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THE DRAGON MOTIF IN ANATOLIAN LEGENDS

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Abstract

In this study, we will review the dragon motif in Anatolian Turkish legends that were compiled from verbal, written and electronic environments and moreover, we will examine the fundamental frame of the cultural background of this motif.

Firstly, we will look at the place of legend, motifs, and the dragon motif in other cultures, later looking at the dragon motif in Anatolian Turkish legends. When we review the fundamentals of the cultural elements of the dragon motif, we will specifically provide information about the beliefs and thoughts of Turks. With this method, we may able to see changes of dragon motif from past to today in parallel to Turkish civilization. Moreover, the dragon motif based on Stith Thompson's **Motif Index of Folk Literature** will be compared to motifs of different world cultures.

Lastly, reviewed dragon motifs will be scrutinized from the perspectives of cultural life and cultural economy and how they could be used in the mentioned field. It is the third dimension of folklore, that is, supporting of updating folkloric production and representing it to the market in a renewed state will be attempted.

Keywords: Anatolian Turkish Legends, Motif, Dragon, Function, Applied Folklore.

INTRODUCTION

1. Anonymous Folk Legends and Their Characteristics

Legends are one of the types of stories told by folk. After becoming an independent branch of study of folklore in the early 19th century, many folk researchers focused on the type of story known as "legends", and tried to come up with a definition for this type of story.

Using our studies of Turkish legends, we can define the anonymous folk stories called legends as such: Lacking a specific type of storyteller, yet told by people known for telling good legends, about a historical or present person, place and events. Despite not having a set time or place, when asked about or mentioned contains material appropriate to the social norms and environment, which shows difference according to the culture of the legend. Using simple language, what is explained is generally about certain historical or religious truths that the storyteller and listener believe, yet contain elements of the supernatural, holiness and credibility along with the element of truth. They protect societal norms and provide detailed information on the environment that was lived in or the roots and functions of social corporations, and are generally products of anonymous oral tradition, which include fairytales, sagas and folk stories, which are told in the style of short prose.

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Religious or historical truths based on legends originating from mythological, religious or fantastic roots become supernatural by means of imaginary and fantastic elements added by centuries of the imagination of collective society.

Because of this, they are not "holy text", despite containing elements of belief, despite having historical elements are not history, and though the roots of legends have many truths, these legends are not the absolute "truth". Legends being explained with a simple yet symbolic language causes them to be a kind of folklore where their truth is not disputed, and causes them to be believable.

Enduring since the earliest times, legends have ensured the flow of successes, tragedies, beliefs and thoughts shared by society, ideals from generation to generation. In short, all the gains of societal life have been passed along through this method.

Legends protect tradition and custom, provide continuity, are a guide to society, provide holiness to the material things that make up the environment or the spot where a feat of architecture stands, has guardian and healing roles, provides an escape mechanism for societal and personal problems, causes people to keep societal memory strong by making them live their ideals and also has a positive effect on culture tourism.

When we examine these functions in addition to our original subject of the dragon motif, it could be said that the motifs that go along with legends give hints about the archaic beliefs of societies and that the change in motifs seen in legends can help to show changes in the levels of civilization of the people.

2. What is a motif, motifs of legend?

The word motif, used more generally in everyday conversation to mean "piece" or "part" is defined in the *Türkçe Sözlük* as: "1. Side to side form an adornment, and any part that individually form a whole: *A carpet motif. The motifs on the lace.* 2. A decorative element used repeatedly throughout a work. 3. *Music.* A small, significant part that provides completeness in numerous aspects to a certain part of the melody: *Melody motif.*"¹

It can be seen that the word motif in Turkish relates to a wide field and many meanings. Ex: Turkish handicrafts, fine arts, music, literature etc.

One of the most important building blocks of anonymous folk stories, a motif is defined by Stith Thompson as: "The smallest element of a fairy tale that has the ability to survive the past." To have this ability, Thompson says that the motif must have several attractive and supernatural traits. He points to three main points in this regard. The first is the characters. Gods, super mundane animals, marvelous creatures (sorcerers, giants, fairies, dragons etc.) Second is the things that are in the background of the events. Things such as magical wares, strange customs, strange beliefs etc. Third is single events. This section comprises the formation of most motifs (Alptekin, 2002: 113–114). As can be seen from Stith Thompson's definition of a motif, the most important group of motifs and the focus of our work are giants, fairies, dragons etc., super mundane animals, and supernatural creations.

The motifs in Stith Thompson's work *Motif Index of Folk Literature* are grouped under twenty-three titles. In the work, the dragon motif appears most under the title "B) Animals, B11. Dragon". In addition; A) Mythological Motifs, C) Taboo (Forbidden), D) Magic, E) Death, F) Supernatural events, H)Tests, K) Trickery, Q) Rewards and Punishments, R) Slaves and runaways, V) Religion etc.² it is seen that some motifs give way to the dragon motif, looking this chart, we can prove that "dragon" is a widely used motif in folk stories.

A. The Dragon Motif

¹ See *Türkçe Sözlük* (1998). V. 2, Ankara, Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, pg. 1578.

² See more: Stith Thompson (1975). *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature. A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books and Local Legends, Volume One A-C*, Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, Third Printing.

A.1. Etymology of the Word Dragon

The *Türkçe Sözlük* defines a dragon as: 1. a frightening fairy tale monster envisaged in different ways. 2. A large snake, robust and frightening like a dragon."³ The word dragon in Turkish originates from Persian. The etymology of the word is as such: ~ Fa ajdahāk/ajdahā اجدحاً/كاهدراً In Persian mythology, mythological snake king, dragon, Dahak ~ Ave aji-dahāka⁴ a.a. < Ave aji yılan << HAvr *eghi-/*ang^whi- a.a. Despite the original form being *ejdehā*, considering that the syllable <+>hā is the Persian addition for the plural form, the form *ejder* arose. The origin of the /r/ sound which later appeared could not be determined. It has been seen that the word first appeared in Turkish as "ejdehā", in the year 1330 years before Hijira (708 B. C.), in Âşık Paşa's work entitled *Garib-nâme*.⁵

Among the people of Anatolia, the word "evran/evren", having meanings such as to turn, to be turned, to be bent and to curl, and originating from the verb "evrilmek" is used to mean, "one who curls, a creature that moves by curling" is used in place of the word dragon.

The word dragon used today shows up as "luu", "böke/büke",⁶ "nek",⁷ "soğulcan", "nihang", "evran" veya "evren" in the earliest Turkish works (Esin, 2004: 136; Yöndemli, 2006: 129).

A.2. Dragon Descriptions

As is understood from the etymology of the word, be it one of the cultures on the planet or be it Turkish culture, the dragon is a snake that has been made larger, more frightening and stylized in many different ways, and is a supernatural and fantastic creature.

In his work entitled *Nuzhet el Kulûb*, Hamdullah Mustafa Kazvinî says that the difference between a snake and dragon is: "The dragon was a snake at first, in time it changed and became a dragon. A snake will become a dragon when it gets the opportunity."

