

Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish Folklore from Northern Iraq

A Comparative Anthology with a Sample of Glossed Texts

VOLUME 2



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15. A MAN AND A SNAKE

Dorota Molin

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Summary

A poor man used to go into the wild to cut wood. He would play his flute (*zurna*) and a snake would appear and dance for him. In the end, the snake would always give the man two coins from its hidden treasure. After some time, the man became greedy and decided to kill the snake in order to get all of its money at once. He tried to kill the snake with a rock, but could not. Instead, the snake attacked the man, killing him on the spot with his venom as a punishment for his betrayal.

(1) ʿana Yawsəp ʿEliša ʿIšhaq mən Dūhok-iwən.[|] yəmmi našət Mar Yàqu-la, šəmmaḥ Maryam Toma Jubràʿal.[|] ʿətti xa maθalūke g-əbən ʿamrənna ʿtáloxun, ʿan wāfa[|] dət barnaša=w xūwe.[|]

(2) k-əmray xà yoma,[|] xa fāqira k-izəlwa l-qàyse.[|] bāθər mət xalešwa m-qàyse,[|] qayəmwā,[|] yātuwa reš kartət qayse diyeḥ.[|] ʿu mapəqwa mašula diyeḥ,[|] zūrna.[|] ʿu maxəwa.[|]

(3) xà xuwe g-napəqwa[|] g-raqəðwa ʿtələḥ.[|] mà raqəðwa ʿtələ[|] ḥəl xaləšwa mən mxayət zūrna.[|] xuwe g-ʿawerwa l-nūqbeḥ.[|] mapəqwa trəy lire ʿtələḥ,[|] ta ʿābu l-zurna, dāw fāqira.[|]

(4) zəlle yoma,[|] θəle yoma,[|] kùd yom k-izəlwa=w pəšle šùleḥ.[|] har b-aθe b-xaləš b-awədlay qàyse.[|] b-àθe[|] b-yatu rəš qayse ʿu maxe,[|] hənna, zūrna.[|] ʿu xuwe b-nəpəq[|] b-raqəð ʿtələḥ.[|] bāθər mət xələš, xuwe g-ʿawer mapəq trəy lire[|] b-yəwəl ʿtələḥ.[|]

(5) xà yoma[|] ʿay fāqira k-īmər, ʿma ʿana, là,[|] hātxa b-awəðən.[|] xūwe,[|] kud yom b-aθe mapəqli trəy lire.[|] hatxa là k-awe.[|] xəzənta kulla šaqlənna![|] ʿana, mà kud yom tre lire yawəlli?[|] har qatlənne ʿu kulla diyi-la.[|]

(6) hām ʿawa[|] zəlle ʿu muḥðere gyàneḥ[|] wədle xa kepa ʿādūla ta gyane[|] gəm-mātule kartəḥ,[|] ʿè.[|] bāθər ma də-xləšle xuwe m-rqàða, qəmle zale maθe lire.[|] ʿu awa šaqəl kəpa,[|] g-maxe gaweḥ.[|] g-maxe gaweḥ[|] ʿu là gəm-qatəlle.[|] xuwe ráʿsan θele ʿu gəm-mnaʿəsle.[|] gəm-mnaʿəsle ʿu pəšle zəpeke tama.[|]

(1) I am Yawsep Elisha Ishaq, from Duhok. My mother is from Mar Yaqo, her name is Miryam Toma Jubrail. I have a tale to tell to you, about trust between a man and a snake.

(2) They say that one day, a poor man went to cut wood. After he had finished, he would sit on top of his load of wood, would take his flute out, his *zurna*, and play.

(3) A snake would come out and would dance for him. He would dance for him until he finished playing the flute. [The snake would then] go into its hole, get two coins for him, for the man with the flute, the poor man.

(4) Many days passed. [The poor man] would go every day, it became his job. He would come and, after finishing his wood-cutting, he would come, sit on top of his wood and play the flute. The snake would come out and dance for him. After finishing, the snake would go in, bring two coins out and give them to [the man].

(5) One day, that poor man thought, 'No, [this is what] I shall do. The snake brings me [only] two coins every day. This is not right. I shall take the entire treasure! I... why should he give me two coins every day? As soon as I kill him, it is all mine.'

(6) So that man went and got ready. He prepared a flat rock for himself and put his bundle on, yes. After [the snake] finished dancing, he went to get the coins. The man seized the rock and hit him with it. He hit him with it, but did not kill him. Immediately, the snake went and bit [the man]. He bit him and the man fell dead on the spot.

(7) *nəhàye,*[|] *ṭāmă‘uθət barnàša,*[|] *xzi hâtxa-yla.*[|] *ya‘ni ‘awa kud*
yoma b-yawəllux trây lire[|] *‘u šwaqa labole qàysux.*[|] *‘e, ṭāmă‘ùθa*[|] *g-*
əbe, hənna, šaqəl̄wala xāzəntət hənna, e.[|] *ya‘ni ‘ay ṭāmà‘hum*
qaṭəllu,[|] *dāx k-əmrila.*[|] *‘e naqla ‘ay qeşəttət xuwe-w barnàša*[|] *‘ây-ila.*[|]

(7) In the end, see what man's greed is like. This is to say, he gives you two coins every day and [even] lets you take some wood. Indeed, [this is] greed: he wanted to take the whole treasure. That is, it is their own greed that kills [people], as they say. This is the tale of the man and the snake.

