

Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish Folklore from Northern Iraq

A Comparative Anthology with a Sample of Glossed Texts

VOLUME 2



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20. A FAMILY HORSE

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Summary

A family had a horse which was very well-known in the region. People called it 'the family horse'. Nobody would mount it. Once a year, the horse would be taken out of the stable for people to see and praise it.

Once, someone stole the family horse. The owner of the family, who had witnessed the theft, mounted his 'normal' horse and chased after the thief. At some point, the owner of the family horse was able to reach the thief and stop him. However, he did not do so and instead let him go.

His sons criticized him, asking why he did not stop the thief. The father reasoned that he let the thief go to save face, since otherwise the reputation around the 'family horse' and their family would be ruined.

(1) *nāvē mə Hērəš=a. | az kuřē Rāšīd bagē Barwārī=ma=ū | az Barwārī=ma. | navīyē Tawfiq Bagē kuřē haji Rāšīd Bāgē Barwārī. | az-ē bo wa čiròkāl ḥašpē mālbātē bē-žəm, | waki bāb=ū bāpīrā bo mə və-gařyāyī.*

(2) *ṭ-bēžən, ha-bū na-bū, | kas šə xodē mastər nà-bū, | kas šə banīyā žī dərāwīntər na-bū. | zamānakī wē davarē | xalkē čə ṭ-kər? | har bənamālākē | ḥəspaḳē makənē, | jəhēlē | galà gala gala gala lāv ha-bū.*

(3) *ṭə-bēžən àv ḥašpē hanē, | har ṭə nāvē bənamālē əṭ-hāt=a nīyās. | ya‘nī xalkē av ḥašpa bənamālē ṭ-nīyāsī. | kas lə vī ḥašpī siyār nà-ṭ-bū. | sālē jārakē av ḥašpa darē ṭ-xəst | nišā xalkē əṭ-dā. | ū xalkē madhà pē ṭə-kərən. | ū xalkē ḥašpē xo bə wā ḥašpā ṭə-šəbəhəndən.*

(4) *ḥašpē bənamālē yē čāwà bū? | bābē ḥašpī yē bənamālē bū, | Pəxīnē. | kuřē wī ḥašpī žī bə wē bənamālē ṭ-mā. | kasē lə vī ḥašpī žə bar qīmātā wī lē siyār na-bū. | tənē darē ṭə-xəst bo jānī, | ū va-šārta-va tə govē dā.*

(5) *ṭ-bən sālakē | ḥašpē bənamālākē | ko gala gala galak yē barnīyāz bū | ū xalkē hamī, | ya‘nī nāv=ū dangēt vī ḥašpī čə būn? | ēḳ hāt=a dəziyēt ḥašpī. | xo āvēt=a ṭ govē-va, | ū xo āvēt=a sar pəštā ḥašpē wā. | vā ḥašpē wā řavānd.*

(1) My name is Herish. I am the son of Rashid Bag Barwari, and I am from Barwari. [I am] the grandson of Tawfiq Bag Barwari, [who is] the son of Haji Rashid Bag Barwari. I am going to tell you the story of 'the family horse', the way I have been told it by the elders.

(2) It is said that there was and there was not, [but] there was nobody greater than God, and no bigger liar than man. What did the people in this region do once? Each family had a young, reliable horse that was very, very strong.

(3) It is said that this [particular] horse (i.e. the horse of a certain family) was known in every family. That is, people knew this horse as the 'family [horse]'. Nobody would mount this horse. Once a year, they (i.e. the family) would bring [the horse] out for people to see. And people would praise it (i.e. the horse) and compare their horses to those [family] horses.

(4) [But] what was the family horse like? Its father, Pekhine, also belonged to this family. Its colt also stayed with the same family. Because of its value, nobody would mount the [family] horse. It was only brought out of the stable for people to see its grandeur, and then hidden again in the stable.

(5) It is said that the horse of [a] family became so famous that everybody [said], 'Well, what is [so] special about this horse? What is it famous for?' A [certain] person came to steal the horse. He went into the stable and mounted the family horse.¹ He stole the horse.

¹ Lit. He threw himself into the stable and he threw himself on the horse.

