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ВОПРОСЫ ИСТОРИИ

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Каменные круги в Европейском Арктическом регионе: вопросы хронологии и атрибуции

С.Ю. КАРГАПОЛЬЦЕВ, М.М. КАЗАНСКИЙ, И.Ю. ЛАПИНА

Stone circles in the European Arctic Region: aspects of chronology and attribution

S.YU. KARGAPOLTSEV, M.M. KAZANSKI, I.YU. LAPINA

Аннотация. Редкий на Кольском полуострове тип мегалитов, или так называемых каменных кругов, был исследован близ пос. Килп'явр (Мурманская область). Общая хронология объектов подобного рода в Центральной и Северной Европе – от раннего римского периода до Средневековья. Высказано предположение о связи каменных кругов Прибалтийского региона с аналогичными комплексами в субарктических и арктических районах Норвегии и на северо-западе Кольского полуострова. Авторы предполагают, что рассматриваемое место было погребальным кенотафом. Появление каменных кругов так далеко на Севере, возможно, явилось результатом зарождения торговли мехами, маршруты которой контролировались войсками варваров преимущественно германского и финского происхождения.

Ключевые слова: археология, Кольский полуостров, Арктический регион, каменные круги, европейский варварский мир, торговля мехами, римский период, Великое переселение народов.

Abstract. A rare type of megaliths on the Kola Peninsula, or the so-called stone circles, was investigated near the settlement of Kilp'iavr (Murmansk region). The overall chronology of the objects of the kind in Central and Northern Europe is from the Early Roman Period to the Middle Ages. The connection of stone circles of the Circum-Baltic Area with similar complexes in the Subarctic and Arctic areas of Norway and the north-west of the Kola Peninsula has been suggested. The article supposes that the site in question was a funeral cenotaph. The appearance of the stone circles so far in the North possibly was a result of the emergence of fur trade, with its routes controlled by troops of militarised barbarians of predominantly Germanic and Finnish origin.

Key words: archaeology, Kola Peninsula, Arctic Region, stone circles, European Barbaricum, fur trade, Roman Period, Great Migration.

Traditionally interpreted as funeral and ritual complexes, the so-called stone circles form a specific type of megaliths. The limits of their distribution area along with ethnocultural belonging and chronology of existence show the widest variation and dispersion. This article presents the analysis of the stone circles accidentally discovered in the Kola Peninsula by S.Yu. Kargapoltsev in 1986 and the search for their closest parallels in the antiquities of Central and Northern Europe (among the Germans, Balts, and Finns). The material in possession deserves special attention because this is the first find of an object of the kind in Russian Lapland.

This group of stone circles is located in the Kola District of the Murmansk Oblast', on the left side of the Murmansk – Pechenga Highway, at the section 62–63 km, 1.7 to 1.8 km to the south-west of the road (Fig. 1) ¹.

The landscape of this natural site, located ca 20 km south of the border between tundra and forest zones, is a stony lake-glacial plain located in the interfluvium of the Western Litsa (12.5 km south-east of the river) and the Ura (9.5 km north-west of the river), orientated to the north-east, towards the lakes of Portlubol, Kiadel'iavr, and Bolshoe Uragubskoe, and Ara Bay, the latter located on the southern watershed of the Motovskii Bay and the Barents Sea. This is 500 to 800 m wide forest – tundra birch rare-forest and crooked-forest plain, limited with *tunturi* hills (Fin. *tunturi* means “mountain” or “hill”) of ridge-and-hilly relief with glacial till on Precambrian crystal-



Fig. 1. Location of the stone circle complex (marked with the black spot)

line rocks and saturated with lakes, streams, and bogs (grass-moss, shrub-moss, and bumpy-moss) ². Ca 500 m north-west of the stone circle complex, there is the foot of Mount Salzhvyd (its top is ca 296 to 310 m high above the sea level).

Although the results of the 1986 and 1987 researches of the site in question have already been published in Russian ³, we consider it important to give its description again for researchers who do not speak this language. The complex of stone circles of various shapes (circular, oval-rectangular, and concentric) comprised of at least a dozen of stone structures located relatively densely (from 2–3 to 15–20 m one from another) within a radius of ca 200 m (Fig. 2).

