

# 7. Chasing Shadows: Sharing Photographs from Former Northwest Manchuria

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In 2014 a new social trajectory was set in place for two photographic collections made by two couples who photographed and researched the region formally known as Northwest Manchuria at the start of the twentieth century. Working with digital copies of these images, I was privileged to share them with the descendants of those originally portrayed. Gě Jùn Gǔ, the Headman of Ewenki Camp 1, scanned the files and recognised a photograph of his family (Figs. 7.1a and 7.1b). His face displayed a keen interest in the imagery, but he also revealed a deeper

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1 I am most grateful to Mrs Erdongua, Bái Yín, Āntè Bù, Mèng Hùijīn, Naragaowa and the many other community members who welcomed us in Inner Mongolia and shared their knowledge and stories. Sincere thanks also to Mèng Sōnglín, head of the Mongolian Ethnic Origin Project and Daur and Orochon descendant; Bái Jīnsēn, director, Hūlúnběiěr Museum of Nationalities; Hāda, curator, Hūlúnběiěr Museum of Nationalities; Nasan Bayar, head of the School of Anthropology, and Bǎohuà, associate professor, at the Inner Mongolia University. All of them had a personal role, as well as academic and political agency, in supporting the project that enabled the sharing of photos with stakeholders who would not otherwise have been able to access them. My gratitude to my co-partners in this digitisation project and their related institutes for their generosity and dedication. Finally, I wish to thank John Lindgren, who in 1992 donated his parents' photographs to the MAA and continues to contribute knowledge and stories that bring the images and their makers to life. In 2017, Stein Mamen donated his grandfather's remaining photographic and manuscript collection to the Museum of Cultural History, Oslo, so the story is set to continue.

sense of excitement. “We had heard of a woman [Ethel Lindgren] coming here many years ago and taking photos”, I remember him explaining, “but we didn’t know where [the photos] were or what they would show us. We have been hunting for them and now you bring them to us”.<sup>2</sup>



Fig. 7.1a “Look, those are the bridles of my clan — this picture must be of my family”. Gě Jùn Gǔ and herders of Ewenki Camp 1. Photo by Jocelyne Dudding, Áolǔgǔ yā, 16 April 2014



Fig. 7.1b “Petr Ivanovich’s daughter and daughter-in-law riding reindeer to look for lost deer. Holding long sticks = Tiawun used for mounting the deer”. Photo by Ethel Lindgren, Ulugit River, 24 June 1932 (MAA P.78208.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

2 Translations from Russian and the analysis of Shirokogoroff’s unpublished manuscripts were done by David G. Anderson.

My arrival carrying copies of this set of photographs brought a pleasing and unexpected end to a search for family photographs. It also started a new process of the herders and their families looking at, enjoying, and investigating their own histories as represented by earlier explorers. For the small team of academics, curators, and film crews — who gathered together from Cambridge, Hohhot [Kökeqota], and Hāilǎěr [Hailar] — to accompany us on that day to the snow forests north of Áolǔgǔyā, Hūlúnbèiěr, it was their first opportunity to see the magic and power of gifting photographs.

This account really begins with the story of two couples who worked and travelled in Manchuria in the early twentieth century. Sergei and Elizaveta Shirokogoroff conducted anthropometric fieldwork on both the Siberian and Chinese sides of the Amur River between 1912 and 1917. Their collections are primarily held at the Peter the Great Museum, St Petersburg (MAË). Ethel Lindgren and Oscar Mamen travelled along many of the same trails in Northwest Manchuria between 1928 and 1932, and much of their work and collections correspond closely with the Shirokogoroffs'. Lindgren and Mamen's northwestern Manchurian collections are now cared for at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge (MAA). The photographs and collections of these two couples had been rarely seen. Their biographies, and hence, their motives and practices in creating and using their photographs were little known. This chapter represents an attempt to contextualize these images.

The chapter is based on the work of a group of university-based scholars and curators in Cambridge and St Petersburg who rediscovered, researched, and digitised the field photographs and papers of these two anthropological couples.<sup>3</sup> Our work was to share these images with their originating communities in Inner Mongolia.

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3 This work began as part of an International Research Network funded by the Leverhulme Trust (IN-2012-138). Through this project, a subset of both photographic collections documenting Ewenki and Oroqen were digitised and prepared for display and sharing with local communities. At a later stage of the project, two partners of our research network, Uradyn Bulag of MIASU, University of Cambridge, and Nasan Bayar of Inner Mongolia University, sought additional funding from the Mongolian Ethnic Origin Project to digitise and return to their sites of creation all of the images contained in the extensive Lindgren-Mamen collections. Several members of the Leverhulme Project conducted fieldwork at Ewenki settlements at Áolǔgǔyā and Gēnhé; Oroqen communities at Ālǐhé; and Yīmǐn River; with Daur in Nántún (formerly Omul Ail); Russian Cossack descendants at

The chapter explores the ways in which the acts of locating, digitising, printing, and displaying those images, created a forum for talking about people's lives. The chapter documents the questions that these images helped to resolve in the minds of the descendants of the people who traditionally herded reindeer or hunted in the region. However, it also documents the shadows created by these images and the new uncertainties these digital collections have created. In the process of chasing these shadows, the chapter addresses the ongoing questions of identity, visual representation, and alternative histories, particularly in the context of sometimes rigid frameworks of state-controlled *ethnos-minzú* identity, among Ewenkis and Oroqens.<sup>4</sup>

One of photography's inventors, Henry Fox Talbot, in 1839 described his process as "partaking of the character of the marvellous, providing almost as much as any fact which physical investigation has yet brought to our knowledge" in the "Art of fixing a Shadow" (Talbot 1839: section 4). He continued with startlingly evocative language:

The most transitory of things, a shadow, the emblem of all that is fleeting and momentary, may be fettered by the spells of our "natural magic," and may be fixed for ever in the position which it seemed only destined for a single instant to occupy (Ibid: 5).

By happenstance, Talbot's language captures much of the wonder and curiosity of the Ewenki herders looking at the images of their ancestors, 100 years previously riding in a similar environment and perhaps camping in similar glades as they. It is this preservation of an event that seems magical within a society that exists in a constant eruption of political change and development. These photographs are more than just an image or interpretation of the past; as Susan

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Éěrgūnà [Argun]; Buriat, Mongol and Barga groups around Gānzhuěr sūmù; and academic and minority migrant communities in Hāilǎěr and Hohhot.

4 Orthography and naming is a significant issue when discussing this transborder region where there are representatives of each nationality or *minzú* living in the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, and sometimes, Mongolia. Although it has become standard to describe the name of the Tungus-speaking people ЭВЕНКИ as *Evenki* in Latin script, within the China studies literature, *Ewenki* is standard. Different generations used different naming conventions. The Shirokogoroffs named most Tungus-speaking peoples in northwestern China as Orochens, while Lindgren and Mamen distinguished between Ewenkis and Oroqens. In China, the term Ewenki also includes the sub-groups Solon, Daur, and Khamnigans, so unless otherwise specified, the use of the term "Ewenki" refers to "Reindeer Ewenki".

Sontag notes, they are a direct trace stencilled off what was real (Sontag 1978: 120). In these historically remote areas, incredibly few local people owned or had access to a camera, and missionary or colonial postings to these regions — frequently a principle source of photographic archives — were uncommon. The use of the camera by the Shirokogoroffs and by Lindgren and Mamen thereby produced some of the earliest known imagery of Ewenkis and Oroqens. It is for such reasons that the visual archives of early twentieth-century travellers cared for by museums are so highly valued by people living today.

## The Field Photography of Sergei and Elizaveta Shirokogoroff

Sergei Shirokogoroff and his wife Elizaveta conducted three expeditions to Siberia and Northwest Manchuria between 1912 and 1917 (see Fig. 5.2). Their first tour was self-funded, and the later expeditions were made on behalf of the Russian Academy of Science and partly the Russian Committee for Central and Eastern Asia Studies. Their expeditions in 1912 and 1913 were to Zabaïkal'skaïa oblast' (Fig. 7.2), and each lasted for approximately four or five months (see chapter 5). Their 1915–1916 expedition went from Gan to the Amur River valleys (Fig. 7.3). The expedition continued westward overland, assembling equally significant collections among the Amur Oroqens and then in Daur and Manchu territories along the Amur River. This expedition built on the experience of their two previous expeditions and arguably lasted for the rest of their lives as they found themselves living as émigrés in China.

Sergei Shirokogoroff and Elizaveta Robinson were born into families of provincial intelligentsia in late imperial Russia. They received their primary education in what is now Estonia, where they first met. They married in Paris at a young age while Elizaveta studied law and Sergei audited a number of lecture courses at the *École d'anthropologie*, and also at a number of other institutions in Paris (see chapter 6). As discussed in some detail in other chapters in this book, neither were initially drawn to Manchuria or east Asia or to fieldwork, but they were sent on their first expedition on the recommendation of their supervisors. That fieldwork would change their lives. Working together at a time when anthropology was a discipline in formation, they combined what today seems to be a chaotic ensemble of research techniques: exhaustively



Fig. 7.2 “Ceremonial welcoming of guests” with Elizaveta and Sergei Shirokogoroff at the centre. Photographer unknown, Akima River, tributary of the Nercha River, October 1912 (MAE 2002-66). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

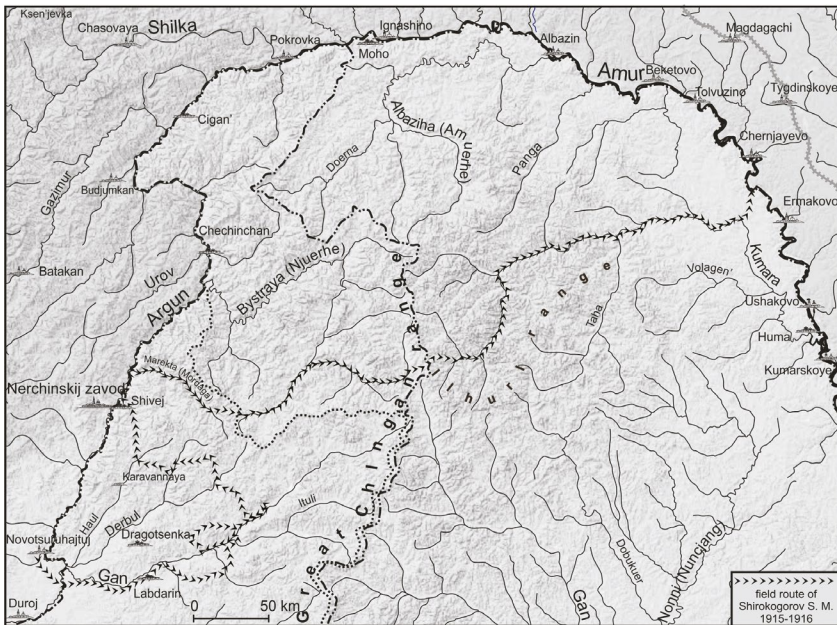
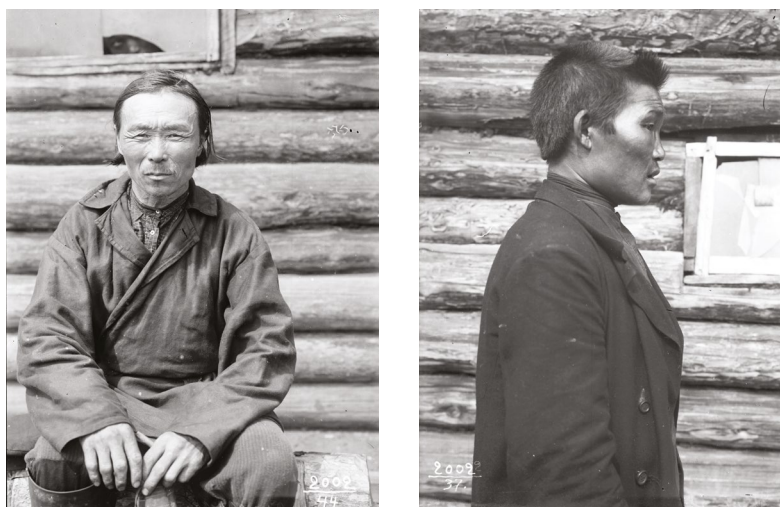


Fig. 7.3 Shirokogoroffs’ expedition routes in Siberia and former Northwest Manchuria, 1915–1916. Map by Aleksei G. Akulov

documenting folklore, creating dictionaries, measuring heads, noting and transcribing music, and collecting artefacts.

