

# The Neo-Aramaic Oral Heritage of the Jews of Zakho

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# CHAPTER 2: ENRICHED BIBLICAL NARRATIVES

## 1.0. The Enriched Biblical Narrative

The topic of this chapter is a central genre in the oral culture<sup>1</sup> of the Jews of Zakho, and indeed of all Kurdistan: the enriched biblical narrative (EBN). The EBN is the retelling and re-composition of a biblical story, usually one of heroic or epic nature. The core, skeletal, biblical narrative is enriched with numerous additions which are woven into it in an organic manner, producing an smooth, even story that does not reveal its composite nature. The fact that it draws on elements from various sources which often originated in different historical periods and in different cultural realms is not evident to the listener, nor is its history of change and growth.

The chapter will consider the EBN through the prism of a concept taken from the study of thematology, the *motifeme*, and it will propose a new concept, the *transposed motifeme*. The chapter claims that the transposed motifeme is a phenomenon central to the EBN and its related genres, and that it is important for their understanding and analysis.

An example of an EBN will be discussed and analysed in this chapter. It consists of two related, and consecutive, stories: the story of Ruth and Naomi and the story of king David. It was told by Samra Zagen, and recorded in her home on 19 April

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<sup>1</sup> On this term see Ong (1982).

2012.<sup>2</sup> The complete narrative, with a translation, is presented in §7.0.

## 2.0. Related Genres<sup>3</sup>

The EBN shares certain characteristics with other prevalent genres of the oral as well as the written culture of the Jews of Kurdistan. These characteristics, predominantly the mechanism of transposed motifemes and the mediatory function (both discussed below),<sup>4</sup> may therefore be regarded as meta-generic characteristics in the culture of the Jews of Kurdistan (that is, characteristics which encompass several genres).<sup>5</sup> The genres which are related to the EBN may be divided into two categories:

1. Synchronically related genres: the living genres native to the culture of the Jews of Kurdistan. These are epic songs (traditionally referred to as *tafsir* or *qəṣṭa*); oral translations of the Hebrew Bible; older NENA translations of the Hebrew Bible; NENA Midrashim; expositions of the *haftarot* and of the Megillot; and Jewish NENA *piyyuṭ* (liturgical poetry).

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<sup>2</sup> I have published another EBN told by Samra Zaqen, the story of Joseph and his brothers, elsewhere; see Aloni (2014a, 26–60). For another recording of a NENA text recounted by Samra, where she talks about her arrival in Israel in 1951 and her first encounter with Modern Hebrew, see Aloni (2015).

<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the literature of the Jews of Kurdistan, see Sabar (1982a; 1982c, xxxii–xxxvi).

<sup>4</sup> In §§4.0 and 2.2.1, respectively.

<sup>5</sup> For discussions of the centrality of genre as a category in the study of folklore, see Ben-Amos (1969; 1976b); Seitel (1999).

2. Diachronically related genres: genres belonging to earlier layers of Jewish culture to which the origins of the EBN phenomenon may be traced. These genres are the *Targum* in various configurations; the *Midrash* in various configurations; *piyyut*; and post-antiquity Rewritten Bible texts.

The geographical isolation of the Jewish communities of Kurdistan—as well as the social structure and their material culture, which greatly resembled those known to us from the rabbinic period—enabled the Jewish communities of Kurdistan to preserve ancient literary traditions and practices, and thus the deep connection between the literary genres of the Jews of Kurdistan and the world of classical Midrash: ancient literary and exegetical genres were kept alive in the Jewish communities of Kurdistan well into modern times.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Rivlin (1942, 183) commented: “It is indeed possible that Midrashim otherwise lost, were preserved in the Aggadah of the Jews of Kurdistan” (my translation). For examples of that type, see Rivlin (1942, 183–84; 1959, 106–8). Gerson-Kiwi (1971, 59) similarly stated that “Kurdistan is known as a territory... where... archaic languages and... archaic singing and playing have survived the vicissitudes of history.... Here we seem to have some samples of a living antiquity, doubly interesting in that it is to a considerable extent connected with Jewish history of the biblical period.” According to Brauer (1947, 12), translated as Brauer (1993, 27), “one gains the impression that a great many ancient (Talmudic) Jewish usages and beliefs, both religious and secular, have been preserved and kept alive among the Jews of Kurdistan.”

## 2.1. Synchronically Related Genres

### 2.1.1. Epic Songs

Epic songs recount biblical or Midrashic narratives, rich in heroic and dramatic elements. These songs were a popular pastime in Kurdistan, and also served as an educational medium for those members of the community who did not have access to the written sources (Sabar 1982a, 63). The songs are usually rhymed and have a clear strophic structure, and each of the songs was performed with a unique melody (Gerson-Kiwi 1971). Similar to the case of the EBN, as we will see below, motifs added to the skeletal narrative of an epic poem are woven into it in an organic manner.

A term commonly used for these epic songs is *tafsir* (pl. *tafsirim*). The word is borrowed from Arabic, where it means “elucidation, interpretation,” or “commentary on the Qur’an” (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 713). Another term used interchangeably with this is *qaṣṣa*, meaning “story” (Sabar 2002a, 282). Sabar described the *tafsirim* as “the foremost literary product of the *ḥaxamim* of Kurdistan” (Sabar 1982c, xxxvi).

Rivlin collected many of the epic songs and published them with an elaborate introduction (Rivlin 1959). Na‘im Shalom, a *hazzan* ‘cantor’ at Ša‘arey Tora, a synagogue of the Jewish community of Zakho in Jerusalem, has recorded and published his performance of two of these epic songs: the story of Joseph and his brothers and the story of the binding of Isaac (Shalom 1986).

Na‘im Shalom’s renditions differ in many details from the equivalent songs in Rivlin’s book, though they follow the same structure.

Other recordings of NENA epic songs are kept in the National Sound Archive in the National Library of Israel, notably: David and Goliath, performed by Ḥakham Ḥabib ‘Alwan in the Zakho dialect, recorded by Johanna Spector (class mark Y 00039); David and Goliath, performed by Eliyahu Gabbay, Naḥum ‘Adiqa, and Salem Gabbay in the Zakho dialect, recorded by Avigdor Herzog (class mark Y 03627); Joseph and Benjamin, performed by Eliyahu Gabbay, Naḥum ‘Adiqa, and Salem Gabbay in the Zakho dialect, recorded by Avigdor Herzog (class mark Y 03627); the story of Joseph performed by Neḥemya Ḥoča in the Zakho dialect, recorded by Edith Gerson-Kiwi (class mark CD 04871 F424-425 item 5351-5366); David and Goliath, performed by Raḥamim Ḥodeda in the dialect of ‘Amidya, recorded by Jacqueline Alon (class mark Y 02719); and the binding of Isaac performed by David Salman in the dialect of Ḥalabja, recorded by the performer (class mark Y 04514).

### 2.1.2. Translations of the Hebrew Bible

The Jews of Kurdistan kept a living tradition of translations into their NENA dialects of the entire Hebrew Bible.<sup>7</sup> These translations were handed down orally,<sup>8</sup> and committed to writing at the

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<sup>7</sup> With the exception of the book of Psalms.

<sup>8</sup> There are recordings of oral performances in the National Sound Archive of the National Library of Israel, for example ‘Alwan (1974),

request of scholars only in the 20th century.<sup>9</sup> The term often used by the Jews of Kurdistan to describe these translations is *šarḥ* or *šarʿ*, from Arabic, meaning “expounding, explanation, elucidation” (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 463).

These translations of the Hebrew Bible are often very literal—“the general tendency is to translate the biblical formulation word by word as much as possible, and therefore the result is a frozen and unnatural language” (Sabar 1983, 27, quoted in Avinery 1984, 138; my translation). However, they were “often based on the traditional commentaries, such as Rashi and the classical Aramaic Targum... [and] in certain cases... a more homiletic translation or allegorical translation was preferred” (Sabar 1982c, xxxv). It is precisely in these instances that the translations show a family resemblance to the EBN.

### 2.1.3. NENA Midrashim

NENA Midrashim were preserved in manuscripts originating from the 17th century, copied in Nerwa and ʿAmidya. It seems that these NENA Midrashim, in their edited form, were the product of the school of Ḥakham Shemuʿel Barazani (Sabar 1982a, 60). They contain homilies and lessons on three portions of the

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which consists of the book of Ruth performed by Ḥakham Ḥabib ʿAlwan, recorded by Jacqueline Alon (class mark Y 01790).

<sup>9</sup> See Rivlin (1959, 68–69). Multiple volumes of these translations were published by Sabar (1983; 1988; 1990; 1993; 1995a; 2006; 2014). A translation of the book of Ruth, as read by Zeʿev (Gurgo) Ariel, was published by Goldenberg and Zaken (1990).



Torah: *Wayḥi*, *Bešallah*, and *Yitro*. They were written with the intention of being delivered publicly, and therefore have a captivating, dramatic character (Sabar 1982a, 60).

A large percentage of the Aggadic material in these Midrashim can be traced back to older, classical Midrashim, but has been reworked and given new, elaborate formulation. In many instances, however, the Aggadic material cannot be traced back to earlier sources and it must be regarded as either original work of the Ḥakhamim of Kurdistan or classical Aggadic material that did not survive elsewhere. Whatever the case may be, the reworking of older material and the incorporation of original material are features that unite the Midrashim with the EBN.

The NENA Midrashim were published by Sabar (1976; 1985).

#### 2.1.4. Expositions of the *Haftarot* and the Megillot

The NENA expositions of the *haftarot* (portions taken from the books of the biblical prophets, read in synagogue after the reading of the Torah) are of *haftarot* for special occasions: the afternoon of Yom Kippur (the book of Jonah; Sabar 1982b);<sup>10</sup> the eight days of Passover (Isa. 10.32–12.6); the second day of Shavuot (Hab. 2.20–3.19; Sabar 1966, 381–90); and the Ninth of Ab (Jer.

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<sup>10</sup> A recording of the book of Jonah performed in the dialect of ‘Amidya by Raḥamim Ḥodeda, recorded by Jacqueline Alon, is kept in the National Sound Archive of the National Library of Israel (class mark Y 02718).

8.13–9.23).<sup>11</sup> They follow the Hebrew text more closely than do the NENA Midrashim, but also contain Aggadic material aimed at interpreting the verses. Similarly to the NENA Midrashim, they are preserved in manuscripts in the Nerwa and ‘Amidya dialects, except for the *haftarah* for the Ninth of Ab, which is preserved in the Zakho dialect and is still used liturgically today by the Jewish community of Zakho in Israel (Sabar 1982a, 61).

The expositions of the Megillot (the Five Scrolls) are similar in character to those of the *haftarot*, although they tend to follow the Hebrew text even more closely. One exception is the exposition of the Song of Songs, which is a translation of the book’s classical Aramaic *Targum*, itself an allegorical interpretation of the Hebrew text (Sabar 1991). The exposition of the book of Ruth is preserved in several manuscripts.<sup>12</sup> The exposition of Lamentations is preserved in manuscripts in the dialects of Nerwa and

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<sup>11</sup> National Library of Israel, Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts no. F74965 copied by Rabbi Shemu’el Baruch from the author, his father, Rabbi Yosef Binyamin; Michael Krupp Manuscript Collection Ms. 2915 written by Ḥakham Ḥabib ‘Alwan; the National Library of Israel Ms. Heb. 1007 copied by Mordechai Naḥum Zakhariko; Ms. Heb. 494 written by Darwish Ben Shim‘on Shanbiko; Ms. Heb. 695 written by Shabbetai Ben Ya‘aqov. Several recorded performances are kept in the National Sound Archive of the National Library of Israel (class marks Y 00028(8-13), Y 00504(02), Y 00504, YC 02657, CD 05033, CD 05037).

<sup>12</sup> National Library of Israel, Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts nos F26847, F26945, F44919, F73987, Ms.Heb.1012=28, Ms.Heb.7806=28, and MSS-D2233. An exposition of the book of Ruth from a privately owned manuscript by Shim‘on Ben-Michael written in

‘Amidya, but is known to the Jews of Zakho in Israel and is recited orally on the Ninth of Ab. No exposition of Ecclesiastes survives, and it is unclear whether it was ever translated into NENA. The exposition of the book of Esther is preserved in a single manuscript.<sup>13</sup> Two recordings of the book of Esther, both in the dialect of ‘Amidya, are kept in the National Sound Archive of the National Library of Israel: one is performed by Repha’el ’Eliyahu, and recorded by Nurit Ben-Zvi (class mark Y 05750); the other is performed by Raḥamim Ḥodeda, and recorded by Jacqueline Alon (class marks Y 02717, Y 02718).

#### 2.1.5. NENA *Piyyuṭ*

Jewish NENA *piyyuṭim* (liturgical poems) in various dialects, which are recorded in manuscripts, have been published by Sabar (2009). Most of these *piyyuṭim* are translations, sometimes very free translations, of earlier Hebrew *piyyuṭim*, but several of them are original works.<sup>14</sup> A number of the *piyyuṭim* recount biblical

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the dialect of Urmi was published by Ben-Rahamim (2006, 192–215). It contains elaborate Midrashic narrative expansions.

<sup>13</sup> National Library of Israel, Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts no. F44919, pp. 70a–104a. This is a Neo-Aramaic translation of the older Aramaic Targum Sheni of the book of Esther. Sabar (1982a, 61) states that exposition of the book of Esther is preserved only orally.

<sup>14</sup> One of these original works is ‘The Binding of Isaac’, from a manuscript by Ḥakham Yishay in the Urmi dialect, which was sung on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, published in Sabar (2009, 60–79). Sabar (2009, 60, fn. 149) writes about this *piyyuṭ*:

narratives,<sup>15</sup> which they elaborate in a manner similar to that of the epic songs (see §2.1.1. above). These *piyyuṭim* were sung in synagogues during certain Jewish festivals.

## 2.2. Diachronically Related Genres

### 2.2.1. Targum<sup>16</sup>

The tradition of Targum, Jewish translation of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic, dates back to the pre-rabbinic period. It seems that the many extant Targumim are related to the ancient liturgical practice of public translation of the Torah, whose aim was to make scripture accessible to members of the community who

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It seems that the Neo-Aramaic version is not a direct translation of a Hebrew *piyyuṭ*, but is rather drawn, with considerable elaboration and dramatisation and with a variety of additions taken from the local linguistic reality... from the rabbinic Midrashim about the binding [of Isaac].

There are also four *piyyuṭim* about the passing away of Moses, which were sung on Simḥat Torah after reading the *me'ona* Torah portion (Deut. 33.27–29): the first without dialect specification, in Sabar (2009, 299–302); the second in the dialect of Saqqəz, in Sabar (2009, 302–6); the third from a manuscript by Ḥakham Sason, son of Rabbi Babba Barazani of Arbil, in the dialect of Arbil, in Sabar (2009, 306–9); and the fourth, taken from Ben-Rahamim (2006, 216–21), from a manuscript by Shim'on Ben-Michael in the dialect of Naghada, republished in Sabar (2009, 309–12).

<sup>15</sup> In one case, *qəṣṭtət ḥanna* 'The story of Hannah', the *piyyuṭ* is based on a Midrashic narrative. Sabar (2009, 425–43) gives two versions: one in the dialect of Zakho and one in the dialect of Dohok, from a manuscript by Ḥakham Eliyahu Avraham Yitzḥaq Dahoki.

<sup>16</sup> For a comprehensive overview of this topic, see Kasher (2000).

were not able to understand the Hebrew. In antiquity, this simultaneous translation was done extemporaneously (or memorised in advance) during the public reading of the Torah by a designated person, the *meturgeman* (Elbogen 1972 [1913], 140–41). Later in the history of *Halakha*, the study of *Targum* side by side with the study of the Hebrew text of the Torah became an obligation, rooted in a Talmudic decree: “Rav Huna son of Judah said in the name of Rabbi Ammi: ‘A man should always complete his portions [of Torah] together with the congregation [reading] twice [the Hebrew] scripture and once [the] Targum” (BT Brakhot 8a; translation based on the Soncino English edition). According to the rabbis, translating the Hebrew Bible properly is a delicate task with sharp borders on both ends of the literal-paraphrase axis: “Rabbi Yehudah said: ‘one who translates a verse literally, he is a liar; one who adds, he is a blasphemer and a libeller” (BT Qiddushin 49a; Tosefta Megillah 3.41).

The extant Targumim (Targum Onkelos, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Targum Neofiti, the Genizah Targum, the Fragments Targum, and the Tosefta Targum of the Pentateuch; Targum Jonathan Ben ‘Uzzi’el, and the Tosefta Targum of the Prophets; the Targumim of the Writings) vary in the degree of literalness and the amount of Aggadic material they incorporate into the text.

The Targum tradition is relevant to the EBN genre in two of its aspects. Firstly, in its mediatory function. It serves as a bridge between the biblical text and the people. This is a very important function in a community where many members could not understand the Hebrew in which the Bible is written. The EBN fills this mediatory function, and declares it in formulas such

as *de šmo'un ya kulloxun mħubbe didi, de mšitun kullu 'azize didi* 'Oh hear all of you my loved ones, oh listen all my dear ones' (Rivlin 1959, 228).<sup>17</sup> Secondly, the Targum weaves Aggadic material into the text in a manner that produces a smooth, unified text. It does not indicate when it departs from a literal translation and incorporates Aggadic additions, and this is very similar to the EBN.

An example of a classical Targum which is particularly close to the EBN style is the Tosefta Targum of the Prophets.<sup>18</sup> It is a Targum especially rich in Aggadic additions incorporated into the text. One half of the material of the Tosefta Targum is for chapters that are, or were, used as *haftarot*. Thus it also has stylistic ties to the NENA expositions of the *haftarot*.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.2.2. Midrash

Midrashic discourse is a central component of rabbinic literature. Its hermeneutical techniques and style are an important foundation of, and can be found in, all of the works of the relevant literature: both those which are classified as Midrash (e.g., Midrash Rabbah for various books of the Hebrew Bible), and those which are not classified as such (e.g., the two Talmudim). The technique

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<sup>17</sup> See also the comments of Sabar (1982a, 63). Kasher (2000, 73) describes the Hebrew formula עמי בני ישראל 'my people sons of Israel' used to address the audience, which appears dozens of times in the classical Aramaic *Targumim* for the Torah. Kasher lists this formula as one of the proofs that the *Targumim* were performatively used in the liturgy.

<sup>18</sup> See edition with commentary in Kasher (1996).

<sup>19</sup> See §2.1.4 above.

of elaborative hermeneutics of Midrash, which is so central to Jewish culture, is the direct ancestor of the EBN.

Nonetheless, one point of dissimilarity between the two must be noted: the Midrashic text, in most cases, quotes the original biblical text dealt with within the Midrashic discourse. By doing that it poses a differentiation between the written text, and the oral Aggadic material. Thus an inherent classification system exists within the Midrashic text itself.<sup>20</sup> The EBN, as we shall see, does not do that. In fact, one of the core features of the genre is the unity of the narrative: the teller and the audience are not necessarily aware, nor are they expected to be aware, of the various ingredients—many of them dating back to entirely different periods and cultural realms—that make up the unified EBN text.

### 2.2.3. Post-antiquity Rewritten Bible Texts

The term ‘Rewritten Bible’ usually refers to a genre prevalent in Second Temple literature, particularly in the Qumran literature. Here it is intended to describe several medieval works (e.g., *Sefer ha-Yašar*; Dan 1986) as well as several modern works (e.g., *Toqpo šel Yosef* and some of the stories in ‘*Ose Fele*, both by Rabbi Yosef Shabbetai Farḥi<sup>21</sup> [1867 and 1864–1870,<sup>22</sup> respectively]). These

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<sup>20</sup> In the Talmud, one of the ways this is achieved is by linguistic differentiation: the biblical text is in Hebrew and the Midrashic interpretation is often in Aramaic.

<sup>21</sup> On Farḥi, his books, and his influence, see Yassif (1982).

<sup>22</sup> On the uncertainty regarding the year of publication, see Yassif (1982, 48, fn. 7).

works are similar in their programme to their better-known Second Temple namesake: they rewrite narratives taken from the Hebrew Bible while adding Aggadic material into the stream of narration. What is common to Rewritten Bible texts and the EBN is that both produce a continuous narrative whose added themes become integral parts of the whole and are not marked as being added material.

Not only is there this theoretical overlap between Rewritten Bible texts and the EBN, one of these works, *Toqpo šel Yosef*, published in 1867 in Livorno, surprisingly shares much of its Aggadic material with a Zakho EBN, the story of Joseph and his brothers (Aloni 2014a, 27–30; 2014b, 339).

### 2.3. The Christian *Durekṭa*

Another related Neo-Aramaic genre that should be mentioned in this context is the Christian *durekṭa* (Mengozi 2012). This is a genre of rhymed and metred poetry on religious themes sung at public gatherings. The genre has its roots in the Classical Syriac genre of *memra*. Many *durekyāṭa* are based on biblical narratives with added material.

Comparing the Jewish Targum and the Christian *durekṭa*, Mengozzi writes that both are “presented as bridge-genres from written to oral tradition” (Mengozi 2012, 335). This bridging function is also shared by Jewish *tafsirim* ‘epic songs’ (see §2.1.1 above), and indeed the *tafsirim* and the *durekyāṭa* have additional characteristics in common: the *tafsirim* and the *durekyāṭa* both contain religious themes and narratives, but are both performed publicly in non-liturgical circumstances (Mengozi 2012, 338–



39); they both contain within their verses expressions directed to attract the audience's attention and meta-poetic statements about the act of performing the song and recounting its narrative (Mengozzi 2012, 335); neither is anonymous,<sup>23</sup> as the names of their authors are recorded (Mengozzi 2012, 337). In addition, some *tafsirim* and *durekyata* are based on the same biblical narratives, and in these cases some of the themes of the additional material are shared. A comparative study of the themes in these cases—for example, comparing those of the Jewish *tafsir* of Joseph and his brothers (Aloni 2014a, 26–60; 2014b) with those in the *durekyata* (see, for example, Mengozzi 1999, 477–78, 482 no. 16; Rodrigues Pereira 1989–1990) about the same biblical narrative—would certainly prove fruitful.

### 3.0. Thematology

Following a discussion of the motif in the analysis of folklore, this section considers the most important concepts of thematology, the methodological approach which will be used in the analysis of the EBN below. The following section then proposes a new concept, the transposed motifeme.

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<sup>23</sup> This is not always the case for Jewish epic songs. Rivlin (1959) gives traditions about the names of the authors for only some of the songs.

### 3.1. The Motif as a Fundamental Concept in Folkloristics

The concept of motif, which is defined as a small meaning-bearing element of a text<sup>24</sup> that may recur in other texts, is central to, some say distinctive of (Ben-Amos 1980, 17), the study of folklore. The standard reference work most closely associated with the concept of motif in folklore is the Thompson motif index (Thompson 1955–1958). It offers a systematic classification of motifs—recurring elements—in folk-literature. The ability to use this index has been described as “a skill which is indispensable to the folklorist, and the defining trait that separates him from all other student of culture” (Dorson 1972, 6, quoted in Ben-Amos 1980, 17). However, over the years, many theoretical critiques have been made of both the motif index and the concept of the motif itself.<sup>25</sup>

One such critique is found in Alan Dundes’s (1962) article ‘From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales’. Dundes criticises the choice of the motif as a basic unit in the study of folklore. While not denying the value of the motif index

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<sup>24</sup> In the context of this chapter, a small meaning-bearing element of a narrative. But the concept of motif is relevant to other art forms as well: music, dance, visual art, textile, and more.

<sup>25</sup> For a thorough overview, see Ben-Amos (1980). See also Ben-Amos (1995, 71): “as much as motif-analysis has become the hallmark of folklore research in the first half of the twentieth century, it has failed to yield substantive interpretive insights into the nature of oral literature and the dynamics of tradition.” Although Thompson’s motif index is the most well-known, it is not the only one—for a list of motif indexes, see Uther (1996). For an annotated bibliography, see Azzolina (1987).

(or that of the Aarne-Thompson tale type index [Aarne and Thompson 1961; Uther 2004]), noting that these indexes are “useful... [as] bibliographical aids or as means of symbol shorthand” (Dundes 1962, 96), he deems that the motif unit is inadequate. The root of Dundes’s criticism is that the motif is, according to him, not a structural unit.

To explain his argument Dundes uses a pair of concepts coined by the American linguist and anthropologist Kenneth Pike (1967): *etic* and *emic* (see ch. 1, §7.0, fn. 25 above). Pike’s binary distinction—which originates from the modes of thought of theoretical linguistics and is etymologically derived from the suffixes of the terms ‘phonetic’ and ‘phonemic’—refers to two approaches to the analytical study of any cultural item: language, narrative, literary works, items of art, or folklore. ‘*Etic*’ denotes a systematic approach where the concepts and analytical units are external to the object of study and to its cultural context, and do not account for the internal functional relations between the elements of that object. *Etic* units are objective, predetermined, and measurable independent of the particular context. ‘*Emic*’, on the other hand, denotes an approach whose concepts and units are conceived with attention to the internal function and reciprocal relations between the elements of the object. It emphasises the structure that these elements constitute, as well as the cultural context of the object at hand. One may add that such an approach takes into

consideration two contexts, the internal one which is formed between the constituents of the cultural item, and the external one which exists between that item and its culture.<sup>26</sup>

According to Dundes, the motif (as well as the tale type)—at least in the way it is used in folklore studies—is an etic unit, in that it pays no attention to the function of the motif in the context in which it appears. Dundes stresses the need for a new *emic* structural unit to serve as the fundamental point of reference for folklore studies. As a possibility, he (Dundes 1962, 100) quotes what he describes as “one of the most revolutionary and important contributions to folklore theory in decades”: Vladimir Propp’s (1962, 100) definition of the function, the structural unit proposed by him in his famous work about Russian fairy tales, *Morphology of the Folktale*,<sup>27</sup> where he states that “an action cannot be defined apart from its place in the process of narration” (Propp 1958, 19, quoted in Dundes 1962, 100).

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<sup>26</sup> Another example for the various possible contexts is the acceptance of the item in its culture as an item—i.e., as a ‘type’—as well as the relation item-audience in a particular performance—i.e., as a ‘token’.

<sup>27</sup> In this work (which first appeared in Russian in 1928), Propp analyses a corpus of 115 Russian folktales. He defines 31 plot events, which he terms ‘functions’, which may appear in each of the folktales. The functions are generalised and formulated in a reductive manner. In the actual texts, they may take up various different surface realisations. What is striking is that, though any given folktale may have any number of Propp’s functions, their order of appearance is fixed and invariable. Propp also defines seven types of characters which undergo the 31-one functions. Thus, the product of Propp’s work, which is considered one of the first demonstrations of a structuralist approach towards texts, is a grammar of Russian folktales. For more detail, see Toolan (2005, 167),

The methodological approach known as thematology is an attempt to create tools which overcome these shortcomings of the concept of the motif.

### 3.2. Thematology: The Concepts

Thematology is a branch of the study of literature whose foundations were laid by scholars such as Trousson (1965) and Weisstein (1988).<sup>28</sup> The basis for the thematological study of Jewish literature, together with a new methodology, was proposed by Elstein and Lipsker (2004). Its central accomplishment is the multi-volume *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Story*, which presents entries on Jewish ‘themes’ (see §3.2.1 below).

At the core of the thematological study of Jewish narratives stands a system of concepts developed by Elstein and Lipsker. These concepts differ from the parallel concepts used in general thematology and the study of folklore, and aim to meet the requirements that the special characteristics of Jewish literature pose.<sup>29</sup> Some of the concepts were introduced specifically for thematology of Jewish narratives to accommodate their unique features—in particular, the tendency of Jewish narratives to be told and retold in numerous versions over long periods of time and

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where he writes that “reactions to the *Morphology [of the Folktale]* provide striking parallels to some of the critical reception given to transformational-generative grammar in the 1960s.”

<sup>28</sup> In the context of Jewish culture, see also the numerous studies of Christoph Daxelmüller referred to in Elstein, Lipsker, and Kushelevsky (2004, 20–21).