However, *Aca'ib el Mahlûkat* says: "When a snake reaches thirty meters and one-hundred years of age, it is a dragon" (Yöndemli, 2006: 123).

Mankind has described this imaginary and fantastic creature in many ways. Some dragons are winged, some breathe fire, some have one head, yet some have seven heads.

The dragon in Turk mythology is a creature that has seven heads, beaked, lion-footed, with a length of fifty arşins (50 x 0.76 m = 42 m), possessing thirty-two giant-like teeth, it's form resembling a peacock, winged, eating fifty camels in one sitting, razing one-hundred elephants with one strike, ripping stones out of the ground with one swipe of its tail, it's eyes burning like a torch, and breathes fire when it opens its mouth (Çetin, 1997: 115, Yöndemli, 2006: 134).

Portrayed in many different ways in different cultures, a dragon is actually a mix of different traits of what could be encountered in the environment such as snakes, crocodiles and other reptiles, lions, birds, and bats.

³ *Türkçe Sözlük* (1998). V. 1, Ankara, Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, pg. 680.

⁴ Dragon came from "Edeha", which came from "Aji-Dahaka". Aji-Dahaka is the name given to the "Oppressive Giant" in Indian-Iranian mythology. The word later took the form of "Deh-ak" (Yöndemli, 2006: 130).

⁵ See, <http://nisanyansozluk.com/?k=ejderha> (12.12.2013).

⁶ Kaşgarlı Mahmud, in his work entitled *Divânü Lugâti't-Türk*, defines "böke/büke" as: "Dragon, a large snake". See more: Robert Dankoff, [with James Kelly], Mahmud al-Kaşyari (1984). *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Divan Luğat at-Türk)*, edited and translated with introduction and indices. Cambridge, Mass. [In: Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures, ed. Sinasi Tekin.], C. 2, Boston, pg. 268.; Besim Atalay (1992). *Divanü Lügat-it Türk Tercümesi*, TDK Yayınları, C. 3, Ankara, pg. 227.

⁷ Kaşgarlı Mahmud, in his work entitled *Divânü Lugâti't-Türk*, gives this article about the word "nek": nek year: A year of the twelve Turkish years[the fifth]. *The year I wrote this book is the year (four hundred) sixty-nine is the year of the nek (dragon). (The year of the male crimson dragon starts on 1076/469 August 5th, Friday). See More: Robert Dankoff, [with James Kelly], Mahmud al-Kaşyari (1984). *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Divan Luğat at-Türk)*, edited and translated with introduction and indices. Cambridge, Mass. [In: Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures, ed. Sinasi Tekin.], C. 2, Boston, pg. 228.; Besim Atalay (1992). *Divanü Lügat-it Türk Tercümesi*, TDK Yayınları, C. 3, Ankara, pg. 155.

In this regard the dragon being a product of the people's imagination has roots in reality. These types of supernatural creatures generally arise as a product of those opening the door to fantastic conclusions and from a graphic observation of nature. In descriptions of dragons, mankind's observations towards nature and imagination were interwoven (Absalon 2010: 12).

A.3. Dragons as an Artistic Motif in Turkish Culture

Due to the positive meaning the dragon carried in early Turkish culture, it can be seen that the dragon motif appears frequently on everyday items and in quite a few branches of art.

For example: The twin-headed dragon used as an astronomical sign by the Turks. Like the graves of Chinese rulers, the Kül Tigin monument and the Kaçgar Cairn, which was discovered in the 8th century, both feature a twin-headed dragon.⁸ In addition, descriptions of dragons are frequently seen in Uyгур Turk iconography. These dragons resemble the Chinese dragons, who in addition to being green or blue, occasionally appear as being yellow or red, and breathe fire (Esin, 2004: 130-138).

The dragon motif in early Turk beliefs and ways of thought carried positive traits, after the Turks settled in Anatolia, influence by Sumerian, Hittite, Roman, Byzantine, Arabian and Iranian brought the dragon to being a frightening and harmful creature, and caused it to possess a place in art with these traits.

The dragon motif can be seen on many materials in Anatolian art. We encounter it frequently in architecture in religious and social structures, tiles, wood, minerals, cloth, carpets and weaved ground rugs.⁹

In the time of the Anatolia Seljuk's and the Beylik's architecture and art¹⁰, the dragon motif is seen in stone rubbings, mineral door knobs¹¹, decoration for wooden doors, tiles and stoneware, carpets¹², and weavings¹³.

In Ottoman art the dragon motif appeared in the 16th century, where a saz (Turkish guitar) style consisting of various plants, animals and mythological characters is observed in works.¹⁴

A.4. Dragons in the World of Symbols

The variety of dragon descriptions reveal themselves as the symbolic meanings that different cultures placed upon this imaginary creature.

Appearing in various cultures with either positive or negative traits, the dragon symbol was in early Turkish culture as a symbol of the bringing of plenitude due to causing rainfall, fruitfulness, rebirth, prosperity, strength, and power (Esin, 2004:131). However, among Turks the positive meaning of dragon decreased, especially during the time when they started interacting with Arab and Iranian culture. The meaning of dragon became more commonly perceived as, "an evil symbol that got the worst of it". As a result of this medieval age Turk texts

⁸See more: Emel Esin (2004). "Ejder Takının Simgeciliği Ve Kötülükten Koruyan Maske", *Orta Asya'dan Osmanlıya Türk Sanatında İkonografik Motifler*, Kabalıcı Yayınevi, İstanbul, pp. 151-168.

⁹ Dragon motifs are seen on many objects in many cultures. In the West especially, the artistic *dragon motif is directed towards protecting the person and scaring enemies*. The dragon was very popular from the Mediterranean to China, and quickly replaced this function in place of all the other hybrid monsters (Absalon 2010: 60).

¹⁰ See more: Gönül Öney (1969). "Anadolu Selçuklu Sanatında Ejder Figürleri", *Belleten*, Volume: XXXII, No.: 130, pp. 171-192.

¹¹ See more: Hakkı Acun (1993). "Ejder Motifli Kapı Tokmakları ve Değişik Örnekler", *Sanat Tarihinde İkonografik Araştırmalar, Güner İnal'a Armağan*, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Armağan Dizisi: 4, Ankara, pp. 1-14.

¹²See more: Sadi Bayram (1998). "Hayvan Figürlü Halılarda Ejder-Kaplumbağa-Akrep-Kertenkele", *Türk Soylu Halıların Hali, Kilim ve Cicim Sanatı Uluslararası Bilgi Şöleni Bildirileri*, Ankara, pg. 66.

¹³ See more: Bekir Deniz (1998). "Anadolu Türk Dokumalarında Ejder Motifi", *Türk Soylu Halıların Hali, Kilim ve Cicim Sanatı Uluslararası Bilgi Şöleni Bildirileri*, Ankara, pp. 102-108.

