

# THEORY AND HISTORY OF CULTURE



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Original article



## Linguomental Complex of Cossack Nomadism: a Review of Nomadic Culture in the Songs of the Cossacks of Stavropol and Kuban in the Late 19th Century

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### Abstract

**Introduction.** The aim of the article is to analyze the peculiarities of the influence of the lifestyle culture of the Stavropol and Kuban communities on the transformation of the linguomental complex of the Cossacks in the late 19th century.

**Materials and methods.** Functional, structural, stylistic and comparative method, built on the combination of methods of linguistics and historical science within the framework of diachronic approach were used.

**Results.** The study analyzes the problem of mosaic of Kuban communities and small part of representatives of the first Cossack communities of Stavropol in the formation of a special linguistic culture and way of thinking, as well as the direct relationship of complementarity and linguomental complex of the Cossacks on the example of song traditions.

**Discussion and conclusion.** The song and ritual traits and folklore of the group under study were imbued with a semi-vagabond lifestyle and military everyday life, which influenced the craving in the songs for the “good old time”. This hypersymbolism replaced the original cultural code, according to which the Cossack communities existed until the settlement of the territory of Stavropol region. The prospect of further research on this topic is expressed in the potential of this study both linguistically and diachronically: most of the ethnic systems of the peoples of the Caucasus coincide with their linguistic communities, which makes diachronic analysis much easier for the linguist.

**Keywords:** poetry, folklore, myth, nomadism, world picture, Kuban, Stavropol region

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Научная статья

## Лингвоментальный комплекс казачьего номадизма: обзор номадической культуры в песнях казаков Ставрополя и Кубани в конце XIX в.

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### Аннотация

**Введение.** Цель статьи – анализ особенностей влияния культуры образа жизни сообществ Ставрополя и Кубани на трансформацию лингвоментального комплекса казаков в конце XIX в.

**Материалы и методы.** Использованы функциональный, структурный, стилистический и сравнительный метод, построенные на сочетании методов лингвистики и исторической науки в рамках диахронического подхода.

**Результаты исследования.** В ходе исследования анализируется проблема мозаичность сообществ кубанцев и малой части представителей первых казачьих общин Ставрополя при формировании особой языковой культуры и образа мышления, а также прямая взаимосвязь комплиментарности и лингвоментального комплекса казаков на примере песенных традиций.

**Обсуждение и заключение.** Песенно-обрядовая черта и фольклор исследуемой группы были проникнуты полубродячим образом жизни и военной повседневностью, что повлияло на тягу в песнях к «старому доброму времени». Данный гиперсимволизм заменил исходный культурный код, по которому казацкие сообщества существовали вплоть до заселения территории Ставропольской губернии. Перспектива дальнейших исследований по данной тематике выражена в потенциале данного исследования как в лингвистическом, так и диахроническом направлении: большая часть этнических систем народов Кавказа совпадают с их языковыми общностями, что заметно облегчает диахронный анализ для лингвиста.

**Ключевые слова:** поэзия, фольклор, миф, номадизм, картина мира, Кубань, Ставрополье

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**Introduction.** The linguoamental complex in linguistics is usually referred to the established linguistic and song traditions reflecting the picture of the world of certain peoples. The main representative of this direction P. Werth believed that in the case of linguistic communities living in frontier conditions, the researcher should pay attention to: 1) actualism: everyday activities of the community; 2) natural-geographical determinism; 3) peculiarities of mythopoetry and rhizome (a set of traditions conditioned by the nature of life of the community in *unus mundus*) [14, p. 114].

Initially, the nomadic actualism of Kuban Cossacks was formed within the framework of military everyday life in the Kuban Cossack army. The various settlements of the Kubans, even before the separation of the Kuban region from the Stavropol province, were governed by koshev and kuren atamans, and then by nakaznye, who were appointed by the imperial court. After the Kuban region was divided into administrative units – departments, they were headed by departmental atamans appointed by the nakaznoy. It can be said that the Cossack administration was formed under the influence of a kind of “chiefdom”, the authority of the ataman, whose image actualized the mythopoetics of everyday life and religious concepts peculiar to Orthodox culture.

