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INTERPRETATION OF STORIES OF SAK MASSAGET EPIC IN HERODOT'S WORD "HISTORY"

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: The article discusses the changes in the ethnic composition of population of the region during historical development of the Uzbeks, the replacement of one tribe by another, assimilation and unification of tribes. The plot of legendary Tomaris is identical to Herodotus's "History" and he narrated this story on the basis of oral sources can be a proof of its origination in the folklore of the ancient Scythian tribes. The image of one-eyed fantastic creature is found in Ossetian mythology associated with the Sarmatians of ethnic origin, as well as the depiction of one-eyed giant, one-eyed, Dorokoz and other mythical characters in the mythology of the Sak and Massaget tribes of Central Asia based on Herodotus's account that "the same story told by Issedons is also narrated by the Scythians,". Mythological notions of the Arimasps may have originated in Central Asia, not in the folklore of the ancient ethnos living in the foothills of the Altai Mountains and the steppes of northern Kazakhstan and this narration of "children of the blind slaves" narrated by the author may be part of a particular archaic plot existed in Scythian folklore. Consequently, the folklore of living people in the vast area from the Caucasus to the Altai Mountains, inhabited by ethnoses called "Scythians" by ancient Greek authors, contains common epic interpretations of this ancient legend

confirms this assumption. While writing his book, Herodotus mentions that it has been preserved in epic plots, applied arts, customs and rituals of ancient Scythian epic in Central Asia.

INTRODUCTION

Uzbek folklore contains ancient epic traditions of sak-massaget and other ethnoses. Well-known folklorists V.M Zhirmunsky and H.T Zarifov in the section of their fundamental research "Epic of Uzbek national heroism" devoted to the analysis of historical epics Ergash Jumanbulbul's epic "Oysulu and Kunbotir" is compared with the legend of Tumaris in Herodotus' History and suggests the following: "Herodotus, noting that he had heard various oral examples of folk tales about the death of Cyrus, said in his work that he considered the most reliable of many such legends. There is no doubt in this story that there are signs of an oral legend, but also an epic legend. It is hard to believe that there can be a regular oral epic tradition that has continued through the peoples and languages of Central Asia for two and a half thousand years, from Massagetes and ancient Persians to modern Uzbek poets, and has maintained a stable historical plot style."¹

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In fact, the content and motives of the epic "Oysulu and Kunbotir" in the repertoire of the bakhshis of the Kurgan school of epic poetry are described in the work of Herodotus "History". The fact that the legend of Tomaris is almost identical to the plot and that the Greek historian narrated it on the basis of oral sources can be a clear proof that there was a much developed epic tradition in our country during the Massaget period. It is true that as a result of almost two and a half thousand years of historical development there is no direct connection between the epic works of the Massaget period and the epic traditions of twentieth-century Uzbek folk epics. - massaget goes back to the epic.

¹ Zhirmunsky V.M., Zarifov Kh.T. Uzbek folk heroic epic. - M.: OGIZ, 1947. - S. 131.

The historical roots of the image of the one-eyed creature in the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, including Uzbek folklore, are connected with the mythology of our ancient ancestors - sak-massagets. Thus, in Book IV of History, Herodotus describes the "one-eyed people and the vultures guarding the Scythian gold" as follows: and nothing definite can be said about them. According to the stories of these idiots, which seem strange to me, these mountains are inhabited by goat-hoofed people, and far away from this people there is another place where people sleep for six months of the year. I will never believe that. On the contrary, it is clear that the eastern part of the land of the Kallars belongs to the Issedons, and it is not known which tribe is located north of the Kallar and Issedons. The Scythians also narrate the same story told by the Issedons. Through the stories of the Scythians, we learn the reason why the arimasps are called by the same name in the Scythian language: in the Scythian language, the word "arima" means "one" and "ospa" means "eye" in their dialect.²

