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**“And a thornbush sprang up between them”: Studies on “Mem
û Zîn”, a Kurdish romance. (Volumes I and II)**

Chyet, Michael Lewisohn, Ph.D.

University of California, Berkeley, 1991

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Ann Arbor, MI 48106**

**"And a Thornbush Sprang up between them":
Studies on Mem u Zin, a Kurdish Romance**

By

Michael Lewisohn Chyet

**B.A. (University of California at Los Angeles) 1980
M.A. (University of California) 1986
C.Phil. (University of California) 1987**

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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GRADUATE DIVISION

of the

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May 17 1991

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"And a Thornbush Sprang up between them":

Studies on Mêm û Zîn, a Kurdish Romance

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‘And a Thornbush Sprang up between them’:

Studies on Mem û Zîn, A Kurdish Romance

by

Michael Lewisohn Chyet

Abstract


This study is based on a corpus of eighteen oral versions of of the Kurdish romance Mem û Zîn, a tragic love story reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet which is very widespread in Northern Kurdistan. All eighteen versions, which constitute the appendix, have been translated into English, complete with notes explaining cultural concepts and linguistic niceties.

The eighteen versions of Mem û Zîn are subjected to a series of comparative folkloristic analyses. Chapter One consists of an introduction to the Kurds, their language and folklore, together with a brief summary of the story of M&Z. This is followed by a critical bibliographic survey of the literature that has been published about the oral versions of M&Z and Eḫmedê Xanî’s literary poem by the same name, including also references for the general study of Kurdish folklore. The analysis of M&Z begins with the second section of Chapter One, in which the proverbial nature of the romance, as seen in certain expressions that are derived from it, is investigated.

Chapter Two is a consideration of the relationship between Eḫmedê Xanî’s literary poem, revered by the Kurds as their national epic, and the oral versions of M&Z. In Chapter Three, Mem û Zîn is assigned to a specific genre of folk narrative, the romance. Chapter Four is an endeavor to restore the performance aspect of the tellings of M&Z, based on a new look at the scanty evidence at our

disposal. The poetic nature and linguistic texture of the oral versions are explored in Chapter Five: Kurdish folk poetics are discussed, followed by the application of the Oral-Formulaic Theory to Mem û Zîn. A detailed comparative study of the versions is undertaken in Chapter Six, looking both horizontally, i.e., across the versions, and vertically, discussing variation within each motif. The final chapter of the study includes an attempt to establish *oicotypes* by linking the variation in the versions of the story to their geographical distribution: this section includes a map of Kurdistan on which the versions have been plotted, as well as other important sites, such as Bayazid, the site of Ehmedê Xani's tomb, and the city of Jezira Bohtan, where the main part of the story of M&Z takes place. The study concludes with a few words about the future of the tradition.

The accompanying bibliography includes sources for the study of Kurdish language and folk literature, as well as publications dealing with folkloristic theory both in general and as applied to Middle Eastern peoples in particular.

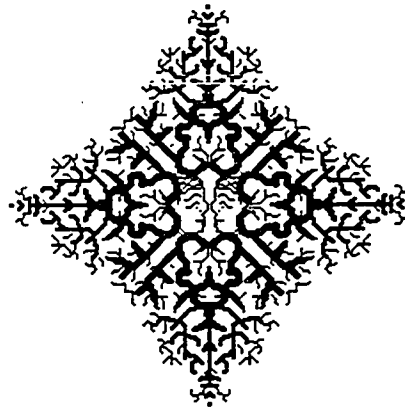

Professor of Iranian Studies
(Dept. of Near Eastern Studies UCB)
Dissertation Advisor
May 23, 1991

To Bahri, Sabri, Mahmud,
Hüseyin, Necip, Ahmed,
and all my other friends

Ji dostên min Behrî, Sebrî, Mehmûd,
Hüseyn, Necîp, Ahîmed
û hevalên min ên din îa

**"And a
thornbush sprang
up between them"**

**Studies on Mem û Zîn:
A Kurdish Romance**



by Michael L. Chyet

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Mem û Zîn : Preface and Acknowledgements

Preface and Acknowledgements

The present work consists of two parts: a corpus of eighteen versions of the important Kurdish folk romance Mem û Zîn (M&Z), and a comparative folkloristic analysis of these versions. Each of the versions in the corpus has been translated into English, together with comparative and explanatory notes. The first seventeen versions have already been published, although only one English translation existed before the present work; the eighteenth (MC-1) makes its first appearance here, with a transcription of the Kurdish text and my translation.

In analyzing M&Z, I have applied the latest methods in international folklore research to Kurdish materials, perhaps for the first time. I have adopted Alan Dundes' tripartite schema of genre definition, by considering texture, text, and context of the versions in the corpus. Moreover, I have attempted to show how İlhan Başgöz' structural analysis of Turkish folk romances (halk hikâyeleri) can, with but a few emendations, be applied to Kurdish folk romances as well: it is not surprising that the Turks and Kurds, two completely distinct ethnic groups which have lived side by side for centuries, should share a genre of folk narrative.

In Chapter One, I present an introduction to the Kurds, their language and folklore, together with a brief summary of the story of M&Z. This is followed by a critical bibliographic survey of the literature that has been published about the oral versions of M&Z and Eḫmedê Xanî's literary poem by the same name, including also references for the general study of Kurdish folklore. My analysis of M&Z begins with the second section of Chapter One, in which I investigate the

Mem û Zîn : Preface and Acknowledgements

proverbial nature of the romance as seen in certain expressions that are derived from it.

Chapter Two is a consideration of the relationship between Eḫmedê Xani's literary poem, revered by the Kurds as their national epic, and the oral versions of M&Z. In Chapter Three, M&Z is assigned to a specific genre of folk narrative. Chapter Four is an endeavor to restore the performance aspect of the tellings of M&Z, based on a new look at the scanty evidence at our disposal. The poetic nature and linguistic texture of the oral versions will be explored in Chapter Five, where the Oral-Formulaic Theory is applied to M&Z. A detailed comparative study of the versions will be undertaken in Chapter Six, looking both horizontally, i.e., across the versions, and vertically, discussing variation within each motif. The final chapter of the study includes an attempt to establish *oicotypes* by linking the variation in the versions of the story to their geographical distribution: this section includes a map of Kurdistan on which the versions have been plotted, as well as other important sites, such as Bayazid, the site of Eḫmedê Xani's tomb, and the city of Jezira Bohtan, where the main part of the story of M&Z takes place. The study concludes with a few words about the future of the tradition.

Throughout the seven chapters, rather than throwing folkloristic terminology at the reader, I have endeavored to explain my terms, giving examples that should drive home the point. I have tried to anticipate my audience in my comments.

It is not unusual for upsurges of nationalist sentiment to be accompanied by a keen interest in the nation's folklore. After all, the field of folklore has its

Mem û Zîn : Preface and Acknowledgements

roots in the rise of nationalism in Europe during the Nineteenth Century. The present study is intended to serve as a model for what needs to be taken into consideration while collecting and recording folkloric material, should the Kurdish people or other kurdologists ever decide to undertake such an endeavor. In all too many cases, such collecting has been done by untrained people with purely political aims, with the achievement of such aims being perceived as more important than the learning of sound practices of linguistic and folkloristic collection. Only in retrospect are such mistakes regretted.

In the present volume, the methodology for carrying out such a folkloristic endeavor has been laid out. Furthermore, copious examples have been given of less than satisfactory collecting techniques and their implications. The main difference between sound and unsound practices is that the former have the potential to accurately reflect the people's oral tradition from several different angles, including *texture* (i.e., language and style), *text* (i.e., the folklore item itself), and most particularly *context* (i.e., the social situation in which the item was used). Such unsound practices as neglecting to record context, changing the informant's language, or combining several versions into a composite text, run the risk of distorting reality, by failing to correctly represent the tradition that is supposedly the source of so much pride.

By myself, I am powerless to implement the methods outlined here. If others who are interested in Kurdish folklore will pick up where I have left off, rather than reinventing the wheel, I believe that this will enhance both the study of Kurdish culture and folklore on the one hand and comparative international scholarship on the other.

Mem û Zîn : Preface and Acknowledgements

It is my pleasure to express my gratitude to the people whose help has made this project possible. I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee, Professors Martin Schwartz, Alan Dundes, and William Brinner, for their encouragement, guidance, and support. My heart goes out to Shayee Khanaka for making the whole thing possible: she and I started to read versions of M&Z together, and many of her comments have given me considerable food for thought. In addition, she helped me get started in translating the Sorani Kurdish version included in the study (OM). My friends John Rundin and Peter Dorsey were of great help in acclimating me to the world of computers. My dear friend and roommate Geoffrey Graham deserves honorable mention for designing the fonts used in the dissertation, and for his excellent job in creating the map appearing in Chapter Seven. Without the invaluable help which he and our friend René Radusky offered, printing out the final draft would have been impossible.

My Armenian friend Anne Avakian is to be commended for her assistance in finding Armenian materials dealing with M&Z and other items of Kurdish folklore: my analyses of three versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa) are based on the English summaries which she provided. I would like to thank my friend and library colleague Rick Velez for constantly keeping me abreast of Soviet publications dealing with the Kurds, and especially for unearthing the volume in which two versions of M&Z (EP-1; EP-2) appear.

I would also like to thank my friend and colleague Robert Hoberman for helping me try to locate Kurdish informants who could recite M&Z in Israel during the summer of 1990. Although we were unsuccessful in finding anyone

Mem û Zîn : Preface and Acknowledgements

during the three brief weeks of my stay, he has found what may be another Neo-Aramaic version among the unpublished material collected by Hans Jakob Polotsky.

There are several foreign scholars whose aid was enlisted. Professor D.N. MacKenzie provided me with three versions which would otherwise have remained beyond my reach (FK-1; FK-2; FK-3). I have shown my gratitude to him by including a reprint of FK-2 together with my English translation in Corolla Iranica, the Festschrift commemorating his 65th birthday which was presented to him in April (1991). I would also like to thank Professor Martin Schwartz once again, for his help in enabling my contribution to be included in that volume.

My special thanks to the Israeli folklorist Heda Jason, for her helpful suggestions, for having sent me a Yemenite tale which resembles the climax of the story of M&Z, and for introducing me to Jacqueline Alon. Mrs. Alon also deserves special mention, for having provided me with a copy of the version of M&Z which she collected in Jerusalem from an elderly Kurdish Jew, Moshe Daniel. Not only did she tape his recitation of the story, she also interviewed his sister at length about it, thereby furnishing the first running commentary on a version of M&Z.

I would like to mention the Kurdish scholars M. Emin Bozarslan and Ferhad Shakely for their kind help in providing me with copies of materials not readily available in North America. They sent me copies of Alan Ward's English translation of EP-1, and of Shakely's fine study of Eḫmedé Xani's literary poem Mem û Zîn.

Mem û Zîn : Preface and Acknowledgements

My friend and colleague Amir Hassanpour-Aghdam was kind enough to let me see the chapter of his dissertation dealing with the Kurdish poet Eḥmedê Xanî, and to send me a copy of the article he wrote for the Encyclopaedia Iranica about the Kurdish narrative form **beyt** (bayt). I am both grateful for his encouragement and proud that we are colleagues.

It is also my pleasure to thank my Kurdish friends in Southern California for allowing me to interview them about M&Z, and for introducing me around the Kurdish community. I will not mention them by name, so as to protect their anonymity.

This is the appropriate place to express my gratitude to Margaret Kahn for all her help and encouragement over the years. In many ways I see myself as following in her footsteps, and she has been a fine mentor.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family, my parents and sister, for their love and support throughout the stressful periods of my life as a graduate student, and before.

Mem û Zîn : Abbreviations

Abbreviations of the Versions (Brackets [] designate versions not fully integrated into the study)

- EP-1 = Jndi, Hajie, ed. "Mam i Zin," in: Kurdskie èpicheskie pesni-skazy [Курдские эпические песни-сказы = Kurdish epic 'song-stories']. (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), pp. 66-[97]; 183-[209]; Ward, Alan, ed. Mem û Zîn : Mam and Zin. Kurdish National Epic. (Amsterdam : International Society Kurdistan [ISK], 1968), 491.
- EP-2 = Jndi, Hajie, ed. "Mam i Zin," in: Kurdskie èpicheskie pesni-skazy [Курдские эпические песни-сказы = Kurdish epic 'song-stories']. (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), pp. 98-[111]; originally published by O.L. Vil'chevskii in: Skazki narodov Vostoka [Сказки народов Востока = Tales of the peoples of the East] (Moskva & Leningrad, 1938), pp. 99-119.
- FK-1 = E'vdal, E. "Mam y Zine = Mem û Zinë", in Folklorā Kymança (Erevan, 1936), pp. 261-292.
- FK-2 = E'vdal, E. "Mam y Zine = Mem û Zinë", in Folklorā Kymança (Erevan, 1936), pp. 293-301.
- [FK-3] = E'vdal, E. & Hajie Jndi. "Memê û Zinë", in Folklorā Kymança (Erevan, 1936), pp. 302-307.
- GNa = Nzhdehian, G. K. [Նժդեհեան, Գ. Գ.]. "Mamo yev Zinë : k'rdakan zhoghovrdakan vêp" [Մամօ եւ Զինէ, քրդական ժողովրդական վէպ = Mamo and Zine, Kurdish folk romance], Azgagrakan Handes [=Ազգագրական հանդես], 11 (1904), 197-240; Macler, Frédéric. "Une Forme Arménienne du thème des amants malheureux," Revue des études Arméniennes, 2 (1922), 91-116.
- HM = Makas, Hugo. "Mamu und Zine", in Kurdische Texte im Kurmanji-Dialekte aus der Gegend von Märdin. (St-Petersburg/ Leningrad, 1897-1926; reprint Amsterdam : APA - Philo Press, 1979), pp. [5]-20.
- HR-1 = Ritter, Hellmut. "Sittiye Zin und Mämme Alâ", in Türöyo : die Volkssprache der syrischen Christen des Tür 'Abdîn (Beirut ; Wiesbaden : Franz Steiner Verlag, 1969), v. 2, pp. 256-297.
- HR-2 = Ritter, Hellmut. "Mammo und Zine", in Türöyo : die Volkssprache der syrischen Christen des Tür 'Abdîn (Beirut ; Wiesbaden : Franz Steiner Verlag, 1969), v. 2, pp. 500-519.
- [JA] = Taped version collected by Jacqueline Alon in Jerusalem, from Daniel Mosheh of Suwarê, Kurdistan of Iraq, February 1979.
- LC-1 = Le Coq, Albert von. "Hikâyêi mämî alan," in Kurdische Texte: Kurmanji-Erzählungen und -Lieder nebst einer Zazâ Erzählung, gesammelt und herausgegeben in der Urschrift und in

Mem û Zîn : Abbreviations

- Transkription (Berlin, 1903; reprint Amsterdam : APA - Philo Press, [198-?]), pp. 36-44; ٤٢ - ٥٢ .
- [LC-2] = Le Coq, Albert von. "Hikāyēi māmī ālan," in Kurdische Texte: Kurmanǧi-Erzählungen und -Lieder nebst einer Zāzā Erzählung, gesammelt und herausgegeben in der Urschrift und in Transkription (Berlin, 1903; reprint Amsterdam : APA - Philo Press, [198-?]), pp. [53]-56; ٦٢ - ٦٨ .
- [LT] = Lescot, Roger. Textes Kurdes, Vol. 2: Memé Alan (Beyrouth, 1942), xxv, 383 p.
- MC-1 = Taped version of Mem û Zîn from the province of Van, in the possession of the author. (c. 1988)
- M&Z = Mem û Zîn, when used as the general name of the oral versions of the story.
- OM = Mann, Oskar. "Mām û Zîn"/"Mem und Zîn", in Die Mundart der Mukri-Kurden, Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen, 4 (Berlin, 1906), Bd. 1, pp. 24-81; Bd. 2, pp. 40-135; Ayyūbiyān, 'Ūbayd Allāh. Çirikey Mem û Zîn : Kurdî - Farsî [چریکی م م و زین] (Tabriz : Chāpkhānah-i Shafaq, [1962]), 277 p.
- PN = Prym, Eugen & Albert Socin. Der Neu-Aramäische Dialekt des Tür 'Abdîn ; a. Die Texte; b. Übersetzung. (Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1881), v. 1, pp. 1-5; v. 2, pp. 1-8, [375].
- PS = Prym, Eugen & Albert Socin. "Mām u-Zîn"/"Mām und Sîn", in Kurdische Sammlungen, Zweite Abteilung: Erzählungen und Lieder im Dialekte von Bohtan; a. Die Texte; b. Übersetzung. (St.-Petersbourg : Eggers et Cie., 1890), v. 2a, pp. [71]-83; v. 2b, pp. 100-117.
- SHa-1 = Haykuni, S. [հայկունի, Ս.], ed. "Mam ow Zin [Մամ ու Զին]", Eminyan azgagrakan zhoghovadzow [Էմինյան ազգագրական ժողովածու] = Eminsk ii Etnograficheskii Sbornik [= Эминск Ий Этнографическ Ий Сборникъ], 5 (1904), pp. 201-227.
- SHa-2 = Haykuni, S. [հայկունի, Ս.], ed. "Mamazin [Մամազին]", Eminyan azgagrakan zhoghovadzow [Էմինյան ազգագրական ժողովածու] = Eminsk ii Etnograficheskii Sbornik [= Эминск Ий Этнографическ Ий Сборникъ], 5 (1904), pp. 227-264.
- ZK-1 = Dzhaliġov, Ordikhane & Dzhaliġ Dzhaliġov. "Memê û Zinê (şaxa 1)" in Zargotina K'urda = Kurdski i Fol'klor. (Moskva : Nauka, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 45-65.
- ZK-2 = Dzhaliġov, Ordikhane & Dzhaliġ Dzhaliġov. "Mem û Zîn (şaxa 2)" in Zargotina K'urda = Kurdski i Fol'klor. (Moskva : Nauka, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 65-90.
- ZK-3 = Dzhaliġov, Ordikhane & Dzhaliġ Dzhaliġov. "Mem û Zîn (şaxa 3)" in Zargotina K'urda = Kurdski i Fol'klor. (Moskva : Nauka, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 90-118.

STANDARD KURDISH ALPHABET CHART

<u>Roman (Hawar)</u>	<u>Cyrillic</u>	<u>Arabic</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>
A a	А а	ا / آ	a in father (Sorani: a in had)
B b	Б б	ب	b in big
C c	Ц ц	ج	j in jig
Ç ç	Ч ч	چ	between ch and j (unaspirated)
Ç' ç'	Ч' ч'	چ'	ch in church (aspirated)
D d	Д д	د	d in dig
E e	Ә ә	ه / هـ	e in beg
E' e'	Ә' ә'	ع / عـ	voiced pharyngeal fricative
Ê ê	Е е	ع	ei in rein
F f	Ф ф	ف	f in fig
G g	Г г	گ	g in go
H h	Һ һ	ه / هـ	h in hat
Ĥ ĥ	К к	ح	throaty h , voiceless pharyngeal fricative
I i	Б б		≈ i in bit

STANDARD KURDISH ALPHABET CHART

[ʃ ʃ	ص	emphatic s: voiceless alveolar fricative
T t	ت	emphatic t: voiceless between d and t (unaspirated)
T' t'	ت	t in tin (aspirated)
[T t̤	ط	emphatic t: voiceless unaspirated, alveolar emphatic plosive)
U u	و	≈ wi in win
ú ú	وو	oo in doom
V v	ف	v in vein
W w	و	w in wig
X x	خ	German ch in ach
X̣ x̣	غ	voiced velar fricative, the voiced equivalent of ch above)
Y y	ي	y in year
Z z	ز	z in zoo
[Z z̤	ظ	emphatic z: voiced, alveolar emphatic fricative)



CHAPTER ONE:
Introduction



Mem û Zîn : Introduction and Bibliographic Survey

A cursory glance at a map of Iran reveals a huge land mass bounded on the south by the Arabian (or Persian) Gulf, on the north by the Caspian Sea and the Soviet Union, on the west by Iraq and Turkey, and on the east by Pakistan and Afghanistan. The official language of Iran is Persian (Farsi), but there are sizeable minorities who speak other languages, some, such as Azerbaijani Turkish, not related to Persian at all. Although Persian, an Indo-European language related to Sanskrit and many of the modern languages of India and Pakistan as well as most of the languages of Europe, is the official language of Iran, it is not the mother tongue of the majority of the country's peasants, who speak a remarkable variety of Iranian dialects and languages, some of which are mutually unintelligible. Many of these preserve ancient features of the Iranian languages which Standard Persian has long since lost, such as the gender and case inflections of nouns and the ergative verb system. Consequently, for the linguist, this linguistic potpourri is a treasure trove of clues about the growth and development of the Indo-Iranian languages, which ultimately may shed light on the history of the entire Indo-European language family.

Some of these languages, such as Tālishī, Vāfsī, Davānī and Meime'ī, are spoken over relatively small areas – some limited to the range of two or three villages. One language which is understood over a large geographic area is Kurdish, spoken mainly on the western fringes of Iran, and continuing northwest into Northern Iraq and Turkey, in a geographical area long known as Kurdistan. A cousin to Persian, Kurdish is a Western Iranian language which exists in several dialects, the major ones being Kurmanji in the north and Sorani in the center of Kurdistan.¹ In

¹For a brief survey of Kurdish dialects in English with maps, see: D.N. MacKenzie. Kurdish Dialect Studies (London et al. : Oxford University Press, 1961), vol. 1, pp. [xv]-xvi. The dialect frontier between

addition, the related Iranian language Zaza (or Dumîlî/Dimlî) is spoken in pockets in Kurdistan of Turkey, in such places as Tunceli (Dersim) and Siverek (northern Urfa province),² while Gurānî is spoken in and around Awroman, Iran.³ The speakers of both Zaza and Gurānî identify ethnically as Kurds.

The various sub-dialects of Kurmanji are spoken throughout Kurdistan of Turkey and Syria, and by Kurds in Soviet Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, as well as in the extreme northern strips of Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan, all in all by slightly less than three-fourths of all Kurds (e.g., by about 15 million people). Sorani, while being the mother tongue of less than one fourth of all Kurds, is the dialect with the most well-developed literary tradition in the twentieth century, mainly because the Iraqi government allowed an educational system in Sorani Kurdish to exist for a time, based on the dialect of Suleimaniyeh (Silêmanî). The use of Kurmanji for educational purposes is officially banned in all but the Soviet Union.

The relationship between Kurmanji and Sorani is such that the further north and west one goes, the more Kurmanji features one encounters in the language, while the further south and east one goes, the more Sorani features become evident.

Kurmanji and Sorani can be described as a line extending diagonally southwest from the town of Naghadeh at the southwest corner of Lake Urmia in Kurdistan of Iran, continuing along an imaginary line into Kurdistan of Iraq, eventually meeting up with the Great Zab River where it flows in a northeasterly direction away from the Tigris. This dialect boundary just misses the southeastern corner of Turkey by a matter of miles: thus, Sorani is unknown in Kurdistan of Turkey (and Syria).

²The two major works on Zaza are: Karl Hadank, Mundarten der Zâzâ, hauptsächlich aus Siverek und Kor, *Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen*, Abt. 3, Bd. 4 (Berlin: Verlag der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1932), xiii, 398 p.; and Terry Lynn Todd, A Grammar of Dimli (also known as Zaza), Doctoral dissertation. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan, 1985), xv, 277 p.

³Major works on the Gurān include: Åge Meyer Benedictsen, Les dialectes d'Awromân et de Pârâ, revus et publiés avec des notes et une esquisse de grammaire par Arthur Christensen (København: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab., 1921), 128 p.; Oskar Mann, Mundarten der Gurân, besonders das Kândûlâi, Auramânî und Bâdschâlânî, bearbeitet von Karl Hadank, *Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen* (Berlin, 1930); D.N. MacKenzie, The Dialect of Awroman (Hawrâmân-Luhôn): Grammatical sketch, texts, and vocabulary (København: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab., 1966), 140 p.; V. Minorsky, "The Gurân," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 11 (1943), pp. 75-103.

The majority of Kurds are Sunni Muslims, but there is also a sizeable minority of Shi'i Muslims (called 'Alevis' in Turkey), as well as small pockets of Yezidis, who are referred to by Muslims as "Devil Worshipers." The Yezidi religion has the unique distinction of having its liturgy in Kurdish⁴. Until this century, the following minorities have lived side by side with the Kurds: Armenians, Kurdish Jews, and Eastern Christian groups such as the Nestorians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Jacobites. With the exception of the Armenians, who speak an Indo-European language, the Jews and Christians of Kurdistan speak dialects of Neo-Aramaic, such as Turoyo and 'Assyrian.' Although tiny communities of these Christian groups still persist on their native territory, most of them now live in Europe, in Australia, and in such American localities as Detroit, Chicago, and Turlock, California. The entire community of Kurdish Jewry, except for a few souls in Kurdistan of Iran, has emigrated to Israel.

All the peoples of Kurdistan, regardless of religion or language, participated in Kurdish folklore, as it was the dominant culture in the area. In a town like Zakho, in Kurdistan of Iraq, there were Jewish and Christian tale-tellers who could sing and tell tales in Kurdish, Neo-Aramaic, and Arabic, and sometimes switched from one to the other in mid-sentence without being aware of it. Although knowing several languages is considered in this country to be a sign of education and sophistication, in a place like Kurdistan, even illiterate peasants commonly know two or even three languages.

The low level of material wealth among Kurdish peasants is in some sense compensated by their extraordinarily rich folklore, which is almost entirely an oral tradition. In addition to countless folktales, folk songs, folk dances, poems, riddles, and proverbs, there are a number of widely known folk romances told in a

⁴For an example, see: Karl Hadank. *Untersuchungen zum Westkurdischen: Boti und Ezâdi* (Berlin : Institut für Lautforschung and der Universität ; Leipzig : Otto Harrassowitz, 1938), pp. 39-60.

combination of prose and sung verse which recount adventures told as true: perhaps the single best known example of this latter genre, at least among the Kurmanji-speaking Kurds, is Mem û Zîn (M&Z). Other romances which are popular among the Kurds include: **Xec û Siyabend** (Khej and Siyabend) and **Leylê û Meccrûm** (Leyla and Majnun), romances which, like M&Z, end tragically; **Dimdim** or **Çengzêrîn**⁵, based on an historical event, the revolt of the Kurds against the Safavid Persian ruler Shah Abbas in 1608-1610, during which a battle was fought at the fortress of Dirndim, to the south of Lake Urmia (Reza'iyeh) in Iran; **Zembilfiroş**⁶ (basket-seller), a poem which tells of the lusting of an older aristocratic woman for a young basket-seller; **Ûsib û Zilêxe** (Yusuf and Zulaikha)⁷, the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife; and **Keî û K'ulik**⁸, the adventures of two princely brothers.

"Yusuf and Zulaikha"⁹ and "Leyla and Majnun"¹⁰ are examples of stories that enjoy a wide circulation throughout the Middle East: Arabic, Turkish, and Persian

⁵Ordikhane Dzhaliilov. Kurdskii gerioicheskiï epos "Zlatorukiï khan" (Dimdim) [Курдский героический эпос "Златорукий хан" (Димдим) = The Kurdish heroic epic "Zlatorukiï khan", i.e. The ruler with the golden hand, (Dimdim)] (Moskva : Glavnaia Redaktsiia Vostochnoi Literatury, 1967), 206 p.

⁶Zh.S. Musaëlian. Zembil'firosh : Kurdskaja poema i ee fol'klornye versii [Зембильерош : Курдская поэма и ее фольклорные версии = Zambilfirosh (The Basket seller) : a Kurdish poem and its folkloric versions] (Moskva : Nauka, 1983), 178 p. Formalistically, this story is generally told in verse.

⁷M.B. Rudenko. Literaturnaja i fol'klornye versii kurdskoï poëmy "Yusuf i Zelikha" [Литературная и фольклорные версии курдской поэмы "Юсуф и Зелиха" =Literary and folkloristic versions of the Kurdish poem "Yusuf i Zelikha"] (Moscow : Nauka, 1986), 367 p. Bakaev's six versions not mentioned in her bibliography: Ch. Kh. Bakaev. Iazyk kurdov SSSR [Язык курдов СССР=The language of the Kurds of the USSR] (Moscow : Nauka, 1973), pp. 313-[346] & Rol' iazykovykh kontaktov v razvitiï iazyka kurdov SSSR [Роль языковых контактов в развитии языка курдов СССР=The role of linguistic contact in the development of the language of the Kurds of the USSR] (Moscow : Nauka, 1977), pp. 147-[211].

⁸No less than thirty versions appear in the first 260 pages of: Folkloro Kuzmanca (Erevan, 1936).

⁹John D. Yohannan. Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in World Literature : an Anthology of the Story of the Chaste Youth and the Lustful Stepmother (New York : New Directions Books, 1968), 310 p.; Persian

literary versions exist of both. The story of Joseph and Zulaikha, which appears both in the Hebrew Bible¹¹ and in the Koran¹², enjoys wide circulation in oral tradition as well: it is exceptionally popular among the Kurds, and is also found among the Jews¹³ and Assyrian Christians¹⁴ of Kurdistan. Moreover, the story of Zembîfiroş resembles it in many ways.

As was alluded to above, several of the stories that are popular among the Kurds are also told by neighboring peoples such as the Armenian, Nestorian, Chaldean, and Jacobite Christians, as well as by Kurdish Jews. The present study contains three versions of M&Z which were translated into Armenian (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa), and three versions which were collected in Turoyo, the Neo-Aramaic language of the Jacobites (PN; HR-1; HR-2). In fact, the first oral version of M&Z we have (PN) was collected in 1869 in Damascus from a Turoyo speaker. Moreover, JA, which has not been fully integrated into the study, was collected by the folklorist Jacqueline Alon from an old Kurdish Jew living in Israel.

classical poem: Firdaus of Tûs *Yûsuf and Zalkhâ* [وزلیخا | یوسف], ed. by Hermann Ethé (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1980), iv, 376 p.; Turkish poem: Yahyâ Bey. *Yûsuf ve Zeliha*, hazırlayan Mehmed Çavuşoğlu (Istanbul : İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1979), 192 p. and Şeyyad Hamza. *Yusuf ve Zeliha*, ed. Dehri Dilgin (Istanbul : Kışeçilik ve Matbaacılık T.A.Ş., 1946); Arabic poem: R.Y. Ebied and M.J.L. Young. *The Story of Joseph in Arabic Verse: The Leeds Arabic Manuscript 347* (Leiden, 1975) - Supplement 3 to Leeds University Oriental Society Annual, and A.F.L. Beeston. "Notes on a Middle-Arabic 'Joseph' Poem," *BSOAS*, 40 (1977), 287-296. This list is by no means exhaustive.

¹⁰Fuzûlî *Leylâ and Mejnûn*, translated from the Turkish by Sofî Huri (London : Allen & Unwin, 1970), 350 p.

¹¹Genesis 39:1-23.

¹²Sûrat Yûsuf [=Chapter XIII].

¹³Yona Sabar. "Joseph and Zulikhaye," in: *The Folk Literature of the Kurdistan Jews: an Anthology*. Yale Judaica Series, vol. 23 (New Haven & London : Yale University Press, c1982), pp. 11-15.

¹⁴Otto Jastrow. "Josephslegende," in: *Der neuaramäische Dialekt von Hertevin (Provinz Sirtî)* (Wiesbaden : Otto Harrassowitz, 1988), pp. 148-163.

Mem û Zîn, also known as Memê Alan, is one of the best known stories of Kurdish oral literature. Although it enjoys extremely widespread distribution among the Kurmanji-speaking Kurds and their Armenian and Neo-Aramaic speaking neighbors, this particular romance is not attested in oral tradition in the Sorani-speaking area, with the notable exception of Rafîman-f Bekir's Mukri version (OM), collected by Oskar Mann in 1903. M&Z is a tragic love story, vaguely reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet or Pyramis and Thisbe. Mem is the name of the young man, and Zîn is the beautiful girl whom he hopes to marry. Let us begin with a brief synopsis of the story:

Doves stop in a garden to rest, and are amazed at the beauty of the young girl, Zîn, whom they see there. The doves decide to bring her to meet Mem, whose beauty is even greater than hers. Mem and Zîn wake up beside one another in Mem's bed, Zîn having been brought there by the doves. At first it is unclear where they are: Mem insists that they are in his room, and Zîn likewise insists that they are in hers. Through a test they ascertain that they are in Mem's room; at this point they fall in love, and exchange rings, after which they fall asleep. Zîn is then returned to her own bed in far away Jezira Bohtan, and when Mem wakes up he thinks it was all a dream, until he discovers Zîn's ring on his finger. No sooner does he see this than he falls over in a dead faint. When he is revived, he tells his father Al pasha, the ruler of the realm, what happened, and Al pasha tries to convince him to forget about Zîn and to marry whomever he wants from their kingdom. Mem disregards his father's wishes, and acquires a fine horse, suit of clothes, and sword, to set out in search of Zîn and her city of Jezira Bohtan. Al pasha has Mem's horse, Bor, thrown in chains, and has all the city gates locked, to try to prevent Mem from leaving; however, Mem's horse, unhindered by the chains, flies over the city walls and sets out with Mem in search of

Jezira Bohtan. Al pasha sends soldiers to try to convince Mem to turn back, but they soon return without him.

Eventually the chains, which Mem has not even noticed, eat through Bor's skin, and he is unable to go on. Mem is about to despair, when the horse tells him to tend to his wounds and let him rest; when Mem does so, Bor's wounds quickly heal and they continue on their way. After a while they come across a farmer plowing his field; Mem asks him where they are, and the farmer replies that they are in Jezira Bohtan. Mem rides on, happy to have arrived. He next comes upon a hunter who is unsuccessfully pursuing a gazelle; Mem catches it for the hunter and gives it to him. The hunter is angry at first, but they soon become friends, and the hunter, whose name is Qeretajdîn, invites Mem to be his guest in Jezira Bohtan. At the entrance to the city, by a stream they encounter a woman who claims to be Zîn, but who is very ugly. Mem is once again about to despair, when Bor tells him that she is an impostor, and to disregard what she says.

Bor rides on, and takes Mem to Qeretajdîn's house, where they are treated with sumptuous hospitality. Qeretajdîn is so taken with his guest that he does not go to the court of the emir (prince) for several days; the emir, Mîr Sêvdîn, sends a messenger to enquire about Qeretajdîn's absence. Qeretajdîn brings Mem to meet the emir, who happens to be Zîn's father (or brother). Although the emir takes a liking to Mem, he does not know that his reason for coming is to marry Zîn, who is already betrothed to Qeretajdîn's brother Çekan. The emir has a villainous minister named Beko, who tries to poison the emir's mind against Mem; Beko's daughter is the false Zîn whom Mem encountered at the entrance to the city. Mem must perform the task of getting a piece of Zîn's jewelry as proof that she loves him; when he succeeds in doing this, Çekan renounces his claim on Zîn, and Qeretajdîn and his brothers become Mem's sworn blood-brothers, ready to protect Mem at any price.

The emir invites Mem, Qeretajdîn, and all the noblemen in his kingdom to accompany him on a hunting expedition. Mem feigns illness, and stays behind to be alone with Zîn. The hunters return earlier than expected, and take Mem and Zîn by surprise. Mem quickly hides Zîn behind his cloak, and is unable to rise when the emir enters. Beko makes a big deal out of this lack of respect, and Qeretajdîn, who sees one of Zîn's braids sticking out from behind Mem's cloak, realizes that if he does not create a diversion to shift everyone's attention from Mem, they will discover that Zîn is hiding behind him, and both he and Zîn will be forever disgraced. Hence, Qeretajdîn heroically has his own manor burnt down, so that everyone will rush out to see what is happening. In so doing, Qeretajdîn successfully saves Mem and Zîn's honor. Qeretajdîn and his brothers embark on a campaign to levy taxes, in order to rebuild his manor; Mem stays behind, and Qeretajdîn tells the emir that if anything happens to Mem, the emir will be held responsible. Beko suggests that the emir and Mem play chess, setting the condition that if Mem wins he may have Zîn, but that if he loses he will be thrown into prison. Mem agrees, and they start playing, with Mem winning every time. Zîn is watching from above, over Mem's shoulder; Beko suggests that the emir and Mem trade places, and when they do so, Mem looks up and sees Zîn and loses his concentration, letting the emir win. Mem is then thrown into prison, where he languishes. When word comes that Qeretajdîn is on his way back, Zîn is quickly sent to release Mem from prison, but he dies as soon as he emerges. Zîn follows him in death, and they are buried side by side in separate graves. When Qeretajdîn returns, he finds the entire city in mourning; he goes with the emir and Beko to the graveyard, where the graves are opened, and Mem and Zîn are found embracing; Beko sticks his head out over the graves to ogle, at which point Qeretajdîn pulls out his sword and slices off Beko's head. A drop of his blood falls between the two lovers, and a thornbush grows on the very spot, separating Mem and Zîn just as Beko tried to

separate them in life. It is said that every time that thornbush is cut down, it grows back.

Although this is the essence of the story, no two versions recount it in exactly the same way. Of the numerous versions that exist in oral tradition, eighteen have been translated and analyzed in the present study. Besides the oral folkloric versions, there is also a poem by the same name, well known among the Kurds, which was composed by the poet Eñmedê Xanî (Ahmed-i Khani) in the latter half of the seventeenth century. The relationship between the oral versions and this poem, revered by the Kurds as their national epic, will be explored in Chapter Two.

The first collecting of Kurdish texts was conducted by Western linguists in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although primarily interested in language, such scholars as Albert Socin and Eugen Prym¹⁵, Hugo Makas¹⁶, and Oskar Mann¹⁷ collected from native informants folktales, poems, and folk romances which are of tremendous importance to the field of folkloristics as well. Nevertheless, because these scholars focused on the language of the texts, rather than on their content or mode of transference, there are monumental gaps in our knowledge about M&Z and the other stories of like genre.

The bearers of the tradition, the narrator-performers who tell these stories before a live audience, are known in Kurmanji Kurdish as *dengbej*¹⁸. *Deng* means

¹⁵Kurdische Sammlungen: a. Die Texte; b. Übersetzung. (St.-Petersbourg: Eggers et Cie, 1890), 2 vols. in 4.

¹⁶Kurdische Texte im Kurmanji-Dialekte aus der Gegend von Mardin. (St.-Petersburg/ Leningrad, 1897-1926; reprint Amsterdam: APA - Philo Press, 1979), 136 p.

¹⁷Die Mundart der Mukri-Kurden. Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen, 4 (Berlin, 1906), 2 vols.

¹⁸Pronounced deng-beige, with stress the second syllable. According to Ayyûbiyân, the most common term in Sorani Kurdish, at least among the Mukri of Iran, is *çîger*, from the verb *çîra* = 'to sing'.

'voice' and *bêj*- is the present tense stem of the verb 'to say'¹⁹: hence, a *dengbêj* must possess a fine voice in order to tell his story, which includes many sung interpolations. The stem *bêj* also occurs in two other important terms, *çîrokbêj* and *stranbêj*. A *çîrokbêj* is a storyteller, one who tells *çîrok* or folktales, and a *stranbêj* is a singer of folk songs, which are known in Kurmanji Kurdish as *kilam*²⁰ or *stran*²¹. The type of gathering at which stories like M&Z were told is called a *civat*: we will have more to say about this word later. It is unfortunate that neither the art of the *dengbêj* nor the goings on at the *civat* has been studied in any depth by the aforementioned scholars or their successors. We know next to nothing about the esthetics of a good performance. What little we know about how one learned to become a *dengbêj* is due to Oskar Mann's description of the situation in Kurdistan of Iran in the first decade of this century, in the introduction to his Mukri texts:

It seems that among the Kurds, in addition to schools directed by mullahs (of which there are not too many), there was and still is a type of singing school, in which they cultivate popular epic poetry. Young people with fine singing voices betake themselves to a master (*wâstâ* = Persian *ostâd*) to follow his instruction, and learn the repertoire of these masters exclusively by oral tradition; there are scarcely any bards who know how to read and write. RaĤiman [O. Mann's informant] was himself illiterate. If these young people are exceptionally gifted, they may go later to a second and a third teacher, and becoming the latter's *shâgird* [=apprentice], but not without some sort of remuneration, the students either doing household chores, or by showing their gratitude through payment in kind.

See Ubayd AllĤh AyyūbiyĤn. *Çirikey Mem û Zîn : KurçĤ - Farsi* | م م و زین | (Tabriz : ÇĤpkhĤnah-i Shafaq [1962]), pp. 4-5.

¹⁹The infinitive is *gotin*, cognate with Persian *goftan* گفتن. The present stem *bêj* is suppletive, i.e. taken from another root: it is ultimately related to the Latin word *vox* from which our own word *voice* is derived.

²⁰From Arabic *kalĤm* كالم , meaning 'talk, speaking' thus stressing the narrative aspect of songs.

²¹Presumably cognate with Persian *serŭdan* سرودن = 'to sing'. The Sorani Kurdish word for song is *goranĤ*, and the Zaza (DumilĤ) word is *dĤr*.

The field where the art of recitation thus learned may be first practiced is in the houses of notables, who gladly pass the evening by listening to the singing of bards and generously repay the latter with *khelat* [(xelat) = gifts]. Moreover, in the villages the bard contents himself with a plate of rice as payment for his recitation. In the towns, there are also coffee houses, in which only tea is served, which are packed full with people who have come primarily to hear the performance of whatever singer happens to be there.²²

Nowhere else is mention made of such singing schools, and it is unclear whether they were limited to Kurdistan of Iran or enjoyed a wider distribution. Moreover, it would be useful to know the history of such schools, and whether they still exist today.

Albert Lord, who studied the tradition of the Yugoslav heroic epic, features a section in his book *The Singer of Tales*²³ on how an epic singer learned his craft. Since the appearance of his seminal study, many attempts have been made to apply both Oral-Formulaic Theory as pioneered by his teacher Milman Parry and himself, and such aspects as the art of the singer and the recitation of a story qua performance, to the narrative traditions of other peoples. In the Middle Eastern sphere, Pertev Naili Boratav²⁴ and his student İlhan Başgöz²⁵ have studied the art of the Turkish *aşık*.

²²Mann, *ibid.*, pp. xviii ff. My translation. A French translation of this passage appears in: Basile Nikitine, *Les Kurdes : étude sociologique et historique* (Paris : Imprimerie Nationale, Libraire Klincksieck, 1956), p. 273 ff.

²³Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 24 (Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press, 1960; reprint New York : Atheneum, 1968 et seq.; reprint Harvard University Press, 1981), chapter 2, pp. 13-29.

²⁴Halk Hikayeleri ve Halk Hikayeciliği [=Folk Stories and Folk Story Telling Tradition in Turkey] (Ankara : Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1943), 327 p.; a German translation exists: *Türkische Volkserzählungen und die Erzählerkunst*, tr. Wolfram Eberhard (Taipei : Chinese Association for Folklore, 1975), 2 vols.

²⁵İlhan Başgöz. "Digression in Oral Narrative : A Case Study of Individual Remarks by Turkish Romance Tellers," *JAF* 99 (1986), pp. 5-23 and his "The Tale Singer and His Audience," in: *Folklore : Performance and Communication*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague : Mouton, 1975), pp. 143-204.

Susan Slyomovics²⁶ and Bridget Connelly²⁷ have both examined the artistry of the Egyptian *rāwīs* who recite the Bani Hilal Epic. Nevertheless, with the exception of the preceding quote from Oskar Mann, the Kurdish *dengbêj* tradition has yet to be subjected to such an examination. Although there is a fair amount of Kurdish oral material already in print, the text-oriented bias in them is clear. It is hoped that the present work will prepare the way for such a full-fledged study of Kurdish oral tradition.

The political situation in which the Kurds have long found themselves militates against the carrying out of the type of fieldwork necessary to correct this imbalance. Because of the oppressive policies of the Turkish government vis-à-vis its sizeable Kurdish minority, serious linguistic or folkloristic research on the Kurds living on land controlled at present by Turkey can only be carried out in secret: if the researcher were to be discovered, his materials would be confiscated, and he would be imprisoned, or deported if he were lucky; his linguistic informants would be tracked down and taken into custody for questioning and torture²⁸. For this reason, although the largest single bloc of Kurds – 10-15 million souls – lives in what is known as Turkey, very little in the way of Kurdish linguistic or folkloristic texts has been collected there since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923: volume one of Roger Lescot's *Textes kurdes*²⁹ (consisting of five folktales, plus 308 proverbs and 51

²⁶The Merchant of Art: An Egyptian Hilali Oral Epic Poet in Performance (Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, 1987),

²⁷Arab Folk Epic and Identity (Berkeley : University of California Press, c1986), 328 p.

²⁸In January, 1991 the Turkish government announced its intention to lift its ban on the Kurdish language. As of this writing, it is unclear how this will affect open folkloristic and linguistic research among the Kurds of Turkey. The Turkish government has revoked the ban on Kurdish in an attempt to placate its angry Kurdish citizens, to prevent security problems in the event that President Bush's Desert Storm war with Iraq spills over into Turkey.

²⁹(Paris : Paul Geuthner, 1940-42), 2 vols.

riddles) and some passages from volume two, and Hellmut Ritter's "Kurmanji-Texte aux dem Tûr 'Abdîn"³⁰ in two parts (consisting of folktales), both from the province of Mardin, are all that have been published.

In 1989 and 1990, volumes one and two of a collection of legends from the province of Diyarbakır appeared³¹. The first volume included 117 legends, while the second contained 134. The collector of this material, a young Turkish woman from Konya named Muhsine Helimoğlu Yavuz, gathered this material by going from village to village. Because of the ethnic composition of the province of Diyarbakır, there is little doubt that most if not all of the material was collected from Kurds, i.e., from native speakers of Kurmanji Kurdish and of Zaza (Dumîlî). However, once again due to text-oriented bias, neither the individual context of each of these 251 legends was collected, nor the original texture – in the Kurdish and Zaza languages – was preserved. While the collection is invaluable because of the number of local legends it documents from the end of the 1980's, from a linguistic point of view it is a shame that the legends could not be collected and published in the original language. If Yavuz, who knows no Kurdish, had tried to do that, she would probably have gotten herself and her informants into serious trouble, considering official Turkish policy regarding the Kurdish language. Yavuz' collection makes it clear that Kurdish folklore is still thriving, in spite of official suppression. However, not one version of M&Z appears among the texts³²: the sixth section of both volumes is devoted to Love Legends ('Aşk üzerine efsaneler'), and only three legends appear under this category,

³⁰I. Kârboran: *Oriens* 21-22 (1968-69), p. 1-135; II. Yeziden: *Oriens* 25-26 (1976), p. 1-37.

³¹Muhsine Helimoğlu Yavuz. *Diyarbakır Efsaneleri üzerine bir Araştırma* (Ankara : San Matbaası, 1989-90), 2 vols.

³²Because M&Z is told as true, it could be considered a legend for the purposes of Yavuz' collection, although I consider it a romance.

two in volume one, and the third in volume two. Such a lack is harder to interpret: it could mean that M&Z is no longer commonly told, or it could mean that Yavuz came across it everywhere, but because of its perceived importance as a symbol of Kurdish national consciousness she decided to exclude it from her collection, either out of a lack of sympathy for the Kurdish cause, or to protect herself from trouble with the authorities.

Ironically, it was possible to do research among the Kurds of Iraq until recently: D. N. MacKenzie published a two volume work in 1961-62 entitled Kurdish Dialect Studies³³, based on fieldwork permitted by the Iraqi authorities in 1954-55 treating of the dialects of Kurdish spoken there; Joyce Blau's Le Kurde de 'Amadiya et de Djabal Sindjar³⁴, which appeared in 1975, attests to the same policy. Both works contain texts of interest to linguists and folklorists. Other than Oskar Mann, Margaret Kahn, and Don Stilo, few Westerners have attempted to do research among the Kurds of Iran, although some Soviet publications on the subject have appeared³⁵. Nor has much work been done among the Kurds of Syria by anyone other than Roger Lescot³⁶.

The places where linguistic and folkloristic research on the Kurds can be safely carried out today include Israel, where almost all of Kurdish Jewry has migrated since 1951; Germany and other European countries with large numbers of "Turkish" Gastarbeiter (guest workers), many of whom are in fact Kurds from Turkey; and the Soviet Union, primarily in the Republic of Armenia. It is in these three places that

³³(London : Oxford University Press, 1961-62) 2 vols.

³⁴(Paris : C. Klincksieck, 1975), 252 p.

³⁵K.R. Eñubi & I.A. Smirnova Kurdskiĭ Dialekt Mukri (Leningrad : Nauka, 1968), 269 p.; their Fonetika Kurdskogo IAzyka : Dialekt Mukri (Leningrad : Nauka, 1985), 339 p.; I.I. Tsukerman. Khorasanski ĭ Kurmandzhi : Issledovanie i Teksty (Moskva : Nauka, 1986), 270 p.

³⁶Appendix 2 to his Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjar (Beyrouth : l'Institut Français de Damas, 1938), pp. 236-43, and his Textes kurdes vol. 2.

extensive research can be done to broaden our understanding of the *dengbêj* tradition.

Having said this, it is necessary to add that in Israel the younger generation is quickly being assimilated to Israeli society, and only the older generation, which grows smaller with every passing day, can still serve as a source for folkloristic and linguistic inquiry. Yona Sabar of UCLA, Jacqueline Alon, Simon Hopkins and Hans Jakob Polotsky in Jerusalem, and Robert Hoberman of SUNY at Stony Brook are among the most avid collectors of Kurdish Jewish folkloric texts.

The Kurdish immigrant community in Europe has been under-utilized as a source of material. On the other hand, Terry Lynn Todd wrote his dissertation on the Zaza language³⁷, based entirely on research carried out in Germany.

Soviet scholarship on the Kurds, their language and folklore has made many important contributions: seven of the versions of Mem û Zîn used in the present study are taken from Soviet publications; moreover, four of the dictionaries consistently consulted are the work of Soviet kurdologists.

Only five important studies of the oral versions of M&Z exist:

³⁷A Grammar of Dimili (also known as Zaza). Doctoral dissertation. (Ann Arbor, Michigan : University of Michigan, 1985), xv, 277 p. The following quote from his dissertation may clarify what is meant by 'Zaza':

Dimili is an Iranian language, part of the Indo-Iranian subgroup of Indo-European. It is spoken in central eastern Turkey by perhaps as many as one million people. The Turks and Kirmanji speakers around them call the language Zaza which has pejorative connotations (Mann-Hadank, 1932:1) ... Mann concluded (Mann-Hadank, 1932:19) that Dimili is not a Kurdish dialect and Hadank concluded (1932:4) that the name Dimili is most likely a metathesis of "Daylami," i.e. the language reflects that of the Daylamites who came from an area called Daylam on the south coast of the Caspian and who were often distinguished from the Kurds in medieval references. Dimili speakers today consider themselves to be Kurds and resent scholarly conclusions which indicate that their language is not Kurdish. Speakers of Dimili are Kurds psychologically, socially, culturally, economically, and politically. It is quite possible, especially since the term Kurd has always been ill-defined (D.N. MacKenzie. "The Origins of Kurdish." Transactions of the Philological Society. 1961:69), that speakers of Dimili should be identified as Kurds today. The language, however, is distinct from Kurdish dialects ..." (pp. iii, v-vi.)

1) Basile Nikitine. "Essai de classification de folklore à l'aide d'un inventaire social-économique," in: XVIe Congrès international d'anthropologie et d'archéologie préhistorique : VIe assemblée générale de l'Institut international d'anthropologie. Bruxelles, 1-8 septembre 1935 (Bruxelles : [Imprimerie médicale et scientifique], 1936), v. 2, pp. 1000-1012.

2 and 3) Roger Lescot. "Introduction," Textes Kurdes, Vol. 2: Memé Alan (Beyrouth : Institut Français de Damas, 1942), pp. liii-xxv; Destana Memé Alan : Kürtçe-Türkçe, tr. Baran (Istanbul : Özgürlük Yolu Yayınları, 1978), 389 p.

4) 'Ubayd Allāh Ayyūbiyān. "Bar'rasī-i taḥqīqī-i "chirkeh-i" Mam ū Zîn va shāhkār-i Aḥmad-i Khānī-i Mam ū Zîn," in: Çirkey Mem û Zîn : Kurdî - Farsî [چریکی م و زین] (Tabriz : Chāpkhānah-i Shafaq, [1962]), pp. 20-35.

5) Qenatê Kurdo [Kurdoev]. "Derheqa şovêd Mem û Zîna zargotî û şova Mem û Zîna Ehmedê Xanî," Govarê Koî Zanyarî Kurd [=The Journal of the Kurdish Academy], 6 (1978), pp. 78-110.

Although one would never guess it from the title, Nikitine's analysis discusses ethnographic details and practices as reflected in one particular version of M&Z, Oskar Mann's Mukri version (OM), collected in Soujbulaq (Mehabad) in Kurdistan of Iran from Raḥīmanî Bekir. His approach is strictly literalist, focusing on how the text accurately reflects details of Kurdish -- and other Iranian people's -- customs. Although limited to one specific type of analysis, we are lucky to have such a fine study.

It is indeed unfortunate that Lescot's "version" of M&Z is the most often quoted: the fact that it includes a French translation has made it accessible to those unfamiliar with the tradition. Moreover, its reissue in Turkey in 1978³⁶, this time

³⁶Destana Memé Alan Kürtçe-Türkçe tr. Baran (Istanbul : Özgürlük Yolu Yayınları, 1978), 389 p

with a Turkish translation, has raised it to a most undeserved place as the ideal version to refer to. Due to this situation, in what follows I will document in detail why I think such acclaim is unjustified.

The notes in the introduction to Lescot's 1942 edition, while too brief to constitute a serious or comprehensive study of the topic, were understandably seen as an important contribution, *faute de mieux*. Nevertheless, from a cursory examination of them, the sorts of methodological biases that make this publication so objectionable are readily apparent. Perhaps Lescot's most valuable contribution is the comparative motif chart for four of the oral versions (LT, OM, GNa [Macler], and a version printed in Hawar) and Ehmedê Xani's literary poem. Although he clearly states that he heard some twenty odd recitations of M&Z, and could therefore have provided us with twenty versions of the romance from his own field work, he chose instead to make one composite text based on three versions, imposing his literary bias on a folkloristic venture, with disastrous results.

The main problem with Lescot's publication is the conflation of three texts. His ideal was to obtain a "good text" of a Kurdish legend:

the only means of establishing a definitive version without fissures was therefore to combine several variants. That is what has been done. The comparative table ... shows that the result is satisfactory.³⁹

Lescot's literary palate induced him to commit the gravest of errors, for a composite text is to be avoided at all costs. If the distinction between oral literature and written literature is valid, how can one justify combining purely oral texts according to the standards of the written word? First of all it must be understood that

³⁹Roger Lescot, "Introduction," *Textes Kurdes* Vol. 2: *Memê Alan* (Beyrouth : Institut Français de Damas, 1942), p. iv. My translation.

oral tradition has its own standards, which are different from those of most written literary traditions; hence, it is erroneous to judge an orally composed text according to the criteria of written literature.

In speaking of how to compare the various versions of an oral narrative, the folklorist Stith Thompson, co-author of The Types of the Folktale, and compiler of the six-volume Motif-Index of Folk-Literature and author of the well-known book The Folktale, has the following to say:

Such studies cannot be based on casually selected texts, for if these have not been recorded exactly as heard, they are of as little value for stylistic analysis as a corrupt literary text would be. Unfortunately for the serious student, many folktale collectors have been primarily interested in making the stories they publish attractive to the persons who might buy their books. And this public, whether of children or of adults, is generally not responsive to the same kinds of effects as the audience for whom the tales were originally meant. Hence the collector revises the tales according to his own fancy or taste. Even with the Grimm collection, we have seen that there was a reworking of the material from edition to edition. The study of these texts is, therefore, of importance only as showing us the literary skill of the Grimms and their idea of what a properly told folktale should sound like. ... The scholar must realize that he is dealing with a folk art and that if the unlettered story-teller and his audience have little regard for distinctions that may seem to him [=the scholar or folklorist] important, they may well insist upon their own distinctions which may seem quite arbitrary and illogical.⁴⁰

Furthermore, the folklorist Alan Dundes characterizes the concept of composite texts as practiced by the Brothers Grimm as follows:

Unfortunately, despite the avowed claims of the Brothers Grimm that they were reporting pure oral tradition as it fell from the lips of uneducated German peasants, source criticism of the hallowed Grimm canon of folktales suggests that this was not always the case. For one thing, as the Grimms began to assemble more and more versions of the same tale type, they could not resist the temptation of combining elements from different versions. As a result, the composite text they published was not really traditional at all, even though it

⁴⁰Stith Thompson. The Folktale (New York : Holt, Rinehart & Winston, c1946; repr. Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, c1977), p. 450-1.

was made up of traditional elements. The tale as reported by the Grimms had in fact never been told in precisely that form by anyone in oral tradition.⁴¹

Lescot is guilty of committing the same offense: by combining elements from three different versions of M&Z, he has created an abstraction which is not representative of the authentic oral tradition of any one place. Moreover, his contention that the versions were "incomplete" before he doctored them up is itself questionable. Nowhere does he clearly define what he means by "completeness." Nonetheless, Lescot, like his predecessors Prym and Socin, is at least to be commended for letting the reader know where he has taken liberties with the text.

The three informants whose material Lescot combined were known as Mişo, Sebrî, and "Stranvan," the latter a pseudonym.

Mişo, whose version was taken as "texte de base" (verses 70-287; 374-756; 818-3091; 3219-end), lived in Meqtel, Syria. He learned M&Z from his father, who learned it from a Kurd from Behdînan⁴². According to Lescot, Mişo's dialect, altered due to frequent contacts with Armenians and Turks, was not among the best, nor was his style among the purest. I would like to know how a serious linguist can consider a dialect *good* or *bad*. Also, what are the criteria being employed to measure purity of style? Lescot goes on to say that, although of mediocre literary quality, the variant which Mişo transmitted was the most *étouffée* [action packed] of all those which could be collected in Syria at the time [=circa 1942]. Such negative commentary is to be encountered at every step in Lescot's introduction. It is not clear if Mişo's text was taken in its entirety: it serves as "texte de base," but does that mean that if we were to

⁴¹ Alan Dundes. Headnote to "Little Red Cap (Rotkäppchen)" in: Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 7.

⁴² i.e., the area of Zakho and Dihok in Kurdistan of Iraq.

strip out Sebrî's and Stranvan's passages, that what would remain would be Mişo's version in its entirety and in the order in which he told it?

Sebrî, originally from the Hesenan tribe, had lived among the Omeran tribe, near Mardin and consequently spoke the dialect of Mardin. Sebrî's version was borrowed from liberally (verses 1-70; prose passage p. 8; 288-334; 360-373; 757-817), supposedly because his language was "better."

The episode of the chess scene (verses 3092-3218) was borrowed from "Stranvan" ⁴³, who came from the Serhedan region, i.e., the Turco-Russian and Turco-Iranian border region, including the provinces of Kars, Ağrı, Van, and Hakkâri in Kurdistan of Turkey. Lescot rated the style [tour] of this version as more lively than what he encountered elsewhere, claiming that it exhibited real beauty. He did however consider its verse to be slightly defective. Again, nowhere does he provide us with the criteria he used in determining what real beauty, defective verse, or good language is. Moreover, I suspect that these judgements are his own, rather than those of native Kurds.

Many of Lescot's pronouncements are based on an incomplete understanding of the material. For example, after correctly stating that whereas Mem is generally from the City of the West [=Muxurzemîn], in OM he is from Yemen, and in Xanî's version he belongs to a noble family of Bohtan, he then goes on to pass judgement, calling the divergences of OM and Xanî "distortions [entorses] imposed on the most correct and most widespread tradition"⁴⁴. He is apparently unaware that OM is representative of the southern oicotype, and that Mem is from Yemen in PS, ZK-3, JA, and MC-2 as well as OM. It is not impossible, incidentally, that the southern

⁴³It first appeared in the journal *Hawar*, no. 36.

⁴⁴Lescot. *ibid.*, p. xiv. My translation.

versions are more conservative than the northern ones, which would mean that Yemen is older than Muxurzemîn. The concept of "correctness" or "incorrectness" has no place in such a study: we have two regional traditions, each of which is equally valid.

When Lescot states that modern variants increasingly neglect the character "Begn⁴⁵," [=Begn(eh)] he is unaware that Begn is a peculiarly southern oicotype, appearing only in OM, ZK-3, MC-1, and JA. The negative term "neglect" is once again uncalled for.

Lescot complained that

the art of the *dengbêj* is in a state of decay [est en pleine décadence]. Those who boast of this title today are mere amateurs with a fragmentary repertoire ... at least twenty informants recited for me what they knew of Memê Alan. Most of them only knew the most salient episodes; some of them summarized in prose the secondary passages, but not one of them ever provided me with an irreproachable whole⁴⁶.

... Moreover, [the *dengbêj*] often takes the liberty of recounting certain episodes in prose, when he is tired, or when his memory fails him.⁴⁷

This suggests that he totally misunderstands the concept of *cante fable*, i.e., stories whose texture consists of prose narration with sung verse insertions at key points. This type of textural feature is discussed in Chapter Three of the present study, in a consideration of the genre to which M&Z is to be ascribed. He is apparently also unaware that romances such as M&Z, told primarily in prose interspersed with verse, exist throughout the Middle East and the Caucasus, among the Turks, Arabs, Persians, Armenians, and Georgians, to name a few. Moreover, he was writing this in 1942.

⁴⁵*ibid.*, p. xviii.

⁴⁶*ibid.*, p. iv.

⁴⁷*ibid.*, p. xxiii.

Some of the fullest versions included in the present study were collected more than ten years later⁴⁸, when according to Lescot one would have expected the tradition to have long since died out.⁴⁹

In combining several versions, Lescot was in effect stating that no one version was satisfactory: he was not happy with the story as it was being told by and for Kurds. He specifically states that

[n]one of the versions in print [=PN; PS; OM; HM; FK-1; FK-2; FK-3] is satisfactory: [PS] is too abbreviated and contains lacunae; [HM] is nothing but a bad summary; [FK-1,-2,-3] were dictated by Armenians, and their language is bad; [OM] is the most coherent version, but it also presents defects.⁵⁰

It is with this denigrating of the tradition that I am most troubled. Unlike Lescot, I find nothing wrong or incomplete about the versions. Even PN and HM, which lack several of the episodes traditionally occurring at the beginning of the story, are useful additions to the repertoire. Each *Jengbej* has his own way of telling the story, and no two versions are identical, although each version is recognizably a link in the chain of the tradition. And it is a fine, robust tradition, which the Kurds are understandably proud of! I doubt that my translations of the eighteen versions of M&Z presented here can begin to capture the thrill of the original Kurdish or Turoyo, but they are as accurate as possible, considering the handicap of having to work from the written record of what were oral performances. Also, the cultural and linguistic notes I have included should make the story more readily understandable to a Western audience. I belong to a different generation than Lescot did, and I have been

⁴⁸e.g. EP-1 (1955); ZK-3 (1959); ZK-1 (1963); and ZK-2 (1970).

⁴⁹This is not to say that in the last decade of the twentieth century the *dengbej* tradition is thriving.

⁵⁰Lescot. *ibid.*, p. iv. My translation.

trained to let the story speak for itself, to try to understand it on its own terms and in its own cultural context, rather than imposing on it literary conventions which are foreign to it, and then attacking it for not complying with those conventions.

On pp. vi-vii, Lescot sees M&Z as reflecting an actual historical event, consulting historical sources in search of personalities with names resembling those in M&Z. In this respect, Lescot is in agreement with many Kurds for a change, in seeing the story as historical. Although I am tempted to compare this endeavor with Tim Severin's article in National Geographic Magazine attempting to trace the voyage of Sindbad⁵¹, looking for historical evidence in purely fictional material, it is possible that some historical reality is included in the story. Certainly the appearance of Jezira Bohtan in all versions argues for considering the story a legend, even if Muxurzemîn is pure fiction. Furthermore, I am told that if one goes to Jezira Bohtan today, one will be shown Mem and Zîn's grave with a thornbush growing on it: for the local inhabitants, the story is part of their local history.

Lescot's composite text was reissued in Turkey in 1978 with a Turkish translation and an introduction by the Kurdish scholar Nurettin Zaza⁵². This edition removed Lescot's version a step further from its original milieu, by replacing words in the text which were deemed 'un-Kurdish' with words deemed 'pure Kurdish.' This may be a natural reaction to the sort of cultural repression under which the Kurds have been forced to live, but it reflects an ideological stance which is unscholarly. No amount of Arabic or Turkish loan words is going to make M&Z an ounce less Kurdish: while there are motifs in the story which are international in distribution,

⁵¹ "In the Wake of Sindbad," National Geographic, 162 (July 1982), 2-41.

⁵² He signs the article with the pseudonym Çiroknivîs - 'story writer.'

the selection and distribution of motifs seen in the story is unique, and uniquely Kurdish.

I believe that attempts to edit out words of foreign origin – a practice all too common in the Middle East – bespeaks an underlying fear that hostile forces will replace the Kurdish language and its folklore with their own language and folklore unless every last foreign word is stricken from the record. It is true that the governments that hold sway over Kurdish territory have tried to supplant Kurdish language and culture: the Turkish government is particularly guilty of this. Nevertheless, in spite of all the attempts to the contrary, Kurdish is still very much alive and well, if not a little bruised. As long as Kurdish remains a living language, it will reflect influences from the surrounding languages: only a dead language can be controlled in this respect. The Turkish, Arabic, Armenian, Syriac (Aramaic), and Persian borrowings into Kurdish are reflective of Kurdish history: are we to turn our backs on this history? Furthermore, many of the loan words have received an unmistakably Kurdish imprint: the word *hikyat*, meaning ‘folktale,’ synonymous with *çîrok*, is borrowed ultimately from Arabic *hikāyah* حكاية; in Turkish the form is *hikāye*, and in Persian *hekāyat* حکایت.⁵³ Although these are all similar, the Kurdish form is unique, and Armenian borrowed precisely this Kurdish form in its word for folktale, *hek’iat’* հեքիատ.⁵⁴ Similarly, *civat*, the sort of get-together at which the story of M&Z is recited, is ultimately from Arabic *jamā’ah* جماعة = ‘group’: Turkish *cemaat* and Persian *jamā’at* جماعت both mean ‘a congregation or assembly,’

⁵³It should be noted that neither the Turkish nor the Persian word means ‘folktale’: the Turkish *hikāye* refers to a folk romance, an orally transmitted genre, while Persian *hekāyat* حکایت refers to a literary tale. What they have in common is that they designate one or another type of narrative.

⁵⁴Likewise, the Neo-Aramaic speaking Jews of Persian Azerbaijan have borrowed the Kurdish word *çîrok*, giving it the forms *çorake* and *çoroke*.

as does the Kurdish form **cimae't**⁵⁵. However, while both **cimae't** and **civat** can have the latter meaning, only **civat** can have the former meaning: hence both its meaning and its form are uniquely Kurdish, regardless of the word's ultimate derivation.

In any case, it was a conscious decision on my part to exclude Lescot's composite text and its later permutations from the corpus of versions considered in this study, in the hopes that in so doing I will nip in the bud the unsound practice of producing composite texts of folk narratives.