<sup>29</sup> On the problem of terminology, see Elstein and Lipsker (2004, 34).

wide geographical and cultural spaces, and to leave written documentation of many of these versions over these vast time and space scopes. For example, we find about forty distinct written versions of the famous story of Ḥoni the Circle Maker who prayed for rain,<sup>30</sup> and these are almost evenly distributed over a period of thirteen centuries (Tohar 2013). These different versions, though showing immense variation, all tell the same story: they are constructed on the same structural skeleton, the same chain of motifemes (the same ‘constant’, see §3.2.2 below). To describe this phenomenon of a series of varied versions of the same narrative, which unfolds over a long period of time and wide geographical areas, the term ‘homogenous series’ was coined. In what follows, a description of the fundamental concepts of the methodology of thematology of Jewish narratives is given (based on Elstein, Lipsker, and Kushelevsky 2004, 9–21 and Elstein and Lipsker 2004).

### 3.2.1. The Homogenous Series

As mentioned, a striking feature of the literature of the Jews, which sets it apart from other literatures, is the tendency of Jewish narratives, often first found in the Hebrew Bible or in other classical Jewish sources, to be told and retold over and over again in varying versions, many of which have come down to us in written form. A single story may exhibit several dozens of versions, each of which differs from the rest, but all nevertheless telling the same recognisable story. Each individual version of

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<sup>30</sup> The most famous of which is in the Mishna, tractate Ta’anit 3.8.

the series may originate from anywhere across a vast geographical and cultural space—from anywhere inhabited by Jews. It may be told in any of the Jewish languages and come from any period of Jewish history.

In the thematological methodology, it is the series itself—rather than any single version of the story—that becomes the object of investigation. Trends in the development of the series as a whole are discovered, and its trajectory may be contextualised in extra-textual observations. The homogenous series, also sometimes simply referred to as a ‘theme’, is the central object of study in the methodology proposed by Elstein and Lipsker. It is different from what is in many instances the object of other thematological studies, the heterogeneous series, where texts are grouped and studied together based on a looser resemblance, for instance, the use of the same set of motifs.

### 3.2.2. Levels of Text

In the methodology proposed by Elstein and Lipsker, six levels of text are analysed. The levels are hierarchical: each level contains the previous. In addition, each level is paired with a corresponding concept that describes the elements of which that layer is composed.

1. The level of material (*Stoff*)—the concept of motif: the motif (see §3.1 above) is a small unit of narrative syntax. It belongs to the level of the textual material. A motif may be a narrative element, such as a ring, a wedding, rain, or a dance. The motif, when treated as an independent unit, is an abstraction detached from context, and is not sufficient

for the study of its original literary environment. In reality, motifs always appear within given textual contexts, and therefore they perform a function, or participate in performing a function, of narrative syntax. Only when it is looked upon as an organic part of its original context can a motif lend itself to hermeneutic deciphering.

2. The level of function—the concept of motifeme: the motifeme<sup>31</sup> is the smallest functional unit of a narrative. As opposed to the motif, which is accounted for outside of the texts it originated from, the motifeme cannot be considered an abstraction detached from its place in the narrative—it is always a part of that context. Its functional value is manifested in that it is the binding principle of motifs. The motifeme is the element that forms meaningful connections between individual, abstract, meaningless motifs and anchors them in a meaningful narrative sequence. Therefore, it is the prime unit of the narrative. It constitutes the link between the units of the material and their role in the text and gives meaning to both—to the motifs and to the textual sequence. It is the central building block in thematological methodology, and is what replaces the motif (which was given this fundamental role in some other schools of folkloristics and literary study) as the smallest meaningful—that is, meaning-carrying—unit of the text. In a narrative sequence, the motifeme may be either an

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<sup>31</sup> The term was coined by Pike (1954, 75). Elstein and Lipsker (2004, 38) and Elstein, Lipsker, and Kushelevsky (2004, 11) erroneously ascribe its coining to Dundes (1962).



element of the storyline or an element of poetic function (introduction, epilogue, scenery, description of the non-storyline elements, and so on).

3. The level of structure—the concept of constant: the constant is the chain of motifemes which recur in all versions of a particular narrative. It is formed by the homogenous series, and is what is common to all of its incarnations. Different versions may give more or less emphasis to particular motifemes of the constant. The variation in emphasis given to each motifeme in a particular token of the constant enables the researcher to infer conclusions about the telos (see below). The variety in the ways in which a constant materialises in different versions of a narrative raises the question of the borders of the homogenous series: a version which omits one or two of the motifemes will normally be considered a member of the series, but what about more remote versions on the spectrum of change? Here, the judgement of the researcher plays a role.

4. The level of ideas—the concept of telos: the telos represents the quality related to ideals and values of the homogenous series as a whole, as well as of each individual instantiation of it. Each change from one version to another in the chain of versions, each particular emphasis or unique expression of a motifeme in a version, may be linked to a value or ideal prevalent in the intellectual and social atmosphere in which that version was created. The concept of telos links literary development and literary entities to

social, non-literary, realities. Thus the analysis of a complete homogenous series can point to long-term trends of change in the extra-literary reality of the community to which that series belongs.

5. The two mediatory levels: in addition to these four main levels of the text, there are two mediatory levels, which Elstein and Lipsker call 'teleological mediators'. These are the 'configuration', which mediates between the motif and the motifeme, and the 'substructure', which meditates between the constant and the telos.

a. The configuration: a configuration is a set of motifs that show a tendency to appear together in the same alignment. Examples of this from familiar tales would be a dragon which guards gold or a wolf which is in a forest. As such, the configuration is still detached from the textual connectivity which would give it meaning, and still does not lend itself to hermeneutic deciphering. It is a mediatory stage which organises the motifs before the motifeme grants them their narrative meaning.

b. The substructure: the substructure is similar to the telos, in that it is an extra-literary reality which gives form to the literary object. The substructure is, however, not a formal, well-structured, system of ideas, beliefs, or moral values which are consciously retained by a society, but rather an unconscious, implicit, state of mind which is prevalent in society at the period when a story version originates.<sup>32</sup> The

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<sup>32</sup> The examples of substructure given by Elstein and Lipsker (2004, 46–47) are the implicit norms of the courtly love of the Middle Ages as the

substructure is thus a mediatory stage between the constant and the telos.

#### 4.0. Transposed Motifemes

As we have seen, Elstein and Lipsker propose a methodology which has a fixed sequence of motifemes, the constant, at its centre. It emphasises the structural similarity between the many versions of each narrative, seen collectively as a set—the homogenous series. This methodological approach relies on a shared structural thread of motifemes, on the homogeneity of the series: its principal object of study is not the narrative itself nor an individual version of it, but rather the homogenous series as a whole, the development of the narrative over time. This approach is particularly fruitful when applied to Jewish literature and folk-literature due to their striking tendency to tell and retell narratives, and to leave traces, i.e., written attestations, of many of the retold versions over very long periods.

What I would like to suggest here is an approach that considers the matter through an equally important feature of Jewish literary folk-traditions, and indeed Jewish literature as a whole, a feature which is very much present in the oral heritage of the Jews of Kurdistan. This is a feature that represents the opposite impulse from the retention of the same motifemic structure that produces the homogeneity of the homogenous series. It is the tendency to mix into a story narrative elements taken from various historical periods and cultural realms in a way which bypasses

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platform of the medieval romance and the Heavenly City as portrayed in the writings of the 18th century.

the chronological development of the series. A reiteration of a narrative may unexpectedly contain a motifeme 'foreign' to the constant of the series, or more accurately what has been the constant up to this point. In many cases, this newly planted motifeme is taken from another, entirely different, and sometimes traceable, narrative. It is, so to speak, transposed from its 'original' locus and incorporated into a new one by the teller or the community that creates the narrative. I call this phenomenon the 'transposed motifeme'.

#### **4.1. Manners of Transposition**

What is interesting in tracing the origin of transposed motifemes is that there seem to be few constraints on what these origins may be: motifemes may be borrowed intra-culturally from narratives originating in the same culture, but of completely different genres, periods, and content, or they may also be borrowed extra-culturally. What is offered here is an analysis that follows the life of the motifeme: its migration from one series to the other and the changes it undergoes.

There are several ways in which a motifeme may be transposed. Here these will be exemplified using the motifemes which will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

A motifeme may be taken from an entirely different narrative or non-narrative text. This other text may be a Jewish one—for example, the motifeme in §5.9, that of the merging of the stones, is taken from a non-narrative portion of a Jewish text, the *Zohar*, which may itself have derived the idea from the appearance of a motifeme of merging stones in relation to the stones of

Jacob, attested in many places in classical rabbinic literature. Alternatively, the originating text might be one of another culture—for example, the in motifeme §5.10, that of splitting one's opponent into two without him realising this, is taken from the Assyrian folk-epic, *Qaṭine*.

A motifeme can also be taken from the very same narrative, but transposed into a new location in it. This may be a result of a structural change, or a result of mere stylistic choice of the storyteller. Examples of this can be seen with the motifemes in §§5.17 and 5.18, where in the biblical narrative the episode of Saul and David in the cave appears before the episode of Abigail, whereas in Samra's story the order is reversed. Another example is the motifeme §5.5, where speaking to the crowd at a funeral is transposed from Boaz's wife's funeral to Boaz's own funeral.

A special case of transposition within a narrative is a motifeme which retains its previous location in the narrative sequence, but where the causality structure is altered: the causality nexuses linking the motifeme to previous or subsequent events (motifemes) in the narrative are different from those in earlier versions of the narrative. This is a very subtle transposition. An example of this can be seen in the motifeme in §5.12, where king Saul's illness is explained as resulting from his anger and his realisation that David will become king instead of him. In the biblical text, Saul is not said to have an illness, and the explanation given for his behaviour is "an evil spirit from God" (1 Sam. 16.14).

Naturally, when motifemes are transposed from different sources and fused together in the new narrative, new causality

structures appear. An example of this can be seen in the motifeme in §5.13, where Jonathan's recommendation of David as the one to play music for his father king Saul is explained as resulting from Jonathan having seen David playing for the sheep and his compassionate care of them.

A motifeme may be split, and told in portions in non-sequential parts of the narration, as occurs with that in §5.8.

Two previously independent motifemes may be unified into one. An example of this is seen in the motifeme in §5.18, where two separate episodes of the biblical narrative, the episode of the cave and the episode in Saul's camp, are united into one in Samra's story.

The location of a motifeme, or its historical context, may be altered. In the motifeme in §5.4, what takes place in the biblical narrative at the city gate instead takes place in Samra's story at the synagogue; and in the motifeme in §5.8, the biblical location of the Elah Valley is now Jerusalem. Similarly, when it comes to the motifeme in §5.17, in the Bible the episode takes place in biblical Ma'on and Carmel, and in Samra's story it takes place near the modern city of Haifa. The modern neighbourhood of Gilo in Jerusalem is also mentioned.

Another type of manipulation of the motifemic structure, which is not a transposition in the strict sense but nonetheless may be considered in the same category, is what the scholar James Kugel termed "narrative expansion" (Kugel 1994, 3–5,

276).<sup>33</sup> This is the elaboration of a previously existing motifeme in the narrative sequence. This elaboration can be so expansive that, in the new narrative, what was previously one short motifeme has grown into a whole episode, which in and of itself contains several subordinate motifemes. An example is the motifeme in §5.1, where Naomi's righteousness—in itself a motifeme transposed into the narrative from classical rabbinic literature—is described at length, and includes her cooking the Jewish-Kurdish *xamuṣṭa* soup and giving some to her poor neighbours.<sup>34</sup>

## 5.0. Motifemes in Samra's Story

In what follows 19 of the motifemes contained in Samra's story are listed. Each subsection begins with a description of the motifeme<sup>35</sup> as told in Samra's story, and continues with a discussion of the sources of the motifeme. The intention is to demonstrate the varied histories and transposition processes of the motifemes.

### 5.1. Naomi and Elimelech's Wealth, the Charity of Naomi (14)–(35)

Naomi and Elimelech are rich.

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<sup>33</sup> Kugel (1994, 4), however, defines the narrative expansion as an exegetical device which is “based on something that *is* in the [original] text” (original emphasis).

<sup>34</sup> For further discussion of types of motifeme transposition, see §6.0 below.

<sup>35</sup> Some of the subsections deal with groups of interconnected motifemes, rather than a single one.

- (19) <sup>H</sup>c<sup>ə</sup>šir<sup>im</sup><sup>H</sup> wélu,<sup>1</sup> ʔəswá-lu <sup>H</sup>sadè,<sup>H1</sup> ʔəswá-lu... xàtte,<sup>1</sup> ʔəswá-lu...<sup>1</sup>  
 ‘They were rich, they had a field, they had... wheat, they had...’

Naomi is a charitable woman, taking care of her needy neighbours and giving them some of the produce that God has given her. For example, whenever she cooks *xamuṣṭa*<sup>36</sup> soup, she makes sure her needy neighbours have some, too.

- (23) <sup>H</sup>šaxením<sup>H</sup> dídi lätlu?!<sup>1</sup> ‘a[w]òn-ile!’ (24) g-daryáwa xápča  
 gərsa,<sup>1</sup> g-daryáwa xápča...<sup>1</sup> mād-ʔətlā,<sup>1</sup> xà qárʔa,<sup>1</sup> hàʔ<sup>1</sup> úzlu,<sup>1</sup>  
*kutèle ta-yalúnke dīdax,<sup>1</sup> lá šoqátte bésax spīqa.<sup>1</sup>*

“My neighbours do not have [any]?! It’s a sin!” She would put some cracked wheat, would put some... whatever she had [lit. has], a zucchini, “Here,” [she says to the neighbour,] “make [= cook] [with] these some dumplings<sup>37</sup> for your children, don’t leave your home empty [of food].”

<sup>36</sup> A sour soup made with meat-filled dumplings. See following footnote.

<sup>37</sup> The dish *kutèle* ‘meat-filled dumplings’ is very popular in Jewish-Kurdish cuisine, particularly in a sour green vegetable soup called *xamuṣṭa*; see Shilo (1986, 80–81, 139, 142–43). The *kutèle* will appear again in the narrative: when they return to Bethlehem, Naomi sends Ruth to glean ears of grain. Naomi says she would make dumplings with whatever Ruth brings: (49) u-ʔóz šəbbólīm bāsrū,<sup>1</sup> mēse,<sup>1</sup> deqānnu garsānnu g-ozānnu,<sup>1</sup> b-ózax kùtele<sup>1</sup> b-àxlax.<sup>1</sup> ‘Make ears of grain behind them [=the harvesters, i.e., glean], bring [here what you have gleaned], I will crack [lit. knock (in a mortar)], grind them, prepare them, we shall make dumplings, we shall eat.’



Her husband, Elimelech, is angry with her for giving away their property. In order to prevent her from giving away any more he decides to move to the city of Me'ohav (in the Bible, Moab).

(33) *kràble mánna,<sup>1</sup> g-érra là g-šoqánnax go-bet-lèhem.<sup>1</sup> g-yáwat ràba...<sup>1</sup> kúlla dawálti b-yà[wa]tta.<sup>1</sup> (34) wàlox<sup>1</sup> g-zèda dwáltox!<sup>1</sup> là-g-naqsa!<sup>1</sup> 'állà d-húlle húlle tàli<sup>1</sup> yáwan ta-gèri ší!<sup>1</sup> là-q-qabəlwa.<sup>1</sup> (35) qam-nabəlla<sup>1</sup> qam-nabálla l-...bázər mə'ohàv,<sup>1</sup>*

'He got angry with her, he tells her, "I will not let you stay [lit. leave you] in Bethlehem. You give a lot... you will give [away] all of my property." "Look now, your property will increase! It will not lessen! God, who gave, gave to me [in order that] I should give to others [lit. my other=other than me] also." He didn't accept. He took her. He took her to... the city of Me'ohav.'

In the Bible, the reason that Naomi and Elimelech and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion leave the Judahite city of Bethlehem and move to Moab is famine: "And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the field of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons" (Ruth 1.1).<sup>38</sup> There is no direct indication of their wealth in the biblical text, nor for Naomi carrying out charitable actions.

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<sup>38</sup> All translations of biblical verses into English in this chapter are based on JPS (1917) and JPS (1999), with some modifications.

Many rabbinic sources describe Elimelech's family as members of the aristocracy.<sup>39</sup> Targum Ruth translates the phrase אפרתים מבית לחם (Ruth 1.2), otherwise rendered 'Ephrathites of Bethlehem', as 'leaders of Bethlehem', and mentions that Elimelech's family became 'royal adjutants' upon arriving in Moab (Levine 1973, 46–47).

One source of Naomi's description as a good, charitable woman is Midrash Ruth Rabbah 2.5 (Lerner edition): "And the name of his wife Naomi' since her deeds were worthy (*na'im*) and pleasant (*na'imim*).” (my translation)

A source for Elimelech's stinginess as the reason of leaving Bethlehem is Midrash Ruth Zuta 1 (Buber edition 1925, 40): "Thus he said: 'Tomorrow the poor gather and I cannot reside among them'" (my translation; see also Yalqut Šim'oni Ruth 598). The following passage of the same Midrash states, however, that stinginess was common to all the members of the family: "Why did scripture mention his wife and his sons? Since they held each other back, out of miserliness that they all had. When the husband wants [to give charity] the wife does not want, or the wife wants but the sons do not want" (Midrash Ruth Zuta 2, Buber edition 1925, 40).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> BT Bava Batra 91a; Midrash Tanḥuma Shemini 9; Midrash Tanḥuma BeHar 3; Seder 'Olam Rabbah 12, Ratner edition (1897, 53–54); Midrash Ruth Rabbah 1.9; 2.5; Yalqut Šim'oni Ruth 598.

<sup>40</sup> This Aggadah appears also in Yalqut Šim'oni Ruth 599, and in Rabbi Tobiah Ben Eli'ezer, Midrash Leqaḥ Tōv on Ruth 1.2, Bamberger edition (1887, 9).

The Jewish ‘Amidya NENA translation of Ruth 1.1 adds ‘rich man’ (Sabar 2006, 59).<sup>41</sup> The ‘Ephrathites’ in Ruth 1.2 mentioned above are translated as ‘great’ or ‘heroes’ (Sabar 2006, 59, fn. 3). A recorded performance by Ḥakham Ḥabib ‘Alwan of the Jewish Zakho NENA translation of Ruth translates ‘Ephrathites’ as *ma‘aqule* ‘noblemen, aristocrats’ (‘Alwan 1974). The Jewish Urmi NENA translation of the same verse states that they became ‘high officials’ in Moab, similar to Targum Ruth (Sabar 2006, 59, fn. 6).

## 5.2. Ruth and Orṭa are the Daughters of Me’ohav (40)

Elimelech marries his two sons to Ruth and Orṭa (in the Bible, Orpah), the daughters of Me’ohav (in the Bible, Moab):

(40) *mə’oháv šl’ átle trè bnàsa:¹ rùt,¹ u-’òrṭa.¹ qam-ṭaláblu ta-kútru bnóne dide.¹*

‘Me’ohav also has two daughters, Ruth and Orṭa. He [= Elimelech] asked for them [= for their hand] for both his sons.’

The book of Ruth does not mention any family relationship between Ruth and Orpah and the king of Moab. Nor does it indicate they are sisters. From the biblical text, it seems that Elimelech and Naomi’s two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, were married only after the death of Elimelech (Ruth 1.3–4).

In classical rabbinic literature there is an old, well-established exegetical tradition that Ruth was the daughter, or the

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<sup>41</sup> Sabar states that this may be taken from Rashi’s commentary on v. 1.

granddaughter, of Eglon king of Moab, who was himself, according to the same tradition, the grandson of Balak king of Moab (BT Horayot 10b; BT Nazir 23b; BT Sotah 47a; BT Sanhedrin 105b; see Levine 1973, 48, fn. 6). A later source, Midrash Ruth Rabbah 2.9 (Lerner edition), states that Orpah is a daughter of Eglon as well, and therefore Ruth's sister.

### 5.3. Naomi's House Remains as She Left It (48)

When Naomi returns with Ruth to her house in Bethlehem, all of her wheat-grinding implements are still there, just as she left them.

(48) *psáxla dárġat bet-lehèm' tùla.' ...ʔtla sàtta' u-garùsta' u...'*  
*múx qamàe' bésa wéla mǝlyá ʔawáe.'*

'She opened the door of [her house in] Bethlehem, she sat [down].... She has a stone mortar and a hand mill and... like [it was] before, her house was full of things.'<sup>42</sup>

This motifeme does not appear in previous sources. Both the Bible and the classical rabbinic literature describe Naomi's return to Bethlehem in a way that may be interpreted as quite the opposite: in Ruth 1.21, Naomi says to the people of Bethlehem, "I went out full, and the Lord has brought me back home empty." Midrash Ruth Rabbah on v. 19 gives the following speech said by the people of Bethlehem:

Is it she, whose deeds were good and worthy? Once she wore her colourful and woollen clothes and now she is

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<sup>42</sup> These specific grinding implements reflect the realia in Kurdistan.

wearing rags, once her face was red from eating and drinking and now her face is green from hunger, once she went by sedan chair and now she is walking barefoot.<sup>43</sup>

The association of Ruth and Naomi's return with grinding implements may be explained by the end of Ruth 1.22, "they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest," and by the fact that the entire narrative from that point onwards is set within the period of harvest.

#### 5.4. At the Synagogue (56)–(62)

After Ruth, heeding the advice of Naomi, spends the night at the foot of Boaz's bed, she asks him to marry her in levirate marriage (*yibbum*), since Boaz's father and Elimelech's father were brothers. Boaz tells Ruth to come with Naomi to the synagogue on the following day, where they will resolve the matter.

(56) *g-érra sé l-bèsa,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>maḥá[r]<sup>H</sup> bónne m-bánoke sáloxun 'əl-knàšta,<sup>1</sup> masyálox na'òmi,<sup>1</sup> u-'ána-šik p-áwən go-kništa,<sup>1</sup> u-kništa mliša jamà'a,<sup>1</sup> b-ózáxni <sup>H</sup>pšarà.<sup>H1</sup>*

'He tells her, "Go home, tomorrow morning come to the synagogue, Naomi will bring you, and I will also be in the synagogue, and the synagogue is full of people, we shall make a compromise.'"

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<sup>43</sup> Midrash Ruth Rabbah 3 (Lerner edition); my translation. Original Hebrew: [ותאמרנה הזאת נעמי] אמרו, [זו] היא שהיו מעשיה נאים ונעימים? לשעבר היתה מתכסה בבגדי צבעונין ומילתין שלה, ועכשיו היא מתכסה' בסמרטוטין, לשעבר היו פניה אדומות מכח האכילה והשתיה, ועכשיו פניה ירוקות מכח רעבון. לשעבר היתה מהלכת באסקפסיות [שלה], ועכשיו היא מתהלכת יחפה.

On the following day, Boaz brings his 89-year-old elder brother to the synagogue, and asks him to perform the *yibbum* and to take Ruth as wife. The brother replies:

(58) ʾāxonī<sup>1</sup> telta-ʾsār yalúnke ʾətlī,<sup>1</sup> u-ʾána <sup>H</sup>məvugar<sup>H</sup> lébi mähkən,<sup>1</sup>  
lébi ʾəmməd-bàxti mähkən,<sup>1</sup> (59) šqúlla ʾəlox<sup>1</sup> hóya bráxta  
ʾəllōx,<sup>1</sup> wéla <sup>H</sup>nàʿal<sup>H</sup> dídi lúšla,<sup>1</sup> ...(61) si-mbàrəx-la.<sup>1</sup>

“My brother, I have thirteen children, and I am old, I cannot speak, I cannot [even] speak with my wife. Take her [= Ruth] for you, may she be blessed upon you. Here is my shoe,<sup>44</sup> wear it. ...Go wed [lit. bless] her.”

The congregation agrees. On the following day, Boaz and Ruth are married in the synagogue by performing the ceremony of the seven blessings.

In the Bible, the *yibbum* scene is recounted in Ruth 4.1–12. It does not take place in the synagogue, but rather at the city gate. Ruth and Naomi are not mentioned as being present. The

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<sup>44</sup> Handing over one's shoe is associated with levirate marriage. In Deut. 25.5–10, it is stated that if a man does not wish to perform levirate marriage with his brother's widow, the ceremony of *ḥališa* 'loosening of the shoe' must be performed: "Then shall his brother's wife go up to him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face; and she shall answer and say: 'So shall it be done unto the man that does not build up his brother's house.'" (Deut. 25.9). In Ruth 4.7–8, it is stated: "Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning exchanging, to confirm all things: a man drew off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour; and this was the attestation in Israel. So the near kinsman said unto Boaz: 'Acquire for yourself,' and he drew off his shoe." See also BT Gittin 34b–37b.

legal procedure described in the biblical text is defined (in vv. 4 and 7) as *ge'ula*, the re-appropriation of agricultural land by a kinsman, and not *yibbum*, levirate marriage, as it is in Samra's narrative. Indeed, the *ge'ula* procedure as described in Ruth is not identical to the one formulated in Lev. 25.25–34, since the latter describes only re-appropriation of property and does not mention marriage. The inclusion of marriage to Ruth in the legal procedure creates a strong association with the *yibbum* procedure. In addition, one procedural component taken from *yibbum* (or, more accurately, from the renouncement of the *yibbum* obligation), namely *ḥaliṣa*—taking off the shoe of one party and giving it to the other party—does appear in the biblical text. In both the biblical and Samra's texts, the refusal of the more closely related *go'el*, or redeemer, is explained by his reluctance to marry an additional wife, Ruth, though in the biblical narrative, he initially agrees to acquire the land and withdraws his agreement only when he hears of his obligation to marry Ruth as well. The Bible does not reveal the familial relation between Boaz and the closer *go'el*, nor does it give any other identifying details, such as his name, age, or the number of his children. Boaz's taking Ruth as a wife is discussed in Ruth 4.13, but there is no mention of a ceremony of the seven blessings.

When it comes to the locale, Targum Ruth 4.1 translates the 'gate' as 'the gate of the court of the Sanhedrin' (see Levine 1973, 98).<sup>45</sup> Several classical rabbinic literary sources identify the closer redeemer as one of Boaz's paternal uncles and as a brother

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<sup>45</sup> Targum Ruth translates Ruth 3.11 similarly. The Sanhedrin was the supreme rabbinical court.

of Elimelech (e.g., BT Bava Batra 91a; Midrash Tanḥuma BeHar 3). However, one source maintains that the *go'el*, whose name is Tob, is indeed Boaz's elder brother (Midrash Ruth Rabbah 6.6 Lerner edition).<sup>46</sup> Boaz is said to have been 80 years old at the time of the marriage (Midrash Ruth Rabbah 6.4 Lerner edition; Yalqut Šim'oni Ruth 606), thus an elder brother aged 89 is plausible.

Both the recorded performance by Ḥakham Ḥabib 'Alwan for the Jewish Zakho NENA translation of Ruth ('Alwan 1974) and the Jewish 'Amidya NENA translation of Ruth 4.1 (Sabar 2006, 74) name the *go'el* as Tob, but do not provide details about his age, family relationship, or number of children. The recorded performance renders the 'gate' of Ruth 4.1 as *bes din* 'court of law' ('Alwan 1974). The 'Amidya translation renders it as *darga d-sanhedrin* 'the gate of the Sanhedrin' (Sabar 2006, 74).

### 5.5. Boaz's Death and Elishay's Birth (64)–(83)

Boaz dies the day after marrying Ruth. Many people come to the funeral and Naomi, being a resourceful woman, publicly declares that the marriage took place, that Ruth spent one night with Boaz, and that if Ruth is pregnant, the child is Boaz's:

(77) ʔilá[ha] sàhəz u-náše sàhzi! kúllə mǎrru <sup>H</sup>bəsèder.<sup>HI</sup> ʔilá[ha] hùlle! smàxla,<sup>I</sup> máni sèle-la? k-ʔitun máni?

“God shall [bear] witness and people shall [bear] witness!”

Everyone said, “Okay”. God gave, she became pregnant,

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<sup>46</sup> According to this and other sources, the name of the closer redeemer was Tob; this is derived from an interpretation of Ruth 3.13.



who came to her [=who was the child]? Do you know who?’

Ruth gives birth to Elishay.

The biblical text does not say how long Boaz lived after marrying Ruth. The name of their child was Obed, who was the father of Jesse (Hebrew *Yishay*), and Jesse was the father of David (Ruth 4.17–22).

