

## EDITORIAL

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### Message to the reader

The conference «“Inventing the tradition” and making “the imaginary community”», devoted to a prominent Russian ethnographer, historian of science, Lomonosov award’s laureate Aleksey A. Nikishenkov, took place at the History Department of MSU on the 20th of December 2014. We present to the readers some materials from this conference in this electronic issue of the journal «Historical Studies».

Aleksey A. Nikishenkov was a prominent scientist. In the 1950s a member of the Academy of Science B. A. Rybakov told about another Head of ethnographic department – Sergey A. Tokarev – that he was «the ethnographic university» himself. These words could be used about Aleksey A. Nikishenkov. It was he who became the department’s symbol for many students and undoubtedly the most authoritative professor in the 1980-2000s. Among his students are Olga B. Khristoforova, PhD, the Director of educational and scientific Centre of typology of folklore and semiotics at RSUH and professor of educational and scientific Centre of social anthropology at RSUH, Nikolay V. Ssorin-Chaykov, a former professor of the Department of Anthropology at Cambridge University and professor of History Department at St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Aleksey L. Elfimov, the Deputy Chief editor of «Etnograficheskoe obozrenie journal» and others.

The articles are divided into three parts. The first one is the transcript of Aleksey A. Nikishenkov’s speeches who was a brilliant orator. When he became the Head of the Department he spent hours talking to students, explaining them the cobwebs of the L. Levi-Bruhl’s conception of pralological thought, Levi-Strauss’ structural constructions, notions about exchange kula, altcheringa time and sometimes about the interpretative anthropology of Clifford Geertz. The biggest part of these lectures have not been published. There was so much time spent talking to students that there was almost no time for writing articles or organising them into large volumes. We tried to do «historical justice» and let the wide readers’ circle to take a look at lectures of an outstanding professor.

The first work is a shorthand record of the speech that A. A. Nikishenkov made at the 70th Anniversary of the Department of Ethnology in December 2009. He talked about the crisis of ethnography (or social

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anthropology as for Nikishenkov it was a different name for the same area of study) and told that this crisis would eventually lead to the development of ethnography. Other two works are his lectures about the history of foreign ethnography. They are devoted to «the phenomenological overturn» and «the interpretational overturn». Both lectures were read for fifth-year students in 1997. Each of them is a valuable investigation. On the one hand, the investigation was not finished and it needs some corrections and additions. It was the reason why Aleksey A. Nikishenkov had not decided to publish his materials about «the interpretational overturn», and the part of materials about «the phenomenological overturn» was published only among collected articles of the Department in 2012<sup>2</sup>. It is unique knowledge that was interpreted by a unique man. It is not just retelling the ideas of Turner, Geertz, Markus and other scientists. There is analysis of academic sphere's mechanics that led to these overturns, ethic appraisal of these ideas and works, and – that many followers of «criticism for criticism» often forget – reflections about the future action in lectures.

The reader will find articles that investigate scientific heritage of A. A. Nikishenkov. The first article is the memoirs of N.S. Borisov where the master of a word makes laconic but accurate till the smallest details image of a friend, scientist, field-enthusiast. There are ideas about ethnic etiquette and social norms of behavior as foundation of culture that is the culture itself (an article by V.V. Karlov), the researcher's ideas about the scientific community as an object of an anthropological investigation and an original research of the tribe of ethnographers and anthropologists (an article by N.V. Ssorin-Chaykov), ideas about the transformation of science and its constancy as a «scientific tradition», about the striking conformity and differences between the English-speaking social anthropology and the Russian ethnography (an article by E.V. Miskova), the ideas about the importance of classical examples of research and classical «cases» to understand modern and the most difficult anthropological concepts (an article by A.V. Tutorski).

It should be noticed that these articles differ from traditional memorial genre. An article «The scientist X's views of some issue» usually sums up and puts point. It's supposed that the collection of works and Festschrift will remain on a bookshelf and become a part of historiography. In our case many authors invite to open a discussion. A discussion about the correlation of anthropology and ethnography, about the possibility to bring the western model of cognition into the Russian science, about the future of a course or the scientific sphere of deontika. All this means that the ideas not only «lived» with the scientist at his time but live nowadays as well. We hope that other Russian researchers will accept this invitation to open a discussion and that the views that will be expressed during the exchange of the opinions will be added to «the ethnographic knowledge-box» as A.A. Nikishenkov said.

