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MYTHOLOGIZATION OF THE LANDSCAPE IN THE MARI PEOPLE'S NOTIONS ABOUT LOCAL HISTORY. IMAGES OF HEROES IN COMMEMORATIVE PRACTICES

In this article the author scrutinizes the memorative landscape of the regions where Mari people live, associated with stories about local legend heroes, namely the symbolic places of their burials, marked in the natural landscape by monuments. The paper aims to investigate the role of ethno-cultural activism in the retransmission of heroic images of Mari folklore and the creation of mythological heritage. The article describes the commemorative and sacred practices associated with the objects of mythologized history and the “biographies” of its heroes. According to the author, these phenomena play an important role in local identity, historical memory and the “construction” of the heritage among local groups of the Mari population. Moreover, some heroic images are perceived by locals as sacred. The author approaches the study of the cultural landscape based on the concept of cultural heritage and the pragmatics of folklore, and the semiotic approach to the study of mythological plots. The article is based on the author’s field materials collected individually in the Republic of Mari El and the Kirov Region in 2017–2021, and during the expedition of the Department of Ethnology of the History Faculty of the Lomonosov Moscow State University in 2017.

Keywords: *cultural heritage, patyr, memorial object, cultural landscape, Chotkar, Pashkan-Keremet, Akpatyr, Boltush, Mari folklore, sacred landscape*

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