

A Journey Into Parallel Worlds

Following
Gerhard Friedrich Mueller's Route



The project for the Second Kamchatka Expedition (1733–1743) was developed by the St. Petersburg Academy jointly with the Senate and the Admiralty Collegium. The expedition became one of the most ambitious undertakings in the history of field explorations. It is not by chance that the expedition was referred to as the Great Northern Expedition.

A great number of land and marine detachments numbering hundreds of people conducted a complex exploration of the whole territory of Siberia from the Urals to the Pacific, and from the southern steppes to the coast of the Arctic Ocean, sailed to the shores of North America, Japan, Aleutian and other islands of the Pacific, which resulted in great geographical discoveries. A lot of studies have been devoted to the history of the expedition as well as to some of its participants. Yet, its enormous academic heritage has not been studied fully yet. In the first place, this concerns the manuscripts and other materials of G.F. Mueller, a Russian academician of German origin, whose tercentenary was widely celebrated by the academic community in 2005.

Magazine *SCIENCE First Hand* has repeatedly turned to the subject of the greatest Russian academic project in its publications on the life and academic activity of the participants of the Second Kamchatka Expedition, such as G. F. Mueller, I. G. Gmelin, and G. W. Steller. In the series of materials devoted to Mueller's anniversary, some fragments of its fundamental manuscript *A Description of Siberian Peoples* were published for the first time.

Mueller was the first to set the task of conducting a complex study of the ethnic history, languages, material and spiritual culture of the aboriginal peoples of Siberia during his voyage as a participant of the Second Kamchatka expedition. Only Mueller's descendants were able to appreciate the true significance of the really grandiose results of his activities as an ethnographer.

In August-September 2005 two members of the Editorial Board together with Alexander Ellert, Doctor of History, the greatest expert and translator of Mueller's works and our permanent author, were fortunate enough to participate in two big international academic gatherings devoted to the jubilee of the outstanding scholar on the invitation of the State Museum of Nature and Man headed by Director L. V. Stepanova (Khanty-Mansiisk) and the Institute of Humanitarian Studies of the Academy of Sciences

Members of the Editorial Staff Larissa Ovchinnikova, Lidia Panfilova, and contributor Alexander Elert, Doctor of History, in the trip following the tracks of the Great Northern Expedition. The map shows the towns that Mueller visited, while the 2005 route is marked in red

of the Sakha Republic (Yakutsk, Yakutiya) headed by V.N. Ivanov, Doctor of History, Member of the Academy of Sciences of the Sakha Republic.

The conference "Russia and Germany: Historical and Cultural Contacts (dedicated to the tercentenary of the birth of G.F. Mueller, the early historian of Siberia)" was held in Yakutsk. Symposium "Three Centuries of Academic Exploration of Yugra: From Mueller to Steinits" literally followed the route Mueller took along the Ob and Irtysh in 1740. It is noteworthy that the academic forums were held in the extreme, if one may put it so, points of the Siberian voyage of Mueller: having covered about 35 thousand km in ten years of the expedition, the scholar reached Yakutsk in the north-east, and Berezov in the north-west.

Out of ten years of his voyage across Siberia, Mueller spent about four months in the lower reaches of the Ob and the Irtysh. The scholar set off from Surgut downstream the Ob on July 4, 1740, in nine days he reached Berezov, where he remained up until of August 1, then he arrived in Samarovskii Yam (present-day Khanty-Mansiisk) on of August 16.

In the course of such a relatively short term, the traveler collected enormous amounts of materials of great academic significance, which, taken together, amounted to hundreds of pages of expedition manuscripts.

The participants of the Symposium, historians, ethnographers, museum staff, and journalists, had a rare opportunity of repeating one of many routes of the legendary academic expedition of the 18th century.

