

# 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



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## 16. A MAN AND A WOLF

*Dorota Molin*

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**Speaker: Sabi Avraham (JA. Duhok)**

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### **Summary**

There was a poor man who tried to make his living by cutting wood and selling it in the market. One day, he met a wolf in the forest. When the wolf learnt about the man's hardship, he promised to give him a golden coin to bolster his income each time the man came to cut wood. The man was very happy. After some time, the man invited the wolf to dinner to express his gratitude to him. After the feast, the wolf overheard the man's wife saying that she detested the smell of his mouth. The wolf took offence. The next day, the wolf commanded the man to strike him with his axe on his head and told him to come back in forty days. When the man returned, the wolf showed him that the wound on his head had healed. He still, however, felt scarred by the what the words of the man's wife. He said 'a wound caused by a blow man may forget, but a wound caused by words is never forgotten.' He told the man never to return to the forest.

(1) ʾəθwa xa beθa d-ʿayəšwa...<sup>|</sup> babət beθa d-ʿayəšwa mən šìwe.<sup>|</sup>  
g-ezəlwa go tūra,<sup>|</sup> q-qatewa šìwe.<sup>|</sup> g-meθèwalu,<sup>|</sup> daréwalu rəš xmara  
dide.<sup>|</sup>

(2) g-ewəðwalu kàrta,<sup>|</sup> g-daréwalu kàrta<sup>|</sup> rəš xmara dide.<sup>|</sup> ʾu g-  
nabəlwalu šùqa,<sup>|</sup> gə-mzabənwalu.<sup>|</sup> k-eθèwa,<sup>|</sup> g-meθewa ʾixala ta ya-  
lunke dide.<sup>|</sup> ʾu k-eθewa k-əxliwa g-ʿešwa bət ʾanna,<sup>|</sup> mən mzabonət  
šìwe.<sup>|</sup>

(3) xa yoma zəlle l-tūra,<sup>|</sup> b-qate šìwe,<sup>|</sup> xzele xa gùrga.<sup>|</sup> ʾaw gurga  
g-emər tale ‘mà wət ʾəθya?’<sup>|</sup> g-emər ‘ana g-əbən...<sup>|</sup> g-ʿešən bət q-  
qaṭʾən šìwe.<sup>|</sup> gə-mzabnənnu go šuqa=w máʿäyəsən yalunke didi.<sup>|</sup> bə-d-  
è ʾana g-ʿešən’.<sup>|</sup>

(4) g-emər, ‘ana b-yawənnox kudyom xa lira kurkāmàna.<sup>|</sup> si  
màšrəf ta yalunke didox.<sup>|</sup> ʾ g-emər, <sup>ⁿ</sup>Kxera xudè<sup>ⁿ</sup>la,<sup>|</sup> <sup>NK</sup>xera xude<sup>NK</sup>,  
bət kərmànji g-əmri.<sup>|</sup>

(5) šqəlle lira kurkāmàna dide mən gùrga<sup>|</sup> ʾu θele l-šùqa.<sup>|</sup> ʾu  
zunne ta gyane ʾixala=w julle ta yalunke dide,<sup>|</sup> ʾu mabsuṭ mərre ta  
bàxte<sup>|</sup> walla ʾana xzeli xa xùra<sup>|</sup> go tura<sup>|</sup> bāle gùrga=le.<sup>|</sup>

(6) kudyom g-emər ʾana b-yawənnox xa kurkāmàna.<sup>|</sup> ʾüdleli  
ʾədyo kurkāmàna.<sup>|</sup> kudyom g-ezəl tura q-qate šìwe<sup>|</sup> ʾu k-eθe gurga g-  
yawəlle kurkāmàna.<sup>|</sup>

(7) pəšle xà yarxa,<sup>|</sup> trè,<sup>|</sup> t̤làha,<sup>|</sup> xa šàta.<sup>|</sup> baxte g-əmra, ‘walla  
hatxa xòš naša,<sup>|</sup> bāš=ile.<sup>|</sup> ʾana g-əban ʾoðanne qàðre,<sup>|</sup> qaðranne=w  
ʿazmaxle kəslan l-bèθa.<sup>|</sup> ʾoðaxle xa ʾixala bāsima<sup>|</sup> ʾu mastaʿən go  
beθa kəslan=u doqax qàðre.<sup>|</sup>

(1) There was a household which used to live on... whose father used to make his living by woodcutting. He used to go to the mountain and cut wood. He would bring it and place it on his donkey.

(2) He would bind it in a bundle. He would put it [as] a bundle on his donkey's back. He would take it to the market and sell them. Then, he would come back home and bring food for his children. When he came, they would eat and live on this, on the money from the selling of wood.

