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LEV IAKOVLEVICH SHTERNBERG: AT THE OUTSET OF SOVIET ETHNOGRAPHY¹

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Introduction

The works of Lev Iakovlevich Shternberg, the eminent Russian and Soviet scientist, accomplished theoretical evolutionist, professor, and corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences (from 1924), are well known by present day historians, ethnographers and anthropologists. An active public figure, he was engaged in the ethnography of the peoples of the Russian Far East and in Jewish ethnography. His acquaintance through correspondence with Friedrich Engels played a not insignificant role in his prominence: Engels wrote to Shternberg, having become acquainted with his discovery of group marriages amongst the Gilyak (or Nivkh) people (Shternberg et al. 1933; Shternberg 1933b: xvii-xix; see also Marx and Engels 1962, vol. 22:364–367). This "discovery," as with his description of other features of the Nivkh (Gilyak) social order, made on the Island of Sakhalin, was the beginning of his scientific activities. Over the period of his eight-year administrative exile he gathered unique field material on the language, folklore and social and religious life of the Nivkh. The results of his research were published in Russia beginning as early as 1893 (Shternberg 1893a; 1895; 1896).

A considerable amount has been written on Lev Shternberg: obituaries, including ones in foreign journals,² articles by ethnographers, archeologists, museologists and historians of science.³ Of particular interest is an absorbing book by Nina Gagen-Torn who, on the basis of personal recollections and archival documents, gives a vivid and emotional account of her teacher—the revolutionary and founder of the Leningrad School of Ethnography (Gagen-Torn 1971; 1975). Renewed interest abroad in Shternberg's works in historiography was linked to the 100th anniversary of the famous Jesup North Pacific Expedition (Kan 2000; Shternberg 1999; Krupnik 1998). In the process of unearthing why Shternberg's book on the Gilyak was not published in the

1 This article had first been published in Russian (Sirina and Roon 2004:49–94) and was translated from that edition into English by J. M. Sutton.

2 Ol'denburg 1927; Kleinman 1928; Jochelson 1928; Kagarov 1929; Azadovskii and Vinogradov 1928; Arsen'ev 1966; Vinnikov 1928.

3 Bogoras 1927; 1928; 1930; Krol' 1929; Alkor 1930; Edel'shtein 1930; Ivanov 1930; Ratner-Shternberg 1930; 1935; Samoilovich 1930; Vinnikov 1930; Okladnikov 1963; Staniukovich 1986; Shulgina 1989; Khasanova 2000; and more.

transactions of the expedition, Shternberg's biographer, Sergei Kan, rehabilitated the scientist's life and, in particular detail, the period after his acquaintance with Boas. (Kan 2001) Shternberg's book "The Social Organization of the Gilyak" was published in the USA in 1999, appropriately in time for the anniversary of the Jesup Expedition (Smoliak and Sirina 2002). The American anthropologist Bruce Grant, who had conducted ethnographic studies on Sakhalin at the beginning of the 1990s, became the book's editor and author of its substantial introduction and epilogue (Grant 1999 a,b).

What has driven us to write an article on a scientist about whom, it would seem, a considerable amount has already been written? What has stimulated this undiminished interest?

The history of Russia's ethnographic research is still full of gaps, amongst which the early period of the development of Soviet ethnography stands out.⁴ It was at this particular time that Lev Sternberg's work as an educator flourished. His main works are notable for their theoretical generalizations within the framework of evolutionary theory, broad comparative parallels and the use of extensive factual material. Shternberg's approach outlined the direction of research in Soviet ethnography and determined its particular interest in the history of primitive societies, questions of ethnogenesis and ethnic history, social organization and religion.

Shternberg's archives opened up for us unique materials, the analysis of which made it possible to understand more deeply, not only his personality, but also his preparation of the first generation of Soviet scientists, the sources of the scientific resourcefulness of his followers and students who worked in the mid and second half of the 20th century.

A significant amount of ethnographic and linguistic material on the peoples of the Far East was gathered and interesting books and articles published during the period 1930–1960s.⁵ At the same time our forerunners enlarged the source base of the subject under study considerably.⁶ This opens up the possibility of tracing the fate of Shternberg's ideas and hypotheses and assess his contribution to the development of ethnography.

The present article is based on both published works and on archival materials from Shternberg's personal collection (St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences Archives), E.A. Kreinovich's personal collection (Sakhalin Museum

4 Chronologically this period was the first, but in fact it was transitional, the prerevolutionary to the new, Soviet ethnography. As it happens, the present-day situation of transition from Soviet ethnography to post-Soviet ethnology is, in some sense, similar to the situation in the 1920s, but with a different vector of development, and it helps, if not to understand, at least to feel the processes that were taking place in the earlier transition period. See in more detail: Tumarkin 1999 (1):4–5.

5 See, for example, Zolotarev 1933; 1934; 1937; 1939; 1964; Levin 1958; Kreinovich 1973; Ostrovskii 1997; Smoliak 1975; 1974; 1990; Taksami 1975; Shternberg 2001a,b; Dudarets 2004.

6 Pilsudski 1996; Khasanova 2001; Shternberg 2001c, Vakhtin 2001; Roon and Sirina 2002; Reshetov 2003.

of Regional Studies) and the anthropological section of the American Museum of Natural History in New York.⁷

Haim (Lev) Shternberg was born on May 4th (old style April 21st) 1861 in the remote provincial city of Zhitomir. His parents, especially his mother, dreamed of seeing him an eminent rabbi. At five he was sent to a heder, a religious school, where the teacher taught Hebrew and the children studied the Torah, the Prophets and the Talmud from early morning until late in the evening. From the age of eleven Haim went to a rabbinical school and from 1873 to the Zhitomir classical gymnasium. He studied well, played little and spent a lot of time reading. “We were indoctrinated with a mixture of Judaism and mysticism from early childhood,” as Shternberg’s childhood friend, Moses Krol’ [Moisei Krol’], recollected. “We were wholly in the power of these beliefs until that new world of ideas, that the Jewish religion judges to be heretical, began to open up before us” (Krol’ 1929:217–218). Gradually his horizons widened and his outlook was enriched by new ideals, by his reading of Russian and west European classical literature translations which began to appear in Russia in the 1870s, and by the works of the revolutionary *Narodniks* (PF ARAN 282/1/195:100–101, 165).⁸

Already as a student Shternberg began to participate in conspiratorial circles. He graduated from the gymnasium in 1881 and entered the physics and mathematics faculty at St. Petersburg University. In the same year, the future scientist became a member of the illegal revolutionary organization *Narodnaia Volia* (People’s Will) that called for the abolishment of the monarchy including by means of violence and terror.⁹ The organization was comprised in the main by *raznochintsy* (people of miscellaneous rank); in some regions of Russia up to a quarter of its members were young Jews (Grant 1999a:xxviii). Not having significant support amongst the majority of the population of Russia, its members tried to overthrow the autocracy by themselves. In March 1881, they successfully assassinated Tsar Alexander II. However, this act of terrorism not only failed to bring them the desired results but led to harsh repression that drained the resources of *Narodnaia Volia* and caused an ideological and organizational crisis. For all the selflessness and self-sacrifice of the *narodovol’tsy*, their endeavor to bring freedom and a better fate to the people, as the present day historian G.S. Kan believes, the fruits of their actions were “bitter to the extreme: from the lib-

7 A.A. Sirina is grateful to the staff of the St. Petersburg branch of the Archive of RAN (PF ARAN), especially N.S. Prokhorenko and M. Mandrik, for their great assistance. The authors are thankful for the literature made available, the consultation and discussion of the draft version of the article by E.P. Akbalian, I.I. Krupnik, V.M. Latyshev, A.V. Smoliak, and M.M. Khasanova.

8 This archive material is a manuscript, which was prepared for printing by the scientist’s widow.

9 On the revolutionary activities of L.Ia. Shternberg in the party *Narodnaia Volia*, see also: Krol’ 1929; Gagen-Torn 1975; Grant 1999a; Kan 2000; 2001. See also the article of Mikhailova (2004) on W. Bogoras.

eral point of view, having brought about years of reaction while, from the conservative point of view, having wounded Russia's prestige" (Kan 1997:153).

For his revolutionary activities, organization and participation in a student demonstration and for writing and publishing a pamphlet "Political Terror in Russia" Shternberg was expelled from university, arrested and exiled from the capital. After having enrolled in the Faculty of Law at the Novorossiisk University in Odessa in 1883 he continued conspiratorial activities. Shternberg participated in attempts to revive *Narodnaia Volia*: he was one of the leaders of the convention of *narodovoltsy* of southern provinces held in 1885 in Ekaterinoslav and edited the last issue of the newspaper *Narodnaia Volia*. In 1886, during the university's final examinations, he was arrested a second time and spent three years in solitary confinement in Odessa's central prison. As his diaries show, this was a painful time of profound self-analysis. But his years in prison were not wasted: here he began to study European languages and read philosophical and literary works, including Milton, Machiavelli, Shakespeare and Defoe, in the original.¹⁰ In 1889, Lev (at what time he had changed his name from Haim to Lev we were unable to ascertain) was sent for ten years' administrative exile to the Russian Far East on the Island of Sakhalin, which had become a place of exile and hard labor in the second half of the 19th century.

Political exiles, especially the *narodniki*, played a substantial role in the development of Russian ethnography. It was exiles who made up the backbone of the participants of Siberiakov's Expedition of 1894–1896, which was equipped to study the way of life of Siberian peoples in connection with the development of gold mining. Particularly large numbers of settler-exiles—ethnographers and linguists of necessity, and brilliant ones at that!—were to be found in the Yakutsk region. Suffice it to name Waldemar Bogoras, Vladimir Zenzinov, Waldemar Jochelson, Dmitrii Klements, Sergei Kovalik, Ivan Mainov, Waclaw Seroshevskii, Vasilii Troshchanskii, and Ivan Khoudiakov. In the conditions of Siberian exile their revolutionary activity, directed at the overthrow of the "old world" gradually transformed into a fertile channel of scientific studies and produced impressive fruit. So, what happened to Shternberg at the distant outposts of Russia? And what role did the Sakhalin period (1889–1897) play in his life?

Sakhalin penal servitude is a mixture of criminal and political prisoners and exile-settlers, prisons, the arbitrariness of overseers, grueling work in coal mines, logging, and road building. But even here, the end of the earth had a life of its own. In a letter to his childhood friend Moses Krol', who had been sent to Zabaikal'e for his revolutionary activities in the same *Narodnaia Volia*, Lev described his first days on the island.

¹⁰ In historiography the opinion has come about that L.Ia. Shternberg read the work of Engels for the first time in prison. S. Kan, referring to archival sources, thinks that Shternberg was acquainted for the first time with the work of Engels (1884) on Sakhalin in 1889. See Kan 2001: 221, 244.

“On Sakhalin we arrived on 19th May, on a warm, sunny day and my first impressions were very pleasant. The head of the district, who met us on the deck, was courteous and informed us about the monthly allowance of 11 roubles 50 kopeks, and that we could have works in the offices and lessons [...] I won't describe all the joy and cordiality with which we were met by the large Sakhalin colony of convicts. Except that over the first days I was inebriated by the joyous welcome.”¹¹

Shternberg tried to find himself in these new conditions and to occupy himself with some undertaking. The status of administrative exile eased his life somewhat and increased his rights: he could travel around the island and correspondence was “free from supervision”. He got to know local “politicals,” and kept in contact with his comrades I.F. Suvorov, A.I. Aleksandrin and N.L. Perlshkevich.¹²

Soon the ways and order of penal servitude gave rise to protest in Shternberg. He confided to his friend, “The hardest thing is to live side by side with convicts [...] with people deprived of all rights. It is this closeness, it seems, that will drive me to some wild corner of Sakhalin, [where there will be] close communion with bears and the primitive people of the taiga.”¹³

In March 1890, the island authorities transferred him to the Viakhtu cordon for his active defense of political prisoners who were subjected to lashing. It is possible that Shternberg's transfer had been guided by another factor: that summer, Anton Chekhov had arrived on the island to study penal servitude and the population census. He tried to meet political exiles. Knowing Shternberg's character, it is possible that the authorities sent him to Viakhtu in good time so that he would not be able to say too much (Gagen-Torn 1975:28–30).

The Viakhtu cordon was a stage station of five log houses on the post road to the mainland and Nikolaevsk-on-Amur. The cordon gave Shternberg the oppressive impression of a “lonely, deserted grave standing in an uninhabited taiga on the shores of the Tartar Strait,” as he wrote (in Taksami 1961:109). The exile was accommodated in a screened off corner of one of the houses where three guards from amongst the criminals that had served their time and a soldier overseer also lived. But special premises were later arranged for him for work and accommodation. In a letter to Krol', Shternberg described his quarters in this way:

“It has, as it were, two halves, a bedroom and study-come-living room-kitchen [sic]. They made me a divan, two tables, a bed, cabinets, and, apart from all this, the admin[istration] has sent me a large box with medicaments, because

11 Shternberg. Letter to M. Krol' of 16th August 1889. In Dudarets 2004:112.

12 In the personal archive of L.Ia. Shternberg in the PF ARAN are letters of comrades of the Sakhalin exile: I. Manucharov, I.P. Iuvachev, B.O. Pilsudski, G. Gostkevich, N. Perlshkevich, and also photographs of some exiles. See Dudarets 2004:106, 113.

13 Shternberg. Letter to M. Krol' of 2nd March 1890. In Dudarets 2004:113.

I am treating settlers and native people. I carry out the treatment conscientiously [...] In these new premises (where there are pictures of friends on the walls, your picture is on the table in a frame, where I am by myself [...]), obviously, I feel better than before, and this is where, with God's help, I intend at last to write and read [...] at the moment I am reading Weber's "History of Greece", not long ago I read Wegele's research on Dante, and read the entire Italian library. When I feel the need to see someone, I call the virtuous guard, a big fellow who had killed his wife, and talk with him about God and people and lofty matters in general. In order to satisfy my need to teach someone, I instruct the big oaf of an overseer in grammar, arithmetic and philosophy. But I do have more interesting society: I am frequently visited by sons of the taiga—Tungus, Gilyaki [Nivkh–A.S., T.R.], Orochens, and settlers—on one question or another."¹⁴

Two kilometers to the south there was a Nivkh camp. Evenk reindeer herdsman visited the cordon and the Nivkh, taking the post to the mainland and back, and stopping over. The young man had the chance to see local inhabitants at close quarters and converse with them. At that time there were two places of residence for the "politicals" on the island: the Aleksandrovskii station and the settlement of Rykovskoe (now Kirovskoe) in the middle reaches of the River Tym (Pilsudski 1996:14). Life at the Viakhtu cordon was relatively free: as he wrote in his letter, Shternberg made a few excursions of 100 *versts* on foot to Aleksandrovskii where he met friends. One such event was for the New Year holidays of 1891. At the beginning of January, he and his companion Suvorov went off for 10 days to Rykovskoe to stay for a while in order to get acquainted with other 'politicals' (Dudarets 2004:115).