Although photography was not a new technique in 1912, the camera was rarely seen in this region. Accessing photographic materials and laboratories for printing was difficult. The first camera that the Shirokogoroffs took to the field with them was a 5 x 7 inch glass plate camera with a wide angle and standard lens, loaned to them by the Russian Geographical Society. This camera was recommended by the British Association for the Advancement of Science and also, they note, by the *École d'anthropologie de Paris* (citing 1898: 109) for the visual recording of anthropometric types (British Association 1909: 51).<sup>5</sup> A specific requirement was portraits of individual's head and shoulders of "the left side of the face in exact profile" and "in strictly full-face", but it was noted that with the 5 x 7 inch negative the prerequisite full-length portraits could also be enlarged to produce a suitable quality head and shoulders portrait (British Association 1909: 50–1) (Figs. 7.4a and 7.4b). An additional instruction notes: "Very interesting series are afforded by whole families" (Ibid: 49) (Fig. 7.5).



Figs. 7.4a and 7.4b. "An Orochen man (Bagadarin) (F.)" and "An Orochen man (translator Pavel) (Pr.)". Photo by Elizaveta and Sergei Shirokogoroff, Akima River, tributary of the Nercha River, October 1912 (MAE 2002-44 and 2002-37). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

5 The RAI in *Notes and Queries* also recommended the British equivalent half-plate camera (Marreco and Myres 1912).



Fig. 7.5 “Old man Antyrov with his wife and daughter at their yurt”. Photo by Elizaveta and Sergei Shirokogoroff, Akima River, tributary of the Nercha River, October 1912 (MAĖ 2002-70). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

It is clear from the resulting photographs of their 1912 expedition that the Shirokogoroffs perceived the camera as a scientific instrument to be used for documenting physical types. Apart from three posed photographs of women preparing skins and portraits of families against the backdrop of their homes, there is little visual documentation of material culture or social contexts. There is only one landscape view, which might have been intended to “document factors that would affect peoples’ evolution” (British Association 1909: 47; Shirokogoroff 1925: 10). The selection of subjects may have been a conscious decision or a limitation of their photographic equipment. The 5 x 7 inch plate camera was cumbersome and required the use of a tripod during exposure, resulting in often formal and static photographs. The necessary glass plates were difficult to transport because of their weight and fragility — with an expected twenty per cent loss due to breakages — and with the difficulty of obtaining additional plates in the field, the Shirokogoroffs would have had to justify and ration every exposure. The heavy, fragile technology also limited the ability of the couple to share photographs. There is only one mention of Sergei gifting a photograph of himself to an Oroqen friend who had given him several gifts (SPF ARAN 849-5-803: 3v).



Although the photographic collections were accessioned under Sergei's name, it is clear that Elizaveta was equally, if not more, active as Sergei in the making and printing of photographs. Her field diary for the 1912 expedition makes several references to her taking pictures (SPF ARAN 849-5-803, 5v; 19v; 21v; and 24).

During the later expedition in Manchuria, the couple used a twin lens stereo camera that produced two offset images of the same scene that, when viewed together in a dedicated viewer, created a three-dimensional impression of depth and solidity. Yet it is unclear why the Shirokogoroffs moved to the stereoscope format. Geographical societies and Francis Galton had historically promoted the stereo camera for land surveying, particularly for monuments and buildings (Livingstone and Withers 2005: 20). If the Shirokogoroffs were engaged in land surveying or cartography, this choice of equipment would make sense. Indeed, within the Shirokogoroff collection there are two images that include a surveyor's pole in the frame (Fig. 7.6) (MAĖ 2638-55a and b). These had previously been read as evidence of the Shirokogoroffs being engaged in surveying work. However, on closer inspection, the pole is fixed in the ground and marked with *dūimya* (inches) to measure levels, most likely water depth during floods or the depth of accumulated snow.<sup>6</sup>



Fig. 7.6 "Orochen equestrians". Identified as "Administrative heads among the Orochen population" in 2638-78. Photo by Elizaveta or Sergei Shirokogoroff, Radde, Upper Amur basin, 1915–1916 (MAĖ 2638-55b). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

6 One of the men in Figure 7.6 appears next to a government building in a later photograph, perhaps indicating that hydrological measurements might have been one of his duties (MAĖ 2638-77).

Some early anthropologists also considered the stereo camera as a tool of authenticity that provided a spatial physical presence of peoples who were “dying out” (Matiasek 2016: 193). Yet despite efforts by David Brewster, the developer of the stereoscope (Livingstone and Withers 2005: 209), to promote the camera, it was seldom recommended for anthropological work. In addition, the smaller-sized negative of the stereo camera the Shirokogoroffs used produced portraits that were deemed “of comparative little value” (British Association 1909: 50).<sup>7</sup> However, if showing photographs in the field, as Elizaveta potentially did (SPF ARAN 849-5-803, 3), the stereoscope could be considered a magical format. Not only could individuals see their own or friend’s likeness, but they also could be seen three-dimensionally — an early form of virtual reality.

Based on the 45 x 107 mm format of the negative, the camera used was probably a Richard verascope, which was smaller, lighter and more flexible for fieldwork. And with a 1/60 shutter speed and a magazine that stocked twelve negatives that were simply changed by turning the camera upside down, instant snapshot photography suddenly became possible (Henriot and Yeh 2012: 65). The verascope certainly changed the styles, genres, and number of photographs the Shirokogoroffs took during their latter two expeditions. During their 1915 expedition — the images from which form the photographic series MAĖ no. 2500 — one gets the sense they were experimenting with a new “toy”. Gone were the head and shoulders portraits against a blank backdrop. Instead there were informal “snapshot” portraits of individuals taken as opportunities arose. Landscapes and studies of houses and settlements now appear more frequently (Fig. 7.7). We also find images of the anthropologist in the field (MAĖ 2500-6), the anthropologist on the trail (MAĖ 2500-36), and the more personal holiday snap (MAĖ 2500-8) (Fig. 7.8).

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7 BAAS’s criterion for cameras used in anthropometric work was that “the portraits should be on such a scale that the distance between the top of the head and the bottom of the chin shall in no case be less than 1 ¼ inch (30 mm.)” (British Association 1909: 50). The verascope as used by the Shirokogoroffs produced headshots no larger than 15mm.

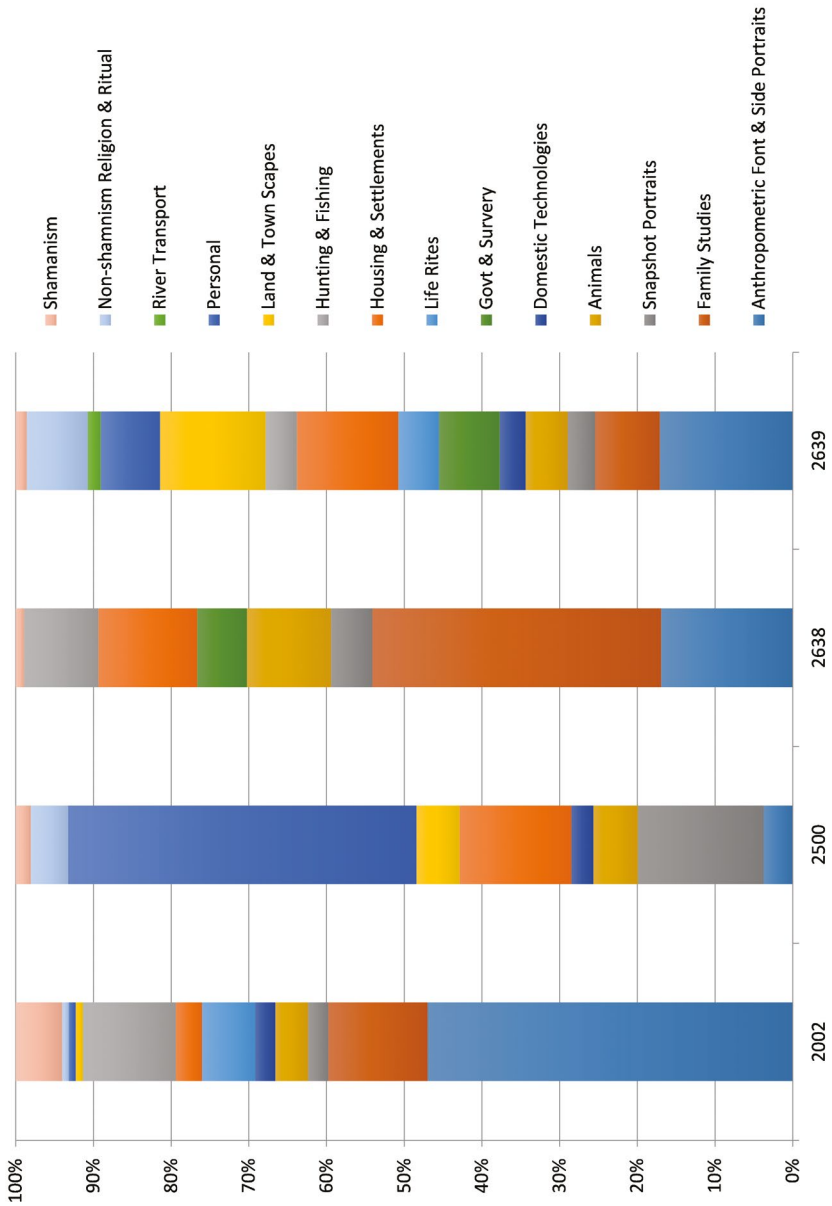


Fig. 7.7 The genres of photography undertaken by Elizaveta and Sergei Shirokogoroff, 1912–1917 (see also Arzūtov 2017), graph by Jocelyne Dudding



Fig. 7.8 “Man (?) with two dogs outside a tent”. Elizaveta with the camp dogs and their tents in the background. Photo by Sergei Shirokogoroff, Priamurskii Kraï, 2015 (MAË 2500-8). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

During the 1915–1916 and 1917 expeditions the Shirokogoroffs returned to taking anthropological portraits, although possibly still through chance encounters such as when Oroqen and military troops visited their camp (e.g. MAË 2639-342 - 2639-377 and MAË 2639-435 - 2639-457 respectively). Families appear posing in front of their houses (e.g. MAË 2638-15 - 2638-18), and thus the images could be used to illustrate social as well as material culture. This reformatting of anthropological portraits also may have been a reaction to the difficulties Elizaveta noted of photographing and measuring individuals in 1912 (SPF ARAN 849-5-803: 12v, 20), but it also illustrates Sergei’s early interest in family characteristics and kinship systems and properties, which resulted in a series of manuscripts and several published books (Arzūtov 2017).

