

ISCKMC 2020
International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»
HERITAGE OF CULTURAL TRADITIONS IN MODERN
ASTROLOGY

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Abstract

The article examines the heritage of ancient eastern cultural traditions on the example of the Zoroastrian cultural tradition and reveals their relevance for modern European people. The development and preservation of the Zoroastrian tradition in the history of Western European culture through the ancient world is shown on the example of astrology. The article reveals specific features of its preservation in culture, in particular in such a phenomenon as astrology. In parallel with this, it raises the question about the reasons for the popularity of the most modern astrology. An attempt is made to investigate not so much the external socio-cultural factors that determine this tendency, but the internal foundations of the existence of this form of extrascientific knowledge in the modern world. The analysis is carried out in the logical-methodological aspect on the example of Avestan astrology based on the materials of the works of the famous modern astrologer Globa, P.P. It is shown that the Zoroastrian tradition acts as a cultural basis for modern astrology, which allows it to fill its methodological guidelines with logical meaning. It is proposed to consider astrology as a guide to the practical application of the religious ideas of Zoroastrianism in life. It substantiates the possibility of practical application in life by each person of the key moral and ethical principles of the teachings of Zoroaster by means of constructing and interpreting his individual birth chart.

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Keywords: Cultural tradition, Zoroastrianism, Avesta, astrology, Avestan astrology



1. Introduction

Astrology, being a cultural phenomenon, not only left a mark on its history, but today it continues to be a sociocultural phenomenon of reality. It is in demand and popular as an element of modern mass culture (Bukurova, 2019). In turn, the development of postmodern culture causes an interest in astrology as the most ancient system of ideas, and it also becomes obvious that it is simplified and becomes the level of a sociocultural phenomenon. At the same time, it is equally important, along with an external view of the problem, to explore the internal foundations of the existence of this form of extra-scientific knowledge in the modern world.

2. Problem Statement

In any processes and phenomena of our time, one can find various manifestations of certain cultural traditions. They act as a kind of basis on which not only the present and the future are formed, but it is endowed with meaning. The deep crisis that European culture is experiencing today is manifested in the domination of mass culture, the culture of glamour. Today human life is filled with simulacra that replace images of the real world with virtual reality. Against this background, interest in ancient cultural traditions, especially oriental ones, which are developing on a different basis, is growing. Based on the idea of the unity of nature, space, man and society, Eastern culture is aimed at achieving harmony with nature instead of dominating it. This becomes relevant for a European person due to the growing economic and environmental crisis, the growth of psychological problems because of the high rates of social development.

3. Research Questions

In this regard, it is interesting to answer the question of which eastern cultural tradition serves as a platform for modern astrology, and how this is reflected in its basic ideas, which essentially reflect the content side of astrology. Let us set the task to carry out this analysis in a logical and methodological aspect using the example of the Avestan astrology so promoted today and try to reveal its main ideas on the basis of the works of Globa.

4. Purpose of the Study

Globa claims that Avestan astrology is astrology based on ideas from the book "Avesta", the sacred scripture of Zoroastrianism. Literally the name "Avesta" means "reasonable dictum" (Boyce, 1987). The language in which many of its revelations are written is archaic, and it is usually called Avestan, since it is known only from the Avesta.

In the cultural heritage of the peoples of the Persian period, we find the Zoroastrian tradition, the founder of which is the prophet Zarathushtra (in Greece he became known as Zoroaster). Zoroastrianism was the state religion of the ancient Persian Empire for several centuries. Many modern researchers agree that such a person really existed (Boyce, 1987; Shaposhnikov, 2002). Among the main features of his

teaching, one can note the ethical side that calls for universal morality and instills a deep sense of responsibility in a believer for the world around him. It is interesting to highlight the main ideas of this archaic teaching and to trace how they are currently manifested in astrology.

5. Research Methods

According to the provisions of the "Avesta", zoroastrianism concentrates on three basic principles: 1) the idea of the struggle between good and evil (light and darkness); 2) the idea of free choice; 3) the idea of the immortality of the soul.

