

The Neo-Aramaic Oral Heritage of the Jews of Zakho

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Oz Aloni, *The Neo-Aramaic Oral Heritage of the Jews of Zakho*. Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures 11. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0272>

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Semitic Languages and Cultures 11.

ISSN (print): 2632-6906

ISSN (digital): 2632-6914

ISBN Paperback: 9781800643024

ISBN Hardback: 9781800643031

ISBN Digital (PDF): 9781800643048

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0272



This book is published with the support of the Martin Buber Society of Fellows at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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Cover design: Anna Gatti

CHAPTER 3: A FOLKTALE

At the centre of this chapter is a folktale told in the Jewish Zakho NENA dialect. This is a rather unusual folktale, since it is built around a relatively uncommon motif in folk-literature, that of magical gender transformation. The folktale, ‘The King and the Wazir’, was told by Ḥabuba Messusani.

1.0. The Folktales of the Jews of Zakho

An essential part of the rich oral heritage of the Jewish community of Zakho is the large and complex corpus of folktales. This draws on both Jewish and Kurdish folklore: many of the tales bear distinctive Jewish characteristics, while others belong to the general regional repertoire. Recounting folktales, and listening to them, was a very common and popular shared pastime of the communities of Kurdistan. The very same folktales, in different versions, with additions, omissions or creative embellishments—all depending on the taste (and talent) of the tellers and their audience—could be told throughout Kurdistan, and in all of its different languages and dialects. The practice of storytelling continued in the Jewish-Kurdish communities in Israel: the senior members of the Zakho community in Jerusalem tell of the regular gatherings in a *diwan*, a drawing room of a home of one of the elders of the community, for the purpose of telling and listening to stories. Zakho folktales vary in length from relatively short ones, like the one presented here, to very long ones capable of filling several long consecutive winter evenings—oral novels, one may call them. Folktales are a social institution that plays a role

in the forming and maintaining of Zakho communal identity. They also perform a function in intergenerational communication: in a society that experienced a deep intergenerational gap brought about by the sharp transition to modern Israel (see Sabar 1975),¹ folktales (and other oral genres) are a mode of contact between the generation of the grandparents and their grandchildren.²

2.0. ‘The King and the Wazir’: Synopsis

A king and his wazir go out to explore their town, wearing ordinary clothes. After crossing a bridge, the wazir’s horse breaks into a gallop, leaving the king alone. The king arrives at a river, and

¹ About the social changes within the community caused by the migration, see Gavish (2010, 316–36).

² For published Jewish Zakho folktales see: Socin (1882, 159–68, 219–23); Polotsky (1967), two episodes from a ‘novel’; Alon and Meehan (1979); Avinery (1978; 1988, 48–65); Zaken (1997); Shilo (2014), a collection of 14 folktales written originally in NENA (not transcribed from a recording), which I edited; Aloni (2014a, 65–79). An important collection of oral literature of the Jews of Kurdistan, though only in English, is Sabar (1982). The most important collection of folktales in the Jewish NENA dialect of Zakho remains unpublished. It is a corpus of 33 stories recorded from Mamo (‘uncle’) Yona Gabbay Zaqen, father of the teller of our present folktale, Ḥabuba Messusani. Mamo Yona (Zakho 1867–Jerusalem 1970), an exceptional bearer and performer of the rich tradition of the Jews of Kurdistan and a well-known storyteller throughout Iraqi Kurdistan, was recorded during 1964 by Prof. Yona Sabar for the Hebrew University’s Jewish Language Traditions Project (*Mifal Masorot ha-Lašon*; see Fellman 1978). Only a small portion of this material has been published, in Sabar (2005): Mamo Yona’s own life story, narrated by him.

he sits down in order to eat and rest. He plays with his ring, and it falls into the water. The king dives into the water in order to recover his ring, and when he gets out, *yímméd m̐áya* 'the mother of the water' (a water spirit) hits him on the head, and he is transformed into a woman. As he sees his reflection in the water, he realises that he is now a very beautiful woman. Some fishermen who pass by take the beautiful woman, with the intention of marrying her to the son of their own king. The king and queen are astounded by the woman's beauty, and their son the prince falls in love with her. The woman and the prince get married and have three children. To celebrate the third birth, the king throws a *seherane* 'an outdoor celebration' for all his people. The woman goes to the riverside in order to look again for her lost ring (the king's ring). She sees the ring in the water, and gets into the river to take it. The mother of the water comes again, hits her on the head, and the woman becomes a man once more, the king. He does not know what to do next.

In the meantime, the wazir, who had fallen from his horse, is found by some hunters, who, seeing his beautiful clothes and horse, realise that he is an important man. He does not remember who he is, as he has lost his memory. The hunters take him to a hospital, where he is given care for one year. A professor takes him home to be his servant, and eventually the wazir becomes like a son to him. One day while the wazir is riding his horse, the horse again gallops, and the wazir falls off at the same place where he had fallen before. He regains his memory. The wazir and his adoptive father go to the wazir's home, but his wife does

not recognise him. She suggests that they should go to the imam, and he will decide whether the wazir is her husband or not.

The king also comes back to his home. His wife does not believe that he is her husband, so he also waits for the imam to come on Friday. The imam, who turns out to be Bahlul, the king's brother, decrees that the king is the king and that the wazir is the wazir, and he sends them back to their homes.

The prince, who had been married to the woman whom the king became, searches for his wife everywhere. Eventually he arrives in the town of the king and the wazir. He goes to the imam and tells him about his lost wife. The imam tells the prince that his wife is not lost, but is a king. The king demands that the prince give him the children that he bore as a woman, and tells the whole story of his transformation. The imam decrees that the prince should keep those children, since the king has other children whom he had earlier fathered as a man. The king and the prince both return to their homes.

3.0. The Motif of Gender Transformation

Many of the motifs³ that appear in our story are known from other literary and folk traditions. To list but a few: the king and his wazir go out wearing ordinary clothes (motif K1812.17 'king in disguise to spy out his kingdom'); the king drops his ring in water and then recovers it (K1812.17 'Solomon's power to hold

³ As classified by Thompson (1955–1958). Motif numbers and titles discussed here are taken from Thompson's classification. For the concept of motif in folklore, and critiques thereof, see Dundes (1962); Ben-Amos (1980); Ben-Amos (1995). See also ch. 2, §3.1.

kingdom dependent on ring; drops it in water’); *yúmmed mǎya* ‘the mother of the water’ (motif F420 ‘water spirits’);⁴ the king looks at his reflection in the water after having been transformed and sees an extraordinarily beautiful woman (motif T11.5.1 ‘falling in love with one’s own reflection in water. (Narcissus.)’).⁵ But the most surprising motif in our folktale, and one which plays a fundamental role in its structure, is certainly motif D10 ‘transformation to person of different sex’.⁶

Motif D10 is relatively uncommon in literary and folk traditions cross-culturally. In both written and oral literature, it is predominantly found in narratives from the Indian cultural space,⁷ though it is not restricted to it. Some of its other occurrences in oral folk-literature come from the Middle-East–Egypt (El-Shamy 1980, 33–38), Turkey (Walker and Uysal 1992, 241–

⁴ In his index, Noy (Neuman 1954, 395) refers to Ginzberg (1909–1938, V:87, 204), who lists several occurrences of water spirits in Jewish literature. Ginzberg mentions the belief, also found in Greek literature, that “water is the abode of demons.”

⁵ See also motif J1791.6.1.