Continuing our review of the literature on M&Z, the Iranian Kurdish scholar 'Ubayd Allāh Ayyūbiyān republished Oskar Mann's version (OM), in the modern orthography for Sorani Kurdish in Arabic script, together with a Persian translation⁵⁶. Although he took a few liberties with the text, which have been indicated in the notes to my English translation of OM, he basically adhered closely to the text Oskar Mann collected from Raḥman-î Bekir. For OM, then, we are fortunate to have both a German and a Persian translation, both with (sometimes conflicting) explanatory notes.⁵⁷ Ayyūbiyān's edition includes an introductory essay in Persian⁵⁸, in which he reiterates Lescot's opinionated evaluation (or devaluation) of the earliest collected versions (PS, HM, LC-1, OM), admitting that he himself has not seen some of them (e.g., LC-1). Other introductory sections list various native terms for both the narrator-performers who tell stories like M&Z, and

⁵⁵also attested as **cimae't** and **cimiet**.

⁵⁶Çirikey Mem û Zîn : Kurdî - Farsî [چریکی م و زین] (Tabriz : Çäpkhānah-i Shafaq [1962]), 277 p.

⁵⁷I availed myself of both of them in translating OM into English.

⁵⁸"Bar'rasî-i taḥqîqî-i "chirîkeh-i" Mam û Zîn va shāhkār-i Aḥmad-i Khānî-i Mam û Zîn," *ibid.*, pp. 20-35.

for the genre of stories to which M&Z belongs⁵⁹, as well as offering a seven-page inventory of the names of stories belonging to this genre, followed by a list of the best known *dengbejes*⁶⁰, both living and dead.

The late Soviet kurdologist Qenatê Kurdo [Kurdoev] published an article on M&Z in Kurmanji Kurdish⁶¹, not easily accessible to an audience beyond the confines of Iraq, both because of the obscurity of the journal in which it was published⁶², and because it was printed in the Arabic alphabet, which Kurmanji-speaking Kurds in Turkey and the Soviet Union would be unfamiliar with⁶³. The article gives a sloppily printed bibliographical survey, which may be the fault of the printer rather than of Kurdoev. Although the title implies that the article will address the relationship between the oral versions and the literary version, there is very little discussion of this issue. Instead Kurdoev deals with the two realms separately, first treating of several different oral versions, pointing out differences between them, without delving into analysis. This is followed by a discussion of Ehmedê Xanî's literary version, comparing it with Tristan and Isolde, and the Georgian romance Eteri and Abesalom. In the article, Kurdoev makes mention of a planned Soviet publication containing

⁵⁹The term he uses is *çirke*.

⁶⁰The term he uses is *çirger*.

⁶¹ Derheqa şovêd Mem û Zîna zargott û şova Mem û Zîna Ehmedê Xanî' [= About the oral versions of Mem û Zîn and Ehmedê Xanî's version of Mem û Zîn] *Govarê Korf Zanyarî Kurd* [=The Journal of the Kurdish Academy], 6 (1978), pp. 78-110.

⁶²*Govarê Korf Zanyarî Kurd* [=The Journal of the Kurdish Academy], published in Baghdad, Iraq.

⁶³Unfortunately, it is realistic to expect that very few Kurds in Turkey would ever find out that such a journal, much less such an article, exists. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ferhad Shakely for making his copy of the article available to me.

Kurmanji is generally written in the Latin or Cyrillic alphabet, and Sorani is generally written in a modified Arabic script. It is possible to write Kurmanji in Arabic letters and Sorani in Latin (or Cyrillic) letters, as there is a one-on-one correspondance between the three alphabets. A chart of the three alphabets can be found on the pages immediately preceding Chapter One.

thirteen versions of the romance, but as of this writing (April 1991) it has still not appeared. Kurdoev goes into far more detail than Lescot in comparing and contrasting the different versions, but it must be borne in mind that his frame of reference was also broader: whereas Lescot limited himself to four oral versions, Kurdoev availed himself of all the versions he listed in the article, twenty in number, if my reckoning is correct.⁶⁴

In addition to these five short studies, a few early versions of M&Z are preceded by short introductions:

Makas, Hugo. "Mamu und Zine: Vorbemerkung", in Kurdische Texte im Kurmanji-Dialekte aus der Gegend von Mardin. (St-Petersburg/ Leningrad, 1897-1926; reprint Amsterdam : APA - Philo Press, 1979), pp. [1]-4.

Mann, Oskar. "Mem und Zin: Vorbemerkung", in Die Mundart der Mukri-Kurden, Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen, 4 (Berlin : Georg Reimer, 1909), Bd. 2, pp. 40-41.

Socin, Albert [& Eugen Prym]. "Mâm und Sîn: Vorbemerkung", in Kurdische Sammlungen, Zweite Abteilung: Erzählungen und Lieder im Dialekte von Bohtan, b. Übersetzung. (St.-Petersbourg : Eggers et Cie., 1890), v. 2b, pp. [99]-100.

⁶⁴This includes two versions to which I have not had access, and excludes my HR-1, HR-2, and MC-1, as well as JA and MC-2. The two versions I lack are: His #7, collected by Maksimê Xemo in 1963 in Leningrad from Mihemedê Sadiqê Bamerini from Behdînan in Iraqi Kurdistan, and his #8, written by Erdaşê Emoyê E'reb from the village of Karvanserayê in the district of Aparan, Soviet Armenia. Apparently Erdaşê Emq, who now lives in Rustaveli, sent this manuscript to Kurdoev so that he would print it. Both these versions are among the thirteen versions that Kurdoev says will be published.

Makas gives enough background material to make it obvious that his informant was not an active bearer of oral tradition, but rather a merchant with a good enough memory to provide short accounts of several Kurdish tales.

Mann mentions two other versions of M&Z that he collected in Suruç in the province Urfa. Although he intended to publish these texts in a later volume of the series, they remain unpublished to this day.

Socin mentions having met someone in Jezira who had a manuscript copy of Eñmedê Xanî's poem, stating that the man was unwilling to sell it to him. He goes on to say that he was not in a position to clarify the relationship between Eñmedê Xanî's poem and the oral versions. His comments regarding content are opinionated, insisting that there must have been a more symmetrical original of which this is a garbled version: such attitudes were typical of the period in which he wrote, although I find them inexcusable in Lescot, who wrote fifty years later. A most frustrating omission is the identity of the informant: Socin refers to him as "the rawî," but does not make it clear whether the elderly Jew Pinchas was the source of this particular text.

In addition, Oskar Mann discusses M&Z among other romances in his consideration of Kurdish folk poetics⁶⁵. We will come back to this in the section on Kurdish folk poetics in Chapter Five.

'Abd al-Ĥamîd Ĥusaynî does not distinguish between Eñmedê Xanî's literary version and oral versions in his article on M&Z⁶⁶, calling PS, LC-1, HM, LT texts (or versions) of M&Z. He displays the same sort of literary bias as Lescot: in fact he seems to have borrowed liberally from Lescot, e.g., claiming that PS is summarized

⁶⁵ "Einleitung über Inhalt und Form der ostkurdischen Volksepik," in *Die Mundart der Mukri-Kurden*, *Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen*, 4 (Berlin : Georg Reimer, 1909), Bd. 2, pp. lxvi-li.

⁶⁶ "Ahmad-i Khān va manzūmah-yi Mam o Zîn," *Nashriyeh-yi Dānishkadah-yi Adabiyat va Ulūm-i Insān-yi Tabriz*, 25 (1352 [1963]), pp. 74-88.

(abbreviated) and as a whole is lacking (incomplete)⁶⁷. He fails to comprehend the profound difference between Xanî's version and the oral versions: although Xanî's version is itself derived from oral tradition, this writer judges oral versions by it. This is by far the poorest piece of scholarship on the topic.

Louis Marin, the acting president of the Société d'Ethnographie de Paris, reported that at the June 6, 1931 meeting, the Kurdish intellectual Emir Sureya Bedr Khan gave a talk on "the poem Mem-o-Zine," in which he claimed that M&Z is recited over the entire area of Kurdistan⁶⁸. As noted above, with the exception of the Mukri version collected by Oskar Mann (OM) from an area along the Kurmanji - Sorani dialect frontier, no Sorani versions of the romance of M&Z have been collected, which strongly suggests that the oral versions are in fact limited to the Kurmanji cultural sphere. This brief report includes a summary of Bedr Khan's oral version of the story, together with the interesting twist that Bedr Khan, a direct descendant of the famous chief of the Kurds of Jezira Bedr-Khan-Bek who revolted against the Sublime Porte in 1846, traces his ancestry back to Zîn and her brother the emir. The report is most valuable for its reflection of how M&Z is perceived by this prominent Kurdish intellectual.

Everything else that has been written deals primarily with the life of Efhmedê Xanî and his literary poem.

Efhmedê Xanî (also spelled Ahmed-i Khani) was probably born in 1061 A.H., which corresponds to the Christian date 1650-1651 A.D.⁶⁹ He was a member of the

⁶⁷ ملخص و بطور کلی ناقص است p. 82. Lescot's original ran as follows: [PS] is too abbreviated and contains lacunae (Le poème de Socin est trop abrégé, et comporte des lacunes: *ibid.*, p. iv)

⁶⁸ "Séance du 6 Juin 1931" [Mem-o-Zine, poème kurde] *L'Ethnographie*, N.S. 24 (1931), pp. 4-6.

⁶⁹ See Ferhad Shakely, *Kurdish Nationalism in Mem U Zin of Efhmed-i Xani* (Sweden, 1983), pp. 8-17.

Xanî tribe, and although it is not clear whether he was born in Bayazid⁷⁰ or Hakkâri, he studied in Bayazid at the Muradiyah Mosque, and his grave is still to be seen above that city, just opposite the remarkable İshak Paşa Sarayı⁷¹. It is also possible that he lived in Jezira Bohtan for a time. Eñmedê Xanî travelled widely, as far as Syria and Egypt, and was fluent in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, as well as in his native Kurdish. A devout and learned Muslim, he is reputed to have composed poetry in all four languages, although he is best known for his Kurdish works Mem û Zîn, E'qda İman (The article of faith), an explanation of the foundations of Islam in verse, and Nûbar (First Fruits)⁷², a rhymed Arabic-Kurdish glossary. As will be discussed more fully in Chapter Two, Xanî loved his people and wrote his literary poem Mem û Zîn, derived from oral tradition, in the hopes of establishing a strong literary tradition in Kurdish. It is sad to report that his dream is only now beginning to be realized. Xanî probably died in 1119 A.H. (1706-1707 A.D.), at the age of 57.

Although Xanî's Mem û Zîn was written at the close of the seventeenth century, it was not until the end of the World War I that it was first published. The first edition was printed in Istanbul in Arabic script, with an introduction signed by Hemze. Although tradition has it that most copies were burnt by the Turks, Shakely reports that there is a copy in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.⁷³ A second printing came out in Aleppo, Syria in 1947: this is apparently an offset reprinting of the first edition. Two more printings of the 1917 Istanbul

⁷⁰Kurdish Bazîd, modern Turkish Doğubayazıt, in the province of Ağrı, near Mount Ararat.

⁷¹This spectacular palace is often depicted on the cover of Turkish touristic guidebooks.

⁷²Facsimile edition: Albert von Le Coq, "Anhang : Zwei kurdische Handschriften aus Damaskus," in: Kurdische Texte. Kurmanji-Erzählungen und -Lieder nebst einer Zîzî Erzählung gesammelt und herausgegeben in der Urschrift und in Transkription (Berlin, 1903; reprint Amsterdam : APA - Philo Press, [198-?]), pp. 1-47 (second grouping of section in Arabic alphabet).

⁷³Shakely. ibid., p. 2.

edition have appeared, in 1954 and 1968, both bearing the imprint of Erbil (Kurdish Hewlêr) in Kurdistan of Iraq, and including Gwî Mukriyanî's introduction.

The late Soviet kurdologist M.B. Rudenko produced a second edition in 1962⁷⁴, consisting of a critical edition of the text in Arabic characters, based on several manuscripts housed in the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad, plus a Russian translation. Moreover, this edition includes two introductions, one in Russian by Rudenko and one in Kurmanji Kurdish in Arabic script by Qenatê Kurdo [Kurdoev]. Rudenko's introduction, mirrored closely by Kurdoev, gives publishing history of Xanî's Mem û Zîn, some biographical information about Xanî, a brief explanation of the prosody of the poem, and a detailed description of each of the nine manuscripts upon which the critical edition is based.

M.E. Bozarslan published a third edition of Xanî's Mem û Zîn in Istanbul in 1968, this time in Latin orthography and with a Turkish translation. A second printing of this edition appeared in 1975, also in Istanbul. From personal communication with the editor, I know that these editions are bibliographic rarities: he himself possesses only one copy, of the 1975 edition.

Although Xanî wrote in Kurmanji, two Sorani translations of his Mem û Zîn have been produced in this century, one a straightforward rendering of the poem by Hejar⁷⁵, a Kurd from Mehabad in Kurdistan of Iran, the other a dramatized version by Pîremerd⁷⁶.

⁷⁴Mem û Zîn (Мам û Зин, kriticheskiĭ tekst, perevod, predislovie i ukazateli M.B. Rudenko, Pamiatniki literatury narodov vostoka, Teksty, Mala seriia, 13 (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), 249, 197 p.

⁷⁵(Baghdad, 1960).

⁷⁶Sergurustey Mem û Zîn (Sîlêmanî : Jîyan Press, 1925), 24 p. Pîremerd is the pseudonym of Had Tewfîq.

The Syrian Kurd Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍānī al-Būṭī published an Arabic translation in 1957⁷⁷, changing the poem into a novel, and excluding the references to Kurdish nationalistic aspirations. This has gone through at least five printings. Rather than reflecting al-Būṭī's own views, the omissions were more than likely due to Syrian censure strictures.

The Iraqi Kurdish scholar Jemal Nebez made a German summary of Xanī's poem, which came out in Munich in 1960⁷⁸. Both al-Būṭī's and Nebez' renderings focus on the love story of Mem and Zīn, omitting Xanī's introductory sections dealing with the place of the Kurds among the nations, and his lengthy praise of God.

Alexandre Jaba served as the Russian consul in Erzurum in the 1850's. During that period, he collected forty Kurdish texts from Mahmud Efendi Bayazidli, a sexagenarian of distinguished background, who came to Erzurum from his native Bayazid, and became Jaba's main informant. In addition to the forty texts, published in Kurmanji in Arabic characters with French translation, Jaba's collection includes notes on the tribes of Kurdistan, on eight important Kurdish poets, and on the science of grammar⁷⁹. Presumably Mahmud Efendi was the source of all this material. The section on the Kurdish poets was for many years considered a reliable source of information: however, many of the poets' dates appearing in that section have since been revised in the light of more convincing evidence⁸⁰. Eḥmedê Xanī is the fifth of

⁷⁷Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān Būṭī, Mamū Zayn: qissat ḥubb nabata fī al-ard wa-ayna'a fī al-samā (Dimashq : Dār al-Fikr, 1982), 200 p. (5th ed.)

⁷⁸Mam und Zin: genannt Romeo und Julia der Kurden: Übersetzung, Vorwort und Kommentare (München: NUKSE, 1969), 47 p.

⁷⁹Alexandre Jaba, Recueil de notices et de récits kourdes servant à la connaissance de la langue de la littérature et des tribus du Kourdistan (St.-Petersbourg, 1860; reprint Amsterdam : APA - Philo Press, 1979), x, 111, 128 p.

⁸⁰e.g., D.N. MacKenzie "Malâ-ê Jizri and Faq̄ Tayrân," in: M. Minovi & I Afshar (eds.), Yad-nāmah-yi Irān-yi Manovskī (Tehran : Tehran University, 1969), pp. 125-30.

the eight poets mentioned. Jaba acquired a manuscript of Xanî's Mem û Zîn, the contents of which he summarized in a letter to the scholar P. Lerch. The manuscript of Mem û Zîn is housed in the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad, according to Kurdoev⁸¹. Jaba also compiled the first major Kurdish foreign language dictionary⁸².

In his 1858 report on Jaba's communiqué regarding Xanî's Mem û Zîn⁸³, Lerch gives biographical information about Eñmedê Xanî, followed by information of questionable accuracy about Kurdish dialects. The final part of the report is a summary of the story of Mem and Zîn as it appears in Xanî's poem. Lerch asserts that the legend of Mem and Zîn is known throughout Kurdistan, which I have shown above to be unlikely.

Martin Hartmann describes in his article "Zur kurdischen Literatur"^{83a} the various Kurdish literary works that were featured in a manuscript formerly belonging to a Kurd in Constantinople that he received in 1896 through the intermediary of a friend living there. Pages 224 to 403 of the manuscript were devoted to Eñmedê Xanî's poem Mem û Zîn. Hartmann discusses the meter of the verse, and the language, lamenting the difficulty of understanding certain passages due to the lack of adequate reference works: even Rudenko, working some sixty years later, found obscure passages in Xanî's Mem û Zîn. Hartmann then mentions two other manuscript editions of Xanî's Mem û Zîn and discusses problems with them, attributing some of

⁸¹ Kurdoev. *ibid.*, p. 79.

⁸² Auguste Jaba & Ferdinand Justi. Dictionnaire Kurde-Français (St.-Petersbourg: Eggers et Cie, 1879), xviii, 463 p. This dictionary, commonly referred to as "Jaba & Justi," included the earlier vocabularies of Rhea and Garzoni.

⁸³ P. Lerch. "Bericht über: 'Résumé de l'ouvrage kourde d'Ahmed Effendi Khani, fait et traduit par A. Jaba,'" Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St. Pétersbourg. Classe Historico-Philologique. Registre 1-15. No. 547, Tome 15: No. 11. (1858), cols. [161]-171.

^{83a} Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, 12 (1898), 106 ff.

the difficulties to the attitude of the copyist. As a final note, Hartmann points to an inconsistency in the date that Jaba gives for Xanî's death: whereas Jaba claims that he died in 1063 A.H. (=1652-53 A.D.), in the final lines of the poem he says he has reached the year [10]64.

In speaking of the Georgian poet Rustaveli, Iosif Orbeli compares his greatness with that of the Kurdish poet Akhmed Khani (=Ehmedê Xanî)⁸⁴. Both of them "gave their hearts to their people." Orbeli affirms that the story of Mem and Zîn existed long before Xanî worked it up into his beautifully worded poem. He mentions some of Xanî's verses whose message to the world is that the Kurds do not lack culture, and are not ruled by passion alone. Orbeli's intense fondness for the Kurdish people and his awareness of their history of suffering are abundantly clear. He enumerates with pride historical figures such as Saladin and dynasties such as the Sheddadis in Iran who were of Kurdish origin.

Writing under the pen name 'Herekol Azîzan,' Celadet Bedirxan wrote an article in the Kurdish journal *Hawar* entitled "Klasîkên me" [=Our classics]⁸⁵. The article basically constituted a reissue of Jaba's section on eight important Kurdish poets, this time in Latin (*Hawar*) script, with a few additional notes and quotes from the poets' works. In the case of Ehmedê Xanî, in addition to quoting Jaba's information including the questionable dates of Xanî's birth and death, Bedirxan points out that these dates may be incorrect: whereas according to Jaba Xanî was born

⁸⁴ 'Vvedenie' [Введение -Introduction], in: *Pamiatniki êpokhi Rustaveli* [Памятники эпохи Руставели -Monuments of the epoch of (the Georgian poet) Rustaveli] (Leningrad : Izd-stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1938), pp. 5-6.

⁸⁵The journal was founded in Damascus, Syria in 1932 by Kurdish political activists who had fled Turkey, such as the Bedirxan brothers, together with Syrian Kurdish intellectuals. The orthography used in the journal, in Latin characters patterned after the system for writing Turkish in the Latin alphabet, is still in use today, and is called the *Hawar* alphabet. See: Amir Hassanpour-Aghdam, The Language Factor in National Development: The Standardization of the Kurdish Language 1918-1985. Doctoral dissertation (Urbana, Illinois : University of Illinois, 1989), pp. 129-130; 248.

in 1000 A.H. [=1591-92 A.D.], in Mem û Zîn Xanf writes that he was born in 1061 A.H. [=1650-51 A.D.]. Four works of Xanf's are cited: Mem û Zîn, Nûbar, Eqidalmanê, and a book on geography which appears to be lost. He then quotes some fourteen lines of poetry from Mem û Zîn, and ends by mentioning the first printing of that work in Istanbul, giving the date as 1919.

The two most critical works are Ferhad Shakely's book Kurdish Nationalism in Mem û Zîn of Ehmed-i Xani⁸⁶ and the relevant section of Amir Hassanpour-Aghdam's doctoral dissertation The Language Factor in National Development: The Standardization of the Kurdish Language, 1918-1985⁸⁷.

Shakely's book, which is unfortunately very hard to find⁸⁸, consists of an introduction, three chapters, and a useful bibliography. In the introduction, a detailed account of the publishing history of Ehmedê Xanf's Mem û Zîn is offered. Chapter One contains biographical notes on Xanf's life. Dates for his birth and death are given, and the methods used in arriving at them are discussed intelligently and in detail. Throughout the book Xanf's verse is quoted as evidence for his attitude about one or another issue. In Chapter Two Xanf's writings are discussed at length. I would only question such statements as "The language of M&Z, its sentence structure and grammar was not much influenced by any other language" (p. 18) and "The stories of Las û Xezal, Şor Mehmûd û Merzingan and M&Z are found only among the Kurds and in Kurdish." (p. 21). In the first instance, it is an established fact that Xanf's Mem û Zîn is very heavily influenced by Persian, both in poetic form and in vocabulary. In the second instance, the story of M&Z is also popular among the Neo-Aramaic-

⁸⁶(Sweden, 1983), 65 p.

⁸⁷(Urbana, Illinois : University of Illinois, 1989), 464 p.

⁸⁸I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Shakely profusely for making a copy of his book available to me.

speaking Jacobite Christians and Kurdish Jews, and the Armenians: I would however agree that the story is not told in any of the languages that might pose a threat to the survival of Kurdish, i.e., Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.

In Chapter Three, Shakely looks at the foundations of Kurdish nationalism as reflected in Xanî's Mem û Zîn. According to Shakely, Xanî's views regarding the situation of the Kurds can be summarized in the following five points: 1) The Kurds lived in misery because their land was under Ottoman Turkish and Safavid Persian occupation; 2) This situation could be remedied if the Kurds were to govern themselves; 3) The answers provided by religion were not satisfactory to him, in spite of the fact that he was a devout Muslim; 4) The Kurdish feudal lords were not interested in unity, but would even collaborate with the Ottomans or the Safavids against each other: they had little interest in the welfare of their own people; 5) The way to liberation was through unity, force, and goodness. Shakely notes that Eîmedê Xanî was far ahead of his time in his views about Kurdish nationalism: whereas he wrote Mem û Zîn in c. 1694 A.D., it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the concept of nationalism came to the Middle East, or, I might add, to Europe.

The bibliography of this book includes several articles that are not easily available in this country or in Europe. Articles from such Kurdish journals as Hêvîya Welêt and Rûnakê are so obscure that finding them is a hopeless venture. I hope the day may come when this is not so, when important articles from obscure journals will be reissued so that they are readily available to those who need and want them.

Finally, in Amir Hassanpour-Aghdam's very fine dissertation on the standardization of the Kurdish language between 1918 and 1985, Chapter Four is devoted to the Kurdish literary dialects from the 15th century to World War I⁸⁹.

⁸⁹Once again, I would like to thank Mr. Hassanpour-Aghdam for his willingness to make this chapter of his dissertation available to me.

Efîmedê Xanî's prominent position in this endeavor is very well covered in Hassanpour-Aghdam's insightful study⁹⁰. Xanî was aware of the inferior status of the Kurdish language, and suggested a series of strategies for circumventing this situation, such as uniting the Kurds under a single Kurdish monarch, and the use of the language for scholarly purposes of literary, scientific, and religious nature, thereby raising the intellectual level of the people. It was with this in mind that he composed his poem Mem û Zîn. In other words,

[a] prestigious language, together with a sovereign king, was the hallmark of a civilized and independent Kurdish nation.⁹¹

Xanî tried to achieve the goal of elevating Kurdish to the level of the more prestigious languages through a series of *bide'ts* or innovations. One *bide't* was the message with which he imbued his rewriting of the folk romance M&Z: according to Hassanpour-Aghdam, Xanî intended Mem and Zîn to symbolize the two parts of Kurdistan, the one occupied by the Ottoman Turks, the other by the Safavid Persians; the villain Bekir was a symbol of the lack of unity obtaining among the Kurdish principalities. If we read Xanî's Mem û Zîn in this way, it is the Kurds' inability to unite which has kept Mem and Zîn, i.e., the two parts of Kurdistan, apart. This is a gentle yet eloquent way to make people aware of what must be done to remedy the situation.

Another *bide't* of Xanî's was his work Nûbar or Nûbehara biçûkan (=First picking of fruit), a short Arabic-Kurdish glossary written in verse, through which he successfully introduced Kurdish, in spite of its status as a minor language, into the

⁹⁰Hassanpour-Aghdam. *ibid.*, pp. 79-87.

⁹¹*ibid.*, p. 82.

Islamic educational system. It turns out that this work fit into the tradition of rote memorization which is so characteristic of the Middle East: because it was in verse, the work was both easy to copy and easy to memorize.

Hassanpour-Aghdam closes this section by mentioning the parties which Xanî expected to disapprove of his innovations, as well as those to whom he appealed for support. According to this fine scholar, Xanî defends his works, his language, and himself, in a manner which is both humble and proud.

With this we come to the end of the bibliographical survey of works dealing with both oral versions of M&Z and Efhmedê Xanî's literary poem Mem û Zîn.

Proverbial Aspects of Mem û Zîn

We will begin our analysis of M&Z with a brief examination of the proverbial nature of M&Z as evidenced in expressions referring to some aspect of the story. The story of M&Z is so well known that it has given rise to proverbial expressions which presuppose a knowledge of the underlying story. The term *proverbial* is a bit misleading, for it may refer to anything widely referred to or famous, and is not limited to proverbs per se. Therefore, it should be clarified at the outset that none of the expressions under discussion here is actually a proverb, which is a fixed phrase statement with a topic-comment structure, usually metaphorical in use, that gives advice or passes judgement in a particular situation. Instead, most of the traditional phrases in question are *folk metaphors*, also known as *proverbial phrases*. The most salient difference between proverbs and folk metaphors is that the former are frozen in one form, while the latter can change for person and number. For example, the English idiom 'to have a ball,' meaning *to have fun*, can be conjugated in first, second, or third person, in singular or plural number, and in every tense (present, future, past, etc.): we can say 'He had a ball' or 'If not for the crowds, we would have had a ball.' 'To have a ball' is a folk metaphor. On the other hand, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush' cannot change for person, number, or tense: it is frozen in form. Consequently, this expression is a proverb. Although Kurdish folklore is rich in proverbs¹, I have come across none that specifically relate to M&Z. On the other hand, there are several folk metaphors derived from the story of M&Z.

¹See Edward Noel. "The Character of the Kurds as Illustrated by their Proverbs and Popular Sayings," *BSOAS*, 1, iv (1920), 79-90; Roger Lescot. "Proverbes et énigmes kurdes," *Revue des études Islamiques*, 11 (1937), 307-350; reprinted with corrections and additions in his *Textes Kurdes* (Paris : Paul Geuthner, 1940) vol. 1, pp. 1189-230; Ordikhane Dzhaliil & Dzhaliile Dzhaliil. *Mesele û Met'elokê K'urda bi Zimanê K'urdî û Rûst* = *Kurdskie Poslovitsy i Pogovorki na Kurdskom i Russkom IAzykakh* (Moskva : Glavnaia redaktsiia vostochnoi literatury, 1972), 454 p. and their *Zargotina K'urda* = *Kurdskiĭ Fol'klor* (Moskva : Nauka, 1978), vol. 2, pp. 358-408; Yona Sabar. "Multilingual Proverbs in the Neo-

Before proceeding further, we must account for an anomaly: although oral versions of M&Z have been collected only from the Kurmanji-speaking areas, with the notable exception of the Mukri (Sorani) version which Oskar Mann collected from Rafiman-î Bekir in Mehabad (OM), several of the folk expressions to be discussed below are in Sorani, of which Mukri is a sub-dialect.

Unlike the other aspects of M&Z which are considered in this study, for the purposes of this particular pursuit, it is not easy to determine if these expressions are based on the oral versions of M&Z or on Xanî's literary poem. Unless the oral tradition of M&Z thrives in Sorani-speaking areas, but has not been documented due to a consistent series of oversights, which I consider unlikely, we must entertain another possibility: Efîmedê Xanî's seventeenth century literary poem may have been read and studied by Kurds beyond the frontiers of the Kurmanji dialect areas, i.e., by Sorani-speaking Kurds².

In what follows, we will be examining two distinct categories of expressions. The first involves material directly from the story of M&Z which has become proverbial, while the second includes traditional Kurdish proverbs and proverbial expressions that are reflected in the oral versions of M&Z. Whereas in the first category, M&Z is the source of the expressions, in the second category, traditional expressions from outside the corpus of M&Z appear in the story in various ways.

In the first category, folkspeech deriving from M&Z, we have the following:

Aramaic Speech of the Jews of Zakho, Iraqî Kurdistan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9 (1978), 215-235; Fattâhî Ghâzî. *Amsâl o hikam-i Kurdî* [=Kurdish Proverbs (in Persian)] (Tabriz : Dānîshgâh-i Tabriz, 1364 [1985]), 616 p.; a recent publication, devoid of texture and context as outlined in this study, is: Abdul-Kader Amin. *Kurdish Proverbs* (Brooklyn : The Kurdish Program, 1989), iv, 76 p.; see also Joyce Dynum Lethin. "Syriac Proverbs from California," *Western Folklore*, 31 (1972), 87-101.

²For example, I know a Kurdish family from the Sorani-speaking area of Kirkûk, Iraqî Kurdistan, whose late father, a Kurdish intellectual, owned a copy of Xanî's *Mem û Zîn*.

1) **Hespa Memê Alan** [= 'Memê Alan's mare']. This is neither a proverb nor a folk metaphor, but rather an item of folkspeech: it is a nickname for the hippopotamus. It is not well attested, appearing only in one source, Izolt's Kurmanji-Turkish dictionary³. This does not constitute enough material on which to base a strong argument, but suffice it to say that seeing Mem's horse as a hippopotamus⁴, a strange animal that lives in the water, corresponds nicely to the versions in which Mem's horse is caught by fishermen in the sea (LC-1; ZK-2; LT). The lack of distinction between rivers and the sea is not unusual for a land-locked area such as Kurdistan. A parallel situation exists in Upper Egypt, where the Nile is often referred to as *baħr*, the Arabic word for 'sea.'

2) **Bek'o E'wan**. The villain of the story of M&Z, he is known in Soranî as **Bekirî Mergewere**. Both forms denote a dishonest person or a traitor, much as the name Benedict Arnold does in American culture. This usage is rather well attested: in Ayyûbiyân's edition of OM, he says in footnote #1 on pp. 142-3 that "Bekire Mergewere (Persian *marg āvar* مرگ آور = 'death bringing') is used proverbially for someone with negative characteristics, such as obstructionism [کارشکنی] and obstinacy [مماندت]."⁵ Moreover, Beko Awan has also been borrowed into other stories, such as the version of **Aşiq Xerîb** which Joyce Blau collected in Jabal Sinjār, Kurdistan of Iraq⁶: in this case,

³D. Izolt, *Ferheng : Kurdî-Tirkî, Türkçe-Kürtçe* (Den Haag : Komeley Xwendikaranî Kurd le Ewropa, [1987]), p. 357, under 'Suaygir.'

⁴From Greek, originally meaning 'river horse.'

⁵Girikey *Mem û Zîn : Kurdî - Farsî* [چریکەى مەم و زین] (Tabriz : Chāpkhānah-i Shafaq, [1962]), pp. 142-3.

⁶*Le Kurde de Ḥamādiya et de Djabal Sinjār : Analyse linguistique, textes folkloriques, glossaires* (Paris : C. Klincksieck, 1975), pp. 176, 206, 233.

too, he is a villain. In Khamoian's *Phraseological Dictionary*⁷, two expressions containing references to Beko occur: B 115. **Bek'irê E'wana**, which can mean either 'a troublemaker' or 'a two-faced, conniving person, like Reynard the fox,' and B 398. **Bûn Bek'rê E'wana** [= 'to be(come) Bekir Ewan'], meaning 'to gossip or bad-mouth,' 'to be cunning or to outsmart,' and 'to be noted for one's perfidy.'

3) **Tu Zîni, ez Memim** [= 'You are Zîn, I am Mem']. Writing in Kurmanji in the late sixteenth century⁸, the Kurdish poet Melayê Jêzîrî used this expression in a poem describing his love for a girl named Aysheh. Ayyûbiyân provides another version of the same expression, this time in Sorani, in an unidentified Kurdish folksong. The relevant verse goes as follows:

Çawit estêrey rojî meşhûrî Kurd û E'cem,
Eto bûye Yay Zîn em[în]îş bûme Kake Mem.
Your eyes shine like the sun star, famous among the Kurds and Persians,
You are Lady Zîn and I am Brother Mem.⁹

Although these two attestations may suggest that this a formula, with only two examples, I think such a label is premature. It is necessary to find several more examples before this phrase can be identified as formulaic.

The next five entries are Sorani folk expressions mentioned by Ayyûbiyân¹⁰.

⁷M.U. Khamoian. *Kurdsko-Russkii Frazedologicheskiĭ Slovar'* [Курдско-русский фразеологический словарь =Kurdish-Russian Phraseological Dictionary] (Erevan : Izdatel'stvo A.N. Armianskoĭ SSR, 1979), pp. 48, 60.

⁸approximately one generation before the birth of Ehmêdê Xani.

⁹Ayyûbiyân. *ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁰*ibid.*, pp. 26-7. I have transcribed the Sorani into Latin orthography, because the Arabic font on my computer lacks certain diacritics necessary for writing Sorani Kurdish. The Standard Kurdish Alphabet Chart before Chapter One shows the one-to-one correspondances between the Latin (Hawar) orthography and the orthography for the Arabic script.

4) **Lên bote dirîy Mem u Zînan** [= 'For us he is the thornbush of Mem and Zîn']. This is said of a person who is disruptive, intrusive, or obnoxious. The reference is to the thornbush that grew on Mem and Zîn's grave from a drop of Beko Awan's blood¹¹. The English expression 'to be a thorn in someone's side' is vaguely reminiscent of this expression.

5) **Mañ deîe maîe gewre Tajdîn begî e** (or **Qeretajdîn begî e**) [= 'His house is like the house of Tajdîn Beg']. This is said of a person whose hospitality is impeccable, or who comes from a family known for its generosity in matters of hospitality. The character of Qeretajdîn, Mem's host and defender in Jezira Bohtan, is discussed at length in the section of Chapter Six entitled *Analysis: Is Mem a Hero?*

6) **Lên bote Kake Memî Alanê** [= 'For us he is Brother Memê Alan']. This is said of a young man who is madly in love with a young woman.

7) **Lên bote Yay Zîni Botanê** [= 'For us she is Lady Zîn of Bohtan']. This is used to describe a young woman who is loyal and faithful.

8) **Sûtaw in deîe Mem u Zîn in** [= 'They are burnt like Mem and Zîn']. This is used in describing the passionate love between a young man and a young woman.

Each of these eight expressions calls to mind a specific character or scene from the story of M&Z. These may very well represent what the Kurds consider the most memorable aspects of the story.

The second category consists of traditional Kurdish (and Iranian) folk expressions that are attested in M&Z.

1) In several versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1) Qeretajdîn's wife hits a servant over the head with a wooden ladle [Motif D.I.C.], when he asks her for

¹¹See E.III in the section of Chapter Six entitled "Motifs Exhibiting Variation: Scenes and Motifs."

something – at the request of his master – that displeases her. Compare the following Persian folk simile:

مثل کنیز کفگیر خورده قر میزند

mīzanad ghor khordeh kafgir kanīz-i mesl-i

hits murmur eaten ladle girl like

6 5 4 3 2 1 ← read in this direction

He complains like a slave-girl who's hit over the head with a spatula

Source: Folklore Archives, 110 Kroeber Hall, UC Berkeley. The informant, Vida Dorroh, learned this c. 1952 from her grandmother in Tehran, who used it to refer to people who were continually complaining.

According to Vida Dorroh, who calls this a 'proverb,' the background of this expression is as follows: "Making good rice is the highest art of Persian cookery. If the mistress of the house found that one of the slave-girls (for this was in the old days) did not make the rice well, she would take the rice-spatula, which is a giant copper stirring spoon [=ladle], and hit her over the head with it. The complaining servant is a familiar figure in Iranian folklore, and one who gets hit over the head with a rice-spatula would complain even more ..."

Certain details of the Kurdish scenario differ from this Persian example: the servant is male, he is not involved in cooking, and he is not a complainer by nature, although in some versions he goes back to Mîr Sêvdîn and says "Look what your daughter (or sister) has done to me." Nevertheless, I believe that the Persian and Kurdish expressions are cognate: they both feature a servant being hit over the head by

a displeased mistress with a ladle. This motif appears to be absent from Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*¹².

Part of the climax of the story of M&Z includes Qeretajdîn's heroic sacrifice of his house, and in some versions of his wife, child, and/or horse, in order to create a diversion enabling Mem and Zîn to escape from the compromising position in which they are caught unawares. This sacrifice includes the literalization of two common folk expressions, numbers 2) and 3) of this category.

2) **Mala te bişewite** [= 'May your house burn down']. This exclamation is quite well attested. In a version of M&Z included in this study (FK-1), Mem is addressed as follows when he is discovered lying beside Zîn by a servant: **Memê mal şewitî rabe bike, bilezîne** [= 'Mem, whose house is burned, get up quickly'] (p. 280). In this context, **mal şewitî** [= 'one whose house is burned'] has the connotation of 'Mem, you son of a gun' or 'Mem, for heaven's sake.' This is, interestingly enough, just before the scene in which Qeretajdîn actually burns down his own house to save Mem and Zîn. In the short story "Ji me çêtira" [= 'Jinns and fairies'] by the contemporary Kurdish writer Bozarşan¹³, expressions such as the following occur:

"Dayê bi gorî, tu birçî bûyî ne! ... Mala mi şewitî ji te ra! ..." (p. 21) [= "Well if that doesn't put my mother in the grave! You're hungry, aren't you? ... May my house burn for you"]

"Mala mi şewitî !" (p. 22) [= "May my house burn down"]

¹²(Bloomington & Indianapolis : Indiana University Press, [c1955]), 6 vols

¹³Mehmet Emin Bozarşan. *Meyro* (Istanbul : Çıra Yayınları, 1979), pp. 21-4; Turkish translation pp. 86-90.

In addition, Khamoian's phraseological dictionary features the following: M 28. **Mala filankesê şewitt** = 'a tragedy befell *someone*' lit. '*someone's* house burned down.' Hence **mal şew[itt]**, as in the quote from FK-1 above, can also mean 'wretched, miserable' The Colloquial Arabic curse *yikhrab bêtak* = 'may your house be destroyed' is in a similar vein. As was alluded to above, in the story of M&Z, this figure of speech is literalized when Qeretajdîn sets fire to his manor: he is willing to risk being miserable for the sake of Mem and Zîn.

3) **Qurban** [= 'Sacrifice']. This type of expression is exceedingly common in the languages of the Middle East. In Arabic such expressions are: *fidāka abī* فدائك أبي / *wa fidan la-ka abī* فدائك لك أبي = 'May my father be thy ransom' and *ju'iltu fidāka* جعلت فدائك = lit. 'May I be made your ransom,' or, as Hans Wehr puts it, 'Could I but sacrifice myself for you!' In Persian, *qurbān-i to/shumā* قربان تو/ شما = '[May I be] your sacrifice,' is a common greeting. Turkish **kurban olayım** = 'May I be a sacrifice,' is a way of saying 'Please!' 'I beg you!' In Christian Neo-Aramaic of Urmia, *ana xlapux* = 'I [am] your replacement' is used in much the same way as the Turkish expression.

In the story of M&Z, besides setting fire to his own house, in most versions Qeretajdîn also sacrifices his wife, infant son, and/or prized horse, or is at least willing to do so. The following passage from ZK-2 may shed some light on this issue:

Qeretajdîn said, "O guest, our fate is with God,
Come, dismount from your horse."
Memê the stranger neither spoke nor dismounted.
Qeretajdîn said, "Memê, my heart is heavy,
You are most welcome in my house,
From today on you and I are brothers of one mother and father,
I am ready to sacrifice [my] two brothers, Cheko and Ereb, for you,
I am ready to sacrifice my whole household for you,
I am ready to sacrifice Lady Ereb -- my honor in this place -- for you."
Memê dismounted at these words and they walked together towards the hall.
(ZK-2, p. 77)

Qeretajdîn declares his willingness to sacrifice those who are most dear to him for Mem, and later on in the story he makes good his claim. Moreover, the aforementioned quote has the effect of coaxing Mem down off his horse, which suggests that in that culture, a vow such as the one Qeretajdîn is making is considered inviting.

4) **Şîrê min helal be** [= 'May my milk be blessed']. This expression is used by mothers, or in speaking of one's mother. It contains the Arabic and Islamic concept of *ḥalāl* حلال, or that which is legitimate or religiously permitted, and its opposite *ḥarām* حرام. Consider the following passage, translated from an Arabic text in the dialect of Qartmin ["Yayvantepe"], province of Mardin, Turkey:

13. She said, "Well, since you aren't hungry, [I swear] by the one who created me and you, just as God the Blessed one created these three eggs and made each one different, still they are alike!" She meant that her milk was blessed [*ḥalība ḥalāl kāt*] (i.e. that she was an honorable woman, that the milk she had drunk from her mother was whole.)¹⁴

In Arabic (at least as spoken in Kurdistan), Turkish, Persian, and Kurdish, when one says that a person's – particularly a woman's – milk is legitimate, one means that the person is honorable. In Turkish there are two expressions: **sütü temiz** [= 'his/her milk is clean'] or **helal süt emmiş** [= 'having sucked legitimate (or blessed) milk'], both meaning 'of good stock, decent, trustworthy.' In addition, **sütü bozuk** [= 'his/her milk is spoiled'], means the opposite. In several versions of M&Z, passages such as the following occur:

Here is Mem's dear mother.

¹⁴From W. Fischer & O. Jastrow. *Handbuch der arabischen Dialekte* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980), p. 167. My translation. The final explanatory note in parentheses is only in the German translation.

She wipes the tears from her red face,
 And says: "Mem, my son, don't go, may my milk be blessed unto you."
 (EP-1, ¶18)

When Mem's mother learns this,
 She says, "People of Yemen, come put on my head dirt and dust from the
 streets!"
 Then she calls out, "[My] son! Mîr Mem, Soul of my soul!
 May my suffering be blessed to you, together with the milk of my breasts.
 Don't go to the city of Jizîr, it's an unlucky city, and comfort is hard to find
 there."

Bengîneh's mother says, "My son, why are you such a thoughtless child?"
 Son, the journey before you is a rare one,
 Son, you may be free of your mother's milk, [but] don't abandon your master!"
 (OM, p. 41; German tr. p. 73; Ayyûbiyân p. 102)

In another Kurdish romance, **Sêva Hacîê**, a mother says

I have given you legitimate milk, I don't want any harm to come to you, don't
 goaway.¹⁵

In both M&Z and **Sêva Hacîê**, the mother of the protagonist says this in an
 attempt to persuade her son not to leave home. In these contexts, the mother is
 apparently relieving her son of his obligations to her. This is stated more explicitly in
 another passage in OM:

Take the news to Mem's mother and Bengîneh's mother, they should not long
 for their sons, perhaps they'll come, they'll set their sons' necks free.
 (OM, p. 40)

According to Oskar Mann, when someone is unhappy about another's
 departure, there is a belief that a curse is resting on the neck of the one departing,

¹⁵Jndi, Hajie, ed. *Kurdskie èpicheskie pesni-skazy* [Курдские эпические песни-сказы -
 Kurdish epic 'song-stories']. (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), p. 152, ¶4; Russian
 translation, p. 30.

which must be removed if the journey is to be successful¹⁶. Consequently, it is necessary to absolve the one departing of his debts, cf. the Turkish expression **hakim helâl et** [= 'relinquish your legitimate claim'] said to someone leaving by his friends staying behind.

There is also an adjective **şirîhelal**, lit. 'with legitimate milk,' which Kurdoev translates as 'noble, honest, sincere'¹⁷. This is more or less equivalent to the Arabic term **ibn ḥalāl** ابن حلال, meaning 'legitimate son' or by extension 'respectable fellow.'

The opposite is **şirîheram**, meaning 'ignoble, dishonest, insincere.' Khamoian's phraseological dictionary lists several expressions dealing with the legitimacy of one's milk¹⁸. It is specifically stated that two of them, III 44. **Şîrê min te helal be!** and III 45. **Şîrê min te heram be!**, are a mother's blessing and curse, respectively.

5) The Kurds are famous for their stubbornness. The Turks even have an expression **Kürt inadı**, meaning 'Kurdish stubbornness.' In M&Z, Mem's stubbornness is manifested in his refusal to leave Zîn's side, even if it means endangering both his and her life:

Mem said: "I swear by God the Almighty,
Until my head falls off,
666 pairs of daggers
Won't pull my mouth from Zîn's breast." (EP-1, ¶59, p. 199)

¹⁶OM, German translation, p. 70, note 91.

¹⁷K. K. Kurdoev. *Ferhengê Kurdî-Rûsî - Kurdsko-Ruskiĭ Slovar'* (Moskva : Gosudarstvennoe izd-vo inostrannykh i natsional'nykh slovarĕi, 1960), p. 707.

¹⁸Khamoian. *ibid.*, p. 266.

This is reminiscent of Kurdish proverbs whose message is that one should stand up and fight, even if one cannot win, rather than running away or giving up.

Two such proverbs are:

Heta li mirinê, ç'av li kirinê
Until death, think of action (=lit. 'eyes on doing')

Rê rîya mirinê be jî, tu her li p'êş be
Even if the road leads to death, you should always be first

This second category consists of traditional folk expressions that are not specific to M&Z, but rather are part of general Kurdish folklore. None of these expressions refers directly to M&Z, referring instead to a particular motif shared by M&Z and other Kurdish tales. This is the major difference between this category and the first, which is composed of expressions that conjure up scenes and characters from the tragic love story of Memê Alan and Lady Zîn.



CHAPTER TWO:

Literary vs. Oral



**The Relationship Between Eñmedê Xanf's
Literary Poem and the Oral Versions**

In studying the Kurdish folk romance of Mem û Zîn (M&Z), it is necessary to distinguish between the many versions of the story which exist in oral tradition on the one hand, and the late seventeenth-century literary poem of Eñmedê Xanf (Ahmed-î Khani) on the other. It is clear that the two have a common source: both feature the same basic cast of characters, and the events of the tragic love story are recognizably the same in both. Nevertheless, there are differences between the oral versions and the literary poem which are important enough to require that they be studied separately. Although in the present study only the oral versions will be considered in depth, no consideration of Mem û Zîn would be complete without mentioning Xanf's literary work, considered by the Kurds themselves to be their national epic. This chapter will outline the major differences between the two, and address the issue of derivation, investigating whether the literary poem is derived from oral tradition or vice versa.

It is worth noting that M&Z is not the only Kurdish folk narrative for which both literary and folkloric versions exist. The Soviet scholar Musaëlian has written a study of Zembîlfiroş¹, in which he includes both the text of the literary poem and several of its oral versions. Likewise, the late scholar Rudenko published a study of the Kurdish literary and folkloric versions of Yusuf and Zelikha². In addition to

¹Zh.S. Musaëlian. Zambîlfrosh : Kurdskaia poema i ee fol'klornye versii [Замбильфрош : Курдская поэма и её фольклорные версии - Zambîlfrosh (The Basket seller) : a Kurdish poem and its folkloric versions] (Moskva : Nauka, 1983), 178 p.

²М.В. Руденко. Literaturnaiia i fol'klornye versii kurdskoï poëmy "Yusuf i Zelikha" [Литературная и фольклорные версии курдской поэмы "Юсуф и Зелиха" -Literary and folkloristic versions of the Kurdish poem "Yusuf i Zelikha"] (Moscow : Nauka, 1986), 367 p.

several oral versions of the heroic epos Dimdim, there is also a poem, attributed to the Kurdish poet Feqîyê Teyra, which commemorates the revolt of the Kurds against the Persian Shah Abbas at the end of the first decade of the 17th century. In his 1967 study of Dimdim (also known as Çengzêrîn)³, Ordikhane Dzhailov claims that Feqîyê Teyra lived from 1302/1303 to 1375/1376⁴, and that therefore it is not possible that he wrote the poem, which must have been mistakenly attributed to him. In a brief article published two years later, D.N. MacKenzie determines that Feqîyê Teyra in fact lived from about 1590 to 1660⁵, the implications of which are that the poet would have been about twenty years old at the time of the revolt. Therefore it is quite possible that the poem is correctly attributed to him.

Regarding M&Z, the French kurdologist Roger Lescot and his student Joyce Blau maintain a very strict distinction between the oral versions and the literary poem. They use the name *Memê Alan* to refer to the versions in oral tradition, reserving the name *Mem û Zîn* for Eîmedê Xanî's masterpiece.⁶ Although the distinction is valid, the Kurds themselves do not adhere to it.⁷ Both Memê Alan and Mem û Zîn are names in use among the Kurdish folk to refer to the story: because of

³Ordikhane Dzhailov. Kurdskiĭ geroidheskiĭ epos "Zatorukiĭ khan" (Dymdim) [Курдский героический эпос "Заторукский хан" (Димдим) = The Kurdish heroic epic "Zatorukiz khan", i.e., The ruler with the golden hand, (Dimdim)] (Moskva : Glavnaia Redaktsiia Vostochnoi Literatury, 1967), 206 p.

⁴In Rudenko's 1965 study of Feqîyê Teyra's poem Şêx San'an, she accepts these dates, although she cites two other possible dates for his death, 1497-98 and 1181-82. See: Faki Tetran. Şexh San'an, ed. M.B. Rudenko (Moskva : Nauka, 1965), p. 4, note #4.

⁵D.N. MacKenzie. "Malâ-ê Jizî and Façî Tayrân," in M. Minovi & I Afshar (eds.), Yâd-nâmah-yi Irânî-yi Mînorîski (Tehran : Tehran University, 1969), pp. 125-30.

⁶Roger Lescot. "Introduction," Textes Kurdes, Vol. 2: Memê Alan (Beyrouth : Institut Français de Damas, 1942), p. iii.

⁷In the present study, the oral versions are generally referred to by the abbreviation M&Z, while the literary poem is written out in full and underlined (Mem û Zîn).

the sad fact that most Kurds have been deprived of the opportunity to be educated about their language and culture, many are unaware that Eñimedê Xanî's literary poem Mem û Zîn is not identical with the versions in oral tradition. Hence there is a gap between Lescot and Blau's *etic* (=analytic) term and the *emic* (=native) terms employed by the folk.

The differences between the literary poem Mem û Zîn and the oral versions can be divided into two categories: aspects of *texture*, and those of *content*. By *texture* is meant the formalistic and stylistic elements, including such considerations as whether the text is in prose or in verse. Details of the story's structure refer to its *content*.

Eñimedê Xanî's work Mem û Zîn consists of a long poem (2655 lines) in the Persian Masnavi style, characterized by strict symmetrical structure, each line consisting of two hemistichs in hazaj meter. Each hemistich contains a fixed nine to ten syllables, with each line rhyming at the end of the first and second hemistichs, but with no rhyme between consecutive lines. Hazaj meter consists of three feet, the first with two long beats (--); the second with two sets of alternating short and long beats (° ·° -); and the third with two short beats followed by two long beats (°° --)⁸. Hence, one hemistich of hazaj meter has the following rhythmical pattern: -/° ·° -/°° --.

⁸Apparently there is some variation: e.g., in the second foot of the hemistich, one may encounter the pattern short-long-long-long (°---), and in the third foot, one long beat (-) can be substituted for the two short beats (°°), as in the following lines:

Herç ku dibêjin ho waye

- -/° - - - / - - -

Hindik ji efsaneyê Bohtan

- - /° - · - / - - -

These two lines are from: Ahmed-i Khani. Mam u Zin. kriticheskiĭ tekst, perevod, predistovie i ukazateli M.B. Rudenko (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoiĭ Literatury, 1962), p. 49.

Furthermore, Persian influence is also very much apparent in the vocabulary of the poem.

In the oral versions poetic texture is not a constant. Most of the versions we have are primarily in prose, interspersed with sung verse at key points, while a few (LC-1, OM, ZK-2, JA, LT) are primarily in verse, with one or two brief prose passages. In both cases, the verse is of a different character from that of Efhmedê Xani's poem: there seems to be no set number of syllables per line; there is no discernible caesura or division into hemistichs; several consecutive lines rhyme, with change in rhyme often signalled by a rhyme signalling device⁹. Nor is there a specific meter which is used in the versions.¹⁰ The language of the oral versions is unselfconscious: depending on where each version was collected (or where the informant has lived), the foreign influences reflected in it tend to be either Turkish (LC-1; EP-1), Arabic (LT; HR-2), or Persian (OM).

Regarding content, Efhmedê Xani's Mem û Zîn has a long introduction, in which he praises God repeatedly and discusses the place of the Kurds among the nations: in this section there is other philosophical discussion as well. The actual story of Mem û Zîn itself does not begin until line 189 (p. 30 of Rudenko's edition). The beginning of the story in the literary poem diverges widely from the oral versions. In Xani's Mem û Zîn both Mem and Zîn are from Jezira Bohtan, whereas in the oral versions Mem is from either Muxurzemîn or Yemen, and he embarks on a journey to reach Jezira Bohtan. The way Mem and Zîn discover one another is also markedly different. Whereas in the oral versions a third party brings them together and they wake up side by side, in the literary poem Zîn and her older sister Sitt go out

⁹This is discussed more fully in the section on Kurdish folk poetics in Chapter Five.

¹⁰In fact, Kurdish folk poetry seems to lack the concept of meter. See the preceding note.

disguised as young men so that no one will recognize them as they enjoy the Kurdish New Year celebration (Newrûz)¹¹, and Mem and Tajdîn go out disguised as young girls for the same purpose. Once Zîn and Sittî catch sight of Mem and Tajdîn, they are unable to think of anything else; the two boys-disguised-as-girls pursue the two girls-disguised-as-boys, until they finally meet and exchange rings. Zîn and Sittî think that there is something wrong with themselves because they are in love with what they think are two girls, and Mem and Tajdîn likewise cannot understand why they are in love with two boys. Zîn and Sittî reveal their predicament to their governess, who finds out the identity of Mem and Tajdîn through a fortuneteller. After a description of the wedding of Tajdîn and Sittî, Efhmedê Xanî's Mem û Zîn continues in much the same way as the folkloric versions.

In the introduction to his composite version of M&Z, Lescot discusses the differences between Xanî's poem and the oral versions, concluding that Xanî was influenced by the style of the Persian poet Jāmī, thus insuring that the Kurdish poet's work would be far removed from the story in oral tradition. The main character of the story, Memê Alan, is portrayed in a much more positive light in Xanî's Mem û Zîn than in the oral versions of the story. Whereas the Mem of oral tradition is generally as disrespectful and flighty as he is beautiful,¹²

[t]he Mem of Xanî possesses, on the contrary, a lofty spirit, and his conduct is never tainted with baseness. The passion which animates him is entirely platonic: purified by adversity, it ceases to be addressed to Zîn, taking God as its object. In prison, Mem rises to the supreme mystical state. When

¹¹Basically identical with the Persian celebration, both falling on March 21, at the beginning of spring. It should be made clear that disguising oneself is not a custom connected with Newrûz: Zîn and Sittî simply wanted to be free to mingle with the crowd without the pomp and circumstance due to them as members of the ruling family.

¹²See the section entitled Analysis Is Mem a Hero? in Chapter Six.

his beloved brings word of his pardon, he refuses the freedom he is offered, and dies while uttering pious words.¹³

Zîn's character is much the same in both the literary and the oral traditions. So also Mîr Sêvdîn, the ruler of Jezira Bohtan. However Xanî's Tajdîn is a combination of Qeretajdîn and Bengîn in the oral tradition: Although Tajdîn is present when Mem is thrown into prison, he does nothing to prevent it; in this way he resembles Bengîn more than Qeretajdîn. However, in his willingness to burn down his own house in order to divert people's attention from Mem, who is hiding Zîn behind his cloak, Xanî's Tajdîn resembles the Qeretajdîn of oral tradition. Nevertheless, in oral tradition Qeretajdîn is the embodiment of honor and manliness, and constitutes a stronger personality than his counterpart in the literary Mem û Zîn.

Thus, to quote Lescot,

We are therefore dealing with two independent poems, entirely different in spirit, in style, and sometimes in content, the Memê Alan of the storytellers and the Mem û Zîn of Xanî.¹⁴

An often-asked question is whether the oral tradition derives from Eñmedê Xanî's poem, or whether he derived his literary masterpiece from an already existing oral tradition. Let us examine the evidence. At first glance, it would seem that Eñmedê Xanî's seventeenth century poem must be older, because the first oral versions were collected much later, in 1869 (PN) and 1870 (PS). It is important to bear in mind, however, that there was very little collecting of material from oral tradition before the middle of the nineteenth century, when the field of folklore began to

¹³Lescot. *ibid.*, p. xx. My translation.

¹⁴ Nous nous trouvons donc en présence de deux poèmes indépendants, d'esprit, de style, et parfois de contenu entièrement différents, le Memê Alan des conteurs, et le Mem û Zîn de Xanî.' *ibid.*, p. iii.

develop as a by-product of the rise of nationalism in Europe. It is a mistake to assume that a story did not exist simply because there is no record of it from a time before stories were being collected. As will be noted below, Efhmedê Xanî was not the first Kurdish poet to mention Mem and Zîn.

From a practical point of view, in light of the high degree of illiteracy in Kurdistan, and in light of the widespread geographical distribution of the oral versions of Mem û Zîn, it seems more likely that Mem û Zîn already existed in oral tradition before Efhmedê Xanî composed his literary version, i.e., that he derived his version from folk tradition, rather than vice versa.

All the literature consulted is unanimous in stating that the oral tradition predates Efhmedê Xanî. Hassanpour-Aghdam states that

[t]he story of this work is adopted from a Kurdish folk ballad called Mem û Zîn or Memê Alan which is still recited by Kurdish troubadours today. The details of the plot, names, characters and setting are all Kurdish.¹⁵

According to Kurdoev

The *dastan* of Mem and Zîn has been found among the Kurdish people since a very early century: the names Mem and Zîn are mentioned in the writings of the Kurdish poet Melayê Jizîrî (14th century). When Melayê Jizîrî speaks of his love for Aysheh, he says of his love for her: "You are Zîn, I am Mem".¹⁶

¹⁵ Amir Hassanpour-Aghdam. The Language Factor in National Development: The Standardization of the Kurdish Language 1918-1985. Doctoral dissertation (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, 1989), p. 84.

¹⁶ Dastana "Mem û Zîn" berî çûna here navînda li nav xelqê Kurda peyda bûye, navê Mem û Zîn li nivîsara şayîrê Kurd Melayê Cizîrîda (çûna 14) tê gotin. Melayê Cizîrî wextê fiexkîra xwe E'yîşêra xeber dîda, derheqa evîna xwe dibêje: "Tu Zînî, ez Memim." Qenatê Kurdo [Kurdoev]. "Derheqa şovêd Mem û Zîna zargotî û şova Mem û Zîna Efhmedê Xanî," Govarê Korf Zanyarî Kurdî [=The Journal of the Kurdish Academy], 6 (1978), p 102.

Although it is known that Melayê Jezîrî (Melai Cizri) lived before Eñmedê Xanî, in light of the preceding quote it would be helpful to know how far apart in time they were. Jaba states that Melayê Jezîrî flourished in 1145-46 (540 A.H.), and died in 1160-61 (556 A.H.), while asserting that Eñmedê Xanî lived from c. 1591 to c. 1652.¹⁷ If this were correct, then more than four hundred years would have elapsed between Melayê Jezîrî's mentioning of M&Z and Xanî's poem. As we have seen above, Kurdoev places Melayê Jezîrî in the fourteenth century. However, MacKenzie has established Melayê Jezîrî's dates as c.1570-1640 based on evidence from his poetry and that of his contemporaries, characterizing the dates given by Jaba's informant Maħmûd Efendî Bâyzîdî as unwarranted exaggerations.¹⁸

As for the dates of Eñmedê Xanî, Jaba offers the dates c. 1591-c. 1652, which would make him a contemporary of Melayê Jezîrî's according to MacKenzie's reckoning. Ferhad Shakely devotes several pages in his book *Kurdish Nationalism in Mem U Zin of Ehmed-i Xani* to the problem of determining Xanî's dates, concluding that he died at age 57, and lived from 1650 to 1707.¹⁹ Hassanpour-Aghdam basically agrees with Shakely, quoting Xanî's dates as 1650-1706.²⁰ Apparently Eñmedê Xanî was born ten years after the death of Melayê Jezîrî. In any event, because we know that Melayê Jezîrî lived before Eñmedê Xanî, the quote from Melayê Jezîrî is the most convincing evidence we have that the oral versions of M&Z predate Eñmedê Xanî's literary poem.

¹⁷Alexandre Jaba. "Notice sur les poètes et auteurs, qui, dans le Kourdistan ont écrit en langue kourde.." in *Recueil de notices et de récits kourdes servant à la connaissance de la langue, de la littérature et des tribus du Kourdistan* (St.-Petersbourg, 1860; reprint Amsterdam : APA - Philo Press, 1979), pp. 8-10.

¹⁸MacKenzie *ibid.*

¹⁹*Kurdish Nationalism in Mem U Zin of Ehmed-i Xani* (Sweden, 1983), pp. 8-14.

²⁰Hassanpour-Aghdam *ibid.*, p. 66.

Shakely points out that there is a contradiction within Xanî's poem Mem û Zîn regarding its origin. On the one hand, Xanî himself admits that he used the folkloric story of M&Z as the basis for his work,²¹ as the following lines suggest:

(239) [I] put them in order and organized them,
[I] suffered for the sake of the people.²²

(321) To bring their melody out of the curtain,
To revive Mem and Zîn again.²³

On the other hand, Shakely cites verses which indicate that the poem consists of original material:

(348) The style, the characteristics, the meaning and the words,
We did not borrow at all.
(349) As a whole they are products of the mind,
They are virgin girls and brides.²⁴

He settles this apparent contradiction by assuming that in the latter quote Xanî is referring to the new ideas he breathed into the story, and the esthetic features he introduced, most notably the versification, which is clearly borrowed from a Persian model.

Thus far we have seen that Eñmedê Xanî's poem differs from the folkloric versions in form (texture) and content (text). Where the content differs, it is not

²¹Shakely. *ibid.*, p. 21.

²²Inaye nizam û intizamê, kêşaye cefa jo boyê 'amê.

²³Nexmê wê ji perdeyê derînim, Zînê û Memê ji nû vejînim.

²⁴Uslûb û sîfat û me'na û lefz, Eşten nekîrin me yak ji wan qarz,
Bîcumle netaicêd fikr in, Dûşze û new'erûs û bîkr in.

unreasonable to expect the message conveyed by the two entities to differ as well. We have noted that the most salient differences are to be found in the beginning of the story. In the oral versions Mem and Zîn are brought together by some sort of supernatural force, and Mem lives in a different city from Zîn, which he leaves against his father's will in order to go find her. In Xanî's *Mem û Zîn*, by contrast, the two lovers are both from the same city, Jezira Bohtan, and they meet by chance at the Kurdish New Year's (Newrûz) festivities. As will be discussed in detail in the section of Chapter Six entitled *Analysis: Is Mem a Hero?*, the above mentioned sections of the oral versions reflect the rebellious behavior and sexual fantasies of a young man.

As for the literary poem, Hassanpour-Aghdam, Lescot, and Shakely are unanimous in stating that Efhmedê Xanî had a political objective in mind when he wrote his adaptation of *Mem û Zîn*. His purpose was to establish a literary tradition in Kurdish to rival those of the surrounding peoples, i.e., the Persians, Turks, and Arabs. Xanî believed that the Kurds had the makings of a great nation in their own right, yet suffered from a lack of unity. He was years ahead of his time, advocating nationalism a good two centuries before it existed as a concept even in Europe.

The vehicle he selected to get his message across was the tragic love story of Mem and Zîn. As Hassanpour-Aghdam puts it

Mem and Zîn represent the two parts of Kurdistan divided between the Ottoman and Persian Empires. Bekir personifies the discord (şîqaq) and disunity (bêtifaqî) of the Kurdish princes which Xanî considered to be the main reason for the failure of the Kurdish people to achieve sovereignty. In spite of the divisive thorn-tree, it seems that the poet hoped that disunity would finally come to an end.²⁵

²⁵Hassanpour-Aghdam. *ibid.*, p. 84. I have normalized the spelling of Kurdish names.

Hence, both the content and the texture of Xanî's Mem û Zîn are designed to address the issue of the Kurdish nation as constituting a unique entity, separate from the neighboring empires. The content of the poem includes a long introduction in which God is praised, and in which the low place of the Kurds among the nations is mentioned, as follows:

- (240) Let people not say that "the Kurds
are without knowledge, without origins.
(241) Various nations own books,
only the Kurds are not taken into account."²⁶

Xanî used the story of Mem and Zîn as a metaphor for the situation of the Kurds. He believed that notwithstanding their formidable external enemies, their biggest enemy was from within. By addressing the issue through his literary work, he hoped to make his readers conscious of the problem. At the same time, he conceived of his Mem û Zîn as the cornerstone of a new Kurdish literature which the Kurdish nation could foster along with their identity. Although his poem is regarded today as the national epic of the Kurds, his plea for Kurdish unity is only now, in the last decade of the twentieth century, beginning to receive the attention it deserves.

²⁶Shakaly. *ibid.*, p. 27.



CHAPTER THREE:

Genre



The Question of Genre

Mem û Zin has been ascribed to a number of different genres, sometimes not clearly distinguishing between Eñimedê Xant's literary poem and the oral folk narrative from which it derives. The following is an alphabetical list of the various terms I have encountered:

- Bend
- Bend û baw
- Beyt (Bayt)
- Cantefable
- Cirikê
- Destan
- Epic
- Epic poem
- Epic poetry (poëziya êpîkîyê)
- Epic song-stories (эпические песни-сказы)
- Legend
- Lyrical epic songs (лиро-эпические песни)
- Qewl
- Raz
- Roman [novel]
- Romantic epic

In an article which first appeared in 1964¹, Alan Dundes suggests that three criteria should be considered in assigning a genre classification to an item of folklore, namely texture, text, and context.

Texture refers to the form and style of the item in question, including such linguistic features as rhyme, alliteration, stress, pitch, juncture, and tone. All of these features vary from language to language: the more important the textural features are, the greater the difficulty of translating them into another language. An analysis of the texture of an item of folklore reveals its linguistic structure.

¹Alan Dundes, "Texture, Text, and Context," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, 28 (1964), 256-9; reprinted in his *Interpreting Folklore* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, c1980), pp. 20-32.