¹⁴ See more: Fatma Banu Mahir (1993). "Osmanlı Saz Üslubu Resimlerinde Ejder İkonografisi", *Sanat Tarihinde İkonografik Araştırmalar, Güner İnal'a Armağan*, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Armağan Dizisi: 4, Ankara, pp. 271-294.

use the dragon motif in various allegorical ways. Eg: If they are spoken of while referring to a ruler they are used to symbolize strength, power and ruler ship. If they are spoken of while mentioning religion, mysticism etc., then they are used as a symbol of the ego, the traps of the devil etc. (Çoruhlu, 1999: 143-144).

The dragon is an imaginary creature that has defines different symbolic meanings in different cultures. When all its traits are looked at the dragon is neither a God nor a Devil; neither Truth hood nor Falsehood; it is more generally a basis of the opposite and completing forces of the universe, and the cycle of life and death (Absalon, 2010: 38).

A.5. Dragons in World Mythology

The dragon motif is a universal motif that is seen foremost in Chinese, and also Middle Asia, Sumerian, Hittite, Phrygian, Assyrian, Urartian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Persian, Islamic and Turkish mythology.

This universal motif has been thought of in legend logical explanations as being directly related of the birth of the cosmos or as being against it as a god that originated from the first chaos, or a monster that was born of the ground. For example, in the cosmos of Mesopotamian mythology, "Marduk", who symbolizes order, brings order to the universe by defeating the dragon named "Tiamat", who symbolizes chaos, and destructive and complex powers.

In Assyrian mythology the head of the underground god "Mutu" is a dragon head. In Indian mythology the enemy of gods and humans is a giant named "Vritra", who was sometimes thought of as a dragon, a snake or a cloud. In Chinese mythology, the devil named "Gong Gong", who is an enemy of the gods, is a dark dragon who creates large typhoons. In Japanese mythology, "Susanoo", the god of winds and oceans, rules over snakes and dragons. In Greek mythology, "Python", along with all other dragons, is born of "Mother Earth", and acts as the guardian of the heart of curses at Delphi. The dragon "Ladon" guards the supernatural tree that gives golden apples, located in the garden of the gods. . There is another dragon who guards the Golden Fleece, who the Argonauts pursued, and who was killed by Iason. Again, in Greek mythology there is a snake with countless heads that lives in the swamp of Lerna. To kill this snake called the Hydra, Heracles burned all of its heads, two new heads emerged for each one that was severed. In German mythology, the devilish creature Fafnir first kills his father, then later becomes a watchman over Nibelungen's treasure in the form of a dragon, finally being slain by Sigurdz (Siegfried) (And, 2007: 322; Absalon, 2010: 26).

B. The Dragon motif in Anatolian Legends and the cultural roots of the motif

The compilation done during the research, and consisting of oral, written and electronic sources has shown that the dragon motif is used in thirty-five Anatolian Turkish legends.¹⁵

Before examining the legends that have been determined, the legend logical roots, and things seen in early system of Turkish beliefs and ideas such as the sky, mountains, water, fire, trees etc., nature cults, holy spirits, the ancestor cult etc. have been classified. By doing so, and by way of the "dragon" motif, the change in mentality in Turkish civilization before and after Islam has been attempted to be traced.

B.1. Dragon Legends about the Sky

B1.1. The Legend of the Dragon that Came Down from the Sky

According to a very popular legend in Diyarbakır, the dragon that was created from the clouds that formed in spring, over the Karaca mountain that is to the southwest of the city is as follows: "An antelope, also known as a gazelle, became pregnant when she saw the looked upon the Ülker star in the fall. While giving birth in spring she notices that one out of a thousand of them is sometimes born resembling a closed pouch. The mother antelope, seeing this out of the

¹⁵ During the compilation only the word "dragon" was searched. "Snake " has been excluded from the subject due to size concerns, and will be assessed in another work.

corner of her eye, spooks at this and kicks at it with her back legs. The young who has been kicked twice by its mother suddenly grows inside the pouch and becomes a DRAGON. The angels that descend from the heavens then bring this animal and bring it among the clouds. The dragons in the sky descends to the world in the fall and spends the winter in a well/cave. During this period they feed once a day from the tail that descends from the sky. When spring arrives the angels let down chains from the sky, which the dragons use to get back to their place among the clouds, after leaving the desolate cave/large well that they were staying in."

In the caves near Bitlis and the Karaca mountain, travelers who have stumbled across these dragons in the well/cave they are staying in during the winter have sometimes stayed with the dragon for months, feeding on the tail that descends for it, then during spring when the dragon is going back to the sky they stick to the its tail when it gives the signal, and have been able to get to the surface safely and go back to their homes. Even today there are their grandchildren who see the dragons with heads resembling a cow's and eyes that burn like a lamp, yet do not harm people from where they lay. They tell stories and adventures based on many observations. "Country folk determine if the year will be prosperous or lean, conflicting or peaceful from the appearance and number of curls of the Cloud Dragon that appears over the Karaca Mountain. This is most often done in the months around May."

"These dragons sometimes descend to the ground and use their tail to grab animals or people from the pasture or road, then take them into the sky. It is also seen that those who are struck by such a tragedy are dropped from the clouds before they reach the sky and are dashed on the ground after being thrown a great distance."

Source of the Legend: M. Fahrettin Kırzioğlu (1953). "Gökten İnen Ejderha Efsanesi ve Tarihteki Yeri", *Türk Folklor Araştırmaları*, C. 2, S. 44, pg. 697-699.

Where the legend is compiled from: Diyarbakır

*The Characters of the Legend*¹⁶: the mother antelope, the young antelopes, dragons, angels, animals on the road, and people.

Time(s) in the Legend: Spring, fall, the month of May

Place(s) in the Legend: Karaca Mountain, the sky, the clouds, the surface, caves, wells, pastures, and roads.

Motifs of the Legend: B11.2.8. The dragon's tail, F796. Dragon seen in the sky, V230.2. The angels are very powerful, V238. Guardian angel.

Assessment of the Legend: In this legend compiled from Diyarbakir the first point that draws interest is the making of the dragon. According to the legend, an antelope became pregnant after seeing the "Ülker star" in fall. While giving birth in spring one of them is born as a pouch and the antelope doubly kicks it in fright. The young in the pouch suddenly grows and becomes a dragon. The legend was compiled from Diyarbakir and the most interesting part about how the dragon was occurred.

The coming about of the dragon in the legend shows similarity to the coming about of "Tepegöz" in the *Dede Korkut Kitabı*. Both of the stories feature a "pouch", "a mass", and a growth of the pouch and a supernatural creature arising when the mass has been "kicked". The creature "Tepegöz" which is described in the *Dede Korkut Kitabı* resembles the Cyclops from Greek mythology. A giant like creature, Tepegöz is born of a female fairy, and has skin that cannot be cut by a sword or pierced by an arrow, only his eye can be hurt. These traits of Tepegöz also resemble those of a dragon.¹⁷

¹⁶ The people, animals, and supernatural creatures of the myth we have analyzed will be listed.

¹⁷ For more information about the relationship between Tepegöz and the dragon See: Alimcan İneyet (2010). *Türk Dünyası Efsane ve Masallarında Bir Dev Tipi: Yalınavuz/Celmoğuz*, Bilge Kültür Sanat, İstanbul, pp. 48-51.

