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S. M. Shirokogoroff's book *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* and its Russian translation: history, structure, and interpretations

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S. M. Shirokogoroff's book *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* was originally published in 1929 in English and later also in Chinese and Japanese languages. It is striking that this monograph has still not been published in Russian. It contains rich ethnographic data on Evenki kin relations, family organization, property relations, and various customs regulating social life. This text demonstrates how ethnographic data are translated into a theory. Compared to the Russian texts of the same period, S. M. Shirokogoroff's writings were free from Soviet ideological frames. This article discusses the historical and ideological contexts, in which Aleksandr Nikolaevich Gorlin (1878–1939), a literary translator, worked on the Russian translation of S. M. Shirokogoroff's book in the 1930s, as well as the challenges that the contemporary readers and academic editors of the translation face. It shows that the translation process itself and translation versions are intriguing objects of anthropological research, as they illustrate the temporal dimension of the academic language and facilitate our understanding and interpretation of diverse processes that molded the indigenous peoples' image in the early Soviet science.

Keywords: Evenkis; ethnic units; history of anthropology; knowledge; social organization; system theory; anthropological translation; Tunguses

S. M. Shirokogoroff's book *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*¹ is based on field materials, which he and his wife Elizaveta Nikolaevna gathered during three expeditions to Transbaikalia and Manchuria in 1912, 1913, and 1915–1917 at the time when Sergei Mikhailovich was working at the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of Russian Academy of Sciences.

The scientist always kept his diaries and other important manuscripts among his personal things, as he mentioned in the description of his arrest in the Amur railway line on his way from Blagoveshchensk to Hailar in April 1917:

A search begins. I have a lot of things with me. Parts of a tent, <bed?> spread, warm underwear, a folding bed, a table, canned meat, some surgical tools, a photographic apparatus, a phonograph, a <compass>, a hiking first aid kit and plenty of manuscripts and other rough copies (as we do not separated from the results of our <> research <> manuscripts – *crossed – authors*). <...> Manchurian manuscripts and other tales transcribed in the European alphabet

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cause a remark of a cornet: Apparently, the code! One of the officers delves deeply into reading ethnographic records.²

From 1922, living in China as an emigrant, S. M. Shirokogoroff could no longer conduct field research among Tungus from the Russian side. The field materials that he managed to record allowed him to write two books on Tungus ethnography and Tungus-Russian Dictionary (published posthumously in Japan).³ However, ethnographic, archaeological, and photo collections, which he gathered for the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, were not available to him. Due to this fact, he couldn't use these materials to write about Tungus material culture.⁴

The book about the social organization of the northern Tungus was written in 1924–1927 in China, although preparatory work (processing field data, working with the available literature, and developing the concept) began much earlier: 'I have a great desire – wrote S. M. Shirokogoroff to L.Ia. Shternberg in spring 1924, – to start working on "Soc[ial] Org[anization] of the Tungus", but in the absence of the necessary books consider it untimely'.⁵ It is known from S. M. Shirokogoroff's letter to sinologist V. M. Alekseev from Amoi, that by September 1927 he finished two large works: *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* and Vol. II. *Process of Physical Growth* as well as a number of articles on linguistics, which he was about to publish during the following year.

We suppose that S. M. Shirokogoroff wrote the text in English and then K. Horchner and K. Jackson from the Commercial Press publishing house edited his English text. Sergei Mikhailovich expressed sincere regret both in letters and in the book itself that it would be published in English. In the preface to the book he says:

Another objection (the first one was lacking literature on the research topic – *authors*) to publication was that my materials must be published in English, which for me was a language neither native nor even sufficiently well studied to enable me to express myself with desirable clarity and in a style not offending the feeling of language among the English-speaking people. Of course, I would be in a much better position if I could write this work in my native Russian language.⁶

Perhaps, S. M. Shirokogoroff's monograph devoted to the topic of social organization is the first in the history of the Russian ethnology (or, one might say, written by Russian-born ethnologist), when a book begins with the description of the methodological approaches of the author. This fact, of course, is outstanding for its time.

In November 1927, he wrote to Vasilii Mikhailovich Alekseev:

Among others, I am sending you 'Ethnos', which is just a summary of my hard work that I have long been systematically preparing to print. Of course, the main part of the work is the chapters where the general theory of 'ethnos' is suggested. In my first work 'Soc[ial] Org[anization] of the North[ern] Tungus', proofs of which I am reading now, I apply this scheme to the particular issue of social organization and history of the Tungus.⁷

Thus, the idea to consider the particular theme of social organization was based on a certain theory, which itself was developed largely on the Tungus material.⁸ But, what was the material which contributed to the creation of this particular theory?

S. M. Shirokogoroff researched Tungus groups which lived in Transbaikalia and the Far East and had spoken or spoke Manchu-Tungus languages.⁹ The particular features of

this field were such that Tungus lived here in the neighborhood and in interethnic contacts with Mongols, Manchu, and Chinese, which had a serious impact on the ‘original Tungus complex’, according to the researcher.¹⁰

The first expedition to the Trans-Baikal region in 1912 led him to Urul’ga Tungus (he followed the footsteps of M. A. Kastren, a researcher who compiled the first Tungus dictionary¹¹). Upon arrival and acquaintance with the place, he realized that the situation was quite different from what he imagined while living in St Petersburg.

