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**ANCIENT BELIEFS AS THE SOURCE OF DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS
IN AZERBAIJANI CARPETS****M. A. Huseynov***Doctoral applicant,
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Abstract. Azerbaijani carpets have the enriched ornamentation. These patterns, which have evolved over the centuries, are distinguished by a variety of content and structure. There is no doubt that beliefs played a significant role in shaping the semantic meanings of carpet patterns. Even during the formation of artistic criteria that attract interest to the Azerbaijani carpet, the popular attitude to the creative world and the coding of stylized patterns related to nature and everyday life did not do without beliefs.

Today our ancient beliefs serve as the main criterion in the study of the artistic content of the encoded patterns of Azerbaijani carpets. However, although the process of the formation of the artistic thinking of the people is to some extent known to the world of science, it is nevertheless not clear how many features of its artistic image are found in folk art.

In this regard, the article analyzes the influence of the formation of corresponding ideas on the fine arts, as well as on the concept of the environment in the belief and thinking system of the ancient Azerbaijanis. At the same time, the peculiarities of cosmogonic patterns, which are symbolic in the artistic structure of carpets, are over-viewed.

Keywords: Azerbaijan; pattern; beliefs; criterion.

Patterns in Azerbaijani carpets were formed by their connection with reality and spiritual criteria of the people. These two factors play a key role in the Azerbaijani carpet weaving, with particular emphasis on the concept of artistic thinking. Although patterns passed down from generation to generation form the structure of the artistic language of carpet weaving, their systematic study remains a problem. Although the art of carpet weaving technically depends on natural factors and has originated as a form of utilitarian art, its colors and patterns are the main criteria that form the artistic image of the life of our ancestors. Already in ancient times, motifs later woven in carpet were carved to depict living and inanimate objects of nature. Over the centuries, the significance of patterns passed down from generation to generation was embodied in folk rituals and ceremonies which play an invaluable role in

the study of motifs and symbols of carpet art. Until now, the design structure of patterns in Azerbaijani carpets, expressing cosmological symbols and beliefs has not been considered as the main criterion and has not been widely studied as a subject of research. Although the process of forming the artistic thinking of the people is known to a certain extent to the world science, it did not fully explain how the features of artistic imagery manifest in the art of carpet weaving. From this point of view, the interconnection of beliefs with the cosmological system of thought made carpet weavers perceive this as an interesting fact. Patterns and beliefs expressing cosmological concepts were depicted in Azerbaijani carpets for centuries. Some patterns of carpet compositions are symbols of our religious memory and space and are encrypted at different times.



Some patterns of Azerbaijani carpet weaving are associated with faith in their meaning and artistic potential. Beliefs were also important in encoding motifs. Even the stylized and structured life of inanimate objects associated with everyday life is associated with beliefs in terms of abstraction. When studying the patterns associated with the history of our faith, we must not forget about heavenly bodies (cosmology), material cultural monuments, elements of nature, legends, stories and other valuable documents that are stored in the oral memory of people. Azerbaijanis had an ancient history of pre-Islamic belief systems. Scientists noted that the Turks living in Azerbaijan use a combination of three elements based on the cult of nature, the cult of the fathers and the god of heaven, and noted the belief in monotheism.

The first word recorded in written Turkic sources is the word God-Tanra [1, p. 13]. The system of symbolic patterns depicting the cults of the god of heaven, father and nature occupies a special place in the artistic structure of our pile and flatwoven carpets. There are dozens of examples of patterns and stamps that represent the words of God passed down from generation to generation. They are widely used in Azerbaijani carpet weaving: "tanrihan", "oguz-khachi" (stamp), "sun", "star", "dome of the sky", "earth-water", "wheel-swastika" (universe), "dragon" (snake), "wheel", "blue mountain", "arrow-bow" and other patterns also form typical criteria of partnership belonging to the carpet weaving traditions of the Turkic-speaking peoples.

