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## ЯКУТСКАЯ ОДЕЖДА XVII И XVIII ВЕКОВ, АРХЕОЛОГИЯ И РЕКОНСТРУКЦИЯ

По материалам исследованных в Якутии в зоне вечной мерзлоты захоронений восстановлена одежда 40 субъектов и ее эволюция во времени с XVII по XIX в. Авторы разработали четкую схему полевых исследований, давшую возможность идентифицировать одежду и провести ее последующее изучение в лаборатории. В начале XVII в. мужчины часто одеты в просторные шубы, позволяющие легко передвигаться. В конце XVII и начале XVIII в. в костюме как мужчин, так и женщин наблюдаются изменения. Одежда теперь не только защищает от холода, но и служит для обозначения социализации человека. Она характеризуется показным использованием импортных товаров и влиянием моды российских дворянских кругов, китайской и/или монгольской либо бурятской моды. На последнем этапе авторам удалось выделить четыре вида традиционной одежды, среди которых встречаются платья с манжетами и рукавами. Одежда в конце XVII и середине XVIII в. одновременно и отвечает утилитарным целям, и демонстрирует социальный статус умершего. Однако большинство украшений, возможно, играли символическую роль, для понимания которой необходимы этнологические данные.

**Ключевые слова:** мерзлые захоронения, ткани, мех, бисер, техника шитья, зарубежные влияния.

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## YAKUT CLOTHES OF THE 17<sup>th</sup> AND 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES, ARCHAEOLOGY AND RESTITUTION

*40 frozen yakutian graves, from the 17th to the 19th century allow the reconstitution of clothes. At the end of the 17th century, new fashions are emerging with the ostentatious use of imported goods and the influences of Russian noble circles and Chinese and/or Mongol and/or Buriat fashions. The garment does not only seem to be any more an element of protection against the cold and a utilitarian object but becomes a way to marking the socialization of the individual.*

**Key words: frozen burials, fabrics, pelts, beads, sewing techniques, foreign influences.**

*In memory of Sergei Kolodezchnikov (1962–2020) Yakut archaeo-ethnologist*

### Introduction

For 15 years, the French archaeological missions have been excavating tombs in Yakutia conducted in association with Yakut archaeologists to understand the genesis of the settlement and the man / environment interactions [Crubézy, Alexeev, 2007; Crubézy, Alexeev, 2012; Crubézy & Nikolaeva, 2017]. The study of clothing is an area in itself of this research. The permafrost has led to a very good preservation of clothing worn by the deceased. In this way, we have been able to work out an accurate field survey system, with the identification of suits and their later study in the laboratory. Beyond the sometimes-fanciful designs of suits left by the travelers of previous centuries [Jochelson, 1933; Georgi 1799] and the oral traditions of the 19th and 20th century [Nosov, 2010; Serozchweski, 1993; Prytkova, 1961; Petrova, 2002, 2010], our contribution brings an innovative vision of these clothes which have received, like in others parts of the world less scholarly attention [Levine, 2020] than more durable objects largely because very few textiles have survived into the twenty-first century.

### Material and methods

On the field, a first general information gathering is made by archaeologists, anthropologists and specialists of the Yakut material culture. These participants exchange informations connected to their various disciplines, in order to implement of the most appropriate methodology for the identified problems. Then comes the stage of the autopsy and the clearance of the different layers of clothes. All the stages are documented by photographic shots and schematic drawings. These precise diagrams allow to understand the manufacturing, the cutting and the sewings of the various clothes. Clothes are then collected on rigid «stiron» plates (flexible plastic plates used in material restoration) for further studies in the laboratory and for storage in a cool room in the reserves. In the laboratory, the assembly of all these data, combined with the field surveys, make it possible to offer the most accurate restitution of the clothes worn by the deceased or arranged in the tomb as well as the actions related to the funeral ceremony. The restitution of the suit is represented in the order in which each item was worn. In order to obtain a clear and comprehensible vision of the superposition of the clothes of the suit, each new «layer» is watercolored and the parts already seen left in pencil. In this study, only coats, dresses and shirts are presented. Other clothing items, as «natazniks», leggings, boots, garment accessories and objects of jewelry will be presented later (fig. 1).

At present time, 17 men, 20 women and 4 childrens were the subjects of restitutions with, for some of them, several layers of costumes that have been drawn (fig. 2). For men, there are two 17<sup>th</sup> century subjects and a majority of costumes that cover the entire 18<sup>th</sup> century. For women, as they

were not buried in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the costumes are mainly from the whole 18<sup>th</sup> century and for some of them from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Only a few of them have been published [Crubézy, Alexeev, 2007, 2012; Nikolaeva, Crubézy, 2017].



