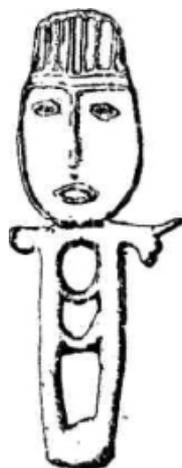


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YULIAN VLADIMIROVICH BROMLEY'S ANNIVERSARY

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Original article

© *Olga Kazmina, and Tatiana Solovei*

THE “BROMLEYAN TURN” IN SOVIET ETHNOGRAPHY

The article analyzes the so-called “Bromleyan turn” — a key stage in the development of Soviet ethnography connected with the work of Academician Yu. V. Bromley (1921–1990). The main focus is made on his “theory of ethnos,” which became the metanarrative of Soviet ethnography in the 1970s–1980s. The authors demonstrate that this theory was not only an internal product of the dynamics within the discipline but also a response to the challenges of the time. The theory of ethnos allowed a radical rethinking of ethnography’s subject field. It shifted the focus from studying ethnic history and traditional culture to analyzing the functioning of ethnicity in modernity. The authors show how Bromley’s theory of ethnos stimulated the formation of borderline disciplines between ethnography on the one hand and sociology, demography, linguistics, psychology on the other (ethnosociology, ethnosociolinguistics, ethnodemography, ethnopsychology, etc.). This “ethnological turn” significantly expanded the research lens and enabled the study of the role of ethnicity in various social spheres. At the same time, it was precisely the theory of ethnos that maintained the integrity of ethnology as a subject, preventing it from dissolving into adjacent fields. Special attention is paid to the evolution of relations between the leading academic center — the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences — and the leading university department of ethnography — the Department of Ethnography at Moscow State University. The article traces the transition from the compelled symbiosis of the post-war years through a period of separation to a new stage of fruitful partnership in the 1970s–1980s. This cooperation, based on theoretical and methodological unity, was embodied in joint publications and a closed cycle of personnel training. In conclusion, the “ethnological turn” of the Bromley era is compared with the later “anthropological turn.” The authors argue that the boundaries of subject expansion should be determined not by interdisciplinary omnivorousness but by the historical logic of the discipline’s development.

Keywords: *Yu. V. Bromley, theory of ethnos, Soviet ethnography, ethnological turn, interdisciplinarity, Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow State University Department of Ethnography*

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THEORETICAL ISSUES

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Original article

© Marina Bakhmatova

ANTHROPOLOGY AND LINGUISTICS:
THE UNION FOR THE SAKE OF TRUTH

The article raises the question of how the approaches of linguistics and anthropology to the problems of ethnocultural identity are interrelated. The American structural linguist Charles Hockett once said: “linguistics without anthropology is fruitless, anthropology without linguistics is blind.” The birth of structural linguistics at the beginning of the 20th century and the convergence of its epistemological approaches with natural science opened a discussion about the legitimacy of using similar methods in socio-cultural anthropology. Inspired by the ideas of the Prague linguistic Circle about phonology, Claude Lévi-Strauss founded structural anthropology, having formulated the theory of structure as an unconscious system of interrelated elements. A kind of manifesto of this trend was the report of Claude Lévi-Strauss “Linguistics and Anthropology” at the 1946 conference, where representatives of the two disciplines raised the question of the prospects for interdisciplinary relations. Research in recent decades has shown that linguistics and anthropology complement each other and thus their collaboration can be very fruitful. Linguistic anthropology has emerged at the junction of two epistemes and combines quantitative and qualitative methods to study such multifaceted and ambiguous issues as ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities in complex societies.

Keywords: structure, structuralism, bilingualism, ethnic identity, the unconscious, linguistics, anthropology, linguistic anthropology

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IDENTITY IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Original article

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BETWEEN MOTHERLAND AND FATHERLAND: BIOGRAPHIES AND LIVES OF THE SAKHALIN KOREANS

Sakhalin Koreans are a unique, isolated group of Korean people, historically connected to both Japan and Russia. Since they found themselves on the territory of the Soviet Union in the aftermath of WWII, they dream was that of returning to their Fatherland of South Korea. As it became possible in 1990s, many of Sakhalin Koreans repatriated to their homeland, but some of those repatriates later chose to come back to Sakhalin seen by them as their Motherland. This paper explores the reasons behind their unexpected choice and concludes that those include cold reception in South Korea, better chance of political and economic self-realization in post-Soviet Russia and changes in value system. For Sakhalin Koreans, unlike for those in South Korea, motherland rather meant place where their children were, not their parents.

