

## PERM AND OB-UGRIC RELATIONS IN TERMS OF FOLKLORE DATA

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**Abstract:** This article examines ethnocultural and ethnogenetic relations between the Komi, Khanty, and Mansi peoples in the recent historical past on the basis of folklore, ethnographic, and historical sources; assumptions are made as to the formation of some of the Khanty groups on the basis of Komi, Khanty, and Mansi components.

**Keywords:** *Asyka*, ethno-local group, Komi of the Vishera River, *mos'*, *Pam*, *pastar*, *por*, Yaz'va-Komi

### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEMATICS

The Permic and Ob-Ugric languages belong to different branches of the Uralic languages, but at the same time, the Komi and the Ob-Ugric peoples have strong kin and cultural relations that are much closer than those with the peoples of their own language groups (Zherebtsov 1982; Kyzlasov 1984; Napolskikh 1991, 1998; Konovalova 1999; Belavin 2000; Martynova & Pivneva 2001; Hekel 2001: 54, 59–62; Krachkovsky 2004; Napolskikh 2007, 2008; Kosarev 2008). The disproportion of lexical borrowings reflects the predominant influence of the Komi on the Ob-Ugric peoples, starting from the Late Middle Ages: in the Komi language, there are 25–30 words of Ob-Ugric origin, while in the Ob-Ugric languages, the number of borrowings from the Komi language amounts to 200–400 words. In the Ob-Ugric languages, there are even some sacral terms borrowed from the Permic (not Udmurt) dialects: Mansi *карт*, east-Khanty *кэрт* ‘sacrificial blood’ (< pre-Permic *гôрд* ‘blood’) or Ob-Ugric *Калтась*, *Камтась* (< pre-Permic \**Кылдысь-инь* ‘female deity of child-bearing, fertility, and fate’; \**кылдись* ‘the one who determines fate and gives birth’ + \**инь* ‘mother, wife, woman’ > Udm. *Му кылчин* ‘mother of the Earth’, *Кылдысин* ‘creator’) (Shutova 1996: 410–413; 2001; Napolskikh 2008; see also Kosarev 2008), and others.

The ancient Permiaks and Ugric peoples are also connected by common epic plots that emerged in the ‘age of the *bogatyr*s’<sup>1</sup> (Domokos 1980: 313–336), which, in the Ob-Ugric folklore, were incorporated into the context of mythological and epic texts about local and ancestral deities-patrons (dial. *туңх, љуңх, юңх*; Mansi *ōйка*, Khanty *укә*), while the Komi had their own series of stories about the local *bogatyr*-sorcerers (*тун; айка*). The early Christianization of Perm Vychegodskaya (the fourteenth century) and Great Perm (the sixteenth century) determined the predominantly Orthodox interpretation of the images of *tuns* ‘sorcerer’, as opposed to the baptizer Stephen of Perm, in the Komi-Zyrian folklore, which led to the desacralization of the images of *the guardians of places*, up to their identification with sorcerers-bandits robbing the vessels that drifted by (Rochev 1984; Rombandeeva 1993: 63, 77; Perevalova 2002: 49; 2004; Limerov 2008: 130–132).

The research of plots and motifs connected with the images of the Ob-Ugric peoples and the Komi described above brings to light the genesis of certain types of folklore texts, allows cultural links and relations between specific multi-ethnic groups to be constructed, and provides a general overview of the migrations of and relations between the peoples of the Cis-Urals, as a result of which individual ethno-local groups were formed.

## PARALLEL PLOTS AND CHARACTERS-MEDIATORS OF PERMIANS AND THE OB-UGRIC PEOPLES

In terms of folklore and genetic comparisons, the legends of the Komi-Zyrian *Йиркан*, Mansi *Пāст ойка*, and Khanty *Пастэр ики* are of particular interest. In those legends, the characters were chasing a blue doe (or a white elk cow), running to the Urals and back on their miracle skis so fast that the freshly baked bread they were keeping in their bosom did not even get cold. The pre-Ural myth about the *bogatyr* (a bear) having a cosmic hunt on a doe (an elk cow) was considered as a mythological justification for exogamous marriages between representatives of the two phratries, in the context of which the plot of the Komi-Permiak legend about *pam* (leader) *Kudym Osh* getting married to *Kostö*, the daughter of the Vogul prince *Asyka*, also unfolds (Limerov 2008: 132–134).