⁶ Similar relevant motifs are: D10.2 ‘change of sex after crossing water’; D12 ‘transformation: man to woman’; D695 ‘man transformed to woman has children’; T578 ‘pregnant man’.

⁷ For a thorough overview of the sources, see Brown (1927); Penzer (1927).

43), the Jews of Iraqi Kurdistan,⁸ and the Jews of Yemen⁹—although it appears in non-Middle Eastern traditions as well.¹⁰

Only one occurrence of motif D10 is to be found in classical Jewish literature. It is found in a story about a poor widower whose wife left him a nursing baby. The widower could not afford a wet nurse, and by way of miracle gained breasts and fed his son himself (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 53b).¹¹

Perhaps the most well-known occurrence of D10 in Western culture is the Greek myth of Tiresias, the blind prophet who, as a punishment from Hera for hurting a pair of copulating snakes, spends seven years as a woman and gives birth to children. After encountering another pair of copulating snakes and sparing them, he is released from his punishment. Having the experience of being both a man and a woman, Tiresias is asked to judge in an argument between Zeus and his wife Hera: who has more pleasure in sexual relations, men or women? Tiresias agrees with Zeus, and says that women's enjoyment is ten times greater.

An Indian story from the Mahabharata, the story of King Bhangaswana (Ganguli ca. 1900, 35–38, book 13, §12), shares

⁸ In addition to our folktale, tales number 3932, 13471, and 16376 at the Israel Folktale Archives Named in Honor of Dov Noy (IFA), University of Haifa.

⁹ Tale number 1235 at IFA.

¹⁰ For instance, it is found in Benin, China, the French-speaking region of Canada, Inuit regions, and Ireland. See Thompson (1955–1958, II:8–9); Thompson and Balys (1958, 97).

¹¹ Noy (Neuman 1954, 281) gives several cases of male embryos transformed into females in the womb.

many plot elements with our folktale. King Bhangaswana is punished by Indra for not including him in a sacrificial ceremony. He is transformed into a woman while bathing in a lake. Bhangaswana had one hundred sons as a man and one hundred sons as a woman. They all slew one another in a battle incited by Indra. When Indra pardons Bhangaswana, now living as an ascetic woman, he asks which of the children should be resurrected. Bhangaswana replies that those he had as a woman should be resurrected, since the affection of a woman for her children is greater than that of a man for his. Highly pleased by the woman's truthfulness, Indra resurrects all two hundred children. He then gives Bhangaswana the choice of being a man or a woman, but Bhangaswana chooses to remain a woman, since the pleasure a woman finds in sexual relations is greater than that of a man.

The many print and manuscript versions of the *Arabian Nights* include four stories which contain the motif of a change of gender: 'The Enchanted Spring', 'Hasan the King of Egypt', 'Warlock and the Young Cook of Baghdad', and 'Shahab al-Din' (stories number 191, 545, 412, and 435 in Marzolph, Leeuwen and Wassouf 2004). The latter two correspond to international tale-type ATU 681 'relativity of time' (Uther 2004, I:373; Marzolph, Leeuwen, and Wassouf 2004, 797), previously known as tale-type AT 681 'king in a bath; years of experience in a moment' (Aarne and Thompson 1961, 238). 'Hasan the King of Egypt' is reminiscent of an Egyptian oral tale (El-Shamy 1980, 33–38). In 'Warlock and the Young Cook of Baghdad' a transformed vizier gets married and gives birth to seven children; the transformed vizier

of ‘Hasan the King of Egypt’ gives birth to only a single child. In all four stories the change of sex is by means of dipping in water.

The oldest of the Middle-Eastern manifestation of the motif is the one of the tale of Khurafa (*Ḥadith Khurafa*).¹² In its most elaborate version, in the book *Al-Fākhir* by 9th-century writer Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Salama, Khurafa, taken prisoner by three *jinns*, hears the following story told by a man: the man was transformed into a woman after being trapped in a particular well; he then got married and gave birth to two children; after some time he went back to the same well, was transformed back into a man, got married again and had two more children.¹³

The final story that will be mentioned here is possibly the earliest recorded folktale of the Jews of Zakho. It also includes the transformation of men into women in proximity to water—in this case, the transformation of two men. This is a Jewish Zakho NENA text recorded by Socin as early as 1870 from Pineḥas of Zakho,¹⁴ which recounts the story of the two brothers ‘Ali and ‘Amar (Socin 1882). Sabar (2002b) has published an updated version of this story, written in language as if it were told in the 1950s, together with a commentary on the linguistic differences between the two versions. In this story, the son of ‘Amar and his friend go hunting. They chase after a gazelle for three days, and

¹² See Drory (1994), where she claims that *Ḥadith Khurafa* was one of the earliest “attempts to legitimize fiction in classical Arabic literature”. See also Marzolph, Leeuwen, and Wassouf (2004, 616).

¹³ This story is classified by El-Shamy (2004, 378, as tale-type 705B “I have begotten children from my loins, and from my womb!”: Khurâfah’s experience,” where he lists more of its occurrences.

¹⁴ Sabar (2002b, 613), suggests that this is Pineḥas Čilmèro.

on the third day they reach a river. The gazelle leaps over it and says to them, “Stop following me. God will, if you are men, you will become women; if you are women, you will become men!” (Sabar 2002b, 625). They marry men and live as women for seven years. One of them gives birth to a triplet of boys, and the other to a triplet of girls. One day they dress as men, take their horses, and ride to find the gazelle. Again they chase after her for three days, and then reach a river. The Gazelle leaps again and says the same words, and the two are transformed back into men and return to their homes.

Almost all of the stories mentioned here present a curious coupling: the proximity of motif D10 to water. Indeed, in his article about the motif in Indian literature, Brown (1927, 4) lists “bathing in an enchanted pool or stream” as the first of five means by which a change of sex is effected,¹⁵ and Penzer, after providing an overview of cases of sex transformation “by a magic pill, seal or plant, or merely by mutual agreement with a super-human being” (Penzer 1927, 224), writes that “as the *motif* travelled westward it seems that water became the more usual medium” (Penzer 1927, 224).

One more element of our story deserves comment: the name of the imam, Bahlul. The character of Bahlul, or Behlül Dane—the clever brother, or son, of caliph Harun Al-Rashid—is well-known from many folktales, especially those originating in

¹⁵ The other four are curse or blessing of a deity; exchanging sex with a Yakṣa, “a creature that is unique in possessing the power to make this remarkable exchange”; by magic; by the power of righteousness or in consequence of wickedness. See Brown (1927, 4–5).

eastern Turkey (Walker and Uysal 1966, 296). A whole sub-genre of folktales features him. In all of them he seems at first like a simpleton, or pretends to be one, but eventually proves his mental and moral superiority over everyone, including the caliph. One of the many Behlül Dane stories is particularly relevant to our folktale. In the story ‘Behlül Dane Teaches God’s Time versus Human Time’ (told by Hacı Mehmet Sivri in 1974; see Walker and Uysal 1992, 241–43), the caliph Harun Reşit is sceptical when he hears Behlül Dane saying, “I have a God whose one hour is equivalent to a thousand of our hours.” When entering the bathroom with a kettle of water, Harun Reşit has a vision in which he lives as a woman for years, gets married, and has children. He then wakes up to discover himself still in his bathroom.

