

The Unit of the Mythological Concept “Adam” in the Dictionary of Mahmud Kashgari and its Interpretation in Karakalpak Culture

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Abstract

This article analyses the mythological concept of “adam” in Mahmud Kashgari’s “Divanu Luġat-it-Turk”, which reflects the worldview of the Turkic peoples of the 11th century. The concept of “adam” reveals a person not only as a biological being, but also as a spiritual-moral and socio-cultural phenomenon. The authors identify the religious-mythological and socio-cultural meanings of the concept and analyse it through the oral works of the Karakalpak people - proverbs, epics, folklore texts. The article shows that the interpretation of the image of “adam” in Karakalpak culture is inextricably linked with ancient Turkic archetypes, and at the same time is enriched with a national worldview. The results of the research serve to determine the conceptual continuity, as well as ethno cultural identity in the “man - society - myth” system.

Keywords: *Conceptosphere, Karakalpak Culture, Mythology, The Concept of “Adam”, Turkic Peoples*

Introduction

Sustainable In his fundamental work, “Divanu luġat-it-Turk”, Mahmud Kashgari not only laid the foundations of Turkic lexicography but also captured a rich cultural and mythological heritage reflecting the worldview of the Turkic tribes of the 11th century. Among the key concepts, a special place is occupied by the unit of the mythological concept “adam”, which symbolizes not only man as a biological being, but also as a spiritual, moral and socio-cultural phenomenon. In the Kashgari dictionary, “adam” appears as a central category of the Turkic concept sphere, closely connected with ideas about fate, honor, sacrifice and spiritual purity (Камилова, 2024), (Хазиева, 2016).

For Karakalpak culture, the concept of “adam” has both a universal and ethnically specific meaning. In folk proverbs, epic tales, and folklore texts, the image of a person is revealed through collective values—family honor, social prestige, harmony with nature, and spiritual perfection. The works of modern researchers (G.K. Kdirbaeva, V.J. Usenova) show that in the Karakalpak mythological concept sphere the image of “adam” retains a connection with ancient Turkic archetypes, but at the same time is enriched with specific elements reflecting the national worldview.

The relevance of this research lies in the fact that studying the mythological concept unit “adam” allows us to identify the continuity of the cultural and ideological codes recorded by Kashgari and trace their interpretation in the Karakalpak tradition.

The purpose of this article is to examine the specific representation of the concept “adam” in Mahmud Kashgari’s dictionary and analyze its interpretation in Karakalpak culture. The objectives of the study include: 1) identifying the religious, mythological, and sociocultural meanings of the concept “adam” in “Divanu lūgat-it-Turk”; 2) comparing these meanings with Karakalpak folklore and literary sources; 3) determining the universal and ethno specific components of the concept in the Karakalpak worldview.

Review of Related Literature

Research on “Divanu lūgat-it-Turk” and the concept of “adam” in the historical and philological context of Mahmud Kashgari’s “Divanu lūgat-it-Turk” (1072-1074) occupies a special place in the history of Turkic philology, as it is the first encyclopaedic dictionary of Turkic languages created in the Arabic written tradition. Scholars have repeatedly noted that this work is not limited to a description of vocabulary, but represents a comprehensive text capturing the ethno cultural realities, mythological beliefs, and social norms of the Turkic peoples of the 11th century (Камилова, 2024).

According to S.E. Kamilova, Kashgari’s work can be considered “the first philological text of Central Asia”, as it combines not only lexicographic description but also ethnographic, religious, and mythological layers, making it a unique source for studying the worldview of medieval Turks (Камилова, 2024). In this context, the concept of “adam” appears as not simply an anthroponymic unit, but a cultural code reflecting the connection between man and society, religion, and nature.

The concept of “human” in the Turkic worldview, primarily as reflected in an analysis of Kashgari’s dictionary, reveals that the word “adam” has a multilayered meaning. It denotes not only the individual as a biological subject but also a person as a bearer of spiritual and moral qualities. In a number of proverbs and sayings recorded in the “Divan”, “adam” is contrasted with the animal world, symbolizing reason, speech, and social responsibility. M. Kashgari emphasized that it is the capacity for rational speech that distinguishes humans from other creatures, and this idea fits seamlessly into the anthropocentric tradition of Turkic cultures (Исабекова, 2017).

Moreover, in the dictionary’s texts, man is often conceptualized as a mediator between the earth and the heaven. A.I. Pylev, examining the mystical poetry included in the “Divan”, notes that early Turkic notions of man are closely linked to Islamic mysticism, where the individual is viewed as the intersection of earthly existence and the divine order (Пылев, 2015). Thus, “adam” in the Kashgari dictionary carries a sacred meaning, acting as the bearer of the divine spirit and a higher purpose.