The present publication is, in a sense, a report on these journeys that were devoted to the father of Siberian historiography and ethnography as well as to academic research of Siberia as a whole. Gerhard Friedrich Mueller in person acted as our virtual fellow traveler and guide, that is, the texts imprinted in italics were taken from his travel notes and field journals.*

*You may find some information on the participants of the Second Kamchatka Expedition in SCIENCE First Hand issues 0 and 2 of 2004 and 1 and 2 of 2005
*Documents from the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts.
Translated and published by A.Elert*

Surgut

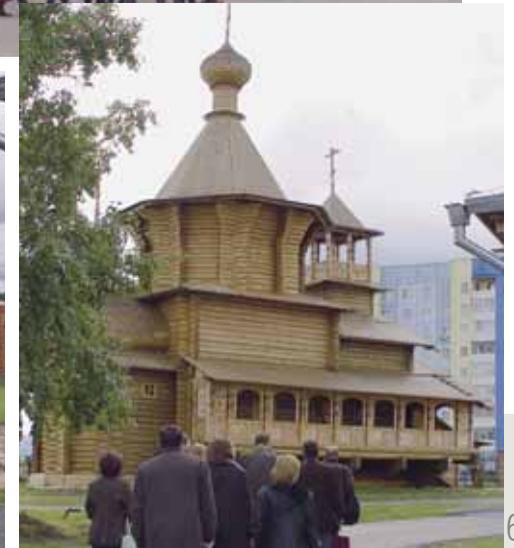


Meeting with Ya. S. Chernyak, Vice-Head of Surgut administration



The city founded in 1594 on the site of the former Ostyak fortress is presently a major center not only of the gas-and-oil producing industry, but also of education and culture.

From G. H. Mueller's notes:
...Surgut, a small town on the right bank of the Ob... It is situated on a sandy and boggy height. In the center of the town, there is a small fortification consisting of a palisade protected by watchtowers at both corners of the wall. This fortification has a chancellery, a house for the vovoda, ordinary barns or storehouses, and wine cellars. Fortifications of this kind are called forts, ostrogs in the local language. Also it had a two-storied church of cathedral type burnt down in 1739. Now they are preparing to erect a new church... There is a parish church of the Blessed Virgin outside the fort, in the upper part of the town. Private dwellings consist of 165 homesteads. The town is surrounded with large and small woods. There are two isles in front of the town, and, in the autumn, when the water between the town and the isles falls completely, it becomes possible to cross on dry land.



What we remember of Surgut is well-kept green lawns; cheerful colors of multistoried blocks of flats; broad road interchanges; a new grand university building with its own theatre, so uncommon of Siberia; as well as white tablecloths in the university cafeteria...





The exposition of the Surgut Museum of Local Lore devoted to the aboriginal population and animal life of the medium part of Priobye, in a well-equipped new building of the museum center



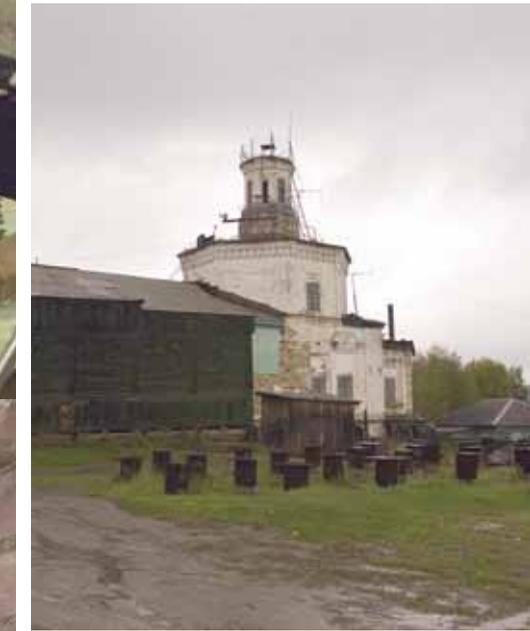
Oktyabrskoye



In the 15th-16th centuries Oktyabrskoye was called Koda, and was, in a sense, the center of the territorial-tribal union of the Khanti and Mansi peoples of the lower Ob basin. After Ermak had conquered Siberia, the settlement of Kodsk, a fortification with a Cossack military unit, was established on that site.