**Fig. 1.** Working methods and achievements: example of At Daban 6 (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750):

A. Excavation of the tomb. B. Clearing of clothing. C. Recovery of the remains of clothing on a stiron.

D. Graphic restitution.

Рис. 1. Методы работы и выполнение: пример захоронения Ат Дабан 6 (Центральная Якутия, 1700–1750 гг.):

А. Раскопки могилы. В. Расчистка одежды. С. Извлечение остатков одежды на стироне.

Д. Графическая реконструкция.



**Fig. 2.** Working method and restitution of clothing:

A. Discussion between the forensic doctor and the clothing specialist. B and C. Working sketch and restitution of the woman's belt. D. Restitution of the different layers of clothing of Kyys Ounouogha (Central Yakutia, 1728 AD).

Рис. 2. Метод работы и реконструкция одежды:

А. Дискуссия между судебным экспертом и специалистом по одежде. В и С. Рабочий эскиз и реконструкция женского пояса. D. Реконструкция различных слоев одежды захоронения Кыйс Уноуога (Центральная Якутия, 1728 г.).

### Results

The vast majority of the subjects we autopsied wore a costume that was not, for the 18<sup>th</sup> century, that of every day. The only subject buried face down and who had certainly committed suicide had a simpler garment, may be the one of every day. He had not been re-socialized for his burial. He had to wear the clothes he had when he died [Crubézy, Alexeev, 2007; Crubézy, Alexeev, 2012; Nikolaeva, Crubézy, 2017]. In one exceptional case, the garment was not worn but laid on the body [Romanova, Stépanoff, Telmon, & Crubézy, 2020].

### Якутская одежда XVII и XVIII веков, археология и реконструкция

The men's clothing: In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the garment is exclusively made of fur and skin. At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the clothes are most of the time poorly preserved and therefore difficult to identify. They are often ample fur-coats, hair outward and doubled with fur, which allow an ease in the movements (fig. 3). There are sometimes decorated with metallic elements (cuprous alloy or low silver) of local manufacture. After 1689 and the establishment of the Nertchinsk trading post [Crubézy, Alexeev, 2007, 2012; Crubézy, Nikolaeva, 2017] some rare large turquoise blue or white beads used as buttons. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, extensive trade networks resulted in the incorporation, of a variety of European-manufactured goods, specially glass beads, rarer, copper tokens bearing the effigies of some European kings. Silk from China will gradually appear and allow the richest people to make shirts; woollens (of Russian and English origin) and cottons will gradually increase in clothing. They will become widespread in the 19<sup>th</sup> century [Crubézy, Alexeev, 2007, 2012].



**Fig. 3.** Restitution of traditional male clothing with fur and hide:

A. Neleger (Central Yakutia, before 1700): This man wears a coat in horse fur, hair outward. Straight cut and ample, without collar, with slightly puffy sleeves, it comes down to the top of the knees. It closes from left to right by leather laces. B. Kous Tcharbyt (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750): This man wears a coat in foal fur, hair outward and doubled by foal fur. Straight cut and ample, without collar, with puffy sleeves, it comes down to the top of the knees. It closes from left to right by leather laces.

Рис. 3. Реконструкция традиционной мужской одежды из меха и шкуры:

A. Нелегер: мужская шуба из конского меха ворсом наружу. B. Кус Чарбыт: мужская шуба из меха жеребенка ворсом наружу.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most of the clothing remains traditional in its materials, its shapes and its cuts but it is embellished with new imported materials (cotton and woollen cloth, silk, glass beads and objects of knick knacks), signs of wealth and power, and that in an ostentatious way (fig. 4). However, new fashions are emerging with waisted cuttings and asymmetric median cuts. For example, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, one can determine the influence of Russian noble circles that Yakut elites encounter in Moscow or St. Petersburg (fig. 5) and that of Chinese and/or Mongol influences. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, cuts get close to «Redingots» like fitted coats, open and buttoned on the front, more or less adjusted to the waist and flared downward. However, the suit remains traditional by puffed sleeves and edges of fur. The fabric, which was initially only used to double fur coats, becomes at this period a visible and outside element of the garment (fig. 6 A, B, C). At that time, clothes are increasingly decorated with embroidery made of even smaller glass beads, called «seed beads». The beading is made on leather strips, and then sewn on the garment (fig. 6 A, B, D).



**Fig. 4.** Restitution of traditional male clothing with some imported products.

Рис. 4. Реконструкция традиционной мужской одежды с использованием некоторых импортных товаров: А. Шаманское дерево 1: мужская шуба из оленьего меха ворсом наружу. В. Кюрелээх 1: мужская шуба из конского меха ворсом наружу, дублированного заячьим мехом. С. Алыы 1: мужская шуба из конского меха, ворсом наружу, дублированного белым заячьим мехом. D. Орджогон 2: мужская шуба или куртка типа «кафтан» из шкуры, дублированной хлопком и заячьим мехом.