The northern Mansis and the northern Khanty date some of their surnames to the mythical ancestor *Pastēr iki* (*Пащар-укә, Пастыр ойка, Пāст ойка*), to whom they link the migration of the Ob-Ugric peoples. Researchers have drawn parallels between the mythical people *пашар ёх, моньщ-ар ёх*, literally ‘the people of Pechory, the people of songs and fairy tales’, which were living

at *Paschar* as ‘the Pechora River’ (As ‘the Great River’, ‘the Ob River’), and the people of the Mansi, who migrated from the European side of the Urals to the Central Siberian Cis-Urals and later into the lower reaches of the Ob River, where the Mansis built Paschera yurts (Khanty *Пастэр курт*, Mansi *Паумтор юрм*) and mixed with the Khanty (Rombandeeva 1993: 42–44). In the tradition of the northern Khanty, on the last day of the Bear Feast,<sup>2</sup> the spirit of the bear ‘is taken away behind the Stone<sup>3</sup> by the seven men- *paschar* to the *Paschar* River, which is like the white-water Ob’ (Uliashev 2011: 55). The origins of the Pastorovs Khanty that lived in Paschera yurts and Aspukhol yurts are linked to ‘the winged and the big-foot’ *bogatyr* that came from the upper reaches of the Ob. The fact that the Khanty from the lower reaches of the Ob River referred to them as *vadasi* ‘the dumb’ and *lev ohal* ‘Sosva Voguls’ is also indicative of the different ethnic origins of this family line. In addition to the Pastorovs, the Khanty from the lower reaches of the Ob River also recognize the Shuganovs, the Ilyins, and the Kormyakovs, who honour *Pastər iki* or *Hyn’ iki*, among the family line of *Pastər yoh* (Perevalova 2002: 48–49) and, as judged by variable identification of *Pastər iki* with the master of the lower world, as belonging to the *por* phratry.

According to the materials collected by Aleksandr Dunin-Gorkavich and Valery Chernetsov (Dunin-Gorkavich 1911; Chernetsov 1939: 25–26), the *bogatyr* ancestors of this family line, i.e., the Mansis, rode elks, while their descendants, the Sampil’talovs, who had migrated from the western Cis-Urals (the basins of the Lozva and Vogulka rivers) and settled at the estuary of the Leplya River at the mouth of the Sosva River, honoured *Лен-мум-ойка* embodied by a silver elk with golden eyes. The cult of the elk has also been preserved among the Khanty within the family line *Ас-пухлын-ёх* ‘people from the settlement at the Ob River’ (the Yeleskins, the Konkings, the Taragupa, the Kostins, and the Pas’marovs), originating from the Yelesins, who had inhabited the banks of the Lozva River, and who are referred to in different sources both as the Mansis and the Khanty. Their family deities include *Хорам ур нэ* ‘a beautiful forest woman’ or *Мис нэ* ‘a cow-girl’, embodied by an elk cow (Perevalova 2002: 51). This female representative of the forest spirits (*мис-ёх*) has a bright look (Kulemzin & Lukina 1973), and her clothes are green, red, and yellow, which is typical of the patrons of the *mos*’ phratry (Gemuev 1990: 67–68). A man that *Мис нэ* has sex with becomes lucky and rich,<sup>4</sup> but when she is visiting the house, there must not be any other women inside because otherwise she will be offended (Gondatti 1888: 8, 34).