Herodotus described the order and geography of the ethnoses living in the eastern part of Meotida in the VII-early VI centuries BC in the form of Scythians, Issedons, Arimasps, "golden guard vultures", Ripey Mountains and Hyperboreans, and "one-eyed people". Pliny considers his people to be among the ethnoses living in the lower reaches of the Amudarya and Syrdarya in the first quarter of the third century BC: "Saks, Massagets, Takhs, Arimasps, as well as the Exvats." Experts believe that in ancient Greek sources the present-day Altai Mountains were meant under the toponym Ripey associated with the land of the Arimasps.³ This is, first of all, a clear proof that the mythological notions of "one-eyed beings" originated in the folklore of the ancient Scythian tribes living in a vast area from the Altai Mountains to the Aral Sea; secondly, the image of a one-eyed fantastic creature in Ossetian mythology associated with the Sarmatians of ethnic origin, as well as the depiction of

² Ancient authors about Central Asia. - Tashkent: Ostekhizdat, 1940. -- p. 20.

³ Ismagilov R.B. On the localization of some tribes of Herodotus's "History" // Historical readings in memory of MP Gryaznov. Part 2. - Omsk, 1987. - P.75; Machinsky D.A. The land of the Arimasps in ancient tradition and the "expanse of the Aryans" in the Avesta // Priesthood and shamanism in the Scythian era (Proceedings of the international conference). - St. Petersburg, 1996. - P.4-6.

one-eyed giant, one-eyed, Dorokoz and other mythical characters in the mythology of the Sak and Massaget tribes of today. Based on Herodotus' account that "the same story told by the Issedons is also narrated by the Scythians," it can be said that the mythological notions of the Arimasps may have originated in Central Asia, not in the folklore of the ancient ethnos living in the foothills of the Altai Mountains and the steppes of present-day northern Kazakhstan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Regarding the emergence of myths about "arimasps", ie "one-eyed people", the image of the one-eyed giant H.G. The most ancient example of this image originated in the primitive times, when the type of hunting labor formed the basis of the way of life. For example, in Kazakh folklore, the hero defeats a one-eyed shepherd. The complete formation of the image of Depegyoz dates back to the time when the Oguzs began to engage in animal husbandry as a whole.⁴

Herodotus begins Chapter 4 of his book named "History" by recalling the story of Darius invading the Scythian land with a large army. According to legend, the Scythian army, which had set out to fight the tribes living in the Old Asian region, returned to their homeland 28 years later. When they returned to their homeland, they encountered another army very strong here. Because the Scythian women, whose husbands had gone to war for a long time, had joined their slaves. The Scythians blind the eyes of all their slaves. This work is done to process milk from beans. After the Scythians have milked the bees, they all put them in a large wooden bowl. The slaves are then lined up around this vessel, where they turn the milk with their slaves and cook it. In this way, the cream collected on top of the milk is very well consumed, and the milk left under it is less appreciated. That is why the Scythians blinded the eyes of their slaves. Because the Scythians are nomads, not farmers. It is from these female and male slaves that a new generation grows up. It is this young generation that, when they find out who their original lineage is, confront the

⁴ Korogly Kh.G. From east-west folklore connections. Temyaglaz (Depegez) - Polyphemus // Typology and relationships of medieval literatures of the East and West. - M.: Nauka, 1974. -- S.287.

Scythian army that has returned from a journey to Media. Upon learning that the Scythian army was returning to their homeland, the children of the blind slaves dug a deep ditch along the boundaries of their territory from Mount Tauria to Lake Meotii, filled it with water, and formed an impassable ravine. When the Scythians tried to cross the lake, an army of children of blind slaves fought relentlessly against them. Although the battle dragged on, the Scythians were unable to destroy them. Then one of them said, "Do we know what we are doing, O Scythian army? After all, we are fighting our slaves! If they kill us, the power of our army will be cut off, and if we destroy them, then the number of our servants will decrease. Let us put down our spears and bows, and let each of us take a whip in his hand and attack the slaves. When they see us attacking them with a weapon, they consider themselves equal to us, and if we chase them with a whip, they will remember who they are and will not be able to resist." This advice will please all Scythians. The slaves were terrified and began to flee the battlefield. So the Scythians will return to their homeland."⁵

This legend of the "children of blind slaves" narrated by Herodotus is likely to be part of a specific archaic plot that once existed in Scythian folklore. Consequently, the fact that the folklore of the peoples living in the vast area from the Caucasus to the Altai Mountains, inhabited by ethnoses called "Scythians" by ancient Greek authors, contains common epic interpretations of this ancient legend confirms this assumption.

