

Introduction

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Tchoukotka : Comprendre le passé, les pratiques contemporaines et les perceptions du présent

Chukotka: Understanding the Past, Contemporary Practices, and Perceptions of the Present

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Introduction

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It has been fifteen years since *Études Inuit Studies* last published an issue devoted exclusively to the region of Chukotka and its inhabitants.¹ Even if one may view Chukotka as “a marginal area of the Inuit world,”² as Yvon Csonka, guest editor of this last issue, suggested, knowledge of this region and its dynamics is still necessary for a better understanding of this world and, more generally, the Arctic and its inhabitants, both indigenous and non-indigenous. Since the last special issue on Chukotka, numerous anthropological, historical, archeological, and linguistic studies of this region have been published. Chukotka never ceases to change, nor does the daily life of its people.

Although the population density of Chukotka is low—there are fewer than 50,000 inhabitants³ on a territory of 720,000 km², which makes it one and a half-time as large as Yukon—Chukotka displays great population diversity. Indigenous people are in the minority (25 to 30% of the population), but their proportion has been increasing since the end of the Soviet period. During the 1990s, many non-indigenous people left the region,⁴ as the special salary granted to northern inhabitants (in Russian, *severnnye*

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1. The last special issue of *Etudes Inuit Studies* on the indigenous people of Chukotka was Vol. 31 (1-2), published in 2007 under the supervision of Yvon Csonka. In 1981, two articles in Vol. 5 (2), of this same journal were presented under the heading “Esquimaux asiatiques / Asiatic Eskimo.” This might be viewed as the first special issue devoted to the indigenous people of Chukotka.

2. Csonka 2007: 24. According to I. Krupnik and M. Chlenov (2013, xxix) “The Russian Yupik [...] make up slightly more than 1 per cent of the overall Inuit family.”

3. <http://www.statdata.ru/naselenie/chukotskogo-ao>.

4. The population of Chukotka fell from circa 169,000 people in 1989 to around 60 000 in 2000 (Kumo and Litvinenko 2019: 110).

*nadbavki*⁵) was no longer high enough to compensate for the post-Soviet economic crisis and its dire consequences. Mobility was augmented when settlements that were viewed as unprofitable were simply closed down, as was the case with the town of Iul'tin (Iul'tin district) in 1995, the town of Ureliki (Provideniya district) in 2000, and the town of Shakhtërskii (Anadyr district) in 2008. In short, the turmoil of post-Soviet times has led a number of members of Indigenous communities to leave villages for urban centres, where those leaving the region had left some empty housing and where the “quality of life” was higher—that is, where there were more jobs, better salaries, more consumer goods, better schools, and diverse cultural activities for children. In the 2000s, new migrants came from central Russia (which is called, locally, *materik*, “the continent”), especially from the Volga region (Kalmykia and Mari El Republic). They took up positions as border guards, doctors, teachers, and school principals. With all of these comings and goings, the population of Chukotka has remained fairly stable over the last decade. Villages have a strong indigenous majority, but they also show great diversity. Ethnic categories used for statistical purposes are problematic; but, even if imprecise, they still give some insight into different communities. According to the 2010⁶ census, the indigenous population includes circa 12,800 Chukchi⁷, after whom the region is named, circa 1,500 Yupik⁸, about 1,400 Even, and 900 Chuvan. According to this same source, the inhabitants who are classified as newcomers (*priezzhie*) are mainly Russians (about

5. For texts in French we use the transliteration of the Slavists and for texts in English, the Library of Congress transliteration, with minor simplifications. Where appropriate, these transliteration conventions are used with Chukchi and Yupik adaptations. Some authors preferred to use phonetic transliteration, and we have respected their choices and methods. Author's names and locations have been made to conform to either English or French conventions. When names of Russian authors are known under a certain spelling, we have respected that but still included transliterations in parentheses in the bibliography. This sometimes involves two spellings of a single name, as in the case of Vladimir Bogoraz, who published in English as Waldemar Bogoras. Depending on the quoted reference, we will spell his name with an -s (English publications) or with a -z (Russian publications). This happens with other authors as well.

6. https://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/Documents/Vol4/pub-04-25.pdf. We refer to official 2010 census figures, because 2020-2021 census data are, as we write this introduction, not available.

7. In this issue, we use the French word “tchouktche” and the English “Chukchi.” These words are derived from the Russian term (which is probably based on the Chukchi word *čavčyv*, designating reindeer herders). The self-designation of the Chukchi is *Lyg'oravèl'at* (plur.).

