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(Baku, Azerbaijan) memmedov.subhan@gmail.com**“AVESTA” MOTIFS IN GERMAN AND AZERBAIJANI FOLKLORE**

In this article, the influence of Avesta on German and Azerbaijani folklore is studied in detail. It would be more correct to say that the ideas and artistic motifs of “Avesta” that are important for the whole world, did not go unnoticed in the oral literature of the German people. We find traces of “Avesta” in the form of episodes in separate tales and legends, as well as other artistic examples, existing in the oral literature of the German people. In this regard, the “Nibelungenlied” epic, which is an ancient German epic, is more important. Mythical images, battle scenes and other similar motifs present in the epic resonate with the “Avesta”. That is why, in this article, the “Nibelungenlied” epic, which is one of the world-famous and masterpieces of German oral folk literature, is compared with the “Avesta”, the holy book of Zoroastrianism, and the characteristics of the influence of Avesta on this epic are studied. In addition, the position of Avesta in Azerbaijani oral folk literature is studied in this article. Artistic examples included in the folklore of Azerbaijan lullabies, fairy tales, folk games were compared with the Avesta and the influence of the Avesta on these artistic examples was clarified. In addition, the traditions of novruz, one of the favorite holidays of our people, were deeply analyzed, the role and importance of Zoroastrianism in the formation of this holiday was studied. Thus, as a result of the research, it was clear that most of the ideas and sayings, aphorisms and wise sayings, proverbs and expressions, fables, legends, narratives and epics that exist today in the thinking of many Eastern and Western peoples, especially Germans, including Azerbaijan, took their origin from “Avesta”. In this article, “Avesta” is characterized as a collection of religious, scientific-philosophical and literary-artistic books. It is emphasized that it, together with the “Gilgamesh” epic, is the first point of reference in the history of the artistic ideas of Azerbaijan and many peoples along with Azerbaijan,

Key words: Avesta, Zarathustra, folklore, German literature, Azerbaijani literature.

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ФОЛЬКЛОРИ**

У цій статті детально досліджено вплив Авести на німецький та азербайджанський фольклор. Правильніше було б сказати, що важливі для всього світу ідеї та художні мотиви «Авести» не залишилися непоміченими в усній словесності німецького народу. Сліди «Авести» у вигляді епізодів знаходимо в окремих переказах і легендах, а також інших художніх зразках, що існують в усній словесності німецького народу. У цьому відношенні більш важливим є епос «Повісті Нібелунгів», який є давньонімецьким епосом. Міфічні образи, батальні сцени та інші подібні мотиви, присутні в епосі, перегукуються з «Авестою». Тому в цій статті епос «Про Нібелунгів», який є одним із всесвітньо відомих і шедеврів німецької усної народної словесності, порівнюється з «Авестою», священною книгою зороастризму, а також характеристики впливу Авести про цей епос вивчаються. Крім того, у статті досліджено місце Авести в азербайджанській усній народній словесності. Художні зразки, що входять до складу азербайджанського фольклору, колискові пісні, казки, народні ігри порівнювалися з Авестою і з'ясувалося вплив Авести на ці художні зразки. Крім того, глибоко проаналізовано традиції Новруз, одного з улюблених свят нашого народу, досліджено роль і значення зороастризму у становленні цього свята. Таким чином, у результаті дослідження з'ясувалося, що більшість уявлень і приказок, афоризмів і мудрих висловів, прислів'їв і висловів, байок, легенд, оповідань і билин, які існують сьогодні в мисленні багатьох східних і західних народів, особливо Німці, в тому числі і Азербайджан, брали своє походження від «Авести». У цій статті «Авеста» характеризується як збірник релігійних, науково-філософських і літературно-художніх книг, підкреслюється, що вона, разом з епосом «Гільгамеш», є першою точкою відліку в історії художнього мистецтва. ідеї Азербайджану і багатьох народів разом з Азербайджаном,

Ключові слова: Авеста, Заратустра, фольклор, німецька література, азербайджанська література.

Introduction. The more religious-philosophical, legal and socio-psychological work "Avesta" is, the more it is one of the most beautiful literary examples, containing the features of literary and artistic works. It is possible to find here the features of both folklore and oral folk literature, as well as written literature, elements of poetry and prose. Most of the ideas and idioms, aphorisms and wise words, proverbs and sayings, fables, legends, narratives and epics that exist today in the thinking of many Eastern and Western peoples, including Azerbaijan, took their origin from "Avesta". However, this magnificent monument did not only affect the oral literature, but also left deep traces in the written literature.

From this point of view, the views of professor Elmaddin Alibayzade in his work "History of Azerbaijani literature", published in 2009, are of great importance. Calling "Avesta" a collection of religious, scientific-philosophical and literary-artistic books, he emphasizes that it, together with the epic "Gilgamesh", forms the first reference point in the history of artistic thought of Azerbaijan, and notes that "Avesta" is even older than the epic "Gilgamesh": "Zoroastrianism is religion, philosophy, science, art. Starting from the Sumerian-Babylonian culture, this religion, philosophy, science and art became a complete concept in the "Avesta" and became a rich collection of thoughts and sayings. The basis of the world of religious and ethical views, philosophical views and artistic ideas of Azerbaijan is the Sumerian-Babylonian culture, the epic "Gilgamesh" and the "Avesta". Secular ideas in the "Avesta" have been the initial point of view, the main line of our religious faith, philosophy, traditions, literature, moral and aesthetic taste throughout history. No matter how strong the opposite effect of Islamic views is, it has not been able to overcome, and lose this deep-rooted core. The correctness of our opinion will be confirmed if we follow this main thread only in the "Book of Dada Gorgud", which is the peak of pre-Islamic folk sayings, and in the work of Nizami, who is considered the genius of the Islamic culture period. As a whole, the history of all-Turkic, as well as Azerbaijani spiritual thought goes back to ancient times, and merges into a single root. If we agree with the opinion that Zarathustra "really lived in the 7th–6th millennium BC and the "Avesta" was created at that time", It is understood that "Avesta" predates the Sumerian culture and its indispensable heroic epic "Gilgamesh", and is still the primary spiritual source for the history of world culture and religion. If we take into account the "calculations" of Greek writers and scientists, now it is 9–10 thousand years old. And this is from "the beginning of history". No one and no idea has lived this life" (Əlibəyzadə, 2009, p. 209–211).

