

KING SOLOMON'S MYTHIC DUALITY: PATRIARCHAL AND MATRIARCHAL ROLES

Kral Süleyman'ın Mitsel İkiliği: Ataerkil ve Anaerkil Roller

Ünsal ÇİMEN*

ABSTRACT

King Solomon stands out as a figure of enduring significance across a wide range of religious, literary, and folkloric traditions. In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, he is depicted as a wise and divinely guided ruler endowed with extraordinary wisdom and understanding, as well as the ability to communicate with animals, spirits, and other supernatural beings. Beyond his historical and religious significance, Solomon also appears in many folk tales, such as the tale of Shahmaran (or Yamlika). In this tale, Solomon is portrayed as a king sleeping in a cave on an island beyond the seven seas. Similar figures appear in King Arthur of English legends and Frederick Barbarossa of German folklore. However, in both the Shahmaran story and other narratives, Solomon is also depicted as the ruler of all birds. In this article, I argue that the first role mentioned –that of the king sleeping in the cave– represents a woman-centered culture, while the second –that of the ruler of birds– represents Solomon's patriarchal dominion over the goddess.

Keywords: King Solomon, Shahmaran, Zümrüt Anka, sacred marriage, king of the birds.

ÖZ

Kral Süleyman, dinî, edebî ve folklorik geleneklerin geniş bir yelpazesinde kalıcı öneme sahip bir figür olarak öne çıkar. Yahudilik, Hristiyanlık ve İslam'da olağanüstü bilgelik ve anlayışla donatılmış, ilahi rehberlikle yönetilen bilge bir hükümdar olarak tasvir edilir. Ayrıca hayvanlar, ruhlar ve diğer doğaüstü varlıklarla iletişim kurma yeteneğine sahip olduğu da anlatılır. Süleyman, tarihsel ve dinî öneminin ötesinde, Şahmaran (veya Yamlika) hikâyesi gibi birçok halk masalında da yer almaktadır. Bu hikâyede Süleyman, yedi denizin ötesindeki bir adada, bir mağarada uyuyan bir kral olarak betimlenir. Benzer figürler, İngiliz efsanelerindeki Kral Arthur'da ve Alman folklorundaki Frederick Barbarossa'da da görülür. Bununla birlikte, hem Şahmaran masalında hem de diğer anlatılarda Süleyman, tüm kuşların hükümdarı olarak da tasvir edilir. Bu makalede, sözünü ettiğim ilk rolün –mağarada uyuyan kral rolü–

* Assoc. Prof. Dr., Muş Alparslan University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Philosophy, Muş/Türkiye. Email: u.cimen@alparslan.edu.tr. ORCID: 0000-0003-0575-6053.

kadın merkezli bir kültürü temsil ettiğini, ikinci rolün –kuşların hükümdarı rolünün– ise Süleyman'ın tanrıça üzerindeki ataerkil hâkimiyetini temsil ettiğini ileri sürüyorum.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kral Süleyman, Şahmaran, Zümrüd-ü Anka, kutsal evlilik, kuşların kralı.

Introduction

In the *Torah*, Solomon is presented as the king of Israel and, like his father David, as a ruler chosen by God. He is known for his justice, intelligence, and wise decisions. In Islamic belief, Solomon is regarded as a prophet to whom God granted extraordinary abilities, including understanding the language of animals, controlling the wind, and commanding jinn. According to Jewish tradition, Solomon's Temple (the First Temple) in Jerusalem was built during his reign. In Islam, greater emphasis is placed on King Solomon's prophetic identity. However, in folk narratives and oral traditions, King Solomon is portrayed more as a legendary and symbolic figure that goes beyond his historical and religious identity. These narratives emphasize his wisdom, justice, and supernatural power.

Shahmaran is a wise, half-human, half-snake being believed to live underground and is regarded as the queen of snakes. Although she keeps her distance from humans, she is not evil; rather, she is wise, merciful, and a teacher.¹ According to legend, a young man named Hasib accidentally enters this hidden underground world and encounters Shahmaran. She does not harm him; on the contrary, she trusts him and forms a strong bond of friendship. Hasib eventually returns to his home, vowing not to reveal Shahmaran's location to anyone. However, after some time, the ruler of the country falls seriously ill, and it is said that the only cure lies in Shahmaran's knowledge. The ruler's men then begin searching for someone who knows Shahmaran's whereabouts and eventually find Hasib. In this difficult situa-