The existence of the invariable pair of patrons in the shape of a ‘bear’ (*por*) and an ‘elk cow’ (*mos*) among the people of *pastər* is indicative of the fact that the migration to the lower reaches of the Ob River from the Northern Sosva and

Lyapin rivers was longstanding, and it took place not only among individual migrants or their families, but by very mature groups of the Khanty, which had a very strong Mansi component in their midst. Judging by the cessation of marriages between the Mansis and the Khanty living in the basin of the Sosva and the Lyapin rivers by the seventeenth century (Sokolova 1979: 120, 123; Perevalova 2002: 51–52), the formation of the independent group finished at the end of the sixteenth century, when *pastar yoh* became ‘the Ostyaks’ for the Mansis and ‘the Voguls’ for the Khanty. Such an exoidentification and folklore and historical data about ‘the former homeland’ allow us to assume that the origins of the *pastar yoh* are not only Ugric.

In this respect, the legends of the Komi-Permiaks about the marriage of the Chud *nah* (*pan*; *gentleman*) *Kudym Osh* to a daughter of the Vogul prince *Asyka* are interesting. This event is associated with the ‘golden age’ of the ancestors of the Permiaks (‘the *bogatyr* Chud’) subordinate to supreme leaders (*nah* ‘pan; gentleman’), one of which was *Kudym Osh* (< Komi-Permiac *Ku dyn Osh* ‘a bear from the Ku River’), born by the priestess of the deity *Voipel’* or *Siura-pelia* ‘big-horned and big-eared’.<sup>5</sup> The mother of *Kudym-Osh* named *Potös’* (< ?? Komi *potny* ‘to crack, to burst’) or *Pövsin* ‘one-eyed’ was so ugly that she could not seduce any single man, which is why she gave birth to a child from a bear (Klimov 1964; Ozhegova 1971: 15, 28, 29, 32; 1972). The worshipping of the Permians of *Voipel’ the dumbhead* is mentioned in historical documents (see Manuscript 1958: 257–271, and others). According to folklore materials, the Komi regarded him as the night guardian of people, the deity of the Moon, night, and the northern wind, and the patron of warriors (Nalimov 1903: 120–124; Ozhegova 1972; Uliashev 1999; Limerov 2008: 130–132). *Voipel’* sends a storm on his enemies, while *Kudym Osh*, who had released beaten enemies, is sent by the priestess ‘to smear the sacrificial animal with blood’ (*Peliut-iz* literally ‘*Peli’s* stone’) to redeem himself (Ozhegova 1972: 11–12).

Khanty *Em-vosh iki*, Mansi *Yalp-us oika* ‘sacred city’ (Komi *Vezhakory* (*vezha* ‘sacred’ + *kar* ‘city’), Khanty *Emyng vosh*, Mansi *Yalpyng us* ‘a man’ who lives at the confluence of the Gornaya, Malaya, and Togotskaya Ob, walks in the shape of a bear, has seven bear-like horses and is wearing a fur coat with bear claws. The northern Khanty honour him under the name of *Tyl’sch un sempa hon* ‘the tsar with eyes as large as the Moon’. In the perceptions of the Kazym Khanty, he appears in the shape of a fiery-red bear, rides a black horse, and is sacrificed in a black robe. According to them, he brought the bow and fire to people, and his tasks are to help sick people, keep souls in the Middle World, and assist the midwife-*Kaltasch* (Karapetova & Soloveva 2000: 203, 204). In myths, he fights in the lower world to save his wife, but he is only able to do that with the help of his younger brother (Khanty *Mir vantty he*, Mansi *Mir susne*

*hum* ‘a man observing the world’), a horseman on the bright horse (Startsev 1928; Kashlatova 2002: 57; Uspenskaia 2002: 39–45). Izmail Gemuev comes to the conclusion that the ‘heaven horseman’ (*Mir susne hum*) put the ‘horseman on the bear’ (*Yalp-us-oika*), the deity of the ancient Ural taiga settlement (*Yalp-us-oika*), on the back burner, but inside their phratries they fulfil similar functions of protecting people and maintaining morality (Gemuev 1990: 75, 86, 138, 220, 221; also see Bogordaeva 2004: 91–93).

