



Comparative Analysis of Divination (*Ifá*) in Yorubaland and Russian Societies

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Abstract. Human's existence is prone to different forms of challenges, which could be physical, emotional or spiritual. Human beings have always looked for answers to the mysteries they encounter in their lives. There is archeological evidence that a need to know and deep spiritual seeking are universal human traits, and that some form of divination has been used since the earliest times, to support this quest. Divination is a way of exploring the unknown in order to elicit answers (that is, oracles) to questions beyond the range of ordinary human understanding. All known peoples on earth have practiced some form of divination. Divination can be done with things, such as consecrated or significant objects, bones, shells, stones, tea leaves, or cards. This paper adopts symbolic and interpretative approaches for its analysis. *Ifá* religion is orally transmitted from one generation to another rather than scriptural. The religion believes in a Supreme Being, divinities, spirits, veneration of ancestors, and mysterious powers that have to do with magic, and traditional medicine. The religion can be found through art, rituals and festivals, beliefs and customs, names of people and places, songs and dance, proverbs, and myths. Many studies of East Slavic paganism are based on written sources. These are scant and consist mainly of brief chronicle entries, sermons, and instructions, dating from the Christian era. East Slavic written sources give a list of probable deities, and, occasionally, their attributes and functions.

Keywords: Divination, Ifa, Paganism, Spirits, Deities.

1. Introduction

Human's existence is prone to different forms of challenges. These challenges could be physical, emotional or spiritual. There are situations with tightly knit issues which require specific solutions. In such circumstances, necessary medium of guide is solicited for, to guarantee taking the right step. (O'Brien, 2007) asserts that human beings have always looked for the

answers to life's great mysteries. There is archeological evidence that a need to know and deep spiritual seeking are universal human traits, and that some form of divination has been used since the earliest times, to support this quest. Divination is also a ritual and a tradition, constituting, an ongoing dialogue with more-than-human agents. Nature is traditionally fundamental to divination, whose indigenous metaphorical roots remit to natural phenomena such as stones, water, and animal behavior (Curry, 2010:114-115).

Divination is a way of exploring the unknown in order to elicit answers (that is, oracles) to questions beyond the range of ordinary human understanding. All known peoples on earth have practiced some form of divination (Loewe, et.al 1981; Peek, 1991). Questions about future events, past disasters whose causes cannot be explained, things unknown hidden from sight or removed in space, appropriate conduct in critical situations, including the healing of illness, determining the times and modes of religious worship, and making choices of persons for particular tasks—all these are common subjects of divinatory inquiry. The means of divination are many, including water and crystal gazing, the casting of lots or sortilege, the reading of natural omens, the taking of hallucinogenic drugs, dreaming, and the contemplation of mystic spirals, amulets, labyrinths, mandalas and thangkas (Purce, 1974; Grossinger, 1980:107-88; Ortiz de Montellano, 1990:144-50; Shrestha and Baker, 1997; Tedlock, 2001). In some instances, the diviner undergoes physical or psychological changes so as to be able to serve as a vehicle for divinatory power, while at other times, animals, objects, and events are themselves considered signs of an external superhuman power (Morales, 1995).

Divination can be done with *things*, such as consecrated or significant objects, bones, shells, stones, tea leaves, or cards. But it can also be carried out via *bodies*, cultivated through spirit mediumship and shamanism, in which there is a communicative

prerogative to the possessed: messages come from the mouths of mediums but do not originate with them (Brown, 1999).

1.1 Symbolic and Interpretative Approaches

Symbolic anthropology studies symbols and the processes such as myth and ritual, by which humans assign meanings to these symbols to address fundamental questions about human social life (Spencer, 1996:535). According to Clifford Geertz, (1973a:45) humans are in need of symbolic “sources of illumination” to orient themselves with respect to the system of meaning that is any particular culture. Victor Turner, (1967:36) on the other hand, states that symbols initiate social action and are “determinable influences inclining persons and groups to action”. Geertz’s position illustrates the interpretive approach to symbolic anthropology, while Turner’s illustrates the symbolic approach.

Symbolic anthropology views culture as an independent system of meaning deciphered by interpreting key symbols and rituals (Spencer, 1996:535). There are two major premises governing symbolic anthropology. The first is that “beliefs, however unintelligible, become comprehensible when understood as part of a cultural system of meaning” (Des Chene, 1996:1274). The second major premise is that actions are guided by interpretation, allowing symbolism to aid in interpreting conceptual as well as material activities. Traditionally, symbolic anthropology has focused on religion, cosmology, ritual activity, and expressive customs such as mythology and the performing arts. Symbolic anthropologists have also studied other forms of social organization such as kinship and political organization. Studying these types of social forms allows researchers to study the role of symbols in the everyday life of a group of people (Des Chene 1996:1274).

