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Art

ALBANIAN CAPITAL AND A BOWL FROM BARTYM

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In the article there is carried out comparative analysis of pictures of peacocks on Albanian capital (Azerbaijan, Mingachevir, V-VI cc.) and on the bowl from Bartym (Russia, Perm, III c.). There is drawn a conclusion that the raised and fluffed up tails of peacocks in both compositions symbolize wintry solstice, i.e. the beginning of the New Year according to ancient Turkic calendar. The likeness of iconography of two works makes it possible to affirm that they were the product of a single religious world outlook – tengrism.

Keywords: Turkic world outlook, symmetric composition, a peacock, polymorphous pictures, wintry solstice

One of the most mysterious topics in Azerbaijan art remains the picture of peacocks on the so-called albanian capital which is a detail of the religious structure discovered in 1948 during excavations on the territory of the site of ancient settlement Sudaghylan not far from the town of Mingachevir. The relief on the capital dates from the V-VI cc. A.D. The authors of the book “History of Azerbaijan architecture” describe this composition thus: “Two stylized relief pictures of peacocks have turned towards the flower – the tree of life also relatively interpreted which is placed in the centre. Flying ribbons knitted on peacocks are characteristic” [1, 36]. (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1. Albanian capital

Almost a quarter of a century later D.Akhundov considered this monument in the common context of the memorial plastic art of Caucasian Albania and proposed the reconstruction of its initial form. According to D.Akhundov's reconstruction the stone fragment with the picture of peacocks is not a capital, on the contrary, it is the base of the cross what made it possible to consider the discussed monument side by side with other albanian stone steles the base of composition of which is the cross. Professor D.Akhundov has revealed the appropriateness of the composition of albanian cross stones where at the foot there is always depicted “a stepped mountain from which a tree of life – the cross germinates” [1, 248-249] and fairly has connected the symbolism of such compositions with sumer cosmogony. (Fig. 2)

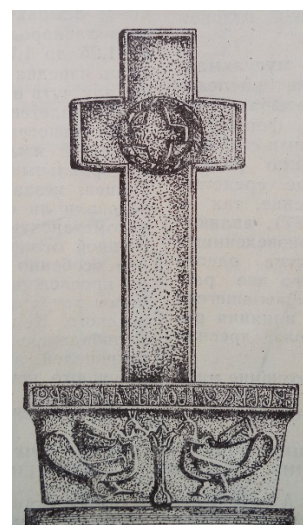


Fig. 2. The base of the cross by D.Akhundov

Alibek Kazhgaliuly studying ornaments of Kazakh carpets distinguishes the picture of “multi-layer stepped pyramida” [6, 52] which in his opinion symbolizes the Great Mountain – Uly Tau. He has also revealed the principle of enantiomorphism – literally “running to meet” in kazakh, sumer and aztec ornament. This principle is firstly used when depicting the mountain (pyramida) and the World tree: if in the composition the tree with its roots is turned upwards to the top of the mountain, the fragment of the world’s picture depicting negative, descending tendencies is in front of us. If on the contrary, then we have to do with positive, ascending aspects of the world’s picture.

The principle of enantiomorphism is necessary for us in order to answer this question: is the discussed monument the capital of the lost column or is it the base of the cross stone – khachdash. So far as the base of khachdash is interpreted by D.Akhundov as the World mountain and the cross as the World tree, in this case we observe the negative, descending aspect of the world’s picture, as the top of the mountain and the crown of the tree are directed towards one direction. If we consider that in the centre of the composition, between peacocks there is described the World tree, involuntarily there is remembered mythological image of the bird Simurg.

According to Azerbaijan version of the legend the bird Simurg is sitting on the top of the World tree or the World mountain. Analogical semantic load bears the image of the bird Samruk in Uzbek mythology. The analysis of mythological images of Kyrgyz bird Ak-Shumkar, Hungarian bird Turul, the bird Karacius and others carried out at one time by the author showed that all of them had a single archetypal source and are sitting on the top of the World tree or the World mountain [10]. But in Turkic mythological tradition the World mountain is called Su-Meru. In other words Simurg, Samruk and Simruk assume the name of the World mountain, then appear in the role of its semiotic duplicates, “assistants”. So encyclopaedic version of the origin of the name Simurg-Samruk as if from iranian “murvsano” [7, 436] is fully groundless.

