



## WORSHIP OF TREES IN CULTURAL PRACTICE OF THE UZBEKS OF THE KHOREZM OASIS

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### ANNOTATION

*The article is devoted to the history of the study of the genesis and evolution of the cult of the Khorezm hagiology trees. Traces of this cult are in the tradition of the veneration of natural objects. Particular attention is paid remnants associated with the cult of the trees can be seen in the Khorezm oasis.*

**KEY WORDS:** *cult, trees, nature, fertility cults, sacralization, remnants of ritual, elishtirik (boyarshnik), Walnut, Jida (Loch silver), Ward, amulet.*

### INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, various beliefs and religious cults of ancestors, dying and resurrecting nature, flora and fauna have coexisted in the territory of modern Uzbekistan, especially in Khorezm. Khorezm, being the birthplace of Zoroastrianism, accepted Islam with great resistance, but retained many relics of previous religions. This was reflected in the use of traditions and cults of vegetation and occupies a special place in the religious and ritual life of the Khorezmians.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The genesis and evolution of the vegetation cult of ancient Khorezm is one of the topical and problematic topics of modern ethnology. At the same time, it is the versatility of this phenomenon that largely explains the fact that some of its aspects are still poorly understood and even unknown. Survivals associated with the cult of vegetation, traced in Khorezm, are very diverse and date back to different stages of the life of human society. The plant world played a very important role in the early stages of human life [1, p.195]. Especially the cult of trees, their individual species is widespread everywhere, manifesting itself in various forms, starting with accompanying any ritual action, and tying shreds of matter on trees, and ending with a complex ritual with a sacrifice at a sacred tree [4]. Trees supplied fruits, such a revolutionary force as fire is connected with trees, it gave man the first tools. [1 p.195-196]. Touching and tying patches of their clothes on banner poles and on trees is a sign of a vow, which the pilgrims believed that it establishes a magical contact between the pilgrims and the object of worship. Prayer and sacrifice on holidays are also taken from the cults that preceded Islam. [3 p.149]. The subject of the cult of trees, according to beliefs, among the peoples of Khorezm of the oasis became individual tree species "having" supernatural properties. Gujum (Elm Androsof) and various kinds of fruit trees, such as tut (mulberry), jida (eastern sucker), elishtirik (hawthorn), were considered these trees. Fruit trees, especially tut (mulberry), jida (eastern sucker) among the peoples of Khorezm were considered symbols of fertility [1 p.197-198].



The endowment of the plant world with supernatural properties among the peoples of the Khorezm oasis was clearly manifested in the customs of wearing amulets and jewelry. It was believed that a woman who wears bracelets, necklaces or pendants as jewelry made from jida stones, pomegranates, mulberry seeds, should have many children among the Uzbeks of Khorezm, such ideas persist to this day [5]. In Khorezm, there is an idea that the strong smell that jida flowers have will drive away the evil spirits of devas and peri, and therefore its bones were sewn into cloth bags and attached to clothes or headdresses. According to beliefs, having felt "their" smell, the spirits think that it comes from their fellows, and do not harm a person [1,p.196]. Ornaments made of hawthorn wood or its twigs were sewn onto children's skullcaps, attached to women's headdresses [5], and twigs with fruits were hung at doors with the cult of hawthorn [7, PMA]. Such items were most often worn by women (mainly during pregnancy) and children, as it was believed that they were especially susceptible to the actions of various evil forces. [6,p.69]. On the one hand, it was a guard against the evil eye, from evil spirits, on the other hand, the desire to transfer onto oneself the special properties of a particular plant that bears abundant fruit [1, p.196-197]. Amulets made of *elishterik* (hawthorn) have been preserved among the population of Khorezm to this day. He is considered not only a talisman for the family from magic, but also an incentive for fertility.[5]

Elements of the cult of trees are found in various religious and ritual complexes in the tradition of honoring objects of nature, but with the spread of Islam, this cult lost its independence: sacred trees began to be venerated only in connection with some Muslim saint and his mazar. For example, Chinar-bobo, which is part of the cult complex of Sultan-Vais (the famous Muslim figure Vais al-Karani) in Khorezm. Because. chinor-sycamore as an object of worship was widely known in the East and in the Mediterranean [6,p.70]. It can be assumed that in the case of Chinor-bobo, we are dealing with the anthropomorphization of an ancient plant object of worship, and the mazar of Chinor-bobo can be included among the remnants of a pre-Muslim complex of beliefs, the cult of which existed in Khorezm in ancient times [2,p.84]. To the pre-Muslim cult of trees, to the idea of magical "trapping the souls" of those living in them, go back to the customs of childless women to hug sacred trees (Chilla-tut) growing at mazars (Gyulli bibi tomb in the Khanka region) to press against them with their whole body, smear themselves with tree sap, take away. According to the ethnographer G.P. Snesev, such methods of "treatment" have nothing to do with Islam [1, p. 269-270]. [7, PMA].

Some trees among the people were famous for notoriety, they were considered the havens of evil spirits and genies. These trees were walnut, jida and Turangil (gray poplar) growing in cemeteries. Therefore, people were afraid to rest in the shade of these trees and bypassed. [7, PMA]. The main reason for their biological features. Walnut leaves and jida flowers have potent ethereal substances, which can lead a person to a state of severe intoxication, and our ancestors had no idea about this. Turangil mainly grew in cemeteries. Ancestors believed that trees and shrubs were shelters for human souls after death and therefore forbade them to be cut down [2,p.28].

## CONCILIATIONS

Thus, all of the above materials give grounds to assert that the elements of the ancient cults of vegetation, especially trees, were part of the religious practice of the Uzbeks of the Khorezm oasis.

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#### JOURNAL ARTICLE

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