**THEORETICAL CHALLENGES IN INTERPRETATION AND RESEARCH OF TOPONYMIC LEGENDS**

**(TOPONİM EFSANELERİN YORUMLANMASI VE ARAŞTIRMASINDA KURAMSAL ZORLUKLAR)**

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**ABSTRACT**

It is well-known that reflecting real life events through fictitious, containing specific epic information based on historical and ethnographical aspects, considered as true information by speaker and listener, consisting of characters from mythological, historical and real life background as well as oral prose works in brief plots (stories) are called as legends. Legends are one of the oldest and most popular epic genres of Uzbek folklore. There are several kind of legends about origination of material environment, events, mythological imagination about flora and fauna, patriots, heroes who have done good deeds for the people, important historical events, tribal history, as well as cities, villages, auls, mountains and rivers, finally about the origin of names of geographical objects and historical monuments. The legends reflect the artistic and aesthetic attitude of our people towards the material world, historical and social events and the geographical structure of our country’s relief.

World folklore has a tradition of categorizing folklore works in myths and legends genres into several types according to the themes and specific signs and in this case there are separate grouping of story lines based on tomonymic motives of origination place names (even though named with different names).

**Keywords**: Uzbek Folk, Uzbek Folk Legends, Place Names, Toponymic Legends, Interpretation Of Toponymic Legends, Research Of Toponymic Legends.

It is well-known that reflecting real life events through fictitious, containing specific epic information based on historical and ethnographical aspects, considered as true information by speaker and listener, consisting of characters from mythological, historical and real life background as well as oral prose works in brief plots (stories) are called as legends. Legends are one of the oldest and most popular epic genres of Uzbek folklore. There are several kind of legends about origination of material environment, events, mythological imagination about flora and fauna, patriots, heroes who have done good deeds for the people, important historical events, tribal history, as well as cities, villages, auls, mountains and rivers, finally about the origin of names of geographical objects and historical monuments. The legends reflect the artistic and aesthetic attitude of our people towards the material world, historical and social events and the geographical structure of our country’s relief.

World folklore has a tradition of categorizing folklore works in myths and legends genres into several types according to the themes and specific signs and in this case there are separate grouping of story lines based on tomonymic motives of origination place names (even though named with different names). In particular, while N.P. Andreev differentiating domestic and historical Russian stories he noted difference of oral prose samples related places’ names from historical prose with its specification.1 Another Russian scientist, A.I. Nikiforov in his article “Story” which was written in favour for "Encyclopedia of Literature" noted that there are three (internal) types of this genre: 1) myths, stories about Gods, sky, soul, evil spirits, saints, etc. ; 2) naturalistic stories about plants, animals, one-eyed, dog-headed strange people; 3) historical narratives. Historical stories are also grouped by the scholars into several groups such as: 1) geographical narratives - explaining the origin of geographical names; 2) narrations about material objects, monuments; 3) narratives of historical events; 4) The genealogy of the people2. Despite the fact that in this classification the genre of folk tales is mixed with genres of legends, myths and stories, it is noteworthy that stories about "geographical and material monuments" are separately grouped. Because the works of this type have characteristics of toponymic prose samples.

Since the 60s of the twentieth century, classification of "toponymic narratives" has been introduced in Russian folklore. Scientists such as S.N. Azbelev, V. Gusev, V.K. Sokolova, K.V. Chistov, V.P. Anikin considered that narratives related to origination of place names are the oldest, most widespread and most living examples of folklore, and noted that important points of these types of narratives related to place names are acceptance of narrated story by teller and listener as a true, leading point of retrospective in epic narratives.3

In Turkish folklore, the toponymic myths have been classified as internal type of the genre, while relying on the scientific views of Russian scholars on the classification of myths and legends. Specifically, E.A. Kostyukhin divides Kazakh folk tales into local, historical and cosmogony narratives.4 Of course, the toponymic narratives have local definition by giving epic information about the connection to a particular area and geographical place. But this feature can not be a leading epic sign for toponymic narratives. In addition, texts labeled "local-historical legends" and which were classified as "intermediate-type" in the classification were to be classified according to the leading character. Toponymic narratives also refer to certain historical figures and historical events. As Kaskabasov correctly states, “Narrations are always historical, regardless of whether they are classified as historical or toponymic. In our view, the classification of historical and toponymic narratives is conditional and is based solely on thematic principles. In fact, toponymic narratives also have a real basis, and historical narratives sometimes show toponymic motives.5

