

**REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

*On the right of manuscript*

**BELIEF IN GOD AMONG THE ANCIENT TURKS**

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**ABSTRACT**

of the dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK

**The topicality of the research and the degree of its elaboration.** Religion is an important element of culture in Turkish society as well as in almost every society. Religion is a way, a belief system, all the rules that faith must follow. This concept stems from the admiration that ethnic associations and nations had for supernatural forces in ancient times. In addition to studying Turkic customs and traditions, in addition to one, to understand the basics of the old Turkic religion, as Abdulkadir Inan said, it is necessary to delve into history. The Turkic belief system is very rich and contains many nuances. They are collectively considered elements of a belief system.

It is impossible to say that the old Turkic religion or Goy Tengri religion and the Saha (Yakut) or Altai Turkic faith, which is known today as Shamanism are the same. The religious beliefs of the Turks, which had a state tradition since ancient times, were at a more developed level than today's Altai and Yakut religious beliefs. Indeed, in the old Turkic societies there is no probable evidence of the existence of a faith similar to shamanism. Even the fact that shamanism is a religion in our time is doubtful. The reason for this is that it does not meet the criterion of religion, it is perceived as a way of incantation or witchcraft, as a means to contact spirits.

In distant Africa, Ireland, even in American Indians, shamans and elements of shamanism are found. The word "gam" in the meaning of shaman was used by the Altai Turks today, and as far as this word is known, it has been living since the 5th century. In the time of the Huns who established power in Europe, two people are mentioned in the names of Ata-gam and Esh-gam, and the clergy of the European Huns were also called shaman. If there was shamanism in the ancient Turks, then Latin and German historians, who

provided quite extensive information about the traditions and customs of the Huns, were supposed to tell about the shamanic meaning with strange rites when talking about the religion of the Huns.

The Turks have historically adopted different heavenly and national religions. In this process, those Turkic peoples were affected by the religions they adopted and moved away from their traditions. This can be seen more clearly, mainly in the example of the adoption of Judaism and Buddhism. As noted in Orkhon monuments, the interest of Turks in China increased at that time. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, The Blue Turkic Khagan Taspar even regretted that he was not Chinese. However, this case was not characteristic of Islam. All Turkic peoples who adopted this religion were able to keep their Turkishness as it was. Because Islam was very respectful of the Customs and traditions of the indigenous peoples who adopted it. The first translations of the Quran were translated into Persian in the 10th century and included between the lines. After the adoption of Islam, the written translations of the Holy Quran were an occasion for the further development and spread of the Turkic writing system and language.

One of the aspects that makes the topic relevant is the analysis of the main conditions of the initial stages of the formation of Turkic thought. From the point of view of today's presentation of Turkish civilization to the world, it was considered necessary to discuss this topic in a scientific way. Another aspect that makes the topic relevant is that shamanism is the first thing that comes to mind when it comes to the Turkic belief system. In order to eliminate this possibility, it was necessary to study this area precisely. It is for this reason that the elaboration of the dissertation is considered very important and is very relevant from a historiographical, theological, literary and mythological point of view. Until now, the analysis of the religion of the ancient Turks in our scientific literature is one of the rather unexplored topics.

Thus, although the motives of the Turkic belief system, such as God, shaman, tree, drum, mountain, water, wolf, moon and others,

are separately discussed in the works of local authors, this research work is especially relevant due to the fact that the ancient Turkic concept of God is involved not in a comprehensive and systematic form, but in a brief analysis.

Although not in a systematic and complex manner, many aspects related to the religious beliefs and godliness of the ancient Turks are reflected in Azerbaijani literature. However, the subject was mainly examined from the aspect of mythological, literary and folklore studies. In Turkey, this topic has been sufficiently studied and thoroughly studied in all aspects. In our study, the subject was tried to be dealt with mainly from the historical and theological aspect. Including Nizami Jafarov, Ramiz Askar, Buludkhan Khalilov, Zaki Validi Togan, Ibn Fadlan, Oguz Reha Turkkan, Hikmet Tanyun, Harun Gungor, Aysu Atan, Muharrem Ergin, Ziya Gokalp, Shaban Kuzgun, Edward Trjarski, V. Bartold, L. Gumilyev, Michel Perin, Magar Lazso Rasoni, Fuad Koprulu, Ahmet Yashar Ocag, Osman Nedim Tunan, Abdulkadir Inan, Bahaddin Ogel, Mirali Seyidov, Fuzuli Bayat, Javad Heyat, Tufan Gunduz, Yashar Kalafat, Fuad Bozkurt, Rza Zeylut, Jan Paul Rocks, Ahmet Tashaghil, Salahaddin Khalilov, Rabiyyat Aslanova, Naila Valikhanli, Giyasaddin Geibullayev, Agil Shirinov, Akbar Najaf, Jalal Beydili, Arif Ajalov, Veli Habiboglu, Haji Gadir Gadirzade, Abulfaz Rajabli, Bakhtiyar Tuncay, Sitara Mahmudova, Aydin Gasimli, Veli Bakhshaliyev, as well as local and foreign language works published by other historians and theologians in recent years were used as sources.

Later, a number of the above-mentioned scholars were contacted personally and oral advice was obtained in detail and correct references were adopted for the development of relevant sections of the topic. The translation of the Holy Quran<sup>1</sup>, authored by academician Vasim Mammadaliyev, has been greatly benefited in the research on the faith and sacred values of the afterlife, which is located in Chapter 2 of the topic.

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<sup>1</sup> Qurani-Kərim / Tərcümə ed.: Vasim Məmmədəliyev; Ziya Bünyadov. – Bakı: Nurlan, – 1992. – 424 s.

The book “Orkhon monuments”<sup>2</sup>, created by professor, turkologist Ramiz Asker, provides valuable information about many traditions, religious views, models of statehood, relations established with neighboring peoples of the ancient Turkic people.

