



Cosmological and Eschatological Space-Time Continuum in Turkic Heroic Epics

Based on the epic *The Book of Dede Gorgud*

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The all-Turkic heroic tradition with an ethnoculturally rich internal structure has different branches. One of these branches is the Oghuz epic tradition. The special place of this tradition in the all-Turkic tradition of narration is determined by the fact that the epic *Oghuzname*, represented by numerous variants, forms a huge epic system. The epic *The Book of Dede Gorgud*, which has come down to us in the form of manuscript, occupies a special place in the epic series *Oghuznam*. In the epic, which is made up of twelve parts-epics, all forms of time are intertwined, including historical time and mythological time. Here it is very difficult to determine the boundaries of historical time-space, the moments of its transition with myth. The reason for it is that the epos *Dede Gorgud*, starting from the myth of *Gorgud* and until the period when it was written, developed without interruption and integrated all the time-space stages of the Oghuz people into its poetic space. The quality of being able to combine different time dimensions has turned the epic *Dede Gorgud* into the *transcendental* monument that stands above the past, present and future.

Investigation

The epic *The Book of Dede Gorgud* is a magnificent monument, the mother book of the nation, a masterpiece that reflects the various stages of the history of national-ideological thought in artistic words, describes the history, culture, ethno-psychological characteristics, traditions, mental values, perceptions of nature, society and time, views of the past, present and future, mythological-religious views of the Oghuz peoples from the mythological epoch to the 16th century.

The epochal time *mixture* created from the confluence of times and places in the epic was defined by Yas-har Garayev figuratively, within the time-space boundaries of about five thousand years. According to Garayev, the 1,300-year-old monument can become a symbol of

spiritual-cognitive renaissance and revival today, combining the pre-1,300-year history and the 1,300-year history that will come after it (2001: 4–10).

In the epic, *The Book of Dede Gorgud*, there are such parts that it is necessary to restore the mythological space-time content. For example, the mythological time-space of the part is at the root of the plots such as about Dirsas Khan sitting in a black tent, Dirsas Khan's son killing the bull, injuring his son Bughaj with an arrow by Dirsas Khan, Khizir's appearance next to him and giving the ointment "the mother's milk and mountain flower" for the wound. There is also a mythological structure in the part of *The Mad Domrul, the son of Dukha Goja*. The time of this part is a purely mythological time. In the structure of the part *Basat killed Tepegoz* the mythological time-space is also seen. The events in the parts such as when Salur Gazan's house was looted, Gazan bey's son Uruz bey was arrested, Ganli Goja's son Ganturali, Gazilig Goja's son Yeynek, Bekil's son Amrah, Ushun Goja oglu Sagray and Beyrek's death, these events were reflected in the historical consciousness of time. But in the part of being prisoner Salur Gazan sent his son Uruz, the historical time-space and mythological space-time are observed in pairs.

The Oghuz mythological place is connected with the name of the Oghuzs' first father, ancestor Oghuz Kaghan. This mythological space in the epic operates within the boundaries of Oghuz mythology. This place can also be called Oghuz space. The myth of Oghuz appeared in this place and was formed on the basis of the structure of the Turkic myth. In ancient myths about Oghuz, he is described as bull-headed. But another zoomorphic sign of Oghuz Kagan is a bird. The patriarchal society created the Oghuz mythological space. Oghuz mythological space is also an astral space. Oghuz cosmogonic myths also give extensive information about this astral space. The astral images of the Oghuz myth can become epic heroes in the process of historical consciousness. In the epic, *The Book of Dede Gorgud*,

Deli Domrul's khatun became an animated creature of an astral image. According to the astral mythological imagination, the female sacrifices were to be given to the dragon that swallowed the Moon. It was based on the conditions of the soul motif instead of the soul. Deli Domrul's khatun is also an anthropomorphized character that fulfills the conditions of the soul motif instead of the soul.