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Fig. 2. Circular stone circles (photographed by S.Yu. Kargapol'tsev, June 5, 1986)

The rock of the circles is local, boulder and *rapakivi* granite (Fin. *rapakivi* means “dirty” or “rotten stone”). The degree of preservation of the stone circles varies from almost intact to heavily disturbed. The best preserved and most expressive stone circle was selected for detailed examination: it showed a concentric layout of three rings (the central ring ca 1 m in diameter was initially damaged) constructed on a relatively flat area (the outer ring was ca 6 m and the middle ring ca 4 m in diameter). A slight elevation of the circle above the general level of the platform was recorded in its northern and western areas; the stones of the circle were sunken into the ground at 3 to 12.5 cm deep (Fig. 3).

Another reason that motivated the detailed inspection of this circle was the need to check its authenticity in order to exclude the possibility that this construction of such a rare type had been recently made.

The survey conducted did not disturb the architecture of the site in question: the circular structures remained untouched, and all the stones were left *in situ* (irregularly shaped stones vary in size from 0.1 to 0.9 m). Partial soil stripping was carried out by two crosswise “trenches” orientated in cardinal directions. In the subsoil sandy loam layer (the topsoil was ca 3–5 cm thick), there were a D-shaped iron buckle and a knife blade with straight back and ledge stop; the knife point and the handle haft were missing. When the works finished, the finds were transferred to the Department of Archaeology of the Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) University for storage. In 2014, V.N. Sedykh organised the conservation of the said artefacts (cleaning from corrosion and oxides) at the Cameral and



Fig. 3. Concentric stone circle. Viewed from the south-east (photographed by S.Yu. Kargapoltsev, June 11, 1987)

Digital Processing, Documentation, and Storage of Archaeological Collections Laboratory of the Institute for the History of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which was carried out successfully by N.S. Kurganov and K.V. Gorlov (Fig. 4, 5) ⁴.

The stratigraphy of the concentric circle under study comprised of: a thin (3–6 cm) topsoil of sod (mostly a mix of lingonberry, blackberry, and reindeer lichen); below, a 7–10-cm-thick layer of dark-grey sandy loam (silt loam-humus low-moisture bleached sands), with the underlying virgin soil of yellowish-brown coarse sand with inclusions of small stones (quartzite) and lenses of loamy soil. The thickness of the virgin soil down to the rock massif was not determined, for the stone circle in question was not subjected to prospect trenching. No traces of secondary or surface burial, such as calcined bones, were found in the cleaned layer. In the southern area of the perimeter under survey (outside the outer ring of the stone circle), there was a fine 10-mm fragment (patinated stain) of an indeterminate



Fig. 4. Iron buckle before and after conservation (photographed by S.Yu. Kargapoltsev and V.N. Sedykh, 2014)



Fig. 5. Iron knife with 5-cm ruler before and after conservation (photographed by S.Yu. Kargapoltsev and V.N. Sedykh, 2014)

bronze artefact which crumbled into dust when attempted to be removed. Presumably, it was a fragment of bead, rivet, or brooch (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Ground plan and profile (cross-section A–A) of the concentric stone circle. Conventions: 1 – turf; 2 – sub-layer of dark grey sandy loam (illuvial-humus low-dense bleached sands); 3 – virgin soil; 4 – boulders; 5 – small finds (drawn by S.Yu. Kargapoltsev, 1986–1987)

The function of the complex under study is presumably defined as a cenotaph, as there were no obvious traces of a burial. However, another cult function of the site is still possible (sacrificial place? sanctuary? memorial?).

No other stone circle was examined during the observation; neither instrumental survey nor mapping of their location was carried out. It was 1989 when V.Ia. Shumkin visited the site, though he also did not have a possibility to study the structures in detail. In August 2022, we made a visual observation of the site anew. Over the past 35 years, some of the stone circles were damaged to a critical extent, but the complex examined in 1987 was generally adequately preserved (Fig. 7).

Unfortunately, the artefacts originating from the stone circle under study do not have narrow dates. Iron D-shaped buckles (see Fig. 4) appeared



Fig. 7. Concentric stone circle. Viewed from the south-east (photographed by S.Yu. Kargapoltsev, August 15, 2022)

in the Barbaricum in the Roman Period to exist there as long as the Middle Ages began. The straight-backed knife fragment (see Fig. 5) has a small vertical projection on the straight back, which was a stopper of the stabbing and cutting part of the blade, distinguishing the artefact the early mediaeval knives of the forest zone of Eastern Europe studied by R.S. Minasian ⁵. Plausibly, the chronology of the stone circles at Kilp'iavr envelopes wide limits from the Roman Period to the Early Middle Ages.

