

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CRIMEAN AND TURKISH LEGENDS THE VALUE ASPECT

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Abstract

The study of legend is necessary for the humanities. Folklore, as an oral history and a mythological subconsciousness of nation, gave us productive material for the analysis of national problems and discovery of their solutions. Investigating common values of different nations is the scope of this research. In particular, it concerns the studying of legends from different nations, which live in one cultural space: Crimea and Turkey.

Introduction

Legends from ancient times up to now help to direct humans towards absolute values. The main function of legend is explaining of value, because legend is a story about the significance of a place, an event or a person. These aspects are very important for society, they are sanctified and mythologized by it. Therefore, all folk legends invariably include a miraculous component, which exists in all types of legends, oral and written. Thus, it is possible to mark out three major legend constituents: sacred, miracle and value. These three components inseparably coordinate with each other. In a legend, sacredness authorizes value and miracle confirms it. It should be mentioned that in legends, values and miracle always collaborate. The more incredible miracle is, the important value must be.

Today political crises call for searching of values that could be shared by everyone. It is necessary to observe the presence of a set of absolute values such as value of life, health or love. Based on this, a Russian philosopher, Mikhail Bakhtin, introduced the term “dialogue of cultures,” which is based on universal values. Folklore, as an oral history and a mythological subconsciousness of nations, can give us productive material for the analysis of values which are

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shared by people. This research is especially valuable in studying legends from different nations, which live in one cultural space, such as Crimea or Turkey. The analysis of the variants of legends from various people or different times can give interesting results. The study of legends from different nationalities can help in the identification of value preference horizontally and the study of legends from one culture, but in a different time, will give value preference vertically.

Crimea and Turkey have many similarities in terms of nature, traditions, and languages. Both Crimea and Turkey have a multicultural background of folklore. Thus, it is logical to unite these two groups in one research. Finding similarities and differences between Crimean and Turkish folklore, discovering the common motifs, and analyzing why exactly these motifs are common between these cultures and why two groups of folk texts have differences is of a great interest for this research.

The brief information about Crimean and Turkish legends is given below. It should be noted that oral sources were not included in this research, just published texts were analyzed.

Crimean legends

Crimean legends are a unique collection of texts that deserves a deep research, but has not been studied properly. The interest for Crimean legends started at the end of the XIX century. The legends were published with a purpose of attraction of the tourists to Crimea. Field works and publications of Crimean folklore were basically done by non-professional folklorists. Therefore, it often happens that principles of classification of collected material are not known, and national origins of legends are not differentiated either. There are many nationalities living in Crimea; thus, there are Crimean Tatar, Greek, Armenian, Karaite, Ukrainian, Russian and Soviet books of Crimean legends. Most legends were collected in their original language, and later were translated into Russian. The nature of legend texts was influenced by translators/collectors' professions and their cultural environment. The most scientific approach for collecting legends was shown in the 20–30-s of the XX century, when scientific expeditions were supported by Communist party, which had just came to power and started to support cultural development of national minorities. However, after Stalin's repressions and deportation of many ethnic groups from Crimea, folklore became a subject for editing according to ideological demands of that time. It made soviet folklore a specific phenomenon, which is worth of separate research (Zherdieva, 2010). When Soviet Union collapsed, Crimean legends became a commercial product, and their publications did not have scientific approach. Thus, publishers mixed legends from different period of time and cultures, did not make references to real sources and did not give any commentary on legends. However, national societies started to publish book of their legends vary actively.

Most of Crimean legends are half-folklore, half-literature. They were edited according to the time they were published, and sometimes besides authentic values inside of legends editor's values can be found. Crimean legends are interesting for social anthropological research because they have many layers of meaning. However, scientific investigation of this phenomenon had started only in the 1990-s because the legends were not desired object for research on the strength of their ideological reductions. There is only one book "Crimean legends as phenomenon of world culture" (Zherieva, 2013) and a few articles about Crimean legends. The articles are about symbols of mountains in Crimean fairy tales and legends (Useynova 1998), characteristics of Crimean legends, folk tails and fairy tales (Fayzi, 1999), features of modern cultural consciousness in Crimean legends (Temnenko, 2002), principles of publishing of Crimean legends (Zherdieva, 2012), the legend about golden cradle at a crossroads of cultures of Crimean peoples (Zherdieva, 2011), models of mythologization of cultural consciousness in the coordinates of the Soviet ideology (Zherdieva, 2010).