Religious and mythological semantics play a role in the interpretation of the concept of “man”. A.A. Khazieva, analyzing the dictionary corpus, emphasizes that terms related to religion and mythology form a semantic field around “adam”, where concepts of purity, spiritual fortitude, fate, and moral choice intersect (Хазиева, 2016). In this regard, “adam” in the Turkic tradition simultaneously functions as an earthly and sacred being.

Objectives

This is especially important for understanding the role of humans in Karakalpak culture, where the image of “adam” retains mythological connotations. Karakalpak proverbs (“Adamdı adam qıladı – sóz”, “Adamdı baylıq emes, aqıl asıraydı”) reflect the same idea: humans do not exist in isolation, but as bearers of reason, speech, and spiritual values.

The linguistic personality of Mahmud Kashgari and the concept of “adam” in U.K. Isabekova’s research reveal the image of Mahmud Kashgari as a “linguistic personality in the dialogue of medieval cultures” (Исабекова, 2017). The scholar emphasizes that Kashgari consciously integrated the Arab-Islamic tradition with Turkic culture, thereby forming a unique system of categories. In this system, “adam” appears as a universal concept linking the traditions of Islamic anthropology and Turkic mythopoetics. Thus, “Divan” becomes not only a lexicographic source, but also a philosophical and cultural text, where the concept of “man” acts as a point of intersection of various ideological traditions.

The study of the image of “adam” in the Kashgari dictionary is fundamental importance for Karakalpak philology. Modern research (G.K. Kdirbaeva, V.J. Usenova) shows that in the Karakalpak concept sphere, “adam” retains a dual structure: universal (common Turkic) and ethno specific. A comparative typological perspective on the Kashgari and Karakalpak materials reveals that the concept of “adam” in both cases is rooted in mythological foundations, but its interpretation differs in emphasis. In the “Divan”, it functions primarily as a lexical-semantic unit, embedded in the system of Islamic and pre-Islamic beliefs. In Karakalpak culture, however, this image acquires a more pronounced ethical and social connotation, being embodied in proverbs, fairy tales, and epic works.

Thus, examining the concept of “adam” in the “Divanu luġat-it-Turk” and comparing it with the Karakalpak tradition opens new horizons for understanding the ethno cultural identity of the Turkic peoples.

Methodology

The mythological concept of man in the Turkic tradition is linked to the mythological consciousness of the Turkic peoples, which has always focused on man as the central element of the universe. Researchers note that anthropocentrism is a pervasive feature of Turkic mythopoetics: man acts as a mediator between the cosmos and society, the sacred and the earthly. The works of classic mythologists (M. Eliade, C. Lévi-Strauss, C.G. Jung) indicate that man plays the role of a mediator in mythological space, who, through rituals and symbolic actions, ensures harmony between worlds (Eliade, 2002), (Lévi-Strauss, 1985).

This approach is fully characteristic of Turkic cultures. The concept of “adam” is formed not as an isolated concept, but as the core of a mythological conceptosphere, including the categories of fate (táġdir), happiness (baxıt), spiritual purity (tazalıq), sacrifice (párawanlıq), and social prestige (abıroy). These concepts are largely reflected in both the Kashgari dictionary and the Karakalpak tradition. Man and Cosmology in Turkic mythology, man is understood as part of the cosmos, whose existence is determined by interaction with heaven (kók aspan) and earth (jer). In epic texts and proverbs, “adam” is often associated with celestial bodies, symbolizing its subordination to higher powers. For example, in Karakalpak fairy tales, the hero’s fate is described through the “juldız”

(star), which indicates his life path. These ideas find a direct parallel in the “Divan”, where Kashgari records numerous expressions linking humans to celestial bodies. A.I. Pylev rightly notes that this connection has a mystical basis: humans not only live in the world but also bear the “imprint of the heavenly order” (Пылев, 2015). The ethical dimension of the concept of “adam” in the Turkic tradition places particular emphasis on human moral and ethical qualities. In proverbs and sayings, “adam” is not simply a biological being, but a bearer of reason, honor, valour, and social responsibility. For example, the expression “Adamnıñ abıroyı – eldiñ baylıǵı” (“A person's honor is the wealth of the nation”) is widespread in Karakalpak folklore.

