

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



<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>

© 2022 Geoffrey Khan, Masoud Mohammadirad, Dorota Molin and Paul M. Noorlander, in collaboration with Lourd Habeeb Hanna, Aziz Emmanuel Eliya Al-Zebari and Salim Abraham.



This work is licensed under an Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the text; to adapt the text for non-commercial purposes providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Geoffrey Khan, Masoud Mohammadirad, Dorota Molin and Paul M. Noorlander, *Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish Folklore from Northern Iraq: A Comparative Anthology with a Sample of Glossed Texts, Volume 2*. Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures 12. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0307>

Copyright and permissions for the reuse of many of the images included in this publication differ from the above. Copyright and permissions information for images is provided separately in the List of Illustrations.

In order to access detailed and updated information on the license, please visit, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0307#copyright>

Further details about CC BY-NC licenses are available at, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Updated digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0307#resources>

Every effort has been made to identify and contact copyright holders and any omission or error will be corrected if notification is made to the publisher.

Semitic Languages and Cultures 12.

ISSN (print): 2632-6906

ISSN (digital): 2632-6914

ISBN Paperback: 9781800647695

ISBN Hardback: 9781800647701

ISBN Digital (PDF): 9781800647718

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0307

Cover images:

Cover design: Anna Gatti

28. TWO MULLAHS

Geoffrey Khan

Speaker: Seran Sher (ChA. Shaqlawa)

Recording: Lourd Hanna

Assistants: Aziz al-Zebari, Lourd Hanna

Audio: <https://nena.ames.cam.ac.uk/audio/230/>

Summary

Two mullahs served the same mosque in the same village. One mullah always used to arrive at the mosque early in the morning and make the call to prayer before the other mullah came. The other mullah got very upset, since the people in the village blamed him for not working. He asked his colleague how he managed to arrive so early. His colleague told him that it was because he had two wives, who looked after all his needs, and advised him to marry a second wife. The other mullah, thereupon, brought a second wife into his home. The wives, however, made his life hell and the mullah escaped in the night and took refuge in the mosque. He castigated his colleague for his misleading advice. His colleague responded that their lives had now become the same.

(1) ʿana šəmi Serān ʿAdday Šēr=ile. | brāt Ḥane ʿĀwdu-iwan. | našət Šaqlāwe=wan. | šāt ʿalpa=w təša ma=w ʿəšti=w xamša hwète=wan | gu Šàqlawa. |

(2) ʿəti xa ḥūčita šəmau trè malaye=le. | ʿətwə=w lətwə | mən bāb ʿalaha=w ʿoda Maryam bəš raba lətwə=w qāt=iš la k-awe, | ʿətwə trè malaye. | ʿāna tre malāye, | malayət xā mata=wənwa, | xa məzgəft=u xa mātə. |

(3) ʿāna tre malāye | xəzmətət dè məzgəft ʿudiwa | gəwət | məşrəxe | qatət mşaləye=w | gu ḥdarət gu taziye=w məndyāne. |

(4) xa mən dāna malāye, | qāmət waxtət şlotət xuşkənta hawewa, | baraw bāyani ʿawa ʿəl məzgəft hawewa. | hawar məşrəxwa=w | ʿqū mşaləye=w | məndi=w | bāng yawəlwa. |

(5) ʿaw malā xət | gālak mətʿəsər payəšwa. | ʿamərwa, | ʿmaʿqūl=ila ʿāt | qāmeti l-ṭāma hawət? | naše lōm wədlu. | ʿamri, ʿāt ʿəl ma məndi [ʿa]xni ʿətye=wət lāxa? | la xəzmətan k-udət | la ma | la bāng č-awət. | ʿe qa tsə məndi bāš lewət. |

(6) fā | gālak mətʿəsər pəšle. | xəre | ʿamər, ʿazən baqrən mən de xāwri | ʿaw mən didi qəša haya k-əte. | ʿana kut tira dərang, | gu tsə məndi la g-matpən. |

(1) My name is Seran Adday Sher. I am the daughter of Hane Awdo. I am [one of the] people of Shaqlawa. I was born in 1965 in Shaqlawa.

(2) I have a story called 'The Two Mullahs'. There was and there was not, there was no one who was greater than God the Father and Mother Mary and shall never be, there were two mullahs. These two mullahs were mullahs serving the same village,¹ the same mosque and the same village.

(3) These two mullahs served the mosque by calling to prayer, attending funerals and so on.

(4) One of these mullahs used to be in the mosque at dawn before the time of morning prayer. He would make a call to prayer crying, 'Rise to pray' and so forth.

(5) The other mullah used to get very upset. He used to say, 'How is it possible for you to be there before me?' People began to blame him saying, 'Why on earth have you come to us here? You do not offer us service nor do you call to prayer. You are not good for anything.'

(6) So, he became very upset. He thought to himself² and said, 'Let me go and ask my colleague who comes before me a little earlier. I am late every time, I do not catch up with anything.'

¹ Lit. mullahs of the same village.

