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the word is ritual loan term from Iranian source (cf. Armenian *nver* 'donation', 'sacrifice?').

Our comparison allows us to conclude that here we have the cult of the zoomorphic sea divinity or divinity of uncontrollable primitive nature and its relics in different Indo-European traditions, which reserves several topics common to the inhabitants of the Indo-European fore-motherland. The mortal heroine of the Armenian mediaeval heroic epic 'Sasna Tsrer' goes back to the original image of this hippomorphical divinity.

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SOULS' VISITING TIME IN THE ESTONIAN FOLK CALENDAR

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The concept of the souls' visiting time in the Estonian folk calendar is known throughout the country. It signifies the perception by the Estonians that there is a period when the souls of the dead are moving around and visiting their former homes. Specific definitions of this time differ. Judging by different archives, the measure can be a certain day in a certain week, or in several successive weeks, a certain number of weeks or days. The most important feast days of autumn are used to define the beginning and end of the souls' visiting time: September 29 – Michaelmas (*mihklipäev*), November 10 – Martinmas (*mardipäev*), November 25 – St. Catherine's Day (*kadripäev*), Christmas. And besides, the frequent use of such adverbs as 'before', 'after', 'around', 'towards', etc., seems to arise not from forgetting but from the fact that the idea of the actual duration of this period was vague.

In the course of time, the idea of the souls' visiting time as a longer period seems to have acquired the meaning that it was necessary to do something special – to arrange a worthy reception for the souls. Food could be left on the

table once, twice or more times, at the beginning and/or at the end of this period, with a week's interval (e.g. every Saturday during the souls' visiting time), or just from the evening till midnight or till morning. The distribution of the souls' visiting time varies. Most frequently the souls' visiting time is before Martinmas, usually beginning one week after Michaelmas and ending one week before Martinmas, or the day is identical of the All Souls' Day on November 2. This period is most common in the central part of South Estonia – in the district of Viljandi and the adjacent regions. The activities connected with Christmas place this period (the Souls' Time) unanimously before Yuletide, and it means obviously not just the days (week) before Christmas Eve, but generally late autumn. In many cases it has been stated that the souls' visiting time was in autumn.

With the help of this rather variegated picture it can be presumed that before the feast days of the church calendar reached Estonia, the end of the year was placed at the souls' visiting time in the local calendar. This, in its turn, was determined by the dying of nature in autumn, the end of vegetation, and at the same time the darkest period of the year and the end of the agricultural season. This time has been the period of receiving the souls of the dead (ancestors) among many European nations, but slowly its customs have centred around the church-established All Saints' Day on November 1, and All Souls' Day, November 2, or around these days. the same tendency is present in the Estonian tradition. In books and visitation protocols we can often come across the Souls' Day as the time when the Estonians brought food for the souls[1]. In Finland the traditions clustered around All Saints' Day on November 1 are especially plentiful, whereas the Souls' Day is of minor importance[2]. In Latvia it was customary to offer food to the souls of St. Simon's Day (October 28), the dating of the souls' visiting time varies as in Estonia, and there appears the same tendency to concentrate on the first days of November[3]. Among the Slavic peoples the day of honouring the ancestors is October 26 (or the Saturday preceding it), the same date is celebrated by the Northeast Estonians, the Votians and the Karelians.

During this period talking and working were forbidden, but certain belief records point out that only one of these two aspects was emphasised. When one ignored the prohibition of talking, it souls result in thunder-damage, but work was not banned completely. The mentioned forbidden activities have included spinning, sewing, carding and other work connected with wool – otherwise sheep would not prosper (South Estonia). Late at night, working indoors was forbidden – the souls were believed to arrive in the evening. In other cases only the work-ban at night has been emphasised. Some records indicate that the souls' visiting time was considered critical for cattle. Information about riddling (then the animals would give birth to multicoloured young) issues from

the northern coastal areas and South Estonia. Originally this activity can emanate both from the cult of ancestors and from the customs of the turn of the year – in both cases it is a critical period when riddling has acquired a magical effect among many nations, including the Latvians (from Martinmas till Christmas), Udmurts (from autumn, especially at Christmas time), and others[4].

Data about feeding the souls and receiving them in the homes are more numerous in South Estonia. Comparing the information concerning Estonians and other nations in the printed sources, it appears that to some extent the places where food was left and the choice of food varies, but some customs are universal. Estonians, Livonians, Latvians, Lithuanians and other nations have the custom that the living speak to the souls, as if directing the guests or the results of their visit – calling the expected guests by their names, telling them to help themselves with the food, apologies for the lack of better dishes, and at their departure the application to the forefathers to continue taking care of the fields and cattle, a recommendation not to step on corn-sprouts on their way back (it would spoil the future crop). When the crop failed all the same in the following year, its logical cause was that the souls had not been satisfied.

When the beliefs connected with the malevolent dead deepened during the centuries, the attitude of the living towards the visiting souls must have changed. The dissatisfaction of the souls can express itself already during the treatment on the funeral. A quotation from an archive record: *When the souls' visiting time has come to an end and the souls are given a send-off, some freshly boiled meat on a wooden plate is taken to the loft in the evening, for the souls to eat. This time no linen should be beetled and no noise made, and the souls were permitted to leave in silence. If some dead had been buried in shabby clothes, they were said to have cried and whined while leaving, in some cases also howling, 'I have a blue shirt on!'* (1894).

The tradition to heat the sauna for the souls seems to be more common (or has been preserved for a longer period) among the Finns and Karelians than among the Estonians or Latvians. The sauna was heated before feeding the souls, also the water was heated and things needed for washing were made ready. In the records of the Estonian traditions it appears that sauna was more a place to give out food, or it has been stated that food was accompanied by a bath whisk and a piece of soap for washing.