A.A. Khazieva emphasizes that in the religious and mythological vocabulary of Kashgar, the category “adam” is closely linked to notions of spiritual purity and virtue (Хазиева, 2016). Humans are conceived as beings called upon to observe religious norms and thereby maintain balance in the world. Thus, the concept of “adam” in the Turkic tradition has a clearly expressed ethical dimension: to be human means to be a bearer of moral values that reflect the collective consciousness of the people. One of the key aspects of the mythological concept of “adam” is its connection to society. In Turkic cultures, the individual is inseparable from the clan (urıw), family (shańaraq), and community (jámiyet). In folklore texts, “adam” is understood primarily through social relations: “without clan, there is no man”.

In the Kashgari dictionary, this aspect is manifested through numerous proverbs emphasizing the value of collectivism and social unity. U.K. Isabekova notes that Kashgari consciously recorded expressions reflecting the relationship between the individual and the collective, making the “Divan” not only a dictionary but also a unique “sociocultural code” of the medieval Turks (Исабекова, 2017). Modern Karakalpak studies confirm the continuity of this tradition. G.K. Kdirbaeva points out that for the Karakalpaks, “adam” is not only an individual but also a “bearer of social prestige”, expressed in the category of prestige. In this sense, the concept of “adam” functions as a link between the individual and society, reflecting the idea of harmony within the collective.

A comparison of Karakalpak material with other Turkic traditions (Uzbek, Kazakh, and Bashkir) reveals both common and specific features of the concept of “adam”. L.R. Suleimanova, examining Turkic vocabulary in the terminology of Bashkir funeral and memorial rites, notes that “adam” in this context symbolizes not only life but also the transition to another world (Сулейманова, 2017). Similar semantic parallels can be found in Karakalpak culture, where death and human destiny are viewed as part of a single cosmic cycle. Thus, the universal Turkic concept of “adam” is imbued with local meanings that reflect the specificity of each ethnic tradition.

The mythological concept of “adam” in the Turkic tradition has a multilayered structure. It includes:

1. The cosmological dimension – man as part of the universe, connected to heaven and earth.
2. The ethical dimension – man as the bearer of honor, spiritual purity, and moral standards.
3. The social dimension – man as a member of a clan and society, whose value is determined by collective ties.

These aspects were recorded in the “Divanu lúgat-it-Türk” and are reflected in Karakalpak culture, demonstrating a strong continuity between the ancient Turkic heritage and modern ethnocultural realities.

Analysis

Karakalpak culture and its interpretation of the concept of “adam” have preserved unique layers of mythological worldview in their folklore, where the concept of “adam” occupies a central place. In proverbs, fairy tales, epics, and rituals, humans are portrayed as the foundation of the universe, the bearer of spiritual values, and the mediator between the cosmos and society. Scholars of Karakalpak philology (J. Yeshbaev, Sh. Kunnazarova, G. Kdirbaeva) point out that “adam” in folk tradition is interpreted not only as a physical personality but also as a “mythological category” uniting moral, social, and sacred qualities. This characteristic is evident in Karakalpak proverbs: “Adamdı adam qıladı – sóz” (“A man is made man by his words”), “Adamnıń abıroyı – eldiń baylıǵı” (“A man’s honor is the nation’s wealth”), “Adam ólse – atı qaladı” (“A man dies, but his name remains”). In these expressions, a person is understood through speech, honor, and a good name—that is, through values that have collective significance.

The interpretation of “adam” in the Karakalpak mythological conceptsphere in the field of cognitive and ethnolinguistic (G.K. Kdirbaeva & V.J. Usenova, 2024) shows that in the Karakalpak conceptsphere, “adam” functions as a key mythologeme, reflecting the unity of spiritual and social principles. G.K. Kdirbaeva notes that the concept of “adam” in the Karakalpak language is closely connected with such concepts as baxıt (happiness), párawanlıq (sacrifice), jámiyetlik abıroy (social prestige). These categories form a semantic field around “adam” similar to those found in “Divanu lúgat-it-Türk” (Кдырбаева, 2024). V. J. Usenova, studying fairy tale discourse, emphasizes that a human in Karakalpak tales is presented as a bearer of collective values and moral guidelines. In her interpretation, “adam” is a “symbolic hero embodying the destiny of the people, their spiritual aspirations, and social ideals” (Усенова, 2024).

