

Clayton Marr

CIPL report of participation

I'm writing this report to confirm that I attended the ASEES conference in Philadelphia. I was there to receive my award for my essay, now a published paper in *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, "The Angevin-Albanian Element in the Albanian Lexicon". However, my experience at the conference amounted to much more than receiving the award.

I attended talks covering geographic areas ranging from Croatia to Yakutia and covering time periods ranging from the late Roman Empire to ongoing events in Ukraine and in regions of the Russian Federation. On many of the talks, I took notes on my computer, to which I would return later. Perhaps the talks that most interested that I attended was a series how the Soviet period, from its inception to (especially) in its twilight were handled in parts of Siberia, with focus especially on the Sakha Republic (/Yakutia, as it was called during the period), Tyva, and Buryatia. It was particularly interesting to learn about the sort of regionalist ideology that took hold in Sakha/Yakutia, being simultaneously rooted in Sakha culture and cosmopolitan insofar as it had it aimed to incorporate the Russians and other non-Sakha into a movement pursuing regional interests. This was all the more interesting in the fact that the researcher presenting this, Sabine Dullin, was French. She did not miss the resemblance of this to French statehood ideologies. Not long after the thought occurred to me, she was talking about the 'Frenching' of the Republic. Apparently there were historical reasons for this – much of the Sakha elite had been students of French political philosophy. At the same time, Sakha nationalism had developed a sort of paternalistic approach vis-a-vis the smaller indigenous peoples of its area, arguing that the Sakha, being "more developed" (more developed literature, intelligentsia, industry) should be "mediators" between the Russians and these smaller peoples (i.e. the Evenki, Yukaghirs, etc.), an ideology rooted in a context rather alien to the French case. Not only was this all super interesting, but it also informed my composition of an essay I was writing for a class, on language contact in Siberia. Well, to be sure: not only did my notes from the talk help, but I also drew from sources I had obtained from talking to people at the conference, Dullin's publications, and sources branching out from there.

The conference also brought me into contact with many people who had a lot of interesting information for me. Some of this concerned career matters. I particularly enjoyed talking to Andrea Lanoux. Other matters were of particular interest to me as a linguist. This was particularly so for the first panel I attended, which concerned the vitality of minoritized languages, especially those in the Russian Federation. It was greatly informative, even if a bit distressing from the point of linguistic diversity. It was particularly instructive to me to learn that the Tyvan scholar present had her own family where, despite the historic strength of the Tyvan language, the youngest generation, due to the subtle pressures of the Russian schooling system which limits good instruction to Russian-medium institutions, are speaking only Russian among each other.

The last thing to mention that stuck with me was the last panel I attended, which focused on current ideological developments in Russia and its diaspora, as measured from sentiment analysis trends on social media. I learned a lot here that I would not have considered, that added a lot of nuance to my understanding about, in particular, the goals of the Russian opposition.

I am filled with gratitude both for the experience I was able to have at this conference and the assistance I received in attending.

Sincerely,
Clayton