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ETHNOGRAPHY IN EUROPEAN MUSEUMS: THE INTERPRETATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF TRADITIONS

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Original article

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CONTEMPORARY ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEOLOGY IN SERBIA: CULTURAL CONTINUITY AND THE SEARCH FOR NEW CONCEPTS

The article focuses on the modernization of ethnographic museums, as well as their significance in the contexts of identity, and cultural and social memory. Through an analysis of ethnographic exhibitions in museums of the Republic of Serbia, the article analyzes how these are presented, which topics are chosen for display, and how the collections are influenced by the concepts of 'new museology,' the anthropologization of ethnology, and an expanded understanding of the ethnographic field. Furthermore, the political changes have been an additional influential factor in Serbia. The reforming state showed interest in ethnology and ethnographic museum collections not only in terms of culture, but also for socio-political engineering. Consequently, in Serbia, the conceptual paradigm of ethnographic museums at the beginning of the 21st century required transformation. The article describes debates within Serbian academic circles, including criticism from colleagues, regarding the state of museums in Serbia. It assesses the role of the Ethnographic Section of the Museum Society of Serbia, the Ethnographic Museum of Belgrade, the Open Air Museum 'Old Village' in Sirogojno, and other museums with ethnographic departments, and describes the practical steps and examples of innovative exhibitions in the country's exhibition halls. In the author's opinion, Serbia's experience can be considered successful in many respects.

Keywords: *ethnographical museums, Serbia, new museology, identity, tradition*

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CONSTRUCTING AN ERA: THE LEADER'S MUSEUM, THE TYRANT'S MUSEUM, THE PEOPLE'S MUSEUM IN GJIROKASTRA, ALBANIA

Through the anthropological paradigm, this work analyzes the current transformation of presentation of traditional cultural forms, way of life and family values, using Albania as an example. This country has experienced a radical change in several socio-political, economic and ideological formations over the past century. The case study chosen is the Ethnographic Museum in Gjirokastra, the hometown of the country's communist leader Enver Hoxha (1908–1985). The anthropology of museum work focuses on managing perceptions of the past through artifacts and collective memory. It uses methods and approaches adopted both for the study of traditional societies and innovative strategies that used to manipulate public opinion and to impose ideologies. Over the last couple of centuries, museum spaces were the main places of contact with the past in most regions of the Old World, and they have not lost their importance to this day. In Albania, which lagged significantly behind the rest of Europe in economic terms, the start of museum work began to develop later, only in the middle of the 20th century. In Albania the first localities to be transformed into museum spaces were those related to the “recognized” leaders of the country, such as the Skanderbeg's castle (15th century) in Kruja or the Hoxha family's house in Gjirokastra. Expanding connections with the world, the globalization of the information space, and the development of tourism have contributed to the emergence of new forms of “implementation” of ethnographic knowledge and museum services — primarily through flexible historical narratives, the production of museum artifacts replicas, etc. The analysis proposed by the author is an attempt to decipher the complex relationship between an ethnographer and a museum visitor, an official and a consumer of goods and services, a person and society.

Keywords: museum, Albanians, ideology and exhibition, construction of history, Enver Hoxha, commercialization of traditional culture

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MODERN ETHNO-ANTHROPOLOGICAL MUSEUMS IN SICILY

The article is devoted to the current state of ethno-anthropological museums in Sicily, a recent phenomenon that has not received sufficient coverage in scientific discourse. The number of these museums is showing rapid growth, making Sicily a leader among other Italian regions and providing a unique example of ethnomuseification. With a long history of ethnographic museum work dating back to the beginning of the 20th century, Sicily built on this experience in the 70s. This was mainly possible thanks to the scientific community, who joined forces with the regional authorities in order to save folk culture and promote the economic development of the region through cultural tourism. At the turn of the 21st century, these traditions continued with the so-called spontaneous museification, when a lot of small ethnographic museums with various thematic profiles appeared, mainly in rural areas. Sicily has the highest attendance index of ethnographic museums in the country, not so much due to tourists, but rather to local visitors representing all segments of the population. This is a consequence of the policy of the Sicilian authorities promoting the value of local culture and the identitarian sentiments of the population.

Keywords: Sicily, ethnographic museums, traditions of museification, cultural policy of the region, spontaneous museification, attendance index

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MODERN ETHNO-ANTHROPOLOGICAL MUSEUMS IN SARDINIA

The article addresses the current state of ethno-anthropological museums in Sardinia, which has not received coverage in scientific discourse. Paradoxically, this region is one of the leaders in Italy and Europe both in terms of the number of museums (including ethno-anthropological ones) and the pace of ongoing museification, but at the same time it has the lowest index of museum visits, both by “internal” and “external” tourists. In an effort to explain this phenomenon, the authors, relying on various sources, including their own field experience, turn to the historical, socio-cultural, psychological, economic, and political realities of Sardinia. Interest in the region’s history and culture is growing, but at the same time, identity politics are becoming more radicalized, declarations of ethnic exclusivity are becoming more emphatic, history is being rewritten, traditions are being invented, cultural myths are being created, and cultural heritage is being commercialized with the development of tourism as a factor in improving living standards. Referring to individual examples of ethno-anthropological museums, the authors consider various approaches to Sardinian museum business (scientific and commercial) as reflections of social processes.

