Katanga Evenkis in the 20th Century
and the Ordering of their Life-world

Anna A. Sirina

An authorized translation from the second Russian edition
Translated by A. Chaptykova
Edited by David G. Anderson

Edmonton
2006

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Information:

© English text—Anna Sirina and David Anderson.
# Table of Contents

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................ iii
Tables ........................................................................................................................ vii
Figures ........................................................................................................................ vii
Editor’s preface to the English edition ....................................................................... xi
   Note on transliteration and the rendering of languages ........................................ xix
Author’s foreword to the second Russian edition ...................................................... 1
Introduction ............................................................................................................... 13

Chapter 1. Socio-economic development and ethno-demographic processes .......... 23
   1.1 Ethnicity and population dynamics in the first quarter of the 20th century .......... 23
      1.1.1 Evenkis ................................................................................. 25
      1.1.2 Russian settlers .................................................................... 31
      1.1.3 Iakuts .................................................................................. 36
   1.2 A summary of the political and economic history of Katanga raion ................. 38
      1.2.1 The Kirensk Committee of the North .................................. 39
      [1.2.2 Administrative developments after 1930] ............................. 41
      [1.2.3 Collectivization] ................................................................. 42
      1.2.4 The geologists ...................................................................... 48
   1.3 Evenki population distribution and ethno-demographic processes ................ 50
      1.3.1 Town life ............................................................................. 60

Chapter 2. A dynamic-logistical technique for ordering the environment ............ 63
   2.1 The economic activities of contemporary hunter–reindeer herders ............... 63
      [2.1.1 Hunting animals for subsistence and for pelts] ............................ 63
      [2.1.2 Reindeer herding] ................................................................. 65
      [2.1.3 Hunting pelt-bearing animals for exchange] .............................. 67
      [2.1.4 Fishing] ............................................................................. 69
      [2.1.5 Reindeer herding today] ....................................................... 70
   2.2 Evenki land tenure ............................................................................. 73
   2.3 Evenki toponymy .............................................................................. 79
   2.4 Travelling cycles, and a descriptive typology of mobile settlements ............ 84
      [2.4.1 The spring travel cycle] ....................................................... 86
[2.4.2 The summer travel cycle] ....................................................... 87
[2.4.3 The autumn travel cycle] ..................................................... 97
[2.4.4 The winter travel cycle] ....................................................... 98

2.5 A hunter’s diary ........................................................................... 101

Chapter 3. Mobile architecture: A static way of organizing the environment ................................................................................ 111

3.1 The structure of an Evenki stoibishche ‘mobile camp’ .............. 111

3.2 Dwellings .................................................................................. 120
  3.2.1 The lodge ........................................................................... 120
  3.2.2 Lodge-covers .................................................................... 122
  3.2.3 The half-lodge .................................................................... 126
  3.2.4 The interior layout of a lodge ............................................ 126
  3.2.5 Belongings ........................................................................ 130
  3.2.6 The golomo lodge .............................................................. 131
  3.2.7 Wooden log cabins ............................................................. 134

3.3 Outbuildings and other structures ............................................ 137
  3.3.1 Storage structures .............................................................. 137
  3.3.2 Caches ............................................................................. 138
  3.3.3 Storage platforms .............................................................. 143
  3.3.4 Flooring ........................................................................... 145
  3.3.5 Hanging implements ......................................................... 146
  3.3.6 Smudges .......................................................................... 147
  3.3.7 The cooking tripod and campfire ..................................... 148
  3.3.8 Pit-cellars .......................................................................... 149
  3.3.9 Structures for drying meat ............................................... 149
  3.3.10 Reindeer fences ............................................................... 151
  3.3.11 Reindeer salt troughs ....................................................... 152
  3.3.12 Dog shelters .................................................................... 152
  3.3.13 The steam-bath ............................................................... 154

Chapter 4. The spiritual aspects of ordering space ......................... 157

4.1 Religious belief ........................................................................ 157
  4.1.1 Orthodoxy ........................................................................ 157
  4.1.2 Shamanizing ...................................................................... 158

4.2 Prohibitions, traditions, and rites connected with ordering space .................................................................................. 161

4.3 Religious and mortuary structures ........................................... 167
  4.3.1 The shaman’s lodge ........................................................... 167
  4.3.2 Mortuary structures ........................................................... 168