Comments to the fig. 4: A. Arbres chamaniques 1 (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750): The man wears a coat made of reindeer fur, hair outward. With a slightly waisted shape, it descends to the level of the knees, flaring slightly downwards. The sleeves are slightly puffy. It closes from left to right by leather laces. Under this coat, the deceased wears a shirt made of imported fabrics, closed with cuprous alloy buttons. The fabric of this shirt is a tight-knit woolen cloth called «soukno», serving among other

things, to make the uniforms of European armies of the time. B. Kureleekh 1 (Verkhoyansk, before 1700): The man wears a coat in horse fur, hair outward, doubled by hare fur. Of Chinese cutting, it goes down to mid-thighs. The sleeves are long and narrow and the collar is rounded. It closes from left to right with two laces associated with a big blue glass bead and a small boot button. The median border is underlined by a relatively wide hide edge. The bord of the sleeves and the lower edge of the coat are decorated with alternating skin and sable fur. Under this coat, the deceased wears horse fur leggings, hair outward. They are held at the knees and ankles by leather ties. The leggings are decorated at the ankles by a very fine beadwork embroidery on a hide band. These smaller glass beads called «pony bead» appear at this time and will become more and more frequent in yakut suits. C. Alyy1 (Verkhoyansk, 1700–1750): The man wears a coat in horse fur, hair outward, doubled with white hare fur. Of straight shape, it goes down to mid-thighs flaring slightly downward. The sleeves are very lightly puffed. It closes from right to left certainly by leather laces, not identified during the excavation. The median border is decorated by a strip of cotton, called «daba» and to the left is associated by a band of sable fur. The lower edge of the coat is only decorated with a large sable fur band. D. Ordiogone 2 (Vilyuy, 1750–1800): The man wears a «Caftan» type coat or jacket, made of hide doubled with cotton and with hare fur from the waist down. Of ample cut, without collar, with  $\frac{3}{4}$  long sleeves, it comes down to mid-thigh. It is open in the middle with an asymmetrical cutout of Mongolian pattern. It is split on both sides. This jacket closes from left to right by cuprous alloy buttons. The ends of the sleeves, the median edges and the lower edge of the coat are underlined by «soukno» and sable fur bands more or less wide. A large plating of sable fur adorns the sleeve between the shoulder and the elbow. This type of decoration will become a standard in the late 18th and early 19th century.



**Fig. 5.** Elements of European court garment borrowed by the Yakut nobles:

Fabric suit with «Redingote» type cut, waisted and short shape; +/- puffed sleeves; slits, pleats or folds on the side; underlining of edges; «Brandenburg» type closures, in fabrics and/or beadwork; wearing a knotted scarf. Elements of European court garment, which are absent from the costume of the Yakut nobles: No wide sleeves with large flaps at the wrist; No pockets; No sleeveless vest under the suit. On the left, Bakhtakh 3 (Verkhoyansk, 1700–1750), on the right, Kuskeghir 2 (Verkhoyansk, after 1800).

Рис. 5. Элементы европейской придворной одежды, заимствованные якутской знатью: Тканевый костюм покроя типа «редингот» укороченной формы с поясом; - +/- рукава с буфами; разрезы или складки по бокам; подчеркивание краев; застежки типа «бранденбург», тканевые и/или вышитые бисером; вязанный шарф. Элементы европейской придворной одежды, отсутствующие в costume якутской знати: широкие рукава с большими клапанами на запястье; карманы; рукава под костюмом.

Слева — захоронение Бахтаха 3 (Верхоянск, 1700–1750 гг.), справа — Кускегир 2 (Верхоянск, после 1800 г.).





**Fig. 6.** Restitution of traditional male clothing with different types of trade-fabrics and beads.

Рис. 6. Реконструкция традиционной мужской одежды с различными видами торговых тканей:

А. Бахтах 3: мужской костюм из сукна, подбитый мехом соболя. В. Кердюген 1: мужская одежда из красного сукна, дублированная белым заячьим мехом. С. Булгуннях 1: мужская шелковая рубашка в русском стиле с шелковой кокеткой на плече. Д. Атыр Мейте 1: реконструкция традиционной мужской одежды из кожи со сложным декором из импортных стеклянных бусин.