8. We chose to use the word “Yupik” in this issue, as it has become widely accepted within the scholar community. On site, and in Russian, the most common word is *èskimos* (eskimo) which is not seen locally as pejorative, even if more people dedicated to the indigenous cause and to the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) seem to prefer “Inuit.” However, “Inuit” does not correspond to the self-designation, *Yupiget* (Krupnik

25,000) and Ukrainians (about 2,900), though there are also a few representatives of other nationalities, including Tatars (451), Azerbaijanis (107), Armenians (105), Uzbeks (79), and Kazakhs (70). Given the subject matter of this journal and the research interests of the contributors to this issue, emphasis falls on the indigenous people of Chukotka.

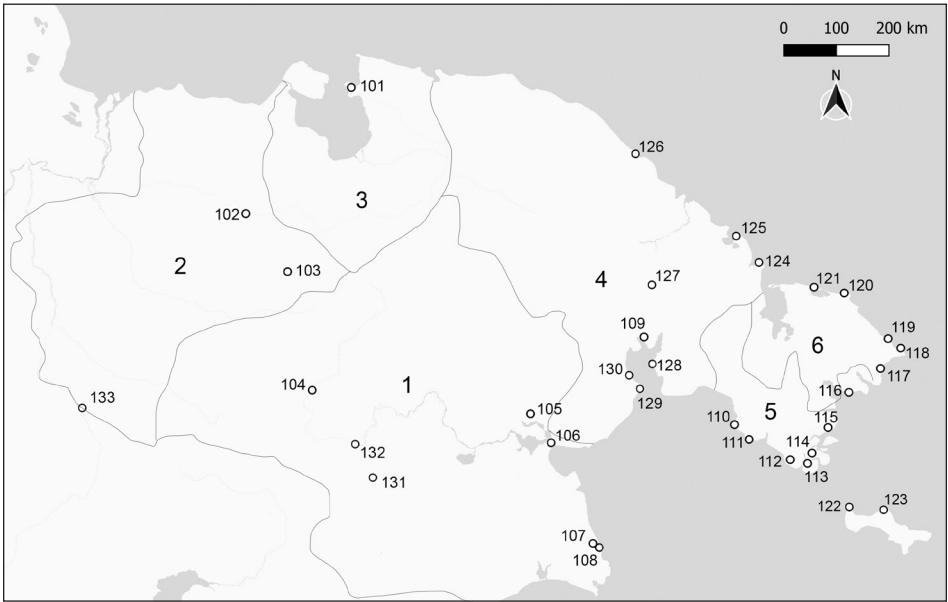


Figure 1. Chukotka (Russia) and St. Lawrence Island (Alaska, USA). Inhabited cities and villages (Source: Igor Chechushkov)

101 – Pevek; 102 – Bilibino; 103 – Ilirnei; 104 – Lamutskoye; 105 – Kanchalan; 106 – Anadyr; 107 – Alkatvaam; 108 – Beringovskii; 109 – Egvekinot; 110 – Enmelen; 111 – Nunlingran; 112 – Sireniki; 113 – Provideniya; 114 – Novoe Chaplino; 115 – Yanrakynnot; 116 – Lorino; 117 – Lavrentiya; 118 – Uelen; 119 – Inchoun; 120 – Enurmino; 121 – Neshkan; 122 – Gambell (USA); 123 – Savoonga (USA); 124 – Nutepel'men; 125 – Vankarem; 126 – Ryrkaipii; 127 – Amguema; 128 – Konergino; 129 – Uelkal; 130 – Snezhnoe; 131 – Vaegi; 132 – Markovo; 133 – Omolon

Administrative districts:

1 – Anadyrskii; 2 – Bilibinskii; 3 – Chaunskii; 4 – Iultinskii; 5 – Providenskii; 6 – Chukotskii

and Chlenov 2013, xxix). Linguists identify three Yupik languages: Central Siberian Yupik (Chaplinskii), Naukan Yupik (*Naukanskii*), and Sireniki Yupik (*Sireniskii*). This last one was officially declared extinct in 1997 (Krupnik et Chlenov 2013: 47).

Indigenous people of Chukotka at a “crossroad of continents”⁹

Located at the extreme northeast of Russia, Chukotka might be seen as a kind of bridge between Asia and America, as it is located in the former but shares characteristics with the latter. The two main subsistence strategies that characterize indigenous activities in the circumpolar world—sea-mammal hunting and reindeer herding¹⁰—overlap in Chukotka. Sea-mammal hunting predominates in the American Arctic and Greenland, while reindeer herding is largely restricted to Eurasia. Attempts to introduce reindeer herding among the indigenous people of North America have ended, for the most part, in failure (Laugrand 2021). In Chukotka, reindeer herding is restricted largely to the tundra Chukchi, whereas coastal Chukchi and Yupik engage in maritime hunting. These two main uses of natural resources are still very present, forming the contexts within which indigenous languages, ritual practices, and diverse forms of social relationships are preserved. This is one feature of the region that has attracted the attention of researchers.

