

**AKDENİZ UNIVERSITY**

**FACULTY OF LITERATURE**



**Furkan Cem TOSUN**

**TENGRISM, THE RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE OF THE ASIA  
STEPPES**

**History Department**

**Graduation Study**

**Antalya - 2019**

**AKDENİZ UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF LITERATURE**

**Furkan Cem Tosun**

**TENGRISM, THE RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE OF THE ASIA  
STEPPES**

**Counsellor**

**Prof. Dr Ekrem Kalan**

**History Department**

**Graduation Study**

**Antalya, 2019**

## CONTENTS

CONTENTS .....	I
SUMMARY .....	III
PREFACE .....	IV
INTRODUCTION .....	1

### PART ONE

#### PRINCIPLES OF TENGRISM

1.1. Cosmology of Ancient Turks .....	6
1.2. Elements Related to the Sun, Moon and Other Celestial Bodies .....	10
1.2.1. Sun .....	10
1.2.2. Moon .....	11
1.2.3. Other Celestial Bodies .....	12
1.3. Is There One God in the Tengri Religion? Or Are There Many Gods? .....	14
1.4. Comparison with other religions .....	15
1.5. First Kams and Kamlik .....	18

### PART TWO

#### Cults, sacrifice and apocalypse in TENGRIANISM

2.1. Cults in Turkish Mythology .....	22
2.1.1. Water Cult .....	22
2.1.2. Mountain Cult .....	24
2.1.3. Tree Cult .....	25
2.1.4. Cult of Birds .....	28
2.1.5. Yada Move .....	30
2.2. Sacrifice Ceremonies .....	31
2.3. Turkish Cosmonology .....	33

<b>2.4. About the Cult of Ancestors .....</b>	<b>38</b>
2.4.1. Wolf Belief in Ancient Turks.....	38
2.4.2. Wei-Su Grey Wolf Legend.....	38
2.4.3. Ancestor of the Gokturks Bozkurt.....	39
2.4.4. Derivation Epic of the Töles.....	40
2.4.5. A Few Words on Oghuz Khan.....	41
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>SOURCE .....</b>	<b>44</b>

## SUMMARY

**Furkan Cem Tosun**

Researches on cults, sacred images and epics that have a place in the minds of people about pre-Islamic Turkish beliefs are analysed. Because the analysis of epics and epics helps to see the point they can reach in the development of social norms. Because every society bears traces of its past. In our research, with the aim of going down to the origins of the beliefs of the Turkish society, the process until today has been studied. The impact of the epics of that period or the narratives that changed by mixing with different religions and societies in different geographies on the Turks was emphasised. In addition, by comparing with different mythologies, the connection between people living in different geographies has been mentioned. An attempt has been made to trace the past and present of a religious life extending from the oldest to Hacı bektas.

**Keywords:** Tengrism, Turkish Mythology, Cults

### **Abstract**

The cults in the minds of people about pre-Islamic Turkish beliefs, researches and epics on sacred images are examined. Because the analysis of epics and epics is helpful in seeing the point they can reach in the development of social and religious norms. Because every society has traces of its past. The epics of that period, or the impacts of the narratives on the Turks in different geographies and mixed with different religions and societies, were emphasized. In addition, the connection between people living in different geographies was compared with different mythologies. From the oldest to the past and the present of a religious life extending to the Haji Bektash has been tried to be traced.

**Key Words:** Tengrism, Turkic Mythologies, Cults

## PREFACE

Within the scope of our text, in ancient times, the Turks, other steppe tribes and Asian communities from unknown times, which can be considered as a system of religions that have arisen, in today's history and history of religion, "Shamanism" or Ziya Gökalp's name "Tsin Religion" will be mentioned in the writing of history and history of religion, and a number of examinations and analyses will be tried to be reached.

The text basically consists of three main parts. In the first part, through our sources, information is presented on the basic building blocks of the ancient Turkish belief system, its constituent elements and some cults and traditions brought to the Turks. In the second part, the cult, which is one of the building blocks of the belief in Sky God, and its effects until today, water, mountain, tree, etc. It is presented as the section where we share what we will tell under the headings.

In addition, while explaining the subject, there is a bet on the remnants of past narratives and practices that are still effective today. Then, by mentioning some elements that are similar in Shamanism and many other religions, the connection between other religions and Shamanism or the connection of many religions and people in the world through similar narratives are also included.

In terms of sources, Ziya Gökalp's *Türk Töresi*, Abdülkadir İnan, Fuzuli Bayat, Yaşar Çoruhlu, Bahaeddin Ögel, the author of the Turkish Mythology series, Hilmi Ziya Ülken, Şerafettin Turan, as well as the pioneer of psychiatry Sigmund Freud's "Totem and Taboo" for psychological approaches on religion and totemism, as well as many works of Mircea Eliade on the history of religion have been used extensively.

I would like to thank my esteemed teacher Prof. Dr. Ekrem Kalan and my dear friend Ufuk Ali Kaftanlı, who has contributed to our work, which investigates the religious beliefs of Turks and Mongols from ancient communities and aims to reveal new perspectives, for their contributions and I hope that our work will add value to the world of science and that you will come to further points in the context of the subject of our work by putting forward new different thoughts in your mind and opinions above our thoughts. Have a good reading.



## INTRODUCTION

Religious Beliefs Since the time when people have spread and settled in Africa, they have deified a number of natural elements that they have encountered and cannot explain both in their geographical environment and in their geographical environment. In Freud's book Totem and Taboo, Totemism is shown as the first religious elements of humans and the fusion of societies. He stated that primitive people in Australia, America and Africa have religion.<sup>1</sup>According to him, "Totem" is effective in the formation of the Clan and he says that it is a guide that is deified as an element that saves the communities from trouble.<sup>2</sup>As a matter of fact, Mircae Eliade opposes these views in Frued's "Totem and Taboo" and presents some of Schmidt's findings. Accordingly, the element of Religion is not preceded by Totem. He says that totemism is not seen in all past societies, but only in four cultures.<sup>3</sup>

So what is Totemism? Totemism, according to Ziya Gökalp's mention in Turkish Tör, is explained as the fact that in primitive times, people, plants or animals were considered sacred and connected to them by blood ties and created a set of rules related to them and said that those totems were their ancestors.<sup>(4)</sup>According to Şerafettin Turan's Totemism, there are three different ideas in Totemism. These are Totem, Taboo, Mana

**Totem:** 1-) A sacred being on which the origins of the clan are based. These beings are often one or they are also considered the ancestors of several people.

2-) The name adopted by the clan.

3-) Symbols or signs that the clan has adopted or left its trace in certain places.

**Mana:** In all living or non-living elements, which are seen as material, spiritual and which take place within the clan.

is the power to be found.

**Taboo:** A set of prohibitions in line with the clan's own beliefs and untouchable elements that emerge over time.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, it is often observed that a deep understanding of "exogomie" has been established among totemic societies. That is to say, according to Freud's account, the persons in the community are not only

---

<sup>1</sup>Sigmund Frued, *Totem and Taboo*, Translation: Ahmet Çalışkanlar, Olympia Publications, Istanbul 2016 p.25

<sup>2</sup>Frued, *Totem and Taboo*, p.138

<sup>3</sup>Mircae Eliade, *Arayış*, Translation: Cem Soydemir, Doğu Batı Yayınları, Ankara 2017 p.38-39

<sup>4</sup>Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Töresi*, Ötüken Neşriyat, Istanbul 2014 p.168

<sup>5</sup>Şerafettin Turan, *Turkish Cultural History*, Bilgi Publishing House, 7th Edition, Ankara 2014 p.111



They do not recognise their siblings from their own parents as siblings, but consider everyone in the clan or community they are in as "siblings". Marriages are made from outside, that is, from other tribes. As a matter of fact, in Freud's work, exogamy is analysed independently of Totemism.<sup>6</sup>

As a matter of fact, according to Abdülkadir Inan, an important person who was captured from the Huns in 121 B.C. was said to have captured a small gold idol (Tös), which is said to have belonged to the Huns and is mentioned in Chinese sources. It is also written that this person offered sacrifices to Gök God in front of this idol.<sup>7</sup> Although elements such as trees etc. are not accepted as Totem in Turks, it is quite clear that there is a remnant of Totemism in the divine memory of the Turks. Moreover, Ibn Fadlan's statement that the reason for the Bashkir chieftain's wearing a necklace in the shape of "male genitalia" around his neck was "derived from the symbol that his ancestors and himself hung around his neck",<sup>(8)</sup> constitutes a different example of "Totemism" that manifests itself among the Turkic tribes.

Tengrism as a belief system, which occupied a very large place in the cultural life of the Turks. It has been a widely spread belief system among Turkic and Mongolian communities. It has always continued its life by being influenced by different belief systems from time to time. Tengrism is also known as the religion of Gök God or "Shamanism" as expressed by Russian historiography. In addition, the Tengric belief system, like the Greek and Scandinavian beliefs, contains many divine elements.

Apart from this, Turks have developed rituals suitable for their way of life in their ancient beliefs. It seems quite natural that a religious element that can be lived without built and planted land should be revealed by a community trying to live their lives in a nomadic state. As a matter of fact, this nomadic situation is very suitable for the Turks to be influenced by different religions and cultures as a result of their travelling to regions inhabited by foreign elements.

Ziya Gökalp points to a tribe that had completely dominated China in 222 BC, which he primitively calls the Tsin Religion, and which Chavannes writes was Turkic, and he knows that these beliefs spread in China through the Tsin.<sup>9</sup> Abdülkadir Inan, on the other hand, is a follower of Ziya Gökalp.

---

<sup>6</sup>Früed, *Totem and taboo*, p.145-146 Şerafettin Turan, *History of Turkish Culture*, p.112

<sup>7</sup>Abdülkadir Inan, *Tarihte ve bugün Shamanizm*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 8th edition, Ankara 2015, p. 2

<sup>8</sup>Ramazan Şeşen, *Ibni Fadlan Seyahatnamesi ve Ekleri*, Yeditepe Publishing House, 6th Edition, Istanbul 2016 p.19

<sup>9</sup>Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Töresi*, p. 35

It is obvious that Greek authors in the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. started to go back much further and that the customs connected with the Scythian practices are one with the Scythian practices. In addition, the ancient Chinese historians have also noted that the beliefs in Sky God, the cult of the dead, and the beliefs in earth-water, which were widespread among the Huns in the II centuries BC, were features that were seen even in the Turkic communities that could not get rid of the influence of foreign cultures in the last period. The Turkic societies, which established states and ruled in their time, lived a more developed divine life compared to other Altai and Yakut communities.<sup>10</sup>Gökalp analyses the limited religious sources of the Yakuts and Altais and calls the divine imagination they lived "Toyunism". However, the word "Toyun" is used in the sense of clergyman in the Buddhist religious concept. It is found in Divani Lügat-it Türk in the meaning of "Toyunun prostrated to burhana- i.e. Buddha."<sup>11</sup>In addition, in the Orkhun Inscriptions, the worship of Sky and Earth is described and there are expressions such as "Turkish sky, Turkish earth". According to Barthold, Tengri was used in the meaning of "Sema". Apart from Tengri, only Umay (Ayızıt), the symbol of beauty and the protector of pregnant women and babies, was mentioned in the monuments.

In addition, the influence of other religions in the early belief system of the Turks will gradually begin to enter. For example, the "Flood Legend", which is one of the basics of Semitic beliefs, is one of the most obvious examples of this. In addition, the "Creation Myth", which developed among the Altai Turks, also contains some Hami-Sami features. To say a few words about the introduction of these influences for the first time, it must be the influence of Nestorianism, a Christian sect born in Eastern Rome in 428. "Nestorianism" or "Nestorius" appeared in Mongolia and West Turkistan before Genghis Khan. The adoption of Nestorianism by the Naymans and Kerites who ruled in Mongolia before Genghis Khan<sup>12</sup>or the influence of "Syriacism", one of the different sects of Christianity that managed to penetrate into Central Asia, as mentioned by Barthold, may also have taken place. It is also possible that it emerged during the Gokturk-Byzantine relations. The elements we have just mentioned are a situation that explains the Semitic influence to some extent.

Although Tengrism, which Ziya Gökalp also referred to as the "Ilkhanate Religion" <sup>(13)</sup> <sup>(14)</sup>in his work, appears to be an ancient religion, it is still practised in Asia, Siberia and Yakut today.

---

<sup>10</sup>Abdülkadir İNAN, *Shamanism in History and Today*, p.1

<sup>11</sup>Hikmet TANYU, *One God Belief in Turks Before Islam*, Ankara University Press, Ankara 1980 p.

III

<sup>12</sup>Sadri Maksudi Arsal, *Türk Tarihi ve Hukuk*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2014 p.56

<sup>13</sup>Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Töresi*, p.93

<sup>14</sup>Ilkhanate and Ilkhanate Religion: Ilkhanate is the dominance of a province over other provinces, Ziya Gökalp divided it into two as Il Religion and Ilkhanate Religion. Provincial Religion refers to the political dimension, while Ilkhanate Religion refers to the moral dimension.(Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Töresi*, p.148-149)

It continues as a belief system that continues its life. One of the most obvious examples of this is the Tuva Turks described by Janyl Myrza Bapaeva.<sup>15</sup> Later, the Yakuts are also one of the rare examples that preserve their traditions from the past and still maintain their religious beliefs today. In addition, the Duha Turks living in Mongolia are one of the communities that still maintain the old Sky God belief system like the Tuvas<sup>16</sup>.

There is also a point that we would like to draw attention to. Because during our research and examination, it is obvious that Tengrism and Turkish Mythology are almost intertwined. Although Shamanism, Tengrism, Totemism or other concepts seem to be different, it is seen that the same religious practices are named differently or some practices in the belief system are named by fragmentation. As a matter of fact, beliefs in Sky God differ from geography to geography or from tribe to tribe, each of which we will also mention in our text.

### **Turks' Perception of God**

It can be said that the Turks had a perception of God according to the development of their own cultural environment within the religions they lived in. As a matter of fact, this understanding has lasted for centuries and its influence can be seen even today. When we look deeper into this cultural environment, we can see that the Turks have created a belief system suitable for their nomadic life. In this regard, Deer's beliefs were also influenced by this element of the Turks living in a nomadic and free way in very large lands. In addition, in the steppe masses, where domesticated animals have a large place in their culture, birds of prey and animals that threaten elements such as domesticated horses and sheep and destroy animal herds have become sacred elements disguised as a messenger or human<sup>17</sup>.

It is also possible to draw some analyses from the narratives Fadlan narrated in Turkestan. According to the narrative mentioned by Fadlan, one of the Oghuzes asks whether the creator has a wife<sup>18</sup>. It is clear from this that the Turks saw God in a human figure even after their conversion to Islam. Moreover, Syriac Mihail (1126-1199), a priest who lived during the Seljuk period, states that the Turks recognised the sky as God.

