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# CHARACTER OF AZERBAIJANI MYTHOLOGICAL TEXTS OF NAKHCHIVAN

Mythology is said to be a specific self-history since the humans began to consume the social life wholly. Each single myth is formed as a character system of Space, Ethos and Time elements. The mythological systems ground on trust, worthiness, real history of all its order within its elements majority structure.

All mythological systems, including Turkic, consist of material, visual and taction in its structure. Accordingly, the Turkic mythology is the mythological reality, mythological history reflecting the world of the Turks-inhabited areas, the woods they walked through, the rivers they crossed, the seas they strove to find. Being the mythology of the world model, Turkic mythology could wholly establish the model of the land where Turkic tribes lived, could transfer into the sign system, and was able to register all objects existing on the earth as the homeland of these tribes. So, Turkic mythology contains history of peoples' life and creative activity.

There are lots of texts linked with mythological character, episodes and motives among folklore texts of Nakhchivan. All together, these elements are closely linked with the geo-landscape of Nakhchivan. From this viewpoint to overview those texts may enable searching the history of Azerbaijan Turkish history connected with Nakhchivan. Let's overview all mentioned ideas.

One of the collected mythological texts says:

"In the beginning, there was nobody except God. And everything was under water. God creates land among water and makes it dry and fertile. Then, various plants grew on it. And then God created a man from soil and breathed live into him".

This given mythological text describes the cosmogonic process in succession. Process of chaos passing into order is described here. Namely, the character of God in the text is the typological adequate of the Almighty in the mind of ancient Turkis that has spread into each other typologically.

The general-typological model of chaos passing into order informs the ancient Turkis of Nakhchivan their mythological farther. In the texts related to the myths of Nakhchivan, Nakhchivan has become mythical for its onomastic units having global peculiarities. For instance, the mountains being popular in Nakhchivan and being roomed in the minds of the local people are remembered in the mythic texts for cosmogonic processes. In one of such texts is said:

"The top of the Alayazin is four-forked. World-spread the Agrhidag and Alayaz have fought. Agrhidag was stronger and destroyed the head of Alayaz".

The onomastic units Alayaz and this mythical text draw attention. Agrhidag mountain is called Ararat by Armenians. The name Agrhidag is remembered in the

mythical texts of Nakhchivan connected with the famous arc of Prophet Noah. Thus, it witnesses that the Agrhidag Mountain has been derived from the remembrance of the Nakhchivan Turks. Rather more clear facts related to Agrhidag Mountain prove the reality that, it is not only connected with Prophet Noah, but also is seen in other mythical sources as well. Therefore, this evidence proves that the mentioned mountain is the structural element of own mythical history. And the land is the homeland for Turkic tribes. One of the written says:

"Once upon a time a shepherd was herding on the slope of the Agrhidag Mountain. In the afternoon he felt tired and his flock too thirsty, and there is no water anywhere. Then he begins to beg his God to create a spring there and he to sacrifice seven sheep instead. In a second, he sees a spring spurring ahead and both he and his sheep drink from the water. But after a while he thinks to himself and says: "Why to cut seven sheep for a little water? I am not foolish". This moment he finds seven lice from beneath under his armpit, kills them and says: "Let it be the seven sacrifices for God: Right that moment, the shepherd and his sheep were turned into stones. Ever since, the stones around Agrhidag Mountain are still since that time".

This mythical text is significant for its come specifies. Firstly, as a mythic text it is included to the etiologic-mythical succession for its subject matter. Because the mythic called etiology occupy the very strict position within description and texts. From this point of view, all lands, including mountains, rocks and so on occupy honorable place in the folklore of Nakhchivan. The text connected with Galin-Gayasi rock says:

"A girl was washing her hair. This time a young man saw her. Being ashamed, she started begging God to turn her into a stone. God turned her into a stone. Today the stone is still there on the bank of the Kardani river rocks".

It should be stressed that the process of the girl's turning into a stone covers the large mythical texts being common typological motive. It means anyone may be turned into a stone; two features are said to be vital. One of them is the stone of the river Kardani that witnesses the mythical ethnos living here. On the other hand, each stone, each rock has its own history and this history takes its source from the myth, initial, from the memory beginning.

