SOME ISSUES OF MAPPING THE RELIGIOUS AND CULT SYSTEM OF ANCIENT ARMENIANS

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The mapping of historical and cultural heritage of any nation is important, particularly in modern geopolitical conditions, when information plays a leading role in civilization processes. It has long been necessary to map the spiritual culture of Armenians in order to represent it in the time and space continuum, with its types and stages of development.

One of the spheres of ancient Armenian spiritual culture is their religious and cult system, which is an integrated structure consisting of religious beliefs, pantheistic notions, myths, pantheons of gods and goddesses, the associated ceremonies, rituals, places of worship, etc. Throughout its formation this integrated structure has proceeded millenia in parallel with the formation of the ethnic society of the Armenians as a people, according to the influences of the processes of ethnogenesis and early ethnic interrelations, as well as the changes in political, social, economic and cultural history of Armenia.

The religious and cult system of ancient Armenians, having passed a development process of thousands of years, is distinguished by its diverse manifestations, and the need for its mapping has been long due. We have made several attempts, meanwhile at the present stage of new technologies when various methods of multi-layer mapping, localization and GPS fixing appear each year, it has become technically feasible.

The pre-Christian religion of the Armenians, as noted above, includes ancient beliefs, mythology, pantheons with places of worship. While mapping temples of deities, shrines and other sanctuaries, their temporal and spatial paradygms should be taken into consideration. In spatial terms, it covers the whole of Armenia – historical and modern, and in temporal terms – from the earliest times up to the adoption of Christianity. Moreover, the study of the ancient Armenian religious and cult system leads us to the conclusion that it should be divided into at least two huge stages: a/ ancient beliefs, which must be represented with the relevant cult places and sanctuaries; b/ pantheons, which

must be represented with gods and goddesses, the places of their worship, and other monuments of cult.

During several years we have made five maps that chronologically cover the pre-Christian religion of the Armenians with its stages of development, beginning with pantheistic beliefs up to deity cults at different stages of the pantheon. Data from ancient Sumer-Akkadian and Hittite ideographic, Urartian cuneiform inscriptions, materials from antique Greco-Roman, medieval Armenian historical literature and Armenian folklore, as well as from the field of ethnographic materials, collected by us in different regions of Armenia, have served as source bases for the maps.

Five maps are presented here, chronologically embracing the paganism of the Armenians in the stages of its development, from the earliest times to the adoption of Christianity.

A/ The first map, entitled "The Cult Centers of the Pre-Christian Deities in Historical Armenia", was published in 1991, in our monograph "The Pre-Christian Cults of Armenians", in the 18th volume of the series "Armenian Ethnography and Folklore" (Fig. 1). The map was made at the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography, for this monograph written on the basis of our Ph.D thesis. The map, as well as the text of the study, are in Russian.

Based on the materials studied in the monograph, places of worship and monuments of different periods of the ancient Armenian religion such as sacred mountains, stone vishap (dragon) stelas, etc. are localized on the map. They only partially reflect the beliefs of our distant ancestors who in different provinces and regions of historical Armenia worshiped mountains and gorges, lakes and rivers, springs, rocks, trees, etc., not all of which could be shown on one map. The data from ethnographic and folk materials, information from the works of many researchers, as well as our field materials collected during the ethnographic expeditions of the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography to Gegharkunik, Shirak and Lori regions of Armenia², served as the main source of materials on beliefs.

¹ **Вардумян Г.Д.** Дохристианские культы армян. Армянская этнография и фольклор /материалы и исследования/, 18, E., 1991, с. 59–161.

² For ethnographic and folk material and its study see: Ազգագրական հանդէս (խմբ. Ե. Լալայեան), գիրք 1–26, Շուշի-Թիֆլիս, 1896–1917: Էմինեան ազգագրական ժողովա-ծու, հի. Ա-Թ, Լազարեան ճեմարանի հրատ., 1901–1913: **Մրվանձտեանց Գ.**, Երկեր,