Turkish legends

Turkish legends are a voluminous folklore material. Collection and publication of Turkish legends started only in the forties, but from the beginning had scientific approach. Collections were made basically by folklorists and philologist in course of their degree works. The collectors often indicated when, where and from whom the legend was gathered. There are many collections of Turkish legends from different regions of Turkey, such as Konya, Hatay, Malatiya, Trabzon, Ordu, Dimerci, Sivas, Istanbul, Çukurova, Urfa, Afyonkarahisar, Izmir, and collections of Turkish legends entitled "Anadolu efsaneler," which means collection of legends from different places in Turkey in one book. There are Turk, Kurd, Armenian, Jew, and Greek populations in Turkey, but in contrast to Crimea we have access only to Turk legends. There is folklore of different nations who live in Turkey, but it was not translated to Turkish. This is why a researcher must know the Kurd, Greek, Armenian, Jewish languages in order to be able to read non-Turk legends in Turkey. Some legends of Ancient Greeks were retold by Turkish sources and only one book of Kurd legends is available in Turkish (Yücel 2003). Most probably, due to a language barrier, Turkish legends did not become a commercial object. Turkey is one of the most popular countries for international tourists, that raises a demand for the legends to be translated at least in English to be available for reading. There are Russian-speaking tourists in Crimea, because of this translated to Russian legends are popular.

Turkish legends do not have both touristic and ideological editing; they were not rewritten by their collectors, it is pure folklore material. Therefore, Turkish texts are rich for traditional descriptions: why this ceremony is performed, who has to do it, in which places and in which conditions it should be (Crimean material does not have this, because Soviet editing

tried to erase every national differences). Turkish legends often have formal beginning/ending and folk style of narration. One legend can be collection of small stories about one place, which looks very much like summary of whole story. However, some collectors tried to narrate in literary way, for example, nature can be depicted poetically. Important feature of Turkish legends is invariable connection with definite places. This is the most critical characteristic of legend as a genre. In Crimean legends, sometimes stories do not have connection with places what is often a sign that these legends were made up (there are many examples in Soviet legends).

Scientific investigation of Turkish legends is rather advanced. There are many articles devoted to understanding of this phenomenon (Boratav, 1973; Örnek, 1971) and different aspects of it (Ayva, 2003; Çıblak, 1997; Gülensoy, 1988; Ocak, 1986; Özdemir, 1986). Also there is a book of Saim Sakaoglu "Investigation of Legend" (Sakaoglu, 2009), and three books about analysis of legends from different regions of Turkey, such as Erzurum, Erzincan and Diyarbakır (Seyidoğlu, 1985; Kara, 2003; Yavuz, 2007).

Values in Crimean and Turkish legends

In this research a value method was used. As it was said above, the method implies that miracle is connected with value. Thus, it is necessary to analyze miracle to understand which value is inside a legend. For example, in the legend "Denizli'de Pamukkale," an unattractive girl tried to commit suicide; she jumped out of a cliff and got to hilling water of Pamukkale. She did not die and became so beautiful that a local prince married her (Önder, 1966:133-134). In this legend, the miracle of reanimation owing to water is showing significance of value of life. Values in legends can be good or bad but function of bad values is to underline good ones, to emphasize their importance. For example, in the legend "Gelin kaya" a girl showed disrespect for her mother. The mother cursed her and she became a stone (Kavcar, 1990:51). In the legend, lack of respect to mother is actually the value of good relation with parents. It can be also a few values in one legend but usually one is dominant or it can be conflict of two values, when characters have to choose between two equally important for them values.