Karakalpak literature of the 20th and 21st centuries also retained the interpretation of humans as a moral category. In the works of Ajiniyaz, T. Kaipbergenov, and other writers, the image of “adam” is closely linked to the concepts of conscience, duty, and honor. The literary heroes of these authors demonstrate that being human means not only living but also serving society and the people. This understanding reflects the traditional Karakalpak worldview: “adam” is “jámiyetniń bir aǵzası” (“an individual who benefits society”). This ethical burden connects modern literature with the mythological tradition, in which a person was always judged by their actions and social role. A comparative analysis shows that many of the meanings recorded by Kashgari in the 11th century continue to exist in Karakalpak culture. For example, speech as a criterion of humanity is noted in the “Divan” “adam” is distinguished by word (sóz) and intelligence. This idea is repeated in Karakalpak proverbs: “A man is made human by his word”. In Karakalpak culture, “abıroy” (prestige) remains the most important characteristic of “adam”. The dictionary “Memory and Name” contains sayings about the immortality of a person’s name. In the Karakalpak tradition, the proverb “Adam ólse – atı qaladı” confirms the same idea.

Thus, we can speak of a profound continuity of cultural codes, where “adam” is a stable concept that has retained its archetypal foundation over the centuries. An important component of the interpretation of “adam” in Karakalpak culture is its sacred aspect. Religious rites associated with birth, marriage, and death have always emphasized the

uniqueness of humans as beings connected to higher powers. Initiation rites (súnnet toy), funeral rituals, and wedding songs, humans are viewed as a link between the past and future generations.

Here, it is appropriate to turn to the research of L.R. Suleimanova, who studied Turkic vocabulary in Bashkir funeral and memorial rites. She demonstrated that “adam” in these contexts symbolizes not only life but also the transition to the next world (Сулейманова, 2017). Similarly, in Karakalpak culture, a person’s death is perceived as a continuation of his life’s journey in space, which confirms the mythological nature of the concept. The social portrait of “adam” in the Karakalpak tradition in the “Divan” is often presented in a generalized form, but in Karakalpak culture this concept is imbued with specific social characteristics. Thus, in folklore and ethnographic texts, traits such as reason and speech, which verbalize the ability to speak and think (“Sóz – adamdı adam qıladı”), are highlighted. Honor and prestige as the social evaluation of an individual (“Abıroy – eldiń baylıǵı”). Memory and name—as a person lives as long as their name lives in society. Sacrifice and responsibility—as a person is obligated to care for family, clan, and community. The interpretation of the concept of “adam” in Karakalpak culture represents a complex interweaving of universal Turkic archetypes and local ethnocultural characteristics. While the “Divanu luǵat-it-Türk” conceptualizes man as a spiritual and social being, in the Karakalpak tradition this image is further developed, being enshrined in proverbs, epics, rituals, and literary works.

Thus, “adam” becomes a key category through which ethnic identity is formed and the system of moral and ethical values of the Karakalpak people is consolidated. Modern cognitive-discursive approaches to the concept sphere of “human” increasingly focus on the human as a central category in language and culture. According to the anthropocentric paradigm (Sh. S. Safarov, N. M. Djusupov, E. S. Kubryakova), language not only reflects but also shapes an individual’s worldview. The concept of “adam” in Turkic languages, including Karakalpak, is a striking example of how lexical and semantic units serve as a representation of ethnocultural values.

Research in cognitive linguistics shows that the concept of “human” functions in language through a system of metaphors, symbols, and discursive practices. Thus, J. Lakoff and M. Johnson, in their theory of conceptual metaphor, noted that human perception and thought are structured metaphorically (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In this context, “adam” in the Karakalpak tradition can be viewed as a universal metaphor for human existence, uniting spiritual and social layers. In her doctoral research, G.K. Kdirbaeva emphasizes the cognitive-discursive approach to Karakalpak philology, the mythological concept sphere, including the image of man, is realized through various types of discourse: artistic, folkloric, and religious. According to her, “adam” is a “cognitive node” that connects universal archetypes and local cultural stereotypes. For example, Karakalpak concepts such as teńiz jolı (sea route), waqıt ólshemi (measurement of time), and jámiyetlik abıroy (social prestige) form a symbolic field around “adam”, allowing it to be viewed as a mediator between nature and society.

V. J. Usenova’s PhD dissertation also demonstrates that the concept of “adam” in fairy tale discourse is linked to a system of symbols representing the individual’s life journey. She argues that fairy tales shape a “human paradigm” through oppositions: good/evil, strength/weakness, and honor/shame. This reflects not only mythological consciousness but also the collective code of the Karakalpak people, where the image of “adam” is

always imbued with moral content. Cognitive-discursive approaches allow us to consider “adam” not only as a linguistic unit but also as a sociocultural phenomenon. In this regard, the research of M. M. Makovsky, Yu. M. Lotman, and V. N. Toporov highlights the role of text and discourse in the formation of concepts. Yu. M. Lotman wrote that “a person in a text is not just a character, but a cultural symbol” (Lotman, 1998).

