

Editor's Foreword

The Khanty Grammar

During his second journey in 1845–49, Castrén worked for less than three weeks with Khanty informants. This happened in the summer of 1845 after he had arrived in Siberia. He travelled from Perm' to Ekaterinburg and further on to Toboľsk, where he took the boat down along the river Irtyš towards Samarovo (today Chanty-Mansijsk). During this boat trip, he had an opportunity to make notes on the southern Khanty dialects.

From Samarovo, Castrén travelled down the river Ob' and worked with Forest Nenets, until he returned to the town of Surgut by the end of summer. There he checked his notes on Khanty and also collected additional material from the dialects in the Surgut area. During this couple of weeks, he outlined the Khanty grammar (in Swedish) and his companion Bergstadi translated it into German. After Castrén returned from his journey in 1849, he was able to check the German translation and oversee the printing of the book.

In this critical edition, most of the commentary is made based on the printed book, here translated into English. There are only minor comments on the differences between the printed version and the manuscript, as Castrén seemingly had control over the printing process, and thus the printed version can be regarded as his own synthesis of the grammatical and lexical notes.

The Manuscript

Castrén's manuscript Vol. V in the Finnish National Library consists of grammatical notes (Förläggningen till "Versuch einer Ostjakischen Sprachlehre"), the manuscript in Swedish (121 pages) and the German translation by Bergstadi (170 pages). In the German version, many paragraphs are written twice or even three times, of which the last has been printed and the first and possible second have been crossed out.

The printed version is a relatively true edition of the German translation (with minor differences). This, again, is not only a translation but also an edition. The differences between the Swedish and German versions come mainly from the order of presentation of the phonological modifications. The Swedish version also includes slightly more paradigms.

The Ostyak lexical collections make up Castrén's manuscript Vol. VI in the Finnish National Library. They consist of "Ostjakisk ord-förteckning" (Ostyak word list), 270 pages in a provisory alphabetical

order, Khanty – Swedish; “Ostjakisk ord-register” (Ostyak word register), pp. 271–330 ordered by theme/parts of speech; “Ostjakiskt Vocabularium” (Ostyak Vocabulary) pp. 331–381, again ordered alphabetically, translated into Swedish and also with etymological commentary (as in the printed version); as well as several “preparatory” versions of the word lists (383–545). Pages 547–629 consist of grammatical notes and paradigms. The original of the Khanty – German printed version is on pages 631–687 of manuscript Vol. VI.

The Structure of the Critical Edition

In what follows, I will first present a short outline of Khanty grammar as it is understood today. The presentation is based on the southern dialects, which were studied after Castrén (and the Hungarian scholars Antal Reguly and József Pápay), especially by the Finnish scholar K.F. Karjalainen, who collected an extensive material from these dialects in the beginning of the 20th century (Karjalainen 1948, 1964, Vértes 1975). The dialects became extinct by the second half of the 20th century. The Surgut dialects, which also play a role in Castrén's grammar, are spoken still today, and have been extensively studied by the Hungarian scholars László Honti (e.g. Honti 1977) and Márta Csepregi (e.g. Csepregi 1998), also in the field. The present knowledge of these dialects is based mainly on their work.

The main part of the book is the translation of the printed grammar with comments presented in marginal notes. It has double page numbering: running page numbers at the bottom of the page and original page numbers from the printed grammar from 1849 at the top.

The final part consists of Castrén's word list (“Wörterverzeichnis”). The word list is commented on with a special method of its own, and this method is described in the beginning of the list (page 78/124).

All references used in the grammar parts (both the modern and the commented grammar) and in the word list are presented together at the end of the volume.

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The editor