

## Antropologicheskii Forum # 13 Online

### Articles

*Elena Lyarskaya.* Women and the Tundra. A Gender Shift in the Yamal Peninsula?

The article analyses the outflow of women from the tundra and taiga of Northern Russia. The author compares the situation that has arisen in Yamal to the processes taking place in other regions.

Keywords: Yamal, peoples of the North, Nenets, gender shift, position of women

*Mariya Kaspina.* Clashes between the law and the customs of traditional culture of Jews in Eastern Europe: The people's Judaism

The article deals with the ways of treating a series of direct religious interdictions which were developed in traditional Jewish culture. For the founders of Jewish religious teaching it was obvious that in real life the law often came into conflict with the people's customs and traditions which were accepted in those areas where Jews live to this day. The author examines cases of clashes between customs and the law in material from the traditional culture of Ashkenazi Jews

from Eastern Europe in the 20th century. The article includes field material from expeditions carried out in 2000–2010 on the territory of former Jewish towns in Eastern Europe: in West Ukraine and Moldavia. The main systems of rules about the breaking of rules which have formed in traditional Jewish culture are more or less identical to universal ways of circumventing interdictions and prescripts: constructing a symbolic perfect tense, changing the status of an object and ritual exchange. Clear parallels to universal ways of circumventing interdictions and prescripts can be found in the people's everyday practices connected to the arrangement of one's home, the funeral rites cycle, and protection from unclean powers.

Keywords: Jewish ethnography, interdiction, traditional culture of Jews in Eastern Europe

*Marianna Smirnova-Seslavinskaya.* Traditional Economy and Lifestyle as Factors of Matrimonial Policy and of Ethno-Social Processes in Rom Groups

The article, using the example of traditional Rom communities, analyzes certain universal features of the workings of matrimonial policy in tribal society and their correlation with the principles of traditional economy. It examines the way in which the processes of the economic expansion of a traditional Rom community and the control of its borders are related to the development of exogamic and endogamic processes, as well as to ethno-social structuring. The model studied can define the features of social stratification processes in traditional societies, in particular, the development mechanisms of Indian castes.

Keywords: traditional economy and lifestyle, mono-professionalization, generational dissemination, economic expansion, occupation change, dynamics of matrimonial rules, social stratification

*Varvara Dobrovolskaya.* “Bast Shoe to Bast Shoe, Boot to Boot”: Interdictions and Prescripts Connected to the Manufacture of Footwear in Northern and Central Russia

The focus of the article is the behavioural norms linked to professions involved in producing different types of footwear. These prescripts differ in a whole series of features which separate them from the main set of norms regulating the manufacturing of clothing items. The article examines the prescripts and interdictions that apply to shoemakers, bast-shoemakers and wool manufacturers, which must be adhered to in order to ensure the safety of these craftsmen and their work, as well as the surrounding people. The norms that regulate

the professional activity of those manufacturing various types of footwear have far more differences than similarities. The prescripts that apply to the work of bast-shoemakers are not dissimilar to those regulating the work of carpenters and basket manufacturers. The norms which a shoemaker must adhere to are in many respects similar to those present in sewing. The prescripts for wool manufacturers closely relate to the interdictions regulating the work of shepherds and potters. The reason for these differences lies in the specifics of the materials with which the craftsmen work, and the entirely different processes used for manufacturing the items.

Keywords: folklore studies, cultural anthropology, prescripts, interdictions and instructions, norms

*Valeriya Kolosova.* What is “Silent Grass” Silent about?  
(On the Identification of Plants in Herbal Reference Books)

The article deals with several ways of identifying plants which are mentioned in herbal reference books (for example “silent grass”). Identification is based on the comparison of a plant’s objective features, which are listed in the text along with data about the habitat it is found in and its linguistic geography (dialectal phytonyms).

Keywords: ethno-botany, phytonyms, dialectology, molchan, Centaurea, herbal reference book, spells

*Irina Nazarova.* Why Do We (Not) Believe in Superstitions?

Our contemporaries usually say that they do not believe in superstitions but sometimes take into account some of them. Half-belief in superstitions is due to the special status of these statements. Superstitions declare the correlation between two events, the relationship between which is not evident to the speaker. The “unobviousness” of the statements is compensated by the fact that they express “traditional”, generally accepted ideas. In certain social and psychological conditions the role of superstitions increases and the semiotic properties of superstitions make them applicable to almost all situations.

Keywords: superstitions, folklore in contemporary society, belief in the supernatural, tradition.

*Aleksandr Kozintsev.* The Phenomenon of “Laughter Crying”: On the Distinction of the Similar

This commentary, dedicated to the memory of T.A. Bernshtam, discusses questions raised by her in work on crying and laughter in

the Russian tradition. Appearing outwardly to be the poles of the “sadness — joy” continuum, crying and laughter turn out to have different qualities. Crying certainly expresses or signifies emotion, while laughter is a display of playful negativism that has become a sign not only of joy, but also of the symbolic transition from culture to “anti-culture”.