1.2 Divination and Modes of Consciousness

Everywhere it occurs, divination involves complementary modes of cognition associated with primary process and secondary process thinking or knowing (Fernandez, 1991; Kracke, 1992). Diviners are specialists who use the idea of moving from a boundless to a bounded realm of existence in their practice. Compared with their peers, diviners excel in insight, imagination, fluency in language, and knowledge of cultural traditions. During a divination, they construct usable knowledge from oracular messages. To do so, they link diverse domains of representational information and symbolism with

emotional or presentational experience. In representational symbolism, specific intentional reference is paramount, the medium of expression is relatively automatized, and inductive reality is paramount. In presentational symbolism, meaning emerges as a result of an experiential immersion in the expressive patterns of the symbolic medium, which is grasped intuitively (Hunt 1995, 41-2). By combining representational with presentational symbolism within a single narrative structure, diviners provide a surplus or superabundance of understanding for their clients. During the act of divination, individual creativity operates: jumbled ideas, metaphors and symbols suggest various possible interpretations which slowly give way to an ordered sequencing and to more limited interpretations. Finally, through dialogue between the diviner and the client, these interpretations are superseded by an unambiguous classification of the causes of the situation and the material needed to respond to and change it. (Tedlock, 2001)

Links to the divine in divination vary. It can be buttressed by a cosmology of invisible entities, which an oracle mediates, such as with the orisha gods in the Yoruba cowry-shell divination (Bascom, 1969). Yet it may also be experienced as a direct configuration of the cosmos as it is, such as with the Tarot, astrology, or numerology, which animate the cosmos with extra-human causal forces, but do not necessarily rely on the existence of a single god or deity. This second category includes conceptualizations by Jungian scholars such as Marie-Louise von Franz, for whom the unconscious is a repository of collective archetypal knowledge, that is catalyzed perfectly through divination (Von Franz, 1980).

1.3 Ifá Divination as a Religion in Yoruba Society

When issues are raised about Yorùbá religion, *Ifá* comes into focus due to its centrality and prominence in the worship of other gods. The religion is orally transmitted from one generation to another rather than scriptural. Although, these days, studies had been done on the religion, it is still far from being scriptural like we have in the case of the Bible, the Quran and Bhagavad Gita among others (Butain, 1989). The religion believes in a Supreme Being, divinities, spirits, veneration of ancestors, and mysterious powers that have to do with magic, and traditional medicine. The role of man in the matter is to harmonize nature with the supernatural. The religion as said earlier has been passed down from one generation to another orally and can be found through art, rituals and festivals, beliefs and customs, names of people and places, songs and dance, proverbs, and myths. Information gathered revealed that it is difficult to

estimate how many people are practitioners of the religion, but the fact remained that directly or indirectly, nearly all the Yorùbá are practitioners either through their names, songs, dance, proverbs, marriage system, customs and traditions (Aduloju, 2019). Indigenous religion of the Yorùbá is the religion of the people before the coming of Islam and Christianity. However, it would be inappropriate to talk of *Ifá* in isolation of the creation stories and the role that *Òrúnmilà*, the custodian of *Ifá* played. Therefore, a look at it below,

1.4 The Myths of Creation

There are at least about three or four different myths of creation as narrated by different scholars of African/Yoruba indigenous religion. According to Idowu 1962, it was Obatala who also known as Orisa nla that was given the obligation by Olodumare to create the world. However, along the way, he was drunk and couldn't complete the work. Therefore, Oduduwa took the material and created the world.

Another school of thought believed that it was the joint decision of the sixteen principal elders like *Obatala*, *Òrúnmilà*, *Gibuede*, *Ajalorun*, the witches and so on that went to request for the creation of the world which Olodumare granted their request and gave each and every one of them duties to perform (Adeoye, 1979).

Yet another school of thought like Lijadu, Ayo Salami was of the opinion that it was *Òrúnmilà* that performed the creation with instructions from Olodumare. However, whichever way or people that performed the work, what is certain is that the world was created by the divinities through the instructions from Olodumare.

1.5 Morality and the Role of *Ifá* Divination as a Moral Agent in Yoruba Society

Morality is the principle concerning the distinction between what is right and what is wrong. It is about good and bad behaviour. It is conformity with self-code, doctrine or system of rules or wishes of God, or how to behave with the norms of social behaviour. Looking at this with the laws or wishes of God, we still realise that morality depends on God. According to Dostoevsky (Businessdictionary), if there is no God, then we won't be talking about right or wrong. As a result, everyone would go about doing whatever he/she like. Therefore, morality in his view depends on God.

Looking at this from the Yorùbá traditional religion's perspective, we shall realize that *Olódùmarè*, in his

words *Ifá*, through *Òrúnmilà* prescribed some natural laws to guide our behaviour and conducts toward *Olódùmarè*, divinities and fellow human beings. *Òrúnmilà* enjoined everyone to live at peace with God and fellow human beings in accordance with these laws. There, he teaches that we should all love one another. According to *Òrúnmilà*, it is through this love for fellow human beings that happiness comes when one devotes one's time to the selfless service of other members of the community or country. This implies that if one truly loves his or her fellow being, there won't be killing, cheating, seduction, embezzlement, misappropriation of public funds, stealing and some other social vices.

Out of different means of articulating the divine mystery and different paths leading to it, *Ifá* divination is one and whole indivisible source of this mystery. According to Lucas 1948, *Ifá* is the oracular deity, the most popular and most important in Yorùbáland. *Ifá* is turned to for guidance and for ascertaining the will of *Olódùmarè* as regards the matter of the past, present and the future. All important events in life is referred to *Ifá* for its guidance and advice. *Ifá* is consulted in marriage relationships, friendships, kingship, chieftaincy, economic, political and religious matters. As said earlier, this *Ifá* is neither human worship rather, as written by Salami 2008, in his word, the divine message of *Olódùmarè* to the entire world.

