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Nasrettin Hodja in the Turkic World

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As well as those characters employed in funny stories, featuring some periods, there are those who have survived along with the social history and become immortalized together with their communities. “As the critiques coincide with all their approvals and disapprovals, not only in their own cultures, but also in all cultural dimensions of humanity, these characters gain a universal popularity and turn to be a general subject for reviews and a character of funny stories for everybody.” (Yıldırım 1998: 234). Nasreddin Hodja, the only example for this definition in the Turkic World, or, in other words, in the whole world, possesses the talent of representing people’s sensitivity towards events, undertaking the mission of standing against social injustice, human rights, economic injustice, and several other universal themes. The significance of Nasreddin Hodja character, who was born as an individual but who gradually became people’s representative, is the place it occupies in our social history, equipped with the knowledge, thoughts and symbols to illuminate our cultural history. Nasreddin Hodja is a national hero who established a pure cultural commonality among the Turkic states and communities living in politically, physically and socially distant lands; reflected the common feelings, thoughts and joys of people who had lived in the known or unknown past and shared the same history and culture; and owned a legendary personality that enabled the survival of the cultural values and unity of the Turkic World. The people of the Turkic World, who learned to struggle against injustice, became self-confident and discovered their existing talent in conversation, with the help of Hodja’s witty personality, engaged in a fight against suppression, injustice and evil by means of Nasreddin Hodja, whom they made their own representative.

With the following words, the Russian writer Turgenyev expresses the love and tradition of Nasreddin Hodja, which goes well beyond the borders of the Turkic World: "There is laughter which is more bitter than tears. Hence, the stories of Nasreddin Hodja that bring about such laughter are a deeply lyrical and poetical philosophy; however, it is such a philosophy that it is the same for a seven-year-old boy as it is for a seventy-year-old man; it is close, cordial, interesting, appealing and exuberant! In all our humanistic, spiritual, linguistic, imaginary and fanciful dreams Nasreddin Hodja is an entity that is most profound, deeply-rooted, permanent and immortal. Like skin worn over the bone, like blood enabling the heart-beats, and like the tiny cells and neurons that make our brain function... Nasreddin Hodja is the person that we sit face to face conversing; he is our friend, comrade and supporter..." (Karahasan 1990: 189) Nasreddin Hodja, who teaches us to solve the matters as we experience them and to live with the human weaknesses that are an inevitable part of life, solves the problems of the real life and attempts to bring a solution to these problems by means of daily realities that exist in the course of life; he tries to bring credible and tolerable solutions. Displaying a realistic character with his philosophy of life, expectations and deeds, Nasreddin Hodja defends the truth in a practical reasoning along with his constructive criticisms, problem-solving attitude, flexible manners, even on the toughest and the most sensitive issues. "Nasreddin Hodja is a model character who exhibits the universal Turkic human reality with the Turkic wisdom." (Gnay 1990: 100-103).

Having been considered equal to the humor in Literatures of Turkic peoples, Nasreddin Hodja jokes have survived for centuries, thanks to the Turkic tribes, in harmony with the time and location and have been accepted as an inevitable part of not only the literary world but also the daily life. In this study, we will analyze the Nasreddin Hodja tradition in the Turkic public literatures of Kumyk, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Azeri, Kazan, Turkmen, Uzbek, Crimean, Uighur, Chuvash and Khakas and exhibit the studies conducted earlier in these locations.

