

Mária Sipos (HUN-REN Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics) – Eszter Ruttkay-Miklan (HUN-REN Hungarian Research Centre for the Humanities): The legacy of va Schmidt. What does it contain and what can we learn from it?

va Schmidt's fieldworks among the Ob-Ugrian peoples covered several fields, i.e. her research interest equally focused on linguistic, folkloristic, and ethnographic issues. Her activities, however, can be divided into several periods, in which different goals, tasks, and circumstances made different results possible.

Prior to her first expedition in 1970, at the age of 22, she had read practically all the literature on obugristics. At that time, her research focused on written sources and literary language.

In 1980 and in 1982, she travelled again to Western Siberia, returning with a rich folklore collection, consisting mainly of private songs and prose texts. The processing of these resulted in a series of folkloristic studies, which analysed a wide range of features of the traditional way of singing, from genre structure to metrics. As for her ethnographic collections on religion and beliefs, they later served as a source of her doctoral thesis on bear cult (1989).

In 1991, the North Khanty Folklore Archive in Beloyarskiy was established, and Eva Schmidt worked as the head of the institution from then until her death in 2002. Her most important task was collecting and documenting, and she also did organisational work, from training and instructing staff to organising amateur collecting networks, while also doing fieldwork herself. The work plans and annual reports outline her main objectives, i.e. collecting and documenting, returning earlier sources to the Khanty or Mansi communities, and revitalising cultural life, especially by re-enacting traditional festivities. Further important research topics of hers were: settlement history, family history (clan, patrilineal classification, marriage circles, specific family events), husbandry (livestock, hunting, fishing, food processing, etc.), issues of religious beliefs: sacred sites, cults, related folklore, and reincarnation.

In our talk, we will briefly present va Schmidt's goals, results and methods.