

# 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



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## 14. A MAN AND A LION

*Dorota Molin*

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**Speaker: Yawsep Elisha Ishaq (ChA. Duhok)**

Recording: Lourd Hanna

Assistant: Salim Abraham

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### **Summary**

A poor man felt desperate, unable to feed his children. He decided to bring some wood from the forest to try to make some money. He knew that this was dangerous because the mountain was ruled by a lion. In the forest, he met the lion and was able to strike a deal with him: he was to bring him food and in return, the lion would let him take wood back with him. After some time, the man invited the lion for dinner to express his gratitude to him. He, however, also asked his wife to serve him separately from the lion. The lion took offence. The next day, the lion was angry and told the man to strike him with his axe on his head. Some days later the lion showed him that the wound on his head had healed. He, however, still felt scarred by the man's proud words and devoured the man as a punishment. The moral of the tale is that 'the impact of a sword heals, but that of words does not.'

(1) 'ana Yawsəp 'Eliša mən Dūhok-iwən.<sup>|</sup> yəmmi našət Mar Yàqo-la,<sup>|</sup> šəmmaḥ Maryam Toma Jubrà'əl.<sup>|</sup> g-əbən 'amrənnux xa maθalūke-la,<sup>|</sup> d-àrya<sup>|</sup> 'u barnàša.<sup>|</sup>

(2) 'əθwa xa 'arya mšītera wewa l-ṭūra.<sup>|</sup> là qabəlwa ču barnašət zəlwale l-ṭura,<sup>|</sup> maxewa qàyse<sup>|</sup> 'u 'awəðwa xà məndi.<sup>|</sup> hār zəlwale,<sup>|</sup> g-naxəθwale, k-ixəlwale.<sup>|</sup> là qabəlwa ču xa zawale.<sup>|</sup>

(3) 'u xa fāqira 'əθwa.<sup>|</sup> pəšle majbūr d-zale maθe qàyse<sup>|</sup> d-mzabənnay gyane<sup>|</sup> d-ʿayāš b-gàway.<sup>|</sup> 'e, là k-əθya mənne<sup>|</sup> xazele dā'əman yala zora bəmyaθa m-kəpna barqūleh<sup>|</sup> 'u latte ču məndi d-maxəllay.<sup>|</sup>

(4) k-imər 'ana mḏāḥən<sup>|</sup> b-zali l-day ṭura d-ile 'arya gawe d-axəlli.<sup>|</sup> nayxən mən xāyi.<sup>|</sup> bəš ṭu mət xazən yale zore myaθa m-kəpna.<sup>|</sup>

(5) qəmle ham 'aw šqalle xmareḥ=u məndi diyeḥ, xàwleḥ,<sup>|</sup> 'u zəlle d-awəð qayse=w àθe.<sup>|</sup> θele, là θele, mnayəx m-gyane.<sup>|</sup> mhàymən,<sup>|</sup> zəlle, mṭele l-ṭura=w munxətle jawḏeḥ=u nàreḥ<sup>|</sup> d-qate qàyse.<sup>|</sup> mxèle, taq, tàq.<sup>|</sup> wele dewa... hənna, 'àrya k-šame qala g-nàxəθ 'əlle.<sup>|</sup>

(6) 'ha, barnàša,<sup>|</sup> 'ati lēθ šəmya gāwi?<sup>|</sup> dax k-iθət 'ati d-qatət 'u məndyane d-g-əbət 'u là g-əbət.<sup>|</sup> lēθ šmiya gu da ṭura diyi=le?<sup>|</sup> k-imər, 'bāle, bāle,<sup>|</sup> wən šmiya=w 'ana ta hədax=ən 'əθya.<sup>|</sup> 'dāxi ta hədax=ət 'əθya?<sup>|</sup>

(1) I am Yawsep Elisha Ishaq, from Duhok. My mother is from Mar Yaqo, her name is Miryam Toma Jubrail. I would like to tell you [something], it is a tale, about a lion and a man.

