

THE FINANCIAL-ECONOMICAL BASIS OF THE GEORGIAN CUSTOMS

(Based on the ethnographic material)

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Latest material gained from the Georgian communities and the observation on Georgian customs makes it clear that personal relationship, personal features and also social rights and condition have undergone some kind of changes.

The ideological and theoretical basis to conduct agricultural activities in Georgia was the Holy Scripture and how to lead the agricultural work was based on it. The latest was considered to be the science about the honest work, to lead the household and in general, the national thrift (economy) with the own strength, to work with love and support on the basis of Christian doctrine. Though, monotheistic Christianity was preceded by the period of faith to influence on nature by the magic way, when people with the help of magic rituals twice a year in spring and autumn perform religious ceremonies and spells to achieve their goals. In the mountainous regions of Georgia there are still some rituals to protect crops and increase productivity.

Among such kind of rituals we can name Thursday of Easter week (Holy Thursday) ritual in Svaneti – “tanpatsaash”, that protects the family from the evil eye, it serves to clean and renew the family. Preparations for harvesting started immediately from the early spring. In Svaneti, “lamproba” was celebrated in February on a fixed day. “Lampari” it was a bunch of a birch tree. The first “Luminari” (lampari) was done in the name of St. Mary the guardian deity of crop capacity, the second one in the name of St. George to protect the man’s power and the third one to please the year to be peaceful and plentiful. For this holiday a special pie “lemzirebi” are baked.

In Samegrelo (Megrelia), in order to overcome the illness and ailment and a healthy man to have the opportunity of work and have a lot of harvest, the did not use to work on the land on Saturdays; The prayer “Gimatua” performed in October for the name of the God of places in Samegrelo and “Kolokroba” performed in the upper part of Racha had the same sense.

The similar holiday was and is still celebrated in the mountainous part of Achara “Shuamtoba”: This is the middle period of the holiday. On this day we thank God that our life in is fruitful, nature helps us and we have plenty of meat and products. We’ll continue to pray to have the abundant future. Rituals like this are known throughout Georgia.

The same can be said about the faith of the full moon phase. As the residents of Okriba, the province in Imereti, say: “I don’t know exactly, but according to the observation everything- sowing, harvesting, vintage, keeping products for winter – should be done during the full moon phase not to be spoilt and to be kept throughout the winter. Timber should be cut during the old moon phase to endure and not to be replaced soon. The wedding ceremony also took place during this period to have the good descendants.

Thus, our ancestors knew (though they could not explain), that there exists to be ‘desired’ and ‘undesirable’ periods in agriculture and it was vital to follow them. It also indicates that there is some kind of divine power of dependence and obedience, and an individual can’t neglect everything and everything is from God. The activities liked by God are in return for guarantee.

It is known that in all parts of Georgia except Khevsureti existed big families. It was due to the natural-geographic conditions of the farm. “Big farm needs a lot of manpower. Well kept farm was the basis of a good life and income.” This type of families were till the late period of the XIXth century even in those regions where the residents by converted

into Moslems force were and were exiled to the Moslem republics of the Soviet union.

Unmarried woman in the family had her share of the land. If she got married not far from the family her share was given or the new land was bought for her. These kind of big families were acceptable for Georgians, as the taxes were very hard for them to pay.

There no longer exists foreman (khevisberi). Though, material gain in Lashkheti proves that there exists a group of 3-4 men and they deal with the problems of community. They solve the problems of the village. When the government funded the village, they give instructions how to spend it. If the officials do not obey them then the whole community opposes. Thus, this is actually a form of local self-government, which is responsible for local needs; this institution serves as the board’s representative (called the trustee) function. It is worth noting that in the last years the government carried out State Rural Support Program. The program in its essence implies the various needs of the local population and society’s involvement to solve them. The research of the work of the given institution has proved that like the rest of Georgia, a lot of customs and rituals have economical and financial basis. With the committee’s decision a person is helped in a range of cases for example to organize funeral.

In the mountainous part of Georgia there still exists territorial – neighboring Community and it has nothing in common with the primitive society. The union of villages and families had a foreman elected by the members of community distinguished from others by his age and intelligence, fairness and impartiality, was tradition protector and devoted to Georgian language. At the community meetings in Svaneti together with the foreman the issues of the community were discussed: the strategy of life, the issues of borders, churches, building the roads, legal points and the forms of punishment: “There was respect and esteem. One knew that every decision was for your benefit.” Every point, either simple or difficult was discussed by the local judge-mediator. They were chosen from the both sides. “Before making any decision they begged God for help in making the right verdict. The side, pleaded guilty, had to pay the victim the stated charge. It did not mean the full compensation, but the victim’s financial condition was improved and he obeyed the verdict.” The harvested crops in the mountainous part of Georgia was little and not enough. So “to create better living conditions, to respect family and guests” the residents of mountain (people from Svaneti and Racha-lechkumi) while finishing the sowing and other agricultural works they used to go outside to work somewhere else (it is said that “A man from Svaneti in a good physical form was worth more than any other”). Main interest of the employer was to have physically strong and efficient employees, but the motivation of the employee was the financial income. Because of the changeable weather it was necessary to harvest crops in time. It was the reason of the spread working cooperative method – Nadi. As the working market was not developed the best way out was “exchange” – one of the ways to increase the working productivity and efficiency,

Payment on account, which needed to be paid time by time. The development of tourism should be paid attention in every region of Georgia, though we think that changing the historical exterior and mixing modern technologies in it won’t be successful. We think that all the discussed issues from our point of view will help us to analyse agricultural and economic conditions of ethnos, problem in the past and nowadays, evaluate the effect of economy on economic conditions and customs and rituals