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# THE EARTHLY LOCI OF DEATH: THE COFFIN, THE GRAVE, THE CEMETERY

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## IZVLEČEK

### **Zemeljski prostori smrti: krsta, grob, pokopališče**

V pričujočem članku avtorica preučuje različna ljudska verovanja in obrede, povezane s krsto, grobom in pokopališčem. Tipično arhaično slovansko dojemanje življenja po smrti je delitev na dva svetova. Ljudje verjamejo, da gre umrli "stran" na "drugi svet", kjer najde svoj prostor: "dom", "vas umrlega". Utelešenje takšnih podob so prostori, povezani z umrlim: krsta, grob, pokopališče, ki jih označujejo poteze posameznika in kolektivnega doma umrlega. Pogrebne šege, ljudska verovanja in uporaba besed, povezanih s smrtjo, potrjujejo tezo, da so krsta, grob in pokopališče slovanski simboli sveta na drugem svetu. Ujemajo se z bivanjem v življenju.

Krsta (v ruskem dialektu – dom, domovina, domovišče, horomina) je včasih urejena kot hiša: ima luknje ali okna ter sliko z izvezeno brisačo, ki je v njenem kotu. Grob je pogosto urejen kot hiša (rusko hatka), vrt ali dvorišče. Vedenje, predpisano na pokopališču, je pogojeno s tveganjem ostajanja na območju umrlega, kjer vse pripada umrlemu: tla, rože, drevesa, sadje in drugo. Ljudje verjamejo, da umrli v določenem času hodijo in obiskujejo drug drugega na ozemlju pokopališča. Tako je pokopališče kot območje umrlih v nasprotju z vasjo – naseljem živih. V članku avtorica opisuje tudi kompleksne odnose med prostori življenja in smrti, pa tudi način njihove medsebojne povezave.

**Ključne besede:** pokopi, krste, grobovi, pokopališča, domovi, etnolingvistika

**Key words:** funerals, coffins, graves, cemeteries, homes, ethnolinguistics

In Slavic folk perceptions man's departure from life has been understood as a passage to "another" world (going to the "other world"), where he is supposed to acquire his place, his home and his socium (see eastern Slavic phraseology connected with the metaphor of death as the "way home", "preparations to go home": in the Polesye dialect *удэ до дому, собираецца до дому, поглядае до дому* – he is going home, he is preparing to go home, he is looking homewards) in the sense 'he is dying'. Loci of the "other world" are materialized in concrete "earthly" forms connected with burial places. According to the folk view of the world, the coffin is understood as a symbol of the house, the grave as a symbol of the dwelling, whereas the house, the courtyard or even the garden, as well as

the churchyard, are supposed to be the settlements of the dead. Such symbolism runs through the most diverse contexts of folk culture: it is reflected in burial vocabulary and phraseology, in folkloric genres (fairy-tales, lyrical songs, burial lamentations, riddles, proverbs), in folk beliefs and omens, burial customs and rituals.

For the Slavs the coffin, the grave and the graveyard are the symbols of home in the “other world”; by a series of signs they correspond to the characteristics of the dwelling, the person’s home when he was still alive. Complex relations between the loci of man’s abiding in “this” and in the “other” world as well as different possible connections between them (ancient burials inside the house, keeping one’s own coffin in one’s house, the living visiting the graveyard and the “walking” dead “coming back”, protection of the house or of the village from a vampire and so forth) deserve special attention.

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As is known, the most essential elements in defining the symbolism and semantics of the Slavic burial and funeral rite are the themes of “fate”, “path” and “home”, expressed in their functional, objective, actional and terminological systems (see [Sedakova 1990: 54]). Rich in their content and mythological contexts, these themes have time and again drawn the attention of scholars. We might mention just some of the works on these issues written by Russian scholars in recent years. O. A. Sedakova [Sedakova 1990] dedicated one of her works to the theme of “fate”, moreover, each of the enumerated semantic blocks was described by her in her dissertation on rite terminology and structure of rite text from the materials of the Slavic burial rite [Sedakova 1983a]. Conceptions of the path to the next world in burial rites and in Russian funeral keening were explored by L. G. Nevskaya and A. K. Chistyakov, [Nevskaya 1980, Chistyakov 1982]. The semantics of the home in burial folklore and burial rites was addressed by L. G. Nevskaya [Nevskaya 1982] and A. K. Bayburin [Bayburin 1983: 133-176]. The theme of “home” and the “way” or the “way home” connected to it, as we can see, is not new in literature, yet nevertheless it is so all-embracing that it deserves to be referred to whenever the folk conceptions of the loci of death are being researched. In our case the subject is the material forms of “the next world” - the coffin, the grave and the graveyard.

When researching the theme of “home” it should be mentioned that the functions of the home in man’s life are determinants for a number of family, calendar and occasional rites. A very special role has been acquired by the symbolism of home in burial rites, because in this case the greatest significance is held by the main features of the division of man’s world into two parts, the transition from one world to the other, from one “home” to the other “home”. Besides, the death of a member of the household, his “departure” from the home, according to Slavic beliefs devastates the home, because the dead can take from the home a part of his property, wealth, the fecundity of cattle and fertility of fields.

The complex of omens and auguries about a person’s death are, above all, connected with the person’s house, in particular with unusual events inside the house (the walls of the house crack, crockery breaks etc.) or with any special animals, reptiles, birds or insects appearing in the house (or near the house, on the roof, in the cellar, in the courtyard, by the window). For eastern Slavs death is foretold by a swallow or a bat flying into the house. According to various omens, death is predicted by the following:

a bird's knock on the window, the scream of an eagle-owl or an owl near the house, a crow on the roof, a cuckoo appearing on the house or uttering three cries above the house. The omen of the woodpecker pecking a wall or an angle of the house, and thus predicting a death in the house, is widespread among all the eastern Slavs. With eastern and western Slavs it is usual to think that a mole living in the house or burrowing in the soil under the house, in the cellar, under the threshold, under the window or beside the house signifies the death of one of the inhabitants [Gura 1997: 63, 271-272, 714]. According to the beliefs of the southern Slavs, a snake found in the house predicts that of one of the family will die.

In the interpretation of dreams the symbolism of death is characterized by the theme of building a house [Listova 1993: 50]. In the entire territory of Polesye a new house in dreams, sometimes a house without windows and doors, foretells someone's death [Svitelskaya 1995: 190]. In the Mogilevskaya oblast (province), Byelorussia, to see a new house in one's dreams means death. In south-east Bulgaria, if a man in his dreams cuts a tree, builds a house, plants flowers or starts a fire, it means he will die soon [Strandzha 1996: 293].

The mythological similarity between the notions of 'the coffin' and 'the house' is confirmed terminologically: Russian *домовина*, *домовище* meaning 'house', 'coffin', 'a structure in the form of a coffin, built on a grave'; Russian, in Pskov, Kostroma, Tver, Smolensk *дом*, *домовница*, *хоромина* meaning 'coffin', north Russian *домовьё* meaning 'coffin', particularly a coffin hacked from a tree trunk; in Polesye *дом* (*уж ему и дом привезли* - they already brought him to his house), *домоука*, *домовина*, *дамауё*, *хата*; *улез у свой дом* - (he crawled into his house) meaning 'died', Bulgarian *къца*, Macedonian *кука* meaning 'coffin' etc. Moreover, the term *дом* (house) and its derivatives are often expanded to the notion "the next world", "the other world".

The coffin, the grave and the graveyard as the symbols of the home of the dead on Earth are contrasted with the home of the living (the coffin and the grave are contrasted with the person's house and the graveyard with the village). This is also expressed in funeral terminology, folklore, rituals and folk beliefs. In Russian proverbs based on the play on words *дом* - *домовище*, *домовина*, the house is contrasted with the coffin: *Дома нет, а домовище будет*. (There is no house, but there will be a coffin). *Дом строй, а домовину ладь*, which means remember your "home" in the other world, in the future [Dal 1: 466].