The Kumyk Turks

In Kumyk language, *anektod*, *anektod habar*; *külkü* “yumor (hümor), humor” (Kumısko-Russkiy Slovar’ 1969: 42; 174) is Nasreddin Hodja, who is the funny figure in the jokes that correspond to these words. In Kumyk folklore, Nasreddin Hodja, known as “Nasreddin the Mullah” or ‘Hodja’, captures his place as the wise man who entertains the people with his lovely conversation and wits and becomes a legendary hero, while leaving behind deep traces in public culture. With his talented and honest as well as humble personality, Nasreddin the Mullah receives the love and respect among Kumyk Turks, making them reflect as they laugh and protecting the rights of the innocent people against tyrants. According to a myth accounted by people, Allah (God) sent Nasreddin Hodja to salvage the Muslims from their grievances and sorrows after Mohammed the Prophet passed away (Orazayev 1996: 176-177). In Kumyk folklore, the first publications on Nasreddin Hodja were made by Nuhay Batirmurzayev Yahsay (1865-1919) and Hadji Akayim, the son of Gazanbiy, of Lower Jenguzey. Hadji Akayim’s “Lataifu Molla Nasruddin Khavaca” was published in Temirkhanshur in 1914. Hasan of Lower Kazanish, the son of Ibrahim and the master of calligraphy, Quatib (1875-1942) republished the 128-page book, which consisted of 279 stories. The 65-page “Molla Nasreddin’in Haharlari”, written by Nuhay Batirmurzayev Yahsay in Arabic alphabet, which contained 96 stories, was published after the author’s death in 1929. There were only 1560 copies of it (Orazayev 1996: 177).

Another book published during the Soviet Union regime in the Kumyk Turks was “Mullah Nasruddinni Yoldashi” (Nasreddin Hodja the Comrade), written by the famous satirist Gereyev. In Ayav Akavov’s (1903-1953) “Nasreddin Hodja’s Answers to Hitler’s Questions”, Nasreddin Hodja is seen as a figure who criticizes Hitler with his smart and witty answers. The article “Nasreddin Hodja’s Hooked Stick”, published in Kumyk Government Journal and many other Nasreddin Hodja jokes and stories published in the same journal fascinated the readers in Kumyk; however, no articles on Nasreddin Hodja have appeared in the newspapers lately (Orazayev 1996: 178).

Mohammed Kurbanov of Lower Kazanish was the only playwright who wrote plays in Kumyk between 1916 and 1942. A year later, a three-act play, “Nasreddin the Mullah”, which he wrote in 1938,

was performed in Kumyk public theatre by G. A. Rustamov. Translated into many languages and performed in the public theatres of Avarsk, Laksk, Lezginnsk in Daghistan, the play was performed in all the cities of the Soviet Union and in Buhara, Uzbekistan, and was highly appreciated. Rustamov, the Chairman of the Theater Association of the Russian Federation in Daghistan Region, said, "The people see Nasreddin Hodja as their own son who has come from among them. He was so much liked that everybody knows this play full of fun and entertainment by heart." The commentary by G. A. Sultanova, an arts expert in Daghistan, on this subject and the fact that the play has been performed 900 times until now are perhaps the best indicators of how much Nasreddin Hodja was liked in Kumyk as well as in the whole Turkic World. What is more, a public actor in Daghistan and in the Russian Federation, Tacutdin Maciyev, who acted the part of Nasreddin Hodja for thirty years with great success, was referred to as "Our Nasreddin Hodja" by the audience and this was a solid indicator of how much they loved Nasreddin Hodja. After the death of this actor, Basir Muhammedov took over this role (Orazayev 1996: 179).

Nasreddin Hodja, who helped the theatres and actors of Kumyk become famous in the neighboring countries, served as a vast resource for Kumyk folkloric studies. The studies and researches conducted by the folklorists, from Daghistan Scientific Research Center, who studied Languages, Literature and Arts, are kept in the archives of the science center. In addition to these researchers, the poems of the contemporary Kumyk poet Mohammed Atabayev, the studies by Ibrahimov Muhammed Zeynelabidinoğlu and Abdurrahim Abdurahmanov, the monthly journal "Hodja Nasreddin", edited by the poet and playwright Atav Atayev from Khakashura and the journals and magazines such as "Dostluk" (Friendship), "Yoldaş" (The Comrade) and "Karçığa" (Karchuva), which included Nasreddin Hodja jokes and stories, are to name some of the significant studies on this subject (Orazayev 1996: 179-180).

Kazan

Nasreddin Hodja, is the unchanging character who reflects the literary and aesthetic appreciation of not only the Tatar Turks but also

the whole Turkic World. “Huca Nasreddin Mezekteri” is one of the bestsellers among the Tatar Turks. The oldest book on Nasreddin Hodja jokes is the “Letaif-i Hoca Nasreddin”, which was published at the University of Kazan with a permission from Petersburg in 1882. The book was published in Istanbul for the first time in 1837 and was translated into the Tatar language with the addition of the pictures taken from the one published in Bulak. The Nasreddin Hodja jokes were published in 1890, 1893, 1903, 1904, 1909 and in 1910, but the number of jokes was never as big as 134, which was the number in the original one (F. Özkan 1996: 188).

