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SEMANTIC CODE OF MYTHOLOGEM TSYKURA / CYKŪRA

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Abstract

The article deals with the problem of the semantic content of the mythologem Tsykura | Cykūra (a component of the name of a wonderful bead), which occupies a significant place in the folklore and ethnographic tradition of the Ossetians. The author focuses on the semantic meaning of the ritual action associated with the cult of veneration of the heavenly patrons – the patrons of the wonderful bead, as well as the Ossetian ritual prayer according to the text of which it was possible to reconstruct the basic Indo-European myth about the hero's opposition to a chthonic being. The range of tasks under study also includes the substantiation of the solar (divine) nature of a wonderful object. The work presents the author's etymology of the term Tsykura which differs from the generally accepted to a certain extent. According to the proposed hypothesis Tsykuraiyi færđig (wonderful bead) is interpreted as a "sun bead" in the Ironian dialect. The author dwells on the most obvious convergence of the Ossetian Tsykuraia Færđig with the Tibetan and Chinese *solar Dzi beads*. It should be admitted that the semantic and phonetic similarity of the Tibetan and Chinese Dzi to the Ossetian Tsikura is too great to allow a judgment about an accidental similarity. It is more likely that there is a reason to talk about their genetic relationship. Comparison of the studied mythologemes seems to be quite reasonable. Our assumption is also supported by numerous artifacts discovered during archaeological expeditions.

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1. Introduction

With the emergence of new research methods and within the framework of polydisciplinarity a deeper consideration of the richest folklore, ethnographic and mythoepic material of the Ossetian traditional culture seems possible. A special status in this respect is assigned to ethnic constants, which are important components of the Ossetian worldview in its verbal, mythological and worldview expression.

Such basic components include the unique relic of Tsykuraiyi færðig | Cykūrajy færðyg (wonderful bead), the widespread veneration of which in North and South Ossetia elevates it to the category of cult elements that have a sacred meaning in the ethnocultural tradition of the Ossetians and are its important material attributes and symbols.

The deep archaic presence of the miraculous bead in the religious and mythological representations of Ossetians and their ancestors (Scythians, Sarmatians, Alans) is confirmed by numerous archaeological evidence and ethnographic descriptions.

The topic under study was considered at different times in numerous works of researchers: Chursin (1925), Khetagurov (2000), Chibirov (2008), Gazdanova (2007), Tmenova (2014), Tuallagov (2015), Gagloeva (1958), Kargiev (1982), Totrov (1978), Gagloty (2017), Besolova (2015), Parastaeva (2014), Sokaeva (2007), as well as Shaev and Samoylova (2013), Berezkin (2012), Huri et al. (2009), Mazzei et al. (2018), Quiroga (2016), Westermeyer (1988), Khairutdinova (2015), Janovič (1982), Orian and Jucan (2013).

Studying the issues of the genetic relationship between the Scythians and the Ossetians, the famous scientist Y. Gagloty, along with other visual similarities, cited as an example the existence of the 'snake stone' among the Scythians, which is a clear analogue of the Ossetian Tsykuraiyi færðig. A weighty argument, according to the observations of the researcher was a short message by the Roman author of I century C.E. Pliny the Elder (23–79), the creator of famous Natural History in 37 books, the Scythians cut the snake's head between the ears to get a pebble, which, as they say, it swallows in fright. Others use the whole head. The snake is used to make pills that are used for many medicines (Gagloty, 2017).

This tradition testifies to the antiquity of beliefs in the healing properties of a wonderful bead that exist among the Ossetians to the present day.

The archetypal motif associated with Tsykuraiyi færðig is presented as an important plot-forming component in all genres of Ossetian folklore including the textual space of the Nartiada and is characterized by significant variability and repetition. Recall that the symbolic meaning of the miraculous bead is reflected in the etiological myths about the origin of heavenly bodies (Narts sfældysty Anuson kadag | Kadag about the creation of narts"), where in the part of the first creation the bead is personified with the divine energy, sunlight and participates in the construction of cosmological models: Dzyrdtoy namyson fyðæltæ rajy, mæng dune, dam, uydis, fynæy, æmyr, saudalyng, stæy tææh arvy zyldyl fæzyndis hury tsalkh, mæyy zyng, stalyy ærttyævdæ sæmæ Stæy sæ rukhsy ændærg færðygau tækhærtæ atsaġat tskh art, æmæ arvæy feskhiyudta zyndzhy stælfæn, uy fæstæ festadis sumylazon fænyk zæhkhy tsaryyvon huy arty fæstautsy uyy fæstautsy Fytsag fæzyndi duney ærdzæy, Huytsauy komytæfæy tsykuray bur færðyg, uy nomæy sævzærd Buræfærnyg ... (Glorious ancestors told that in ancient times the