Keywords: T.A. Bernshtam, Russian folk culture, orthodoxy, dual belief, laughter, crying

### Materials from Expeditions

*Svetlana Ryzhakova.* Miracles in Aglona

The material presented in this article was collected by the author in August 2003 during field research in the area of Aglona (East Latvia). It reflects local beliefs related to the miracle-working icon of Our Lady of Aglona, its role in the life of local people and stories about events which are looked upon as miracles. The material shows that virtually all cases recorded in the Aglona area indicated an active appeal to Our Lady of Aglona, the making of vows and their fulfillment as a result of which miracles happened. They are linked to special temporal periods — festivals, pilgrimages, either for individual crisis points in one’s life such as illness or other special need. The stories describe miracles of the origin of the church itself and the protection of its integrity; miracles happening to people who appeal to the Mother of God and fulfil vows; miracles happening on pilgrimages made to Aglona on the feast of the Assumption on 15th August; miracles linked to the image of St. Antony. There is also another side to the miracles: the presence in Aglona of a special, holy power, divine grace, ranging from the miracle-working icon and basilica and especially strong at the feast of 15th August, results in mixed feelings among local inhabitants on the great popularity of the place. Perhaps this indicates, among other things, the ambivalent nature of the miracle, which opens the door to both positive and negative changes in a person’s life.

Keywords: Aglona, miracle-working icon, stories about miracles, pilgrimage, church festival

*Veronika Makarova, Svetlana Podrezova.* Ethnographic “Cinema” from Nina Gavrilovna

The article deals with a video recording made in the Zhukovskii district of the Bryanskaya region in May 2006. The authors examine the interaction between the collector and the informant, where the communication is led entirely by the latter. The heroine of

the article, Nina Gavrilovna (b. 1935) knew how to use the researchers' video cameras to shoot "ethnographic film", planned in great detail by her. The article includes visual material.

Keywords: ethnographic film, professional informant, visual anthropology

### Museum

*Vsevolod Gurin.* One Topic from the History of the Formation of the Tibetan Collections at the Russian Museum of Ethnography and the State Hermitage

The article contains the results of scientific research on the history of the formation and study of collections of Tibetan religious art, carried out by the author in 2009–2010 in the museums of St Petersburg. This topic reflects the specific nature of the formation of Tibetan collections in the first half of the 20th century and reveals the historical reasons for the current situation of their study. While working through the inventory volumes of The State Hermitage, traces of collection № 900 were discovered, which was transferred in the 1930s from the Russian Ethnographical Museum and since 1955 was thought to be lost. In this article an attempt is made to reconstruct the history of the "lost" collection using the data available and to solve some questions raised by the process used to register items in the Hermitage.

Keywords: Buddhism, Tibet, art, painting, collections, museums, history, Hermitage, Russian Ethnographical Museum, inventory, S.F. Oldenburg, E.E. Ukhtomskiy, A. Barannikov, J.I. Yelikhina, L.G. Cherenkova

*Sergey Dmitriev.* A Brief Essay on the History of the Formation of the Collections for the Peoples of the Middle East in the Russian Museum of Ethnography

The Ethnography department of the Russian Museum in the name of Emperor Alexander III (today the Russian Museum of Ethnography) was formed as an institution that should represent the traditional culture as of the peoples who had settled in the Russian Empire and its adjacent territories. As a result it contained numerous collections about the peoples from different regions. Among them are collections about the Iranians, Turks, Kurds, Aisors, Turkish Turkmen and Armenians. Different groups of the population of Russia participated in the creation of this museum, such as members of the Imperial Family (Great Princes Georgii Mikhailovich, Boris Vladimirovich and Nikolai Nikolayevich the Younger), eminent Orientalist

scholars (A.N. Samoilovich, N.N. Martinovich, K.A. Inostrantsev, A.A. Miller, S.I. Shapshal, A.A. Loris-Kalantar, S.V. Ter-Avetisian and L.F. Bogdanov), painters (L.V. Dmitriev-Kavkazski, F.G. Berenshtam, A.P. Eisner, K.Z. Kavtoradze, and R.R. O’Konnell-Mikhailovskaya), officials (A.P. Petrova, N.I. Amatuni, A.S. Ostrogradsky and others), military men (Major General S.I. Pokhitonov, the famous explorer and director of the Tiflis Museum Colonel A.N. Kaznakov and others). Some artefacts come from famous pre-Revolutionary collections (such as those of F.M. Plyushkin, N. Oranzhereev, N.V. Shcheglova). Good collections were assembled in the Karsk region by A.A. Florensky, and in Turkey by Red Cross doctor P.V. Shusev. Generally these collections related to the pre-Revolutionary period. Small collections were formed by museum employees in the latter half of the 20th century (A.L. Natanson in 1961 created one on the Kurds and E.G. Torchinskaya in 1981 also on the Kurds). Some collections originated from various museums in St Petersburg. As a result there formed quite an interesting store of collections on the traditional culture of the peoples of the Middle East.

