



THE MYTHOLOGICAL POWER OF PHRYGIA

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Abstract

Mythology bears many clues that illuminate the ancient history. If we regard them from a functionalist, as a Durkheimian view, the main roles of all myths are legitimate the social and moral structure of a society and to reaffirm the identity of the people. Myths contribute to the essence of the identity of a nation. Since the Early Ages, Anatolia has hosted many ancient civilizations.

The unique characteristic of Anatolia has been noticed by everyone in throughout the world if they interested in art, literature, music and any subject ranging from the first beauty contest in the world to the Gordion knot. It is impossible to avoid the origins of many inventions emerged in Anatolia. Phrygia and its richness on mythology is just one of the parts of Anatolian richness.

The distinguished characteristics of Phrygia and such as King Midas, King Nannakos and the other mythological figures such as god or goddess contribute a lot to introduce the Anatolia by means of their highly regarded place in the world literature, art and history.

Key Words

Phrygia, Mythology, King Midas, Anatolia

PHRYGIA'NIN MİTOLOJİK GÜCÜ

Özet

Mitoloji, Eski Çağ tarihini aydınlatan, pek çok ipucunu bünyesinde taşır. İşlevsel açıdan baktığımız zaman, mitoloji, Durkheimci bakış açısıyla toplumun sosyal ve ahlaki yapısını meşrulaştırmak ve insanların kimliklerini yeniden onaylamaktır. Mitler, bir ulusun varlığının özüne katkıda bulunur. İlk Çağlar'dan itibaren Anadolu, pek çok medeniyete ev sahipliği yapmıştır. Anadolu'nun bu emsalsiz özelliği, yeryüzünün ilk güzellik yarışmasından, Gordion düğümüne kadar farklı konularla, sanata, edebiyata, müziğe ilgi duyan herkesin dikkatini çeker. Anadolu'da ortaya çıkan birçok ilki görmemezlikten gelmek imkânsızdır. Phrygia ve onun mitolojik zenginliği

Anadolu'nun sahip olduğu zenginliklerden sadece bir parçadır.

Kral Midas, Kral Nannakos gibi Phrygia ile özdeşleşen karakterleri ile tanrı ve tanrıçalardan oluşan diğer mitolojik figürler, dünya literatürü, sanatı ve tarihindeki yüksek değerleriyle Anadolu'nun tanıtımına katkıda bulunurlar.

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Anahtar Kelimeler

Phrygia, Mitoloji, Kral Midas, Anadolu



I.INTRODUCTION

Anatolia (Asia Minor) has been the cradle of civilizations throughout the world. It hosted many civilizations in its prehistoric and historic times from Hittites to Phrygians, Roman Empire to the Byzantines, Seljukians to the Ottoman Empire and still carry out this hosting by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's new secular, democratic Republic called as Turkey with dominantly Muslim population but also embraces the some other minorities with different nation and religion with its unique tolerance in the world. The Hittites considered themselves as "The country of One Thousand Gods of Hatti"¹ and this tolerance tradition continued to the Ottoman Empire and has taken over by the young republicans of the Turks. The various civilizations we have just stated a few of them contributed to the presentation of Anatolia. Many distinguished figures of art, literature, history, religion, geography and etc. were originated in Anatolia. St.Nicholaus was born in Patara , lived in Myra and his church is in Demre / Antalya, the father of history, Herodotos and the the famous geographer and historian Strabon were born in Anatolia, the former one in Halicarnassus(Bodrum) and the later one in Amesia(Amasya).One of the civilization that contributes to the presentation of Anatolia is the ancient kingdom of Phrygia, during the tenth and eleventh centuries before our era, reigned almost without a rival, over the western half of Asia Minor.² R.D Barnett emphasizes the noteworthy contribution of the Phrygians in the arts in spite of its intangibility and hardness to emerge. He called them great musicians and inventors of the Phrygian music mode and some musical instruments such as cymbals, flutes, the triangle and syrinx and the Phrygians taught the usage of these musical instruments to the Greeks.³

Gordion knot metaphor is used to identify the intractable problems that require a bold stroke and a fresh thinking for a successful resolution.⁴ Apollo versus Pan and the Story of Midas and the origin of the musical instrument flute is originated in Phrygia. Aesop, famous for his fables and

Parables, was a native of Phrygia.⁵ These are the a few samples that enrich the especially the Greek then respectively the European and the world literature and art. Today, millions of students throughout the world learn the works and stories of Herodotos, Strabon, Aesop, St.Nicholaus, and King Midas and find an opportunity to discover their hometown, Asia Minor.

¹ Karasu, Cem, "Why did the Hittites Have a Thousand Deities", Hittite studies in Honour of Harry A.Hoffner Jr. on the occasion of his 65th birthday, edit. Gregory McMahon, Harry A. Hoffner, Gary M. Beckman, Richard Henry Beal, International Congress of Aesthetics 2007 "Aesthetics Bridging Cultures", s.221.

² W. Crooke, *King Midas and His Ass's Ears*, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of Folklore Enterprises, Ltd., Folklore, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jun. 30, 1911), pp. 183.

³ R.D. Barnett, *Phrygia and the Peoples of Anatolia in the Iron Age*, Cambridge Ancient History II/30, 1975, p.433.