Typologically, the stone circles in question do not belong to the stone structures already known in the Kola Peninsula, such as cromlechs, labyrinths (also called Babylons), stone piles (boulder mounds), or seids ⁶. However, in the northern Fennoscandia, on the territory of present-day Sweden and Norway, there are stone circles, often of smaller size, interpreted as sacrificial sites of Late Mediaeval Saami ⁷. Nowadays, the earliest metal artefacts discovered at the Saami stone circles are dated from 700 AD onwards ⁸.

It is worth mentioning that the stone circles in the Wielbark- and Przeworsk-culture cemeteries from the Roman Period, which are located in the Vistula Basin, generally date from the late Stage B1 to B2/C1–C1a (70/80–180/220 AD), such as the Przeworsk-culture stone circles in Osieck ⁹, or the Wielbark-culture stone circles in Polish Pomerania from Stage B2/C1–C1b/C2, i.e. 150/160–250/260, as well as their parallels in Southern Scandinavia. All these show a degree of similarity with the assemblages in the Kola Peninsula under study ¹⁰. Let us also mention the parallel sites discovered in the Sambia Peninsula, mainland Estonia, and Saaremaa Island ¹¹. However, the Baltic stone circles most often have only one stone ring with a burial inside it. The exception is the stone structures of R. Wołagiewicz's type 3 comprising of two concentric circles ¹². Generally, it is the case of a funeral / cult tradition, which to a greater or lesser extent enveloped a significant part of the Circum-Baltic area from Finland and Sweden to Eastern Prussia as early as the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age ¹³.

In Estonia, the stone circles of the kind were possibly related to the so-called *tarandas* (from Est. *Tarandkalmistu*, or "fenced cemeteries"), or the cemeteries with fences of boulder surrounding cist graves (parallel to Western and Central European cists). The long period of their existence is determined from the Late Bronze Age and Pre-Roman Period to the Early Migration Period, i.e. from the tenth/ninth – fifth/third centuries BC to the fourth/fifth century AD ¹⁴. The tradition of stone fences has also been documented at the Roman-Period cemeteries in the western area of the Izhora Plateau ¹⁵. We consider this direction of connections, as well as the pattern of spreading of the established traditions, the most probable and more or less explainable. In other words, the stone circles of the Arctic region may, very indirectly, reflect the Circum-Baltic tradition originating from the Roman and the Great Migration Periods. If it was the case, the most probable period of these structures' first appearance in the Arctic region was the Great Migration Period.

Actually, many researchers suppose that the main incentive for the spread of European influences (artefacts, traditions, and migrations) on the north, in the Baltic and Fennoscandia, was the growing demand for fur¹⁶. Let us remind that the fur trade in Europe did not have a global importance prior to the fifth century, as fur clothing was perceived as a sign of barbarism (e.g. the edict of 416 AD prohibiting it in Rome)¹⁷. The first reliable account on the fur trade between the Mediterranean and the Northern and Eastern European Barbaricum appeared in Jordanes, in the sixth century¹⁸. According primarily to the palaeozoological data, the most demandable fur in the said period was beaver's. Large quantities of sable and marten started to be hunted later, when the Slavs joining this business as intermediaries and hunters. This is evidenced particularly by the Slavic name of sable in mediaeval Western Europe¹⁹.

Fur was obtained in Northern Fennoscandia probably as early as the Roman Period²⁰. Among the main fur-hunters there were the Finns, or the Saami (Lapponians). Their contacts with the Germans undoubtedly took place as early as the Roman Period according to the finds of the artefacts of Norwegian origin from the Roman Period in Finnmark²¹. In this region, the Great Migration Period corresponds to the Post-Ceramic or Early Saami Iron Age²² (see Fig. 1). It was the time when the Lapponians stopped their local ceramic industry and metal working. The reduction of the Saami's own production was probably connected with their strict orientation to the exchange trade of forest "goods," when the necessary artefacts came from the outside, the Baltic Finns and Germans. The real presence of natives from other territories in the Saami zone is evidenced by a bog find of skis of the "southern" type featuring the radiocarbon dating to the first half of the first millennium AD²³.