Only one source in classical rabbinic literature mentions Boaz’s death immediately after his marriage to Ruth, Midrash Ruth Zuta.<sup>47</sup> “They said, in the same night that he came unto her he died” (Midrash Ruth Zuta on Ruth 4.13, Buber edition 1925, 49; my translation). The motifeme appears in two later rabbinic sources: Yalqut Šim‘oni (Ruth 608) and Midrash Leqaḥ Ṭov (Rabbi Tobiah Ben Eli‘ezer, Midrash Leqaḥ Ṭov on Ruth 4.17, Bamberger edition 1887, 44).<sup>48</sup> The latter contains a description of the actions which Ruth takes to prevent suspicion with regard to her fidelity:

When Boaz came to Ruth, on that same night he died. And Ruth held him upon her belly the entire night so that they should not say that she was disloyal to him with another man. And when all came in the morning, they found him dead on her belly and therefore they named him [=the child] after Naomi [since she adopted him]. (Rabbi Tobiah

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<sup>47</sup> On the problem of dating Ruth Zuta, see Shoshani (2008). Midrash Ruth Zuta was first published by Buber in 1894.

<sup>48</sup> Midrash Leqaḥ Ṭov is a Midrashic collection for the Pentateuch and the Megillot composed by Rabbi Tobiah Ben Eli‘ezer in Macedonia during the 11th century. It contains both material derived from ancient sources and original material by the author.

Ben Eli'ezer, *Midrash Leqah Tov on Ruth 4.17*, Bamberger edition 1887, 44; my translation)<sup>49</sup>

While the strategy to prevent suspicion described in this source is not the same as the one in Samra's story, Naomi plays a role in both.

The motifeme of speaking to the crowd gathered for Boaz's funeral found in Samra's story may have originated from the Midrashic description of the funeral for Boaz's wife:

And some say that the wife of Boaz died on that day, and [the people of] all of the towns congregated in order to pay an act of kindness [= participate in the funeral]. Ruth entered with Naomi, and it came to pass that she [= Boaz's wife] was taken out and she [= Ruth] entered [at the same time]. And all the city was astir concerning them. (*Midrash Ruth Rabbah 3.5–6* Lerner edition; my translation)<sup>50</sup>

In both texts, the gathering of a congregation for a funeral is exploited to serve as an event of interaction with the public. However, the two similar motifemes are positioned and integrated at two different points of the narrative sequence; this is an example of the transposition of a motifeme from one point to another within the same narrative.

The Jewish 'Amidya NENA translation of Ruth 4.14 associates the night of Boaz and Ruth's marriage with the death of

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<sup>49</sup> Original Hebrew: ד"א ילד בן לנעמי ולא לבועז מלמד כשבא בעז אל רות באותו הלילה מת ותפשתו רות על בטנה כל הלילה שלא יאמרו זנתה תחתיו מאיש אחר וכשבאו הכל בבוקר מצאוהו מת על בטנה ולפיכך קראוהו על שם נעמי.

<sup>50</sup> Original Hebrew: ויש אומרים, אשתו של בועז מתה באותו היום, ונתכנסו כל העיירות לגמילות חסד, ועד כל עמה בגמילות חסד, נכנסה רות עם נעמי, והיתה זו יוצאה וזו נכנסת, ותהום כל העיר עליהן.

Boaz's previous wife: *qam do lele mætla bax-bo'az u-mosele 'aya, mæn-ʔilaha* 'On that night the wife of Boaz died and he brought this one [i.e., he took Ruth], [it was] from God' (Sabar 2006, 76; my translation). This association between the two events may have opened the door for the transposition of the motifeme of the funeral for purposes of providing an opportunity for interaction with the public.

### 5.6. Elishay Suspects His Wife of Unfaithfulness (85)–(89)

Elishay (in the Bible, Jesse), the father of David, is angry with his wife. He chases her out of the house. She stays at her father's house for one month while pregnant with David.

(85) *krəbwale' mæn-dè báxta' damməd-wéla smáxta bəd-dávid ha-mèlex.*<sup>1</sup> ... (86) *qam-karədwala' xá yaʔxa zálla be-bàba.*<sup>1</sup>

'He got angry with this woman [i.e., his wife], while she was pregnant with king David.... He chased her out, for one month she went to her father's house.'

When she returns, Elishay does not believe that the child is his.

(86) *sèla' g-əmrà-le' qam-kardətti' u-hənnə' u-ʔána báxta smàxta.*<sup>1</sup>  
*g-ér là' là' léwat smàxta!*<sup>1</sup>

'She came, she says to him, "You chased me out, and this and I am a pregnant woman." He says, "No, no! You are not pregnant!"'

The wife calls God as a witness that she had not been touched by other men.

(88) *rəbbonó šel-‘olām<sup>1</sup> sáhəz ʾəlla ʾe-bàxta,<sup>1</sup> báni básar ləwa  
nḥáqta,<sup>1</sup> yála dīdox híle.<sup>1</sup>*

“Master of the Universe, bear witness to this woman, she has not been touched by humans, it is your child.”

God is angry with Elishay for casting doubts upon the morality of his righteous wife and his paternity of the child.

(89) *rəbbonó šel-‘olām,<sup>1</sup> k‘ásle ʾəlle.<sup>1</sup> g-er-yála dīdox híle,<sup>1</sup> má  
g-əmrəttá?!<sup>1</sup> bàxta,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>nakiyà,<sup>1</sup> u-šadikà,<sup>H</sup> mání b-náḥəq ʾəlla?!<sup>1</sup>*

“The Master of the Universe got angry with him. He says, “It is your child, what are you saying to her?! [She is a] clean, and righteous, woman, who would touch her?!”

This motifeme has no trace in the biblical text. In classical rabbinic literature, the prominent trend is to portray Jesse as a person of impeccable behaviour and moral stature. He is mentioned as one of four people who never sinned (BT Shabbat 65b; Targum Ruth 4.22 [=Levine 1973, 41]; Rabbi Menahem Ben Rabbi Shelomo, Midrash Sekhel Tōv on Exod. 6.20, Buber edition 1901, II:35). It is hard to see how this view is compatible with the motifeme in Samra’s story.

There is, however, a source in which this motifeme does appear. Curiously, it is a work that did not have as wide a distribution in the Jewish world as other late Midrashic works: *Yalquṭ ha-Makhiri*. This is a compilation of earlier Midrashic material that was composed by Rabbi Makhir Ben Abba Mari, apparently in 14th-century Spain or Provence. In *Yalquṭ ha-Makhiri* on Ps. 118, we read the following story:

Jesse was the head of the Sanhedrin<sup>51</sup>... He had sixty grown sons, and he became celibate with his wife for three years. After three years, he had a beautiful female slave and he desired her. He told her, "My daughter, prepare yourself tonight in order to come to me in exchange for a release document." The slave went and said to her mistress, "Save yourself and myself and the soul of my master from hell." She said to her, "What is the reason for that?" She told her everything. She said to her, "My daughter, what can I do? For he has not touched me for three years now." She said to her, "I will give you some advice, go prepare yourself and so will I, and this evening when he says 'shut the door' you shall enter and I shall go out." And thus she did. In the evening, the slave stood and extinguished the candle, she came to shut the door, her mistress entered and she went out. She spent the entire night with him and was impregnated with David. And out of his love for that slave, David turned out redder than his brothers... after nine months, her sons wanted to kill her and her son David, since they saw he was red. Jesse told them, "Let him be and he will be enslaved to us and a shepherd." This was concealed for 28 years, until God said to Samuel, "Go, I will send you to the house of Jesse the Bethlehemite." (Rabbi Makhir Ben Abba Mari, Buber edition 1899, II:214)<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> The supreme rabbinical court.

<sup>52</sup> Original Hebrew: ...פליגי בה תרי אמוראי במערבא, חד אמר דוד בן אהובה היה, וחד אמר דוד בן שנואה היה, כיצד ישי ראש לסנהדרין היה, ולא היה יוצא ונכנס אלא באוכלוסא בס' רבוא, והיו לו ס' בנים גדולים ופירש מאשתו ג' שנים, לאחר ג' שנים היתה לו שפחה נאה ונתאוהו לה. א"ל בתי תקני עצמך הלילה כדי שתכנסי אלי בגט שחרור, הלכה השפחה ואמרה לגברתה הצילי עצמך ונפשי ואדוני מגיהנס, א"ל מה טעם, שחה לה את הכל, א"ל בתי מה אעשה שהיום ג' שנים לא נגע בי, א"ל אתן ליד עצה, לכי תקיני עצמך ואף אני כך, ולערב כשיאמר סגרי הדלת תכנסי את ואצא אני, וכך עשתה. לערב

*Yalqut ha-Makhiri* remained in manuscript form until it was published in six volumes by five scholars over four decades, starting in 1893. The volume that contains this passage was published by Shelomo Buber in 1899. Rabbi Makhir lists his source for each of the passages of his book, but the source given for this particular passage is simply “a Midrash.” It is not to be found in any earlier extant rabbinic work.<sup>53</sup> However, the story does appear, in a different formulation, in another work from the same period and region, *Torat ha-Mminḥa*, by the 14th-century Spanish Rabbi Ya‘aqov Ben Ḥanan’el Sikili (or, of Sicily), which remained in manuscript form until 1991 (Sikili 1991, homily no. 23; referred to by Azulay 1957, 72). The story is then mentioned in several later sources, each giving a different formulation as well as different reasoning for Jesse’s actions, and citing different biblical verses as support. It appears in *Keli Yaqar* (Laniado 1992, 416, on 1 Sam. 16.11),<sup>54</sup> a commentary on the books of the prophets,

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עמדה השפחה וכבת את הנר, באת לסגור את הדלת נכנסה גברתה ויצאה היא, עשתה עמו כל הלילה נתעברה מדוד, ומתוך אהבתו על אותה שפחה, יצא דוד אדום מבין אחיו, מכאן אמרו חכמים צריך אדם לקשט עצמו ולעמוד כנגד אשתו בשעה שהיא עולה מבית הטבילה לט' חדשים בקשו בניה להרגה ואת בנה דוד, כיון שראו שהוא אדום, אמר להם ישי הניחו לו ויהיה לנו משועבד ורועה צאן, והיה הדבר טמון עד כ"ח שנה, כיון שא"ל הקב"ה לשמואל לך אשלחך אל בית ישי הלחמי... On the tension between David and his siblings in the Bible and in classical rabbinic literature, see Grossman (1995).

<sup>53</sup> Though, as Ginzberg (1909–1938, VI:247, fn. 13) states, BT Pesahim 119a gives a dialogue between David, Jesse, David’s brothers, and Samuel, composed of the verses of Ps. 118.21–28. Three of these verses appear in the dialogue between David’s mother and brothers in the passage in *Yalqut Ha-Makhiri*.

<sup>54</sup> This is referred to by Ginzberg (1909–1938, VI:246, fn. 11).

by Rabbi Shemu'el Ben Avraham Laniado (16th–17th century, Aleppo). Rabbi Menaḥem Azariah da Fano (1548–1620, Mantova, Italy) gives a long version of the story, considerably different from the *Yalqut ha-Makhiri* version and containing Kabbalistic interpretation, in his *Ma'amar Ḥiqqur ha-Din* (printed in 1597).<sup>55</sup> This passage by Fano is quoted in a responsum (printed in 1723) by Rabbi Ya'aqov Alfandari (17th century), which deals with a Halakhic question concerning the possibility of marriage between someone who may perhaps be a *mamzer*<sup>56</sup> and a released slave.<sup>57</sup> Rabbi Ḥayyim Yosef David Azulay (the Ḥida, 1724–1806) has the story in his *Sefer Midbar Qedemot* (Azulay 1957, 72) and in several other places in his writings.<sup>58</sup> Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna (known as the Vilna Gaon, 1720–1797) gives a commentary on Rabbi Yosef Caro's *Yore De'a* 157:24 (Ginzberg 1909–1938, VI:246, fn. 11), where he simply adds the comment *ke-uvda de-yiṣay* 'as the deed of Yishay' to a decree of Rabbi Moshe Isserles (the Rema) dealing with a disguised wife.

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<sup>55</sup> Part 3, ch. 10. *Ma'amar Ḥiqqur ha-Ddin* was printed as part of Fano's *Sefer 'Asara Ma'amarot* (Fano 1649, 60a), referred to by Azulay (1957, 72).

<sup>56</sup> A child born from forbidden relations between a married woman and a man who is not her husband.

<sup>57</sup> Responsum 68 in Part A of *Sefer Muṣal me-ʿEš*, a collection of Alfandari's writings that survived a fire; see Alfandari (1998, 95). This responsum was referred to by Azulay (1957, 72).

<sup>58</sup> For the various other places the story appears in Azulay's writings, see fn. 5 there. Azulay's version of the story is referred to by Ginzberg (1909–1938, VI:246, fn. 11).

Shinan (1996) notes that the *Yalqut ha-Makhiri* passage deals with but one case of a series of women in king David's ancestry who disguised themselves in an intimate situation: Leah and Jacob (Gen. 29), Tamar and Judah (Gen. 38), Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 3), and the daughters of Lot (Gen. 19). Shinan (1996) also claims that although the purposes of this tradition are not entirely clear, it must have a connection to Ps. 51. 7: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Curiously, a similar story is told by Josephus in his *Antiquities of the Jews* (book 12, ch. 4.6; referred to by Ginzberg 1909–1938, VI:246, fn. 11); in this case the story is about Joseph the son of Tobias who had a son, Hyrcanus, with his niece, who had been disguised by her father as an actress and with whom Joseph fell in love.

The fact that Elishay's wife stays at her father's house for a month in Samra's story represents the realia of marital life in Kurdistan. It was common for a woman, who would be living with her husband's extended family,<sup>59</sup> to take shelter at her parents' house for a period of time after a quarrel with her husband or her mother-in-law—there is a verb to describe this, *moxšəmla*.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> On the patrilocal pattern of marriage in the Jewish communities of Kurdistan, see Aloni (2014a, 85–101); also Feitelson (1959, 207); Starr Sered (1992, 13).

<sup>60</sup> See Sabar (2002a, 201) on *x-š-m*: "(K[urdisch]/P[ersian]) to feel alienated (daughter-in-law who after a quarrel goes back to live temporarily with her parents)."



### 5.7. David's Anointment (90)–(119)

God sends the prophet Samuel to anoint a son of Elishay as king. Elishay has six sons, and he presents them to Samuel by age. God had told Samuel to anoint the son that had a pillar of fire, the *Shekhinah* ‘divine presence’, upon his head. But Samuel does not see the pillar of fire upon any of the sons’ heads.

(109) *məséle* ’aw-xət’ *stún núra lá xəzyàle.*<sup>1</sup> (110) *šmú’əl hannavi,*<sup>1</sup>  
*márrele rəbbonó šel-’olàm’ dāmməd ḥmállā,*<sup>1</sup> *šəxína b-rèše,*<sup>1</sup>  
*’òha-le!*<sup>1</sup>

‘He brought the other one, he didn’t see the pillar of fire. Samuel the prophet, the Master of the Universe [had] told him, “When the *Shekhinah* stood [= dwells] upon his head, this is he.”’

Samuel asks Elishay:

(111) *’ətlóx xá bròna xát?’*<sup>1</sup>  
 ‘Do you have another son?’

Elishay says that he has one more son, who is seven years old.

(111) *wéle go-<sup>H</sup>sadè<sup>H1</sup> ’əmməd ’ərba,*<sup>1</sup>  
 ‘He is in the field with the sheep.’

Samuel tells him to fetch that son. He comes from the field wearing a *dəšdàša* ‘ankle-length robe’ and a white hat.

(113) *g-ér ḥmól ’àxxa,*<sup>1</sup> *monáxle bəd-rəbbóno šel-’olàm’ šaxiná*  
*ḥmàlla.*<sup>1</sup>

‘He [= Samuel the prophet] says, “Stand here,” he looked towards the Master of the Universe, the *Shekhinah* stood [i.e., dwelt upon the head of that son, David].’

The prophet Samuel anoints David as king of Israel, using oil from the Temple.

The anointment of king David by Samuel is told in 1 Sam. 16. There God tells Samuel to anoint the son that he points out (16.3), Jesse brings forth his sons in order (16.7–10), and Samuel asks whether there are more sons and then instructs Jesse to fetch David from the field where he was tending the sheep (16.11).

The anointment is referred to, or retold, in numerous rabbinic sources, ranging from early Tannaitic works (e.g., *Sifre Devarim* 17; *Midrash Tannaim* on Deut. 1.17) to the late *Midrashim*.<sup>61</sup>

The motifs of the pillar of fire and *Shekhinah* are well-known from other places in Jewish literature, but both are absent from all sources that recount David's anointment. The biblical text states that "the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (1 Sam. 16.13), immediately after the anointment, but not before.<sup>62</sup>

David's age at the time of his anointment is not mentioned in the Bible. He is said to be 28 in *Seder 'Olam Rabbah* (Ratner edition 1897, 57, ch. 13),<sup>63</sup> an early rabbinic work from the Tannaitic period, as well as in *Yalqut ha-Makhiri* (see §5.6 above) and in *Torat ha-Minḥa* (see §5.6 above).

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<sup>61</sup> For a list of further references, see Ginzberg (1909–1939, VI:247–49, fns 13–23).

<sup>62</sup> *Midrash Tannaim* on Deut. 1.17 does, however, state that David prophesied as a young child that he would destroy the cities of the Philistines, kill Goliath, and build the Temple.

<sup>63</sup> Ratner notes that although the printed version is '29', the correct version according to manuscripts is '28'.

### 5.8. *Guri Kunzəri* (128)–(131), (179)–(181)

King Saul had *Guri Kunzəri*,<sup>64</sup> a suit of armour. Only the one chosen to be king, David, would be able to wear it. The suit is described as an object able to test the capability to fight Goliath.

(128) *mád* ʔiz,<sup>1</sup> *yalúnkəd yeruśalâyim*,<sup>1</sup> *şrâxle* <sup>H</sup>*rámkol*<sup>H</sup> ʔâse,<sup>1</sup> *hakóme*  
*g-êbe qatêlle gòlias*.<sup>1</sup> *g-emer-ʔáwd lawáşla* ʔè *bádla*<sup>1</sup> ʔibe *qatêlle*.<sup>1</sup>  
 ‘All of [lit. whatever there is] the children [i.e., boys] of  
 Jerusalem, a loudspeaker called out that they should come,  
 [since] the king wished to kill Goliath. He says, whoever  
 wears this outfit, he is able to kill him.’

But it does not fit anyone. Only one boy has not tried the suit on, a seven-year-old boy who was left in the fields. King Saul orders him to be fetched.

(131) *qam-maluşla* ʔêlle,<sup>1</sup> *bêr šoʔá šênne*,<sup>1</sup> *yiştabbáh šemò*<sup>1</sup> *rwéle qam-*  
*małêla*!<sup>1</sup>  
 ‘They dressed him with it [lit. it on him], [only] seven years  
 old [i.e., therefore small], may His name be praised, he  
 [= David] grew and filled it!’

When king Saul sees this, he is angry, since he feels that this boy, David, will become king instead of him. Later in the story, David refuses to wear the suit of armour, and insists on wearing his own *daşdâşa* ‘ankle-length robe’.

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<sup>64</sup> From Kurdish *zirih* ‘coat of mail’ and *kum* ‘helmet’; see Sabar (2002a, 161), where he also refers to occurrences of the word in Rivlin (1959, 233, 241).

(180) *gələlələlə léwa báš t̤àli! lášši qəzla! <sup>H</sup>lò lò lò! <sup>H</sup>lò makušənnā mənni! ʾána bəd-dəšdāša dīdī b-azəna!*

‘Gələlələlə it [= the suit] is not good for me! My body has been burnt. No no no! I’ll take it off me, I shall go in my ankle-length robe!’

His reason for doing so is that he noticed Saul’s anger, and he does not want to draw his animosity.

(181) *g-émer ʾéne lá-hoya ʾəlli,*<sup>1</sup>

‘He says [= his reasoning was], “His [= Saul’s] eye should not be upon me.”’<sup>65</sup>

The basis for this motifeme is to be found in 1 Sam. 17.38–39, immediately after king Saul agrees to send David to fight Goliath:

And Saul clad David with his apparel, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his apparel, and he essayed to go[, but could not]; for he had not tried it. And David said unto Saul: “I cannot go with these; for I have not tried them.” And David put them off him.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Interestingly, the Hebrew word ‘oyen ‘hostile’ in 1 Sam. 18.9 is derived from the same root as ‘ayin ‘eye’. The (1917) JPS translation for the verse is “And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.”

<sup>66</sup> One more exchange of clothes by David which occurs in the biblical narrative is in: “And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle” (1 Sam. 18.4). The robe in this verse may be the source for the *dašdāša* ‘ankle-length robe’.

This motif appears in several rabbinic sources (BT Yevamot 76b; Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 26.9; Midrash Tanḥuma Emor, 4; Midrash Shemu'el 21, Buber edition 1925, 64).<sup>67</sup> In all these sources, the suit which Saul gives to David miraculously fits his size, Saul's dissatisfaction is visible, and David refuses to wear the suit for the battle, saying "I cannot go with these; for I have not tried them" (1 Sam. 17.39). In some of these sources, the miraculous fitting on David of clothing that belongs to Saul, who was previously described as being "from his shoulders and upward... taller than any of the people" (1 Sam. 9.2), is presented as a sign of David's future kingship:<sup>68</sup> for example, "even if a person is short, once he is appointed king he becomes tall" (Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 26.9; my translation) and "that is proof that David, may peace be upon him, was worthy for kingship" (Midrash Aggadah on Lev. 21.15, Buber edition 1894, 54; my translation). Nonetheless, in none of the sources is the suit presented as a test object, as in Samra's formulation.

Saul giving his coat of mail, helmet, and sword to David is mentioned in the epic song by Ḥakham Eliyahu Avraham Dahoki Mizraḥi of Dohok published by Rivlin (Rivlin 1930, 114; 1959, 241), but there is no mention of a miraculous change in size in the song.

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<sup>67</sup> Subsequent references to this tradition include: Midrash Aggadah on Lev. 21.15, Buber edition 1894, 53–54; Rashi on 1 Sam. 17.38; Abrahavanel on 1 Sam. 17.55.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. motif H36.2 "Garment fits only true king" in Thompson (1955–1958).

### 5.9. The Seven Stones (147)–(150), (162)–(164)

On his way to the battlefield, David collects seven stones to use with his *bardaqaṇiyye* ‘slingshot’. As he picks up the stones, he proclaims:

(148) *bəzxút* ‘*avrahàm*,<sup>1</sup> [*bəzxút*] *yitshàk*,<sup>1</sup> [*bəzxút*] *ya‘aqòv*<sup>1</sup>

“For the merit of Abraham, [For the merit of] Isaac, [For the merit of] Jacob”

He continues in this manner to name five patriarchal figures. He puts the stones in his pocket. Before using these stones in battle, David again says:

(162) *yá* ‘*ilàhi*,<sup>1</sup> *bəzxút kúd xá u-xà*,<sup>1</sup> *šó’a nàse*,<sup>1</sup>

“O my God, for the merit of each and every one [of those] seven [*sic*] men”...

He then puts his hand in his pocket and discovers that the seven stones he collected have become one stone.

The biblical source of this motifeme is 1 Sam. 17.40:

And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd’s bag which he had, even in his scrip; and his sling was in his hand; and he drew near to the Philistine.

The following extract appears in Midrash Shemu’el:<sup>69</sup>

“And he took his staff in his hand, and chose for himself five smooth stones out of the brook,” one for the name

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<sup>69</sup> Original Hebrew: ויקח מקלו בידו ויבחר לו חמשה חלוקי אבנים מן הנחל, אחד לשמו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, ואחד לשמו של אהרן, ושלוש לשלשת אבות העולם, אמר אהרן לא אני הוא גואל הדם עלי להיפרע ממנו, (א"ל) [אמר] הקב"ה והלא לפני חירף וגידף, עלי להפרע ממנו...

[ = sake] of the Holy One blessed be He, and one for the name [ = sake] of Aaron, and three for the three patriarchs. Said Aaron, “Is it not me who is the blood-avenger? I must take vengeance on him [ = Goliath]!” Said the Holy One blessed be He, “But it is before me that he had taunted and cursed! I must take vengeance on him!” (Midrash Shemu’el 21, Buber edition 1925, 64; my translation)

Here, there is no mention of the separate stones becoming one. The merging of the stones is reminiscent, though, of a famous Aggadah about the stones collected by Jacob, which appears in various formulations in several places in classical rabbinic literature, for example:

It is written: “And he took of the stones of the place” (Gen. 28.11); but it is also written: “And he took the stone” (Gen. 28.18)! Said Rabbi Yitzḥak: “That teaches us that all of these stones gathered to one place, while each one of them says, ‘Upon me shall this righteous man rest his head,’” a Tanna taught: “They were all merged into one.” (BT Ḥullin 91b, my translation)<sup>70</sup>

The application of the motif of the merger of the stones to the stones of David appears in the Zohar in several places (Zohar III:272a; Tiquney Zohar 62a; Zohar Ḥadash 66b), for example:

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<sup>70</sup> Original Hebrew: כתיב ויקח מאבני המקום, וכתיב ויקח את האבן! אמר רבי יצחק: מלמד שנתקבצו כל אותן אבנים למקום אחד, וכל אחת ואחת אומרת עלי יניח צדיק זה ראשו; תנא: וכולן נבלעו באחד. Also in: Midrash Genesis Rabbah 68; Midrash Tanḥuma VaYeṣe 1; Midrash Yelammdennu Genesis 128; Midrash Tehillim 91.6; Rabbi Tobiah Ben Eli’ezer, Midrash Leqaḥ Ṭov on Gen. 28.11, Buber edition (1880, 140–41); Midrash Genesis Rabbati 28.11; Rabbi Menahem Ben Rabbi Shelomo, Midrash Sekhel Ṭov on Gen. 30.13, Buber edition (1900, I:140–42); Yalqut Šim’oni VaYeṣe 118.

“They were made one, all of the five” (Zohar III:272a; my translation).

In the epic songs published by Rivlin (1959, 246), the motif of the merger of the stones appears only in the epic song by Ḥakham Eliyahu Avraham Dahoki Mizraḥi of Dohok.

### 5.10. The Battle against Goliath (151)–(166)

David goes to fight Goliath. Goliath is surprised to see a child standing in front of him, and disparages him. In the battle, blows will be struck in turn. Goliath says:

(152) *mxí darbàdōx* [= *dárba dīdōx*],<sup>1</sup>

“Strike your blow.”

David replies that Goliath should strike first, since he is the one wearing armour and since David does not know how to strike.

(152) *mxí dárba dīdōx*<sup>1</sup> *xázax mà šškal-hīle*.<sup>1</sup>

“Strike your blow [and] we’ll see what sort [of a blow] it is.”

Goliath strikes his blow and destroys half a mountain. He causes David to go flying. God saves David, cushioning his landing. When David returns to the battlefield, Goliath is surprised that he is still alive.

(156) *g-er-má-wæt šàx?! má?*<sup>1</sup> *g-er wən-šàx*<sup>1</sup> *<sup>A</sup>ḥamdu-l-là*.<sup>A1</sup> *bés*  
*ʔilá[ha] ʔmīra*.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> See above, ch. 1, §14.0, proverb no. (79).



‘He [= Goliath] says, “What, you’re alive?! What?” He [= David] says, “I’m alive, thank God. The house of God is built<sup>71</sup> [= everything is well].”’

Now it is David’s turn. First he proclaims:

(162) *yá ’ilàhi,<sup>1</sup> bəzxút kúd xá u-xà,<sup>1</sup> šó’a nàse,<sup>1</sup>*

“O my God, for the merit of each and every [of those] seven men”

Then, using his *bardaqanìyye* ‘slingshot’, he shoots the single stone into Goliath’s forehead.

(164) *’úzla gər-gər-gər-gər-gər qam-’ozále trè qát’e.*

‘It made gər-gər-gər-gər-gər [and] it made him two pieces [i.e., sliced him].’

Goliath, not being aware that he has been split in two, asks contemptuously ‘Is this your blow?’, to which David replies by asking Goliath to wiggle a bit.

(166) *š’ášle gyàne<sup>1</sup> xá qát’ə mpálle mənne<sup>1</sup>*

‘He wiggled himself, one piece fell off him.’

The battle between David and Goliath is described in 1 Sam. 17.41–50. Taking turns in striking is not mentioned there, or anywhere in classical rabbinic literature. The sources do not mention Goliath having a chance to strike—indeed, some of the sources state that upon seeing David, Goliath was rooted to the ground, unable to move (Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 21.2; Midrash Shemu’el 21, Buber edition 1925, 65).

However, such a motif of taking turns in battle appears in the well-known folk-epic ‘Qaṭine’. This folk-epic describes the adventures of the Assyrian national hero, Qaṭine. The various

folk-traditions comprising this tale were shaped into the national Assyrian epic song *Zmīrta D'Qāṭīne* by the 20th-century poet William Daniel, and published it in three volumes containing some 6000 verses (see Warda and Odisho 2000; Donabed 2007; Lamassu 2014). One version of the folk-traditions of this epic, known to the Jews of Zakho and told in prose, is attested in Shilo (2014, 148–65). In one episode in Shilo's version, Qaṭīne fights against the hero of Armenia. In this episode, like in that recounting the battle of David and Goliath in Samra's story, the motifs of taking turns and cutting the opponent into two without him realising are both present. When Qaṭīne's turn to strike comes, he cuts the hero of Armenia, head to toe, with his recently sharpened dagger. The hero is not aware that he has been cut and laughs at Qaṭīne. Qaṭīne asks him to dance a little before he strikes his third blow. When the hero does, he falls into two pieces.

Taking turns and cutting one's adversary into two also appear in the episode of the David and Goliath battle in the epic song recorded by Rivlin from Ḥakham Eliyahu Avraham Dahoki Mizraḥi of Dohok (Rivlin 1930, 116; 1959, 245–47).

### **5.11. Goliath's Sword and 'Eliya Ḥəttè and His Condition (167)–(178)**

King Saul has ordered that Goliath's head must be cut off and placed before him, so that he knows that Goliath has indeed been killed; no sword but Goliath's own can cut off his head. David asks 'Eliya Ḥəttè (in the Bible, Uriah the Hittite), the bearer of Goliath's armour, to give him Goliath's sword, so that he can cut off Goliath's head and carry it to king Saul.

(172) *g-er-lá-g-yanne-lox* [= *la-g-yawənnə-lox*]<sup>1</sup> ʔtli šārṭ ʔəmmox<sup>1</sup>  
*hákan yawátti xà-brat-yəsraʔəl*,<sup>1</sup> *b-yawənnə-lox*.<sup>1</sup>

‘He says, “I will not give it to you. I have a condition for [lit. with] you: if you give me a daughter of Israel [i.e., a girl of Israel to marry], I will give it to you.”’

David hesitates, but eventually agrees. As a result, God becomes angry with David:

(175) *g-er-lébox yáwəṭ čù brát yəsraʔəl ṭàlè*<sup>1</sup> ʔəlla brát,<sup>1</sup> ʔáy d-híla  
*<sup>H</sup>ba[t]-zzúg<sup>H</sup> dídox bat-šéva<sup>c</sup> mən-<sup>H</sup>šamáyim<sup>H</sup> ksúta ṭàlox*,<sup>1</sup> ʔàya  
*b-yawáṭta ta-ʔeliyá ḥəttè*.<sup>1</sup>

‘He says, “You cannot give any daughter of Israel to him but the daughter, the one that is your spouse, Bathsheba, [which is] written [i.e., destined] for you from heaven, you will give **her** to ʔEliya Ḥəttè.”’

David cuts off Goliath’s head, and takes it and places it in front of king Saul. The Israelites are freed from Goliath and the Philistines.

(178) *zəlla*,<sup>1</sup> ʔúrra,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>ra<sup>CH</sup>-ʔáfe, *mən-yəsraʔəl*,<sup>1</sup> ʔilá[ha] b-yá[wə]l <sup>H</sup>ṭòn<sup>H</sup>  
*ta-ʔəsraʔəl*,<sup>1</sup> *pášla šahyàna*,<sup>1</sup>

‘That trouble went [away and] passed from Israel. God will give good to Israel, there was a celebration.’

David appoints ʔEliya Ḥəttè the head of his army.

David’s decapitation of Goliath is recounted in 1 Sam. 17.51:

And David ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him,

and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their mighty man was dead, they fled.

In v. 54, it is told that David brought Goliath's head to Jerusalem: "And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent." The condition imposed by ʿEliya Ḥəttè regarding an Israelite woman alludes to the story of David and Bathsheba, told in 2 Sam. 11.

The idea that Bathsheba was David's destined wife appears in the Talmud: "Bathsheba the daughter of Eliam was destined for David from the six days of creation, but she came to him with pain" (BT Sanhedrin 107a). However, the Aggadah that identifies Uriah the Hittite as Goliath's armour-bearer, that says he is given an Israelite woman by David, and that indicates that God punishes David by making this woman David's destined wife Bathsheba, is quoted only by later sources. The earliest attestation thereto is an allusion in a commentary on Chronicles ascribed to a disciple of Saadia Gaon (10th century CE): "And the one who says that Uriah the Hittite was the military servant of Goliath, is wrong" (Kirchhiem 1874, 10; commentary on 1 Chron. 2.17; quoted by Lewin 1940, 189). The two earliest sources in which our Aggadah explicitly appears are Rabbi Shemuʿel Ben Avraham Laniado's *Keli Yaqar* (Laniado 1603, 293a, commentary on 2 Sam. 11.3) and Rabbi Moshe Alsheikh's *Marʿot Ha-Tzovʿot* (Alsheikh 1603–1607, 45a, commentary on 2 Sam. 12.1), which cites it as being from "a Midrash of our rabbis which became known though I have not seen it written [= a copy of it]." Though there is insufficient information to determine the exact years that Rabbi Laniado spent in the city of Safed, it is possible that the two rabbis lived there concurrently, during the latter half of the

16th century CE; it is certainly the case that their two books were printed in the same year and by the same publisher in Venice. Subsequent sources are *Petaḥ Ha-’Oheḥ*, an alphabetical collection of homilies and Aggadot by Rabbi Avraham Ben Yehudah Leb of Przemyśl (1691, 15a); *Pney Yehoshua*<sup>6</sup>, a Talmudic commentary by Rabbi Ya’akov Yehoshua<sup>6</sup> Falk (Falk 1739, commentary on BT Qiddushin 76b); and *Ḥomat ’Anakh*, a biblical commentary by Rabbi Ḥayyim Yosef David Azulay (Azulay 1803, 20b, commentary on Ps. 38.19). Lewin, who lists the two early sources by Laniado and Alsheikh and the later source by Leb (as well as additional sources which state that Bathsheba was indeed predestined for David, but do not relate specifically our Aggadah) in his *’Otzr Ha-Ge’onim* (Lewin 1940, 189–90), writes in the introduction to the volume that these relatively late sources do not seem to be the original source of this Aggadah (Lewin 1940, viii).

Our Aggadah does appear in the epic songs by Ḥakham Eliyahu Avraham Dahoki Mizraḥi of Dohok (Rivlin 1930, 116–17; 1959, 248), by Rabbi Ḥayyim Shalom son of Rabbi Avraham son of Rabbi ‘Ovadya of Nerwa and ‘Amidya (Rivlin 1959, 253), and by Ḥakham Yishay of Urmia (Rivlin 1959, 299), all recorded by Rivlin. In the first song, David asks for Goliath’s sword, in the second he asks for a key for Goliath’s armour which was hidden in Goliath’s beard, and in the third he asks Uriah to open the armour around Goliath’s neck. In Samra’s version both the sword and the key are mentioned. Rivlin writes about this Aggadah:

As for the use of Aggadah by the authors of the [epic] songs, we should keep in mind that the Jews of Kurdistan also had a tradition and Aggadah, which may originate in lost Midrashim. We should not assume that all Aggadot in

these songs originate with the author. Such is the case with the Aggadah about Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba in these songs, which is not to be found in the Midrashim, but a source for it was found<sup>72</sup> in the writings of the Geonim. (Rivlin 1959, 104; my translation)

### 5.12. Saul's Illness (183)–(184)

Realising that David will take his place as king, king Saul becomes angry and ill.

(183) *pāšle rāba ḥolē.<sup>HI</sup>* (184) *dúqle rēše,<sup>I</sup> rāḥqa mən-ʿasraʿēl,<sup>I</sup>  
mārʿa,<sup>I</sup> lā-g-ḥaṭal!<sup>I</sup>*

‘He became very sick. A pain, may it be far from Israel, caught his head, it does not stop!’

The Bible several times links Saul’s “evil spirit from God” and David’s success. Saul’s condition is never described as an illness, let alone a headache. The first mention of the evil spirit occurs immediately after David’s anointment by Samuel, as a consequence of it:

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. Now the spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrified him. (1 Sam. 16.13–14)

It is the remedy to this evil spirit, the music of the harp, that brings David into the house of Saul for the first time:

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<sup>72</sup> The source, the aforementioned commentary on Chronicles, was located by Lewin (Lewin 1940, 189; my footnote).

Let our lord command your servants, that are before you, to seek out a man who is a skilful player on the harp; and it shall be, when the evil spirit from God comes upon you, that he shall play with his hand, and you will be well. (1 Sam. 16.16)

The second mention is after the battle against Goliath, when Saul witnesses the public support for David resulting from the battle:

And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. And it came to pass on the next day, that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the house; and David played with his hand, as he did day by day; and Saul had his spear in his hand, and Saul threw the spear, thinking to pin David to the wall. But David eluded him twice. (1 Sam. 18.9–11; see §5.14 below as well)

One more time is again immediately after another of David's victories over the Philistines:

And there was war again; and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled before him. And an evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing with his hand. (1 Sam. 19.8–9)

It appears that the first time Saul's condition was 'diagnosed' as an illness is quite late. Rabbi Yitzhak Abravanel writes in the 15th century:

After the spirit of the Lord departed from him, he did not remain as the rest of men, but rather apprehensions and bad thoughts surrounded him, and his mind was always occupied with his punishment and with how the Lord had rent the kingdom of Israel from him, and how his good spirit departed from him, and due to that his blood burnt

and the illness of melancholia developed in him, which is developed in men due to the burning of the blood and the burnt red humour, and the physicians have already written that this illness causes the loss of imagination and the faculty of judgement. (Abravanel's commentary to 1 Sam. 16.14; my translation)<sup>73</sup>

This notion that Saul has some kind of mental disorder recurs only very rarely in the history of traditional Jewish biblical exegesis. The passage by Abravanel is cited by Rabbi Meir Leibush Ben Yehiel Michel Wisser (the Malbim) in his 19th-century commentary on the same verse. Similarly, Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin (the Natziv) writes in his commentary on Lev. 2.2 about “an illness of black humour which had come upon Saul” (my translation). Despite the few occurrences of this idea in traditional exegesis, reading a mental disorder into the character of Saul has become very common among modern readers of the text, in both academic and popular culture. However, I have not found any previous source that identifies the illness of king Saul as a ‘headache’.

### 5.13. Jonathan's Friendship with David (185)–(190)

David and Jonathan, Saul's son and heir to the throne, are very good friends.

(185) *xà roháya-lu' xà nəšáma-lu' xà-<sup>H</sup>gil<sup>H</sup>-ilu.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Original Hebrew: ...אחרי שסרה ממנו רוח השם הנזכר לא נשאר כיתר האנשים, אבל סבבוהו בלהות ומחשבות רעות, והיה תמיד דמיונו מתעסק בענשו ואיך קרע השם את מלכות ישראל מעליו ואיך רוחו הטוב סר מעליו, ומתוך זה נשרף דמו ונתתהוה בו חולי המילאנ”קולייא המתהוה באדם משריפת הדם והאדומה השרופה, וכבר כתבו הרופאים שבחולי הזה יפסד הדמיון והכח המחשב...



‘They are one spirit, they are one soul, they are the same age.’

Jonathan goes to visit David in the field. He sees that when David plays his *jezuke*,<sup>74</sup> all the sheep gather around him, bow their heads, and listen.

(185) *k-xáze damməd-g-máxe jezùke, kùlle 'érba k-èsē, k-ḥàməl.*<sup>1</sup>

‘He sees that when he plays his *jezuke* all the sheep come, stand.’

Jonathan finds another good quality in David: he treats with compassion the ewes that have given birth. He pets them, washes them, and feeds them with fresh green grass.

(186) *dàre... go-ʔize... gəlla yarùqa yarùqa, raʔiza raʔiza g-maxəlla.*<sup>1</sup>

‘He puts... in his hand... green green [and] fresh fresh grass, [and] feeds her.’

It is Jonathan’s friendship with David, and his seeing David playing music for the sheep, that causes him to recommend David’s playing to his father Saul, as a cure for his headache.

In the biblical text, David and Jonathan’s friendship appears in various places, for example:

The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.... Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. (1 Sam. 18.1–3)

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<sup>74</sup> A musical instrument. See fn. 131, below, and also ch. 3, fn. 56.

And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should slay David; but Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David. (1 Sam. 19.1)

David arose out of a place toward the South, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times; and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David: Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying: The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my seed and your seed, for ever. (1 Sam. 20.41–42)

And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him: Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you; and you will be king over Israel, and I shall be second to you; and even my father Saul knows this is so. (1 Sam. 23.16–17)

However, the biblical narrative talks about David playing music for Saul before it mentions David and Jonathan meeting: “David took the harp, and played with his hand; so Saul found relief, and it was well with him, and the evil spirit departed from him” (1 Sam. 16.23). David's playing is thus not presented as a result of Jonathan's friendship.

The motif of Jonathan's friendship subsumes, in Samra's story, two additional motifs: David playing music for the sheep and David feeding the ewes. Both are given as reasons for Jonathan's acknowledgement of David's worth.

A Midrashic tradition about taking care of sheep by giving them soft grass appears in three places in classical rabbinic literature: Midrash Tehillim 78 (edited prior to the 8th century CE in

the Land of Israel); Midrash Exodus Rabbah 2.2 (probably edited in the 10th century CE; Shinan 1984); and Yalqut Šim‘oni Psalms 823 (edited in the 12th or 13th century CE). In these sources, unlike in Samra’s story, David gives the soft grass to the newborn lambs, not to their mothers: “[David] would bring out the small ones to graze first so that they should graze on the soft [grass]” (Midrash Exodus Rabbah 2.2 Vilna edition; my translation). Furthermore, the focus in these sources seems to be David’s ability to provide for each of his sheep in accordance with its needs:

...and then he would bring out the old [sheep] so that they would graze on the medium grass, and after that he would bring out the youths so that they would graze on the hard grass. The Holy One blessed be He said, whoever knows how to shepherd each sheep according to its strength should come and shepherd my people. (Midrash Exodus Rabbah 2.2 Vilna edition; my translation)<sup>75</sup>

This contrasts with Samra’s story, where the focus is David’s compassion towards the newborn lambs and their mothers.

In these sources, the fact that David takes care of the sheep is not said to be witnessed by Jonathan, nor is it connected to David’s appointment as a musician for king Saul. Rather, it forms part of a tradition of stories about leaders being tested by God for their leadership skills, based on their performance as shepherds. God’s response to David’s action is to correlate the ability

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<sup>75</sup> Original Hebrew: ויקחהו ממכלאות צאן, מהו ממכלאות צאן כמו ויכלא הגשם, היה מונע הגדולים מפני הקטנים והיה מוציא הקטנים לרעות כדי שירעו עשב הרך ואחר כך מוציא הזקנים כדי שירעו עשב הבינוני, ואח"כ מוציא הבחורים שיהיו אוכלין עשב הקשה, אמר הקב"ה מי שהוא יודע לרעות הצאן איש לפי כחו יבא וירעה בעמי, וה"ד מאחר עלות הביאו לרעות ביעקב עמו.

to shepherd sheep with the ability to care for people—a tradition that is also recounted in connection to other leaders, such as Moses. Samra indicates that David's behaviour is the reason for Jonathan's esteem towards him, although she does follow this with an element of the divine thereafter:

(187) *ʔt̪le<sup>H</sup> l̪év t̪òv<sup>H</sup> u-[q]urbáne ʔilá[ha] k-iʔè.<sup>I</sup> <sup>H</sup>galuy-yadù<sup>dh</sup>-ile,<sup>I</sup>  
k-îʔe<sup>I</sup> hàdx̱a-le,<sup>I</sup> k-îʔe go-lábbəd nāše mà-ʔis.<sup>I</sup>*

‘He has a good heart and God [may I be] His sacrifice knows. It is well known [to Him] [lit. revealed (and) known], He knows it is so, He knows what [there] is inside the heart[s] of people.’

I have not found any attestation of the motif of David playing for the sheep in earlier sources.

#### 5.14. King Saul's Sword and the Angel (191)–(193)

After a few days of David playing to king Saul in order to relieve his pain, Saul attacks David with his sword. An angel diverts the sword and causes it to hit the wall above David. Jonathan says:

(193) *qày,<sup>I</sup> réšox k-tàrəš<sup>I</sup> ʔaz-qáy q-qat̪l̪àtte?<sup>I</sup>*

“‘Why? Your head heals [when he plays for you] so why do you kill him?’”

King Saul replies:

(193) *p-qat̪l̪ənn̪e.<sup>I</sup>*

“‘I shall kill him.’”

Two episodes are found in the Bible where king Saul attempts to smite David with his spear, 1 Sam. 18.10–11 and 19.9–10. Miraculous deliverance by an angel is not described there,

nor anywhere else in the exegetical tradition. The only reference that I have found to there being something miraculous about David's evasion of the attack is in the commentary by Rabbi Levi Ben Gershon (the Ralbag, Gersonides) on 1 Sam. 19.10, where he states that David's being able to evade the strike was a miracle, since his attention was focused on playing properly at the same time.

### 5.15. King Saul's Promise (194)

King Saul makes a promise that whoever kills Goliath will receive half of the kingdom and marry his daughter Michal.

(194) ...*palgôt dawálta p-póya tàle,<sup>1</sup> u-bràti<sup>1</sup> mìxal<sup>1</sup> tále <sup>H</sup>matanà.<sup>H1</sup>*

“...half of the wealth [or: kingdom] will be his, and my daughter Michal—a gift for him.”

This motifeme originates from 1 Sam. 17.25: “And it shall be, that the man who kills him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.”

The promise to give half of the kingdom echoes Est. 5.3: “‘What troubles you, Queen Esther?’ the king asked her. ‘And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be granted you’” (see also Est. 5.6; 7.2).

### 5.16. The Cave of Elijah the Prophet (195)–(200)

David escapes from king Saul and hides in the Cave of Elijah the Prophet in Haifa. He has with him eight hundred men.

The Cave of Elijah the Prophet is a well-known pilgrimage site, located on Mount Carmel in the city of Haifa. The Bible

states, one chapter before the episode with Abigail (see the following subsection) that while being pursued by king Saul, David and his men stayed in a cave in the desert of En-Gedi (1 Sam. 24.1–2). The episode with Abigail, in ch. 25, is said to take place in the area of Ma'on and Carmel, two biblical Israelite settlements located in Judah to the south of Hebron. The association of the cave of David and his men with the Cave of Elijah the Prophet on Mount Carmel in Haifa in Samra's story is due to the coincidentally identical names of the biblical settlement and the mountain. In the biblical narrative, the En-Gedi cave is not a part of the Abigail episode, and it is in the desert of Judah, not in the region of Hebron. The cave is incorporated into Samra's story because it appears immediately before the Abigail episode in the biblical text.

### **5.17. Gila of Haifa (201)–(231)**

The festival of Rosh Hashana is approaching, and David needs sustenance for his men. A very rich man, Elimelech, lives in Haifa; he owns flour-mills. His wife, Gila, is also very rich, and she owns the neighbourhood of Gilo (in Jerusalem), which her father had named after her. David sends two soldiers to ask for sustenance for Rosh Hashana, but Elimelech refuses. He replies to Gila's protests:

(206) *lá g-ya[wà]nne čù-māndi.<sup>1</sup> fèrat<sup>1</sup> yàtwat<sup>1</sup> ha-ʔàsqað šī la-g-ya[wá]nne.<sup>1</sup>*

“I will not give him anything. You [can] fly [or] sit, even this much I will not give him.”

Gila goes after the soldiers and gives them a written document permitting them to take anything they might need.

(210) *xamšī kəsyása qàmxa,*<sup>1</sup> *mən-ṭahúnət qàmxa.*<sup>1</sup> *xamšī bakbúke,*<sup>1</sup>  
*ʾəmmá bakbúke* <sup>Hšəmən<sup>H</sup></sup> *mən-ṭáh-*<sup>1</sup> <sup>Hšəmən<sup>H</sup></sup> *dídi.*<sup>1</sup>... (212)  
*sáʿun lə-ʾərba,*<sup>1</sup> *ʾəmmá réše ʾərba mèsun,*<sup>1</sup> *ʾúzule ta-<sup>H</sup>rós-ha-*  
*šanà.*<sup>H1</sup>

“Fifty bags of flour, from the flour-mill. Fifty bottles, a hundred bottles of oil from my mi[ll], oil.... Come to the sheep, bring one hundred heads of sheep, prepare them [lit. it] for Rosh Hashana.”

When Gila tells her husband she has given David’s men all of that, he dies.

(218) *ʾóha mət̤le,*<sup>1</sup> *pqèʿle l-dúke,*<sup>1</sup> *mət̤le l-dúke!*<sup>1</sup>

‘This one [=the husband] died, he exploded [i.e., died from anger] on the spot [lit. his place], he died on the spot [lit. his place]!’

After the mourning period for her husband, Gila invites David to visit. He thanks her for the food she sent, and she proposes giving him all of her property if he marries her. David agrees and marries her.

This episode is told in 1 Sam. 25.2–43. However, Samra’s version differs from that one on several points.

The names of the couple in the Bible are Nabal and Abigail. Samra uses Elimelech, the same as the name of the husband of

Naomi at the beginning of Samra's narrative,<sup>76</sup> and Gila, after whom Gilo was said to be named by her rich father. The modern-day neighbourhood of Gilo in Jerusalem is located near the Palestinian town of Beit Jala, thought to be the site of biblical Gilo,<sup>77</sup> which appears later in the biblical narrative: it is the home of Ahitophel the Gilonite (2 Sam. 15.12), David's counsellor and the grandfather of Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11.3; 23.34; cf. 1 Chron. 3.5). I have found no previous source presenting an association between Abigail and Gilo, nor any which states that Abigail was rich in her own right.

As explained with regard to the motifeme in §5.16 above, in Samra's story Gila and Elimelech's home is located in the modern city of Haifa because the biblical settlement of Carmel shares its name with Mount Carmel near Haifa.

In the Bible, Nabal is said to be a wealthy owner of herds of sheep and goats. In Samra's narrative, he is the owner of flour-mills. This is perhaps taken from the realia of Kurdistan, where millers were among the wealthy property owners.

The Bible indicates that this episode took place when Nabal was shearing his sheep. Although shearing, as a family celebration, did not have a fixed time, it most commonly occurs during the spring.<sup>78</sup> In Samra's story, the episode takes place just before

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<sup>76</sup> A point of similarity between the two characters called Elimelech is that they do not allow their wives to use their wealth to provide goods to those in need.

<sup>77</sup> Though a more probable identification is Ĥirbet Jala in the Hebron area; see Luncz's comment in Schwarz (1900, 126).

<sup>78</sup> On shearing as a familial feast in the Bible, see Haran (1972).



Rosh Hashana, at the beginning of autumn. This originates from BT Rosh HaShana 18a, where Rav Naḥman ascribes to Rabba Bar Abbuha the opinion that the ten days of Nabal's sickness (1 Sam. 25.38) were the ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur (see also Yalquṭ Šim'oni Samuel 134; Rashi on 1 Sam. 25.38). The notion that David needed sustenance for his men for the feast of the eve of Rosh Hashana comes from Rashi's commentary on 1 Sam. 25.8.

In the Bible, it is David who "sent and spoke concerning Abigail, to take her to him to wife" (1 Sam. 25.39), whereas in Samra's story the initiative comes from her. This is possibly due to the interpretation of 1 Sam. 25.31 by the rabbis—after convincing David not to punish Nabal, and referring to his future as king of Israel, Abigail says to David, "then remember your handmaid." The rabbis understood this as a hint for David to marry her after the death of Nabal (BT Bava Qamma 92b; BT Megilla 14b; JT Sanhedrin 2.3;<sup>79</sup> and many other subsequent commentators). Samra's version is also reflective of the independence and assertiveness of the Jewish women of Kurdistan in matters pertaining to marriage.<sup>80</sup> Abigail's independence and assertiveness are also stressed in Samra's story when she issues a written document permitting David's soldiers to take abundant goods from

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<sup>79</sup> JT = Jerusalem Talmud, Vilna edition.

<sup>80</sup> See Sabar (1982c, xv): "Kurdish women in general enjoy more freedom and a wider participation in public life than do Arab, Persian, and Turkish women. They are also freer in their behavior towards males and rarely wear the veil." On the life of Jewish women in Kurdistan, see Brauer (1947, 147–57; 1993, 175–89).

her and her husband's property, and by emphasising that she was wealthy in her own right and not only due to her husband.

### 5.18. David Finds King Saul Asleep (233)–(234)

David finds king Saul asleep. He cuts a piece of his coat, takes a bite of his apple, and drinks from his water, but he does not hurt him.

(234) *ksúle t̤àle,*<sup>1</sup> *ʾána lā<sup>1</sup> q-qaṭlānnox,*<sup>1</sup> *ʾāhāt<sup>1</sup> g-ābāt qaṭlātti<sup>1</sup> ʾána lá-*  
*g qaṭlānnox,*<sup>1</sup> *ʾāhāt<sup>H</sup> mélex yāsraʾēl<sup>H</sup>-wāt.*<sup>1</sup>

‘He wrote to him, “I shall not kill you, you want to kill me, I shall not kill you, you are the king of Israel.”’

This draws from two separate biblical episodes. The first is in 1 Sam. 24, where, when Saul enters the caves in which David and his men are hiding, David cuts off a corner of Saul's cloak without him noticing. The second is in 1 Sam. 26, in which David and Abishai enter the camp of king Saul while the king and his men are asleep. David does not hurt the king, but rather takes his spear and flask of water. In both cases, the objects taken are used as proof of David's good intentions and reverence for the king of Israel. It is probably this similarity between the two episodes that led to their unification in Samra's story.

The unification of the two biblical episodes also appears in the epic song published by Rivin (1959, 257), where it says that David “ate a little from his plate, drank some water from his jar, cut [a piece] off from Saul's coat.”

It seems that the three objects that are taken in Samra's story and in the epic song, instead of the one object in the episode in 1 Sam. 24, or the two objects in the episode in 1 Sam. 26, align

better with a general tendency of folktales to use typological numbers.<sup>81</sup> I have found no source referring to king Saul's apple.

### 5.19. King Saul and Raḥela the Fortune-teller (235)–(242)

King Saul goes to Raḥela the fortune-teller.

(236) *báxta pasxáwa bəd-fàla,*<sup>1</sup> *k-i'áwa má-ʔiz go-<sup>Hc</sup>olàm<sup>Hl</sup> má lès.*<sup>1</sup>

‘A woman that used to open in fortunes [i.e., she was a fortune-teller], she knew what there is in the world [and] what there is not.’

He asks her to tell his fortune. She refuses, because she swore to king Saul three months ago that she would not tell anyone's fortune. Saul does not reveal himself, but promises her that he will ensure that the king exempts her from her oath. In the process of telling Saul's fortune, the prophet Samuel appears. He says:

(241) *šàʔul,*<sup>1</sup> *ṭlā[ha] yóme ʔtlox piše,*<sup>1</sup> *ʔàhət u-kúd ṭlā[ha] bnóne dídox ʔásət qṭàla.*<sup>1</sup>

“Saul, you have three days [lit. three days you have remained], you and your three sons will be killed [lit. come to killing].”

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<sup>81</sup> That is, numbers that bear special symbolic meaning for a particular culture and tend to recur in many of its texts and art forms. For example, Law no. 14, “the law of three and the law of repetition,” in Olrik's influential “Epic laws of folk narrative” (Olrik 1965 [1908]) describes the many repetitions of the number three in European folktales (Olrik's study was of folktales of European origin). In the Hebrew Bible, the numbers seven, ten, twelve, and forty often recur.