Every individual recitation or version of an item of folklore is a *text*. Whereas texture is largely untranslatable, the text can be translated. By analyzing a folkloric text, its folkloristic structure can be discovered: the motif chart accompanying this study, derived from the accompanying texts of Mem û Zîn, is an example of folkloristic structure.

The *context* is the specific social situation in which an item of folklore has been employed. *Context* must be distinguished from *function*, which is the use or purpose which a genre of folklore is put to. While context is specific to one particular telling of a tale, singing of a song, propounding of a riddle, and the like, function is a composite of all the contexts typified by the genre as a whole. An analysis of context clarifies the social setting of a particular item of folklore. Moreover, it lets us know how the audience has responded to the performer: if we recognize the existence of oral literature, then why not oral (or native) literary criticism? By soliciting audience reaction, we can learn a great deal about the esthetics of a good performance, and about native values and beliefs.

Without knowledge of context, it is not possible to explain why a particular text has been chosen or why that text was worded in a particular way, i.e., to understand how context influences text. Moreover, by consistently recording the context, an idea of the function of the genre may be established. Dundes gives examples in which a knowledge of the context in which a particular phrase was used makes it possible to assign it to the riddle genre, when otherwise it might be classed as a proverb.

Although the identity of the narrator is an important element that has often been recorded by folklorists, such minimal information should not be mistaken for context: data about the behavior of the narrator during performance, as well as the composition and reactions of the audience, are regularly omitted from most folklore collecting. The vast majority of folklorists have dwelt on the text, while relegating

texture to linguists, and ignoring context altogether. The published versions of Mem û Zîn that we possess are typical examples of this. All the early versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM) were collected by linguists interested in them as linguistic specimens. Although textural information is available for these versions, they are primarily text-oriented. The next group of versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa) were published only in Armenian translation. Likewise, (EP-2) was published only in Russian translation. Consequently, for these four versions the texture has not been collected². Other than providing basic information about the informant³, neither the above versions nor the ones that follow deal with context at all. The next group of versions (FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; ZK-2) were collected by Soviet folklorists: while the last four include somewhat detailed information about the informants, for the first two only the informants' names and places of residence are provided⁴. Two Turoyo versions were collected by the linguist Hellmut Ritter (HR-1 and HR-2); they provide somewhat detailed information about the informants, as well as the texture and texts -- especially important in this case due to their being in a language other than Kurdish: nonetheless, the context is once again left out.

In applying Dundes' three criteria to Mem û Zîn, as a means of identifying the genre to which it belongs, the following chart emerges:

²with the exception of the sung poetry in SHa-1, which appears both in the original Kurdish (in Armenian characters) and in Armenian.

³except for (PS) and (EP-2). For (PS) we know the place [Zakho] and date [1870], but the identity of the informant is unclear. As for (EP-2), we know neither the identity of the informant nor the place or date of collection. All we know is that it first appeared in *Skazki narodov Vostoka* [Сказки народов Востока = Tales of the peoples of the East/Orient] (Moskva & Leningrad, 1938), pp. 99-119, edited by O. L. Vil'chevskii, reprinted in *Kurdskie èpicheskie pesni-skazy* [Курдские эпические песни-сказы = Kurdish epic song-tales] (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), pp. 98-111.

⁴The omission of biographical details is unusual in a Soviet folkloristic publication.

- Texture:** Kurdish (Kurmanji)
 a. verse (PŞ; LC-1; [SHa-2]; ZK-2; JA)
 b. prose and verse [cante fable] (HM; [SHa-1]; [GNa]; FK-2; FK-1; [EP-2]; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; MC-1)
- Kurdish (Sorani [Mukri])
 verse (OM)
- Turoyo
 prose (PN; HR-1; HR-2)
- Translation only (-Texture)
 a. Armenian (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa)
 b. Russian (EP-2)
- Text⁵:** PN (1869); PS (1870); HM (1896); LC-1 (1901); LC-2 (1901); OM (1903); SHa-1 (1904); SHa-2 (1904); GNa (1904); FK-2 (1926); FK-1 (-1936); FK-3 (-1936); EP-2 (c.1938); LT (-1942); EP-1 (1955); ZK-3 (1959); HR-1 (1960); HR-2 (1960); ZK-1 (1963); ZK-2 (1970);
 on cassette tape: JA (1979); MC-1 (c.1967); MC-2 (c.1989)
- Context:** a. identity of informants (all but PŞ; GNa; EP-2)
 b. social setting (ø)
 c. native literary criticism (JA; HR-1; MC-1; Sureya Bedr Khan)
 d. digression (PN; PŞ; LC-1; OM; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1)

The texture of the versions of Mem û Zîn which form the basis of this study may be summarized as follows: Mem û Zîn is told in two dialects of Kurdish, Kurmanji and Sorani. Whereas the sole Sorani version (OM) is in verse, some of the Kurmanji versions are in verse (PŞ; LC-1; [SHa-2]; ZK-2; JA), while others -- the majority -- are in a mixture of prose and verse (HM; [SHa-1]; [GNa]; FK-2; FK-1; [EP-2]; EP-1; ZK-2; ZK-1; MC-1). Of the Kurmanji versions, four have been published only in another language: three in Armenian, of which two are in mixed prose and verse (SHa-1; GNa) and one is in verse (SHa-2), and one in Russian, in mixed prose and verse (EP-2). Three Turoyo [Neo-Aramaic] versions exist, all three in prose (PN; HR-1; HR-2).⁶ While all these versions can be used for structural analysis, for the

⁵Arranged by date from earliest to most recent.

⁶Yona Sabar, a Kurdish Jew from Zakhq, Kurdistan of Iraq, currently a professor of Hebrew at UCLA (age c. 45), has told me that he remembers hearing Zîn u Memê (as Mem û Zîn is known among the Jews

purposes of formalistic (textural) analysis such as Oral-Formulaic Theory or poetics, the versions which exist only in translation are of no use⁷. Moreover, in translating the versions, it would have been too difficult to translate the verse in a manner which preserved the rhyme of the original, and consequently it was dispensed with, with the exception of one or two passages, for which both rhyming and non-rhyming translations were offered, e.g.:

Gelî xelqê dinyan û e'lamê,
 Hûnê dîna xo bidinê, çî fikyate hatt serê Zîné û Memê,
 Gelî aliyê li civata,
 Hûnê bala xo bidinê, çî fikyate bi serê Zîné û Memêda hate. (ZK-3, p. 90)

- [90] O peoples of the world and the earth,
 [You will] have a look at what happened to Zîn and Mem.
 O (turning to) the direction of the group,
 [You will] take a look at what occurred to Zîn and Mem.

A rhyming translation of this in English is:

O peoples of the earth and world,
 See what on Zîn and Mem has unfurled,
 O members of the human race,
 To Zîn and Mem just what took place.

Although the latter translation captures the spirit of the type of rhyming involved in the original, such slavish rendering of the original texture could only be done at the

of Zakho) recited in Neo-Aramaic (a dialect distinct from Turoyo) in prose, interspersed with sung verse in Kurdish.

⁷with the exception of the sung poetry in SHa-1, which appears both in the original Kurdish (in Armenian characters) and in Armenian.

expense of the meaning, and the final effect would have been to trivialize the content. Therefore, I have opted to remain as true as possible to the meaning, rather than to the texture of the text.

As mentioned above, M&Z exists in two different forms: some versions are long prose narratives interspersed with sung poetry. Other versions, however, are entirely (or predominantly) in verse. The mixed prose and verse texture is reminiscent of what Başgöz calls the *folk romance hikaye*. Moreover, this combination of prose and poetry is a well known form in European literary tradition as far back as Roman times: it is known as *prosimetrum* or *cante fable*⁸. With regard to the importance of texture as a factor in genre definition, it should be borne in mind that for Turkologists, the many Turkish versions of the long verse poem Yûsuf ve Züleyha, although structurally similar to the hikaye, are classed as a different genre.

We are faced with a dilemma: should we assign both prose and verse forms of Mem û Zîn to a single genre, or should we distinguish two different genres, as Turkologists have done with Turkish materials? To put it another way, should textural features alone determine the genre to which an item of folklore belongs? Dundes' answer to the latter question is clear: texture is only one of three criteria to consider in genre assignment, the other two being text and context. In addition, in Herbert Halpert's article "The Cante Fable in Decay," (1941)⁹, he makes a clarification which may shed some light on the discussion at hand. On page 192, he says:

...we should make clear that the term *cante fable* as used here, refers only to forms of the folktale, and not to the highly sophisticated literary form of *Aucassin et Nicolette*, the only specimen "of French literature in the Middle

⁸John R. Reinhard. "The Literary Background of the Chantefable," *Speculum* 1 (1926), 157-169.

⁹*Southern Folklore Quarterly*, 5 (1941), 191-200.

Ages which is composed of verse *and* music *and* prose, and ... is rightly called unique." ¹⁰

In making this distinction, Halpert suggests that the term *cante fable* refers to the texture of a given text, as distinct from its genre. According to him, the folktale genre may assume different forms: while most folktales are told in prose, some occur in prose mixed with (sung) poetic verses. Hence, whereas Dundes argues for the inclusion of texture as part of genre definition, Halpert considers texture as external to genre classification, basing his classification solely on *content* (i.e., text). Such an approach could be labeled text-oriented, not a flattering designation according to current trends. What Dundes and Halpert share is the conviction that texture alone must not determine genre. Bearing this in mind, the present author has been able to benefit from Halpert's comments while preserving Dundes' tripartite classification scheme. For if we apply Halpert's logic to M&Z, we have a partial solution to our dilemma: whatever genre we assign to M&Z, it may assume one of two forms (or textures): either verse -- perhaps the original form ¹¹ --, or prose interspersed with verse, with the verse appearing particularly at key dramatic points in the story. Consequently, if we follow Halpert's lead, we may relegate the term *cante fable* to the rank of a formalistic (or textural) designation rather than seeing it as a genre, and in so doing we may eliminate it from the long list of genre designations under

¹⁰He quotes Reinhard, *ibid.*, p. 157.

¹¹The American Bible scholar William Foxwell Albright (1891-1971) suggests in a discussion of the poetic background of early Hebrew prose that "prose was frequently a secondary form behind which lay a poetic version." [as quoted in: Robert C. Culley, "Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies," *Oral Tradition*, 1 (1986), 30-65; reprinted in: *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*, ed. by John Miles Foley (New York and London: Garland Publishing Co., 1990), pp. 189-225, esp. 199-200. The following two works by W.F. Albright are mentioned there: *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1957) and *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (1969).]

consideration. According to this way of thinking, Turkologists might want to rethink the issue of genre assignment vis-à-vis the poem *Yûsuf ve Züleyha*.

Chapter five of the present study, in which the focus is on Kurdish folk poetics and the Oral-Formulaic Theory, deals primarily with the texture of the versions of M&Z.

The texts listed above include five which have not been fully integrated into the present study: (LC-2; FK-3; LT; JA; MC-2). Largely due to time considerations, it was deemed that eighteen versions were sufficient for the purposes of analysis. Le Coq's second version (LC-2) and the third version appearing in *Folkloro Kymança* (FK-3) were excluded mainly for this reason. Lescot's "version" (LT), being a conflation of three texts, is scientifically unsound: moreover, it is hoped that my exclusion of materials of this sort, consisting of composite texts, will set a precedent. The version collected by Jaqueline Alon (JA) and the one from Iraq which I purchased from a Jerusalem cassette seller in May of 1990 (MC-2) would require large blocks of time for adequate transcription, as well as native speakers with whom to consult: because of the dearth of native speakers of Kurmanji in North America as of this writing, this must regrettably be considered beyond of the scope of the present work¹². Nevertheless, I fully intend to publish these texts in the future.

The translations of fifteen versions and the summaries of the three published in Armenian (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa)¹³ are the texts upon which this study is based. In chapter four, a comparative study of the versions together with detailed motif charts, the versions of M&Z qua text are the focus of inquiry.

¹²If I lived in Nashville, Tennessee, Los Angeles or San Diego, where fairly large Kurdish communities exist, I would have had an easier time finding native speakers. Nevertheless, the number of Sorani speakers residing in North America far outnumbers Kurmanji speakers: this may change with the expected arrival of 3,000 Iraqi Kurdish refugees sometime in 1991.

¹³for which I once again give special thanks to Anne Avakian.

Due to the fact that, for the most part, context has been ignored, anyone attempting a study of this aspect of the oral versions of M&Z is severely limited in what he can say about it. Nevertheless, some remarks are possible. The identity of all the informants but two (for PS and EP-2) is known, although the amount of detail that has been provided regarding the various informants is uneven. Next to nothing is known about the social setting in which the versions were told. It would be helpful if we knew, for instance, which versions were told before a receptive audience, and which were told purely for the benefit of the collector. According to Başgöz (1975),¹⁴ the composition of the audience may affect the tale-teller's performance quite profoundly: whereas the tale-teller may embellish his tale and spread it out over several hours for a receptive audience, the same tale-teller may collapse his story into a short, uninspired narrative if he perceives the listeners as hostile.

Regarding native literary criticism, if not for the unpublished work of Jaqueline Alon, we would have absolutely nothing. Mrs. Alon collected a version of M&Z from an old Kurdish Jewish man from Iraq, together with his sister's reactions to hearing the story. Moreover, I have interviewed several Kurds about M&Z and similar stories: although my interviews do not refer to a specific version of the tale, they constitute an attempt to recreate what a performance of M&Z was like, by talking to people who grew up with this tradition, and by asking them to remember back to their childhood in Kurdistan, in an attempt to see what was happening through their eyes.

¹⁴Ilhan Başgöz. "The Tale Singer and His Audience," in: Folklore : Performance and Communication, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague : Mouton, 1975), pp. 143-204.

In addition, by applying the theory of digression as laid out by İlhan Başgöz in another article of his,¹⁵ it is possible to glean some interesting information about the personality of the *dengbêjes* as reflected in their side comments.

The aforementioned aspects of context are laid out in detail in Chapter Six, which is devoted to a consideration of M&Z qua performance.

At first glance, the sheer number of genres to which Mem û Zîn has been ascribed boggles the mind. Upon closer scrutiny, however, there is some unity underlying the divergence. Many of the terms contain the word *epic*. Nikitine calls M&Z an *epic poem*¹⁶. The Soviet Kurdish folklorist Ordixanê Celîl [Dzhalilov] refers to it as a lyrical *epic song* [лиро-эпическая песня] in his 1960 article¹⁷; in a fine collection of Kurdish folklore which he compiled together with his brother Celîlê Celîl, the three versions of M&Z which they include appear in the section entitled *epic poetry* [poëziya êpîkiyê]¹⁸. Hajie Jndi, another Soviet folklorist, includes two versions of M&Z in a collection of folk narratives belonging to a genre

¹⁵İlhan Başgöz. "Digression in Oral Narrative : A Case Study of Individual Remarks by Turkish Romance Tellers." *JAF* 99 (1986), 5-23.

¹⁶Basile Nikitine. "Essai de classification de folklore à l'aide d'un inventaire social-économique," in: XVIIe Congrès international d'anthropologie et d'archéologie préhistorique : VIe assemblée générale de l'Institut international d'anthropologie, Bruxelles, 1-8 septembre 1935 (Bruxelles : [Imprimerie médicale et scientifique], 1936), v. 2, pp. 1000-1012; "La Poésie lyrique kurde." *Ethnographie*, nouvelle série 45 (1947-50), 39-53.

¹⁷Ordixhane Dzh. Dzhalilov. "O nekotorykh voprosakh kurdsogo narodnogo tvorchestva" [O некоторых вопросах курдского народного творчества = On some questions concerning Kurdish folk literature], Patma-Banasirakan Handes [Պատմա-Բանասիրական հանդես] (1960), p. 203.

¹⁸Ordixhane Dzhalilov & Dzhalil Dzhalilov. Zargotina K'urda - Kurdskiĭ Fol'klor [Курдский фольклор]. (Moskva : Nauka, 1978), 2 vols.

which he calls *epic song-stories* [эпические песни-сказы]¹⁹. Frym and Socin (1890) believed that Mem û Zîn and other narratives of like genre “were originally composed in poetic form, i.e., they were originally epics²⁰,” although they considered M&Z a “Roman”.

The composite text published by Lescot (LT) was reworked²¹ and published with a Turkish translation under the title *Destana Memê Alan*²² by someone using the pseudonym Baran. *Destan* is originally a Persian word [dastân داستان / dāstān داستان], variously glossed as: story, fable, tale, romance, history, and proverbial expression²³. In Turkish the word assumed the form *destan*, meaning: epic, epic poem, ballad, song²⁴. Before proceeding any further, it should be pointed out that compilers of dictionaries are often imprecise about terminology pertaining to specific fields of study: hence, although the folklorist would define ‘myth’ or ‘epic’ differently than a classicist would, such differences are seldom incorporated into standard dictionaries for the layman. This being the case, the definitions provided for Persian dastān and Turkish *destan* should only be seen as approximations, rather than accurate definitions: so far, the only thing that can be said with certainty is that the

¹⁹Hajie Jndi (ed.). *Kurdskie èpicheskie pesni-skazy* [Курдские эпические песни-сказы - Kurdish epic ‘song-stories’]. (Moskva : Izdatel’stvo Vostochnoĭ Literatury, 1962), 242 p.

²⁰Eugen Frym & Albert Socin. *Kurdische Sammlungen. a. Die Texte; b. übersetzung.* (St.-Petersbourg : Eggers et Cie, 1890), vol. 1.a, p. xix

²¹i.e., words deemed ‘not of pure Kurdish stock’ were replaced with ones which were considered so.

²²Baran (pseudonym). *Destana Memê Alan: Kürtçe - Türkçe - Memê Alan Destanı* (Istanbul : Özgürlük Yolu Yayınları, 1978), 389 p.

²³Muhammad Mu’in. *Farhang-i Fārsī* [فرهنگ فارسى] (Tihārān : Amīr-i Kabīr, 1432-1452 [1963-1973]), vol. 2, p. 1483.

²⁴*Redhouse Çağdaş Türkçe-İngilizce Sözlüğü - Contemporary Turkish-English Dictionary* (Istanbul : Redhouse Yayınevi, 1983), 455 p.; *Redhouse Yeni Türkçe-İngilizce Sözlük - New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary* (Istanbul : Redhouse Yayınevi, 1981), 1292, 45.

term *dastân/destan* refers to some sort of narrative, perhaps characterized by musical accompaniment. The various Soranî dictionaries yield the following: epic poem, ode, *lay*²⁵; *dastan* story, poem, legend, tale²⁶; epic poem²⁷; tale, story²⁸. We know little more than when we started. Unfortunately, the Kurmanji dictionaries consulted were not much better. Only four of them listed the word at all: Kurdoev, Anter, Jaba & Justî, and *tzolî*. Of these, the most reliable is Jaba & Justî; they give two forms, [destan] داستان meaning *tale*[conte] and [dastan] داستان meaning *account* or *tale* [récit, conte]. Kurdoev gives *dastan*, designating it as archaic [устаревшее слово] and glossing it as *tale, story, or myth*. Both Anter and *tzolî* give the form as *destan*, defining it by the identical Turkish word. In addition, *tzolî* gives two examples of *destans*: *Destana Memê Alan* and *Destana Rustem*, thus putting the oral versions of *Memê Alan*²⁹ in the same genre as Ferdowsi's Classical Persian masterpiece, the *Shahnameh*³⁰, or even worse yet, failing to distinguish between the oral versions of M&Z and Ehemedê Xanî's literary poem. Although the Kurmanji dictionaries have been shown to be of little use in arriving at a specific meaning for *destan/dastan*, the two most reliable Soranî sources, Joyce Blau and Wahby & Edmonds, agree with the

²⁵Taufiq Wahby and C.J. Edmonds *A Kurdish-English Dictionary* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 33.

²⁶K.K. Kurdoev & Z.A. IUsipova *Kurdsko-Russkii Slovar' : Sorani* (Moskva : Russkii IAzyk, 1983), pp. 262-3.

²⁷Joyce Blau. *Manuel de kurde : dialecte Sorani* (Paris : Klincksieck, 1980), p. 223.

²⁸Ernest N. McCarus *A Kurdish-English Dictionary : Dialect of Sulaimania, Iraq* (Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. 45.

²⁹as the French Kurdologists Roger Lescot and Joyce Blau refer to the oral versions of M&Z, reserving the term *Mem û Zîn* for Ehemedê Xanî's literary poem.

³⁰Rustem (Persian Rostam رستم) is the hero of the Sistan cycle of the *Shahnameh*.

primary meaning given in the Turkish dictionaries – and with common usage among Turkish folklorists – in glossing it as *epic*

Hence, we have returned to our starting point: designations containing the word *epic*. Nor does this word have a simple, commonly agreed upon meaning in English. In *The Singer of Tales*, Albert Lord admits that the term *epic* is ambiguous. Some scholars use extreme length of a narrative as a criterion for defining what is or is not an epic: e.g., we speak of “a work of epic proportions”. Nevertheless, Lord rejects this criterion, arguing that some ‘epics’ are short. Others would like to limit the term to heroic poetry – in fact, some scholars substitute the term ‘heroic poetry’ for ‘epic’, in an attempt to avoid ambiguity. A. Lord rejects the appellation ‘folk epic’, saying that we have outgrown this vague term, which misrepresents oral epic (or oral narrative) poetry, rather than accurately describing it. *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* distinguishes three types of epic: classical epic (as Homer’s *Iliad*), literary epic (as Milton’s *Paradise Lost*), and folk epic (as *Beowulf*).

In her book *Ethnopoetics*, Heda Jason provides definitions of folkloristic terminology, including several different types of epic, namely: historical epic (e.g., *Iliad*; South Slavic epic; Indian Mahabharata), national epic (e.g., Russian bylina; Persian Shah-name), universal epic (e.g., first part of the Sumerian epic of Gilgamesh; exploits of Herakles; Indian Ramayana; Old English *Beowulf*), romantic epic (e.g., *Odyssey*; contemporary Central Asian epics), mythic epic (e.g., Babylonian *Enuma Elish*; Hittite epic about Ullikummi), and carnivalesque epic (no e.g.)³¹. Although a definition for each type is offered, it would be nice to know the criteria employed in arriving at these distinctions. It seems that some of them are arbitrary: some Russian byliny, for instance, consist of mythological material, belonging to Jason’s Universal

³¹Heda Jason. *Ethnopoetics : A Multilingual Terminology* (Jerusalem : Israel Ethnographic Society, 1975), pp. 49-51.

epic category (#4.3.2.3., p. 50), while others reflect historical periods. The same can be said for the Shah-nameh, or the South Slavic heroic poetry.

Through a careful reading of the essays in Felix J. Oinas' collection *Heroic Epic and Saga* (1978), it is possible to come up with criteria which scholars of epic recognize in defining the genre. An epic, then, is a cycle of tales regarded as the history of a given people from its inception until a certain point in time. As such, epic combines myth, explaining how mankind and the world came to be in their present form, and legend, which deals with folk history³². A recurring theme in epic is the battles successfully fought by a national hero against a foreign enemy. It is not uncommon for several generations of rulers and/or heroes to be featured in the various episodes of an epic tradition. Regarding form (or texture), epics tend to be in poetry³³. Some epic traditions are oral, others are the written record of what is presumed originally to have been oral.

If we now apply this folkloristic working definition of the term epic to M&Z, it is immediately apparent that M&Z does not fit the description. First of all, M&Z is a single story, rather than a cycle of tales. Secondly, M&Z does not pretend to be an historical account of the Kurdish people: it certainly does not treat of their beginnings, nor of how they came to live in the territory now known as Kurdistan. Myth, as the term is used by folklorists³⁴, is absent from M&Z. As for legend, it is incorporated to the extent that factual places, such as Jezira Bohtan, [and perhaps historical

³²as distinct from factual or scholarly history.

³³However, İlhan Başgöz states that "the Koroğlu epic is in prose interspersed with poetry." See his "The Epic Tradition Among Turkic Peoples," in: *Heroic Epic and Saga*, ed. by Felix Oinas (Bloomington & London : Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 317.

³⁴i.e., A sacred narrative that explains how mankind and the world came to exist in their present form. See: Alan Dundes (ed.) *Sacred Narrative : Readings in the Theory of Myth* (Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, 1984), 352 p.

personalities] are included; and it is told as true. Moreover, the thornbush motif is a typical legendary ending³⁵. The story is still believed by Kurds today, and I am told that if you go to Jezira³⁶, the local inhabitants will show you Mem and Zîn's grave with the thornbush still growing from it, doomed forever to drive a wedge between the two lovers, even in their graves. Although brief skirmishes are depicted in some of the versions, the theme of battle is tangential to the plot: nowhere in *M&Z* can one find long, detailed descriptions of battle scenes. Nor can it be considered a chronicle, either of battles or of dynastic succession. Whereas the epic hero's behavior generally sets an example to be followed, Mem malingers to avoid going on a hunting expedition and fails to rise when the emir of Jezira Bohtan enters the court. In addition, Mem dies after being imprisoned in a dungeon, whereas the victorious heroes of the epic genre would scarcely ever allow themselves to fall prisoner. Epic heroes defend nations from marauders and monsters; Mem must be protected by his chivalrous host Qeretajdîn, and is imprisoned in the latter's absence. With regard to the form (texture) of the epic genre, most versions of *M&Z* do not exhibit pure poetry, a trait which it shares with such Turkish epics as *Köroğlu*. It is hoped that the preceding discussion has debunked the misconception of *M&Z* as belonging to the epic genre.

Among the several terms used by the Kurds themselves³⁷, two prominent ones are **qewl** and **beyt**. **Qewl** is a Kurmanji term which I first learned from a Kurd from Siirt. He defined it as "a story, but distinct from the **çîrok** [folk tale], because

³⁵Both the French medieval romance *Tristram and Isolde* and the Georgian story *Abessalom and Eteri*, both told as true, end similarly. Although technically not legends, these stories, like *M&Z*, incorporate legendary material.

³⁶Gizre in the recently formed province of Şirnak, formerly part of the province of Siirt, Kurdistan of Turkey.

³⁷i.e., emic terms.

there are songs in a **qewl**, whereas a **ç'îrok** is in prose." As an example of a **qewl** he named Sipñanê golê, of which I have not found any published versions. In explaining what a **qewl** is, he employed the Turkish terms **destan**, which we have discussed above, and **halk hikâyesi**, to be explained below. **Qewl** comes from the Arabic word **qawl** قول meaning 'a saying, utterance, declaration'³⁸. Only two of the Kurmanji dictionaries listed the word: al-Hadiyah al-Hamîdiyah and **izolî**. In the former, it is defined as "talking in verse in Arabic or Kurdish, containing a story, praise, or love"³⁹; in the latter, as "a story in verse". In the folklore collection assembled by the Celîl [Dzhalîlov] brothers, there is a section entitled **Qewl û beyt'ê êzdiya** [Yezidi qewls and beyts]: judging from the material appearing there, **qewl** refers to a type of Yezidi religious poem consisting of three- to five-verse stanzas⁴⁰.

Another emic term is **beyt**. In a fine article appearing in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, the Kurdish scholar Amir Hassanpour-Aghdam defines the **beyt**[bayt] as:

a genre of Kurdish folk art similar to Azerbaijani Turkish *dâstân* or *hekâya*... *Beyt* is an orally transmitted story which is either entirely sung or is a combination of sung verse and spoken prose. It is distinguished from Kurdish lyrical folk songs (*hayrân*, *qatâr* and *lâwik*) by its essentially narrative character and, generally, its length. *Beyt* is also generally distinguished from the Kurdish narrative genre *hekâyat* or *ç'îrok* (story) by its sung verse form. In contrast to its Azeri counterpart, singing is unaccompanied by instruments.⁴¹

³⁸It is the verbal noun (maşdar) of the verb qāla قال = 'to say.'

³⁹الكلام المنظوم عربيا أو كرديا يتضمن قصة أو مدحا أو عثقا.

⁴⁰Dzhalilov and Dzhalilov. *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 5-53.

⁴¹Amir Hassanpour-Aghdam. "Bayt" in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica* vol. 4, fasc. 1, pp. 11-12.

The similarity between this definition and the one for *qewl* above should be readily apparent. Both terms are reminiscent of the term *cante fable* discussed above. Hassanpour-Aghdam goes on to list the various types of subject matter encountered in the *beyt*. First on his list is the topic of tragic love, typified by such stories as *Mem û Zîn* and *Xec û Styabend*⁴². Other topics include conflict between the Kurdish principalities and the governments in the area, intertribal conflict, religious themes, and the lives and artistry of bards.

Next, Hassanpour-Aghdam discusses the interaction between written literature and the *beyts*⁴³, giving "the national epic⁴⁴ of the Kurds," Ehemedê Xani's *Mem û Zîn*, originally a *beyt*, as an example of a classical poet drawing on *beyt* material for his literary creation. Although Hassanpour-Aghdam correctly states that *beyts* "are found in all Kurmānjî (Northern) dialect areas (Iran, Soviet Armenia, Turkey, Iraq, and Syria) and in parts of the Sōrānî (Central) dialect regions,⁴⁵" he does not point out that the term is itself limited to the Sorani dialect: the word exists in Kurmanji also, but only with the meanings of a) a verse of poetry – which preserves the original

⁴²or *Stamend*, as he calls it.

⁴³He unfortunately renders *beyt* in English with the word *ballad*, which is a distinct genre.

⁴⁴This is an example of the use of the term *epic* by non-folklorists. The following definition from *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* most closely approximates what is meant by *epic* in the present context: "b: a long narrative poem (as Milton's *Paradise Lost*) having the structure, conventions, and tone of the classical *epic* but dealing with later or different subject matter – called also *literary epic*" (p. 762). As mentioned above, other types of *epic* distinguished in *Webster's* are *classical epic* (as Homer's *Iliad*) and *folk epic* (as *Beowulf*). The phrase 'dealing with later or different subject matter' is vague: in the wrong hands it could be used to justify classifying almost anything as an *epic*.

⁴⁵Hassanpour-Aghdam, *ibid.*, p. 12.

meaning of the term in Arabic⁴⁶, or b) a Yezidi religious hymn [=qewl (as used by Dzhaliilov)].

According to the Iranian Kurdish scholar Ayyūbiyān, among the Sorani (Mukri) Kurds other native (emic) terms applied to M&Z include **çirîke**, **raz**, **bend û baw**, and **bend**⁴⁷. The dictionary definitions of these words are of little help: for **çirîke** we find 'shrill cry (of hawk), shriek, song on open road', for **bend û baw**, 'misrepresentation, false propaganda', and for **raz**, 'secret, mystery'. If these words take on an additional meaning, equivalent to **beyt**, such usage is apparently limited to particular regions.

Whereas we cannot deny that terms such as **qewl** and **beyt** are fine native terms for the genre, it is desirable to have a scientifically sound etic term as well⁴⁸. Albert Socin calls M&Z a *novel* [Roman]⁴⁹. Oskar Mann refers to M&Z and like stories as *romantic epics* [romantische Epen]. European scholars have applied this term to narratives that appear to resemble M&Z in other cultures. For example, M.

⁴⁶Arabic bayt بيت, the most basic meaning of which is 'house.' 'Verse of poetry' is, however, a very common extended meaning. Moreover, the different meanings form different plurals: buyūt بيوت - 'houses,' but abyāt أبيات = 'verses.'

⁴⁷Ayyūbiyān, 'Ubayd Allāh. "Chirîkeh ya'nî cheh?," Çirîkey Mem û Zîn : Kurdî - Farsî [چرîکەى مەم و زین] (Tabriz : Chāpkhānah-i Shafaq, [1962]), pp. 3-5.

⁴⁸An emic term is one used by the folk in speaking of a genre of folklore: it is a native category. An etic term is one used by outsiders studying the culture: it is a scholarly category, useful for comparative purposes. To illustrate the difference, let us suppose that in a particular culture, one [emic] term does duty for both riddles and jokes. For the members of the culture, there is no need to distinguish between the two: for folklorists interested in studying riddles or jokes, however, it would be necessary to differentiate the riddles from the jokes, making what would be an artificial [etic] distinction by native standards.

⁴⁹ibid., p. xix. Perhaps *novella* would be a better rendering?

Chikovani classifies the Georgian folk legend Abessalom and Eteri as a romantic epic.⁵⁰ Heda Jason offers the following definition of the genre:

Romantic epic: Epic about a warrior-hero who wins a bride, or about a warrior and his bride/wife who overcome obstacles which hostile forces impose on their marriage/reunion. This epic is related to heroic fairy tale, but is essentially set in the realistic mode although elements of fabulous modes often appear in it (especially marvelous elements; no creative elements). This epic is set in spaces 3 [=“our country”] - 4 [=“this world”], in human time, often in a specific historical period and is a sub-division of historical or national epic, according to the epic sub-genre prevalent in the culture.⁵¹

She then gives as examples of *romantic epic* the *Odyssey* and contemporary Central Asian epics, such as *Alpamysh* or *Manas*. Although this definition reflects fairly well what happens in *M&Z*, it differs in some important details: because Mem fails to overcome the obstacles placed in his path by hostile forces, the marriage never takes place. Strictly speaking, Mem is not a warrior-hero. What is most problematic is the use of the term *epic* in speaking of *M&Z*, as has been discussed above⁵². The adjective *romantic*, however, alongside Frym and Socin's designation *Roman* [novel], may be leading us in the right direction.

Ilhan Başgöz has investigated at length the Turkish *halk hikâyesi*, literally 'folk story', which he refers to as "the folk romance *hikaye* , a long narrative that

⁵⁰M.J. Chikovani. "On the Problem of Typological Similarities between Three Mediaeval Novels "Tristram and Isolde," "Abessalom and Eteri" and "Vis and Ramin," Proceedings VIIIth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (Kyoto and Tokyo, 1968), vol. 2, pp. 337-340.

⁵¹Jason, *ibid.*, p. 50, #4.3.2.4. In personal communications with Miss Jason, she told me that she would classify *M&Z* in this category.

⁵²I may seem to contradict myself in my article appearing in the *Festschrift* for D.N. MacKenzie *Corolla Iranica*. I submitted that article before I wrote this chapter, and at that time I was still calling *M&Z* a 'romance epic,' as had been suggested to me by Heda Jason. I tried to have the terminology changed in the article, but it had already been printed by then. I would like to thank my professor Martin Schwartz for his attempt to intercede on my behalf in this matter.

blends prose and poetry.⁵³ He translates the term **hikâye** (or **halk hikâyesi**) by *romance* (or *folk romance*). In his many articles on the subject, he has examined the structure of these narratives⁵⁴ and the sorts of formulas which appear in them⁵⁵, as well as considering the storytellers and their performances⁵⁶. Although he deals with a tradition which is distinct from that of the Kurds, Kurds have lived in close contact with Turks for centuries, as they have also with the Armenians and the Neo-Aramaic speaking Jacobites and Assyrians: it is not surprising that two neighboring peoples should compose stories in a genre common to both -- if indeed the Turkish **halk hikâyesi** is the same as the Kurmanji **qewl** and the Sorani **beyt**. Hassanpour-Aghdam's mention of an Azeri counterpart to the **beyt** is further support for the existence of a shared genre.

It is fortunate that Başgöz' studies reflect the three criteria proposed by Dundes for defining genre. His consideration of formulas falls under the rubric of *texture* while his examination of structure deals with *text* and his performance-oriented articles treat of *context*. Because he has dealt with all three necessary aspects of the **hikâye** genre, I impart some weight to his statements, and to his rendering of **hikâye** as *romance* in English. If Başgöz' structural analysis of the Turkish hikâye

⁵³ İlhan Başgöz, "Digression in Oral Narrative : A Case Study of Individual Remarks by Turkish Romance Tellers," *IAE* 99 (1986), p. 6.

⁵⁴ "The Structure of the Turkish Romances," in *Folklore Today: A Festschrift for Richard M. Dorson*, ed. Linda Dégh, Henry Glassie, Felix J. Oinas (Bloomington : Indiana University, 1976), pp. 11-23.

⁵⁵ "Formula in Prose Narrative Hikâye," in *Folklorica : Festschrift for Felix Oinas*, Egle V. Zygas & Peter Voorheis eds. (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 25-58.

⁵⁶ "Digression in Oral Narrative : A Case Study of Individual Remarks by Turkish Romance Tellers," *IAE* 99 (1986), pp. 5-23; "Dream motif in Turkish folk stories and shamanistic initiation," *Asian Folklore Studies*, 26 (1967), 1-18; "The Tale Singer and His Audience," in: *Folklore : Performance and Communication* ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague : Mouton, 1975), pp. 143-204.

accurately describes the structure of M&Z, then his genre definition may also apply to M&Z.

Let us now consider İlhan Başgöz' typology for Turkish halk hikâyeleri as outlined in his article "The Structure of the Turkish Romances"⁵⁷. This typology is modeled on Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*⁵⁸, in which he outlines in detail the thirty one narrative segments that Russian folktales are composed of: he calls these narrative segments *functions*⁵⁹. Başgöz has made the adjustments necessary for rendering Propp's typology applicable for the romance, breaking it down into three main stages (initial, medial, and final), as follows:

- A. Disintegration of the family.
- B. The Struggle to Establish a New Family.
- C. Establishment of a New Family.

Each section is composed of several Plot Actions, namely:

- A. Plot Action 1: Crisis
Plot Action 2: Transformation
- B. Plot Action 3: Search
Plot Action 4: Obstacles
Plot Action 5: Resolution
- C. Plot Action 6: Union

⁵⁷in *Folklore Today: A Festschrift for Richard M. Dorson*, ed. Linda Dégh, Henry Glassie, Felix J. Oinas (Bloomington : Indiana University, 1976), pp. 11-23.

⁵⁸2nd edition, (Austin : University of Texas Press, 1968). The first English translation appeared in 1958.

⁵⁹These are also known as *motifeme slots* according to Alan Dundes' terminology.

Başgöz waits until the end of this section to clarify that this scheme most accurately reflects those hikâyes with happy endings. Hikâyes with sad endings were the norm 150 years ago, and some of them still end sadly, while others have been consciously given happy endings, to meet the exigencies of audience demand. This is a fascinating point, which in my opinion deserves much more discussion than treatment as a mere afterthought. M&Z would have to come under the 'sad ending' category: it does not share the evolutionary change of its Turkish neighbors, perhaps due in part to the active suppression of Kurdish culture in Turkey, severely curtailing the flourishing of the tradition⁶⁰. Some minor adjustments are required to fit the 'sad ending' category into the scheme -- particularly for Plot Actions #5 and #6, as will be seen below. These adjustments apply to Turkish hikâyes with sad endings as well as to M&Z.

Having set forth the basic units upon which Başgöz' typology is based, I will now attempt the application of it to M&Z, pausing where necessary to make adjustments and clarifications. I have used the designations appearing in the Motif Chart for M&Z from Chapter Four of the present study.

A. Disintegration of the family.

Plot Action 1: Crisis. Initial scene/situation.

1. The family is introduced in the particular social milieu within the historical and geographical setting

2. Crisis

- a. The father dies
- b. Both parents die
- c. The couple has no child
- d. The family escapes from their native land for fear of persecution
- e. One of the members of the family is cursed by an old woman to lead a tragic life

⁶⁰However, this 'sad ending' category holds true for versions collected beyond the borders of Turkey as well.

Propp does not consider the initial situation a *function*, but nevertheless regards it as an important morphological element. The rubric 1. above, introducing Mem's family, appears in all versions of M&Z. Under the rubric 2. **Crisis**, it is **c. The couple has no child** that is most applicable to M&Z. Başgöz finds this category important enough to add a special comment for it:

...if the crisis is childlessness, it is temporarily solved, following the childlessness pattern of Propp's tabulation, except that in the Turkish romances two families are involved and later each has a child, one a boy and the other a girl. The children are betrothed prenataly by their parents. The real crisis appears later, when the boy and girl reach maturity and one of the families breaks the engagement vow.⁶¹

My teacher William Hickman has pointed out that adoption is one means of eliminating childlessness: in version EP-1 of M&Z, Al-Pasha finds Mem on the seashore and adopts him, raising him as his own flesh and blood (A.4. of the motif chart). In several versions (LC-1; ZK-2; OM), a donor figure intercedes to provide a wife (LC-1; ZK-2) for Mem's father, or to provide a magic apple to make Mem's mother pregnant (OM). This corresponds to A.2. in the M&Z motif chart. Although in other versions Al-Pasha is not completely childless, Mem is his only child,⁶² and it is generally worded as if his parents were just one step away from being childless, e.g.:

Al-pasha and his wife were quite old, and Mem was all they had in the way of offspring. They loved their Memê delal very much. [Al-p'asha jina xweva gelekî mezin bûbûn, ewled-t'ewledê wan Memê t'enê bû. Ewana gelekî ji Memê xweyî delal fiiz dikirin] (ZK-1)

⁶¹Başgöz. "Structure of Turkish Romances," p. 12.

⁶²except in PN, where Mammo has a sister named Aminah. The first part of PN is anomalous, consisting of an otherwise unattested and unidentified folk tale. Moreover, in that version there is no Al-Pasha.

The other elements in Başgöz' note regarding childlessness are reminiscent of the situation of M&Z, but do not exactly describe them. While Mem and Zîn's families do not know one another, and therefore could not possibly have betrothed their children while still in their infancy, in many versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1) Zîn is already betrothed to one of Qeretajdîn's brothers⁶³ – whether from infancy or not is often not stated. She breaks her engagement vow with the consent of her fiancé. Moreover, whereas in the latter cases both Zîn and her first fiancé are both from Jezira Bohtan, in OM, the two families whose childlessness is cured by the consumption of a magic apple,⁶⁴ those of the king [padishah] and his vizier, are both in Yemen. Hence, while in both scenarios two families are involved, Mem's or Zîn's family is only one of them: in no case are both Mem's and Zîn's families the two families in question. Although the details of these situations are not identical to those outlined by Başgöz, they are close enough to be within the same realm.⁶⁵ His typology is flexible enough to allow for elaboration: moreover, the amount of variation between the different versions of one Turkish halk hikâyesi may resemble the sorts of differences seen between Başgöz' description and what we find in M&Z.⁶⁶ Let us now continue our consideration of Başgöz' structural typology:

3. Disintegration of the family order. The family order, which has meant security, love, and affection for the young boy hero, soon becomes a psychological crisis for him and reaches an intolerable point following a failure -- a

⁶³See II.J. and II.K. of the Dramatis Personae section of the M&Z motif chart.

⁶⁴By eating the apple, Mem and his companion Bengneh are conceived.

⁶⁵This situation, in which the elements are present but in a somewhat different arrangement than expected, can be regarded as an example of *displaced elements*, a concept dealt with in Chapter 4.

⁶⁶See Fikret Türkmen. *Tahir ile Zühre* (Ankara : Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1983), 288 p. This is a nicely done comparative study of 24 versions of the Turkish hikâye *Tahir ile Zühre*.

physical or spiritual ordeal, or some social blame being placed upon the hero when he reaches puberty.

Plot Action 2: Transformation: The young boy (hero) is transformed into an adult-lover-artist.

1. This transformation takes place in an ecstatic dream; it contains the main elements of an initiation ceremony. The boy is visited by a holy figure (the future protector) who offers him a love potion and introduces a young girl to him. When he sees her and drinks the love potion from her hands, the infantile personality of the hero dies and he becomes a God-inspired minstrel. He gets a new name (mahlas), which is given him in the dream.

This transformation is the most important action of the romance:

- a. The passionate love of the romance emerges from this ecstatic experience
- b. The young man is unmistakably established as the main figure of the plot: his song and adventures become the main attraction of the narrative
- c. New characters such as the holy protector and the heroine are introduced

2. It is only after this dream that the hero, as a mature person, dares to leave his family to follow his own destiny and establish a new family of his own. This is the final blow to the little remaining family unity.

The whole dream, which includes the main characters of the romance, the romantic love, and a short description of the plot by the holy figure, is in fact the core of the romance in micro-form.

For the most part, this transformation is an accurate description of what happens in M&Z (see section B.I. of the M&Z motif chart). While the meeting of Mem and Zîn is not specifically called a dream, it is certainly endowed with dream-like qualities, in many instances being mistaken for a dream until the next day when Mem finds Zîn's ring on his finger (see B.II. of the motif chart).

The Turkish word **aşık** (ashik) has two meanings. It is derived from the Arabic active participle 'عاشق' *āshiq* meaning 'lover, one in love'. In Turkish, in addition to this meaning, and through the inspiration of the love for a beautiful girl first seen in the dream, the young man who has had the dream wakes up in love and becomes a minstrel able to sing and recite improvised poetry. Such a minstrel is also called an **aşık** in Turkish. This meaning of **aşık** is also used in Kurdish and Armenian. Hence, whereas in most Turkish hikâyes the young man awakens from

his ecstatic dream transformed into an **aşık** in both meanings, in M&Z he is **aşık** (aşiq in Kurdish) only in the sense of being in love. In no version of M&Z does he become a minstrel. In ZK-1, however, a missing link is supplied:

When the experienced old man saw Mem, he said, "O noblemen, may Al-pasha be well, I have good news for you: Mem is not sick, he's in love! Call an ashik, have him come play his saz⁶⁷, by God's leave Mem will get well, and we will marry off our beloved Mem." The advice of the experienced old man was immediately carried out. An ashik came, and Al-pasha ordered him to sing a love song for Mem. The ashik began to play his saz. At the sweet sound of the saz and the crooning of the voice of the ashik, Mem opened his eyes, [awakening] from a [deep] sleep.

Here Mem is cured from lovesickness by being sung to by an **aşık**, rather than becoming one himself.

Mem is visited by doves, jinns, or angels, who fulfill the rôle of Başgöz' holy figure or future protector. Rather than introducing Zîn to him or offering him a love potion, they place her beside him in his bed, and retire to let them discover one another. The immature personality of Mem is replaced by that of a young man in love, although in M&Z his name is not changed to reflect this. For an example of how Mem changes, consider the following passages from ZK-1:

Before:

When Mem grew up and it was time for him to marry, Al-pasha was in a constant state of anxiety, and thought, "How will a girl meet his beloved Mem, who is worthy of him?" Several times Al-pasha summoned Mem's friends and instructed them to learn Mem's thoughts, to find out which girl Mem loves, so that they could ask for her hand for him. But Mem would give no word to his friends, because at that time Mem was not in love with anyone.

After:

Mem said, "Vizier's daughter, the one my heart loves,

⁶⁷—a string instrument.

She is not here,
 She lives in Jizîra Bota,
 She's the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn,
 The sister-in-law of Qeretajdîn,
 The betrothed of Chekan – lion of the earth,
 She has a green gown,
 The name of this beauty is Lady Zîn,
 The likes of you will never see her color or face."

The exact details of the elements of Başgöz' **Plot Action 2: Transformation** are similar only in general outline to those of M&Z. Nevertheless, the importance he attaches to this section in the story fits M&Z to a tee. Mem and Zîn's passionate love comes into being through this experience (see a. above); Mem and his adventures are the focus of the whole story (b. above); Zîn, the other main character of the story – as well as the reason for Mem's embarking on his adventure –, is introduced at this point.

Zîn introduces herself to Mem, giving a string of her attributes, as in the following example from ZK-1:

"I am the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn, from the city of Jizîra Bota, I am the sister-in-law of Qeretajdîn, the betrothed of Chekan, I am the owner of the green gown. My dear, these are my attributes."

Because of the way Zîn introduces herself at this point, we are given our first taste of Jezira Bohtan and the characters we will meet when Mem goes there. This approaches Başgöz' designation of the initial meeting between the young man and his beloved as a microcosm of the romance.

Başgöz theorizes that the romance pattern can be seen as a framework which combines the sexual fantasies of a pubescent boy with rebellion against paternal authority. Support for this theory can be found in a passage in version ZK-2 of M&Z.

On the morning after Mem and Zîn first meet, Mem comes to his father's diwan [court] and recounts his experience:

Memê called out to the assembly:
 "Father, last night I had a dream,
 On one side of you is a judge,
 On one side of you is a mufti,
 Have them look at the papers to find out what the meaning of my dream is."
 The judge and mufti together called to Memê.
 They said, "Your dream is that of a young man,
 Whatever you saw,
 Came over all of us." (ZK-2, p. 70)

The last three lines are particularly revealing. What Mem claims to have seen is unmistakably interpreted by the elder authority figures of the community as the sexual fantasies of a young man. Mem's first revenge comes in what happens next:

Memê called out to them,
 "If my dream wasn't a divine dream,
 So help me God, let me become blind and deaf in both eyes and ears,
 Let me become lame in both legs and both hands,
 So that I have to walk on my hands and knees.
 If my dream is true, if it's divine,
 May both of you become blind and deaf in both eyes and ears,
 May both of you become lame in both legs and both hands,
 So that you have to walk on your hands and knees."
 Memê's words went up to the Lord on high, went up to the heavens,
 And the judge and mufti became blind and deaf in both eyes and ears,
 They became lame, and had to walk on their hands and knees.
 Those in the assembly looked at each other in amazement. (ZK-2, p. 70)

Here we see the young man, Mem, winning a victory over two authority figures, the judge and the mufti. By becoming lame, having to walk on all fours, the two adult males are reduced to being helpless infants. Such irreverence shown to respected community figures has a tinge of impish adolescence to it.

This rebelliousness -- what Başgöz refers to as *disintegration of family unity* -- may be a key criterion in differentiating the romance from the epic, for

whereas the disintegration of the family is a common theme in romances, in the epic the boy's search for the girl does not run counter to the will of his father. In the epic tradition, when it comes time for a boy to marry, he manages to do so without threatening family unity (i.e., in ways which are socially acceptable). The action in the romance is based on individualistic aspirations as opposed to the communal norms espoused in the epic. Such aspirations are expressed by choosing one's own mate instead of marrying someone selected by one's parents, and by establishing a new family that is not patrilocal. Both of these goals are attempted in M&Z.

It is only after Mem meets Zîn that he decides to leave his father's kingdom in search of her, with the intention of establishing a new family of his own. As can be seen from Al-Pasha's reaction to Mem's departure, he considers this to be very damaging to the unity of the family. Consider the following passage, once again from ZK-1:

Mem thus prepared himself for his journey. Old Al-pasha was in a sorry state. He called Mem to him, and together with his council of notables advised Mem to give up this plan. Al-pasha said, "Son, you know your mother and I have grown old, we have nobody else but you, why are you doing this to us, leaving us desolate?" But no matter what Al-pasha and his entourage, or his own friends and companions said, they could not change Mem's heart. His thoughts would fly to Jizîra Bota, [to be] with lovely Zîn. ...

Al-pasha said, "Hey, my beloved Mem, my son,
Is there no sense in your head at all,
Don't you [ever] think 'My mother is elderly, my father
is old?'
To whom can I hope to leave my throne and crown of gold?"
Mem said, "Hey, Al-pasha, my beloved father,
I know that my mother is elderly, my father is old,
?Bless what I am about to embark on,
Now my relationship to you is null and void."

No matter what Al-pasha did, Mem would not come back, Al-pasha wept and cried bitterly.

In summary, so far we have seen that the skeleton that Başgöz has suggested for Turkish **halk hikayeleri** is also applicable to M&Z, although the individual details of the plot may differ. Let us proceed now to the second section in Başgöz' typology.

B. The Struggle to Establish a New Family

Plot Action 3: Search

1. Following the dream, the hero gets a musical instrument and describes his dream, then reveals his resolution to leave the family in search of the young girl.

2. His decision upsets his family, especially his mother who begs him not to leave them alone.

3. His decision is unalterable; he sets out, taking his saz and nothing else.

As stated above, Mem does not become an **aşık** in the sense of minstrel, so he does not get a musical instrument. He does however describe what happened to him the previous night, and announces his decision to set out in search of Zin. His decision upsets both of his parents, who react as outlined in B.III.C. of the M&Z motif chart. In summary, while Al-Pasha is generally more adamant about trying to prevent Mem from leaving, Mem's mother's reaction is softer: perhaps it is summed up best by what happens in OM: "Mem [and Bengineh]'s mothers beg them not to go, but bless their trip." If Başgöz is correct in seeing this type of story as dealing with a boy's rebellion against his father's authority, then the difference between the behavior of Al-Pasha and Mem's mother -- particularly the vehemence of the father's reaction -- is understandable. In addition, Mem sets out on his horse, in some versions (OM; ZK-3; MC-1) also accompanied by his trusted servant Bengin. Whoever he brings with him, the irreversibility of his decision is clear.

Plot Action 4: Obstacles: This overlaps with the previous Plot Action. Actions 3 and 4 then alternate until the end of the story.

1. As soon as the hero leaves his family, obstacles arise to make the journey difficult.
 2. Nevertheless, the young lover manages to locate the heroine and meet with her

3. They are separated

Each obstacle consists of the following components:

- a. Agent introducing the obstacle
- b. Motivation of the agent
- c. Nature of the obstacle
- d. Consequences of the obstacle

Plot Action 5: Resolution

1. The obstacles are successfully eliminated by the hero.

Başgöz views the rest of the story as consisting of a series of obstacles which are successfully overcome, until the final union. This can be shown to work for M&Z. First, however, I would like to suggest some emendations to Başgöz' scheme. Unless we see **Plot Action 3: Search** as underlying all the ensuing obstacles, I fail to see how it alternates with Plot Action 4. Although Mem only leaves home once, it could be argued that all his adventures relate back to his search. Once Mem leaves his place of origin, his parents are not mentioned again except in a few versions, and then only at the end of the story, after he is already dead and buried. Hence I do not perceive Plot Action 3 as recurring: if it does recur in the Turkish hikâyes, this is a difference between them and M&Z.

I have added two more components to the structure of each obstacle, as follows:

- e. object of obstacle
- f. helper figure

Moreover, the fourth component of the obstacle schema, **d. Consequences of the obstacle** seems to be identical with **Plot Action 5: Resolution**, rendering the

latter superfluous. Moreover, in **hikâyes** with sad endings, the hero is unsuccessful in the resolution of the final obstacle which he encounters. The various obstacles that make up the body of the story will be shown below. But first we must consider the final section of the typology:

C. Establishment of a New Family.

Plot Action 6: Union.

1. The romance ends in the bridal chamber: the hero and heroine reach their earthly goals.

As mentioned above, Başgöz adds parenthetically the important point that this is the scenario for **hikâyes** with happy endings. In those **hikâyes** which end sadly, the lovers are united in death. This is the case in M&Z, as the following examples suggest:

They dug up Mem's grave and positioned Zîn in her beloved Mem's arms, then returned. ... The mîr, Qeretajdin, and the notables went to mourn by the graves of Mem and Zîn. When they opened the door of the tomb, it looked to them as if Mem and Zîn had arisen, you might say that the smile of love was on their mouths. Beko stuck out his neck and said, "Mîr, I swear by your head, come see! It looks like they've arisen." (ZK-1)

A few days pass. One day, in the mîr's diwan, the subject of Mem and Zîn comes up. They say, "It was something [ordained] by God, but we prevented it from happening⁶⁸." Beko says, "No, you're wrong, o nobles of Botan, God had nothing to do with the matter. This was the work of the devil. If you don't believe me, let's go at dawn and open up Mem and Zîn's graves: if they are not in each other's arms, you will know that everything I [have said] is a lie." They all say, "All right, Beko."

In the evening Beko goes and opens up Mem and Zîn's graves. He puts them both in one grave, and puts their arms around each other. Then he covers up the grave, and returns home. He says to himself, "I brought them together with my own hands: what if they get up from the grave and go back to their own graves?" (ZK-3)

⁶⁸-lit. "We did not let their desire for each other be"

When they opened up the grave, they found them face to face, with perspiration pouring out of them like little hailstones, [and] light streaming forth. (EP-1)

The idea of lovers being united in death is also good for the Turkish halk hikâyeleri **Kerem ile Aslı** and **Tahir ile Zühre**. Because hikâyes with sad endings display this sort of tragic unity, the designation "Establishment of a New Family" is not appropriate. I would suggest a more general designation that fits hikâyes with both happy and sad endings, such as "Final stage" or "Final situation".

The structural typology that Başgöz has proposed for the Turkish hikâye or romance has been shown to accurately reflect the structure of M&Z: all the major sections appearing in the motif chart are accounted for in Başgöz' structural typology. The emendations I have suggested are largely applicable to Turkish as well as Kurdish materials⁶⁹. What follows is a full application of Başgöz' typology to M&Z, using the relevant headings from the motif chart.

A. Initial stage [Disintegration of the family]

Plot Action 1: Crisis

- A.2.a-b. Mem's future father marries and begets a son (LC-1; ZK-2)
- A.2.c. Mem's father is given an apple [by donor figure], which he shares with his wife, and begets a son (OM)
- A.4. Mem's heroic birth: virgin impregnated by seawater abandons infant Mem on seashore, where he is found and adopted by Al-Pasha (EP-1)

Plot Action 2: Transformation

- B.I. Mem and Zîn #1 discover one another
- B.II. It was not just a dream

B. Medial stage [Struggle to establish a new family]

⁶⁹It remains to be seen to what extent this typological is applicable to other traditions in the area, particularly those of the Armenians and Neo-Aramaic-speaking Assyrians (Nestorians), Chaldeans, Jacobites, and Jews.

Plot Action 3: Search

B.III. Mem prepares for trip

Plot Action 4: Obstacles

B.III.C. Mem's parents' reaction to his trip

- a. Agent introducing the obstacle: Al-Pasha
- b. Motivation of the agent: to prevent Mem from leaving
- c. Nature of the obstacle: locking gates and putting shackles on Mem's horse's [= Bor's] feet
- d. Consequences of the obstacle: Mem successfully overcomes obstacle: Bor flies over gates
- e. object of obstacle: Mem
- f. helper figure: Bor

C.I. Mem and Bor (on way to Jezira Bohtan)

- a. Agent introducing the obstacle: Bor
- b. Motivation of the agent: pain/discomfort caused by chains
- c. Nature of the obstacle: Bor's inability to continue trip
- d. Consequences of the obstacle: Mem successfully overcomes obstacle: he stops and treats Bor's wounds
- e. object of obstacle: Mem
- f. helper figure: donor figure: dove's feather(s) (SHa-2; GNa); Xidir nebî (MC-1)

C.III. Encounter with Zîn #2

- a. Agent introducing the obstacle: Zîn #2
- b. Motivation of the agent: her lust/love of Mem
- c. Nature of the obstacle: Zîn #2 claims to be Zîn #1
- d. Consequences of the obstacle: Mem successfully overcomes obstacle: Bor tells him that she is an impostor
- e. object of obstacle: Mem
- f. helper figure: Bor

?D.I. Mem arrives in Jezira Bohtan --> variant of C.III.

- a. Agent introducing the obstacle: Zîn #2
- b. Motivation of the agent: her desire that Mem stay at her father's house
- c. Nature of the obstacle: Zîn #2 claims that Beko Awan's residence is Qeretajdîn's residence
- d. Consequences of the obstacle: Mem successfully overcomes obstacle: Mem is Qeretajdîn's guest
- e. object of obstacle: Mem
- f. helper figure: ?

- D.II. Mem gets token from Zîn #1 and wins Qeretajdîn's approval
- a. Agent introducing the obstacle: Qeretajdîn and brothers
 - b. Motivation of the agent: to prevent Mem from marrying Zîn #1, who is betrothed to Çekan (or: to prove that Zîn #1 loves Mem; or: to test Mem's manliness)
 - c. Nature of the obstacle: task -- Mem must bring a token from Zîn #1, or else!
 - d. Consequences of the obstacle: Mem successfully overcomes obstacle: Zîn #1 gives him a token, which he brings to Qeretajdîn and brothers, and thereby wins their approval
 - e. object of obstacle: Mem
 - f. helper figure: Zîn #1
- D.III. Hunting expedition
- a. Agent introducing the obstacle: Mîr Sêvdîn
 - b. Motivation of the agent: to test Mem's manliness
 - c. Nature of the obstacle: hunting expedition
 - d. Consequences of the obstacle: Mem successfully overcomes obstacle: he feigns illness
 - e. object of obstacle: Mem
 - f. helper figure: ? (Mem himself?)
- D.IV-V. Disgrace averted + D.VIII.A-C. Poetry contests
- a. Agent introducing the obstacle: Beko Awan
 - b. Motivation of the agent: to disgrace Mem (or: to separate Mem and Zîn #1)
 - c. Nature of the obstacle: trying to force Mem to stand up in Mîr Sêvdîn's presence (which would reveal that Zîn was hiding behind him)
 - d. Consequences of the obstacle: Mem successfully overcomes obstacle: Qeretajdîn creates a diversion by sacrificing his own home, son, wife, etc.
 - e. object of obstacle: Mem
 - f. helper figure: Qeretajdîn
- D. VI. Mem and Mîr Sêvdîn's game
- a. Agent introducing the obstacle: Beko Awan (& Mîr Sêvdîn)
 - b. Motivation of the agent: to get rid of Mem (or: to separate Mem and Zîn #1)
 - c. Nature of the obstacle: board game (chess) match with stipulations which state that Mem will be imprisoned if he loses

- d. Consequences of the obstacle: Mem unsuccessful in averting obstacle: he is imprisoned
- e. object of obstacle: Mem
- f. helper figure: \emptyset – this occurs in the absence of Qeretajdîn

D.VII. Qeretajdîn's absence

- a. Agent introducing the obstacle: dervish
- b. Motivation of the agent: lust for Zîn #1
- c. Nature of the obstacle: refusing to deliver Zîn's letter unless she lets him kiss her
- d. Consequences of the obstacle: Zîn successfully overcomes obstacle: Qeretajdîn kills dervish, thereby restoring Zîn's honor
- e. object of obstacle: Zîn #1
- f. helper figure: Qeretajdîn

Plot Action 5: Resolution

[I recommend eliminating this as being superfluous: **d. Consequences of the obstacle** fulfills the function that this is intended for. I will, however, point out at this point that all the obstacles are successfully eliminated except for D.VI., which in effect sounds the death knell for Mem]

C. Final stage [*Establishment of a new family]

Plot Action 6: Union [in death]

E. Death of Mem and Zîn #1

Because the structural typology for the Turkish hikâye or halk hikâyesi outlined by Başgöz has been shown to accurately reflect the structure of M&Z as well, it can now be asserted that they belong to the same genre. Because this tabulation is

applicable to both prose and verse versions of M&Z,⁷⁰ I can reiterate my earlier assertion that texture alone should not be the basis for a generic distinction.

Başgöz uses the term *romance* as the translation of halk hikâyesi, adducing arguments which enable us to clarify even more precisely the difference between the romance and the epic. Whereas the epic, in addition to being a chronicle of the great exploits of a people, reinforces the traditional hierarchical structure of the family, the romance may be seen as a revolt against that very structure, reflecting instead a young man's desire to be his own master, choose his own mate, and establish his own household. The desire for such a revolt is a natural part of the adolescent experience, as is also daydreaming about sexual matters. It will be suggested in later chapters that the appeal of the story of M&Z may in fact lie in the vicarious escape it provides its audience from a reality in which submission to patriarchal authority is otherwise inevitable.

Alongside such emic terms as *qewl* in Kurmanji and *beyt* in Sorani, we may place the etic term *romance*. Romances abound in folk tradition as well as in literature: for this reason, the designation *folk romance* may be helpful in distinguishing between the two: M&Z would then be a folk romance. Among the best known romances are the medieval French Tristan et Isolde,⁷¹ which seems to represent elements of both folk and literary tradition. At least one hundred versions of the Georgian folk romance Abessalom and Eteri⁷² have been collected. The Persian

⁷⁰examples from both types have been quoted in the above illustrations.

⁷¹Alan S. Fedrick (tr.). The Romance of Tristan by Beroul; and The Tale of Tristan's Madness (Harmondsworth, Middlesex et al. : Penguin Books, c1970), 170 p.

⁷²See N.I. Dolidze & M. IA. Chikovani. Gruzinskie narodnye skazki [Грузинские народные сказки = Georgian folk tales] (Tbilisi : Merani, 1971), pp. 197-201; 343-7; Chikovani, M.J. "On the Problem of Typological Similarities between Three Mediaeval Novels "Tristram and Isolde," "Abessalom and Eteri" and "Vis and Ramin," Proceedings, VIIIth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (Kyoto and Tokyo, 1968), vol. 2, pp. 337-340.

story of Vis and Ramin is a literary romance. Although these works are all called romances, it would be interesting to see how well Başgöz' structural typology fits them.



CHAPTER FOUR:
Context



Performance Aspect: Argumentum ex Silentio

Within the field of Middle Eastern folkloristics, good studies of oral literature taking text, texture and context into account have been published. Both Susan Slyomovics¹ and Bridget Connelly² have studied the Egyptian Bani Hilal epic tradition in situ, and have written fine works based on their findings; Lîla Abu-Lughod's³ study of Bedouin oral lyric poetry from the Western Desert of Egypt and Saad Sowayan's⁴ treatment of the oral poetry of Arabia are also praiseworthy. In these cases, the recitation of the story qua performance is dealt with at length. İlhan Başgöz⁵ and Feritve Naili Boratav⁶ have done similar work with Turkish *aşıklar* (bards) and their material. Unfortunately, this has yet to be done using Kurdish materials and informants, due, at least in part, to the political situation. Although Kurdish oral literature is very rich and extensive in scope, the collecting that has been undertaken

¹The Merchant of Art: An Egyptian Hilali Oral Epic Poet in Performance (Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, 1987),

²Arab Folk Epic and Identity (Berkeley : University of California Press, c1986), 328 p.

³Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society (Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, c1986), xix, 317 p.

⁴Saad Abdullah Sowayan. Nabati Poetry : The Oral Poetry of Arabia (Berkeley : University of California Press, c1985), 234 p.

⁵"Digression in Oral Narrative : A Case Study of Individual Remarks by Turkish Romance Tellers," IAF 99 (1986), pp. 5-23; "The Structure of the Turkish Romances," in Folklore Today: A Festschrift for Richard M. Dorson, ed. Linda Dégh, Henry Glassie, Felix J. Oinas (Bloomington : Indiana University, 1976), pp. 11-23; "The Tale Singer and His Audience," in: Folklore : Performance and Communication, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague : Mouton, 1975), pp. 143-204.

⁶Halk Hikayeleri ve Halk Hikayeciliği [=Folk Stories and Folk Story Telling Tradition in Turkey] (Ankara : Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1943), 327 p.; German translation: Türkische Volkserzählungen und die Erzählerkunst, tr. Wolfram Eberhard (Taipei : Chinese Association for Folklore, 1975), 2 vols.

has been largely text oriented: hence, the performance aspect, i.e., the context in which the texts were collected, has been almost completely ignored.

As a consequence of this omission, anyone attempting a study of this aspect of the oral versions of M&Z using the available materials is severely limited in what he can say⁷. Nevertheless, some remarks are possible. In the corpus of eighteen versions of M&Z appearing in the present work, the identity of all the informants but three (for PS, GNa, and EP-2) is known, although the amount of detail that has been provided regarding the various informants is uneven. Next to nothing is known about the social setting in which the versions were collected: it would be helpful if we knew, for instance, which versions were performed in front of a receptive audience, and which were told purely for the benefit of the collector.

