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MARI'S LANGUAGE AND ETHNIC IDENTITY IN AREAS OF THEIR COMPACT SETTLEMENT (BASED ON DATA FROM 2024–2025 SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEYS)

The article presents the results of sociolinguistic surveys conducted by the author among ethno-local Mari communities in Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, the Sverdlovsk and Kirov regions in 2024–2025. One of the questions in the sociolinguistic questionnaire concerned ethnic identity. Along with roots (birthplace and family) and culture (observance of traditions and customs), our respondents identified the Mari language as one of the key markers of ethnic identity. Based on 400 interviews, the paper analyses how often the language was identified as one of the ethnic markers depending on the respondent's local ethnic group, age, and level of language proficiency. The relationship between language and ethnicity is examined in the context of the current linguistic situations in Mari communities, where idioms are undergoing a language shift. In addition, the study of the respondents' linguistic biographies makes it possible to examine the influence of more specific factors on the role of language in the process of ethnic self-identification. The paper highlights ethnonyms used in certain Mari communities to refer to individuals who do not speak the ethnic language, and draws on additional materials from the Mari community in the Moscow region. The author concludes that the ethnic language remains a symbol of Mari identity in most of the above-mentioned communities and emphasizes the importance of maintaining the Mari language in order to preserve the boundaries of the ethnic group and its ethnocultural diversity.

Keywords: *Mari language, ethnic identity, ethno-local Mari communities, language shift, Mari language in education, traditional speakers, new speakers*

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COMMON AND DIVERGENT FEATURES OF UDMURT AND MARI COSTUMES IN THE ETHNIC CONTACT ZONE (A CASE STUDY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BASHKORTOSTAN)

This article is based on field data collected by the authors in the summer of 2025 in the compact settlement area of the Udmurts and Mari in the Yanaul, Tatyshlinsky, and Mishkinsky districts of the Republic of Bashkortostan. It attempts to study the costume complexes of the two Finno-Ugric peoples — the Udmurts (southern Udmurts) and the Mari (eastern Mari), which developed by the mid-20th — first quarter of the 21st century. The authors aim to identify their common and unique features. It was revealed that, having migrated to other areas from their historical habitats, the Mari and Udmurts maintained mutual contacts in their new places of residence. For example, in the Yanaul, Tatyshlinsky, and Mishkinsky districts both the Udmurts and the Mari settled in both compact and dispersed groups, which allows them to interact and influence each other, and this is particularly evident in their traditional national costumes. Furthermore, both Udmurt and Mari costumes are significantly influenced by the traditions of the neighboring Tatar and Bashkir populations, while maintaining their own distinct ethnic identity.

Keywords: *traditional costume complex, southern Udmurts, eastern Mari, ethno-cultural contacts, technologies, ornamentation*

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“EVERYTHING IS UPSIDE DOWN”: SEMIOTICS AND THE REALITY OF THE “THIRD WEDDING” IN UDMURT CULTURE

The article is devoted to the study of the existence of the «yyr-pyd soton» memorial rite (also known as the “third wedding”) in modern Udmurt culture. The rite is considered as a liminal practice that completes a person’s life cycle and symbolically marks the transition of the soul to the afterlife. The study is based on field materials collected in 2023–2025 in various regions of the Udmurt Republic, as well as on early ethnographic sources. The ritual is examined and deconstructed from the perspective of symbolic anthropology and V. Turner’s approach. The article analyzes the main stages of the ritual, including sacrifice, feasting, and festivities, as well as its temporal and spatial aspects. A separate section of the article focuses on the current state of the ritual, its vitality, and the trends in its transformation. The authors use E. A. Yagafova’s concept as a model for analysis. The influence of Christianization, the internal tabooing of the ritual, and others are highlighted as the main factors affecting its current state in modern Udmurt society. Despite this, it is noted that the local tradition still maintains a stable perception of the yyr-pyd soton as a sacred act.

Keywords: Udmurts, memorial rite, third wedding, yyr-pyd soton, symbolic anthropology

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THE CONCEPT OF “DOMESTICATION” AND THE MAKING OF DOMESTICATED SPACE (EVIDENCE FROM CHUVASH ETHNOGRAPHY)

The article explores the concept of “domestication” in relation to space. The authors interpret domestication as a process of complex development and transformation of the environment by humans, which results in the creation of a “domesticated space”, i. e. a sphere of life that combines utilitarian and sacred aspects. The concept of “domesticated space” is analyzed in the context of related categories, such as “habitat”, “cultural landscape”, and “anthropogenic landscape”. The article emphasizes its social nature, including artificially created objects such as settlements, dwellings, economic and cult-ritual buildings and other loci. This space is structured and has certain boundaries separating the developed “own” from the undeveloped “alien”. The paper considers a hierarchical model of space development, using the ethnography of the Chuvash as an example. Its center is the dwelling with its sacred zones, then come the yard, the street, the entire settlement and the surrounding lands. The degree of domestication weakens with distance from the center. Particular attention is paid to the ambivalence of some loci: cemeteries and sanctuaries are simultaneously located both inside and outside the domesticated space, acting as mediators between the worlds. The article also characterizes the symbolic practices of domestication, such as rituals and the marking of boundaries that endow the space with protective and semantic functions. The domesticated space of the Chuvash is a dynamic system formed through everyday economic activity, spiritual views and cultural practices. This is a process of constant development, adaptation to the landscape and creation of not only a material but also a symbolic environment that ensures the cultural identity and security of the community. The concept of domestication demonstrates the deep interconnection between material culture, religious beliefs and the organization of living space.

