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ЖАҢА ЖӘНЕ
ҚАЗІРГІ ЗАМАН ТАРИХЫ

NEW AND MODERN
HISTORY

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CRAFTS IN THE MIDDLE AGES (BASED ON AZERBAIJANI HEROIC EPICS)

Abstract. The article is devoted to the issues of craftsmanship, which are included in the heroic epics of Azerbaijan (Dede-Gorgud, Koroghlu, Gachag Nabi), in a word, find their own description. Here, attention is mainly paid to the ethnographic description and analysis of such professional and artistic fields as blacksmithing, coppersmithing, jewelry, silk weaving, carpet weaving, felting, pottery, stoneworking, woodworking, saddlery, etc. The author of the article notes that the emergence of the mentioned professional and artistic fields in the region is not accidental. This was, first of all, due to the richness of natural raw materials of Azerbaijan, as well as the presence of people of the region with many years of experience, empirical knowledge and skills. The article emphasizes that the increase in the role of the horse in everyday life and in war, especially in connection with the emergence of cavalry types, the production of saddles with a saddle and other accessories required the labor of a skilled craftsman with production skills. It is precisely in order to meet such needs that the profession of saddlery was formed.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, heroism, epic, craftsmanship, ethnology.

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Ортағасырлық қолөнер (Әзірбайжанның ерлік эпостары негізінде)

Аңдатпа. Мақалада Әзірбайжанның ерлік эпостарында («Деде-Қорқыт», «Көроғлы», «Қашақ Нәби») кездесетін қолөнер мәселелері қарастырылады. Мұнда негізінен зергерлік, теміршілік, ұста ісі, жібек тоқу, кілем тоқу, киіз басу, қыш жасау, тас өңдеу, ағаш ұсталығы, ер-тоқым жасау секілді кәсіби және көркем өнер салаларының этнографиялық сипаттамасы мен талдауы беріледі. Мақала авторы аталған кәсіби және көркем өнер салаларының аймақта пайда болуы кездейсоқ емес екенін атап өтеді. Бұл, ең алдымен, Әзірбайжанның табиғи шикізатқа бай болуымен, сондай-ақ өңір тұрғындарының көпжылдық тәжірибесі мен білімінің болуы себепті орын алған. Мақалада жылқының күнделікті өмір мен соғыстағы рөлінің артуы, әсіресе атты әскер түрлерінің пайда болуына байланысты ер-тоқым мен басқа да ат әбзелдерінің өндірісі шебер қолөнершілердің еңбегін талап еткендігі атап көрсетіледі. Осындай қажеттіліктерді өтеу үшін ер-тоқым шеберлігі кәсіби қалыптасқан.

Түйін сөздер: Әзірбайжан, ерлік, эпос, қолөнер, этнология.

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Introduction

Both in ancient and medieval times, a number of arts and crafts were widespread in Azerbaijan – metalworking (blacksmithing, coppersmithing, jewelry), weaving (silk weaving, carpet weaving), felting, pottery, stoneworking, woodworking, saddlery, etc. The richness of Azerbaijan in natural raw mate-

rials (wood, clay, stone, mineral dyes, non-ferrous and ferrous metals, wild fibrous plants) from time to time gave impetus to the emergence and development of various arts and crafts here. Starting from the ancient Stone Age, simple labor tools were made from hard stone types (camellia, flint) that provided sharp fragments for the acquisition and consumption of means of life, especially food products, for

cutting, chopping, piercing, scraping, etc. purposes. As the centuries passed, productive forces developed, production technology improved, and new arts and crafts emerged. They formed the basis of economic life and served to meet the daily economic and household needs of the population. In addition to archaeological materials, there is quite interesting information about this in the ancient folklore samples of our people, including our epics.

Material and method

When writing the article, materials from heroic epics (Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, Koroglu, Gachag Nabi), as well as ethnographic works, were used. At the same time, in the study of the topic, preference was given to the methods adopted in the science of ethnography. That is, in the study of the issue, the method of historical comparative analysis, description, and a complex approach were used.

Discussion

One of the most widespread art forms in Azerbaijan was saddlery. First of all, let us note that the preparation of riding equipment was initially a household profession. However, later, due to the increasing role of the horse in everyday life and in war, especially the formation of cavalry units, the preparation of saddles and their additional equipment required the labor of a skilled craftsman with special production skills, and therefore a professional art form – saddlery – began to take shape [Azerbaijani Ethnography, 2007:420].

