

NEW ASPECTS IN THE STUDY OF FEMALE CORPOREALITY IN KARELIAN CULTURE

In regional Russian historiography, gaps remain associated with the study of women's everyday life. This is due both to the specifics of traditional culture, which tabooed conversation on these topics and to scientific traditions, which for a long time bypassed these problems. This article presents the results of archival research and fieldwork. It investigates some understudied aspects of the life of a Karelian peasant woman, connected with the physical and "cultural" body and the emotional sphere. These include menarche, visual markers of sexual maturity, the first wedding night, the first childbirth, and the ambivalent position of a woman in labor; the end of the fertile period. One of the article sources is the author's expedition materials collected from women born in the 1920s-1950s. Despite the retrospective nature of interviews, this information reveals previously unknown (sometimes quite emotional) aspects of women's everyday life. The material is presented according to the rituals of the life cycle, which mark the transition of a woman from one social status to another. At the same time, the author acknowledges the conventionality of this categorization since female corporeality was not limited to birth, marriage, and death but had many other aspects.

Keywords: corporeality, women's history, Karelian culture, Karelian woman, history of Karelia

For Citation: Litvin, J.V. 2022. New Aspects in the Study of Female Corporeality in Karelian Culture. *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)* 2: 141–153.

Author Info: Litvin, Julia V. — Ph.D. (History), Research Associate in the Ethnology Section, Institute of Linguistics, Literature and History of the Karelian Research Centre, Russian Academy of Science (185910 Petrozavodsk, 11 Pushkinskaya Street, Russia). E-mail: litvinjulia@yandex.ru ORCID: [0000-0002-2369-4987](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2369-4987)

References

- Agapkina, T.A. 2004. *Mesyachnye* [Menseses]. Vol. 3. In *Slavyanskije drevnosti. Etnolingvističeskij slovar'* [Slavic antiquities. Ethnolinguistic Dictionary]. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya: 241–245.
- Bohac, R.D. 1990. Widows and the Russian serf community, In *Russia's women: accommodation, resistance, transformation*, edited by B. Evans Clements, B. Engel, Ch. Worobec. Berkeley: University of California Press: 95–112.
- Ilyukha, O. P., eds. 2012. *Karel'skaya krest'yanka v zerkale istoriko-etnograficheskikh istočnikov (vtoraya polovina XIX — nachalo XX vv.)*. *Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* [Karelian peasant woman in the mirror of historical and ethnographic sources (second half of the 19th — early 20th centuries). Collection of documents and materials]. Petrozavodsk: Karel'skii nauchnyi tsentr RAN.