⁴ W. Russell Neuman, Lee W. McKnight, Richard Jay Solomon, *The Gordian Knot: Political Gridlock on the Information Highway*, MIT Press, 1998, p.xi.

⁵ Samuel Griswold Goodrich, *A History of All Nations From the Earliest Periods to the Present*, Miller, Orton & Milligan Publishers, New York and Auburn 1856, Vol. II, Chapter CLIX, p.300.



II. KING MIDAS AND THE GOLDEN TOUCH

King Midas, son of Gordius and Cybele, is said to have been a wealthy king of Phrygia, a pupil of Orpheus and a great patron of the worship of Dionysus. His wealth is stated in a story concerning with his childhood obtaining the wheat through the ants. This story indicates that one day he would be the richest of all mortals.⁶ The second character of the legend is Silenus, fat, ugly constantly drinking wine, and sporting a tail and a pair of horses' ear, he was the close friend of Dionysus (Roman name Bacchus), the Greek god of wine and one of the twelve Olympians.⁷ Herodotus, mentions of a place in Macedonia called "the Gardens of Midas, son of Gordius," where roses grew of themselves and with blossoms that had as many as sixty petals apiece.⁸ Here Midas is said to have captured the satyr Silenus, of whom it was believed that when he was drunk or asleep mortals could compel him to prophesy and sing by surrounding him with chains of flowers. When Dionysus found Silenus, he was so grateful to the king and he granted him his wish. Midas asked that whatever he might touch should be changed into gold. King Midas didn't notice Dionysus and Silenus leaving. He was so greedy to begin! He touched the gate; it turned into gold! He touched the fountain; it turned into gold and threw an arc of golden droplets to fall into a golden pond! He touched a statue; it turned into gold and played a golden harp. He ran around the garden touching twigs, and stones and flowers and even a wheelbarrow and they all turned into the finest gold. Midas imagined transforming his whole palace into gold. His dream of golden glory lasted until his meal time. Everything turned into gold while he was eating and he couldn't eat and drink anything. Midas was beginning to starve amid splendor. He bitterly regretted the wish that he had made. King Midas begged Dionysus, humbly acknowledging how greedy and unwise he had been, and the god forgave him and ordered him "Go to the River Pactalus and have a bath in it." The myth stated by the Ovidious in his *Metamorphoses*. In the last part of the myth the sand of River Pactalus turned into gold following the diving of King Midas as we have seen the lines of Ovidious:⁹

*The hungry wretch, his folly thus confest,
Touch'd the kind deity's good-natur'd breast;
The gentle God annull'd his first decree,
And from the cruel compact set him free.
But then, to cleanse him quite from further harm,
And to dilute the relicks of the charm,
He bids him seek the stream that cuts the land*

⁶ William Smith., *A New Classical Dictionary Of Greek And Roman Biography, Mythology And Geography*, ed. Charles Anthon, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1851, p.513.

⁷ Anna Claybourne, *Gods, Goddesses, And Mythology*, edit. C. Scott Littleton, *Marshall Cavendish Corporation*, Vol. V, China, Jan. 2005, p.1305.

⁸ Herodotos, *Herodot Tarihi VIII-138*, çev. M.Önen, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İst, 2004.s.444.

⁹ Ovidious, *Metamorphoses*, translated by M. Brookes, Cornhill Publishing Co. Boston, 1922, XI, 146-193.



*Nigh where the tow'rs of Lydian Sardis stand;
Then trace the river to the fountain head,
And meet it rising from its rocky bed;
There, as the bubbling tide pours forth amain,
To plunge his body in, and wash away the stain.
The king instructed to the fount retires,
But with the golden charm the stream inspires:
For while this quality the man forsakes,
An equal pow'r the limpid water takes;
Informs with veins of gold the neighb'ring land,
And glides along a bed of golden sand.*

III. THE MUSIC CONTEST OF APOLLO AND PAN

Pan, the son of Hermes, was the Greek god of nature, known his modesty. Robert Graves says that Pan “is said to have been so ugly at birth, with horns, beard, tail and goat- legs, that his mother ran way from him in fear and Hermes brought him to the Olympus in order to amuse the gods and goddess.¹⁰

Pan, in an audacious behavior, challenged Apollo, the god of the lyre, to a trial of skill. Apollo accepted his offer and then they involved a musical contest Pan and King Midas of Phrygia acted as a judge in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid:¹¹

Abhorring riches he inhabited the woods and fields, and followed Pan who dwells always in mountain-caves: but still obtuse remained, from which his foolish mind again, by an absurd decision, harmed his life. He followed Pan up to the lofty mount Tmolus, which from

its great height looks far across the sea. Steep and erect it stands between great Sardis and the small Hypaepa. While Pan was boasting there to mountain nymphs of his great skill in music, and while he was warbling a gay tune upon the reeds, cemented with soft wax, in his conceit he dared to boast to them how he despised Apollo's music when compared with his—. At last to prove it, he agreed to stand against Apollo in a contest which it was agreed should be decided by Tmolus as their umpire. This old god sat down on his own mountain, and first eased his ears of many mountain growing trees, oak leaves were wreathed upon his azure hair and acorns from his hollow temples hung. First to the Shepherd-god Tmolus spoke: “My judgment shall be yours with no delay.” Pan made some rustic sounds on his rough reeds, delighting Midas with his uncouth notes; for Midas chanced to be there when he played. When Pan had ceased, divine Tmolus turned to Phoebus, and the forest likewise turned just as he moved. Apollo's golden locks were richly wreathed with fresh Parnassian laurel; his robe of Tyrian purple swept the ground; his left hand held his lyre, adorned with gems and Indian ivory. His right hand held the

¹⁰ Robert Graves, *Yunan Mitleri*, çev. Uğur Akpur, Say Yayınları, İstanbul, 2004, s.112.