In the deepest layers of the mythological space of Oghuz the place of Gunortaj of Oghuz is the place where the Sun stands at the top point. It depends on the name Oghuz which is a cosmic name and Gunortaj is the place of the Sun, as Basat says *Qalarda-qoparda yerim Gunortaj* ("The place where I stay, from where I rise, Gun-Ortach (Place of the Sun in the sky at noon)") (Zeynalov 1988: 102). Basat's mythological association with the lion and the Sun shows that his mythological place, like Oghuz, is Gunortaj. The cosmic space *Gunortaj* acts as a projection of the mythological space of Oghuz in space. So, not only did Basat live in a mythological cosmic time, but Salur Gazan, Dede Gorgud, Bugaj and Beyrek also lived in this cosmic space. It can be concluded from this that the Oghuz mythological space is a cosmic space. Seyfeddin Rzasoy notes that "Basat's place in the *galarda-goparda* is as Gunortaj in the sky, the place of Tepegoz standing in reverse projection to the sky is in the underground (2007: 144).

The archetype of the time-mythological space combines with the action and hero archetypes and participates in the creation of archaic myths related to the epic. Later, these archaic myths are forgotten, but their signs remain in the structure of new texts, including the epic *The Book of Dede Gorgud*. For example, totem myths are forgotten, but its signs live in Salur Gazan's cult-level belief in trees, water and wolf in *The Book of Dede Gorgud*. Salur Gazan is informed with water, trees and wolf in his mythological place. This belief system places Salur Gazan's mythological place into the epic. Without the mythological place Salur Gazan would not have been able to meet his cults. Therefore, mythological space-time is always active in the epic.

The main factors that form the mythological space are language, memory, time, and myth. Rahim Aliyev writes: "It is the ability to manage and actualize the treasure of vivid images in memory through words that can act as their sign and stimulus" (2008: 120). In general, the word has a controlling force. Having a certain meaning it passes through consciousness under the influence of irritation, controlling thought. Myth is also the word and controls thought.

After creating the Gods and Goddesses of Oghuz time-space the mythological consciousness also forms its functions. Even Oghuz gives the demiurgical feature to the God, according to the Ongonian thinking of mythological consciousness, he describes it zoomorphically. The thought of Oghuz in the form of an animal (ox) also dominates the idea that he is a two-horned god. And it is the symbol and the formula that create the idea of God in mythological

thinking. This process can be understood as follows: The human mind has a necessary measurement system. This system creates a generalizing mold-form based on the magnificent word, sentence, and poetic expressions of an idea to express an instant idea. This mold is a formula. When this mold combines with a symbol, it serves for its poetic expression and becomes artistic speech. Kamil Veli Narimanoglu writes that "... the arbitrary epic lives as a language embedded in the human brain, the speech acquires reality during performance and all speech formulas appear as the expression formulas of that language" (2000: 128–131).

One of the main factors creating the Oghuz mythological space is the mythological consciousness of the ancient Oghuz living there, the spatial symbols and spatial formulas created by their mythological consciousness. Such symbols and formulas refer to the topographical (geographical) spaces. A feature of the topographical places is their legend in the epic. Such topographical spaces are out of history, they can be imaged because of the artistic paintings.

The place formulas and symbols are also related to is epic space. As the Oghuz space and the infidel space are imaged, it forms both a spatial formula and a spatial symbol in the epic. The concepts of *own* and *other* space also come from here (Aliyev 2001: 12).