Keywords: *Sardinia, ethno-anthropological museums, intrinsic motivation of museification, tourism development, new museum strategies*

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“THE RIGHT TO THE MUSEUM”: BAMBERG MUSEUM OF MARKET GARDENERS AND WINE-GROWERS AS A PLACE OF HERITAGE AND CONFRONTATION

The article, based on extensive fieldwork and archival research, focuses on a small regional museum dedicated to the professional group of market gardeners and wine-growers in Bamberg. The author attempts to answer the following questions: if the museum as an institution preserves and exhibits objects of the distant past, how does it relate to a still active professional group? How do the gardeners and winegrowers use “their own” museum? Is it theirs indeed? The Market Gardeners’ and Wine-Growers’ Museum was created thanks to the initiatives and possibilities of certain individuals who had the necessary expertise and administrative resources. When two concepts and expositions — the initial one from the 1970s and the new one from 2011 — were compared, it was revealed that the museum exists in two modes. The first of them preserves and exhibits heritage, and the second one is practical: the museum serves as a meeting house for the professional association. An analysis of the gardeners’ community’s reactions to the 2011 re-exposure, in the context of the city’s and professional group’s changed cultural status, revealed conflicts over the right to the museum. While the previous rhetoric that the museum belonged to them maintained, the Bamberg market gardeners were actually pushed to peripheral and honorary positions, but lost the governing role they used to play before.

Keywords: Market Gardeners, museum, heritage display, City of Bamberg, intangible cultural heritage

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UPDATING CULTURAL HISTORY AND TRADITIONS: THE CASE OF THE SKANSEN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

Public discourse on monuments of the country's material, cultural and mental history plays an important role in the context of the actualization of historical memory and the achievement of mutual understanding in a complex multicultural society. Ethno-anthropological approaches allow us to view open-air museums not only as the phenomena of cultural and scientific life, but also as an educational resource which is clear and accessible to visitors of different ages and backgrounds. Skansen museum has managed to create exhibitions that lucidly present the complex issues of the historical and cultural patterns among the country's various ethnic groups, their traditional economic activities, everyday and festive life, and the formation of ethnic and cultural norms and traditions in different areas and regions. Preserving and maintaining historical traditions is especially relevant during periods of significant socioeconomic transformation. Such global changes have taken place in the world and in Europe over the past century (World War II, local conflicts, the migration boom of 2015–2016). The result of these serious socio-political changes was the emergence of a multicultural society in Sweden, replacing the previous monoethnic and monocultural society with its traditional ethnic minorities (Sami, Turks, Gypsies, Finns, and Jews).

Keywords: monuments of material and spiritual culture, museums, education and actualization of the history

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TRADITIONS AND MODERNITY

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Original Article

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OSSETIANS IN TURKEY: TRADITIONAL FOOD AS A MARKER OF IDENTITY

For more than a century and a half of the history of diaspora life, the Ossetians in Turkey have developed a complex identity. The components of this identity (civil, pan-Caucasian/Circassian, ethnic, and sub-ethnic) determine the nature of ethnic and cultural processes, and the mechanisms by which they adapt to foreign cultural environments while preserving and developing their ethnicity. The study of the existing system is relevant because it helps us understand the history of the gradual incorporation of Ossetians into the host society and the construction of their current identity. The study aims to determine the prospects for their national and cultural development and to identify the potential of the diaspora in the consolidation processes. The ethnological study of the Ossetians in Turkey will contribute to the rethinking of some established yet not totally correct notions about the modern diaspora. This article focuses on traditional food as a primary marker of the identity of the Ossetians living in Turkey because it is one of the most stable cultural elements. The study is based on field materials collected by the author during a comprehensive folklore and ethnographic expedition to Ossetian settlements in Turkey in 2015. Through participant observation, the traditional Ossetian repertoire of dishes and products brought by the first settlers was identified, as well as the influence of the Circassian cultural sphere on Ossetian cuisine and its preparation methods. This influence was first observed among the privileged classes in the historical homeland, and then continued in the new conditions of the diaspora. Turkish inclusions in traditional food, including ceremonial dishes, were revealed. Current processes of “renewal” of ethnicity, experienced by all Caucasian diasporas in Turkey, the growing interest in ethnic and cultural values, and the intensification of contacts with compatriots, have given rise to revival initiatives and practices. An analysis of these processes allows us to consider traditional food an innovative resource actively used in ethnocultural projects.

