

# CELALİ REVOLTS AND THE EPIC STORY OF KÖROĞLU

## Celali İsyanları ve Köroğlu Destanı

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### ÖZET

Destanların oluşmasında, gelişmesinde ve değişmesinde destan anlatıcıları ve onların dinleyicileriyle olan ilişkileri çok önemli rol oynadığı gibi, aynı şekilde destanların yaratılmasında bir toplumun veya milletin tarihindeki önemli ve derin izler bırakmış savaşlar, göçler, doğal afetler ve iç çatışmalar gibi olaylar da destanların yaratılmasının temel sebepleri olup, bunların o toplum ve millet üzerindeki etkileri belli bir destan geleneğine bağlı olarak destan anlatıcıları vasıtasıyla toplumda uzun süre yaşayabilme imkanı bulmuşlardır. Bu destanlardan bir kısmı çeşitli dönemlerde yazıya geçirilip, yazarı bilinen veya bilinmeyen bir kitap olarak günümüze ulaştıkları gibi, bazıları da yazıya geçirilmeyip, günümüze kadar sözlü gelenek anlatıcıları tarafından günümüze ulaştırılmışlardır.

Ortaya çıktığı dönemde veya belli bir süre sonra yazıya geçirilmeyip, sözlü gelenekte çok uzun bir süre yaşama şansı bulan ve çok geniş bir alanda bilinen ve anlatılan bir destan çeşitli dönemlerin tarihi olaylarından unsurlar ihtiva etmeye başlar. Anlatıldığı sosyal çevre ve şartlara uyum sağlayabilmesi için farklı tarihi dönemlerin sözlü geleneklerinde yeniden yaratılan bir destan kahramanın tipi ve de onun gösterdiği başarılar ve yaptığı kabul edilen işlerin değişmesi kaçınılmaz olacağı gibi, bu değişimlerin de anlatmanın tür özelliklerinde bile değişimler meydana getirmesi doğaldır.

Destanlar bir toplumun tarihinde meydana gelen önemli sosyal, kültürel ve siyasal olaylarla ilgili anlatmalar olmakla beraber destanların tarihi birer vesika olmadığını, tarihi gerçekleri doğru bir şekilde yansıtmadıklarını da belirtmeliyiz. Tarihi kaynaklar veya tarihte olmuş olayları anlatan vesikalar belirli ölçülerde bu kaynakları hazırlayan kişilerin yorumlarıyla birlikte yazılmışlarsa da, büyük ölçüde tarihi bir olayı gerçeğe en yakın bir biçimde yansıtır. Destanlar bu noktada tarihi kaynaklardan ciddi biçimde ayrılırlar. Destanlar; bir tarihi olayın oluşu ve sonuçlarının aktarılması ve bunların yorumunu değil, tarihi olayların bir kahraman tarafından yaşanmış şeklini, kahramanın bu olaylardaki rolünü, yaptığı işleri ve gösterdiği başarıları anlatırlar. Denilebilir ki, tarihi olayları yaşamış ve yaşamamış, duymuş veya öğrenmiş kişiler olan destan anlatıcıları bu olayları varisi ve sahibi oldukları geleneklere ve de içinde buldukları sosyal çevre ve şartlara göre yorumlarlar. Bu şekildeki bir destanı anlatma çeşitli dönemlerden unsurları ihtiva ettiği gibi, anlatıcısının kabiliyetine göre her defasında yeniden şekil bulmakta, anlatmanın şekli de anlatıcıya göre, yer, zaman ve şahıs gibi değişiklikleri içerebilmektedir.

Bütün bu değişimlere bir destanın çok uzun süre sözlü gelenekte yaşaması da ilave edilirse, tarihi bir olaydan da kaynaklansa bile bir destanın bugün ortaya çıkan şeklinin mitoloji, masal, hikaye gibi diğer halk anlatmalarından parçalar ihtiva ettiğini kolaylıkla gözlemleyebiliriz.

Bütün bu genel açıklamalardan sonra esas üzerinde duracağımız konuya dönecek olursak, biz bu incelememizde çeşitli araştırmacılar tarafından Köroğlu'nun çıktığı dönem olarak kabul edilen 16. yüzyılın ikinci yarısı ve 17. yüzyılın başlarında Anadolu'da yaşanan ve genel olarak "Celali" isyanları olarak adlandırılan dönemin sosyal şartlarını araştırmacıların verdiği bilgilere göre aktararak, ister tarihi bir kişilik olsun ve isterse destanı bir karakter olsun Köroğlu'nun Celali isyanlarıyla ilişkisini inceleyeceğiz.

