A Visitor's Guide to Shamans and Shamanism The Kunstkamera's Russian and Asian Ethnographic Collections in the Late Imperial Era

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Abstract: In the late imperial era, the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (the Kunstkamera) in St. Petersburg produced a series of guidebooks for visitors that provided an account of the changes in the gallery spaces and collections within the museum. Among the changes was a reorganization of the collection that brought about the removal of a gallery dedicated to Russian ethnography, which had housed Siberian, Central Asian, and a small number of European Russian objects. Siberian and Central Asian materials were then presented by the museum in an Asian ethnographic collection. In this new Asian collection, shamanism emerged as a category that operated to unify Russia in Asia as a culturally contiguous space located in an imperial elsewhere east of the Urals.

Keywords: classification, ethnographic collections, imperial Russia, museum history, Russia in Asia, Shamanism, Siberia

During the late imperial era, the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (the Kunstkamera) produced a series of guidebooks for the museum visitors. These books supplied information about the displayed collections and guided the visitors through the galleries. By examining these guidebooks, we can see the systems of classification and categorization used within the museums to organize and identify the materials on display and how these objects were presented to the public. This article focuses on the displays of Siberian and Central Asian ethnography and, in particular, the shamanic materials within these collections. The article traces the changes in the museum that distanced Russia in Asia from Russia in Europe and how shamanism

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became a dominant ethnographic category that connected the different Indigenous Siberian and Central Asian people to emphasize a cultural continuity across the Russian Empire east of the Urals.

The Kunstkamera in St. Petersburg was an influential ethnographic museum in imperial Russia and viewed itself as a center of research and collections within the empire. Peter the Great established the museum in 1714 as an imperial cabinet of curiosities but it was transferred to the Academy of Science in 1724 and transformed into a public scientific museum. Over the centuries, the Kunstkamera has remained a fixture within the St. Petersburg cityscape sitting on the banks of the Neva, with the late imperial period being described as its “golden age.”¹

Peter the Great’s initial collection encompassed diverse materials, including anatomical specimens, scientific instruments, ethnographic materials, and natural science specimens. In the late imperial era, the museum was specifically focused on ethnographic collections and, though removed in the 1880s, on anthropological (physical anthropology) ones as well. During the museum’s golden age, the ethnographic collections expanded and numerous expeditions were funded by the museum to facilitate this growth. The museum maintained an international collection, with materials on display for visitors from, for example, North America, East Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands. In addition to this international collection, the museum had a substantial collection of Siberian and Central Asian ethnographic materials. The museum continues to maintain a Siberian department, but no Siberian ethnographic materials remain on display for visitors. Although this was a domestic collection within the context of the Russian Empire, these objects were foreign to the European Russian urban metropolis of St. Petersburg. This unfamiliarity with the materials from Asian Russia, and shamanism, in particular, is underscored by the more substantial exposition this collection received than others within the museum. This suggests that the museum assumed that visitors would not be familiar with the material, and that there was an interest or need to provide information to introduce people to the collection.

To communicate this information to visitors, the Kunstkamera published several editions of guidebooks that were formatted to be carried easily by a visitor while touring the collection. The guidebooks were small paperbacks ranging between 70 and 191 pages with no illustrations or maps.² The guidebooks were organized into large sections that showed divisions between the different halls and floors. Each cabinet was numbered, the objects inside identified and, in some cases, described. Generally, the objects were identified by type, by their

position on numbered shelves within a cabinet, general location (i.e., on top or bottom of the cabinet) and by the manner of presentation (i.e., hung on the wall or lying on the shelf). The guidebooks cost 30 kopeks and offered a substantial overview of the museum and introduction to the collections presented.³ It was common for European museums to produce guidebooks for visitors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Carole Paul notes that these guidebooks were not illustrated and were not intended to function as a “virtual museum” by providing a two-dimensional presentation of the collection.⁴ These guidebooks could not offer documentation of the museum’s collection without the reference of the physical space of the galleries, however, the guidebooks could offer a close-up view for the visitor to carry through the galleries of the museum as a printed docent.

