

DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v7i2.1604

Citation: Mamedov, A., Orishev, A., Zalyzin, I., Fomina, T., & Paikidze, A. (2018). Formation of the Talysh Ethnos Worldview under Geoethnic Conservation Area Conditions. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 7(2), 155-167. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v7i2.1604>

Formation of the Talysh Ethnos Worldview under Geoethnic Conservation Area Conditions

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Abstract

Formation and development of the Talysh ethnic consciousness under the conditions of the Talysh 'geoethnic reserve' have been analyzed. Certain ethnoforming elements of the Talysh culture, i.e. factors promoting preservation of the basic constants of the Talysh ethnic consciousness, have been revealed. On the one hand, it is a cult of rocks, stones, groves and trees, and on the other hand it is worship of air, water, land and fire, which with the appearance of Zoroastrianism at first, and later of Shia Muslim, were not absorbed and peripheralized, but filled with new religious and ethical contents presenting moral and esthetic ideals of the Talysh people. The role of a myth and religion as an obligatory early stage of formation of the Talysh ethnic culture has been determined; regularities of formation of the Talysh ethnic consciousness have been shown; steps of ethnogenesis and a world view of the Talysh ethnos have been enlightened. Introduction of strange cultural tradition components could not eliminate the existing valuable attitude of 'the geoethnic reserve', but right opposite, they created syncretic environment stimulating evolution of the Talysh ethnic consciousness towards world judgment in the system of moral and ethical images considerably enriching the Talysh ethnos outlook. Having been formed this syncretic environment effected significantly the Talysh ethnos social attitude, as well as, predetermined a prevalent character of religious values in Talyshes spiritual and socio-political life.

Keywords: Talyshes, Worldview, Geoethnic reserve, Talysh culture, Ethnos, Ethnic consciousness, Outlook.

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Introduction

From our point of view the main task of the philosophical-anthropological and philosophical-cultural study of formation and development of the Talysh ethnos worldview consists in identification of those worldview components which not only explain historical and cultural processes of formation and development but could also predict the Talysh ethnos evolution.

This task assumes the solution of two problems:

- 1) Identification of the Talysh culture ethnoforming elements, that is the basic structures that are responsible for preserving and transmitting the ethnos spiritual experience;
- 2) Examination of factors that have a transformative effect on the Talysh ethnic consciousness progress throughout historical development of the ethnos.

Several periods can be found in the history of the Talysh. The first one covers the time frame when the Talyshes were included into various Iranian state formations; the second one is connected with the accession into the Russian Empire and Russian influence - first as the Talysh Khanate, an independent state establishment, and then as a part of the Azerbaijanian SSR after the USSR foundation. The third period of Talysh history is related to the time spent in the Azerbaijan Republic. Hence, investigating the problem of the Zoroastrian-Shiite worldview formation in case of the Talysh ethnos culture, we enlighten all the stages of historical development of the ethnos - from the most ancient tribal formations to modern post-Soviet Russian history ones. Some aspects of Talysh ethnos life first in the Median and later in the Achaemenid state, beginning with the formation of media as a state entity, have been studied in details, but the situation with the analysis of the Talysh ethnic consciousness as an integral ethnic unit is more difficult. However, available historical-ethnographic and linguistic studies contain sufficient empirical materials for the development of this problem, particularly as regards researches of Russian ethnographers and linguists (Zeidlits N.K., Khanykov N.V., Chursin G.F., Marr N.Ya., Kistenev D.A., Riss P.F., Legkobytov B.L., Miller B.V., etc.), conducted both in pre-revolutionary Russia and in the Soviet Union. These rather valuable ethnographic and linguistic works contain very important information of a worldview character, allowing to analyze the development of the Talysh ethnic consciousness and mythological-religious, philosophical worldview of the Talysh ethnos. The studies conducted within the framework of various Caucasian scientific societies and expeditions are of great interest as well, such as research of the Caucasian training directorate Board, the Caucasian Historical and Archaeological Institute in Tiflis, the Caucasian Department of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society and etc.. It should be noted that referring to historical, cultural heritage experts in Asian and Islamic studies (Marr N.Ya., Kistenev D.A., Legkobytov B.L., Hodzko A.L.) try to distinguish various aspects of artistic and folk-epic character, partially reflecting the Talysh ethnos worldview. In this sense, the works are certainly important from philosophical point of view, in the context of history of religion, philosophical anthropology and philosophy of culture, but such a one-sided approach in covering the problems of ethnic consciousness is very superficial and completely unsuitable for the purposes of the given study. Being taken together, outworld and natural phenomena perception peculiarities, relations in a team, family and society, volitional powers and emotions represent cultural and spiritual facts characterizing a person, his mind-set and educational levels, regardless of his particular social hierarchy membership. These features are developed in a collective environment forming ethno-cultural integrity. Such cultural phenomena are reflected in the development both of individual and ethnic group consciousness. In this paper, we will often refer to Zoroastrian and other sources enlightening the ethnic history of the Talysh people, its worldview and value orientations in different historical time periods.