An anomaly in the Shirokogoroffs’ archive is the relative lack of a visual presence of shamans and shamanism. Since Sergei came to be known after his death as an expert on shamanism, this absence is curious and frustrating. For today’s Oroqens and Ewenkis, many of whom have lived through the Cultural Revolution, glimpses of religious practices before they were banned are important. In the surviving photographic archive, Shirokogoroff documented eight shamans dressed in their full regalia and two portraits of a shaman in everyday wear (Fig. 7.9). This links quite well to Shirokogoroff’s interest in clothing and interpretation of regalia as “equipment”, as discussed in chapter 5. Along these lines, there are also two photographs of a shaman’s spirit-apron misleadingly captioned as “Utensils” (MAË 2500-87 - 2500-088). There is also one

photograph of “Birches stuck in the ground, with rags and rabbit skins attached”, which is likely a shamanistic site (MAË 2002-9). Finally, there is a series labelled “Oforo (Kalun-Shan’). A sacrifice” (MAË 2639-568 - 2639-571) that appears to show meat being prepared and guests attending but not of the ritual performance. None of these material or social aspects are mentioned in Sergei’s epic *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* (1935) nor are there any written accounts of performances in Elizaveta’s 1912 field diary. It would seem that for them shamanic ritual generated objects rather than relationships.



Fig. 7.9 “A female shaman (in traditional dress with her drum)”. Photo by Elizaveta Shirokogoroff, Orochen compound, Upper Amur basin, 1915–1916 (MAË 2638-23). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

A disadvantage of the verascope camera was that it used a thinner glass plate, meaning its lightness for transportation and use was offset by a much higher breakage rate. For example, it’s almost certain that the Shirokogoroffs made a frontal and probably a side portrait of the female shaman depicted in Fig. 7.9, yet only the photograph of the back of her costume ever reached MAË. The Shirokogoroffs also had difficulties with soft focusing, poor exposures, light leakage, and chemical staining during developing or printing.<sup>8</sup> Elizaveta records developing her own negatives (SPF ARAN 849-5-803, 24), and during their 1915–1917 expeditions they were printing images in the field using printing-out

8 The series of plates in MAË with the classmark 2002, taken on the 5 x 7” camera has nineteen damaged and/or poorly taken negatives. The verascope series with classmark MAË 2500 has 44 damaged negatives, series MAË 2638 has sixteen, and series MAË 2639 has 127.

paper.<sup>9</sup> This adds to the lack of quality of the Shirokogoroffs' photographs, which often makes their images difficult to read. Unfortunately, with so many of the portraits having undistinguishable features, it made them of limited interest for today's viewers looking for family resemblances.

The Shirokogoroff photographic archive is poorly documented. It would seem that the couple themselves undertook their portraiture for extremely formal or typological purposes, without any thought to delving into the individual's personal biography. Elizaveta notes in her 1912 field diary that the photographs were taken to support anthropometric measurements, and that census cards were also completed on each family (SPF ARAN 849-5-803: 3, 5, 10v, 12v, 13, 19v, and 20). The census cards, which may have held the attributions, have not been found. The photographs from the 1912–1913 expeditions were attributed by Sergei Shirokogoroff himself and generally were classified by region, year, and ethnic group, with few if any detail concerning the individuals in each photograph.

The much more extensive archive from the 1917 expedition often lacks even this basic information, which probably was due to the fact that the couple posted their undeveloped glass plates to St Petersburg for processing (TumA 1915/16: 95). Although they returned to St Petersburg briefly in 1917, it is likely that they never even saw the printed results. It is further likely that museum workers who did not know the context of the expedition documented the collection. In addition, the museum's classmarks do not reflect the photographs' chronological order. This lack of documentation meant that when contemporary Ewenki searched the databases for connections, the Shirokogoroffs' photographs were frequently overlooked.

As typologies, the Shirokogoroffs' photographs were rather more successful. It is significant that the 1915–1916 expedition was planned to investigate what we can recognize today as ethnogenetic curiosity. Sergei described the Tungus of eastern Mongolia and Northwest Manchuria as living in a "transitory belt" and interested himself in the study of "degrees of assimilation and even of amalgamation" with neighbouring groups (Shirokogoroff 1923a: 518, 520). His conclusions — perhaps in some unknown way illustrated by his anthropometric photographs and

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9 Gelatin-chloride paper that is contact-printed with a negative using the sun as a light source.

collections of material culture — were that the southern Tungus groups were “leading ethnoses”. He argued that they heavily influenced both Manchu and Chinese cultures, the latter of which he controversially described “as an amalgam” (Shirokogoroff 1923b: 619, 621).

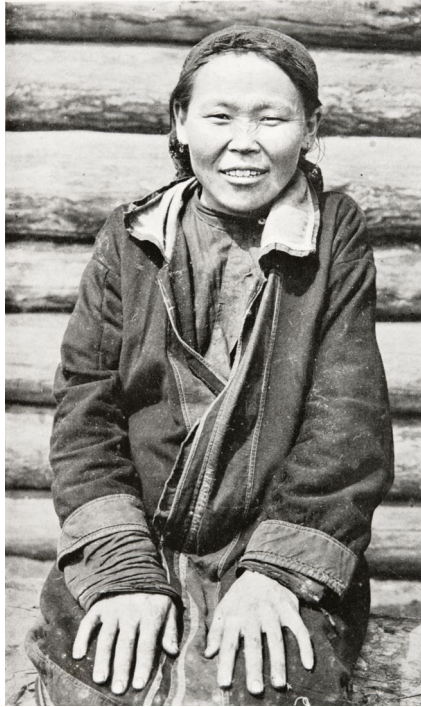


Fig. 7.10 “Transbaikalian Orochon woman (Collection of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography)”. Reproduced in Czaplicka 1914: plate 13. Originally entitled “Woman (front)” (MAÉ 2002-39). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

Copies of the Shirokogoroff’s photographs found their way into the hands of collectors and many images were published in a host of Soviet-era publications, often without attribution to the photographer (Anderson and Arzyutov 2016: 205 n18) (Fig. 7.10). The results of the 1915–1916 Manchurian expedition were cited in many of the English-language scientific publications published under Sergei’s authorship, although often not in a way that allows easy interpretation of the photographic archive. Sergei published one English-language account of the 1912 and 1913 fieldwork in a scientific journal that is now difficult to find

(Shirokogoroff 1923a, 1923b). Elizaveta wrote and published in Russian a detailed account of their journey with a heavy emphasis on a description of the watersheds and roads used to access the area (Shirokogorova 1919). Elizaveta also published her analysis of the songs and music that she recorded during their fieldwork (Shirokogorova 1936).

This interesting latter aspect of their first expedition, and perhaps also of their Manchurian fieldwork, was an early attempt at sharing museum phonographic collections. The couple took with them a phonograph and printed copies of unidentified types of music, which they played for local Oroqens and Ewenkis, to great interest. In return, they also recorded local songs. As Elizaveta explained in a much later publication:

The Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in Petrograd in 1911–12 opened a Department of Musical Phonograms [...] Every researcher was given a phonograph and wax cylinders in order to record original versions of folk music among the peoples of Siberia and Asia. In the United States [at the Smithsonian Institution] this movement has already created its own literature on the study of folk music (Shirokogorova 1936: 283).

In her handwritten field diary, it was clear that the playing of the phonogram, and the recording of music, often functioned as a social ice-breaker, and thereby made individuals more comfortable with Elizaveta undertaking measurements and the photographing of physical types:

22 June. [...] A lot of people came to join our company. The women agreed to be measured. The phonograph made a great impression on everyone. I let them listen to the entire collection (SPF ARAN 849-5-803: 3).

15 [July] [...] In the evening, we opened the phonograph. It was with great difficulty we managed to get someone to sing something. On the one hand, they wanted to, but they got shy. They wanted to sing. It proved necessary to isolate Serëzha [Sergei] [to get them to sing]. Their songs are not long and very monotonous. They sang, laughing (Ibid: 16v-17).

However crackly and faint these wax cylinder recordings are, when played back in 2015–2016 they instantly appealed to all groups alike. Even when the songs were not recognised, or were not from the same cultural group, listening to the old songs linked people across the centuries. Invariably the listener would reply in song, to which many would then add their voices (Fig. 7.11).





Fig. 7.11 Mrs Erdongua listening to and then singing the lullaby recorded by Elizaveta Shirokogoroff in 1912. Photo by Bǎohuà, 2 April 2015. Wax cylinder, Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House) (FV 3276)

## The Field Photography of Ethel Lindgren and Oscar Mamen

Ethel Lindgren, a Cambridge social psychology graduate, and Oscar Mamen, the Norwegian explorer and trader (and later, her husband), conducted social anthropological research from their base in Hǎilǎěr, Hūlúnbèiěr province, between 1929 and 1932. Lindgren's most well-known work is from her and Mamen's three short expeditions northwards to stay with Reindeer Ewenkis in summer 1929, winter 1931, and spring 1932. On each of these trips they also spent a number of weeks with the Russian Cossack communities along the Argun [É'ěrgǔnà] River. The routes of these expeditions often overlapped with the earlier paths of the Shirokogoroffs (Fig. 7.12). During their time in Hūlúnbèiěr, Lindgren and Mamen amassed a staggering visual archive of 8,813 photographs covering all minorities in the area including Reindeer Ewenkis.<sup>10</sup> The collection is not only notable for the high quality and pleasing artistic composition of its images, but that it provides some of the earliest known photographs of the diverse peoples and landscapes of the region

10 This figure represents the number of unique images in their collections and consists of 5,778 negatives, 2,816 prints without an original negative currently located, and 219 drawings.

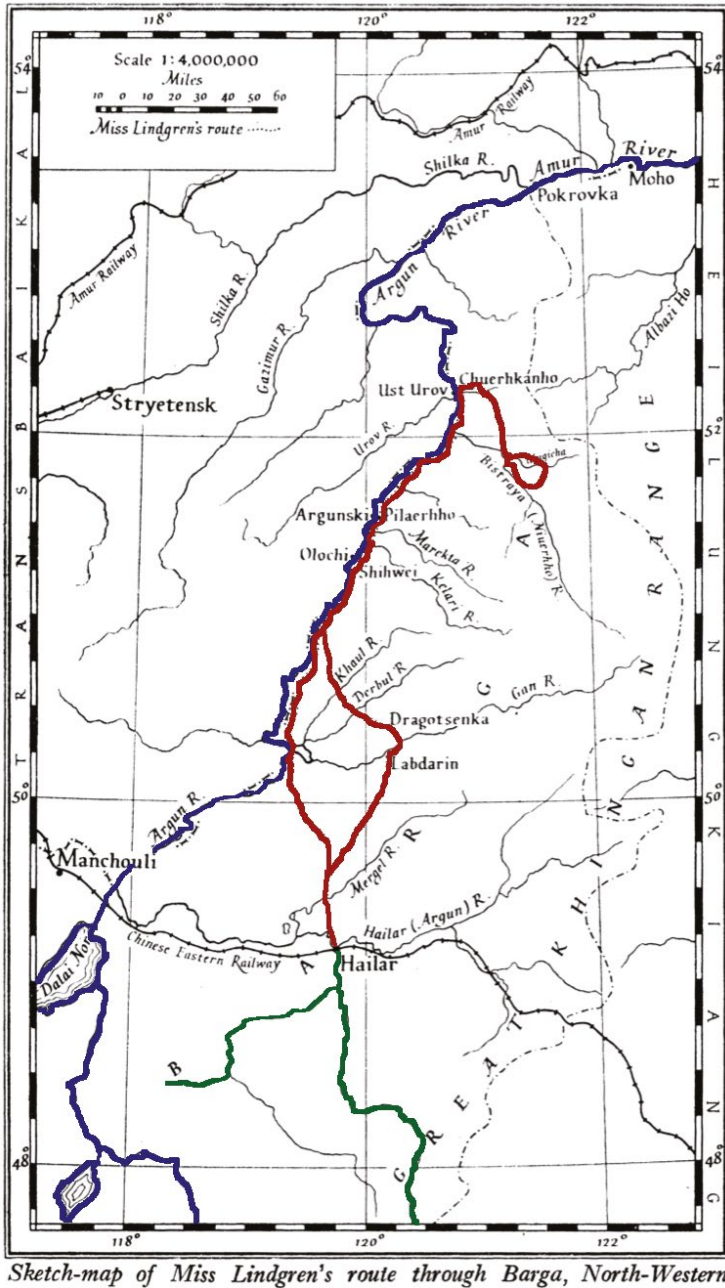


Fig. 7.12 Lindgren and Mamen's expedition routes in former Northwest Manchuria, 1929-1932 (author's highlighting) (MAA MN0082). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

now known as Hūlúnběiěr, Inner Mongolia. As with the Shirokogoroffs, Lindgren and Mamen also made a large number of field reports and Lindgren collected over 200 material artefacts.