Furthermore, Chukotka’s indigenous people have historically been in contact with and influenced by both Americans and Russians, trading with both partners. In the nineteenth century, some indigenous people seem to have been more familiar with English than with Russian, and even today there are traces of English loan-words in the Yupik and Chukchi languages. In the twentieth century, the proximity of the American continent has deeply and often dramatically affected the history of the region and its inhabitants, especially during Cold War, when villages deemed to be too close to the American coast were closed and their inhabitants displaced (Chichlo 1981, Krupnik and Chlenov 2007). Relations among Yupik living on both sides of the Bering Strait, who have always been in contact but who were separated for decades for political reasons, invite comparative study. Indeed, the history of interactions between the Yupik of St. Lawrence Island (Alaska) and the Yupik of Chukotka seems to be without precedent. Contributors to this issue provide insight into these matters (Krupnik, Morgounova-Schwalbe, Yamin-Pasternak and Pasternak).

9. Cf. the volume *Crossroads of Continents* (1988) by Fitzhugh and Crowell.

10. In this context, Igor Krupnik uses the terms “Dual Subsistence Model” (Krupnik 1993, 210), describing it as a “subsistence continuum” (Krupnik 1998, 223). However, these two activities do not exhaust the traditional means of subsistence among indigenous people, which also include fishing at sea and in rivers, hunting in the tundra, gathering eggs and wild plants (see Belichenko et al.; Vaté, this volume), etc.

From an economic and political point of view, Chukotka was subject to diametrically opposed extremes of the post-Soviet era: after being among the regions affected most disastrously in the 1990s, it became a model of recovery in the following ten years, after the election of the oligarch Roman Abramovitch as governor in 2000 (He resigned from this position in 2008 to become president of the Chukotka Duma until 2013.) During this period, Chukotka profited from the notoriety of its governor, gaining in visibility, at least to a degree. Since 2008, Chukotka, led by Roman Kopin, has experienced a measure of stability, despite continuing to suffer from inherent challenges, especially regarding transportation and supply. Chukotka remains one of the most expensive, the least accessible, and the least populated of the northern regions. The dreadful experience of the 1990s still haunts local memory.

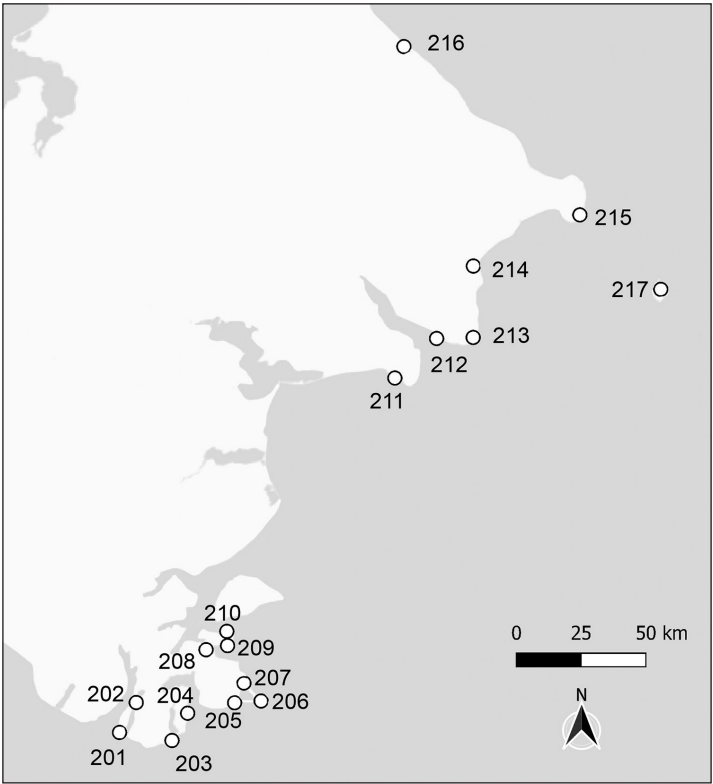


Figure 2. Chukchi Peninsula. Abandoned villages (Source: Igor Chechushkov)

