Erzurum in the Turkmen Version of Koroglu Legend

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Abstract: In the Turkmen version of Koroglu Legend, there exist lots of country, city and place names belonging to the Turkish world and neighboring folks. The places in the legend are not only composed of Turkmen lands and neighbors, but there are other extraordinary places like Kaf Mountain as well. The hero of the legend, Koroglu, has connections with neighboring places because of various reasons. In the most of the sections, Koroglu organizes wars against the neighboring countries and cities. He imposes a tax on some of those countries and cities. Arzılum (Erzurum) is also one of the cities in which Koroglu is interested. Although it's far from Turkmen geography, Erzurum takes place in the Turkmen version of the legend. The city is described in details. In the most sections of the legend, the name and the characteristics of the city, particularly "Erhasan and Tellihan" take place. In this study, the materials related to Erzurum, which is located in twenty one sections of the Turkmen version of Koroglu Legend, have been analyzed. The information given about the city has been evaluated, particularly by moving from the section of "Erhasan and Tellihan".

Keywords: Koroglu Legend, Turkmen, Names of the Places, Erzurum, Erhasan, Tellihan

1. Introduction

Koroglu is not only the legend of the Turkic folks, but also of Georgian, Tajik and other neighboring geographies, as well. The legend which was spread in a vast region has a rich plot. Depending on the variety of the events, there are multi-colored places in the legend. There are the names of the different places, which are belonging to the various locations from the west to the east and from the surface of the earth to the welkin, and their descriptions. Besides Camlibel which is the main location of the saga, Ottoman, Germiyan, Nishabur, Arabia, Georgia, Rawan, Tabriz, Esfahan, Aleppo, Shirwan, Semerkant, Bukhara, Rum, Istanbul, China, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Kaf Mountain are major place names.

Camlibel, which is named as "Candibil" in the Turkmen version of the saga, is located on the Yildiz mountain, namely in the north of Turkmenistan on, alias the Balkan mountains (Kiçigulov, 1976, p.86). Koroglu embarks on many adventures by going from this center to the neighboring countries and the cities. One of the cities, which exist in many different versions of the legend and related to a variety of the events, is also Erzurum. Erzurum, particularly forming the main location of the "Erhasan and Tellihan" versions, is a place in which Koroglu and his brave-men have been portrayed. That's why there are descriptions and information regarding Erzurum. In the Turkmen version of the epic, the name of the city, as also uttered by the folks living in the region, is Arzılum (Kürkçüoğlu, 2007, p.6-9). It is possible that "Arz al Rum" which is one of the Arabic-rooted names of the city has transformed into

"Arzılum" in the course of time. It will be clear by moving from the information provided in the work, whether Arzılum taking place in Koroglu legend is Erzurum or not. In the Turkmen version, 21 sections of Koroglu have been examined. Taking these into consideration, the parts concerning Erzurum, in order of the sections, are as follows in the legend:

In the section of the "Arapdan Ar Alış" (Revenge from the Arab), Gülendam talks about Erzurum.

"Göroglı beg gelip, atından düşdi,
Sir Koroglu came and dismounted his horse
Senin gızın gucaklaşıp görüşdi,
He talked to your daughter and gave her a hug
Birbirine gülpeçek dey çırmaşdı,
They embraced each other like ivy
Arzılum Dağı'ndan aşdı yaranlar."

The lovers climbed over the Arzılum mountain (Memmetyazov et al.,1990, p. 100)."

In this stanza, it is said that Koroglu passed over the Arzılum mountain by taking Arab Reyhan's daughter away with him. In the Turkmen version of the legend, Erzurum, as stated above, is commemorated with its mountain. The information given in the text tallies with the surface features of the city which is located geographically in a mountainous region. Additionally, the name of Erzurum mostly appears in connection with the events concerning Arab Reyhan. Therefore, the hometown of Arab Reyhan is of Erzurum. Koroglu passes by the Araz (Aras) river so as to arrive at the place in which Arab Reyhan lives and then he reaches at Erzurum. In the saga, Araz is told in the words of Koroglu as follows:

"Gurbanın bolayın canım gıratım For God's sake, my sweety dapple-gray Araz deryasından geçer günündir. This is the day you will pass through the Araz river" (1990, p. 85).