Of all the new acquaintances in Rykovskoe, Shternberg singled out the exile Bronislav Osipovich Pilsudski. He had turned up on Sakhalin two years before Shternberg in connection with the case of 1st March 1887 (the attempt to assassinate Tsar Alexander III). In exile, Pilsudski became acquainted with the indigenous people of the island and took down a few Nivkh texts. It is possible that Shternberg's choice to study Sakhalin's indigenous peoples was finally determined after his meeting with Pilsudski (Iuvachev 1927; Kreinovich 1968).

On Shternberg's return to the Viakhtu cordon, the district administration proposed that he take part in a census of the people in the Nivkh encampments of Northern Sakhalin. Their original cultural identity had been poorly studied at the end of the 19th century. It is not surprising that the young man jumped at this work straight away.

On 7th February 1891, Shternberg set off to the north on dog sleighs together with Nivkh guides. Far out in the snows of the Ten'gi, Muzmvo and other settlements, for the first time, the future scientist plunged deep into the world of the living Nivkh culture that hitherto he had only observed from the outside in Aleksandrovskii and

14 Shternberg. Letter to M. Krol', January 1891. In Dudarets 2004:114–115.

at Viakhtu. In carrying out the census he acted in accordance with the instructions of the island's administration. Its questions were quite detailed, so the material obtained proved to be unique.

“Over the month of my stay in the iurtas I had the opportunity to make intimate acquaintance with their customs, live their life with them, as it were, and could ascertain that a lot of what the ‘primitive’ people venerated was far from being as utopian as it may seem [...] I discovered their terms for relationships and family and clan institutions, identical to those of the Iroquois and in the famous Punalua-family (on the Sandwich islands). In a word, the remains of that form of marriage on which Morgan based his theory and which serves as the first point in Marx and Engels’ pamphlet on the origins of the family, private property and the state.”¹⁵

In June of the same year, 1891, Shternberg continued his study of the Nivkh of the River Tym and the Okhotsk coast where, apart from the Nivkh, there were Evenki and Uilta (Oroki). Together with Uilta herders, Shternberg continued the journey on reindeer from the mouth of the River Tym to distant places around the bays on the north-eastern coast of the island. The journey by dugout along the Tym up to Niiskii Bay and further south along the eastern shores to the Cape De l’Isle de la Croÿère lasted from 22nd June until 17th July. During this time, Shternberg visited Nivkh seasonal camps in the Tym valley and got to know their way of life. Despite fatigue, the harassment of mosquitoes and midges, and other hardships, he never failed to keep up his traveler’s diary. As a rule, the events and impressions of the day were recorded late in the evening, after having settled down by the campfire (Shternberg 2001a).

After his return to Aleksandrovskaia, Shternberg processed the journey’s materials, wrote articles and gave lessons to children. His position as a citizen showed itself particularly vividly during the years of the “Onor case” when, during road construction on the island, as a result of the brutal treatment of convicts, some one hundred of them died or went missing without a trace over a period of three months. There appeared a series of articles in the *Vladivostok* newspaper under the headline “Sakhalin Conversations”, written by Shternberg under the pseudonym Verus; they were received fervently by the entire colony (See Latyshev 1996:17–18, 289).

“My present life (personal, in the narrow sense) is devoid of difficulties. I have an agreeable room [...] eat well, comrades are devoted, once or twice a week I mix with society, where I am very talkative, even jovial, at times making everyone laugh. Relations with the administration are peaceful, I receive 30 roubles a month and not long ago even had the extremely disagreeable satisfaction of sending my parents a hundred roubles at their request [...]”¹⁶

15 Shternberg. Letter to M. Krol’, 19th May 1891. In Dudarets 2004:117–118.

16 Shternberg. Letter to M. Krol’, 10th November 1892. In Dudarets 2004:123.

In the summer of 1892, Shternberg set off for South Sakhalin along the River Poronai in order to record the Sakhalin Ainu people and buy items of women's tools for an exhibition in Chicago. He visited both east and west coasts, acquainted himself with the life of the Ainu, took advantage of the hospitality of Japanese fishermen, and got the feel of the rhythm of life over the southern part of the island.

“In the summer, the indigenous people live in the work yards of the Japanese, whose fishing stations are scattered over a distance of 2–3–5 and more versts,” Shternberg wrote, “one has to stop at each depot, enter each of the temporary huts [...] there are corners where large-scale trade is undertaken, whose products are loaded onto large steamships, where Americans, who have lived on the island many years, do the managing [...] there is a place called Mauko on the western shore of Sakhalin, where Ainu, Chinese and Koreans, settlers under the management of the merchant Semenov and the American Damby, harvest seaweed [...] The American is married to a Japanese woman, the Japanese live with Ainu women, the Ainu have Winchesters and American watches, eat Japanese spice cakes, smoke American pipes and feed on rice.”¹⁷

In August 1893, Shternberg left post Aleksandrovskii for a short while to travel south to Sortunai, to the Nivkh and Ainu. This time he surveyed a section of the north-western shore. The survey of this coast took Shternberg almost three weeks. The weather was against him; there were storms and south-westerly winds. Apart from that, an epidemic of intestinal influenza in one of the Nivkh settlements kept him longer than expected. He gave medical assistance to those in need and left medicine with one Nivkh, having instructed him how to recognize the symptoms of some illnesses. In the Agnevo, Pil'vo, Soia, Sokh and other settlements he carried out a census of the Nivkh living there by name (Roon and Prokof'ev 2001). It struck the young man that the area had been abandoned by Ainu not long before.

“Most of the inhabitants have Ainu blood in them. There are clans that consider themselves to be Ainu-Gilyaki. In the settlement of Pil'vo, the whole population, including women and children, speak Ainu fluently” (Shternberg 2001b:285).

Shternberg registered cases of the migration of Nivkh to this area from other parts of Sakhalin and from the mainland. During his journey he collected a herbarium and minerals, and for the first time in the history of North Sakhalin he undertook archaeological excavations.

Once again, in 1893 and 1894, Shternberg journeyed along the north-western coast of Sakhalin in order to collect new material and check his old records taken in 1891. It was important to catch the changes in the natural movements of the Nivkh population over the previous years and compare them with the results of earlier records.

17 Shternberg. Letter to M. Krol', 10th November 1892. In Dudarets 2004:123–124.

In the first stages of independent work, Shternberg did not have any professional training in the undertaking of fieldwork. In many ways he acted on intuition, sometimes according to the instructions of the administration (for the first census of the Nivkh). From his diaries and early field reports it is clear that Lev Shternberg determined the methods of study himself: observation, daily descriptions of field situations, rarely by full interviews, more often by exposition of a conversation. Such an approach limited the subject and depth of the research somewhat. The content of Shternberg's early diaries is fragmentary, often there are no dates, no names of settlements where the records were made, they lack the necessary information on the informant and those being interviewed and also other important and essential data for further processing of the field material. Unfortunately, Shternberg's handwriting was far from ideal and many handwritten texts from his notebooks are practically unintelligible.

The language barrier hampered communication and understanding of the subtleties of the other culture. The Nivkh guides did not always know Russian well and spoke with an accent. The structure of the Nivkh language differed from that of Russian, and it was difficult to "access". So, Sternberg decided to learn Nivkh. He was the first to begin research into the Nivkh language.

There have long ceased to be Ainu and Nivkh camps in the majority of areas Shternberg visited. The Ainu moved to Japan from south Sakhalin after World War II. Nivkh live in mixed settlements or in towns and their culture has changed considerably. The diary descriptions of Shternberg's first journeys have become valuable ethnographic sources. From them one can see the formation of the scholar's personality and his search for methods for fieldwork.

No less important is Shternberg's activity as a collector who made a significant contribution to the establishment of the first museum on Sakhalin at the post Aleksandrovskaia. In the order of the military governor of the Island of Sakhalin, Major-General V.D. Merkazin, of 6th December 1896, on the opening of the museum, Pilsudski and Shternberg are mentioned in the list of persons whose "participation furthered the acquisition, compilation and arrangement of the museum's collection, contributing various gifts."¹⁸ It is a rare case in the history of penal servitude that political exiles are noted in the order of a military governor for their achievements for the good of society together with military personnel and civil servants! Collections of items of Ainu, Nivkh and Evenk culture were exhibited in the ethnographic section of the first Sakhalin museum. A few collections gathered by Shternberg for demonstration at an exhibition in Chicago 'settled' in America, but without the name of the collector, they were 'dissolved' into the museums, probably, part of them kept in the Field Museum and private collections.¹⁹

18 Order of the military Governor of the island of Sakhalin, December 6th 1896 Nr. 226, signed by Major-General Merkazin (in Kostanov 1996:7–9).

19 Shternberg 1900:388; Shternberg. Letter to F. Boas 11th July 1905. American Museum of

In 1895, with the permission of the authorities, Shternberg visited the mainland, going to Vladivostok and Blagoveshensk. He was able to work around the Lower Amur amongst the Nivkh, Oroch, and Ulch peoples. This page of his journeys is perhaps the most enigmatic: documents witnessing to the permission to leave Sakhalin and the financing of the episode are yet to be uncovered. The well-known American anthropologist, Franz Boas, in a letter to Berthold Laufer (1898) who was working on Sakhalin 1898–1899 as part of the Jesup project, mentioned the funding of Siberian expeditions in Russia at the expense of the benefactor Sibirakov: “He paid the expenses of Shternberg, who went to the Amur, and two gentlemen who visited the Yukaghir and Chukchi.”²⁰ This made it possible for Shternberg to expand the geography of his research and collect comparative material after which he returned to Sakhalin. Two years later, in 1897, he received amnesty and left the island ahead of time.

Ivan Iuvachev, political exile and Shternberg’s acquaintance from Sakhalin, thinking over everything that had happened to him, wrote to his close relatives: “Don’t grieve: we often don’t suspect what will serve us well” (Iuvachev 2001). Sakhalin served as a turning point in Shternberg’s life. Here, for the first time, he tried himself as a linguist and field researcher-ethnologist; here he thought over his first scientific works and dreamed of his future activities in Russia. As a result of his long exile to the far reaches of Russia, Shternberg’s revolutionary activity of necessity gave way to a passion for the history and culture of indigenous peoples, and later became his profession. But he did not renounce the ideals of his youth. In the midst of the peoples of his studies, and later in the society of students, he continued to spread the ideas of equality and brotherhood, progress and social justice. ‘Primitive’ peoples, their social structure and beliefs became a ‘model’ to illustrate the ideas of progress and the unity of the cultural development of humankind.

In 1898, having returned from exile to his native Zhitomir, Shternberg became acquainted with Sarah Ratner, who before long became his wife. She had returned to Zhitomir after having graduated from the St. Petersburg Bestuzhev Women’s Pedagogical Courses and become the director of a college for women. The history of their relationship is very important for an understanding of Shternberg’s scientific work.

Lev Shternberg was very happy in his private life, always surrounded by the love of those close to him and friends. Sarah had three sisters and a brother. “When I turned ten years of age,” she recollected, “[...] my elder sister and I were consigned to the family of our uncle, to his large disorderly family where I was given little attention”

Natural History, Anthropology Department Archive. Shternberg Correspondence, acc.# 9/26/1903-9/12/1906.

20 Letter from F. Boas to B. Laufer, 10th October 1898. American Museum of Natural History, Anthropology Department Archive, Correspondence acc. #1900–12.

(PF ARAN 282/4/18:11 rev.). Sarah was left to herself and often felt lonely, forgotten and unhappy. At 12 years of age she finished four years at a boarding school, and later went to St. Petersburg to study. Sarah's diary of her student years shows her to be a complex person in whom intellect, education, a passion for the beautiful and at the same time a "high degree of self-esteem," and lack of confidence in herself were combined. This was a time when the spirit of Bazarov had possessed peoples' minds and the specter of imminent social upheaval was hovering in the air. "I had long lost the god, to whom I had so sincerely, so fervently prayed in childhood; instead of him I acquired another god, another faith, a belief in progress, in happiness [...]" (PF ARAN 282/4/18:13 rev.). The female students underwent good practica in various educational establishments of St. Petersburg, for example, in the Abramov school that was famous in those times. In the summer, the girls earned some money at the *dachas* (summer cottages) of the well-to-do, by giving lessons to their children. Judging from her diary, Sarah did not aim to return home to Zhitomir, but wanted to gain the right to live in St. Petersburg (PF ARAN 282/4/18:28 rev.).

The young people found each other—a fortunate instance of love and mutual consent. They needed each other—Lev, an ardent, passionate, open-minded person, and Sarah—cautious, somewhat cold, very clever in a conventional way, but constantly needing support and approval. That was the very talent Shternberg had: he could encourage a person with a couple of words and make them believe in themselves. "You easily slip into pessimism when you are far from me," he wrote to her in 1900, when they had to live separately, she in Zhitomir, he in St. Petersburg, having gained a residence permit there in order to prepare his scientific works for publication.²¹ Sarah established good relations with Shternberg's parents straight away, for which he was very grateful: "My sister writes that they (his parents—A.S., T.P.) have come to love you like their own daughter" (PF ARAN 282/2/361:17).

When Shternberg left on an academic trip, expedition or spa (where they, actually, frequently went together), they still kept in contact. They wrote letters to each other. As Shternberg traveled more often, most of the letters were from him, and Sarah kept them all carefully. One of the letters was written in 1900 when they had still not long been married: "You say I forget you [...] No, my dearest, I can forget myself, but you never, never" (PF ARAN 282/2/361:27). Shternberg shared everything with her: day-to-day things, scientific, museum, and anything else; there were no secrets between them, it appears, all the more so because, from about 1914, Sarah Ratner-Shternberg began work in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in the ethnology of North America section. It is no exaggeration to say that Sarah lived the life of her husband: his successes and setbacks; his career was her career.

In the autumn of 1901, the Shternberg's son was born. Much loved by his parents, he was given a good education. At home he went by the family name Adia. Arcady

21 These letters are now in the personal archive of L.Ia. Shternberg: PF ARAN 282/2/361:15.

graduated from the Military-Medical Academy and became a doctor. It would appear he shared more interests with his uncles: Abram, Aaron and David Iakovlevich Shternberg, who were also doctors. Lev always maintained close relations with his relatives.²²

Throughout their lives, Shternberg's childhood friends remained his closest friends: Moses Krol' [Moisei Krol'], Waldemar Bogoras [Vladimir Bogoraz], and Waldemar Jochelson [Vladimir Iokhel'son]; people with the same ethnic, social roots, the same mindset and experience of life as revolutionary *narodniks*. They were sent into exile at the same time: Shternberg to Sakhalin, Bogoras—to Srednekolymsk in the Yakutsk region, and Krol' to Selenginsk (Zabaikale) (Bogoras 1927:275–276). Throughout their exile, the friends kept in touch with each other. Here is an extract from a letter from Bogoras of 4th November 1895:

“May the biggest devil they've got in hell take you. On what grounds are you celebrating the name day of your heart and inviting me, in absentia, to try the pie. ‘I am leaving, you are leaving, he is leaving.’ All your letters are filled with the conjugation of this verb. Leave, then, ‘for god's sake, go’ as a Jewish girl I know says. I myself am not leaving and have nothing to be joyful about. If only you knew, Lev, what vicious mockery your words about [my] garb and retirement garb, about the need to cheer up, about future activity in Russia and so on, when I have to ‘be on duty’ another three years in Kolymsk at God's will, by order of major-general Otchaiannyi!” (PF ARAN 282/2/34:7).

