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The New Dädä Qorqut Tales from the Recently-Found Third Manuscript of the Book of Dädä Qorqut

*Dede Korkut Kitabı'nın Yeni Bulunan Üçüncü Yazmasındaki Yeni Dede Korkut
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Recently a new manuscript of the Book of Dädä Qorqut has been found by Welimuhammed Hoja, a Turkmen book collector from Turkmen Sahra in northern part of Iran. The text of this manuscript comprises twenty-seven declamations (*soylama*) and two tales (*boylama*). One of the declamations reveals the original name of Gazan, a hero of the Dädä Qorqut stories and how he came to be called Gazan 'the Cauldron.' Taking into account the importance of the subject and the significance of the manuscript, the author has decided to translate the book into English. The article presents the translation of the 13th and 14th narratives and the story of how Deli Dönmez was called Gazan.

Key Words: Dädä Qorqut, Salur Gazan, castle of Qars, sword, spear, shield, seven-headed dragon, inner and outer Oghuz.



I. Introduction

Recently a new manuscript of the Book of Dädä Qorqut has been found by Welimuhammed Hoja, a Turkmen book collector from Turkmen Sahra in northern part of Iran. This is the third manuscript of the Book of Dädä Qorqut and it is called the Turkmen Sarhra copy of the book. Internal evidence suggests that it was copied in the early 19th century from an old manuscript. From the style of its calligraphy –*Nasta'lik* and *Shikasteh*– we understand it was written in Iran, and from its language which reflects the properties of the Tabriz dialect of the Azerbaijani language, we come to the conclusion that it was copied by an Azerbaijani. The text also preserves the language and style of the Book of Dädä Qorqut. The text of this manuscript comprises twenty-seven declamations (*soylama*) and two tales (*boylama*). One of the declamations reveals the original name of Gazan, a hero of the Dädä Qorqut stories and how he came to be called Gazan ‘the Cauldron.’ Neither this declamation nor the two narratives exist in previous manuscripts. These are what make this manuscript significant. The author has already published the manuscript with a transcription and translation of the text into Turkish, an explanation of the language of the text in the introduction and a glossary in Turkish. Taking into account the importance of the subject and the significance of the manuscript, the author has decided to translate the book into English. The article presents the translation of the above-mentioned parts of the manuscript –the 13th and 14th tales and the story of how Däli Dönmöz was called Gazan.

On 27th December 2018 I received by email a text from Welimumuhamed Hoja, a book collector from Iran. Initially I could not open the file, but after I opened it I realised that it was a new manuscript of Dädä Qorqut in old Anatolian Turkish. I began working on this manuscript transcribing its text. It was a copy of an older Book of Dädä Qorqut. It was written in the *Nasta'lik* form of the Arabic script which is peculiar to Iran. Occasionally in the text and especially in the marginal notes the *Shikasteh* style of Persian calligraphy is used. This style developed in the 19th century to be used in court documents. It shows that the manuscript was copied in Iran in 19th century from an older manuscript possibly written in Anatolia. The beginning of the manuscript is missing. Therefore, we find

no information about the name of the manuscript and the date it was copied. However, on page 10 of the manuscript a line written by pencil is added in Hicrî 1347 (1928) which reads as follows: (جلد دویم کتاب ترکمان ثانی): *cild-i duyuyum-i kitāb-i Türkmän, (ä)lsānî* which means ‘The Second Volume of the Book of the Turkmen-*s*’. In the last word of the name of the manuscript written in Arabic, the first letter (*alif*) seems to have been dropped, ([ä]lsānî) means ‘second’. It seems that the writer intended to write the same words in Arabic and gave up the idea. It has been transcribed in an article about the new manuscript published by Ankara University (Shahgoli et al. 2019), as *Cild-i Duyuyum-i Kitāb-i Türkmän Lisānı* which does not make sense as it means ‘The Second Volume of the Book of the Turkmen Language.’ The manuscript must have been copied by an Azerbaijani from the villages around Tabriz in Iran who has used his own language while preserving the properties of the old Anatolian Turkish. We also notice some archaic Turkish and Turkmen elements in the text. The calligrapher or the copier has allowed many spelling mistakes which make the text a difficult one to read correctly.