The early nineteenth century was a renaissance for the guidebook as a genre. Julie A. Buckler notes that this was the time when John Murray, Karl Baedeker, and Thomas Cook’s tours all began producing guidebooks.⁵ Buckler suggests that guidebooks to the city of St. Petersburg also began to be produced at this time, citing Fedor Shreder’s *Noveishii putevoditel’ po Sankt-Peterburgu* from 1820, and Pavel Svin’in’s multiple volume *Dostopamiatnosti Sankt-Peterburga i ego okrestnostei* from 1816 to 1828.⁶ The latter of these she describes as aimed more toward “armchair travelling” than actual touring of the city, similar to the image of the catalog as the virtual museum.⁷

Museums rely on classification to systematize their collections, and these guidebooks preserve a record of the different and changing systems of classification used within the Russian collections of the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences. However, classification is neither natural nor neutral. Rather, it is the product of intellectual systematization that seeks a spatial and temporal segmentation of the world into “a set of boxes (metaphorical or literal) into which things can be put to then do some kind of work—bureaucratic or knowledge production.”⁸ This idea, that classificatory systematization of material can be productive of knowledge, allows the guidebooks to potentially become not descriptive texts, but prescriptive ones, that classify and order the objects for the reader/visitor, thereby constructing their knowledge about the material. The changes in the museum galleries that are recorded across the different editions of the guidebook emphasize plasticity in the galleries that forms and reforms the information presented to the visitors and unsettles the fossilization of the knowledge production.

The guidebooks document the displayed permanent collection, which conjures an image of a stable collection forever sitting as the

foundation of a museum, but this would inaccurately characterize the nature of a museum's collection. Scholars demonstrated that systems of trading, loaning, institutional policies, state politics, deaccessioning, donations, theft, repatriation, decay, and acquisitions all shape a museum's collection.⁹ The scholarship that destabilizes this permanency presents the museum in movement and brings to the forefront the labor, communities, and objects that form the museum and its collections.¹⁰ The impermanence of collections is rooted in a mixture that includes the nature of many objects as ephemeral or perishable. Further, changing museum policies and ideologies can emphasize newness, growth in collections, and variation to attract visitors and publicize new research and expeditions.¹¹

Despite the changes in the displays throughout the late imperial period, the principle categories of collected objects remained relatively stable. The ethnographic collections often consisted of such items as domestic goods, including tools, clothing, and utensils; artistic and craft materials, such as musical instruments, woven textiles, and carvings; and, often, religious objects. The latter found within the Russian ethnographic collections belong to different Siberian and Central Asian shamanic traditions. These consist of shamanic coats, drums, and *tyus* (a Turkic word that refers to a spirit and its material vessel of containment within Siberian shamanic traditions—also known as a *kheg* in Samoyed languages or *ongon* in Buryat and Mongolian).¹² These remain the main categories of shamanic objects on display within the museum in the late imperial era. However, the framing of these materials changes and, by tracing this diachronically through the guidebooks, these items become increasingly central to the presentation of the ethnography of the peoples of Russia in Asia while also becoming a means of unifying and distancing the region from European Russia and the rest of Asia.

Visiting the Gallery of Russian Ethnography in 1891

Prior to discussing the specific displays of the Russian ethnographic collection at the *Kunstkamera*, it is useful to first orient ourselves to where the collection was within the larger museum. The 1891 edition of the *Guidebook to the Museum of the Imperial Academy of Science for Anthropology and Ethnography* would have brought the visitor through the *Kunstkamera*'s two exhibition halls. The ethnographic collections were in the first hall and half of the second; the rest of the second hall housed

anthropological collections. The latter included what we now might classify as physical anthropological and archaeological collections and was made up of two sections: Department of Antiquities of the Stone Age and the Department of Human Skulls and Skeletons. The cabinets containing anthropological artifacts were organized by location of origin, and included, for example, in cabinet four "**The Central and Eastern parts of European Russia**; remains found together with mammoth bones,"¹³ or cabinet twenty-nine "**Europe**. Ancient skulls, artificially elongated. The custom of skull mutilation in childhood exists among some peoples even now. Skeletons of infants."¹⁴ The larger ethnographic collections, which would eventually take over the entire museum, were organized by regions—Russia, Asia, Africa, Australia, and America. These regional displays were further subdivided into specific countries and communities.