(2) There was a lion who controlled a mountain. He did not allow any humans to enter the mountain to cut wood or to do anything [else]. If someone went there, he would come down on them and eat them. He did not allow anyone to go there.

(3) There was a poor man. He had to go get wood to sell it in order to make a living. He was not able to see [his] little child dying of hunger in front of him, having nothing to feed them.

(4) 'I shall sacrifice [myself] by going to the mountain where the lion is and he will eat me. I shall be spared [the burden of] this life. It is better than seeing [my] little children dying of hunger.'

(5) So he took his donkey and his equipment, his ropes, and went to get wood before going back. Whether or not [the lion] would come, he would find relief. Believe me, he went and climbed the mountain, got out his chopper and his axe to cut wood. He started cutting, *crack, crack*, and a wolf... I mean lion heard the sound and came to him.

(6) 'Hey, human, have you not heard of me? How dare you come here to cut whatever you like and so on? Have you not heard that this mountain is mine?' He said, 'Indeed, I have heard and that is why I have come up here.' 'What do you mean that this is the reason you have come?'

(7) *k-imər, 'mhēmən, meri b-axlətti* | *'al 'āqāl là xazən yali zore myaθa m-kəpna barqûl 'èni.* | *ham 'ən 'axlətti 'ati bəš tu mət xazənnay,* | *mayθən barqûl yale zore hawe bəmyaθa m-kəpna-w xàzənnay.* | *naqla 'āti-žī* | *b-kāypux-wən.* | *'ana gu həmayata diyux-iwən.* | *g-əbət,* | *'ana həlala təlux.* | *'u g-əbət žī,* | *'ana hun 'əθya m-majburûθī* | *d-má'yəšən 'äyāl diyi.* |

(8) *k-imər, 'madám t-ila hədax,* | *ham, hām təli ránd=ila* | *'u ham təlux rand=la.* | *'däxi?* | *k-imər 'ati b-awðət qayse 'u b-làblət,* | *'u 'ana b-yawənnux məşraf diyux.* | *b-zalux hām təli b-aθət,* | *'aygət aθət maθətti 'ixàla,* | *hām 'ana axlən.* | *'e,* | *k-imər, 'kābira ránd=ila.* |

(9) *kud-yom k-izəl k-iwəð xà kartət hənna...* | *tenət qàyse,* | *g-làbəl.* | *labəl qàyse* | *'u çu xa là labole,* | *'àjran gə-mzabənnay.* | *k-iðət 'əstəglāl d-šūqa.* | *mhàymən,* | *kudyom hol bəθàya,* | *labole 'u mzabone qàyse,* | *'u naše bəxžàya,* | *'e.* | *'u 'ani xene là g-yari zalay.* |

(10) *xa yoma...* | *táb'ān d-k-iθe d-maθe 'ixàla,* | *k-əxli mùxðaðe.* | *'awa=w 'arya k-əxli mùxðaðe tama.* | *ya'ni, hām 'ixalət fāqira* | *'ala həsəbeḥ k-awe.* | *'e,* | *'arya g-yawəlle,* | *'tali=w təlux.* | *xa yoma mət xzèle 'arya,* | *ya'ni, kābira wədle faðl 'əlleḥ.* |

(11) *k-imər, 'ba, xòni,* | *xa yoma də hayyu ham 'ati məşraf l-gèban.* | *'azmənnux xa yoma l-gèban,* | *mənnan xùl.* | *k-imər, 'mà y-xaləf.* | *b-àθən.* | *ba 'arya mən mǎni b-zade?* | *là zade mən çu xa.* |

(7) He said, 'Believe me, I thought [that if] you eat me, at least I shall not see my little children dying of hunger in front of my eyes. Even if you eat me, it is better than seeing them. I would die in front of my little children if they were to die of hunger with me seeing them. Now, I am at your mercy, I am under your protection. If you want, I am yours, [but] even if you want to, I have come out of the need to feed my children.'

