

Story #489 (Tape #2, 1974)

Narrator: Rıza Göçün

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

Date: June 1974

How Demircioğlu Rescued Köroğlu from Bolu Bey's Dungeon

Ahmet Uysal: Rıza Göçün is now going to sing from Köroğlu. I'd like
the song plus the story. You may start anywhere you wish.

Rıza Göçün: Would you like me to sing the same part my father sang?
(i.e., for Eberhard)

Ahmet Uysal: Whatever you wish.

Rıza Göçün: Köroğlu had very brave friends, such as Ayvaz, Demircioğlu,
Hüylü, and Köse Kenan. They were his companions, scientific
men who used to capture places and people. They would
encircle any place Köroğlu wanted to take and lay it waste.
These four of Köroğlu's men were wise and brave.

Ahmet Uysal: Give their names again.

Rıza Göçün: Ayvaz, Köroğlu's man whom he had kidnapped from Istanbul
and adopted, the son of a butcher; Demircioğlu, a black-
smith whom Köroğlu had once kidnapped; Hüylü, brother
of Şirindöne,¹ who had come to kill Köroğlu (when she was
Köroğlu's mistress), but seeing that Köroğlu was a gallant

¹ Şirindöne means, literally, Merry Turn. After having only daughters,
a couple may give the latest child this name, hoping, by means of this name,
to turn their family luck from girls to boys. Many Turkish children are
given such prayerful names.

and brave man, changed his mind and stayed with him instead of returning to his father; Köse Kenan, who used to throw the mace, was a wise man. These men used to survey a place they were to rob, lay a trap, and when the entire world was asleep, toward dawn, at the time of the morning ezan, when Moslems could hardly be distinguished from infidels, attacked. This was the way these men of Köroghlu acted. They would take prisoners in the cities they entered. They were wise and courageous people. Now I shall sing what Köroghlu sang in honor of his men.

A company of horsemen, a company of horsemen is coming,

O, my son, from below,

Iron bows in their hands--Hey! Aman!--their arms so strong--Oy!

In battle he has the eyes of a water-buffalo, the eyes of a water-buffalo.

Now I need my Demircioghlu by my side, by my side;

In battle he has the eyes of a water-buffalo, the eyes of a water-buffalo.

Now I need my Demircioghlu by my side, by my side.

The trot of their horse is like that of the partridge;

Aman! The decorations of his chest are like those of the peacock.

On the battlefield he used to eat men like a wolf, like a wolf;

Now I need my Deli Hüylü² by my side, by my side.
 On the battlefield he used to eat men like a wolf,
 like a wolf;

Now I need my Deli Hüylü by my side, by my side.

When he mounted his horse, he called Kōroghlu Ram,
 And he never dismounted, he never dismounted;
 When he took the field, he never withdrew, never
 withdrew;

Now I need my handsome Ayvaz by my side, by my side.
 When he took the field, he never withdrew, never
 withdrew;

Now I need my handsome Ayvaz by my side, by my side.

Kōroghlu had said, "I need them by my side," because Bolu Bey, at Bolu, was his enemy. This hostility he [Kōroghlu] had inherited from his father. After he had had Kōroghlu imprisoned, Demircioğlu had entered the city [i.e., Bolu Bey had had Kōroghlu imprisoned]. Bolu Bey had a daughter named Dızdar Aghası³. He entered the palace, with saz in hand, pretending to be in love with Bolu Bey's daughter.

²Deli means crazy, mad. It has a special meaning when applied to warriors, however. It then has the connotation of reckless abandon, unreasonable gallantry.

³There is a considerable doubt as to what this girl's name is. Dızdar Aghası means nothing; it could be Kızlar Aghası, Keeper of the Girls, the harem in Ottoman times--either a eunuch or strong woman. In the questioning that followed, however, the narrator denies the possibility of Kızlar. At one point he pronounces her name Dizler Aghası, which would mean Keeper of the Knees--which makes no sense either.

sh ha i m ha th
 ha Kör ng

emircioghlu had wanted to hear a song from Köroghlu while he was in
 ail.

Köroghlu had said, "Very well. Let me sing a song for you."

--What we heard just now was the song that Köroghlu sang.

Demircioghlu and Ayvaz rescued Köroghlu from the dungeon.

Demircioghlu carried away Dizdar Aghası, and they had Bolu Bey himself
 put in the dungeon. Then Köroghlu forced Bolu Bey to have their wedding
 officially consecrated.