Keywords: domestication, domesticated space, traditional culture, ethnography of the Chuvash, settlement, dwelling

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THE CONCEPT OF MCDONALDIZATION IN THE FOOD CULTURE OF MODERN MORDOVIA

Based on field materials collected by the author in 2023–2025 in the Republic of Mordovia, this article analyses the impact of McDonaldization on the transformation of the food culture of modern Mordovia. The methodological framework is based on G. Ritzer's concept, which identifies efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control as key elements of rationalization in contemporary society. The article examines the adaptation of Mordovian dishes to globalized formats of fast food, street food, hybrid cuisine, etc. Furthermore, an important focus of the work is the discourse on authenticity in the context of "invented traditions" and ethno-branding, as well as the transformation of Mordovian alimentary practices among rural populations. Efficiency is expressed in the acceleration of food preparation and consumption: in food trucks and Mordovian cuisine cafés, dishes are prepared in no more than 10–15 minutes, and semi-finished products are used. Predictability manifests in the standardization of menus, with restaurants featuring items familiar to consumers. The author concludes that McDonaldization in Mordovia is fragmentary: fast-food chains are present only in the regional capital, yet its elements (standardization, simplification, predictability) permeate both local ethnic cafés and food trucks, as well as everyday home cooking. The processes of adaptation and adoption lead to a shift in the "registers of truth," where authenticity is determined not only by the antiquity of a recipe but also by the atmosphere being created.

Keywords: mordovian cuisine, McDonaldization, authenticity, restaurant industry, globalization

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PERCEPTION OF MIGRANTS BY STUDENTS IN MORDOVIA AND UDMURTIA

The article is a comparative analysis of the results of surveys on migration problems conducted among students of universities in the Republic of Mordovia and the Udmurt Republic in 2025 according to a questionnaire developed by employees of the Distributed Scientific Center. As part of the survey, students were asked to express their opinions on the need for foreign labor in these republics, their attitudes towards foreign labor and educational migration, and to assess the level of migrant phobia among the local population and the impact of the Internet and the media on shaping the image of a migrant. They were also asked to formulate their migration-related fears and anxieties. In general, the students of Mordovia and Udmurtia demonstrated a fairly high level of interethnic and interreligious tolerance, although manifestations of latent migrantophobia were also evident. It is concluded that the most effective management measures to prevent ethno-political and interethnic conflicts related to migration are to maintain a balance between economic interests and national security of the country, interdepartmental and inter-level coordination in the implementation of state national and migration policies. This includes the prevention of extremism and early conflict prevention, as well as constant monitoring of migration processes and interethnic relations.

Keywords: Republic of Mordovia, Udmurt Republic, students, migration, migrant phobia, social and cultural adaptation

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ORTHODOX ANTHROPOLOGY

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Original article

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THE ROLE OF ORTHODOXY IN THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

The article focuses on Orthodoxy within a historical context, as a phenomenon that has shaped the Russian state and culture. However, it uses a specific methodology since our analysis is based on a morphological principle (a uniform description of all components of the described structure) rather than an isomorphic one (the principle of uniqueness). We demonstrate that within the “great tradition,” namely, the ancient one, a rigid framework for the functioning of culture, ideology, and tradition is formed. Russian Orthodoxy, the heir to Byzantine Orthodoxy, addressed its own challenges in integration with the “great tradition,” the ancient and Eastern Christian traditions, and the Orthodox faith. For ideology, the most important typological principle was the protection of rationalism by tradition and religion; for culture, the principle of “non-secular secularity”; and for tradition, ethnic individuality. Throughout its historical development, Russian Orthodoxy has addressed both the challenges common to the entire great tradition and those specific to Russians and other peoples living within a common political and civilizational space. To this day, Orthodoxy in Russia remains integrated into the governmental, social, and cultural mechanisms for the protection, reproduction, and unity of Russian civilization.