As it is known, it is within the bounds of possibility that someone coming from Turkmenistan can reach at Erzurum by passing Aras river. In the saga, it is clear that Koroglu has arrived in Anatolia, namely to Erzurum, by following such a route.

In the section of "Arab Reyhan" in the Turkmen version of Koroglu epic, Hopnişan Peri tells Sultan Leke about Erzurum.

"Altında atı bar semender kimin,

He is on his horse like a phoenix,

Deh diyse dar köçe boldı yol kimin,

Saying giddap, like a road become the narrow streets,

Göye garlı dagdan akan sil kimin,

Like the flood running from the snowy mountain to the welkin,

Arzılum Dagı'ndan ötdi soltanım. My sultan passed over the Arzılum mountain'' (1990, p. 333).

Koroglu turns back to his homeland by passing over the Erzurum mountain. Koroglu disguises into a shepherd and speaks in Ottoman Turkish to get information about Sultan Leke and his army who follow him. "He disguised into a shepherd. They caught up, too. Koroglu greeted them in their mother tongue, Ottoman." (1990, p. 333). When the ones coming later ask his nationality, he says "Ottoman." As it can be understood from here, Erzurum is a place related to the Ottoman Empire. Eventually, the possibility that the city is located on a different location in the east or north according to Turkmenistan is eliminated. The information "Ottoman" accommodates Erzurum in the legend to the city Erzurum, which is known as a place.

In the same section, the name of the Erzurum Mountain is also uttered in full by the words of Koroglu in another verse. Here, Koroglu uses the name of "Pelen Mountain" in the two verses of five stanzas.

"Arap Reyhan bu işine guvanma,

Arab Reyhan, don't be proud of this deed,

Ol Pelen Dagı'ndan aşdıgım bardır.

I have climbed over Pelen Mountain

..

Damagına tumar takan gızını

Your daughter wearing jewelry around her neck

Ol Pelen Dagı'nda guçdıgım bardır.

Have been hugged by me on the **Pelen Mountain**" (1990, p. 362).

In this part, he repeats the incident concerning the Arab Reyhan's daughter whom he had abducted. Above was mentioned that he had run away from the Erzurum Mountain by taking the girl away with him; here, the name of the mountain is openly articulated. This mountain is Palandoken. It is also named as Palan Mountain. In the verse, the use of Pelen instead of Palan is of accent.

In the section of Kırk Münler (Forty Thousands), Koroglu has a great war with Sultan Hünker. One of the places of the war is also Erzurum.

"Arzılum Dagı'nda söveş düşende,

When the battle starts on Arzılum Mountain,

Er vigitler vürekleri coşanda,

When the hearts of the brave-men beat,

Gılıçdan gırmızı ganlar saçanda,

When the red blood drops off the sword,

Muhannesler zar zar yıglar (ağlar) soltanım.

The cowards weep and weep, my dear sultan!" (1990, p. 416).

In the section of "Bezirgen," in three separate stanzas, it is given information about Erzurum. In the first of theses stanzas, Aysoltan tries to convince Bezirgen not to go for a long journey:

"Arzılum Dagı'nda yagmırlar yagar,

It rains on the Arzılum Mountain,

Melevşeler kaddı bilini (belini) eger,

Violets nod their heads and bend double

Yayın okı eziz tenine deger,

Arrow of the arch touches your precious skin,

Arkadagım gitme uzak yollara.

O, the one I trust, do not go to far places" (1990, p.541).

Koroglu gives the second information about Erzurum:

"Göroglı beg dünye erkdir,

Sir Koroglu, the world is calm,

Han Övez'e gelen görkdür,

What Han Övez obtains is the glory,

Arzulum'un yolu berkdir,

The road to *Arzulum* is hard,

Gayt (git) bezirgen yol mundadır.

Off you go, the road, yielding a profit is here."(1990, p.548).

The last information in the section of Bezirgen is given by Bezirgen himself:

"Arzılum 'da kovup yeten,

Getting close to Arzılum

Yaka bir yan çalıp tutan,

Putting himself on airs

Doganlık aradan öten,

Killing the brotherhood,

Göroglı atlı agam vardır.

