This Grammar inevitably bears the marks of Russian traditions in Manchu studies.

In Russia, Manchu studies began as early as the first quarter of the 18th century. One can, however, safely assume that in the 17th century, interpreters of Manchu, Chinese, and Mongolian must have participated in early frontier diplomatic relations and trade negotiations, in which Russia and China were engaged. For instance, the Treaty of Nerchin (1689) was drawn up in five languages, namely Manchu, Chinese, Mongolian, Latin, and Russian.

The Peking Ecclesiastical Mission, which existed from 1715 until the Treaty of Tianjin and performed secular functions, had played a great role in the development of Manchu studies in Russia. Members and students of the Mission became famous Russian manchurologists who created a considerable number of works of great value. Using the Chinese system of teaching Manchu, Russian manchurologists were the first scholars who introduced the Manchu language and writing to the Western society. They translated into Russian a number of very important Manchu-Chinese textbooks, which became well known in Western Europe only in the next century. One would not be mistaken in saying that Russian manchurologists of the 18th century initiated a distinctive school of Manchu philology, which devoted particular attention to original manuscripts in Manchu. Russian scholars collected these valuable literary monuments, which in the course of time came to constitute the foundation of the richest collections of the Asia Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Academy of Sciences. They also translated a considerable number of these works into Russian.

Unfortunately, the majority of these works still remain unpublished. Many of them are now kept in the Archives of Orientalists in the Institute for Oriental Studies in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The published ones became an important part of scientific heritage not only in Russia but also outside the country and have not lost their significance to this day.

If the first Russian manchurologists, who were excellent connoisseurs of the Chinese language, investigated Manchu as a language closely related to Chinese, and may be, to Mongolian, the manchurol-
ogists of the beginning of the 20th century began to study the language as one closely related to the Tungusic languages. They devoted particular attention to the establishment and definition of the Tungus-Manchu language family.

At the beginning of the 20th century the Manchu language was a specialized field of scientific research at the Oriental institute in Vladivostok (1899-1920). In 1920 the chair of the Manchu language at the Oriental Institute was disestablished. This was connected with the loss of interest in Manchu, which, after the fall of the Qing dynasty (Manchu by origin) in 1911, ceased to function as the official language of China. Subsequently, the Manchu chair was re-established at the Oriental faculty of Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) university in 1947, but it existed for only five years.

After this period, Russian scholars were chiefly interested in Manchu in regard to its relationship to other languages of the Tungus-Manchu language family. They mainly searched for those language traits, which were lacking for the establishment of the altaic-parent language and for the determination of the place of Manchu among other Altaic languages including Tungusic.

The necessity to create standard languages and writing systems for Tungusic peoples in the 1930s caused an intensive investigation of all Tungusic languages and dialects scattered over the vast spaces of Siberia and the Far East. During this time a great number of collections of fieldwork texts, textbooks, and dictionaries were made. This was also a time when similarities and distinctions between Manchu and other Tungusic languages were brought under detailed scrutiny.

V.A. Avrorin and E.P. Lebedeva who taught me Manchu and some other Tungusic languages at University, were among scholars who participated in a comprehensive project to develop writing systems for the Northern Minority languages in Russia. They were also among those who were involved in the creation of the standard Tungusic languages, wrote scientific grammars of these languages, dictionaries, and textbooks. Doing their fieldwork in Siberia and the Far East, they studied not only the languages, but the history, ethnography, religion, and the way of life of the Tungusic peoples as well. Familiar not only with Manchu, but also (without exaggeration) with most Tungusic languages, both of them studied the Tungus-Manchu languages, always bearing in mind the similarities be-
tween their grammatical structures. I have tried to follow their example. As it happened, I have been the co-author of the last book, published by E.P. Lebedeva. This is a book dedicated to the language of the Manchu tribe Sibe and partly to the history of these people. The last book on which V.A. Avrorin worked was Manchu Grammar. He didn’t finish the manuscript. For more than 20 years Avrorin’s unfinished book was inaccessible to scholars. Recently it was prepared for publication by A.M. Pevnov and M.M. Khasanova and published in Russia (Avrorin, 2000). The grammar that we suggest to the reader was written before Avrorin’s book came out of press.

My first acknowledgment should go to V.A. Avrorin and E.P. Lebedeva who awakened my interest in studying Tungus-Manchu languages. They also introduced me to the prominent Russian tinguusologist, A.F. Boitzova, under whose guidance I wrote my dissertation dedicated to certain verbal categories of Evenki many years ago and who displayed a keen interest in my work until her last days. I am very grateful to her.

In the seventies I worked with a group of scholars at the Institute of History, Philology, and Philosophy of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Under the leadership of Prof. Maya Iv. Cheremisina, this group carried out a comparative typological study of complex (polypredicative) sentences in the languages of Siberia. At that time I had a good opportunity to investigate syntactic structures of different Tungus-Manchu languages trying to find similar and distinct features among them. The scholars of this research group had shared with me their works in progress, and over the years I greatly benefited from their aid, especially M.Iv. Cheremisina, to whom I owe special thanks.

The bulk of the research presented in this Grammar was done at the Department of Linguistics of the Institute for Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. I am sincerely grateful to my colleagues from the Institute for their encouragement and instructive discussions. Many of them were of great help to me. Dr. Zoya M. Shalyapina helped me prepare my first articles in English for publication. We spent many hours not only trying to formulate the statements as accurately as possible, but also trying to specify the statements themselves and discussing many linguistic problems. Prof. Evgeniya I. Shutova, a sinologist, taught me Chinese when ten years ago I realized that my work would not be possible without reading books of Chinese specialists in Manchu. I was able to appreciate her
help when I was reading Manchu grammars recently published in
China. I have always been able to consult with Prof. Mariya N.
Orlovskaia, a specialist in old and contemporary Mongolian, on any
questions concerning Mongolian studies and enjoyed her friendly
support over the years. I also enjoyed communicating with Dr.
Bulyash H. Todaeva, a specialist in many Mongolian languages,
whose books are well-known among specialists. I always had the
opportunity to access information about any Altaic publications from
Dr. Lev R. Kontzevich, a specialist in Korean, whose encyclopaedic
knowledge, provided me with many useful references. I have great­
ly benefited over the years from the aid of Prof. Vladimir M. Alpa­
tov, a specialist in Japanese and general linguistics.