The ethnonyms *Finni-Screrefennae* / *Scretefennae* (sometimes derived from Old Norse as "Finns-skiers") and apparently *Uinouiloth* / *Caino-thioth* are reconstructed for the sixth-century Saami in Northern Fennoscandia. The latter possibly constituted a separate Finnish or Finno-Germanic militarised group which operated in the zone of Scandinavian-Saami contacts, later known as the *Kvæner*, *Kainuu*²⁴, i.e. the Finno-Germanic mediaeval population on either side of the Gulf of Bothnia. It is interesting that the DNA analyses of the boat burials in the cemetery of Tuna confirm the existence of kinship ties between the Saami and the Svealand elite at least in the later, Vendelian Period. According to B. Arrhenius, the *Ynglinga saga* supplies evidence of the same kinship ties between the Saami and Svealand ruling clans²⁵.

The knowledge of the *Scretefennae* repeatedly noted among the ancient writers²⁶ was obviously connected with this people's significant role in the fur trade²⁷. The extraction and trade of forest products became the main activity of the Lapponian population of Fennoscandia and greatly transformed the Saami society²⁸.

The trade with the northern hunters was probably barter (direct exchange), as it was already the case in the early sixteenth century between the Swedes and

the Saami. In the Southern Norrland, iron mined here was used to make axe-shaped bars, which served as a barter unit until the Viking Age ²⁹. Fur buying possibly happened in winter, at ice trading grounds, e.g. on the ice of lakes, ensuring the necessary minimum of mutual safety. Such places soon became the sites where trading centres like Helgö emerged ³⁰. By the way, researchers have already been noted the role of Helgö as one of the main centres of fur trade ³¹. In the case of Northern Finland, it has been supposed that trade contacts took place at winter settlements, or *talvikylä*, located on forested hills. Finally, silent exchange trade possible also took place, as described for the Northern Urals by the Russian Primary Chronicle and the Arab writers.

The Russian Primary Chronicle describes this phenomenon in the following words: “Within these mountains are heard great cries and the sound of voices; those within are cutting their way out. In that mountain, a small opening has been pierced through which they converse, but their language is unintelligible. They point, however, at iron objects, and make gestures as if to ask for them. If given a knife or an axe, they supply furs in return” ³². In other words, initially indigenous fur-sellers attract the attention of potential buyers by making a great noise, and then, in a very limited space, where a sudden attack or violent removal of the fur was not possible, they offer their goods by signs and indicate the desired price.

The barter trade was different in the view of Arabic writers: “The merchants say that the Darkness is not far from them, and that the people of Yura come to this Darkness, and enter it with torches, and find there a huge tree like a big village with a big beast [sitting] on it; they say it is a bird. And they bring goods with them, and [every] merchant puts his property separately, and makes a sign on it, and goes away; later on, they return and find goods which are in need in their country. And every man finds near his goods some of those things; if he agrees, he takes them, and if he does not, he takes his things and leaves others, and deceit never happens. And they do not know those from whom they buy these goods” ³³. “When the travellers have completed forty stages they alight at the [Land of] Darkness. Each one of them leaves the goods he has brought there and they return to their usual camping-ground. Next day they go back to seek their goods, and opposite them skins of sable, minever, and ermine. If the merchant is satisfied with the exchange he takes them, but if not, he leaves them. The inhabitants then add more skins, but sometimes they take away their goods and leave the merchant’s. This is their method of commerce. Those who go there do not know whom they are trading with or whether they be jinn or men, for they never see anyone” ³⁴. It is worth noting that such a trust existed in traditional societies not always and not everywhere. For example, according to ethnographic materials, the peoples of North-Eastern Siberia conducted the fur trade sometimes in the form of a battle: “Both sides came to trade in full armour and offered each other the goods on the spear-tips; or they held bundles of skins in one hand and a naked knife in the other, in full readiness to enter the battle at the slightest alarm” ³⁵.