201 – Avan; 202 – Plover; 203 – Qiwaq; 204 – Tasiq; 205 – Uqighyaghaq; 206 – Staroe Chaplino (Ungaziq); 207 – Tefleq; 208 – Engaghhpak; 209 – Napaqutaq; 210 – Siqlluk; 211 – Akkani; 212 – Pinakul; 213 – Nuniamo; 214 – Pu’uten; 215 – Naukan; 216 – Chegitun; 217 – Ratmanov Island (Big Diomedé, Imaqliq)

Because of its proximity to the United States, Chukotka has long had a special position within Russia. Even after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the region retained its official status as a “border security zone” (*pogranichnaia zona*, in Russian). For this reason, access to the field is difficult for non-Russian researchers, and even Russian citizens need a *propusk*, a permit, to enter the border zone.¹¹ Suffering the consequences of these arbitrary and complex restrictions, and no doubt also because of the political nature of her research topic, the anthropologist Patty Gray was forbidden officially from entering the region for five years (see Gray forthcoming).

A region that has played a central role in the anthropology of the Arctic

Chukotka or, more broadly, northeast Siberia occupies an important position in the history of Arctic and Siberian studies. Without providing an exhaustive list of authors who have worked in Chukotka or of all the topics they have addressed, we attempt in this section to evoke some of the main lines of research conducted in this region.

One of the “founding fathers of Siberian studies,” Vladimir Bogoraz (who published in English under the name Waldemar Bogoras), played an essential role in the emergence of a pre-Soviet Russian ethnography (Vakhtin 2006, 51). He conducted research in the Siberian northeast and published numerous studies concerning the Chukchi, Koryak, Itelmen, Even, and Yupik. Vladimir Bogoraz also contributed to the emergence of a “transnational momentum” (Schweitzer 2001) through his participation in the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897-1902), funded by the American banker Morris K. Jesup and led by the American ethnologist Franz Boas. This research resulted in the publication of studies that are still essential references in the field today (e.g., Bogoras 1904-1909; 1910, see also Krupnik and Fitzhugh 2001).

Chukotka retained a central place in Soviet ethnography. Innokentiy Stepanovich Vdovin (a student of Bogoraz) was an itinerant teacher in Chukotka between 1932 and 1934, and he learned the Chukchi language at that time. If his studies reflect the ideological constraints of the Soviet era, they include, nevertheless, important analyzes combining historical and ethnographic perspectives on various topics, such as religious practices

11. In theory, the legal status of the region as a “border zone” was abrogated in 2018, with the exception of three islands (Big Diomed Island, Wrangel Island, Herald Island). Nevertheless, border guards have continued to control the documents of Russian citizens who are not residents of Chukotka. For foreigners, a special authorization (*propusk*) is still required for entering the territory. In addition, control of the movements of sea mammal hunters and of coastal citizens has intensified.

(e.g., shamanism and also relations to Christianity, as in Vdovin 1979, 1981) and relations to nature (Vdovin 1976). He also published a monograph on the Chukchi (Vdovin 1965). Another important figure is the Russian ethnologist Varvara Kuznetsova, who stayed in the Amguema tundra between 1948 and 1951. She only published one article, but it stands as an indispensable reference regarding reindeer herding rituals (Kuznetsova 1957; see also Mikhailova 2015). At the end of the 1920s and the dawn of the 1930s, ethnographer and linguist Aleksandr Forshtein went to Chukotka. He was arrested in 1937 and spent ten years in the GULAG. He is best known as the photographer who took unique pictures of Yupik villages (Krupnik and Mikhailova 2006a, Krupnik and Mikhailova 2006b see also Krupnik in this volume), but most of his research has been lost.

From the 1970s to the 1990s, anthropologist Igor Krupnik, anthropologist and linguist Mikhail Chlenov, sociolinguist Nikolai Vakhtin, and biologist Liudmila Bogoslovskaja conducted fieldwork on the Asian Yupik and maritime Chukchi. They were interested primarily in kinship systems (Chlenov 1980), folklore (Chlenov 1981), ritual practices in historical perspective (Krupnik 1979; Krupnik 1980), ethno-ecology (Chlenov 1988; Krupnik 1989), and also in the history of ethnic groups (Krupnik, Chlenov 1979). The foci of their research included, among other things, the cultural inheritance of Yupik and Chukchi in coastal areas and the preservation of cultural memory. Without their publications and without the interviews that they conducted with people born in the early twentieth century, many aspects of Yupik and maritime Chukchi culture would have remained unknown. The publication of the memories of Yupik people living in Novoe Chaplino and Sireniki, which were recorded by Igor Krupnik in the 1970s and 1980s, is of great significance for our understanding of the Yupik world of Chukotka (Krupnik 2000b; see also Krupnik in this issue). Published well after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but drawing on data collected during the Soviet era, the monograph *Yupik Transitions: Change and Survival at Bering Strait, 1900-1960* (2013), by Igor Krupnik and Michael (Mikhail) Chlenov, is a comprehensive study revealing the historical dynamics of Yupik society in the first half of the twentieth century. For his part, Nikolai Vakhtin published a fine study of Sireniki language (Vakhtin 2000) and other important works on the sociolinguistics of northern indigenous people (Vakhtin 1992, 2001, 2004). In 2019, he also compiled and analyzed previously unpublished texts in the Yupik language, which had been collected in Chukotka by the linguist Ekaterina Rubtsova in the 1930s-1940s (Rubtsova and Vakhtin 2019, see also Vakhtin below)—another example of the contribution of Soviet research to our knowledge of the region. While coastal populations were the subject of numerous studies, scholars displayed less interest for the Chukchi during this period, especially those living inland. Many aspects of their history and practices remained unknown. Too often,