Keywords: *Russian Orthodoxy, ideology, culture, ethnicity, Russian people, historical development*

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ORTHODOX ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN OVERCOMING THE SPIRITUAL CRISIS

Orthodox anthropology today is positioned as the teaching of the Orthodox Church about man and his nature. Its provisions and principles, developed in theology, are not always accepted by secular science. However, human hidden abilities, which determine one's spiritual essence, remain not fully understood by science itself. The Russian Orthodox Church not only develops the theoretical principles of Orthodox anthropology, but also implements them in practice. Russia is an original civilization with a historically formed Orthodox basis. In modern conditions, its ideology should be based on the unity of national interests. In such difficult times that Russia is going through today, religious organizations are proving to be the most resilient. They are positioned as institutions that consolidate people based on traditional values. Their activities in strengthening the cultural environment, educational and charitable activities, and social partnership in almost the entire social sphere are especially important. Ensuring the spiritual security of Russian society is possible on the basis of preserving the Orthodox tradition and forming a new ideological project for Russia. The purpose of this article is to study the positive experience of the Russian Orthodox Church in the search for ways to overcome Russia's spiritual crisis based on the principles of Orthodox anthropology.

Keywords: *Orthodox anthropology, Russian Orthodox Church, spiritual crisis, spirituality*

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CURRENT SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS WITHIN THE ORTHODOX ANTHROPOLOGY

Orthodox anthropology has a rich potential for the development of modern social and humanitarian knowledge as a theological discipline. The study of the spiritual essence of man in his communion with God within the framework of religious tradition is one of the most challenging subjects of study in modern science. Nevertheless, despite the fact that theology is officially recognized as a scientific specialty in our country, its heuristic status is the subject of debate. The study of the potential of modern Orthodox anthropology in solving urgent problems of social and humanitarian knowledge showed that it can contribute to solving a wide range of such problems: environmental issues, the development of economic theories and social management, legal issues, ethical problems in medicine, technical sciences, problems of spiritual upbringing and education, and more. The search for alternative solutions to many pressing problems of modern society involves the development of new branches and areas of anthropological knowledge, among which Orthodox anthropology occupies a special place.

Keywords: *theology, Orthodox anthropology, science, religious tradition, church, social and humanitarian knowledge, social theology, political theology, ecological theology*

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RUSSIAN-SPEAKING POPULATION IN EUROPE

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Original article

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KEEPING RUSSIA WITHIN: IDENTITY AND VALUE ORIENTATIONS OF RUSSIAN EMIGRANTS IN TODAY'S GERMANY

The article examines the mechanisms of Russian culture functioning and value orientations among emigrants from Russia residing in Germany from the 2010s to the present. The study substantiates the relevance of distinguishing a fifth migration wave, driven not so much by political, economic, or ethnic factors as by academic mobility, the development of international educational programs, and widespread digitalization that removes information barriers. The empirical basis of the research comprises 34 semi-structured interviews with informants who relocated to Germany during the specified period, as well as data from participant observation of the cultural life of the Russian-speaking community and materials from virtual ethnography (analysis of emigrant blogs and diaries). The central research question addresses emigrants' value attitudes toward the preservation of Russian culture within German society, with value orientations interpreted as a system-forming element of identity. Special attention is paid not only to positive strategies of cultural self-realization but also to narratives of indifferent attitudes toward cultural heritage preservation. This required a methodology aimed at achieving a high level of trust with informants. The study attempts to capture the multidimensionality of everyday practices among Russian emigrants, including both offline communication (e.g. leisure activities or intergenerational gatherings) and digital reflection on migration experience. The conclusion is drawn that the nature of contemporary emigration is undergoing transformation, with professional and personal strategies of self-realization beginning to dominate over ethnically determined reasons for relocation.

Keywords: late resettlers, Russians in Germany, Russian emigration, Germany, virtual ethnography, Russian language, Russian culture, diaspora

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RUSSIANS IN SERBIA: 100 YEARS WITHIN THE PARADIGM OF BALKAN HOSPITALITY

This article presents a socio-anthropological study of the Russian community in Serbia. The Russian presence in the region recently marked its centenary — a milestone that, in a striking parallel, was accompanied by a new influx of migrants from Russia. While providing a brief historical overview of preceding migration waves, the author focuses primarily on the contemporary period of Russian adaptation in Serbia. How many Russians reside in the Balkans now? What factors contribute to the country's appeal? How do they settle and build their lives here? What are their strategies for finding employment and managing economic and housing matters? How do they engage in recreational activities and satisfy their cultural needs? How does the socialization of children unfold? How are Russians perceived by the local population? Methodologically, the study relies on a combination of participant observation, digital anthropology (including chat and blog analysis), and ethnographic interviews. The most compelling excerpts from the respondents' narratives are presented in the article. These empirical data lend a personal dimension to the scholarly narrative, while simultaneously providing a basis for broader theoretical generalizations. In a wider sense, the history of the Russian diaspora helps understand the place and significance of the culture of small ethnic groups, including migrant communities, that find themselves in a foreign environment. The integration of Russians into foreign cultural environments, the preservation of their national and cultural identity and lifestyle, and the transformation of their self-consciousness provide a basis for scholarly conclusions and offer a fertile field for research across various disciplines, including ethnology. Theoretically, shared ancestry, linguistic kinship, and a common religion serve as key drivers for the assimilation of one ethnic group into another in Serbia. Yet, this did not happen with the Russians who arrived a century ago. Whether this will hold true for the current wave of newcomers remains to be seen.

