In 1951, the secluded Neo-Aramaic-speaking Jewish community of Zakho migrated collectively to Israel. It carried with it its unique language, culture and customs, many of which bore resemblance to those found in classical rabbinic literature. Like others in Kurdistan, for example, the Jews of Zakho retained a vibrant tradition of creating and performing songs based on embellishing biblical stories with Aggadic traditions.

Despite the recent growth of scholarly interest into Neo-Aramaic communities, however, studies have to this point almost exclusively focused on the linguistic analysis of their critically endangered dialects and little attention has been paid to the sociological, historical and literary analysis of the cultural output of the diverse and isolated Neo-Aramaic communities of Kurdistan. In this innovative book, Oz Aloni seeks to redress this balance.

Aloni focuses on three genres of the Zakho community’s oral heritage: the proverb, the rewritten biblical narrative and the folktale. Each chapter draws on the author’s own fieldwork among members of the Zakho community now living in Jerusalem. He examines the proverb in its performative context, the rewritten biblical narrative of Ruth, Naomi and King David, and a folktale with the unusual theme of magical gender transformation. Insightfully breaking down these examples with analysis drawn from a variety of conceptual fields, Aloni succeeds in his mission to put the speakers of the language and their culture on equal footing with their speech.

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Cover design: Anna Gatti

Oz Aloni
The Neo-Aramaic Oral Heritage of the Jews of Zakho
CHAPTER 1: PROVERBS

The so-called gnomic genres of oral culture are a group of genres which share the common feature of brevity. Proverbs, proverbial phrases, idioms, riddles, jokes, aphorisms, Wellerisms, and slogans are several important members of the group. The study of this group of oral genres is situated on the border between several disciplines: folkloristics, linguistics, anthropology, and literary theory. It seems that the gnomic genres are important not only to the cultural competence of a member of a community, but also to the linguistic competence of a speaker of a language: the Russian scholar Grigorii L’vovich Permiakov concluded as the result of an experiment that there is a “paremiological minimum” of 300 gnomic texts (Permiakov 1985), which “native as well as foreign speakers [...] need to know [...] in order to communicate effectively in that language” (Mieder 1997, 405). This chapter is dedicated to a prominent member of the group of gnomic genres: the proverb.

The study of proverbs and proverbial phrases can generally be divided into two realms: paremiography, which is the collection, compilation, and lexicography of proverbs; and paremiology, which is the theoretical study of proverbs and proverb usage. This chapter will begin with an overview of the existing paremiographical collections of Jewish Zakho NENA proverbs (§1.0), and will then discuss some paremiological issues exemplified by Zakho proverbs (§§2.0–13.0). The remainder of the chapter consists of proverbs collected in my own fieldwork (§§14.0–15.0).
1.0. Paremiography: Published Collections of Zakho Proverbs

Four collections of Jewish Zakho NENA proverbs have been published so far: Pesaḥ Bar-Adon (1930), Yosef Yo’el Rivlin (1945; 1946), Judah Benzion Segal (1955), and Yona Sabar (1978). Together they comprise approximately 400 proverbs.¹

Each of these collections utilises a different lexicographical system. In the early days of Jewish Neo-Aramaic scholarship, Bar-Adon (1930, 12) published, a short collection of seven proverbs, which he had heard from Ḥakham Baruch. Bar-Adon quotes the Neo-Aramaic proverb in vocalised Hebrew script, gives its literal translation in Hebrew, and adds a comment about its “intention,” sometimes including linguistic remarks. For example:

1. šulṭ ʾozili xurasi, lḥbbi k-ḥāhe g-nexi ʾizasi

‘[In Hebrew:] A work done for me by my friends, my heart gets tired [but] my hands rest.’

The intention: When one’s work is done by others, one cannot be sure whether the workers are doing the work decently, and so one’s heart is not at ease, as opposed to one’s hands, which are at rest. Or: The heart gets tired when work is performed by friends and the heart itself does nothing. (Bar-Adon 1930, 12)²

¹ A few proverbs occur in more than one collection.
² On the difficulties that the term ‘literal meaning’ entails, see Searle (1979).
³ His footnotes have been omitted. The Neo-Aramaic in the examples cited in this section is transcribed according to the transcription system used throughout this book, which involves some modification of the
Rivlin lists the 108 proverbs of his collection in alphabetical order. They are transcribed in vocalised Hebrew script. For each proverb, there is a literal Hebrew translation, after which he gives a short explanation of the meaning or intention of the proverb. For example:

32. ʾan peši tre, peši ṭlaha
(If today there are two, tomorrow there will be three.)
Meaning if a man and a woman marry, children will follow; or if two people join together loyally, their partnership will grow and more people will join. (Rivlin 1945, 213)

In some instances, when a proverb alludes to a narrative that is necessary to understand it, Rivlin adds the narrative as well. For example:

95. xa ʾena ʾəl səlqa u-xa ʾena ʾəl kotəlka.
(One eye towards the beet and one eye towards the dumpling.)
A tale: They served a man some beet, which was very good and sweet, and also a meat dumpling. He did not know which he should choose. As a result, other people ate them both, and he was left with neither. (Rivlin 1945, 213)

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forms given by the original authors. The translation from Hebrew is mine.

4 Rivlin (1945, 207) states that this is “a selection from one thousand proverbs in the language of Targum [=NENA]” which are in use by the Jews of Kurdistan.

5 See fn. 2 above.

6 On proverbs that represent or summarise narratives, see §8.0 below.

7 This is reminiscent of Buridan’s ass.
Rivlin acknowledged the value of his collection of proverbs for linguistic research. At the time of its publication, there was hardly any published material in the Jewish Zakho dialect, or in any other Jewish Neo-Aramaic dialect. However, he proclaimed that his motivation in publishing these proverbs was to

open a window which will allow us to observe the spirit of this Jewish tribe, which is almost lost in the land of Assyria, and also to observe the spirit of the environment in which they live, their manner, and their wisdom and morals. (Rivlin 1945, 208; my translation)

Segal divides the 143 proverbs in his collection into thirty-three semantic categories, such as ambition, authority, boasting, and boldness. The proverbs are given in a detailed phonetic transcription (which does not correspond to the modern standard for transcribing Neo-Aramaic). Each proverb is translated literally into English. Linguistic comments, mainly etymological, are given for each proverb, and reference is also made to other paremiographical collections. For many of the proverbs, a concise remark about meaning is given. For example:

[Category:] Ambition

1. súse gə-mnə'le u-sariṭlāna-šī g-mārəm 'aqle

(sariṭlāna Syr[iac] rarely for ṣarīṭlāna, Payne Smith, Thesaurus, s.v.; šī, Kurdi; aqile, perhaps from argle, Syr[iac] ṣarīṭlāna, rather than from Syr[iac] ܥܩܠ 'twist'.

‘The horse is being shod, and the crab also lifts its foot.’ (Rivlin, No. 84: ‘The water-reptile(?) lifts its foot, and says, Shoe me.’ Maclean No. 58: ‘They came to shoe the mule,

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8 This is an allusion to Isa. 27.13 (my footnote).
9 See fn. 2 above.
and the frog put out his foot too.’ Maclean, however, explains the proverb: If one man gets a present everyone else expects one too.). (Segal 1955, 254)

Segal’s principal informants in compiling the collection were Ḥakham Mordekhai ʿAlwani and Ḥakham Ḥabib ʿAlwani (Segal 1955, 253). It seems that one of Segal’s goals was to contextualise the proverbs that he collected with other collections of Aramaic, Kurdish, and Middle Eastern proverbs, and point out linguistic issues that emerge from these proverbs.

The aim of Sabar’s collection is not only to document NENA proverbs, but to document all proverbs that were used by the Jewish community of Zakho, regardless of the language in which they were framed. Two-thirds of his 153 proverbs are indeed in Zakho’s Jewish NENA. However, the criterion for this collection is not language-based, but community-based, and it documents the lexicon of proverbs shared by the community. Sabar lists proverbs in the three languages commonly spoken by the members of the Jewish community of Zakho—NENA, Kurdish, and Arabic—as well as giving one proverb in the Christian NENA dialect of Zakho (Sabar 1978, 221, no. 16), and one proverb which is partially in Turkish (Sabar 1978, 226, no. 81). According to Sabar, in addition to multiple loanwords from old layers of Hebrew, Kurdish, Persian, Arabic, and Turkish, a salient feature of Jewish Neo-Aramaic speech is its colouring “with numerous proverbs in the languages of their neighbouring ethnic groups,” which the Jews “naturally incorporated into Neo-Aramaic speech” (Sabar 1978, 215). Sabar notes that the reasons for not

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10 Ḥakham Ḥabib ʿAlwani was the author’s grandfather.
translating “foreign” proverbs into NENA may have been in order to enhance the authenticity of folk-narratives of the foreign milieu, or to preserve the proverb’s specific “literary form, such as rhyme, play on words, rhythm, metre, and other prosodic features, which would be lost in translation” (Sabar 1978, 218).\footnote{In my opinion, the use of a foreign language may also serve as a marker of proverbiality by increasing out-of-contextness. On out-of-contextness as an important feature of proverbs, see this chapter’s discussions in §§3.0 and 10.1 below.}

Sabar gives the transcribed proverb, its translation into English, a reference to other paremiographical collections, including the Zakho collections discussed above, and an explanation of the meaning of the proverb or any linguistic issues that emerge from it. For example:

77. \textit{kepa} l-duke yaqura. ‘A stone is heavy in its (original) place.’ A person is respected only as long as he is in his own community, Cf. Segal, 34; Maclean (1895), 122; Socin (1882), p. 119, r (vars.); Tikriti, 783; Yahuda, Y. B., 643 (vars.). (Sabar 1978, 226)

Sabar (1978, 232) also gives an index of ‘subjects’; for example, the proverb given above appears under ‘Honor and Shame’ (Sabar 1978, 232).

\section*{2.0. A Misleading Conception}

It is common to see proverbs as traditional sayings expressing a general truth, tokens of folk-wisdom formulated and polished into pithy, gnomic sentences. The most important and meaningful constituent of a proverb, according to this common view, is
its content, which is identical with its wise or moralistic message. A more literary-oriented approach might also be interested in the literary mechanisms (figurative language, prosody, intertextuality, etc.) that the proverb utilises in order to effectively convey its message. But even then, the assumption is that the important part of the proverb is the meaning contained therein, its semantics. This conception is very much based on the classical idea of the proverb as a moralistic-didactic literary product. It is strengthened by the way proverbs are collected, presented, and traditionally studied in classical and other ancient proverb anthologies.

This conception of the proverb is a misleading one in so far as it concerns the linguistic and folkloristic documentation, study, and analysis of proverbs. It may result in neglecting three central elements of the phenomenon of the proverb. Firstly, an extensive set of proverbs and proverbial phrases—those which do not match the view of the proverb as incapsulating ‘traditional wisdom’ or having moralistic or didactic value—is left out, despite being a part of the oral culture of a community. This may be termed the lexicographical gap, since it is a shortcoming in the completeness of the paremiographical collection. Secondly, the functional and pragmatic value of proverbs is ignored. The social-behavioural and linguistic circumstances in which a certain proverb may or may not be used and the ends that the utterance of a proverb aims to achieve either in the social sphere or in the discourse are key elements of proverb competence. Ignoring them results in what may be termed the pragmatic gap. And thirdly, the fact that the meaning of a proverb is not determined solely by its
internal constituents, but to a very large extent by its discursive environment—that is, the fact that a proverb’s meaning is context-dependent—is often forgotten. This results in a semantic gap, since the portion of the meaning of a proverb which lies outside the boundaries of its sentence is missed.

The importance of context parameters for the study of folklore performance in general has long been recognised. It was expressed succinctly by the functionalist anthropologist Malinowski (1926, 24, quoted in Bascom 1954, 335): “The text, of course, is extremely important, but without the context it remains lifeless.” Equally relevant are the words of the folklorist Alan Dundes:

Functional data must, therefore, be recorded when the item is collected. An item once removed from its social context and published in this way deprives the scientific folklorist of an opportunity to understand why the particular item was used in the particular situation to meet a particular need. (Dundes 1965, 279, in his introduction to a reprint of Bascom 1954)

In the collection of proverbs contained in this chapter, an attempt has been made to overcome these three gaps—the lexicographical, the pragmatic, and the semantic: the first gap, by broadening the scope of what would be considered a proverb, and the latter two by giving context situations for each proverb.12

3.0. Defining Proverbs

Despite their very wide distribution in all registers of language, and the ease with which we intuitively recognise proverbs when

12 See §13.0 below.
encountering them, it is not at all trivial to define what one is. In fact, some paremiologists have believed that it is impossible to do so. Perhaps the most influential book in modern paremiology begins with the following statement:

The definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking. An incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not. Hence no definition will enable us to identify positively a sentence as proverbial. (Taylor 1985, originally published in 1962, quoted in Dundes 1981, 44)

The author, Archer Taylor, “remarked that in a way his whole book constituted a definition of the proverb” (Dundes 1981, 44).

Another influential scholar, Bartlett Jere Whiting, writes:

To offer a brief yet workable definition of a proverb, especially with the proverbial phrase included, is well nigh impossible. Happily no definition is really necessary, since all of us know what a proverb is. (Whiting 1952, 331, quoted in Dundes 1981, 44)

Despite these sceptical remarks concerning the possibility and (lack of) necessity of such a definition, many scholars have offered their views on this question, either in works dedicated wholly to the theoretical quest for a definition, or as tentative theoretical premises in works dealing with other paremiological issues. In what follows, three of these definitions are given, and attention is drawn to certain aspects of these definitions.

A short definition is given by Peter Seitel, in an article which will be further discussed below (see §9.0 below):
Proverbs [...] may be provisionally defined as short, traditional, ‘out-of-context’, statements used to further some social end. (Seitel 1969, 145)

This definition raises a few questions. What is the nature and degree of the ‘out-of-contextness’ of proverbs? How do they relate then to the discursive, linguistic, social, or behavioural contexts in which they occur? What is the meaning of “traditional” in that respect, and why should proverbs be regarded as such? How does the utterance of a proverb “further some social end,” and what type of ends does it further?

Galit Hasan-Rokem defines proverbs as a genre of folk-literature, among the genres that have been termed gnomic or minor:

The most common of these genres is the proverb, which may be defined as a genre of folk literature which presents a specifically structured poetical summary referring to collective experience. The proverb is used in recurring situations by the members of an ethnic group to interpret a behavioural or interactional situation, usually one which is a source of conflict or scepticism. (Hasan-Rokem 1982a, 11)

In the spirit of the aforementioned (see above, Introduction, §3.0) programmatic article by Jakobson and Bogatyrev (1980 [1929]), Hasan-Rokem introduces into the discussion the element of collective experience. The proverb is a mediator between communal experience and communal poetics, and the private, personal usage of it within personal experience. Hasan-Rokem points out several features that underlie the phenomenon of the proverb. Firstly, by referring a situation to the community’s
values and transferring it to a conceptual level, the proverb re-
stores equilibrium to the situation. Secondly, a proverb, once
used, creates a collocation, a link, between the situation at hand
and a chain of past situations that the same proverb may apply
to. Hasan-Rokem terms this “the paradigmatic aspect of proverb
usage” (‘paradigmatic’ here in the Saussurean sense of the term).
When proverbs are used within a narrative, it is this usage that
creates intertextuality, a relationship with other narratives and
situations in which the same proverb may appear. And thirdly,
the ability of the individual to properly use a proverb in accepta-
ble, “correct,” contexts is “the syntagmatic aspect” (again in the
Saussurean sense). Hasan-Rokem terms this ability “proverb com-
petence.”

These two definitions by Seitel and Hasan-Rokem empha-
sise the function of proverbs. They attach more importance for
the understanding of what a proverb is to its relationship with its
context (social, behavioural, discursive, and narrative contexts)
than to the qualities of the particular sentence or phrase which
happens to be that proverb. They maintain that what determines
whether we deem an utterance a proverb or not are chiefly pa-
rameters external to that utterance.\(^{14}\)

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\(^{13}\) See §5.0 below. ‘Competence’ here is as used by Chomsky; Hasan-
Rokem (1982a, 11) refers to Chomsky (1965, 4).

\(^{14}\) This is not to say that Hasan-Rokem or Seitel dismiss or ignore the
internal parameters of the structure of the proverb. Hasan-Rokem speaks
of three levels of the proverb: the use, the function, and the structure
(see in particular Hasan-Rokem 1982a, 18–53; see also Hasan-Rokem
1993, where both the context and poetics of the proverbs are analysed).
For Seitel’s (1969) argument, the concept of metaphor, which pertains
Alan Dundes, on the other hand, offers a different view. His approach to the question of what a proverb is relies on observing its internal structure. “The critical question is thus not what a proverb does, but what a proverb is” (Dundes 1981, 45). Thus he offers the following definition, which involves the linguistic concepts of topic and comment:15

[T]he proverb appears to be a traditional propositional statement consisting of at least one descriptive element, a descriptive element consisting of a topic and a comment. (Dundes 1981, 60)

The attempt to define the proverb intrinsically, avoiding dependence on external factors, is appealing. Dundes’s definition, however, has a point of weakness: it may be applicable to many utterances, even those which are clearly not proverbs. It does not indicate what is not a proverb. As Arora (1994, 10) puts it, “Dundes’ topic/comment analysis is likewise applicable to any number of ordinary, ‘made-up’ utterances.” The only thing that differentiates ‘ordinary utterances’ from proverbs under this definition is the concept of traditionality.16 We shall return to Dundes’s approach in §7.0 below.

To conclude this section on definitions, here are two final short, informal definitions, which may be regarded as proverbs in their own right. Cervantes stated that proverbs are “short sen-

15 These are particularly associated with the functional sentence perspective of the Prague School.
16 For a discussion of the concept of traditionality, see below, §10.0, specifically the features discussed in §§10.2–3.
tences drawn from long experience” (quoted by Dundes 1981, 61). And Lord John Russell defined the proverb as “one man’s wit and all man’s wisdom” (Taylor 1981, 3). Taylor, using an altered formulation of this definition as the title for an article, states that this definition underwent a process of proverbial change, and is now remembered as giving prominence to wisdom rather than wit: “the wisdom of many and the wit of one” (Taylor (1981, 3–4).

4.0. Image, Message, Formula, and Proverb

Synonymy

The Finnish folklorist and paremiologist Matti Kuusi, distinguishes between three components of the proverb: the proverb’s image, its message, and its formula (Kuusi 1966; Dundes 1981, 46–47). The proverb’s image is its semantic content considered independently from its pragmatic function as a proverb. The proverb’s message is usually not expressed explicitly in its semantic content, and is related to its pragmatic function. The proverb’s formula is its syntactic or logical structure.

Some formulas recur in the proverbial lexicon independently of the proverb’s image or message. This can be better understood with an example:
be-kálo šəšlu,1 be-xótna lá rəšlu.1
‘[In] the house of the bride they are [already] rejoicing, [but in] the house of the bridegroom they have not [yet] felt [anything].’ (proverb no. (6) in the present collection17)

This proverb’s image is related to a wedding: one family is already celebrating their daughter’s engagement while the other family has not even heard about it.18 The message of the proverb, made explicit, is ‘one party is ahead of the other in a shared venture; one of the parties may even not express agreement to the initiative’. The formula of this proverb, two independent clauses of which the second is negative, recurs in other proverbs:

dərmán šəzāne ḫız,1 dərmán šriʻe lēs.1
‘There is a cure for the mad, [but] there is no cure for the crazed.’ (proverb no. (10) in the present collection)
yóma gnēle,1 qáza u-bāla lā-gnelu.1
‘The day ended, [but its] troubles did not end.’ (proverb no. (16) in the present collection)

The division between the three components of the proverb has relevance to a phenomenon that may be termed ‘proverb synonymy’. Synonymy between proverbs may occur in either the images or the messages of the proverbs. Image synonymy is similitude of the images expressed in the proverbs, whereas message synonymy occurs when different proverbs with dissimilar images

17 The proverbs are given in §§14.0–15.0. The proverbs in §14.0 are given morpheme-by-morpheme glosses, and a context situation is provided for each.

18 On the procedure for betrothals and weddings in the Jewish community of Zakho, see Aloni (2014a, 88–101).
Proverbs convey a similar message and are used to further a similar end. Take, for example:

\[
\text{šàqfa' la mšápya 'al šàqfa, lá-k-tafqa 'ëbbu.}'
\]

‘[If] a piece did not resemble a[nother] piece, it would not have met it.’ (proverb no. (72) in the present collection)

The message of this proverb is that ‘the two parties are together, or are collaborating on some ill endeavour, only because there is something similar in their characters, or because of the implicit agreement of the less guilty party’. It is synonymous with the message of the following proverb, though their images are very different:

\[
\text{čūčaksu kfólla zárúra u-tróhun fayyāre}
\]

‘A bird was the surety of a starling and both of them can fly.’ (proverb no. (72) in Rivlin 1946, 211; my translation)

The message is also the same in:

\[
\text{sawóna qròże, sotónta hnèle-la.}'
\]

‘The old man pinched [and] the old woman enjoyed it.’

(proverb no. (58) in the present collection)

Since synonymous proverbs are usually synonymous only in one of the three components, they always present a degree of contrast. The choice between different synonymous proverbs, in the same situation, may emphasise different aspects of that situation, and by that offer different interpretations of the same situation.
5.0. ‘External’ and ‘Internal’ Grammar and Structure

When considering the grammar and structure of proverbs and proverb usage, the discussion may be divided into two interrelated aspects: the ‘external’ and the ‘internal’. Given that the term ‘grammar’ refers to a set of implicit rules which govern the correct use of a linguistic item, and that the term ‘structure’ refers to the manifestation of these rules in any particular occurrence as well as to the relationships between the various constituents of that structure, ‘external’ refers here to the relationship of a proverb with its surrounding linguistic environment (its co-text) and with its non-linguistic circumstances (its context); ‘internal’ refers to the structure, content, and grammatical phenomena within the sentence(s) or phrase(s) that constitutes the proverb itself. The ‘structure’ here includes linguistic-grammatical and poetic features (such as syntactic structure, selection of lexical items, prosody, etc.), as well as internal ‘folkloristic structure’ (on folkloristic structure, see §7.0 below).

