

Antropologicheskyy Forum No. 19 Online

Articles

Alla Sokolova. Family Heirlooms and Jewish memory

The article presents the results of a field study carried out as part of the “Family heirlooms and Jewish memory” project which resulted in the organization of an exhibition at the State Museum of History of Religion in St. Petersburg. On the basis of interviews with the owners of the heirlooms, the article examines the relationship between them and the various storage and presentation practices for these kinds of items. The practices are defined as a particular way of keeping family memories that plays an important role in constructing Jewish identity on the basis of one’s ancestors.

Keywords: Jewish family heirlooms, Jewish ritual objects, family memory, Jewish identity, ikhes, Jewish descent, Jewish usable past, museums, field study.

Svetlana Ryzhakova. Fux, Commilton, Philister...: Some Preliminary Observations on Student Corps in Latvia

Student academic organizations, typical of German cultural areas (*Burschenschaften*, *Landsmanschaften*, *Fraternitas*, *corps*), played quite

significant role in Baltic high school history and culture. Originating at Dorpat University at the beginning of the 19th century, they later emerged at the Polytechnic University in Riga, the Latvian University, etc. They form a strong hierarchical system based on the social mechanisms of both inclusion and exclusion, with prescriptive organization, behaviour and rituals. The author provides historical and anthropological data of the phenomenon of ethnic corporations (Russian, Latvian etc.) in the Baltic area and analyses “Fraternitas Arctica” and “Sororitas Tatiana” in particular.

Keywords: Burschenschaften, Landsmanschaften, Fraternitas, corps, academic social culture, Baltic’s states high schools history.

Anna Pivovarova. “Forgotten” Placenta: Symbolic Actions in Contemporary Home Birth

Sometimes a new cultural practice requires performing a certain ritual while the established tradition has not yet provided a prepared behavioural strategy. In the Russian peasant tradition, taking care of placenta was fully delegated to housewives. In modern birth culture, this function is performed by medical staff: what happens to placenta in the hospital is determined by the general practice of treating biological waste. In the case of home births in the city, parents face difficulties when they have to do something with the placenta. Fieldwork data show that parents realise the symbolic importance of placenta and do not dare simply throw it away. An action such as that would be judged as absolutely unacceptable. Yet without any continuity of tradition, they often do not know what to do. Based on symbolic manipulations of placenta, the paper investigates the mechanisms of searching for and inventing traditions in modern city culture.

Keywords: home birth, ritual, urban birth rituals, placenta, placentophagy, New Age.

On the Trail of the 15th Vinogradov Readings

Maria Gavrilova. The Transformation of Traditional Games in Soviet Pedagogy (1920s–1930s)

Active games were used widely in Soviet pedagogy not only as a means for physically educating children and young people but also as an instrument of political education. To create new games according to the prevailing ideology the authors of game compilations that were recommended for use in Soviet schools, kindergartens, and youth clubs used traditional Russian games material. This article addresses following questions: (1) What kind of traditional game

plots appealed to Soviet educational specialists of the 1920s and 1930s? (2) What kind of games were not acceptable to Soviet educational specialists? (3) What changes occurred to the traditional games — namely, which actions were emphasised, deleted and deliberately added?

The modification of game content according to the prevailing ideology uncovers the principles on which a game is founded. This article shows that through modifications in the game plot such as giving characters different names, adding, deleting and changing the actions in a game, the creators of new games follow general gaming principles.

Keywords: soviet pedagogy / education, communist propaganda, game / gaming pedagogy, games played at school, Russian traditional / popular games, plot structure of a game.

Kirill Maslinsky. School Discipline through the Prism of Folklore

The main focus of this article is on the narrative representation of school discipline (student resistance, non-compliance and conflicts with teachers) in Russian school folklore and official school documents in the second half of the 20th century. Two genres of school jokes (written and oral), school rules and official lists of permitted punishments were compared. The concept of discipline is operationalized as disciplinary episodes depicting student infringements or disciplinary action (punishments) taken by teachers. The distribution of infringements and punishments among the genres studied and the genre differences in perspective on the same disciplinary episodes reveal subtle borders between the official and unofficial view on discipline in Soviet schools. I also suggest several semantic categories that guide the narrative representation of school discipline: the isomorphism of disciplinary and schooling processes, the risk involved in initiating disciplinary conflict, the connection between discipline and everyday school routine and the internal structure of disciplinary system (hierarchy of punishments).

Keywords: Soviet school, contemporary folklore, school folklore, school discipline.

