

Review

Tatar First Names from West Siberia: An English and Russian Dictionary, with Native-Speaker Pronunciation CD. By Edwin D. Lawson, Zinaida S. Zavyalova and Richard F. Sheil. San Diego, CA: HTComGroup. 2015. Pp. xxxiv + 66. Illustrations/maps. US \$14.99, Euro €10.91 (PB). ISBN: 978-1-49-537322-0.

This book is a result of a joint US-Russian study which appears valuable for both historians and linguists, because this is the first study that has been devoted to personal names of Tatars living in Western Siberia, namely, in the Tomsk region. The Tatar population of Tomsk and Tomskaya Oblast represents the most significant indigenous group (about 20,000 or 2% of the population) that has different traditions from those of the Russians in terms of culture, lifestyle, psychology, and religion. Tatars live both in the city and countryside.

Historically, the Tatar population was not ethnically united and had been formed of two components — the alien and the native — which were also not homogeneous and differed from each other in terms of household traditions, language dialects, and level of socioeconomic and cultural development. The Turkic-speaking population of the province was divided into Tomsk Tatars, who came from three tribes — Eusta, Chat, and Kalmak (descendants of Teleuts) — and the newcomer Tatars who came from the Volga and Ural regions. The newcomer Tatars played an important role in leveling the linguistic and cultural diversity among the Tatars of Tomsk. Kazan Tatars appeared in the Tomsk province in the first half of the seventeenth century, but the most intensive resettlement refers to the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. It is the newcomer Tatars who brought with them the Muslim religion that was adopted by Tomsk Tatars in the first half of the eighteenth century and eventually contributed to the ultimate unification of the Tatar population. Coexistence of the alien and indigenous Tatars helped to overcome the differences between their languages. The influence of the newcomer Tatars was evident in the fields of economy (e.g. in the wider dissemination of agriculture), clothing, food, naming ceremonies (and the borrowing of personal names that occurred), and others. However, this was not a one-way process, and there was also assimilation of the newcomers by local Tatars.

Quite a significant group of the Tatar population lived in the city of Tomsk, in a separate area called Zaistochie. In Tomsk the local Tatars mixed actively with the Kazan Tatars, and the latter subjugated the indigenous Tatars to their influence and spread their language and culture among them. The growth in the urban and rural Tatar population in Tomsk and the surrounding region was due to intensive migration during World War I (1914–1918) and World War II (1939–1945), the famine in the Volga region in 1921–1922, labor migration, and natural population increases. Currently, the Tatar population of Tomsk and the region is a significant ethnic group formed from the mix of Kazan and Siberian Tatars, Bukhara, and other Turkic peoples, who have their established culture, life, psychology, religion (Islam), and native Tatar language. Siberian Tatars speak the Ural-Turkish dialect, which differs from other Tatar dialects.

In *Tatar First Names from West Siberia: An English and Russian Dictionary*, the authors analyze the personal names of 50 Tatar families from the city of Tomsk and 50 families from Tatar villages in the Tomsk region. A total of 799 respondents were interviewed and, from them, more than 500 names were collected. The *Dictionary* gives a record of each name in English and Russian transliteration, its gender, the BBC–*New York Times* pronunciation variant, and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) pronunciation variant. It is especially valuable that the *Dictionary* traces the language which the name comes from (if the name is not of Tatar origin), for example: “*Alisa*, *ah-lee-sah*, English < Old French < Old German ‘of noble kind,’ possibly a form of *Alexandra*

(3).” The *Dictionary* also shows the meaning, historical reference, and frequency of the names, for example: “*Kooryeklyebika: koo-ryeh-klyeh-BEE-kah, Old Bulgar-Tatar ‘beautiful, imposing, magnificent lady.’ This name was found on Bulgar-Tatar graves from the 16th century discovered in Tatarstan (26).*”

As a result of painstaking, in-depth research by American and Russian scholars, *Tatar First Names from West Siberia: An English and Russian Dictionary* also provides information related to the language, social life, and culture of the Tatar people. It compiles and presents material in two languages — Russian and English — and can definitely shed light on Tatar anthroponomics. By expanding the scientific basis of study, the work contributes to a better understanding of Tatar language and culture in the Western world. The authors have rightly noted that the naming patterns were indicators of political and religious pressure, especially in those areas where Russian was not originally the first language. In these areas, Russification was a tool and a result of political influence.

