

# THE HISTORICAL, RELIGIOUS, SUPERNATURAL, AND SOCIAL ELEMENTS IN THE OGHUZ KAGHAN'S EPIC

Metin ÖZARSLAN\*

## Özet

Bu çalışmada genel manada epik/destan ve Oğuz Kağan Destanı'nın Türk destan edebiyatındaki yeri üzerinde durulmuştur. Özelde ise, Oğuz Kağan Destanı'nın Uygur yazması esas alınarak, destan tarihî, dinî, tabiatötesi ve beşerî unsurlar açısından incelenmiştir. İnceleme yapılırken yer yer İslamî Oğuz Kağan Destanı'na da müracaat edilmiş ve ele alınan konular bakımından Dede Korkut Kitabı'nda geçen kimi vakalarla da paralellik kurulmuştur.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Epik/destan, Oğuz Kağan, tarihî unsurlar, dinî unsurlar, tabiatötesi unsurlar, beşerî unsurlar

## Introduction

The adventure of word of "destan", which means epic or saga, takes a very wide part in Turkish language. It is known that the concept has been used with various meaning in historical process (Elçin 1983: 71-86). When we regard the concept of destan as an epic we can find various definitions about it: Destan is defined as "the collective products, which are self-born from spirituality, and historical and esthetic existence of the entire nation" (Köprülü 1981: 41); "narrative that is is about religious, , and national heroic adventures of any nation" (Banarlı 1987: 1); "the products of earliest folk literature, which has come up as a poetry after some legends, which has not reached up a level of esthetic identity in the life of any tribe or nation" (Elçin 1981: 72); "religious and heroic legends and stories, which tell us about the adventures, heroes, the thoughts about the events of nature, universe, community and the reactions of any nation to all these at the beginning of and before history" (Timurtaş 1981: 3).

According to definitions in sources of Europe and West, this word called as epic, epos, saga, legend, and oral heroic poetry, is written by formulaic and ostentation style and based on oral narration, tells the heroism of extraordinary people. Differently that are written by literary style, those are traditional and handed down from one person to another and preserved by memory (Oinas 1972: 99).

The oral epic was created in various parts of the Old World by semi professional or professional specialists who equipped with specific teciques of composition and performance. In most of Europe and the Middle East this genre had become obsolete before the modern period (Feldman 1981: 1). It is told that the mentality of any community, which kept its traditions and customs in those epics that are written on

\* Assoc. Prof., Hacettepe University Turkish Folklore Department

narratives that mention about s, heroes, s, and collapsing (Best 1991: 37). The term of epic or heroic poetry has been used as a same meaning to determine the style of narrative that is , comes today; having attention because of its and , is belong to heroic poetry.

There are three stages and to arise an epic: core, , and . It is essential that any epic must have some s to occur in ancient times. It is necessary that occurrence of any epic, there must be a great event or adventure, unforgotten and mentioned at all times, belongs to any nation and naturally that events must influence to same nation. This is the core stage of epic. Then the of epic happens by that of national life going on in any great adventures and feeding the main core continually. The core that is in this stage has been as a complete epic. The stage has been completed with writing the oral material, as the national life living to this epic mood (Ergin 1970: 1).

The literatures of every nation pass over various stages and influence different cultural developments throughout the ages. Every society has got special ancient national epics, for example, Finnish Kalevela, Persian Shahnama, German Nibelungen, English Beowulf etc. Although those epics had been occurred in recent times, Turkish people had got national epics, about ancient periods of their long wonderful and colorful lifetime as well. Having the understanding of *"Let there be more seas and rivers / And the sun become our flag and the sky a for us"* of the civilization and culture of , Turkish people, being a conqueror nation, departed Central Asia, the holly Otuken, and Pazırık highland and arrived in the warm seas, Anatolia, the Balkans, and Central Europe. Thus lots of epics have taken important place in the literary products, which is carried on by oral tradition in Turkish historical adventure. As well as Turkish people's adventure in this historical period, Turkish oral poetry art also passed over from Central Asia to Europe (Yıldırım 1986 and 1998).

The national life and historical adventure of Turkish people are too huge to be contained to only one epic. That is way; there are many national epics of Turkish in this great oral tradition. Those epics as to be great and small are Ergenekon, Manas, Oghuz Kaghan, Battalgazi, and Koroglu etc. The world heroic stories of the life of Turkish nation have been told those epics and their numerous versions. One of those epics, Manas Destanı, more than 250.000 lines, is the longest one of epics in the world. Most of those couldn't have been written soon, after time of their gathering. Because of the tumultuous adventures of Turkish in historical period, they had lost most of things about their identity of epic character, even most of them were lost in historical agitations and some of their narratives or unexact sums had arrived today. It has been created some artificial epic trials by bringing together the sum of lost epics in modern Turkish literature.<sup>(1)</sup>

There are many different s on the occurrence of Oghuz Kaghan epic, is claimed the second oldest epic of Turkish. According to the first of those ideas, It is belong to Hiong-Nuas founded a great emigrant state between 126 and 201 of B.C. (Köprülü 1981: 52). The other is about Sakas, were in Central Asia VII<sup>th</sup> century of B.C., and

<sup>1</sup> For some of those artificial epics, see Rıza Nur (1928), Pepeyi (1938), Dağlarca (1949 and 1951), Atsız (1946 and 1949), Çavuşoğlu (1959), Beyatlı (1962), Sepetçioğlu (1965), Gençosmanoğlu (1971), and Gocul (1971).