Because we have not been provided with the necessary data to document the performance aspect of our versions of M&Z, we have no alternative but to try to work backward from the texts. The fullest versions we have include OM and EP-1. OM spans 57 pages of print -- all but the beginning in verse: according to what is stated in the final lines, it took four nights of recitation to complete it. We do not know at what point in the story the *dengbéj* Raġiman-î Bekir stopped on each of the four nights, nor how many people were in attendance, nor for that matter whether the audience consisted of the same people each night. The duration of the performance -- both per night and in toto -- is also unknown. It is tempting to conclude that the audience was very receptive, due to the amount of embellishment which this version contains: what most other versions accomplished in a few lines, Raġiman-î Bekir generally fleshed out into the better part of a page⁸.

⁷For this reason, the present chapter is shorter than I would have liked.

⁸Lest I be accused of having a literary bias, let me express my dissatisfaction at referring to oral recitations in terms of such written standards as 'a few lines' or 'the better part of a page', but such is

EP-1 was collected from E'tarê Şero in 1955. This version, in mixed prose and verse, occupies 26 printed pages, with long verse recitations appearing on every page but two. Once again, the duration of the recitation⁹ and the composition of the audience -- if there was indeed an audience -- are unknown factors. According to Başgöz¹⁰, the composition of the audience may affect the taleteller's performance quite profoundly: whereas the taleteller may embellish his tale and spread it out over several hours before a receptive audience, the same taleteller may collapse his story into a short, uninspired narrative if he perceives the audience as hostile.

Although it is reasonable to assume that these two versions are the most likely candidates for performance before receptive audiences, two things should be borne in mind. Firstly, von Sydow has made the very important distinction between active and passive bearers of oral tradition¹¹. Whereas the active bearers of oral tradition are the singers, the storytellers, the *dengbêj*es the passive bearers of oral tradition are those people who make up the audience: they may not tell the stories well themselves, but they know them, and they can distinguish a good telling of a tale from a mediocre one. While both Raĥman-î Bekir and E'tarê Şero are unquestionably active bearers of tradition -- and we have many other texts collected from them as evidence of their skill - - it is fallacious to infer from this that they always performed in front of enthusiastic audiences.

the legacy of text-oriented collecting. If it were known how much time it took for a line to be recited, I could speak in terms of seconds or minutes instead.

⁹According to a comment by K.K. Kurdoev, E'tarê Şero wrote down this version himself. This runs counter to Jndi's note [see *Kurdskije èpicheskie pesni-skazy* [Курдские эпические песни-сказы = Kurdish epic 'song-stories']. (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), p. 242.] In Chapter Five I discuss briefly why I think this is unlikely.

¹⁰Başgöz "The Tale Singer and His Audience."

¹¹"On the Spread of Tradition," in: *Selected Papers on Folklore* ed. Laurits Bødker (Copenhagen : Rosenkilde og Bagers Forlag, 1948), pp. 11-18.

Conversely, it is clear from Hugo Makas' notes that the informant for HM, Mohammed Emîn bin Shemdîn el-Mendîlkânî, was a passive bearer of tradition: he had not heard a recitation of M&Z for some twenty years prior to the collection of this text. Consequently we have some way to explain the lacunae in his version, particularly the omission of the beginning of the story.¹²

Secondly, from my own experience collecting Turkish folklore in Turkey in 1987-88, I know that a good tale-teller – a good active bearer of oral tradition – does not necessarily need a receptive audience to ply his trade. In a village near Elâziğ, an old man with thick glasses was brought before me as an informant. When I asked him if he knew any tales, he basically burst forth into a detailed version of Şah İsmail, complete with sung verse insertions at the appropriate moments. Because his eyesight was poor, he was not fully cognizant of the four or five people assembled in the room: the audience was irrelevant to his very fine performance. Because I have experienced this myself, I am loath to assume *prima facie* that all full versions were performed before receptive audiences, and that all abbreviated versions were performed under less ideal conditions.

The version FK-2 constitutes a special case. It begins, like many other versions, as a prose narration interspersed with sung verses at certain key points in the story. However, the final part, from the hunting scene (#2) [D.III.A.] to the end, seems to have been told in haste: the style suddenly changes to short, telegraphic sentences, cramming several events into a few lines; moreover the sung verse completely disappears: one gets the feeling that the collector's bus was about to leave and he had to induce the informant to quickly finish the story. Whereas most Soviet folkloristic publications give the date of collection and some biographical information about the informant, such

¹²The narration begins with B.III.C. *Mem's parents' reaction to his trip*

as his age, tribal affiliation, previous places of residence, ethnicity, level of literacy and the like, unfortunately the only information provided in this publication is the informant's name and the village in which the tale was collected. Due to the lack of background information regarding the tale teller's life and the circumstances of collection, we can say very little about the performance aspect of this text, and cannot therefore properly account for the sudden change in the teller's style.

Although many expectations may be pinned on the future, with the hope that future collectors will record context as well as text and texture, the texts which have already been published are not completely useless in this regard. If we were to subject the eighteen versions of M&Z included in this study to analysis aimed at uncovering the degree to which the individual personality of the narrator-performer is reflected in details varying from version to version, perhaps we would come up with enough data to at least partially fill in the void. In so doing, perhaps we would be in a position to make some guesses about the audience as well. The present chapter is an attempt to do just that. It should be made clear from the outset of such an undertaking that this is not an ideal situation: nevertheless, considering the reality which we are facing, if we desire to learn anything about the context in which the existing versions of M&Z were performed, we have no other alternative. In undertaking this task, I have made use of the fine studies of digression in oral narrative pioneered by Robert A. Georges¹³ and İlhan Başgöz¹⁴, and added inferences of my own based on an examination of geographical and linguistic considerations.

¹³ "Do Narrators Really Digress? A Reconsideration of "Audience Asides" in Narrating," *Western Folklore*, 40 (1981), 245-252.

¹⁴ "Digression in Oral Narrative: A Case Study of Individual Remarks by Turkish Romance Tellers," *IAF* 99 (1986), pp. 5-23.

Ideally, digressions should be studied during performance. Nevertheless, such audience asides can also be found in manuscripts and published texts, such as the ones upon which the present study is based. By the term "digression" is meant the individual remarks that a narrator-performer makes while telling his tale. As Georges rightly says,

Noticeably missing from most published records – or bracketed or presented parenthetically when they are included – are narrators' judgmental, explanatory, and evaluative comments. Usually viewed as digressions and identified as interpolations or audience asides, such utterances are seldom discussed or analyzed, suggesting that they are extraneous rather than integral to narrating.¹⁵

Although often relegated to the sidelines, digressions may in fact tell us a great deal about both the narrator-performer and his audience. In an article on the theory of oral composition, Joseph Duggan cites an example from a medieval French *chanson de geste*, *Huon de Bordeaux*, which

contains a remarkable passage reflecting at one and the same time the spontaneity of an oral performance and the economic reality of the bard's life [la *vie jongleuresque*].¹⁶

He goes on to quote a passage from the poem in which the bard [jongleur] says that he is very tired and thirsty, and in which he invites the audience to have a drink with him and to return the next day after dinner. Such a passage is very valuable for what it can tell us about the context in which such a story was told: we know that it was told in the evening after dinner, and that the bard's [jongleur] remuneration was in draughts of beer rather than in money. Moreover, it strongly suggests that the mode of composition was spontaneous, rather than being the recitation of a memorized text.

¹⁵Georges *Ibid.*, p. 245.

¹⁶'La Théorie de la composition orale,' *Olifant*, 8 (1981), 238-55, esp. 249-50. [my translation]

If we are to study digressions, we must first be able to identify them. Başgöz presents the following list of formalistic features which may be used in identifying digressions¹⁷:

a. Directly addressing the audience: Duggan's quoted passage is an example of this;

b. Changing the third person narrative into the first person;

c. Altering the pitch of one's voice: in a printed text this aspect is usually lost;

d. Altering the speed of verbal discourse: this is also lost in a printed text;

e. Gesturing to the listeners: if the text has a passage such as "it was this big" in which the gesture is not described, the wording suggests that we are missing something.

f. Indirect manifestation of self by citing such traditional folklore forms as proverbs, anecdotes, legends, and folk poetry: in this case the narrator-performer is not directly revealing himself, but rather lets a traditional form express his thoughts for him. This sort of digression has an added function which is very important: through it the narrator-performer's personal interpretation of a given motif or episode is revealed.

Examples of these features from the versions of M&Z are readily apparent. Directly addressing the audience (a.) is a frequent occurrence in MC-1, by the narrator-performer's inserting "dear listeners" [guhdarê e'zîz] at frequent intervals.

We have an example of changing from the third person to the first person (b.) in PS, in the following passage:

Then he saw that Mir Zeidin had arrived at the door of the diwan.
Zin, Lady of Bohtan, was stuck under [Mem's] coat.
All the nobles of Bohtan assembled in the diwan.
When Mir Zeidin returned from the hunt,
He greeted Memê Ala.

¹⁷Başgöz *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Memê Ala returned his greeting without rising [= on his ass].
 Accursed Bako rose up before him and said, "Mem, are you
 better than the nobles of Bohtan?
 When Mir Zeidin, Lord of Bohtan, passes by,
 How do you greet him?"
 [?Mem] said, "Bako, early this morning,
 Mem had a bad headache,
 For this reason I can't speak to Mir Zeidin, Lord of
 Bohtan." (PS, p. 78)

A change of person such as this suggests that the narrator-performer is identifying with the character in his story so strongly that for a moment the two become fused in his mind.

Altering the pitch of one's voice or the speed of verbal discourse are considerations which are limited to versions for which we have the actual recording on tape. In the case of M&Z, I have in my possession three such versions (MC-1; MC-2; JA), only the first of which has been included in the present study. In MC-1, when Mem awakes to find that Zîn #1 is gone [around B.II.], the narrator-performer loudly interjects **Ey-wah!** [= "woe is me"]: he alters the pitch of his voice, an example of c. above. Moreover, although at the beginning of the story the narrator-performer speaks slowly and deliberately, when he gets to Mem and Zîn's argument over who has come to whom [B.I.C.], he is speaking quickly and excitedly: thus he alters the speed of his verbal discourse (d.). These latter two features are very difficult to indicate in writing, and we will never know to what extent they were present in the other seventeen versions of M&Z.

In HR-1 there is an example of a gesture that only those present at the time of the original telling could have fully appreciated. It is as follows:

(367) They buried them the way they bury, one here and one over there by the entrance gate, (368) Three or four meters apart from each other. (HR-1, p. 294)

Although in this case the meaning is not completely lost on the reader, it is clear that the phrase "one here and one over there" was accompanied by gesturing (e.). There are other examples in this version of distances being described in terms that would be meaningful only to someone present and familiar with the area:

(108)...he only had to go as far as from here to Āstil;
 (116) ...he was just opposite it, as close as from here to the lower khan. (HR-1, p. 268)

Āstil is the name of a nearby town¹⁸: a native of the informant's village (Kfârze, province of Mardin, Kurdistan of Turkey) would understand how far this is. The lower khan is presumably a nearby building: this is clearly a shorter distance than to the town of Āstil.

In PS, we have another example of information that only someone present at the time of the original recitation could understand, although this time probably no actual gesture was involved:

Memê Ala rode on and asked for Qaratazhdin's house. He rode on like one who is totally lost, [until] one like me came out in front of him and led him to Qaratazhdin's house. (PS, p. 73)

Unfortunately, we don't know for certain who the informant was, much less what he looked like, so this comment cannot be fully appreciated.

An example of f. above, the narrator-performer's indirect revelation of self through the use of an established item of folklore, is the following from ZK-1:

Mem says, "Come on Zîn, they say: Women are fickle,
 You give me a reliable sign,
 Which will be believed by the brothers." (ZK-1, p. 56)

¹⁸According to Hellmut Ritter, it is a town adjacent to Midyat, the capital of this county (ilçe or nahiye). See note at bottom of page 269 (HR-1).

Calling women fickle [parsû xar] is either a traditional saying or a commonly held belief, or both. In any event, by prefacing such a statement with a phrase such as 'they say,' he is not committing himself to agreeing with it. Nevertheless, as Başgöz quite rightly points out,

[t]he teller is not the creator of this form of digression, but he is the selector. He chooses and links the traditional lore to the main narrative, and assigns it a specific function, which can only be understood by a careful examination of the performance.¹⁹

We do not have the option of examining the performance of ZK-1 carefully; all we can do is try to piece together clues that may lead to a particular conclusion. In this case, another piece of evidence regarding the tale-teller's attitude towards women is revealed in what he has Zîn #1 say in the following quote, just after Mem has fallen dead at the entrance to the dungeon pit:

Zîn said, "My father's city is a great city,
May cannonballs make it level with the ground,
Who has ever seen that prisoners are brought in by men,
yet released by women?" (ZK-1, p. 62)

These two quotes from ZK-1 suggest that the informant, E'gîtê T'êcir, had higher regard for men than he had for women. It would be nice if we could interview him to find out if this is indeed the way he felt, and if so, why.

According to Başgöz²⁰, the older the narrator-performer is, the more likely he is to digress. Middle Eastern cultures are what Alan Dundes calls *past-oriented* i.e.,

¹⁹Başgöz *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁰Başgöz *Ibid.*, p. 10-11.

societies in which "individuals are measured in terms of age and how much *past* experience they have"²¹: hence an older man in Middle Eastern society enjoys prestige because of his age, and his experience in life insures that others will both welcome and respect his advice. Conversely, a younger narrator-performer has not yet earned prestige and respect, and is consequently reluctant to indulge in voicing his personal opinion too loudly, i.e., to digress too often, for fear of angering his audience. According to this logic, if a particular version abounds in digressions, the storyteller is likely to be quite old.

So far we have mentioned two explanations for digressions: a receptive audience and the age of the narrator-performer. However, it should be borne in mind that other reasons may be adduced to account for digressing. Başgöz divides digressions into three categories based on function and content, each of which can be correlated with specific characteristics of the audience. His categories are: 1) explanatory and instructional digressions; 2) opinions, comments and criticism; 3) self-reproach and confession. Georges' earlier findings also fit into these categories. Let us look at each category more closely:

1) Explanatory and instructional digressions. If the narrator-performer perceives his audience as lacking familiarity with certain cultural concepts occurring in the story, he may digress to explain them; conversely, there will be few explanatory digressions if the audience is deemed sufficiently conversant with the culture. In practice, it is probably safe to assume that the younger the audience is, the more unfamiliar with traditional concepts -- hence the more in need of explanatory digressions; likewise, the

²¹"Thinking Ahead: A Folkloristic Reflection of the Future Orientation in American Worldview," in: *Interpreting Folklore* (Bloomington, Ind. : Indiana University Press, c1980), p. 81.

older the members of the audience are, the more they will be familiar with such concepts -- and thus less likely to need explanatory digressions.²²

Examples of explanatory digressions from the corpus of M&Z versions include:

I. "...he came to an inn like the inn of Midyat" (HR-1, p. 264, sentence #84);

"...he only had to go as far as from here to Āstil" (HR-1, p. 268, sentence #108);

"...he was just opposite it, as close as from here to the lower khan." (HR-1, p. 268, sentence #116);

"The man was a stranger" (HR-1, p. 274, sentence #190).

The first three quotes are similar in nature: the explanations in them are framed in terms of places familiar to a native of the area. This suggests that in addition to the Hellmut Ritter's assitant Besim, there were other villagers in attendance at the time of collection. Alternatively, perhaps the sixty year-old informant, Yūsuf Mälke Asmar, was explaining these things for Besim's benefit, and used local landmarks because that was what all he knew.

The last of the four quotes, "The man was a stranger," in this context is tantamount to saying 'How should he know any better?' The frequency of digressions in this version -- the four above do not exhaust the subject -- seems to indicate that Yūsuf Mälke Asmar perceived his audience as requiring some explanation in order to fully understand the story.

II. "The man, Mammo, enters the city and asks for Bakko 'Awan's house; they direct him [and] lead him; he comes to Bakko 'Awan's house and enters as a guest. -- They receive guests there [=in Gziro]: in those mountains a man, who may be a stranger, they take him in, whichever house he goes to ..." (HR-2, p. 508, sentences 58-59).

²²One could, however, expect the opposite if the subject matter included borrowings from modern technology.

This is a revealing digression. Gzîro (= Jezira Bohtan) is not in the mountains, but rather on a flat plain, on the Tigris (Dicle) River: opposite the first page of the introduction to Roger Lescot's composite 'version' of M&Z (LT) is a rather nice aerial photograph of the town, which clearly shows how flat the area is. However, the man telling the story, Sleimân Hanna Maskôbi (born c. 1913), is originally from the Tûr 'Abdîn, a mountainous area in the province of Mardin²³. Sleimân's family left his native town of Midîn in 1926, when he was about 13 years old, and they passed briefly through Syria on their way to Beirut, moving to Jerusalem for 23 years before returning to Beirut. My guess is that telling the story made Sleimân think back to his native region, and his youth, and that in his mind he substituted Gzîro/Jezîra for his native Midîn. Middle Easterners pride themselves on their hospitality: when Sleimân describes the way a guest was received 'in those mountains,' he may be taking pride in the hospitality for which the Kurds and their neighbors are famous. If my assumptions are correct, his explanation is more valuable for what it reveals about him than for its instructional worth, since part of the information he imparts is factually inaccurate.

The following two depend on the word 'brother':

III. "He mounted his horse, and took 42 of his villagers with him – they were not his brothers, although in the story they are called his brothers." (PN, p. 3)

"The three brothers and Mem embraced each other on the roof of the palace, they got along like brothers, without hatred or fighting." (ZK-1, p. 57)

In the first case (PN), an aspect of village life is reflected: vis-à-vis the outside world, all members of a particular village may see themselves as related; in some cases,

²³Prior to May 1990, Jezira Bohtan, or Gîzre, as it is officially known in Turkish, also belonged to the province of Mardin. After May 1990, it became part of the newly formed province of Şîmak.

they actually do belong to the same family. In an article I published in 1987, I explain the functional equivalence of neighbors and brothers, allomotifs appearing in the same motifeme slot in different versions of the same folktale, as follows:

From my experience living in an Arab village, I know that married brothers often live next door to each other. Therefore, in many cases, one's brother is one's neighbor. Hence the paradigmatic equivalence of brothers and neighbors is neither surprising nor coincidental to a Middle Eastern peasant audience.²⁴

In the present instance the equivalence is between brothers and villagers, but the same explanation may be used. We will probably never know why the informant Jano [Dschano] felt it important to clarify that the villagers were not actually brothers, although they are referred to as such in the story.

The second instance includes the informant E'gîtê T'êcir's definition of how brothers should treat each other. In order to appreciate this comment, we need to review the events leading up to it: Before Mem went to ask Zîn for a token of her love, Qeretajdîn's two brothers were ready to unsheath their swords and run Mem through with them, because he was making comments about Çekan's fiancée; by successfully bringing back some of Zîn's golden jewelry as proof of her love for him, Mem has just won the approval of Qeretajdîn and his two brothers; as a result, Qeretajdîn's brother Çekan has renounced his betrothal to Zîn, so that Mem may have her. Now that Mem has proven himself and has been accepted as a fourth brother, the hostility which Çekan and E'rfan had felt for him has been forgotten: they have buried the hatchet, to use an English folk expression. Hence, the narrator-performer's comment brings this whole

²⁴Michael L. Chyet. "Açıl Sofram, Açıl!" (Tischleindeckdich): A Comparative Study of Middle-Eastern Versions of AaTh 563," *Fabula*, 28 (1987), p. 95.

episode to a close by reminding us that what started out as hostility has ended with the strong bond of brotherhood.

2) Opinions, comments and criticism. The narrator-performer may wax philosophical, commenting on the value of life experience and the ephemeral nature of the world if his audience consists largely of elderly people; in my opinion, a younger audience would be more receptive to comments dealing with contemporary issues, such as politics.

The following is an example from M&Z:

"They sat down, and Bakko 'Awan said to the emir, 'You see that guest who is with you, the stranger, who you said was a good man? When you returned from hunting, he didn't rise before you.' -- The intelligence of these people -- after all they were Kurds (=lit. "Kurmanj") -- He got very angry: how could he, a guest, get it into his head not to rise before him?" (HR-2, p. 512, sentences #107-8).

This comment reflects a negative attitude toward Kurds, or at least reiterates the stereotypes that they are stupid and quick to anger, particularly regarding matters of honor. The informant Sleimân H̄anna Maskôbi was probably not in close contact with any Kurds after he left his native Mîdin in Kurdistan of Turkey in 1926, when he was thirteen years old. This is also the only time that the characters in the story are specifically called Kurds (Kurmanj).

3) Self-reproach and confession. The narrator-performer may share self-reproaching digressions if he feels comfortable with the audience. By the same token, before an audience perceived as hostile, such digressions tend to be stifled.

For whatever reason, examples of this type of digression are not readily apparent in the corpus consulted. Perhaps none of the versions were collected under conditions in which the narrator-performer felt comfortable enough to speak of his own shortcomings. However, if we broaden the category to include all references by the

narrator-performer to himself – whether positive, negative, or neutral – then examples such as the following may be considered:

“Now let’s say two words about Kakeh Mem in the style *nadirî*
This is the order of Raĥman Bakirî
Who is both Kurmanj and Dêbokirî
For the sake of Dr. Mann, the eternal one ...” (OM, p. 39)

and at end as follows:

“O Lord! May Raĥmân Bâkir never die! In four days he completed this
poem for the German master [=Oskar Mann]
Jesus, the spirit of God, stood at the head of the German master.
Lord Master, may you travel the seas in perfect health, and send
greetings to your mother and sister!” (OM, p. 81)

In both cases, the collector Oskar Mann and the narrator-performer Raĥman-f Bekir are both mentioned. In the first case, he identifies himself by stating his name and tribal affiliation. In the second, he refers to Oskar Mann as the German master, and recognizes the fact that he is Christian, by mentioning Jesus. In each instance he wishes that one or the other of them have eternal life. All of this religious imagery is in keeping with the character of this version: OM, LC-1 and MC-1 constitute the versions of M&Z with the most pronounced Islamic imprint.

“...one like me...” (PS, p. 73)

As stated above, because it is not made clear who the informant is, this comment cannot be fully appreciated. It is possible that PS was collected from Pinehas, a very aged Jew from Zakho who enjoyed a reputation as a “master-Rawi,” continually travelling among the Kurdish tribes of Bohtan and Hekkari. Pinehas is mentioned in Socin’s field

notes, but it is not specifically stated that he was the source of the version of M&Z included in that collection.

It should be obvious by now that any of a number of factors may influence the incidence of digressions: accounting for them is not simply a function of the narrator-performer's age or the audience's receptivity, but may reflect the composition of the audience as well. It is a frustrating fact that although Başgöz' typology is very helpful in identifying the various types of digression, without more contextual data we can only guess at what role these digressions actually played in a given version. For example, it is reasonable to assume that an explanatory digression indicates that the narrator-performer perceived the audience as being unfamiliar with a cultural concept; however, with the paltry evidence at our disposal, it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove that this was indeed the case.

What interests us here is the various ways in which the individual narrator-performer shines through from behind the traditional story he is telling. A consideration of digressions is one strategy for achieving this objective. Two others that I would like to propose are the examination of geographical setting and linguistic evidence.

By *geographical setting* is meant the geographical details that the narrator-performer includes in his story. It can be demonstrated that the storyteller sometimes situates his characters in real-life localities that are familiar to him. Hence, considering that Ohanyan Israêl, the informant for ZK-2, is from a village not too far from Diyarbekir, it must be more than coincidence that in ZK-2, Mem reaches Diyarbekir's well known Black Bridge [Pîra Reş] and enters the city. Similarly, PS was collected in Zakho, and in that version Mem passes through Amadiyah and Zakho on the way to

Jezira Bohtan; moreover, a little further on, towns one half hour and one hour²⁵ east of Jezira Bohtan are mentioned. The accuracy of geographical detail in these versions is a reflection of the informants' familiarity with their respective areas.

In HR-1 there are several examples of geographical setting, including the following:

"Qara Tajdin had scarcely gotten as far as Āstil" (HR-1, p. 290, sentence #320)

Once again, we see that such details are specific to a particular region: Āstil is approximately fifteen kilometers away. This comment would have no meaning to someone unfamiliar with the layout of the Tūr'Abdīn.

In PN there is a passage in which Mir Sevdin and Hasso quarrel (p. 5). As a result, Hasso and his brother Chakko angrily mount their horses and ride off to Damascus. The informant for this version, Jano [Dschano], had emigrated from his native Midyat to Damascus, where he was living when this version was collected from him. A plague of locusts which befell Midyat for six consecutive years forced Jano's people to leave their homes. It is interesting to note that both in his own life and in his story, Damascus is where one goes to escape a bad situation.

In examining linguistic evidence, we are necessarily combining texture with context. We are looking for hints in the speaker's use of language which reflect his life experience.

²⁵by horse, that is.

The use of the Arabic greeting **ahla u sahla** (=welcome) in HR-2 (p. 508, sentence #64) may reflect the fact that the informant, Sleimân Hanna Maskôbi (born c. 1913), has been living in Arabic-speaking countries since he was 13.²⁶

Ohanyan Israêl, an Armenian originally from the village of Hiznemîre [=Haznamir, called in Turkish İnpınar, in the county (ilçe) of Beşiri, province (il) of Siirt] was the informant for ZK-2. According to him, Hiznemîre was inhabited by Armenians and Yezidis of the Reşkot tribe. Ohanyan Israêl claims to have learned a great many Kurdish songs and stories of the Reşkot tribe from Yahoê Mistê Qulo, a native of Bolind, a neighboring village. In ZK-2 there are several words in which an original ' [ç] is pronounced as h: **sihûd** for **si'ûd** ('luck'); **ferhit** for **e'rhit**²⁷ ('jinn'); **t'ibifiet** for **t'ebie't** ('nature'). This is a reflection of his having lived among the Yezidis, who are noted for this characteristic.²⁸

The proliferation of Turkish loan words in LC-1 is indicative of the region in which it was collected, in the extreme western part of Kurdistan, in an area where the Turkish-speaking population outnumbers the Kurdish-speaking population. Some examples are: **yasi[an]** < Turkish **yatsı** (= 'Muslim call to prayer in the evening'); **kadi camiası** (= 'community of Islamic judges [kadis]'); **Şirin elma** (= 'Sweet apple,' here a man's name); **gerdek** (= 'bridal chamber'); **seyrek basan** (= 'wide stepping'). Moreover, the reflection of the Ottoman Turkish court bespeaks an environment in which Turkish is known and perhaps held in esteem. Examples of this include the title **şexî hünkâre**, the second word of which is **Hünkâr**, one of the epithets of the Ottoman sultans: hence, the Hunkar sheikh would be "a sheikh of the Ottoman sultan (or some other ruler)," or "a

²⁶It should be pointed out, however, that even in the Tûr' Abdîn, Arabic is widely spoken.

²⁷This involves an additional metathesis as well: -rf- > fer-

²⁸Hellmut Ritter. "Kurmānci-Texte aus dem Tûr'abdin: 2. Yeziden" *Oriens* 25-26 (1976), p. 1.

royal sheikh"; and *él-pānčā dīwān sīkīnīn* < Turkish **el pençe divan durmak** = "to stand in an attitude of respect with joined hands; to stand ready to receive orders," describing the respectful obeisance performed when coming into the presence of a king.

As will be discussed below, we know from Besim's remarks that Yūsuf Mälke Asmar, the informant for HR-1, felt more at home in Kurdish than in Turoyo, and that both his material and his vocabulary exhibited strong Kurdish influences. This being the case, it is not surprising that the word he uses for 'thornbush' at the end of the story [E.III.B.] is **dirrihe**, a loanword from Kurdish **dirî**, whereas in PN and HR-2 native Aramaic words are used instead, **sālūno** and **Ḥulto** respectively.

Another piece of linguistic evidence from HR-1 is the following:

Mämme Ala got up. His servant came to him and filled his water pitcher, and handed it to him. [Mämme] went out and washed himself, then spread out his prayer rug or whatever, to pray. (HR-1, p. 262, sentences 58-9)

The narrator is Christian, and therefore not completely familiar with Islamic prayer rituals. We get a clue to this from the wording 'his prayer rug *or whatever*' [*bē min-yo*]. This is a very subtle example of how language can reflect attitudes: if I understand the nuances correctly, there is no hostility expressed here; rather, the Jacobite Christian informant's vague idea of how Muslims pray is apparent.

Both geographical setting and linguistic factors may provide similar clues. For instance, the use of an Arabic greeting in HR-2 (a lexical detail) and having Hasso and Chakko ride off to Damascus in PN (a geographical detail) reflect the fact that both informants have been living in Arabic speaking countries, Lebanon and Palestine in the former case and Syria in the latter.

The final part of this chapter, in which native reactions to individual versions of M&Z are examined, will begin with a consideration of some brief comments by the emir Sureya Bedr Khan, a member of the prestigious Kurdish family from Bohtan, regarding the significance he attaches to the romance²⁹. Firstly, as the descendant of a princely family that ruled Bohtan for centuries, he considers the story of M&Z as part of the chronicles of his own family: he regards Zîn and Mîr Sêvdîn as his ancestors. This implies that the story of M&Z has a special function for his family. Although it is known that many Kurds regard the legend of Mem and Zîn to be true, ascertaining whether or not this genealogical function of the story is unique to Bedr Khan's family would require a fair amount of fieldwork.

The emir Sureya Bedr Khan supplies another important detail, this time regarding the *dengbêj* tradition. According to him, anyone intent upon reciting either M&Z or Eñmedê Xani's literary poem, must first make a pilgrimage to the grave of Mem and Zîn in Jezira Bohtan; only after this ritual do they consider themselves authorized to recite the story. Moreover, he asserts that this tradition is scrupulously adhered to³⁰. I wonder just how widespread this tradition is; as it is not attested anywhere else, perhaps it is peculiar to the region of Bohtan. Certainly under present day conditions it would be difficult for would-be *dengbêjes* from Syria, Iraq, Iran and Soviet Armenia to undertake such a pilgrimage.

Seventeen of the eighteen versions included in this study have already been published. Among them, there is only one which provides any contextual information about the informant and his narrative performance: we are fortunate to have a description of the informant for HR-1. This information relates to the way the

²⁹Louis Marin. "Séance du 6 Juin 1931" [Mem-o-Zîne, poème kurde] *L'Ethnographie*, N.S. 24 (1931), p. 4.

³⁰*ibid.*, p. 6.

informant Yūsuf Mälke Asmar told stories in general, without specific reference to his version of M&Z. Nevertheless, since besides M&Z only one other story of his appears in Hellmut Ritter's collection, some of the comments must refer to M&Z. These comments are all the more important because they constitute the only native oral literary criticism (to use Alan Dundes' term) that has been published about a specific version of M&Z.

Hellmut Ritter himself was unable to obtain permission from the Turkish authorities to conduct fieldwork in the Tūr 'Abdīn region of Mardin, Kurdistan of Turkey; instead he entrusted his native informant Besim, whom he met and befriended in Istanbul, with his tape recorder when Besim went home to the Tūr 'Abdīn for the summer (1960). Besim made many fine recordings, which he and Hellmut Ritter transcribed when he returned to Istanbul. One of Besim's most valuable contributions was a text which he himself spoke into the tape recorder, in which he recounted what he had done during his time in the Tūr 'Abdīn: it was in this text (#11 in volume one of Hellmut Ritter's Turoyo texts³¹) that he also gave his impressions of the people from whom he collected his texts. Among Besim's several informants was Yūsuf Mälke Asmar, from whom he collected HR-1 and one other text, a folktale. This is what Besim had to say about him:

(305) Yūsuf Mälke is really a gifted storyteller. (306) But the stories which he knows are of Kurdish origin. (307) He translated them from Kurdish into Syriac (=Turoyo) and then told them to us. (308) Thus there are many Kurdish words in his language. (309) Yūsuf Mälke Asmar is perhaps sixty years old. He comes from Kfärze. (310) He made a special trip from the village to tell us "çirökât" [=folktales]. The [Kurdish] word çirökât is taken directly from his own mouth. (311) When he was telling stories, he spoke from the bottom of his heart. (312) He spoke word after word, sentence after sentence, as if it were poetry. (313) When he recounted in Kurdish, he spoke better and with more gusto. (314) During his recounting he spoke of battles. At the appropriate times, he also

³¹Türöyo : die Volkssprache der syrischen Christen des Tūr 'Abdīn : A. Texte (Beirut ; Wiesbaden : Franz Steiner Verlag, 1969), #11, vol. 1, pp. 92-3.

sang.³² (315) But unfortunately I did not record any of the Kurdish. I only recorded what he translated into Syriac. (316) For this reason there are in his stories passages about battles and poems which are missing [from the tape]. (317) For to translate these into Syriac is difficult and takes too much time.

This information contains both good and bad news. On the one hand, it is very refreshing: we finally have an assessment of a narrator-performer's artistic skill by a native member of the intended audience. Important details are supplied, such as the provenance of the informant's material, and what language he is most at home in, as well as an assessment of the storyteller's skill. However, we are also informed of an unfortunate omission: apparently the spoken prose in Turoyo was interspersed with sung poetry in Kurdish, which latter has been left out: furthermore, it is not clear from the printed text just where these omissions occur.³³ It is a sad fact that Besim's zeal in collecting material in his native language Turoyo, plus the limited number of blank tapes at his disposal, combined to create a situation in which only part of the text that his informant told has been recorded: text, texture and context are incomplete. The flow of the story's performance has been interrupted, and what has come down to us is in essence a mutilated document. What a paradox that the one version which includes context tells us explicitly what is implicit in the other versions: that we are missing too much contextual information to give proper consideration to the performance aspects of the story! In the final analysis, HR-1 is no less deficient than the other seventeen versions.

Regarding native literary criticism, another important source of information is the unpublished work of Jaqueline Alon, an American woman who moved to Israel in

³²I assume he means that the battles and songs were in Kurdish.

³³Other instances of the story of M&Z's being told in a Neo-Aramaic dialect, but with the songs sung in Kurdish, have been reported among the Jews of Zakho (Kurdistan of Iraq) by Yona Sabar (personal communication).

the sixties, where she met and married a Kurdish Jew. She studied with the prominent Israeli folklorist Dov Noy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. As the wife of a Kurdish Jew, she was accepted as a member of the Kurdish Jewish community in Israel, and as such was very successful in collecting massive amounts of material from Kurdish Jews living in Israel. Among the stories and songs she has amassed, she has a version of M&Z which she collected in 1979 from an elderly man, the late Daniel Mosheh, who was from the village of Suwarê in Iraqi Kurdistan³⁴. The two Jewish families of this village³⁵ situated northeast of Dihok bore the distinction of speaking Kurdish, rather than Neo-Aramaic, as their native language, although they apparently also knew Neo-Aramaic.

Jaqueline Alon did not content herself merely with recording Daniel Mosheh's telling of the tale. During the ensuing weeks, she played back the recording of Daniel Mosheh reciting M&Z (in sung -- or chanted -- verse) to his sister Esther (who had been present at the initial telling), and recorded Esther's explanations and reactions. Thanks to this work -- which has remained unpublished until now -- we have some native literary criticism about M&Z. During a short visit to Israel in May-June of 1990, Mrs. Alon was kind enough to make copies of this material available to me for use in my dissertation.

Esther provides a running commentary in Hebrew³⁶ on her brother's recitation of M&Z. Although reproducing her entire commentary is beyond the scope of the present study, some of the most salient features will be presented. There are several

³⁴See the map in Chapter Seven for the geographical location of Suwarê.

³⁵Abraham Ben-Yaacob. Hosafot u-milu'im la-sefer Kehilot Yehude Kurdistan
הוספות ומילואים לספר קהילות יהודי כורדיסטאן = Supplement to Kurdistan Jewish Communities (Jerusalem : Kiryat-Sefer, 1981), p. 48.

³⁶That is, Hebrew as spoken by an immigrant from Kurdistan, which is a study in itself!

points in the story at which she reacts by interjecting a comment such as 'poor Mem'³⁷. For example, when Mem wakes up and finds that Zîn is gone, and discovers her ring on his finger, he falls ill [B.II.B.]. At this point, Esther says:

"Now he has fallen ill, the poor thing!³⁸"

Further on into the story, when Mem and Bengîn have set out for Jezira Bohtan, in a twist that is unique to this version, they discover by asking people that they have missed their mark and have ridden on past it: it will take them a two day's journey to turn around and come back [C.II.A.]. When Esther hears this, she says:

"The poor things³⁹, tsk tsk!"

A little further on, Mem and Bengîn encounter a ploughman, who is afraid that they want to steal his mules, and therefore tries to flee. [C.II.A.2.] They tell him that they mean him no harm, and give him a handful of gold from their saddlebag. He is so delighted, that he throws down the plough, and takes them to Jezira Bohtan himself. Esther has two interesting comments at this point. First of all, when she hears that the ploughman will take them to Jezira Bohtan, she says:

³⁷In Hebrew *misken* מִסְכֵּן.

³⁸In Hebrew: 'akhshav niyeh holeh, *misken!* עֲבָשׁוּ נְהִיָּה חוֹלֵה, מִסְכֵּן!

³⁹In Hebrew: *miskenim* מִסְכָּנִים

"Wonderful! ⁴⁰"

Secondly, while explaining to Jacqueline Alon what Mem and Bengin say to reassure the ploughman, she has them say:

"We are not people of -- uh, what do you call it -- we are not El-Fatah, or anything, we want only good things.⁴¹"

By saying "we are not El-Fatah," a reference to the Palestinian "terrorist" organization, she has brought some Israeli flavor into her explanation of this piece of Kurdish folk literature. Any Israeli Jew would immediately understand the implication of the term 'El-Fatah.'

Another valuable aspect of such studies of native reactions is what they can teach us about the semantics of certain words. For example, Esther refers to Zin as 'Xatûn Zinë,' literally *Lady Zin*. When Jacqueline Alon asks Esther why she is called specifically 'Xatûn,' Esther explains:

"This is like what we say to a queen.⁴²"

⁴⁰In Hebrew: yofi יופי

⁴¹In Hebrew: Anahnu lo anashim shel -- eh, zeh kakhah -- anahnu lo elfatah, lo klum, anahnu rak tovim rošim. אנחנו לא אנשים של -- אה, זה ככה -- אנחנו לא אלפתח, לא כלום, אנחנו רק טובים רוצים

⁴²In Hebrew: zeh, kama anahnu omrim le-malkah. זה, כמה אנחנו אומרים למלכה.

Therefore, we know that according to Esther's understanding, this is a term reserved for royalty or for someone to be treated with deference. Her explanation is in fact borne out by such dictionaries as Kurdoev and Bakaev.

Esther's reactions indicate that she is 'hooked into' the story, that she is emotionally involved in it, and cares what happens to the characters. When something bad befalls them, her comments show that she feels sorry for them, and when something good happens to them, it is clear from her comments that she is happy for them. Her explanation of the semantics of the term **Xatûn** as applied to Zîn shows her high regard for Lady Zîn. Esther Daniel is to be commended for her patience in the tedious procedure of listening to the tape from start to finish and dutifully answering Jacqueline Alon's questions, and for her serious attitude towards the entire undertaking.

In addition to Besim's comments about HR-1 and Esther's about JA, I interviewed a Kurdish friend of mine living in Southern California to whom I had sent a copy of MC-1, the version of M&Z which I acquired in the vicinity of Van in 1988. My friend, whom we will call Temo, is in his thirties, a well educated professional who grew up in the province of Muş, Kurdistan of Turkey. Temo makes it clear that M&Z is not his favorite story: he prefers the story of Xec û Siyabend (or Siyabend û Xec, as he calls it). He found MC-1 to be disappointing, both from the point of its length, and its language. Although he does allow for the possibility that it took less time to recount the story than he remembered from his childhood in Kurdistan. Nevertheless, Temo seemed to think that the *dengbêj* did not put a lot of effort into his narration. He was, however, amused with the way the *dengbêj* said that M&Z is not the Koran.

Whereas Besim and Esther's comments about the versions that they heard were positive, Temo is critical of the version he heard. To be comparative in an effective way, we would have to have the comments of several different Kurds about one particular version: the comments of different people about different versions are not

easily compared. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that both Temo and Besim are well educated, whereas Esther is a simple village woman. Moreover, Temo is Muslim, Besim is Christian, and Esther is Jewish. Temo and Esther's native tongue is Kurmanji, while Besim's is Turoyo. Temo and Besim were both young men at the time of their participation, while Esther was already a grandmother. The backgrounds of these three are quite varied: if they were all three evaluating the same version, the results would undoubtedly be very interesting. Although this sort of thing has not yet been done, it may be a very fine project for future students of Kurdish folklore.



CHAPTER FIVE:
Texture



Kurdish Folk Poetics

The field of Kurdish folk poetics is still virtually virgin territory. In a larger discussion of Kurdish folk and classical literature, Sureya Bedr Khan¹ [Bedirxan] devotes about twelve lines to the technique of Kurdish poetry, failing to make a distinction between folk and literary styles. Because his comments are followed by a discussion of the earliest Kurdish literary poets, it is safe to assume that he has literary, rather than folk, poetry in mind.

Roger Lescot² takes a very cursory look at the poetry of the oral versions of Mem û Zîn (Memê Alan) for which he made the unfortunate mistake of combining them into a composite text. He mirrors Oskar Mann in finding no meter whatsoever in Kurdish folk poetry, resorting to a syllable count instead. As a final contribution, he lists the end rhymes which occur in the parts of the story he pasted together from three different dengbêjes, Mişo, Sebrî, and "Stranvan."

Basile Nikitine wrote an article (c. 1947) on Kurdish lyrical poetry³, specifically the genre known by the emic term *lawj* (*lewç* in Hawar orthography). In it he suggests that the epic poems, by which he means the genre to which Mem û Zîn belongs, may be expansions of what were originally fragments in the form of *lawj* [*lewç*]. In what follows, he reviews Oskar Mann's findings, and although he points out that the great Kurdish patriot and poet Kamuran Ali Bek Bedr Khan [Bedirxan] and others "cannot admit the absence [of regular metrical rhythm] among the

¹ "La littérature populaire et classique Kurde," in XVIe Congrès international d'anthropologie et d'archéologie préhistorique. VIe assemblée générale de l'Institut international d'anthropologie. Bruxelles, 1-8 septembre 1935 (Bruxelles, 1936; Nendeln, Liechtenstein : Kraus Reprint, 1969), p. 727.

² Introduction, "Textes Kurdes. Vol. 2: Memê Alan" (Beyrouth : Institut Français de Damas, 1942), pp. xxii-xxiv.

³ "La Poésie lyrique kurde," *Ethnographie*, n.s. 45 (1947-1950), 39-53.

Kurds," he himself does not find fault with Mann's analysis, concluding that a larger corpus must be examined than the one in his possession before a definitive answer can be given. His comments regarding the *dengbêj*'s memory are fairly typical of what was believed before Parry and Lord's introduction of the Oral-Formulaic Theory.

Ordixanê Celîl [Dzhalilov]⁴ briefly discusses Kurdish folk poetics in his study of the heroic epic Dimdim (also known as Çengzêrîn or Lepzêrîn). He concludes that there are two prosodical forms, symmetrical and asymmetrical, and lists the most common end rhymes encountered in the epic Dimdim.

In the introduction to his study of the literary poem and folkloric versions of the Kurdish romance epic Zembîlfiroş, Zh. S. Musaèlian⁵ discusses the poetry of the literary poem, with a few notes about how it differs from the folkloric versions. His notes, although brief, echo Oskar Mann's description, to be detailed below. He states that folkloric versions consist of three- or four-verse stanzas, and mentions syllable counts, stating that verses of nine, ten, eleven or more syllables are common.

Folk poetry differs markedly from classical literary poetry, the latter following the prosodic rules of Arabic and Persian classical poetry. Hence, rhyme and meter are regular in literary poetry. In the case of Eñmedê Xani's poem *Mem û Zîn*, there is no question of stanzas, as the form is the Persian masnavi, in which each verse consists of two rhyming hemistichs of equal measure: consecutive verses do not

⁴Kurdskiĭ heroicheskiĭ epos "Zatorukiĭ khan" (Dumdym) [Курдский героический эпос "Златорукный хан" (Дымдым)] - The Kurdish heroic epic "Zatorukiĭ khan," i.e., The ruler with the golden hand, (Dimdim) (Moskva : Glavnaia Redaktsiia Vostochnoi Literatury, 1967), pp. 61-62.

⁵Zambil'frosh : kurdskaia poĕma i ee fol'klornye versii [Замбильфрoш : курдская поэма и ее фольклорные версии] = Zambil'frosh : a Kurdish poem and its folkloric versions] (Moskva : Nauka, 1983), pp. 13-39, esp. note #57.

from what he considered to be correct: nevertheless, he is to be commended for indicating when he did so, as well as recording what the wording was before he tampered with it. His attempts to reconstruct the original form, a typical pursuit during that period, also caused him to emend the text unnecessarily. A valuable contribution was his noting what sounds could rhyme with each other, e.g., he noted that it is permissible for ū and ī to rhyme, as in sandīda and osūda, or hūna (?) and ma:sīna. When it came to poetic meter, Socin claimed that both trochaic (-→) and iambic (-→) meters exist, being unable to see that meter as we know it is absent from Kurdish folk poetry. His discussion of meter degenerated into a technical discussion of the phonetic intricacies of syllabification, and how stress patterns influence vowel coloring, both of which really belong to the realm of phonology and morphology rather than poetics. Oskar Mann's comment that this should not be included in a paper purporting to treat of the forms of Kurdish poetry was well taken. Finally, nowhere in his discussion did Socin employ examples from the Kurdish version of Mem û Zîn which he collected (PS).

Much of what Socin wrote was reviewed, expanded, and corrected by Oskar Mann, in a treatise preceding the German translation of the texts he collected among the Mukri tribe of Iranian Kurdistan, Die Mundart der Mukri-Kurden⁸. His discussion deals largely with the texts (including a version of Mem û Zîn) which he collected from Raḫman-î Bekir, who spoke Mukri, a variety of Sorani (or Central) Kurdish, which is distinct from Kurmanji (or Northern) Kurdish⁹. Nevertheless, he includes findings from his own hitherto unpublished Kurmanji material, in addition to critiquing Socin's earlier treatise on Kurmanji poetics. As should be

⁸Oskar Mann. "Einleitung über Inhalt und Form der ostkurdischen Volksepik," in Die Mundart der Mukri-Kurden *Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen*, 4 (Berlin : Georg Reimer, 1909), Bd. 2, pp. [xv]-ii.

⁹The group of dialects in which the majority of the versions of Mem û Zîn has been collected.

evident from the preceding survey, later scholars still refer to Mann's findings in discussing Kurdish folk poetics: the present study is no exception. In what follows, I will attempt to ascertain to what extent his findings for Sorani are also applicable to Kurmanji versions of Mem û Zîn.

He isolates three criteria by which a poetic text may be identified, namely rhyme, meter, and Strophenbildung, or stanzaic form.

Rhyme in the texts Mann collected is predominantly feminine¹⁰, although masculine rhyme is also occasionally to be found. The predominance of feminine rhyme accounts for the meaningless -e often added at the end of a line of verse. This last explanation is valid for Kurmanji also: in the following example, the final -e has no other function than as a poetic marker:

Rojekê ji rojê xudane,
 Bi ser vî bajarê hade hatî e'ydeke mazin /sic/, e'ydeke qurbane.
 Xwarzî diçûne malê xalane,
 Birazî diçûne malê apane,
 Bûk derk'etin ji malê xezûrane,
 Berê xwe dane malî bavane,
 Ji xoîra çûne zeyane,
 Ev hersê milûkê ha k'urdê wan kore, warê wan undane,
 One day (of God's days),
 A great feast came over this city, the Feast of the Sacrifice-
 Nephews went to visit their uncles,
 Nieces went to visit their aunts¹¹,
 Brides left the homes of their fathers-in-law,
 Headed for the homes of their fathers,
 And went to visit their parents-
 There were three noblemen whose luck was dry, whose houses
 were empty, (ZK-2, pp. 65-6)

¹⁰A rhyme of two syllables in which the second syllable is unstressed, e.g., fóllo and hóllo, or bríghtly and níghtly: this is typified by trochaic meter (-→). There is also masculine rhyme, a rhyme of only a single stressed syllable, as in cát and hát, or unstressed followed by stressed, as in annóy and enjóy: this is typified by iambic meter (-→).

¹¹lit. "Sisters' sons went to visit their mothers' brothers, / Brothers' sons went to visit their fathers' brothers."

In prose and everyday speech, the final words of each line would be [xudan], [qurban] [xala(n)], [apa(n)], [xezûra(n)], [bava(n)], [zey(îy)a(n)], [unda + ye/ne]. This phenomenon is so prevalent in Kurdish folk poetry that it serves as one of the main ways to identify language as poetic.

According to Mann, impure rhyme is quite common. Examples of this in the Kurmanji versions of Mem û Zîn abound. One need only look at the rhyme words in the three stanzas quoted from ZK-1 in the discussion of stanza below (bozin, pozin, but *pîroz be*; şêne, têne, but *dibême*; rêşin, serxweşin, but *xweş be*), or the rhyme in the quoted passages from Zembîlîfiroş in the discussion of E'tarê Şero's style in the next section (derda, xatûnêda, veda, ç'e'va/ç'ava) to get a feeling for the prevalence of impure rhyme.

Mann has the following to say about meter in Kurdish folk poetry:

[If by] 'meter' [is meant] an alternation of long and short, or stressed and unstressed syllables according to fixed rules, or a demonstrable limiting of the number of syllables from rhyme to rhyme in the majority of verses, [then] not even the slightest trace of it is to be found.¹²

In view of the total absence of identifiable meters, Mann speaks of counting syllables as an alternative. He distinguishes between a) strings of long verses, in which each line is of a different length, and b) series of short verses, averaging eight syllables per verse. In my section on Oral-Formulaic Theory, I employ syllable counts as a way of identifying individual formulas.

With regard to accentuation, the only difference between poetry and prose is in the predominantly feminine rhyme of the former, which coincides with trochaic meter (-→).

¹²Mann. *ibid.*, p. xodiii. My translation.

As for stanzaic form (Strophenbildung or strophische Gliederung), Mann identifies the emic term *bend* (bänd), meaning 'verse,' and defines the stanza (Strophe) as a complex of verses containing the same rhyme. Sets of three- or four-line stanzas with parallel content are of common occurrence: in fact, although stanzas (or rhyme sequences) may be from two to five or even six verses in length, the overwhelming majority are three to four verses long. Moreover, he hypothesizes that Mem û Zîn and other stories belonging to the same genre originally consisted entirely of three-line stanzas.

I would differ with Oskar Mann in his use of the term 'stanza' to designate this phenomenon. In the versions of Mem û Zîn which are entirely in verse, such as LC-1, LT, OM, and ZK-2, as well as in other stories belonging to the same genre, the same *rhyme sequence* can go on for much more than six verses. For example, the first page and a half of LC-1 contains 53 typeset lines exhibiting a rhyme sequence in -ane: if each individual verse were printed on a separate line -- as has been done in my English translation -- rather than in a run-on fashion resembling prose, the verses exhibiting this rhyme sequence would take up approximately three pages. As mentioned below, the majority of verses in LT-Sebrî and LT-Mîşo also manifest a rhyme sequence in -ane. Can a rhyme sequence that spans twenty pages be considered a stanza?! The term *rhyme sequence* is preferable, as it can be used whether the sequence consists of two verses or of two hundred verses.

There are also cases in which the term stanza is warranted. In the prose versions of Mem û Zîn, the sung verse that is inserted at certain key points often

appears in parallel groupings that can be described as stanzaic. Consider the following, which consists of three parallel groupings of three verses each¹³:

Qeret'ajdîn go: "Gelî bira, em sê birane, hespê me hersêka bozin,
 Em li dinê digeîrîn de'w û dozin,
 Zîne bûka mine, bira li Memê bimbarek û pîroz be".
 Qeretajdin said, "O brothers, we are three brothers, all
 three of our horses are grey,
 We roam the world in search of fights,
 Zîn is my sister-in-law to be, may she be happy with Mem."

E'fan go: "Gelî bira, em sêne, / hespê me hersêka şêne,
 Em de'w û doz ji dinê têne,
 Zîne bûka mine, ez li Memê fielal dibême".
 Efan said, "O brothers, we are three, / all three of our horses are
 chestnut color,
 We go to wars in the world,
 Zîn is my sister-in-law to be, I say [let her be] legally Mem's."

Çekan go: "Gelî bira, em sêne, hespê me hersêka reşin,
 Em li dinê digeîrîn, bi serxweşin,
 Zîne dergîstîya mine, bira li Memê fielal û xweş be".
 Çekan said, "O brothers, we are three, our horses are all
 three black,
 We roam the world, light-headed,
 Zîn is my fiancée, may she be legally Mem's." (ZK-1, pp. 56-7)

Different strategies for signalling the beginning or the end of a stanza are discussed: one way of signalling the end of a stanza is by the repetition or paraphrasing of the second-to-last verse; a device for signalling the beginning of a new stanza (a rhyme signalling device) is the insertion of a verse such as the following:

Kîê bú lâ mām û bengînî

bâlâkcâwa

¹³In the original, the second stanza is typeset as four lines, but since by analogy the second line corresponds to the last four words of the first line in stanzas one and three, I have taken the liberty of punctuating all three stanzas according to one standard, as a heuristic device.

Who was [from] Mem and Bengîneh beautiful-eyed
 =Who was it? Beautiful-eyed Mem and Bengîneh (OM, p. 49)

The subsequent lines will rhyme in -âwa, the rhyme having been set by this introductory verse. This is particularly effective when it occurs in a series of stanzas (or rhyme sequences) in close succession, as in the following:

- I. kîê bû lâ mām û bengîni bâlakcâwa
 lâ sârîncâwâi kânîê bûn pîâwa.
- II. kîê bû lâ jûtiârî jindîa,
 jûti bâraîdâ kird, bô yâya zinê birdî mizgêniâ.
- III. kîê bû lâ kurî jûtêrî naujûâna,
 hâr râi dâkird, bô mām û bangînan dâihênâ, nâna.
 awân nanâkâîân dâkhwârd, dâîân-bizhârt shukrâna.
 înjâ bô jûtêrîân dâkird bâ khâlâd bakhshâna.
- I. Who was it? Beautiful-eyed Mem and Bengîneh,
 They dismounted at the source of a well.
- II. Who was it? The handsome plowman,
 He let go of the plow, [and] brought the good news to Yaya Zîn.
- III. Who was it? The beautiful young son of the plowman,
 He ran and brought bread for Mem and Bengîneh.
 They ate the bread and gave thanks,
 Then they gave the plowman a reward. (OM, p. 49)

Several Kurmanji versions of Mem û Zîn display a different device for achieving the same goal. I propose the term *rhyme signalling device* [RSD] to refer to this phenomenon. In the versions designated LC-1, LT, and ZK-2, all of which share with OM the distinction of being almost entirely in verse, a rhyme signalling device such as the following is inserted:

- LC-1: a. dîlimin dîlikî dîne
 âekî mămê diwîne
 hāmā ziārātine
 wā hāmā ġanātine.

My heart is a crazy heart, (*dîlimin dîlikî dîne*)
 Those who see Memê
 Are all [worthy of] shrines
 And all [38] [worthy of] paradise. (LC-1, pp. 37-38)

- b. dîlimin dîlikî lâxâne
 sālā māmē kétene dāhāne
 âekî lâ ruiye māmē difkire nāzāne
 šémsu qāmer kižāne
 māmē ġirtin žā bār nāfsî dā-u bavāne
 wa ħürdū āpāne
 dāne bār dāstî xoġāne 'ölāmāne
 mām çekirin kûškî mādîrsāne
 ħattā bā šeš sālā qadām kîre ħaftāne ...

My heart is an apparent heart, (*dîlimin dîlikî lâxâne*)
 When Memê turned ten years old,
 Those who looked at Memê's face couldn't
 Tell it apart from the sun and the moon.
 They took Memê away from his parents
 And his two uncles,
 They handed him over to (80) teachers and ulemas,
 They made a school pavilion for Mem.
 When he was six going on seven ... (LC-1, p. 38)

- c. zîne gō dîlimin debē
 tû lâwe kēi
 šāvā lâ nive šāve balġî sārî min lâ çē digārēi
 kārîe mārūi āyāye bā rišwātū wāre sār ġie xātūnāye
 rābe āzā bañ kim lâ ġālāliā wādā qasābe mērā ātā bükūžin
 nāvîmin bā tārā pis bûwe lâ dūnyēi

Zîn said, "*Dîlimin debē*,
 Whose son are you?
 In the middle of the night [40] what are you looking for on my
 pillow?
 It is the act of the men of an agha
 To bribe their way into a lady's bed.
 Get up! I will call the Jelālîs, our butchers, they will kill you;
 My name has become dirty in the world because of you."
 (LC-1, p. 40)

- LT-Sebrî: a. Got: "Dilê min li yan e, sê cara li yan e!
Emrê min, yemşikê, sêzde ye, dikeve çardane.
Ji roja ko ez ji diya xwe re bûme, û heyanî roja îro, min ne diye ruyê
zilama û xortane. ..."

He said, "My heart is accursed, three times accursed!
I am thirteen years old, almost fourteen.
From the day I was born until today, I have not seen the faces of
men and boys ..." (LT-Sebrî, l. 287-290, p. 28)

- b. Memo dengêkî banê Zînê, qîza Beko Awan kir, go: "Lê, lê, xûşkê, dilê
min liyan e, sê cara liyan e!
Ez î xerîb im, nizanîm rîyan û derbane.
Xwedê hebîna, bihurê felatê Cizîrê kîjan e? ..."

Mem gave a call to Zîn, the daughter of Beko Awan, saying,
"O sister, my heart is accursed, three times accursed!¹⁴
I am a stranger, I don't know the roads and ways.
For heaven's sake, which is [the way to] ford the Tigris River?"
(LT-Sebrî, l. 782-84, p. 74)

- LT-Mîşo: Memî got: "Xwalo, dilê min î liyan e:
fro dilê min bûye yataxa derd û kulane ..."

Mem said, "Uncle, my heart is accursed:
Today my heart has become a den of grief and sorrow ..."
(LT-Mîşo, l. 638-39, p. 60)

- ZK-2: a. Ferhîit dibê: "Mîrê mino, dilê min liyane,
Bila îro serê min bibe qurbana stîya Zîn û Memê Alane".

The ifreet said, "My mîr, my heart is accursed [heavy],
May my head be a sacrifice for Lady Zîn and Memê Alan."
(ZK-2, p. 68)

- b. Dilê min liyane, liyane,
Memê-Ala û stîya Zîn bi hev hîsiyane,
Tîrs û saw û hêbeteke giran k'ete dilê wane,
Herdu ji xweîra li hev û dinê şaqîs mane.

¹⁴liyan/liyan = 'grieving, afflicted, heavy (of heart)'

My heart is accursed, accursed [heavy, heavy].
 Memê Alan and Lady Zîn became aware of each other,
 Fear and awe entered their hearts,
 They were amazed at themselves and at each other. (ZK-2, p. 69)

- c. Memê dibê: "Bavo, dilê min li bêye¹⁵,
 Dilê min lédide, weke mewcê be'rêye,
 Çiqa qîz û bûkê di bajarê Muxurzemînêda hene, bêjine min: bira, ezê ji
 wanra bêjim: xuaye,
 Ji xîna stîya Zîn li ser rûyê e'rdêye".

Memê said, "Father, my heart is windy,
 My heart is swaying, like the waves of the sea,
 As for the girls and brides of the city of Mukhurzemîn, they
 should all call me 'brother,' and I shall call 'sister'
 [All women] on the face of the earth except for Lady Zîn."
 (ZK-2, p. 72)

All the examples of this type of rhyme signalling device include the expression *my heart* [dilê min] plus a modifier such as [li bê-] or [liyan-] plus the copula *is* [-(-y)e]. The meaning of some of the modifiers, such as [li bê-], is not altogether clear¹⁶. This RSD can either occupy the end of the verse, as in (LC-1) c., (LT-Sebrî)b., (LT-Mîşo), (ZK-2)a. & c., or the entire verse, as in (LC-1)a. & b., (ZK-2)b.¹⁷ As with the RSD "Kîê bû ..." in OM, the rhyme of the subsequent verses is then fixed. In the case of both LT informants (Mîşo and Sebrî), however, the rhyme sequence is -ane in the verses preceding the RSD as well: in fact, the majority of both informants' verses display this rhyme sequence.

Much of what Oskar Mann has to say regarding the folk poetics of the Mukri Kurds holds true for Kurmanji folk poetry as well. Rhyme, usually feminine and

¹⁵li bêye. This phrase, which appears also in Le Coq's versions collected in Zîncîrî in 1901, is obscure. It could be: the preposition li + the oblique case of ba = "wind" + the copula -ye, meaning altogether "it is from the wind."

¹⁶At least not to me. See the preceding note.

¹⁷(LT-Sebrî)a. can be considered in the latter category, since it is a quotation preceded by one word, *he said* [got].

often impure, is the single most palpable criterion by which folk poetry may be identified. Meter as we know it does not exist, syllable counts being a useful substitute. Stanzaic divisions as Mann describes them, i.e., a group of *bends* or verses exhibiting the same rhyme, often with parallelism in structure, seems to be more common in the prose versions of Mem û Zîn with sung verse insertions; in the verse versions of the romance epic, I would replace the term 'stanza' with *rhyme sequence*, since the number of rhymed verses may be well over the four-verse limit observed by Mann. The rhyme sequences are often signalled by a *rhyme signalling device* [RSD].

Oral-Formulaic Theory

Oral-Formulaic Theory was originally devised as a means of ascertaining whether or not Homer's poetry was the product of an oral – rather than written – tradition. Milman Parry and Albert Bates Lord conceived the idea of studying a living oral tradition, that of the Yugoslav epic songs (*junačke pesme*), to see to what extent it resembled Homer's works. Their discovery is by now well known: the formulaic language of both the Ancient Greek tradition and the living Yugoslav tradition is indeed similar. Both exhibit formulaic structures on the level of the verse, the type-scene, and the theme. Since the publication of Albert B. Lord's book *The Singer of Tales* in 1960, oral-formulaic theory has been applied to such literary traditions as Old English poetry, Old French poetry, and Russian *byliny*.

In applying oral-formulaic theory to M&Z, several clarifications need to be made at the outset. Firstly, the theory was originally developed by Parry and Lord as a way of trying to prove that Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* were the compositions of an oral bard. Whereas there was some doubt about the oral character of the Ancient Greek, Old English, and Old French poems before they were examined in the light of oral-formulaic theory, M&Z is, like the Yugoslav case, unquestionably a living oral tradition.

Since there is no need to prove the oral nature of M&Z, it is tempting to assume that the problems confronting anyone trying to reconstruct a performance of, say, *Song of Roland* in Old French, do not exist for a living tradition such as that represented by M&Z. The frustrating fact is, however, that although the tradition of reciting the tragic love story of Mem û Zîn is entirely oral (Ehmedê Xani's 17th century literary poem is derived from this oral tradition), we possess nothing but text-oriented transcriptions of oral performances. Beginning with the earliest version

collected by a Western scholar in 1869 (PN) and continuing up to the version I acquired on cassette tape in 1988 (MC-1), very little is known about the story of M&Z as performance, or about the art of the *dengbêj* who tell it. Nor do we have more than one telling by any single *dengbêj*. Hence, in spite of the twenty odd versions that exist in print, and in spite of our total certainty as to the oral character of the tradition that spawned M&Z, anyone attempting a serious study of it is not much better off than the scholar of such long-extinct traditions as the Old English or Old French.

Whereas Homer's works, as well as the Old French, Old English, and other traditions -- whether epics, romances, or chansons de geste -- are completely in verse, the versions of M&Z can be divided into two categories. Some versions are primarily in verse (PS, LC-1, OM, ZK-2, LT), but the majority of versions I have seen consist of prose narration with sung verse inserted at key points in the story: this sung verse is the most stable part of the story, and seems to be formulaic¹. William Foxwell Albright (1891-1971), the American Bible scholar, suggests in a discussion of the posited poetic background of early Hebrew prose that "prose was frequently a secondary form behind which lay a poetic version."² If we assume that the versions of M&Z in verse preserve the older, more archaic form of the story, and that the prose versions are a more recent development, then M&Z may provide evidence in support of Albright's thesis. Prym and Socin (1890) believed that M&Z and other romances of

¹The two Neo-Aramaic (Turoyo) versions collected by Hellmut Ritter (HR-1 and HR-2) are entirely in prose narrative, without any sung verse at all. We know from a passage by Ritter's native assistant Besim that HR-1 included sung poetry in Kurdish, which he failed to record. In a personal communication, Yona Sabar told me that he remembers (c. 1970-1980) hearing the late Hayyo Çilmêro of Zakho, Iraqi Kurdistan, tell the story of Zîn u-Mameh (as Mem û Zîn is known among the Jews of Zakho) in Neo-Aramaic in prose, inserting sung verse in Kurdish at certain key points.

²Robert C. Culley. "Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies," *Oral Tradition*, 1 (1986), 30-65; reprinted in: *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook*, ed. by John Miles Foley (New York and London : Garland Publishing Co., 1990), pp. 189-225, esp. 199-200. The following two works by W.F. Albright are mentioned there: *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1957) and *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (1969).

like genre "were originally composed in poetic form, i.e., they were originally epics. For no. XXXI [=Mem û Zîn] this is as good as certain; the epic became more and more abbreviated in the mouth of the folk, and as far as the content is concerned, it was even partially distorted, to the point where [something as garbled as the Neo-Aramaic version in] Prym and Socin, Der Neu-Aramäische Dialekt des Tûr 'Abdîn I (=PN) could arise.³ Oskar Mann likewise suggested that M&Z and stories of its genre originally consisted entirely of three-line stanzas.⁴ Unfortunately, we have no oral versions from before 1869, and the earliest versions we do have, from 1869 to just after the turn of the century (PN, PS, HM, LC-1, LC-2, OM, GNa, SHa-1, SHa-2), exhibit both verse and prose types. Due to the lack of evidence, it is difficult to prove or disprove Prym and Socin or Oskar Mann's hypotheses.

In applying oral-formulaic theory to M&Z, both verse and prose versions will be considered. Although some of the literature on oral-formulaic theory sets a minimum of two occurrences of a phrase (group of words) within one text as the criterion for being considered a formula⁵, I have taken liberties with this stricture, as will be seen below.

Three different contexts have been considered in examining the oral-formulaic nature of M&Z:

1) Formulas occurring only once in a version, but with unmistakable parallels in other versions;

³Albert Socin [& Eugen Prym]. "Anhang: Die Form der kurdischen Poesie," in Kurdische Sammlungen, Erzählungen und Lieder in den Dialekten des Tûr 'Abdîn und von Bohtan: a die Texte (St.-Petersbourg : Eggers et Cie, 1890), v. 1a, p. xix. My translation.

⁴Oskar Mann. "Einleitung über Inhalt und Form der ostkurdischen Volksepik," in Die Mundart der Mukri-Kurden Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen, 4 (Berlin : Georg Reimer, 1909), Bd. 2, p. L.

⁵Jean Ritzke-Rutherford. "Formulaic Microstructure: The Cluster," in: The Alliterative Morte Arthure. A Reassessment of the Poem. Karl Heinz Goller ed. (Cambridge, England : D.S. Brewer, 1981), p. 72.