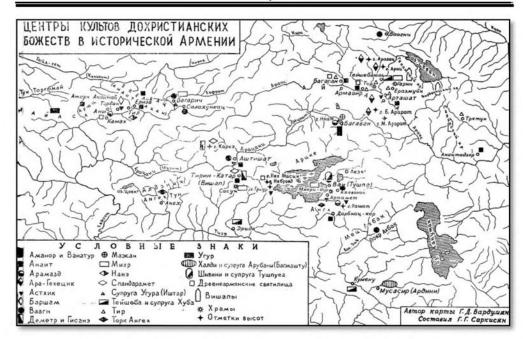


Fig. 1. The Cult Centers of the Pre-Christian Deities in Historical Armenia

The main material of this map includes the sanctuaries, temples of gods and goddesses, according to stages of development of the heathen pantheon. Thus, from the Hayasan pantheon (XV–XIII centuries BC), only two worship centers of the supreme couple are indicated on the map: the father god Ugur in the central city of Hayasa (of the country of Hayasa-Azzi), and the mother goddess, whose name is conveyed by Ishtar's ideogram, in Bagarich (the province of Higher Armenia). Information about these and other deities of the Hayasan pantheon (the cult centers of which are also noted in the inscription, but not reflected on our map) comes from Hittite sources, and these materials are mostly published.³ The main source is a political document – a treaty concluded between the king of the Hittite Empire and the ruler of Hayasa, in the oath part of which the deities of

hh. 1, 2, Ե., 1978, 1982։ **Ալիշան Ղ.**, Հին հառատք կամ հեթանոսական կրօնք հայոց, Վենետիկ, 1895։ **Մամուեսյան Խ.**, Հին Հայաստանի կուլտուրան, հհ. 1, 2, 3, Ե., 1931–1941։ **Աբեղյան Մ.**, Երկեր, հհ. Ա, Գ, Է, Ը, Ե., 1966–1985։ **Վարդումյան Գ.**, Դաշտային ազգագրական նյութեր՝ ԴԱՆ-1973, Գեղարքունիք։ ԴԱՆ-1974, Շիրակ։ ԴԱՆ-1976, Լոռի։

³ About the Hittite and Hayasan deities see: Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi (KUB), Berlin, 1921ff, X, 82. Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi (KBo), Leipzig/Berlin, 1923ff, IV, 13; **Герни О.** Хетты, М., 1987, с. 119.

both countries are mentioned. In our work we have also used the books already published in the period of carrying out our investigation.⁴

From the pantheon of Van Kingdom (IX–VI BC), the map shows the three supreme couples of gods and goddesses: Ḥaldi–Arubani/Bagmashtu, Teisheba–Huba, Shivini–Tushpuea. The data taken from the materials on the cuneiform inscription on the Van rock, called Mher's Door, were repeatedly published and investigated by several generations of Urartologists. Undoubtedly, one can draw up a separate map for the cult centers of the Van Kingdom, since the sources (not only Mher's Door, but also some others) provide rich material on the subject, and many sanctuaries, the nature and names of which are very diverse, are known, and it is not difficult to indicate them on the map. However, it would have been difficult to place both pre-Urartian and post-Urartian material on one map, as it would have created excessive clutter, therefore we have noted only the supreme triad.

On the map, the main place is occupied by the cult centers, temples of the gods and goddesses of the pan-Armenian pantheon of the Ervanduni-Artashesyan period (VI century BC – IV century AD), information about which has been taken from the works by antique Greco-Roman (Herodotus, Xenophontis, Strabonis) and medieval Armenian (Agatangelos, Movses Khorenatsi and others) historians.

⁴ The text and the study of the inscription see: **Forrer E.**, Hajasa-Azzi, Caucasica, 1931, № 9, 22–23. **Капанцян Г. А.** Хайаса – колыбель армян, Е., 1947, с. 84–99. **Մшрифри-ијий फ.**, ^Фрциппиййեր փпрршифифий ийпиййերпи йшфи.- ^ФРС, 1961, № 3–4, էջ 100: **Хачатрян В. Н.** Восточные провинции Хеттской империи, Е., 1971, с. 148. **Джаукян Г. Б.** Хайасский и его отношение к индоевропейским языкам, Е., 1964, с. 47–57, 84–95. **Эшhпифий Ф. Р.**, <шjng լեզվի ишипйпирлий. **Б**шфишфриф фийийшфишфрушй, **Б**., 1987, էջ 327–330: **Вардумян Г. Д.** Дохристианские культы армян, с. 67–68.