Indo/Skits, come after a couple ages, expanded to an range fields, and that's way it would have been coto the theme of Oghuz Kaghan epic with some historical events the as a result of the s of epic which would have gone to the older times.

Among Oghuz's conquests, Asia Minor is his most remarkable and the detaily mentioned one. These conquests will have reflected a range of victories that are made by Saka/Skits from Askelan in west to Chinese borders in east; from Abi, Yakut (Saka/Sakait) remain those Sakas in north; to Taksilia, in North India, is belong to Indo-Skits in South. It means the time of states of Armenid in Iran and Helen in Grek. Then some narratives belong to Crusades times, and before them, they had been added to the stories (Togan 1972: 122). According to those views after Alp Er Tunga narrative, Oghuz Kaghan epic is the most ancient narrative among the Turksih narratives circle. The base of this epic is the conquests of a king, who was a conquerer of Chinese, Iran, and Caucasia; had travelled the whole , and of north to the district of Yenisey, and on people around (Köprülü 1981: 48).

Today it remained only two written versions of this epic which had been known among Turkish people for ancient times. One of those, which is a text written by Uigur alphabet, as no being far away any Islamic influence, shows to the older version of epic. Because of the Uigur text is uncompleted; there is no information about when and where epic is written. But it is a fact that this epic was written after XII<sup>th</sup> century. By the names of Golden Kaghan and Churchet Kaghan in the epic, it is meant the dynasty of Tonguz, that is, Kins, who Chinese in 1125 (Sümer 1960: 388-389). Reshid ud-din, vizier of Gazan Khan, mentioned Islamic format of the epic for the first time and then it was transmitted to other places. There are some differences and similarities between İslamic format, mentioned by Reshid ud-din, and Uigur manuscript of the epic. They show us the epic was determined in very anciet times because while writing his works Reshid ud-din applied for the old Turkish sources (Köprülü 1976: 25). Radloff discovered Uigur manuscript for the first time, and took in Kutadgu Biliq. W. Bang-R. Rahmeti (1936) published this text later, and it was published again with an introduction, written by Muharrem Ergin (1970). In XV<sup>th</sup> century Reshid ud-din's Persian text, that is, Islamic version of Oghuz Kaghan was adapted to Anatolian Turkish by Yazicioglu in his Tarih-i al-i Selchuk and to Chagatay Turkish by Ebul Gazi Bahadır Khan in his Shejere-i Terakime (Kononov 1937 and 1958). The text of Presian in which Reshid ud-din's work, Jami-ut Tevarih (Berezin 1861, Ateş 1957), was studied historically and adapted to Anatolian Turkish by Zeki Velidi Togan (1972). Shejere-i Terakime (Oghuz Kaghan) that Ebul Gazi Bahadır Khan adapted to Chaghatay Turkish was also published in Anatolian Turkish (Ergin []).

Some parts at the beginning and ending of Uigur manuscript, is the earliest format of Oghuz Kaghan epic, are incomplete. This situation shows the epic is wider. The in some studies on this subject matter is that Oghuz Kaghan epic is a part of great epic, spread to Dede Qorqud epic. Ziya Gökalp had thought Turkish epics and legends as a whole and having connection among the parts of those independent epics. According to him; the narratives of Oghuz, Afrasiab, Bogac Khan, and Shah Ismail are able to think as various types of the same narrative. Because in the situation of without naming, , and fighting to fathers, the heroes in these epics resemble to each other (Ziya Gökalp 1331: 413 [Filizok 1992: 88], 1976: 104-105, 1977: 97). Moreover, it is

argued a between the “boga/bull” word, “bugach” in the narrative of Bugach Khan that first part of Oghuzname and the name of “Oghuz” (Sinor 1950: 5, Ziya Gökalp 1976: 58-59). In parallel with developing of Turkish history, the narrative of Oghuz also has change and kept the memories of various ages and dynasties.

Thus it is possible to see some remains, which are about later ages, on the Oghuzname in hand. These are the remains of A.D. of Hiong-Nus; the leftovers of Gokturk and Turkesh Khans or Karluk Yabgus; partly the residues of Qazne, Seljuq, and Kharezmsah Sultanates. Additionally that the identities like Irkil Khoca, Ulug Turk, Qorgud Ata, or Dede Qorgud in the epics are on the same duties are the subsidiary elements, become into being around of Oghuzname. Besides the epics, belonging to Altay-Yenisey’s circle, have great similarities of theme and motif (Köprülü 1981: 53-54). In this study I will examine the epic of Oghuz Kaghan, which is very important in Turkish epic literature, and find the historical, religious, supernatural, and social elements in it. In my work I will take Uigur manuscript of the epic as a main text, and in patches apply to Islamic version of it.

#### *Historical Elements*

The name of Oghuz is the first historical element among all the others in Oghuz Kaghan epic. It is regarded as equal the identity of Oghuz Kaghan with the some historical identities together in some studies on this subject matter. J. Guignes writes with restraint that Mete/Motun, the great king of Khuns, seems like to Oghuz Kaghan. But Russian Sinologist Bichurin states too positively that these both identities are able to the same (Ögel 1973: 10). There are other researchers, write down that both Oghuz and Mete/Motun are the same identities (Atsız 1992: 67, Güngör 1988: 17). These both epic and historical identities are accepted as same identities on account of that there are similarities between some circumstances in the epic and the historical events. These similarities are based on firstly that Mete/Motun invents the arrow to enforce of his army and that the word of “oghuz” meaning “arrow man” consist of the words of “arrow=ok” and “man=uz” (Sinor 1950: 5-6), secondly there is a similarity system of classification twenty-four between that Mete/Motun invents his army and that Oghuz has got six grandson from four each son, thirdly fighting of both of the identities is the same people and the same wars (Ziya Gökalp 1976: 58-59).

