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Original article

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## NIKOLAI F. MOKSHIN ON THE ETHNIC HISTORY OF THE CHUVASH

*This is the first time Professor Mokshin's publications devoted to ethnic history of Chuvash people are analyzed. The article addresses various ethnonymic issues, historical and geographical works, as well as anthropological, archaeological, ethnographic and folkloric passages. The author of these lines recollects Nikolai Fyodorovich as an impetuous man, an uncompromising debater who knew how to raise a new point to clarify any dispute. Thus, so far, Academician M. N. Tikhomirov, member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, was considered to have put an end to the discussion about whether the 'Veda' ethnonym had been applied to the Chuvash. However, N. F. Mokshin noted that there was actually an uncertainty in M. N. Tikhomirov's observation. When M. N. Tikhomirov spoke of the Chuvash, he meant the Cheremis, the Vedas, or the Burtas. Therefore, N. F. Mokshin provided a clearer historiography of the identity of "the Veda = the Chuvash". He also undertook expeditions to Mordovia, Chuvashia and the Gorky Region to find out how the ethnonym 'Veda' was used by the Mordovians. At the same time, he was the first to show that Mordovian names and surnames were derived from the word 'veda'. It is probably no coincidence that it is among the Mordovians that one can find people with Chuvashov surname. N. F. Mokshin also wrote about the affinity of the peoples of the Volga and Urals regions in terms of their traditional practices and beliefs, insisting that the Bulgars and Suvars were two different peoples, not one. He used numerous facts to show the process of the Kypchakization of the Tatars and, consequently, the Tatarization of the Chuvash. N. F. Mokshin's works are distinguished by their topicality and novelty.*

**Keywords:** N. F. Mokshin, ethnography, history, Chuvash, Mordovians

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