Results

The problem of Talysh ethnogenesis and ethnic consciousness has stayed out of researchers' attention for a long time. Talyshes, their language and culture were mentioned for the first time in the work of the Russian Iranian Alexander Khodzko [4], who collected songs samples of Caspian tribes including Talysh. Later I. Berezin, a famous Orientalist, who visited the Trans-Caucasian region and the northern provinces of Persia, began investigation of Northern Iranian tribes. The research results were summed up in two works – 'Journey around Dagestan and Transcaucasia' and 'Journey about Northern Persia', published in 1849 and 1850. A large amount of work on studying the Talysh ethnic consciousness was done within the framework of the Caucasian Department of the Russian Imperial Geographic Society. In 1855 P.F. Riss published his article 'About Talyshinians, their life style and language', where he described in detail the way of life, customs and traditions of the Talysh people.

Problems connected with ethnic communities, their political structures, conditions of functioning and development are very diverse and of wide research interest. They include a range of issues related to formation and development of ethnic consciousness, its religious component, as well as ethnic groups' languages, culture and traditions.

With reference to Iranistics it can be said that certain aspects of ethnic history and culture of Iranian-speaking peoples in general and the Talysh people in particular have been studied. The latter is of great scientific interest due to its history and culture, geography, economy within Russia, largely related to the purposeful plans of the Russian state for more active development of the South Caucasus, changes in the nature of relations and forms of its government. The materials published by researchers in the XVIII and early XX centuries, especially the works of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society, contained valuable information about the Talysh ethnos, its language, culture, customs and traditions, reflecting the development of the Talysh ethnic consciousness at various historical stages. Being for all intents and purposes the first generalizing work relating to philosophical analyses of the Talysh ethnos consciousness, this study is based on these scientific materials which are of great importance in solving the problem of the Zoroastrian-Shiite worldview formation mechanisms typical for Talysh culture.

But, nevertheless, the present work has arisen thanks to the purposeful and conscientious work of more than one generation of the above mentioned scientists (linguists, historians, ethnographers) who made an invaluable contribution to the study of the Talysh people history, language and culture. The review of pre-revolutionary analyses, which were carried out in the second half of the XVIII and early XIX centuries and dealt with Talysh ethnicity, points out significant achievements of Russian historians, ethnographers, and geographers in relation to Talysh economic and everyday life, the Talysh language, religious outlook, rituals and traditions. In works of the Soviet period (Miller B.V., Pireyko L.A., Vinogradova S.P., etc.) the main emphasis was placed on the study of the Talysh language and its different dialects.

Having compared the Talysh language with Azari, the surviving remnants of the ancient Iranian language, B.V. Miller came to the conclusion that the Talysh language could be considered to be its immediate descendant [13]. Miller's findings were later confirmed by B.V. Henning [8] and E. Yarshater [18].

In our opinion, the main point of the Talysh ethnogenesis and ethnic consciousness problem is to determine conditions under which such a rich historical retrospective of an ethnic group can ensure ethnos evolutionary perspectives and it should be done on the basis of the historical comparison of Talysh ethnogenesis spatio-temporal parameters and methods of their actual reflection in the ethnic consciousness. The Talysh ethnic history resembles a stormy and largely tragic chain of events caused, on the one hand, by a political low-key role, or more correctly political apathy, absence of struggle, persistent striving for self-preservation (G.F. Chursin, N. Ya. Marr, P.Ya. Ryss). But on the other hand, reckless ambitions, desire for independence and drive for freedom should be recognized as the main characters of

the Talysh people. B.V. Miller notes that there were no areas of common interest between both points of view. In fact they were diametrically opposed in their basis.