---

<sup>15</sup>For the religious beliefs of the Tuvas, see. Janyl Myrza Bapaeva, *Tuva Shamanism*, Kömen Publications, Konya 2013

<sup>16</sup>For the religious beliefs of the Duha, see. Tsevelin Chardarsürüng, Translated by Sibel Bozbeyoğlu, *Duha Turks*,

<sup>17</sup>Jozsef Deer, Translation: Şerif Bastav, *Istep Culture*, *Ankara University DTCF Journal*, Vol. 12 S. 1-2 1954 p.160, 161

<sup>18</sup>Ramazan Şeşen, *Ibn Fadlan Seyahetnamesi ve Ekleri*, p. 11

He also wrote that when one of the Turks was asked the question "Who is your God?", they answered "Sky God"<sup>19</sup>.

Another point to be mentioned is the idea that the religion of the state-organised Turkic power and the people is different. It is mentioned that while Shamanistic elements are more common among the people, a divine understanding is dominant among the state officials<sup>20</sup>. As a matter of fact, it is inevitable that the old-time Turkic communities deified the elements that they could not explain in the sky and in their lives together with the elements brought by nature and living conditions, and since they saw the sky above all, they formed the understanding of the Great Tengri, and it can be said that one of the biggest reasons for this sanctity of the sky is due to the sanctity of the sun, the most obvious example of this is that the Gok-Turks greet the rising sun nine times by turning to the east. Genghis Khan also performed the same rituals<sup>21</sup>.

There is one more point we would like to mention, and that is this. All nomadic tribes living on the steppe, Ugors, Samoyeds, Tuvas, Khakas, etc. No matter how many people think that they have a religious belief with similar elements, when examined more deeply, there are some differences in the practices of each of them. As a matter of fact, there are three elements that are similar in all of them. These are Sky-God, great spirits and shaman spirits. For example, while Chukchi Shamans used a mushroom drink to ascend to the sky, the Shamans of other Siberian regions (Yakut Shamans, etc.) did so only with rhythmic and dance figures<sup>22</sup>. As a matter of fact, although they are considered to be separate, in our opinion, the distinction here does not go beyond the similarities of sects or theological differences in the same three-book religion.

---

<sup>19</sup>Hayrettin İhsan Erkoç, Tenri and Allah Perceptions in the Transition Process of Turks to Islam, *Ankara University DTCEF Journal*, 58.1 2018 p.302-303

<sup>20</sup>Yaşar Çohruhlu, *Türk Mitolojisinin Ana Hatları*, Kabalcı Publishing, 4th Edition, Istanbul 2018 p.19;

<sup>21</sup>Ibrahim Onay, The Impact and Contribution of Turkish Culture in the Genghis Khan Period, *Turkish Studies*, Volume 7/4, Fall 2012, p.2449

<sup>(22)</sup>M. Ja. Zonnickaja, Dances of Yakut Shamans, Translation: Metin Özarslan, *Türkbilig*, 2002/3 p.188, 191

## PART ONE

### PRINCIPLES THAT CONSTITUTE TENGRISM

As in every belief system there is a procedure, a rule, there are a number of principles in the Old Turkic belief system. With a different approach, we will focus on the elements that make Tengrism a religion, some sanctified elements, natural element cults and the similarities with different religions that we see similar features of the ancient Turkish religion. Myth/saga narration is included in the section.

#### 1.1. Ancient Turkish Cosmology

There are many myths, gods or spirits in the ancient Turkish religion, among which celestial bodies are frequently mentioned. Since the belief in Tengri was based on the Sky, it provided a very comprehensive astrological observation. Jozsef Deer says that this is due to the fact that the communities living on the vast steppe, despite the geographical features they live in, reveal a very wide perception of the universe<sup>23</sup>.

As for the Old Turkish Cosmology, we will first talk about the designs of the universe in the Turkish belief system, and then we will deal with the subject mythically.

In the ancient beliefs of the Turks, the concept of Sky has a very large place. The main reason for this is that the concept of God is associated with the sky. Celestial belief elements are reflected in the sources since the proto-Turkic periods. Turko-Mongolian influence<sup>24</sup> within the territory of China is observed from the Chou, the pre-millennium state. As a matter of fact, after the death of their kings, whom the Chou called "Tien", the place where their souls migrated, that is, the Sky, began to be called Tien. Tien was also used as the name of God<sup>25</sup>. The conception of Sky and Earth-water and the conception of the universe existing in the Turkish belief system is observed in a Buddhist text from the IXth century. The Turkish-Chinese mixed conception of the universe is as follows.

*"In this universe, the upper sky is bright, the lower darkness is dark. The sun god is bright, the moon god is dark. Fire is bright, water is dark. The male is bright, the female is dark. If these native-sky, feminine-male (principles) meet, all living and non-living, two kinds of beings are born and appear.... The sun and the moon are travelling by mixing and meeting. Therefore, there are four seasons, summer and winter. In four seasons (all seasons)*

---

<sup>23</sup>Deer, *Istep Culture*, p.161

(<sup>24</sup>) W. Eberhard, *Ancient Chinese Culture and Turks*, Translation: İlker Berk, *Ankara University DTCF Journal*, 1943 Volume 1, S.4 p.26

<sup>25</sup>Muhaddere N. Özerdim, *Chou'lar ve Bu Devirde Türklerin Gelen "Gök Religion"*, *BELLETEREN*, Vol. XXVII, S. 105, p.12

*again divided into two periods and eight 'new days' are born ('new days' are the Chinese chieh, the first days of the four seasons, the spring and autumn equinoxes [two periods when days and nights are of the same length], and the summer and winter solstices (the longest day and the longest night))"*<sup>26</sup>

In addition, through the text we quoted above, it is understood how important elements such as the sun and the moon are for the Turks, which we will talk about in the following topics. Again, the influence of Buddhism in this text is an important issue that should not be ignored.

Turks have made a world depiction of their own. As a result of the conclusions reached by some researchers, there is a quadrilateral world design within the ancient Turkish belief. The main reason for this is mentioned to come from the established Turkish states. Since the Central Asian states were established on lands that exceeded the huge horizon extending from east to west due to geographical reasons, they resembled the shape of a quadrilateral <sup>27</sup>. In addition, according to the belief of Tengrism, there are narratives that the Earth stands on some living creatures.

Namely;

*"...God Ulgen did not stop, he also gave advice, next to this world, a fish was created.*

*The world was placed on these big fish, the fish were very big, they supported the world*<sup>(28)</sup>."

According to Çeyeni, one of the Indian creation epics, the world is on the back of a turtle. A part of the epic told in Indian beliefs is as follows.

*"...Grandma Turtle" asked Maheo. "Do you think you can help me?" "I am very old and can move very slowly, but I will try," replied the turtle and swam towards Maheo. Maheo began to pile the mud on his back until it formed a hill. The mud hill grew, spread and flattened by Maheo's hands until Grandma Turtle was invisible. "So be it," Maheo said once more. "Let the earth be known as our Grandmother, and let the Grandmother who carries the earth on her back be the only creature who is not a stranger under water, above or below the ground, the only creature who can walk or swim to any place as she wishes." And so it has been and so it goes on. Grandma Turtle and all of her descendants have to walk very slowly because they carry the weight of the whole world and all people on their backs..."*<sup>(29)</sup>."

---

<sup>26</sup>Emel Esin, *Introduction to Turkish Cosmology*, Kabalıcı Publishing House, Istanbul 2001 p.23

<sup>27</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume I, Turkish Historical Society, 5th Edition, Ankara 2014 p.315

<sup>28</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume II, Turkish Historical Society, 6th Edition, Ankara 2014 p.466

<sup>29</sup>Alice Marriot, Carol K. Rachlin, *Kızilderili Mitoloji*, İmge Kitapevi, Translation: Ünsal Özünlü, Ankara 1994 p.40

In addition, in Maaday Kara, an Altai Epic with the same characteristics, there are places that show similar characteristics to the example we shared above. However, differently, it is observed here that it is not fish that carry the world on their backs, but whales. The examples we have given here can be multiplied, as well as in some Indian and a few other ancient religions, it is thought that the world is stationary on some creatures and that disasters occur in the world due to the movements of those animals<sup>30</sup>.

In the Indian creation narratives, the world was built on an old sea turtle, which is also a sea creature.

According to the past beliefs of the Turks, every being has a soul and an owner to whom it is connected. To be more precise, a tree has a soul on its own. But this tree can be divided into smaller spirits and souls, or it can merge with other trees to form a larger community, that is, it contains both unity and multiplicity. The tree is an individual, but it is itself part of a forest mass connected to a land, a region or the whole world. Or a Bear, who is the master of that forest, is only one of the Bear lineage in the world. It can be explained as such<sup>31</sup>.

Another important issue is the depiction of the universe that emerges in the beliefs of the Turks. As in every religious belief, there are some stories or beliefs to explain the enormous order of the universe. There are examples of this issue found in the Turks. As seen in ancient Turkish beliefs, Turks depict the universe in three dimensions. Upper World, Lower World and Middle World, all these levels have a function. In the Turkish cosmology, each level has a separate conception.

The Upper World can also be referred to as the realm of light, the place of God and his servants, other spirits. It is believed that it consists of seventeen levels (sixteen levels in Teleuts, seven levels in Yakuts, nine levels in Tuvas)<sup>(32)</sup> Below, there are seven or nine levels of the dark realm, and in the space between the two is the earth, that is, the Middle World. On the seventeenth floor of the heavenly realm is Kayra Khan. Kayra Khan draws the destiny of the universe. Ulgen on the golden mountain and golden throne on the sixteenth floor, the mighty Kizagan Tengere on the ninth floor, the mighty Mergen Tengere on the seventh floor and Mother Day who illuminates people and the earth, Moon Ata on the sixth floor, Kuday Yayuci on the fifth floor, Yayık, one of the sons of Ulgen, and people on the third floor.

---

<sup>30</sup>Yaşar Çoruhlu, *Türk Mitolojisinin Ana Hatları*, p.153, 154

<sup>31</sup>Jean Paul Roux, *The Ancient Religion of Turks and Mongols*, Translation: Aykut Kazancıgil, Kabalcı Publishing House, Second Edition, İstanbul 2011 p.105

<sup>32</sup>Fuzuli Bayat, *Mythological Stories of Ancient Turks*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 2nd Edition, İstanbul 2017 p.15-16

May-Tere, known as the patron saint. The source of life is located in Milk Ak Köl and Süro Mountain, together with the Seven Gods and their own servants, benign angels and humans<sup>33</sup>.

Apart from these, the Middle World, where people live, is blessed with the name Yer-su. The Middle World is known as the place where people live, but there are seventeen spirits here. These are also known as Yer-su spirits. The most important of the Yer-su Deities are the following. Yo Kan and his son Temir Kan, the most powerful and sitting on the top of the world tree, Talay Kan, the ruler of all waters, Umay, the patron of pregnant women and children, two female spirits Mother Maygıl and Ak-Ene, and other mythological elements related to the Earth-water such as rain, snow-making Yada stone<sup>34</sup>. The information about the spirits in the Middle World is quite shallow (except for Mother Umay).

The underworld, on the other hand, is believed to consist of seven or nine floors where there is a continuous darkness, and it is believed that evil spirits reside on all floors and that the plants and herbs in it consist of shapeless arrangements such as iron and steel <sup>35</sup>. The general names of the evil spirits here are Ayna, Körmös and Etkers and the terrible Erlik Khan is the ruler of them all. According to some myths, Erlik sits on a black throne on the fifth floor, according to others on the ninth floor. Beneath the throne of Erlik is the place of banished souls, i.e. hell<sup>36</sup>.

After finishing this section, we can move on to the section examining the place of elements such as the Sun and the Moon in the Turkish belief system.

---

(33) W. Radloff, *Türklük ve Shamanlık*, Örgün Publishing House, Haz: Nurer Uğurlu, İstanbul 2008 p.21-22

<sup>34</sup>Yaşar Çoruhlu, *Türk Mitolojisinin Ana Hatları*, pp.37-51

<sup>35</sup>Fuzuli Bayat, *Mythological Stories of Ancient Turks*, p.18

(36) W. Radloff, *Turkism and Shamanism* p.26



## 1.2. Elements Related to the Sun, Moon and Other Celestial Bodies

### 1.2.1. Sun

In this regard, if we first talk about the customs of Tuva Turks. Although it is known that Tuvans have had customs with the sun since ancient times, it is also known that there is an expression among the Tuvans that "Without the sun, there is no life". In addition, the Tuvans believe that at the time of the eclipse of the sun, "time worsens". The reason is that the weather is similar to the sun<sup>37</sup>.

In another context, according to information from Chinese sources, it is reported that the Hun kings came out of their tents in the morning and blessed the sun. In addition, according to Azerbaijani researcher Seyidov, the root of the Turkish word "Tengri" is Tan(g) and in more than one Turkic dialect "Tan" means the place where the sun rises. In other words, the word God is related to the sun.<sup>38</sup>As a matter of fact, according to Bayat, even though the sun is important, it is seen that the sun is not a "God" but represents the unity and unity of God. Especially in the belief system of the Turks, it is not possible to perceive it as God. In addition, the fact that the Hun ruler greeted the sun shows that the Moon had lost its influence in the belief system at that time<sup>39</sup>. Roux also mentions that the sun is universally referred to as the day in Turkish and that the cult of the sky, sun and stars was very developed among the nomadic masses of Asia. In addition, even if the sun and the moon are both important, the moon alone does not contain a cult element, while the sun is a cult with its own existence.<sup>40</sup>Another information belonging to the Huns period is that the sun symbolised the east, the sun was worshipped, and due to this sacredness, the doors of the Turkish otags were facing the direction in which the sun was rising.<sup>41</sup>.

The reason why the sun occupies such a big place may be the following. Since the nomadic Turkish masses living in the vast steppe land saw the darkness as an evil, it is seen that they thought of the sun as a saviour, that is, as a light rising over the darkness.

As a matter of fact, beliefs about the sun have survived to the present day and even in Anatolian literature, "the sun is feminine and the moon is masculine". According to some narratives

---

<sup>37</sup>Janyl Myrza Bapaeva, *Tuva Shamanism*, Kömen Publications, Konya 2013 p.49

<sup>38</sup>Yaşar Çoruhlu, *Türk Mitolojisinin Ana Hatları*, p.27

<sup>39</sup>Füzuli Bayat *Turkish Mythological System I*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 4th Edition, İstanbul 2017 p. 298-299

<sup>40</sup>Jean-Paul Roux, *The Ancient Religion of the Turks and Mongols*, p.132

<sup>41</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume II, p.237

While the place of the sun was located on the 8th floor, one floor below the floor of God, according to the Altai narrative, there was a spirit that existed from the crumbs of the sun, called "Suyla". His duty was to look after people<sup>42</sup>.