Ancient Nakhchivan land has been preserving the ancient names of Turkic-Islamic world in its folklore and mythical memory. From this point of view the events (mythical stories) connected with Noah and Khidir, two prophets, are characteristic. One of those texts says:

Art by Bahruz Kangarli.  
Noah's grave, 1920



"There is a black stone on the surface a horse-shoe trace in Yayji village of Julfa. They say while passing by on the horse prophet Khidir has stepped on it".

This interesting mythic text is peculiar for the motive that the horse-steps of people considered saint were left on the stone surfaces. This motive has spread to all Turkic-Islamic world. But the present characteristic feature of the problem is that the ethos living on the land of Nakhchivan is linked with its sacral world. Nakhchivan Turks consider the land where they live to be sacred. It is because of that, this land is also a place through where prophet Khidir has passed by. So that, the ethos regards the land on which they live sacred, they trust in different parts of it and the sacredness of the land comes from out of the ethnos's conscious, ethnic memory and ethnic-moral self. The stated features are seen in the other texts related to prophet Khidir as well. In one of those texts is said:

"Once upon a time there were seven brothers and one sister. The brothers used to go to work, but their sister stayed home cooking and in the evening, they all gathered to have their supper. One day the girl couldn't find anything for cooking. She goes out to gather vegetables. In the evening brothers returned home and hardly had they tasted the vegetables they all turned into sheep. The girl began screaming. Next day she takes the sheep to herding. Suddenly she found a horseman in grey clothes. The man asked the girl why she was crying. The girl told him what happened. That man was prophet Khidir. He said, 'Do not speak; God will turn your brothers into people. But in case you cry, there will be no chance to do that. Prophet Khidir started touching his stick on the sheep. Six of the seven were turned into people. But while touching on the last sheep the girl couldn't bear this and cried. It was her youngest brother. He was turned into a man partially and died six months later".

This very interesting legend resembles a story. To say more exactly, the brothers turning into animals and later on by the help of mysterious man being turned into people are the motive widely specific to stories.

This kind of penetration or assimilation of saint people might only be the result of long century process.

Otherwise, assimilation of real toponym into folklore toponym at once is impossible. The influence of land names, on folklore, mythical texts demonstrates its century long interrelation.

Gami-Gaya in the territory of Ordubad is linked with the legends and versions having archaic images from the point of mythic ideas semantically. Gami-Gaya is related to the arc of Prophet Noah directly due to some texts.

One of the mythical texts related to Noah says, that relying on the inspiration by God Prophet Noah forecasts the strong storm and flood. Therefore, Prophet Noah builds an arc and places a pair of animals from each kind on it. After a while the earth was covered with water. All people on drowned in the water and died. Then the storm stops. Turk, one of the legendary sons of Prophet Noah basing on his father's advice takes a sheep and a ram and goes to an island. But, everywhere being surrounded by water he couldn't leave the island. One day Turk found an animal killed and eaten. And then he thinks to himself whether there are other animals besides the sheep. Whom was it eaten by? Turk was surprised greatly; he didn't sleep whole night watching. Suddenly he discovers something approaching towards them in the water. Approaching closer, Turk saw a grey wolf. The wolf rushed to the animal. This moment Turk stood on wolf's way. Having seen him the grey wolf stepped backward and Turk started following it. They ran far away. Turk found the way of the wolf in the water was very shallow hardly reaching ankles. After a while, they come to the dry land. This way Turk saved his life.

Turk thought that grey wolf rescued him. So he drew wolf on his flag. Thereafter, when his kin increased, he reminded his sons the grey wolf as their rescuer. If not for the wolf, the Turkic kin would not have survived. In case of any disaster Turks must address to him.

This mythical text discovered in Nakhchivan gives us very interesting materials. Note: though having the whole plots-texts differences, the different mythical texts are concentrated around the same succession. Namely, these images are the myths included to the Turkish mythic system and concentrated around the only Turkic myths. So, the relation of Prophet Noah with Turkic kin must not be understood as different events.

The myths connected with the storm of Noah have widely been spread in the world folklore. The main problem is that the Turkic mythology has developed and as an idea has possessed the image of Noah himself. On the other hand, the image of Turk is included to the context connected with the grey wolf.

Thus, in the images of Noah, Turk and Grey Wolf follow one another. The relation of Noah with Gami-Gaya enables us to think this order as a sacral toponymic location. Thus, the ancient Gami-Gaya rock of Nakhchivan, its relation with Turkic and Islamic mythology justifies the chronotypic parameters of antiquity in the memory of the ethos living in this land. ❁