Tables

Table 1. Distribution and population in places where Peoples of the North reside in Irkutsk oblast', 1989........................................14

Table 2. Population of Evenki groups along the upper and middle courses of the Lower Tunguska River, according to the Polar Census of 1926–27. .................................................................27

Table 3. Distribution, population, and family size of Russian settlers along the upper course of the Lower Tunguska River, 1880........32

Table 4. Population dynamics for Russians, Evenkis, and Iakuts in Katanga raion.................................................................51

Table 5. Population of Katanga raion by nationality, 1959–89..............54

Table 6. Distribution of the population (including Evenkis) in settlements in the southern part of Katanga raion, 1989. ..........55

Table 8. Economic entities in Katanga raion, Irkutsk oblast', and the tracts of land they occupy, 2000. ..................................174

Table 9. Population of Evenkis in Katanga raion, based on sex and age, as of 1 January 2000. ......................................................179

Table 10. Population and location of hunters (Evenkis and Russians) in the southern part of Katanga raion who were willing to join clan communes in 2000..................................................185
**Figures**

Figure 1. V. D. Kaplin and his wife, A. P. Sychevichir, at the Day of the Reindeer Herder, Erbogachen village, March 1988. ..........................5

Figure 2. A rest break in the taiga, 1981. ...................................................... 6

Figure 3. [The author] riding a reindeer, 1989. Photo by P. K. Kaplin. ......7

Figure 4. The author with the Kaplin family, 1989. Photo by P. K. Kaplin..8

Figure 5. Petia Kaplin, 1989. ..........................................................9

Figure 6. Stretching hides in a summer camp, 1989. .................................10

Figure 7. A map of Siberia, featuring an enlarged representation of Irkutsk oblast'. ..................................................................................18

Figure 8. The approximate regional population distribution in Katanga raion at the end of the 1920s. ..................................................24

Figure 9. “These are two families of mobile Tunguses. They have a hewn gula-izba, where they live for part of the winter, travelling for the rest of the time. At left, the two girls are holding lassos.” Photo and text by V. Ia. Shishkov, 1911 (KRKM No. 11). ............................................................................................26

Figure 10. Playing reindeer at a summer camp. Photo by [P. P. Khoroshikh] c. 1930 (IOKM No. 469-278). .................................................30

Figure 11. Several generations of Russian settlers in Katanga district, 1993. ..................................................................................31

Figure 12. I. S. Kaplin, a Tokma Evenki, visiting an old campsite, 1989. .44

Figure 13. The border demarking the territories of the Katanga and Preobrazhenka promkhozes [hunting enterprises], 1969–92........47

Figure 14. The office of the Katanga Promkhoz [hunting enterprise]. A hunter prepares to depart for his trampoline, October 1995. .......48

Figure 15. Tania Mitina (nee Kaplina) with her children and cousin Petia, Erbogachen 1988. ..................................................................57

Figure 16. The yard layout of Natal'ia Vasil'evna Boiarshina (Evenki), Erema village, 1987. ........................................................................61

Figure 17. Interior layout of the [half of a duplex] house of Mitrofan Nikolaevich Sychevichir (Evenki), Teteia village, 1988. ....................62

Figure 18. Drying and stretching a moose hide, 1981 ..................................64

Figure 19. A reindeer loaded with freight, August 1981 .......................66
Figure 20. Cheronchin (Evenki) with village youngsters, Ika village, 1991..........................67

Figure 21. “Going fishing with a harpoon”.................................69

Figure 22. A reindeer cow with a kuluka restraint, 1990. Photo by M. G. Turov.......................72

Figure 23. The territories used by contemporary nomadic Evenkis [1991].........................................................89

Figure 24. The summer travel routes of two related Evenki families [1991]..........................................................90

Figure 25. The summer travel routes of an Evenki family and of two adjoining communities of Teteia Evenkis, 1988....................90

Figure 26. Embroidering with glass beads in summer camp, 1988...........91

Figure 27. Sasha Zabrodin clears the ground under a lodge, 1988.........95

Figure 28. Katia Kaplina at the campfire of a summer camp, 1989. .........96

Figure 29. The layout of autumn camp and fencing system for reindeer, 1991..........................99

Figure 30. Summer camp, 1981.........................................................112

Figure 31. Summer camp................................................................112