Uzbek folklore was also based on the division of legends into different types according to the scope and leading epic properties. In Russian-Uzbek Dictionary of Literary Terms, co-authored by N. Khotamov and B.Sarimsokov, legends are classified into historical, toponymic, religious, and household groups.6 According to U.Jumanazarov, who studied the interpretation of historical reality in Uzbek folklore, legends are divided into toponymic, religious and historical types.7 According to Professor K.Imomov, the Uzbek legends are classified into four types: mythological, religious, toponymic and historical, although they combine them in a general sense based on a fictitious fabrication of the narrative of the text, the way it is popularized, and the way to convey certain information to the listener.3 In this classification scheme is correctly categorized which is based on subject, but "religious legends" also contain historical events and historical characters (for example, prophets, their companions, etc.), in this case we can consider combining religious and historical myths and name them as "mythological, historical and toponymic legends". This form of classification, first of all, fully reflects the stages of historical development of the genre of myth; secondly, it also complies with the criteria of the topic.

Oral prose works related to place names, geographical area, relief, natural and archaeological monuments are one of the most lively and widespread types of epic folklore. From the beginning of the 20th century, the world folklore has focused on toponymic works in the classification of myths and legends and has grouped them under different names. Toponimic myths are small epic prose illustration of the fantasy of reality through fictitious myths, explaining the origin of a particular place and informing the listener about it.

As you know, in the last decade of the twentieth century - at the beginning of the 21st century, a great work has been done in the world folklore to collect, publish and study folklore toponymic prose. Research has been done on the peculiarities of Russian, Ukrainian, Buriat, Tatar, Bashkir, Bashkir, Tuva, Finnish, Turkish and Uzbek toponymic myths, plots, motives and genetic base characters.

New research on toponymic myths has focused on clarifying specific properties of toponymic stories. In particular, G.I. Kanakina found that the main characteristic of folk works in toponymic theme represents fragment of local culture,8 while O.E. Afanasev and A.V. Trotsenko determined the place of the legendary genre in toponymic cultural space by analysis of Ukrainian folk material.9 In connection with the publication of the Russian Federation multifunctional monuments "Folklore of Siberia and the Far East", a new scientific concept for the description and preparation of oral works, including myths, legends and stories of nations and people living in the region, in particular, Siberia and the Far East. It has been suggested that the oral toponymic prose in folklore preserves more mythological imagination.10

When we examine scientific studies of toponymic fiction in world and Turkish folklore studies, there are a number of scientific interpretations in the definition and characterization of the genitive affiliation of toponymic motives at the core of the plot, as well as the terminological confusion that underlies this. As we have observed, such troubling issues generally consist of the following:

1) The first of these erroneous scientific interpretations, which is caused by ignoring the specificity of toponymic prose, is the denial of toponymic prose as a distinct sub-type in the classification of myths and legends. Although classifying narrators of toponymic character as a distinct type in folklore classification has become a tradition, some scholars believe that toponymic code or toponymic motives may also be in historical narratives (or myths), and vice versa. They prefer not to classify toponymic prose given the observation of the interpretation of real and real historical characters. In particular, because the famous Russian scientist V.V.Propp interpreted myths as oral prose works expressing ethical beliefs related to Christian religion, such genre works as "cosmogony myths", "myths about the world", "myths about the world", " myths about sinners and innocents ”.11 The toponymic myths are not reflected in his classification.

According to the Russian scholar N.Krinichnaya, the narrations are an example of a historical prose, and there are only “toponymic motives” in the narratives associated with the place names. In her view, the division of myths and legends into historical and toponymic types does not take into account the fact that all the works of these two groups are historically based.12 As she categorizes toponymic narratives as masterpieces of country development and migration, the plot structure of folklore works of this type is based on toponymic motives.13 According to N.R. Bayjanova, the classification of the works of Altai folklore, "divide the narratives into two groups and divide them into historical (historical events and historical forms) and geographical (related to the emergence of names of particular places)." The narratives of the second group are, in essence, similar to those of the first type. In other words, geographical narratives have historical significance.14 Y.V. Lemorenko, who studied the criteria for preparing oral prose works included in the multicolored Siberian and Far Eastern folklore, and grouped genre-related texts of each text, grouped texts on folklore genres other than fairy tales: 1) etiological myths and legends about animals; 2) myths; 3) stories about meeting with supernatural beings; 4) myths and stories about the origin of the tribe; 5) stories explaining the reason for the place names.15 Apparently, toponymic narrativs have a tendency to be popularized in the form of myths or legends.