Nasreddin Hodja was also the hero of the series of jokes published in the front journals during WWII to keep the soldiers’ spirits high with the title “Huca Nasreddin Frontta” (Hodja Nasreddin at the front) (F. Özkan 1996: 191). The writer Abdulla Ähmät made great efforts in collecting and publishing Hodja’s jokes. M. Vasilyev comments on this: “When our (that is, in Tatar language – X. M.) scripts are studied we encounter the following issues: 1) The course of events are being changed so as to fit the indigenous life. 2) The grotesque is being belittled as the absurdity of laughter and the rudeness of the actions are being demonstrated. 3) The irony against religion increases¹.

In addition to this information, G. Başırov says, “in some stories, Hodja does not ride on his donkey but is mounted on a horse as we usually do around here². Or sometimes they exchange Hodja’s donkey with a cow at the market place. Hodja’s rooster is replaced by chicken. Akshehir and Sivrihisar in the Turkish version of the jokes are replaced by our own geographical places³”. These words indicate the prominence of Hodja stories among Tatar population.

There are other instances where Hodja Nasreddin jokes appear in Tatar folklore. For example, many Hodja jokes with different characters

¹ M. Vasilyev, *Tatarskiye versii anekdotov Xodji Nasreddina*, İOAİE, XXXIV., 1928, vol. 1., no 2, p. 143.

² G. Başırov, *Mâzâk Niçek Tugan*, “Meñ dä ber Mâzâk”, p. 389.

³ “Letaif Huca Nasreddin Afände”, 1845, pp. 8, 12-13; “Huca Nasreddin Mâzâkläre”, 1966, pp. 152-153. 156.

are being told among the Tatars. In some jokes, Nasreddin Hodja is replaced with some other protagonists⁴ (Urmançı 1997: 1-120).

Of the humor characters in Tatar jokes other than Nasrettin Hodja, *Äkmäli* is the farmer; *Gıybedi* likes fishing; *Mendi* enjoys hunting; *Mokut* (Mokıt) likes fishing; *Möcip Divana* is a bit insane; *Rehmi Tilmeç* (Rähmi Tılmaç) is the character who lived in the 19th century and was interested in reading medical books and was known to be quite witty; *Yalkaw kilen Pärixa* is lazy and naive; *Ziräk kilen Ülmäs Silu* is a wise man (Sakaoğlu 1995a: 272; Sakaoğlu 1996: 67-75).

Azerbaijan

In the jokes which correspond to *letife* (Azerbaydjansko-Russkiy Slovar' 1965: 234) and “**bezeme**” (Sakaoğlu 1995: 268) in Azeri language, the public satire is prevalent. Nasreddin Hodja, who is attributed to the whole Turkic World is the most beloved and famous humor character in Azerbaijan. The periodical “Mullah Nasreddin”, which was first published in Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, under Azeri writer Mirze Celil Mehmetkuluzade's editorship (1869-1932) and was published intermittently for 25 years in Tebriz and Bakü, was the first journal of humor published in the Turkic World. For taking over the mission of being the voice of the common people and a public defender in the 20th century, which had been carried out by Nasreddin Hodja before, the journal has always been loyal to the language and the register used by Nasreddin Hodja and the way he analyzed the events (Akberoğlu 1996: 25-28).

The most prominent humor characters in Azerbaijan in addition to Nasreddin Hodja are *Hacı Dayı*, *Bameze Musa*, *Unnu Ağca*, *Meşedi Abbas*, *Ayrım Tağı* and *Kârağan Usubr* (Makas 1995b: 377; Sakaoğlu 1995a: 272).

⁴ In a story about, when his house is set on fire his assistant comes running. Without looking at his assistant he says: “If it is burning why are you saying this to me, go and tell your mom, tell her to come and take a look, I am not interested in the house work”. The same story is told in Hodja version, too N. İsänbät. Tatar Halık Mäzäkläre”, vol. 2, p. 332; “Huca Nasretidin Mäzäkläre”, 1966, p. 156.