¹ In the version of the tale found in *One Thousand and One Nights*, Şahmaran is depicted as a female creature; however, there are also versions that portray Şahmaran as a male serpent (see Gedik, 2021: 306–315; Şimşek, 2019: 29). Neşe Yıldırım argues that Şahmaran is mostly depicted as a male being in stories told outside Anatolia, whereas in Anatolia Şahmaran is predominantly depicted as female due to the dominance of goddess cults in the region (see Yıldırım, 2001: 10–11). Nevertheless, Şahmaran –a half-serpent female being living in the underworld– should be considered a goddess. All symbols mentioned below, such as the well, the mountain and island with jewels on them, the apple, the dragon, and the fountain of life, demonstrate that Şahmaran is a female serpent. Narrative versions that depict Şahmaran as male should therefore be regarded as a result of patriarchy.

tion, Hasib breaks his promise and is forced to reveal Shahmaran's location. Once captured, Shahmaran heals the ruler and transforms Hasib into a great physician.

The story of Shahmaran is composed of interwoven narratives. When Hasib encounters Shahmaran in the underworld, Shahmaran tells him the story of Bulukiya and Affan. This article focuses on this particular story. Bulukiya and Affan wish to go to the cave where Solomon is sleeping to take the ring that is still on his finger. This ring will grant them the power to become the lord and ruler of humans, animals, and even jinn. In the narrative, Affan and Bulukiya travel together to the island where the cave in which Solomon slept is located. It can be argued that this cave, where Solomon slept, symbolizes the goddess's womb.² Therefore, King Solomon, who slept in this womb-symbolizing cave, can be examined within a woman-centered cultural framework.

However, he is also associated with a characteristic that aligns him with a patriarchal order: as is widely attested in various legends, Solomon is frequently depicted as the ruler of birds. But the Zumrud Anka (Zümrüd-ü Anka), which symbolizes the goddess and also appears in the Shahmaran story, is in fact the true ruler of the birds. Indeed, this study includes a narrative in which Solomon gains the title 'king of birds' by establishing dominion over a bird that can be interpreted as the Anka. Therefore, in this essay, I portray Solomon, in his role as the ruler of the birds, as a figure who embodies patriarchal authority.

Folkloric narratives are constantly evolving, living, and contextually sensitive. Their vitality stems from their transmission through oral tradition from generation to generation and from their continual reshaping in each retelling. The diversity of folkloric narratives arises from both geographical and cultural contexts; the same fairy tale or myth can be told with different

² Regarding caves as a symbol, Freud, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, argues that hollow objects such as boxes, chests, and ovens symbolize the womb (Freud, 1958: 354); that narrow passages symbolize the vagina; and that being in water is related to fantasies of intrauterine life (Freud, 1958: 397, 399). Similarly, Carl Jung suggests that caves may symbolize the womb of Mother Earth (Jung, 1964: 285). Mircea Eliade also expresses the following on this subject: "It is worth remembering, too, that the caves and caverns were compared to the matrix of the Earth-Mother. The ritualistic role played by 'caves', attested in prehistoric times, could likewise be interpreted as a mystic return to the mother, which would also help to explain the sepulchres in the caves as well as the initiation rites practised in these same places" (Eliade, 1978: 41). For more information on the ritualistic role of the cave symbolizing the womb, see also (Moyes, 2012).

patterns, characters, and endings in different regions. Taking into account these characteristics of folkloric narratives, this study aims to examine King Solomon as depicted in the Shahmaran story and in the Jewish tale *The Gift of Wisdom*. Although the study primarily uses the version of the Shahmaran story found in *One Thousand and One Nights*, other versions have also been consulted. For example, Abdî Mûsâ's version of *Câmasb-nâme*³ was used because, in this version, Affan is killed by a dragon, which serves as an important symbol from the perspective of the woman-centered culture. The Cemiyet Kütüphanesi version of the Shahmaran story⁴ was also used, as it specifies the bird –an eagle– that carries Janshah to the top of the mountain, which serves as another symbol for interpretation. The Jewish tale, *Solomon's Gift of Wisdom*, is included in this study, as it explains how Solomon became the ruler of the birds.

This study adopts an interpretive (hermeneutical) approach within the framework of qualitative text analysis, taking into account the diversity of folkloric narratives. The examined fairy tales are analyzed using symbolic and archetypal text analysis methods to reveal the multi-layered structure of meaning in the texts. The analysis is further supported by a feminist critical reading of these symbols and archetypes.

Adopting a holistic perspective grounded in the shared symbolic language of narratives from different cultures, this study brings together symbols such as Shahmaran, the Anka, the cave, the ring, the dragon, the eagle, the fountain of life, and the apple tree to demonstrate the transition from a woman-centered culture to a patriarchal one through the portrayal of King Solomon in these folk tales.