Ethel John Lindgren was born in Illinois in 1905 to a Swedish-American family, but spent much of her youth in Asia accompanying her stepfather, Henry Eichheim, the composer and ethnomusicologist, on his tours. In November 1917 she saw Central Asia for the first time, writing later,

Standing on an inner great wall, above Kalgan, I saw the dun-coloured land continuing to the horizon and thought it was the desert.

I had a great *feeling*, one of serenity, of eternity — a feeling of the ground (JLA 1987).

At that moment, Lindgren vowed to return to find out as much as possible about Central Asia — both Chinese Turkestan and Outer Mongolia — with a view to the possibility of entering these territories and doing ethnographic work within them.

Lindgren had learnt Chinese and Japanese during these visits and these, along with experimental psychology, were the subjects of her initial studies at Cambridge. Upon transferring to anthropology, and with a growing interest in the social psychology of cultural groups, working under the supervision of Ellis Minns, Lindgren fulfilled her wish to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in Mongolia. Lindgren arrived in Běijīng in December 1927, but it was not until March 1928 that she was able to find a suitable travel companion and the necessary visas to travel on to Urga (now Ulaanbaatar) (Fig. 7.13).<sup>11</sup>

For many anthropologists about to embark on expeditions, we normally find a shopping list of equipment. For Lindgren this list consisted of one item only: a shotgun with 500 rounds of ammunition and its licence, issued by the US Legation (JLA 1928a). She also packed a camera, which she probably saw equally as a scientific tool to document her fieldwork — as recommended in *Notes and Queries in Anthropology* (Marreco and Myres 1912: 353-59) — and a means of recording images for her personal memoirs. Ironically, as Lindgren wrote to

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<sup>11</sup> Lindgren's first travel companion had withdrawn from the trip over safety concerns and others — like Roy Chapman Andrews and Sven Hedin who Lindgren met in Beiping as they were leading expeditions out to Mongolia — were unwilling to have a young female on their teams (JLA 1928a; 1928c).



Fig. 7.13 “E. J bartering at our camp with R. T. woman, Listvîanaîa, near Bystraîa River”. Photo by Oscar Mamen, 30 May 1932 (MAA N.23911.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

her friend, after surviving military skirmishes and “so many bandits between here [Kalgan] and the missions [at Chabar] (which are near the border of Outer Mongolia) that it is unsafe to take anything with one” (JLA 1928b), the Mongolian border guards confiscated Lindgren’s camera and gun as she entered the country. As Lindgren commented, “Mongolia was by then a satellite state of Russia”, and therefore not only was photography banned, her movements were restricted to the city boundaries of Ulaanbaatar, meaning that she was unable to undertake the anthropological fieldwork as she had hoped (JLA 1932a). Lindgren did not own a camera again until 1931. Instead, all her photographs relating to Mongolia were given to her by friends. During her 1929 and 1930 expedition and residence in Northwest Manchuria, Oscar Mamen took all of the photographs (Lindgren 1936, ii).

Lindgren first met Mamen while in Ulaanbaatar, writing to a friend that Mamen was:

a giant figure [...] of whom I have heard so much [...] He has clear blue eyes, grey-white hair, & that hawk-like explorer profile and gaunt figure one knows in travelling Norwegians — speaks excellent English, has good stories, & [enjoys] the pleasures of wine — in this case cognac is the only adequate consolation, women (in this case all memories) and song: the gramophone. So are the old pleasures modified & reproduced in Urga (JLA 1928d).

Oscar Mamen was born in June 1885 to a farming family in southern Norway and grew up enjoying outdoor pursuits. In 1911, on the invitation of his cousin, Alfred Rustad, Mamen travelled to Ulaanbaatar in order to help set up an office of the British American Tobacco Company. Mamen had travelled to Outer Mongolia (Republic of Mongolia) in search of adventure and riches. Instead he developed a love affair with a place and cultures that he extensively documented visually and literarily. Mamen never trained as a surveyor, geographer, or anthropologist, but he assisted other explorers who travelled to Mongolia and embraced many of their techniques and practices.<sup>12</sup> Thus, at around the same time the Shirokogoroffs were travelling with their camera to Siberia, Mamen obtained and travelled with a camera to remote areas of Outer Mongolia. For Mamen, photography was an artistic hobby and personal record, although he also at times utilised it as a scientific tool to evidence reality (Fig. 7.14).

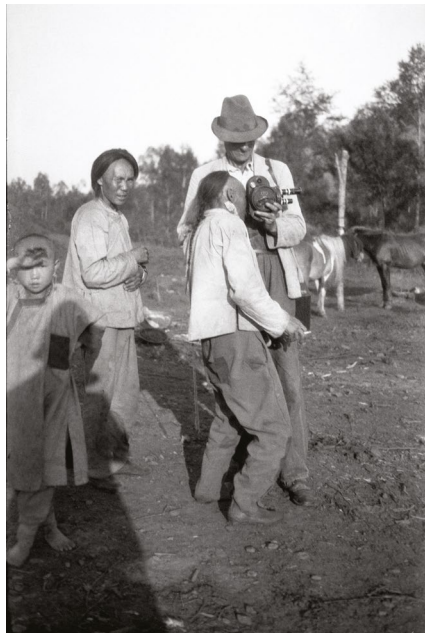


Fig. 7.14 “Khavan examines movie, Elingui”. Photo by Ethel Lindgren, 27 August 1931 (MAA N.40453.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

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12 Mamen features in several books written by travellers to the area, including Roy Chapman Andrews (1921).

Six months after their first meeting, Lindgren, Mamen, and all other foreign nationals were expelled from Mongolia after the political coup in February 1929. In their final days in Mongolia, Mamen was recommended to and employed by Lindgren as a guide and photographer for her proposed new fieldwork site of Northwest Manchuria. Mamen and Lindgren married in January 1930.

Relocating to Inner Mongolia, Lindgren and Mamen went in search of what Lindgren described as “a little-known tribe of Reindeer-Tungus” (Lindgren 1930: 518), writing:

It was with incomplete and largely misleading information about the Northern Barga, its modes of communication, and where and how the Reindeer Tungus were to be found, that I set out to investigate this remote tribe in June of [1929] (Lindgren 1930: 527).

Lindgren’s fieldwork was conducted during a transition period from the classical practice of exploration and ethnographical collecting (hence her first visit had undercurrents of salvage ethnography) to the new modes of immersive field research. During her first expedition, Lindgren had met and become friends with Olga Dmitrievna Kudrina, an Ewenki shaman (Fig. 7.15). At Olga’s invitation, Lindgren returned to stay at Olga’s camp during her second and third expeditions. This intensive time with Olga provided invaluable information that was to become the basis of Lindgren’s doctoral thesis, “Notes on the Reindeer Tungus” (Lindgren 1936). A large number of photographs in the collection are of Olga, including images of her dressed in her shamanic costume, her relatives, and her camp, but vexingly, as with the Shirokogoroffs, there are no photographs of Olga performing as a shaman. Lindgren’s thesis is significant for its early analysis of the functions of shamanic healing rituals and as a precursor to later reflexive methodologies (Lorimer 2006: 508).

Mamen is the unsung hero in this story of the success of Lindgren’s fieldwork. Lindgren’s previously mentioned description of Mamen demonstrates his immense popularity and sociability (JLA 1928d). At six feet, four inches tall, with blond hair, he equally had a physical presence, as well as being a figure of curiosity, particularly for children (Lindgren was six feet, one inch tall with ginger hair). Mamen was also a polyglot, fluent in Mongolian, Chinese, English, Norwegian, and conversant in Russian, German, French, and eventually Ewenki. His non-verbal communication was also effective. After six weeks on the trail of the “elusive and mysterious Ewenki”, on their first encounter



Fig. 7.15 Olga Dmitrievna riding reindeer held by her husband, Nikolai Larionovich. Ochilda, Upper Bystraia. Note Mamen's tent in the background. Photo by Oscar Mamen, 29 November 1931 (MAA N.23654.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge



Fig. 7.16 "Meeting the 1st R. T. on Ulugicha River". Nikolai Ivanovich Kokeroff [Kokarov] with Lindgren at their joint camp. Photo by Oscar Mamen, 25 July 1929 (MAA N.126084.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

with such an individual, Mamen writes, "shaking hands, gave him vodka and starting talking around our caperkelzie [sic] breakfast" (HILA Mamen 3-16: 25 Jul. 1929). Over the next five days at Nikolai Ivanovich Kokeroff's camp (Fig 7.16), Mamen went hunting and fishing with the men, sharing both his catch and meals with them (HILA

Mamen 3-16: 26–30 Jul. 1929). It was probably Mamen’s ability to hunt that aided Mamen and Lindgren’s acceptance at the camps: in 1929 there were severe food shortages, with several deaths due to starvation being noted (Lindgren 1936: xxxi). Mamen wrote,

The food question is becoming serious with us, and the Avankies [sic] have nothing to spare. I went twice out hunting but saw nothing. Finally managed to buy some flour, 10 Russian pounds for \$3 (HILA Mamen 3-17: 2 Aug. 1929).

Lindgren certainly would not have been able to survive in the snow forests without Mamen’s ability to procure food (Lindgren 1936: ii). Mamen’s stories and photographs of hunting subsequently proved critical in engaging today’s Ewenki and Oroqen men with the images during our digital sharing project (Fig. 7.17).



Fig. 7.17 “Three Tungus hunters from behind, Mid Martielkoi, Barga, N. Manchuria”. Photo by Oscar Mamen, 27 November 1931 (MAA N.23611.LIN).  
© Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

Mamen was responsible for all the expedition photography in 1929 (379 negatives), and for the majority of images from the 1931 and 1932 trips (1,650 and 1,320 negatives respectively). He also made about 1,500 feet of 16 mm cine film (MAA F.126021.LIN-F.126029.LIN). From Mamen’s first photographic endeavours in 1913 he used folding-bed cameras with 127-roll film. These cameras were light and portable and Mamen utilised them for making both instant and sequential imagery. Unlike the Shirokogoroffs, it appears that Mamen did not have difficulties



accessing or affording photographic material, and he amassed an impressively large archive for this time period.