This is especially significant for Karakalpak culture: every text—proverb, song, epic—captures the image of the individual as a “symbol of culture”. As a result, a stable mythological model is formed, where “adam” represents not only a biological being but also a bearer of spiritual experience, collective memory, and traditions. Modern Karakalpak literature and media preserve and transform this traditional image of the individual. In television and radio programs, educational projects, and public initiatives, “adam” continues to be conceptualized as a symbol of morality, justice, and spiritual strength. Thus, according to G.K. Kdirbaeva, in contemporary discourses (media, educational texts), “adam” becomes “the key to cultural identity”, confirming the relevance of its study from a cognitive perspective.

Furthermore, researchers note that globalization and digitalization are creating new forms of representation for the concept of “adam”. In the context of intercultural dialogue, it acquires transnational characteristics while preserving national meanings. This is particularly important for the Karakalpak people, where the preservation of ethnocultural values is linked to the stability of the concept of “adam” as a bearer of memory and tradition. A comprehensive analysis of modern research allows us to identify universal and ethno specific characteristics of the concept of “adam”, such as universality in connection with the universe, sacredness, moral norms, and family memory. Ethnospecific (Karakalpak) emphasis on *abıroy* (prestige), collective identity, and the interconnectedness of the individual and society, expressed in proverbs and epics.

Thus, cognitive-discursive analysis confirms that the concept of “adam” is a stable cultural construct that has maintained continuity with “*Divanu lúgat-it-Türk*” and has found new development in Karakalpak culture.

The results of the literature review revealed that:

1. In Mahmud Kashgari’s “*Divanu lúgat-it-Türk*”, the concept of “adam” is recorded as a lexical-semantic and cultural unit associated with religion, mythology, and society.
2. In the Turkic mythological tradition, “adam” appears as a mediator between the sacred and the mundane, a bearer of honor and moral norms.
3. In Karakalpak culture, the concept of “adam” maintains continuity with the Kashgari heritage, but is enriched with ethno specific features associated with collectivism, honor, and social responsibility.
4. Modern cognitive-discursive approaches allow us to consider “adam” as a “cognitive node” of ethno culture, uniting universal archetypes and local values.

Thus, “adam” remains the central concept that shapes the national identity of the Karakalpak people, providing a link between the past, present, and future.

The empirical basis of the study was comprised of:

- dictionary entries, paremias, and folklore texts recorded in Mahmud Kashgari’s “*Divanu lúgat-it-Türk*” (11th century);

- Karakalpak paremiological collection (proverbs, sayings, and set expressions reflecting the image of “adam”);
- epic works (“Qırıq Qız”, “Er Qosay”, “Alpamıs”), where the image of man is revealed through the archetypes of the hero and the sage;
- ritual texts (funeral, memorial, wedding, and initiation songs) containing ideas about man’s place in society and the cosmos;
- modern Karakalpak literary texts, where the concept of “adam” receives new interpretations.

Cognitive analysis was used as a methodological basis (identifying key semantic fields and archetypal structures of the concept “adam”), componential analysis (decomposing the concept into its elementary semes: speech, honor, fate, prestige, and sacrifice), a comparative typological method (comparing Kashgari material with the Karakalpak tradition), and discourse analysis (examining the functioning of the concept “adam” in different types of discourse: folkloric, religious, and artistic).

An analysis of the concept of “adam” in Mahmud Kashgari’s dictionary based on the lexical-semantic level in “Divanu lúgat-it-Türk” interprets the word “adam” not only as “human” in the biological sense, but also as “an intelligent being endowed with speech”. In several articles, Kashgari emphasizes that “adam” is not simply a living being, but a being endowed with the gift of speech and the ability to distinguish between good and evil. (Камилова, 2024).

Particular attention is paid to phrases in which “adam” serves as a standard or contrast. For example:

- “Adam sózinen tanıladı” – “A man is recognized by his word”;
- “Adam malı menen emes, aqlı menen bay” – “A man is rich not in property, but in intelligence”.

These sayings demonstrate that for the 11th century Turks, “humanity” was directly associated with intelligence and speech, rather than material wealth.

According to A.A. Khazieva’s observations, religious vocabulary in the Kashgari dictionary is closely intertwined with the concept of “adam” (Khazieva, 2016). Humanity is viewed as a creation of Allah, endowed with spirit (ruwx), and therefore, their life acquires a sacred dimension.

Examples from the “Divan” confirm this:

- “Adam – Allanıń amanatı” – “Man is the amanat of Allah”;
- “Adamnıń janı – Allanıń nurı” – “The soul of man is the light of Allah”.

