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Original article

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## RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM IN OSSETIAN FESTIVE RITUALS

*The article studies one of the aspects of Ossetian ethnic religion as an interesting ideological complex that was formed at the intersection of a number of diverse cultures of Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the modern era. Its relevance is due to the growing tendency to study the Ossetian ethnic religion as a unique “unmixed” object, and therefore the category of “syncretism”, when applied to it, often raises objections. This study, therefore, can be considered as the author’s interpretation, as an outside perspective of the cult, of which the author herself is not an adherent. The central focus of the study is the Ossetian holiday of the Yuletide cycle Bynaty-khitsu, associated in folk beliefs with demonic forces. Within the paper, the main elements of its ritual are identified and compared with similar elements in Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism. This is the first time this problem is addressed in this manner. The methodological foundation of the study is the classification of historical types of religious syncretism, as proposed by E.V. Belyaeva. In addition, as the research is synchronic, it is carried out within the framework of the structuralism of C. Lévi-Strauss, which views all cultural systems (language, mythology, religion, art, customs, traditions) as sign systems.*

**Keywords:** ethnic religion of Ossetians, syncretism, festive rituals, Bynaty-khitsu

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