Although *Ifá* is in possession of knowledge of several branches as said earlier, but knowledge of this surpasses the moral and ethical teachings of *Ifá*. This evidence in most of *Ifá* is available in both major and minor *Odù*'s. Hardly do we see any chapter or verse of *Odù* that does not talk about one moral instruction or the other, directly or indirectly. Most of these moral teachings are *either* taught in proverbs, wise saying, or stories. Some of these moral teachings of *Ifá* are found in natural laws given to humanity to guide our conducts among human beings, and our relationship with the divine begins and finally with *Olódùmarè*, the Supreme Being (Bascorn, 1969). The first of such natural laws is the one that enjoined human beings to acknowledge *Olódùmarè* as the Supreme Being and father of the universe who created all things. This is evidence in many *Ifá* chapters and verses. Both divinities and mankind were advised to worship *Olódùmarè*. According to *Odù Òfún-sé* (Akintola, 1999). *Ifá* says divinities acknowledged the supremacy and headship of *Olódùmarè*. There *Ifá* says:

Orí gbó kéké, idàndàn geere
Eruku yomù awo wọn lóde òrun
A difá fún gbogbo òkànlerúnwó irúnmoḽè
Wọn nḽ rèè gba isin nilé Olódùmarè l'óde òrun
Eruku – yomì a dé ò
Olódùmarè mo dè ò
Mo wá yìn ò ò.

Ori gbo keke, Idanda geere
 Eruku yomu the initiate in heaven
 Ifa divination was performed for all the four hundred and one divinties
 they were going to obtain worship at Olodumare's house in heaven
 Erukuyomu we've arrived
 Olodumare I'm around
 I came to pay homage.

In the same vein, *Òrúnmilà*, the custodian of *Ifá*, also advised all mankind to direct all its worship to *Olódùmarè*. Though one may wonder why he gives such an advice it is because a lot of people, particularly people from different faiths, hope and belief that the Yorùbá and Africans in general worship idols. This assertion had been argued several times that Africans do not worship idols. Rather, these divinities or the so-called idols are just servants, errand boys and girls of the creator, *Olódùmarè*. It is undeniable in those days that people directed their worship toward the divinities, the concept that was not peculiar to the Africans alone, rather the whole world. However, the fact remains that mankind knows that both the divinities and the spirits were created by *Olódùmarè* (Idowu, 1962). They also know that they (divinities and spirits) possess some qualities and powers that mankind does not have. Thus, people tend to fear and reverence them. However, with the advice of *Òrúnmilà* through *Ifá*, mankind re-established its commitment to worship *Olódùmarè* through these divinities.

Ethical Laws of Nature on how to live at Peace with Olodumare (God in Yoruba belief) and Man as Found in *Ìká Òfún* (Somadhi, 2002)

As part of human duties is to live at peace with their creator and their fellow human so that the society would be inhabitable for all. Therefore, God the creator revealed himself to man in different forms in a way that man in each continent on earth will understand him, obey him and do his bid. This is the reason God gave to the Yoruba the ethical laws of nature as found in one of the sub *Odu* in *Ifa* divination to guide man's conducts with his fellow man and God the creator of which the Christian theologians have codified into the ten commandments of God. This is so because of the similarities found in these texts. According to *Ifá* in *Ìká Òfún*, there *Ifá* says;

Ìká funfun
Ìká ò funfun
A difá fún àgbààgbà méréndínlógún
Wọn nre'lé Ifè, wọn nḽ rèè tọṛọ ogbó
Àwọn le gbó, àwọn le tó
Bí Olódùmarè ti rán wọn ni wọn dá Ifá sí
Wọn ní wọn á gbó,
Wọn á tó, sùgbón kí wọn pa ikilè mó
Wọn ní kí wọn má fì esùrú pe esùrú
Wọn ní kí wọn má fì esùrù pe esùrù
Wọn ní kí wọn má fì odidè pe òdèdè
Wón ní kí wọn má fì ewe irókò pe ewé oriro
Wọn ní kí wọn má fì àìimòwè bá wọn dé odò
Wọn ní kí wọn má fì àìlókó bá wọn ké hain-hain
Wọn ní kí wọn má gba ònà èbùrú wò 'lé Akálà
Wọn ní kí wọn má fì ikóodè nù'dí
Wọn ní kí wọn má sù sí epo
Wọn ní kí wọn má tọ sí àfọ
Wón ní kí wọn má gba òpá l'ówó afójú

Ika is white,
 Ika is not white,
 Divined for sixteen elders
 They were going to Ile Ife to ask for long life
 Would they live long
 As Olodumare (God decreed, was their question)
 They said the sixteen elders would live long
 In good health, but that they should respect and obey Ifa guiding laws
 They advised them not to call esuru (yam species) esuru, that is,
 not to say what they do not know
 They advised them not to call esuru (special beads) esuru, that is,
 not to perform anything for which they do not have the basic knowledge.
 They advised them not to call odide (parrot) oode (bat),
 that is, not to mislead people
 They advised them not to say Iroko leaves are oriro leaves,
 that is, not to deceive people
 They advised them not to try to swim if they are ignorant
 of swimming, that is, not to claim wisdom that they lacked
 They advised them to be humble and never be egocentric
 They advised them not to enter Akala's house deceitfully,
 that is, not to be treacherous. (Akala is a title in Ifa)
 They advised them not to use Ikoode (sacred feathers)
 for cleaning after using the toilet, that is, not to break taboos
 They advised them not to defecate on epo (Ifa's sacred food),
 that is not to break taboos
 They advised them not to urinate inside afo traditional factory
 for epo pupa processing), that is, not to break taboos
 They advised them not to take a walking cane from the blind, that is, to

Wón ní kí wón má gba òpá l'ówó ogbó
is, to respect and be nice to the elderly
Wón ní kí wón má gba obìnrin Ògbóni
respect moral laws

Wón ní kí wón má gba obìnrin òrẹ́

Wón ní kí wón má s'òrò ìmùlẹ́ l'èhìn
betray trusts

Wón ní kí wón má sán-an ibàntẹ́ awo

Wón dé'lé ayé tán,

Ohun tí wón ní kí wón má ẹ́ ni wón nẹ́...

respect the weak, to respect the weak, feeble, and be nice to them
They advised them not to take a walking cane from an old person, that

They (babalawo) advised them not to take Ogboni wife's, that is, to

They (babalawo) advised them not to take a friend's wife, that is, not to betray a friend; not to betray a trust

They advised them not to go behind and discuss secrets, that is, not to

They advised them not to disrespect or make love to a Babalawo's wife

When they elders got to earth,

They did all the things that they were advised not to do...