Later in the book “The Secret History of the Mongols”<sup>3</sup> translated by the scientist, the presence of interesting information about the mythological elements of the belief system made it possible to use it as a source.

Along with this, the scientist drew attention to the valuable points in the work “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud bibliography”<sup>4</sup> compiled by F.Dits on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the introduction of the epos “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud” to the world scientific community, that the 2nd volume of the book has become the object of research.

Turkic historian and researcher of ancient Turkic history Ahmet Tashagil’s 3-volume works “Gokturkler”<sup>5</sup> and 2 “Children of Kok Tengri”<sup>6</sup> are seriously involved in the research and are considered a valuable source. Ahmet Tashagil studied the ancient Turkic history, mainly the history of Goycharks, by reading the ancient Chinese sources, and revealed the shortcomings of the work of many Turkic and foreign Turkologists who studied Goycharks before him. The scientist was able to clarify many dark moments of history by reading and studying all Chinese texts related to Goyturks. The inadequacy of information on Orkhon monuments, which is the only source for studying the history of the ancient Turks in their own language, has made Chinese sources the main sources of Turkic

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<sup>2</sup> Əskər, R.B. Orxon Abidələri / R.B.Əskər. – Bakı: Nurlan, – 2012. – s. 272.

<sup>3</sup> Monqolların gizli tarixi / Tərcümə ed. Ramiz Əskər. – Bakı: Türksöy kitabxana seriyası, – 2011. – 360 s.

<sup>4</sup> Əskər, R.B. Kitabi-Dədə Qorqud bibliografiyası [2 cilddə] / R.B.Əskər. c.2, – Bakı: Nurlan, – 2017.– s. 218.

<sup>5</sup> Taşağıl, A. Goktürkler / 3 cild, –Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu yayınevi, –2012. – 473 s.

<sup>6</sup> Taşağıl, A. Kök Tengrinin çocukları (Avrasya Bozkırlarında İslam öncəsi Türk tarihi) / –İstanbul: Bilge Kültür sanat yayınları, –2013. –334 s.

history. These close ties with China have gradually led to mutual integration between the two nations in the fields of statehood, culture, religious beliefs, literature and others.

French Turkologist Jean-Paul Roux's work "History of the Turks – 2000 years from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea"<sup>7</sup> was also involved in the research work. The work was translated into Turkish by Aykut Kazancıgil and Lale Arslan Özcan in 2004 and presented to readers. Another famous work of the scientist "The Old Religion of Turks and Mongols"<sup>8</sup> gained valuable knowledge about the elements of the Turkic belief system. The work was translated into Turkish by Ayku Kazancıgil in 1994.

The work "Memory of faith"<sup>9</sup> by the historian Akbar Najaf, who studied mainly the ancient and Middle Turkic history and the Turkic belief system, played the role of a beacon in drawing up the initial plan for the development of the topic. This valuable historical source is considered to be one of the few works in which the ancient Turkic belief system is thoroughly studied in Azerbaijan. Many aspects of the Turkic belief system, writing system, literature and Turkic statehood tradition are found in the work "Hun Millennium"<sup>10</sup>.

In addition to using a valuable study called "Grammar of Cuneiform Azeri-Turkish"<sup>11</sup>, written by Tariyel Azertürk, a Turkologist and Sumerologist living in the United States, we also made a direct connection with the scientist himself and benefited from his ideas and views. The scientist's work played the role of a valuable source in the elaboration of the parts related to the written monuments of the ancient Turks and their origin. This valuable source fulfilled the function of guidance in comparing Turkic

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<sup>7</sup> Roux, J. P. Türklerin Tarihi-Pasifikten Akdenize 2000 yıl / terc: Aykut Kazancıgil ve Lale Arslan Özcan, –İstanbul:Kabalıcı Yayınevi, –2004. –560 s.

<sup>8</sup> Nəcəf, Ə.N. İnanc Yaddaşı / – Bakı: Izmedia, – 2014. –352 s

<sup>9</sup> Nəcəf, Ə.N. İnanc Yaddaşı / – Bakı: Izmedia, – 2014. –352 s.

<sup>10</sup> Nəcəf, Ə.N. Hun Minilliyi / – Bakı: Teas Pres, – 2015. – 460 s.

<sup>11</sup> Azertürk, T.N. Mixi Yazılı Azəri Türk Dilinin Qrammatikası / – USA, – Seatle, – 2004. – 232 s.

symbols and Sumerian ideograms, elements of the Turkic belief system and elements of the Sumerian belief system.

Famous Turkologist Ibrahim Kafesoglu's scientific works entitled "Ancient Turkish religion"<sup>12</sup>, "Turkic name, Turkic ancestry, motherland and distribution of Turks"<sup>13</sup>, "Turkic national culture"<sup>14</sup> and "Asian Turkic states"<sup>15</sup> also contain valuable information about the relevant sections of different chapters of the topic.

The work of the Polish turkologist Edward Triersky "Turks and death"<sup>16</sup>, translated into Turkish by Hafıza Er, contains many valuable ideas related to the afterlife beliefs of the Turks, analysis of their funeral rites, similar and distinctive customs with other peoples, religions. Due to the fact that it is a neighbor of China for many years, there has been a synthesis of cultures in many nuances, which the scientist has managed to present to the readers in a very original way. The work can be considered a rich treasure in terms of the Turkic belief system. The scientist has done great work in reading the Turkish alphabet. He studied the monument of Öng, made a copy of Kuli Chur, transcribed it and translated it into English together with J. Clawson.

Turkic mythology expert Fuzuli Bayat's "Turkic shamanism in outline"<sup>17</sup> and "Turkic shaman texts. Legends and memories"<sup>18</sup> were

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<sup>12</sup> Kafesoğlu, İ.R. Eski Türk Dini. – Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, – 1980. – s.67.

