This comparative anthology showcases the rich and mutually intertwined folklore of three ethno-religious communities from northern Iraq: Aramaic-speaking (‘Syriac’) Christians, Kurdish Muslims and—to a lesser extent—Aramaic-speaking Jews. The first volume contains several introductory chapters on language, folklore motifs and narrative style, followed by samples of glossed texts in each language variety. The second volume is the anthology proper, presenting folklore narratives in several distinct varieties of North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic and Northern and Central Kurdish. The stories are accompanied by English translations. The material includes different genres such as folktales, legends, fables and anecdotes, and is organised into seven thematic units. The folkloristic material of these three communities is shared to a large extent. The anthology is, therefore, a testament to the intimate and long-standing relations between these three ethno-religious communities—relations that existed in a multilingual environment centuries before the modern era of nationalism.
31. FIRYAT AND KHAJIJA

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Audio: https://kurdic.ames.cam.ac.uk/audio/246/

Summary

This tale is about a water spring called kahnūkā xamā ‘spring of sorrows’ in the Amedia region. Firyat, one of the nobles of the region, wanted to marry Khajija, but her family did not want to give their daughter to him in marriage, because they were from different religions.

Since Firyat was a powerful man, Khajija’s family would have to agree to the marriage proposal eventually. They gave Firyat a false hope saying that they would give Khajija to him in marriage only if he would build them a canal flowing into a pool to store water.

After a while, Khajija’s family noticed that Firyat was about to finish the canal, and they would have to give him their daughter. They went to Fatiha, who poisoned Firyat and tricked him into believing that Khajija was dead, after which he passed away. The water was called the spring of sorrows ever since.

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(1) nāvē mən Ḍəhmət Abūbêkər Sələmn. az ... xalxē gundê Xizavā-ma, Ḍə aṣîrâ Guliya. Kanîkâ xamâ ava ... təngadarak-ə lə ve rē tə-bêzən-ē təngâ bânkê. kavrak-ə, kavrē das kolâ-ya.

(2) ija diyar-ə ku taqriban masâfata čər mîrâ kür kəriya. bə dâs kolâ-ya-w ü qiyaâdu mətrak ĺi fiyâ-ha-w. čər mîrâ kûrâtîyyâ kavri-ya. ava bûçî masalan ... av kavra hât-ə kolânin?

(3) mərovak lə ve mantaqê bi. hîngi av ... galak jârâ dənyâ təzî mərov bi-û jär diva yâ vålâ bîva. av mantaqa wi sadamî təzî mərov bi. lə Məninê tə-bêzən bâzêr bêl ḫond bûşîtê lê habê.

(4) malxakê lə ve mantaqayê habêl mantaqa Məninê-û hatâ bëndorê wêl də-got-ê Fëryât. Fëryat mərovaê yê xodân shiyân bi. xodân ... zarvû dâst bi. ĺê xodân shiyân bi. kas lê nà-d-shiyâ-yê-w ü têr mərov zî bi.

(5) vêjâr ... ava gundê Bahniyâ gundak yê qadêm-â. kəçak-ê lə wê rê bi, nâvê wê Xajîjâ bi. nâvû dangêt Xajîjâyê ... Fëryâtî go lê bi. kəçakê barkati yâ pêşkêş-â.
My name [is] Ahmad Abubakir Sileman. I am from the village of Khizava, from the Gulī tribe. The spring of sorrow contains a narrow canal [through which water flows] here, [the canal] is called Tangā Bānke. It is a rock [that has been] excavated by hand.

It is evident that the canal has been excavated almost four meters deep. It has been excavated by hand and it is two meters wide. The depth of the canal is four meters. Why was this rock excavated?

There was a man in this region. This [region] was sometimes populated and sometimes unpopulated. At the time [when this story happened] it was highly populated. It is said that the city of Minīn was very rich.

There was a king in these regions, [that is] the Minin area and its environs. He was called Firyat. Firyat was a powerful man. He was wealthy and of great authority. He was powerful. Nobody could compete with him. He was a very rich man.

There is an old village here called Bahnin. A girl used to live there whose name was Khajija. Firyat learned about Khajija’s fame. She was a beautiful, gifted girl.