However, Bogoras went to St. Petersburg in 1898, before Shternberg. He took part in the Jesup Expedition, and got to know Boas well. Bogoras (and Jochelson) were the first “stages” on the way to Shternberg's relations with C.G. Salemann and V.V. Radloff, and they recommended him to Boas as the third Russian participant of the Jesup project. Bogoras together with Krol' furthered Shternberg's transfer from Zhitomir to St. Petersburg.

According to the laws of the Russian Empire of that time, Jews could not settle beyond the Pale of Settlement. In order to transfer to St. Petersburg, one had to have higher education (officially Shternberg gained that only in 1902), or accept Christianity, or find a valid reason for living in the capital. Shternberg's reason was the necessity to work on a book about the language and folklore of the Gilyak and consultations with the well-known linguists Carl Salemann and Vasilii Radloff.

By that time, “thanks to some degree of impudence,” Bogoras had already moved, “with flying colors” to St. Petersburg, “and after some negotiations stayed there on a temporary basis. And since temporary arrangements in Russia are the most lasting, I don't feel disheartened [...] my temples have gone quite white and fur on my brow

22 Some 400 items of family correspondence are kept in PF ARAN (F 282).

somewhat tarnished, but, on the whole, it seems, I have only aged a little” (Gagen-Torn 1975:115). The first to solicit for Shternberg’s transfer to St. Petersburg before Radloff was Krol’ (Kan 2001:223). A little later, Bogoras did the same.

“I was at Radloff’s today and tempted him with your collection [...] and he promised to solicit your transfer to Petersburg in order to process your collection, which will be given over to the museum.” Furthermore he advised him to, “Boast a little with restraint, but with weight [...] that there is material on the Gilyak language that should be handed over to the Academy, it is with academician Salemann [...] and that you need the consultation of competent people in order to process it and ask for permission to come to Petersburg for half a year [...] Radloff promises not only to solicit permission, but even to give you an allowance to process the collection and material [...] The academicians can be activated only if you motivate them. It follows that this will depend on your work” (PF ARAN 282/2/34:10–11. See extracts in Vakhtin 2001:80).

Shternberg moved to St. Petersburg in June 1899. Permission to stay in St. Petersburg for three months was received from the Minister of Interior, and at the suggestion of Salemann it was decided to take advantage of this from September 1900, as everyone spent the summer at their *dacha*. Shternberg settled down in Perkjärvi; Salemann spent the summer at a *dacha* in Usikirki, not far away (Gagen-Torn 1975:118). Shternberg wrote home, “Petersburg didn’t give me the depressive impression that could have been expected. On the contrary, I felt quite at ease when I plunged into this vast place [...] But the *dachas* [...] are real Sakhalin” (PF ARAN 282/2/361: 34 rev.).

The materials on the Gilyak language and folklore were finally prepared for publication over the summer of 1900. Shternberg took the system of the Russian linguistic alphabet (the so-called academic alphabet) from Salemann and Radloff in order to transcribe the sounds of the Gilyak (Nivkh) languages. He received the proofs of his work at the end of September, and worked tirelessly for ten hours every day until he completed them. Shternberg wrote his work like a “pass” into St. Petersburg, into a different life; it was for this reason that it was finished so quickly. Undoubtedly, his wife insisted on this as well. Shternberg was missing her and searched actively for lodgings: “I am sure that with you my works will be twice as auspicious” (PF ARAN 282/2/361:54–54 rev.).

In 1900, the young scientist became the editor of the ethnographic section of the most popular encyclopedic dictionary in Russia—Brockhaus and Efron. He wrote some 40 articles for this encyclopedia on various questions of ethnography and religious studies.²³

In St. Petersburg, Shternberg lived at the lodgings of Krol’, who was practicing law. Usually, before tea, he would take a bath; he loved water and swam well, walked every

23 Those articles concerning religion were republished in Shternberg 1936.

day and occasionally cycled around Marsovo Pole. Radloff offered Shternberg work at the museum and promised to solicit for his acceptance after the three-month period of registration. Salemann himself took the proofs of Shternberg's manuscript to the printers, which "moved" its author considerably. In general, it was at this time that Shternberg felt "very happy" (PF ARAN 282/2/361:1 ov., 16, 22 rev.).

Of all the organizations at the beginning of the 20th century that dealt with ethnographic research, the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (IRGO), in which there were ethnographical sections and regional branches in different places, was the most important. There was an ethnographic department at the Imperial Society of Natural History, Anthropology and Ethnography (OLEAE) at Moscow State University, as well. Ethnography was developed in museums also, in particular in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology (MAE) of the Academy of Sciences, and since 1902 at the Russian Museum of the Emperor Alexander III.

Shternberg came to the MAE in 1901 and worked there till the end of his life. He began as an unpaid volunteer; in 1902, when he had officially received higher education, having taken examinations at the faculty of law (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1991:108), he was accepted on the staff in the position of junior ethnographer. In 1904, he became a senior ethnographer at the MAE—the second person after the director of the museum, V.V. Radloff.

It is difficult to imagine that at the beginning of the 20th century there were only four researchers, including the director, working at the MAE. Today, the museum is the largest research, exhibition and educational center in Russia, where more than 100 researchers work in 12 departments. The museum has some 2 million exhibits including 27 000 from the main assemblage of Siberian collections. More than a million and a half people visit the main ethnographic museum every year (Taksami 2000: 16–18). Work in the museum is always diverse, and includes scientific, educational, collections and arrangement of exhibitions. Shternberg was involved in all of these activities. At the beginning of the 20th century, attempts were made to stimulate scientific research, including that concerning museums. In 1903, at the initiative of Oľdenburg and Radloff, the Russian committee was set up for the study of Central and East Asia, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Chairman of the Committee was Radloff, and the secretary—Shternberg. The task of the committee was to give financial support to researchers in different countries who were undertaking their study in Siberia and East Asia. Funds were given out annually for carrying out ethnographic and archeological expeditions. These also included individual annual scholarships for researchers who were completing their scientific work (Ratner-Shternberg 1928 :35). Exhibits collected on such expeditions would have to go to Russian museums. In Shternberg's opinion, the Russian committee was a "special ethnographic organization at the Academy of Sciences" (Shternberg 1925:61). The committee operated until

1918 and made a significant contribution to scientific research. Most attention in the museum was given to the acquisition of collections of items relating to natural history and ethnography that comprised the foundation of its existence. At the same time, work was devoted to the scientific identification and attribution of existing items. For the establishment of the main collections of the museum, and especially its Siberian collection, credit is due, to no small degree, to Shternberg.

Stock came from different sources. First and foremost, collections were brought from expeditions by members of staff. In 1910, after a long pause, Shternberg went on an expedition to the Far East. Over three summer months, together with students, I.I. Zarubin²⁴ and I.N. Anshel's, he worked with the Gold (Nanai) people on the Amur, and with the Oroch and Negidal of the River Amgun', and also on Sakhalin.

Officially the expedition began on the last day of May in Vladivostok, with the visit to the Governor General in order to receive permission to undertake excavations, meetings with comrades of exile, and making the acquaintance of local regional historians. The members of the expedition spent four days in Khabarovsk. Here, they visited the Grodekovskii museum, where they met Vladimir Arsenëv, and arranged with him the dispatch of ethnographic items to St. Petersburg (Tarasova 1985:22). The steamboat left on its run down the Amur on 9th June. The first stop for expeditionary work was at the settlement of Viatskoe, in the vicinity of which they examined Amur petroglyphs. Unfortunately their main part happened to be under water because of a flood. On 19th June, after two weeks of work in the Nanai settlement of Sakachi-Alian (where they had been surprised, because the settlement had become Russified, to meet two shamans), they reached the Troitskoe settlement by steamboat and later Nanai settlements located in the area. They traveled by boat along the Amgun' River to the Negidal. There they had planned to stay a week, but remained for two. They arrived at Nikolaevsk-on-Amur on 25th August, and from there went on to Sakhalin. On the way out of the mouth of the Amur they got stuck on sandbanks twice, and Sakhalin greeted them with unprecedented torrential rain that had swept away all the bridges and washed away roads. Shternberg was overwhelmed with melancholy, although the Governor General came to visit him and everyone recognized him. He visited the graves of his comrades and was left with "[...] only one desire—to get away from Sakhalin as fast as possible" (PF ARAN 282/2/361: 73, 73 rev.).

Shternberg, together with his students, carried out ethnographic and anthropometric studies, took photographs and bought exhibits for the museum. From the 1910 expedition he brought back not only linguistic, anthropological, archeological and folklore material, but also four large ethnographic collections, and phonographic cylinders with recordings of folklore texts. A scrupulous analysis of these ethnographic collections was undertaken by Marina Khasanova (Khasanova 2000:85–97).

24 Later Zarubin came on the staff of the MAE, professor of Leningrad University, expert on the languages of the peoples of the Pamirs.

The Nanai collection is the largest: 362 storage units. Shternberg acquired the Nanai items in the Torgon, Sakhachi-Alian (later Sikhachi-Alian), Dada, Chol'chi and other settlements; amongst the items are things collected from the small Udege group of the Anui River. The majority of the items characterize the spiritual culture of the Nanai and their beliefs (representations of spirits, hunting amulets, talismans, shaman clothes and belongings). It was at this time that Shternberg made an Amur and Sakhalin Nivkh collection of 175 storage units. He gathered the Negidal collection (127 storage units) mainly along the Amur in the area where the River Amgun joins the Amur. Until then it was only possible to see very few Negidal items in the MAE.

As V.I. D'iachenko was able to ascertain, the stock of photographs of the peoples of Siberia and the Far East that had been taking shape at MAE since 1880, contained over 800 photographs from Shternberg's expedition of 1910. His collection of photographs of the Nanai and Nivkh includes 217 negatives; prints of them make up separate collections. Another photographic collection is dedicated to the Nanai, Negidal and Oroch. Thematically, they include anthropological types of the population and objects of their spiritual culture relating to shamanism, funeral rites and musical instruments (D'iachenko 2000:180). The museum lacked the means to equip the expedition and purchase exhibits so, on the initiative of Radloff and Shternberg, a Council of Trustees was set up to find funds for the museum. Well-to-do people, including well-known industrialists and manufacturers, joined the Council. The fact should not be omitted that the activities of this Council, at the beginning of the 20th century, were linked to a scandal known as the "Adler affair" that caused great harm to the prestige of the MAE. A.I. Teriukov was the first to make the materials of the case public (Teriukov 1993). A member of MAE staff (later a professor at Kazan' University), Bruno Adler raised the question of unethical actions on the part of V.V. Radloff and senior ethnographer Shternberg in relation to the collection of A.V. Zhuravskii. One of the members of the Council of Trustees, the St. Petersburg merchant E.I. Aleksander, with the knowledge of the museum's leadership and for the achievement of material benefits, manipulated the collections gathered by Zhuravskii in the north of Russia. Although the leadership of the Academy of Sciences did everything they could not to let the scandal leave its walls, it had to take some measures; the case was considered by a court of arbitration and became the subject of special proceedings in the Academy, leading to a revision of the work of the MAE. Keppen, who was charged with the preliminary investigations by the President of the Academy, was obliged to come to the following conclusion: "The affair made a painful impression on me and gives grounds to acknowledge actions on the part of the administration (MAE-A.S., T.R.) as not being worthy of the Academy of Sciences" (Teriukov 1993:259). Although in the course of investigations no selfish aims on the part of Radloff and Shternberg had been revealed, it made everyone involved very anxious. The Academy tightened its control of funds entering the museum's Council of Trustees (Teriukov 1993).

On Radloff's initiative, a Committee of Assistance for the museum was set up. The geography of the collections covered most of the world, which reflected the economic and political standing of Russia in the world. In 1914, expeditions were equipped to go to South America, Inner Asia (Zabaikale, Manchuria and the Amur region); and in the same year to India and Ceylon (Karmysheva 2002; Sirina 2003; Revunenkov and Reshetov 2003).

Collections were made by devotees as well. Shternberg actively formed a network of such "correspondents", and drew colleagues, friends and acquaintances into gathering exhibits, their sale or donation. Amongst the people who made an enormous contribution to the formation of the MAE ethnographic collections were, in particular, Bronislav Pilsudski and Vladimir Arsen'ev, who worked with the museum through Shternberg.

Credit for developing the Ainu ethnographic collection at the MAE is due to Bronislav Pilsudski. Today it is one of the largest and most complete Ainu collections in the world, and includes 1890 objects of which Pilsudski collected more than a thousand. In all, he contributed nine sets of Ainu, Nivkh and Oroch (Khasanova 2001:415) items and one collection of photographs to the MAE. Pilsudski had received funds via the MAE and the Academy for trips, mainly expeditionary, for the collection of exhibits. From 1902 to 1905, Pilsudski worked in South Sakhalin, and in 1903, together with V. Seroshevskii traveled to the Ainu of south Sakhalin and Hokkaido Island. The museum received rich collections of objects of ethnographic interest, including photographs and sketches. In 1907 and 1909, the MAE bought collections on Nivkh ethnography and a collection of photographs. All Pilsudski's collections were registered by Shternberg and some, written by him, exist to this day.

Vladimir Arsen'ev began acquiring ethnographic collections for the MAE in 1910. Shternberg was constantly making orders for such collections, asking him to gather "everything possible," since extra items could be exchanged for others. "Now I have a special request," he wrote in 1925. "I am very much in need of a small Goldy collection comprising ornamented fish-skin clothes, birch bark ornamented tableware, and wooden, grass and other religious figures. I'll send you the expenses [...] With your connections with the Goldy, this will be easy to fulfill. I need this collection urgently" (in Tarasova 1979:73).

At last, the exchange of duplicates from collections was being made with museums of the world or the purchase of exhibits abroad. It was this that Shternberg dealt with energetically on his trips abroad, and his personal contacts and connections played a considerable role in it. For the first time, in 1904, he went to Berlin and Stockholm in order to arrange for a museum exchange. In 1908, after the congress of Americanists in Vienna, he dropped into Prague to buy ethnographic collections, and in 1911, he visited Stockholm. In 1924, after a congress of Americanists, Shternberg worked in Stockholm once again, selecting some 500 exhibits for the MAE. He was assisted by the Swedish traveler and President of the Swedish Academy Sven Hedin (PF ARAN 282/2/361:188).