4.0. *Baxtox hakoma-la* ‘your wife is a king’:

Gender Boundaries and Perplexity

Many scholars have commented on the cultural and social unrest and anxiety that undermining gender boundaries may create.¹⁶ In

¹⁶ For example, “Cross-dressing is about gender confusion.” About this sentence, taken from Marjorie Garber’s book *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (1992, 390), Tova Rosen (2003, 149–50), writes: “If clothing is a language, then cross-dressing poses a gender riddle. Clothes are intended both to cover and to reveal; they hide the body’s sexual signs and, at the same time, signify the binarism of the sexes. The concealed anatomical differences are replaced by a culturally determined gendered symbolism of clothing. Thus, in texts, as well as in life, clothing functions as a code for sexual (and other) differences. Moreover, the language of clothing does not only encode ‘masculinity’ or ‘femininity’, but rather points to the very constructedness of gender

our folktale, confusion generated by the focal point of motif D10—the notion that breaking genders boundaries is possible, even by magic—permeates many of the narrative elements. There is a latent sense of confusion everywhere: in the plot and the reasoning of its events, in the words and the actions of the characters, in the narration, even in the language of the folktale. From the very first event in the storyline, obscurity is present. The wazir's horse breaks into a gallop for no apparent reason. He then falls from it, loses his memory, and spends several years under another identity. The king is transformed into a woman by a water spirit, gets married, and has children. He has not done anything to enrage the water spirit to merit this unwelcome transformation.¹⁷

What is the reason for or purpose of these ordeals? Do they come as a punishment, or in order to teach some lesson? In many of the other stories built around these motifs, some rationale for the tormenting adventures undergone by the characters is given: they are either punished by enraged gods or spirits, or taught a lesson after showing disbelief. Not in our folktale. The king and the wazir's long and harsh ordeals come and then go away with

categories. Cross-dressing, on the other hand, manifests the discontinuity between the sexual body and the cultural gender and, thus, offers a challenge to easy notions of binarism.“ Also, Meiri (2011, 164–65): “Transsexuality evokes categorical and epistemic crises more than any other form of crossing of gender.... [T]ranssexuality, in its visibility, holds in itself the various anxieties evoked by different forms of crossing of gender” (my translation).

¹⁷ On gender transformation as unexpected and unwelcome, see Brown (1927, 6–9).

no apparent motive or benefit of a lesson learned. Even when their period of transformation is done and they regain their original identity, there are hardships involved—the disbelief of the wives, the king torn away from the children he gave birth to as a woman, the prince losing his beloved wife—and no greater power, position, wealth or wisdom—no compensation—is gained. This is a Kafkaesque folktale, almost as Kafkaesque as Kafka's own *Metamorphosis*, where the suffering of the protagonists is left unexplained and unresolved.

The words of the king after being transformed back into a man in his second encounter with the mother of the water, where we would expect him to rejoice at having recovered his identity, are

(45) *wi-má-b-ozən ʾə-nàqla?ʼ... lá-k-iʾən ma-ʾòzən.*¹

‘Oh, what shall I do now?... I do not know what to do.’

His confusion is evident, and is growing:

(46) *la-k-ʾa ma-ʾòza,ʼ ta-máni ʾáza ʾámra ʾána ʾhakòma-wan.*¹ *ta-máni ʾámra ʾána bax-ʾhakòma-wan.*¹

‘She does not know what to do, to whom would she go [and] say “I am the king”? To whom would she say “I am the wife of the king”?’

This reaction of the king, his manhood restored, seems even more helpless than his reaction to his first transformation, where he simply wore his original man's clothing and was taken away by the fishermen.

The peak of confusion and loss of identity in the story is found in the secondary character, the wazir. When he is found by

the hunters after he has fallen from his horse, the following short dialogue takes place:

(51) *là-g-maḥke,*¹ *la-hè la-lá,*¹ *g-əmɾile m̀ani-wət?*¹ *g-émer là-k-i`en,*
*wéle p̀sì`a.*¹ *m-èka wét?* *g-émer là-k-i`en.*¹

‘He does not speak, not “yes” [and] not “no,” they say to him “who are you?” He says, “I don’t know,” he is wounded. “Where are you from?” He says, “I don’t know.”’

The wazir’s words are at variance with his appearance, a tension between his external identity markers and his own lack of identity: he is recognised by the hunters as being an important person by his clothing and horse, but the external aspects of his identity do not help him when he loses his sense of self.

The atmosphere of confusion is not created by the events of the storyline alone; stylistic features of the narrative contribute to it as well. For instance, the characters are nameless. Only one character, who appears towards the end of the story, has a name: the imam Bahlul. It is interesting to note that the named imam Bahlul plays a role of clarifying the events and restoring order. Indeed, also the children of the wazir, who play no role in the story as characters, are given names: Mirza-Maḥamad, Aḥmad, and Fatma. Their only function is to be named. The knowledge of their names is used as proof of identity. That is, once again, names and naming take part in restoring order. The lack of names of characters, which is a well-known characteristic of fairy-tales in itself, contributes to the confusion of the listener due to the identity transformations in our folktale. Furthermore, the confusion is aggravated. Our folktale contains three kings (the main character; the father of the prince; and the prince, who is also

referred to as king), three queens (the wife of the main character; the mother of the prince; and the woman who used to be king, who is referred to as queen after marrying the prince), and three women (the main character; the wazir's wife; the main character's wife). These sets of characters are referred to as 'the king', 'the queen', and 'the woman' respectively, without specification.

It seems that even the teller of the story herself partakes in the general bafflement. The following episode occurs just before the wazir goes out for the ride which will bring about the regaining of his memory:

(55) 'áwa¹ qámle xà-yoma,¹ g-ámri wéle ḥakòma,¹ 'átle tèra.¹
ḥakóma dóhun màtle.¹ 'átle téra g-mandèle.¹

'He rose one day, they say there's a king, who has a bird.
Their king died. He has a bird which they throw.'

This episode, which seems incoherent and has no clear ties to preceding or subsequent events, is located at a crucial point of the storyline, just before all the entanglements of the story begin to be resolved.

Gender transformation spreads confusion and chaos even in the grammatical structure of the language of the folktale: at the points of transformation, as well as when the king later recounts his experiences, the use of referential elements with specified gender—pronouns and conjugations—becomes unclear. Grammatical elements of the 'wrong' gender are used both before

and after a transformation takes place. For example, in (44)–(46):¹⁸

(44) *pāš-la* *gòra*.¹...

become.PFV-3FS man.M

‘She became a man...’

(46) *qám-la* *lwiš-í-la* *júlle* *đid-a*.¹...

rise.PFV-3FS dress.PFV-ACC.3PL-3FS clothes.PL GEN-3FS

‘She rose [and] wore her clothes...’

(46) ...*mxé-la* *l-úrxa*

hit.PFV-3FS on-way.F

‘...and started walking.’

And also, (79)–(81):

(79) *báxt-ox* *hakòma-la*.¹...

wife.F-POSS.2MS king.M-COP.3FS

‘Your wife is a king’;

(80) *k-xáze* *gòr-a* *híle*.¹...

ind-see.IPFV.3M.SG husabnd.M-POSS.3FS COP.3MS

‘He [= the king] sees it is her [= the king’s] husband’;

(81) *g-émer* *yalúnkəd* *mà?*¹ *’a[he]t-gòra wát!*¹

ind-say.IPFV.3MS children-GEN what you.MS-man.M COP.2MS

‘He [= the husband] says [to the king]: “Children of what?

You are a man!”’

(81) *màto*¹ *yalúnke* *mes-ən-nu-lax?*¹

how children bring.IPFV-1MS-ACC.3PL-DAT.2FS

“How will I bring you [feminine] the children?”’

¹⁸ For the purpose of clarifying the grammatical gender discrepancies, the following examples are glossed. For explanation of the abbreviations used see ch. 1, fn. 42.