- Ilyukha, O.P. 2007. *Shkola i detstvo v karel'skoi derevne v kontse XIX — nachale XX veka* [School and childhood in a Karelian village in the late 19th — early 20th centuries.]. St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin.
- Inkha, I.K. 2019. *V krayu kaleval'skikh pesen* [In the land of Kalevala songs]. Petrozavodsk: Periodika; Kukhmo: Yuminkeko.
- Keinänen, M. — L. 2003. *Creating Bodies: Childbirth practices in pre-modern Karelia*. Stockholm: Stockholm University.
- Konkka, A.P. 2014. Materialy po traditsionnym karel'skim prazdnikam severo-zapadnykh dereven' [Materials about traditional Karelian holidays in the villages of the north-west]. In *Na plechakh Bol'shoi Medveditsy. Izbrannye stat'i. (Yubileinyi sbornik k 65-letiyu i 45-letiyu sobiratel'skoi deyatel'nosti)* [On the shoulders of the Big Dipper. Selected statisticians. (Jubilee collection for the 65th and 45th anniversary of the collective)], edited by A. P. Konkka. Petrozavodsk: Karel'skii nauchnyi tsentr RAN: 125–165.
- Kosmenko, A.P. 2011. *Poslaniya iz proshlogo: traditsionnye ornamenti finnoyazychnykh narodov severo-zapadnoi Rossii* [Messages from the Past: Traditional Jewelry of the Finnish-Speaking Peoples of the North-West of Russia]. Petrozavodsk: Skandinaviya.
- Kujola J., eds. 1944. *Lyydiläismurteiden sanakirja*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Uskontotieteellinen Seura.
- Laukkarinen J. 1933. Suomalaisten naimatapoja. In *SKS toimituksia 186*. Helsinki: Suomalaisten Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Listova, T.A. 1996. “Nechistota” zhenshchiny (rodil'naya i mesyachnaya) v obychayakh i predstavleniyakh russkogo naroda [Feminine “impurity” (childbirth and menstruation) in the ordinary and perceptions of the Russian people]. In *Seks i erotika v russkoi traditsionnoi kul'ture* [Sex and eroticism in Russian traditional culture], edited by A. L. Toporkov. Moscow: Ladomir: 151–174.
- Litvin, J.V. 2020. Pech', kadka i samovar: simvoly statusa khoziaiki v karel'skoi traditsionnoi kul'ture [Stove, tub and samovar: symbols of the status of a housewife in Karelian traditional culture] *Quaestio Rossica*. 8 (5): 1505–1518.
- Logvinenko, E.S. 2019. Traditsionnaya odezhda [Traditional clothing]. In *Narody Karelii. Istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki* [Karelians. Historical and ethnographic essays], edited by I. Yu. Vinokurova, 127–133. Petrozavodsk: Periodika.
- Makarov, G.N., Ryagoev, V. D. 1969. *Obraztsy karel'skoi rechi. Govory livvikovskogo dialekta karel'skogo yazyka* [Samples of Karelian speech. Livvi Dialect of the Karelian Language]. Leningrad: Nauka.
- Mikhailova, O. 2000. Sledy arkhaischeskikh verovaniy v sovremennoi kul'ture (na primere otnosheniya k regulam) [Traces of archaic beliefs in modern culture (on the example of attitudes towards menses)]. In *Problemy arkhologii i etnologii* [Problems of archeology and ethnology]. Petrozavodsk. Vol. 2: 35–39.
- Mironova, V., Litvin, J. 2018. Young People's Joint Leisure Activities in Traditional Karelian Culture: Norms and Social Practice. In *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*. Vol. 11(2): 85–100. DOI: 10.1515/jef-2017-0015
- Mukhina, Z.Z. 2018. *Russkaya krest'yanka v poreformennyi period (vtoraya polovina XIX — nachalo XX veka)* [Russian peasant woman in the post-reform period (second half of the 19th — early 20th centuries)]. St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin.
- Nikol'skaya, R.F., Surkhasko, Yu. Yu. 1992. Banya v semeinom bytu karel' []. In *Obryady i verovaniya narodov Karelii* [Baths in the family life of Karelians], edited by Yu. Yu. Surkhasko, A. P. Konkka. Petrozavodsk: Karel'skii nauchnyi tsentr RAN: 68–85.
- Pashkova, T. V. 2018. *Narodnaya meditsina karelov XIX — nachala XXI veka: opyt kompleksno-go issledovaniya* [Traditional medicine of Karelians of the XIX — early XXI centuries: the experience of complex research]. Ph.D. diss., “Chuvashskii gosudarstvennyi universitet imeni I. N. Ul'yanova”.

- Paulaharju, S. 1995. *Syntymä, lapsuus ja kuolema. Vienan Karjalan tapoja ja uskomuksia*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Pushkareva, N. L. 2007. *Gendernaya teoriya i istoricheskoe znanie* [Gender theory and historical knowledge]. St. Petersburg: Aleteiya.
- Razumova, I.A. 2001. *Potaennoe znanie sovremennoi russkoi sem'i. Byt. Fol'klor. Istoriya* [Hidden knowledge of the modern Russian family. Byt. Folklore. History]. Moscow: Indrik.
- Sallinen-Gimpl. P. 2013. *Karjalainen nainen*. Helsinki: Unifada.
- Shikalov, Yu.G. 2013. "Podol'she v devushkakh pokhodish', pomen'she zamuzhem pozhivesh'": reproductivnyi period i brachnyi voзраст zhenskogo naseleniya Belomorskoï Karelii v kontse XIX — nachale XX v. [The reproductive period and the age of marriage of the female population of the White Sea Karelia at the end of the 19th — beginning of the 20th centuries]. In *Karel'skaya sem'ya vo vtoroi polovine XIX — nachale XXI v.: etnokul'turnaya traditsiya v kontekste sotsial'nykh transformatsii. Sbornik statei i materialov* [Karelian family in the second half of the 19th — early 21st century: ethnocultural tradition in the context of social transformations. Collection of articles and materials], edited by O. P. Ilyukha. Petrozavodsk: Karel'skii nauchnyi tsentr RAN: 89–110.
- Surkhasko, Yu. Yu. 1977. *Karel'skaya svadebnaya obryadnost' (konets XIX — nachalo XX v.)* [Karelian wedding rituals (late 19th — early 20th centuries)]. Leningrad: Nauka.
- Vinokurova, I. Yu. 2015. *Mifologiya vepsov: entsiklopediya* [Vepsian mythology: an encyclopedia]. Petrozavodsk: Izdatel'stvo Petrozavodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta.
- Zherbin, A.S., Kert, G.M., Morozov, K.A., eds. 1983. *Karely Karel'skoi ASSR* [Karelians of the Karelian ASSR]. Petrozavodsk: Kareliya.