

## Antropologicheskyy Forum No. 16 Online

### Articles

*Anna Pavlova.* Can We Judge a Nation's Culture on the Basis of Its Language?

This article voices strong doubts regarding the idea that language and culture are inextricably linked. Conclusions drawn about any national culture based on an analysis of the corresponding national language are never reliable. An analysis of untranslatable lexicon can lead to false insights into a foreign culture.

Keywords: linguistic relativities, international linguistic relations, linguistic map of the world, key words of culture, culture concept, untranslatability, lacuna

*Alexander Matochkin.* Individual Features of the Pechora Epic Singers' Quantitative Technique for Verse Singing

Russian folk verse in its direct sung form is investigated in the paper. Folk audio recordings are subjected to philological study. This approach is not utilised in modern prosody despite some attempts to explore sung folkloric verse (the 'musical' theory of folklore verse). The paper proposes an original tabulation method of representing sung verse. The method facilitates an investigation of the quantitative technique (distinguishing between syllable lengths). Complete text audio recordings of three Petchora bylinas' are analyzed using this method.

Keywords: oral poetry, folklore verse, Russian folk verse, bylina verse, sung verse, ‘musical’ theory of folklore verse, isochronism, quantitative technique, syllables length, audio recordings of folklore, tabulation method of sung verse representation, Pechora bylinas

*Andrey Stepanov.* The North-Russian House: Spatial dynamics and daily experience (latter half of 20<sup>th</sup> — early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.)

The essay is devoted to the particular characteristics of regional alterations (in the Totemsky district, Vologda oblast) in the layout and interior of the peasant house (*izba*). The work reveals the mechanisms by which cultural innovations intrude into the traditional system of survival and the spatial structure of the house. We consider the structure of habitual space as a set of places articulated by means of perception and acting — a topos which forms the phenomenological landscape of the house. It enables us to see how the incorporated skill of ‘place-action’ regulates daily practices and how innovations are adopted. As a result, external sociocultural (technological and urbanistic) factors, perceived by the internal experience of the social system and its actors, are converted into the very structure of the system.

Keywords: system, topos, space, landscape, perception, practice, izba, stove, chamber

### **Mass Protests in December 2011: an Essay on Online Research**

*Darya Radchenko, Irina Ksenofontova, Dina Pisarevskaya.* The Logic of Virtual Protest: The Week after the 2011 Elections

This article considers the logic of virtual protest and the mechanism of the transition from a virtual expression of dissatisfaction to significant actions in reality (such as political protests). On the basis of text analysis (samples include texts which emerged and / or circulated in the Russian blogosphere between the elections on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2011 and political demonstrations on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2011), the authors discuss the dynamics of virtual activity and attempt to clarify how and to what extent virtual activity influenced the demonstration on 10<sup>th</sup> December. The main result of the research is a conclusion that a key role was played by texts which proposed a mild political scenario and contained appeals for “honesty”, “justice” and ideas based around civil society.

Keywords: political demonstration, protest, virtual activity, blogosphere, civil society, virtual community, Internet

*Anna Sokolova, Maria Golovina, Elizaveta Semirkhanova.* “Bandar-Logs” in Sakharov Prospect: A Sociological Portrait

The article provides data received from sociological research on participants of the protest that took place on 24<sup>th</sup> December. The data describes a typical protest participant as a highly educated representative of the “intelligentsia”, a well-to-do person adhering to liberal values. On the other hand there is also a huge group of people who are much more radical in terms of their political view.

Keywords: demonstration, political activity, quantitative sociology

*Dmitry Gromov.* “We Are Not The Opposition, We Are The People”: New Features of Street Political Actionism

The people taking part in the protest demonstrations on 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> December 2011 in Moscow were not members of any political organizations and had no experience of political activity. This condition influenced the style of the demonstrations. Self-representation with homemade placards was very widespread, but there was no calling out of slogans, something which is typical for organized groups. In this paper the author analyzes manipulation regarding the number of protestors, the specific character of spatial organization, tactics for involving volunteers and so on.

Keywords: political demonstration, political activity, self-representation, placard, slogan

*Mikhail Alekseevsky.* Who Are All Those People (the Ones with Placards)?