Keywords: *The Balkans, Russians, Serbia, demographic evolution, Complex Identities, integration*

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THE RUSSIAN DIASPORA IN ALBANIA: CLIMATE, POLITICS, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The work, within the paradigm of anthropology, analyzes the processes of formation of the Russian diaspora in Albania, the mechanisms of its interaction with local authorities, the algorithms for integration into local society, the contradictions that arise along the way, and the prospects for preserving linguistic, cultural, religious and ethnic identities in the context of global challenges of the 20th — early 21st centuries. The first generation of representatives of the Russian enclave in the western Balkans established themselves there after the revolutionary events of 1917 in Russia. The Russian-speaking diaspora grew significantly during the years of the “great friendship” between Albania and the USSR after World War II, when many Albanian men studying in the Soviet Union married Soviet women. The democratic reforms in both countries in the early 1990s gave further impetus to the growth of the Russian diaspora. Since then, not only Russian citizens marrying Albanians have begun moving to the Balkan country, but also wealthy individuals purchasing coastal property, entrepreneurs opening businesses, and those in the “freelance” professions, which allow them to work from anywhere in the world, who have chosen the Mediterranean climate and leisurely lifestyle over the bustle of overcrowded megacities. The primary focus of this study is on Russians who have settled in Albania over the past three decades — from the 1990s to the present. The ongoing transformation of Russians in the Balkans’ perceptions of their own identity, the forms and presentation of traditional and popular culture, traditional and customary ways of life, and family values in Albania, which has experienced radical changes in several socio-political, economic, and ideological structures over the past century, is a highly relevant subject of research. The analysis offered by the author is an attempt to decipher the complex process of relations between one’s own and others, between man and society.

Keywords: *Russians (Russian-speaking), diaspora, Albania, migration policy, ethnic identity, economic factors, social ties, cultural adaptation*

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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING DIASPORA IN CYPRUS

In this article, the author, who has been living in Cyprus for many years, in cooperation with her colleague-anthropologist attempts to outline the anthropological paradigm of the local Russian (Russian-speaking) diaspora. The work is based on the field materials and makes use of the method of participant observation. Drawing on their experience of close contacts with both representatives of the Russian diaspora and the local population, the authors explore various aspects of the life of the community — one of the largest and most compact non-national diasporas living in Cyprus. The focus is on the number of Russian-speaking migrants as well as the ethnic, social, cultural, linguistic, confessional, professional, and social characteristics of the diaspora's members — from their everyday life to their social, patriotic and civic manifestations. The Russian diaspora and the Russian-speaking community are particularly distinguished from each other in that the latter includes a much broader stratum of migrants — not only ethnic Russians or Russian citizens, but also Russian-speaking immigrants from the territories of the former Soviet Union. This emphasizes the role of the Russian language as a means of interethnic communication and the consolidation of multiethnic communities. The study also touches upon the difficulties of assimilation of Russian speakers in Cyprus.

Keywords: *Cyprus, Russian (Russian-speaking) diaspora, Russian language, culture, identity. integration*

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ARE THE RUSSIANS COMING? STATISTICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC: POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Russian and Russian-speaking population in the Czech Republic constitutes a small, relatively recent, and still evolving community. It is composed of migrants from Russia and other former Soviet republics. The influx of Russian settlers to the Czech Republic has never been massive, neither in the post-Soviet decades nor, even less so, now, as the European Union enforces strict anti-Russian sanctions. In recent years, the Russian-speaking population of the Czech Republic has grown primarily through an influx of citizens from other post-Soviet countries. Although the Czech Republic seeks to attract young, highly skilled professionals in the hope of securing a reliable tax base, it remains reluctant to grant them full civil rights. Nevertheless, driven by strong motivation, solid educational and professional credentials, and an aptitude for navigating cultural and linguistic differences, Russians in the country often enjoy a higher economic and social standing than other migrant groups, and in some metrics, even outpace the local population. Despite their relatively small total number — officially estimated at tens of thousands in the Czech Republic (though our own estimates suggest around 100,000) — the Russian and Russian-speaking minority is dispersed across all major and mid-sized urban areas. This makes it impossible to gain an accurate understanding of this group based solely on interviews and selective surveys. The Czech Republic stands out from many European countries with its meticulous state statistics. The analysis of these statistics makes it possible not only to estimate the actual population size, but also to determine educational levels, the extent of involvement in productive labor, and to understand the ethnocultural, linguistic, and civic orientations of this demographic group. Within the Czech Republic itself, the issue of the Russian presence remains understudied. An analysis of the results of the recent national census conducted in the country confirms that the demographic and human capital losses suffered by Russia in the first post-Soviet decades should serve as a warning and a safeguard against repeating past mistakes in refining domestic policies to support human potential.