Figure 32. Layout of the summer camp of T. A. Zabrodina and L. I. Kaplina, July 1988..........................113

Figure 33. Layout of the summer camp of Egor Veretnov, 1989.............114

Figure 34. Layout of the short-term summer camp of Vasilii Pavlovich Kaplin, August 1989..........................114

Figure 35. Layout of the summer camp of Nikolai Ivanovich Kaplin......114

Figure 36. Layout of the summer camp of Mitrofan Nikolaevich Sychev, July 1988..........................115

Figure 37. Layout of the summer camp of Vasilii Pavlovich Kaplin, August 1989..........................115

Figure 38. Autumn camp, 1991. Photo by M. G. Turov..............................116

Figure 39. Layout of autumn camp of Lazar Petrovich Sychev, October 1991..........................117

Figure 40. Layout of autumn camp of E. P. Sychev, 1990..........................117

Figure 41. Winter camp, 1990...............................................................118
Figure 42. Layout of the spring camp of Mitrofan Nikolaevich Sychei, 1988. ................................................................. 119

Figure 43. Layout of the spring camp of Vasilii Pavlovich Kaplin near Dagaldyn Lake, 1989. ......................................................... 119

Figure 44. Layout of the spring camp of Vasilii Pavlovich Kaplin, 1989. ....................................................................................... 120

Figure 45. Evenki lodge with birch-bark coverings. Photo by [P. P. Khoroshikh] c. 1930, (IOKM No. 469). ........................................... 123

Figure 46. Lodge coverings [paired panels of each type]. .................. 125

Figure 47. “Summer camp”, 1987. .................................................... 126

Figure 48. Half-lodge, used in trips for provisions, etc. Photo of Luka camp on the Lower Tunguska River by P. P.Khoroshikh c.1930, (IOKM No. 469-183). ................................................................. 127

Figure 49. Half-lodge of the Teteia Evenkis. .................................... 127

Figure 50. Interior of a lodge in autumn camp, 1990. Photo by A. V. Os'kin....................................................................................... 128

Figure 51. Layout of lodge interior (Shirokogoroff 1929).................. 129

Figure 52. **Malu**—the seat of honour. Photo of lodge interior by [P. P. Khoroshikh] c. 1930 (IOKM No. 469-195). ........................................ 130

Figure 53. The stationary dwelling (**golomo**) of the Teteia Evenkis..... 132

Figure 54. **Golomo** of the Teteia Evenkis, a transitional dwelling between the lodge and the permanent **balagan**. .......................... 134

Figure 55. **Balagan** on the outskirts of Preobrazhenka village. ........ 135

Figure 56. Construction of a small winter cabin, 1989. .................... 136

Figure 57. Interior layout of a winter cabin, 1990. ............................ 137

Figure 58. **Noku** storage platform.................................................. 139

Figure 59. Cache (**noku**) of the Erbogachen Evenkis.................... 140

Figure 60. Cache (**noku**) of the Teteia Evenkis............................ 141

Figure 61. Meat cache (**muko**), with **muko** for bones in the background, 1990. ............................................................... 142

Figure 62. Various types of **delken** storage platforms. .................... 144

Figure 63. Saddles and saddlebags stored on **umnevun** flooring. .... 145

Figure 64. Horizontal rod for hanging things. ................................. 146
Figure 65. Wooden pegs. ................................................................. 147
Figure 66. Smudges. ................................................................. 148
Figure 67. “At the campfire”. .................................................... 149
Figure 68. Buchivun rack for drying and curing meat. ............... 150
Figure 69. Preparing dried meat in camp, 1989. ......................... 151
Figure 70. “Spring fence” and “autumn fence”. ....................... 153
Figure 71. Salt trough. ............................................................. 154
Figure 72. Dolgan shelter for dogs. ........................................... 154
Figure 73. Abdun shelter for dogs. ........................................... 155
Figure 74. View from an Evenki camp, 1991. ......................... 156
Figure 75. Types of Evenki tombstones in Nakanno, Erbogachen, and Teteia. Drawing (n) shows two examples of traditional aerial graves. ................................................................. 169
Figure 76. Possessions of the deceased placed on a hanging rod near the grave. ................................................................. 170
Figure 77. Hunting territories in Katanga raion following the reorganization of hunting enterprises in 2000. Map supplied by V. P. Konenkin. ................................................................. 176
We are pleased to offer English-language anthropologists a translation of Anna Sirina’s path-breaking monograph *Katanga Evenkis*. This work documents the lives of a group of hunters and reindeer herders living at the headwaters of the Lower Tunguska River at the end of the 20th century. The author argues that the Katanga Evenkis are best described by the flexible and creative way they use the land around them. Her work is unique in the Russian ethnographic tradition in that it makes a strong argument that Evenkis continue to exercise a strong presence on their lands, despite severe pressure by Soviet-era policies and even more devastating dislocations by recent industrial development and privatization. According to Sirina, Katanga Evenkis at the end of the 20th century are best characterized not by what they have lost, but instead by the way they continue to “make a home for themselves in the taiga” using a variety of adaptive strategies and intuitions that reflect what she calls the “outlook of a mobile people”. While based on extensive fieldwork, the book is also supported by an excellent command of the published and archival material on the region. As such, it is a solid reference work on this region and these people, as well as of the complex relationships that one can find in the taiga of Eastern Siberia.