Talysh cultural traditions were formed and developed under rather peculiar conditions, considered as a 'geo-ethnic reserve', which significantly influenced characteristic features of the Talyshes. First of all, Talysh national culture is integrated with such a geopolitical locus (an acquired cultural space), which has constantly been associated with diverse, often opposing cultural influences. Suffice it to say that, although the introduced traditions, ideas and beliefs have played a dominant role in the indicated 'geoethnic reserve' but they have never supplanted previous value systems completely. So it gave pride of place to the development and constant preservation of norms, mechanisms and criteria for ethnic identity of Talysh ethnos socio-cultural existence. But on the other hand, this unique 'geo-ethnic reserve' contributed to the formation of a mono-religious environment, i.e. religious and confessional monotony, which allowed to avoid conflicts on religious base. Having been grafted on the Talysh land, Shiite Islam intertwines elements of Zoroastrian and Dozoroastrian beliefs contributing to diversity of Talysh folklore and lifestyle. The most complicated semiotic (sign-symbolic) contexts with their unique synthesis in the framework of folklore forms of culture have been created. At the same time, there are many places in the world that due to their natural and geographical conditions were able to be outside of civilization for centuries, to be excluded from the great transmigration of different tribes and peoples, and thereby were able to maintain their self-contained isolation. It is the Talysh region with its mountains, dense forests that has reliably been guarding the Talysh people and their language for many millennia.

Talyshes have densely inhabited in the south of the Azerbaijani Republic and the north of Iran since the dawn of time. Shiite Islam is professed by far the majority of people who live in the Azerbaijan Republic. On the contrary Talyshes in the southern parts are mainly members of the Sunni. This important feature should be taken into consideration paying due regard to the tense situation that exists between two brands in Islam. The very ratio in favor of the Shiites was directly opposite to the general proportion between Shiites and Sunnis in the Islamic world.

Fact-finding of the Talysh ethnogenesis is determined by certain difficulties i.e. very scarce availability of a factual base, which can be compensated with materials of the language, toponymy, mythology, historical traditions, etc.

Self-designation is known to arise on the ethnic self-consciousness basis. However, the sources do not often exhibit examples of self-designation, but names given to the nation by its neighbours.

Addressing the problem of Talysh ethnogenesis one should stay focused on another very important factor related to Talysh place of living. To a large extent the complexity of the Talysh ethnogenesis problem is due to their specific location. From ancient times Talyshes have lived on the south-western coast of the Caspian Sea. It had an impact on Talysh ethnogenesis and ethnic consciousness.

The very process of ethnic culture creation always begins in the borderzone where the original substrata of ethno genetic processes are very mobile and unstable. According to written sources and archeological data several ethnic groups already established at the beginning of the first millennium BC. on the territory of ancient Manna (an ancient state existed in the X-VII centuries BC in the Near East, south and east of Lake Urmia, the territory of modern northern Iran, Iranian Azerbaijan), the tribes of the Caspians, Kadusis, Gels, etc. being especially distinguished among them. The ethnic map of the region began to change after the arrival of the Median tribes and resulted in the extreme complexity of the very problem of ethnogenesis of the people who lived here. Talysh ethnogenesis is based on two constants: 1) autochthonous non-Iranian and 2) Iranian. At the initial stage, undoubtedly, the non-Iranian element prevailed as an integral part of a single Caucasian settled cultural community. From time immemorial the South Caucasus has been a

historically developed region, where peoples maintain wide political, economic and cultural ties among themselves.

The most difficult question in Talysh history is the problem of origination and formation of the Median ethnic community. Ethnogenesis and ethnic composition of these ancient tribes are not unanimous in research literature. Without giving specifics of the questions what tribes were in the ancient Medes and whether, according to Herodotus, there was originally a Median tribal union of six tribes or it was a union of independent tribes, we will try to look at this problems from the Talysh's point of view - how they think about their origin themselves in traditional and mythological way. Let's try to identify those dominants of consciousness that allowed the Talyshes to recognize themselves as a unified ethnic community, and thus to isolate from the rest of the Iranian nationhood.

L.N. Gumilev noted that in places where the boundaries between landscape regions are blurred and smooth transitions from one geographical condition to another are observed, ethnogenesis processes are less intense. Developing this idea, L.N. Gumilev came to the conclusion that mountain ranges could be regarded as uniform regions since the mountain belts constituted one geographic economic complex in relation to man [7]. Based on this concept the Talysh mountains are quite convenient for preserving Talysh relic ethnos-persistent. Under these mountain-bound conditions the traditional environment of the Talysh ethnos was formed. Interacting with it, the Talysh seemed to saturate the surrounding natural environment with themselves and at the same time the environment enriched their economic and everyday life, dwelling, and their ethnic consciousness. Obviously, problems of boundaries between micro - and macro cosmoses, an individual and society are always solved in the process of such contact with traditional habitat. At the same time, such options as individuality, life, family, and home are essential for each Talyshman and life of the whole ethnos or a whole group realized by analogy with individual life and everyday life is really important for the ethnos. Despite widespread prevalence of ancient ethnic names associated with Talysh (the word Talysh is found in the denominations of various Azerbaijan and Armenian settlements), the ethnic name and the ethnos Talysh itself is related mainly to the south-west territory of the Caspian Sea where the Talysh have lived from prehistoric times. It is the area surrounded on the one hand by the Caspian Sea and on the other by the Talysh mountains where the Talyshes ran an isolated household, intermarried and for the first time realized their ethnic essence, created a unique original culture.