The same grammatical confusion occurs in other places in our folktale as well.¹⁹

5.0. ‘The King and the Wazir’: The Text

This folktale,²⁰ ‘The King and the Wazir’, told by Ḥabuba Messusani, was recorded on 7 January 2013 at Ḥabuba’s home in Jerusalem’s Katamonim neighbourhood, where many of the Jewish immigrants from Kurdistan settled when arriving in 1951. Ḥabuba was born in Zakho in 1936 and came to Jerusalem in 1951. As mentioned, she is the daughter of the famous storyteller Mamo Yona Gabbay.²¹ Present in the recording session were Ḥabuba Messusani (HM), Batia Aloni (BA), Prof. Geoffrey Khan (GK), and myself. The recording ID is HM130107T4 00:04–12:16.²²

¹⁹ This linguistic abnormality appears also in the story of the brothers ‘Ali and ‘Amar; see Socin (1882, 164, ln. 6; Sabar 2002b, 621, no. 51).

²⁰ This folktale clearly belongs to the genre of fairy-tale (*Märchen*). It presents the genre’s distinctive characteristics: unknown time and place of happening, nameless protagonists, archetypical characters, miraculous incidents, and supernatural beings. That being said, keep in mind Dundes’s assertion (1964, 252): “...thus far in the illustrious history of the discipline [= folkloristics], not so much as one genre has been completely defined.”

²¹ See fn. 2 above.

²² The recording is available for listening on the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Database Project site at <https://nena.ames.cam.ac.uk/dialects/78/>.

- (1) HM: ^Hhayá mélex^H xá ḥakòma¹ u-wazìra.¹ HM: There was a king, a king, and a wazir.
- (2) ḥakóma g-émer ta-wazíra dide,¹ d²³-áx xàzax¹ má hìle¹ ^Hmaṣàv^{H1} bážer dèni.¹ The king says to his wazir, “Let us see what is the situation of our town.
- (3) b-lóšax júlle dád ^Hragìl,^{H1} hàdxax,¹ júlləd dārwiše,¹ b-áx zàvrax.¹ We shall wear these ordinary clothes [lit. clothes of regular], like that, beggars’ clothes, we shall go [and] wander around.”
- (4) g-émer[r]e go-’èni.¹²⁴ He says to him, “upon my eyes.”²⁴
- (5) g-émer náblax xa-ğolàma ’ámma,¹ g-émer là.¹ He says, “Shall we take a servant with us?” he says, “No.”
- (6) ʔón xápča ’awàye,¹ ʔixàla,¹ u-drí go-kásta dīdox,¹ Carry some things, food, and put [them] in your bag,
- (7) ’á[hə]t go-mahíne dīdox, ’àna go-mahíne dīdi¹ kútran b-áx. you on [lit. in] your horse, I on [lit. in] my horse. Both of us will go.
- (8) [m]páqlu básər gəššra,¹ They went out, [and right] after the bridge,
- (9) mahíne dād wàzir¹ dhərra.¹²⁵ ʔí u-di²⁶ u-’rəqla u-’rəqla u-’rəqla u-’rəqla u-qam-nablále ’èmma,¹ hìl¹ the wazir’s horse broke into gallop. I and di²⁶ she ran and ran and ran and ran and took him [= the wazir] with her, until a distance [lit. way] of some five kilometres [where] she dropped him.
 ʔúrxe^{H3} eze^H xamšá ^Hkelométer^H qam-mamp[ə]lále.¹

²³ Contraction of the interjection *de*.

²⁴ Idiomatic expression meaning ‘I will fulfill your request’.

²⁵ The Modern Hebrew root *dhr* is used here with NENA morphology.

²⁶ Sabar (2002a, 141): “*day-day-day*: sounds describing speed of racing animals.”

- (10) *pášle hákoma* ^{H1}*levàd*, ^{H1}*lá-k-i'e* The king was left [lit. became] alone, he does not know where he should go, where he should not go.²⁸
 ^ʿ*éka* ^ʿ*àl*, ^ʿ*éka lá* ^ʿ*àzəl*.¹²⁷
- (11) *zəlle*.¹ He started walking [lit. he went].
- (12) *zəlle*²⁹ *xzéle xá*, ¹*xawòra*.¹ He went²⁹ [and] saw a river.
 *xawóra k-tʿat mà-yle?*¹ Do you know what is *xawóra*?
- (13) GK: ... *he*... GK: ... Yes...
- (14) HM: *xawòra*, ¹*Hnàhar*.^{H1} HM: *xawóra*, a river.
- (15) *xzéle-xa xawòra*, ¹*rùwwa*.¹ He saw a river, [a] big [one].
- (16) *qámle túle ž*³⁰*-dáv*... *tàma*.¹ He rose [and] sat down upon that... there.
- (17) *šlaxle hásak dídox*³¹ *Hna'alà*...^{H1} He took off, excuse my language,³¹ his shoes..., [and] put his feet in the water. He took out some food [and] ate, took out his coffee kettle [and] made himself a coffee, he played with his ring, like that. His ring fell into the water.
 qundáre dide, ¹*dréle* ^ʿ*áqle go-*
 ṁàya, ¹*mopáqle xápča* ^ʿ*ixála*
 xəlle, ¹*mopáqle józi díde* ^ʿ*úzele*
 xa-qàhwa, ¹*mto'álle bád* ^ʿ*asáqsa*
 dide hādxa. ¹*asáqsa díde mpélla*
 go-ṁàya.¹

²⁷ Note the use of two allomorphic forms of the same verb within one sentence: *ʿàl*, *ʿàzəl*.

²⁸ Idiomatic expression meaning ‘he did not know where to go, he was utterly perplexed’.

²⁹ 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. 2, fn. 102.

³⁰ Contraction of *rəš-*.

³¹ Sabar (2002a, 169) on *hásak dōxun*: “All present/of you excluded (said after saying a dirty word).”

- (18) *wày g-émer¹ mpàlla¹ átta lá-
k-i²an² éka má b-òzen,¹ d-lá
asàqsa.¹ qàmle,¹ šlaxle júlle dide¹
u-g-émer b-àn,¹ kóšən go-ṁàya,¹
zé³li³ éka mpàlla.¹ mapqənnə.¹* “Oh!” he says, “It fell, now I do not know where, what I shall do, without a ring.” He rose, took off his clothes, and he says, “I shall go, go down into the water, [since] I know where it fell. I shall bring it out.”
- (19) *mpáqle, yímməd ṁáya³² sèla.¹
mxéla-[-ʔəl]le xá... hənnə¹³³
rašóma³⁴ go-rèše,¹ qam-ʔozále xà
^Hbaḥorà,^H lá g-hanélox ʔəbba
men[xət].¹ ḥakòma pásšle
^Hbaḥurà.^H* [When] he went out [of the water], the Mother of the Water³² came. She struck him with one... *this*,³³ *rašòma*³⁴ upon his head. She turned him into such a girl, you could not stare enough at [lit. you would not enjoy (i.e., be satisfied) to stare at her]. The king became a young woman.
- (20) *k-xáze gyàne,¹ bràta-le!¹ xà
sqélta! lá g-hanèlox ʔəbba.¹* He sees himself [= his reflection in the river], he is a woman! So beautiful! You could not enjoy [staring enough] at.
- (21) *[m]páqle l-wàrya,¹ júllet gùre-lu
táma. lúšle júlle dide¹ túle
l-tàma.¹³⁵* He went out [of the water], men’s clothes were there. He wore his clothes. He sat there.³⁵
- (22) *sèlu,¹ ánya¹ dád g-dóqí hənnə¹
šabakvànə¹ g-əbe dóqí g-doqí* Came, these, who catch *this*, fishermen, they want to catch, they catch fish. They see this

³² Sabar (2002a, 177): “a female ghost that dwells in the river.”

