

**Крашенинникова Ю. А., Низовцева С. Г.,** *КАЛЕНДАРНАЯ КУЛЬТУРА РУССКОГО НАСЕЛЕНИЯ ЗАВОДСКИХ ПОСЕЛЕНИЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ КОМИ.* / ОТВ. РЕД. Т.А. ЗОЛотова. ЕКАТЕРИНБУРГ: УРО РАН, 2025, 440 с. + 16 с. илл. [Krasheninnikova Yu. A. and Nizovtseva S. G., *CALENDAR CULTURE OF THE RUSSIAN POPULATION OF MINING AND METALLURGICAL SETTLEMENTS OF THE KOMI REPUBLIC.* EDITED BY T. A. ZOLOTOVA. YEKATERINBURG: URAL BRANCH OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, 2025, 440 p. + 16 p. OF ILLUSTRATIONS.]

The reviewed book is a worthy conclusion and synthesis of the long-term study of the topic by two scholars from the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Komi Scientific Centre of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences – Yu. A. Krasheninnikova and S. G. Nizovtseva (see Bibliography, Krasheninnikova, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2017a, 2017b, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025; Nizovtseva, 2018, 2019, 2023a, 2023b, 2024; joint 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2019b, 2021). The book covers one of the lacunae on the map of Russian calendar rituals: it provides a detailed description of the ritual calendar culture of three factory settlements in the Komi Republic (Nyuvchim, Kazhim and Nyuchpas), where ironworks and iron-smelting industries emerged in the mid-18th century. Two of these metallurgical plants, which in modern terminology may be described as “city-forming”, existed until the late 1920s, and the third plant actually existed until the end of the twentieth century. In other words, the factory tradition itself spans almost a century, with its subsequent development lasting even longer.

The study is based on a wide-ranging body of sources, including field material recordings since 2008, ten expeditions using the “continuous survey” methodology, and repeated follow-up recordings for clarification. In addition, the authors have identified and included earlier recorded material from eight different archives, as well as various types of printed materials. The research methodology and techniques are clearly outlined in the Introduction.

Despite the widespread scholarly interest in calendar rituals within folklore studies, the book has a unique feature that sets it apart from similar works on other regional materials: it explores the factory tradition in addition to its general interest in peasant culture.

The culture of the factory population is examined in the context of current theoretical approaches. While Soviet folklore studies focused primarily on the working-class folklore created by workers themselves – reflecting their worldview and everyday life (working songs, legends, and oral narratives) – in recent decades, the scope of research has expanded to include the entire cultural repertoire of the workers, including elements of peasant folklore. This shift is reflected, for example, in the works of researchers from Perm, particularly A. V. Chernykh. The book identifies changes in traditional rituals in the workplace (pp. 260, 261), such as the significance of prognostic rituals for factory workers that only relate to personal life events, as well as the absence of references to production-related concerns in factory calendar rituals (*ibid.*). The authors assert that the development of cattle-breeding rituals in factory-based migrant cultures, alongside the near absence of agricultural rituals (such as divination concerning harvests and economic life), represents a specific feature of these traditions. However, we believe that the reason

for this is not the factory-based character of the communities, but rather the fact that they have become part of the general North Russian tradition. The factory context has only served to reinforce this.

The authors adopt a historical and typological approach to the calendar culture of the factory region. The tradition under study is considered secondary, having developed on the basis of “mother” cultures brought by the immigrants and different local types, characterised by an “insular” mode of existence. The analysis is based on a synchronic perspective – from the first third of the 20th century – within which its framework and dynamics are nevertheless revealed. The methodology and research methods are clearly defined in the Introduction.

The book is significant not only within the framework of “working” and “factory” themes in folklore and ethnography studies, but also addresses an important issue in the contemporary humanities: the regional and local aspects of culture. Drawing on the theoretical insights of N. I. Tolstoy in this field, and the research conducted by A. N. Vlasov on North Russian culture, the authors contribute to the solution of this problem and shed light on one of its facets by examining specific material. Their research is also relevant to the issue of the formation of migrant cultures, which are prevalent in Russia.

The authors provide a detailed description of the rituals across the entire annual cycle, examining them as interconnected sets of practices associated with seasonal turning points and major church festivals (Christmas, Easter and Pentecost), as well as the rituals associated with individual holy days. The book examines the rituals in all their genre diversity and the variety of their constituent elements, including the naming of holidays and ritual characters, the composition of participants, and the attitudes of the wider community towards them. Attention is also given to the actional and object-related aspects of the rituals, as well as the accompanying verbal texts – sentences, proverbs, signs, prohibitions, instructions, blessings and other poetic texts – both conventional and occasional. The book provides numerous supporting examples in the form of interview quotations. Whenever possible, the monography also shows the dynamics of the rituals. Chapter V constitutes a particularly valuable contribution on the preservation and transformation of factory workers’ festive culture in modern conditions.