Elmaddin Alibeyzade tries to justify with his opinion that "Avesta" has played its role in the formation of world culture because it has a very ancient history. If we agree with what the distinguished professor said, we come to such a scientific conclusion that "Avesta" has significantly influenced the folklore of the peoples of the world as well as Europe. In this sense, it would be more correct to say that the universal ideas and artistic motifs in "Avesta" did not remain unaffected on the oral literature of the German people. We find traces of "Avesta" in the form of episodes in separate tales and legends, as well as other artistic examples, existing in the oral literature of the German people. In this regard, the "Nibelungenlied" epic, which is an ancient German epic, is more important. Mythical images, battle scenes and other similar motifs present in the epic resonate with the "Avesta". The events of this epic take place in the Rhine valley, in the ancient city of Worms.

Discussion. Along with Christian rites and rituals, ancient beliefs and mythical elements are found in the epic. The king-people, feudal-peasant relations also show that this epic bears traces of the Middle Ages. When you get acquainted with the epic, it is clear that this artistic monument has gone through a long period of historical formation. The fact that the epic goes back to ancient times strengthens the idea that it was influenced by "Avesta".

Above, we gave certain information about the influence of "Avesta" on the world's mythological thinking. This period basically started after Alexander's march to the East. Thus, after Alexander the Macedonian attacked Iran and other eastern lands and took these territories under his unified rule, a single Hellenistic culture began to form in all the lands he ruled. The unification around this culture has led to the creation of a single ideology in the cultural life and way of thinking of all the peoples living in those areas. Eastern peoples copied many things from the West, and Western peoples copied many things from the East. In a word, unified management has strengthened cultural assimilation. This unification mainly influenced the mythological outlook of the peoples. Some literary motifs in the mythological thinking of the peoples under the control of the Greek-Macedonian empire have already acquired an international character after a certain time. Those motives that existed in the mythical system of these peoples, one might say, we find in the oral literature of both the eastern and Western peoples. Reflecting on some of them below may be useful in the future to base our opinion on scientific points of view:

– A three-headed, or multi-headed, fire-breathing dragon that exists as a mythical figure in epics and fairy tales, as well as in legends and myths;

– Battle scenes that took place within the framework of a certain morality and the voluntary transfer of the defeated wrestler during these battles to the vassalage of the victorious side;

– In fables, fairy tales and epics, the hero's skin becomes unarmed by bathing in the lake and river or rubbing some substance on it, and by chance an open space remains in some part of the body at the level of the weapon, etc.

It should be noted that it is possible to extend this list as much as desired. But even this amount will be enough for us to substantiate our opinion from a scientific point of view. It is also satisfactory in terms of the volume of this dissertation.

As we mentioned above, the dragon cult has left deep traces in the mythical way of thinking of almost all peoples and has become a system. In the mythology of the peoples of the world, the image of a dragon can be found in two situations, characteristic of:

– The first of them is the image of a dragon, personifying kindness and acting as a positive hero, which we find in literature and other art samples of ancient Chinese, ancient Sumerian-Akkad and other peoples.

– In the second case, the image of the dragon acts as a mythical negative image representing evil, which is mainly the territories where the teaching of Zoroastrianism spread. This includes ancient Iran, Azerbaijan and other territories.

In the convex images of the golden glass found in Hasanli, we see the symbols of the ancient Sumerian gods. This image depicts a three-headed dragon behind the King's throne. This dragon represents the three main Sumerian gods. The first of them is the first Sumerian god – the sky god An, the second is his son – the air god Enlil, who became the main god in the Sumerian pantheon after his father (after 2500 BC), and the third is the water god Enki – who shows himself as a knowing, wise god in all matters. Always depicted together behind the royal throne and in fish skin, these gods are shown as patrons of fertility, abundance and state. The image of a lion lying next to the King's throne is also a motif from the Sumerians. It was used in ancient Azerbaijani art as a symbol of the sun, Ahura Mazda, and power (Rzayev 2019, p. 372). The lion lying next to the throne is a symbol of the Sumerian goddess Inanna, patroness of the state of Manna. G.Kurochkin believes that this lion figure is the lion on which Anahit is riding, as if the lion was given on this glass as one of Anahit's symbols. This is far from the truth. Because A.O.Makovelsky in his work “Avesta” shows that “Avesta does not recognize the lion” (Rzayev, 2019, p. 125). Therefore, the lion here could not be a sign of Anahit. This opinion of his is not justified in the interpreta-

tion of the images. It is true that in the Middle East there were many images and figurines of goddesses on a lion, and often, incorrectly, they considered them the image of Anahit. However, it is a fact that these works of art, which appeared under the influence of Sumerian culture, were never created in connection with the teachings of the “Avesta”, but were dedicated to the Sumerian goddess Inanna (Ishtar) (Rzayev, 2019, p. 311).

Rightly, Mokovelsky does not attribute mythical elements originating from Sumerians to “Avesta”. Referring to Mokovelsky's scientific results, we can say in agreement with him that the image of the dragon in the “Avesta” acts as a representative of evil. To strengthen our opinion, it is enough to look at the activity of evil forces in this monument. Unlike Angra Mainyu himself, the forces gathered around him have no signs of divinity, and the creative function is very weak. They have a limited scope, but destructive power. Aj-Dahak (Dahak) is the name of a huge snake, which occupies a special place among evil forces. It has 3 bodies, 3 heads, 6 eyes, 1000 tricks. With these indicators, the snake cannot change its skin, retreat from the waters, constantly creating drought and damaging the soil, although it strives to become a judge-absolute. Its Arabized and Persianized form is Zohhak. Zohhak is described in the “Shahnameh” as an angry king-tyrant. It feeds on human brains and sprouts snakes from its shoulders. The most terrible tragedy caused by Aj-Dahak is the killing of Kersasp, a loyal supporter of Hormuz. This murder is committed by the horned dragon Sarvar. In the light of Ahur-Mazd, every good god has a giant enemy. In the initial conflict, Vohu-Mana's brutal opponent is Ak-Man (meaning “bitter spirit”, often equated with Anhro-Manyu). The main core, the most active and powerful branch of the army of the evil spirit is the Daevs (Giants). The word “Daev” means “cruel” and “enemy”. Many of them are cursed in “Avesta”. Some of the giants functioned as idols in earlier beliefs. For example, a giant named Buit is believed to be Buddha, an idol-god long denied by fire worshipers as the main belief in India. Asto-vidot is the name of one of the angels of death, he destroys the body of the dying person and entraps his soul, and Virazsh takes those stuck on the Chinvad bridge to hell. Ayshma-daev means “anger”, “depravity”, and the three most terrible giants are called that. It is interesting that in our tales the heroes fight three giants. And those giants live in the depths of the earth with a desire for light, they kidnap beautiful girls and keep them with them as a symbol of the sun (Qafarli, 2019, p. 389). As it seems, all the giants and dragons present in “Avesta” represent evil as the minions of Ahriman.

Based on the general results obtained from the above scientific facts, we can note that the mythical dragon image in the "Nibelungenlied" epic, the ancient epic of the German people, also originates from the "Avesta". Here it is shown that Siegfried, after wandering for a long time, meets a blacksmith. He begins working as a lamp for a blacksmith with the goal of obtaining a sword. A blacksmith named Mimir takes his new lamp to the furnace and hands him the heaviest hammer to see if he can cope with the task. Siegfried strikes with the hammer in such a way that pieces of iron scatter around. Enraged by this, Mimir grabbed Siegfried by the ear, and Siegfried hit him the ground. The blacksmith sends him to the coal miner on the other side of the forest to get coal to save himself from Siegfried. He thinks that on his way there, the dragon on the road will destroy Siegfried. Taking the sword he had made for himself, Siegfried was attacked by a dragon on the cliff. He uproots the first tree in front of him and throws it at the dragon. Seeing the dragon among the branches of the tree, Siegfried became encouraged, threw other trees at the dragon. As soon as the trees piled up on top of the dragon, Siegfried set fire to the dragon and set it on fire.

In another part of the epic, it is said that Siegfried, who reached the coal miner, asked him the location of the dragon mentioned by Mimir and his friends. The coal miner tells him the location of the dragon, and Siegfried is in trouble on the way. After a long toil, Siegfried reaches the land of the Nibelungen, where the dragon resides. This country is ruled by two kings named Schilbung and Nibelung. These two kings and the warriors attached to them are waiting to obtain a very large treasure as well. Siegfried meets a dragon at the entrance to the city and begins to fight him. The dragon spews fire from its mouth and attacks Siegfried. In the end, Siegfried destroys the dragon. Hearing the dragon's roar, Schilbung and Nibelung come out of hiding and thank the hero for slaying the monstrous dragon and ask him to divide the Nibelungen's treasure between them. In return, they promise to give him the best sword, ballung. As we have seen, in both episodes, the dragon is depicted as a negative mythical figure representing evil. This also reveals the role of "Avesta" in the formation of "Nibelungenlied" epic as an undeniable fact.

G. Kurochkin, based on the legends of "Ardivisur-Yasht", narrates that Treton, the hero who defeated the three-headed dragon, helps Paurova, a boatman hurrying to his house, to rise to the sky in the form of a chalagan in order to quickly reach his apartment. The boatman flies to his home for three days and three nights, but he cannot land. Therefore, the boatman approached Anahit, who appeared in the sky

at dawn, and asked the goddess to bring him down to the ground and bring him to his home, in return, he gives Anahit a vow consisting of hom drink and milk filtered and purified in the waters of the Rangkh River. Anahit, portrayed as a beautiful, strong, slender girl, fulfills this request and brings him home safely.

Another motif in folklore, epics and fairy tales, as well as in historical sources, are the battle scenes of the heroes. These battle scenes have remained in folklore and history as heritage. In the oral literature of the peoples of the world, the exploits of the heroes during the Iranian-Turan and Iranian-Greek wars were immortalized. It should be noted that during both wars, the teaching of Zoroastrianism in ancient Iran and nearby territories was at the level of the official religion. During these periods, quite well-known heroes and brave warriors of their time, such as Afrasiyab, Rustam zal and others, grew up on both Iranian and Turan lands. Countless examples of Iranian combat culture were also worked out in written literature at different times. Nizami Ganjavi, Abulgasim Firdovsi and other poets portrayed the beating scenes of Zoroastrian heroes in their works. It should be noted that numerous "Shahname"s have been written in the history of literature. One of them is a "Shahname" from the Uzbek period. The most notable scene in this work is the scene of Shaghad's murder by Rustam. This scene was one of the most described stories of the epic in terms of reflecting the death of the chief hero of the "Shahnameh" Rustam. According to the story, Shaghad is the step-brother of Rustam and also the son-in-law of the king of Kabul. At that time, Kabul was paying taxes to Rustam. The king and Shaghad come up with a plan to evade this tax. Shaghad complains to Rustam that the king of Kabul insulted him. Rustam also takes a hundred warriors with him and goes to take revenge on the king. Asking for forgiveness from Rustam, the king of Kabul invites him to hunt. At the hunting ground, a trap is prepared for Rustam in secret holes filled with pre-sharpened swords and spears. Rustam, his horse Rahsh and a hundred warriors fall into these pits. Understanding the trap of Shaghad, Rustam then asks him for a bow and arrow. As soon as Shaghad fulfills this wish, Rustam draws his bow and takes aim at Shaghad. Shaghad is afraid and hides behind a tree. However, Rustam kills Shaghad by nailing him to a tree with his arrow.

It should be noted that numerous research works have been conducted on the heroes depicted in the history, legends and fables of Iran related to the Zadush period, as well as epics. One of them is the doctoral dissertation of Abdolrahman Dieji at Istanbul University called "Battle Scenes in Iranian Miniatures".

In this scientific work, it can be said that the feats of all the Iranian heroes of the Zoroastrian era were mentioned and under the title “Characteristics of Iranian miniature war scenes”, the development of battle scenes, battle composition and positions, the confrontation of two warriors in an empty field, the struggle of two warriors in front of two armies, the fight of two groups, the field war of two armies, the pursuit of the enemy, the raid on the camp, the castle siege, creatures fighting man, man fighting man, man fighting imaginary creatures, man fighting monster, etc. topics are discussed in detail. It is clear as a scientific fact that these martial traditions, inherited from the Zoroastrian period, spread to the culture of other nations.

We see this in the “Nibelungenlied” epic. In the epic, the Nibelungen kings Schilbung and Nibelung gathered warriors and attacked Siegfried. During the battle, Siegfried kills the kings and up to five hundred warriors. Meanwhile, Tarnkappe and the dwarf Alberich enter the battlefield. Attacking Siegfried to avenge the slain kings, Alberich torments him, but is finally defeated and swears to be his vassal. The warriors of the Nibelungen country also take an oath to come under Siegfried's rule. The battle scene described here reminds us of the battlefield where Rustam or Afrasiyab fought. It is clear from the episode that these battle scenes were based on eastern, especially “Avesta” motifs.

There is another motif in the “Nibelungenlied” epic, which, besides being quite ancient, has been used in the epics of many peoples. In these legends, tales and epics, the hero's skin becomes impregnable by bathing in a lake or river, or by rubbing some substance on it, and by chance, an open space is left in some part of the body at a level where a weapon can work. In the epic “Nibelungenlied” Siegfried is attacked by a dragon on a cliff. He uproots the first tree in front of him and throws it at the dragon. Seeing the dragon in the branches of the tree, Siegfried threw other trees at the dragon. As soon as the trees piled up on top of the dragon, Siegfried set fire to the dragon and set it on fire. As the dragon burns, fat flows from its body. Siegfried, who touched this oil with his finger, saw that his finger hardened like a horn. Then he wipes his whole body. While anointing, a leaf falls between Siegfried's shoulders as he stands under the linden tree. Siegfried's body is no longer affected by weapons. However, since oil does not get to the place where the leaf fell, Siegfried can only get a wound from there. It should be noted that this motive is also present in the “Book of Dada Gorgud” epos, which is a monument of our nation's spiritual culture, “on the boy of Basat's killing Tapagoz”. In addition, we find this motif in the “Legend of Achilles” in Greek

mythology. Achilles is the name of one of the heroes in Homer's poems “Iliad” and “Odyssey”. “The Legend of Achilles” says that Achilles' mother, Thetis, bathed her son in the sacred river Styx to make him invincible. Because she is holding his son's heel, Achilles' heel is not touched by water, this part of his body remains unprotected. Achilles' tutor, the Centaur Chiron, feeds him with the entrails of lions, bears and boars, teaches him to play the lyre and sing. Thanks to him, Achilles becomes a fearless warrior. In one of the battles, Achilles' rival Paris manages to kill him. Paris' arrow pierces Achilles' heel, the only weak spot in his body. This is how the proud and valiant Achilles, the favorite hero of Alexander the Great, the outstanding general of ancient times, perishes.

This legend about Achilles, the main hero of Homer's poems, probably passed into the Greek mythological thought from the “Avesta”. Considering the fact that “Avesta” is older than Homer, it can be assumed that certain episodes in “Iliad” and “Odyssey” were copied from “Avesta”. The fact that we come across such episodes in the “Book of Dada Gorgud” epic is a clear proof that those motifs originate from the East. In conclusion, we can say that “Avesta” played a great role in the formation of the folklore of Germans as well as other peoples. The scientific results we obtained with the ideas we justified above give reason to say this.

Our magnificent monument “Avesta” and the religious-ideological philosophy of Zoroastrianism had a special influence on European peoples as well as Eastern peoples, especially the people of Azerbaijan, their folklore and fiction, has left its traces in a number of examples of oral folk literature – tales, epics, legends, proverbs, sayings, folk performances, etc. Considering that Zarathustra came out of the Azerbaijani lands, the traces left by this magnificent monument in our literature are very natural, and even if we say that the Azerbaijani people are more fortunate in this matter than other Eastern peoples, we will not be mistaken.

Even today we see traces of Zoroastrian philosophy and traditions in a number of proverbs widely used in our language. So, in Zoroastrianism, burial rites would not be performed with the burial of the dead. It was first placed in a high place, for example, on the roof of a house. After forty days, after the carrion-eating birds, crows and ravens finished eating the flesh of the deceased, after the bones were cleaned from the flesh, the deceased's owners kept the remaining bones on the ground in a special place. Because “according to belief, a person should protect the purity of fire, water and soil. The fire and the land could not be defiled with corpses. Therefore, the bodies were left in stony places on the heights, or in sto-

ne structures called huts (tower of silence), reminiscent of such places, so that the animals and birds could be fed. The bones were also stored in special places so as not to defile the soil" (A rich expression of the Azerbaijan spirit, 2016). Proverbs that are still used in our language today, such as "The meat was entrusted, the bone is permanent", "The flesh is yours, the bone is mine", "Eats flesh, but does not bite bones", "Eats my flesh, he stares at my bones", "Eats my flesh, but does not throw out my bones" are proverbs related to Zoroastrian funeral rites. Or proverbs such as "Fire is our mother, it is holy", "Welcome from the hearth, farewell from the hearth", "Fire is faith", "Do not pour water into the fire", "The fire does not burn the child that does not burn", "They do not put the fire near the water" according to the Zoroastrian religion stand on the belief of holiness (Proverbs 2013, p. 179–181, 327–328). The fact that fire has been considered sacred since time immemorial, the belief that it will cleanse a person from all kinds of evil, evil, and that good will triumph has been expressed. This is the spirit of Azerbaijan-it is still at the core of world culture today (A rich expression of the Azerbaijan spirit, 2016).

One of the most authoritative sources of our oral folk literature is folk plays and performances, which are directly related to the traditions of Zoroastrianism. These folk plays and performances are holidays and ceremonies associated with natural phenomena, such as the arrival of spring, the awakening of nature, fertility, and so on, and are celebrated in many nations of the world. One of such holidays, which includes very rich folk traditions, is Novruz, which has a very ancient history. In general, the question of the origin of Novruz, how it arose and took its modern form is a rather interesting process. Determining the role played by the Zoroastrian religious outlook, customs and traditions in this process and investigating the traces left by this process in our cultural history is a very relevant issue, as the subject of our dissertation. From the point of view of the study of the origin of Novruz, it is important to consider a number of folk ceremonial games related to the ancient Zoroastrian rites. It is known that, like other cultural events, Novruz, along with preserving the cultural heritage before it, adopted something from the culture after it, that is, Zoroastrian customs and traditions. It should be noted that this is very important from the point of view of examining the common, similar and distinctive features of Zoroastrianism ceremonial games and Novruz ceremonial games.

The replacement of one season in nature by another season and the course of agricultural work related to it were explained from this point of view as the effect of divine forces and were celebrated

with corresponding semi-religious performances. In later periods, these festivals were changed, subjected to various influences and were called by other names, but the people preserved the original nature and manner of execution of these holidays for a long time. Incomplete information from sources of the distant past, of course, cannot give a complete picture of these ceremonies. However, it is necessary to look for the initial period of creation and trace of a number of our folk performances known to us now in these ancient festivals (Zoroastrian ceremonies, traditions and their distribution in the ancient olympic games).

Thus, there are the following ceremonial games on the religious worldview and traditions of Zoroastrianism:

"Azerjan" ceremonial game, celebration is one of the oldest Azer celebrations. The most sacred festival of our great ancestors was dedicated to the "invisible flame", the god of fire, which gives warmth to the human body and living nature. According to the old belief, each of them was dedicated separately to the five incarnations of fire, that is, to the fire lying in the trunk of the tree, to the heat that gives warmth to man and nature, to the fire that burns in fireplaces and hearths, to the fire of lightning that burns and purifies everything, and to the sun that burns in the sky.

The participants of this holiday, held on cold days, ate things that warm the body – nuts, fatty and fleshy ulcers, garlic, went out into the open air, demonstrating their readiness to resist the cold with ceremonies and games. The pheasant bird was considered a symbol of this holiday.

Those festivals known in history as **"Azer bayram"** and **"Azerchashn"** were called **Shahrivar, Sadda, Chiragan, Mehriqah** and **Azergah**. Of the ceremonies known to us and considered interesting, **"Sujaddin"** occupied a special place among the performances. This word means "water is our ancestor".

"Kahambar" means a fragrant, odorous place. It is the name of the special ceremonial celebrations held in the territory of Azerbaijan during the period of fire worship, the total number of which reaches 6 or 7. Founded by Zarathustra, each of these celebrations lasting 5 days (as written) is dedicated to the creation of the sky, earth, water, plants and animals, and people. In another article, those public holidays are called **"Humbar"**.

During the Zoroastrian period, the main place was given to **"Dastaband"** yalli dances in the ceremonies. Even this happens in the works of the poet Nizami Ganjavi. Our eminent poet especially mentioned the groups of young men dressed in white or red who performed in the temples of Zoroastrianism. The **"Parvardagah"** ceremony held in Azerbaijan

has taken root in our language since ancient times. During that ceremony, cheerful, hilarious and attractive people do not sleep until morning. They jumped over the bonfire, told stories, funny sayings and performed various games. Sometimes this ceremony was called “7 charshanba night of power”. In the past, the “**Shamon**” game was also of great interest. This game would feature entertainment in a huge pool filled with water. Here, along with hand-to-hand combat, wrestling competition, the hand-to-hand scenes of wrestlers with wild animals (lion, tiger, bear, wolf, bull, etc.) in the water aroused great interest and entertained the audience. In these games, people of art playing and dancing, as well as speaking eloquently and eloquently are the main features of this ancient game. In addition to these, the shaman's hand holding a scepter is considered a symbol of his greatness and famous mastery. Such artists perfectly knew witchcraft, reciting prayers, composing poems, telling stories, chanting, and playing saz-gobuz. In general, during the “Shamon” game, those gathered would perform various games, funny dances, etc., sing songs, and have fun. “**Ardibehishtagan**” was one of the mass ceremonies started in ancient Azerbaijan from Zoroastrianism. According to the old belief, there were great ceremonial games and celebrations held in celebration of a god named Ardibehisht, who controlled the mountains and sacred fires. In the sources, the name of these mass games and ceremonies was sometimes called “Ordubehisht” and “Urdubehisht” (203). **Mehrikan** holiday should be specially mentioned among the Zoroastrian holidays held in Azerbaijan in early times. Mammad Arif Dadashzade, in his research entitled “Medieval spiritual culture of the Azerbaijani people”, in addition to providing information about Novruz holiday and its ancient traditions, showed that “Mehrikan holiday was always held at the beginning of the autumn season, after harvesting”. Medieval authors, when talking about Mehrikan holiday, first mention the time when it was held. Abu Reyhan al-Biruni indicates that this holiday is celebrated from the 16th to the 30th of the month of Mehr (Novruz in the research of eminent scientists, 2022).

“Novruz and fiery charshanba festivities were large gatherings in connection with the meeting of the sun. Here, participants and spectators would climb from dusk to the heights, to the top of a mountain and a hill, settling around the bonfires that had remained there. When the first rays of the sun appeared, they would light the bonfires, everyone would greet the sun, bow down and play a solemn halay dikdasta (with such content as courage, heroism), perform singings and spin on the bonfire, the athletes would wrestle and be rewarded with khoncha. This ceremonial khoncha,

considered as a vow to the sun, consisted of 7 types of things most necessary for the home and household – bread, salt, rue, coal, mirror, water and eggs – arranged on a large, copper or silver tray. According to custom, the khonchas would stay for two days in the homes of those awarded. Then they would light lamps and torches from the bonfire and return to the houses. They would light the fire and ask for blessings” (Zoroastrian ceremonies, traditions and their distribution in the ancient olympic games).

