

BOOK REVIEW: SEMIBRATOV, V. 2021. THE PHENOMENON OF A COUNTY TOWN. MALMYZH IN THE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN CULTURE. MOSCOW: “RARE BIRD”, 288 P.

The review of the monograph “The Phenomenon of a County Town. Malmyzh in the history of Russian culture” by V. K. Semibratov appreciates highly this work. The book depicts the city of Malmyzh history in the 17th—early 20th centuries as a place where the interaction of Russians, Tatars, Udmurts, and Mari inhabitants took place. This multidisciplinary study is based on multiple literary and archival sources. The objects of study are universal and specific manifestations of the leading forms of preservation, translation, transformation, creation of life activity models. The methodology for studying, describing, and interpreting is mainly based on a systemic cognitive model and partly on a diatropic model. This allows the author to: revise, organize and update the resources of Malmyzh’s collective memory; conceptually select clusters of facts in order to reconstruct the evolution of the local anthroposphere; reveal the mutual influence of the cultural dynamics of Malmyzh and another regions of the empire. Coupled with the techniques of micro-historical method this lets the author to identify and isolate all historical and cultural factors, components and motives from one another. The monograph is evaluated in the light of a number of ideas: “Retropia” by Z. Bauman, the anthropological concept “Past Discontinuous” by I. Sandomirskaya, transhistorical thinking, V. I. Ivanov’s historical philosophy in his poem “Man” and “Patriotism” by M. Krom. It is emphasized that some of Malmyzh’s relationships with the country had a status of social inventions. They are useful for the anthropologist and educator as precedents or prototypes of the relationship between the “native” and the “universal”. The monograph provides a transhistorical contact with the past. Therefore, the book stimulates the reader’s regional self-awareness, his reflection of motherland studies.

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