ghostly (imaginary) world was lifeless, silent and gloomy. Then a solar disk appeared in the blue sky, a moonlight, a star shine (the star Sirius – Z.K.) and the trail of the Milky Way stretched out. In the light a shadow like a bead flashed and sparkling with an incinerating blue flame separated from the sky with a fiery spark. Falling to the ground it turned into dark ash ... Then from this ash and from the heavenly fire God created the Narts. From the breath of the Creator in the Universe the **tsykurayy bur færdyg** (yellow tsykura bead) appeared and Burafarnyg came from its name”... (Our translation – Z.K.) (Narty kadjytæ: Iron adæmy epic. Tsypparum chinyg, 2007; Salagaeva, 2007).

2. Problem Statement

In previously published scientific articles the author of the proposed study outlined in sufficient detail the semantic meaning of the ritual action associated with the cult of veneration of heavenly patrons who endow the specified object with wonderful properties.

A detailed study of ritual prayer contributed to the assertion of the celestial origin of the bead, contrary to the common (scientific literature) judgment that *Tsykuraiyi færdir* refers either to the objects of fetish worship or to occult symbols related to lower mythology (Parastaeva, 2019). A significant corpus of well-known ethnographic descriptions about various ways of acquiring this relic by a person, including information about its functional features, are also an additional source of understanding the sacredness of the wonderful object and its high status in the traditional culture of the Ossetians.

3. Research Questions

In this work an attempt is made to re-interpret the semantic meaning contained in the name of the mythologeme *Tsykuraiyi færdir*, one of the variative and most preferred forms of which is the name ***Tsykura-færdir***. On the basis of the proposed hypothesis one of the options of the origin of the term under study is considered, to a certain extent different from the well-established etymological interpretation, according to which *Tsykuraiyi færdir* is interpreted as a “bead of the fulfillment of desires” (“*bead of something to ask for*” (*færdir* “bead”, “gem” *cy* “what” *kūraj* “to ask”) (Abaev, 1958).

In our opinion, the definition of the “wonderful bead” is metaphorical, since this concept is not included in this lexical context and when literally translated into the original language it is identical to the phrase '*alæmæty færdir*'.

The stable definition of “*wish fulfillment bead*” also implies doubts since the Ossetian name of the bead lacks the meaning *fulfillment*. It is obvious that this expression is stylistically imperfect since it is derived only from the component that is the conditional mood verb '*Tsy-kurai*' – “What do you ask for” (literally). It is important to note that Khetagurov (2000), in his ethnographic essay *The Person*, proposes a definition of *Tsykuraiyi færdir* in the meaning of a bead of abundance and happiness.

It is known that numerous studies, including our previous research on this mythologem, convey the generally accepted etymology of the term. A more in-depth characteristics of the semantic meaning of *Tsykura-færdir* is found in the new work of Chochiev (2019). However, according to the generally accepted opinion the scientist adheres to the traditional etymology of the concept under study: The idea is that a bead was obtained from the mouth of a snake and gave what was requested – fulfilled the request.

And it is important to note that ‘to ask’ is *kur*, which is the basis of the concepts *guryrn* – ‘to be born’, *aguryrn* – ‘to seek’, *kuryrn* – ‘to ask’, actively it had the meaning ‘to strive for the appearance of something’ with the help of asking for *kuiryrn* or searching for *aguriyn* (Chochiev, 2019).

4. Purpose of the Study

Those were doubts about the validity of etymology of the term that led us to the search for a new vision of the problem, since the interpretation of the concept of *Tsykuraiyi færdyg* in the meaning of ‘wish fulfillment bead’ is ambiguous and requires deeper understanding.