<sup>13</sup> Kafesoğlu, İ.R. Türk Adı, Türk soyu, Türklerin Anayurdu ve Yayılmaları / Türk dünyası el kitabı, I cilt, – Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, – 1992. – 108 s.

<sup>14</sup> Kafesoğlu, İ.R. Türk Milli Kültürü / – İstanbul: Ötüken, – 1998. – 447 s.

<sup>15</sup> Kafesoğlu, İ.R. Asya Türk devletleri / Türk dünyası, I cilt, ikinci baskı, –Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, – 1992. – s. 111-159.

<sup>16</sup> Trijarski, E. Türkler ve Ölüm / tercüme:Hafız Er, – İstanbul: Pinhan yayıncılık, – 2012. – 639 s.

<sup>17</sup> Bayat, F.X. Ana Hatlarıyla Türk Şamanlığı / – İstanbul: Ötüken, – 2006. – 304 s.

<sup>18</sup> Bayat, F.X. Türk şaman metinleri. Efsaneler ve memoratlar, 2 Baskı / –Ankara: Ötüken , –2005. –300 s.



used as a valuable source in the development of the section “Shamanism” in the 2nd chapter of the subject.

Later, the works of many famous scientists of America and Europe were benefited by using English-language sources. “Shaman healer sage”<sup>19</sup> by Alberto Villoldo, “An encyclopedia of shamanism”<sup>20</sup> by Christina Part, “Shamans in Asia”<sup>21</sup> by Clark Chilson, “Historical dictionary of shamanism”<sup>22</sup> jointly written by Graham Harvey and Robert Wallis, “Sultans-Shamans-Saints”<sup>23</sup> by Howard Federspiel used as a rich treasure for comprehensive study of shamanism section.

**Object and subject of the research.** The object of the dissertation work is the issues of analysis, theoretical and practical study of the faith of God in the ancient Turks. The subject of the study includes the analysis of the faith of God in the ancient Turks, the systematization and generalization of knowledge gained from the study of theoretical and practical points of view.

**Goals and objectives of the research.** From a theoretical point of view, the most important problem was the lack of a scientific definition of the belief in “God”, which in ancient times could fully cover at the conceptual level about the current state, its functioning, monotheism and its distribution among the ancient Turks. In this regard, the purpose of the study is to study the dynamics of the analysis, study and development of the faith of God in the ancient Turks.

In order to investigate the analysis of the faith of God in the ancient Turks, the following tasks were set in the dissertation:

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<sup>19</sup> Alberto, V. Shaman Healer Sage / – London: Bantam, – 2001. – 256 p.

<sup>20</sup> Christina, P. An Encyclopedia of Shamanism / –New York: Rosen Publishing Group, –2007. –672 p.

<sup>21</sup> Clark, C. Shamans in Asia / – New York: Routledge Curzon, – 2003. – 199 p.

<sup>22</sup> Graham, H. Robert W., Historical Dictionary of Shamanism / –Toronto: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, – 2007. – 392 p.

<sup>23</sup> Howard, F. Sultans-Shamans-Saints: Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia / – Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, – 2007. – 312 p.

- to study the formation of the ancient Turkic statehood tradition;
- to analyze the relationship of ancient Turks with the culture of other peoples;
- to explore ancient Turkic culture;
- to explore the concept of “Faith in God”;
- to investigate the period of transition of the ancient Turks to solitude and its cause;
- to analyze the attitude towards other religions and the reasons for the transition to Islam;
- to conduct research on shamanism.

**Research methods.** The research work was carried out using descriptive, typological-comparative, analysis and synthesis methods. Its methodological foundations are the methods of systematic, comparative analysis, as well as the comparative-approach method in the study of the sources and causes of the emergence and expansion of the faith of God in the ancient Turks. In writing the dissertation, general logical methods were also used—induction, deduction, historical description and systematic analysis. The dissertation also widely used the method of empirical analysis of statistical data on the analysis and distribution of various concepts, allowing to evaluate the analysis of the faith of God in the ancient Turks.

**Provisions for defense.** The following provisions are put forward in the research work:

- to generalize the concept of the term “God” in modern Turkology;
- to describe the study of concepts on the basis of modern religious and turkological scientific sources;
- to describe and identify conceptual artistic and evaluative aspects of the concept of “God” in Turkology;
- to determine the role of shamanism in ancient Turkic religious beliefs;
- to determine the period of transition from loneliness to Islam in ancient Turks and its cause;

- to investigate and describe the conversion of the ancient Turks to Islam;
- to study and describe the phenomenology of religion in terms of the Turkic belief system.

**Scientific novelty of the research.** Speaking about the scientific novelty of the dissertation, it is worth noting that the works of a large group of domestic and foreign authors are considered, and what is indicated in the lower:

1. For the first time in the research work, the period and cause of the transition of the ancient Turks to loneliness are studied.
2. The dissertation examines the socio-political situation of the ancient Turks.
3. Generalized information about the states and territories founded by the ancient Turkic peoples is reflected in the research work.
4. The research studies the stages of development of the cultural history of the ancient Turks.
5. For the first time with the proposed research method, the beliefs of the gods of the ancient Turks are examined in detail on the basis of ancient written sources.
6. The religions of shamanism and monotheism in ancient Turks are mutually successful to be studied in the field of Azerbaijani theology.
7. For the first time in the proposed approach, the concepts of godliness and monotheism are analyzed in the epic “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud”.
8. For the first time in the presented dissertation, the concept of phenomenology of religion finds its detailed explanation.

**Theoretical and practical significance of the research.** The theoretical significance of the dissertation is that the analysis of the belief in God in the ancient Turks, the study of its systemic, structural and functional features were investigated in the historical aspect in Azerbaijani and Turkish Religious Studies.

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belief in God in the ancient Turks, the study of its systemic, structural and functional features were investigated in the historical aspect in Azerbaijani and Turkish Religious Studies.