Their most important aspect of the legend in Turkish culture is that the "dragons" live in the "sky" within the "clouds". This brings up thoughts of the importance of the "sky" in the legend logical roots of legend among the Turks before Islam.

Those who have researched the belief system of the Turks before Islam have accepted that the oldest and most basic belief was of the Sky-God.¹⁸

From the first ages of history people have thought of the sky as a "limitless and transcendent" being. The sky is naturally symbolizes being transcendent, strength, holiness, infinity, the untouchable and the unchanging. It equals being "being supreme", "being above", "having power" and "being holy" (Eliade, 2003: 61-62). The early Turks called God "Tengri", which meant "sky". These names and titles show that the Turks believed that the supreme god came from the sky, and is the ruler and creator. The greatest creator god in Turkish mythology is "Bay Ülgen", who resides on the seventh, ninth or sixth level of the sky. His throne is on the highest level of the sky or the summit of the mountain of the cosmos. The trinity of Sky-Creator- Ruler of the Universe ensure the cosmic safety and life on Earth (Eliade, 2003: 80-81).

Due to the holiness placed upon the sky, people told symbolic stories about cosmic events and named real and imaginary animals after many things that belonged to the cosmic dimension such as the sun, the moon, the stars etc.¹⁹, as a result of this while the sky became an amazing poem of symbols (Absalon, 2010: 28), they had many beliefs about and based practical knowledge about the nature of things seen in the sky such as the sun, the cycle of the moon and stars, comets, lightning, thunder, storms and rainbows etc.

In Turk cosmology it was believed that along with the heavens making a yearly rotation, there was also a rotating sky wheel that carried the stars. A pair of heavenly *dragons* are said to turn the fate of the bottommost heavens in a text about the Mani religion which was presented to the Khan (Ruler). In doing so the heavens and heavenly wheel, as well as one of the symbols for them that is the *sky dragon*, called *Kök-luu* or *Everen* in Turkish, was a symbol of a place in the sky and also of time (Esin, 2001: 43-44). Moreover, the "cloud" in the legend we examined in Uygur literature is a form of a *kök luu* (sky dragon), and the sound that emanates from the sky is considered its roar. In his work entitled *Divânü Lüğâti't-Türk*, Kaşgarlı Mahmud says: "The *luu* or *nek*, that is, a sky dragon is a symbol of water and plenty, or symbolizes sources of water and rain clouds", and in saying so reinforces this belief (Esin, 2004: 131-132).

As can be seen, the "sky dragon" in the legend we have examined manifests itself as dragons that ascend to the sky and live among the clouds in Turkish cosmology.

One of the most important aspects of the legend compiled from Diyarbakır is that the dragons move according to the times of the equinox. According to the legend, the dragons come down to Earth during fall and spend the winter in a large cave or well. In spring the dragons leave their desolate cave or well and ascend back to the clouds in the sky.

In his article "*Everen, Selçuklu Sanatı Everen Tasvirinin Türk İkonografisindeki Menşeleri*", Emel Esin gives us this information so we can understand the legend logical roots better: The old Turks believed that in spring the dragons horns, wings, beard and feathers appeared, while after fall they would go underground and hide like an alligator or water snake. The motif of ascending to the sky is seen on the Luu (dragon)'s back in China, is a motif that has its place in Hun and Uygur Turk arts (Esin, 2004; 131).

Another cultural root that had to do with the dragons moving according to the times of the equinox is the twelve animal calendar that Turks use. The "snake" and "dragon" each symbolize one year of the twelve animal calendar used by the Chinese, Mongols, and Turks.

¹⁸ See more: Hikmet Tanyu (1980). *İslamlıktan Önce Türklerde Tek Tanrı İnancı*, Ankara.; Ünver Günay, Harun Güngör (2007). *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Türklerin Dinî Tarihi*, İstanbul, Rağbet Yayınları.

¹⁹ For an example of a work on the subject See: Fikret Türkmen (1974). "Türk Halk Hikâyelerinde Gökyüzü ile İlgili Alegoriler", *1. Uluslararası Türk Folklor Semineri Bildirileri (8-14 Ekim 1973)*, Ankara, pp. 159-165.

The Luu (dragon), which is the fifth animal of Turkish calendar, also has to do with early Turkish astrology. The four directions and different elements, are shown in Chinese and Uygur Turk cosmology as animal symbols. The symbol of the direction East, fall, green or blue which is the equivalent of the color of the sky, and the symbol of the tree is *kök luu* (dragon) (Esin, 2004: 132), this information overlaps with the elements of "above", "sky" and "spring" in the legend above.

According to early Turkish beliefs, the year of the dragon caused a lot of rain, prosperity, abundance happens, wars are fought and much blood is spilled. The year of the snake however is a bad year, because evil, unrest, scarcity, cold and sickness occur. It is pointed out in old sources that the year of the snake is also when snakes and other such reptiles multiply, dishonesty increases among the people and that hate brews between rulers (Yöndemli, 2006: 138).

When the cultural aspects of the legend are taken into consideration, it can be seen that the half settled, half nomadic people of Diyarbakır used the twelve animal calendar for thousands of years and it was expected that what the year would bring was determined by its animal, and was used to guess how the year would go and was based on belief.

According to our evidence, dragons were supernatural creatures who ruled the skies, and being a symbol of the clouds, it was believed that when they swallowed the moon, or in other words when the clouds covered the moon, this brought rains of prosperity. It should be remembered that along with the legendological information that is based on the roots of the dragon, they are a symbol of water, of plenty and of rebirth (Esin, 2004: 155).

In doing so it can be thought that the dragon is vitally important for people who work in agriculture and livestock by providing explanations for natural occurrences such as the change of seasons, rain, lightning etc.

When we look back at the legend we have examined we see that the dragons that are found in the sky in spring come down to Earth in the fall to spend the winter in large and deep caves or wells in the Karaca mountain.

This aspect of the legend calls to mind the design of the universe in Turk mythology.

Texts from Altai Shamanist Turk civilizations saw creation of the universe as having three basic levels. The level between the heavens and the levels of the underworld is the surface where humans live. The world that has people living on it is also affected by the *sky* and *underground* worlds. The creator, all the protector gods and all *righteous souls reside in the levels of the sky*, while the ifrits (devils), and *evil souls and evil gods reside in the dark levels underground*. Even after all the influence that the shamans had, the transparency of the sky in the design of the world was not lost because the three large worlds were connected by one axis, the belief of a world where one could pass through the other was retained. In the Göktürk Yazıtları the east side of the Kültiğin Abidesi starts with the words that show belief of a three levelled world, "The blue above is the sky, underground is the dark place, and humanity lives in the middle" (Arslan, 2005: 65-75).

Also having cultural roots in the design of the universe in Turkish mythology, it is observed symbolically there are both "good" and "bad" dragons. We come across dragons that "do not bother people when they are lying on the ground", "not harming travelers for months and even sharing their food with them" were good dragons that were symbols of abundance and prosperity in early Turkish culture. Along with this we also see in the same legend, appropriate to the design of the world, evil dragons that come out of their caves and wells and "grab people and animals with their tails and bring them into the sky", "causes deaths", "harms people and animals", are destructive, and cause chaos.