Bu incelemeyi ulaştığımız sonuçlar ise şu sorulara cevap niteliğinde olacaktır. Köroğlu bir Celali midir? Destan kahramanı Köroğlu ile tarihi kaynaklarda adı geçen ve Bolu yöresinde yaşadığı zikredilen Köroğlu'nun ilişkisi nedir? Köroğlu'nu bir Celali olarak kabul etmenin sonuçları nelerdir? Köroğlu Destanı Türkiye'de mi doğmuştur?

### Key Words (Anahtar Kelimeler)

Celali, Köroğlu, Turkish Epics (Türk Destanları), Hero (Kahraman), Revolt (İsyan).

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### 1. Introduction:

Epic story narrators and their relation with their audience play a very important role in the creation, development, and transformation of epic stories. Like wise, wars, migrations, natural disasters and internal disturbances that leave traces in the history of a society or a people are fundamental causes for the creation of epic stories; their impact on a particular society or a nation survives.

In various periods some of these epics are transformed into written texts whose authors may or may not be known, thus surviving until present days; some of the epics survive through ages in the oral tradition and are made known to today's generations by the narrators of the epics.

Oğuz Kağan and Dede Korkut are the Turkish epics that have survived until today in written form; they were put on paper long after they came into existence and developed. On the other hand, the epic story of Koroğlu, which is one of those Turkish epics, had not been transformed into written form until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This epic story was collected by the researchers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries directly from the narrators, and than put on paper.

The fact that the epic Koroğlu was recorded and put on paper long after it came into existence and, before that had existed in oral tradition in a vast territory, combined with the fact that the epic concerns historic events from various periods, that the character of the epic was subjected to changes, that the changes that affected the narrator and social environment where the narrator lived- all

this gives us reason to believe that these changes were reflected in the epic Koroğlu, which survived until today in various forms.

Epic stories concern important social, cultural and historical events in the history of a nation. However, it should be noted that epics are not historical documents and they do not necessarily reflect historical facts in an objective manner, especially the epics lived in oral tradition for a long time. Epic stories differ from historical sources and documents, which could be presumed to reflect historical facts to a certain degree, in that they are not concerned with giving an account of the flow of historical events and their consequences or interpreting those events. Rather, epic stories tell us about the experiences of a nation and the hero's role in a historical event and hero's deeds and accomplishments. This task is performed in a particular literary form by the narrators within the context of epic story telling traditions in the milieu where the epic stories have been told.

The narration of an epic story, depending on the ability and skill of the narrators, could contain elements from various historical periods. The epic stories could take different forms; the manner of narrating the epic stories can vary from place to place, from narrator to narrator, from audience to audience and from time to time. All these variables, when applied to an epic that has been existed in oral tradition for a long time, leads to a situation where an epic story, even if it was created as a result of a particular historical event, differs, in its present form, from its original form or

from the form that we establish. We could discern this by establishing how epic stories contain parts from myths, tales, legends and other folk narratives and how, after comparing historical sources to the events told in an epic, different elements have been incorporated into the epic by different narrators in various times.

The purpose of this article is to examine the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries; the period when Koroğlu said to have lived in; the period also known as the period of the Celali revolts in Anatolia. In light of the available material concerning the social conditions of the time, I will try to establish Koroğlu's relation as a historical figure or as an epic character- with the Celali revolts. I will try to find answers to following questions: Was the hero of the epic Koroğlu a Celali? What are the relations between the epic hero Koroğlu, and Koroğlu that is said to have lived in Bolu region in Anatolia in the 116<sup>th</sup> century? If the epic hero Koroğlu that was told in Anatolia preceded the Celali revolts, how was it related to the latter and what were the reasons to find in the epic elements related to the Celali revolts?

To answer these questions there is a need, first of all, to examine the social and economic causes for the Celali revolts in the framework of historians' evaluation of the period.