The purpose of this study is to present the author’s etymology of the term *Tsykura*, to a certain extent different from the generally accepted, traditional one. The results of this study favor a deeper understanding of the meaning of the miraculous object in the folklore and ethnographic tradition of the Ossetians, and also prevent the recoding of the ritual behavior of the Ossetians.

As a reasoned justification special attention is paid to the appeal to the historical and cultural aspect and the tradition associated with similar beads among different peoples of the world. The author dwells on the most obvious similarities of the Ossetian *Tsykuraiyi færdyg* with the Tibetan and Chinese ‘Dzi sun beads’.

5. Research Methods

The following was used during this study: the historical and typological method, the method of scientific textological analysis. The most constructive in this study is the application of the method of mythologism.

The study is based on a **methodological base** determined by the principles of textological, semiotic, structural and semantic analysis with the elements of comparison and juxtaposition, which immeasurably expands the possibilities of interdisciplinary research.

6. Findings

Based on everything mentioned above it is logical to turn to the nature of the cult object itself, the tradition of its veneration and involvement in the context of mythoepic symbolism.

Wonderful beads are a material substance and differ in a variety of colors according to which their functional features are determined. It was verified by Gagloeva (1958) in detail. Based on the data from informants, the scientist reports that according to the separate sources there are two types of beads: black with white and red spots and white with a yellow tint. According to other sources, the color palette is more diverse and has six varieties: 1) red with three stripes, i.e. blue, black and white; 2) white, with a slight blue tinge, called ‘*ækhsyry bærkady tsykurai færdig*’ (busa-Tsikura, giving an abundance of dairy products; 3). black, i.e. giving children to childless; 4) yellowish, i.e. giving welfare to livestock; 5) white with a black tint, i.e. giving an abundance of harvest; 6) red, which served to predict the future (Gagloeva, 1958).

In addition, according to the color differences, beads endow their owners with a creative gift and heal from all kinds of ailments. With their help, future events are foreshadowed, which confirms the mythological synonymy of *Tsykuraiyi færdyg* and *Arvaidæn* (*Heavenly Mirror*), information about which is figuratively and eloquently conveyed by Ossetian ritual poetry. However, it seems important to clarify that the miraculous bead, in contrast to the archetypal symbol Arvaidin, really exists in the actual world as part of the fundamental ontological categories (Kusaeva, 2016).

One of the characteristics of the bead's multifunctionality is its ability to resurrect the dead. This property of a wonderful object is also widely reflected in the works of various genres of Ossetian folklore.

It should be noted that the Ossetian mythology at all times was distinguished by a dualistic nature based on the fear of breaking a taboo, in this case, the tradition of venerating a unique relic, since its desecration or disappearance entailed inevitable troubles.

As shown, in each of the beads, according to their color differences, a certain symbolism is encoded, according to which it has a specific functional effect. It should be noted that the oral tradition brought to us the canonical ritual prayer, the text of which does not contain an appeal to the heavenly patrons – patrons of Tsykura-færdig, with various requests.

According to numerous ethnographic information the wonderful object is the property of a significant number of Ossetian families, who zealously preserve the continuity of the canons of its veneration. In rare cases, the relic is also kept in the sanctuaries of gorges, for example, in the Tbau-Uatsilla sanctuary, located in the village of Tsagat Lamardon in the Dargav gorge. In contrast to the family ritual, in honor of a bead belonging to a whole society, a convention feast (*kuvyd*) is held annually with the participation of people from the area. A special cult event (ritual ablution of a bead in milk, etc.) is carried out, similar to the ritual performed to the present in the sanctuary of the Kazakh family in the village of Makhchesk in the Digorsky gorge.

The owners of the wonderful bead are the chosen ones, therefore they treat the relics with a special feeling of sacred awe and carefully hide it from prying eyes. The order of its content is also sacred. According to Kargiev (1982), based on the field research materials, *sykura-fardyg*, *bura-fardyg*, *aluton* (all-perfect, all-fulfilling, all-healing) is a luminous body; the rays emitted by it in abundant quantities are pure, transparent, brilliant, and the power of their action is so great that they penetrate even a stone. Moreover, the rays of light emitted by the *tsykura-fardyg* are so bright that even the light of the sun cannot eclipse them; they easily replace the lamp in the dark. So that it does not lose its miraculous power, Ossetians say, it is necessary to store it in a place where sunlight does not penetrate, from the action of which its healing properties evaporate (Kargiev, 1982).

