

Antropologicheskii Forum # 6

Forum: Ethnographical collections in the modern museum

Curators of anthropological and ethnographical collections are currently going through a period of uncertainty about their function. In the past, such collections were understood to have two distinct purposes: to inform ordinary visitors about the cultural history of different ethnic groups and to act as a centre of research material and expertise for professional researchers. Nowadays, researchers are more interested in the present than in the past, and ordinary visitors have many other ways in which they can find out about cultures that interest them. It is accordingly not surprising that talk of a museum crisis is becoming more and more common. Participants of the Forum discuss the issues of finding new ways of attracting visitors, visitor expectations, new ways of displaying ethnographical collections and the future of ethnographical museums.

Articles

Dmitri Zakharine. Collective Purification Rites in Russia. Anthropological, Social and Historic Aspects

The author discusses the history of Western European and Russian purification rites in

a comparative manner. He begins from a premise about the existence of culturally rooted ties between the ideas of vice, contagion and pollution. He proceeds to the social meaning of purification rites. When performing such rites newcomers wash away traces of the outside world in order to become integrated in a foreign community. Some of these rites have been very important for the reproduction of Russian political elites. In the analysis of bath-friendships between Russia and Western Europe (for example Ivan IV and Godunov, Stalin and Kirov, Khrushchev and Kekkonen, Kohl and Yeltsin, Yeltsin and Khazbulatov, Putin and Schroeder etc), politicians take centre stage in the current research.

Alexander Manuilov. The Practice of Privacy in a Southern Russian Village (Case Study)

The article is devoted to the categories of ‘private/public’ and their realizations in the everyday life of a Krasnodar village. The author dwells in detail on the specificity of fieldwork, communicative situations in which inhabitants are involved, and the syntagmatics and paradigmatics of privacy. His examples show that the majority of spheres of rural everyday life are characterized by the privatization of the public.

Aado Lintrop. About the Ship “Petropavlovsk”, Harbinger of Revolution

The article presents a historical commentary on the Estonian folk song ‘This obscene, nasty law of the Russian state’ which describes the events of the Russo-Japanese War and became popular again at the end of the 1980s, during the so-called ‘singing revolution’. The author compares ‘military’ and ‘revolutionary’ variants of the song and dwells in detail on their historical context — the military actions and key figures they mention — and its reflection in newspaper reports.

Mikhail Alekseevsky. The Motif of the Revival of a Dead Man in Northern Russian Funeral Lamentations: Text and Ceremonial Context

The work is devoted to the analysis of the motif of the revival of a dead man in Northern Russian funeral lamentations. The analysis of this widespread and well-established motif in the context of funeral ritual pragmatics allows the author to disprove the opinion held by scholars that its character is emotional and rhetorical. The author concludes that using this motif in funeral lamentations is an element of verbal magic aimed at providing mutual communication between

the world of the living and the world of the dead. By calling the dead man to “come to life”, a mourner can tell him about her troubles, ask for help, and make an invitation to a funeral meal to cajole. At the same time this ‘appeal’ is understood by the tradition as potentially dangerous, and therefore in order for the dead man to whom the weeping is addressed not to become a threat for the living, a lamentation containing the motif of revival ends with the obligatory formula of the impossible: declaring the impossibility of returning from the dead.

Valeria Kolosova. ‘Yatryshnik’

The article analyses folk legends and beliefs connected with a very mythologized plant in traditional Slavonic culture. The author makes an attempt to join these beliefs, as well as the ritual practices and dialectal phytonyms for orchis in Slavonic territories, with the appearance of the plant and to trace the ways of comprehending and semiotizing its features in folk ideas.

Mikhail Lurie. Sadistic Rhyme in the Context of Urban Folklore: Children and Adults, General and Specific

The article is devoted to sadistic rhymes, one of the latest and most popular genres of teenage poetic folklore of the 20th century. The texts of rhymes are considered in the context of late Soviet everyday mythology and the products of other genres of urban folklore of that epoch, both children’s and adult’s (jokes, remakes, etc.) This analysis allows the author to conclude, that the specificity of the genre is determined not by political implications and protest perception (which is commonplace in research on sadistic rhyme), and not even by ‘black humour’ itself which other genres of children’s folklore use all the time. The author believes that the secret of the popularity of sadistic rhymes is to be sought in the sphere of poetics, in the special genre model of organization of the text on all levels: compositional, syntactic, lexical, rhythmic and others.

Museum

Olga Fishman, Natalia Ivanovskaya. Mutual Stereotypes: From the Experience of an International Exhibition Project

The publication describes the exhibition ‘Russia-Norway. Through Centuries and Borders’, which took place in 2004 at the Norwegian folk museum in Oslo and in 2005 in the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg. It also details the fundamental moments in the history of Russian-Norwegian relations. The exhibition organizers set themselves the task of demonstrating and overcoming

mutual clichés and stereotypes by considering each other and of facilitating their scientific reflection and visual display, but were faced with an extreme firmness of mutual stereotypes among the organizers themselves. However, the experience of working together and the data received in this work have made a certain contribution to the study of the nature and state of mutual stereotypes among contemporary Norwegians and Russians.