1. Solomon: A King initiated into the Mysteries of the Goddess

When we consider Joseph Campbell's monomyth theory,⁵ it becomes clear that both Bulukiya and Affan are archetypal heroes who must fulfill certain duties to be initiated into the mysteries of the goddess. Archetypal heroes are helped by the goddess (or queens, beautiful girls) to overcome

³ *Câmasb-nâme* is the name of a work translated from Persian into Turkish that tells the story of Shahmaran and was presented to the Ottoman Sultan Murad II by Abdî Mûsâ in the fifteenth century, see (2023). For other Shahmaran stories found in folklore, see (Sökmen and Balkanal, 2018).

⁴ This anonymous Shahmaran story was printed by the Cemiyet Kütüphanesi in 1928 at the Orhaniye Matbaası (see Şâhmerân Hikâyesi, 2017). Hereafter, I will refer to it as the Cemiyet Kütüphanesi version.

⁵ For detailed information regarding the archetypal heroes, see (Campbell, 2004).

challenges during their journey to complete their missions. These queens or beautiful girls become the lovers of the heroes, and the heroes marry them and become the new kings after the old kings are sacrificed/killed. We can mention world-famous heroes: Jason, who traveled with the Argonauts and became Princess Medea's lover; Oedipus, who married Queen Jocasta and became king; and Theseus, who traveled to kill the Minotaur and received help from Princess Ariadne. In the story of Shahmaran, the heroes Bulukiya and Affan embody the future king, while Solomon embodies the former king who must give way to the new one. Both Bulukiya and Affan travel by sea and are helped by the goddess, that is, Shahmaran, to overcome challenges; in this story, Shahmaran helps them find the plant that makes it possible to walk on the sea.

Bulukiya and Affan search for the cave on the island beyond the seven seas in order to find King Solomon. Their motivation is to possess Solomon's ring, as it would make them lords over humankind, beasts and jinn. After overcoming the challenges, we know that archetypal heroes often marry queens and become kings. In this story, I would argue that the ring sought by Bulukiya and Affan symbolizes marriage to the goddess and initiation into her mysteries.

It is also no coincidence that the king in the cave on the island was Solomon, since King Solomon was a believer in the ancient goddess religion and incurred the wrath of Yahweh for his services to the goddess. In the Old Testament, we read the following about how Solomon followed the goddess religion:

As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek, the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.⁶

We know that when the Hebrew people came to Canaan, they were influenced by the culture of the Palestinian people. The God El of the Canaanite and Ugaritic cultures and El's wife, the Goddess Asherah, were the main characters who influenced the Hebrews. However, the Hebrews later took a stance against the old matriarchal Canaanite religion. This negative attitude can be seen very clearly in the Torah.

⁶ The Holy Bible, New International Version, 1 Kings 11: 4-6.

As mentioned, archetypal heroes marry queens, representing goddesses, and then become kings. This marriage is also known as sacred marriage, and repeats between the king and the queen periodically as a fertility ritual. The sacred marriage ritual is expressed in a text from Sumerian tablets as follows:

The people of Sumer assemble in the palace,
The house which guides the land.
The king builds a throne for the queen of the palace.
He sits beside her on the throne.

....

The queen bathes her holy loins,
Inanna bathes for the holy loins of Dumuzi,
She washes herself with soap.
She sprinkles sweet-smelling cedar oil on the ground.
The king goes with lifted head to the holy loins,
Dumuzi goes with lifted head to the holy loins of Inanna.
He lies down beside her on the bed.
Tenderly caresses her, murmuring words of love:
“O my holy jewel! O my wondrous Inanna!”
After he enters her holy vulva, causing the queen to rejoice,
After he enters her holy vulva, causing Inanna to rejoice,
Inanna holds him to her and murmurs:
“O Dumuzi, you are truly my love.” ... (Wolkstein and Kramer, 1983: 107–108).