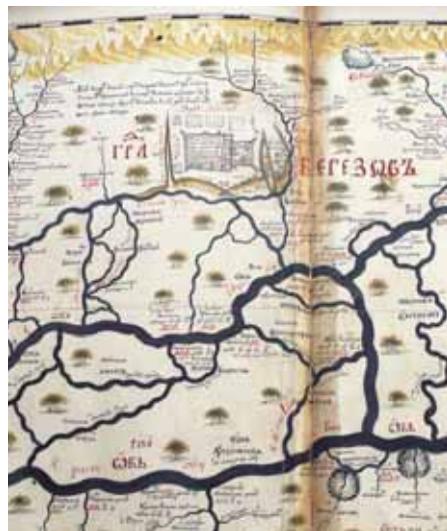
Kodsk Trinity Monastery, which is located on the right bank, has two wooden churches, Trinity and Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin. At the present time a new stone church with two altars is being erected in place of the old one. There are common monastery structures, such as cells, barns, and storehouses. Monastery servants live in three homesteads outside the monastery, besides there are 15 peasant homesteads for landless peasants who, in the majority, come from christened Ostyaks. They were attached to the monastery from of old, so the monastery could use them for various kinds of work and for this had to pay only ordinary taxes to the State treasury (G.F. Mueller).

Nowadays Mueller would have definitely given its due to the delicious produce of Oktyabrskii fish-factory, like the participants of the trip on board the motor ship "Rimskii-Korsakov" did



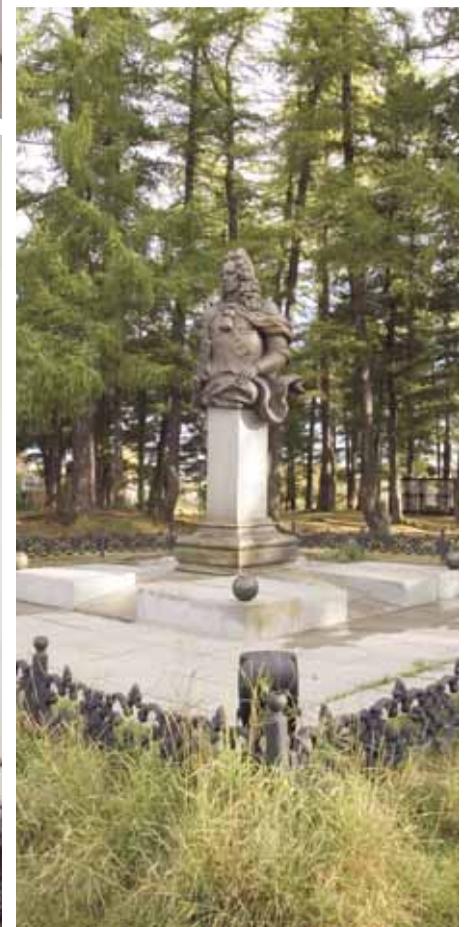
The scale model of Kodsk Monastery and some ethnographic exhibits that give an insight into the culture of aboriginal inhabitants of the region, as well as the Russian-speaking population, in the exposition of the Oktyabrskoye Museum of Local Lore