There are no unknown topographical places in Oghuz mythological space. These are the lands inhabited by the Oghuzs or infidels. The Oghuzs live in these cities, travel from these places and return back. The names of the places where the events took place during the trip are neighboring areas of Oghuz. No matter how powerful the infidels are in their historical places and fortresses from the point of view of political and social state, they are physically distinguished from the Oghuzs. It is the demand of epic poetics. In order to show the power and magnificence of the Oghuz, the poetics of the epic describes the infidels as cruel, savage and stronger than the Oghuzs: *At üzərindən ikisi qıvrışdılar, dartışdılar, kafirin gücü ziyadə, oğlan zəbun oldu* ("Both of them fought on the horseback, the pagan had a lot of strength, the boy became weak and lost his strength") (Arasli, ed. 1977: 32), and *Ya Cəbrayıl, var, şol quluma qırx ərcə qüvvət verdim* ("Oh Ye, Gabriel, go ahead and give my servant strength equal to the strength of forty wrestlers") (Arasli, ed. 1977: 133).

In this part one can see that the topographical space formula indicated by the number is expressed precisely: *Doqquz tuman Gürcüstanın xəracı gəldi* ("The fee of Georgia of nine thousand tuman currency has arrived") (Arasli, ed. 1977: 125). It is observed that the space is also uncertain: *Ağ ban evini qara yerin üzərinə tikdirmişdi* ("He built his house with a white roof on black soil according to traditions no one was allowed to build white tent except a leader") (Arasli, ed. 1977: 125). Here, *qara yer* ("the black place") means land and is a sign of the general Oghuz area.

While the historical place in the epic is the man's place, the Oghuz mythological place was a place of woman in its archaic layer. The space of a woman is based on the ancient mythological views about the mother-woman in material, spiritual, ritual, family and marriage spheres. In the mythological society the woman is the ruler, the protector of the family. In the eposes the wives give advice to their husbands, protect their family and show the right way to their husbands. Goddesses always protect women's rights and children's health in the Oghuz mythological space (Nabiyev 2009: 100). Oleng, Humay, and Ayiisit are female goddesses. Their function is to protect the women from evil forces of the female gender, for example, *al arvad*, *albasti* ("evil demon – a woman who harms women in labor") and so on (Agayev 2008: 98). Umay (Humay), the scientist Mammadhuseyn Tahmasib shows that she is the friend of any child. It is clear how important that a child's companion is in the life and development of the child in the mother's womb. This natural-material taking on a supernatural form and essence in the mythical thought, was elevated to the status of a goddess and in the later stages of own development, shadow and protection, it turned into a mythical bird that gives happiness such as a state, a child to the people (Tahmasib 2010: 163).

Ganturali, who is using his male rights, wants to punish Seljan Khatun for fighting with his enemy without permission. Because Oghuz society is a patriarchal society. In the patriarchal society the male rights are considered superior.

In the epic thought, one can observe the narrowing of the male Oghuz mythological time-space, its symbolization by acquiring the opposite meaning (woman) in the form of a cave. The cave is a symbol of that world in the Oghuz mythological worldview. This cave is a place where Oghuz's enemy Tepegoz lives. But Tepegoz was born in the light world and after acquiring the nature of evil, he came to the place of evil. Thus, the cave is a symbol of evil. Here we can say that Tepegoz and its place are in opposite proportion to the Oghuz mythological space, as evidence that shows the essence of the Oghuz mythological space and proves its belonging to the Oghuz. Here one can meet the process of spatial change. Tepegoz changes its location because it is hostile to the Oghuz space. This space change also belongs to some Oghuz heroes. For example, Ganturali coming out of the Oghuz space enters the evil space. This space change is to prove the power of the Oghuz. Ramazan Garfarli writes: "... The symbols played a special role in generalizing the idea, narrowing the broad content and placing it in the meaning capacity of a word in the formation of artistic techniques" (2010: 102). Tepegoz also participates in the part as a symbol of evil in a hyperbolic form. But Basat prevents the degradation of the Oghuz society in the good content of the meaning. His fight with Tepegoz also takes place in the cave. Therefore, the meaning of the cave is close

as a narrow space, but Tepegoz reflects the broad meaning in its content. The people eaten by Tepegoz are considered its victims.