Apart from his museum and scientific activities, Lev Shternberg took an active part in public and political affairs and journalism, which took up a great deal of his time and energy. Sergei Kan ascertained that it was this that was one of the reasons why the book "The Social Organization of the Gilyak" was not completed on time and consequently did not appear in the transactions of the Jesup Expedition (Kan 2001). Shternberg took part in the legal and illegal Jewish movement in Russia in the period between the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. Their aim was to overthrow the monarchy and set up a democratic government in which all Jews would receive all citizens' rights. During his first trip to America in 1905 he contacted especially Jewish emigrants from Russia. Shternberg was one of the organizers and ideologists of the Jewish People's Group (1906–1907), an association of Jewish public figures who did not share the idea of Zionism. He went in for journalism and editing, published articles and items for periodicals, and gave lectures on the Jewish question (Shternberg 1907b). In 1910, he was one of the consultants to the State Duma on this range of questions (Kan 2001:228, 231). In 1915, Shternberg visited the front as a delegate of the Committee of Assistance to Jewish Refugees (Grant 1999a: xiii).

Shternberg was a fortunate combination of good field worker and erudite scientific theoretician. He never had an ethnographical education; everything he achieved in ethnography, he achieved through self-education. His mind aspired to large generalizations and new resounding discoveries. He understood the main shortcoming of ethnographical research in Russia at that time: the lack of a theoretical foundation. Shternberg went down in the history of science as a consistent advocate of evolutionism. He adhered to the formational approach to the development of human society. At the same time, he aimed his students towards the concrete and comprehensive study of separate cultures, which drew his approach closer towards the American school of the historical ethnography of Franz Boas.²⁵

Ethnography became not only a profession but the focus of Shternberg's life. He aspired to raise ethnography in public opinion and in politics (sometimes by way of excessive idealization) up to the level of a separate field of science, and at the same time important and necessary for society from a practical point of view.

Shternberg considered ethnography to be a science of an undivided humanity. He called it now ethnography, now ethnology, but the latter term he used in relation to research abroad (Shternberg 1926d). He understood culture to be common life experience, which forms recollections that unite people into one historic whole. Regarding the development of culture from the point of view of progress and along an ascending line, Shternberg proposed bold hypotheses and, using examples of the cultures of different peoples of the world, drew wide comparative parallels. He was aiming to

25 According to the recollections of Z. Cherniakov, Bogoras and Shternberg considered themselves to be the students of Boas (see Grant 1999b:248).

show that humanity develops according to a single set of laws. Each phenomenon was regarded by him as the direct expression of a common historical necessity; from the point of view of evolutionism, with the help of examples from the most diverse parts of the world, even torn from their interconnections and concrete context, it is possible to reconstruct the course of the progressive development of humanity.

The main object of Shternberg's studies were the peoples of the Russian Far East, first and foremost, the Nivkh. Apart from this, he studied the Ainu, Oroch, Nanai and Negidal. He did not avoid even the least significant problem connected with the ethnography of these peoples. He followed Schrenck [Shrenk], one of the most outstanding researchers into the peoples of the Far East in the 19th century, subjecting to reexamination and raising doubt about the main scientific hypotheses put forward by his forerunner (Shrenk 1883; 1892; 1903).

Shternberg was a talented linguist, describing the grammatical, phonetical, and lexical structures of the Nivkh language for the first time. He wrote over 100 works on ethnography and linguistics.²⁶

Lev Shternberg had a particular interest in questions of social organization and religious faith. One gets the impression that he proceeded not so much from the analysis of concrete facts in coming to the construction of a hypothesis and theory, as from a concrete evolutionistic theory to the collection of facts "to fit it" (at least in his study of social organization). The latter interested Shternberg from the point of view of the development of family and marriage institutions; here, one should think, he was attempting to understand (especially having got acquainted with the relevant literature) the sources of the present-day state of society and possible paths of its future development. An interest in religion had been established in him in early childhood, while an interest in questions of customary law is natural for a person who had almost completed a course in law.

Shternberg began writing his first works while in exile; they came to the attention of the head of the island of Sakhalin, Merkazin. "He has taken my notes and wants to talk with the governor-general about them," he wrote in 1893, "the latter, judging from the papers, is a widely educated person and sympathises with the study of the region."²⁷ With the light hand of officials, Shternberg's articles began to be printed in well-known scientific journals.

The first publication was Shternberg's communication about the Sakhalin Nivkh that appeared in the newspaper *Russkie Vedomosti*, on the 14th October 1892. It contained brief notes on the social organization of the Nivkh, registered by him in terms of kinship during the undertaking of the census in February and March 1891. It was this article that drew the attention of Friedrich Engels. In his opinion, the author of the report "not only establishes the existence of group marriages, i.e. the right to

26 For a detailed bibliography of the works of Shternberg: see Shternberg 1933a:709–714; Ol'denburg and Samoilovich 1930b:7–19.

27 Shternberg. Letter to Krol', 21st November 1893. In Dudarets 2004:125.

mutual sexual relations between a number of men and women, but gives examples of such a form that closely borders on the punalual marriage of Hawaiians, on the most developed and classical phase of group marriage" (Engels 1892–1893:364). During the census he got to know the Nivkh terms for relationships and about "free" relationships between men and women in Nivkh society by comparison with the European counterpart. He interpreted the material he collected as the existence of "group marriages" amongst the Nivkh of Sakhalin. However, Shternberg was not pleased with the German publication. In a letter to a friend he wrote, "I received another letter from Rakhil [...] she sent me a cutting from a German newspaper with a review and translation from "Russkie Vedomosti" of a report on my article by Friedrich Engels. For all that I am not happy that it got into print prematurely. Now it will be necessary to make a lot of changes."²⁸ Shternberg's article "Sakhalin Giliaki" (1893), "Journey to the Far North of Sakhalin" (1895), "Orochi of the Tatarskii Strait" (1896), relating to the period of exile on the island, appeared in *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* (Ethnographical Reviews), *Tiuremnii vestnik* (Prison bulletin) and in the newspaper *Vladivostok*.²⁹ They were noted and praised highly.

Nivkh linguistics and the collection of folklore occupied a significant place in Shternberg's early creative works. He studied the language for six years, having to acquaint himself with the living language that was unknown to science.

"At first it was particularly difficult [...] in Viakhtu settlement there was not even one Gilyak with any knowledge of Russian whatsoever. My attempts at learning the language by ear through conversations [...] were quite unsuccessful. I decided [...] to approach the task the longer way—through theoretical study. Surrounding myself with [...] a few young Gilyaki, I started to write down short texts, seeking phrase analysis [...] At first work was extremely difficult as my teachers did not realize that phrases consist of separate words, and [...] stunned me with long sentences, which I was hardly able to jot down in the least perfect form. On top of that, painstaking questioning quickly bored them and our sessions moved on with long intervals" (Shternberg 1908: viii-ix).

One of Shternberg's more important works is still little called for and underestimated by those studying Siberia, "Materials on the study of the Gilyak and their folklore." This rich collection of mythological texts on the Nivkh, recorded in two languages, came from the printers in 1908 (see also Shternberg 1900:387–434). "There is nothing easier than to have the chance to listen to a Gilyak story-teller, but to take it down is extremely difficult. Gilyak speak very quickly. Furthermore, the language of a story-teller is archaic, different from conversational and even for the Gilyak them-

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Shternberg 1893a; 1893b. Between 1893–1896 L.Ia. Shternberg published several articles in the weekly bulletin *Vladivostok* on issues relating to local life, satirical essays, travel articles and stories.

selves is not fully understood” (Shternberg 1908:x). Shternberg recollected. For the first time an outline was given in this work of the phonetics of the Nivkh language; folklore texts (in west and east Sakhalin dialects) with a translation into Russian were published for the first time (“literally a word-for-word translation”). These texts were recorded both by the author himself in the Rykovskoe settlement in 1897, and by Bronislav Pilsudski from the Nivkh, Churka, Pletunka and other Nivkh, and passed on to Shternberg for publication.³⁰ Shternberg proposed detailed commentary to the texts, and also the first classification of Nivkh folklore; he gave a characterization of the story-teller and singer, and for the first time noted the mutual influence of the Nivkh and Tunguso-Manchurian epic.

Shternberg believed that the Gilyak language was genetically close to American Indian languages; however, he later agreed with Leopold von Schrenck’s opinion that the Gilyak language is part of an isolated group of “paleo-Asiatic” languages. The expert in the Nivkh language, Erukhim Kreinovich appraised his teacher’s contribution at its true worth, pointing out at the same time, however, some of Shternberg’s mistaken conclusions in the numeral system, phonetic system and others (Kreinovich 1968). Shternberg’s great service was in the fact that for the first time he placed the Nivkh language into linguistic terms of reference, though he failed to complete this work; the Nivkh-Russian dictionary remained unpublished, as did his outline of Nivkh grammar.

Shternberg kept and developed his interest in questions, traditional in Russian ethnography, of ethnogenesis and ethno-history. Active studies into ethnogenesis were being undertaken in Siberia, since it was the nature of the Siberian “field” that archaic cultures were passing into history and even those observable in the present gave grounds for such investigations and permitted significant results to be achieved. That this later became a dominant subject in Soviet ethnography was not by chance (Tokarev 1949).

The Far East, Primor’e and Priamur’e [Outer Manchuria] have been regions of intensive inter-ethnic and cultural contacts since ancient times. Shternberg tried to investigate the most complex, many-layered and intertwined peoples and cultures, drawing on, as in the case of the Ainu, all possible sources: linguistic, archeological, ethnographic and anthropological. It was his last work on the Ainu that was noted by Maksim Levin as being an example methodologically “of the complex approach to research into questions of ethnogenesis” (Levin 1958:232). Such an approach allowed Shternberg to state, and for the first time argue most fully, the hypothesis of a southern, Austronesian origin of the Ainu, which, although it still required further refining, was actually proven by him (Shternberg 1929). Shternberg created a new method of studying ethnogenesis by identification of the formation and genesis of each clan comprising the people being studied. This method came to be widely used by Soviet scientists (Smoliak 1975).

30 Folklore texts in the Nivkh language, collected by B. Pilsudski during his exile on Sakhalin, partly published by Shternberg 1908:ix, xxii.

Contemplating questions of the classification of peoples of the Far East, Shternberg came to the conclusion that the main classification must be the ethnonym of the people. Based on this proposition, he drew the conclusion that the Tungus-Manchurian peoples of the Amur and Sakhalin—the Oroch (Uilta), Oroch, Mangun (Ulchi), and Gold (Nanai), make up one tribe, i.e. people, since they all call themselves in the same way: *nani* (Shternberg 1933a:6–10, 396–398.). In this he did not agree with Schrenck. Although the ethnic proximity of the above peoples is beyond doubt, all the same they differ from each other linguistically and culturally. Shternberg, like the majority of scientists of his time, thought that Oroch and Udege (the latter he mistakenly called Kekari) were one and the same people. There were other points of view: Sergei Brailovskii was the first to use the ethnonym *Udikhe*, that corresponded with the ethnonym of these people; Vladimir Arsen'ev and Innokentii Lopatin supposed, on the basis of an analysis of the languages, that the Oroch and Udege were different peoples (Brailovskii 1901; Lopatin 1912; Brailovskii 1923; Arsen'ev 1926; 1947). The latest research has shown that it is their point of view that is correct. The theory on the tribal unity of the Tungus language peoples of the Lower Amur and Sakhalin based on the unity of their ethnonym turned out to be insufficiently validated (Smoliak 1975:43–44).

Shternberg, as opposed to Schrenck, thought that the ancestral home of the Nivkh was on the mainland; having analyzed the construction of their dwellings and type of dog breeding, he put forward the hypothesis of their northern origin. The hypothesis has not been confirmed by the latest research (Levin 1958:119–120). Another of Shternberg's hypotheses on the genetic link of Nivkh with Native Americans that arose at the peak of popularity of cross-cultural studies of North-West North America and the North-East of Russia at the end of the 19th beginning of the 20th centuries, was also later acknowledged to be unsatisfactory (Levin 1958:297).

Shternberg, arguing with Schrenck, believed that the Oroch moved to the Amur from the north. He pointed to the mixed character of Oroch descendants, noting that up to three-quarters of Oroch clans come from peoples living to the north of the Oroch. The latest research confirmed the heterogeneous ethnic composition of the Oroch, the main role in the formation of which, in the opinions of Valentin Avrorin and Elena Lebedeva, was played by the Nanai-Ulch component (Avrorin and Lebedeva 1966:7–8).

Shternberg took an interest in the question of the determination of the ethnic origin of the ancient population of Sakhalin, but the lack of archeological data prevented him from making any substantial deductions. The latest research has confirmed that the Ainu came to Sakhalin quite late (Kozyreva 1967:117–118).

In connection with the ethnogenesis of the peoples of the Far East, the question remains of the indigenous substrate in the culture of the Amur peoples. Analysis of the bear festival plays a considerable role in determining the answer. Shternberg put forward the hypothesis that the bear festival, when a bear is kept in captivity, was

taken by the peoples of the Amur from the Ainu. This hypothesis was accepted by the majority of scholars of the time. However, Anna Smoliak in one of her works showed that the bear festival, with the bear captive in a cage and with its later killing, has even more ancient roots with the peoples of the Lower Amur than with the Ainu (Smoliak 1961:337–344). She considered the influence of the Ainu in Priamur'e had been highly exaggerated, drawing attention to Manchurian and Chinese influence.

As can be seen, many of Shternberg's hypotheses have not been confirmed. However, the very fact of the posing of general questions, the analysis of materials accumulated, the breakthrough to the level of major and bold generalizations were, from the point of view of the development of the science, very productive. Many years had passed since the time of observations of the phenomena by the scientist, and new interesting work devoted to the ethnography of the Nivkh and other peoples of the Far East had appeared. These works clarify and complement his observations, and in some areas diverge from them.³¹ The question of the ethnogenesis of the peoples of the Far East is still far from being settled.

In studying the social organization of the Nivkh, Shternberg "discovered" amongst them, and later amongst other peoples of the Far East, "vestiges" of group marriage. Already a few of his contemporaries were skeptical about the hypothesis of group marriage. In particular, Aleksander Maksimov wrote that all the examples of marriage institutions that are usually referred to reinforce it, in actual fact are not group marriages in the full sense of this term, but are purely local, unique cases, which are not genetically interconnected; apart from that, the terms of the relationship do not correspond with systems of relationships. Nevertheless, in the Soviet period the approach, according to which systems of classifying relationships cannot be explained in any way other than by the existence of group marriages in the past, was widespread (Maksimov 1997).

Nowadays the concept of group marriages is no longer so invulnerable, as in Morgan's and post-Morgan times (Kriukov 1972; Artemova 2000).