There is an elder of me, named Koroglu

. . .

Arzılum'da onun adı,

His name in Arzılum,

Haka yetişer peryadı,

His screams are heard by God,

Cümle peri soltanzadı,

All elves and the children of the sultan,

Sapar Mehrem şirim bardır.

I have Sapar Mehrem the lion."(1990, p.556).

In the section of Bezirgen, there is no additional info on Erzurum different from the aforesaid information. It is mentioned that there is rain on the mountain of the city; it is a long way and the people in the city know Koroglu very well. Indeed, the widest information about Erzurum is given in the section of "Erhasan and Tellihan" in the Turkmen version. Erhasan, one of the brave-men of Koroglu, falls in love with Tellihan, Sultan Hasan's daughter living in Erzurum, whom he had seen in his dream. He goes to Erzurum to get/have her. Based on this event, it is given a lot of information about Erzurum, which is in the main location.

Erhasan asks for permission from Koroglu to get the girl he had seen in his dream. He gives voice to his desire for her in a five-stanza ballad with the repeated voice (*radif*) of "If you allow, I will go to Arzılum." In the poem, the peculiarities of Erzurum are not told; only it is said about the thought of going to this city.

"Arzım işit Çendibil soltanı,
Sultan of Çendibil, hear my wish,
Rugsat bersen Arzılum'a gideyin,
Allow me, let me go to Arzılum,
Yokdur diysen menin sözümde hatam,
Should you say no, then the mistake is with my saying
Rugsat bersen Arzılum'a gideyin.
Allow me, let me go to Arzılum

Bir ak sagal baba geldi gaşıma,
With an elder wise man, I came across
Yar sövdasın saldı menin başıma,
He set the love of darling on me
Hiç bakabilmenem degre daşıma,
I cannot glance around
Rugsat bersen Arzılum'a gideyin.
Allow me, let me go to Arzılum.

Söymek söyülmeklik ozaldan bardı, Love and to be loved used to be Işk sövdasın bu gün başıma urdı, He pushed my head into the love Tellihan diyip renni royum sargardı, Faded out my face as I say Tellihan Rugsat bersen Arzılum'a gideyin. Allow me, let me go to Arzılum.

Eger bersen senden rugsat dilerim, If you give, I ask for your permission, Ol yarı görmesem bolmaz kararım, No way, but seeing the darling is my decision,

Düyşümde görmüşem Tellihan yarım,

I have seen Tellihan, my darling, in my dream

Rugsat bersen Arzılum'a gideyin.

Allow me, let me go to Arzılum.

Erhasan diyr indi bile yörmege,

Says Erhasan, walk together anymore,

Tayın yar yolunda canım bermege,

Ready to give his life for the sake of the way to my darling

Arzım şodur söver yarı görmege,

It is my wish to see the darling, I seek for

Rugsat bersen Arzılum'a gideyin.

Allow me, let me go to Arzılum." (1990, p. 742-743).

Upon these words, Koroglu gives his horse, sword and quiver and sees Erhasan off. He gives place to Erzurum among the words he told him.

"Bir muştak sen söver yarın gönlünde,

You the zealous lover, love your darling from your heart

İndi müngün Gırat'ımın bilinde,

Now, with your water-skin on the waist of My dapple-gray

Barar (varır) bolsan Arzılum'un ilinde,

Should you arrive at Arzılum city,

Bargın (git) Hasan bir Alla'ga tabşırdım.

Off you go, I entrusted you to God.

Arzılum şundan kıldın erada,

O Arzılum, you exist now for this,

Huda kılsın kuvvatını zıyada,

May God strengthen you,

Yetirgey sen mert yigidi mırada,

Reach you at your wish,

Bargın Hasan bir Alla'ga tabşırdım.

Off you go, I entrusted you to God. "(1990, p. 746-747).

Koroglu, in another advice to Erhasan, touches shortly about Erzurum:

"Arzılum'a kıldın talap,

You wish to go to Arzılum,

Tellihan'ı Hak'dan dilep,

By begging Tellihan of Hakk (God),

Gördüm seni indi sınap,

I tested you so believed,

Berekella batır Hasan.

