

<https://doi.org/10.37708/ezs.swu.bg.v24i2.7>

RELIGIOUS AND PAGAN RITUAL VOCABULARY IN THE DICTIONARY OF MAHMUD AL-KASHGARI

Zifa Temirgazina

Pavlodar Pedagogical University named after A. Margulan, Kazakhstan
Email: zifatemirgazina3@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3399-7364

ABSTRACT: Mahmud al-Kashgari's 11th-century dictionary, "Divan Lugat at-Turk," is a repository of linguistic and encyclopedic information on the spiritual culture and worldview of the ancient Turks. Pagan and religious ritual vocabulary includes a complex of words and expressions thematically related to the sacred sphere in a given culture: beliefs, rituals, and rites. Lexical units describe actions, concepts, and beings within this thematic group. The personal code includes the names of gods (theonyms), spirits, and demons (demonyms); the actional code includes the names of rituals and their actions (exorcism, fortune telling, fumigation, and spellcasting); and the subject code consists of terms related to the performance of rituals (e.g., amulets, sacrifice). The applied ethnolinguistic analysis reveals that the religious beliefs of the Turks are characterized by dual faith. They retain pagan Tengriist ideas, although they had already officially adopted Islam by this time. Particularly revealing in this regard is the theonym *Тәңрі* (Tengri), which the dictionary's author translates as Allah. The theonym *Умай* (Umay), part of the Tengriist pantheon of gods, is also actively used. The dictionary contains a wide variety of demons, naming various types of evil spirits. They cause harm to humans and cause possession, which, according to Turkic beliefs, can be treated through the rite of exorcism. Exorcism is performed by *қамы* – shamans who perform magical acts and use magical artifacts. Religious and pagan ritual vocabulary is one of the most lexically represented thematic groups in the dictionary – 38 lexemes, which testifies to the importance of religious and pagan concepts in the ancient Turkic tribes.

KEYWORDS: Mahmud al-Kashgari, religious and pagan vocabulary, theonyms, demonyms, ritual of exorcism, possession

Introduction

The 11th-century dictionary "Divan Lugat at-Turk"¹ (2005) was conceived by Mahmud al-Kashgari as a testimony to the culture and spiritual existence of the Turkic tribes and peoples, presenting knowledge of their language, customs, and traditions to the Arab world.

Mahmud al-Kashgari's dictionary includes not only the vocabulary of Turkic dialects but also extensive information on the culture, beliefs, customs, climate, and area of settlement of Turkic-speaking peoples in the 11th century.

¹ We use the Cyrillic variant of al-Kashgari's dictionary in this article, which is listed in the References section (Ал-Кашгари/Al_Kashgari, 2005).

Furthermore, the dictionary includes examples of Turkic poetry as illustrations. According to turkologist Khisamitdinova, “the dictionary by the great 11th-century Turkic lexicographer Mahmud Kashgari ‘Divan Lugat at-Turk,’ in which every word, poem, and proverb is given with an indication of its linguistic and ethnic affiliation is a model of ethnolinguistic work” (Хисамитдинова/Khisamitdinova, 2007, p. 760).² This allows researchers, in addition to the linguistic approach itself, to apply an ethnolinguistic approach to the analysis of lexicographic material, in particular, to religious and pagan ritual vocabulary. The traditions, rituals, and customs of the ancient Turks represent not only and not so much ethnic cultural constants, but rather provide an opportunity to reveal the mental world of the ancient Turks, their worldview and perception, demonstrating the level of their cognitive abilities and unity with the surrounding nature (Bastamitova, Shaimerdinova, 2023).

The word, as a linguistic unit, is most representative of encyclopedic, extralinguistic knowledge. Dictionaries can be viewed as a repository of information about the world, spiritual culture, and the views and ideas of a given people, conveying human experience acquired over many millennia. Pagan and religious ritual vocabulary are words and expressions associated with the beliefs, rites, and rituals of ancient pagan cultures, describing the actions, concepts, and beings that comprise this religious and everyday sphere. Believers ascribe certain transcendental properties, particularly magical ones, to words, verbal formulas, messages, sequences of messages, and the like (Boreiko, Fedotova, 2024, p. 83). This thematic group of vocabulary includes subgroups that convey the semiotic codes of a ritual as a holistic semiotic system: personal code – names of gods (theonyms), spirits and demons (demonyms)³, action code – names of rituals, actions in them (exorcism, fortune telling, fumigation, casting a spell), subject code – terms associated with the performance of rituals (for example, amulets, sacrifice).

