

Story #490 (Tape #2, 1974)

Narrator: Rıza Göçün, 43,  
son of one of  
Eberhard's per-  
formers in 1951

Location: Gebeli village, kaza of  
Osmaniye, Province of  
Adana

Date: June 1974

*Note* *follo*

Avshar Dirge

Fights over land used to occur between the Avshars and the Tecirli tribe.<sup>1</sup> Osman and Ömer, two Avshar brothers, were killed in one of these fights. Their sister dreamed of the incident, awoke in the night, and knew intuitively where to find the bodies of her brothers. They lay in a deep valley somewhere. She walked to that place and found their bodies there. Standing by them and holding in her two hands the caps of her brothers, she sang the following dirge.

His fine sword in his hand,

His fine sword in his hand,

Its point piercing my lungs,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy,

yoy, yoy, yoy-y-y-a.

<sup>1</sup>The Avshars were one of the original twenty-four Oghuz tribes. The Tecirli constituted a sub-tribe prominent at the time of the Mongol invasion.

Two caps in my two hands.

When will it be morning?

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a.<sup>2</sup>

Two caps in my hand.

When will it be morning?

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a

Ömer and Osman, my brothers,

Ömer and Osman, my brothers,

I shall not go but shall winter here,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a

<sup>2</sup>Although some stanzas have four lines, some have but three, and one has five.

Other people call me mad

Am I mad, my brothers?

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a.

Other people call me mad

Am I mad, my brothers?

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy-y-y-a.

The thatched cottage owned by Ömer--

Its reeds are weeping,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a

The brides of my brothers--

They are weeping and wiping away their tears,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy-y-y-a

The brides of my brothers--

They are weeping and wiping away their tears,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a

The rose bush has been pruned,

The rose bush has been pruned

So that it will soon sprout shoots.<sup>3</sup>

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a.

They have killed my two brothers

In order that their hearths may sink down,<sup>4</sup>

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a.

<sup>3</sup>This is an allegorical reference to the death of the brothers and the wish that their progeny will be numerous.

<sup>4</sup>To destroy one's family by "sinking his hearth" appears frequently in Turkish poetry all the way back to 10th-century Book of Dede Korkut.

They have killed my two brothers

In order that their hearths may sink down,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy-y-y-a.

The rose bush is strangled and choked;

The rose bush today has shed all its leaves,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy-y-y-a.

My brothers' two brides--

Now they are nightingales singing till morn,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a.

My brothers' two brides--

Now they are nightingales singing till morn,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a.

To your gray horse,<sup>5</sup> brother,

I shall no longer give any barley,

I shall no longer give any barley,

Nor give to your sheep its lamb [to suckle],

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a.

The enemy comes from behind.

Ascend the steep slopes now, the sons of my father,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy

yoy, yoy-y-y-a

The enemy comes from behind.

Ascend the steep slopes now, the sons of my father,

Oy, oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy, yoy, yoy, yoy--oy,

yoy, yoy-y-y-a.

<sup>5</sup>Turkish heroes traditionally ride gray horses. Bamsi Beyrek with the Gray Horse is one of the most prominent of the Oghuz beys in The Book of Dede Korkut. The name of Koroghlu's horse, Kirat, means literally Gray Horse.