The Russian collection was further divided into "Antiquities" and the "Collection on the Ethnography of Russia." The latter collection consisted primarily of materials from Asia, principally from Siberia and the Russian Far East, though some of the cabinets toward the end of the hall displayed collections from Central Asia. The gallery began with cabinet one, which displayed Sakha "Clothes, miscellaneous weapons, and handicrafts made of bone." At the start of this guide to the gallery was "**Russian** peasant needlework from Olonets and Tver regions and wooden utensils from Vyatka."¹⁵ These were the only pieces from European Russia included in the Russian ethnographic collection, and they would be removed by the time the 1898 guidebook was published, thereby restricting the Russian ethnographic section to non-European communities within the Russian Empire.

The 1891 guidebook presented the objects displayed inside the various cabinets, through short entries that provided the visitor with identification information of the cabinet's contents, as seen in the entry on Russian needlework. Occasionally, the visitor would have been granted more detailed listings of the contents, suggesting the museum was encouraging particular attention to these items or responding to a lack of familiarity or transparency that required more exposition. For example, in cabinet seven, the short identifications were supplemented for the visitors with brief descriptions to accompany the objects and to help distinguish one from another: "Accessories of the **Koryak**: from the same bone—smoking pipes, decorated on top with groups of animals; the figure of a woman with a box on her back carrying produce, and also children; images of a wild mountain goat, a deer, and a bear; a bone blade for scraping snow, also used by the Chukchi."¹⁶ Although

not an interpretive text, this did provide visitors with more guidance to the particular decorative elements of the pieces on display than many other displays received.

At its most descriptive, the 1891 guidebook featured a single short expository piece on shamanic material culture that connected objects scattered across several cabinets and shelves to each other and provided a larger contextual introduction to shamanism. This expository piece, titled, “idols and fetishes of the Ostyak and Orok peoples (gift of I. S. Polyakov), and of the Gilyak, Tungus, and Samoyed peoples (the last a gift of F. N. Chernyshev),” provided specific and culturally localized information regarding shamanism for visitors, while also presenting an overview of practices that connected six indigenous groups from Siberia and the Russian Far East—Gilyak, Orok, Ostyak, Samoyed, Tungus, and Yakut.¹⁷ This short essay opens with a general statement regarding shamanic beliefs and material culture, stating, “They (the idols and fetishes) depict spirits and demons which, according to shamanistic beliefs, influence human destinies, which can be appeased by sacrifices in the form of food, delicacies, etc.”¹⁸ Following this introduction to the material culture of shamanism, the anonymous author continued, turning to an explanation of the Gilyak traditional practices of making shamanic “idols” in the form of human figures cut from trees for the purposes of healing different ailments.¹⁹ In these shamanic medicinal practices, the author explains, a figure (or idol) would be cut from a tree with visible indications of the kind of ailment the person was suffering from; for example, a consumptive person could be indicated by extreme emaciation and a person suffering from “water sickness” was shown by the depiction of a bloated stomach. Once the figure was cut out of the tree, the empty space in the trunk would be filled with an offering of food and the “idol” could then be carried away.²⁰ The description provided the readers and visitors with a more sustained and contextualized explanation of the displayed pieces and demonstrated how they were part of a larger system of traditional medicine. Further, the description tied the displays to a particular indigenous cultural tradition identified within the gallery.