### 1.2.2. Moon

The moon, which has a presence in almost all belief systems of the world, has been one of the basic concepts in the form of "Moon God" in the ancient religious deity culture of the Turks. In addition, while the Moon, which is the indicator of perfection, shares its duty with the Sun, on the other hand, the Moon is seen as the "first source of life" in the eyes of nomadic tribes. Although the Moon cult is an archaic belief, it is observed that the Moon God and his ground symbol, the bull, came from Mesopotamia to Khakassia. Because it is also "Bugay", which is the old form of the word "bull". So this may show us that the bull may appear as the physical appearance of God on the ground<sup>43</sup>.

In Ziya Gökalp's Turkish Tör, there is a narrative about the shapes of the moon in the sky.

*According to this narrative; an orphan girl goes to fetch water. When the moon realises that the orphan girl is being persecuted, she is brought to her own floor by the moon through a bush. The moon's face being a crescent moon or full moon is based on the adventures of this orphan girl on the moon floor, and the moon will grow as the girl grows. In the end, when the girl is sad, the moon becomes crescent moon, when the girl is happy, the moon becomes full moon. There is also a "White Bear". This Bear wants to drown the Moon because he is in love with the girl. As a matter of fact, he cannot afford it. He defeats her for only three days and the moon is victorious in the remaining twenty-five days<sup>44</sup>.*

This is clearly seen in the narration. While explaining a natural element, a very different narrative has been created. The cycle of the Moon was tried to be explained with a myth.

As mentioned above in the Sun myth, there is also a "Moon father", which resides on the sixth floor of the celestial realm, that is, one floor below Mother Sun. There is also Ay Ata, who resides on the 6th floor of the 17-storey celestial realm<sup>45</sup>. The reason why the Moon is male in Turks and why young children are introduced as Aydede for the Moon must be the belief in the Moon ancestor from past times.

---

<sup>42</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology Volume II*, p.238

<sup>43</sup>Fuzuli Bayat *Turkish Mythological System*, Volume I, Ötüken Neşriyat, 4th Edition, Istanbul 2017 p.268-269

<sup>44</sup>Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Töresi*, p.127

<sup>(45)</sup> W. Radloff, *Turkism and Shamanism*, p.21

### 1.2.3. Other Sky Objects

It should be noted that there are not only the myths of the Moon and the Sun, but also other astrological elements in the Turks' idea of the vast universe. In particular, there are many stars without specific names. Even the locations of the gods are sometimes indicated on the basis of celestial bodies. For example, if we look at Ulgen, he sits on his Golden Mountain and Golden Throne between two stars on the sixteenth floor, far above the Moon and the Stars<sup>46</sup>. This is both an example of the expression of the location of the gods and an example of the cult of mountains.

At the same time, it is observed that the Pole Star has a great influence on Turkish beliefs. As a matter of fact, according to Esin, the Pole Star was regarded as the place of the Sky-God<sup>47</sup>. Furthermore, according to the belief, God connected the upper, middle and lower worlds with the Iron Pile or Altun Pile. The world was also fixed by God by connecting the iron stake to the "Pole Star"<sup>48</sup>.

The narrative in Rahmeti and Bang's Oghuz Khan epic in Uyghur script is as follows.

*"There's a girl in that light. She's sitting alone. She was a very beautiful girl. She had a fiery and bright mole on her head (forehead?), like an iron stake (pole star). It was thought that if she laughed, the sky god was laughing: if she cried, the sky god was crying. When Oguz Khan saw her, his mind went crazy: he loved her and took her"<sup>49</sup>.*

In addition, there are narratives mentioning that Shamans who passed into the spirit world were taken as far as the pole star and could not go beyond it<sup>50</sup>.

In the Islamic and Anatolian phases of Turkish history, there is the discourse of "Muhammad, the Pole of the Poles". This expression is the iron in the centre of the millstone and it is said that "As the stone revolves around the iron, the world revolves around its own pole." There must be a similarity between the understanding and the ancient "Iron Pile"<sup>51</sup>.

Finally, it is noticeable that the "Pole Star" has more than one function in ancient Turkish beliefs. It is understood that in some places it is the "Home of God", and in some places it is a symbol of beauty, brighter than the Sun and the Moon. In a sense, in the light of all these narratives, we can see how important the "Pole Star" is for the Turks.

---

<sup>46</sup>Fuzuli Bayat, *Mythological Stories of Ancient Turks* p.16

<sup>47</sup>Emel Esin, *Introduction to Turkish Cosmonology*, p.30

<sup>48</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume II, p.231

<sup>(49)</sup> R. Rahmeti and W. Bang, *Oguz Khan Epic*, Burhan Basimevi, Istanbul 1936 p.13

<sup>50</sup>Fuzuli Bayat, *Mythological Stories of Ancient Turks*, p.17

<sup>51</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume II, p.23,

Another star that has been the subject of legends in Turkish culture other than the Pole Star is the planet "Venus", also known as Çulpan or more commonly as "Shepherd's Star". There are important sources that write that Çulpan is a God. A Yakut narrative between Chulpan and the "Pleiades" is transmitted to us by Ziya Gökalp. In addition, the Yakuts considered the star Zuhre to be a virgin in love with the constellation Ulker <sup>(52)</sup>.

*"The name of Zühre by Yakuts is Çolbu Hanım. This young girl loves the star Pleiades, and Pleiades is burning for Çolbu Hanım. Whenever she pines for Çolbu Hanım. When Çolbu and Ülker come together in one line, their hearts begin to beat, their chests swell, their breaths become louder. These breaths become waves. Immediately there is a hurricane, it wreaks havoc."*

It is also said that Yakut Turks are afraid of the alignment of Ulker and Cholpan.<sup>53</sup>

If it is necessary to draw a conclusion from all these narratives mentioned here, it should be said at the very beginning that it shows how developed Astrology was in the eyes of the Turks and other Tengrist communities. The Turkish masses, who have revealed a very wide perception of religion and universe, must have continued to live these elements in the religions and cultures they entered or were influenced by in the later stages of history, and the fact that parents still tell their children about the Moon as "Grandfather Moon" is an example of this.

---

<sup>(52)</sup> W. Radloff, *Turkism and Shamanism*, p.155

<sup>53</sup>Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Töresi*, p.127

### 1.3. Is There One God in the Tengri Religion? Or Is There Many Gods ?

Since the beginning of Turkish religious history researches, one of the important points on which researchers have focused on is whether the ancient belief system of the Turks is monotheistic (Monotheist)? Or polytheistic (Polytheist)? They are looking for an answer to the question.

In the IXth century, the traveller Ibn Fadlan passed through the lands of Turkestan and narrates the memories of some of the peoples he saw there. Ibn Fadlan passes through Oghuz lands and states that Oghuz people there say "One God" meaning "One God".<sup>(54)</sup> Indeed, this information is important but questionable. Because the same Ibn Fadlan mentions the existence of people among the Oghuzes who accepted Islam, albeit in form.<sup>(55)</sup> In addition, it is clearly seen in Ibn Fadlan's work that the monotheism of the Oghuzes is not valid for all Turkic Urug. In other words, it is obvious that the talk of Turkic and monotheism based on the Oghuzes is an absolutely inconsistent determination.<sup>(56)</sup>

Even if those who state that the Turks belong to polytheistic beliefs are relatively few compared to those who say that they are monotheists, their most important arguments do not go beyond the words "Öd Tengri" and "Umay" in the Altai epics and Köktürk inscriptions of Ibn-i Fadlan and Radloff. In addition, the Köktürk inscriptions constitute an argument for the defenders of the Monotheist thesis in some aspects.<sup>(57)</sup> As a matter of fact, the "seventeen-storeyed celestial realm and nine-storeyed subterranean realm and the gods or spirits on its floors"<sup>(58)</sup> in the Altai myths indicate that there may have been a Polytheist religious structure.

In our opinion, if we bring an interpretation from the discussions on this subject without being involved in any side, Turkish communities lived in very different and dispersed elements. In this context, as can be understood from the above, they lived with a different understanding of Tengri or with different principles transmitted differently by travellers. In other words, it is quite usual that there are differences between the principles they believe in among the Turkic communities. As a result, we are of the opinion that it is inconsistent to present a definite rule that the Turks were collectively Monotheist or Polytheist.

---

<sup>(54)</sup>Ramazan Şeşen, *Ibn Fadlan Travelogue*, p.10

<sup>(55)</sup>Ramazan Şeşen, *Ibn Fadlan Travelogue*, p.11

<sup>(56)</sup>Sadettin Gömeç, in his article "Shamanism and Supplementary Turkish Religion", states: "Ibn Fadlan, who travelled among some Turkish tribes in the 10th century, says that if one of them is persecuted or sees something he does not like, he raises his head to the sky and says "one God". He quoted Ibn Fadlan in this way.

<sup>(57)</sup>Dursun Yıldırım "Türk Bitiği (Ankara; Akçağ, 1998) Köktürk Çağında Tanrı Mı Tanrılar Mı Vardı?" points to the monotheistic belief by quoting from the Göktürk inscriptions.

<sup>(58)</sup> W. Radloff, *Turkism and Shamanism*, p.18

#### 1.4. Comparison with other religions

Since Tengrism is a belief that has penetrated among the Turkish and Mongolian masses in many different geographies and since people have come out of Africa and dispersed to many different parts of the world, it has many common features among religions in the world.

It is seen that the members of the Tengri belief interact with the context of the geographical place where they live and that it contains some elements that are similar to each other. The father and mother element in the Tengri belief, the gods are called father and mother, or the Great God is called father, the earth, nature and its elements are called mother. In ancient Chinese religions, "God the Father" corresponds to "Mother Earth". It is mentioned that Emperor Chuan Hsü, who ruled between 2598-2514 BC, appointed an official to worship God and the Earth, to communicate between people and spirits, and to play songs.<sup>(59)</sup> It is also known that in Chinese religion, mountains and rivers are sacred and sacrifices are offered to God and these elements.<sup>(60)</sup>

The two creation epics of the Native Americans or Indians of America, who were previously believed to be Turks, have common points with the Altai creation epics. In the epics called Çeyen and Modok in the local regions, the following two parts at the beginning of Çeyen and Modok show a definite similarity with the behaviour of God, who appears under various names in the Altai epics, at the beginning of the epic.

Tchaen: *"In the beginning there was nothing and the Great Spirit Maheo lived in the void. Maheo looked around, but there was nothing in sight. He wanted to listen to something, but there was nothing to listen to. There was only one Maheo, alone in nothingness..."*

Modok: *"It is Kumokums who created the world and everything in it. He created the world like this: Kumokums sat on the eastern shore, near the reed lake. There was no fear in him, but only curiosity, because there was nothing around but the reed lake..."*<sup>(61)</sup>

In the Altai creation epic quoted by Radloff, the position of God at the very beginning is as follows.

*"Before the earth and the sky were created, everything was water, there was no earth, there was no sky, and the sun and the moon did not yet exist. At that time, the highest of the gods, the beginning of all beings, the ancestor and mother of the sons of man, Tengere Kayra Kan called himself*

---

<sup>59</sup>Herbert Allen Giles, *Religions in Ancient China*, Translation: Deniz Uludağ, Doğu Batı Yayınları, Ankara 2017 p.12

<sup>60</sup>Herbert Allen Giles, *Religions in Ancient China*, p.15

<sup>61</sup>Alice Marrott, Carol K. Rachlin, *Native American Mythology*, p.43

*He created a similar being and called it a person (kiji). Kayra Kan and the person flying calmly like two black geese on the water they would float."*<sup>62</sup>

It is obvious that there are many similarities between the texts mentioned above. We would also like to draw attention to the water element, which stands out between the Modok and Altai epic. It is also found in other versions of the Altai epic and the Yakut creation myth. The beginning of another version of the Altai epic is as follows.

"There was no sky and no earth. There was the endless sea, God Ulgen was flying in this sea, looking for a place to land, but he could not find it."<sup>63</sup>

The following parts of the beginning of both epics are very similar.

Modok *"There is plenty of water, said Kumokums to himself, and what would it look like if there was a little earth around it? So he went down, down, down, down, down, down, down, down, five times trying to reach the bottom of Saz Lake, and on the fifth attempt he dug up a handful of mud."*<sup>64</sup>

Altai said: *"Since a person can no longer fly, Kayra Kan wanted to create a place, for this he dived into the water.*

*He told him to dig up earth from the depths and sprinkled it on the water."*<sup>65</sup>

As it can be understood from the examples we have given for both texts, the loneliness of God in the texts takes place in all three texts, while God's being in an unstable place on the water is similar to each other in the Indian epic Modok, Yakut and Altai texts. All these similarities may be a supporting factor for the thesis that the communities called Indians were once Turkish masses who settled in this geography from Asia.

In addition, the examples we have given above can also be found in the quatrains of Veli Baba, a Bektashi grandfather after Islam. The quatrain in question is as follows.

*"Arif offered, he took, he reaped the  
world, Gabriel flew in the deep many  
a time, Hak scattered a handful of  
earth into the deep Should the deep  
float and become a place!"*<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> W. Radloff, *Turkism and Shamanism*, p.18

<sup>63</sup> Saim Sakaoglu, Ali Duymaz, *Pre-Islamic Turkish Epics*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 13th Edition, Istanbul 2018 s.157

<sup>64</sup> Alice Marrott, Carol K. Rachlin, *Indian Mythology*, p.44

<sup>65</sup> W. Radloff, *Turkism and Shamanism*, p.18-19

<sup>66</sup> Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume I, p.470

The discovery of fire as an element that changes people's lives has shaped human history and has been one of the main elements of the development that has come to the present day. People have included these great developments in their religious motifs. However, very interestingly, there are similarities in the stories of communities on different continents discovering fire. In particular, it appears as a bird bringing or stealing fire from the heavens or God.

An Aboriginal group in Victoria, Australia believes that a hawk named "Tarrakukk" set the whole countryside on fire by itself, an indigenous group in New Guinea believes that a parrot and another bird bring fire to the earth. Similarly, the Asian Malays believe that a woodpecker stole the fire, and the Buryats, one of the Turkic communities, believe that a swallow bird stole fire from Tengri for humans and that Tengri was so angry that he shot an arrow at the bird and pierced the bird's tail. It is said that from that time onwards the tails of swallows point in two different directions.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, bird motifs in all other religions and in the ancient Turkish religion do not end there.