**Materials and methods.** The study of these facts and phenomena of everyday life can be based on the methods of linguistics, historical science and cultural studies. In particular, we should emphasize the introspective method, the oppositional method and the method of component analysis, which are most important in the framework of natural-geographical determinism. In this case, the following should be mentioned: the Kuban Cossacks were characterized by the riverine feature of housing culture, although mythopoetics and peculiarities of nomadic behavioral stereotypes suggest the formation of settlements near lakes, streams, swamps, estuaries and some other types of water bodies, including clusters of deep ponds. On the other hand, the tributaries of the Kuban, swampy rivers and old rivers that dry up in summer can be called with certainty a factor of mixed lifestyle culture, both nomadic and Georgievsky. This is evidenced by the fact that initially many Cossack settlements of the Wild Field during the genesis of proto-Cossack communities settled both near rivers and lakes. In the third quarter of the 14th – early 15th century, the housing culture of the Cossacks was conditioned by the need to keep a huge number of livestock and the importance of the development of Cossack koshas in territories where there might not be rivers, but there were many lakes or a long old river [13].

The extraction of drinking water in Kuban in the 19th century had common features with the way the communities of the Wild Field extracted water after settling near rivers and lakes. The main way of obtaining drinking water was purification through sand and gravel (several holes were made in the container, it was covered with a cloth and two layers of fine gravel and sand were poured on top, fixing the container on a branch and placing another large container, so that the untreated water overflowed over the edge and did not get into the inlet). The second method was filtration in a pit under the reservoir, what in modern times is called “earthen pump”. For this purpose, a pit was dug below the water level near an existing pond with untreated water, and soon soil-filtered water accumulated in this pit. Cossacks collected drinking water through woolen nets, trying not to lift mud and sand from the bottom at the same time [7].

Water collection was an important part of leisure, sometimes – a way of its saturation and expansion of social space, creating a positive emotional background: “A Cossack went with a sieve to the water in the wake of the boy” [3, p. 40]. There were other ways. For example: by driving wooden pegs into the ground, Cossacks stretched a processed skin of a large animal or a large piece of cloth, creating a construction like a modern tent. Thus, rainwater flowed into the tent. If there was a forest in the neighborhood of the settlement, it was possible to wrap a soft cloth around the shins, collecting dew, or to put a large bag on a branch with leaves, tightly tying it and getting condensed liquid [3, p. 406].

These methods did not cease to be relevant in the 19th century, although the proximity to the Black and Azov seas made the process of water extraction much easier, making more primitive methods irrelevant. On the other hand, Cossacks with a lower than average level of wealth, who could not buy drinking water, regularly used these methods of water extraction, which were more typical of nomadic culture, as other methods were more widespread among agriculturalists.

One way or another, hydrography and sacralization of water resources played a huge role in the vital aspect, in the formation of primary cultural traits, socio-economic relations between Cossack communities and actualized the adoption of nomadic actualism at the level of collective unconsciousness. The external natural-graphic and morphological characteristics of rivers and reservoirs contributed to the emergence of special needs in myth-making and the creation of their own, unique song traditions [4, p. 7].

**Results.** Geographical concepts and value attractors of “freedom” and “will” were not closely related, but were quite relevant in family life and household motives. The interior decoration in the 19th century was quite peculiar to the nature of nomadics, although it underwent significant changes under the influence of Orthodox culture [4, p. 9].

In the framework of ethnolinguistics we can give such an example: the perception of the concept “fire” and the attitude to “fire” did not go beyond the conceptualization of the fire-hearth in *unus mundus*. In the form of a denotation fire personified family comfort and devotion to faith (in the broadest sense), and in the form of a positive connotation it was identified with a reliable dwelling and confidence in the future. Another example is related to the denotation and connotation of “river”: the functions of a cultural concept transferred from one word to another in the form of a metaphor, thus revealing the value basis of the original code [5].

