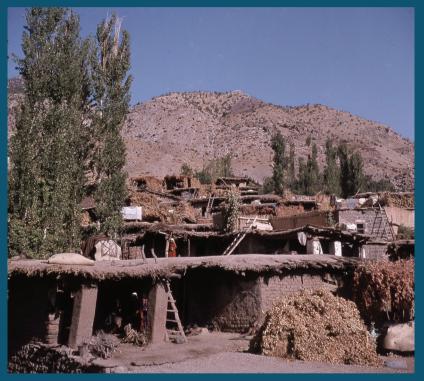# Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish Folklore from Northern Iraq

A Comparative Anthology with a Sample of Glossed Texts

VOLUME 2

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Cover images:

Cover design: Anna Gatti

19. A EWE AND A WOLF

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Recording: Lourd Hanna

Audio: https://kurdic.ames.cam.ac.uk/audio/236/

Summary

Once upon a time a ewe and her lamb lost their flock. They arrived at a meadow and stayed there a whole year. One winter day, a cunning wolf passed by the ewe's hut and claimed that the ewe dwelled in his territory, and that he had a witness. The ewe knew of the wolf's intention to eat her lamb. The next day the ewe saw the wolf wandering around with a fox.

The ewe took refuge in a dog's home. The dog reminded the ewe of the importance of taking an oath on one's elders among the members of the dog family. He advised the ewe to ask the wolf's witness to take an oath on the truth of the wolf's claim, while at the same time the dog hid himself behind a tree to attack them if they took a false oath.

The wolf came along with the fox as his witness. As the fox was taking an oath, he caught sight of the dog behind the tree. The fox was scared and went away. The wolf took the oath himself and was attacked by the dog. The wolf withdrew his claim and went away.

(1)   *tabˤan nāw=əm Hāwsàr=a.ˈ xarkī šaqrāwằy=ma.ˈ nāwī tawāw=īš=əm Hawsar Nadzāt Bāpīr Řahmằnˈ Sūrtsì=a.ˈ awaha mašhùr=īn.ˈ dāk=əm nāwī Jamīlà=ya.ˈ ū la dūy dwāzday hazàr=ū noṣat=ū haštā=ū hašt la dāyīk būy=ma.ˈ*

(2)   *tabˤan šaqrāwā zor xòš=a.ˈ wa šətī kaltūr=īš=ī zor tēdằ=ya.ˈ galak kàs=īš=ī tēdā=ya la sar haqāyāt=ūˈ la sar ... basarhātakānī šaqrāwāy zòr zorˈ yaˤnī bằs=yān kərdī=ya.ˈ bas away ka zor zor yaˤnī šətakʸī nāmo bītən həndak haqāyàt=ənˈ ka pēšūtər ʾənqətằˤ=yān kərdī=yaˈ bas māyt-owà zəmằn.ˈ*

(3)   *la dằk-awaˈ dzā la dāpìr-t-awa mābīt-owa yān la bằb-ət mābīt-oawa.ˈ zor dzār ka mà šaytānīyak=ən a-kərd la mārēˈ dāpīr=əm yān kasakʸī gawra da-hāt haqāyàt=ī lo agʸēřāyn-owa.ˈ lo away ham āqər bīn.ˈ wa ham dars=ū ˤəbràt=īš lē war-gərīn.ˈ yaˤnī tamanā=n a-kərd aw haqāyatāna har bardawằm bən.ˈ*

(4)   *awa=m wa fəkər dēt-ən hamū jārē gəčkà būmˈ dāpīr=əm yā nēnkàkˈ aw jā masalakʸ=ī lo daynằyn-oawaˈ lo away āqər bīn,ˈ ū mutˤakʸ=ìš war-gərīn.ˈ wakʸī ēstà na-bū.ˈ yaˤnī āypàd ha-bītənˈ yān mubāyìlˈ yān taknalujīyằ.ˈ*

(5)   *awa dzā aw šətāna la pēšān=īš yaˤnī lo tsə̀ tsīrokˈ la bar tsə haqằyat zīyātərˈ bằw=ī ha-būa?.ˈ la nāw kəltūrī kurdì̀ˈ yān masalan la nāw xò=tānˈ yān la har dzīyakʸì̀ xàstan la šaqrāwāy.ˈ čūnka kārabà na-būaˈ ū talavīzyòn=īš na-būa.ˈ ū yaˤnī řādyon=ū šətānà=š na-būa.ˈ*

(1)   Well, my name is Hawsar. I am from Shaqlawa. My full name is Hawsar Najat Bapir Rahman Surchi. We are famous for this [name]. My mother is called Jamila. I was born on the 2nd December 1988.