Ksenia Gavrilva. The Metamorphoses of “Ranetki” in the Village of Bolshoy Roy: Staging a Television Series as a Spontaneous Game and Organised Amateur Performance

The article is focused on investigating the context and patterns of children using the popular TV series “Ranetki” as a conceptual basis for playing and staging. Having been part of the discourse of the

children's community, the performances (which date back to 2009) are now examined within the framework of two different types of childhood activity: children's plays ("pretending games" or "improvisation plays" in Russian academic discourse) based on films or television production ("playing films") and cultural projects of the village community centre, namely an institutionalized amateur staging controlled by an adult. Drawing on comparative data allows us to point out the specific features of plays or stage projects based on adopting and revising the media production.

Keywords: anthropology of childhood, children's culture, theory of game and play, children's play, improvisation play, playing films, children's amateur performance (staging).

Materials from the Archives

Natalia Komelina, Mikhail Lurie, Svetlana Podrezova. The Songs of Street Singer Vladimir Yegorov Recorded on a Phonograph by A.M. Astakhova

In 1931 several songs performed by a professional street singer Vladimir Yegorov were recorded on a phonograph record by Leningrad folklorist A.M. Astakhova, who was then working on a folklore collection "Songs of street singers". These audio documents are now stored in the Audio Archive of the Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House) and were not previously known to scholars. The present publication includes audio tracks of 9 song fragments, full texts of the songs concerned, their musical scores, notes by A.M. Astakhova and comments by the publishers. The reader is able to hear the performance of urban street songs and get a glimpse into the repertoire and the performing style of a singer who flourished in Leningrad market squares in the 1920s — early 1930s.

Keywords: street singers, urban folklore, songs and couplets, folklore audio-record.

Interview

Galina Komarova. "The Anthropological Profession Impressively Widens the Worldview of the Scholar"

The article publishes a dual interview from the project "Female Portraits in the Scholarly Context", which consisted of interviewing female anthropologists from different countries who study the peoples of Russia and the former USSR. The author's interlocutors in the interview are Natalia Zhukovsky (Russia) and Caroline Humphrey (UK), both of whom are scholars with substantial experience in the field ethnographic and anthropological work.

Participants in the interview speak of their personal scientific careers, share their experiences and discuss the prospects of their science. Their reflections on the trajectories of their respective professional communities provide much food for thought.

Keywords: peoples of Russia and the former USSR, anthropological field studies, ethnicity, gender.

Conferences

10th Congress of Ethnographers and Anthropologists: Impressions from Participants

This publication impressions of some participants of the 10th Congress of Ethnographers and Anthropologists collected as answers to a questionnaire distributed by Antropologičesky Forum. The Congress took place on 2nd–5th July 2013 in Moscow and was organised by the Association of Russian Ethnographers and Anthropologists in collaboration with the N.N. Miklukho-Maklay Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Science. The main subject of the Congress was “The modern town and social and cultural modernization in Russia”.

Keywords: 10th Congress of ethnographers and anthropologists, urban studies, social and cultural modernization.

Julia Buchatskaya. “Concepts of the Subject in European Ethnology”: a Scientific Workshop at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology / European Ethnology at the Georg-August-University of Göttingen, 13th–14th December 2012

This international discussion was devoted to attitudes to the concept of the subject and subjectivization in European ethnology and cultural studies today. 13 reports, both theoretically and empirically-oriented, considered the various patterns and conditions of forming subjects in different examples: analysing qualitative interviews, the phenomenon of the private rental sector in regional tourism, body and gender practices in the subculture Visual Kei and the professional culture of ethnologists and researchers studying migrations. The diverse interpretations of the subject within the humanities were reviewed and it revealed which of the synonymous concepts (individual, person, personality, actor) ethnologists work with today.

Keywords: subject, subjectivization, conference review.

Maria Gumerova, Anna Ivanova. Review of the Conference “Constructing the ‘Soviet’? Political Consciousness, Everyday Practices, New Identities”

On 19th–20th April 2013 the 7th conference “Constructing the ‘Soviet’? Political Consciousness, Everyday Practices, New Identities” was held in the European University at Saint Petersburg. The mission of the annual event was to provide an international discussion of the problems of the Soviet history, to develop academic connections and to find new methods and approaches. The conference gave to young scholars from Russia and abroad an opportunity to discuss different aspects of Soviet everyday life, politics, economics and art; to receive comments from well-known academics — anthropologists, historians, sociologists and philologists — about their research.

Keywords: Soviet history, Soviet culture, political history, economic history, Sovietization, Socialist Realism.

Andrey Toporkov. The International Conference “Charms on Paper, Charms in Practice”

The International conference “Charms on Paper, Charms in Practice” was a part of the 16th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research ‘Folk Narrative in the Modern World: Unity and Diversity’ (25th–30th June 2013, Vilnius, Lithuania).

Keywords: verbal charms, magic, manuscripts, rituals.