³³ See note on *hənnə* in §5.0 of the Introduction.

³⁴ Sabar (2002a, 292): “vertical hand used as cursing sign; a blow with open hand on top of the head (to indicate disdain, disapproval...).” Also appears in Rivlin (1959, 226, 240).

³⁵ Verbal forms and pronouns in this sentence are masculine. The woman is still referred to as a man here.

- nunyàsa.*¹ *k-xáze* ^{ʔé} ^H*baḥurá*^H
*hádxa sqə̀lta,*¹ *g-ámri wálla bār*
*ḥakóma dèni,*¹ *hay-ṭlá[ha]* *šə́nne*
wélu bə-zvára xa-^H*baḥurá*^H *ṭàle,*¹
*xa-sqə̀lta,*¹ *xa-bràta u-là*¹ *g-ráze*
*bəd-čù-xa.*¹
- (23) BA: *ʔaqə́le la-qṭéʔle* *ʔəl-čù-xa.*¹
- (24) HM: *ʔéha b-nabláxla* ^H*ulày*^H
*raze-ʔə́bba.*¹
- (25) *qámli sèlu,*¹ *sèlu,*¹³⁶ *qam-nablíla*
qámáye kəz-ḥakóma, yímme u-
*bàbe,*¹ *qam...* *g-əmri,*¹ *ʔéha*
ḡe[r]... *ʔé ḡèr-məndi-la*¹ *go-*^H*kól*
ha-ʔolám^H *lez-moxwà[sə]*¹ *bəs*³⁷-
sqə́lta-la mən ráḥel ʔəmmènu
*ʔafə́llu.*¹
- (26) ^H*tòv.*^{H1} *məsélu* ^H*yèled,*^H *ʔéne...*¹
*qam-xazə̀la,*¹ *ʔšə́qle ʔə́lla,*¹ *qam-*
*ʔebə̀la.*¹
- (27) *zə́llu məsélu qam-barxíla ʔə́lle,*¹
*u-ʔáy šàta,*¹ *smə̀xla.*¹ *[h]wélela*
*xa-bróna.*¹ *šátəd...*¹ *pə̀šla,*¹ *báser*
- so beautiful girl, they say, “Indeed the son of our king, for three years they have been seeking [lit. turning around] for a girl for him, a beautiful [girl] [or: a beauty], a girl, and he is not satisfied with anyone.”
- BA: His mind was not cut on anyone [= He was not satisfied with anyone].
- HM: “This one [= the girl], we shall take her [to him], perhaps he would be satisfied with her.”
- They rose [and] came, they came,³⁶ they took her first to the king, his mother and father, they... say, “That [girl is something] different... she is something different, in the entire world there is not [a girl] like her, she is even more beautiful than Rachel our Mother.”³⁸
- Good. They brought the child [= the prince]. His eyes... he saw her, he fell in love with her, he loved [or: wanted] her.
- They went [and] brought [and] married them [lit. they blessed her to him], and in that year she became pregnant.

³⁶ See fn. 29 above.

³⁷ The shift š > s is due to the following consonant.

³⁸ Rachel the Matriarch.

- tré šǝnne,¹ smǝxla, hwélela xa-bróna xǝt.¹ báser tré tǝlǝ[ha]*
šǝnne¹ smǝxla hwélela xa-bróna xǝt hay-tǝlǝha.¹
- (28) *qǝmlu^H anšey^H-bǝžer,¹ ʾo*
ḥakóma mǝrre,¹ g-émer b-ózen¹
seherǝne.¹³⁹ k-tǝt má-yla se-
herǝne?¹
- (29) GK: *mm*
- (30) HM: *mǝ-yla?¹*
- (31) GK: *^Hmesibǝ.^H*
- (32) BA: *^Hnaxon.^H*
- (33) HM: *seherǝne nǝpqax ʾǝl-e...¹*
- (34) BA: *^Hmesibǝ.^H*
- (35) GK: *^Hpǝknik.^H*
- (36) HM: *...^Hpǝknǝk.^H*
- (37) *[m]pǝqlu b-seherǝne,¹ u-b-na-*
blǝnna báxti u-yalúnke dǝdi,
kúlle ʾixǝla¹ ʾǝna b-yǝwǝn ta-nǝš
bǝžer,¹ bǝlaš.¹ ʾǝse ʾǝl-xǝšbǝni,¹
- She gave birth to a son [lit. a son was born to her]. A year... she stayed [= she did not become pregnant for one year, and then] after two years she became pregnant [again] and gave birth to another son. After two [or] three years she became pregnant [again and] gave birth to another son, that's three.
- They rose, the people of the city, the king said, he says, "I shall do a *seherǝne*."³⁹ Do you know what is a *seherǝne*?
- GK: Mm.
- HM: What is it?
- GK: A party.
- BA: Right.
- HM: *Seherǝne*, we go out to the...
- BA: A party.
- GK: A picnic.
- HM: ...picnic.
- They went out for the *seherǝne*, "and I shall take my wife and my children, I will give all of the food to the people of the city, for free. They should come at my expense, because

³⁹ Sabar (2002a), 237: "communal procession and picnic in the country side (during Passover or Succoth Holidays)."

- čukun-kálsi [h]wélela hay-
t̪à[ha] bnóne.¹ my daughter-in-law gave birth
to three boys.”
- (38) [m]pàqlu.¹ They went out.
- (39) kàlse-ši,¹ ^Hmalkà^H-la,¹ ...wéle
^Hkéter^H b-rèša.¹ His daughter-in-law, she is also
a queen,... [she has] a crown
on her head.
- (40) zàllu,¹ wélu, ¹aw-yòma¹ xèllu,¹
štèlu,¹ kùllu¹ welu bə-rqàza¹ u-
dòla¹ u-zərne⁴⁰ u¹ u-mád¹ g-šbe¹
b-¹[w]ázat¹ faràhe.¹ They went, they were, on that
day they ate, they drank, eve-
ryone was dancing, and *dola*
and *zurne*,⁴⁰ and whatever is
necessary for a celebration [lit.
whatever is needed in making
celebrations].
- (41) ¹éha sēla xa-hánna b-rèša,¹
g-ámra wàlla¹ b-azána kəz-gəván
^Hnàhar.^H ¹asáqsa dídi mpəlwala
tāma.¹ u-¹asáqsa lá xəzyàli.¹
qam-¹ozáli ¹e-yəmməd məya
^Hbaḥurà^{H1}. That one [= the woman], some
this came into her head, she
says [to herself], “Indeed, I
shall go to the riverside. My
ring fell there. And I did not
find [lit. see] the ring. That
Mother of the Water made
[= turned] me into a girl.”
- (42) zǝlla l-tāma,¹ zǝlla l-tāma⁴¹ ¹əna,¹
báz monáxla bəd-màya¹ ¹éna
nžórra bə[d]-¹asəqsa.¹ qam-xa-
zyàla.¹ She went there, she went
there,⁴¹ her eye, she only
looked at the water, her eye
caught a glance of her ring.
She saw it.
- (43) wáy! g-ámra¹ wálla wéla ¹asáqsa
¹asáqsət ḥakòme-la.¹ p-košàna.¹ Oh! She says, “Indeed here is
the ring!” It is the ring of the
king. “I shall go down [there].”