In his book on the social organization of the Gilyak (Nivkh), which, as noted above, was published posthumously in English in 1999, Shternberg described and analyzed the system of relationships of the Nivkh and in addition to previous works drew analogies with the social organization of other peoples, first of all of the north-east of Russia and north-west of North America. There is nothing essentially new in the book by comparison with already published works. However, despite the sometimes word for word repetition of a book published in 1904, from the point of view of interpretation and theoretical generalizations it is a somewhat different work. It

31 See, for example: Kreinovich 1973; Ostrovskii 1997; Smoliak 1975; 1974; 1990; Taksami 1975; Black 1973.

is more up to date from a theoretical point of view than the works of Bogoras and Jochelson (see Kan 2001:218).

Shternberg devoted a number of works to the social organization of the Nivkh, which include a classical analysis of the clan organization and family-clan relations within this people. He looked deeply into the many and various family and social bonds that tie a Nivkh to his clan, considering the main indications of a clan to be notions of the singleness of origin, of a common fire, exogamy, common religious norms and ceremonies, the existence of one and the same clan from which all the members of this particular clan take wives, and also the existence of a common, third clan where all members of the clan give their women in marriage (the so-called three-clan union) (Shternberg 1933a:210–214). In the opinion of Smoliak, the “three-clan phratry,” about which Shternberg wrote a great deal, is not discernible in investigations undertaken after him (Smoliak 1974:170–217; 1975). This was possibly caused by the fact that, already at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, marriages on the basis of three-clan unions were no longer being concluded, rather mutual marriages between two clans were being practiced. Relatively recently the marriage bonds of minority ethnic groups of North Asia were studied in an article by G.M. Afanasieva and Iu.B. Simchenko. They expressed the opinion that the existence of three-clan marriage phratry (which in Shternberg’s constructions were important components of Nivkh social organization) in a numerically small group was impossible (Afanasieva and Simchenko 1981). In old editions of his work, describing marriage customs of the Nivkh, Shternberg demonstrated such ties without indicating specific clans: clan *A* takes women from clan *B*, *B* from *C*, and *C* from *A* (Shternberg 1933a). However, in a later page the author wrote that different “real-life conflicts did not always permit” the realization of these rules, there were exceptions and fourth clans appeared, and a three-clan phratry turned into a four-clan union. Shternberg’s last work, published in English, vividly demonstrates both the three-clan and the more complex, four-clan (and even five-clan) phratry: clan *A* – clan *B* – clan *C* – clan *D* and back again (Shternberg 1999:31–38).

Shternberg wrote that some clans of this people were “flourishing,” others were “dying out”: “a clan is a living organism.” Indeed, materials in the archive of Nikolaevsk-on-Amur, which relate to the first quarter of the 20th century and include a list of Nivkh clans of the Amur and Sakhalin and their representatives who entered into marriage, show that this indigenous people had more than 70 clans (Smoliak 1970; 1974; 1975).

Shternberg himself never wrote about the clan make-up of the Sakhalin Nivkh. Data of 1910 on clans of the Amur Nivkh that had settled in the lower reaches of the river and in the estuary were taken from his notebooks and put into scientific circulation in 1933 in his posthumously published books. On the basis of field and archive studies, Smoliak ascertained that absolutely all Nivkh clans at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century lived each in his or her own clan community, but the

composition of the settlement was multi-clan, and sometimes multi-national. Shternberg did not single out the Nivkh community, the unit of which is the settlement, as an independent social unit. In V.R. Kabo's opinion, "the settlement as it stands out in the works of Shternberg and other authors should be seen as a heterogenic or indigenous-clan community. The latter was an economic unit in Nivkh society" (Kabo 1981:206). The old position on the clan as an economic unit that L.G Morgan and other researchers adhered to (Shternberg was strongly influenced by his idea), is not found with the Nivkh. The same is true for the neighbors of Nivkh along the Amur (Smoliak 1974; 1975). If the wide extent of the areas occupied by the Nivkh and the small numbers of this people are taken into account, then there were no grounds for setting apart separate clan hunting grounds. For this reason, representatives of different clans did not come into conflict and, on the contrary, were happy when outsiders turned up, inviting them into the settlement. The commonality of clan territory was observed only with a new, recently formed clan (Shternberg 1933a:175). Returning to the question of the territorial property rights of the Nivkh, we would stress that Shternberg's assessments in this area were inconsistent, which can be explained by the complex structure of land holding relations with the Nivkh.

Shternberg's works, having marked out the direction of further research, at the same time objectively played the role of a "brake" in the study of questions of kinship. The elaboration of this area in Soviet ethnography right up to the period of the 1950–1960s went along the course constructed by Morgan and Engels. Within the framework of the structuralist and post-modernist theoretical approaches many of the propositions of evolutionism and Marxism appear to be mistaken.

At Leningrad University Shternberg taught a course "The History of Religious Beliefs," that was taken down in shorthand by his students and published by them in 1936 (Shternberg 1936). Shternberg defined religion as one form of the struggle for existence. He came to that conclusion on the basis of his own field materials, as he was still not acquainted with the work of Edward Tylor (Ratner-Shternberg 1933:99). But he saw in the idea of the soul not a primary concept, but the product of long development. Shternberg marked out three stages in the development of animism: animatism, primary spiritualism, personification of nature, and the concept of the soul (Shternberg 1936:2–12). He underlined the importance of the psychology of a primitive person when studying early forms of the development of religion, and in these approaches we see some closeness of his to the French sociological school of Emile Durkheim.

A large place in the scientific work of Shternberg was devoted to the study of different religious phenomena. He paid special attention to the study of the evolution of

religious beliefs using examples of different religious phenomena that are widespread amongst different peoples, sometimes far from each other in location, language, culture and place in history. He especially made a deep study of the cults of the eagle and twins amongst the peoples of Siberia, the cult of *inau* with the Ainu, and religious 'chosenness'.

Shternberg introduced the term "cult of twins" into circulation and proposed another interpretation for it that differed from the concept of the mythological school. In his opinion, twinned gods reflect the mythology of a real phenomenon in religious practice: the twin cult. He drew the conclusion that "the twin cult is only one type of cult of deified people-kinsmen." Later, Aleksander Zolotarev and Sergei Tolstov pointed to another basis for the twin cult, that is, the archaic dualistic organization of society and corresponding world-view (see Basilov 1993b:34–37).

Shternberg devoted his article "Divine election in religion" to the question of shamanism and the inheritance of the shamanic gift (Shternberg 1927a). He thought it was possible to become a shaman through the will of the spirits (but not obtain the shamanic gift by human action, although that was possible), and the "shamanic sickness", being overcome, opens the way to shamanic practice. On the expedition of 1910, he put forward for the first time (which is very important), on the basis of several conversations with a young Nanai shaman in the settlement of Sikhachi-Alian, the hypothesis that a sexual element is one of the main reasons for the belief that a shaman is chosen. Shternberg assumed that shamanism represents the primary, early stage of selection on the sex motif, and the same motif is common to a number of other religious phenomena. He understood the lack of factual material for the basis of a pattern for this phenomenon for all humankind. For this reason he set his students the task of collecting such material. Some of his followers, having become interested in the new hypothesis, took another look at their field material and found evidence to support it.³² However, the hypothesis has not been confirmed to this day, though neither has it been refuted. Scientific opinion was divided on the question.³³ The well-known investigator into shamanism, Vladimir Basilov, thought that the concept of somebody 'being chosen' was one of the "significant religious conceptions of humanity, but cannot be fully accepted today [...] the role of the sex motif in the concept of somebody 'being chosen' was unjustifiably exaggerated by Shternberg; this relates both to shamanism and to later cults and institutions" (Basilov 1993a: 95).

32 Such information can be found in the letters of Nevskii to Shternberg (PF ARAN 282/2/211), and in letters from Prokofiev to Shternberg (PF ARAN 282/2/242:1, 5 rev.).

33 See, for example: Smoliak 1994 (3):174–175; Kharitonova 2000:312–338. In the opinion of M.M. Khasanova the sex motif in devine election in the religious views of the Nanai, Ulch, and Oroch is present, without doubt, but the question remains: what is its place amongst other motifs and to what extent is it characteristic of other peoples of the world? (personal communication–A.S.).

Whereas, on the whole, he was highly critical of Freudianism, amongst his positive groundwork Shternberg noted the role of the unconscious factor in religion, and also the abnormal psyche of a concrete individual in the formation of religious ideas. He thought that Siberian shamanism originated in a single south Asian center, possibly in India (Ratner-Shternberg 1930:120).

Historiographic research and the study of Jewish ethnography occupied a specific place in Shternberg's scientific work and heritage.

At the beginning of the 1900s, Shternberg actively published reviews of books, the list of which indicates the variety and wide breadth of his interests: G. Mortillet—"The Prehistoric World," L. Krzhivitskii—"Mental Races," N. Kharuzin—"Ethnography," L. Sokolovskii—"The Study of Human Nature," H. George—"The Works of Henry George," S. Kotliarevskii—"Present Day Catholicism," W. Bogoras—"The Chukchee" and others. Apart from that, he wrote a number of small essays on the life and work of V.V. Radloff, G. Miller, V. Bartold, D.N. Anuchin, M.A. Castrén: the majority of whom were timed for anniversary dates (Shternberg 1907; 1909; 1913a; 1916; 1926; 1925; 1927c; 1928a). Shternberg paid a great deal of attention to tendencies abroad in sciences relating to humans (Shternberg 1926b).

That side of Shternberg's life and scientific work concerning Jewish ethnography is still little known and requires special study. He was not a specialist in this field but he gave it considerable attention. Throughout life he maintained an interest in his native culture, which apparently urged him to read lectures on the Jewish question and engage in Jewish ethnography. In Petrograd, in 1919, an Institute of Higher Jewish Knowledge (later to be named the Petrograd Jewish University and later still the Leningrad Institute of Jewish History and Literature) was established with the aim of producing different specialists; Shternberg was one of its lecturers (Sobolev and Anfert'eva 1995[2]:7–8, 6).

Shternberg collaborated with a number of organizations engaged in the study of Jewish culture. He was chairman of the committee administering the work of the Jewish History and Ethnographical Society. It had been set up on 16th November 1908 with the aim of furthering the "study and research into all areas of Jewish history and ethnology." There were a number of sections in the Society, an archive and museum with exhibits on the history and ethnography of Jews. In 1923, Shternberg became the editor of the journal *Evreiskaia Starina* [Jewish antiquity], in which he published several articles on Jewish ethnography (Shternberg 1913b; 1912; 1924a; 1924b; 1924c; 1928b; Anskii 1914). The most interesting of these is the article "Issues of Jewish National Psychology," in which the author emphasizes an "inborn complex" of the Jewish people. "The most surprising in the mentality of a Jew," Shternberg notes, "is a combination of extreme rationalism with intense emotionality and activity" (Shternberg 1928b:32). This "inborn complex" was a feature of the scientist himself to the whole.

Shternberg became a field ethnographer 'against his will'. One can safely say that without that eight-year exile on Sakhalin there would not have been that Shternberg who is well known as an investigator into the peoples of the Far East. Field ethnography did not interest Shternberg until he was impelled to engage in it in exile, in that vacuum of spiritual life that existed on Sakhalin for an active person overflowing with energy: "Occupation with ethnography," his wife recollected, "raised his spirits and filled his solitary life with a living interest" (PF ARAN 282/2/195:121). The same, however, applies to the colleague with whom he had endless professional arguments and a time-tested friendship—Waldemar Bogoras. And it is also true that Shternberg, unlike Bogoras, was prepared deep down for these investigations from the point of view of his interest in the history of the development of society and the state (Kan 2000:21).

And from the very beginning he was interested in the history of the development of marriage and the family in ethnography, and also the history and evolution of religious beliefs, from the study of which he did not stray.

The years of life on Sakhalin were indeed that period when young Shternberg could undertake intensive field studies. True, it was not participant observations that were dominant in his methods, as they were, for example, with Pilsudski or Bogoras, who, in 1895 wrote to Shternberg from Srednekolym'sk: "I am now entangled in ethnography. Traveled around the district, moving from place to place for seven months with the Chukchi, the devil take them, rode on reindeer, rafted down rivers [...]" (PF ARAN 282/2/34:6 rev.; in Vakhtin 2001:71–89), but by the method of interviews, including in-depth interviews, during the taking of the census in 1891, in the north-east of the island. He worked mainly in the summer. Shternberg's diaries, 1892–1896, were published not long ago in Iuzhno-Sakhalinsk (Shternberg 2001a,b; Roon and Prokof'ev 2001:211–215). Criticizing some foreign theories, among other things, Shternberg used as his strongest argument the fact that they were written by scientists, not conversant with the real life of the peoples being investigated, in their "studies."

Strictly speaking, no one taught Shternberg the method of field studies. One can risk saying that he actually had no method. Does anyone teach a shaman how to become a shaman and perform the rituals? Here too it was a sort of intuition based on his inherent ability and knowledge, experience of life and convictions. He showed his interviewee books with pictures, calling forth their reaction to the cultural life of other peoples, and he was quite provocative in relation to places that were, for the Nivkh, forbidden, and then getting their explanations, he painstakingly worked with his interviewees to learn the language, terms for relationships and beliefs (Shternberg 1904:30).

In general, on the basis of his first experience of work, Shternberg came to the conclusion that it was essential to learn the language and, despite all the difficulties, he did this.

One gets the impression that Shternberg did not like long periods of fieldwork. His mind was of a different mold: analytical, hypothesizing, discerning general pat-

terns in language and culture. Before us is an example, quite rare in the Russian ethnographical community, of a person with an alert analytical mind and at the same time an interest in concrete ethnographical facts. As an evolutionist, he asserted the singleness of human culture, considered that it develops in one direction, and put forward unexpected parallels from different aspects of Nivkh culture with those of the German, Slavic, Jewish and other peoples (Shternberg 1893a:10, 13, 28).

More often than not the conversation began with a discussion of the history of things that interviewees sold or gave to the museum. This was one of the most productive methods of gathering information in conditions of limited time that continues to be used successfully today, especially by museum scholars. Shternberg was present at shamanistic rituals also (Shternberg 1927a:11–16).

In 1914, Shternberg published “A Short Course in Ethnography (with regard to the mode of life of peoples of the north),” in which he shared his practical experience as a field ethnographer: it is necessary to learn how to observe, know the language or at least have a basic vocabulary of the people under study, keep a daily diary and, already “in the field” to systematize the data obtained. He briefly outlined different elements of culture and ways of their investigation. Most space in his course was given to questions of “social culture” (clan, terms for relationships and marriage), and there was a section on “beliefs” (including shamanism) (Shternberg 1914; 1933a:715–737).