‘Local Tungus borrowed the Buryat language, their anthropological type and ethnographic complex changed: It was supposed to find the Tungus language here but all Tungus here speak Buryat (<.> jargon). Those records, wh[ich] I managed to make clearly show the existence and use of the Tungus language in a very limited proportion. Tunguse, among whom we will stay, profess Lamaism but they also have shamans (We live now behind the hedge of a shaman). I frankly admit that I am somewhat confused. I do not know whether to start learning language or not. If they speak broken Buryat, is there any sense to learn this jargon? Tungus say that earlier they had spoken Orochen and also that before they did not speak “Tungus”, i.e. Buryat. While I stay among Tungus, I’ll write down their words and so on. This is what I have so far started doing. When we get to Orochens, I will record them as well’ – he wrote to Shternberg on 11 June 1912.¹²

We brought this passage in order to present explicitly a difficult situation, which young ethnologist S. M. Shirokogoroff faced in the very beginning of his work. And no one could give him a special and wise advice in this situation. Shternberg, who was an addressee of this letter, had never worked in Transbaikalian Region and had no firsthand information. All he could give was a general advice based on his profound knowledge and experience. Due to the specificity of the field, Shirokogoroff paid special attention to the history of modern ethnic groups, migration, inter-ethnic contacts, ideas about different ‘cultural complexes’, and the impacts of ‘primary’ (natural) and ‘secondary’ (cultural) environments.¹³ According to Shirokogoroff, the term ‘Tungus’ was a ‘generic’ name of ethnic groups, who originated from the same ancestral entity and took divergent historical paths under the influence of different environments. As a result, Tungusic groups had such differences, which made the construction of new ethnic reality possible. Thus, the term ‘small peoples of the North’ was coined in the 1920s–1930s.

In the introduction to the monograph, *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*, the author gave a brief synopsis of how he understood ethnicity, social organization, and culture. Although Shirokogoroff in his scientific work addressed the topics of classical evolutionist trend in ethnography of the late nineteenth century, such as social organization and religion, he doubted about the existence of ‘evolution’ of cultural phenomena, believing that ‘they are a function, and a function changes, not “evolves”...’¹⁴

Shirokogoroff’s intention was to give a systematic description of the Tungus ethnographic complex. The complex approach to the object of study implied the comprehensive description and analysis of cultural phenomena in the context of interconnection of their constituent elements. In this sense, S. M. Shirokogoroff’s methodological approaches correlate with functionalism. Yet, it is rather the ‘ethnic unit’ with its constituent parts than the society or the social group that takes the central place in his analysis. In contrast to functionalists, S. M. Shirokogoroff never ignored the historical approach to the research object, while taking into consideration that ‘these units are always in process of change (variations)’.¹⁵

The book *Social Organization* consists of eight chapters. The untitled ninth chapter is an extension of the previous chapters. The monograph is built on an enhanced

plan: beyond the chapters on social organization (Chapters III–VII) it includes additional data on geographical conditions, classification, and distribution of Tungus groups and the history of their origin and migrations (Chapters I–II) as was noted by Shirokogoroff himself.

According to S. M. Shirokogoroff, social organization of Tungus consists of the phenomena related to different historical periods and backgrounds; it is closely connected with the material culture, mentality, identity, and worldview. Its partial changes lead to a complete change in the whole system. Shirokogoroff argued that social phenomena as functions may be considered only in connection with other existing ethnographic phenomena.¹⁶

Chapter VIII stands out from the general style of the book. It reads quite modern in the context of the contemporary social anthropology. The chapter, characterizing social life and mentality of the Tungus, is built mostly on personal everyday life observations and descriptions from the field. We will give just one example:

<...> some Tungus adapt themselves to Chinese ideas and customs. <...> A Tungus woman was once invited by a Chinese woman, travelling on a river steamer, to visit her. The Tungus women first refused, but being curious, followed the Chinese woman to the steamer. She was delighted in seeing it, especially the engine, the kitchen, and a very important person, the Chinese cook, and ‘a good cooking grandfather’, the captain, who was probably a Russian. She gave a full account of her experience, and a wish to travel on such a wonderful boat; her story became most appreciated, especially by children. Since that time the woman is convinced of Chinese superiority.¹⁷

For its time period, the book has a rather comprehensive finding aid: it has a detailed subject index and partially annotated authors and geographical indices. Remarkably, the term ‘ethnos’, existing in the general index, refers the reader to the term ‘unit, ethnical’ (consciousness, decline of, definition, formation, stabilization, territory, political, territorial).¹⁸ For example:

In this study I use the term ‘ethnical unit’ in the sense of a unit, in which a process of change of ethnographical elements, and their transmission to succeeding generation and biological processes are known. These units are always in process of change (variations) so that the unit of yesterday is not quite the same as it will be tomorrow, but genetically it *is* the same.¹⁹

In this book, the scholar employed Tungus material for the research on ethnogenesis and ethnic history for the first time. These topics acquired terminological clarity in the 1950s–1990s, becoming, along with the social organization, central research concepts of Soviet ethnographers.

The very fact of convergence of the interests on this research subject revealed in a Russian emigrant’s work, published in English and in Soviet Tungus studies, is remarkable. It serves as a manifestation of development trends of Russian science even though Shirokogoroff lived and worked outside the USSR.

Attention to the ethnogenesis and clan composition was typical for the Russian ethnography from the very beginning, and especially in Siberian studies of the Soviet period.²⁰ Interestingly, the fundamental works on these topics were authored by researchers from the Department of Socialist Construction among Small Peoples of the North, the Institute of Ethnography in Moscow.²¹ It was the specificity of the Siberian field that lead scientists to this topic, where the continuity between archaeological and living cultures

existed and written sources, including Russian archival records and Chinese chronicles, could be used.