However, sometimes there was direct takeover of the furs from the locals, either as a tribute ³⁶, or simply as a plunder ³⁷. According to these relatively late sources and geographical location of old ethnic groups, the armed troops that placed tributes and plundered the Saami consisted primarily of German Scandinavians and Baltic Finns (Kvens / Kvener, Karelians, or their ancestors).

The main reason why Europeans needed furs should be not just a fashion, but a global cooling (“the Late Antiquity and the Great Migration Period pessimism”), with the peak in the sixth and seventh centuries. There are researches to call this cooling, which became one of the factors of the systemic crisis of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the Migration Period, the “Late Antique Little Ice Age” ³⁸. It was probably the desire to take control of the fur trade that may have been the trigger for the migration of militarised barbarians eastwards and northwards as far as the most remote periphery of the European Barbaricum ³⁹. Noteworthy, the first archaeological traces of Scandinavian penetration into the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland, with access to the system of river routes of Eastern Europe, date to this moment, or the late fifth or early sixth century ⁴⁰.

In the Late Roman and the Great Migration periods, a well-defined wave of “civilisational” flow of artefacts and traditions from the West, coinciding with the spread of Roman and Early Byzantine imports ⁴¹, overflowed the northern part of the forest zone of Eastern Europe, including the territory of the Baltic States and the North-West of modern Russia ⁴². It is indicative that a number of finds of weapons and horse equipment of “Western” (Germanic and Baltic) appearance in these territories testify to the assimilation of military technology introduced from the West by the forest population ⁴³.

The reasons for the active penetration of Western weaponry, funeral rite, and stereotypes of behaviour into Eastern Europe should probably be considered to be the general tension in the middle to second half of the fifth century of the military and political situation on the Middle Danube, caused by the fall of the Hunnic realm (451–453), the collapse of the Western Roman Empire (476), and the beginning wars between the Germanic barbarian kingdoms. This restructuring reached Northern Europe as well, as evidenced, in particular, by the migration of the Heruli to Scandinavia, the appearance of Scandinavian kings at the Ostrogothic court in Ravenna, the Esti embassy to Theodoric, or the participation of mercenary Varni in the Gothic War ⁴⁴. Probably, in the Great Migration Period, or the fifth and sixth centuries, some militarised groups of Danube-Germanic, Slavic, and Baltic populations advanced into the forest zone of Eastern Europe. Comparatively few, but rigidly organised and highly militarised groups of multi-tribal populations leave the Ponto-Danubian region to migrate in different directions. The migrants did not leave a deep trace in the culture of the local population, except for the artefacts of warrior and horseman groups, and were apparently assimilated by them rather quickly; however, under the specific situation of the fifth and early sixth centuries such groups could

play an important role in the military and political history of the forest zone of Eastern Europe for a short period ⁴⁵. In the Arctic zone, the Scandinavian Germans and Baltic Finns could play a similar role of warlike migrants, as already mentioned.

It is interesting that at the same time, in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, the sea route was lunched to connect the Baltic basin with the North Sea and the Western Atlantic ⁴⁶. On the southern and eastern coasts of the Baltic Sea, this route is marked by the appearance of clusters of burial sites with prestigious and professional weapons. These graves actually indicate the shaping of local military elites who tried to control the coastal navigation in the Baltic waters ⁴⁷.

It was the period (fifth and early sixth centuries) of active phase of fur supply from Eastern Europe and Scandinavia to the south, as far as the Mediterranean, with trading mediators not only the Germans from the Baltic region, but also the steppe nomads, the Hunuguri ⁴⁸. For the Circum-Baltic region (East Prussia, the Baltics, Finland, Sweden, Jutland, and the Baltic islands), this period was marked by the formation of “minor” barbaric “kingdoms,” which were strongly influenced by militarized German cultures of Central Europe, the North Sea basin, and Southern Scandinavia ⁴⁹. Most likely, the rulers of these small “kingdoms” controlled the flows of the fur trade in the North of Europe. Apparently, this process is reflected in the funeral sites of the Northern Scandinavian elite. This way, the burial chamber of the famous “princely” barrow of Högom in Norrland, constructed ca 500 AD, contained the remains of the skins of a bear, beaver, marten, sable, polecat, reindeer, and seal ⁵⁰. According to Swedish researchers, it emphasizes the role of fur as a status symbol in the hierarchy of the Scandinavian barbarians ⁵¹.