Turkmenistan

The word “joke” which means *gülki gürrin* “funny story” in Oris-Turkmen Dictionary (Orisça-Türkmençe Sözlük 1929: 8) published in 1929 corresponds to *anektod* “a short and funny story about an interesting event” (Türkmen Dilining Sözligi 1962: 42); *şorta* “funny, effective”/*şorta sözli* “joke teller” (Türkmen Dilining Sözligi 1962: 773); *yomak* “humor, wit, pun”/ *yomakçı* “joke teller”, (Türkmenko-Russkiy Slovar’ 1968: 316) in Turkmen language today.

Esenpolat, Garasatlık, Garrı Ata, Şanguli Kekeç, Kemine, Keymir Kör, Mirali, Niyazveli (Kör) Karı, Pıhl, Seyitguli Ağa, Veligurban, Yanrısatlık (Sakaoğlu 1994: 322; Sakaoğlu 1995a: 272); *Nazargülü/Samsık Nazar* (Kılıç 1998: 109) are some of the well-known joke types.

Uzbekistan

In Uzbek language *latifa* “short story about a funny event/ *latifaguy/latifaçı* “skilled in funny stories, joke teller” (Uzbek Tiliniň İzahlı Lugatı 1981: 428; Yusuf-Tulum 1994: 275) stands for the word ‘joke’, which developed as an individual genre between the 9th and 11th centuries during which injustice, oppression, uprisings and tyrannies were abundant.

In Uzbekistan, where individual joke protagonists replaced Nasreddin Efendi, the humorous stories centered specifically upon Nasreddin Hodja, who was also known as “Nasreddin Efendi, Mullah Nasreddin, Hodja Nasreddin, Efendi”. Under the dictionary entry “latifa” in *Uzbek Tiliniň İzahlı Lugatı* (A Concise Dictionary of Uzbek Language) is the phrase *Afandi latifaları*, meaning “short and funny stories produced by people about legendary public hero Hodja Nasreddin Efendi’s adventures” (Uzbek Tiliniň İzahlı Lugatı 1981: 428), which demonstrates the importance that the people of Uzbekistan attach to Nasreddin Hodja.

Nasreddin Hodja, the unique character in the jokes, is described in two ways in the scripts: The first one displays a wise, smart, witty, compassionate, funny, humane and fair man with active reactions, life experience, justice; the second one is an untalented and weak Nasreddin Hodja. His personality is shown purposefully weak. Nasreddin Hodja

discloses the oppressions of the rich but unjust feuds, unfair treatments and social injustice through puns and puts the audience into a strong laughter while representing people's ideals and their expectations from the future and from the authorities as well as their hopes. His opponents, on the other hand, are cruel, unfair, untalented, greedy of money and material possession and cunning hypocrites. The main function of the antagonists is to deceive the people or their representative Nasreddin Hodja, while treating them badly and planning to harm them. Nasreddin Hodja becomes an ideal figure against their condemned and unacceptable behaviors in society. The Padisah, the judge, the vezir and the executioner are the secondary characters and are the bad guys who favor the ones against Hodja. Efendi's wife, his son, the miller, the owl and the horse are Hodja's assistants and are the good guys. The donkey and Hodja are inseparable (AKM).

Some information related to Nasreddin Hodja found in Uzbek Soviet Encyclopedia is as follows: "Efendi" is the title given to Nasreddin Hodja, who is the hero of the satiric humor prevalent in the eastern folklore. He is known as "Hoca Nasriddin" among the Uzbeks, "Hoca Nasır" among the Kazakhs and "Mullah Nasriddin" among the Azeris. Indeed, Efendi is the public hero who praises justice and laughs at human weaknesses, possessing all human virtues. The Efendi figure presumably first appeared along with the humor in the written literature and folklore of the Arabs, Iranians, Turks, Caucasians and their neighbors all along the first millennium and remained as a national hero of wits, bearing each nation's conditions of life and peculiarities. These were first published in Istanbul (1837); later, the Turkish, Azeri, Uzbek and other Turkic communities prepared the hand-written or printed versions of various volumes; they were partially translated into the European languages, too. The 1837 publication of Efendi jokes became famous in Uzbekistan. They were shortened and translated into Uzbek by an unknown author by 1862-63. Since the Nasreddin Hodja figure matched with the Uzbek humor and heroes, gradually, all national jokes were being written with the name "Efendi". In the movie sector, the opinions conflicting with the socialist and communist regime were being despised under the name Efendi. The Efendi figure also served the men of arts and literature as an invaluable source. For example, "Nasriddin in