⁵ About the pantheon of the Kingdom of Van (Urartu) see: Lehmann-Haupt C. F., Corpus Inscriptionum Chaldicarum (CICH), Berlin – Leipzig, I, 1928; II, 1935. Ղափանցյան Q., Пършритр щишийтърнър, Б., 1940: Пиотровский Б. Б. Ванское царство (Урарту), М., 1959: Ътъјър, Урартская мифология,- Мифы народов мира (МНМ), т. 2, М., 1982, с. 549–550. Lang D. M., Armenia – Cradle of Civilization (3 ed.). London, 1980, p. 85–111. Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus in Remote and Classical Antiquity, Hittite, Hurrian, Urartian History and Culture. Urartian Inscriptions (rbedrosian.com/Classic/urartian.html, translated by A.H. Sayce). **Quhnւկյան Q. P.**, ≺шյпд լեզվի պшийлирэнъй. նшфишфишфи 2раши, Էջ 441–445: ≺йшушфушћ U., Վшնի թшфишфпригрушћ шфишифишфишфиров, Б., 1991: Вардумян Г. Д. Дохристианские культы армян, с. 76–86.

⁶ Herodotus, Historiarum libri IX, 1–3, Cambridge, Mass.-London, 1946–1950.
Xenophontis, Anabasis /transl. by C. L. Brownson/, Loeb Classical Library, 1922, rev. 1989.

About the deities such as Aramazd, Anahit, Astghik, Nane, Vahagn, Mihr, Tir, Amanor, Vanatur, Spandaramet, Barshamin, much has been written, as well.⁷

Designated on the map are also such centers of cults which represent a whole locality, as, for example, the main place of worship of Anahit in the province of Ekegheats (Akilisena), called 'Anahitakan' ('dedicated to Anahit') in ancient times, also the mountainous area of Athorn Anahtai ('Throne of Anahit'), the center of worship of Aramazd in Ani Kamakh, sacred places Ashtishat, Bagavan (Ditsavan), Van, Yerazmuyn and others. It should be noted, however, that not all the mythological characters of pre-Christian Armenia are reflected on this map. In particular, the eponyms of the Armenians – the ancestor gods of the Armenian people – Hayk and Aram, whose images are thoroughly examined in the study, are not marked on the map, while the range of their worship covered the entire country of Hayq-Armenia. Their absence on the map is, of course, a serious omission, the only reason for which is the fact that these mythological images are special, and to localize them on the map is difficult, as they represent the whole country of Armenia from the very beginning of its formation. For millennia, the borders of the country have changed, but the memory about the ancestor-patriarchs in the people lives to this day. On another map, made by us

Strabonis, Geographica /recogn. A. Meineke/, v. 1–2, Lipsiae, 1915–25. Ագաթանգեղայ Պատմութիւն Հայոց /աշխատութեամբ Գ. Տէր-Մկրտչեանի և Ս. Կանայեանցի/, Տփոլիս, 1909։ Մովսիսի Խորենացւոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց /քննական բնագիրը եւ ներածութիւնը Մ. Աբեղեանի եւ Ս. Հարութիւնեանի. նմանահանութիւն, լրացումները Ա. Բ. Սարգսեանի/, Տփոլիս, 1913, վերահրատ. Ե., 1991։ Եզնկայ վարդապետի Կողբացւոյ, Եղծ աղանդոց, Թիֆլիզ, 1914։ Ղազարայ Փարպեցւոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց /քննական բնագիրը Գ. Տեր-Մկրտչյանի և Ստ. Մալիսասյանցի/, Ե., 1982։ Փաւստոսի Քիւզանդացւոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց /բնագիրը Ք. Պատկանյանի, թարգմ. և ծանոթագրութ. Ստ. Մալիսասյանցի/, Ե., 1987։ Անանիա Շիրակացւոլ Տիեզերագիտութիւն եւ տօմար, Ե., 1940։