The peculiarities of the Cossacks’ thinking and world picture, the reflection of nature on the linguistic consciousness can be traced in folklore. Here is an excerpt from the song tradition of the early 19th century:

Головы не преклоняешь,  
Конь ты мой ретивый,  
С седоком как вихорь,  
Как вихорь ты летаешь,  
Увези меня домой,  
На родной-то стороне  
Всяк уютней и спокойней  
Ой, на родной-то стороне...  
Вот он дом, за чистым полем,  
Весь пылает и сияет,  
За семейным очагом  
Сядем, вспомним о былом  
О Рассеюшке споем,  
Баско светит солнце,  
Баско льется и река за склоном,  
Пусть прольется песня следом...  
[9, с. 113]

The residential feature of nomadism of the Kuban Cossacks of the 19th century was closest to the nomadic culture of the Caucasian and Transcaucasian highlanders, and most of all resembled the actualism of neighboring tribes. In fact, the nomadic way of life of the Cossacks, nomads by nature, who had truly vast territories for settlement, but did not want to intensively cultivate the land, as they already had a large number of livestock, as well as spaces for grazing, resembled the way the nomadic tribes of Stavropol (Nogais, Kalmyks) organized life in the specially allocated for them “Territory of nomadic peoples” [8, p. 189].

For example, the Nogais received lands quite suitable for cultivation and development of arable skills, but stopped only at cattle breeding and small forms of horticulture. This was not enough for agricultural production to provide food for all families, so the Nogais were often forced to work for the Cossacks. And, it should be said that there was never any complementarity between the Cossacks and the Nogais, despite ethnic and linguistic differences. If the Nogais organized raids, it was suppressed with less aggression and pressure on the local population. Nogais preferred plains, steppes and semi-steppes, had experience of living on meadows, and therefore often cooperated with Cossacks in organizing such trades as meadow and forestry. Dangerous neighbors and the negative experience of resettlement policy led to the taboo of sedentary housing culture among the Nogai [8, p. 196].

The change feature in the songs of the Kuban Cossacks was due to the nature of stable social ties and the ease of conducting trade policy at different levels of community and social organization. The cultural integration of the Cossacks and the peasantry made it clear that the attitude of the two social groups to the acquisition of new social concepts related to status or prestige and social claims was diametrically opposed. Peasants never sought gain beyond necessity, beyond what could be a good for the family or the community. Men and trade in the utilitarian perspective of the Cossacks caused disputes and contradictions, while trade relations were expressed as a daily necessity and expanded according to personal gain and the need to obtain a new status [1].

Косари косять, витэр повивае,  
Видна удова з богачом розмовляє.  
Богачу – богачу, я тэбэ давно бачу,  
Нэ сватай моей дочки, бо коров нэ маю.  
В нейи коровы – то чорнийи бровы,  
В нэйи овэчки – ласкови словэчки...

[1, p. 117]

The Cossack way of life in the aspect of social relations and trade completely coincided with that of the Nogai. Even the Cossacks of Stavropol were closer to the Nogais in many domestic, family and cultural aspects, but not to the peasants; the only exceptions are the poorest stratum and the commoners, those who had lost the most significant cultural concepts.

Люлька моя пэньковая з вэчэра курылась,  
Поставыв я на польщю, впала та й розбылась.  
Люлька моя пэньковая, як тэбэ нажиты,  
Ой пиду я по базарю, по люльци тужиты.  
На базари дивка ловка пшоно продавала,  
Вона ж мини молодому люльку сторгувала...

[1, с. 270]

The economic feature of nomadism was a reflection of the differentiation of social strata of the Kuban region, which took place not only intensively, but also destructively: the way to achieve a new status, to satisfy their social needs and claims often led to the fact that the Cossacks “degraded” the idea of land as a genuine form of social and economic good [11, p. 9].

In the absence of the need to obtain rights to land plots, the Anomad Cossacks lost their sense of belonging to the cult of land and the cult of ancestors, at least at the level of collective unconsciousness [11, p. 3].