Despite the early Soviet slogans propagating ‘renunciation from the old’, Soviet science, in this case ethnography/ethnology, retained the basic continuity with the pre-revolutionary science in terms of themes, techniques, research ethics, and it was one of its typical features.²² Shirokogoroff’s book *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* was translated in the 1930s. However, the Russian translation, registered in the archive of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) in Leningrad since 1967, has never been published. Despite the fact that this and other works authored by the emigrant scholar were not released in the USSR, they received acknowledgement in the country.²³ The typescript of the Russian translation still contains the seals of the library of Northern Indigenous People’s Institute, as well as the translator’s corrections and unknown editors’ notes. Theoretically, after 1967 any Soviet scientist could have read the typescript; in fact, the names of its users are recorded in the archival visitor’s book.²⁴ The most important figures of the Tungus studies in Russia such as G. M. Vasilevich, a researcher of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Ethnography (based in Kunstkamera), and V. A. Tugolukov, a researcher of the Institute of Ethnography in Moscow, were familiar with both Shirokogoroff’s original book and its Russian translation kept in the archive. These scholars were interested in the same subject and could use his book both as a source and as a pattern.²⁵ In the book *Evenki*, G. M. Vasilevich, providing the most comprehensive, for that period, a historiographical review on the topic, referred to Shirokogoroff’s major works.²⁶

During Stalin’s epoch, S. M. Shirokogoroff’s works were forbidden in the USSR; the very fact of keeping them could be interpreted as the evidence of anti-Soviet activities entailing serious consequences.²⁷ For instance, G. M. Vasilevich was imprisoned in 1952.²⁸ She was accused of anti-Soviet activities and two S. M. Shirokogoroff’s books, one of which was *Ethnos* published in 1934 in English,²⁹ were used as evidence of her anti-Soviet activities (the information from the personal archive of A. M. Reshetov). These books were destroyed after she had been arrested and forced to sign the documents about their liquidation as things which were ‘devoid of value’. At the same time, this translation was neither forbidden nor destroyed. It is obvious that Vasilevich used A. N. Gorlin’s translation, which contains her handwritings – small comments concerning translation of particular terms and the use of Evenki words. For example, she questioned why the word ‘group’ was translated everywhere as ‘tribe’ [*plemia*].³⁰

Even though the translation of S. M. Shirokogoroff’s works as well as other English language publications could have been used as evidence against people who worked with them, Vasilevich had an opportunity to study S. M. Shirokogoroff’s Tungusic ethnographic and photo collections.³¹ She used the data on Evenki material culture, the typology of the dwellings, cradles, breast jackets (a detail of breast jackets, Rus. *nagrudnik*), and others for the study of the problems of ethnogenesis (Shirokogoroff was not able to use these particular sources after his emigration).³² Vasilevich reworked a number of materials on the Evenki language and culture, and gathered the facts concerning Evenki groups living not only in Russia’s Far East, but also in West Siberia.³³ In 1968, Vasilevich presented a scientific report for a Dr Sc. degree, where the third chapter had a subtitle ‘Tungusic ethnographic complex’, which was based on the analyses of Tungus material culture. Obviously, she borrowed the term from Shirokogoroff’s work, but fulfilled it with new data.³⁴

Another similarity of Shirokogoroff’s research and other works by Soviet ethnographers is a relative isolation from other world scientific centers. In Shirokogoroff’s case, it

was caused by the remoteness of the place of his residence in China from European research centers and schools. He tried to overcome this situation by intensive reading of the contemporary ethnographic literature and scientific correspondence.

A somewhat different situation appeared for the freedom of scientific creativity in the context of relations between authorities and science. Sergey Mikhailovich could deal with any themes and could freely express his views in relation to the European Sinology and Soviet Ethnology, without the fear of persecution by authorities while living in China.³⁵ Soviet ethnographers were in a different position compared to Western scientists. This fact was relevant not only for theoretical approaches and specific references to the Marxist literature. Ethnographers were supposed to serve the interests of the government.

It was especially the case with the scholars of the North engaged in the Soviet language politics in the 1920s–1930s. The main goals of this politics were to create written languages for illiterate people of the USSR. The eradication of illiteracy among the people of the North was impossible without studying their language while ideologically pushing them forward to learning the Russian language. G. M. Vasilevich was directly involved in the creation of Evenki writing. She compiled Evenki-Russian and Russian-Evenki dictionaries and textbooks. This work was absolutely innovative but was unfortunately limited by the rigid epoch and ideological frameworks. S. M. Shirokogoroff severely criticized Vasilevich's project of Evenki written language and the Soviet language politics implemented among the Tungus people, in general.³⁶ According to Shirokogoroff, the underlying causes of the Evenki written language creation seem to be of political and lingvo-political origin and the Evenki written language did not have any future. He believed that in the process of the standard Evenki language creation its dialects were ignored. Hence, he considered a grammar of the Evenki written language as 'a grammar of the invented language'.³⁷

However, the successes of the Soviet educational project eventually outweighed the negative effects of its implementation methods. On the one hand, fiction (mostly autobiographical and traditionalist), penned by indigenous authors, showed 'achievements of the Northerners on the road to socialism'. On the other hand, it suggested the theme and style which were unknown in positivist and objectivist ethnography at that time. Hence, there was a certain gap between the images of Evenki, which were established in novels and other publications created by indigenous writers and those established in the research of Soviet era ethnographers. This artistic movement helped us to hear Northern peoples' voices. This movement has been unprecedented: in fact, it anticipated the emergence of the postmodern approaches to indigenous peoples in the Western anthropology, which later migrated to Russian social science.