In international catalogs of epic plots and motives, toponymic fiction has been classified as a separate plot type. Specifically, A1617 is a series of works that tell the origin of geographical names in the catalog compiled by S. Thompson. "Etymology of place names" is summarized under the heading. Therefore, when we classify the text of folklore of the genre according to the theme, we think it is advisable to classify toponymic fiction as well as mythological and historical myths. This is true because the toponymic motivation for this is the plot of such works. Consequently, the evaluation of the legends describing the origin of place names on the basis of "folk etymology" in the form of "toponymic motives" of historical narratives is somewhat controversial. This is because the interpretation and totally understanding refers not only to the motives of such myths, but to the whole plot of the myth, not to the plot element that explains the origin of the place.

2) The second serious error associated with the study of popular toponymic prose is that the myths about the origin of place names are interpreted as an example of a "myth" genre. The myth of the mythical texts is similar to the mythical, mythical and mythical representation of the mythical texts. That is why some experts link the genetic roots of the mythical genre with myth. In particular, S.S. Katash writes that “The evolution of the mythic plot in the later times has included an epic myth, legend, fairy tale and heroic character"16. Indeed, in ancient times mythic perception of the world was based on mythological imagination and myth was synonymous with nature. A.M. Ganieva acknowledged that the understanding and interpretation of existence at that time was based on mythological syntax.17 With the emergence of the tradition of visualizing reality through artistic thinking, epic plots and motives have emerged due to the diffusion of mythical codes in the process of replacing mythological codes with artistic images. This shows that the myth played a significant role in the formation and development of the legends.

Although the myth is an archaic example of folklore, it does not preserve live performance in the epic genres of folklore, but some scholars have found that the use of the term "myth" in determining the genre affiliation of the toponymic fiction. In particular, the Kyrgyz scientist B.Kebekova said that “the theme with myths and legends is quite close to each other. Jer-suu, too, has a lot of themes, and notes that in the classification of the Kyrgyz myths the "toponymic myths", that is, "explain the reasons for naming land and water".18 According to NR Bayjanova, classifying the toponymic prose of mountain Altai, "myths that were believed to be true by people in ancient times of human thought have been transformed into legends, fairy tales and fictitious perceptions. Also interpreted through mythological representations.19 ” According to him, the texts are accepted as true by the narrator and the listener, and the fictitious fabrication in them is facultative. The legendary texts are surreal because of their imagination and the portrayal of wonders. And myths are a form of unrealistic reality expressed through the prism of various beliefs. N.R. Bayjanova considers texts about the origin of mountains, peaks and hills in Altai folklore as a "toponymic myth". The main motive of this type of toponymic fabulous plot is the creation or creation of a particular object, that is, the etiology, which is the basis of mythological interpretation of surreal reality.20

It cannot be denied that the myth played an important role in the genesis of the mythical genre. After all, Jurayev, who put forward the hypothesis that the formation and evolution of Uzbek folk tales are "stages of myth and myth," is not a direct replica or copy of ancient myth, but a new epic creation. A new way of interpreting, explaining and interpreting reality has, in a sense, come as a rejection of the mythological worldview. Therefore, mythological plots have not become a direct myth, that is, the mythology completely absorbs elements of mythology, while rejecting the mythological method.21 Hence, the genre of legend, while still retaining the essence of ancient myths, emerged as a product of artistic-epic thinking, with mythological plots and ancient myths largely reflected in mythological myths. Given that toponymic myths are a product of later historical and folklore processes by the time of their creation, the use of the term "toponymic myths" is wrong.

3) The third controversial issue regarding the elucidation of the properties of toponymic myths is the combination of myths and legends about the origin of place names, with no separation. Bashkir scholar F. Nadrshina notes that "legends, legends related to land, water, rocks and other places" occupy a special place in folklore and call them "toponymic stories".22 It is well known that each of the myths and legends are independent genres with their own characteristics, and they have distinct and common features. In essence, toponymic myths are characterized by the interpretation of the origin of a particular place by fictional fabrications, supernatural events, historical, imaginary and mythological images. Although the appearance of the legend is similar to the toponymic narrative in terms of the function and function of a particular geographical object, it differs dramatically in the form of reporting the facts. Where toponymic myths are based on fictitious, fictional, and mythical interpretations, the plot of place narratives is different from legend in that the story is based on a living fiction, historically-ethnographic, and a true reflection of reality.