In accordance with this, the bead is carefully wrapped in a clean, snow-white fabric or cotton wool, which is renewed every time after a special cult event. The bead is usually placed in three boxes and carefully covered in a secret place. The prototypes of caskets dating from the 8th – 9th centuries were found among the materials of Alanian burials (Gamovskaya Balka, Moschevaya Balka, etc.). The presence of similar ideas among the Sarmatians is evidenced by the find dating back to the 2nd and 1st centuries BC and discovered during an archaeological expedition in the village Zamankul (North Ossetia-Alania) (Tuallagov, 2015).

The clearly structured space of the Ossetian dwelling presupposes the storage of the relic in its sacred part, i.e. the upper right corner of the female half of the house from the entrance, or in the attic (tsars). This corner is called ‘*bynaty byn*’ – the place of the patron saint of the hearth or ‘*særy zudy byn*’ – the place of the angel’s head.

Only during the New Year’s festivities, on the day of the patron saint of the hearth ‘*Bynaty hitsauy ækhsæv*’, is it taken out of the cache and a special ceremony is performed in the presence of exclusively representatives of this family. Participation in the ritual is taboo both for the outsiders and for new household members (young daughter-in-law, son-in-law) who appeared in the family during the year, since they acquire the status of full representatives of the family only after the birth of their first children following the tradition.

The sacred model of the ritual action is characterized by variability. So, in some gorges, a bead is placed in a bowl with ghee (*tsar*), which has a high ritual status in the Ossetian ethnocultural tradition. Dipping a bead to the bottom of the vessel brings happiness and prosperity to the family in the coming year. It is curious that the beads have the property of being covered with perspiration, changing in color, increasing, or decreasing in number, if there were several of them initially. Moreover, each precedent has a special symbolic meaning.

In this case, the representatives of the family begin even more fervent prayer so that their heavenly patrons save them from harm. In this case the bead is placed in the center of one of the three ritual pies (upper), symbolizing the divine world (*uælarv*), since within the framework of the mythological worldview system of Ossetians the bead is at the basis of the universe as a realistically motivated analogue of the Sun. The participants in the ritual entrust their family to the patronage of the celestials (*fædzæhst*) through the mediation of a bead, which in this religious and mythological construction is represented as an analogue of the universal mythoeptic symbols: the Universal Egg and the All-Seeing Eye.

It seems significant that in the Digor dialect of the Ossetian language this relic finds expression in two lexemes: *zolakhi færdug* (precious stone) and *golakhyi / gulakhi færdug* (pearl, precious stone) (Takazov, 2003). It should be noted that the form *gulakhi færdug*, which is found in the kadags recorded by Gubadi Dzagurov from the narrator Omar Kalitsev in 1910 is an indicator of the distinctive features of the Zadalesk-Khanaz dialect, which existed in this area until the 30s of the 20th century (Narty kadjytæ: Iron adæmy epic. Dygkægæm chinyg, 2004).

Undoubtedly, the typological similarity of these mythologemes positions them as interchangeable forms of the same concept. The unambiguous nature of the analyzed units is also conveyed by the semantic content of the epic plots. These forms could contribute to the representation of the semantic elements of the lexemes under consideration; however, a preliminary clarification of the terminological essence revealed only their genetic heterogeneity with the stable meaning of the mythologem *Tsykuraiyi færdyg* (bead what you ask).

In the light of the proposed observations that clarify the question of the semiotic correspondence of these folklore concepts, their relationship can be supported by a detailed etymological analysis. At first glance, the study of the above concepts is complicated by significant changes that have undergone the Digor variants of the name of the bead, transforming to the forms that are now obscure. This is evidenced

by ‘question marks’ regarding the form ‘gulakhi færduḡ’ indicated by Gubadi Dzagurov when fixing epic texts (NOIUSS). Perhaps the collectors and commentators of the epic believed that these names were unknown to the Ossetian ethnonymic nomenclature. However, upon closer examination of the semantic features of these concepts the recognition of their identity seems quite likely.

