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B. A. SEREBRENNIKOV AS TURKOLOGIST-COMPARATIVIST AND PROBLEMS OF ALTAIC STUDIES

Abstract

B. A. Serebrennikov's biography is an excellent example of scientific preparation and research of a universal comparativist who was able to resolve challenging issues of historical-comparative studies of languages belonging to different language families and groups. Criticizing Altaic theory as a theory of Altaic languages kinship, B. A. Serebrennikov did not completely reject it; he compared the challenge with Turkic, Mongolian and Tungus-Manchurian languages to the one that researchers face in their historic-comparative studies of languages from other families. Despite the criticism of certain statements of his opponents, he did not aim at ruining the Altaic theory as such but called on researchers to improve it through looking for better proof for the kinship.

After 30 years since publishing of B. A. Serebrennikov's works, the orthodox Altaic concept that acknowledges the kinship of Turkic, Mongolian, Tungus-Manchurian, Korean and Japanese languages has made their positions stronger, Turkic-Mongolian-Tungus-Manchurian contacts and lexical isoglosses have been enriched by new material, and "Counter-Altaic" concept denying the kinship of Altaic languages has perished as a theory not having found enough positive facts to support itself.

Keywords: Turkic studies, historical phonetics, historical morphology and syntax, kinship, language contacts, reconstruction.

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