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<sup>2</sup> Nikishenkov A. A. K istorii fenomenologicheskogo perevorota v social'nom poznanii XX veka: simvolicheskaja antropologija Viktora Tjernerera // Jetnokul'turnye processy v proshlom i nastojashhem. K jubileju doktora istoricheskikh nauk, professora Klavdii Ivanovny Kozlovoj. The collection of scientific articles. The chief editor PhD, prof. A. A. Nikishenkov - Trudy istoricheskogo fakul'teta. Serija 2. Vip. 57. Moscow, 2012.

**The third part** is the articles of A.A. Nikishenkov's friends that work in the same ethnographic spheres. Two very interesting articles tell about the modern models of designing traditions and constructing historic memory in two very different regions. O.A. Bogatova analyses the role of political elites in Mordovia in making neo-pagan practices and a new historic mythology of erzya-mokshas. D.M. Bondarenko shows in his work based on materials of two years field work in American megalopolises and small towns how «historic mythologies» are different among black African colonial migrants and modern free-will ones. Two works are devoted to historiographic investigations. A.A. Matusovski discusses the German ethnographers' contribution to the research of Amazonian peoples' life and culture at the end of 19th – the beginning of the 20th centuries. There is a review of the British Victorian scientists' views of issues of the British Islands' native-born inhabitants in the article by D.A. Trynkina.

Two other articles investigate issues that A.A. Nikishenkov studied less than the ones mentioned above. T.I. Vedernikova analyses wedding ceremony and its semiotic aspects in the North of European Russia. This region was very important for A.A. Nikishenkov. He was the Deputy Head of G.G. Gromov's expedition to the North of European Russia during the 1970s. When he started to work in MSU one of his professional tasks was to create the ethnographic exposition of the Museum of Archeology and Ethnography at the History Department. At that time almost all the exposition was based on materials from the North of European Russia. This issue had a great influence on Nikishenkov but did not become the main one. He started working on it again only in 2010 when he published two articles<sup>3</sup>.

The article by G.U. Sitnyanski, the member of IEA RAS', analyses Eurasianism and its correlation with the Russian political institutions and traditions. A.A. Nikishenkov published some articles about Eurasianism<sup>4</sup>.

It should be noticed that there are two issues that A.A. Nikishenkov studied a lot but they have not been discussed in this collection. It is the research of peoples from Australia and Oceania and the buddhistic world of South Siberia (first of all - Buryats). We hope that researchers will turn to this part of A.A. Nikishenkov's heritage and fill this gap in.

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<sup>3</sup> Nikishenkov A. A. Vstrecha na rodine M. V. Lomonosova: tvorcheskij sojuz dvuh zamechatel'nyh jetnografov – Petra Savvicha i Aleksandry Jakovlevny Efimenko // Proshloe i nastojashhee jetno-logicheskij issledovanij. Sbornik nauchnyh statej, posvjashennyh 300-letiju so dnja rozhdenija M. V. Lomonosova / pod red. N. L. Mehedova. — M., 2011. S. 25–42; Nikishenkov A. A. i dr. Problemy jetnograficheskogo izuchenija ruskogo krest'janstva (socionormativnaja kul'tura). Ucheb-no-metodicheskoe posobie / pod red. A. A. Nikishenkova. — M. : Novyj hronograf, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Nikishenkov A. A. N. S. Trubeckoj i fenomen evrazijskoj jetnografii (predislovie k publikacii) // Jetnograficheskoe obozrenie. 1993. № 6. S. 99-103; Nikishenkov A. A. Evra-zijstvo, orientalizm i social'naja antropologija // Nauka o kul'ture i social'naja praktika: antropologicheskaja perspektiva. M., 1998; Nikishenkov A. A. Rossijskaja iden-tichnost' v svete idej klassicheskogo evrazijskaja // Finno-ugry – slavjane – tjurki: opyt vzaimodejstvija (tradicii i novacii). — Izhevsk, 2009. — S. 485–497.