Ahmet Uysal: Could that name be Kızlar Aghası?

Rıza Göçün: No, no, it is Dizler Aghası.

Ahmet Uysal: Now I'd like the words--exactly what he said. I don't
 want the tune--just the lines.

Rıza Göçün: Well, sir, Demircioghlu was very brave. It was the age
 of the sword, and no one could beat Demircioghlu at
 swordsmanship. He would fight in an area of one or two
 acres and never let his enemy get near him. He was a
 very powerful and courageous man. Few men could lift
 his sword. Demircioghlu had 100 men, all his own men.
 Köroghlu had 17 company commanders, all most courageous
 men. All together, Köroghlu had 1,700 horsemen. This
 is what he sang about them: "If Demircioghlu had been at
 my side, Bolu Bey would not have been able to put me in
 the dungeon."

Bolu Bey had taken K roghlu prisoner at  amlıbel⁴ when he had found him there alone, at a time when his horsemen were not there. "If Demircioglu had been at my side, Bolu Bey would not have been able to capture me. He is a courageous man who would have chopped off his [Bolu Bey's] head. He could not have brought me here. H yl  is a courageous man, and if he had been at my side, they could not have captured me. If my Ayvaz had been at my side, he would have died rather than leave the field. He would win the battle and relieve me, never letting me be taken by Bolu Bey." Saying these things, he had spoken of their bravery.

K roghlu's horsemen had gone to rob a caravan, and when they returned, they found that Bolu Bey's men had trapped K roghlu at  amlıbel all alone. Bolu Bey's company commander had explained to Bolu Bey that this was the way it should be done, because he feared that his horsemen might kill him and ravage his house and his country. "Therefore, I brought him to you alive [he told Bolu Bey]." Bolu Bey's company commander explained to Bolu Bey why K roghlu should not be killed: "If he is killed, it may cause your house and country to be destroyed. Since he killed one of my men and cursed me, we shall put him in the dungeon as punishment. If he should die in the dungeon, that would be all right, a natural death. K roghlu used to eat a whole

⁴  amlıbel was the legendary mountain stronghold of K roghlu. The word means Pass with Pine Trees, a name which could describe hundreds of mountain sites. It is usually thought to refer to a site on K roghlu Mountain, above Bolu.

lamb at one sitting, and if his food was stopped, he would become ill and die. If we can get rid of him in this way, it will be well. If his horsemen ever hear of this, they will ruin both our homes and our country."

When Köroghlu's horsemen returned to Çamlıbel, they looked but could not see Köroghlu, who had been captured and taken away. His company commanders went to Bolu and entered the city. In order to find out whether Köroghlu was dead or alive, they took certain measures. When they heard that Köroghlu had been thrown into the dungeon, Demircioğlu, taking his saz in his hand, went to see Dizler Aghası, the daughter of Bolu Bey and the Director of the dungeon. He went to her room as an aşık⁵ and stayed there. When he discovered that Köroghlu was alive, he went to Köroghlu and had him sing the song I sang for you just a while ago. He took Bolu Bey prisoner and took Dizler Aghası as his wedded wife. They returned to Çamlıbel, where they had a wedding that lasted for 40 days and 40 nights. Demircioğlu and his wife were very happy there.

Ahmet Uysal: I'd like you to give us just the words of the song that you sang to us. Just tell me what he said.

Rıza Göçün: "A company of horsemen are coming from below." --Sir, "a company of horsemen" means

Ahmet Uysal: Just the words, not any commentary.

Rıza Göçün: In other words, very strong horsemen are coming. Sir, "a company of horsemen" means

⁵Aşık means lover, but most of the time it refers to a love poet of the singing and often saz-playing variety.

Ahmet Uysal: I don't want any commentary.

Rıza Göçün: A company of horsemen was coming from below, that is to say, iron bars in their hands--with their strong arms-- in battle with the eyes of water-buffaloes. Now I need my Demircioghlu by my side.

Ahmet Uysal: Go on to the second quatrain.

Rıza Göçün: The trot of his horse is like that of the partridge;
The decorations of his breast look like those of the peacock.
On the battlefield he would eat a man like a wolf.
Now I need my Deli Hüylü by my side.
He used to shout, "Ram Köroghlu!"
And when he mounted his horse, he would never come down
from it.
Ayvaz would not let go the handle of the sword,
And when he took the battlefield, he would die rather than
leave it.
Now I need my Ayvaz by my side.

Ahmet Uysal: This is what I want.