It is noteworthy that in the Kadags the wonderful bead is found mainly in the cycle about Soslan (Narty kadjytæ: Iron adæmy epic. Dygkægæm chinyg, 2004). According to one of the epic versions of the legend about the birth of Soslan (*Sos-doræi igurd Narti Soslan*) the hero is born from the Sos-stone and a wonderful bead presented in the legend as an object with solar semantics.

*Narti Ækhsinyæ hæppæltæ ækhsnadta doni bilæbæl, æ uæle tsubur kuræt iskodta utemæy. Innæ færsti fiiyau istsudæy, æma 'yimæ Æhsinæ æhe ravdesæ-bavdesæ kodta. Ær imæ hitsæ kodta, fal imæ batsæuæn 'adtæy, æma uædta Khutsaumæ iskuvta: "And Khutsau, ædta mi kara ratsuua, uoy **gulakhi færduḡ** festun kænæ!" **Gulakhi færduḡ** festadæy, æma 'y fehsta, uæddær ye næ khærtzdæenæy, zæḡvḡæ. Ækhsinæ dær æhe fæyyeuvars kodta, æma dorbul isæmbaldæy, æma uomi uodgoymag batsudæy* (Narty kadjytæ: Iron adæmy epic. Dygkægæm chinyg, 2004).

The Nartov mistress (Shatana – Z.K.) washed clothes on the river bank in a short beshmet. A shepherd was walking along the opposite bank, and Akhsina (mistress – Z.K.) attracted his attention. The shepherd was inflamed with passion for her, but could not approach. Then he prayed the God: Turn what comes out of me into a wonderful bead, so that at least it will reach the goal. But Akhsina dodged the bead. And hitting a stone the bead impregnated it (stone). (Our translation – Z.K.).

According to Tsagaraev (2000), in this plot, the late mythological innovation clothed the ancient mythological plot of the Sacred marriage of Heaven and Earth with the subsequent birth of an epic hero, in an everyday erotic episode. It is easy to see that this archaic text repeats the sacred for the ancient man the plot of the fertilization of Mother Earth by Father-Heaven, where the material hypostasis of the earth is a stone, and the celestial person, Uastyrdzhi (in the image of a shepherd – Z.K.), is directly connected with life-giving force sun rays.

The sunny nature of Soslan has often been the cause for scientific discussions. In addition to the validity of Dumézil's (1990) conclusion about the traits of the cultural hero in the image of Soslan, which perfectly coincide with his sunny nature, the famous linguist Yu. A. Dzitstsoyty revealed convincing arguments representing the hero's solar origin. The scientist's statement by Tylor (1989) that in the mythology of many peoples the “personified sun itself” acts as a cultural hero, allows, according to Dzitstsoyty, to remove the artificially created opposition of the positions of Dumézil (1990) and Meletinsky (1957). It is of considerable interest that the researcher, when comparing the tale of the birth of Soslan with the ancient Indian texts of the Rig Veda, found their typological correspondence and complete coincidence of the motives for the birth of the Sun (Dzitstsoyty, 2017).

This opinion is quite consistent with the position of the prominent scientist Takazov (2014b), who considers the issues of mythological archetypes in Ossetian cosmogony and substantiated the concept of the divine nature of Soslan's nart, its anthropomorphic embodiment, symbolizing the image of the Sun.

Taking into account the above, the solar semantics of the wonderful bead is quite obvious, which is the basis for searching in the very name of the object (both in the Ironian and Digor dialect forms of the Ossetian language) the root word reflecting this concept.

So, based on the example of the term *zolakh* | *solaq* it is quite easy to recognize the common root word **sol** – the sun by comparing linguistic material. Abaev (1989) considered its correspondences in various languages proposing an etymological interpretation of the lexeme ‘sun’ in the dictionary article.

