

Report of Double Conference IUAES in Moscow

“Urban encounters between nomadic and sedentary people (Moscow I)”

and

“The city as counterpoint of civilization: European Asiatic and Russian Dimensions (The Experience of the Millennium) (Moscow II)”

Sukhanovo, Moscow, Russia, 7-12 June 2002

Hosted by the Russian Academy of Arts and organized by the IUAES Commission on Urban Anthropology and the IUAES Commission on Nomadic Peoples. Supported by the International Social Science Council (ISSC, Paris) and UNESCO.

Research has continued on pastoral nomads, however marginalized they have become. But the populations who have faced urbanization have rarely been the focus of attention. Sometimes nomads are forced to adopt a sedentary lifestyle although their worldview continues to be based on a nomadic life. The relationship between nomads and urbanites is characterized by a mixture of adaptation, co-operation, suspicion, trust and conflict. This symposium sought papers that address the cultural, political, or economic aspects of the encounter. The relation was approached from the perspective of nomadic or of sedentary peoples, or the perspectives of both groups may be juxtaposed.

In four days 36 papers were presented and discussed in 7 sessions. There were 53 registered participants from Russia, China, USA, Iran, Germany, Israel, Ukraine, Lithuania, Azerbaijan, and Poland. More papers were sent from India, Switzerland, Armenia, and Bulgaria.

Present were of anthropologists of nomadism and urbanism on the one hand and specialists in cultural studies on the other. In a broad Eurasian context the culture of the indigenous peoples of mountainous as well as steppe regions in East and South-East Europe were discussed. Also the monuments and values of the ancient and modern urban culture, the peculiarities of different civilizations as well as the specific character of small towns were studied.

In the first part of the double conference (“Urban Encounters Between Nomadic and Sedentary People”) papers were read on ancient monuments of the city culture in Eurasia, on cities in the epicentre and at the borders of the nomadic world, as well as on city and nomadic cultures: connection, interaction, contradictions in historical (past) and modern contexts.

The second part of the Conference “The city as Counterpoint of Civilization: European, Asiatic and Russian Dimensions (The Experience of the Millennium)” was devoted to the city as an aesthetic system, to classic traditions and modern trends in city-planning, to problems of architecture’s ensembles and styles and to design of the city environment.

Other sections of the conference dealt with economic and social problems, with psychological stress, with contradictions and crisis situations, with the extreme zones of the modern urban anthropology, with the city as a strong point of the national movements and ethnic mobilization, as well as an arena of the political and religious activity migration, with conflicts, inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations in the cities, etc

See full report [LINK] - edited from longer reports by co-ordinator Freek Colombijn (Executive Secretary IUAES Commission on Urban Anthropology) and participant Vladimir Kudryavtsev.

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