2) Formulas repeated more than once within one version;

3) Formulas shared between one or more versions of M&Z on the one hand, and other stories belonging to the same genre (e.g., Xec û Sîyabend, Leyla û Mecrûm, Séva Hacıê, Zembîlfiros, etc.) on the other.

Because we do not possess more than one version of M&Z per *dengbêj* we are limited as to what we can say about the style of any particular *dengbêj*. Fortunately, we do possess other orally composed texts collected from some of the informants. Hence, as a partial remedy to the problem at hand, I have examined other narratives by some of these informants, in an attempt to isolate stylistic elements occurring both in M&Z and in other stories they tell, that may be unique to one or another of them. This may be considered a sub-set of 3) above.

In Albert B. Lord's book *The Singer of Tales*, the *formula* is defined as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea⁶." A line or half line of epic poetry constructed on the pattern of formulas is called a *formulaic expression*. In a discussion of the formula in a Middle English text, the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, Jean Ritzke-Rutherford modifies Lord's definition of the formula by adding the condition that "two or more occurrences in the same poem are necessary to identify a phrase as a formula."⁷

She then proceeds to demonstrate how several formulas occurring together repeatedly, in differing contexts, can be called a *formula cluster*⁸. Although I have incorporated the latter term in my analysis, in adopting Parry and Lord's definition, I

⁶Albert Bates Lord. *The Singer of Tales*. Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 24 (Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press, 1960; reprint New York : Atheneum, 1968 et seq.; reprint Harvard University Press 1981), p. 30.

⁷Ritzke-Rutherford. *ibid.*

⁸*ibid.*, pp. 73 ff.

have had to make some clarifications. Kurdish folk poetry does not contain verses of uniform length, unlike many of the poetic traditions of Europe and the Middle East: a syllable count of the first set of parallels below (I.) shows that in every version each line consists of a different number of syllables, the shortest containing seven syllables (FK-2, third line; EP-1, fourth and sixth lines), and the longest containing a phenomenal 26 syllables (ZK-1, fourth line)! Moreover, the formulas tend to be a full line in length, rather than the one half-line which is the norm for the Alliterative Morte Arthure.

Ritzke-Rutherford's addition to Lord's definition does not hold for the situation in Kurdish folk literature: although many of the formulas and formula clusters I will be discussing appear only once per version, the similarity of whole lines across versions makes their traditionality and cognation abundantly clear. Perhaps the real difference between the material that Ritzke-Rutherford is addressing in her definition and that with which I am dealing is that she is treating orally-derived written texts for which very limited numbers of versions are available, while I am dealing with multiple versions of transcribed oral performances. I would like therefore to present a definition of the formula which is applicable to a Kurdish oral context, as follows:

A formula is a group of words, up to one whole line in length, which is regularly employed to express a given essential idea. One occurrence per version of a poem is sufficient to identify a phrase as a formula, provided that the phrase in question has clear parallels in other versions. To qualify as a formulaic cluster, two or more formulas must co-occur at least two times in a comparable context.

Furthermore, I would like to point out that such phrases as "Once upon a time" and "They lived happily ever after" occur once per folktale, yet the accepted

terms for them are, respectively, introductory and concluding *formula*. Thus we see that the term *formula* can refer to a group of words occurring only once in a text, provided that it has analogues in other texts, be they different versions of the same story or different stories belonging to the same genre.

I will begin my examination of oral-formulaic theory in M&Z with the first of the three contexts mentioned above, namely formulas occurring only once in a version, but with unmistakable parallels in other versions. The first set of parallels I have chosen corresponds to B.I.A.1 in the motif chart, in which three birds, or fairies dressed as birds [usually doves] ask God to send down a fourth dove's garb for Lady Zîn⁹. The numbers in parentheses at the end of each line indicate the number of syllables in the line.

I. Three doves ask God to send down a fourth dove's garb for Zîn [B.I.A.1]

(FK-1) Xwedêo tu bikî ferware, (9)
 p.261 Libsê kevotkekê bikî xare, (10)
 Em sisêne, Zînê bi mefa bikî çare. (13)

God, you make a command,
 Send down a dove's gown,
 We are three, make Zîn [our] fourth.

(FK-2) Kevotkek dibêje, -- Werin emê îsmekî xwedê serda bixûnin, em sisêne,
 p.293 bona k'ele[ş] Zîn-xatûn ser me bibe çar.
 Ewana distirên:
 Ay rebî tu bikî ferware, (9)
 Zîna mîr Sêvdîn ser me bikî çare, (11)
 Post jorda têne xare. (7)

One dove says, "Let us cast a divine spell, we are three, let lovely Lady Zîn be the fourth."

⁹Motif F821.1.6. Dress of feathers.

They sing:

"O Lord, you make a command,
Make Mîr Sêvdîn's Zîn the fourth one of us,"
A doveskin came down from above.

(ZK-1)
p. 46

"Xwedêyo, tu bikî ferware, (9)
Libasekî kewotka bikî xare, (11)
Em sisêne, xatûn Zîna delal bive çare, (14)
Sîheta nivê şevê, şehere Muxurzemîn,
p'encera Memê delalda bikî xare." (14 + 12 = 26)

"Oh God, you make a command,
Send down a dove's attire
We are three, lovely Lady Zîn will be the fourth,
At the hour of midnight, in the city of Mukhurzemîn, set
her down at the window of Memê delal."

(EP-1)
#6, p. 185

--Yarebî, bikî ferware, (8)
P'ostekî kevotka bîni xare, (10)
Em bi xwe sisêne--
Zîne ser me bikî çare. (6 + 8 = 14)
Xadêda bû ferware, (7)
P'ostek jorda hate xare, (8)
Sê horî bûne çare. (7)

"Oh Lord, make a command,
Bring down a dove's garment,
We ourselves are three,
Make Zîn the fourth one of us."
God made a command,
Plumage came down from above,
The three houris became four.

(SHa-1)¹⁰
p. 201

Խոստէ թը կրահր վուարայ,
Փոստէ կեավոթկայ ժորտա բրկրա թորայ
Էա՛մ սրսէն ա, Զի՛նէ ըժժառա բըբէ շար ա:
Xodê bikira ferware, (8)
P'ostê kevotka jorda bikira xare (12)
Em sisêne; Zîne ijmeṛa [=ji meṛa] bibe çare. (13)

¹⁰In the original Armenian text, the sung poetry that appears throughout is given both in the original Kurdish in Armenian characters and in Armenian translation. I have given the Kurdish both in Armenian characters as printed in the text, and in an approximation of the same in Kurdish Hawar orthography [in the Latin alphabet].

If God would make a command,
 Send down a dove's garment from above,
 We are three, may Zin be [our] fourth.

This set of parallel passages is a formulaic cluster, as it can be further broken down into three discrete formulas, each a full line in length, as follows:

- a.
- (FK-1) Xwedêo tu bikî ferware, (9)
 God, you make a command,
- (FK-2) Ay rebî tu bikî ferware, (9)
 O Lord, you make a command,
- (ZK-1) Xwedêyo, tu bikî ferware, (9)
 Oh God, you make a command,
- (EP-1) Yarebî, bikî ferware, (8)

 Xadêda bû ferware, (7)
 Oh God, make a command,

 God made a command,
- (SHa-1) Xodê bikira ferware, (8)
 God, make a command,
- b.
- (FK-1) Libsê kevotkekê bikî xare, (10)
 Send down a dove's gown,
- (FK-2) Post jorda têne xare. (7)
 A doveskin came down from above.
- (ZK-1) Libasekî kewotka bikî xare, (11)
 Send down a dove's attire

(EP-1) P'ostekî kevotka bînf xare, (10)

.....
Postek jorda hate xare,

(8)

Bring down a dove's garment,

.....
Plumage came down from above,

(SHa-1) P'ostê kevotka jorda bikira xare (12)

Send down a dove's garment from above,

c.

(FK-1) Em sisêne, Zîné bi mefa bikî çare. (13)

We are three, make Zîn [our] fourth.

(FK-2)

...em sisêne, bona k'ele[ş] Zîn-xatûn ser me bibe çar. (16 - prose)

.....
Zîna mîr Sêvdîn ser me bikî çare, (11)

"...we are three, let lovely Lady Zîn be the fourth."

.....
Make mîr Sêvdîn's Zîn the fourth one of us,

(ZK-1) Em sisêne, xatûn Zîna delal bibe çare, (14)

We are three, lovely Lady Zîn will be the fourth,

(EP-1) Em bi xwe sisêne--

Zîné ser me bikî çare. (6 + 8 = 14)

.....
Sê horî bûne çare.

(7)

We ourselves are three,
Make Zîn the fourth one of us.

.....
The three houris became four.

(SHa-1) Em sisêne, Zîné ijmefa [=ji mefa] bibe çare. (13)

We are three, may Zîn be [our] fourth.

It is noteworthy that this cluster of formulas appears only in versions of M&Z in which Mem and Lady Zîn are brought together by three doves [B.I.A.1 in the motif chart]. In versions in which they are brought together by jinn [B.I.A.2] or angels [B.I.A.3], this passage is absent. It should also be noted that cognates also exist in SHa-2, GNa, and EP-2, but they have been excluded from this textural analysis because the original Kurdish has been lost: only Armenian translations of the two former versions have been preserved, and the original Kurdish text of the latter version was destroyed in the siege of Leningrad during World War II; we are fortunate to have even the Russian translation of it.

The order of the lines is a.-b.-c. except in FK-2, in which the order is a.-c.-b. Because these lines appear together, and in a fairly fixed order, I have adopted Ritzke-Rutherford's terminology, and refer to them as *formula clusters*, although in the context of M&Z we could also think of the formula clusters as individual poems, clearly set off from the surrounding prose narrative.

Another anomaly in FK-2 is that formula c. appears first in the prose narration leading up to the sung verse, and that the prose rendering of formula c. is fuller than the verse rendering of it. If we include the prose formula c., the order is c.-a.-c.-b. The situation we encounter in this passage is anomalous, because on the one hand, the first appearance of formula c. is in a prose passage, yet on the other hand FK-2 is clearly an oral traditional text. Perhaps this occurrence of formula c. in prose should be seen as a preamble to the formula cluster (i.e., poem) to follow.

Albert B. Lord tells us that "one cannot have *formulas* outside of oral traditional verse ... If one discovers repeated phrases in texts known not to be oral

traditional texts, then they should be called repeated phrases rather than formulas.^{11*}

Paul Kiparsky contradicts this by asserting that

formulas should occur equally in oral poetry that uses relatively free metrical schemata, and in oral prose. I think there is no question that all oral literatures, not just those with tight meter, tend to be formulaic to some degree. ... Folktales are the most obvious example of formulaic language in oral prose. An advantage of the grammar-based analysis proposed here is that the formula in such forms of oral literature can be defined in exactly the same way as for Homer.¹²

If we broaden Kiparsky's scope to include all types of folk narrative, then legends, myths, and romances such as M&Z would be included. As will be seen repeatedly in this chapter, the consideration of formula in M&Z cannot be limited to the poetic passages. Hence, I will side with Kiparsky on this matter, as against Lord.

In reference to the formula as defined by Ritzke-Rutherford, specifically to the requirement that a phrase appear a minimum of two times in the same poem in order to be considered a formula, it could be argued that EP-1 meets that required minimum. In this version the order is a.-b.-c.-a.-b.-c. If the first a.-b.-c. cluster constitutes a *request* with the verbs in each line in the subjunctive mood, the second cluster furnishes the *result*: here all three verbs are in the simple past tense. The doubling is neatly parallel. EP-1 is one of the more embellished versions collected: it was told by E'tarê Şero, a fine storyteller who will be discussed more fully below. A talented singer "can shorten or

¹¹Albert B. Lord. "Perspectives on Recent Work on Oral Literature [excerpted]," in: Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook, John Miles Foley ed. (New York & London : Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), p. 46; reprinted from: Oral Tradition, 1 (1986), pp. 467-503.

¹²Oral Poetry: Some Linguistic and Typological Considerations," in: Oral Literature and the Formula, ed. Benjamin A. Stolz and Richard S. Shannon, III (Ann Arbor : Center for the Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies, The University of Michigan, c1976), pp. 87-8.

lengthen his songs at will according to his artistic personality¹³: this type of parallel structuring is one of the strategies he might use to extend a short song.

In examining each formula separately, it is possible to discern a structural pattern for each. Formula a. consists of three elements:

O God 1	you make 2	a command 3
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Element #1 consists of a word for *God* [Xwedê - Xadê - Xodê]¹⁴ or *Lord* [rebi]¹⁵, often in a vocative form expressed with vocative particles [ay - ya] or by adding a vocative ending to the word God [Xwedêo - Xwedêyo].

Element #2 consists of a verb, in four cases out of six a second person singular subjunctive form: *make!* [(tu) bikî]. In SHa-1, we have what appears to be a past subjunctive form [bikira]. In the second EP-1 line (the 'response'), we have a simple past tense form: *was* [bû]: all the verbs begin with **b**.

Element #3 is identical in all six instances: *command* [ferware].

As far as the number of syllables per line is concerned, FK-1, FK-2, and ZK-1 consist of nine syllables, the first EP-1 line (the 'request') and SHa-1 consist of eight syllables, and the second EP-1 line consists of seven syllables. The spread between seven and nine (7-9) syllables is not too significant: the average is 8.2. This verse and

¹³Matiija Murko. "The Singers and Their Epic Songs" in: Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook, John Miles Foley ed. (New York & London : Garland Publishing, Inc, 1990), p. 14. This is an English translation by John Miles Foley: the original appeared in La Poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du XXe siècle (Paris : Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1929), pp. 1-31.

¹⁴The Persian cognate is *khodā* خدا .

¹⁵From Arabic *rabbī* رَبِّي = 'my lord.' This is a specifically Islamic way of referring to God.

the next are examples of what Oskar Mann meant by "a series of short verses, averaging eight syllables per verse."

Formula b. is composed of five discernible elements, although some versions only exhibit four of the five:

<u>garment</u>	<u>of dove</u>	<u>from above</u>	<u>make</u>	<u>down (adv.)</u>
1	2	3	4	5

The first element is a word for *garment* [libsê - libasekî] or *skin* [p'ost - postê - postek(i)]. The second, *of dove* [kevotkekê - kewotka - kevotka] is absent in two out of six instances. The third, *from above* [jorda] appears in three out of six instances: in only one case (SHa-1) do elements two and three appear together.

The fourth element is a verb form: in three cases it is a second person singular subjunctive [bikî - bînî]; in one case it is a past subjunctive [bikira]. In three out of the four cases mentioned thus far, the verb *to do* [kirin: bikî - bikira] appears. In the other two cases, the verb *to come* [hatin] is used, once in the present tense [têne] and once in the past tense [hate]: moreover, the verb *to bring* [anîn: bînî] may be seen as a causative form of the verb *to come*: i.e., to bring is to cause something to come. In four out of six cases (the four subjunctives), the verb begins with **b**.

The fifth element is again consistent throughout: *down* [xare].

The number of syllables per line varies considerably in the different versions of formula b.: FK-2 has seven syllables, the second EP-1 has eight, FK-1 and the first EP-1 have ten each, ZK-1 has eleven syllables, and SHa-1 has twelve. The range between seven and twelve is rather large: the average is 9.66.

Formula c. also consists of five elements:

<u>We three are.</u>	<u>Zin</u>	<u>for us</u>	<u>make</u>	<u>four</u>
----------------------	------------	---------------	-------------	-------------

1

2

3

4

5

The first element, *we are three* [em sisêne] occurs in four out of the six instances: of these, one is the anomalous prose line in FK-2; in the first occurrence in EP-1, the phrase *ourselves* [bi xwe] has been interpolated between *we*[em] and *are three*[sisêne]. The verse counterpart to this line in FK-2 lacks this element, and the second occurrence in EP-1 has simply *three* [sê].

The second element appears as [Zînê] in FK-1, the first EP-1, and SHa-1. In three instances, Zîn appears with qualifiers: *lovely lady Zîn* [keleş Zîn-xatûn] in the prose line in FK-2, *mîr Sévdîn's Zîn* [Zîn mîr Sévdîn] in the verse line in FK-2, and *Lady Zîn the lovely* [xatûn Zîna delal] in ZK-1¹⁶. In the second EP-1 line, *houris* [horf] does duty for Zîn.

The third element, a prepositional phrase, is hard to render literally in good English. For the purposes of this analysis, a literal translation will be used. *On us* [ser me] occurs three times, in both the prose and verse lines of FK-2, and in the first EP-1 line; *with us* [bi mefa] occurs once, in FK-1; and *to us* [ijmefa] also occurs once, in SHa-1. This element is lacking in ZK-1 and in the second EP-1 line.

The fourth element is the second person singular subjunctive *may you make* [bikî] three times: in FK-1, the verse line of FK-2, and the first EP-1 line. It is the third person singular subjunctive *let her become* [bibe - bive] three times: [bibe] in the prose line of FK-2 and in SHa-1, and [bive] in ZK-1. In the second EP-1 line, the verb is *theybecame* [bûne]. Once again, all the verbs begin with **b**.

As in the preceding two lines, the final element is uniform: *four* [çare]. The only deviation is in the prose line of FK-2, where the form is [çar] rather than [çare]. In

¹⁶It will be seen below that Zîn the lovely [Zîna delal] is another type of formula, consisting of a proper noun plus epithet.

normal speech, the word for four in Kurdish is in fact *çar*: the additional *-e* occurring in [ferware], [xare], and [çare] is part of the poetic convention of predominant feminine rhyme outlined above by Oskar Mann.

As for the number of syllables in this line, the second EP-1 line is the shortest, counting only seven syllables. The other parallels resemble each other more closely in this regard: the verse line of FK-2 consists of eleven syllables; FK-1 and SHa-1 consist of thirteen; and ZK-1 and the first EP-1 line consist of fourteen. The prose line of FK-2 adds an additional word, *in order to* [bona], and consists of sixteen syllables. The average is 14.666. The line consisting of 26 syllables mentioned above is from an additional line in ZK-1, which has no cognates in the other versions, although it coincides with the last two elements of our line b.: *you make down* (=you send down) [bikî xare].

As far as geographical distribution is concerned, the following chart shows that all the versions exhibiting this formula cluster come from one continuous area, comprised of Soviet Armenia and the area contiguous to it across the border in Eastern Turkey¹⁷. SHa-2 and GNa have been included, although they clearly contain the formulas in question, their exact form is uncertain, since for these versions only the Armenian translation of the Kurdish original is available. EP-2 was excluded, because too little information is available about it: neither the name of the informant nor where or when it was collected is known, nor by whom. Moreover, only a Russian translation of the original Kurdish exists. T = Turkey; SA = Soviet Armenia. With the exception of SHa-2, all of these versions are prose narrations with sung verse insertions: the Armenian translation of SHa-2 is entirely in verse, and a note at the beginning states that "with [the informant's] and Kisag Nalbandian's help, S. Haykuni

¹⁷See map (Figure 7a) in Chapter Seven.

translated Onbashi Mehon's version into Armenian, trying to preserve the poetic texture of the original."

Version	Informant	Date	Place	Collector
SHa-1	Oskan Ohanian	1904	Şemsettin, Van, T	S. Haykuni
SHa-2	Onbashi Mehon	1904	Van, T	S. Haykuni
GNa	? [a Kurd]	1904	Eleşkirt, Ağrı, T	G. Nzhdehian
FK-2	Fekoê Mraz	1926	Gozeldere, Ağbaran, SA	E. E'vdal
FK-1	XudoêQaşo	pre 1936	K'arvanserê, Ağbaran, SA	E. E'vdal
EP-1	E'tarê Şero	1955	Nork, Erevan, SA	Hajie Jndi
ZK-1	E'gîte T'écir	1963	Sığanlı (=Avtona), T'afin, SA	?Ordixanê Celil

The second formula cluster to be examined is also from the beginning of the story of M&Z. This time, however, I have chosen formulas which exist only in versions told entirely in verse: the versions are LC-1, LC-2, LT, and ZK-2. Of these, only LC-1 and ZK-2 are fully translated and integrated into the motif chart. My reasons for excluding LT are discussed elsewhere: in the present analysis, only parts of

LT taken from Lescot's informant from Mardin, Sebrî, are in question. LC-2 was collected in the same place and at approximately the same time as LC-1.

II. Childless rulers and the arrival of the Feast of the Sacrifice [A.2]

(ZK-2)

Rôjekê ji rôjê xudane, (9)
 Bi ser vî bajarê hade hati e'ydeke mazin [sic], e'ydeke qurbane. (21)
 Xwarzî diçûne malê xalane, (10)
 Birazî diçûne malê apane, (11)
 Bûk derk'etin ji malê xezûrane, (11)
 Berê xwe dane malî bavane, (10)
 Ji xoîra çûne zeyane, (8)
 Ev hersê milûkê ha k'urdê wan kore, warê wan undane, (18)

One day (of God's days),
 A great feast came over this city, the Feast of the Sacrifice-
 [66] Nephews went to visit their uncles,
 Nieces went to visit their aunts¹⁸,
 Brides left the homes of their fathers-in-law,
 Headed for the homes of their fathers,
 And went to visit their parents.
 There were three noblemen whose luck was dry, whose houses were
 empty,

(LT-Sebrî)

p. 1, l. 11-19

Rojekê ji rojê Xwedê, bi ser wan de hatiye Eydê Qurbanê, (20)
 Xwarzî diherin malê xalane, (10)
 û brazî diherin malê apane. (11)
 Elî begê, Emer begê û Elmaz begê derketine ser yazlixane. (22)
 Ji xwe re li hev nerîn û giriyane, (12)
 (15) Digotin: "Geli birano, em sê bira ne. (13)
 Emrê me şêst in, dikevin şêst û pêncane. (13)
 Rebê Alemê daye me malê girane. (13)
 Emê warocax ê kordûnda ne. (10)
 Rojekê ji rojê Xwedê, emê serê xwe deynin diyarê rehmetê, axê gorane. (26)

One day (of God's days), the Feast of the Sacrifice comes upon them,
 Nephews go to visit their uncles,

18= lit. "Sisters' sons went to visit their mothers' brothers, /

Brothers' sons went to visit their fathers' brothers."

Nieces go to visit their aunts,¹⁹
 Ali beg, Emir beg, and Elmaz beg went out onto their balcony.
 (15) They looked at each other and [started to] cry,
 Saying, "Brothers, we are three brothers,
 We are sixty going on sixty five.
 The Lord of the world has given us much wealth,
 [But] we are without descendants or heirs.
 One day (of God's days) we will go to rest in the kingdom of mercy, in
 the dust of the grave..."

(LC-1)

p. 36, l. 3-15

lâkin sâ bāge vi bāžari hānā hārsē berāye hāvin āmmā aulād tūnnen
 kōre kōr oğayin wārwāndāne (34)
 rōjke [5] lā bin rūye xudē lā bāžari moyribē piāng 'id gāštine hāv yāk 'ida
 ānsarāne (30)
 yāk 'ida yahūdiāne (8)
 yāgzi 'ida mūsliṁānāne (9)
 yāgzi rōyā gūlūs hūmāyun yāgzi rōyā nābiā wā enbiā rōyā Inā 'ida
 paiyāmbārāne (31)
 wā hārsē bāgāna pādīshāhi moyribiāne (15)
 bādārketin sār taxti sultānā sērū tamāše kirin lā ahāli moyribiāne (26)
 sākirin hārkāsiki xēru wā xairāt d,ḥārīne sār māle bāvāne (22)
 būkā bā dāsti aulādixā girtin d,ḥārīn sār māli bāvāne (20)
 lāwīki čārdāh sāli suār debūne [10] lā hāspāne (16)

But there are three begs in this city, all three are brothers; they have no
 children, their households are empty, their lineage is lost.
 One day [5] in the city of Mughrib five holidays coincided, one an *eed* of
 the Christians,
 One an eed of the Jews,
 And one an eed of the Muslims,
 One the day of the imperial session, and one the day of the Prophets,
 Friday, Eed of the Seers,
 All three begs, the rulers of Mughrib
 [Sat] on their imperial thrones watching the people of Mughrib,
 Hearing everyone going to visit their father's house in goodness,
 Young wives took hold of their children's hands and went to their
 father's house,
 Fourteen year-old boys mounted [10] their horses,

(LC-2)

p. 53, l. 1-4

šāv dāhāte 'idānū arāfatāne (12)
 lā bāžari moyribē pē debūnā sā berāne (15)
 kōre kōr oğaye war wāndāne... (10)

¹⁹See note #18 above, at the parallel passage in ZK-2.

- Berê xwe dane malî bavane, (10)
 Ji xoîra çûne zeyane, (8)
 Nephews went to visit their uncles,
 Nieces went to visit their aunts²¹,
 Brides left the homes of their fathers-in-law,
 Headed for the homes of their fathers,
 And went to visit their parents.
- (LT-Sebrî) Xwarzî diherin malê xalane, (10)
 û brazî diherin malê apane. (11)
 Nephews go to visit their uncles,
 Nieces go to visit their aunts,
- (LC-1) säkirin härkäsiki xêru wä xairät d, hârine sâr mälê bävâne (22)
 bukâ bâ dâsti aulädixä girtin d, hârin sâr mälî bävâne (20)
 Hearing everyone going to visit their father's house in goodness,
 Young wives took hold of their children's hands and went to
 their father's house,
- c. (ZK-2) Ev hersê mîfûkê ha k'urdê wan kore, warê wan undane, (18)
 There were three noblemen whose luck was dry, whose houses
 were empty,
- (LT-Sebrî) Emê warocax ê kordûnda ne. (10)
 We are without descendants or heirs.
- (LC-1) lakin sä bäge vi bazarî hanä harsê beräye hävin ämmä auläd
 tünnen köre kör oğayin wärwändäne (34)
 But there are three begs in this city, all three are brothers; they
 have no children, their households are empty, their lineage
 is lost.
- (LC-2) köre kör oğaye war wändäne... (10)
 Their households empty, their lineage lost.

One feature common to all these versions is their end rhyme, which in all the versions in question is consistently in *-ane*. These versions are almost entirely in

²¹This is not a literal translation: lit. "Sisters' sons went to visit their mothers' brothers, / Brothers' sons went to visit their fathers' brothers."

verse, and the uniform rhyme continues for long periods²². The ending *-ane* appears most often as the plural of the oblique case of nouns, as is generally the case in formulas a. and b. above; at other times, it may consist of a word ending in *-a* plus the suffix *-ne*, which either serves as the plural copula (=we/you/they are), as in formula c. above, or performs no other function than to preserve the rhyme. As mentioned above in the section on poetics, Oskar Mann offered the convincing explanation that this can be accounted for by the predominance of feminine rhyme in Kurdish folk poetry. Whereas in ZK-2 and LT the verses are arranged on the page in verses ending in *-ane*, in LC-1 and LC-2 the original text consists of one undifferentiated paragraph. I have taken the liberty of arranging the verses on the analogy of ZK-2 and LT, with each line ending in *-ane* (or the appropriate end rhyme), so that visually it is easy to discern where each line of verse ends.

Formula a. is fully attested only in ZK-2, LT, and LC-1: LC-2 has only a vague analogue, as will be seen. The formula can be reduced to the following constituent elements:

<u>one day of God's days</u>	<u>onto the city</u>	<u>came</u>	<u>a great festival</u>
1	2	3	4

LT provides the ideal pattern for this formula. In ZK-2, the formula is realized as two consecutive verses, with element #1 as the first, and elements #2, #3, and #4 as the second verse: both *God*[xudane]²³ and *sacrifice*[qurbane] end in *-ane*. LC-1 is extraordinarily embellished at this point, featuring five enumerated festivals where the other versions have only one: the enumeration is not part of the formula.

²²i.e., for many pages in a printed text. See discussion above in section on poetics.

²³Here we have the noun *Xuda* [God] plus a grammatically meaningless *-ne* which performs no other function than to preserve the rhyme.

Whereas ZK-2 extends the formula over two verses, in LC-1 it makes up less than one whole verse, or 23 syllables out of 30 total: the remaining seven syllables, which consist of the first of the five festivals to be enumerated, furnish the rhymed syllable *-ane* which ends the verse. Moreover, in LC-1 element #3 *arrived at each other* - coincided [gāštine hāv] is preceded by element #4 *five eeds (festivals)* [pīāng ħd]. Although LC-2 can be said to lack this formula, the line *The evening of the Festival of Arafat came around* [šāv dāhāte ħdānū arāfātāne] seems to vaguely parallel the elements outlined above, as follows:

šāv	dāhāte	ħdānū arāfātāne
<u>The evening</u>	<u>came</u>	<u>Festivals and Arafats</u>
1	3	4

Here the second element is lacking; the first is a time expression, but a different one from what appears in the other versions. The fourth element of LC-2 is a paraphrase of its parallel elsewhere. Whereas in LC-1 a one-line formula is expanded into four lines, in LC-2 only one line occurs, and it makes only a vague allusion to the formula and its motif. In endeavouring to explain this, I would like to suggest that LC-2 was told by a less-skilled informant than LC-1, and that this truncated line is as a whole representative of LC-2, which is a relatively short version.

The number of syllables in this formula in LT is 20; in ZK-2, the first line consists of 9, the second of 21 syllables (30 syllables all told); in LC-1, the line consists of 30 syllables, only the first 23 of which belong to the formula in question. The parallel passage in LC-2 has only 12 syllables. This formula tends to be relatively long, 20 syllables or more: if the passage in LC-2 is included, it is conspicuously short, partly because it lacks one of the constituent elements of the formula, element #2.

What I have designated as b. is actually a series of enumerations consisting of several verses displaying the same formulaic pattern, and I shall therefore consider them together as a unit. This is reminiscent of what Ritzke-Rutherford calls *formulaic system*, defined as

a group of half-lines, usually loosely related metrically and semantically, which are related in form by the identical relative placement of two elements²⁴

If we remove the limitation of 'a group of half-lines,' the definition describes the phenomenon at hand. The pattern is as follows:

<u>IA relative</u>	goes	to the house of	<u>la relative</u>
1	2	3	4

The first two verses of ZK-2 are clearly cognate to LT; the third and fourth verses of ZK-2 bear similarities to LC-1. LT and LC-1 do not share any of the same cognate verses, although their patterns are similar. There are only two differences between the verses common to ZK-2 and LT: 1) The tense of the verb is different, ZK-2 having the past continuous *they were going* [diçûne] where LT has the (irregular) present tense *they go* [diherin]; and 2) The second line of LT begins with the conjunction *and* [û].

The pattern outlined above requires some adjustments to fit LC-1. First of all, the first verse begins with an additional element, the verb *they heard (that...)* [säkirin]; secondly, element #1 in the pattern is replaced by a pronoun *everyone of* [härkäsikī] and its modifiers *goodness and good things* [xëru wā xairāt]; thirdly, the second verse adds an element between #1 and #2: *by the hands of their*

²⁴Donald K. Fry, Jr., *Aesthetic Applications of Oral-Formulaic Theory: Judith*, 199-216a. Dissertation (Berkeley: University of California), p.36, as quoted in: Ritzke-Rutherford. *ibid.*, p. 72.

children they took = they took their children by the hand [bǎ dǎstī aulǎdīxǎ gǐrtīn], so that the subject, element #1, has two verb complements, one a transitive past tense verb *they took* [gǐrtīn] and one a present tense intransitive verb *they go* [dǎhǎrīn]. Verses three and four of ZK-2 also contain a shared subject *brides* = daughters-in-law [būk] with two verb complements, *they came out* [derk'etin] in line three, and *they headed for* [beré xwe dane] in line four: hence element #1 is not repeated in line four, and is therefore absent. Consequently, ZK-2 and LC-1 share the word *brides* [būk - būkā] and elements #3 and #4 *their fathers' houses* [malī bavane - sār māli/mālē bāvāne].

Hence, while the similarity between the verses in ZK-2 and LT is readily apparent, the relationship between ZK-2 and LC-1 requires some explanation. The same is true of the syllable count: both ZK-2 and LT have ten or eleven syllables in each verse, whereas the verses in LC-1 are considerably longer, containing twenty to twenty two syllables each.

Formulas a. and b. are logically related, and co-occur in the same order in all three versions²⁵. Formula c., while part of the same general theme, is not as tightly connected to the preceding two formulas, following them in three cases (ZK-2, LT, and LC-2), preceding them in one (LC-1). The underlying pattern is²⁶:

<u>With one's hearth blind</u>	<u>with one's encampment lost</u>
1	2

²⁵excluding LC-2, which lacks formula b. altogether.

²⁶I have translated the idioms literally for the purposes of the analysis. *Blind of hearth* [korocax] actually means "childless," and *lost of encampment* [warwunda] means "extinct" in speaking of a family line.

In LT, the *dengbêj* seems to have made a slip of the tongue, saying [warocax ê kordûnda], transposing the first element in each of the two expressions, where he probably meant to say [*korocax ê war wunda]. [Warocax] means “dwelling” or “residence,” and [kordûnda] yields no meaning in the dictionaries I consulted. In ZK-2, the first element is *their Kurd is blind* [k’urdê wan kore], which is explained as meaning “unfortunate.” If we replaced [k’urd] with [ocax], we would have basically the same expression as in LC-1 and LC-2.

One curious point about this formula is that it can take up the entire line, as in LC-2, or just part of the line, as in LC-1. In ZK-2 and LT, there is one element preceding element #1: in ZK-2 it is *these three rulers* [ev hersê milûkê ha], a noun and its modifiers, and in LT it is *we* [em- + -ê], a pronoun plus an untranslatable complement. The formula itself tends to consist of anywhere from eight or eleven syllables. In LC-2 the verse is ten syllables long; in LC-1, the last ten syllables of the 34 in the verse make up the formula. In ZK-2, the final eleven of the eighteen syllables in the verse constitute the formula, and in LT, a ten-syllable verse, the formula includes all but the first two syllables (i.e., the formula makes up eight of the ten syllables).

The geographic distribution of the versions of M&Z which feature these formulas is indicated in the following chart²⁷. Although all the versions come from the same general area, LT-Sebrî and ZK-2 are from the two adjacent provinces of Mardin and Diyarbekir, making them closer to each other than either is to the versions from Zincirli in what is now the western part of the province of Gaziantep. LC-1 and LC-2 are unique in that they were collected by Le Coq from two men from the

²⁷See also map (Figure 7a) in Chapter Seven.

same village: the similarities between them give us some clues as to a regional ecotype, i.e., the form the story of M&Z assumes in a particular geographical area²⁸.

Version	Informant	Date	Place	Collector
LC-1	Ja'far Oğlu Seidi Bîyā	1901	Zincirli (or Kilis?), Gaziantep, T	Albert von Le Coq
LC-2	Ali Gāwānde Dālika	1901	Zincirli (or Kilis?), Gaziantep, T	Albert von Le Coq
LT-Sebrî	Sebrî	c.1940	Mardin, T	Roger Lescot
ZK-2	Ohanyan Israēl	1970	Hiznemîr, Diyarbakir, T ²⁹	Ordixanê Celîl?

The second of the three contexts I will examine is that in which formulas are repeated more than once within one version. This phenomenon is to be found in all Kurdish language versions that I have read. The formula cluster examined below occurs several times within a single version, while having parallels in other versions as well.

²⁸As will be seen in Chapter Seven, LT-Sebrî and ZK-2 belong to the central zone, while LC-1 and LC-2 are in the western zone, vis-à-vis the geographical spread of M&Z.

²⁹Although this version was collected in Soviet Armenia, the informant, an Armenian named Ohanyan Israēl, was born in 1910 in the village of Hiznemîr in the province of Diyarbakir, and lived there until age 17, when he fled with his family across the border to Qamişli, Syria. He remained there until 1966, when he moved with his family to the sovkhos of Arteniyej in the district of Talln, Soviet Armenia. According to the notes at the back of *Zargotina K'urda*, Ohanyan Israēl learned his material from Yahoê Mistê Qulo, a Kurd from the village of Bolind, adjacent to Hiznemîr (between 1910 and 1927).

The following are the repeated passages within each version. The first seven occurrences (three from PS, three from ZK-3, and one from ZK-2) include the formulaic phrase "a newborn dove", while the remaining fifteen occurrences lack it. Nevertheless, the two sub-groups are obviously cognate, because: a) they are used at the same points in the story; and b) there are formulaic phrases other than the aforementioned one which are common to both sub-groups. This suggests that in a formula cluster, not all of the constituent formulas need be present.

III. Description of Zîn

- | | | | |
|---------------|---|------|--|
| (PS)a | ḥaci zîna žhva zîna, | (7) | |
| p.74, l. 7-8 | au kavōka nū-farḥîna, | (8) | |
| | au ḥuška mire-mina mîr zeidîna. | (11) | |
| | Zin is just Zin, | | |
| | A newborn dove, | | |
| | The sister of my Mir Zeidin. | | |
| (PS)b | yadi au buḥva zîna | (7) | |
| p.75, l. 9-11 | au kavōka nu-farḥîna, | (8) | |
| | au ḥuška mîr zeidîna. | (7) | |
| | The other one is Zin herself, | | |
| | A newborn dove, | | |
| | The sister of Mir Zeidin. | | |
| (PS)c | bō-cē nābēzi yārkā-min zîna, | (10) | |
| p.80, l. 8-9 | au kavōka nū-farḥîna, | (8) | |
| | ḥuškā mîrē-mina mîr zeidîna. | (10) | |
| | Why don't you say your beloved is Zin ³⁰ , | | |
| | The newborn dove, | | |
| | Sister of my prince, Mir Zeidin? | | |
| (ZK-3)a | Dibê, ew stîya Zîne, | (7) | |
| p.91 | Kewoka nû ferxîne, | (7) | |
| | Xuyê t'ac, e'mbaré zêrîne, | (9) | |
| | Xuka mîr Zêydîne, | (6) | |
| | Domama Qeret'ajdîne, | (8) | |

³⁰-lit. Why don't you say, "My beloved is Zin ..."

Welat û memlek'etê wênekê li Cizra Bota dimîne. (19)
 [He says,] this is Stîya Zîn,
 A new-born dove,
 Possessed of a crown of golden amber,
 The sister of mîr Zêydîn,
 The cousin of Qeretajdîn,
 Her native land is Jizra Botan.

(ZK-3)b*
 p.105 Ewa pêşî ko tu dibînî, jêra dibêjin stîya Zîne, (18)
 kewoka nû ferxîne, (7)
 xayê t'ac û e'mbarê zêrîne, (10)
 xuka mîr Zêydîne, (6)
 domama Qeret'ajdîne (8)
 Do you see the one in front? They call her Lady Zîn,
 a new-born dove,
 possessed of a crown of golden amber,
 the sister of mîr Zêydîn,
 the cousin of Qeretajdîn

(ZK-3)c
 p.108 Memo dibêje: "Ya mîrê min, wel, ko Bek'o digotî, (16)
 Pêrîya dilê min disotî, (9)
 Muhuba dilê min ko heye, jêra dibêjin Zîne, (16)
 Kewokeke nû ferxîne, (8)
 Xuka mîr Zeydîne, (6)
 Domama Qeret'ajdîne." (8)
 He says, "My mîr, what Beko says
 Has me quite upset
 I do have a beloved, they call her Zîn,
 A new-born dove,
 The sister of mîr Zêydîn,
 The cousin of Qeretajdîn."

(ZK-2)a
 p.81 Memê dibê: "Beko, ya min Zîne, Zîne û Zîne, (15)
 Kevokeke nû ferxîne, (8)
 Waye, xu ji navkê û bi jorva ji mîra di p'encerêda dertîne, (21)
 Ji ek'sê te û bavê te, xuka mîrê te mîr Zêydîne." (18)
 Memê said, "Beko, the one I want is Zîn, it's Zîn and it's
 Zîn,
 A newborn dove, she's gazing down at me through the
 window screen,

* Attestations marked with an asterisk occur in the text as if they were prose; i.e., they are not originally aligned on the printed page in separate verses, but rather appear as part of a prose passage. I have taken the liberty of arranging them so that the individual verses are easily discernible; the first word of each verse remains in lower case, as in the original attestation.

Unlike you and your father, she's the sister of your prince
Mîr Zêydîn."

(ZK-2)b
p.80

Memê dibê: "Qeret'ajdîn, tiştê ko dilê min dixast stîya Zîne, (16)
Xua mîr Zêydîne," (5 or 6)
Memê said, "Qeretajdîn, the one I wanted was Lady Zîn,
The sister of Mîr Zêydîn,"

[(HM)a
p.6

az zānim dārgestîja tā kîje. hwaşkâ mîr sâvdîna (prose: 16)
I know who your betrothed is. It is the sister of mîr
Sevdîn.]

(HM)b
p.10

arê lō lō bakō awânō. (9)
tâ şwîr u mişhâf le-bâr me d'-aninō. (11)
hodê ;âlâmê : surâja dôstê me tuninō, (14)
z'-halafe jeki . nâvê wî zinêja. (11)
qîza hâtunê qarataşdîna, (10)
hwaşkâ mîr sâvdîna... " (6)
"Yes lo lo o Bâko Awâno.
You placed sword and Koran before me.
God knows that I don't have a herd of lovers,
There is only one: her name is Zînê.
She is the daughter of the lady of Qaratajdin,
The sister of mîr Sevdîn."

(LC-1)a
p.39, 1.125-8

min pîrs kir av qizâ kie dugō qizâ mîrî 'azîm (16)
xûçikâ mîr zândîn (6)
dutmâma hasân çakō qumsî-bakû qarataşdîne (16)
nâvixâ dilbâr zîne ...' (7)
I asked, 'Whose daughter is she?'
They said, 'She is the daughter of Mîr 'Azîm,
the sister of Mîr Zandin,
the first cousin of Hasan-Cheko, Qumsî-Beko,
Qaratashdîn,
Her name is Dilber Zîn.'

(LC-1)b
p.40, 1.175-6

zîne gō dilîmîn dîne (8)
pismâme min hasan çakō qumsî bakû qarataşdîne (17)
bāve min mîr 'azîme (7 or 8)
berāye min mîr zândîne (8 or 9)
bâ mûrâ dewên dilbâr zîne" (9)
Zîn said, " *Dilîmîn dîne*,
My cousins are Hasan-Cheko, Qumsî Beku, Qaratashdîn,
My father is Mîr 'Azîm,
My brother is Mîr Zandin,

They call me Dilber Zîn."

(SHa-1)a
p.203

Եա կու էազ դըրնագժ նա լըվրա.
Նավէ վի Զինէք, դիզա Միր Սեւտինէ,
Նաւէա Միր Ադլասայ, վէլի չգիր Բոթանայ,
Շանայ շինէ ունգիւայ.

Ya ku ez dixwazim na li vra (9)
Navê wê Zinek, qîza Mîr Sevdîn e, (11)
Nevîya Mîr Atlas e, velî Cizîr Botane, (14)
Şaneşînê rengine. (7)

The one whom I want is not her.
Her name is Zîn, she is the daughter of Mîr Sevdîn,
She is the granddaughter of Mîr Atlas, the governor of
Jezira Bohtan,
The colorful capital.

(SHa-1)b
p.214

Եարա Մաժէ Խաթուն Զին ա.
Խուշկա Միր Սըւտին ա, դիզա Միր Թաժտին ա,
Նաւիա Միր Ադլաս ա,
Վէլի շանա շինա ընէնգիւ ա.

Yara Memê xatûn Zîn e. (8)
Xûşka Mîr Sêvdîn e, qîza Mîr Tajdîn e, (12)
Nevîya Mîr Atlas e, (7)
Velî şaneşîna rengine. (9)

Mem's beloved is Lady Zîn.
She is the sister of Mîr Sevdîn, the daughter of Mîr
Tajdîn,
She is the granddaughter of Mîr Atlas,
The governor of the colorful capital.

(FK-2)a
p.294

Ya ez dibêm ew xewn rojek nîne, (10)
Ya ez dibêm ew Zîne, qîza mîr Sêvdîne, (13)
Baltûza Ç'ekan--Qeret'ajdîne. (10)
Ya ez dibêm, ew qîzeke bûkne, (11)
Bejna xweba kaşezekî hêşîne, (11)
Tîlî-pêç'îyê wê nermike-mijmiljîkne. (13)
Çiyê wê Cizîre, ew qîza mîr Sêvdîne. (13)

"The one I speak of is no daydream,
The one I speak of is Zîn, the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn,
The sister-in-law of Chekan and Qeretajdîn.

The one I speak of is a bride-like girl,
Her waist is [as thin as] a green leaf,
Her fingers are soft and tender,
She lives in Jizîra, she is the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn."

- (FK-2)b*
p.295 ...[dibê:] ya ez dibêm, ew xatûn Zîne, (11 or 9)
ciyê wê dixazin, Cizîra Botane, (12)
ew qîza mîr Sêvdîne, (7)
baltûza Qeret'ajdîne. (8)
...he says, "The one I speak of is Lady Zîn,
if you ask where she lives, [it is] Jizîra Bota,
she is the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn
[and] the sister-in-law of Qeretajdîn."
- (FK-2)c
p.295 Ya ez dibêm, canikeke bûkîne, (11)
Bejnêda k'ahezeki hêşîne, (10)
Navê wê k'eleş xatûn Zîne. (9)
Bi xwe qîza mîr Sêvdîne, (8)
Ew bûka Qeret'ajdîne, (8)
Ciyê wê Cizîra Botane." (9)
"The one I speak of is a tender bride,
Her waist [is as thin as] a green leaf,
Her name is lovely Lady Zîn.

She's the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn,
The [future] sister-in-law of Qeretajdîn,
She lives in Jizîra Botan."
- (FK-1)a*
p.262 --Ez Zîn-xatûnim, qîza mîr Zêvdînim, (11)
xûşka mîr Sêvdînim, (6)
nevîa mîr Etlesim, ji Cizîra Bota me, xwedana koçik serê rengînim, (24)
K'exbê hêşînim, (5)
eger rast dibêji ez bûka Qere-T'ajdînim." (14)
"I'm Lady Zîn, daughter of Mîr Zêvdîn,
sister of Mîr Sêvdîn,
granddaughter of Mîr Atlas, from Jizîra Bota, owner of a
many-coloredpalace,
[and] a green gown;
if you speak truthfully, I'm the sister-in-law-to-be of
Qeretazhdin."
- (FK-1)b
p.265 Ya ez dibêm xatûn Zîne, (8)
Qîza mîr Zêvdîne, (6)
Xûşka mîr Sêvdîne, (6)
Ew Cizîrê dimîne. (7)

Koç'kada t'imê dimîne, (8)
Ew li vira nîne, (6)
Bûka E'fîn-Qeret'ajdîne, (9)

Dest girtîa Ç'ektne, (6)

Xweya k'exbê hêşîne." (7)

"The one I want is Lady Zîn,
The daughter of Mîr Zêvdîn,
The sister of Mîr Sêvdîn,
Who lives in Jizîra.

She lives in a palace,
She isn't here,
The sister-in-law of Efin and Qeretazhdin,
The fiancée of Chekin,
She wears a green gown."

(FK-1)c
p.285

Memê: --Bekir, yara min ew nîne, (10)

Yara min xatûn Zîne, (7)

Qîza mîr Zêvdîne, (6)

Xûşka mîr Sêvdîne, (6)

Xudanê k'exbê hêşîne, (8)

Dîsa dibêm, xatûn Zîne." (8)

Mem: "Beko, that one isn't my beloved,
My beloved is Lady Zîn,
The daughter of mîr Zêvdîn,
The sister of mîr Sêvdîn,
Owner of a green gown,
I'll say it again, it's Lady Zîn."

(ZK-1)a*
p.47

Ez qîza mîr Sêvdînim, (7)

ji şêherê Cizîra Bota, bûka Qeret'ajdînim, (16)

dergîstîya Ç'ekanim, xweyê k'exbê hêşînim... (14)

I am the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn,
from the city of Jizîra Bota, I am the sister-in-law of
Qeretajdîn,
the betrothed of Chekan, I am the owner of the green
gown...

(ZK-1)b
p.49

Memê go: "Qîza wezîr, ewa, dilê min diñebîne, (16)

Ew li vir nîne, (5)

Li Cizîra Bota dimîne, (9)

Ew qîza mîr Sêvdîne, (7)

Bûka Qeret'ajdîne, (7)

Ew dergîstîya Ç'ekîn - şêrê zemîne, (12)

Xweya k'exbê hêşîne, (7)

Navê wê nazik, xatûn Zîne, (9)

Gelekê nola we qet reng û rûyê wê nabîne". (15)

Mem said, "Vizier's daughter, the one my heart loves,
She is not here,
She lives in Jizîra Bota,
She's the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn,

[au = ew] at the beginning of the verse (in PSa-b-c), or the indefinite article suffix *a/an* [-ek-] appended to the word *dove* [kewok - kevok] (in ZK-3c and ZK-2a).

As with formula b. in cluster II. above, formula c. is a series of enumerations consisting of several verses displaying the same formulaic pattern, which will be considered together as a unit. Any one attestation may have as few as one (in PSa-b-c, ZK-2a-b, HMa) and as many as four (FK-1a) verses with the formula, but most versions have two or three verses. This is perhaps the most distinctive formula in the cluster, and no attestation occurs without some form of it. The pattern for formula c. is:

is:

<u>Female relative of</u>	<u>Iman's name</u>
1	2

The most common words appearing in the 'Female relative' slot in element #1 are: *sister of* [ḥuškā - xuka - xua - ḥwaškā - xūška - xūčikā]; *daughter of* [qīza]; *granddaughter of* [nevīya - nevīa]; *bride* or *sister-in-law of* [būka]; *sister-in-law of* [baltūza]; *female cousin of* [domama - dutmāma]; and *fiancée of* [dest girtīa]. Lady Zīn both describes herself and is described by Mem in terms of several of her male relatives. It is interesting to note that in (LC-1)b, Lady Zīn enumerates her male relatives, using the following terms: *my male cousin* [pismāme min]; *my father* [bave min]; and *my brother* [berāye min]. I would argue that this is the same formula, seen from a female perspective.

Formula d. is of more limited occurrence, appearing in (ZK-3)a, and in all attestations for FK-2, FK-1, ZK-1. Sometimes it is only part of the verse, as in (FK-2)a, (FK-1)a, and (ZK-1)a. It consists of the following sub-groups:

Sub-typed1:

<u>Her place</u>	<u>Jezīra [Bohtan] is</u>
1	2

In (FK-1)b-c and both ZK-1 attestations, Zîn is *the owner of a green k'exbe/k'exbe* [=wedding gown?]; in (FK-1)a, she is *the owner of a colorful palace and green k'exbe*. The modifiers in -*in*- are *green/blue* [hêşîn] and *colorful* [rengîn]. In (ZK-3)a-b, Zîn is *the owner of a crown of golden amber*. Here the modifier in -*in*- is *golden* [zêrîn].

Formula f. occurs in only three passages: (SHa-1)a, (FK-1)b, and (ZK-1)b. All of them are at the same point in the story, when Mem is at the party thrown for him by his father in the royal garden [B.II.C. in the motif chart]. The pattern is:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{!Shel} & \text{here} & \text{is not} \\ 1 & 2 & 3 \end{array}$$

In (SHa-1)a, this forms part of a longer verse, and the order of elements is 3 - 2, *not here* [na li vra].

The attestations of this formula cluster occur at fixed points in the story: A) when Lady Zîn introduces herself (or is introduced for the first time); B) when Mem tells his father (or others in his native land) about Zîn; C) when Beko Awan tricks Mem into revealing who his beloved is during a verbal duel [D.VIII.B. in motif chart]; D) when a group of four or five girls is described, one of whom is Lady Zîn; and E) when Mem speaks to Qeretajdîn about Lady Zîn. The following chart indicates which of the five scenarios is applicable for each occurrence of the formula.

Version	Page	Scenario A-B-C-D-E
(PS)a	p. 74, l. 7-8	E
(PS)b	p. 75, l. 9-11	D
(PS)c	P. 80, l. 8-9	C
(ZK-3)a	p. 91	A

(ZK-3)b	p. 105	D or E
(ZK-3)c	p. 108	C
(ZK-2)a	p. 81	C
(ZK-2)b	p. 80	E
(HM)a	p. 6	E
(HM)b	p. 10	C
(LC-1)a	p. 39, 1.125-8	A
(LC-1)b	p. 40, 1.175-6	A
(SHa-1)a	p. 203	B
(SHa-1)b	p. 214	C
(FK-2)a	p. 294	B
(FK-2)b	p. 295	B
(FK-2)c	p. 295	B
(FK-1)a	p. 262	A
(FK-1)b	p. 265	B
(FK-1)c	p. 285	C
(ZK-1)a	p. 47	A
(ZK-1)b	p. 49	B

Of the versions of M&Z in which this formula cluster occurs, PS, ZK-2, and LC-1 are primarily in verse, whereas the other versions (ZK-3, HM, SHa-1, FK-2, FK-1, ZK-1) are prose narrative with sung verse inserted at key points. Hence, it cannot be said that this cluster is limited to one or the other type, unlike the clusters I. and II. above.

The version collected by Oskar Mann in Soujbulaq (modern Mehabad, Kurdistan of Iran) in 1903, which I have designated OM, is in a class by itself. As far as I know, it is the only version of M&Z that has been collected in Mukri, a northern sub-dialect of the Sorani (Central) dialect of Kurdish: hence, shared formulas between the Kurmanji versions and this Mukri version (my context #1), while not impossible, are unlikely. Nevertheless, this version, recited by Raġiman-î Bekir, is extraordinarily elaborate: it abounds in recurrent formulaic phrases (my context #2). In demonstrating this, I have followed Lord's method of taking a sample passage of fifteen lines, indicating which verses or groups of words are repeated elsewhere in OM. In searching for parallels, I limited myself to the first ten pages of OM, which in themselves provided ample material for comparison.

IV. The doves debate whether Mem or Zîn is more beautiful.

"bezâna, rûmâtî kâkâ mamî zarîftira yân cirâ û fanâra".

âû k'ê bû lã pãrî dã tarlãna,

shaqqizhniân la bãñî khõñân dã, dãñân-girtawa hau tabaqãñi âsmãnãna,

lã hîc kûêkiân wucãn nadãdã, hattã dãcûnã shãrî cizîrê, lã sar kõshkî

yãya zîñê dãbûnãwa miwãna,

5 dãbûn bã kõtîrî shîñ, dã kunî pãnjarãn-dã dãcûnã zhûrê, hañ-dãñishtin
lãsãrdãñãqãna.

khûshkî gaurã dãtê: "jãmîñê, sãfîñê, am'ñû bẽbim bã qurbãna!

inã bezãnîñ kãkã mãm zarîfa yãn yãya zîñ zedã jûãna".

khûshkî nẽwinjîñ dãtê. khûshkê, khufã hañnãgirê pẽm bedõrẽniawa
imãñê;

rûhî kãkã mamî lãwê rãhãtûa, awã rãwãstãwa dãkã sãirãnê;

10 ãgãr bẽtẽin: yãya zîñ zarîfa, rûhî kãkã mamî zîz dãbê, dãcê,

shikãvãtmãn lã dãkã lã kn sãhibî arz û âsmãnê.

ãgãr bẽtẽin: kãkã mãm zarîfa, rûhî yãya zîñ zîz dãbê, lẽmãn dãbêtã

arzãcî lã khizmãt pẽghambãrî ãkhîrî zãmãnê".

khûshkî cûkãlã kutî bã khushkãna:

"amîñû bẽbim bã qurbãna!

amã bayãya zîñê hañgîrîñ, bîbẽnã yamãmî gaurã û girãna,

15 bezãnîñ kãkã mãm zarîfa yãn yãya zîñ zedã jûãna".

Let's see whether Kakeh Mem's cheeks are more radiant or lamps and
lighthouses [are]

Who is this? Fairies [dressed] as falcons"

- They were flapping their wings, they were flying up to the seventh layer of heaven,
Nowhere did they rest, until they reached the city of Jizîr, they were guests at the palace of Yaya Zîn.
- 5 They became blue doves, they entered at the window [openings], they perched on the windowsill.
The eldest sister says, "Jemîn, Sefîn, may I be a sacrifice for you. Let us see whether Kakeh Mem is more delicate, or Yaya Zîn is more beautiful."
The middle sister says, "Sister[s], God wouldn't like it if I lost my faith. Kakeh Mem's soul has come from there, he's standing there, wandering about.
- 10 if we say Yaya Zîn is [more] beautiful, Kakeh Mem's soul will get mad, he'll complain about us to the master of the earth and heavens: If we say Kakeh Mem is [more] beautiful, Yaya Zîn's soul will get mad, she'll become a plaintiff against us to the Prophet of the end of time."
The youngest sister says to her sisters:
"May I be a sacrifice for you!
Let's pick up Yaya Zîn and take her to Yemen the great and powerful,
- 15 Let us see whether Kakeh Mem is more delicate, or Yaya Zîn is more beautiful." (OM, p. 28)

In the following discussion, I will discuss each verse individually, referring to each one as numbered above.

Verse 1.

"bezâna, rûmâtî kâkâ mämî zârîftîra yân cirâ û fânâra".
Let's see whether Kakeh Mem's cheeks are more radiant or lamps and lighthouses [are].

Cf. p 26:

khúshkî gaurâ datê bâ khúshkî cûkalâ: "khuṭākāi, khúshkê, rûmâtî kâkâ mämî zârîftîra yân cirâ û fânâra?"
The eldest sister says to the youngest one: "By God, Sister, are Kakeh Mem's cheeks more radiant, or are lamps and lighthouses?"

Verse 2.

áu kiê bú lâ pärî dá târlâna,
Who is this? Faines [dressed] as falcon?

The first four words of this verse [áu k'ê bú lâ –] constitute an example of the rhyme signalling device [RSD] discussed above in the section on poetics. The last three words [pāri dā tārłāna] first occur in the middle verse of a three-line stanza on p. 26. The stanza is as follows:

khāliq! hār atōi lâ sār hāmwāna!
 dēnā rūi zāmīnē sē pāri dā tārłāna,
 lâ sār kōshkī kākā māmī, brāhīm pād'shāi yāmānē dāiāndā sāirāna.
 O creator! You alone are above everyone!
 Three fairies as falcons come down to earth³¹
 Above the palace of Kakeh Mem, the son of Brahim, King of Yemen,
 they fly about.

Verse 3

shaqqizhniān lâ bâfi khōiān dā, dāiān-girtawa hāu tabāqāi āsmānāna,
 They were flapping their wings, they were flying up to the seventh layer
 of heaven,

The second half of this verse *they were flying up to the seventh layer of heaven* [dāiān-girtawa hāu tabāqāi āsmānāna] has several parallels, each one substituting a different verb in place of [dāiān-girtawa]. As Nikitine notes, this formulaic phrase reflects the Islamic belief that the heavens contain seven layers³².

Cf
 háfiān-girt, lâ pānjarāniān hēnā dārē, lâ sār bâfi khōiān dānā, lâ khuḷāi
 pāranāwa, hārākātiān lâ khōiān dā, cūna hāu tābāqāi āsmāna
 They put her on their wings, prayed to God, they started moving, they went to
 the seventh layer of heaven, (p. 28)

³¹lit. "Come down to earth three fairies as falcons"

³²Basile Nikitine "Essai de classification de folklore à l'aide d'un inventaire social-économique" in: XVle Congrès international d'anthropologie et d'archéologie préhistorique : Vle assemblée générale de l'Institut international d'anthropologie, Bruxelles 1-8 septembre 1935 (Bruxelles : l'Imprimerie médicale et scientifique, 1936), v. 2, pp. 1002-3

dāngī mālāikātān dāīgātē lā ḥāu tābāqāī ḥāsmānē
The sound of angels reaches it from the seventh layer of heaven, (p. 31)

hattā ḥāḥiān-girt, bīrdiān, lā ḥāu tābāqāī āsmānē rāwāstāwa
Until they took her up to the seventh layer of heaven³³. (p. 33)

In addition, this formulaic element is part of another full line formula manifested twice on p. 31 of OM, as follows:

kākā mām dātē: khātūnē, kōshkī min bilinda sār lā ḥāu tābāqāī āsmānē,
Kakeh Mem says, "Khatun, my palace is very high, its tip reaches the seventh layer of heaven, (p. 31)

yāya zīn dātē: mīr mām, kōshkī min bilinda sār lā ḥāu tābāqāī āsmānē,
Lady Zīn says, "Mir Mem, my palace is very high, its tip reaches the seventh layer of heaven, (p. 31)

Verse 4.
lā ḥīc kūēkiān wucān nādādā, hattā dācūnā shārī cizirē, lā sār kōshkī
yāya zīnē dābūnāwa mīwāna,
Nowhere did they rest, until they reached the city of Jizir, they were
guests at the palace of Yaya Zīn.

This verse has a very close parallel further down on the same page, in which the main difference is that the focus is on Zīn and her surroundings in the first, and on Mem and his in the second passage:

lā ḥīc kūēiān wucān nādādā, hattā dāhātīnā shārī yāmānē, lā būrjī
bātāk dābūnāwa mīwāna,
Nowhere did they rest until they reached the city of Yemen, they were
guests at Burj-i Belek.

³³=lit: "Until they picked her up, took her, in the seventh layer of heaven halted"

Verse 5.

dâbûn bâ kôtîrî shîn, dâ kunî pânjârân-dâ dâcûnâ zhûrê, haṭ-dânîshṭîn
lâsârdâṭâqâna.

They became blue doves, they went in through the window [openings], they
perched on the windowsill.

This verse yields two parallels, as follows:

dâbûm bâ kôtîrêkî shîn, dâ kunî pânjârân-dâ haṭ-dânîshṭîm lâ sâr
dâṭâqâna.

I became a blue dove, at the window opening I perched, on the window sill
(p. 27)

dâ kunî pânjârân-dâ dâcûnâ zhûrê, yâya zîniân wêrâî mîr mâmî dirêzh
dâkirî shân bâ shâna.

bô khôîân dâfirîn, dâcûnâ sâr dâṭâqâna.

They went in through the window opening, they stretched out Yaya Zîn next to
mîr Mem shoulder to shoulder.

They flew to the window sill³⁴. (p. 28)

Verse 6.

khushkî gaura datê:?"jamîné, sâtiné, am'nú bébîm bâ qurbâna!

The eldest sister says,?"Jemîn, Sefîn, may I be a sacrifice for you.

The first three words are part of a very common formulaic system, in which the middle word *eldest* [gaurâ] may be substituted by *middle* [nêwinjîn] as in verse 8 below, or by *youngest* [cûkâlâ] as in verse 12 below; the third word *says* [dâṭê] may be substituted by the same verb in a different tense, such as *said* [kutî] in verse 12 below, or by another verb, such as *asked* [pîrsîa] (p. 26); moreover, complements such as *to the sisters* [bâ khushkâna] may be added, as in verse 12 below.

³⁴-lit: "themselves they flew, they went to the window sill"

The second part of the verse *may I be a sacrifice for you* [am'înû bébim bã qurbâna] is a traditional oath, with some interesting variations:

khúshkê, ázid bébim bã qurbâna!
Sister, let me be a sacrifice for you! (p. 26)

khúshkê, ázû bébim bã qurbâna!
Sisters, let me be a sacrifice for you! (p. 27)

amínû bébim bã qurbâna!
May I be a sacrifice for you! (verse 13, p. 28)

khúshkê, wázû bébim bã qurbâna!
Sisters, let me be a sacrifice for you! (p. 28)

In three out of the four parallels, the verse begins with the word *sister/s* [khúshkê]. In verse six, the sisters are addressed by name [jämînê, säfinê]. In the same three parallels, the Kurmanji form of the first person singular pronoun / [az = ez] is used, rather than the normal Sorani form [(a)min], which appears in verses 6 and 13. This is one of several examples of Kurmanji influence in this version of M&Z³⁵. In all but verse 6, the formula occupies almost the whole verse, preceded in three cases by the word *sister/s* [khúshkê].

Verse 7.

injâ bezânîn kâkâ mäm zârîfa yân yâya zîn zêdä jûâna.
Let us see whether Kakeh Mem is more delicate, or Yaya Zîn is more beautiful!

³⁵One could even go so far as to say that the mere existence of the story of Mem û Zîn in a Sorani dialect is in itself an example of Kurmanji influence.

This verse has four close parallels, each one differing in minute details:

"bezânîn kâkâ mäm zârîftîra yâ yâya zîn zêdâ jûâna".

"Let us see [whether] Kakeh Mem is more delicate, or Yaya Zîn is [more] beautiful." (p. 27)

"bezânîn, jâ kâkâ mäm zârîftîra yâ yâya zîn zêdâ jûâna".

"Let us see whether Kakeh Mem is more delicate, or Yaya Zîn is [more] beautiful." (p. 27)

"bezânîn kâkâ mäm zârîfa yân yâya zîn zêdâ jûâna".

"Let us see [whether] Kakeh Mem is [more] delicate, or Yaya Zîn is [more] beautiful." (verse 15, p. 28)

"bezânîn yâya zîn zârîfa yâna mîr mäm zêdâ jûâna".

"Let us see [whether] Yaya Zîn is [more] delicate, or Mîr Mem is [more] beautiful." (p. 29)

This formula also bears comparison with the formula in verse 1 above: both contain the element *Kakeh Mem is more delicate* [kâkâ mäm zârîftîra], and both include a comparison of Mem's beauty with some other entity.

Verse 8.

khúshkî nêwinjîn dâfê: khúshkê, khuîâ haîmâgirê pêm bedôrênîawa
îmânê;

The middle sister says, "Sister[s], God wouldn't like it if I lost my faith.

The first part of the verse [khúshkî nêwinjîn dâfê] has already been mentioned above in the discussion of verse 6 above. The last three words in the verse have a parallel in the following:

aîngô tamâhtâna bämîn bédôrênin îmânê,
You are ambitious that I lose my faith, (p. 29)

Verse 9.

rûhî kākā māmî lāwê rāhātûa, awā rāwāstāwa dākā sāirānê;
 Kakeh Mem's soul has come from there, he's standing there, wandering about.

This is the only verse in the fifteen-line selection that seems to have no parallels.

Verse 10.

ägär béteîn: yāya zîn zārifa, rûhî kākā māmî ziz dābê, dācê,
 shikayātmān lê dākā lā kin sāhibî arz û āsmānê.
 If we say Yaya Zîn is [more] beautiful, Kakeh Mem's soul will get mad,
 he'll complain about us to the master of the earth and heavens:

Verse 11.

ägär béteîn: kākā mām zārifa, rûhî yāya zîn ziz dābê, lēmān dābêta
 arzāci lā khizmāt pēghambāri ākhiri zāmānê.
 If we say Kakeh Mem is [more] beautiful, Yaya Zîn's soul will get mad,
 she'll become a plaintiff against us to the Prophet of the end of
 time.

With the close parallelism between verses 10 and 11, the first part of them *If we say (X) is [more] beautiful, (Y)'s soul will get mad* [ägär béteîn: (X) zārifa, rûhî (Y) ziz dābê] constitutes two examples of the same formulaic element. The only difference is that the names [yāya zîn] and [kākā mām] trade places between the two verses. In addition, the second part of each verse is a paraphrase of the other: 'complaining to the master of the earth and heavens' and 'becoming a plaintiff to the Prophet of the end of time' are equivalent.