(May God grace you) you, brave Hasan" (1990, p.750).

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After these words, Erhasan takes the road. This incident is shortly summarized by this prose in the legend as follows: "Erhasan, in this journey, arrived at the Erzurum city by taking the road to be lasted for two months in 20 days without stopping the horse. When he saw the vineries and the minarets of the city, he commemorated Tellihan and uttered a sentence." (1990, p.751). As it is seen in the text, the road to Erzurum is two months by horse. This distance is an estimation that is close to the reality. On the other side, the existence of the vineries and the minarets makes reference to both the greenery and an Islamic place. There is significant information in this section that will form the basis for the root of Koroglu Legend. The father of Tellihan is Shah Hassan. Comparing with the historical records, it can be said that Shah Hassan is Uzun Hassan, the king of the White Sheep Turkomans who reined Erzurum. Uzun Hassan had some conquests Erzurum and its environs in 1456. Then, in 1467, he ends up the sovereign of the Black Sheep Turkomans in Erzurum. The city was subjected to the reign of Uzun Hassan between 1473 and 1478 (Kürkçüoğlu, 2007, p. 136-140; Yüksel, 2006, p.15). The reputed fame of Uzun Hassan reining a lot of places in Azerbaijan, Armenia and the East Anatolia is possible to be a resource of the legend by reaching at Turkmen. With the aid of the information also, it can be considered that Koroglu, the hero of the epic, lived in 1400s because in the details of the poem, it is spoken of the Shiite-Sunni confrontations in those years. Furthermore, it is possible to have an approximate date with reference to the information belonging to the names of the Ottoman and Germiyan states, their homelands and the rulers.

Erhasan stops by a horse bazaar in Erzurum. He behaves as if someone trying to sell his horse. Tellihan invites him to the palace. In the meantime, sightseeing the city, Erhasan is both puzzled and admires. "There were forty streets in the city of Erzurum. He is puzzled because he does not know the street in which Tellihan lives." (1990, p 55). After the befuddlement, Erhasan says a word addressing to his lover and searches for where she is:

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"Arzılum'da dogan ayım,
My moon rising in Arzılum,
Ne yerdesen Tellihan'ım,
Where are you, my Tellihan" (1990, p.755).
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Erhasan goes to the place of Tellihan that is close to the horse bazaar. In the historical records, there is information about that there exists a horse bazaar in the Erzurum castle and the castle is close to the places in which the rulers reside. Erhasan and Tellihan decide to run away. Tellihan disguises into a male warrior and leave Erzurum together with her lover. Noticing the situation, the gardener of Tellihan informs the sultan about their getaway. He tells of Erzurum during his explanations.

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"Acal yetmen geldi kaza,
An unfortunate came before the arrival of the death,
Arzılum'a düşdi ıza,
What was left for Arzılum is to suffer the torment
Şol işine bergey ceza,
Punish her for what she did,
Yüzün yere salıp gitti.

'Cos left by bringing disgrace on thee' (1990, p. 765).
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Upon the news, the Sultan sends the wrestler named Garaman with some soldiers after the girl, but Garaman fails against Tellihan and Erhasan. Later on, Hassan goes after the lovers by taking an army. Seeing a great army in front of him, Erhasan yells at the enemy to mention that he is not afraid and challenges.

"Arzılum'ın leşgeri,

O the soldier of Arzılum,

Gel meydana uruşalı,

I throw down the gauntlet against you,

Sagu sola at süreli,

Let's ride the horse to the right and left,

Humarı men urulaşı.

My intention is to have a fight with you." (1990, p.772).

Erhasan and Tellihan bravely have a battle with the army for long duration. Wounded in the battle and being at the trouble, Erhasan calls up Koroglu by the cranes. Here, he also talks about Erzurum.

"Çandıbilden Arzılum'a yetildik,

We arrived at Arzılum over/from Çandıbil,

Ozal Tellihan'ı alıp gutuldık,

We got Tellihan and run away at first,

Ahırında köp leşgere tutuldık,

Then, many soldiers seized us,

Salam yetir durna bizim illere.