Hocand", "Nasriddin in Buhara", "Hodja Nasriddin's Adventures", "The Twelve Graves of Nasriddin" were some of the films produced in this respect. These views published in a journal called "Gülistan" in Tashkent, relating to the question "Who is Nasreddin Efendi?" are as follows: "We have come so far believing that Nasreddin Efendi was not a historical figure but an extraordinary hero of public creativity. Actually, the active, funny and smart humor, attributed to the name Efendi, is the product of bona fide public creativity. Having survived through centuries and in huge numbers, they have now come to be known as the special humor part of the public oral literature. In the same journal, Fârasul Zünnün puts it in the article with the title "Orta Asya'da Lakin" (However in Central Asia): "There are various opinions about this interesting character known as "Hodja Nasreddin", "Mullah Nasreddin", "Nasreddin Efendi" or simply "Efendi", who is beloved by many nations for his smartness, naivety and wittiness. His name has become famous among not only the Turkic tribes but also the eastern and European nations. These stories were translated into Russian, French, German and English languages and published. Who is this man that attracted the people and where and when did he live? In "Lataifi Hoca Nasreddin", which was stone-printed in Uzbek language in Tashkent and Buhara before the October coup, it is said that Nasreddin Hodja had lived in Turkey. In "Lataifi Hoca Nasreddin" published in Tatar language, Hodja is said to have lived in Anatolia. In the recent issues of the journal "Şark Yulduzu" (The East Star) published in Tashkent, "Efendinin Kırk Bir Padişahı" (The Forty-one Padishahs of Efendi) by Zahir Âlam was published. In this tale, some examples from Nasreddin Hodja's deeds are included." (Koçar 1990: 199-201).

Defending the common people's rights, representing the them, bringing a solution to the events, ascribing the victories he won out of verbal encounters by means of his wits to the people, Nasreddin Hodja became a representative of the Uzbek humor, too.

The Uighur Turks

Between Uighur *latipe* (Uighursko-Russkiy Slovar' 1968: 118) and "çakçak" (Özkan 1992: 15), which correspond to the types of joke, the word "çakçak", meaning "wits" and "joke" has a narrower meaning

than “latipe”. The word *latipeçi* is mainly used for people who are famous characters and story-tellers (zkan 1992: 15).

Nasreddin Hodja jokes are the most common humor type among the Uighurs. This is best illustrated by the entry “latife” in the *Uighursko-Russkiy Slovar’* dictionary, which corresponds to “Nasreddin Efendi’nin latifeleri” (The Nasreddin Hodja Jokes). There are three other types of jokes in Uighur culture: *Kasım Kızık*, *Molla Zeydin* and *Seley Çakkan..*

Kazakhstan

The jokes that are named as *anektod*; *kldirgi ängime* “funny event, joke” (Kazaxsko-Russkiy Slovar’ 1996: 33; 219) in Kazakh language are short stories based on a firm network of events: *Aldar Kse* is the main character in Kazakh jokes that are also known as *erteke* and *anız*, meaning “tale” or “funny tale” (Sakaoğlu 1995: 5; AKM), where the characteristics of the main character are demonstrated through various events and actions. Aldar Kse, who resembles the typical Bektaşî, is a beloved and preserved type of joke among the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Turkmen, Tajik and Karakalpak Turks. *Aycarık*, who is another Kazakh joke character, is similar to Nasreddin Hodja and is a figure symbolizing laziness and reminding of the Bektaşî figure, according to the information acquired from the scripts of jokes.