Comments to the fig. 6: A. Bakhtakh 3 (Verkhoyansk, 1700–1750): The man wears a «soukno» suit doubled with sable fur. Of waisted shape, very flared downward thanks to the addition of fabric corner pieces on both sides, it goes down above the knees. The sleeves are long and thinner towards the wrist. The very baggy aspect is made possible thanks to the use of fabric and the distribution of the embus with the help of pleats or folds which allow to give the volume and a better fallen. The suit closes from left to right by 5 cuprous alloy buttons. The round neckline is lined with sable fur. The edges of the median and lower borders are made with blue «daba» and sable fur. In the back, the median sewing is covered by a band of «daba» which widens in rhombus and ends with a split underlined by sable fur. The sides are covered by strips of «daba», which follow the sewings and emphasize by a detachment the armhole of the garment. B. Kerdugen 1 (Verkhoyansk, 1700–1750): The man wears a red «soukno» garment, doubled with white hare fur. Cut fitted at the waist and flaring downward, it goes down till mid-thigh. The sleeves are puffed and tightened at the wrist. It is closed from left to right by cuprous alloy buttons. It is decorated on the shoulders with a piece of dark «daba». The sleeves are underlined by a dark «daba» strip and two-colored sable fur bands (winter hair and summer hair). The median borders and the lower border are underlined with a band of dark «daba» and wolverine fur strips more or less wide. He wears leggings decorated with a very elaborated beadwork. C. Bulgunniakh 1 (Vilyuy, 1700–1750): The man is wearing a Russian-inspired silk shirt with a silk yoke marking the shoulder. The collar is folded. Of wide cut with folds on the breast, it is closed on the base of the collar by a button in cuprous alloy and a leather loop. The sleeves are long, puffed and closed at the wrist by cords, whereas initially they were closed by cufflinks. The numerous visible sewings are due to the fact that the shirt is made of silk scarves. Indeed, the Yakuts were acquiring scarves, less taxed, rather than silk rolls from China. D. Atyr Meite 1 (Verkhoyansk, 1700–1750): Restitution of traditional male clothing with hide and a complex decoration of imported glass-beads. The man is wearing a garment in skin, doubled with sable fur. Of waisted cut, slightly flared downward and long sleeves, slightly puffy, it goes down to mid-thigh. This garment is closed from right to left by two large blue glass beads.

Very decorated, it appears by the richness of its decoration, like a type of ceremonial suit and at the same time, it is very traditional in its cut. It is decorated with strips of beadwork that end with a pattern of ripples or wavelets. The median edges and the lower border are decorated with the same beaded bands but underlined by strips of sable fur more or less wide with an alternation of colors (winter hair and summer hair). It has decorative beaded bands on the sides, on the shoulders and on the top of the sleeves. The collar is underlined by sable fur. The only technique used for beading on objects brought to light on

## Якутская одежда XVII и XVIII веков, археология и реконструкция

the excavations of our archaeological missions, is the «flat point»: several beads are put on a thread, the latter then being sewn on the hide or the fabric by another thread. In the production sites of glass beads (Venice, Bohemia and China) a multitude of different colors exists. The uniformity of color (only black, blue and white) observed among the Yakut is therefor a choice. The technique of beading, very uniform, points the problem of making these sets. Who made these beadworks? Were they done at the family level or were they done by specialized craftsmen who move around at fairs and markets? Did these craftsmen also make more elaborate or ceremonial suits? These last questions arise in the same way for women's clothing of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



**Fig. 7.** Restitution of female clothing with little imported material, German token and Chinese coins.

Рис. 7. Реконструкция женской одежды с небольшим количеством импортного материала, немецким жетоном и китайскими монетами:

А. Нюрнбергский жетон и китайские монеты на натазнике и шапке (Бойола 2). В. Реконструкция традиционной женской одежды с небольшим количеством импортного материала. Шаманское дерево 1: женская рысья шуба ворсом наружу, подбитая темной тканью даба. С. Атыр Мейтэ 2: женское пальто из оленьей кожи, пропитанное рыбьим жиром для водонепроницаемости.

Comments to the fig. 7: A. Nüremberg token and Chinese coins on Boyola 2's «nataznik» and «chapka» (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750). Regarding the tokens found on this suit, the fact that they do not bear any evidence of obvious wear would indicate that they were not used as account tokens. It is about objects having been able to participate in a system of exchanges, the intrinsic and especially ornamental value of the object dominating on its real monetary value. Chinese coins being also present on this suit, all these objects will, thanks to their geographical origin, allow to highlight some commercial flows. B. Restitution of traditional female clothing with little imported material. Arbre chamanique 1 (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750): The woman wears a lynx fur coat, hair outward, doubled with dark «daba». Of slightly flared downward cut, it is ample, long and covers widely the knees. Splits on the sides, which can be laced, allow to widen or not the coat as needed. The sleeves are shouldered, flared and short. The closure is made from left to right, certainly with laces, not identified at the search or then, it is possible to imagine that the coat closed may be with the help of a belt. C. Atyyr Meite 2 (Verkhoyansk, 1750–1800): The woman wears a coat of reindeer skin, tanned with fish oil to waterproof it, where from a little bit yellowish color. It is doubled with blue «daba». Of straight cutting, the long sleeves are of raglan pattern, covering the shoulder up to the neckline. It comes down to over the knees and closes from right to left with leather laces and a cuprous alloy button at the neck. The borders of the sleeves are decorated with sable fur and a wide silk ribbon.