(2)   Well, Shaqlawa is very pleasant. It has a lot of cultural traditions. There are also a lot of people living in Shaqlawa who have extensively discussed the tales and the history of Shaqlawa. The most conspicuous [cultural traditions] are some tales which have been narrated in earlier times, but have remained through the course of time.

(3)   It happens that these tales have been passed on to you (lit. remained) from your mother, grandmother, or father. It would happen often that we would make mischief. My grandmother or an elder would come to tell us a tale so that we would be wise, and additionally learn lessons from them [the tales]. We would plead with them to constantly tell those tales.

(4)   I'm being reminded continually that in my childhood my grandmother or an old lady would tell us a tale so that we would be wise, and learn a lesson. It was not like now, when there is an iPad, cell-phone, or [other] technology.

(5)   Why is it that in the past tales were common in the Kurdish culture, or among you [the Chaldeans], or elsewhere, [and] especially in Shaqlawa? The reason is that there was neither electricity nor television. Likewise, radio and the like did not exist.

(6)   *aw dzā xarkakà dā-nĭštī˳na.*ˈ *šaw˳īš dərȅž būa.*ˈ *ba tāybatī šaw-ē hāwĭn-ȁn.*ˈ *dā-nĭštī˳na hatā dawrī saˁȁt da˳ū yāzday.*ˈ *la ĭš˳ū kārī hātī˳na-wabȁw*ˈ *aw jā sawzà˳w mīwà˳w masalan*ˈ *qaysī˳ū məšməša˳w aw xwārnȁnay ka ha-būa.*ˈ *dȁ˳yān-nāy-aw haqāyat˳yān gʸēřāyn-oawa*ˈ *hatā řoyĭštȉya.*ˈ

(7)   *bas la jīyakī wa ba jē˳yān hēštī˳ya.*ˈ *haqāyat ha-būa ba šaš māng* [*har*] *tawȁw na-būa,*ˈ *masaran haqāyatī Rustamī Zȁr ū aw šətana.*ˈ *yān šawē zəstānȁn*ˈ *xarkaka hamū la pāš nwĕž-ū ˁĭšȁyē*ˈ *la jīyakī xȁř a-būn-ūwawa.*ˈ *aw jā šawčarà˳yān dā-a-nā.*ˈ *mēwəž˳ū zor šətī dīkà˳š.*ˈ *yaˁnī ka la nāw kurdawārī hà-būwa˳w*ˈ *aw šətāna kərȁya.*ˈ

(8)   *awa ka ēstā da˳m-hawē bȁs kam*ˈ *čan komaḷak hakāyàt˳ən,*ˈ *ka xȍš˳a.*ˈ *yaˁnī mutˁàkʸī xoš˳yān tēdā˳ya˳w*ˈ *pēkanĭn˳īš˳yān tēdā˳ya la handak dzēyān.*ˈ *ȁ.*ˈ

(9)   *haqāyataka la nāwī mař˳ū bəzȁn,*ˈ *yā xod mař˳ū dā-bəřȁnī mař-ak.*ˈ *a-rē ha-bū nà-bū*ˈ *kas la xwȁy gawratər na-bū.*ˈ *law dunyāya p̂ān˳ū barȉnay*ˈ *šūwānàk ha-bū.*ˈ *mēgalàkʸī galak la mař˳ū bəzən˳ī tē-dā ha-bū.*ˈ *řožak la řožān la ēwāràkʸī pāyīzān*ˈ *dərangānàkʸī šawē*ˈ *mař la gar barxī xo dā-a-bəřȅt.*ˈ