researchers relied on Bogoraz as the ultimate reference, without registering the changes that had occurred since his last publications and without commenting on the contradictions in the works of this great ethnographer (on this matter see Vaté and Eidson 2021). It was not until the early 1990s that new ethnographic data finally began to be produced.

Travelling to Chukotka during the Soviet period was reserved for citizens of the USSR, and even for Soviet researchers it presented all the challenges of “ethnography in a ‘forbidden zone’” (Chichlo 2008). Once the borders were opened in the post-Soviet era, Chukotka became again the object of “transnational” attention. The 1990s were a time of effervescence. Despite complications, organizing a long-term fieldwork became possible once more, and scholars in all fields took advantage of this new opportunity for exploration. The American anthropologist Anna Kerttula was one of the first to arrive in Chukotka. She conducted fieldwork in Sireniki (a coastal village of the Providenskii District) at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. In her monograph entitled *Antler on the Sea: The Yup'ik and Chukchi of the Russian Far East* (2000), Kerttula writes about a village with both Chukchi and Yupik inhabitants as a complex sociocultural phenomenon in its own right. She worked with many interlocutors who ranged from Russians born outside of the region to indigenous people (Kerttula 2000). This was a first attempt in ethnological research in Chukotka to take a territorial approach to members of diverse groups living in a shared space. Boris Chichlo, a scholar from the CNRS (France), organized two international expeditions in 1991 and 1993¹², thus coordinating the presentation of new information from representatives of different fields and encouraging scholars to work on this region (Chichlo 1993). Kazunobu Ikeya, a researcher from the Osaka National Museum of Ethnology, also travelled to Chukotka and developed comparisons with his earlier fieldwork in East Africa (Ikeya and Fratkin 2005). Virginie Vaté, co-editor of this special issue, and Patty Gray met for the first time in Chukotka's capital, Anadyr, in 1996. While Gray was conducting fieldwork for her dissertation, Vaté was just about to begin hers, after having gathered data for her master's thesis while working with the NGO Doctors of the World in 1993 and 1994. Many theses based on anthropological research set in Siberia were defended in the 1990s and 2000s, some of which were set in Chukotka (see Gray et al. 2003, 29-31).

Articles and monographs appeared at an accelerating pace, covering previously neglected topics or exploring familiar ones in greater depth. It became possible to study and to talk about the consequences of the colonial policy of the Soviet power towards the indigenous population, in particular, about the series of forced displacements of the Yupik of Chukotka in the

12. The expedition in 1993 ended with a dramatic helicopter accident (see Csonka 2007: 13).

years from 1930s to 1950s (Krupnik and Chlenov 2007; Holzlehner 2011). Fieldwork conducted in the 1990s also highlighted the limits of the autonomy granted to Chukotka's indigenous people by political authorities. Examples may be found in works by Debra Schindler (1992, 1997), Yvon Csonka (1998), Krupnik and Vakhtin (2002), and Galina Diatchkova (2005), and in Patty Gray's book *The Predicament of Chukotka's Indigenous Movement: Post-Soviet Activism in the Russian Far North* (Gray 2005).

Studies on rituals and religion have been renewed. They demonstrate that some of the practices that were assigned to the past in Soviet studies, no doubt for ideological reasons, are still alive (Golbtseva 2008, 2017, Vaté 2007, 2013, Vaté 2021). This research is not limited to an inventory of continuities, however; it also addresses new forms, resistances, and past and present interactions (Oparin 2020, forthcoming; Vaté 2005a, 2005b; Klovov 2018, 2021; Schweitzer & Golovko 2007). Examples include the new relationship of indigenous people with Christianity, which developed during the 1990s with the arrival of Protestant missionaries of various denominations (Vakhtin 2005, Vaté 2009), and also the evident will on the part of the Russian Orthodox Church to mark the territory by building new Orthodox churches and monuments (Vaté 2019). In recent decades, funerary and commemorative practices have also received a significant degree of attention (Oparin 2012, Nuvano 2006, Panáková 2014).

