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“S. M. Dudin’s Report on His Trips to Central Asia in 1900 – 1902” in the Archive of the Russian Museum of Ethnography

Abstract

The article presents one of historical and ethnographic sources kept in the Archive of the Russian Museum of Ethnography – the report on the first museum expedition to Central Asia organized by S.M. Dudin in 1900–1902. This report is of great importance for studying the cultural history of the Central Asian region and also the emergence of ethnographic museology in Russia. S. M. Dudin’s expeditions were the first ones, the work of which was based of specifically developed program of collecting objects, photographs, and ethnographic information for Russian museums. The article describes principal methods and thematic directions of

Dudin’s expedition work as he states them in his report; it characterizes the structure of the report and the contents of its sections. It focuses on the section dedicated to Sarts, settled Turkic- and -Tajik-speaking population of the central areas of Central Asia (settled Uzbeks and lowland Tajiks), whose culture Dudin described in detail. The article lists those components of their traditional culture which were examined in report: house and house furnishing, food, clothing, adornments, hairstyles, agriculture and husbandry, hunting, fishing, arms and military equipment, pharmacy, children’s toys and adults’ entertainments, organization and attributes of religious life, etc. The article gives examples of S.M. Dudin’s specific methods of collecting and photographing. It underscores several particularly valuable and unique pieces of evidence concerning certain traditional crafts and homemade production, in particular receipts of vegetal and mineral textile pigments, techniques of copper objects making, paper production technologies, which can be used for revitalization and development of modern folk arts. The article also provides little-known facts about the organization of religious life and dervishes’ activities, pastime and entertainments of the population and a unique local custom of combining profession of illusionist with preaching.

Keywords

Archives, historical sources, The Russian Museum of Ethnography, S.M. Dudin, central Asia, Uzbeks, Tajiks, traditional culture.

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