

## CONSTRUCTING THE IMAGE OF THE VILLAGE IN THE RITUALS OF RUSSIAN NEO-PAGANS

*The article studies the ritualism of Russian neo-pagans and the ways in which townspeople construct a certain image of the village. The author describes a neo-pagan rite in an extra-urban space and the transformation of participants in urban and rural environments before, after and during the rite itself. The study shows how Russian neo-pagans relate to villagers and whether there are ways of their interaction. The paper is based on a field study of the Russian neo-pagan community in 2020–2021. The author identifies the ways of constructing the virtual ruralness and highlights the elements of the created image of the village. The article discusses the main elements of Russian neo-pagan rituals conducted by the studied community and describes the appearance of the participants and the way they interact during the ritual. This study emphasizes the main elements of the ritual that contribute to the construction of the virtual village. The study also shows how long the constructed image of the village exists after the rite is over, and how much this depends on the type of rite and the environment. The article raises a question as to whether the atmosphere of the ritual and the village that is created matters itself, or whether the participants are mainly driven by the desire to preserve the culture and become part of it.*

**Keywords:** construction of the image of the village, community, ritual, rural area, virtual ruralness

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**For citation:** Burobina, P. A. 2024. Constructing the Image of the Village in the Rituals of Russian Neo-Pagans. *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)* 2: 102–117.

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