the mutual genetic affinity of the Altaic languages.

According to his latest, posthumous work, namely the comparative grammar, Common Altaic included at least four dialects, namely Proto-Korean, Proto-Turkic, Proto-Mongolian, and Proto-Manchu-Tungus. Proto-Korean and Proto-Turkic (we would say, Proto-Chuvash-Turkic) probably occupied the southern part of the original linguistic area, whereas Proto-Mongolian and Proto-Manchu-Tungus occupied the northern part. At the same time, Proto-Manchu-Tungus and Proto-Korean occupied the eastern portion, and Proto-Turkic (Proto-Chuvash-Turkic) and Proto-Mongolian occupied the western portion of the area. Of course, this is only a hypothesis which cannot be proven easily, but it is one of those working hypotheses which are useful as a starting point for future research.

## Bibliography:

- Ramstedt, G. J., *Über die Konjugation des Khalkha-Mongolischen*, Helsinki 1902.
- “Über mongolische Pronomina”, *JSFOu* 23: 3 (1904).
  - “Zur Geschichte des labialen Spiranten im Mongolischen”, *Festschrift Wilhelm Thomsen*, Leipzig 1912, pp. 182–187.
  - “Zur Verbstammbildungslehre der mongolisch-türkischen Sprachen”, *JSFOu* 28: 3 (1912).
  - “Ein anlautender stimmloser Labial in der mongolisch-türkischen Ursprache”, *JSFOu* 32: 2 (1916).
  - “Zur Frage nach der Stellung des Tschuwassischen”, *JSFOu* 38: 1 (1922).
  - “Über den Ursprung der türkischen Sprache”, *SBFAW* 1935, pp. 81–91.
  - “Das deverbale Nomen auf *-i* in den altaischen Sprachen”, *StOF* 11: 6 (1945).
  - “Das deverbale Nomen auf *-m* in den altaischen Sprachen”, *MSFOu* 98 (1950), pp. 255–264.
  - *Einführung in die altaische Sprachwissenschaft* I, Lautlehre, Bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Pentti Aalto, *MSFOu* 104: 1 (1957).
  - *id.* II, Formenlehre, Bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Pentti Aalto, *MSFOu* 104: 2 (1952).

For a complete bibliography of Ramstedt's works *vide*: Karl-Erik Henrikson, “Sprachwissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen von Prof. Dr. G. J. Ramstedt”, *StOF* 14: 12 (1950), pp. 1–14.

3.10. Ramstedt's ideas fell upon a fertile soil. The first scholars to respond to and develop them were the mongolists in Russia. The Polish mongolist, Władysław Kotwicz who at that time, i.e., before 1923, was working at the University of St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), Rudnev, and Vladimirtsov became interested in Ramstedt's work and accepted his method and most of his etymologies as well as the phonetic correspondences established by him.

Ramstedt found also adepts outside Russia. Although the well-known Hungarian turcologist Julius Németh had been rather sceptical at first about the affinity of Turkic and Mongolian (“Die türkisch-mongolische Hypothese”), he too, came to the conclusion that they are related to each other. According to Németh's scheme greatly differing from that of Ramstedt, four stages could be established in the history of the Altaic languages: 1. primitive unity, i.e., genetic affinity; 2. the period of Chuvash-Mongolian mutual influences; 3. the period of Turkic-Mongolian mutual influences; and 4. the period of Yakut borrowings from Mongolian (“Über den Ursprung des Wortes ‘Schaman’ und einige Bemerkungen zur türkisch-mongolischen Lautgeschichte”). Németh's scheme cannot now be accepted because it is known that there has never been a Chuvash-Mongolian common stage.

Another Hungarian scholar, Gombocz, continued Ramstedt's work. An important work of his is devoted to the correspondences of Manchu-Tungus, Mongolian, and Chuvash *r*, *l* to Turkic *z*, *š* respectively, and Manchu-Tungus and Mongolian initial *d*, *n* to Turkic initial *y*. Another work of great importance is Gombocz's book on the Volga Bulgarian loan-words in Hungarian.

Gombocz's views differ from those of Ramstedt in that he regards Turkic *z* and *š* as original, whereas Ramstedt regards them as having developed from *\*r* and *\*l* respectively. According to Ramstedt, Chuvash *văkăr* "ox" < *\*ökür* > Turkic *öküz* "ox", but Gombocz regards Chuv. *văkăr* as having developed from *\*öküz* > Turk. *öküz*. Otherwise Ramstedt's and Gombocz's work supplement each other.