## 2. What Were the Celali Revolts?

The Celali revolts are used as a general name when referring to the revolts that took place in the Ottoman Empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The word "Celali" means that belongs to "Celali"

and originates from Şeyh Celal of Bozok, who revolted for the religious problem in early 16<sup>th</sup> century. That the massive Celali movements of the latter part of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries were called Celali for no apparent reason was due to the fact that Şeyh Celal revolted in Tokat in 1519 claiming to be the "Mahdi"; all the subsequent revolts that threatened the people of Anatolia regardless of their aims and forms, were referred to as Celali by the people and historical documents. (İslam Ansiklopedisi; Vol. 7: 252).

Researchers have proved that the revolts of Şahkulu, Nur Ali, and Şeyh Celal in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century had to do with "Shiaism" and the influential propaganda of Şah İsmail of Iran and that they differed in aims from the revolts that occurred in the latter part of the century, which were not religious-motivated, yet came to be called Celali. (Griswold; 1969: 214-218). The historical sources point that these movements did not aim at dividing Ottoman Empire and that the leaders of the revolts did not proclaim themselves "Padişah" or "Sultan". What were the causes and aims of these revolts, which suffered the Anatolian people for a long time, and let them to become subjects of devastation? What did they accomplish? To understand better the epic hero Koroğlu and Koroğlu as a historical figure it is necessary to touch upon the causes of these events and their evolution. (Akdağ; 1963:243-250)

The chain of the revolts that started in the second part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century has been examined by the scholars W. Griswold, M. Akdağ who unveiled to a considerable extend the problems laying at

the heart of the matter. I will make use of their works in providing the information regarding the causes and the developments of the Celali revolts and then proceed to analyze Koroğlu's relation with the Celalis.

### **3.The Causes for the Celali Revolts:**

The main cause for the Celali revolts was the economic condition of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century. Economic conditions had to do with the means of living of the people and the army, the tax policies of the government and the administrative adjustments related to them.

Other important developments influencing the Celali revolts were the long war with Iran followed by a war with Austria and the economic and political crises they produced. These were accompanied with less, but nevertheless important factors such as a general increase of the population and some natural disasters.

In general, in the 16th century the economic structure of the Ottoman Empire was based on agriculture and supplemented by the benefits of being a middleman between Asia and Europe. The first indication for a crisis in the economy was seen in the shortage of precious metals, which was caused by the fact that traders from the East and the West extracted raw precious metals such as silver and copper in exchange for finished products of the same materials. This shortage influenced the money policies of the Empire; there was a significant price increase in various finished products.

Shortage in terms of money and price increase has directly influenced the income of the soldiers who come to be known as Celali. Here one should take into consideration the tax system that existed, for the question of taxes was quite influential in converting state servants into Celalis. The laws established, to small detail, the procedures and amounts of taxes that were to be collected from the population. Yet, due to the deterioration of the economy some state servants endeavored to collect taxes, known as "âdet", on top of the taxes required by the law. This caused dissatisfaction among the population. (Akdağ; 1963:13-20)

A brief mention should be made of the Ottoman tax system and see how the deteriorating economy affected the tax system, those who were entrusted with collecting the taxes, and consequently, those who paid the taxes.

There were two fundamental principles in taxation in the Empire. The first principle was to collect taxes according to Islamic jurisprudence. This tax was known as "Tekalif-i Şeriyye". The second kind of taxes was known as "Tekalif-i Örfiyye", which could be translated as "Military Tax" which was fixed by state government. Both taxes were divided into sub-groups and were fixed on the basis of the Ottoman "Akçe" (Coin Money).

Those who possessed land were called "Raiyyet", and those who collected taxes from them were referred to as "Sahib-i Raiyyet". Instead of paying the soldiers and civil servants from the treasury, the practice was to let those soldi-

ers and civil servants live on the taxes they collected from the lands allocated to them. When a village was designated as "Tımar" (Fief), its taxes were collected by "Sahib-i Raiyyet." When it came to collect taxes that resulted from various fines, the "Sahib-i Raiyyet", which consisted partly of "Tımarlı Sipahis" (Fief Spahes), were assisted by the "Sancakbeyi" (Governor of the Province), the "Subaşı" (Police Magistrate), and the "Kadı" (Judge). Another kind of "Sahib-i Raiyyet" was the "Serbest Tımar" (Free Fief), which was divided into sub-groups such as "Has", "Zeamet", "Dizdar Tımarı", and "Vakıf Tımarı". Those that belonged to "Serbest Tımar" had the right to collect the "Tekalif-i Örfiyye" (Military Tax).

