

August Ahlqvist: Tschuwaschisches Dialektwörterbuch

Edited by Klára Agyagási and Eberhard Winkler.

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Chuvash is the only surviving member of the Bulgaric branch of the Turkic language family, the older stages of which are poorly attested. Therefore, for the study of the Turkic language family as a whole, any linguistic material related to the Chuvash language is of great importance. In this context, dialectological and premodern data that extend beyond the standard written language are particularly valuable. It is known that Russian and other archives house several unpublished manuscripts on the Chuvash language from the 18th and 19th centuries.

The work under review, edited by Klára Agyagási and Eberhard Winkler, makes a significant contribution to making some of this material accessible to the academic community. The materials in question were collected by the Finnish scholar August Ahlqvist (1826, Kuopio – 1889, Helsinki), who is better known for his research on the Finno-Ugric languages. Ahlqvist gathered these materials in 1856–1857 from several Chuvash villages, including Išaki and Koz'modem'jansk, documenting data from both Upper and Lower Chuvash dialects.

In 2008 and 2010, the editors published a two-volume work that included a facsimile of Ahlqvist's original manuscript, which comprised three vocabularies and a Chuvash grammar, along with an untranslated transcription. The present volume is a critical edition of Ahlqvist's Chuvash lexical materials.

The book consists of a preface by Klára Agyagási (pp. 7–24), an introduction by Eberhard Winkler (pp. 25–36), a dictionary of Ahlqvist's materials (pp. 37–294), and indexes of German and Russian meanings (pp. 295–330).

The preface begins with an overview of the history of research on the Chuvash language since Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg's *Das Nord- und Ostliche Theil von Europa und Asia* (1730) and discusses Ahlqvist's place in this tradition. It continues with Agyagási's account of how Ahlqvist collected and organized his Chuvash vocabularies. In the following section, Agyagási provides detailed information on the phonology, phonetics, and orthography in Ahlqvist's manuscript, including a comparative table of phonetic transcriptions used by Ahlqvist, Heikki Paasonen, and the modern Cyrillic Chuvash alphabet with its phonemic transcription (p. 18). The preface concludes with a discussion of the structure of the headings in the critical edition.

The introduction is a revised version of the section titled *August Ahlqvist als Erforscher des Tschuwaschischen* (pp. XXXVI–LX) in the authors' earlier work. It includes a brief biography of Ahlqvist, an account of his journey to the Chuvash people, and his field research on Chuvash dialects. The introduction concludes with a short section on Ahlqvist's significance for the study of Chuvash and neighbouring Finno-Ugric languages.

The dictionary section presents Ahlqvist's Chuvash lexical materials, comprising a Russian–Chuvash, a Chuvash–Russian, and a Chuvash–Swedish vocabulary. The alphabetical order of this section (a, ă, č, e, ě, x, i, ī, y, k, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, š, š, t, u, ü, v) does not correspond to either the Chuvash Cyrillic alphabet or its romanization, which may cause some confusion.

Each dictionary entry begins with the romanized form of the literary Chuvash word and its meaning as found in the standard Chuvash–Russian dictionary by Mikhail I. Skvorcov (1982) and the Russian–Chuvash dictionary by Ivan A. Andreev and Nikolaj P. Petrov (1971). The second line shows the forms recorded by Ahlqvist in his vocabularies. The Russian meanings remain untranslated, while the Swedish meanings are translated into German. The third line provides comparative data from well-known Chuvash dictionaries by Nikolaj Ašmarin (1928–1950) and Heikki Paasonen (1908). However, references to Paasonen's work are limited to page numbers. The edition would have been more accessible if both the Russian and Swedish meanings had been translated, with the original translations provided separately.

The authors distinguish three types of headwords: bold and non-italic, bold and italic, and non-bold and italic. The first type represents words found as such in the standard Chuvash–Russian and Russian–Chuvash dictionaries. The second type includes words recorded by Ahlqvist from a single dialect and those given by Ahlqvist in specific morphological structures, even though their bases and derivational suffixes are otherwise known. The third type comprises words that cannot be identified using existing lexicographic sources. Additionally, many headwords are marked with an asterisk, likely indicating isolated forms without clear comparisons, though this is not explicitly explained in the preface.

Some valuable hapaxes appear in Ahlqvist's Chuvash materials. While some are etymologically obscure, others can be analyzed with reasonable certainty. For example, *yüšenter-* 'to moisten' (p. 113) is derived from a loanword from Tatar *yüčəš* 'wet', which ultimately traces back to Common Turkic **hödüš* 'idem' (> Old Uyghur *ödüš* 'moisture, moist'). *s^cum* 'leg' (p. 236) likely relates to Common Turkic *sān* 'body; limb, organ, a part of the body' (Dybo 2003: 188–189). *pot* 'swamp' (p. 170) corresponds to Common Turkic *batığ* 'idem', attested from Old Uyghur onward (Wilkens 2021: 151), though it has lost its reduced final vowel. *kürēk* 'gathering' (p. 139) resembles Common Turkic *kuvrag* 'crowd, gathering' but is more plausibly a loanword from a later form, such as **kuyrak*. *sükläs* 'to

carry' (Swedish: *bära*; p. 194) appears to be a spelling error for *śükläs*, equivalent to *sěkle-* 'to lift, to carry'. Finally, *sukl'as* (recte *śukl'as*) 'to maintain, to keep up' (Swedish: *uppehålla, upphära*) is a variant of *śükläs*.

As a researcher, I wish that this critical edition of Ahlqvist's Chuvash materials were published in English. Aside from the basic word list (pp. 215–242) in *Chuvash Manual* by John R. Krueger (1961), there is no reliable Chuvash–English dictionary. A collaboration between scholars with expertise in the Chuvash language would provide a strong foundation for a comprehensive Chuvash–English dictionary. Despite these personal wishes, the book is an invaluable contribution to Turkic and Chuvash studies. Hopefully, future studies will continue to explore such archival materials on Chuvash.

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