Neither in the history of architecture, nor in the history of Azerbaijan art there is convincing, exhaustive interpretation of the so-called albanian capital and pictures of peacocks. It is surprising that at the time when the capital was discovered in the course of excavations in Mingachevir, there happened the event which remained unnoticed by home researchers. On August, 1947 in Perm province, not far from the village of Bartym the local tractor driver working in the field found a silver vessel with relief pictures. It was a bowl of a boat shape 26 cm long, 6 cm high, 9 cm wide with the weight of about 700 grams. In a year the famous archaeologist Otto Bader devoted the first publication to this find. As on albanian capital there was described a symmetric composition of two peacocks facing each other on Bartym bowl. Initially O.Bader thought that the bowl had belonged to monuments of Sasanian epoch, peacocks’ scarves “belonged to tsar’s regalias”. [2, p. 88]. He dated the bowl from the III century A.D. The object depicted between peacocks O.Bader called “the figure in the form of a fanciful goblet or an altar” [2, 88]. (Fig. 3)



Fig. 3. The bowl from Bartym

Bartym bowl is not an isolated archaeological find. In the course of the first half of the XX century various silver wares were discovered on the bank of the river Kama. After a thorough investigation of the whole territory O.Bader together with A.Smirnov came to the conclusion that “Bartym precious finds belong to a rich sanctuary” [3, 16]. In this very article O.Bader retracted his initial opinion about belonging of the bowl to Sasanian monuments: polymorphous figures are not characteristic for

Sasani art". They are met in the Transcaucasus and on the territory of Middle Asia. These regions can be considered to be the place of making Bartym bowl. [3, 19]. Of course the localization of the origin of the bowl on the territory of Middle Asia or the South Caucasus doesn't mean that it is the work of Turkic art.

Forty years later the tatar research worker Azgar Mukhamadiyev having studied specimens of silver discovered on the bank of the river Kama found out that "on the edges of several bowls or vessels there are placed clearly engraved inscriptions in Turan letters" [8]. The inscriptions were read by A. Mukhamadiyev. One of them engraved on the dish which is discovered in the same place with Bartym bowl contains prasing about the tsar Dikkiz, Atilla's son. Speaking about the artistic style of pictures on silver wares discovered on the bank of the river Kama A. Mukhamadiyev connects it directly with Hun-turkic world outlook. One more very important and interesting detail. Quoting M. Gashgari A. Mukhamadiyev traces the name of tatar village Bartym to oghuz word "bart" which means "vessel", "cup". It should be added that in modern Turkish language the word "bardak" means "glass", "goblet".

All signs of pictures on albanian capital and a bowl from Bartym show that there is a typical three-part composition before us which can be described in the following way: it is "a) horizontal; b) consisted of three parts; c) symmetrical; d) the last figures of the composition are placed in a similar rhythm and are frontal to each other, i.e. they are orientated to the central figure". Any three-part composition consists of a "sacral centre" guided from the flanks by "strong creatures" [4, 229]. Such a composition can be defined as canonical one. But the canon appears within the bounds of a certain culture and well known, each time with concrete world outlook.

Let's determine important details of iconography of the picture on the albanian capital from Mingachevir. Firstly, what is called "a flower interpreted conditionally as a tree of life" by the authors of the book "History of Azerbaijan architecture" is not so at all. It is quite evident that it is a bowl on a high stand –

a slim pedestal or on a column of fine proportions. It is also obvious that peacocks' beaks sink into the bowl, i.e. both birds drink water. So as to come to this conclusion it is enough to compare the picture from Mingachevir with an analogical topic on the fence of the presbytery of the church in Torchello (the end of the XI c.) which as Jean Richer writes "describes two peacocks drinking out of the bowl standing on the column" [9, 220].

Secondly, on Mingachevir relief peacocks' tails are raised and fluffed up. On Jean Richer's pictures they are dropped and gathered. According to French researcher it means that they symbolize autumnal equinox. At the same time, continues Jean Richer, "we have noted above that the peacock which remains motionless fluffs the tail up, also can be considered to be the image of solstice" [9, 223]. Consequently, Mingachevir peacocks symbolize solstice, moreover defining more exactly – wintry solstice, beginning of the New Year according to ancient Turkic calendar. At last, the third detail: Mingachevir peacocks' necks are knitted with flying ribbons. Academician R. Efendiyev explained this detail: the ribbon meant that the bird was sacred [12, 37].