Berezovo

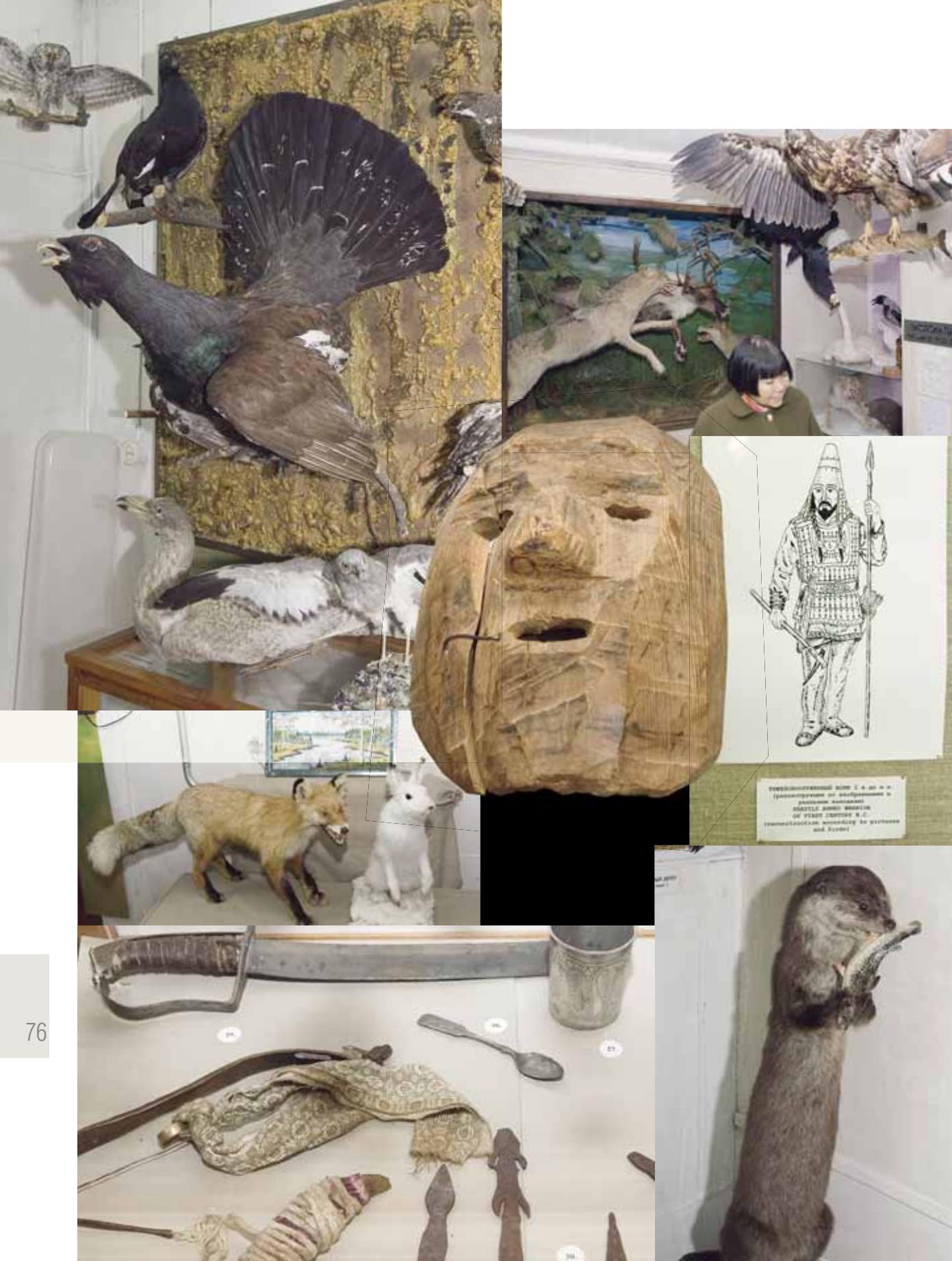


Berezovo fort founded in 1593 is commonly known as a place of high class exile. Another local object of note is “sosvinskaya herring” of piquant salting, or, to be more exact, tugun, a small fish of the white-fish genus of salmon family which was one of the main dishes on the table of Russian tzars.

Berezov is a town on the left elevated bank of the Sosva. It consists mainly of a small quadrangular stronghold enclosed with a palisade. At its corners they began erecting watchtowers. A tower protects the gates looking out on the river. There is a chancellery, voevoda's house, and standard barns. Near the gates, outside the stronghold, there is a cathedral church devoted to Saint Virgin Maria. Above and below the stronghold, there are four parish churches, which, however, have only one priest. A small firm (Gostinnoi dvor) including 9 stores, a customhouse, and a wine cellar constitute the public sector of the town. There are 175 homesteads. A lot of barns in which the inhabitants store their products and other belongings in order to ensure greater safety against fires are located along the river bank, in front of the town (G.F. Mueller).



Grand duke A. D. Menshikov, famous associate of Peter the Great, spent his last days in the provincial town of Berezovsk



Unique archeological finds from ancient Nyaksimvolskoe gorodishche, ancient settlement, such as bronze castings, ornaments, ceramics, household goods can be found in the exposition of Berezovo Local Lore Museum

Sherkaly



A "Labas" is the Ostyak name for a barn. Labases are erected on four posts, and the posts have deep grooves to prevent mice from climbing up (G.F. Mueller).



A marvelous concert was awaiting the travelers in the new building of the House of Culture



In March 2005, a satellite communication station was installed in this small Siberian settlement, whose cozy ethnographic museum still houses clan spirits of Khanty families, according to a museum staff member.



The Ob Ostyaks make boats of aspen trees that grow in abundance along the river up to Berezovo



Shor-Kara, or Shorkarskii churchyard, is situated 41 versts away from Kodsk Monastery. There is the Church of The Image Not-Made-By-Hands built for the Ostyaks, attached to which are, besides the dwellings for the clergy, 10 winter and 11 summer jurts of the Shorkarskaya volost (district) (G.F. Mueller).