. It could be said that there are two reasons that these evil dragons appear in the plot of mythology. Firstly, the dragon in Turkish thought is similar to the Chinese dragon because it

has control of the water, meaning it possesses the power to bring forth springs and make it rain. Its activities are positive because it can end a drought. Yet sometimes it displays a bad and capricious character, and if it changes with too much force it can cause destruct weather events such as a flood, a tornado etc (Absalon, 2010: 34). The second reason is that when the Turks embraced Islam the negative traits of the dragon, especially those from Arabian and Persian culture, where the dragon is a creature that is immortal and evil creature was accepted by the Turks.

Another important point that draws attention in the legend is the powerful angels sending and controlling the dragons with "chains" to bring them into the sky or bring them down to Earth. If looked at from the perspective of a hunter-gatherer and nomadic lifestyle, it reminds us of the "change of seasons and continuity", just as the snake motif does. The cycle of nature dying and rising that is repeated each year, and in accordance with this events in the sky such as thunder, lightning, rain etc. were symbolized with this chain of connections, and dragons were described as creatures in legend that ascended to the sky during the spring solstice, and descended down to Earth during the fall solstice.

Having a civilization based on a nomadic lifestyle, in the first ages of Turkish history festivals of seasonal change, especially those of summer, a ceremonies about the "kök luu" sky dragon would be performed when the dragon constellation reached the top of the heavens (Yöndemli, 2006: 151). As can be understood from information, the old Turks would perform ceremonies when the dragon ascended to the sky in spring to celebrate the rebirth of life. It is seen that in later times and even today these ceremonies have become celebrations of Nevruz (New year in Iran and Turkey) and Hıdırellez (The day celebrating when the prophets Hızır and Ilyas met).

The motif of the angels that "chain" the dragon in the legend entered settled life, when looked at from the perspective of the Turks who embraced Islam it can be thought of as a sort of attributing godliness to the dragon, a symbol of abyndance and prosperity, and that the the dragon is a creature that can be made helpless against the limitless strength and might of Allah by being controlled by angels.

Thus, we have seen in the legend the various meanings placed upon the dragon over thousands of years in the Turkish system of thought and belief, and how new meanings were given to it appropriate to the changes that were lived.

Variant to the Legend: Texts similar to the one we examined above can be seen in Kars²⁰ and Erzurum.²¹

B.2. Dragon Legends about the "Mountain – Rock and Water" Cult

B.2.1. Dragon

There is an entombed saint near Erzurum named Abdurrahman Gazi. There is also a mountain called Sultan Sekisi that is close to the tomb. Old Erzurum was founded there. One day a dragon goes down to the Paşapınar, the source of the peoples drinking water, surrounded in smoke guards it, swallowing anyone who tries to get some water. The people had no idea what to do. The dragon turned to stone upon the malediction of a dervish and the people were saved. It is said that shapes resembling dragons on Sultan Sekici are dragons turned to stone.

Source of the Legend: Bilge Seyidoğlu (1985). *Erzurum Efsaneleri*, 2. bs., Erzurum Kitaplığı, Erzurum, , pg. 187.

Where the legend is compiled from: Erzurum.

²⁰ See <http://www.tgdturkey.com/tr/kars/sehir-hakkinda/efsaneleri>, (10.10.2013).

²¹ Bilge Seyidoğlu (1985). *Erzurum Efsaneleri*, 1. Printing, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Atatürk Üniversitesi Basımevi, Ankara, pg. 186.

Characters in the Legend: Abdurrahman Gazi, the dragon, the people, those coming to get water, a dervish.

Time(s) in the legend: One day.

Place(s) in the Legend : Erzurum, Close by Abdurrahman Gazi's tomb, The Sultan Sekisi mountain, Paşapınar.

The Physical Elements in the legend: The rocks at the Sultan Sekici mountain that resemble dragons.

Motifs of the Legend: B11.2. The shape of the dragon, B11.7.1. The dragon possesses the water, F900. Miracles, Q551.3.4. Turned into stone as punishment, Q235. Punishment by malediction, M411.8. Malediction of a protector, V50. Prayer, V52. The mysterious power of prayer, (T) V206.1. Dervish, V113. Tombs, V229.4. Protector defeats the dragon.

Assessment of the Legend: When looking at this legend compiled from Erzurum, a dragon surrounded by smoke descends from the sky onto the Sultan Seki Mountain and inhabits Paşapınar, which provides the people whom live on the mountain with drinking water. According to our opinion the legend logic roots which form the legend; are the very important "mountain" and "water" cults of the old Turkish beliefs and thinking system.

In mythology, mountains especially have been thought as being sacred because of their closeness to the heavens. Mountain; the symbol of the location of the gods as well as the place for love. In every legend there is a commemorated sacred mountain. It is usually acknowledged that mountains, are the place where the earth and sky meet. This is why a "mountain" is the centre of the world. Because of this conception, from the beginning of time mankind has identified: temples, castles, sacred cities, etc., holy places and regions as "mountains" (Eliade, 2003:113-114).

In the old Turkish belief and thinking system a mountain cult is also about the Sky-God culture. With Shamanistic Turks the mountain: is the most important representative of the sky and earth-water spirits. Mountains are thought of as the holy places where the earth and sky meet. It is believed that mountains have spirits, the mountain possessor correlates with the greatest possessor the Sky-God (İnan, 1995: 48-50). The spirits found on earth are also connected to mountain spirits. It is believed that Mountain spirits aid people, provide them with happiness, help the animals reproduce, bestow health and safety, give all hunters prey and protect their herds from danger (Önal, 2003: 101).

Praying and worshipping would be done on the high mountains to be closer to God. Because mountains are spiritual places, and like for Ötüken Mountain the shadow of God where the sultans rule the state (Roux, 1994: 124-126).

In the legend we have viewed, the dragon descends upon the Sultan Seki Mountain surrounded by smoke. If paid close attention in the edit of the legend the dragon does not land anywhere specific on earth. As we have seen the dragon descending from the sky and the old Turkish belief system. The mountain, correlating between earth and sky also believed to be a sacred place. We could say that the dragon descending upon the Sultan Seki Mountain holds an important place in the mountain cult from Turkish mythology.

Having said that the dragon descending upon the mountain's peak, which a water source "Paşapınar" is found. This reminds us of the legend's legendologic root which is the water cult.

Water is the most fundamental necessity for life to go on, as well as the survival of humans, animals, and plants. Because of its feature, water is the symbol of abundance and purification for many cultures.²² It is like this in Turkish mythology as well. Like the earth

²² See more: Mircea Eliade (2003). *Dinler Tarihine Giriş*, Translator: Lale Arslan, Kabalcı Yayınları, İstanbul, pp. 196-216.