This writing on Gilyak traditional medicine is then further contextualized within broader introductions to North Asian shamanism, in particular the beliefs and rituals surrounding the bear festival. The bear festival is introduced as a general northern Siberian religious ritual, rooted ‘in the beliefs of the northern *inorodtsy* (non-Russians, literally, ‘those of other origin’), the primary role among the ‘sacred’ animals is played by the chief predator of the north—the bear.”²¹ The bear and

the bear festival are presented as aspects of northern shamanic practices general across the north, and, rather than examining the specific religious practices, the author offered a broader regional characterization of the practices and beliefs. This allows objects located in different cabinets across the gallery that were localized within particular ethno-cultural groupings to be collectivized and classified not by region, but by religious tradition. For example, unlike the Gilyak idols that are presented as embedded within a particularized cultural tradition, a displayed bear skull and “large, long handled, wooden spoon for feeding the bear before his slaughter” are both identified as Gilyak while also connected to the larger cultural category of the “northern *inorodtsy*” and shamanism.²²

In the 1891 guidebook, ethnographic materials were classified by their specific cultural origin, and the Asian territory of the Russian Empire was divided into distinct ethnic groups rather than geographic regions. Typically the entries featured the name of the ethnic or cultural group from which the objects originated in boldface text, emphasizing this as a prioritized classification system within the galleries. Two exceptions to this pattern existed, both of which are connected to the shamanic collections. The first of these was the entry for cabinet two that contained, “the clothing of Siberian **shamans** with accessories of their rites—drums and short wooden spikes with iron rattles.”²³ Here, rather than classifying the object or collection of objects by their ethno-cultural or geographic region of provenance, the term **shaman** is in boldface. This changed the pattern of the prioritized classification system, and unlike the other entries in the guidebook, no specific information was provided for visitors regarding where the clothing was from or which shamanic tradition it was contextualized within. Rather, it was the general identification as *Siberian* that operated as the sole geographic or cultural designation. In the entire Russian ethnographic section there was only one other example where the boldface text was not used to designate the place of origin. Curiously, the other occurrence was the term *musical instruments*, which was used to identify the objects located in cabinet three and included instruments associated with the shamanic bear festivals discussed in the short essay on shamanic material culture.²⁴ Despite the prioritized classification being “musical instruments,” within the guidebook the specific instruments contained within the case are identified as being Kamchatkan, Bukharin, the Samoyed, the Vogul, and the Ostiak.²⁵ The inclusion of these details allowed the visitor to still see the musical instruments as particularized, unlike the shamanic coat.

The movement between the specific and the general presentation of shamanism within the guidebook, both in the introductory essay and the classifications of the collection on display, continued throughout the guidebooks produced in the late imperial era. This allows shamanism to operate as a means of classification on par with the specific geo-cultural designations of the other displayed objects. Moving forward, this becomes even more pronounced as shamanism merges with geographic and regional divisions of Asia.

Visiting the Gallery of Asia in 1904

The 1904 guidebook introduced the visitor to a different museum than it was in 1891. In 1894, Vasilii Radlov had taken over as the museum's director, and his background as a researcher of Turkic languages, history, and cultures brought attention to the collections of Russia in Asia. The growth in this area was visible in the guidebook that presented a larger collection from the Siberian, Central Asian, and Eastern Asian regions of the Russian Empire. The materials within this collection were no longer classified within a Russian ethnographic gallery but as an Asian gallery. This ethnographic collection was distinguished from the East Asian gallery space, which presented the ethnographic collections from China, Japan, and Korea.

The museum galleries were still primarily organized by geographic regions—Asia, East Asia, Africa, Australia, Oceania, Indonesia, South America, and North America. But now two more thematically oriented collections were added—one on “The Buddhist World” and the other on “Shamanism and Shamans.” In *The Invention of World Religions*, Tomoko Masuzawa presents nineteenth-century scholarship in the newly developing field of religious studies, the geospatial overlaying of religions onto physical and political maps in order to demarcate the regions associated with the various “world religions.”²⁶ The regions represented in “The Buddhist World” and “Shamanism and Shamans” galleries divide the space of Central and East Asia into two areas defined by religious traditions. The former contained materials from “Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Annam (Southern Buddhists), the population of Nepal, Tibet, China, Korea, Mongolia, and Japan, parts of the Transbaikal region, the Privolga region, and the Don Kalmyks (Northern Buddhists).”²⁷ The latter was introduced in the guidebook to visitors through a brief essay that opened with the following: “Without exception, all Siberian *inorodtsy* who have not converted to Christianity or who have not