Keywords: Russian Museum of Ethnography, peoples of the Middle East, museum collections

### Following in the Footsteps of the “Urban” Forum

*Tanya Richardson*

The study of the “urban” in anthropology has had a long and interesting career. Although anthropologists no longer debate whether they should study life in cities or the city as a whole, the in/of distinction remains an important framing device. Much of the most interesting contemporary anthropology about cities simultaneously considers urban imaginaries, practices and politics, examples of which can be found in recent monographs on Odessa, Santiago and Berlin.

Keywords: urban anthropology, city mythologies, urban social movements, urban planning

### In Response to Publications

*Tatyana Bunchuk. Khoronit’ Po-repnomu: An Addition to the Ethno-Linguistic Interpretation of the Northern Russian Phraseological Unit*

This article researches the name of actions in one of the Northern Russian funeral ceremony. Based upon the analysis of linguistic,

folkloric and ethnographic data the author suggests that this action — *khoronit' po-repnomu / na kostrakh* — reflects the people's idea of the completion of a person's life journey. Premature death was symbolically interpreted as “unreal” which is why the interment of a person who died unexpectedly, before his life span was spent, was preceded by an action imitating burial but which was not one.

Keywords: turnip, funeral, temporary, folk culture, symbol

### Personalia

*Dmitrii Nesanelis*. In Grateful Memory. The 100-year Anniversary of the Birth of Vasilii Vasilievich Nalimov

The article is dedicated to the 100-year anniversary of the birth of the exceptional mathematician, logician and philosopher Vasilii Vasilievich Nalimov (1911–1997), author of excellent scientific and philosophical works that have received widespread international acknowledgement. This material discusses the anthropological interests of Nalimov, which partly coincide with the interests and findings of his father, the first professional Komi ethnographer V.P. Nalimov (1879–1938). The publication includes letters from V.V. Nalimov to the author with historical and culturological commentaries.

Keywords: V.V. Nalimov, P.A. Sorokin, anthropology, sociology, gender research, orthodoxy, Catholicism, ancient paganism, traditional culture

### In memoriam

*Dmitrii Nesanelis, Mikhail Rogachev, Aleksandr Teryukov, Yurii Shabaev, Valerii Sharapov*. Nikolai Dmitrievich Konakov (04.12.1946 — 10.08.2010)

On 10th August the ethnographer Nikolai Dmitrievich Konakov passed away. For more than 20 years he was head of the ethnography department at the Institute for Language, Literature and History at Komi Educational Centre, in the Ural department of the Russian Academy of Sciences. His academic interests included the trade culture of Komi, traditional nature management, and the mythology of Ural peoples. One of his main scholarly achievements was the monographic description of the culture of Komi hunters and fishermen, the deciphering of the ancient Komi trade calendar and the realisation of the “Komi Mythology” project.

Keywords: Nikolai Dmitrievich Konakov, ethnography, traditional nature management, mythology, Komi

## Conferences

### Second Congress of Folklorists: Impressions from Participants

This publication presents material from surveys taken by Antropologicheskii Forum of some participants of the Second Congress of Folklorists which took place on 1st–6th February 2010 in Moscow, organised by the State Republican Centre of Russian Folklore.

Keywords: Second congress of folklorists, modern folklore studies

*Svetlana Ryzhakova.* The Baltics as an Intersection of Civilizational Identities. 8th Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe, 11th–14th June 2009, Kaunas (Lithuania)

This report focuses on the 8th International Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe that took place on 11th–14th June 2009 at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, titled “The Baltics as an Intersection of Civilizational Identities”. The broad format of events and the participation of scholars from almost all the countries in the Baltic region provided the opportunity to look at the Baltic area as a whole, and its separate linguistic, historiographical, social and cultural problems.

Keywords: Baltic research, Baltic region, ethnic culture, national identity, migration, Lithuanian diaspora, Latvian literary language, historical memory, Soviet history and daily life

*Valeriya Kolosova, Konstantin Rangochev.* Ethnic Groups in Cultural Landscapes

This text contains a review of the International Symposium “Ethnic Groups and Sacral Geography” (2nd–4th October 2009, Samokov, Bulgaria), dedicated to the 540-year anniversary of the stay of patron saint of Bulgaria, Ivan Rilski, in the town of Samokov and combined with the Festival of Cultural and Historical Films, the “Fourth Balkan Culturological Film Collection”. Reports of participants mentioned issues of interpretation of folkloric and author’s texts (oral and written), the study of cultural landscape, the material and non-material legacy of different regions of Bulgaria, particularly the Samokov district, and also other Slavic and Balkan countries.

Keywords: ethnic group, folklore, sacral geography, cultural legacy, ritual, textology, musicology, narrative, archeology, ethnographic films

### **Questionnaire**

Monitoring the Scholarly Life of the Anthropological Community (2009).

The publication presents material from the annual questionnaire carried out by 'Antropologicheskii Forum' with the purpose of monitoring the academic life of the Russian anthropological community. The questionnaire considered the results of research activity throughout 2009 in ethnography, anthropology, folklore studies and ethno-/sociolinguistics (monographs, collections of articles, published field data, reference books, reviews, textbooks, published discussions and conferences), as well as trends in disciplines within the anthropological circle.

Keywords: results of academic life, anthropology, ethnography, folklore studies, ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics