

Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish Folklore from Northern Iraq

A Comparative Anthology with a Sample of Glossed Texts

VOLUME 2



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37. THE PROPHET'S HORSE

Masoud Mohammadirad

Speaker: Herish Rashid Tawfiq Beg (NK. Dure)

Recording: Lourd Hanna

Audio: <https://kurdic.ames.cam.ac.uk/audio/248/>

Summary

A certain horse called *Dildil* (alternatively *Dindil*) had the power to fly. Once a prophet was riding Dildil on the way to a village called Sarao in the Barwar region. The prophet came across a couple of villains who waylaid him. He prayed to God to be relieved from this predicament. The only way to get out of the situation was through a certain stone called 'Muzalan'. God caused the stone to become soft like dough. Then Dildil walked on the stone until they reached a safe place and got rid of the villains.

It is believed that the footprints of Dildil are still visible on the Muzalan stone. The narrator talks about the cultural significance of Dildil in the region. There are folk songs in which there is reference to Dildil. Historically it is believed that Dildil was the name of the mule of the prophet Muhammad, which was later passed down to Imam Ali. Nowadays in the Barwar region the term 'Dildil' is used to refer to the good quality of a horse.

(1) *nāvē mə Hērəš-a.*¹ *az bîst-û hāšt sāl-əm.*¹ *as xalkē Barwārī Bālā-ma.*¹ *û as kuřē Rāšīd Bagē-ma,*¹ *naviyē Tawfīq Bagē,*¹ *navičərke Hājī Rāšīd Bagē Barwārī.*¹

(2) *as taqrībān*¹ *čār sālakā āsāyī māyma lə nāv Barwārīyā.*¹ *û mən gala gala təšt əš nāv Barwārīyā žə bāb-ū bāpīrā kom kərin.*¹ *èk šə wā təštēt mə galak kom kərin*¹ *žə bəlī av āxāftənēt xalkēt nāv Barwārīyā hamī gāvā t-bēžən-a mǎ,*¹ *av čīrokēt hanā*¹ *avēt az noka dē bo hawa hāndakē žē bēžəm.*¹

(3) *yā mən bə xwa àw-a*¹ *ku av təštē az ət-bēžəm*¹ *bə-hēt-a nāvēsīn,*¹ *û na-hēt-a žə bīr kərən,*¹ *čūnko av təštē ha wakī 'īmānatakī-ya.*¹ *žə bāb-ū kālā bo mǎ māyn,*¹ *û dē bo xalkē dī žī čītən.*¹ *vējā am-ē š čīrokā Dəldəlī das pē bə-kan.*¹

(4) *čīrokā awəl*¹ *av ā Dəldəlī.*¹ *tə-bēžən Dəldəl*¹ *ħaspāk bū,*¹ *řəkēbēt wī wakī yē čēlā-ū gāyā būn.*¹ *řəkēbā wī yā gəřovər nà-bū.*¹ *nāl nà-t-katn-ē.*¹ *wakī šīnpē*¹ *gāyā wuxtē lə 'ardī na-d-mīnən,*¹ *wakī wānā bū.*¹

(5) *tə-bēžən payxambarāk ha-bū*¹ *sīyārē Dəndəlī bū.*¹ *àv Dəndālē ha*¹ *tu čū bā kī rā dənyāyē*¹ *tu šīyā lē sīyār bī,*¹ *û Dəndəl dā frītən.*¹ *handā gundē lə nāv barwārīyā hayn,*¹ *tə-bēn-ē 'Adənē*¹ *o Sařarò.*¹ *həndāv Sařarò*¹ *bə řaxē nəzārē Sařarò*¹ *kavrāk yē hay*¹ *tə-bēn-ē kavrē Mūzałānē.*¹ *av kavrē Mūzałānē*¹ *yē mašhūr-a*¹ *əb šīnpēt Dəndəlī.*¹

(1) My name is Herish. I am twenty-eight years old. I am from Upper Barwar. I am the son of Rashid Bag Barwari, the grandson of Tawfiq Bag, and the great-grandson of Haji Rashid Bag Barwari.

(2) I have been going around the Barwar region for almost four years. I have collected a lot from the older generation in Barwar. Apart from everyday conversations with people,¹ I have also collected some folktales, a few of which I will tell to you.

(3) My aim is that the tales I tell you will be written down so that people will not forget, since these tales have been entrusted² to us. They have been passed down to us from our ancestors and will be transmitted to other people. Let us start with the tale of Dildil.