(3) One day he went to the mountain to cut trees and he saw a wolf. This wolf said to him, 'Why have you come?' He said, 'I want to... I make my living by woodcutting. I sell it in the market and provide for my children. In this way I make my living.'

(4) He replied, 'Every day, I will give you one golden coin. Go and spend it on your children.' He said, 'It is God's favour, God's favour!' They said it in Kurmanji.

(5) He took his golden coin from the wolf and came to the market, and bought food for himself, and clothes for his children. He was pleased and told his wife, 'I met a friend on the mountain, but he is a wolf.'

(6) "Every day"— [the wolf] said—"I will give you one golden coin." He has given me today a golden coin.' So every day, [the man] goes to the mountain, cuts wood and the wolf comes and gives him a coin.

(7) One month went by, then two, three, one year. His wife said, 'Indeed, what a kind man! He is good. I want to make some dishes for him, I shall treat him, we shall invite him for a feast at our house. We shall prepare good food for him, he will enjoy himself at our house, and we will feast together.'

(8) *g-emər ʔala, 'šūqle. | gūrɡa=le. | hēwan=ile. | mǝ b-aθe go naše? | naše b-zād'i. | mbārɓə'ālu gurga ya'əl go maθa. | g-əmra, 'lǝ, | lǝ, | marre 'àθe. |*

(9) *zǝlle g-emər ʔǝle, | g-emər, 'ana lēbi 'aθən. | gūrɡa=wən, k-axlən nǝše. | b-aθən go maθa kullu mbārɓə'i. |*

(10) *zǝlle mǝrre ta baxta, 'hǝtxa g-emər gurga. | <sup>H</sup>az<sup>H</sup> g-əmra, 'šud 'aθe b-lēle, xǝška. | bǝ-daw wǝxt | lǝθwa bēhǝrùθa. | lǝθwa 'anʔariq menoròt | kahɓaba lǝθwa. | xǝška wewa. | 'u p-payǝšwa xǝška, | kulla maθa xǝška wawa. |*

(11) *g-əmra, 'dammǝt p-payǝš xǝška, | šud 'aθe, | beθan wele bǝ-dūmǝhik dǝt maθa. | b-aθe kǝslan beθa=w b-ǝzǝl. | čūxa la k-xazǝle. | g-emər, 'baxti b-oðalox xa 'azime bǝš. | mǝrre ʔale, 'b-àθən', | g-emər, 'b-àθən. | g-emər, <sup>H</sup>tov, <sup>H</sup> b-àθən. |*

(12) *θǝle, | baxte qam-qaðrǝle=w 'udla 'ixala bǝšima ʔale, | 'u pǝšle 'ašǝrta kǝslu. | xǝlle, štele=w muħkèlu. | pǝšla dràngi, | g-emər 'ana b-azən l-ʔura. | qǝmle... mǝrre beθa ži zǝlle qam-maxzele 'urxa=w mpǝqle. |*

(13) *u-'awa yǝ'ǝlle l-'óya, | gurga ħmǝlle go tǝra. | gurga ħmǝlle go tǝra, | šǝme mǝ b-àmri bǝθǝr zǝlle. | baxte ži g-əmra, 'walla xǝš, | xǝš xúra 'ǝtlox. | xǝš xúra=le 'o gurga. |*

(8) He says to her, 'Leave him alone. He is a wolf. He is an animal. What does it mean "He will come among people"? People will be afraid. A wolf that enters the city will alarm them.' She said, 'No, no, tell him to come.'

(9) So he went and told [the wolf], but he replied, 'I cannot come. I am a wolf. I eat people. If I come to town, everyone will be alarmed.'

(10) So the man went and told his wife 'This is what the wolf said.' So she said, 'Let him come at night, [in] darkness.' At that time, there were no lights. There were not, for instance, lamps. There was no electricity. It was dark. When it got dark, the whole city would be dark.<sup>1</sup>

(11) She said, 'Let him come after it gets dark. Our house is on the outskirts of the town. He will come straight to our house and go back. No one will see him.' So he told the wolf, 'My wife will make a great banquet for you.' He replied to him, 'I shall come.' He said, 'I shall come.' The wolf said, 'Well then, I shall come.'

(12) He came, his wife offered him hospitality and made a feast for him. He spent the evening at their home. He ate, drank and they chatted. It got late, [so] he says, 'I shall go [back] to the mountain.' He got up... the father of the house also went and showed him the way, and he (the wolf) went out.

(13) [While] that one (the man) entered, the wolf waited at the door. The wolf waited at the door to hear what they were going to say after he had left. His wife says, 'Indeed, a good, good friend you have. A good friend he is, that wolf.'

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<sup>1</sup> Lit. was darkness.