Keywords: *Ossetians, Turkey, identity, traditional food, revival practices*

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FROM CHUM TO APARTMENT: THE RHYTHMOGRAMS OF WOMEN'S EVERYDAY LIFE AMONG THE NENETS

The article examines the transformation of all spheres of women's everyday life during the transition from living in a chum to living in an apartment (not an evolutionary shift, but the seasonal rhythm of semi-nomadic life). Through a comparative analysis of two women's rhythmograms — Tatiana Soboleva in the tundra and Margarita Taiborei in the village, changes in the living space organization, economic practices, and social communication are revealed. Semi-nomadic life leads to a redistribution of activities, a transformation of the objective world, and an adaptation of traditional practices to new conditions. In the village, women face the need to combine their usual reindeer herding and housekeeping activities with the new opportunities and requirements of settled life. Social ties become more diverse and mediated by technical means, the range of social and virtual contacts expands. However, some traditional values, such as the importance of family ties and support for the native language, persist. The author concludes that the adaptation of the Nenets to a settled and urban life is a complex and multifaceted process, involving both the development of new practices and opportunities, and the preservation of traditional cultural elements in new conditions. Women play a key role in this process, ensuring the continuity of generations and the sustainability of the Nenets culture in an ever-changing world.

Keywords: *Nenets, women's everyday life, rhythmograms, new nomadism, nomadism, sedentary life, space*

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TRADITIONAL CONCEPTIONS ABOUT GENDER AND AGE STRATIFICATION IN CONTEMPORARY KAZAKH CULTURE (THE CASE OF WESTERN KAZAKHSTAN)

Issues related to the traditional gender and age stratification in a society have been repeatedly raised by researchers in the context of a general study of the age structures of the Central Asian peoples. In recent decades, however, the topic of the gender and age structure of Kazakh society, especially the topic of contemporary Kazakh conceptions of traditional age communities, has not been the focus of research. The main aim of this article is to introduce the dominant ways in which conceptions of traditional gender and age stratification are adapted in contemporary Kazakh society. Do these conceptions remain relevant, or are they gradually losing their significance in everyday life, dissolving in the modern information space, and becoming part of the historical memory? The article is based on field ethnographic research conducted by the author in Western Kazakhstan. The article uses historical, cultural and ethnographic methods. The functional significance of age communities in contemporary Kazakh culture is greatly reduced in comparison with traditional culture. It seems more appropriate to talk about the preservation of conceptions of the gender and age stratification in the society, rather than about clearly formed and rigid age classes. However, belonging to a certain age group determines a person's basic rights and responsibilities, his or her social status, stable behavioral patterns, place and role in the ritual system. The general attitude towards the biosocial rhythms of society and human life is preserved and appears to be a living functioning system. This allows us to conclude that ideas about the gradation of society according to gender and age still play a significant role in the lives of contemporary Kazakhs.

Keywords: *Kazakh culture, gender and age stratification, age symbolism, behavioral patterns, adaptation of tradition*

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MEDICAL IDEAS IN THE YUKAGHIR TRADITIONAL CULTURE

The article is devoted to the study of traditional medical concepts of the Yukaghirs. The information available in the works of travelers, missionaries and ethnographers of the 19th — early 20th centuries is often fragmentary and unsystematic, and the problems addressed in them have not yet been the subject of targeted study. The Yukaghirs' ideas about hygiene, health and diseases — that is, those values and meanings that accompany a person throughout life — have not been analyzed. The available material is systematized and analyzed in order to interpret its symbolic and semantic component. The study's methodology is based on Dilthey's hermeneutic circle, according to which any phenomenon must be understood by periodically ascending from considering specific details to a general panoramic vision. It was revealed that the traditional medical views of the Yukaghirs are characterized by mystical and magical ideas about diseases and treatment (personification of the disease, contact with spirits, etc.). These concepts determine the methods of treatment, which included both rational (herbal medicine, fumigation, cauterization, massage, etc.) and magical ones. They had a correct understanding of the anatomy of the human body and the functioning of its organs, as well as an irrational one. The ideas about hygiene, health, diseases and their treatment in the Yukaghir traditional culture were well-developed and have been preserved both in ethnographic records of the 19th-20th centuries and in the language, which allows us not only to create a picture of their folk medical knowledge, but also to some extent to determine their value guidelines and meanings.

Keywords: *Yukaghirs, traditional culture, ideas about illness and health, sanitation and hygiene, spiritual values*

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SOCIAL WORK OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE RELIGIOUS SPACE OF SEVERODONETSK AND MARIUPOL

The aim of this article is to assess how the Russian Orthodox Church in Severodonetsk (LPR) and Mariupol (DPR) is providing social, psychological and spiritual help to civilians affected by military actions. The study is based on empirical data obtained through interviews with Severodonetsk residents and a survey among Mariupol residents in 2024. It was revealed that the Russian Orthodox Church is currently carrying out activities to coordinate and systematically provide social, psychological and spiritual help to the affected civilians of the new constituent entities of the Russian Federation. The massive material support to the state during the SMO has become one of the important areas of patriotic service of the clergy and believers in 2022–2025. By now, the social and patriotic work of the Russian Orthodox Church during the SMO period has not yet received due attention from Russian researchers. The experience of the Russian Orthodox Church in the patriotic service to the Motherland, providing social and charitable assistance to the affected civilian population, soldiers, refugees seems relevant from the point of view of social solidarity.