Keywords: *Sakhalin Koreans, South Korea, repatriation, transborder people, motherland*

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Original Article

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ETHNOLINGUISTIC IDENTITY OF THE BASHKIRS IN BELARUS: THE CONCEPT OF *MOTHER TONGUE*

The article examines the ethnolinguistic identity of the Bashkirs living in Belarus in connection with the concept of “mother tongue”. While they clearly identify themselves as ethnic Bashkirs, some of them consider Tatar their native language. The adaptation strategies of the Bashkir diaspora and their inherent ethnolinguistic identification are of scientific interest. However, due to their small numbers, this ethnic community has remained completely unstudied in Belarusian ethnology thus far. The author qualifies the method of ethnolinguistic identification among the Bashkirs of Belarus as “combined.” It reflects the situation in their ethnic homeland at the time when they left. This problem is deeply rooted in the history of these peoples and is part of ethnopolitics.

Using survey materials on the Bashkirs of Belarus, the author showed that the concepts of “native language” / “mother tongue” / “ethnic language” are not always synonymous, since the native or ethnic language may not always serve as a marker of ethnicity but rather as an ethnocultural identifier. For this article, the author relied on field materials collected in 2021–2025 among Bashkirs and Tatars — natives of Bashkortostan. It is shown that in Belarus, as well as outside their ethnic homeland, Bashkirs usually establish Tatar-Bashkir connections, which can be considered an ethnocultural phenomenon. For this reason, as well as in view of linguistic, cultural and religious commonality, the author carried out research on the Bashkirs of Belarus in conjunction with the study of the Tatar diaspora.

Keywords: *Bashkirs of Belarus, diaspora, native language, ethnolinguistic identification*

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 Original article

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CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL IDENTITIES: COMPETING HISTORICAL NARRATIVES IN CONTEMPORARY TEXTBOOKS IN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

This article examines the construction of historical narratives in modern history textbooks in Armenia and Azerbaijan in the context of the ethno-political confrontation between the two countries. The study focuses on contemporary history textbooks from these states, approved by the ministries of science and education of the respective republics and recommended for university students: History of Azerbaijan (From Ancient Times to the Present), authored by Professor I. M. Mamedov, and History of Armenia, compiled by a group of authors under the editorship of Professor G. R. Simonyan. A comparative analysis of the texts was conducted to identify competing interpretations of historical events, uncover propaganda and manipulative narratives, and to assess their influence on the entrenchment of cultural, social, and political contradictions between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. It was concluded that the examined educational materials contain pseudo-historical plots used to legitimize both states' claims to disputed territories and justify their chosen political course towards further deterioration of Azerbaijani-Armenian relations.

Keywords: *enemy image, historical narratives, Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict*

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Original article

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IRANIANS' PERCEPTIONS OF MOSCOW AND ITS RESIDENTS

Despite the deepening of bilateral relations between Iran and Russia, negative stereotypes about Russia persist in Iranian society, largely due to a lack of awareness. This article aims to study Iranians' perceptions of the socio-cultural differences between Iran and Russia. The main goal of the study is to identify how Iranians view Moscow and its population. To achieve this goal, several objectives were set: 1) to determine Iranians' expectations regarding interaction with the space and population of Moscow; 2) to identify differences in these expectations among different social groups within Iranian population. The study collected and analyzed data that showed that Iranians' perceptions of Russians and Muscovites are largely based on their perception of cultural differences. The image of Moscow was found to be generally positive and associated with its rich cultural heritage, modern achievements, and the freedoms that the city provides. In addition, the study identified five groups of Iranians who differ in their attitudes toward Moscow and its population, ranging from negative to idealized, depending on their experience of interaction and level of awareness. The article concludes that the presence of personal connections and the experience of successful adaptation in a close social environment contribute to the formation of a positive image of Moscow among Iranians, which emphasizes the importance of intercultural exchange.

Keywords: *Iran, Moscow, autostereotypes, heterostereotypes, image of the city*

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Original article

© Zoya Anayban, and Galina Balakina

INTERETHNIC TOLERANCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF TUVA (ETHNOSOCIOLOGICAL STUDY RESULTS)

The article is devoted to the study of interethnic tolerance in Tuva in the contemporary period. The analysis is based on the survey of the republic's residents, carried out in 2023 as part of the project "Socially successful and unsuccessful adaptation practices of ethnoregional communities in the context of large-scale innovative changes (on the example of the Republic of Tuva)". The results suggest that interethnic relations in the region are generally stable and favorable. In the summer of 2023, a survey was conducted among the working-age population of Tuva (421 people) using a sample representative in terms of ethnicity, age, gender, and territorial composition. The results of the study showed that the greatest differences in assessments of the current interethnic situation exist between the two main ethnic groups of the republic: Tuvans and Russians, while at the same time, gender and age differentiation in the responses of respondents — between men and women, as well as between young people and the older generation — is not so noticeable. Some interethnic tension revealed during the study, mainly in interpersonal communication, is primarily due to the presence of socio-economic problems in the region that are not being adequately solved, which is reflected in the general climate of interethnic interaction and tolerance.

