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The Research Object
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FORUM FOR ANTHROPOLOGY AND CULTURE

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Forum for Anthropology and Culture

E-mail: magazine@kunstkamera.ru

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Published to Mark the Sixth Congress of Russian Anthropologists (28 June — 2 July 2005)

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Editor's Foreword

We are delighted to present the second issue of *Forum for Anthropology and Culture*, the English-language edition of *Antropologicheskii forum*, published by the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences, in co-operation with the European University, St Petersburg, and the European Humanities Research Centre, University of Oxford.

This issue of the journal contains the 'Forum' published in the second issue of our parent journal, an exchange between Russian and Western scholars about the role of the researcher (academic observer) in the study of culture, particularly in the context of fieldwork. It also includes a selection of articles and conference proceedings from the second and third issues of the journal. We have chosen material in order to give a sense of the journal's diversity of interests and of its international character, including work by both Russian and Western scholars, and which spans a broad range of themes and of analytical approaches, from oral history to mythography, from linguistics to the history of everyday life and of popular beliefs; both material of Russian interest and material produced by specialists in 'foreign anthropology' from within Russia is included. Additional items include a selection of reviews; a publication of fieldwork materials from the railway town of Bologoe, a junction on the 'October' (originally 'Tsar Nicholas I') line between Moscow and St Petersburg, and two obituaries, of the scholar and human rights activist Nikolai Girenko, murdered by fascists in St Pe-

tersburg last year, and of *Forum for Anthropology and Culture*'s deputy editor, Sevir Chernetsov.

The issue concludes with a selection of material from a special issue of *Antropologicheskii forum*, to mark the Sixth Congress of Russian Ethnographers and Anthropologists. Practical factors (funding constraints in particular) made it impossible to translate this issue in its entirety, though the discussion offers extraordinarily interesting insights into the difficulties and anxieties endured by Russian academics generally, who are struggling to produce academic work of high quality in conditions where guaranteed funding for research has collapsed, where salaries are set at risible levels (\$100 per month for a senior researcher in a major metropolitan institutes), and where libraries no longer offer the resources that they did in Soviet days. At the same time, the discussion is permeated by awareness that academics can contribute to the formation of a civil society, and that, perhaps, anthropologists and ethnographers might have a particular capacity and indeed duty to involve themselves in the processes of social change. The extracts from the 'Forum' that we have printed here give a sense of the range of attitudes expressed — from pro-Western and internationalist to protectionist — and of the variety of concerns and considerations that were voiced.

All the articles that originally appeared in Russian are accompanied by annotations explaining terms and realia that might otherwise present difficulties to Anglophone readers. In the case of Nikolai Vakhtin's article, 'On Certain Peculiarities in the Act of Communication', these annotations are quite extensive. This was at the suggestion of the author, who pointed out that various questions and comments made by the translator when working with the text were highly relevant to the issues of communication (or non-communication) raised in the article. Given *Forum for Anthropology and Culture*'s emphasis on dialogue, presenting this new kind of dialogue or new 'genre' also seemed appropriate.

Once again, we express our thanks to the translators — Sarah Turner, Andy Byford, and Adam Fergus — for their hard work and commitment; to the editorial staff of *Antropologicheskii forum*, in particular Arkady Blyumbaum, Olga Boitsova, and Marina Ilyna, for overseeing the production process; and to the Modern Humanities Research Association, the Humanities Division, University of Oxford, and New College, Oxford, for their generous sponsorship of the costs of translating this issue into English.

This issue is dedicated, with affection and gratitude, to the memory of Sevir Chernetsov.

Albert Baiburin
Catriona Kelly

Note on Conventions

Annotatory material has been slightly adapted for the benefit of readers who do not know Russian. Editorial notes are identified by [Editor]; all other notes are authorial. **Transliteration** is based on the British system (ya not ia, yu not iu, -sky rather than -skii in surnames and geographical terms) but with some modifications: Andrei not Andrey (ditto Sergei, Slobodskoi etc.) The soft sign has been omitted. Soft sign followed by e is transliterated -ye: Troepolye etc. Initial soft e usually E. Famous names that are not usually transliterated according to this system (Yermak, Yeltsin) are left in their familiar forms; exceptions are also made for the names of individuals who preferred or prefer their names to be transliterated in certain ways (N. S. Trubetzkoy, Marina Ilyna, Levon Abrahamian, Yuri Berezkin). **Quotations from primary material** are given in italics.

The names of contributors from Russia and other Slavonic countries are given in the form first name-last name, rather than name-patronymic-surname.

All authors were invited to vet the translations of their contributions; in cases where no response was received to the invitation, this has been made clear in an initial note.