KAZAKH-ENGLISH DICTIONARY

by

BORIS N. SHNITNIKOV

With a preface by NICHOLAS POPPE

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FOREWORD

The present Kazakh dictionary is the most complete ever compiled. It is much larger than the Kazakh-Russian dictionary by Kh. Makhmudov and G. Musabayev (Alma-Ata 1954) and is the first to be compiled outside the USSR.

The author was not a professional scholar and worked on his dictionary only in his free time. He achieved, however, remarkable results, and his work ranks with that of authors of other well-known dictionaries of Turkic languages.

Boris Nikolayevich Shnitnikov was born on October 4, 1886, in St. Petersburgh, Russia. His father was a well-known lawyer and his mother was a niece of Otto Böhtlingk, a scholar of world renown and author of the famous Sanskrit dictionary and of the first scholarly work on Yakut, one of the Turkic languages.

After graduation from the Tenisheff high school, a privately-owned educational establishment in St. Petersburgh, Shnitnikov studied at the Department of Economics of the Polytechnical Institute in the same city. In 1912, while still an undergraduate, he participated in an expedition sent by the Ministry of Agriculture to the Kirgiz and Kazakh regions. There he became interested in the language and customs of the Kazakh, the most numerous nomad people in Central Asia, and decided to devote the subsequent years of his life to their study.

After completing his training at the Polytechnical Institute, Shnitnikov worked in the main office of the Russian Merchant Fleet (the so-called Voluntary Fleet) in St. Petersburgh and, later on, in Vladivostok.

Subsequent to the outbreak of revolution in Russia Shnitnikov lived, in 1918, in Hongkong and in 1919-20 in London, where he worked as a representative of the Russian Merchant Fleet. In 1921 he moved to Paris, and finally emigrated in 1925 to the United States.

Shnitnikov never abandoned the idea of devoting himself to the study of the Kazakh language, and over the years collected materials for a Kazakh dictionary and grammar. He exhausted all the old dictionaries and collected a large number of words taken from various Kazakh books. To complete his work, however, he needed more free time than his full-time position in the Army Map Service allowed him. He obtained, with the help of Professor L. E. Dostert, a grant from the Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., and was given a room in the building of the Institute of Languages and Linguistics in which he could keep his books and

boxes of word slips. By 1959 his work had progressed far enough for part of it to be put in the form of a manuscript ready for publication. This was the first volume (A-M) of the dictionary.

During many years of collecting material for his dictionary, and the subsequent time of preparation of the final draft of the manuscript, Shnitnikov had the privilege of conducting his work under the supervision and guidance of Professor Karl H. Menges of Columbia University. In this connection, the undersigned wishes to thank Professor Menges in the name of the deceased.

Shnitnikov's health had never been good, and in 1958 he fell gravely ill. He never recovered completely and died on the 30th of April, 1961. His work remained unfinished, the second half of the dictionary represented by a number of boxes filled with word slips not arranged in any particular order.

The author of this foreword, who had known the deceased for many years and counted him among his dearest friends, once promised him to take care of his dictionary in the event that Shnitnikov himself could not complete it. This promise was kept, thanks to a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies. The second half of the dictionary (from N to the end of the Kazakh alphabet) was completed by Mr. Raymond J. Hebert, a candidate for the Ph.D. degree in Turcology and Linguistics in the Far Eastern and Slavic Department of the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. Mr. Hebert arranged Shnitnikov's word slips according to the latter's system and prepared the manuscript of the remaining part of the work. Shnitnikov's system was preserved without any changes in order to maintain uniformity, so that it would not be obvious where his work ended and Hebert's started. Mr. Hebert, in the capacity of co-author of the final draft of the second part of the manuscript, and the writer of these lines, as the person responsible for the completion of the project, wished also to present this work exactly in the form which it would have taken if Shnitnikov had succeeded in completing it.

It is hardly necessary to stress that preparation of the deceased author's manuscript entailed solving some problems. Most of the inconsistencies, omissions and sometimes errors, which the author no doubt would have eliminated, have been removed, but some of them have remained. For instance, the author did not always give the correct form of some verbal stems, omitting the final bi or i, believing them to be connective vowels, although they belong to the stems in question. In most cases in which these errors were noticed, corrections were made.

There is little to be said about the rôle of the undersigned in the completion of this dictionary. He was consulted from time to time by the author, some of his suggestions were incorporated in the work, and after Shnitnikov's death he supervised Mr. Hebert in his research.

It should also be mentioned that Prof. John R. Krueger and Dr. Talat Tekin, of

Indiana University, spent much time reading the proofs of the dictionary, making corrections and contributing to the improvement of this publication.

In concluding this foreword, it should be mentioned that Professor L. E. Dostert, Director of the Machine Translation Research and Language Projects, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., put the final draft of the first volume of the dictionary and all the materials belonging to Mr. Shnitnikov, which had been kept at Georgetown University, at the disposal of the undersigned in the most generous manner. Last, but not least, the American Council of Learned Societies is to be thanked for the grant which made possible the completion of this work.

Seattle, Washington, July 1, 1965

NICHOLAS POPPE

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