King Saul gets sick, and Raḥela takes care of him for three days.

(242) ʿúzlale <sup>H</sup>maràkim<sup>H</sup> šòrḇa<sup>1</sup> máyət ksèsa,<sup>1</sup> qam-maxlâlè,<sup>1</sup> qam-maštyàlè,<sup>1</sup>

‘She made for him soups, thick [rice] soup, chicken soup  
[lit. chicken water], she fed him, she gave him to drink.’

The story of the diviner of Endor is told in 1 Sam. 28,<sup>82</sup> although her name is not specified in the biblical text. Yalquṭ Šim‘oni gives the name Zephaniah, and states that she was the mother of Abner (Yalquṭ Šim‘oni Samuel 140).<sup>83</sup> Raḥela’s reluctance to tell fortunes is rooted in vv. 3 and 9 of 1 Sam. 28:

And Saul had put away those that divined by a ghost or a familiar spirit out of the land.... And the woman said unto him: “Behold, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off those that divine by a ghost or a familiar spirit out of the land; So why are you laying a trap for me, to get me killed?”

The period of three months is not mentioned in the biblical text, nor is her oath not to tell fortunes. In the tragic message given to king Saul by Samuel, Samra’s narrative specifies three days, a further period of three, where the biblical text gives only one day (1 Sam. 28.19). The fortune-teller’s compassionate care towards Saul after he receives the tragic message is recounted in the Bible in vv. 21–25. However, Samra tells of thick rice soup and chicken soup—known folk remedies—as Raḥela’s offerings, in lieu of the biblical fatted calf and unleavened bread.

<sup>82</sup> For a literary analysis of the biblical narrative, see Simon (1992).

<sup>83</sup> Another source claims that she was the wife of Zephaniah: Pirqey De-Rabbi Eli‘ezer 32, Higger edition (1944–1948).

## 6.0. Conclusion

We have seen that various motifemes in Samra's story draw from different historical layers of Jewish literature, as well as from other traditions. The way in which the motifemes are amalgamated into a new cohesive narrative 'bypasses' the consecutive historical development of the homogenous series of Elstein and Lipsker's thematology of Jewish narratives, since motifemes are drawn from sources of various periods, and various cultural spaces, regardless of their historical consecutiveness.<sup>84</sup> This process in fact disrupts the homogeneity of the homogenous series. It is this non-linear borrowing of motifemes that I refer to as motifeme transposition.

It should be noted again that in addition to straightforward transposition of motifemes from one source to another there are several other mechanisms of motifeme manipulation:

- altered causality: keeping the motifeme structure of previous versions of the narrative, but tying them

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<sup>84</sup> This criticism of Elstein and Lipsker's notion of the historical development of the homogenous series resembles Moshe Idel's criticism of Gershom Scholem's historical picture, expressed, for instance, in Scholem (1941). Idel (1990, xxiii) states: "Thus I am hesitant to conceive the history of Kabbalah as it appears in the written documents as a 'progressive' evolution alone. It seems that alongside this category we shall better be aware of the possibility that later strata of Kabbalistic literature may contain also older elements or structures, not so visible in the earlier bodies of literature. In other words, I allow a greater role to the subterranean transmission than Scholem and his followers did." See also Idel (1988, 20–22).

together with a new causal nexus (e.g., the motifeme in §5.12);

- unification: combining previously separate motifemes into one unified motifeme (e.g., the motifeme in §5.18);
- reorganisation of narrative time: the relocation of a motifeme in the narrative time sequence (e.g., the case of the motifeme in §5.5);
- subsuming: one motifeme subsumes under it several other motifemes in a hierarchical structure (e.g., the motifemes in §5.13);
- temporal transposition: the re-setting of a motifeme in a new historical period, or milder forms of anachronism (e.g., the motifeme in §5.16; the use of a 'loudspeaker' in the motifeme in §5.8).

## **7.0. The NENA Text and Its Translation**

The text was recorded at the home of Samra Zaqen on 19 April 2012. Present at the recording session were Samra Zaqen (SZ),

Batia Aloni (BA), and myself (OA). The recording ID is SZ120419T1 9:30–37:29.<sup>85</sup>

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                        |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1)  | BA: <i>k-taxrát mǎrrax b-sapràttan e...</i> <sup>1</sup>                                                                                                                              | BA: Do you remember you said you will tell us eh...                                                                    |
| (2)  | SZ: <i>hè hé,</i> <sup>1</sup> <i><sup>H</sup>səppùr<sup>H1</sup> dǎd hánna</i> <sup>86</sup> <i>g-əbètun...</i> <sup>1</sup>                                                         | SZ: Yes yes, do you want [to hear] the story of <i>this</i> ... <sup>86</sup>                                          |
| (3)  | BA: <i>mád g-əbàt.</i> <sup>1</sup>                                                                                                                                                   | BA: Whatever you want.                                                                                                 |
| (4)  | SZ: <i>...dǎd na<sup>c</sup>òmi?</i> <sup>1</sup>                                                                                                                                     | SZ: ...of Naomi?                                                                                                       |
| (5)  | BA: <i>na<sup>c</sup>ómi u-rùt.</i> <sup>1</sup> <i><sup>H</sup>aval<sup>H</sup> mád g-əbat mǎhke.</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>hakan-g-əbat gèr-mǎndi<sup>1</sup> gèr-mǎndi.</i> <sup>1</sup> | BA: Naomi and Ruth. But tell [us] whatever you want. If you want [= prefer] something else [then tell] something else. |
| (6)  | SZ: <i><sup>H</sup>lò-xašív<sup>H1</sup> ʔátta wà<sup>c</sup>du-hile.</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>séle <sup>H</sup>zmàn.</i> <sup>H1</sup>                                                    | SZ: Never mind, now it is its [= this story's] time. The time has arrived.                                             |
| (7)  | BA: <i><sup>H</sup>naxòn.</i> <sup>H1</sup>                                                                                                                                           | BA: Right.                                                                                                             |
| (8)  | SZ: <i>séle <sup>H</sup>zmàn.</i> <sup>H1</sup>                                                                                                                                       | SZ: Time has arrived.                                                                                                  |
| (9)  | BA: <i>séle wà<sup>c</sup>du,</i> <sup>1</sup> <i><sup>H</sup>naxòn.</i> <sup>H1</sup>                                                                                                | BA: Their time has arrived, correct.                                                                                   |
| (10) | SZ: <i>...hé, g-emárwa—ʔiláha nàtə</i> <sup>187</sup> <i>...manəxle<sup>1</sup> ʔaxòni<sup>1</sup> go-gan-èzen.</i> <sup>1</sup>                                                      | SZ: ... Yes, he used to say— may God sa[ve] <sup>87</sup> ... give rest unto him, my brother, in heaven.               |

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<sup>85</sup> The recording is available for listening on the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Database Project site at <https://nena.ames.cam.ac.uk/dialects/78/>.

<sup>86</sup> See note on *hènnā* in Introduction, §5.0.

<sup>87</sup> Samra started the word *natərre* of the expression *ʔiláha natərre* ‘may God protect him’, but changed it to the expression *ʔiláha manəxle* ‘may God grant him rest’.

- (11) *g-emórwa na‘òmi...<sup>1</sup> u- e...*  
*šámméd góre hànna wéle<sup>1</sup>*  
*<sup>H</sup>règa<sup>CH</sup>... ‘elimèlex!<sup>1</sup>* He used to say [= tell] Na-  
omi... and eh... the name of  
her husband was *this*, [wait a]  
moment... Elimelech!
- (12) BA: ‘elimèlex.<sup>1</sup> BA: Elimelech.
- (13) SZ: ‘elimèlex.<sup>1</sup> SZ: Elimelech.
- (14) *skíne-welu go-bet-lèhem.<sup>1</sup> ‘áswa-*  
*lu <sup>H</sup>báyit gadòl,<sup>1</sup> ‘parnasà tóvā,<sup>1</sup>* They lived in Bethlehem. They  
had a large house, good liveli-  
hood,
- (15) *háya-lahem sàde<sup>1</sup> ve-ḥàtta...<sup>H1</sup>* they had a field, and wheat...
- (16) BA: *wéalu <sup>H</sup>‘aširìm.<sup>H1</sup>* BA: They were rich.
- (17) SZ: *máḥkax <sup>H</sup>‘əvrìt<sup>1</sup> ‘ó<sup>H</sup> kùrdi?<sup>1</sup>*  
*là k-ḥan,<sup>1</sup>* SZ: Shall we speak Hebrew or  
Kurdish [= Neo-Aramaic]? I  
don’t know
- (18) BA: *<sup>H</sup>kùrdit!<sup>H1</sup>* BA: Kurdish [= Neo-Aramaic]!
- (19) SZ: *‘ə,<sup>1</sup> ‘əswá-lu,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>‘aširìm<sup>H</sup> wélu,<sup>1</sup>*  
*‘əswá-lu <sup>H</sup>sadè,<sup>H1</sup> ‘əswá-lu...* SZ: OK, they had, they were  
rich, they had a field, they  
had... wheat, they had...  
*xàṭṭe,<sup>1</sup> ‘əswá-lu...<sup>1</sup>*
- (20) BA: *zangìn wéalu<sup>1</sup> rāḇa.<sup>1</sup>* BA: They were very rich.
- (21) SZ: *hè.<sup>1</sup>* SZ: Yes.
- (22) *<sup>H</sup>‘az<sup>H</sup>-‘āya ‘áswa-la trè bnóne.<sup>1</sup>*  
*<sup>H</sup>‘az<sup>H</sup>-‘āya <sup>H</sup>‘išā,<sup>1</sup> ‘āxi<sup>1</sup> ṭovā<sup>H</sup>*  
*wéla.<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>‘išā<sup>1</sup> ‘im-lèv<sup>1</sup> patūah.<sup>H1</sup>*  
*g-āba yāwa.<sup>1</sup>* So she had two sons. So she  
was a very good [lit. the best]  
woman. A woman with an  
open heart. She wants to give.



- (23) ʾəròta-la.<sup>1</sup> ʾána mbášlan  
xamùšta,<sup>188</sup> <sup>H</sup>šəxením<sup>H</sup> dídi  
làtlu?! ʿa[w]òn-ile!<sup>1</sup> It's Friday. "Shall I cook xamùšta,<sup>88</sup> [while] my neighbours do not have [any]?! It's a sin!"
- (24) g-daryáwa xápča gərsa,<sup>1</sup>  
g-daryáwa xápča...<sup>1</sup> màd-ʾátla,<sup>1</sup>  
xà qárʾa,<sup>1</sup> hàʾ<sup>1</sup> ʾúzlu,<sup>1</sup> kutéle<sup>89</sup> ta-  
yalúnke dídax,<sup>1</sup> lá šoqátte bésax  
spìqa.<sup>1</sup> She would put some cracked wheat, would put some... whatever she had [lit. has], a zucchini, "Here," [she says to the neighbour,] "make [= cook] [with] these some dumplings<sup>89</sup> for your children, don't leave your home empty [of food]."
- (25) ta-dè<sup>1</sup> b-nàbla<sup>1</sup> xápča sayìhe,<sup>1</sup>  
ʾúzlu mabòse<sup>90</sup> ta-yalúnke  
dídax.<sup>1</sup> la-šoqátte qanúnax  
spìqa.<sup>1</sup> g-ozàwa.<sup>1</sup> To this [woman] she takes some crushed wheat, "Make [= cook] mabose<sup>90</sup> [with] these for your children. Don't leave your stove empty." She [that woman] would do [so = cook the crushed wheat].
- (26) ʾàwa<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>lāfʿamim<sup>H</sup> k-esèwa<sup>1</sup>  
k-xazèwa,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>o<sup>H</sup>-wéla nabòle,<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>H</sup>o<sup>H</sup>-wéla b-isàya,<sup>1</sup> méka kəsyat?<sup>1</sup>  
k-karəbwa<sup>1</sup> rəba.<sup>1</sup> He [Naomi's husband Elimelech] would sometimes come [and] see her, either while she was taking [produce to her neighbours] or while she was coming [back], "Where are you coming from?" He would get very angry.
- (27) wàlox,<sup>1</sup> là-karbət,<sup>1</sup> ʾàlla g-yáwəl  
tàlu<sup>1</sup> yáwəl tàli,<sup>1</sup> yáwan ta-xa- "Look now, don't get angry, God gives to them, [He] gives to me, I shall give to someone

<sup>88</sup> A sour soup made with meat-filled dumplings. See fns 36 and 37 earlier in this chapter.

<sup>89</sup> See previous footnote.

<sup>90</sup> Sabar (2002a, 210) on *mabose*: "( < ת-י-ב )... Sabbath-food cooked overnight." Sabar (2002a: 110) on *b-y-t*: "ת-י-ב... to spend the night... to cook overnight... to keep overnight."

- xə̀t.*<sup>1</sup> *ʔə̀tli,*<sup>1</sup> *g-ábe yàwan!*<sup>1</sup> *xer-*  
*ʔalla!*<sup>1</sup> *là qabálwa.*<sup>1</sup> *k-karə̀bwa*  
*mónna.*<sup>1</sup> else! I have, [therefore] I  
should give! [It's the] benevo-  
lence of God! [i.e., it is not  
ours]" He did not accept that.  
He would get angry with her.
- (28) *kúllu gorgiát hə̀t*<sup>1</sup> [= *grásət*  
*xə̀t[te]* ?]. *ʔəswá-la dānga.*<sup>1</sup>  
*ʔəswá-la sə̀tta.*<sup>1</sup> *g-deqáwa*  
*mnòša.*<sup>1</sup> All of the grinding [imple-  
ments] of wheat. She had a  
wooden mallet. She had a  
stone mortar. She would grind  
[lit. knock] by herself.
- (29) *g-deqáwa xə̀tte,*<sup>1</sup> *ʔəswá-la*  
*garə̀sta.*<sup>1</sup> *g-garsáwa gə̀rsa,*<sup>1</sup>  
*garsáwa kə̀škəri.*<sup>1</sup> *kùlle geb-*  
*g-ozáwa.*<sup>1</sup> She would grind wheat, she  
had [manual] millstones. She  
would mill groats. She would  
mill semolina. She would do  
all of the things.
- (30) *naʕə̀mi,*<sup>1</sup> *kùllu geb-gozáwa,*<sup>1</sup> *u-*  
*g-yawàwa.*<sup>1</sup> [*gə-m*] *palʔàwa ta-*  
*náše ší.*<sup>1</sup> *g-ə̀ba ʔə̀xla u-mə̀xla.*<sup>1</sup> Naomi, she does all of the  
things, and she gives. She  
would also give away [lit. di-  
vide, distribute] to people. She  
wants to eat and to feed [as  
well].
- (31) BA: *brát hə̀lāl.*<sup>1</sup> BA: A worthy woman [lit.  
daughter of kosher].
- (32) SZ: *hè.*<sup>1</sup> SZ: Yes.
- (33) <sup>H2</sup> *áz<sup>H</sup> ʔəha wéla.*<sup>1</sup> *krə̀ble mánna,*<sup>1</sup>  
*g-érra là g-šoqánnax go-bet-*  
*lə̀hem.*<sup>1</sup> *g-yáwat rə̀ba...*<sup>1</sup> *kúlla*  
*dawálti b-yə̀[wa]tta.*<sup>1</sup> So that's what's happened [lit.  
so this (FS) was]. He got angry  
with her, he tells her, "I will  
not let you stay [lit. leave you]  
in Bethlehem. You give a lot...  
you will give [away] all of my  
property."
- (34) *wə̀lox<sup>1</sup> g-zə̀da dwáltox!*<sup>1</sup> *là-*  
*g-náqsa!*<sup>1</sup> *ʔə̀lla d-húlle húlle tə̀li!*  
*yáwan ta-gə̀ri ší!*<sup>1</sup> *là-q-qabəlwa.*<sup>1</sup> "Look now, your property will  
increase! It will not lessen!  
God who gave, gave to me [in  
order that] I shall give to oth-  
ers [lit. my other = other than  
me] also." He didn't accept.

- (35) *qam-nabàlla<sup>1</sup> qam-nabàlla l-...<sup>1</sup>* He took her. He took her to...  
*mə'o...<sup>1</sup> bážər mə'ohàv,<sup>1</sup> 'èka* Meo... the city of Me'ohav.<sup>91</sup>  
*wéla<sup>1</sup> bážər mə'ohàv?<sup>1</sup>* Where was the city of  
 Me'ohav?
- (36) BA: *go-məšəlmàne,<sup>1</sup>* BA: In [the country of] the  
 Muslims,
- (37) SZ: *qam-nabàlla.<sup>1</sup> mə'oháv* He took her. Me'ohav, do you  
*k-ì'ə̀tule maní-le? k-ə̀tule mání-* know who he is? Do you know  
*le<sup>1</sup> mekàle?<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>makór<sup>H</sup> dide,<sup>1</sup>* who he is, where he is from?  
*k-ə̀tule <sup>H</sup>mákor<sup>H</sup> dide* His source, do you know  
*mekàle?...<sup>1</sup>* where his source is from?...
- (38) OA: <sup>H</sup>lò,<sup>H</sup> OA: No,
- (39) BA: <sup>H</sup>lò,<sup>H</sup> BA: No,
- (40) SZ: *... mə'ohav?... 'àz e...<sup>1</sup>* SZ: ... Me'ohav?... So eh... he  
*g-émer nablənnax bážər* says, "I'll take you to the city  
*mə'ohàv,<sup>1</sup> 'ána 'ə̀tli, g-bàre* of Me'ohav, I have [means], I  
*mənni.<sup>1</sup> mə'oháv ší 'ə̀tle trè* can afford it." Me'ohav also  
*bnàsa:<sup>1</sup> rùt,<sup>1</sup> u-ə̀rta.<sup>1</sup> qam-ṭalə́blu* has two daughters, Ruth and  
*ta-kútru bnóne dide.<sup>1</sup>* Orta.<sup>92</sup> He asked for them  
 [= for their hand] for both his  
 sons.
- (41) *qam-nabàlla,<sup>1</sup> zə́lla 'ə̀mme,<sup>1</sup> 'úzlú* He took her [= Naomi], she  
<sup>H</sup>hatonà<sup>H</sup> *qam-gorìlu kútru* went with him, they made a  
*bnàsa dide.<sup>1</sup> rə̀hqa m-bát[ət]* wedding, they married both of  
*'əsra'èl<sup>1</sup> 'áwwa məṭle,<sup>1</sup> gòra.<sup>1</sup>* his daughters. [May it be] far  
 from the houses of Israel,<sup>93</sup> he  
 died, her husband.
- (42) BA: *'elimèlex,<sup>1</sup>* BA: Elimelech.

<sup>91</sup> In the Bible: Moab.

<sup>92</sup> In the Bible: Orpah.

<sup>93</sup> An expression said when mentioning a bad event.

- (43) SZ: *hè,<sup>1</sup> 'elimélex mätle.<sup>1</sup> zólle*  
*xa-šáta go-pàlga,<sup>1</sup>* SZ: Yes, Elimelech died. One year had passed [lit. one year went in the middle (i.e., in the midst of the story)],
- (44) *'áz e,<sup>1</sup> zólle xápča xát go-pàlga,<sup>1</sup>*  
*u-kútru bnòne-ši mätlu,<sup>1</sup> mání*  
*píšen?<sup>1</sup> t̰á[ha] baxtàsa.<sup>1</sup>* So eh, some more time passed [lit. some more went in the middle], and both sons also died, who remained [alive]? The three women.
- (45) *g-ámra bràti,<sup>1</sup> lá-g-samxan*  
*másyān bnóne magurànnax,<sup>1</sup>*  
*sà'un<sup>1</sup> gòrun<sup>1</sup> mésun yalùnke,<sup>1</sup>*  
*'ána zèllu xləšlu,<sup>1</sup> 'anya-tre*  
*wélu.<sup>1</sup>* She [= Naomi] says, “My daughter, I will not become pregnant [and] bear [lit. bring] sons that will marry you. Go [PL] get married [and] have [lit. bring] children, I, they've gone, they're finished [= for my part, I will not bear any more children], there were [only] these two [lit. these two were].”
- (46) *rùt<sup>1</sup> g-àmra,<sup>1</sup> mèsat<sup>1</sup> mèsan,<sup>1</sup> pəšat*  
*pəšan,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>ḥayím šəllí<sup>1</sup> 'al-ḥayím*  
*šəllàx.<sup>1</sup> 'aní lò 'a'azón 'otáx<sup>1</sup> bə-*  
*šúm 'əfen!<sup>1</sup> ḥayím šəllí v-*  
*šəllàx<sup>1</sup>—'əḥàd!<sup>H</sup> 'á[h]at mèsat<sup>1</sup>*  
*'ána mèsan,<sup>1</sup> 'á[h]at 'àxlat<sup>1</sup> 'ána*  
*b-àxlan,<sup>1</sup> 'á[h]at...<sup>1</sup> g-ámra*  
*<sup>H</sup>bəsəder.<sup>H94</sup>* Ruth says, “[If] you die, I die, [if] you live, I live [lit. you remain, I remain], my life is on [= for] your life. I will not leave you under any circumstances! My life and yours—are one. [If] you die, I die, [if] you eat, I eat, [if] you...” She [= Naomi] says, “Fine.”<sup>94</sup>
- (47) *'òrta g-əmrá-la<sup>1</sup> sé l-be-bàbax.<sup>1</sup>*  
*zəlla,<sup>1</sup> zólle <sup>H</sup>beraxā<sup>H</sup> [or:*  
*b-'ùrxa].<sup>1</sup> rúit séla 'əmma.<sup>1</sup>* Orta, she tells her, “Go [back] to your father's house.” She went [away, may a] blessing [be with her] [or: she went her way]. Ruth came with her [= with Naomi].

<sup>94</sup> See Ruth 1.16–18.

- (48) *sèla,*<sup>1</sup> *sèla,*<sup>1</sup> *psáxla dárġat bet-*  
*lehèṁ*<sup>1</sup> *tùla.*<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>*yés lá<sup>H</sup> xàṭṭe*<sup>1</sup> *u-*  
*’átla e... xàṭṭe lát-la,*<sup>1</sup> *’átla sàtta*<sup>1</sup>  
*u-garùsta*<sup>1</sup> *u-...<sup>1</sup> mún qamàe*<sup>1</sup>  
*bésa wéla màlya ’awáe.*<sup>1</sup> She came, she came, she  
opened the door of [her house  
in] Bethlehem, she sat [down].  
She has wheat and she has  
eh... wheat she doesn’t have,  
she has a stone mortar and a  
hand mill and... like [it was]  
before, her house was full of  
things.
- (49) *g-ámra bràti,*<sup>1</sup> *sè,*<sup>1</sup> *bò’az*<sup>1</sup> *g-mápəq*  
*xàṭṭe,*<sup>1</sup> *sè,*<sup>1</sup> *u-’óz šəbbólím*<sup>95</sup>  
*bàsru,*<sup>1</sup> *mèse,*<sup>1</sup> *deqànnu*  
*garsànnu*<sup>96</sup> *g-ozànnu,*<sup>1</sup> *b-ózáx*  
*kùtele*<sup>1</sup> *b-àxlax.*<sup>1</sup> *b-ózáx qámxa*  
*b-àxlax,*<sup>1</sup> *b-ózáx gársa b-àxlax!*<sup>1</sup>  
*k-ì’ax ’ózáx.*<sup>1</sup> She says “My daughter, go,  
Boaz brings out [= harvests?]  
wheat, go, and make ears of  
grain<sup>95</sup> behind them [= the  
harvesters, i.e., glean],<sup>97</sup> bring  
[here what you have gleaned],  
I will crack [lit. knock (in a  
mortar)] them, grind them,<sup>96</sup>  
prepare them, we shall make  
dumplings, we shall eat. We  
shall make flour [and] eat. We  
shall make groats [and] eat!  
We know [how] to make  
[them].”
- (50) *zèlla,*<sup>1</sup> *xà yóma*<sup>1</sup> *trè*<sup>1</sup> *ṭlāha,*<sup>1</sup> *zəlla*  
*bàsru,*<sup>1</sup> *sèle,*<sup>1</sup> *bò’az,*<sup>1</sup> *xá yóma*  
*qam-xazèla*<sup>1</sup> *márre-le wáy!*<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>*éze*<sup>H</sup>  
*báxta*<sup>H</sup> *yafà<sup>H</sup> màto k-šáqla...?*<sup>1</sup> She [= Ruth] went, one day,  
two, three, she went behind  
them [= the harvesters]. He  
came, Boaz saw her one day,  
he said to himself [or: to his  
harvester], “Way! What a  
beautiful woman, how [is it  
possible that] she  
takes... [= collects ears]?”

<sup>95</sup> From Hebrew *šibbōlīm* ‘ears of grain’ (borrowed before contact with Modern Hebrew).

<sup>96</sup> Two separate stages of the grinding process.

<sup>97</sup> The Jewish law of *lèqet* (Lev. 19.9; 23.22) states that harvesters must not collect the ears of grain that fall to the ground during the process of harvesting. They should leave them for the poor to glean.

- (51) *màndu-la*,<sup>1</sup> *mčančəlu*<sup>98</sup> [or: *mčəmčumun*<sup>99</sup>] *tála*.<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>*ən-ɬavár*.<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>*im*<sup>H</sup>-*səla*<sup>1</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>*é-baxta*<sup>H</sup> <sup>H</sup>*yafà*<sup>H</sup> *u*-<sup>1</sup> *màqul*<sup>1</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>*óza* *šəbbòlət*,<sup>100</sup> *həllu-la*.<sup>1</sup>
- [He said to his harvesters:] “Throw to her [some extra ears], tear [some ears]<sup>98</sup> for her [or: pretend you don’t see for her sake<sup>99</sup>]. [There’s] no harm [lit. thing] [in that]. If [such] a beautiful and noble woman came to glean [lit. make ear<sup>100</sup>], give [or: let] her.”
- (52) *zəlla mər̄ra ta-xməsa*<sup>1</sup> *g-əmra* *k-ìʔat*<sup>1</sup> *mər̄re bəʔaz hədxə*, *qam-baqrānnu mən̄i-le*<sup>1</sup> *mər̄ru bəʔaz hile*.<sup>1</sup>
- She went and told her mother-in-law, she says, “You know, Boaz said so-and-so. I asked them who he is, they said, ‘It is Boaz.’”
- (53) *g-əmra ʔəwa...*<sup>1</sup> *mpəllax* *yabúm*<sup>101</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>*əlle*.<sup>1</sup> *g-əmra-la*<sup>1</sup> *təv*,<sup>1</sup> *sə*,<sup>1</sup> *xəp*,<sup>1</sup> *u-mšə*<sup>1</sup> [or: *u-mšə*],<sup>1</sup> *sé* *dməx*<sup>1</sup> *qam-ʔəqlə*.<sup>1</sup>
- She [= Naomi] says, “He... you fell *yibbum*<sup>101</sup> on him.” She says to her, “Good, come, bathe, and wash your clothes [or: dab yourself (maybe with perfume, etc.)], go sleep near his feet.”
- (54) *zəlla dməxla qam-ʔəqlə*,<sup>1</sup> *sələ*<sup>1</sup> *qam-xazəla štəhta qam...* <sup>H</sup>*mìta*<sup>H</sup> *dide*.<sup>1</sup>
- She went [and] slept near his feet, he came [and] saw her lying down near... his bed.

<sup>98</sup> See Ruth 2.16.

<sup>99</sup> From *č-m-č-m* ‘have bleary eyes’ (Sabar 2002a, 132), to avoid embarrassing her. This would parallel the biblical “...and you shall not put her to shame” (Ruth 2.15).

<sup>100</sup> From Hebrew *šəbbòlet* ‘ear of grain’ (borrowed before contact with Modern Hebrew).

<sup>101</sup> That is, he is obliged to fulfil *yibbum* (levirate marriage) with you. See §5.4 and fn. 44 earlier in this chapter.

