Summary

From the Editor

The selection of articles for this book was not random. Each of them focuses on issues of current interest to ethno-americanists, first and foremost the issues concerning the nodal points and crucial events in the history of inhabitants of the New World — the arrival and origins of the first settlers of America, «neolithic revolution», European conquest, formation and development of immigrant societies — or those concerning the study of certain important elements of their culture, such as Indian mythology. The authors draw upon vast literature and offer original interpretations of the issues currently discussed by the world science.

The collection demonstrates the importance of the American material for the research into the fundamental laws of socio-cultural evolution of mankind.

A.A. Zubov

Physical Anthropological Characteristics of the Native American Pre-European Population

The contemporary data of physical anthropology and population genetics do not, for the most part, support the wide-spread opinion on the origins and taxonomy of the American Indian. The aboriginal Indian population if the pre-European period was much more heterogeneous than is commonly believed and thus it cannot be included as a whole into the Mongoloid great race, containing some other components. The anthropological type of the ancient Americans originates from the common undifferentiated «eastern» (Mongoloid-Australoid) stock characteristic of the upper paleolithic-mesolithic population of south-eastern and eastern Asia. The ancestors of the American Indians penetrated into the New World gradually and in many diverse groups over a very long period, being the first migration dated back to 30-40 thousand years.

Yu.E. Berezkin

The Problems of Study of the Indian Mythologies

Particular combinations of motifs in the mythological texts are due to chance circumstances. Attempts to fill texts with meaning promote their modification to make them more adequate for the given purpose. As the specialists monopolize sacred knowledge, popular, lay mythologies are replaced with priestly ones. Besides the general idea of the primeval ancestors and of the time of creation, there is hardly anything really universal in the mythology. Neither the World Tree, nor other elements of the world structure are shared by all traditions. The characters in a given text find their place in the system of co-ordinates created by two pairs of oppositions: the own/the alien and the powerful/ the weak which define human relations as well as the social behavior of the higher animals. The trickster is a character who stands near to the center of co-ordinates, being simultaneously own and strange, strong and weak. The same oppositions underlie many tales that describe the transition of borderline between the own and the alien worlds. Several classes of characters such as animals, different spirits and ghosts, foreigners and to a certain degree women easily overlap thanks to their mutual opposition to the community of men. The tales are produced either by agglutination of motifs or by inserting additional motifs into the initial frame, the shell-motif. The local and regional sets of motifs and tales result from the long-time chance process and do not depend significantly on natural and cultural features. The original formation of mythology was probably connected with the appearance of language and is a problem apart from the study of particular oral traditions.

V.A. Bashilov

Two Models of the «Neolithic Revolution» in the Central Andes: towards the Study of the World Paleolithic Economic Process

The article is devoted to some general problems of the paleoeconomic process of «neolithic revolution» as they are seen in the light of archaeological materials of the Central Andes. In antiquity, there existed two models of the process in this territory, a «classic» one in the mountains and an atypical one on the Pacific coast. The classic process consisted in the transition from hunting-gathering to agriculture-llama breeding. The atypical model existed within the appropriating economy changing into a complex economic system with maritime orientation. The «neolithic revolution» continued in both areas for no more than 1500 years. This time is very short as compared with the previous and subsequent periods of the existence of different economic types. This testifies incontestably in favour of the revolutionary character of this process.

A relatively rare historical phenomenon of productive economy formation within the framework of the appropriating economic system is observed on the Peruvian coast. Its appearance permits us to explain the existence of complex societies of fishers-hunters-gatherers in different areas of the world. The structural similarity of the «neolithic revolution» in both areas of the Central Andes allows one to speak about one and the same regularity underlying the examined paleoeconomic processes.

E.G. Alexandrenkov

Appropriation of Cultural Elements (the Case of Colonial Cuba)

American history is characterized by permanent interaction of peoples of multiple ethnic origins and different cultural heritages. The evaluation of this process by anthropologists has produced certain explanatory concepts, such as *acculturation, transculturation, conquest culture* and others.

The early colonial history of Cuba demonstrates that in the early sixteenth century the intruders from Spain were adopting elements of aboriginal culture in a selective way. While, in the course of their forceful interaction with the natives, the conquerers assimilated many elements of material culture (along with their authentic names) — those of vital importance for survival, — they completely rejected such components of a culture as the system of aboriginal religious views. This (selectivity and use of force in cultural exchange) permits one to consider the process in terms of *appropriation of culture*.

N.N. Kulakova

Immigrants of European Ancestry in the US Cities: Towards the Problem of Evolution of Ethnicity

The article examines the historical and cultural link between the ethnicity, social mobility and settlement patterns of immigrant groups of European ancestry in the US cities. At the same time, the role and meaning of ethnicity in America is discussed. While in the last and early in this century immigrants arriving from different European countries concentrated in ethnic neighborhoods and exploited specific economic niches, ethnicity thus being an important principle of social organization in the United States, the present is a time of transition between the older pattern where rather strong ethnic differences prevailed and a newer one where white ethnic groups have roughly equal life chances to attain many highly valued statuses. Insofar as ethnicity has a role, it is increasingly voluntary, dependent on deliberate actions of individuals to maintain activities and relationships that have an ethnic character. Ethnic identity rather than community is becoming increasingly more meaningful as a basis for ethnicity among whites.

L.S. Sheinbaum

The State and the Immigrants's Ethnicity: Argentina's Experience

The article discusses the way the authoritarian rule of the Argentinian state has influenced transformations of the immigrants' ethnicity. Through nationalizing the school, the army and the mass media, the state has been implementing assimilationist policy aimed at consolidation of the immigrants and the nucleus of the Argentinian (Creole) ethnic community. The state's nationalism and the grass-root Creole nationalism were mutually supportive. All of these factors together prevented European immigrant masses from seriously opposing cultural assimilation and creating new ethnoses or a new nation of European character.