

be escaped, although it became operative only after the culprit's death. Such reckoning done without human intervention and without recourse to the law was connected with the belief in God's justice, and consequently, with the religious aspect of life.

The world of beliefs is hardly compatible with the model of life advocated by the Church; nevertheless, it exists and in a sense stands guard to the special order, including morals. In fact, the interdependent and mutually related co-existence of these two worlds is typical of the whole spiritual culture. This syncretism of Christianity and magic allows different and seemingly conflicting phenomena to form a unified whole and offers an explanation of phenomena which could not be accounted for by a single type of faith.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The article is based on the materials that the author collected on her folklore-collecting field trips in three Carpathian regions (Śląski, Sadecki, Żywiecki) between 1976-1981 and 1984-1987. The collections, stored in the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences are catalogued 1512, 1555, 1575, 1596, 1610 (Sadecki region); 1556, 1563, 1586, 1597 (Śląski region); 1627, 1647, 1673, 1674 (Żywiecki region). (*Author*)

<sup>2</sup>Churching used to be a religious ceremony, observed usually 40 days after the birth of the child. It ended the lying-in period and at the same time the so-called period of *impurity*. Nowadays it has features of a lay ceremony and is of purificatory character. However, owing to its magical contents consisting in the belief in the purposeful character of this ritual - its function being protective, rather than receptive - churching acquires magical and religious overtones.

## PAGAN SACRIFICING PROCEDURES OF THE UDMURTS

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The present paper is based on the praying and sacrifice feast marking the end of the spring agricultural cycle known today by the common name *gershyd*. The feast has been observed by myself in the Varklet-Bodia village (the Tatar Republic, Agryzh region) in 1988 and 1989. If one includes in the *gershyd*-feast also the family prayer *võsh nerge* (Udm. 'praying custom'), which is conducted without a sacrifice, the feast lasts for nine days. Together with pauses, caused by various reasons, the feast is usually prolonged to two weeks.

In the following all the prayers-sacrifices included in the feast are mentioned:

- 1) *vösh nerge* – family prayer;
- 2) *yu vösh* – crop prayer, good crop is being prayed for;
- 3) *kuyaskon* – the deceased are commemorated;
- 4) *kunan kotirtem intili kuriskisa vöshaskon* (Udm. ‘prayer asking for permission to use the place for calf’s paddock’) or *kunan kenere piron* (Udm. ‘coming in the calf’s fence’) – prayer asking for permission to use the spot as the basic sacrificial place;
- 5) *chuny vöshan* (Udm. ‘foal’s prayer’) – a sheep is sacrificed;
- 6) *mu-kylchin* – ‘earth fairy’s prayer’, a black sheep is sacrificed;
- 7) *chunyn sermet vöshan* – (Udm. ‘prayer of foal’s bridles’) or *iybyrtton* (Udm. ‘bowing’) – white sheep and two geese are sacrificed;
- 8) *aktash* (Tat. ‘white stone’) or *tödi iz vöshaskon* (Udm. ‘white stone prayer’) – a sheep is sacrificed;
- 9) *kuyaskon* – those who have died far from their homes are commemorated.

Today the prayers are held not only to commemorate the deceased, the latter occasion occurs twice during the feast. The family prayer is conducted by the master of the household or, in his absence, the oldest male member of the family; the rest of the prayers are directed by the special foreprayers, the *vöshas*. It is said that in former times the *tuno*, or witch, used to appoint the foreprayers, now the vacant places are filled by voting. There are similar data from the Maris concerning both of the mentioned ways of becoming a leader of ceremonies.<sup>1</sup>

Every prayer-meeting is conducted by a different foreprayer together with his assistants. The foreprayer prays with his head covered (the other men are bareheaded during the prayer), he stands facing south and in his hands there is a vessel with sacrificial food. This manner of praying has been very common among the Udmurts.<sup>2</sup> The records fixing the direction of praying differ from each other: Georgi and Pallas mention west, Müller and Buch east, Bogayevsky west, Potanin east, south and west depending on the addressee of the prayer.<sup>3</sup> Harva supposes that the custom to pray facing south has been adopted from the Tatars while originally the gods and fairies were prayed to facing east and the dead facing west.<sup>4</sup> In general, the peoples of North-Eurasia, especially those of North Siberia, have associated the western and northern quarters with the realm of the dead, the nether world, while the eastern and southern quarters have been associated with the upper world, the abode of the gods.