¹¹ Ovidious, *Metamorphoses*, translated by M. Brookes, Cornhill Publishing Co. Boston, 1922, XI, 146-193.



plectrum—as an artist he stood there before Tmolus, while his skilful thumb touching the strings made charming melody. Delighted with Apollo’s artful touch, Tmolus ordered Pan to hold his reeds excelled by beauty of Apollo’s lyre.

That judgment of the sacred mountain god pleased all those present, all but Midas, who blaming Tmolus called the award unjust. The Delian god forbids his stupid ears to hold their native human shape; and, drawing them out to a hideous length, he fills them with gray hairs, and makes them both unsteady, wagging at the lower part: still human, only this one part condemned, Midas had ears of a slow-moving ass. Midas, careful to hide his long ears, wore a purple turban over both, which hid his foul disgrace from laughter. But one day a servant, who was chosen to cut his hair with steel, when it was long, saw his disgrace. He did not dare reveal what he had seen, but eager, to disclose the secret, dug a shallow hole, and in a low voice told what kind of ears were on his master’s head. All this he whispered in the hollow earth he dug, and then he buried all he said by throwing back the loose earth in the hole so everything was silent when he left. A grove thick set with quivering reeds began to grow there, and when it matured, about twelve months after that servant left, the grove betrayed its planter. For, moved by a gentle South Wind, it repeated all the words which he had whispered, and disclosed from earth the secret of his master’s ears.

The other version of music competition is concerns the Phrygian satyr or silen Marsyas and Apollo:¹²

Phrygian satyr or silen Marsyas, who engaged in a musical competition with Apollo. Athena devised a double flute but threw it away when she found that it distorted her face while she played it. Marsyas found the flute and learnt how to play it then challenged Apollon to a musical competition. They agreed in advance that the winner could do whatever he wished the loser. The satyr, Marsyas inevitably lost. After the competition, Apollo flayed Marsyas alive and hung him from a pine tree. The nymphs and satyrs of the countryside mourned for him, and either their tears or Marsyas’ blood became the River Marsyas.

It is also stated in Hyginus Fabulae 165, Pausanias 10.30.9, and Apollodoros I.4.2.

IV. THE GORDION KNOT

After controlling the modern coast of Turkey, Alexander spent nearly a year travelling through the central part of Turkey. Alexander came here for strategic reasons. Gordion was the key-road junction in Central Anatolia. Also he must have been known from his boyhood in the Garden of Midas. In the spring of 333 B.C., at Gordion, the capital of Phrygia, an oracle identified Alexander as the destined ruler over Asia.¹³ Gordion was the city of Midas whose father Gordius

¹² William F. Hansen, *Classical Mythology: A Guide to the Mythical World of the Greeks and Romans*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005, p.280.

¹³ Ernest A. Fredricksmeier, *Alexander, Midas and the Oracle at Gordium*, *Classical Philology*, Vol. 56, No: 3, July 1961, s.160.



was believed to have migrated from Macedonia centuries before in a wooden cart. His arrival fulfilled a local prophecy, and Gordius became king of the place, which was henceforth called as Gordion. In Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (Bioi Paralleloi), the entrance of Alexander into the Gordion stated:¹⁴

After this, he subdued such of the Pisidians as had offered him resistance, and entered Phrygia; and after he had taken the city of Gordion, reputed to have been the home of the ancient Midas, he saw the much-talked-of waggon bound fast to its yoke with bark of the cornel-tree, and heard a story confidently told about it by the local people, to the effect that whosoever loosed the fastening was destined to become king of the whole world. Since the fastenings had their ends concealed, and were intertwined many times in crooked coils, Alexander was at a loss how to proceed, and finally loosened the knot by cutting it through with his sword, and that when it was thus smitten many ends were to be seen. But Aristobulus says that he undid it very easily, by simply taking out the so-called "hestor," or pin, of the waggon-pole, by which the yoke-fastening was held together, and then drawing away the yoke.