The military and political centres of the type probably appeared not only in the Baltic, but also in more remote regions of the forest zone of Eastern Europe. The materials of the fortified settlement of Demidovka in the Upper Dnieper area could be an argument ⁵².

The above pattern of reasoning allows the one to establish and substantiate the causal relationship between the fur trade and the penetration of fur miners (both intermediary buyers and hunters) into the Subarctic and Arctic zones of Fennoscandia and the Kola Peninsula in the Late Roman and the Great Migration Periods.

To complete the analysis of the finds in possession from the Kola Peninsula, it would be important to turn, for a parallel, to the situation in Arctic Norway. B. Solberg used the data of radiocarbon analysis of settlement centres (showing a circular layout of 15–17 houses with an open square in the centre) to date these sites in the Norwegian Arctic area from the first half of the second to the middle or the second half of the sixth century and also linked the intensification of life in the north with fur hunting and whaling industry. In the researcher’s opinion, the main fur suppliers probably were local Saami (*Screrefennae*, *Σκριθίφιννοι*, *Scritobini*), but only as hunters and tributaries. Control over trade connections

with mainland Europe and supply of furs to its “market” was made by organised groups of barbarians, which gradually lost contact with the “metropolis” and became enterprising colonisers of remote territories and unwitting “civilisers” of the wild land, who provided it with a rapid “demographic explosion”⁵³. In the same period, a similar situation occurred in Northern Sweden, around the Gulf of Bothnia, where the first permanent settlements appeared in the late fifth and sixth centuries probably in result of the development of fur trade⁵⁴.

Chronologically important for determining the period of settlement of Germanic colonists in the Arctic area is the fifth-century burial (chamber inhumation) in Grunnes, Finnmark (in the vicinity of the town of Vardø at the northern tip of the Varangerfjord). Its chronology is based on cross-shaped brooch of the Mundheim type and a bone comb⁵⁵. Let us mention that Vardø is only 140 kilometres as the crow flies from the stone circles in Kilpjavr. By land, bypassing the Varangerfjord, it is about 290 kilometres.

Jordanes knew the people of *Adogit*⁵⁶, who lived in stone area⁵⁷; the latter fits well the realities of the northern Norwegian coast. The islands in the frozen sea mentioned by Jordanes as the place where wolves used to lose their sight because of the great cold⁵⁸ have been interpreted as the present-day Vardø (mediaeval *Vargeyjar*, from – *vargr* = “wolf,” i.e. “Wolf’s islands”)⁵⁹.

According to what was stated above, we share the opinion that the fur trade was probably the main motivator for various contacts and migration movements in the north and north-east of Europe, including the reason for the appearance of Scandinavians, Baltic Finns, Danube Germans, Balts and Slavs in north-west Russia. To clarify the situation, let us only note that the objects of fur trade and hunting in the Scandinavian-Kola Arctic area could be white and blue foxes, foxes, otters, martens, ermines, weasels, squirrels, Arctic hares, as well as lynxes, wolverines, brown bears and wolves⁶⁰. As for muskrat, mink and beaver, they were brought to the Kola Peninsula for settlement in the wild only in the 1930s⁶¹.

Thus, the cultural and historical context of the stone circles in question was most likely associated with the traditions of heterogeneous militarised barbarians, who was able to raid as far as the coast of the Norwegian and Barents Seas⁶². However, only full-scale research of the above-mentioned complex of circles and the surrounding area can confirm or refute the said conclusions.

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Translated by Nikita Khrapunov.

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60. Jordan mentions especially valuable fur of sapperinae pelles supplied from Scandinavia. — JORDANES. Op. cit., p. 21. It would be hard to say what kind of animal it was; the historians have already offered all possible interpretations, from blue fox to sable, including marten, ermine, squirrel, and black fox, but, finally, no one knows which version is better. — SVENNUNG J. Op. cit., S. 47–51.
61. Atlas of the Murmansk Region..., p. 19.
62. It is interesting to note that from the fifth to seventh century the belt set elements of the Ural origin distributed in the northern area of the forest zone as far as present-day Estonia, Finland, and Sweden. These artefacts indicate the permanent ties between the Kama region and the population of Finland in the seventh century and, possibly, the long-distance penetration of Perm traders to the West. Most likely, it was the case of fur trade. For details see: KAZANSKI M.M. The Mounds of Old Uppsala and the "Eastern Way". In: Novgorod and the Novgorod Land. 2007. Iss. 21., p. 125–137 (with bibliography). Almost simultaneously, ca 500 AD, there increased the intensity of contacts between Sogdian merchants and forest hunters of the Urals and Western Siberia. — MARSHAK B.I. Silver for the Fur. In: The Byzantine idea. Byzantium in the Era of the Comnenians and Paleologians / Ed. by V.N. Zaleskaya. Saint Petersburg. 2006, p. 73; SHUVALOV P.B. The Conception of Russia..., p. 85. Could the expansion of Ural-Baltic contacts be a response to the increased demand for furs from the Sogdians?