Good/bad values

The content analysis of Crimean and Turkish legends yielded the following results. Among good values that exists both in Turkish and in Crimean legends are love for homeland, value of sacred, value of life and health, bloodless capture of fortress/city, value of love to person and to child, hospitality. Among bad values are greediness, cruelty, lust for power, wantonness, faithlessness, incest, murder, disrespect for parents, carelessness to child, pride, cowardice, infraction of laws of hospitality (Turkey) and ingratitude for hospitality (Crimea).

Value of love for homeland is the most frequent in Crimean legends, then for Turkish legends the most numerous is value of sacred. These values are constant both horizontally and vertically (they do not change from people to people and from time to time).

These two big values can be spited up to sub-values. Thus, value of homeland has sub-values of homeland foundation, its peaceful existence, its defense, big love for it, and awareness that this place is the most beautiful in the world. The bad value is probability to loose the motherland. The value of sacred can be divided into sub-value of God, value of saint, value of religion (Islam), value of religious traditions (abdest, namaz, reading of Koran, hajj, necessity of sacrificing), value of religious places (mosques, holy houses, Saint's grave), and protective function of holy. The opposite values of sacred are disrespect to God and saints, spiritual and physical dirtiness, drunkenness, gambling, and polygamy. The most common among bad values is giving a promise to sacrifice an animal and going back on this promise. In legends, usually God turns a sinner into a stone for punishment (Sakaoğlu, 2003:69-79).

The good example of **value of love for homeland** is the Crimean Tatar legend about Aziz. A centenarian made a "hajj" (he came from Crimea to Mecca). The man was killed by Arabs on his way home, but before he died he remembered his homeland, garden and nutwood. He asked God to be buried in Crimea and he heard like some voice promised him that. When the Arab cut his head, the old man took it under his arm and walked from Mecca to Crimea. The people from his village noticed a grave near his nutwood and saw a green light there, and they understood that this is the grave of Aziz (which means "saint") (Marx, 1918:260-264). It is obvious that there is nothing impossible for mythological thinking in this legend: an old man was walking a long way to Mecca, and more fantastically, a dead man was returning home. Strong love for native land, the desire for living in Crimea (even though it is not possible), and mythological thinking constituted unbelievable miracle – a dead man came back to Crimea. The motive "cut head" ("kesil baş") is also widespread in Turkey, but it is connected with other value. This miracle is used for inspiration for victory. In legends, a dead man is continuing to fight in spite of his head was cut (Sarı, 1994:21).

The most striking example of the value of constant love for homeland is to be found in variants of the legend in terms of the Golden Cradle. The variants of this legend exist among different nationalities of Crimea, such as Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Armenians, Karaites (Kondaraki, 1883:71-76; Fayzi, 1999:22-27; Polkanov, 1995:14-15; Birzgal, 1937:365-380). The survival of this legend was also retraced. It was born in ancient times, but it is continue to work. The legend was transformed in Soviet times (Vul&Shlyaposhnikov, 1959:57-61) and adapted to contemporary culture (Tkachenko, 2009). According to the legend, there were two enemy clans in Crimea, one of them being autochthonous, another being alien. When locals began to lose the

war, their leader made a decision to save his people by following this way: he climbed up to an inaccessible mountain, hid a cradle (the sacred object of the clan) in a cave, and charmed by means of the spirits of that cave. The cradle in this legend became a symbol of the life of nations. If the cradle is destroyed, the people of Crimea will disappear. Keeping the cradle in the cave is the essential condition of the safe existence of Crimean people. The love for motherland is universal. This value is conjoint for Crimea. It does not separate peoples, but unites them, because Crimea is the home for every Crimean nation. The fact that variants of the legend exist among all Crimean nations affords us an opportunity to say about possibility of dialogue of cultures based on universal value of love for Crimea.

The value of love for homeland is present in Turkish legends also, but in different way. If in Crimea most legends tell about importance to defence of homeland, then in Turkey motif of conquest is more popular. Folklore narrates about the most vital problems. Crimea and Turkey has different histories. Crimea all time was conquered by new strangers. It was permanent danger to lose homeland. Whereas in Turkey people were not in jeopardy of loss of home, quite the reverse, essential problem was to take new lands. It is very rarely when value of capture is near to miracle, because legends try to show that Turks took countries by themselves without help of miracle, using just their intellect and power.