Keywords: DPR, LPR, Mariupol, religious organizations, Russian Orthodox Church, Severodonetsk

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Original article

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SACRED TREES AND GROVES IN THE NORTHERN TRADITIONAL CULTURE

The work is based on empirical field materials from a study of the cultural landscapes and rural historical settlements of the Russian North (Arkhangelsk region and Karelia). The rural landscape is a cultural phenomenon that combines a natural and historical-architectural territorial complex rooted in traditional culture. Sacred, sacrificial, treasured or revered trees and groves are just a few examples of natural sacred objects that are (or were) widespread in the traditional cultures of various ethnic groups, particularly in Russia. Most information about them has been preserved in the zone of coniferous and mixed forests. In some regions (for example, in the Caucasus, Siberia, the Volga region and the European North) sacred groves have been preserved and are still in use today. The sacred groves were a hallmark of the traditional culture of the Russian North (most of the preserved groves are located in the Kenozersky National Park). The sacred trees also include roadside trees, the sign trees called “karsikko” by the Finno-Ugrians and “zalaz” by the Russians, and a special group of trees with negative, witchcraft semantics. Construction rituals acted as an integral sign system through which peasants protected their sacred values. The choice of trees used in wooden architecture was of great importance for construction, both practically and symbolically.

Keywords: Russian North, building rituals, sacred trees, holy groves

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THE CONCEPT OF WILDNESS IN MARI FOLKLORE ABOUT THE SPIRITS OF FOREST SPACE

The author examines the concept of wildness and the image of the “wild (forest) man” in modern Mari folklore. According to Mari beliefs, forests, lowlands, hills are inhabited by host spirits (chodyra kugyza, chodyra oza, leshii) and other demonic characters (ovda, chodyra iya, korem iya, targyltysh). These folklore characters, who can communicate with people, are described as anthropomorphic creatures. According to the local beliefs, they are not isolated from the natural world; rather, they are part of it. This allows us to consider these characters in the context of the image of the “wild man”, which is widely represented in the folklore traditions around the world. In Mari non-fabulous narratives, the main characteristics of the “wild man” are: 1) zoomorphic features; 2) ways of communicating with the human world; 3) the idea that demonic characters represent an ancient population of the region, and a separate biological species. The specifics of the Mari forest spirits are their feminization and defensiveness. Based on field materials collected among the Meadow, Mountain and Eastern Mari people, the author examines the local images of “wild” people, characterized by pronounced demonic features. In particular, the article highlights the main nominations, visual characteristic, and functions of forest folklore characters.

Keywords: Mari folklore, wild man, ovda, the owner of the forest, Mari demonology, unspeakable prose

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GRANDMOTHER'S SANCTUARY AT NYAMBOITO LAKE: THE MATERIALS OF THE 2024 EXPEDITION

The article examines a cult site located on Lake Nyamboito in the Lower Taz basin. The new ethnographic materials about the sanctuary obtained during the authors' expedition to Taz in 2024 supplement the only existing description made by Tyumen scientists Yurii N. Kvashnin and Aleksandr A. Tkachev in 2014. The study provides arguments for the Selkup origin of the sanctuary and determines the name of the revered spirit — Old Woman Ilyntyl Kota or Grandmother Ima Kota, the main deity of the Selkup pantheon. The sanctuary is about a hundred years old. Over the past century, the Selkups of Lower Taz have been assimilated by the Nenets. Currently, the sanctuary is used by the Nenets, who simply call the spirit “Grandmother”, and treat it as a Nenets spirit, and protect it from vandals. Such treatment suggests there was a reciprocal cultural influence of the Selkups on the Nenets. The ritual to honor the spirit, performed by the Nenets, is no different from the Selkup's ritual, but this points to the ritual's universal qualities common to most Siberian peoples rather than to cultural borrowings. Nenets informants told a family legend about how their ancestors came to the lake and built the sanctuary. However, the analysis of the legend did not confirm the idea of a Nenets origin of the sanctuary or many of the facts contained in it, which were probably “made up” by the informants, who tried to place the main episode of the legend in the context of general history. The increased interest of informants in their origins allowed us to conclude that a new ethnic self-awareness was forming among the indigenous population of the Taz region.

Keywords: *Selkups and Nenets of the Lower Taz, sanctuary on Lake Nyamboito, spirit worship ritual at the sanctuary, ethnic history, traditional culture and its modern transformations*

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MONOTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM IN MODERN RUSSIAN PAGANISM

The worldview of modern Russian pagans is based on the combination of monotheism and polytheism. The gods are considered emanations of the one God, manifestations of his various components. Modern Russian pagans believe that the world is unknowable for subjective human perception. This worldview concept is a manifestation of Plato's idealism in the modern world.