The Komi *Voipel’* and ‘the bear from the Ku River’ are very close to the Khanty *Em-vosh iki* and Mansi *Yalp-us oika* in terms of their properties and functions (at least, typologically). *Voipel’* – the Moon – is the night guardian that gives (and takes away) children and sends stormy weather for the violation of social norms. *Kudym Osh* wears a beaver or sable fur coat both in winter and in summer and proves to be a person with a civilising mission, bringing iron, cereal, etc., to the Chud people; he sails to the Voguls in a black boat made from a black elm tree (*yrzha pu*) that is rare in the territories of Perm Krai, which is highlighted in the text (Ozhegova 1972: 11–12). In spite of the fact that the Komi did not have a phratry system (at least, at the time when historical records were made), the marriage proposal of the ‘bear-prince’ to a bride having an elk or a calf face is clearly based on the idea of the social order consisting of two parts. *Kudym Osh* has ‘bear origins’, while the awareness of the mother of the Vogul bride points out some kind of connection between her and the people of the *Asyka* prince.

*The cunning Potös’ spread rumours about the beautiful daughter of the Vogul prince who lives near the high mountains in the upper reaches of the Yazva River. She will bear a bogatyr child to the man who will marry her, which is her destiny. And Potös’ was doing her best in order that the rumour would reach Kudym Osh, saying that she had heard that herself from the people who were coming to the sanctuary. But the cunning Potös’ was lying: she knew that the daughter of the Vogul prince was a monster with an elk head and that many men were trying to court her, but none of them came back. The Vogul prince did not want the ill fame about his daughter to spread and killed all of the men who refused to marry her after they had seen her face. (Klimov 1964: 12)*

In the Komi-Zyrian legends about the hunter *Yirkap* (*Irkab*) a sorceress who wanted to get rid of the hero turned her daughter into a blue doe, who turned into a magpie near the *Sibyr-iz* ‘Siberia stone’, and then into a beautiful girl who asked the hero to marry her, but the *bogatyr* killed the girl and took the heart of the doe-girl to her mother (Rochev 1984). The Permian and the southern Zyrian son of a bear *Pelia* (*Peria*, *Pera*) was chasing the wood spirit *Vöris’ kul’*

(*Vörsa*) up to the Ural stone, then killed him and married his wife. The motif of a sorceress (options: a mother, a stepmother, a sister) sending the hero to death is not only common in epic legends with the plot of chasing a doe / an elk cow, but is also widespread in fairy-tale folklore.

The wild origins of the spouse of the main character are in accord with the nuptial-ritual idea of the magical uncleanness of the bride being a girl of an alien family line. The ritual beating of the bride with a withe or a lash occurs both in the Komi and in the Ob-Ugric folklore. In the Komi folklore the bride is beaten with an alder withe by some old male assistant, and only after creeping things leave her body does he hand her over to the groom. In Ob-Ugric folklore, *Em-vosh iki / Yalp-us oika* 'purifies' the wife of *As tyi iki / Oias oika* ('a man from the upper reaches of the Ob'). In the Permian text, the secret of the ugly mask of the bride, which marks her as belonging to an alien family line, is disclosed to *Kudym Osh* by a Vogul woman *Vayasi*, whose name, without any doubt, originates from the Ob-Ugric *wōj-aśə* 'animal father' (*wōj* 'aimal' + *aśə* 'father'), i.e., the parent and protector of animals.

In the folklore of the Ob-Ugric peoples, the wife of the master of the sacred city is procured by brothers from the lower world, a hostile country lying behind the Stone. In Komi folklore, the image of the Stone Mountains is also quite traditional, being the border between the family line of the main character and the family line of the bride, or as a place where her family line lives. Hence, Komi and Ob-Ugric folklore materials mutually duplicate each other, which allows an assumption to be made about the existence of marital relations, at least between the *epic* ancestors of the Komi and the Mansis.