Another project of Soviet power was a replacement of the name 'Tungus' by a number of self-names. First of all, the change to self-name 'Evenki' was made within the framework of the Soviet national policy (the author of the project is not known; yet, it seems that the decision was made on the basis of the Polar Census of 1926–1927); S. M. Shirokogoroff proposed the term itself as a classification term in the given work.

S. M. Shirokogoroff's book *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* did not receive reviews in the USSR but was highly appreciated in foreign scientific journals (e.g. L.C. Hopkins and E. Gaspardon).³⁸ The book received high recognition later: for instance, it was twice reprinted in the United States (in 1966 and 1979) in a series of 'classics of anthropology' among others; it was also translated into Chinese (1984) and Japanese (1941 and 1982).³⁹ Yet, Shirokogoroff's book still has not been published in Russian, although such attempts took place repeatedly. The first attempt or, rather, intention to publish the book in Russian refers to Sergei Mikhailovich Shirokogoroff

himself and his wife, life-long companion and assistant Elizaveta Nikolaevna. We don't know, in which language Shirokogoroff wrote his book – directly in English or in Russian, which was later translated to English – because his Russian manuscript of the book has not yet been found. However, considering the fact that Elizaveta Nikolaevna translated his book *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* into Russian, S. M. Shirokogoroff, obviously, have not had the whole monograph manuscript in Russian. The text was supposed to be prepared for publication in Russian after corrections and possibly small additions of the author.⁴⁰

We think Shirokogoroff planned to publish his book in Russian due to a number of reasons. Firstly, S. M. Shirokogoroff was born in Russia and was personally attached to his home and, therefore, wanted to be published in his country regardless of his ambiguous political status. Secondly, the level of pre-revolutionary ethnographic science including Siberian studies was high in Russia and he expected a welcoming reaction from the potential academic audience either to his theory or to Tungus field materials. Thirdly, the English language at the time was not yet *the lingua franca*. Therefore, the following questions remain: does Elizaveta Nikolaevna's translation of 'Social organization' exist and, if it does, is there any connection between A. N. Gorlin's and her translation?

The second attempt to translate Shirokogoroff's book also contains many mysteries and has more questions than answers. Three-volume translation of S. M. Shirokogoroff's book in typescript is kept in the archive of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera).⁴¹ The author of the translation is indexed as A. N. Gorlin, an editor of 'Goslitizdat' (State Literary Publishing House) and Academia publishing house, a professional translator of fiction and non-fiction.⁴² He was repressed in the late 1930s. Who exactly ordered him translation of the book? Who paid for such a voluminous work? Who advised, if at all, the interpreter on ethnological terminology? These and other questions still remain.

Researchers had repeatedly approached this manuscript – they intended either to use it as a source of information for research papers or to publish it. It is known in the academic circles that Ch. M. Taksami, a well-known ethnographer who once headed the Museum of Ethnography and Anthropology (Kunstkamera), planned to publish the book with a group of colleagues in the late 1990s. Similar attempts, apparently, took place earlier, before 1967, as far as we can judge from the ink edits in the original typewritten manuscript.⁴³ An unknown editor restored Shirokogoroff's term 'ethnos', which helped us to define the time when the amendments were made (the term 'ethnos' was officially launched in Soviet ethnography in the 1960s–1970s).⁴⁴

However, attempts to publish Gorlin's translation were not successful. The publication was complicated by the fate of the immigrant author and the repressed translator, as well as by a number of other challenges including a huge amount of preparatory work, the complexity of Shirokogoroff's text, and the lack of English-speaking researchers familiar with the Tungus-Manchurian issues. Favorable objective and subjective conditions facilitated the current project aimed at the preparation of the Russian translation of S. M. Shirokogoroff's 'Social Organization...' for publication. Changes, which have been taking place in the Russian society over the two recent decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, provoked rethinking of the national history and attracted special attention to Russian immigrant scholars. At the same time, a new generation of English speaking Russian anthropologists, to which the article's authors claim to belong, emerged. They have field research, translation and editing experience, and, more importantly, profound knowledge of the history of science and social anthropology/ethnology of the regions in which S. M. Shirokogoroff worked. Furthermore, a new grant system introduced to

stimulate scientific research in post-Soviet Russia facilitated research teamwork on a project basis. This third attempt to translate Shirokogoroff supported by the Russian Foundation for Humanities⁴⁵ should, finally, result in the publication of the book ‘Social Organization of the Northern Tungus’ in Russian in the established academic series ‘Ethnographic Library’.⁴⁶

Our translation strategy is based on the principle of careful and meticulous reading and comparison of S. M. Shirokogoroff’s and A. N. Gorlin’s texts. This philosophy helps us to prepare an updated, corrected, well-edited, and richly commented text. In fact, Gorlin was Shirokogoroff’s contemporary and, therefore, we decided to use his translation as a foundation for our editorial and research work, while acknowledging the valuable contribution made by the translator to the development of Tungusic studies and anthropology/ethnology. It should be admitted that Gorlin translated a large volume of complicated text in a rather accurate and unified manner. The existing translation also prevents our temptation to translate Shirokogoroff’s text in contemporary terms: chronologically, Gorlin’s translation is closer to the original. It also helps us to notice and interpret hidden meanings, and fill the time gap between contemporary readers and Shirokogoroff’s text.