The message of Zoroaster is imbued with the idea of the existence of two worlds: the world of the visible, manifested, tangible, earthly and the world of the invisible, unmanifest, intangible, heavenly, to which the gods (spiritual entities) belong. Thus, the Universe splits into two parts: spiritual (heavenly) and material (earthly). Here the difference between the sensible and the spiritual is presented as living and concrete, that is, deity or spirit is a living force. We can say that everything around is alive and animate.

All attention in Zoroastrianism stops at the struggle of two opposites, light, and darkness, good and evil, from which the process of life in the Universe is composed. The "Avesta" itself speaks of this struggle as already existing, without explaining either the beginning or the conditions of this struggle. Most researchers of Zoroastrianism hold the position that the prophet declared the primacy of the Good Deity in the primary unmanifest world (Boyce, 1987; Shaposhnikov, 2002). The struggle between the Good and the Evil Spirits takes place only in the manifested world, which is completely dependent on the unmanifest, and is limited by the time frame. When the Good Spirit finally triumphs over the Evil in the earthly world (which is generated by the struggle of these opposites), then the very possibility of the existence of this material world will disappear. Then the end of time will come, and the earthly world will merge with the heavenly one.

Thus, it can be noted that Zoroastrianism strives for pantheistic unity, but it is closed by dualism, that is, the struggle between two opposite principles of good and evil. So ideas about goodness and light are concentrated in the person of the god Ahura-Mazda, and his opposite is the god Angra-Mainyu. Both have in their subordination the spirits created by them. It means that strict parallelism is proposed, when all the positive properties of the spirits of Ahura-Mazda find their negation in the spirits of Angra-Mainyu. Countless spirits of good and evil are different facets of qualities and attributes that are inherent in each of the gods. This has significant and far-reaching spiritual and ethical implications as they can bestow these qualities on believers. These are two principles of life, which determine real life and real being, and to which everything in the religious view of Zoroastrianism is reduced.

If we turn to Avestan astrology, then the content of such basic concepts as "planet" and "sign of the zodiac" includes aspects related to supernatural forces (as a result of the manifestation of the gods Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu). So, Globa (2001) writes:

According to the ancient Avestan teaching, the planets were originally cosmic bodies projecting onto the Earth God's grace, poured out throughout the cosmos. Evil, having burst into our system, distorted this projection, introduced a devilish principle into it. From that moment on, the planets by their nature became dual for us. Now they carry both angelic and devilish origins ... The signs

of the zodiac are also a source of information, but, unlike the planets, the signs are not defiled ... These are some pure facets of the Law, the gate behind which lies our path into the unknown. The planets are the keys that open these gates. (p. 54)

It turns out that he describes certain aspects of the act of Creation from the Avesta, when Ahura Mazda first created everything in a spiritual form, and then he gave it a material form. And it was the material creation that turned out to be vulnerable to the forces of evil, and the god Angra Mainyu immediately attacked him. He brought corruption, death, and vices to the perfect material world (Boyce, 1987).

According to Zoroastrianism, man is a product of great forces. The very appearance of living beings in the material world appears to be the result of already created beings of the invisible world, that is, the reification of these spiritual forms of being. Thus, man is the embodiment of invisible spirits. According to the revelation received by the prophet, he has a common mission with good deities, namely, to fight evil and restore the world to its original perfect form. Thus, the history of man is also an arena of struggle between the principles of good and evil. As the British researcher of Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, Boyce (1987) notes, "Zoroaster gave his followers a special moral law - to live in accordance with a good thought, a good word and a good deed" (p. 12).

In accordance with it Globa (2005) views astrology as a direction of activity that is of practical importance for a person in the struggle between good and evil. He explains this by the fact that astrology allows not only to determine the needs, abilities, characteristics of a person's character, his talents, psychological complexes, directions of personality development, but it primarily allows to identify temptations by the forces of evil and support by the forces of good of each person based on the construction of his astrological birthday cards. So, he writes: "In a nutshell, the astrological method boils down to identifying the influence on every large and small part of the world of higher forces: the forces of good, coming from God, and the forces of evil, coming from the devil" (Globa, 2005, p. 54).

Let us move on to considering the second postulate of Zoroastrianism, the idea of a free choice. A person here consists of several parts: a body, a special force that animates the body, and a soul. The vital force is directly related to the material principle, but the soul represents aspects of consciousness, conscience, which is the spiritual principle of the intangible world.