accepted Islam are devoted to shamanism.”²⁸ Shamanism was recognized as the defining religious tradition of the Siberian *inorodsty* and was overlaid onto the geography of North and Central Asia. The actual form of shamanic practice was open to variation, the introductory essay noted, “shamanism does not represent a uniform belief and is not the same for all nations.”²⁹ While allowing for diversity in the specifics of beliefs, shamanism was able to encompass such differences and operate as a general category for the religious beliefs of the region and the construction of a “shamanic world” located north of the “Buddhist world” that together stretched over the Asian continent.

The area of North and Central Asia was assigned to the shamanic world region. The “Shamanism and Shamans” gallery predominantly featured collections from southern regions of the Asian territory of the Russian Empire, notably from Abakan, Buryatia, and Altai, particularly the Turkic groups in the regions such as the Soyots, the Telengits, the Tatars, and the Beltirs.³⁰ The objects associated with the collection of shamanic materials primarily consisted of drums and beaters, along with shamans’ coats and *tyus*. The material in this collection was identified in the guidebook according to various systems locating the place of origin at varying levels of geographic or cultural specificity. These included using city names (e.g., Abakan), ethnic group (e.g., Beltir), general areas (e.g., “a figure of a Turkic shaman from Eastern Siberia”),³¹ or a particular subgroup (e.g., “the Altai Soyots from Tolbnor³² Lake”).³³ The range of shamanism throughout North and Central Asia was also extended through the general ethnographic collections of the Asia gallery, where shamanic objects were included in the ethnographic presentations of groups across the region—for example, the Ainu, the Tungus, and the Gilyak. The reorganization of the Kunstkamera that was reflected in the 1904 guidebook continued to prioritize geographic categorization as a principle means of systematizing the collection. The 1891 guidebook also relied on geographic categories, whereas some of the cabinets were thematically linked and the expository texts linked together collections around topics like the bear festival. Thus, in presenting the museum’s galleries in the 1904 guidebook even the seemingly thematic collections ultimately provided a geospatial system of mapping religion onto geographic space.

The geographical orientation in the 1904 guidebook was decidedly Asian. In 1891, the Siberian and Central Asian materials were classified within the Russian ethnographic collection, which also contained a small number of European Russian materials; but later these ethnographic materials were disconnected from their Russian context. The

Asia collection was subdivided by ethno-cultural group (Yakut, Ainu, Gilyak, Yukaghir, Lamut, etc.) and emphasized the distinctive identities of the different indigenous nations. This new curatorial methodology allowed the displays to provide a clearer demarcation between the cultural products of different communities across the vast area of Asia represented in the gallery. It also provided a clearer racialized hierarchical system that emphasized ethno-cultural evolution and prompted comparisons among the groups.

Each display in the guidebook had an introductory text that offered a survey of general information for the localization and classification of the group. As an example of these texts, the introduction to the section on the Ainu community reads:

Aboriginals of the Japanese archipelago were gradually displaced to the north by the Japanese—to Yeso Island [Hokkaido] and the southern part of Sakhalin. A type noted for clearly pronounced mongoloid facial features, especially in women, they are distinguished by their hairiness. Their main occupation is fishing and hunting. The draft animal is a dog.

