

SCTCMG 2021
International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of
Modern Globalism»

INSTITUTE OF PRAYERS IN THE MUSICAL PICTURE OF THE
CIRCASSIAN WORLD

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Abstract

The article examines the institution of prayers associated with the image of the bee, its localization in the mythological picture of the myth, the mythological story associated with the picture of the creation of the world, together with Heaven and Earth, the Sun and the Moon in the co-creation of the image of the female deity of the good goddess and patroness of bees and beekeeping Marem or Merem (Marem, Mereim), otherwise, Merissa (Melissa, Melix), identified by researchers with the Christian Mother of God Mary as a complex coded layer of knowledge, with its semantic system of rituals and rituals of myth, revealing itself through many symbols, images, and signs. In the context of the deconstruction of the institute of prayers in honor of the goddess Merissa, we have revealed the moment of co-creation of the myth through cult appeals and the "Rite in honor of the Great Mother of God", the Shoumaf festival and the rites of the Swarm Day and the Day of the Bribe of Honey, the Feast of the Assumption "MaremIyu", which was preceded by the pre-fasting night of ritual cleansing "Dygyuzh'ygyu zshesh". The question of localization of the image of a bee in the mythological picture of the myth, its space of "presence" and influence, which is divided into two spheres – "sacred" and "profane", "ours" and "alien", and the hive acquires the function of a neutral zone, delimiting the inner and the outer worlds, thereby dividing into two concepts of the world.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Deity, institute of prayers, musical worldview, song



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1. Introduction

The bee is given divine origin, and the honey that it extracts is endowed with a miraculous source of wisdom and immortality. According to the available data, the image of a bee is a mediator between the upper and lower worlds, a messenger of the world of the living, a great messenger and owner of the gift of translating the sacred language of the Supreme God into the human language.

Since ancient times, among various peoples, a bee has been the personification of purity, prudence, order, thrift, caution, the embodiment of diligence, striving for order, industriousness, mutual assistance, actual knowledge, eloquence, sweetness, deified ordered community.

The image of a bee is one of the key concepts of the world's naive picture and belongs to the concept of "living nature surrounding a person." "Bee" in myth becomes a taboo sign, but at the same time, a symbolic-taboo attitude towards it remains. The location of the "bee" – the hive acquires the function of a neutral zone, delimiting the inner and outer worlds, thereby dividing the world into two concepts – "ancient/old world" and "new world". This division starts the archaic analog of the division into the outer world and the inner spiritual sphere (Gucheva, 2020).

Each time has its symbolism, which was needed to achieve specific knowledge and embraced the desire "to comprehend the laws of mind and, based on these laws, to build the life of one's spirit and body" (Vernadsky, 1999, p. 423). This aspect also affected the image of the bee. A bee's image is revealed through archetypal meanings as a bee, a beehive, and honey, where each has its symbolism.

In Egyptian myths, bees were considered a symbol of the sun god Ra's tears, and their ability to appear suddenly personified a symbol of death and a symbol of the rebirth of the divine afterlife.

In Hindu myth, the bee is the symbol of Shiva, and "the blue bee on Krishna's forehead is like the avatar of Vishnu. Kama, the god of love, like Cupid, has a bow and arrows, and a bowstring consists of bees" (Worrell, 2000, para. 5).

In most myths, the bee was a symbol of the soul. The Mediterranean peoples associated this connection with the Sun, with the symbol of Spring and the symbol of the resurrection. The myth of the Eleusinian deity of the Great Mother Demeter and her daughter Persephone (Cora) is considered a symbol of the seasonal death and resurrection of nature. The image of Cora is also the personification of the honey-like and lunar symbol. Some of the myths associated with the symbol "bee."