The great god of the Turks, Ulgen, is equivalent to Zeus in the Hellenes and Anu in the Hittites. The triad of Anu-Enlil-Ea in the Hittites is similar to the triad of sky-earth-sea in the Turks. For this reason, researchers believe that Mesopotamian, Hittite and Altai cultures are related to each other.<sup>68</sup>

Before the adoption of Orthodox Christianity, the Russian masses were a tribe belonging to pagan beliefs. When we look at the sources, it is seen that there are very important similarities between the pagan elements of the Russians and Turkish Tengrism. One of the most important similarities is the tree of life, the creation of living beings, etc. We think that these elements are quite related.

In the Turks, the element of the tree of life appears as the image or a synonymous expression of the iron stake that holds the earth, middle and upper world together. The main task of the Iron Pile is to keep the Earth, Middle and Upper worlds together. The roots of the tree represent the Underworld, the trunk the Middle World and the branches the Sky World<sup>69</sup>. The highest point is the Pole Star. If we look at the tree of life from the perspective of Russian mythology, the first element that catches our eye is the Tree of Life within Russian Mythology.

---

<sup>67</sup>James George Frazer, *Myths about the Roots of Fire*, Translation: Deniz Uludağ, Doğu Batı Yayınları, Ankara 2018 s.18, 50, 135, 140

<sup>68</sup>Yaşar Çoruhlu, *Türk Mitolojisinin Ana Hatları*, p.26

<sup>69</sup>Fuzuli Bayat, *Mythological Stories of Ancient Turks*, p.19



underground together. In the Russian Myths about the creation of living beings, God created man, but Satan was jealous of this and wanted to create his own people, but he failed and created the goat, but he could not revive the goat.<sup>70</sup>In the ancient Altai narratives, after God created human beings, Erlik was jealous of the people created by God, and when he could not create his own people, he asked God, but God did not allow him to do so, and he entered the minds of the people in the upper world of God and tried to attract them to his side. According to a story from the Podolsk region of Russia, before the creation of the Earth, there was only water. When God was walking on the water, he saw a foam on the water and when he touched it, a devil appeared. As a matter of fact, the devil considered himself equal to God and took the piece of earth in his own name.<sup>71</sup>A similar narrative is found in the creation epic of the Yakut Turks. The beginning of the epic is as follows.

*"When the great White creator Ürüing-aying-toyon, in the beginning, stood high above the great sea, He saw a foam floating on the water. God stopped and asked the foam:*

*The foam looked at God and said:*

*"I am a devil. At the bottom of the water, on the ground, I live there." God turned to the devil:*

*I don't know if your word is true! Is there a place under water? Then bring me a piece of earth!" Satan He dived into the sea, a long time passed. Then Shayran appeared with a little land in his hand..."<sup>72</sup>*

As a result of the comparisons we have made in this chapter, it is highly probable that all these religious similarities are unlikely to have developed independently of each other or by chance, and that a single religion can be reached when all these religious belief systems are rooted out. In the end, more time should be spent on this issue, and questions should be asked about the spiritual roots of religions, and the necessary researches should be carried out with importance.

---

<sup>70</sup>Gamze Öksüz, *Rus Mythology*, Çeviribilim Yayınları, İstanbul 2014 p.45, 46, 48

<sup>71</sup>Gamze Öksüz *Russian Mythology* p.61

<sup>72</sup>Saim Sakaoğlu, Ali Duymaz *İslamiyet Öncesi Türk Destanları*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 13th Edition, İstanbul 2018 s.159

## 1.5. First Kams and Kamlik

Although kam, or shamanism as it is more commonly known, is technically a clergy, the kam perform many more tasks than the spiritual dimension. The methods of the shaman to pass into the spiritual dimension are called "ecstasy". In this way, the kam can spiritually ascend to the sky and descend underground without any harm, and can travel to extraterrestrial areas through ecstasy.<sup>73</sup>

There is a point that should be known while explaining Turkish kamism. None of the Turkic tribes are part of a belief system that repeats each other. Each tribe and clan has its own spirits, ancestors and gods that they believe in. In other words, none of them is an imitation of the other. The practice of one may not be compatible with the other. This is because nomads, people living in settled order and masses living far away from each other in other regions all perform independent Kamlik procedures.<sup>74</sup>

Kams are divided into two groups as White and Black. White kams are known to have emerged first. According to Altai myths, shamans are divided into three groups: those who ascend to the sky, those who communicate with the spirits of the underworld, and those who operate in both realms. Since the leader of the white shamans is Ulgen, the white shamans are considered more sacred.<sup>75</sup>

Tuvan kams use a number of methods and instruments before starting the ecstasy performance. It can be said that they perform kaming with kününgü, homus, tambourine, costume and a stick called Dayak. Kams can perform ecstasy at any time, but it is known that the best time is at night. There are customs and traditions of ecstasy seen in the Tuvas.<sup>76</sup> The essence of Sahara kamism is the cult of Nature, spirits and gods, and devotion to the family hearth and homeland determined by the gods. In the Sahas, kamism survives thanks to a large cult of ancestors. The Saha kam establishes a link between the community and the spirit world and was the person who established a connection between the two worlds. While elements such as totemism, animism and the cult of ancestors come to the fore in the belief system of Tengrism, which we have already mentioned, and in Saha shamanism, the element of perceiving nature as alive is observed.<sup>77</sup>

A different characteristic of the Kams is their healing properties. This situation continued even after the Turks' conversion to Islam through Kutadgu Bilig.

---

<sup>73</sup>Mircae Eliade, *Shamanism*, İmge Kitabevi, Translation: İsmet Birkan, Ankara 1999 p.214

<sup>74</sup>Yusuf Ziya Yörükan, *Müslümanlıktan Evvel Türk Dinleri*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 5th Edition, Istanbul 2014 p.52

<sup>75</sup>Yaşar Çoruhlu, *Türk Mitolojisinin Ana Hatları*, p.26

<sup>76</sup>Janyl Myrza Bapaeva, *Tuva Shamanism*, p.30

<sup>77</sup>Valeriy Vasilyev, *Kamlığı of the Saha People*, Translation: Timur B. Davletov, Hacettepe University Turkiat Research Institute Living Old Turkish Beliefs Information Banquet: Proceedings, Ankara 2007 p.25

can be observed. In the verse couplet in Kutadgu Bilig; "*Greed is the disease that has no cure, even if all the kams of the world come together, they cannot cure it*"<sup>(78)</sup>, the effects of the Kams until the early times of the transition to Islam and the Healer elements are concretised. It is also possible that Kutadgu Biligte is referring to the Kams, i.e. people who treat the spirits.<sup>79</sup> Because it is believed that among the treatment methods of the Kams is to talk to the spirits by means of ecstasy methods.<sup>80</sup>

There are many rumours about the first kamlik. If we talk very briefly about the rumours found. There is a rumour that the ancestors of shamans were eagles sent against the evil spirits of Erlik. There are also rumours about a person named Chingis-Had-jir Bo Tengrin who was sent for the same purpose. There are Eren Chechen in Altai Sayan. Eren "iren" is the name given to Kam maniacs in Altai Turks.<sup>81</sup>

Thus, the K rm s, one of the building blocks of Shamanism, emerges. The spirit issue described here still explains the haunting of people by jinn and imaginary creatures in today's Turkish society.

Kams and their practices have been very common in Turkish customs and traditions. We can see the old kam practices even after the hangings. For example, it is known that in pre-Islamic times, spitting towards the moon and pointing a finger at it was a shameful taboo. In the work of Mahmud of Kashgali, we see the expression "The moon is not shown with a finger."<sup>82</sup>

In the XIVth century in Anatolia, the clothes and attire of the people called dede and babas resembled those of the kams of centuries ago.<sup>83</sup> It is seen that kamism paved the way for movements such as Alevism, Tahtaism, Babaiism and Bektashism, which were born out of the connection between Islam and Islamic Turkish beliefs. As a matter of fact, it should be noted that the depictions of beliefs such as the virgin birth of Kad nc k Ana, the deification of Ali and the Twelve Imams were created later, outside the Islamic process.<sup>(84)</sup> Even today, there is a similarity between the religious rituals performed in Cemevis with semah, drinking, hareml k-selaml k procedures, and the pre-Islamic rituals in which people sat in a circle, drank alcoholic beverages such as koumiss, danced by kams and performed in a very strict discipline.

---

<sup>78</sup>Yusuf Has Hacib, Kutadgu Bilig, T rkiye  ş Bankası K lt r Yayınları, Trans. Ay eg l  akan, 4th Edition, Istanbul 2017, p.164

<sup>79</sup>Yusuf Has Hacib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, p. 325

<sup>80</sup>Dilara Bayrak, Women in Central Asia and Siberian Shamanism, *Kocaeli University Institute of Social Sciences, Department of History*, Kocaeli 2013 p.20 (Unpublished Master's Thesis)

<sup>81</sup>Fuzuli Bayat *Mythological Stories of Ancient Turks* p.141

<sup>82</sup>Samire M min Shamanism and its remnants today *ULAKB LGE*, 2013, Volume 1, Issue 1 p.85

<sup>83</sup> erafettin Turan *History of Turkish Culture* p.128

<sup>84</sup>Hilmi Ziya  lken *Articles on Anatolian Culture*, Do u Bat  Publications, 2nd Edition, Ankara 2017 p.312-313

<sup>85</sup>It is also observed that Kam ecstasy rituals are performed in the evenings, and it is known that when a Kam dies, only his descendants who are descendants of the Kam and apprenticed to the previous Kam can become the new Kam.<sup>86</sup>Almost identical to the practices mentioned here are observed during the worship of Alevi-Bektashi communities. It is known that the aforementioned group performs Cem Ceremonies in the evenings, and it is known that in order to become a Bektashi-Alevi grandfather, it is necessary to come from the lineage of grandfathers.<sup>87</sup>

Clavijo of Castile, who travelled to Samarkand to serve as an ambassador to Timur, mentions the activities of the dervishes named Deli Baba who were with Timur.<sup>88</sup>In addition, Sayyid Muhammad Nurbahsh, who was active in the Timurid period and was highly respected, claimed to be a descendant of Musa El-Kazim, one of the Twelve Imams, and was declared Caliph by those around him.<sup>89</sup>This is one of the most obvious examples of the narratives we have given above.

In modern times, the cloths and rags that the Islamised Turks still tie to graves and trees are the biggest indicators. One of the most obvious examples of this is the remnants of the cult of the spring, which is still alive in the bushes and cloths found near a mineral water in Kızılcahamam district.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup>Orhan Yılmaz, *The Effects of Old Turkish Religion (belief in God) and Shamanism in Alevism, Academic History Thought Journal*, 2014 Vol.1, S.4, p.4

<sup>86</sup>Michel Perrin, *Shamanism*, İletişim Yayınları, Translation: Bülent Arıbaş, 2nd Edition Istanbul 2003 p.34, 71; Fatma Ahsen Turan, *The Journey from Shaman Rituals to Alevi Semahs*, Journal of Turkish Culture and Hacı Bektaş Veli Studies, 2010 S.56 p.156

<sup>87</sup>Fatma Ahsen Turan, *Journey from Shaman Rituals to Alevi Semahs*, Journal of Turkish Culture and Hacı Bektaş Veli Studies, 2010 S.56 p.156

<sup>88</sup>Şerafettin Turan, *History of Turkish Culture*, p.128

<sup>89</sup>İsmail Aka, *Timur and his State*, Turkish Historical Society Publications, 4th Edition, Ankara 2017 p.193-194

<sup>90</sup>Abdülkadir Inan, *Remnants of Shamanism in Muslim Turks*, *Journal of Ankara University Faculty of Theology*, 1952 S.4 p.25-26

## SECOND PART

### Cults, sacrifice and the apocalypse in TENGRIANISM

#### 2.1. Cults in Turkish Mythology

In every religious belief system, there are some elements attributed to holiness. Especially in religions known as nature religions, the number of these increases. As we have already mentioned, the Old Turkic religious system has a totemistic, naturalistic structure and is a belief system in which monotheist and pantheist influences are observed among the tribes. As a matter of fact, there are many cultised elements in the Tengrist mythological system.

##### 2.1.1. Water

In addition to being the most important source of life and the most important needs of living beings, water is given a separate sanctification in the ancient religion of the Turks and Mongols in the belief of Tengri. It is even confirmed by the main sources themselves through the narrated parts. In *Tarih-i Cihan Güşa*, which is known as a very important source for Mongolian history, a fragment of the Mongolian country laws or Genghis laws shows the faith-based water cult.

Namely, during the reign of Ögeday, when he and Chagatay were returning from hunting, he saw a Muslim man in the water. Chagatay, a staunch defender of Mongolian law, immediately had the man captured in anger and attempted to kill him. Ögeday intervened, saying that they did not have time for this at the moment and had the man arrested.<sup>91</sup> As can be understood from this section, it is seen that it is inappropriate to enter the water or pollute the water.

Ibn Fadlan, who was in Turkestan earlier than *Tarihi Cihan Güşa*, gives important information about the attitudes of Turkic tribes towards water. Firstly, Fadlan, who was in Oghuz, states that Oghuzes are not good with water and that they do not touch water, especially in winter. He also states that the merchants and guests coming to the Oghuzes were not allowed to bathe and they believed that those who did not obey the rules did things that would bring magic and curse to them. While mentioning the Bashkir gods, he also mentions the Lord of Water.<sup>92</sup> Biruni writes in his work *Asal ul-bakiye* that the Turks worshipped a river near their dwelling place. Gardizi also writes in similar terms that the Turks prostrated to a river.

---

<sup>91</sup>Alaaddin Ata Melik CÜVEYNİ, *Tarih-i Cihan Güşa*, Turkish Historical Society, Ankara 2013 p.201

<sup>92</sup>Ramazan Şeşen, *Ibn Fadlan Travelogue*, pp.10-11

<sup>93</sup>It is known that it is sacred for Turks and Mongols to swear an oath beside a river. There are similar examples in Anatolia and in Dede Korkut stories. In addition, it is seen that the Mongolian peoples make oaths by drinking water from the river.<sup>94</sup>In Tuva peoples, water is known as a source of wealth. If a water source is found near a person's pasture or winter quarters, it is recognised as a sign of wealth. In addition, people who have incurred the wrath of evil spirits are blessed by the water.<sup>95</sup>

Well, when we look at the basis of all this worship and the cult of water from a mythical point of view, we need to convey a part of the Altai narratives. In the Altai Myth, it is explained that God, who is alone on the water, is inspired to create from the water. God was inspired to create by the voice of Ak Ana coming from the water and created the person.<sup>96</sup>As seen here, water must be seen as the inspiration of life in Turkish myth. It should also be mentioned that there are mythical narratives of women who became pregnant through water. According to the myths, the daughter of Koton Khan was thirsty during a forest trip with her forty servants and they drank water from a spring they encountered at that time, and when they drank the water with the blood that accidentally came to their mouths in the water, they all became pregnant.<sup>97</sup>In this example, the understanding of the source of life attributed to water is seen.