## **DESIGNATION OF THE KOMI PEOPLE (*SARAN YOKH*) FROM *POR* TO *MOS*'**

Modern Ob-Ugric peoples are quite consistent in assigning the Zyrians (*saran*) to *mos*'. In the texts about the marriage of the bear-*bogatyr* to the elk cow-princess, the Voguls are clearly designated as *mos*', while the ancestors of the Permiaks (the *bogatyr* Chud) are designated as *por*. Consequently, it would be logical to assume that nuptial alliances were made between some Komi-Permiak and Ob-Ugric groups which had some kind of phratrial order. Taking into consideration the connection between the Christianization and the overgrowth of birches that is consistent in the folklore of the peoples of the north of Russia, as well as the fact that it is the golden birch that is the attribute of the Kaltas' and the Heaven Horseman, the guardians of the *mos*', the perceptions of the Komi of the *por* people can refer to the period of non-Christianized Permians living in the

contact area. Folklore identification of the eastern Permians, representatives of the 'bear phratry', is indicative of the historical existence of the group of the Komi isolated from the Dvina-Vym-Vycheгда (Perm Vycheгodskaya), Luza (Small Perm), and Kama (Great Perm) Komi, which was peripherally integrated into the Ugric cultural area that covers the left bank of the Kama River and the upper reaches of the Vycheгда, Pechora, and Ob rivers, the hydronyms of which contain the duplication of the names of tributaries that cannot be attributed to anything else but for the fact mentioned above: the rivers Vishera, Kosyu, Mylva, Sosva, etc. The descendants of this group are apparently the Cherdyn or Yazva Komi, whose language (even in terms of phonetics) is very different from the Zyrian and Permian dialects. Besides, the eastern 'Permiaks' are anthropologically closer to the Ural type, which has been preserved among the modern Mansis to the fullest extent possible.

The material that serves as a basis for making assumptions about the phraternal-nuptial relations between the Permians and the Ob-Ugric peoples in the Middle Ages provides the image of the Vogul prince *Asyka*, who combines the features of a mythological deity, an epic character, and a real historical figure. According to the legend, *Asyka* lives in the upper reaches of the Yazva River, which is a tributary of the Kama River. In accordance with the historical documents, the Pelym prince *Asyka*, together with the Permians and the people living on the banks of the Vyatka River, takes part in numerous incursions: in Perm (in 1455, when Bishop Pitirim of Perm was killed), Cherdyn (in 1481), etc. (Manuscript 1958: 261). In folklore and historical texts he is referred to as 'the Vogul prince', but his name is clearly of Khanty origin: 'Ob man, Ob master' < Khanty *As* 'Ob' + *iki* 'a man'.<sup>6</sup> In the Mansi vocalization, his name would sound like *Ояс ойка*. It is obvious that this name was not so much a proper name as indicative of territorial belonging and a high status, related to mythological succession from the seventh son of Thorum and Kaltas' (heavenly god and fertility goddess) – Khanty *As tyi iki* 'a man from the upper reaches of the Ob' (> *As iki*).

The mythical master of the upper reaches of the Ob River, who has many names (Khanty *Sanke* 'Light', *Ort* 'Guardian' > 'Prince', *Loven ho* 'horseman', Mansi *Luvsan hum* 'horseman', Khanty *Muv vertty he* 'a man walking around the world', *Mir vantty hu* 'a man protecting the world' and Mansi *Mir susne hum* 'a man protecting the world'), and keeps watch over the order in the world of people (Bogordaeva 2004: 187; Baulo 2007: 71–73). 'The heaven horseman' patronizes the *mos*' phratria. He is depicted as riding a white or a golden mare with eight wings, and more rarely as riding an elk cow. On the whole, the marriage of *Kudym Osh* to the daughter of *As iki* is quite logical in terms of mythology.

The image of Pan-sotnik, included in the Komi folklore series about Stephen of Perm as Pan, Pam, or Pama<sup>7</sup> and preserved in fairy tales as a situational

character who has the sacral knife *pan purt*, sparks as much interest. According to some texts, Pam was unable to oppose Christianization and colonization by Moscow, and he left for Siberia.