For example: **xūr** | **xor** – 1. sun, sunny; 2. figuratively – happiness; other, Iran **hwar*, other ind. svar-‘ ancient slav. *slnce*, Russian, sun; lit., Latvian, *saulē*; goth. *sauil*; other, n, sol, lat. *sol*, etc. Iranian **xor**, being contaminated from the European **sol* -, could give a compromise form **xol*, whence the name of one of the ancestor brothers of the Scythians $\text{Κολαζαϊς} = \text{xol-a-xšaya}$ – Lord of the Sun (Abaev, 1989).

Due to the fact that in the ancient Iranian language the initial Indo-European **-s** is preserved, if it goes into **-z**, then we observe the transition from **sol** to **zol**. In modern Ossetian, the old **s** and **š** (as well as **z** and **ž**) coincided in one sibilant, which in various dialects approaches either **s (z)** or **š (ž)** (Abaev, 1949).

Accordingly, *zolakh* | *solaq* is legitimately regarded as a lexeme consisting of the root word **sol* – the sun and the suffix *-aq*, the semantic meaning of which is a characteristic of the Sun. The mythologeme *golakhi* | *xolaqi* meaning solar is similarly etymologized, where *-gjol* [**xol*] is a root word meaning *sun*; *-aq* is a suffix characterizing the belonging; *-i* is a case ending of the genitive. In this case, the transition from *sol* to *gjol* [**xol*] is natural, since when dropped out, the initial Proto-Indo-European *-s* in the ancient Iranian language goes into *-x*. The transition of the suffix *-aq* to *-akh* also seems to be motivated. Similar cases are observed when *-g* is voiceless and in derivative words turns into *-kh*: *sag* – a dee", *sah* – brave, bold. As the analysis clearly shows, the probability of the semantic content of the concepts *solaq* / *xolaqi* (*ğolaqi*) færdyg in the meaning of the “sun bead” is very high.

In this context, the mythologem *ğolæ* (*hul* – ‘alchik’, ‘grandmother for the game’), which on the Iranian soil is etymologized as a ‘ball’, ‘round’ and goes back to the concept **xūr*, also arouses a certain interest (Abaev, 1973). A similar term in the Digor dialect is found in the name of gold coins, which, in accordance with the system of symbols emphasizes the semantic relationship of the concepts ‘gold’ and ‘the Sun’.

It seems logical to reproduce examples that expose the transition of the Iranian initial *-kh* in the Digor dialect into *-g*: *khzt* – Ir. | *gatz* – game, ‘dances’, ‘wedding’, ‘joke’; *khomyl* – Ir. | *gombæl* – “adult”, “educate”, etc.

Based on the foregoing, the solution to the problem described in the proposed study is seen in the verification of reliability of opinion about the solar nature of the miraculous bead. In support of this hypothesis, it is advisable to recall the legend about one of the most common ways to acquire a bead, where, according to the storyline, it is organically included in the symbolic paradigm of the mythologem “The Sun”.

According to legend, Tsykura-færdig falls to earth from heaven during the rampant of the elements, a strong thunderstorm accompanied by thunder. Reconstructing the basic Indo-European myth, in which the main mythologeme is the opposition of the hero to a chthonic being, this phenomenon is explained as the abduction of the Sun by the Dragon. The subject marking the Sun in the presented mythological construction is Tsykura-færdig, and of the chthonic creature, the Dragon, is a snake, whose prey is a bead falling to the ground. It is characteristic that it acquires its functional purpose only when a person, without fail, at the risk of his life, manages to get a bead from the throat of a poisonous snake.

Within the framework of the mythological worldview system, the world harmony is restored, which was disturbed as a result of the struggle between *Light and Dark* (Kusaeva, 2016).

Thus, the appeal to the cult of the Sun has acquired a fundamental significance in Ossetian mythology. In the traditional culture of the Ossetians, the symbolism of the solar element is one of the most important archetypal allegories of the supreme world and is characterized by rather high coefficient of study.

An appeal to the solar field is contained in the scientific works of a significant number of modern Ossetian scientists: Mamieva (2011), Darchieva (2012, 2017); Abaeva (2012, 2018); Takazov (2013, 2014a); Salbiev (2019) and others. Taking into account the obviousness of a detailed understanding of this topic, let us omit its detailed presentation in this work.