The most significant attraction of this manuscript is the fact that it is completely different from the previous two manuscripts of the Book of Dädä Qorqut, i.e. the Dresden and Vatican manuscripts. Like these manuscripts, the new one consists of *declamations* with lines ending in a refrain or rhyming words. The declamations in the new manuscript do not exist in the previous two manuscripts. The new manuscript which is called the Turkmen Sahra [see above] manuscript, does not have any of the twelve stories in the Dresden and Vatican manuscripts. However, it has two new tales which were not known before, although there were references to them in previously written manuscripts of the Book of Dädä Qorqut; one of them - the 13th tale (38/7 -52)- is the story of the conquest of the Castle of Qars and the 14th tale (52-61/5) is the story of Gazan fighting with the seven-headed dragon.

In March 2019 Prof. Dr. Metin Ekici declared that he had found the 13th story. He said he would publish a summary of the story, but he did not do so. Turkish readers could see the stories after this new manuscript was published in a book by Ekici (2019), a long article published by PhD students of Ankara University (Shahgoli et al. 2019) and a book by the author entitled *Dede Kurkut’un*



Üçüncü Elyazması. The book by Ekici presented the two tales as the 13th narrative of the Book of Dädä Qorqut. He might not have noticed the space placed on the pages of the new manuscript after every change of subject. The 13th story about the conquest of the Qars Castle begins on the 9th line of page 47 and ends at the bottom of page 51 of the manuscript. On page 52 a completely new story, the 14th tale begins. This is clear because a line at the top is left empty to show that the subject is changed. There are 13 lines on this page; the pages where there is no change of subject, just as in the original Books of Dädä Qorqut, have 14 lines.

There is also a new story in the new manuscript in the form of a declamation that provides new information about how Gazan, a hero in the Book of Dädä Qorqut, had acquired his name. We learn from this story that Gazan, meaning ‘cauldron’ was in fact called Deli Dönmöz meaning ‘the Daredevil’ before he filled a 60 *batman* ‘180 kg’ cauldron with wine and carried it over his shoulder. This information is significant for those involved in studying the Book of Dädä Qorqut.

The Book of Dädä Qorqut occupies an important place in Turkish literature and is regarded as a significant pillar of Turkish culture. After introducing the new manuscript of the Book of Dädä Qorqut to the Turkish readers in a book, mentioned above, published recently in Istanbul (Azmun 2019), I have decided to translate the text of this manuscript into English. It will be published soon. I thought it would be useful to familiarise the English-speaking readers with the most significant aspects of this manuscript- the 13th and 14th Dädä Qorqut narratives and the story of Gazan:

II. Translation

[13th Narrative: The Conquest of Qars Castle]

Gazan, lord of Kaysar Salur, wolf of the misty mountains, good man of the Salur, pride of the Äymur, Daredevil of Zu’l-qadr (and) representative of King Bayindir, is speaking. “I had gone hunting with my elders to the snow-capped mountains with green hyacinths. I was drinking. From captains on the border a



mounted courier came. ‘Gazan,’ he said, ‘why are you drinking? Ten thousand enemies have come up against you.’

“When I heard that ten thousand enemies had come, I stretched out my arm and began to amuse myself in the white tent. When I heard that twenty thousand enemies had come I did not change my position. When he said that thirty thousand enemies had come, (49) I ignored it. When he said that forty thousand had come, I looked sideways from the corner of my black eye, I did not move a muscle. When he said fifty thousand had come I did not extend my arm to shake hands with him, I said it was a small number. When he said sixty thousand had come I thought of God; I did not mount my horse. When he said seventy thousand had come I did not take any action. When he said eighty thousand had come I was not concerned, and when he said ninety thousand enemies had come I went towards my surcoat and got dressed. When he said one hundred thousand enemies had come I did not turn round and retrace my steps, I did my ritual ablu- tion in running water and completed my Muhammadan prayer, putting my trust in the One Mighty Creator. O Muhammad, I said, O Ali, help me.