Keywords: Russians in the Czech Republic, population censuses, ethnocultural identity, linguistic identity, migration, demography, social structure

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ARE THE RUSSIANS COMING? STATISTICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC: EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROFILE

The Russian and Russian-speaking population in the Czech Republic constitutes a small, relatively recent, and still evolving community. It is composed of migrants from Russia and other former Soviet republics. The influx of Russian settlers to the Czech Republic has never been massive, neither in the post-Soviet decades nor, even less so, now, as the European Union enforces strict anti-Russian sanctions. In recent years, the Russian-speaking population of the Czech Republic has grown primarily through an influx of citizens from other post-Soviet countries. Although the Czech Republic seeks to attract young, highly skilled professionals in the hope of securing a reliable tax base, it remains reluctant to grant them full civil rights. Nevertheless, driven by strong motivation, solid educational and professional credentials, and an aptitude for navigating cultural and linguistic differences, Russians in the country often enjoy a higher economic and social standing than other migrant groups, and in some metrics, even outpace the local population. Despite their relatively small total number—officially estimated at tens of thousands in the Czech Republic (though our own estimates suggest around 100,000)—the Russian and Russian-speaking minority is dispersed across all major and mid-sized urban areas. This makes it impossible to gain an accurate understanding of this group based solely on interviews and selective surveys. The Czech Republic stands out from many European countries with its meticulous state statistics. The analysis of these statistics makes it possible not only to estimate the actual population size, but also to determine educational levels, the extent of involvement in productive labor, and to understand the ethnocultural, linguistic, and civic orientations of this demographic group. Within the Czech Republic itself, the issue of the Russian presence remains understudied. An analysis of the results of the recent national census conducted in the country confirms that the demographic and human capital losses suffered by Russia in the first post-Soviet decades should serve as a warning and a safeguard against repeating past mistakes in refining domestic policies to support human potential.

Keywords: *Russians in the Czech Republic, population censuses, ethnocultural identity, linguistic identity, migration, demography, social structure*

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Original article

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THE IMPACT OF EPIDEMICS AND PANDEMICS ON THE CHRISTIAN VISUAL CULTURE: ST. CHRISTOPHER AND THE FOURTEEN HOLY HELPERS

This article examines the impact of epidemics and pandemics, particularly the bubonic plague (“Black Death”) pandemic of the 14th century, on the visual culture of Western Christianity. Using the example of two interrelated cults — St. Christopher and the group of Fourteen Holy Helpers — the author demonstrates how threats to health and life transformed religious consciousness and its material embodiment. An analysis of the evolution of the image of St. Christopher demonstrates the acquisition of new functions: from the protection from sudden death to patronage of travelers and protection from the plague. The saint’s growing popularity led to the creation of monumental frescoes on church facades along pilgrimage routes, especially in the Alps, so that every traveler could see him daily and find salvation. The example of the Fourteen Holy Helpers illustrates the formation of a new group cult as a direct response to the demand for protection from disease. Originating in Germany, this association of holy martyrs became widespread during the Black Death and was later strengthened by the emergence of a major pilgrimage center Vierzehnheiligen. Thus, both examples illustrate how demographic catastrophes stimulated the development of new forms of veneration, iconography, and sacred geography.

Keywords: epidemics and pandemics, Christian visual culture, medieval Europe, Saint Christopher, cult of saints, Fourteen Holy Helpers

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GRECO-ROMAN CONCEPTIONS OF MOTHER AND CHILD PROTECTION AGAINST EVIL FORCES

This article is devoted to ancient Greco-Roman beliefs concerning the protection of mothers and children from evil influences, such as demons, witchcraft and the evil eye. Drawing on Greek and Roman sources, the article highlights the main ways of protecting children: magical incantations, general measures to protect space, gestures and actions, amulets, objects emitting noise. The author concludes that ancient magical means of mother and child protection did not differ from those used in general apotropaic practices, but in relation to children and their mothers they are used in larger quantities. For instance, amulets with common protective symbols in the case of children become a full-fledged set of protective means, designed to enhance the effectiveness of measures by combining them: children usually wore whole chains of amulets, while women — one or two, and men in general neglected this kind of protection. This can be explained by the ancient world's perception of the special vulnerability of young children and women in labour, whose premature deaths were usually attributed to the actions of evil forces. There are specific features associated with the protection of children: amulets such as the Greek ribbon with amulets tied on the child and the Roman bulla not only had protective properties, but also reflected the social status of the owner. Some objects intended for apotropaic protection also had a domestic function — for example, they could be used as toys and rattles.

