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## **Символика и функции вещей в похоронно-поминальной обрядности некрещеных чувашей\***

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## **Symbolism and Functions of Things in the Funeral and Memorial Rites of Unbaptised Chuvash People\***

**ABSTRACT.** The article is devoted to semantics, symbolism and ritual functions of things in modern funeral and memorial rites of unbaptised Chuvash people. It considers the modern interpretation of the functional features and symbolism of ritual objects, the transformation of the object code of unbaptised Chuvash ritual under the influence of Orthodoxy and globalisation processes. The material complex of modern funeral and memorial rites of unbaptised Chuvashes in its basic characteristics (a set of objects, their functionality, forms, material, properties) corresponds to the traditional one and includes such objects as a coffin, a grave monument and other elements of grave design, a towel and personal belongings of the deceased, candles, metal objects, utensils, money, etc. They attribute individual features, gender and ethno-confessional belonging of the deceased. The study has shown that symbolic-functional manifestations of things in the context of modern funeral and memorial rituals are conditioned by traditional Chuvash ideas about death and the afterlife, ritual bodily uncleanness of the deceased, the attitude to preserving communication with the deceased, their position in relation to the living, etc. The above ideologemes associated with the traditional 'cultural code' of the Chuvash remain in the actual semantic field of religious practices of unbaptised Chuvash in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The transformation of rituals caused by changes in the life of the ethno-confessional community over the last century has affected, along with functionality, the 'iconicity' of the objects used, reduced the semiotic status of things, led to their partial loss in rituals, but in general did not destroy the structure of the semiotic model, which retains the archaic language of culture at its core.

**KEY WORDS:** things, signification, funeral and memorial rites, symbolism, Chuvash, cultural language

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*Fig. 1. A plaque and a trowel on the grave in the Savgachevo village, Aksubaevsky District, Republic of Tatarstan. 2021. Photo by E. A. Yagafova*



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*Fig. 2. 'Bridges' in front of the ravine on the way to the cemetery in the Staroe Afonkino village, Shentalinsky District, Samara region. 2021. Photo by E. A. Yagafova*



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*Fig. 3, 4. Grave pillar with a shawl and a towel in the cemetery in Sidulovo-Erykly village, Aksubaevsky District, Republic of Tatarstan. 2021. Photo by I. G. Petrov*

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Fig. 5. A table and a chair for memorialising the deceased in front of a ravine on the way to the cemetery in the Staroe Surkino village, Almetyevsky District, Republic of Tatarstan. 2014. Photo by I. G. Petrov



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