² Lit. he saw.

(7) ʾàmər, | mǎla. ʾ | ʾamər, ʾhà ʾaxoni, | mà=ila? ʾ | ʾamər, ʾmur qàti, |
gu mà mǎndi ʾāt qǎmāt waxtāt mšaloye lǎxe=wāt? ʾ | ʾamər, ʾqa mà? |
ʾamər, ʾhemən našāt ʾawayi lèwu mǎni razi. | k-əmri “ʾāt | dràng k-
atāt-u | qat qalux là k-šǎmǎxle. | dyara la yan qalux bǎsima lèwe | yan
ṭǎmbal-iwāt, | là k-atāt.” ʾ |

(8) ʾàmər, | ʾmhèmən, | ʾana xà mǎndi ʾamrənux ʾàxon. ʾ | ʾamər,
ʾčādāt mà? | ʾana trè ʾišunyata ʾəti. |

(9) ʾāna tre ʾišunyàta | xa har màye g-mašxəna qati, | xa pǎštumǎ!
g-dawqala qati, | xa gòri g-matwalu qati, | xa jǎle ḥazər k-udalu | xa
qundǎri-š šǔbuḡ k-udalu. | qa hādax | xa=w tre ʾana ḥazər k-pešən. | qa
hadax qǎmetux k-ṭapən. ʾ |

(10) ʾamər, ʾmātu? ʾ | ʾàmər, | ʾyaʿni raʾyux mà=ile? ʾ | ʾàmər, | ʾraʾyi=le
ʾawdātu trè ʾišunyata. ʾ | ʾamər, ʾmātʾàkkəd-iwāt? ʾ | ʾamər, ʾma de
mdzārəb! | ʾaxonux mà mare=le qatux? ʾ | ʾamər, ʾha halʿān k-azən. ʾ |

(11) har plǎṭle mǎn mǎzgǎft | ʾizǎle xa baxta mtele. | ʾitele qam-
yawǎla | qam-matùla l-beta. | ʾamər, “ʾāna | šloṭāt ʾašərte=la, | bizǎl=ən
qa mǎzgāft. ʾ |

(7) He said, 'Mullah.' He said, 'Yes, brother, what is the matter?' He said, 'Tell me, how is it that you are here before the time of prayer?' He said, 'How?' He said, 'Believe me, the people of the village are not happy with me. They say "You come late and we never hear your voice. It seems you do not come either because your voice is not good or because you are a lazy person."'

(8) He said, 'Look, let me tell you one thing, brother.' He said, 'Do you know what? I have two wives.

(9) These two wives, one of them always warms water for me [to bathe], one holds a cushion for me, one puts out my socks for me, one prepares my clothes, one polishes my shoes. That is why I get ready in a moment,³ and this is why I get here before you.'

(10) He said, 'But how?' He said, 'I mean, what is your advice?'⁴ 'My advice is for you to have two wives.'⁵ He said, 'Are you sure?' He said, 'Just give it a try! This is your brother's advice to you.'⁶ He said, 'I shall go immediately [and marry another woman].'

(11) As soon as he left the mosque, he went and married another woman. He came and put her, he helped her settle at the house. He said, 'It is time for the evening prayer. I am going to the mosque.'

³ Lit. [by the time I count] one and two.

⁴ Lit. your opinion.

⁵ Lit. you make them two wives.

⁶ Lit. what is your brother saying to you?

(12) *hātà dāre¹ qālāt¹ ʾāna tre ʾišunyātu¹ l-dāw balət Zaba ʾapewa.¹
xā ʾamrawa,¹ ʾkalba xəryət mālā.¹ ʾaw⁷ xət ʾamrawa,¹ ʾatxa ʾələt rišət
mālā.¹ ʾe xət ʾamrāwa,¹ ʾkalba l-qawrət mālā xare.¹ bejəga mən xat-
watu-u ʾòdu¹ ʾani kǔlu qam-matilu l-gor.¹*

(13) *ma ʾawəd?¹ wəre¹ ʾamər, ʾmā=ila?¹ ʾamər, ʾbāš=ila,¹ ʾaxtun qa
mā ʾəli mšawore=witun?¹ ʾana mā?¹ ʾamri, ʾxer ʾāt mutyan=iwət.¹*

(14) *ʾəl mǔhəm¹ là ʾidele¹ mātu¹ tre ʾlaha sāʿāt fətlū.¹ qāmət yoma
bāyəz,¹ ʾərəqlə¹ mən qam ʾidāt dan trè ʾišunyata¹ ʾət mara qatu, ʾāt
ʾatxa wədlux¹ ʾāt ʾatxa wədlux,¹ b-e ga mšawore l-ʾəgdāde.¹ rešu gālak
gālak mrèle.¹*

(15) *ʾizəle.¹ lèle=le,¹ lebe tsə məndi ʾawəd gu məzgaft.¹ la ʾibe
māšrəx¹ la ʾibe mālā bang ʾawəd,¹ la tsə mendi lèbe ʾawəd.¹ ʾizəle¹ tāra
qam-patəxle.¹ ʾitule ʾələl.¹*

(16) *ʾitule ʾələl.¹ ʾamər qatət mālā,¹ ʾàmər,¹ waxtət mšaldye=le.¹ xa-
zəx mənū mən jānu maḥçoye=le mālā.¹ k-àmər,¹ ʾwaxtət mšaldye=le?¹
la waxtət mšaloye lèla.¹ ʾe ga xa gəfwa šaqləni¹ xantsa ʾəni matwənu.¹*

⁷ The speaker uses the masculine pronoun ʾaw although the reference is to one of the wives.