Also, there are other ethical principles that *Ifá* talked about as agents of moral behaviours among the Yoruba such as portrayal of wisdom as a basic virtue which is the application of knowledge. Wisdom as a concept is the right application of knowledge which *Ifá* forbid us displayed if we do not have it as found in the second law of *Ifá*. With this concept of wisdom, *Orúnmilá* portrays the *Ifá* corpus as a wisdom literature (Akintola, 1999:105)

Again, helpfulness and service to others as a foundation of virtue (*ríran omólàkẹ́jì l'ówó*) is one of the natural laws that says we should do unto others what we want others to do unto us also stated that we should render self-less help to others without expecting any gain or reward from such a help. This is seen in the saying of the Yorubá that goes thus: *ò fi tiẹ́ sílẹ́ gbọ́ teni ẹ́lẹ́ni, Olódùmarẹ́ ni í baá tiẹ́* – whosoever devotes his time for the help of others, it is God that, will help such a person to oversee his own affairs. This is found in *Ìrosùn Méjì* (Fatoosin, 2019) where *Ifá* affirms that:

Àkùkọ́ f'ogbe lẹ́bẹ́lẹ́bẹ́ ẹ́yì

A dífá fún Òpilíkí

Tí ó fi tiẹ́ sílẹ́

Tí ó máá gbọ́ teni ẹ́lẹ́ni káyé kiri...

Àkùkọ́ f'ogbe lẹ́bẹ́lẹ́bẹ́ ẹ́yì

Casts divination for Opiliki

Who left his affairs behind

And attends to other people's affairs

In the same manner, love is seen as ethical concept (gratefulness, kindness, goodness towards fellow-men). This is the true essence of *Olódùmarẹ́*, the creator and is the foundation of the world. It is a selfless feeling of benevolence, affection and devotion towards God and individuals created by God. *Orúnmilá* puts love as a virtue that should be initially practiced by individual in their relationships which is anchored in *Ifá* on avoidance of wickedness to neighbors (Akintola, 1999:113).

Forgiveness is another moral virtue displayed in so many verses of *Ifá* by *Orúnmilá*. A very good example is found in *Òtúrà Méjì* (Akintola, 1999:117), where *Orúnmilá*'s friends who seduce his wife, Anipupa and later sold her to slavery as a result of fear that she would tell *Orúnmilá* about the matter when *Orunmila* comes back. When *Orunmila* came back, he heard about the issue though not from his wife Anipupa and despite that he forgave his friends for their misdeeds.

Avoidance of physical beauty to inhibit natural development (avoidance of thought-less haste and love –less-ness in marriage) is another moral agent. In *Ifá* divination, men are warned to be careful not to take physical beauty as a guarantee for fruitful and successful marriage. On this, *Ifá* cautioned in *Odù Ìwòrì-Òwónrin* (Akintola, 1999:119) that:

Mbá jóbìnrin,

Àrà kan nì nbá dá

Mbá tòlẹ́kẹ́ tí tí lọ́ dé bẹ̀bẹ̀rẹ́ ìdí

Ma fì gbogbo ara hurun

Títí lọ́ dé pọ́n-pọ́lọ́ itan

Mbá bojú wabé wò ma fẹ́rín sí

Ma ní ikú dẹ́dẹ́ nẹ́ lábẹ́ aṣọ́

Òrìṣà tí kù jẹ́ kọ̀mọ̀kùrìn ó leè tọ́jọ́

Dífá fún Gbòngàn-Ìròkò

Tí Í ẹ́ olóbò yèrèpè

Eyi tí nrele oko

Njẹ́ Gbòngàn-Ìròkò

Were I a woman

I would have performed one feat

I would have displayed waist beads most alluringly

I would display fluffy skin hair

Right down onto my thighs

I would behold my captivating vagina with a smile

And say unmistakable death is under the cloth

The goddess that spells premature death for a young man

Casts divination for Gbongàn-Irokò

With excessively sexy vagina

Who was getting set for her betrothal

Now, Gbongàn-Irokò

*A rí ọ rẹwà nà ò
Jé ká rí ọ rọmọ tuntun*

We have seen you are beautiful
Let us see you with babies

Other ethical values that *Ifá* mentioned are kindness, gratefulness, perfidy-*Ilẹ̀ didà*.

