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TRADITIONAL CALENDAR AND ASTRONOMICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE KHINGOU VALLEY INHABITANTS (TAJIKISTAN)

The article presents the results of an ethnographic study of the traditional calendar and astronomical knowledge conducted in 2023 among the inhabitants of the Khingou River valley (Sangvor district, Republic of Tajikistan). 56 informants from 21 villages, which cover the entire currently populated part of the valley, were interviewed. The paper describes the local traditions of determining important dates of the agricultural calendar based on observations of the Sun and stars. Special attention is paid to holidays related to the agricultural cycle, such as Nowruz, Juft Baroron and the beginning of winter “chilla”. At the same time, such traditional agricultural holidays as “Herman kurbon” (wheat harvest) and “Mehrگون” (completion of harvest) have lost their former influence and live more in the memory of the older generation, which is due to the strong influence of Islam. Sirius, the Pleiades and the three stars of the Orion’s belt are widely known in the Khingou Valley, with the latter asterism being used to determine the onset of Nowruz. In addition, a previously unknown constellation “Hen and Chickens” has been discovered in this region, which is associated with Aldebaran and the Hyades star cluster. The study revealed that certain fragments of traditional astronomical knowledge in the Khingou Valley have been preserved, and they are closely related to the agricultural way of life despite significant cultural and social changes.

Keywords: *ethnography of Tajiks, folk astronomy, star visibility, time counting, agricultural holidays*

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