My special thanks are owed to Dr. Tamara G. Pogibenko who
took the trouble of editing the manuscript. The importance of her
critical judgment and instructive help can scarcely be exaggerated.
I enjoyed working together trying to find better ways of treating
specific questions.

For many years I have had the opportunity to collaborate with
colleagues from the Department of Altaic languages of the Institute
of Linguistics of the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Academy
of Sciences. Conferences that were dedicated to Tungus-Manchu
studies, and held under the leadership of Prof. Alexander M.
Scherbak, always led to further research. Fruitful collaboration with
specialists from St. Petersburg, especially with Tatiana A. Pang, has
continued until recently.

A few words should be said about the extra-linguistic situation at
the time when I started my work on Manchu Grammar. For many
well-known reasons, scholars in Russia did not have absolute free­
dom either in getting foreign literature concerning their speciality
or in participating in conferences that were conducted outside Russia.
These circumstances inevitably caused a lack of information on both
sides. Scholars in Russia often had no opportunity to become ac­
quainted with recent results in their field, which had been obtained
in the West, likewise Western scholars did not always know about
some of the interesting results obtained in Russia.

In my scientific career, the Permanent International Altaistic
Conference (PIAC) under the leadership of Prof. Denis Sinor has
played a role of great importance. Many of my papers, delivered
at the meetings of the Conference, were subsequently published in
the Proceedings of the PIAC. It would not be an exaggeration to
say that to a great degree this book is a product of inspiration received from Prof. Denis Sinor. It was he who gave me the idea itself. It was he who during the time of writing and researching inspired me with enthusiasm and encouraged me to further investigation and prevented me from losing courage. Naturally, I would not like him to be too disappointed with the final product. And, of course, he must not be held responsible for any of my inaccuracies or mistakes.

With the help of the conference, I have had the opportunity to collaborate with my Western colleagues. In 1986, during the meeting in Tashkent, I made the acquaintance of Prof. Giovanni Stary who has been of very great help to me during many years. He provided me with new publications on Manchu studies carried out in China. I have appreciated this greatly not the least because until recently it was rather difficult to get Chinese publications on Manchu studies in Russia.

Prof. Stary also published my first articles in English in the “Asiatic Journal” where he has been editor in chief and in a new series “Aetas Manjurica” that has been launched by him together with Martin Gimm and Michael Weiers. I would like to stress that Prof. Stary and the series “Aetas Manjurica” have greatly promoted cooperation among scholars engaged in Manchu studies, from every corner of the globe.

During many years I enjoyed the help, friendship and support of many other people whom I met at the Conference.

I am particularly beholden to Prof. Hans-Peter Vietze who has kindly provided me with the Manchu font.

I am very thankful to Dr. Tak-sing Kam from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology for instructive discussions and useful references he has provided, and to many many others who in different forms provided help, not limited to the writing of this book.

Apart from the PIAC, many other institutions and people lent me their assistance and support when my undertaking was just a project.

In 1989-1990, I spent half a year in China, at the Liaoning University, and at that time I had contact with Chinese scholars. Specialists in Manchu studies of the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences were always ready to render assistance in my work. I was very fortunate to meet Prof. Li Shulan and Prof. Hu Zengyi from the Institute of Nationality Studies in Peking and enjoyed fruitful
discussions with the staff from the Institute of Manchu studies in Harbin, including its former director Prof. Liu Jinsiyan.

I am very grateful to colleagues and friends from the University of Auckland in New Zealand, who provided personal and professional help. I enjoyed delivering papers at the Linguistic seminar under the leadership of Dr. Frank Lichtenberk. I gratefully acknowledge the suggestions that I have received in discussing my papers with the members of the Seminar.

I am particularly indebted to Prof. Ian Lilly and Dr. Mark Swift, specialists in Russian from the University of Auckland, whose instructive help and very useful advice were always of great importance to me during my work.

I owe very special thanks to Louise Gauld for helping with my English grammar and style. This book would not have been possible without her assistance. She has checked the whole manuscript for readability and ultimately for common sense and I am sorry to say that sometimes it was not very easy to do. I am very thankful to her for all that she has done, beyond any call of duty.

I am also very grateful to Sanja Brankov whose diligent editorial work significantly improved the clarity of exposition.

At the starting point of my research, from 1996 until 1997, I was subsidized by the Pacific Cultural Foundation of Taiwan. I thank the President of the Foundation Yu-sheng Chang, the Vice-president Nathan Yu-jen Lai, and the Chief of the academic section Margaret Chan with whom I collaborated very fruitfully.

As the readers of this book will note, I often give references to the publications of Jerry Norman and Pamela-Kyle Crossley whom I do not know personally but whose books and articles were of great help to me. The readers of this book will perhaps notice that I have not included, for different reasons, references to some publications of Western and Asian specialists. Hopefully, I have compensated for this by bringing to scientific notice a number of works of Russian specialists, which have been previously unknown to Western readers.

And last but not least, I am particularly beholden to my husband Dr. Arkadii M. Slinko whose speciality is far apart from linguistics (although mathematics and structural linguistics are not as far from each other as people used to think), but who, over the years, has shown great patience and rendered his assistance in different ways.