Value of sacred was singled out in Turkish legends as the most important by the reason of frequency of legends about saints. There is even specific genre “menkabe” (legend about saints), which does not exist Crimean folklore at all. The value of sacred is also critical by the reason of quality of miracles, such as a saint’s forecast of rain or control of the weather; whole army was fed by one saint; a saint’s ability to control wild animal; impossibility to burn a saint on fire; undecomposition of dead body; good smell from a grave; a saint’s prayer on his own grave; sound of spoken Koran from holy places. However, the most impressive miracles in Turkish legends are reanimation from death and saint’s movement from Turkey to Mecca and his return to Turkey in one day. There are just three Turkish legends where a saint makes alive human and animal (Önder, 1966:91-93; Nasrattinoğlu, 1973:19-21; Yavuz, 2007:297). However, motif “motion in space” is very popular. It is a legend about a master and his helper. The master went to Mecca. On Friday the helper asked master’s wife to make halavah/cutlet and brought it hot to his master to Mecca, after this came back to his home in the same day. When people from his village found out this relocation, they realized that the helper was a saint. Most probably that the miracle of reanimation from dead is less impressive then travelling through the space, because death and sleep some times are indistinguishable, but to be in Turkey on Friday morning and to be in Mecca for Friday namaz (while halavah is still hot) is really something incredible.

There is also very strong and ancient value of protective function of holy. Crimean material does not have these samples. For example, according the legend “Sivri tepe,” there were graves of Turk saints, and Greeks were afraid of them. When they came by with Turkish prisoners, they wrapped up horseshoes that the saints could not hear them, but once they forgot and the Turk saints woke up, caught up Greeks and turned them to stones (Sakaoğlu, 2003:50-51). Life-saving of Turkish soldiers by the dead saints is an interesting miracle which is one more proof of importance of value of sacred for Turkish culture.

The value of sacred exists in Crimean legends also but, in the majority of cases, it accompanies with standard miracles from hagiography. However, it is possible to find original patterns. In Crimean legends “Karadag bells’s ringing,” there was a small church in Karadag Mountain in Koktebel. The church was so poor that it even did not have bells. St. Stephen sailed by the church on the night of Easter. The saint prayed to God, and nonexistent bells started to ring. Now every Easter people who live in Koktebel hear ringing of nonexistent bells (Marx, 1917: 26-27). Undoubtedly vary beautiful miracle goes with meaning of Christian faith.

After values of sacred and love for homeland **value of life and health** is among equally important both Crimea and Turkey. In Crimea, the value of life is widespread in the legends about holy springs and saints’ graves. There are problems with potable water in Crimea, that attracts attention and every springs become sacred objects for all nationalities. In legends, springs are believed to have healing, if not reviving properties. Values of health and life are universal for everyone, and one spring can be a pilgrimage center of different nations. As an example, Savupulo’s spring in Simferopol is revered by both Christian and Muslim, but the place has different legends. Christians believe in the healing properties of the water due to the legend about a Greek who recovered his sight by washing his eyes in the water of the spring. The grave of Saint Salgir Baba, which is near the spring, explains sacredness of the water for Muslim people. In Crimean legends, water is source of life, but in Turkish legends, water is also important for abdest. For example, in the legend “Kanlıçeşme,” a woman let pass a saint through a spring that the saint could have abdest, and the woman was awarded with nonelapsing food (Alpaslan, 2006:13). Thus, sometime the value of holly is more meaningful then value of life and health in Turkey.

The value of life sometime near to **value of death**, because mythological thinking is cyclical, it combines life and death, beginning and end. Death can give birth to a spring. Frequently, this is death of a saint and his grave next to a spring, which makes the spring sacred. The sacredness of a place is proven by the miracles of recovery on the saint’s graves. The same as springs, every nationality worships the graves of Christian and Islamic saints, because it is not

possible to divide values of sacred and life, they are precious for all people what makes dialogue of cultures feasible.