One of the oldest sources providing information about the art of saddlery is the epic “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud”. Although there is no information about the technical elements and technology of saddlery here, there are enough episodes about saddlery. These episodes also prove that saddlery was a fairly developed art form in the territory of Azerbaijan at the time the epic was published, and that specialized craftsmen such as saddlers and saddlers were active:

“Atlarının əyərlərin aldılar,
Geyimlərin çıxardılar.
“Bir əyər, bir uyan” –

dedi, gətirdilər [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 2004:155] və s.

In the epic poem “Koroghlu”, it is also possible to come across the names of saddle elements such as saddle-bridle, stirrup, etc. Here, “Saddle the horses,

let's go and settle our accounts with Hasan Khan” [Koroghlu, 2005:52], “After Koroglu read the letter and was satisfied with the story, he ordered, they saddled Kirat”, “They saddled Kirat and came to the pomegranate garden with the gardener” [Koroghlu, 2005:76], “If Koch Koroglu would saddle him” [Koroghlu, 2005:77], “There was a Turkman horse that was fast in the wind and water. He quickly had him saddled and saddled”, “Koroglu saddled Kirat and rode him, took a bow and arrows in his hand” [Koroghlu, 2005:113], “Demirchioglu went, drew the cart from the stable, saddled him and rode”, “And he looked, and a group of saddled and bridle horses had taken the Yagi reserve” [Koroghlu, 2005:151] “Hasan's childhood friend, the saddle master Fatali, who had earned a reputation for bravery and generosity in Demirgapi Derbent “he called” [Koroghlu, 2005:329] and other expressions confirm the existence of skilled craftsmen and saddlers engaged in saddle making in the 17th century.

It is possible to obtain information about the art of sazbandi from the epics “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud” and “Koroghlu”. In “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud”, Dede Gorgud takes his “golcha gopuz” in almost all the tribes and “boy boylayir, son sonlayir”. The main character of the epic “Koroghlu” Koroghlu also always goes against the enemy with a Misri sword in one hand and a three-stringed saz in the other. Ashug Jun, who previously played the saz in the palace of the Erzurum Pasha and later became the Chanlibel ashug – the folk ashug, is a famous artist whose voice has spread everywhere. In the epic, news and information are conveyed through the language of the saz, and dialogues are conducted “both in words and with the saz” [Koroghlu, 2005:471]. Such information, in turn, confirms that sazbandi, which is closely related to the art of aqchislama, has a very ancient history in Azerbaijan and has gone through a long path of development and improvement to this day.

One of the crafts that is often found in heroic epics is weaving. Archaeological materials prove that weaving has a very ancient history in Azerbaijan. For example, during excavations at the Kultepe archaeological site, bone awls and stone mortars used for spinning yarn were found in the first cultural layer of the site [Abibullaev O.A., 1957:80-81]. Several clay awls and large stone axes with holes on both sides found in the Eneolithic cultural layer of the Mingachevir settlement also indicate that at that time the local population was familiar with the art of weaving, probably with the weaving of coarse woolen fabrics [Guliyev H., 1961: 26].

Written sources dating back to the 7th century indicate that cotton was widely cultivated in Albania. The higher development of cotton growing and the progress of cotton weaving on this basis coincide with the early Middle Ages, especially its developed stage. Sericulture as an auxiliary economic sector occupied a special place here. Since cocooning was an economically profitable economic sector, it quickly became a type of occupation for the local population. In subsequent periods, sericulture spread as an economic sector to all regions of the country. Information about this was extensively described in the travelogues of Eastern and European travelers, merchants, ambassadors, and scholars who visited Azerbaijan in the Middle Ages (A. Oleari, Y. Streys, K. Zeno, A. Contarini, I. Schiltberger, M. Polo, etc.).

In separate chapters of the epic “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud”, information about sericulture is also provided, and this information is mostly presented in the form of “a thousand places were covered with a carpet of sericulture”, “in ninety places was covered with a carpet of sericulture” [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:16, 28, 42, 69, 106]. In addition, information about sericulture and silk is also reflected in words and expressions such as “ibrishim”, “abrishim”, a twisted silk thread called “sinin yalicigin”, “atlasla yapılanda gog sayvanlu” [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:71], etc. The expression “ipek” (ipeg) here denotes silk fabric, and atlas denotes “shiny silk fabric; silk face, cotton lining” [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:313]. As for “ibrishim” (abrishim), these expressions are the early medieval form of the term “erish” explained in ethnographic literature.