In 1929, Mamen was using a Piccolette camera with a 4 x 6.5 cm negative that had been purchased by Lindgren for the expedition, and he was processing and distributing prints of “all those I snapped” while on the trail (HILA Mamen 3-16: 15 Jul. 1929). In 1931, Mamen had updated his equipment to a Zeiss Kolibri camera and Lindgren was using Mamen’s old Kodak Vest Pocket Camera. A year later, Mamen was experimenting with a Leica 35 mm camera, although Lindgren wrote to her doctoral supervisor, Professor Minns,

In many ways the much advertised Leica and Kolibri cameras have proved a disappointment. The ideal picture can be enlarged indefinitely: but if the film itself has some structural flaw (and unfortunately many have) an enlargement of course magnifies it to such a point that the print cannot be used for reproduction without much retouching (JLA 1933).

Mamen made a diverse portfolio of images: primarily informal portraits of his expedition companions, the lands they travelled, and the events they attended. He also used the camera to evidence “we were here”, such as their first encounter with an Ewenki person (MAA N.126084.LIN), and as explanatory illustrations for his writings on events attended and new technologies encountered (HILA Mamen M.63) (Fig. 7.18).



Fig. 7.18 “3 women & 2 little girls, Omul-ail (W)”. The girl in the middle is named Laorgao and her mother is holding her. On the right is Xiaonian, aged four, and her six-year-old sister is standing in the doorway too shy to be photographed. Information from Laorgao, July 2015. Photo by Oscar Mamen, 23 May 1929 (MAA N.39838.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

The taking of anthropometric frontal and profile portraits was a new genre for Mamen in 1929, and as this practice primarily included Ewenki “types” it was probably done at Lindgren’s request. Many of these portraits are similar to the Shirokogoroffs’, although the inclusion of informal social elements at the edges of the frame of the anthropologist’s posed and controlled portrait seems more deliberate than with the Shirokogoroffs (Fig. 7.19). After Lindgren obtained her own camera and was taking her own “type” studies, Mamen repositioned his camera to make more informal character studies that show a comradeship and partnership between those in front of and behind the camera.

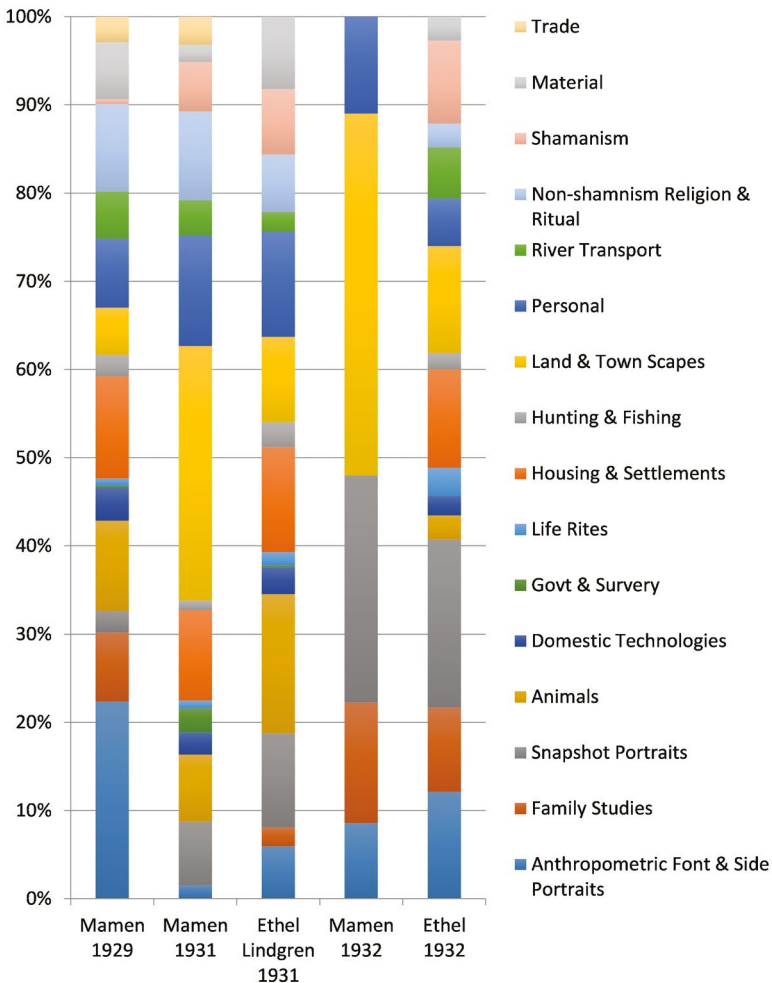


Fig. 7.19 The genres of photography undertaken by Oscar Mamen and Ethel Lindgren, 1929, 1931–1932, graph by Jocelyne Dudding

The Lindgren-Mamen collection is extremely important as it documents the changing conditions in Northwest Manchuria and Mongolia at a crucial stage in its political, social, and economic history. The Manchu Empire collapsed in 1911 and the Mongols in what was then Outer Mongolia undertook to create an independent nation state. A number of photographs depict the political movements of Mongolian nationalists in the Barga region at the time. Inner Mongolia made several attempts at independence, autonomy, or union with Outer Mongolia, but these were unsuccessful for various political reasons. Other photographs and Mamen's diaries record the Japanese invasion of Harbin in 1932, after which they considered it unsafe to remain in China. Unlike the Shirokogoroffs, who settled in China for the rest of their lives, Lindgren was never to return to Manchuria.

Due to concerns about the political situation and the safety of her friends and colleagues remaining in Manchuria, Lindgren published very little of her research. She also deliberately concealed the identity of specific individuals, particularly informants, to ensure their safety (Whitaker 1988: 255). Hence in her thesis, Russian traders are simply referred to as "Trader A.", "Trader B.", etc. (Fig. 7.20).



Fig. 7.20 "Aleksēi Filippovich Kaigorodov", identified as "Trader B." in Lindgren's doctoral thesis. Photo by Oscar Mamen, Muchikan, 14 August 1929 (MAA N.21765.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

## Evolving Museology

The collections of these two couples now reside primarily in two institutions. The Shirokogoroff archive is held in the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (MAĖ) in St Petersburg. The collection is fragmentary, consisting of only the 810 photographs that have been discovered at present.<sup>13</sup> This collection itself was not well known for many reasons. Part of its obscurity might be due to the fragmented nature of the archive and partly due to the controversial status of these émigré scholars in the former Soviet Union. Nevertheless, prints made from their glass negatives were mounted onto captioned cards and used as a research archive for internal and visiting scholars (Fig. 7.21a). In addition to the photographs and field reports, the couple collected artefacts, physical anthropological measurements, and archaeological specimens.<sup>14</sup> Combined together, they make up the largest single collection in the museum (Sirina and Davydov 2017). Eleven wax cylinders recorded by Elizaveta Shirokogoroff are held at Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House) (FA IRL RAN 3271–3289), and many of their manuscripts are held in the Archive of the Academy of Sciences in the same city, with the remainder dispersed across Eurasia.

Lindgren and Mamen's photographs entered the photographic collections of the MAA in two separate events; first, in 1935 Lindgren sent 130 prints for inclusion in Haddon's teaching collection (Fig. 7.21b). Then, four years after her death, her son, John Lindgren, donated her photographs and papers to the museum in 1992. The collection is officially accessioned as the "Lindgren Collection" although the majority of photographs (sixty per cent) were made by Mamen.

Although both the MAĖ and the MAA actively sought photographs from Shirokogoroff and Lindgren at the time of their creation, their subsequent positioning within these institutes has been ambiguous. With the falling out of fashion of such anthropological teaching and research visual aids after the 1940s, and with what Elizabeth Edwards and Chris Morton describe as the "redrawing of collections

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13 The collection in the MAĖ's archive consists of 501 negatives and 280 prints. Another 159 prints were registered by the MAĖ in the 1920s, but their location is not currently known.

14 "Archaeological excavations at the Amur river in Blagoveshchensk district" (photographic series MAĖ 2638) [RA IIMK 1/1(1916)/162].



Fig. 7.21a “Types of Amur River Orochen”. A mounted board from Shirokogoroff’s Printed Collection. Photo by Sergei Shirokogoroff, likely July 1915. Orochens: Likely Bystraia River camp (MAĖ 2639-219 and 2369-220). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

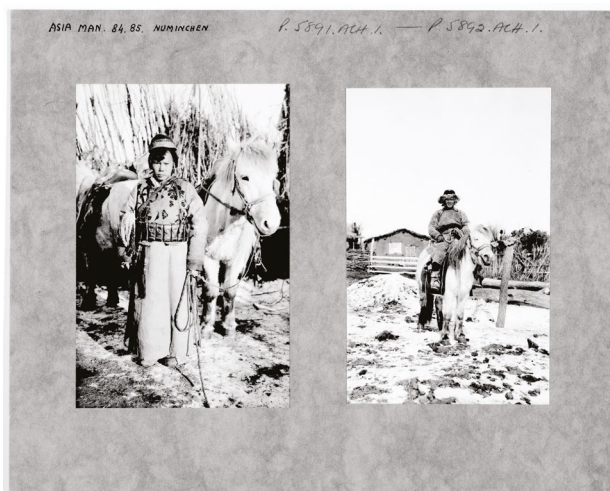


Fig. 7.21b “Numinchen” and “Kumarchen – Garsand, living among the Numinchen”. A mounted board from the MAA’s Teaching Collection and related catalogue card. Photos by Oscar Mamen, Imin River, 21 March 1932 (MAA P.5891.ACH1 and P.5892.ACH1). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

boundaries and curatorial territories”, these teaching collections were transferred — often divided — and left to languish in boxes in libraries, basements, cupboards, under stairs, etc. (Edwards and Morton 2015:

8). More recently, with developments in representation theories and alternative historical narratives — combined with the introduction of digital technologies — there has been an upsurge in interest in photographic collections cared for by museums. It was this changing academic context and the enthusiasm in the original communities that led our group to initiate a digital sharing project with the photographic collections of the two couples.

At the time of their fieldwork, both Lindgren and Mamen recognised the social importance of their photographs to the people they met. Lindgren wrote, the Ewenkis “were most anxious for copies of their photographs, which I trust have since reached them safely through the trading station” (Lindgren 1930: 534). It is not known whether any of these prints reached the Ewenki camps in 1929, and to date no one has mentioned seeing surviving prints within the Ewenki community. This return of photographs was not an isolated undertaking for Lindgren and Mamen. As Mamen recorded in his diary:

Thursday, 23rd [May]. Hailar. Clear, warm weather. Been to the second Dagur village, Omul Ail, most of the day and taken a lot of snaps, etc.

and five days later:

Tuesday. 28th. Hailar. Clear, hot weather. Been to Dagur village, Omul Ail, with Haisan and distributed photos, etc (HILA Mamen 3-16: 23 and 28 May 1929).

These early exercises in the sharing of prints open up the question, as we shall see below, of the different ways that images can be interpreted.

## Affection for and Recognition of Northwest Manchuria in the Twenty-First Century

Almost a century has passed since the Shirokogoroff photographic archive was created, as well as some eighty years since Lindgren and Mamen assembled their archive. Between 2014 and 2017 all the images from both collections were shared and discussed with Ewenkis and Oroqens by myself and other scholars in China. The formal diffusionist and evolutionist frames that had encouraged the Shirokogoroffs and Lindgren and Mamen to compose their photographs had, in many cases,

been forgotten both by scientists and by local people. Nevertheless the photographs were evocative and recognizable to descendants of the many cultural groups portrayed in the archives. In general, the better composed and somewhat fresher Lindgren-Mamen photographs had greater appeal for Manchurian audiences. However, photographs of the artefacts collected by the Shirokogoroffs, along with their wax cylinder recordings, evoked a similarly strong interest.