**Fig. 8.** Restitution of traditional female sleeveless dresses.

Рис. 8. Реконструкция традиционных женских платьев без рукавов:

А. Елечей 1: женское платье из красного или алого сукна, дублированное соболиным мехом.

В. Ус Сэргэ 1: женское целомудренное платье из красного или алого сукна.

Comments to the fig. 8: A. Eletcheï 1 (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750): The woman wears a chasuble dress in red «soukno», or scarlet, doubled with sable fur. Sleeveless and mid-long, it goes down to the knees, very waisted and flared downward. It closes from left to right by flat cuprous alloy buttons. Opened at the front, the lower and median edges are decorated with a beaded strip underlined by a sable fur band more or less wide. The asymmetrical shaped beading band has a setback in the hips area. At waist level, two side strips, deaded with rows of blue, black and white glass beads which are associated in the center with a row of small curved tin discs. They are underlined on each side by 6 perforated, square plates, in cuprous alloy or low silver with a motif of interlaced ropes. B. Us Sergue 1 (Central Yakutia, circa 1770): The woman wears a chasuble dress in red «soukno», or scarlet, very flared downward thanks to the addition of corner pieces on the side, the sewing being visible at the

front and the back of the garment. Splits on the side, not «reclosable», allow bigger ease in the movement. A very fine sleeve, covers only the shoulder. It is lined with a thin strip of sable fur. The round neckline is underlined by a strip of sable. Sable fur of different colors and fur of Siberian polecats underline the median edges and the borders of the lateral splits. A wide lower border in fur of sable lines the dress which closes from right to left. No button was found during the excavations.



**Fig. 9.** Restitution of traditional female dresses with short sleeves.

Рис. 9. Реконструкция традиционных платьев с короткими рукавами:

А. Сэргэлээх: женская шуба из шкуры жеребенка, дублированная мехом, с короткими рукавами из меха соболя. В. Кыыс Унуога: женское пальто из конской кожи средней длины с пышными рукавами. С. Бере: женское пальто из дубленой кожи, приталенное, до середины бедер, с короткими и слегка пышными рукавами. D. Булгуннях 2: женское приталенное пальто типа «редингот» из дубленой кожи. Е. Тысарастах 2: женская шуба из дубленой кожи с подкладкой из меха соболя.

Comments to the fig. 9: A. Sergueeekh (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750): The young woman wears a coat in foal skin doubled by fur, with short sleeves in sable fur. It is of very flared cutting which comes to the knees, with a free and round collar of «Claudine» pattern. It is closed on the front from left to right by buttons in cuprous alloy. The collar and two wide bands coming from the hollow of the shoulder and passing to the back are decorated with rows of glass beads in alternance with boot buttons of cuprous alloy or low silver. The lower border is lined with a wide band of fur and strips with beadwork. These beadings emphasize the transition between the fur edge decorating the bottom and the two lower edges of the closure. The median edges are not underlined with fur. B. Kyys Ounouogha (Central Yakutia, 1728 AD): The young woman is wearing a horse skin coat with mid-length and puffy sleeves. The beaded round neck is fixed to the coat. Of straight cut slightly marking the waist, it comes down up to the knees. It closes from right to left by a cuprous alloy button. The median edges are lined by beaded strips confined with wavelets and by asymmetric shape, which have a setback at the level of the hips. The bords of sleeves, lower and median edges are underlined by sable fur, more or less wide and of different colors (summer hair and winter hair). Several beaded appliques of beaded Yakut motifs called «inakhsit», in the lower part of the coat, symbolize breeding and prosperity. C. Béré (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750): The woman wears a tanned skin coat, of waisted shape, with short and slightly puffy sleeves. It comes down to mid-thighs and closes from left to right by leather strips with boots buttons at the extremities. The collar fixed to the coat, closes by leather laces. The garment is decorated at the collar, at the lower and median edges by a beadwork of blue, black and white «seed beads», with a row of large white glass beads in the center. The waist is marked by two side strips with the same beadwork. The lower and the median edges are underlined with fur of Siberian polecat. The sleeves do not have fur borders. D. Bulgunniakh 2 (Vilyuy, 1700–1750): The young woman wears a «redingot» like fitted coat in tanned skin. Of waisted shape, it flares downward and has side splits that can be closed by leather laces. With a crew neck round collar with leather laces closure and short puffy sleeves, it closes from left to right by 4 large blue turquoise glass beads associated with cuprous alloy boot buttons and leather straps. A large beaded rosette surrounds this closing system, like «Brandenburgs». The left median edge, the lower edge and the borders of the lateral slits are underlined with bands of beadwork and sable fur. At the level of the hips, and on the front of the garment, is a transversal band of beading underlined by 4 bunches of pendants of beads ended by tokens and thimbles. The sleeves are not underlined by fur. E. Tysarastaakh 2 (Verkhoyansk, 1700–1750): The young woman wears a tanned skin coat, lined with sable fur. It is upright, slightly flared down, with short sleeves and a crew neck round collar. It closes from left to right by cuprous alloy buttons. Bands of glass beads confined with wavelets underline the collar and the medial edges that have an asymmetrical shape with a setback in the chest level. It is decorated on the hips with large beaded bands at the end of which hang four triangular and perforated metal plates of cuprous alloy or low silver with a pattern of interlaced ropes. These plates are obtained by molding and are more or less thoroughly smoothend. No border is lined with fur.