“Whom did I order to be the coordinator near me? I made Qarabudag, the son of Qaragöne, coordinator. He is the one for dread of whom the ground gives way wherever he steps, who, when he casts a hostile look at his enemy, frightens him to death, who eats the liver and lung of the hungry lion after frying them on a sheet of iron, who struts confidently when he joins a raid and has the virtues of the grey hawk, who resembles the fastest of birds of prey and who is the pillar of Turkistan and the khan of Aleppo, a man with a bow of steel and arrows of white poplar. (50)

“To whom did I assign the right hand side? The right hand side I assigned to Khan Afshar, chief of the guards, he who went as Bayindir’s ambassador to King Bijen, and after getting there overthrew Alay Khan and Bulay Khan, who beheaded Kil Barak and on returning severed the neck of his maternal uncle Qonur Alp at Kaplantu Pass, who received a chestnut horse as a gift from the king, and was the flower of the gatherings.



To whom did I assign the left hand side? The left hand side I assigned to Däli Dundar, the son of Gayan, the sultan of Taberseran and the leader of twenty-four thousand brave men; Dundar was the one who crossed the Aras and Kur rivers that flow from red Tabriz, who took the town of Därbänd-of-the-Iron-Door with a kick and while kicking, made a man scream on the tip of his spear, who frightened Qiymuq and Qiytaq to death, set up a shady bower over Mount Shah and organised a drinking party near the River Samur, who was sent red apples from Qabal in winter time to whet his appetite, who received taxes from fourteen villages in Panbukchi and who raided Min Kishlak.” (51)

Gazan speaks on:

“I myself stood at the rear; I assigned the leading officers of the Inner Oghuz to the right hand side and ordered the officers of the Outer Oghuz to be on the left hand side. I confronted one hundred thousand infidels at the entrance to Alagöz and in the countryside of Sharaphaneh. I went into a frenzy and did battle; I struck those infidels with my sword for seven days and seven nights. After seven days, I turned to look, and seven infidels lay prostrate before my sword. It was then that I realised that one hundred thousand infidels had been massacred. I conquered Aras and the Castle of Qars in that raid. I gave them a hammering for all to see. I appointed Lele Qilbaš as mayor of Aqčakalä Surmäli. I went to Mount Surhab on an excursion. While I was in a good mood I gave the flag, flag-staff and drum to the sons of six high-ranking officials and made them chieftains like myself.”

Then, while calling them heroes and brave, Gazan says “I put no trust in them”.

[14th Tale: Gazan Fighting with the Seven-Headed Dragon]

(52) One day in the springtime Gazan, Ulaš’s son, who was the dragon of mankind and the might of the religion of Islam, who rode a chestnut horse, who was the good man of the Salur and the pride of the Äymür and the Daredevil of Zu’l-qadr, who resembled summertime on Mount Savlan and wintertime in Sari-kamish, who had the frightening power of eighty thousand men, who was like the sharp edge of black steel, the shining, sharp tip of a spear, the pointed tip of

hard arrows and the shaft of hard arrows, who was the honour of Azerbaijan and the representative of the king, made people lead out dogs and hounds on a leash, made them take sea birds with them and made them tame panthers. He took three hundred young men with him.

Gazan turned his gaze towards Aq Manqan and went hunting. In Aq Manqan, he did hunting and fowling. Late in the afternoon he said: "Gentlemen, no one should come with me, all of you go to the tent; I will do some hunting alone and then return". After sending his men to the tent, Gazan, alone on the top of the hill of Aq Manqan, made his horse prance. It was beginning to get dark and he had not been able to hunt a single quarry. "O Lord," he said, "I have separated myself from my men (53), I wish to hunt a quarry, I do not want to return to the tent empty-handed, do not leave me without a kill." He cast his eye over the lower part of the mountain suitable for hunting. At the foot of the black mountain he observed light flickering in seven places. He also observed that thick smoke was rising from seven places. Gazan thought that it was the light coming from his own tent. He made his horse prance and took off towards that light. In Gazan's tent Lälä Qilbaš, his servant, heard that Gazan was alone where he was hunting. He was uneasy and ran in search of him.

When Gazan reached his destination, he saw something like a hill lying there. He saw something swollen like a dense forest. He came across a seven-headed dragon. The source of the lights like torches in seven places was the eyes of that dragon. The thick smoke coming out in seven places was steam from the mouth of the dragon. What was swollen like a dense forest was the withers of the dragon. When Gazan saw the dragon his heart was filled to overflowing. The whole world (54) came alight for him. He decided to fight with the dragon.