The basic study that resulted in the *Dictionary* had two purposes: first, to find out whether there was a general scheme of Russification of the national Tatar minority, and, second, to discover the degree of Russification of the Tatar population in cities and villages. The authors prepared a detailed questionnaire to collect information about three generations of each family interviewed. The study identified nine historical periods in which respondents lived: the Royal Period (until 1917); the Civil War (1918–1920); the Soviet Period (1921–1940); the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945); the Post-War Period (1946–1953); the Post-Stalin period or “Thaw” (1954–1964); the Brezhnev Period or “Stagnation Era” (1965–1984); the Gorbachev Period or “Restructuring” (1985–1990); and Post-Communism (1991–present).

Another result of the study was to identify the three groups of names used by West Siberian Tatars:

- 1) *Old names* derived from Arabic, Persian, and Turkish languages, which are often compound names and contain the suffixes *-abd* (“faith”), *-din* (“religion”), or *-ulla* (“God”);
- 2) *New names*, which came from Turkey and Iran, or have Tatar origin. They may be combinations of several words from different languages, or combinations of different names, for example, *Musagitdin* and *Saydzhafar*;
- 3) *Newest names*, which are derived from Tatar, Russian, and European languages. They are modified versions of the *old names*, where some letters have been added to make them sound more harmonious.

According to the *Dictionary*, the most common Tatar names among urban and rural women are *Zulfiya, Alfiya, Nailya*, and *Liliya*; and, among men, *Rinat, Ramil, Renat*, and *Marat*.

The authors also explain that Tatars devise new names for their children, using words or phrases from Arabic, Persian, and Tatar languages that have beautiful sounds. Another trend in naming traditions is the desire of parents to invent new names by changing the initial letters in *old names* (e.g. *Elmira–Ilmira, Nail–Fail*). Generally, *Tatar First Names* describes three main tendencies in the Russification of the Tatar population of West Siberia. First, since the mid-nineteenth century, the Tatar anthroponymic model has been changed in accordance with the Russian naming pattern. Surnames began to form on behalf of the father and acquired the suffixes *-ov, -ova*, and the patronymic names with the suffixes *-vich, -vna*, specific to the male and female naming patterns in the Russian language, appeared. Second, with the formation of the Soviet Union, a large number of Tatars left their communities and became urban residents, then living closely with the Russian population. Children had to be taught in Soviet schools and adults had to work in Russian-speaking teams. According to the national policy of the USSR, Soviet citizens were to be equalized in all things. This triggered a wave of attempts to adapt to a new society in which Russians were the vast majority. It was a source of the so-called *Mismatches* (xix), which occurred when the respondents had one name in the Tatar community and another in the Russian community. According to the *Dictionary*, four times as many men and women in the city had mismatched names compared to those in the villages, and almost twice as many Tatar women had Russian names compared to Tatar

men. Third, forced to live in two cultural worlds, West Siberian Tatars had to use two languages and two naming patterns. Representatives of the Tatar intelligentsia realized that the only way to preserve their culture and national and personal identity was to remain Tatars and Muslims. Nevertheless, the majority of Tatars in Tomsk today have acquired Russian first and patronymic names (Russian first and patronymic names often having the same initial letters as the Tatar ones), or have changed their native names in full compliance with the Russian naming model. Moreover, the current generation of Tatars seems to choose first names for children based on personal preferences (the main criterion being beautiful sounds) with little reference to linguistic or cultural issues.

One of the most interesting features of the *Dictionary* is that it has a CD audio application with the correct pronunciation of personal names included. There are few anthroponomical dictionaries (none of Tatar) that have this essential element which allows users to hear the names pronounced by a native speaker. It is especially important because Tomsk Tatars have no written language and may be classified as an endangered indigenous people, whose language and culture are at risk of extinction.

The *Dictionary* could be especially useful in universities that have programs in philology and history, regional studies and cultural studies (like Tomsk Polytechnic University and Tomsk State University), as well as for local history and ethnography sections in international libraries.

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