According to Oghuz mythological consciousness, if an Oghuz person changes his world or dies, he will be resurrected and live in cosmic space. The usual act of death is described next to the bridge of Deli Domrul. But in Deli Domrul's speech the words, *Savaşım, çakişim, dirişim, yaxşı igidin canını qurtarayım* ("I am here to fight, I am here to argue, I am here to resist, just save the life of a brave man") (Arasli, ed. 1977: 87), the idea of bringing the dead back to life and imagining the dead alive in the Oghuz afterlife is also hidden.

The Oghuz mythological space is divided into two places: Ich Oghuz and Dash Oghuz. These spaces in the Oghuz mythological space the bird models of heroes live in their names in parallel with their animal models. Both bird and animal models are equal members of the structure of the Oghuz mythological space. In this mythological space, the ongon birds are protector birds. For example, the bird *tulu* ("eagle") protects Salur Gazan; it is his ongon and the sacred bird of the Oghuz space. In the mythological origin of many Dede Gorgud heroes stands the bird *tulu*. The word *bamsi* ("eagle") in the name Bamsi Beyrak, determines the ongon ethnicity of the name Beyrak in the archaic thought (Garfarli 2015: 454). In ethnogenesis Bamsi's son Beyrek is stronger than Gurd's son Beyrek. According to this strong influence after the end of the mythological period the ongon and totem names remain as signs in a person's name.

Oghuz mythological space can be restored in the minds of many heroes of *The Book of Dede Gorgud*. In this regeneration process the bird and animal archaism of the hero, connected to the past, plays a powerful role in his reincarnation. The connection to the past period is felt in characters such as Salur Gazan, Beyrek, Basat, Aruz, Deli Domrul, Dirse Khan and Bughaj, but one can see the historical connection in the characters such as Gazan Khan, Bayandir Khan and Ganturali. A hero connected only to the historical place cannot descend into the mythological place or fight with a dragon. But as Salur Gazan is also connected with the mythological place of Oghuz, he can go down to this place and fight with the dragon. In the epic "The part of being prisoner Salur Gazan sent his son Uruz" it is observed clearly that Salur Gazan is connected with Oghuz mythological space:

*Qlağolsuz yol başaran Qazan ər idim,
Yeddi başlı əjdərhayə yetib vardım.
Heybətindən sol gözüm yaşardı
Hey gözüm, namərd gözüm, müxənnət gözüm.
Bir yilandan nə var ki, qorxdun! – dedim.*
(Arasli, ed. 1977: 146)

(I used to be Gazan, a hero wandering without a guide

I reached to the seven-headed dragon
I got tears in my left eye because of fear
Oh, ye my coward, coward, treacherous eye
You are afraid of just one snake, I said.)

In these verses Salur Gazan's battle with the dragon in the sub-mythological Oghuz area is confirmed. This fact indicates that Salur Gazan was able to descend into the lower mythological space at any time, his spatial changeability. The spatial change of Salur Gazan takes place according to the historical anthropomorphizing feature of time. It means that Salur Gazan is also an anthropomorphic image of the time. Salur Gazan realizes the mythological time in the myth, but Gazan Khan realizes the historical time.

According to the above mentioned we can say that the mythological place of Oghuz has passed through two historical stages. The first of them is the era of matriarchy. In this period the archaic mythological thought of the mythological place not named Oghuz and the structural units of this thought were formed. The second stage is the period associated with patriarchal society. In this period the mythological consciousness was already formed, its structures related to the mythological world model were created and acted, then this activity weakened, as a result of it the transition to historical consciousness took place. This period can also be considered the period of epic activity of our ancestors. The formation of the oldest Oghuzname also appears in this period. In all mythological and historical periods, the mythological place of Oghuz influenced the epic activity and played a role in the creation of a great epic as *The Book of Dede Gorgud*. Amin Abid writes about Oghuzname: *Oghuzname* is the most ancient work of folk literature that the Azerbaijanis had before the period of feudalism. According to its current status, Oghuzname means the first work of Azerbaijani literature (Abid 2016: 240). Oghuzname is a national system of thought. The ancient legends are reflected in its historical plot.