It should be noted that a bee was perceived as a messenger of spirits, and it was conveyed as a message to the living from the world of the dead. In the studied folklore and ethnographic materials, Merissa is the patroness of bees and beekeeping. In the Circassian world's mythological picture, she was initially assigned the role of the goddess of fertility. However, this image was not preserved in the memory of the myth. The myth of the goddess and patroness of bees is significant for this study. Frederic Dubois de Monpere (1974), during one of his visits to the Caucasus, wrote down the legend of the ascension of Marem (in another version – Merissa). This myth tells that once, when "all the bees died, only one survived, which hid in the sleeve of Merissa, and she saved a bee, after which all the bees that now exist came from that bee" (p. 439). This motive for the continuation and preservation of the genus suggests its stencil motifs in songs and hymns (Gucheva, 2018) in honor of the goddesses. The

description of the goddess's appearance using sublime epithets with numerous comparisons with divine luminaries was undoubtedly tabooed.

2. Problem Statement

The article sets the following tasks:

- explore the institution of prayers associated with the image of the goddess and patroness of bees and beekeeping Marem;
- to carry out a semantic and symbolic analysis of the institution of prayers and their musical component;
- to reveal the mutual influence, interconnection, and interaction of the goddess image, music, and myth in the context of the institution of prayers as a new reality of "conscious power" and the supremacy of people over nature.

3. Research Questions

Research questions are to deconstruct the institution of prayers associated with the goddess Merissa's image, identify local and socio-cultural features that reflect and symbolize the ideas of myth and value orientations of the historical era.

4. Purpose of the Study

The article aimed to consider the institution of prayers associated with the goddess's image and patroness of bees and beekeeping Marem.

5. Research Methods

Considering the above specificity of the material, the study's goal and objectives determined the priority of semantic-hermeneutic, comparative-genetic, structural-semantic methods and the use of immanent-lexical and comparative analysis.

6. Findings

The fertility goddess Merissa is actually the main character of the myth. Merissa has remarkable irrational strength and the ability to penetrate the inner essence of all things. This goddess combined the giving life principle's function, which is conceptually and symbolically associated with the Sun and life. Its opposition is "the image of mythological death." The image of death is associated with sunset, that is, the mythological death of the Sun, which becomes a mystery that people are trying to comprehend (Gucheva, 2020, p. 112).

The patroness of the bees, Merissa, embraced the three-dimensional space of myth. Her mirrored "image of death" brings the myth into the fourth dimension, which creates new images and plots with its own conceptual, linguistic, musical, and mythological picture of the world (Gucheva, 2020). Merissa

could appear one of the most laconic and vivid images of the world's mythological picture. With great regret, we must note that only her name has survived in the oral tradition. Our perception of the patron goddess of bees Melissa is associated with the perception of the archetype of the Great Mother, in which her sacred and mythical power is combined with the colorful external image of Merem, whose body "shines with silver, and a crescent is burning on her forehead" (Lavrov, 2009, p. 356).

At first glance, there is a feeling that large-scale figurative and semantic transformations of the image of the goddess are associated with ritual and cult layers that cover a long process. This process is scattered not only in the space and time of the myth but also in various means of its realization. However, this study details these general provisions. In the matter of identifying the time frame for sending cult proclamations, we faced many problems since the proclamations are scattered in real mythological time.

As the surviving folklore and ethnographic materials show, bees and beekeeping Merissa's goddess and patroness belong to the most ancient mythological images. This circumstance makes it possible to determine the holidays in her honor to the most ancient cult appeals. At the same time, the image of the Mother of the Great God Merem correlates with the time of the adoption of Christianity by the Circassians. Bell believes that the time of establishing the holiday in honor of the goddess refers to "the times when Christianity prevailed in Circassia in honor of the Mother of Christ!" (Bell, 1974, p. 465).

There are two narrative religious and cultural layers in the Merem cult: pagan and Christian. Actually, the first is directly related to the image of Merissa and its ritual and ceremonial complex, in which two layers must be distinguished: firstly, the complex of rituals held in the summer associated with the day of the patroness of bees and beekeeping Merissa, and secondly, the complex of rituals that were held in the fall in her honor to mark the completion of the harvest.