The practical significance of the dissertation work lies in the fact that the results obtained can be used in the study of various aspects of theoretical and typological religious studies, mainly the history of religions. Conducting an analysis of the subject of the study from a historical point of view makes the dissertation theoretically and practically significant. The scientific results obtained in the research work can also be used in the following provisions:

- in conducting scientific-research work on the analysis of the religious worldview of ancient Turks;
- in conducting research on Turkish history;
- in conducting research on relations between Islam and Turks;
- delivering lectures on the subject under study in educational institutions and conducting specialty courses;
- reading of reports at domestic and international scientific conferences on conducting analysis on the history of Turkey and the formation of the Turkic thought system.

**Approbation and application.** Reports on the main provisions of the dissertation work were made at the Institute of manuscripts named after Mahammad Fuzuli of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Baku State University, Nakhchivan State University, Youth Forum in Ganja, international scientific conferences held at other institutes of ANAS. The content and main scientific results of the research are reflected in the articles published in various domestic and foreign journals, as well as his theses published in conference materials of the national and international level.

**The name of the organization in which the dissertation was performed.** The research work was carried out at the Institute of manuscripts named after Mahammad Fuzuli of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

**The name of the organization in which the dissertation was performed.** The research work was carried out at the Institute of

manuscripts named after Mahammad Fuzuli of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

**The total volume of the dissertation with a mark, separately marking the volume of the structural units of the dissertation.** The “introduction” part of the research work is 16943; chapter I is 71601; Chapter II is 134799, and the “Conclusion” part is 7029 characters, the total volume of the dissertation consists of 230372 characters.

## II. THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

In the “Introduction” of the dissertation, the topicality of the research is substantiated, the degree of its elaboration is studied, the object and subject of the study, the goals and objectives for the future, research methods, the provisions put to the defense, the scientific novelty of the work, its theoretical and practical significance, approbation and application are commented.

Chapter I of the dissertation is called “The socio-political situation of the ancient Turks” and consists of six sub-chapters.

In the first sub-chapter entitled “**The exit of the ancient Turks to the stage of history**”, a different and rich national-spiritual, religious-moral and scientific-philosophical outlook of the Turks, as well as every nation that has managed to preserve its existence from the most ancient times of history, is briefly characterized by centuries-old statehood tradition. The commitment of the Turks, who have an honorable history of statehood, to the protection of national, religious and human feelings and ways of life within the framework of the principle of fair power is always proved. The etymology of the term “Turk” is also mentioned in detail here. *“The word “Turk” is a cumulative concept that has become the ethnic name of tribal unity, and when it entered the historical stage in the fifth century, regardless of the initial form of this community language, it used the*

*syambi language, which was the means of inter-tribal communication of the time*"<sup>24</sup>.

Thus, in this sub-chapter it was concluded that the socio-political and historical processes taking place towards the end of VIII century led to the real end of Goyturk people and epoch. All these events are reflected in the monuments of Orkhon, which is the historical card of the Turks.

The second sub-chapter of Chapter I is called **"The first Turkic state called Turk-Goyturk Empire"**. Here, the rich cultural heritage and statehood traditions of the Turkic states and peoples after the Goyturk Empire are explored. The first written letters of the Turkic people, the first written texts, the first historical cards, the first Turkic sculptures, balbals, etc. it is associated with the name of the founders of this state, which is called *Türük*. The Goyturk Khaganate, which occupies the territories stretching from distant Siberia to the periphery of the Caspian Sea, was an example in all areas for all Turkic states that came after it. The Turkic states, which were formed later, owe this state precisely because of their Statehood traditions.

The third sub-chapter of Chapter I, called **"The ancient Turks and the Silk Road"**, deals in detail with the "Silk Road", which played an important role in Turkic history, mainly in its belief system. The world scientific community first got acquainted with the term "Silk Road" in 1877 by the prominent German traveler and geographer Richthofen. *"From the second century BC in its classical sense, the Silk Road from East Asia, specifically from China, serving mainly as a silk trade route to the Mediterranean countries, has increasingly developed, becoming the necessary means of communication of the ancient world, which made possible and ensured wider trade and cultural ties"*<sup>25</sup>. The Silk Road is the name

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<sup>24</sup> Аджи, М. Тюрки и мир: сокровеннаа история / – Москва: ОГИЗ, АСТ, – 2015. – 640 с.

<sup>25</sup> Feyziyev, C.Ə. Türk Dövlətləri Birliyi-Qlobal İnteqrasiyanın Avrasiya Modeli / – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – 2013, – 311 s.

given to trade routes that existed in its time and were created within the borders of China in the context of the profitable sale of silk carried out during the Khan dynasty (207 BC – 220 AD).

The fourth sub-chapter of Chapter I is called “**Ancient and medieval Turkic literature**”. In this sub-chapter, the samples of the artistic heritage created since the early Middle Ages in the historical homeland of the great Turkic nation – the vast steppes called Turkestan in Central Asia, the snow-capped mountains in the North and the dense forests of Siberia, and Tibet in the South are studied and their influence on the religious belief system is investigated. The footsteps of Turkish horses in these areas, which now cover a large region that has expanded to Western Europe, attract the interest of historians engaged in the field of Turkology. Material evidence found as a result of long-term archaeological excavations conducted over the centuries confirms that there was no material and cultural heritage of any ethnos or people before the Turkic nation in this large geographical area.

The first examples of culture in the mentioned regions were formed by Turks, told epics, sang songs and created their first written sources. “*The Oguz myth is the paradigm of the Turkic myth metamodel as a thought phenomenon. Turkic mythological thinking has marked the ethnic structural color of the Turkic Ethnos with the myth code*”<sup>26</sup>. The rich artistic thinking of the Turkish people, which extends to the deepest layers of history, occupies an important place in the literary thinking of different peoples of the world from the point of view of its unique ideological-aesthetic and multifaceted expression-genre features.