The aim of our study is an ethnolinguistic analysis of religious and pagan ritual vocabulary reflecting Turkic beliefs in gods, the devil, and spirits, as well as related to exorcism rituals, in the ancient Turkic dictionary “Divan Lugat at-Turk” by Mahmud al-Kashgari. The choice of the exorcism ritual was motivated by its being one of the most lexically representative rituals in al-Kashgari’s dictionary. Other rituals are represented by a small number of lexemes, for example, the ritual of sacrifice – one word (4633)⁴ *йағзуу* [sacrificial animal]

² All translations of the quotations from Russian are the work of the author, Z.T., unless otherwise indicated.

³ For more details on theonyms and demonyms see Иванова и др./Ivanova et al., 2018; Temirgazina, Albekova, et al., 2021.

⁴ Lexemes are further indicated in the article by the numerical indexes they have in the dictionary edition. These indexes make it easy to locate words in the dictionary text.

(“designation of an animal that people in pagan times slaughtered for their idols, fulfilling a vow or making a sacrifice”)⁵.

To date, Mahmud al-Kashgari’s dictionary has been studied in considerable detail from various perspectives. Research has focused on its significance as the first dictionary of Turkic languages, which laid the foundations for areal linguistics.⁶ Karl H. Menges (1995) emphasizes the important role of al-Kashgari’s work in the development of Turkology as a scientific discipline. According to Arienne M. Dwyer (2005, p. 73), the Uyghurs, the Kyrgyz, and Turkic peoples in general regard Mahmud al-Kashgari as a representative of their own ethnic tradition, while his work is considered a valuable source of historical, cultural, and geographical information about the Turkic tribes of the 11th century. Special works are devoted to the comparative-historical aspect (Насилов/Nasilov, 2007), the disclosure of lexical and grammatical connections of the ancient Turkic language with modern Turkic languages: Azerbaijani (Askar, 2008), Kyrgyz (Семенова, Токоев/Semenova, Tokoev, 2015), etc. Other publications have examined individual lexical groups: names of animals (Hauenschild, 2003; Meltem, 2015), space objects (Хазиева/Khazieva, 2018), musical concepts (Заатов/Zaotov, 2020), and lexical-semantic groups of verbs denoting craft actions (Темиргазина и др./Temirgazina et al., 2024).

The religious concepts reflected in the dictionary were analyzed by Nuran Yilmaz (2008). The researcher classified religious concepts into the following taxa: “General concepts related to religion,” “Concepts related to the principles of faith,” “Concepts related to the consciousness of service and the principles of Islam,” and “Concepts related to Sufi culture” (2008, p. 1008). Yilmaz also emphasizes that numerous shamanic elements (for example, *üām* [“divination with the help of special stones”], *йалбин* [“to be possessed”], etc.), which could be attributed to religious concepts, were not included in his analysis, since they should be the subject of another study (Yilmaz, 2008, p. 1008). Consequently, many pagan pre-Islamic concepts were excluded in the work of Yilmaz. This indicates that the pagan pre-Islamic vocabulary of al-Kashgari’s dictionary has not yet been fully studied, and the present research seeks to fill this gap by explaining the complex interaction between religious and pagan beliefs in Turkic societies of the 11th century.

Selda M. Karaşlar (2016) examined the dictionary’s reflection of the relationship between religion and ancient Turkic society. Furthermore, A. Khazieva (Хазиева/Khazieva, 2016) examined the religious and mythological vocabulary of al-Kashgari’s dictionary. However, the small number of lexemes analyzed (nine units) does not allow for a complete understanding of the religious and pagan ritual vocabulary in the spiritual culture of the Turkic tribes of the 11th century.

⁵ We have included this word in the vocabulary of the exorcism ritual because it may be part of its subject code.

⁶ See: O. Pritsak (1959), F. Karabulut (2009), and U. Isabekova (Исабекова/Isabekova, 2017).

Materials and Methods

The study was based on Mahmud al-Kashgari's dictionary, "Divan Lugat at-Turk," published in 2005 by Dyke Press. The translation, preface, and commentary to this edition were written by turkologist Z.-A. Auezova, and the indexes were compiled by R. Ermers. Thirty-nine lexical units were extracted from the dictionary, reflecting the religious and pagan views of the ancient Turks (see table below).