The pagan stratum is heterogeneous in time (summer and autumn, day and night). The autumn cycle of celebrations in honor of the Mother of Christ Merem began in early October and:

... for two weeks a holiday called Merem is celebrated. Young people move in groups, sequentially, from house to house and spend time dancing, singing, drinking bosc. Part of the ceremony consists in the fact that a bunch of people, while they are holding baked cheese pies in their hands and swinging them, together with loud screams around them, call out to Merem and ask for happiness, health, and abundance in everything (Bell, 1974, p. 470).

And:

The sacrifices do not consist of cattle, but of various flour and honey dishes, mainly of pies stuffed with cheese (haliva). While all this is being offered as a gift to St. Mary, all people are praying for health, fertility, and happiness. Young people especially love this holiday; after the sacrifice, the youth gather and move in long rows, singing and shouting, going from house to house, demanding refreshments. In the evening, everyone gathers in an open place and indulges in fun until late at night (Koch, 1974, p. 610).

Tebu de Marigny (1974) mistakenly associates the holiday in honor of Merissa with the honey spas (August 14), but at the same time, he notes that "he copes in September, on this day everyone treats each other to dishes and drinks made from honey" (p. 301).

As for the summer cycle of ceremonies and rituals in honor of Merem, there is confusion in time and the actual administration of cult appeals. Several festivals were established, and fasting began with a rite of purification. According to Monpere (1974), "the Circassians have subordinate deities, or a kind of saints, grafted onto pagan deities. They have Merissa, the protector of bees, a holiday in her honor was celebrated in the summer and a cycle of celebrations associated with the day of the patroness of bees and beekeeping Merissa. During the ritual of purification, they jumped "over the fire, like the Russians on Ivan Kupala ... Those jumping over the fire ask Meryem for the forgiveness of sins, and after that, they consider themselves already cleansed of them" (Lulie, 1862).

In the summer, the holiday "Tkhagreplykh" was held – the daughter of God or the virgin of God" (Dubrovin, 1927). During this holiday, the girls turned to the Mother of the Great God as the heavenly patroness with a request for a successful marriage and healthy offspring. The whole festive day passed to the sounds of songs and dances in her honor. For this celebration:

Each girl was obliged to take a chicken to the place of prayer and there prepare a dish from it, which was treated to the audience, after which they congratulated all those present on the plot in honor of the Mother of God (Dubrovin, 1927, p. 126).

It was with the Tkhagreplykh holiday that the weekly fast in honor of Merem began and "after fasting for the next week, on the first Sunday they celebrated Margem and Yan (or at the direction of other Tgashhuo-yan), which took place in August and corresponded to our Assumption Day" (Dubrovin, 1927). On this day of the holiday, "a song was sung popularly in honor of the Mother of God" (Lulie, 1862), and the holiday was timed to "taking bread from the fields" (Lulie, 1862), but this was the beginning of long "festivities, renewing every evening with dances, until the inhabitants of the whole valley or the parish – thagapha – are bypassed" (Lulie, 1862).

Lavrov described the spring cycle of ceremonies and rituals in honor of Merem – "every house was walked around with prayers for the harvest and good offspring. A public meal was held in the last house. The prayers mentioned, "Merem, the mother of the Great God" (Serem Thyeshue yang)" (Lavrov, 2009).

The Christian layer differs significantly from the pagan one. The sensual contemplation of the Mother of the Great God's image is brought to the fore, where the feeling of representation and cult appeal is repressed. According to Lulier, "This Meryem is Mary, as because she is called the mother of God" (Lulier, 1862, p. 136). In the "calendar of the Kabardians, she was given one day – Friday, which is still "considered a sacred day in honor of Meryem" (Nogmov, 1893).