The formation of such a concept is facilitated by the presence of a single Creator Deity, who created the world, in the Slavic pagan pantheon (Rod or Svarog). Folkloric texts, such as "The Verse about the Book of the Dove" and the "Symbol of the World Tree" also provide examples that support the concept that unites monotheism and polytheism. Combining mono- and polytheism is a key component of the ideological structure of modern paganism. It determines other parameters, such as religious tolerance, the attitude towards dynamism and modernization of tradition, the syncretism of some pagans' worldview, the desire to comprehend the world (including through direct knowledge), interest in omens and reading signs, and the formation of specific symbols. The article is based on field research conducted in 2023–2024. During the study, the author conducted 35 individual and group semi-standardized in-depth interviews with pagans and attended various events related to paganism (primarily calendar rituals). Additionally, he explored neo-pagan literature, publications from specialized media, and social networks.

Keywords: neo-paganism, monotheism, polytheism, idealism, Plato

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THE WHEEL OF THE YEAR IN WICCAN LITERARY TRADITION

This article explores the formation of the Wheel of the Year — a calendar cycle of festivals originally created within Wicca, the world's largest modern pagan religion. Over time, this cycle has been adopted by nearly all branches of contemporary paganism. The analysis focuses on how the dates of these festivals were chosen in the written Wiccan tradition and examines the historical and cultural precedents that shaped them. It also considers the role of Victorian science and its methodologies in inventing these traditions, highlighting connections to the 19th-century wave of nationalisms that sought to construct pagan pasts. The study draws on foundational works by Wicca's key figures — Gerald Gardner, Doreen Valiente, and Aidan Kelly — as well as on the writings of Victorian anthropologists like James Frazer, John Rhys, and Margaret Murray, whose ideas heavily influenced Wiccan thought. Particular attention is given to the impact of the Celtic Revival and Anglo-Saxon mythology, popularized by J. R. R. Tolkien's works, on the process of festival creation. The article concludes that the Wiccan festival cycle is not just a set of ritual practices but also a framework for constructing collective memory. It draws on Victorian-era ideas about the ancient roots of modern festivals and the “survivals” they embody. This cultural invention born in the framework of romantic nationalism links contemporary traditions to a romanticized past, helping to establish Wicca as a recognized social institution.

Keywords: *Wheel of the Year, Wicca, modern paganism, romantic nationalism, Victorian anthropology, cultural memory, J. R. R. Tolkien, Margaret Murray*

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HOLIDAYS AND LEISURE

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Original article

© *Elena Fursova and Mariya Vasekha*

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' LEISURE DAYS IN THE TRADITIONAL CALENDAR AND ITS ALTERNATIVES IN THE SOVIET PUBLIC SPACE

This article aims to analyze the transformation in the structure of women's holidays throughout the 20th century, from the pre-Soviet calendar focused on the values of Orthodoxy and ethnic traditions to the Soviet holiday system and the present day. The authors attempt to find correlations between the number and content of women's days off from work in different periods of the 20th — 21st centuries and the social status of Russian women. Particular attention is paid to informants' stories when they explain the reasons for idleness, speak about their satisfaction from the increase or decrease in the number of days off and changes in leisure activities. The study is based on ethnographic field materials collected in the 1990–2000s in the villages of Western and Eastern Siberia. The authors of the article apply classical scientific methods of description, qualitative analysis of narrative interviews, and comparative method in order to identify common and different features in the typology and content of women's holidays among different groups of Russians in Siberia. In traditional culture, "idleness" was the most important aspect of a women's holiday. However, in the Soviet period and now, this criterion only corresponds to an officially non-working day: International Women's Day on March, 8. In traditional societies, the liberation of women from everyday work was not interpreted as a tribute to their special status (as wives or mothers), but rather as a way to avoid possible negativity for the entire community due to noncompliance with prohibitions on "women's work" on certain days. Thus, women invariably could not work on such days. "Idleness," or the conscious avoidance of "dirty" women's work, was perceived as a holiday in itself. The analysis of ethnographic materials revealed differences in women's and girls' holidays in traditional culture. During festive "maiden days," girls were exempt from housework and agricultural tasks but performed numerous rituals with significant folkloric elements and engaged in fortune-telling practices. The study considered the diversity of Russian and local Siberian ethnocultural groups and their holiday traditions.

