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Weir, Shelagh. The Beduin. 86 pp., 13 color, 85 black-and-white illust. and 5 line drawings; bibliogr.; London: the British Museum Publication. New edition, 1990.

Nowadays, when we, in St. Petersburg, are likely to feel uneasy about the future of Peter the Great Museum of Ethnography and Anthropology, we look with special interest towards activities of our colleagues abroad. One of the closest analogues to our Museum is the Museum of Mankind, the Ethnography Department of the British Museum. Among the British Museum Publications one can find 'The Beduin' by Shelagh Weir (first edition 1976, new edition 1990). Since this attractively designed and lavishly illustrated slim volume is not a new book, one might be justified in asking why is it worth reviewing, and what is the purpose of the review?

To begin with, Shelagh Weir as an anthropologist is responsible for the Middle Eastern collections in the Museum of Mankind; most of her field-work has been done in Yemen. These two points provide us with the common ground, since most of our recent Arabian collections have come to the Museum of Ethnography and Anthropology from Yemen, too. Moreover, this book is focusing on the traditional artefacts made by the beduin, or bought from local craftsmen. Emphasis is placed on the beduin of South Jordan, the Negev desert, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. All six sections of the book describe main features of the beduin 'traditional material culture' (p. 10) or, more precisely, the material features of their traditional culture, i.e. the tent and its social and economic importance, transport, weaving, costume, and jewellery.

The tent section mentions strips of goat-hair cloth (*shuqqah-shuqāq*). In the North of Arabia tent roofs are made up of six or eight strips, while in the South semi-nomads of the Hadramawt plateaux living in stone huts keep the tradition of weaving the shuqaq on huddle looms but use these strips as ground mats. Everywhere this job is done by women; special terms for it are similar: both tribe folk in South Jordan and in Raidat al-Dayyin plateau of Hadramawt beat-in the weft thread with gazelle horns. The al-Dayyin tribe's process of making goat-hair strips has been described by Pavel Pogorelsky, a member of our Museum's staff, who examined field data of Russian-Yemeni Complex Expedition, along with ethnographical materials collected in the book under review. Information about traditional technology proves that old (neo)evolutionistic schemes of development from the primitive to a more sophisticated level are often useless when applied to the Middle East cultural area: as a rule different techniques are known here, the choice has been apparently determined by cultural factors, rather than by practical ones. The same is true with regard to the potter's wheel, two types of camel riding saddle (behind or before/on the hump).

The author argues that 'body imagery is used in some of the terms applied to parts of the tent' (p. 15), i.e. 'hands' and 'legs' for the front and back corner poles, 'face' for the front of the tent, etc. This widespread practice of anthropomorphization is typical of cultural space in general, e.g. the dwellings, pastures, strips of field, parts of a date-palm.

The section about weaving is quite informative. The process is explained in detail, common and rare techniques are dealt with (p. ex. combination of plaiting and weaving). Speaking about weaving products of the beduin, the author pays special attention to decorated deviding curtains as 'the most splendid item woven for the tent', that 'would make an interesting comparative study' (p. 58) throughout Arabia.

Sections dedicated to the beduin costume and jewellery are no less useful due to Shelagh Weir's publications on the spinning and weaving, embroidery, and costume. My personal appreciation of the text was enriched by an opportunity to attend the Palestinian Costume exhibition organized by the author and her collaborators in the Museum of Mankind. The most impressive in costume section is the story about the 'double dress' (*thōb ḥōb*) in Jordan, the giant-sized dress over 3 m long (pp. 63-65, fig. 62), that reminds me of the giant dresses from Socotra described by Vitaly Naumkin. The Arab terms cited by Shelagh Weir and connected with women's and men's traditional costume (*khalaqah*, *burqa^c*, *milfa^c*, etc; one may add *fīṭah*, *shaydhar*, etc.) corroborate once again the Arab phenomenon of terminological interchangeability when one word depicts different objects,

the practice which, I believe, is connected with the initial interchangeability of costume's components.

Passages on ornamental patterns, in particular on jewellery, give enough detail to understand the main items of a vast topic. Multi-coloured combinations, blue beads, cowrie shells, coins and buttons are used as decoration throughout the area; silver has been replaced by gold save the last islets in the South.

The book is intended to be accessible to a non-academic readership (and for non-English speakers, who may add some new terms to their vocabulary). The text provides data for planning exhibitions, for displays that will set the objects in their cultural context and ethnographic environment. It also provides excellent material for a guide. The photographs taken by the author are clear and expressive. Since our Museum in St.Petersburg faces the necessity of reorganizing our own Middle East exposition, this book is thought-provoking and often stimulating for our scientific and editorial practice. One looks forward to further publications of the Museum of Mankind and its Middle Eastern section.

Mikhail A.Rodionov

Veit, V. Die vier Qane von Qalqa: ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der politischen Bedeutung der nordmongolischen Aristokratie in den Regierungsperioden Kang-hsi bis Ch'ien-lung (1661-1796) anhand des biographischen Handbuches Iledkel sastir aus dem Jahre 1795. Teil 1: Untersuchungen; Teil 2: Biographien. - Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990 (Asiatische Forschungen; Bd. 111).

Капитальный труд известной немецкой монголистки Вероники Файт представляет собой исследование и перевод на немецкий язык части "Илэтхэл шастир" ("Высочайше утверждённых биографий князей Внешней Монголии и Туркестана") - важнейшего источника по истории Монголии XVII - сер. XIX вв. Этот памятник является весьма объёмным и содержит огромное количество сведений. Его недостатком является то, что в него вошли преимущественно те сведения, которые заслуживали внимания с точки зрения пекинских чиновников: например, история буддизма в Монголии практически не нашла отражения в "Илэтхэл шастир". Тем не менее, этот памятник является именно тем источником, без соотнесения с которым невозможно использование никакого другого источника по истории Монголии цинского периода. Поэтому появление труда В. Файт является крупным событием в изучении монгольской истории.

Работа В. Файт посвящена тому разделу "Илэтхэл шастир", в котором содержатся сведения о Внешней Монголии (Халхе). Первая часть работы ("Исследования") представляет собой очерк истории Монголии (главным образом Халхи) начала XVII в. и ценное исследование системы административного управления Монголией в составе империи Цин. Значительное место занимают систематизированные автором и расположенные в хронологическом порядке сведения об императорских аудиенциях, присвоениях титулов монгольским князьям, военных кампаниях и т. п. Очень тщательно составлены автором генеалогические таблицы князей Халхи. Большой интерес представляет собой проведённое В. Файт исследование истории составления и издания "Илэтхэл шастир".

Вторая часть работы ("Биографии") содержит переводы биографий халхаских князей, содержащихся в цзюанях 45-76 "Илэтхэл шастир". Они расположены в том же порядке, что и в источнике, т. е. в виде генеалогии княжеских родов со-