(10)   *a-gāt˳a dzēyakʸȉ*ˈ *tařȁš˳ī lē˳ya˳w mērg˳a.*ˈ *wāta mērgàkʸī dzīyā aw šətāna˳ya.*ˈ *šawē lo xoy a-mēnēt-oawà.*ˈ *a-kāt˳a dzȅy xoy.*ˈ *hatā zəstān˳ū hāwȉn˳īš dē*ˈ *aw mařa har law dzēy a-mīnȅt-o.*ˈ

(6)   Back then, people would sit together. The nights were long. They would sit together specially during summer nights until 10 p.m., 11 p.m. People would come back home from their daily work. It was the custom that vegetables and fruit, such as dried apricot, apricot, and such would be put [in front of the guests] while they would narrate the tales until they would leave the party.

(7)   It was the custom that at some point they would end the story [in the middle, in order to continue later]. Some tales were such that they would take six months to be fully narrated, for instance, the tale of Rostam the son of Zal, and such. Likewise, during winter nights people would gather in a place after evening prayers. They would switch on a lamp. [Many things would be served] like raisins and many other things. That is, this tradition existed in the Kurdish regions.

(8)   What I am going to discuss now is a set of tales which are good. That is, they carry a nice argument, and include jokes in some parts. Yes.

(9)   The tale is called 'a ewe and a goat', or 'the separation of a ewe'. It is said that there was [and] there was not, [but] there was no one greater than God. In this vast world, there was a shepherd. He had a flock of sheep which contained many ewes and goats. Once, late one autumn evening a ewe and her lamb lost[1] the flock.

(10)   She (the ewe) reached a place which was [full of] rocks and was a meadow. That is, it was a separate meadow and so forth. She stayed there for the night. She made the place her habitat. She stayed there the [coming] winter until the [next] summer.

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[1] Lit. were separated.

(11)   *yaʿnī kurītàkʸī lo xo durust a-kā=w lēy a-žē.॰ řožak la řožằn॰ la nāw sarmā=w sora=w bastalàkʸī॰ gurgakʸī bərsī fērbằz loy d-ēt=a pēš.॰ a-rē, ʿkʸề řēy ba to dāya॰ la nāw murkʸī mən dā-nəšì?ʾ॰ mař=īš wằq=ī wəř a-mīnē॰ ʿē bāša gurgò!॰ ba xo gurg har řoža=w la dzēyakʸì=ya.॰ bařawà=ya=w har tsə řoža=w la mantəqakʸì=ya.॰ maʿqừl=a॰ ʿārd=ī ha-bī amən nà-zānībīm?ʾ॰*

(12)   *awīš a-rē, ʿpēštər nà-hātīya.॰ bas ka mən lērà=ma॰ da=y-hawē bə=n-xwằ tabʿan.॰ handza [dằn=yān pē xwāzīn].॰ a-rē, ʿšətī wā nì=ya!॰ aw murka murkʸē xwằ=ya.॰ nà murkʸē tu=wa=w nà murkʸē mən=īš=aʾ॰*

(13)   *ʿkừ ato akēy ē xo?॰ a-rē mən šāhēd=ū ʾəsbằt=əm hana,॰ ka àw murka॰ murkʸē mòn=a=w॰ la bāb=ū bāpīrằn lo=m māwīt-oawa.ʾ॰ mař=īš a-rē, ʿbə-řo b-īnà!॰ a-rēt řằz bērē=ū la řēgay šērì ba!ʾ॰*

(14)   *mařaka=š řằst=a॰ gùrəg fērbāz=a.॰ da=y-hawē məndārakà=y lē bə-xwā.॰ a-rē, ʿsəbaynēkà॰ saʿāt dwāzdày nīwařwānē॰ yā xod wàxtī ēwārē॰ amən šāhēd=ū ʾəsbāt-ī xo=m da-ynằm.॰ d-ēm a-salmīnəm ka awa murkʸē mən=a.ʾ॰*

(11)   That is, she made a shed in it for herself and lived there. Once, in the middle of cold weather and frost, a cunning hungry wolf came to her. He said, 'Who has let you live on my property!?' The ewe was astonished[2] [and said], 'Well, wolf! A wolf is normally in a different place each day. It is a wanderer and is in a different region each day. Is it conceivable that a wolf had land and that I had not known about?'