*And Pam said to the people: "One night and one day bury all of your belongings, your ornaments, and your jewellery so that foreigners will not find anything." And Pam also said: "Do not touch the sleazy one, let him live among us without knowing us, let him walk among us without seeing us, let him talk to us without hearing us. Do not touch him, because if you kill him, many more of the ones like him will follow." In one night and one day the people hid all of their riches, jewellery and ornaments, and buried them to wait for better days. And they left the Orts to guard their treasures. The time will come when the treasures come out by themselves. And Stephan did not find anything. He came to an empty place.*

*The peoples were the манси, манси, and манса. The манси and манси, they are like the Komi. And let us not talk about the манса at all, especially before the night falls. They were horrible people, inhuman. The say Pam left together with the Mansis when Christianity entrenched itself in the Komi Land. He was living somewhere beyond the Urals. And he is buried in Siberia.<sup>8</sup>*

The historical Pan-sotnik, who fulfilled the functions of a spiritual and a military leader among the Permiaks, made incursions on Ust-Vym (1380, 1384), Yarensk (1389), etc., almost one hundred years earlier than the historical *Asyka*. According to the Vym-Vychegda manuscript (Manuscript 1958: 260), in 1384, Pan was 'expelled from the territories of Perm from his kin and tribe' to Udora and Pinega, and in 1392, he laid siege to Ust-Vym with the Voguls. At the end of the fourteenth century, Pan-sotnik was forced to leave, taking with him 'a large share of the Permiaks and the Zyrians, who had lived in Great Perm and left their spacious lands on the western side of the Ural Mountains. He persuaded them to move to the harsh northern lands near the Ob River, to the lands where they are not different from the Kondyrs now, but are referred to as the Ostyaks alongside with them' (Georgi 1776: 66). At first, the migrants settled in the area of Bol'shoi Altym, from which thirty people fled from being christened by Metropolitan Philotheus Leschinsky behind Obdorsk, into the Vokhsarkovs yurts (today the village of Aksarka) (Georgi 1776: 67).

In the manuscript of 1380 (250–300 years before the emergence at the upper Vychegda of settlements with the Orthodox Komi population) it is mentioned that Pan lived at the right tributary of the Vychegda River in 'a place named Vishera' (Manuscript 1958: 258). Being a strategically important junction point that connects the upper reaches and the tributaries of the Vym, Vychegda, Izhma, Pechora (extending out behind the Urals through the Ilych River), and



Kama rivers (extending out behind the Urals through the Yazva River), the area of Vishera on the banks of the Vychegda River was the area of co-existence of the Komi and the Mansis.<sup>5</sup> The specific cultural features of the Vishera local group of the Komi-Zyrians living in the upper reaches of the Vychegda River have been preserved until now. The Vishera Komi are distinguished by the phenomenon that among them we can meet the carriers of Ural anthropological features (dark hair and irises, stockiness, eye shape) more often, which gives a reason for other peoples living in the upper reaches of the Vychegda River to jokingly call their neighbours *visersa iaranyas* ‘the Vishera Nenets’ and *s’öd vogil’yas* ‘the Black Mansis’.

The references to Pan-sotnik living simultaneously at the Vychegda River and in Great Perm, his power over the Permiaks and the Zyrians and, at the same time, his incursions on the towns near Great Perm and at the banks of the Vychegda River together with the Voguls allow us to make a number of assumptions. Firstly, the influence of Pan spread through the entire pre-Christian population inhabiting the territories between the Kama and the Vychegda Visheras (Komi *Viser*). Secondly, this Perm population interacted with the Voguls much more than with western and south-western Permians. Thirdly, a considerable part of the Vishera Permians was forced to move beyond the Urals together with the Voguls, under the pressure of Christian migrants (the inhabitants of the banks of the Vychegda, Dvina, and Vym rivers, the northern Russians).

The remaining ‘Visheras’ mixed with the western Komi, who were related to them in terms of language, and made the nucleus of the local eastern subgroups of the Komi-Zyrians and the Komi-Permiaks. In the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, the ‘Visheras’ who had moved to Siberia with Pan-sotnik, took part in the formation of the mixed group (the Mansis + the Khanty + the Komi), on the basis of which a separate subgroup of the northern Khanty was formed. Most probably it was also the reason for the abundance of ‘Permisms’ in the modern Ob-Ugric languages, except for the borrowings of later periods. The last tribute to the language of the ancestral home was, apparently, the name Kama that was given to a small tributary of the Konda River.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES**

In general, the comparative research of Permian and Ob-Ugric folklore, when compared with historical documents, gives a fairly clear idea that the Ob-Ugrians (apart from the Voguls-Mansis mentioned in the chronicles) did not constitute a monolithic ethnos in historical terms. This is also reflected by cultural and language differences between the northern and southern Mansis,

between the northern, eastern, and southern (assimilated to date) Khanty. It is enough to note a strong divergence between the territorial Khanty parlanges, very loosely referred to as ‘dialects’.