(14) *bāle xa mēndi qūšur ʿibe.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *g-emər ʔala, ʿma ʿibe qūšur?*<sup>ʾ</sup> *g-əmra ʔale ʿrixa...*<sup>ʾ</sup> *ʔaba rixa là bāsima k-eθe mən pəmme.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *rixa là bāsima k-eθe mən pəmme.*<sup>ʾ</sup> <sup>H</sup>*az<sup>H</sup> g-emər, ʿgūrga-le, ʿoha-le.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *ma ʿoðən?*<sup>ʾ</sup>

(15) *šmèʿle gurga muḥkela hatxa ʿalle,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *xriwa.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *qam-darele go nàθe*<sup>ʾ</sup> *ʿu qḥərre.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *krəble.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *g-emər ʿana g-oðənnu hawùθa,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *ʿani k-parʿila ʔali bət xriwùθa.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *g-əmri ʿrixa ʔaba pīs g-napəq mən pəmme.*<sup>ʾ</sup>

(16) *zəlle l-ṭūra.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *durdət yom q-qayəm märe bəθa,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *g-ezəl ta šìwe,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *gurga ži θèle,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *g-emər, ʿšqullox ʿadyo ži xa lira kurkāmàna,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *bāle mən ʿadyo,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *là k-eθət,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *ḥəl ʿarbi yome xèta.*<sup>ʾ</sup>

(17) *bāle šqulle nāra dīdōx. nāra dīdōx šqülle,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *g-emər, ʿmxile go reši,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *kmà ʿibox!*<sup>ʾ</sup> *ʿu tūrre reši bət nāra.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *g-emər, ʿmàṭo maxənnə go rešox?!*<sup>ʾ</sup> *b-qaṭlənnox?*<sup>ʾ</sup>

(18) *g-emər, ʿlà q-qaṭlətti.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *g-emər ʿatta ʿan maxətte nāra go rēši,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *ʿàn b-axlənnox.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *xzi, mà g-əbət?*<sup>ʾ</sup> *ʿēn la maxətte nāra go reši ʿana b-axlənnox.*<sup>ʾ</sup> *ʿaw naša ži faqira,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *kma g-əmşèle, qam-maxele go rēše,*<sup>ʾ</sup> *qam-saləḥle gurga.*<sup>ʾ</sup>



(14) But there is a flaw in him.’ He says to her, ‘What flaw is there in him?’ She says to him, ‘A smell, a lot of bad smell comes out of his mouth. A bad smell comes out of his mouth.’ Then he says, ‘He is a wolf, this is how it is. What should I do?’

(15) The wolf heard [how] she spoke in this way about him, maliciously. He kept it to himself<sup>2</sup> and got upset. He became angry. He says, ‘I do them a favour and they pay me back with evil. They say “A very dirty smell comes out from his mouth.”’

(16) He went to the mountain. The next day the father of the house gets up, goes to [get] wood. The wolf came and says, ‘Take for yourself one golden coin also today, but do not come for the next forty days.’

(17) But take your axe. Take your axe,’ he says, ‘and hit my head with it<sup>3</sup> as [hard as] you can. And crack my head with the axe.’ He says, ‘What do you mean I should hit your head?! Shall I not kill you?’

(18) He says, ‘You will not kill me.’ He says, ‘Now, you either hit me [with the] axe on my head or I eat you. See for yourself what you want. If you do not hit my head, I shall eat you.’ This poor man, he hit his (the wolf’s) head as [hard as] he could and the wolf forgave him.

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<sup>2</sup> Lit. he put it in his ear.

<sup>3</sup> In Neo-Aramaic, ‘to hit’ takes two objects. The Theme (‘direct object’) is the tool, the Recipient (‘indirect object’) the place hit, thus literally ‘hit it on my head.’

(19) *u-zàlle,*<sup>|</sup> *gurga ži qam-yasərre reš gyàne,*<sup>|</sup> *brindar=ile.*<sup>|</sup> *g-emər tale,* ‘*bas ʿarbi yoma xeta b-àθət.*<sup>|</sup> *bas ʿarbi yoma xeta b-àθət b-axlənnox.*<sup>ʔ</sup> *zàlle,*<sup>|</sup> *muḥkele ta baxta,* *g-emər,* ‘*ḥāl-u māsale didi,*<sup>|</sup> *ʿèha-la.*<sup>|</sup> *gurga mərre ṭali* “*lā k-eθət ʿarbi yoma xeta ʿaxxa.*”<sup>|</sup>