Keywords: ancient mythology, child-killing demons, Gello, strix, apotropaic magic, amulets, history of childhood

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(RE)CONSTRUCTING DRUIDRY: THE ROLE OF SCHOLARSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MAKING OF TRADITION

This paper presents an anthropological study of contemporary Druidry as a form of spiritual identity, examining the role that scholarship and technology have played — and continue to play — in the creation and development of this tradition. The study pursues three objectives: (1) to assess the applicability of M. Strmiska's typology of modern Paganism to contemporary Druidry, drawing on ethnographic material collected by the author; (2) to analyse the reasons why modern Druids engage with scholarly publications in their spiritual practice; and (3) to address the conceptual question posed by the Ship of Theseus paradox in the context of contemporary Druidry: if all the constituent elements of the original tradition have been replaced, does it remain the same tradition? The analysis is organised around two chronological stages in the development of contemporary Druidry: its emergence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and its contemporary evolution. The first stage is examined through historical sources and published scholarship, allowing an analysis of the formative role of scholarship and technology in the initial construction of the tradition. The second stage is investigated through long-term observation of Druidic and other Celtic spirituality-oriented communities, together with three written interviews conducted by the author with contemporary Druids from Wales, Brittany, and Ireland. The findings suggest that contemporary Druidry cannot be adequately described within a strict reconstructionist/syncretic dichotomy. Instead, it represents a dynamic religious tradition in which reconstruction and innovation coexist. The study further demonstrates that scholarship has come to function not only as an external means of studying Druidry but also as one of the internal mechanisms through which the tradition is continually interpreted, reconstructed, and developed.

Keywords: Paganism, Contemporary Druidry, scholarship, technology, spiritual identity

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ADYGHE (CIRCASSIAN) GOD OF THUNDER SHIBLE AND ANATOLIAN TESHUB: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

The article studies the worship of the thunder god Shible by the Adyghe and compares it with a similar ancient Anatolian cult. The archaic nature of the Adyghe's religious rites and the associated legends is confirmed by analogies with the religion and mythology of the Hattians / Hittites. A study of Hittite sources shows that the worship of Shible was similar to the widespread cult of the thunder god called Teshub among the Hattians / Hittites and Hurites. Significant information in this regard is provided by Hittite sources describing the celebration of the spring festival Puruli by the Hattians / Hittites in the sacred city of Nerik. The main event of the Puruli celebration was the Teshub's confrontation with the dragon Illuyanki. This motif resembles the Adyghe myth of Shible defeating the underground dragon. The rituals related to agriculture and fertility, which feature the god of thunder as one of the main characters, are identical. The piety of the Adyghe towards Shible is strikingly similar to the veneration of Teshub by the ancient Anatolians — a complex sacred cult of whom was revered invariably. This paper reveals a close relationship between ancient sources and narrative the 15th–20th centuries, ethnological, archeological and linguistic data. The author employs historical, comparative, systemic and retrospective research methods. The preservation of the archaic religion of the Adyghe over a long time made it possible to study related materials from the 19th and even the beginning of the 20th centuries. The study of translations of Hittite reveals similarities between the cults of fertility and agriculture of the Adyghe and ancient Anatolians.

Keywords: Adyghe, Abkhazians, aerial burial, cult of agriculture and fertility, Shible, Hatti, Teshub

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ANDEAN PRACTICES OF DIVINATION IN THE INCA AND EARLY COLONIAL TIMES

This article explores Andean fortune-telling practices within a broad cultural and religious context. The historical scope of the study is determined by the characteristics of the available sources. Historiographical works on the subject are mainly focused on oracles, while other forms of divination have been studied almost exclusively as part of a broader analysis of religious beliefs of the corresponding period. Based on a range of written sources, including chronicles, reports, treatises, and documentary evidence (including unpublished materials), the author analyses the main types of divination in the Inca and early colonial times, such as cleromancy, oneiromancy, haruspicy, astrology, and oracles. Other forms of divination were also practised, but sources record them less frequently. Therefore, the types of divination in the Andes shared similarities with those found in other cultures, albeit with some distinctive features. Obviously, all Andean fortune-tellings have both “state” and “local” dimensions. However, some types of divination tend more towards one of these poles. For example, haruspices and astrology were more prevalent at the state level, as they required appropriate costs, equipment, and special knowledge. On the other hand, cleromancy, oneiromancy, and oracles can easily be practiced within the local religion and continued to exist in the early colonial era when the Inca state religion ceased to exist. Additionally, the close connection between Andean divination, sacrifice, and the cult of huacas is evident. Therefore, we can conclude that Andean fortune-telling is closely linked to other aspects of the religion.

