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Original article

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THE STARRY SKY OF THE KYRGYZ

The article analyzes information on the folk astronomical knowledge of the Kyrgyz people, collected since the beginning of the 20th century (Kuftin 1916) to the present. Thanks to the support of the Russian Science Foundation (Project No. 22-18-00529), two expeditions were undertaken in 2023–2024 to collect new information. 121 informants from different regions of Kyrgyzstan were interviewed. The surveys were conducted in the form of in-depth interviews based on pre-designed questionnaires comprising 38 basic questions. Processing the questionnaire materials made it possible to determine the frequency with which stars, asterisms, and planets were mentioned and used, and frequency profiles characteristic of each of the selected regions were obtained. Based on these profiles, a methodology is proposed for assessing the similarity of astronomical knowledge in different regions, which made it possible to identify sets of stars that characterize “pastoral”, “agricultural”, and “urban” clusters that are linked to the types of farming in modern Kyrgyzstan. Based on the previously proposed methodology for determining the level of astronomical knowledge (Dubova, Nikiforov 2024), appropriate estimates were obtained for each region of Kyrgyzstan. The “highest rates” of folk knowledge were found in Jalal-Abad (Aksy district) and Naryn regions (Zhungal district). In general, it can be argued that traditional astronomical knowledge is best preserved in isolated regions with less influence from modern culture.

Keywords: *Kyrgyzstan, ethnoastronomy, assessment of the level of folk astronomical knowledge, spatial modeling*

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