Nevertheless there are some scholars who also regards that neither Mete/Motun nor Oghuz Kaghan are the same identity, even Oghuz Kaghan is equal to different historical identity. According to these points of view Oghuz Kaghan’s epic is formed before Mete/Motun and the hero in the epic is equal to youthfulness of Mete/Motun; by the way it was made some modifications in the epic (Ögel 1973: 11, Togan 1972: 122). Although Priest Potanin, were in Mongolia in 1246, assimilates Oghuz Kaghan to Kirey Khan and Uhir-Bama, in new Mongolian legends, his argument is not compatible with historical facts. J. Marquart also regards that Oghuz Kaghan may be Genghis (Ögel 1973: 11). This based on combatings of Oghuz with İt/İl/Kil Barak tribes that they have dog heat (Togan 1972: 24), is far away of being truthful (Köprülü 1981: 84). On the other hand it is known that Oghuz Kaghan is compared to Alexander the Great in some of Oghuznames, are artificial epics (Rıza Nur 1928: 6). Oghuz Kaghan’s sons appear as historical identities, are the king in the epic. Moreover there are the genealogical tables, are about the ancestors of Oghuz and his

sons in the Oghuznames (Togan 1972: 129-131, Sümer 1960: 375, 1992: 169-172). But it seems that it is not clear whether the historical identities, Mete/Motun or Genghis and the epic identity Oghuz Kaghan are the same identity or not. However Oghuz Kaghan is the other historical identities. Even there is same situation in other heroic poetry of Turkish people in Central Asia as well. Most of heroes in these epics are regarded as various historical identities (Zhirmunsky / Chadwick 1969: 142-148).

#### *Religious Elements*

There are not much religious elements in Uigur manuscript of Oghuz Kaghan epic. They appear only as a pray to God in just one expression at the beginning of the epic. From the expression of "Oghuz Kaghan was praying to God once again" (Bang-Rahmeti 1936: 13 [616]), it might be argued that Oghuz Kaghan prayed to God before, too. None the less, it is not clear what the reason for the hero's praying to God is. But at the end of his praying a girl comes down from heaven, and then he gets married to this girl. At the end of this epic, Oghuz tells his sons: "I ; I have paid my debt to God in the Heavens" (Bang-Rahmeti 1936: 33 [636]). It is seen in his words that these wars are the expression of paying debt to God in the Heavens. There is great Islamic influence in the Islamic version of the epic. The supernatural elements in Uigur manuscript of the epic were swept away by the Islam.

#### *Supernatural elements*

Supernatural elements in Oghuz Kaghan epic are concerned with birthing, childhood, marrying, and fightings of Oghuz. Those statements that are the beginning of epic are messenger of the birthing of hero: "Yet once upon a time Ay Kaghan's eyes shined. Her laborpains started..." (Bang-Rahmeti 1936: 11 [614]). During the birthing of Oghuz, that Ay Kaghan's eyes shined is the messenger of cosmic elements as light or heavenly light. West Turkish people call Ay Kaghan, Oghuz's forefather, as Kara Kaghan. From the 763 years Uigurs come under the influence of Mani religious, the naming of Ay Kaghan in the epic caused of changing the concept of Heaven God to Moon God. Uigurs could not touch the main theme of Oghuz Kaghan's epic, but they added chop and changes to the epic with the influence of new religious (Ögel 1973: 129-130).

Analysing the statement on the birthing of Oghuz, Sencer Divitçioğlu (1994) with his rhetoric approach, say that Oghuz is born from intercourse with female Moon and male Bull. It is also known that the moon is female and the Bull is male in the other world legends. He thinks that the statement of Ay Kaghan is read incorrectly in fact that the word would be Han and it is necessary that be translated as Hanım, the title of lady. So he asserts his idea that Ay Kaghan or Ay Hanım is female. The writer using a Freudian approach, which is named by himself, he reads birthing of Oghuz as: "Being split the matrix of Ay Hanım is bloodstained and bore a male child" (Divitçioğlu 1994: 20). It is inevitable that a child can also be supernatural after his birthing if he is born from the totem of Bull and Moon. In such a case the ancestors of Oghuz have got the supernatural power. Consequently it can be mentioned that the hero also has got the supernal power. Oghuz in his qualifications is the type of ideal human for his society (Kaplan 1985: 27).

At the borning time of Oghuz his face and phsical occurrence are determined exaggeratedly in the epic:

The eyes of this baby were hazel, his face was blue, his mouth was red like fire and his hair and eyebrows were black. His feet were like ox's feet, his waist was like wolf's waist, his sholders were like sable's shoulders, and his chest was like bear's chest. His body was hairy from head to foot... (Bang-Rahmeti 1936: 11 [614])

Thus we are witness of that is perceived the body of Oghuz, comes from the Moon mother and the Bull father, as a united animal. It is an animal that mixed of bull, ox, wolf, sable and bear. Although we ignore the assumption of that kind of animals were a totem in Turkish, Mongol and Tongus societiy in period of time, we have to accept that animals had an important rule in these societies (Divitçioğlu 1994: 22). The points of view about that the hero's eyes is hazel and his face is blue in this discription are also related with that Oghuz is born with being mature and having been experienced by God's gift and that he is wrapped in colour of God (Ögel 1973: 130). It is the samples of exeggerated similitude that are of the animal's comparisons about the physical shape of the hero.