Table One. Ritual and ceremonial vocabulary in al-Kashgari's dictionary: the number of linguistic units by thematic subgroups

Theonyms	Demonyms	Ritual vocabulary				
		Obsession	Sacrificer, shaman	Spells	Treatment options	Protective means
<i>Таури,</i> <i>байат,</i> <i>савжй,</i> <i>Умай</i>	<i>йак,</i> <i>йилбик,</i> <i>йил,</i> <i>унужйн,</i> <i>тутузлуз,</i> <i>тутузлуз</i> <i>ййр,</i> <i>тикй,</i> <i>живй</i>	<i>тутуз,</i> <i>йалбин~</i>	<i>қам,</i> <i>йалвйжй,</i> <i>йатжй,</i> <i>йат,</i> <i>туйин</i>	<i>арваи;</i> <i>сувида;</i> <i>исрик,</i> <i>кувуз,</i> <i>қаж, қувуз,</i> <i>қаж қаж,</i> <i>исрик</i> <i>исрик</i>	<i>акит,</i> <i>урумдай,</i> <i>какук,</i> <i>хармал,</i> <i>уд</i>	<i>битик,</i> <i>мунжук,</i> <i>қай,</i> <i>абай,</i> <i>кусук,</i> <i>йағиш</i>
4	8	2	5	8	5	6
Total 38						

The empirical material also includes proverbs and poetic lines from the dictionary, illustrating the semantics of lexemes.

The primary method chosen for analyzing the lexical material is ethnolinguistics. According to N. Tolstoy, ethnolinguistics is:

... a complex discipline whose subject matter is the culture 'content plan', folk psychology, and mythology, regardless of the means and methods of their formal embodiment (word, object, ritual, image, etc.). ... In this case, ethnolinguistics is a striking example of the 'expansion' and penetration of linguistic methodology into neighboring disciplines, in this case, ethnography – an expansion that has been much discussed and written about recently and which is already bearing fruit (Толстой/Tolstoy, 1995, p. 40).

A. Kaidarov (Кайдаров/Kaidarov, 1973) developed the ethnolinguistic approach, based on the understanding of language as a repository of cultural information, accumulating the material and spiritual culture of an ethnic group. The essence of the ethnolinguistic method lies in reconstructing the relationships between the lexical meaning of words and ethnographic, anthropological, historical, and mythological information. Ethnolinguistic analysis of vocabulary

reveals cultural realities, historical facts, archaic beliefs, and other facets of a people's existence that constitute their worldview.

Results and Discussion

1. Theonyms in the Dictionary

Despite adopting Islam as the official religion, Turkic tribes retained pagan beliefs and customs associated with Tengrism. “Before the adoption of Islam, the worldview of the nomadic Turkic tribes of Central Asia was based on a belief in spirits inhabiting the entire animate and inanimate world, in the gods of Heaven, Earth, and Water” (Ауэзова/Auezova, 2005, p. 20). Their religious beliefs were characterized by dual faith, typical of peoples and tribes during the transition from pagan Tengrism to Islam. This dual faith did not mean a complete rejection of older beliefs. Many people continued to adhere to Tengrism or its elements, even if they formally converted to Islam.

Tengrism, based on the cult of the sky god Tengri and the worship of earth and nature, blended with new religious norms. During this period, ancient rites, beliefs, and rituals that existed alongside Islam could persist, such as the veneration of nature spirits, ancestral spirits, and magical practices (Аязбекова/Ayazbekova, 2020). This is reflected in al-Kashgari's dictionary.

At the time of the writing of ‘Divanu lugat at-Turk,’ the Turkic tribes were already adherents of Islam. With its spread among the Bashkir tribes, a gradual shift away from pagan and Tengrism occurred. Muslim philosophy, customs, and the language of the Muslim holy book – Arabic – came to the forefront. Naturally, a shift in conceptual framework and religious vocabulary also occurred (Хазиева/Khazieva, 2016, p. 167).

The history of the study of the names of gods and mythical creatures, the change of religious concepts in the Turkic languages since the 10th century is described in detail in the work of A. Ivanova, G. Khazieva-Demirbash, Yu. Artemyev (Иванова и др./Ivanova et al., 2018, pp. 237–238).