The toponym Talysh is met in medieval Arab sources, in particular, it is found in Baladzuri's, Yakut's, Al-Tabari's works who specified Talysh as al-Tylasan. Al-Tabari wrote: 'In the mountains around Azerbaijan, there lived such nations as gels and al-Tylasans who did not bow back to the Arabs and were free and independent' [9]. According to Hamdallah Kazvini, the medieval Persian author, there was the Tavalish region located between the cities of Sultaniye and Ardabil, its name was an Arabized plural form from the word Talysh, that is, in essence, a synonym of Talishan [16]. Another medieval author Rashid ad-Din Fazlullah provided two interesting fragments about the Talysh region and the Talyshes in his work on Gazan Khan (late XIII century): Near the western shore of the Caspian Sea, there is the city of Talysh and it is populated by the Talysh Elsewhere, Rashid ad-Din Fazlullah spoke about the Talysh region as a separate area: The great padeshah Gazan-khan decided to go hunting in Talysh 'velayat' (a province - author's note) near Mugani [9]. It should be noted that the factor of Talysh independence was already emphasized in the first publications on Talyshes, especially in external sources. The present form of the ethnonym Talysh was first encountered in the Armenian version of the story of Alexander the Great, composed in the XVI century and translated from the Greek original of the V century: And he told me that he was a refugee from the gates of the Caspian near Talysh in the province of Gilan [9].

Referring to the Caspian tribes habitat the ancient authors mentioned Gels, Mards (Amards), Caspias, Kadusis and others. As we noted above, Al-Tabari identified Tilasans together with Gels. If the Gels are today's Gilians, then it is quite logical to consider the Kadushi as the ancestors of modern Talyshes, since

there were no large ethnic migrations in the specified region surrounded on the one hand by the sea and on the other by the Talysh mountains. '... The region was entered into neither by the Arabs in their rapid raid on Dagestan nor by wild Central Asian hordes that repeatedly invaded Iran and Eastern Europe' [15]. Territorial isolation from the rest of the world predetermined cultural isolation as well, contributed to the development of a special 'geo-ethnic reserve'. The only question is whether the Kadushi, as well as Gels, Mards (Amards) and other tribes were originally Iranians, or they belonged to autochthonous ethnic groups of the South-Western Caspian region that were Iranized in the ancient era.

Among recent research, the work of the well-known Iranian G. Asatryan should be noted. The author concludes that ethnicons Talysh and Kadus are identical on the basis of their suffixal forms similarity [9]. Earlier N.Ya. Marr, the founder of the Japhetic theory, connected the term Taylish with the name of the Daleev tribe (Dalaa), the word stem of which is the prefix dal [12]. In his opinion the Talysh ethnic nature is strongly linked to numerous tribal and individuals everyday features, to the Japhetic world of the Caucasus and the Talyshes are full of elements of national psychological passion for the Caucasus [12]. Therein the Soviet japhetologist acted as an irreconcilable opponent of J. de Morgan, a French archaeologist, who also researched the Talysh ethnogenesis. The latter marked down pre-Talysh, Greeks and Indians as the same family of origin, i.e. as the Aryan world [14]. J. de Morgan relied mainly on material culture monuments but linguistic data are also important for ethnic identification. Though the penetration of the Median Indo-European language into the Caspian region was an epiphenomenon, and the tribes inhabiting the territory preserved their non-Indo-European dialects [5], all the surviving names of the Caspians, Kadushis and other pre-Caspian tribes are Iranian [1]. Thus at various stages of their history Talyshes were known under such names as Caduceias, Caspias, Mages, Gels, etc. But to a greater degree, the Talysh is identified with the Kadushians, since they occupy the same territories as the Kadushi tribes and this fact is recorded in the ancient sources. According to some ancient authors, in particular, Strabo, the Cadusians lived in the neighborhood of the Medes and Matiens. As it has already been noted above, G. Asatryan assumed that the word Talysh was a naturally modified form of the word *kadus*, although it is possible that the word *kadus* is an ellinized form of the ethnicon Talysh.