For all the elevation of feelings in the Avesta, Ahura Mazda is described by features that are alien to the true concept of the deity of that time; on the contrary, he appears to be humanoid. He is ascribed together with the body and soul, as a special principle. He has wives and children. Thus, here the monotheistic idea of God is not separated from the naturalistic view. Perhaps this can explain the conclusion to which the researcher Boyce (1987) comes: A man with his mind and the right to choose most of all belongs to Ahura Mazda.

According to one of the revelations of the prophet, he saw that righteousness and virtue by their nature are different from depravity and sin. He grasped these two main opposites of being in their initial collision. In this act of revelation, the main thing is the fact that the two primary deities voluntarily, although in accordance with their original nature, made a choice towards good and, accordingly, towards evil. According to Boyce's approach, it is this act that becomes the prototype of a similar choice for every

person (Boyce, 1987). Thus, the main life task of a person is a conscious and free choice between good and evil. This choice is made both for life and on a case-by-case basis. The researcher Shaposhnikov (2002) also comes to this conclusion, he writes: "Moral choice in the teachings of Zarathushtra is the most important effort of the soul and the manifestation of freedom" (p. 30).

In accordance with this, Globa (2001) claims that in the soul of every person there is both good and evil. Everyone has the opportunity to increase or decrease these components of their soul through free choice. In order to determine the vulnerabilities of the human soul, that is, manifestations of evil (sins and temptations to which a person is exposed), and vice versa, the good qualities of the soul, that is, manifestations of good (his creative inclinations, creative potential), it is necessary to build and interpret an individual astrological chart birth, that is, his horoscope.

It turns out that the planets in the horoscope of a person's birth act as indicators of his creative and destructive manifestations. Globa (2001) defines planets as "pointers" that give a certain direction to a person, and show what he needs to work on, what he needs to change in himself. According to his approach, a person needs to work on certain qualities associated with the planets and improve them. And through such work on himself, a person contributes to the strengthening of the harmony of the world. So, a person's life is seen by him as a "work", which consists in the choice between good and evil. Moreover, the concepts of "good" and "evil" are associated with God and the devil, with light and darkness. Therefore, any human action is considered by him from the point of view of whether it serves the forces of light or darkness. Thus, the main moral and ethical principles that were laid down at the origin of the Zoroastrian tradition are traced here. Moreover, any forecast for the future is presented as a kind of simulation of the situation. There are various options in it: if a person does this, then there will be one thing, and if otherwise, then another. That is, a person is left with the right of free choice. Globa (2005) writes: "The main goal should not be prediction, but the modeling of the desired variant of events, as well as the prevention of the undesirable variant" (p. 12).

Consider the third postulate of Zoroastrianism, the idea of the immortality of the soul. Ahura Mazda, according to the prophet, endowed a person with two benefits: happiness in the material world and immortality in the future life. So, we find the idea that the soul, existing independently of the body, remains to live after its destruction and the disappearance of the vital force. Zoroaster preached a doctrine directed against the reign of evil and demanded a fight against it and service to the god of goodness and light, Ahura Mazda, promising union with him and bliss in his invisible, heavenly world, together with light spirits.

Here it is interesting to refer to the research of Van der Waerden (1991), one of the largest specialists in the history of mathematics and astronomy of the Ancient World, who, based on the study of a huge amount of historical materials, comes to assumptions about the Persian origins of the birth of personal astrology. He writes that ancient astrology, as presented in the great series of omens, Enuma Anu Enlil, was replaced in the Persian period by a new divination art, horoscopic astrology, which is still in use today (Van der Waerden, 1991). During this period astrology, which had previously dealt exclusively with the welfare of the country, forecasting the weather, war, and peace, moved on to addressing personality issues.