By culture they are above their neighbors, the Gilyak, because they are familiar with weaving, although the loom is very primitive. Pottery has, apparently, been forgotten by them, as clay pots are found on their territory. Peculiarities of their life—material from nettles and elm fiber, and the cult of staves of shaved wood (inau) and peculiar ornament.³⁴

The information presented here about where and how the group lived, along with the physiological assessments, were common in these introductions as a means of classification. In the example introduction above, the comparison based on cultural evolutionary principles between the Gilyak and the Ainu effectively demonstrates the hierarchical and evolutionary ideology that underlay the new systematization of the collection. This curatorial methodology was common for the late nineteenth century and within the study of religion; thus, these displays were embedded within the epistemic and ethnographic methodologies of the period.³⁵ The guidebook presented to the visitor an easily accessible systematization of the Asian populations of the Russian Empire (and beyond) that allowed simultaneously for the different nationalities and cultural groups to appear distinctive, while also forming a general regional cultural norm, here suggested through the geospatial mapping of religions onto Asia.

The inclusion of religious information in the introductory text to the Ainu collection is indicative of the frequent inclusion of religious ma-

terials in the different displays outside of the two specifically religious thematic galleries. Much of the religious material presented within the specific cultural displays in the Asia gallery is labeled "cults," which included shamanic materials. Within the introduction to the Ainu collection the visitor was presented with the "cult of the staves of shaved wood" or the *inau*. The specific object identifications provided several different examples of *inau* including, "a curative inau, hanging over the bed of a sick old woman," an *inau* "threaded with bird heads," and "a decoration made from the shaved wood worn by the bear on the day it is killed."³⁶ Moreover, within the display was a "shamanic drum" as part of the collection.³⁷

Shamanism, as a general category, was incorporated into the specific and localized cults of the Ainu, and other ethnographic displays within the Asia gallery. Shamanic material culture was not limited to the "Shamanism and Shamans" gallery. Examples range from pieces contained within the Gilyak collection where there was a "shaman drum from fish skin with a beater," the collection of material from the Golds had a "shaman's amulet," and in the Tungus displays there was a larger collection presenting "the accessories of the practice of shamanism among the Tungus people."³⁸ Shamanic materials were dispersed throughout the Asian ethnographic collections and classified within the displays dedicated to specific Siberian cultures contained within the different localized religious traditions, or "cults." Objects were connected to specific groups in the Asia collection, but they also allowed for the disparate cults to be connected to form a larger regional religious category. Within the specific displays in the Asia gallery, "cult" is used as the particularized local category for contextualizing the religious material on display, but *shamanism* is the more mobile term that is used across the Asia gallery, and is the general category used to gather together these different local traditions, or 'cults' to form the larger shamanic world that covered vast areas of North and Central Asia.

The characteristics of shamanism as a regional religious category were explained for the visitor in the guidebook's introductory essay to the "Shamanism and Shamans" gallery. The introduction provided a general explanation of a tripartite shamanic cosmological system that consists of upper, middle, and lower worlds. The shamans, it explained, functioned as mediators within and between these three worlds, as shamans were those individuals "whose souls have the ability while leaving the body on the ground, to temporarily move to the upper and lower worlds."³⁹ The shaman's role was primarily discussed as that of a healer and as a Charon-like figure that was able to carry the souls

of the dead into the “realm of shadows.” In addition, a shaman may be able to predict the future and to help locate things that were lost.⁴⁰ Unlike the expository text on shamanism in the 1891 guidebook, which drew together specific Siberian shamanic practices from the Gilyak, Orok, Ostyak, Samoyed, Tungus, and Yakut peoples to provide an introduction to the shamanic materials on display, this new text did not ground shamanism in any specific cultural or ethnic groups. Instead, it presented a general shamanic system that remained untethered from localized practice or specific cults. Shamanism was explicitly explained in the guidebook as not being uniform across Siberia, but it was continually developed and employed as a category that was able to be generalized across different religious traditions across Asia.