In terms of production technology, all traditional Azerbaijani fabrics are made by weaving warp (extension, chilla) and weft (atma, lula, aragati), which are made as a result of perpendicular and crisscrossing of the fabric fibers. The warp-weft weaving technology, which has ancient traditions, did not lose its practical importance until the 19th and early 20th centuries. For example,

Uzaq-uzaq yollarınan,
Belə ipək çullarınan...

Or,

Paşa, sənə nişan verim Qıratı,
Əbrişim ipəkdən yalı görəkdi...
The words “rübənd”

[Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:192] “silk curtain” [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:242] found in the epic, as well as “They pitched a white tent, spread a colorful carpet, slaughtered a white sheep, drank seven years of red wine” [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:107], “A thousand places had spread silk carpets. The Oghuz Stone Oghuz begs had gathered” [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:135], etc., indicate the extensive development of weaving and carpet-making in Azerbaijan during the time of Dede Gorgud.

Such information can also be found in the epic “Koroglu”. Thus, the names of woven products such as farsh (a carpet to be laid, placed underfoot) and kalı are often mentioned in the epic:

Altına döşərdim xalı,
Yoxdu mənim kimi dəli,
Bu günümdə İsabalı
Gəlimi, ay mədət, ay mədət!.. (2, 162).

Or,

“İman yiyəsi olasan, a Mələk qarı.
Yaxşı Təbriz xalı-xalçam var” [Koroghlu, 2005:285].

Finally, the expression “Old cotton will not be a rag” used in the introduction to the epic “Kitabi-Dede Gorgud” proves that cotton weaving has been practiced in Azerbaijan since ancient times [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:109].

In addition, the information provided in the epic about camel caravans traveling from “bezirgan” to the markets of Tabriz, Derbent, Shirvan, Nakhchivan, Ganja, Tbilisi, Togat, Istanbul, Aleppo, Egypt, Damascus, Baghdad, and the fact that Koroglu received “taxes” from the caravans, etc., indicates intensive trade at that time, and one of the main objects of that trade was precisely woven products.

The epic “Gachag Nabi”, a relic of the 19th century, also contains enough episodes related to weaving, especially silk weaving. The following expressions in the epic are clear examples of this: “...Ay Nabi, Haji Safar takes our cocoons and our rice from us. This year he made it completely white. He took as many cocoons as we had, saying, ‘I will give you cloth,’ but he did not give even an arshin” [Gachag, 1961:174]. Or, in the episode in the epic where Gachag Nabi describes the Gray Horse, it is said:

Boz at, səni sər tövlədə bağlaram,
And içirəm, səni məxmər çullaram.

Boz at, mənə bu davadan qurtarsan,
Qızıldan gümüşdən səni nallaram.

One of the areas of art that flourished in our country in ancient times was felting. There is enough information about this type of art in ethnographic literature. Felt, which creates coolness in summer and protects from cold in winter, was widely used for covering the tops and sides of huts and huts, for flooring and decorating residential buildings, for making prayer rugs, doormats, blankets, hats, shawls, long boots, socks, robes, heyba, sacks, bags, slippers for pack animals, palanquins, saddle covers, cargo felt, etc. for household needs. Felts were white, black and brown, depending on the composition of the wool. The most valuable of these were felts made of white wool. At the same time, decorative felts (namand) dyed in red, green, blue and orange were also made. The decorations of the namand, heyba, yaherustu, terlik and other felts mainly consisted of zoomorphic (mountain goat, gazelle, lion, scenes of animal fighting), geometric (rhombus, rectangle, triangle), botanical (branch, flower-flower), cosmogonic (moon, sun, star) ornaments, as well as "chain", "ram's horn", "goose foot", "heart" and other patterns. The edges were covered with a braid, as on carpets [Azerbaijani Ethnography, 2007:464].

During archaeological excavations in the Mingachevir area, several bronze seals dating back to the 4th-3rd centuries BC were found. The clothing in the drawings of people on those seals is relatively reminiscent of a thick felt cloak. The image of a stick in his hand, a peaked cap on his head and a thick cloak are of particular interest. BC The Greek historian Herodotus, who lived in the 5th century, reported that the Sakas used flat felt hats, which were called burks by Azerbaijanis [Azerbaijani Ethnography, 2007:463].