(8) He said, 'If that is the case, then it is good for me and good for you.' 'How?' He said, 'You will cut wood and take it [to town], and I shall give you your living. You will go come to me and when you come here, you will bring me food so that I too can eat.' 'Yes,' he says, 'that is very good.'

(9) He goes to cut wood every day, makes a bundle of this thing, a load of wood, and carries [it]. He brings wood while no one else does, so he sells the wood at a high price. You know, taking advantage of the market. Believe me, he comes every day, transports and sells wood, people can see this. Others do not dare go [to the mountain].

(10) One day... of course, when he brought food, they would eat together. He and the lion ate together there. So the poor man's food was also on his expense. Yes, the lion gave to him [saying], 'For you and for me.' One day, he realized what a tremendous favour the lion was doing to him.

(11) He said, 'Brother, come over one day to our home, honour us [in this way]. I would like to invite you to our home, eat with us.' He said, 'Fine, I shall come.' Whom does a lion fear? He fears no one.

(12) *mhaymən wədlay,<sup>|</sup> zəllay mṭelay l-bàyyəθa.<sup>|</sup> k-imər ta bāxtəḥ,<sup>|</sup>  
 'bāxta,<sup>|</sup> g-daryat 'ixala ta 'àrya,<sup>|</sup> dre jūda-w ṭàli dre jūda.<sup>|</sup> k-imər,  
 'lə'án 'egət galize g-nāxθi, galize g-naxθi gu 'ixàla,<sup>|</sup> ləbbi là k-izəl.<sup>|</sup>  
 ya'ni, 'è.<sup>|</sup> 'ay-ži zəlla,<sup>|</sup> θela muθela 'ixàla.<sup>|</sup> drela ta 'àrya jūda,<sup>|</sup> 'u  
 ṭàleh jūda.<sup>|</sup> 'u 'ani pəšlay bixàla.<sup>|</sup>*

(13) *xəlle 'arya<sup>|</sup> 'u xləšle-w θele l-ṭura.<sup>|</sup> derət yoma zəlle fāqira.<sup>|</sup>  
 k-imər, 'ha, ha, fāqira,<sup>|</sup> kudyom k-əxlətwə mənni,<sup>|</sup> 'əxxa,<sup>|</sup> galizi là  
 naxθiwa gawət ixala?<sup>|</sup> day d-mṭeli l-gebòxun gəm-ʿazmətti,<sup>|</sup> drelux  
 jūda ṭali-w ta gyànux jūda.<sup>|</sup>*

(14) *'e, g-məstànkəfət mən galizi?<sup>|</sup> 'ay, 'ày-ila faḳl diyi 'əllux?<sup>|</sup>  
 'axxa k-əxlətwə mənni 'ala ḥsàbi<sup>|</sup> galizi là k-iθewa gawət ixala.<sup>|</sup>  
 'aygət θeli gèbux, galizi nxətle gu 'ixala, g-yarəm ləbbux mənni.<sup>|</sup>*

(15) *k-imər ṭàle,<sup>|</sup> 'xzi d-amrənnux,<sup>|</sup> 'màθile nārux,<sup>|</sup> mxile gu rèši.<sup>|</sup>  
 'dāxi maxənnə b-rešux?<sup>|</sup> 'ən là maxətte b-reši, dāha b-axlənnux.<sup>|</sup>  
 lazəm maxətte b-rèši.<sup>|</sup> gəm-maxəle b-rešəḥ.<sup>|</sup> 'u 'arya zəlle ta gyàneḥ.<sup>|</sup>  
 'u fāqira θèle,<sup>|</sup> wədle qàyse<sup>|</sup> 'u θele l-bàyyəθa.<sup>|</sup>*

