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Original Article

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## SERGEY A. TOKAREV'S CONCEPTUAL IDEAS ON THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE YAKUTS IN THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AND THE MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

*The article discusses the outstanding contribution of S. A. Tokarev (1899–1985) to the study of the Yakuts' social organization in the 17<sup>th</sup> century employing a modern theoretical and methodological approach. Although the researcher generally worked within the strict framework of the formational approach commonly accepted in Soviet historiography, sometimes he managed to go beyond it in an effort to be objective. This was possible due to his deep knowledge of not only ethnographic materials, but also of Russian written sources of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He studied huge arrays of cursive columns from the funds of the Siberian Prikaz and the Yakut Voivode's Hut, stored in the central archives, and used them in a comparative analysis with other sources. The original concept of the social organization of the Yakuts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that he developed in the 1930s and subsequently revised in his major works in the 1940–1950s, made an outstanding contribution to Russian historiography, supplemented it with new data and offered a holistic view of the historical and ethnographic realities of the Yakut late medieval society. However, S. A. Tokarev's intention to remain on reliable historical ground, based on specific documentary sources of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, provoked substantial criticism. His research was cast in a continuous search for the closest scientific definitions to the categories of social organization of the Yakuts, which he identified. He used the entire toolkit of theoretical approaches and research methods and his experience, based on the best traditions of Russian historical and ethnographic science. Modern achievements of Yakut studies of historical knowledge confirm the scientific significance and relevance of the main conclusions and observations of S. A. Tokarev.*

**Keywords:** *S. A. Tokarev, social organization of the Yakuts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, historiography, sources, Yakut studies*

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