Coming back to the question of the semantic features of Tsykuraiyi færdyg one should say that the ironic dialect form of the name of the wonderful object *tsykuraiyi* | *cykūrajy* is a composite formation consisting of two root words – *tsi* | *-cy* and *-kur* | *-kūr-*. Following the proposed concept, which clarifies the semantic content of the concept under study one can assume that the second constituent unit of this term is represented by the root word **xūr* (khur) – the sun, solar\’sunny.

The initial *-tsi* | *-su* remains unclear for us the explication of which requires deeper and more multifaceted study.

It is characteristic that in the modern Ossetian language the morpheme *-tsi* is not used as an independent term, but it actively appears as a component of complex words in a significant corpus of tokens. The width of this cover is demonstrated by the relation of this morpheme to the general etymological series, where the following can be used as the Indo-European basis of complex words: **ti*, **cy*, **dzi*, **zi*, **chi*, **ki*, **si*, **ci*, etc. Let us illustrate the examples with similar meaning:

cīn | *cijnæ* (tsin) – joy, benevolence (Abaev, 1958);

cyren | *ciren* (tsyren) – bright flame (Abaev, 1958);

zīlyn: *zyld* | *zelun*: *zild* (zilyn) – to turn around, to rotate, to circle (Abaev, 1989), etc.

As a cautious hypothesis we can assume that in the role of the Indo-European basis of the sought-for concept *-tsi* | *-cy* can appear consonant with **-cy*, root morpheme is **ti*. The lexical fund of the Indo-European language, presented in detail in the works of Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1984), is of considerable interest for the identification of this formant. Studying the canonical forms of the root morphemes in the structure of the Indo-European root, scientists explained the origin of the late polymorphic Indo-European forms, one of which is **t'i-eu-jo-os* => i.e. *t'iujos* (ancient Ind. – divyáh; Greek – δῖος; Latin – dīus) in the meaning of *divine*. Similar transitions of the root morpheme – **ti* to – **cy* can be considered on the example of the lexeme *cyrg* | *cirg* (tsyrg) – sharp. According to the etymology of ВЮЮ Abaev, this lexeme was naturally transformed from **tigra* (t before i → c), and *tūrg* ‘sharp’ pers. *tūr* ‘arrow’, ancient pers. – *tigra*- sharp (*tigrahauda*- “with sharp caps” = Os. *cīrgxod*).

In the dictionary entry of Abaev (1958) the lexeme *tigra* < *tig*- sharp is given, it is present in the Ossetian language in the form *tig* | *teg* with the semantics ‘edge’, ‘protruding angle’, etc. This root is found with another formant in other Ind. *tigma*- sharp.

A similar transition of the root morpheme – **ti* to – **cy* is seen in the term *cixt* | *ciğd* (*tsykht*) – cheese. V.F. Miller, comparing it with the ancient Indian word *tikta* – spicy, bitter, salt, recognizes the

Iranian etymology of the word. Abaev (1958) supports the impeccability of the sound side since the transition from *ti* to $\rightarrow ci$ is quite natural. The correspondence of the semantic content is also seen, i.e. spicity, salty product.

Among the concepts under consideration, the term *tītykky* found in the Iron dialect of the Ossetian language is of considerable interest: *tītykky færdyg* ‘gem tītykk’ (færdyg ‘gem’, ‘small bead’) is a wonderful, extraordinary beauty gem. Abaev (1979), suggesting the etymology of this lexeme, gives the Iranian root **ti-*, **tai-*, restored by G. Bailey, in the meaning of ‘to look’. It is recognized in the following words: *tēlay* – ‘eyes’, *Tištrya-*, *Tīr* – the star of Sirius. In the Ossetian language, according to the scientist, *tītykk* is raised to **taitaka-* and approaches the given group. For the semantics of lexemes ‘look’, ‘see’, ‘eyes’ \rightarrow ‘gem’ Abaev (1979) proposes to turn to the ancient Persian language in order to compare these concepts with *kasaka-* ‘gem’, ‘precious stone’ from *kas* – ‘to look’ (Osset. Kæsyn).

This etymology is quite consistent with the semantics we have proposed – *the All-Seeing Eye*, which we came to as a result of analyzing the text of ritual prayer, where Tsykuraiyi færdyg appears in this image (Kusaeva, 2016).