O the crane, send greetings to our cities." (1990, p.779).

In the meantime, Koroglu worries about Erhasan.

"Baralmadım men gaşıma,

I could not ride on my saddle,

Arzılum degre daşına,

Not at the Arzılum's stream and the stone,

Ne sövda düşdi başıga,

What a love was it in his mind?

Atlandı Hasan gelmedi.

(Er) Hasan got the horse, but still not back." (1990, p.780).

Then, he asks for the news about Erhasan and searches for him:

"Göroglı özün gördün mi?

Koroglu, have you seen yourself?

Arzılum'a sen bardın mı?

Have you arrive at Arzılum?

Hasan'ım halın sordun mu?

Have you asked about my Hasan?

Bir habarın bardır senin.

You have any news!" (1990, p.781).

Koroglu cannot endure anymore and gathers his men. He launches forth to get Erhasan. He calls out to his men in five stanzas as follows:

"Hasan canım gitdi gaydıp gelmedi, My dear Hasan has gone, still not back, Yörün begler Arzılum'a gidelin. Howay fellows, let's go to Arzılum. Uzak yolun hiç habarı bolmadı, No news from (his) long road, Yörün begler Arzılum'a gidelin. Howay fellows, let's go to Arzılum.

Bu gün meydan söveşini gurmaga,
Today to set the battle,
Erhasan'ın ahvalını sormaga,
To ask about Erhasan,
Dönüp dönüp düşmanları urmaga,
To fight the enemies without stop,
Yörün begler Arzılum'a gidelin.
Howay fellows, let's go to Arzılum.

Gahba pelek mana belanı sardı,
Cruel fate has hung over my head,
Men bilmenem Hasan'ıma ne boldı,
I don't know what happened to my Hasan,
Elli gündür Gırat bilen yogaldı,
He has been away with Dapple-gray for fifty days,
Yörün begler Arzılum'a gidelin.
Howay fellows, let's go to Arzılum.

Bu sebeplen menin bagrım paradır,
Hence, my heart is injured,
Bu cıdalık teni cismim yaradır,
This parting is the wound on my skin,
Geler mutdetinden ötüp baradır,
It is high time he was back,
Yörün begler Arzılum'a gidelin.
Howay fellows, let's go to Arzılum.

Göroglı diyr gızıl güli solmasın, Koroglu says! May his red rose not fade away, Gırat bilen Hasan nabut bolmasın, May Hasan not perish with Dapple-gray, Köp düşman içinde yalnız galmasın,

May he not be alone among many enemies, Yörün begler **Arzılum**'a gidelin. Howay fellows, let's go to **Arzılum**.'' (1990, p.782).

In this way, Koroglu and his brave fellows set off and save Erhasan. Though many details are not given, there is repetitive information taking place in the former texts above also about Erzurum. Here, it is given priority to go to Erzurum. It is made do with its name only. In the remaining sections coming after the section of "Erhasan and Tellihan," there is no information about Erzurum. The legend ends up with the death of Koroglu.

With reference to the information about Erzurum (*Arzılum*) in the Turkmen version of the Koroglu Legend, it has been given the various descriptions belonging to the city which had served as the source of civilization for many countries and is located on the crossroad of the Silkroad. In the texts, Erzurum is given place sometimes with its name and some with its descriptions. The fact that Erzurum has a mountain (Palan) and it is termed as a valley; its vineries, castle, horse bazaar and it is presented as the hometown of the Sultan is the mentioned characteristics. Many details concerning the city are given in the section of "Erhasan and Tellihan." The information in the legend is matched up with the real knowledge. There is not much exaggerated and imaginary information about Erzurum. In the Turkmen version, Erzurum has occupied much more space compared to the other places, particularly Istanbul, Bukhara and Semerkant. These details on the legend are very significant for Erzurum in terms of mentioning the fame of the city. With reference to the information given about Erzurum, it is possible to make an estimation about the origin of Koroglu, the hero of the legend by also taking other information into account. According to this, it can be said that the appearance of Koroglu is circa 1400s, but this is completely the subject of another study so we are content with this amount.

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