In the 19th century, as evidenced by some songs and collections of poems, the cult of ancestors in Kuban existed in a modified form, formalized and contradictory due to the infusion of religious concepts of Orthodox culture, which dictated the comparison of labor on the land with a heavy burden, a sin inherited from the ancestors. On the other hand, the most stable pagan, Arian traditions and complexes of beliefs, actualized by the settlement of the Old Believers, prescribed the perception of arable plots as gifts of the earth-feeder, and virgin lands as sacralized associates of the concept «land» in the mythopoetics of the Eastern Slavs. In conditions of extremely high yield of fertile strips of the Kuban lowland, the processes of sacralization and idealization can be called quite natural and justified. Diachronically, a change in the attitude to land among the Kuban Cossacks occurred only on January 28, 1918, when the Kuban People’s Republic was proclaimed [10].

And yet, the dichotomy between cattle breeding and farming did not allow the actualization of new axioforms, even taking into account the rich valeric basis laid by the principles of the Slavic worldview. The special cohesion and sense of belonging of the Kuban Cossacks are the factors that distanced them from farming and brought them closer to cattle breeding and fishing, those trades that were more suitable for the military everyday life and allowed to reveal agonism. If the peasants achieved high performance in agricultural production by collective labor, unhurried and measured, the Cossacks were dominated by a competitive spirit (who will graze the cattle earlier, who will catch more fish, etc.) [12, p. 74].

The Cossack circle respected military merits and trophies, this factor developed in the Cossacks individualism, the desire for independence. Cohesion was supported by agonism and did not harm the development of individual actor cultural traits [12, p. 95].

It will be easiest to reveal the agonism of the Cossacks of the Kuban region and Stavropol province on the example of the songs “Zazhurylys chornomortsi” and “From morning day to evening” [S utra den’ do vecheru] [1].

Зажурылысь чорноморци,  
Шо нигдэ прожиты,  
Найихала Московщина,  
Выганяе з хаты.  
Ой, годи вам, чорноморци,  
Худобу плодыты.  
Ой, час – пора вам, чорноморци,  
Йты на Кубань житы.  
Идутъ наши чорноморци  
Та й нэ оглядаються.  
Оглянутъся в ридный край –  
Слизьмы умываються...

[1, с. 39]

The first song was composed in Kuban, in the process of competition between the Kubans and the Black Sea people who moved to Kuban. Agonism here is actualized through a simple competition – who can herd more cattle in a short period of time (kub. bal. “thinness”). It is also an interesting fact that usually competitions between Cossacks were not supported by a dispute, as, for example, competitions between officers who settled along the Stavropol and Kuban regions in the early XX century [2].

The second song shows agonism between the Stavropol Cossacks of the village of Nogutsky in Alexandrovsky regions, a household song with lyrical elements actualizes an aggressive dispute, but, immediately after highlighting the negative connotation, the dispute in the author’s intension is immediately replaced by the concepts of laughter culture, and the motif of a dance song emerges:

С утра день до вечеру,  
Выпасали мы овец,  
Баско гордо, баско рьяно,  
Во село Ногутском.  
Ишо позаспорили  
Аж повздорили да,  
Кто больше выпасет,  
Тот и молодец,  
Ой, кто больше выпасет,  
Тот и молодец...  
[4, p. 62]

The military, heroic trait of nomadism is the main one when considering the nomadic culture of the Cossacks as a whole, but it is also the most controversial, as the specificity of the military everyday life of the Kuban and Stavropol Cossacks in relationship with the military mentality was conditioned by an external factor rather than an internal one. This fact can make the analysis of the heroic trait one-sided. However, if we connect the military mentality with the “business vein” inherent in the Kuban Cossacks in the early 18th century, then it becomes clearer the craving of the Kubans for military trophies, as well as the characteristic feature of military skills, originating not so much in bravery and self-denial, but in ingenuity and cunning (this may indicate the utilitarian perspective as such, which stands out significantly against the perspective of the Don group) [6, p. 3].