As thanks offering Gordius dedicated his ox cart to the temple of Zeus, King of the Gods.¹⁵The legend is described in the *Annabasis* of Arrian in the following lines:¹⁶

When Alexander arrived at Gordion, he was seized with an ardent desire to go up into the citadel, which contained the palace of Gordius and his son Midas. He was also desirous of seeing the wagon of Gordius and the cord of the yoke of this wagon. There was a great deal of talk about this wagon among the neighboring population. It was said that Gordius was a poor man among the ancient Phrygians, who had a small piece of land to till, and two yoke of oxen. He used one of these in ploughing and the other to draw the wagon. On one occasion, while he was ploughing, an eagle settled upon the yoke, and remained sitting there until the time came for unyoking the oxen. Being alarmed at the sight, he went to the Telmissian soothsayers to consult them about the sign from the deity; for the Telmissians were skilful in interpreting the meaning of Divine manifestations, and the power of divination has been bestowed not only upon the men, but also upon their wives and children from generation to generation. When Gordius was driving his wagon near a certain village of the Telmissians, he met a maiden fetching water from the spring, and to her he related how the sign of the eagle had appeared to him. As she herself was of the prophetic race, she instructed him to return to the very spot and offer sacrifice to Zeus the king. Gordius requested her to accompany him and direct him how to perform the sacrifice. He offered the sacrifice in the way the girl suggested, and afterwards married her. A son was born to them named Midas. When Midas was grown to be a man, handsome and valiant, the Phrygians were harassed by civil discord, and consulting the oracle, they were

¹⁴ Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives*, translation by Bernadotte Perrin, Harvard University Press, William Heinemann Ltd. 1919. Chapter: XVIII.

¹⁵ Michael Wood, *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great: A Journey from Greece to Asia*, University of California Press, 1997, p. 49.

¹⁶ Arrian, *İskender'in Seferleri*, çev. Meriç Mete, İdea Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2005, s.46-47.



told that a wagon would bring them a king, who would put an end to their discord. While they were still deliberating about this very matter, Midas arrived with his father and mother, and stopped near the assembly, wagon and all. They, comparing the oracular response with this occurrence, decided that this was the person whom the god told them the wagon would bring. They therefore appointed Midas king; and he, putting an end to their discord, dedicated his father's wagon in the citadel as a thank-offering to Zeus the king for sending the eagle. In addition to this the following saying was current concerning the wagon, that whosoever could loosen the cord of the yoke of this wagon was destined to gain the rule of Asia. The cord was made of cornel bark, and neither end nor beginning to it could be seen. It is said by some that when Alexander could find out no way to loosen the cord and yet was unwilling to allow it to remain unloosened, lest this should exercise some disturbing influence upon the multitude, he struck it with his sword and cutting it through, said that it had been loosened. But Aristobulus says that he pulled out the pin of the wagon-pole, which was a wooden peg driven right through it, holding the cord together. Having done this, he drew out the yoke from the wagon-pole. How Alexander performed the feat in connection with this cord, I cannot affirm with confidence. At any rate both he and his troops departed from the wagon as if the oracular prediction concerning the loosening of the cord had been fulfilled. Moreover, that very night, the thunder and lightning were signs of its fulfillment; and for this reason Alexander offered sacrifice on the following day to the gods who had revealed the signs and the way to loosen the cord.

Nearly the same version of the legend is also stated in Justinus's book.¹⁷The most noteworthy event was his encounter with the Gordion knot. For centuries there existed the myth of this intricate knot made of special bark which united the yoke and tongue of an ox cart. Alexander may have pursued the Gordion knot to sanction his inevitability, support his ambition to heroism, strengthen his ego, enlarge his visibility, encourage his army and generals, affect the locals, improve his reputation, and discourage Darius.¹⁸ Today "cut the Gordion knot is a cliché" referring "making it happen" or "get things done." The Gordian knot is a legend associated with Alexander the Great. It is often used as a metaphor for an intractable problem, solved by a bold stroke ("cutting the Gordian knot"):

"Turn him to any cause of policy,
The Gordian Knot of it he will unloose,
Familiar as his garter"¹⁹

Alexander's favourite line in the *Iliad* shows his declared ambition, to be; "at the same time a good king and a strong spear-fighter."²⁰In Gordion he had the convenient time of a major propaganda coup. In the palace of legendary King

¹⁷ Marcus Junianus Justinus, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, translated with notes by the Rev. John Selby Watson., London, Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Convent Garden, 1853, Book II/VII.

¹⁸ Lance B.Kurke, *The Wisdom of Alexander the Great: Enduring Leadership Lessons from the Man Who Created an Empire*, Amacom, New York, 2004, p.123.

¹⁹ Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act 1 Scene 1. 45-47.

²⁰ Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.A Historical Biography*, University of California Press, London, 1991.p.41.



Gordius, founder of the Phrygian Kingdom, was a wagon whose yoke was attached firmly to its pole by a knot of a cornel bark, the ends of which were impossible to see. An ancient tradition, perhaps invented for the occasion, said that whoever could untie this knot would become lord of all Asia. Alexander went up to the acropolis and he had two choices; have a go or ducking the issue. But what if he failed. Before cutting the knot he muttered himself; "It doesn't matter how the knot is loosened." Alexander thought about the problem for a while and then, with his usual impulsive disregard for little difficulties, cut through the knot with his sword. There are some speculations whether it was untied or cut. Alexander solved the matter by pulling out a pin out of the midst of the knot and unties it told by one version of a story. Some new reproduction versions states that it is impossible to untie because of its fastening form and then it was cut by Alexander after he got frustrated.²¹ Callisthenes was quick to hail this achievement as a proof of his divine endorsement for the campaign. ²² The stories differ greatly in many historians' works. In Arrian it is Midas' wagon and Midas is chosen as a king; in Justin it is Gordius wagon but Midas is chosen king; in Curtius it is Gordius' wagon but Midas is chosen as a king; in Plutarch Midas is king, but it was not stated whose wagon it was.²³ The legend is also mentioned in

V. THE MYTH OF CYBELE AND ATTIS

Grant Showerman states the Cybele and Attis myths on the basis of Phrygia in the following lines:²⁴

The Cybele-Attis myth symbolizes the relation of Mother Earth and her fruitage. Attis is the plant kingdom beloved by her: his emasculation is the cutting of her fruits: his death, his burial, and his preservation by the mourning mother symbolize the death and preservation of plant life through the cold and gloom of winter; his resurrection is the return of the warmth of spring.