The eschatological time that predicts the end of the Oghuz time-space system is marked as a certain time dimension that occurs as a result of the influence of eschatological myths on the epic. This time type has a very complex system as well as being very abstract. Because the concepts of time in cosmogonic, anthropogonic, calendar, religious and shamanic myths do not enter the epic as they do. The duration and dimension of time in these myths are described in the epic abstractly or concretely. Eschatological time is not simply understood, the characters of the epic act as the direct participants of this time form. They accept this time form with the presence of details. One way of perceiving it is sleep. In the part of Salur Gazan's house pillage, as a sign of eschatological time, the dream shows the arrest of the Salur Gazan's family to him (Arasli, ed. 1977: 34). Under the consciousness the explanation of this dream is mythological. In order to explain the dream, Salur Gazan's

brother, Garagune, appears in the role of a dreamer. In the eschatological myths and in the epic the ideas about the savior of the world are understood clearly. This is also mentioned in the religious thoughts. In the above-mentioned example, it is noted that Salur Gazan is the person who can save the Oghuz world from the future apocalypse. There is also a connection between his dream and the function of salvation.

In the eschatological teachings there are also ideas about the afterlife of people after the end of the world. The people's ideas about that world are also reflected in Islamic teachings. This thought is also met in the proverbs spoken by Dede Gorgud:

Əzəldən yazılmasa qul başına qəza gəlməz.

Əcəl vada ırmayınca kimsə ölməz.

Çıxan can geri gəlməz

(Arasli, ed. 1977: 14).

Sağış günündə ayna görklü

(Arasli, ed. 1977: 16).

(Without God's writing, no harm befalls a person
Nobody dies unless it's time to die
a person's soul left once won't return to his body
once again
out of the days of the week, Friday is the beautiful
one)

Eschatology of the individual is also connected with the general day of resurrection. Nikolai Berdyaev names these two eschatologies individual and universal disaster and writes: "On the one hand, after the death of a person an individual resolution of his personal fate is confirmed. On the other hand, it is expected that the fate of the whole world and humanity will be decided at the end of time and history. Free time occurs between two perspectives. Eternal fate cannot be isolated, it is connected with the fate of history, the world and humanity. The world, the universal destiny is my destiny, and vice versa, the universal destiny of the world cannot be decided without me" (Berdyaev 2003: 550–551).

Eschatological time is observed as a product of both the ozan and his eschatological thinking of different individuals. Salur Gazan is the hero of the epic who later acquired the eschatological outlook. The capture of his family can be considered a small doomsday for him. This small eschatological time period ends when he fights against Shoklu Malik and kills him. The eschatological myth is based on Salur Gazan's eschatological time. In the myth Salur Gazan fights with the pro-image (dragon) of Shoklu Malik and restores the eschatological time structure of the myth. The evolution of the eschatological myths can be observed not

only in *The Book of Dede Gorgud*, but also in fairy tale plots with the same content. In these texts the end of the mythological cycle indicates the end of the world. The eschatological worldview begins from the starting point and continues to the final point. Here the features of evolution reflecting the transformation from the mythological worldview into the religious worldview, from the mythological text into the religious text are observed. In the religious worldview the concept of eschatological time appears more clearly and gets the religious character. Mircea Eliade writes: "In the religions of the primitive and Eastern peoples the thiogenic and cosmogonic ideas are seen very much, which are associated with the idea of an eternal struggle between two trends in the life of space – its destruction and reshaping. In this regard, the distinction between Biblical eschatology and eschatological plots in other religions is divided into two parts for the forms of expression of eschatological moods and ideas: mythological and eschatological-historical types" (1995: 224).