According to the texts of the Avesta, the righteous souls of the dead travel to heaven over the Chinvat bridge to heaven, while evil souls break off this bridge and fall into hell. That is, the last location

of righteous souls is assumed in the same place where the stars, the moon and the sun are. Van der Waerden (1991) in his research showed that the idea of the journey of the soul originates in this myth, and only later appears among ancient philosophers. The deepest religious roots of personal astrology lie in the idea that the soul, before its birth, descends from heaven, where it takes part in the conversions of the stars, and, uniting with the body, forms a living being. This explains the way in which a person's character is dependent on the sky. He comments on the Middle Persian text "Denkart" in the following way: "The soul of Zarathushtra is of heavenly origin: it descends from the highest heaven to Earth. These religious beliefs originally had nothing to do with the zodiac or with any other parts of Babylonian science, but later they were combined with those religious beliefs that made possible the emergence and development of horoscopic astrology" (Van der Waerden, 1991, p. 102). The Persian myth could be of decisive importance in the emergence of the horoscope associated with birth.

The French researcher of the history of ancient philosophy and religion Festugier (2019) showed in his works that in the first centuries of the Christian era, the ideas of Zoroastrianism penetrated into Ancient Greece. He writes that since the Alexandrian era, there has been a lot of literature on behalf of Zoroaster, and since the Hellenistic period, many authors have cited Zoroaster's books on astrology (Apotelésmatika), magic and alchemy (Festugier, 2019). Another French historian Boucher-Leclerc (2012) showed that the technical name of that time "apotelesmatic" determined astrology (or "horoscopy") directly related to the moment of a person's birth and the construction of his individual birth chart. Thus, there is indirect evidence that the roots of personal astrology may go deep into the Zoroastrian cultural tradition.

Culturologist Zelinsky (1996) notes that it was in the ancient world that "that connection of Eastern occultism with Greek science took place, the fruit of which was scientific Greek astrology. Ptolemy played a special role in the formation of that astrology. His work "Tetrabiblos", known as "The Mathematical Treatise of Four Parts" or "The Four Books", was the main prerequisite for the development of astrology as a scientific direction up to the 17th-18th centuries (Bukurova, 2013). It was along this branch that the formation and development of Western European thought proceeded.

Now let us consider how the principle of the immortality of the soul is represented in modern astrology. In the works of Globa (2001, 2005), the idea of the multiplicity of human incarnations is manifested, which explains the cause-and-effect relationship based on the interpretation of his individual astrological birth chart. It turns out that a person is born and dies many times and lives many earthly lives. Each time he is given a chance to live life anew, since the memory of his previous incarnations and the experience accumulated during them are erased. However, previous incarnations lay the causes of events in the current life. This information is available to a person through the study of his individual birth horoscope.

The mechanism of how it works in astrology is revealed as follows: "If the position of the planets in the signs of the Zodiac (cosmogram) indicates to us what a person came to this world with, then the position of the same planets in the houses of the horoscope (the horoscope itself) shows what tasks a person in this incarnation will have to decide what events will be attracted to him" (Globa, 2005, p. 49). It turns out that with the help of an individual astrological birth chart, a person can find the reasons that led to a particular event, and grope for possible ways out of the current situation. At the same time, the reason

for both is the person himself, and further events depend only on the person himself, on his choice. Therefore, a person is an active principle of his destiny.

6. Findings

Summing up the research results of Globa it can be noted that Avestan astrology, as an extrascientific form of knowledge, manifested the main provisions of the Zoroastrian cultural tradition. This tradition acts as a kind of basis that allows astrology to fill its methodological guidelines with logical meaning. The three basic principles of Zoroastrianism are not only relevant for modern astrology, but also find methodological application in astrological practice. Thus, the possibility of practical application in life by each person of the key moral and ethical principles of the teachings of Zoroaster through the construction and interpretation of an individual birth chart is determined. It turns out that the Avestan astrology can be viewed not only as a way of knowing oneself, but also as a kind of guide to the practical application of the basic religious ideas of Zoroastrianism in human life.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, astrology, as one of the most ancient forms of extra-scientific knowledge, is rooted in the original ideas of man about the cosmic nature of being, which we find in mythology as the most archaic form of world perception. Avestan Astrology, according to the works of P.P. Globa, based on the Zoroastrian cultural tradition, not only places a person at the center of the individual universe of perception, but contributes to building harmonious relations with nature and fostering a deep sense of responsibility in modern man for the world around him.

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