Keywords: Incas, Andean civilization, divination, oracles, idolatry, Christianization

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL MOSAIC: YOUNG SCHOLARS' PERSPECTIVES

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Original article

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REPRESENTATIONS OF DANCERS IN THE RUSSIAN DANCE JOURNAL “ORIENTAL” (2005–2014)

This study analyzes the image of the oriental dancer (belly dancer) based on materials from the dance journal Oriental. The article examines a dance common in the Middle East and North Africa, which incorporates the folk traditions of the peoples living in this region and transfers them to the stage. The 2000s saw the peak of popularity of this dance form in Russia, with the emergence of the Russian Dance Organization and the Oriental Dance Professionals League. The “Oriental” journal became a valuable source for researching dance and its context in the 2000s–2010s. It published articles containing information such as descriptions of training with dance accessories (sword, tambourine, or shawl), tips for learning Middle Eastern languages (Arabic and Turkish), techniques for performing elements of various styles, reviews of belly dance textbooks, legal commentary on plagiarism in dance, choosing music for performances, aspects of working with percussionists, organizing a concert, independently choreographing a dance, classical choreography, and issues related to recording dance on camera. Our study focused on the image of an oriental dance performer in publications aimed at Russian female readers. The methodology is based on a qualitative content analysis of 22 issues of the journal (2009–2014) using a gender approach and methods for studying women’s everyday life. The results are relevant for the study of the history of dance in Russia and can be used for further analysis of women’s everyday life and the development of oriental dance in our country.

Keywords: Arabism, Orientalism, colonialism, feminism, everyday life, gender studies, women’s history, dance anthropology, oriental dance, belly dance

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CULTURAL BROKERAGE IN PERIODS OF TRANSFORMATION: TWO CASES FROM THE HISTORY OF THE OKHOTSK DISTRICT, Khabarovsk Krai

The article examines the activities of two cultural mediators between the indigenous and newcomer populations in the history of the Okhotsk District, Khabarovsk Krai, namely the school teacher Nikolai Prokop'evich Tkachik, who worked in the village of Arka, and the Orthodox priest Father Vikentii (Romanyuk), who served in the settlement of Okhotsk and ministered to the surrounding villages, including Arka. Both interacted with the local indigenous residents, predominantly Evens, during periods of radical historical upheaval: Tkachik during the years of early Sovietization, and Father Vikentii in the early 21st century against the backdrop of the post-Soviet religious revival. The article is based on fieldwork materials collected in Arka and Okhotsk in the spring of 2023, as well as on archival and literary data. It compares the forms and consequences of these individuals' cultural brokerage activities. It is shown that the effectiveness of their mediation was determined not so much by their formal position or status in society, but rather by their personal qualities and aspirations, particularly their ability to engage in dialogue with local residents, their respect for local specificity, and their involvement in the life of the community.

Keywords: cultural brokerage, periods of transformation, Evens, Indigenous peoples of the Russian Far East, kolkhoz establishment, Orthodox Christianity, education, enlightenment, administrative approach, role of the individual in local history

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NATIONAL AND REGIONAL IDENTITY OF THE KRASNODAR RESIDENTS: ETHNOSOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

This article examines the national and regional identities of the population of the Krasnodar city. Research methods included a mass survey of the city population (over 400 respondents) and in-depth interviews with city residents and employees of educational and cultural organizations, including Cossack ones. The analysis revealed the persistent dominance of a pan-Russian national identity, with regional and local identities existing alongside it rather than as alternatives. The concept of homeland is multilayered: the “greater” homeland — Russia — coexists with the smaller homelands, which are understood in a variety of ways by members of different groups. Because Krasnodar Krai is a hub of intra-Russian migration, informants who arrived in the regional capital from another region of the country or from another district of Kuban maintain ties to their place of birth or previous place of residence. The desire to establish themselves in a new place leads them to perceive it as a new homeland. The concept of “homeland” also varies among the different generations of Krasnodar residents. Some young people in Krasnodar are first- or second-generation residents, meaning they are the children or grandchildren of people who moved to Kuban from other regions of the country. This leads these young people to perceive Kuban and the regional capital as their homeland. However, for their parents and older relatives, a sense of belonging to the region of their birth remains important. An examination of Krasnodar residents’ attitudes towards modern Kuban Cossacks and their role in the region’s life also allows us to assess the role of the military community in forming a distinctive, culturally charged regional Kuban identity, which manifests itself in an awareness of the place of modern Cossack culture in regional society and the maintenance of Cossack traditions among the younger generation of Kuban residents.

Keywords: *identity, regional identity, Krasnodar Krai, Kuban region, Cossacks, Kuban Cossacks, Russia*

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PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR THE SHAMAN-PSYCHOLOGIST: NAVIGATING PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC DISCOURSE AND TRANSPERSONAL ONTOLOGY

The article examines the process of forming professional ethics among shamans-psychologists in the contemporary urban environment of European Russia. Based on qualitative research, including in-depth interviews, roundtable materials, and digital ethnography, the author analyzes how practitioners with a background in psychology who employ shamanic techniques construct their ethical code. The study demonstrates that the emerging ethics represent a complex hybrid construct, arising at the intersection of psychotherapeutic discourse and urban shamanism within a post-secular cultural context. The article explores the creative transformations of key principles such as “do no harm,” as well as the role of money, which is redefined into a symbolic tool for ritually concluding therapeutic relationships. It is concluded that the ethics of shamans-psychologists are a creatively reworked cultural construct, enabling the establishment of a unique professional niche through dual legitimation.