Conflict between two values

Legend can contain two opposite values, when heroes have to choose between two values, and this alternative gives more importance to chosen value. It can be opposition of two good or two bad values. For example, there is a conflict between **sexual desire** and **thirst for treasures** in Crimean and Turkish legends about treasure-hunting. The main characters of these legends have to choose between a beautiful devil woman and the riches that she is guarding. “The gold and the woman are two different deaths when the Devil interferes in the case,” which is the way that one Crimean legend ends (Marx, 1914:247). Does not matter what main hero will choose, both leads him to trouble.

Metamorphoses of human beings into stones are very popular motifs in Crimean and Turkish mythology. Generally this is an example of the conflict of two positive values – **freedom and life**. In this conflict freedom always wins. A Russian philosopher, N. Berdyaev, proved that the value of freedom is even more important than the value of happiness, people always choose freedom over life (Berdyaev, 1993). Widespread in Crimea, the legend “Alive rocks” tells about a mother and a daughter who did not want to be in a rich bey’s harem and they chose to be turned to stone over to be held in captivity (Marx, 1917:47-49). Choosing a freedom over life is value conflict that exists in all variants of the legend, but in one, its collector N. Marx added his own value – love the mother for her daughter. N. Marx brought it in the legend by making literary insertions, such as “mother’s love is born before child’s birth and does not end after mother’s death,” “mother’s endearment is like breeze in hot day, like sun warming in rainy weather,” “remember your mother, if she has left this life, and this will relieve your heavy heart,” or “woman is weak but when she has to rescue her child she can be harder then stone” (Marx 1917, 47-49). Thus, besides main value conflict Marx brought his own value which is not exists in folklore texts.

Metamorphoses of humans into stones have also conflicts of values “love and death.” Most of characters choose death over life without love. In Turkish legends, metamorphoses also have specific motivations, such as fear and death, dishonour and death, grief and death, hopelessness and death.

However, the most bright example of conflict of two positive values is about choosing between love for homeland, its defence, self-sacrificingness, civicism and life in Crimean legends; and the most frequent conflict is Islamic and not-Islamic beliefs in Turkish legends.

The conflict “**love for home and life**” is in Crimean legend “Arzı kız”. The beautiful girl Arzı was kidnapped from her village Mishor shortly before her wedding. She was sold to the

harem of a Turkish Sultan. In spite of her rich life in Istanbul, homesickness made her deeply unhappy. Even giving birth to a son did not make the situation better. She took her child and threw herself from a tower to the Black Sea. The inhabitants of her village started to notice that the girl with her child went out of the sea and spent some time near her favorite fountain every year (Krishtof, 2001:207-212). Arzı chose her homeland over her life and life of her child. Mythological thinking tries to highlight the value of love for Crimea by using fantastic miracle “dead person return to home” as a vehicle.

The conflict of two opposite values in Turkish folklore is the conflict of **Islamic and not-Islamic beliefs**. One very popular legend tells about non-Muslim boy (Greek or Armenian) who ask Turkish girl to marry him in exchange for hay (Sakaoğlu, 2003:44-45; Tatlı, 2005:40-44; Özen, 2001:206; Çebi, 2001:63-68). It was a year of bad harvest. People of the village did not have hay for animals which started to die. The reach boy had enough food for saving the village from death, and he made a condition – the most beautiful girl had to marry him and renounce her faith. Thus, the heroine had to make choice, she either had to betray her faith or to doom her people to death. In this desperate situation the girl started to wrestle with God, who helped her. Incredible miracle happened: spring came in winter, trees were in bloom, grass turned green. We can see again an example how the most important value of Islam is underlined by beautiful miracle.