It is interesting that the ethnicon *kadus* is found in Shahname by Firdousi in the form of *katuz*, and it meant representatives of the clergy class during the reign of the mythical Jemshid [6].

According to I. Aliyev, the tribes living on the south-western coast of the Caspian Sea were behind the common name of the Caspians [1]. The Kadushi, Caspias and other tribes of the South-Western Caspian region undoubtedly played an important role in the Talysh ethnogenesis development, they introduced Median culture and traditions to the Talyshes. Due to hardly accessible subtropical forests and mountains on the one hand, and the sea on the other, these tribes were able to preserve the Median language which almost disappeared in the Great Media.

Talysh and related ethnic groups of Azerbaijan and Iran are bearers of Median culture as well as Italians and Greeks are the bearers of Greco-Roman antiquity, and Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians are carriers of ancient Russian culture.

Yu.V. Bromley confirmed that ethnic groups always left a trace in the world-historical process; they passed their historical, cultural and biogenetic heritage to their successors [2]. These words are also true in relation to the Talyshes, their consistency of the Medians. Hence the ancient autochthonous tribes of the South-Western Caspian region kept some independence from the rest of Media, but spiritually they already belonged to the Median and later Median-Atropatene culture.

The Talysh ethnic consciousness is very deep rooted and correlates with the period of the ethnos birth and formation. The extant Talysh cultural ideas about mythological ancestors and kinship allow us to assume the presence of a certain correlation between related tribes, united under the name of Median tribal union. Up

to the time of the Great Media decline in the IV century BC the Talysh ancestors (the Caduceus, the Caspian, and other related Caspian tribes) preserved their characteristics in the general mass of peoples calling themselves Medians [5], and played an indispensable role in the formation of an independent statehood which northern borders stretched to the north of Arax. This state became first known as Atropatakan (in Talysh - land, the edge of Atropos). The basic concepts of the ancient Azerbaijani people were formed on this territory by the merging of local tribes, which included the Talysh ancestors as well. Asari, the language of those ancestors, belonged to the northwestern group of the Iranian languages, and was very close to the modern Talysh language.

The loss of the original non-Iranian language was an important factor in this event. As it has been mentioned above, the loss of the language results in the loss of ethnic identity. If a group of people or a whole ethnos acquires a new ethnic identity it means that they have already belonged to a new ethnos [5].

Inherently any language as a medium of spiritual experience and divine values is of paramount importance for the cultural development. K. Levi-Strauss recognized that language can also be viewed as a condition of culture, what is more, from two positions. First, from the diachronic point, as by means of the language a person acquires his group culture; a child is taught and brought up in word and in deed, he is scolded and praised with words.

From a more theoretical point of view, any language also represents the conditions of culture to the extent to which the latter has a structure similar to the structure of the language. Both are created via oppositions and correlations, in other words, via logical relationships. [11] In the case under consideration, the stranger Iranian language, which was formed under the conditions of rich cultural traditions and accordingly possessed developed terminology, certainly had definite advantages over the language deprived of these traditions. Thus, having lost their native language, autochthonous tribes lost their ethnic self-consciousness, the process lasting long enough, for several centuries.

However, the problem of the Talysh ethnogenesis is still far from being resolved. The early layer of the Talysh ethnic consciousness, containing the cult of groves and trees on the one hand, and worshipping divinities of the pre-Islamic Iranian pantheon on the other hand, leads to the conclusion that pre-Iranian elements of consciousness were not completely absorbed, and disappeared leaving a trace, they organically blended into a new structure of consciousness with a Zoroastrian cult of natural elements (fire, water, earth).

The peculiarity of Talyshes' settlements across Iran and Azerbaijan was that they were located on the territory of several states. It was not caused by migration processes. As a result of the Turkmenchay Peace Treaty (1828) Talysh was finally divided into two parts: the Iranian Talysh and the Russian Talysh, the latter became a part of the Azerbaijan SSR, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union was included in the Azerbaijan Republic.

