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Original Article

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THE RITUAL CLOTHING OF THE SEMEISKIE OF WESTERN TRANSBAIKAL: ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE LOST COMPONENTS AND MEANINGS OF THE COSTUME COMPLEX

The Old Believer culture, known for its traditionalism, has long preserved many elements of the pre-schism way of life. At the same time, its representatives perceived and developed the heritage of their ancestors in their own way. Their culture displayed the desire to conform to the image of a Christian looking for salvation, who strives by all means to show his efforts in this direction. Clothing was one of the means to express this aspiration, and the ritual clothes preserved both the system developed before the schism and the conceptualized Christian symbolism for a long time. This was manifested in the cut, styles and decorations with bastings, pleats and other elements that were supposed to emphasize Christian orientations and help to get closer to Heaven. The article presents an overview and analysis of various costume complexes (prayer, baptism, wedding, burial) of the Semeiskie Old Believers of Western Transbaikal based on the analysis of a range of observations, interviews and objects preserved in private, church, municipal and state collections. The author reveals the logic of tailoring and application of different parts of the costume and analyzes the number symbolism used in the creation and existence of iconic garments. This makes it possible to reconstruct some of the almost lost components and meanings of the traditional culture of the Semeiskie and other territorial-cultural groups of Old Believers.

Keywords: *Old Belief, Old Believers, Semeiskie, ritual garments, baptismal garments, wedding garments, garments for praying, burial garments, number symbolism*

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