### Bibliography:

- Gombocz, Z., *Die bulgarisch-türkischen Lehnwörter in der ungarischen Sprache*, MSFOu 30 (1912).  
 — "Zur Lautgeschichte der altaischen Sprachen", *KSz* 13 (1912), pp. 1–37.  
 Németh, J., "Die türkisch-mongolische Hypothese", *ZDMG* 66 (1912), pp. 549–576.  
 — "Über den Ursprung des Wortes 'Schaman' und einige Bemerkungen zur türkisch-mongolischen Lautgeschichte", *KSz* 14 (1914), pp. 240–249.

3.11. To return to the St. Petersburg school of altaicists, it should be remarked that it accepted Ramstedt's methods, etymologies, and observations with regard to sound correspondences with only a few reservations.

The first generation of scholars engaged in Altaic comparative studies based on Ramstedt's works comprised Kotwicz and Vladimirtsov. Both of them accepted the phonetic correspondences established by Ramstedt. They also accepted his etymologies and rejected only those of them which were doubtful or obviously erroneous.

As far as the common origin of many words and suffixes is concerned, Kotwicz fully shared Ramstedt's views. He was, however, more reserved in his statements with regard to the genetic affinity of the Altaic languages, i.e., their origin from one common language, namely Common Altaic or Proto-Altaic. Details referring to the latter and discussion of the mutual relations of the members of the Altaic group will be given below, but it should be mentioned here that in later stages of his scholarly activities Ramstedt believed in the existence of a Common Altaic or Proto-Altaic language, the ancestor of all Altaic languages spoken at the present time. Vladimirtsov was of Ramstedt's opinion in most matters, including the problems of Common Altaic. One could add that Vladimirtsov was actually unoriginal as far as the Altaic theory is concerned and accepted everything Ramstedt had to say with regard to problems involving the mutual relations of the Altaic languages. This statement is not meant to minimize Vladimirtsov's achievements, and its purpose is to stress out that Vladimirtsov did not have any doubts about the genetic affinity of Mongolian, Turkic, and Manchu-Tungus.

Kotwicz, however, was less categorical in his statements. He accepted Ramstedt's thesis that the Altaic languages possess a large body of common elements (grammatical structure, suffixes of common origin, words, regular sound correspondences) and he established a number of ancient forms reconstructed on the basis of comparative study, but he conceded that genetic affinity is by no means the only possible explanation of resemblances or even identity of those common elements. From this point of view his posthumous major work

*Studies on Altaic Languages* (in Polish) is particularly important. It is unfortunate that this work is not available in translation into English but there is a somewhat incomplete Russian translation. The relations of the Altaic languages are represented by Kotwicz in the following manner.

At the beginning of the Christian era, there existed three groups of languages structurally very close to each other, namely Turkic, Tungus, and Mongolian, or as we should say, the predecessors of Turkic, predecessors of Tungus, and predecessors of Mongolian. Turkic, in Kotwicz's opinion, may have exercised a strong influence upon Mongolian, and the latter influenced Tungus. Geographically seen, these three language groups may have represented three concentric circles.

The similarities observed in the languages in question may be the result of contacts and influences, in addition to an original structural resemblance. These contacts may have extended as far as to involve Korean. Consequently, Kotwicz's theory differs from that of Ramstedt only as far as the conclusions are concerned. Ramstedt concluded from the similarities and identities that the languages in question were genetically kindred, whereas Kotwicz was more inclined to explain the similarities as results of contacts.

Vladimirtsov who was Kotwicz's pupil, a member of Radloff's circle, and a regular attendant of Ramstedt's lectures and talks on Altaic subjects, was at the beginning of his career rather reserved in his opinions about Altaic affinity.