Researchers note that modern Turkic

... mythology includes mythonyms associated with the views of Tengrism. Thus, in the Turkic-Tatar mythopoetic picture, it is necessary to distinguish theonyms – the names of the highest gods associated with the views of Tengrism (Tanre, Zhir-Su, Umay, etc.), which form the content of ‘higher powers’, and demonyms – the names of dark forces, spirits, forming the content of ‘lower powers’, which do not have the status of a god and are closely associated with beliefs in the everyday life of the ethnocultural space of a particular people (Иванова и др./Ivanova et al., 2018, p. 238.⁷).

⁷ For more information on this matter, you can also see the article by M. Akosheva et al. (Акошева и др./ Akosheva et al., 2022).

In the dictionary “Divan Lugat at-Turk,” the theonym (6418)⁸ *Таһрү* [Tengri], the name of the supreme god in the Tengrian pantheon, is translated as “Allah, He is Almighty and Great!” Mahmud al-Kashgari consistently translates the name *Таһрү* into Arabic as *Allah* throughout the text of the dictionary. See: (2371) *ул таһрүкә картиндү* “he believed in **Allah** (and recognized His Apostle)”; (1209) *таһрү ыт ындурдү* “Allah commanded plants (and others) to grow”. V. Mambetova, analyzing the semantics of the word *Tengri* in the Kashgari dictionary, emphasizes its sacredness and fateful significance in the Turkic world order: “According to Kashgari, Tengri acted as the creator of all things and was closely associated with such concepts as masculinity, the fate of the people, and the state. He was perceived by the ancient Turks as a deity of cosmic proportions” (Мамбетова/Mambetova, 2017, p. 160).

Nevertheless, researchers rightly note elements of dual faith in the author's reasoning regarding the semantics of the theonym *Tengri*: “...Mahmud Kashgari, being a true Muslim, warns us against the sin of calling the sky Tengri, whereas the pre-Islamic Turks used the word Tengri to refer to both the sky and God” (Хазиева/Khazieva, 2016, p. 168). R. Gusseyn-Zade also asserts that, despite the Turks adopting Islam in the 10th century, they continued to call the single god *Кан Тангри* (Kan Tangri), i.e., Kok Tengri, until the second half of the 12th century (Гусейн-Заде/Gusseyn-Zade, 2011, p. 104). Tengrism did not disappear completely; it was transformed, and its elements persisted in popular culture, folklore, and traditions even after the spread of Islam. Dual faith was not a single doctrine, but rather a collection of transitional forms of religious consciousness, where old and new ideas were intertwined and coexisted.

In some Turkic dialects, there was a separate name for Allah, see, for example, (5479) *байәм* [prophet] “the name of Allah Almighty, in the Argŷ dialect.” The prophet, who carries the word of Allah is called (6682) *сәвжәй*, a noun derived from *cāw* “to lead, to speak, to exemplify”, “this is what the prophet conveys.”

The dual faith of the Turks was also evident in their veneration of the goddess Umay. In the Tengri pantheon, Umay occupied a place of importance after Tengri. She personified motherhood and fertility, and was the patroness of children and women in childbirth. She protected infants from evil spirits, and birthmarks on a child's body were considered to be her touch. In mythology, the image of *Умәй* (Umay) is associated with caring for the family, the home, and procreation (Потапов/Potapov, 1973). In the dictionary, the theonym *Умәй* is mentioned repeatedly, particularly in the context of motherhood and childbirth. Thus, al-Kashgari cites the Turkic proverb (636) *умәйкә табинсә ыгул булур* “He who reveres her (умәй) will have a child. Women see it as a good omen.”

A notable ethnolinguistic fact is the use of the name of the goddess Umay, patroness of women in labor and infants, to designate such a physiological

⁸ The dictionary entry index is given in parentheses, allowing one to quickly find the word in Mahmud al-Kashgari's dictionary (2005). Word indexes are used throughout the text.

phenomenon as the female placenta: (636) *умай* [placenta] – “something like a sac that emerges from within a woman after childbirth. It is said to be the child’s companion in the womb.” In the “Old Turkic Dictionary” the common noun *умай* and the proper name *Умай* are recorded as homonyms (Древнетюркский словарь/Old Turkic Dictionary, 2016, p. 648).

2. Demonyms in the Dictionary

The dictionary also presents a fairly detailed system of naming evil spirits – demonyms. The devil is called (5424) *йак* [devil]: (4054) *йак каргалдй* “the devil (or other) was cursed”; (4475) *ул йакнй каргаттй* “he forced (someone) to curse the devil (or other)”. This lexeme also has the meaning “demon, shaitan”: (1405) *йак анй аснаттй* “the demon/shaitan sent a yawn upon him.”