In the epic "Kitabi-Dede Gorgud", it is possible to find such words and expressions as "felt", "black felt" [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:24], "felt burk" (1, 80), "butterfly" (a hat made of felt), "They laid it under the black felt", "On-sixteen binip uz engili, felt burkli, argun dinli, uzgun tilli kafir çiga aldi" [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:81].

The fact that the traditional craft called metalworking was widespread in Azerbaijan is also confirmed by the results of archaeological excavations. Thus, in Mingachevir and Beylagan archaeological monuments, in Agstafachay, Gedebe, Shamkir, Ganja, Goygol, etc. Traces of the production of nu-

merous metal products have been found in places [Vahidov R. 1961:10], [Ibrahimov F. 1988:41], ; [Babayev I, Ahmadov G. Gabala (historical-archaeological essay), 1981: 14].

The deepening of specialization that occurred from time to time led to the formation of independent areas within the metalworking craft, such as foundry, coppersmithing, jewelry, blacksmithing, gunsmithing, knifemaking, locksmithing, etc. One of them, and perhaps the most important, is gunsmithing. Gunsmithing is considered one of the oldest and most technologically complex areas of metalworking. The work of medieval weapons workshops, which provided the army and the guards of rulers with the necessary ammunition (swords, shields, spears, maces, lances, helmets, armlets, armor, etc.), clearly demonstrates specialization within the craft and a simple division of labor.

The word "iron" is used repeatedly in the epic "Kitabi-Dede Gorgud": "iron power", Demirgapu Dervand, iron-clad bull, iron-chained bull, iron-tipped arrow [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:259], iron-clad bey [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:299], etc. However, one of the issues that attracts attention in the epic is the information provided about the armory, that is, the reserves of weapons made of iron and steel. In one of the episodes we read: "The month is boiling: It is advice. Let them quickly load the armory. Let the begs ride!" he said [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:169].

In the epic "Kitabi-Dede Gorgud", expressions such as balchag (hilt, sword handle, iron that protects the hand in the hilt), jida (lance, spear, bayonet), jidalu (with a spear, spear, bayonet), chowshan (armor) [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:88], changgal (hook, hook with several teeth, a javelin-shaped tool), damran (iron arrowhead), gjurz (iron club; mace, scythe), [Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, 1962:107], hamayl (necklace, strap hanging from the shoulder; sword pendant), hamayl kushanmag (throwing the strap of the sword from the shoulder – wearing it crosswise), gama (sword, double-edged knife, small dagger), kylyc (sword), etc. indicate that weaponry was quite developed in Azerbaijan at that time. Such information is also confirmed by the findings obtained during archaeological excavations. For example, in the Mingachevir and Gadabay regions of Azerbaijan, Scythian-type (triple-bladed) arrowheads dating back to the 7th – 6th centuries BC were discovered (it is interesting that the "Kitabi-Dede Gorgud" epic also mentions exactly the triple-bladed arrowhead).

The “Koroglu” epic also contains a lot of information about metalworking craftsmanship. Here, too, it is often possible to come across expressions such as steel sword, shield, pillar, chevron, spear, steel weapon, steel chevron, steel armlet, silver armlet, black steel nails, iron robe, Khorasan steel [Koroghlu, 2005:320], steel robe [Koroghlu, 2005:538]:

Mən poladam, dəmirçidə dayanmış,
Şüşəyəmmi əl dəyəndə sınaq mən?.

Or,

Yarı cılxa polad, yarı nalpara,
Qara əqrəb kimi zəhrimar ola [Koroghlu, 2005:320] və s.

It is necessary to talk about the Misri sword separately. According to the plot of the epic, along with the Kirat, the Misri sword is the main source of strength and power of Rovshan (Koroghlu). It is said that Rovshan finds a stone on the ground while playing in the field as a child. Although the stone is small, it is heavy and solid. Its blow even kills a calf grazing in the meadow. After examining the stone with his own hands, Rovshan's father, Ali, realizes that it is a piece of lightning that fell from the sky. Ali first makes a sword from this stone, and then a sword. Ali, who gives the sword to his son, says: “Rovshan, take this sword and tie it to your waist, this sword is unlike any other sword. This sword will be called lightning..., from now on you will call it the Misri sword”.