Keywords: Tuva, ethnic tolerance, survey, Tuvans, Russians, interethnic relations, ethnic stereotypes

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CAUCASIAN STUDIES

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Original article

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**STRENGTHENING RUSSIAN IDENTITY THROUGH
YOUTH SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INITIATIVES
IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS FEDERAL DISTRICT**

This article examines the perceptions of young people in the North Caucasus Federal District regarding their role in strengthening Russian national identity within the region, the significance of interethnic relations and contemporary methods of optimizing them, and the importance of ethnic traditions and their promotion in this process. The views of the younger generation are an important indicator of socio-political and cultural processes, as young people today are leading various social and cultural initiatives. Given their involvement in the global media landscape, which is exploited by hostile forces to disseminate destructive ideas of “decolonization,” the focus of these initiatives should be the subject of scholarly attention. This study draws primarily on the materials submitted by youth organizations for grants from the Presidential Fund for Cultural Initiatives for the period 2017–2025, aimed at strengthening Russian identity in the region. An analysis of the applications identified projects based on ethnic traditions, their popularization, and using them in optimizing interethnic relations; projects that foster friendly contacts within various youth communities; and projects aimed at identifying and enhancing unifying meanings and symbols. It should be noted that the applications reviewed correct the unifying notions identified by scholars: a shared state, the Russian language, native land, responsibility for the fate of Russia, a shared historical past, and common symbols.

Keywords: North Caucasus, youth, cultural initiatives, Russian identity

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Original article

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FOLKLORE TRADITIONS OF MOUNTAIN JEWS

Until the mid-20th century, the folklore of Mountain Jews included tales of common Iranian origin and tales based on biblical themes. The latter can be found in the culture of every Jewish group; in the Jewish religious tradition, they are known as ha-gadah (הגדה) — “narrative”. During this period, the Mountain Jews’ storytelling practices were dominated by tales in their native language.

Tales in Azerbaijani, Nogai and Kumyk also played a significant role. The speakers of these languages for a long time enjoyed political dominance in the regions where Mountain Jews lived, and these languages were used for interethnic communication. Less common in the storytelling practice of Mountain Jews were tales in North Caucasian languages. The folklore traditions of their territorial groups differed somewhat from each other due to the influence of the neighboring people’s traditions. The Mountain Jews can be divided into northern and southern groups, each with their own sub-dialect. The northern group speech was influenced by Kumyk and Nogai, which were languages of interethnic communication in the area, while in the area where the southern group dwelled, this was Azerbaijani. Northern group Jews were fluent in Kumyk or Nogai, but few of them understood Azerbaijani, while for the southern group it was the other way around. Since the mid-20th century, they have been gradually replacing their native language with Russian. This process is now almost complete. The displacement of their native language by Russian has led to the transformation of their folkloric traditions: their tales, proverbs, sayings and jokes are now predominantly traditionally Russian. As a result, their territorial groups are experiencing a universalization of their folklore traditions, and they are familiar with their traditional Mountain Jewish folklore in Russian translations. Some tall tales, fairy tales, historical anecdotes, proverbs and sayings of Mountain Jews were recorded by the author in 1994 from the words of the Derbent storyteller Rafail Aviyaevich Rafailov (1924–1997). Currently, there are no longer any storytellers of Mountain Jewish folklore in their native language — R. A. Rafailov was the last.

Keywords: *intercultural dialogue in the Caucasus, periodization of cultural influences in the Caucasus, displacement of the native language of Mountain Jews by Russian, storytellers, funeral lamentation*

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ANTHROPOCENTRISM OF ETHNOPEDAGOGICAL APHORISMS IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

The human system of perceiving, systematizing and interpreting the world is inherently anthropocentric — it defines a man as the measure of all surrounding objects. By studying the ethnopedagogical means of forming a personality, by analyzing the aphoristic maxims that accompany one's upbringing and socialization, we can learn about the nature of ethnic education: how a child is encouraged, consoled, punished, edified, inspired. Knowledge of these patterns enables us to use the anthropologism of ethnopedagogical aphorisms in modern educational programs, considering a man in all his universal characteristics and in all spheres of activity from everyday life to diplomacy and education. It is also important to keep in mind that the anthropocentrism of folk aphorisms can be expressed not only explicitly, but also implicitly: no matter what an aphorism talks about (flora, fauna, natural phenomena, etc.), ultimately, through comparison, metaphor, synecdoche and other poetic and artistic means, it talks about man.