In books about the earlier period, sauna as a place for laying out food is mentioned more often that in the archive records about the last century. In the records the loft is named most frequently. Descriptions stressing that one had to lay out some of every kind of food in the household (hence also eggs, curds, mashed potatoes, bread, and some others), indicate that these customs originate from the general sacrificing tradition.

The reasons for leaving the food were: '*it was a matter of luck*', '*then there will be good luck*', '*then the souls won't go across the field*' (i.e. rye will not fail). It was believed that when no food was offered (or when the souls disliked it), '*it will bring death to the house*', '*souls will do evil*', '*cattle or field will be damaged*'. No one tried to offer the souls symbolic food or something unworthy, only in rare cases items like tripe and the like have been mentioned. There is no information about feeding the souls with food obtained from outside the household (e.g. fish, meat of wild animals, berries).

The melting of the mental image of revenants into the tradition of the souls' visiting time is evident in the mumming tradition in the Viljandi district, which continued up to the first decades of the 20th century. In this region mumming was done not only on the eve of Martinmas and St. Catherine's Day, but throughout several weeks. As the mumming tradition has no fixed pattern, it is reasonable to presume that the tradition is of relatively late origin, although it looks rather ancient. Beggars have traditionally been called 'souls': *'These are no beggars, minstrel-beggars were the guests, they are souls.'* People tried to imitate namely souls, or, to be more precise, ghosts. For this reason they dressed in white, less frequently in black ('evil souls'), or wrapped themselves in a white sheet. The souls threatened the hosts with a rod, tried to switch, squeeze or trouble them in some other way. They howled, squealed, or were completely silent (a souls does not speak), demanded food (because souls are to be fed). In some regions they danced and played an instrument. The souls came to visit during several nights or only once, according to their wish. In several reports the souls' visiting time has been related to the departure of souls. *'When the souls are seen off, then the souls come.'*

A single report explaining the aim of masking is of interest: when the souls' visiting time was over, the souls were turned out, 'a white sheet was wrapped around, a bundle of rods held in the hand'. In the memory of minstrel-beggars a note is made about singing, e.g.,

> *On the eve of the day the souls came. I was tending the cattle at Laane, then we went minstrel-begging in the neighbouring household. We were dressed in white, sheets around us. The receivers were to give something. Apples were given. If not, they whipped, they birched one another. These verses were sung: 'The souls have reached us, whoo-pee, The souls have reached us, whoo-pee. At the order of the Belltinger we have but arrived at the house. By twelve we must again be back in the chapel'.* (See: RKM II 94, 141/2 (1) < Krk (1960)).

It becomes evident from the words of the song that minstrel-beggars are hurrying back to he graveyard by twelve o'clock, because the chapel-ward is then going to shut the door (the chapel-ward of Paistu graveyard who was

mentioned in the song died at the end of the 19th century, as the local people have said). Apparently minstrel-begging became popular as an occasion of merry-making just at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, but earlier it could have followed the original spirit of the event more strictly (white clothing, a ban of talking, characteristic sounds, and the like), and it can be related to the seeing off of the souls or their departure. In comparison with the Finnish and Karelian *kekritars* or *köüritars*, who were masked as strangers or terrifying figures, scared children, and with the Latvian *tsīgans* who went from house to house, joking and riddling, the souls of the Viljandi district are quite peculiar as such.

In the souls' visiting time the weather was supposed to be foggy and calm. Wind was associated with the discontent faction of the souls (the howling of the wind resembled the noises that the souls made). In the same way, as in spring it was customary to observe the rising of the temperature to the zero on the Annunciation Day on March 25, the beginning of icing was followed on the All Souls' Day. This significant change is reflected in the proverb *The souls come in a carriage and leave on a sledge*. Probably the carriage and the sledge have been mentioned just figuratively, and yet, it could also be an echo from the ancient tradition to go to meet the souls in the graveyard on a vehicle, as is reported about our kindred nations, e.g. the Maris. The choice of either a carriage or a sledge (i.e. if the weather is warm or cold) has helped both the Estonians and Finns to forecast weather.

It associates with the finishing of the agricultural work much less in Estonia than in Finland, where this period's *kekri*-festival[5] is simultaneously a festive day to celebrate the end of reaping, the turn of the year, and for honouring the souls of the ancestors. The Estonian, Livonian and Latvian traditions are well comparable, as regards the concept and dating of the souls' visiting time. As for South Estonia, is apparently unified already during the period of tight contacts between the Baltic and Balto-Finnic tribes, and, showing unusual conservatism, remained without any significant changes throughout centuries. Through Russian Orthodox church calendar *midrusk*, i.e. St. Dmitri's Day, has also been known in East Estonia (derived from the feast of the Russian Saint Dmitri, celebrated on Saturday before October 26).

St. Dmitri's Day has no definite date, but preparing better food for the dead ancestors and laying the table belong to the customs of that feast. The members of the family were sitting a bit farther away, until the souls were supposed to have eaten enough, and only then everybody started to eat. The information is from the end of the 19th century.

Today we can learn about the souls' visiting time only from elderly informants. Examples can be drawn from the custom to light candles on the graves or

on the window-sills to commemorate the deceased, and the organised souls' visiting time celebration at the Time of the Yellowing of the Leaves (on October 15, 1988, about 20,000 people gathered in Tartu St. Mary's Cemetery for the celebration).

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SOME SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE FOLK MUSIC OF VATKA AND KALMEZ UDMURTS

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Already in ancient times the Udmurts of the North and north-western regions of the republic and the Kirov district have been divided in two: the tribes