2. Divination in Russia

Ivanits 2015, postulates that the term is often used for the interweaving of pre-Christian and Christian elements in the belief and practice of the Russian peasant is *dvoeverie*, or "double faith." "The double faith" of Christians addicted to pagan rites and superstitions is the brunt of the invective of many sermons of the first centuries of Russian Christianity. On the verge of the Soviet era the Russian peasant retained his belief in spirits of the house and farmstead and of various aspects of nature. While these personages were the clear inheritance of the pagan era, Christianity too made its contribution. In certain biblical figures and Saints, it provided the peasant with a roster of personages to ward which to direct his aspirations for a bountiful harvest and personal happiness and, in the figure of the devil, with a major culprit on which failures could be blamed. Many of these personages seem to be thinly disguised reworkings of pagan deities. In addition, most studies of East Slavic paganism have been based on written sources. These sources are scant and consist mainly of brief chronicle entries, sermons, and instructions, all dating from the Christian era and hostile to pre-Christian belief. What East Slavic written sources do give is a list of probable deities, and, occasionally, their attributes and functions. Yet, while these documents give very little information about the content of East Slavic paganism, they leave no doubt whatsoever that the broad masses clung to their ancient gods and rituals for centuries after Russia's baptism and that the lower clergy sometimes joined in these celebrations

2.1 The Pagan Background

But, even though the traditions and spirit world of the Russian Peasant contained reflections of ancient beliefs, one cannot make direct connections between particular notions of the nineteenth-century peasant and the pagan of tenth-century Rus'. Over the centuries ancient beliefs and rituals acquired many additional layers, and it is often difficult to determine what is a later accretion and what is truly ancient. One thing is certain: the Russian pagan and his nineteenth-century descendant were both farmers whose primary concerns were fertility and bounty. When the harvest failed, the peasant went hungry or, worse, starved. The various agricultural rituals of nineteenth-century village life provide a valuable, if circuitous, avenue to Russian paganism.

Kcenia, 2019 emphasizes that one of the best times in the year to do the fortune readings of any kind are Svyatki. It is a time period between two orthodox holidays – Birth of Christ on the 7th of January and Baptism of Christ on the 19th of January. It was believed that those weeks are a peculiar transitional period, when the last year is already gone but the next year is not yet here.

In this strange time the veil between the human world and the world of supernatural becomes thinner and magic becomes stronger.

In the old times the first week of Svyatki was called "holy", and the second one "scary". During this time, it was prohibited to work in the dark of the evening, young men and women went carolling, everyone cleaned their houses from the negative energies and malicious entities by having the water blessed and smudging the house with frankincense.

The fortune-telling rituals were generally held at night. First and foremost, the participants were supposed to be released from the protection of their gods or spiritual entities for the time of the divination. People took off their Christian crosses and other protective amulets, everybody tied knots on their clothing, let their hair down. In order not to get harmed by evil spirits, the participants could draw a circle around them before starting the ritual. The place was also chosen carefully. It should have had a certain dark energy to it, often people chose abandoned houses, sometimes even cemeteries. The places that indicated the border between the two worlds were also fitting, for example gates, crossroads, wells.

The fortune-telling could be divided in three groups: divinations about harvest, about family, and about love.

One of the ways to know whether you'll have a good harvesting season this year was to go to a crossroad on the 1st of January, after the morning service. There, one needed to draw a cross on the ground and put their ear on the mark. A person listened closely and if they heard a full wagon coming, it was a sign of abundant crops. The sound of an empty wagon – of a hungry season. Another way to predict how much harvest awaits you in the upcoming year was to use gramineous plants. People made little wisps of ears of every plant they had and left them outside for the night. The bundles that were covered in frost on the next day told which kind will grow well this year.

In order to know what the next year will bring to you and your relatives, families went out together to eavesdrop. Silently, people approached a house and tried to hear what is going on there. To hear someone having an argument indicated a stressful year ahead of you. If you heard crying, a sickness would come to your home.

A prayer, on the contrary, was the sign of a blessed year for you and your loved ones. There was also a way to learn the future of the family. Everybody could go and lay down in a place where people did the threshing, and listen intently. If one heard a knocking sound, it meant death, the ringing told you of a soon wedding, the sounds of the threshing signified wealth.

During the time of Svyatki, the love rituals were the most popular kind of divinations and the most important ones for many young men and women. There were and still are a great amount of fortune-telling rituals one can conduct in those magical nights of January. For example, on a clear night, one can take a mirror and angle it towards the sky so it reflects the moon. When a person catches it on the mirror's surface, they should stare at it intently until the image starts to blur and multiply. The number of little moons in the mirror indicates how big their family will be.

Another belief connected to the night sky states, that if a girl sees a fallen star, the direction it flies, shows the way to her future husband. Also, at night, an unmarried women could make a little bridge out of rods and put it under their pillow. Before going to bed she should say: "Whoever my betrothed is, they will lead me across the bridge". It is believed that the future lover will be seen by the girl in her dream.

2.2 Types of Divination in Russia

According to Chumbash (2016), there are various ancient divinations that help people for many centuries to learn the future, look into the past and correctly interpret the signs that fate sends in the present.

Old fortune telling on items

This is a common traditional Russian divination, which you can use if you want to know your fate. Of course, you can do this in various other ways, using Tarot cards, wax, quotes from books, flowers, and so on. But this particular rite was especially popular among our ancestors.

They were sure that in order to get clear answers and things really started telling the truth, it was necessary to follow clear rules. The ritual is performed only on the full moon, exactly 12: 00 at night.

It is not conducted alone, but with other people. Everyone who came to the session should bring various items with them — it can be rings, earrings, money, buttons, bread, candy.

As soon as everyone is ready, the host puts the brought items on a large dish and covers them with a white towel. After that you need to say:

Famous for bread, famous for salt, famous for the labor of the peasant! Tell us what to expect!

After this, the first participant of the ceremony must get anything out of the towel. It is interpreted and put back. Next, the second participant has to pick also, without looking, get their attribute. Meaning of things:

Rings — marriage; bread-prosperity, harvest; buttons-children; sweets — sweet life, full of joy; money — material well-being.