Several linguists arrived in Chukotka to study the Chukchi language (see Dunn 1999, Zhukova & Kurebito 2004, Weinstein 2010, 2018, and the translation of Omruvie text in the *In Memoriam* section of this issue). Language analysis has broadened progressively to include sociolinguistic aspects of language use (Leonova 2020; Pupynina 2013; Schwalbe 2015, 2017).

Reindeer herding is a topic that has attracted much interest in the anthropology of Siberia, especially in the decade from 1990 to 2000. The disastrous decline of reindeer herds in the 1990s prompted researcher to devote their attention to this problem, particularly to questions about the ownership of reindeer (Krupnik 2000a, Gray 2000, 2012; Ikeya 2003).

More generally, the subject of indigenous knowledge has come to occupy a central position in research on Chukotka—knowledge of the environment (Krupnik and Vakhtin 1997, Bogoslovskaja and Krupnik 2013) but also of hunting (Bogoslovskaja 2003, Bogoslovskaja, et al. 2007, Mymrin 2016; Jashchenko 2016). Some studies deal with the consequences of climate change and others with the traditional use of natural resources (Bogoslovskaja and Krupnik 2013). The focus on environmental knowledge has had the effect of promoting collaboration with indigenous researchers.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, a number of researchers have organized participatory studies involving collaboration with indigenous specialists (see especially Zdor in this issue). The voices of indigenous people—scientists, hunters, elders—are increasingly heard (Bogoslovskaja and

Krupnik 2013; Bogoslovskaja et al. 2007; Bogoslovskaja et al. 2008; Leonova 2014). Of particular note is a recent collective monograph on the heritage and history of Chukotka, in which local researchers are widely represented (Kolomiets and Krupnik 2020).

The anthropology of food has also seen significant growth. Under the impetus of the research of Sveta Yamin Pasternak, among others, many new directions are explored regularly (Ainana et al. 2007; Davydova 2019; Dudarev et al. 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2019d; Golbtseva 2017; Gray 2021; Kozlov 2007; Kozlov et al. 2007; Yamin-Pasternak 2007; Yamin-Pasternak et al. 2014). This theme is also featured prominently in this issue, which testifies to its dynamism.

The culture and social status of newcomers [*priezzhie*] in Siberia were rarely subjects of Soviet research. One key publication on this topic is the book *Settlers on the Edge: Identity and Modernization on Russia's Arctic Frontier*, by the Canadian researcher Niobe Thompson, which focuses on the non-indigenous population of Chukotka that emerged between 1930 and 1980. This book also gives some insight into the policies of Governor Nazarov in the 1990s, which led to the bankruptcy of the region (Thompson 2008). Nikolai Vakhtin, Peter Schweitzer, and Evgenii Golovko have dedicated a monograph to populations stemming from the old Russian settlements (*starozhily*) in northeastern Siberia (Vakhtin, Golovko, and Schweitzer 2004).

After the boom of the 1990s and 2000s, research in Chukotka slowed down, to a degree after 2010. In recent years, however, a new generation of scholars has committed itself to the study of the region, exploring new directions. For some time now, Anastasia Yarzutkina has been focusing on the topic of alcohol addiction in Chukotka and on the social life of alcohol in indigenous villages of the region (Yarzutkina 2017; Yarzoutkina and Koulik in this issue). In addition, she has recently published an article showing how reindeer herders in the village of Vaegi have also turned to horticulture and how they have attempted to combine these diametrically opposed economic practices (Yarzutkina 2021).

In 2019, Jaroslava Panáková published an article entitled “Something like Happiness: Home Photography in the Inquiry of Lifestyles,” focusing on visual sensibility in Chukotka, the photographic practices of local people, and the concept of happiness as expressed through visual images (Panáková 2019; see also Istomin, Panáková, and Heady 2014).

In the wake of the ERC project led by Peter Schweitzer (“INFRANORTH—Building Arctic Futures: Transport Infrastructures and Sustainable Northern Communities”), infrastructure has become a topic that has mobilized researchers. Nobody who has travelled in Chukotka can deny that this is a theme of central importance. In 2021, the journal *Etnografika* published an article by Elena and Vladimir Davydov about shortages in tundra villages and diverse practices of the “second-hand use of available resources where

a creative transformation of a physical object is happening”¹³ (Davydov and Davydova 2021 p. 25). In this issue, we include Tobias Holzlehner’s article on the ways in which indigenous people in his Chukotkan field site reuse discarded objects for purposes of construction.

