

Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish Folklore from Northern Iraq

A Comparative Anthology with a Sample of Glossed Texts

VOLUME 2



Geoffrey Khan, Masoud Mohammadirad,

Dorota Molin and Paul M. Noorlander

In collaboration with Lourd Habeeb Hanna,

Aziz Emmanuel Eliya Al-Zebari and Salim Abraham



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Faculty of Asian and Middle
Eastern Studies



<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>

© 2022 Geoffrey Khan, Masoud Mohammadirad, Dorota Molin and Paul M. Noorlander, in collaboration with Lourd Habeeb Hanna, Aziz Emmanuel Eliya Al-Zebari and Salim Abraham.



This work is licensed under an Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the text; to adapt the text for non-commercial purposes providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Geoffrey Khan, Masoud Mohammadirad, Dorota Molin and Paul M. Noorlander, *Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish Folklore from Northern Iraq: A Comparative Anthology with a Sample of Glossed Texts, Volume 2*. Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures 12. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0307>

Copyright and permissions for the reuse of many of the images included in this publication differ from the above. Copyright and permissions information for images is provided separately in the List of Illustrations.

In order to access detailed and updated information on the license, please visit, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0307#copyright>

Further details about CC BY-NC licenses are available at, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Updated digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0307#resources>

Every effort has been made to identify and contact copyright holders and any omission or error will be corrected if notification is made to the publisher.

Semitic Languages and Cultures 12.

ISSN (print): 2632-6906

ISSN (digital): 2632-6914

ISBN Paperback: 9781800647695

ISBN Hardback: 9781800647701

ISBN Digital (PDF): 9781800647718

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0307

Cover images:

Cover design: Anna Gatti

11. THE BRIDGE OF DALAL

Masoud Mohammadirad

Speaker: Saeid Razvan (NK. Zakho)

Recording: Masoud Mohammadirad

Audio: <https://kurdic.ames.cam.ac.uk/audio/245/>

Summary

A builder was commissioned to build a bridge in Cizre Bohtan. The emir cut off his right hand lest he build a similar bridge elsewhere. To take revenge against the emir, the builder fled to Zakho and accepted to build a bridge there. The arch of the bridge kept collapsing. A fortune-teller advised the builder to sacrifice the first 'living soul' who would come onto the bridge the next day and put it inside the bridge in order for the arch to hold together. The next morning, the builder's daughter-in-law, Dalal, brought the workers food. She came with a dog. The dog was distracted by a mouse at the edge of the bridge. Dalal was the first to stand on the bridge. She was put into the bridge alive and the arch was completed successfully. The next day, her husband tried to take her out of the bridge. Dalal made him stop, saying that she would be happy to be a sacrifice for Zakho.

- (1) *az ... nāvē mən Saʿīd Haji Sadīq¹ Zāxoyī žə bənamālakē Zāxo
yā=t kavən¹ nāvē bənamālā Ğazvānā¹ t-ēm bar-niyāsīn Saʿīd Ğazvānī¹.*
- (2) *az dē nūka sar afsānā pərā Dalāl āxavəm.¹ mən pēnj šās
partūk sar Zāxo čē kərīna¹ žə kalapòr-o¹ afsānà=w¹ mažû=w¹ pēzānīyē
Zāxo¹ bə zəməne Kurdî-o ʿArabî.¹*
- (3) *afsānā pərā Dalāl¹ būci nāvē wē kərīna pərā Dalāl?¹ ākənjiyēt
Zāxo yēt kavən¹ yēt Zāxo āvā kərīn¹ Juhî bīn.¹ av afsānā¹ yā
Jəhīyān=a.¹*
- (4) *ū ma əš Jəhīyā go lē bīya.¹ ū ma əž day bābēt xo¹ əb vī šəklī
go lē bīya¹ awē às bo wa t-bēžəm.¹*
- (5) *ət-bēžən ... pərək dī wusā əl Jəzīrā Botā hātbī āvākərənē¹ nāvē
wē pərā Bāfət.¹*
- (6) *waxtē pər bə dumāhī ināyī¹ mūrē ... yē Jəzīrā Botā¹ gāzī
hostāyī kər¹ got-ē, ‘dē ta xalāt kəm.¹*
- (7) *dastē wī yē rāstē žē va-kər¹ got-ē, ‘tā tu čə pərē dī¹ əl čə jəhē
dī āvā nà-kī!¹ az šānāziyē bə vē pərē ..¹*

(1) I—my name [is] Saʿid Haji Sadiq Zakhoyi; [I am from] an old family in Zakho, called the Razvan family. I am known as Saʿid Razvani.