As a rule, the prayers are said standing: men are placed behind the foreprayer, while women are standing apart at some distance. The final prayers of the *iybyrtton* cycle and all the prayers of the *aktash* cycle are said kneeling and bowing to the ground from time to time. The latter has probably given the

prayer its name – *iybyrtton* (Udm. ‘bowing’). At the present the prayers are not improvised any more and therefore none of the foreprayers says his prayer aloud. It is known only that the prayer addresses the sky god *Inmar*, the earth fairy *mu-kylchin* and the tribe’s guardian spirit *vorshud*. A good crop is prayed for, together with the necessary conditions, especially rain. The earlier records confirm that the earth fairy has been prayed for a rich crop, and *Inmar*, alongside with other things, for rain.<sup>5</sup> Vereshchagin has recorded that in the county of Glazov the foreprayers, while praying, held a branch of silver fir in their left hand.<sup>6</sup> All in all, branches of trees have been of great importance at those sacrifices. So, on the sacrifice shelf of the prayer-house *kuala*, there have always been some branches, it holds also for the places where the *vorshud*, the sacrifice box, has not been preserved anymore. In *lud*, the sacrificial grove, the sacrifice table was covered with branches before the prayer. The Eastern Udmurts hoisted a cross-beam over the fireplace in the sacred grove; for this they used a bough with its top branches unlopped. The trunk of the cross-beam had to point at the direction of praying.<sup>7</sup> Likewise the Maris of Birskey county, Ufa province raised a crossbeam on the fireplace in the sacred grove and placed the sacrificial food on the branches spread on the ground.<sup>8</sup> It is known that the Lapps placed birch branches (in summer) or fir branches (in winter) under their idols.<sup>9</sup> In Varklet-Bodia the sacrificial food is laid on the ground on birch branches; birch branches are also laid on the table, on the sacrificial altar and into the sacrificial hole for the earth fairy. At the five major prayers a cross-beam is set up on the fireplace in the described way and through the birch branches water is poured on the sacrificial animal.

Although several deities are being prayed simultaneously, the sacrifices to *Inmar* and the earth fairy are offered separately. Today the sheep sacrificed to *Inmar* is white or of light colour, the one sacrificed to the earth fairy is black. Also in the past *Inmar* was given animals of light fur, and the earth fairy those of black.<sup>10</sup> The Maris have considered the best sacrifice for the heavenly god a white foal, and for the earth-mother a black cow.<sup>11</sup>

Whether the sacrificial animal pleases the gods, is tested in Varklet-Bodia in the following way: the *vöshas* pours some water on the animal through the birch branches. If the animal reacts somehow, it is considered to be a good token. There are numerous accounts referring to this watering by the Udmurts.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the Maris tested the suitability of the sacrificial animal with water, saying corresponding prayers at that.<sup>13</sup>

At the prayer-meeting *chunyn sermet vöshan* (Udm. ‘prayer of foal’s bridles’) in addition to a sheep two geese are sacrificed. Of interest is the account by Ostrovsky mentioning a pair of swans taken to the river in a festive procession after the prayer in the sacred grove and released there.<sup>14</sup>

Pervukhin states that in case the sacrificial animal does not react to the water-test, a duck or a goose must be sacrificed in addition.<sup>15</sup> Geese as bridles for the sacrificed horses on their way to *Inmar* have been mentioned by Potanin (1884). The fact that earlier horses or foals have been sacrificed in the Varklet-Bodia village, is testified to by the names of the prayers (besides the above-mentioned *chuny vöshan* – Udm. ‘foal’s prayer’). Horses were sacrificed also by the Maris.<sup>16</sup> Georgi mentions the horse as the first sacrificial animal of the Mansis living in the Perm province,<sup>17</sup> and, as Munkacsi has written, the Mansi considered the sacrifice especially favoured by the gods to be a white horse (Munkacsi 1893).