As noted above, there are two constants in the core of the Talysh ethnogenesis: 1) local, pre-Iranian and 2) strange Iranian. Synthesis of these constants, that is, the autochthonous one, based on the specific conditions of the Caucasus (the Talysh Mountains) on the one hand, and the external Iranian ethnic traditions of monotheism on the other, determined the syncretic character of the Talysh worldview consciousness. The incoming Iranian constant is dominant in the structure of the Talysh ethnic consciousness, and, undoubtedly, had a huge influence on the further evolution of the Talysh ethnic consciousness during a long period of historical development. At the initial stage the pre-Iranian element prevailed, but as far as alien Iranian-speaking tribes settled and migratory processes became more active on the cusp of the II - I millennia BC, the situation changed. The catalyst for changes in the ethnic consciousness structure was the loss of a local non-Iranian language.

Surely, local languages of the region could not in any way withstand competition with dialects of the incoming Median language: Being a means of conveying cultural values and traditions the language was of great importance for culture development in the broadest sense. Of all the components of culture, the language possesses the most clearly expressed ethnic functions. It is undoubtedly the main sign of the ethnos. Language change is usually accompanied by changes in other basic cultural features of the ethnos or ethnic community i.e. in everyday life, military affairs, social structure, political institutions, religion, etc. In other words: the change of language entails a loss of ethnic identity, change of ethnicity usually in the second or third generation. [1].

Previous studies characterizing Talysh ethnic consciousness development refer to Zoroastrian antiquity and the Middle Ages correspondingly. Zoroastrian religious beliefs and customs observed by the Talyshes during the Middle Ages were altered by Islamic norms, while they retained the original forms to a large extent. It is no coincidence that Islam covered the Talysh region much later than other parts of Iran. Adoption of Islamic customs should be noted to be accompanied by serious compromises on the part of new religion, especially in the field of women's rights and freedom, as will be discussed below.

Discussion

Certain material for Talysh ethnic consciousness research is provided by Medieval Arab and Persian sources as well. *Kabus-nime* is especially valuable in this regard, reflecting pre Caspian population customs in the first centuries of Islam. The paroemiac work written in the style of Aristotle's 'Ethics of Ethics' exposes the author's attitude toward the formation of worldview in the coming generation which should correspond to the basic provisions of the new religion, although this worldview largely preserved the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian base.

Since ethnos is primarily a historical category, one of its essential functioning properties as a historical unit is historical memory that preserves for the next generations the testimonies of historical facts, traditions about great ancestors, individuals who made a significant contribution to ethnos culture in general, and family, tribe, nation, in particular. This ethnos historical memory materializes in oral and written traditions, life style, cultural, religious and economic life. Both historical foretime and ethnos origin are important for the ethnic consciousness, directly reflecting in the worldview developed by means of symbols of the common past such as myths, legends, traditions, etc.

As for the historical and religious components of the Talysh ethnic consciousness, they are largely determined by people's commitment to spiritual values, which were developed by Zoroastrian religious beliefs and which were again reinterpreted through the prism of Shiite teaching. Modern Talysh ethnos is the result of this special cultural tradition. The Zoroastrian-Shiite model of ethnic consciousness was the basis of the Talysh ethnic consciousness for many centuries, and still retains its dominant status. It was possible due to the fact that each of spiritual values covered the same conglomerate of ethnic components, and the formation of religious cults occurred with the orientation to the same tradition sanctified.

Comparing Talyshes with representatives of other peoples living in Azerbaijan and primarily with Turkic population, researchers determine a great difference in morals and life style.

D.A. Kistenev wrote: Talyshes' way of life is purely tribal. Their family does not have a patriarchal type, but is more individual; therefore, Talysh personality is freer and more independent, it is not suppressed by the ancestral principle, as in the case of the Tatars; similarly, a woman in their family is more important, and her position is higher than in the family of the latter. Family isolation and realization of family principles in social - land relations are characteristic features of Talysh life. [17].

Shiite Islam generated such a complex of ideas and beliefs that influenced the ethnos consciousness and

self-consciousness. First of all, it is a doctrine of the savior Mahdi emphasizing that justice will triumph with Mahdi's coming to the Earth, and everyone will meet with their deserts.

In our opinion, it is necessary to distinguish two different aspects in Shiism: 1) internal or philosophical-ascetic Shiism and 2) external or popular-religious Shiism. The problem of popular religiosity relates not only to confessional and ethno-cultural identification, but also to those religious representations that were adapted by Shiism and reflected the worldview where faith in magic and ritual reigned. Consciousness skills, specific worldview, signification put by people of that time in their deeds cannot be explained only by the content of Shiism dogmatic works.

For Shiism did not deny various forms of popular beliefs, and skillfully adapted them for its own purposes, it was necessary to find areas of common interest. Thus the second stage of the struggle began - the period of transformation, adaptation, adjusting to the Talysh utilitarian needs, assimilation of religious practice, without which Shiism could hardly become national religion.