That the heroes of epic are described the by this manner is derived from the epic narrative style. The features are like that the hero sucks only one time his mother, and does never once again; and after his borning time; and he wants raw steak, soup, and wine; and starts to talk; and grows up, walks, and plays after fourteen days are that supernatural s, imputed to a new born baby, will be done by s had some kind of celestial qualifications. It can be mentioned the same supernatural behaviours for Manas and Er Toshtuk as well. Manas can talk in his while he is a baby, and says as:

I will ease the stuff of Muslims, I will s, I will help to . (Radloff 1995: 18)

Er Toshtuk says the word of "mother" in the second day, and the word of "father" in the sixth day of his borning. When he was a little baby, he could go to next his father crawling on all fours and brings the flock of lamps to home (Zhirmunsky/Chadwick 1969: 156). It is known that the nouns are used with adjectives and the verbs with adverbs in the epic narrative in general. For example, the mouth of Oghuz is described as red like fire. There is also the same exaggeratedly description in Manas epic. In this epic it is expressed that the eyes of Manas are dark blue, and his face is dark red while it has been telling his borning (Ögel 1973: 136). But in Oghuz Kaghan's epic, it has got a special style that is different from the style of classic epic. This style is suitable for the way and the view of life which are described in the epic. The sentences are very short and they express the action in general. The nouns are plainly in general. There are little adjectives. It has just been described the faces and bodies of Oghuz and his wives in the epic. It has been taken the comparison elements of these descriptions from the cosmic world, in which Oghuz lives, and the world of animals. These descriptions are not decorative but they have critical meaning (Kaplan 1985: 18).

It is possible to say that these descriptions are concerned with the heroes which are undertaken this attributes, are probably related to being the king of the hero. That they have got some different features from the other people is also the messenger of that they will be the king. The men to become the king should have had

“power”, “share”, “holiness”, and “cognizance” from God and concluded some processes (Yıldırım 1991, 1992 and 1998). In these cases Oghuz who becomes the king rules for 1000 years for a version (Togan 1972: 49), and for 116 years for another version (Ergin [undated]: 42). Especially the first of two time zones is a period that the supernatural being can rule.

The marriage of Oghuz Kaghan is full of the scenes that include too many cosmic elements about the sky and supernatural features:

Oghuz Kaghan was praying to God once again. Suddenly it shuts in darkness. A light is lineally descended from the sky. It was more gleaming than the sun and moon. There was a girl, sitting alone in that light. That girl was very beautiful. There was a fiery and bright beauty spot that was like the pole star, in her heat. She was so beautiful that when she was crying God was crying and when she was smiling God was smiling. When Oghuz Kaghan saw her, he was infatuated; he loved and married her... (Bang-Rahmeti 1936: 13 [616])

As the result of the hero's praying to God, in the lights a very beautiful girl, carries celestial features, is sent from the sky by God's gift. That girl is heaven's daughter. It is known either in Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam or in the system of Turkish belief, the holly spirits even prophets would be in a hollow of light. Gün [Sun], Ay [Moon], and Yıldız [Star] Khans, who are born from this girl, have got the name of elements that are the symbol of sky (Ögel 1973: 140). God had got down clarity to the land by sending to Oghuz Kaghan the light that is a sign of inseminated. Having been plastered with God's holiness Güneş, Ay, and Yıldız grant fecundity to Oghuz people. The theme of form the inseminater-inseminated root with the light is a subject matter is seen frequently in the legends of Turkish and Mongol (Divitçioğlu 1994: 27). Moreover it is seem as differently the theme of form the inseminater-inseminated root with either the light or the tree in the of Turkish epic as well.<sup>(2)</sup>

The second marriage of Oghuz Kaghan comes up in a scene that includes to cosmic elements about the earth:

Again one day Oghuz Kaghan went hunting. He showed a tree in the middle of a lake. There is a girl, sitting alone in the hollow of this tree. She was a very beautiful girl. Her eyes are more cerulean than the sky, her hair is curly like a river, and her teeth are like purl. (Bang-Rahmeti 1936: 15 [618])

The second girl who Oghuz Kaghan was together is tree. Her hair floats like rapidly flowing river. She had come from a tree, which strikes its roots to a lake. Thus this tree-girl had embodied both the tree and water that belong to the earth. It can be considered the intercoursing of them has a bearing on tha fertility, if it is estimated that Oghuz find the girl in the hunting. Already the hollow gives female image (Divitçioğlu 1994: 28). It is known that the elemens are called as “earth-water= yer-

<sup>2</sup> The relation among the human, light and tree is told as:

“When Sultan Osman was sleeping in the lodge of Sheikh Edebâli in a night, he dreamed a dream. In his dream he was sleeping next to his sheikh. He sees that a moon rises up form the bosom of Edebâli, and then enters his bosom when its maturation. At that moment a tree grows up and it starts to be bigger. As the tree grows up it is getting yellow and beautiful. It covers the entire the world with the shadow of its branches” (Banarlı 1987: 511).

su” takes place in the system of old Turkish beliefs and legends of creation (Buluç 1942, İnan 1954, 1976, Ögel 1973).

