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Some aspects of traditional culture transformation among the population of the Border Region

Cultural traditions are a phenomenon historically formed in the development process of an ethno-social organism and transmitted from generation to generation, which is the basis of the norms of relations between people in all spheres of life.

In the post-Soviet period, two different trends emerged: on the one hand, at the first stage, against the background of the cataclysms occurred in the 1990s, revival of the elements of traditional culture, on the other hand, a rather intensive process of transforming cultural traditions, under the influence of a new geopolitical reality, globalization, radical changes in the political and social sphere, introduction of modern communication and other types of technologies, etc. In the border region economic, cultural and other impulses coming from the neighboring country are added to this.

The paper discusses current situation among the Azerbaijani population of Kakheti, bordering Azerbaijan. Analysis of the field material showed that transformation is observed in almost all spheres of traditional culture. Over the past hundred years, this population has even changed its name.

In the South Caucasus, until the 1930s, to designate the Muslim population of Turkic origin the term “Tatar” was used; which had the same meaning as Muslim. It, gradually, acquired the meaning of ethnicity (Azerbaijani, Turk, etc.) and has survived on the existential level to this day. However, most Azerbaijanis perceive it as offensive and believe that since the

presidency of Mikheil Saakashvili, due to the discriminatory nature of this term, its use is punishable by law.

In Kabala community (Lagodekhi municipality), the descendants of traditional herders have turned to farming, and now greenhouses (mainly horticulture) and viticulture are main source of income for family farms. The food system has also changed. Georgian influence is especially vividly felt in the rituals of funeral repast, wedding, and Sunyat (initiation, which is considered analogous to Christian baptism). Numerous ritual feasts have become a tradition and were not restricted even under the Covid-19 pandemic. Sometimes as many as 500-700 people attended the wedding. The family would pay the fine for breaking the ban and then the bride danced with the fine receipt in her hand. The events, unfolded in the post-Soviet period, had an impact on the economic life, religion, social and gender relations, upbringing of children, education system, funeral rites, etc.

The material presented in the paper shows the introduction of innovative elements into everyday life under the influence of certain factors and at the same time the ability of traditional culture systems to resist complete abolition of tradition or immediate and radical transformation. At the same time, the analysis of individual traditional culture systems from chronological perspective shows that these changes can be of fundamental importance.