⁴⁰ The *zurne*, a conical wind instrument with a double reed (similar to the Western oboe), is played together with a large double-headed bass drum, the *dola*, during weddings and other happy occasions.

⁴¹ See fn. 29 above.

- (44) *šlixíla júlle dída, šlixíla júlle*
dída,¹ kùšla.¹ kùšla,¹⁴² g-šba šáqla
^Htabà'at,^H séla yímmed m̀àya,¹
mxéla-la xá¹ rašòma,¹⁴³ pššla
hakòma.¹ pššla gòra.¹ She took off her clothes, she took off her clothes, she went down [into the water]. She went down [into the water],⁴² she wants to take the ring, the Mother of the Water came, she hit her with a *rašòma*⁴³ she became the king. She became a man.
- (45) *wi-má b-ozán 'ə-nàqla?¹ júlləd*
baxtàsa 'ísən!¹ lá-k-i'ən ma-
'òzən.¹⁴⁴ "Oh what shall I do now [lit. this time]? There are women's clothes! I do not know what to do."⁴⁴
- (46) *qám̄la lwišíla júlle dída¹ mxéla*
l-úrxa b-[']àqla u-dí u-dí u-dí u-
dí u-sèla.¹ la-k-í'a ma-'òza,¹ ta-
máni 'áza 'ámra 'ána hakòma-
wán.¹ ta-máni 'ámra 'ána bax-
hakòma-wán.¹ She rose [and] wore her clothes and started walking [lit. hit the road by legs] and onwards she came. She does not know what to do, to whom would she go [and] say "I am the king"? To whom would she say "I am the wife of the king"?
- (47) *lá-k-i'a mà-[']oza,¹ 'ətla t̄lá[ha]*
bnóne m̀anne.¹⁴⁵ ^Htóv^H m̄t̄ela,¹
^Haxšáv^H 'áya b-šoqàнна,¹ sélan
kəz-wàzir.¹ She does not know what to do. She has three sons from him.⁴⁵ Good, she arrived, now we shall leave her, we come [lit. came] to the wazir.
- (48) *wázir sèlu, 'ànya¹ d̀əd¹ g-èzi,¹*
g-dóq̄i¹ h̀anna¹ t̄ere.¹ nəš̀are.¹ The wazir, they came, those [people] that go [and] catch *this*, birds. Hunters.

⁴² See fn. 29 above.

⁴³ See fn. 34 above.

⁴⁴ The verbal forms with which the king refers to himself in (45) are masculine.

⁴⁵ Unlike in (45), where the king is referred to using masculine forms, in (46)–(47) he is referred to using feminine forms.

- (49) BA: *nəčāre.*¹ BA: Hunters.
- (50) HM: *g-él g-mènxi,*¹ *ʔò¹ xá nàša,*¹ HM: He walks, they look.
*mux-ḥakòma-le wázir,*¹ *xá-kma* [They see] this, one man, he is
*júlle sqile-ʔalle,*¹ *ʔe mahíne, wele-* like [= he looks like] a king,
*mpíla l-tàm.*¹ the wazir, some beautiful
clothes he has, and a horse [lit.
that horse], he [the wazir] had
fallen there [lit. he is fallen
there].
- (51) *là-g-maḥke,*¹ *la-hè la-lá,*¹ *g-əmríle* He does not speak, not “yes”
*màni-wət?*¹ *g-émer là-k-iʔen, wéle* [and] not “no,” they say to
him, “who are you?” He says,
*pšì⁴⁶ a.*¹⁴⁶ *m-èka wét?* *g-émer là-* “I don’t know,” he is wounded.
*k-iʔen.*¹ *^Hzikarón^H díde zàlla.*¹⁴⁷ *la-* “Where are you from?” He
k-táxer čù-məndi. says, “I don’t know.” His
memory was gone [lit. went].
He does not remember any-
thing.
- (52) *qámli qam-nablile,*¹ *qam-daréle* They rose and took him, they
*gó,*¹ *ʔe hənna,*¹ *gó xastaxàna,*¹ put him in a, *this*, in a hospital,
they said to that... eh doctor,
*márru ta-dáw...*¹ *e dóktor g-émer* he [= one of the hunters] says,
“*òh!* This is a great [= im-
portant] man, we saw him [he
had] fallen down from a horse,
fix him, treat him.”
*ʔòh! ʔó xà nàša rúwwa-le,*¹ *qam-*
*xazáxle wele-mpíla mən-mahíne,*¹
*msàdərre,*¹ *mtàpəl*⁴⁸ *ʔəbbe.*¹
- (53) *mtopəlle*⁶³ *pášle gó...*¹ *xastaxàna*¹ He treated him... he stayed in
the hospital for about one year.
*^Héze^H xá, xá šàta.*¹ *g-mbaqríle* They ask him “where are you
from?” He says “I don’t know.”
*m-èka wét,*¹ *g-émer là-k-iʔən,*¹

⁴⁶ The Modern Hebrew root *pš*⁴⁶ is used here with NENA morphology.

⁴⁷ Verb in the feminine form, although *^Hzikarón^H* is masculine. See fn. 55 below.

⁴⁸ The Modern Hebrew root *tpl* is used here with NENA morphology. Since the historical emphatic quality of the consonant *ṭ* is not retained in Modern Hebrew, it is pronounced as *t* by Ḥabuba.

- 'éka b-ât?'¹ là-k-i'ən,¹ pášle
 l-tàma.¹
- (54) xà,¹ muxwàsox¹ profèsor¹⁴⁹
 g-émer ysálox⁵⁰ kàslì¹
 b-yà[wə]nnox¹ 'ixàla¹ štàya,¹ 'ótli
 šùla,¹ 'úzli xápča šùla,¹ mád
 g-ábət 'òz.¹ g-émer hàwwa.¹ lá-
 k-i'e čù-məndi.¹
- (55) 'áwa¹ qámle xà-yoma,¹ g-ámri
 wéle ḥakòma,¹ 'ótle tēra.¹
 ḥakóma dóhun mət̤le.¹ 'ótle tēra
 g-mandèle.¹
- (56) 'óha rkúle mahíne dide,¹ mahíne
 díde dhərra,¹ dhərra,¹ dhərra,¹⁵¹
 'áka mpəlle¹ mpəlle xa-gar-xét
 'əl-təm.¹ ^Haval^H-mpəlle,¹ la-
 brélele čù-məndi,¹ txərre.¹
- (57) wáy! g-èmer¹ 'ána wàzir wéli¹ ké-
 le ḥakòma? 'éka zəlle? 'ána pášli
^Hkvàr¹ mevugàr,¹ zakèn,^H mà-
 b-amrən?¹ 'éka p-šaqláli bəxti?
 la-k-šaqlàli,¹ ^Hkvár^H la-g-bàli!¹
 'ána wəl pəšli...¹ la-g-mhémana
 'əbbi¹ díwən 'ána wàzir!¹
- “Where will you go?” “I don’t know.” He stayed there.
 One, like yourself, a profes-
 sor,⁴⁹ says, “Come stay with
 me, I will give you food [and]
 drink, I have work [for you],
 do some work for me, do what-
 ever you like.” He says, “all
 right.” He does not know any-
 thing.
 He rose one day, they say
 there’s a king, who has a bird.
 Their king died. He has a bird
 which they throw.
 He [the wazir] rode his horse,
 his horse galloped, galloped,
 galloped. Where he had fallen,
 he fell there again. But [when]
 he fell, nothing happened to
 him, he remembered.
 “Wow!” he says, “I was a wa-
 zir! Where is the king? Where
 has he gone? I became already
 old, what will I say? Would
 [lit. where would] my wife
 take me [back]? She wouldn’t
 take me [back], she doesn’t
 love [or: want] me anymore.
 Indeed I became... She won’t
 believe me that I am the wa-
 zir!”