The women's clothing: We do not know, by archaeology, women's clothing until the very early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The coat seems already very stereotypical in all the regions where we have made excavations, and could proceed from an already former tradition. Clothes are short, very widened downward and sometimes split on sides so allowing a good behavior on horseback. The garment is also characterized by the ostentatious use of imported goods, namely cotton fabric, woolen cloth, silk, glass beads and above all knick-knacks such as Nüremberg tokens, Chinese coins, boot buttons and thimbles. All these metal objects are diverted from their original function and are an integral part of the decoration of coats, dresses, «chapkas» and «natazniks» (fig. 7 A). The feminine garment of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, show few imported artefacts. There are essentially two types of coats whose cutting is going to depend on the basic material used for making. First, we have fur coats that are long; second more or less tanned skin coats that have straight and mid-length cuts (fig. 7 B, C). During the most recent phase, besides the heavy winter fur coats with hair outward that we do not present here, we have been able to distinguish four types of traditional clothes, who for some are moreover rather dresses which differ by their cups and their sleeves. To note that the sewings are made essentially with the back stitch. The edges of woolen fabrics (which do not hold folds) without fur decor, are made with catch stitches on rolled sewings. The join sewings between two pieces of fabric or the addition of fur on borders are made with overlock stitches. The widening was provided by inserting the cut off corner pieces of cloths into the sides of the dress and they are visible and constitute even a type of decoration.

(a) The sleeveless dresses (fig. 8): These suits are «Chasuble» style dresses: sleeveless, wide, and worn above other clothes. (b) The dresses with short sleeves (fig. 9): These clothes are dresses or mid-seasonal celebration coats made of tanned skin and richly decorated with beadwork and knick

knacks. They form a homogeneous group throughout all Yakutia both by the cuts and by the decorations. The slightly puffy sleeves are short, with a sleeve head that fits to the roundness of the shoulders. (c) The dresses with long sleeves (fig. 10): For these long-sleeved garments, it is also difficult to find an exact terminology. Are they coats, dresses? These clothes form a homogeneous group throughout all Yakutia by the cuts and the decorations. The sleeves are long, with a head sleeve which fits to the roundness of the shoulders and are more or less puffy. (d) The dresses with Chinese, Mongolian or Russian tradition influenced patterns (fig. 11): Some clothes are printed of foreign influences both by the cuts as by the decorations. However, they remain of yakut tradition with the use of «classic» materials especially for doublings and braids («soukno», «daba» and fur specially sable).



**Fig. 10.** Restitution of traditional female dresses with long sleeves.

Рис. 10. Реконструкция традиционных женских платьев с длинными рукавами:

- А. Шаманское дерево 1: женское церемониальное пальто, одно из самых декорированных среди обнаруженных нами при раскопках. В. Иерелях: женское пальто с двойным слоем дубленой лошадиной кожи, подбитое собольим мехом. С. Булгуннях 2: женская одежда из зеленого сукна, дублированная мехом соболя. D. Сордонох: женское пальто из красного или алого сукна, дублированного мехом белого зайца. E. Ус Сэргэ 1: женское пальто из ткани даба цвета охры, дублированное собольим мехом, с длинными и пышными рукавами.