This girl, described with the elements of the earth, carries surely particularities that come from beliefs about the water and the tree.<sup>(3)</sup>

Because she is sent by holly “ıduk” called as “earth-water= yer-su”. In this girl, the only element about the sky is that the blue colours of her eyes. By this feature, it is given a symbolic expression to that girl comes from “earth-water= yer-su”. Since the blue colour is the symbol of God. The children of the second wife of Oghuz are Gök [Sky], Dağ [Mountain] and Deniz [Sea]. These names are the sembol of the earth. Consequently it is unionized the powers of the sky and earth by the children of both the two wives of him. The formation of Oghuz and Turkish People is related with the adaptation of constitution, structure, even formation of the universe (Ögel 1973: 140). Thus these motives can be considered the reflection to the epic, as the first beliefs about the creation of the universe of Turkish peoples. It is clear that the names given to the sons of Oghuz are not coincidental; and the first three of them respresents the starsland the others represent the earth too (Ercilasun 1991: 7).

In Oghuz Kaghan’s wars, which for the idea of his being world conqueror, a great male wolf, has got blue-hairy and blue-mane, leads to his army:

While breaking to dawn, a light, like sun, penetrated into tent of Oghuz Kaghan. A great male wolf has got blue hairy and blue mane, came out of that light. This wolf has Oghuz Kaghan and said: Hey Oghuz! You want to move on Byzantines, and I want to proceed in front of you as well. (Bang-Rahmeti 1936: 19 [622])

The greywolf motif, which we meet as a celestial fact or a totem is often seen in the epic tradition and in the old Turkish epics and legends. This greywolf, which is written in Turkish reproduced legends, is thought to be the spirit of old ancestor of Oghuz Kaghan’s pathfinder. The guidance and the help of the greywolf point out a parallelism with the help of the wild animals especially with the birds for heroes in other Central Asian oral Turkish epics (Zhirmunsky/Chadwick 1960: 152). Particularly, the greywolf motif that figures in Turkish reproduced legends is widely handled by native and foreign researcher.<sup>(4)</sup>

#### *Social Elements*

Oghuz Kaghan’s epic in its particular circumstances is plastered with Social elements, would be considerably realistic. Oghuz beats the rhinoceros (monster) living in the forest and mashed the people giving a deep suffering) using some rational techniques and he shows bravery:

There was a great forest, many streams and rivers there at that age. There were many flying birds and hunting animals here. A huge rhinoceros was living in

<sup>3</sup> For an analyz about the cult of tree and forest in Turkish culture, see Özarslan (2003).

<sup>4</sup> For some of those studies, see Eberhard (1942: 42); Ziya Gökalp (1976: 105–108, 1977: 98–101); Ögel (1973: 13–29); İnan (1987: 625); Roux (1994: 157–168), Çobanoğlu (1997: 165–173).



that forest. It ate the horses and people. It was terrific and disastrous monster. It mashed the people giving a deep torment. Oghuz Kaghan was a brave man. He wanted to hunt that rhinoceros. Once upon a day, he went hunting. Taking spear, row, arrow, sword, and shield he went hunting. He caught a deer. He bound it with a withy and then he went. Then the morning came. In dawn time he came and saw that the rhinoceros took the deer. Then Oghuz Kaghan took a bear, and bound it to tree with his golden belt. The morning came again. In dawn time he came again and saw that the rhinoceros took the bear as well. This time he stood himself at the bottom of that tree. The rhinoceros came and shut the shield of Oghuz with its head. Oghuz hit the rhinoceros's head with spear and killed it. He cut its head and took it and he went. When he came again he saw that a red-footed falcon was eating the bowels of the rhinoceros. He killed the red-footed falcon with the row and arrow and cut its head. Then he said, "The rhinoceros ate the deer, and killed the bear. My spear killed it because it was iron". He said, "The red-footed falcon ate the rhinoceros. My row and arrow killed it, because they are copper", he said and went... (Bang-Rahmeti, 1936: 11-13 [614-616])

It seems that there using all his arms besides the manner of his thinking philosophically in the style of being killed the monster by Oghuz are important. Here is a mentality that is related with trusting for his arms of hero and regarding iron and copper to be holly in the life of that age. Moreover there is sameness between humankind and property in this discussed matter. We can see an alike rational technique and philosophical idea in in the Book of Dede Qorqud. For example Bugach, Son of Dirse Khan defeats the bull at the result of particular idea as well (Barthold 1898: 175-193, Gökyay 1973: 7, Ergin 1989: 82). Basat wraps sheepskin around himself, while he was killing Tepegöz<sup>(5)</sup> (Gökyay 1973: 11, Ergin 1989: 212). Kanturalı gets assistance to encourage him while he was defeating the bull, the adult male camel, and the lion (Gökyay 1973: 87-91, Ergin 1989: 189-190).

It is known that taking name is very important in the culture of Turkish life. Particularly the ritual of gaining name in the epics of nomadic Turkish society is very common motif (İnan 1991: 202). But there is no knowledge about how hero gets his name or who gives his name in the Uigur manuscript of Oghuz Kaghan's epic. On the contrary the hero says his name as Oghuz in İslamic version (Togan 1972: 18, Ergin [t.y.]: 26). In the Bogach Han's narrative of Dede Qorqud, Bogach lives until a definite period without a name, and then he kills the bull and gets his name in a case (Gökyay 1973: 7, Ergin 1989: 82). In the Bamsi Beyrek's narrative of Dede Qorqud, Beyrek fights with enemies to win the name for him (Gökyay 1973: 34, Ergin 1989: 120-121).