The following five sections consider several approaches to both the internal and the external analysis of the grammar and structure of proverbs.

6.0. Internal Structure

Looked at in terms of their internal linguistic features, Jewish Zakho proverbs appear in various forms. They consist of a variety of syntactic structures: they may be comprised of one sentence or more, or they may not be a complete sentence at all; they may
employ various types of subordinate clauses. They may use special, poetic, or rare lexical items, or may use everyday or even vulgar language. They may utilise various topoi and images from various semantic fields. They may or may not be in metre, may rhyme or not, may use alliteration or other types of sound play, or may use puns. It would seem that there are no particular grammatical or poetic constraints on, or prerequisites for, a sentence or a phrase in order that it should be a proverb. To put it differently, there are no absolute grammatical or linguistic parameters according to which the interpretation of an utterance in natural speech as a proverb by the listeners is predictable (on the perceptibility of proverbiality, see §10.0 below).

However, it does seem that many Zakho proverbs do have one or more of a small set of characteristic grammatical features that may increase the likelihood of an utterance being perceived as a proverb. Some of these features, though particularly common in proverbs, do not entail proverbial interpretation; they are common also in non-proverbial language. On the other hand, one of the features—the feature of ‘two independent juxtaposed clauses’ (§6.4)—does entail, or at least radically increase the likelihood of, proverbial interpretation. Examples of proverbs with each of these features are quite common among the proverbs in the published collections, as well as in those of the present collection.

The features which suggest a possible interpretation as a proverb may be grouped under three categories. There are four syntactic features: conditional sentences, single clauses with an initial noun, an initial noun or pronominal head with a relative
clause, or two independent juxtaposed clauses; two semantic features: parallelism and particular semantic fields; and three prosodic features: rhyme, metre, and alliteration.

In what follows, each feature is demonstrated through several examples. In addition, those proverbs in the present collection as well as in previously published collections which possess the relevant feature are listed. Following sections exemplifying each feature, some examples of proverbs which do not possess any of these features are given.

6.1. Conditional Sentences

Some proverbs have the structure of a conditional sentence.\(^{19}\)

\[
\text{hákan soténi hawéwala '}xškása, b-šarxáwala màmo.
\]

‘If our grandmother had had testicles, we would have called her uncle.’ (proverb no. (12) in the present collection)

Some conditional proverbs do not make the conditional marker hakan ‘if’ explicit.

\[
\text{šàqfa la mšápya '}ɔl šàqfa, lá-k-tafqa '}ɔbbà.
\]

‘[If] a piece did not resemble another piece, it would not have met it.’ (proverb no. (72) in the present collection)

Conditional proverbs in the present collection: nos (12), (72), (84), (91).

\(^{19}\) Hasan-Roken (1982b, 285) makes the following claim: “all proverbs have a common deep structure, which may be perceived and described as the logical structure of a conditional proposition. This assumption is based on the fact that all proverbs are universal generalisations, and never represent only a single instance” (my translation).

6.2. Single Clause with Initial Noun

In many cases the initial noun in a proverb is extrapolosed and thus topicalised.

*dúnýe qzàya-la*

‘The world is [only] a preparation. [Therefore everything should be taken easily].’ (proverb no. (78) in the present collection)

*ˈzla dída g-mzabnále go-ɾáha šugàne.*

‘She sells her yarn in many markets.’ (proverb no. (98) in the present collection)

*ˈarxe ˈarxəd ˈilaha-lu*

‘Guests are guests of God.’ (SA:5)

Initial noun proverbs in the present collection: nos (11), (17), (28), (32), (35), (42), (54), (56), (67), (68), (70), (73), (78), (79), (83), (88), (89), (93), (98), (105), (124), (127), (139), (141), (142), (144), (146), (157), (166), (172), (178), (181), (190).

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20 Throughout this chapter, in referring to individual proverbs from the previously published collections the following abbreviations are used: BA = Bar-Adon (1930); R = Rivlin (1945; 1946); SE = Segal (1955); SA = Sabar (1978). The number following the colon represents the number of the proverb in the respective collection.

21 Several speakers offered the interpretation: ‘The world should be managed [smoothly].’

6.3. Initial Noun or Pronominal Head with Relative Clause

Some proverbs consist of an initial noun or pronominal head, followed by a relative clause.

ʾíza død lébox nagɔṭta nšuqla.'
‘A hand that you cannot bite, [you should] kiss.’ (proverb no. (2) in the present collection)

kúd k-ʾe ṛahəl k-éxəl čučə.'
‘He who knows much eats little.’ (proverb no. (18) in the present collection)

Relative clause proverbs in the present collection: nos (2), (18), (19), (20), (21), (22), (23), (27), (29), (30), (33), (35), (36), (37), (40), (48), (50), (62), (64), (71), (76), (87), (142), (170), (184), (188), (189).

6.4. Two Independent Juxtaposed Clauses

In some cases, a proverb is comprised of two (or more) syntactically independent juxtaposed clauses, with no conjunction or anaphoric pronoun in the latter.

*núra xe qòqa,*¹ *tanésa xe nàša.*¹

‘[Like] fire under a clay pot, a word under a person.’ (proverb no. (55) in the present collection)

tóra g-nåpel,*¹ sakíne g-zâhfi.*¹

‘The ox falls down, [and] the knives become abundant.’ (proverb no. (15) in the present collection)

dørmnán šɔ̀zâne ˈiz,*¹ dørmnán šrīe lèς.*¹

‘There is a cure for the mad, [but] there is no cure for the crazed.’ (proverb no. (10) in the present collection)

xá bàba’ gɔ-mdábər ˈɔsr̩à yalúnke,*¹ ˈɔsra yalúnke la-gɔ-mdábri xá bàba.*¹

‘One father [can] support ten children, [but] ten children cannot support one father.’ (proverb no. (39) in the present collection)

Many of these proverbs are also rhymed, or contain alliteration.

*be-kálo šɔ̀šlu,*¹ *be-xátña lá rɔ̀šlu.*¹

‘[In] the house of the bride they are [already] rejoicing, [but in] the house of the bridegroom they have not [yet] felt [anything].’ (proverb no. (6) in the present collection)

lá ˈáw jàjik,*¹ lá ˈáw zàh̩hə̀r.*¹
‘Not [of] that jajik [=herbal cheese], [and] not [of] that poison.’ (proverb no. (44) in the present collection)

Juxtaposed clause proverbs in the present collection: nos (3), (6), (9), (10), (15), (16), (31), (34), (39), (43), (44), (49), (52), (55), (58), (59), (61), (66), (69), (74), (75), (80), (82), (85), (92), (96), (97), (109), (148), (153), (176), (189), (191).


6.5. Parallelism

Some proverbs exhibit overt semantic parallelism between two parts of the proverb.

\[xása g-ə̀mrà: ˈə̀xòni, \quad xuzí xazýñnox wázir dûnye, \quad ˈə̀xonà g-èmer: \quad xàsi, \quad xuzí xazónnas xaddámëd bàxì.\]

‘The sister says: ‘My brother, I wish I would see you [= that you would be] the wazir of the [entire] world.’ The brother says: ‘My sister, I wish I would see you [= that you would be] the servant-maid of my wife.’ (proverb no. (3) in the present collection)

\[xá bàba' gə-mdábr ˈə̀srà yalûnke, \quad ˈə̀sra yalûnke la-gə-mdâbrì xá bàba.\]

‘One father can support ten children, [but] ten children cannot support one father.’ (proverb no. (39) in the present collection)

Parallelism in proverbs in the present collection: nos (3), (6), (9), (10), (39), (42), (43), (44), (45), (48), (49), (55), (58), (61), (65),
(75), (80), (82), (85), (86), (96), (97), (109), (153), (163), (168), (176), (177), (189), (191).


6.6. Semantic Field of the Proverb's Image

There are several particularly common semantic fields from which proverbs' images are drawn. It should be emphasised that the semantic field of the proverb's image does not determine other aspects of that proverb, that is, its message formula or its function.

6.6.1. Marriage

"palgôd ḥártîl, ḥànnâ-le."

‘One half of the bride-price is henna.’ (proverb no. (67) in the present collection)

Marriage image proverbs in the present collection: nos (6), (8), (23), (25), (42), (67), (87), (101), (117), (151), (153), (160), (169).

6.6.2. Family

\textit{bróni u-bər-bróni u-ṭé’ni ṭəlli}.\footnote{1}  
‘[Behold, here are] my son and my son’s son, [but yet] my load is upon me.’ Or: ‘My son and my son’s son and my load are upon me.’ (proverb no. (7) in the present collection)  
\textit{kúd gáwər yəmman},\footnote{1} \textit{b-ṣərxáxe bəbo}.ootnote{1} \textit{kúd gáwər sətan},\footnote{1} \textit{b-amráxe məmo}.ootnote{1}  
‘Whoever marries our mother, we shall call him father. Whoever marries our grandmother, we shall call him uncle.’\footnote{22} (proverb no. (23) in the present collection)

Family image proverbs in the present collection: nos (3), (6), (7), (12), (23), (39), (42), (80), (112), (114), (117), (151), (153).


6.6.3. Men and Women

\textit{dáwan baxtása},\footnote{1} \textit{bəš bassimə-le} \textit{mən-dáwan gūre}.\footnote{1}  
‘Sitting with women is better than sitting with men.’ (proverb no. (83) in the present collection)

Men and women image proverbs in the present collection: nos (12), (25), (58), (83), (86), (117), (151).

\footnote{22} Sabar (2002a, 210) notes that \textit{məmo} is “used by young people addressing a paternal uncle or any old person.” Each of the two sentences of this proverb can be used separately.

6.6.4. Animals

Figures include donkeys, dogs, fish, foxes, mice, chickens, roosters, partridges, goats, crabs, lions, sheep, snakes, bulls, cows, calves, livestock in general, birds, horses, camels, ravens, doves, cats, ants, fleas, lice.

ʾāzza mgurwàntaʾ k-šátya mën-rēš ṣèna.

‘The grimy goat drinks from the fountain-head.’ (proverb no. 1 in the present collection)

Animal image proverbs in the present collection: nos (1), (4), (7), (15), (22), (24), (28), (29), (31), (32), (35), (41), (54), (56), (57), (66), (70), (73), (90), (93), (102), (139), (141), (143), (165), (183).

6.6.5. Kitchen and Cooking

*qóqa g-ème| mer xési dēhua-la,1 ʾatrána [var: káfkir] g-ème| mer ʾátta mpáqli mónnox.1*

‘The clay pot says, “My bottom is made of gold”; the ladle says, “I just came out of there.”’ (proverb no. (61) in the present collection)

*qázra død hawéba rába kabaniyat,1 k-ősya yán malúxta1 yán pàxta.1*

‘A [pot of] cooked food that many cooks are involved in making turns out either [too] salty or [too] bland.’ (proverb no. (64) in the present collection)

Kitchen cooking and food image proverbs in the present collection: nos (24), (41), (44), (48), (55), (61), (62), (64), (75), (120), (115), (138), (149), (150), (159), (171), (172), (175), (176), (189), (191).


6.6.6. Vulgarity

Figures include genitailia, excrement, urine, flatulence, prostitution, promiscuity.

*parṯá| na mórre,1 la-k-iʿen ma b-ózən bêd-ó miráta ʾiddi,1 xmára mórre1 ba-ʾána lá g-màḥkən.1*

‘The flea said: “I do not know what to do about that good-for-nothing of mine [=my penis]”, the donkey said: “I, then, shall not speak.”’ (proverb no. (66) in the present collection)
Vulgarity serves to increase the out-of-contextness of the proverb, its ‘improper’ images being sharply contrasted with the casual stream of discourse (see also §10.1 below).

Vulgarity image proverbs in the present collection: nos (12), (22), (30), (31), (40), (47), (50), (53), (58), (63), (66), (68), (69), (70), (84), (88), (96), (99), (103), (104), (105), (107), (111), (144), (151), (155), (156), (164), (182).


6.6.7. Death and the Dead

\textit{mìsa dóhun qam-qorile, ʾál gan-ʾèzenʾ ʾál gəhənām, ʾl-waju.ʾ}

‘They have buried their dead, they do not care whether he goes to heaven or hell.’ (proverb no. (51) in the present collection)

This does not include proverbs whose message refers to death or to the deceased but whose image does not, such as (in the present collection) proverbs nos (11), (193), and (194).

Death and the dead image proverbs in the present collection: nos (19), (25), (50), (51), (60), (125), (158), (183).

6.7. Rhyme

Some proverbs rhyme.

šút ’ozlē xurāsi,¹ k-čáhe lóbbi u-g-néxi ḳəzəsi.¹
‘Work done [for me] by my friends, my heart gets tired and my hands rest.’ (proverb no. (71) in the present collection.

Cf. BA:1

gwāra' stāra.¹

‘Marriage is a shelter.’ (proverb no. (8) in the present collection)

Rhymed proverbs in the present collection: nos (6), (8), (9), (27), (29), (42), (45), (49), (52), (59), (60), (65), (68), (71), (75), (76), (77), (80), (82), (86), (87), (92), (95), (106), (108), (119), (126), (150), (151), (152), (159), (162), (176), (184), (190), (192), (193), (197).

6.8. Metre

Some proverbs present an equal number of stresses in the two parts of the proverb, similar to the metre of biblical poetry.

*dréla máya bød-tré šagyàsa.*¹

‘She poured water in both troughs.’ (proverb no. (81) in the present collection)

*marīra xtàya,*¹ *xólyà 'əlâyà.*¹

‘Bitter below, sweet above.’ (proverb no. (82) in the present collection)

Proverbs in metre in the present collection: nos (4), (6), (8), (13), (14), (15), (21), (29), (33), (34), (42), (44), (45), (52), (53), (55), (58), (59), (60), (65), (68), (71), (74), (75), (77), (81), (82), (85), (92), (96), (97), (101), (108), (109), (116), (119), (123), (139), (140), (143), (145), (147), (148), (150), (159), (168), (175), (177), (193), (197).

6.9. Alliteration

Alliteration or other forms of sound play are common in proverbs.

\[ brôni \ u-bôr-brôni \ u-ťê'ni \ ʾôlli. \]

‘[Behold, here are] my son and my son’s son, [but yet] my load is upon me.’ Or: ‘My son and my son’s son and my load are upon me.’ (proverb no. (7) in the present collection)

\[ kûri \ u-kurâstî, \ u-ťê'ni \ ʾôlli. \]

‘[Behold, here are] my young goat, and my young she-goat, [but yet] my load is upon me.’ Or: ‘My young goat and my young she-goat and my load are upon me.’ (proverb no. (7) var. in the present collection)

\[ xmârta \ mpâqlula \ xalawâsà. \]

‘The she-ass found relatives [lit. uncles].’ (proverb no. (28) in the present collection)

\[ lâ \ ʾálw \ jâjik, \ lâ \ ʾálw \ žâħhar. \]

‘Not [of] that jajik [=herbal cheese], [and] not [of] that poison.’ (proverb no. (44) in the present collection)

Proverbs with alliteration in the present collection: nos (2), (6), (7), (13), (28), (29), (44), (46), (47), (59), (60), (65), (72), (81), (82), (85), (92), (95), (96), (100), (101), (107), (108), (116), (119), (123), (126), (128), (133), (137), (140), (148), (150), (159), (161), (162), (163), (168), (184), (189), (191), (192), (193), (195), (197).

Proverbs


6.10. None of the Features Listed Above

Some proverbs contain none of the aforementioned features.

\[ xá lébe l-xà, 'g-émer tré tré sálo xun ʾālli. ' \]

‘One cannot overcome [even] one, [but] yet he says come unto me in pairs.’ (proverb no. (38) in the present collection)

\[ dámmād šómša g-nápqa, 'éwa g-él kàsla, 'áp-awa g-šbe šàxən. ' \]

‘When the sun comes out [= appears], the cloud goes to her, it also wants to warm up.’ (proverb no. (154) in the present collection)

Proverbs with none of the above features in the present collection: nos (26), (38), (94), (110), (113), (118), (121), (122), (129), (130), (131), (132), (134), (135), (154), (167), (173), (174), (179), (180), (185), (186), (187), (196).


7.0. Folkloristic Structure

In his article ‘On the Structure of the Proverb’, Alan Dundes (1981) offers an approach towards the analysis of proverb structure different from the one taken in the previous section. Dundes
still focuses on the internal structure of the proverb, but not on its linguistic structure. Rather than taking into account the proverb’s grammatical elements, Dundes considers what he terms its ‘folkloristic structure’:

To the extent that proverbs are composed of words, there would have to be linguistic structure involved. The question is rather whether there are underlying patterns of ‘folkloristic structure’ as opposed to ‘linguistic structure’ which may be isolated. (Dundes 1981, 46)

Dundes also detaches his analysis from the question of function:23 “The critical question is thus not what a proverb does, but what a proverb is” (Dundes 1981, 45).24

As quoted above (§3.0), Dundes defines the proverb as “a traditional propositional statement consisting of at least one descriptive element, a descriptive element consisting of a topic and a comment” (Dundes 1981, 60). The terms ‘subject’ and ‘predicate’ are deliberately avoided here, since these syntactic elements do not always coincide with the topic-comment pair.

In the tradition of structuralism, a central concept in Dundes’s analysis is contrast or opposition. When a proverb is comprised of more than one “descriptive element,” the relation between these elements may be either oppositional or non-oppositional. An example given by Dundes for a non-oppositional “multi-descriptive element proverb” (Dundes 1981, 60)—that is,  

23 And, indeed, a given proverb from its context. See §13.0 below.
24 This contrasts with the approach of Seitel, for example. See §9.0 below.
a proverb consisting of more than one descriptive element—is *like father, like son*. A Zakho example would be:

\[ \text{lá́ ʾáw jà́jik,́ lá́ ʾáw žà́ḥhār.} \]

‘Not [of] that jajik [=herbal cheese], [and] not [of] that poison.’ (proverb no. (44) in the present collection)

Dundes’s example for an oppositional multi-descriptive element proverb is *Man works from sun to sun but woman’s work is never done*, where there are oppositions of man versus woman, and finite work versus infinite work. A corresponding Zakho example would be:

\[ \text{bá́ba g-yáwöl ta-yalönké kútru k-fárḥi,́ yálonke g-yáwi ta-bábōhun' kútru g-bàxi,́} \]

‘[When] a father gives to [=provides for] his children, both [sides] are happy, [when] children give to their father, both [sides] cry.’ (proverb no. (80) in the present collection)

This distinction between oppositional and non-oppositional constitutes the primary division in Dundes’s typology of multi-descriptive element proverbs. The oppositional or non-oppositional relation between the descriptive elements in a proverb is generated by different proportions of “identificational-contrastive” features (Dundes 1981, 52). Some proverbs involve primarily contrastive features and are therefore clearly oppositional, while others involve identificational features and are non-oppositional. But many proverbs combine both identificational and contrastive features. Thus, the axis of oppositional-non-oppositional must be seen as a continuum (Dundes 1981, 59).

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25 The term is taken from linguist Kenneth Pike.
Proverbs achieve varying degrees of contrast or similarity by employing different combinations of contrast between their structural constituents. The strongest contrast is produced when both pairs of topics and the comments of the two descriptive elements are in opposition: *Last hired, first fired* (last ≠ first, hired ≠ fired). Similar examples exist in Zakho:

*dərmán šəzāne *īz,* dərmán šrī’e lès.*

‘There is a cure for the mad, [but] there is no cure for the crazed.’ (proverb no. (10) in the present collection)

(cure for the mad ≠ cure for the crazed, there is a ≠ there is no)

*mád mjomā’lu bəd kočēksa,* zállu bəd ’ətrāna.*

‘What they have saved with a spoon, they wasted with a ladle.’ (proverb no. (48) in the present collection)

(saved ≠ wasted, spoon ≠ ladle)

A lesser contrast exists when only one pair of these components is in opposition: *Easy come, easy go* (easy = easy, come ≠ go). Zakho examples of this lesser degree of contrast include:

*lá èwa* u-lá sàxwa,*

‘Not [in] cloud and not [in] fine weather.’ (proverb no. (45) in the present collection)

(not = not, cloud ≠ fine weather)

*sawóna qrōšle,* sotánta hnēle-la,*

‘The old man pinched [and] the old woman enjoyed it.’ (proverb no. (58) in the present collection)

(old man ≠ old woman, to pinch parallels to enjoy)

Non-opposition will be produced when none of the components are in contrast: *Many men, many minds.* Zakho examples:
qámle čûka,’ bsómla dûka.

‘Čuka got up, [and] the place become [more] pleasant.’
(proverb no. (59) in the present collection)

ʾóz hawûsa,’ mándi b-màya.

‘Do an act of kindness, [and] throw [it] in the water.’ (proverb no. (74) in the present collection)

For Dundes (1981, 54), “all proverbs are potentially propositions which compare and/or contrast.” A high level of contrast or contradiction between the elements of the proverb is analogous, suggests Dundes, to the concept of complementary distribution in linguistic theory. For example, consider When the cat’s away, the mice will play (Dundes 1981, 55). From the three sets of contrasting composites in this proverb—cat ≠ mice, one ≠ many, absence ≠ presence—there appears an image of two mutually exclusive situations: the presence of the cat versus the presence of the mice. These two situations can be said to be in complementary distribution, since when one is the case the other cannot be. Once again, an analogous example can be found in Zakho proverbs:

šûla’ ʾārya-le,’ g-náḥki ʾólle,’ k-páyəš ruvika,’

‘Work is a lion. Only touch it [and] it becomes a fox.’ (proverb no. (73) in the present collection)
(untouched [not commenced] work ≠ touched [commenced] work, lion ≠ fox)

The two situations—where one has not started work and it is as intimidating as a lion, and where one has started work and consequently it has shrunk to being a fox—are mutually exclusive, and may be described as being in complementary distribution.
On the basis of these principles Dundes offers several types of underlying ‘folkloristic structure’ of proverbs. These types, in addition to giving insights concerning the theory of the phenomenon of the proverb, may be used as a tool for the classification and lexicography of proverbs.