In this sense, our corrections resemble a careful restoration work: they mean rather systematization of different layers of textual information than mere language editing. Our work is based on two strategies: while keeping the authenticity of the text, we explain, comment or reformulate the fragments, requiring such work, for the contemporary reader. The idea of such academic editing of the translation is to preserve Shirokogoroff’s original writing language to the maximum possible degree while avoiding the Early Soviet terminology which was rather introduced by the translator than used by Shirokogoroff himself. Our overall aim is to preserve his academic writing style known from his original publications in Russian.

In the very beginning of our work, we did not think about the degree, to which the Russian scientific language has changed since the 1920s–1930s. However, we encountered the challenges presented by such language evolution while working with the text more closely. From our point of view, A. N. Gorlin worked rather as a fiction than an academic translator of the anthropological literature. As further steps showed, another problem was not only the complexity of the translation itself, but also the use of the terminology by Gorlin. On the other hand, we found ourselves in a unique situation allowing us to compare the concepts and terminology of the Soviet ethnography with the contemporary academic language and approaches presently dominating in social sciences and humanities. The most prominent features of the academic text belonging to the 1930s include evolutionary concepts of social development, which implied gradual progress from the primitive to the socialist stage, adopted by Soviet historical science, and the use of terminology, partly created and spread in the Soviet era, and partly inherited from the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. It displays the temporal dimension of the scientific language. Russian translation reads as more old-fashioned text compared to the original, which is much more in line with the contemporary academic English. Many special terms that were rather new for the anthropological theory of the 1930s gradually became incorporated into the vocabulary of social sciences.

It may seem that such nuances are not so important; however, the translation of A. N. Gorlin is an example of how S. M. Shirokogoroff could have been interpreted and understood by his contemporaries. Thus, this translation is an interesting artifact and an object of research itself. It perfectly reflects the language of the Russian science of the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. It turned out that this terminology was introduced not in the 1920s, when it was conceived and approved as applied to Tungus

and other ethnographic materials, but much later in the 1960s when the world anthropology was actively searching for new approaches.

S. M. Shirokogoroff obviously tried to avoid evolutionist clichés which dominated in Soviet ethnography. He acted in accordance with his concept of the ethnos and introduced new terminology. By contrast, A. N. Gorlin used those clichés in his translation. He tried to find the words intelligible for the Soviet reader. It seems that Gorlin tried not just to translate the text but to make a ‘cultural translation’ in the sense of the adaptation of his language to the cultural facts, social, and political circumstances of the country and the epoch. An interesting fact is that Gorlin received his doctoral degree in natural sciences abroad in Belgium.⁴⁷ Therefore, he himself might have been inspired by Shirokogoroff’s theory. He must have tried to make the text sound more evolutionistic even though the original terms, in some cases, were different. Thus, A. N. Gorlin translated *ethnos* as ‘people’ [*narod, liudi*]; *ethnic group* – ‘nationality, people’ [*narodnost*] or ‘tribe’ [*plemnia*]; *social system* – ‘social order’ [*sotsyal’nyi stroi*]; *Tungus groups* – ‘Tungus tribes’ [*tungusskie plemena*]; *ethnic/ethnical unit/group* – ‘tribal unit/tribe’ [*plemennaia edinitsa/plemnia*]; *interethnic relations* – ‘intertribal relations’ [*mezhplemennye otnosheniia*]; *inter-ethnical* – ‘intribal’ [*mezhplemennoi*]; *interethnical millieu* – ‘intertribal environment’ [*mezhplemennaia sreda*]. The Russian translation also contains the term ‘intertribal pressure’ [*mezhplemennoe davlenie*]. Finally, the term *genetic relations* should not be translated literally; rather, in this case, one should put the emphasis on the origin of one thing from another.

Gorlin offered ‘primeval’ [*pervobytnyi*] as a translation for ‘primitive’. We suppose that it would be better to unpack the term with the descriptive translation ‘standing on a lower position of cultural development’ since this formula most clearly reflects the debates of evolutionary and neo-evolutionary anthropological and ethnographic paradigms characteristic of those times.

In some places, it is clear that S. M. Shirokogoroff made literate translation from the Russian language into English. At the same time, in many places, Gorlin used the same strategy translating from English into Russian. Such double translation may lead to misinterpretations. For instance, in his book Shirokogoroff used the term ‘clan’ instead of the Russian term *rod* (lineage). In his turn, Gorlin translated it as ‘clan’ [*klan*]. Even if we cannot assert, in which language Shirokogoroff’s originally wrote his ‘Social Organization’, the English text, exuberating with Russian grammatical structures, characteristic clichés and calques, reveals the authorship of a non-native, obviously, Russian language writer.

Another question concerns some nuances and clichés employed by the translator. For example, ‘<...> culturally superior people <...>’ (347–348) was translated by A. N. Gorlin as *liudi stoiashchie na bolee vysokoi stupeni kul’turnogo razvitiia* [people standing on a higher level of cultural development]; we gave the translation *kul’turno prevoskhodiaschiinarod* [culturally superior people] instead. A number of editors’ comments and corrections concern Gorlin’s translation of the central terms and concepts of the book. For instance, ‘social organization’, in some contexts, is inadequately rendered as *bytvoi uklad* [literally, ‘conditions of everyday life, way of life’].

Then, a translator preferred to use ‘before our era’ [*do nashei ery*] and ‘our era’ [*nasha era*] instead of Shirokogoroff’s ‘before and after the birth of Christ’.