The long interval between the collection of this material and their return plays an important part in this story. Revolution, civil wars, and geopolitical tension were key factors in isolating these archives from their source communities. New digital technologies have helped bring them together again. Today we are able to digitize the plates at a high resolution, adjust and recover details in files, and thereafter to create proxies that after are often clearer and more legible than the originals. However, the most important element that fuels curiosity today is the search by local people for a cultural identity after the end of the Cultural Revolution. The incessant pace of modernization, industrialization, and change in the People's Republic of China has made these images especially evocative. Very few of our audiences possessed, or had even seen, historical photographs of their own ancestors, let alone images dating to the times of Lindgren-Mamen or the Shirokogoroffs.

Among the contemporary peoples of Inner Mongolia, the first question nearly always was: What group is this — are they Oroqen or Ewenki? The next question was then: Do you know the person's name? These questions illustrated a desire on the part of contemporary observers to connect and identify with the image. In many ways it also illustrated how these viewers felt a loss of their heritage when they were not able to identify which group was represented in a photo. The recalling and recording of individuals' names was important to many viewers as a way of making a connection with those portrayed. Working with the photographs enabled a sense of agency and ownership, and for many elders, an appreciation that their memories and histories were important — a recognition that they were the holders of knowledge with a responsibility to relay this information on to the next generations. Their enthusiasm to remember went to such a level that sometimes elders "recalled" memories which were not shared by others who were present, sometimes creating tension or debate.

Lindgren and Mamen's careful recording of names was therefore a crucial point of entry for many viewers. Some difficulties arose in that Lindgren and Mamen often recorded the Orthodox Christian Russian names adopted by Ewenkis, which might differ from the Ewenki or Chinese names by which they now may be more commonly known. Lindgren wrote that Ewenkis had adopted Russian names from "when the Reindeer Tungus now in Manchuria were still in Siberia", and continued favouring them due to their continued trade with their Russian *andaki* (trader-friends) (Lindgren 1936: 32; Kolås and Xie 2015: 2). Lindgren does note that most adult Ewenkis, as well as some children, had Tungus names, but these were not disclosed to her — a practice that she rightly or wrongly associated with a desire to avoid the displeasure of the Russian Orthodox Church (Lindgren 1936: 32). Further, Lindgren and Mamen also recorded names using a non-standard phonetic transcription, which complicates making links to the way these names are pronounced today.

The Lindgren and Mamen naming conventions enabled us to create some very direct and moving links between contemporary individuals and their ancestors. One contemporary Ewenki woman, Āntè Bù, who we met at Áolǔgǔyā in April 2015, immediately recognised the name of her father, but not his image, as he had died young and she had never seen a picture of him (Fig. 7.22). Using the name, we were then able to find photos of her grandparents, and her uncle, aunt, and brother. The Lindgren attributions contained the information that her grandparents had adopted her mother, a fact that Anta was not aware of. Having seen these images, she shared memories of and information about her ancestors with her own son and grandson. Later that night, Anta arranged for *lieba* (*khleb*), the Russian-style pan-baked bread we had identified in the photographs of, to be baked for dinner.

On the other hand, the archival recording of names could sometimes bring up uncomfortable issues and memories. Early in our fieldwork, David G. Anderson, a member of the project, raised the issue that Evenkis living in Siberia might be uncomfortable pronouncing the name of a deceased clan member in case the speaking of the name entices a departed spirit to return to the middle world and linger. Different authorities debated this point during the fieldwork on the Chinese side. According to Mèng Sōnglín, a senior Daur, Ewenkis do not practice special avoidances when pronouncing the names of their deceased





Fig. 7.22 Āntè Bù holding a portrait of her father, Piotr Buldorovskii (MAA N.21681.LIN). Photo by Jocelyne Dudding, Áolügüyā, September 2015

parents and relatives: they can directly call their grandparents' and ancestors' names. Or when they have been asked about these individuals, they can say who is from where, or who is from which family because there are many repeated names among these minorities (Sōnglín, pers. comm., 2 Nov. 2016). His comments reflect the importance and respect given to extensive genealogical knowledge among many Mongolian peoples, and he may be speaking about general Inner Mongolian norms. However, Sū Rìtài, an anthropologist working with Ewenki, does note that Mongolian shamans still practice such avoidances. For example, when someone's father died, if the person said,

Dad come back, the spirit will return. However, if the person has been asked who your father is, he can directly call his father's name to tell them, especially when the person have been asked or to is required to complete registrations in police or official departments, they can say their names (Sū Rìtài, pers. comm., 2 Nov. 2016).

As I travelled to Inner Mongolia as a guest of the Hūlúnběiěr Museum and was accompanied by a member of the Propaganda Department, it is conceivable that I was seen in an official capacity and therefore was able to request and be provided with individual names. Regardless of the context, when unnamed individuals could be identified with their Chinese, Russian, or Tungus name, there was an incredible sense of pride and ownership.

Lindgren's naming conventions for the different nationalities were mainly driven by her ideas of cultural evolution, but it is also clear that she was often concerned to record the names and deeds of friends and assistants. This identification allowed individuals to be placed within their social group and retain connection within local histories, which, as Laura Peers and Alison Brown describe, enables self-determination and cultural preservation, particularly after periods of government assimilation policies (Brown and Peers 2006: 273).

A striking example of how local histories can overwrite anthropological framings is the photograph of a mother, who we now know was called Pingrui, with her infant in a traditional cradle in the community of Omul Ail, now named Nántún, on 19 July 1932 (Fig. 7.23). Lindgren and Mamen left a copy of the print with the mother. This print remains with Pingrui's descendants and is considered a family treasure.



Fig. 7.23 Pingrui holding her “Dagur cradle & 3 months baby, Omul Ail”. Photo by Oscar Mamen, 19 July 1931 (MAA P.10943.ACH1). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

The difference in interpretations between the early twentieth century ethnographer and the people's lives that they touched can be read in Lindgren's caption:

Two photographs of a Dagur cradle taken at Omul-ail, a Dagur settlement south of Hãilãěr. The Dagur cradle is very much like [that of] the Numinchen, which I believe to derive from the former. The bulk of the Dagur population of Manchuria lives along the Nonni river, where for over two and a half centuries they have been the chief, almost the sole, traders dealing with the Numinchen and other Kxingan Tungus tribes (MAA P.10943.ACH1).

Lindgren's description betrays her training in how to illustrate anthropological theories with images. She understands the cradle in this caption as being positioned within a system of diffusion whereby the artefact, which could be empty of mother and child, illustrates the way that one ethnic group derives from another. In Lindgren's manuscripts and letters, she wrote of how she used and planned to publish her photographs as tools in the study of social groups (see LCC 1931: 19 and 55; JLA 1932b). However, the magic of this tool is that the image, in Edward's terms, has the ability to lead multiple lives within which it can record parallel realities (Edwards 2003: 83). For the descendants of the mother and child, the image displayed a vibrant connection to the past:

This is Pingrui, we don't know which baby this would be. The cradle is called a "Darde" (Daur language). There is some decoration at the back of the cradle, normally it's made from the small ribs of lambs, and on the top it is suede. The upper design is an auspicious pattern called Naires (Sudure Mani and Dambu 2015).

The striking difference between Lindgren's caption and the Nántún residents' description illustrates that, for originating communities, the photographs' social set of meanings or "other realities" is what is important (Brown and Peers 2006: 265).

Sometimes recognition was experienced without a tangible genealogical link to a particular individual. Of the photographs that drew the most comment, one portrait of "an old woman" was the most popular and was greeted with "She looks just like my grandmother" (Xú Giǔ, February 2015). For many it did not matter whether the woman was Oroqen or Ewenki, or that we didn't know her name. Instead, it was the memories of childhood and growing up while being looked after by

their grandmother that the image conjured that were significant (Fig. 7.24a). This one photo evoked numerous stories of childhood.

The second favourite photo was that of a baby in his cradle, which prompted the exchange:

“He’s so grumpy”.

“So would you be if held up like that”.

“But with those cheeks he’s obviously healthy” (Liú Xiá and Bái Yíng, February 2015).

The photo not only prompted comments on the baby’s expression, but it also sparked stories of what their own cradle looked like (Fig. 7.24b). Based on these responses, and their universal appeal, these became the lead photographs in the projects’ resulting exhibitions and catalogues.



Fig. 7.24a (left) Old mother, daughter and grandchild, Ikhe Bebe (MAA N.40513. LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

Fig. 7.24b (right) Child in cradle: middle wigwam of East group, Ikhe Bebe. Photo by Ethel Lindgren, 1 September 1931 (MAA N.40504.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

In other instances, the recognition of a significant individual could elicit reactions to complex and tragic historical events. The recognition of the Wampuyen is a case in point. In March 1932, Lindgren and Mamen conducted an expedition south along the Yimǐn River during which they stayed for two nights at Ango Holis (now known as Anggo Xolis). Amongst the 200 photos they made during this stay were twelve portraits of a young woman whom Mamen identified as “Wampuzan” and Lindgren as “Wampuyan” (Figs. 7.25a and 25b).

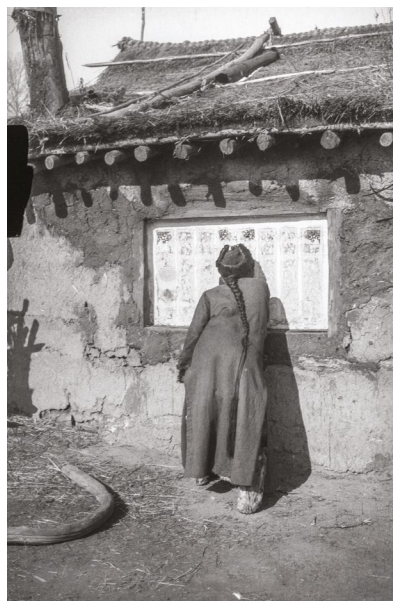


Fig. 7.25a (left) “Wampuzan, young girl, Ango Holis”. Photo by Oscar Mamen, 22 March 1932 (MAA N.21652.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

Fig. 7.25b (right) “Wampuyan calling others, Ango Holis”. Photo by Ethel Lindgren, 22 March 1932 (MAA N.80589.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

As a result of the digital sharing and the public displays of these photographs in 2016, there has been a retelling of the tragic history of the Yimǐn River massacre that took place a few years after Lindgren and Mamen’s visit. According to these oral accounts, an entire village was attacked and killed following a conflict between Burfāts and Yimǐn Oroqen in 1935. According to these accounts, only two girls survived.

One was Wampuyen, who survived due to the fact that her thick braid stopped her attacker's blade on the back of her neck (Fig. 7.25b). Wampuyen was subsequently adopted by Déhǎi Bǎiyer, but she later died from the plague Déhǎi Bǎiyer's son, Mèngghé Bātú, provided these details upon seeing Lindgren and Mamen's photos. These portraits of Wampuyen unlocked more than memories (Binney and Chaplin 2003); they created a dialogue that had been previously unheard and differed from official accounts. Orochon elders from Yīmǐn village recounted how the Buriāts attacked before dawn using machetes to behead men, women, and children. It is estimated that over 200 people died in the attack. Lindgren, who had acquired a shaman costume from Doshincha, the former chief of Anggo Xolis, in 1932, provides another perspective, writing in 1935 that the chief and entire village had been killed "by Buriāts tired of the Numinchen's continuous horse and cattle rustling" (Lindgren 1935). Families in nearby villages adopted the two girls who managed to escape and Anggo Xolis was abandoned. Mèngghé Bātú commented that each time he and his friends saw and talked over the photos of Anggo Xolis, they remembered more details of the villagers and the attack.