---

<sup>93</sup>Abdülkadir İnan, *Eski Türk Dini Tarihi*, Altınordu Yayınları, Ankara 2017 p.45

<sup>94</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume II p.410

<sup>95</sup>Janyl Myrza Bapaeva, *Tuva Shamanism*, p.68

<sup>96</sup>Fuzuli Bayat, *Mythological Stories of Ancient Turks*, p.21

<sup>97</sup>Fuzuli Bayat, *Mythological Stories of Ancient Turks*, p.138

### 2.1.2. Mountain

Mountains are among the unique symbols that have always been seen as great for people. This is because the mountain has always been important for people, especially for communities that believe in celestial gods, as a great natural element that reaches God, as well as its protective aspect from evil. The mountain is a natural force in every respect and possesses almost all the qualities appropriate to the Godhead. In the case of the mountain, being high and inaccessible is parallel to being mighty and powerful.<sup>98</sup>

As a matter of fact, since the Turks are subject to a belief system originating from the sky, one of the main reasons for the mountain element may be that they are close to the sky or God. If we look at the mythical narratives, the first one that comes to mind should definitely be the Ergenekon Epic. Because in the Ergenekon narrative, the Turks melted a great mountain by means of their skilful blacksmithing. As a result, they achieved salvation. In addition, through the mythical narrative known as the Bozkurt Epic, which tells that the lineage of the Göktürks descended from the wolf, the depiction of the mountains as a protective element is observed. The part mentioned in the epic is as follows;

*"A-shi-na is the surname of the Turks, whose ancestors lived above or to the right (west) of the Western Sea, a different lineage of the Huns that became a separate/independent division. When the ancestors of the Turks were living there, they were attacked and defeated by a neighbouring country; the enemies killed whole families, men and women, young and old. There was only one boy left, only ten years old, and the soldiers saw that he was so small that they could not bear to kill him, so they cut off his legs and arms and left him in the middle of a swamp covered with grass. There is a she-wolf in the swamp, and every time she brings meat and feeds it to the boy; the boy then survives by eating meat, and grows up, and has sex with the wolf, and then the wolf becomes pregnant. When the ruler of the neighbouring country heard that the child was still alive, he again sent his men to kill the child and ordered them to kill the child. The men saw that the wolf was with the child and wanted to kill the wolf too, but the wolf, as if with divine help, fled to a mountain to the east of the sea, north or north-west of Kochu Country. There is a cave in the mountain, inside the cave there is a plain covered with grass, it is hundreds of metres in diameter and all four sides are mountains. The wolf hides here and then gives birth to ten sons..."<sup>99</sup>*

As can be seen in the last parts of the narrative, of which we have quoted a large part in order not to disturb the integrity of the narrative, the Ashina lineage or the Gokturk dynasty lineage was born in a narrow time.

---

<sup>98</sup>Mircea Eliade, *Introduction to the History of Religions*, Kabalcı Publishing House, Istanbul 2003 p.62; Seniha Sönmez, *Türklerde Dağ Kültü İnanancı ve Altay, Tıva, Şor Destanlarında Dağ*, Balıkesir University Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Turkish Language and Literature, Balıkesir 2008 p.73 (Unpublished Master's Thesis)

<sup>99</sup>Hayrettin İhsan Erkoç, *Motifs in Turkish Myths (VI.-VIII. Centuries)*, *JOTS*, 1/1, 2017: p.39

It is seen that the element that is instrumental in the establishment of the mountain is protected on the mountain with "divine help". Another issue related to the protective duty and the mighty attribute is that the proverbs such as "behind him there is ... like a rock" and "man like a mountain" have survived to the present day.<sup>100</sup>In addition, it is possible to come across verse examples written in the literary style of Kutadgu Bilig. *"Whoever has many friends, many comrades, it is as if he has rested his back on a solid rock"*<sup>101</sup>It is seen that the expression "to rest his back on a rock" is used as equivalent to the meaning of being mighty, unshakable.

Mountains also appear as a part of the Iron Stake belief, which has a very important place in Turkish mythology. The Iron Stake is a highly functional figure that holds the Upper, Lower and Middle worlds together in the Turkish belief system and is believed to be "kalgancı çak", that is, the apocalypse will break out, and as we have mentioned before, its top is connected to the pole star and various spirits tie their horses. Iron stakes sometimes appear as great mountains.

### 2.1.3. Tree Cult

The cult and belief elements against the tree in the Turkish belief system are quite high. The data conveyed by travellers and various sources support this. Many beliefs about trees show themselves. We will cite the first example from Divan Lügait-it Türk. *"God damn it, the kifiers call the sky "Tengri". Again, they say "Tengri" to every object that is big in their eyes (they see big), such as a big rock and a big tree. Therefore, they prostrate to such things. For the same reason they call a scholar "Tengri-kan". We seek refuge in Allah from deviation."*<sup>102</sup> Here it is stated that in the Turkic communities that have not yet converted to Islam, they prostrate to the tree when they are prostrated.

One of the most important elements of the tree in Turkish beliefs is the myths that humans were created from trees. In this context, a narrative of the Wei-Wu is important. According to the narrative;

*"A knot appeared from a tree near Selenge; five boys emerged from it. The youngest of them was Bu-ci khan. After more than 20 successors came a khan named Tü-lun-di-cin; this khan*

---

<sup>100</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel *Turkish Mythology*, Volume II p.544

<sup>101</sup>Yusuf Has Hacib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, p.143

<sup>102</sup>Ramazan Şeşen, *According to Islamic Geographers Turkish Countries*, Turkish Historical Society, 2nd Edition, Ankara 2001 p.



*He fought against the Chinese in the time of Tang and was given the princess Cin-lyen (Golden Lotus) as a wife. His son Go-li-di-cin lived in the mountain of Gen Ho-lin, the mountain from which the clan originated.<sup>103</sup>*

At the same time, the fact that the human masses are taken out of a tree from the tree figure reflected here is also included in the Altai Creation Epic. The section we are talking about is as follows;

*"He grew a tree with nine branches from the ground and created a person under each branch. These nine people became the ancestors of the nine tribes living on the earth to this day<sup>(104)</sup>."*

Although there is no clear information about the connections of both narratives, it is possible that there is a connection between the Wei-wu and the Altai narrative. In the epic of Er Sogotoh, a narrative of the Yakuts, tree motifs are quite common. In addition, trees are very important for the Yakuts. If we talk about the tree in the Er Sogotoh narrative, it will be useful to quote the following lines. In the epic;

*"...The tree would come across the haka and  
come right in front of him. There was a big  
meadow, in the middle of this place, a very old  
breeze was always blowing.  
The tree Hakan was great, the Mother of all  
things, existence depended on it, heaven and  
earth were its building. The roots used to  
cover the underground world, the leaves of  
the tree were exactly seven feet,  
It was bigger than him, with overhanging cones,  
At the very root of the tree, a spring was visible,  
This was the water of life, flowing clear and  
clear...<sup>105</sup>"*

It seems that a tree is mentioned to which the beings, the sky and the earth, that is, everything is connected. In addition, as it can be understood from the epic, there is a possibility that this great tree is a pine tree. We do not only see the pine tree motif here, but also note that the tree of life on which Yö Kan, the mightiest of the spirits of the Middle Realm, sits at the top of the pine tree motif is also found as a pine tree.

---

(103) W. Eberhard, *China'in Şimal Komşuları*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Translation: Nimet Uluğtuğ, 2nd Edition, Ankara 1996 p.75

(104) W. Radloff, *Turkism and Shamanism*, p. 19

<sup>105</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Vol.I p.111

In addition, according to the beliefs of the Altai, there is a pine tree that is at the centre of everything and sustains the worlds. The Yakuts say that there is a big tree in the centre of the earth and it is shown as a source of power with its golden roots.<sup>106</sup>In addition, this tree, whose other name is Temir Kazık, is also mentioned as the pillar of the sky in Kutadgu Bilig. In Kutadgu Bilig; *"This is the pillar of the sky, the honour based on righteousness, if the honour is broken, the sky will not stand in place"*<sup>(107)</sup>.

If we look at the traveller's notes describing the element of tree worship, first of all, Ibn Fadlan, who mentions the Bashkir masses as the most dangerous of the Turkic hordes, emphasises that the natural elements such as winter and rain in summer and summer had a God, and that there was a Tree God and the Sky God as the greatest of them.<sup>(108)</sup>According to the information given by Ibn Rusteh, the Avars gather around a great tree on Wednesdays and prostrate to the tree. In addition, in a narrative among other Turkic tribes, wisdom about the tree is given. According to the sage;

*"...On this day every village goes with its idols to a place where there is a water hole and trees. Sacrifice to these trees*

*They cut (?), they tell fortunes with arrows. Then a man from among them comes to the idols"*<sup>(109)</sup>.

This effect is also visible in the narrative mentioned in the Turkish countries as a general Turk. As a matter of fact, it is of course useful to approach the information given here with scepticism. Because the possibility that Arab and Islamic geographers may have introduced some customs by interpreting them from their own point of view should not be ignored.

Among the Duhan shamanist communities, the practice of binding a call to the trees after the dead still continues. Just like today, this tradition, which continues in many places in Anatolia with various elements, is one of the most important examples that can be given within the scope of the tree cult. The Dede Korkut narratives, one of the most important elements of our literature, also contain remnants of the old beliefs. Among these, there are examples such as giving blessing to the tree, sacrificing a horse after the dead.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup>Jean Paul Roux, *The Ancient Religion of the Turks and Mongols*, p. 155

<sup>107</sup>Yusuf Has Hacib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, p. 265 3463. Beyit

<sup>108</sup>Ramazan Şeşen, *Ibn Fadlan Travelogue*, p.20

<sup>109</sup>Ramazan Şeşen, *Turkish Countries According to Islamic Geographers*, p.90

<sup>110</sup>Abdülkadir Inan, *Shamanism in History and Today*, p.207

#### 2.1.4. Birds Cult

In fact, the cult of birds is not only an element of worship found in the Turks. Birds are culturally and religiously seen in many other religious elements. It seems that they are given different names (Simur, Hüma etc.). Although it is not included as a title within the scope of Old Turkish beliefs, it is seen that it is mentioned in the text range. The bird motif has had a very important place in the Turkish mythological system from the past to the present. It has spread over a wide period of time from the mythos of the Altai to the double-headed eagle of the Seljuks and the semahs of the Bektashi and Alevi Turkish communities.

It is necessary to mention the Altai narratives because in the myths of the Altai, God and the person are travelling in the form of birds. There is also a crow who is the servant of Erlik, the khan of the underworld. Here there is an element of changing form or underwear. Birds are one of the most important symbols among the elements of changing form<sup>111</sup>. The following text can be given as an example of changing into a bird's underwear;

*"... Black-Kököl flew as a bird and landed on the window of Day Khan. He listened to Day Khan's conversation with his daughter... (In order to save his daughter from enemies), he said, "I will make you a small bird..., I will turn my gold and silver into ashes and blindness... I will put my people in the clothes of crows and magpies..."<sup>(112)</sup> .."*

The element of changing underwear is clearly visible in the example we have given. Crane is one of the bird species that is imagined for changing the underwear. Crane bird covers a wide range of motifs in Turks. Since the crane is a migratory bird that crosses long distances, it is depicted as an element that brings letters from local folk literature, as well as a representative of great migrations. At the same time, the crane or stork is reflected even in the dance motifs of the Kam rites of the Yakuts <sup>(113)</sup>. There are also texts in which the Yakuts have ancestors who enter the costume of migratory birds such as stork and crane. In the Göktürks, too, there is an element of flying in Stork or Crane costume<sup>114</sup>. One of the first three sibling ancestors of Ashina entered and flew away in a stork's body. It is one of the elements that shaped Turkish religious life in the post-Islamic periods. Moreover, the arrival of Hacı Bektaş Veli in Anatolia by entering the pigeon's body is a known element in the Menkıbes. The legend of Hacı Bektaş Veli is as follows;

---

<sup>111</sup>For the issue of changing underwear, see. Bahaeddin Ögel, Turkish Mythology Volume II, Turkish Historical Society, 5th Edition, Ankara 2014 p.171, Also see for an example of changing underwear in different elements in Turkish Mythology. 173

<sup>112</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume II. p.179

<sup>(113)</sup>M. Ja. Zonnickaja, *Dances of the Yakut Shamans*, p.191

<sup>114</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume II p.702

*"...When Hacı Bektash-i Veli reached the border of Rum, he saw that he was tied to the youlma, he said Bismillah and billah, he leapt with the wilayat and reached the ceiling of the great arsh. The angels welcomed him with the tajil of elif, they said hello, you have come to peace, O son of the Prophet Hacı Bektaş-i Veli.*

*Hünkâr took the form of a dove, flew down to Sulucakaraöyük and landed on a stone. His blessed feet were buried in the stone like being buried in dough. The men of Rum were in a state of awe, they realised that he had entered the country, they said they could not bind his way. They said to Karaca Ahmed, "You, the watchman of the Greek country, see if he has entered the country. Karaca Ahmed was in silence for a while, then he raised his head and said, "I have looked all over the country of Rum, every citizen is sitting with his wife; only in Sulucakaraöyük there is a soldier in the form of a dove sitting; when I saw him, a terror fell on me; he said that it must be him. The saints of Rum wish that someone would take the form of a falcon and go and hunt him. Among them was one of the caliphs of Sultan Beyazîd, a man named Doğrul, who had come to the principle of Rum from Iraq. He stood up and said, "Please let me go. He immediately took the shape of a falcon and flew away. He saw a dove on a stone in Sulucakaraöyük. As it soared with all its majesty and landed on it, Hacı Bektaş took the form of a human being, stretched out his hand, grabbed the falcon and squeezed it so hard that Hacı Doğrul's mind was blown<sup>(115)</sup>..."*

In the above-mentioned example, it is described that Hacı Bektaş came to Sulucakaraöyük in Anatolia by turning into a dove or, as we have mentioned, by taking the form of a dove to overcome the obstacles he encountered on his way to the land of Rum. In addition, it is not only Hacı Bektaş who takes the form of a bird in the text, but also Doğrul (Tugrul), who is named as one of the caliphs of Sultan Beyazîd, is seen to migrate by taking the form of a falcon. It should not be overlooked that the pre-Islamic Animistic elements are a Menkıbe describing the time of Beyazîd not too early in the post-Islamic period. Finally, it is understood that the bird motif, which is one of the living motifs that started with the elements of nature from the earliest times, took place in the early periods of Islam and in the later periods, moreover, the legendary bird Anka, which was born from the ashes, continued in the Ottoman Empire as Hüma and spread to the name of the Ottoman administrative body Divan-ı hümayûn. Even today, even in the 21st century Turkish world, where new ones are added to the long debates of Islam and branched, the importance of the bird motif is reflected in proverbs (shooting the crane in the eye, etc.).