Comments to the fig. 10: A. *Arbre chamanique 1* (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750): The young woman is wearing a ceremonial coat, among the most decorated that we found in excavation. It is made in tanned skin and entirely covered originally with a brown fabric. Of flared shape, thanks to large lateral folds starting from the waist, it comes down up to the knees. A rectangular yoke marks the shoulder. The round neck is decorated with a beadwork and is fixed to the coat. Both median edges are embellished with fur flaps. The buttons (boot buttons) assuring its closure are inside, at the junction between the coat and the flaps. Along the opening, on both sides of the flaps, there are two leather bands decorated with glass beads and cuprous alloy boot buttons. This beadwork was therefore only fully visible when the coat was closed. An asymmetrical setback of this band is present at waist level. We can also note from the waist, an interstice devoid of beads. The bands are decorated in regular intervals, with tassels, a leather cord assembly with large turquoise glass beads, cuprous alloy tubular beads, and a round, notched cuprous alloy pendant. Two beaded appliques of Yakut motifs, with pendants, are on both sides of the setback, symbolizing breeding and prosperity. B. *Ieralakh* (Verkhoyansk, 1700–1750): The girl wears a coat with a double layer of tanned horse skin, doubled with sable fur, which comes down above the knees. Of flared cut, sleeves set-in very high on the shoulder narrowing at the wrists, it closes from left to right. The collar is very close to the neck and bordered by a skin strap. On the left median edge, it has a flap, under which are two buttons in cuprous alloy. Blue «daba», sable fur of two colors and a skin strip underline the median and lower edges. The borders of the sleeves are not decorated with fur. A very wide beaded belt closes the coat. C. *Bulguniakh 2* (Vilyuy, 1700–1750): The young woman wears a green «soukno» garment, doubled with sable fur. Of waisted cut, it flares downward and comes down to mid-thigh. With a round neck, a small triangular cut that marks the shoulder, set-in long and thin sleeves, it is closed from left to right. It is decorated on the median and lower edges with sable fur, Siberian polecat fur, a beadwork strip and at the lower edge with a strip of light colored cotton fabric. At the level of the wrist, a band of skin on which was sewn sable fur of two colors, is a beaded decoration of very elaborate and fine diamond motifs. A leather lace holds the sleeve. D. *Sordonokh* (Verkhoyansk, 1700–1750): The girl wears a coat in red «soukno», or scarlet, doubled with fur of white hare. Of flared cut, with very puffy set-in sleeves, a crew neck round collar edged with sable fur, it is split in the back. It comes down to the top of the knees. The coat closes from left to right with cuprous alloy buttons and leather pieces with a pointed cut. A large «daba» yoke on the shoulders runs down the front along median borders and makes a diamond-shaped cutout in the back and covers the side sewings. A beaded strip with «seed beads» and large white beads and with wolverine fur underlines the «daba». The sleeves are decorated with wolverine fur, a strip of skin with very elaborate and fine beadwork, ending with diamond patterns. E. *Us Sergue 1* (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750): The woman wears a buff-colored «daba» coat, doubled with sable fur, with long and puffy sleeves. Of waisted shape and very widened downward, it comes down up to the top of the knees. The collar is made of horse fur. A yoke of Damask silk of bronze color underlines the shoulders. It is closed from left to right by 4 pear-shaped cuprous alloy buttons, whose leather ties are decorated with silk pieces of diamonds shape, like «Brandenburg». The median and lower edges, and the ends of the sleeves, are made with sable fur underlined with a band of silk. An asymmetrical setback of this band is present at the waist level. The back, decorated with silk in its middle part, is split in its lower half.

At the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, burial became systematic for both genders. The style of male and female clothing changes to become through the results of the archaeological excavations, simpler and more «Russian» in the cuts and decorations. It becomes fancy and exaggerating some details, like the height of the «chapkas» or the length of coats as we can see in ethnographic collections and on the first photos made by W. Jochelson during the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897–1903) [Jochelson, 1933].

## Discussion

Thanks to archaeology and to the systematic study of clothing, we know that the traditional Yakut suit does has little to do with the illustrations appearing in the literature of the previous centuries (except for M.M. Nosov's and N.F. Prytkova's publications in the 50s and 60s [Nosov, 2010, Prytkova, 1961]), but for Prytkova atlas they're basically newer costumes than the ones from our excavations. Before the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the masculine clothes, ample, it is typical of an adaptation to the very rough climatic conditions of Yakutia. However, at the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century, masculine and feminine garment does not only seem to be any more an element of protection against the cold but becomes a way to mar-

## Якутская одежда XVII и XVIII веков, археология и реконструкция

king the situation of the individual in the group, its social status, its wealth. It may become an object whose aesthetic qualities are more looked for. The imported artefacts become more and more frequent until the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The use of these materials so marks in an ostentatious way the wealth of the owner of the suit. Given that all the men and women were not buried, everything suggests that we are in presence of a homogeneous and «classical» group of elites in their finest ceremonial clothes.



**Fig. 11.** Restitution of traditional female dresses with foreign influences.

Рис. 11. Реконструкция традиционных женских платьев с иностранным влиянием:

А. Кыыс Унуога: женское платье из дубленой кожи, подбитое соболиным мехом. В. Елечей 1: женское платье из сукна цвета охры, подбитое соболиным мехом. С. Сордонох: женская рубашка из даба русского покроя.

Д. Ат Дабан 6: женское платье из дубленой кожи трапецевидной формы.