A version of the Ossetian heroic epic, written and published in 1881, depicts the son of a blind giant taking advantage of the absence of Batradz, the leader of the Narts, to entertain the Narts without the consent of his father, and then harass and insult them. The next day, the hero Batradz returns and summons the "blind giant's child" to his side, pulling out his arm and cutting it off. The young man escaped from Nart's hand, but died of his disability.⁶ The epic plot of the Nartes in the Ossetian epic "Son of the Blind Giant" corresponds to the narration of Herodotus in two respects:

⁵ Herodotus. Story. - L. : Nauka, 1972. -- S. 187-188.

⁶ Dumézil J. Legends about the "sons of the blind" in the Caucasus and the Caucasus // Ethnographic Review. - M., 1996. - No. 5. - S.82-83.

first, in both epics, the "son of the blind" , demonstrates its power and acts violently; second, in both cases, when the real owner of the land returns, they will be punished. Such commonalities show that Herodotus effectively used epic plots from the ancient Scythian epic in the process of writing his History, and therefore the historical basis of the story of the "son of the blind" goes back to the Scythian or Sak-Massagette folklore.

The French scholar J. Dumézil, who compared the information about the "son of blind" narrated by Herodotus and the Byzantine Faust with other sources on the subject, identifies this ancient epic with the plot of the popular epic "Gorogly" ("Korogli"). "There is no doubt that the Byzantine Faust used examples of folk epics in his writing that the ruler, who was in fact the son of a blind king, was doomed to destruction due to his heroism and carelessness. However, although it is not possible today to determine what that folk epic actually was, it should be noted that in Turkish folklore living in the north-western part of Iran, plots similar to the legend narrated by Faust are widespread. This is a series of epics about the "son of the blind" Korogli... It can also be a random partnership, of course. "If the issue of historical and genetic connection is on the agenda, we will try to justify it.",⁷ - he wrote.

In our opinion, it is possible that there is a connection between the interpretation of the epic plot about the "blind son" in the works of Herodotus and other ancient authors and the origin of the name of the protagonist of the epic "Gorogly". This scientific hypothesis is confirmed by the materials of the Uzbek version of the "Gorogly" series of epics.

CONCLUSION

It is well known that the epic creativity of a particular nation is an integral part of the system of intangible cultural heritage and spiritual values of that nation and is one of the important factors in ensuring the historical, cultural and social development of a society. Typically, folk epics are interpreted as a product of

⁷ Dumézil J. Legends of the "sons of the blind" in the Caucasus and the Ciscaucasia// Ethnographic Review. - M., 1996. - No. 5. – P.88, 91.

national artistic thinking, that is, a genre of folklore that artistically reflects reality in a broad epic context.

The comparative-historical analysis presented in the article shows that there is a well-developed epic tradition among the Sak and Massaget tribes, whose creators and performers performed historical heroic songs, fairy tales, epic legends and archaic epics reflecting the realities of that period. The epic works in their repertoire have a heroic-combat character in terms of their plot structure and content, and can be assumed that they are mainly dedicated to depicting the heroism and unparalleled courage of patriotic leaders who bravely defended their homeland from foreign invaders. It is difficult to prove that the epic traditions of Sak-Massaget and the works of modern Uzbek poets have been preserved for two and a half thousand years due to the fact that the ethnic groups living in Central Asia have constantly changed their language, culture and traditions. But there is no doubt that ancient epic traditions, in particular, the archaic epic of sak-massaget, also played an important role in the formation of epic knowledge and epic memory, one of the most important factors in the creation, development and growth of folk epics.

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