(12)   She said [to herself], 'He had not come earlier [to this place]. However, now that I am here, he wants to eat us. That is why he is creating a trap for us.' She said [to the wolf], 'It is not so! This property belongs to God. This is neither your property nor my property!'

(13)   [The wolf said], 'How is it that you claim it is yours? He said, 'I have a witness [who can prove that] this property is mine and has been passed on to me from my elders.'[3] The ewe said, 'Go and bring him! [As] the saying goes,[4] 'Say the truth and be courageous!'[5]

(14)   [Now] the ewe is right [but] the wolf is being cunning. He wants to eat her (the ewe's) lamb. He (the wolf) said, 'Tomorrow at noon or in the evening I will bring my witness [here]. I will come and prove that this is my property.'

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[2] Lit. Her mind remains dazed.
[3] Lit. fathers and grandfathers.
[4] Lit. it says.
[5] Lit. be in the path of lion.

(15)   *a-rē řož hāt=ū řož řòy.│ mař hàr pərsyārī a-kərd, 'da-bī│ šāhēd-ī gurgʸḕ bī?'│ səbaʿynḕ lo=y wa dīyār kat│ gùrg=ū řēwī pēk-awa būn.│ wət=ī, 'ba xwāy hār=əm šàř=a.│ amən kừ bār=yān bə-bam?'│ čừ│ hānā=y bərd=a bar ṣagʸì.│*

(16)   *kəsokàkʸ=ī lē bū,│ kəsokakʸī zor zor ba-wàj=ū│ ba-wafà.│ dīfàʿ=īš=ī la mařakay a-kərd.│ got=ī, 'hār=ū maslà=m aw ha-ya=w ba hānā=m ga!'│ got=ī, 'xam=ət nà-bī!│ la nāw ama yak šət zor bằw=a.│ aw=īš wədzằ ġ=a.│ wədzāġī bāb=ū bāpīrằn.│ bằš=a?'│*

(17)   *'pē=yī bə-rḕ!│ amən a-čəm la pəšt aw dāràv│ xò a-šārm-oawa.│ har kātak řēwī hằt│ sừndī xwārd ba wədzāġ=ī│ yān ba har šətàkʸ=ī,│ awā mən řĕk lat=ū pàt=ī a-ka-m.│ nḕ-wēr-ən sondī ba dro bə-xon.'│ a-rē hamān xuta=yān dzē ba dzḕ kərd.│ ṣay xo šārd-owa la pəž dằrī.│ ū gurg=ū řēwī=š hātən lo šahādadānḕ.│*

(18)   *got=ī got=ī, 'awà=š šāhēd-ī mən.'│ řēwī ba jəwāb hāt zor ba murtahì│ got=ī, 'amền šāhēdī a-dam│ ka àw murka│ mừrkʸē gurgī=a│ atò hātī│ la sar=ət dā-kotằya,│ ba bē hàq=ū│ ba bē mằf.'│*

(15)   It is said [that] dawn broke.[6] The ewe kept asking [her-self], 'Who is going to be the wolf's witness?' One morning the wolf and fox became visible to her [from afar]. She (the ewe) said, 'By God, I am in a bad situation! How am I supposed to get rid of them?'[7] She went to ask the dog for help.

(16)   There was a dog in it [in the meadow], a respectful faith-ful dog. He would defend the ewe. She said [to the dog], 'The situation is like this, [please] come to my aid.' He (the dog) said, 'No worries! Something is customary among us [the members of the dog family], [and] that is the clan, that is, the clan of elders. All right?'

(17)   [The dog continued] 'Tell him [the wolf to come]! I will go and hide myself behind that tree. Whenever he [the fox] comes over and starts to take an oath on his clan or on anything else, I will tear him down right away. They will not dare to make a fake oath.' It is said that they (i.e. the ewe and the dog) made the same plan. The dog hid himself behind the tree. And the wolf and fox came to bear witness.

