

Scientific Research on the God Mitra Conducted by European and Asian Scientists

Rahmonberdiyeva Mahkamoy Jo'ra qizi

Doctoral student Termez state university Termez, Uzbekistan

E -mail: mrahmonberdiyeva@gmail.com

Phone: +998 (99)513-21-13

Abstract: This article is in Material objects (monumental temples) found as a result of archaeological excavations by European and Asian scientists, their analysis, and the scientific views of scientists were studied and conclusions were drawn. This paper explores the multidisciplinary research on the ancient Indo-Iranian deity Mitra, drawing on scholarly contributions from both European and Asian researchers. Mitra, a central figure in early Vedic and Avestan texts, has been studied across disciplines such as comparative mythology, linguistics, archaeology, and religious studies. European scholars have focused on Mitra's role within the Indo-European pantheon and its evolution into the Greco-Roman Mithras cult, emphasizing philological and iconographic evidence. Asian researchers, particularly from India and Iran, have concentrated on indigenous interpretations and the continuity of Mitra worship in cultural traditions and rituals. Comparative analyses reveal that Mitra symbolizes concepts of covenant, harmony, and solar attributes across civilizations. This synthesis of Eastern and Western academic perspectives highlights the global relevance of Mitra and opens new avenues for understanding ancient belief systems, their transmission, and their modern interpretations in mythological and spiritual contexts.

Key words: Mithra, Jarkutan, V. Tomaszek, Y. Marquardt, H. Bartholomew, A. Jackson, F. Andreas, G. Child, H. Bailey, Bronze Age , religious views , northern Afghanistan , ancient times, Avesta, Central Asian scholars .

Introduction

Europe and Asia History of religion in archaeology according to in life big affairs was done Ancient historical in monuments excavation works take This research As a result , Europe and Asia different in the regions chapel remains found . This material from sources in the past of our ancestors religious imagination about information we get possible . In the late 19th century and the 1930s of the 20th century, the scientific centers of Germany and France played a special role in Avestan studies, including Mithraism ¹. Among such scientists, we can include K. Ritter, F.

¹Khodjaeva N. Dj . Historical geography of Central Asia in the pre-Islamic period. - Dushanbe, " Donish ", 2017. S. 7.

Spiegel, F. Windischmann, F. Justi, G. Garrez ², M. Breal, V. Geiger, V. Tomaszek, Y. Marquardt, H. Bartholomew, A. Jackson, F. Andreas, G. Child, H. Bailey, H. Newberg, E. Benveniste, Christensen, E. Hersfeld, etc.

M. Breal, studying the Avesta and Zoroastrian texts, pays special attention to the cult of Mithras in his studies on the geography of the Avesta and the Zend Avesta. He draws parallels between Ecbatana and the later Roman Mithraism .

In the 1940s-1970s, Western European scholars played a special role in Avestan studies, especially Mithraism. In particular, the works of E. Hersfeld ³, W. Henning ⁴, J. Duchenne-Guhem ⁵, F. Altheim ⁶, W. Hins ⁷, M. Mole ⁸, I. Gershevitch ⁹, G. Wiedengren ¹⁰, H. Lommel ¹¹, H. Newberg ¹², R. Fry ¹³, J. Kellens ¹⁴, M. Boyce ¹⁵, R. Zahner ¹⁶, MJ Vermaseren ¹⁷, and R. Girshman are of particular importance.

One of the scholars who paid special attention to the image of Mithra in the Avesta is I. Gershevitch. His research on the myth of Mithra was a major event in Western European orientalism. In this research, the scientist ¹⁸states that the understanding of Ahuramazda as the Sun dates back to Zoroaster ¹⁹, and that Mithra's acquisition of solar symbols began in "Eastern Iran" (Central Asia) .²⁰

Bronze to the period related Jarqo'tan , Dashtli , Togolok , Gonur in the monuments centralized , monumental temples studied . Of temples religious character in the matter of scientists one to the idea disagree although , plural researchers them Proto-Zoroastrianism They call it temples .

² Breal M. *De la geographie de l'Avesta* . — JA, 1862. 482-497 ; Breal M. *Le Zend-Avesta*. — J. des Savants, 1893/1894. 1-36.

³ Herzfeld E. *Zoroaster and his World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947. Vol. I - II. 821 p.

⁴ Henning WB *Zoroaster- politician or witch doctor*. Oxford: Oxford . Univ. Press, 1951. 51 p. (Ratabai) Katrac Lectures: 1949).

⁵Duchesne- Guillemin J. *Zoroaster* Critical study with a translation commenté des Gâthâ . Paris: G. - P. Maison neuve , 1948. 301 p.; Duchesne- Guillemin J. *The Western Response to Zoroaster*. Oxford: Clarendon Press , 1958. 112 p . (Ratabai (Katrak Lectures: 1956).