Keywords: ethnopedagogy, anthropocentrism, ethnocultural education, peoples of the North Caucasus, aphoristic genres of folklore

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SACRED PLACES AND PRACTICES BASED ON THE MATERIALS OF EXPEDITIONS TO ARMENIA ORGANIZED BY THE STATE MUSEUM OF ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE USSR — RUSSIAN MUSEUM OF ETHNOGRAPHY (1958 AND 2021)

In the 1950s, ethnographers from Leningrad conducted a series of expeditions in preparation for exhibitions on the traditional culture of Caucasian peoples at the State Museum of Ethnography of the USSR Peoples (now the Russian Ethnographic Museum). One such trip was an expedition to the Armenian SSR in 1958 led by E. N. Studenetskaia, head of the Caucasus department, and A. L. Natanson, a department employee. The field report on the expedition to the city of Yerevan, and the Goris, Martuni, Basargechar, and Oktemberyan districts of the Armenian SSR presents, among other topics, the results of research into the religious beliefs of Armenians, recorded in several villages as well as in Etchmiadzin — the historical and spiritual center of the Armenian people. This section of the report is particularly important as it reflects local and pan-Armenian religious practices that persisted during the Soviet period, and the museum staff's perspective on this aspect of the culture they studied. In 2021, a follow-up expedition to the mentioned districts was conducted by L. Gushchyan, Leading Researcher of the Caucasus department of the Russian Ethnographic Museum, which allowed for the formation of comparative expedition material on Armenian local sacred practices in the 20th–21st centuries. The paper is based on the archival documents and photographic collections from the 1958 expedition stored in the Russian Ethnographic Museum, as well as the author's own field material.

Keywords: *ethnographical museum, Soviet ethnography, religion, Armenia, E. N. Studenetskaia, A. L. Natanson*

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ANTHROPOLOGY OF ART

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Original article

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**“POETICS” IN MUSICOLOGY: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS**

The article focuses on the application of the concept of “poetics” in musicology. As an interdisciplinary concept, it is widely used in the literary criticism, theater studies, musicology and other areas of the humanities, although it was initially formed in the literary criticism. As a methodological approach, poetics studies not only the aesthetic problems of art, but also the stylistics of musical language and composition techniques. In musicology, it can be applied to the analysis of different levels; in addition, there is an obvious tendency to establish musical poetics as a theoretical discipline. The purpose of the article is to compare the interpretation of the concept of poetics in literary criticism and musicology, and to clarify the methodological foundations of the poetological approach from historical and theoretical perspectives. Considering all these aspects on the basis of the historical and semantic approaches, the author used the methods of contextual and comparative analysis. The main result of the study is that the modern poetological approach developed in Russian musicology is based on the multidimensionality of the work’s organization, in particular, on the dualism of content and form. Much attention has been paid to the theoretical substantiation of this problem by E. V. Nazaikinsky and N. S. Gulyanitskaya, in particular. Their works reveal two main perspectives in relation to the poetics of musical composition — the study of stylistics as a system of expressive means and the extraction of the “spiritual” concept from the “musical” content. However, musicologists also declare a purely theoretical musical poetics, combining theoretical and historical musicology. The idea of analyzing works with a poetic aspect is evident in the lectures of Stravinsky and Berio. Understanding the artistic integrity of a work from the standpoint of its poetics helps to strike a balance between the structural and substantive aspects of the composition. It is concluded that the poetological approach makes it possible to focus on the semantics of the work and the specifics of its stylistic qualities.

Keywords: poetics, Aristotle, poetological, musicology, genre, stylistics

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SCULPTURE IN DAGESTANI FOLK ART (1930^S–1940^S): FIELD RESEARCH IN GUNIB DISTRICT, 2010^S–2020^S

Since the Middle Ages, no sculptures had been created in Dagestan, except for volumetric ornamental forms of decorative arts and references to the art of the Bronze Age. The process of Sovietization that engulfed the region from the early 1920s was accompanied by de-Islamisation, which drastically changed all spheres of life, including art. Based on field research, the author of the paper is the first to reveal the names of the first self-taught Dagestani sculptors who had become well known in the republic by the early 1930s. The phenomenon of sculpture by Dagestani folk craftsmen has so far failed to catch the eye of specialists. This paper is based on field research materials collected in the Gunib district of Dagestan in the 2010s and 2020s. It was revealed that, prior to the late 1940s, Dagestani sculpture had developed thanks to local stone carvers. Many of their works fell victim to an outburst of vandalism caused by re-Islamisation in the 1990s. The study also revealed the biographies of the folk craftsmen, helped compile a complete list of their works, to create a photographic bank, and to identify the current location of the monuments.