At the beginning, Vladimirtsov felt that the existence of the Altaic language family, i.e., a family of genetically related languages, had by no means been proven. Vladimirtsov interpreted many common elements as cross borrowings, i.e., as words borrowed from Turkic into Mongolian and, *vice versa*, from Mongolian into Turkic. This attitude of Vladimirtsov towards similarities between Mongolian and Turkic is characteristic of his article on the Turkic elements in Mongolian which appeared in 1911. Later on, after having worked on the problems revolving around the mutual relations between Mongolian, Turkic, and Manchu-Tungus for another fifteen years, Vladimirtsov became much less reserved in his opinions about the Altaic problem. In his latest work in the field of Altaic comparative studies, in his *Comparative Grammar* (in Russian) Vladimirtsov unequivocally appears as an adherent of the theory about the genetic affinity of Mongolian, Turkic, and Manchu-Tungus. There he says that Mongolian belongs to the Altaic language family which includes also Turkic and Manchu-Tungus. Mongolian is related to the latter two because all three languages came into existence as a result of different developments of the same language which had been spoken some time ago. Mongolian, Turkic, and Manchu-Tungus have a common ancestor which can be conventionally called "the Altaic language". Mongolian is an Altaic language because it is one of the forms of development of that Altaic language (*Comparative Grammar*, p. 45). These quotations demonstrate that Vladimirtsov was in the later stages of his research an outspoken supporter of the Altaic theory based on the assumption of genetic affinity.

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- II. (Les noms de nombre); III. (Les noms de couleurs)", *RO* 7 (1931), pp. 130–234.
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3.12. The Altaic theory is also recognized by some Soviet scholars. An outspoken representative of the Altaic theory as formulated by Vladimirtsov is the turcologist Baskakov. "The most ancient period in the development of Turkic languages . . . is the Altaic period in which Turkic was little differentiated from Mongolian and the latter from Manchu-Tungus", says Baskakov in his book *Tyurkskie yazıki* (p. 28). Although his ideas referring to certain phonetic correspondences differ from those of Ramstedt and Vladimirtsov, he agrees in essence with their statements with regard to the Altaic affinity.

An interesting contribution to Altaic comparative linguistics was published by the Soviet scholar, Illich- Svitych.

Another Soviet altaicist, Sanžeyev expresses himself rather vaguely. In his article dedicated to Vladimirtsov's linguistic theories and achievements, Sanžeyev says that it is premature to insist on the concept of Common Altaic and, consequently, on the genetic affinity of the languages in question, as being more than a hypothesis. In quoting Ligeti who believes that the genetic affinity of the Altaic languages has not yet been proven, Sanžeyev (p. 17) says that the idea of affinity is no more than a hypothesis (p. 25). In his article on "Modern Mongolian" (in Russian), however, Sanžeyev states that the Mongolian languages are regarded as closely related to Turkic, having *genetically* originated from a common Mongolian-Turkic language (p. 7). It is difficult to say why he floats between two theories in articles which appeared one year apart. The only explanation one can find is that in the article "Modern Mongolian" Sanžeyev meant to say that Mongolian and Turkic are commonly regarded as closely related and having originated from one ancestor *but he, Sanžeyev, did not believe it*. His position would have become much more definite if he had added it. Anyway, as he fails to give an unequivocal formula-

tion of his position, he should be excluded from discussion of adherents or opponents of the Altaic theory.

An opponent of the Altaic theory is, however, the Soviet linguist Serebrennikov in whose opinion the "formulae established by the altaicists" such as  $r > z$ ;  $d-, n-, \check{y}- > y$ ;  $\acute{l} > \acute{s}$  have not yet been proven.

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3.13. A follower of Ramstedt is his pupil, the Finnish scholar Pentti Aalto. He edited and published Ramstedt's comparative grammar after the death of its author. Aalto has accepted the phonetic correspondences and the common suffixes established by Ramstedt. As far as the interrelationship of the Altaic languages is concerned, Aalto is an adherent of the affinity theory. He believes that the Altaic languages are genetically related to one another and regards the fact that the author of these lines accepted Ramstedt's theory about the genetic affinity of the Altaic languages as a positive achievement. Whereas the author of these lines had been somewhat uncertain about Korean and hesitated between original genetic affinity (in German, "Urverwandtschaft") and an Altaic substratum in Korean, Aalto refused to see any difference between the two possibilities and stated that it is hard to distinguish between "Urverwandtschaft" and a substratum (*vide* his review of the author's comparative grammar, p. 9). This demonstrates that Aalto accepts the Altaic theory without reservations. Moreover, he does not reject the possibility of primitive ties connecting the Altaic and Uralic languages, although he does not believe that the admission of such a remote affinity might be of value at the present time (*ibid.*, pp. 9–10). He is more cautious in this aspect than the Finnish turcologist Martti Räsänen, also a pupil of Ramstedt, who is an adherent of both the Altaic and Ural-Altaic theories.