Verse 12.

khúshki cūkálá kuti bā khushkāna:
 The youngest sister said to her sisters:

In addition to the discussion above (see verse 6) about the formula system that this verse exemplifies, it has both an almost exact parallel, viz.

khúshkî cikôlá kutî bã khushkâna:
The youngest sister said to her sisters: (p. 27)

and several close parallels which make it clear that this construction is not merely a sub-type of the formula system discussed above at verse 6, but is rather a full line (whole verse) formula in its own right. The other manifestations of this formula are:

khúshkî gaurâ dúbârâ kutî bã khushkâna:
The oldest sister again said to her sisters: (p. 26)

khúshkî nêwinjî kutî bã khushkâna:
The oldest sister again said to her sisters: (p. 27)

khúshkî gaurâ kutî bã khushkâna:
The oldest sister said to her sisters: (p. 26)

As in the case of verse 6 above, any one of the three sisters, *youngest* [cûkâlâ/cikôlá], *middle* [nêwinjî], or *oldest* [gaurâ] may be 'plugged in'; in the parallel from page 26, the word *again* [dúbârâ] is inserted.

Verse 13.

"aminû bébim bã qurbâna!
"May I be a sacrifice for you!

See verse 6 above for discussion.

Verse 14.

amâ bâ yâya zîné háṭg'irîn, bîbênâ yâmâni gaurâ û girâna,
Let's pick up Yaya Zîn and take her to Yemen the great and powerful,

The second half of this verse, *Yemen the great and powerful* [yâmâni gaurâ û girâna], has the following parallel:

ägär kâkâ mäm mân nâgâîndawâ yâmâni gaurâ û girâna,
If we could not bring Mem back to Yemen the great and powerful, (p. 27)

Moreover, the word pair *great and powerful* [gaurâ û girâna] appears in yet another verse:

kôshkî mîn kôshkêkî gälêg gaurâ û girâna.³⁶
My palace is a very great and powerful palace. (p. 31)

This adjectival word pair is curious, in light of what is said below regarding word pairs or doublets. It is not unusual to have a word pair (such as *pavilion-and-palace* [k'öçk û sera]) modified by an adjective, e.g., *colorful pavilion-and-palace* [k'öçk û serayê rengin], in which the entire phrase is a formulaic element. In the present instance we have the opposite, a noun plus an adjectival word pair. Both cases are examples of noun-plus-epithet-serving as formulaic elements.

Verse 15.

³⁶Note the alliteration.

bezânîn kâkâ mām zârîfa yân yâya zîn zêdâ jûâna.
 Let us see whether Kakeh Mem is more delicate, or Yaya Zîn is more
 beautiful.

See verse 7 above for discussion.

Several of the formulas occur (with slight variations) as many as five times in the first ten pages of OM. Within the fifteen sample verses analyzed above, three formulas occur twice each (6 & 13; 7 & 15; 10 & 11). The version spans 57 pages of print, and supposedly took four nights to recite. Although we do not possess another version of M&Z from Raĥiman-î Bekir, by comparison with other versions, this one is extremely elaborate. The repetition of formulas is a strategy for 'padding' a story, particularly useful if the storyteller has an attentive audience that wants the story to continue for a long period of time.

Let us turn now to context 3) Formulas shared between one or more versions of M&Z and other stories. Formula cluster I. above is not limited to M&Z, as an example of it has turned up in a version of another Kurdish story, *Memê û E'îşê*. One version of Memê û E'îşê ends with the following lines:

{65} Ew bû ji e'mrê xadêye, (8)
 Jorda p'ostê gura k'etiye, (9)
 Wetê têca hilatiye, (8)
 Bûye gura serê çiyaye. (9)

This was by the order of God,
 From above a garment of wolves fell,
 Wetê³⁷ got into it,
 She became a wolf on the top of the
 mountain ³⁸.

³⁷Wetê is the name of Memê's mother in this story.

³⁸Mame i Aîshe - Memê û E'îşê," in *Kurdskie Epicheskie Pesni-Skazy*, ed. Hajie Jndi (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), pp. 15-[23]; 139-[146]; 239. This text was collected in 1939

Only the first two lines concern us here, however the poetic texture of this version as a whole must be understood. Unlike the versions of M&Z in which our formula cluster appears, this version of Memê û E'îşê is entirely in verse; the number of syllables in it varies between seven and fourteen, most commonly with eight or nine syllables per line. In the four lines above, the first and third lines consist of eight syllables, while the second and fourth lines consist of nine syllables each. The end rhyme can change every couple of lines, or it can go on for a long time without changing. In the above case, the end rhyme *-éye* begins nine lines above, and in our four lines it varies between *-éye*, *-lye*, and *-aye*. This is an important consideration, because in all the versions of M&Z which include formula cluster I. discussed above, the end rhyme is *-are* [ferware; xare; çare]. Although the texture of Memê û E'îşê requires a different end rhyme, formulas a. and b. of our formula cluster I. are discernible in the passage from it quoted above.

Let us compare the pattern for formula a. with Memê û E'îşê (henceforth ME). The pattern for formula a. is:

a. <u>IOIGod</u>	<u>lyoul make</u>	<u>a command</u>
1	2	3

In ME, the same three elements are there, although the order of the pattern is different, dictated by the exigencies of the rhyme scheme:

from a 55 year old peasant named Aloè Sq, resident of the village Tiseli of the Akhaltsykh district of the Georgian S.S.R. Although himself a member of the Celali tribe from the Turco-Iranian border region, the majority of Kurds in his district of the Cûnik tribe, from near Oltu in the province of Erzurum, Turkey (?; Oltynskii raion). Alo lived for a long time among the Sipki tribe who inhabit the Talin and Aparan districts of the Armenian S.S.R. Bibliographic references of other versions are given on page 239.

Ew bú	ji e'mré	xadéye
<u>[This] was</u>	<u>by the order of</u>	<u>God</u>
2	3	1

The second EP-1 line (the 'response') is closest to the ME line:

Xadéda	bú	ferware
<u>At God</u>	<u>was</u>	<u>a command</u>
1	2	3

In both, the same form of the word for God is used, [xadê], and the same verb, *was* [bú] is used. *By the order of* [e'mré] and *a command* [ferware] are paraphrases of each other. It would appear that the formula is flexible enough to adjust to different poetic environments while remaining recognizable.

Let us continue now, with formula b. of formula cluster I. above:

<u>garment</u>	<u>of dove</u>	<u>from above</u>	<u>make</u>	<u>down</u>
1	2	3	4	5

The parallel in ME is:

Jorda	p'osté	gura	k'etiye
<u>from above</u>	<u>garment</u>	<u>of wolves</u>	<u>fell</u>
3	1	2	4-5

Once again, the order of the elements is different; in addition, elements #4 and #5 have collapsed into one: *fell* [k'etiye]. 'Falling' is a paraphrase of 'sending something down'.

One interesting difference between the M&Z versions on the one hand and ME on the other is that in the former it is a dove's garment (Motif F821.1.6. **Dress of feathers**.) which God sends down, while in the latter a wolf's garment (cf. Motif F821.1.3. **Dress of raw fur**) comes down. At this point, it should be pointed out that this formula cluster seems to be limited to the primarily prose versions of M&Z. There are two versions that have a motif comparable to this, but belong to the group of versions that are told mainly in verse: they are OM and LC-1. OM is unusual because it is in Sorani (Mukri), a Central Kurdish or Group I. dialect according to MacKenzie's classification scheme, whereas the rest of the Kurdish language versions are in Kurmanji, MacKenzie's Northern Kurdish or Group II. dialect group³⁹. LC-1 is a version from the western edge of the continuous area in which Kurmanji is spoken⁴⁰, and is heavily influenced by Turkish. What is lacking from both versions is the request that God send down a dove's garment: instead, the doves (or falcons in OM) simply "tied fairy wings onto Zîn" (LC-1) or "put a splendid outfit on her" (OM). It is perhaps no coincidence that these two versions are also the most heavily laden with Islamic religiosity, particularly if underlying the request to send down a dove's garment is a pagan belief that the different animals have gods. In the Yezidi religion⁴¹ it is believed that different domestic animals have protectors [p'îr] which look after

³⁹D. N. MacKenzie Kurdish Dialect Studies (London: Oxford University Press, 1961-62) vol 1, p. xviii.

⁴⁰There are Kurmanji speech enclaves further west, just south of Ankara in Central Anatolia, in such places as Polatlı and Haymana (province of Ankara), Aksaray (until recently province of Niğde), and Çiçekdağı (province of Kırşehir), as well as in Sivas. These dialects have yet to be documented.

⁴¹a religion the majority of whose followers are Kurds. The Yezidi religion has the distinction of being the only religion whose liturgy is in Kurdish. For some examples of Yezidi prayers in Kurdish see: Karl Hadank, Untersuchungen zum Westkurdischen. Boti und Ezadi (Berlin: Institut für Lautforschung and der Universität; Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1938), pp. 39-60

them and speak to them in their own language⁴². Due to Islamic influence, such beliefs would then have been forced into a monotheistic mold, in which God looks after the various animals himself. For a truly religious Muslim, however, the whole idea may still smack of paganism: this could account for the muted reference to this motif when the narrator is a pious Muslim, as in LC-1 and OM.

Formula c. does not work in the context of ME, and is therefore absent from it. Nevertheless, the co-appearance of the same two formulas (a. and b.) in two different stories is noteworthy. It is unlikely that coincidence alone could account for this. What I have just demonstrated argues for the validity of Ritzke-Rutherford's concept of formula clusters vis-à-vis Kurdish oral literature.

At this point, I have given examples of the three contexts in which formulas may occur in M&Z: across versions, within one version, and between M&Z and other stories in the same genre. I would now like to examine certain formulas which a given informant uses in M&Z and in other stories collected from him. As mentioned above, we do not possess more than one version of M&Z per informant (*dengbêj*); hence, we are severely limited as to what we can say about the individual style of any particular *dengbêj*. However, since other stories and poems have been collected from several of the *dengbêjes* who tell M&Z, we can look at these other stories in an attempt to isolate stylistic features peculiar to a specific *dengbêj*.

E'tarê Şero, of the Kurdish tribe Ortîlî, which inhabits the Ashtarak region of Soviet Armenia, was born in 1901 in the village of Soybilax (Soğukbulak)⁴³ in the

⁴²see *Kurdskie Epicheskie Pesni-Skazy*, p. 126, note 28. Also: Rudenko, M.B. *Literaturnaja i fol'klornye versii kurdskoj poëmy "İUsuf i Zelikha"* [Литературная и фольклорные версии курдской поэмы "Юсуф и Зелиха"] = Literary and folkloristic versions of the Kurdish poem "Yusuf i Zelikha" (Moscow : Nauka, 1966), p. 53.

⁴³or from the village of Damaskane, according to Qenatê Kurdo [K.K. Kurdoev], "Derheqa şovêd Mem û Zîna zargotî û şova Mem û Zîna Ehmedê Xanî," *Govarê Kofî Zanyarî Kurd*

county (kaza) of Sürmeli, Kurdistan of Turkey⁴⁴. A Yezidi by birth, he was a literate peasant, who lived in Nork, a suburb of Erivan, capital of Soviet Armenia, until his death in 1974. He was a jolly fellow who loved to talk, and knew, wrote, and collected most types of Kurdish folklore, including folktales, romances, and songs. Two versions of the story of Yusuf and Zulaykha (Ûsiv û Zelîxe) have been collected from him, one in 1965 and the other sometime prior to 1976⁴⁵, as well as two versions of Zembilfiroş which he wrote down himself in 1933⁴⁶. The version of M&Z which I have designated EP-1 was collected from him in 1955. It is most closely related to ZK-1, FK-1, FK-2, SHa-1, and GNa, but in many places is more embellished than these, as in the first formula examined above, in which E'tarê Şero added a second set of formula clusters parallel to the first set, an example of how a skilled singer might lengthen an otherwise short song.

Let us now examine three passages in EP-1 which are similar:

Ew rojekê, [Zînê] pêşya carîê xwe k'et û hate nav baxê T'orkîrî, xweîa seyrange kir. (EP-1: #4, p. 184)
 One day she led her maidservants to the garden of Torkîrî, and made a picnic for herself.

...sibê t'emam werne baxê minî [=yê Al-p'aşal] T'orkîrî... (EP-1: #10, p. 187)

[=The Journal of the Kurdish Academy], 6 (1978), p. 83. The late Professor Kurdoev also states that E'tarê Şero *wrote down* this version and gave it to Hajie Jndi, a detail not mentioned elsewhere, and -- although believable -- is not verified.

⁴⁴Ordikhane Dzhaliil & Dzhaliile Dzhaliil. Zargotina K'urda = Kurdskiî Fol'klor (Moskva : Nauka 1978), vol. 2, p. 501 and Hajie Jndi (ed.), Kurdskie Epicheskie Pesni-Skazy. (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), p. 242.

⁴⁵[1965] Ch.Kh. Bakaev. Rol' IAzykovykh Kontaktov v Razvitiî IAzyka Kurdov SSSR (Moskva : Nauka 1977), p. 189-211 and [pre 1976?] M.B. Rudenko. Literaturnaia i Fol'klornye Versii Kurdskoî Poemy "IUsuf i Zelikha" (Moskva : Nauka, 1986), pp. 300-310, 336-247.

⁴⁶[1933] Ordikhane Dzhaliil & Dzhaliile Dzhaliil. Zargotina K'urda = Kurdskiî Fol'klor (Moskva : Nauka 1978), vol. 1, #10, pp. 189-194 and [1933] Zh.S. Musaëlian. Zambil'frosh : Kurdskaia poema i ee fol'klornye versii. (Moskva : Nauka, 1983), pp. 110-116.

...all must come tomorrow to my [=Al pasha's] garden Torkirî...

Ez u tu ji emê heñe baxê T'orkirî, xweña k'êfkin (EP-1: #57, p. 198)
Let's you and I go to the garden of Torkirî and take pleasure in one
another.

The garden of Torkirî (or the Enclosed Garden) is mentioned in three different contexts in one story. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say *a* garden of Torkirî rather than *the* garden of Torkirî. Upon close inspection, it turns out that at least two (possibly three) different gardens are intended. In the first and third cases, the garden in question is in Jezira Bohtan, while in the second case, it is in Mukhurzemîn, Mem's home town. How could the same garden appear in two different cities? If we look at other versions, we find that in ZK-1, for instance, the garden in Mukhurzemîn is called Xas-baxçe⁴⁷, whereas the one in Jezira Bohtan is baxê T'ürkîrî, clearly a variant of the name of the garden appearing three times in EP-1; in FK-1, the order is reversed: the first garden is **baxê t'orkirî**, and the second is **xasbaxçe**⁴⁸. We find him using this same formula in both of his versions of Yusuf and Zulaykha:

"Aqûb, rave em heñin nava baxê minî t'orkirî, wê derê hewzê minî mermer
heye..." (Bakaev: #4, p. 190)
"Agûb, rave, emê heñine nav baxê minî t'orkirî, wê derê hewzê minî mermer
heye." (Rudenko: #27, p. 300)
"Jacob, come let's go to my garden of Torkirî [or- to my enclosed garden], I
have a marble pool there."

Apparently *the garden of Torkirî* [baxê t'orkirî] is a formula which E'tarê Şero uses whenever he describes a large, well-watered garden belonging to a dignitary

⁴⁷cf. Turkish Has bahçe.

⁴⁸Because these texts are orally transmitted, there is no standard regarding punctuation or capitalization. In some versions, the names of the gardens are capitalized, while in others they are not. I am preserving the capitalization of the originals, which is not always homogeneous.

or ruler. This is an example of what Lord calls a *formulaic theme*, consisting of: "the repeated incidents and descriptive passages in the songs."^{44a}

The following examples deal with another aspect of E'tarê Şero's style:

Çûn gotne Al-p'asha, go ... (EP-1: #9, p. 186)
They went and told Al pasha, they said:

...Bor k'êlimî, disa gote Memê, go: ... (EP-1: #36, p. 193)
...Bor spoke, once again he said to Mem, he said:

...paşê Qeret'ajdîn gote mîr, go: ... (EP-1: #44, p. 195)
...then Qeretajdîn said to the mîr, he said:

In all three cases, the sentence narrates what somebody said, and is followed by a quotation. What is distinctive about the style is the repetition of the word *said* [gote - go] in each case, appearing the first time in a full form [got(n)-] plus a dative suffix [-el (=he said to...)], and the second time in a short form [go] often used in introducing direct quotations. In substandard English, one can hear such analogues to this structure as the following: "So I says to him, I says, ...".

Once again, a similar construction can be found in E'tarê Şero's tellings of Yusuf and Zulaykha:

Rojekê Sixir divêje, divê ... (Rudenko: #27, p. 300)
Rojekê Sixir divêje Aqûb, divê: (Bakaev: #4, p. 190)
One day Sîkhir says [to Jacob], he says:

Ew diçe cem Meyanê û divêje, divê ... Meyane divîne boşe, gerekê xwe aşkelake, divêje Aqûb divê ... (Bakaev: #8, p. 191)

^{44a}Albert Bates Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 24 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960; reprint New York: Atheneum, 1968 et seq.; reprint Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 4 & chapter 4 (pp. 68-98).

He goes to Meyane and says to her, he says ... Meyane sees that it is no use, she must reveal herself, she says to Jacob she says ...

The only difference between the use of this stylistic feature in E'tarê Şero's Yusuf and Zulaykha on the one hand, and in his M&Z in the other, is the tense of the verb: in M&Z he tends to narrate in the past tense, whereas in Yusuf and Zulaykha he narrates in the present tense⁴⁹. In both cases, the same verb is repeated, the first time in its fullest form [gote, divêje], the second time in its shortest form [go, divê]. Other examples can be found in E'tarê Şero's repertoire:

Hesenîko:

Xulam usa jî diçine divêjine Se'dûm-beg. Divên: ...⁵⁰
The servants likewise go and tell Sadum-beg. They say:

Heian:

Xweyê malê tê derxist, wekî diz xame, gote jina xwe, go: ...⁵¹
The master of the house guessed that the thief was naïve, he said to his wife, he said:

Bûk û stûn:

Āokê xasî gote bûka xwe, go: ...⁵²
One day a mother-in-law said to her daughter-in-law, she said:

⁴⁹In the present tense, the dative suffix [-e] is either absent or identical with the third person singular verb suffix.

⁵⁰Dzhalil & Dzhalil, vol. 1, #21, p. 253.

⁵¹ibid., vol. 2, #841, p. 200.

⁵²ibid., vol. 2, #844, p. 201.

As can be seen, sometimes the present tense is used, while at other times the past tense is. This stylistic trait is far from unique to E'tarê Şero, as the following examples from other storytellers indicate:

Aža û xulam:

...dît wekî hialê wî boşe, gote xulamê xwe, go: ...⁵³
 ...he saw that his condition was helpless, he said to his servant, he said:

Kurê feqîr:

Yekî gote hevalê xwe, go: ...⁵⁴
 One [fellow] said to his friend, he said:

In addition, there are also times when E'tarê Şero says simply *he said* [go] or *he says* [dibê - divê]. This is exclusively the case in the versions of Zembîlfiroş which he himself wrote down. This trait seems to work best in an un-self-conscious, oral context: as soon as an oral stylist is asked to write down a story, he is no longer un-self-conscious, and certain features of his oral style will disappear. This seems to be the case with respect to the narrator's role of introducing direct speech⁵⁵.

So far the two examples we have seen of E'tarê Şero's style, the way he describes a garden and the way he often builds up to a quotation, are taken from the prose sections of his narratives. Although Kiparsky finds prose material adequate for oral

⁵³ibid., vol. 2, #845, p. 201. The informant is Ahmedê Mirazî from the village of Qulîbeglu (now called Sovetakan) in the district of Hoktêmberyan, Soviet Armenia. He was born in Diyadin, in what is now the province of Ağrı, Turkey.

⁵⁴ibid., vol. 2, #862, p. 207. The informant is Cerdoê Esed, from the village of Sabûnçî in the district of Talîn, Soviet Armenia. His parents fled from Kars in what is now Turkey.

⁵⁵If I am right, then Professor Kurdoev's statement that EP-1 is E'tarê Şero's *written* version of Mem û Zîn is false. See note #130 above.

formulaic theory,^{51a} stylistic clues can also be gleaned from the poetic passages of E'tarê Şero's M&Z. In EP-1, the following two cognate passages occur:

Qeret'ajdîn bi brava hat derda, (10)
 Selam dane Memê di serda, (9)
 Hêja bûne çar bra hevra xeberda (11) (EP-1: #39, p. 194)
 Qeretajdîn and his brothers came inside,
 They greeted Mem first,
 They became as four brothers speaking together.

Gava Memê çû derda (7)
 Selam da mîr bi serda, (7)
 Mîr selam e'lêk' veda, (7)
 Sivik-sivik rabû ji berda (9) (EP-1: #43, p. 195)
 When Mem went inside
 He greeted the mîr first,
 The mîr returned his greeting,
 Rising ever so slightly to his feet.

The first two lines of both passages clearly consist of formulas. Both first lines exhibit the following formulaic structure:

<u>[Person]</u>	<u>came/went</u>	<u>inside</u>
1	2	3

In the first passage, element #1 has the modifier *with his brothers* [bi brava], and in the second passage, the conjunction *when* [gava] precedes the first element. The line is ten syllables long in the first, and seven syllables long in the second passage: the length of the former is explained by its containing the rather long name Qeret'ajdîn (four syllables) plus the modifier *with his brothers* [bi brava]. Moreover, the second passage consists of a series of relatively short lines (7-9 syllables

^{51a}Kiparsky. *Ibid.*

in length), which accounts somewhat for the length of the second occurrence of this formula.

The second line consists of the following formula:

<u>Greeting</u>	<u>gave/ftol</u>	<u>[person]</u>	<u>first</u> ⁵⁶
1	2	3	4

In the first occurrence, it is nine-syllables long, while the second is seven syllables. Other than this, there are no striking differences between the two. The rhyme is in **-erda** throughout, with one irregularity: *he returned* [veda] in the third line of the second passage, in **-eda**. Thus far, two attestations of this formula within the same text have been demonstrated. In addition, the formula occurs in both versions of Zembîlîroş which E'tarê Şero wrote down in 1933:

1. Zembîlîroş diçû derda, (8)
 Selam da xatûnê serda, (8)
 Xatûn sivik rûbû ji berda, (9)
 Dest qisê kir û t'ev xeberda.⁵⁷ (9)
- Zembilîrosh went inside,
 He greeted the lady first,
 The lady rose slightly to her feet,
 They spoke and conversed together.

As in the two passages from M&Z, the first two lines of this passage fit into the patterns for the two formulas outlined above. Line three is cognate to the fourth line of the second passage in EP-1, the only difference being that the first two syllables are [sivik] in EP-1⁵⁸, and [xatûn] in Zembîlîroş. The fourth line ends with their *speaking*

⁵⁶bi serda = lit. 'at the head'

⁵⁷Dzhalil & Dzhalil. *ibid.*, vol. 1, #10, p. 191 and Zh.S. Musaelian. *ibid.*, #1, ¶18, p. 112. The verse is identical in both versions.

⁵⁸which are repeated in the third and fourth syllables of the verse, yielding *lightly lightly* = very lightly [sivik-sivik]

together [t'ev xeberda], which resembles the third and final line of the first EP-1 passage. Hence, whereas within EP-1 itself, only the first two lines of the passage are cognate, the passage from Zembîlfiroş bears comparison to the last lines of both of the EP-1 passages.

The passage in E'tarê Şero's version of Zembîlfiroş has cognates in other versions, as is shown below:

- II. Zembîlfiroş hate derda,
 Silavek dabû xatûnêda,
 Xatûnê silav alek veda,
 Go:?"Ser-serê min hafî, ser herdu ç'ava".⁵⁹
 Zembilfirosh came inside,
 He greeted the lady,
 The lady returned his greeting,
 She said,?"On my head you have come, on my eyes"⁶⁰
- III. Zembîlfiroş çû derda,
 Ewî silav kire serda,
 Xanûm ji evînya ravû berda.⁶¹
 Zembilfirosh went inside,
 He greeted [her] first,
 The madame, out of love, rose to her feet.
- IV. [Dibê: "Zembîlfiroş, k'erem ke jor, xanûm te dixaze".]
 Zembîlfiroş çû derda,
 Ew xanûm bû, rûbû berda.⁶²
 [He says, "Zembilfirosh, please come up, madame wants you."
 Zembilfirosh went inside,
 It was madame, she rose to her feet.

⁵⁹Musaëlian. *ibid.*, #2, ¶8, p.117. Collected in 1964 in Tbilisi, Soviet Georgia, from Tafûr Mamûd, illiterate, born in 1882 in Dîgor, province of Kars, in what is currently Turkey.

⁶⁰i.e., "Welcome!"

⁶¹Musaëlian. *ibid.*, #5, ¶5, p. 130. Collected in 1964 in the village Koryokhaz Aparansk, Soviet Armenia, from Oko Silêman, illiterate, born in 1891 in Kars.

⁶²Musaëlian. *ibid.*, #6, ¶2, p. 134. Collected in 1964 in Tbilisi, Soviet Georgia, from Şamo Davoev, illiterate, born in 1894 in the village of Mîrak Aparansk, Soviet Armenia.

- V. Zembîlfiroş hatibû ji derda,
 Slavek xatûnê veda,
 Xatûn got:?"Tu ser serî, herdu ç'e'va".⁶³
 Zembilfirosh had come inside,
 A greeting the lady returned,
 The lady said,?"You are on [my] head, both my eyes."
- VI. Zemîlfiroş hatibû derda,
 Selamek xatûnê veda,
 Xatûnê got:?"Tu ser serî, herdu ç'e'va".⁶⁴
 Zemilfirosh [sic] had come inside,
 A greeting the lady returned,
 The lady said,?"You are on [my] head, both my eyes."

It can be seen from a comparison of all six versions in which this formula cluster occurs that there is another formula which is not in all the versions: *You are on [my] head, both my eyes* = welcome! [Tu ser serî, herdu ç'e'va]. As for the rhyme, [veda] occurs in II., V., and VI. *Eyes* [ç'e'va] represents an even further departure from the rhyme in **-erda**. In fact, only I., III., and IV. have rhyme in **-erda** throughout. In II., it is questionable whether one can speak of a rhyme scheme at all: each verse ends in something different, viz. **-erda**, **-êda**, **-eda**, and **-ava**. A similar situation obtains in V. and VI., with a different ending in each of the three verses. The fairly consistent end rhyme, in this case in **-erda**, while not unique to E'tarê Şero, is characteristic of his style: in both passages from EP-1 and in the cognate passage from his versions of Zembîlfiroş (I. above), the end rhyme in **-erda** is strictly adhered to, with one exception: [veda] in the second EP-1 passage. Moreover, the same can be seen in the EP-1 version of the first formula examined in this chapter, under I. Three doves ask God to send down a fourth dove's garb for Zîn. If I am correct in my analysis, it would also explain why the formula *You are on [my] head, both my*

⁶³Musaëlian. *ibid.*, variant Abdala #1, ¶9, p. 141. Collected in 1927.

⁶⁴Musaëlian. *ibid.*, variant Abdala #2, ¶9, p. 146. First published in 1933. Very similar to Abdala #1 (see the preceding footnote).

eyes = welcome! [Tu ser serî, herdu ç'e'va] is absent from E'tarê Şero's repertoire, as being too deviant from the rhyme scheme⁶⁵.

⁶⁵Another dengbêj, Ohanyan Israel, also employs this formula cluster in his version of Mem û Zîn. An important characteristic of his version is that it is in verse. Hence, this formula cluster cannot be said to be limited to either verse or prose versions of the romance epic. Ohanyan Israel's parallels are as follows:

Hate alê odê, silav di dîwanê werda,

Xulam û xizmetk'ar û Bek'o rābûn ji berda,

Memê qûna wî rānebû ji wan cîya û wan e'rda.

[Then] came to the hall, giving greeting to his diwan.

The youths and servants and Beko stood up,

[But] Memê wouldn't get up off his ass.

Go: "Gelî xulama, mîrê me, mîr Zêydîn, silav di dîwanê werda,

Em hemî rābûn ji berda,

û Memê rānebû ji wan mesk'ena, ji wan e'rda."

[Beko] said, "O youths, our prince, Mîr Zêydîn, gave greeting to his diwan,

[And] we all stood up,

But Memê did not rise from his place on the ground."

Qaweçî go: "Mîrê min Qeret'ajdîn, mîr Zêydîn hat ji derda,

Silav di dîwanê werda,

Xulam û xizmetk'ar û Bek'o rābûn ji berda,

Qûna Memê rānebû ji wan mesk'ena, ji wan e'rda."

The coffee pourer said, "My mîr Qeretajdîn, Mîr Zêydîn came in from outside,

Gave greeting to his diwan,

The youths and servants and Beko stood up,

In continuing to survey the applicability of Oral-Formulaic Theory to Kurdish oral literature, I will next examine the related phenomenon of word pairs (or doublets), which is common to all Middle Eastern languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Kurdish, among others. As for Turkish, G. L. Lewis states in his Turkish Grammar⁶⁶ that "on almost every page of the dictionary will be found nouns and adjectives consisting in pairs of assonant words," a description that is applicable to Kurdish as well. In Robert C. Culley's article "Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies"⁶⁷, he reviews the literature on word pairs in Biblical Hebrew and related literatures (e.g., Ugaritic). The linguist Yakov Malkiel has written a very nice exploratory essay, in which he calls such word pairs *binomials* and discusses this phenomenon with regard to English, German, French, and a few other European languages⁶⁸.

The doublets, both constituents always the same part of speech, can be a pair of nouns, adjectives, or verbs, either linked by a dash (when written down) or joined by the word *and* [û]⁶⁹. The paired words may be: a) alliterative, i.e., they may both have the same initial sound; b) synonymous; c) complementary in meaning, e.g., *mother*

[But] Memê wouldn't get up off his ass. (ZK-2, p. 84)

⁶⁶(Oxford: Clarendon Press, c1967, 1978), p. 236.

⁶⁷Oral Tradition, 1 (1986), 30-65; reprinted in: Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook, ed. by John Miles Foley (New York and London: Garland Publishing Co., 1990), pp. 189-225.

⁶⁸Yakov Malkiel. "Studies in Irreversible Binomials," Lingua 8, ii (1959), 113-160; reprinted in his Essays on Linguistic Themes (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 311-355.

⁶⁹There are numerous examples of the same word pair occurring in both ways in one and the same text, e.g., in ZK-1, where in the first occurrence of a particular formula, the forms [agir û alav(ê)] and [dil û hinav(ê)] are found, while the second occurrence has [agir-alav(ê)] and [dil-hinav(ê)]. In the following discussion, only pairs of nouns and adjectives will be considered: pairs of verbs will not be dealt with.

and father = parents [dê û bav] or *night and day* [şev û rōj]; or, rarely, d) rhyming, e.g., *lions and men* [şêr û mêr], a hendiadys meaning 'courageous men'. It is not uncommon for an alliterative pair to also be either synonymous, e.g., *friends and companions* [heval û hogir] and *servants and attendants* [xulam û xizmetk'ar] or complementary, e.g., *throne and crown* [t'ext û t(')ac]. Such doublets tend to occur several times within a given text (context #2), as well as having parallel occurrences across texts (context #1).

These doublets may modify the meaning of the individual components in several ways, the most prominent of which are: 1) hendiadys; 2) making the meaning exceedingly ornate; or, conversely, 3) keeping the meaning simple. As in the example [şêr û mêr] quoted above, the paired words may form a hendiadys, in which the paired nouns take on the meaning of a noun plus modifier. Some doublets impart a more intense connotation to the constituent words than either of them has when used alone. Hence, [xulam û xizmetk'ar] means something like 'all kinds of servants and attendants', creating an image of a large group of servants tripping over each other, whereas when "xulam⁷⁰" appears alone, it simply means 'servant boy', and "xizmetk'ar" is just a 'servant' or 'attendant.' Likewise [şim û me'sa(ne)] may conjure up an picture of every imaginable sort of footwear, although by itself "şim[ik]" is a wooden-soled slipper for use in the bath⁷¹, and "me[ls]" denotes slippers made of yellow leather⁷² or prayer slippers⁷³. In point of fact however, in the versions of M&Z

⁷⁰from Arabic ghulām غلام. *y (x̄) > x under the influence of izmetk'ar? [Suggested by Martin Schwartz, personal communication].

⁷¹according to Bakaev's dictionary.

⁷²according to Jaba and Justi's dictionary.

⁷³according to Izoli's dictionary.

in which the phrase [şim û me'sa(ne)] appears, it simply means 'a pair of shoes': consequently, doublets may also convey the simplest meaning inherent in the paired words.

The following chart consists of the formulaic doublets that occur in version ZK-2 of M&Z. In the fourth column, entitled 'Relationship', **a** = alliterative, **s** = synonymous, **c** = complementary, and **r** = rhyming.

Doublet	Meaning	Part of Speech	Relationship	Number of Occurrences
har [û] dîn	crazy	adj.	s	1
hebs û singdan	prison	n.	s	2
k'êf û hienek	pleasure	n.	c	2
k'êf û şay[ne]	pleasure	n.	c	1
oxir û felek	destiny, fate	n.	s	3
qîz û bûk	girls & brides	n.	c	3
rê û dirb	roads	n.	s	2
saz û sazband	musicians	n.	a	2
şêr[a] û mîr[a]	brave men	n.	r	2
şim û me'sa[ne]	shoes	n.	s	3
te'ji û t'ûie	hounds	n.	a/s	3
tevir[a] û bêr[a]	shovels	n.	s	1
t'ext û tac	throne & crown	n.	a/c	3
xîr û xalî	desolate	adj.	a	2
xîret û namûs	honor	n.	s	1

xulam xizmetk'ar	û	servants	n.	a/s	3
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In the aforementioned discussion, formulaic doublets were taken from ZK-2, a version of M&Z completely in verse. Now let us consider a version in prose with sung verse insertions. In the following chart, containing selected doublets from the first twelve pages of ZK-1, a sixth column has been added to indicate whether a given word pair appears in a prose or verse context:

Doublet	Meaning	Pt. of Speech	Rel-ship	No. of Occs.	Prose / Verse
aqil k'emal	û brains and beauty	n.	s	2	P-1/V-1
bertil û bac	taxes	n.	a/s	2	V
ça û qawa-	tea & coffee	n.	s	2	P
ç'ira şemdane	û candles	n.	s	1	V
dest û rû	face	n.	s	2	P
de'w û doz	fight	n.	a/s	2	V
eşq û şa	celebration	n.	s	2	P
e'yan k'ubar	û nobles	n.	s	3	P
gede-gûda	beggars	n.	a	2	P-1/V-1
heval hogir	û friends	n.	a/s	3	P
k'oçk û sera	palace	n.	s	5	P-4/V-1

k'urk û libas	coat	n.	s	2	V
lal û duř	jewels	n.	s	3	P-1/V-2
qeyd û çidar	chains	n.	s	5	P-1/V-4
qîz û bûk	girls & brides	n.	s	4	P-3/V-1
řeng û řû	good looks	n.	a	3	V
xulam û xizmetk'ar	servants	n.	a/s	3	P-1/V-2

As the chart shows, formulaic doublets may occur either in the prose section or in the sung verse sections. There is a tendency for a given doublet to be limited to one or the other: in the cases where it does occur in both, however, there is a definite preference for one or the other texture. Of the seventeen doublets in the chart, seven occur both in prose and verse sections of the story: of those, two occur once for each of the two textures (aqil û kemal; gede-gûda), while five display a marked preference for one or the other.

The fact that this type of formula, the doublet, occurs both in verse and in prose textural environments, is problematic for oral formulaic theory. Parry and Lord, as well as all those who have applied their theory to traditions in other languages, have made it clear that the theory is applicable only to poetry. In the case of M&Z, if not for Kurdish oral literature in general, a particular type of formula, the doublet, occurs both in prose and in poetry. Even if a particular doublet is more common in a prose context than in a poetic one, there are cases in which the same doublet can occur in both contexts. If, as mentioned above, the prose versions are paraphrases of a tradition

which was originally entirely in verse, then some of the poetic characteristics may have been carried over into the prose retellings.⁷⁴

Regardless of which of the two textures a particular doublet occurs in, the class of traditional pairs of words as a whole clearly exists both in prose and in poetry. Word pairs that occur in verse versions of M&Z, such as ZK-2, as well as in the verse sections of the prose versions, such as ZK-1 and FK-2, are perhaps the best candidates for consideration as formulaic building blocks. Examples of doublets that occur in both of the above charts, i.e., both in verse and prose versions of M&Z, include the following:

qîz û bûk
girls-and-brides

t'ext û t(')ac
throne-and-crown

xîr û xalî
empty-and-desolate

xulam û xizmetk'ar
servants-and-attendants

The doublet *(unmarried) girls and brides* [qîz û bûk], occurs in nine out of eighteen versions used in this study⁷⁵. Both unmarried girls and married women

⁷⁴It should be noted, however, that some of the word pairs are common in everyday speech. For example, dê û bav is the simplest way to say 'parents.'

⁷⁵[SHa-1], [SHa-2], [GNal], FK-2, [EP-2], EP-1, ZK-1, ZK-2, and MC-1. In OM, the same thing is said in another way, using 'jin û kiç' rather than 'qîz û bûk': this also switches the order of the elements. In Xanî's literary poem, the half-line *dûşîze û new'erûs û bîkr in* [= are girls and new brides and virgins] (second hemistich of line 349) is apparently a literary equivalent to 'qîz û bûk.' Note that three words are used rather than two, and the simple three syllables are expanded to ten, constituting one entire hemistich in hazaj meter.

share the distinction of being female: this is an example of a complementary doublet, calling to mind all sorts of women, or women both before and after marriage, the all-important line of demarcation in the context of a traditional society. This formula is not limited to M&Z: in a poem attributed to E'vdalê Zeynê recited by E'tarê Şero, the informant (*dengbêj*) for version EP-1, the following verse occurs:

Mîna berê	qîz û bûka	qe	dora xwe	navînim ⁷⁶ .
As before	girls and brides	at all	around myself	I don't see
=I no longer see girls and brides all around me, as before.				

In addition, it appears in another story, Dewrêşê E'vdî (Avdi the Dervish), as told by two different *dengbêj*es Ohanyan İsrâîl, from whom we have version ZK-2 of M&Z, and E'gîtê T'êcir, teller of version ZK-1. In Ohanyan İsrâîl's version (Z-29), we encounter the following:

Hicûma e'wil, emê bavêjinê	ser k'ozê	qîz û bûkê wane ⁷⁷
Attack first, we-will throw	on sheepfold-of	girls and brides their
=We will launch our first attack against the sheepfolds of their girls and brides		

Hicûma e'wil, wê bavêjine	ser k'ozê qîz û bûkê we kîka û we milane ⁷⁸
=We will launch our first attack against the sheepfolds of the girls and brides of you Kîkas and you Milas ⁷⁹	

⁷⁶ Ordikhane Dzhali & Dzhali Dzhali. *Zargotina K'urda = Kurdskiĭ Fol'klor* (Moskva : Nauka, 1978), vol. 2, #813, p. 97.

⁷⁷*ibid.*, vol. 1, #29, p. 279.

⁷⁸*ibid.*, p. 280.

⁷⁹names of two tribes.

Hicûma e'wil, li ser k'ozê qîz û bûkane,⁸⁰

=We will launch our first attack against the sheepfolds of the girls and brides

In E'gîtê T'êcir's version (Z-33), the following verse occurs:

Qîz û bûkê şêherê Êrê fadivin t'emaşê,⁸¹

The girls and brides of the city of Êr get up to [watch] the spectacle.

In all the above cases, the meaning is 'all sorts of women'⁸². The three occurrences in Z-29 are cognate, being three manifestations of one formula. The one occurrence in Z-33 is not related to the formula so well attested in Z-29, but rather is cognate to a phrase which occurs twice in ZK-1, and appears to be part of E'gîtê T'êcir's style. The relevant passages from ZK-1, both of which are in prose, are:

... sivê bira qîz û bûkê şêher t'emam bêne başê T'ûrkîrî
tomorrow morning all the girls and women of the city should come to the garden
of T'ûrkîrî (ZK-1, p. 48)

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, vol. 1, #29, p. 281.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, vol. 1, #33, p. 297.

⁸² This formula may be very old indeed, for I have come across an close analogue of it in the Genesis Apocryphon, an Aramaic text that forms part of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In column XX, in a description of the beauty of Abra[ha]m's wife Sara[i] at the time of their descent into Egypt (paralleling Genesis, chapter 20), the expression *betulan we-kalan* [ܒܬܘܠܐܝܘܬܐܘܟܠܐܢ], (=virgins and brides) appears [see: Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I: A Commentary* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971), line 6, pp. 62-3]. The full sentence reads: "There are no virgins or brides who enter a bridal chamber [who are] more beautiful than she." This phrase forms part of a poem which has no direct counterpart in the Biblical passage; the Aramaic text is an apocryphal account of it, reflecting orally circulating versions of the Biblical narrative. The long period of historical contact between Aramaic and the Iranian languages makes it possible that a formula could exist in both Aramaic and Kurdish. It should be remembered that three versions of Mem û Zîn included in the present study are originally in Turoyo, the Neo-Aramaic language of the Jacobites of the Tur 'Abdîn region of Mardin, Kurdistan of Turkey: this bespeaks a shared oral tradition between speakers of Kurdish and of Neo-Aramaic.

Qiz û bûkê şêherê Muxurzemîne, bi ewîntya fîzkirina Memê dilê her yekêda,
 qol-qolbûbûn,
 The girls and women of the city of Mukhurzemîn, each one with the love of Mem
 in her heart, strolled arm in arm (ZK-1, p. 48)

Hence, a word pair such as **qiz û bûk** may form part of several different verse-long formulas, as in Z-29 and Z-33. Although this use of the term formula more nearly fits Lord's definition, in that phrases of this type occupy only part of a given line of verse, I find it confusing and unsatisfactory to employ the term *formula* in describing both the formulaic phrase as a whole and its constituent parts. If the three verses in Z-29 are three versions of one and the same formula, then **qiz û bûk**, a fixed element within that formula, cannot be designated by the same term which denotes the verse as a whole. Robert C. Culley⁸³ makes it clear that there is a debate regarding whether or not word pairs should be considered formulas at all, at least in the context of Biblical Hebrew. In any event, a distinction must be drawn between building blocks, such as word pairs like **qiz û bûk** which are used in constructing longer formulaic strings, and those longer formulaic strings themselves. Albert B. Lord suggests calling a line or half line that is formulaic a *formulaic expression*, leaving the term *formula* free to designate the constituent elements of the verse; in the context of Kurdish folk poetry as analyzed here, the lack of distinction between a whole line and half line is unsatisfactory. Alternatively, the term *formula* could be limited to the verse as a whole, employing a term such as *formulaic element* or *formulaic phrase* to denote the constituent elements of the verse. The latter terminology has been used in the present study.

In ZK-1, there are two occurrences of a verse that are clearly formulaic, consisting of two (in one case: three) word pairs. They are as follows:

⁸³*ibid.*, pp. 202-4

Agir û alavê dil û hinavê qîz û bûka disotin, (18)
 Fire-and-flames heart-and-innards-of girls-and-brides burned
 (1) (2) (3)
 =Fire and flames erupted in the hearts and breasts of the girls and women,
 (ZK-1, p. 49)

Agir-alavê dil-hinavê Qeret'ajdn birava disotin, (19)
 Fire-and-flames heart-and-innards-of Q. and brothers burned
 (1) (2)
 =Fire and flames engulfed the hearts of Qeretajdin and his brothers,
 (ZK-1, p. 59)

Whether or not the word pairs are themselves formulas in the sense Parry and Lord have in mind, some of them regularly occur in verses which are formulaic, as demonstrated above. Others occur with fixed epithets, a context which is also formulaic. Examples:

lal û duṛ, bavê cewahir
 rubies-and-pearls, the father of jewels (ZK-1, twice - verse)

k'oçk û serayê rengîn
 pavilion-and-palace colorful
 =colorful pavilion-and-palace (ZK-1, twice - prose)

şim û me'sê zêrî[n]e
 slippers-and-sandals golden
 =golden slippers-and-sandals (ZK-2 and Dzhalil & Dzhalil, vol. 1, #29,
 once each)

This construction is reminiscent of another formulaic convention, that of proper noun plus epithet. Milman Parry first carved a niche for himself in classical

scholarship by devoting a monograph⁸⁴ to the analysis of the technique of formulaic epithets, and Albert B. Lord explains the concept in The Singer of Tales⁸⁵ in the chapter on the formula. John Miles Foley refers to these as 'noun-epithet formulas' in The Theory of Oral Composition⁸⁶, and gives as examples from Homer:

"much-suffering divine Odysseus," "swift-footed divine Achilleus," "ox-eyed queen Hera," "Gereonian horse-man Nestor," "goddess gray-eyed Athena," "Diomedes of the great battle-cry" [and] "Menelaos of the great battle-cry"⁸⁷

The literature consulted was unanimous in considering such phrases as formulaic elements: in fact, oral-formulaic theory was largely developed as a way to explain them. The same phenomenon can be found in M&Z, although once again not limited to a poetic environment. Some examples are:

Memê Mem	delal the lovely
Zîna Zîn	delal the lovely
Memêye Mem	nazîk the delicate
Zîna Zîn	nazîk the delicate
Bek'ol'yê] Beko	E'wan the troublemaker
Qeret'ajdîné Qeretajdîn	dîn the crazy

⁸⁴ L'épithète traditionnelle dans Homère (Paris, 1928)

⁸⁵ (New York : Atheneum, c1960, 1976), pp. 34 ff.

⁸⁶ The Theory of Oral Composition : History and Methodology (Bloomington & Indianapolis : Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 23-24.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 24. An example from Avestan, like Kurdish an Iranian language, is *nairē.man ō kərəsāspō-* "manly Krsāspa" [see: Christian Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch (Berlin & New York : Walter De Gruyter, 1979), col. 1053]

Al-p'aşayê	kal
Al pasha	the old

If we see the word pair plus epithet phrase as structurally equivalent to the proper noun plus epithet phrase, then we have a criterion for judging whether or not the word pairs are themselves formulaic. I would argue that whereas the phrase *Qeretajdîn the crazy* [Qeret'ajdîné dîn] is formulaic, the name Qeretajdîn by itself is not; hence, although *golden slippers-and-sandals* [şim û me'sê zêr(în)e] is a formulaic phrase, why should the word pair [şim û me's(an)] alone be considered formulaic? The additional fact that many of the word pairs occur in prose narrative, as well as in everyday speech, strengthens the argument that these doublets should be regarded simply as nouns, perhaps enjoying a status similar to that accorded proper nouns. Therefore, it is my conclusion that word pairs are not formulaic except when they occur with fixed epithets.

In this section, Oral-Formulaic Theory has been applied to the oral versions of M&Z included in the corpus. A definition for the formula and formula cluster vis-à-vis Kurdish oral literature has been offered, and three different formulaic contexts have been examined, with examples provided for each. The three contexts are: a) one occurrence of a formula per text, with obvious parallels in other versions; b) several occurrences within the same text; and c) one or more occurrences in M&Z with a parallel in some other story. As a corollary to this last context, the style of one *dengbêj* has been scrutinized in the light of formulaic evidence. Although most of the formulas examined occur in verse passages, there are also examples of formulas in a prose environment. Finally, the formulaic nature of word pairs or doublets has been debated, and the conclusion has been reached that in and of themselves word pairs are

not formulaic, although they do appear in formulas in conjunction with fixed epithets.



CHAPTER SIX:

Text



Doves, Jinn, or Angels?: Motifs Exhibiting Variation

In this section, the story of M&Z will be broken down into its constituent parts, and each part will be subjected to comparative analysis based on the range of variation exhibited across the eighteen versions used in this study. The method employed in this investigation is both comparative and structuralist. It is a combination of the Comparative Method (also known as the Historical Geographic or the Finnish Method) and Proppian Structuralism. Breaking the story down into its constituent parts is in keeping with the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp's methodology: he called these parts *functions*, but Alan Dundes has replaced this with the term *motifeme*.¹ Within each individual *motifeme* slot, indicating what happens in each version at that point is an application of the Comparative Method as pioneered by the Finnish folklorists Julius and Kaarle Krohn and Antti Aarne.

To give the reader an idea of what a *motifeme* is, let us start with an example from Cinderella, a tale familiar to most Westerners. In the version of Cinderella which has been popularized by Walt Disney, when Cinderella leaves the prince's ball just after the clock strikes the midnight hour, she loses one of her glass slippers in her rush to leave. In other folk versions of the tale, she loses a ring instead.² Within the motif N350. *Accidental loss of property*, the glass slipper and the ring are variants which fit into the same slot in different versions of the tale. This slot is an example of

¹See his "From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales," *Journal of American Folklore*, 75 (1962), 95-105; "Structural Typology in North American Indian Folktales," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 19 (1963), 121-30; reprinted in his *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, c1965), pp. 206-15; and "The Symbolic Equivalence of Allomotifs in the Rabbit-Herd (AT 570)," *Arv: Scandinavian Yearbook of Folklore*, 36 (1980) [1982], 91-8; reprinted in his *Parsing Through Customs : Essays by a Freudian Folklorist* (Madison : The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 167-77.

²See Anna Birgitta Rooth. *The Cinderella Cycle* (Lund : C.W.K. Gleerup, 1951)

a *motifeme slot*, and the different items that can be fit into such a slot – in this case a glass slipper and a ring – are *allomotifs*.³ Let us now cite an example from M&Z. At the beginning of the story, Mem and Zîn are brought together by three doves in some versions, by the jinn in other versions, and by two angels in yet other versions. The *motifeme slot* that these three *allomotifs* fill could be termed “*Characters who fulfill the function of bringing Mem and Zîn together*”.

The only other attempt to construct a chart showing correspondances between the various versions of M&Z was by Roger Lescot in the introduction to his composite text (LT)⁴. His chart consisted of six columns, entitled (from left to right) Version moyenne; Mişo; O. Mann [=OM]; Hawar; Xani; Macler [=GNa]. “Xani” refers to Efîmedê Xani’s literary poem. “Mişo” and “Hawar” refer to two of the three versions included in the pastiche that he created: his “Version moyenne” is the version that he intended to come up with as an abstraction based on all the versions, as if he were dealing with numbers, for which an average could be produced by adding up all the sums and dividing by the number of constituents. Only two of the eighteen versions included in the present study appear in his chart, OM and GNa. Why the other early versions were excluded is a mystery to me. Certainly Lescot knew of PN, PS, LC-1 (and LC-2) and the three FK versions: he specifically mentions some of them in his introduction. The chart is most useful for its comparison of Efîmedê Xani’s poem with the oral versions.

³The terms *motifeme* and *allomotif* were first used by Kenneth L. Pike in his *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior* (Glendale, 1954; reprinted: The Hague : Mouton, 1967) , by analogy with the linguistic terms *morpheme* - *allomorph* and *phoneme* - *allophone*.

⁴ Les Variantes de Memê Alan,” in the introduction to his *Textes Kurdes*, Vol. 2: *Memê Alan* (Beyrouth : Institut Français de Damas, 1942), pp. [viii]-xiii.

Kurdoev's article⁵ about the folk versions of M&Z and Eñmedê Xani's version is also a comparative study of the versions known to him (PS; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; FK-1; FK-3; EP-1; ZK-1). Differences between the various versions are discussed, but they are neither plotted in a chart nor listed in a table. According to Kurdoev, the Leningrad Department of Kurdology has been planning to publish thirteen versions of M&Z for some time now: this welcome addition to the field has yet to appear as of this writing, thirteen years later.

It is hoped that the following discussion, together with the accompanying charts and tables, will enhance the study of M&Z for kurdologists, folklorists, linguists, and students of comparative literature.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

I.A. Mem.

Mem is known as Mem, Memê, Memo, or Memê Ala[n]; in OM, he is sometimes referred to as Kakeh Mem [= 'older brother Mem'], and other times as Mîr Mem [= 'emîr or prince Mem']. Mem is short for Muḥammad, a very common Islamic name. The story itself is known by two different names, either **Mem û Zîn** or **Memê Alan**. The French kurdologist Roger Lescot used the term Memê Alan to refer to the oral versions of the story, reserving the term Mem û Zîn for Eñmedê Xani's literary poem. Although the distinction is important, the folk use the two terms interchangeably; moreover, there is another well known folk romance which goes by two names: the story of **Xec û Siyabend** (or Siyamend), also known as **Siyabendê Silivî**. Here, too, we have the same two types of titles: one consisting of

⁵ Derheqa şovêd Mem û Zîna zargotî û şova Mem û Zîna Ehmedê Xani, "Govarê Kofî Zanyarî Kurd [-The Journal of the Kurdish Academy], 6 (1978), pp. 78-110.

the names of the man and woman around whom the story revolves (although in M&Z the man is named first, whereas in Xec û Sîyabend the woman's name comes first), the other the man's first name followed by his tribal affiliation.

Mem is an only child in all versions but one (PN), in which he has a twin sister named Aminah, about whom we hear nothing after they are born. Two common noun-plus-epithet formulas are **Memê delal** [= 'Mem the lovely'] and **Memêye nazik** [= 'Mem the delicate'].

I.B. Mem's father (Al pasha)

Mem's father is generally known as Al-Paşa, Alan-paşa (ZK-2), Alan-begê (ZK-3), Ālā (HR-1), Mîr[ê] Alan (PS; HM). This is not his personal name, but rather means the *pasha beg* or *emir* of the Al tribe. Hence, Mem is Mem of the Al tribe, and his father is the leader of the tribe. In reality there is no Kurdish tribe known as Al or Alan⁶, however there was an ancient nomadic Iranian in the southern Caucasus people by that name. **Al** in Kurdish can mean 'a flag or banner' or 'a rock, boulder, or crag' (although this latter meaning is from a source of questionable reliability) and in Turkish, **al** is one of several words for 'red'; there is also an Arabic word **āl** meaning 'tribe or clan.' To make matters more confusing, the city that Mem comes from is shrouded in mystery: this will be discussed more fully below, under I.F.

In a few versions, Mem's father is given a personal name. In LC-1 (4.) he is called *şirin almā*, which is Turkish for 'sweet apple'⁷. In OM (5.) he is called Brâhîm Pasha or Brâhîm Padishah: Brâhîm is a Kurdish form of the Arabic name Ibrâhîm, known in Judeo-Christian tradition as Abraham. SHa-2 has a King Kachants, an

⁶-an is an inflectional ending, signifying the oblique case of the plural.

⁷Şirin elma in Turkish.

Armenian name, and PN (3.), which begins the story with a heretofore unidentified folktale, features Yusif Agha as Mem's [Mammo's] father.

I.C. Mem's mother

Mem's mother is unnamed in nine versions (PN; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1), and is not mentioned at all in seven (PS; HM; FK-2; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; MC-1). Among the versions in which she is mentioned but not named, in one (GNa) we are told that she is dead, but later on she is alive; in another (EP-1) she is a virgin living at shrine; in PN (1.d.) she is Yusif Agha's female cousin.

Mem's mother has a name in two versions: in LC-1 (3.) she is *zālixā xātun*, *kāčikā qorēišiāne* [= 'Lady Zelikha (or Zulaykha), daughter of the Qureishis']. Zelikha (or Zulaykha) is the name given to Potiphar's wife in Islamic versions of the biblical story of Joseph, and Qureish is the name of the tribe that the Islamic prophet Muḥammad belonged to. In ZK-2 (4.) she is known as *T'ēli 'iṣan*: this is comparable to Zin #1's second name in EP-1, *T'ēli Xatūn* [see II.A.3.b.], and to *Telli Nigâr*, the name of Koroğlu's beloved in the Turkish folk romance *Koroğlu*. **Telli** is a Turkish word which originally means 'containing wire or thread [tell],' but in speaking of brides it means 'decorated with gold or silver wire or thread': this latter meaning fits for the three young women in question, as they are all of marriageable age at the time.

I.D. Mem's servant Bengîn

Bengîn, or Bengîneh as he is called in OM, appears in only four of the versions included in the study (OM; ZK-3; ZK-2; MC-1). In addition, he also appears in JA and LT: in the latter he is called 'Begî.' All the attestations are from southern versions, but his absence from PS is striking in this regard. Bengîn accompanies Mem to Jezira

Bohtan in OM, ZK-3, and MC-1 (2.), but stays behind in ZK-2 (3.). In versions without Bengîn, Mem has a faithful companion in his horse Bor, for which see I.E. below.

I.E. Mem's horse (Bor): See also B.III.A. and C.I.

Mem's horse is named Bor in eight versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1), and Bozê Rewan (or Rewal) in two versions (LC-1; ZK-2). In seven versions, he is not named (2. : PN; PS; OM; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2), and in one version (HM) he is not mentioned at all. In the versions in which the horse is called Bozê Rewan (3. : LC-1; ZK-2), to which we may add LT-Mișo⁸, he is caught by fishermen in the sea, Motif B184.1.3. *Magic horse from water world* In OM (1.c.) the horse is unnamed, but is referred to as *espi bor* [= 'gray horse']. The word *bor* means both 'gray' and 'horse'; as a matter of fact, *boz* also means 'gray' as well as 'a horse or donkey with a grey coat'.

I.F. Mem's homeland (Mukurzemin or Yemen)

In most versions, Mem's native city is called Muxurzemîn or one of its variants: Şehirê Muxurzemînê (ZK-1); Mukurzemin (EP- 2); şehirê Mixurzemînê (EP-1); Mukher Zamin (SHa-2); Muxur Zemîn (FK-1); Muşûr-Zemîn (FK-2); Mkhur-Zaman [Մխր-Զաման] (GNa); Merxebzemîn (MC-1); bāžare moyribiāne (LC-1); Bajarê Mixribiyan (LT). In southern versions, however, it is known as Yemen (PS; OM; JA) or Bajarê Yemenê (ZK-3). In four versions (PN; HM; SHa-1; HR-1) it is unnamed, although in PN (3.b.) we are told that it is near the land of India. In HR-2 (4.) it is called 'the place of the Ala'.

⁸See LT, p. 16, line 137.

There is a curious sort of inversion in some versions (PS; OM; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-2): ironically, no one in Muxurzemîn (or Yemen) has ever heard of Jezîra Bohtan, when in fact it is Muxurzemîn that is a fictional place: Jezîra Bohtan really exists.

By gathering together the various forms of the name Muxurzemîn that appear in the various versions, we are in a position to make some guesses as to the meaning of the word. *Zemîn* is undoubtedly the Persian word *zamîn* زمین meaning 'land': this has a native Kurdish cognate *zevî* [= 'field']. For Muxur- we have the following variants: *Mixur-*, *Muxur-*, *Merxeb-*, *Mixribiyan* (LT), and *moyribiâne* (LC-1). I suspect that *Merxeb-* is a metathesis of **Mexeb-*, which we see in *Mixribiyan* and *moyribiâne*, from the Arabic word *maghrib* مغرب, meaning 'west.' If I am right, the forms *Muxur-/Mixur-/Muxur-* would have lost a final -b. An analogous situation obtains in the Kurdish forms *mitirb /mit'irp /mirt'ib /mirt'iv* [= 'Gypsy'], from Arabic *mutrib* مطرب [= 'singer, entertainer'], which exhibit the same types of metatheses, -tri- --> -tir- and -tri- --> -rti-: one need only imagine the disappearance of the final -b in the *Muxur-/Mixur-/Muxur-* group as a simplification of the consonantal cluster -rbz-, furthered by dissimilation in the labial environment (i.e., the two m's in *Muxurzemîn*). The *Maghrib* is the western part of the Arab World, the part of North Africa in which Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia are situated. Hence, *Muxurzemîn* could mean 'Western land,' or 'Morocco.'

What does this have to do with Yemen? Yemen is a southern land. The Semitic root $\sqrt{\text{YMN}}$ means both 'right side' and 'south', e.g. Hebrew *yamin* [YaMiN] יָמִין = 'right' and *teman* [ta-YMaN] תֵּמָן = 'south; Yemen'. Apparently, to the Semitic peoples, east was up: when one looked up, one was facing east, and one's right hand was to the south. In any event, Yemen is thought of as a far away and exotic place, as is Morocco: so also India in PN. My explanation, then, is that for the Kurdish peasant,

Morocco in the west, Yemen in the south, and India in the east were equally strange places, and Mem could come from any one of them. Incidentally, this strengthens the argument that the Al tribe to which Mem belonged was not Kurdish.

I.G. Minor donor figure.

The major donor figures, the doves, jinns, and angels who bring Mem and Zîn #1 together, will be dealt with below in B.I.A. : hence, the following discussion will be limited to other, less widespread donor figures. There is no minor donor figure in ten versions (PN; PS; HM; SHa-1; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2). Of the versions which have an initial stage [see A. in Scenes and Motifs], both the three that have a childless man as Mem's future father (2.a-c. : LC-1; OM; ZK-2) and the one with Mem's heroic birth (4. : EP-1) have donor figures. In A.2a-c, LC-1 (2.a.) has the Royal sheikh [šëxi hunkâre], OM (2.c.) has Veysel Karant of Mahidesht, and ZK-2 (2.b.) has Xocê Xizir (Khizir), who appears also in MC-1 as Xidir nebî or Xidir Eyles. Veysel Karant⁹ was a local saint who was a contemporary of the Prophet Muhammad: his grave is a shrine on the road between Bitlis and Diyarbekir. Xizir or Xidir¹⁰, generally depicted as a little old man with a long white beard who appears out of nowhere to help people in trouble, is a *Deus ex machina* figure often identified with Elijah the Prophet in Jewish tradition and St. Elias in Christian tradition. In Turkish he is known as Hızır, and in Arabic as Khidr خضر , from a root meaning 'green,' suggesting a connection with

⁹Also known as Uways al-Qarant or Wësulqarant. See M. M. van Bruinessen. "Other saints of Kurdistan," in: Agha Shaikh and State : on the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan. Thesis (Utrecht : Rijksuniversiteit, 1978), p. 275-6.

¹⁰For a monograph in Turkish on the belief in Hızır, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak. İslâm-Türk İnançlarında Hızır yahut Hızır-İlyas Kültü [The Hızır or Hızır-Elias cult in Islamic-Turkish Beliefs] (Ankara : Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1985), 229 p. For a brief discussion of al-Khidr in an Egyptian context [in English], see Susan Slyomovics. The Merchant of Art: An Egyptian Hilali Oral Epic Poet in Performance (Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, 1987), p. 12.

fertility. In EP-1 (A.4. in Scenes and Motifs) the donor figures who are instrumental in Mem's conception are three riders, guides of luck and fortune.

In SHa-2 and GNa, when Mem is intent upon healing Bor's wounds in the transitional stage [C.I.], the doves from the beginning of the story reappear and give Mem one (SHa-2) [or three (GNa)] of their feathers, instructing him to dip it in water and then to rub Bor's wounds with it: this heals his wounds.

When Mem faints after finding Zîn #1's ring on his finger [B.II.A-B.], in ZK-1 his father finds an old man [Kalê zemanê] who tells him what is wrong with Mem and what to do about it. This is not as clearcut a case as the others listed here, as no magic is performed.

II.A. Zîn [#1]

Zîn #1 is called Zîn or Zînê, and her name is oftentimes accompanied by epithets, e.g. dilbâr zîne or zîna zêidâne (LC-1), zînê sittîâ bohtâ (PS). In some versions she is called Lady Zîn: Zîn xatûn (FK-2; FK-1); Xatûn Zîn (ZK-1; MC-1); Khatun Zîn (SHa-2); Stîya Zîn (ZK-3; ZK-2); Sityâ Zîn (HR-1); Yay Zîn (Yaya Zîn) (OM). In EP-1 she has the additional name of T'êlî Xatûn: this is discussed above under I.C. Zîn is supposedly a shortened form of the Arabic name Zaynab, known best to westerners in the Greek form Zenobia.

There are several references to Zîn featuring some form of the word **sittî**: zînê sittîâ bohtâ (PS); Stîya Zîn (ZK-3; ZK-2); Sityâ Zîn (HR-1); Sittîye (HR-1). As will be seen below in II.L, Qeretajdîn's wife, i.e. Zîn's elder sister, is often called **Sittî**: this is the case in Eñmedê Xanî's literary poem as well. The word resembles the colloquial Arabic way of saying 'my lady,' namely **sittî**. Hence, in some cases it is taken as the equivalent of **xatûn** or **yay** (OM), meaning 'lady,' while in other cases it is a proper name in its own right.

Two common noun-plus-epithet formulas are **Zîna delal** [= 'Zîn the lovely'] and **Zîna nazîk** [= 'Zîn the delicate']. It is noteworthy that the same epithets often accompany Mem's name.

II.B. Mîr Sêvdîn, emir of Jezira Bohtan

The Mîr's name has three main forms: Mîr Sêvdîn, Mîr Zeydîn, and Mîr Zêndîn. Hybrid forms such as Mîr Zêvdîn and Mîr Seydîn also occur, but it is interesting to note that each of these hybrids occurs together with the form Mîr Sêvdîn: in FK-1, Mîr Sêvdîn is Zîn #1's brother, while Mîr Zêvdîn is her father; likewise, in EP-1 Mîr Sêvdîn is Zîn #1's uncle, and Mîr Seydîn is her father.

In LT, the Mîr is called Mîr Ezîn. All of these variants presumably come from Arabic names like **sayf al-dîn** [sêf-ed-dîn] سيف الدين [= 'the sword of the religion'] and **zayn al-dîn** [zên-ed-dîn] زين الدين [= 'the beauty of the religion']: Ezîn may come from **'izz al-dîn** ['izz-ed-dîn] عز الدين [= 'the 'strength of the religion'].

II.C. Mîr Sêvdîn's relationship to Zîn [#1]

In nine versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1) Mîr Sêvdîn is Zîn #1's brother, and in five versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-2; EP-2; ZK-1) he is her father. In two versions (GNa; HR-1) there is an inconsistency such that at the beginning of story we are told that Mîr Sêvdîn is Zîn #1's brother, but later on he is referred to as her father. As mentioned above in II.B., there are also two versions in which she has two male relatives with similar sounding names, Mîr Sêvdîn [brother] and Mîr Zêvdîn [father] in FK-1, and Mîr Seydîn [father] and Mîr Sêvdîn [uncle] in EP-1: taking these into account, Mîr Sêvdîn is Zîn #1's brother in ten versions, and her father has a name like that in seven versions.

II.D. Zîn #1's father

As has just been stated above in II.C., Mîr Sêvdîn is Zîn #1's father in seven versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1). In three versions, her father is an emir, but with a different name: Mîr Zerav in PN; Mîr Şarâf in HR-1; and mîrî 'Azîm in LC-1. In two versions (HR-2; MC-1) it is specifically stated that Zîn #1 is fatherless, and in another five versions (PS; HM; OM; ZK-3; ZK-2) Zîn #1's father is not mentioned.

II.E. Beko Awan the villain

The villain of the story, Mîr Sêvdîn's right hand man, is known both by the full form of his name, Bekirê E'wan, or by his nickname Bek'o or Bek'oyê E'wan. E'wan is an epithet meaning 'troublemaker, schemer.' In other versions he is known as bakōê na;latî [= 'Beko the accursed'] (PS); qumsî-bākû [= 'Gossip-Beko'] (LC-1); and Bekirê Direwîn [= 'Bekir the liar'] (MC-1). In OM he is referred to in three different ways: Ka Bekir [= 'Brother Bekir']; Bekir Agha [= 'Bekir the agha (feudal lord)']; and Bekirî Mergewere [= 'Bekir the bringer-of-death']. As has been mentioned elsewhere, he is the proverbial Benedict Arnold of Kurdish oral literature. His personality is discussed in the section of Chapter Six entitled Analysis: Is Mem a Hero?