Those who belonged to "Serbest Tımar" appointed as "Voyvodas" to collect the tax. Those Feudal Fiefs that did not belong to "Serbest" category were subjected to tax collection by the spahes and man from the province administration. The kadıs were entrusted with supervising the tax collection in all timars. This gave the kadıs leverage in passing a decision on matters concerning tax collection in the villages.

The Ottoman government failed to fix the amount of taxes in accordance with economic conditions. The value of "akçe" was falling rapidly: "Altun" (Ottoman Gold Coin) that cost 35 akçes in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, latter in 16<sup>th</sup> century cost 120 akçe. The tax amount that had been fixed when akçe was most valuable was not adjusted when it lost its value. It has been noted that this affected the tax system and those who paid taxes negatively. To balance its

spending the government decreased the amount of silver in the akçe, but nevertheless kept its value in relation to gold same as before. It is argued that this measure prevented the government from financial loss. (Griswold; 1969: 11-12; Akdağ; 1963:23-25).

Another measure taken by the government to improve its financial situation was to increase "Padişah Hasları" (the private lands of the ruler where the taxes collected for only government). This was obviously to the detriment of the owners of timar. In addition to this, what decreased "timar" owner soldiers' tax revenues from their "timars" was the decision of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman to convert approximately 20.000 "Kapıkulu" (Sultan's Special Soldiers) into "timar" soldiers. The treasury paid the "kapıkulu" soldiers; now they were to be assigned "timars" from those already assigned to others. This had devastating effect on the income of those from whom timars were taken away or whose timars were reduced. The situation was worsened when a timar was assigned to more than one person. Though this development did not have visible consequences during the reign of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, they were a factor in preparing the ground for the Celali revolts in later years. (Akdağ; 1963: 27-31).

The developments such as price increases and devalued money in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was beginning to affect those paying taxes; although it was banned, lending money with interest became widespread. Those who profited were able to acquire more lands. On the other there was a shift from traditional agriculture

to stock farming, especially among big landowners. Inevitably, herds damaged cultivated lands. Added to this way the grain shortage in Anatolia, caused by European merchants who collected it by paying high prices. These developments too affected Anatolian people and served as causes for the Celali revolts.

As a result of the economic deterioration those who became poorer found the solution in migrating from their villages to larger settlements. Those left their villages to seek their fortunes elsewhere constituted two new types of people: "Suhtes" and "Levends". Those came to be known, as suhtas were the children of poor families who decided to go to study at "Orta Medreses" (Secondary Medreses) in big cities. They were unable to enter the higher "Medreses" in İstanbul, Bursa and Edirne, so they attended the "medreses" in their area and stayed there for a long time. The "Levends" were men who, due to the economic conditions, sold their lands in the villages and sought jobs as bodyguards and police to state administrators or as "Azaps" (Marines), "Yeniceris" (Janissaries) or "gönüllü" (volunteers) in the borderlands. Those who could not secure a job gave themselves to plunder and pillage.

Administrative irregularities caused by the economic problems, power struggles in the center of the Empire and its effect on the lower level administration ranks added to the unrest among the population. The conflicting interest between "Ehl-i Şer" (Those Involved in Religious Affairs) and "Ehl-i Örf" (Those Involved in Military Affairs) was embodied

in struggle between the "kadıs" and "sancakbeys". The result of this was that the regular folk (Reaya) and soldiers were set against each other, thus preparing the grounds for revolts. (Akdağ; 1963; 31-42).

Another development that can be put among the political reasons for the Celali revolts was the increase in the importance given to "Devşirmes" (soldiers collected from the subject nationalities who were mostly from Balkans) by the central government, while the "tımâr" soldiers in Anatolia were increasingly neglected. To the worsening economic conditions of the latter was added the increasing inclination of the central government to appoint "devşirmes" as province administrators. Thus their role within the military was becoming of secondary importance a situation that would make them more inclined to join Celali groups. (Griswold; 1969:13-14).