(6) *zaḷām ži, | xodānē ḥaṣpī pē hasā. | dīt ēkī ḥaṣpē wā bār. | got-a
 ʔūṛēt xo, | ʔəḷūn vē ṛā-bə-gahən | hatkā ma čū. | ēkī ḥaṣpē ma bār, | yē
 bənamālē. | avē bābē ḥaṣpī, | əv bābē bənamālē. |*

(7) *yaʿnī žə bāb-ū kālā-va ḥaṣp-ū bənamāl pēk-və būn, | nažāt bo
 nažātī. | gotī | əv | ʔaḷāmē xodānē ḥaṣpī čū lə ḥaṣpē xwa siyār bū. | ū
 ʔūṛēt wī žī dā dīv. | katn-a dīv ḥaṣpī, | katn-a dīv. | ū ḥaṣp ṛā-gərən
 čārgāvā. |*

(8) *ʔūṛēt wī žīk yē bə dīv-va, | ū bāb-ē bə dīv dəzīkarī-va. |
 dəzīkar-ē lə ḥaṣpē bənamālē siyār-a. | bāb žī lə ḥaṣpē xo siyār-a. | har
 du ʔūṛ žī av dā warēt wāy dī. | ʔā ki žə bāgīr haya, | lē lē siyār būyn. |*

(9) *ʔə-bēžən bāb gahašt-a dəzīkarī. | dastē xwa hāvēt, | dā gahət
 pātka wī | nā-gahašt-ē, | dastē xwa zəvəṛānd-avā. | ū haysārē ḥaṣpī bə
 ləxāv-va kēšā, | ū ḥaṣəp ṛā-wəstānd. | dəzīkar žī žē falətī. |*

(6) The man, the owner of the horse found out [about the robbery]. He saw that a person had taken their horse. He said to his sons, 'Get up, go and reach the thief, for we are disgraced.² Someone has taken our horse—the family horse.' [Both] the horse's father [and] the father of the family [said so].'

(7) From the days of old³, from one generation to the other, the horse and the family had lived together. It is said that the owner of the family horse went and mounted his [other] horse. And his sons followed him. They went after the [family] horse, they went after it. They galloped on their horses towards the thief.

(8) The sons [went] behind their father, and the father went after the thief. The thief was riding the family horse. The father was on his [other] horse. Similarly, his two sons followed each other. Even though it was [extremely] windy, they were riding their horses.

(9) It is said that the father reached the thief. He stretched out his hand to grab the thief's scarf [but since] his hands did not reach it [the thief's scarf], he withdrew them. He (the father) pulled the reins of his horse and made it stop. The thief rode away.⁴

² Lit. Our honour went.

³ Lit. from fathers and grandfathers.

⁴ Lit. The thief escaped from him.

(10) *hatā kūrēt wī gahištən-ē,[|] got-ē, ‘bābo! ta čə mālā ma xərā kər?[|] wē gāvē dastē ta tə-gəhəšt-ē![|] ta būčī na-gərt?[|] got-ē, ‘rünən![|] mə ‘aql xarəj kər.[|]*

(11) *go, ‘waxtē az gahəštīm ɣəspē bənamālē,[|] – avē hənda sāl-a am əb bāb ū bāpīr-va madhā pē tə-kayn,[|] ū tə-bayn nāv xalkē,[|] – tu zānī čə hāt sarē mən?[|]*

(12) *gotī, ‘waxtē mə dītī[|] mə dastē xwa dā həvēm[|] pātəkā dəzī dā-gērəm,[|] dā xalək hamī zānītən[|] dəzīkarək hāt ɣəspē mə dəzī,[|] yē bənamālē,[|] avē sarē həndasāl-a nāv ū dangēt wī čūyn.[|]*

(13) *‘dā bēžən, “ēkī ɣəspē wa dəzī.[|] ū hīn bə ɣəspēt xwā[|] yēt sīyārīē[|] bə ɣəspē bənamālē řā gahəštən.”[|] bəlā ɣəşəp bo wī bīt[|] bas bəlā madhēt ɣəspī bə-mīnē.[|]*

(10) When his sons caught up with him, they said, ‘Dad, why did you ruin our home?! A while ago you could have reached the thief! Why didn’t you grab him?’ The father said, ‘Calm down⁵! I acted wisely.’

(11) He (the father) said, ‘When I approached the family horse—the one which we have been praising for so long and which we take around for people to see—do you know what I thought of?’

(12) He (the father) said, ‘When I saw that I could stretch out my arms and grab the scarf of the thief, [I thought that] people would figure out that a thief had come to steal our horse—the family horse—the one which has been famous and well-known for so many years.’

(13) [The father continued] ‘[Later] people would say, “Someone stole your [family] horse. And you could reach the family horse with your riding horses.”⁶ [So instead,] let the [family] horse be the thief’s, but let the praise of the [family] horse remain with us!’

⁵ Lit. Sit down!

⁶ Implying that this would have exposed the horse’s lack of any special powers.