II.F. Zîn #2: relationship to Beko Awan

In twelve versions (PN; HM; OM; SHa-2; GNâ; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1) Zîn #2 is Beko Awan's daughter, while she is his sister in four versions (SHa-1; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2). In two versions (PS; LC-1) there is no Zîn #2. In a few versions (OM; MC-1; JA) this character is called by a different name, Melik Reyfian or the like.

II.G. Zîn #2: her profession [excludes II.F.3.]

Zîn #2 is a sorceress or fortuneteller [femildar or sihirbaz] in nine versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1). She is the maidservant of Zîn #1 in seven versions (OM; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; HR-1; ZK-2; MC-1). In four versions (SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; MC-1) she is both.

II.H. Maidservant of Zîn #1

In five versions (SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; HR-1; ZK-2) Zîn #1's maidservant is also named Zîn or Zînê: in four of the five cases (SHa-2; GNa; HR-1; ZK-2) the maidservant is Beko Awan's daughter, and in one case (FK-1) she is his sister. In GNa Zîn #1 has forty maidservants, all named Zine. In three cases (LC-1; OM; MC-1) -- four including JA -- Zîn #1's maidservant is named Melîk Reyfian (OM), Melek Rîfian (MC-1), or Reihan(e) (LC-1): in OM and MC-1 she is Beko Awan's daughter. In two versions (ZK-3; ZK-2) Gule'îş (or Gule'yîşan) is Zîn #1's servant girl. No maidservants are mentioned in five versions (PN; PS; SHa-1; FK-2; EP-2). Maidservants are mentioned, but left unnamed, in six versions (HM; LC-1; EP-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2): in HM the number of unnamed servants in two, while in three versions (LC-1; EP-1; ZK-2) there are forty unnamed servants.

II.I. Qeretajdîn

Qeretajdîn is present in all but one version (PN): in that version his duties are shared between the Mir and the characters Hasso and Chakko, who are the equivalent of Qeretajdîn and his brothers in other versions. In the Armenian translations (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa) he is called Gharatazhdin (Ghara-T'azhdin in GNa) or Tazhdin; in the Russian translation of EP-2 he is known as Karatadjin. The name seems to mean

'Black crown of the religion,' combining Turkish *kara* [= 'black'] with Arabic *tāj al-dīn* [tāj-ed-dīn] تاج الدين [= 'crown of the religion']. A formulaic name-plus-epithet is *qaratāzđine dīn* (PS) or *Qeretajđinê devdīn* (EP-1) [= 'Crazy Qeretajđin'].

II.J. Qeretajđin's brothers (* = betrothed to Zīn #1)

In most versions, Qeretajđin has two brothers, E'rfan and Ç'ekan: in seven versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; EP-1; EP-2; ZK-1; MC-1) it is Ç'ekan who is already betrothed to Zīn #1 when Mem comes onto the scene. E'rfan's name displays the following variation: E'fan (FK-2; ZK-1); Afan (SHa-2); Arfó (HM); Arfo[n] (SHa-1); 'Irfo/'Ārfo (OM); E'rfin (FK-1); Arfin (EP-2); E'rif (ZK-3; MC-1); E'reb (ZK-2). Ç'ekan's names also displays variation, as follows: Ç'ekan (FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1); Jakan [ǰawqan] (SHa-2; GNa); Ç'eko (ZK-3; ZK-2; MC-1); [Chakko] (PN); Cheko (OM); cakō (PS); [ḥāsan-]čākō (LC-1); Jako[n] (SHa-1); Ç'ekn (FK-1); Chekin (EP-2). In a few versions, the names of Qeretajđin's two brothers resemble word pairs. In two cases they rhyme: makō and cakō (PS); Kakan [qawqan] and Jakan [ǰawqan] (GNa). The first pair, makō and cakō, is a reworking of the pair Hasso and Chakko (PN) [also ḥāsan-čākō (LC-1)]. In GNa, it is Kakan rather than Jakan who is betrothed to Zīn #1.

In two versions (PS; LC-1) Qeretajđin has a third brother as well: mīr maḥmūd (PS) and qumsí-bākū (LC-1). When all three brothers' names are rattled off at once, a rhythmic effect is created: makō, cakō, mīr maḥmūd (PS); ḥāsan-čākō qumsí-bākū (LC-1). In the former, the alliteration in *m-* is quite conspicuous, while in the latter čākō and bākū rhyme.

II.K. J-1, J-2 (& J-3) are Qeretajđin's brothers

In EP-2, Arfin (a variant of the name E'rfan) is Zīn #1's brother, and Chekin is Qeretajđin's brother, who is mentioned once as being betrothed to Zīn #1, after which

this is forgotten: hence this version lacks motif D.II.D., in which Çekan renounces his engagement to Zîn #1. In HR-1 there is no mention of Qeretajdîn's brothers: instead, his son is betrothed to Zîn #1.

In HR-2 Qeretajdîn has no brothers. Likewise in OM, 'Irfo and Çeko are not Qeretajdîn's brothers, but rather princes who, like Mem, have come to try to win Zîn #1's hand. In PN, on the other hand, it is Qeretajdîn who is absent: Hasso and Çakko, the equivalent of Qeretajdîn and his brothers, are the brothers of Mîr Sêvdîn and Zîn #1 in this version.

II.L. Qeretajdîn's wife (Sittî or Perfî)

In six versions (OM; SHa-1; EP-2; ZK-3; ZK-2; MC-1), Qeretajdîn's wife is named Sittî or some variant of it: Sittî (MC-1); Stîyê (ZK-3); Setiya (EP-2); Xatûn Estî [Lady Astî] (OM); Sutin (SHa-1); and Stîya E'reb [Lady Ereb] (ZK-2). In five versions (SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1) her name is Peri: Perfî (xanim) (FK-1); Khanum Peri (GNa); Perf-xatûn (ZK-1); Xatûn Perfî (EP-1); Gul Peri (SHa-2). In HR-1 she is called Bêgi xānim (HR-1), while in three versions (PS; FK-2; HR-2) she is mentioned, but not named. In several versions her name includes a title which means 'lady': xanim, xatûn, or stî (in Stîya E'reb).

In three versions (PN; HM; LC-1) there is no such character: PN lacks a Qeretajdîn, hence it is not surprising that his wife is also absent; in HM Arfo's wife, who is also Beko Awan's sister, is mentioned.

II.M. Her relationship to Zîn #1

In seven versions (PS; OM; GNa; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1), Qeretajdîn's wife is the sister of Zîn #1 and Mîr Sêvdîn. In four versions (SHa-1; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1) she is the sister of Zîn #1 only: these coincide with versions in which Mîr Sêvdîn is Zîn #1's

father. In four versions (SHa-2; FK-1; EP-2; HR-1) it is not stated that the two women are related.

II.N. Qeretajdîn's servants. See also D.I.C.

In eleven versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1) there is no mention of Qeretajdîn's having servants. In five versions (SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1) Çawîş or Chavush, meaning 'sergeant or servant' is part of the servant's name: Çawîş Mêrdîn (FK-1; ZK-1); Bacîn Çawîş (EP-1); Chavush (SHa-2); Ghavaz Chavush [ԴԱՎԱԶ ՉԱՎՈՍ] (GNa). Notice that in SHa-2, Chavush is the servant's name. In GNa, the servant Ghavaz Chavush is Qeretajdîn's oldest son. Two servants are mentioned in FK-1: Çawîş Mêrdîn and Bacîn. There are other, unnamed servants in four versions (EP-2; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa): SHa-2 and GNa include both named and unnamed servants.

II.O. Zîn #1's homeland (Jezira Bohtan)

Unlike Mem's native city, the name of Zîn #1's hometown is quite stable throughout all the versions. The fullest form, Cizra Bohtan, occurs only in GNa (Jezira-Boht'an [ՋԵԶԻՐԱ ԲՕՏԲԱՆ]). Bohtan appears as Bota, Botan, or Bohta. Jezira has a special form in Turoyo: Gzîro. Each of the Armenian versions rendered the name slightly differently: Jzir [(u) Bot'an] [ՋԵԶԻՐ Ա ԲՕՏԲԱՆ] (SHa-1); Chzir u Bodan [ՃԵԶԻՐ Ա ԲՕՏԲԱՆ] (SHa-2); Jezira-Boht'an [ՋԵԶԻՐԱ ԲՕՏԲԱՆ] (GNa). In two cases (HM; OM) a title accompanies the name: walâtê jezîrê bôtâ [= 'Kingdom of Jezira Bota'] (HM); Şarî Cizîrê [= 'City of Jizîr'] (OM). The city still stands today: it is known as Cizre in Turkish, and is part of the newly formed province of Şirnak, and was formerly part of the province of Mardin. The city was an important center in the past, with a small Jewish community closely linked to the Jews of nearby Zakho across the

border in Kurdistan of Iraq. If one goes there today, I am told, one will be taken to see Mem and Zîn's grave with Beko Awan's thornbush still growing on it.

II.P. Man sent by Zîn #1 to bring Qeretajdîn back (kisses Zîn; carries message). See also D.VII.B. & D.VII.C.

Of the six versions in which this occurs, three of them (PN; SHa-1; FK-1) feature a dervish. In HM, the messenger is a *pajâ* [*peya* = 'passerby or man']; in ZK-3 he is Zîn #1's baldheaded servant boy [*xulamekî k'eç'elok*]; and in ZK-2 he is a poor boy who exchanges gold pieces for silver ones, to pay taxes to Qeretajdîn. In LC-1, the attestation is so brief that no messenger is specifically mentioned: all we are told is that

Zîn took a hodja and dictated a letter to Hasan Cheko [to the effect] "*Yâ wallah, Mîr Zendîn has thrown Memê into prison, come without delay!*" Hasan-Cheko and Qaratashdin immediately mounted [their horses] and came asking. (LC-1, p. 43)

It is not specifically stated that the hodja was the messenger, but in any case, a hodja is a religious man, as are the dervishes in the first three versions mentioned above. Only in PN and LC-1 is the messenger not killed.

SCENES & MOTIFS

A. Initial stage : Introductory tale elements extraneous to structure of the story

This stage is absent in all but five versions. In 2., occurring in three versions, Mem's father is unmarried, i.e. without a family (LC-1; ZK-2) or childless (OM). Through magical means, such as the eating of a magic apple, this lack is liquidated, and Mem's father obtains a family. This cluster of motifs appears in several folktales

and romances, such as the story of Shah Ismail¹¹. PN (3.) exhibits an unusual accretion: it begins as a folktale and switches midway to what is clearly the story of Mem and Zîn¹². In EP-1 (4.), Mem is born through an heroic birth à la Lord Raglan¹³: his mother is impregnated by the sea foam; gives birth to him through her mouth; and abandons him on the seashore, where he is found and reared by Al-Pasha. Here, as in 2. above, Mem's father is childless.

B. Preparatory stage – Mukhurzemîn

B.I. Mem and Zîn #1 discover one another

B.I.A. Discovery of Mem and Zîn.

The statistically most common way that Mem and Zîn are brought together is at the hands of three birds, usually doves, although the number and species does vary a bit (1. : SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; EP-2; OM; GNa; LC-1). [B.I.B.] The ten versions in which this scenario appears are evenly divided as to which of the two lovers the doves notice first: in five, they notice Mem first, and in five, they notice Zîn first. An alternative way that Mem and Zîn discover one another is through the jinn (2. : ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2), who are commanded by their king to bring the two to him, so that he may see if they are in fact as beautiful as he had heard; once he sees them and is convinced of their beauty, he orders his jinn to take them both to Mem's room, where they wake up in each other's arms. In two versions (3. : PS; MC-1), rather

¹¹For a Kurdish version see "Shah Ismail and Qamberta" in: D.N. MacKenzie Kurdish Dialect Studies-II (London et al. : Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 4-33; also a Turkish folktale, EB Type 247.

¹²The folktale is as yet unidentified.

¹³Lord Fitzroy Richard Somerset Raglan. "The Hero of Tradition," Folklore, 45 (1934), 212-31; reprinted in: Alan Dundes (ed.) The Study of Folklore (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, c1965), pp. 142-57.

than the jinn, two angels bring them together. PN (4.) is once again anomalous: here Mem learns of Zîn through a merchant from Mosul. This closely resembles a Turkish folktale, EB Type 188 *Hüsnü Yusuf*. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, doves, jinn, and angels are allomotifs filling the same motifeme slot; this is also an example of Thompson's variation type #11 *animals and ogres or demons may be shifted*

B.I.C. Mem & Zîn argue: Who has come to whom?

This motif is absent in two versions (PN; HM). In FK-2 (2.), the argument is substituted by a polite debate. With these three exceptions, the argument between Mem and Zîn is a standard part of the story. Zîn's coming to Mem rather than the other way around implies that she is the pursuer.

B.I.D. Argument resolved by a proof.

The two most common allomotifs for proving their whereabouts are: (1.) They count the number of minarets in the city: there are 366 in Mukurzemin, and only 66 in Jezira Bohtan; and (2.) Zîn calls her servants, and after no one answers, Mem calls his, and he immediately answers. In two more versions (3. : LC-1; OM) calling someone plays a part. EP-2 (4.) and SHa-1 (5.) exhibit unusual departures from the norm. The whole motif is absent in two more versions (PN; HM).

B.I.E. Exchange of rings and vows; exchange initiated by [Mem or Zîn].

Mem initiates the exchange of rings in only two versions (1.a. : FK-2; PN), whereas Zîn takes the initiative in six versions (2. : PS; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; ZK-1). The most common scenario, however, a mutual exchange, appears in nine versions (3. : LC-1; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1). Only one version (HM) lacks this motif.

B.I.F. Items exchanged

In fourteen versions, only rings are exchanged. However, in three southern versions (2. : PS; OM; MC-1) both rings and handkerchiefs are exchanged. As HM does not begin until B.III.C., it is not surprising that it lacks this motif.

B.I.G. Zîn #1 tells Mem to come after her

This motif is absent in twelve versions and present in six, of which 1. and 2. include the threat that Zîn #1 will marry someone else unless Mem comes after her. Although not fully developed, this must be connected somehow with Zîn #1's betrothal to Qeretajdîn's brother Çekan [J-2]. It is reminiscent of Motif N681. *Husband returns home just in time to forestall wife's wedding to another*, which appears in the Odyssey. In allomotifs 3. and 4. Zîn #1 is depicted as playing the coquette, whereas in 5. she seems timidly hopeful.

B.II. It was not just a dream**B.II.A. Proof that Mem and Zîn's visit was not just a dream**

Mem discovers Zîn #1's rings on his finger in six versions (1. : PS; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1), and Zîn #1 discovers Mem's ring on her finger in only one version (3. : MC-1). There are three versions in which both Mem and Zîn #1 discover one another's rings on their finger (2. : LC-1; OM; GNa). It is interesting to note that these same three versions are among the nine versions in which the exchange of rings is mutual: for those three versions, such mutuality is a type of parallelism, perhaps a stylistic feature. There are two versions (4. : ZK-3; HR-2) in which Mem knows that

Zîn #1's ring is on his finger, without having to discover it there. The whole motif is absent from six versions (PN; HM; SHa-1; SHa-2; HR-1; ZK-2).

B.II.B. As a result

In three of the six versions in which Mem discovers Zîn #1's ring on his finger, he faints (2. : FK-2; FK-1; EP-1); in two more (PS; EP-2), no result is mentioned; in one, Mem falls lovesick (1. : ZK-1). Mem falls lovesick in two other versions, one because he knows he has her ring (HR-2), and one without any prompting (SHa-2). Both Mem and Zîn fall lovesick in two of the three versions in which they discover each other's rings (3. : OM; GNa). The result in the one version (4. : MC-1) in which Zîn discovers Mem's ring is that she becomes morose. In SHa-1 (5.) Mem falls in love when he awakes to find Zîn #1 gone: this does duty for B.II.A. (discovery of the ring) and B.II.B. (its result) in this version. In ZK-3 (6.) Mem gives his servant Bengîn an ultimatum that if he doesn't find Zîn #1 for him, Mem will have his head; in this version Mem's father is also given an ultimatum, as will be seen below. In ZK-2 (7.) we have another interesting variation: Mem goes to his father's diwan and tells what happened during the night; he swears that if he is lying, he will go blind and lame, but if he is telling the truth, the judge and mufti will be so afflicted; the judge and mufti go blind and lame, which shows that God is supporting Mem.¹⁴ This motif is lacking in six versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; EP-2; HR-1).

B.II.C. Party in Al-Pasha's garden for Mem to choose bride

In ten versions (eleven counting the footnote in SHa-2) Al-Pasha throws a party for Mem in his garden, and orders all the unmarried girls [qtz] and married

¹⁴God revokes his support for Mem later on in this version. See D.VIII.A. below.

women [bûk] in the kingdom to attend it. In four of these versions (2.), Mem is to throw an apple at the girl he wants. This motif, for which cf. Motif H315. *Suitor test: apple thrown indicates princess's choice* is reflective of a custom which is still practiced. In three versions (2.a., c-d. : SHa-1; FK-1; MC-1) he doesn't throw the apple at anyone. In FK-2 (2.b.), he throws it at the wall in anger, and it lands with such force that it bursts into a million pieces. In three versions (MC-1; ZK-3; HR-1), one of which overlaps with the apple motif, Al-Pasha goes out in search of Zîn #1 for Mem: in ZK-3 (3.a.), Mem gives his father seven days' respite to find her, similar to his threat to Bengîn (see B.II.B. above), and in HR-1 (3.b.), he threatens to disown his father unless the latter finds out where Jezira Bohtan is. Whereas in ZK-3 Al-Pasha fails in his task, in HR-1 he stays in an inn where he meets a merchant who has just come from Jezira Bohtan, so he comes back successful in his mission. Perhaps the scenario in PS (4.) is the simplest of all: Al-Pasha tells Mem that he will request the hand of whichever girl Mem wants to marry. The entire motif is absent in four versions (PN; HM; LC-1; HR-2).

B.III. Mem prepares for trip

B.III.A. Mem chooses a horse

In three versions, Mem already has a horse (2. : PS; ZK-3; MC-1). In six versions (1. : SHa-1; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1), Mem chooses a scrawny horse from the royal stables, which he instructs the stablehands to water copiously and care for for a couple of weeks, after which he becomes a fine riding horse, cf. Motif D1868.1. *Nag becomes riding horse* He names the horse Bor, a word which means both "horse" and "gray." In OM, he chooses a gray horse [espî bor]: here the quality "grayness" replaces scrawniness as well as tying into the horse's name in the other versions. In

two versions (3. : LC-1; ZK-2), Mem's horse comes from the sea and is named *Bozê Rewal* [or *Bozê Rewan*], cf. Motif B184.1.3. *Magic horse from water world* In the Turkish epic *Köroğlu*, allomotifs 1. and 3. are combined: a fine mare from the sea is captured, and is brought to the royal stables; the foal of that mare looks very thin and frail, but because *Köroğlu's* father, the royal stablekeeper, knows what fine stock it is from, when the bey of Bolu orders him to bring him the finest horse in the stable, he brings him the frail foal; the bey of Bolu becomes furious and punishes the stablekeeper by having him blinded. The method by which Mem acquires a horse in EP-2 (4.) is unique: a mare tells him to go to a ravine in the mountains and choose one of her sons. This motif is absent in five versions (PN; HM; SHa-2; HR-1; HR-2).

B.III.B. Mem acquires items for trip [in order of acquisition]

In eight versions, Mem acquires a saddle and/or harness, suit, and sword, in various orders and combinations. In PS (4.) and ZK-2 (5.) he already owns these items, and they are brought to him: hence in PS, Mem already has both a fine horse (see B.III.A. above) and fine items for his trip. In six versions (1.-3. : GNa; FK-1; FK-2; EP-1; EP-2; ZK-1), he goes to the saddlemaker, tailor, and blacksmith and orders fine items for his trip, requesting them by a certain date. This motif is absent in ten versions (PN; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; MC-1).

B.III.C. Mem's parents' reaction to his trip

In five versions (1. : FK-2; FK-1; ZK-1; GNa; EP-1) Al-Pasha tries to prevent Mem from leaving by bolting the city gates and chaining down Mem's horse [Bor]. In three versions (2. : HM; ZK-3; ZK-2) Al-Pasha curses the trip: in one of these (ZK-3), Mem's mother also curses it; in another (ZK-2), however, she encourages Mem to

go.¹⁵ In two versions (3-4 : OM; HR-2) one or another of his parents asks him not to go, but gives him help in the form of money or a blessing when he actually does go. Only in SHa-2 (5.) does Mem have the blessing of both of his parents. The motif is absent from seven versions (PN; PS; LC-1; SHa-1; EP-2; HR-2; MC-1).

B.III.D. Mem's temporary escorts on the trip: they turn back

In five versions (1. : SHa-2; PS; GNa; ZK-2; EP-1) Mem sends the men home: he prefers to be alone. In three versions (2: OM; ZK-3; HR-1) he does not request their departure, but every day (OM; HR-1) or every hour (ZK-3) one of them turns back, as prearranged with Al-Pasha, in a futile attempt to induce Mem to return. This motif appears in four more versions (3-6. : PN; LC-1; SHa-1; MC-1), but each is different enough to be classed separately. In three of them (3-5. : PN; LC-1; SHa-1) Mem's escorts only accompany him up to a certain point, after which they turn back. In SHa-1 (6.) Al-Pasha sends men to frighten Mem, but he eludes them by taking a different route: this is a different strategy by Al-Pasha to achieve the same goal, i.e. to induce Mem to return home. The motif is absent from six versions (HM; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; HR-2; ZK-1).

C. Transitional stage – between Mukhurzemîn and Jezira Bohtan

C.I. Mem and Bor

C.I.A. Horse talks; Wounds from chains

In nine versions (1. : SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1) Bor is granted the gift of speech and tells Mem that he cannot continue because of the

¹⁵Note that it is at this point that HM begins.

chains which are still fastened to his legs. [Cf. Motif B211.1.3. *Speaking horse*] The image of a miraculous horse galloping as fast as an airplane, even though his feet are in fetters, is one of the most vivid images in the story of M&Z. In PN (2.) also, the horse speaks, but here he has something different to say: he tells Mem to go home, furthering the purpose outlined in B.III.D. above. In EP-2 (3.) the chains fall off before they leave Mukhurzemin. This motif does not appear in seven versions (PS; HM; LC-1; OM; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2).

C.I.B. Mem stops and treats Bor's wounds

In eight versions Mem stops and treats Bor's wounds. In three of those eight (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa) Mem ignores Bor's complaints for a time, finally giving in. In PN (3.) Mem stops twice: the first time he feeds his horse, and the second time a snake climbs up Mem's leg. The motif is absent from nine versions (PS; HM; LC-1; OM; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2). See also D.VIII.A.

C.I.C. Bor's wounds heal

In five versions (1. : FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; SHa-1) Mem washes and binds Bor's wounds with a handkerchief, and puts him out in the meadow to graze. In two versions (2. : SHa-2; GNa) the doves from B.I.A.1. reappear and supply feathers which Mem dips in water and applies to Bor's wounds, which magically heal. In one version (3. : MC-1) Xidir, another donor figure, comes to help. This motif does not occur in ten versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2).

C.II. People encountered along the way

C.II.A. Mem asks farmer how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan

In twelve versions, Mem encounters a farmer or ploughman and asks him either what the name of that place is, or how far it is to Jezira Bohtan; the farmer replies that the place is Jezira Bohtan (or that it is close by); Mem gives the farmer some gold as a reward for the good news. In seven of them (1.a-b. : SHa-1; SHa-2; EP-2; HR-1; MC-1; GNa; FK-2) that is all that happens. In OM (1.c.) the ploughman is with his son, and they have been sent there by Qeretajdîn's wife Ladi Astî for the express purpose of meeting Mem. In two versions (2. : ZK-1; EP-1) Mem comes back a second time to ask another question: in EP-1 (2.b.), the farmer thinks that Mem wants to kill him and take back the gold, and tries to flee; in FK-1 (2.c.) Mem almost comes back to ask another question, but changes his mind. In PS (1.d.) Mem encounters a gentleman [juâmëreg] instead of a farmer. In ZK-3 (3.) he encounters two different people, one an old man, the other a farmer. In ZK-2 (4.) three people cross his path: an old man (Xizir), a porter, and a miller; Mem asks them how far it is to Jezira Bohtan; the porter says it is still far, and Mem, displeased with this news, frightens him with his sword, for which action he [=Mem] falls from God's favor; the miller says it is near, and Mem rewards him with gold because of the good news. This motif is absent in four versions only (PN; HM; LC-1; HR-2).

C.II.B. Determining where Mem should stay in Jezira Bohtan

Two alternate scenarios appear at this point in the story: a) Mem meets up with Qeretajdîn; or b) Mem meets up with Zîn #2, the daughter or sister of Beko Awan. In four versions (1.a-c. : FK-1; ZK-1; FK-2; EP-1), Mem encounters Qeretajdîn who is out hunting. Mem successfully intercepts Qeretajdîn's quarry, and they meet, quarrel, and part as friends: Mem winds up being Qeretajdîn's guest in Jezira Bohtan. In one more version (1.d. : GNa) the same occurs, except that Qeretajdîn is not angry that Mem

intercepts his quarry. In ZK-2 (1.e.) Qeretajdîn, Mîr Sêvdîn and Beko Awan are out hunting together when Mem meets them. In three more versions (2. : OM; MC-2; ZK-3) Mem asks Zîn #2 [Beko Awan's daughter or sister] where he should stay (see C.III. below). In PS (3.) he asks the gentleman he meets up with (see C.II.A.d. above) where to stay in Jezira Bohtan. The entire motif is absent from eight versions (PN; HM; LC-1; SHa-1; SHa-2; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2).

C.II.C. Qeretajdîn's identity is or is not revealed at time of first meeting [with C.II.B.1]

In three versions (FK-1; ZK-1; ZK-2), Qeretajdîn reveals his identity to Mem. In two more versions (FK-2; EP-1) his identity is revealed to the audience, but not to Mem. In GNa (3.) his identity is not revealed at all. This motif only occurs with C.II.B.1.

C.III. Encounter with Beko Awan's Zîn (Zîn #2) [see also II. F.-H.]

C.III.A. Zîn #2 tries to trick Mem at entrance to Jizîra Bota

For the motif of Zîn #2 being mistaken for Zîn #1, see also in D.I.E. and D.II.A.3-4. In three versions (SHa-1; FK-1; EP-1) of the fifteen (1.-2.) in which this motif appears, Zîn #2 has already been mentioned earlier. In ZK-3 and HR-1 (2.), she tests Mem's gallantry by spreading her laundry on the road, in order to see how he reacts: in both cases, he shows his good breeding by making a detour. In three more versions (3.-5. : LC-1; OM; ZK-2) something transpires which is obviously cognate. In ZK-2 (3.) Zîn #1 plays a trick on Mem, and Mem mistakes Zîn #2 for her: this is the only version in which it is Zîn #1 who tries to fool Mem. In OM (4.) Mem deceives himself: Zîn #1's maidservant, called Melik Reyhan in this version, explicitly states that she is not Zîn #1, but Mem insists that she is. In LC-1 (5.) Mem meets an unnamed

girl at the river who claims to be Zîn #1; Mem does not believe her, and guesses that she is Zîn #1's maidservant. The latter three (3.-5. : LC-1; OM; ZK-2) all involve some sort of displaced element in which the common element of intersection is Zîn #2 [Zîn #1's maidservant] being mistaken for Zîn #1. This motif is absent from two versions only (PS; HM).

C.III.B. Place where Mem encounters Zîn #2

In ten versions (1. : SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2), Mem encounters Zîn #2 at a well, fountain, or spring [kanf]. In five more versions (2. : PN; LC-1; OM; FK-2; MC-1) they meet by the river. In EP-1 (3.) Zîn #2 is on a bridge when Mem approaches her. In all three cases, Zîn #2 is near a water source.

C.III.C. Activity Zîn #2 is engaged in

Zîn #2 is engaged in some sort of woman's work. In three versions (1.a. : SHa-1; GNa; FK-1) she is spinning; in eight (1b.-2.a-b. : FK-2; ZK-1; PN; HR-1; MC-1; OM; ZK-3) she is washing; in one (3. : EP-1) she is sewing; and in three (4. : EP-2; HR-2; ZK-2) she is drawing water. If we divide the allomotifs differently, in five versions (1. : SHa-1; GNa; FK-1; FK-2; ZK-1) she is handling wool, and in five (2. : PN; HR-1; MC-1; OM; ZK-3) she is doing laundry. In SHa-2 and LC-1 (5.) it is not stated what she is doing.

C.III.D. Mem asks Zîn #2 where his ring is

In five versions (1.-2. : FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; SHa-2) (six including the GNa footnote [1.d.]) she claims to have lost Mem's ring accidentally while at the water source. In one (3. : GNa) she says that she left it at home. In MC-1 (4.) this is replaced

by Zîn #2's reproaching Mem for not remembering who she is. The motif is absent from eleven versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2).

C.III.E. Final words

In six versions (1. : FK-2; FK-1; ZK-1; ZK-3; EP-1; LC-1) Zîn #2 asks Mem to take her with him when he goes. In four of the six (FK-2; FK-1; ZK-1; EP-1) she will go as Zîn #1's maidservant, and in one (ZK-3) as the wife of his own servant Bengîn. In GNa (2.), Mem knocks her down when she tries to prevent him from passing. This contrasts with the two versions (ZK-3; HR-1) mentioned above in C.III.A. in which she tests Mem's gallantry by spreading her laundry on the road, in order to test his reaction to having his path blocked. In those two cases, he acts politely, stepping around her laundry, whereas in this case he behaves violently to being hindered. This motif does not appear in eleven versions (PN; PS; HM; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1).

D. Main stage - Jezîra Bohtan

D.I. Mem arrives in Jezîra Bohtan

D.I.A. Mem's host in Jezîra Bohtan [see C.II.B. above]

Qeretajdîn's house is the most commonly attested place where Mem stays in Jezîra Bohtan, appearing in twelve versions (1. : PS; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1; ZK-3; ZK-2; OM; HR-1). In LC-1 (1.c.) Mem stays with Ḥasan čakō, Qeretajdîn's brothers. Of the twelve versions in which Mem stays with Qeretajdîn, in two he almost ends up staying elsewhere: in OM (1.d.) he originally heads for Beko Awan's house, but finding no one at home, he goes to Qeretajdîn's; in HR-1, Mem first goes to the mosque, where Zîn #2 finds him and takes him to her father Beko Awan's house,

telling him that Beko Awan is Qeretajdîn; when the lie is discovered, he goes to Qeretajdîn's house. In ZK-3 and ZK-2 (1.b.) Qeretajdîn tests Mem's honor by sending his own wife to Mem's room, but Mem acts honorably and sends her away, thereby winning Qeretajdîn's trust. In two versions (2. : FK-2; PN), Mem stays with Mîr Sévdîn instead: this is not so surprising in PN, because there is no Qeretajdîn in that version; however, FK-2 is anomalous in this respect. In MC-1 (4.) Mem stays seven days with Qeretajdîn, then seven days with Mîr Sévdîn. In HR-2 (5.), Mem stays first with Beko Awan, then with Mîr Sévdîn: this is reminiscent of HR-1, in which Mem is taken to Beko Awan's first. In one version (3. : HM) Mem is solely Beko Awan's guest.

D.I.B. Jealousy of Mîr

In ten versions (1. : OM; SHa-2; GNa; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; PS; FK-1; MC-1) the Mîr is jealous because Qeretajdîn has not been to see him in several days. In ZK-2 (2.) the Mîr is jealous because Mem has opted to stay with Qeretajdîn rather than with him. In LC-1 (3.a.) instead of the Mîr's feeling jealous, he invites Mem to his house along with Qeretajdîn and his brothers. In SHa-1 (3.b.) Qeretajdîn suggests that they all go to the Mîr's diwan, hence the Mîr's jealousy is avoided in this version also. The motif does not occur in five versions (PN; HM; FK-2; HR-1; HR-2).

D.I.C. Servant hit on head by Qeretajdîn's wife with ladle

In five versions (1. & 3. : SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; EP-1; ZK-1) Qeretajdîn's wife hits the Mîr's servant on the head with a ladle when the Mîr sends him to summon Mem to his diwan. In two versions (2. & 3. : SHa-1; FK-1) Qeretajdîn's wife sends a servant to the Mîr's diwan to inform Qeretajdîn that he should come home immediately, because he has a guest. In SHa-1, this motif occurs twice, once in each of the above scenarios. In ZK-2 (4.) Qeretajdîn's wife hits Qeretajdîn himself on the head with a

shoe, for not trusting Mem (see D.I.A.1.b. above). This motif is absent from eleven versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; MC-1).¹⁶

D.I.D. Mîr Sêvdîn is very fond of Mem

It is explicitly stated that the Mîr is very fond of Mem in ten versions (1. : PN; PS; OM; SHa-2; GNa; EP-2; EP-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1). In another three versions (2. : FK-2; FK-1; ZK-3) it is clear from the context that this is implicit. The Mîr is undecided as to what he thinks of Mem in SHa-1 (3.), and the motif is lacking in four versions (HM; LC-1; HR-1; ZK-2).

D.I.E. Mîr Sêvdîn offers Mem a gift

In three versions (1. : GNa; EP-2; EP-1) Mîr Sêvdîn lets Mem choose his own gift. In another three versions (2. : FK-1; SHa-1; SHa-2) Mîr Sêvdîn offers Mem a whole principality to rule. Whereas in the latter case the Mîr treats Mem as an equal, in PS (5.) he wants Mem to serve as his tobacco and pipe bearer, until Qeretajdîn informs him that Mem is his equal in rank. In OM (3.) the Mîr offers Zîn #1 to Mem, but because Beko Awan has spread rumors that she has leprosy, Mem politely refuses. In two versions (4. : ZK-3; ZK-2) Zîn #2 is offered to Mem, but he mistakes her for Zîn #1, and accepts the offer until the error is discovered later. The motif is absent from eight versions (PN; HM; LC-1; FK-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1).

D.I.F. Mem takes as gift a position [that enables him to be near Zîn #1]

In four versions, Mem requests a position as cook or coffee server in the diwan (1.a.-d. : GNa; SHa-2; EP-1; FK-1). In some versions (e.g. ZK-1) he had a similar job in

¹⁶See the section on proverbial usages in Chapter One.

his father's diwan. In one version (1.e. : SHa-1) he requests to be a *çavuş* [=servant or doorman]. Ironically, whereas in PS in D.I.E. above a position serving the Mîr was considered beneath Mem, in the five versions mentioned so far in conjunction with the current motif, Mem chooses a position which is beneath his social standing: what is important to him is being near Zîn #1, regardless of what job he has. In EP-2 (3.) Mem requests a fur cloak¹⁷. Two versions in which Mem's high status is preserved are OM(2.), in which he requests to be leader of the hunt, and PS (4.), in which he is given a seat of honor opposite the Mîr in his diwan. In two cases (SHa-1; EP-2) Mem has been advised beforehand by Zîn #1 regarding what to request.

D.I.G. Mîr Sêvdîn stands up when Mem enters

This is present in seven versions (1. : SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; FK-1), and absent in eleven (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1). Qeretajdîn presents the possibility that the Mîr will unwittingly stand up when Mem enters the diwan in the form of a wager.

D.I.H. Handkerchief as proof

The Mîr denies having stood up when Mem entered the diwan, but by placing a handkerchief on his seat when he stands up, Qeretajdîn has proof that it happened. It is curious that the Mîr is uniformly unaware that he has stood up. This exhibits the same distribution as in D.I.G. above. Cf. Motif H113. *Identification by handkerchief.*

D.II. Mem gets token from Zîn #1 and wins Qeretajdîn's approval

¹⁷An explanation of this is offered in the section of this chapter entitled "Notes on the Different Versions of M&Z Used in the Study," under EP-2.

D.II.A. Mem and Qeretajdîn + brothers sit on balcony; Zîn's caravan passesby

In seven versions (1. : SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1; FK-1) Zîn #1 passes by with a caravan of pots and pans to wash at the well while Mem, Qeretajdîn and his brothers sit on the balcony and watch; Mem says that he wants to ambush the caravan and collect a tax from it, which angers the brothers, because Zîn #1 is still betrothed to Çekan. In two versions, there is no anger: in OM (2.a.), 'Irfo and Cheko, who are not Qeretajdîn's brothers, but rather rival suitors for Zîn #1's hand, are not angered by what Mem says; in LC-1 (2.b.) Ḥasan çakō encourage Mem to go water his horse at the spring as an excuse to talk to Zîn #1. There are two versions in which Zîn #1 and Zîn #2 are confused at this point: in ZK-2 (3.) this scene is confounded with C.III., when Mem encounters Zîn #2 at a water source before entering Jezira Bohtan; in ZK-3 (4.) Mem agrees to marry Zîn #2 rather than Zîn #1, an error later corrected. The motif is absent from seven versions (PN; PS; HM; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; MC-1).

D.II.B. Task: Mem must get a token (piece of jewelry) from Zîn #1

In eight versions (1.-2. : PS; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1) Mem must bring back a token of Zîn #1's love for him, or else he will be beheaded. In two of those versions (2. : SHa-1; FK-1) Mem imposes this task on himself. In GNa (3.) Mem has two tasks to perform: a) he must bring stored grain from the town of Sakhlan and fight off an ambush on the way, and b) he must get a gold piece from Zîn #1. In ZK-3 (5.) Zîn #1 writes Mem a letter in which she informs him that he has mistaken the servant [Zîn #2] for the mistress [Zîn #1]; as proof he is to come see both of them in the royal garden. ZK-2 and MC-1 will be treated in D.II.C. below. This motif is absent from six versions (PN; HM; LC-1; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2).

D.II.C. Zîn #1 gives Mem jewels she was wearing

In ten versions (1. : PS; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1; EP-2; FK-1) Zîn #1 gives Mem her adornments (gold coins) as a token of her love for him. The idea of something of valuable being given as a token is preserved in ZK-2 (2.) in a slightly different context: Qeretajdîn gives Beko Awan two gold pieces as a token of Mem's betrothal to Zîn #2. In MC-1, Zîn #1 throws two bouquets into the air, one red and one yellow; if Mem catches the red one, they will achieve their goal in this world; if he catches the yellow one, they will achieve their goal in the next world; he catches the yellow one. The yellow bouquet is a token of Mem and Zîn's union, just as the gold coins from Zîn #1's adornments are: the gold coins Qeretajdîn gives Beko Awan (for the wrong Zîn) also symbolize such a union, but between Mem and Zîn #2. This motif is absent in six versions (PN; HM; LC-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2).

D.II.D. Çekan renounces his betrothal to Zîn #1, gives her to Mem (with II.J & II.K of Dramatis Personae)

In six versions (1. : SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; EP-1; FK-1; ZK-1) Çekan renounces his betrothal to Zîn #1, giving her to Mem. In two of the six (1.c. : SHa-2; ZK-1) Çekan objects first, but ultimately renounces his claim on Zîn #1. As allomotifs to this, in OM (3.) 'Irfo and Cheko, rival suitors for Zîn #1's hand, renounce their intention to pursue Zîn #1, and in HR-1 (2.) Qeretajdîn nullifies his son's engagement to Zîn #1, both so that Mem may have her. In a similar vein, in ZK-2 (5.) Mem renounces his engagement to Zîn #2. Çekan's renunciation of his engagement to Zîn #1 signals that Mem has won complete acceptance by Qeretajdîn and his brothers: in FK-2 (4.) it is this result that appears in place of Çekan's renunciation. This bears comparison with another way in which Mem wins the approval of Qeretajdîn, in D.I.A.b. above: Qeretajdîn tests Mem by having his own wife adorn herself, then sending her to tempt

Mem; when he learns that Mem has sent her away, i.e. renounced any claim on her, he wins Qeretajdîn's total trust and support. Both in the present scene and in D.I.A.b., a man's foregoing of a claim on a woman is connected with earning approval at the hands of another man. This motif is absent in eight versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-2; MC-1). Cf. Motif P311. *Sworn brethren*

D.III. Hunting expedition (#2); Mem's feigned illness

D.III.A. Hunting expedition (#2)

This motif occurs in some form in all versions. In seventeen out of eighteen cases, it is a hunting expedition that Mîr Sêvdîn invites all the able-bodied men to join him in: the point at which this section occurs varies greatly from version to version. In SHa-2 (3.) both a hunting expedition and a jireed match (similar to a jousting tournament) take place. In ZK-3 (2.) only the jireed match takes place.

D.III.B. Mem's feigned illness

There are two major realizations of this motif: a) Mem stays home; b) Mem sets out with the others, but comes back early. In eleven versions (1. : PS; HM; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1) Mem does not go on the hunting expedition at all, claiming illness as the reason. In four cases, his feigned illness is his own idea (SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; MC-1); in four cases, it is Zîn #1's idea (OM; SHa-1; EP-2; EP-1); in one case it is suggested to Zîn #1 by Beko Awan (ZK-1); in two cases Qeretajdîn is in on the idea (HM; PS). In three versions (2. : LC-1; ZK-2; HR-1) Mem sets out with the other men, then turns around and comes back: in ZK-2 (2.a.) this is due to a headache; in LC-1 (2.b.) Hasan çakō send Mem home; and in HR-1 (2.c.) Mem goes against Qeretajdîn's will by turning back. In the two jireed matches, each occurrence has a

slightly different outcome: in ZK-3 (3.a.) Mem falls from his horse, as suggested to him by Qeretajdîn; in SHa-2 (3.b.) Mem hides under his horse, as suggested to him by the horse himself. The entire motif is absent in three versions (PN; FK-2; HR-2).

D.III.C. Purpose of hunting expedition (#2)

In three versions, the purpose of the hunting expedition is to test Mem's manliness (1. : SHa-1; FK-1; HR-1). In FK-1 (1.b.) it is stated that he may have Zîn #1 if he is manly enough. In HR-2 (2.) the purpose is to get everyone to leave for a while, so that Mem and Zîn #1 can be alone together. In GNa (3.) Beko Awan plans to do away with Mem during the hunt, and to make it look like an accident. In the remaining thirteen versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-2; FK-2; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1) no specific purpose is mentioned.

D.III.D. Site of Mem and Zîn #1's rendez-vous

In ten versions (PN; PS; HM; OM; ZK-3; ZK-2; MC-1; LC-1; HR-1; HR-2), Mem and Zîn meet in the diwan of the palace. Although the diwan generally belongs to the Mîr, in LC-1 (1.b.) it is the diwan of Ḥasan ĉako, and in HR-1 (1.c.) it is the diwan of Sittiye Zîn. In HR-2 (1.d.) the location is more generalized, taking place in the palace. In eight versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; FK-2; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1) Mem and Zîn's tryst takes place in the Mîr's garden. The diwan variant seems to occur in southern versions, the garden variant in the north.

D.III.E. Reason why the hunting expedition (#2) is cut short

There are four versions (PN; HM; LC-1; OM) in which the hunt is not cut short, but rather comes to a normal end, at which time the participants return home. In the remaining fourteen versions, however, the hunt comes to an early end, for one of

three reasons: a) due to inclement weather (PS; SHa-1; ZK-1; SHa-2; FK-1; EP-1); b) due to the machinations of Beko Awan (HR-2; EP-2; HR-1; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-2); or c) because the Mîr does not want to go hunting without Mem (MC-1).

In the first instance, there is a connection between hunting and rain- or hailstorms. In olden times, it was believed that if one went out hunting, this could cause it to start raining. We see this in the Mu'allaqah (pre-Islamic Arabic ode) of Imru' al-Qays, in which it begins to rain while he is out hunting¹⁸. So also here, while the hunters are out hunting, a rainstorm (PS; SHa-1; ZK-1) or hailstorm (SHa-1; FK-1) suddenly appears, or else Beko the villain suggests that it will soon rain (EP-1), forcing the hunters to seek shelter in the Mîr's garden at the edge of the city, where Mem and Zîn just happen to be having a tryst. The storm is generally connected with D.III.D.2., i.e. the garden rather than the diwan as the place of Mem and Zîn's rendezvous: in only one version (PS) do they return to the diwan because of a rainstorm. EP-1 forms a link between the rainstorm allomotif and the allomotif of Beko Awan's interference, because he says "My mîr, it will rain a lot, let us ride to your garden of Torkîr and dismount. I just saw two young fawns in your garden. We can capture them, and make a meal out of them, until the rain stops."

Beko Awan's manipulations take many different forms: in HR-2 (2.a.) everyone turns back simply because of Beko Awan's suggestion that they do so; in EP-2 (2.b.), he slanders Mem; in HR-2 (2.c.) he claims that the hounds cannot follow the scent. It is interesting to note that in some versions (e.g., ZK-1) Beko Awan stays behind to spy on Mem and Zîn: in such a case the rainstorm performs the function that Beko Awan does here. In three versions (GNa; FK-2; EP-1) Beko Awan tells the Mîr that the deer to be hunted are in the garden: the deer are a reference to Mem and

¹⁸This idea originally comes from Professor James Monroe, Department of Comparative Literature, University of California, Berkeley.

Zîn. This scenario is connected with the tryst in the garden [D.III.D.2], whereas the following occurs only in connection with the tryst in the diwan [D.III.D.1]. In ZK-3 and ZK-2 (2.e.) Beko Awan makes a bet with his men to pursue him to Mir Sêvdîn's diwan with instructions that if they overtake him (=Beko Awan), they must kill him: putting his life at stake in this manner forces Beko Awan to ride very quickly to reach the diwan¹⁹.

The Mir's desire to call off the hunt since Mem is not coming along (3. : MC-1) is another indication of the Mir's fondness for Mem (see D.I.D.).

D.IV. Mem and Zîn #1 are in trouble²⁰

D.IV.A. Mem and Zîn #1 almost discovered; Zîn hides under Mem's coat

In eight versions (PS; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; EP-2; ZK-3; MC-1) Mem initiates the hiding of Zîn #1 under his coat. In six versions (PN; FK-2; FK-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1), or seven if we include EP-1 (3.), the hiding is initiated by Zîn #1. In three versions (HM; LC-1; ZK-2) it is not stated who the initiator is. If we compare this motif with B.I.E. *Exchange of rings and vows* above, in which the exchange is initiated by Mem (KF-2; PN), Zîn #1 (PS; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; ZK-1), or is mutual (LC-1; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1), the following results emerge: a) in no one version is Mem the initiator in both cases; b) in three versions (FK-1; HR-1; ZK-1) Zîn is the initiator in both cases; c) in six versions (OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; ZK-3; MC-1) there is a mutual exchange of rings and vows in B.I.E. coupled with hiding initiated by Mem in D.IV.A; d) in two versions (PS; EP-2) B.I.E. is initiated by Zîn #1, while

¹⁹and not the garden!

²⁰The Israel Folktale Archives has a Yemenite Jewish folktale which is very similar to this whole scene. It was collected in Israel in 1959 by Heda Jason from Yafet Shvili. The archival number of the tale is IFA 1292. Special thanks to Heda Jason for this reference.

D.IV.A. is initiated by Mem. These statistics render it difficult to come up with a clear pattern regarding whether Zîn #1 or Mem takes more initiative in particular versions: statistically, the most common correlation is for Mem and Zîn to conduct a mutual exchange of rings in B.I.E., and for Mem to initiate hiding Zîn #1 under his coat in D.IV.A.; the next most common correlation is for Zîn #1 to initiate in both cases. There seems to be no clearcut geographical distribution of these motifs, as northern versions appear in both of the aforementioned scenarios.

D.IV.B. Word for Mem's cloak

There are basically four different names given to Mem's cloak: a) fur; b) cloak; c) overcoat; and d) animal hide. 'Fur' occurs in nine versions (PN; HM; LC-1; FK-2; ZK-3; ZK-2; FK-1; EP-1; GNa), including the word pair **k'urk û libas/livas** [fur and garment] in FK-1 and EP-1, and the Armenian word **mushtak** **մուշտակ** in GNa. 'Cloak' occurs as the Arabic loanword 'abā **آبا** [cloaklike wrap] in three versions (MC-1; HR-1; EP-2), including one Turoyo (Neo-Aramaic) version, and one version for which only the Russian translation of the Kurdish original exists.²¹ 'Overcoat' (**qap'ût** in Kurdish) occurs in another three versions (ZK-1; HR-2; SHa-2), including a Turoyo version and a version for which we have only the Armenian translation of the Kurdish original.²² In two southern versions, one in the Southern Kurmanji dialect of Zakho (PS) and one in Mukri [Sorani] (OM), the term 'animal hide' occurs, appearing as **kavi:l** in PS and **káuł** in OM.

²¹Although we cannot be completely sure what the original Kurdish term was in this version, the Russian translation has **войлочная аба** **во́лочная аба** = 'felt cloak' (EP-2). The Armenian term (SHa-1) **farach** **ֆարաժ** may also mean 'cloak.'

²²Although we cannot be completely sure what the original Kurdish term was in this version, the Armenian translation has **verark** **վերարկ** = 'overcoat' (SHa-2).

D.IV.C. Mem fails to stand up when Mîr Sêvdîn enters

This scene includes a disrespectful act – a sin of omission rather than of commission – on Mem's part. In twelve versions (PN; PS; SHa-1; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2), Mem remains seated when the Mîr enters the diwan. In three more versions, similar scenarios occur: in ZK-3 (3.) Mem fails to stand up and vacate Mîr Sêvdîn's seat when the latter enters; in MC-1 (4.) Mem is about to stand up, but Zîn #1 tells him that if he does, he will disgrace her; and in HM (2.) Mem fails to greet Mîr Sêvdîn when the latter enters the diwan. SHa-2 (5.) is unique, because in it Mem actually stands up, but he bows sluggishly, which is considered disrespectful, judging by Beko Awan's comments. The motif is not mentioned in two versions (LC-1; OM): considering how fully most scenes are described in OM, the absence of this one is particularly notable.

D.IV.D. Mîr Sêvdîn's reaction

In ten versions, Mîr Sêvdîn's reaction to Mem's lack of respect is one of anger: in eight versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2), his reaction is immediate, while in two (PN; FK-2) it is delayed. In HM (1.b.), Mîr Sêvdîn is shocked or surprised [ajebbû] by this. In one version (3. : EP-2) Mîr Sêvdîn is not angered, and in six versions (PS; LC-1; OM; GNa; EP-1; MC-1) Mîr Sêvdîn's reaction is not mentioned.

D.IV.E. Beko Awan's interference

In eight versions (PN; PS; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1; ZK-2) Beko Awan comments on Mem's failure to get up, in an attempt to get Mem into deep trouble by publicly drawing attention to his failings. In three versions (2. : FK-1; ZK-1; MC-1), one

of which (ZK-1) overlaps with the preceding allomotif (1.), Beko Awan lights a fire right beside Mem (and Zîn #1), so that they sweat and will eventually have to get up and move²³. I believe that the insertion of a fire at this point is somehow connected with Qeretajdîn's burning down his house (see D.V.B. below). In another three versions (3. : SHa-1; EP-1; ZK-1), Beko Awan exploits religiosity, by suggesting that they all stand up and pray to God (SHa-1; ZK-1), or, in a version which overlaps once again with the first allomotif (1.), that Mem stand up and pray to God (EP-1). Both allomotifs 2. and 3. share the idea of doing something to try to force Mem to stand up and publicly reveal Zîn #1's hiding place. In one version (EP-2), Beko Awan is the butt of the Mir's anger rather than Mem, in that Mir Sêvdîn says that it is Beko Awan who has tricked him. This motif is absent from six versions (HM; LC-1; OM; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2).

D.V. Qeretajdîn's sacrifice

D.V.A. Qeretajdîn sees Zîn #1's hair sticking out from under Mem's coat, and understands

In five versions (six including the footnote to SHa-2) Qeretajdîn notices Zîn #1's braids (1.a. : SHa-2 [footnote #26]; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; HR-2; ZK-1). In one version (1.c. : EP-1), which furnishes a link to allomotif 2., Mem rearranges Zîn #1's braids, and Qeretajdîn notices. In six versions (seven including the footnote in SHa-2), Mem takes an active role in letting Qeretajdîn see Zîn #1's braids sticking out from under his coat (2. : PS; SHa-1; SHa-2 [footnote #26]; ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-2; MC-1): in all but one, Mem shows Zîn #1's braids to Qeretajdîn, while in HR-1 (2.b.), Mem signals Qeretajdîn with

²³This is reminiscent of Mem and Zîn's sweating in the grave [E.II.B.1.c (FK-1)].

his eyes²⁴. The remaining variations are single occurrences: in OM (3.) it is Zîn #1 herself who shows Qeretajdîn her braids; in FK-2 (4.), in what I consider a displaced element, Beko Awan shows Zîn #1's braids to Mîr Sêvdîn. In LC-1 (1.b.), there is a curious allomotif in which Hasan çäkõ & Qeretajdîn notice a woman's skirt sticking out from under Mem's coat, but don't know if it belongs to Mîr Sêvdîn's sister or wife, or to Hasan's wife. The element of intersection – if I may use my newly-coined term in this fashion – between this and the preceding allomotifs is that both a woman's hair and her skirt are sexually diverting to many a heterosexual male.

There are two versions which lack the motif of something sticking out from underneath Mem's coat. They are PN (5.), in which Hasso and Chakko instinctively know that Zîn #1 is hiding behind Mem, without any further explanation being offered, and HM (6.), in which Qeretajdîn tries unsuccessfully to warn Mem and Zîn that Mîr Sêvdîn is coming by making noise outside the diwan: in this version it was Qeretajdîn who suggested that Mem feign illness, so he knew of Mem and Zîn #1's rendez-vous ahead of time.

D.V.B. Qeretajdîn causes diversion; heroic rescue by Qeretajdîn; Items sacrificed:

The heroic nature of Qeretajdîn's sacrifice is discussed in the section entitled **Analysis: Is Mem a Hero?** In all but two versions (HM; FK-2), Qeretajdîn's house is set on fire to create a diversion which will enable Mem and Zîn to disengage themselves from their precarious situation. In eleven of the sixteen cases in which Qeretajdîn's house burns down, another item is sacrificed as well (PN; PS; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1); in two cases (HR-1; ZK-2), two other items are sacrificed. To put it differently, there are only three versions (SHa-2; GNa; EP-2) in

²⁴Because the narrative is interrupted at this point, it is impossible to say what Mem's next action would have been.

which only the house is sacrificed. In HM, there are two sacrifices, one of his brother Arfo's wife and child, the other of Mir Sêvdîn's horse and tent, but Qeretajdîn's house is not burnt down in this version.

Other items sacrificed include: a) Qeretajdîn's child (2. : PS; FK-1; ZK-1; SHa-1; MC-1; EP-1; OM); b) Qeretajdîn [or Hasso's] wife (#.a-b. : PN; HR-2); c) Qeretajdîn's wife and child (3.c-d. : ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-2), or his brother Arfo's wife and child (HM); and d) horses (4. : HR-1; ZK-2; LC-1; HM). In the case of Qeretajdîn's child being sacrificed (2.), there are three versions in which the cradle is mentioned rather than the child itself (SHa-1; MC-1; EP-1), and one in which it is unclear if he is actually sacrificed, but his mother is ready to sacrifice him (OM). In PN (3.a.) Hasso's wife is shot, while in HR-2 Qeretajdîn's wife is run through with a sword. In three versions (ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-2) Qeretajdîn chases after his wife with their child strapped to her breast: in all three it is left unclear whether or not they are actually killed; in HM, Qeretajdîn's brother Arfo sacrifices his wife, who happens to be Beko Awan's sister in this version: hence this is a jab at Beko Awan as well.

Horses are sacrificed in four versions (4. : HR-1; ZK-2; LC-1; HM); in the first two they are burnt, while in LC-1 they are killed with a sword. In his movie "Yol," the late Yılmaz Güney makes an implied comparison between women and horses: Seyit's wife, who is kept prisoner in the horse stable because she was caught selling her body while Seyit was in prison, dies in the snow while walking with Seyit from her father's village to the local town. Earlier, on the way to see her from that same town, Seyit had to shoot the horse he had set out with, because it could not endure the severe cold and deep snow. Shortly before she succumbs, Seyit's wife passes beside the carcass of the horse, and it is implied that both she and the horse share a common fate -- to be servants to men, to die in the snow, etc. This detail from outside the story of Mem û Zîn may explain how a woman and a horse may be functional equivalents, occupying

the same motifeme slot in different versions of the same tale. In HM, the horse belongs to Mîr Sêvdîn; consequently, this is a blow to the Mîr, parallel to the blow to Beko Awan inherent in his sister's being killed.

D.V.C. Items rescued:

In eight versions (PN; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; EP-2; HR-2; ZK-2) no items are saved at all. In the remaining ten versions, the following items are rescued: a) books; b) horses; and c) a child or child's cradle. In four out of five cases (1.a. : PS; SHa-2; ZK-3; MC-1), the rescued book is the Koran (Qur'ân), the holy book of Islam; the fifth occurrence, by a Jacobite Christian Turoyo speaker, has simply 'book': it is not surprising that a Christian would not speak of the Koran. In four versions (2. : FK-1; ZK-3; SHa-2; SHa-1) horses are rescued: in FK-1 and ZK-3 (2.a.) a single horse; in SHa-2 (2.b.) Mem's horse Bor, and in SHa-1 (2.c.) three horses. In GNa, Qeretajdîn orders the rescue of six horses, but his wife leaves them to be burned.

The phenomenon of Qeretajdîn's ordering the rescue of someone, which is then overturned by his wife, occurs in five versions (3.b-c. : PS; SHa-1; GNa; EP-1; ZK-1) with regard to the rescue of their children. In three versions (3.b. : PS; SHa-1; GNa) Qeretajdîn orders the rescue of the child's cradle, but his wife leaves it to be burned; in EP-1 (3.b.) Qeretajdîn orders the rescue of four golden cradles²⁵, but his wife leaves them to be burned; and in ZK-1 (3.c.) Qeretajdîn orders his son's rescue, but his wife leaves him to be burned. In two more versions (SHa-2; ZK-3) a child's cradle is rescued.

D.V.D. Beko Awan interferes: tells Mîr Sêvdîn "it's nothing," thereby forcing Qeretajdîn to sacrifice yet another precious item, in hopes of getting Mîr Sêvdîn to leave the diwan and come see

²⁵if *bormotk* means 'cradle.'

In five versions (HM; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2) is it necessary for Qeretajdîn to resort to a second or even a third diversion *due to Beko Awan's interference*. In three cases (1. : HM; HR-2; ZK-3) Qeretajdîn has to cause a second diversion; in ZK-3 (1.b.), the same occurs, but Mîr Sêvdîn strikes Beko Awan as a result. In two versions (ZK-2; HR-1) Qeretajdîn feels forced to cause a second and third diversion; in HR-1 (2.b.) in addition Beko Awan is struck by the Mîr for saying that nothing is wrong.

D.V.E. Mem extinguishes flames of Qeretajdîn's manor

This motif occurs in three versions (GNa; EP-1; ZK-1). In GNa (1.a.) Mem extinguishes the flames with the hem of his garment and saves Qeretajdîn's infant son from burning to death. In EP-1 and ZK-1 (1.b-c.) Mem puts the fire out with a handkerchief; in EP-1 he sings to the fire, saying that if his and Zîn #1's love for each other is divinely inspired, it will put the fire out: this is a proof test similar to the one in ZK-2 [B.II.B.7.] in which the judge's and mufti's becoming blind and lame furnishes proof that Mem's encounter with Zîn #1 was not just a dream.

D.VI. Mem and Mîr Sêvdîn's game; Mem's imprisonment

D.VI.A. Game between Mem and Mîr

In thirteen versions, Mem and the Mîr play a board game: chess in ten versions (1.a-b. : PS; HM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1), checkers in two versions (1.c-d. : ZK-2; LC-1), and backgammon in one version (1.e. : OM). This provides a piece of Kurdish realia, for the Kurds are famous for their skill in chess. In two versions (2. : ZK-3; HR-2), Mem and the Mîr play cards. EP-2 (3.) is unique for its arrow shooting contest. The entire contest is absent in two versions (PN; HR-1).

D.VI.B. Terms of game

In eight versions (1. : HM; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; SHa-1; HR-2; ZK-1; FK-2), the terms of the game are focused on Mem, rather than equally balanced between Mem and the Mîr, as follows: in four versions (1.a. : HM; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1) if Mem wins, he may marry Zîn #1; if he loses, he will be thrown into prison. In one each, a) if Mem wins, he may marry Zîn #1; if he loses, he will lose his head (1.b. : SHa-1); b) If Mem wins, he may marry Zîn #1; if he loses, he will either lose his head or be thrown into prison (1.c. : HR-2); c) If Mem wins, he may ask for whatever he wants; if he loses, he will be thrown into prison (1.d. : ZK-1); d) If Mem loses, he will be thrown into prison (1.e. : FK-2). In one version (2.b. : EP-1), the terms are different for the Mîr than they are for Mem: if Mîr Sêvdîn wins, he may ask whatever he likes of Mem [şendixwaz]; but if Mem wins, he may marry Zîn #1. The terms are equal for both players in four versions (2.a. : EP-2; ZK-3; ZK-2; MC-1): whoever wins may ask what he likes of the loser, a practice known as *şendixwaz* in Kurdish. In PS (3.) whoever loses must tell the winner who his beloved is: although this does not seem to be in line with the other versions, a consideration of its occurrence as a separate motif in several versions [see D.VIII.B. below] reveals that the consequences of Mem's revealing that he is in love with Zîn #1 could produce the same consequences as losing the game: it could land him in jail. In LC-1 (4.) this is replaced by Mîr Sêvdîn's asking Mem how he can be overpowered; Mem replies: a) by chains, but Mem breaks them; b) by the hair of a horse's tail. The end result of this is similar to the others, as it leads to Mem's loss of freedom. In three versions (PN; OM; HR-1), no terms of the game are mentioned.

D.VI.C. Causal connection between Mem's losing game and his being thrown into prison

In eleven versions (1. : HM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-1) Mem is imprisoned as a direct result of losing the game with Mîr Sêvdîn: in one of them (1.b. : EP-1) Mîr Sêvdîn would have let it pass, but due to Beko Awan's insistence, Mem was imprisoned. In the seven other versions, there is no direct connection between the results of the game and Mem's imprisonment. In three versions (2.-4. : ZK-2; HR-1; LC-1) a different specific reason is given. In two of them (2.-3. : ZK-2; HR-1) Mem is in prison because he is caught alone with Zîn #1; moreover, in ZK-2, rather than Mem losing the game, Mem and Mîr Sêvdîn are tied at checkers. In the third (4. : LC-1) Mem is imprisoned as a result of being overpowered by the horsetail hair. In the four other versions (PN; PS; OM; MC-1), Mem is simply thrown into prison, without any special reason being given.

D.VI.D. Zîn #1's tunnel and its discovery

In nine versions (1. : SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-1; MC-1) Zîn #1 has a tunnel dug between Mem's prison cell and her bedroom. In GNa (1.b.) there are two tunnel episodes: a) Zîn #1 has a tunnel dug between the kitchen where Mem is working and her bedroom [see D.I.F.1.]; b) Zîn #1 has a tunnel dug between Mem's prison cell and her bedroom. In another nine versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; EP-2; HR-2; ZK-2) this motif is absent.

D.VI.E. After the tunnel is discovered, Mem is moved from first prison to second, worse prison [excluding D.VI.D.2]

Of the nine versions containing the tunnel motif, in six of them (1. : SHa-1; GNa; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1) Mem is moved to a stone prison, in two of them (2. : SHa-2; ZK-3) he is moved to the bottom of a well, and in one (3. : HR-1) Mem remains in the original prison cell, and the tunnel is plugged up with pitch. In the first six

versions, before the tunnel is discovered Mem is in a wooden prison in two versions (1.b. : EP-1; ZK-1), and earthen prison (1.c. : FK-1) in one version, and simply in prison in three versions (1.a. : SHa-1; GNa; MC-1).

D.VII. Qeretajdîn's absence [often precedes D.VI.]

D.VII.A. Qeretajdîn and brothers leave town on mission

The two most common reasons that Qeretajdîn and his brothers leave Jezira Bohtan are: a) to fight a battle with the enemy, in six versions (1. : SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1); and b) to collect taxes, in seven versions (2. : OM; GNa; ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-2; ZK-1; MC-1). In three of the latter category (GNa; ZK-2; ZK-1) they are going to collect taxes for the specific purpose of rebuilding Qeretajdîn's house that burned down. In PS (3.) a third reason for their departure is given, namely to deliver Mîr Sêvdîn's gift to Mecca. In PN and HM (4.) they do not go on a mission, but rather leave after having quarreled with Mîr Sêvdîn, and go to Sham [=Syria or Damascus]. In three versions (LC-1; FK-2; HR-2), Qeretajdîn and his brothers do not leave town.

D.VII.B. Zîn #1 sends message to Qeretajdîn with a man who demands a kiss from her as payment [with II.P of Dramatis Personae chart & D.VII.A]

This episode is absent from eleven versions (PS; OM; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1). In five of the seven versions in which it does appear (1.a. : HM; SHa-1; FK-1; ZK-3; ZK-2) Zîn #1 sends a letter to Qeretajdîn with a man who demands a kiss from her as payment; she writes in the letter that Qeretajdîn should kill the man after taking the letter from him. This is an example of Motif K978. *Uriah letter. Man carries written order for his own execution* In the two remaining versions (1.b-c. : PN; LC-1), the man is not killed.

D.VII.C. The messenger's payment [excluding D.VII.B.2]

Of the seven versions in which D.VII.B. occurs, the messenger demands a kiss in five versions (PN; SHa-1; FK-1; ZK-3; ZK-2); in the latter two he agrees to receive the kiss after he returns from delivering the letter. In HM (2.) he demands marriage rather than a kiss, and in LC-1 (3.) he neither demands anything, nor is he killed.

D.VIII. Floating motifs

D.VIII.A. Mem's unmanly behavior [nemerdi]

Listed are three different examples of Mem's unmanly behavior, each of which occurs in only one version (or two, in the case of 3.). What they have in common is that they all occur during the transitional stage, while Mem is journeying to Jezira Bohtan. In SHa-1 and GNa (3.), Mem finally stops and treats Bor's wound after ignoring the horse's complaint [C.I.B.2]. In ZK-2 (1.) a porter from Jezira Bohtan gives Mem an undesired answer, by telling him that he still has a long way to go before reaching his destination; because of this Mem frightens him; in so doing, Mem falls from God's favor: this occurs at the point during Mem's journey when he asks someone he encounters how far it is to Jezira [C.II.A.4].

In FK-2 (2.) Mem commits an unmanly act when he strikes Qeretajdîn over the head with a stick; Mem later redeems himself by staying with Qeretajdîn until he recovers consciousness, rather than riding off and leaving him defenseless: this occurs when Mem catches Qeretajdîn's gazelle for him during hunting expedition #1 [C.II.B.1b].