⁷ **Կոստանեանց Կ.**, Հայոց հեթանոսական կրоնը, Վաղարշապատ, 1879: **Ալիշան Ղ.**, Հին հաւատք կամ հեթանոսական կրоնք հայոց, Վենետիկ, 1895: **Эмин Н.О.** Исследования и статьи, Москва, 1896. **Gelzer H.**, Zur armenischen Gotterlehre, Leipzig, 1896. **Էմին Մ.**, Հայ հեթանոսական կրоնը, Վաղարշապատ, 1898: **Տաղաւարեան Ն.**, Հայոց հին կրоնները, Կ. Պոլիս, 1909: **Դուրեան Ե.**, Հայոց հին կրоնք կամ հայկական դիցաբանութիւնը, Երուսաղէմ, 1933: **Մելիք-Օհանջանյան Կ.**, Միթրա-Միհրը «Սաս-նա Ծռեր»-ի մեջ, Ե., 1946: **Մելիք-Փաշայան Կ.**, Անահիտ դիցուհու պաշտամունքը, Ե., 1963: **Ավդալբեզյան Թ.**, Միհրը հայոց մեջ.- Հայագիտական հետազոտություններ, Ե., 1969: **Աճառյան Հր.**, Հայերեն արմատական բառարան, հհ. 1–4, Ե., 1971–1979: **Арутюнян С.А.** Армянская мифология.- МНМ, т. 1, М., 1980, с. 104–106. **Вардумян Г.** Д. Дохристианские культы армян, с. 103–122.

some years later, we have partially filled this gap. The map was made in the early 1991s, and it satisfied the requirements of its time, but now lags behind the level of development of mapping and needs further rework in accordance with the modern methods of electronic digitization.

The second and the third maps – "Pagan beliefs in Armenia" and "Pagan religion. Pantheons", are in Armenian, and, as far as we know, represent the first attempt of its kind to map this subject. Those maps were produced in 1998, commissioned by the Faculty of Geography of Yerevan State University. The publication of the "Atlas of Armenian Population and Culture", has not yet been implemented. We have only the most basic, the so-called hand-written copies of the maps.

B/ The second map — "Pagan Beliefs in Armenia", reflects the oldest religious beliefs and related pantheistic notions, including the worship of mountains and caves, plants and animals, rivers and lakes, etc. (fig. 2). The map also shows the places of worship of the stone stelas — vishaps (dragons), petroglyphs with cult content, the sanctuaries and all sorts of shrines created by nature and man.



Fig. 2. Pagan Beliefs in Armenia

As in the case of the previous one, on this map too, the cartographic material is far from being complete, since it is impossible to mark all the beliefs of the numerous regions of all fifteen provinces of historical Armenia on one map.

The source of the map covers materials from ethnographic literature, in particular from "Azgagrakan Handes" («Uqquuqnuluulu huuluhu» / Ethnographic Journal"), as well as our field materials collected during the ethnographic expeditions in three regions of Armenia – Lori, Gegharkunik, Shirak.

C/ The third map – "Pagan Religion: Pantheons" was, as noted above, made in the same period and with the same purpose as the second one, and also remained unpublished.

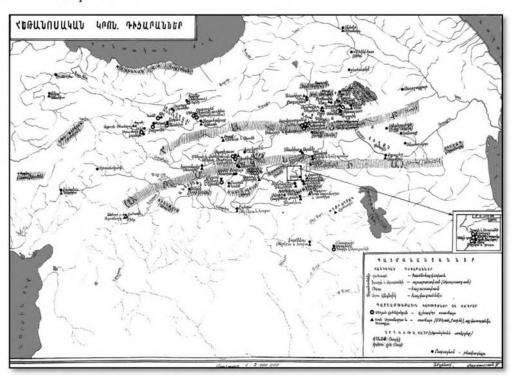


Fig. 3. Pagan Religion: Pantheons

This map, by its content, is similar to the first one – "The Cult Centers of the Pre-Christian Deities in Historical Armenia", made in Russian, but differs from it in the nature of presentation. While on the first map the places of worship are marked by the names of gods and goddesses of different stages of the pantheon, on the second one they are marked by groups denoting these stages: Haykids (III millennium BC), Hayasan (II millennium BC), Urartian (IX–VI centuries B.C.)

and pan-Armenian (VI century B.C. – IV century AD). Here, too, places of worship for different deities are designated by the names of gods or goddesses, for example, Anahit, Aramazd, etc., and sometimes by the names of the temples – the House of Aramazd and Astghik, the Vahevanian temple, etc. There are also areas and toponyms related to the cult and the theonym: the country of Hayq (Hayk') – as founded by Hayk Nahapet (Patriarch Hayk), Armenia – by Aram Nahapet (Patriarch Aram), Bagavan – as a cult center, lake Van – as a place associated with the worship of the Sun.

Materials for this map are taken from the same written and folklore sources as the first one. Both the previous second and this third map, when they are published, will need to be digitized in accordance with the modern mapping techniques.