"water" is also a feminine element, it is thought of as "mother". Water extinguishes fire, but because it nurtures and grows the tree, which ignites it has gained a complementary meaning (Roux, 1994: 114-117). It is believed that water has a , spell-breaking, purifying specialty. The old Turks believed that every spring, lake, river, and water source was the "possessor" or the owner of the spirit of "water".²³

The dragon seen together with the "mountain" and "water" cult carries traces of dragon beliefs from old cultures: "Dragons are water emblems; they represent the cosmic rhythms and the holy power of water. When sleeping in lakes or when passing by rivers; the rain, humidity, flood they distribute to one side of the world and the other and by doing so control the fruitfulness of the world. Dragons live in the clouds and lakes; they empty the sky water, distribute fertility to the fields and women. A dragon is the symbol of water, that feeds life and gives birth to civilization (Eliade 2003: 212-214).

In the light of information given above, first of all we can say this about the dragon: The dragon that descends from the sky surrounded by smoke, in Turkish mythology the sacred, the God's "happiness" which was represented by the "mountain" and "water" cults was listed together. And this symbolically brings to mind that the dragon, which is connected to the "sky", the "mountain", and "water". Emits the side of abundance, fertility and holiness in Turkish culture.

After the factors that make up the legend's mythologic roots, it is seen that room for Islam beliefs is given. First of all in the legend the dragon is portrayed as; the bringer of chaos, malevolent, one that harms people, and one who cuts off the water sources. Basically as a creature that is "the symbol of defeated evil". This description in Turkish society has been expanded mostly after the acceptance of Islam period affected by the Arab, Persian and Byzantium culture.

The other important factors in the legend are "the dervish" and "the curse" motifs. The public is saved from the dragon, that kills anyone who goes to get water, by a dervish's prayer. Which shows that this motif belongs to the epos²⁵ and various stories²⁶ that revolved around the religious individuals of the time, when Turks were trying to Islamicise Anatolia and the Balkans.

In the legend the dervish with incredible powers, gets his strength from God's limitless power. With this power he trusts, he imprecates. After his curse the dragon turns to stone and becomes the symbol of evil, the dragon, is defeated. Thus symbolically the good, in other words the cosmos prevails over evil, in other words the chaos. But this happens only because of the means of the dervish, who held on to God's power.

As a matter of fact in the legend; a murderous, peace disturbing dragon turns into stone, being destroyed by a dervish's curse. In Turkish civilization this describes the transformation from "alp" to "saint", in other words a society conversion.²⁵

In the period when societies relied on agriculture supernatural powers started taking place and this strength was seen to rule over nature and humans. In stories of battles against animals, physical strength is not the main theme anymore. That is why according to the Islamic understanding the supernatural power given by the creator of the universe and ruler, God, conquers nature's creatures, and that is how miracles are made. Hence the reason the guardians of the time use their spiritual powers, by showing us miracles, to defeat ferocious monsters and dragons.

As addition to these in the text we see the distinct features of legends in the text. The most important function of legends: "answering the questions about extraordinary situations

²³ For the water cult See: Abdülkadir İnan (1995). *Tarihçe ve Bugün Şamanizm: Materyaller ve Araştırmalar*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, pp. 48-65.; Özkul Çobanoğlu (1993). "Türk Kültür Tarihinde Su Kültü", *Türk Kültürü*, No.: 361, pp. 32-42.

and what people are curious about as well as clarifying, giving information about extraordinary places and nature's elements is what makes up the basics of the function of the legends. Because in the legend's editing it gives information about the rocks that look like a dragon, which takes place on Sultan Seki Mountain.

Many examples of this legend that have been found around the world have found the dragon responsible for the roughness of the earth's crust. Mountains are born after their activities or Dante-like fights, rocky peaks are believed to be the claws or horns of the fallen beasts. The Along gulf is an example of this. This gulf, in Vietnamese has the name Vinh Ha Long, meaning "where the dragon touches the sea ". According to some, this gulf's perimeter was formed by a large dragon's body movements. But according to others, the islets in the gulf are the parts of the monster's, which lies under the sea, body which stay above the water (Absalon, 2010: 20).

The factor that has prepared a base for the land forms on Sultan Seki Mountain, comes from mythologic roots²⁵, that is the "rock-cutting" motif. This motif²⁵ that commonly takes place in many legends from Anatolia, is that by rewarding the good you are punishing the bad. Therefore by public conscience, the society's feeling of justice is reinforced.

As seen from the explanations above, the dragon legend we have examined. Whether it's before Islam or after Islam the belief and cultural elements have been given place to involve hints about the Turkish culture's change and transformation.

Variant of the Legend: We have come across similar texts, like the one above in: Bayburt, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Harput, and Sivas.

B.3. Battle with the Dragon

B.3.1. The Dragon Lake Legend

The Kayaici village connected to Araklı has a deep lake aforementioned Çatak. Very long ago there were two dragons in this lake, that was formed by the river flowing through the rocks. That is why this lake, in local language has been aforementioned: "Lake Azdehir" or "Azdehir's Lake".

Back then the dragons of the lake would terrorize everyone around them. When these creatures walked upon the ground, it would shake and where they stepped would crumble. They would devour any living thing that came their way.

The locals would live in fear and panic because of these monsters. They did not have the means to handle the dragons. They prayed to God. Caliphate Ali flew there on his horse. He tied the dragons to the rocks in the lake and left. Not long before the dragons died from starvation. And the locals were at peace.

Source of the Legend: Haydar Gedikoğlu (1998). *Trabzon Efsaneleri ve Halk Hikâyeleri*, 1. bs., Trabzon, Trabzon Valiliği İl Kültür Müdürlüğü Yayınları, s. 117.

Where the Legend was compiled: Trabzon.

Character(s) in Legend: Dragons, local people, Caliphate Ali(Hazreti).

Time(s) passed in Legend: Back then.

Place(s) mentioned in Legend: Araklı, Kayaici village, the lake formed by the river that flows through the rocks(Çatak).

Materialistic elements mentioned in Legend: "Lake Azdehir" or "Azdehir's Lake".

The Legend's motifs: B11.2. The dragon's shape, B11.3.1.1. Dragons live in lakes, B11.2.4.1. A dragon's steps, B11.5. A dragon's power, B11.7.1. A dragon restrains a water source, B41.2. Flying horse, D2135. Magical air journey, F900. Miracles, V50. Prayer, V229.4. Guardians beat dragons.

Evaluation of the Legend: First of all this legend that was compiled from the Trabzon region, was trying to answer the question as to why the lake is named "Lake Azdehir" or "Azdehir's lake. Either the legend or the world, was bringing together very important mythologic elements belonging to Turkish culture to try and answer the question from its own edit.

The motif that is most eye-catching in the symbolic explanation in the legend is the "battle with the dragon" motif. When taking into account the steps of Turkish society's development we see the "battle with the dragon" motif belongs to the first periods of nomads. The old Turks that live within the frame of Savannah civilization; to survive in Turkistan's geography; had to on one side fight against enemies and on the other with animals, who are an important part of nature. "In those times pets were very few and valuable. Instead, a dragon or one that is compared to it, in the Oğuz Kağan legend we come across a "rhino". Large and wild animals, that present great danger to mankind. Killing the animal in this respect would be considered a good deed for the people in other words, "heroism". The goal and meaning of killing animals in the following centuries and their legends were to change. Due to possible changes in geography or the increase of domestication of animals, wild animals no longer posed a threat to human populations. Thus, this new found status between human and wild animals created simply a means to demonstrate physical power and bravery. So the dragons and similar animals no longer posed threats to civilizations." (Yöndemli, 2006: 156).

