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TERSIS, Nicole, 2008 *Forme et sens des mots du Tunumiisut. Lexique inuit du Groenland oriental*, Louvain, Paris and Dudley, Peeters, collection Arctique, 9, 590 pages.

par Louis-Jacques Dorais

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Recensions / Book Reviews

BADTEN, Linda Womkon, Vera O. KANESHIRO, Marie OIVI, and Christopher KOONOOKA

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The year 2008 witnessed the publication of linguistic material from the two opposite ends of the Eskaleut speech area: Siberian Yupik and Tunumiisut (East Greenlandic). If both works constitute welcome and needed additions to our knowledge of these languages, their nature and objectives are different. Whereas the Siberian Eskimo dictionary, compiled by a team of native speakers and edited by ANLC's applied linguist Steven Jacobson, is chiefly aimed at a Yupik audience, Tersis's "Inuit Lexicon" has largely been written for specialists by a scholar interested in theoretical linguistics.

The *St. Lawrence Island/Siberian Yupik Eskimo Dictionary* is a much enlarged and complete version of a "preliminary" Yupik dictionary with a similar title, which the same compilers (except for Koonooka) and editor had published in 1987. It can be considered an almost definitive (although the authors do not consider it so, begging readers for suggestions on words to be added) and user-friendly reference work on the language shared by the St. Lawrence Island (Alaska) and Chukotkan (Russia) Yupiget.

The book opens with a 36-page preface and introduction to the Yupik language (its geographic range and lexicography), the sources of the present dictionary, its general organisation, data on orthography and pronunciation, the format of the main entries and appendices, and an exhaustive bibliography of lexical works on Yupik. Then follows the principal (almost 600 pages) section of the two volumes: the list of bases. Each Yupik base is listed in its Latin (used on St. Lawrence Island) and Cyrillic (used in Chukotka) orthographies. It is translated into English and, most of the time, followed by at least one example of its use and, occasionally, by lexical or historical comments. When the Proto-Eskimo form of the base is known, it appears at the end of the entry.

The dictionary does not end with the list of bases. It also includes a compilation of postbases (with its own introduction, and in the same format as for bases), a list of enclitic suffixes, and 14 appendices covering topics such as grammatical endings,

demonstratives, numerals, loanwords, kinship terminology, and Yupik place names (with maps) for both Chukotka and St. Lawrence Island. The book closes with a 175-page English-Yupik index.

Together with Jacobson's *Practical Grammar of the St. Lawrence Island/Siberian Yupik Eskimo Language* (ANLC, 2001), the *Dictionary* completes in a masterly fashion our knowledge of the Yupik language. One can only wish that it be translated into Russian—as was the Jacobson-edited *Naukan Yupik Eskimo Dictionary* (ANLC, 2004)—so that the Chukotkan Yupiget can gain access to the wealth of data within its two volumes.

Nicole Tersis's *Forme et sens des mots du Tunumiisut. Lexique Inuit du Groenland oriental* ('The Shape and Meaning of Words in Tunumiisut. A Lexicon of East Greenlandic Inuit') is a much more compact, but quite similar work of scholarship. Like the Yupik *Dictionary*, it includes maps (with a limited number of Inuit place names), an introduction to the sources and format of the lexicon, and a 240-page list of Tunumiisut bases with French translation, examples of use, and Proto-Eskimo or Proto-Inuit form, when known. This is followed by a 100-page list of postbases, in the same format, a Tunumiisut-English-Danish lexicon of bases and postbases (without examples or Proto-Eskimo forms), a French-Tunumiisut wordlist, appendices listing grammatical endings and deictics, and an exhaustive bibliography. As with the Yupik dictionary, verbal entries in the Tunumiisut lexicon are listed as bases rather than as full forms in the third singular person of the declarative, as was the habit in more traditional lexicographical publications.

What differs between the two books is Tersis's lengthy grammatical description (*Aperçu grammatical*) of the language of East Greenland, as well as the presence, in appendix, of a 23-page Tunumiisut text with morphological analysis and French translation. More striking, however, is the difference in tone between the two works. Tersis certainly wants her book to be useful to local users (*cf.* Tunumiisut-English-Danish section), but at the same time she aims for a more sophisticated level of linguistic analysis. Her *Aperçu grammatical* and her appendices on grammatical endings and deictics cannot be really considered user-friendly for readers who do not possess some training in linguistics. These are clearly aimed at specialists. This higher level of linguistic sophistication is compounded by the book being principally written in French rather than in Danish or English, thus limiting its potential local readership. However, this does not impair in any way the book's outstanding contribution to our knowledge of Tunumiisut, perhaps the most original—from a lexical and morpho-phonological point of view—of all Inuit dialects.

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