
BOOK REVIEWS

Tatiana A. Pang, *Descriptive Catalogue of Manchu Manuscripts and Blockprints in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Russian Academy of Sciences. Issue 2* — *Описание маньчжурских рукописей и ксилографов Санкт-Петербургского филиала Института востоковедения Российской Академии наук. Вып. 2*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001, 218 pp, plus facsimiles. — Aetas Manjurica, 9.

T. Pang's work is a closing one which crowns years long labours of Russian specialists in Manchu studies who were engaged in the cataloguing and scholarly description of Manchu manuscripts and xylographs kept in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies collection. These materials are justly considered to be the richest in the world, not to count Manchu manuscripts and xylographs preserved in the collections of China. The catalogue is marked as Issue 2 to indicate that it is the continuation of M. P. Volkova's catalogues of Manchu manuscripts and blockprints preserved in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies collection¹.

The "Descriptive Catalogue" under review includes an introduction, description of manuscripts and xylographs, and indices. The introduction (pp. IX—XXVII), which is very informative, provides a detailed account of the Manchu collection's formation, the beginning of which can be traced back to the early eighteenth century. The author gives her assessments of scholarly importance of the collection and the degree of its investigation. She also indicates the most valuable or rare copies, among which T. Pang names a few unique samples representing Manchu writings. In addition, the introduction includes the description of (i) seven Manchu manuscripts from the archive of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies; (ii) a rare four-language Peking xylograph from the Tibetan collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies; and (iii) four Manchu-Chinese xylographs from the Chinese collection of the Institute (pp. XXVII—XXXVI).

The main body of the catalogue contains a description of 411 Manchu manuscripts and xylographs not covered in the first issue, and a description of newly acquired Manchu books (pp. 1—172). The material in the catalogue is organised thematically, as in the previous catalogues of Manchu manuscripts and blockprints by M. Volkova (see n. 1). It

should be noted that such thematic catalogues and descriptions provided with alphabetical indices are most common reference-books easy to use.

Each item follows the scheme worked out at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies for other catalogues. For manuscripts, the scheme consists of the following points: each entry contains the title in Manchu, Chinese or other language. If Chinese, the title in Roman transliteration is accompanied by its Chinese equivalent in characters, then short description of the manuscript follows: information on the name of the author or those involved in the work, pagination, type of paper, size, ink, type of bounding, date, notes on introduction, marginalia, and colophon are given; condition of manuscript is also indicated. Entries are provided with information concerning previous owners. For blockprints, information on printing house is also present.

In our view, this scheme, as a whole, is good enough to enable the scholar to offer the reader all necessary information in a condensed form. The great majority of the materials in the catalogue are blockprint editions. Judging by the bibliographic notes at the end of the book, many of those are represented in other Manchu manuscript collections. But there is a great deal of them which are to be found only in the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies. Most of them are manuscripts dealing with regulations in the Russian-Chinese border area (Nos. 87—102), imperial letters and memorials (Nos. 103—25), unknown Manchu translations of Chinese novels (Nos. 214—6), shaman prayers, collected by A. V. Grebenshikov in Manchuria (Nos. 339—44), geographical maps of the Qing empire compiled by Jesuits (Nos. 406—9), etc.

As a rule, xylographs well known to specialists and xylographs newly introduced into scholarly circulation are provided with brief annotations. Inexplicably, there are minor deviations from this scheme: in contrast with Manchu manuscripts, which are provided with annotations, the xylographs of Buddhist content have no, even brief, explanatory notes (Nos. 357—390).

Some manuscripts, with not very extended text, for example, imperial orders or patents, are given in the catalogue in full transliteration (Nos. 107, 109—116, 118—124). In all cases the description includes cited passages from the beginning and end of the text. The presence of such kind of

¹ M. P. Volkova, *Opisanie man'chzhurskikh rukopisei Instituta narodov Azii i Afriki* (Description of Manchu Manuscripts at the Institute of Asian and African Peoples) (Moscow, 1965); *idem*, *Opisanie manchzhurskikh ksilografov Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR* (Description of Manchu Xylographs at the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Oriental Studies), issue 1 (Moscow, 1988).