Keywords: *Dagestani sculpture, relief portraits, folk craftsmen, Khalil Musaev, Magomed Murtuzalev, Omar Musalaliev, Mukhudin Idrisov, vandalism, re-Islamization*

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Original article

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THE INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHICAL AND CLIMATIC CONDITIONS OF THE KARAKALPAKS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRAFTS

This article explores how geographical and climatic conditions influenced the development of traditional crafts among the Karakalpak people. The author analyses how the region's physical geography — particularly its arid desert and semi-desert landscape, lack of forest resources and abundance of natural materials such as wool, reed, clay and fish bones — shaped unique artisanal practices deeply intertwined with the environment. Special attention is given to the concept of geographical determinism in the context of Karakalpakstan, where the environment imposes constraints while also encouraging the evolution of specific types of craftsmanship. Using a comparative-historical approach, the article demonstrates that Karakalpak artisanal traditions were not static, but evolved in response to both internal cultural mechanisms and external socio-economic influences. The study emphasizes that craft development was a form of environmental adaptation and rational use of available resources. Particular focus is placed on felting, weaving, reed basketry, and the use of by-products of fishing as culturally embedded artisanal techniques. Thus, craft is understood not only as an economic activity but also as an expression of cultural memory and ecological intelligence. The findings highlight the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing craft cultures through the lens of natural environment, social organization, and historical change.

Keywords: *geographical determinism, traditional crafts, Karakalpaks, climatic conditions, felting, weaving, material culture*

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Original article

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WATERMARKS IN THE ATTRIBUTION AND DATING OF GRAPHIC WORKS

The article focuses on the role of watermarks in attributing and dating of graphic artworks. Watermarks serve as an important tool for determining the time of creation and authenticity of artworks, as well as for establishing their authorship and geographical origin. The primary objective of the study is to explore the use of watermarks for dating and attributing graphic works, and to examine the symbolic meaning of these marks in artists' works. The article discusses the history of papermaking and the first watermarks in Europe and Russia, analyzing the technological aspects of their production and application. It examines the role of watermarks in art historical research and their use in dating and verifying the authenticity of artworks, using examples from the works of Albrecht Dürer, Konstantin Korovin, and Zinaida Serebriakova. Modern methods of visualizing watermarks are described, including rubbing techniques, infrared photography, radiography, beta-radiography, and soft X-ray radiography, which allow for more precise documentation of watermarks. The study emphasizes the importance of systematizing and cataloging watermarks as a key tool in art history and art authentication.

Keywords: watermarks, filigree, attribution, dating, graphics, paper production

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Original article

© Marina Frolova

JAVANESE FOLK HORROR IN CONTEMPORARY MASS CULTURE OF INDONESIA

The interaction of Internet-lore, literature and the 2022 box-office film “KKN in Dancer’s Village” is “a 3D narrative”, a modern version of the “oral-written-theatrical continuum” (according to the term offered by V.I. Braginsky). In 2019, an Indonesian Twitter user @SimpleMan posted about “real” events that are said to have happened in 2009 at a student field-practice in a remote village in East Java. The semi-anonymous compiler of Internet-lore also wrote a fiction book. After publication, the director Awi Suryadi made a folk horror film adaptation: its intrigue is tied to the beliefs and ritual practices of the villagers. A set of texts, the lore about the village of spirits appeal to fears of the Javanese mysticism kejawen, the incorporation of animistic beliefs into Islam, previously acceptable, but today interpreted as polytheism. The popularity of “KKN” reflects mass reactions to the loss of significance and meaning of animistic rituals, disappearance of the village dance institution, fear of the village life, denial of the “inconvenient past” as a consequence of Islamization combined with technical and economic progress. It demonizes the village and traditional rural practices such as making offerings to the spirits and ritual dancing, and marks the end of the Java-centric era and the building of the new pan-Indonesian identity.

Keywords: *Internet-lore, folk-horror, Indonesian horror, KKN di Desa Penari, Javanese culture*

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FOLK MEDICINE AND DISABILITY

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Original article

© *Elena Nosenko-Stein*

DISABILITY AND FOLK MEDICINE: THEORIES, FIELD RESEARCH, AND CULTURAL VARIABILITY

In this introductory article the author, the head of two research groups for Disability Research analyzes causes of low interest in studying this phenomenon (or even its absence) among Russian ethnographers and anthropologists. She briefly describes the emergence and history of Disability Studies, models and approaches existing within this interdisciplinary field, issues and topics that are being considered by ethnographers and anthropologists in many countries. The author also highlights the common ground between Disability Studies and medical anthropology, with scholars, specializing in Disability Studies, focusing on the social and cultural aspects of disability as a complex phenomenon rather than the medical problems of disabled people. According to the author, the causes of the low interest in Disability Studies among Russian anthropologists root in the profound stigmatization of disability and in medical approach to this phenomenon, which is widespread not only in the Russian mass consciousness, but also among academic community. The paper also discusses the establishment of research groups for Disability Studies in two Russian academic institutes, their main activities and publications. Concluding the article, the author presents papers that comprise a special section of the journal Vestnik Antropologii (Herald of Anthropology). These papers consider some folk medicine practices for treating serious illnesses and traumas that lead to disability as well as perceptions of impairments in different culture, such as the peasant culture of the Russian North, traditional and modern Abkhaz and Circassian cultures.

