



## **Nizami Ganjavi and Turan (TO 880 Anniversary of the Great Poet)**

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### **Author's contribution**

*The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Articles about the "concept" and "danger" of "Turanism" in political and publicistic works are often published in the international media, and this is so convincing that it has an impact on some scientific literature (history of literature, anthologies). In fact, on the contrary, materials obtained from scientific literature should be a source of political science and journalistic materials. In this context, we see that attempts to find a "brand" in historical research are still ongoing.

We try to reveal the general picture, taking contradictions on this topic from the sources of the works of Nizami Ganjavi and Firdosi, as well as on the basis of existing historical documents. Has there ever been a state called Turan in history? If not, what was the source and purpose of this legend? If there was no Turan, how did Iran exist? Who won the war between Iran and Turan? If Firdosi knew this story, then why does Nizami write in his works the complete opposite of this story?

As you can see, in addition to collecting tips from the works of Nizami and Firdosi to answer many questions, one can distinguish place names and ethnonyms from ancient mythology and Zoroastrianism and determine the true "threat" by creating a general picture, defining the history and geography of events.

This article attempts to answer some questions by comparing a number of historical, literary events and positions (multicultural approach of the great poet, comparative analysis of creativity, etc.).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nizami Ganjavi is an great poet who left his mark on world literature in the 12th century. Many works have been written, researched and translated into many languages of the world about him. In this article, we will try to look at Nizami from an unprecedented perspective, comparing material from a number of sources and literary passages about his multicultural thinking, religious and ethnic tolerance, dedication to human values and attitudes towards history [1,2].

Nizami lived in the XII century, knew his time well and could freely express his views on various statesmen. Nizami, who considers himself a Turk, writes: Pedər bər pedər məməra tork bud - Ke hər yek be nıru yeki gorg bud. (Текст написан на персидском языке в латинской транскрипции) Translation of the verse: My father and his father were Turks - each in his place, like a wolf.<sup>1</sup>

Also, in different parts of Nizami's works, he talks about the Turks and different peoples, presents them, attracts attention, and expressing a multicultural approach to all peoples. We are not mistaken when we say that Nizami's "Seven Beauties" is a work that literally expresses and promotes multiculturalism. Also, the word "Turk" and hundreds of "components" (phrases) and expressions derived from it are noted in the Persian hamsa Nizami, "Turk", "Turki", "Turkan", "Turkane", "Turktaze", "Turkvash". "and others. The poet's goal was to express steadfastness, courage, beauty, kindness, fearlessness, courage and so on. The poet even praises the kings, whom he praises for being Turks, thinking that they are far from disgraceful.

تو گفنی دل از رده دارد به خشم  
هم بد نژاد است و هم بد تن است  
زخونش دل سنگ مرجان کنم  
ای دوزخی روی دور از بهشت  
زاینده را بر تو باید گریست  
نام پدرشان ندارند یاد  
سوالاتی می کند که این شخص جواب می دهد

Nizami knows Firdosi, who wrote and worked two hundred years before him, is familiar with his work and marks him as a poet of a high level. But when we look at the works of Firdosi, we see that his whole worldview is divided into good and bad, good and evil the point of view "ours" and "not ours." It is clear here that he was under the influence of Zoroastrianism and that all natural and social phenomena took place between good and evil [3-6]. The main idea in the poems of Shahnameh Firdosi preserved in history, is the Iranian-Turanian war and in this war there are "good" and "evil", that is, Iran, which is the side of "good", and Turan, which is the side of "evil".

It should be noted that in the work of Nizami, there is "division" as well as "opposition". In "Khosrov and Shirin": the line "If he is Keyhosrov, then we are Afrasiyabs", declares that Turan is able to confront Iran and answer on equal terms. However, Nizami does not represent "Iran" or "Turan" as enemies [7,8]. In the work of Nizami, both Keikhosrov and Afrasiyab are worthy personalities.

The idea that a number of new mythological events were included in the text of the "holy book" in the Sassanian version of the Avesta was analyzed in detail in my research. Firdosi introduces "Turan", based on the mythology of the Sassanid period, and does not hide his incomprehensible "hatred" for the Turks. In the legend, based mainly on Sassanid mythology, Firdosi builds a model of war that has no history, defines the good and bad sides in this war, takes the position of the "Iranian" side as a side of good, evaluates the "Turanian" side as an evil Turk and says:

ابا سرخ ترکی، بدی، گریه چشم  
که آن ترک بد ریشه و ریمن است  
تن ترک بد ذات بی جان کنم  
از آن پس بپرسید، از آن ترک زشت  
چه مردی و نام و نژاد تو چیست؟!  
بود ترک، «بد طینت» و «دیو زاد»  
در جایی هم هرمز از یکی از بزرگان و پیران دربار

<sup>1</sup> Nizami Gəncəvi. *Divan. Bakı, Mütərcim; 2019.s.4. (Nizami Gəncəvi. Divan. Bakı, 2019.p.4.) (in Azerbaijani)*

Translation of the verse: (This is a Turk who has a bad race and is cunning. He has a bad background and a bad soul (body).