The theme of championing the dragon has been carried through out old Turkish civilizations. Alongside this, the symbolic champion of this theme is the Muslim Caliphate Ali. It is well known that Ali is a source of Islamic pride in a Turk's bosom. Because of his heroism, integrity, and honesty, after the acceptance of Islam, in the sociocultural realm of the Turk he replaced and became the typological "alp". For this reason Turkish society has made Caliphate Ali the main character in folk culture when sagas²⁷ and tales of war²⁸ are mentioned. In the legend those who feared the wrath of the dragon prayed to Allah. Allah, accepting their prayers, sends Ali, on his "flying horse", just in time to defeat and kill the dragons.

Distinct civilizations that ran parallel to the time of the Turks have also come across this theme of "championing the dragon." The Sumerians and the Hittites of Anatolia/Asia Minor, the Indians, Chinese and Iranian in the East have many religious beliefs and myths that revolve around the theme of "championing of the dragon " (Yöndemli, 2006: 155).

We also see the a similar myth of the "dragon buried in water" present in Western literature.²⁴ "In the West the dragon is perceived as the enemy of nature who is defeated by a hero in order to save her." Europe of the middleages maintained the antique myth that the dragon was to be enslaved without being slain. The elimination of the dragon was used as metaphor to the end of winter and the rebirth of nature. In these tellings a hero commands the disappearance of the dragons, or more commonly snakes, to relieve the population of its worries. Many tellings are similar in this regard: Saint George²⁵, Babylonian Abdias, Auxerian Saint Germanus or the Parisian Saint Marcel. In Metz Saint Clement, in order to establish Christianity, makes Graouilly come out of his cave. He makes the animal kneel then later brings its domesticated form to the Seille river and commands it be *buried in the water*. Similarly, Saint Marthe domesticates the extortive Tarasque, near the edges of the Rhone river, to successfully *sink him in the river*. In both examples the monster does not die as a result of battle, but of tender authority and control over it leading to its eventual exile. Thus, the notion of the dragon was brought out of its original conceptions. In this manner, legends resemble those

²⁴In the *Kitab-ı Mukaddes* there are references to the dragon and struggle, the fight between the forces of chaos and order in the beginning, and also the critical war that will occur when Judgement Day arrives. See more: *Kitab-ı Mukaddes*, İşaya, 5: 9, 27: 1; Mezmurlar 74: 14; Eyüp 26: 12; Vahiy 12.

²⁵ In his work entitled *Bektaşî Menâkıbnâmelerinde İslâm Öncesi İnanç Motifleri*, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak ties the myths about dragons in the Christian era of Anatolia, especially in the triangle of Çorum-Yozgat-Amasya to the stories of "Saint Georges" or "Saint Theodore". See more: Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (1983). *Bektaşî Menâkıbnâmelerinde İslâm Öncesi İnanç Motifleri*, İstanbul, pp. 172-176.

stories of ecological substance because the dragon, as a wild component of nature, must be delicately tamed but not destroyed " (Absalon, 2010: 47).

The dragon combat motif, as explained above is the symbol from sagas originated by Turkish societies of the battle between good and evil affected by the Islamic culture in the time before Islam.

In the legend we have viewed, the superiority of good over evil is being explained. Having said that, in the legend: just like the legends about the battle between Western saints and the dragon. The Islamic hero Excellency Ali killing the dragon who terrorized the people can be interpreted as the victory of Islam against superstitious religions in Anatolia.

Variant of the Legend: We come across a similar text in Artvin³¹, from the legend above.

In legends it is not always a guardian or religious elder that battles against the evil dragon, but sometimes an ordinary character that is in the edit of the legend.

In these kinds of legends, the battle against the dragon motif, is a symbolic representation of a rite of passage (initiation) for the character to find their courage. The character's battle with the dragon; clearly shows the tendency of the archetypal theme, which is the opposite of egoistical victories. This struggle represents the transition to reach the next level, for example the passage from childhood to a teenager or from a society's view from living with the enemy to living freely. Whether a personal or collective test is at hand, sometimes the battle itself is more important than the victory (Absalon, 2010: 58).

What we have compiled from the legends during our studies; a shepherd²⁶, a gypsy²⁷, a lord²⁸, a young man²⁹, and a carpenter³⁰ fight against a dragon.

C. Applied Folklore and the Dragon Motif

Globalization nowadays has caused quite a few cultures to make themselves be felt on Earth. This effect of globalization causes different cultures from different geographies to disappear and become standardized. We can see that Turkey is also quickly moving towards the effect area of globalization parallel to the rest of the world. As a result of this the Turkish language, folk culture, the traditions happen during times of passage, beliefs and cooking culture, the way to have fun, behaviour, and basically every other aspect that has values belonging to national culture is quickly disappearing at almost every step of societal, family and individual life.

One of the most important tools for reducing the effect of globalization on Turkey and making sure national values are passed on to future generations are applied folklore. In his work entitled *Küreselleşme ve Uygulamalı Halkbilimi*, Öcal Oğuz says: "If Turkey wants to research and remark on its local and national traits and continue these traits, while also wanting an income pencil to "trade" these traits, it must have a firm grasp of the pure plane of importance of folklore in the future and of the need to spread the national inheritance to the world. It is important to prepare institutionalisation for the practical plane of it" (Oğuz, 2002: 58).

In this section of the work we will cover the evidence and analysis of the dragon motif in Anatolian legends, and try to answer the question of what should have been done to pass on the dragon motif, which has signs of very old Turkish culture, to the current generation. To answer this question we will examine the dragon motif in several countries, evaluating how folklore is applied and products that are produced, thereby try to explain what should be done.

²⁶ <http://www.kenthaber.com/akdeniz/hatay/Rehber/genel-bilgi/hatay-sozlu-tarih> (20.10.2013).

²⁷ Muhsine Helimoğlu Yavuz (1993). *Diyarbakır Efsaneleri Derleme-Araştırma-İnceleme*, Doruk Yayınları, Ankara, pp. 344-345.

²⁸ Muhsine Helimoğlu Yavuz (1993). *Diyarbakır Efsaneleri Derleme-Araştırma-İnceleme*, Doruk Yayınları, Ankara, 1993, pg. 117.

²⁹ <http://www.delineticiler.net/ic-anadolu-bolgesi/127083-erciyes-daginin-efsanesi.html> (09.10.2013).

³⁰ <http://dunbuguninsan.blogspot.com/search/label/Ejderha> (05.11.2013).