Malyi Atlym



Malyi Atlym, or Atlymskii churchyard... There is the Church of Transfiguration built for the aboriginal Ostyaks as well as 16 Ostyak winter jurts of the Malyi Atlymskaya volost. Summer dwellings are dispersed over the entire area several versts higher. A little distance up the right rocky bank, there is a fairly large sandy artificial mound, which the Russians refer to as Staryi Atlymskii gorodishche, site of ancient settlement. The Ostyaks say that in olden times their enemies were both the Tartars and Samodians and they used to hide from the enemies in those hills (G.F. Mueller)



Steep hills covered with Siberian pine, bluish grey berries of juniper, chestnut Boletus luteus mushrooms on a thick layer of fallen needles, land rich in antiquities, and people with lavish heart. They say that there are places where one would like to die. In Malyi Atlym, one would like to live.

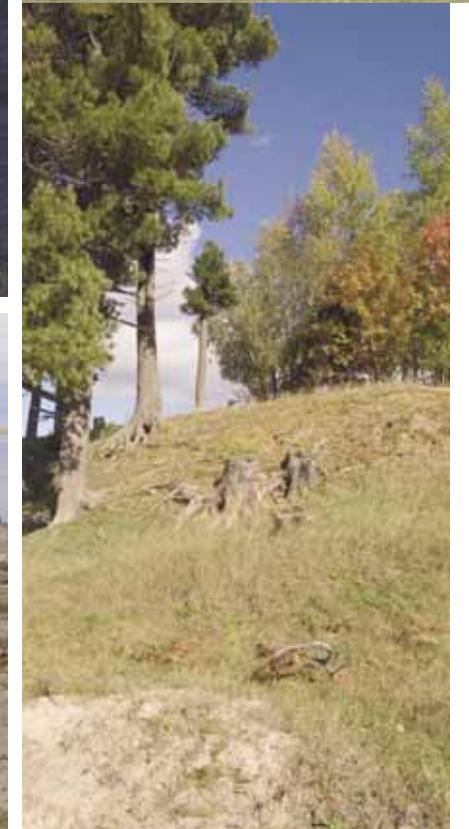


Contemporary explorers of Siberia: Prof. E. A. Helinskii (The University of Hamburg, Germany), S. V. Gorshkov, and N. N. Baranov (Ural State University, Ekaterinburg, Russia)

Karymkary



Karim-Karra, or Karimkarskie jurts are situated on the right bank. There are 11 jurts, the last ones in the Sukhorukov volost (district). The Karimkarka River flows one verst from the previous jurts. There is a round hill near the northern bank. The hill is surrounded with water on all sides, and, according to the Ostyaks, in olden times it served to protect this people from their enemies. Hence the name of the river and the village, for the word Karra means a town or stronghold (G. F. Mueller).