⁴⁹ Directed to Prof. Khan.

⁵⁰ *Dativus ethicus*.

⁵¹ The Modern Hebrew root *dhr* is used here with NENA morphology.

- (58) *séle* ʔal-bèsa,¹ *kəz-bàbe*,¹ *kəz-daw-bàbe d-qam-hənnàlle*,¹⁵²
g-emərre,¹ *mà qəšṭa?*¹ *g-émer ḥàl*¹
u-qəšṭa dīdī ḥàdxa wəla.¹ *dīdī u-*
dəd-ḥakōma.¹ *ḥakōma zálle b-xá*
ʔàl,¹ *lá-k-iʔen ʔéka zəlle*,¹ *u-ʔána*
zəlli b-xà-ʔal.¹ He came home, to his father,
to that father of his that did
such and such for him,⁵² he
says to him, “What is the
story?” he says, “My story [lit.
situation and story] is thus. Of
mine and of the king. The king
went to one side, I do not
know where he went, and I
went to another [lit. one] side
[= we separated].”
- (59) *g-émer de-qú sà bròni*,¹
k-taxréten ʔəka-wəṭ,¹ *go-d-éma*
*bəžer?*¹ *g-émer hə*.¹ *k-taxrátte*
šəmməd bəsox,¹ *k-iʔətte?*¹ *g-émer*
hə.¹ *qu-d-àx*¹ *b-ásən ʔəmmox*.¹ He [the father] says, “So go
ahead [lit. rise come] my son,
do you remember where you
were?” He says, “Yes.” “Do you
remember the name of your
home, do you know it?” He
says “Yes.” “So let’s go [lit. rise
that we shall go], I’ll come
with you.”
- (60) *šqálle ʔáwa u-báxte, làtle*
yalúnke,¹ ʔó *pášle mux-bròne*.¹ *se-*
d-àx b-ásən ʔəmmox,¹ *zálle*
ʔəmmə.¹ He took his wife [lit. he took
himself and his wife], he
doesn’t have children, he [the
wazir] was [lit. became] like a
son to him [lit. his son]. “Let’s
go [lit. go that we shall go], I’ll
come with you.” He went with
him.
- (61) *zálle ʔəmmə*,¹⁵³ *mtəqtəqlu*
[b-]dàrga,¹ *[m]páqla xa-*
xəddàmta,¹ —ʔátle *pàre*,¹ *wàzir* He went with him,⁵³ they
knocked on the door, a maid
opened—he has money, he is a
wazir, he receives [lit. take] a
salary, his wife receives [lit.

⁵² The irregular root *hnl*, with gemination of the second root letter, is derived from *hənnā*; see fn. 33 above and §5.0 of the Introduction. Sabar (2002a, 151): “to say this and that; to do this and that, have inter-course....”

⁵³ See fn. 29 above.

- híle, ¹ k-šáqəl mǝʿaš, ¹ báxte* take] the [= his] salary—she
k-šáqla mǝʿaš, ¹—g-əmrále mǝni- [= the maid] tells him “Who
wǝt ʾàhǝt? ¹ g-émer ʾána wǝzir are you?” he says, “I am the
wǝn, ¹ ʾó bésa dǝdi-le. ¹ wazir, this house is mine.”
- (62) *g-ámra wǝy! ¹ zǎlla mǝfra ta-* She says, ‘Huh?!’ She went
báxte g-əmra-xa-šǝzǎna wǝl-sèle, [and] said to his wife, she says,
g-émer ¹ ʾána wǝzir wǝn, ¹ ʾó bésa “A madman indeed came, he is
dǝdi-le. ¹ saying ‘I am the wazir, this
 house is mine.”
- (63) *g-ámra mǝʾurre, ¹ máʾurre xǎzyan* She [the wife] says, “Show him
ʾèma šǝzǎna. ¹ k-xazyǎ-le la- in, show him in [and] I’ll see
g-yaʾǎle. ¹ what madman [this is].” She
 sees him [and] she doesn’t
 know [= recognise] him.
- (64) *g-emǝrra ʾáhat bǎxti wǎt, ¹* He tells her, “You are my wife,
šǝmmǝd bróni, mirza-maḥǎmad- the name of my son is Mirza-
íle, ¹ šǝmmǝd bróni xèt, ¹ ʾàḥmad- Maḥamad, the name of my
íle, ¹ šǝmmǝd brǎti ¹ fǎṭma-le. ¹ other son is Aḥmad, the name
 of my daughter is Fatma. I, this
 is my story [lit. my situation
 and story is thus].”
- (65) *g-ámrale ḥmòl, ¹ tú tamà, ¹ xǎ* She tells him, “Wait, sit over
ʾála. ¹ nablǎnnox kǝz-ʾimam. ¹ there, aside. I’ll take you to the
ḥǎkan-ʾimam mǝrrǝ dǎ[d] ¹ imam. If the imam says that
^Hbeʾemét ^H ʾá[hǎ]t gòri wét, ¹ góri, you are my husband, [you are
 not, you are not my husband.”
láʾ làʾ ¹ lèwǝt góri. ¹ my] husband, [if] not, [then]
- (66) *g-emǝrra ^Hbǝssǝder. ^H* He tells her, “Okay.”
- (67) *ḥákoma šíne ṭréle ṭréle ʾáw* The king also, he rode and
ḥakòma, ¹ séle ʾǎp-awa. ¹ séle, rode that king. He also came.
séle⁵⁴ mṭéle ʾəl bésa. ¹ séle g-pásxa He came, he came⁵⁴ he arrived
 home. He came, the maid
 opened the door, he says, “I

⁵⁴ See fn. 29 above.

- dárga xəddàmta*,¹ *g-émer 'ána* am the king, I... that is my
ḥakóma wən.¹ *'ána... 'áya bəxti-* wife."
la.¹
- (68) *'əlla g-əmrá, ləwan 'ána bəxtox*,¹ On the contrary she replies [lit. says], "I am not your wife, you
'əḥət wət-piša gèr šəkál,¹ *lá-welox* changed [lit. you became a dif-
hàdxa!¹ *'átta-wal pəšlox gèr* ferent shape], you were not
hənnā!¹ *'ána là g-əmhémənan* like that! Now you indeed be-
'əbbox.¹ *g-émerra* ^Htòv.^H not believe you." He tells her,
 "Okay."
- (69) *'əp-awa zólle qam-matùle, 'éka* He also went, [someone] sat
wəzír,¹ *qam-matwíle xəzre*.¹ him down where the wazir
 [was], they sat him down next
 to him.
- (70) *yóm 'əròta*,¹ *yóm 'əròta-g-əmrí* "Friday, [on] Friday our imam
b-əse 'ímam dèni.¹ *ímam dèni* will come. Our imam he will
'áwa b-qàte.¹ *k-ì'e*.¹ *'ótle* decree. He knows. He has [the
^Hnevu'à.^H *k-xáza 'ákan d-íle* ^Hbe- gift of] prophecy. He sees
'emèt^H *ḥakóma*.¹ whether he is really the king."
- (71) *wállā k-èse*,¹ *'ímam dóhun yóm* Indeed, their imam comes [on]
'ərròta,¹ *k-xáze bəhlul-íle*,¹ *'axón* Friday, he [= the king] sees it
 is Bahlul, the king's brother.
ḥakóm,¹ *k-xàze 'àwa-le*.¹ He [= the king] sees it is him.
- (72) *g-əmríle wállā k-ì'èt*,¹ *'é hənnā*¹ They tell him, "Indeed, you
dèni,...¹ ^Hmišpát^H *dèni qam-* know, our *this*... our case [lit.
*mesáxla*⁵⁵ *kəšlox*.¹ ^Hkt^H *là-mṣax*.¹ trial] we brought to you. Be-
'òha,¹ *ḥakòma-le*,¹ *'ó wəzír-íle*.¹ cause we are not able [to de-
 decide whether] that [man] is
 the king [and] this [is the] wa-

⁵⁵ Verb in the feminine form, although ^Hmišpát^H is masculine. This may be because NENA šarì'əta/šər'əta 'trial, judgment' is feminine. See fn. 47 above.