Гадание на хлебе

Хлеб — всему голова. Он считался одним из главных продуктов, которые употребляли в пищу наши предки, поэтому к нему относились с особым почетом. При помощи хлеба также можно узнать, что произойдет завтра. Для этого необходимо купить самый свежий хлеб с хрустящей корочкой.

Translation:

Divination on bread

Bread tops everything. It was considered as one of the main foods that our ancestors consumed, therefore, it was treated with special respect. Bread can also be used to find out what will happen tomorrow. To do this, you need to buy the freshest crispy bread. The loaf must be very large. When you bring it home, you must not show

Буханка должна быть очень большая. Когда вы принесете ее в дом, никому показывать ее нельзя. Заверните сразу атрибут в большой кусок белого бумажного полотенца и держите под подушкой. Помните, резать, есть этот хлеб нельзя. Ровно в 12:00 ночи достаньте магический атрибут, положите на плоскую поверхность. Снимать полотенце не стоит. Возьмите большой острый нож и начните разрезать завернутый хлеб на куски. При этом спросите трижды вопрос:

Что со мною будет завтра?

Теперь посмотрите на то, как режется продукт.

Если отрезанный кусок остался на месте, это говорит о том, что все чтобы запланируете, случится, день будет успешным, вам улыбнется фортуна. Если ломоть все-таки упал, но некоторое время до этого продержался ровно, это говорит о том, что задуманное также исполнится, но через некоторое время. Скорее всего, все, чего вы хотите, случится через неделю после проведения данного обряда. На вашем пути будут некоторые неприятности, но не стоит особо переживать по этому поводу. Если же ломоть хлеба упал сразу, то ничего не планируйте на грядущие сутки, так как любые ваши идеи будут обречены на провал.

Ритуал с обувью

На Руси этот способ гадания использовался в основном зимой. Наши предки были уверены, что это реальное предсказание, так как в нем участвуют предметы живой и неживой природы. С помощью этого ритуала можно узнать, как относится к вам любимый человек. Для этого достаточно просто выйти из дома зимой, снять с ноги ботинок за носок, сказать имя любимого и сильно бросить обувь через правую сторону.

Теперь медленно обернитесь и проследите, как приземлился атрибут. Если нос обуви указывает на вас, то вероятно взаимность в любви. Если же ботинок направлен в противоположную сторону, то это говорит о том, что парень пока к вам холоден.

Простой обряд на желание

Существует масса гаданий, которые позволяют вам определить, реализуется ли ваша мечта или нет. Обряды проводятся в домашних условиях. Это не менее любопытный метод, который позволит узнать, исполнится ли ваша мечта. Для того, чтобы провести гадание, вам необходимо в позднее время суток, как только выпадет большое количество снега, выйти из дому, найти поверхность, еще нетронутую другими людьми и лечь на спину очень аккуратно и постараться не повредить свой отпечаток. Когда будете лежать на снегу,

it to anyone. Wrap the attribute immediately in a large piece of white paper towel and keep it under your pillow. Remember, you cannot cut this bread. At exactly 12:00 midnight, take out the magic attribute, put it on a flat surface. You shouldn't take off the towel. Take a large, sharp knife and start cutting the wrapped bread into pieces. At the same time, ask the question three times:

What will happen to me tomorrow?

Now look at how the product is cut.

If the cut piece remains in place, this means that everything you plan will come true, the day will be successful, fortune will smile at you. If the slice still fell, but for some time before that lasted exactly, this suggests that the plan will also come true, but after a while. Most likely, everything you want will happen a week after the ceremony. There will be some troubles on your way, but don't worry too much about it. If a slice of bread fell immediately, then do not plan anything for the coming day, since any of your ideas will be doomed to failure.

Translation:

Shoe ritual

In Russia, this method of divination was used mainly in winter. Our ancestors were sure that this is a real prediction, since objects of animate and inanimate nature participate in it. With this ritual, you can find out how a loved one treats you. To do this, it is enough just to leave the house in winter, take off your shoes by the toe, say the name of your loved one and throw your shoes strongly over the right side.

Now slowly turn around and trace how the attribute landed. If the nose of the shoe points towards you, then reciprocity in love is likely. If the shoe is directed in the opposite direction, then this indicates that the guy is still cold to you.

Translation:

A simple rite on desire

There are a lot of fortune-telling that will allow you to determine whether your dream comes true or not. The ceremonies are carried out at home. This is an equally curious method that will let you know if your dream will come true. In order to conduct fortune-telling, you need to leave the house at the late time of the day, as soon as a large amount of snow falls, to find a surface still untouched by other people and lie on your back very carefully and try not to damage your print. When lying in the snow, be sure to make a wish. It is now important to wait until next morning. As soon as the sun rises, you

обязательно загадайте желание. Теперь важно дождаться следующего утра. Как только солнце встанет, можете пойти и расшифровать итог. Если контур останется нетронутым, то ваша мечта точно исполнится в ближайшие сроки. Если же отпечаток был немного затоптан, то для того, чтобы реализовать свою мечту, придется приложить много усилий.

Старинный обряд с мусором

Наши пращуры не ограничивали фантазию и придумывали самые разнообразные и любопытные методы ворожбы. Для того, чтобы провести этот ритуал, вам необходим будет сухой мусор. Это может быть бумага, нитки, лоскутки ткани, картон и т.д. Перед тем как провести ритуал, вам необходимо будет пересыпать все эти мелочи в отдельную коробку и спрятать до Святков. Содержимое нельзя кому-либо показывать или перебирать. На Святки, ровно в 12 часов ночи, когда никого не будет больше дома, достаньте коробку, высыпьте мусор посреди помещения и обойдите эту кучу трижды по часовой стрелке. При этом трижды скажите:

В вечерний час хочу узнать, что ждет меня в году грядущем!