D/ The fourth map – "Principales centros de culto de Armenia" ("The Main Centers of Cult in Armenia"), was published in 2010, in the book "History of the Armenian People", in Spanish, in the paragraph on the pagan religion of Armenians, in our authorship. It covers the main material of the previous maps, not counting beliefs, and just as the third one, represents the deities and their cult centers according to the stages of the development of the pantheon.

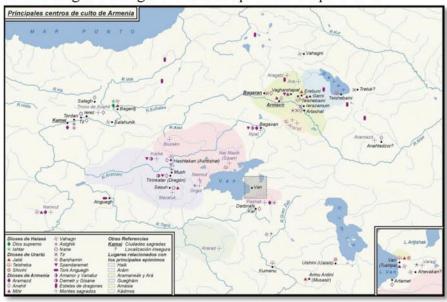


Fig. 4. The Main Centers of Cult in Armenia

⁸ Vardumyan G. D., La antigua religion y la mitologia.- Historia del pueblo Armenio, Barcelona, 2010, p. 435.

Mapping was carried out using electronic methods of digitization. The following groups of deities of the ancient Armenian pantheon are shown along with other sacred places and shrines:

a/ Hayasan deities: the supreme couple with their cult centers are represented; b/ Urartian deities: the supreme triad of Haldi, Teisheba and Shivini with their worship centers are shown; c/ Armenian deities are marked in the following composition: Aramazd, Anahit, Mihr, Vahagn, Astghik, Nane, Tir, Barshamin, Spandaramet, Tork Angegh, Amanor and Vanatur, Demeter and Guisane; d/ stone vishaps, sacred mountains, other holy places; e/ Armenian eponyms of the Haykids – Hayk, Aram, Aramaneak, Ara, Gegham, Amasia, Kadmos and associated places. On this map the information from later publications is used, embracing all the stages of ancient Armenian religion and cult – pantheistic beliefs, ancestor gods, Hayasan, Urartian, pan-Armenian pantheons, etc⁹.

E/ The fifth map is the Armenian version of the previous map, and it is entitled "The Centers of Worship in Heathen Armenia".

This map needs some further refinements: a/ the last group will be the first, because it represents the eponyms of Armenians – the patriarchs - grandparents of the nation, and will be called the Haykids, b/ The name of the "Armenian" group will be clarified, since it leaves room for the assumption that the other deities are not Armenian, meanwhile they represent different stages in the

⁹ **Ջահուկյան Գ.**. Լեցվական նոր տվյալներ հայոց նախաթրիստոնեական կրոնի և հավատարիքների մասին.- ՊԲՀ, 1992, № 1, էջ 22: Haas V., Geschichte der hethitischen Religion, Leiden, London-New York-Köln, 1994, S. 366–367, 539–625. Lhuhgjuli Um., Հայրենի առասպելներից ու վեպերից, Ե., 1995: Hacikyan A. J., Basmajian G., Franchuk E. S., Armenian Mythology, 2000,- books.google.am/books?=0814328156. Ioustphul L, Հայոց ազգային դիցարանը, Կլէնտէլլ, Կալիֆորնիա, ԱՄՆ, 2001։ **Պետրոսյան Մ.**, Դասերը և եռադասության դրսևորումները հին և վաղմիչնադարյան Հայաստանում, Ե., 2001, էջ 117, 121: **Պետրոսյան Ա.**, Հայկական դիցարանի հնագույն ակունքները.- ՊԲՀ, 2004, № 2, էջ 209, 222: **Արծրունի Գ.**, Դիցարան հայոց. Հանրագիտարանային բառարան, Ե., 2003: **Դավթյան Ա.**, Հայոց աստղային դիցաբանություն, Ե., 2004: **Ղազարյան Ո.,** Հայասա. քաղաքական և մշակութային պատմությունը, Ե., 2009, 102–116: **Armen** Asher, The Peoples of Ararat. 2009. **Լայայան Վ.**, Հայոզ դիզաբանական տոմարական համակարգը, Ե., 2007։ Idem, Հայ դիցաբանության և քրիստոնեության համեմատություն, Ե., 2009: Ananikian M., Armenian [Mythology].- Mythology of all Races, v. 7, N. Y., 1964. Idem, Armenian Mythology: Stories of Armenian Gods and Goddesses, Heroes and Heroines, Hells and Heavens, Folklore and Fairy Tales, Indo-European Publishing, 2010.

development of the Armenian pantheon. And, of course, some other refinements and additions will also be made.