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1 Lit. is.
2 Lit. owner of power.
3 Lit. Nobody was able at him.
4 Lit. He was a full man.
(6) readOnly ... āš bənāmālā 'awādī bi ... Bahnīnē bī. āš bənāmālā Faq ābrāhimî bi. ʁā-bi šor got, 'tə-vēt hūn vē kəčē bə-dən mən. mən nāv-ū dangē wē gō lē bi. kəčkā yā pēškēš-ū barkaṭī-ya. tə-vēt hūn vē kəčē bə-dən mən. ’


(8)  readOnly awi ʁi ət-got-ē, ‘tə-vēt hūn bə-dən mən! ’ tab’ān šiyānēt wān na-bi. ya’ni tə-zānī Fərəyāt xodān quwāt-ə-wī dē har šēt bə-bēt. balē ... got-ē, ‘am-ē takbīrā xwa ḵwēn. ’

(9)  readOnly Fərəyāt zəvərī-vā. pəstī ʃan rōzākā —žənkək ... har bənāmālākə 'awādī yā lə Bahnīnē hāy, am də-bēʃən-ē bənāmālā Kulkā. žənkək šə wē mālē ha-bi. žənkəkā šatūrē tēgəhāštī bī. nāvē wē Fatihā bī.

(10)  readOnly žənkə got-ē, ’ tab’ān ... avānā ... wāxtē takbīrā xwa ḵawrī, šartāk āvēt bar. awəl šartāk āvēt bar, go, ‘am-ē, go ma šārt dē hāy tu yē šārtē ma bo mà ’adā ḵay. ’ šartē ta ẓī-ya? ’
(6) She was from [that] so-and-so family in Bahnin. She was from Faq Ibrahim’s family. He (i.e. Firyat) rose [and] went [to Khajija’s family and] said, ‘You must give me this daughter [of yours in marriage]. I have heard about her fame. [I have heard that] she is a beautiful and gifted girl. You must give me this daughter [of yours in marriage].’

(7) They did not want to give her to him [in marriage], [since] their religion was not the same. The one from Bahnin (i.e., Khajija) was Muslim. As for the other one (i.e. Firyat)—I do not know [for sure]—, he was either Christian or Zoroastrian. Anyway, they did not want to give her to him [in marriage].

(8) He (i.e. Firyat) said, ‘You must give [her] to me.’ In fact, Khajija’s family were helpless [in the face of Firyat]. They knew that Firyat was powerful and could take her anyway. They said [to him], ‘We will consider [your proposal].’

(9) Firyat returned [home]. After a few days, a woman ...—a family used to live in Bahnin, whom we call the family of Kulkā. This woman was from this family. She was a thoughtful, intelligent woman. Her name was Fatiha.

(10) The woman said,—naturally, when they (i.e. Khajija’s family) considered the matter, they made a condition for him. First, they made a condition for him [and] said, ‘We have a condition [that] you need to fulfil.’ [Firyat said], ‘What is your condition?’

\[5\] Lit. a.
\[6\] Lit. throw a condition at his front.

(12)  pānē ... wi sardami šart awādē bīn↑ bo wān galak gərōng bi.| řā-bī dastēt bə joyē kər.| aw kavāra kolā.| avāna barē xo dā-yē↑ ku dē vi kavrī kolōn,↑ ē dē jūyē bōt.↑ ĕ hār tō-vēt bə-dən-e.|↑

(13)  ŋa aw ma got aw ŋənkā ša wē bənamāla Kulkā,↑ ŋənkəkā tēgahaštə bī got, ‘az-e ŋā-bəm čəm.| az-e ŋā-bəm čəm kādakā žahrərī| bo wi bəm.↑ wi kožəm-u↑ kās nə-zāna mən kād[žē kər].↑↑

(14)  ŋənk ŋā-bī pärzīnē xo [inā].↑ pärzin ... vē kurdawārī-ya| maštī kādā kərən.| kādakā žahrərī yə dasnišənkərī kər de nāv pärzinē dā.| ē ŋā-bī hāt! sahārē dā řē↑ nīro hāt kahnīyā xamā.|↑

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7 Speech muffled.
(11) They said, ‘Oh Firyat, [you who are] well-off! You must make a canal from the river for us. It must come straight from the river. Make us a canal, which runs across this rock, the one which is called Barbine Dere. It is a highland and flat land, and it is an area [suitable] for agriculture. You shall build a pool for us to preserve the water coming through the canal!’ ‘All right’, he (i.e. Firyat) said.

(12) At that time winning a bet was very important to people.\(^8\) He (i.e. Firyat) rose [and] began to dig the canal.\(^9\) He excavated the rock. They had a look at his work and saw that he was going to carve out the rock and finish the canal [soon]. And [this means] that eventually they should give her to him [in marriage].’

(13) The woman whom we talked about (i.e. Fatiha), the one from the Kulkā family, who was a clever woman, said, ‘I will go and bring him poisonous pastry. I will kill him. Nobody is going to find out that I put poison\(^10\) in the pastry.’