Cybele was usually identified with Rhea, the mother of Zeus and the greatest Greek gods, and like Rhea she personified with Mother Earth.²⁵ The Great Mother Deity of the Phrygians, known also, and especially in the cult language of the Romans, as the Great Mother of the Gods (Magna Deum Mater). Her worship had its origin in Asia Minor in pre-historic times, probably prior to the advent of the Phrygians, which is placed at about 900 B.C. ; became prominent in early historic times in Galatia, Lydia and Phrygia where the various forms of Cybele legend agree in localizing the origin of her cult; and was most strongly centralized in

²¹ Lance B. Kurke, *Ibid*, 124.

²² Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great*, Routledge Publishment, London, 1997, p.31.

²³ W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great: Volume II, Sources and Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1948, p.263.

²⁴ D.C.Holtom, *The national faith of Japan; a study in modern Shinto*, Paragon Book Reprint Corp., New York, 1965, p.113.

²⁵ Michael Grant & John Hazel, *Who's Who in Classical Mythology*, ,Routledge, NewYork, 2004, p.95.



Phrygia.²⁶Its most sacred seat was at Pessinus a Galatian city near the borders of Phrygia, but it was a part of the Great Phrygian Empire, in which the symbol of the goddess, a small meteoric stone was preserved. The cult spread to Thrace, Greece and the island around there but never gets the popularity as it has in Asia Minor because of un-Hellenistic background. In 204 B.C. in a response to an oracle, the Roman Senate brought the Cult of Cybele and its most important image, a large sacred stone that is said to have fallen from Cybele. The cult was adopted by the Romans for the purpose of winning the favor in the 2nd Punic War. This was a common practice in Roman tradition and in this case, was done so to combat the infamous Hannibal's deadly escapades in the Italian peninsula.²⁷This incident also stated in the History of Rome by Livius.²⁸The envoys from Rome visited Attalus in Pergamum. He received them kindly and went to Pessinus in Phrygia with them gave the sacred stone to them.

Attis was said to have been a young shepherd beloved by Cybele. His birth was miraculous. His mother Nana, the daughter of the god of the river Sangarios, was a virgin and became pregnant after an almond fell on her lap. In some version of the legend the pregnancy of the Nana is described in a different way. Agdistis, who was a monster with both male and female sexual organs, was born from the seed that Zeus once let fall upon the ground when he was asleep. But since his double sexuality frightened the gods, they cut off Agdistis' male organ. From Agdistis' amputated organ then, an almond tree grew up with its fruit ripe; and when Sangarius' daughter came along, they say, she took of the fruit and laid it in her bosom and, on doing this, the fruit disappeared and she found herself pregnant. Attis was left to die a he-goat took care of him. Attis grew up and became a handsome youth and Cybele fell in love with him. Attis was unaware of Cybele's love and made preparations to get marry with the daughter of Pessinus King. Cybele became furious drove both Attis and his father-in-law mad so that in their frenzy they castrated themselves. Attis injury was so terrible and eventually he died. After the incident, Cybele felt bad and accused himself having killed him. Then Cybele begged Zeus to transform Attis into a pine tree. Cybele continued her mourning period under the tree and all growth stopped on earth. Zeus promised her that tree will always remain green (evergreen).²⁹There is some confusion in Attis stories and in some stories, Cybele was stated as the mother of Attis. Cybele, mother of gods and goddess, bringing life and productivity, corresponds to Mary, virgin mother of Jesus known by many Christians as "Holy Mary, Mother of

²⁶ James Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Part VII, edit.* John A. Selbie, Kessinger Publishing, LLC, January 24, 2003, p.377.

²⁷ James Hastings, *Ibid*, p.377

²⁸ Titus Livius, *The History of Rome*, translated. Canon Roberts, Everyman's Library (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1912).XXIX/10-14.

²⁹ Michael Grant & John Hazel, *Ibid*, p. 95.



God," who is also "full of grace," and such the medium conveying Christ, the bestower of divine eternal life, unto the world.³⁰

Ovidious, in his book *Festi*, describes the different version of the myth.³¹ In his lines, Attis attached himself to the Cybele. She deployed him as the caretaker of her temples, pledging him to vow of chastity. Attis committed a sin with the tree nymph Sagaritis whom Cybele destroyed. Attis then worried about himself and had a nightmare without stopping. He lacerated his body with a sharp stone and cut off his genitals, weeping, and "I have deserved it! With my blood I pay the penalty that is my due. Ah, perish the parts that were my ruin! Ah, let them perish." This incident created a tradition and the priests of Attis started to castrate themselves before entering the service of goddess Cybele.