8.0. Proverbs in Behavioural or Interactional Contexts vs Proverbs in Narratives

A distinction should be made between proverbs used in social interaction and proverbs used within a narrative. Those two categories, however, overlap to a degree. Firstly, narratives in themselves can perform, and usually do perform, a function in social interaction. And secondly, the account of proverb used in social interaction—the context situations provided in the present proverb collection, for example—is always in the form of a narrative: the actual social happening has been narrativised.

Scholars have studied the use of proverbs within narratives, particularly folk-narratives, as a special case of proverb usage, with its own unique additional characteristics:

The use of a proverb within a folk narrative, stresses the paradigmatic, cultural aspect of the proverb. The proverb within the narrative creates an effect of intertextuality, a relationship between several texts. (Hasan-Rokem 1982a, 11)

A special class of proverb consists of those proverbs which allude to particular narratives, usually narratives which are well-known

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26 A book dedicated to this topic is Hasan-Rokem (1982a).
to members of the community. A proverb of this type immediately brings to mind the associated narrative, and thus telling it in its entirety becomes unnecessary. The frequent use of a proverb of this kind separately from its narrative grants it a degree of independence, and it is possible that a member of the community could learn the correct usage, message, and social function of such a proverb without becoming aware of its narrative, although, naturally, knowing the narrative is a condition for a fuller understanding of it.

Several such narrative-dependent proverbs are recorded in the present collection: nos (70), (101), and (117). There are also examples in the previously published collections: R:3, R:4, R:5, R:6, R:9, R:10, R:20, R:37, R:41, R:43, R:59, R:82, R:85, R:95; SE:65; SA:12, SA:30.

9.0. Seitel’s Social Use of a Metaphor

A model of analysing the elements of a proverb’s utterance in relation to its extra-linguistic context was suggested by Peter Seitel (1969). Seitel divides each performance of a proverb into three components:

1. the ‘social context’: the various elements that constitute the relation between the speaker and the hearer of a proverb, the circumstantial relation between the addressee of the proverb and its addresser;
2. the ‘imaginary situation’: the constituents of the image expressed in the proverb itself and the nature of the relations between them;
3. the ‘social situation’: the situation in social interaction that the proverb is applied to, the social end that the proverb is intended to further.

This can be exemplified using the following Zakho proverb.

\[\text{xmára } k-t-e \text{ } 'áxol ná'na'?! \]

‘Does a donkey know to eat spearmint?!’ (proverb no. (41) in the present collection)

This proverb was said by a grandmother to her grandson when the latter refused to eat a certain dish she had prepared for him. According to Seitel’s terminology, the social context would be the familial relation between a grandmother and a grandson, with all that it entails (age, gender, traditional roles, generational gap, etc.); the imaginary situation would be the image expressed in the proverb itself, that is to say the donkey, the spearmint, and the relation between them, perhaps ‘inability to eat’, ‘lack of appreciation’, or ‘ignorance of the quality of’; and the social situation to which the proverb is applied is the refusal of the grandson to eat the dish due to, in the grandmother’s view, ignorance towards its quality or mere stubbornness. It is clear, and this is one of the central qualities of the phenomenon of the proverb, that there is an analogical relationship between the imaginary situation of the proverb and the social situation.

Another important part of Seitel’s model is the concept of correlation. In our example, the grandson fills two roles: he takes part in both the social context—being a child, male, grandson, of a certain age, and so on—and also in the social situation—being
the one that refuses stubbornly and ignorantly to eat. The mapping of one type of relation onto the other by means of applying a proverb is termed by Seitel ‘correlation’.

Seitel proposes a simple and useful way of classifying types of correlation. A proverbial correlation may be either in the first, second, or third person, singular or plural. In our example, the correlation is that of second person singular. Had the grandmother directed the proverb to two of her grandchildren, the correlation would have been second person plural. Had the grandmother uttered the proverb while speaking to her daughter, the mother of the grandson, about the grandson’s refusal, the correlation would have been third person singular.

As Seitel shows, the very same proverb may have different, and sometimes reversed, meanings when used in different correlations. Seitel states that, in the community whose proverbs are the subject of his study, proverbs belonging to the type involving animals, when correlated with human beings in a first-person correlation, are always intended to justify one’s own actions, whereas the same type of proverb, and indeed the same proverbs themselves, when in a second-person correlation, are intended as a negative appraisal of the addressee’s actions. There seems to be a rule operating here, which can only be discovered by documenting and analysing the features of the context and the situation. It is a demonstration of the importance of the documentation of these features for the study of the phenomenon of the proverb in any given language community.

Seitel’s approach is directed at answering a critical question: 

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28 The Ibo people of Eastern Nigeria.
Given that a person has memorized a certain number of proverb texts, by application of what set of rules does he speak them in a culturally appropriate manner and by what criteria does he judge the correctness of another’s usage? (Seitel 1969, 144)

In Seitel’s view, the answer to this question is to be found in these ‘external’ categories of function.

10.0. Arora’s ‘Perception of Proverbiality’

Unlike other scholars who have attempted to define the genre of proverbs, Shirley Arora, in her article ‘The Perception of Proverbiality’ (Arora 1994), does not try to find intrinsic features of the proverb by studying a particular corpus of actual proverbs, on the basis of which a definition may be formulated. In her view, the important question is not what a proverb is, but rather what leads listeners to identify a proverb when they encounter one.

Arora distinguishes between two separate questions. The first question is, how does the researcher identify a proverb? That is, how does the researcher determine the category of their object of investigation, in which some phrases are included and some are not (Arora 1994, 4)? The second, more fundamental, question is, how does a speaker of a particular language, within a particular oral culture, identify a proverb? How does the speaker assign the label ‘proverb’ correctly? From a descriptive point of view, this is a central question; as Arora (1994, 6) argues, “the success of a proverb performance as such must depend ultimately

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29 In the words of Seitel (1969, 144): “How does one recognize that which he is going to study?”
on the listener’s ability to perceive that he or she is being addressed in traditional, i.e., proverbial, terms.”

By applying the label ‘proverb’ to an utterance, the listener refers its content not to the authorship of the immediate speaker, but to the authority of communal tradition. This dissociation of the proverb from the individual speaker is an important factor in the performance of a proverb, and is one of the sources of its effectiveness in fulfilling its social function.

What is significant, and essential to the success of any proverb performance, is evidence that the utterance in question was ‘not made up’ by the speaker; that it belongs to the category of ‘they say,’ not ‘I say.’ (Arora 1994, 8)

The listener knows that the proverb used by the speaker was not made up by that person. It is a proverb from the cultural past whose voice speaks truth in traditional terms. It is the ‘One,’ the ‘Elders,’ or the ‘They’ in ‘They say,’ who direct. The proverb user is but the instrument through which the proverb speaks to the audience. (Arewa and Dundes 1964, 70, adapted by Arora 1994, 5, with Arora’s adaptations in italics)

Thus the question of how a listener knows that a particular phrase is intended as a proverb arises. How does he or she know that it is expected of him or her to refer the saying to communal authorship?

Arora’s claim is that a number of features increase the probability of a phrase being perceived as a proverb. Some of these features are independent of the ‘genuineness’ of the proverb: an ‘artificial’ newly composed proverb, in which these features are deliberately incorporated, may well be perceived as a genuine ‘traditional’ one; this is indeed shown to be the case by the results of an experiment reported in the article (Arora 1994, 13–23). These
features, therefore, play a crucial role in the process of the acceptance or rejection of new proverbs in a particular community.\textsuperscript{30}

Each of the nine features that Arora suggests increase the chance of a listener interpreting an utterance as a proverb are now discussed in turn.

10.1. Out-of-contextness

The out-of-context nature of proverbs, when used in a natural conversational context, is a feature noted by many paremiologists.\textsuperscript{31} Here it is argued that the ‘abruption’ of the natural, well-contextualised, flow of conversation, is one of the markers that allow the listener to identify a proverb. This trait, naturally, can be observed by a listener or researcher only when proverbs occur within the framework of natural discourse.\textsuperscript{32}

10.2. Traditionality

For a researcher, the traditionality of a proverb is in many cases a verifiable attribute (Arora 1994, 7). A proverb that is claimed to be ‘traditional’ by a community of speakers may be found either in historical documents of previous periods of the language or in more recent scholarly paremiographical collections.

\textsuperscript{30} Arora, whose study is based on the identification of proverbs in Spanish by members of Spanish-speaking communities in Los Angeles, acknowledges that these features and the ranking of their relative prominence may differ in different languages.

\textsuperscript{31} See, for instance, Seitel’s definition quoted in §3.0 above.

\textsuperscript{32} Hence the importance of providing context situations in a proverb collection; see §13.0 below.
This, however, cannot be applied to languages for which written sources are lacking. Neo-Aramaic, in this respect, presents in a challenging situation: there is relatively little historical documentation of Neo-Aramaic and its various dialects. However, other forms of older Aramaic are abundantly documented. A comparison between the corpus of Neo-Aramaic proverbs and the corpus of Talmudic Aramaic proverbs, for instance, may prove fruitful.\textsuperscript{33} Furthermore, many Neo-Aramaic proverbs may have parallel proverbs attested in historical documents of other languages of the area (Hebrew, Kurdish, Persian, Turkish, or Arabic).

10.3. Currency

Taylor (1985, 3) defined the proverb as “a saying current among the folk.” There is no doubt that general acceptance is an important, perhaps crucial, feature of a proverb. But what is the criterion for considering a proverb to be current? What is the ‘critical mass’ of currency? It seems that there is no clear answer for this.\textsuperscript{34}

Determining the currency of a proverb becomes more problematic when investigating a language such as Jewish Neo-Aramaic, with a limited number of native speakers. If one wishes to capture the ‘traditional’ situation, one must assume that modern

\textsuperscript{33} For examples of Jewish Zakho proverbs with Talmudic or Midrashic parallels, see proverbs nos (15), (39), (44), (52), (64), (77), (178) in the present collection.

\textsuperscript{34} Arora (1994, 7): “but no one has suggested a means of identifying the point at which sufficient ‘currency’ has been attained to mark the magical transformation from non-proverb to proverb.”
speakers’ knowledge, judgement, and familiarity with the lexicon of proverbs represent those of the community of earlier period. However, this problem is solved if the subject of study is defined as the language as it is spoken today by its present community of speakers, and the oral culture of that community.

It should be borne in mind that actual traditionality and currency have little or no significance for the speaker and listener in a proverb performance situation. The speakers usually do not possess any factual knowledge about these variables. As Arora puts it, “from the ethnic point of view, age and currency are largely assumptions based on the attribution of these characteristics to the abstract category of ‘proverbs’” (Arora 1994, 8).

10.4. Repetition

The fact that a particular phrase is repeated on more than one occasion by speakers is an indication that it is a proverb. It is not a sufficient one though, since it is also common for simple sentences to be repeated in conversation. Arora claims, however, that “more complex utterances are not as a rule repeated word for word on other occasions” (Arora 1994, 8).

10.5. Grammatical and Syntactic Features

Proverbs are likely to have some grammatical or syntactical features which both make the proverb “easier to remember and transmit” (Silverman-Weinreich 1981, 71, quoted in Arora 1994, 9–10), and “[intimate] to those who do not know it that it is a proverb” (Silverman-Weinreich 1981, 71, quoted in Arora 1994, 9–10). These features, however, are not in themselves sufficient
for a definition of the genre, since they “would appear equally applicable to non-traditional, conversational utterances” (Arora 1994, 10; see §6.0 above for examples of this type of features).

10.6. Metaphor

When browsing through an existing collection of proverbs, labelled as such, we automatically interpret the proverbs’ images as meant metaphorically: the label ‘proverb’ entails metaphorical interpretation.

In reality, however, the process is the opposite: the out-of-contextness of a statement “labels it as a metaphor, to be understood figuratively, and leads in turn to its identification as a proverb” (Arora 1994, 11). The metaphorical interpretation, triggered by the utterance’s out-of-contextness, entails the labelling as ‘proverb’. The metaphorical quality of a proverb is determined by its context. It “becomes metaphorical only within its context” (Arora 1994, 11). As a result, paremiographical collections which document only the proverbs, and isolate them from their original discursive context, lack something fundamental to the phenomenon of the proverb and its study (see §13 below).

10.7. Paradox and Irony

Proverbs may use features such as paradox or irony, or “sharp contrasts and surprising comparisons” (Arora 1994, 11, referring to the ideas of Silverman-Weinreich 1981, 77). These semantic features “add to the impression of an utterance as a polished ar-

10.8. Lexical Markers

The use of archaic lexical items both “mark[s] an utterance as non-conversational” and “provide[s] added evidence to the listener that what he is hearing is an ‘old’ saying” (Arora 1994, 12). Along the same lines, Sabar (1978, 218 and fn. 18) claims that “proverbs may indicate various dialects or older strata and include archaic forms or words, some of them unknown or obsolete outside of the proverb. [...] As any folk literature, proverbs, too, may preserve archaic words and forms.”

10.9. Prosodic Markers

The use of certain prosodic (or as Arora terms them, phonic) markers can signal to a listener that an utterance is a proverb. For example, if an utterance involves rhyme, metre, or alliteration, it is more likely to be treated as a proverb.

The existence or absence of metric substructure in a message is the quality first recognized in any communicative

35 For a discussion from another angle of the proverb being ‘a polished artefact’, see §12.0 below.
36 Sabar gives the following example (SA:150): zólle xóla básor dòla. ‘The rope has followed the drum (or the bucket).’ Sabar explains that the original meaning of the archaic word dòla ‘bucket’ was lost in Neo-Aramaic, and so the word is interpreted as its homonym, ‘drum’; hence the different explanations of the proverb. See proverb no. (77) in the present collection.
event and hence serves as the primary and most inclusive attribute for the categorization of oral tradition. The presence of such markers indicates ‘a deliberate deviation from everyday speech’. (Ben-Amos 1976a, 228–29, quoted in Arora 1994, 13)

11.0. Deictic and Anaphoric Usage

A distinction may be made between the deictic and anaphoric usages of proverbs. Proverbs may be used deictically—that is, they may refer to persons, events, situations, or objects that are extra-linguistic, but still have relevance to the speaking event. Proverbs may also be used in reference to persons, events, situations, facts, and so on that were previously mentioned in the discourse—that is, anaphorically.

The anaphoric usage of proverbs is most evident when proverbs are employed in narrative, where it is clear that they refer to an intra-discursive element. The distinction between deictic and anaphoric proverb usage is not identical to that between behavioural and narrative usages. Deictic and anaphoric usages can each be found in both behavioural and narrative contexts.

12.0. The Creative Process and the Proverb-reality Cycle

In order to recognise a proverb as such, the addressee ought to identify in it a degree of creative reworking. The addressee must sense the trace of a creative process (see also §10.7 above). The creative formulation is what makes encountering an utterance of
a proverb enjoyable, and appreciated as meaningful, and is ultimately responsible for the proverb’s acceptance. The trace of creative work can take various forms: interesting prosody, rhyme, or metre, a surprising metaphor, or humour. Each of the features discussed in §§6.1–10 and 10.1–9 above may serve as a trace of creative processing, detectable by the listeners.

The various kinds of creative formulation are the result of the focusing of the creative effort on different stages of what is here termed the proverb-reality cycle:

(a) a general, recurring situation in reality, or a general truth learned from experience (i.e., a ‘type’ of reality, in terms of linguistic theory)

(b) the formulation of a proverb, by way of abstraction, generalisation (the poiesis of the proverb, its creative processing)

(c) the application of an existing proverb to a particular situation in reality (a ‘token’ of reality); the instantiation of the proverb

The creative effort may be concentrated in varying proportions in the three stages of this cycle, as well as in the transitional stages leading from one to the other. Focusing the creative effort

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37 As opposed to a ‘token’. The relation in the pair type/token in this context is similar to the one in the Saussurean pair langue/parole.
in different stages produces different types of proverb. For example, consider the following two types of proverb.

1. Proverbs which are formulations of general truths with unique wording and rhyme, metre, or alliteration. These proverbs tend to be spoken when the situation depicted in them actually occurs, that is to say, they tend not to be used metaphorically. Examples would be:

 pára xwàra' ta yóma kòma.¹
‘A white coin for a black day.’ (proverb no. (65) in the present collection; also BA:2, SA:102)
This proverb may be said, for instance, when a small amount of money is saved, or when coins change hands.

 palgód qaḥbùsa' món nɔxpùsa.¹
‘Half of the lewdness is caused by shyness.’ (proverb no. (68) in the present collection)
This proverb may be said, for instance, when a shameful incident happens to someone who is considered too modest or self-righteous.

2. Proverbs which do not express in their image a general truth or a general statement. These are spoken in situations which are completely different from what is expressed in their image, and often in a very surprising way. An example would be:

 'aqúbra lá g-yá'ol go-nùqba,¹ g-máy'ol kanúšta 'ɔmme.¹
‘A mouse cannot enter the hole, [but yet it tries to] take a broom in with it.’ (proverb no. (4) in the present collection)
This proverb is used to describe a person who commits himself or herself to a task beyond his or her powers, or to refer to a situation in which the resources are not sufficient to achieve a goal.

Another example would be:

\[ kūd \ g-šbe \ sàker,\ lá-g-manelu \ kashiye. \]

‘Whoever wants to get drunk does not count the cups.’
(proverb no. (21) in the present collection)

This proverb is used when someone tries to save expenses after having already decided they want to achieve something, or to express the view that one should commit oneself wholeheartedly to what one is doing.

In a proverb of type (1), the focus of creativity would be in stage (b), the proverb’s poetic formulation, and in the transitional stage leading to it, the identification of the recurring situation in reality. In a proverb of type (2), the focus of creativity would be stage (c), the application of the proverb in a surprising manner, in a situation which is seemingly unrelated to the proverb’s image.

Even a trace of the focus of creativity in the proverb is sufficient to enable the proverb’s acceptability, and its preservation in shared cultural memory.

13.0. Context Situations

In the present collection of proverbs, a context situation is provided for each proverb in §14.0, giving a situation in which a speaker may use the proverb naturally. There are two main reasons for providing these context situations.
1. The context situation is an example of the correct use of the proverb. It provides the information about proverb competence involved in the usage of that particular proverb—for instance, the correlations between the constituents of the proverbs and reality, the out-of-contextness of the proverb, and so on.

2. A context situation is the most effective and accurate way of recording the message of the proverb. For many of the proverbs, the message—a principal part of the proverb’s meaning—cannot be inferred from the proverb’s image. It may be argued that the most important part of the meaning of the proverb lies outside of it.

An example of the importance of context statements for the second reason, that they give an effective means for recording the message of the proverb, can be demonstrated with a proverb

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38 Hasan-Rokem (1982a, 16): “The different performances reveal the denotative and connotative variation of a proverb, in the same way as different performances reveal the semantic variation of a word.”

39 In discussing the understanding of proverbs, Hasan-Rokem (1982a, 15) notes that “in and of itself, the proverb is an inadequate source.” The corpus of Aramaic proverbs recorded in the Talmud serves as an illustration of this. In many cases, the meaning of these proverbs is unclear, as is evident from opposing interpretations made by commentators. The reason is not necessarily that obscure words are used in the proverb. Rather, it is precisely because the meaning of the proverb lies primarily in its message, and in its social usage, both of which can be understood only if context is provided. When context is not recorded, the fragile meaning of the proverb is easily forgotten.
which appears in all four previously published collections (with slight variations):

\[ \text{déna l-gùre,} \text{ tálga l-ṭùre.} \]

‘Debt on men, snow on mountains.’

Each collection gives a different explanation of the message of this proverb, and has a different understanding of the correlations between the metaphor’s constituents and what they represent. Bar-Adon explains: “A man must not despair due to the load of his debt, like the eternal snow which the mountains carry patiently” (Bar-Adon 1930, 13; my translation). That is, the ability of mountains to steadily resist the weight of snow is correlated to men’s perseverance. Rivlin explains: “Meaning, people will not give back what you lend them” (Rivlin 1946, 212; my translation). That is, the disposition of snow to melt is correlated with people’s tendency not to pay back. Alternatively, snow as a common reality is correlated with people’s indifference towards their debts. Segal explains: “Do not be afraid to incur debts; they will disappear like the winter snows” (Segal 1955, 268). That is, the snow’s disposition to melt is correlated with a debt’s tendency to eventually be settled. Finally, Sabar explains: “Just as it is natural for the lofty mountains to have snow on top, so it is for men to have debts. Don’t be ashamed to borrow money!” (Sabar 1978, 223). That is, the naturalness of mountains carrying a heavy load of snow is correlated with the supposed naturalness of men to have debts.

\[ ^{40} \text{Sabar’s (1978, 223) translation has been provided here. Interestingly, the second half (in SE:125: the first half) of the proverb appears in the Babylonian Talmud, Ta‘anit 3b:} \]

תלגא לטרים.
In addition to offering different understandings of the message of this proverb and the function of the metaphor, the cited collections do not help us to establish the rules for the correct usage of this proverb, that is to say, in which social and discursive circumstances it may or may not be spoken.\footnote{A further example of the importance of context in proverb usage is seen in Dundes (1981, 51), where he comments on Sokolov’s (1950, 285) statement that what distinguishes a proverb from a riddle in the case of a particular Russian sentence that can be used as both is intonation: Sokolov is incorrect, however, when he contends it is only by means of a single change of intonation that a proverb is transformed into a riddle. It is obviously not intonation per se which is the critical causal factor. Instead, it is the context in which the text is cited. [...] The context or rhetorical intention of the speaker determines the intonation pattern and the genre distinction.}
14.0. The Proverbs

The proverbs and proverbial phrases in this collection were collected from various informants. All context situations, unless otherwise stated, are recorded from Batia Aloni. Each proverb is glossed, translated, and given a context situation.

(1) ʾə́zza mgurwànta’ k-šátya mən-rëš ʾëna.’

goat.F grumpy.F IND-drink.IPFV.F from-head.GEN fountain/spring.F

‘The grumpy goat drinks from the fountain-head.’

Vars.: ʾə́zza mgurwànta’ ʾəl rëš ʾëna.’

‘The grumpy goat goes to the fountain-head.’

ʾə́zza mgurwànta’ k-šátya mən-rëš xawòra.’

‘The grumpy goat drinks from the river’s head.’