The study is accompanied by three appendices and five indexes of various kinds. While some of them (such as the List of Abbreviations and Symbols and the List of Photographs and Illustrations) are traditionally auxiliary, i.e. facilitating navigation through the text, others are no less significant than the text of the study itself. For example, the Dictionary of Chrononyms, which spans 40 pages and contains approximately 70 entries, has independent scientific value. It provides not only an interpretation of the chrononym, presented in all variants available in the sources together with examples of usage in folk speech, but also a range of additional information about the designated holiday, including ritual practices, prohibitions and regulations. The annotated index of informants (pp. 378–389) proves to be a solid base of field material comprising 127 informants, some of whom were interviewed repeatedly over several times (Nos. 112, 117, etc.). At the same time, it can serve as an additional source when studying specific aspects of the topic. The annotations provide both local and chronological contextualisation, including information

about the informant's connection to a specific local tradition (place of birth and residence, as well as details concerning parents and more distant ancestors, sometimes extending to great-great-grandparents). The inclusion of interviews conducted at different points in time also allow us to see the dynamics of the tradition.

At first glance, the inclusion of extensive interview texts in the Appendix may appear superfluous. However, this is likely justified, since here, unlike in the quotations, the texts are given in full, offering complete narrative accounts of past festive practices. In a context where such rituals have ceased to exist in everyday life, these retrospective narratives are how they continue to exist in the present – as a form of folk culture, and in this form they deserve to be studied. In the book, the authors study this form, noting recurring motifs, their frequency, and modes of verbal expression, thereby developing a methodology for their characterisation.

The Bibliography, spanning 19 pages and including about 230 research papers, deserves special attention. It indicates that the study was conducted with consideration of all the work done by previous researchers (a review and serious analysis of their work is provided in the Introduction, pp. 17–20).

Thus, the book written by scholars from the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Komi Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences meets all the requirements of an academic publication and can serve as a model for studying the calendar rituals of other regions.

Like any serious research, it prompts further reflection and raises a number of questions, doubts and suggestions. It seems to us that the sheer number of sources sometimes overwhelms the authors, and some of the sources cited in the book are not included in the research. For example, the book devotes considerable attention to identifying the places from which the settlers came to the factory district. The article presents the results of historical research based on a variety of sources, alongside the authors' own research, including lists of settlers' surnames obtained from census records and parish registers. This material is invaluable for studying patterns in the transmission of cultural traditions. Not every local tradition has such data. However, we believe that the book does not use this material effectively. No conclusions are drawn from the lists of names, nor are their implications fully explored. We understand that studying these names is a significant undertaking, but if it has not been done, why include the lists and take up pages (pp. 11–17)? The book identifies the factors that influenced the formation and development of the migrant culture and the features that define it (pp. 22–23), but in our opinion, these factors are not sufficiently supported by concrete evidence. The processes of integration – and to a lesser extent filtration – within the migrant population of a single ethnic group and the entire new local society were more evident in the material culture and linguistic phenomena (nicknames) than in the rituals themselves.

The material on factory culture presented in the book is contextualised through broad comparative analysis, with relevant examples drawn from different regions of the country, ranging from Smolensk province to Siberia. However, it would have been preferable to see a comparison with the traditions of the places from which they were brought to the new territory. Although the authors repeatedly state that the nature of the sources allows only

a synchronous snapshot of the tradition since the 1930s, rather than a deeper diachronic analysis, and that they do not aim to examine the initial formation of the tradition, we believe that the sources they have collected provide a partial basis for addressing this task. By comparing the sources with specific “parent” traditions, we can gain a better understanding of the selection and modification of the material, which can help us identify the patterns of secondary culture formation. For example, it is repeatedly mentioned that the settlers included residents of the Vetluga district of the Kostroma province.

A comparison with the Vetluga ritual practices suggests that the factory tradition did not include elements such as Lenten rounds of courtyards, the collection of “crosses” (biscuits) with the corresponding incantations (significant in the Vetluga tradition), and “*ileiny*” (under-dish songs). This absence may be explained by the specificity of these practices, which were not reinforced either by the regional traditions of other immigrants or by the surrounding cultural environment, suggesting that there may be other principles of selection and inheritance in addition to the ones mentioned.

Similarly, comparisons between this “insular” culture and its immediate surroundings would have been desirable. Comparisons with North Russian culture as a whole are consistently made, as well as with individual, well-studied regions (such as the Luzsky region), but we would like to see more focused and precise comparisons. This should clarify some of the conclusions, such as the idea that the rituals of the culture’s carriers were influenced by the absence of an agrarian complex, rather than by the form of their work, as discussed earlier. However, these should be understood purely as our suggestions to the authors. The book represents a serious study and one that opens the way for further studies of a similar kind.

The book is dedicated to the memory of the authors’ teacher, Andrey Nikolaevich Vlasov. This is a fitting tribute to the work he taught and the scholarly devotion he inspired in them.

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