Keywords: *holiday calendar, women's holiday, women's and girls' idleness, Friday, Soviet modernization, March 8, women's studies*

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KOREDUGA — “SACRED JESTERS” OF THE MANDEN (WEST AFRICA)

Koreduga or so-called “traditional jesters” are a rather closed group in Mali and Guinea, often referred to as a secret union. They can be found at any festival or even funeral. You can recognize them by their costumes and attributes — they are dressed in old ridiculous clothes or just bright costumes decorated with a lot of unnecessary things; they behave provocatively absurdly. But in fact, there is a whole philosophy of the Koreduga. Not only they perform an entertaining function, but also are good healers, conduct rituals, solve personal and social problems. They have a lot in common with shamans. They are called “counter-society” — because they say and do things that are the opposite of what is expected. The path of the Koreduga is difficult: it consists of several stages of initiation, as a result of which each Koreduga becomes a bearer of wisdom. The Koreduga consider the vulture as their symbol and have certain fetishes. The legends about the connection of the Koreduga with the vulture vary greatly among the Bamana and Senuso (peoples of West Africa). The Koreduga are also connected with the main secret unions of the Manden — primarily with the Kore society, but also with the Komo: they say that they connect the highest leaders of the unions with other people, carry out various assignments of the unions and participate in their rituals. Their role in society is great, the Manden peoples themselves are proud of their tradition and support it in every possible way. Although the Koreduga union is undergoing some changes, primarily due to Islam, it is still very popular and plays an important role in Mali and Guinea.

Keywords: tradition, koreduga, Manden

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HISTORIOGRAPHY, SCHOOLS, AND CONCEPTS

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Original article

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THE THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF STUDYING ETHNIC HISTORY

The development of the humanities and their integration with a number of natural sciences has greatly expanded the scope of ethnic history. Whereas the topic of ethnogenesis had chiefly been the domain of historians (with the help of some data provided by ethnography, archeology, and linguistics), starting from the second half of the 20th century, research in ethnogenesis was augmented by geography and religious studies. At the beginning of the 21st century, anthropologists joined the study of ethnogenesis. Today, it is not rare that ethnographers and geneticists publish jointly. Naturally, this synergy of fields requires profound research in ethnic history. The exact contribution of each particular field of study needs to be clearly demonstrated and defined. At the same time, it is imperative that the analysis of events and facts be carried out within the framework of historical dynamics. A critical approach must be taken to both published papers and original sources. Thus, one must distance oneself from the confines of the regional, confessional, or linguistic affinities of the cultures or ethnic groups being studied. It is true that such methods may very well turn out to be a priori. This, however, can easily be mitigated by employing a multidimensional approach to analyzing facts and phenomena. For example, research in genetics allows scholars to delve into the deepest layers of ethnic history. Similarly, archeologists benefit greatly from using strontium isotopes, which help trace the migration routes of humans. Linguistic transformations suggesting interaction with neighboring peoples must also be taken into account. Studying ethnic history requires a comprehensive methodology, for the complexity and multidimensionality of the formation of an ethnic group is too complex and multidimensional for any single discipline to study alone. Thus, an integration of several disciplines is required: chemistry, physics, computer science, geography, and many more can all provide the much-needed extra help. Modern sciences allow an ethnographer, armed with interdisciplinary, systemic, and transdisciplinary approaches, to step outside of their comfort zone and take a broader look at the world. This, however, requires the scholar to be at least minimally familiar with many disciplines, for a comprehensive approach the boundaries between the various fields of study become blurred, and a synthesis of sciences emerges. A philosopher would say that the borders are being washed away and the methods are being smelted. Such rebirth of the methodology, progressing from simple to complex, creates metascience, which itself facilitates a holistic description of the phenomenon in question — in our case, an all-embracing history of an ethnic group.

Keywords: *history, ethnic group, theory, methodology, transdisciplinary approach*

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“EUGENICS OR LIFE”: THE FATE OF ONE RESEARCH DIRECTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FORMATION OF SOVIET SOCIALISM (1920–1930S)

The article examines the problem of the development of eugenic ideas in Soviet society in the 1920s and 1930s. The author concludes that the desire of eugenicists to radically improve the human species is related to the ideas of socialist transformations. Eugenics as a science about human nature provided broad opportunities for social construction. This was one of the reasons for the initial support of eugenics, as evidenced by the establishment of the Russian Eugenics Society at the Institute of Experimental Biology in 1920. However, as L. D. Trotsky's ideas about the “permanent revolution,” which included revolutionary views on the possibility of creating a new man, were excluded from the development strategy of the USSR, eugenics ceased to enjoy state support. The conflict between eugenics and Stalin's concept of building socialism was caused, in particular, by different attitudes to the influence of the environment on the ability of humans and animals to acquire hereditary traits. The desire to improve the everyday lives of Soviet citizens did not align with the ideas of eugenicists about everyday asceticism and the difficulties of survival as the most effective factors of natural selection. The author suggests that the reasons for the negative attitude toward eugenics in the USSR in the early 1930s should be seen not only in its “bourgeois” nature, but also in its “mechanistic” view of society as a field for unlimited biological experimentation.