When the dragon is mentioned in world culture China comes to mind first. Having a very important place in Chinese culture, the dragon has been known how to be kept alive for thousands of years, parallel to the changing times and cycles. This cultural element has even succeeded in becoming known throughout the world. There is no doubt that New Year's celebrations and such that are based on the Chinese calendar have been very effective due to being traded with the rest of the world by the media and being done with continuity, and contain elements such as the dragon dance etc. that are directly related to the dragon motif.

Apart from these celebrations in China, there are many signed works from the West that can be assessed about the dragon motif in applied folklore. In the second half of the XVIII. century, especially among enlightened physical scientists. Dragons and other supernatural creatures in folklore started to be explained with rationalist explanations based on science. It was said that the dragons of old legends that were imagined by folk were hybrids of reptiles such as lizards, crocodiles and snakes that were exaggeratedly large, producing an impossible animal. As a result of this the dragon and other supernatural creatures left reality and started to their place as the heroes of fantastic literature and the earliest science fiction.³¹ As a result of the giant fossils that appeared in later years the dragons that were believed to be real have been replaced today by their respectable successors: dinosaurs.³² This supernatural creature that was imagined by the first people in time became an attractive theme symbolically, and in literature. The caricatures in today's newspapers represent the world wrapping economic power and population of China or Asia. Moreover, the dragon is nowadays used³³ as a cultural and fantastic image in comic books³⁴, novels,³⁵ computer games³⁶ and from there in cartoons,³⁷ and in movies.³⁸

All these examples show that Turkish cultural history contains a very long history of the dragon motif just as Chinese culture does, and methods appropriate to the age and for different sections of society such as festivals, music, books, pictures, various gift items, novels, comic books, movies, series, computer games etc. and encouragement can be given for products supporting folklore to be produced and bought.

Moreover, tourist trips could be arranged in the Anatolian geography that reflects in legends, where the mountain and rocks resemble dragons, and various organizations could be started.

CONCLUSION

Legends are one of the types of anonymous folk literature, and one function of them is carrying the cultural codes of the people for thousands of years and being a means by which these codes are passed from generation to generation.

³¹ The most important representative of fantastic and science fiction literature of this type is the French writer and traveler Jules Verne.

³² Remembering Steven Spielberg's movie *Jurassic Park* would be helpful at this point.

³³ Patrick Absalon and Frederik Canard, *Ejderhalar - İnsanlar Diyarındaki Canavarlar*, Translator: Ali Berktaş, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1. Printing, İstanbul, 2010, pp. 75-76, 80, 85, 87, 91, 93, 94.

³⁴ Comic book artist Boulet's *Little Dragon* (2001) and *The Adventures of Merlin* (2000) are comic books that can be pointed out as an example of this. As is common knowledge, Merlin has appeared to the audience as a movie and as a series.

³⁵ Anne McCaffrey's *La Ballade de Pern* (1992), and later Christopher Paolini's *Eragon* (2003), which was later brought to the bigscreen, both feature dragons in their content and are both examples of this type of novel. The world-famous books *Bilbo Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1967) by J. R. R. Tolkien have sold millions. This shows how that people today still show interest in myths.

³⁶ The computer game *Divinity: Dragon Commander* can be given as an example of this.

³⁷ The cartoons of *Haku - "Spirited Away"* (2001), *Ejderha Avçuları* (2008) and *Ejderhani Nasıl Eğitirsin* (2010) can be given as an example of this.

³⁸ As is commonly known, "Merlin", which contains a dragon motif in the content, has its place in cultural economy, both as a movie and as a series. Movies about dragons and dragons that have an important role in other movies are: *King Ghidorah - "Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster"* (1964), *Elliot - "Pete's Dragon"* (1977), *Draco - "Dragonheart"* (1996), *Vermithrax Pejorative - "Dragonslayer"* (1981), *The Male - "Reign of Fire"* (2001), *Saphira - "Eragon"* (2006), *Toothless - "How to Train Your Dragon"* (2010), *Smaug - "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug"* (2013). The series *Game of Thrones* has been watched a lot recently, and is an important program that makes way for dragons in its content.

When we look at Anatolian Turkish legends we see that many of the supernatural creatures are themselves a motif in the legends. One of these legendical motifs is the dragon motif. The dragon is a motif that is frequently seen in world mythology. The dragon is an imaginary creatures which many different cultures place various symbolic meanings upon. Throughout history people have vieweed the dragon as a symbol of good or evil, and was looked upon as the representative of chaos and the cosmos, and life and death.

The early Turkish belief and thought system saw the dragon as a symbol of that which brought abundance due to being a means of making it rain, prosperity, rebirth, comfort, strength and power. After the acceptance of Islam and permanent settlement in Anatolia, the meaning of dragon had a weaker positive meaning among the view of the Turkish folk, instead coming to more commonly mean "a symbol of evil that got the worst of it". This was caused under influence from Arab, Persian and Byzantine culture.

The legendical texts that we examined in our work offers that the dragon in the system of Turkish belief and thought was thought to possess traits that were "good" and "bad". This shows that the legendical texts we examined have cultural roots stretching back to very old ages, and this is striking in that it shows that the style of legend is a very important carrier of culture.

In the legends we have examined the basis of the dragon motif relies on Turkish mythology, the early age Turkish system of beliefs and thought , and Islamic elements. Therefore if the cultural area of the motif is closely examined then it will be possible to trace the changes in the civilization and levels of the people over thousands of years by looking at the dragon legends.

It is known that before the Turks accepted Islam they had belief system that included the Sky-God, and also natural and ancestral cults. When we look at areas that were inhabited by dragons, we find that they were found inhabiting natural elements that were exceedingly important in early Turkish belief such as the sky, a mountain, a cave, water sources etc.

The nature of the dragons in Anatolian legends have been listed according to the history of belief and according to what the dragons perceived as. As an example, sky dragons before Islam showed signs of belief where they were described as having many more good characteristics and being a symbol of rain and prosperity, while signs of belief after Islam more commonly describe the land dragons as guarding water sources and having bad characteristics, and were considered a symbol of chaos.

In the legends we have compiled the hero in the conflict scenes with the dragon are in the following order: "The angels in the sky, His holiness Ali etc., Protector individuals, and normal people. Heroes from this legendologic roots and beliefs being in dragon legends shows parallelism with the development ages of the history of Turkish civilization.

We can divide these heroes of Anatolian legend who fight the dragon into three groups: "Godly powers, angels" which are sourced from the system of early Turkish beliefs and thoughts. After the Turks accepted Islam the alpine typology was gone, replaced by his holiness Ali etc., religious leaders, saints, protectors, the basic figures of a settled farming lifestyle such as a lord, a shephard, a young person etc. and other average heroes.

Just as the heroes who fight against the dragons have a nature that resembles where the dragon lives, the stages of development in Turkish culture have been reflected as to show in Anatolian legends. By means of the hero who fights the dragon, we can hold a candle to the trail of change in civilization from alp to saint, and from saint to shephard.

A motif that is such an important part of cultural history and has is seen very frequently all over the world should be a part of applied folklore in Turket today, and various types of cultural products with the dragon motif on them should be produced. If this is not done,

products bearing the dragon motif from different cultures will be an influence and will fill the gap, preparing the foundation for national values being forgotten.

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