When editing Gorlin’s translation, we also had to deal with some challenges presented by the use of historical geographical names. These challenges were predetermined by the fact that the names of the regions and other administrative units described by Shirokogoroff have changed due to political and administrative reforms and shifting

borders. Remarkably, the author admits the usage of outdated geographical names in a footnote (Chapter I), but the translator leaves these names unchanged without any comments or references to the contemporary equivalents of the period. Hence, one of the features of the translation is the use of chronologically outdated geographical names and administrative-territorial units (i.e. Yakutsk Government [*Iakutskaja oblast*] in contrast to the present day Republic of Sakha (Yakutia); Kirin province vs. Jilin Province, China; Transbaikalia [*Zabaikal'skaia Oblast*] vs. Zabaikal'skii Region [*Zabaikal'skii Krai*], Enisey Government [*Enisejskaia Guberniia*], an abolished administrative unit (1822–1925) in West Siberia, Irkutsk Government [*Irkutskaja Guberniia*], an abolished administrative unit (1708–1925) in South-East Siberia, etc.).

A similar challenge for the editors and the contemporary reader is presented by the names of Tungus self-governing bodies. In fact, a special indigenous self-government system, introduced by the Statute of Aliens' Government (1820),⁴⁸ functioned in the period described by Shirokogoroff. The system included three descending administrative levels: (1) governments or dumas (i.e. Urul'ga Steppe Duma [*Urul'ginskaia stepnaia дума*]), (2) (indigenous) kin administrations [(*inorodcheskie*) *rodovye upravleniia* (*upravy*)], and (3) settlement administrations [*stoibischnye upravleniia*]. Various names of Tungus indigenous governments and administrations are used repeatedly throughout the book, both in the original and the translation (particularly, Chapter II). While reading these obsolete names in the original, we first come across their Roman transliteration (i.e. *Bauntovskaja inorodnaia uprava*) and then read the English equivalents of administrative terms provided by Shirokogoroff (thus, he renders *inorodcheskaia/inorodnaia uprava/upravlenie* as 'non-Russian administration bureau' in the name '(Lake) Baunt Non-Russian Administration Bureau', Chapter II). While working with the translation we should be careful about the regular use of administrative terms in Russian. Thus, editorial work with administrative and territorial divisions and geographical names belonging to another historical period requires meticulous proof-reading, as well as relevant academic comments and references that would facilitate readability and perception of the text by the contemporary reader.

The obsolete or erroneous Russian orthography and outdated transcription systems used by the author and/or the translator constituted another set of related technical problems that the editors of the book encountered. Obviously, Shirokogoroff used old English transliterations of proper names, especially, hydronyms (i.e. the present *Kydzhimit River* was transcribed as *Kidimit* by Shirokogoroff and then rendered as *Kidimit* by Gorlin respectively; the *Yumurchen River* was transcribed as *Yumarchen*; *Tsipa* was rendered as *Chipa* both by the author and the translator). The same orthographic and transcription challenges are relevant for ethnonyms. The contemporary ethnic name of Evenki is rendered as *evenki* (with other phonetic variations, including *owonki*, *avanki*, etc.) by the author and spelt as *Yevenki* by the translator.

There are also obvious typographical errors found both in the original and the translation. Thus, in one case Shirokogoroff, apparently, misspelt the abovementioned hydronym *Chipa* as *Chita*, where the latter stands for the city name. The translator didn't notice the orthographic error despite the telling context and subsequently rendered the name as *Chita*. In general, Shirokogoroff's original text is full of obsolete diacritical marks and spellings, which were further complicated by the translator's omissions or inaccuracies. While, we comment on the cases of obsolete transliteration and acknowledge the usage of modern transliteration (Romanization systems), with the Library of the Congress being the most common of them, we made a decision to preserve the transliteration used by Shirokogoroff for the sake of rendering the authenticity of the original text.

This makes the editing work even more demanding: we should not only be attentive to the technical aspects of Shirokogoroff's and Gorlin's texts, but also have linguistic intuition for Russian and English languages of different periods and, last but not the least, possess profound knowledge of the geographical and historical contexts of the regions described in the 'Social Organization'.

At the same time, inaccuracies in Chapters V and VI are rare guests. We suppose this fact is related to a descriptive character of those chapters and lack of theoretical frames of Tungus who lived in the beginning of the last century. We corrected A. N. Gorlin's translation where S. M. Shirokogoroff introduced a term, or better to say, tried to do so. Moreover, we hypothesize that S. M. Shirokogoroff himself introduced new terms. He left no comments but indicated the complexity and ambiguity of his terms by quotation marks. To put it in another way, S. M. Shirokogoroff provoked the reader to look beyond common meanings of the word (i.e. a term signifying an item) but to engage with other more abstract and multilayered meanings. The author, perhaps, did not see the reason to explicit the complexity of the term.

In such cases, A. N. Gorlin did not introduce any direct translation that is very interesting. Very likely, as the translator of a fiction literature, he would definitely choose that simple way. He attempted to understand a delicate context of ethnography and deliver it to a reader in a most corrected and clear way. This strategy of translation speaks very positively about the professional nature of A. N. Gorlin.

Here, we would like to exemplify our idea by deconstructing the term *placing* used with the quotation marks in Shirokogoroff's original. He used *placing* in order to signify and explain both actual places for idols of guardian spirits of newly born children and guardian spirits themselves. Places and idols, hence, become integrated. Moreover, the process of attachment of guardian spirits to a child is also a part of *placing*. Thus, the term *placing* is loaded with three connotations, or, to put it in another way, the term acts in three-dimensional space: geography, spiritual creature, and the process of attachment of the latter to a child.