However, it is extremely important to emphasize that value of sacred is not divided into religions in Turkish legends. Thus, both Christian and Muslim sacred places and people are holy for every religions. There is no conflict of religions there. For example, in the legend “Cabbar dede,” an Armenian called out his saint for help. The saint came and asked why he was called. When he got an answer, he got angry. He said that there is local Turkish saint Cabbar dede, why man did not ask him for help and made his Armenian saint traveled long way from Baghdad to Turkey (Kavcar, 1990:52-55). In other legend “Bolulu hoca mezarı,” one famous orthodox priest died. Muslims and Christians were bidding to carry his coffin. The dead priest rose from his coffin and pointed to Muslims (Yavuz, 2007:281-282). In legend “Şeyh Salih kilisesi ziyareti,” after death of an Islamic saint, people built both a mosque and a church on his grave. Now both Muslim and Christian are visiting his grave (Yavuz, 2007:256).

There are two good examples for holly places which are universal for many religions: Hagia Sophia and the Sumela Monastery. There are a lot of legends that show holiness of these places for Muslim and Christians. The legend about the Sumela Monastery tells about translation of Icon of the Virgin Mary into Melá Mountain in Trabzon and foundation of monastery there. When Turk came to the Monastery they tried to break, burn, sink the icon but could not succeed. When Sultan Murat passed near the Monastery and heard strange sounds, he ordered to open fire,

but nothing happened to the building, then Turks understood that this was holly place that could not be destroyed. There is a pool with holly water inside of the Monastery. Both Muslim and Christian heal there but Muslim sacrifice animals after recovery (Gedikoğlu, 1998:108).

Hagia Sophia is also sacred for both Christian and Muslim. In Byzantine Empire, as the main church, in Ottoman Empire, as the main mosque, Hagia Sophia is holly place that does not need to be translated from one cultural tradition to another. The building has strong sacred meaning for all religions. Thus, there are Turkish legends about construction of Hagia Sophia. They are proving holiness of the building from the beginning. For example, water for cement was brought from the Kaaba (Önder, 1966:23).

However, capture of Istanbul and Hagia Sophia has absolutely different evaluation from Greek and Turkish point of view. The Crimean Greek legend “Shadow” is about conquest of Hagia Sophia. It describes Turks as very cruel people. Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror ordered to kill every person who was hiding and praying in Sophia, so he was able to pray there in silence. Sultan entered to the church where dead people were laying on the floor and stumbled over corpses. His hand was dirtied up in human blood. He printed his hand on column. We can still see this print in one of Hagia Sophia’s column. Sultan started to pray but he was interrupted by an old Orthodox priest who started to serve his Lord. Fatih commanded to brick him up, but the priest disappeared. Only his voice said “I will come back when Sophia becomes ours again” (Marx, 1917:50-53). According to Turkish legends, Mehmed was hero which conquered Istanbul, of course there are no descriptions of Sultan’s savageness in Turkish legends, it is only said that he swung around building of Hagia Sophia in the direction of the Kaaba, and by this way changed it from a church to a mosque (Önder, 1966:23).

It is more than understandable that the fact of seizure of Istanbul was tragic for Greeks so they mythologized Mehmed as a pure evil, whereas capture of Istanbul was very important for Turks, so Mehmed was mythologized in good way and was able to do marvels. However capture of Hagia Sophia is secular event, and the reactions are different, but concerning sacred meaning of the building, it did not change its holly shade for both religions.

Conclusion

Study of Turkish and Crimean legends helped to understand value preferences of two cultures. There are values of patriotism, sacred, life, health, freedom, love both in Crimean and Turkish legends. These values are dialogic values, they unite cultures.

The most important value has to have the most incredible miracle. Thus, in Crimean legends the most popular value is the love for homeland and it is emphasized by the most impressive miracle of dead person return to home. In Turkish legends, the most significant value

is sacred and it is accompanied by the miracle of movement in space. Dominant values attracted the most unbelievable miracles.

There are differences between two groups of texts. Crimean legends were process by their collectors, but Turkish legends are pure folklore material. However, content analysis showed that in general their value preferences are similar.

It is important to publish more collection of Turkish legends in many languages, because above mentioned values which are inside of legends make possible dialogue of cultures. However, publishers should be careful, because so-called “black legends” also exist and contain negative values inside. These legends can result national conflicts and discord. Myths and legends have a strong influence on people consciousness and goal of scholars control this influence.

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