I will destroy the body of an evil Turk, make the heart of a stone "coral" from his blood

Ask him, you shameful Turk, you are a man of hell and your face is far from heaven

What kind of man you are, what is your name and origin, the one who brought you into this world should mourn you.

A Turk can be evil and is born of a "giant" who does not know his father and does not know his name.)

Admittedly, many of the concepts and expressions of the Persian language of the 9th-10th centuries, based on the expression of poetic thought, create problems in translation. When translating, it is difficult to convey the aggressiveness of thought and the scope of hatred. Naturally, Persian was not a "folk" language at that time. In the Middle Ages, dictionaries were developed to explain many of the words and phrases used in Firdosi's Shahnama. At that time, the Persian language was developed in the temples "Mobids" and "Mitraistomi", epics and legends were created and disseminated. Islam, which was already established in the ninth and tenth centuries, did not participate in this process.

Firdosi's writings about neighbors living together do not bring him "headship" and respect. It is known that even after his death he was denied a burial in the "common" cemetery. He was buried in the garden of his house in the city of Tus, and later a monument was erected for him by order of the ruler of Khorasan. The tomb of Firdosi, which was soon destroyed, was restored by Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1928-1934, creating a "mausoleum" for him and reproducing his legacy, making it the basis of the "Paniran" worldview.

There are almost no traces of Islam in the images and events of Firdosi. As can be seen from the poem, a Turk with a negative image is the son of Devin. Dev as a negative image of the Sassanian worship of fire (Sassanian Zoroastrianism), represents an evil force. The heroes of Firdosi are also historical and mythological figures of the Sassanian period. It can be assumed that Firdosi did not have a lot of information about the history of Iran in the

Achaemenid period. Otherwise, he would have praised them in his work. Since, knowing about the "Bekhestun letters", about the exploits of Kirus or Darius, he would certainly have included this in his poem.

Unlike Firdosi, Nizami illuminates in his work, the history of the Achaemenid period and creates an image of the legendary Alexander, different from the history of Herodotus. He compares Alexander to the ruler of Barda, not to Kyrius.

Nizami does not call Alexander "a descendant of a giant who does not know his roots and ancestors", but presents him as an "intellectual". On the whole, Nizami Ganjavi is far from thinking "winner or loser". Nizami thinks about the "wise and ignorant" and at the end of his work gives "perfection" to all people [9].

In his poem written to Sultan Sanjar, the Seljuk Shah, Nizami Ganjavi considered justice, loyalty and beauty to be the characteristic features of the Turks:

دولت ترکان که بلندی گرفت مملکت از داد پسندی گرفت  
چونکه که تو بیدادگری پروری ترک نه ای، هندوی غارتگری

**Translation of the verse:** (When the state of the Turks "rose", their countries flourished and saw justice. "If you oppress the people," then you are no longer a Turk, maybe some kind of a robber)

## 2. HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT TOURANISM

According to encyclopedias [10,11,12], the word Turan is of Persian-Tajik origin and is known as a geographical area in Central Asia. It was created by adding the Persian plural form "an" to the word tour. "Turan" means a place and has long been used as a toponym. He is referred to in the Avesta as "Tuirianam". According to ancient Persian mythology, the origin of the "Persians" begins with a man named Firdun. It is believed that this mythology was formed mainly during the Sassanid period. Firdun has three sons: Iraj, Turan and Salim. Turan kills Iraj, and Salim has no heir. Only Turan has a son named Zadsham, through whom the genealogy continues.

There are many opinions about Turan. After the conquest of Sogdiana by the Turks in 565 in neighboring countries, especially in Iran, two ethnonyms - "Tur" (Iran) and "Turk" (-) are confused by phonetic similarities. In the Shahnam, where the Iranian-Turks conflict was recorded, the name "Turan" (country of tours)

began to be used in the meaning of "Turkestan" (country of Turks). However, the "Turanization" of the Turks began at the end of the 10th century, after the Ghaznavids, who conquered Iran, divided into Turkic dynasties. The Karakhanids who occupied Turan elevated their ancestors to the legendary king of Turan Afrasiab and began to be called the "House of Afrasiab" in order to legitimize their rule over Turan. Afrasiab himself was identified with the hero of Turkic legends Alp-Er-Tong.

The German "Map of Iran and Turan" dates back to 1850 (during the Gajar dynasty). The territory of Turan is marked with an orange line. The name "Turan" appears in the east of the Aral Sea. On the map, Turan covers the territories of modern Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, as well as the northern provinces of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This area is almost identical to modern Central Asia.

Iran also appeared as a place name and was known as "Iran Falati" (Iranian Plain). Firdosi was one of the first to use the Iranian geographic name as a political concept. Firdosi, who wrote the mythology about the Iranian-Turanian war, probably knew that there were no such states. Then there was neither Iran nor Turan. These names were used as the geographical name of the place.

Shahnameh Firdosi does not comment on ethnic groups representing the Iranian side if the Turanians are nomadic tribes from the northeast. Given that Firdosi himself lived and worked in Central Asia, the "Iran" he had in mind was different from the geographic area we now know.