Yael spent the night with us, she was very cold [lit. she froze of cold], I covered her with a blanket [lit. I threw a blanket on her], she said to me, “This blanket—whose is it, whose is it?! I do not want it! I do not want to cover [myself] with it!” I told her, “Very well,

42 The Leipzig Glossing Rules (https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php) are used here. Abbreviations used are: ACC accusative, COP copula, DAT dative, DEM demonstrative, F feminine, FUT future, GEN genitive, IMP imperative, IND indicative, INF infinitive, IPFV imperfective, JUS jussive, M masculine, NEG negator, PAST past tense, PFV perfective, PFV_PTCP perfective participle, PL plural, POSS possessive, REL relative, S singular, VERB_N verbal noun, 1 first person, 2 second person, 3 third person.

43 See note about translation in §5.0 of the Introduction.

44 See §13.0 above.
mgurwànta' g-éza šátya mën-rēš [you] fastidious half-wit [lit. bland-clean]! A grimy goat goes [and] drinks from the fountain-head."

(2) ḥéza d-ṣd léb	extsuperscript{45}-ox nagz-ēt-ta' nṣūq-la.'
hand.f of-gen unable-2ms bite.ipfv-3ms-acc.3fs kiss.imp.2s-acc.3fs
‘A hand that you cannot bite, [you should] kiss.’

Var.: ḥéz lébox nagzētta' nṣūqla.'

The connection between kissing and biting as opposite expressions of love and hate can be found in an interpretation of Gen. 33.4 in Midrash Genesis Rabbah 78.9 with regard to Jacob and Esau.

xa-báxta ūzla gazénta el-
‘A [certain] woman complained [lit. made a complaint] about her sister-in-law, and told [her] what she had done and what trouble she caused her [lit. and played with her head]. And she said she had wanted to quarrel with her, [but] she said [to herself] “I should not destroy my brother’s house, a hand which you cannot bite, kiss it. And I spoke with her well [= nicely].”

(3) xásə g-ənra.' ḥaxōn-i, xuzí xazy-án-nox
sister.ind-say.ipfv.3fs brother-poss.1s i.wish see.ipvf-1fs-acc.2ms
wázir dûnye, ḥaxōna g-ēmer.' xās-i, xuzí
wazir.m.gen world.f brother.ind-say.ipfv.3ms sister-poss.1s i.wish
xaz-ən-nax xəddámt-əd bāxt-i.'
see.ipvf-1ms-acc.2fs servant_maid-gen wife-poss.1s

\textsuperscript{45} A construction from older Aramaic la 'it b- ‘there is not in-'. 
The sister says: “My brother, I wish I would see you [= that you would be] the wazir of the [entire] world.” The brother says: “My sister, I wish I would see you [= that you would be] the servant-maid of my wife.”

I love my eldest [lit. firstborn] brother very much, throughout the years [lit. all of the years] whatever he asks me I give him, also money when he needed. My own dear soul [lit. sweet spirit/soul] was for him. When he married I did for him and for his wife whatever they wanted, and he always used to ask me to help his wife with the housework because she cannot do [this] work by herself. After a few years I understood what people say: The sister says ‘My brother, I wish I would see you [= you would be] the wazir of the [entire] world. The brother says: “My sister, I wish I would see you [= you would be] the servant-maid of my wife.”
(4) ʾaqūbra lá  g-yāʾəl    go-nùqba,1 g-máyʾəl
mouse.M  NEG ind-enter.ipfv.3ms  in-hole.m  ind-insert.ipfv.3ms

kanūsta ʾəmm-e.1
broom.F  with-gen.3ms

‘A mouse does not [=cannot] enter the hole, [but yet it tries to] take a broom in with it.’

Var.: ʾaqūbra lébe yáʾel go-nùqba...

‘A mouse cannot enter the hole...’

Cf. proverbs nos (38) and (140) below, which are synonyms.

(5) ʾal réš  yatûme1 g-lépi    garàʾe.1
on  head.m.gen  orphan.m  ind-learn.ipfv.3pl  barber.mpl

‘On the head of the orphan do the barbers learn.’

Var.: ʾal réš yatûma1 g-lépi ʾillé gràʾa.1

‘On the head of the orphan they learn to cut hair over it.’

When I started learning to cook, I used to cook matfuniya146 and xamuṣṭa,47 and I used to take the whole pot to our neighbours who were poor and had many children [lit. a

46 A tomato soup with meat dumplings.
47 A sour soup with meat dumplings.
Our neighbour came [and] said to my mother, “Sotuna, bless me, they want to send my husband to be a consul in America.” My mother asked, “Who told you?” She said, “No one, but I know because the consul is an old man, and there is no one [suitable] like my husband.” My mother remained silent. Afterwards she said to my father, “[In] the house of the bride they are [already] rejoicing, [but in] the house of the bridegroom they have not [yet] felt [anything].” After a few weeks, the neighbour said, “They did not send my husband, they sent another person.”

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48 According to Sabar (2002a, 286), the meaning of this verb is ‘to notice, wake up (as a result of noise, etc.).’ For NENA speakers in Israel, though, the fundamental meaning of rʾš is ‘to feel’. This is possibly due to the influence of the Modern Hebrew cognate rgš.
(7) bron-i u-bər-brón-i u-ṭe’n-i ʾəll-i.1
son-poss.1s and-son-gen-son-poss.1s and-load.m-poss.1s on-1s

‘[Behold, here are] my son and my son’s son, [but yet] my load is upon me.’

Or: ‘My son and my son’s son and my load are upon me.’

Vars.: kúri u-kurəsti,1 u-ṭe’nii ʾəlli.1 / rəš-ḫəsi.1

‘[Behold, here are] my young goat, and my young she-goat, [but yet] my load is upon me / on my back.’

Or: ‘My young goat and my young she-goat and my load are upon me / on my back.’

Cf. proverb no. (180) below.

kúlla dúnye hīla l-rēši.1 bron i-
bar-bróni u-ṭe’ni ʾəlli.1

šul-ʾéza kúlle-ile ʾəlli,1 hām
ʾaxwāsi u-hām yalūnke dīdi b-āṣe
pāši ʾəmmi,1 kúri u-kurəsti,1 u-
te’ni ʾəlli,1 gūlli mgombōlli go-
šūla,1

(8) gwàra’ stāra,1
marriage [ = marry.INF] cover.INF

‘Marriage is a shelter.’

Var.: gwàra’ stāra-le.1

‘Marriage is a shelter.’

Cf. R:81, a synonym.

dāde hār g-əmrāwa ṭalēni,1 brātī Dade always used to tell us:
bnāsa lāzəm gōri,1 gwàra’ stāra-
le.1 “My daughter, girls should get
married, marriage is a shelter.”
(9) *doḷāmand* — *brióxa háwe ʾdł-lox,* *fàqqir* —
rich.m blessed.ms be.ipfv.3ms on-2ms poor.ms
*m-ēka wéle-lox.*
from-where be.pfv.3ms-dat.2ms

‘[To the] rich [they say] may it be a blessing [lit. blessed] for you, [to the] poor [they say] where did you get it from [lit. from where is it to you]?’

Vars.: ‘āšir’—*brióxa háwe ʾdłlox,* ʾānī’—mēka wéle-lox.*

‘Rich—may it be blessed for you, poor—where did you get it from?’

*fàqqir mēka-lox,* *doḷāmand* brixa ʾʾllox.*

‘Poor—where is it from? Rich—blessed upon you.’


Šǒlo lūšle básle xāsta u-zálle l-šle bádle mēka-ila? krōble u-márre qam-zonīnna dūksēt nāhum zangīn zūnne básle dīde. ʾāya-ila, ʾānī mēka-lox, ʾāšir brixa ʾʾllox.*

Šǒlo wore a new suit and went to synagogue. Everyone asked him: ‘This suit where is it from?’ He became angry and said: ‘I bought it where Nahum the rich had bought his suit.’ That is, poor—where did you get it from, rich—[may it be] a blessing [lit. blessed] for you.’

(10) *dərmán šəzāne ᵃz,* *dərmán šrīe lɛs.*

cure.m.gen mad.pl there is cure.m.gen crazed.pl there is not

‘There is a cure for the mad, [but] there is no cure for the crazed.’
That woman is not human, no one can get along [lit. do] with her, she is crazy. Her sister-in-law said [lit. rose and said], ‘She is not mad, I wish she were mad [lit. may it be on madness]. There is a cure for the mad, but not for the crazed.’

(11) dûnye[lá-k-peša] ta ̣čû-xa. ̣
world.F NEG-IND-remain.IPV.3FS for no_one

‘The world will remain for no one.’

Var.: dûnye la-pëša ta-čû-xa. ̣

‘The world will remain for no one.’

Cf. SA:45.

Murdakh the son of Yona did a lot in his life. He bought and sold houses, he built a lot in Jerusalem, and half of the roads in Jerusalem it was he who built, and he passed away [lit. rested] suddenly. All the people were shocked, one said to the other, “The world does not remain to anyone”, not even to Moses our Master.

(12) hákan soté-ni hawé-wa-la ̣škàsa, ̣
if grandmother-POSS.1PL be.IPV-PAST-DAT.3FS testicle.FPL b-šarx-áx-wa-la màmo. ̣
FUT-call.IPV-1PL-PAST-ACC.3FS uncle.M

49 Sabar (2002a, 210) on màmo: “used by young people addressing a paternal uncle or any old person.”
‘If our grandmother had had testicles, we would have called her uncle.’

‘amóyi mòrre,₁ hákan 'ozónwa Ḟótô,₁ kazbónwa ràba,₁ báxte qam-jobâle,₁ šmè’lan' šmè’lan,₁ hákan sóti hawéwala ḋskàsa,₁ b-šarxáxwala màmo.₁

My uncle said: “If I had done such and such [lit. like that], I would have profited a lot.” His wife answered him: “So we heard, so we heard, if my grandmother had had testicles, we would have called her un-cle.”

(13) hákan u-bàlkid ḡawwäl-bâla.₁

if and-maybe trouble.F

‘Maybes cause only trouble.’

wan-mfakóre hákan 'ozónwa Ḟótô,₁ bálkid bás-tov hòya,₁ u-

hákan Ḟótô,₁ bálkid... yîmmi mòrra hákan u-bàlkid ḡawwel-
bâla.₁ lá lazém xáswat hákan Ḟótô₁ u-hákan Ḟótô₁.

I was thinking if I had done so [lit. like this], maybe it would have been better, and if [I had done] so [lit. like this], maybe... My mother said: “If and maybe [cause only] trouble, you should not think if so and if so.”

(14) huzáya g-nápøq mën màhkame,₁

jew.M IND-exit.ipfv.3MS from court.F

‘aqøle k-ése b-rêš-e.₁

mind/intelligence.M-POSS.3MS IND-come.ipfv.3MS in-head.M-POSS.3MS

‘[Only when] the Jew comes out of the court, does he gain back his wit.’

zólli tâ’yan šûla ta-‘èšan.₁ sëli,₁ qam-baqrîli kma-šò’ale.₁ mën-

šëtan’ pòmmi ñglèqle’ lâ y’èli ma.₁ ‘àmran.₁ mpõqli u-mtoxmûni má-lazém mjobànwa.₁ ḡë!₁

huzáya g-nápøq mën-màhkame,₁ ‘aqøle k-ése b-rêš-e.₁

I went to look for a job [in order] to support myself. I came, they asked me a few questions. From Satan [=Satan made it so that], my mouth closed, I did not know what to say. I went out and thought about what I should have answered. Ah! The Jew goes out of the courthouse [and] his mind comes [back] to his head.
(15) **tóra g-nàpel,** sakíne g-zàhf-i.  

ox.m ind-fall.ipfv.3ms knife.pl ind-proliferate.ipfv-3pl  

‘The ox falls down, [and] the knives become abundant.’  

Var.: **tóra mpàlle,** sakíne zìḥflu.  

‘The ox fell, knives became abundant.’  

See: נפל תורא חדד לסכינא ‘The ox fell—sharpen the knife’ (BT50 Shabbat 32a)51  

mpàlle ganáwa go-bes-sáleḥ ḏàga,  
bése qam-saròqle. ḏàta, xá básor  
xá k-ési nàše, g-šbbi páre dōd-doyònnulla. la-wòllule mòhlàta.  
′āya-la, **tóra g-nàpel,** sakíne g-zàhfí.  

A thief entered [lit. fell into] the house of Saleḥ Ağa, he ‘cleaned out’ his house. Now, one by one people come, they want the money they had lent him. They did not allow him a respite. That’s it, the ox falls, the knives increase.

(16) **yóma gnè-le,** qáza u-bála là-gne-lu.  

day.m set.pfv-3ms trouble and-trouble neg-set.pfv-3pl  

‘The day ended, [but its] troubles did not end.’  

Var.: **yóma g-gàne,** qáza u-bála là g-gàne.  

‘The day ends, [but its] troubles do not end.’  

Cf. SA:147. See also Sabar (2002a, 123), under g-n-y.  

ṣdyo šméli kma-dardubálá sélú  
′el-náhum ñárja, **yóma g-gàne,**  
qáza u-bála là g-gàne.  

Today I have heard how many ailments came upon Nahum the lame, the day ended [lit. set], [but] the troubles did not end [lit. set].

(17) **képá ʼel-dúk-e** yaqùra.  

stone.m on-place-poss.3ms heavy.m

50 BT = Babylonian Talmud, Vilna edition.  
51 I thank Prof. Yoel Elitzur for this reference.
‘A stone is heavy [when it is] in its place.’

Cf. SE:34, SA:77.

Samra said to her husband: Let’s leave Zakho, [and] go to Dohok, maybe God will broaden our hands [= will make us prosper], I know that also in Dohok the community will respect you [lit. hold your honour]. He told her: I do not leave Zakho, I do not leave my community, a stone in its place is heavy.

(18) kúd k-ře rāḥa k-ře ḫel čūča.¹

whoever.gen IND-know.ipfv.3ms much IND-eat.ipfv little

‘He who knows much eats little.’

The daughter of ʾIyo is beautiful and noble, whoever came to ask for her hand, she did not want [him]. Her mind was not cut on anyone [=She was not satisfied with anyone]. She did not get married. She remained in the house of her father; whoever knows much eats little.

(19) kúd g-ël,¹ man kís gyān-e g-ël.¹

whoever.gen IND-go.ipfv.3ms from pocket.m refl-3ms IND-go.ipfv.3ms

‘He who passes away, it is from his own pocket that he loses.’

The shopkeeper of that shop passed away [lit. rested]. His children sold the shop and travelled away from here. No one remembers nor mentions that poor soul. Ah! Whoever goes [=dies], goes at his own expense [lit. from his own pocket]. What a pity! [lit. pity/deprivation on him!] No one apart from him lost [or: lacked] anything, [it is only] he [who] lost [or: lacked].
(20) kúd lá zóll-le ʾəl ʾiz-eʾ
whoever.GEN NEG walk/go.PVF-3ms on hand.F-POSS.3MS
lá-k-iʾe ʾàq-l-eʾ.
NEG-IND-know.IPFV.3MS in-honour.M leg-POSS.3MS

‘He who never walked on his hands does not understand how important his legs are.’

Vars.: kúd g-ʾél ʾiz-ʾasse, k-ʾiʾe b-qáḍor ʾaql-ʾasse.ʾ

‘He who walks on his hands, knows how important his legs are.’

kúd g-ʾél ʾiz-eʾ, k-ʾi e b-qáḍor ʾaql-ʾasse.ʾ

‘He who walks on his hands, knows how important his legs are.’

Cf. SE:18.

Our baker was sick. For three Shabbats [or: weeks] we prepared [lit. whitewash/plastered\(^{52}\)] the Shabbat food\(^{53}\) at home, it was a nuisance [lit. we were very pestered]. When we went after three weeks to the baker, my mother told him, ‘Thank God you became healthy, and now we shall not suffer, and we [now] know your worth [lit. honour].’ He replied, ‘Whoever [never] walked on his hands, does not know the honour [= importance] of his legs.’

\(^{52}\) Whitewash or plaster was presumably used to insulate the pot in order to keep it hot.

\(^{53}\) Jewish law forbids cooking on the Sabbath. The food for the Sabbath is cooked on Friday and left hot, using insulation or a small source of heat, for twenty-four hours.
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(21) kúd g-óbe såker,\(^1\)
whoever.GEN IND-want.IPVF.3MS be_drunk.IPFV
lá-g-mané-lu kašiyе.\(^1\)
NEG-IND-count.IPFV-ACC.3PL cup.PL

‘Whoever wants to get drunk does not count the cups.’

Cf. SE:9, SE:11, which are synonyms.

\(g-\text{b}n\) rába lépen tá\(r\)n tiyára,\(^1\) I would very much like to learn
ta-yômmi,\(^1\) hákan
tá\(r\)nna tiyára ʾəmmé-
ma ál\(d\)m dídi saʾá-u-pálğe,\(^1\) lázôm
yawónnne xamši rúpiyéye.\(^1\) hákan
k-tá\(r\)nna palgôd-sáʾa,\(^1\) lázôm
yawónnne ʾarbî rúpiyéye.\(^1\) bôš-tov
tá\(l\)i kúd-yom lépen palgôd-sáʾa,
bále,\(^1\) rába páre lázem dâf\(w\)n,
yômmi môrra-li,\(^1\) brôni,\(^1\) kúd g-óbe
såker,\(^1\) lá-g-manelu kašiyе.\(^1\)

(22) xmára g-yasr-í-le kəz-xmára,\(^1\) g-láep
donkey.M IND-tie.IPFV-3PL-ACC.3MS chez-donkey.M IND-learn.IPFV.3MS
mônne.\(^1\)
from-3MS

‘[When] you [lit. they] tie a donkey near a[nother] donkey,
it learns from it.’

Vars.: xmára g-yasrîle kəz-xmára,\(^1\) g-láep mánnne fuʾálе.\(^1\)

‘[When] you [lit. they] tie a donkey near a[nother] don-
key, it learns its ill deeds.’

xmára g-yasrîle kəz-xmára,\(^1\) gə-mʾârət.\(^1\)
'When you [lit. they] tie a donkey near another donkey, it farts.'

xmára g-yasrîle kəz-xmâra, g-lâep m'ârət muxwâse.

'When you [lit. they] tie a donkey near another donkey, it learns to fart like him.'


ʾaná tré yalônke, mən-yôm ūlu, These two children, since the day they are together, they make many mischievous actions. The little one taught the big [= older] one naughtiness. They jump here and break [things] there [lit. here]. And they took our soul out [= gave us a hard time]. [If] you tie a donkey near [another] donkey, it learns from it.

kûd gáwɔr yəmn-an, FUT-call/scream.ipfv.3ms who marry our mother, we shall call him father.

b-шаr-xá-łe bàbo. oh who/ever. marry.ipfv.3ms FUT-call/scream/ipfv-1pl ACC.3ms dad
sòt-an, b-amr-áx-łe màmò.154 grandmother POSS.1pl FUT-call/say.ipfv-1pl ACC.3ms uncle

‘Whoever marries our mother, we shall call him father. Whoever marries our grandmother, we shall call him uncle.’

Cf. SE:115. Note that each of the two sentences of this proverb can also be used separately.

dʾərrî ḥl-šûla bàsər țilahá yárxə I returned to work after spending three months in America

dad-wéwali go-ʾamèrika. [lit. three months that I have
been in America]. They told me [that] they replaced our good manager. I said: ‘They are all the same [lit. one]. Whoever marries our mother we shall call father.’

A new hazzan came [lit. came for us] to the synagogue, he is not from our people [=Kurdistani Jews], but he is very good. We were happy and we said one to the other, ‘[It is good even if] he should not be from our people, whoever marries our grandmother, we shall call uncle.’

‘The beard of one is on fire, the other says: “Let me roast my partridge [over it].”’

‘One is crying his beard is on fire, his friend says, “Let me light my cigarette [with it].”’

Cf. SA:20, a variant; proverb no. (25) below, a synonym.
I am completely immersed and troubled [lit. mixed up and shaped into a ball] in my work. I have no time to scratch my head. Мərjane sees my situation, she tells me: “I am your expiation, watch [lit. put your eye on] my daughter while [lit. until] I go to the bath and return.” I told her: “Мəрjane, [this is] the story of that one who [when] his beard is on fire, the other tells him, give me my partridge [and] I shall roast it.”

(25) xá wël-e qam-šnàqa, I
   one COP-3MS [= be.PFV.3MS] in_front_of-hanging.VERB_N [= hang.INF]
   báxt-e q-gəmra, I  hál-li
   wife-POSS.3MS IND-say.PFV.3FS give.IMP-DAT.1S
   pàre, I  vàn ʾəl-ḥàmmam. I
   money[=coin.MPL] go.PFV.1S to-bath.M

‘One is about to be hanged, his wife says, “Give me money, I shall go to the bathhouse.”’

Var.: xá wëlù bə-šnàqa dìde, báxtë q-gəmrə, hálli pàre ta-hàmmam. I

‘One is about to be hanged [lit. they are hanging him], his wife says, “Give me money for the bathhouse.”’

55 A form of address expressing affection.
56 The reference is to the miqve ‘ritual bath’, where the wife bathes after her menstrual period in preparation for marital relations. The woman in the proverb does not understand the severity of the situation of her husband, and intends to prepare herself for him.
Cf. proverb no. (24) above.

My mother wants [is just about] to prepare [lit. white-wash/plaster\textsuperscript{58}] the Shabbat food, two minutes before Shabbat [starts], the daughter of the neighbours came and asked her, “Show me how you shape into balls\textsuperscript{57} the meat dumplings.” My mother said, “Now?! At the time [of] the choking [slaughtering?] of the goat’s kid? One is about to be hanged, his wife says, give me money, [so that] I shall go to the bathhouse.”

(26) \textit{xá dəqn-e} \textit{k-táʾən,} \textit{ʾaw-xéṭ}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textit{k-čáhe.} \textsuperscript{1} \\
\textit{IND-become_weary.IPfv.3ms} \\
\end{tabular}

‘One carries his own beard, [but] the other gets tired.’

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textit{Var.: xá dəqne k-taʾənna [ACC.3f],} \textit{ʾaw-xéṭ k-čáhe mənna.} \textsuperscript{1} \\
\textit{IND-carry.IPfv.3ms} \\
\end{tabular}

‘One carries his own beard, [but] the other gets tired of it.’

Cf. proverb no. (180) below.