The wars that were waged after the reign of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman had more defensive character; they were fought to prevent the loss of land already under Ottoman possession. Therefore, even if the war was won, usually there was no acquisition of new lands. Since, in this case, the prospects of taking spoils was not high as before, the willingness, especially of tımâr soldiers, to participate in the war diminished. Consequently, they were deliberately late in enlisting for the expeditions or did not enlist at all and deserted. (Akdağ; 1963: 79-83).

While all those economic and political factors created the conditions for the Celali revolts, there was a development

that preceded these revolts, a development that could be accepted as the first phase of the Celali revolts. This was the so-called "Suhte Movement" (the revolt of the "medrese" students), which engaged the government for a long time. Though these were relatively small groups, they, nevertheless, remained on the government's agenda continuously. Especially in the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century many agreements were reached between the government and those medrese students, only to be broken afterwards. The government resorted to force to solve the matter and in the process the "reaya" suffered as well. Kadıs and province administrators took opposite sides and acted with hostility against each other. As a result, all sides; those who participated in the "suhte" revolts, those who helped them, those who wanted to punish the former and the latter were wearied down, thus creating new ground, for bigger revolts in the future. The concern over the "suhtas" increased in time of war and the government looked for solutions to prevent new occurrences of plunder, pillage and so on. (Akdağ; 1963: 85-90).

It has been noted that when an expedition was called to Iran in 1577, there was a concern in Anatolia, caused by the fear that villages and towns might be subjected to pillage. Numerous petitions sent to the center asking the government to leave as many soldiers as possible behind for internal security. As a result, the government decided to dispatch security units consisting of 30-40 soldiers to each province; it also deemed it convenient to ask every village to choose a

"Yigitbaşı" (Foreman) who would lead local militia forces against possible raids on the village. Obviously, such measures would not be satisfactory. The provincial administrators opened the new cadres that were filled by "Levends" and "Sekbans" (Deserted Janissary Soldiers), that were unemployed or deserters, thus forming the units designated to provide internal security. This created a situation where there was a confusion as to who was rebel and who was serving the state. (Akdağ; 1963:116).

At the beginning of the war with Iran it has been established that there were three groups that posed threat to people in Anatolia. The first group was the medrese students, the second was the group of oppressed and discontented civil servants; the third group was the most dangerous one because it consisted of "sekbans" (janissary soldiers). The first group was to a considerable degree by the latter two, but not completely eliminated; the second used even available opportunity to their advantage; the third group was willing to serve the highest bidder. Initially, the latter were a small group that wandered around disguised as janissaries or medrese students. As they grew in numbers, they formed larger groups. When the government created "İl Erleri" (Province Soldier Cadres) in the provinces for internal security reasons, they filled those cadres and later chose their leaders. Although their duty was to provide security and tranquility, they subjected the people to plunder and pillage. The people and "kadıs" filed complains; given the peculiar character of those things in state service; people ca-

me to see the “bandits” and “the state employees” as the same. (Akdağ; 1963: 121-122).

The wars with Iran, which lasted longer than expected, and the wars on the European borders of the Empire were such that in 1590's affected all state mechanisms; especially the wars on European soil proved that the Anatolian soldier was relegated to secondary importance; struggles at the top found reflection among the lower posts.

#### **4.The Important Celali Revolts:**

When all these factors are taken into consideration, it becomes clear that the economic, social, and political situation in Anatolia at the time was not very promising. The revolts of the medrese students were soon to be followed by more massive revolts as a result of the potential explosive factors within the society. Small Celali groups that grew in time and became more and more involved in plunder and pillage caused initial disturbances. (Griswold; 1969: 1-10)

The first of those groups, upon which the government sent its army, but failed to achieve an undisputed victory, was the group of Karayazıcı Abdul Halim. He was in state service first as “Su-başı”, later as “Sekban Commander” and was employed in Tarsus-Silifke region to put under control the “suhte” movements there. When the province governor, to whom he was subordinated, was dismissed, he and his men lost any prospect of being promoted; so they revolted and were joined by other groups in the area, thus constituting a substantial Celali group. (Griswold; 1969: 26-27). Karayazıcı and his men captured the city of

Urfa and continued to fight government forces sent to suppress them. One of those sent to suppress them, Hüseyin Paşa, joined Karayazıcı; when all efforts to take care of him by force failed, in the first years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Karayazıcı was appointed to the governorship of Amasya province. Not satisfied, he revolted again and the conflict continued in cycles. The government was not able to defeat Karayazıcı completely, who died from natural causes. (Griswold; 1969:32-38).