For ancestors and the deceased relatives bread and eggs are broken in pieces and laid under a tree and the crumbs are doused with some raw spirits. The breaking of bread for the dead has been described by a number of authors.<sup>18</sup> Mostly the ritual was still conducted at home where the food was crumbled into a vessel either near the oven or at the threshold.

At all the prayer-meetings, except the family prayer, the earth fairy prayer and the commemoration of the deceased, the so-called sacrifice up, *vyle mychon* (Udm. ‘putting up’) is conducted, i.e. sacrificial food is laid on the tree branches, on a stump or a small table – the altar during the prayer. For this purpose bread, pancakes, the meat of the sacrificial animal or bird (or several of the foodstuffs together) can be used. In the past the meat used for ‘putting/sacrificing up’ was cooked in a special vessel. According to Bekhterev the ears, heart, lungs and guts of the sacrificial animal were used for this purpose; according to Buch its heart, lungs and liver; Harva mentions head, heart and neck, righthand blade and three ribs. That meat could not be eaten by a woman; it was given only to the performers of the ritual and the most venerable of all men. A similar manner of sacrificing was earlier used in the *kuala* – the prayer house, in the sacred grove called *lud*, at the *bulda* – common prayer-meetings of the villages, etc.<sup>19</sup> Alongside with ‘sacrificing up’, there was also a common custom of sacrificing into a fire (Udm. *tylaskon*). Although there are a few accounts about the food ‘sacrificed up’ left untouched in the place of sacrifice in the past,<sup>20</sup> the custom to sacrifice them into fire has been more common. Already Müller mentions that before the Udmurts began to eat their sacrificial food, they threw bits of the ears, eyes, legs, heart and guts of the sacrificial animal into fire. According to Georgi pancakes, honey and drinks were also thrown into the fire. Yelabuzhsky writes that in *kuala*, the prayer-house, a part of the foodstuffs was sacrificed into fire and a part was put on the sacrificial shelf.<sup>21</sup> In Varklet-Bodia in addition to the food used for ‘sacrificing up’, some blood of the sacrificial animal and some meat brothare sacrificed into the fire. These sacrificing manners are known also to the Maris. Harva has described the joint prayer-meeting *mer-küsö* ob-

served in the Cherlak sacred grove in the county of Birsk of the Ufa province in 1913, where a part of the meat of the sacrificial animal was cooked in a separate cauldron (the so-called *siiwö*-meat). After the meat had been cooked, a few bits of it were placed into the barrel under the sacrificial tree, while a part was sacrificed into the fire to the gods and the mother of the fire. A piece of every organ was skewered on a rod which was thrust between the sacrificial belt tied round the sacrificial tree.<sup>22</sup> Aminoff has supposed that sacrificing into fire is a more recent and a borrowed custom of the Udmurts, and he has been supported by Harva. However, one must consider the great significance of fire among all the peoples of North Eurasia. So, for example, by the Ob-Ugrians and the Samoyeds the fire, especially the one in the tent, has been a kind of connection between the heaven, the world of the men and the lower world. When the fire spat, it was explained as the talk of the deceased who were to be reconciled by throwing bits of fat into the fire. Fire and the fireplace have been of significance in healing and in the shaman's journeys to the upper and the nether world.