S. M. Shirokogoroff did not make any comment on the polysemy of *placing*; however, Gorlin tried to convey his own sense of the term and the process and translated *placing*, in different contexts, either as a 'room' [*pomeschenie*] or as a 'small god' [*bozhok*]. Elsewhere, Shirokogoroff gave us another Russian term [*vmestilische*], which is different from Gorlin's equivalent and rather a 'case', a 'chest' than 'room'.⁴⁹ Therefore, in our version, we replace Gorlin's 'room' by S. M. Shirokogoroff's *vmestilishche*. 'Small god' is actually an emic version since we encountered this term quite often during our field expeditions to Evenki. 'Small gods' are idols representing guardian spirits of a particular place.

Taking into consideration the abovementioned examples, we might hypothesize that here we are facing the emergency of discussions about the place, the sense of the place, and place-making, which seemed to be very relevant for western social anthropology of the 1980s. A remarkable fact, however, is that Shirokogoroff enriched ethnography by the combination of material form of 'place' and the non-material process of creation of a reason for that material place. In other words, he combined 'room', 'capacity', and 'attachment'. Most likely, Shirokogoroff was one of the first who borrowed the concepts of place and place-making from phenomenology for ethnographic analysis.

One more example is the term 'primitive' which is also carefully placed in the quotation marks in the original. This decision speaks loudly about the uncertainty about the use of terminology and approaches. S. M. Shirokogoroff seems to be trapped by strict

borders of the powerful theory called ‘evolutionism’. This hegemonic theory explained the stages of cultural and social progress in those times.

Finally, we wish to comment on a curious episode where S. M. Shirokogoroff used quotation marks. Thus, he described in his text the so-called different systems such as psychological, historical, economical, and sociological and only the last one was rendered with quotation marks. Unavoidably, the question emerges: why does S. M. Shirokogoroff relates to sociology in this manner?

We assume that the author’s attitude is predetermined by a unstable status of sociology as a discipline among ethnographers and social anthropologists of those times. Sociology was a rapidly developing and mostly positivistically oriented science. Ethnographers perceived sociology as a typology-making, categorizing, and modeling science. In this particular case, the descriptive nature of ethnography (which denoted a science in Russia and a method abroad) caused S. M. Shirokogoroff’s uncertainty. At the same time, any categorization and systematization referred to rapidly developing sociology as a science about society and culture.

S. M. Shirokogoroff, hereby, used quotation marks to contextualize implicitly two types of terms: *emic* and *etic*. Thus, the first group relates to Evenki ethnography, and the second to theories. The first group (*placings*) is covered by the hint about the complexity and multiplicity of the described phenomenon and processes. The second one (*primitive, sociological system*) is granted by attention due to their unstable, vague, and flexible status in an academic environment of those times.

The translator consistently broke long paragraphs of the original text. However, such artificial fragmentation, to some extent, distorted the text, style, and intention of the author, who wrote as widely as he thought was correct (we should take into consideration that he wrote in a foreign language). Therefore, we sought to restore paragraphs and sentences in the original form in accordance with the writing style of the author.

The book has one place that does not need to be translated into Russian, because the original Russian text is preserved and the author referred to it. We found this Shirokogoroff’s text and gave it in full (Chapter IX, addendum on shamanism).

S. M. Shirokogoroff, unlike many of his colleagues, realized that ‘... principles of ethnographic analysis of phenomena and their changes entirely applicable to scientific work, which is part of spiritual culture and, therefore, are not able to avoid the common fate’. He also concluded:

the study of the works of ethnographers itself can be an object of ethnographic studies of civilized nations, for the purpose, to know exactly how customs and psychology of ethnic groups from other cultural cycles are refracted in the minds of civilized ethnographer.⁵⁰

Thus, we found ourselves in the role of such researchers and interpreters.

This work helps us to revisit the biography and personality of S. M. Shirokogoroff, to see his theory free from ‘mythological’ preconceptions and extreme judgments. We believe that it would be unfair to deprive the reader of being a ‘translator’ him or herself and, to experience the authentic style of those times and emotions which it may evoke due to its difference from contemporary academic writing. The book opens the door to the Tungus world of the early twentieth century.

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Notes

1. Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization*.
2. Sankt-Petersburg Archive, Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (hereinafter-SPbAB RAS) 849/5/797: 3–4. The manuscript is written with a pencil with a numerous amendments, crossings, and inserts.
3. Besides the already mentioned monograph on the social organization: Shirokogoroff, *Psychomental Complex; Tungus Dictionary*.