А теперь заберитесь на кучу (встаньте на нее) так, чтобы окно было у вас за спиной и прислушайтесь, какие звуки будут доноситься с улицы или из-за стен. Если первое, что вы услышите, будет кашель, стоны, то, возможно, вы сильно заболите в течение года либо будете болеть часто. Если услышите мужской голос, то встретите надежного соратника. Если голос будет женским, то не исключено появление соперницы. Если послышится смех, то весь год будет благоприятным. Если услышите детский голосок, возможно появление потомства. Громкий плач или крик — неприятности, ссоры. Как гадали в старину по ветке на отношения?

Если вы хотите узнать, как к вам относятся молодой человек, то воспользуйтесь этим старым проверенным обрядом. Вам необходимо будет заранее взять сосновую веточку и маленькую елочную игрушку. В старину наши предки брали пряник или любую другую сладость. Теперь подойдите к тому месту, где проживает возлюбленный, прикрепите ветку около двери в дом, около калитки и разместите на ней игрушку. Важно сделать все так, чтобы никто не заметил вас. Ровно через сутки, в то же время, придите на это место снова. Если атрибут остался вместе с игрушкой нетронутым, то чувства не будут взаимными. Если же атрибуты исчезли, то, вполне возможно, юноша испытывает к вам теплые чувства.

can go and decipher the result. If the outline remains intact, then your dream will definitely come true in the near future. If the print has been a little trampled, then in order to realize your dream, you will have to make a lot of effort.

Translation:

Old rite with trash

Our ancestors did not limit their imagination and came up with the most diverse and curious methods of divination. In order to perform this ritual, you will need dry trash. This can be paper, thread, scraps of fabric, cardboard, etc. Before performing the ritual, you will need to pour all these little things into a separate box and hide them until Christmas time. Content should not be shown or crawled to anyone. On Christmastide, exactly at 12 o'clock in the morning, when no one else is at home, take out the box, pour out the garbage in the middle of the room and go around this pile three times clockwise. At the same time, say three times:

In the evening hour I want to know what awaits me in the coming year!

Now climb onto the pile (stand on it) so that the window is behind you and listen to what sounds will come from the street or from behind the walls. If the first thing you hear is a cough, moans, then you may get very sick during the year or get sick often. If you hear a male voice, you will meet a reliable companion. If the voice is female, then the appearance of a rival is possible. If laughter is heard, then the whole year will be auspicious. If you hear a child's voice, offspring may appear. Loud crying or screaming - troubles, quarrels.

Translation:

How to guess in the old days on the branch over relationships?

If you want to know how a young man treats you, then use this old proven rite. You will need to take a pine twig and a small Christmas tree decoration in advance. In the old days, our ancestors took gingerbread or any other sweetness. Now go to the place where your beloved lives, attach a branch near the door to the house, near the gate and place a toy on it. It is important to do everything so that no one notices you. Exactly one day later, at the same time, come to this place again. If the attribute remains intact with the toy, then the feelings will not be mutual. If the attributes have disappeared, then, quite possibly, the young man has warm feelings for you.

Village fortune telling on chickens, this ritual has come down to our times from the pagans. It is held on the full moon, exactly at 12:00 midnight. It is important that all

Деревенское гадание на курах Этот ритуал дошел до наших времен от язычников. Проводится он в полнолуние, ровно в 12:00 ночи. Важно, чтобы все домашние уже в этот момент спали. В помещении по сторонам ставится емкость с водой, хлебом, солью, сахаром, различными монетками и колечками. Заранее выберите курицу, которая будет принимать участие в ворожбе и занесите ее дом для того, чтобы она освоилась и не боялась. Когда наступит нужный час, занесите птицу в нужную комнату и проследите, какая вещь ей понравится больше всего. Птица не сможет пойти к вещи, которая больше блестит и привлекает ее по внешним качествам, а выберет интуитивно. Если птица выбрала соль, на вашем пути будет немало трудностей, которые нужно будет преодолеть.

Сахар — жизнь будет сладкой, все будет удаваться, фортуна будет улыбаться.

Кольца — скоро выйдете замуж.

Вода — в жизни не будет никаких особых изменений, все будет идти своим чередом.

Хлеб — богатый урожай. Монеты — прибыль, достаток.

Гадание на золе.

Проводится этот обряд в бане. Перед тем, как туда отправиться, необходимо заранее вооружиться горстью золы. Наберите небольшой сосуд воды, смочите в ней березовый веник и трижды по ходу часовой стрелки сделайте манипуляции над емкостью. При этом трижды произнесите слова:

Сбудутся ли мои желания в наступающем году?

Следом бросается горсть золы, и ваша задача дожидаться, пока она полностью не осядет на дно. Если магический атрибут распределился равномерно по всему дну емкости, то это говорит о том, что вашей мечте сбыться не суждено.

Если же она оказалась в каком-то определенном месте, это говорит о том, что все желания исполнятся. Если исход гадания показал, что вашей мечте пока не суждено сбыться, то вам следует вылить жидкость вместе с золой на улицу и сказать:

Чтобы все плохое быстро закончилось, и на смену ему скорее пришло только хорошее.