We can see a similar poem in the Old Testament, titled *Song of Solomon*, regarding King Solomon and his lover. Sumerologist Samuel N. Kramer says the following about the similarity of the *Song of Solomon* with the Sumerian sacred marriage hymns:

In both the Song of Songs and the Sumerian Sacred Marriage Songs, for example, the lover is designated as both king and shepherd, and the beloved is not only his “bride,” but also his “sister.” Both the Biblical and Sumerian songs consist largely of monologues and dialogues spoken by the lovers, interspersed here and there with chorus-like refrains. Both make use of polished, ornate, rhetorical figures of speech that bespeak the well-stocked repertoire of the professional court poet. And both dwell on such themes as the reveling of the lovers in garden, orchard, or field; or the maid bringing the lover to her mother’s house - no doubt numerous others will be identified in the course of time. It, therefore, seems not unreasonable to surmise that the Song of Songs, or at least a good part of it, is a modified form of an ancient Hebrew liturgy celebrating the marriage of a Hebrew king - Solomon for example - with a goddess of fertility, a Sa-

cred Marriage rite that had been part of a fertility cult that the early nomadic Hebrews took over from their urbanized Canaanite neighbors, who in turn had borrowed from the Tammuz-Ishtar cult of the Semitic Akkadians, and which was itself but a modified version of the Dumuzi-Inanna cult of the Sumerians (Kramer, 1981: 315–316).⁷

The Ring of Solomon, also known as the Seal of Solomon, consists of a six-pointed star representing his sacred marriage to the goddess, as is seen in the Song of Solomon. The downward-pointing triangle in the shape of the six-pointed star is the symbol of female genitalia (yoni), and the upward-pointing triangle is the symbol of male genitalia (lingam), so the Seal or Ring of Solomon (the six-pointed star) represents the union, the sacred marriage, between the female (goddess, queen) and the male (god, king) (Zimmer, 1972: 147). The wisdom of Solomon was actually the wisdom of the goddess.

Solomon, in the story of Shahmaran, is on the island beyond the seven seas, in a cave that represents the womb of the goddess. When Bulukiya and Affan arrived at the island where Solomon's cave was located, they were very hungry and came across an apple tree. When they attempted to eat the apples, the giant who guarded the tree warned them not to do so, explaining that this apple tree was the very one forbidden to Adam and Eve. In fact, this island symbolizes the womb of the goddess; the apple is known to symbolize both death and rebirth, and eating an apple from this tree signifies entry into the mysteries of the goddess. Also in Greek mythology, there is the Garden of the Hesperides, where an apple tree is guarded by a dragon called Ladon; this garden is located at the western edge of the world, at the boundary of Oceanus (Hard, 2004: 28–29). The Garden of the Hesperides is also a symbol of the womb, and the apples are the fruits of initiation into the goddess's mysteries – namely death and rebirth. Therefore, the apple refers to sexuality, since entering and being reborn from the womb is associated with sexuality. This is why Paris gave the golden apple to Aphrodite in exchange for Helen's love. Apples also refer to death: when King Arthur was fatally injured, he was taken to the island called Avalon, which literally means 'the Isle of Apples' (Monaghan, 2004: 28–29). It is

⁷ Another example of sacred marriage is seen between the God Attis and the Goddess Cybele. Attis is sacrificed periodically and then reborn from the womb of Cybele. The worshippers of Attis and Cybele call the day of Attis' rebirth *Hilaria* and spend that day having fun with dancing and sexual excesses, in other words, sacred marriage ceremonies (Redmond, 1997: 136). For sacred marriage, also see (Eisler, 1996).

believed that he will one day return from there to restore order. Avalon is the place where King Arthur, like King Solomon, entered a period of sleep, a symbolic state representing death and resurrection. We can see in many myths around the world that the hero often sleeps in caves or subterranean places. In our example, Solomon sleeps in a cave on an island. In the Hindu religion, the God Shiva sleeps in the lotus flower, which represents the womb of the Goddess Kali, between his reincarnations (Rawson, 1978: 151).⁸ Initiation into the mysteries of the goddess takes place in her womb, which is represented by a cave, a subterranean space, or a temple; each initiate who undergoes these mysteries experiences death and rebirth within the goddess's womb. Another example is King Frederick, who was believed to sleep in his underground shelter called the *Rock of the Raven* until his return (Borchardt, 1971: 152). And we also know that the raven is the bird of death, which carries mystics beyond the Moon to the sphere of wisdom of rebirth.⁹ Therefore, Solomon's sleep is another fact in this story that proves that he is the king (hero) who is initiated into the mysteries of the goddess. We can conclude that Solomon is the hero who, overcoming various challenges, reaches the island where the queen, representing the goddess, awaits him. The ring symbolizes his sacred marriage to the goddess. This marriage, meaning his initiation into the goddess's mysteries, is the source of his wisdom, and thus he became king. Bulukiya and Affan also represent archetypal heroes: new candidates who kill the old sacrificial king and marry the queen in order to become the new king.¹⁰

⁸ Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz say the following about the sleeping hero: "Together with that of the king of fairies and of fairy-tales, another complex of ideas has attached itself to the figure of the Grail King: the motif of the sleeping old man who will awaken one day and bring back a new and happy age, a paradisaical kingdom. This complex of ideas is imbued with the old conceptions of the sleeping Kronos-Saturn, the motif, already quoted, of the sleeping old man in the legend of Alexander and its variants, and the theme of the Apostle Thomas resting uncorrupted in his place of burial in India, as well as other parallels. These ideas are connected, moreover, with that of an anticipated earthly golden age or kingdom" (1998: 196).