- (55) *g-er-qày<sup>1</sup> bràti,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>lâma,<sup>H</sup> g-àmra,<sup>1</sup> xmasî mërra,<sup>1</sup> g-náplan <sup>2</sup>əllox,<sup>1</sup> hàdxa wéla hək̀kòsa<sup>1</sup> mót̃le bròna u-..., <sup>H</sup>ze naxon,<sup>H</sup> bábe u-bábe <sup>2</sup>axwàsa-lu.<sup>1</sup>* He says, “Why, my daughter, why?” She says, “I fall on you [yibbum].” The story was like that [= she told him the whole matter], her [= Naomi’s] son died and..., that [= the story] is true, his [= Boaz’s] father and his [= Elimelech’s] father are brothers.
- (56) *g-érra sé l-bèsa,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>maḥá[r]<sup>H</sup> bánne m-bánoke sáloxun <sup>2</sup>əl-knəšta,<sup>1</sup> masyálox na‘òmi,<sup>1</sup> u-‘ána-šik p-áwəṇ go-knəšta,<sup>1</sup> u-knəšta m̃l̃sa jamà‘a,<sup>1</sup> b-ózáxni <sup>H</sup>pšarà.<sup>1</sup> psèder.<sup>H1</sup>* He tells her, “Go home, tomorrow morning come to the synagogue, Naomi will bring you, and I will also be in the synagogue, and the synagogue is full of people, we shall make a compromise.” Fine.
- (57) *<sup>H</sup>le-məḥrāt<sup>H1</sup> zəllu l-knəšta,<sup>1</sup> zəllu l-knəšta,<sup>1102</sup> m-əséle <sup>2</sup>axòne,<sup>1</sup> ‘át̃le <sup>2</sup>axóna bəs̃ rúwwa mənne,<sup>1</sup> bər-tḡáne u-‘əḳ̣’a šənnne-le.<sup>1</sup> g-ə‘márre <sup>2</sup>axòni,<sup>1</sup> g-nápla <sup>2</sup>əllox,<sup>1</sup> ‘è báxta.<sup>1103</sup>* The following day they went to the synagogue, they went to the synagogue,<sup>102</sup> he brought his brother, he has a brother older than he, 89 years old. He says, “My brother, she falls on you,<sup>103</sup> this woman.
- (58) *hàdaxa-la ḥál u-qəṣṡa.<sup>1</sup> g-ér ‘àxonì telta-‘sár yalúnke ‘ətlì,<sup>1</sup> u-‘ána <sup>H</sup>məvugár<sup>H</sup> lébi mähkən,<sup>1</sup> lébi ‘əmməd-bàxti mähkən,<sup>1</sup>* This [lit. thus] is the situation and the story.” He [= the brother] says, “My brother, I have thirteen children, and I am old, I cannot speak, I cannot [even] speak with my wife.

<sup>102</sup> This repetition of a word or phrase with this intonation is a typical stylistic feature of Jewish Zakho NENA narration. It usually appears at the beginning of an episode in the narrative. See also ch. 3, fn. 29.

<sup>103</sup> That is, you are obliged to perform levirate marriage (or *ḥališa*). See fn. 101 above.

- (59) *šqúlla ṭàlox<sup>1</sup> hóya bráxta ʾàllox,<sup>1</sup>* Take her [= Ruth] for you,  
*wéla <sup>H</sup>nà<sup>c</sup>al<sup>H</sup> dídi lúšla,<sup>104</sup>* may she be blessed upon you  
 [= be blessed together, *mazal*  
*tov!*]. Here is my shoe, wear it.
- (60) BA: *hè...<sup>1</sup>* BA: Yes...
- (61) SZ: *si-mbàrəx-la.<sup>1</sup>* SZ: Go wed [lit. bless] her."
- (62) *jamá<sup>c</sup>a kúllu məskùmlu<sup>105</sup> ...<sup>1</sup> g-ér* The congregation all agreed....  
*<sup>H</sup>maḥàr<sup>1</sup> taxíni...<sup>H1</sup> bəne<sup>1</sup>* He says, "Tomorrow, pre-  
*máxən<sup>106</sup> gyàna<sup>x</sup>,<sup>1</sup> ləš,<sup>1</sup> u-ʾána* prepare... tomorrow prepare  
*b-ləšən<sup>1</sup> b-áx ʾəl-knəšta,<sup>1</sup> b-ozáx* yourself [= get ready], wear  
*<sup>H</sup>šéva<sup>c</sup> braxòt!<sup>H107</sup>* [wedding garments] and I will  
 wear [wedding garments], we  
 shall go to the synagogue,  
 [and] we shall do [= perform  
 the ceremony of the] seven  
 blessings!"<sup>107</sup>
- (63) *<sup>H</sup>le-maḥrát<sup>H</sup> sélu ʾúzlu <sup>H</sup>šéva<sup>c</sup>* The following day they came  
*braxòt,<sup>H1</sup> qam-gawərra.<sup>1</sup>* [and] did [= performed the  
*<sup>H</sup>[yi]štabáḥ šəmò!<sup>H1</sup> ʾáwwa* ceremony of the] seven bless-  
*ʾəmmèt<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>tóra šeló ʾəmmèt.<sup>H1</sup>* ings, he married her. May His  
 name be praised! He [= God]  
 is true [= lit. truth], [and] His  
 Torah is true [= lit. truth].
- (64) *<sup>H</sup>le-moḥorát ʾomrím ba-bóker hu-* The following day, they say,  
*mèt.<sup>1</sup> bó<sup>c</sup>az mèt!<sup>H1</sup>* he died, Boaz died!
- (65) BA: *e bə<sup>c</sup>az?<sup>1</sup> ʾāa...<sup>1</sup>* BA: Boaz? Oh...!
- (66) OA: *<sup>H</sup>kèn?!<sup>H1</sup>* OA: Really [lit. yes]?!

<sup>104</sup> See Ruth 4.7–8.

<sup>105</sup> The Modern Hebrew root *skm* is used here with NENA morphology.

<sup>106</sup> The Modern Hebrew root *kwn* is used here with NENA morphology.  
 The equivalent NENA root is *ḥzr*.

<sup>107</sup> A ceremony marking the *qiddušin*, the second and final stage of a  
 Jewish wedding, in which seven benedictions are said.



- (67) SZ: <sup>H</sup>bó<sup>c</sup>az mèt!,<sup>1</sup> láyla ʿexàd  
nəš<sup>ʕ</sup>ár ʿità.<sup>H1</sup> SZ: Boaz died! He stayed with  
her [only] one night.
- (68) BA: wī!...<sup>1</sup> BA: Wī!
- (69) OA: <sup>H</sup>á kèn?!<sup>1</sup> zé ló yadàti.<sup>H1</sup> OA: Really [lit. yes]?! I didn't  
know that.
- (70) BA: pappùke!...<sup>1</sup> BA: Poor man!...
- (71) SZ: <sup>H</sup>bó<sup>c</sup>az mèt...<sup>H</sup> SZ: Boaz died...
- (72) zálle xábra ʿəllù<sup>1</sup> bó<sup>c</sup>az mət̄le,<sup>1</sup>  
bó<sup>c</sup>az mət̄le,<sup>1</sup> xmàsa<sup>1</sup> šàṭər-ila.<sup>1</sup> The word went to them  
[ = they were informed, they  
learned the news that] Boaz  
died, Boaz died. Her  
[ = Ruth's] mother-in-law is [a]  
resourceful [woman].
- (73) sélu jmá<sup>ʕ</sup>lu nàše<sup>1</sup> kúlla ʿàlam  
jmá<sup>ʕ</sup>la <sup>H</sup>la-ləvayà.<sup>H1</sup> People came and gathered, the  
entire world [ = many people,  
the entire community] gath-  
ered, for the funeral.
- (74) ḥmàlla u-šrə̀xla,<sup>1</sup> g-əmrá rəbbóno She [ = Naomi] stood up and  
cried out, “[In the name of  
šəl-ʿolàm,<sup>1</sup> xzàwun,<sup>1</sup> kúlləxon  
sahzètun,<sup>1</sup> támmal ʿúze  
<sup>H</sup>ḥatùna,<sup>H1</sup> see, all of you, testify, yester-  
day he made the wedding,”
- (75) ʿé báxta<sup>108</sup> kàlsa ḥíla,<sup>1</sup> ʿé báxta this woman<sup>108</sup> is her daughter-  
in-law, this woman [ = Ruth],  
qam-barxála ʿəlle,<sup>1</sup> lál-xəl wəl- she [ = Naomi] blessed her to  
him [ = married her off to

<sup>108</sup> Samra switches here to third person. Switching from first to third person within direct speech is a common feature of Samra's narration, especially in instances where the narrator does not wish to take upon herself an utterance which is perceived as negative. In relation to that, see Kasher (2000, 74, feature B) where one of the features he mentions as indicative of Targum liturgical use is switches from second to third person in order to avoid giving offence to the audience.

- dmáxle kàsla,*<sup>1</sup> *ʔakán smáxla* <sup>H3</sup>δ<sup>H</sup> *bróna* <sup>H3</sup>δ<sup>H</sup> *bráta dād-bòʿaz-ilu.*<sup>1</sup> Boaz], last night he indeed slept with [lit. at] her. If she got pregnant, a son or a daughter, they are of Boaz.
- (76) BA: *<sup>H</sup>naxòn.*<sup>H1</sup> BA: Correct.
- (77) SZ: *ʔilá[ha] sàhəz u-náše sàhzi!*<sup>1</sup> SZ: “God shall [bear] witness and people shall [bear] witness!” Everyone said, “Okay.”  
*kúllo mórru* <sup>H</sup>bəsèder.<sup>H1</sup> *ʔilá[ha]* God gave, she became pregnant, who came to her [= who was the child]? Do you know who?  
*hülle<sup>1</sup> smàxla,*<sup>1</sup> *máni sèle-la?*<sup>1</sup>  
*k-ʔitun máni?*<sup>1</sup>
- (78) BA: *làʔ.*<sup>1</sup> BA: No.
- (79) SZ: *bróna mání,*<sup>1</sup> *má-yle šəmme?*<sup>1</sup> SZ: Her son, who [is he], what is his name? The son of Ruthie?  
*bər-rùti?*<sup>1</sup>
- (80) BA: *là-k-ıyan.*<sup>1</sup> BA: I don’t know.
- (81) SZ: *ʔelišây!*<sup>1</sup> SZ: Elishay!
- (82) BA: *ʔà!*<sup>1</sup> *ʔelišây.*<sup>1</sup> BA: Ah! Elishay!
- (83) SZ: *hwéle-la ʔelišây!...<sup>1</sup> hwéle-la* SZ: She gave birth to Elishay  
*ʔelišây,*<sup>109</sup> *naʿómi qam-ʔaʿanàle,*<sup>1</sup> [lit. Elishay was born to her]!  
*qam-ʔozábe-xudàni,*<sup>1</sup> *ʔelišây,*<sup>1</sup> She gave birth to Elishay [lit. Elishay was born to her],<sup>109</sup>  
*ʔilá[ha] hülle-le<sup>1</sup> šoʿá bnòne,*<sup>1</sup> *u-* Naomi reared him, she took  
*xá bràta.*<sup>1</sup> *rùt,*<sup>1</sup> *<sup>H</sup>sáfta<sup>H</sup> dide híla.*<sup>1</sup> care of him. Elishay, God gave  
*rùt<sup>1</sup> héš wéla pàšta,*<sup>1</sup> him seven sons, and one  
daughter. Ruth was his grand-  
mother. Ruth was still alive,
- (84) BA: *hè,*<sup>1</sup> BA: Yes,
- (85) SZ: *ʔəz e,<sup>1</sup> xà yóma,*<sup>1</sup> *hànna,*<sup>1</sup> SZ: So eh, one day, *this*,  
*ʔelišây,*<sup>1</sup> *krəbwale<sup>1</sup> mən-dè báxta<sup>1</sup>* Elishay, he got angry with this  
*damməd-wéla smáxta bəd-dávid* woman [i.e., his wife], while  
she was pregnant with king

<sup>109</sup> See fn. 102 above.

- ha-mèlex.*<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>*aḥaròn<sup>H</sup> sé[le]*<sup>1</sup> David. He came last, the seventh child.  
<sup>H</sup>*yéled ševi<sup>Ḥ</sup>*<sup>1</sup>
- (86) <sup>ʾ</sup>*áz e...*<sup>1</sup> *qam-karədwala<sup>1</sup> xá* So eh, he chased her out, for  
*yaṛxa zəlla be-bāba.*<sup>1</sup> *səla<sup>1</sup>* one month she went to her father's house. She came, she  
*g-əmrà-le<sup>1</sup> qam-kardətti<sup>1</sup> u-hənnà<sup>1</sup>* says to him, "You chased me  
*u-ʾána báxta sməxta.*<sup>1</sup> *g-ér là<sup>1</sup> là<sup>1</sup>* out, and *this* and I am a pregnant woman." He says, "No  
*léwat sməxta!*<sup>1</sup> no! You are not pregnant!"
- (87) BA: *léwe mənni,*<sup>1</sup> BA: "It is not from me,"
- (88) SZ: *lèwe mənni!*<sup>1</sup> *g-èrra,*<sup>1</sup> *g-əmrà-* SZ: "It is not from me!" She  
*le,*<sup>1</sup> *rəbbonó šel-ʿolām<sup>1</sup> sáhəz ʾəlla* says, she tells him, "Master of  
*ʾe-bəxta,*<sup>110</sup> *báni bāsār lèwa* the Universe, bear witness to  
*nḥáqta,*<sup>1</sup> *yála dīdox híle.*<sup>1</sup> *smáxta* this woman,<sup>110</sup> she has not  
*zəlla.*<sup>110</sup> been touched by humans, it is  
your child. She<sup>110</sup> went pregnant [=she was pregnant when she left]."
- (89) <sup>H</sup>*tòv<sup>H</sup>!*<sup>1</sup> *lá-wele<sup>H</sup> kol-káx* Good! He [= Elishay] was not  
*meruṣə,*<sup>H</sup> *rəbbonó šel-ʿolām,*<sup>1</sup> so satisfied. The Master of the  
*kʿəsle<sup>111</sup> ʾəlle.*<sup>1</sup> *g-er-yála dīdox* Universe got angry with him.  
*híle,*<sup>1</sup> *má g-əmrətta?!<sup>1</sup> bəxta,*<sup>1</sup> He says, "It is your child, what  
*ḥnakiyà,*<sup>1</sup> *u-ṣadikà,*<sup>H</sup> *màni* are you saying to her?! [She is  
*b-náḥəq ʾəlla?!<sup>1</sup>* a] clean, and righteous,  
woman, who would touch  
her?!"
- (90) *g-émer ta-šamúʾel ha-nnàvi,*<sup>1</sup> He says to Samuel the prophet,  
*g-émer sí mbárx xá yála dəd-* "Go bless [i.e., anoint] one  
*ʾelišāy,*<sup>1</sup> *páəš ḥakóməd yisraʾèl!*<sup>1</sup> child of Elishay, so that he  
shall become the king of Israel!"

<sup>110</sup> See fn. 108 above.

<sup>111</sup> The Modern Hebrew root *kʿs* is used here with NENA morphology.

- (91) *zàlle<sup>1</sup> dâmmâd zàlle<sup>1</sup> šmû<sup>1</sup>el*  
*hannâvi šârâf ʾal-kûllu bātâd*  
*yisraʾél ʾal-dô bêsa u-ʾallòxun!<sup>1</sup>* He went, when he went, Samuel the prophet, may [his blessing] shine on [or: may he watch over] all the houses of Israel [and] on this house and on you!
- (92) BA: ʾamèn!<sup>1</sup> BA: Amen!
- (93) SZ: ʾilâ[ha] ya[wá]lox <sup>H2</sup>éšet  
 ḥâyil,<sup>H1</sup> SZ: May God give you [= OA] a woman of valour
- (94) OA: ʾamèn!<sup>1</sup> OA: Amen!
- (95) BA: ʾamèn!<sup>1</sup>, BA: Amen!,
- (96) SZ: u-bânât bêsa go-rušaláyim  
 xazyálu yalónke dîdox,<sup>1</sup> SZ: and build a house in Jerusalem, may she [= BA] see your children,
- (97) OA: ʾamèn ʾamèn ʾamèn!<sup>1</sup> OA: Amen amen amen!
- (98) BA: ʾamèn,<sup>1</sup> ʾamèn, ʾamèn!<sup>1</sup>, BA: Amen, amen, amen!,
- (99) SZ: u-ʾin-šâ<sup>2</sup>-ʾalla muxwâsi  
 fârḥat ʾábbu SZ: and God willing you [= BA] will be happy with them like myself [i.e., like I am happy with my own grandchildren]
- (100) BA: ʾamèn, ʾamèn,<sup>1</sup> ʾamèn!<sup>1</sup> BA: Amen, amen, amen!
- (101) OA: ʾamèn<sup>1</sup> ʾamèn!<sup>1</sup> OA: Amen amen!
- (102) SZ: ʾána kmâ kéfi séle!<sup>1</sup> ʾilâha  
 k-îʿe!<sup>1</sup> SZ: Me, I am so happy [lit. how much my joy came]! God knows!
- (103) BA: ʾamèn!<sup>1</sup> BA: Amen!
- (104) SZ: ʾâz e,...<sup>1</sup> <sup>H1</sup>ha-ʾemèt<sup>1</sup> e<sup>1</sup> bâ<sup>H1</sup>  
 g-érre bròni<sup>1</sup> rûwwa<sup>1</sup> dalâla,<sup>1</sup>  
 masélu brône rûwwa,<sup>1</sup> šamû<sup>1</sup>el  
 hannavî monèxle<sup>1</sup> là ḥmâlla stûn...<sup>1</sup> SZ: So uh,... The truth, uh, he [= Samuel the prophet] came, he [Elishay] says to him, “My son, the eldest, [my] dear one,” they brought his eldest son, Samuel the prophet looked, the pillar [of

- fire] did not stand... [= was not upon the eldest son]
- (105) 'az-è,<sup>1</sup> g-emárre léwe 'ó bròna,<sup>1</sup> — So, he says, "It is not this son"—now, what, I like to  
 'atta<sup>1</sup> mà<sup>1</sup> g-əban<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>yotér speak Hebrew too much, I  
 maddāy<sup>H1</sup> g-máḥkiyan <sup>H</sup>cəvrít<sup>H1</sup> speak Hebrew, all the time my  
 kúlle wá'ada lišáni g-éza tongue goes [to] Hebrew, I  
<sup>H</sup>cəvrít,<sup>H1</sup> g-əbánnā <sup>H</sup>cəvrít<sup>H1</sup> rāba,<sup>1</sup> love Hebrew very much,
- (106) BA: <sup>H</sup>kèn<sup>1</sup> naxòn<sup>1</sup> naxòn<sup>H1</sup> BA: Yes, right, right,
- (107) SZ: hè,<sup>1</sup> SZ: Yes.
- (108) BA: 'az-lá qam-šaqa'lle 'aw-bròna,<sup>1</sup> BA: So he didn't take that son,
- (109) SZ: g-emárre <sup>H</sup>lò,<sup>1</sup> lò ra'úy.<sup>H1</sup> SZ: He says to him, "No, [he is] not worthy." He brought  
 mäséle 'aw-xát g-ér <sup>H</sup>lò,<sup>H1</sup> mäséle the second one, he says "No,"  
 'aw-xát<sup>1</sup> stún núra lá xəzyàle.<sup>1</sup> he brought the other one, he  
 didn't see the pillar of fire.
- (110) šmú'al hannavi,<sup>1</sup> márrele rəbbonó Samuel the prophet, the Master  
 šel-olām<sup>1</sup> dāmməd ḥməlla,<sup>1</sup> of the Universe [had] told  
 šəxína b-rəše,<sup>1</sup> 'əha-le!<sup>1</sup> him, "When the Shekhinah  
 stood [= dwells] upon his  
 head, this is he [i.e., that is the  
 son who will be king]."
- (111) g-er-lè<sup>112</sup> 'óha<sup>1</sup> g-er-lè<sup>112</sup> 'óha,<sup>1</sup> He [= Samuel the prophet]  
 kùd 'əštá ḥməllu<sup>1</sup> g-ér <sup>H</sup>lò!<sup>H1</sup> says, "It's not him," he says,  
 'ətlóx xá bròna xát?<sup>1</sup> g-ér 'ətli "It's not him," all of the six  
 xa-bróna xát<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>cəvāl<sup>H1</sup> bār šo'ə stands [in front of him], he  
 šánne-le.<sup>1</sup> wéle go-<sup>H</sup>sadè<sup>H1</sup> says, "No!" "Do you have an-  
 'əmməd 'ərba,<sup>1</sup> g-érre mà-g-ot..., other son?" He says, "I have  
 'áni mxalpì-le<sup>1</sup> mesèle.<sup>1</sup> one more son, but he is [only]  
 seven years old. He is in the  
 field with the sheep." He says,  
 "What are you doing... [= why  
 are you making an issue out of  
 it?], they [= the other sons]  
 will substitute for him [lit.  
 switch him] [and] will bring  
 him."

<sup>112</sup> Contraction of lèwe.

- (112) *séle mād-xa-dəšdāša*<sup>113</sup> *xa-*  
*kusísa xwārta b-rəše.*<sup>1</sup> *g-emér*  
*ʾəha-le*<sup>1</sup> *g-ér ʾəha-le.*<sup>1</sup> He came with [i.e., wearing]  
 an ankle-length robe,<sup>113</sup> a  
 white hat on his head. He  
 [= Samuel the prophet] says,  
 “This is he?” he [Elishay] says,  
 “This is he.”
- (113) *ḥmàlle*<sup>1</sup> *g-ér ḥmól ʾəxxa,*<sup>1</sup>  
*monáxle bəd-rəbbóno šel-olām*<sup>1</sup>  
*šaxiná ḥmàlla.*<sup>1</sup> He [David] stood, he [= Sam-  
 uel the prophet] says, “Stand  
 here,” he looked towards the  
 Master of the Universe, the  
 Shekhinah stood [i.e., dwelt  
 upon David].
- (114) *g-er-ʾəha brənox*<sup>1</sup> *màyle šámme?*<sup>1</sup> He says, “This son of yours,  
*dàwid-hile*<sup>1</sup> *g-er-ʾó p-pà[y]əš*<sup>1</sup> what is his name?” “It is Da-  
*ḥdàvid mèlex yəsraʾèl!*<sup>H1</sup> *ʾə* vid.” He says, “This [one] will  
*brənox!*<sup>1</sup> be David, the king of Israel!  
 This son of yours!”
- (115) *hawéle*<sup>H</sup> *məšḥàḥ*<sup>H1</sup> *dád məséle*  
*ḥšémen*<sup>H</sup> *mən-bét məqdāš,*<sup>1</sup> *qam-*  
*dahənle*<sup>1</sup> *u-qām-*<sup>1</sup> *ʾa[wə]zle*<sup>1</sup> *u-ʾál*<sup>1</sup> Here is the ointment that he  
 had brought, oil from the Tem-  
 ple, he anointed him, and  
 made [i.e., applied it] towards  
 [lit. the side of] his palms and  
 his heart and his back and his  
 legs and his feet,  
*káffəd-ʾize*<sup>1</sup> *u-ləbbe*<sup>1</sup> *u-ḫəṣe*<sup>1</sup> *u-*  
*ʾəqle*<sup>1</sup> *u-ʾəqər-ʾəqle,*
- (116) *g-ér*<sup>H2</sup> *ʾalohím yišmòr ʾotxá,*<sup>H1</sup> he says, “May God protect you,  
*dúkšət ʾəzət,*<sup>1</sup> *hávət*<sup>H</sup> *barì.*<sup>H1</sup> *külle* [every] place that you go, may  
 you be healthy.” [And] all the  
 children of Israel [as well].  
*yalúnkət yəsraʾèl.*<sup>1</sup>
- (117) BA: *ʾamen.*<sup>1</sup> BA: Amen.
- (118) OA: *ʾamen.*<sup>1</sup> OA: Amen.
- (119) SZ: *qam-, xələš,*<sup>1</sup> *pəšle bór...*<sup>1</sup> That’s it, he became, the son  
*qam-məšəḥle.*<sup>114</sup> of..., he anointed him.

<sup>113</sup> Translation of *dəšdāša* according to Sabar (2002a, 145).

<sup>114</sup> The Hebrew root *mšḥ* is used here with NENA morphology.

- (120) *básər ʔəto, ʰ xarəye, ... ʰ šáʿul ha-mmèlex<sup>H</sup> šrəxle... ʰ e... ʰ gám-ken<sup>H</sup> šáʿul ha-mmèlex<sup>ʰ</sup> séle gólyas paləštāya, ʰ ə g-əbe nāše ʔammed-yəsraʔəl. ʰ* After that, later on... king Saul called... eh... also king Saul, Goliath the Philistine, eh he wants to fight with Israel.
- (121) *máni mšàdri<sup>ʰ</sup> máni là-mšadri? ʰ šáʿul ha-mèlex ʔətle, ʰ xá ʰ ḥalifā<sup>H</sup> zigúri kunzəri, ʰ<sup>115</sup> čùxxa lèbe<sup>ʰ</sup> lawəšlā, ʰ ʰrák<sup>H</sup> ta-dávid ha-mèlex hila-ʔùzta. ʰ bás mèlex, ʰ ʔaw-dad-páyəš mèlex... ʰ* Whom shall they [= Israel] send [and] whom shall they not send? King Saul has, one suit, *Ziguri Kunzəri*,<sup>115</sup> no one can wear it, it is made only for king David. Only a king, the one who will become king...
- (122) BA: *máyla kúri kunzəri?* ʰ BA: What is *Kuri Kunzəri*?
- (123) SZ: *gúri kunzəri-le šəmma. ʰ* SZ: Its name is *Guri Kunzəri*.
- (124) BA: *ʔá gúri kunzəri, ʰ ʰyàfe<sup>H</sup>, ʰ* BA: Oh *Guri Kunzəri*, nice,
- (125) SZ: *gúri kunzəri bəd-kùrdi, ʰ bəd-hənnā ʰ lá-kyan bəd-ʰəvrít<sup>H</sup> mày-le, ʰ* SZ: *Guri Kunzəri* in Kurdish [= Neo-Aramaic], in *this* I don't know, in Hebrew, what it is.
- (126) BA: *ʰəval<sup>H</sup> ʔətla ʰperùš<sup>H</sup>? ʰ yáʿane mày-la gúri kunzəri, ʰ šəmma? ʰ* BA: But does it have a meaning [lit. interpretation]? Meaning, what is *Guri Kunzəri*, its name?
- (127) SZ: *é šəmma, ʰ ʰḥalifā<sup>H</sup> dād<sup>H</sup>mèlex<sup>H</sup> hila, ʰ kúlla ʔəmməd ʰbarzalim<sup>H</sup> u-ʔəmməd é<sup>ʰ</sup> šanéʔta* SZ: Uh, its name, it is the suit of the king, all of it with irons [i.e., made out of pieces of iron], and with uh, it is made by craftsmanship, not just a simple thing. It's valuable [lit.

<sup>115</sup> Sabar (2002a, 161): “ziri(-kunziri) coat of mail (= H[ebrew] תחרא B[ible] T[ranslations]), armour.” In Rivlin (1959, 233, 241): “ziri ukum ziri.” Sabar (2002a, 161) explains: “kum = helmet, K[urdis]h.”