Due to the lack of the Talysh written tradition, the spread of Shiite religious literature was carried out via the Turkic language which also served all religious rites and rituals. The Zoroastrian religious tradition was oral.

Works addressed to the masses (teachings, books of examples, stories about Mahdi's disappearance, stories about his imminent resurrection, etc.) were taken on an artistic form which was accessible for understanding. The fascination of such works was combined with their target setting - to set on the paths of Shiite salvation. So a lot of written works fully saturated with Shiite themes appeared and they were referred to as literature of folk Shiism. In this case, we were not interested in the samples of folk Shiism literature, but in the interaction of two types of consciousness in them - a new one (Shiite) and a traditional one (Zoroastrian). This material gives us the opportunity to expand and deepen our understanding of origins of the Talysh ethnos behavioral, spiritual and moral structures.

As an example, here is an excerpt in the Talysh language from Alexander Khodzko's book:

Хоса кина! Ышты ном Шеваханг!
Мийона бестей кушти хазо ранг,
Махди Сахеб-Заман беньша ба Диван,
Али ды Рустами бешу ба дешмони джанг!

And it is a version of the same excerpt first in Russian and then in English:

О, красивая девушка! Твое имя – плеяда созвездий!
И на талии твоей платок из тысячи соцветий,
Пока властелин времени Махди не явился в мир,
ли да Рустам уберегут нас от несчастий [4].

Oh, a beautiful girl! Your name is a galaxy of constellations!
And there is a scarf of thousands of inflorescences on your waist,
While the lord of time Mahdi does not appear on the Earth,
Ali and Rustam will save us from misfortunes [4].

Seemingly, the Talysh religious consciousness does not differentiate Islamic and pre-Islamic issues; it unites Shiite imam Ali and Rustam, the hero of pre-Islamic epic tales in one heroic image.

Thus, the analysis of ethno cultural tradition transformation allows us not only to isolate the structure-forming paradigms of the Talysh ethnos culture, but also to demonstrate how an introduction process of a new cultural tradition, first Zoroastrian and later Islamic, is taking place under the conditions of the Talysh geo-ethnic reserve which is capable to preserve in a unique way fundamental features of ethnic consciousness.

At the same time, only those components of the introduced worldview attitudes were reflected and consolidated in the Talysh ethnic consciousness which after adaptation overlapped on the existing layer of ethnic consciousness.

The resulting syncretism enriches the Talysh ethnos consciousness with new religious and ethical content leading it to new spiritual guidelines for understanding and interpreting the phenomena of the surrounding world.

Taking into account the normative assessment resulted from the moral principles, a new approach allows us to identify dominant behavior mechanisms in the Talysh ethnic society.

Specific conditions of the Talysh geo-ethnic reserve allowed the ethnos to preserve its identity, language, customs and traditions throughout the long historical period. Isolated existence prevented both physical and spiritual expansion of an alien civilization to a considerable extent. Prior to Zoroastrianism penetration into the region the Talysh ethnos worldview consisted of symbols associated with natural elements, the cult of groves and trees. Zoroastrianism provided ethical force and Talysh religion became natural - the religion of goodness or light. With the approval of Zoroastrianism and later of Islam, foreign written literary traditions developed, formed and dominated; they prevented appearance of Talysh script in its own Talysh ethnos spiritual history. Thus, Talysh national heroes were imported from the introduced written traditions, they are mainly general Iranian ones (Zarathushtra, Rustam, Babek, etc.) and Muslim (Shiite - the fourth righteous caliph Ali, his son Hussein, the twelfth hidden Imam Mahdi, etc.).

Investigating the formation of Zoroastrian-Shiite worldview as an object of philosophical analysis in case of Talysh ethnos culture, it is necessary to outline in general terms a number of items relating to the study of main characteristics of modern Azerbaijani people, since its formation is the result of the Turkic-speaking tribes expansion beginning with the XI century, their transfusion with local population, adoption of their traditions and customs having a significant impact on ethnic consciousness evolution both of Talysh people and other indigenous ethnic groups of Azerbaijan. Some researchers (for example, M. Weber) assume that people, ethnic groups, united by a common historical destiny, religious and mythological traditions, language, economy have a great desire to a state form of existence. With regard to Talysh people, it cannot be said that there is consensus among researchers on the causes of the emergence of their various state structure forms within short historical periods. Thus, before touching upon the issue of Talysh different state forms we will focus on the Talysh ethnogenesis problem that is still looking forward to its final solution.