Both mythological and historical types of eschatology are found in *The Book of Dede Gorgud*. In the part where Basat killed Tepegöz, the ideas about the end of the world are explained in the mythological aspect. Metaphysical ideas about the end of the world are in the lower layer of this part. Here we meet the eschatological description of an archaic myth. In the part the eschatological time ends with the death of Tepegöz. M. Eliade notes: "In short, these myths about the end of the world express the same ancient and very widespread idea that suggests a more or less absolute re-creation of a new universe, the regular *degradation* of space, which requires its cyclicity, destruction and restoration. From these myths about the recent catastrophe, which at the same time heralded the inevitable revival of the world, arose and developed in the era of prophetic and nationalistic trends of primitive societies" (1995: 68). Eschatological myth and eschatological destruction arose as a product of the subconsciousness of the ancient people.

Conclusion

In all Oghuznames, including in the oghuzname *The Book of Dede Gorgud*, the mythological core of space-time is the image of Oghuz Kagan. This image combines all the diachronous and synchronous parameters of Oghuz space-time as a universum. Oghuz space-time is organized by anthropological, ethnic, political, and geographical levels. All of these levels are marked in the Oghuz universum. As

every individual is considered Oghuz in the world of Oghuz, the nation, state and geography he lives in are also called Oghuz.

The Oghuz universe is also a model of communication among all individuals, generations, ancestors and heirs in Oghuz time and space. From this point of view, each level of Oghuz time-space embodied in the mind of Oghuz man, merges with each other in the Oghuz spatial model creating a single spatial system. The core of the Oghuz time-space model is the image of Oghuz Kagan. The Oghuz Kagan is the beginning, basis and source of the Oghuz space in the historical-diachronic context. Because all the elements that form the Oghuz space – all the elements of society and nature are originated from Oghuz Kagan. From this point of view, the whole structural scheme of Oghuz epic-mythological space is embodied in the myth of *Oghuz Kagan*. Oghuz Kagan's six sons named Day, Moon, Star, Sky, Mountain, and Sea are the ancestors of both the elements of nature and the elements of society. From this point of view, nature and society in the Oghuz space are the components of a single system according to the genetic point of view.

Oghuz as a space world of the time-space continuum is closely and inextricably connected with the world of chaos. Oghuz chaos forms the basis of the construction of Oghuz space. Each Oghuz goes to the world of individual chaos and returns from there renewed. From this point of view, the space of chaos plays the role of the foundation and material for the construction of the Oghuz cosmic space.

The epic *The Book of Dede Gorgud* is closely connected with cosmogony, in fact, it is a stage of the process of creation, as in the world epic-mythological thought, eschatology, which literally covers ideas about the end of the world, man, life, time. As in the proverb it is said "If one does not die, the other will not be resurrected", the Oghuz perceived the end of time as the beginning of a new time.

The concept of death, which is the concept of eschatological endings in the formula "The world of the future, the world of the departed, // the last end of the mortal world" in the epic, means the mechanism of creation that combines coming and going, that is, birth and death.

In *The Book of Dede Gorgud* the eschatological time also means the point where epochal time periods diverge and converge. The expression *Rasul aleyhisselam zamanina yaqin* ("Close to the time of the messenger (of God), greetings to him"), which indicates the time of birth of Dede Gorgud in the epic, is the formula of epoch-making time and shows that the Oghuz imagined the world in which



they lived as a process consisting of two times – the old time before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad and the new time that began with his birth. However, in the eschatological concept of time of the epic, the concepts of Islam and Oghuz time have merged and parallelized. As an ethnos, the Oghuz who converted to Islam tried to remain attached to their godly identity at the same time. In this regard, if the point *Rasul aleyhisselam zamanina yaqin* indicates the finality of the pre-Islamic time, then the breaking off of a hero who is called a father, who is afraid of his stale stature, that is, the birth or emergence of the old time before fear, represents the reunion of the new time that began with fear. This, in turn, shows the parallelization of their own chronometry and Islamic chronometry in the eschatological and generally time-related thoughts of the Oghuz.

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