The book is also unique for the fact that it is written by a woman representing a new generation of Russian ethnologists. Anna Sirina was one of the first young Russian ethnographers to travel to international conferences and form strong friendships with European, Australian, and North American anthropologists who were interested in the ethnography of Siberian peoples. She conveys a strong sympathy for Siberian peoples, and a knack for representing their humanity among all of the structures that have shaped their lives and economy. There is a natural overlap between Anna’s ethnographic style and the birth of a new trans-national project to write an ethnography of Siberia which focuses upon issues of identity and the way that social and economic projects impact upon local societies (Schweizer 2001; Schweizer et al. 2004). For that reason, an English translation of this well-known work is particularly appropriate.

There is an element in this work that looks towards the Euro-American tradition of social anthropology. I write this somewhat controversially, for I know that Anna herself has a strong sympathy for both the Irkutsk and Moscow schools of Russian ethnography, and that she would undoubtedly see her inspiration as lying with them. It is true that she is faithful to this tradition. Sirina’s book makes careful reference to the typologies and the archaeologically informed models that are characteristic of these two schools. However, a strong emphasis in this book is also on analyzing how Evenkis make decisions and react to circumstance using what anthropologists
educated in a different tradition might call agency. We can clearly read in her typologies of mobile architecture the fact that Evenkis hold to no structural canon on how to build a lodge, or even how to make offerings to the land. She writes that every case presents a new opportunity for elaboration, and that the sheer variety of examples is in itself a proof of the operation of a mobile culture.

Although the examples and the theme of this work look towards Euro-American social anthropology, the work is not worded in this way. The heart of Sirina’s description of the way Evenkis “order their life-world” is a very clever adaptation of models taken from Russian architects to the analysis of how built structures represent a certain “ethnic” ecological inspiration. Had this book been written in a different time and place, we would not be surprised to read her approach described as “ethnoarchaeology,” and to find citations not to architects but to Lewis Binford (1983) and Susan Kent (1984). Indeed, her conclusion to the analysis of Evenki lodges at the end of section 3.2.5 speaks of the presence of “invisible boundaries”, or even “zones”, representing the structured way in which Evenkis use space. Nevertheless we can only find these ideas between the lines. Overtly, the work is worded in the classically descriptive and classificatory tone of Russian ethnology.

The master concept of the book—organizatsiia sredy zhizneideiatel’nosti ‘the ordering of the life-world’—is also a clever adaptation of several Soviet models. It has proven to be an extremely difficult phrase to translate, partly because of the way that English syntax works but also partly because the concept itself is more suggestive than it is definite. The term translates literally as “organization of the environment of life-activities”. As such, it combines two elements that in English-language anthropology we usually like to contrast: the creative agency of “life-activities” and the inanimate structural weight of an “environment”. Mediating the two ideas is the thought that Evenkis quite casually—almost subconsciously—“organize” or “order” both elements in a way that suits them. In this translation, I have chosen a word from the field of phenomenology to represent the “environment of life-actions”: life-world (Schutz & Luckman 1973). I also have chosen to confine it with the verb “to order”, which is the strongest among the possible translations of the Russian word organizatsiia. In support of my latter choice, Sirina clearly defines the term organizatsiia in the introduction as about making things tidy (uporiadochit’) in a planned manner (planomerno). Moreover, there is no doubt that in this text, the concept is more often than not applied to the use of space rather than to the division of labour (as the English term “to organize” usually implies). It is important to state that my decision to use this translation represents a thinking-through of the implications of Sirina’s original term, which are not fully described as such in the text. Instead, the text demonstrates her concept through examples. Evenkis order their life-world by placing skin lodges outside their new stationary cabins, by arranging furnishings within their cabins as if they were tents, or by preparing wood or articles in one place at one time in order to use them in a different season at
some time in the future. They tend not to order their environment by getting elected to local government or retraining themselves to take up a different career. In my opinion, this phenomenological accent given to Sirina’s use of organizatsiia pays respect to a certain sense of agency, implicit in the text, which makes this work unique in the Russian ethnological tradition.