⁹ Campbell says the following about the relationship between the initiate and the raven: "The Raven, the black bird of death with whom the mystic was identified in the first initiation, carried him symbolically beyond the lunar sphere, which was the sign -here as everywhere- of the waxing and waning of the life-round of birth and death: the nutritive, vital energies of the vegetal aspect of existence. Identified with the Raven, the mystic imagination left the physical body to the work of change and dissolution, flying, as it were, through the lunar gate, to the second sphere: that of Mercury (Greek Hermes; Egyptian Thot; Germanic Woden, Othin), the sphere of occult powers and of magic, and of the wisdom of rebirth" (Campbell, 1991: 255).

¹⁰ For sacrificial kings, see (Frazer, 1911).

When they find King Solomon, Affan attempts to take the ring from Solomon's finger but is killed when a drop of liquid diamond falls from the ceiling and engulfs him in flames. However, in the *Câmasb-nâme* version, Affan dies as a result of the fire spewed by the dragon guarding Solomon. We know that dragons generally represent the goddess in many myths around the world. One of the most important dragon goddesses was Tiamat, who was killed by her son, Marduk. In Greek myths, Python was a serpent/dragon who represented the Goddess Gaia in her temple at Delphi. And we know that Delphi means womb (delphys) (Beekes, 2010: 314). Again, the Gorgons were snake women, and Medusa –the most famous Gorgon– had hair made of snakes. Queen Medea had a chariot driven by two dragons. Examples can be multiplied. In our story, Shahmaran is also a dragon goddess because she is a half-woman, half-snake creature. Therefore, we can say that, besides his ring, the dragon that guards King Solomon reveals Solomon's relationship with the goddess; that is, Solomon is a king initiated into the mysteries of the goddess. Goddesses (queens) not only help heroes overcome the challenges they face during initiation, but also protect them.

Lastly, we can mention the fountain of life, which gives wisdom, youth, and immortality to those who drink from it. Similar to the cave which represents the womb, this fountain of life also represents the womb, and those who drink from it, drink the menstrual blood of the goddess. The water which comes from the fountain of life is the symbol of menstrual blood. We can observe this both in mythologies and in the origins of certain words; for example, the word *pû* means "river source" and "vagina" in Babylonian, while the word *buru* means "vagina" and "river" in Sumerian (Eliade, 1978: 41). Judy Grahn says that many of the wells and springs in England today still bear pagan female names (1993: 25). In Norse mythology God Odin gets his wisdom by drinking from Mimir's well. In Indian mythology, there is a wellspring in paradise that is the source of *soma* (Jamison and Brereton, 2020: 100), which, also known as *amrita*, is the elixir of immortality consumed by the gods (Goblet d'Alviella, 2000: 170) and is semantically related to *ambrosia*, the drink of immortality of the gods in Greek mythology (Mallory and Adams, 1997: 494–495). Therefore, we can say that the fountain of life, which grants wisdom and immortality to those who drink from its waters, represents the womb of the goddess, and it should be regarded as further evidence of King Solomon's connection to the goddess religion.

2. The Ruler of the Birds: King Solomon and His Patriarchal Dominion over the Goddess

On his journey, Bulukiya came across a young man. He asked the young man who he was and why he was there. The young man told Bulukiya that he was Janshah (Cihan Shah), and then recounted his story. During his voyage, Janshah eventually arrived at a city. There, he encountered a female slave for sale in the city market, but no one was willing to buy her. A man took Janshah to the merchant who owned the slave. The merchant told Janshah that if he agreed to do what the merchant wanted, he would give him a thousand gold coins and the slave woman. Janshah accepted the offer without hesitation. The next day, the merchant took Janshah to the foot of a mountain. He first killed a mule and took its skin, then said to Janshah, "Cover yourself with this skin, and a great bird will come and carry you to its nest on this inaccessible mountain. Then, show yourself to the bird, and it will flee from you. There are many precious stones on the top of the mountain. You should throw some of these stones to me. Then you may descend." Here, we see a mountain full of precious stones, and therefore, we can say that this mountain is the place of the goddess. In the myths, we see a strong relationship between mountains and goddesses. Campbell puts it beautifully:

Images of the goddess frequently show her atop a mountain. The whole mountain is the goddess. This goes back to the old Sumerian times, when the cosmic mountain is represented in the ziggurats. In India, Parvatī is the goddess of the mountain, even as she is the mountain – that's what her name means: "mountain" (Campbell, 2013: 52).