The fifth sub-chapter of Chapter I is called “Written monuments of the ancient Turks, the origin of the Orkhon Alphabet”, in which the monuments of the Orkhon-Yenisei, as well as the work “Divani dictionary-it-Turk” are investigated and the importance of

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<sup>26</sup> Rzasoy, S.G. Mifologiya və folklor: nəzəri-metodoloji kontekst / – Bakı: Nurlan, – 2008, – 175 s.

their coming to light in the study of the history of the Turkic religious faith is proved. A new stage was entered in Turkic history with reading of inscriptions on Orkhon-Yenisei monuments. Ancient Turkic written monuments can be found in many corners of Eurasia. Their main distribution area is the basin of the Orkhon and Yenisei rivers, Uyghuristan, Turkestan, Altai, Caucasians, Balkans, Crimea and Hungary. *“The largest number of monuments is in the Yenisei Basin. 106 monuments have been officially registered here. In second place is the Altai territory with 78 monuments. Orkhon Valley, on the other hand, is still in third place with 54 monuments. 38 monuments were found in Turfan and 15 in Talas”*<sup>27</sup>. Some of the monuments found have not yet been deciphered. Indeed, as many famous Turkologists say, the origin of the Orkhon Alphabet goes back to the stigma, which is considered the main element of the Turkic belief system, which traces its roots to more ancient ones.

In the sixth sub-chapter I, called **“The traditions of the ancient Turks”**, the issues of religions and the profound influence of related beliefs on the living forms of Turkic society since early times are involved in the analysis. When the traditional old Turkic belief system is studied, it is possible to see that some of these beliefs and practices have changed and continued their activities in everyday life. As a consequence of this, the religion and beliefs of nations, societies have been in the area of constant interest of researchers.

According to the basic tradition in Turkic mythology, first silt is created from water, then this silt is dried and takes the form of soil, and plants grow from the drying soil, and at the end, mud is made from this soil and people are created who are considered the human race. This sequence continues in subsequent processes and reveals various living and inanimate beings of nature. One of the chosen epos in the ancient Turkic literature is the “Törəyiş” epos. In this epic written by Radlov, there are parallels that correspond to the first great ancestor.

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<sup>27</sup> Əskər, R.B. Orxon Abidələri / – Bakı: Nurlan, – 2012. – s. 272.



Tree belief is a well-researched topic related to the folklore of peoples belonging to the Turkic language family. The worship of the tree would have been found mainly among the pagan Turkic peoples. For example, it was observed in the ancient Turks who came from the legendary Euthukan, the sacred forest of the Turks. There are some large and desolate trees that are believed to be sacred. Sacred trees have a long tradition: an example of this is the covenant tree in Turkey. *“Turks on the tree of the covenant, they hang on the branches of this tree a piece of paper written on the secret desires-they connect their desires. Despite the ban on the transition to Islam, this tradition, considered as idolatry, is currently preserved in some Shiite and Bektashi societies in Turkey within the framework of other Islamic views”*<sup>28</sup>. Thus, although today the majority of the greater Turkic world is Muslim, it is clearly evident that they live the traditional old Turkic religion and related beliefs together with Islam.

The second chapter of the research work is called **“The belief system of ancient Turks”** and consists of seven sub-chapters.

The first sub-chapter of the second chapter is called **“Phenomenology of religion and its history from the point of view of the history of religions”**. The purpose here is to reveal the middle path by identifying similar and convergent sides. The comparison of religions also means that the further missing aspects of the religion to which you belong are known, which in the course of reasoning reveals a prior awareness of their own weaknesses.

From the Scottish scientist La Saussaye to contemporary scientists such as Geo Widengren and Ake Hultkrantz, many people included in the second group understood the phenomenology of religion as a comparative study and a classification of the phenomenon of religion in different types. Scientists in this group

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<sup>28</sup> Kalafat, Y. Doğu Anadolu da Eski Türk İnançlarının İzleri / – Ankara: Ebabil Yayıncılık, – 2005, – 284 s.

have shown little interest in specific phenomenological understanding, methods and investigation procedures. The terms phenomenon and phenomenology come from the Greek word Phainomenon (“thing that manifests itself” or “thing that appears”).

A second use of phenomenology in a non-philosophical way, however, occurs in identifier, systematic and comparative studies in religions. In these studies, scientists form groups of religious phenomena in order to reveal their main ideas about religious phenomena and to formulate their typologies.

Thus, the phenomenologists of religion have recognized that their approach should not only cooperate and be complementary to historical research, but also that the phenomenology of religion is fundamentally historical. All religious information is also historical, since no phenomenon can be clear without its history being known.

The second sub-chapter of the second chapter, called “**The religion of monotheism in ancient Turks**”, examines the success of Turks who have boundless respect for their ancient national and spiritual values and remain closely attached to them in preserving the concepts of worshipping one God in their different religious belief systems.

The Turks also worshiped the one God since ancient times. The Turks’ voluntary conversion to Islam is due to the fact that Tawhid, the main principle of the Islamic religion, ordered to believe in the only one God. The fact that the word “Tengri” is the first and most common expression read in ancient Turkic written sources Orkhon-Yenisei stone book monuments indicates that it was used more than a wide class of people. This means that the ancient Turks worshiped God as a deity and were closely related to him because they considered him a sacred being. There is no doubt that the Turks were the first to turn to God, to whom they had deep faith as a divine force, in their daily lives and in all their works. *“Despite their great*

*respect for Earth, Water, Fire, the Turks still believed in one God, the creator of the universe”*<sup>29</sup>. Thus, divinity is a belief system based on the Turkic mythological way of thinking of the people, which was an expression of the main religious views of the ancient Turks.