Classifying the Shaman

The guidebooks produced by the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences in the late imperial era preserve a record of the systems of classification used within the publicly displayed collection of the *Kunstkamera*. The ordering and naming of things is not neutral or natural in its partitioning of the world.⁴¹ These guidebooks were produced for visitors to the museums as guides that offered structured tours of the collection, which, as Samuel Alberti notes in his work, “serve to shape the visit, to construct what a visitor is and does.”⁴² The guidebooks constructed a systematic route through the museum collection that offered an orchestrated experience to the visitor. The public collections at the *Kunstkamera* were both literally and metaphorically boxed into cases and galleries that configured them as Russian and later as Asian, at times presenting objects as locally specific and at others trans-regionally generic.

In the 1891 guidebook, the Asian space of the Russian Empire was incorporated into the large gallery of Russian ethnography. This narrated the empire as a unified space and presented an ethnographic subject that was inclusive of European Russians, though notably this was limited in scope to a few objects at the start of the gallery. The changes to the gallery by 1904 presented a redefinition of the collection as forming an Asian ethnographic gallery that encompassed regions of North and Central Asia. This was separate from the gallery, for example, on East Asia, which maintained its own gallery space. This shift becomes particularly important when considering the role played by shamanism within the gallery as a mobile category that connected the different specific localized collections through religion. While the

information provided to visitors acknowledged the variations within shamanic traditions, shamanism as a category remained superimposed onto the geography of Asia to define and link together through a shared religious tradition a region separate from the "Buddhist World" that covered and connected Siberian, Central Asian, and Pacific coastal regions.

The turn toward Russia in Asia as connected to Turkic and broader Central Asian regions reflected Vasilii Radlov's own academic interests in the region. It also spoke to a larger ambiguity about the nature of the Russian Empire and colonialism. The Russian Empire lacked the colonial structure of overseas colonies separated from the imperial centre by borders of "blue water" colonial structure of, for example, the British, French, or Belgian empires.⁴³ Nathaniel Knight addresses this in his work on Russian orientalism, when he writes, "Russia was an empire in a world of imperialism. But it was a peculiar Empire. Set apart by its vast territorial expanse and human diversity from the continental dynastic empires to which it was closest akin politically, Russia also differed intrinsically from the maritime colonial empires of Western Europe in the patterns, motives and consequences of its expansion."⁴⁴ Knight notes that the Russian Empire employed the colonialist rhetoric of orientalism, primitivism, and ethno-hierarchy that privileged the European center and distanced itself from the spaces and cultures of the imperial others.⁴⁵ The removal of the Russian ethnographic materials, the reclassification of the collection as Asian, and the geospatial classification of the region as a shamanic world all separated and distanced this collection from the space of European Russia where it was housed. Visitors were not prompted to see or understand this through a relationship of nearness, but rather as a defined area located in the imperial elsewhere east of the Urals in Asia.

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Notes

1. “Istoria Kunstkamery,” http://www.kunstkamera.ru/exposition/kunst_hist/ (accessed 2 October 2018).
2. Notably, the guidebooks to the Zoological Museum of the Imperial Academy of Sciences from 1904 and 1910 include maps and photographs.
3. *Putevoditel’ po muzeiu imperatorskoi akademii nauk” antropologii i etnografii* (St. Petersburg, 1891), recto of back flyleaf.
4. Carole Paul, ed., *The First Modern Museums of Art: The Birth of an Institution in 18th- and Early-19th-Century Europe* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012), xvii.
5. Julie A. Buckler, *Mapping St. Petersburg: Imperial Text and Cityshape* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 90.
6. *Ibid.*, 92.
7. *Ibid.*, 93.
8. Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences*, Inside Technology (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 10.
9. Catherine A. Nichols, “The Smithsonian Institution’s ‘Greatest Treasures’: Valuing Museum Objects in the Specimen Exchange Industry,” *Museum Anthropology* 41, no. 1 (1 March 2018): 13–29; Susan M. Pearce, ed., *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, Leicester Readers in Museum Studies (London: Rout-

ledge, 1994); Francine Hirsch, "Getting to Know 'The Peoples of the USSR': Ethnographic Exhibits as Soviet Virtual Tourism, 1923–1934," *Slavic Review* 62, no. 4 (2003): 683–709.