(2) Now, I will talk about the myth of ‘the bridge of Dalal’. I have written¹ five, six books on Zakho, in Kurdish and in Arabic, on its heritage, myths, history, and general information.

(3) The myth of the bridge of Dalal—why is it (i.e., the bridge) called the bridge of Dalal? The old inhabitants² of Zakho, the ones who built Zakho, were Jewish. This myth belongs to the Jews.

(4) We have heard it [the myth] from the Jews. We have heard it from our parents in the manner I am going to tell you about.

(5) It is said that another bridge like this (i.e. the bridge of Dalal) had been built in Cizre Bohtan, called the bridge of Bafit.

(6) When the construction of the bridge was finished, the emir of Cizre Bohtan summoned the builder³ [and] said, ‘I will give you a gift.’⁴

(7) [The emir] cut off his right hand [and] said to him, ‘Lest you make another bridge [like] this anywhere else! I [take] pride in this bridge.’

¹ Lit. produced.

² The speaker uses the word *ākənji*, which is apparently a modified form of Turkish word *ekinci* ‘sower’.

³ I.e. the master.

⁴ Lit. I will gift you.

(8) *damā hātī Zāxo^l řavī hāt Zāxò bə xo^l mîrē Zāxo dāxoz žē kər^l
pərakē lə sar ġābîrî çē kət^l əl řožhalâtē bāžērî.^l*

(9) *aw bə ‘āksē=t mîrē Jəzîrē^l got, ‘bəlā az dē āvā kəm.^{’l} aw čū bə
xo hustā lə xo kòm kər.^l aw banā bî^l ya‘nî [əp hangē] andāzyār nà-
bî^l bas àw yē āvā kərî.^l*

(10) *lê gařā^l əl darkārē bākòrē Zāxū^l bə taqrîban pāzda bîst
kîlomətrā^l bar žə wērē inān.^l du bar žî bə řēvē ət-katîn^l hatā nūkà žî
lə Dārozānē mawjud=ən.^l*

(11) *ū dās āvēt=a pərē^l ā čəkərənā pərē.^l damā t-gahašt=a kəvānā
nîvê^l dā tamām kət.^l řožā dî dā èt^l aw kəvān^l wē həl-wəšāyî.^l*

(12) *awî pərsyārā^l əb ‘Arabî t-bēžn-ē ‘‘arrāř^{’l} bə kurdî am ət-bēžn-ē
‘xēvzānk^{’l} yān awē təštî bə xo b-zānət^l got-ē, ‘az pərē husā āvā t-kəm^l
ət-həl-wəšət!^{’l}*

(8) When the builder⁵ came to Zakho—he fled and simply came to Zakho—the emir of Zakho demanded that he build a bridge on the Khabur river⁶ in the east of the city.

(9) Contrary to [what] the emir of Cizre [had told him], he (i.e., the builder) said, ‘Alright, I will build [one].’ He went and gathered some builders around him. He himself was a mason, that is, he was not an architect. However, he had built that the bridge⁷.

(10) He looked around. He brought the stones [necessary for the construction of the bridge] from [a distance of] around 15–20 kilometres north of Zakho. Two of the stones were dropped on the road [to Zakho]; they can still be seen⁸ in Darozan.

(11) He started⁹ building the bridge. Whenever he completed constructing the arch in the middle of the bridge, the next day, he would come to the bridge [and] the arch had collapsed.

(12) The builder¹⁰ asked [a fortune-teller, who is] called ‘*arrāf*’ in Arabic. In Kurdish, we call them *xêvzānk*, meaning ‘someone who knows about things by themselves.’ He said, ‘I am building such a bridge, [but] it keeps collapsing.’

⁵ Lit. he.

⁶ Khabur or Little Khabur is the name of a river that joins the Tigris at the conjunction of Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.

⁷ Lit. it.

⁸ Lit. are existent.

⁹ Lit. He threw hands at the bridge, at building the bridge.

¹⁰ Lit. he.