The noun (4842) *йилбик* [evil spirit] has the generalized meaning of “evil spirit”: *арка йилбик таздй* “a person was possessed by an evil spirit”. The dictionary also records the collective noun (5335) *йил* with the meaning of “jinn, spirits.” Evil spirits can further be differentiated by various factors – by location of action, by the method of harming a person, etc. Consider the following two examples: (802) *унжйн* – “an evil spirit that attacks a person in the desert” and (3085) *тутулз* – “jinn,” *тутулз ййр* “...a place where jinn lives, harming anyone who passes by.”

Furthermore, the Turks believed that spirits participated in battles and fought on one side or the other: the lexeme (5753) *живй* “designates the side (under the protection) of the spirits. The Turks believe that during battles between two armies, the spirits inhabiting the lands of these armies fight each other, protecting the people ruling in their areas.”

The traditional system of Turkic mythological creatures also includes the spirits of deceased ancestors. The noun (5772) *тикй* [nocturnal noise] denotes the nocturnal noise caused by the spirits of ancestors: “The Turks believe that every year on a certain night, the spirits of the dead gather to visit the places where they lived and their relatives.” Researchers have noted that when describing a mythological creature, the Turks pay more attention to the epiphenomena of its appearance: the noise of trees, the unusual behavior of birds and animals, or, conversely, an alarming silence (see Казахские народные приметы/Kazakh folk omens, 1993, p. 12).

3. Ritual vocabulary related to exorcism and the treatment of possession

An evil spirit or devil could harm people, possess them, and cause them to be possessed: (2006) *тутуз* “devilish possession.” The verb (5117) *йалбин-* means “to be possessed.” The illustrative example speaks of jinn and evil spirits having power over people, subjugating them: (5335) *ар йалбиндй* “the man was under the power of jinn.”

The poetic lines quoted by al-Kashgari in his dictionary entry (5395) figuratively describe the devil’s seduction of a person through worldly pleasures

and expensive clothing. Al-Kashgari reproaches a person for succumbing to the devil's wiles:

- *бардй саўд йӱк ʔутрӱ тутуб бӱл*
- *баржсин казибан талӱ йувгӱ булуб қӱл*

“The devil turned to you and gave you honey (i.e., worldly pleasures), and you dressed yourself in his (select) silks (allowing him to seduce you). Continue (to grovel) in your madness if you have not recognized his cunning.”

According to the pagan beliefs of the ancient Turks, possession was a disease that needed to be treated with various magical rituals and ceremonies. The deep-rootedness of pagan beliefs is evidenced by the fact that modern Turkic peoples “throughout their history considered and treated various diseases through cultural ideas of supernatural forces and demonic possession. These ideas remain despite official medical practices being available and recognized” (Sirazetdinova & Suleimanova, 2025, p. 550). The ritual of exorcising the devil or evil spirit from a possessed person in Turkic practices of both sedentary and nomadic types is described in detail in the work of T. Zarcone (2013). He concludes that “exorcism forms the basis of treatment in all local variants of Islamized shamanism, regardless of whether they belong to the ‘nomadic’ or ‘sedentary’ type” (Zarcone, 2013, p. 29).

Ritual and magical actions were performed by (5402) *қӱм* [priest]: *қӱм ʔарваи ʔарвӱдӱ* “the priest cast a spell”; *қӱмлӱр қамуғ ʔарваиудӱ* “the priests cast spells” or “removed hexes.” Priests were also predictors of the future: (6695) *қӱм ʔирқлӱдӱ* “the priest foretold something.” A separate category consisted of (4769) *йӱлвӱжӱ* [sorcerers]. In the pagan beliefs of the Turks, a spellcaster (6147) *йӱтжӱ* is a powerful figure, capable of controlling the elements of nature. The lexeme *йӱтжӱ* is derived from the word (4590) *йӱт* [witchcraft], which denotes divination using special stones, for example, (6147) *йӱтжӱ йӱтлӱдӱ* “the sorcerer summoned clouds and rain by placing stones”; (4559) *бак йӱтламтӱ* “the ruler ordered the sorcerer to summon strong wind and snow.” Al-Kashgari accompanies this dictionary entry with the following commentary: “Such a thing is known in the Turkic lands: with the permission of Allah Almighty, wind, hail, and rain are summoned using stones.” This is yet another example of the interweaving of Islam and pagan beliefs, rituals, and traditions in the religious consciousness of the Turks.