A number of names for the grave express the perception of the grave as the "eternal" refuge of man, which he finds after death, in contrast to the "temporary" (earthly) one, for instance Serbian *вечна кућа*, Macedonian *вечна кука* (coffin), see also Polesyan *вечный дом* (the eternal home) meaning 'the other world'. In Russian burial lamentations the coffin is called *вековое домовищечко* (the centuries-long home), *вековечно хоромное строеньице* (the everlasting mansion). The Ukrainians call the coffin *нова хата* (the new house), which has analogies in the burial lamentations where the motif of a new home is present. Unlike the earthly human dwelling, the house-coffin is characterized as "cold", "dark": Serbian *ледна кућа* 'coffin'; in Russian lamentations the coffin is a "cold mansion, not covered with moss", where "there

is no glazed stove” [Afanasyeva, Plotnikova 1995: 553-554], see [Nevskaya 1982: 108]. The most characteristic feature of Slavic keening over the dead is the darkness of the new “home”. In Polesye funeral keening the coffin is called *хатинойка темнейка* (the dark house) [Svitelskaya 1995: 190], in Russian keening *темная хороминка*, where “the windows look as if they have been drilled through, as if the light has been brought in by a sieve”; “the triangular apertures have not been cut through, the little glass windows have not been made” [Chistyakov 1982: 115]. In Macedonian lamentations the grave and the coffin are *зда кука* (the ugly house), *темна кука* (the dark house) with “no windows and no doors” [Risteski 1998: 255]. In Russian riddles the coffin is “a house without windows and without doors”. A number of negative meanings associated with the coffin continues with the characteristics of a “strange”, a “different” house, according to the Russian proverb *На чужбинке, словно в домовинке* (In a strange land it is like in a coffin.) [Dal 1: 466].

Making a coffin is often interpreted as building a new house: the Guzuls call it *поставэне хаты* (building a house). In the north Russian, Carpathian and Polish regions openings resembling little windows were made in the sides of the coffin at the level of the deceased’s shoulders and a window pane was put in them. In a child’s coffin the Guzuls cut out one window, and for an adult two. A small window, sometimes an opening covered with a piece of wood was also made in the Russian log coffins. According to different explanations, the windows were made for the dead to see the living; for the soul to see its body from time to time; for the dead person to see the other deceased; for the dead person to “look out” from his “house” [Afanasyeva, Plotnikova 1995: 554].

The inner furnishings of the coffin and the grave often repeat the decoration and furnishings of the earthly human dwelling. In eastern Polesye an icon decorated with an embroidered towel was placed in the corner of the coffin, thus imitating the corner with icons in the house (*красный угол*) [Svitelskaya 1995: 190, 203]. Before laying the deceased (the coffin with the deceased) in the grave, the Bulgarians sweep it like a dwelling [Vakarelsky 1990: 125]. The elements of the interior of the deceased’s previous dwelling and items he needed when he was alive are put in his coffin: food, a beverage, linen, a change of underwear, clothes, towels, shoes, a switch of green birch trees, so that he will be able to take a steam bath in the other world, etc. The articles laid in the coffin were either connected with the deceased’s habits and liking, or they were indispensable when he was still alive. For instance a lame man was given his stick or his crutch, a smoker his pipe etc. Furthermore, the articles correspond to the deceased’s profession (a shoemaker gets an awl, a tailor is given a needle), and to his age and sex (a woman gets a shawl and a needle, a child gets a toy etc.).

In accordance with the universal Slavic conception of death as a sleep, a bed was made in the coffin. The eastern Slavs covered the bottom of the coffin with straw, hay, chips, shavings, dry switches of birch trees or leaves. The Bulgarians make in the coffin a specially prepared new bed or a homespun blanket, two beds or linen. The ancient Slavs also used to cover the bottom of the graves with bedding (fabric) or they made a kind of “floor” instead - from sand or colored clay and they strewed the bottom with ashes from the home hearth [Vakarelsky 1990: 127].

The outside of the grave was also shaped like a house. The Byelorussians placed rectangular wooden constructions on the graves - *прыклады, прыкладзіны*. As a rule, these were wooden buildings in the shape of a house, covering the whole mound: such an erection resembled the cover of a coffin, it often had small windows and a roof, it was called *хатка* (a little house) [Pahavanni 1986: 30]. The constructions on the graves in the shape of a house, or logs resembling a house in form, were known in western Polesye. The names of such constructions in the Byelorussian part of western Polesye are characterized by lexemes formed from the root *хором-* (*прихором* etc.) [Svitelskaya 1995: 204-205]. Among the Russians, a cross with an icon on the grave covered with double-pitch roofing is sometimes called a “little chapel”. In some cases, the small house on the grave with a double-pitch roof was crowned with a carved finial [Chistyakov 1982: 115]. In the Russian North it is possible to see, beside the ordinary cross, an oblong quadrangular construction (a “goloubets” or stuffed cabbage roll), open at the top or with a flat roof, on which a cross is placed [Zelenin 1991: 351].