(4) The first story [is] that of Dildil. It is said that Dildil was a horse whose hooves were like those of cows and bulls. Its hooves were not round [and] horseshoes could not be installed on them. Its footprints on the earth were like those of buffaloes. It was like them.

(5) It is said that a prophet used to ride Dindil.³ As for this Dindil,—wherever you wanted to go in the world, you could just mount Dindil, and it would fly over there. There are a few villages around here, [two of them are] called Adin and Sararo. On the road to Sararo, in the shady mountain slope by Sararo, there is a stone called the stone of Muzalan. The stone of Muzalan is famous for having the footprints of Dindil on it.

¹ I.e. the stories that they tell us regularly.

² Lit. are like an entrustment.

³ Dindil is a variant of Dildil, see paragraph 10.

(6) *ət-bēžən av payxambārē ha| hāt=a gərtən har čār har čan
 řaxāva. | kāfərā gərt av payxambara=w, | awē lə siyārē Dəndəlī=ya. |
 də‘ā əž xodē kərən | ku žə vi zayqatē | ū žə vē hālatē wəsāyē bə zahmāt
 xalās bītən. | řā-bū čə kər? | řā-bū də‘ā əž xodē kərən ku | řēkakē bo
 bat=a | vē masalā av āsēbūna aw katiya. |*

(7) *tə-bēžən, řab-əl-ālāmīnī | čə kər? | Dəndəl ... àv Dəndəlē | àw
 payxambar lē siyār | wa lə Mūzaḷānī kər, | kavərē Mūzaḷānē wakī
 havīri nārəm bū. | ū Dəndəl pēt xwa yē xəstən kavərī, | ū bə kavrē
 Mūzaḷānē sarkat hatā čü həndāv Saṛaro. |*

(8) *ū tə-bēžən hatā nūkà žī | jəhē vā šīnpēyā | yēt Dəndəlī | yēt
 māyn=a lə kavrē Mūzaḷānē, | awē t-kavīt=a həndāv gundē Saṛaro. | av
 təštēt ma yē dī | ma yē žə Dəndəlī gò lē boyn, | ma lə strānā dā galakā
 go lē boy. |*

(9) *strānā Atmānī haya vā Şēxānī ət bar řā tə-bēžən. | lə Duhokē
 t-hēt=a gotən. | àw=a: |*

Atmān siyārē dəndəlē! |

pāžo hara Mūsəlē! |

(6) It is said that a⁴ prophet was waylaid from all four different directions. The villains waylaid the prophet, the one who was riding Dindil. He prayed to God to be released from this predicament and dire situation. So⁵ what did he do? So⁶ he prayed to God to open up a way for him to flee from this predicament.

(7) It is said, what did the Lord of all Worlds do? Dindil ... the horse ridden by the prophet ... He (i.e. the God) did something to Muzalan, the stone of Muzalan, such that it became soft like dough. Dindil put its feet on the stone and went up from the stone of Muzalan until it reached the road leading to the village of Sararo.

(8) It is said that the footprints of Dindil have remained on the Muzalan stone until today, the one which overlooks the road of the village of Sararo. What we have seen and heard about Dindil, we did⁷ so through [folk] songs [as well].

(9) There is a song called Atmani, which is told by the Shekhani. It is sung [particularly] in Duhok, and is as follows:

Atman! The rider on Dindil!

Ride it! Go to Mosul!

⁴ Lit. this.

⁵ Lit. He rose.

⁶ Lit. He rose.

⁷ Lit. have heard.

(10) *av təštēt wasā žik-ēt nāv da hayn. | haka am dīf rā bə-čīn |*
hēštā handī lēkoḷinā bə-kayn | ū lə dīv bə-čīn ku Dəldəl | nā Dəndəl-a |
Dəldəl-a nāvē wī. | nāvē hēštārā payxambarī-a bo imām ‘Alī mābo. |
tə-bēžən hēštarakā səpī bo. |

(11) *bas lə daf mē nāv Barwāriyā, | lə daf mē, | vārāvtər təbēžən-a*
Dəldəl. | fəlān kasī haspē wī Dəldəl-a, | ya‘nī šēt bē bə-frīt, | wasā lə
asmānā t-hēt-ū čītən. |

(10) Such couplets are in it (the song). If we follow this matter and do some research on this topic, the name of the horse is not Dindil, but Dildil. This (i.e. Dildil) was the name of the mule of the prophet Muhammad, which was later passed down to Imam Ali. It is said that Dildil was a white mule.

(11) In our region called Barwar, in our region, we rather say Dildil. [When we say] someone's horse is Dildil, it means that the horse [is so powerful that it] could fly [and] travel through the sky.