(16) *pədle xena fāqira,<sup>|</sup> 'u 'arya lātte 'alaqa gawe.<sup>|</sup> ḥal xa yòma,<sup>|</sup>  
 'àrya,<sup>|</sup> nàxle rešəḥ.<sup>|</sup> rešəḥ nàxle.<sup>|</sup> 'u θele, xaze fāqira hole 'əθya l-ṭura  
 b-waḏa qàyse.<sup>|</sup> mṭèle fāqira,<sup>|</sup> k-imər, 'hà fāqira!<sup>|</sup> 'uhu, <sup>A</sup>ahlan wa-  
 sàhlan<sup>A</sup>,<sup>|</sup> dāxi-wəθ?<sup>|</sup> maqšad: mroḥəble gawe.<sup>|</sup>*



(12) Believe me, they did so, they went and arrived at [the man's] home. He said to his wife, 'Woman, when you serve food for the lion, serve him separately from me.' He said, 'because when his drool runs down, it goes drips on the food. I lose my appetite.' So, she went and came back, brought food. She served the lion separately and [the man] separately. They started eating.

(13) The lion ate his food up and came back to the mountain. Next day, the poor man went [to the mountain]. He [the lion] said, 'Hey, poor man, you ate with me here everyday. Did my drool never run down into food? When I went to your home and you invited me, you served me separately and yourself separately.

(14) You find my [drool] revolting? Is this [how you pay back] my favour? When you used to eat with me at my expense, [then] my drool was not dripping on the food. When I came over to your home and my drool ran down into the food, you became proud.'

(15) He said to him, 'Listen to what I say. Bring your axe and hit me with it on the head.' 'What do you mean I should I hit you with it on the head?!' 'If you do not hit me with it on the head, I shall devour you right now. You must hit me with it on the head.' He hit him on his head and the lion went away to his own [place]. The poor man came, cut the wood and went back home.

(16) The poor man went [to] another [place] while the lion had nothing to do with him, until one day, the lion's head recovered. His head recovered. He came and saw—the poor man had come to the mountain, cutting wood. He got to where the poor man was. He said, 'Hello, poor man! Welcome, how are you?' I mean, he welcomed him.

(17) *k-imər*, 'fāqīra,<sup>|</sup> də xur gu rēši,<sup>|</sup> xzi nīxa reši, 'ən lā.<sup>|</sup> xayer gu rēšeḥ.<sup>|</sup> *k-imər*, 'mhāymən, hole piša bəš tu m-qamayθa.<sup>|</sup> mašalla... škīr alaha.<sup>|</sup> *k-imər*, 'lāwa b-kepi bas 'ati,<sup>|</sup> 'ati gəm-jabrətti d-maxənwa 'əllux.<sup>|</sup>

(18) *k-imər*, 'xzi, fāqīra, reši nəxle.<sup>|</sup> bas xabrux həš lèle nīxa,<sup>|</sup> d-ana... k-əmrətwa galizi y-naxθi gawət 'ixāla.<sup>|</sup> bāθər mət nəxle reši=w xabrux lèle nīxa,<sup>|</sup> <sup>A</sup>ḥaq=u mustahāq<sup>A</sup>=ile d-axlənnux.<sup>|</sup> qəmle gəm-'axəlle b-e dāna.<sup>|</sup>

(19) 'e, qāy,<sup>|</sup> šawpa, šawpət saypa g-nāyəx.<sup>|</sup> šawpət xabra lā g-nayəx.<sup>|</sup> xabra nāxwaš, nāxwaš=ile, 'e.<sup>|</sup>

(17) He said, 'Oh poor man, come look at my head. See whether or not my head has recovered.' He looked at his head and said, 'Believe me, it is better now than how it was before. Thank God.' He said 'It was not what I wanted, but you forced me to hit you.'

(18) He said, 'Look, poor man, my head has recovered. But [the impact of] your words [when] you said that my drool was dripping into the food has not yet recovered. Since my head had recovered and [the wound] of your word has not recovered, it is my full right to devour you.' He devoured him immediately.

(19) Therefore, the impact of a sword heals, but the impact of words does not heal. Words can be very evil, yes.

