

Oldest Population of Caucasus According to Mythological Data

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Abstract

According to mythological data ancient population of Caucasus was represented by Giants. Among them are one-eyed Goliaths also. They mainly appear as shepherds. Goliaths obtained all means for existence and the next generations used them. Later they lost their old dignity and transformed into evil creatures. There are women Goliaths-warriors in the Caucasian folklore and their activity is connected to the heroic-wedding motive.

A special group of giants in the Caucasian mythology is made of Devs, which appeared here as a result of cultural-historical contacts with the Oriental world. According to beliefs of the East Georgian mountain dwellers, the territory where they resided, used to belong to Devs earlier. Devs used to be involved in various economies: hunting, farming, sheep breeding. As the ancient settlers Devs are distinguished for special abundance.

Keywords: Mythology, folklore, giants, Devs, population

Introduction

The starting epoch of cosmos creation is characterized by goliath signs in the Caucasian mythos. The epoch of goliaths was distinguished for special abundance, fat used to soak through the soil. The earth residents of that period used to squeeze juice from handful of soil, drink it and this food was sufficient for them for a long time. Their sleep was "goliath" as well – they used to sleep for a week.

There are large stones, hollow like bowls in some places in Mtiuleti (mountain region). According to people, Devs made this stones in the form of bowls and these fortresses were also built by them. These stones are too heavy to be moved by ten-twelve people (Folklore, 1961, p.294).

The Georgian mountain dwellers referred to goliaths of old generation as Devs. When they had a headache they used to make iron belts.

One-eyed Goliaths and Women Goliaths

The ancient population of Caucasus is represented by one-eyed goliaths. This is their essential, Caucasian sign. There are Cyclopes - one-eyed goliaths in the Greek Mythology

as well. Odysseus encountered one of them, Polyphem. He saved himself by poking the only eye of Cyclope, then hid himself in the flock of sheep and escaped from the cave. We encounter a similar plot in separate regions of Caucasus (Dalgat, 1972, pp.77-88).

Avaras referred to a one-eyed goliath as "Gadaroberi", which means "plate-eyed", Laks referred to is as "Bread-Eyed" or "Basin-Eyed". According to the Tushian legend, the leader of evil spirits is one-eyed. Goliath "Sieve-eyed in the forehead" is also mentioned.

One-eyed goliaths are not too smart but they possess all benefits: they have fire, cattle, towers and they do not give them up voluntarily. The people of the next generations have to obtain this benefits by struggling. Goliaths are in their premises, heroes go to them to steal fire or other benefits and they manage this by means of their cleverness.

Goliaths used to live on the earth much earlier than people. They obtained (or Gods gave them) all means for existence and the next generations used them. By appearance of new, more adept generation, they lost their old dignity and transformed into evil creatures which were forcibly deprived of kindness by cultural heroes. However, one or two kind goli-

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aths have remained in the Caucasian folklore.

One-eyed goliaths mainly appear as shepherds, as their main benefit is the flock of sheep and their tool is a crook. Goliaths which represented the previous population of Caucasus and were considered to be ethnarchs of separate peoples and families, used to life nearly without a conflict, led a passive idyllic shepherd life, but they gradually changed their image and obtained a negative role in the new mythological system, became more active and transformed into predacious evil creatures in the opinion of the new generation, some of them were even considered to be monsters. These representatives of the previous generation made up a demonological layer of the Caucasian mythology (Sikharulidze, 2006, p.215).

There are women goliaths – warriors in the Caucasian folklore who come from goliath mythos, but as they lost contact with mythos, they found their way in epos and acquired signs of the epic hero. Warrior women who have physical strength in line with dimensions are found in fairy-tales. They used to have a magic force: they could call and stop the rain.

Unlike men goliaths, huge women are more active and their activity in the epos and fairy-tale is connected to the heroic-wedding motive. Woman goliath seeks a fiancé by sign of strength and adeptness. When meeting a man, she is masked and the opponent does not even know that he confronts a woman, as she wears man's clothes.

The struggling woman goliaths are far from unfaithfulness, breaking promise and perfidy. They never behave treacherously and warn their opponents before the attack.

One more detail makes the woman goliaths closer to representatives of the old generation. They possess certain property, have their own dominion, territory where a person cannot enter easily, have a flock of sheep and have treasure. But nobody disputes their property. The plot ends by the woman goliath being defeated in the struggle, i.e. she finds a man stronger than herself and they get married. This plot does not develop in another way.

Devs

A special group of giants in the Caucasian mythology is made of Devs, which appeared here as a result of cultural-historical contacts with the Oriental world. They are negative heroes in the Iranian mythology, representatives of the team of Ariman, the opponent of the kind deity Ahuramazda. Due to similar appearance or other signs, they mixed with the Caucasian goliaths and entirely replaced them in some places. Therefore, the signs of old population of Caucasus are observed in the image of Devs, especially ownership of the territory (Kiknadze, 1996).

According to beliefs of the East Georgian mountain dwellers, the territory where they resided, used to belong to Devs earlier. Mountain dwellers specify the places of settlement of Devs more specifically, as a visibility.

Devs used to live in houses built with huge stones. Indeed, the structures considered to be the dwellings of Devs, surprise the visitors with their massive huge stonework used for building the wall.

It is mentioned in the legends that Devs used to be involved in various economies: hunting, farming, sheep breed-

ing. The sheep owned by Devs were of a special breed, with sharp horns and they were better than other sheep.

Devs as the ancient settlers are distinguished for special abundance. One khevsur was married to the daughter of Dev. His father-in-law De sent workers to reap the field. The Dev told his daughter to go and help. The son-in-law did not impede her and he went to his father-in-law. When they started reaping, the khevsur was astonished at their fast and abundant work (Ochiauri, 1967, p.20).

On the field ploughed by the plough made by Devs, two ears grew on each stem. In general, blacksmith's work is distinguished from activities of Devs. They were known for this skill. Their forge shops are mentioned in various places. Devs mainly forged plowing tools. There was no blacksmith in Pshav-Khevsureti in that period. Devs as the old and knowing settlers, possessed the magic art of blacksmith's work, which was unavailable for people. In addition, Devs used to keep their activity in secret. There was a great demand on the tools forged by them. A man could not approach the forge shop of Devs. A woman should have brought the order. Devs used to fall in love with these women and leave them there until the tool was forged. There are legends on relations of Devs and people, including hostility and good relations.

Devs had their women as well, which were as big as Devs. Visitors were particularly scared of the mother of Devs, who had a huge beer pan on her head.

The End of Dev's Authority

According to all these legends, Devs have human customs but they differ from them by their large size, strength, abundance. As owners of these places, they are settled on their land and have relations with people, but these relations are aggravated at some stage (maybe Devs saw people as rivals for the land) and Devs confront people, harass them, deprive of their property, assault their women.

A man could not overcome Devs, so he asked the God for help. The God sent sons of the God i.e. deities to struggle with Devs, as they would not give up their property without struggling. Confrontations of sons of God and Devs are depicted in the folk legends, which by severity is equal to tytanomachia described in the old mythologies. Sons of God managed to gain the final victory. They drove the defeated Devs to the underground.

Sons of God took the land away from Devs, released people from violence of idol-Devs and gave them residence. But the most important thing which followed exile of Devs, was establishment of chapels, introduction of religion (relations of God and people), which brought an order to the human society and gathered them together.

Sons of God established majority of chapels in the former settlements of Devs as a sign that the old life (similar to chaos) has come to an end and a new order, new belief is introduced.

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