4. SPbAB RAS 820/3/880: 3–6 reverse. Letter to V. M. Alekseev, 1 November 1927, sent from Amoy.
5. SPbAB RAS 282/2/319: 28–30. Letter to L. Ia. Shternberg, 11 March 1924, sent from Shanghai.
6. Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization*, P. VIII; See also: SPbAB RAS 820/3/880: 1.
7. SPbAB RAS 820/3/880: 2; 3 reverse.
8. The first publication of ‘Ethnos’ appeared in Russian: Shirokogoroff, *Etnos*.
9. Western Tungus groups that lived in what is now Tomaskaia Oblast’, Krasnoiarskii Krai, Irkutskaiia Oblast’ and the north and north-east Yakutia remained beyond the focus of his research.
10. For example, Ethel John Lindgren, who worked in Northern Manchuria directly in the footsteps of Shirokogoroff, was also fascinated by the topic and published an article on the topic of cultural contacts on the example of Russian (Cossack) – Tungus cultural contacts which were relatively recent to Shirokogoroff’s time. See for example: Lindgren, “An Example of Culture-Contact without Conflict,” 605–621. The attention to the region itself grew, obviously, due to Shirokogoroff’s book on the social organization.
11. Kastren, *Reiseberichte und Briefe aus den Jahren*; see also: Titov, *Tugusko-russkii slovar’*.
12. SPbAB RAS 282/2/319: 1–2.
13. See note 1 above.
14. SPbAB RAS 820/3/880: 16. Letter to V. M. Alekseev, 30 September 1928.
15. Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization*, 7.
16. *Ibid.*, Introduction chapter, 10–12.
17. *Ibid.*, 341–2.
18. *Ibid.*, 417.
19. *Ibid.*, 7.
20. Panchenko, “Etnogeneticheskaia problematika,” 94–97.
21. Dolgikh, *Rodovoi i plemnoi sostav*; Tugolukov, *Tungusy*; Gurvich, “Etnicheskaia istoriia Severo-Vostoka Sibiri.”
22. Sirina, “Soviet Traditions in the Study,” 89–101; look also: Mul’man, “Shirokogorov. Nekrolog,” 144–155.
23. We assume that his theory of ethnos was borrowed and reworked by Y. V. Bromlei and L. N. Gumilev, among others. Authors rarely, if at all, referred to their predecessor. See, e.g.: Kuznetsov, “Teoriia etnosa S.M. Shirokogorova,” 57–71; Sirina, “Chuvstvovat’ dvizhenie nauki,” 140–165; Danchenko, “O skhodstve vzgliadov S.M. Shirokogorova i L.N. Gumileva,” 72–74.
24. Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences Archive (hereinafter-AMAE RAS). K-2/1/215, 216, 217. Lists of the users of archival materials are recorded in special volumes.
25. Vasilevich’s monograph published in 1969 has a comparative essay about hypotheses of Tungus origin with the appendix ‘Tungus kin groups in XVII–XX centuries’. For instance, maps, given in her book resemble in their design (not in content) those published in Shirokogoroff’s monograph.
26. Vasilevich, *Evenki (istoriko etnograficheskie ocherki)*. She provided references to three English language monographs of S. M. Shirokogoroff and to two of his works published in Russian.
27. The same story happened with the archeological and ethnological articles of repressed scholar B. E. Petri and many other emigrant and repressed scholars.
28. Ermolova, “Tungusoved Glafira Makar’evna Vasilevich,” 10–46.
29. Shirokogoroff, *Ethnos: An Outline*.
30. AMAE RAS No. K-II/1/215: 4.
31. Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (MAE RAS). Photo collections of S. M. Shirokogoroff: No. 2002 (1912), No. 2500 (1915), No. 2638 (1915–16), No. 2639 (1915–16), No. 2639a (1909–1912, collected by A. A. Iakovlev), No. 2825 (1922); ethnographic collections: No. 2003 (1912), No. 2067 (1913), No. 2216 (1913), No. 2569 (1916, collected by A. A. Iakovlev), No. 2646 (1916–1917, collected by S. M. and E. N. Shirokogoroff’s), No. 2649 (1917, collected by S. M. and E. N. Shirokogoroff’s), No. 2650 (1915, collected by S. M. and E. N. Shirokogoroff’s).

32. Vasilevich, "Ugdan"; "Tunguskaia kolybel"; and "Tunguskii nagrudnik."
33. Vasilevich, *Evenki (istoriko etnograficheskie ocherki)*.
34. Vasilevich, *Evenki (k probleme)*.
35. At the same time, the Chinese ethnography was 'semiprohibited' to him, as he himself admitted.
36. Shirokogoroff, "Tungus Literary Language," 35–66.
37. Khasanova, *Gumanitarnye nauki v Sibiri*, 74–75; Burykin, "Lingvisticheskie vzgliady S.M. Shirokogorova," 12–17.
38. Hopkins, "S. M. Shirokogoroff, Social organization," 403–405; Gaspardone, "Shirokogoroff, Social Organization," 556–559.
39. Inoue, "Bibliography of Works," 63–66.
40. SPbARAS 820/3/880: 35 reverse.
41. AMAE RAS No. K-II/1/215, 216, 217.
42. Kukushkina, "K istorii seksii."
43. The manuscript was registered in Kunstkamera's (MAE RAS's) archive in 1967. It was forbidden to edit the archival materials.
44. AMAE RAS No. K-II/1/215, pp. 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43 (Introduction).
45. Project 13-01-00117a (2013–2015), led by A. A. Sirina, investigators V. N. Davydov, O. A. Povoroznyuk, V. V. Simonova.
46. The book series 'Ethnographic Library' was established in 1983 in Moscow by the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences and the *Vostochnaia literatura* Publishing House. Many books written by Russian and foreign scholars and published in the series have exerted influence upon the world ethnology and anthropology. For example, the authors of the republished books from the series include L. G. Morgan, C. Levi-Straus, M. Mead, V. Radloff, V. Bogoraz, D. K. Zelenin, M. Mauss, A. Radcliffe-Brown.
47. Kukushkina, "K istorii seksii," 647.
48. Russ. *Ustav ob Upravlenii inorodtsev* was, for its time, a rather advanced law vesting power in local and regional self-governing bodies of indigenous peoples of Siberia.
49. Shirokogoroff, "Opyt issledovaniia"; *Etnos*.
50. Shirokogoroff, *Etnos*, 3.

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