(20) <sup>H</sup>*tòv.* <sup>H</sup>*pədlu ʿarbi yòme,*<sup>|</sup> *qəmle ʿaw naša xa ga xət,*<sup>|</sup> *zàlle l-ṭura,*<sup>|</sup> *zàlle xzele gùrga,*<sup>|</sup> *g-emər,* ‘*ṭale,* *g-emər,* ‘*θà ʿaxxa,*<sup>ʔ</sup> *g-emər,* ‘*θèlox,*<sup>ʔ</sup> *g-emər* ‘*šqullox xa lira kurkāmāna xèta.*<sup>ʔ</sup>

(21) *g-emər,* ‘*šrila*<sup>|</sup> *ʿe kăfiya mən reši-w xzi,*<sup>|</sup> *duktət mxelox ʿo nārà ʿəlla.*<sup>ʔ</sup> *qam-šarela mən ʿaqəle,*<sup>|</sup> *wela trəšta.*<sup>|</sup> *g-emər,* ‘*ma k-xazət?*<sup>ʔ</sup> *g-emər,* ‘*wele rešox trışa.*<sup>ʔ</sup>

(22) *g-emər,* ‘*k-xàzət?*<sup>ʔ</sup> *g-emər,* ‘*šwirət nāra dīdōx*<sup>|</sup> *qam-maxətte bāθər ʿarbi yòme,*<sup>|</sup> *trəšle reši.*<sup>|</sup> *bāle xabrət bāxtōx mərre ṭali*<sup>|</sup> *ḥəl mòθa*<sup>|</sup> *lā g-našənnē.*<sup>ʔ</sup>

(23) *g-emər,* ‘*ma mərre ṭalox?*<sup>ʔ</sup> *g-emər,* ‘*axtóxun, baxtox muḥkèloxun,*<sup>|</sup> *baxtox mərre* “*ʿo gugra xōš nāša=le, ḥāš=ile, bāle xa rixa pīs k-eθe mən pəmme.*”<sup>|</sup>

(19) [The man] went away, [while] the wolf bandaged his head—he is wounded. He says to him, ‘But come back in forty days. You will come only after forty days, [otherwise] I shall eat you.’ He went and spoke to [his] wife, he says, ‘My situation is this. The wolf told me, “You will not come here for another forty days.”’

(20) Good. Forty days passed by, the man got up once again. He went to the mountain, he went and saw the wolf [who] says to him, he says, ‘Come here.’ He says ‘[Since] you have come,’ he says, ‘take for yourself another golden coin.’

(21) He says, ‘Untie this scarf from my head and see the place [that] you hit [with] that axe.’ He untied it from its bandages and look, it has healed! He says, ‘What can you see?’ [The man] says, ‘Indeed, the head has healed.’

(22) He says, ‘Do you see?’ He says, ‘The wound of your axe with which you hit me—after forty days, my head has healed. But your wife’s words that she said to me—I will not forget them until [the day of my] death.’

(23) He says, ‘What did she say to you?’ He says, ‘You and your wife spoke, your wife said, “This wolf is a good man, but a bad odour comes out of his mouth.”’

(24) *šwirət<sup>4</sup> xàbra<sup>1</sup> là k-eθe nšaya.<sup>1</sup>*

(25) *šwirət dərba<sup>1</sup> naša g-našèle.<sup>15</sup>*

(26) *šwirət xàbra<sup>3</sup> həl mòθa<sup>1</sup> naša la g-našèle.<sup>1</sup>*

(27) *lazəm yà<sup>3</sup>e naša maṭo maḥke. dər bāl<sup>6</sup>,<sup>1</sup> mən ʿadyo pēf là k-eθət l-ṭura.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> This word—*šwira*—is unattested elsewhere in this dialect or in other Neo-Aramaic varieties known to me. It could be a mistake caused by the fusion of two words: *šawpa* ‘footprint, trace’ *twira* ‘broken, damaged’. The word *šawpa* features in the corresponding saying in the parallel ChA. Duhok story (*A Man and a Lion*, 19)—possibly the source of this Jewish tale. *twira* would also make sense in this context, i.e. *twirət xabra* ‘[that which] a word has damaged.’ It may also have been influenced by the Hebrew verb *šavar* (from *š-b-r*), the counterpart of the Aramaic *twira* (*t-w-r*), both ‘to break’.

<sup>5</sup> This two-part proverb occurs also in the Christian Aramaic version of the story, likewise from Duhok (*A Man and a Lion*, 19).

<sup>6</sup> Compare with *dre bāl* in other (Christian) varieties. Here, the imperative *dər* appears in its original Arabic form, unadapted morphologically.

- (24) A wound [caused by] words is not forgotten.
- (25) A wound [caused by] a blow a man [does] forget.
- (26) [But] a wound [caused by] words—a man does not forget it until [the day of his] death.
- (27) A man should know how to speak. Be careful not to enter the mountain from today onwards.'