Shternberg did not only collect material on indigenous peoples, but propagated ideas of better social organization, equality and brotherhood. K.M. Mylnikova and V.I. Tsintsius, working in 1926 amongst Negidal on the River Amgun, passed on the reminiscences of the older people about Shternberg: “Lev Iakovlevich did not only relate to them as equal to equals, but told them that, it turns out, all people were equal, and that there would be a time when they won’t be exploited. He also tried to develop in them a sense of national identity or, as they say, ‘asked them to take care of their old law’” — “But now that good time has come that Lev Iakovlevich told us about,” (PF ARAN 282/1/110: 79) in that way they summed up their reminiscences. Shternberg did the same amongst young teachers, workers, and students with whom he came into contact in one way or another throughout his life.

Science is moved by ordinary people. Their interactions with each other, temporary or permanent coalitions, sympathies and antipathies play a big role in the intra-scientific life, determine the vectors of further research, speed them up for a time or, on the contrary, hold back the development of particular areas of science, ideas and works. In connection with this, we would like to sketch out the interrelations of Shternberg with some of his colleagues and friends.³⁴

34 The scholar’s archive contains a wide correspondence both with Russian and foreign colleagues. Shternberg’s main correspondents at different times were F. Boas, C.V. Hartman, J. Ambrosetti, W. Bogoras, W. Jochelson, B.O. Pilsudski, S.M. Shirokogoroff, V.K. Arsenëv and E.A. Kreinovich.

A significant role in Shternberg's scientific career was played by his relationship with the American scientist Franz Boas (1858–1942), the founder of the “American school of cultural anthropology.” If Boas had not ordered Shternberg's manuscript of his book on Gilyak, who knows, it is possible that even the work “Family and Clan of the Peoples of North-East Asia” of 1933 would not have come into being. Boas thought Shternberg to be the “Russian Bastian”³⁵ and spoke highly of him (posthumously) as an outstanding anthropologist and scientific theorist, and he also underlined his personal friendship with him (see also Kan 2001).

This relationship, built up on a professional basis, grew into many-sided cooperation. The point was that Boas, like Shternberg, was a passionate champion of human rights, individual freedom, advocate of equality, and enemy of racism, ethnocentrism and chauvinism (Lewis 2001). Both scientists were highly acknowledged in scientific circles and had many students and followers.

Correspondence between Shternberg and Boas began in 1905. At that time, the question of Shternberg's visit to the American Natural History Museum for work with its collection from the Amur region was being discussed. Boas wanted Shternberg to meet Dr. Laufer, one of the participants of the Jesup Expedition who had worked in the Amur region and gathered an ethnographic collection at the end of the 19th century (PF ARAN 282/2/29:2). Shternberg arrived in America at the beginning of May 1905 and spent two and a half months there, which were full of impressions, meetings and journeys (see also Kan 2001). During this time he wrote three and a half pages of texts with explanations of some items, indicated by the manuscript of the scholar himself, and visited the Chicago museum in order to learn about the fate of the collection he had made that had been sent to America at the beginning of the 1890s (Roon 2000:141). Boas made Shternberg a proposal of cooperation in a project on the preparation of a manuscript and publication of the transactions of the Jesup Expedition. During meetings, discussions and in letters the subject of Shternberg's book was crystallized: “The Gilyak and their Neighbors,” which in the following was narrowed down to “Social Organization of the Gilyak.” However, for different reasons the manuscript was published only at the end of the 20th century.

Boas drew Shternberg, and Bogoras and Jochelson also, into participating in the congresses of Americanists: in Stuttgart (1904), Quebec (1906), Vienna (1908), Buenos-Aires (1910), and London (1912). Shternberg gave papers at the congresses on theoretical questions of ethnology, and specifically on questions that were being devel-

The limited length of the article and in some instances lack of materials does not permit us to illustrate the relations of Shternberg with W. Jochelson, M. Krol', A. and L. Mervart and some others of his colleagues and friends.

35 Adolf Bastian (1826–1905) was one of the founders of German ethnology. He produced numerous works on the peoples of the world. He put forward the hypothesis of the psychological concurrence of humankind, and recognized the possibility of different paths of evolutionary development.

oped by participants of the Jesup Expedition headed by Boas (Krupnik 1998:205). In 1912, Shternberg wrote to his wife from London: “Famous scientists have gathered here. It was here that I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of the eminent Frazer and had a long conversation with him. He had come, I am able to say, to a large extent because of me.” London made an “enchanting impression” on Shternberg: “[...] a city with charming architecture, gardens, courteous people on the streets, and everything marked with the imprint of the strength of taste and coziness.” It was then too that he met Boas: “We had a very pleasant and friendly conversation [...]” (PF ARAN 282/2/361:132, 132 rev.).

The history of relations between Shternberg and Bronislav Pilsudski (1866–1918) has been the subject of attention of a number of scientists and local historians both in Russia and abroad in recent years (Pilsudski 1996; Khasanova 2001; Reshetov 2000; Latyshev 2008). A surprising friendship of two people, their identical “starting point” in penal servitude on Sakhalin, similar interests in the sphere of ethnography, and such different fortunes in life! But with time everything falls into place and, not having received due acknowledgement in his lifetime, Pilsudski “is returning” in triumph into the history of science first and foremost as a brilliant field linguist and ethnologist (Inoue 2003:135–163).

Pilsudski was very fond of Shternberg. “You [...] have bestowed a living stream of interests, a will to live,” he wrote to him in 1897, “I have become so used to sharing my anxiety and apprehensions with you. But, most of all, it is so interesting with you! It’s difficult to part, but I am happy for you [...] Very happy” (in Gagen-Torn 1975:103–104).

Only one side of the correspondence between Pilsudski and Shternberg has been preserved: to date Sternberg’s letters to Pilsudski have not been found, but Pilsudski’s letters to Shternberg have been published by V.M. Latyshev (Pilsudski 1996).

Pilsudski shared his field materials and folklore texts with Shternberg, and part of the latter (according to one source, four texts, but to another—eleven texts) were included in his book on folklore (Shternberg 1908, Vol. 1. Part 1). Shternberg needed Pilsudski as a person who had worked a great deal with the Ainu and Gilyak, knew the Far East well and could be the gatherer and conveyer of collections to the museum and a correspondent. Shternberg never forgot his Sakhalin comrade and from time to time helped him with friendly advice, arrangement of an expedition or purchase of collections.

Sergei Mikhailovich Shirokogoroff (1887–1937) began working at the MAE in 1910 (Revunenkovna and Reshetov 2003). It was Shternberg who advised him, a person never having visited Siberia, to choose Zabaikal’e, where Tungus were living, as a region for research. An expedition in 1912 was the first expedition that he went on together with his wife. He wrote to St. Petersburg: “Both Elizaveta Nikolaevna and I are enchanted with the nature of Zabaikal’e and of Siberia in general. We like the Tungus and they like us too, it seems [...] they are very trusting. I am very, very grateful to

you, much appreciated Lev Iakovlevich, for your prompting me to go to the Tungus" (PF ARAN 282/2/319: 1 rev.).

The expedition was successful: new collections were made and scientific material gathered. It would appear that Shirokogoroff at that time was close to Shternberg in his political views, as he received the news of the revolution of February 1917 enthusiastically. But soon the Shirokogoroff couple experienced the consequences of the disturbances in the normal course of life directly. Mongolians in Hailar were in a state of trepidation and areas close to the border in the Far East were unsettled: bands of Chinese were terrorizing the populace. Everyone was caught up in it: travelers, local inhabitants and the Tungus. On the road from Blagoveshensk, where Shirokogoroff had been translating texts with the help of an Oroch, to Chita, the couple and people accompanying them were arrested and "[...] found themselves in a dreadful situation [...] All these circumstances: arrest, difficulties in travel, literal robbery of people who found themselves forced to use other people's services, and these muddle-headed Mongolians have exhausted us completely both morally and physically" (PF ARAN 282/2/319:16).

In August 1917, Sergei Shirokogoroff was in Ekaterinodar, where he was resting with his wife at the isolated farmstead of her parents after the Manchurian expedition. He wrote to Shternberg about his uncertain situation. From China, where Shirokogoroff had emigrated, he informed Shternberg that he had completed his work on the subject "Ethos and Ethnography:" "By my calculations, I thought I would crawl out with them much later, but my unnatural exercises in the university [...] forced me to begin writing. I am aware that a great deal in the work is unfinished [...] but I don't want to put it off till an unknown future, but put these questions, at least in order that everyone criticized severely, it is good for the future" (PF ARAN 282/2/319:25 rev.)³⁶

For personal and ideological reasons (towards the end of his life Shirokogoroff became a monarchist) their scientific and personal communications broke off completely. Evidently, it was not by chance that after the mid-1920s Shirokogoroff himself never referred to Shternberg amongst those who had had any kind of influence on his scientific destiny. The early correspondence is evidence of the opposite. Bogoras once called Shirokogoroff "the most capable of Shternberg's older students" (Bogoras 1928:8; see also Reshetov 2003b:188). Shternberg's relations with Vladimir Arsen'ev (1872–1930), an outstanding researcher into the Far East, took a different shape (Luganskii 1997). These were people of quite opposite descent, outlook, education and experience of life.

In 1910, Arsen'ev became acquainted with Shternberg and accompanied him for a period of time on his journey along the Amur (PF ARAN 282/1/110:25). At that time, Bruno Adler invited Arsen'ev to participate in an All-Russian ethnographic exhibition organized at the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg. Arsen'ev gave a collection to the

36 In Shternberg's archive there are 11 letters from Shirokogoroff for 1912–1924, the last of which posted from Hailar and Shanghai.

museum for which he was awarded a small silver medal of the Geographical Society (Polevoi and Reshetov 1972).

Shternberg, because of the above-mentioned “arbitration tribunal,” was in poor relations with Adler and, it would appear, he all but transferred these relations to Arsenëv. Feeling this, the latter wrote to Shternberg: “B.F. Adler has an account to settle with you—this is his and your affair! But there is no misunderstanding between us and therefore there should not be strained relations between us. Then (in St. Petersburg) I said to myself, ‘The duty of every decent person is not to enflame enmity between others, but on the contrary to try to put it out!’ And for this reason your quarrel with Adler could not influence me [...]” Arsenëv always had a respectful, courteous and friendly disposition towards Shternberg. “Remember my words at the I.R.G.O. [Imperial Russian Geographical Society] during the lecture (the paper “Orochi-Udehe,” read by Arsenëv 18th March 1911–A.S., T.R.) I officially and publicly announced that I would listen to your objection with pleasure (although it was very strongly worded) and that I am ready to have further conversations and discourse with you,” (PF ARAN 282/2/20: 3 rev., 4) he wrote to Shternberg in 1913.

“Lev Shternberg was a very serious critic of other people’s work. He was not shy to speak his mind,” Arsenëv recalled in his public speech devoted to Shternberg’s memory. He spoke about the kind of comments the scientist made on the pages of his work: “Nonsense. What you are venturing is not serious. [...] Everything needs to be started afresh.” But gradually the tone of his remarks changed: “Your book has disturbed me. It has revived in my memory that past time when I was young and began work on ethnography for the first time and had direct contact with indigenous people. You have written little on ethnography recently, but what you are communicating now are real masterpieces” (PF ARAN 282/1/110:23, see also Arsenëv 1966).

At Shternberg’s request, Arsenëv was collecting information on terms used for relationships and norms of marriage, arranging and dispatching ethnographical collections, and taking care of his students and colleagues for him. Shternberg helped Arsenëv also and, in times that were difficult for him, he invited him to work in Leningrad. Shternberg’s scientific, social and political authority helped Arsenëv parry the attacks of his ill-wishers in the early post-revolutionary years.³⁷

Shternberg had close ties with Bernhard Petri (1887–1937). The son of the well-known anthropologist Edward Petri, the young Petri, remaining at an early age without his father, fell under the guardianship of Radloff and Shternberg. In 1910, after graduating from St. Petersburg University, Petri began work at the MAE where he remained in the position of junior ethnographer until 1917. The scientific interests of a number of the staff of the MAE were connected with Siberia, and Petri also chose the region of western Pribaikale, where Buryat live, for his research. Both the region and the subject of research, family and clan of western Buryat and their religious beliefs,

37 Letters of L.Ia. Shternberg to V.K. Arsenëv: 76, 80; PF ARAN 282/2/20.

it appears, were suggested by Shternberg. Over the years at the MAE, Petri went on three lengthy expeditions in Pribaikale (1912, 1913, 1916), which were financed by the Russian Committee for the study of Central and East Asia. Over the course of the expeditions he maintained a correspondence with Shternberg.

After the October Revolution, Petri decided to remain in Irkutsk for an indefinite period, and in 1923 he settled permanently in Siberia: "My plan is closely linked with personal ties and the sympathy and interest which local people have in my research," he wrote to Shternberg in 1922, "I cannot bring myself to give all this up and leave for Petersburg, as you insist [...] I ask you to keep for me the high title of ethnographer of the Academy of Sciences that I have born so far and of which I am proud [...]" (PF ARAN 282/2/227:15,16).

In the 1920s, professor Petri, together with other Siberian scientists set up the Irkutsk School of Archeology and Ethnography, whose students are well-known in the history of Soviet science: A.P. Okladnikov, M.M. Gerasimov, and G.F. Debets (Sirina 2003:57–80).

The October Revolution rocked and overturned the whole of Russia—civil war, intervention, emigration. At the same time for many people it opened up new possibilities. Amongst them was Lev Shternberg. In the post-revolutionary confusion he was arrested for a short time, but then released.

After Radloff's death in 1918, Shternberg began to carry out the duties of director of the MAE. The First World War and the Russian Revolution had upset established connections and new concerns presented themselves. Shternberg had to arrange for the export of collections gathered by Liudmila and Aleksander Mervart in India. Not until the beginning of 1920 were collections on Greenland Inuit, ordered way back in 1914, brought out of Denmark.

The former staff of the museum had become sorely depleted in post-revolutionary years: some staff failed to return after work on expeditions, remaining in Siberia and north China, like Petri and Shirokogoroff; others returned but were later repressed, others still, like Jochelson, chose to emigrate from what was by then the USSR (Sirina 2003:64–65; Revunenkov and Reshetov 2003; Vigasin 2003).

New people came to the museum, whose director was now Efim Karskii. One of them was Dmitrii O'ldergge, later to become a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, one of the founders of the Russian school of Africanists. After finishing the department of linguistics and literature in the faculty of social sciences at Leningrad University in 1925, O'ldergge began working at the MAE, where he attended Shternberg's seminars. Shternberg compiled lists of literature for O'ldergge and, remaining in his study in the evening, had long conversations with him on the theory of culture circles and the views of Fritz Graebner and Heinrich Schurtz, imperceptibly directing his research towards African Studies. In 1927, on Shternberg's ini-

tiative, Dmitrii Ol'derogge was sent to Germany on an official assignment for half a year in order to study African collections and languages; the trip turned out to be very fruitful (Osnitskaia 1993; Popov 2004).

Shternberg helped A.B. Piotrovskii, the uncle of the future director of the Hermitage, outstanding expert on Oceania, and a gentle, considerate, outwardly unobtrusive person, not embarrassed by his handicap of deafness (Zhmoida 1999:146).