It has been noted that the revolt of Karayazıcı prompted the government to pay more attention to the Celalis and that people were complainant of the armies that were sent to suppress the Celalis as they were of the Celalis themselves. (Griswold; 1969:39-46).

Without going into much detail with regard to each Celali revolt, it should be mentioned that Karayazıcı's place was taken by his brother Deli Hasan, who, having also fought in the armies of the Empire, was given the post of governor of Bosnia. During the wars with Austria he, Deli Hasan, and his Celalis took part in the battles, where it is said that as much as 6.000 of his men perished. Other Celali revolts of the 17<sup>th</sup> century were those led by Canbuladoglu in Syria, the revolt of Tavail around Harput, and the revolt of Kalenderoğlu Mehmet in Ankara. Although all these revolts were suppressed by government forces or as a result of some kinds of agreement, especially when Kuyucu Murad Pasha was in charge of dealing with the Celalis, there were still some Celali groups, however smaller later on. (Griswold;1969:110-154).

### 5. Koroğlu as a Celali:

During these revolts some important historical figures emerged, and some of these names, name of a Celali figure or leader, are found in the epic story of Koroğlu cycle. When historical sources concerning the records of the time are examined, a reference is found about Koroğlu from Gerece an administrative district of Bolu and Çakaloğlu from Kıbrısık as Celalis that previously had been in the service of the Bey of Bolu as "İl Askeri" (Province Soldier), but later became Celalis who posed threat to the property and well being of the local population. From the year of 1582 the same record orders them to be captured. (Akdağ; 1963: 122).

This is the main reason why various researchers see Koroğlu as a Celali, that is, as a bandit and robber. Yet the question of whether Koroğlu whose name appears among the Celalis is really the hero of the epic story constitutes another question open to debate.

What makes it difficult to accept those two characters as same and one is the fact that in the Anatolian variants of the epic story of Koroğlu there is an account of events from the Celali period as well as events from preceding period and even events from modern times.

With regard to the historical character of Koroğlu, P. Naili Boratav, in his book "Koroğlu Destanı", has expressed the possibility that Koroğlu was a Celali. On the other hand the author does not exclude the possibility, expressed by Z. Velidi Togan and Fuad Köprülü, that Koroğlu was an epic hero that came into existence as result of the wars with Iran

that were waged by Oğuz (Turkmen) groups while they were living in Central Asia, before they migrated to Anatolia. If this view is adhered, the relations between the epic Koroğlu and Koroğlu the Celali could be explained in terms of the changes in folklore creations and their adaptations. (Boratav; 1984:136-139).

Axel Olrik's "Epic Laws of Folk Narrative", or, more particularly, his thesis on the "concentration on the leading characters of folk narratives" provides a considerable explanation to this question by pointing that the deeds of a hero who is famous or about to be forgotten and became obsolete are passed upon to him or his are passed upon a new hero. (Olrik; 1965: 129-141). This leads to a situation where oral elements of the past could also now be found in a different folk genre. This phenomenon can be observed in various examples in Turkish folklore. For instance, anecdotes that have nothing to do "Nasreddin Hoca" are ascribed to him. Another example could be the anecdotes about the poet Namık Kemal, who has become the hero of vulgar anecdotes.

In the "cönks" (note books where folk poets by themselves or somebody else wrote down the famous folk poets' poems and folk stories) Fuad Köprülü found poems of the folk poet Koroğlu who accepted to be lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. (Köprülü; 1962: 90-104). The relation between this poet and Koroğlu whose name appears in the historical sources as participant of Celali revolts has not been determined yet, leading to different speculations. It is possible to argue that they were two different personalities, because there is no any indication of Kö-

rođlu the Celali being a poet. One could also argue that those poems were created by the folk singers by using the name of Korođlu, which is possible. On the other hand, the fact that Korođlu the poet was serving in the army leaves open the possibility of some relation with Korođlu the Celali. The fundamental point that deserves attention is that the poems of Korođlu the poet are attributed to Korođlu the epic hero. If it is accepted that all of these as the same person, then the figure Korođlu appears simultaneously as a Celali, a military poet and an epic hero. Yet this can be easily discarded owing to the fact that Korođlu the poet was faithful servant of the state who in his poems praised the soldiers and the pashas and the sultans that took part in the expeditions to Iran- a fact which makes it difficult to relate Korođlu to Korođlu the Celali.

