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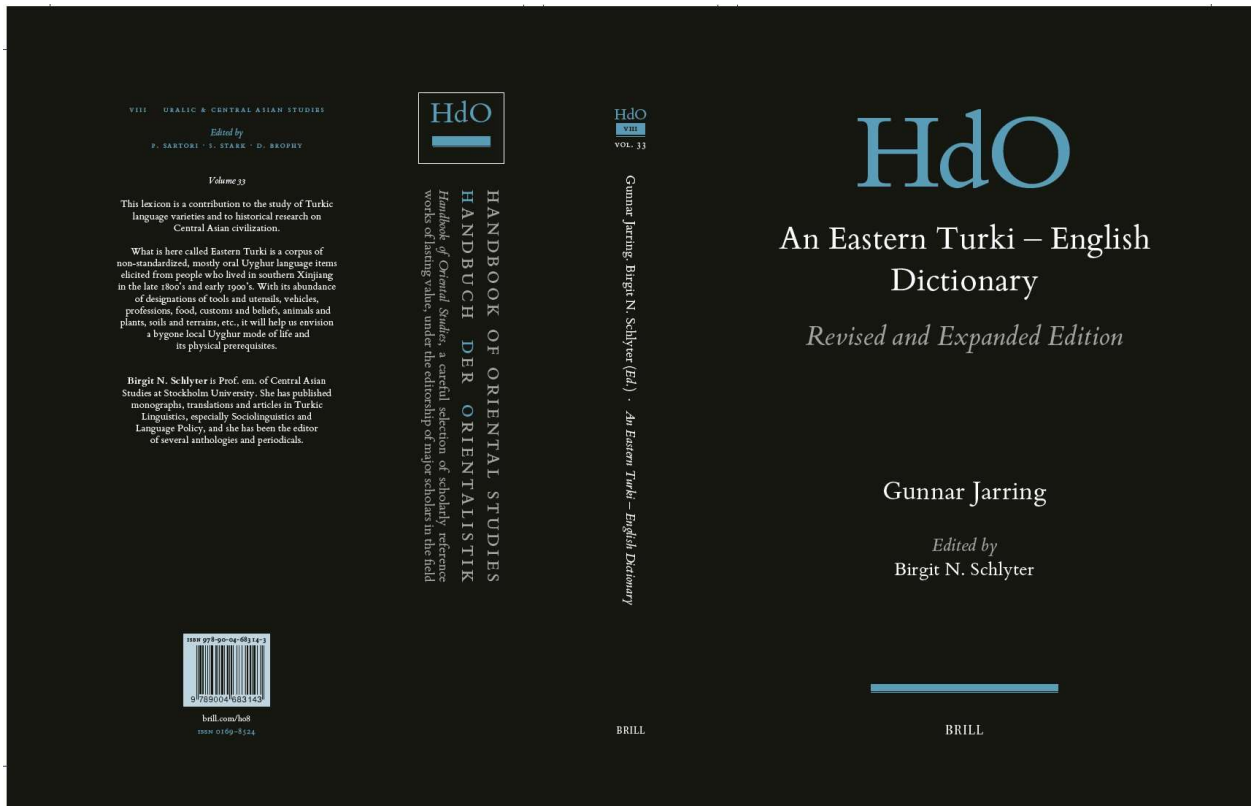
An Eastern Turki – English Dictionary, 2nd edn

Compiled by Gunnar Jarring (1907–2002)



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From the editor, Birgit N. Schlyter:

The original corpus of the second edition of *An Eastern Turki – English Dictionary* was compiled by the Swedish Turkologist, Ambassador Gunnar Jarring, over a period of more than seventy years, beginning with his graduate studies and fieldwork in the late 1920s and ending with his death in May 2002. It is a documentation of non-standardized, mostly oral Eastern Turki (Uyghur) language items elicited from people who grew up and lived in southern Xinjiang before the world wars of the 20th century and the founding of the People´s Republic of China.

With its abundance of dialect variants for designations of tools and utensils, vehicles, professions, food, customs and beliefs, animals and plants, soils and terrains, etc., this dictionary will help us envision a bygone local Uyghur mode of life and its physical prerequisites. From a Swedish perspective it has an important place in the promotion of Central Asian and Turkic Studies in the 21st century. Gunnar Jarring's contribution to this field of research cannot be overestimated. The anthology *Kashgar Revisited: Uyghur Studies in Memory of Ambassador Gunnar Jarring* published in 2017 bears witness to his significance towards this end.

After Jarring's death, his handwritten manuscript for a revised and expanded edition of his Eastern Turki dictionary from 1964 was digitized and eventually transferred to my Department of Central Asian Studies at Stockholm University for the completion and final editing of the forthcoming publication. A privilege of special significance for this work was my direct access to The Gunnar Jarring Central Eurasia Collection at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII) during my term as Director of the Institute, 2012-2014, and as Professor at Stockholm University affiliated with Boğaziçi (Bosphorus) University, Asian Studies Center, 2015-2017. This collection was originally part of Jarring's private library. At Jarring's own request, it was deposited at Stockholm University during the last few years of his life. In 2012 it was donated to SRII in accordance with a decision by and with funding from the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities.

The bulk of the sources employed by Jarring for his dictionary are at this point in time several decades or even more than a century old, sometimes including words and expressions that may seem to have fallen into oblivion, no longer recognizable either by native Uyghurs – Xinjiang-based or in exile – or by professionals in the field of Uyghur Studies. For me as a linguist, this has been an almost painful reminder of the rapidity with which dialects, if not entire languages, may be impoverished and forced closer to extinction.

Most of the unpublished source material referred to in Jarring's Eastern Turki dictionary originates from Swedish missionaries working at stations set up and run from 1892 until 1938 in Kashgar, Han-Cheng, Yarkand and Yangi-Hissar. In contrast to explorers and other short-term visitors to the region, the missionaries stayed on, lived with the locals and acquired a unique

knowledge of the territory and its people. Turkic Studies as a modern academic discipline in Sweden was to a great extent initially promoted by the linguistic and ethnological competence acquired by homecoming missionaries from Eastern Turkestan.

For further reading:

"From the Private Library of Gunnar Jarring and His New Eastern Turki Dictionary" (Chap. 1 in Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Birgit N. Schlyter, Jun Sugawara (eds), *Kashgar Revisited: Uyghur Studies in Memory of Ambassador Gunnar Jarring*, Leiden/Boston: Brill 2017), https://birgitschlyter.se/artiklar/KashgarRevisited.Chap.1.pdf

For information on The Gunnar Jarring Central Eurasia Collection at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul and its digital library: https://www.jarringlibrary.lingfil.uu.se