

Story 1136 1974 Tape 11) Narrator: Bekir Şimşek

Location: Sekeli village, Yerköy
kaza, Yozgat Province

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Stir Gently

Before the coming of the Republic, the area which is now Yozgat Province was dominated by the Çopanoğlu Barony.¹ This anecdote is about that time and that barony, but it also explains the folk expression still used here: "Don't stir it too much or Çopanoğlu may come out from underneath it."

The Çopanoğlu Bey always used to have soup for breakfast. He had soup every morning. Unlike most people, he used to stir pieces of yufka² into his soup.

One day he had a guest at breakfast with him, and this guest decided to eat his soup the same way that Çopanoğlu did. He began to stir pieces of yufka into his soup. The servant was waiting on them was worried by this. He knew that it

¹ In earlier Turkish times the aristocrats were called Beys. They were roughly equivalent to lords or barons in England. Both their authority and the area they controlled were known as a beylik, parallel to a barony. The narrator here does not use the term barony, of course, but Çopanoğlu Beylik (Çopanoğlu Beyliği). Although the central Turkish government of the Sultan controlled the entire Empire, some of the local administration was in the hands of imperial appointees and some remained in the hands of the leading family of the area.

² Yufka is a flat, unleavened bread baked on a slightly convex piece of sheet metal known as a sac or saç. It is a popular bread in rural areas, partly because it will store for a long while without any spoilage.

Story 1136

necessary to respect a guest, but he also knew that the Bey sometimes became very angry when people imitated him. He therefore cautioned the guest, "Please, sir, do not stir it too much or Çopanoğlu may come out from under it."