The eastern Slavic constructions on the graves correspond to the southern Slavic burial rites. In north-west Bulgaria there is a custom of building on the grave a house-like structure from bricks and mortar or placing on it a miniature model of a house [Benovska-S'bkova 1995: 217]. As the researchers have noted, in eastern Bulgaria a “little house” (*къщичка*) can be either wooden, ceramic or even specially made of tin-plates, which is a product of local handicrafts. [EB: 198]. Building of similar “houses” and miniature models of houses on the graves is also known in southern Bulgaria and Macedonia. In Strandzha over a period of 40 days the relatives of the deceased every day bring to the graveyard 40 stones or tile plates, from which they build on the grave a construction called *къща, мъртъвската къща*, the house of the dead. The grave is often fenced with four big stones or stone plates, while in the area of Malkotyrново a “small house” (*къщичка*) is built from four thick boards [Strandzha 1996: 300]. In the Rhodope villages a house-like structure is built for the deceased twice. First, after lowering the coffin into the grave, it is covered with twigs, logs and stone plates. Afterwards a wooden house (*кукла, кошничка*) is placed on the grave with candles inside which are supposed to “light the dead person’s way to the other world” [Rhodope: 202-203].

On the grave a peculiar garden is arranged: flowers and fruit-trees are planted and the place is fenced with a paling, stones or sticks. Russians used to put turf round the grave mound [Kremlyova 1993: 20]. In Polesye, in the region of Gomel, on the feast of St. Radunits a tree had to be planted on the grave and birch sticks were driven into the ground around it [PA]. In the region of Sofia, on the fortieth day the grave is fenced with stones and sowed with wheat [Sofia region: 228].

The system of the Slavs’ mythological conceptions connected with the grave as the deceased’s house can acquire specific forms in dreams and nocturnal visions. According to the records from Polesye, when the relatives take some sand from the grave on the twelfth day after the funeral and consecrate it in the church in order to take it back to the grave, in case of their forgetfulness, according to stories, the dead person “comes” to them in their dreams and demands that they return him “the corner of his house”. *Бувае як не однесеи той песок, ноччу покойник буде сницца, да иче*

скажэ: “Чого ты моей хаты вугол одорвала?” [PA, the Gomelskaya province, village of Stodolichi, recorded by L.N. Vinogradova].

210 Similar rituals and beliefs are connected with the graveyard as a whole, being the place where the dead or their souls abide. It is considered that the souls live in the graveyard and keep the habits from the times when they were still alive. According to the beliefs of the Bulgarians and Macedonians, at midnight the dead come out of their graves to take a walk around the graveyard and visit each other. In Bosnia it was believed that a man who was forced to sleep in a graveyard should not lie between two graves because the dead in the two graves would quarrel about “which of them he came to visit” and they could strangle the man for that [ZNŽO 27/1: 175]. The first deceased person buried in a new graveyard is believed to be the forefather of the whole graveyard community of “ancestors”. It is supposed that the whole “community” has a malevolent attitude towards those who had not died a natural death (those hanged or drowned), and they are not accepted into the community. This can be one of the many explanations of the typical burials of such dead outside the space of those deceased who died a natural death (see [Zelenin 1995: 92]).

The names of graveyards often express semantics defining them as ‘a dwelling, a settlement of the dead’. M. Fasmer connects Russian dialectal names *буѣ, буѣво* with that adopted from the Old Swedish *bó* “dwelling” and Old Slavic *bú* “dwelling” [Fasmer 1: 234]. The Russian word *нозочн* (the original meaning of which was “a coaching inn, where the prince and ecclesiastics stayed temporarily”) is used in dialects in the meanings ‘church community’, ‘parish’, ‘the center of the village area’, and also ‘graveyard’ [Fasmer 3: 295].

The plants and the trees within the boundaries of the graveyard are supposed to belong to the dead, and it is therefore forbidden in the graveyard to break twigs, to pick flowers or even inhale their fragrance lest one should lose one’s sense of smell. Such prohibitions are particularly common among the western Slavs. In Silesia it is believed that a man who smelled or picked a flower in a graveyard, will be visited at night by a dead person who will remind him that this is his property [Fischer 1921: 353]. In the Polish Beskidi it is thought that a person who picks flowers from graves will get sores and boils on his body as a revenge from the dead [Wierhy 1981/41: 226]. Among the Serbs it is forbidden to cut trees in a graveyard, otherwise the souls of the dead will not be able to rest in the shadow of the trees and eat their fruit [SMR: 136]. According to Bosnian beliefs, a man who has eaten fruit in a graveyard will fall ill with dropsy [GZM 1995/10: 133] etc.