\textsuperscript{57} See Sabar (2002a, 122), under \textit{g-m-b-l.}

\textsuperscript{58} See fns 52–53 above.
Maryam helps her children a great deal. She does whatever they ask for. Za’o tells her: ‘Why do you tire yourself that way so much? Each one should make for his [own] home [= each child should take care of himself].’ Maryam answered her: ‘All right, my dear one you are, what’s it to you [lit. you what is your concern]? One carries his own beard, [but] the other becomes tired.’

(27) xábra død-g-nápəq mən-tré səppása,^
spoken_word.m REL-IND-go_out.IPFV.3MS from-two lip.FPL.

g-závər-ra kúll-a màsa.^
IND-turn.IPFV.3MS-ACC.3FS all-3FS village.F

‘Whatever goes out of the lips will circle the whole village.’

Vars.: …g-závər go-kúlla màsa.^
‘…in the whole village.’

…g-závər go-kúllu maswása.^
‘…in all of the villages.’

…g-závərru [ACC.3PL] kúllu maswása.^
‘…circle all of the villages.’

Cf. R:97, SA:141.
basso bax-dárwaš mòrrali,1 Basso the daughter of Darwaš
g-šan ḍamránnax xa-məndi,1 told me: “I want to tell you
bālē-xábra xe-pelavax.159 something, but a word under
mòrrila,1 xzé səppásı ḫu ḡliqe,1 your slipper.”159 I told her: “See,
k-l’an xaábra ḏə-d-nápsə mən-tré my lips are closed, I know that
səppásə,1 g-závə go-kúlla màsə.1 a word that goes out of the two

(28) xḿárdta mpáq-lu-la xalawásə.1 Basso the daughter of Darwaš
donkey,F go_out.PFV-3PL-DAT.3FS uncle,PL
told me: “I want to tell you
something, but a word under
your slipper.”

‘[Suddenly] the she-ass found relatives [lit. uncles].’

(29) xḿárdta ḏəd kúš-li mònn-e,1 šêṭən šud ráku This boy learned [= went to
šáll-e.1 school] with me, he was such a
on-3MS
poor soul, they used to hit him
and laugh at him. One day he
became angry, braced himself
[= hit him hard]. Everyone
was frightened [or: astonished], they said, “He became
courageous [lit. he grabbed
courage], because his grandfa-
ther came. The she-donkey
found uncles.”

Var.: xḿárdta ḏəd kúšli mɔnne,1 šud šêṭən ráku šáll-e.1

‘A donkey from which I have [already] dismounted, let
[even] the devil ride it.’

Var.: xḿárdta ḏəd kúšli mɔnne,1 šud šêṭən ráku šáll-e.1

‘A donkey from which I have [already] dismounted, the
devil should ride it!’

59 See proverb no. (195) below.
Cf. proverb no. (164) below, which is a synonym.

I saw the daughter of Ḥakham ʾəšhaq in the market. I told her: “Khazale, do you know who works instead of you [= who has the job you used to have] in the pharmacy?” She told me: “A donkey from which I have dismounted, let the devil ride it, I do not know and I do not care.”

Whoever has henna, dyes his penis [as well].

Whoever has henna, dyes his penis [as well].

The hen cackles, [and] the penis of the rooster falls [off].

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60 An expression of appreciation.
Habo said she wants to travel [away] for the entire festival [of Passover]. Her husband said, “I am also eager [to go].” My mother laughed and said, “The hen cackles, [and] the penis of the rooster falls [off]. How will you travel during the festival of Passover? Where will you spend [lit. make, i.e., celebrate] Passover?!”

(32) kálab g-háwe kučška.¹

‘A dog sires puppies.’

One bad neighbour came to [live next to] us, a screamer and a foul-mouth, and likes his own voice. We started to ask people about him, who is he, where did he come from. They told us, “This is the son of Yaʿaqov Qadarči.” Blessed be the name of the Creator! The [same] wickedness and the [same] screaming and the [same loud] voice to the both of them. A dog sires a puppy.

(33) kúd tákel ʾél jiràn-e,

‘He who relies on his neighbour, remains without dinner.’

Var.: kúd tákel ʾél xurāse,¹ b-dámex lá ʿašāya.¹

‘He who relies on his friends, will sleep without dinner.’

My mother always tells me: “You should know how to get along [lit. know for yourself].”
kūd tākel ṣēl jirāne, pāyāš là ṣāšāya. ¹

Do not count on anyone. Who-
ever relies on his neighbour,
stays without dinner.”

(34) xóla qṭè’-le, ᵇšwe mborbòz-lu. ¹

rope.M cut.PFV-3MS wood.MPL scatter.PFV-3PL

‘The rope broke, [and] the sticks scattered.’

Cf. SA:144.

zálli ṣēl-marimōe ⁶¹ kēz-xurāsti. ¹ I went to pay my condolences
[lit. to the marimōe ⁶¹] to [lit. at] my friend. Her father and her
mother passed away [lit. rested] within one month—
may they ask for life for us. ⁶²

She cried and trembled. She
said, “The rope snapped, the
wood has scattered. Now my
siblings will go each one to his
work, each one in his way, all
of us will scatter. The house of
my father and mother has been
destroyed.”

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⁶¹ The Jewish mourning period of seven days, the shiv’a.
⁶² An expression said after mentioning the deceased.
I long for those days [lit. I wish/would that for those days], when my father and my mother were alive, and each Shabbat, and each festival, we all used to come to their home [lit. chez them]. And on weekdays [lit. in the middle of the week], whoever went to the market, or to do some task of his, would come to the house of my father, [and so] we used to always see one another. Since the day they passed away [lit. rested]—may they ask life for you—each one is busy with his own things, the rope snapped and the wood has scattered.

(35) ksésa død gə-mråmda,¹ b-réš gyàn-a
hen.F REL IND-spread_dirt_by_digging.IPFV.3FS gə-mråmda.¹
IND-spread_dirt_by_digging.IPFV.3FS

‘A hen that spreads dirt, does so upon her own head.’

That bimbo, all day long she speaks of people. This one is like that, and this one did such and such. Now nobody can stand her [lit. everybody is not able to see her]. A chicken that spreads dirt, does so upon her own head.

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63 See Sabar (2002a, 193), under נוֹזֶי.
64 An expression said after mentioning the deceased.
65 Apparently from the Arabic root rml ‘to sprinkle with sand’ (definition from Wehr and Cowan 1976, 360).
(36) kúd réš-e léwe go qarqəšyàsa,¹ whoever.gen head.m-poss.3ms cop.neg.3ms in tremor/quarrel.mpl
'áł kàndàla.¹
go.ipfv(.jus.)3ms steep.slope.m
‘Whoever is not engaged with the chaos of this world, is of no worth.’

Said by Ḫakham Zekharya, a well-known figure in the Zakho community in Jerusalem.

xáḥam zaxáya wéale maḥkyána Ḫakham Zekharya was talkative and very joyful, anything would light him up like fire, and he always used to say, “Whoever’s head is not [immersed] in tremors and quarrels, may he go to [=fall into] a steep slope, and I like people whose head is [immersed] in tremors and quarrels.”
g-emərwà,¹ kúd réše léwe go-qarqəšyàsa,¹ 'áł kàndàla.¹ u-'áña
g-əben nàše dəd-réšu hîle go-qarqəšyàsa.¹

(37) xolá kud ʾáwəz tərnìni,¹⁶⁶ lázəm [var: ʾána]
is-it.so all.rel do.ipfv.3ms tərnìni must/need [I]
ràqz-ən.¹
dance.ipfv-1ms
‘I am not obliged to dance for anyone who makes [=sings] tərnìni.’⁶⁶

Var.: xolá kud ʾámər/ʾámərri tərnìni,¹ ʾáña b-ràqzən.¹
‘Is it so that [for] anyone who tells/tells me tərnìni, I will dance?!’

Cf. proverb no. (137) below.

⁶⁶ Sabar (2002a, 313) on tərnàna tərnìni: “sound imitations of dance.”
xurásti kúd-yomá g-əmrá-li sa-
áx káz-dé qam-əzmálan’ sa-áx
káz-dayá qam-əzmálan. mórrí-la
xolá kud-ámer tərənínī,1 lázəm
rəqzan.1 xolá kud-əzəmlí lázəm
ˈán.

My friend tells me every day,
“Let’s go to [visit] this [per-
son], she invited us, let’s go to
[visit] that [person], she in-
vited us.” I told her, “Is it so
that [when] anyone says
tərənínī, I should dance? Is it so
that [when] any-one invites
me, I should go?”

See proverb no. (104) below for an additional relevant context.

(38) xá lēb-e l-xà,1 g-émer tré tré sá-loxun
one unable-3MS on-one IND-say.IPfv.3MS two two come.IMP-2PL
ˈəll-i,1
on-1s

‘One cannot overcome [even] one, [but] yet he says come
unto me in pairs.’

Cf. the synonymous R:47, SE:7, proverb no. (4) above and no.
(140) below.

xazále brat-xáhəm šəλomʰ
k-pxalxáwa kəz-xa-əspāha
dolamán,1 kúd-yom mən bənəke
hël ləle k-pxalxáwa.1 bəs yóm
xusəba lə-k-pxalxawa.1 xə yòma,1
mərra ta-yəməna,1 jirən dəd-
ma’aləmti g-əba pələxan kəsələ
b-yóm xuʃəba,1 má g-əmrət
H’əmaʰ?2 yəməna mjoyəbla: brəti,1
xə ləbe l-xà,1 g-émer tré tré
sələxun ˈəll,1 wat-qrəfta mən-
šūla dədx kəz-mələmtəx,
g-əbat pəlxat xa-xət dúka?! Khazale the daughter of
Hakham Shalom used to work
for [lit. at] a [certain] rich fam-
ily. She would work every day
from morning until evening.
Only on Sunday[s] did she not
work. One day, she said to her
mother, ‘The neighbour of my
boss wants me to work for [lit.
at] her on Sunday[s]. What do
you say, mother?’ Her mother
answered: ‘My daughter, one is
not able to overcome one [lit.
one cannot on one], he says
come to [fight] me in pairs [lit.
two two come on me], you are
wrenched from your work at
your boss’[s], [and] you want
to work [at] another place?!’
(39) \( \text{xá bába}\text{-gá-mdábér} \rightarrow '\text{ésra yalúnke}, '\text{á}sra yalúnke \)

one father IND-sustain.ipfv.3ms ten child.pl ten child.pl

la-gá-mdábri \( \rightarrow \text{xá bába.} \) \( \text{NEG-IND-sustain/support.ipfv.3pl one father} \)

‘One father can support ten children, [but] ten children cannot support one father.’

Cf. R:53 (where Rivlin gives a similar proverb in Arabic), SE:17, proverb no. (80) below. See ḥamínkə abá býmí bônu bônu líc. ‘The love of the father is for the sons, the love of the sons is for the sons they have’ (BT Sota 49a); ḳúd gá-mtá’el b-əd-‘əxre, ‘Whoever plays with faeces, smells like faeces.’

Var.: \( \text{kúd gá-mtá’el bad-‘əxre}, 'k-ése mən-izase. ' \)
'Whoever plays with faeces, the smell of faeces comes from his hands'.

Cf. SE:47.

Haḥkham Nahum always says, “Be careful [lit. (keep) your eye on yourself]! If you find [lit. saw] friends [who are] thieves, liars, dirty, also from you the smell of theft and lies will come. Whoever plays with faeces, the smell of faeces comes from him.”

(41) *xmára k-ʾe ḥáxol náʾnaʾ?!*

I cooked such a *xamústa*67 soup, may the house of its father be destroyed,68 how good it was! Haḥuba my neighbour came, tasted it, and started to scorn it, ‘There is no salt in it, it should be more sour.’ My mother heard and said: ‘[I am] your expiation’69 Haḥuba, my daughter cooked a wonderful *xamústa*. Does a donkey know [how] to eat spearmint?!’ I was very happy.

(42) *káls-ox mən-súlta mési-la,*

I cooked such a *xamústa* soup, may the house of its father be destroyed, how good it was! Haḥuba my neighbour came, tasted it, and started to scorn it, ‘There is no salt in it, it should be more sour.’ My mother heard and said: ‘[I am] your expiation’ Haḥuba, my daughter cooked a wonderful *xamústa*. Does a donkey know [how] to eat spearmint?!’ I was very happy.

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67 A sour soup with meat dumplings.
68 An expression of appreciation.
69 The Hebrew noun *yofi* here takes the NENA genitive marker -d.
70 A form of address expressing affection.
‘Take you daughter-in-law from the dunghill, [but] the place of your [own] daughter [you should] select it well.’

Uncle Murdakh said to my father: “My son fell after the daughter of Ḥayika the barber [=he likes her], I would like to go to negotiate the marriage, I do not know what her family is like [lit. how the house of her father is], what [kind of] people they are.” My father answered him: “Take your daughter-in-law from the dunghill, the place of your daughter select it well.” He said to my father: “That is true [lit. (this) is your word], my teacher.”

(43) lā hāw-ēt dūšā' [var.: xōlya'] lā ṣeši-lox,1
NEG be.IPV-2MS honey.M [var.: sweet.M] NEG suck.IPV.3PL-ACC.3MS

lā hāw-ēt dūšā' márira lā reqi-lox.1
NEG be.IPV-2MS honey.M bitter.M NEG spit.IPV.3PL-ACC.3MS

lā hāw-ēt wišā' lā tori-lox.1
NEG be.IPV-2MS dry.M NEG break.IPV.3PL-ACC.3MS

lā hāw-ēt rakixa' lā marći-lox.1
NEG be.IPV-2MS soft.M NEG crush.3PL-ACC.3MS

‘Do not be [too] sweet, so that they will not suck you.
Do not be [too] bitter, so that they will not spit you [out].

71 For details about the process leading to a Zakho Jewish wedding, see Aloni (2014a, 85–101).
72 The extended family household in Zakho, be- ‘house of’, and the changes it has undergone in Israel are discussed in Aloni (2014a, 85–88).
Do not be [too] dry, so that they will not break you.
Do not be [too] soft, so that they will not crush you.’

Cf.: ‘Do not be sweet lest they swallow you’ (Arama 1573, 88b; my translation). See also additional references in Zlotnik Avida (1938, 53–54).

My son, see what Maimonides wrote, one should always go in the middle [path]. Do not be too sweet, so that they do not suck you, do not be bitter so that they do not spit you [out], do not be dry so that they do not break you, do not be soft so that they do not crush you.

(44) lą ḍâw jâjik, lą ḍâw žâḥhar.¹

‘Not [of] that jajik,⁷³ and not [of] that poison.’

Var.: lą ḍâw jâjik bëd ḍâw žâḥhar.¹

‘Not [of] that jajik with that poison.’

Cf. ‘אומרים לה לצרעה לא מדובשך ולא מעוקצך.’ They say to the wasp: not of your honey and not of your sting’ (Midrash Tanḥuma, Parashat Balak 6); ‘משלי אמרים לי לזרعوا לא מזרעש ולא מעייטך.’ A proverb: they say to the wasp: not of your honey and not of your sting’ (Midrash Tanḥuma Buber edition, Parashat Balak 9; my translation). This is used as a proverb in Modern Hebrew as well.

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My friend gave me a large and beautiful carpet, but how dirty it was! My soul went out [=I had a hard time] until I cleaned it. One week I worked on [lit. in] it. Ah! Not [of] that jajik, nor [of] that poison.

(45) lá ʾėwa¹ u-lá Ṽə̀xwá.

NEG cloud.M and-NEG fine_weather.M

‘Not [in] cloud and not [in] fine weather.’

My friend had a fight with her husband and went back to live with her parents for some time.²⁴ When they reconciled [with each other], after several days, she asked her husband, “When would you like us to go to the house of my father?” He said, “On a day [when there is] no cloud [and] no fine weather.” She understood that he does not want to go and was silent.

(46) lés mənn-il¹ u-lés mənn-il¹.

there_is_not from-1s and there_is_not from-1s

‘There is no one like me, there is no one like me.’

Cf. R:91, proverb no. (103) below.

Bakh-Mamo [=Uncle’s Wife] the grandmother of Carmela, used to get up every day at dawn, she would sweep the entire neighbourhood, and sing, “There is no one like me, and there is no one like me.” And one time I asked her, “Why do you sing this song?” and she

²⁴ Sabar (2002a, 201) on x-š-m: “to feel alienated (daughter-in-law who after a quarrel goes back to live temporarily with her parents).”
said to me, “What, is it not so? I searched [and] searched, [and] did not find [anyone] better than myself.” I told her, “Bakh-Mamo, my mother has a story, when God created the world, He said to one angel, ‘Let this stone be in your hand, and whoever you see that is not satisfied with himself [lit. that his mind is not cut upon himself] strike his head with this stone [lit. hit this stone on his head].’ This angel until today waits [or: stands] and the stone [is] in his hand.”

See an additional context situation at proverb no. (103) below.

(47) la k-xárya ta la ʾàxla.¹
NEG IND-DEFECATE.IPFV.3FS for NEG eat.IPFV.3FS

‘She does not defecate so that she should not eat.’

Var.: la ʾáxla ta la xárya.¹

‘She does not eat so that she should not defecate.’

That person does not give [even] one qurush⁷⁶ to anyone. He is a miser. He does not shit so that he would not eat. He is like his mother, she would skin a louse and sell its skin.⁷⁷ And his father, [when] he has a forty [degree] fever, he would give it to no one.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ See proverb no. (106) below.
⁷⁶ Sabar (2002a, 283): “small Turkish coin.” The reference here is probably to the grush, an old Israeli coin.
⁷⁷ See proverb no. (102) below.
⁷⁸ See proverb no. (91) below.
(48) mād mjomá'-lu b-ād kočëksa,1 zāl-le b-ād
what-REL collect.PFV-3PL in-gen spoon.F go.PFV-3S in-gen
ʾatrāna.1
ladle.M

‘What they have saved with a spoon, they wasted with a ladle.’

Cf. SA:137.

One man complained [lit. made a complaint] about his wife. He says “I work a lot, I gather one dinar to the other [lit. dinar to dinar], I give my wife an allowance each month [or: the salary of each month]. After [only] one day she says she does not have money, she does not have with what to shop in the market. What I gather with a spoon, goes with a ladle.’

dámmād wēali zūrtā,1 láswa
māya go-yeurušālayim,1 g-daryāxwa šātle,1 ta-kūd
čappāksad mūtra k-kōšāwa go-

dāy šātle.1 máya wēalu rāhā
gōran.1 xā-yoma séle ’axōnī
mxele pōhna ’ol-šātle’ kūllu máya
bōzlu.1 yōmmi mūra,1 mād
mjom’īlan bōd-kōčëksa,1 zōllu
bōd-ʾatrāna.1

When I was young [lit. small], there was no water in Jerusalem. We used to put a bucket [out], so that every drop of rain goes down into that bucket. Water was very expensive/valuable. One day my brother came, he kicked [lit. gave a kick to] the bucket, all of the water spilled. My mother said, ‘What we gathered with a spoon, went away] with a ladle.’

(49) man núra dōhun1 lá g-šāx-n-ax,1
from fire.M GEN.3PL NEG IND-become_warm.IPV-1PL
‘Their fire does not warm us, but their smoke blinds us.’

My friend told me, “I will come with my children, they will play with your son, and we will bake kade’ for the festival.” She and her large family came [lit. she came, she and her large family], they did not play at all [lit. it is forbidden if they played], but they did scream, cry, and fight one with the other. They soiled the entire courtyard [=entrance room]. I told her, “My friend, we did not warm from your fire, [but] we did become blind from your smoke.”

‘A corpse that you wash too much will break wind.’

‘A corpse that you wash too much will break wind.’
Proverbs

bron-xalто-ʾэster, lóple najaronsa.
mɔrre, yɔmmi, g-lépen najaronsa,
b-oẓánnax xazáne sqɔ́lt. a
masséle siwe u-škôle ʾáwez
xazáne. bâle-xolá qam-xalõšla,
xá yóma g-ʾemer ʾo dárga léwe
hâš, mxalpɔ̃nne, xá yóma
g-ʾemer ʾaqlás xazáne hîlu plîme,
mxalpɔ̃nnu, kúd yóm mboʾbšle
ʾé xazáne. yômme pq̲l̲a, mòrra-
le brôni, mís râba xepile gow-
mʾarot. k-mále mbaʾbštta ʾé
xazáne.

The son of Aunt Esther studied carpentry. He said, ‘My mother, I am studying carpentry, I will make for you a beautiful closet.’ But has he indeed finished it? One day he says, ‘This door is not good, I shall replace it’, another [lit. one] day he says, ‘The legs of the closet are crooked, I shall replace them.’ Each day he messed with [lit. poked] that closet. His mother exploded [=was exhausted and impatient]. She told him, ‘My son, a dead [person] that is washed too much, farts. Enough messing with [lit. poking] this closet.’

(51) (ʾání) mísá dóhun qam-qori-le, ṡál
they dead.ms gen.3pl past-bury.3pl-acc.3ms go.ipfv.3ms
ganʾezên ṡál gɔḥɔnnàm. (lè-waj-u).
Garden[-of]-Eden go.ipfv.3ms hell neg-concern-poss.3pl
‘They have buried their dead, they do not care whether he goes to heaven or hell.’
Var.: mísá dóhun k-xèpile, ṡál ganʾezên ṡál gɔḥɔnànɔ.
‘They have washed their dead, [they do not care whether] he goes to heaven or hell.’

xazále zállà l-šùqa, zûnna râba
xɔ̃drà. mûrdax, mšodōrre ʒâqil
dîde u-bróne šâle, maʾinila,
sélu drélu kîllù sállat qam-dârgot
bēsa u-zôllu. sèla xazále, ěna
Khazale went to the market, she bought a lot of vegetables. Murdakh sent his worker and his son Saleh to help her. They came [and] put all of the baskets near the door of the house and went [away]. Khazale came, her eyes became dark
[i.e., she was unpleasantly surprised by the sight], she saw that all of the vegetables were scattered in the courtyard, where cats play [lit. cats play there]. She said, ‘Ah! They did their work, they have washed their dead [person], [if] he goes to heaven or to hell—they do not care.’

(52) *máqar kulla dûnye‘oz ‘aqól-ox tûne.*

‘Ask all of the world [=everyone], [but] act only according to your own opinion.’