In Varklet-Bodia the sacrifices to the earth fairy are offered into a special hole dug for the occasion, the *mu-kylchin gu* (Udm. 'earth fairy's hole') and they include bread, blood and bones of the sacrificial animal and the broth. One must stress that at the earth fairy's prayer has been no sacrificing into fire and *vyle mychon*, the 'sacrificing up', is not conducted. The analogous sacrificing to the earth fairy has been described by Bekhterev, Potanin, Vereshchagin, Gavrilov, Harva, et al.<sup>23</sup> Also the Maris have buried the meat and bones offered to the earth-mother.<sup>24</sup> After the prayer-meeting the sacrificing hole was covered with earth and splints so that animals could not scrape it out.

As the comparison of different sources confirms, the prayers in different places have been formally quite similar. As in Varklet-Bodia the tribal prayer-house *byddzym kuala* and the sacred grove *lud* have been abandoned, the *gershyd* has become one of the principal pagan feasts in the village today. One may suppose that the *gershyd*-feast has to some extent developed to replace the already decayed *kuala* and *lud* prayers. For example, *aktash* (Tatar. 'white stone'; Udm. 'evil fairy' or 'spirit'), a component prayer of the feast may be viewed as a continuation of the prayers devoted to the fairy of the sacred grove, the *lud kuzo* or *keremet* (numerous accounts consider it to be evil). This surmise is supported by the fact that *aktash* has been directly called a *keremet*.<sup>25</sup>

Probably the *gershyd*-feast has reached us and preserved so well namely due to the fact that it constituted a kind of concentrate of the pagan praying-sacrificing feasts.

Translated by Anne Allpere

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<sup>6</sup>Vereshchagin, G. Votyaki Sosnovskogo kraya. In: *ERGO po otd. etnografii*. XIV, Issue 2, St.Petersburg, 1885.

<sup>7</sup>See Note 2, Holmberg (Harva).

<sup>8</sup>See Note 1, Holmberg (Harva).

<sup>9</sup>See Note 2, Holmberg (Harva).

<sup>10</sup>See Note 5, Potantin; and Note 2, Holmberg (Harva) .

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<sup>14</sup>See Note 12, Ostrovsky.

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<sup>20</sup>See Note 2, Holmberg (Harva).

<sup>21</sup>See Note 19, Yelabuzhsky.

<sup>22</sup>See Note 1, Holmberg (Harva).

<sup>23</sup>See Note 12, Bekhterev; Note 2, Potanin; Note 5, Vereshchagin; Note 18, Gavrilov; Note 2, Holmberg (Harva).

<sup>24</sup>See Note 1, Holmberg (Harva).

<sup>25</sup>See Note 2, Potanin.

## THE HISTORY AND SEMANTICS OF SOME TYPOLOGICALLY CONNECTED FINNO-UGRIC THEONYMS

Alexander Lipatov. Yoshkar-Ola, Mari

Paganism and world religions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc.) did not appear in the world in their complete form like Minerva from Jupiter's head – they are the result of a long development, whereas 'the of religious ideas did not develop by replacing each other completely, but new features were added to the remaining old ones'.<sup>1</sup> The roots of paganism reach back beyond millennia, and yet it managed somehow to survive until late 19th century.

A monotheistic pantheon is an unknown phenomenon to heathen peoples. The heathen pantheon essentially represents the whole mosaic of tribal pantheons. Even in one ethno-linguistic family, e.g. the Finno-Ugric one, each ethnic group has its own set of gods. Let us name the higher deities: the Komi God of light and kindness is *Yen*, and the God of darkness and evil *Omel*; for Mordvinians, accordingly, *Vardya-Shkai* (or *Cham-Pas*) and *Shaitan*, for Mari *Yumo* and *Keremet*, for Khanty and Mansi *Numi-Torum* and *Kul*.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, the Mari cosmogony is the most complete of them. Rychkov wrote in 1770 that among the Gods worshipped by the Maris the first place is occupied by Yumo, a god living in heavens; and he was the one who created heaven and