Aalto published a number of articles in which he presented his views on the mutual affinity of the Altaic languages, including Korean, e.g., an article on the Altaic initial  $*p$ .

Another follower of Ramstedt's theories is Pritsak whose views expressed in his works on Chuvash and Bulgar are particularly close to the opinions of

the author of these lines. Pritsak has also been, since 1958, the editor-in-chief of the journal *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher*.

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3.14. Before proceeding to further discussion of the Altaic theory, it is necessary to define the place of Korean among the Altaic (or *other* Altaic) languages.

The Korean language, its dialects and history, are still insufficiently investigated. Therefore its relation to other languages is less clear than that of Mongolian, Turkic, or Manchu-Tungus. In general, there are the following theories and hypotheses with regard to affinity of Korean: 1. affinity with Japanese; 2. affinity with Dravidian; 3. with Chinese; 4. with the Indo-European languages; 5. with the Altaic languages.

1. The theory about Korean and Japanese affinity is based on the fact that both languages are agglutinative and possess a number of stems resembling one another, partly due to the fact that many of them are borrowings from Korean into Japanese or *vice versa* or borrowings in both languages from Chinese. There are, however, words which are not borrowings, their similarities having not yet been explained in a satisfactory manner, the result being that some scholars believe that both Korean and Japanese belong to the Altaic group. The Korean-Japanese affinity is postulated by Aston, Kanazawa, and some other scholars.

2. The Dravidian languages are spoken in India. They include Tamil, Telugu, and a number of other languages. Possessing an agglutinative grammatical structure, they were regarded as akin to the Ural-Altaic languages. The theory about the affinity of Korean and Dravidian was established by Hulbert.

3. Korean has numerous borrowings from Chinese and is practically flooded with Chinese elements. It owes most of its vocabulary to Chinese and is an important source for the study of Ancient Chinese, because Korean has preserved many features of the former and particularly the ancient pronunciation of words borrowed from Ancient Chinese.

Edkins was the first to discuss Sino-Korean correspondences, dealing at the same time with Mongolian and Chinese, and Korean and Mongolian correspondences.

4. The primitive affinity of the Altaic and Indo-European languages has also found supporters, one of them being the well-known turcologist Karl H. Menges.

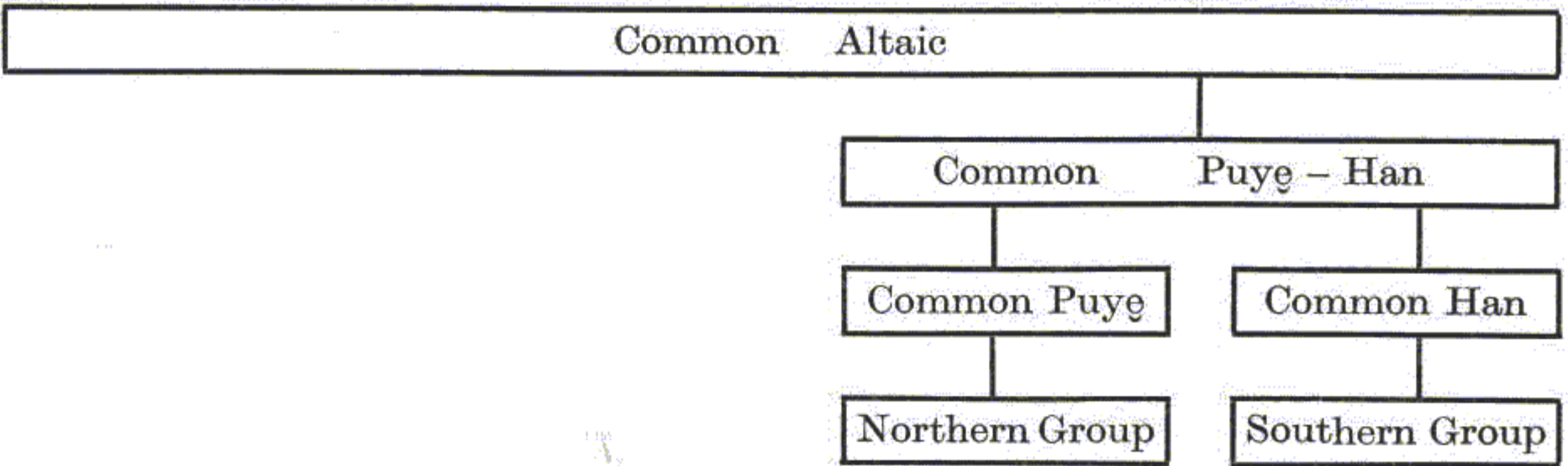
The best-known supporters of the Korean-Indo-European theory are Jensen, Koppelman, and Junker.

