

The two Rychkovs and the Finno-Ugric people

Finno-Ugric studies have discussed the work of the two Rychkovs very moderately. The father, P. I. Rychkov (1712–1777) published his text titled *Топография Оренбургская* [The topography of Orenburg] in 1762, which described the Orenburg Governorate from a historical and geographical point of view and gave an overview of the people living in this area. He wrote briefly about the life conditions, customs, clothing and belief system of the Mordvin, Mari and Udmurt people and he also included a Mordvin and a Mari prayer in this description.

After a short service in the army, the son, N. P. Rychkov (1746–1798) joined the Orenburg Expedition, within the division lead by P. S. Pallas (1769–1770). His travelogue contains 33 Mari and 11 Udmurt words mainly from the realm of pagan beliefs, including prayers and names of gods.

Keywords: Rychkov, 18th century, Mordvin, Mari, Udmurt languages.

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