- ʔùzta<sup>1</sup> lá <sup>H</sup>stàm.<sup>H1</sup> ʔàtlā...<sup>1</sup> ʔtla  
<sup>H</sup>cèrex!<sup>H1</sup> čúxxa lèbe lawášla.<sup>1</sup> it has value]. No one is able to wear it.
- (128) mád ʔiz,<sup>1</sup> yalúinkəd yerušalàyim,<sup>1</sup> All of [lit. whatever there is] the children [i.e., boys] of Jerusalem, a loudspeaker<sup>116</sup>  
 šráxle <sup>H</sup>rámkol<sup>H</sup> ʔàse,<sup>1</sup> ḥakóma  
 g-əbe qaṭəlle gólías.<sup>1</sup> g-emer-ʔáwd called out that they should come, [since] the king wished to kill Goliath. He says, whoever wears this outfit, he is able to kill him.  
 lawášla ʔè bádlá<sup>1</sup> ʔibe qaṭəlle.<sup>1</sup>
- (129) ...là...<sup>1</sup> xá d-làwəšla<sup>1</sup> xá ràbsa-la ... not... whoever [lit. one who] wears it, for one it's [too] large, for one it's [too] small, it doesn't fit him [lit. it doesn't enter in front of him], and one...  
 tále<sup>1</sup> xá zúrta-la tále,<sup>1</sup> lá g-ʔóra  
 qáme u-xà...<sup>1</sup>
- (130) g-əmri ʔíz xà pīša,<sup>1</sup> bār šoʔà They say, there's one [boy] left, he is seven years old, he is in the field, only this man is left [i.e., only he did not try the suit yet]! "Go fetch him."  
 šənnē-le<sup>1</sup> wéle gó <sup>H</sup>sadē,<sup>H1</sup> ʔàw-  
 gora-le pīša!<sup>1</sup> qu-sáʔun mèsu-le.<sup>1</sup>
- (131) qam-malušla ʔəlle,<sup>1</sup> bār šoʔá They dressed him with it [lit. it on him], [only] seven years old [i.e., therefore small], may His name be praised, he [= David] grew and filled it!  
 šənnē,<sup>1</sup> yištabbáḥ šemò<sup>1</sup> rwéle  
 qam-maḷəla!<sup>1</sup>
- (132) šáʔul ha-mélex krəbble,<sup>1</sup> g-er-ʔə...<sup>1</sup> King Saul got angry, he says [to himself] "This one... will be instead of me, he will take it... [i.e., the kingship]"  
 p-páyəš šwini,<sup>1</sup> p-šaqaḷla...<sup>1</sup>
- (133) <sup>H</sup>tòv,<sup>H1</sup> g-əbe ʔázat qaṭlätte gólíyas "Good, you need to go and kill Goliath the Philistine," he [= David] says, "Very well, no problem." He wore his ankle-length robe, his hat is on his head, his keffiyeh, and he has,  
 palištàya,<sup>1</sup> g-émer <sup>H</sup>tòv,<sup>1</sup> ʔéyn  
 beʔayà.<sup>H1</sup> lùšle<sup>1</sup> dəsdaša díde,<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>H</sup>kóva<sup>H1</sup> díde b-rəše,<sup>1</sup> kaṭiya díde,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Clearly, an anachronism.



- u-[ʔə]tle, ʔátle hənna, ʔáy-dəd* he has *this*, that [thing] which  
*e...* uh...
- (134) BA: *tfàkke,*<sup>1</sup> BA: a gun,
- (135) SZ: *là, ʔəd-g-màxe ʔèpa ʔəbba*<sup>1</sup> SZ: No, [the thing] that you  
*tràq, ʔ hənna, ʔ lá-k-yan šəmme* throw a stone with, *traq!* *this*, I  
*máy-le b-kürdi, ʔ e...*<sup>1</sup> don't know what its name is in  
Kurdish [= Neo-Aramaic],  
uh...
- (136) BA: *e wi! ʔəṭə ʔ hē,*<sup>1</sup> BA: Uh *wi!* Like that, yes,
- (137) SZ: *lá tfàkke, ʔ e...*<sup>1</sup> *Hhèvel<sup>H</sup>...*<sup>1</sup> SZ: Not a gun, uh... a rope...
- (138) BA: *Hhèvel<sup>H</sup> ʔəṭə*<sup>1</sup> BA: A rope, like that...
- (139) SZ: *u-hənna, ʔ g-e[wá]z tsràq!*<sup>1</sup> SZ: And *this*, it does *tsraq!* *this*,  
*hənna, ʔ šəmme mày-le?*<sup>1</sup> what is its name?
- (140) BA: *Hhêts va-kèšet<sup>H</sup>* BA: An arrow and a bow,
- (141) SZ: *hé Hhêts va-ḥêts, ʔ hêts va-* SZ: Yes, an arrow and an ar-  
*kèšet.*<sup>H</sup> row, an arrow and a bow.
- (142) BA: *Hhêts va-kèšet.*<sup>H</sup> *u-bəd-* BA: An arrow and a bow, and  
*Hkúrdit<sup>H</sup> mày-la?*<sup>1</sup> in Kurdish [= Neo-Aramaic]  
what is it?
- (143) SZ: *ʔà?*<sup>1</sup> SZ: Eh?
- (144) BA: *bəd-Hkúrdit?*<sup>H</sup> BA: In Kurdish [= Neo-Ara-  
maic]?
- (145) SZ: *bəd-kürdi?*<sup>1</sup> *šəmme nšèli*<sup>1</sup> SZ: In Kurdish [= Neo-Ara-  
*g-əmrànnax, ʔ šəmme nšèli.*<sup>1</sup> maic]? I forgot its name, I tell  
*šəm[ma] ʔát[ta]-táxr[an]* you, I forgot its name. I'll re-  
*b-amrànnax.*<sup>117</sup> member its name now and tell  
you.<sup>117</sup>
- (146) BA: *Htòn.*<sup>H</sup> BA: Good.

<sup>117</sup> Samra will remember the word *bardaqaṇiye* 'slingshot' in (164).

- (147) SZ: <sup>ʔ</sup>óha zàlle, <sup>1</sup> qam-šaqállla  
<sup>ʔ</sup>amme u-zàlle. zólle ráš-... <sup>1</sup> qrúle  
<sup>ʔ</sup>al-hànnna, <sup>1118</sup> šqállle xa-kèpa, <sup>1</sup>  
 SZ: This one [= David] went [away], he took it with him and went. He went to [lit. upon]... he came close to the *this*, <sup>1118</sup> he took a stone,
- (148) g-ér [declaiming:] bəzxùt <sup>1</sup> ʔav-  
 rahàm, <sup>1</sup> šqállle xa-kèpa xət g-ér <sup>1</sup>  
 bəzxút yaʔaqòn, <sup>1</sup> bəzxút ʔav-  
 rahàm, <sup>1</sup> yitšàk, <sup>1</sup> yaʔaqòn <sup>1</sup> hay-  
 t̰làha. <sup>1</sup>  
 he says, “For the merit of Abraham,” he took another stone, he says, “For the merit of Jacob, for the merit of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.” Here this is three [of them].
- (149) sqállle tré kèpe-xət <sup>1</sup> g-ár bəzxùt <sup>1</sup>  
 mòše <sup>1</sup> ve-haròn. <sup>1</sup> kúd xámša  
 dréle go-jèbe, <sup>1</sup> zàlle. <sup>1</sup>  
 He took two more stones, he says, “For the merit of Moses and Aaron.” The five of them he put in his pocket, [and] he went [away].
- (150) qam-darélú go-hànnna dide, <sup>1</sup>  
 nəšèli <sup>1</sup> šámma bassíma-le bəd-  
 kùrdi. <sup>1119</sup>  
 He put them in his *this*, I forgot, its name is [very] pleasing [= beautiful] in Kurdish [= Neo-Aramaic]. <sup>1119</sup>
- (151) zólle g-èmer <sup>1</sup> m̀ani séle <sup>1</sup> qat̀elli? <sup>1</sup>  
 kèlu, <sup>1</sup> pošùlkan <sup>1</sup> mošùlkat? <sup>1120</sup>  
 g-èmrì... <sup>1</sup> k-xàze <sup>1</sup> xa-yàla-le, <sup>1</sup>  
 h̰mila, <sup>1121</sup>  
 He [= Goliath] went [and] he says “Who [is it that] came to kill me? Where are the pošùlkan mošùlkat?” <sup>1120</sup> They say... He sees it is a child, standing. <sup>1121</sup>
- (152) g-ér mxí darbàdox [= dárba  
 d̰idox], <sup>1122</sup> g-ér ʔàna m̄á?... <sup>1</sup>  
 He says “Strike your blow,” <sup>1122</sup> he [= David] says, “What I...? You are wearing clothes of

<sup>1118</sup> Maybe to a river, to collect pebbles, or to the battlefield. See 1 Sam. 17.40.

<sup>1119</sup> See fn. 117 above.

<sup>1120</sup> Unclear. Perhaps Goliath is mocking Hebrew names?

<sup>1121</sup> See 1 Sam. 17.42.

<sup>1122</sup> David and Goliath take turns in striking. See §5.10 above.

- ʾàhət<sup>1</sup> lwìša<sup>1</sup> júllət kúde kunzəri,<sup>1</sup> Kude Kunzəri [= armour], you  
 ʾíbox máxət dârbe,<sup>1</sup> ʾána mà- are able to strike a blow, I,  
 k-iʾən máxən.<sup>1</sup> mxí dárba dîdox<sup>1</sup> what do I know [how] to  
 xázax mà šákəl-hile.<sup>1</sup> strike. Strike your blow [and]  
 we'll see what sort [of a blow]  
 it is."
- (153) mxéle xá hènna,<sup>1</sup> xà<sup>ʾ1</sup> palgèd,<sup>1</sup> He struck a *this*. A half of uh...  
 e...<sup>1</sup> ʾáy dùka,<sup>1</sup> xrùla.<sup>1</sup> hènna,<sup>1</sup> that place was destroyed. *This*,  
 Hhàr.<sup>H</sup> mountain.
- (154) BA: hè,<sup>1</sup> BA: Yes,
- (155) SZ: kúlle Hhàr<sup>H</sup> kúšle,<sup>1</sup> bəd-dé SZ: The entire mountain went  
 bəd-hánna dîde.<sup>1</sup> down, with that with his *this*.
- (156) ʾó fârre,<sup>1</sup> qam-mafârre,<sup>1</sup> ʾilá[ha] This one [= David] flew  
 qam-matùle,<sup>1</sup> séle hmálle xá-ga [away], he [Goliath] made  
 xát barqùle.<sup>1</sup> g-er-má-wət šàx?! him fly [away], God made him  
 má?<sup>1</sup> g-er wən-šàx<sup>1</sup> Ahamdu-l- land safely [lit. sat him down],  
 là.<sup>A1</sup> bés ʾilá[ha] ʾmîra.<sup>123</sup> he came [and] stood again in  
 front of him [= Goliath]. He  
 [= Goliath] says, "What,  
 you're alive?! What?" He  
 [= David] says, "I'm alive,  
 thank God. The house of God  
 is built<sup>123</sup> [= everything is  
 well]."
- (157) g-er-de mxí dârbox,<sup>1</sup> g-ér ʾo- He [= Goliath] says, "Well  
 màni-le?<sup>1</sup> eh<sup>h</sup>.<sup>1</sup> hàdxa ʾúzle,<sup>1</sup> strike your blow," he [Goliath]  
 morèmlè hánna ʾšsw[a]<sup>1</sup> ʾíne says, "Who is this [guy]?"  
 [= ʾene ?] dwìqe wélu,<sup>1</sup> Uh... He did like that, he lifted  
*this*—there was—his eyes were  
 held [i.e., covered],
- (158) BA: he, BA: Yes,

<sup>123</sup> See ch. 1, §14.0, proverb no. (79).

- (159) SZ: *bád-e...<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>barzèl.<sup>1</sup> kóva<sup>c</sup>*  
*barzèl.<sup>H</sup> gúri kunzəri <sup>H</sup>barzèl<sup>H</sup>*  
*híla,<sup>1</sup> kùlla.<sup>1</sup>* SZ: ... in uh... iron. Iron helmet. The *Guri Kunzəri* is [made of] iron, all of it.
- (160) BA: *he he,* BA: Yes yes,
- (161) SZ: *kúlle <sup>H</sup>kòva<sup>c</sup> barzél.<sup>H</sup> u-...<sup>1</sup>*  
*hànnna <sup>H</sup>barzél.<sup>H</sup> morámle hádxa*  
*’ène,<sup>1</sup> gōb’ène gléle,<sup>1</sup> g-ér mxí*  
*dárba dīdox,<sup>1</sup>* SZ: All of it is an iron hat. And... iron *this*. He lifted his eyes like that, his forehead was uncovered, he says, “Strike your blow,”
- (162) *g-ér yá ’ilāhi,<sup>1</sup> bəzxút kúd xá u-*  
*xà,<sup>1</sup> šó’a nàse,<sup>1</sup> ’ide [or: dé<sup>124</sup>]*  
*m[ən]dèle go-jébe,<sup>1</sup> šo’a<sup>1</sup> hánna*  
*šqàlle,<sup>1</sup> xà<sup>1</sup> pášlu<sup>1</sup> pášlu xà képa.<sup>1</sup>* he says, “O my God, for the merit of each and every one [of those] seven men,” he put [lit. threw] his hand in his pocket, he had taken seven *this*, they became one! They [all] became one stone.
- (163) BA: *əmhəm,<sup>1</sup>* BA: Hmmm,
- (164) SZ: *qam-daréle go-barda-*  
*qanīye.<sup>125</sup> qam-daréle go-barda-*  
*qanīye dīde<sup>126</sup> ’úzle tràq!!<sup>1</sup> ’úrra*  
*go-gob’ène<sup>1</sup> ’úzla gər-gər-gər-gər-*  
*gər qam-’ozále trè qát’è.* SZ: He put it in [his] sling-shot.<sup>125</sup> He put it in his sling-shot.<sup>126</sup> He made *traq!!* It penetrated his [= Goliath’s] forehead, it made *gər-gər-gər-gər-gər* [and] it made him two pieces [i.e., sliced him].
- (165) BA: *<sup>H</sup>yòfi,<sup>1</sup> yòfi!<sup>H</sup>* BA: Nice, nice!
- (166) SZ: *qam-’ozále trè qát’ə.<sup>1</sup> ’oà!<sup>1</sup>*  
*g-emərre,<sup>1</sup> ’òha-le dárba dīdox,<sup>1</sup>* It [= the stone] made him two pieces. *Oa!* He [= Goliath] says [dismissively], “Is this your blow?” He says, “Well,

<sup>124</sup> Interjection expressing encouragement.

<sup>125</sup> Samra remembers the word she had forgotten, thus the strong intonation. See fn. 117 above.

<sup>126</sup> See fn. 102 above.

- g-er-dé šʷùšla gyánox.*<sup>1</sup> *šʷšle*  
*gyàne*<sup>1</sup> *xá qáṭʔa mpálle mènne.*<sup>1</sup>  
 (167) <sup>H</sup>*ával mā<sup>H</sup> wéle míra ta-dàw,*<sup>1</sup>  
*tà...*<sup>1</sup> *ta-šáʷul ha-mèlex,*<sup>1</sup> *lázəm*  
*rése qatéʷle matúle qàme,*<sup>1</sup> *dəḏ-*  
*yáʷe qam-qatə̀lle,*<sup>1</sup> *làxwa...*<sup>1</sup>  
 (168) BA: *hè,*<sup>1</sup>  
 (169) SZ: *là-g-bar[e],*<sup>1</sup> *lát-le* <sup>H</sup>*brerə.*<sup>H</sup>  
*ʷalla g-erre,*<sup>1</sup> *màni-le*<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>*aḥraʷtʰ*  
*dide?*<sup>1</sup> *ʷeliyá ḥəttè.*<sup>1</sup> *ʷelyá ḥəttà.*<sup>1</sup>  
 (170) BA: *hè,*<sup>1</sup>  
 (171) SZ: *ʷawa*<sup>1</sup> *g-emərre hállile*<sup>1</sup> *qzila,*<sup>1</sup>  
*hállile sépa dide,*<sup>1</sup> *čù-sepa lébe*  
*qatéʷle réš*<sup>1</sup> *d-gólyas palaštàya,*<sup>1</sup>  
*láh[aw]e sépa dide.*<sup>1</sup>  
 (172) *g-er-hállile sépa dide,*<sup>1</sup> *qatʷə̀nne*  
*rése*<sup>1</sup> *nablə̀nne.*<sup>1</sup> *g-er-lá-g-yanne-*  
*lox*<sup>127</sup> *ʷətli šàrt*<sup>1</sup> *ʷəmmox*<sup>1</sup> *hákan*  
*yawátti xà-brat-yasraʷəl,*<sup>1</sup>  
*b-yawə̀nne-lox.*<sup>1</sup>
- wiggle yourself a little.” He wiggled himself, one piece fell off him.  
 But what [more], he had told to that, to... to king Saul, he needs to cut his [= Goliath’s] head and put it in front of him [= king Saul], in order that he knows that he had killed him, otherwise...  
 BA: Yes,  
 SZ: It [i.e., this action] cannot be, he does not have a choice. So he tells him... Who is his [= Goliath’s] responsible person [i.e., his armour-bearer]? ʷEliya Ḥəttè. ʷEliya Ḥəttà.  
 BA: Yes,  
 SZ: He tells him, “Give me the key, give me his sword,” no sword can cut the head of Goliath the Philistine, if it is not his [own] sword.  
 He [= David] says, “Give me his sword [so that] I shall cut his head off and bring it [to king Saul].” He says, “I will not give it to you. I have a condition for [lit. with] you: if you give me a daughter of Israel [i.e., a girl of Israel to marry], I will give it to you.”

<sup>127</sup> Contraction of *la-g-yawə̀nne-lox*.

- (173) *hmálle dāwəd ha-mmèlex, mato*  
*b-yawónne brát yasra'èl?*<sup>1</sup> *u-là*  
*g-bárya šík<sup>1</sup> g-əbe-réše nabálle*  
*ta...<sup>1</sup>* King<sup>128</sup> David waited [and  
 thought], “How will I give him  
 a daughter of Israel?” and it is  
 also not possible [not to take  
 the head], he must carry his  
 head to...
- (174) *hmálle xá-gar xèta<sup>1</sup> g-emárre*  
*<sup>H</sup>tòv<sup>H</sup> b-yawónnox xa brát*  
*yasra'èl, <sup>1</sup>hàllile, <sup>1</sup>sèpa díde.<sup>1</sup>* He waited [and thought] once  
 again, he tells him, “Very well,  
 I will give you a daughter of  
 Israel, give it to me, his  
 sword.”
- (175) *qurbáne 'ílaha 'ày-damma,<sup>1</sup>*  
*k'śle<sup>129</sup> 'əl dāwid,<sup>1</sup> g-er-lébox*  
*yāwət čù brát yasra'él tǎle<sup>1</sup> 'ǎlla*  
*brát,<sup>1</sup> 'áy d-híla <sup>H</sup>ba[t]-zzúg<sup>H</sup>*  
*dídox bat-šéva<sup>c</sup> mən-<sup>H</sup>šamáyim<sup>H</sup>*  
*ksúta tǎlox,<sup>1</sup> 'àya b-yawátta ta-*  
*'eliyá hǎttè.<sup>1</sup> lébox yāwət<sup>1</sup> čù brát*  
*yasra'èl.<sup>1</sup>* Then God [may I be] His sacri-  
 fice, got angry with David, He  
 says, “You cannot give any  
 daughter of Israel to him but  
 the daughter, the one that is  
 your spouse, Bathsheba,  
 [which is] written [i.e., des-  
 tined] for you from heaven,  
 you will give **her** to 'Eliya  
 Hǎttè. You cannot give any  
 [other] daughter of Israel.”
- (176) BA: *<sup>H</sup>naxòn.<sup>H</sup>* BA: Right.
- (177) SZ: *waḷlǎ,<sup>1</sup> 'àya...<sup>1</sup> šqǎlle sèpa,<sup>1</sup>*  
*qtè'le,<sup>1</sup> dréle go-čǎṇṭa<sup>1</sup> zǎlle*  
*m[o]túle qám e...<sup>1</sup> šá'ul ha-*  
*mmèlex.<sup>1</sup>* Waḷlah, that [happened]... He  
 took the sword, he cut, he put  
 it in a bag, he went and laid  
 [lit. sat] it in front of uh...  
 king Saul.
- (178) *zǎlla,<sup>1</sup> 'ùrra,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>ra<sup>cH</sup>-ǎfe,<sup>130</sup> mən-*  
*yasra'èl,<sup>1</sup> 'ílá[ha] b-yá[wǎ]l* That trouble [i.e., Goliath or  
 the Philistines] went [away

<sup>128</sup> At this point in the narrative, David is not yet king (though he is already anointed).

<sup>129</sup> The Modern Hebrew root *k'ś* is used here with NENA morphology.

<sup>130</sup> Sabar (2002a, 89): “(Ar[abic]) f. *'āfe* misfortune, mishap; pl. *'āfityāta*.”

- <sup>H</sup>tòv<sup>H</sup> ta-ʾəsraʾél,<sup>1</sup> pášla šahyàna,<sup>1</sup> and] passed from Israel. God  
qam-qatlıle xǎlaş,<sup>1</sup> ʾeliyá hətte st<sup>1</sup> will give good to Israel, there  
g-šbe mesèle,<sup>1</sup> b-awázle <sup>H</sup>şár was a celebration, they had  
şavá<sup>H</sup> dide ʾe-náqla.<sup>1</sup> killed him, that was it. ʾEliya  
Həttè, he [= David] wants to  
bring him [or: it is necessary  
to bring him], he will make  
him his general [lit. minister  
of the army] now.
- (179) ʾaz-dámməd qam-malùşla So when he dressed him in the  
suit [lit. dressed the suit on  
<sup>H</sup>halífa<sup>H</sup> ʾalle,<sup>1</sup> šáʾul rába kràble,<sup>1</sup> him], Saul became very angry,  
dáwid monáxle bəd-ʾén šàʾul,<sup>1</sup> David looked at the eyes of  
Saul, the eyes of Saul became  
ʾen-šàʾul<sup>1</sup> gèr-šəkəl-ilu,<sup>1</sup> gèr-šəkəl different [lit. are of different  
colour/form], his face became  
pášle<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>partsúf<sup>H</sup> dide.<sup>1</sup> different [lit. is of different  
colour/form].
- (180) gələlələlə léwa báš ʾàli!<sup>1</sup> láşši Gələlələlə it [= the suit] is not  
good for me! My body has  
qəzla!<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>lò lò lò!<sup>H1</sup> makuşánnna burnt. No no no! I'll take it off  
me, I shall go in my ankle-  
mànni<sup>1</sup> ʾána bəd-dəşdáşa dídi length robe! They took it off  
him.  
b-azèna!<sup>1</sup> qam-makuşla mánne.<sup>1</sup>
- (181) g-émer ʾéne lá-hoya ʾəlli,<sup>1</sup> pášla,<sup>1</sup> He says [= his reasoning was],  
“His [= Saul’s] eye should not  
pášla tère!<sup>1</sup> be upon me [i.e., I do not want  
him to become hostile to me].”  
It [= the suit] became, it be-  
came his size!
- (182) BA: hè<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>bètaḥ,<sup>H1</sup> BA: Yes, sure,
- (183) SZ: ʾèh,<sup>1</sup> zálle u-sèle,<sup>1</sup> ʾaz-šàʾul,<sup>1</sup> SZ: Uh, he went and came  
[back, from the battle against  
pášle<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>holé,<sup>H1</sup> qḥərre,<sup>1</sup> g-əmer-ʾó Goliath], so Saul, became sick,  
he became angry, he says,  
p-pá[y]əş šwini.<sup>1</sup> pášle ràba “This one [= David] will be  
[king] instead of me.” He be-  
<sup>H</sup>holé.<sup>H1</sup> came very sick.

- (184) *dúqle rěše,<sup>1</sup> ráhqa mən-ʔəsraʔəl<sup>1</sup>,  
màrʔa,<sup>1</sup> là-g-ḅatəl<sup>1</sup>* A pain, may it be far from Is-  
rael, caught his head, it does  
not stop!
- (185) *yonàtan bróne,<sup>1</sup> rābəd rába<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>H</sup>háver<sup>H</sup> dād-dāwid-hile.<sup>1</sup> xà  
roḥáya-lu<sup>1</sup> xà nāšāma-lu<sup>1</sup> xà-  
<sup>H</sup>gil<sup>H</sup>-ilu,<sup>1</sup> g-él kášle go-<sup>H</sup>sadē<sup>H</sup> u-  
kěse,<sup>1</sup> u-k...<sup>1</sup> k-xáze damməd-  
g-máxe jezúke,<sup>131</sup> kúlle ʔérba  
k-ěse,<sup>1</sup> k-ḥāməl.<sup>1</sup> k-épi rěšu,<sup>1</sup>  
k-šāmʔi jezúke díde.<sup>1</sup>* His son Jonathan, he's very  
much a friend of David. They  
are one spirit, they are one  
soul, they are the same age, he  
[= Jonathan] goes to him  
[= David] to the field, and  
he... he sees that when he  
plays his *jezuke*<sup>131</sup> all the sheep  
come, stand. They bow their  
heads, they hear [= listen to]  
his *jezuke*.
- (186) *u-ʔátle xa-māndi xét ši-<sup>H</sup>tòv<sup>H</sup>  
dāwid ha-mmēlex,<sup>1</sup> kud-g-másya  
yàla,<sup>1</sup> bròna,<sup>1</sup> bràta,<sup>1</sup> ʔéma  
ʔiwánta g-hawèla,<sup>1</sup> g-él k-šaqaḷla<sup>1</sup>  
u-g-mašmāšla<sup>1</sup> k-xayəpla,<sup>1</sup>  
dāre...<sup>1</sup> go-ʔize...<sup>1</sup> gəlla<sup>1</sup> yarùqa<sup>1</sup>  
yarùqa,<sup>1</sup> raʔiza<sup>1</sup> raʔiza<sup>1</sup>  
g-maxəlla.<sup>1</sup> u-[g-]māštela māya.<sup>1</sup>* And he has another thing that  
is good, king David: whoever  
brings a child [= gives birth],  
a boy, a girl, whichever ewe  
gives birth, he goes [and]  
takes her, and pets her, he  
washes her, he puts... in his  
hand... green green [and]  
fresh fresh grass, [and] feeds  
her.
- (187) *ʔátle <sup>H</sup>lév tòv<sup>H</sup> u-[q]urbáne  
ʔilá[ha] k-ʔè.<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>galuy-yadùa<sup>cH</sup>-  
ile,<sup>132</sup> k-f'e<sup>1</sup> hàdxa-le,<sup>1</sup> k-f'e go-* He has a good heart and God  
[may I be] His sacrifice knows.  
It is well known [to Him] [lit.  
revealed (and) known],<sup>132</sup> He

<sup>131</sup> Evidently Samra refers here to a musical instrument. According to Sabar (2002a, 127), a *jəzunkə/čəzuke* is a “booklet (of religious or magic nature).” According to another informant, Ḥabuba Messusani, the correct name of the intended musical instrument is *suzuka*. Perhaps it is the plucked string instrument *saz*, common in Kurdistan. See also ch. 3, fn. 56.

<sup>132</sup> A loan from (pre-Modern) Hebrew *galuy ve-yadua*<sup>c</sup>. The connective *vav* is omitted to fit the common asyndetic hendiadys pattern in NENA.



- lábbəd náše mà-ʾis.<sup>1</sup> kúd-xa u-xá* knows it is so, He knows what  
*k-ʾe má-ʾiz go-ləbbe.<sup>1</sup>* [there] is inside the heart[s] of  
 people. Each and every one,  
 He knows what is in their  
 hearts [lit. his heart].
- (188) *ʾáud ʾətle tòn,<sup>1</sup> ʾáud látle k-ʾe.<sup>1</sup>* Whoever has good[ness] [in  
*márre, qày<sup>1</sup> g-ámri <sup>H</sup>paršán<sup>H</sup>* his heart], whoever does not  
 have, He knows. He said, why  
*kóda u-kùlisa-le,<sup>1</sup> k-ʾe!<sup>1</sup>* do they say, “He is the inter-  
 preter of the liver and the kid-  
 ney”? He [= God] knows!
- (189) *ʾáz è,<sup>1</sup> g-emárre bàbi b-án* So uh, he [= Jonathan] says,  
*mesánnox,<sup>1</sup> ʾətli xà<sup>1</sup> dàwid e...<sup>1</sup>* “My father, I’ll go bring you, I  
*g-máxe b-jezùk<sup>133</sup> ta-ʾárba,<sup>1</sup> šud-* have one, David uh... he plays  
*ʾàse.<sup>1</sup>* the *jezuke<sup>133</sup>* for the sheep.”  
 “Let him come.”
- (190) *zəlle mxélele b-jezùke<sup>1</sup> réše* He went [and] played the  
*trəšle.<sup>1</sup> kud-damməd<sup>1</sup> tlá[ha]* *jezuke* for him, his head  
 healed. Every three hours he  
*sà‘e,<sup>1</sup> g-ewózle maxéle jezùke<sup>1</sup>* used to do for him, to play the  
*ʾáwa g-nà[y]əx.<sup>1</sup> trəšle rəše,<sup>1</sup>* *jezuke* for him, he [= Saul]  
 would rest. His head healed,  
*damməd g-èzel<sup>1</sup> ʾáwa réše* whenever he [= David] goes  
*g-màre’.<sup>1</sup>* away, his [Saul’s] head hurts.
- (191) *xá yòma,<sup>1</sup> trè,<sup>1</sup> ʾàrba,<sup>1</sup> xá yòma<sup>1</sup>* One day, two, four, one day he  
*g-šaqaðlle sépa díde,<sup>1</sup> g-ábe* takes his sword, he wants to  
 strike him with it, in order to  
*maxèle ʾəlle,<sup>1</sup> qaṭəlle,<sup>1</sup> qaṭəlle* kill him, to kill David [or: he  
 will kill him, he will kill Da-  
*[or: p-qaṭəlle,<sup>1</sup> p-qaṭəlle] dāwəd.<sup>1</sup>* vid].
- (192) *malāx qam-šaqaðlle sèpa,<sup>1</sup> qam-* An angel took the sword [and]  
*daréle mən-ʾél dāwəd go-gùda.<sup>1</sup>* put it above David in the wall.