The third subchapter of the second chapter is called **“The essence of the meaning of “God” by the ancient Turks”**. Here, the essence of the concept of “God” was thoroughly studied, it was substantiated that the term Tengri is not only the religious and spiritual property of the Turks, but also one of the ancient mythological images of the Eastern world. The word Tengri was used in Goyturk writings in the meaning of “sky”, “the face of sky” and God. In Uyghur texts, the word God means “İlah, God, Burkan and Effendi”. At the beginning of the post-Islamic period, it was used in the meaning of “Allah” and “İlah”. In the ancient Turks, it was stated that there was only one “creator” of the Earth and the sky.

*“Revealing the secret of the ancient Orkhon writings, V. Thomson also believed that Turks were polytheists, and saw the traces of polytheistic shamanism of the ancient Turks in the beliefs remaining from other neighboring countries, for example, shamanism in Mongolia”*<sup>30</sup>. In general, there is a lot of evidence that the Sky God in Turks has represented a single great being since very ancient times. God was considered one of the greatest spiritual powers in the Turks.

The fourth sub-chapter of the second chapter is called **“Ancient Turks’ belief in the afterlife”**. This sub-chapter analyzes the celebrations and various ceremonies of the Turks, which, as in

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<sup>29</sup> Tanyu, H. İslamıktan Önce Türklerde Tek Tanrı İnancı / – Ankara: Boğaziçi yayınları, – 1986. – 216 s.

<sup>30</sup> Thomsen, V. Orhon ve Yenisey yazıtlarının çözümü, İlk bildiri, Çözülmüş Orhon yazıtları / terc: V. Köken, – Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurum, – 1993. – 448 s.

any society, have fixed, molded, symbolic meanings at specific times and places. These can generally be symbolic acts of social life or religious specific acts in a narrow sense. Many traditions related to the belief in the afterlife have survived to this day.

The fifth sub-chapter of the second chapter is called **“Religious ceremonies”**. An important effect of religious rituals is that they keep alive the spirit of social solidarity and integration, unity and integrity. The coming together of people who share similar beliefs and emotions in a religious ceremony leads to the emergence of more sincere and warmer feelings between them, and they see themselves as parts of the same whole. The desire to be interested in each other, to help and support each other increases. For example, graduation ceremonies, birthday celebrations, official holiday ceremonies are a general ritual, celebrating the Prophet's birth, a circumcision ceremony, a ceremony of reciting a mawlid, a rain prayer are religious rituals.

The sixth sub-chapter of the second chapter is called **“The Gray Wolf Motif”**. It is known that every nation has an animal that it considers sacred and shows respect, and in ancient Turks it was a wolf. Although the wolf cannot rise to the level of totem, it has a special place in the Turkic mythology.

The seventh subchapter of the second chapter is called **“Sacred values”**.

There are a number of holidays and ceremonies that are widespread in different nations of the world. This is related to the fact that these peoples live in the same zone, geographical region, and interact with each other. Nowruz holiday, which is the arrival of spring and the change of year, is one of these ceremonies. Comparative studies prove that Nowruz is solemnly celebrated with different names in all regions where Turkic societies are spread.

The third chapter of the research is called **“Other religions and beliefs adopted by the ancient Turks”** and consists of six sub-chapters.

The first subchapter of the third chapter is called **“Christianity”**. Turks got acquainted with Christianity mainly during the Parthian period. Even today, there are Turkic communities that live as Christians, and the Gagauz can be taken as an example.

The second subchapter of the third chapter is called "Buddhism". Buddhism had a serious influence on the Turkic belief system. The two main sects of this religion, Hiyanaya and Mahayana, influenced the Turks. The Turks were more interested in the Mahayana sect. Turks called Hinayana “kiçik könlünqü” (smaller vehicle) and Mahayana “uluğ könlünqü” (greater vehicle). Buddhists adopt the “smaller vehicle” teaching because they base on personal perfection. Turks, on the other hand, have taken Mahayana as a basis, and the reason for this is the closeness of that sect with the concept of universalism. Here, the cult of the Sky God in the ancient Turkic belief system was reflected as the Burkan cult.

The third sub-chapter of the third chapter is called **“Judaism”**. When talking about Judaism among the Turks, the name of the Khazar Turks comes first. The reason for this is that the Jews turned this religion into a national religion, and the adoption of this religion was not found outside of them, and especially due to the lack of missionaries of this religion, a Turkic Khaganate officially adopted this religion at the level of the ruling elite, while no one was invited to adopt this religion. Of course, this case has become a field of research by many world historians as a case of great interest. Along with the Khazars, the Kipchaks are the other Turks who adopted Judaism. Judaism is not found in other Turkic tribes. Judaism spread among the Kipchaks from the 10th century through Karaim missionaries.

The fourth subchapter of the third chapter is called “**Daoism**”. Interacting with many important religious structures in the regions they came from, the Turks have also had a rich cultural experience. Thus, different stems of Turks at different times accepted and adopted religions such as Buddhism, Manichaeism, Judaism, Christianity, and Taoism. Just as Turks could not go forward with all their religious adoptions before adopting Islam, this ambiguity has not been completely clarified.

Turkic peoples began to become Muslims in large numbers from the beginning of the 10th century. The fact that there are great similarities between the pre-Islamic beliefs of the Turks and the Islamic religion has been an extremely effective factor in this. However, before adopting Islam, the Turks, who migrated from Central Asia to various regions of the world and exchanged culture with local nations, were influenced by other local beliefs as they carried their beliefs to distant geographies.

The fifth subchapter of the third chapter is called “**Shamanism**”. This subchapter broadly interprets shamanism, one of the various religious belief systems worshiped by the Turks throughout history, and studies its connection with the Turks.

Shamanism is once an extremely widespread pagan religion, the first religion, the mother of the vast majority of world religions originated from its depths. Although Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and their various branches are officially recognized at the state level in the territories currently inhabited by the Turks, in fact, almost all Indigenous peoples of the North and Far East, as well as Siberia, continue to adhere to shamanism in one form or another. Shamanism continues to exist in various pagan beliefs, superstitions, charlatanism, belief in goblins and sweets, and other forms among the people here.

