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

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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)  nävé mo Ḫerōš-a.\textdagger\textdagger as bīst-ū ḥāst sāl-\textdagger\textdagger as xalkē Barwārī Bālà-ma.\textdagger\textdagger ū as kuřē Ṛašīd Bagē-ma,\textdagger\textdagger navīyē Tawfīq Bagē,\textdagger\textdagger navīčērkē Ḥaji Ṛašīd Bagē Barwārī.\textdagger\textdagger

(2)  as taqrībān\textdagger\textdagger čār sālakā āsāyī māyā lə nāv Barwārīyā.\textdagger\textdagger ū mən gala gala tōst sō nāv Barwārīyā žō bāb-ū bāpīrā kom kərīn.\textdagger\textdagger ēk šō wā tōstēt ma galak kom kərīn\textdagger\textdagger žō bəlī av āxāftənēt xalkēt nāv Barwārīyā hamī gāvā t-bēžən-a mə,\textdagger\textdagger av čirokēt hanə\textdagger\textdagger avēt az noka dē bo hawa həndakē žē bēžəm.\textdagger\textdagger

(3)  yā mən bə xwa āw-a\textdagger\textdagger ku av tōstē az t-bēžəm\textdagger\textdagger bə-hēt-a nāvēsīn,\textdagger\textdagger ū na-hēt-a žə bir kərīn,\textdagger\textdagger čūnko av tōstē ha waki ūmānatakē-ya.\textdagger\textdagger žo bāb-ū kālā bo mə māyn,\textdagger\textdagger ū dē bo xalkē dē žī čitən.\textdagger\textdagger vējā am-e š čirokā Dədəlī das pē bə-kən.\textdagger\textdagger

(4)  čirokā awəl\textdagger\textdagger av ā Dədəlī.\textdagger\textdagger tə-bēžən Dədəlī haspāk bū,\textdagger\textdagger řokēbēt wi waki yē čēlā-ū gāyā būn.\textdagger\textdagger řokēbā wi yā gərovər nā-bū,\textdagger\textdagger nāl nā-tkatn-e.\textdagger\textdagger waki šinpēl gāyā waxtē lə ūardī na-d-minən,\textdagger\textdagger waki wānā bū.\textdagger\textdagger

(5)  tə-bēžən payxambarək ha-bū̄ siyārē Dəndoli bū.\textdagger\textdagger əv Dəndəlē ha\textdagger\textdagger tu čū bā ki rā dənyāyə̄ tu šiyā lē siyår bī,\textdagger\textdagger ə Dəndol dā fritən.\textdagger\textdagger handa gundē lə nāv barwārīyā hayn,\textdagger\textdagger tə-bēn-e Ḫadənē o Sarārō.\textdagger\textdagger həndāv Sarārō bə ṛaxē nɔzārē Sarārō kavrāk yē hay\textdagger\textdagger tə-bēn-e kavrē Mūzałāné.\textdagger\textdagger av kavrē Mūzałāné yē mašhūr-a\textdagger\textdagger əb šinpēt Dəndolī.\textdagger\textdagger
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.

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, I have also collected some folktales, a few of which I will tell to you.

My aim is that the tales I tell you will be written down so that people will not forget, since these tales have been entrusted 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.

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.

It is said that a prophet used to ride Dindil. 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-bêzhən av payxambărē ha1 hât-a qortön har čar har čan ṭaxāva.1 kāfərā qort av payxambara-w,1 awē lə siyârē Dəndəli-ya.1 də'â əž xodē kərən1 ku žə vī zayqatē2 ū žə vē hālatē wəsəyē bə zahmât1 xalâs bitēn.1 ţâ-bû čə kər?1 ţâ-bû də'â əž xodē kərən ku1 ţēkakē bo bat-a1 vē masalā av ăsebūna av katiya.1

(7) tə-bêzhən, řab-əl-əlāmînī čə kər?1 Dəndəl ... av Dəndəle1 âw payxambar lē siyār1 wa lə Mūzâlānî kər,1 kavârē Mūzâlānê waki havri nàrəm bū.1 ū Dəndəl pēt xwa yē xətən kavârī,1 ū bə kavârē Mūzâlānê sarkat hatā čū həndâv Saɾarō.1

(8) ū tə-bêzhən hatâ nûkâ žî jâhē vā šînpēyâ1 yēt Dəndəlî1 yēt māyn-a lə kavârē Mūzâlānê,1 awē t-kavît-a həndâv gûndê Saɾarō.1 av təstît ma yē dî ma yē žə Dəndəlî gō lē boyn,1 ma lə strânâ dâ galakâ go lē boy.1

(9) strânâ Atmâni hayâ vâ Şêxânî ət bar ţâ tə-bêzhən.1 lə Duhokê t-hēt-a gotən.1 âw-a:1

Atmâni siyārē dəndəle!1

pâžo hara Müsâlê!1
It is said that a 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. So he did he do? So he prayed to God to open up a way for him to flee from this predicament.

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.

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 did so through [folk] songs [as well].

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!

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4 Lit. this.
5 Lit. He rose.
6 Lit. He rose.
7 Lit. have heard.
(10)  ava ṭaštēt wasā ḏīk-ēt nāv da hayn.¹ haka am dif ṭā ḇ-čin¹
hēštā handi lēkōlīnā ḇ-kayn¹ ū lō div ḇ-čin ku Ḏlḏl¹ nā Ḏnḏl-ā¹
Ḏlḏl-ā nāvē wi.¹ nāvē hēstōrā payxambari-ā bo ʿimām ʿAli mābo.¹
ṭe-bēžon hēstārakā sēpī bo.¹

(11)  bas lō daf mā nāv Barwāriyā,¹ lō daf mā,¹ vārāvtār tōbēžon-ā
Ḏlḏlā.¹ fōlān kasi haspē wi Ḏlḏl-ā,¹ yaʿnī šēt bē ḇ-frīt,¹ wasā lō
asmānā t-hēt-ū čitān.¹
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.

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.