The common character of jokes in the whole Turkic World, Nasreddin Hodja (*Kojanasır /Hoca Nasr*) is the main character in Kazakh jokes, too. With his deeply philosophical personality, mastery in using the language, talent to overcome dangerous situations and his guidance, Kojanasır has captured the hearts of the Kazakhs (Makas 1995: 305; AKM). Some information about Nasreddin Hodja is given in Kazakh Soviet Encyclopedia: “Nasreddin Hodja is a beloved figure in Kazakh humor. Sometimes he appears to be a cunning man and sometimes rather naïve. The humorous tales about Nasreddin Hodja are being told as “Mullah Nasriddin”, “Hodja Nasriddin”, “Nasriddin Afandi” jokes not only in Kazakhstan but also in all Central, Minor and Lower Asia, Saudi Arabia, Greece, Romania, Serbia, Idil and Caucasus folklores. This shows that Nasreddin Hodja humor first started to emerge during the period when the cultural and economic relations between Asia

and Europe in the middle ages were getting stronger. The subject is stated briefly and the incident is logically described in Nasreddin Hodja jokes. The general theme attributed to the Nasreddin Hodja jokes reflects the common wit among the peoples living in those areas. According to scholars such as V. Gordlevskiy, I. Braginskiy and K. Devletov, the essence of the jokes related to Nasreddin Hodja assumed their solid form in the end of the Middle Age. Nasreddin Hodja is not the name of the person who lived in history, rather, it became pretty common among Muslim peoples of the Middle Ages, the themes being extended, and became very complicated as is the Hodja figure. He then turned into a both historical and folkloric character.

Nasreddin Hodja appears quite cunning at times and pretty naïve and good-willed at other times. Therefore, in Nasreddin Hodja jokes, one can see the foreign views as well as domestic opinions. Thus, all of the Nasreddin Hodja jokes are completely a public property and product. In Kazakh folklore, Nasreddin Hodja is depicted as a public representative who distinguishes between good and bad, misery and generosity as well as publicizes the injustice created by the rulers and the rich” (Koçar 1990: 197-198).

The Crimean Turks

Özenbaşlı Ahmet Akay is the most well-known character of the jokes, which mean *mezek*, *kızıklı*, *kölkele*⁵ in Tatar language and resembles Nasreddin Hodja of the Anatolian Turks.

The Kyrgyz Turks

Aldarkösöö and *Apendi* are the two main types of jokes in Kyrgyz public literature. The common character of jokes of the Turkic World, Nasreddin Hodja, pronounced as *Apendi* in Kyrgyz language, is almost the voice of the people, protecting the rights of the society from

⁵ *Mezek* ‘joke’/ *mezek söylev* “tell a joke”/ *mezek koru* “to joke”/ *mezek öçin* “for laughs” (Tatarsko-Russkiy Slovar’ 1966: 383); *kölkili* “funny, ridiculous”/ *kölkili vakıyga* “funny event”/ *kölkili hikaye* “funny story” (Tatarsko-Russkiy Slovar’ 1966: 324); *kızıklı* “interesting, striking”/ *kızıklı vakıyga* “striking event” (Tatarsko-Russkiy Slovar’ 1966: 306).

indecent, unfair, cruel and miser individuals and rulers with his unexaggerated physical appearance, honesty, good will, generosity, verbal ability, wittiness, fair and hardworking character.

Chuvashia

In Chuvash language, no single word or expression meaning “joke” other than *t* (? < Rusa *utka*) “joke” / *tlen-* “tell a joke” (Paasonen 1950: 162) has been encountered. *Lapu Stappan* is the most well-known joke character in Chuvashia. He is known to resemble Nasreddin Hodja (Gngl 1995: 63).

The Khakasia

The jokes known as *anektod*, *hormaıooh* in Khakas language (Russko-Xakasskiy Slovar’ 1961: 36) is taken as real stories experienced by people in Khakas public literature. M. A. Unqvitskaya, who says, “humor and satire beget the characters for novels,” defines jokes as short, delirious and vivid events in which satire and humor come together. The scholars, V. Sidelnikov and Boris Balter, on the other hand, classify jokes as vivid tales, urban tales, humorous tales, historical tales, fables and name them as humorous tales. Although they can be considered a category as regards theme, quantity and form, jokes are not named as a single category, while the word *hormaıooh/ormaıook* meaning “joke” is accompanied by *hanaloh* or *oyunu*, meaning “being humorous” or “the one who has the ability to perform a joke” (AKM).