Moreover, we find the expression *Mani-dvipa*, or "The Island of Jewels," used in the Tantric texts of India to refer to the abode of the goddess (Campbell, 2004: 104). Similarly, in the version of the Shahmaran story found in *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night*, we read the following regarding the cave on the island where Solomon sleeps: "After wandering for a day and a night about the island, they came to a hill whose rocks were of musk and yellow amber and in whose sides opened a magnificent cave with roof and walls of solid diamond" (Mardrus and Mathers, 2005: 340). When we consider these points, two things become clear: that the great bird carrying our hero up the jewel-filled mountain is the Zümrüd Anka, since *zümrüd* (emerald) is a precious stone, and that the island where Solomon sleeps in a cave with a roof and walls of solid diamond is the abode of the goddess.

In the *Câmasb-nâme* version of the story, after the tale of Janshah concludes, Bulukiya returns home, and a few people claim that the bird of paradise brought him back (2023: 406). Then Bulukiya asks his mother who actually brought him home, and she replies, “I saw an eagle in the sky, and it brought you back” (2023: 407). This eagle that brought Bulukiya home must be the Zumurud Anka.¹¹ In the Cemiyet Kütüphanesi version of the Shahmaran story, the great bird that carries the hero to the top of the mountain is described as an eagle (*Şâhmerân Hikâyesi*, 2017: 72). One of the characteristics of the Anka is that, in fairy tales, it carries the hero to Mount Qaf or another realm, guiding them along the way. In the Anka fairy tale, which I will describe below, we see the Anka carrying the hero from the underworld to the earth. This role of her –similar to the examples of Princess Medea and Ariadne, who guide Jason and Theseus– shows that the bird symbolizes the goddess. As you may recall, Shahmaran, who also symbolizes the goddess, guides heroes such as Affan, Bulukiya, and Hasib.

The Anka is a bird that is born from its own ashes, a characteristic it likely inherits from the Phoenix. I interpret this trait as a representation of the goddess, who gives birth to everything and then takes these things back into herself –into her womb– in order to give birth to them again. Dying and being reborn from its own ashes symbolizes this regenerative capacity of the goddess. This capacity is also reflected in the Ouroboros, a serpent depicted in a circular position, eating its own tail. While it consumes itself, it is not exhausted, because it simultaneously reproduces itself. Therefore, this circularity can never be exhausted: things are born, live, die, and are reborn; the womb is both the beginning and the end – the same point on the circle. That the Anka dies and is reborn from her own ashes refers to this circle, that is, the characteristic of the womb as a place of both death and rebirth.

¹¹ Phoenix was also depicted as an eagle in many historical records, such as Herodotus and Ezekiel the Dramatist, who made the oldest depiction of the Phoenix that has survived to the present day. R. van den Broek gives the following examples from the Alexandrian Jew Ezekiel the Dramatist, and Herodotus: “The Alexandrian Jew Ezekiel the Dramatist, who gives the oldest surviving detailed description of the phoenix, says that it is almost twice as large as the eagle. It is not hard to understand why comparison with the eagle was made in describing the phoenix: both were sun birds, both were seen as king of the birds, and the traditions of both tended to cross and recross” (Broek, 1972: 252); “Herodotus says that he has seen only a picture of this bird. If this representation was correct –a condition he specifies explicitly– the phoenix has gold and red feathers and resembles the eagle most closely in appearance and size” (Broek, 1972: 402). For Broek’s other explanations of the Phoenix’s resemblance to the eagle (Broek, 1972: 457).

The sacrificial king is sacrificed as a ritual to provide the continuity of death and rebirth in nature. After the king is sacrificed as a fertility rite, the dead king enters the goddess's womb, is reborn, and this ritual must be performed periodically to maintain the circularity of nature.