In Russia, the demonstrations against the State Duma election result in December 2011 became the most widespread political street protest since Perestroika. However the forms of protest were very unusual, for example many protestors brought to the demonstrations comic homemade placards with absurd slogans. The author of the paper compares placards seen at the Moscow demonstrations with agitation placards of other similar political street protests (the student demonstrations in Serbia in 1996–1997, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the civil rights movement “Occupy Wall Street”) and analyzes the social makeup of protestors with placards. The result of field research shows that the most active group of people with placards is not students, but highly educated middle-aged specialists who want to make a political protest in an ironic way.

Keywords: political activity, elections in Russia, street protest, demonstration, protestors, homemade placards, slogans

*Andrey Moroz.* The “Folklore” of Protest Demonstrations in December 2011. The Old and the New

The article concerns the “folklore” of the protest demonstrations in December 2011 in Moscow and throughout Russia that were provoked by falsified election results. Political posters at the demonstrations, jokes and anecdotes that were widespread among protest participants are researched from the point of view of their roots and novelty. The conclusion drawn is that contemporary Russian protest activity takes some of its themes and signs from the Brezhnev era, while some methods and principles come from the 2004 Orange revolution in Ukraine. At the same time many new features are noticed in the creative protest activity of December 2011.

Keywords: folklore, anthropology, contemporary history, political protest, demonstration, elections, humour, Orange revolution, Perestroika, USSR, Ukraine, Russia

*Maria Akhmetova.* ...And the Bandar-Log Have Come: Vladimir Putin’s Statement and the “Folk Placard”

The paper depicts and analyses images and motifs of homemade placards used in the political demonstration “For Honest Elections” (24<sup>th</sup> December 2011). Some of these posters were inspired by Vladimir Putin’s statement which compared Russia’s political opposition to the Bandar-Log (*banderlogi* in Russian) and Putin himself to the python Kaa (characters in Kipling’s “The Jungle Book”).

Keywords: homemade posters, protest culture, visual motifs, Kipling, Bandar-Log

*Aleksandra Arkhipova.* Putin Jokes Ten Years On, or Does the Folklore of the “Snow Revolution” Really Exist?

This paper discusses the issue of valuable correlations between political jokes and political changes. In order to verify the main hypothesis I made a special sample of Putin jokes (110 texts, 73 joke types) that had been circulating widely in December 2011. These texts were divided into two groups based on their morphology: *Class A* (jokes with a traditional dialogue structure, typical folklore joke types) and *Class B* (lacking dialogue structure, representing a parody of speech genres). I found out that within the normal functioning of political humour *Class A* jokes are more popular. Even in modern times people do like old political jokes and retell them even more often than the new ones. But when the December political crisis started to escalate, *Class B* jokes grew more popular. The culture

of popular political protest does not need the old folklore models, instead requiring texts with special non-dialogue structures and other speech genres, because such texts are closer to actual forms of popular political activity.

Keywords: Putin jokes, motifs, joke types, popular political protest, contemporary folklore

### **Material from the Archives**

*Evgeny Platonov.* The First List of the Chapels in the St. Petersburg province 1734–1735 and the Circumstances of its Creation

During the so-called “piety reform” of Russian religious life in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, one of the most important areas was the secular and ecclesiastical administration’s struggle against popular religion and popular cult places — chapels. In 1720–1730, because of this struggle, several lists of chapels in different cities and provinces were made. One of them that has survived to this day is the list of the chapels in the St. Petersburg province which lists 68 chapels in the province with some additional information about the everyday religious life of Votian and Izhorian people. By comparing this information to another archive data, trials about “superstitions” in 1731–1734 and ethnographical records from the 18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries, we can understand how the priests compiled these lists and also analyze the dedications, location and functions of chapels. Additional information allows us to hypothesise the genesis of several religious customs of the Finno-Ugric population or the region.