In another version, the sword is given to Rovshan by the blacksmith who made it. He characterizes the quality of the sword as follows: “The material of this sword is made of lightning stone, its water is from Miskhana water, and its mouth is made of raw powder of Alkhar silver. I named it Misri sword”.

Or;

“...This was such a sword that nothing could stand in its way. Whatever you hit, it would cut and pour. With this sword, you will make khans, beys, and pashas drink blood. With this sword, the mukhannas, the cowards, and old enemies will taste your hand. With this sword, you will break fortresses, destroy camps, and caravans. But do not tell anyone that this is a lightning sword. From now on, you will call it Misri sword. As long as you are on the waist of Kirat, the sword is on your waist, and no enemy will be able to penetrate you” [Koroghlu, 2005:53-54].

The mention of metal products such as kelid (lock, key), kübe-küpe (earring), külüng (külüng,

düser; a tool with two pointed and sharp ends, for carving stones), kupeli (with earrings, earrings), garujig (wristband, bracelet), etc. in the epic “Koroglu” confirms that blacksmithing, as well as jewelry, developed in the territory of Azerbaijan during the mentioned period [Koroghlu, 2005:321]. Here, the bracelet is presented not only as a valuable decoration, but also as a token and a trust:

Koroğludu atan zati,
Çənlibeldə var büsatı,
Bazubənddi amanatı,
Allaha tapşırdım səni [Koroghlu, 2005:321].

It should be noted that in the Middle Ages, farriery was widespread as one of the main and important branches of blacksmithing. In many cases, this art was even separated from blacksmithing and operated independently. In this regard, the chapter “Bringing Demirchioglu to Chanlibela” of the epic is very characteristic. It is clear from the plot that Demirchioglu, one of Koroglu's closest comrades-in-arms, is the son of a farrier named Ali kiş. Koroglu's first encounter with Ali kiş, as well as Demirchioglu, is depicted in the epic with very interesting artistic colors. Thus, one day Koroglu goes to Erzurum to shoe Kirat and also to find new comrades-in-arms. After wandering around, he finally finds a perfect farrier at the very end of the bazaar. “He got off his horse, greeted the farrier and pulled Kirat in front of him. The farrier quickly stood up and poured the horseshoes in front of Koroghlu so that he could choose which one he liked. Koroghlu, seeing the farrier as a good man, wanted to joke with him and crushed the horseshoes he had made with his hands one by one. Observing this scene, Demirchioglu, in response, crushed the coins that Koroghlu had given to Ali as a hired hand and returned them to him...” [Koroghlu, 2005:105].

Pottery has a unique place in the history of traditional crafts of the Azerbaijani people. The richness of raw materials has historically created conditions for the widespread spread of this craft in almost all regions of Azerbaijan. In the production of pottery, water jugs, household jugs, water bowls, rivers, food containers, jugs (molasses, honey, oil jugs), basti, barni, kalga, baqqa, khaira, karagan, enganek, dandene, halimdan, assuzan, suzak, kapa (vevak), tandirs, lamps, heating devices, etc. took a leading place.

The epic “Kitabi-Dade Gorgud” contains information about the names and uses of some of these

vessels: “Badyals were set up in eighty places” [Kitabi-Dade Gorgud, 2004:37], “Large-mouthed khumras were placed in the middle. Badyaals were set up in nine places. Golden legs and jugs were arranged. Nine black-eyed, braided-haired, hands covered from the wrists, fingers covered with nigar, and throats one inch long were carried by infidel girls with golden legs to the Kalin Oghuz begs. Salur Qazan, son of Ulaş, drank from each one” [Kitabi-Dade Gorgud, 2004:37, 78], etc.

Conclusion

The conducted research shows that in the Azerbaijani heroic epics (Dade-Gorgud, Koroglu, Gachag Nebi) the types of art known among our people

are highlighted. This not only shows the importance of these types of art in people’s lives, but also reveals their specific features.

Like archaeological and historical literature, the oldest examples of Azerbaijani folklore, including heroic epics, emerge as valuable sources providing information about various areas of traditional craftsmanship. Even if this information is incomplete, it allows us to make certain judgments about the socio-economic landscape of the period, the lifestyle of the population, and the characteristic features of its cultural and spiritual development. From this point of view, we believe that there is a need to involve Azerbaijani folklore examples, including heroic epics, in more serious ethnological research.

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