

³Op. cit.

⁴Bardavelidze, V. *Drevneishie religioznye verovaniya i obryadnoe graficheskoe iskusstvo gruzinskikh plemyan*. Tbilisi, 1957, p. 93.

⁵Bardavelidze, V. *On the History of the Eldest Beliefs in Georgia (the Deity Barbar-Barbar)*. Tbilisi, 1941, pp. 120 (in Georgian).

⁶See *The Hagiographies*. Tiflisi, 1859, pp. 305-307 (in Georgian).

⁷P.C, 96 col 782-814. Tarhoat (Belgium), 1976.

⁸Istoricheskaya zametka o Varvarinskoi tserkvi. In: *Kavkaz*, 1857, No. 243.

EATING OF BEESTINGS AS AN ORIGINAL CALENDAR RITE OF THE BASHKIRIAN UDMURTS

Tatyana Minniyakhmetova. Izhevsk, Udmurtia

The problem of the typology of the ethnic communities is still one of the main problems in ethnology. Here we are to underline the questions dealing with difficulties in studying the phenomena of the small ethnic formations. That problem has attracted the attention of the scientists lately, because of the activating of the national movements in the USSR,¹ suddenly it was discovered that small ethnic formations, linguistic groups, dispersed parts of large ethnoses, have not been studied as well as they should be. According to that, we will try to give a glance at the mechanism of the connection between the main massive of the ethnos and its dispersed parts. It is well known that the ethnic groups because of different reasons (social-economic, political), finding themselves in the different ethno-geographical conditions, continue to preserve the main qualities of the motherland-ethnos. At the same time, finding itself in new conditions, the ethnic group has naturally fallen under the influence of a different culture, traditions, language, and probably has to adapt to a new ecological condition - in any case, it effects the culture of this group, making it borrow a lot of elements. Such a transformation is not chaotic or a blind imitation, but, interpreted through the ethnos's mind, incarnates into new forms of economy, develops new traditions, peculiarities of the language. So, in the course of time, such a group, on the one side, becomes a specific unity, having adapted itself

in new conditions and, on the other side, the unity with the strong enough instinct of the self-preservation, which displays itself first of all in consciousness, ethnonyms and in the translation of the main components of the traditional culture to the descendants.

In this article we are to analyse some of the particularities of the traditional rites on the example of the ethnic group of the Bashkirian Udmurts. The Udmurts of Bashkiria are one of the small-numbered ethnic groups living here,² which excite great interest of the explorers: ethnographers, linguists, folklorists, scientists. The Udmurts began to appear in the region of Bashkiria already in the 16th century³ and the process lasted up to the end of the 19th century.⁴ The Bashkirian Udmurts' main reason of appearance here was the policy of conversion to Christianity, begun by the Russian state after the annexation of the Kazan Khanate in 1552.⁵ So the Udmurts who lived in the Kazan and Vyatka districts shifted to the territory of modern Bashkiria (to the northern parts of it).⁶ Here the Udmurts found themselves mainly in the environment of the Turkish (Bashkirian and Tatar) peoples. There lived also some Russian and Cheremiss (Mari) groups. The impact of different ethnic surroundings on the various sides of the material and spiritual culture of the Udmurts displays itself particularly in the language, which included numerous Turkish elements. It also displays itself in the sphere of folklore and music. You can see the influence of the Turkish foundation in the planning of the farmstead and partly in the peculiarities of dwellings; in the national costume,⁷ food and the cooking traditions. However, this ethnic group had preserved some archaic features. Recognising themselves as genuine Udmurts,⁸ they know exactly which tribe (*Vorshud* tribe) they are from. Besides, remaining pagans, in most cases they carefully followed their archaic traditions. It is meaningful that the Bashkirian Udmurts keep a great number of stable expressions.

The rite of eating beestings (*csözy syion*) described in this article is rendered carefully only by the Udmurts of Bashkiria. They try to hold on to most of the traditional rules and standards of the rite. Every family renders this rite soon after calving. The cow retains its importance in the household, that is why the attitude to the cow is special and respectful in the whole family. Preparations begin at the very moment of calving. The calf is always led into the house some hours later. The ceremony is held even if there is a warm cattle-shed in the farmstead. The calf is led around the stove with the sun shining and lifted up by hands. It is told that the calf will grow as big and as high as it is lifted to. It is fumigated to make it grow healthy and to protect it against the evil eye. For the same purpose, a string with coloured and metal pendant is hung round its neck.

The first milk (it is milked 7-11 times) is collected into a vessel and kept in a fresh place. Ten days after that the refreshment-making begins.

At first the meal of beestings (the first milk) is cooked for guests. The main meal is called *csözy*. It is cooked of beestings with mixed whites of eggs and salt on a weak fire. The next meal is *zyret*-cooking of the same ingredients, while the dish is continuously stirred. Finally the meal looks like a liquid omelet and is spread on cool scones. The other kind of meal is *jölpyd* - sour clotted milk. The sour ferment is put into the boiled milk, then kept to settle for a day. It is offered to the guests with cream. The next compulsory dish of the rite is called *taban'* - the sour scones. A lot of various other wares are cooked, too. They try to lay the table more richly, but in each case the main attention is paid to the beesting meal (*csözy, zyret, jölpyd, taban'*).

When serving, a charcoal - the magic protection - is thrown into the cup with beestings. For the same purpose, trying to maintain prosperity, the ritual table is encircled with a knife. After preparations, early the next day guests are invited to the ritual meal. Usually if they get much beestings and the village is not so big, all the members of it must be guests (or are invited). Before they come the stove is stoked up for baking the scones. Standing in front of the stove, the mistress of the house prays (*kuriskon*) for health and fertility of the cow and the cattle, for prosperous life, saying her wishes to God *Inmar*.