⁶ Altheim F. *Zarathustra // Die Neu Rundsc Hau* , 1952. No. 63. P. 165-190.

⁷ Hinz W. *Zarathushtra* . Stuttgart: Kohlhammer , 1961. 271 p.

⁸ Molé M. *La structure de premier chapitre du Videvdat // JA* 1951 . No. 229. P. 283-298. Molé M. *Cult, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*. Paris: Presses Univ. de France, 1963. 597 p.; Molé M. *La légende de Zoroaster selon les textes pehlevis*. Paris: Klincksieck, 1967. 322 p.

⁹ Gershevitch I. *The Avestan Hymn to Mythra* . Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1959. 357 p. Gershevitch I. *Geneological descent in Iranian // Bulletin of the Iranian Culture Foundation*, I. 1973. P. 71-86; Gershevitch I. *Zoroaster's own contribution // JNES*. 1964. Vol. XXIII, No. 1. P. 12-38.

¹⁰ Widengren G. *The Religions Irans* . Stuttgart: Kohlhammer , 1965. 394 p.

¹¹ Lommel H. *Anahita-Sarasvaiti // Asiatica* . Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz , 1954. P. 405-413 ; Lommel H. *Die Religion Zarathushtras. After Awesta gargestellt*.VIII. Tübengen: Olms, 1971. 290 p.

¹² Nyberg HS . *Biography of Zarathustra in the Denkart // Acta Iranica* 7. 1974. Vol . IV. P. 503-519.

¹³Fry R. *Nasledie Irana*. M.: Izd - vo Vostochnaya literatura, 1972. 467 p .

¹⁴ Kellens J. *Mythes et conceptions avestiques sous les Sassanides // MHSN*. 1975. 1. P. 457-470; Kellens J. *L'Avesta comme source historique : La liste des Kayanides // Studies in the Sources on the History of Pre - Islamic Central Asia*. E d . by J. Harmatta . Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó , 1979. P. 41 -53.

¹⁵Boyce M. *A History of Zoroastrianism*. Leiden-Cologne: EJ Brill, 1975. Vol. I. 345 p.; Boyce M. Grenet F. *A History of Zoroastrianism*. Leiden-New-York- Copenhagen - Cologne: EJ Brill, 1975. Vol. III; Boyce M. *A Persian stronghold of Zoroastrianism* . Oxford: Clarendon Press , 1977. 284 c . (Ratanbai (Katrak lectures: 1975)

¹⁶ Zaehner RC *The dawn and twilight of Zoroastrianism*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson , 1961 .

¹⁷ Vermaseren MJ *Mithras the secret god*. New York , 1963.

¹⁸ Gershevitch I. *The Avestan Hymn to Mythra* . Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1959. 357 p.

¹⁹ Gershevitch I. *The Avestan hymn to Mithra* . Cambridge , 1959. P. 47-58.

²⁰ Gershevitch I. *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra* . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press , 1959 . P. 38, 41-42.

To Mithra of worship come output traditional accordingly from BC in the 2nd millennium BC Indo- Aryans lived and Iranian-Aryan ancestors beliefs with depends on . Obviously period From AD previous . 18-17 centuries Near In the East is observed ²¹.

Mithraism this sun and light god as separately monotheism the appearance of a religion based on in the form of appearance was said views are also in science available in our country occurring findings analysis this shows that Mithra to the kings help gave leader as Mithraism worshipped population area also great in terms of and ancient of the world civilization centers organization to be , to be from his power tree gives ²².

METHODS

The article presents the study of the god Mithra and his teachings by Central Asian scholars based on the principles of generally accepted methods - objectivity, historical analysis, comparative-logical analysis, and chronological sequence.

RESULTS

The oldest written information about Mithras is preserved in the sources of the Indo-Aryan peoples. In them, the treaty of the Mitanni ruler Shattiwaz with the Hittites (mid-2nd millennium BC) is attested by the names of the gods Mithra, Varuna, Indra and the twins Nasatya. In addition, Herodotus compared the god Goytosir, whom the majority of the peoples of Eurasia and Central Asia obeyed, with Apollo, and historians have conducted research on this issue and proved that Gaeti Sura (Goytosir - the owner of the pastures) was Mithras ²³.