These discussions, along with the inclusion of the photos and with their commentary in the exhibition "Dialogue Across the Century" in Nántún, July 2016, was seen by the community as being somewhat cathartic and a means of addressing past injustices (Fig. 7.26). Mention of the attack is made in official accounts, but neither the details nor the number of people killed are recorded in these documents. While showing the portraits of Wampuyen and others from Anggo Xolis brought painful memories to many, the images also brought the recovery and legitimization of the history for the Oroqen living on the Yīmǐn River. Official histories were questioned, and while there are no photographs of the actual attack or aftermath, Lindgren and Mamen's photographs provide support to examine previously written accounts. A second major theme in the sharing of the collections was a fascination with the elements of everyday life and material culture that were portrayed in the images along with the people. This applied equally to the much older Shirokogoroff collection and to the Lindgren-Mamen collection.

Many of the portraits in both collections are informally anthropometric in their paired front and side poses, with the resulting



Fig. 7.26 “Dialogue Across the Century” exhibition, Ewenki Museum, Nántún, July 2016. Photo by Jocelyne Dudding

portraits often appearing slightly awkward and frozen when compared to more journalistic or snapshot styles of photography. When these photographs were shown to contemporary audiences, people were curious about the awkward poses and asked why they were taken this way. When the theoretical context was explained — about how scholars sought to understand the physical form of an individual in order to better understand how identities evolved from one to another — the viewers quickly understood. To some degree, official government policies are still developmentalist and evolutionist, but just as quickly, these meanings were swept aside and the photographs reclaimed as cultural objects with their biographies and histories reattached.

Some participants were immediately able to see the humour behind some of the forced poses. For example, in the Shirokogoroffs’ very first expedition to Zabaïkal’e in Siberia, either the locals dressed in their “best” for the camera, or the couple asked locals and their Cossack guides to pose in traditional Oroqen hunting costumes (Fig. 7.27). There was great amusement when there was the realisation, or what Barthes (1984) calls the *punctum*, that the man wearing the winter furs on the left was wearing summer boots, and vice versa on the right. Speculation continued as to whether the men had deliberately dressed for the camera wearing the incorrect boots, or whether Shirokogoroff had asked the

men to pose in clothing not their own and either the boots did not fit or they did not realize their mistake.



Fig. 7.27 “Men in winter hunting costumes”. Photo by Sergei Shirokogoroff, Chita Region, June 1912 (MAĖ 2002-92). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

This particular photograph was significant since it also bridged a kind of gender divide of interest in photographs of material culture. While scenes of hunting were a visual focus for the men, scenes of domestic life became a focus for many women. Shirokogoroff’s photographs of the two hunters overlapped this gendered interest. The men were interested primarily in the rifles and rifle tripods, and secondarily, along with the women, the purposes of the articles of clothing and what furs or materials they were made from.

More broadly, the photographs from both collections that documented Oroqen hunting equipment and clothing touched on contemporary political issues in another way. Hunting was a particularly sensitive topic for Oroqens, and most highly illustrated their sense of loss of



traditional ways of life. During interviews undertaken in preparation for the exhibition “River Stars Reindeer”, Nieren and Zhāng Róngdé commented,

Hunting is highly valued amongst Oroqens and is an essential way through which traditional skills and knowledge are passed from fathers to sons.

In 1996, all hunting was banned by the Chinese state on the grounds of animal preservation. As part of this, we were ordered to hand in our hunting guns, which for us is the symbol of our identity. While many recognise the need for the ban, the loss of hunting has had a huge social impact on us (Richard Fraser, pers. comm., Feb. 2015).

Photographs of camp life, and the material culture surrounding it, also spurred curiosity about lost lifeways. Recent policies of resettlement, and, in the case of Áolǔgǔyā Ewenkis, multiple resettlements, have been associated with the loss of culture and traditions. The greatest impact was on former hunters who had been permanently relocated to Áolǔgǔyā and disliked their increased separation from the forest and traditional ways of subsistence: hunting and herding. As Richard Fraser, one of the project facilitators, explained based on his interviews, “The hunters’ lives in the town but he wishes to be in the forest. He is always pinning for his days as a hunter. Now all he can do is drink every day” (Fraser 2010: 327). Particularly for those who had been resettled to Áolǔgǔyā, images of older lodges and conical dwellings brought up links to the past and the manner in which newly urbanized settlements pose new challenges not suffered in the older dwellings.

It is fascinating that the debate on housing is an old one, and in the writings of both the Shirokogoroffs and of Lindgren we can see evidence that people struggled to define the best sort of dwelling for their times. In this interesting excerpt from Lindgren’s unpublished diary, written during her expedition to the Chol River in 1931, she encapsulated a debate on the quality of housing materials and nostalgia over the loss of certain techniques:

Birch-bark Wigwam Covers: Khavan spoke of birch-bark as far superior to reeds and said that there was no one who knew how to do it any more. “We have become useless”, he said. He was delighted with photos of N. people and said that when he was young they all had birch-bark — “tikšā(n) ju”. In winter they have roehide. He does not live in a house in

winter, but he said “a few have”. Spoke of houses as warmer. He said they kept their heavy winter things “in the mountains” but in the winter they lived far from the hills, by the river, where it is warmer. Work of preparing “tikšā(n)” he spoke of as heavy: you have to find the right pieces, cut them, then boil them. So they have given it up. The reed bands are easy to prepare (LCC 1931: 19) (Fig. 7.28).



Fig. 7.28 “[Reed] Wigwams & houses at the Orochen settlement at Öru Kere, Upper Yimin River”. Photo by Oscar Mamen, 20 March 1932 (MAA N.21615.LIN).  
© Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

Writing two decades before Lindgren in her published field report, Elizaveta Shirokogoroff worried about cultural assimilation brought on by the architecture of modern dwellings:

The Amur Orochens, like most Orochens, live in conical yurts that are covered in the summer with panels made of boiled bark, and in the winter with warm coverings sewn out of skins. Now it seems this way of life is no longer valued by them in the winter and they have started to build log cabins [*zimov'ia*] of a Russian design. At the present moment there are already three such cabins (although two of them were built by the same Orochen [hunter]). [The residents] have gone so far into the Russian lifestyle that they have started to take on agriculture by settling in the middle sections of the Bystraia River valley and planting there oats and wheat — and are demonstrating good results (Shirokogorova 1919: 20).

For the younger generations today, the stark visual contrast between the conical dwellings of the past and the brick multiple storeyed flats

of today was an eye-opener that prompted discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of their lives over their grandparents' generation. The loss of their cultural heritage, especially the intangible heritage of language, song, and dance, was keenly felt by all generations. This was linked to government policies, which still continue, that push for constant resettlement into increasingly modern dwellings. At the same time, many viewers expressed frustration with the way that traditional dwellings were relegated to museums, or their elements were incorporated into modern brick and concrete architecture in order to try to encourage some monetary economic benefit to the region out of tourism. A classic case-in-point is the troubled story of the Ewenki "village" of *Áolüǰǰyā*, which has been resettled by government planners three times since 1950 (Xie 2015). Many community members told of how their grandparents refused to live in the new housing, instead sleeping in their traditional *d'ū* (conical lodge) and using the house for storage. Shirokogoroff writes personally of the inadequacies of the government houses, describing how they had to pitch their tents inside their allocated government house in order to keep warm (SPF ARAN 142-1(1918)-68: 127).

Again, it is fascinating that the story of government-induced wholesale resettlements is an old story, one that troubled observers as early as 1915. Elizaveta Shirokogoroff worried about centrally planned Oroqen resettlements (Fig. 7.29):

Undoubtedly in the near future the Kumar Orochens will switch to a different manner of subsistence, and likely to agriculture, just like their neighbours have done who live more to the south and east near the Amur River. Around the city of Mergen there are already a few newly formed Orochen villages, and the Orochens there are ploughing the land. The Chinese government is trying in every sort of way, including the use of force, to convert their Orochen subjects to agriculture and to a life in villages planned out according to a Chinese template. They have built new centrally financed villages with 10–15 *fanzas* [Manchu-style semi-subterranean huts] to begin with and have begun resettling Orochens in them. The Chinese government even built an entire city called Sin-an — and filled it with Orochens who likely will scatter and run away. [...] I should mention that this transfer to a new form of economy will be suffered painfully by the Orochens (Shirokogorova 1919: 37).



Fig. 7.29 “An Orochen residence in the forest”. Photo by Sergei Shirokorogoff, Autumn 1915. Orochens: Upper Amur basin, Manchuria (MAË 2638-69). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

There are of course many sides to the debate. The government likely forced resettlement onto Oroqens with a sincere desire to improve the health and well-being of the population. Different generations of government officials felt that traditional dwellings were unhealthy and vulnerable to the elements. Lindgren, some decades later, documented the continual problems caused by summer flooding and the linked problem of shortages of clean water that, combined with traditional hygiene patterns, contributed to the spread of epidemic diseases. The severe flooding of 1929 was one of the justifications given by the Chinese government for building permanent houses for Ewenkis. The vulnerability of traditional structures to flooding and epidemic disease was partly to blame for high rates of infant mortality in traditional camps — a feature of traditional life that contemporary viewers also commented on. For example, Āntè Bù was able to identify the portrait captioned “Wife of Innokentii Nikolaevich Buldotovskii, [Buldorovskii?] with baby. Beremekan Camp. 3/8” (MAA N.21706.LIN) as Oksa[na], her aunt, but when asked who the baby was, Āntè Bù replied, “There were lots of children, and so many died while young, that I don’t remember all their names. I don’t know which child this would have been” (Figs. 7.30a and 7.30b).<sup>15</sup>

15 Interview with Āntè Bù, Áolǔgǔyā, 1 April 2015.



Fig. 7.30a (left) “Wife of In[n]okentii Nikolaevich Buldotovskii [Buldorovskii?], with baby. Beremekan Camp”. “Oksa[na], wife of Churin Buldovskii [Buldorovskii?] (which means “blue-eyed”, like Russians), Āntè Bù’s uncle. The infant’s name is unknown”. Information from Anta Bu, 1 April 2015. Photo by Oscar Mamen, 3 August 1929 (MAA N.21706.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

Fig. 7.30b (right) “Valentina, daughter of Kostenkin [Konstantin] Kudrin, tied in her cradle preparatory to being packed on deer. Note block of ice for water on the left”. Photo by Ethel Lindgren, Martielkoi River, 27 November 1931 (MAA N.24479.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

Lindgren recorded the personal details of only one infant death, that of Valentina, the nine-month-old daughter of Tatiana Petrovna and Kostenkin [Konstantin] Dmitrievich Kudrin, who Lindgren had nomadised with during all three of her expeditions. Lindgren included three photographs of Valentina in her doctoral thesis (Lindgren 1936: 160–62, plates 27–9), and the understatedness of the third caption emphasises the reality: “Cradle, with Valentina in it, being loaded on a deer by the child’s mother and another woman. The reindeer in the right foreground was slaughtered when the child died, 18 days later” (Ibid: 162, plate 29).

The combination of Valentina’s four portraits, along with her and her family’s names, details, and photographs, and her importance to the family being demonstrated by her father “Kostenkin relat[ing]

that on the occasion of his infant daughter Valentina's death they had killed a 'good reindeer' and made 'a very high *delken* [storage cache]'" (Lindgren 1936: 159), meant the photographs had a greater resonance that drew comments from several community members. As Binney and Chaplin note, the return of photographs does not always evoke happy or positive memories (Binney and Chaplin 1991: 431–32).