Such expressions emphasize that man is conceived not only as a social but also as a sacred being.

A.I. Pylev points out mystical and poetic elements that the “Divan” contains the most ancient examples of Turkic Muslim mystical poetry, where a man is presented as a mediator between the earth and the heaven (Пылев, 2015). Thus, in poetic fragments, “adam” is associated with the “star of fate” and the “ray of light” leading to truth.

These elements of mystical symbolism bring the concept of “adam” closer to the universal archetypes of world mythology, where man is always represented as the “path to God” or “traveller between worlds” (Eliade, 2002).

Thus, in the Turkic tradition, the individual was understood not individually, but through their contribution to the life of the clan and community.

The empirical material from “Divanu lûgat-it-Türk” allows us to identify the following components of the concept of “adam”:

1. Speech and intelligence – the criterion of humanity (distinction from animals).
2. Sacredness – man as a creation of Allah, bearer of the spirit.
3. Sociality – man as a member of the clan, custodian of honor and memory.
4. Mysticism – man as a mediator between the earth and the heaven.

These characteristics form the basis of the mythological concept of “adam” in 11th century Turkic culture.

The interpretation of the concept of “adam” in the Karakalpak language and culture within the Karakalpak paremiological fund contains a number of manifestations that reveal the essence of man through the prism of collective values. The most frequent groups of proverbs feature prominently speech, honor, name, and memory. Speech and intelligence: “Adamdı adam qıladı – sóz” (“A man is made by a word”); “Aqıl – adamnıń baylıǵı” (“Intelligence is a man’s wealth”). These proverbs echo formulations from Kashgari, where speech and intelligence play the primary roles in humanization (Камилова, 2024).

Honor and prestige: “Adamnıń abıroyı – eldiń baylıǵı” (“A man’s honor is a nation’s wealth”); “Abıroysız adam – qanatsız qus” (“A man without honor is like a bird without wings”). Here, honor is interpreted as the primary criterion of an individual’s social values, which is entirely consistent with the Kashgari’s tradition (Исабекова, 2017).

Name and Memory: “Adam ólse – atı qaladı” (“A man dies, his name remains”), “Jaqsınıń atı ólmeydi” (“The name of the worthy never dies”). These expressions emphasize the idea of collective memory, in which a person lives on through good deeds and public recognition. Thus, Karakalpak proverbs demonstrate the persistence of archetypal meanings recorded in the “Divan”.

Karakalpak heroic epics (“Qırıq Qız”, “Er Qosay”, and “Alpamıs”) present man not simply as an individual, but as a hero, a bearer of strength, wisdom, and social responsibility. In “Qırıq Qız”, warrior girls defend the people, embodying the ideals of sacrifice and patriotism. Here, “adam” is an individual willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of society. In “Er Qosay”, the hero symbolizes courage and fortitude, but his value is measured not only by his military qualities but also by his honor, wisdom, and ability to lead his clan. In “Alpamıs”, the hero is associated with the idea of overcoming challenges, where a person demonstrates fortitude and loyalty to traditions. These archetypes are consistent with the data in “Divanu lûgat-it-Türk”, where ‘adam’ is interpreted as the guardian of social order and spiritual values (Пылев, 2015).

In the ritual culture of the life cycle—birth, marriage, death—the concept of “adam” is revealed in a sacred dimension.

Birth: at the birth of a child, the wish is made: “Adam bolsın” (“May he become a man”). Here, the word “adam” denotes not simply “man”, but a person endowed with virtues, wisdom, and honor. Marriage: at weddings, it is often said: “Eki jas bir-birine tirek bolıp, nağız adam bolğay” (“May the young people become true people, a support for each other”). Death, in funeral songs the idea is often heard that a person remains in the memory of the people: “Adam ólse – sózi qaladı” (“When a person dies, his word remains”).

L.R. Suleimanova, analyzing Turkic vocabulary in Bashkir rituals, notes that the category of “adam” is always associated with the transition to another world [Сулейманова, 2017: 59]. The Karakalpak data confirm the universality of this symbolism. In modern Karakalpak literature, writers (Ajiniyaz, T. Kaipbergenov, M. Yesebayev) continue to develop the traditional image of “adam”, integrating it into new social and cultural contexts. For Ajiniyaz, “adam” is the bearer of conscience and national spirit, a fighter for justice. For T. Kaipbergenov, man is presented as the custodian of historical memory and national dignity. Thus, 20th- 21st- century literature preserves the mythological foundation of the concept of “adam” but imbues it with new realities—patriotism, the struggle for independence, and the preservation of national identity.

