

“Stepsons of the Urals”: The Turkic-Finnish incorporation in the culture of the Bessermans

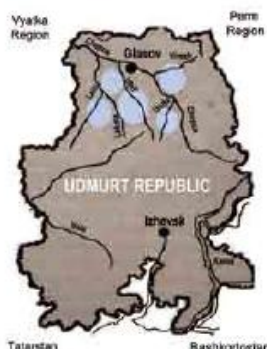
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1. The genesis of the Ural Bessermans is still undiscovered. The Bessermans live on the territory of the Udmurt Republic on the coast of the Rivers Uda, Vych, Ubit, Lelma, Lema and Moysa (III. 1). The total population of Bessermans is about 5000 inhabitants (census 2002). Their language is Udmurt (dialect). There are no divisions on family groups—vorshudes (acpyydes). The self-given name, an Arabian form of the reference to Allah (in pagan prayers), this all means that the Bessermans had contacts with or even a direct origin from Moslems. In several settlements, Tatars use such cultural traditions of the Bessermans as holy groves and family objects of worship.¹ The ornate shoulder-belt (kavkaz) looks like the Tatar itu (juz) (III. 2). It is an abundant item in Iranian culture.² Anthropologically, the Bessermans are close to Hungarians. There are a lot of similarities with the assembly of Besserman clothes of the 18th–19th centuries and the architecture of Middle Asia. Only here among the whole Ural-Volga region we can find trousers erz (pete) with a “narrow step”, a feature common for Indo-Tibetan culture. They widely occur on the territory of Central Asia.³ Janchik (janchik)—is a handbag in the middle part of a suit; it undoubtedly relates to Iranian and Central Asian (Horoemic and Sogdian) traditions⁴ (III. 3). Headdresses in the form of tsak (maksu) and kashku (kashku) are similar to Chuvashian and express the idea of an image of the world, as for example the yurta (III. 4). Weaving patterns are similar to the art of a fur mosaic, embroidery and block-back ornaments of Ugras culture.⁵
2. The riddles of Besserman culture and art have no ethnographical answer. The solution should take into account the following factors:

¹ Popov 2004: 305.
² Aleksey and Aleksey 1983: 144–155.
³ Baitov 1951.
⁴ Koshayev 1999.
⁵ Koshayev 1975: 114–141, Ivanov 1965.

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III. 1. Bessermans live on the territory of the Udmurt Republic on the coast of the Rivers Uda, Vych, Ubit, Lelma, Lema.



III. 2. Ornate shoulder-belt (kavkaz) looks like Tatar itu (juz).

III. 3. Janchik (janchik) is a handbag in the middle part of a suit, and it undoubtedly relates to Iranian and Central Asian traditions.

- The Bessermans make up an individual nation. They have psychologically independent behaviour.
 - The confessional tradition is of a secondary nature against the culture itself.
 - The culture of Bessermans shows how to solve the problem of family and civilization.
 - The incorporation process deals with both family (East-Finnish) and National-Confessional (Turkic) traditions.
3. The conflict of family and civilizational values in Russia is a so-called “delayed problem” since the 20s–30s of the 20th century. Its nature is in eliminating national and transcendental identity. In those years, Russian ethnic groups experienced the destruction of archaic myth, ritual and ceremony under the conditions of the glossing over of individual beginnings in national cultures.⁶ The vanishing of the Bessermans as a nation illustrates this process. The young intelligentsia carried a new spiritual experience. It confronts the ideology based on a strict reduction of integrity. The intelligentsia raised questions dangerous to the ruling class. That led to mass deportations and in some cases to physical elimination of the national elite. This process took place within the boards of industrialization and collectivization. It is a feature of intelligence to be able to ask “non-trivial questions”. The aim of this process was to close down the archaic consciousness of people and to replace “archaic myth” with a “communist” sensibility.

⁶ Vesilov and Shibanov 1994: 74.
⁷ Vesilov and Shibanov 1994: 74.

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4. Perspectives of solving the problem between family and civilization can be demonstrated by the example of the cultural consciousness of the Bessermans. “Ethnosoundtrack” (EST) is supposed to be the basis for this demonstration. This term was proposed by A. G. Krasnikov ethnic group. **Nation** + sound eng. **Tone** + track eng. **Footstep**. The culture of the ethnosoundtrack is a heritage of a number of cultures in one hand, where the polyphony of cultural experience is expressed by the melody of one language in a mono-consciousness.⁸

The structure of EST can be represented in the following way:

- a) Linguistic field: comparison of family and civilizational axiomatic features of a culture.
- b) Visual and sound field: discovering spiritually sensitive but not physically sensitive priorities of a culture.
- c) Myth as an artificial evolution of the image of the world. World archetypes of the Creation: the birth of the world from original archetypes of its making. “Cultural archetypes” and the structure of a genesis in “I-consciousness” and “We-consciousness”. Consciousness in a structure of Finnish-Turkic incorporation: pre-categorical, categorical, instrumental, analytical.
- d) Field of psychological interpolation: “culture of shame”—as the essence of a behaviour exponent, usual for family systems.

⁸ Krasnikov and Krasnikova 2008: 4.
⁹ Material on the research into these phenomena is stated in the work Japan 1988.

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Fig. 4. Headaddresses in the form of (a) tak (maxos) and (b) kashpu (kasny) are similar to Chuvashian and express the idea of an image of the world, as for example (c) yusta

e) Connection of the last with the "oblivion of a sin"—is breaking the laws of God. According to the Old Testament, the sin of parents falls on future generations. Islam with respect to Judaism is linearly continued. Getting success through passing calendar rituals (Moslem) is not a prior norm for Besesermans. Their life is based on a strict codex of prohibitions.

So the EST category is supposed to study the conflict of family and civilization by absorption and working up cultural sources.

EST studies the development of the archaic model of the world into an anthropocentric one.

EST art is based on a professional basis as the main method of art creation. The main problem here is the cooperation of subject, association, essence and symbol. The author should

be fluent in languages and notions of world culture. The viewer, reader and listener should be ready for introspection,¹⁰ and both sides for introjections.¹¹

EST work is to remove all contradictions in the problem of ethnic and national art.

EST synthesizes syncretic and logical categories based on the experience of verbal consciousness and the formation of written culture.¹² It helps to unify notions of the "ethnic-family" and the "national-social".

- The human being is able to obtain and transform world archetypes.
- Ethnic humans live and think as national representatives and can comprehend their world embodiment. The aim of obtaining is beyond his will, but its function is to preserve life.
- This cultural evolution can be represented in a semiotic way: semantics is the essence of ethnic reserve of word, image, culture; syntax is a structure of processes of existence creation; pragmatics is a function, aimed at circulation.

This approach allows us to form up new cultural contexts. The study of the Besesermans' culture will promote this process.

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¹⁰ Introspection—from the Latin verb *introspectare*—to look inside—psychology: studying of psychological processes (conscious, thinking through experiencing these processes).

¹¹ Introjections—from Latin word *intro* (inside) + *iacere* (put)—inclusion of thoughts, motives, aims of other people.

¹² It is natural for written culture to have elements of scientific concepts of the world within the realms of religion and later—scientific knowledge.