Following on and related to the master concept, the second most difficult phrase in the book captures the author’s important observations on the way that Evenkis move through and occupy the taiga. In Chapter 2, Sirina argues that Evenkis have a “dynamic-logistical model” of using space or ordering their environment. As with the master concept, this category was not easy to translate. The Russian original refers to the dynamicheskii (lineinyi) sposob employed by Evenkis (with brackets in the original). In literal translation, this would be rendered as a “dynamic (linear) way”—again creating an uncomfortable contrast between a pattern that shifts creatively and one that is locked in a definite, unidirectional trajectory. Again, the meaning of this important term is not self-evident in the text, but it comes out through an important contrast. At the end of section 2.1.2, Sirina contrasts the “static” strategy of Russians staying in fixed cabins with the trajectories, routes, and “rhythms” of Evenki movements all through the taiga. The fact that she sees this motion as a trajectory, rather than a deliberate line, is emphasized by the odd word lineinyi, which carries a broader meaning than the word “linear” in referring to how hunters identify places along a trail. To my mind, this is close to Ingold’s description (1986) of a hunting environment that is organized through a system of paths. My decision to use the term “logistical” to represent this action evokes the English-language literature in ethnoarchaeology, which is not referenced in the original. However, the comparison fits with and sums up the ethnographic examples given in the book. According to Sirina, the dynamic-logistical model is evident in the way that roads are maintained and marked for specific purposes (section 2.4), as well as by Evenki toponymy, wherein the environment is labelled by the resources that can be found there (section 2.3).

I have presented my reasoning for the translation behind these two key categories not only because it helps to understand the text, but also in order to illustrate the nature of the translation that we are presenting. This is a translation done by anthropologists for anthropologists. As such, it adapts the overt meaning of terms to make their deeper meaning understandable. I feel that this less-than-literal translation makes the text more readable—and more importantly, that it puts the author’s intentions in the best light. However, I do admit that it would be hard for someone to learn Russian or English by comparing the two texts side by side.

Before I turn to a more technical description of other parts of the translation, I would like to point out some other important highlights in this book. One of the rare aspects of this book is the great detail that it provides of local practices. It is important to emphasize that the large number of Evenki words in the text are specifically Katanga Evenki words, which differ
from both the literary Evenki language published in the central (Soviet or Russian) dictionaries and the dialects that one might encounter in other parts of Siberia. This aspect makes Sirina’s book an important reference work for the upper reaches of the Lower Tunguska river valley—a region that sits at the intersection of many cultural traditions.

Furthermore, besides putting great effort into describing and mapping the more traditional aspects of Evenki bush life, Sirina also directs our attention to other, completely undocumented aspects. In her eyes, the hanging pole *lokovun* is not simply a pole, but a device that can be erected in several different ways and for different purposes. In her eyes, the smallest details of camp architecture take on significance. This is a welcome departure from standard ethnological description of camps, which focus our attention on the lodge and the main campfire. Linked to this sensitivity to detail is another rare element that regretfully is missing in much Russian ethnography. Although the book is entitled *Katanga Evenkis*, the monograph is actually about a set of cultural practices that are reproduced not only by Evenkis but also, in part, by Lakuts and Russians. Chapter 5 presents the quite radical argument that *Russkie starozholi* ‘Russian settlers’ differ in no significant way from Evenkis, and deserve the same rights and protections that Evenkis now enjoy as members of an “indigenous” nation. The author also demonstrates the now widely accepted phenomenon that Evenkis remain Evenkis even if they drive snowmobiles, use wooden cabins, and cover their meat caches with plastic sheets.