The ambivalence of the ancient Turkic religious consciousness is evidenced by the fact that the dictionary, in addition to positive or neutral definitions, records a negative attitude toward priests. For example, (5469) *тӱйин* “a priest from among the infidels. He is among them like our *ʔӱлим* [bishop] or mufti. He constantly resides among the idols, reading the books and opinions of the infidels. May Allah Almighty protect us from him!” The dictionary’s author’s commentary emphasizes the unacceptability of priests who worship idols in Islam; their status

among the infidels is equated with that of a mufti – a high position in the Islamic hierarchy.

The dictionary entry for the lexeme (5431) *қувуғж* (“manifestation of possession by an evil spirit”) describes in detail the ritual for curing the possessed: “The possessed person is cured by splashing cold water on his face and saying *қувуғж қувуғж*. Then he is fumigated with rue (*хармал*) and aloe (*зўд*). I believe that this is derived from the expression *қаж қаж* ‘run, go away, evil spirit!’” Furthermore, al-Kashgari describes the origin of the word and cites its phonetic variant in the Oghuz dialect: (5433) *қувуз* – “a variant of the word *қувуғж*. *йил қувуз битикӣ* a spell against an evil spirit.” The ritual of exorcism of an evil spirit includes a whole series of specific magical actions: sprinkling with cold water, fumigation with rue, anointing with a potion, etc.

Shamans are believed to be able to exorcise evil beings because they know how to get the evil spirit’s name, which strongly correlates with the nature of illness... and the way of returning demonic beings to where they come from (Sirazetdinova & Suleimanova, 2025, p. 551).

An important part of the ritual are the verbal means accompanying the actions. These are magic words, incantations, and spells. Their use is indicated in the dictionary by special verbs: (1256) *арваи*~ – “to cast spells,” “to remove a curse”; (6040) *суви*~ – “to whisper, to cast spells. There is a variant of the word with *с* (*сув*әди).” To enhance the effect of a spell, it is repeated several times, for example, *қувуғж қувуғж*. The ritual for removing a curse from a child, described in the dictionary, also uses a spell formula with the repetitions *исрик исрик*: (464) *исрик* – “a word that is pronounced when removing a curse or the evil eye from a child; they fumigate him and say *исрик исрик*. This means: Be bitten (by an evil spirit!).”

The ritual of exorcism involves various magical remedies. These include potions and stones that cure possession, hexes, and the evil eye:

- (131) *акит* – “a potion applied to a baby’s face to remove scabs and hexes. It contains a mixture of saffron and other substances”;
- (919) *урумдәй* – “a stone that serves as an antidote”;
- (4269) *какук* – “a hazel grouse, a bird whose bones are used in witchcraft, making love potions, and love spells.”

To exorcise evil spirits and protect against their negative influences, the Turks use various protective artifacts:

- (2110) *битик* – “amulet” in Oghuz;
- (2825) *мунжук* – “ornaments, lion claws, and amulets that are hung on a horse’s neck”;

- (5372) *қайи* – “a transparent stone of white and black color. The white one is set in a ring to protect against thunder, thirst, and lightning”;
- (744) *абѣқѣ* – “a scarecrow placed in a vegetable garden to protect against the evil eye”;
- (4286) *қусқуқ* – “a scarecrow placed in a vegetable garden or vineyard to protect against the evil eye”;
- (4633) *йағиуи* – “the designation of an animal that people in pagan times slaughtered for their idols, fulfilling a vow or making a sacrifice.”

Conclusion

An analysis of ancient Turkic vocabulary related to the names of gods, spirits, and the ritual of exorcising demons and devils from a possessed person has revealed that in the 11th century, despite their adoption of Islam, Turkic tribes continued to practice pagan shamanic rituals and traditions in their daily lives. This transitional period from paganism to Islamization was characterized by dual faith, which is undoubtedly reflected in the religious and pagan vocabulary of al-Kashgari's dictionary. The semantic analysis of this vocabulary has shown that in their everyday practices the ancient Turks predominantly adhered to pagan beliefs, preserving shamanic traditions and rituals. The conceptual sphere of the sacred in it appears as a result of the interplay of ethnocultural traditions and the religious and pagan worldview of the native speakers.

The present study is limited to the problem of the interaction between religious and pagan consciousness. This opens prospects for their further distributive study in al-Kashgari's dictionary, particularly with regard to the pagan lexicon.

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