In Khakasia, *Ay Dolay* is the most prominent character of jokes, who resembles Nasreddin Hodja to a great extent (Gngl 1995: 63). Nasreddin Hodja is again the beloved common joke character in Khakas culture as he is in all Turkic societies.

The Evaluation

Having featured as an important figure in the Turkic and the world literature, Nasreddin Hodja, who has been a subject for numerous Turkic⁶ and foreign, amateur/professional researchers⁷, from the east and

⁶ Ziya Gkalp, Fuad Kprl, Pertev Naili Boratav, Aldlbaki Glpınarlı, Ahmet Caferoğlu, kr Elin, İlhan Bagz, Tahir Alangu, İbrahim Zeki Burdurlu, Dursun

the west, in their articles, studies, essays, memories and diaries, which constitute the “Nasreddin Hodja Tradition and Nasreddin Hodja Generation”, has been a universal character as a wise man, advisor, defender of people, public hero, “cultural hero”, social critic, reconciliator, therapist, man of wits and master of words, retaining his reputation as the character of jokes for the Turks and the world for centuries. Nasreddin Hodja and his world view, his wisdom, ideas, suggestions, mastery of using words and wits have always been referred to in almost all dimensions of verbal culture of the Turkic peoples in solving the problems, understanding the complex incidents for his personal evaluations and judgment. This reality shows the extent of the commonality of feelings and ideas among these people. Throughout history, Nasreddin Hodja has been a universal character, who inspired Cuha of Arabia, Hıtar Peter of Bulgaria, Till Eulenspiegel of Germany and Scaramuccia of Italy, as well as many other characters of jokes of many nations.

The jokes you may be hearing anywhere as you tread on the lands where the Ottoman Empire had once reigned, even though you are not conducting a research, are included in the instrumental and spiritual elements of culture that constitute the verbal dimension of Turkish history, literature, folklore, artistry and architecture. These jokes have become a style which has been kept alive in the Balkans with the contributions of Nasreddin Hodja. Not only the Turks but also the

Yıldırım, Fikret Türkmen, Saim Sakaoglu, Sadık Kemal Tural, Umay Günay, Mehmet Önder, M. Öcal Oğuz, İsa Özkan, Fatma Özkan, Metin And, Perihan Arbak, Arslan Kaynaradağ, Nejat Sefercioğlu, Mehmet Ali Aksoy, Mustafa Kemal Karahasan, Orhan Veli Kanık, Şükrü Kurgan, Sabri Koz, İsmet Çetin, Ali Berat Alptekin, Mustafa Duman, Muhsine Helimoğlu Yavuz, İbrahim Altunel, Ferit Öngören, Atanur Meriç, Mehmet Aydın, Türker Eroğlu, Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay, Şeref Boyraz, Nükhet Tör, Gülay Güngül, Kemal Özer and many others, whom we have not mentioned here, studied Nasreddin Hodja, his philosophy and his jokes in Turkey.

⁷ Ignacz Kunos, Stith Thompson, Matilda Koen-Sarano, Kathleen R. F. Burrill, William Burchardt Bater, Henry Dudley Barnham, J. A. Decourdemanche, V. A. Gordlevskiy, Jiri Mahen, N. Mallouf, Anton Pann, V. Pio, Muhammed Ramazani, Lenoid Solovev, Otto Spies, Ivan fiop, M. T. Tahmasip, Albert Wesselski, N. Zimmanichi, Valantin Antonov, Jennifer Petzen, Beki Bardavid, etc. can be named as some of the foreign researchers, in the east and the west, who studied Nasreddin Hodja and his world view.

Macedonians, Romanians, Greeks, Albanians, former Yugoslavians, and Bulgarians came to know and love Nasreddin Hodja for his wits, smartness and eloquence in the jokes translated into those languages.

Nasreddin Hodja, managing to retain his identity for centuries as the common character of jokes among the Turkic peoples that are geographically far away from each other, will be kept alive in the Turkic nations and societies in the future as has always been so far, being aware of the importance of the mission he received from the Turkic community.

KAYNAKLAR

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Kısaltma:

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