Makhovich-Matskevich described in detail the autumn holiday in honor of Merem. Makhovich-Matskevich believes that this is a Christian dormition and "the only day in the year when all hard work stops in the whole earth, everyone dresses in the best dresses, and the whole country is announced with joyful songs and rifle shots in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary" (Makhovich-Matskevich, 1864). Among

the Mozdok Kabardians, fasting began only after the feast of the Assumption – MarenIyu, and it was preceded by one of the most important pre-fasting nights – Dygyuzhgyu zhesh (the night of the wolf's hole). Perhaps it was a night of ritual cleansing for women and girls since they spent the whole night in prayers and appeals to the deity: "The next day, having prepared all kinds of cakes, they go to church and go around all four corners of it singing the song "Saint Mary." The tour was carried out exclusively by women and girls. While walking around the church, they tirelessly turned to St. Mary with a prayer: "Save us our babies (descendants)", "... help our children, look at them kindly!".

In this study, we could not help but touch upon two other festivities in honor of Merem – the "Day of the swarm" (shoumaf) and "Day of the taking of honey" ritual. Most likely, the ceremony "Day of the swarm" was carried out in the spring and it is the very rite of resettlement in a new hive of bees during which they performed a special song of the beekeeper "Sebym eklu, matem kluezh!" (Go to the swarm, go to the hive!) (NPINA, 55). It was based on a clichéd formula for referring to a bee (object), a typological structure for describing its image and a description of the required action, as well as imitation of natural sounds (bee buzzing), which was called "conventional verbal formulas" (Gippius, 1980). Here we can only add that each owner arranged a ritual feast at the end of the ritual – "rite – a treat" (Azamatov, 2001) for the residents of the nearest houses, but children were still guests of honor. The ritual food consisted of various dishes and a drink "shyoupsy" with the addition of honey. The second rite was the collection of honey, which had similar features to the previous one, and a ritual feast was also arranged on it, which also had the same name. Before the start of the feast, the owner of the apiary pronounced his good wishes and after the meal, "the children sprinkled "bzhiaIo" on the walls, on the fence of the apiary – the remnants of an unfinished sweet solution of "shoupsy" and at the same time asked for help from "Merem" to increase the yield of honey – zyshekuaner schekonish'ytf" (Azamatov, 2001).

Returning to the characteristics of the heavenly goddess Merissa, the influence of the most important ideological image is visible – the Mother of the Great God Tha and the progenitor and mistress of all life on earth. Merissa-Merem – the image of a girl with a beautifully kind face, whose eyes are sunny, whose body shines with white gold, a crescent moon burns in her forehead, whose chest is golden, whose clothes flutter and shine with silver.

7. Conclusion

Thus, the architectonics of happiness and eternity are enclosed in the image of the Great Mother of God Merem and are emphasized from one holiday to another, from one rite to another. She is a radiant embodiment of the ideal image and meaning of the goddess Merissa, the Mother of the Great God Merem, which is revealed by the myth's entire length.

The primary meaning of patronage of bees and beekeeping in combination with the image of the goddess of fertility is two powerful architectonics of meaning in the musical and mythological picture of the world. The image is the goddess image and patroness, while the meaning of the "meaning" is the image of the goddess. Of course, we cannot recreate the prototype of Merissa in that "initial" and "pure" sacredness, but we can touch her as divine, which in this case only lures us into creating our own "new" image.

The deconstructed institutions of prayer performed many functions, in which we distinguished several semantic layers: firstly, their primary purpose was to pray and thank the goddess of fertility Merem for a good harvest, and secondly, these are a kind of holidays of ritual purification during which fires were made and through which jumped, asking Meryem for the forgiveness of sins, thirdly, all the actions of these holidays were aimed at future well-being, gaining health and happiness for children, fourthly, the ceremonies performed the function of a complex sacred transition to the holiday in honor of Merem through cleansing by fasting and performing special songs, and finally, culminating and the main one is the rite in honor of the Great Mother of God Mary, which ended the mythological year in honor of the goddess with the Thagapha rite and during which songs-appeals to the goddess were sung.

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