Contents

Articles: **P.A. Iskenderov**. Balkan's fall of 1913; **V.P. Kazakov**. Conflict in the South Atlantic: geopolitical aspect. People. Events. Facts; **S.K. Tulbassiyeva, S. Zhumatay**. Legislation on disenfranchisement and its application in practice in the Alma-Ata district in 1918–1936; **I.V. Goncharova, G.S. Chuvardin, V.V. Kulachkov**. The impact of the collectivization process on the formation of early Stalinist collective farms (based on the material of the Central Chernozem region); **N.V. Mitiukov, R.V. Faizullin, Yu.L. Kim**. The fleet of the Sarapul's Gortop in 1932–1956. Discussion Problems: **V.A. Berdinskikh**. Historical fact as an artificial construct; **L.A. Van Haaske**. The discourse of the paranormal in the culture of the Perestroika era (based on diary materials). Archaeology: **S.Yu. Kargapoltsev, M.M. Kazanski, I.Yu. Lapina**. Stone circles in the European Arctic Region: aspects of chronology and attribution. For Teacher of History: **V.V. Denisov, D.A. Kryuchkov, G.A. Kryuchkov**. The technologies of the construction of the Great Pyramid of Cheops in educational and popular science literature of the second half of the 20th century. History and Law: **A.A. Aryamov, V.V. Kulakov**. Byzantine transit of legal Judaica to domestic criminal law; **V.A. Maksimov, K.G. Svarchevskii, E.Kh. Mamedov**. The Middle Ages as an object of research of legal science; **Yu.G. Shpakovsky, V.I. Yevtushenko, Yu.M. Goryachkovskaya, V.K. Dovgalyo, N.V. Stus**. Formation and legislation Ancient Russian state and Medieval European states: comparative historical and legal analysis; **A.P. Petersburgsky, E.V. Aristov, I.N. Kuksin, M.V. Markhgeym, A.E. Novikova**. Genesis of the constitutional and legal formalization of the institute of judicial control; **V.I. Dolinko**. Interstate relations in countering economic crimes during public procurement of goods (works, services). Cultural News: **Liu Fang**. The process of orientalizing of urban sculpture in China from the middle of the 19th century; **Cao Yifan**. The history of the development of the art of Socialist Realism in the USSR and China; **Mahmoud Abdel Rasoul Mohammad Alakhras, Pakri Mohamad Rashidi Mohamad**. "The Inheritance of Loss" as the postcolonial bildungsroman: a struggle for identity. Contributions: **Zhou Tianhe, Peng Wei (corresponding author)**. Institutional conditions of the development of Chinese entrepreneurship in the Russian Far East in the 1990s; **J.V. Hasanova, K.A. Najafova**. The historical development of trade and economic relations between Azerbaijan and the countries of the European Union. Medicine and Sports Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow: **He Huichao, Wang Jingbo**. History of the formation of sports disciplines as an element of the development of society in China; **Yang Guang, Wei Lai**. Women and the Olympic Games: trends and problems of modern women's sports. Education: Past, Present, and Future: **Xu Hong, Li Liqun (corresponding author)**. Review of Russian language textbooks in Chinese higher education institutions: 1949–1966; **Aida Albasalah, Razan Alarnous, Samar Zuhair Alshawwa**. Assessing historical, behavioral, psychological and economic impacts of home education in Saudi Arabia; **Xiong Yaling, Zhang Weimin (corresponding author)**. The research on the design strategy of outdoor sports facilities for preschool children from the perspective of game theory.

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