Keywords: *medical anthropology, professional ethics, neoshamanism, urban shamanism, healing*

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CENTRAL SARDINIA FEASTS OR «FEASTS FOR OURSELVES»

The article, based mainly on the materials of the author's field research, analyzes the current state of the festival culture in Barbagia — the most conservative region of Sardinia. It considers a phenomenon previously unnoticed by researchers — the traditional holidays and collectively celebrated rites of passage of this pastoral region, referred to by the local population as “feasts for themselves”. We are talking about solemn events that have survived to this day and have not lost their ritual significance for the population. These events are mainly of archaic origin — relics of often pre-Christian rituals and holidays. During these celebrations the population scrupulously, both consciously and unconsciously, follows tradition, excludes innovations, and does not allow the presence and participation of “outsiders”. The article highlights the conservation and reproduction of traditional culture in modern conditions and its protection from innovation, maintaining cultural continuity, preserving authenticity, and strengthening the local identity of the population. The article contributes to the development of European festology and also to understanding the mechanisms of adaptation of traditional societies to the challenges of globalization, including through the preservation of traditional festive and ritual practices.

Keywords: Sardinia, Barbagia, feasts, rites of passage, protection of tradition, identity

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INTERGROUP OSTEOMETRIC VARIATION IN THE GRECO-ROMAN POPULATION OF FAYUM OASIS, EGYPT

The Deir el-Banat necropolis in the Fayum Oasis (Egypt) was in use from the Ptolemaic era (3rd century BC) to the Arab Fatimids (10th–12th centuries AD). Active Greek settlement of the oasis began under the early Ptolemies: land grants were primarily given to retired clerukh warriors, who formed the backbone of the army and interbred with the local Egyptian population. During the Greco-Roman period (roughly 4th century BC — 4th century AD), burial practices shifted from complex mummifications in anthropomorphic sarcophagi to simpler burials, but the material culture remained rich and diverse, indicating social and ethnic mixing. This study tests this hypothesis using postcranial material. Fourteen male and fourteen female skeletons from this necropolis were examined; massiveness indices (diaphyseal circumference to length ratio) and section indices (platolenia, platimeria, pilastry, and platycnemia) were calculated for the long limb bones. It was found that the male bones were predominantly moderately massive or massive, while the female bones were predominantly gracile, with significant variability observed within each group for various indices. The cross-sectional shape was also heterogeneous: the radii and ulnae were all strongly flattened, the femurs were sagittally flattened in the upper portion and narrowed in the middle with a frequent well-developed pilaster, and the tibiae were narrowed in the middle portion but expanded above (eurycnemia). The obtained osteometric data are fully consistent with the craniological data: a robust skeleton is more often associated with mesocranial skulls, while a gracile skeleton is more often associated with dolichocranial skulls. Consequently, the population of the Fayum oasis during the Greco-Roman period was not homogeneous; it was a mixed population, where the incoming Greeks apparently had a more robust build and were more often buried in “rich” sarcophagi, while the women, even in such prestigious burials, retained gracile features, which may indicate their local (Egyptian) origin, perhaps as the wives of colonists. The results support the hypothesis of miscegenation and socio-ethnic stratification in the Fayum during this era.

Keywords: Ancient Egypt, biological anthropology, osteometry, bone strength, skeletal massiveness, gracility, long limb bones, section index, platolenia, platimeria, pilastry, platycnemia

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A CRANIOFACIAL RECONSTRUCTION OF ARDIPITHECUS (A. RAMIDUS ARA VP-6/500)

This work focuses on reconstructing the appearance of Ardipithecus (Ardipithecus ramidus ARA VP-6/500). The study of the skull and subsequent facial reconstruction show that the appearance of Ardipithecus did not resemble apes, such as chimpanzees, but rather monkeys. The study is based on unique materials obtained by the author through the analysis of soft tissues of the green monkey's head. The reconstructed Ardipithecus appearance is characterized by a very narrow and sloping forehead, a poorly developed brow ridge, a low and medium-wide face, a slanting inner eye slit, a narrow nose, a wide mouth with thin mucous membranes, a sloping chin with no protrusion, and medium-sized ears. The prognathism of the upper and lower jaws is relatively low. In general, the reconstructed appearance of Ardipithecus exhibits several archaic features, bearing a closer resemblance to members of the Cercopithecine subfamily. We can conclude that the ancestors of humans, represented by Ardipithecus, although they had a mosaic of archaic and progressive features in their skeletal structure, did not resemble apes in appearance, which was previously a well-established notion.

Keywords: *Ardipithecus ramidus*, ARA VP-6/500 skull, Ethiopia, anthropological reconstruction, appearance

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