5 "The name *Tepegöz* is derived from the words *tepe* ("hill," "top," "head") + *göz* ("eye"). The best-known one-eyed giants of antiquity are the Cyclops of Greek myth and literature. Hesiod discusses a race of cyclops in his *Theogony*, but it is Homer's story of Polyphemus in Book IX of the *Odyssey* that is pertinent here. There is no question about some of the similarities between Tepegöz and Polyphemus. Their stories are parallel at several points, particularly in the cave scenes near the end, when the giant is blinded by the hero. Inasmuch as *The Book of Dede Korkut* took shape in what for centuries had been part of the Greek world, it is not unreasonable to suppose a causal relationship between the two works" (see Mundy 1956: 279-302; Sümer-Yüksel-Walker 1972: 199).

The epic is contained giving festivals, meeting council, fighting with enemies, having shared his homeland by Oghuz Kaghan between his sons, the relationships between the king and army in that times, finally the cooperation among those elements ect. When Oghuz Kaghan declares as a king himself, he arranges a meeting, and gives a festival. He gives some orders to people and people accept his orders in this festival. After preparing fourteen tables and stolls they eat various types of meal and drink wines. At the end of the festival Oghuz Kaghan gives an order to people and says to them as follows:

I have become king of you  
Let us take and  
Let the cry out of war be a sign for us  
Let grey wolf be leads us  
Let iron s become like  
Let horses run hunting place  
Let there be more seas and more rivers  
And the sun becomes our flag and the sky a /yurt for us...  
(Bang-Rahmeti 1936: 17 [620])

As Oghuz hold sway over the spirit of the people by his speech, he inoculates his ideas of world conqueriness to them. Particularly the last two lines are concising the statement of the idea of founding a world-affliction state in Oghuz's sipirit. He shows the sky as a /yurt, and also the sun as a flag. He makes clear the idea of his being world conqueror by sending his messages to all around it:

I am the king of Uigurs and it is essential that I become the king of the entire world. I want to you to obey for me. I would like to get to you for me. If anyone obeys for me and accepts my gifts, I accept him as friends. If anyone doesn't, who is being the object of my rage, I accept him to be the enemy of me and sending army to him and raiding immediately I have him hunged and abolished. (Bang-Rahmeti 1936: 17 [620])

In the following part of the epic, it is told the fightings for the lands that are dependent on Oghuz or not. These wars are made with an idea of world conquerer that is expressed clearly in the notice of which Oghuz sent.

Oghuz Kaghan fights in the cost of Itil Müren Sea to Urum Kaghan and Uruz Beg, his brother; in a place, called Churchet, to Churchet Kaghan; to people in the places like India, Thongusia and Syria; and in southern to Masar Kaghan. It is never stopped in any places that are taken, fighting to be always on the move. These places in the epic are not standing pleaces but crossing and passing over them. Oghuz never stops in his taking this places, passes, and goes.

The encountered difficulties during the wars are solved by the talented men are attendant under control of Oghuz. These men are Saklap saved the city; Kalach opened the door without key; Kipchak crossed to water making raft or born in a hollow of tree; Karluk brought finding the horse from the iceberg; and Kangly carried spoils of war making ox-cart. They are appointed as lord to that places where they showed their talents in order to Oghuz Kaghan give the way of renaming. Here it

stands out being an organizer of Oghuz. That Oghuz renames to these men comes out in a different style. However there is not any event about showing heroness people, who have already had a name, are renamed. In this regard that these names are agnomen is also probably. Oghuz Kaghan's behaviour is very practical and considerable in his giving rename to his men. There is an exact accordance between the names given by him and the acts that his people did. From these men Saklab is written down as an ancestor of Slav ve Finnish people (Togan 1946: 18). Karluk, who is described as to be never afraid of God and Devil, forms an example of the type of brave hero, and reminds Deli Dumrul who challenged the Angel of Death [Azrail] in the Book of Dede Qorqud (Gökyay 1973: 75, Ergin 1989: 177). The names of Kalach, Kipchak, and Karluk are recorded to be tribal names of the communities, situated province in the Turkish history.

After his wars Oghuz Kaghan gets old like everyone. In front of this fact he decides to apportion his land among his sons within a ritual. This apportionment is made based on his adviser Ulug Turk's comments on Oghuz Kaghan's dream. Sending his older sons to the east and the younger sons to the west, he passes them a trial. Finally he apportions his land meeting a council and giving the names to his sons as Bozok [Grey Arrow] and Üçok [Three Arrow]. This ritual, made with the repartition of Oghuz's land, gives information about the social environment of Oghuz. The ritle is initiated by constructing two columns, then, two hens, one golden and one silver, are placed onto these pillars which are fourteen fathom long, while two sheeps -a white and a black one- are tied to the bottom of these columns. The constructed columns are fourteen fathom, are parallel the fourteen tables and chairs in the beginning of the epic. It is certain that those golden and silver hens, put on the columns, and the white and black sheeps, tied bottom of the pillars, have got some of peculiarities come from believes of that times. But it is not clear what these are.

In the general assembly both Bozoklar [Grey Arrows] and Üçoklar [Three Arrows] hold a place two sides of Oghuz. These practices is made in this ritual that is about social structure are surely involved some characteristics given information about of who might be a king after Oghuz. According to this situation, his older sons, are given row, and named Bozok [Grey Arrow] teir father, take a little bit upper place than his youngers and they constitute of right patrol in the army. Thus his younger sons, are given arrow, and named Üçok [Three Arrow] by teir father, take a little bit lower place than his olders and they constitute of left patrol in the army as well. Row rules like king. Arrow is an emissary that is in row's command. After this ritual Oghuz Kaghan shared his land to his sons, devolves the management on his older sons that is, Bozoklar [Grey Arrows]. In Islamic version of the epic Oghuz Kaghan says to make Irkil Khoca do further action about his dream. Irkil Hoca gives to "brand= damga", "totem= ongun", and "ülüş= fraction" for each of those persons, who renamed by Oghuz, and shows to them a pastureland and a place suitable for use in the winter (Togan 1972: 49).