(12) By the time he returned home, the cries of these two wives were reaching the other bank of the Zab River. One said, 'May a dog shit on the mullah!'⁸ Another said, 'May this [dog's shit] be on the head of the mullah.' Another said, 'May the dog shit on the mullah's grave.' Besides his sisters and his mother, they included them all in their curses.⁹

(13) What could he do? He entered [the house] and said, 'What is the matter?' He said, 'All right, why are you swearing at me? What have I done?'¹⁰ They said, 'But it was you who brought us [here].'

(14) Well,¹¹ he did not know how the next two or three hours passed by. Before dawn broke, he fled from the hands of the two women as they were saying to him, 'You did this, you did that,' at the same time swearing at each other. He had a big headache.

(15) He went away. It was night time and he could do nothing in the mosque. He could not call to prayer. The mullah could not make a call [to prayer]. He not do anything. He went and opened the door. He sat on the upper floor.

(16) He sat on the upper floor. He said to the mullah—it is said that it was prayer time and the mullah began to talk to himself saying, 'Is it prayer time? No, it is not prayer time. So let me take a nap and close my eyes for a bit.'

⁸ Lit. the mullah shat upon by a dog.

⁹ Lit. in the situation.

¹⁰ Lit. I am what?

¹¹ Lit. the important thing.

(17) *k àmər:| xzèle| xa tǎpǎtap ʾitèle.| xzele ʾe mǎla xət ʾitele.| ʾàmər,| ʾitèlux?ʾ| ʾàmər,| ʾnaša xoš nàša! madam ʾāt betux mṣuṭəm̄wale,| qa mà beti qam-mṣaṭm̄ate?ʾ| ʾāt betux nura ʾitən gu betux ʾarqəṭwa m̄ane ʾāna š̄əne,| qa mà beti qam-awd̄ate?ʾ|*

(18) *ʾamər, ʾqa ma bas ʾāna m̄arux,| ʾāt la t̄ləblux m̄ani m̄asàʿāda?ʾ| ʾay m̄asàʿāda d̄əx l̄əwət b̄əxzaya?ʾ| q̄āmeti l-m̄əzgaft-iwət,| h̄āta parux ḥālāl ʾawd̄ətu.ʾ|*

(19) *ʾwəlux,ʾ ʾamər, ʾāt beti nura qam-awd̄ate.ʾ| ʾamər, ʾbas b̄əti k̄āwla payəš,| mà?ʾ ʾāye=la ʿešan weta x̄à.ʾ|*

(20) *ʾāya ḥūc̄ita| k-əm̄rila qa daw našət rešu là (ha)we mara=w| rešu mamr̄èle.| ʾawdza ʿābra m̄ən de naša k-šaql̄ila.| k-əm̄rila qa d̄an naše| ʾaxtsa gu q̄ūsət naše là (a)te=w ʾazəl,| gu moxət j̄ānu ʾawəd,| ʾaxtsa gu t̄ānayātət naše la qayəm=u ȳātu.|*

(21) *ʾawdza ʾiteli ʾit̄eli| ts̄ə m̄əndi=š la w̄əlu qati.|*

(17) It is said that he heard¹² some footsteps coming. He saw the other mullah come. He said, 'Have you come [already]?' He said, 'My friend,¹³ if your life was ruined,¹⁴ why did you ruin my own life? Your home was like hell¹⁵ from which you fled all these years, so why did you make my home [the same]?'

(18) He said, 'Why have you blamed me?'¹⁶ Did you not ask for help from me? Do you see how I have helped you? You are at the mosque before me, so you will legitimately earn your money.'

(19) 'But you,' he said, 'have turned my home into a hell.' He said, 'Should only my house be in ruins? So our life has now become the same.'

(20) This story is told about those who do not have a headache but cause themselves to have a headache, so that people will learn a lesson from [the story of] this man. [The story] tells people that one should not act¹⁷ according to what other people say, but one should act using one's own mind, rather than stand and sit according to what [other] people say.

(21) So, I have come back [from the scene of the story], but they gave me nothing [to prove that I saw it].

¹² Lit. saw.

¹³ Lit. man, good man.

¹⁴ Lit. your house was ruined.

¹⁵ Lit. there is fire in your house.

¹⁶ Lit. why have you said [this] only to me?

¹⁷ Lit. come and go.

