

The Balts.

The Balts were known with Antique sources. The gothic historian Jordan (6-th.c. A.D.) placed them on extensive spaces from Baltic up to the bottom Don. In 4-th c. A. D. Expansion of Slavs and process slavisation east (Dnepr) Balts, finished in 12 - 13-th centuries A.D. As a relict in pool of Oka long still there was a tribe holjad (from here surname Holjadkin from story Dostojevsky "The nose").

Henceforth Balts occupied territory of present Lithuania, Latvia and East Prussia on which they in general were kept and until now (except for Prussia). Here there was a process of formation of princedoms. At western Balts (Prussians) it was established theocracy, there was a strong caste of priests, the isolation and authority reminding invisible empire of druids. There were large cult centres with set of wooden temples and sacred groves. One of such centres was Romovo, which priests and their chapter Krive were esteemed on all territory of Baltic. The Prussians conducted enough activity politics that has induced the Polish king at the end of 12 in. To invite for war with them the Teutonic order which has transferred the base to Europe from Palestine. Within 13 centuries there was the persistent struggle finished by liquidation of Prussians independence and then their germanization. Last pagans were victims of religious wars of 17 century. The reason of defeat western Balts, perhaps, is covered in domination at them the priestly estate which are far from problems of a real politics and taking place in ideological antagonism with neighbours. At the same time ancestors of Lithuanians, who were ruled by the princes, have kept independence.

In middle of 13 centuries in Lithuania there was a first state led by leader Mindowgas. He was the enemy of German knight order (present Estonia) and Russian prince Alexander Nevsky's ally. Mindowgas was lost as a result of plot and his state has broken up. Prince Gediminas (1316 - 1341) achieved stronger association of Lithuania. At him and his successors Lithuanians have defended the country from crusaders and have won the extensive grounds of Russian princedoms in the east (up to Black Sea and river Oka). All this time Lithuania kept religion of ancestors, remaining some kind of "reserve Indo-European Paganism" in Europe. To tell the truth, among a part of princes the orthodoxy started to be distributed. But right at the end of 14 centuries pagan princes have accepted Catholicism. It has resulted in enmity with Moscow and loss of east territories. The further history of Lithuania (down to connection to Russia at the end of 18 centuries) was closely connected to Poland.

For so long pagan period the Balts have saved up the big mythological content. From the point of view "dualistic" approach of the present research,

it is necessary to tell, that the textual part outweighs graphic. Images of gods in Balt art are present - as Prussian stone idols 10 - 11-th centuries A.D., some jewellery products from Lithuania and Latvia, late Middle Ages, a wooden groove and embroideries of 19 century. But the material, which has been written down in 19 century by ethnographers is much more significant. These are remarkable Latvian songs, Lithuanian dualistic legends and national fairy tales. The big role in our understanding Balt mythologies play certificates of Christian authors (comparable with the Greek messages in the attitude the Celts, Germanics, Thracians and Illyrics).