Эти старинные действенные ритуалы помогут вам получить ответы на многие вопросы. Воспользуйтесь мудростью наших предков, окунитесь в мир магии и соприкоснитесь со сверхъестественным. Помните, результаты подобных гаданий лишь подталкивают в нужном направлении, если вы получили негативное предсказание, то не стоит отчаиваться, ведь вы только сами можете изменить свою судьбу в лучшую сторону.

household members are already asleep at this moment. In the room, a container with water, bread, salt, sugar, various coins and rings is placed on the sides. Select in advance a chicken that will take part in the divination and bring her home so that she gets comfortable and not afraid. When the right time comes, bring the bird into the right room and see which thing she likes best. The bird will not be able to go to a thing that shines more and attracts it by its external qualities, but will choose intuitively. If the bird has chosen salt, there will be many difficulties on your way that will need to be overcome. Sugar - life will be sweet, everything will work out, and fortune will smile.

Rings - getting married soon.

Water - there will be no special changes in life, everything will go on as usual.

Bread is a rich harvest. Coins - profit, wealth.

Translation:

Fortune telling on ash.

This ceremony is held in the bathhouse. Before you go there, you need to arm yourself with a handful of ash. Pick up a small vessel of water, moisten a birch broom in it and manipulate the container three times clockwise.

At the same time, say the words three times:

Will my wishes come true in the coming year?

A handful of ash is thrown next, and your task is to wait until it completely settles to the bottom. If the magic attribute is distributed evenly over the entire bottom of the container, then this indicates that your dream is not destined to come true.

If she found herself in a certain place, this suggests that all desires will come true. If the outcome of fortune-telling showed that your dream is not yet destined to come true, then you should pour the liquid along with the ash onto the street and say:

So that all bad things end quickly, and only good ones come to replace him.

These ancient, powerful rituals will help you get answers to many questions. Use the wisdom of our ancestors, plunge into the world of magic and get in touch with the supernatural. Remember, the results of such fortune telling only push you in the right direction, if you received a negative prediction, then you should not despair, because only you yourself can change your destiny for the better.

Гадание на берёзе

Девушке во время недели Зелёных святков надо выбрать на берёзе три ветви, но если дерево было пышным, то разделить одну ветку на три части. Затем надо сплести косу, приговаривая: "Плетись, плетись косица красавицы берёзоньки. Берёзоньку я завью. Благослови Лелюшка, о суженом скажи". После этого надо завязать косу красной лентой и крепкой травой. Через три дня надо прийти обратно к берёзе и смотреть на заветную косу. Если ветки не завянут, коса не распустится, жених будет ладным, крепким и пригожим –желание сбудется.

Изучение особенностей различных гадательных действий позволяют нам лучше постичь образ мысли и быт наших Предков, прикоснуться к бесценному опыту поколений и, возможно, заглянуть в будущее... Гадания живут в народе, несмотря на многовековую борьбу с ними церкви и развития "цивилизованности" человечества. "Читая в великой таинственной книге природы, полной чудес, могучих и непостижимых сил, свою судьбу, свое счастье и горе, народ создал сложную систему примет, предсказывающих грядущее. Но многочисленных примет, как случайных явлений природы, недостаточно, чтобы проникнуть в тайны судьбы, в неведомую область незнаемого. Стремление раскрыть будущее и уяснить непонятные явления жизни мироздания выдвинуло особые приемы познания путем искусственного создания условий для суждения через приспособление предметов и явлений, путем общения со сверхъестественными силами, иногда внутренним ощущением и воображением, выдвинуло искусственно создаваемый новый ряд примет, истолковав которые, можно узнать свою долю. Это - гадания".

3. Conclusion

This paper observes that divination is a path charted as a medium of guidance to the taking of right decisions in Yorubaland and Russia. Some of the processes are common. In Yorubaland, *Ifá* is turned to for guidance and for ascertaining the matter of the past, present and the future, while Russian peasants retain their belief in spirits of the house and farmstead and of various aspects of nature. There are common matters that are resolved through divine consultations in both societies, such as: choosing a life partner, expected kind of harvest for farmers and resolving knitted issues that are beyond human comprehension. While divination in Yorubaland is basically rendered orally, in Russia, sometimes it could be oral, but generally written.

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Translation:

Fortune telling on a birch

During the week of Green Saints, a girl needs to choose three branches on a birch, but if the tree was lush, then divide one branch into three parts. Then you need to weave a braid, saying: "Weave, weave the braid of the beautiful birch tree. I will curl the birch. Bless Lelyushka, tell me about your betrothed." After that, you need to tie the braid with a red ribbon and strong grass. After three days, you need to come back to the birch and look at the cherished braid.

If the branches do not wither, the braid will not bloom, the groom will be okay, strong and handsome - the wish will come true.

Studying the features of various fortune-telling actions allows us to better comprehend the way of thinking and life of our ancestors, to touch the invaluable experience of generations and, possibly, to look into the future. Fortune-telling lives among the people, despite the centuries-old struggle of the church with them and the development of humanity's "civilization". "Reading in the great mysterious book of nature, full of miracles, mighty and incomprehensible forces, their destiny, their happiness and sorrow, the people have created a complex system of signs that predict the future.

But numerous signs, as random phenomena of nature, are not enough to penetrate the secrets of fate, into the unknown realm of the unknown. The desire to reveal the future and to understand the incomprehensible phenomena of the life of the universe put forward special methods of cognition by artificially creating conditions for judgment through the adaptation of objects and phenomena, by communicating with supernatural forces, sometimes with inner sensation and imagination, put forward an artificially created new series of signs, by interpreting which, you can learn your share. This is fortune telling.

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