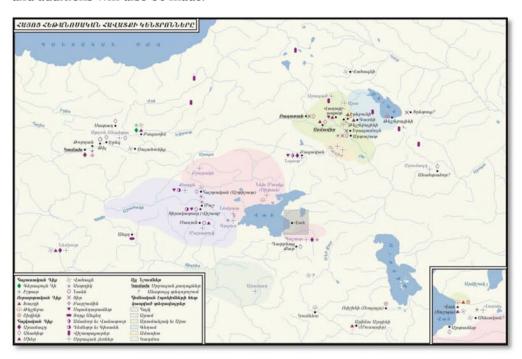


Fig. 5. The Centers of Worship in Heathen Armenia

These five maps, representing the first attempts in the mapping of the ancient Armenian religion and mythology, will serve as a basis for creating more advanced maps in the future. Modern electronic technologies make it possible to reflect many additional data from the existing material that have not been shown on the maps presented because of the impossibility of designating all of them on a single map. On the other hand, making an atlas of the maps which will present the stages of development of the ancient Armenian religion and mythology is a must today. All the above-mentioned shortcomings in our five maps must be corrected, especially those of technical nature. Some refinements of scientific nature will also be introduced, several groups of deities (such as the pantheons of Aratta and Nairi countries) whose cults have been studied in our research during recent years, will be added.

The newest technologies will allow us to solve certain problems in a new way, using the means and tools of digital mapping. The creation of new maps will fill the gap in the representation of the pre-Christian past of the Armenians,

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which in its turn will open new prospects to show the full temporary and spatial picture of the spiritual culture of the Armenians, its components and features, stages of development in history.

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ՎԱՐԴՈՒՄՅԱՆ Գ.

Ամփոփում

Հայոց նախաքրիստոնեական հավատը ներկայանում է բնապաշտական հավատալիքներով ու դիցարանով, աստվածների և աստվածուհիների տաճարներով, մեհյաններով, բագիններով և այլ պաշտամունքային վայրերով։

Մեր կազմած քարտեզներն ընդգրկում են հայոց հեթանոսությունն իր զարգացման փուլերով՝ վաղնջական շրջանից սկսած մինչև քրիստոնեության ընդունումը։ Առաջին քարտեզը կոչվում է «Նախաքրիստոնեական աստվածների պաշտամունքային կենտրոնները պատմական Հայաստանում» (ռուսերեն), երկրորդը՝ «Հայաստանի հեթանոսական հավատալիքները», երրորդը՝ «Հեթանոսական կրոն. դիցարաններ» (երկուսն էլ հայերեն), չորրորդը՝ «Պաշտամունքային գլխավոր կենտրոնները Հայաստանում» (իսպաներեն) և հինգերորդը՝ «Հայոց հեթանոսական հավատքի կենտրոնները» (հայերեն)։

Այս քարտեզները հին հայոց պաշտամունքը ներկայացնող առայժմ միակ փորձն են։ Հայոց հեթանոսության ժամանակակից եղանակներով քարտեզագրումն անհրաժեշտ է հոգևոր մշակույթի, դրա պատմության և բաղկացուցիչ տարրերի ուսումնասիրման, տարածական ու ժամանակային կտրվածքներով այն ամբողջականորեն ցույց տալու համար։

НЕКОТОРЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ КАРТОГРАФИРОВАНИЯ РЕЛИГИОЗНО-КУЛЬТОВОЙ СИСТЕМЫ ДРЕВНИХ АРМЯН

ВАРДУМЯН Г.

Резюме

Дохристианская религиозная система армян включает в себя древние пантеистические верования, пантеоны богов и богинь с их храмами, капищами, святилищами и иными местами поклонения.

Нами составлено пять карт, хронологически охватывающих язычество армян согласно этапам его развития (начиная с древнейших времен до принятия христианства). Первая карта называется «Центры культов дохристианских божеств в исторической Армении» (на рус. яз.), вторая – «Языческие верования армян», третья – «Языческая религия: пантеоны» (обе на арм. яз.), четвертая – «Основные центры культов в Армении» (на исп. яз.) и пятая – «Центры языческой веры армян» (на арм. яз.).

Эти карты, на сегодняшний день, единственные в своем роде. Картографирование дохристианской мифокультовой системы с использованием средств современных технологий имеет весьма важное значение, поскольку дает возможность представить духовную культуру древних армян во временном и пространственном континууме.