Now, I will recount the story of Zumrud Anka and interpret it as an initiation narrative within the framework of Campbell's monomyth theory. There was once a king who had three sons and an apple tree that bore three apples every year. When the apples ripened, a seven-headed giant would come and take them, so the king never had a chance to harvest them. One day, the eldest son told the king that the next time the giant came, he would try to kill it; however, when the time came, the prince was frightened and ran away. The following year, the middle son tried to kill the giant, but he too became afraid and ran away. The next year, the youngest son attempted to kill the giant and succeeded. This time, it was the giant who fled. The three brothers followed the giant and saw that it went down into the underworld through a well. The two older brothers tried to enter the well but failed, whereas the youngest brother succeeded. Here, the well should be interpreted as a representation of the vagina of the goddess, and by entering the underworld through the well, the youngest son enters the womb of the goddess, that is, he dies. Entering the womb also signifies sexual union with the goddess. Because the womb is associated with both death and rebirth, sexuality has likewise been associated with these concepts. This can be perfectly seen in the relation between the words tomb and womb in English. The word tomb is derived from *wamba*, meaning cave, and *wamba* is derived from *wambe*, meaning womb (Sjöö, 1987: 131). Therefore, when the prince enters the underworld through the well, he enters the womb, which also means his death and signifies sexual intercourse with the goddess. He also meets a beautiful girl in the underworld and later marries her, which further suggests that entering the underworld –that is, the womb–symbolizes sexuality.

The beautiful girl helped the prince kill the giant. Then the prince helped her to ascend to the earth through the well. But the older brothers took the girl, leaving the youngest brother in the well and telling their father that he had died. My argument is that the lie the youngest prince's brothers told the king –that is, their claim that the youngest brother was dead–symbolizes the ritual death of the prince, because the underworld represents the womb, and entering it and then emerging from it symbolizes the ritual death and resurrection of the prince. Therefore, in this story, we can

see the relationship between death, sexual intercourse and entering the underworld. At the end of the story, the prince comes out of the underworld, that is, from the womb, and this symbolizes his rebirth.

Returning to the tale of the Anka, the youngest prince encountered the Zumrud Anka in the underworld and asked her to bring him back home. The Anka told the prince that she needed forty sheep and forty barrels of wine to do this, and asked him to give her a sheep whenever she said “gak” and a barrel of wine whenever she said “guk” during their flight to Earth. After the prince had gathered the forty sheep and barrels of wine, he placed them on her back and climbed onto her. During the flight, he ran out of sheep to feed the Anka, so he cut the calf of his leg and offered it to her. The Anka realized that it was human flesh and refused to swallow it. When they reached Earth, she gave the flesh back to the prince, who placed it on his calf so he could walk home.

Here, in addition to the beautiful girl, the Anka, who helps the prince return home, also symbolizes the goddess. The prince giving his flesh to the bird, and the bird attaching its flesh to the prince’s calf when he returns to the earth, symbolize the prince’s experience of death and rebirth; in other words, his participation in the mysteries of the goddess. The Anka does not eat his flesh; rather, eating the hero’s flesh symbolizes taking him into her womb to give birth to him again. The cutting of his flesh represents his death, and placing it on his calf represents his rebirth. In many myths around the world, birds that eat the flesh of the dead – such as vultures and eagles – represent the goddess who takes the deceased into her womb to give birth to them again. On this subject, Marija Gimbutas states the following regarding the Neolithic vulture goddess:

The death goddess, the Neolithic vulture goddess and tomb goddess, became known in Old Irish tradition as Ana (or Anna, Anu, or Danu). She gave her name to the legendary Tuatha De Danann (or Anann) tribe, the “People of the goddess Danu (or Anu)” (genitive case: Anann). As Anu, she was “mother of gods.” This ancient name for the goddess is well attested in the Mediterranean and Near Eastern world as meaning “mother” or “foster mother.” Ana and Annia appear as names for caves and tombs. She was the mother of the dead and the regenerator of nature as well. Her life-giving, nourishing breasts are identified with a pair of hills in County Kerry, “Da Chich Anann,” the Paps of Ana. This appellation recalls the megalithic tomb era five thousand or more years earlier, when people sculptured breasts on tomb walls and menhirs (Gimbutas, 2001: 185).

The Neolithic people placed their dead on the surface of the earth to be eaten by the birds of prey, and when these birds left, only the bones remained. They then buried the bones, so the dead people would be reborn (Gimbutas, 2001: 21). This shows us that the Anka, who represents the goddess, is represented by a bird of prey that eats dead bodies, which is a symbol of taking dead bodies into the womb, so she can give birth to them. Since the initiation ceremony into the mysteries of the goddess refers to the experience death and rebirth, we can interpret that the youngest prince experiences death and rebirth by entering through the well and exiting from there to the earth; and also, giving his flesh to the Anka and getting it back from her should also be seen as a proof of his experiencing death and rebirth, and of the Anka's representation of the goddess.