However, there are also archaeological sources in these monuments that completely contradict Zoroastrian customs , including the tradition of placing the corpse in the ground and burying it with objects. The historian Alisher Shopolatovich Shaydullayev expressed his scientific views in his research and concluded that the corpses were mainly buried in sarcophagus-style graves in a prone position, with men on the right side and women on the left, with objects added to the ground. The corpse to the ground , rich weapons with buried population converted to the religion of " Proto-Zoroastrianism " obedience reached to be possible not . Medium Asia bronze period population mainly Mithra to the cult obedience Mitra cult according to the corpse to the ground can be buried Because Mithras about from messages to him/her obedience did peoples corpses to the ground buried about information find possible ²⁴. The scientist last in years done increased field research as a result , Medium In Asia fire (sun) cult Eneolithic from the era existence fireplace altars in the example of own the solution found . Jarqo'ton in the temple a total of 8 altars its location is also sun to God name that it was built confirms . Bronze to the period related Dashtli , Arkaim , early iron to the period related Tallahassee monuments sun in appearance built . So , architecture monuments Mithras Central In Asia Before Zoroastrianism was chief god in the ages task done He insisted that it shows . To the glyptic related sources this in the period legendary and mythical characters and epic heroes images created the league Of course , this of images most of Harappa and the Oxus civilization ancestors together lived period "Indo- Iranian" unity " era conclusion that it was created gives .

²¹ Kumon F. Misterii Mitry: Per. s fr. SPb., 2000. S. 288.

²² Rahmonberdiyeva MJ Sharq of scientists in their studies Mithra cult expression . Bulletin of the Khorezm Mamun Academy: scientific journal.-№7/3 (116), Khorezm Mamun Academy, 2024. – 175 p. – Electronic version of the printed edition - <http://mamun.uz/uz/page/56> . Pages 65-68.

²³ Rtveladze E. Voiny Mitry // Obshchestvennoe mnenie. Prava cheloveka-№ 1-2.-1992.- S. 19–27.

²⁴ A.Sh. Shaidullaev . THE IMAGE OF MITRA IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS OF THE PEOPLES OF CENTRAL ASIA . ARCHAEOLOGY OF UZBEKISTAN IN THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS. MATERIALS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE DEDICATED TO THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN Samarkand, September 15-16, 2016. Pages 63-65.

European researchers also contributed to the research on Mithras, studying the cult of fire and temples based on material culture, based on the philosophy that it is a part of the Sun on Earth. For example, VISarianidi focused on the semantics of fire-related devices in Altin-10, Y. Yamamoto covered Zoroastrian Fire Cult Temples in archaeology and literature ²⁵, M.Boyce covered the sacred fire in Zoroastrianism ²⁶, K.Shipman covered Iranian fire temples ²⁷, and D.Stronah ²⁸covered the fire temples in Koh-i-Shahr.

R. Girshman compared the images of the stone reliefs at Bishapur with the images in the Biyanaiman ossuaries and identified the image of Mithra in them. The two images identified at Bishapur are of Mithra and Anahita, while the other two are of Zrvana and the god of fire ²⁹.

In Russia, Mithraism was directly associated with the translation of the Avesta. The Avesta was translated into Russian by I.M. Steblin-Kamensky, and Mithra was initially considered a god of contracts, then a god-warrior, a god-judge, and finally a solar god who carried the Sun in its heavenly flight ³⁰. There are also a number of translations of the Avesta into Russian ³¹.

Mithras is said to have served as the chief god among the peoples of Central Asia until the Zoroastrian era. Vladimir Nikolaevich Toporov, a prominent expert in the history of religion, believes that Mithras served as the chief god among the ³²Indo - Iranian peoples from the 3rd millennium BC to the middle of the 1st millennium BC .

The process of the first state relations, which were formed for the first time in human history in Mesopotamia at the end of the 4th millennium BC , expanded eastward to Iran and India in the 3rd millennium BC. At the end of the 3rd millennium BC, the first state relations were formed in the Tejen and Murghab oases of Southern Turkmenistan, and at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, in Bactria, using the examples of the monuments of the Sopolli culture and the related Dashtli culture. According to scientific research, scientists have put forward the theory ³³that the cult of Mithra was the main deity in the Neolithic, Eneolithic, and Bronze Ages, and also existed under the name of fire worship .

DISCUSSION

VI Sarianidi, who studied the Dashtli culture in Northern Afghanistan, says about the ancient Bactrian statehood: " The flowering of urban culture in Bactria in the Bronze Age led to the emergence of states here in the pre-Achaemenid period . " ³⁴If we turn to scientific views on the subject of statehood, each state has its own religious views. The findings of archaeological research led the scientist to the conclusion that during this period in Northern Afghanistan, the population worshiped the cult of Mithras and built monumental temples based on fire worship ³⁵. In addition, as a result

²⁵Yamamoto, Y. "The Zoroastrian Temple Cult of Fire in Archeology and Literature (I)," Orient 15, 1979, pp. 19-53.

²⁶M. Boyce, "On the Sacred Fires of the Zoroastrians," BSO(A)S 31, 1968, pp. 52-68.

