

Story 1503 (1973 Tape 11

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Silifke kaza,
İçel Province

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Yürük¹ Hospitality

There was once a young man who stopped at a Yürük encampment and was accepted there as a guest. One of the Yürük brides said to him quietly, "Ağa,² you may come to our tonight."

The young man thought that the bride intended to sleep with him that night. After the evening meal everyone retired. The bride went to her tent and went to sleep, but the guest did not sleep because he expected some further signal from the bride. Finally, he got up and sneaked across the camp to the bride's tent. There he called her quietly until she woke up.

"What is it?" she asked. "Listen, you dog. Go back to your tent and go to sleep. There is a good reason why I have not called you."

¹Yürüks (or Yörüks) constitute the only remaining group of year-round nomads in Turkey. They usually winter in the Taurus Mountains, where there is inexpensive pasturage for their huge herds of livestock, and they winter along the Mediterranean coast.

²An ağa (English, agha) is a rural landowner, sometimes wealthy, often powerful. The word does not indicate an official title but describes an economic status. They are often the principal employers of farm workers, and they are often viewed

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This woman had a husband who was a bandit and who was away from the Yürük camp much of the time. But she had received word that he was to return that night. Later that night her husband rode into the camp, gürüp, gürüp.³ When he arrived at his tent, his wife arose and greeted him.

In the morning the husband asked his wife, "Is there a stranger in the guest tent?"

"Yes

"Is he dead or alive?"

"He is alive," answered his wife.

"Then why is it that he does not come and talk with me?"

The bride said, "He is probably angry because I refused to sleep with him last night.

The Yürük went to the guest tent and said, "Come on, friend. Get up and join us. Do not be upset because of the behavior of my wife. She often treats me the same way!"

by their employees as harsh, driving, and abusive. The term ağa is also used in a complimentary way, as an honorific, for a distinguished or just older person than the one using the term. Thus an older brother is called ağa bey by his younger siblings. Ağa bey may be used as a deferential term to one older or more prestigious than the speaker. A taxi driver may refer to his passenger as ağa bey; a salesman speaking to a male customer may call him ağa bey.

³Onomatopoeia for the sound of hoofbeats.