If we can speak of the modern Mansis as direct descendants of the Voguls, then the direct identification of the chronicle’s *Yugra* or even the *Ostyaks* with the ancestors of the modern Khanty, which is popular today, is a long stretch, since those generic names united many Samoyedic and Ugrian clans, being more geographical rather than ethnonymic terms. Representatives of very diverse peoples were involved in the formation of the modern Khanty, as evidenced by the names of individual clans: *Ur Sirn* (‘Nenets clan’), *Saran Sirn* (‘Zyrian clan’), *Pastar Yokh* (‘Pashcher/Pechora (?) people’), *Lev Okhal* (‘Sosva Voguls’), etc.

There is no doubt that representatives of the Komi people also took part in the formation of the modern Mansis and (at least, the northern) Khanty, although to varying degrees, as evidenced by a wide linguistic, folkloric, and historical material. Nevertheless, the question of the ethnic components and the ethnogenesis of the Ob-Ugrians remains open, which provides ample opportunities for future research.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The ‘heroic era’ of the peoples under consideration is aligned with the Christianization of the Komi; the colonization of the Cis-Urals and Trans-Urals; Permian and Vogul invasions into small towns on the banks of the Kama, Vycheгда, and Dvina rivers; the military campaigns of the Kurbsky princes ‘from the rivers Vym, Vycheгда, Sysola, Dvina’ against the princes of Yugorsk in 1483, 1499–1500, etc. The texts about *bogatyr*-elders (Komi *айка*, Khanty *ики, ойка*, Mansi *ойка*) date back to the thirteenth–sixteenth centuries (Beliaev 1852: 1–264; Rogov 1858; Tizengauzen 1884; Bakhrushin 1935; Zbrueva 1952; Manuscript 1958: 257–271; Novoseltsev 1965: 410–417; Levitsky 1978; Zherebtsov 1982; Sukhoguzov 1989: 160–163; Belikova 1996).

<sup>2</sup> A traditional complex of rituals dedicated to the bear.

<sup>3</sup> The Urals.

<sup>4</sup> The texts about the cohabitation of a hunter with a forest woman who brings luck in hunting and fishing are widespread among the Komi-Zyrians.

<sup>5</sup> An expanded linguistic-toponymical analysis and the textological analysis of the plots about the Komi-Permiak gentlemen-*bogatyrs* *Ku dyn Osh*, *Pera*, and *Kupra* (?? < *Ku* + *P(era)* ‘Pera from the Ku River’) could also lead to certain conclusions.

<sup>6</sup> The Komi origins of this word can also be assumed as an ill-conditioned and virtually impossible hypothesis: Komi *asyka* ‘belted, iron-sided’ < *asyk* ‘rim’, ‘girdle’, ‘ironwork’. The reason for that is the names of the younger Kondsky princes that are mentioned in the manuscript and are admittedly of the Komi origin: *Changyl* ‘upturned, cocked *задранный кверху* (about a nose, a shoe toe)’, *Lyab* ‘weak, sickly’ (Manuscript 1958: 262).

- <sup>7</sup> The plots about the confrontation and theological discussions of Stephen and Pan-sotnik are quite well analysed in the work of Pavel Limerov (2008); see also Druzhinin 1897.
- <sup>8</sup> Recorded by O. Uliashev in Syktyvkar in 1998 from Y. S. Kushmanov, born in the village of Chuhlom of Syktyvdinsky District of the Komi Republic in 1947 (field data collected by the author).
- <sup>9</sup> After the incursions, the Permians and the Voguls would most often leave upstream the Vychegda River, while after the incursion on Cherdyn, the captive Perm bishop Pitirim was killed at the Pomos River, at the right tributary of the Vychegda River.

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