In ancient Turkish legends, we come across birds quite frequently in creation myths. At the same time, birds take part in rituals. When we were talking about fire before, we mentioned the narrative of the bird that stole the fire from the god in Buryats. It is known that the Uighurs had protective bird gods. In addition, according to the customs of the European Huns, the eagle was considered as the motif of the Sky God.

---

<sup>115</sup>Abdülkadir Gölpinarlı, *Manakıb-ı Hacı Bektaş-i Veli "Vilayet-name"*, İnkılâp Kitabevi, İstanbul 2017 p.18-19

appears<sup>116</sup>. At the same time, one of the seven sons of Ulgen is an eagle according to Kara-bird Anohin<sup>117</sup>. Apart from this, there is another creation myth. Here the great God sends a swan to dig up the earth and builds the earth with it.<sup>118</sup>

### 2.1.5. Or Move

The elements of nature in ancient Turkish beliefs have been frequently mentioned so far, and although this is a similar topic to the ones mentioned above, there are some differences this time. Because it is observed that Islamic geographers emphasise the possibility that the elements of nature, which they considered as idolatrous in the previous mentions, may be real this time. The Yada stone is seen as a sacred stone used by oracles and kams, which enables them to manage or rule natural events. The Yada Stone may be a concrete reflection of the widespread geographical presence of the totemistic elements of the past Turks. Because it is seen that it is a Turkish cultural element coming from the Uighurs to Anatolia and even to the Ottoman Empire. It is quoted from Ibn El-Faqih, one of the Islamic scholars on Yada stone. He reports the discovery of a mystical stone found in the Oghuzoguz countries, which is strange and has the ability to cause snow, rain and hail whenever they want. In addition, in a different place in the work, Belkık, the son of the Oghuz Hakan, tells that his ancestors managed natural elements such as rain and snow through this stone.<sup>119</sup> A different source in the Islamic geographers, on the other hand, mentions the existence of a stone used when it is necessary to rain in the Turkish country. The name of the Yada stone can be mentioned as a rain-making spell called Yat and a spell that manages weather events. Ziya Gökalp also mentions this information and mentions a narrative with Hami-Sami influence about the Yada Stone. Noah gave this stone called Yada stone to his son Yafes. Yafes, in turn, gave this stone to his son Turk. Moreover, it was believed that if this stone was placed on a water, it would rain, if it was hung on the horse's mane, the wind would blow, and if it was thrown into a burning fire, it would extinguish the fire. The Kam who were skilful in using the stone were called "Yadaci"<sup>120</sup>. The existence of the Yada stone is also observed among the Mongols. According to some Mongolian accounts, the Yada Stone was found in animals such as snakes, deer, etc.

The Yada Stone is an early example of the conversion of the Turks to Islam, corresponding to the reign of the Safavid Shah Tahmas. raids on Muslim Uzbeks

---

<sup>116</sup>Gülşah Yüksel Halıcı, Gök Tanrı'nın Temsilcileri Protective Birds, *folklor/edebiyat*, 2014 Volume:20 Issue:77 pp.

73

(<sup>117</sup>) A. V. Anohin, *Materials of Altai Shamanism*, Kömen Publications, Translation: Zekeriya Karadavut, Jannet Meyermanova, Konya 2006 p.13

<sup>118</sup>Muraz Uraz, *Turkish Mythology*, Düşünen Adam Publications, 2nd Edition, Istanbul 1991 p.17

<sup>119</sup>Ramazan Şeşen, *Ibn Fadlan Seyahetnamesi*, p.56, 58

<sup>120</sup>Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Töresi*, p.56

It is known that the Uzbek beys against the Shah tried to wear down the Safavid army by means of Yadajis sent to the Safavid camp.<sup>121</sup>

The Yada Stone showed itself until the 18th century and was mostly believed in the Russian Army after the 18th century, rather than the Turkish Ottoman Empire. It is seen that elements that can be considered as magic, such as rain-making techniques, were used against Ottoman soldiers during the 1768 - 1774 Ottoman-Russian War. In addition, statistical data such as the fact that in 1718 the Russian army numbered around 370,000, of which 104,000 were Kalmyk Turks, or that in the wars of 1768-1774 the number of Kalmyks constituted a quarter of the Russian army <sup>122</sup>show that the Russians believed in the Yada stone and its prophecy at this time.

## 2.2. Sacrifice Ceremonies

Ancient Turks led a nomadic life in which animal husbandry was developed. It is reflected in the memories of ancient travellers that they had herds of tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of mostly small cattle. In addition, there were sacrificial rituals and mythical and spiritual justifications for these rituals. We will talk about this mythical and spiritual part.

In the context of the ancient belief system, it is necessary to mention bloody and bloodless sacrifices. The method called bloodless sacrifice is a method based on the method that the blood of the sacrifice does not touch the soil or on the methods performed without taking a life. It should be said that especially in Mongolia and Mongolian geography, there are sources recording Mongols. For example, in *Tarihi Cihan Güşa*, it is mentioned that during the reign of Ögeday Khan, when he served as the enforcer of Genghis laws, he forbade the Muslim population to sacrifice in accordance with the Shari'ah and used the expression "mundar meat eaters" for them<sup>123</sup>. Chagatai's use of this term for Muslims seems to be due to the fact that in the Islamic method of sacrifice, the blood must flow into the ground. Another form of bloodless sacrifice is performed in the form of treats given in nature without taking life. It is a form of sacrifice in which mare's milk, wine, etc. are scattered or offered to certain places by the kams<sup>124</sup>.

---

<sup>121</sup> Ahmet Öğreten, "Yada Tasi" in *Turkish Culture and Its Use in the Ottoman - Russian Wars at the End of XVIII. Century*, *BELLETEN*, 2000 Vol.LXIV S.241, p.893

<sup>122</sup> Ahmet Öğreten, "Yada Tasi" in *Turkish Culture and the Ottoman-Russian Wars at the End of the XVIIIth Century Utilisation*, p.896

<sup>123</sup> Alaaddin Ata Melik Juveni, *Tarihi Jahan Gusha*, p.248

(124) A.V. Anohin, *Materials of Altai Shamanism*, p.35

A different example of this bloodless form of sacrifice is found in the Scythians. According to Herodotus' account from ancient times, it is mentioned that in religious ceremonies, the victim was placed in a square with its front and hind legs tied, and the person who would perform the sacrifice would strangle the victim and take its life by strangling it, accompanied by a prayer, after dropping it on the ground behind the victim<sup>125</sup>.

Other sacrificial rituals are also observed. For example, it is stated in Chinese sources that sacrifices were made four times a year for God figures made of goat and preserved in leather.<sup>126</sup> In addition, twenty-four tribes of the Huns, with the participation of Shan-yu, offered sacrifices to the Sky-God and Earth-water, and in a Chinese source, one of the Hun Yabgu's offered sacrifices to the Sky-God in front of an idol. The Kyrgyz offered sacrifices to God and Spirits, waters and trees<sup>127</sup>.

If we need to examine the subject with a more mythical observation, in the beginning, people who sacrificed for the great God Ulgen gave the task of punishment to his brother Erlik because Ulgen could not show mercy in punishing those who did not sacrifice. For this reason, after a while people stop sacrificing for Ulgen and sacrifice only for Erlik. At the same time, there is a rare incident where Erlik and Ulgen act together. In addition, while remote places such as forests and caves are preferred for sacrifices in the name of Ulgen, sacrifices for Erlik are mostly performed in areas where bad events occur. An example of this is a kurgan or a funeral pyre. The ceremony for the sacrifice takes three forms. After sunset, preparations for the ceremony are made, the place of sacrifice is searched, then an animal selected from the herd is sacrificed<sup>128</sup>.

Chinese sources are not limited to these. They contain narratives about human sacrifice within the sacrificial customs of the Turks. That part quoted in Chinese sources is as follows. *"From now on, we have to sacrifice human beings to Tenri!" he swears. He chooses these sacrifices mostly from the A'er Company, then kills the children and grandchildren of this company, i.e. his descendants, and sacrifices them to Tenri. To this day, the Turks sacrifice human beings to a brigade in accordance with this tradition and always choose and use human beings from the A'er Company.*<sup>129</sup> This is the data on human sacrifice of the Turks, and similar cases of human sacrifice are found in Germanic religions.

---

<sup>125</sup>Herodotus, *History*, Translation: Müntekim Ökmen, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 10th Edition, İstanbul 2014 p.318

(<sup>126</sup>) W. Eberhard, *China's Neighbours to the South*, p.77

<sup>127</sup>Abdülkadir Inan, *Shamanism in History and Today*, pp4, 5, 9

(<sup>128</sup>) W. Radloff, *Turkism and Shamanism*, pp.38-39

<sup>129</sup>Hayrettin İhsan Erkoç, *Göktürk Myths According to Chinese and Tibetan Sources*, BELLETEN, 2018 Vol.LXXXII, S.293 p.68

is located in In the Scandinavian territory of Uppsala, t h e Scandinavian altar area  
The sacrificial rituals in his mythology included human and animal sacrifices.<sup>130</sup>

### 2.3. Turkish Cosmogony

In ancient Turkish beliefs, just like in similar ancient communities, there are a number of divine spirits reflected in epics, shaman prayers and reflected in the sources of various great researchers.

The Cosmology of the Turks has focused on how the Turks perceive the Sky, God and the universe, and here, with a more mythological approach, we will present some examples of creation myths taken from different sources in which these descriptions are mentioned. Although all of them show similar signs in their foundations, they are quite different in terms of the motifs of the processing of these signs and show how colourful the human brain is. On this occasion, we intend to make some analyses on the epics we have quoted and to emphasise the foreign beliefs or cultural elements that they may have been influenced by.

First of all, the mythological narrative we want to deal with is a narrative related to the Flood, which we observe in the Hami-Sami influence. The narrative we are talking about is as follows.

In line with the beliefs of the Altaians, the earth we are on is the "chin earth", that is, the real earth. Apart from this, there is another place under the real place where the darkness takes place. The chin earth we are on is currently in the second stage of life. This stage was reached as a result of a Flood that is thought to have happened. The harbinger of the Flood will be a goat with iron horns.<sup>131</sup>After that, it continues as follows.

*"Seven days there was an  
earthquake. Seven days there  
was an earthquake.  
Seven days the mountains breathed  
fire. Seven days it rained  
. There was a storm and hail for seven days.  
It snowed for seven days.*

---

(130) R. I. Page, *Scandinavian Myths*, Phoenix Publishing House, Translation: Ismail Yilmaz, Istanbul 2009 p.25

(131) A.V. Anohin, *Materials of Altai Shamanism*, p.19



*After that, the cold began. There were seven holy brothers. They knew that there would be a flood. The eldest of them was Erlik and the other one was Ulgen. Ulgen was given superior divine abilities and he was known as nomçı (bookseller). The brothers built a ship and took on board a pair of every kind of bird and animal. When the flood was over, Ulgen released a rooster (takaa) from the ship. But the rooster died of cold. Then he sent a goose. The goose did not return to the ship. A third time Ulgen sent a raven (kuskun). The raven did not return either, because it found carrion and started eating it... The seven holy brothers came out of the ship... Ulgen started to create human beings with the help of nom, the book of wisdom. He put a sky flower (root flower) in a golden cup. His elder brother Erlik stole a part of this flower and created a human being. Ulgen was angry with his brother and said: "Let the people you have created be the black tribe with the black belt!" (Kara kayş kurlun, kara albatti polzin your yayagan albattiif.) and cursed him. Then he said: "Let the white tribe I created go to the place where the sun rises and the black tribe you created go to the place where the sun sets". The black tribe covered a circle with leather and invented a drum and started to perform shamanic rituals for the first time on earth... Bodies came to life. Among them were children, young men, girls, men, women and old men. That's how people appeared on earth. Erlik had a rifle filled with smokeless gunpowder. Every night he would come out of the underworld and shoot people with it and take their lives himself. Then he used to make beautiful girls cooks (kazanci) and young men grooms (ködöçi). Ulgen realised that the people in the palace were dwindling. Then he filled Erlik's gunpowder box with another gunpowder without anyone seeing. Erlik fired his rifle at night. There was a deafening sound. Erlik threw the rifle out of fear and fled to the underground world. Since that day, Erlik has not been on the surface of the earth. He now sends his messengers to hunt souls. Once Erlik used to ride a white horse. But then he gave this horse to God in exchange for the life of a hero. But Almighty God deceived him and gave him a black bull instead of a life. He ordered Erlik to ride this bull backwards and to take an axe (ay malta) in his hand instead of a whip. Therefore, Altaians sacrifice black bull or cow to Erlik instead of horse<sup>(132)</sup>."*

The text quoted by Anohin above provides us with very valuable elements. First and foremost, the Flood is almost perfectly similar to Noah's Flood, which is believed to have taken place in major religions such as Islam, Christianity and Judaism, except that the characters are different. Determining the period when this epic began to be told can be understood from the elements in the text. Because the fact that the character "Erlik" has a gunpowder rifle shows us that the narration dates of this epic emerged in the not so dark periods of ancient time. In the light of this information, it leads us to the conclusion that this epic started to be told at least after the XV. - XVI. century, or that it may have come from an earlier time but later took on the form we have quoted above. If we make a comment by looking at the period in which the epic was told, we can see that the Flood element in the epic is directly influenced by Islam.

---

(132) A.V. Anohin, Materials of Altai Shamanism, p.20

We believe that it would not be wrong to infer that it was a flood. In the narratives of Turkish Mythology, the narratives about the Flood event are not limited to the above-mentioned example. Another account tells the story of a man named Nama. This story clearly has common points with the Noah's Flood.<sup>133</sup>

One of the most important epics in which foreign religious influences are observed is undoubtedly the Altai Creation Epic. As a matter of fact, this text is very important both as an important creation myth and in terms of showing the influences we have mentioned. The narrative in question is as follows.