VI. THE BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER OF MIDAS AND THE CURATIVE HOT WATERS

In early times, Phrygia was divided into Phrygia Major on the South, and Phrygia Minor on the northwest. The Romans divided into three parts; Phrygia Salutarist on the east; Phrygia Pacatiana on the west; Phrygia Katakekaumene in the Middle.³² Phrygia Salutarist is known with its hot waters and it means "Healthy Phrygia". The following story is about the curative waters of Phrygia.³³

King Midas has a wealthy life; he can get everything that he wants. His only problem was absence of a child. Eventually the gods replied his wishes and bestowed him a beautiful daughter called Suna. Daughter of the king, Suna, catches a disease when she is a young woman. Nobody can find a cure for her acnes on her body. Because of her misery, she started to travel through the mountains. After the exhaustive travelling, she feels tired and looking for a place to rest. While she was looking for water in order to overcome her thirstiness, noticed a river today called as Gazlıgöl and put her into the water without considering the mudness of the water. She sleeps for a few days around the river after the restless days. When she wakes up, she realizes that she has no pain and the acnes are disappeared. When the King's men find her, they immediately go to the King's palace. The King is very happy after observe his daughter's recovery. Suna tells about everything the period of her recovery based on the curative waters. The King asks to her daughter "Which medicine man healed you? Tell me, and I will assign him the chief medicine man". And Suna answers "The hot water healed me, not a medicine man". So he orders "Build there a bath, so people passing by shall be healed". So, it is considered that these thermal springs are being used since the Phrygians

³⁰ Ivan Strenski, *Thinking About Religion an Historical Introduction to the Theories of Religion*, Blackwell Publishing, United Kingdom 2006, p.157.

³¹ Ovid, *Festi*, translated by James G. Frazer, IV/221.

³² Edward Robinson, *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Longman, London, 1850, p.769.

³³ Latif Daşdemir, *Afyonkarahisar Efsaneleri*, Afyonkarahisar Kültürü, II, Afyon, 2001, s. 91-104.



VII. THE LEGEND OF KING NANNAKOS

The traditions of the many nations bear the memories of the flood. Among the Phrygians was a legend of King Nannakos in Iconium, who lived to the age of 400 years, predicted the flood, and in prospect of the devastation awaiting them, cried and prayed for his people.³⁴ The city Apameai bears the nickname κιβωτός, “Ark.” On coins from Apameia under Septimus Severus and others we can see portrayals of the departure from the Ark. The Ark bears the name “ΝΩΕ” (it is stated as “Noah” in Riehm reproductions). It is really difficult to accept the name “Noah” is an old, native tradition here. So, whether the flood legend, itself, was brought here by the Jews who were flooding all of Asia Minor or the Jewish tradition added a preexistent, native Phrygian tradition.³⁵ James George Frazer describes the legend in its article called “Ancient Stories of a Great Flood” in the following lines;³⁶

Another city of Asia Minor which appears to have boasted of its connexion with the Great flood was Apamea Cibetos, in Phrygia. The surname of Cibotos, which the city assumed, is the Greek word for the chest or ark; and on coins of the city, minted in the reigns of Severus, Macrinus and Philip the Elder, we see the ark floating on water with two passengers in it, whose figures appear from the waist upwards; beside the ark two other human figures, one male and the other female, are represented standing; and lastly, on the top of the chests are perched two birds, one of them said to be a raven, and the other a dove carrying an olive branch. As if to remove all doubt as to the identification of the legend, the name Noe, the Greek equivalent of Noah, is inscribed on the ark. No doubt the two human figures represent the Noah and his wife twice over, first in the arks and afterwards outside of it. These coin types prove unquestionably that of our era the people of Apamea acquainted with Hebrew tradition of Noachian Deluge in the form in which the story is narrated in the Book of Genesis. They may easily have learned it from their Jewish fellow citizenship, who in the first century before our ear were so numerous or wealthy that on one occasion they contributed no less than 100 thousands pound weight of gold to be sent as an offering to Jerusalem. Whether Apamea the tradition of Deluge was purely Jewish in origin, or whether it was grafted upon an old native legend of a great flood, is a question on which scholars are not agreed.

In his work *Ethnica*, Stephanus Byzantinus, states that Iconium, drawn from the major flood tradition of the Greeks. He also identified Iconium as the place where Prometheus and Athena, at the command of Zeus, recreated the human race after the great flood by creating post-diluvian mud images (εὐκόνες), later to be resurrected by the summoned breath of the wind.³⁷ The Iconium was re-peopled after the flood and Iconium was named after this command. In Greece,

³⁴ G. Frederick Maclear, *A Class book of Old Testament History*, Macmillan and co, London, 1868, p.16.

³⁵ Hermann Gunkel, Mark E. Biddle, *Genesis*, Mercer University Press, the USA, 1977, p. 75.

³⁶ J.G. Frazer, *Ancient Stories of a Great Flood*, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Volume: 46, 1916, p.270.