Materials from expeditions

Alexey Konkka. Materials on Calendar Mythology and Calendar Rituals among the Karelian Peoples from Syamozero

The publication is a collection of field records and archival data (Folklore Archive of the Finnish Literary Society) from the 1920s–1980s which have not previously been published. The publication includes rare data on winter Christmastide, rituals to increase a maiden's *slavutnost* (*lemmennosto*), and summer holidays connected to animal sacrifices. A special introductory article entitled 'Great *Syndy*: Christmastide Spirit with a Face of the Saviour' considers the place of beliefs about *Syndy* in Karelian calendar mythology, which have no analogues amongst neighbouring peoples.

Reviews

Dmitry Zakharine. K.A. Bogdanov. Doctors, Patients and Readers: Pathographic Texts of Russian Culture in the 18th–19th Centuries. M.: OGI, 2005. 504 p.

The subject of the reviewed book is medicine, or 'pathographic discourse' which appears in two dimensions in the book — on the one hand as a language of illness description, and on the other as a language of a society's self-description. The reviewer mentions the originality of K.A. Bogdanov's cultural conception.

Alexander Massov. G.I. Kanevskaya. "I am Homeless But I am Free": Displaced Russians in Australia (1947–1954 gg.). Vladivostok: Far Eastern University, 2005. 232 p.

The author of the reviewed book studies the political and economic aspects of Russian emigration to Australia, emigrants' adaptation to Australian society, the problems of preserving the ethnic and cultural identity of the Russian community. Special attention is paid to the third wave of Russian emigration and displaced persons (DP). The reviewer specially notes the periodization of Russian emigration to Australia suggested by G.I. Kanevskaya, and thinks that the reviewed monograph makes an essential contribution to the study of the history of Russian emigration to Australia.

Catriona Kelly. A.A. Zalizniak, I.B. Levontina, A.D. Shmelev. The Key Ideas of the Russian Linguistic Map of the World. M.: Languages of Slavonic Culture, 2005. 544 p.; L. Gudkov. Negative Identity. M.: New Literary Review, Russian Public Opinion Research Centre, 2004. 816 p.

The book is devoted to the construction of Russian identity in language and social self-determination. The reviewer criticizes the idea of the untranslatability of the key concepts of Russian language shared by the authors of the first study and their circular reasoning. While noting the strengths of the works, the reviewer points out that the authors of both books work from a picture of the Russian identity that is too stable.

Grachev Igor, Rykin Pavel. Willard Sunderland. Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2004. XVII & 239 p.

Alexander Morrison. Willard Sunderland. Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2004. XVII & 239 p.

The reviewed book is devoted to Russian imperial politics in the colonization of the steppe regions. In Igor Grachev's and Pavel Rykin's review the author is criticized for his use of the concepts 'imperialism' and 'colonialism' as a theoretical basis, that the reviewers consider to be myths and errors of the western mentality. Alexander Morrison, on the contrary, praised the work. The reviewer opposes the current idea of the non-colonial nature of the Russian Empire.

Conferences

Andrey Toporkov. Round Table "Magic and Folk Religion in Russia and Western Europe"

The publication is devoted to the round table organized on May 23rd 2006 at the Russian State University for the Humanities (Moscow) by the Russian-French Centre for Historical Anthropology and the publishing house 'Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie [New Literary Review]'. Besides reports on magic and folk religion in Russia and Western Europe, the Russian translation of W. Ryans book 'The Bathhouse at Midnight: An Historical Survey of Magic an Divination in Russia' (M.: NLO, 2006) was presented within the framework of the round table.

Eugenia Vasina-Grigorieva. Visual Research: Summer School and Conference in Saratov

The publication reviews the summer school ‘Visual Methods of Sociological Research’, organized in Saratov from 5th–29th July 2006 by the Centre for Social Policy and Gender Studies together with faculty of social anthropology and social work of Saratov State Technical University and under the supervision of the Russian Society of Sociologists, and the conference ‘Visual Anthropology: New Views of Social Reality’ which logically concluded the summer school. The author of the review mentions the growing popularity of visual methods in sociology and a variety of approaches among the participants of the conference.

Svetlana Leontieva, Kirill Maslinsky. Educational Text at Soviet Schools

The publication reviews the international conference ‘Educational Text at Soviet School’ (6th Children’s Readings) held by the Department of Children’s Literature of the St. Petersburg State University of Culture and Arts on 15th–16th December 2006. The review indicates the main scientific problems of the conference (namely, school training as one of the major channels of translating norms), methodological approaches to the analysis of data (educational texts used at Soviet schools in the 1920s–1980s) and the contribution of the conference participants to the anthropological study of the phenomenon of Soviet schools.