The Talysh Khanate is known to exist in the XVIII century up to its accession into the Russian Empire. It had all the attributes of statehood and relations with foreign states. It is noteworthy that throughout the years of its autonomous existence the Talysh Khanate gravitated towards Russia. And although discussions on the Talysh ethnogenesis as well as other indigenous peoples of Iran and Azerbaijan are still going on, and, by the way, not only in scientific circles, researchers are consolidated in one important question i.e. the Talysh are the autochthonous population of the South Caucasus.

Spreading from the borders of Iran to the Mugan steppe a new-formed Talysh Khanate was a 'geo-ethnic reserve' which carried the main layer of ethnic culture and identity of the Talysh ethnos. Unlike their

southern brothers in Iran, who largely lost their ethnic identity, the Russian Talysh have kept their basic cultural universals such as norms, values, stereotypes of thinking, beliefs, and the Talysh language of great purity.

In scientific literature some attention is often paid to the existence of the so-called 'highland' and 'lowland' Talyshes. Highland Talyshes are habitually referred to as 'raggery'. They live under the harsh conditions of the Talysh Mountains and are engaged mainly in animal husbandry, while lowland Talyshes are involved in arable farming, although cattle breeding is widespread as well.

The main difference between them is chiefly in the way of life - 'raggery' live much poorer than their lowland co-brothers. Undoubtedly, severe existence conditions made them physically more developed - they are tall, have asthenic constitution, and all of them are wonderful hunters. According to a number of researchers, highland Talyshes - raggery have maintained national type features to a greater extent than other nations. The same point of view has been expressed, in particular, by N.V. Khanykov [10].

Thus, it can be concluded that despite these minor differences that did not affect the formation of integrated ethnic worldview, the Talysh as a whole represent a modern ethnic society characterized by a holistic ethnic worldview based on accumulated experience of ancestors. As far as it is known, not every population possessing a complex of characteristic cultural features is an ethnos. The antithesis 'we' – 'they' [2] is also typical for the Talysh ethnic consciousness. In this sense, an important component of Talysh ethnic self-consciousness is the idea of the common origin of all ethnos members, which is usually understood as the cooperative historical activity of their ancestors.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the analyses carried out in this article we can conclude that:

- The place of a myth and religion as an obligatory early stage in the ethnic culture formation has been determined. Relying upon studies of famous thinkers who have analyzed the mythological consciousness essence, a number of ethnic consciousness formation patterns have been shown. The established cultural unity of ethnos members is inextricably linked with the commonality of their psyche, expressing, in particular, in their character shades, specificity of values-based orientations, tastes, etc. [3]. It is obvious that basic semantic orientations of ethnos culture are transmitted in the intra-ethnic interaction process. And each member of the ethnic group absorbs, perceives those semantic settings of his ethnos culture which play an important role in the formation of an individual worldview;

- Ethnogenesis stages and worldview relating to the Talysh ethnic consciousness were revealed as an organic part of the Caucasian and Iranian cultural areas where traditional conceptions prevailed and developed under specific ethnic group life conditions, which we have called 'geoethnic reserve'. With the introduction of an exogenous cultural tradition its constituent elements could not eliminate the existing value system of the 'geoethnic reserve', but on the contrary, they created syncretic environment contributing to the evolution of the Talysh ethnic consciousness towards understanding the world in the system of moral and ethical ideas, significantly enriched the world of the Talysh ethnos.

Such syncretic environment had significant impact on social perception of the Talysh ethnos, predetermined the leading nature of religious values in its spiritual and socio-political life.

Social existence of the Talysh ethnic community has become a real basis of the Talysh ethnic consciousness formation; the former is the process of Talyshes' mutual relations in economic, social and spiritual activities, where individual natural features of each member of the ethnic community are formed and exposed, as well as the traits characterizing the ethnos as a whole, that is, collective and social qualities, arising in the process of cooperative socio-economic activities of individuals.

The modern stage of ethnic consciousness development, including the Talysh ethnic consciousness, is characterized by a strong desire of many ethnic groups to search for their historical roots, actualization of ethnic and confessional factors, resulting in the so-called movement for national 'revival', the first signs of which appeared in the late XX century. However, from our point of view, it is practically impossible to regenerate the Talysh culture in all its color and diversity due to the loss of certain social roots, as well as the objectively influencing processes of globalization and modernization under conditions of continuing assimilation and collapse in cultural continuity of the ethnic development.

Footnotes

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