He turned round and saw Lälä Qilbaš ready to serve him. He asked for Lälä's advice. "Dear Lälä, do you see this dragon lying like a hill? Shall we keep on towards this dragon, or shall we slip away and pass it by? What do you advise?" Lälä reflected that the person called Gazan was a brave man. If he said "do not go on", Gazan might get angry. Lälä said, "Master, you are taller than the black mountain that lies before us; do not die. You are more beautiful than rivers overflowing with limpid water; do not die. You are the stallion of a herd of horses, do



not die. You are the strongest of the camels; do not die. You are the ram of the herd of sheep; do not die. You are the leader of honourable men; do not die. You are the bravest of the young men; do not die. What is called a dragon is but a snake, keep on towards it.” Gazan (55) made the chestnut horse prance and approached the dragon with great speed. He saw the dragon lying asleep. Gazan thought that killing it while it was asleep would not be an act of bravery, and for a brave man, staying alive through trickery is not being alive. He plucked a hard arrow from his quiver and shot the dragon with it.

When the dragon awoke, swishing its tail, moving around the mountain, spreading its venom, painting the earth in colours, it drew in its breath and gulped at the clothing, and Gazan was dragged with his clothing and horse into the throat of the dragon like thistles swept up by the wind. Gazan cried out in entreaty at the top of his voice: “O God almighty, when you raise someone up you make him reach the sky, O great God who does not allow the person he punishes to reach his goal, many people imagine you in the sky, while you are in the heart of true believers and on the tongue of the faithful. O great God, I will kiss the mouth of those who say you are one, and strike the mouth of those who say you are two. I will build a bridge over the flowing rivers; I will lend a hand to those left behind, I will cover those who are naked. I do not want people to say (56) that at life’s last moment I was swallowed by a snake. O God, save me. Let this not be my day of ruin.”

When one has a day of ruin one must plead with one’s God. Those who plead with God will not be left in distress. When Gazan pleaded with his God, a rock as big as a great hall appeared between him and the dragon. When Gazan reached the top of that rock, he dismounted and planted his spear in the ground, covering himself with his shield. A brave young man will give life to a weapon as long as he lives. The weapon might be necessary to that brave man for a moment or for just an hour. The dragon made a great effort to overcome Gazan by sucking him down, but the spear and shield did not allow it to climb up the rock. Gazan settled himself on the top of that rock. The dreadful power of the dragon made one of his eyes weak and blurred and bloodshot. Gazan grew angry with his eye. “Hey, you cowardly eye, you had no fear of the cutting edge of sharp black steel swords;



you showed no weakness towards the sharp tip of hard arrows (57); the hundred-weight mace of the infidel hit me on the head and you did not leave your socket. What they call a dragon is just a snake; what does it have, that it blurs and weakens you? What is a cowardly eye like you doing on a brave man like me?" And he took out his dagger and made to scoop out his eye. Then he thought that people might say, "He saw a dragon, he was afraid, and because of his fear he had no excuses and he scooped out his eye".

He emptied his quiver in front of him. When he had finished all eighty of the arrows, he stabbed the dragon again and again. The dragon had no strength to suck. He held his black steel sword in one hand and wielded a sabre. Standing over the dragon he managed to stab all seven heads in one go and the dragon fell to the ground. When the dragon's venom poured out on to the ground, it started a fire. Gazan stabbed with his dagger, stabbed with his sword and stabbed with (58) his knife. Then he sat cross-legged on the dragon. When Lälä Qilbaš saw the fire he thought the dragon might have swallowed Gazan. "O master, whose white bread I have eaten," he said, as a number of swords came down fast on the dragon. When he got there, what was it he saw? He saw the seven heads of the dragon lying on the ground. He saw Gazan sitting cross-legged on the dragon. Lälä said "I salute your bravery and your skill, my lord Gazan. Well done, my lord." "My dear Lälä, I did not kill the beast, your attitude and your efforts killed it. Find skilled master-craftsmen and have this dragon skinned." Lälä brought the craftsmen and had the dragon skinned. From the skin of the dragon Gazan had a gown made befitting his dauntless spirit. He prepared a box for his dusty hard bow. He had a quiver fashioned for his hard arrows. He had a sheath made for his black steel sword. He had a box fashioned for his mace with its six (59) ridges. He also had a box fashioned for his shining spear with its colourful flag. He had a cover fashioned for the saddle of his wolf-haired chestnut horse. He made the fringe of an awning from the skin of the dragon. He made the seven heads into one piece by cutting them down, and he wore it on his fine head. With his horse and his gown he was dressed to look like a dragon, and seeking King Bayindir went on his way.