Returning to Janshah's story, after he had thrown the precious stones from the top of the mountain to the merchant, he descended the mountain and walked for a day and a night. Eventually, he saw a magnificent palace rising towards the sky and approached it. When he reached the gate, he noticed an old man sitting on a bench at the entrance, his face glowing with light. The man held a ruby scepter and wore a crown of diamonds. They greeted each other, and Janshah told the old man everything about his journey and asked him who he was. The old man said, "Solomon settled me here and named me lieutenant of the birds." Here, we see once again that Solomon is presented as the ruler of the birds, for it is stated that he is the one who bestowed the title of lieutenant of the birds upon the old man. However, the true ruler of the birds is the Anka; therefore, I argue that Solomon's role as ruler of the birds constitutes a patriarchal intervention.

To clarify my argument, let us consider a Jewish folk tale titled *Solomon's Gift of Wisdom*.¹² It is known that God had given Solomon the ability to understand the language of the birds. One day, however, a little bird asked how a man –Solomon, who was confined to the earth– could rule over the birds when an eagle living on a high mountain could be their king. Solomon then asked the little bird to call the White Eagle to Jerusalem so that he could determine who was truly king over the birds, the eagle or himself. The little bird did as Solomon requested. The White Eagle came, and sparks of fire flew from its wings like sharp swords. Solomon then instructed his guards to blow the shofar (ram's horn). At that moment, the throne room was filled with all kinds of birds. In this way, Solomon proved that he

¹² For this fairy tale, see (Frankel, 1993: 214–216).

was the king of the birds and gave an order to the White Eagle to visit him every month, saying, “Upon your wings, I will keep watch over my kingdom.” When we consider this, it can be said that the White Eagle was the ruler of the birds before Solomon. In fact, Solomon calls the White Eagle “the King of the Birds” in the folk tale mentioned above. Therefore, the eagle in this folk tale should be considered the Anka. The sparks coming from its wings provide another reason for this identification, as the Anka is a bird that is reborn by burning in its own fire.

In the story of the Anka, as previously recounted, the youngest prince is carried from the underworld to the earth on the back of the Anka. In the Jewish tale mentioned, Solomon watches over his kingdom while riding the White Eagle. This similarity again shows that the White Eagle is the Anka, and that Solomon is the hero carried on the back of the Anka –that is, the goddess– since the ruler, or queen, of the birds must be the goddess represented by the Anka. However, this story shows that Solomon obtains the title of King of the Birds by overcoming the White Eagle, which implies that the White Eagle was the king (or ruler) of the birds before Solomon.

Conclusion

As previously mentioned, this study adopts an interpretive (hermeneutical) approach within the framework of qualitative text analysis, taking into account the diversity of folkloric narratives. Accordingly, using symbolic and archetypal text analysis methods to reveal the texts’ multifaceted structures of meaning, King Solomon’s matriarchal and patriarchal roles are analyzed through the Shahmaran narratives and a Jewish tale, and this analysis is further supported by a feminist critical reading of symbols and archetypes.

I have argued that King Solomon, who sleeps in a cave on an island beyond the seven seas, should be regarded as an archetypal hero, like Jason, Oedipus, and Theseus. King Solomon sleeps in a cave, which should be seen as a representation of the womb of the goddess who guards him as a dragon, and his magic ring is a symbol of his sacred marriage to the goddess. Bulukiya and Affan also represent the archetypal hero. They should be seen as exemplary sacrificial kings who kill the old king and attempt to take his place. Shahmaran, in turn, represents the goddess who aids these heroes in their journey –that is, in their initiation– by providing the plant that allows them to walk on the sea and reach the island beyond the seven seas where King Solomon sleeps. Here, Shahmaran plays a role similar to that of Prin-

cess Medea and Princess Ariadne, helping the heroes, who are the new candidates for kingship.

As for King Solomon's patriarchal role, this emerges as his new role as the ruler of all birds. We can see how he acquires this role in the tale *Solomon's Gift of Wisdom*. However, this role can also be observed in the story of Shahmaran. In fact, the Anka (The White Eagle) is the ruler of all birds because this bird symbolizes the goddess; yet Solomon takes this role from it. As mentioned earlier, King Solomon –wearing the magic ring symbolizing his sacred marriage to the goddess and sleeping in the cave representing the goddess's womb– represents a Solomon devoted to the goddess's religion. However, in the Shahmaran story, Solomon, who bestows the title of lieutenant of the birds upon the wise old man, represents a patriarchal hero in this role.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests: The author has no potential conflict of interest regarding research, authorship or publication of this article.