Var.: *máqar kulla dûnye‘oz b-xábrox tûne.*

‘Ask all of the world [=everyone], [but] act only according to your own word.’

Cf. ‘You should have sixty advisors, but do not forsake the advice of yourself’ (Ben Sira 1544, 15b).80

(53) *mûx yatûma ʾôt-le zûba.*

‘Like an orphan, owner of a penis.’

Var.: *mûx yatûma máre zûba.*

‘Like an orphan, owner of a penis.’

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80 Referred to by Weissberg (1900, 61).
My aunt bought new shoes, she came to us [=to our house], she shook herself [=behaved flauntingly] in order to show them to us, my mother said, “She shows us her shoes, like an orphan that has a penis.”

She was proud of her car like an orphan that has a penis.

The calf went to [bring] salt.

When my brother told my mother that he had found himself a job and that he would begin to work in two weeks, my mother said, “All right!81 The largish calf went for the salt. We shall see with the help of God [lit. may God help].”

My brother’s friend came and asked where my brother was. My mother said, “The largish calf went for the salt.” He laughed.

The daughter of ʿAqo fell into the mouth of people [=people started gossiping about her]. The entire neighbourhood started gossiping about her.

81 Said dismissively.
dôhun.1 ṣō mārre zōlla ṣammād-
dôha,2 u-ṣō mārre dmáxla ṣammād-dawāha,1 u-ṣ̂āya pappâxu,1 bāxta-
ḥāš wēla,1 mahkōyod nāše qam-
makāmla b-ēn-kūllu. nūra xe-
gōqa,1 tanēsa xe nāša,1

(56) nunisā mān réš-a k-xâr-w-a,1
fish.f from head-poss.3fs ind-become_spoil.ipfv-3fs
‘A fish [starts to] rot from its head.’

Cf. BA:4, SA:100.

chāga lá-zonat go-đē ḏɔkkāna,1
māre-ɗɔkkāna duglāna u-
ganawa-le,1 yalūnkē didē u-
žagīle didē kūllu muxwase,1 láplu-
mònne,1 ḏōto-ila,1 nunisā mān-
reša k-xârrha,1

(57) si xmar-i ṣilāha ṣmm-ox,1 hākan már-i
go.imp.2ms donkey-poss.1s God with-2ms if master-poss.1s
hāwe ṣmm-i,1 ṣilāha p-āwe ṣmmī,1
be.ipfv.3ms with-1s God fut-be.ipfv.3ms with-1s
‘Go, my donkey, may God be with you. If my master is with
me, God will [also] be with me.’

bōno massēle xa-žāgīl ta-fōrña-
dīde,1 hēdi-hēdi ṣ̂ō-žāgil ṣ̂ūzle-
kūllē móni,1 bōno wōlle go-ŋze-
kūlla fōrña,1 básor kma-wâda,1-
bōno xzele fōrña là-k-kažba,1-
bāxtē mārra-le, bōno māroxa go-

Bōno brought a worker to his bakery. Gradually this worker
did everything [in the bakery]. Bōno gave the entire bakery
into his hand [=gave the supervison over to him]. After
some time, Bōno saw that the bakery did not produce profit,
his wife told him, “Bōno you
said in your heart [=to yourself] ‘I have untied my sash, this worker will do my work. Go, my donkey, God be with you’, but it is not so, if my master is with me, God will [also] be with me. If you were at the bakery, a blessing will fall into the bakery [=it will be prosperous].’

(58) sawòna qrèš-le,¹ sotònta hnè-le-la.¹

old_man pinch.PFV-3MS old_woman cause_pleasure.PFV-3MS-DAT.3FS

‘The old man pinched [and] the old woman enjoyed it.’

Cf. R:72, SE:56, SA:139.

yòmméd bàdre sèla,¹ xxéla nèhra

šuíqa u-bèsa mtùrbola,¹ sèla

bàdre mòrra-la,¹ sèle sàleh,¹

mùrrre-li sa-mpòq xápça go-

šèmśa  b-áx šèmel-håwâ,²² xàràe

màsihax xòri,¹ ’áp-ana šúqli nèhri

u-zòlli,¹ yòmmma mòrra hàwwa

bràti,¹ sawòna qrèšle,¹ sotònta

hnèle-la,¹

(59) qòm-le čùka,¹ bsòm-la dùka,¹

get_up.PFV-3MS Čuka.M become_pleasant.PFV-3FS place.F

‘Čuka got up, [and] the place became [more] pleasant.’

Var.: qòmle čùka,¹ rúxla dùka,¹

‘Čuka got up, [and] the place became more spacious.’

82 Apparently from Arabic nšèm al-hawa ‘breath air’.
A small change that makes a difference for the better. Čuka was the **shamash** (custodian) of one of the synagogues of the Jewish-Kurdish community in Jerusalem.

Cf. SA:41.

I came to visit my sister and to complain [lit. make complaint] about my mother-in-law. Her neighbour was there [lit. at her]. I could not speak about my mother-in-law. When her friend went [away], I said to my sister, ‘Ah! Čuka got up, [and] the place became more pleasant. Now I can speak and tell you what is in my heart.’

(60) qam-mayʾšl-ən-ne qam-mòsa, ta yāʾel
Past-bring_in-1ms-acc.3ms in_front_of_death.m for enter.ipfv.3ms

qam šàsa, 1
in_front_of fever.f

‘I brought him to death so that he will [agree to] enter the fever.’

sèla bax-nāhum u-mórra ta-
yòmmì, 1 xzè wan-ba-myàsa, 1 lébi
yòn xudàni bêt-yalúnke didì, 1 lá-
g-madwan yòn šùl bèsì, 1 mórrì ta-
nàhum, 1 ìz xa-bàxta maʾináli xà-
gà b-šabsá bòd-šúla yaqùra, 1 bòd-
nèhra u-spànàja, 1 b-yawáxla tre-
tlāha lire, 1 lá bèlè, 1 yòmmì
štòqla, 1 sóllu trè yomàsa, 1 yòmmì
xzèla nàhum, 1 mòrra-le, 1 nàhum,

The wife of Naḥum came and said to my mother, “See, I am dying [=having a very hard time], I cannot take [lit. make] care of my children, I do not have enough time to do my housework, I said to Naḥum, there is a woman that would help me once a week with the hard [lit. heavy] work, with laundry, and with washing the floor, we shall give [=pay] her two [or] three lire. He did not agree [lit. want].” My mother remained silent. Two days passed [lit. went], my mother saw Naḥum, she told him,
“Naḥum, hear [=listen], [may] you not hear [anything] bad. 83 I saw your wife, she is very-very ill. Her heart turned into a [single] hair 84 (=her heart shrank because of the hard work, she became sick), you must take [=hire] for her a housemaid that will help her every day. If not, God forbid [lit. may God not do (that)]…” Naḥum turned into a [small] lump [=became scared]. 86 I told my mother, “[May] your health/vigour be well/pleasant [=well done, bravo]! You have brought him into death so that he will enter the fever.” Naḥum went home, he said to his wife, “All right, take [=hire] this neighbour, may she help you once a week.”

(61) qóqa  g-emer  xés-i  dēhwa-la, ʾətrána
clay.pot.m  ind-say.ipfv.3ms  under-1s  gold.m-cop.3fs  ladle.m
[var.: káfkir]  g-emer  ʾəttá  mpóq-li  mónn-ox.
[var.: large_spoon]  ind-say.ipfv.3ms  now  go_out.pfv-3ms  from-2ms

‘The clay pot says, “My bottom is made of gold”; the ladle says, “I just came out of there.”’

Cf. R:103.

83 See proverb no. (129) below.
84 See proverb no. (136) below.
85 Contraction of ʾiláha lá ʾawəz.
86 See proverb no. (135) below.
The daughter of the real estate agent praised herself, how kind [lit. good] she was to [lit. with] her housemaid. The housemaid laughed and said, “I wish [even] a half of what she said were true [lit. has been], I just came out of you.”

Habuba complained [lit. made a complaint] about her mother-in-law. While we were speaking, her mother-in-law came and started praising herself. “There is not a mother-in-law like myself in the entire village. How much I respect/pamper my daughter-in-law.” Habuba whispered, “I know which gold there is under you.”

(62) qóqa dod k-torá-le cabaniye,¹
clay_pot.M REL ind-break.IPFV.3FS-ACC.3MS cook.F
lá-k-eše hás mónn-e.¹
NEG-IND-come.IPFV.3MS sound.M from-3MS

‘A clay pot that is broken by the cook does not make a sound.’

Vars.: …čù-has lá-k-eše mónne.¹
‘…no sound comes from it.’

…čoppèn la-k-eše mónne.¹
‘…two drops [of sound] do not come from it.’

I travelled and arrived to the place I had wanted, I looked for a place to park [lit. make-stand] my car, I did not find [lit. see] one, after me came a policeman with his car, he parked it where [lit. in a place of] it is forbidden, I said to myself, this policeman does whatever he wants, a clay pot that the cook breaks, does not make a sound [lit. no sound comes from it]. No one tells him [or: can tell him] [=the policeman] anything.

(63) k-xáre má-d g-Ōbe,₁ g-Ōbe

IND-defecate.ipfv.3ms what-rel IND-want.ipfv.3ms IND-want.ipfv.3ms

wiša,₁ g-Ōbe miyāna,₁
dry.m IND-want.ipfv.3ms liquid.m

‘He defecates whatever he wants, [if] he wants dry [it is dry], [if] he wants liquid [it is liquid].’

Vars.: hákan g-Ōbe k-xáre wiša,₁ hákan g-Ōbe k-xáre miyāna,₁

‘If he wants he defecates dry, if he wants he defecates liquid.’...rakixa,₁ ‘...soft.’

‘o-nāša lebox mhēmenet ṭolle ṭāl This person, you cannot believe him about anything [lit. you cannot believe on him on anything]. He says whatever he wishes. If he wished he’d defecate dry [faeces], if he wished he’d defecate liquid [faeces].

(64) qṓzra dād hawé-ba rába kabaniyat,₁
cooked_food.f rel be.ipfv.3ms-in-3fs many cook.fpl

k-Ōṣya yán maluxta’ yán pāxta,₁

IND-come.ipfv.3fs or salty.fs or bland.fs
‘A [pot of] cooked food that many cooks are involved in making turns out either [too] salty or [too] bland.’

Cf. SE:135. Also compare: ‘A pot of partners is neither hot nor cold’ (BT ‘Eruvin 3a).

For the bar mitzvah celebration [lit. tefillin] of my son, each one advised [lit. said] me what to do. One said [you should do] so and the other [lit. one] said [you should do] so. I told them, “A food that many cooks have cooked, put their hand in, and stirred, turns out either bland or [too] salty. Leave us, we shall wear [= put on] my son’s tefillin [= celebrate my son’s bar mitzvah] however he wishes.”

(65) pára xwàra1 ta yóma kòma.1
coin.m white.m for day.m black.m
‘A white coin for a black day.’

Cf. BA:2, SA:102.

‘axóni g-émer ta-bràte,1 ḫfšlu My brother [always] tells his daughter, “Save the money so that you will have one white coin for a black day.”

(66) partɔ́na mɔ́r-re,1 lá-k-i’en ma b-ózon
flea.m say.PFV-3MS NEG-IND-know.1MS what FUT-do.IPFV.1MS
bɔ́d-ó miráta didi,1 xmára mɔ́r-re1
in.GEN-this.m unclaimed_inheritance of-1S donkey.m say.PFV-3MS

87 I thank my grandfather Ḥakham Ḥabib ʿAlwan for this reference.
Proverbs

\textit{ba}^{88}.\textit{ʾána lá \( g-\text{māhk-\( ən \).}^{1} \)

then\(^{88}\text{-I \ NEG \ IND\text{-}speak.}\text{IPFV\text{-}MS \ ‘The flea said: ‘I do not know what to do with that good-

\text{for\text{-}nothing of mine \[= my penis,\]’ the donkey said: ‘I, then, shall not speak.’ \)

Var.: \textit{parṭ\( ə́\( ʾna m\( ə̀ \( rre,^{1} \text{mirāta dīdī xōlle lēbbi,}^{1} \ldots \text{‘The flea said: ‘The good\text{-}for\text{-}nothing of mine ate my heart \[= is causing me distress\],...’} \)

Cf. SA:103.

\textit{ṣałēḥ bər\text{-}māro mərre \textit{ta\text{-}axōne} \)

\textit{biuxra,}^{1} \textit{ḥət! \ ‘jōzli mən\text{-}mādrase!}^{1} \text{lāzəm rāba lēpən,}^{1} \text{lātli wā\text{′}da} \text{xāpča mə\text{′}lən,}^{1} \text{\‘axōne \textit{dəd\text{-}g\text{-}lāyəp pəyəš ḥākim\( ə \)mərre}^{1} \text{\textit{ba}}^{88\text{-} \textit{\‘āna má b\text{‘}mənən,}^{1} \text{lātli wā\text{′}da} \text{xēkən rēši,}^{1} \text{\‘āya\text{-}lə \textit{parṭ\( ə́\( ʾna} \text{mərre,}^{1} \text{lā\text{-}k\text{-}i\text{‘}en ma b\text{-}əzən bəd\text{-}ō} \text{mirāta dīdī,}^{1} \text{\textit{xməra mərre}^{1} \text{\textit{ba}}^{88\text{-} \textit{\‘āna lá \( g\text{-}māhkən,}^{1} \)

\( 67 \) \textit{pəlg\text{-}əd hārṭi̇l,}^{1} \text{\textit{ḥənna\text{-}le.}^{1} \)

\text{half\text{-}GEN \ bride\text{\text{-}price.M \ henna.F\text{-}COP.3MS \ ‘One half of the bride\text{-}price is henna.’} \)

\(^{88}\text{Sabar (2002a, 103): ‘proclitic particle to indicate mild puzzlement, wonder, complain.’} \)
My friend invited us to eat a salad. She said to us, “I have made such a salad [lit. one salad], may the house of its father be destroyed,⁸⁹ that salad.” We came, we ate, the entire salad was [made of] lettuce, I told her, “My friend, you have made a salad all of which is leaves of lettuce, one half of the bride price is henna.”

(68) palg-əd qaḥbūsa¹ môn nəxpuṣa.¹

half-gen prostitution/adultery.F from shyness/modesty.F

‘Half of the lewdness is caused by shyness.’

‘Aziz the son of our neighbour Naḥum is an only child, a good and shy child. The children of the neighbourhood learned to ask him for things, do that thing, give me that thing. ‘Aziz is [too] shy to say, “No, I do not have [it], I cannot do [it].”

His father Naḥum is very worried [lit. afraid] about him. He told him: “My son, pay attention, one half of lewdness is caused by shyness, learn to say no!”

(69) ʂqāl-la mən šərm-a¹ [var.: šərma¹] dré-la ʾəl

take.PFV-3FS from anus.F-POSS.3FS [var.: anus.F] put.PFV-3FS on pəs-a.¹ [var.: pəsə.¹]

face-POSS.3F.SG [var.: face.F]

‘She took from her anus [and] put on her face.’

Var.: ʂqālla mən šərma¹ šəpla ʾəl pəsə.¹

⁸⁹ An expression of appreciation.
‘She took a stick from her anus [and] smeared on her face.’

See the context situation for proverb no. (111) below.

(70) šərm-əd †iyánta glè-la.1
anus/buttocks.F-GEN ewe.F be_exposed.PFV-3FS
‘The ewe’s buttocks are exposed.’

Because the ewe, tail fat always covers her buttocks, and
the goat, her tail is thin and curls upwards, [so] when the
ewe jumps, her tail goes up and
her buttocks are visible [lit. they see her buttocks]. One
day the ewe leaped over a
brook, her tail fat went up. The
goat stood and said, ‘Huh! The
buttocks of the ewe are ex-
posed!’ The camel does not see
its [own] hump.90

(71) šūl ʾozt-le xurās-ı,1
work.M-GEN do/make.ipfv.pl-acc.3ms friend.pl-poss.1s
k-čáhe lōbb-i u-g-néxi ʾızas-ı.1
IND-get_tired.ipfv.3ms heart-poss.1s and-ind-rest.ipfv.3pl hand.fpl-poss.1s
‘Work done [for me] by my friends, my heart gets tired and
my hands rest.’

Var.: šūl ʾozt-le xurās-ı,1 k-čáhe lōbbi u-là-g-nexi ʾızasi.
‘Work done [for me] by my friends, my heart gets tired and
my hands do not rest.’

Cf. BA:1, SE:85, SA:127.

90 See proverb no. (93) below.
My daughter-in-law came to help me with [lit. in] the [house]work of Passover. Every minute she asked me how to do [lit. should I do] this thing and this thing. The entire time my eye was after her [= I watched over her]. [In order to] tell her what to do. I became more tired [than I would have otherwise]. I said to myself, work done [for me] by my friends, my heart gets tired and my hands rest.

(72) šàqfa la mšápya ʾol šàqfa,¹

piece.f NEG resemble.ipfv.3fs to piece.f

lá-k-tafqa ʾbbing-a.¹

NEG-IND-meet/stumble_upon.ipfv.3fs in-3fs

'[If] a piece did not resemble a[nother] piece, it would not have met it.'

Vars.: wàšla la mšápya ʾol wàšla,¹ lág-alqa ʾbbinga.¹

'[If] a piece would not resemble a piece, it would not stick to it.'

wàšla la mšápya ʾol wàšla,¹ lág-alqa ʾol wàšla.¹

'[If] a piece would not resemble a piece, it would not stick to a piece.'

Cf. R:72, SA:139.

Hayika the son of Čuna is very stingy, everyone knows. And his wife—blessed be the name of the Creator—also she is stingy like him. [If] a piece did not resemble a[nother] piece, it wouldn’t meet [that] piece.
† Work is a lion. Only touch it [and] it becomes a fox.

Var.: šûla' mux-ʾàyya-le,‘…

‘Work is like a lion…

yʾálli l-bèsa' réši mborbèzle' u-ʾéni
xš̩klu." márrì yəmmi,‘ ʾštli ṭàba
šūla,' lá-k-i'än má ʾòn' u-má lá
ʾòzan,‘ ʾéka šàklan,' bràti,' šūla
ʾàyya-le,‘ mánde ʾìzax ʾələle pàyəš
ruvika,‘

I entered home, my head became scattered [=I became weary and confused] and my eyes were darkened. I said, “My mother, I have much work, I do not know what I should do and what I should not do, where I should start from.” “My daughter, work is a lion, throw your hand at it [=commence performing it], it becomes a fox.”

† Do an act of kindness, [and] throw [it] in the water.

Var.: ʾóz hawûsa,' mándi b-ṭàya,'

‘Do an act of kindness, [and] let [it] go in the water.’

Cf. SE:54, SA:37, proverbs nos (89) and (90) below. Also compare: ‘Send your bread upon the water, for after many days you shall find it’ (Qoh. 11.1).91

91 About the Jewish tale-oicotype associated with this verse, see Noy (1971).
Since I was little, my mother taught me to do people favour[s], and not to ask for anything [in return]. She always told me, do a favour, throw [it] into the water.

(75) **dmóx kpìna, qú swì’a.**

'Sleep hungry [and] rise full.'

Var.: **dmóx kpìna, qú šamìna.**

'Sleep hungry [and] rise fat.'

Habuba said to me: "My daughter, everyone was poor in Zakho, with one pile of ashes they would raise the children, not like here. There were nights, I did not sleep out of hunger. My mother told me, sleep hungry, rise satiated. This is how she would tempt me to sleep."

(76) **dúkəd g-jàrya’ k-pàrya.**

'Where it flows, it heals.'

Var.: **dúkəd g-jàrya’ k-pàsxà.**

'Where it flows, it opens up.'

Hale and ‘Aziz have been married for fifty years. We have never heard [lit. it is forbidden

92 See proverb no. (114) below.
xa-čəppén  mennòhun.

if we heard] [even] a [single] sound [lit. a two-drops] from them. Hale is such a woman, an egg without a mouth, and also ‘Aziz is not talkative. This week, on Sunday morning, we heard shrieks from their house. They had such a fight, we could not believe that these people know how to fight and scream like that. Hale cried and killed herself [=was in great sorrow and distress]. My mother said, “We did not know anything about those people.” Shahude said, “I felt that it is wet under her. Her eyes were malicious. [Good that] God made [lit. God that made] this abscess open up, where it flows, it heals.”

Cf. SE:79, SA:150. See also: הלך החבל אחר הדלי ‘The rope followed the bucket’ (Midrash Tanhum, Parashat Miqets 10).
The son of my uncle bought a house in Eyn Ha-Emek. My brother said, “Well, I also would go to Eyn Ha-Emek!” My mother said, “All right, my son, go! The rope went after the bucket.”

(78) dūnye qzāya-la.1

world.f prepare.verb.n-cop.3fs

‘The world is [only] a preparation. [Therefore everything should be taken easily].’


I was angry with my husband, I went to the house of my father, I cried and said to my mother, ‘Why did you let my father marry me to my cousin? He is many years older than I am [lit. he exceeds me many years], and his mind is not like my mind. He is a good man, but I did not marry him out of love.’ My mother said, ‘My daughter, do not be angry, he is a good man, and he is our relative [lit. he is people of ourselves]. The world is about managing it. Soon you will have children [lit. now children will come to you], and you will be happy with them, God will give [lit. put] love [and] peace between you both.’

See also the context situation for proverb no. (82) below.

97 A community settlement in the north of Israel, founded in 1944 by immigrants from Kurdistan.

98 Several speakers offered the interpretation: ‘The world should be managed [smoothly].’
(79) **bés ūlāha ūmira.** ¹

> The house of God is built.

See ch. 2, §7.0, no. (156).

**márrti ta-sāmra,** bóné u-bomaxét I said to Samra, “Tomorrow and the following day it will snow [lit. snow will descend].

**p-káwaš tālga,** čúxa lá-g-napáq No one will go out of his house.

**mon-bèse,** ’ātta g-ēn ’al-šuqa,¹ I am going now to the market; would you like me to buy you anything?” She said to me, “I have what I need, I have food, the house of God is built, and be blessed by God [=may God bless you].”