I would like to alert readers to the following aspects of the translation:

1. **Mobile peoples.** In most instances, I have chosen not to use the word “nomadic” for the Russian word *koch'evyi*. This is due to the fact that in this work, Sirina places a heavy emphasis on the planned, deliberate nature of motion in this economy. In many places, she describes Evenkis as *neosedlye* ‘non-settled’ (cf. Andrianov 1985). In my opinion, the English word “nomadic” connotes a more random type of motion than the dynamic-logistical model put forward here.

2. **Administrative units.** We have chosen to use the Russian originals for the administrative-territorial divisions encountered in the book. Ordinarily, for example, it would be better to translate *raion* as ‘county’. However, this book covers such a large swath of time that the text would quickly become littered with other county-like identifiers from the Tsarist and early-Soviet periods (*uprava, uezd, okrug*). To help the reader navigate the transliterated terms, we have provided definitions and temporal context in a glossary.

3. **Bush lexicon.** Stemming from the book’s intimate portrait of local skills, there are a great number of terms referring to hunting lifestyles in the Subarctic that have no standard English literary equivalents. We have chosen to use English words that are in common use in Northwestern
Canada to represent these activities. While it is an arbitrary choice to some degree, these terms are taken from a place with great ecological and historical similarities to Eastern Siberia. Thus, for example, ambar is translated as ‘cache’ and profil’ as ‘cut-line’. I would especially like to thank Tom Andrews of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife for his guidance in translating the terms for portable skin lodges and log cabins.

4. Geographical names. Unless there is a commonly used English equivalent (e.g., Manchuria for Man’chzhuriia, Transbaikal for Zabaikal’e, and Siberia for Sibir’), all geographical names have been transliterated using the Library of Congress system (described below). The names Evenkiia, Iakutiia, and Buriatiia are common informal designators of the official Evenki Autonomous Okrug in Krasnoiarsk Krai, the Republic of Sakha (Iakutiia), and the Buriat Republic, respectively.

5. Evenkis. It is a clumsy coincidence that the singular form of the word Evenkis use to call themselves—evenki—corresponds to the way that Russian-speakers make plurals. Thus, the Russian-language literature renders evenk as the singular form and evenki as the plural. The literature often implies that this corresponds to the way Evenkis speak. Actually, in the Evenki language, evenki is the singular designation, and evenkil is the plural. Since this book is written in English, we make full use of the original stem—Evenki—and add an ‘s’ to mark the plural. To Russian-speaking readers, this may make it seem that the word has two plural endings. I would ask those readers to give consideration to the Evenki grammatical forms.

6. Russian settlers. The descendants of Russian settlers who came to Siberia in several waves between the 17th and late 19th centuries are often spoken about as a unique group known as starozhily. The direct translation of this term would be ‘Russian longtime-dwellers’. One sometimes finds the term ‘Russian old-settlers’ in the English language literature. I have chosen to translate this term simply as ‘Russian settlers’ since the term ‘settler’ itself has a frontier ring to it. However, one should be aware that the Russian settlers written about here differ substantially from the communities of geologists and petroleum workers who moved to Siberia in the 1960s and 1970s. These Russians are often called priezzhie ‘newcomers’. The descendants of Russian settlers typically have acculturated to local ways and preserve special creolized or dialectical differences that make them appear to 20th- and 21st-century ethnographers as a qualitatively different type of people than the Russians who arrived during the period of Soviet industrialization.
7. Passive constructions, implicit phrases, and explanatory footnotes.

Russian academic discourse favours passive constructions and sometimes subjectless sentences, which sound more objective. These phrases are difficult to translate in a way that makes them readable, and in the end they violate what I see as the central message of this book about Evenki creativity. In English-language anthropology, it is permissible not only to write about oneself but also to make one’s field consultants the subjects of their own sentences. Thus, in very many places in the translation, we have reversed the order of phrases and added implicit subjects in square brackets. In the Russian original, Sirina had a tendency to indicate trajectories in her own thought with ellipses (…) and the phrase et cetera (i t.d.). In most cases, these have been deleted for the sake of clarity. Finally, if the author has referred to knowledge that is implicit to Russians living in Russia, or even to Russians who live with Evenkis, this has been spelled out either in square brackets or in a series of separately numbered editor’s footnotes prefixed by the custom mark §. The set of footnotes by the author has a separate numbering system. For consistency, the author’s footnotes have been renumbered from the system in the original book.

