

Golubeva, Liubov' V. and Sofiia O. Kupriianova, Л.В. Голубева and С.О. Куприянова. *Материнство в советской деревне: ритуалы, дискурсы, практики в двух томах; том I: Исследование; том II: Фрагменты интервью*. [Motherhood in the Soviet Village: Rituals, Discourses, and Practices in Two Volumes; Volume 1: The Study; Volume 2: Interview Excerpts]. Volume 1, 320 pp. Volume 2, 896pp. Санкт-Петербург: Пропповский центр, 2022. Volume 1: List of informants. Archival photos. List of Collectors. Maps. Volume 2: List of abbreviations. Glossary of Dialect Words. \$110.00 (hardback). ISBN 978-5-6044326-2-4 (Volume 1). ISBN 978-5-6044326-3-1 (Volume 2).

Liubov Golubeva and Sofia Kupriianova's two-volume Russian-language opus *Motherhood in the Soviet Village: Rituals, Discourses, and Practices*, edited by Svetlana Adon'eva and published by the Propp Center in Saint Petersburg, Russia, is devoted to the concept and everyday realities of motherhood in the Arkhangelsk and Vologda regions of Russia. The book spans from the end of the nineteenth century to the present. There is a particular focus on transitions during the Soviet period. The analysis of changing and surviving traditions is structured around four key areas: pregnancy and childbirth, introduction of the infant to the family, infant care, and crises with the infant. The study presented in the first volume is based both on extensive extant archival materials and new field interviews that were collected by the authors in the Russian North since 2003. There, they talked to mothers and grandmothers, who were born between 1917 and 1970, about their experiences of motherhood. The results are presented in what the authors refer to as a "thick" (literally, enriched [*насыщенное*]) anthropological description (I:5).

Using the conceptual frameworks of Marcel Mauss' body techniques, Michel de Certeau's practice of everyday life, Erving Goffman's frame analysis, and Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, Golubeva and Kupriianova document both a continuity of body habits and their modifications from the pre-October Revolution agrarian context to the contemporary urbanized environment. The need for such a body focus was made particularly clear to the collectors when they asked an older informant to demonstrate the procedure for swaddling a baby. Unexpectedly, the informant sat down on the floor, extended her legs, and placed a demonstration doll on her extended legs with the doll's head towards her feet, an approach that the collectors later observed in multiple locations. This contrasts with the contemporary technique of diapering a baby on a horizontal high surface, such as a table or bed. The authors also analyze how women talk about their maternal experiences, noting (un)spoken prohibitions on subjects such as pregnancy, the onset of labor, or a baby's health. The researchers convincingly show change in register from everyday language to ritual language, which is characterized by tone shifts, euphemisms, and metaphors.

A major theme is young women transitioning their reliance from the patronage of their mothers-in-law to reliance on their own mothers and state-provided medical services. The first section of the first chapter devoted to rites

and practices of childbirth is titled “Помощь свекрови и повитухи” [Assistance by the Mother-in-Law and by a Traditional Midwife] (I:23). Further in the chapter, in a section titled “Роды с фельдшером” [Birth Assisted by a Medical Professional] (I:42-49), the authors demonstrate the shift to more medicalized and hospital-based childbirths as one of the factors in the changing position of a husband’s family in the maternal experience. The authors convincingly argue that in a traditional exogamous marriage, when a woman entered her husband’s household often distant from her native village, the patronage by the mother-in-law and her assistance in the birth and infant care were critical, especially for a first-time mother. Traditionally, the father was a participant in the childbirth. The stress on the paternal family is evident in the requirement to immediately wrap the newborn in the father’s old shirt, symbolizing the entrance of a new member into the paternal household, as described in the second chapter. However, thanks to Khrushchev’s residential and daycare policies in the 1960s, when a new family acquired an opportunity to live separately, women had a choice between submitting to their mother-in-law or living independently; the authors see a generational conflict centered on this shift. The theme of the authority of the mother-in-law or transition away from it continues throughout the four chapters of the first volume. Chapter Three, devoted to infant care, again has a section titled “Патронаж свекрови и старших” [Patronage by the Mother-in-Law and Other Elders] (I:147-152). Chapter Four, dealing with critical illnesses, accidents, disappearances, and the deaths of children not only presents and analyzes narrative materials of dire circumstances and loss but also notes the role of the mother-in-law in keeping previous generations of mothers healthy.

Golubeva and Kupriianova frequently refer to interviews published in the second volume, which by itself constitutes a mini-archive of almost 900 pages, based on materials held at the Saint-Petersburg University Folklore Archive and the Propp Center electronic archive. The second volume is organized along the same four thematic areas as the first volume, but it is also further subdivided geographically and functionally with tags, e.g., “#afterbirth” [#послед] (II:155). Both volumes have multiple appendices; aside from an extensive bibliography of primarily Russian-language sources, Volume One contains an alphabetical list of nearly 650 informants to whom the authors express their gratitude, six archival photos, a list of over 275 collectors, and historical information and maps of the regions; Volume Two contains a list of abbreviations and a glossary of dialect words.

The reader may not always be entirely satisfied with the descriptions in the text. There is, for example, surprisingly little information on the actual techniques of frequently mentioned diapering and swaddling. Are there ties or pins involved? How does the special swaddling ribbon [пеленальник] work? If a kind of a hood is left to cover the baby’s face, what are the actual folds? If, as the authors mention, the mother-in-law’s old skirt is used for swaddling, is the skirt modified in any way before such use? Moreover, there is only a single sentence that refers to the type of swaddling—in the past, it was “tight” [тугое пеленание] with the baby’s arms and legs straightened (I: 104), or “little soldier” style [солдати́ком].

“Free swaddling” [*свободное пеленание*] or “wide diapering” [*широкое пеленание*], both of which are considered preferable by Russian medical professionals these days, are not mentioned at all. Are there any generational conflicts related to different views on how to swaddle an infant?

Golubeva and Kupriianova present a detailed and coherent picture of shifting motherhood practices in the region. As a systematic analysis of extensive materials, the text is an important contribution to research on the anthropology of motherhood, both in historical terms and for understanding the worldviews of contemporary mothers in Russia. The work addresses current academic interest in motherhood and meets societal demands for knowledge of traditional practices in rethinking and reevaluating existing practices in pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare. It is relevant for medical and cultural anthropologists, folklorists, scholars of literature and art, medical professionals, and the public at large. A great service to anthropology would have been a translation of the work into English, which would make this study available to a greater circle of researchers into motherhood worldwide outside of Russia.

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