(13) got-ē, ‘şəbà^l kī xodān gīyān^l awəl bē sar pərə^l dū got-gotēt
hayn^l êk žə wān ət-bēžət,^l ‘sār žē ka=w xwinā wī pē řā dā.^{’l} yā duē
pətar^l ya‘nī ət-hāt-a gotənē^l tə-bēžət sāxēnī haykalē pərə bə-kat^l
‘haykal dā^l ū faršā dayna sar-ū^l ū bə-grà!^{’l}

(14) řožā dī səpē dē^l Dalālē bo yē xārən ināt.^l Dalāl bīkā wī bī.^l
şəē Dalālē əl pēšiyē bī.^l

(15) kayfā hustāyī galāk hāt.^l damā gahaštī nēzik pərə^l şayī
məškāk dīt^l bār dā-yē^l Dalāl ət-sar pərə kat^l ava dē bət-a qurbānī.^l

(16) māmē wē got-ē^l waxtē čūyī māmē wē gərī^l řāndək əž čāvē wī
hātn-a xārē.^l got-a māmē xo,^l ‘mām, tu bočī t-gərī?^l

(17) got-ē, ‘hāl-ū masalēt ‘arrāfī yēt xēxzānkī avā=na^l ət-vēt az tà
bə-kəm haykalē pərə dā.^{’l}

(13) [The fortune-teller] said, 'Tomorrow morning, any living soul¹¹ that comes onto the bridge'—there are two sayings [regarding the fortune-teller's advice]. The first is [the fortune-teller] said, 'Behead the living soul and rub its blood on the bridge.' The second saying is narrated more frequently. [According to this the fortune-teller] said that he (i.e. the builder) should put [the living soul] alive into the bridge. [The fortune-teller said,] 'Cover it with a carpet, and seal it (i.e. the bridge).'

(14) The next day, in the morning, Dalal brought him (the builder) food. Dalal was his daughter-in-law. Dalal's dog was in front of her.

(15) The builder was very pleased. When they came closer to the bridge, the dog saw a mouse and headed towards it. Dalal walked onto the bridge,¹²[meaning that] she was going to be the sacrifice [for the bridge].

(16) Her uncle (i.e., her father's brother) said to her—when she came, her uncle cried, tears streamed down his face.¹³ She said to her uncle, 'Uncle, why are you crying?'

(17) He said, 'The fortune-teller's saying¹⁴ is like this: I must put you into the construction of the bridge.'

¹¹ Lit. the owner of soul.

¹² Lit. Dalal fell on the bridge.

¹³ Lit. teardrops came down from his eyes.

¹⁴ Lit. the state and problem of the fortune-teller is such.

(18) *ē got=ē, 'bəlā!| akar av pəra sar mē čē bə-bət| az=ē xo kəm qurbānīyā vī bāžērī.| ya'ni čūnko az žənək=əm| hīn mē bə čāvaki nērīnī əl mē ət-fəkərən?'*¹

(19) *řā-bī jəhē wē čē kər=o| dərēž kər=o| fārš da-ynān sar.|*

(20) *havžīnē wē| zaḷāmē wē| nā l māl bī.| pəštī řožakē zəvərī-va| pərsyār kər, 'kā havžīnā mən?'*

(21) *bābē wī got=ē,| hāl=ū masala avà=ya| ma yē kərī ət pərē dā.|*

(22) *'čāwā wa wa kər?| čāwā?'*¹ *das hāvēt=a māhūlī| got, 'dē čəm īnm=a dār.'*¹

(23) *čò| hāndī māholā da-ynād=ē| awē kər=a gāzī| got=ē, 'bās=a!| tu wusā mē pətər də-ēšinī!| àv pəra dē mīnt=a sar mālēt mən| hāndī mən šīyāyī.'*¹

(24) *ya'ni ava kurtīyā afsānā pərā Dalāl.| bas wak mē gotī ta| ava əž Jəhīyā hātī=ya sətāndən.|*¹

(18) She said, 'Alright! If this bridge is going to be built on me, [then] I will make myself a sacrifice on behalf of the city. Just because I am a woman, do you have a false belief in me?'¹⁵

(19) [The builder] made her a place [in the bridge], laid her down and put a carpet on her [and successfully built the bridge].

(20) Her (i.e., Dalal's) spouse, her husband, was not home. He returned [home] a day later [and] asked, 'Where is my spouse?'

(21) His (Dalal's husband's) father (i.e., the builder) said, 'The story is as follows: we have put her into the bridge [for the bridge to hold together].'

(22) [Dalal's husband said] 'How could you do this? How?!' He grabbed¹⁶ the stone hammer [and] said, 'I will go and take her out.'

(23) [Dalal's husband] went and hammered the bridge so much. Dalal¹⁷ started to call him [and] said to him, 'That's enough! You are hurting me more by doing so! This bridge will stand on my shoulders as long as I am able [to hold it].'

(24) This [was] a summary of the myth of the bridge of Dalal. However, as I had told you, the myth has been transmitted¹⁸ from the Jews.

¹⁵ Lit. You think of me through a negative eye.

¹⁶ Lit. He threw hands at the stone hammer.

¹⁷ Lit. she.

¹⁸ Lit. taken.