Keywords: *anthropology, ethnography, disability, disabled people, stigmatization, social constructivism, medicalization*

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© *Harriet Kurova, and Nurbiy Kurov*

CIRCISSIAN FOLK MEDICINE AND DISABILITY TREATMENT IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Folk medicine plays an important role in the culture of each nation, being shaped by its geographical environment, natural flora and fauna, and dietary habits, which ensure community health. Travelers, missionaries and adventurers who explored the Caucasus contributed to the study and description of Circassian medical practices. Islamic culture has had a significant impact on the development of medicine in the North Caucasus. The practice of healing through the Koran, prayer and medical procedures contributed to the emergence of professional physicians. Circassian military medicine, based on a military lifestyle, accumulated many years of experience in dealing with wounds, fractures, burns and combat injuries. This knowledge was carefully preserved and passed down within a select group of families whose members, like the clergy, were held in high regard within society. Information obtained from the analysis of field materials from Turkey allows us to draw conclusions about the continuation of traditional medical practices after the exodus from the Caucasus. However, the limited availability of historical sources prevents the full disclosure of the secrets and methods of Circassian medicine.

Keywords: *Traditional medicine, military medicine, Adyghe, Circassians, Caucasus*

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ILLNESS AND DISABILITY IN ABKHAZ SOCIETY

Despite its relative immaturity, medical anthropology has achieved notable success in studying local medical practices but has paid comparatively little attention to the situation of people with disabilities in non-European societies and cultures. Based on both published sources and her own field data collected through long-term participant observation, the author attempts to characterize the concepts and practices regarding disability that have developed in Abkhazia. In particular, she concludes that the traditional Abkhaz model of disability does not look too exotic and is not too different from the European medical model. But its general emphasis is still shifted because fewer manifestations of disabilities are interpreted as therapeutic (medical) problems, even when magical actions are considered a specific form of treatment and healing. At the same time, many ailments are fatalistically accepted. Being a person with disabilities in Abkhaz society is a problem for a family or clan, and not only and not so much for a single individual, as everywhere in European cultures. The lives of the most disadvantaged people here take place almost exclusively at the family level, and thus they are excluded from society. It is not typical for Abkhazia to recognize some special status for people with “deviations”.

Keywords: medical anthropology, folk medicine, Caucasus, Abkhaz, disabilities, models, constructivism

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Original article

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FOLK MEDICINE PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS DISABILITY IN THE ARKHANGELSK NORTH

The author drew on extensive fieldwork conducted in the villages of Arkhangelsk Region in 2005–2024, as well as materials from the Mezen Museum of Local Lore. The research of the previous years was developed within the framework of Disability Studies. The article analyzes the phenomenon of disability in a traditional society using the example of peasant communities in the Arkhangelsk Northern Region. Over the course of centuries of development in the region, the North Russian population has formed a certain perception of disability based primarily on religious, moral, and social concepts. The author highlights the relatively understudied phenomenon of the stigmatization of disabled people. The article pays considerable attention to folk medical and ritual practices within the Northern Russian population and the phenomena of “those who know” or “wisemen” and herbalists. It describes the most popular herbs, which the locals believe to have exceptional healing abilities. The author compares the times at which medicinal plants are collected in different regions of Arkhangelsk, highlighting its northern part where the landmark date of 7 July, the annual Midsummer Day holiday, is still preserved. The author concludes that along with the continued importance of folk knowledge in the tradition of collecting herbs and treatment methods, there are various traditional ideas about people with disabilities among the Northern Russian population, and a tendency to isolate and stigmatize them. Faith in witchcraft and healing by magical means remains strong in northern villages. The phenomenon of the wiseman, having undergone certain transformations, remains stable and has local specifics.

Keywords: *Arkhangelsk North, disability, stigma, herbs*

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FUNERAL RITES AND THE UNDERWORLD

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Original Article

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THE UNDERWORLD OF THE RUSSIAN FAIRY TALES: CLIMBING A TREE TO A BIRD'S NEST AND RETURNING TO ONE'S WORLD

The article continues the author's ongoing series of works on the study of the semantics of fairy tale plots. It considers the main plot of the second part of the fairy tale SUS type No. 301 A, B ("Three Underground Kingdoms"), which is relatively independent. Using comparative materials, the author analyzes the relationships between the main components of the plot: the image of a tree and the motif of climbing it; the motif of the hero communicating with the chicks (and all its variants), which reveals the traces of mythological exchange relations of "life force"; the image of a mother bird of prey returning the hero to Earth. When analyzing the latter image at a cross-cultural level, the author reveals its probable origins, going back to the image of the "good serpent" swallowing and regurgitating the hero to help him reincarnate (according to V. Ya. Propp). Overall, this plot, in its prototype, is reconstructed as the desire of the soul of the deceased/neophyte for rebirth. The tendency toward anthropomorphizing the image of the chicks (as girls) observed when comparing motifs can be traced back to the formation of other fairy tale plot lines (the first move of the SUS 301 A, B type, and the SUS No 300 type of tales).