5. As for the Altaic origin of Korean, this is corroborated better than any other theory or hypothesis established so far.

It was established by first-rate linguists, such as Polivanov and Ramstedt who did not confine themselves to general statements but corroborated their views with numerous convincing etymologies. It should be also pointed out that Vladimirtsov was quite enthusiastic about the affinity of Korean and Altaic. Although he had not published his observations, he quoted orally such correspondences as Kor. *nal* “day” and Mongolian *nara* “sun”; Kor. *tol* “stone” = Mong. *čilayun* < Com. Alt. *\*tiāla-gūn* “stone” = Chuvash *čul* < *\*tiāl* “stone” = Turk. *tāš* “stone”, etc.

Much more important are Ramstedt’s works on Korean and its relation to the Altaic languages. Ramstedt believed that Korean is an Altaic language and has originated from Common Altaic, like Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, and Chuvash-Turkic. The same opinion is shared by Aalto.

Some Korean scholars also believe that Korean is an Altaic language. The following scheme demonstrating the origin of Korean has been suggested by Ki-Moon Lee, professor at the University of Seoul:



Middle Korean was based on Silla which belonged to the Southern group, and began with the appearance of Koryŏ which played the rôle of a *κωινή* and had absorbed elements of Koguryŏ which belonged to the Northern group.

At the present time, the Altaic origin of Korean is regarded as more likely than the affinity with Dravidian, Chinese, Ainu, or Indo-European, although some scholars have doubts about the Altaic origin of Korean. But then, as it will be demonstrated *infra*, some scholars even reject the whole Altaic theory.

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3.15. The comparative grammars of the Altaic languages available at the present time, namely Ramstedt’s *Einführung in die altaische Sprachwissenschaft* (two volumes) and that of the author of these lines (*Vergleichende Grammatik der altaischen Sprachen*, Teil I) are based on a large descriptive literature and comparative grammars of the individual language groups. At the present time, there are comparative grammars of the languages belonging to the Mongolian, Turkic, and Manchu-Tungus groups.

The oldest comparative grammar of the Mongolian languages is that by Vladimirtsov (1929). It is both incomplete and obsolete, containing formulations and etymologies which cannot be accepted at the present time. It is basically a comparative grammar of Khalkha and Written Mongolian, i.e., an enlarged version of Ramstedt’s *Das Schriftmongolische und die Urgamundart phonetisch verglichen* but includes some data on dialects spoken in Inner Mongolia, on Oirat, Buriat, Middle Mongolian (the language of the ḥP’ags-pa script), but also Manchu, Tungus, and Turkic. It does not contain any data on Ordos, Monguor, and Dagur because these languages had not yet been studied, and ḥP’ags-pa forms are in Vladimirtsov’s book misspelled, because at that time the correct readings had not been established, e.g., *daḥul-ya-yue* (p. 214) “proclaiming” (instead of *du’ulqaquē*), *bolyan* “city” (p. 147), a form artificially and erroneously reconstructed (the original gives *bolqaqun* “those who will do” which was misunderstood as *bolqadun* “of the cities”); *moṅk’a / moṅk’e* (p. 167) “eternal” (instead of *moṅk’a / moṅk’e*), etc.

A number of equations is wrong in Vladimirtsov’s book, e.g., Mong. *dabusun* “salt” = Yakut *tūs* id., Chuvash *tāvār* id. (p. 258), because *tūs* goes back to *\*tūz < \*tūr >* Chuv. *tāvār*, whereas Mongolian *dabusun* goes back to *\*dabur-sun* which would have yielded Turkic *\*yabuz >* Turkish *yavuz* but not *duz*; Mong. *čimügen* “bone, marrow” = Turkic *süñük* “bone” (p. 251), because Mong. *č*