Shamanism creates an imagination of one of the parameters of the Turkic religious thought system, which is characterized as a multidimensional system when its true and real essence is understood. That is, no matter how much it is intertwined with the Turkic religion, it still remains as one of the dimensions of that system, forming a subsystem within the framework of the Turkic religious-mythological outlook, which is a system.

The sixth sub-chapter of the third chapter called “**Islam**” thoroughly analyzes the history of the Turks, who came into contact with other divine religions, adopting and converting to Islam with a large majority in a short time after getting acquainted with it.

The Turks completely adopted this religion with their faith in accordance with Islam, but continued some of their old customs and traditions together. Just as some of the beliefs and behaviors mentioned here can be seen among the Turks living in today’s Turkey, Azerbaijan and its environs, in other regions. Apparently, after the transition to Islam, the Turks continued many words in the Islamic religion as Turkic. The meaning of this is that the Turks used these words in their one God religion long ago. The Turkic God is “alone and has no partner”. However, these listed events did not mean that the Turks fully converted to Islam. Because the exceptions are valid for each period. The ideas of the author of the 10th century Ibn Fazla are very important for the formation of ideas about that period. He said: “*Although many of the Oghuz and Bashkirs recited Shahada to please the Muslims, they were in their ancient Turkic religion with all their faith and way of life*”<sup>31</sup>.

The Turks who accepted Islam adopted this religion in such a way that after a while the Islamic religion became as if it were the

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<sup>31</sup> Candan, E. Türklerin Kültür Kökeni / – İstanbul: Sınır Ötesi yayınları, – 2011. – 582 s.

national religion of the Turks. It should be stated here that the remarkable similarities between the old belief of the Turks and the Islamic religion is the most important factor that facilitates the adoption of the Islamic religion by the Turks.

The influence of the similarities between the two cultures is enormous in the fact that the Turks converted to Islam and became its defenders a short time later. For example, the tolerance shown by the Turks against other religions is extremely similar to the fact that Islam is a religion of tolerance. Again, the belief in one God that exists in the two beliefs, the similarity of the belief in afterlife and sacrificial worship are remarkable features. The importance given to the concept of family, Sharia customs, honor, purity, the similarities between the concept of jihad and ghaza in Islam and the idea of Turkic World Power, the welfare and happiness of the people in both thoughts, the absence of discrimination between the classes are other similar features of the two belief systems. Many common features similar to this caused the Turks to adopt Islam not by the power of the sword, but by their own will. In general, the acquaintance of the Turks with Islam dates back to the time of our Prophet.

## CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the research work, the scientific results obtained by the applicant in accordance with the topic can be summarized on the basis of the following provisions:

- Religious and mystical structures such as Buddhism, Maniheim, Shamanism, Tengrikism, Islam and Christianity have survived among the nations of Central Asia and have left traces in the lives of many states. These traces are still alive today. For this reason, the professionals who carry out the research on the study should examine the environment of a community, state or any culture in which a religion or a belief is maintained that has not been influenced by any element. However, naming work in a region where cultural elements are so involved can also have negative consequences. For example, it is a big mistake of this kind to say that



shamanism first belonged to religion and later to the Turks, and this misconception has been repeated by many foreign and domestic anthropologists, researchers and specialists. Another reason for the necessity that we see in the solution of the problem, at least in part, is that shamanism contains features inherent in primitive peoples as a result of their application. The truth behind the fact that Western anthropologists at this point perceive the Turks as shamanists is hidden here.

- Before the Turks got acquainted with these religions and Islam, which we counted above, they still believed in one God from the time of the Asian Huns and differed from other nations with these features. We have seen this more clearly in the course of our research on the basis of many Chinese, Byzantine, Arab, Turkic and other sources that we have obtained. Such ancient historians and travelers as Ibn Fazlan, Menandr, Simokat also accurately mentioned this fact.

- Although many domestic and foreign researchers express the religion believed by the Turks as the belief in the sky god, there have been various discussions about it and the focal point of these discussions is the “shamanism issue”. In fact, any sect is not at all, just as shamanism is not a religion or a religious belief in its own right. The main principle of shamanism, as stated by Ibrahim Kafoghlu, is a “religious-sehri-mystical” structure, which arose with the idea of ordering spirits, demons and informing about the future, has adherents in the associations of Central and North Asia and in many parts of the world.

- Although the researchers who claim that the old Turkish faith is shamanism are guided by some shamanic elements within the Turkish religion and fall into this judgment, it should be said that shamanism was able to easily enter into other religions in terms of structure and was treated as if it were a kind of religion. It should also be noted that at present, this idea has faded into the background in Turkic science. This situation has not only been experienced in the belief in the celestial God, but there have always been elements related to shamanism within the religions that dominate in many regions of the world, especially in Asia.

- From the recent studies that have been done far from these targeted approaches, it is concluded that shamanism is not an old religion of the Turks, not even a religion. In addition, it should be stated that the conclusion we have obtained from our research is that the Old Religion of the Turks has a one-God belief system called "One God". However, this religious system does not pay off the wealth in Islam very simply.

- Before Islam, the Turkic states had a special significance. After the adoption of Islam, the foundation of all public and state life came under the control of the Arab Caliphate. Because Islam, due to the defeat of the Turks at the end of the long-term Wars has been adopted. The entire culture of the victorious Arabs was also adopted. This is a huge change. Each change also gave rise to the reaction to the previous period, the neglect of the written wings of that period, perhaps led to the disappearance.

- The fact that the Turks are familiar with Islam dates back to the time of our Prophet. The first Islamic martyr Hz. Sumeyya, Surayc family is Turkish, the prophet is sitting in a Turkish tent, there are many hadiths that appreciate the Turks if brought to the eyes, starting from the century of happiness of our ancestors, it would be understood that Islam passed. The real Islamization took place after the entry of the Umayyad armies into lower Turkistan. As soon as the Turks had the opportunity to recognize the Islamic religion in the border towns, they adopted it.