Studies in Chukotka have also taken the form of contributions to visual anthropology (Jääskeläinen 2012, Panáková 2005, 2015, Vakhrushev 2011), which include documentary films (Jääskeläinen 2019, Puya 2014) and even fictional films (on these films and others, see Damiens in this issue).

Research in Chukotka—a new state of the art

In this edition, our intention is to highlight the vivacity and diversity of studies about this region. We have gathered *nineteen* contributions from various fields, including anthropology, history, sociolinguistics, the history of art, and ethnobotany, written by researchers from several countries and representing institutions around the world. Still, this double edition cannot provide an exhaustive overview of the entire landscape of Chukotkan studies. Some researchers are not represented in this issue because of a lack of time or means on their part or on ours. We hope, however, that the contributions to this issue reflect pertinently the state of the art of research conducted in Chukotka by representatives of various human sciences over the past ten to fifteen years; and we hope that these contributions stimulate the exploration of new paths in the future.

We have organized this issue thematically. We open the collection with an anthropological and historical study by Igor Krupnik, who employs photographs in exploring the depths of historical memory in Chukotka and on St. Lawrence Island (Alaska). Caroline Damiens’s article also engages with visual materials, offering a retrospective of the cinematographic representation of Chukotka in the twentieth century. Then, in the second part, the articles by Tobias Holzlehner and Sofia Gavrilova address in different ways the forced displacement of indigenous populations that occurred from the 1930s to the 1950s. The question of language is the subject of the third part. A sociolinguistic article by Daria Morgounova-Schwalbe focuses on the emotional aspect of Yupik language use and its intergenerational transmission. Mikhail Chlenov examines the origins of a variety of the Aleut language spoken on Medny Island (“Copper Island”) in the Commander Islands. Though Chlenov’s field site lies outside of Chukotka, his research concerns the Eskaleut world and the Asian part of the Bering Sea region. The fourth section offers new perspectives on food and consumption. Elena and Vladimir Davydov analyze the connection between perceptions of the taste of reindeer meat and the different ways of

13. Our translation.

slaughtering reindeer in the tundra and the village of Amguema. Sveta Yamin-Pasternak and Igor Pasternak, who have long been interested in the food traditions of indigenous people on both sides of the Bering Strait, devote their article to the expressive aesthetics of traditional cuisine in Chukotka and Alaska. Anastasiia Yarzoutkina and Nikolai Koulik address a delicate issue by examining how people relate to both money and alcohol in indigenous villages. Olga Belichenko, Valeria Kolosova, Kevin Jernigan, and Maria Pupynina present meticulous ethnobotanical research on the use of various plants by the Chukchi—a topic that has received more attention in the Inuit world than in this part of the Arctic. In the fifth section, Eduard Zdor and Oksana Kolomiets take up a neglected topic: relations in Chukotka between indigenous people and various non-indigenous actors. Eduard Zdor studies different experiences of cooperation between indigenous experts and scientists. In contrast, Oksana Kolomiets focuses on complex interactions between representatives of indigenous peoples and industrial companies operating in the region. The sixth part combines several contributions that deal with various types of representations. Through analyzing two Yupik folk tales recorded by the linguist Ekaterina Rubtsova in the early 1940s, Nikolai Vakhtin provides insight into local perspectives on the domestication of reindeer. Dmitriy Oparin's article focuses on the social life of Yupik incantations and, more generally, on the use of the Yupik language in the contemporary religious context. Virginie Vaté returns on the topic of plants, describing how reindeer herders of the tundra of Amguema use them and showing how plants connect people and reindeer. The issue ends with four research notes in a section entitled "Perspectives." Igor Pasternak combines approaches of the artist and the anthropologist in his reflections on the carving of walrus ivory by Chukchi and Yupik artists. In an autobiographical sketch that we solicited, Vladislav Nuvano retraces his journey and illuminates his perspective as an indigenous researcher. Zoia Weinstein-Tagrina, a culturologist and an artist, provides a study of songs and incantations of the Chukchi. Finally, Dmitriy Oparin presents his most recent multimedia project, "The Memory of a Settlement", which is devoted to the genealogy, oral history, and photographic archives of Yupik families in Novoe Chaplino (Providenskii District).

These are the paths that we explore in this issue, but there are other possible paths waiting to be explored. Here we will mention some that are not present in this issue or in the published record. In the anthropological literature, for example, the indigenous population of Chukotka is represented almost exclusively by the Yupik and the Chukchi; but there are also Even, Chuvan, and Yukaghir who inhabit the region.