**g-šbat zonánnax xa-mêndi?**'mira,¹ u-mburáxtat ūlāha hōyat.¹

(80) **bába g-yáwol ta-yalônke kútru k-fârh-i,**¹

> [When] a father gives to [=provides for] his children, both [sides] are happy, [when] children give to their father, both [sides] cry.’

Cf. proverb no. (39) above.

**ḥamínko bxéle u-môrrre,** lá-g-ben Ḥaminko cried and said: “I do not want anyone to give me money, [when] a father gives to his children, both [sides] are happy, [when] children give to their father, both [sides] cry. May no one cry.”

(81) **dré-la ṃáya b-ôd-tré šaqyāsa,**¹

> She poured water in both troughs.’

Cf. proverb no. (98) below, a synonym.
My mother told me, “My daughter, hold much the honour of [=give much respect to] Dina, our neighbour, the mother of Ephraim, and the honour of Khatun, the mother of ‘Aziz. God will help, one of their children will be your luck [=you will marry]. You should pour water in both troughs.”

I went to visit Ḥabuba. I knew that she was very ill. She is dying [lit. carrying]. When I entered, she became very happy. She told me, “My daughter, may God make it shine/bright upon you, like you have brightened my day upon me.” I said in my heart, “That is it, bitter below, sweet above. Her situation is bitter and she is [=appears] sweet. The world is all about managing it.”

Sitting with women is better than sitting with men.’

Cf. SE:109, an antonym.

99 See proverb no. (78) above.
100 Or: drawing room, council, assembly.
Whenever Garib 'Oče came to us, he would not enter to my father [=my father’s room] to sit with the Hakhamim, he used to come in the veranda, sit with the women, laugh and say, “A divan of women is more pleasant than a divan of men. And you should know, [that] when women speak men [should] remain silent. I will remain silent and laugh my head off [lit. faint from laughter].”

If those who regret ate faeces, there would be no faeces left in the world.

I regretted very much over the foolish deeds that I had done, and the deeds that I had not done. I sat and brooded. My mother told me: “My daughter, if those who regret ate shit, there would not remain any shit in the world.”

I searched far away [but] I found close by.

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101 See proverb no. (86) below.
The brother of Ḥabuba looked for a good girl [lit. daughter of kosher, i.e., of good family, qualities and reputation] to marry and build his house [with]. He travelled to Mosul, he travelled to Baghdad, no girl caught his attention [lit. fell in his heart]. He returned to Zakho, on the way he saw a fine girl, shining like the moon-light [lit. like the sun of the moon]. He started speaking with her, it turned out that she was [lit. she went out] a relative of his [lit. his people], and she also grew up in his neighbourhood. Ḥabuba said: “My brother, you searched far away, [but] found near. May God make [light] shine upon you.”

When women speak, men are silent.

Whoever does not take [a wife] from his own ethnic group, goes [=dies] in his sickness.

Cf. SE:24.
The son of my uncle married one of the people of here [=Ashkenazim], she took his soul out of him [=she gave him a hard time]. They fight about everything. His mother told him, “My son, whoever does not take [a wife] from his own ethnic group, God forbid [lit. may God not make it], goes [=dies] in his sickness.”

Every crooked penis finds its cure here.

The house of the Ḥakham was near the market. Whoever went to the market would, on his way, enter the house of the Ḥakham [lit. the house of the household/family of the Ḥakham]. His [=the Ḥakham’s] daughter said, “Do not hold [this] against me [lit. on me], every crooked penis finds its cure here. I am tired [lit. became tired] of these lowly people [lit. caught and dissolute] who come here. All day long one enters [and] one goes out.” After several years, she understood what a good house it was, it was like the house of Abraham Our Father, open to its four sides. One
would enter crying, when he would go out his face [was] smoothed, the Ḥakham and his wife used to listen to anyone, used to help anyone, and whoever entered there went out satisfied. His wishes fulfilled.

(89) *hawūsa là-[ʔɔz-æt] 'amməd-huzāya.*¹

favour.F NEG-do.IPFV-2MS with-jew.MS

‘Do not do a favour for a Jew.’

Cf. proverb no. (74) above.

I found a good job for my cousin, I told him, “Go, start working there, you will earn good money, and enjoy it as well. Many people would have liked to work in this place.” My cousin went, started working [lit. started the job], worked one week and said: “This is not for me, it is a sehrane¹⁰⁴ [=pleasant as a spring celebration], but it is not for me.” He left [lit. he rose and left] that place. It was the Garden of Eden [=exceptionally good] for him! I thought to myself, “Do not do a favour for a Jew.”

(90) *mándi láxm-ox reš-māya,*¹ bálkid xa-nunīsa

throw.IMP.2MS bread.M-POSS.2MS on-water.PL maybe one-fish.F

*bd- oslo.*¹⁰⁵

FUT-catch.IPFV.3FS-ACC.3MS

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¹⁰⁴ A spring celebration. See ch. 3, fn. 39.
¹⁰⁵ I thank Prof. Yona Sabar for this proverb.
‘Throw your bread over the water, maybe a fish will catch it.’

Cf. SE:54, SA:37, proverb no. (74) above. See ‘Send your bread upon the water, for after many days you shall find it’ (Qoh. 11.1).

When I was looking for a job, I asked my teacher to help me. He told me: “Throw your bread to [lit. on] the water, maybe a fish will grab it. Send letters to many places.”

When I was looking for a job, I asked my teacher to help me. He told me: “Throw your bread to [lit. on] the water, maybe a fish will grab it. Send letters to many places.”

My mother said, “I shall go visit Bāsso, she is ill, when I return from her, I will go [lit. enter] to Ḥakham Naḥum’s house, and take from him the meat grinder, on my way I will buy two [or] three things from the market, isn’t it [a] good plan?” “Of course, mother, well done [lit. may your...”

106 See above, fn. 91.
bassûma¹ hám zyâra¹ hám⁵ health/vigour be well/pleasant, both a visit and a trading opportunity.”

(93) gûmla lá-k-xaze ‘ujûksa did-e.¹ camel.m NEG-IND-see.ipfv.3ms hump.f of-3ms
‘The camel does not see its [own] hump.’

See the context situation for proverb no. (70) above.

(94) ĭz-ox mpôl-la go tér ʾilâha. hand.f-poss.2ms fall.pfv-3fs into-sufficient God
‘Your hand fell into the sufficient [= abundance] of God.’

Cf. proverb no. (112) below.

ʿáziz mûrreli kma g-əbêla ʿAziz told me how much he loves our family. He told Yoʾel the husband of Faruḥ, the son-in-law of Ḥakham Ḥabib and Sûtanu, “You do not know what luck you have that you married the daughter of Ḥakham Ḥabib, your hand fell into the abundance of God.”

(95) rozâna rozâna,¹ ĭz-i pêša earthquake.f earthquake.f hand.f-poss.1s become.ipfv.3fs
dôrmâna.¹ cure.m
‘Earthquake earthquake! My hand shall be the cure!’

Said by women after an earthquake, while putting their hands on the ground.

(96) ĭxâl-e pûrta,¹ ʿurtyás-e prûzla.¹ food.m-poss.3ms bran/sawdust.f fart.f.pl-poss.3ms iron.m
‘His food [is of] sawdust [but] his farts [are of] iron.’

Var.: …ʿurṭîse pôlaz.¹
‘…his fart [is of] steel.’
Our neighbour, for some time, has not been working, he does not have a job. He does not have even one quruš to support himself. I told him, clean the courtyard, clean the stairs, take two [or] three quruš, sustain your situation. He answered: “I do not do these things, I do not clean after people.” My sister told me: “Leave him, his food is sawdust [but] his farts are iron.”

(97) ʾáhat mfāšel, ʾáxnan b-lōš-ax.

‘You shall cut it [and] we shall wear it.’

Compare Sabar (1974, 330), nursery rhyme no. 3:

xmýānox mfāšil uʿahut lōš […]

‘May your father-in-law cut out (garments) for you to wear.’

In that case, however, the expression is used not as a proverb but rather literally.

sámrā mórra ta-jíran dida, šqol Samra said to her neighbour, “Take the daughter of my sister for your son, she is beautiful and good.” He said to her, “Whatever you say, wife of my teacher. You will cut out, and we shall wear.”

(98) ʾızla did-ā g-mzabná-le go-rába šuqā-ne.

107 Sabar (2002a, 283): “small Turkish coin.” The reference here is probably to the grush, an old Israeli coin.
'She sells her yarn in many markets.'

Cf. proverb no. (81) above, a synonym.

My sister said that she would come [and] help me, and to you she also said that she would come [and] help you, and she said that she would go to my mother [and] cook for her, I know that she does not do a thing from a thing [=she won't do anything], yet she sells her yarn in many markets.

(99) bè'ta nápla mən šərm-a,1 lá-k-tora.1
egg.F fall.IPFV.3FS from buttocks.F-POSS.3FS NEG-IND-break.IPFV.3FS

‘[If] an egg falls from her buttocks it does not break.’

This woman is [of one] span’s stature,108 bè'ta nápla mən šərna,1 lá-k-tora.1 bāle-kása k-ʃə ṭa ṭa-gyána.1

(100) bè'ta bāla pəmma.1
egg.F without mouth.M

‘An egg without a mouth.’

Cf. SA:31.

See the context situations for proverbs nos (76) above and (112) below.

(101) gūr-rax gūr-rax barrokyás-ax
get_married.PFV-3FS get_married.PFV-3FS kilim_rug.PL-POSS.3FS

čeq-lu.1
tear.PFV-3PL

108 See proverb no. (116) below.
‘You got married, you got married, your rugs have torn [because of the many suitors that stepped on them].’

 Avro Bəṭṭi wanted to sell his house. Many people came and went, and did not buy the house. He said to himself, “What’s happened [lit. what did that become]? It is like the story of Khazale [lit. it has become Khazale’s story], many suitors came for her, they came and went and did not marry her. Her mother out of her sorrow said, ‘You got married, you got married, your rugs tore.’”

(102) g-nāṣṭi  qâlma’ u-gólดา  dīḍ-a  gə-mzabnî-le.1

‘They skin a louse and sell its skin.’

Var.: g-nāṣṭi bāqqa,’ g-əmzābni gólda dida.1

‘They skin a frog, [and] sell its skin.’

See the context situation for proverb no. (47) above.

(103) g-jáyer  mən šûrs-e.1

‘He urinates through his navel [unlike all others].’

Var.: mən šûrse g-jáyer.1

‘Through his navel he urinates.’

Cf. proverb no. (46) above.
This person is very haughty, he thinks highly of himself [lit. he thinks himself (too) much, i.e. he is full of himself], he thinks there is no one like him [lit. there is not of him],¹⁰⁹ he is not like everyone. He urinates from his navel.

(104) dré-le párra b-rëš-e¹ u-²éra go-šərma.¹
put.PFV-3MS feather.M in-head.M-POSS.3MS and-penis.M in-anus.M

‘He put a feather on his head and a penis in his anus.’

mo²ṣ̱nni ḥǎq̱q̱l bəd-ṣabāḡ̱d bëse.¹ sële ʿax̱òne,¹ ḥǎq̱q̱l g-em̱orrə.¹ xṣ̱t ʿem̱a šûla sq̱ḻa ʿúẕḻe ʿò.¹ ʿana-roḥ̱áy̱i mp̱sq̱ḻa m̱n-č̱ẖw̱a,¹ g-x̱̱ḵli u-mɔṟṟi,¹ hawa,¹ drí párra b-rëši.¹

Badre mɔṟṟa-li,¹ ṣmò,¹ lá-šamʿat xɔ̱w̱a,¹¹¹ qam-ʿazm̱ḻi máḥḵyan go-diw̱an gûre,¹ muráḏi ḥš̱ḻlu,¹ ʾc̱ dôra qam̱és̱a ʿẕm̱lu báxta máḥḵya ʾemm̱ḏ-ruw̱aṉe,¹ msɔf̱éṟṟi lʰ-tel-ʰ-av̱v̱ Mḵḻ,¹ qam-maṯw̱ḻi go-qurṉs̱ɔd sɔ̀ḏde¹ kûllu guráne mɔhḵḻu xa-bas̱r daw-xèt,¹ hîl mṭe̱ḻe dɔṟi yòma gnèḻe nâše kûllu mɔrbɔẕlu¹ dɔmm̱i bɔẕle.¹ mɔrṟi-la xuṟāsti,¹

¹⁰⁹ See proverb no. (46) above.
¹¹⁰ See proverb no. (129) below.
yámmi marrā-li mən-zūna1 doq  
qādrax bəd-iżāx u-lōp ta-
gyānač xolā kūd 'amōr tōnnīnī'  
lāzəm rāqṣat, 111 xzè ma-sēla  
b-rēšax, 1 drēlu pāra b-rēšax u-
'ēraq go-sārmāx.

(105) hāmmam g-małāq-le  
bāth.m  
IND-set_fire.ipfv.3ms-acc.3ms  
in-gen  
'He heated the bath [water] with his farts.'

Cf. R:70, SA:58.

go-maḥālē dēnī, 1 'swa xa-
sotīnta, 1 pappûkə lāswa-la má  
'axlāwa. 1 nāše g-raḥmūwa ʾālla, 1  
g-yawīwala partōxe. 1 xā-dora, 1  
sēle nassimo, 1 xzēle ʾe-pappûkə, 1  
mārre, 1 ʾāṭṭa ḥāʾ ʾahā māḥken  
ʾīmməd naš-māḥkame u-
maʾinīla. 1 baser-trē ṭālāha šābāsə, 1 
lā ʾšmēlu mōnne čū-məndi, 1  
yámmi mɔrra, 1 ʾo-nāša ła-użlez 
čū-məndi, 1 hāmmam g-małāqle  
b-ʾurtīyāše. 1 mörwala bax-
mašlīah. 1112

In our neighbourhood, there was one old woman, poor soul, she did not have what to eat. People use to take pity on her, they used to give her crumbs. Once, Nassimo came, he saw that poor soul, [and] he said, “Now right away I will speak with the people of the government [= authorities] and they will help her.” After two [or] three weeks, no one heard [lit. they did not hear] anything from him, my mother said, “That person did not do anything, he set fire to the bath with flatulence. The wife of Mašlīah said so.” 112

111 See proverb no. (37) above.
112 See proverb no. (117) below.
search.PFV-1S search.PF-1S more-good from self-1S NEG see.PFV-1S
'I searched [and] searched [but] did not find [anyone] better than myself.'

Cf. SE:80.

See the context situation for proverb no. (46) above.

(107) xáre qâm-e xáre básr-e xà
defecate.IPV.3S/PL in_front-3MS defeceate.IPV.3S/PL behind-3MS one
īla.
COP.3FS
'[Whether] you defecate in front of him [or] behind him, it is one [= it is the same for him].'

Var.: xáre qâme xáre básre lá g-mfàreq.
'[Whether] you defecate in front of him [or] behind him, he does not distinguish.'

ʾo-náša be-ʾašel hîle. lá-g-daʾel
That person is ill-mannered. He is not able [or: does not want] to see what [people] do for him. You defecate in front of him, you defecate behind him...

mád g-ōzi tâle. xáre qâme xáre
bâsrê...

(108) kúd šåbòʾta xá šånèʾta.
all.REL finger.F one craft/skill.F
'Each finger, a skill.'

ʾe-bâxta, râḥa šåter-ila, xa-ʾešet
That woman, she is very skilful/clever/strong, a woman of
hàyil. kúd šabòʾta xá šanèʾta-la.
xuziʾaxòni mgâbe ta-gyáne
xá muxwása.

(109) xa g-ʾemer xa g-ʾtârjām.
one IND-say.IPV.3MS one IND-translate.IPV.3MS
‘One is talking, the other is translating.’

ʾanya-yalünke, kùllu sélu ʾōlli,1 mád g-ôn gə-mʾámri ʾōlli,1 xá g-ेemer xá gə-mtärjom.1 ʾiláha nàṭrru,1 ràwe u-parqili,1 These children, they all came upon me. Whatever I do, they boss me around. One says [and] the other [lit. one] translates. May God guard them. May they grow and let me be.

(110) xés-e talōttà,1
under-3MS wet.F
‘Under him it is wet.’

See the context situation for proverb no. (76) above.

(111) lá gə-mfárqa ʾéra mən gizāra,1
NEG IND-distiguish.ipfv.3FS penis.M from carrot.M
‘She cannot distinguish between a penis and a carrot.’

brat-ʾavro xà behéma-la,1 lá k-ùa ču-məndi,1 lá gə-mfárqa módi mən-məndi,1 ʾéra mən gizāra,1 bāle-yʾèla ta-gyāna,1 pāšla qira,1 ṭpěla bəd-mənāššē,1 la-nxèpla,1 šqōlla mən-šermə,1 dréla l-pàsa,1113 u-qam-jabrâle gūrre ʾəmma,1

(112) mpól-la go-kás yəmm-a,1
fall.pfv-3FS in-belly.F.gen mother-poss.3FS
‘She fell into her mother’s belly.’

Cf. proverb no. (94) above.

113 See proverb no. (69) above.
Šanné brat-'Iyo' kmâ bâš welâ' Šanne the daughter of 'Iyo, how good she was! A drop does not come from her [=she is quiet, does not complain], an egg without a mouth. 114
God had mercy on her, [and] sent her one good boy [lit. a son of kosher] and he married her. His mother and father also like her very very much [lit. much of much], and they pamper her, she fell into her mother's belly. Blessed is the Creator!

(113) mxá-la pówna ʾsł-la.' strike.PFV-3FS kick.M on-3FS
‘She struck a kick over her.’
šamuʾel u-šiyon jirâne wéalu,' Šamu’el and Siyon were neighbours, they went to school [lit. studied] together, went to the army together, they used to do everything together. They were like twins. They went to university together, but Šamu’el was more master-shoulder [=diligent and successful], and brighter. He studied [and] studied, he struck a kick over Siyon, he became a doctor. Siyon is still studying.

(114) b-xá kóza qùṭma,' g-marwé-wa-lu yalùnke.' in-one pile.M ash.M IND-raise.IPfv.3Pl-Past-Acc.3Pl child.PL
‘With one pile of ash they used to raise children.’

See the context situation for proverb no. (75) above.

(115) lá k-káweš mən-šàpya.' NEG IND-go_down.IPfv.3Ms from-strainer.M

114 See proverb no. (100) above.
‘He does not go down through the strainer.’

ʾo-nāša lēbi daʾlānne,1 kma- ‘I cannot stand [lit. see] this person, how hard [lit. viscous; =stubborn, solemn] he is! Whatever I ask him, he would not do [it], whatever I do [lit. I do (and) I do not do], he does not fulfil my wishes, he is stubborn [lit. viscous], he does not go down through the strainer.

(116) qómad šiṭa1 u-kāsa k-ʾa.1 stature. M GEN span115.M and-belly. F IND-know. IPFV. 3S

‘He is as tall as a span but [lit. and] his belly knows [=he is cunning].’

See the context situation for proverb no. (99) above.

(117) mòr-wa-la bax-mašliā.1 say. PFV-PAST-3FS wife. GEN-Mašliah

‘Said the wife of Mašliah.’

dámmed kurdināye dod-záxo When the Kurds [=Jews of Kurdistan] of Zakho came to Israel, there was not [any] work [=jobs] in Jerusalem, they were very poor. On Sunday[s] they used to travel to the villages and work in the fields. Each one used to take with him bread and some condiment to eat [lit. live (on)]. One day, one man brought only bread. He did not have anything at home. They started eating, the wife of Mašliah told him, “Do you

[115] That is, the distance measurement based on the distance between the thumb and the small finger of the human hand.
have only bread?! Wait don’t eat, I will send you right away [lit. now] some condiment.”

He waited and waited, the day ended. His friends told him, “The day ended, come, let’s finish work.” He told them, “But the wife of Maṣliaḥ said she would send me [some] condiment.” From that day [on], they say, “Said the wife of Maṣliaḥ.”

See also the context situation for proverb no. (105) above.

(118) ʾén-a sé-la qam-gyân-a.

‘Her [own] eye came unto her.’

My friend said she would come to me and help me a little. She came [and] pilled two water-melons, how much her eye came to her! [=she was so proud of it!]

(119) naxîr-a naxîr bêndâqa, sëppás-a sëppás

‘Her nose is like a hazelnut, her lips are [thin] as paper, blessed be the name of the Creator!

Var.: …pásas pás warâqa,…

‘…her face is [smooth] as paper…’

They came to ask for the hand of [lit. they came for the ‘asking’ of] my niece and they sang to her, “Her nose is like a hazelnut, her lips are [thin] as paper, blessed be the name of the Creator!” And all of us were happy.

(120) rózza k-táʔən màya.¹
rice.m IND-carry.ippv.3ms water.pl
‘Rice [can] take up water.’

Eran asked me to speak with his student [some] lišana deni.
I told the student to come, we shall speak [some] lišana deni, he said, “I want to come but I want to bring with me two [of] my friends, okay?” I said, “They should come upon my eyes [=by all means], three guests and one guest are the same, my rice [can] take up water.”

(121) qam-mapqá-la mə̀n-mə̀ne.¹
pasm-take_out.3ps-acc.3fs from-meaning.f
‘She took it out of meaning [=she exaggerated, she overdid it].’

Cf. Sabar (2002a, 222), under ma’ne.

