

## THE DEAD IN THE SPACE OF THE LIVING: THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION AMONG THE ABKHAZ

*The article uses the example of the ceremonial side of the Abkhaz tradition of celebrating the Feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary (Hаnхәа) as an attempt to show how the Abkhazian society shapes its ideas about the world of the living and the world of the dead. The border between these worlds is seen as passable in both directions, which requires the living to be cautious, on the one hand, and to care for the dead, on the other. The most important form of care for the dead is feeding them, which becomes the central ritual action during the celebration of the feast. Food is offered not only to relatives, but also to those deceased who may be around and also need food. Another form of contact with the world of the dead is the divination. On the Feast of the Dormition, it takes place next to the cemetery at night and consists in listening to sounds that are considered as signs of upcoming events related to a particular community. Both forms of communication with the dead imply compliance with a certain set of prohibitions aimed at protecting the living.*

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