Keywords: eugenics, soviet society, new man

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ETHNIC POLICY OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE IN OVERCOMING THE AUTONOMIES' UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDDLE VOLGA REGION IN THE 1920S–1930s

The study describes the basic principles of the ethnic policy of the Soviet government in the 1920–1930s, highlighting its stages, most prominent aspects, and the main functional directions. Among the most important aspects of the ethnic policy in the given period were the national-territorial autonomies and their institutionalization, administrative-territorial division and economic zoning, titular peoples and national minorities in the autonomies of the Middle Volga region, the formation of a Soviet in content, but ethnic in form culture of the autonomous formations within the RSFSR and the indigenization of peoples. Particular emphasis is placed on the Middle Volga region as a multi-ethnic region of the country. Significant attention is given to analyzing the Soviet government's attitude toward the status of the Russian people at certain stages of national policy and studying the processes associated with its active participation in overcoming the autonomies of the RSFSR's uneven development in the 1920s–1930s. It is concluded that by the end of the 1930s the Soviet government was able to equalize the level of socio-economic and cultural development of non-Russian peoples and their autonomies, to stabilize and strengthen the system of public administration, the natural result of which was the 1936 Constitution of the USSR and the 1937 Constitution of the RSFSR. As a result, the regional associations dissolved after completing their primary objective, and the autonomies, having significantly advanced their socio-economic and cultural development, left the regional associations to become independent in their subsequent interactions with the Center.

Keywords: *ethnic policy, Russian people, Middle Volga region, USSR*

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THE STRUCTURE OF MORPHOFUNCTIONAL CORRELATIONS AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS AS A MIRROR OF THE ANTHROPOGENIC PRESSURE IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL NICHE

Correlation is interpreted as a valid marker of a population's adaptive variability. The paper focuses on the correlation structure of morphofunctional indices of children aged 9, 13, and 15 years in connection with the level of anthropogenic pressure at the place of residence. The data (n=5137) were collected in 21 districts of the Nizhny Novgorod region in 2010–2012. The protocol included anthropometric dimensions (height, weight, chest girth), BMI, and body surface area (Du Bois method), physiometric indices (VC, left and right hand-held dynamometry), hemodynamic parameters (systolic and diastolic pressure, heart rate, Berseneva/Baevskiy indice of functional changes), glucose level. Correlation matrices were analyzed for 4 ecological clusters, separated by the anthropogenic pressure index (API). The total increase in the number of significant inter- and intrasystem morphofunctional correlations connected with the increase in the anthropogenic pressure level is the following: 186 in the ecologically satisfactory cluster, and 228 when the ecological situation is tense. The effect is more significant for children aged 9 years independent of sex, and male adolescents aged 13 years. The number of significant correlations is lower for girls independent of age, especially at 13 years, when the number is 156 for males and 125 for females. The study confirms the main statement of the correlation adaptometry that the number of associations of physiological and morphological parameters is associated with changes in ecological pressure. Boys tend to be more ecologically sensitive compared to girls, who are more resistant. The paper proves the efficiency of correlation analysis for the purposes of modern ecology.

Keywords: biological anthropology, schoolchildren, morphofunctional status, level of anthropogenic pressure, intersystem correlations, adaptive variability

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THE NARIOKOTOME BOY (KNM-WT 15000). CRANIAL STUDY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF APPEARANCE

This work is devoted to the study of the cranium from Nariokotome III (KNM-WT 15000), Kenya, known as Nariokotome Boy. It focuses on the study of cranial morphology with an emphasis on supraorbital and zygomaxillary regions and the individual's appearance reconstructed from the skull. A comparative analysis with other ancient crania was carried out using the craniotrigonometric protocol developed by one of the authors (SV). The appearance of Nariokotome III is characterized by a very narrow and sloping forehead, a medium-developed brow ridges, a tall and narrow face, a horizontal eyes position, a very wide nose and a wide interorbital distance, a large mouth with thick lips, a sloping chin and strongly protruding ears. There is a strong prognathism of the maxilla and mandible. The Nariokotome III cranium demonstrates mosaic characteristics of the supraorbital region, characteristic of both the Front Asian forms and the pithecanthropus of Southeast Asia. In the zygomaxillary region, Nariokotome III exhibits more erectoid characteristics. Some traits of the supraorbital and zygomaxillary regions are characteristic of Neanderthals. Craniotrigonometric analysis showed that Nariokotome III occupies an intermediate position between Homo habilis and Homo ergaster, being especially close to OH 24 and Dmanisi 2700 crania. The results of the study suggest that taxonomically the Nariokotome Boy is intermediate between the Homo habilis/Homo rudolfensis and Homo ergaster taxa.