Keywords: chapels, Votian, Izhorian, Ingria, sacrifices, the Holy Synod, St. Petersburg province, popular religion

### **Conferences**

Readings in Honour of B.S. Ryabinin (Petrozavodsk): Impressions from Participants

The publication presents material from the survey carried out by ‘Antropologicheskii Forum’ with answers given by some participants of the Readings in Honour of B.S. Riabinin which took place on 12<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> September 2011 in Petrozavodsk, organised by The Kizhi Federal Museum of Cultural History and Architecture.

Keywords: B.S. Riabinin, Northwest Russia, modern folklore studies, modern studies in anthropology and ethnography.

*Mikhail Alekseevsky, Dmitry Gromov.* Conference “Folklore in the 21st Century: Heroes of Our Time”

The authors present a review of the conference “Folklore in the 21st Century: Heroes of Our Time” about modern folklore characters, which took place in the State Republican Centre of Russian Folklore (Moscow) in October 2011. The review provides short summaries of the most interesting papers presented on the conference.

Keywords: modern folklore, conference, review, characters, folklore genres

*Andrey Vozyanov.* The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and Summer School of the International Association T2M: A Closer Look at Mobility Studies

The 1<sup>st</sup> T2M International Summer School, followed by the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility, were held in Berlin, Germany, from 30<sup>th</sup> September—9<sup>th</sup> October 2011. Historians, sociologists, anthropologists and other specialists presented their social and socio-historical research projects in the field of transport and mobility studies. The aim of the text is to give a short overview of the topics and trends of this developing discipline which were touched upon at these events.

Keywords: mobility studies, history of transport, science and technology studies, spatial turn, cultural geography

*Makka Albogachieva.* International Conference “Islam in Russia and Beyond: the History and Culture of Society”

This paper provides an overview of the conference dedicated to the memory of Batal Hadji Belharoeva prepared by the Government of the Republic, the Coordinating Centre of Muslims of the Northern Caucasus, Ingushetia Muftiate and the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), and devoted to discussing various aspects of history, sociology, political scientists, culture and economy in the context of Islamic culture.

Keywords: Islamic culture, anthropology of religion, Ingushetia, brotherhood of Batal Hadji Belharoev

*Ekaterina Kuznetsova, Andrey Toporkov.* The International Conference “Oral Charms in a Structural and Comparative Light”

This publication chronicles the international conference “Oral Charms in Structural and comparative Light”, which took place on

27<sup>th</sup>–29<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at the Russian State University for Humanities (Moscow). It was organized by the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming, the Marc Bloch Russian and French Centre for Historical Anthropology of the Russian State University for Humanities, the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The chronicle provides information on the primary objectives of the conference, the variety of issues discussed, the participants, the conference sessions, and its preliminary results. It also provides short summaries of all the papers presented at the conference, and a review on the recent publications in the field of verbal magic research (from journals to monographs).

Keywords: conference, folklore, religion, traditional culture, charms, charm-indexes

### Personalia

*Elena Revunenkovna*. The Life and Fate of Nina Ivanovna Gagen-Torn — Ethnographer and Poet

This paper is dedicated to the life and attitude of N.I. Gagen-Torn (1900–1986); her work as a poet and scholar left an important legacy in Russian ethnology and culture. The epoch of her life may be regarded as a microcosm of the great contemporary events and shocks of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like many of her contemporaries she spent time in the GULAG, but nevertheless she realised her creative abilities both in science and literature — in poetry and in prose. As an ethnographer, a pupil of L.Y. Sternberg and V.G. Bogoraz and following their teachings, she carried out an in-depth investigation into the dress of the Volga ethnicities, and she provided theoretical insights as well as generalising a series of ethnographic problems. Of enormous importance are her memoirs — especially as a source both for history and ethnology. Of paramount importance are Gagen-Torn's investigations in the realm of the great monument of Russian literature — “The Tale of Igor's Campaign” — in which she managed to combine both the perspective of both scientist and poet with regard to this outstanding poem. Her image remains an irreproachable example of how, even throughout tragic events, it was possible to keep intact and pure those innumerable talents with which she was generously endowed.

Keywords: N.I. Gagen-Torn, ethnography, poetry, repressions, L.Y. Sternberg, V.G. Bogoraz, Andrey Bely, clothes, home, shamanism, “The Tale of Igor's Campaign”