### *Conclusion*

Although Oghuz Kaghan's epic has some missing parts; it has special importance among the other Turkish epics. Being created the most featuring sciences of its times is also surely one of the important specialities in Oghuz Kaghan's epic. There is

◆ Metin Özarslan

little bit the elements of dead and alive have been seen in nomadic Turkish epics (Elçin 1971: 103-104), shape changing, mystery or exaggerating descriptions. Even in this form of Oghuz Kaghan's epic have much more realistic features, comparing to the some other epics that appeared later on.

We have two versions that are as written and oral, about this ancestor's souvenir epic. It has been known that the oral literally materials become static after writing them. If this epic had been determined in oral tradition or after living in the period of oral tradition, it would have been more and different versions about it. We can see that this unique souvenir, even its missing constitution keep some very perfect sciences about the ancient times of Turkish nation. One hand thinking about the missing oral versions of Oghuz Kaghan epic; on the other hand imaging that the existing written texts is not incomplete, who knows that what we would see a wonderful sciences that show the way about Turkish nation's epic life.

*References*

- Arat, R. Rahmeti (1987). *Makaleler*. Haz. Osman F. Sertkaya. Ankara Türk Kültürü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yay.
- Ateş, Ahmet (Ed.) (1957). *Reshid ud-din, Jami-ut Tevarih*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yay.
- Atsız, H. Nihal (1946). *Bozkurtların Ölüümü*. İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi.
- (1949). *Bozkurtların Dirilişi*. İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi.
- (1992). *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*. İstanbul: Baysan Basım ve Yayın Sanayi.
- Banarlı, N. Sami (1987). *Resimli Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*. C. I. İstanbul: MEB Devlet Kitapları.
- Bang, W. ve R. Rahmeti (1936). *Oğuz Kağan Destanı*. İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi.
- Barthold, V. V. (1898). "Bugach, Son of Dirse Khan". *Archaeology Journal of the Russian Oriental Society* 11: 175-193.
- Berezin, İ. N. (Ed.) (1861). *Reshid ud-din, Jami-ut Tevarih*. Petersburg: Karl Kray.
- Best, Otto F. (1991). "Destan Kavramı". Çev. Yakup Karasoy. *Millî Folklor* 10: 37.
- Beyatlı, Yahya Kemâl (1962). "Selimnâme". *Eski Şiirin Rüzgârıyla*. İstanbul: Yahya Kemal Enstitüsü.: 7-19.
- Boratav, Pertev Naili (1983). *Folklor ve Edebiyat*. İstanbul: Adam Yayınları.
- Buluç, Sâdedin (1942). "Şamanizm". *Türk Amacı* 1 (1-2-3): 42-130.
- Çavuşoğlu, Mehmed (1959). *Ulubatlı Hasan Destanı*. İstanbul: Milliyetçiler Derneği.
- Çobanoğlu, Özkul (1997). "Kılavuz Bozkurt Motifinin Tarihsel Bağlamlarda ve Günümüz Alevi-Bektaşî Tarikatlerindeki Yapısal ve İşlevsel Sürekliliği Üzerine Tespitler". *Kadri Eroğan: Hacı Bektaş Veli Armağanı*. Ankara: Gazi Üniv. Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Merkezi Yay.: 165-173.
- Dağlarca, Fazıl Hüsnü (1949). *Üç Şehitler Destanı*. İstanbul: Varlık Yayınları.
- (1951). *İstiklal Savaşı*. İstanbul: Varlık Yayınları.
- Divitcioğlu, Sencer (1994). *Oğuz'dan Selçukluya*. İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık.
- Eberhard, W. (1942). *Çin'in Şimal Komşuları*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yay.
- Elçin, Şükrü (1971). "Göçebe Türk Destanlarında Ölüp Dirilme Motifi". *Halk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay.: 103-104.
- (1977). "Türk Dilinde Destan Kelimesi ve Mefhumu". *Halk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay.: 90-99.