- Although elements related to shamanism occupy a place in the Turkish religion, Islam has been the religion that has influenced them the most throughout their history in the Turkic world of faith and is easily accepted. The proximity of Islam to Turkic culture and traditions has led to the adoption of large masses within the Turks. It is no coincidence that Islam has long been spread and introduced to the whole world under the Ottoman flag. It is not for nothing that the Turkologist scientist Bartold expressed Turks as more jealous Muslims than Arabs.

- The cult of the God Tengri, who personified the sky, is an undeniable historical reality. In the glorious days of the ancient

Turks, who united most of the Eurasian steppes with the state, the great rulers worshiped this God and left monuments with runic inscriptions, where their deeds were glorified. Although this tradition continued in the state of Yenisei Kyrgyz after the fall of the Eastern and then Western Turkic Khaganate, it was subsequently interrupted.

- Islamic religion *fiqh*, *kalam*, *tafsir* interested in religious issues such as and incomprehensible to the public not through scholars, anyone can understand in a simple manner stating that the Islamic Sufis learning through nomadic Turks, this new religion has revealed a new religious understanding by reshaping their culture. Thus, Turks who had a chance to live in Islam without losing their selves have continued to live in the Islamic religion of culture and practices related to their old beliefs. Even today, these folk beliefs, which are described as superstitious, but continue to exist, are traces of the old Turkish religion on the Turkish-Islamic culture and are reflections of those. When exploring the Orkhon-Yenisei monuments, we seem to have established a bond between our present and the past, and we have seen that the same traditions still live.

- It is a pity that Turks who profess other religions, with the exception of Turks who profess Islam, lose their national identity. Such a situation occurs among the Kipchaks, among whom, in addition to those who converted to Islam, they completely forgot about their Turkic origin precisely because of the loss of national identity. Turks who today live in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but have forgotten their national identity, are a perfect example of this.

### **The main content of the dissertation is reflected in the following scientific works:**

1. Şamanizm anlayışı, şaman və vəzifələri // - Bakı: BDU-nun İlahiyyat fakültəsinin Elmi məcmuəsi, - 2015. № 23, - s. 283-290.
2. Qədim Türklər və İpək yolu // Beynəlxalq İpək Yolu Konfransının materialları, - Naxçıvan, - 16-17 oktyabr, - 2015. s. 56.

3. Böyük İpək yolunun İslamdan öncəki türklərin dini və ticari həyatlarına təsirləri // - Bakı: “Dil və Ədəbiyyat” Beynəlxalq elmi-nəzəri jurnal, - 2016. № 98, - s. 319-322.
4. Qədim türklərdə təktanrıçılıq inancı // - Bakı: BDU-nun İlahiyyat fakültəsinin Elmi məcmuəsi, - 2016. № 25, - s. 273-278.
5. Qədim türklərin inanc sistemində bozqurd motivi // - Bakı: “Dövlət və Din” İctimai fikir toplusu, - 2016, № 46, - s. 100-104.
6. Религиозные убеждения каспийских тюрок // - Одеса: “Актуальні Проблеми Філософії Та Соціології” Науково практичний журнал, - 2016. Випуск 14, - с. 6-9.
7. Orxon-Yenisey yazılarının qədim türk damğalarıyla bağlılığı // “Azərbaycan Əlyazmaları Dünya Kitabxanalarında” I Beynəlxalq elmi-nəzəri konfransın materialları, - Bakı, - 20 may, - 2016, - s.123-125.
8. Orxon-Yenisey yazılarının açar sözü Tanrı və Orxon yazılarının mənşəyi // “Türkoloji elmi-mədəni hərəkətdə ortaq dəyərlər və yeni çağırışlar” mövzusunda Beynəlxalq konfransın materialları, - Bakı, - 19 may, - 2016, - s. 352.
9. Şamanizmin mahiyyəti // 20-ci əsrdə dünya elminin inteqrasiya prosesləri” adlı gənclərin Beynəlxalq elmi forumunun konfrans materialları, - Gəncə, - 10-14 oktyabr, - 2016, - s. 313-314.
10. Türk inanc sistemi baxımından qədim türklərlə şumerlərin ortaq bağları // - Bakı: BDU-nun İlahiyyat fakültəsinin Elmi məcmuəsi, - 2017. № 27, - s. 107-113.
11. Qədim türklər və buddizm inancı // - Bakı: “Dövlət və Din” İctimai fikir toplusu, - 2017. № 50, - s. 90-94.
12. About the ancient Turkic tribes who adopted Christianity // - Караганда: Вестник Карагандинского Университета. Серия История-Философия, - 2017. № 3, - с. 53-59.
13. Taoizm dinini qəbul etmiş Orta Asiyadakı prototürk tayfaları // Proceedings of the 1st International scientific conference young researchers, dedicated to the 94th anniversary of the national leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, - Baku, - 5-6 may, - 2017, - s. 1047-1048.

14. Türk İnanc Sistemi Baxımından qədim və orta dövr türk ədəbiyyatı // “İslam həmrəyliyi-2017: reallıqlar və perspektivlər” mövzusunda Respublika elmi-metodiki konfransın materialları, - Bakı, - 25-26 aprel, - 2017, - s.198-199.
15. Buddizmi qəbul etmiş qədim türk boyları // Azərbaycanca türk xalqları tarixinin tədqiqi və tədrisi məsələləri” mövzusunda Respublika elmi-praktiki konfransın materialları, - Bakı, - 18-19 may, - 2017, - s. 94-97.
16. Eski Türklerde ahiret inancı // 5th International Scientific and Practical Conference “Trends in Science and Practice of today”, – Ankara, Turkey, –19 october–22 october, -2021-ci il, - s.357-360.

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