²⁷ Schippmann K., " Hinweise und Anmerkenzueinigen Sasanian Monumenten," Iran 7 1969, pp. 157-62.

²⁸Stronach, D. " The Küh-i Shahrak Fire Altar," JNES 25, 1966, pp. 217-27.

²⁹Ghirshman R. Etudes iraniennes. II . " Artibus Asiae" vol., XI, pt. 4. Ascona , 1948, p. 298; 298, 299.

³⁰Avesta. Izbrannye hymny / P er. s avestiyskogo I.M. Steblin -Kamenskogo. Dushanbe: Adib , 1990. S. 155.

³¹Avesta v russkikh perevodakh (1961-1996). SPb : Magazine "Neva", 1997.

³² Toporov V.N. Myth. Ritual. Symbol. Image Issledovaniya v oblasti mifopoeticheskogo: Izbrannoe. - M.; Izdatelskaya group "Progress" - "Kultura", 1995 - 624 p. 193-194 str.

³³ Askarov A.A. Drevnezemledelcheskaya kultura epoxi bronzy na yuge Uzbekistana. Tshkent, "FAN", 1977; Askarov A.A., Abdullaev B.N. Djarkutan. Tashkent, "Science" 1983; Askarov A.A., Shirinov T.Sh. Rannyaya gorodskaya kultura epoxi bronzy na yuge Sredney Azii, Samarkand, 1993; Sarianidi V.I. Drevnie zemledeltsy Afghanistan. M., 1977.

³⁴Sarianidi V.I. Drevnie zemledelsty Afghanistan. – P. 151-155.

³⁵ Sarianidi V.I. Drevnie zemledeltsy Afghanistan. M., 1977. - S. 145-147.

of archaeological excavations carried out in Turkmenistan, VI Sarianidi discovered a monumental temple complex with a total area of 12-20 hectares of central monuments of the Bronze Age . It is located in a remote area. Excavation materials prove that the cities that were the centers of oases were governed by temple sanctuaries .

AA Askarov and T.Sh. Shirinov include the Jarkuton monument in the category of early cities and confirm that the early states had a "karlikov i y" or "chifdom" form³⁶.

In the 15th century BC, traces of life in Sopollitepa faded away, and the local population migrated from the Muzrabat oasis to the basins of the Sherabad River, or rather to the banks of the Bo'stonsay, which was considered its tributary from ancient times. This monument is now known as Jarko'ton, and its total area is more than 100 hectares.

1975, A. Askarov and his students have been conducting regular excavations at the Jarkuton monument. As a result, about 3 thousand tombs, a village-fortress, a fire temple, a fortress-palace, and other structures have been excavated and opened in this monument. The main administration of the Jarkuton city-state is the "Jarkuton Fire Temple". This structure, located on a hill, served not only as a temple, but also as a palace-prayer. Research conducted in recent years has shown that a monumental building with a regular rectangular shape was first built here. This building can be called a palace with certainty. After all, here is a 7x7 meter reception hall, corridor-like rooms were built around it, plastered with white plaster, and terracotta figurines depicting horses were glued to the walls, a decoration method typical of palaces. The temple of " Jarqo'ton fire ", studied by AA Askarov and T.Sh. Shirinov, is being built, that is, a square-shaped palace-temple with a 5-meter-thick defensive wall is being built here. Calling this building a palace-temple is correct both in terms of the architectural solution and in terms of the social strata of the community. Considering that during the formation of the first class relations, rulers and priests were not divided into separate social groups, it seems that our conclusion is historical.

According to scholars, the form of religious beliefs prevalent in Northern Afghanistan and Southern Turkmenistan does not differ from the religious beliefs of the Sopoli culture located in Southern Uzbekistan.³⁷ According to the general opinion of AA Askarov and T.Sh. Shirinov, the Jarkutan fire temple served as the religious center not only of the city, but also of the entire oasis³⁸.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the numerous finds found as a result of archaeological research in Central Asia, the presence of religious monumental temples in their composition, we witness that in the Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Ages, in the religious views of the local population in our regions, there was a separate cult of Mithras, which has been preserved to this day. With the emergence of the Zoroastrian religion, Mithras is repeatedly mentioned in the Avesta as one of the main gods of this religion. Today, the sacred observance of fire, which is found in our daily forms of economy,

³⁶ Askarov A.A., Shirinov T.Sh. Ranyaya gorodskaya culture ... - S. 114.

³⁷ T.Sh. Shirinov. Ranyaya gorodskaya culture epoxy bronze yuga Uzbekistan. Samarkand 1993. B 12 5 .

³⁸ Askarov A.A., Abdullaev B.N. Djarkutan. - T., Science, 1983; b 41.

indicates that its name has changed as a synonym for the Mithras cult. We can see that for thousands of years, despite the change in its name, it has been preserved among the local people.

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