- (78) *g-émərre bròni¹ mà¹ ^Hbakašá^H*
dìdox hîla?¹ g-émer hâl¹ u-qəsta¹
didi¹ hādxa wéla.¹ qam-xazéla xá
^H*baḥurá^H rāš,¹ bastád ^Hnàhar,^{H1}*
qam-meséla ṭàli¹ u-qam-gorənnā¹
u-[ʔ]tlí ṭlá[ha] bnóne mənna,¹
u-zà¹la báxti!¹ He tells him, “My son, what is your request?” He says, “This is my story [lit. my situation and story was thus]. They [= the fishermen] saw a girl on the river bank, they brought her to me, and I married her, and I have three sons from her, and my wife has disappeared!”
- (79) *g-émer là zá¹la báxtox,¹ báxtox*
hâl¹ u-qəsta hādxa-la,¹ báxtox
ḥakòma-la.¹ ʔátta mnablənnox
kəsle,¹ u-, ʔàwa¹ b-qatə¹la šər⁶⁰áta
dìdox.¹ He says, “Your wife has not disappeared, your wife this is her story [lit. the situation and story is thus], your wife is a king, now I shall take you to him, and, he will decree [lit. cut] your judgement.”
- (80) *g-émərre d-àx.¹ zólle qam-*
nabálle.¹ k-xáze gòra⁶⁰ hîle,¹ ʔáwa
k-î¹e, wéle báxta gòra⁶⁰ hîle.¹
g-əmrále⁶¹ kèlu yalúnke dídî?¹
g-əbànnu!⁶² He tells him, “Let’s go.” He went and led him. He [= the king] sees it is her [= the king’s] husband. He [= the king] knows, he was a woman, this is [= was] her husband. She [= the king] tells him, “Where are my children? I want⁶² them!”
- (81) *g-émer yalúnkəd mà?¹ ʔa[he]t-*
gòra wət!¹ mātə¹ yalúnke
mesənnu-làx?⁶³ He [= the husband] says, “Children of what? You are a man! How will I bring you⁶³ the children?”
- (82) *g-ámra hâl¹ u-qəsta dídî hādxa-*
la.¹ ʔána¹ mpəlla¹ ʔasəqsa¹ dídî,¹ She [= the king] says, “This is my story [lit. my situation and story is thus]. I, my ring fell, I

⁶⁰ The feminine possessive pronoun -a refers to the king.

⁶¹ Feminine verbal form.

⁶² This verb, uttered by the king, is in the feminine form.

⁶³ Feminine pronoun.

- hádxa qam-mazvərànna¹ mpóla* twisted it [around my finger]
go-màya,¹ séla yímmed m̀àya¹ like that, it fell into the water,
mxélali xá rašòma¹ qam-ʾózáli the Mother of the Water came,
^Hbahùra^H.¹ qam-gorànnox,¹ ʾiláha struck me with a *rašòma*⁶⁵
wálleli¹ t̀là[ha] bnóne m̀nnnox.¹⁶⁴ [and] turned [lit. made] me
 into a girl. I married you, God
 gave me three sons from you.⁶⁴
- (83) *ʾúzlox seheràne,¹ sèli,¹ ʾéni* You made a *seheràne*,⁶⁶ I came,
nḡər̀ra-[ʾe]l ʾasəqsa d̀idi,¹ ʾasəqsa my eye caught a glance of my
dəd-^Hyahalòm^H h́la,¹ dád,¹ ring, it is a ring of diamond, of,
jawàhar.¹ diamond.
- (84) *kəpli g-šban šaqlànna,¹ séla ʾàý* I bent down in order [lit. I
yímmed m̀àya¹ mxélali xá want] to take it, that Mother of
rašòma¹ qam-ʾozáli xá-gar xət the Water came, struck me
gòra.¹⁶⁷ with a *rašòma* [and] turned
 [lit. made] me again into a
 man.⁶⁷
- (85) *ʾána ḡakòma-wən,¹ k-xázət* I am a king, you see here.
ʾàxxa.¹ ʾe-náqla g-éban⁶⁸ yalúnke Now, I want⁶⁸ my children,
d̀idi,¹ mád m̀rre ʾiman,¹ m̀rre whatever the imam says [lit.
táli-ilu,¹ ^Ho^H-t̀àlox h́lu.¹ said]. He says [lit. said] they
 are for me or they are for you
 [= he will decree either].”
- (86) *g-emər̀ra ^Hgam^H-ʾà[h]at zəllax¹* He tells her [= the king], “First
^Hgam^H-yalúnke yawànnu-lax?¹ [lit. also] you went away, and
ʾilà[ha]-la qabálla m̀nnax.¹ [now you want that] I will give
 you the children as well?! God
 will not permit this! [lit. God
 will not accept it from you;

⁶⁴ All forms in (82) referring to the king are feminine.

⁶⁵ See fn. 34 above.

⁶⁶ See fn. 39 above.

⁶⁷ All forms in (84) referring to the king are feminine.

⁶⁸ Feminine verbal form.

- = this is a violation of the di-
vine justice].”
- (87) *sèle-kəz ʾimam¹ ʾimam g-èmer,¹*
ʾá[h]at ʾótłax yalúnke,¹ ʾàwa¹—
yalúnke dide hflu.¹ ʾàni¹ yálunke
díde țàle,¹ yalúnke díđax țàlax,¹
sí bròni,¹ ʾilaha-ha[w]e ʾəmmox,¹
sí gór xa-xèta.¹⁶⁹ He came to the imam, the
 imam says, “You [= the king]
 [already] have children, he
 [= the prince]—those are his
 children. They, his children are
 for him [= should stay with
 him], your children are for
 you. Go my son, may God be
 with you, go and marry an-
 other.”⁶⁹
- (88) *há ʾèha wéla,¹ ʾáwa zólle l-bèse,¹*
ʾó séle l-bèse.¹ ^Hzéhú^H g-əbet xa-
xèt?¹ Here, this is it, he went to his
 home, [and the other] one
 went to his home. That’s it,
 would you like another one
 [= story]?
- (89) BA: *kúd šmiʾále xà[y]e...¹* BA: [May] whoever has heard
 it live...
- (90) HM: *...xà[y]e,¹ kud-là*
šmiʾále...¹⁷⁰ g-əbet xa-xèt?¹ HM: ...live, whoever has not
 heard it... [also live].⁷⁰ Would
 you like another one?

⁶⁹ All forms in (86)–(87) referring to the king are feminine.

⁷⁰ A common ending formula in NENA folktales.