Comments to the fig. 11: A. Kyys Ounouogha (Central Yakutia, 1728 AD): The girl wears a tanned skin dress, doubled with sable fur. Straight in shape, it is split very high on the sides and comes down up to the knees. It has long, narrow sleeves and a round neck collar without fur. The median edges show the asymmetrical cut of Chinese pattern with a double setback and a typical tightening at the waist. The dress is closed from left to right by two large turquoise colored glass beads. The median edges, the lower edge and the borders of the sleeves are embroidered with the technique of appliqué with silk and sable fur. The band of skin decorated on the waist, which hides the gathers of the dress, deserves a more precise examination. The embroidery with silk thread of several different colors, is executed at the point of chain. 3 rows of eyelets realized with cording stitch and with a technique of appliqué letting appear different colors of fabric underneath. Several rows of large round festoons made with silk thread of several colors underline these. The whole decoration gives an impression of wealth to the garment and however, reveals no beadwork. B. Eletcheï 1 (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750): The woman wears a buff colored «soukno» dress, doubled with sable fur. Of Mongolian pattern cut, it is waisted. Very narrow flat folds starting from the hips, give a large amplitude to the lower part. It has long sleeves fitted and adjusted to the roundness of the shoulder, very puffed and a round neck with a very decorated yoke. It comes down below knees. The dress must certainly be slipped by the top because it opens only until the waist. It is closed from left to right by two buttons surrounded by a rosette of cobalt blue beads, little frequent in the beadworks that we have found until now in excavation. The median edges, the lower edge, the collar and the sleeve borders are underlined with sable fur. The dress is richly beaded. On the median edges, the yoke around the neck and shoulders and the band of skin covering the folds at the hips, the design of the beadwork is complex. White beads designing diamonds with a blue bead in the center, are placed at regular intervals in the middle of the beading, then come on each side white and blue rows, small black and white flowers, then blue and white rows to end with blue colored waves. This design is doubled on the yoke of the shoulder. The fur of the lower edge is underlined by a double denticulate beadwork design and by 3 thin strips of leather perforated with circles reminding of the decorations of the birch bark of the «urasas». A leather belt decorated with «seed beads» and stick shaped tin pieces, was partly sewn at the back of the dress at waist level. C. Sordonokh (Verkhoyansk, 1700–1750): The girl is wearing a very fine blue «daba» shirt. Of Russian cut, very short, it has 3/4 sleeves with a very wide and gathered armhole. The edge of the sleeves, also frowned, is ended by a wide bias. The round neck is free, with «Claudine» shape, with an also rounded neckline, from which start gathers. The shirt has a visible sewing in the upper back part and a cutout of the lower border in diamond shape. It is amazing that this complex cut is hidden. D. At Daban 6 (Central Yakutia, 1700–1750): This is here about a particular case because the woman did not wear the dress, but it was deposited on her body. It is a tanned and undoubled skin dress. Of trapeze shape widening downward, sleeveless and with a round collar, it comes down up to the knees. It is very wide and gathered at the waist, as the Mongolian type dresses. Very short sleeves only cover the shoulder and are ended with a rolled sewing by the hem stitch. It is open on the front and closes from left to right by buttons in cuprous alloy. The collar, fixed to the dress, is decorated with blue and white pearls and with boot buttons. On the shoulders are leather yokes decorated with rows of beads and with small curved tin discs. The median and lower edges are decorated with sable fur. Two breastplates that go down to below the waist are decorated with beads and many rows of small curved disks of cuprous alloy or low silver. Pendants made of large blue beads, tubular beads in cuprous alloy and boot buttons are fixed to it on the sides. At waist level and at the beginning of the hips is not a belt, but a beaded leather band that recovers and fixes the gathers. Associated to this band, hang on each side, four elements in cuprous alloy or low silver, three circular and one topped with stylized horse heads. The circular decorations evoke a Manchu origin. Above the band and continuing downward and along the median edges, are two fine bands of brown «daba». In front, from the waist and at regular intervals, are placed on both sides of the median edges, 3 beaded appliques of Yakut motifs associated with a large turquoise blue bead and an openwork cruciform element in cuprous alloy.

The symbolism of horse and riding was closely associated with these women by the furniture of the graves, they were thus certainly also riders which could explain that clothes are short, very widened downward and sometimes split on sides so allowing a good behavior on horseback. Initially in fur and skin, garment are changing thanks to the trade, with the appearance of new materials but also different decorations, beadwork and the use of knick-knack in particular. These differences, which appear in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are they due to the largest number of excavated tombs, to an evolution in the function of the costume as a factor of social or cultural identification, a plurality of uses (work or cere-

mony), is there a transmission or not of ceremonial costumes, different criteria for the choice or availability of materials, temperature fluctuations or more important interactions with other peoples of Yakutia and European travelers?

Numerous questions are asked about Yakut costumes. The garment has the distinction of being both an utilitary object but, also carries during the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century and middle 18<sup>th</sup> century, the social status of the deceased. However, most decorations, perhaps all, had a symbolic role, which is very difficult to grasp without ethnological data. All the suits are not complete or «restitutable». They do not always allow to highlight relevant variations and partitions contrary to ethnological research because tombs are a sampling, first by the fact that everyone is not buried gives a vision that does not reflect an entire society and then by the fact that all the graves are not excavated.

So many questions which are going to guide our future researches and to allow us to answer the essential question that asks us: what is the place of the garment in the evolution of the Yakut funeral practice?

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