³⁷ Dean Philip Bechard, *Paul Outside the Walls: A Study of Luke's Socio-Geographical Universalism in Acts 14:8-20*, Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Rome, 2000, p. 321.



there is an expression called as “more ancient than the Nannakos” that refers to the “before the flood” or “antediluvian”.³⁸ “To weep like a King Nannakos” is the other expression related with the flood occurred in Iconium.³⁹

VIII. THE LEGEND OF PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Philemon and Baucis were elderly peasants in the country of Phrygia. They were an old married couple who were the only ones in their town of Phrygia to welcome the disguised gods. One evening, Jupiter (Zeus) decided to visit the village to observe if the people who live there kind and hospitable. He and his son Mercury (Hermes) changed their clothes and wear shabby clothes. Then they went from door to door, begging food and rest. At each door they were rejected, until they finally arrived at the cottage home of Philemon an old man, and her wife Baucis.⁴⁰

Philemon and Baucis invited the two tired travelers in. This old couple joyfully greeted and entertained them with great kindness. During the meal, as Philemon refilled her guest's glasses many times, the wine pitcher remained full. They thought that their meal was not sufficient and decided to slaughter their only goose in their guests' honor. Unfortunately, the legs of the goose were faster than those of householders. Even though the humans were not as fast, they were smarter, and so they cornered the goose inside the cottage, where they were just about to catch it. But at the last moment, the goose sought the shelter of the divine guests. To save the life of the goose, Jupiter and Mercury disclosed themselves and immediately expressed their pleasure in finally meeting an honorable human pair and led the old couple to the top of the hill in order to save themselves because Jupiter said that he was going to destroy the town and all the people who ignored him. When they looked around them, they saw that the town in the valley below had disappeared completely below a new lake. Their neighbors had not been kind, but still the old couple wept for them.⁴¹

Their sadness soon turned to wonder as their humble hut was transformed into a stately pillared home with a golden roof. Zeus said to them, "I will grant you whatever you wish." The old couple whispered to one other. Then Philemon replied, "Oh, mighty Zeus, let us serve you as priests and priestess of your temple. When it is time for us to die, grant that we die in the same instant so that neither of us has to grieve for the loss of other." "Zeus accepted their offer."⁴²

After many years of faithful service in that great temple and they did not miss their small hut and sincere character. One day as they were standing in front of the

³⁸ William M. Ramsay, *Pictures of the Apostolic Church: Studies in the Book of Acts*, Kessinger Publishing, 2004, p.355.

³⁹ Guy Davenport, *Seven Greeks*, New Directions Books, New York, 1995, p.239.

⁴⁰ Ann. G. Thomas, *The Women We Become: Myths, Folktales, and Stories About Growing Older*, Volcano Press, California, 2004, p.35.

⁴¹ Ann. G. Thomas, *Ibid*, p. 36-37.

⁴² J. Parker, A. Mills, J. Stanton, *Mythology: Myths Legends and Fantasies*, Global Book Publishing, Publishers, 2003, p.77.



building, they started talking about the old days. Suddenly each saw the other putting forth leaves. Their skin started to turn into tree bark. They embraced each other and cried, "Farewell!" Baucis was turned into a silver linden tree and Philemon into an oak, two different but beautiful trees intertwined with one another. In wonder, people came from afar to admire and hang wreaths on the branches in their honor.⁴³

The story we have mentioned above also stated in the following lines of the Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:⁴⁴

*The power of heaven is great and has no bounds;
Whatever the gods determine is fulfilled.
I give you proof. Among the Phrygian hills
An oak tree and a lime grow side by side,
Girt by a little wall .I saw the place.
With my own eyes when Pittheus ordered me
To Pelops' land where once his father reigned.
Not far from these two trees there is a marsh,
Once habitable land, but water now,
The busy home of divers, duck and coot.
Here once came Jupiter [Zeus], in mortal guise,
And with his father herald Mercury,
His wings now laid aside. A thousand homes
They came to seeking rest; a thousand homes
Were barred against them; yet one welcomed them,
Tiny indeed, and thatched with reeds and straw;
But in that cottage Baucis, old and good,
And old Philemon (he as hold as she)
Had joined their lives in youth, grown old together,
And eased their poverty by bearing it
Contentedly and thinking it no shame.
It was vain to seek master and servant there;
They two were all the household, to obey
And to command. So when the heavenly ones
Reached their small home and, stooping, entered in
At the low door, the old man placed a bench
And bade them sit and rest their weary limbs,
And Baucis spread on it a simple rug
In busy haste, and from the hearth removed
The ash still warm and fanned yesterday's embers*

⁴³ Northrop Frye, Jay Macpherson, *Biblical and Classical Myths: The Mythological Framework Of Western Culture*, University of Toronto Press, 2004, p.316.

⁴⁴ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, translated. A. D. Melville, Oxford University Press, 1986, Book: VIII, p.190-197.