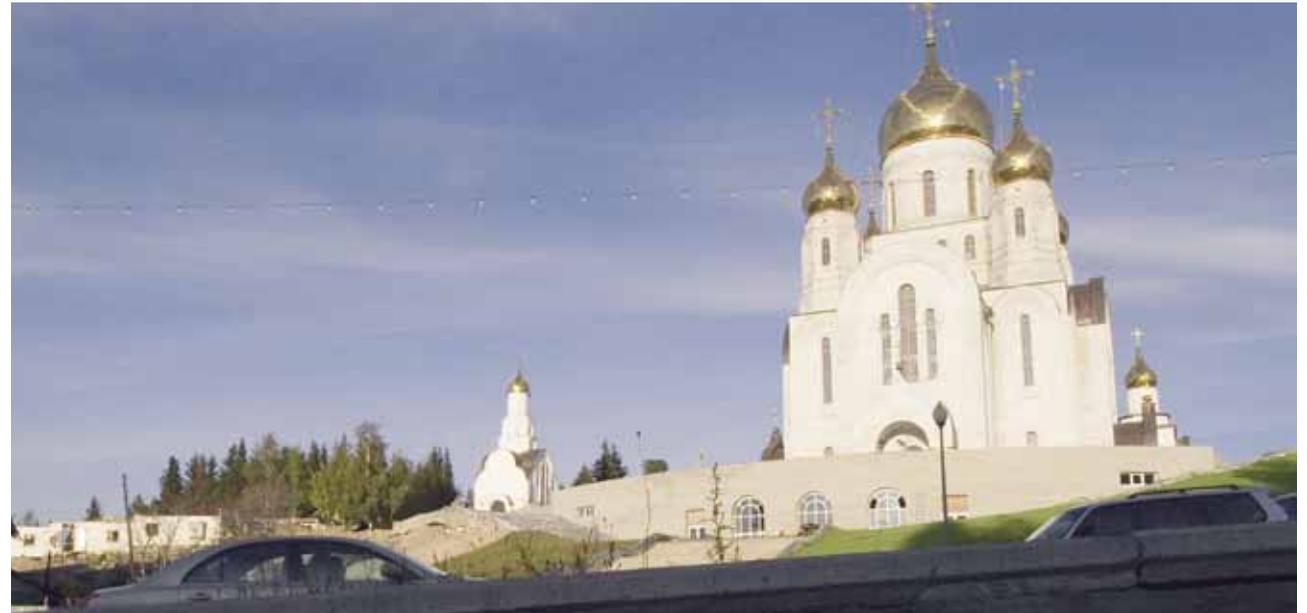
The Ostyaks keep dogs partly for hunting, partly for riding. Rich Ostyaks keep as many as 6 or 7 dogs. In the winter, they feed them on bones that are left from yukola and on fish scales, which, however, should be previously boiled. Some hunting dogs are trained for hunting for any wild fowl, some dogs chase only fox, and others only sable. Neither the Ostyaks, nor the Samodians eat dogs, not because they consider them unclean or unpalatable, but mainly out of sensitiveness and respect (G. F. Mueller)



Khanty-Mansiisk

Khanty-Mansiisk, the present-day center of the Khanty-Mansiiskii autonomous district, lies on seven hills. Its beginning was laid in 1637 by the Tzar's decree that ruled to establish Samaravskii Yam in order to provide the national mail service.

Samaravskii Yam, coachman's outskirts of town, is located on the east bank, 17 versts from the mouth of the Irtys River. There is a two-storied church, the top floor of which is meant for church service in the summer, while the ground floor was intended for religious services in the winter. There are 111 homesteads, 93 out of which are coachmen's. By the time of the Siberian governor grand duke Gagarin, this station looked almost like a town. By the example of other Siberian towns, an uyezd (a district) was added to it that consisted both of Russian villages and settlements and Ostyks' volosts (G.F. Mueller)



There is a pier for water-craft going from Tobolsk bound both to the lower reaches and head water of the Ob River, as well as from there to Tobolsk, for which purpose a custom-house was established there under the supervision of the customs official (G.F. Mueller)

Golden broaches and museums, biathlon routes, and Russian art rarities in the Fund of Generations — all this is the modern capital city of the Yugra Land. There you will see broad paved squares, glass and marble buildings, bright colors of flower beds, night illumination.

“A fabulous town, town of dream” that is how the residents call their rapidly changing town, the center of the richest oil-producing region of Russia.