*"In the past there was only water; there was no earth, sky, moon and sun. There was God (Kuday) and a "person". They took the form of black geese and flew over the water. God was not thinking about anything. The "person" made the wind and rippled the water and sprinkled water on the face of God. This "person" thought that he was bigger than God and dived into the water. He was drowning in the water; he began to cry out, "God, help me!" God said, "Come up!" and he came up out of the water. God said: "Let there be a solid stone!" and a stone came out of the bottom of the water. God and the person sat on the stone. God said to the "person": "Dive into the water and bring out soil from there!" " The person took soil from the bottom of the water and gave it to God. God threw this soil on the water and said: "Let the earth be!". Thus the earth was created. After this, God again said to the "person": "dive into the water and bring up earth". The "person" dived into the water and thought, "Let me get some earth for myself"; he took earth in both his hands; in one hand he put the earth in his mouth, thinking to work on his own. He wanted to create a place secretly from God. He gave the earth in one hand to God. God scattered this earth and the solid earth came into being. The earth that the "person" had hidden in his mouth began to grow. He started to suffocate, choke and die. He started to run away from God. But wherever he looked he found God with him. When he was about to drown, he begged, "O God, true God, help me!" God said to him, "What have you done? Did you think to hide earth in your mouth? What did you hide this earth for?" God asked him. The person replied: "I hid this earth in my mouth so that I could create a place". God said to him: "Throw the earth out of your mouth!" The "person" threw the earth. Small and small hills were formed from this earth. Then God said: "Now you have sinned; you have thought evil against me. Even the thoughts of the people who obey you (sanga bakkan albating) will be evil. The thoughts of the people who obey me will be pure; they will see the sun, they will see light. I have taken the name of the true Kurbustan. Your name shall be Erlik; those who hide their sins from me shall be your people; those who hide their sins from you shall be my people!" "*

*A tree grew without branches and knots. God saw this tree and said, "It is not pleasant to look at a tree without branches; let nine branches grow on it!" Nine branches grew on the tree. God again said: "From the root of the nine branches shall come forth nine people, and from them shall be nine nations!"*

---

<sup>133</sup>For the mentioned Flood Text, see. Abdülkadir İnan, *Tarihte ve Bugün Shamanizm*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 8th edition, Ankara 2015 p.22.  
Edition, Ankara 2015 p.22

*At this time Erlik heard the noise of a crowd and asked, "What is this noise?". God said, "You are a king and I am a king, and this noisy crowd is my nation." Erlik wanted this tribe to be given to him. God said to him, "No, I will not give it to you, look after yourself!" Erlik said, "Wait, let's see. Let me see this nation of God," and walked towards the crowd. He came to a place. Here he saw people, wild animals, birds and many other living creatures and thought, "How did God create them? What do they feed on?" The people here were feeding on the fruit of a tree. They were eating the fruit from one side of the tree and not taking the fruit from the other side. Erlik asked the reason for this, and the people answered him: "God forbade us to eat the fruit of these four branches. He commanded us to eat the fruits of the five branches on the side where the sun rises. He ordered the snake and the dog not to leave those who wanted to eat from the four branches of this tree. After this, God ascended to the sky. The fruits of the five branches became our food."*

*When Erlik Kōrmös heard this, he found a person called Törüngey and said to him: "God lied, eat the fruits of these four branches!" The guard Snake was asleep. Erlik entered his mouth and said, "Get up on this tree!". The snake climbed the tree and ate the forbidden fruit. Törüngey and his wife Eje were travelling together, and Erlik said to them, "Eat this fruit!" Törüngey did not want to. But his wife ate, the fruit was very sweet. She took the fruit and put it in her husband's mouth. At that moment both of them lost their feathers, they were ashamed. They hid under the trees. Then the god came. The whole nation hid from God. God cried out: "Törüngey, Törüngey! Eje, Eje! Where are you?" They said: "We are under the tree, we cannot reach you." Snake, dog, Törüngöy, Eje all blamed each other. God said to the snake: "Now you have become Kōrmös (devil). Let people turn against you, strike you, kill you," then he said to Eje: "You have eaten the forbidden fruit.*

*You have obeyed the word of Kōrmös, henceforth you will be pregnant, give birth to children, give birth*

*you will suffer, then you will die". He said to Törüngey: "You have eaten Kōrmös's food, you have not listened to me, you have taken the devil's word, those who take his word will live in his country, they will be deprived of my light, they will be in the world of darkness<sup>(134)</sup>..."*

In the part of the text we have quoted, the influence of Hami-Sami religions is observed. Because it is seen that the events of Eje and Törüngey are not very different from the Adam and Eve narrative in the three great religions known as the religions of the book. In addition, it is a distinctive feature that the formation of nations and people within the text is with the tree. It is a precedent for the tree cult we mentioned before.

Since the emergence of Christianity among the Yakuts, this has affected the Yakut kam myths. As a result, the epics told over time were shaped in this direction. The Creation Epic of the Yakuts is as follows.

---

<sup>134</sup>Abdülkadir Inan, *Shamanism in History and Today* p.14-16

*"The great White Creator Ürüŋ-ayıg-toyon, in the beginning, standing high above the great sea, saw foam floating on the water, standing high above the water, floating on the water. God stopped and asked the foam:*

*"Who are you?" The foam looked at God and said:*

*"I am a devil. At the bottom of the water, I live there." God turned to the devil:*

*"I do not know if your word is true! Is there a place under water? Then bring me a piece of earth!" The devil dived into the sea, a long time passed. Then the devil appeared. With a little earth in his hand. God took it in his hand, looked at the black earth. He blessed the earth and threw it into the water. Then the devil fell:*

*"How shall I immerse this God in water and drown him?" But at that very moment, somehow the earth began to grow and spread around. It hardened and solidified. Immediately most of the sea was filled with earth<sup>135</sup>.*

It is stated that there is a Christian influence in the Yakut legend we have mentioned above. As a matter of fact, there is no mention of the introduction of this Christian influence. However, if we make an inference, it is seen that the Christianisation policies of the Russians accelerated from the last half of the 17th century as a result of the Christianisation policies of the Russians from the time the Yakuts came under the rule of the Russian Tsardom. It is seen that the Yakut masses, who managed to preserve the traces of their own identity against all assimilation policies, intertwined their customs from the past with Christian narratives over time.

---

<sup>135</sup>Saim Sakaoglu, Ali Duymaz, *Pre-Islamic Turkish Epics*, p.159

## 2.4. About Cult of Ancestors

### 2.4.1. Belief in Wolf in Ancient Turks

Turks and Mongols have frequently interacted with wolves since the most ancient times within the difficulties brought about by the political, social and nomadic life order and have given motifs to the most predatory creature of the steppes at every stage of history, in their banners and epics. It is inevitable that the wolf, which has such an active influence on the life of a society, has left deep traces in terms of religious beliefs. This attribution of sacredness, which we can talk about as an animistic element, can be detected through sources from the BC periods. It is also believed that the ancestor of Huns was suckled by a wolf. This situation is not only valid for the Huns but also exists in the Turkic tribes in general. For example, in the Tardush tribe, a wolf-headed being tells them about disasters<sup>136</sup>. In more recent times, the first sentence of the most authoritative Mongolian source on Genghis Khan, "Mongyol-un niyuca tobciyan", reads as follows.

*"The ancestor of Genghis Khan, Börte-chino, who was born destined by the Almighty God, travelled across the sea with his wife Gua-Maral and settled in Burhan Haldun Mountain at the source of Onon River and gave birth to a son named Bataçıhan.<sup>137</sup>"*

The ancestors called Börte-çino and Gua Maral mentioned in the sentence quoted above are Wolf and Deer. It is the main source feature that shows the place of the wolf motif in the steppe beliefs. The existence of wolves and epics in Wu-su, one of the oldest Turkic elements, is mentioned in the sources.

---

<sup>(136)</sup> W. Eberhard, *China's Neighbours to the South*, pp.86-88

<sup>137</sup>Ekrem Kalan, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, Translation: Mehmet Levent Kaya, Kabalcı Publishing House, Istanbul 2011 p.13

### 2.4.2. Wu-su Grey Wolf Legend

The Wu-su tribe, whose characteristics are similar to the Huns, are described with their nomadic characteristics and animal husbandry just like the ancient Turks. These similarities also show similarities in terms of the first ancestors<sup>138</sup>. The narrative we will mention is one of the Wu-su ancestor legends.

*"The king of Wu-Sun was called Kun-mo. His father had a small state in the west of Hiung-nu. The Hiung-nu attacked them and killed his father, but they did not kill Kun-mo, the young king's son, but threw him alive into the grass. A black bird (crow) flew towards him and gave him meat. Then a she-wolf came and suckled him. The Hiung-nu ruler was surprised and thought that he was blessed by God. He made him come out of the grass and when he grew up he made him a commander in his army. He was successful many times, so the Hiung-nu ruler gave Kun-Mo back the rule of his people. Kun-Mo, the king of Usun, gathered and developed his people. He raided and took the neighbouring cities. He had an archer army of several ten thousand men. He gained experience in battles. After the Hiung-nu ruler died, Kun-Mo withdrew his people and travelled far away from Hiung-nu. He enthroned himself as king. After that, he no longer went to the assembly in Hiung-nu palace. Thereupon they attacked the Hiung-nu by sending troops of horsemen, but they could not defeat them, and they thought that the king of Wu-sun had taken hold of the power of a god and drove him away from them. Therefore, they considered him to be under Hiung-nu rule again, and they did not make any great raid after that."<sup>139</sup>*

In this text, which dates back to BC, the motherhood of a wolf to a human cub is seen. As a matter of fact, it is known that there are many narratives in this regard. Especially Ashina (Gokturk) myths are important with these epics.

### 2.4.3. Grey Wolf Ancestors of Gokturks

Regarding the first ancestors of the Göktürks, legends about the wolf ancestor and the derivation of the Ashina lineage, which is about the salvation of the people from a disaster by means of a wolf, are mentioned in the sources. One of these legends is as follows.

*"The Göktürks (T'u-chüeh) are descended from the ancient Huns (Hsiung-nu) and are a branch of them. They themselves descended from a family called A-shih-na (A-shih-na). (Later they multiplied), they began to live in separate tribes. Then they were defeated by a country named Lin. (After the defeat, the Gokturks) were killed by this country. (Among the Gokturks who were all killed) there was only a boy of about ten years old. When the soldiers of (Lin country) saw that the boy was there, they took pity on him and did not kill him. They had cut off the feet of the only child and left him among the grasses in a swamp.*

---

<sup>(138)</sup> W.Eberhard, *China's Neighbours to the South*, p.104

<sup>139</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology Volume I*, p.19

*(At this time) a she-wolf appeared around the child and fed the child by giving him meat. After the child grew up in this way, he began to live a husband and wife life with the she-wolf. The wolf had also conceived from the child in this way.*

*The king (of Lin, who had defeated the Gokturks and put them all to the sword) heard that this boy was still alive and sent his soldiers to kill him too. The soldiers who came to kill the boy saw the wolf and the boy side by side. The soldiers wanted to kill the wolf. But the wolf (seeing them) ran away and went to the mountain north of Kao-ch-'ang (Turfan). There was a deep cave in this mountain. There was a big plain inside the cave. The plain was covered with grass and streams. The wolf entered this cave and gave birth to ten children there. In time, these children grew up and brought girls from outside and married them. In this way, the girls they married became pregnant and from each of them a lineage was derived. (Here the founders of the Göktürk state came from) A-shi-na family is one of (this Ten-boy).<sup>(140)</sup> "*

In the aforementioned narrative, the descent of the Ashina lineage from the wolf is described. It is observed that this narrative is derived from the need to trace the dynastic roots to a creature believed to be sacred in order to strengthen the legitimacy of the ruling family Ashina.

#### **2.4.4. Toba Derivation Epic**

The Toba (Tabgach) Khanate, which is recorded in the sources as a Turkic mass forming a mighty dominance area in the IVth century in the south of China, is recognised in the sources as a part of the Asian Huns<sup>141</sup>. For this reason, the wolf motif is as important for them as it was for the Huns. Because of this reason, there are epics of Derivation in which wolf motif is included<sup>142</sup>. The epic in question is as follows.

*"One of the Hun beys had two very beautiful daughters. This bey thought that only Gods could marry his daughters. For this reason, he built a high tower on the north side of his country and brought his two beautiful daughters here to marry the gods.*

*After a while, a wolf came to the tower and the girls married this wolf, thinking that he was God. The voice of the Nine Oghuz born from this marriage was similar to the voice of a wolf. Migration Epic There was a mountain named "Hulin" in the homeland of the Uighurs. Two rivers named Brick and Selenge came out of this mountain. One night a divine light descended from the sky on a tree there. The people living between the two rivers watched this carefully. A swelling formed on the trunk of the tree, and the divine light stayed on the swelling for nine months and ten days. The trunk of the tree split open and five children appeared from it. The people of this country raised these children. The youngest, Buğu Khan*

---

<sup>140</sup>Saim Sakaoğlu, Ali Duymaz, *Pre-Islamic Turkish Epics*, p.197

<sup>141</sup>Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, *Turkish National Culture*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 38th Edition, Istanbul 2015 p.88

<sup>142</sup>The same epic is described as Uyghur Epic in popular sources. As a matter of fact, Bahaeddin Ögel states in Volume I of *Turkish Mythology* that this epic belongs to the Tobas. See. Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume I, Turkish Historical Society, 6th Edition Ankara 2014 p.18

*When he grew up, he became a ruler. The country was rich and the people were happy. A long time passed. A prince named Yuluğ Tiğın became the ruler. He fought a lot with the Chinese. To end these wars, he decided to marry his son Gali Tigini to a Chinese princess. In return for the princess, the Chinese asked the ruler for the rock at the foot of the mountain of God, which was called Kutlu Dağ. Gali Tigin gave the rock. The Chinese lit a fire around the rock to take the rock away, and when the rock got hot, they poured vinegar on it. They put the rock, which was broken into small pieces, into carts and carried it to China. All the birds and animals in the country cried for the departure of this rock in their own language. Seven days after that, Gali Tigin died. There was famine and drought. They had to leave their homeland and migrate.<sup>143</sup>*

In the text we quoted above, it is told that the girls who were locked in a tower to marry the gods married a wolf and formed the Nine Oghuzes. In this legend, besides the possibility of the wolf appearing as an image of God, the origins of a Turkish community can be traced back to Kurt Ata.

#### **2.4.5. A Few Words on Oghuz Kagan**

Oghuz Kagan is the most emphasised figure among the ancestors of the Turks and is clearly pronounced in the sources. Researchers frequently share their opinions in their works and scientific writings about the historical identity or reality of Oghuz Kagan, especially whether he has a historical identity or reality, and whether he is Mo-Tun himself or a commander of Alp Er Tunga.

There are main sources that have brought Oghuz Khan to the present day. The first of these is the Oghuz Khan epic in Uyghur script. The copy of this epic is in Paris and was translated into Turkish by G. R. Rahmeti and W. Bang. In this source, under the influence of older religious elements, there is a depiction of Oğuz Kağan as a demigod or god-like characteristic. There is a superhuman depiction of Oğuz Kağan such as Oğuz Kağan having a celestial face, a red mouth like fire, or having sucked his mother's milk only once and not asking for more, eating raw meat when he was still a baby, and asking for wine.<sup>144</sup>

Another important source mentioning Oghuz Khan is the narrative of Oghuz Khan narrated by Reşideddin. It is mentioned in the section of Reşideddin's famous work *Jamiut Tevarihîn* where he tells about the Oghuz. A detailed analysis and analysis of this section was made by Zeki Velidi Togan.<sup>145</sup> According to the narrative mentioned in the aforementioned source, the intensity of Islamic influence is quite obvious. Later on, similar depiction of Oghuz with Islamic influence is also seen in the early Ottoman chronicles.