A comparison of Kashgari and Karakalpak material reveals a number of parallels. Speech and word in the “Divan”: “A man is known by his word”; in Karakalpak proverbs: “Adamdı adam qıladı – sóz”. Honor and prestige: in the dictionary, honor is recorded as the foundation of personality; in Karakalpak culture, abıroy is a key element of the social portrait. Name and memory in the “Divan”: “The name remains after death”; similar formulas are preserved in Karakalpak proverbs. Sacrifice in the mystical poetry of Kashgari is conceptualized as a mediator between worlds; in Karakalpak epics, heroes sacrifice themselves for the sake of the people.

Thus, we can speak of a direct continuity of cultural codes, where the concept of “adam” retains universal Turkic features, but in the Karakalpak tradition, the social and moral component is strengthened. The interpretation of the concept of “adam” in Karakalpak culture demonstrates the stability of archetypal meanings recorded as early as the 11th century and their transformation in an ethnically specific manner. In paremiology, “adam” is revealed through speech, honor, and memory. In epics, through heroism, sacrifice, and collective responsibility. In rituals, through the sacredness of the life cycle. In literature, through conscience, patriotism, and national identity.

Thus, the image of “adam” remains the core of the Karakalpak concept sphere, reflecting the interplay of the universal and the local, the sacred and the social, the traditional and the modern. Empirical analysis has shown that the concept of “adam” occupies a central place in the Turkic and Karakalpak concept sphere. It represents a complex interweaving of anthropological, ethical, social, and sacred meanings.

In Kashgari’s “Divanu lúgat-it-Turk”, this concept was first recorded as a lexical-semantic unit reflecting collective values. It has been preserved and further developed in Karakalpak culture, becoming a symbol of national identity, honor, and collective memory.

Thus, the study of the unit of the mythological concept “adam” allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the continuity of cultural codes and reveal the mechanisms of formation of the ethno cultural identity of the Karakalpak people.

Findings and Discussion

The concept of “adam” as an archetype of Turkic culture, as analysed in the materials of “Divanu lûgat-it-Türk” and the Karakalpak tradition, revealed that the concept of “adam” is an archetypal and universal element of the Turkic conceptual sphere. It has remained stable for over a millennium, integrating sacred, social, and ethical aspects.

Mahmud Kashgari also noted that a person is defined through speech and intelligence (Камилова, 2024), as well as through the social assessment of society (Исабекова, 2017). These characteristics are reproduced almost unchanged in Karakalpak proverbs. Thus, it can be argued that the image of a person as a bearer of speech and honor is universal throughout Turkic civilization.

The results of the empirical analysis suggest a dual structure for the concept of “Adam”. On the one hand, it is linked to the sacred order—humanity is conceived as a creation of Allah, a bearer of the spirit (*ruwx*), a trustee of God. On the other hand, it has a social dimension—an individual is valued by society through their actions, name, and honor. This duality is clearly evident in both the “Divan” and Karakalpak texts. In the proverbs “Adam ólse – atı qaladı”, sacredness (the immortality of the name) and sociality (public memory) are combined in a single image. Thus, the concept of “adam” functions as a mediator between the divine and the human, the sacred and the mundane. The ethical component deserves special attention. In both corpora (Kashgari and Karakalpak), being “adam” means not simply being biologically human, but also conforming to moral standards: having honor, keeping one’s word, and caring for one’s people.

This approach confirms the anthropocentric orientation of Turkic culture, where the individual is assessed not individually, but through their social usefulness and moral qualities. In this context, *abıroy* serves as a key ethno specific marker of the Karakalpak tradition.

A comparative analysis has shown that, although universal archetypes (speech, honor, and name) are common to Turkic cultures, the Karakalpak tradition emphasizes collectivism. It conceptualizes the individual primarily as part of a clan (*urıw*), a community (*jámiyet*), and a people (*el*).

In the epics, heroes embody collective ideals rather than personal ambitions. In “Qırıq Qız”, girls sacrifice themselves for the sake of the people; in “Er Qosay”, and “Alpamıs”, the heroes fight not for personal glory, but for the honor of their clan. This emphasizes that the ethnically specific interpretation of “adam” in Karakalpak culture enhances the social and moral component.

An important feature of the Karakalpak tradition is the epic interpretation of “adam”. In the epics, the image of man is embodied through the archetype of the hero, symbolizing strength, wisdom, and sacrifice. This adds a specific national flavour to the universal concept.