Consequently, the semantic content of the initial component of the concept under study has one more shading meaning ‘all-seeing’, which also emphasizes the belonging of a wonderful object to the supreme world.

7. Conclusion

Thus, as a result of the study an original vision of the semantic content of the mythologem Tsykuraiyi færdig (a wonderful bead) was proposed. The work also revealed the convergence of Ossetian folklore and ethnographic as well as mythological features with similar traditions of other peoples.

The results of etymological consideration have shown that within the framework of modern Ossetian word formation the form of *tsykuraiyi* | *cykūrajy* decomposes into two root words -tsly- and -kurla- and the genitive case ending -iyi.

According to the proposed hypothesis the etymology of the mythologem Tsykuraiyi færdig g | *Cykūrajy færdyg*, meaning ***the sun bead***, seems quite reasonable. At the same time, the initial root word -tsy (*ti) indicates the divine origin of the miraculous object. It should be recognized that, on the basis of the analysis carried out in the proposed article, this position is fully consistent with the semantic richness of concepts with a similar meaning found in the Digor dialect of the Ossetian language: *sofaq* / *ğolaqi færdyg* – *the sun bead*.

As a reasoned substantiation of the proposed concept it seems important to turn to the historical and cultural aspect, in particular, to the tradition associated with similar beads among different peoples of the world, since the mythological motive about a wonderful bead inherent in the archaic epic of Ossetians is very common in the cultures of many ethnic groups. Typological parallels regarding the belief in the existence of such beads or stones (more often in the folk tradition) are noted among the Caucasian peoples neighboring with the Ossetians: Armenians, Georgians, Karachais, Balkars, etc.

N.Ya. Marr and Ya.I. Smirnov mention Armenian and Georgian tales about a dragon dropping from its mouth a precious stone that brings happiness to its owners (as cited in Abaev, 1958).

According to Gaksthausen’s information (as cited in Gagloeva, 1958), the Armenians had the following belief: There is a breed between the snakes of the Mount Ararat, which is under the dominion

of their chosen queen. The queen holds a magic stone in her mouth. On famous nights she throws it high and it shines like the sun. Eternal prosperity to the one who grabs it on the fly.

The message of Frazer (1980), who writes about the belief of the Greeks in the healing powers of a stone called “serpentine” is of great interest. However, according to the author, its healing effect was manifested only with a snakebite.

But the most obvious convergence of the Ossetian Tsykuraiyi færðig can be traced with the Tibetan and Chinese “Dzi sun beads”, which in the context of the issue under study involves known evidence of ancient and medieval ties of Iranian tribes with the peoples of Tibet and China (Kuznetsov, 1998; Tuallagov, 2014).

The information from Byazirov’s (2019) article strengthened our point of view. The author put forward a hypothesis according to which the root word ‘Tsi’ (Zi), which is actively included in the Chinese vocabulary is a concept brought into the linguistic fund of the Sino-Caucasian macrofamily from the oldest obsolete language. In ancient times its carriers lived in the southeast of Asia Minor (in the upper reaches of the Euphrates River) and were the founders of the cult center Göbekli-Tepe (Pot-bellied Hill), which is a temple complex located in the Armenian Highlands in the upper reaches of the Euphrates River. According to the researcher the Chinese language, where, until now, the term ‘Tsi’ is used to denote the concept of energy, it could have entered the region as a result of the migration wave of the speakers of this proto-language (Byazirov, 2019).

The lexeme ‘Tsi’ is still used in Chinese toponyms and hydronyms (Kryukov & Huang, 1978). In addition, it is contained in the name of the Chinese Qing dynasty founded by the Manchus (1644–1912).

It should be admitted that the semantic and phonetic closeness of the Tibetan and Chinese ‘Dzi’ to the Ossetian ‘Tsikura’ is too great to allow a judgment about an accidental similarity. Comparison of the studied mythologemes seems to be quite reasonable. Our assumption is also supported by numerous artifacts discovered during archaeological expeditions.

We have to determine in which direction the borrowing of the term was going: from the ancient Iranian language to Tibetan (Chinese) or vice versa.

Accordingly, the results obtained and presented in the article do not exhaust the entire range of the aforementioned issues. The given topic has considerable research potential and is promising for further study.

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