(14) The woman took her carpetbag. A carpetbag is [typical of] Kurdish regions. She filled it with some pastry. She marked the poisonous pastries and put them into the carpetbag. And she set off\(^11\) in the morning [and] arrived at the spring of sorrow by midday.

\(^8\) Lit. them.

\(^9\) Lit. He put hand on the canal.

\(^10\) Lit. the poison.

\(^11\) Lit. hit the road.
(15) kahniyā xamāl ava: kahniyākā qadīm-a-w yā tāzē āvā bīna-ū.1 av-a la pōšt kavri.1 hāt sar kahniyē.1 wārgahē ... Foryāti hingē lō sar vē kahniyē bi.1 hāt ... bēn wē kavore-ū salāf kēr-e-ū,1 ū got, ‘mēn fōrāvūn ā bo hīnāy’-ū.1

(16) pēkva dawr-ū bārī di lē kōm bīn-ū.1 zāf dā-yē-ū.1 ē ku kāda dā-yē.1 aw kādā dasnāsāx̌ānērti kēr dē dastē Foryātī ūrā.1 awānā [disā] xwārēnā xwa xwār.1

(17) waxtē xwārēnā xwa xwārī.1 tab’an avī ... waxtē av kāda zahraḵerī xwārī.1 Fāṭihā-yē got Foryāti got, ‘pă tu zānē ava čī-ya'?1 got, ‘čī-ya'?1 got, ‘ava sērōskā Xajījā-ya1 Xajījā ‘āmrē xodē kēr.1 ‘čāwā?’1 got, ‘balē wālā.’1

(18) Foryāt čēk čō wāzī wi čēk čō.1 tab’an kādā žī xwār.1 pōštī māwayakē māl Foryāt kavingā sar lē kāt.1 ū kāt.1 muqdayrakē mān hātoň dořā,1 ū xalkē wi ūran-kēr-ū.1 kā ‘əlāj-ēt wi waxtī čō bīn?1 hōndī hāt-e, Foryāt mōr.1 ū vē šiwayī mōr.1
The spring of sorrow, it is a spring. It is an old spring which has been reconstructed recently. It lies behind the rock. She (Fatiha) came to the water spring. Firyat was still at the spring. She came close to the rock, greeted him, and said, ‘I have brought you lunch.’

[Later] other people gathered. She gave them many pastries. She gave the pastry that she had marked for Firyat. They ate their meal.

While Firyat was eating the poisonous pastry, Fatiha said to him, ‘Do you know what this is?’ Firyat said, ‘What is it?’ She said, ‘This is Khajija’s throat. She has passed away.’ ‘How come?’ [he said]. ‘By God, yes it’s true!’, she said.

Firyat passed out [and] his situation got worse, of course, as he had eaten the poisonous pastry too. After some time, his napkin fell from his head. And he fell. People waited a while. They came around him, lifted him. Let us see what medicine there was at that time. It [things] went so far that Firyat died.

He died in this manner.

\[12\] Lit. came.
(19)  awānā ū hamīā aw käda yēt xwārin. | kasē ḥəzər nā-kər ku [masalan] ... | goti, ḏə bar či Fəryāt mər?| šə xəmēt Xajījāyē dā mər.| hatā nūkā| av nāva kat sarē vē kahniyē, | tā-bəz̈n-ē kahniyā xamā.| əz̈ bar ... Fəryātē.| ah ū xamēt Xajījāyē [dā] mər.| (20)   Xajījā-ū Āmīnā xoškēt di wē [bī]. | vē gāvē, ziyāratē wānā yē lō ziyāratē gundē Bahnīnē.| ava həkāyātā Fəryātē-ū Xajījāyē.|
(19) Everyone else\textsuperscript{13} had also eaten [from] those pastries. No one could understand [the reason for Firyat’s death]. They said, ‘Why did Firyat die? He died out of sorrow for Khajija’s death.’ The name [\textit{kahnīyā xamā} ‘the spring of sorrow’] has been given\textsuperscript{14} to the spring ever since. It is called \textit{kahnīyā xamā} ‘the spring of sorrow’ after Firyat[’s ordeal]. Yes, Firyat died out of sorrow for Khajija’s death.

(20) Amina was Khajija’s sister. Their tombs are located in the cemetery of the village of Bahnin. This [was] the tale of Firyat and Khajija.

\textsuperscript{13} Lit. they also all.
\textsuperscript{14} Lit. has fallen.