They invited one singer, and she sang more and more, and we didn’t understand anything. I told a woman who was sitting next to me, “She took it out of meaning, this singer. How much she sings, and how much she whines,” no one enjoys [it].
(122) qam-mapqá-la mən-naxir-i.¹
   PAST-take_out.3FS-ACC.3FS from-nose.M-POSS.1S

   ‘She took it out of my nose.’

   xurásti mórra b-ásya šaqláli bəd-trambéł dida,¹ la-ʔán go-dé śəmša,¹ ḥmōli ḥmōlli,¹ séla u-mórrali hával b-áx zónax xa-móndi tálī u-xaráe b-áx ʾəl-xəlmóta didax,¹ qam-maʿatəlāli u-ʾé maʿaruf dida qam-mapqála mən-naxiri.¹

   My friend said she would come and take me in her car, so I should not walk in that sun. I waited [and] waited, she came and told me, “First we shall go buy something for me, and afterwards we shall go to your task.” She delayed me, and this favour of hers, she took it out of my nose.

   wéali l-bēsa,¹ škōlli ʾáxlān u-séla xási qam-lazlašāli,¹ qam-mapqále ʾixála mən-naxiri.¹

(123) ʾúz-la lá-ʾuz-la.¹
do.PFV-3FS NEG-do.PFV-3FS

   ‘[Whatever] she did [or] did not do.’

   krəblī mən-xurásti,¹ qam-majgorráli rāba,¹ xarāe séla máhkya ʾəmmi,¹ lá-qam-samhanna,¹ ʾúzla lá-ʾuzla,¹ lá-məhkəli ʾəmma.¹

   I was at home, I started eating and my sister came [and] hurried me, she took the food out of my nose.

   xási ʾləbla ʾán ʾəmma ʾəl-ʃüqa,¹ lá-g-banwa,¹ ʾúzla lá-ʾuzla lá zólли ʾəmma.¹

(124) kás-a qam-mamərʾà-la.¹
   belly.F-POSS.3FS PAST-cause_pain.3FS-ACC.3FS

   ‘She made her [own] belly hurt.’
Cf. proverb no. (128) below.

I asked Basso to buy some tomatoes for me when she is in the market. But I have not seen a single tomato [lit. it is forbidden if I saw one tomato]! She made her [own] belly hurt [to avoid the task], I cannot ask her for anything.

See also the context situation for proverb no. (128) below.

(125) našé-lax  már’a u-môsa.1
forget.ipfv-acc.2fs pain.m and-death.m
‘May pain and death forget you.’

‘wi-nšéli  zonánna xar-mála,1 bráti
našé lax már’a u-môsa,1  zúnna-li.’

(126) ḋamóma  u-yôm-e  kôma.1
scarecrow117.m and-day.m-poss.3ms black
‘A scarecrow117 and his day is black.’

‘ọ qaṣaba  mørute ra’-ile. la-
g-mahke, kake xriče pɔmmə
ṣtíma, ḋamôma u-yome koma.’1

This butcher, his face is bad. He does not speak, his teeth are gnashed, his mouth is sealed, a scarecrow117 and his day is black.

(127) barbát-ad  núra  fôr-ru  mɔn-2én-e.1
spark.pl-gen fire.m fly.pfv-3pl from-eye.pl-poss.3ms
‘Sparks of fire flew from his eyes.’


116 An important ingredient of the soup known as xamuṣta; see ch. 2, fn 36–37.
117 The translation of ḋamôma is according to Khan (2008b, 1215).
See the context situation for proverb no. (132) below.

(128) gárm-ox là mayqor-şt-tu.\(^1\)

bone.pl-poss.2ms neg make Heavy.ipfv-2ms-acc.3pl

‘Do not make your bones heavy.’

Var.: gárm-e yaqûre.\(^1\)

bone.pl-poss.3ms heavy.pl

‘His bones are heavy.’

Cf. Sabar (2002a, 124), under garma; proverb no. (124) above.

Šábti mšaq'ána,\(^1\) gárme kma-
yaqûre,\(^1\) hay-tre šabása peláve-
didi hîlu kèsle,\(^1\) xà bəzmára
lázəm čáyək 3bbu,\(^1\) káse
g-mamrê'la\(^{118}\) u-lá qam-
'awêzlu.\(^1\)

Shabti the cobbler, his bones are so heavy, it’s three weeks [that] my shoes are with him, he has to knock in them [only] the one nail, he made his belly ache\(^{118}\) and he did not fix [lit. do/make] them.

(129) šmô la-šam'ôt xrióa.\(^1\)

hear.imp.2s neg-hear.ipfv.2ms bad.m

‘Listen, [may] you not hear [any] evil.’

See the context situations for proverbs no. (60) and no. (104) above.

(130) k-taqöl-la gyân-e.\(^1\)

ind-weigh.ipfv.3ms-acc.3fs self.f-poss.3ms

‘He weighs himself.’

Bássô mèrra,\(^1\) b-dûn màsihànna
xmäsi,\(^1\) b-nablanña xárça
šôr'hà,\(^1\)–bônoke qam-xazyànna
b-izàla şax-salim,\(^1\)–k-fan şax-

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\(^{118}\) See proverb no. (124) above.
several weeks she does not come to us, she weighs herself, [in order to] see whether her daughters-in-law visit her or not. Today is my turn to go visit her, I shall make her head grow [=make her feel important; flatter her]."

(131) \text{\textit{k-l'a} tér gyán-a.}'

\textit{She knows sufficiently for herself.}'

Var.: \textit{ięba tér gyànà.}'

\textit{She is sufficient for herself.}'

Cf. Sabar (2002a, 308), under \textit{tér.}

\textit{yalünkät xási mjohóddlu xá med-
daw-xét.}' xá mæla xábre béd-d-
ay-xét.}' séla yônmu,}' u-mórra ta-
d-ay-zúrta,}' qtó' qàlax.' mórri ta-
xási,}' áhat lê-wajax,}' ay-rábsa
k-ì,a tér gyán,' lê[w]a xa-
móskin,' ȉba kúd tláha xaswásá
mayʾilalu go-jèba.'

The children of my sister quarrelled one with the other. One struck words in the other [=they argued; insulted one another]. Their mother came and told the little one, “Cut your voice [=be silent]!” I told my sister, “You should not care, the eldest can get along [lit. knows sufficiently for herself], she is not poor [=helpless], she can put [lit. insert] all her three sisters into her pocket [=she is strong enough to manage them].”

(132) \text{\textit{dín-i} g-él m-rèš-i.}'

\textit{religion/judgement}M-POSS.1S \text{\textit{IND-GO.IPFV.3MS from-head.M-POSS.1S}}

\textit{I lose my senses. [lit. my religion/judgement goes away from my head.]’}

\footnote{The word \textit{dùn} is borrowed into NENA from both Hebrew, where it means ‘Jewish law, judgement’, and from Arabic, where it means ‘religion’. See Sabar (2002a: 141).}
This man gets angry quickly. [How] poor is his wife! She came from the market, she had not put down her baskets yet, he started yelling at her, sparks of fire flew from his eyes. She tells him, “But what did I do?!” He says, “You know [that] when I come home and do not see you my judgement goes away from my head [=I lose my senses].”

(133) ġné-li u-lá rɔš-li.¹
be_suddenly_happy/lucky.pfv-1s and-NEG feel.pfv-1s

‘I was so lucky [but] I didn’t realise it.’

Can be used either ironically or not.

kálsi škólla pálxa,¹ nahagóna zólle ʿal-mólxa,¹ mòrra,¹ yalónke masyálu kásli ʿozán-bu xudānì.¹ ġnéli u-là r̲asli.¹ ʿána la-kṣayšli ṭēši xekánne,¹ ʿáttā lázom ʿōn xudānì b̲ēd-yalónkē zòrē.¹ ʿáya u-yómma-šik ġnēlu.¹

(134) dúk-sox lá màr’a.¹
place.f-poss.2ms NEG hurt.ipfv.3fs

‘[May] your place not hurt.’

hár-dammād g-mašihatānna sōti g-mbarxâlì,¹ bróni dalālā u- ʿazîza dúkox là mār’a.¹

Always when I visit my grandmother she used to bless me: “My dear and darling son, may your place not hurt [=may you will not experience pain].”

¹⁰ See proverb no. (127) above.
¹¹ See proverb no. (54) above.
(135) \( \text{pòš-le xà-lappa.} \)\(^1\)

become.PFV-3MS one-small_lump.M

‘He became [as small as] a lump [\(=\) he became frightened].’

Cf. Sabar (2002a, 207), under lappa. See the context situation for proverb no. (60) above.

(136) \( \text{lòbb-a pòš-le xa-mòsta.} \)\(^1\)

heart.M-POSS.3FS become.PFV-3MS one-hair.F

‘Her heart became [like] a hair [that is, her heart ‘shrank’ because of fear, sorrow, hard work, or illness].’

See the context situation for proverb no. (60) above.

### 15.0. Appendix: Additional Proverbs (with No Glossing or Context Situation)

(137) \( \text{ʾé tòrnìni}^{122}\text{-la, tòrnàna wélà pòšta.} \)\(^1\)

‘This is tòrnìni,\(^{122}\) tòrnàna is still left.’

\( \text{ʾé tòrnìni-la, tòrnàna hèš b-àsyà.} \)\(^1\)

‘This is tòrnìni, tòrnàna will come.’

\( \text{ʾé tòrnìni-la, tòrnàna welà bàsra.} \)\(^1\)

‘This is tòrnìni, tòrnàna is behind it.’

Troubles come in bundles. Cf. SA:13 (a synonym), proverb no. (37) above.

(138) \( \text{kùd-xa gàròş núra xe/qam-qóqa dìde.} \)\(^1\)

‘Everyone pulls the fire [towards] under/in front of his one clay pot.’

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\(^{122}\) See fn. 66 above.
Var.: kúd kabanîye gáraša...

(139) xáṭra bād kàlbâ,1 léba znâya.1
‘[The stroke of a] rod in a dog, there is no prostitution [=shame] in it.’

Hitting a dog is permissible. Also used metaphorically: insulting a bad person is allowed (he who acts like a dog will be treated like a dog). Cf. SA:114.

(140) qú-m-rêšî,1 lá marçënnox.1
‘Get off me so that I will not crush you.’
Cf. SA:108; proverbs no. (4) and no. (38) above (synonyms).

(141) ròsqet kálbe ’al šázàne.1
‘The livelihood of dogs is upon [=provided by] the mad.’

Dishonest or cunning people (or underdogs) achieve their needs at the expense of the naïve. Cf. SE:120.

(142) réša dòd la-mâre’,1 lá yasròtte.1
‘A head that does not hurt, do not tie it.’
Var.: réš [GEN] la-g-mâre’, lá yasròtte.1
‘A head that does not hurt, do not tie it.’ Cf. SE:14.

(143) rùvi1 u-šùqa.1
‘The fox...and the market...’

Said in order to emphasise the lack of connection between two things.

(144) ríx pošyàsa k-ése mên maḥkóye dîde.1
‘The smell of farts comes from what he says.’

(145) túrran ’ô jalîda,1 ta-šàtyax ’án nàya.1
‘We broke this ice in order to drink this water.’
Said when a great effort is done to achieve something.

Var.: ...máya qaríra. ¹
‘...cold water.’

(146) ‘áqel léwe bød-rúwwa u-zòra.¹²³
‘Intelligence is not in big and small [=not dependent on size or age].’

(147) ‘íyo íle bə-qɔ́dáya,¹ u-kəz-lòbbe’ xòre wéna.¹
‘Iyo is preparing, and in his heart [=he thinks that] I am his friend [=cooperating].’

(148) pòsli pìre,¹ ‘úmri pèva.¹²⁴
‘I became an old woman, my life is from now on.’

Cf. [...] ‘[...] Now that I am withered, am I to have enjoyment [...]’ (Gen. 18.12)

(149) yòmmi dúqla òròshi,¹ hës-lá mòle.¹
‘My mother prepared pickles, it[s time] has not yet arrived [=it is not ready yet].’

Said when someone is delaying a favour which has been asked.

(150) kpìnà k-ëxën òtìna.¹
‘The hungry eat [even] mud.’

Anyone who is hungry would eat anything. Cf. the Prov. 27.7.

(151) návyan kálsa u-xmàsa,¹ zá’lu ‘éra u-ɔ̀škàsa.¹
‘Between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law [=amidst their arguments and struggles], the penis and testicles got lost.’

¹²³ I thank Ahuva Baruch for this proverb.
¹²⁴ I thank Ahuva Baruch for this proverb.
Cf. R:55 (a synonymous proverb).
(152) \( xáyí tā-γάνι! jūlle dād-kūd-yom ṣālī, ṣādyo bāš k-šākli-li \).\(^{125}\)
‘My life is for me!\(^{126}\) I wear clothes of every day [= normal clothes] [lit. clothes of every day are on me], today they suit me better.’

An expression of good mood, satisfaction.
(153) \( qóqèd ʿarāsa g-rāsəx\^{1} qóqèd ʿizamyāsa là g-rāsəx.\)
‘The clay pot of the rival wives\(^{127}\) boils, the clay pot of the sisters-in-law does not boil.’

Rival wives, living in the same home, must find a way to get along (in the proverb they cook together), sisters-in-law do not get along and they do not have to collaborate.
(154) \( dāmməd šómšə g-nāpqə \^{1} ʿēwa g-ēl kəsla\^{1} ʿáp-awa g-šbe šəxən.\)
‘When the sun comes out [= appears], the cloud goes to her, it also wants to warm up.’

Var.: \( dāmməd ʿēwa k-xāze šómšə məqəla \^{1} ʿēwa g-ēl k-əsla \^{1} ʿáp-awa g-šbe šəxən.\)
‘When the cloud sees that the sun came out [= appeared], the cloud goes to her, it also wants to warm up.’

(155) \( xʁéle go ṭayə.\)
‘He defecated in the issue.’

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\(^{125}\) Contraction of \( k-šākli ṣālī.\)

\(^{126}\) An expression of love, but usually addressed to or about another person, predominantly to children: \( xáyí ūləox! / ūləe! \) ‘My life is for you! / for him!’

\(^{127}\) In polygamy.
He spoiled the business.

(156) ʾīṣa la g-mátya ʾal š̱rma.

‘Her hand does not reach her buttocks.’

She is a miser. Also a curse: may she not be able to serve herself.

(157) ʾól xa čāŋga máya, k-tèpa.

‘She [can] float on a handful of water.’

She knows how to get along.

(158) ʾo mīṣa la k-tawéle ʾé ʾazāya.

‘This dead is not worth this mourning/lamentation.’

Said about an exaggerated response to something. Or saying that something is unworthy.

(159) hiye hiye labaniye.

‘This and this [are both] yogurt.’ (Ar.)

It’s all the same, it’s nothing new.

(160) zaharóke dʾòrra la-gwàra.

‘Zaharoke returned without getting married.’

Said when someone returns without achieving what he or she had intended.

(161) zóʾaḏ zamàre.

‘A pair of singers.’

Said, often dismissively, about inseparable friends or about two people who collaborate in something.

(162) ḥále ḥále kúd-xa ʾal maḥàlle.

‘His situation his situation, everyone [goes] to his neighbourhood.’

At the end of the day everyone should mind their own business.
(163) là ṯə̀sli, .drə̀sli, lə ṉəxli, nəxli.¹
   ‘I did not heal, I cracked; I did not rest, I barked
   [= howled].’

Life is hard.

(164) kūllə dūnye šud-pēša ʾèra, lə ṣálqa ʾəbbi.¹
   ‘May the entire world be a penis [but] do not stumble upon
   / touch me.’

   Vars.: ...la nāḥqa ʾəlli.¹
   ‘...do no touch me.’

   ...la qàrwa ʾəlli.¹
   ‘...do not come close to me.’

Cf. proverb no. (29) above which has a synonymous message.

(165) xmáre g-ēl b-ʿurxa.¹
   ‘His donkey is walking on the road.’

Things are going well for him.

(166) ma-dōqnox bōd máyəd dōʾe qam-maxurštta?¹²⁸
   ‘What, did you dye your beard white with a yogurt drink?!’

Said to an older man who says something unwise.

(167) ʾeliko b-xà násə.
   ‘Eliko with one ear.’

Used to describe someone or something with some defect, lacking
something, incompetent. Or said about a task which was per-
formed only partially. Cf. R:64.

(168) xá xábra nùra, xá xábra bəṛud.
   ‘One word [of] fire, one word [of] gunpowder.’

¹²⁸ I thank Ahuva Baruch for this proverb.
Used of someone speaking angrily.

(169) móndi dâd-lá-ʾáse ʾammâd-kâlo, lâ-kese básra.\(^{129}\)

‘What does not come with the bride, shall not come after her.’

Past promises are irrelevant. If one promises something, one should deliver now.

(170) kúd lá šxônne bêd-šômšêd bònokê.\(^{1}\) la-g-šáxên bêd-šômšêd ʿâsîrta.\(^{130}\)

‘He who did not warm up in the morning’s sun, will not warm up in the evening’s sun.’

Something done too late is useless. Cf. R:11, SE:124 (explained with various messages).

(171) šalâqtêd bêʾe.\(^{1}\)

‘[She who] boils the eggs.’

Said of someone who knows how to get along in life. Also: a fomenter of quarrels.

(172) xâbrox qaṭʾêli bêd-šâkar.\(^{1}\)

‘I cut your word[s] with sugar.’

Said as an apology when interrupting someone’s speech.

(173) g-yâʾla go-ʾêni.\(^{1}\)

‘She goes into my eye.’

She argues with me, contradicts what I say.

(174) ʾêna qaṭʾa qam-gyâna.\(^{1}\)

‘Her eye cuts in front of her.’

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\(^{129}\) I thank Naftali Mizrahi for this proverb.

\(^{130}\) I thank Mordechai Yona for this proverb.
She thinks highly of herself; makes a big deal out of the respect she thinks is due to her.

(175) ʾáxəl réšé páyaš mànne.†
‘May it eat his head, and [still] stay from him.’

May the object that he did not agree to give me harm him and exist after him.

(176) pósra b-axläle, † gárme mťašyalu.†
‘She would eat the meat [and] hide the bones.’

She won’t reveal my dirty laundry.

(177) fāqir zółłe l-tôksa, † u-zángin ṭríałe l-bòdra.†
‘The poor went to his belt [= euphemism for intercourse?] and the rich ran to the threshing floor.’

The only pastime of the poor is sexual intercourse (?). Cf. proverb no. (9) above.

(178) mən-jamàʾa′ l-à-g-ʾeqa duksa.†
‘From [= because of] the congregation, space does not become narrow’.

Var.: mən-naše...
‘From [= because of] people…’

They feel the space is sufficient because they love each other. Cf. כי הריחמתי הזה עוזי אופתי显示器 שבובות שהנהра דא עוזי רחהיתפורה ירחמתי ‘When our love was strong, we could lay on the blade of a sword, now our love is not strong, a bed sixty ells wide is not enough for us’ (BT Sanhedrin 7a; my translation).

131 I thank Ḥabuba Messusani for this proverb.
132 I thank Boʿaz Sando for this proverb.
133 I thank Naftali Mizraḥi for this proverb.
(179) cúxxa látle kafîl u-damàn.\textsuperscript{134}

‘No one has a guarantor and protection-tax/bail.’

Everyone is mortal. Cf. proverb no. (11) above.

(180) kárti u-ṭə’ni\textsuperscript{1} wélú š-xəši,\textsuperscript{1} u-xóři k-čáhe ʾ ámbu.\textsuperscript{135}

‘My load and my burden are on my back, and [=but] my friend is getting tired because of [lit. in] them.’

Cf. proverbs no. (7) and no. (26) above.

(181) dáqon qáša qam-ʾozále kanɔšta.\textsuperscript{1}

‘She made the beard of the priest a broom.’

She used something in a disrespectful way.

Var.: …ʾozále sponjədər.\textsuperscript{1}

‘…she made it a rag.’

Synonymous message to that of proverb no. (182) below.

(182) mxélu tambúr b-ʾér bâbu.\textsuperscript{1}

‘They struck the drum with the penis of their father.’

Said when someone is showing disrespect while thinking they are, or trying to be, respectful. Synonymous message to that of proverb no. (181) above.

(183) ymút al-dík’ u-ʾéno ʾala-naxàla.\textsuperscript{1}

‘The rooster dies and [=but] his eye is on the waste [or: bran].’ (Ar.)

Desires never die. Cf. Aramaic version in SE:33; proverb no. (191) below, a synonym.

\textsuperscript{134}I thank Naftali Mizrahi for this proverb.

\textsuperscript{135}I thank Naftali Mizrahi for this proverb.
(184) ʾáw d-čáyək réšē go-tanûra¹ q-qáyəz bêd-nûra.¹³⁶
    ‘He who sticks his head into the oven gets burnt by the fire.’

Synonymous message to that of proverb no. (40) above.

(185) g-yáʾal go-xa-u-xât.¹
    ‘He enters one into the other.’

He is starting to get angry.

(186) ʾiláha šqilále mônne.¹
    ‘God has taken it from him.’

He lost his senses. He became angry.

(187) mən-qôma ta-ʾaqlûsa.¹
    ‘From stature to wit.’

May you lose some of your stature and gain it in intelligence. Cf. proverb no. (116) above.

(188) kûd šqûlle ʿaqûllax lâ mtâhne ʿûbbe.¹
    ‘Whoever took your wits, may he not enjoy it!’

Cf. SA:9.

(189) kûd g-máxe šûd-mâmre,¹ kûd g-máxəl šûd-mâswe.¹
    ‘He who hits should hurt, he who feeds should satiate.’

Cf. SE:11.

(190) kusîs ʿâlo' dréle b-érš jâllo.¹
    ‘He put the hat of ʿAlo on the head of Jallo.’

He confused two matters.

¹³⁶ Sabar (2002a, 131), under č-y-k.
(191) kása kpónta k-sò’a, ‘énya kpónta là k-sò’a.\(^{137}\)

‘A hungry belly [can be] satiated, a hungry eye [can]not [be] satiated.’

Cf. the synonymous proverb no. (183) above.

(192) ‘ázə qál’a qalaʾisa párə kása béb kulisə.\(^{1}\)

‘[May] she go away [to hell, and may] her belly burst and overflow together with her kidney.’

A curse.

(193) šám’a ‘ár’a, lá ‘amrálə.\(^{1}\)

‘[May] the earth hear [it, and] not tell it to her.’

Said about a deceased person, when mentioning a negative fact about them.

(194) ‘óba gýâna.\(^{1}\)

‘[May] she love herself.’

Said about a deceased person, after saying that she had loved the speaker, or that the speaker had loved her, in order that the deceased person shall not cause the speaker to join her.

(195) xábra xé pelâvax.\(^{1}\)

‘A word under your slippers.’

Keep a secret. See the context situation at proverb no. (27) above.

(196) pômmî twîrá qâme.

‘My mouth is broken in front of Him.’

Said to God, when saying something which may be construed as resentful towards Him. Cf. Jer. 12.1.

\(^{137}\) Sabar (2002a, 188), under kpìna.
(197) ʾamórka ʾamórра zamórka zamórра.

‘May the sayer say it, may the singer sing it.’
Let people say whatever they want.