4) Another misconception in the scientific interpretation of folklore toponymic prose is the attempt to give the toponymic narrative and mythological myths a distinct genre. The idea that toponymic fiction should be described as a separate genre is first seen in the works of Russian scientist V.K. Sokolova. The scientist who analyzes toponymic narratives as an expression of historical narrative writes: “In order to distinguish different types of toponymic traditions, to classify them and to determine their place among the genres of oral fairy-tale prose, one cannot only rely on traditions associated with major historical events and persons. For this, it is necessary to investigate all varieties of toponymic traditions, their relation to reality and their connection with other oral poetic prose works”.23 In other words, "Differentiation of different types of toponymic narratives, their classification and the role of folk prose in a system other than fairy-tale genres" means that toponymic prose is a separate genre.

E. Orlova in his article "Toponimic narration as a non-fiction genre of folk oral prose" in the article Voronezh's toponymic prose is not a legend or a narrative of origin, but rather a character. That is why, they should be studied as a separate genre, with a focus on interpreting the meaning of toponym. He writes that “the toponymic narrative is intended for educational purposes rather than for fairy tales. For a long time, historical information, scientific reasoning, popular sentiments have been transmitted orally from generation to generation. The toponymic narratives are folklore that tells the history of the names of villages, rivers, cities, towns and other places”24

One of the proponents of this view, A.B. Asenova-Nurgaliyeva, in the analysis of the Kazakh toponymic narrators collected from Akmula region, concluded: “Toponimyc narratives are a distinct epic genre with specific functions and structural features. Specific features of the plot motives in these narratives have characteristic features of Russian and other kind of folklore. The toponymic motive may be formative or static depending on the genre. Because toponymic motivation is often found in epic genres that are not part of the fairy tale. In particular, the toponymic motive in oral stories of demonological character does not fulfill the task of forming a plot. The toponymic motive included in the demonological story is used as a spatial representation of events and a pure static function. The mythical function of the toponymic motive is also static and is used to confirm the supernatural features of the hero. ”25 At the same time, O.E. Afanasev and A.V. Trotsenko interpreted toponymic prose as an independent genre, and the concept of "toponymic myth" in general is a vivid example of "folk etymology" and aims to explain the origin of geographical names of folklore. Interpreted as a separate genre. Today, toponymic myths are a masterpiece of folk spiritual culture, a component of culture, an important means of personal development”26

There is one correct statement in the above quote, which is the fact that the toponymic motives are the basis of the folklore prose writings about the origin of place names. However, it is wrong to consider toponymic narrators as a separate independent genre, rather than a sub-genre of legend or myth. The genres of folklore differ from each other in terms of their performance, poetic construction, life (or function), and attitude to music. From this point of view, the toponymic narrative (or toponymic myth) does not have any character that distinguishes it from other genres of folk prose, for example, the narrative (or myth). Therefore, the toponymic narrative cannot be considered a separate independent genre.

To give a definitive answer to the question whether the toponymic myth (or toponymic narrative) is one of the non-fictional genres of folk oral prose, or one of the subtitles of the myth (or narrative), the famous Russian folklore scientist B.N.Putilov wrote: genetically, without evaluating the specificities, history and specificity of the genre always leads to failure".27 Consequently, in determining the genre's affiliation of a folklore, the scientist states that "1) a set of works / texts that have in common their relation to artistic features, content, poetic construction, function, method of execution and nonverbal art forms (music, dance, theater)".28

Analyzing these criteria, we find that there are no criteria for distinguishing toponymic myths (or toponymic narratives) as separate genres. The fact that the essence of the text is toponymic does not justify its categorization. Therefore, it is wrong to interpret toponymic myths or toponymic narratives among other genres of folklore, such as fairy tales.

From the above brief analysis we can conclude that the combination of toponymic myths and toponymic legends in world folklore, ignoring the distinctive features of toponymic prose in classifying myths and legends, and searching for mythic genre-specific features such interpretations as independent genres are scientifically erroneous and result from misinterpretations of toponymic prose properties will bring into complication. Toponymic myths are folklore works based on a fictitious interpretation of the origin of a particular place, and is one of the mythological subgroups.

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