And fed them leaves and bark, and coaxed a flame
 With her old breath; then from the rafters took
 Split billets and dry twigs and broke them small,
 And on them placed a little copper pan;
 Then trimmed a cabbage which her spouse had brought
 In from the stream-fed garden. He reached down
 With a forked stick from the black beam a chine
 Of smoke-cured pork, and from the long-kept meat
 Cut a small piece and put it in to boil.
 Meanwhile their talk beguiles the passing hour
 And time glides unperceived. A beechwood bowl
 Hung by its curving handle from a peg;
 They fill it with warm water and their guests
 Bathe in the welcome balm their weary feet.
 They place a mattress of soft river-sedge
 Upon a couch (its frame and feet were willow)
 And spread on it their drapes, only brought out
 On holy days, yet old and cheap they were,
 Fit for a willow couch. The Gods reclined.
 Then the old woman, aproned, shakily,
 Arranged the table, but one leg was short;
 A crock adjusted it, and when the slope
 Was levelled up she wiped it with green mint.
 Then olives, black and green, she brings, the fruit
 Of true Minerva [Athena], autumn cherry plums
 Bottled in wine lees, endive, radishes,
 And creamy cheese and eggs turned carefully
 In the cooling ash; all served in earthenware.
 Next a wine-bowl, from the same 'silver' chased,
 Is set and beechwood cups, coated inside
 With yellow wax. No long delay; the hearth
 Sends forth the steaming feast and wine again
 Is brought of no great age, then moved aside,
 Giving a space to bring the second course.
 Here are their nuts and figs, here wrinkled dates,
 And plums and fragrant apples in broad trugs,
 And sweet grapes gathered from the purple vines,
 And in the midst a fine pale honeycomb;
 And - over all - a zeal, not poor nor slow,
 And faces that with smiling goodness glow.
 Meanwhile they saw, when the wine-bowl was drained,



*Each time it filled itself, and wine welled up
All of its own accord within the bowl.
In fear and wonder Baucis and Philemon,
With hands upturned, joined in a timid prayer
And pardon sought for the crude graceless meal.
There was one goose, the trusty guardian
Of their minute domain and they, the hosts,
Would sacrifice him for the Gods, their guests.
But he, swift-winged, wore out their slow old bones
And long escaped them, till at last he seemed
To flee for sanctuary to the Gods themselves.
The deities forbade. 'We two are gods',
They said; 'This wicked neighbourhood shall pay
Just punishment; but to you there shall be given
Exemption from this evil. Leave your home,
Accompany our steps and climb with us
The mountain slopes.' The two old folk obey
And slowly struggle up the long ascent
propped on their sticks. A bowshot from the top
They turn their eyes and see the land below
All flooded marshes now except their house;
And while they wonder and in tears bewail
Their lost possessions, that old cottage home,
Small even for two owners, is transformed
Into a temple; columns stand beneath
The rafters, and the thatch, turned yellow, gleams
A roof of gold; and fine doors richly carved
They see, and the bare earth with marble paved.
Then Saturnius [Zeus] in gentle tones addressed them:
'Tell us, you good old man, and you, good dame,
His worthy consort, what you most desire.'
Philemon briefly spoke with Baucis, then
Declared their joint decision to the Gods:
'We ask to be your priests and guard your shrine;
And, since in concord we have spent our years,
Grant that the selfsame hour may take us both,
That I my consort's tomb may never see
Nor may it fall to her to bury me.'
Their prayer was granted. Guardians of the shrine
They were while life was left, until one day,
Undone by years and age, standing before*



*The sacred steps and talking of old times,
Philemon saw old Baucis sprouting leaves
And green with leaves she saw Philemon too,
And as the foliage o'er their faces formed
They said, while still they might, in mutual words
'Goodbye, dear love' together, and together
The hiding bark covered their lips. Today
The peasants in those parts point out with pride
Two trees from one twin trunk grown side by side.
This tale I heard from staid old men who had
No reason to deceive. I saw myself
Wreaths on the boughs and hung a fresh one there,
And said: 'They now are gods, who served the Gods;
To them who worship gave is worship given.'*

IX. RESULT

The expression of "Cut the Gordion knot" is to solve very quickly any very complex problem or to get to the heart of the problem became popular throughout the world.⁴⁵ A double or Gordion knot, a technique unique to Anatolia that results in a denser, more durable product than the single knotted carpets found abroad.⁴⁶ It is believed that some musical instruments such as cymbals, flutes, the triangle and syrinx were invented in Phrygia and the people of Phrygia were regarded as the great musicians.⁴⁷ These are just a few examples of the Phrygian culture that we can see in their mythological stories. Today, many scholars believed that the European Civilization based on Greek and Roman civilization but in fact the Greek and Roman civilizations benefited from the Anatolian, Egyptian, Mesopotamian and the other civilizations. Anatolia with its geographical position between the Mesopotamian and the Greek civilization, contributed to the transition of the civilization from east to the west not only from its own culture but also the other cultures from the east as a bridge. Phrygia, as a center in the middle of Anatolia, and also as a neighboring country to the west, especially to the Greek civilization plays an important role with its geographical position and its culture in the world literature, art and music.

⁴⁵ Eric Donald Hirsch, Joseph F. Kett, James S. Trefil, *The new dictionary of cultural literacy*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishment, the U.S.A., 2002, p.34.

⁴⁶ Lynn A. Levine, *Frommer's Turke*, Wiley Publishing, New Jersey, 2006, p.140.

⁴⁷ Barnett, R.D., *Phrygia and the Peoples of Anatolia in the Iron Age*, Cambridge Ancient History: II /30, 1975, p. 433.



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