Although the Iranian-Turanian war is not really in history, the number of those who want to present this event as historical has especially increased in the XX-XXI centuries. In world history, there was neither the great unity of the Germanic tribes, nor the great unity of the Slavic peoples, nor the great unity of the Turkic peoples. It is unprofessional to make predictions about contemporary historical events on the basis of a literary work based on mythology.

Reza Shah Pahlavi made the first attempts to synonymize the concepts of Iran and Persia in the 1930s. 30s Reza Shah Pahlavi announced that we are not Persians, we are Iranians and this began the synonymization of Iran-Persia. The Pahlavi government has also done a lot to "Persianize" Iran. As a result, multinational Iran as "Persian" denied the multicultural composition

of a large geography and introduced the concept of "Iranian-speaking" peoples, which had no scientific basis.

The geographical area inhabited by the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes of the Saks in Kazakhstan was called Turan. Of course, these Saka tribes did not know about the mythological "sons of Firdun" and the mythology between them, history and conflicts. Later, Saks, Massagets, Kushans, Parthians, Hephthalites and other eastern peoples began to be called Turanians. The term referred to almost all of Central Asia inhabited by these peoples. The topic of the centuries-old confrontation between Iran and Turan in Persian literature has received wide coverage, and the merits of Firdosi played an important role in this.

The cultural "environment" created by Shahname Firdosi did not achieve its goal. The idea of Turkism and Turanism were presented and lived in this geography as an "expression of tolerance" and multiculturalism.

For the first time, the term Turan as a special name in the form of "Alp-Turan" is found already in the ancient Turkic inscriptions of the 7th-8th centuries. (*E. Yarshater. Afrāsīāb* (англ.). Encyclopaedia Iranica -2011.) This is 3-4 centuries before the time of Firdosi, and Firdosi does not know this "history". The emirs of Bukhara were also presented as "rulers of Turan" or "kings of Turkestan and Turan" before the Russian occupation of Central Asia in the early 19th century.

Turan is also known as one of the regions of the Sassanid Empire. According to the geographical information of the books of Muslim historians, Turan was a mountainous region in Eastern Baluchistan. At the same time, the word "Turan" became known as the name of an area inhabited by Turks and other non-Persian peoples, located in Khorasan, northeast of the Amu Darya River.

Turanism became a political ideology that provided for the unity of all Ural-Altai peoples. It was originally intended to unite the Finns, Hungarians, Estonians and Finno-Ugric peoples, as well as the Manchus, Mongols and Turkic-speaking peoples. This ideology, supported by the Azerbaijani and Tatar intelligentsia in Russia before the 1905 revolution, began to spread in Turkey after the proclamation of the Second Constitution in 1908. The "Turanist" views, which Zia Gokalp (11.p.25) put forward among the leaders of the "Union" and "Party of Progress",

were taken as a basis. Anwar Pasha, one of the Ottoman generals of that time, in 1918-1922 tried to spread the idea of Turanism in Central Asia.

Many historical figures expressed their views and words about Turanism. Amir Teymur: "We are Maliki-Turan, Emir-Tukistan. We are a Turk, son of Tur. "I am the greatest and most ancient of the peoples, the leader of the Turks," he said. Zia Gökalp, the founder of the idea of Turanism, said: "The motherland is not Turkey, the Turks are not Turkestan, the motherland is a large and eternal country of the Turks: Turan." Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: "I believe in the unity of Turks and I see it," he said, and many thinkers saw and supported this idea within the framework of multicultural values.

### 3. CONCLUSION

As you can see, in the work of Nizami, the Turks and "Turkism" express an idea that does not depict a specific ethnic group and is a common (gathering, uniting) factor. However, there is an opinion that non-Turks are not enemies, they describe all peoples with their uniqueness and quality. The work "Seven Beauties" is a very good example of this. Unlike Nizami, Firdosi sees non-"Iran" as an enemy, and the target of criticism is not only the Turks, but also other peoples, who become the object of criticism, and sometimes even "insults".

In the works of Nizami, every nation of the world is under the protection of "heaven". All peoples are unique, individual and irreplaceable. In The Seven Beauties, the Indian beauty is protected by Saturn: the Turkestan (Chinese) beauty is protected by the Sun: the Slavic beauty is protected by Mars: the Byzantine beauty is protected by Jupiter, and no one is left aside. Nizami lovingly praises the uniqueness of the "people" he represents, in defining each "beauty", shows their uniqueness.

The ideological architecture of Firdosi's work, distinguished by a high level of rhetoric and skillful use of poetic techniques, was not taken into account in the Middle Ages. Of course, the fact that he was not loved during his lifetime, and that the works written by him besides the Shahnameh (of course, he had other works ...) were not preserved, was the result of public attitudes towards him. (It is believed that a great poet cannot write "only one work" in his life.)

In the 1920s and 1930s, through the efforts of Reza Shah Pahlavi, the work of Firdosi again came to the fore and laid the foundation for the ideology of "paniranism". On the contrary, Nizami does not have "pan-Turkism" or "pan-Turanism". There is love for the peoples of the world, respect for world culture, and peaks that need to be conquered in the general process of cognition for all.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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