Breaches of etiquette during any time spent in a graveyard (in other words, in a settlement of the dead) entail a punishment, often in the form of the unexpected appearance of the dead in the settlement of the living. According to the beliefs in Polesye, if a housewife breaks a stick in the graveyard and sweeps the ashes from the stove with it, the dead will roam inside the house and under the window for the whole night [Sedakova 1983b: 253].

At the same time, the graveyard as a sacred locus indicating the earthly location of “the other world” becomes a legitimized place of meeting between the living and the

dead: people come to the graveyard on the days of remembrance of the dead in prayer, they leave food for the souls; they bring them presents of clothes; they greet them as if they were alive; they clean and decorate the graves, they bake a special sort of bread and so on. It is characteristic to invite the dead to a meal which takes place on the graves, as, for example, among the Byelorussians, on Tuesday of St. Thomas's week dedicated to the remembrance of the dead in prayer: "*Святые радзицели! Ходзице к нам хлеба-соли откушаць*" (Holy parents! Come to us and have some bread with salt.) [Tereschenko 1848/3: 122]. In a west Byelorussian ritual called *будить покойника* (to wake a dead man), a dead relative was 'hailed' and 'entertained' to ritual food in the graveyard on the second or third day after the funeral [PA]. In Ryazan province, the ritual food which was brought to the graveyard on the feast called Radunitsa (Tuesday of St. Thomas's week), seemed to be divided between the living and the dead, who came "from the dark" and invisibly attended the feast together with the living until sunset [Tereschenko 1848/5: 28-29].

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The house is contrasted with the world ("home") of the dead and therefore it cannot be the place of a new meeting between the living and the dead, with the exception of the special feasts dedicated to the remembrance of the dead in prayer. These feasts are not celebrated on the graveyard but in the house to which the "ancestors" and "parents" are invited. The same status of a sacred time, when a meeting with the dead takes place inside the house, is connected with certain calendar feasts, above all the "svyatki" (Christmas-time) and some other days. For instance, in Byelorussian Polesye the "grandfathers" were invited to supper on the last day of "Maslenitsa" (Shrovetide - the week before Lent): in the evening everyone sat at the festive table. The housewife opened the window and called three times: "*Дяды, дяды, ходзьце вячэраць!*" (Grandfathers, grandfathers, come to supper!) [Pahavanni: 163].

In everyday life the appearance of the dead in the house, not to mention demons such as vampires, was extremely undesirable. Therefore the protection of the house by means of various ritual and magical acts began immediately after a deceased person appeared in the house. While the dead person was lying in the house, it was forbidden to do any work in the house or in the garden. At the moment when the deceased's coffin - his "new house" was brought into the house, everyone went out, especially pregnant women. The carrying out of the deceased was done extremely carefully: they knocked with the coffin on the threshold, so that the deceased bade farewell to his "old" home and would not come back anymore; they turned over all the furniture in the house, they poured out water, they gave the remains of bread and other food to dogs, from the house they threw after the dead person a stone or smoldering pieces of wood from the hearth, they swept or washed the floor, they opened all the windows and doors, they took the deceased's effects out of the house and burnt them. In the Russian North, after the coffin has been taken out, rubbish from the street is swept towards the house so that all its inhabitants will stay in the house [Zelenin 1991: 349]. The Bulgarians do not spend the first night in the house where the deceased is lying. In various Slavic regions the fellow-villagers do not take anything from such a house, especially food (see, for example, [Romanov 1912: 309]). In the vicinity of Gevgelia (Macedonia)

after the deceased has been buried, every villager pours out all the drinking water he has (calling this water *мртoвска* ‘belonging to the dead’) and brings new water. The housewives also change the leaven for bread every time somebody has died in the village [Tanovich 1927: 258].