When the guests come they are invited to sit around the table, and after the mistress of the house has tasted all the dishes, the ritual dinner is called open. When everybody begins to eat, it is watched who tastes the beestings first. If it is a man or a boy - it is believed that a bull calf will be born next year; but if it is a woman or a girl - a heifer. Each guest tries to taste as many dishes as possible, perhaps each one. It is believed that magic virtues of the food enter everyone who eats them.

After the meal and tea the guests say their best wishes to the household and to their cow. But before they leave for home, another ceremony is to be carried out. Taking a wooden spoon, the masters of the house knock on the forehead of every guest, saying *bull calf gored, heifer gored (os l'ekaz, mes l'ekaz)*. This ritual has the following meaning. If anyone feels envious seeing such a rich dinner, it might bring harm to the house-masters. It calls the evil eye. So the ritual is used against it and nobody ought to be angry, because the ritual gives the guests deliverance from malicious intentions, too.

So, in the same manner from early morning up to late at night the flow of guests does not stop. People of every age come, but few men take part in the ritual.

The stove is heated the whole day to regale every guest with hot pancakes. Even at the periods when the flow of guests interrupts for a while, firewood is appended into the stove, for the defense from the evil spirit.

On this day more care is taken of the cow, too. The cow is better fed and with more tasty food than on the other days. The cow is given pieces of ritual bread. Evidently it is not merely feeding of an animal, but symbolises treating the cow as a member of the family.

The magic meaning of the custom is purposed to ensure the fertility of the cattle, its protection from sickness and murrain, as well as to provide the people with food, consolidate the collective and strengthen the felicity of the family.

The ritual use of milk and dairy foods is common to the neighbouring nations (Bashkirs, Tatars, Mari), but everywhere it has specific features. Even the Udmurts of the motherland (Udmurtia) do it in a different way: only the closest relatives are invited to the ceremony and the party is organised in the evening. And the Udmurts of the Kirov district do not escape special ceremonies. The traditional meal here is a boiled beesting with bread, which is given to the visitors or even strangers. But the Udmurts of Tatarstan hold on to the rite of eating the beestings more than the other group of Udmurts.

The ban to eat dairy food before the ritual holds for the most groups of Udmurts, but the rite of its abolishing has not been preserved identically for the different groups of Udmurts.

We suppose that such a cautious preserving of the ceremonies (as this custom) by Bashkirian Udmurts can be a natural phenomenon of the existing small ethnic groups.

The surroundings of the different ethnoses in which a part of this ethnos finds itself (in our case the group of Udmurts) apparently promotes the conservation or preservation of their own traditional elements of culture. The determinants for the degree of preservation of the traditions are, first of all, confessional and linguistic. In our case, representatives of the Finno-Ugric linguistic unity, pagans, find themselves in the Turkish and Moslem surroundings. But such problems, of course, are to be analysed thoroughly, encompassing everything.

Literature

¹*Etnicheskie i etnograficheskie gruppy v SSSR i ikh rol v sovremennykh protsessakh.* Ufa, 1989.

²223700 Udmurts were numbered in Bashkiria in 1989. *Sovetskaya Bashkiria*, March 25, 1990.

³Miller, G. *Istoriya Sibiri*. Vol.1. Moscow - Leningrad, 1937, p. 338.

⁴Yanguzin, R. Chislennost i rasselenye udmurtov v Bashkirii v kontse XV111 - nachale XX veka. In: *XVII-ya Vsesoyuznaya finno-ugorskaya konferentsiya. Tezisy dokladov*. Izhevsk, 1987, p. 214.

⁵Nasibullin, R. *Zakamskiye govory udmurtskogo yazyka*. Diss. na soiskaniye uchenoy stepeni kand. ist. nauk. Moscow, 1977, p.7.

⁶Nasibullin, R. O nazvaniyakh udmurtskikh dereven basseynov rek Buy i Bystryi Tanyp. In: *Onomastika Povolzhya* 3. Ufa, 1973, p.308.

⁷Lebedeva S., Atamanov, M. Kostyumnye komplekсы udmurtov v svyazi s etnogenezom. In: *Problemy etnogeneza udmurtov*. Ustinov, 1987, p.117.

⁸Atamanov, M., Vladykin, V. Pogrebalny ritual yuzhnykh udmurtov. In: *Materialy srednevekovykh pamyatnikov Udmurtii*. Ustinov, 1985. p.132.

LUCKY VOYAGE!

Old Beliefs Met With In Shipbuilding

Reet Naber. Tallinn, Estonia

There are but few people like Oskar Loorits with such a wide interest in the seafaring and fishery traditions of the Estonians as to record them in writing.

A serial publication called *The Mode of Life in Estonia of Former Days* was begun at the Estonian Folklore Archives (but not completed).¹ The first volume (published in 1939) contains readings on everyday life of the sailors and fishermen. This serial was intended to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Jakob Hurt's birth.

Since this year is the 90th anniversary of the birth of Oskar Loorits, it seems high time to remember that the seafaring traditions are as closely linked with the history of our people as are agriculture and cattle breeding. It shows the cognizance of life, the manner of thought, experiences and skills employed throughout the centuries. This must be considered as a rightful part of the popular culture, although much has been taken over from abroad, adapted and merged into everyday use.

For thousands of years seafaring has played an important intermediary role between different cultures. Because of its variegated character seafaring has exerted a greater influence on culture and is more contact-promoting than many other fields of activity. Foreign influence is noticeable also in Estonian nautical terminology, which to a great extent can be traced back to western countries, specifically to the Germanic cultural regions. The same is true also for many a belief and custom.