One can accept the view that the epic Korođlu was a Celali that lived in Bolu region in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or one can object to it. However, one must accept the fact in the Anatolian variants of the epic story of Korođlu there are significant elements related to the Celali revolts. The reason I dwell upon the causes of the Celali revolts and their effects on the people is that such occurrences tend to provide the necessary impulse for the creation of epics or add and change the natural form of a former epic, thus leaving a trace as a historical event in popular consciousness. If it is accepted, that Korođlu as an epic hero that had existed in Turkish society prior to the revolt, it could be said that the Celali revolts of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries cre-

ated an epic situation, the need for a hero, or an epic that was already in existence at the time was added new elements as a result of these events that influenced the people so deeply. In the context of such a reorganization of the epic, the fact that Korođlu, the epic hero, and Korođlu, the Celali, shared the same name has made it easier for the epic to be reorganized and diffused. The result of the reorganization would be such that now the epic would combine old and new elements.

Although some aspects of the view that the epic of Korođlu originated in Anatolia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was diffused to Central Asia through Azerbaijan are worth taking into account, one should be aware of the attempts to put Korođlu in a certain ideological world. In his article, entitled "The Epic Tradition Among Turkic Peoples", İlhan Başgöz introduces Korođlu as a Celali who abducted children; he is also characterized as a poet who lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This view contradicts what has said by Fuad Köprülü in his work cited above which is indirectly cited by Başgöz. (Başgöz; 1978: 315-316).

In a work co-authored by Nora K. Chadwick and Victor Jirmunskiy it is argued that, "*under feudal oppression the figure of this popular hero (Korođlu), who had been created by the epic tradition, became an expression of the elementary protest of the people against their oppressors. He acquired the characteristics first of all of a rebel and avenger of the people and then of the 'ideal democratic ruler', friend and protector of his subjects*". (Chadwick-Jirmunskiy; 1969:300).

Though the characterization of Koroğlu as a rebel could be attributed to the Celali revolts, when one considers the fact the Celali rebels afflicted more damage on the people than on the state the answer to the question of whom they avenged and whom they protected becomes open to debate. One should also point to that Celali leaders and in the epic story Koroğlu the hero had respect for the sultan and a fact proven by their willingness to come to some sort agreement with the latter. This allowed them, as seen in the examples of Karayazıcı and Deli Hasan, to acquire posts in government ranks. As mentioned, Deli Hasan and his "sekbans" participated in the wars with Austria, where 6.000 out of 10.000 men died. Similarly, in the epic Koroğlu cycle reference is made to Koroğlu's participation in the wars with Austria. Thus a double-sided picture is presented where men who are rebels are also men serving the state. In this case, it becomes difficult to establish the standards by which one could characterize Koroğlu either as a rebel or a hero.

One of the consequences of accepting Koroğlu as an epic hero and a Celali that lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century is accepting the view that the epic was created in Anatolia. However, a comparative examination led me to conclude that this was not the case; the epic appeared in Anatolia later.

First accepting the epic Koroğlu as a Celali, V. Jirmunskiy then argues that the epic originated in the territories between Anatolia and Azerbaijan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and diffused from Azerbaijan to Turkmenistan and from there to Uzbek

and Kazak societies, acquiring in the process episodes that originally did not exist such as the supernatural birth of the hero. (Chadwick-Jirmunskiy; 1969:301-302). Only one part of this view could be proven that is the role Turkmens played in diffusing Turkic epic creations from the East to the West and West to the East. (Reichel; 1992:318-325). When one examine Central Asian versions of the epic Koroğlu and compare them to the Anatolian and Azerbaijan versions, one has to believe that the epic should be originated in Central Asia or more clearly among the Turkmens. There are various reasons for this: First, the first complete collected version of the epic story cycle of Koroğlu that was collected from the "aşıks" (the story teller minstrel poets) of the southern Azerbaijan and put on paper is the version of A. Chodzko where Koroğlu is presented as a member of the Turkmen Teke tribe. (Chodzko; 1971:4). The Turkmen and other Central Asian Turkish versions of the epic depict Koroğlu as a Turkmen as well. (Karnıyev; 1983: 34).