(18)   [The wolf] said, 'Here is my witness!' The fox started to speak[8] comfortably [and] said, 'I testify that this land is the wolf's and that you have come [into this land and] usurped it without having any [legitimate] rights.'

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[6] Lit. The sun came and the sun went.
[7] Lit. How can I load them?
[8] Lit. came to answer.

(19)   *mařaka꞊š got꞊ī, 'āxər nà̄-bī.' la ʿādà̄t꞊ū ʿurfē ma' sūnd xwārdə̀n' aw ja salmāndə̀n.'' got꞊ī, 'bāš ama sūnd ba tsə̀ bə-xoyn?'' got꞊ī, 'a-bī sūnd ba wədzà̄ġī bāb꞊ū bāpīrān꞊əm bə-xoy',' mařakà got꞊ī.'*

(20)   *řēwī꞊š got꞊ī, 'zor ʾaʿtīyādì̄꞊ya.' wədzà̄ġ꞊ət la kēndar꞊a tā sūndī pē bə-xoyn?'' got꞊ī, 'wədzāġ-ē mən la pəšt àw dāra꞊ya.'' ka řēwī dìt꞊ī sagàkʸī gawra' la pəž dārakà꞊ya,' har zərà̄w꞊ī čū' got꞊ī, 'na ba xwà̄y' bak pīrozī wədzà̄ġ꞊ət' ato wədzāġ꞊ət gala galak mubāràk꞊a.' nə-tān-əm sūnd꞊ī pē bə-xòm.'' řīwì̄ řoy.'*

(21)   *got꞊ī gurg got꞊ī, 'nà̄-bīt!' řīwī tərsà̄꞊ya.' aga nā qat qàt pəšt la mən nākā꞊w' šāhēd ò꞊a' ka awa murkʸī mə̀n꞊a.'' got꞊ī ka gurg lēy nəzīk bū-awa sūnd bə-xwà̄,' got꞊ī, 'mən sūnd nak ba wədzāġ-ē tò' ba hamū šətě̄kʸī a-xom!'*

(22)   *ka dīt꞊ī ṣàg꞊ī lē꞊ya' ṣa pəř꞊ī dāya꞊w quřkʸ꞊ī gə̀rt.' got꞊ī, 'āmà̄n!' amə̀n hīts nī꞊ma.' aw murka murkʸī tò꞊a.'' jā a-rè̄' law hāḷatay dā ūdzāġ awanda pīròz boa' la nāw komaḷgāy kurdì̄' yaʿnī sù̄nd꞊ī pē xorā꞊ya.' har lò꞊ya꞊š a-bīnīn' haqāyata kurdīyakà̄n' baw amānjay a-bàn.'*

amn꞊īš hātm-àw' hì̄ts꞊əm pē na-bəřā.' xalās꞊ū řòy.'

(19)   The ewe said, 'It does not work like this! In our customs one first takes an oath then one proceeds to presenting proof.' He (the fox) said, 'All right! What should we take an oath on?' 'You should take an oath on the clan of my ancestors!', the ewe said.

(20)   The fox said, 'It is totally fine. Where is your clan for us to take an oath on?' She said, 'My clan is behind that tree!' On seeing a big dog behind the tree, the fox was frightened[9] [and] said, 'By God, [and] by your clan's sanctity, your clan is very holy. I cannot take an oath on it.' The fox went away.

(21)   The wolf said, 'It does not count! The fox became scared, otherwise, he would never turn his back on me. He is the witness that this property is mine. When it was the time for the wolf to take an oath, he said, 'I will take an oath not only on your clan but also on anything else!'

(22)   When he (the wolf) saw that a dog was there [behind the tree], the dog jumped on the wolf and seized [him by] his neck.[10] He (the wolf) said, 'Please, please! I am nothing! This property is yours!' It is said that the clan was so holy in Kurdish society that one took an oath on it. That is why we see that it has been referred to in Kurdish tales.

I have come back [from the events of the story] and nothing was given[11] to me [by the characters in the story]. It is finished.[12]

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[9] Lit. his gall bladder went (away).

[10] Lit. He grabbed his throat.

[11] Lit. Nothing was cut for me.

[12] Lit. It is finished and gone.