Keywords: *fairy tales, traces of reincarnation ideas, climbing a tree, chicks/children in a nest, flying on a bird, snake bird, plot transformations*

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TRADITIONAL HINDU FUNERAL PYRE: CONSTRUCTIONAL ASPECTS

Today the rite of cremation on a funeral pyre is most widely represented in India. One of its most important practical aspects is the construction of the pyre. This depends on various factors, the most significant of which are the type of fuel, the environmental conditions and the ethno-confessional specifics of the funeral rite. This work aims to study the variations in the construction of Hindu funeral pyres. Data were collected at the Tajganj cremation center in Agra, India, during the Russian-Indian anthropological expedition of the Paleoethnological Research Center and the State Biology Museum named after K.A. Timiryazev in 2018, 2019, and 2022. Research methods included visual observation and description of the pyre-building process, sketching the pyre construction, and conducting unstructured interviews with participants in the funeral rite. A total of 166 observations of cremations and 19 sketches of the pyre construction were made, and 6 unstructured interviews were conducted. The author identified three types of funeral pyre: wood, dung and mixed. All of them have a rectangular shape and a common construction plan. The basis of each pyre is a three-layer bed on which the body of the deceased lies in a supine position, covered by layers of fuel. The relative sizes of the pyre, the methods used to fix the limbs and the covering layer of fuel are related to the position of the body on the bed. The results of the study can be used as comparative data in archaeological research.

Keywords: cremation, body burning, Hindu funeral rites, Hinduism, Agra, India

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Original article

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SHAMANIC FUNERAL RITUALS IN THE TUVAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC (1921–1944): PROHIBITION AND TRANSFORMATION

The author describes the religious situation and ritual culture during the period of the Tuvan People's Republic, and discusses a sharp change in state religious policy. It is revealed that the ritual traditions of the life cycle were practiced in their traditional form and in all their diversity only until the anti-religious propaganda emerged in 1929. The paper outlines the changes to traditional wedding ceremonies and the guardianship of young children, the ban on the traditional aerial burial of shamans and transition to a new, previously not practiced method, and the appearance of common cemeteries. The ban on traditional shamanic funeral rites proved to be a difficult test for the Tuvans since the idea of the 'pure bone' of a shaman was deeply rooted in their mythology. According to this idea, the bodies of deceased shamans could not be interred in order for their life force to enter another person and for them to become a new shaman. Based on such ideas, during this period, attempts were made to imitate a shamanic burial — the body of a deceased shaman was placed in a shallow pit, and ritual objects were hung near the burial site. According to ethnographic sources, Tuvan believers and priests underwent a painful transition from established religious principles to following the new anti-religious policy. However, in such a short period of time, it was still difficult for Tuvans to change their stable mythological beliefs, the traditional worldview, and to adapt painlessly to a new situation. Therefore, during the prohibition period, shamans were secretly buried in the traditional way in remote, hard-to-reach places, while ordinary people were buried in the ground.

Keywords: Tuvan shamanism, religious and ritual culture, funeral rituals, methods of burial of shamans, prohibition and transformation, Tuvan People's Republic

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FUNERAL RITES OF THE KARAKALPAKS IN THE SAMARKAND REGION (SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH — EARLY 21ST CENTURY)

This article focuses on the funeral rites of the ethnic group of Karakalpaks living in the Bulungur and Dzhambay districts of the Samarkand region. It provides information on their beliefs regarding the soul and spirit, the cessation of breathing and the soul leaving the body of the deceased in the form of a bird or fly. It also covers the practice of leaving the deceased in the house for one night and loud mourning. The author also emphasizes that, unlike the rest of the region's population, Karakalpaks do not employ professional washers, such as “засол” or “нокчу.” Instead, according to the ancient Turkic tradition of “сүөк уüecu” (literally ‘owners of bones’), close relatives wash the body of the deceased themselves. Describing the ritual of “ðäýpe” (fidiya), which persists in modern Karakalpak funeral rites, the author emphasizes its clear connections to animism, fetishism, and totemism. Field research revealed that horses were part of funeral rites until the end of the last century, while religious and mythological beliefs about them as a means of transporting the deceased to paradise, particularly in their localized form, can still be seen today. The funeral tradition of the Samarkand Karakalpaks, as well as that of other regional groups, clearly demonstrates the fusion of archaic beliefs with Muslim customs.