Another point is that seems to be as a general characteristic almost all Turkish epics starting with an account of the hero's birth. Although this can be seen in the epics of Manas, Alpamış Dede Korkut and in the Central Asian versions of Koroğlu, the Anatolian and Azerbaijan versions of Koroğlu do not contain this part. Instead, in the latter Koroğlu appears as a 13-15 years old boy. (Ekici; 2001: 16-18). Jirmunskiy's view can be acceptable only if this general characteristic of the Turkish epic is disregarded. Otherwise my explanation can be that these

parts of the epic concerning the birth of the hero were forgotten or dropped during the diffusion process by the Anatolian and Azerbaijanian epic narrators due to the social and cultural changes have been occurred in the society of Azerbaijan and Anatolia, which accounts for the non-existence of the birth episode there. (See; Kaplan, Bali, Akalın: 1974; Tahmasib: 1969; Karriyev: 1983; Gumarova: 1973).

Yet, another point is that not only in the epics of Turkish origin, but in almost all epic stories in the world, epic heroes come from a noble family and protect their people against foreign threats. However, both in the Anatolian and Azerbaijan versions, Koroğlu, the epic hero appears as son of a horseman; there is no mention of his coming from a noble family. On the other hand, in the Turkmen, Kazak, and Uzbek versions, he is introduced as a son or a grandson of a "Bey" (A Local Ruler) and he himself is also introduced as a "Bey" or a "Sultan". While the epic heroes of Oğuz Kağan, Manas, Alpamiş, and Dede Korkut narratives are of noble origin, but the hero of the Anatolian and Azerbaijan versions of Koroğlu is not which strengthens our conviction that the epic the epic story of Koroğlu was of Central Asian Turkish origin.

In addition to that, in the Central Asian version of the epic Koroğlu's enemies are the Shah of Iran, the Kalmuks, the Kızılbaş's and so on. These belong to different societies and are characteristic of the Turkish epic tradition. In the Anatolian and Azerbaijan versions, however, the enemies of Koroğlu come from the

same society. This also gives weight to the view that the epic of Koroğlu was not of Anatolian-Azerbaijan origin. In sum, the epic story of Koroğlu originated in Central Asia, most likely among the Turkmens, and was later diffused to Anatolia, where it was reconstructed probably following the Celali revolts.

#### **Conclusion:**

In the second part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Anatolia became a hotbed for the revolts of various discontented groups- "medrese students" and "sekbans"- which came to be known as "Celali", giving this name to all revolts of the time.

First revolts had religious character and were followed by medrese students; latter owing to the economic, social and political conditions in which the Ottoman Empire found itself, there emerged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Celali groups, which engaged the government for a long time. The state had to face rebels who had been brought up in it and had served it; the government tried to put an end to these revolts by use of force or by permitting the Celalis and their leaders into state service. This led the situation where the same person could be both a rebel and a state servant and such a situation creates confusion with regard to how those characters should be seen.

The people of Anatolia suffered during the revolts that lasted for a long time. The people in the Anatolian part of the Empire were put in difficult situation both by those who revolted and those who were charged with suppressing the revolts. Added to already difficult economic conditions, such an environment for-

ced people to flee and migrate from their lands.

Such an atmosphere of unrest and suffering in Anatolia provided all the necessary conditions for an epic story. Although Köroğlu, the epic hero, who also figures as a Celali in historical documents, and the narratives build around him carry the traces of the period in the Anatolian versions of the epic story, it is still arguable whether Köroğlu the Celali and Köroğlu the epic hero were the same person.

Since determining whether or not Köroğlu was a Celali has to do with the question of when and where the epic was created, it is possible to arrive at some conclusion by examining Köroğlu as he appears in other Turkish versions and comparing the latter with the Anatolian variants of the epic story cycle. (Yıldırım; 1983: 103-114). My own comparison points that it is more probable that the epic originated in Central Asia. This leads us to believe that the epic was reworked during or following the Celali revolts; new elements and the historical and social events of the revolts were incorporated into the epic. Thus the epic story cycle of Köroğlu appeared in Anatolia and Azerbaijan with the different elements and in a different form compared to its Central Asian versions.

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