<sup>133</sup> See fn. 131 above.

- (193) *sèle yonatan<sup>1</sup> g-emərre qāy,<sup>1</sup>*  
*rēšox k-tārəš<sup>1</sup> ʿaz-qāy q-qaṭlätte?<sup>1</sup>*  
*g-émer p-qaṭlənne.<sup>1</sup>* Jonathan came, he tells him,  
 “Why? Your head heals [when  
 he plays for you] so why do  
 you kill him?” He says, “I shall  
 kill him.”
- (194) *wéle mīra šīne<sup>1</sup> mání dād-qaṭálle*  
*gòlyat,<sup>1</sup> palgát dawólta p-póya*  
*ṭàle,<sup>1</sup> u-bràti<sup>1</sup> mīxal<sup>1</sup> ṭàle<sup>H</sup>mat-*  
*anà.<sup>H1</sup> ʿaz-ʿé náq[la] hám*  
*p-pá[y]əš xətne<sup>1</sup> u-hám*  
*p-pá[y]əš...<sup>1</sup> k-sáyən mənne.<sup>1</sup>* He had said also, “Whoever  
 kills Goliath, half of the wealth  
 [or: kingdom] will be his, and  
 my daughter Michal—a gift for  
 him.” So now, he will also be-  
 come his son-in-law, and also  
 become... he hates him.
- (195) *sámle mənne,<sup>1</sup> ʿè wéla.<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>bə-sóf*  
*šel-davār,...<sup>H1</sup> séla<sup>H</sup>malḥamà,<sup>H1</sup>*  
*ʿarəqle bàsre,<sup>1</sup> ʿarəqle bàsre<sup>1134</sup>*  
*dāwād ha-mmélex zəlle,<sup>1</sup> zálle l-*  
*<sup>H</sup>maʿarát<sup>H1</sup> ʿelyáhu naví<sup>H</sup>be-*  
*ḥəfa.<sup>H1</sup>* He hated him, that was that  
 [= all of that happened]. Even-  
 tually, war came, he chased af-  
 ter him, he chased after him,<sup>134</sup>  
 king David went, he went to  
 the cave of Eliyahu the  
 prophet in Haifa.
- (196) *nobəllele<sup>1</sup> tmanyá ʿəmmáe*  
*<sup>H</sup>baḥurīm,<sup>H1</sup> ʿəmmə,<sup>1</sup> túle go-*  
*<sup>H</sup>maʿarà,<sup>H1</sup> mtošéle gyàne<sup>1</sup> mən-*  
*qam-šàʿul<sup>1</sup> g-ʿarəqla.<sup>1</sup>* He took with him eight hun-  
 dred men, he sat in the cave,  
 he hid himself from Saul, he  
 ran away.
- (197) *ʿay-rút u-naʿómi moḥkyàli?<sup>1</sup>*  
*xləšla?<sup>1</sup> rút [u-]naʿómi,<sup>1</sup> hə.<sup>1</sup>*  
*sélan ʿàxxa.<sup>1</sup>* The one of Ruth and Naomi  
 I’ve [already] told? It’s fin-  
 ished? Ruth and Naomi, yes.  
 We came here [in the story].
- (198) BA: *hè,<sup>1</sup> hə,<sup>1</sup> hə.<sup>1</sup>* BA: Yes, yes, yes.

<sup>134</sup> See fn. 102 above.

- (199) SZ: <sup>ʔ</sup>az-dáwəd ha-mmélex sèle,<sup>1</sup> So [with regard to] king David, Rosh Hashana came, he  
 sèle,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>rós ha-šanà,<sup>H1</sup> wéle go- was in the cave of Eliyahu the  
<sup>H</sup>ma‘arát<sup>H</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>elyáhu navì.<sup>1</sup> prophet.
- (200) tmanyá <sup>ʔ</sup>ammáe <sup>H</sup>ḥayalím<sup>H</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>àtle,<sup>1</sup> He has eight hundred soldiers,  
 g-ábe <sup>ʔ</sup>àxli<sup>1</sup> g-ábe šàte,<sup>1</sup> làt-le.<sup>1</sup> they need to eat, they need to  
 m̀ani b-ya[wá]le?<sup>1</sup> ḥukúma lèwa drink, he does not have [any-  
<sup>ʔ</sup>ámme,<sup>1</sup> ḥukúma wéla <sup>ʔ</sup>amməd thing to give them]. Who will  
 šà<sup>ʔ</sup>ul.<sup>1</sup> give him? [= no one will give  
 him] The government [or:  
 reign] is not with him, the  
 government [or: reign] is with  
 Saul.
- (201) <sup>ʔ</sup>isen<sup>1</sup> xà<sup>ʔ</sup>,<sup>1</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>elimèlex.<sup>1</sup> wéle go- There is one, Elimelech. He  
 ḥəfa,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>āšīr<sup>H1</sup> dəd-kùlla,<sup>1</sup> kùlla was in Haifa, a rich [person]  
 yəsra<sup>ʔ</sup>èl-ile.<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>giló<sup>H135</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>e <sup>H</sup>gilò,<sup>H1</sup> of all of Israel [i.e., very rich,  
 dide-ila. kùlla <sup>H</sup>giló<sup>H</sup> dide-ila.<sup>1</sup> the richest]. Gilo,<sup>135</sup> this Gilo,  
 is his. All of Gilo is his.
- (202) <sup>ʔ</sup>àtle,<sup>1</sup> bàxta,<sup>1</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>àya<sup>1</sup> bába <sup>H</sup>āšīr<sup>H</sup>- He has, a wife, she, her father  
 ile,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>giló<sup>H</sup> dide-ila,<sup>1</sup> šamma-ile is rich. Gilo is hers, she was  
 dārya dide gila,<sup>1</sup> <sup>H</sup>giló<sup>H</sup> kùlla named after it Gila [lit. her  
 wéla ksúta bəd-šamma.<sup>1</sup> u-góra name was put Gila; or: he put  
<sup>H</sup>āšīr<sup>H</sup>-ile,<sup>1</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>àtle...<sup>1</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>ārxē<sup>1</sup> u-<sup>ʔ</sup>àtle belongs to her [lit. is written in  
 ṭaḥùne<sup>1</sup> u-<sup>ʔ</sup>àtle qāmxa.<sup>1</sup> her name]. And her husband is  
 rich, he has... a mill and he  
 has a mill [Ar.], and he has  
 flour.
- (203) mšodárre tré <sup>H</sup>ḥayyalím<sup>H</sup> kàsle<sup>1</sup> He sent two soldiers to him he  
 g-émer séla <sup>H</sup>roš-ha-šanà<sup>H1</sup> g-əbéli says, “Rosh Hashana came, I  
<sup>ʔ</sup>ārba,<sup>1</sup> g-ábe<sup>1</sup> pəsər-rəša<sup>136</sup> g-ábe need sheep, need head-flesh,<sup>136</sup>  
<sup>ʔ</sup>ó-māndi <sup>ʔ</sup>ò-māndi.<sup>1</sup> need this and that.”

<sup>135</sup> A modern neighbourhood in the south of Jerusalem, near the site of biblical Gilo (Josh. 15.41; 2 Sam. 15.12). See §5.17 above.

<sup>136</sup> It is a custom to eat the flesh of the head of an animal or a fish in the festive meal of Rosh Hashana eve.

- (204) *g-ər-lá g-ya[wə]nne čù-məndi.*<sup>1</sup> He says, “I will not give him anything.”
- (205) *g-ərrále gila,*<sup>1</sup> *màto lá*  
*g-yawáxle?!<sup>1</sup> tmanyá-əməe*  
<sup>H</sup>*hayyalím<sup>H</sup> ʔətle<sup>1</sup> tíwa go-*  
<sup>H</sup>*ma‘arà<sup>H</sup> bála ʔixàla,<sup>1</sup> štàya,<sup>1</sup>*  
<sup>ʔ</sup>*ərba,<sup>1</sup> qàmxa,<sup>1</sup> rəzza,<sup>1</sup> šàkar.<sup>1</sup>* Gila tells him, “How will you not give to him?! He has eight hundred soldiers sitting [= staying] in a cave with him, without food, drink, sheep, flour, rice, sugar.”
- (206) *g-émer lá g-ya[wə]nne čù-*  
*məndi.<sup>1</sup> fərat<sup>1</sup> yàtwat<sup>1</sup> ha-ʔàsqað*  
<sup>š</sup>*í la-g-ya[wə]nne.<sup>1</sup>* He says, “I will not give him anything. You [can] fly [or] sit, even this much I will not give him.”
- (207) *g-əmrá de-tú ʔəl-dùkox.* She says, “Well sit at your place.”
- (208) *[m]pəqla básər<sup>H</sup> hayyalím,<sup>H</sup>*  
*g-əmrá<sup>H</sup> bəʔu,<sup>H</sup> g-əmrá sáʔun*  
*màrule<sup>1</sup> mārūn ta-dàwid,<sup>1</sup>*  
<sup>ʔ</sup>*àna,<sup>1</sup>—* She went out after the soldiers, she says, “Come,” she says, “Go [and] say to him, say to David, that I—
- (209) *wəl-šqúlloxun xá waràqa,<sup>1</sup>—*  
*sáʔun šqòlun<sup>1</sup> ʔəs[ra]<sup>1</sup> tlaš<sup>1</sup>*  
<sup>ʔ</sup>*m[ma] a xamší kəsyása rəzza,<sup>1</sup>*  
*mən-ṭəhúne dīdi.<sup>1</sup>* here, take a piece of paper [= confirmation]—come take ten, thirty, a hundred um fifty bags of rice, from my mill.
- (210) *mʔošəri.<sup>137</sup> xamší kəsyása*  
*qàmxa,<sup>1</sup> mən-ṭəhúnət qàmxa.<sup>1</sup>*  
*xamší bəkbúke,<sup>138</sup> ʔəmmá*  
*bəkbúke<sup>H</sup> šəmən<sup>H</sup> mən-ṭáḥ-<sup>1</sup>*  
<sup>H</sup>*šəmən<sup>H</sup> dídi.<sup>1</sup>* I’ve authorised [that]. Fifty bags of flour, from the flour-mill. Fifty bottles, a hundred bottles of oil from my mi[ll], oil.”

<sup>137</sup> The Modern Hebrew root ʔšr is used here with NENA morphology.

<sup>138</sup> The Modern Hebrew word *baqbùq* is here given a NENA plural form. The corresponding NENA words are *bəṭle*, *baqbaqiyat*.

- (211) *hùlla,<sup>1</sup> màd 'ótla,<sup>1</sup> húlla waràqa<sup>1</sup>* She gave, whatever she has,  
*xtəm<sup>139</sup>la 'ólla,<sup>1</sup> sá'un šqólun* she gave a piece of paper  
*xòlun.<sup>1</sup>* [and] signed it, “Come take  
[and] eat.
- (212) *sá'un lə-ʾərba,<sup>1</sup> ʾəmmá réše ʾərba* Come to the sheep, bring one  
*mèsun,<sup>1</sup> ʾúzule ta-<sup>H</sup>roš-ha-šanà.<sup>H1</sup>* hundred heads of sheep, pre-  
pare them [lit. it] for Rosh  
Hashana.”
- (213) *tòv,<sup>1</sup> ʾilá[ha] máʾmər bèsax,<sup>140</sup>* Good. May God build your  
*gilá hùlla.<sup>1</sup>* house,<sup>140</sup> Gila gave.
- (214) *séla dʾára, wéle təkya,<sup>1</sup> gòra.<sup>1</sup>* She came [and] returned, he  
was reclined [and relaxed],  
her husband.
- (215) *g-əmrà-le,<sup>1</sup> là húllox čù-məndi,<sup>1</sup>* She says to him, “You did not  
*ta-dàwid.<sup>1</sup> tmanyà<sup>1</sup> ʾəmmàya<sup>1</sup>* give anything, to David. Eight  
*<sup>H</sup>hayylim<sup>H</sup> ʾótle<sup>1</sup> u-látle maxèllu,<sup>1</sup>* hundred soldiers he has and he  
*séle <sup>H</sup>roš-ha-šanà<sup>H</sup> u-ʾəza,<sup>1</sup>* does not have [anything] to  
*ʾáxnan ʾàxlax<sup>1</sup> ʾáwa là ʾáxəl?!<sup>1</sup>* feed them, Rosh Hashana came  
and the festival, we shall eat  
[and] he shall not eat?!”
- (216) *g-er-lá g-yawənnə,<sup>1</sup> ʾótli taḥùna<sup>1</sup>* He says, “I shall not give him,  
*u-ʾótli kùllu-geb.<sup>1</sup>* I have a mill and I have every-  
thing.”
- (217) *g-əmrá xud-rəšox<sup>1</sup> ʾàsqad húlli<sup>1</sup>* She says, “[By the] life of your  
*u-ʾàsqad<sup>1</sup> u-ʾàsqad<sup>1</sup> u-ʾàsqad<sup>1</sup> u-* head, I gave this much, and  
this much, and this much, and

<sup>139</sup> The NENA root *xtm* ‘to seal, to end, to obscure, to overfill or to be overfull’ (Sabar 2002a, 202) is used here with the meaning of its Hebrew cognate, ‘to sign’.

<sup>140</sup> A blessing expressing gratitude.

- qam-xatmánnu*<sup>141</sup> *<sup>H</sup>xatíma*<sup>H142</sup>  
*dídox,*<sup>1</sup> *u-mṭelu* *ʾálle* *ʾawáe.*<sup>1</sup> I signed them [with] your signature, and the things have [already] arrived to him.”
- (218) *ʾóha mət̤le,*<sup>1</sup> *pqèʾle l-dúke,*<sup>1</sup> *mət̤le*  
*l-dúke!*<sup>1</sup> This one [= the husband] died, he exploded [i.e., died from anger] on the spot [lit. his place], he died on the spot [lit. his place]!
- (219) BA: *pqèʾle!*<sup>1</sup> BA: He exploded!
- (220) SZ: *pqèʾle!*<sup>1</sup> *g-ámra pqòʾl sì.*<sup>1</sup> SZ: He exploded! She says, “Explode, go ahead.”
- (221) *básər xláṣla mən-<sup>H</sup>šəvʿá<sup>H143</sup> díde*  
*yàrxá,*<sup>144</sup> *mšodàrra,*<sup>1</sup> *g-ámra*  
*šrùxule<sup>1</sup> dàwid<sup>1</sup> ʾáse ʾàxxa.*<sup>1</sup> After she had finished with his *shivʿa*,<sup>143</sup> month,<sup>144</sup> she sent [word], she says, “Call David to come [or: he should come] here.”
- (222) *séle dàwid<sup>1</sup> túla ʾəmmə,*<sup>1</sup> *mərra-*  
*le,*<sup>1</sup> *g-emárra rāba,*<sup>1</sup> *<sup>H</sup>todá rəbbá<sup>H</sup>*  
*ṭàlax,*<sup>1</sup> *hullàx-lan,*<sup>1</sup> *u-ʿəšlan<sup>1</sup> u-*  
*xəllan,*<sup>1</sup> *u-mosèlan u-,*<sup>1</sup> *<sup>H</sup>kol-tòv<sup>H</sup>.*<sup>1</sup> David came, she sat with him, she told him, he tells her, “Many thanks to you, you gave us, and we ate [lit. ate dinner], and we ate, and we brought and, all the good [of the earth, i.e., an abundance of high-quality foods].”

<sup>141</sup> See fn. 139 above.

<sup>142</sup> The Modern Hebrew lexeme *ḥatimà* is given NENA phonology here: *ḥ* > *x*, penultimate stress.

<sup>143</sup> The mourning period of seven days.

<sup>144</sup> The mourning period of a month.

- (223) *g-šmra mēnex,<sup>1</sup> xá ḥál u-qšta*  
*ʿəha-la,<sup>1</sup> ʿé báxta<sup>145</sup> pššla*  
*yābbum,<sup>146</sup> ʿāna<sup>1</sup> kúllu ʿánya*  
*ʿarxāsa<sup>1</sup> u-ʿánya kúllu kaswánnu*  
*b-šəmmox,<sup>1</sup>* She says, “Look, that is the situation [lit. one situation and story is that], this woman<sup>145</sup> became *yibbum*,<sup>146</sup> and all these mills, and all these, I will write them in your name [i.e., I will make you the owner],
- (224) *<sup>H</sup>avāl,<sup>H</sup> hwí<sup>H</sup> fēr,<sup>H147</sup> ʿāp-aya*  
*nábəlla<sup>145</sup> dāmməd pēšət*  
*<sup>H</sup>mēlex,<sup>H1</sup> šqúlla<sup>1</sup> pēša bāxtox.<sup>1</sup>* but be fair, take also her<sup>145</sup> when you become king, take her [and] she will be your wife.”
- (225) *g-ér go-ʿəni.<sup>1</sup> ḥúlle ʿízu d-xa-u-*  
*xəṭ.<sup>1</sup>* He says, “In my eye [= I agree completely].” They gave their hands of each other [= they shook hands].
- (226) BA: *máto mpállā yābbum ʿəlle,<sup>1</sup>*  
*xolá ʿaxón...<sup>1</sup>* BA: How [do you mean] she fell *yibbum* on him, after all [is he] the brother of...
- (227) SZ: *là yābbum!<sup>1</sup> g-əmrále pššla*  
*ʿarməlsa,<sup>1</sup>* SZ: Not *yibbum*! She tells him she became a widow,
- (228) BA: *ʿā<sup>1</sup> ʿarməlsa,<sup>1</sup>* BA: Oh, a widow,
- (229) SZ: *u-<sup>H</sup>tseʿirā<sup>H</sup>-la,<sup>1</sup> u-ʿótla māl,<sup>1</sup>*  
*u-ʿótla...<sup>1</sup>* SZ: And she is young, and she has property [or: wealth], and she has...
- (230) *ʿó māl ta-máni b-yawāanne?<sup>1</sup>*  
*<sup>H</sup>gilo<sup>H148</sup> b-šəmmòx,<sup>1</sup> ʿərxawása* “This wealth, to whom will I give [it]? Gilo<sup>148</sup> is in your name [= yours], the mills are

<sup>145</sup> See fn. 108 above. The switch from first to third person here produces ‘combined speech’; see Golomb (1968).

<sup>146</sup> Levirate marriage. See §5.4 and fns 44 and 101 earlier in this chapter. Unlike Ruth, Gila did not need *yibbum*, and Samra corrects herself in (227) below.

<sup>147</sup> Borrowed into Hebrew from English ‘fair’.

<sup>148</sup> The neighbourhood. See fn. 135 above.

- ṭàlox*,<sup>1</sup> *ʾá[ha]t* *<sup>H</sup>magíá<sup>CH</sup>* *ṭàlox* for you, you are entitled to  
<sup>H</sup>*ha-kòl*.<sup>H1</sup> everything.”
- (231) *g-ér* *<sup>H</sup>magíá<sup>H</sup>* *ʾà[ha]t* *ší ṭáli*.<sup>1</sup> He says, “I am also entitled to  
*šqállē* *ʾiza*.<sup>1</sup> *zálle* *ʾàya mséla* *ʾàya*<sup>1</sup> you.” He took her hand. Some  
*pášle dáwid ha-mmèlex*.<sup>1</sup> time has passed [lit. this one  
went this one brought], he be-  
came king David.
- (232) BA: *<sup>H</sup>yòff<sup>H</sup>!* BA: Great!
- (233) SZ: *zàlle...*<sup>1</sup> *šául ṭʿéle* *ʾàlle*<sup>1</sup> *qam-* SZ: He went... Saul searched  
*xazèle*,<sup>1</sup> *ʾàwa*,<sup>1</sup> *xzéle šául* for him. [It was] he [= David]  
*dmìxa*,<sup>1</sup> *qtéʿle* *ʾásqad m-ʿabáyye* [who] found him, he found  
*dìde*,<sup>1</sup> *šqállē xá laqqá m-xabúša* him asleep, he cut this much  
*dìde*<sup>1</sup> *štéle mʾaya dide*<sup>1</sup> *là nháqle* of his cloak, he took a bite of  
his apple, he drank his water,  
*ʾàlle*.<sup>1</sup> [but] he did not touch him.
- (234) *ksúle ṭàle*,<sup>1</sup> *ʾána là*<sup>1</sup> *q-qaṭlènnox*,<sup>1</sup> He wrote to him, “I shall not  
*ʾàhəṭ*<sup>1</sup> *g-əbət qaṭlètti*<sup>1</sup> *ʾána lá g-* kill you, you want to kill me, I  
*qaṭlènnox*,<sup>1</sup> *ʾàhəṭ* *<sup>H</sup>mélex* shall not kill you, you are the  
*yəsraʾèl<sup>H</sup>-wət*.<sup>1</sup> king of Israel.”
- (235) SZ: *xaráe* *<sup>H</sup>ba-sòf<sup>H</sup>* *e*<sup>1</sup> *šául ha-* SZ: After that in the end, uh,  
*mmélex básər ṭlà[ha]* *yóme*,<sup>1</sup> king Saul after three days,  
*zálle kəz e...*<sup>1</sup> *bàxta*,<sup>1</sup> *e* went to uh... a woman, uh,  
*<sup>H</sup>kor[ʔ]ím-la<sup>H</sup>* *raḥèla*.<sup>1</sup> her name is Raḥela.
- (236) *g-emərra psóx ṭàli*<sup>1</sup> *báxta* He tells her, “Open [my for-  
*pasxáwa bəd-fála*,<sup>1</sup> *k-iʾáwa má-* tune] for me [= tell me my  
*ʾiz go-<sup>H</sup>olàm<sup>H</sup>* *má lès*.<sup>1</sup> fortune],” a woman that used  
to open fortunes [i.e., she was  
a fortune-teller], she knew  
what there is in the world  
[and] what there is not.
- (237) *g-əmra-wan...*<sup>1</sup> *šául ha-mmèlex*<sup>1</sup> She says, “I’m... king Saul  
*wéle ʾàsya qábəl*<sup>1</sup> *ṭlà[ha]-yárxē* came to me three months ago,  
I swore to him [lit. I am sworn



- kàslì,<sup>1</sup> wan-yəmísa ž-ʔíze là*  
*pasxán ta-čù-xxa.<sup>1</sup> là zéʔla šáʔul*  
*ha-mmèlex híle.<sup>1</sup>* on his hand] that I shall not  
 open [the fortune] for any-  
 one.” She did not know that it  
 is king Saul.
- (238) *ʔána lá g-naḥqàna ʔal-<sup>H</sup>séfer<sup>H</sup> la-*  
*g-pàsxaṇ,<sup>1</sup> čákkən wan-márta xá*  
*xábra ta-šáʔul ha-mmèlex <sup>H</sup>lò,<sup>1</sup>*  
*lò!<sup>H</sup>* “I shall not touch the book  
 [and] not open, because I have  
 said [lit. I am said] [this] one  
 thing [or: word] to king Saul,  
 no—no!”
- (239) *g-ér psòx,<sup>1</sup> là kšáfle gyàne<sup>1</sup>*  
*<sup>H</sup>ával<sup>H</sup> g-émer ʔàna... e<sup>1</sup>*  
*paṭrənnax,<sup>149</sup> šóqən paṭèrrax*  
*šáʔul ha-mmélex mán,<sup>1</sup> mən-*  
*momàsa dífax.<sup>1</sup> psəxla,<sup>1</sup> xzèla,<sup>1</sup>*  
*šamúʔel ha-nnàvi-le.* He says, “Open,” he did not re-  
 veal himself, but, he says, “I  
 will... exempt you, I will see  
 that king Saul exempts you  
 from your oath.” She opened,  
 she saw, it is Samuel the  
 prophet.
- (240) *xzèla dāmməd séle šamúʔel ha-*  
*nnàvi,<sup>1</sup> k-ìʔa,<sup>1</sup> šáʔul mayəs,<sup>1</sup>*  
*ḫàlaṣ.<sup>1</sup> là-məḥkela,<sup>1</sup> g-əṁra,<sup>1</sup> sa-*  
*xzì.<sup>1</sup> má ʔíʔ gó...<sup>1</sup>* She saw when Samuel the  
 prophet came, she knows, Saul  
 shall die, that’s it. She did not  
 speak, she says, “Come see,  
 what there is in the...”
- (241) *psəxla,<sup>1</sup> u-xzèle šamúʔel ha-*  
*nnàvi.<sup>1</sup> šamúʔel ha-nnàvi g-ére,<sup>1</sup>*  
*šàʔul,<sup>1</sup> ṭlā[ha] yóme ʔətlōx pīše,<sup>1</sup>*  
*ʔəḥət u-kúd ṭlā[ha] bnóne dídox*  
*ʔəsət qṭàla.<sup>1</sup> zèʔle.<sup>1</sup>* She opened, and he saw Sam-  
 uel the prophet. Samuel the  
 prophet tells him, “Saul, you  
 have three days [lit. three days  
 you have remained], you and  
 your three sons will be killed  
 [lit. come to killing].” He  
 knew.
- (242) *pəšle <sup>H</sup>holè.<sup>H</sup> ʔáy bāxta,<sup>1</sup> ʔúzlale*  
*<sup>H</sup>maràkim<sup>H</sup> šòṛḃa<sup>1</sup> máyət ksèsa,<sup>1</sup>*  
*qam-maxlāle,<sup>1</sup> qam-maštyàle,<sup>1</sup>* He became sick. That woman,  
 she made for him soups, thick  
 [rice] soup, chicken soup [lit.  
 chicken water], she fed him,  
 she gave him to drink, he slept

<sup>149</sup> The Modern Hebrew root *pṭr* is used here with NENA morphology.

- dmóxle kásla t̤láh[ha] yòme,*<sup>1</sup> there [lit. at hers] three days,  
*pášla* <sup>H</sup>*məlḥamà*<sup>H1</sup> *kúd t̤lähun...*<sup>1</sup> a war started, all three of them...
- (243) *xzéle kúd<sup>1</sup> t̤lähun yalínke díde* He saw all his three children  
*q̤t̤lín.*<sup>1</sup> *ʾáwa šîn p̤s̤í<sup>c</sup>a*<sup>150</sup> *wèle,*<sup>1</sup> getting killed. He [himself]  
*dréle sépa dide,*<sup>1</sup> *məndéle gyàne<sup>1</sup>* also was wounded, he put his  
*ʾápawa zəlle.*<sup>1</sup> *ʾaz-máni p̤išən?*<sup>1</sup> sword, he threw himself, he  
*dáwid ha-mmélex p̤ášle* <sup>H</sup>*mélex* also went [away, i.e., died]. So  
*yəsraʾèl.*<sup>H1</sup> who became [king] [or: who  
remained (alive)]? King David  
became the king of Israel.
- (244) BA: *ʾəmhəm,*<sup>1</sup> BA: mmmm...
- (245) SZ: *mád q̤t̤lle q̤t̤lle,*<sup>1</sup> *u-mád* SZ: Whatever he killed he  
*ʾámme ysəqlə<sup>1</sup> ʾəl-<sup>H</sup>šəltòn,*<sup>1</sup> *bárux* killed, whatever [= whoever]  
*ha-šəm,*<sup>H1</sup> *ḥkəmlə.* was with him ascended to the  
rule, blessed be the Lord, he  
reigned.

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<sup>150</sup> The Modern Hebrew root *p̤s̤í<sup>c</sup>* is used here with NENA morphology.