The family and household features of nomadism were distorted by the influence of Orthodox culture (as it was spread among the Cossacks). The influence of traditions, ritual part of ceremonies and cultural universals of the Don Cossacks noticeably transformed the nomadism of the Kubans, who separated from the unified ethno-cultural environment of the Cossacks. On the other hand, compared to the Stavropol Cossacks, the nomadism of family life still retained the nature of nomadism. Although, from the ratio of how many different Cossack and peasant groups influenced the formation of mentality and linguistic consciousness, the cultural basis of all Cossack communities and stanitsa of Stavropol region by the end of the 19th century, we should not be surprised that nomadic culture was not constantly reflected in family everyday life [6, p. 5].

At some point, the Cossacks-Stavropol even began to acquire syncretic elements of the complex of folk beliefs of the mountain tribes (but not those that could be classified as nomads); this hit hard the utilitarian perspective and nomadism in general. On the other hand, the influence of multiple social ties with the Nogais relatively saved the germinating rhizomes, even if the ripening fruits could end up being hybrid [7, p. 11].

Как во тереме, как у нас,  
Как во тереме высоком,  
Там столы стояли,  
Стол� новые – дубовые,  
Так ли у нагайца в хате  
Скатерти разостланы?  
Так ли бутылочки расставлены?  
Так ли стаканчики поставлены?  
О чем речь пойдет, о том не знаю,  
Ой, нагаец, мы затеем,  
Мы затеем жизнь степную!  
Опостылел дом родной,  
То-то я печалюсь и тоскую...  
[9, p. 103]

The Nogai, judging by their culture, language and way of life and thinking, retained a more «pure» nomadic nature than the Kuban and even more so the Stavropol Cossacks, but somehow their model of nomadism was completely



different, they were not ceased to be perceived as foreign cultural phenomena in the eyes of the entire Cossacks of the South Russian stanzas as a whole. At the same time, the homeostasis and hypersymbolism of some Nogai tribes interested the Cossacks rather than alarmed them.

L.A. Yakobi believed, that is why the linguist can assume that the neighborhood with the Nogais supported structural elements of nomadism, formal rhizomes in the songs of the Cossacks-Stavropolians, but did not develop the functions of nomadic culture in folklore, since both the traditions and customs of versification, and many songs were borrowed by the Cossack part of the population of Stavropol province either from the Kubans or the Black Sea people, and new folklore was created, as a rule, by former rich and prosperous peasants who had joined the Cossack class (this can be judged at least by linguistic indicators (lexemes, lexemes, morphemes, morphemes, allomorphs, concepts, discourses, syntagmas, etc.), inherent in the Kuban balachka or the colloquialism of the Stavropol Cossacks) [11, p. 4].

**Discussion and conclusion.** Thus, defining the linguoamental complex of the Cossacks-nomads, we can conclude that the consequence of the infusion of new linguistic dominants, ethnic and cultural idioforms into the surrounding territories was that the Kubans rejected the peasant life, way of life and thinking, resisted the penetration of Georgiev culture into the Cossack environment, despite the fact that they needed peasants as free, or at least cheap labor force. The contradictory policy of the chiefs and governors of the Kuban region only played into the hands of those wealthy families who opposed the settlement of non-Cossack classes on the territory of the Kuban. They believed that peasants should retain their role as farmers, and this applied primarily to non-natives, refugees and migrants.

The song and ritual trait is thus dual in many aspects: the folklore that developed in the linguistic space of Kuban and Stavropol during the period under study was permeated by both nomadic nature and Dahlia culture. Locus topicus is a line of expiration, and, undoubtedly, this problem deserves a separate and non-disciplinary study.

The linguoamental complex that we observe in Stavropol province is quite different: Cossacks accepted peasants relatively easily and even actively cooperated with them, providing support in their transition to the Cossack estate. In Stavropol at the end of the 19th century, special cultural, linguistic and song traditions began to emerge, which were characterized by the synthesis of the Cossacks' nomadic and the peasants' agricultural culture.

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