It would be rewarding to study migration in Chukotka, which is dynamic and highly variable. As we asked at the outset of this introduction, who are the Kalmyk and Mari people who may be found in Chukotka today?

Why do migrants keep coming to Chukotka? Where do they come from? But mobility does not concern newcomers alone. The isolation and remoteness of Chukotka, along with its inaccessibility, due both to the underdevelopment of its transportation infrastructure and to an excess of political restrictions, make Chukotka seem like a static region. On the contrary, however, people are constantly moving between villages and reindeer herders' camps, among the different villages, to district capitals, to Chukotka's capital, Anadyr, or beyond the borders of the region. For a long time, travelling to Alaska was the most common trip abroad because of historical and familial relations across the Bering Strait. But today, destinations lie further abroad, for example, in Turkey, China, or Thailand; and there are many reasons to visit these distant places—e.g., vacations, education, access to healthcare, and so on. Even if the distances that are commonly travelled have increased, this mobility of Chukotkans is not new: during the Soviet period, many had already travelled to Magadan or Leningrad/Saint Petersburg in order to study, and a number of those who did leave Chukotka did not return. What is life like for indigenous students in urban centres? Recently, research has been published on mobility in the Russian Arctic (Vakhtin and Dudek 2020), but Chukotka and its inhabitants do not figure prominently in these studies. This is, therefore, an issue that requires more attention.

Another type of mobility, which seems to be particularly characteristic of Chukotka, consists in international relations with other indigenous people in Canada, Greenland, and Alaska, where Yupik and Inuit also live. The international experience of the Russian Yupik, gained through participation in conferences of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, in international meetings of the peoples of the Arctic, or in tours of folk dance and song ensembles, deserves study in itself. Moreover, the links between the Yupik of Siberia and those of Alaska could still be the subject of new studies, particularly on the recent period, when one can observe marriages between people from the two sides of the Bering Strait, the continuation of cultural exchange, and even the migration of Yupik from Chukotka to Alaska.

In contrast to the situation in North America, there are in Russia few academic publications, works of popular science, or multimedia projects devoted to oral history, to the memories of elders, to the expertise of local people, or to the self-presentation of indigenous youth. The works of Igor Krupnik (2000b) are, of course, a notable exception; but we still feel that greater attention could be paid to oral history and life stories, in the spirit of Nancy Wachovich's book *Sagiyuk* (2001). We hope that future researchers will take up these suggestions, though they represent only a few of many possibilities.

We started preparing this issue in 2019. We are finishing it in the spring of 2022. While all our efforts were focused on finalizing this issue, on February 24, 2022, Russia started a war against Ukraine. This situation, the

horror of which grips us all, is not without serious effects on both the inhabitants of Chukotka and the prospects for further research in this region. Like the rest of the Northern Far East, Chukotka has welcomed many Ukrainians since the 1930s, and especially after the events in Chernobyl in the late 1980s. A number of Ukrainians still live in Chukotka today. One can only wonder about their situation and the consequences of this conflict for local social relations. The war will surely affect the social climate of Chukotka, leading to the decrease and, perhaps, the full blockage of international relationships, including those with Alaska. It may result in shortages of medicine and other imported products and in the severing of channels of communication (as in the shutdown of Facebook and Instagram on Russian territory). Moreover, we know that Russian soldiers who come from Chukotka, including members of indigenous communities, are stationed in combat zones. We recently learned about the death of a Chukchi man from the village of Vankarem who was serving with the Russian forces in Ukraine. As social anthropologists studying a region in Russia, we cannot ignore this tragedy.¹⁴

We cannot help but be struck by the irony of our situation: as we finish a volume that brings together contributions from researchers from around the world, with different origins, all in the name of our common interest in this particular region and its inhabitants, we understand that the possibility of continuing this research together, in the field, has been shattered indefinitely.

We write this introduction in April 2022. The issue of the journal should be published in June. We can only hope against all odds that war will be over by then.

We would like this issue to be seen as a call for peace, an expression of our commitment to “thinking together” beyond borders. Losing the spirit of international collaboration and the friendships that have been cultivated over the last thirty years, which are based on the common experience of research in Chukotka, would add one tragedy to another. We hope that this issue will not be the last of its kind and that, in the years to come, we or our younger colleagues can publish a new edition, a new review gathering the great diversity of perspectives of researchers who care about the indigenous people of Chukotka.

14. This statement expresses the views of the authors of this introduction only. The authors of the various contributions to this issue had no knowledge of the contents of this introduction before publication and cannot be held responsible for the statements that we make in it.

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Кытвалынк'ык'он! Игамсик'аюкамси!

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