Jean Richer adduces the Greek name of the peacock "taos" and accentuates that it has oriental origin, as it contains the first and the last letters of the alphabet, this bird, perhaps, is the image of integrity of the world outlook [9, 220-221]. In modern Azerbaijan language the name of the peacock sounds exactly so – "tovus". One of administrative districts of Azerbaijan and corresponding centre of the region is also called so.

Bartym peacocks are distinguished with their polymorphousness: the picture as if composed of fragments of various creatures including the man. The body of each peacock is a combination of the animal's muzzle with open jaws, human face and well drawn small fish. All the called fragments are perfectly blended with common outline of the body, more exactly – make this contour replacing wings, tail or paws of the peacock.

The origin of polymorphous pictures was for a long time the object of lively discussions

of specialists. Some researchers connected them with the influence of the culture of Urartu, others – with the tradition taking its origin from Mesopotamia. At the same time there were authors who pointed to analogies with pictures covering the surface of archaeological excavations on the territory of the Greater Black Sea area. The most interesting polymorphous pictures of the considered period are compositions on the scabbards of swords from Kelermes and Melgun barrows where fantastic creatures with drawn bows in their hands are presented. In due course there prevailed the opinion that Bartyml bowl as finds from barrows belong to Scythian art, exactly to the art of tsar's scyths. Azerbaijan researcher Zaur Hasanov [5] has proved that tsar's scyths were turks-oghuzes. In ancient times on the territory of Azerbaijan there existed Scythian – kimmerian state of Gamir. In Scythian environment just tsar's scyths were bearers of religious world outlook common for all ancient turks. In this context for the identification of both monuments - on the albanian capital and a bowl from Bartyml is of decisive importance the fact that the peacocks are described with the raised and fluffed up tails, i.e. both compositions symbolize wintry solstice, the beginning of the New Year according to ancient Turkic calendar.

Though the iconography of pictures on albanian capital and on the bowl from Bartyml are not fully identical, it is possible to tell surely that both works belong to the same master, the same artistic school. Consequently, Bartyml bowl is made on the territory of Azerbaijan, by

one of masters of Caucasian Albania. Both works are directly connected with a complicated satiated religious ritual. Both of them blended with the sign space of ancient sanctuaries. The use of the religious object made in the Caucasian Albania, in the sanctuary of Bartyml testifies in favour of the common character of religious world outlook on the vast spaces of Eurasia. This religion was tengrism, belief in eternal Blue Sky-Tengri.

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ALBAN KAPİTELİ VƏ BARTIM CAMI

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Məqalədə alban kapiteli (Azərbaycan, Mingəçevir V-VI əsrlər) və Bartım camı (Rusiya, Perm III əsr) üzərindəki tovuz quşları təsvirlərinin müqayisəli təhlili verilmişdir. Belə bir nəticə çıxarılmışdır ki, hər iki kompozisiyada tovuz quşlarının qaldırılmış və açılmış quyruqları qış gün dönümünün, yəni qədim türk təqviminə əsasən Yeni ilin başlanğıcının rəmzidir. İki əsərin ikonoqrafiyasındakı oxşarlıq təsdiq etməyə imkan verir ki, onlar vahid dini dünyagörüşünün – türk tanrıçılığının rəmzidir.

Açar sözlər: türk dünyagörüşü, simmetrik kompozisiya, tovuz quşu, polimorf təsvirlər, qış gün dönümü

АЛБАНСКАЯ КАПИТЕЛЬ И ЧАША ИЗ БАРТЫМА

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В статье проводится сравнительный анализ изображений павлинов на албанской капители (Азербайджан, Мингечаур, V-VI вв.) и на чаше из Бартыма (Россия, Пермь, III в.). Сделан вывод о том, что приподнятые и распущенные хвосты павлинов в обеих композициях символизируют зимнее солнцестояние, то есть начало Нового года по древнему тюркскому календарю. Сходство иконографии двух произведений позволяет утверждать, что они являлись продуктом единого религиозного мировоззрения – тенгризма.

Ключевые слова: *тюркское мировоззрение, симметричная композиция, павлин, полиморфные изображения, зимнее солнцестояние*