“The ease with which Lev Iakovlevich talked with me, in a way (exclusively in writing) that troubled many other people so much, his ability to encourage a person, fill him with a belief in his own powers, and readiness to assist at all times with his colossal erudition were an invaluable service to me,” Piotrovskii recollected. “For me meeting Lev Iakovlevich was a salvation in the full sense of the word, only thanks to this did my life gain content and meaning” (PF ARAN 282/1/110:114).

Shternberg was nurturing the idea of arranging a section in the museum for the evolution and typology of culture that would reflect his theoretical preferences. The setting up of such a section began in 1925, but after his death the shaping of the section was discontinued, and the idea itself was forgotten.

The Soviet state showed a particular interest in the development of ethnography and regional studies and allocated considerable funds to this end. Shternberg was one of the editors of the journal *Etnografiia* (Ethnography) 1926–1930, the forerunner of the present *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* (Ethnographical Review), editor of *Chelovek* (The Human) (1927). Together with Bogoras he also conducted scientific and practical work as a member of the Committee for assistance for the Peoples of the North in the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

The country's leaders needed detailed information on the population: numbers, languages, details of life, and also specialists. Shternberg suited the role of teacher for the new, Soviet social and economic structure better than anyone else. Even before the revolution he had used every chance to expound his ideas of the unity of cultural development and human progress, and called for a fair social structure of society. Shternberg's experience and multifaceted abilities were required by the Soviet authorities that regarded the peoples of the north the most oppressed and backward in social and economic development and, for that reason, requiring particular state paternalism. Shternberg received a unique possibility to teach first in the Institute of Geography set up in 1918 (he was the dean of the ethnographical section), and then, in 1925, after the reorganization of the Institute and its merging with the university, within the walls of Leningrad State University [LGU], in the ethnographical department of the Geography faculty (Staniukovich 1971). These educational institutions became the basis for the preparation of a new generation of Soviet ethnographers, and the school itself received the name “the Leningrad school” (see Liarskaia, *this volume*). It was the graduates of this school that had the outstanding role of solving the practical tasks of eliminating illiteracy and forming a national *intelligentsia* from amongst the peoples of the North, which, indeed, they fulfilled. It was not out of nothing that the

“school” arose: through Bogoras and Shternberg the traditions of Russian ethnography, field station research, knowledge of the language, and the humanistic orientation of research were passed on to a new generation of students.

Student ethnographers received multifaceted knowledge in different spheres of science: the history of world culture was taught by well-known scholars: V.M. Alekseev, N.I. Kareev, V.V. Struve, I.V. Frank-Kamenetskii; the theory and practice of linguistics by B.V. Vladimirtsev, L.Ia. Shternberg and W. Bogoras; and statistics by F.F. Kaufman. Students were also taught the natural sciences, the knowledge of the basics of which could prove useful during fieldwork: botany, zoology, soil science, geology and others. Theoretical groundwork was combined with museological and expeditionary practice. To prepare students for the “field” they were taught the skills of work with cameras, map-making, outlining, and the basics of drawing. (On the “Leningrad ethnographic school” see also: Ratner-Shternberg 1935; Gagen-Torn 1971; Staniukovich 1971)

At the University, Shternberg taught courses in “An introduction to ethnography,” the “Evolution of material culture,” “Evolution of religious beliefs” and the “Evolution of social culture.” One of the first of Shternberg’s students recalled that in 1921 the professor read lectures in the enormous hall of the main University building, where only 2 or 3 electric lamps cast a stingy light on the figures of students crouched-up from the cold (PF ARAN 282/1/110:15).

“A thin, elderly man, shriveled up as if by internal combustion,” Nina Gagen-Torn recounts in her memoirs, “spread out stacks of scribbled cards and raised his eyes; looked intently at us for a while through his glasses, and then began to speak:

“Many people don’t have the slightest idea that, without ethnography, without its data, classifications and generalizations there would be no science of man, his culture, space, and time. To put it more simply, the discipline called history is impossible, and the same for the discipline of sociology [...] The greatest service of ethnography is in the fact that for the first time it established the concrete notion of humanity en masse. If one can put it like this, it is that for the first time made a roll call of all the peoples of the planet [...]”

He bent down to his stack of cards so as to make a quotation that would prove his thought. Brought them close up to his glasses, read, and coughed a little, shuffling the cards. He was no orator, he even stuttered slightly. It was not easy to listen to him, or to make notes.

I was surprised: what had brought all these students here? Why were they listening to the strained and matter-of-fact speech of Shternberg? And soon I understood that what we were witnessing was not an academic lecture, but the pith of this man’s life. He was infusing his whole will and passion into ethnography. This was felt by everyone and could not but enflame [...]” (Gagen-Torn 1994: 50–51).

After the lectures students would fairly often see Shternberg home (he lived not far from the university) and converse along the way, arguing on one topic or another, about philosophy, or history, and this informal dialogue conveyed no less than the formal classes (Grant 1999b:247–248, 252). One of his students recalled: “Lev Iakovlevich had an original manner of behaving in conversations that was peculiar to himself, he would listen carefully, put in questions, elucidate and argue without advancing his own superiority, as an equal with equals, without irony [...]” (PF ARAN 282/1/110:134).

Those around him were attracted by his inner charisma as a leader, his ability to stand up for his convictions and interests, and also to inspire his interlocutor with a faith in his own abilities.

Shternberg was able to interest young people in science, and together with Bogoras, he demanded knowledge of the language of the peoples being investigated as well as “being in the field” no less than one or two years, that is, participatory observation. Both scientists taught students the basics of the Nivkh, Chukchi and Evenk languages. Bogoras, a person with a quick temperament, sociable, full of life, open and explosive, often became distracted at lectures, answered questions, laughed together with the students and made jokes. Shternberg, according to the recollections of his students, was a complex, reserved person, who they loved but were somewhat afraid of for his sharp judgments, strictness, sternness and seriousness (Grant 1999b:247).

Many of the students of Shternberg and Bogoras eventually became outstanding scientists, organizers of the scientific process, compilers of alphabets and dictionaries for peoples formerly having no written language. But first there were expeditions; for the majority, scientific work was combined with administrative work or teaching.

It is appropriate at this point to recall the “Ten Commandments of the Ethnographer” compiled by Shternberg, presumably by analogy with the Biblical Ten Commandments. We give them here in full (Gagen-Torn 1971:142–143):

1. Ethnography is the crown of the humanitarian [social–A.S., T.R.] sciences, for it makes comprehensive studies of all peoples in the past and present.
2. Do not idolize your own people, own religion or own culture. Know that all people are potentially equal: There is neither Hellen [Greek–A.S., T.R.], nor Jew, nor white, nor colored. He, who knows one people, knows none, he, who knows one religion, one culture, knows none.
3. Do not profane science, nor defile ethnography by careerism: the real ethnographer can only be the one that fosters enthusiasm towards the science, love for humankind and for people.
4. Work for six days, and on the seventh sum up the results. Remember your duty before society and science.
5. Honor great forbears, and teachers in scientific and public life, in order that you be honored according to your services.

6. Do not destroy science with the falsification of facts, superficial, inaccurate observations, or quick conclusions.
7. Do not change the once chosen subject of ethnography. He, who has started along the path of ethnography, should not stray from it.
8. Do not commit plagiarism.
9. Do not bear false witness against your neighbor, against other peoples, their character, customs, practices etc. Love your neighbor more than yourself.
10. Do not force your own culture onto the people you study: approach it with regard and care, with love and attention, no matter at what stage of culture it is, and it will aspire to rise to the level of a higher culture itself.

This “moral code” of the first generation of Soviet ethnographers was born on the wave of post-revolutionary enthusiasm and was by no means a “flippant code” as Nina Gagen-Torn believed (Gagen-Torn 2002:318).

In a distinctive form, Shternberg’s fundamental theoretical, methodological and ethical views are reflected in it. Romanticism and maximalism, the idealization of the science of peoples are characteristic of the “Commandments”: not to betray ethnography, ethnography being the crown of all the humanitarian (social) sciences, all peoples are equal, he, who knows one culture, knows none. The humanistic traditions of Russian ethnography were also reflected in the “Commandments.” Although they speak of the potential equality of peoples and cultures, Shternberg, in accordance with the evolutionist paradigm, actually “arranged” peoples along “stages of culture,” stressing that the people being studied would “itself aspire to rise to the level of higher cultures.”

But in practice not everything was unequivocal. The process of including the peoples of the North and Far East into the Soviet state framework was being forced through without restraint, especially in the 1930s. Unfortunately, almost no one amongst the researchers paid attention to the incongruence of the noble goals and the rushed methods as if the end justifies the means. Severed from their usual surroundings and living conditions, many students of the Institute of Peoples of the North (INS) fell ill, and dropped out, as A.P. Koshkina-Alkora expressed it, “the inevitable percentage of the debilitated.” Those who like Nina Gagen-Torn expressed openly their doubts about these kinds of method were in the end obliged to give up teaching (Gagen-Torn 2002:142).

Shternberg, Bogoras and other teachers of the ethnographic section of the Geography faculty of the Leningrad State University prepared a whole *pleiad* of students who continued the work of their teachers in a worthy manner.

Sergei Vasilevich Ivanov (1895–1986), having become an eminent ethnographer and art historian, was a student at Leningrad University in 1922. He attended one of Shternberg’s lectures by chance and was so carried away that he later wrote:

“As for my main subject now, I can say that its choice is due exclusively to L[ev] Y[akovlevich]. Before I became acquainted with him I was mainly interested in modern European and Russian art (and leftist currents in art at that) [...] Thanks to lectures and conversations with L[ev] Y[akovlevich]. I turned my attention in quite the opposite direction – to the art of the other peoples” (PF ARAN 282/2/97:5).

At Shternberg’s suggestion, Ivanov began to study this art based on the materials at the MAE and literature. In 1922 he studied the ornamentation of the headdresses of the Aleuts from the evolutionary point of view. On Shternberg’s proposal, Ivanov became a junior assistant in the ethnographic section at the Leningrad University in his department and at the same time a trainee at the MAE. Ivanov and Karger wrote to Shternberg from their expedition in the Far East in 1926–1927: “In Boktor, we were present at the shamanistic ritual (*kamlanie*) and took part in the driving out of a devil. We become friends with the indigenous people very quickly [...] Both of us feel well. We work for days on end” (PF ARAN 282/2/97:12). Ivanov worked under Shternberg’s guidance for five years, right up to the death of his favorite professor, gaining the necessary experience.

Erukhim (Iurii) Abramovich Kreinovich (1906–1985) was, without exaggeration, Shternberg’s favorite student, on whom he placed special hope. Iurii Kreinovich graduated from LGU (Shternberg himself taught him the basics of the Nivkh language) and in 1926 on the recommendation of his teacher he went to Sakhalin where he remained for two years authorized by the Sakhalin Soviets to deal with indigenous affairs.³⁸ Despite being busy with work, Shternberg quickly responded to his student’s requests, helped him with advice and informed him about university news. Persistently and patiently he reminded the young intern about what would seem to be commonplace truths, but, without doubt, important parts of ethnographical investigations. “When you take down words and texts, note without fail who his mother is, if she spoke like the Gilyak of the Tangi settlement, or the Ada-tymy, or the Tro. This is very important, because children speak the language of their mother. I implore you to take down everyday language, make them speak in Gilyak about ordinary things from everyday life. Epics and such things go without saying [...] I would like to give you millions of instructions and questions, but first learn the language and write down as many texts as you can.”³⁹

During the first days after his arrival on Sakhalin Kreinovich, at Shternberg’s request, sought out his friends in exile who remained alive, the graves of his comrades and also former interviewees. He found then even the Nivkh, Churka, Shternberg’s

38 Letters that Kreinovich wrote to the professor are kept in Shternberg’s personal archive (PF ARAN 282/2/154:17 rev.).

39 Letter of L.Ia. Shternberg to E.A. Kreinovich. Sakhalinskii oblastnoi kraevedcheskii muzei, # 6473-188 a,b; Shternberg 2001c:203.

kind old acquaintance. It was at his place that Shternberg, while traveling around the island at the beginning of the 1890s, made his first notes of the texts of Nivkh folktales. Kreinovich repeated the fate of his teacher, as an exile, but even in the camps of Kolyma he survived as a linguist and ethnographer, leaving a notable trace on Nivkh and Ket linguistics and ethnography (Roon and Sirina 2003).

Vera Ivanovna Tsintsius (1903–1984) went down in the history of science as an outstanding linguist, professor, and dean of the Faculty of Peoples of the Far North at the Leningrad State Pedagogical Institute (LGPI) named after Herzen.

In 1926, the fourth-year student of the ethnographic department of the Geography Faculty at the LGU, Vera Tsintsius and Klara Mylnikova broke off their education and left for a year for the Far East, to the Negidal (Khasanova and Pevnov 2003:230). They wrote to their teacher: “Now, just at the time of our arrival, the humpback salmon and summer chum harvest began. And the Negidal, out of sheer joy, start ring dances: hand in hand, they dance rhythmically to shouts [...] They converse with us very willingly. And although we, with the long road and all the fuss of an unscientific kind, had decidedly forgotten the language, all the same they say that we know the Tungus language well, and perhaps for this reason they trustfully tell us about the *alarinki* (the place where the ritual of presenting gifts to the spirits is held—A.S., T.R.) [...] We are absolutely enchanted with the Amur [...]” (PF ARAN 282/2/307: 2, 1 rev., 3).

After Shternberg’s death the girls recalled: “[...] they (the Negidal—A.S., T.R.) without any hesitation, only a week after our arrival, took us to their place of prayer and sacrifice, where women are not permitted to go, and where they are hardly likely to have taken us with such willingness, had it not been for the fact that we are Lev Iakovlevich’s students” (PF ARAN 282/1/110:79).

In 1927, Vera Tsintsius began teaching Tungus-Manchurian languages in the Institute of Peoples of the North [INS] in Leningrad. Tsintsius and Mylnikova made a considerable contribution to the posthumously published works of their teacher. It was they who prepared almost all his archive materials concerning the languages and cultures of the Tungus-Manchurian peoples (see also Khasanova 2000; Kishinev 2002:101)

Back in 1925, V.L. Kotvich wrote to Shternberg that “somehow the Tungus materials are unlucky—a great deal was taken, but little has come out of it as a result. Perhaps someone from amongst your students will have more luck. It will not be easy to begin [...]” (PF ARAN 282/2/152:3). Vera Tsintsius, like Glafira Vasilevich (1895–1971), another outstanding student of Shternberg, made a scientific breakthrough in the study of the Tungus-Manchurian languages: she was the editor of the Comparative Dictionary of the Tungus-Manchurian languages, (Tsintsius 1975–77) and did much for the development of questions of the language, folklore, and ethnography of the Tungus-Manchurian peoples.⁴⁰ Marina M. Khasanova, having worked amongst the

40 See more about V.I. Tsintsius in: Bulatova and Charekov (eds.) 2003.

Negidal at the end of the 20th century, noted that amongst them “[...] to this day, stories about the two astonishing Russian girls, Vera and Klava, who spoke the Negidal language beautifully and took down folk tales and legends are still alive” (Khasanova 2000:102).⁴¹

Georgii Nikolaevich Prokof’ev (1897–1942), a talented ethnographer and expert on Siberia. In 1925, the Committee for the North in the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) Presidium sent him on an assignment to the Tazovskii tundra to study the economic and cultural situation with the Ket and Samoyed. He went together with his wife, Ekaterina Prokof’eva. There he worked for three years as head of the boarding school and teacher in the settlement of Ianov Stan (from July 1925 until July 1928).