Unarguably, the highlights of both collections were the images of shamans and shamanistic costumes. Both the Shirokogoroff and Lindgren-Mamen photographic collections are complemented by entire shaman costumes they purchased and are now held in the respective museums. As mentioned previously, the shaman Olga Dmitrievna Kudrina played a special role in the Lindgren collection and indeed in Lindgren's research (Fig. 7.31a). It is perhaps not unimportant to understanding the friendship between Ethel and Olga that in the past the Kudrin family for many generations had supported visiting researchers. The name of one of Olga's ancestors, Grigorii Vasil'evich Kudrin, appears in Sergei Shirokogoroff's field diary of the 1915–1916 expedition while they stayed at Ust' Urov on the Bystraia River [TumA 1916/16: 94]. Shirokogoroff photographed Grigorii Vasil'evich Kudrin's *zimov'e* (winter cabin) and attributed it to the family — a prominent exception to the rule of his scarce documentation (Fig. 7.31b).



Fig. 7.31a "Olga Dmitrievna dressed as shaman, with Nic. and Stepan P., middle Martielkoi, near the Upper Bystraia River". Photo by Oscar Mamen, 26 November 1931 (MAA N.23609.LIN). © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge



Fig. 7.31b Grigorii Vasil'evich Kudrin's cabin. Photo by Sergei or Elizaveta Shirokogoroff, Priamurskii Krai, 1915–1916 (MAĖ 2639-157). © Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

Following in the footsteps of both Shirokogoroff and Lindgren, the later Soviet-era ethnographer Anatoliĭ Kaĭgorodov was also hosted by the Kudrin family, who organized his fieldwork in the Three Rivers region (Kaigorodov 1968; Heyne 2009). Indeed, one could try to reverse the interpretation and argue that the support of the Kudrin family, and Olga in particular, might be closely associated with the development of the themes of shaman-studies and shamanism in Europe.

In Inner Mongolia, the attitude towards shamanism has shifted dynamically. During the Cultural Revolution, religious practices, including shamanism, were banned. In the course of our fieldwork we heard several stories of how, during the period, shamans hid their costumes in the forests to prevent them from being confiscated. Unfortunately, many died before they were able to retrieve their regalia and their costumes were subsequently found by hunters or loggers and deposited in local museums. Since China ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2005, there has been a surge in the numbers of shamans and shamanic practices. With the increased cultural ownership of shamanism there has been a move towards a more private and respectful approach, and on my last visit to Inner Mongolia in 2016, I saw for the first time a notice requesting that visitors not photograph the shaman's hut on display in the Inner Mongolian Museum, Hohhot, out of cultural respect. To date there has

been no request for any photographs of shamans by Shirokogoroff or Lindgren-Mamen to be restricted as secret/sacred, but it is probably only a matter of time.

## Conclusion

Lindgren's, Mamen's and the Shirokogoroffs' photographs ended up in museum collections with captioning that, in many ways, provides a greater understanding of anthropological histories than the content of the image. These photographs retain a "communicative knowledge", that is information communicated visually, but as Edwards notes, their conjunctive knowledge, which relies on social embeddedness, is restricted (Edwards 2001: 89). The process of digitally sharing the photographs with their originating communities enabled them to be recirculated, held, talked about, and viewed in a cultural setting unencumbered by any institutional context. As a result, their conjunctive knowledge was reanimated.

The notion of the photograph being a carrier of a person's spirit is based on the idea that the dead are still with us, and rather than fixing a shadow, photography preserves what John Berger describes as being a "likeness":

What is a likeness? When a person dies, they leave behind, for those who knew them, an emptiness, a space: the space has contours and is different for each person mourned. This space with its contours is the person's likeness and is what the artist searches for when making a living portrait. A likeness is something left behind invisibly (Berger 2001: 19).

Using this definition aids our understanding of why a photograph represents something different for each viewer at a particular time and place. Even when the viewer may not have known the individual portrayed personally, there is often a mythical or social memory (French 1995) based on family, community, or historical stories that provides an emotional outline for viewing the photographs.

This process also emphasizes the responsibility that museums have not only to preserve and document collections, but also to make them accessible to communities in meaningful ways. For both the Shirokogoroff and Lindgren-Mamen collections, this was particularly important due to political, economic, and technological restrictions that



made the photographs difficult for originating communities to access. During this project, we showed digital copies of the Shirokogoroffs' photographs and directed individuals to the MAĖ website<sup>16</sup> for access to low-resolution images and related information and this did change the nature of reciprocity in our fieldwork. For the Lindgren-Mamen collection, the MAA provided high-resolution jpeg files of the entire collection to six community museums and universities, and single files to individuals who engaged with specific images. We also carried a small number of prints, although these proved unnecessary as — from the oldest to the youngest — all community members engaged in viewing the digital images and had no difficulty in navigating through files on either the project's iPad or laptop.

The MAA has a long history of returning photographs to their originating communities, beginning with Alfred Haddon, who took prints from his first Torres Strait expedition (1888–1889) back to the islands during his second expedition (1898–1899). Haddon undertook this action recognising the social importance of the photographs, particularly when the photographs included family and friends who had died in between the trips. Haddon recommended this process in *Notes and Queries* in 1899 and 1914, as well as teaching this practice in his courses in anthropology at the University of Cambridge. It was within this context that Ethel Lindgren completed her studies and she certainly undertook the same practice of sharing prints made on previous expeditions with those she met again. Oscar Mamen, who did not have the same anthropological training, but appeared to have a working interest in exploration, surveying, and people, also ensured that he “printed a lot of photos for the people whom we had snapped” (HILA Mamen: 15 Jul. 1929).

Subsequent to the sharing of photographs by Lindgren and Mamen, a set of photographs was taken back to Evenki communities in Siberia by David Anderson during his doctoral research in 1996. This return was within the remit of “photo elicitation”, that is, the showing of photographs to community members in order to elicit information. In the 2000s, the process had evolved into “visual repatriation”, that is, the return of copies of photographs held in museum collections as museums and communities increasingly became aware of the intrinsic

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16 <http://collection.kunstkamera.ru/entity/ALBUM/1242177864?index=14>

claims of descendants (Buijs and Jakobsen 2011). My issue with the term “visual repatriation” is that it implies a one-way process of museums giving back to communities, yet the original photographs are not returned and the process does not alter the museums’ proprietary rights over the photographs. The term “repatriation” is also highly charged and politicised. For this project the term “digital sharing” was designed to identify that, along with a recognition of the cultural ownership of these images, it was a two-way process of sharing digital copies of the photographs and their related information cared for by MAA with communities. In exchange, there is increased circulation and access to the images and sharing of knowledge and ways of caring for both that knowledge and the images themselves. For the Lindgren project the MAA has also received a number of new photographs created in response to Lindgren’s original photographs for our collections. Thus the project was a collaboration where each partner contributed equally to the sharing of Lindgren and Mamen’s photographs.

Berger instructs us that photographs always need language and require a narrative of some sort to make sense (Berger 1980: 51), and this is certainly true for the Shirokogoroffs’ and Lindgren-Mamen’s photographs. Their photographs contain forensic evidence that relates basic information, and often provides the studium, that is an average effect of liking the photographs (Berger 1981: 26). A significant part of this studium was found not in the photographs’ value, nor in what they visually represented, but in what they are in and of themselves: many individuals within the source communities seemed to want to see the photos because they desired to be part of the collective who had seen and commented on them (Berger 1981: 21). But the punctum, that which grabs the attention and makes a person entranced with an image, was present in moments when, for example, the Ewenki Headman recognised his family’s bridle, or the Yīmǐn River community spotted the braid that saved Wampuyen from being beheaded.

This digital sharing project centred upon supporting the agency of local populations in interpreting and utilising the photographs of these two ethnographic couples for their own local heritage and culture. The project was run in conjunction with the Hūlúnbèiěr Museum, a municipal museum that oversees the Ewenki, Áolǔgǔyā, and Genhe local museums, and sought to promote advancement of museum

practices and engagement with their local communities. The sharing of the photographs and the resulting discussions had a greater impact than just creating dialogue between individuals and across generations; it also started discussions about museums' roles in exploring continuing socioeconomic, education, and health issues. A second Mongolian heritage project is now being proposed that will continue the work of exemplifying partnerships with local museums and stakeholders.

In terms of the Shirokogoroffs, and Lindgren and Mamen, we have collated a more complex understanding of their work in Manchuria. Academic judgements have been consistently levelled against Shirokogoroff due to the lack of contextual information in his writings, and Lindgren due to her lack of publications, but it cannot be underestimated how much global politics influenced their arrival and departure from Manchuria. The Shirokogoroffs' exile separated them from their friends and family, and one gets a sense that neither fully settled in China. Lindgren chose not to publish immediately after her expulsion due to her concerns for the safety of her friends and colleagues that remained in Hǎilǎěr — many of whom were imprisoned or killed in the following years of warfare. By the time that the political situation had stabilised in the 1950s, Lindgren was working as an editor at the Royal Anthropological Institute and developing her Cairngorm Reindeer Herd project with her second husband, Mikel Utsi. Lindgren never returned to Inner Mongolia, despite a desire to. In many ways, her photographs have become her legacy. Her collection provides invaluable cultural heritage for Ewenki and, quoting the headman of Áolǔgǔyā Camp 1, "finding and sharing these photos will bring knowledge and personal meaning for Ewenki in a time of crisis of diminishing customary ways of life and identity".<sup>17</sup>

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17 Gě Jùn Gǔ, Headman, Áolǔgǔyā Camp 1, 8 April 2015.

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- LCC 1931 - A2012/001/11. Lindgren, E. "Chol Trip 1931" (unpublished manuscript).

## MAA: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

- MAA F.126021.LIN - F126029.LIN. 16 mm films by Oscar Mamen.
- MAA N.126084.LIN. Meeting the 1st R. T. [Reindeer Tungus] on Ulugicha River. Nikolai Ivanovich Kokeroff with Lindgren at their joint camp. Photo by Oscar Mamen, 25 Jul. 1929.
- MAA P.10943.ACH1. Pingrui holding her "Dagur cradle & 3 months baby, Omul Ail". Photo by Oscar Mamen, 19 Jul. 1931.

## MAË: [Numbered Collections of] Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

- MAË 2002. Steklĭannye negativy Sergeĭa i Elizavety Shirokogorovykh, Zabaĭkal'skaĭa oblast, Chitinskiĭ uezd October 1912 179 x 129". 116 plates.
- MAË 2500. Steklĭannye negativy Sergeĭa i Elizavety Shirokogorovykh, Priamurskiĭ kraĭ 1915, 1050 x 440 mm. 149 plates.
- MAË 2638 Steklĭannye negativy Sergeĭa i Elizavety Shirokogorovykh, Priamurskiĭ kraĭ, basseĭn verkhnego Amura, 44 x 107 mm [verascope]. 81 plates.

MAĖ 2639. Steklĭannye negativy Sergeĭa i Elizavety Shirokogorovykh. Verascope, Amurskĭi okrug i Manchzhuriĭa 44 x 107 mm [verascope]. 604 plates.

RA IIMK: Manuscript Archive of the Institute of the History of Material Culture, Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg

RA IIMK 1-1(1916)-162: 1. Otnoshenie V. V. Radlova v Imperatorskuĭu Arkheologicheskuiu komissiu (12 Jul. 1916). 4 folios.

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SPF ARAN: St Petersburg Filial of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences

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SPF ARAN 142-1(1918)-68: 124-27. Pis'mo S. M. Shirokogorova L. ĪA. Shternbergu, 30 Nov. 1916.

TumA: Donald Tumanisonis's Personal Archive, Horten, Norway

TumA 1915/16. Photocopied Field Diary of Sergei Shirokogoroff, 1915-1916.