While Kashgari defines “adam” primarily through word and honor, Karakalpaks also define it through heroism and the ability to defend the people. This shift in emphasis reflects historical circumstances: the Karakalpak people have lived for centuries in a struggle for survival, which has predetermined the perception of man as a warrior and protector.

From a cognitive linguistics perspective, the concept of “adam” can be viewed as a “cognitive node” that combines universal and ethnically specific meanings. Its structure distinguishes between universal semes (speech, reason, honor, memory, sacredness) and ethnically specific semes (prestige, collectivism, heroism, sacrifice).

Discourse analysis revealed that “adam” functions in various genres and text types (proverbs, epics, rituals, and literature), maintaining consistent meanings. This confirms the idea that the concept of “adam” is the core of the Karakalpak concept sphere.

Thus, it can be argued that Karakalpak culture preserves common Turkic archetypes but strengthens its socio-moral and heroic-epic components. The study’s results open up new directions: a corpus analysis of Karakalpak parasitology, identifying the frequency of the concept “adam”, a semantic map of the concept in comparison with other Turkic languages, a study of the concept’s transformation in the context of digital culture and globalization, and an examination of the role of the concept “adam” in contemporary media discourses (press, social media, education).

The concept of “adam” is an archetypal element of Turkic culture that has remained stable since the 11th century. It has a dual structure: sacred (connection with Allah, spirit, and destiny) and social (honor, memory, and collectivism). Karakalpak culture enhances the socio-moral and heroic-epic aspects of the concept, making it a central category of ethnic identity. Cognitive-discursive analysis confirms that “adam” is a “cognitive node” linking universal and ethnically specific meanings. Further research should focus on corpus analysis, comparisons with other Turkic cultures, and an examination of the concept’s transformation in contemporary contexts.

Thus, the discussion showed that the unit of the mythological concept “adam” in the dictionary of Mahmud Kashgari and its interpretation in Karakalpak culture form a continuous line of succession that not only preserves the tradition, but also determines the cultural future of the Karakalpak people.

Conclusion

This study provided a comprehensive examination of the mythological concept “adam” in Mahmud Kashgari’s “*Divanu lûgat-it-Türk*” and its interpretation in Karakalpak culture. An analysis of lexicographic data, paremiological material, epic and ritual texts and contemporary literary works revealed that the image of man is a central element in the ethno cultural concept sphere of Turkic peoples, including the Karakalpaks.

First of all, it should be emphasized that as early as the 11th century, Mahmud Kashgari documented the universal characteristics of the concept of “adam”: the connection between man and speech and intelligence, his sacred nature as a creation of Allah, and his social significance expressed through the categories of honor and memory. These characteristics formed the basis for the concept’s further development in Turkic cultures and have been preserved virtually unchanged in the Karakalpak tradition.

At the same time, analysis of Karakalpak material revealed the presence of distinct ethnic characteristics. In proverbs and sayings, the “adam” is portrayed as a bearer of abiroy (honor and prestige), which is one of the key markers of Karakalpak identity. In epic works, the image of the individual receives a heroic and epic interpretation: they become not only an individual but also a symbol of sacrifice, strength, and patriotism, a fighter for the honor of their clan and nation. In ritual culture, the “adam” appears as a sacred being, whose life and death are understood in the context of cosmic cycles and tradition. A particular significance is the fact that in Karakalpak culture, the individual is always perceived through the collective—family, clan, community, and nation. Collectivism as a value enhances the social dimension of the concept and shapes its ethnically specific character. Thus, the Karakalpak version of the concept of “adam” retains universal Turkic archetypes but emphasizes the social, moral, and heroic components.

From a cognitive-discursive analysis perspective, “adam” is a multilayered concept that functions in various types of discourse: folklore, epic, ritual, and literary. In each of these discourses, it performs different functions – from a native speaker and morality to a hero and symbol of national identity. This multifaceted nature allows us to view “adam” as a “cognitive node” that unites universal and local meanings, tradition and modernity. The study’s results also demonstrate the importance of the continuity of cultural codes. Despite the millennia-long gap between the “Divan” and modern Karakalpak texts, the concept of “adam” retains its relevance. It continues to be the foundation of the people’s moral and ethical system, a reflection of their ethnic identity, and a symbol of spiritual resilience. Prospects for further research include expanding the corpus of texts studied (including contemporary media and educational discourses), as well as a comparative analysis of the concept of “adam” in Karakalpak and other Turkic languages. This will allow for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms by which archetypal meanings are preserved and transformed in the context of globalization and cultural change.

Thus, the unit of the mythological concept “adam” is not only a linguistic and cultural category, but also a symbol of the continuity, spiritual strength, and resilience of the Karakalpak people.

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