A few letters from Prokof’ev that he wrote from his Taimyr expedition (1925–1927) have been kept in Shternberg’s archive. “Fate has brought me to Ianov Stan, where I was given the position of head of the boarding school: the place is very busy; this is the center of the Tazovskii tundra; all the indigenous peoples of the district gather here.” Prokof’ev began studying the Selkup and Nenets languages straight away and ran into a number of difficulties: his language materials in some cases diverged from those of Castrén. He compiled, for the first time, a Nenets alphabetical primary on the basis of the Latin, and then the Russian alphabet, wrote the first teach-yourself manual of the Nenets language, the first grammatical outlines of Nenets, Selkup, Enets and Nganasan languages, and worked vigorously on the questions of the ethnogenesis of the Samoyed peoples. Prokof’ev consulted Shternberg on questions of Ostyako-Samoyed shamanism and systems of relationships: “I feel an urgent need to receive the necessary instructions from you for my further investigations” (PF ARAN 282/2/242: 1,5 rev.).

Andrei Aleksandrovich Popov (1902–1960), a remarkable ethnographer and expert on Siberia, was engaged in ethnography even before receiving higher education. Popov was born into the family of a priest in Yakutia and was proficient in the Yakut language from childhood. In 1925, *Narkompros* [People’s Committee for Education] sent him to study in the Geography Faculty at the LGU. It should be mentioned that both Shternberg and Bogoras thought the participation of Siberians themselves in the study of Siberia most advantageous. Popov was 35 penniless and carried out work under contract, receiving little for it (Gracheva 1993:408). He recalled:

“Although I was with Lev Iakovlevich for only two years, I nevertheless got to know him well and his uplifting image will stay in my memory forever [...] At

41 The fate of Vera Tsintsius was quite fortunate, though Klara Myl’nikova (married name Forshstein) was unable to continue her work on linguistics and folklore, although she was not less talented than Tsintsius: on her first expedition she recorded a large number of texts (M.M. Khasanova, personal communication—A.S.).

the first meeting I had with Lev Iakovlevich I was amazed at his trustful attitude towards me, a person quite unknown to him, his sincere desire to help on seeing my difficult circumstances, without inquiring about who I was [...] The person writing these lines had been in quite onerous material conditions that had forced him to forgo higher education. But Lev Iakovlevich did not permit it: for two whole years he supported me, finding various ways for me to make some earnings [...]" (PF ARAN 282/1/110:115–116).

Popov left valuable work on the ethnography and folklore of the Dolgan, Yakut, and Nganasan peoples and contributed considerably to the study of the worldview of these peoples. (Popov 1966; 1976; 1984)⁴²

Leonid Pavlovich Potapov (1905–2000), outstanding investigator into peoples of South Siberia, professor, many years heading the Leningrad part of the Institute of Ethnography, recalled that Shternberg had played an appreciable role in his life having interested him deeply in "indigenous religions."

Potapov had come from the Altai to Leningrad and entered the ethnographic department of the LGU. The "green" first-year student of the ethnographic department gave a paper on the nut trade amongst the Altai people. After this there was a very critical discussion and Potapov became depressed, having taken the criticism as a personal fiasco and tragedy. "I needed support very much but was completely alone." Then he went to his little-known professor Shternberg. "With a heavy heart I ascended the narrow stone stairs, where L.Y. lived. He came out to me and we went through to his study. A warm, conveniently arranged room full of books, and a comfortable arm-chair where L.Y. invited me to sit, and finally his gentle question: 'Tell me what has brought you to me,' discharged my state of mind and from the first words of my story I felt how large tears were rolling down from my eyes" (PF ARAN 282/1/110:111–112). Shternberg encouraged the student, gave different kinds of advice and spoke of the role of enthusiasm in science.

Once, late in the autumn, Potapov was preparing for an expedition to the Shor. "It hurts me to send you off deep into the taiga where you must study the everyday life and beliefs of hunters and sleep with them on the snow," Potapov recalled Shternberg's words. "I feel that I am taking upon myself a grave responsibility, sending you out into such conditions, but you are young and love ethnography, if you feel quite fit, only in such a case will I accept your concurrence,"—these were his additional words. Hearing that Potapov had no means to pay for treatment of his ailing teeth, Shternberg gave him some (D'iakonova and Reshetov 2002:125–130; PF ARAN 282/1/110:110–113).

42 For more works of A.A. Popov see: Gruppa tovarishchei 1961(2):139–140.

Since 1924, Shternberg's health had gradually begun to deteriorate, becoming particularly noticeable in 1926. At the insistence of his doctor-brother, Shternberg went to Kislovodsk. In November of the same year he took part in the Third Pacific Science Congress held in Tokyo. As a representative of the USSR Academy of Sciences, whose corresponding member he had become in 1924, Shternberg informed Congress participants about the book, published in English, "Russian Scientific Research in the Pacific," for which he had written the section on "Ethnography" (Shternberg 1926c:160–188). The scientist also read a paper on the question of the origins of the Ainu, who he had made observations of during his exile in the south of the island of Sakhalin. Before this he had published an article on the Inau cult of the Ainu (Shternberg 1905 [vol 1, pt.4]:289–308). This "enigmatic" people had interested him because their language and culture clearly differed from the cultures of other Sakhalin peoples.

Shternberg followed the course of the Congress attentively and later wrote an article on it that was published in the journal *Etnografiia* (Ethnography) (Shternberg 1927b:327–336). Every day was loaded with sessions and receptions. Shternberg gave a lecture in the USSR embassy in Tokyo to which Japanese with knowledge of the Russian language were invited. After the Congress he wanted to stay for another week: "I would like to visit the Ainu, at least for a couple of days," he wrote to his wife, "then devote another couple of days to conversations with local scientists that are particularly interesting for me but were not at the Congress, and later purchase various things for the Museum [...] I have found experts on Japan here who have assisted me greatly" (PF ARAN 282/2/361:2). He also met N.A. Nevskii who was living then in Japan. A correspondence was established between the scientists, although not for long. In one of the letters, Nevskii put forward his etymology of the word *inau*: *inu*—"listen to the end," *hay*—"talking, speaking, listening (to people's words and requests) and telling (about this to the gods)" (PF ARAN 282/ 2/211: 4).⁴³

An excursion around the country took place within the framework of the Congress. Delegates visited Kyoto, former capital, and had the honor of meeting the Emperor. The nature and culture of Japan made a significant impression on Shternberg and made him forget his ailment for a time: "[...] what is particularly delightful here are the gardens and especially the gardens of ancient mansions (7th or 8th century, at every step here). This is indescribable beauty in the combination of colors, and incomparable views [...] in the beauty of each tree, which is tended as one would a child [...]." And everywhere the refrain is repeated: "I am very homesick [...] I so want to leave for home" (PF ARAN 282/2/361:218–218 rev., 215 rev.). He returned to Leningrad already seriously ill.

Sergei Stebnitskii was one of the last students to see Shternberg less than a month before his death. Stebnitskii dropped in to Shternberg's *dacha* at Duderhof before leaving for Kamchatka in July 1927. Despite his sick condition, the professor had a

43 Shternberg's version: *ni*—"tree" + *au*—"tongue."

long conversation with Sergei, and helped him to make up a concrete program of research, the value of which his student realized properly only “in the field.” Later Stebnitskii recalled:

“It was two versts to the station, Lev Iakovlevich took his hat and a stick and set off to accompany me. He took me along his favorite road—over the hill. He kept stopping. Narrowing his eyes at the setting sun, he showed me the sea: ‘Look!’ The evening was a rare one. ‘Now look at this pine!’ He almost ran up to the enormous forked pine and knocked it with his stick. The pine’s appearance was indeed quite fantastic. And Lev Iakovlevich stood beneath it lithe, joyous and, I could even say, full of life. I had never seen him like that and couldn’t even imagine it. ‘I run down this road every day to bathe.’ (‘Run!’) ‘You swim?’—‘And what did you think? I’m not such an old man!’— ‘Well, let’s go,’ he walked on, all the time drawing attention now to some odd branch, now to a flower poking out amongst the grass. That’s how I remembered him—in the forest, at sunset, light and hungrily breathing in the pure evening air” (PF ARAN 282/1/110:11–12).

Shternberg died on 14th August 1927 at his *dacha* in Duderhof. “He was delirious over his last hours and came to himself just before his death,” Bogoras related, “He couldn’t speak, and wrote with his finger in the air: ‘I am dying’” (Bogoras 1927:282). His civil funeral took place on 16th August in the Society of Political Exiles. The next day, accompanied by a large gathering of people, Lev Shternberg was buried in the Jewish Preobrazhenskii graveyard in Leningrad, opposite the grave of the famous sculptor Aleksander Antokolskii. On the upper part of his gravestone the words of the scientist are clearly seen: “All humankind is one” (PF ARAN 282/1/195:176).

News of Shternberg’s death found many of his students on expeditions. Sergei Stebnitskii heard of his teacher’s death only half a year later:

“Late in the evening in winter the post arrived on dogs at the Koryak settlement of Kichiga. A lot of people were crowded in my cramped little room at the indigenous school, sorting out the bundles and packets. I was given a few envelopes, amongst them one that had been typed with the stamp of the Ethnography Museum. I tore the envelope open. A photograph of Lev Iakovlevich fell out and onto the table. His intent familiar eyes, as if in life, were looking at me. I could barely read the attached notification. I put it on the table, turned and rushed out into the cold dark classroom. I stood there for a long time, running my finger over the misted glass. Before me the flat snowed-over tundra was lit up by the moon” (PF ARAN 282/1/110:11–12).

After Shternberg's death, his widow, students and unfinished works were left behind. "Years have passed, but no, my friend, there is no oblivion, and the pain is sharp, as in the terrible moment of parting," Sarah Ratner-Shternberg wrote a few years after the death of her husband (PF ARAN 282/ 4/116:10). She collected reminiscences of his students, former students, scientists and friends of her husband. It is thanks to her efforts that a collection of reminiscences of Shternberg was prepared for printing (O'denburg and Samoilovich 1930). On the initiative of his widow a Commission was set up for the publication of his works under the chair of I.I. Meshchaninov. It was supposed that the collected works of Shternberg would be published in five volumes. At the same time it was planned to write and publish a book about Shternberg in the series "The Lives of Outstanding People" (PF ARAN 282/4/20:147-151). In 1936 the manuscript of the collected works was sent to the printers, then sent for completion and, finally, with the change of the director of the MAE, withdrawal of D.K. Zelenin and I.N. Vinnikov from the editorial board, arrest and execution by firing squad of Y.P. Koshkin-Alkor, and arrest of E.A. Kreinovich, it was delayed and set aside.

Nevertheless, the majority of Shternberg's main works: the book "Sem'ia i rod u narodov Severo-Vostochnoi Azii" [Family and Clan of the Peoples of North-East Asia] (1933), "Giliaki, Orochi, Goldi, Negidals and Ainu. Articles and Materials" (1933); the collection "Pervobytnaia religiiia v svete etnograficheskogo issledovaniia" [Indigenous Religion in the Light of Ethnographic Research] (1936), and the book "The Social Organization of the Gilyak" (1999), were published posthumously. At the same time, "Sem'ia i rod u narodov Severo-Vostochnoi Azii" and "The Social Organization of the Gilyak" are very close in content. More than half the book "Gilyaki, Orochi, Goldi, Negidals and Ainu," published in Khabarovsk, is comprised of articles and materials that had previously been published by Shternberg. For the first time Shternberg's lectures, on the transcripts of which he had worked in his last years, were published in a collection in 1936. The other half of the book's text was made up of Shternberg's articles on questions of religion that had already been published.

A meeting of ethnographers of Moscow and Leningrad (April 1929) changed the alignment of forces in ethnography. New approaches to the discipline of history were taking shape, programs in higher education were being revised and criticism of "bourgeois specialists" was unfolding. Y.P. Koshkin (Alkor), understanding full well the changing situation, supplied Shternberg's works, already prepared for reissue, with introductions including criticism of the views of his teacher. He was accused of underestimating the role of the means of production in human history, and of over-emphasizing the psychological element in his analysis of religious beliefs. But it was too late to save many "young Marxists": the flywheel of repression had already been launched.

Lev Shternberg lived and worked at turning points in the history of Russia. He began as a revolutionary of the *narodnik* kind, and was an active participant in the social reorganization of life. Gradually, under the influence of scientific, museum and teaching activities, he moved away from revolutionary methods of action. "He was one of the lucky ones in his generation," Bogoras believed, "being able to switch his revolutionary ardor over and away from the sharp chasms of politics towards the wider and calmer course of science" (Bogoras 1927:271). Shternberg's evolutionism was not only the methodology of his research: he believed deeply and sincerely in the progressive development of humankind and was an opponent of racism, chauvinism, and national exclusiveness.

The results of social revolutions are often unpredictable. The revolution lifted Shternberg up high, he was in demand, but it could have cast him into hell. History showed how this can happen a little later [...]. Lev Shternberg, fortunately, did not live to see this. His widow died of hunger in 1942 in the Leningrad blockade, having given her husband's telescope for the needs of the front not long before her death (Vologdina 1994:181).

The charisma of a leader moved Shternberg through life, giving it a special meaning. Three years of solitary confinement and later exile to Sakhalin, that forced him to concentrate in the main on ethnography, linguistics and folklore, played the role of a compressed spring.⁴⁴ When released, it brought into action an enormous inner energy. This energy fulfilled itself in Shternberg's multifaceted activity: ethnography, linguistics, museology, social and political activist, teacher and journalist.

Science does not stop in its development, and it is natural that a number of Shternberg's hypotheses, discoveries and methods have been revised with time. All the same, in the history of Russian science he will always remain an outstanding scientist and wonderful teacher who stood at the source of the highs and lows of Soviet ethnography.

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44 In 1895, Bogoras, in a letter to Shternberg from Srednekolymsk, where he was in exile, expressed this thought like this: "I am so hungry, I have been so hellishly, cadaverously, unbearably hungry over these 3650 eternities [...] that if I could get hold of a chunk of life [...]. I am ready to get my teeth into it and tear at it like a rabid dog" (PF ARAN 282/2/34:6).

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