Professor Kamil Huseynoglu explains a number of novruz traditions from the point of view of Zoroastrianism, noting that the year is divided into two seasons and it is believed that the forces of good prevail in summer and evil in winter. It is for this reason that in winter people, animals and all nature suffer from cold, disease and hunger. In the middle of winter, the forces of evil become so strong that people are forced to call on the protective gods for help. Every charshanba day (Wednesday), they hold ceremonies and begin to appeal to one of the guardian angels. Finally, on the last charshanba night, guardian angels and the spirits of people's dead relatives begin to approach the earth. On the eve of Novruz, cleaning houses, yards and chimneys, buying new clothes, and so on, is to welcome these “guests”. And on the evening of last charshanba, even poor people should open a rich table as much as they can in honor of the souls of their relatives and angels. Also, those who resent on this day should be reconciled, everyone should speak good words, be kind, so that spirits and angels are pleased with them. Also, the graves of deceased relatives should be visited, and their souls should be given a gift. For this reason, the last charshanba in Southern Azerbaijan is also called the “holiday of the dead”. In order for the spirits to recognize their home and relatives in the light and quickly get to the house in the evening after dark, they make a bonfire on the roofs and in other high places and jump over it. However, due to the fact that the ancient meanings of the Novruz ceremonies have been forgotten, people now think that they jump over a bonfire to cleanse themselves of diseases and ailments, although in Zoroastrianism fire is considered sacred and it is considered a sin to pollute it (Novruz is the oldest astronomical holiday in the world, 2020). The point is that some of the customs described by Kamil Huseynoglu as “oblivion”, for example, jumping over a fire, are not a newly acquired custom, but rather those associated with earlier traditions than Zoroastrianism. These and such customs are inherited by us from Sumerian culture. The prominent scientist tries to explain the Novruz holiday with the traditions and customs of Zoroastrianism. And he explains the cus-

toms and traditions alien to Zoroastrianism as customs acquired later. However, it should be noted that the Novruz holiday has nothing to do with the souls of dead people. And jumping over the fire is traces of the more ancient Sumerian-Turkic culture. Both in the ancient Sumerians and their successor, the Turks, fire has been perceived from time immemorial as a protective, cleansing, patronizing being. This holiday is an astronomical cultural phenomenon based on the vernal equinox of day and night in connection with the meeting of spring. However, as a cultural phenomenon, Novruz, of course, also has a number of customs, which it attributes to Zoroastrianism.

Kamil Huseynoglu further notes that this struggle between the forces of good and evil continued until the day of Novruz, and on the day of Novruz (March 20 or 21), the forces of good defeated the forces of evil and began to celebrate their victory. It was on this day that the element of fire was celebrated in Zoroastrianism. This essentially means seeing off winter and meeting spring, because on that day, as a result of the transition of the sun from the south of the equator to the Northern hemisphere, day and night equalize, and from its next day the days begin to lengthen. Naturally, in more ancient times, people could not accurately determine the day when the day and night became equal, and therefore Novruz was celebrated on different days of spring. The exact day of Novruz was fixed only in the XI century in the New Solar Calendar, developed by a team of scientists led by the famous astronomer and poet Omar Khayyam (Novruz is the oldest astronomical holiday in the world, 2020).

Novruz is a new day and a new year for our people. In Novruz, the land wakes up from hibernation, life revives and a new life begins. The road to Novruz day passes through 4 charshanbas. These are charshanbas of water, fire, earth and wind. On water charshanba, water means the renewal of water sources, fire – the increase in the temperature of the sun, earth – the awakening of the Earth, and wind – the budding of trees with the help of the wind. And all these revive and renew nature as a whole (Novruz holiday, the national symbol of our people, 2022).

This is how Professor Kamil Huseynoglu explains the Novruz charshanbas and their Zoroastrianism beliefs: "It should be noted with regret that the elements of the four charshanbas we are celebrating now are not elements of Novruz, but of the same Mithra holiday. However, unlike the Persians until the 1970s, we had six charshanbas ceremonies or elements celebrated. At that time, Novruz began to be celebrated in our country at the official level for several years. Wednesdays or charshanba days, on the other hand, bore different names in different regions

in the memory of the people. Basically, the names "false charshanba", "eternal charshanba", "herald charshanba", "flower charshanba", "ash charshanba" and "last charshanba" were used. Therefore, our folklorists were instructed to systematize these names. And because they did not know the history and system of Novruz, they mechanically took Persian charshanba days and elements (water, fire, wind and earth). These elements are the origin of Mithra religion" (Novruz is the oldest astronomical holiday in the world, 2020). It should be noted that the belief in the sanctification of the four elements is neither a mithra nor a custom directly related to Zoroastrianism. These customs are actually the present-day manifestations of Sumerian culture, which is considered the oldest civilization. If we approach the issue from this position, we think we can get healthier results.

The custom of throwing a hat, which is one of the ancient Novruz customs, has been in the form of dangling a bag from the chimney of houses (Things we don't know about Novruz. 2020). This tradition is still preserved in many regions. From the point of view of old Zoroastrianism, the explanation of this was as follows: "After the spirits and angels "come out" a feast begins in their honor. Spirits dangle bags from doorways and chimneys to claim their share. The owners of the house should put the best food in these bags" (Novruz is the oldest astronomical holiday in the world, 2020).