---

<sup>143</sup>Bahaeddin Ögel, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume I, p.21

<sup>(144)</sup> W. Bang, G. R. Rahmeti, *Oghuz Khan Epic*, p.11

<sup>145</sup>See. Zeki Velidi Togan, *Oguz Epic*, Enderun Publications, 2nd Edition, Istanbul 1982



In the History of Aşıkpaşaoğlu, which is an important main source, while talking about the ancestors of the Ottoman lineage, he draws an Ottoman lineage starting from Şehzade Korkut, going back to Oğuz, Yafese and finally to Noah.<sup>146</sup>

If we talk about the debates on the identity of Oğuz Kağan, there are many opinions that Oğuz Kağan was the Hun ruler Mo-tun. This is because there are elements such as his sons' organisation of Oghuz Khan's state from 24 Turkish tribes and the analogy with Mo-tun's 24 divisions. Another analogy is the claim that there is a similarity between the names of Mo-tun's sons Kök (Ki- ok) and Kun (Chüen-ch) and Oguz Khan's sons Gök and Gün.<sup>147</sup>

In this regard, our opinion is that the similarities that remain in the air by trying to establish some hypothetical similarities to a legendary character such as Oğuz Kağan are most likely not realistic. This is because Oghuz Khan is an epic element that appeals to a wider audience. In our opinion, the most correct view on this issue is that, as Tufan Gündüz mentions in his work, the life of Oghuz Khan and what happened to him is the integration of the lives of all other Turkish states and rulers Attila, Tuğrul and Çağrı beys, Çaka Bey and even Ottoman sultans Fatih, Kanuni, Safavid Shah Shah Ismail, in short, the lives of Turkish states and rulers established anywhere in the world, with Oghuz Khan.<sup>(148)</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup>Hüseyin Nihal Atsız, Aşıkpaşaoğlu History, Ötüken Neşriyat, 6th Edition, İstanbul 2016 p.14

<sup>147</sup>Saadettin Gömeç, The Identity of Oghuz Kagan, A Few Words on Oghuzs and Oghuz Kagan, *DTCF History Journal of Research*, 22/ 35 p.116

<sup>148</sup>Tufan Gündüz, Oguz Khan Epic, Yeditepe Publishing House, 3rd Edition, İstanbul 2016 p.16

## CONCLUSION

In our work, in which we examined the general Turkish Mythology under the name of Tengrism, we tried to look at the reasons underlying the rituals and practices or the epics told. We also focused on how the epics and rituals were influenced by foreign religions and how the Turks shaped their myths according to the changing living conditions of the Turks. In the first part, we focused on the importance of the Turkish thought, which is very closely related to the sky, on the blessing of the objects in the sky. In particular, we shed light on the natural connection of the sun with Sky God and the epics told about the moon. In the epic about the moon, it is described that the moon falls in love with a girl like a human being, takes her with him and makes her happy. This situation, which seems like an insignificant detail, is actually quite important. Because, as will be seen under the headings mentioned later, this is to add human characteristics to God. In addition, the effect of giving sacredness or divine attributes to objects such as the sun, the moon or the pole star in the sky has survived to the present day, and in the paintings of Caliph Ali, which are frequently seen as a motif by the Heterodox, Kızılbaş, Alevi groups in Anatolia today, seeing Ali right in front of the sun is one of the elements that have been transferred to the present day.

Another issue we have touched upon in our work is to make comparisons between mythologies on certain issues. In this mythological comparison, we have focused on the similarities and differences between Indian Mythology, Russian Mythologies and Turkish Mythology. As a result of this study, we believe that the similarities between the Indians and Altai myths regarding the creation of the world cannot be a coincidence. If these similarities are taken into consideration in the similarities between other mythologies, including Turkish mythology, there should be two possibilities in terms of the history of religions. Firstly, either the origin of all religions should be a single source as mentioned by evolutionists. Secondly, people spread over many different geographies, even if they are disconnected from each other, must have created similar legends and myths on events that their brains work with common perception and cannot explain. As a matter of fact, it does not seem possible for the human mind and consciousness, which can think on a very large scale, to come up with such limited thoughts. For this reason, in our personal opinion, we believe that the first reason would be a more probable and rational idea preference. The fact that there are so many similar stories about finding fire in different societies of different worlds and that there is a general bird motif in the stories of finding fire, only the bird type is different, can be given as a different example.

In addition to being not only a few mythological inferences, we have mentioned in our text that the Turks, like the Hami-Sami religions, have a Flood narrative.

may shed light on this. Or it is interesting that there is a similarity between Törüngey and Eje in the Altai Creation myth and the Adam and Eve narrative. Is there an Islamic influence on the appearance of Sumerian narratives such as the Flood and the first humans in Turkish myths? Or it is very important to analyse and examine whether there is an older connection.

In the section on cults, in addition to mentioning the similarities again, we have frequently mentioned the effects that have survived to the present day, and we see that the part that has survived to the present day is quite impressive. In the section on the bird cult, the importance of the crane bird in the issue of changing the frost and its importance up to Hacı Bektashi is very clear. In addition, at the beginning of the second part, while focusing on the creation of the universe in Turkish epics, we tried to mention the sources that these epics are likely to have been influenced. In the section on the Cult of Ancestors, we tried to explain the discussions on the existence of animism in the Turks before Islam by giving examples from the wolf ancestor motif in the Turks. As can be seen in our text, the wolf ancestor / mother motif seen among the Huns, Göktürks and other steppe tribes is a very obvious example of animism. Such situations, which are seen in some researchers in order to bring Turks closer to Islam, are quite sad. We do not find this subjective narration correct and we are in favour of telling it as it is. It is quite clear from the known sources that totemistic and animistic ideas were present in the religious life of the Turks, and their influence can be seen even today (the perception that a favourable outcome will occur depending on the totem or lucky stone).

## SOURCE

- Aka, İsmail, *Timur and his State*, Turkish Historical Society, 4th edition, Ankara 2015
- Anohin, A.V, *Altai Shamanlığına Ait Materyaller*, Kömen Publications, Translation: Zekeriya Karadavut, Jannet Meyermanova, Konya 2006
- Arsal, Sadri Maksudi, *Turkish History and Law*, Turkish Historical Society, Ankara 2014
- Atsız, Hüseyin Nihal, *Aşıkpaşaoğlu History*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 6th Edition, Istanbul 2016 Bapaeva, Janyl Myrza, Tuva Shamanism, Kömen Publications, Konya 2013
- Bayat, Fuzuli, *Turkish Mythological System I*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 4th Edition, Istanbul 2017
- Bayat, Fuzuli, *Mythological Stories of Ancient Turks*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 2nd Edition, Istanbul 2017
- Bayrak, Dilara, Women in Central Asia and Siberian Shamanism, *Kocaeli Univesitesi Sosyal Institute of Sciences, Department of History, Kocaeli 2013* (Unpublished Master's Thesis) Cüveyni, Alaaddin Ata Melik, *Tarih-i Cihan Güşä*, Turkish Historical Society, Translation: Mürsel Öztürk, Ankara 2013
- Çoruhlu, Yaşar, *Türk Mitolojisinin Ana Hatları*, Kabalcı Publishing, 4th Edition, Istanbul 2018
- Deer, Jozsef, Translation: Şerif Bastav, Istep Culture, *Ankara University DTCF Journal*, Vol. 12 S. 1-2 1954 p.159-176
- Eberhard, W, China'in Şimal Komşuları, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Translation: Nimet Uluğtuğ, 2nd Edition, Ankara 1996
- Eberhard, W, Old Chinese Culture and Turks, Translation: İlker Berk, *Ankara University DTCF Journal*, 1943 Vol.1, S.4 p.19-29
- Eliade, Mircae, *Arayış*, Translation: Cem Soydemir, Doğu Batı Yayınları, Ankara 2017
- Eliade, Mircae, *Introduction to the History of Religions*, Kabalcı Publishing House, Istanbul 2003 Eliade, Mircae, *Shamanism*, İmge Kitabevi, Translation: İsmet Birkan, Ankara 1999 Esin, Emel, Introduction to Turkish Cosmology, Kabalcı Publishing House, Istanbul 2001
- Frazer, James George, *Mitler on the Roots of Fire*, Translation: Deniz Uludağ, Doğu Batı Yayınları, Ankara 2018
- Frued, Sigmund, *Totem and Taboo*, Translation: Ahmet Çalışkanlar, Olympia Publications, Istanbul 2016

- Giles, Herbert Allen, *Religions in Ancient China*, Translation: Deniz Uludağ, Doğu Batı Yayınları, Ankara 2017
- Gökalp, Ziya, *Türk Töresi*, Ötüken Neşriyat, İstanbul 2014
- Gölpınarlı, Abdülkadir, *Manakıb-ı Hacı Bektaş-i Veli "Vilayet-name"*, İnkılap Kitabevi, İstanbul 2017
- Gömeç, Saadettin, Oğuz Kağan'ın Kimliği, Oğuzlar ve Oğuz Kağan Üzerine Bir-two Söz, *Ankara Üniversitesi DTCF Journal of Historical Research*, 22/ 35 p.116
- Gündüz, Tufan, *Oguz Khan Epic*, Yeditepe Publishing House, 3rd Edition, İstanbul 2016
- Halıcı, Gülşah Yüksel, Sky God's Representatives Protective Birds, *folklore/edebiyat*, 2014 Volume:20 Issue:77 p.71-81
- Inan, Abdülkadir, Remains of Shamanism in Muslim Turks, *Ankara University Theology Faculty Journal*, 1952 S.4 p.19-30
- Inan, Abdülkadir, *History of Old Turkish Religion*, Altınordu Publications, Ankara 2017
- Inan, Abdulkadir, *Shamanism in history and today*, Turkish Historical Society, 8th edition, Ankara 2015
- Kafesoglu, Ibrahim, *Turkish National Culture*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 38th edition, İstanbul 2015
- Kalan, Ekrem, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, Translated by Mehmet Levent Kaya, Kabalcı Publishing House, İstanbul 2011
- Marriott, Alice - Rachlin, Carol K, *Indian Mythology*, İmge Kitapevi, Translation: Ünsal Özünlü, Ankara 1994
- Mömin, Samire Shamanism and its remnants today, *ULAKBİLGE*, 2013, Volume 1, Issue 1 p.79-89
- Onay, İbrahim, Cengiz Han Devrinde Türk Kültürünün Etkisi ve Katkısı, *Turkish Studies*, Volume 7/4, Fall 2012, pp.2441-2455
- Ögel, Bahaeddin, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume I, Turkish Historical Society, 6th Edition, Ankara 2014
- Ögel, Bahaeddin, *Turkish Mythology*, Volume II, Turkish Historical Society, 6th Edition, Ankara 2014
- Öğreten, Ahmet "Yada Tasi" in Turkish Culture and Ottoman-Russian Relations at the End of the XVIIIth Century
- Savaşlarında Kullanılması, *BELLETEN*, 2000 Vol.LXIV S.241, pp.863-900 Öksüz,
- Gamze, *Rus Mythology*, Çeviribilim Yayınları, İstanbul 2014

- Özerdim, Muhaddere, N. Chou'lar ve Bu Devirde Türklerin Gelen "Gök Religion", *BELLETEN*, 1963 Vol. XXVII, S. 105, pp.1-23
- Page, R. I., *Scandinavian Myths*, Phoenix Publishing House, Translated by İsmail Yılmaz, Istanbul 2009
- Perrin, Michel, *Shamanism*, İletişim Publications, Translated by Bülent Arıbaş, 2nd Edition Istanbul 2003
- Radloff, W., *Türklük ve Şamanlık*, Örgün Publishing House, Haz: Nurer Uğurlu, Istanbul 2008
- Rahmeti, R., -Bang, W., *Oguz Khan Epic*, Burhan Basımevi, Istanbul 1936
- Roux, Jean Paul, *The Ancient Religion of Turks and Mongols*, Translated by Aykut Kazancıgil, Kabalcı Publishing House, Second Edition, Istanbul 2011
- Sakaoğlu, Saim, - Duymaz, Ali, *Pre-Islamic Turkish Epics*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 13th Edition, Istanbul 2018
- Sönmez, Seniha, Turks Mountain Cult Belief and Altai, Tiva, Shor Epic Mountain, *Balıkesir University Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Turkish Language and Literature, Balıkesir 2008* (Unpublished Master's Thesis)
- Şeşen, Ramazan, *İbni Fadlan Seyahatnamesi ve Ekleri*, Yeditepe Publishing House, 6th Edition, Istanbul 2016
- Şeşen, Ramazan, *Turkish Countries According to Islamic Geographers*, Turkish Historical Society, 2nd ed, Ankara 2001
- Tanyu, Hikmet, *Türklerde Tek Tanrı İnancını before Islam*, Ankara University Press House, Ankara 1980
- Turan, Şerafettin, *History of Turkish Culture*, Bilgi Publishing House, 7th Edition, Ankara 2014
- Turan, Fatma Ahsen, Journey from Shaman Rituals to Alevi Semahs, *Turkish Culture and Hacı Bektaş Veli Research Journal*, 2010 S.56 p.153-162
- Uraz, Murat, *Turkish Mythology*, Thinking Man Publications, 2nd Edition, Istanbul 1991
- Ülken, Hilmi Ziya, *Articles on Anatolian Culture*, Doğu Batı Publications, 2nd Edition, Ankara 2017
- Vasilyev, Valeriy, Kamılığı of Saha People, Translated by Timur B. Davletov, *Hacettepe University Institute of Turciyat Research Living Old Turkish Beliefs Information Banquet: Proceedings*, Ankara 2007 p.25-26

Yılmaz, Orhan, The Effects of Old Turkish Religion (belief in the God of Heaven) and Shamanism in Alevism, *Journal of Academic History and Thought*, 2014 Vol.1, S.4, pp.1-13

Yörükan, Yusuf Ziya, *Müslümanlıktan Evvel Türk Dinleri*, Ötüken Neşriyat, 5th Edition, Istanbul 2014

Yusuf Has Hacib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Trans. Ayşegül Çakan, 4th Edition, Istanbul 2017

Zonnickaja, M. Ja, , Dances of Yakut Shamans, Translation: Metin Özarslan, *Türkbilig*, 2002/3 p.187-192