10. Marilena Alivizatos, *Intangible Heritage and the Museum: New Perspectives on Cultural Preservation* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2012); Julia Fein, "Talking Rocks in the Irkutsk Museum: Networks of Science in Late Imperial Siberia," *Russian Review* 72, no. 3 (June 2013): 409–26; Janet Ulph, "Frozen in Time: Orphans and Uncollected Objects in Museum Collections," *International Journal of Cultural Property* 24, no. 1 (2017): 3–30; Hannah Turner, "The Computerization of Material Culture Catalogues: Objects and Infrastructure in the Smithsonian Institution's Department of Anthropology," *Museum Anthropology* 39, no. 2 (2016): 163–77; R. Eric Hollinger et al., "Tlingit-Smithsonian Collaborations with 3D Digitization of Cultural Objects," *Museum Anthropology Review* 7, no. 1–2 (2013): 201–53; Bruce Altshuler, ed., *Collecting the New: Museums and Contemporary Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

11. Alivizatos, *Intangible Heritage and the Museum*; Tomislav Šola, "Redefining Collecting," in *Museums and the Future of Collecting*, ed. Simon J. Knell (New York: Routledge, 2016), 250–260.

12. F. A. Brokgauz and I. A. Yefron eds., *Ensiklopedicheskii slovar'*, 34 ed. (St. Petersburg: "Tyus," 1902), 368. For an in-depth discussion of *ongon*, see 1. Caroline Humphrey, "Inside and Outside the Mirror: Mongolian Shamans' Mirrors as Instruments of Perspectivism," *Inner Asia* 9, no. 2 (1 January 2007): 173–95.

13. Note that the boldface text is in the original. In general, I have attempted to preserve the original presentation of the archival material. This includes boldface text, parenthetical comments, sentence structure, and punctuation.

14. *Putevoditel' po muzeiu imperatorskoi akademii nauk" antropologii i etnografii* (1891), 66–67.

15. *Ibid.*, 6.

16. *Ibid.*, 8.

17. *Ibid.*, 9–10.

18. *Putevoditel' po muzeiu imperatorskoi akademii nauk" antropologii i etnografii* (1891), 10.

19. The guidebooks do not list the names of any authors, rather the authorship appears identified collectively as the Imperial Academy of Science.

20. *Putevoditel' po muzeiu imperatorskoi akademii nauk" antropologii i etnografii* (1891), 10.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, 14.

23. *Ibid.*, 11.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

27. *Putevoditel' po muzeiu imperatorskoi akademii nauk" antropologii i etnografii* (St. Petersburg, 1904), 77.

28. Ibid., 55.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., 56–59

31. *Putevoditel' po muzeiu imperatorskoi akademii nauk" antropologii i etnografii* (1904), 58.

32. In the original document the author wrote the name of the lake as *ozera tolbnor*. It appears, however, that the author mistook the *nuur* morpheme in Mongolian for *lake* as part of the name, thus writing "Lake Tolbo Lake" in Russian. Instead, it should be Tolbo Lake.

33. Ibid., 59.

34. *Putevoditel' po muzeiu imperatorskoi akademii nauk" antropologii i etnografii* (1904), 42.

35. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995); Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*.

36. *Putevoditel' po muzeiu imperatorskoi akademii nauk" antropologii i etnografii* (1904), 46.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 34, 42, 50.

39. Ibid., 56.

40. Ibid.

41. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*.

42. Samuel Alberti, "The Museum Affect: Visiting Collections of Anatomy and Natural History," in *Science in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century Sites and Experiences*, ed. Aileen Fyfe and Bernard Lightman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 376.

43. Bruce Robbins. "Blue Water. A Thesis." *RIAS* 8, no. 1 (2015): 47–66.

44. Nathaniel Knight, "Was Russia Its Own Orient? Reflections on the Contributions of Etkind and Schimmelpenninck to the Debate on Orientalism," *Ab Imperio* 2002, no. 1 (2002), 299.

45. Ibid.