The path connecting two contrasted loci, the house and the grave (coffin), the village and the graveyard, becomes the concrete incarnation of the path to “the other world”. A number of ritual and magical acts are carried out on the way to the graveyard and from the graveyard towards home. To avoid negative consequences connected with the returning of the dead to the house of the living, in various Slavic regions people take another route home from the graveyard, and they do not turn back on the way to the graveyard and from the graveyard home. On the way from the graveyard the Serbs tried not to go to other people’s houses in order not to bring misfortune to the house. When they entered their own house they thoroughly shook off any soil from the graveyard. Graveyards are often situated on the other side of a river, a brook or another water barrier which the souls of the dead cannot overcome [Zechevich 1982: 61]. Among the Balkan Slavs, before going from the graveyard after the burial of the deceased it is customary to wash one’s hands in the nearest water source. In the south-west of Bulgaria (the community of Petrich, village of Gega, record of E. S. Uzeneva [MDABIA]), after washing their hands each participant at the burial took a handful of water and threw it behind his back over the left and the right shoulders, “so that the deceased would forget his way home”. For the same purpose in that area a fire was lit in front of the house entrance and everyone stepping over the threshold after the funeral took a piece of charcoal and threw it behind his back. In Strandzha after the burial every participant leaving the graveyard throws a stone behind his back, “so that the dead will not come back” [Strandzha: 298]. In Rhodope, after the burial people do not take home any items from the grave that had been brought to the graveyard [Rhodope: 202].

Special measures for protecting the house against visits from the walking dead, vampires, can also be connected with the route. Thus in eastern Serbia (in the region of Knjaževac, village of Donja Kamenica, record of the author [MDABIA]) people strew the way from the home to the graveyard with millet. Then they bestrew the grave and go on strewing millet on the way from the graveyard to the river in order to get rid of the vampire who has been coming to the house; in this way “drowning” him in the river. Here a quite typical system of protective acts is used: a demonic character from the other world, having visited the house of the living and going back to his dwelling-place, counts the strewed grains, yet his path suggested by people continues goes from his grave to the water.

Of course, the earthly loci of death understood as places connected with various kinds of conceptions of death are not limited by concrete and real places of burial. For instance, in Russian keening the localization of the other world envelops the subterranean sphere, unknown and inaccessible places, water, “the sky” (the latter is less often expressed in lamentations) [Chistyakov 1982: 121-122]. In beliefs and rituals concerning human dwelling, the places connected with “ancestors” are the threshold of the house and the stove (see, for example, [Bayburin 1983: 138, 167]).



In this way, a complex of Slavic conceptions about the concrete (materialized, earthly) loci of death is realized in completely different forms: from the ways of naming the coffin, the tombstones and the graveyard to the beliefs and ritual or magical acts connected with the places of burial. These conceptions are also reflected in the motifs of oral folklore (mostly in lamentations and keening) where they acquire a special mytho-poetical appearance. An archaic system of beliefs about death can be brought to light through an analysis of the extensive body of Slavic ethnographical, linguistic, folkloric and general cultural contexts which are connected with the subjects themselves (in our case: the coffin, the grave and the graveyard) as well as with that object of research, whose concept constitutes the basic semantic dominant of the familiar beliefs and rituals; i.e. the actual human dwelling. Complex correlations between the two worlds (of the living and of the dead) are reflected in concrete rituals and beliefs concerning their materialized substances, therefore the complex of ritual and magical acts connected with the house on one hand, and with the coffin (the place of burial) on the other hand, become significant. The real connecting link between them is the path, the path from the village to the graveyard and back. Here an important role is played by “the landmarks on the way”, its main points: the threshold of the house, the gate of the courtyard, the boundary of the village, crossroads, passages over water, the graveyard gate; however this theme deserves separate research.

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BESEDA O AVTORICI

Anna Plotnikova, dr., na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Moskvi je diplomirala iz ruščine in ruske književnosti, na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Beogradu pa iz srbohrvaškega jezika in jugoslovanske književnosti. Doktorirala je leta 1990. Je višja znanstvena sodelavka na Oddelku za slovansko etnolingvistiko in folkloro na Inštitutu za slovanske študije Ruske akademije znanosti v Moskvi. Ukvarja se z ljudsko kulturo, dialektologijo južno-slovanskih jezikov, lingogeografijo in etnolingvistiko. Objavila je okoli 100 znanstvenih člankov. Njeno najpomembnejše delo je Gradivo za etnolingvistično raziskovanje balkanoslovanskih area-  
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