- (1981). *Halk Edebiyatına Giriş*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay.
- Ercilasun, Ahmet B. (1991). "Oğuz Kağan Destanı Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler". *Millî Folklor* 11: 7.
- Ergin, Muharrem (1970). "Önsöz". *Oğuz Kağan Destanı*. İstanbul: MEB Yay.: I-II.
- (1989). *Dede Korkut Kitabı I*. Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yay.
- Ergin, Muharrem (ty.). *Ebülgazi Bahadır Han, Türklerin Soy Kütüğü*. İstanbul: Tercüman Yay.
- Feldman, Walter Robert (1981). *The Uzbek Oral Epic: Documentation of Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Bards*. PhD. Dissertation. New York City: Columbia University.
- Filizok, Rıza (1992). *Z. Gökâl'ın Edebî Eserlerinde Halk Edebiyatı Tesiri Üzerine Bir Araştırma*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay.
- Gençosmanoğlu, Niyazi Yıldırım (1971). *Malazgirt Destanı*. İstanbul: Ötüken Yay.
- Gocul, Basri (1971). *Oğuzlama*. Bursa: Sanat Matbaası.
- Gökay, Orhan Şaik (1973). *Dedem Korkudun Kitabı*. İstanbul: Başbakanlık Kültür Müsteşarlığı Yay.
- Güngör, Erol (1988). *Tarihte Türkler*. İstanbul: Ötüken Yay.
- İnan, Abdülkadir (1954). *Tarihte ve Bugün Şamanizm*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yay.
- (1976). *Eski Türk Dini Tarihi*. İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay.
- (1987). *Makaleler ve İncelemeler I*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yay.
- (1991). *Makaleler ve İncelemeler II*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yay.
- Kaplan, Mehmet (1985). *Türk Edebiyatı Üzerine Araştırmalar 3, Tip Tahlilleri*. İstanbul: Dergâh Yay.
- Kononov, A. N. (Ed.) (1937). *Ebul Gazi Bahadır Khan Shejere-i Terakime*. İstanbul: Turkish Language Association.
- Kononov, A. N. (Ed.) (1958). *Ebul Gazi Bahadır Khan Shejere-i Terakime*. Moscow: Academy of Sciences.
- Köprülü, M. Fuat (1976). *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*. Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yay.
- (1981). *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*. İstanbul: Ötüken Yay.
- Mundy, C. S. (1956). "Polyphemus and Tepegöz". *Journal of the British Society for Oriental and African Studies* 18: 279-302.
- Oinas, Felix J. (1972). "Folk Epic". *Folklor and Folklife*. edited by Richard Dorson. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.: 99-115.
- Ögel, Bahatin (1973). *Türk Mitolojisi*. Ankara: Selçuklu Tarih ve Medeniyet Enstitüsü Yay.
- Özarlan, Metin (2003). "Türk Kültüründe Ağaç ve Orman Kültü". *Türkbilig* (2003/5): 94-102.
- Pepeyi, Haluk Nihat (1938). *Çanakkale*. Ankara: Çankaya Matbaası.
- Radloff, Wilhelm (1995). *Manas Destanı*. Çev. Emine Gürsoy-Naskali. Ankara: TÜRKSOY Yay.
- Rıza Nur (1928). *Oğuznâme*. İskenderiye: Matbaatü'l İttihadi'l-Mısır.
- Roux, Jean-Paul (1994). *Türklerin ve Moğolların Eski Dini*. Çev. Aykut Kazancıgil. İstanbul: İşaret Yay.
- Sepetçioğlu, Mustafa Necati (1965). *Yaradılış ve Türeyiş*. Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yay.
- Sinor, D. (1950). "Oğuz Kağan Destanı Üzerine Bazı Mülâhazalar". Çev. Ahmet Temir. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi* IV, 1-2: 1-14.
- Sümer, Faruk (1960). "Oğuzlara Ait Destanı Mahiyette Eserler". *DTCF Dergisi* XVII (3-4): 388-389.

◆ Metin Özarslan

- Sümer, Faruk, Ahmet E. Yüksel and Warren S. Walker (Translation into English and Edition) (1972). *The Book of Dede Korkut*. Austin & London: University of Texas Press.
- Sümer, Faruk (1992). *Oğuzlar*. İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı Yay.
- Timurtaş, Faruk Kadri (1981). *Tarih İçinde Türk Edebiyatı*. İstanbul: Vilâyet Yay.
- Togan, Z. Velidî (1946). *Umumî Türk Tarihine Giriş*. İstanbul: Tarih Araştırmaları Yay.
- (1972). *Oğuz Destanı*. İstanbul: .
- Yıldırım, Dursun (1986). "Orta Asya Bozkırlarından Urumeli'ne Türk Sözlü Şiir Sanatının Yayılması". III. *Milletlerarası Türk Folklor Kongresi Bildirileri*. C. II. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay.: 441-458.
- (1991). "Köktürk Çağında Kağan Kılma / Kağan Olma Süreci". XI. *Türk Tarih Kongresi Bildirileri*. Ankara: Yay. 519-530.
- (1992). "Köktürk Çağında Tanrı mı Tanrılar mı". IV. *Milletlerarası Türk Halk Kültürü Sempozyumu Bildirileri*. C. II. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay.: 351-361.
- (1998). *Türk Bitiği*. Ankara: Akçağ Yay.
- Zhirmunsky, V.-Nora Chadwick (1969). "Historical and Unhistorical Elements in Heroic Poetry and Saga". *Oral Epics of Central Asia*. Chamberge at the University Press. 142-148.
- Ziya Gökalp (1331/1915). "Eski Türklerde İçtimaî Teşkilat". Aktaran: Rıza Filizok. *Millî Tettebbu'lar Mecmuası* I/ 3 (Temmuz-Ağustos, 1331): 413.
- (1976). *Türk Medeniyet Tarihi*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay.
- (1977). *Türk Töresi*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay.

## THE HISTORICAL, RELIGIOUS, SUPERNATURAL, AND SOCIAL ELEMENTS IN THE OGHUZ KAGHAN'S EPIC

Metin ÖZARSLAN\*

**Abstract:** In this study, it has been emphasized on the epic and Oghuz Kaghan's Epic that have taken place in the Turkish epic literature in general. In particular, it has been examined the historical, religious, supernatural, and social elements having been predicated on the Uyghur manuscript of Oghuz Kaghan's Epic. During the analysis, it has also been applied in the Islamic Oghuz Kaghan's Epic and showed the similarity in some cases in terms of the topics covered in the Book of Dede Korkut.

**Keywords:** Epic, Oghuz Kaghan, historical elements religious elements, supernatural elements and social elements

---

\* Assoc. Prof., Hacettepe University Turkish Folklore Department