Keywords: skull from Nariokotome III, Homo ergaster, Homo erectus, anthropological reconstruction, appearance

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INTERGENERATIONAL DYNAMICS OF ANTHROPOMETRIC INDICATORS AND CURRENT TRENDS IN PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS IN KRASNODAR

The article presents the results of a comprehensive anthropometric study of students in Krasnodar (17–23-years-old) conducted in 2024. The study aimed to observe the current trends in physical development and intergenerational changes in anthropometric indicators against the background of all-Russian trends. Data analysis revealed significant regional differences: compared to their Moscow peers, Krasnodar students demonstrate a stronger physique (higher Livi index, chest girth, and fat fold thickness values), which is more pronounced in young men. Intergenerational analysis (1964–2024) showed an increase in average body length of 4.53 cm for young men in Krasnodar and 2.01 cm for women. At the same time, in recent years, a slight decrease in mean body length values was found for male and female groups. Comparison with the data of the 1980s revealed a change in the proportions of the physique of today's youth: Krasnodar young men have a tendency towards narrowness and an increase in the indicators of fat deposition. A similar secular trend was observed in Moscow youth, which indicates the stability of intergenerational changes in the morphological status of young people in different cities of the European part of Russia. The practical outcome of the study was the development of current regional physical development standards for young people in Krasnodar in the form of normative tables based on regression analysis of the body mass to body length.

Keywords: *secular trend, body proportions, student youth, physical development, deceleration, regional standards, Krasnodar Territory*

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Original article

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL JOURNEY OF A. HRDLIČKA AND TH. A. FJELSTRUP TO MONGOLIA IN 1912

The history of the expedition of Aleš Hrdlička, the first curator (since 1903) of the Department of Physical Anthropology (DPA) of the US National Museum, to Siberia and Mongolia in 1912 is little known. Theodore A. Fjelstrup, a student of Saint Petersburg University, accompanied A. Hrdlička as interpreter and assistant. The expedition aimed to collect anthropological material for the US National Museum and the future Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, to conduct anthropometric measurements and to take anthropological photographs of the indigenous population. The article reveals the history of several Mongolian photographs that A. Hrdlička sent to Th.A. Fjelstrup in 1913. They are now stored in the Scientific Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences N. N. Miklouho-Maklay Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology. The correspondence reveals that Fjelstrup later also carried out Hrdlička's orders and requests and maintained contacts with Siberian counterparties. Thus, Fjelstrup became involved in the circle of outstanding foreign and Russian natural scientists and acquired invaluable experience in travel and field work under difficult conditions. Fjelstrup was involved in sending Hrdlička's materials to the United States until his departure on an expedition to South America in April 1914. During his stay in San Diego in 1915 he visited the Exhibition and saw these collections there.

Keywords: Aleš Hrdlička, Theodore A. Fjelstrup, anthropology, expedition, Mongolia, photographs, Panama-California Exhibition

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SHAREVSKAIA, B. I. — THE FIRST RUSSIAN SCHOLAR OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN BELIEFS

It has been 120 years since the birth and 40 years since the death of Bertha Isaakovna Sharevskaya (1904-1985), the first Russian scholar of African religions. After graduating from Lomonosov Moscow State University, B. Sharevskaya began to study the history of the ancient world, especially the religious ideas of the Greeks and Romans. Her interest in the origins of religious beliefs naturally grew into attention to their traditional forms. Starting as the head of the Ancient World Department of the Central Museum of Antireligion, she soon turned her attention to African spiritual culture. B. Sharevskaya emphasized the complexity and ambiguity of this phenomenon, analyzed the dynamics and trends in the development of beliefs, their connection with politics, the mutual influence of local traditions and world religions, etc. B. Sharevskaya's scientific legacy includes more than 150 publications - books, articles, reports, translations, etc. Her monograph "Old and New Religions of Tropical Africa" is still in demand as an encyclopedia of African religions. She was also involved in art, which was closely related to the ritual life of Africans. While working in scientific institutions and participating in international forums, she successfully combined her active work with teaching at the Faculty of History and the Institute of Oriental Languages (Institute of Asian and African Countries) of the Moscow State University. Today, numerous students of B. Sharevskaya continue her work, developing various aspects of the scientific direction she founded.

Keywords: Africa, traditional beliefs, Afro-Christian churches, "the Africanization" of Christianity, religion and politics

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Review article

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XVI CONGRESS OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND ETHNOLOGISTS OF RUSSIA. PERM, JULY 2–6, 2025

The article summarizes the main outcomes of the Congress of Anthropologists and Ethnologists of Russia, which took place in the city of Perm from July 2 to 6, 2025. The Congress was dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Komi-Permyak Okrug, the first national district in the USSR. The authors present key information on the history of the Congress over the past 20 years, including participant statistics and the geographical scope of the event. It is noted that both the number of participants and the thematic diversity of sectional meetings have been steadily increasing. The recent Congress hosted 1,170 attendees (out of 2,700 applications) from 73 regions of Russia and 23 countries. Details on the Congress's preparatory process and accompanying opening events (photo exhibition, book fair, folkloric performance, etc.) are provided. Special attention is given to the key topics of the sections and roundtable discussions held during the event, as well as current issues facing the Russian humanities. The authors conclude that the Congress is becoming a vital platform for scholarly communication, shaping the future direction of anthropology and ethnology in Russia for the coming years.

Keywords: Congress of Anthropologists and Ethnologists of Russia, Perm, Komi-Permyak Okrug, state national policy, ethnology, anthropology

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