King Bayindir heard that Gazan had become a dragon and was drawing near. The Oghuz are such trusting Turks that they never asked how a human being could become a dragon. People from the right or left hand side began to speak, saying that they could not stand up to Gazan when he was a human being, and now that he had become a dragon he could swallow all of them; they should all climb a hill and shoot arrows in continuous volleys. King Bayindir began to speak: “My representative is a brave young man, a good young man; he may have come across a dragon and he may have killed the dragon and dressed himself up like a dragon; if he has become a dragon he would not recognise either relative or sibling.” (60)

Qarabudag said: “My liege, give me permission; let me go and confront Gazan, if he has become a dragon let him swallow me.” Qarabudag made his horse prance and went to confront Gazan. He stopped at a place where he could make his voice heard. He plucked an arrow from his quiver. “Uncle, people say that you have become a dragon. If you have not become a dragon, call to me in a loud voice. If you do not call, Gazan, I will kill you with the tip of a hard arrow; I will cut you to pieces, Gazan, with the sharp edge of my black steel sword. If you have killed a dragon may your fight be a good omen for you; give me a piece to enjoy as a token of happiness.”

Gazan dismounted and tied his sword to Qarabudag’s waist. At that moment Qarabudag became a brave man, signified by his sword. Soon afterwards King Bayindir heard about this. Saying “Gazan has killed a dragon”, he took the Inner Oghuz and Outer Oghuz people with him to meet Gazan. Gazan dismounted and ran seventy steps and prostrated himself at the feet of the king. Then he set up the tent he had made from the skin of the dragon. King Bayindir sat under the tent cross-legged. Gazan hosted the king for seven days and seven nights. Dädä Qorqut says: A brave man like Gazan came into this world and passed on.”

God bless Hajilu (the calligrapher).

How Däli Dönmäz Became Gazan?

(38) If I took the form of a fragrant mist and turned yellow, it was by becoming a cloud in the sky.



On the lower slopes of the mountain I became a drizzle; I was Gazan who became mist on the summit of the high mountains.

I became the seven-headed dragon, swishing my tail, moving around the mountain, scattering venom and painting the earth in colours; I was Gazan who consumed everything by sucking it down.

I had taken my elders and gone to the lower slopes of Mount Cholpa in Ala Ćaq. On my orders a colourful baldaquin was raised, ruby-coloured wine was poured, young lambs were roasted on a spit. I was drinking with my elders. A black stone broke off the rock and fell. The knights on the right ran away to the right hand side, the knights on the left ran away to the left hand side, I did not even move the glass in my right hand to my left hand. I am Gazan who stopped the black stone by stretching out the bottom of my legs.

The cauldron that had come from Alademur Kafir Khan (39) was not a six, but a sixty-*batman* (180 kg) cauldron; the champions of the Inner Oghuz and Outer Oghuz could not lift it when it was empty; I filled it with ruby-coloured wine and lifted it well above my shoulder and after emptying it I put it down. So I was Gazan who assumed the name of Gazan, the Cauldron, though my name was Deli Dönmöz.

It had come from Alademur Kafir Khan. That infidel's yellow bow was made of the horns of sixteen he-goats. Men of distinction from the Inner Oghuz and eminent masters from the Outer Oghuz could not draw the bow. I pulled the string after I had slackened it with the strength of my wrist and shoulder. I was Gazan who had received the post of representative from the king.

A set of not six, but seven steel skewers with diamond tips had come from Alademur Kafir Khan; I pinned them to the ground with the white sole of my foot. I was Gazan who received Borla Xatun, the tall daughter of the king, as a reward.

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