8. Evenki dialects. The Baikal region has an incredible diversity of cultures. As a reflection of this, in the Russian original Sirina often lists three, sometimes four, versions of the same Evenki word to capture all the possible ways that one can hear it in use. This is valuable information for linguists, but somewhat cumbersome for the average reader. With Sirina’s agreement, we have put the emphasis in the text on the northern dialect (kh-sibilant version), with variants listed in the glossary.

The English text itself was produced by several people and evolved in six discrete drafts. The Editorial Committee of the Baikal Archaeology Project (BAP) hired two people to produce the base translations. Alia Chaptikova prepared the first, founding translation of the entire text from Russian to English. Ksenia Maryniak wrote a base translation of the short author’s foreword, prepared an initial draft of the glossary, and formatted the reference list using English-language bibliographic standards. She also reworked the Russian versions of the maps and diagrams, while Darren Shaw reformatted the photographs into the versions printed here. The BAP Editorial Committee produced the index added to this translated edition.

The BAP editorial committee initially asked me to read the translation for accuracy. However, it soon became evident that the text, glossary, captions, and reference list required a literary editing as well. I rewrote almost every sentence, correcting syntax, changing awkward formulations, and then verifying several versions of the text with the original Russian version sentence-by-sentence. Only the fifth and sixth versions and the galley proof were produced without close line-by-line comparison to the original. Unclear passages were clarified with the author at several points, and she read and
corrected the fourth version. While reading the final draft, I still find passages that I would like to change, but I hope that this translation is clear enough to convey the essence of Anna’s work.

In the course of revising the text, Anna Sirina took the opportunity to correct some small errors and omissions in the original text, to update and supplement the reference list, and in places to add a few sentences to clarify the text. These new passages are clearly marked. To some degree, this translation is a more correct version of the original Russian text.

We all hope that the text will find a welcome audience among English-speaking anthropologists, and that it will contribute to making the life and traditions of the Katanga Evenkis better known. In her foreword to the second Russian edition, Sirina refers to the challenges that await Katanga Evenkis as petroleum exploration increases at the start of this century. We hope that through this text, some of the anthropologists who have worked to protect the local land rights of First Nations people in Canada, Australia, and Alaska now might be attracted to this region.

I conclude this preface by thanking Anna Sirina, both for her patience during the three years that it took to produce this book and for the tireless work she has put into her travels to Evenki and Even communities from Katanga to Kamchatka. In a sense, the text itself embodies the dynamic-logistical type of attention to the environment that so well characterizes the life of a mobile people. This English translation has been my constant companion at conferences, while travelling to Canada to visit relatives, and even during fieldwork based out of Irkutsk. Anna herself has worked on it between her trips to the Far East and in Moscow. I am happy that Anna’s work, with the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, is now reaching a wider international audience.

The book is volume 2 in a series of publications devoted to the archaeology and anthropology of Sibirica. As this book goes to press, there are plans to publish an already completed manuscript translation of Mikhail Turov’s work on Katanga Evenkis (1990), which will nicely complement this book.

Note on transliteration and the rendering of languages

This text transliterates Evenki Cyrillic and Russian Cyrillic text with the Library of Congress romanization standard, but without diacriticals. The standard for hard and soft signs is respected. Readers should note that the way the Library of Congress standard glosses over the iotized and uniotized Cyrillic e does not serve Evenkis very well. Evenki words very rarely have an iotized e, and thus one should expect that the romanized character ‘e’ represents an η in Evenki or in Evenki-derived Russian words. This is especially the case for the name of the capital of Katanga raion—Erbogachen—and for the people themselves. Neither is pronounced as Yerbogachen nor Yevenki. However, the Enisei River is pronounced as Yenisei.
Russian terms are indicated in italics: *bania, palatka, shapka*. Evenki terms are indicated in italicised bold type: *amaka, delken, golomo*. Russian plural forms are transliterated, as are Evenki plural forms, which are often consistent with Russian grammar. Note that some Evenki words have become so widely used by local Russians that they have entered their everyday lexicon: *rovduga, argish, shaman*. Proper names, nicknames, diminutives, and acronyms are transliterated directly.

**References**