V. I. Baidin, researcher of Kirsha Danilov's works and biography (Ural State University, Ekaterinburg) with a cave bear

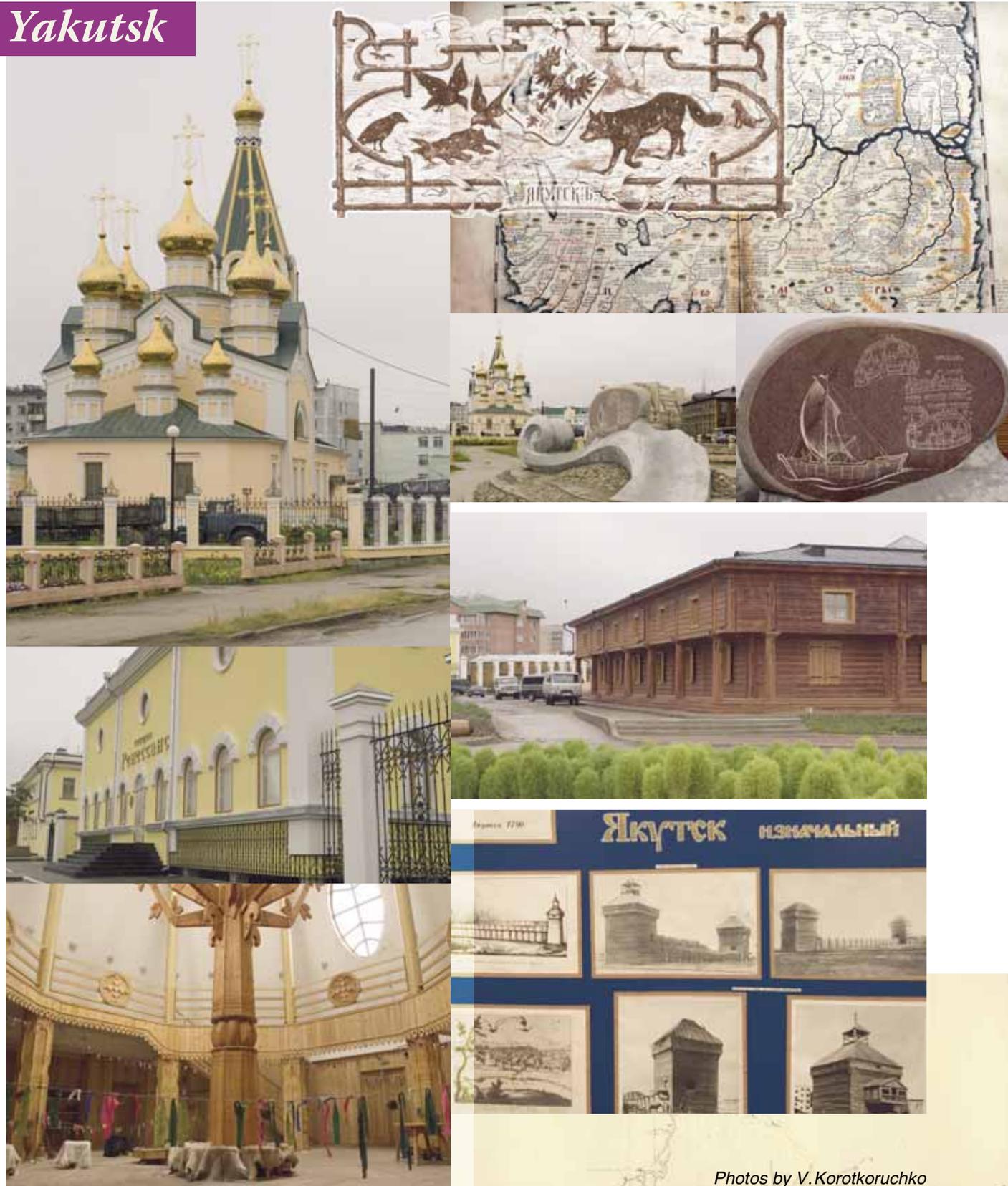


▲ A mammoth vertebra, pierced by a spear of an ancient hunter, from the largest graveyard of mammoths "Lugovskoye" in the exposition of the Museum of Nature and Man and on the pages of *SCIENCE First Hand* magazine

▲ Traditional organization of the world as perceived by the contemporary inhabitants of Yugra. An exhibition of works of M. Timirgazeev, a decorative bone carver, in the Museum of Nature and Man



Yakutsk



The history of the capital city of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) dates back to 1632, when Lenskii ostrog was established on the right bank of the Lena River, 70 km north of the present-day Yakutsk. Nowadays, over 200 thousand residents, about one fifth of the population of the republic, live there. Some 12 per cent of the working population is engaged in science and education.

Caps of the Yakuts are something special, like the rest of their clothes. I can compare Yakut caps to nothing other than bonnets of small children in Germany. Those bonnets are tied on the neck so as not to fall off the head in their sleep. The Yakut females, both women and girls, wear an additional embellishment on top of their caps, namely, lynx's tail stuffed with skin to make it stiff and stick up from the top. (G.F. Mueller)



Exhibition at the Institute of the Humanities of the Academy of Sciences of the Sakha (Yakutiya) Republic devoted to the tercentenary of G.F. Mueller, the first historian of Siberia

Photos by V. Korotkoruchko



The neighing of the herds, shrill cries of Asiatic white cranes, repercussion of celestial cataclysms are all interlaced with one another in the sounding of the khomuz, an ancient instrument used in shaman's practice. Albina Degtyareva, a popular khomuz musician, instructor of the higher school of music of the city of Yakutsk, performed for the participants of the conference.