Novruz holiday has Novruz table and Novruz khoncha. Often, a seven-sin table is opened. The table of seven sign, starting with the letters in – "s", means sirka (vinegar, represents taste and pleasure), sarimsag (garlic, health), sebze (vegetable, hope), sumach (blessing), sikke (coin, wealth), saat (clock, long life) and su (water, clarity). This is how Kamil Huseynoglu explains this issue according to his Zoroastrian beliefs: "...in honor of the immortal angels (spentes), seven things should also be placed on the table, which begin with the letter "s" (in the Arabic alphabet this letter is called "sin") (the Persians call it "haft sin", that is, "seven sin")" (Novruz is the oldest astronomical holiday in the world, 2020). So, things placed on the table, according to ancient beliefs, begin with the letter "s" in honor of spentes, that is, angels. The number of blessings is also associated with the number of seven angels guarding those sacred blessings. For this reason, when decorating the table on the day of the holiday, 7 kinds of things are placed on the table. These are water (purity), mirror (in the sense of purity, that is, people look at it so that it is away from lies, envy, and selfishness), honey (awakening of nature), fish (since this animal is very flexible, it is desired that people should also be flexible in life),

apple (a pleasant smell because it is), halva (sweet) and gold placed in the cup (which is also a symbol of wealth). In our opinion, the custom of the seven-sin table can be valued as one of the traditions left by Zoroastrianism for Novruz holiday.

Various sweets are prepared in Novruz, but the most important sweets are shakarburra, baklava, ghoghal and sugar bread. They are considered symbols of the moon, stars and the sun. Malt, a sign of blessing, is one of the main attributes of the holiday. On the eve of the holiday, our women make the hope, desire, and sustenance of the house and family green, and such beliefs are among our traditions that have existed for a long time. Thus, the traces of malting are a cultural event that dates back to the ancient Sumerian civilization. Of course, in this case, flowers, water, mirrors, and gold items are not missing from the table. When food is brought to the table, candles are lit in the name of each family member. According to tradition, everyone should be at home on the day of the holiday. They should forget their sadness, be in a cheerful mood and say nice words to each other (National custom and tradition – Novruz holiday, 2011). The symbolic characters of Novruz are Kechel and Kosa. These symbolic characters themselves are associated with nature. Thus, Kechel means the pre-awakening period of nature, Kosa means sustenance and blessing, the sprouting of vegetation. Professor Kamil Huseynoglu explains this issue as follows: “On the morning of the last charshanba night, people begin to fight against evil forces with the help of spirits and angels who came to help them, that is, they hold ceremonies that embody this fight. In our country, the most recognizable of these ceremonies is the performance between Ketchel and Kosa. Here Kechel is the symbol of winter, which has made nature bald, and the Kosa is the symbol of prosperity, the goat and spring. In this struggle, Kosa wins over Kechel, that is, spring over winter. In some regions (for example, Ordubad), Ahriman, who rules in winter, is dressed as a “khan” and at the end they take him and throw him into the water. In the village of Mughanli, Georgia, until recently, the role of evil forces was played by people called “Kechapapaglar”. They hurt people, “beat them and took their money”. Residents hit them with eggs” (Novruz is the oldest astronomical holiday in the world, 2020).

It is known that our great ancestor personified and deified the forces of fire, water, earth, air and other nature and performed ceremonies, rituals and performances for their sake. The ancient Turks believed that the motherland in which they live has a patron. The patron saint of the motherland was conceived in different ways and called by different names. They imagined the patroness of the motherland as a tree,

mountain, fire, earth, water. The ancient Turks called their homeland, the high mountain of the motherland, as well as the mythological layer of the patroness of the motherland. According to Turkic thinking, the mountain was the patroness of the motherland. In a word, the land, water, fire, mountain of the motherland are inseparable from each other (Zoroastrian ceremonies, traditions and their distribution in the ancient olympic games).

The traditions of Zoroastrianism have had their influence on other types and genres of our oral folk literature and have left deep traces in these examples of artistic creativity. For example, the ancient Zoroastrian mythical worldview and the impetus of the initial artistic imagination also had a significant impact on the formation and memory of fairy tales. The structural-semantic picture of Azerbaijani fairy tales indicates that the ancient Turkic mythological worldview is carried in these texts, on the one hand, and on the other hand, it expresses the reflection of traditional oriental themes, international travel motifs and plots. In magical and allegorical tales, the Turkic mythological layer (winged horse, magical water, lightning that burns and purifies everything, sacred mountain, snake, and tree cults) is combined with international motifs and plots. Tales have a special place among the genres included in the epic type of our folklore. Tales are among the ancient genres of oral folk literature. Narrations, short stories, anecdotes, sometimes a number of love stories, legends and fairy tales are often included in the group of fairy tales. True, there are many similar, close signs of these genres. However, they should never be equated and mixed... (Əfəndiyev, 1992, p. 173, 174) Among all epic genres, tales are distinguished by their characteristics. A tale is a widespread epic genre among the peoples of the world. Therefore, many folklorists have commented on the characteristics of tales.

V.G. Belinsky considered magic, sorcery, spells, giants, dragons, fiction and others as the main signs of fairy tales. According to Y.V. Chamanzaminli, the main aspect of fairy tales is the victory of right over wrong. F. Kocherli showed that at the end of all the stories, the storyteller turns to the listeners with a wrestling face and says: “They ate, drank, lived well. You also eat, drink, live well” etc.

Animating objects and natural phenomena, transferring the characteristics and qualities of people onto objects and animals, transforming ordinary events in society and nature into fantastic images, mixing them with extraordinary events, optimistic attitude, faith towards the future, a good mood, an abundance of adventure and complex events of wide epic plates, etc. are typical features of tales (Əfəndiyev,

1992, p. 174). Tales can be grouped approximately as follows: tales about animals, tales about magic, historical tales, family-household tales, satirical tales. It is the magical tales that interest us the most about the subject. Among the ancient tales, magical tales occupy a special place. In them, the struggle of the people, ancient people, against natural forces and wild animals was reflected in their artistic reflection. Ancient people who were powerless in front of natural forces and wild animals described these forces in the form of giants and dragons in those tales. Magical tales are a beautiful expression of the artistic thinking of the fantasy of the Azerbaijani people. "Shams and Gamar", "Malikmammad", "Prince Mutalib", "Tale of Hatem", "Garagash", "Akh-vakh", "Magical ring" and other such tales can be examples. The characteristic feature of magical tales is that the heroes in them win over the enemy with the help of magic, sorcery, spells, fight against giants, dragons, and indestructible spells. In these tales, events and stories described in various legendary places, in the world of darkness, and even in the other world, manifest themselves as people's real struggles and sufferings, dreams of a happy future, and hatred of enemies... (Əfəndiyev, 1992, p. 179).