Keywords: *Karakalpaks, soul and spirit, burial traditions, funeral rites, archaic rituals*

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Original Article

© Yaroslav Sizov, and Marina Butovskaya

SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF FACES AMONG DIFFERENT RACIAL GROUPS BY RUSSIAN STUDENTS

The study analyzes the mechanisms underlying the perception of faces belonging to people of European, Asian, and African ancestry. It aimed to determine the relative impact of individual morphological facial features, ancestry, the observer's gender and personality on social judgements. The sample included 243 respondents (Russian students of European ancestry) who rated 15 standardized photo portraits of models from three racial groups according to the criteria of attractiveness, aggressiveness, altruism, and social status. Additionally, the observers' personality traits were measured using psychodiagnostic tools (BFI-2-XS, BPAQ, Helpfulness Questionnaire). It was demonstrated that individual morphological features of the face were the dominant factor influencing social judgements. This factor significantly exceeded the effect of the racial category. Stable perceptual patterns were identified, such as the "halo effect" and a negative correlation between perceived aggressiveness and prosocial characteristics. The influence of the models' racial affiliation proved to be statistically significant but weak. The respondent's gender was found to be a significant modulator of perception: men and women demonstrated different strategies for ranking racial-gender groups by attractiveness and aggressiveness. At the same time, the stable personality characteristics of observers were found to have no systematic connection with basic evaluations of neutral faces. The obtained data indicate the priority of universal mechanisms of primary perception over categorical and individual-psychological factors.

Keywords: big races, facial morphology, personality traits, aggressiveness, attractiveness, , first impression, social perception

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SOMATIC AND SEXUAL MATURITY IN PERIPUBERTY (A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF MOSCOW SCHOOLGIRLS)

The issue of the association between somatic and sexual maturity is relevant in population monitoring due to significant variability in this association between groups and over time. This study examines the age-related changes in somatic dimensions (height, weight and pelvic diameter), breast development and age at menarche in Moscow schoolgirls aged 8–17 years, who were observed over a period of nine years (1982–1991). A total of 125 individuals were included in the study. First, the patterns of one-year dimension gain dynamics were calculated, then they were smoothed using the least squares method. The smoothed curves were used to determine the peak gain of each dimension in years, the absolute level of the peak in centimeters, kilograms or scores, and the delta (in years) between the peak of the dimension and menarche. Peak height velocity (PHV) occurs 1.5 years before menarche (at 13.03 years), peak pelvic velocity (PPV) occurs 0.5 years before, and peak breast development occurs 1 year before menarche. Peak weight velocity (PWV) coincides with menarche; therefore, PHV is the most likely trigger of menarche. The high correlation between PHV and PPV, PMV and menarche (0.62–0.68) suggests that PHV is a key factor in puberty and may reflect common genetic regulation of the dynamics of the parameters under discussion. This conformity is supported by the results of factor analysis. The first 'general' factor of development rate in puberty has the most significant positive loadings on PHV (0.88), PPV (0.82), PWV (0.85) and age at menarche (0.75). The earlier somatic pubertal acceleration occurs, the earlier menarche occurs — and vice versa. According to factor analysis, the final somatic status (e.g. definite height) does not depend on pubertal events. The same applies to breast development, which has independent dynamics throughout puberty.

Keywords: *biological anthropology, schoolgirls aged 8–17 years, sexual maturation, menarche, peak height velocity*

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REVIEWS AND CRITIQUES

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Book review

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BOOK REVIEW: E. E. NOSENKO-SHTEIN. “INVISIBLE PEOPLE, OR BEING DISABLED IN RUSSIA (ANTHROPOLOGICAL ESSAYS). MOSCOW: INSTITUTE OF ETHNOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY, RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES; NEOLITH, 2025. 396 P.

The reviewed monograph is a well-founded scientific anthropological study based on extensive fieldwork, including structured interviews with informants and experts. The book covers a wide range of issues related to disability in Russia. It specifically examines the conceptual framework and the situation of children with disabilities in the country, with a focus on educational methods for such children. It also explores employment opportunities for people with disabilities and how they acquire professional skills. Summarizing the results of fieldwork, the author identifies the various life strategies of people with disabilities, which ultimately determine their behavior. The book discusses issues of leisure for people with disabilities and their self-identification. It also presents an analysis of the challenges that people with disabilities face when starting a family. The review briefly presents the book's contents and recommendations for how social services can use the findings. Disability is not a problem unique to people with disabilities; it is a problem for society as a whole, requiring serious attention and study.

Keywords: *people with disabilities, disabled people, anthropology of disability*

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