All of the Yakut females, both women and girls, wear rather large and heavy earrings. Few have silver earrings; generally earrings are made of copper. Women living in discord with their husbands have the habit of taking off their earrings and cutting their braids. Widows usually wear heavier earrings. They make them heavier by adding to them more embellishments and also decorate their clothes more in order to allure vacant men (G.F. Mueller)

The Yakuts have some sacred places on those roads where there is a river cape or a mountain slope and where a particularly beautiful and tall larch or pine-tree grows. Each passer-by hangs something on it, like a piece of rag, or some bad broadcloth, or a shred of fur, or a few hairs from the mane of his horse. If a person goes on foot and has got nothing to give, he throws his stick there. Doing this they say the following words, "My grandmother, here I am giving you a present, leave me and my horse contented on my way and undamaged."



Some of the Yakuts esteem the eagle as their deity, some honor the swan, and others the raven. Shamans never eat swans. Common people, though they eat swan meat, should tie all the bones in a bunch and place them on a small meal shop. (G.F. Mueller)



Legendary Yarmanka is the place through which all the participants of the expedition passed on their way to Kamchatka



The Yakuts hold all stallions in high esteem, so nobody rides them and they are harnessed in carts only as a last resort. Those stallions that are of white or pale-gray color are consecrated by the shamans (G.F. Mueller)



traditional Yakut dwellings, such as a summer hut of birch-bark; a winter hut; a scale model of the Zashiversk Church of the Saviour from the Open-Air Museum of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, SB RAS (see *SCIENCE First Hand*, Issue 0, 2004)



250 years ago scientists did not even suspect of the riches concealed in the Earth's interior of the coldest region of Russia.

At present the very name of this academic establishment of SB RAS sounds like an anthem for treasure hunters: the Institute of Geology of Diamonds and Noble Metals. Its laboratories, as well as its Geological Museum have in store real treasures, such as pearl ammonite, apparition minerals, placer deposits of diamonds and native gold.

Those Yakuts who can smelt iron, can also forge it into various items, like knives, axes, arrows, fire stones, and any household utensils and hunting tackle they need. They may supply other, even remote, peoples with these items. (G.F. Mueller)

A.P. Smelov, Doctor of Geology and Mineralogy, Director of the Institute of Geology of Diamonds and Noble Metals, SB RAS



S READ MORE
in the coming issues





Much water has flown under the bridges since the time when teams of indefatigable early explorers sailed and pulled boats, rode on horse carts and dog teams across the vast expanses of Siberia. The past centuries rendered the personages of the participants of the Great Northern Expedition such traits as monumentality and classicism not characteristic of them when they were alive.

In order to perceive what the legendary explorers of Siberia had really been like, one had to listen to the splashing of cool Ob water astern, eat some delicious lightly salted white salmon, listen to the hypnotic, mesmeric tune of the khomuz and to loud disputes in the chief cabin. To perceive them as ordinary people, people with hot blood and thirst for the novel, people with keen minds. People like our contemporaries who set off on their voyage "on the tide of memory" 250 years after, like those who will come to take their place tomorrow. Let everything pass as water in the river. The river remains.



Our contemporaries, the successors of the legendary explorers of Siberia, during the extraordinary symposium devoted to the father of Siberian historiography and ethnography, G.F. Mueller



In the photo:

Left to right, at the top: A.H. Elert (The Institute of History, SB RAS, Novosibirsk), D.M. Redin (Ural State University, Ekaterinburg), Yu. N. Smirnov (Samara State University), L.M. Artamonova (State Academy of Culture and Art, Samara), E.V. Gerasimenko (Museum of Nature and Man, Khanty-Mansiisk), N.P. Kopaneva (St.Petersburg Branch of the RAS Archive);



in the center: V.P. Dolmatov (Rodina magazine, Moscow), A.A. Petrushin (Lukoil-Western Siberia, Tumen), N.V. Shabalina (Museum-Exhibition Center, Sovetskii);

at the bottom: A.T. Shashkov (Ural State University, Ekaterinburg), V.Hinzsche and A.E. Hinzsche (the Francke Foundation, Halle)