If you pay attention, the spell, witchcraft, talisman and so on that we find in magical tales are not religious-mystical in nature. People's wishes and dreams are clearly manifested in these spells and witchcraft. The heroes of "Kechel Mammad", "Gul oglan", "Malikmammad" and other fairy tales are brave people who came from the people. Thus, the Simurgh birds, doves, fairies, magic ring, table and various objects and other auxiliary forces make the struggle of these helpless heroes even more real and determine the victory of good over evil and justice over social injustice. So, in these tales, we learn about people's dreams about luck, fate, happy life, etc., and their worldview in general. In this regard, the important scientific-historical importance of magical tales should be especially noted. The giant is one of the forces often involved in magical tales, its robe, appearance is rough, ugly, gigantic, giants are described as having one, seven, or even 40 heads. Sometimes they fly, steal and capture beautiful girls and boys. Sometimes they are depicted as eating human flesh. The best blessings in the world, including gold, silver, and jewels, are supposedly in the possession of the giants. A flying carpet, a table, and a magic ring are also in the hands of giants. Sometimes giants live in darkness. Giants are as cowardly, incompetent, stupid, and naive as they are cruel, rude, and merciless. For example, in the tale "Hakh Nazar", the cowardly Nazar takes the carpet, the ring

and the table and runs away from the giants. Even though they steal the beautiful girls, the giants cannot subjugate them. In all our tales, these terrible giants are defeated by the heroes. Justice triumphs at the end of the tale. One of the forces as terrifying as a giant is the dragon. Dragons are also depicted as huge and gigantic. It is shown that these have 3, 7, 40 heads. Dragons are found in two main places in fairy tales. They cut off the water and torment the people, and sometimes they eat the chicks in the eggs of Simurgh birds, who are the hero's helpers. They try to eat Simurgh's eggs or destroy their young, but are always defeated by the hero and his minions (Əfəndiyev, 1992, p. 180). Among the magical tales, the tale "Malikmammad" is more characteristic. In terms of explaining Zoroastrianism's religio-ideological philosophical view and worldview, as well as traditions, this tale can give us more clues. Therefore, let's pay attention to the analysis of this tale. Observations on the tale of "Malikmammad" will be enough to clarify the characteristics of magical tales in general. For the first time, the writer and folklorist Y.V. Chamanzaminli dealt extensively with this tale. This tale, which he wrote down from oral language, he has published twice, and talked about it in detail in several articles. Prominent folklorist scientist P.Əfəndiyev notes: "... traces of the materialistic thinking of ancient people's beliefs have remained in magical tales. It is not difficult to see the traces of the materialistic thinking of the ancient man in magic, sorcery and incantations. It is very noteworthy that Y.V. Chamanzaminli also approaches magic tales from those aspects that we talk about, especially in these tales he seeks the beliefs of ancient Azerbaijanis in connection with Zoroastrianism, and his conclusions are mostly correct" (Əfəndiyev, 1992, p. 180–181). Y.V. Chamanzaminli notes in this regard: "as "Malikmammad" is considered a type in all Azerbaijani fairy tales, the analysis of this is also explained by others". Later, the outstanding scientist continued and connected this magical tale with the religious and philosophical views of Zoroastrianism. He notes that the philosophy of "Malikmammad" describes nature as dual. On one side Hormuz and the light he created, eternal life, truth and justice, and on the other side Ahriman and his group: giants, dragons, incense, envy, evil thoughts that are products of the dark world. These two forces, which are "in eternal conflict with each other, result in the victory of Hormuz" (Çəmənzəminli, 2005, p. 278).

According to the eminent writer, the struggle between the forces on both sides in the tale of "Malikmammad" begins and ends like this: "The wonderful apple tree provides the King with constant youth. But the giant created by Ahrima prevents this.

The fight begins. Success goes to the side of Malikmammad. Because he is a pure-hearted and intelligent person. The two elder brothers cannot achieve success because they lack good intentions (Çəmən-zəminli, 2005, p. 278).

The apple tree described in the tale “Malikmammad” bears fruit in every three days. Anyone who eats a fruit of this tree turns into a 15-year-old youth. The aged king longs to eat this apple. But an apple that ripens in the middle of the night disappears as soon as it is opened in the morning. The bravery of Malikmammad also begins with this story (Əfəndiyev, 1992, p. 181). Y.V. Chamanzaminli tries to connect this apple, which is given as a source of youth, life and happiness, with the oldest rites and beliefs described in the work “Avesta”. He writes that: “In the “Avesta” there is a “Naara” tree similar to an apple tree. According to the beliefs of the ancient races living between the Kura and Araz rivers, the “Naara” tree... gave spirit to all vegetation. Some liken “Naara” to a tree that bestows eternal life. The apple tree in “Malikmammad” is very similar to “Naara”. A person who eats apples becomes young and gets eternal life” (Çəmən-zəminli, 2005, p. 278). Later, Y.V. Chamanzaminli, who reconciled the phi-

losophy of the “Malikmammad” tale with the philosophy of Zoroastrianism, writes: “In “Malikmammad” the struggle results in the rule of truth and light. This is the philosophy of “Avesta”. Zoroastrianism does not have the monotheism of the religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) that emerged from the Semitic race. Instead of unity, there is duality in the universe, and struggle is preached as the basis of everything. This struggle develops and grows and finally ends with the disappearance of darkness, giants and dragons, envious beings, and the disappearance of the earth. The religious ideology in Zoroastrianism is to provide eternal life, eternal light, eternal rest and happiness in the world” (Çəmən-zəminli, 2005, p. 278–279).

Conclusion. In general, giants, dragon, black ram, dark world represent darkness, evil forces, magic apple tree, simurgh bird, white ram, light world represent light and good forces in the tale “Malikmammad”. The struggle of both sides and the victory of the light and good forces over the dark and evil forces is the clearest example of the deep traces left by the religious-ideological philosophy of Zoroastrianism in our national culture, folklore and national way of thinking.

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