In the system of beliefs and ideas of the ancient Azerbaijani Turks, the concept of the environment consisted of earth and sky. These two elements hold a special place in the cosmological thinking of Azerbaijanis, as well as in the artistic structure of their patterns based on the ancient belief in divinity. One of the interesting facts is that, in general,

the solution of the intermediate field in Azerbaijani carpets is largely related to the creative world. The old weavers connect the creative world with God, heaven (sun, universe), earth (earthly spirit) and water (water spirit). In the design structure of some flatwoven carpets, symbolic signs can be found derived from the words of the deity. For example; The patterns of some palas, jejim, and chiyi textiles of Nakhchivan and Shirvan have a system of signs that symbolically correspond to words and concepts written in ancient Turkic inscriptions. One of these sayings is the words written on the Orkhan-Yenisei monuments: "Above is the blue sky, below is the earth, and in the middle is their son of man" [3]. According to this saying, the arrangement of the patterns depicted on the stripes of the Nakhchivan jejim is interesting. Each jejim stripe above the human sign has a vertical meander sky (dragon) and a rectangular (square) symbol at the bottom, symbolizing earth.

The creative world belongs to God. Before Islam, Azerbaijani carpets depicted symbolic signs representing God and heaven. Such images are called "universe". The movement of the circular universe was symbolized by a serpent or dragon. In the Middle Ages, the word "evrən" (universe) was used to denote the concept of "snake" [2, p. 3]. In carpet design, the ancestors, who perceived the middle field of the carpet as a universe, used various cosmological elements to express the creative world, claiming that God is superior to all other beings. From this point of view, stylized abstract images of the moon, sun and stars are placed in the middle of the carpets. These medallion elements, the meaning of which we do not know, are usually called "gyol" (lake). The art of carpet weaving has influenced the system of patterns expressing the creative world through different periods of artistic development and is mainly reflected in three components.



Here, on the basis of three components, it systematizes the patterns of the heavenly, earth-middle and underground lower, or dark, worlds. It is the influence of such concepts that gave rise to the elements symbolizing the generative world.

The generative elements are also associated with the generative world. The patterns of Azerbaijani carpets are practically surrounded by symbols of generative elements. Patterns symbolizing soil, water, air, wood and other elements of nature form the basis of carpet compositions. Influenced by beliefs, our ancestors attributed land and water to the creative world as well as to the creative elements. Even in our mythological memory, "earth-water" is understood as the cause of creation. From this point of view, the concept of "earth-water" in the faith of the ancient Azerbaijanis was directly related to God. In almost all beliefs, "earth" and "water" are sacred conceptions.

Each carpet pattern has an element of "earth" and "water". Because in the symbolic system of our carpets, each straight or broken line drawn horizontally represents the symbol of "earth" (horizontal line) and "water". Traditionally, Azerbaijani carpet weavers call the straight lines surrounding the carpet border "water". In general, the concept of "water of life" (a symbol of eternity) is somehow described in the artistic structure of Azerbaijani carpet weaving. For example, in the corner of the Guba carpet "Ugakh", which reflects the traditions of inheritance, the mother gives the child "the water of life" – a small scene, but in fact it is mythological and expresses our ancient beliefs.

The principles of duality in carpet composition are stable both naturally and artistically, as a thought-provoking fact in carpet weaving. From the earliest times of carpet weaving, the principle of duality is formed by a combination of decorative images of

night and day, good and evil, top and bottom, etc. Although the history of this principle is unknown, in Azerbaijani carpet weaving it is associated only with fire worship or Zoroastrian beliefs, which contradicts the meaning and content of structures ancient carpet compositions. Because the natural existence of the creative world and the elements have symbolic features in a broader sense and are used in carpet compositions with colors and patterns.

It is for this reason that carpets woven with different geometric or floral patterns are capable of conveying information in accordance with different beliefs. Even the use of symbols in the system of carpet patterns with the theme of "good and evil", which specifically expresses the concept of duality, requiring multifaceted semantic explanations, does not fully justify Zoroastrianism or the worship of fire. The designs on the carpets, which have such artistic meaning, are systematically interactive and blurred, which allows a full view of the composition of the carpet.

Thus, the attitude of people to the creative world and the encoded symbols of this attitude, such as carpet patterns, from time to time merged with the stylized elements of nature and the life of our ancestors and formed the basis of Azerbaijani carpet weaving. Even here, on the basis of the shape of the pattern of any object taken from nature or everyday life, it is necessary to approach the existence of expressive features associated with the creative world, as well as with the sacred creative beings.

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