D.VIII.B. Poetry contest (verbal duel)

According to Ayyūbiyān it is a centuries-old custom among the Kurds for young men and warriors to recite poetry in verbal disputes and on the battlefield, in

which they express their feelings in verse, creating epic poems: skill in this art is greatly valued.²⁶ This verbal duel in which Beko Awan taunts Mem, in an attempt to get him to admit publicly that he is in love with Zîn #1, is an example of such a poetry contest. The entire episode is absent from nine versions (PN; LC-1; GNa; FK-2; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1). In the nine versions in which it does occur, there are three different places in the story in which it can take place: 1) just after Mem gets a token from Zîn #1 [D.II.] (1.a. : ZK-3) or after Çekan renounces his betrothal to Zîn #1 and they all go to visit the Mîr (1.b. : SHa-1); 2) just after the scene with Qeretajdîn's sacrifice [D.V.] (2.a. : HM; SHa-2; FK-1) or when Beko Awan interferes by commenting on Mem's failure to rise before the Mîr [D.IV.E.] (2.b. EP-1); and 3) just after the game between Mem and Mîr Sêvdîn [D.VI.A-B] (3.a. : OM; ZK-2) or as the terms of the game [D.VI.B.3] (3.b. : PS).

D.VIII.C. Result: Mîr Sêvdîn orders his men to kill Mem [excluding D.VIII.B.7.]

When Mem is tricked into admitting that he loves Zîn #1, the action of the Mîr is very violent. In seven of the nine versions containing this motif (1. : PS; HM; SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; ZK-3; ZK-2), Mîr Sêvdîn orders his men to kill Mem; daggers are drawn, and Mem is saved by Qeretajdîn and his brothers. The violent reaction is absent from OM (3.); in EP-1 (2.) there is a scene with violence and the unsheathing of swords, but it is unrelated to the poetry contest.

D.VIII.D. Qeretajdîn's handkerchief in shape of rabbit as diversion to save Mem & Zîn #1

²⁶ Ubayd Allâh Ayyûbiyân. *Çirkey Mem û Zîn : Kurdî - Farsî* [م و زین] (Tabriz : Châpkhānah-i Shafaq [1962]), p. 211, note 1. See also: Alan Dundes, Jerry W. Leach and Bora Özkök. "The Strategy of Turkish Boys' Verbal Dueling Rhymes," *Journal of American Folklore* 83 (1970), 325-349, reprinted in: Alan Dundes. *Parsing Through Customs: Essays by a Freudian Folklorist* (Madison, Wisc. : University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 82-117.

I am acquainted with a Kurdish woman from Kirkûk, Iraqî Kurdistan (born c. 1961) who told me that as a child she remembers seeing 'rabbits' made out of handkerchiefs as a way of amusing children. This seems to be a traditional Kurdish amusement. While Zîn #1 is serving coffee in the diwan, Beko says to Mir Sêvdîn that if she smiles when she serves Mem his coffee, this is proof of their love; Qeretajdîn fashions a rabbit out of his handkerchief and shows it to the assembly just as Zîn #1 serves Mem his coffee: the handkerchief is adduced to explain Zîn #1's laughter and smiling, while concealing Mem and Zîn #1's love for each other. This motif occurs in only three versions (FK-1; EP-1; SHa-1): in the first two instances, it follows the episode of Qeretajdîn's sacrifice [D.V.], while in SHa-1 it follows Çekan's renouncing of his betrothal to Zîn #1 [D.II.D], and replaces the earlier visit to Mir Sêvdîn which occurs in other versions [D.I].

Handkerchiefs serve three different functions in various versions of M&Z. In seven versions (SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1) handkerchief is thrown on the Mir's seat when he stands up at Mem's entrance, as proof that the Mir did indeed stand up when Mem entered [D.I.H.]; in two versions (ZK-1; EP-1) Mem extinguishes the fire in Qeretajdîn's house with a handkerchief [D.V.E.1.b-c.]; and in three versions (FK-1; EP-1; SHa-1) Qeretajdîn uses a handkerchief tied in the shape of a rabbit as a means of creating a minor diversion to protect Mem and Zîn [D.VIII.D.]. While the first and second functions occur in ZK-1, and the first and third functions occur in FK-1, all three functions occur in EP-1. Moreover, although all of the attestations of all three functions involve northern versions only, in southern versions (PS; OM; MC-1) Mem and Zîn exchange both rings and handkerchiefs when they first meet in Mem's room [B.I.F.2].

E. Final stage - Death of Mem and Zîn #1

E.I. Mem's death**E.I.A. Zîn #1 takes Mem out of prison**

In all but four versions, Zîn #1 releases Mem from prison. In two versions (4. : LC-1; 2.d. : HR-2) Qeretajdîn releases him, and in two versions (PN; FK-2) the whole motif is absent. In eight versions (1. : PS; HM; SHa-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-1), Beko Awan tells Zîn #1 to release Mem; in four versions (2. : SHa-1; GNa; ZK-2; MC-1) it is the Mir who tells her to. In one version (EP-2) both Beko Awan and the Mir tell Zîn #1 to let Mem out of the dungeon. In OM (5.) the initiative comes from Zîn #1 when she requests permission to release Mem. In LC-1 (4.) Hasan çäkõ release Mem from prison: permission is neither requested nor granted.

Of the thirteen versions with Zîn #1 as the one setting Mem free, eight (HM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-2) include the proviso that she should bring her maidservants along, while in two (HM; MC-1) she is told to bring musicians or musical accompaniment: HM calls for both maidens and musicians.

The significance of choosing Zîn #1 as the one to release Mem will be dealt with further in E.I.C. below.

E.I.B. Mem's death

In nine versions (1. : SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-2; ZK-1; 3.a. : HR-2) Mem is pulled up from the dungeon pit by a rope; in three versions (2. : OM; GNa; EP-2) he is hangs onto the long braids of Zîn #1 or other women, and is pulled up. In three versions (1.d-f. : FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1) the color of the rope is specified: in one (1.d. : EP-1) it is white; in one (1.e. : ZK-1) it is yellow; in one (1.f. : FK-1) they try to pull him up first by a white rope, which is unsuccessful, then try with a yellow rope

wrapped around his waist. In four versions (1.b-c. : SHa-2; HR-1; ZK-2; 5. : HM), he shed drops of blood when he emerges from the pit, then expires. In two versions (3.a-b. : HR-2; MC-1), Beko Awan interferes by telling Mem that Zîn #1 is marrying someone else; the proof of this is Zîn #1's bridal gown; when he sees Zîn #1 in a bridal gown, which is actually meant for him, he dies. In LC-1 (4.) he dies as soon as he lays eyes on Zîn #1. In PS (6.) Mem asks Zîn #1 to bring him a bowl of cold water, and he dies after he drinks. In two versions (PN; FK-2) it is simply stated that Mem dies, without any further details: these two versions are known for their brevity.

This scene has the markings of a birth in reverse. Mem leaves a womb-like place, pulled out by a rope – suggestive of an umbilical chord. The dungeon is the antithesis of a womb: rather than being warm and nurturing, it is cold and austere. As will be seen in E.I.C. below, it is stated that if Zîn #1 (or more generally, if a woman) lets him out – i.e. acts as midwife – he will die, but if a man does, he will live. Here too we have the reverse of what normally occurs: it is women who both give birth and administer to the prospective mother, but here it is stated that the presence of a woman will ensure the death of the “child” coming out into the world.

E.I.C. Prediction regarding sex of person releasing Mem from prison

This motif is present in five versions only (SHa-2; GNa; EP-1; ZK-2; ZK-1). In three (1.a-b. : GNa; EP-1; ZK-2) of them it is stated that if a woman (specifically Zîn #1 in GNa and ZK-2) releases Mem, he will die; if a man releases him, he will live.²⁷ This is structurally similar to the condition in MC-1 [D.II.C.3] in which Zîn #1 throws a yellow bouquet and a red bouquet into the air, and tells Mem that if he catches the red

²⁷Male envy of female procreativity may be inherent in the statement that if a man lets Mem out of the dungeon, he will live, but if a woman lets him out, he will die. See Alan Dundes “The Flood as Male Myth of Creation,” *Journal of Psychoanalytic Anthropology*, 9 (1986), 359-372; reprinted in his *The Flood Myth* (Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, 1988), pp. 167-82.

one, they will attain their desire in this life, but that if he catches the yellow one, they will have to wait until the next life.

In SHa-2 and ZK-1, the idea of shame is introduced: in SHa-2 (2.a.) Zîn #1 says it is disgraceful that Mem should be released by a woman; in ZK-1 (2.b.) she says it is shameful that prisoners are brought in by men, then released by women.

E.II. Zîn #1's death

E.II.A. When Zîn #1 dies vis-à-vis Mem's death

In seven versions (2.a. : SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; ZK-2) Zîn #1 dies the same day as Mem; in EP-2 (2.b.) she dies the evening of the same day. In two Turoyo versions (1. : HR-1; HR-2) she stabs herself to death just after Mem dies. In GNa (3.) she dies at noon on the next day; in LC-1 (4.) she dies a week later; in PS and HM (5.) she dies eight days later; and in MC-1 (6.) she dies forty hours or forty days later. The time of her death is not specified in three versions (PN; OM; FK-2). PN and FK-2 also lack detail regarding Mem's death.

E.II.B. Burial of Mem and Zîn #1

There are three common ways that Mem and Zîn #1 are buried: a) in seven versions (2. : PS; FK-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; 4.a. : HM) they are buried separately, but when the graves are opened, they are together [Motif E419.6. Lovers buried apart found in one grave each morning]; b) in five versions (1. : PN; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-1), they are buried back to back, but when the graves are opened, they are facing each other; and c) in four versions (3. : OM; SHa-1; ZK-1; MC-1) they are buried together [Motif T86. Lovers buried in same grave]. In two versions (4.a-b. : HM; LC-1) Mîr Sêvdîn and company play jireed and throw a lance, with the understanding that they

will open up whichever grave it lands on: in HM (4.a.) it lands on Mem's grave, and they open it to find Mem and Zîn #1 together, with a clay sword between them, which links this with type a) above; in LC-1 (4.b.) the result is not reported, but before she dies, Zîn #1 says "if they are lying back to back, her brother is innocent of any wrongdoing." The expectation is that they will be lying face to face, as in type b) above, and that her brother the Mîr is guilty. [Cf. Motif E442. *Ghost laid by piercing grave (corpse) with stake*] The game of jireed makes its appearance in SHa-2 and ZK-3 also, but at a different point in the story [D.III.A.2-3]. In types a) and b), Mem and Zîn are united in the grave by supernatural forces, an indication of divine support for their union.

E.III. Beko's death and thornbush on Mem and Zîn's grave from drop of Beko's blood. Motif E631.0.3. *Plant from blood of slain person*

E.III.A. Beko Awan is killed by

In twelve versions (PS; HM; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1) Qeretajdîn kills Beko Awan by slicing off his head with a sword at the side of Mem and Zîn's open grave. In PN (1.c.), a version in which Qeretajdîn is replaced by Hasso, Hasso kills Beko Awan. In two versions (1.b. : HM; ZK-3) Qeretajdîn does this, in spite of Mîr Sêvdîn's exhortation not to. In two versions (2.a. : SHa-1; ZK-2) Mîr Sêvdîn kills Beko Awan himself, and in another version (2.b. : OM) he orders Beko Awan's execution. In FK-2 (3.) Al-Pasha kills Beko Awan; in LC-1 (4.) Qumsî Beko, who is one of Qeretajdîn's brothers in this version, is not killed.

E.III.B. Word for thornbush:

In seven versions (PS; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-1; MC-1), including one Turoyo version (HR-1), some form of the Kurdish word **dîrî** [= 'thorn'] is employed.

Other Kurmanji words for thorn are **stirf** or **istrf**, and **kelem**: each appears once, the former in HM (2.), the latter in ZK-2 (3.). In OM the Sorani word **zî** [= 'Christ's thorn'] is used.²⁸ Two of the Turoyo versions use native words: **sālûno** (PN) and **Ûultô** (HR-2); HR-1 borrows the Kurdish word **dîrî** as **dîrrihe**. Each of the Armenian versions uses a different native word for thornbush: **meshi dzaî** [մեշի ճաւ] (SHa-1); **ch'ich'khan p'ush** [չիչխան փուշ] (SHa-2); and **kîni** [կննի] [= 'astragalus'] (GNa).

In EP-2 (10.) Beko Awan's blood falls on a bush growing over the graves and his blood becomes scarlet flowers rather than a thorn: this is Motif E631.0.3.1. *Red plant from blood of slain person*, whereas the others are Motif E631.0.3. *Plant from blood of slain person*. The motif is lacking in two versions (LC-1; FK-1).

E.III.C. Legend about the thornbush

In nine versions (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; MC-1) nothing further is said regarding the thornbush. In four versions (1. : SHa-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2) we are told that it is still there to this day. In another four versions (2.a. : SHa-1; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1) it is stated that every year it is cut down, but it always grows back, and in one version (2.b. : GNa) every day it is cut down, but it always grows back the next day. In all nine versions which have such an epilogue, evil as represented by Beko Awan is seen as being inextricable: even in death he continues to harass Mem and Zîn. In his doctoral dissertation, Amir Hassanpour-Aghdam states that in Eñmedê Xanf's literary poem Mem û Zîn, the villain Beko Awan "personifies the discord (şiqaq) and disunity (bêtifaqî) of the Kurdish princes which [Xanf] considered to be the main reason for the

²⁸The compound **dirkezî** also exists, consisting of **dirke-** (cognate to Kurmanji **dîrî**), and **zî**.

failure of the Kurdish people to achieve sovereignty."²⁹ By imbuing the metaphor of the thornbush with this added meaning, Xanî found a very effective vehicle for his message.

F. Conclusion

Five versions (HM; SHa-1; GNa; ZK-3; HR-2) end with E.III.C. above. Eleven versions end with some kind of concluding phrase: two concluding formulas and four sets of concluding verse. The concluding formulas are: 1) "May favor befall the parents of those listening" [rahmá l dei bābēd gohdāra] (1.a. : PS; EP-2; ZK-2; MC-1); and 2) "May you be well for me" [tu šmera saḥ] (PN; HR-1): both PN and HR-1 are Turoyo versions, but the concluding formula is in Kurdish. Both formulas are common ways to end folktales.

Concluding verse occurs in five versions, as follows: 1) "Mem and Zîn are in heaven, Beko Awan is in hell" (2.a. : SHa-2); 2) "Good are the three months of summer, /Very fine are the summer pastures of Fereshin, / Nowhere on earth can be found Memê Alan and Zîn" (2.b. FK-1; 3.d. ZK-1); 3) "One side of Jezîra flourishes and the other is in ruins" (3.c. : FK-2); and 4) a greeting to Oskar Mann, the collector of the version (3.a. : OM). In three cases (OM; FK-2; ZK-1) the concluding verse is in addition to either Bengîn or Bor's return to Mem's native land.

In three versions (3.b-d. : FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1) Mem's horse Bor returns to Mukhurzemîn at the end of the story. In OM (3.a.) Bengîneh returns to Yemen, brings Mem's father Brayim Pasha back to Jezira Bohtan, finally returning to Yemen with

²⁹Amir Hassanpour-Aghdam. The Language Factor in National Development: The Standardization of the Kurdish Language 1918-1985. Doctoral dissertation (Urbana, Illinois : University of Illinois, 1989), p. 84.

him. Here we have another example of Bor and Bengîn[eh] performing a similar function.

In LC-1 the *dengbêj* ends with the wish that Mem and Zîn #1 attain in the next world what they didn't attain in this, and provides biographical information about himself: his name, his father's name, and the place and date of collection.

The fact that some versions lack a particular motif to which I attach importance in my analysis, strongly suggests that other interpretations are possible, or that some of the *dengbêjes* had a different understanding of the the story than I do. Unfortunately, because their reactions were left unrecorded, we will never know. It can only be hoped that future collecting will incorporate aspects as the *dengbêj's* world view and his audience's as well as his own opinions about his material, so that we are not forced to do for this living Kurdish tradition what Melville Jacobs had no choice but to do for the folklore of the extinct Clackamas Chinook Indians: create his own ingenious, but unsubstantiated and unprovable, native audience reactions.

Memorandum Zin Motif Chart

Dramatis Personae

	PN	PS	HM	LC-1	OM	SHa -1	SHa -2	GNa	FK-1	FK-2	BP-1	ZK- 3	HR- 1	HR- 2	ZK- 1	ZK-2	MC- 1
I.A.	2b	1t 4a	2b	1a	4a	2t 4b	4b	2t 3b	1t 3a	1t 3a	3a	1t 2a	1b	2b	3a	1t 3a	1t 2a
I.B.	3	2c	2c	4	5	1	6	1	1	1	1	2b	2d	7	1	2a	1
I.C.	1d	2	2	3	1a	1a	1a	1b	1a	2	1c	1a	2	2	1a	4	2
I.D.	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	2
I.E.	2	2	2(4)	3	1c	1a	1a	1b	1a	2	1a	2	2	2	1a	3	1a
I.F.	3b	2	3a	1e	2	3a	1a	1c	1b	1a	1a	2	3a	4	1a	1a	1d
I.G.	1	1	1	3	4	1	5	5	1	1	6a	1	1	1	6b	2	2
II.A.	1a	1t 1b	1b	1t 2e	2d	2a	2b	1a	1t 2b	1t 2a	1t 3b	1t 2c	2c 3a	1a	1t 2b	2c 2b	2t 2b
II.B.	1b	2a	1b	3a	3b	1b	1b	2a	1a	1t 1c	1t 2c	2b	2a	1a	1a	2b	1a
II.C.	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	4a	2	1	3	1	2	1	1
II.D.	2a	2(5)	2(5)	3	2(5)	1	1	1	1	1	1	2(5)	2b	4	1	2(5)	4
II.E.	1b	1d	1b	1e	2c 2d 2f	1t 2a	1b	2a	1t 1c 2b	1t 1c 2b	2b	1a	1b	1b	1c	1a	2t 2e
II.F.	1	2(3)	1	2(3)	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
II.G.					2	1	3	3	1	3	1	1	2		1	2	3
II.H.	4	4	5b	2; 5c	2*	4	1*	1*	4	1*	5c	3	1*	5a	5a	1*	2*
II.I.	7	2	2	4	1	3; 6	3; 6	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
II.J.1.	f	h	b	f	b	b	a	1*	a	c	e	d	2(8)	2(8)	a	d	d
II.J.2.	b	b	d	b	b	b'	a'	a	a	c'	a'	b	2(e)	2(e)	a'	b	b'
II.J.3.	a	b	a	c	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
II.K.	3	1a	1a	1a	2	1b	1b	1c	1a	1b	1b	1a	1e	1f	1b	1a	1b
II.L.	2(5)	4	2(5)	2(5)	1	1	2	2	4	2	1	1	3	4	2	1	1
II.M.	2(4)	1	2(4)	2(4)	1	2	3	1	2	3	2	1	3	1	2	1	1
II.N.	1	1	1	1	1	6	4; 6	5; 6	1	2; 3	6	1	1	1	2	1	1
II.O.	6	4; 5	1	2	5	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	1; 6	6; 7	1	1	2
II.P.	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	4	1	1	1	5	1

Mem û Zîn
Motifs Exhibiting Variation

DRAMATIS PERSONAE**I. A. Mem.**

1. a. Memê Alan (ZK-2; ZK-3; MC-1); [širin] māmī ālan(e) (LC-1)
b. Memê Ala (FK-2); mamē alā (PS); Māmme 'Alā (HR-1)
2. a. Memo (ZK-3; MC-1)
b. Mammo (PN; HR-2); Mamo (SHa-1; GNa); māmu (HM)
3. a. Memê (FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; ZK-2)
b. Mame (GNa)
4. a. Kakeh Mem (OM); Mîr Mem (OM); mam (PS)
b. Mam (SHa-1; SHa-2; EP-2)

I.B. Mem's father (Al pasha)

1. Al p'āşa (FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; MC-1); Al-p'āşa (ZK-1); Al pasha (SHa-1; GNa); Al'-pasha (EP-2)
2. a. Alan-p'āşa (ZK-2)
b. Alan-begê / Alaybegê (ZK-3)
c. mîrē alāna, paşae yemanea (PS); mîr alān (HM)
d. 'Alā (HR-1)
3. Yusif Agha (PN)
4. širin almā, šāhī moyribiāne (LC-1)
5. Brayim Pasha / Padishah (OM)
6. King Kachants (SHa-2)
7. unnamed (HR-2)

I.C. Mem's mother

1. a. unnamed (OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; ZK-3; ZK-1)
b. unnamed: dead, later is alive (GNa)

- c. unnamed: virgin living at shrine (EP-1)
- d. unnamed: Yusif Agha's female cousin (PN)
- 2. \emptyset (PS; HM; FK-2; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; MC-1)
- 3. zālixā xātun, kāčikā qorēišiāne (LC-1)
- 4. T'êñ 'iṣan (ZK-2)

I.D. Mem's servant Bengîn

- 1. \emptyset (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1)
- 2. Bengîn (ZK-3; MC-1); Bengîneh (OM): accompanies Mem to Jezîra Bohtan.
- 3. Bengîn (ZK-2): does not accompany Mem to Jezîra Bohtan

I.E. Mem's horse (Bor): See also B.III.A. and C.I.

- 1. a. Bor (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1)
- b. Por[**٩٥٥**] (GNa)
- c. unnamed, but referred to as **espî bor** = 'gray horse' (OM)
- 2. unnamed (PN; PS; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2)
- 3. Bozê Rewal (ZK-2); serāk basān bōzî rawān (LC-1)
- 4. \emptyset (HM)

I.F. Mem's homeland (Mukhuzemîn or Yemen)

- 1. a. Muxurzemîn (ZK-2); Şehirê Muxurzemîné (ZK-1); Mukhuzemîn (EP-2); şehirê Mixurzemîné (EP-1); Mukher Zamin (SHa-2)
- b. Muḫur Zemîn (FK-1); Muḫūj-Zemîn (FK-2)
- c. Mkhur-Zaman [**Մխուր-Համան**] (GNa)
- d. Merḫebzemîn (MC-1)
- e. bāžāre moyrîbiāne (LC-1)
- 2. Yemen (PS; OM); Bajarê Yemenê (ZK-3)
- 3. a. unnamed (HM; SHa-1; HR-1)

b. unnamed place near the land of India (PN)

4. Place of the Ala (HR-2)

I.G. Donor figure.

1. ø (PN; PS; HM; SHa-1; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2)
2. Xocê Xizir (Khizir) (ZK-2); Xidir nebî/Xidir Eylas (MC-1)
3. Royal sheikh [šēxi ħunkāre] (LC-1)
4. Veysel Karanî of Mahidesht (OM)
5. Doves (SHa-2; GNa)
6. a. ?Three riders, guides of luck and fortune (EP-1)
b. ?Kalê zemanê (ZK-1)

II.A. Zîn [#1]

1. a. Zine (PN; GNa); Zine (HR-2; PS); dîlbâr zine (LC-1)
b. Zîné (FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1); zîné sittiâ bohtâ (PS); Zîné (HM)
2. a. Zîn (MC-1); Zîn (SHa-1; EP-2)
b. Zîn xatûn (FK-2; FK-1); Xatûn Zîn (ZK-1; MC-1); Khatun Zîn (SHa-2)
c. Sîtya Zîn (ZK-3; ZK-2); Sityâ Zîn (HR-1)
d. Yay Zîn (Yaya Zîn) (OM)
e. zîna zēidāne (LC-1)
3. a. Sittiye (HR-1)
b. T'êlî Xatûn (EP-1)

II.B. Mîr Sêvdîn, emir of Jezîra Bohtan

1. a. Mîr Sêvdîn (FK-2; ZK-1; MC-1; FK-1 [brother]; EP-1 [uncle]); Mîr Sêvdîn (HR-2)
b. Mîr Sevdin (PN; SHa-1; SHa-2; EP-2); Mîr Sâvdîn (HM)
c. Mîr Zêvdîn (FK-1 [father])

2. a. mîr zeidîn (PS); Mîr ZeidÎn (HR-1); Mîr Zeydin [Միր-Զեյդին] (GNa)
 - b. Mîr Zêydîn (ZK-3; ZK-2)
 - c. Mîr Seydîn (EP-1 [father])
3. a. mîr zândîn (LC-1)
 - b. mîr Zêndîn (OM)

II.C. Mîr Sêvdîn's relationship to Zîn [#1]

1. brother (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1)
2. father (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-2; EP-2; ZK-1)
3. brother [at beginning of story] → father (GNa; HR-1)
4. a. Mîr Sêvdîn [brother] & Mîr Zêvdîn [father] (FK-1)
 - b. Mîr Seydîn [father] & Mîr Sêvdîn [uncle] (EP-1)

II.D. Zîn #1's father

1. "Mîr Sêvdîn" [=II.B. above] (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1)
2. a. Mîr Zerav (PN)
 - b. Mîr Şarâf (HR-1)
3. mîrî 'Azîm (LC-1)
4. Zîn #1 is fatherless (HR-2; MC-1)
5. ∅ = Zîn #1's father is not mentioned (PS; HM; OM; ZK-3; ZK-2)

II.E. Beko Awan the villain

1. a. Bek'o (ZK-3; ZK-2; FK-2); Mamê Bek'o (ZK-3); Bak'o [Բաքո] (SHa-1)
 - b. bákō awân (HM); Bako Avan (SHa-2); Bakko Awan (PN); Bakko Ğāwân (HR-1); Bakko Ğāwân (HR-2);
 - c. Bek'oyê E'wan (ZK-1); Bek'oê E'wana (FK-1; FK-2)
 - d. bakō ē na;latî (PS)

e. qumsi-bākū (LC-1)

2. a. Bak'ir-Avan (Paqr) [𐰇𐰣𐰚𐰚𐰚-𐰚𐰚𐰚] (GNa); Bekir Avan (SHa-1); Bekir-Awan (EP-2)

b. Bek'irê E'wana (FK-2); Bek'rê E'wana (FK-1); Bek'irê E'wan/E'wîn (EP-1); Bekirê E'wan (MC-1)

c. Ka Bekir (OM)

d. Bekir Agha (OM)

e. Bekirê Direwîn (MC-1)

f. Bekirî Mergewere (OM)

II.F. *Zîn #2*: relationship to Beko Awan

1. daughter (PN; HM; OM; SHa-2; GNa; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1)

2. sister (SHa-1; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2)

3. ø = Zîn #2 absent (PS; LC-1)

II.G. *Zîn #2*: her profession [excludes II.F.3.]

1. sorceress/fortuneteller [rēmildar or sihirbaz] (SHa-1; EP-2; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1)

2. maidservant of Zîn #1: (HR-1; ZK-2; OM)

3. both 1. and 2. (SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; MC-1)

II.H. Maidservant of Zîn #1 (* = Beko Awan's daughter or sister)

1. Zîn #2: *Zîn (SHa-2); *Zîn (HR-1); *Zine (GNa); *Zinê (FK-1); *Zina qîza Bek'o (ZK-2)

2. *Melik Reyñan (OM); *Melek Riñan (MC-1); reiñan(e) (LC-1)

3. Gule'yîşan (ZK-3); Gule'îş (ZK-3; ZK-2)

4. no maidservants (PN; PS; SHa-1; FK-2; EP-2)

5. a. maidservants unnamed (HR-2; ZK-1)

b. 2 maidservants, unnamed (HM)

c. 40 maidservants (LC-1; EP-1; ZK-2)

d. 40 maidservants, all named Zine (GNa)

II.I. Qeretajďin

1. Qeret'ajďin (FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1); Qeretajďin (OM)
2. qaratažďin / qaratažďine ďin (PS); qaratāžďin (HM); Qarā Tājdin (HR-1); Qara Tājdin (HR-2)
3. Gharatazhdin (SHa-1; SHa-2); Ghara-T'azhdin [Ղարա-Քաժդին] (GNa)
4. qaratašďin (LC-1)
5. Karatadjin (EP-2)
6. Tazhdin (SHa-1; SHa-2)
7. ø (PN)

II.J. Qeretajďin's brothers (* = betrothed to Zîn [#1])

II.J-1. a. E'fan (FK-2; ZK-1); Afan (SHa-2)

b. arfó (HM); Arfo[n] (SHa-1); 'Irfo/'Ārfo (OM)

c. E'rfin (FK-1); Arfin (EP-2)

d. E'rif (ZK-3; MC-1); E'reb (ZK-2)

e. E'rfan (EP-1)

f. [Hasso] (PN); ĥásan [-čäkō] (LC-1)

g. ø (HR-1; HR-2)

h. makō (PS)

i. Kakan [Կակա՛ն] (*GNa)

II.J-2. a. Ç'ekan (FK-2; *EP-1; *ZK-1); Jakan [Ճակա՛ն] (*SHa-2; GNa)

b. Ç'eko (ZK-3; ZK-2; *MC-1); [Chakko] (PN); Cheko (OM); cakō (PS); [ĥásan-] čäkō (LC-1); Jako[n] (*SHa-1)

c. Ç'ekín (*FK-1); Chekin (*EP-2)

d. unnamed (HM)

e. ø (HR-1; HR-2)

II.J-3. a. ø (PN; HM; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1)

b. mîr maḥmûd (PS)

c. qumsî-bākû (LC-1)

- II.K. 1. a. J-1, J-2 (& J-3) are Qeretajdîn's brothers (PS; HM; LC-1; FK-2; ZK-3; ZK-2)
- b. J-1 & J-2 are Qeretajdîn's brothers; J-2 is betrothed to Zîn #1 (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1)
- c. J-1 & J-2 are Qeretajdîn's brothers; J-1 is betrothed to Zîn #1 (GNa)
- d. J-1 is Zîn #1's brother; J-2 is Qeretajdîn's brother, mentioned once as being betrothed to Zîn #1, after which this is forgotten (EP-2)
- e. Qeretajdîn has no brothers; his son is betrothed to Zîn #1 (HR-1)
- f. Qeretajdîn has no brothers (HR-2)
2. J-1 & J-2 are princes who are suitors for Zîn #1's hand, potential rivals to Mem (OM)
3. J-1 & J-2 are the brothers of Mîr Sêvdîn & Zîn #1; Qeretajdîn absent (PN)

II.L. Qeretajdîn's wife (Sitî or Perî)

1. Sitî (MC-1); Stîyê (ZK-3); Setiya (EP-2); Xatûn Estî [Lady Astî] (OM); Sutîn (SHa-1); Stîya E'reb [Lady Ereb] (ZK-2)
2. Perî (xanim) (FK-1); Khanum Peri (GNa); Perî-xatûn (ZK-1); Xatûn Perî (EP-1); Gul Peri (SHa-2)
3. Bêgi xānim (HR-1)
4. unnamed (PS; FK-2; HR-2)
5. ∅ (PN; HM; LC-1)

II.M. Her relationship to Zîn #1

1. sister of Zîn #1 and Mîr Sêvdîn (PS; OM; GNa; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1)
2. sister of Zîn #1 (SHa-1; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1)
3. not stated (SHa-2; FK-1; EP-2; HR-1)
4. ∅ (PN; HM; LC-1)

II.N. Qeretajdîn's servants. See also D.I.C.

1. ø (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1)
2. Çawîş Mêrdîn (FK-1; ZK-1)
3. Badîn (FK-1); Badîn Çawîş (EP-1)
4. Chavush (SHa-2)
5. Qeretajdîn's oldest son: Ghavaz Chavush [ՂԱԼԱՎ ՉԱՆՈՉ] (GNa)
6. unnamed (EP-2; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa)

II.O. Zîn #1's homeland (Jezîra Bohtan)

1. Cizîra Bota (FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; ZK-2); Jezîra Bota (EP-2); Cizîra Bôtâ (HR-1); walâtê jezîrê bôtâ (HM)
2. Cizîra Botan (MC-1); ğâzîrâ bôtân(e) (LC-1); Jizîr [(u) Bot'an] [ՋԻՐ Ա ԲՕԹԱՆ] (SHa-1); Chzîr u Bodan [ՃԻՐ Ա ԲՕՊԱՆ] (SHa-2)
3. Jezîra-Boht'an [ՋԻՐԱ ԲՕՏՐԱՆ] (GNa)
4. Jezîra Bohta (PS)
5. Jezîre (PS); Şarî Cizîrê [City of Jizîr] (OM)
6. g(e)zîro (PN); Gzîro (HR-1; HR-2)
7. Bota (HR-2)

II.P. Man sent by Zîn #1 to bring Qeretajdîn back (kisses Zîn; carries message). See also D.VII.B. & D.VII.C.

1. ø (PS; LC-1; OM; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1)
2. Dervish (PN; SHa-1; FK-1)
3. Passerby/Man[peya<pajâ>] (HM)
4. Zîn #1's baldheaded servant boy [xulamekî k'eç'elok] (ZK-3)
5. Poor boy who exchanges gold pieces for silver ones, to pay taxes to Qeretajdîn (ZK-2)

Mem u Zin Motif Chart
Scenes and Motifs

	PV	PS	HM	LC	OM	SH a-1	SH a-2	GN	FK	FK	EP	EP-1	ZK	HR	HR	ZK	ZK	MC
								A	2	1	2		3	1	2	1	2	1
A.	3	1	1	2a	2c	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	2b	1
B.I.A	4	3a	e(5)	1f	1d	1a	1a	1e	1a	1a	1c	1b	2a	2b	2b	1b	2c	3b
B.I.B	.	.	.	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	.	.	.	.	.	.
B.I.C	e(3)	1	e(3)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B.I.D	e(6)	2	e(6)	3a	3b	5	1	1	1	1	4	1	2	2	2	1	2	2
B.I.E	1b	2	e(4)	3	3	3	3	3	1a	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	3
B.I.F	1	2	e(3)	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
B.I.G	2	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)	4	4	3	1	1	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)	5	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)
B.II.A	e(5)	1	e(5)	2	2	e(5)	e(5)	2	1	1	1	1	4	e(5)	4	1	e(5)	3
B.II.B	e(8)	e(8)	e(8)	e(8)	3	5	1	3	2	2	e(8)	2	6	e(8)	1	1	7	4
B.II.C	e(5)	4	e(5)	e(5)	1	2a	1	1	2b	2c	1	1	3a	3b	e(5)	1	1	2d
B.II.A	e(5)	2	e(5)	3	1b	1a	e(5)	1a	1a	1a	4	1a	2	e(5)	e(5)	1a	3	2
B.II.B	e(6)	4	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)	1	2	1	3	2	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)	2	5	e(6)
B.II.C	e(6)	e(6)	2a	e(6)	4	e(6)	5	1b	1a	1a	e(6)	1b	2b	e(6)	3	1a	2c	e(6)
B.II.D	4	1b	e(7)	3	2a	6	1a	1c	e(7)	e(7)	e(7)	1d	2b	2c	e(7)	1c	5	
C.I.A	2	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	1	1	1
C.I.B	3	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	2	1b	2	1a	1a	e(4)	1a	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	1a	e(4)	1a
C.I.C	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	1d	2a	2b	2b	1a	1a	e(4)	1b	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	1c	e(4)	3
C.I.A	e(5)	1d	e(5)	e(5)	1c	1a	1a	1b	1b	2c	1a	2b	3	1a	e(5)	2a	4	1a
C.I.B	e(4)	3	e(4)	e(4)	2a	e(4)	e(4)	1d	1b	1a	e(4)	1c	2b	e(4)	e(4)	1a	1a	2a
C.I.C	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	2	1	.	2	.	.	.	1	1	.
C.II.A	1	e(6)	e(6)	5	4	1 ^a	1	1	1	1 ^a	1	1 ^a	2	2	1	1	3	1
C.II.B	2	.	.	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	2
C.II.C	2a	.	.	5	2b	1a	5	1a	1b	1a	4	3	2b	2a	4	1b	4	2a
C.II.D	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	2	1d,	1d,	1a	1a	e(5)	1b	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	1c	e(5)	4
C.II.E	e(3)	e(3)	e(3)	1d	e(3)	e(3)	e(3)	2	1a	1a	e(3)	1c	1b	e(3)	e(3)	1a	e(3)	e(3)
D.I.A	2b	1a	3	1c	1d	1a	1a	1a	2a	1a	1a	1a	1b	1a	5	1a	1b	4
D.I.B	e(4)	1b	e(4)	3a	1a	3b	1a	1a	e(4)	1b	1a	1a	1a	e(4)	e(4)	1a	2	1c
D.I.C	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	3	1	1	e(5)	2	e(5)	1	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	1	4	e(5)
PV	PS	PS	HM	LC	OM	SH a-1	SH a-2	GN	FK	FK	EP	EP-1	ZK	HR	HR	ZK	ZK	MC

Mem u Zin Motif Chart
Scenes and Motifs

	PN	PS	HM	LC	OM	SH a-1	SH a-2	GN	FK	FK	EP	EP-1	ZK	HR	HR	ZK	ZK	MC
								a	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	2	1
D.I.D	1	1	e(4)	e(4)	1	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	e(4)	1	1	e(4)	1
D.I.E	e(6)	5	e(6)	e(6)	3	2a	2c	1	e(6)	2a	1	1	4	e(6)	e(6)	4	e(6)	
D.I.F	.	4	.	.	2	1e*	1b	1a	.	1d	3*	1c	.	.	.	.	.
D.I.G	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	1a	1a	1a	1b	e(2)	1a	1a	e(2)	e(2)	1a	e(2)	e(2)
D.I.H	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	1a	1a	1a	1b	e(2)	1a	1a	e(2)	e(2)	1a	e(2)	e(2)
D.II.A	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	2a	1a	1a	1a	1a	1b	e(5)	1a	4	e(5)	e(5)	1a	3	e(5)
D.II.B	e(7)	1	e(7)	e(7)	1	2a	1	3	1	2b	e(7)	1	5	e(7)	e(7)	1	4	6
D.II.C	e(4)	1a	e(4)	e(4)	1a	1a	1a	1a	1a	1c	1b	1a	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	1a	2	3
D.II.D	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)	e(6)	3	1a	1c	1a	4	1b	e(6)	1a	e(6)	e(6)	1c	5	e(6)	
D.III.A	1a	1a	1a	1b	1e	1a	3	1a	1a	1c	1a	2	1a	1a	1a	1d	1a	
D.III.B	1f	1e	1d	2b	3b	1a	1a	1a	1f	1a	1b	1b	3a	2c	1f	1c	2a	1a
D.III.C	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	1a	e(4)	3	e(4)	1b	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	1c	2	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)
D.III.D	1a	1a	1a	1b	1a	2a	2a	2a	2a	2b	2a	2a	1a	1c	1d	2a	1a	1a
D.III.E	4	1a	4	4	1a	1b	2d	1b	2d	1b	2b	1c	2e	2c	2a	1a	2e	3
D.IV.A	2	1	4	4	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	2	4	1
D.IV.B	1a	4	1a	1b	4	5	3b	1c	1a	1b	2b	1b	1a	2a	3a	1a	2a	
D.IV.C	1	1	2	e(6)	e(6)	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	4	
D.IV.D	1c	2	1b	2	2	1a	1a	2	1c	1a	3	2	1a	1a	1a	1a	2	
D.IV.E	1	1	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	3a	1	1	2a	4	3b	e(5)	e(5)	e(5)	2b/3a	1	2a	
D.V.A	5	2a	6	1b	3	2a	1a	1a	4	1a	1a	1c	2a	2b	1a	1a	2a	
D.V.B	1j	3a	3d	1j	1j	1j	1	1	e(5)	1j	1	1j	1j	1j	1j	1j	1j	
D.V.C	e(4)	1a	e(4)	e(4)	e(4)	2c	3b	2d	e(4)	2a	e(4)	3b	1a	1b	e(4)	3c	e(4)	1a
D.V.D	e(3)	e(3)	1a	e(3)	e(3)	e(3)	e(3)	e(3)	e(3)	e(3)	e(3)	e(3)	1b	2b	1a	e(3)	2a	e(3)
D.V.E	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	1a	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	1c	e(2)	e(2)	e(2)	1b	e(2)	e(2)
D.VI.A	e(4)	1a	1a	1d	1e	1a	1a	1a	1b	1a	3	1a	2	e(4)	2	1a	1c	1a
D.VI.B	e(5)	3	1a	4	e(5)	1b	1a	1a	1e	1a	2a	2b	2a	e(5)	1c	1d	2a	2a
	FN	PS	HM	LC	OM	SH a-1	SH a-2	GN	FK	FK	EP	EP-1	ZK	HR	HR	ZK	ZK	MC
								a	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	2	1

Mem û Zîn
Motifs Exhibiting Variation

SCENES & MOTIFS

A. Initial stage : Introductory tale elements extraneous to structure of the story

1. ø (PS; HM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1)
2. a. Mem's future father [širin alma], youngest of three childless brothers, rulers of the land; royal sheikh instructs him to go to the Qoreishis, and ask for the hand of zālixā xātun; he begets a son by her (LC-1)
- b. Mem's future father [Alan-Pasha], oldest of three childless brothers, rulers of the land; pray to God; Khizir comes and instructs them to take gold and go to Egypt, to ask for the hand of t'êfi 'tšan; she will bear them a son whom they are to name Memê Alan; Mem is born, grows quickly; Mem is kept in dark room, where one day he is frightened by a ray of sunlight (ZK-2)
- c. Mem's future father [Brayim Pasha] and his vizier are childless; pray to God; Veysel Karanî comes and gives them apple; they share apples with their wives, and sons are born to them; sons kept in dark room; accidentally break window with bone from soup and see sunlight for first time (OM)
3. Folktale-like: Yusuf Agha impregnates his first cousin; causes disgrace; she bears a boy [Mammo] and a girl [Aminah]; fight between Mammo and Yusuf Agha; Mammo is made the local ruler; Kills lion (PN)
4. Mem's heroic birth: a virgin is impregnated by seawater and gives birth through her mouth to a boy; she abandons him at the seashore, where he is found by Al Pasha, who raises him as his only child (EP-1)

B. Preparatory stage — Mukhurzemîn

B.I. Mem and Zîn #1 discover one another

B.I.A. Discovery of Mem and Zîn:

1. a. 3 doves invoke God to send down dove's skin for Zîn: drop slumber pearls in Zîn's ear (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-2; FK-1)
- b. 3 doves invoke God to send down dove's skin for Zîn [no slumber pearls] (EP-1; ZK-1)
- c. 2 doves invoke God to send down dove's skin for Zîn (EP-2)

- d. 3 falcons invoke God to send down dove's skin for Zin (OM)
 - e. 3 houris/fairies from heaven, mother and 2 daughters invoke God to send down dove's skin for Zin : drop slumber pearls in Zin's ear (GNa)
 - f. 3 daughters of fairy king become turtledoves [qumri]: youngest sister hides clothes of 2 older sisters while they bathe, and won't return them until they tell her what she wants to know (LC-1)
2. a. King of the Jinn [ṣahé e'rfta] + jinn [e'rfté cinal]; the king asks if anyone knows of two who should be united; Mem & Zin, with slumber pearls in their ears, are brought by jinn (ZK-3)
 - b. King of the Jinn + jinn; argument: one jinn says that Zin is more beautiful, another says that Mem is more beautiful; Mem & Zin, with slumber pearls in their ears, are brought by jinn (HR-1; HR-2)
 - c. King of the Jinn + jinn; one jinn claims that Zin is the most beautiful girl, and Mem the most beautiful boy; Mem & Zin, with slumber pearls in their ears, are brought by jinn (ZK-2)
3. a. 2 angels bet against each other: 1 says Zin is more beautiful; 1 says Mem is (PS)
 - b. 2 angels bring Mem and Zin together (MC-1)
4. Merchant from Mosul acts as intermediary between Mem & Zin (PN)
 5. ∅ (HM)
- B.I.B. Doves notice Mem or Zin first. (With B.I.A.1. only)
1. Notice Mem first (LC-1; OM; SHa-1; FK-1; EP-2)
 2. Notice Zin #1 first (SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1)
- B.I.C. Mem & Zin argue: Who has come to whom?
1. Argument (PS; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1)
 2. Polite debate (FK-2)
 3. ∅ (PN; HM)
- B.I.D. Argument resolved by a proof
1. Count number of minarets in city [366 in his city, 66 in hers]: they count 366 (SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1)

2. Each calls servant: his answers, hers doesn't (PS; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1)
3. a. They walk about the palace, and Zîn #1 realizes she is not at home; She calls Qeretajdîn and brothers, but they don't answer (LC-1)
b. Mem calls his servant Bengîneh first, and Bengîneh answers; they walk about the palace and look out the windows (OM)
4. What side of the bed the hearth is on? — if it is on the left side, they are in Zîn #1's bed; if it is on the right side, they are in Mem's bed: it's on the right side (EP-2)
5. Mem tells Zîn #1 to extinguish light, but she doesn't know where it is (SHa-1)
6. ∅ (PN; HM)

B.I.E. Exchange of rings and vows; exchange initiated by

1. a. Mem (FK-2)
b. Mem gives ring to merchant from Mosul to give to Zîn #1 (PN)
2. Zîn #1 (PS; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; ZK-1)
3. Mutual exchange (LC-1; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1)
4. ∅ (HM)

B.I.F. Itemsexchanged

1. Rings (PN; LC-1; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2)
2. Rings and handkerchiefs (PS; OM; MC-1)
3. ∅ (HM)

B.I.G. Zîn #1 tells Mem to come after her

1. Zîn #1 tells Mem that he must come in 40 days to marry her, or else she will be married to someone else (FK-2; FK-1)
2. Zîn #1 hires messenger and sends Mem letter saying, "If you're coming, come now, otherwise I will marry [someone else]." (PN)
3. Zîn #1 insists that if Mem is a real man, he will undergo any ordeal to find her (GNa)

4. Zîn #1 says, "You will have to come find me" (SHa-2)
5. Zîn #1 gives Mem directions to Jezîra Bohtan, in case he wants to come after her (HR-1)
6. ∅ (PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1)

B.II. It was not just a dream

B.II.A. Proof that Mem and Zîn's visit was not just a dream

1. Mem discovers Zîn's ring on his finger (PS; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1)
2. Mem discovers Zîn #1's ring on his finger, and Zîn #1 discovers Mem's ring on her finger (LC-1; OM; GNa)
3. Zîn #1 discovers Mem's ring on her finger (MC-1)
4. Mem remembers Zîn #1's ring (ZK-3; HR-2)
5. ∅ (PN; HM; SHa-1; SHa-2; HR-1; ZK-2)

B.II.B. As a result

1. Mem falls [lovelsick (SHa-2; HR-2; ZK-1)
2. Mem faints (FK-2; FK-1; EP-1)
3. Both Mem and Zîn #1 fall [lovelsick (OM; GNa)
4. Zîn #1 is morose (MC-1)
5. Mem falls in love when he awakens to find Zîn #1 gone (SHa-1)
6. Mem orders Bengîn to find Zîn #1 or else! (ZK-3)
7. Mem goes to his father's diwan and tells what happened during the night; he says that if he is lying, he will go blind and lame, but if he is telling the truth, the judge and mufti will be so afflicted: judge & mufti go blind and lame (ZK-2)
8. ∅ (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; EP-2; HR-1)

B.II.C. Party in Al-Pasha's garden for Mem to choose bride

1. Party in Al-Pasha's garden for Mem to choose bride; Parade of unmarried girls and married women of kingdom (OM; SHa-2 [footnote #5]; GNa; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1; ZK-2)

2. a. Party in Al-Pasha's garden for Mem to choose bride; Parade of unmarried girls and married women of kingdom; Mem is to throw apple at the girl he wants: he doesn't throw it at anyone (SHa-1)
- b. Party in Al-Pasha's garden for Mem to choose bride; Parade of unmarried girls and married women of kingdom; Mem is to throw apple at the girl he wants: he throws it in anger and it bursts into a million pieces (FK-2; SHa-1)
- c. Party in Al-Pasha's garden for Mem to choose bride; Parade of unmarried girls of kingdom; Mem is to throw apple at the girl he wants: he doesn't throw it at anyone (FK-1)
- d. Party in Al-Pasha's garden for Mem to choose bride; Parade of unmarried girls and married women of kingdom; Mem is to throw apple at the girl he wants: he doesn't throw it at anyone ; Al Pasha goes out in search of Zin #1 for Mem (MC-1)
3. a. Mem gives his father 7 days to find out about Jezîra Bohtan, but his father fails to find anything out (ZK-3)
- b. After Mem threatens to disown his father, his father goes out looking for Jezîra Bohtan; in an inn he meets a merchant who has just come from there (HR-1)
4. Al Pasha tells Mem, "Whoever you want, I'll request for you" (PS)
5. ∅ (PN; HM; LC-1; HR-2)

B.III. Mem prepares for trip

B.III.A. Mem chooses a horse

1. a. Scrawny horse chosen from royal stables (SHa-1; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1)
- b. Gray horse [espî bor] chosen from royal stables (OM)
2. Mem already has a horse, which is mentioned for the first time at this point (PS; ZK-3; MC-1)
3. Fine horse caught by fishermen in the sea [precedes B.I.A] (LC-1; ZK-2)
4. Mare tells Mem to go to a ravine in the mountains and to choose one of her sons (EP-2)
5. ∅ (PN; HM; SHa-2; HR-1; HR-2)

B.III.B. Mem acquires items for trip [in order of acquisition]

1. Suit, saddle, sword (GNa); [horse], suit, saddle, sword (FK-1)
2. Saddle, suit (ZK-1); Suit, [horse], saddle (FK-2); Saddle, suit, [horse] (EP-1)
3. Sword, harness, [horse] (EP-2)
4. Mem takes out items which he already owns: saddle; gold; dagger, sword, and golden lance (PS)
5. Mem's mother has Bengîn and his 88 servant boys fetch box of Mem's clothes, Erzurum saddle & 7 straps, and shiny sword (ZK-2)
6. ø (PN; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; MC-1)

B.III.C. Mem's parents' reaction to his trip

1. a. Al Pasha tries to prevent trip by having city gates bolted and Bor the horse's legs chained (FK-2; FK-1; ZK-1)
b. Al Pasha tries to prevent trip by having city gates bolted and Bor the horse's legs chained; Al Pasha wonders aloud what the evil eye has in store for Mem (GNa; EP-1)
2. a. Al Pasha's curse on Mem and his trip (HM)
b. Al Pasha and Mem's mother's curse on Mem and his trip (ZK-3)
c. Al Pasha's curse on Mem and his trip; Mem's mother encourages his to go (ZK-2)
3. Al Pasha asks Mem not to go, but gives him money when he goes (HR-2)
4. Mem and Bengîneh's mothers beg them not to go, but bless their trip; Brayim Pasha's cries of despair (OM)
5. Mem has his parents' blessing [halal] (SHa-2)
6. ø (PN; PS; LC-1; SHa-1; EP-2; HR-1; MC-1)

B.III.D. Mem's temporary escorts on the trip: they turn back

1. a. Al Pasha sends men to accompany Mem: Mem sends them home: they ask him to write letters as proof that he sent them back (SHa-2)
b. Al Pasha sends 100 men to accompany Mem: Mem sends them home (PS)
c. Al Pasha sends 40 men to accompany Mem: Mem sends them

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home (GNa); Al Pasha sends 40 men to accompany Mem — 20 on the left, 20 on the right: Mem sends them home (ZK-2)

- d. Some of Al Pasha's men decide to accompany Mem: Mem sends them home (EP-1)
2. a. Al Pasha sends 12,000 men to accompany Mem: Everyday 1,000 of them leave and return home (OM)
- b. Al Pasha sends 1,000 soldiers to accompany Mem: Every hour 100 of them leave and return home (ZK-3)
- c. Al Pasha sends 40 men to accompany Mem: Everyday one of them leaves and returns home (HR-1)
3. The Sheikh of the Qoreishis [šexî qorēišia] sends 80 men to accompany Mem: they go with him as far as the road to Jezira Bohtan and return (LC-1)
4. Mem takes 24 villagers with him: they turn around and leave him (PN)
5. While Al Pasha is gone in search of Zîn #1 for Mem, Mem sets out with soldiers: they turn back (MC-1)
6. Al Pasha sends men to frighten Mem: he avoids them by taking a different route (SHa-1)
7. ∅ (HM; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; HR-2; ZK-1)

C. Transitional stage — between Mukhurzemîn and Jezira Bohtan

C.I. Mem and Bor

C.I.A. Horse talks; Wounds from chains

1. Bor tells Mem about his wounds from the chains (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1)
2. Horse is hungry; tells Mem to go home (PN)
3. Chains fall off before they leave Mukhurzemîn (EP-2)
4. ∅ (PS; HM; LC-1; OM; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2)

C.I.B. Mem stops and treats Bor's wounds

1. a. Mem stops; treats horse's wounds (FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1)
- b. Mem stops; treats horse's wounds; Mem is truly sorry he ignored

Bor's pain (SHa-2)

2. After ignoring Bor's complaint, Mem finally stops (SHa-1; GNa)
3. Mem stops twice: first time, horse talks; second time, a snake climbs up Mem's leg (PN)
4. ∅ (PS; HM; LC-1; OM; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2)

C.I.C. Bor's wounds heal

1. a. Mem washes Bor's wound with handkerchief; lets Bor graze in meadow (FK-2; FK-1)
 - b. Mem wraps Bor's wound with handkerchief; lets Bor graze in meadow (EP-1)
 - c. Mem washes Bor's feet with water, wraps them with handkerchief; lets Bor graze in meadow (ZK-1)
 - d. Mem tends to Bor's feet; lets Bor graze in meadow (SHa-1)
2. a. Dove's feather: when dipped in water, heals Bor's wound (SHa-2)
 - b. 3 dove's feathers: when dipped in water, heal Bor's wound (GNa)
3. Xidir nebî (donor figure) helps (MC-1)
4. ∅ (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2)

C.II. People encountered along the way

C.II.A. Mem asks farmer how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan

1. a. Mem asks farmer/plowman how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan (SHa-1; SHa-2; EP-2; HR-1; MC-1)
 - b. Mem asks farmer/plowman how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan [follows C.II.D](GNa; FK-2)
 - c. Mem asks plowman and his son how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan: the plowmen were sent their by Lady Astî: prearranged, not coincidence (OM)
 - d. Mem asks gentleman [juâmêreg] how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan (PS)
2. a. Mem asks farmer/plowman how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan: Mem comes back to ask another question (ZK-1)
 - b. Mem asks farmer/plowman how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan: when Mem comes back to ask another question, farmer thinks Mem

wants to kill him, so farmer tries to flee (EP-1)

- c. Mem asks farmer/plowman how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan: Mem almost comes back to ask another question, but changes his mind (FK-1)
3. Mem encounters 2 different people and asks each one how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan: a) an old man; b) farmer/plowman: when Mem comes back to ask another question, farmer thinks Mem wants to kill him, so farmer tries to flee (ZK-3)
4. Mem encounters 3 different people and asks each one how far it is to Jezîra Bohtan: a) old man (Xizir in disguise): they ride to Diyarbekir; Xizir turns into youth; they part company; b) porter from Jezîra Bohtan: gives Mem undesired answer; Mem frightens him; Mem falls from God's favor; c) miller: gives Mem desired answer; Mem rewards him with gold (ZK-2)
5. ø (PN; HM; LC-1; HR-2)

C.II.B. Determining where Mem should stay in Jezîra Bohtan

1. a. Hunting expedition (#1) on the way to Jezîra Bohtan; Mem catches gazelle that Qeretajdîn is unable to catch; Qeretajdîn is angry; they do battle; Mem wins; they become friends; Qeretajdîn continues hunting, invites Mem to be his guest in Jezîra Bohtan (FK-1; ZK-1)
- b. Hunting expedition (#1); Mem catches gazelle that Qeretajdîn is unable to catch; Qeretajdîn is angry; they do battle; Mem wins; they become friends (FK-2)
- c. Hunting expedition (#1); Mem catches gazelle that Qeretajdîn is unable to catch; Qeretajdîn is angry; argument resolved by Qeretajdîn's brothers (EP-1)
- d. Hunting expedition (#1); Mem catches gazelle that Qeretajdîn is unable to catch; Qeretajdîn & brothers praise Mem, they become blood brothers; Bor instinctively leads Mem to Qeretajdîn's house (GNa)
- e. Mem meets Qeretajdîn, Mîr Sêvdîn, and Beko on hunting expedition (#1); The 3 of them debate whose guest Mem should be; Mem chooses to be guest of Qeretajdîn (ZK-2)
2. a. Mem asks Zîn #2 where he should stay in Jezîra Bohtan (OM; MC-1)
- b. Mem asks [Zîn #2] where he should stay in Jezîra Bohtan; she tells him to wait in garden; Beko comes and Mem asks him where to stay [follows C.III.] (ZK-3)

3. Mem asks gentleman where he should stay in Jezira Bohtan (PS)
 4. ø (PN; HM; LC-1; SHa-1; SHa-2; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2)
- C.II.C. Qeretajdîn's identity is or is not revealed at time of first meeting [with C.II.B.1]
1. Qeretajdîn's identity is revealed to Mem (FK-1; ZK-1; ZK-2)
 2. Qeretajdîn's identity is revealed to audience (FK-2; EP-1)
 3. Qeretajdîn's identity is not revealed (GNa)
- C.III. Encounter with Beko Awan's Zîn (Zîn #2)
- C.III.A. Zîn #2 tries to trick Mem at entrance to Jizira Bota (* = first mentioned earlier)
1. Zîn #2 tries to trick Mem into believing that she is Zîn #1 (PN; *SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; *FK-1; EP-2; *EP-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1)
 2. Zîn #2 tries to trick Mem into believing that she is Zîn #1: she spreads her laundry on the road, blocking Mem's path, to test his gallantry (ZK-3; HR-1)
 3. Zîn #1 intends to play trick on Mem; Mem mistakes Zîn #2 for Zîn #1 (ZK-2)
 4. Mem tricks himself: [Melik Reyhan] says that she is not Zîn #1, but Mem insists that she is (OM)
 5. Unnamed girl at river claims to be Zîn #1; Mem does not believe her, and guesses that she is Zîn #1's maidservant (LC-1)
 6. ø (PS; HM)
- C.III.B. Mem encounters Zîn #2
1. at well [fountain; spring] (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2)
 2. at river (PN; LC-1; OM; FK-2; MC-1)
 3. on bridge of Zembeli (EP-1)
- C.III.C. Zîn #2 is engaged in
1. a. spinning wool (SHa-1; GNa; FK-1)
 - b. washing wool (FK-2; ZK-1)

2. a. washing clothes (PN; HR-1; MC-1)
 - b. bleaching linens (OM; ZK-3)
3. embroidery (EP-1)
4. drawing water (EP-2; HR-2; ZK-2)
5. not stated (LC-1; SHa-2)

C.III.D. Mem asks Zîn #2 where his ring is

1. a. Mem asks about the ring; Zîn #2 says it fell into the river (FK-2; FK-1)
 - b. Mem asks about the ring; Zîn #2 says it fell onto bridge and got lost (EP-1)
 - c. Mem asks about the ring; Zîn #2 says it fell off her finger and got lost (ZK-1)
 - d. Mem asks about the ring; Zîn #2 says she was keeping it in her mouth, while washing at fountain it fell into water and was lost (GNa [footnote])
2. Zîn #2 mentions ring, saying it accidentally fell into stream (SHa-2)
3. Mem asks about the ring; Zîn #2 says she waited so long without eating that she forgot his ring at home (GNa)
4. Zîn #2 reproaches Mem for not remembering her, or their vow to each other (MC-1)
5. ∅ (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2)

C.III.E. Final words

1. a. Zîn #2 wants Mem to take her as Zîn #1's servant (FK-2; FK-1; ZK-1)
 - b. Zîn #2 wants Mem to take her with him when he leaves; he decides to marry her off to Bengîn when they leave (ZK-3)
 - c. Mem promises to take Zîn #2 as Zîn #1's maidservant (EP-1)
 - d. Mem promises to take unnamed girl with him to city of Mughrib if she tells him where to cross the river (LC-1)
2. Mem knocks Zîn #2 down when she tries to prevent him from passing; she swears vengeance (GNa)

3. ø (PN; PS; HM; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1)

D. Main stage - Jezîra Bohtan

D.I. Mem arrives in Jezîra Bohtan

D.I.A. Mem's host in Jezîra Bohtan

1. a. Qeretajdîn (PS; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1)
 - b. Qeretajdîn; he tests Mem's honor by sending his own wife to Mem's room; Mem sends her away (ZK-3; ZK-2)
 - c. Hâsan çäkō [Qeretajdîn's brother(s)] (LC-1)
 - d. Mem originally heads for Beko Awan's house, but finding no one at home, he goes to Qeretajdîn's house (OM)
 - e. Mem goes to mosque; Zîn #2 follows him there; she takes him to Beko Awan's home, telling him it is Qeretajdîn's home; when the lie is discovered, he goes to Qeretajdîn's house (HR-1)
2. a. Mîr Sêvdîn (FK-2)
 - b. Mîr Sêvdîn [there is no Qeretajdîn in this version] (PN)
3. Beko Awan (HM)
4. Qeretajdîn for seven days; Mîr Sêvdîn for seven days (MC-1)
5. Beko Awan at first; then Mîr Sêvdîn (HR-2)

D.I.B. Jealousy of Mîr

1. a. Jealousy of Mîr because of Qeretajdîn's prolonged absence (OM; SHa-2; GNa; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1)
 - b. Jealousy of Mîr because of Qeretajdîn's prolonged absence [follows D.II.] (PS; FK-1)
 - c. Jealousy of Mîr because of Qeretajdîn's prolonged absence [follows D.II.C] (MC-1)
2. Jealousy of Mîr because Mem is Qeretajdîn's guest rather than his own (ZK-2)
3. a. No jealousy: the Mîr invites Memê Alan, Hâsan çäkō and Qeretajdîn to his house [follows D.II.A] (LC-1)
 - b. No jealousy: Qeretajdîn suggests that they go to the Mîr's diwan [follows D.II.] (SHa-1)

4. ∅ (PN; HM; FK-2; HR-1; HR-2)

D.I.C. Servant hit on head by Qeretajdîn's wife with ladle

1. Servant sent by the Mîr to summon Mem to his diwan (SHa-2; GNa; EP-1; ZK-1)
2. Servant sent by Qeretajdîn's wife to bring Qeretajdîn home from Mîr's diwan to meet Mem; servant is hit upon returning without Qeretajdîn (FK-1)
3. both 1. and 2. (SHa-1)
4. Qeretajdîn hit on head by his wife with shoe for not trusting Mem (ZK-2)
5. ∅ (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; MC-1)

D.I.D. Mîr Sêvdîn is very fond of Mem

1. Explicitly stated (PN; PS; OM; SHa-2; GNa; EP-2; EP-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1)
2. Implicit (FK-2; FK-1; ZK-3)
3. Mîr is undecided (SHa-1)
4. ∅ (HM; LC-1; HR-1; ZK-2)

D.I.E. Mîr Sêvdîn offers Mem a gift

1. Mîr Sêvdîn asks Mem to choose a gift (GNa; EP-2; EP-1)
2. a. Mîr Sêvdîn offers Mem the office of emir [mîrtî] (FK-1)
b. Mîr Sêvdîn offers Mem a principality (SHa-1)
c. Mîr Sêvdîn offers Mem Istanbul (SHa-2)
3. Mîr Sêvdîn offers Zîn #1 to Mem; Beko Awan spreads rumor that she has leprosy, so Mem politely refuses the offer; Mem gives Bengîn to Mîr Sêvdîn (OM)
4. Zîn #2 is offered to Mem; Mem thinks Zîn #1 is intended, and accepts; the error is discovered later (ZK-3; ZK-2)
5. Mîr Sêvdîn wants Mem to be his tobacco and pipe bearer; Qeretajdîn informs him that Mem is his equal in rank (PS)
6. ∅ (PN; HM; LC-1; FK-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1)

D.I.F. Mem takes as gift a position [that enables him to be near Zîn #1] (* = as advised by Zîn #1)

1. a. Cook (GNa)
 - b. Supervisor of kitchen (SHa-2)
 - c. Cook [k'urkê aspêjîê = cloak of cooking], serving coffee in the diwan (EP-1)
 - d. Chief of servants, in charge of serving coffee in the diwan (FK-1)
 - e. Servant or doorman [chavush] (*SHa-1)
2. Leader of the hunt (OM)
3. Felt cloak (*EP-2)
4. Seat in the diwan across from Mîr Sêvdîn (PS)

D.I.G. Mîr Sêvdîn stands up when Mem enters

1. a. Mîr Sêvdîn stands up when Mem enters (SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1)
 - b. Mîr Sêvdîn stands up when Mem enters [follows D.II.] (FK-1)
2. ∅ (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1)

D.I.H. Handkerchief as proof

1. a. Handkerchief as proof that Mîr Sêvdîn stood up when Mem entered (SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1)
 - b. Same as a. [follows D.II.] (FK-1)
2. ∅ (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1)

D.II. Mem gets token from Zîn #1 and wins Qeretajdîn's approval

D.II.A. Mem and Qeretajdîn + brothers sit on balcony; Zîn's caravan passes by

1. a. Mem and Qeretajdîn + brothers sit on balcony; Zîn's caravan passes by on way to wash pots at well; Mem says he wants to collect a toll from this caravan; Brothers get angry at Mem (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1)
 - b. same as a. [follows D.I.A.] (FK-1)
2. a. Mem and Qeretajdîn + brothers sit on balcony; Zîn's caravan passes by on way to wash pots at well; Mem says he wants to collect a

toll from this caravan; 'Irfō and Cheko not angry (OM)

- b. Zîn #1 passes by Hasan çäkō's house on way to fetch water from well, as excuse to see Mem; Hasan çäkō encourage Mem to take his horse to be watered as excuse to see her [follows D.I.A] (LC-1)
3. [see C.III.] Zîn passes by Qeretajdîn's gate on her way to fill jugs; Mem mistakes Zîn #2 for Zîn #1; repeated a second time, this time Mem takes Zîn #1 (ZK-2)
4. Mem agrees to marry Zîn #2, thinking she is Zîn #1; Zîn #1 tells him of this in a letter, as proof he is to come see her and her servant in the royal garden; Mem convinces Qeretajdîn to go with him to the garden on Friday, where they see both Zîn #1 and #2, and the error is discovered (ZK-3)
5. ∅ (PN; PS; HM; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; MC-1)

D.II.B. Task: Mem must get a token (piece of jewelry) from Zîn #1

1. Mem must get a piece of jewelry from Zîn #1 as proof that she loves him (PS; OM; SHa-2; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1)
2. a. Mem suggests that he get a piece of jewelry from Zîn #1 as proof that she loves him (SHa-1)
b. same as a. [follows D.I.A] (FK-1)
3. 2 proof tasks: a) Mem must bring stored grain from town of Sakhlan; he is ambushed on the way, and successfully defeats his assailants; b) Mem must get a gold piece from Zîn #1 (GNa)
4. Qeretajdîn gives Bako Awan 2 gold pieces as token of Mem's betrothal to Zîn #2 (ZK-2)
5. In a letter, Zîn #1 tells Mem that by mistake he has agreed to marry her servant Zîn #2; as proof he is to come see her and her servant in the royal garden (ZK-3)
6. Mem gets bouquet from Zîn #1 (MC-1)
7. ∅ (PN; HM; LC-1; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2)

D.II.C. Zîn #1 gives Mem jewels she was wearing

1. a. Zîn #1 gives Mem jewels she was wearing; token of her desire to marry him (PS; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1)
b. same as a. [follows C.III.] (EP-2)
c. same as a. [follows D.I.A] (FK-1)

2. Qeretajdîn gives Bako Awan 2 gold pieces as token of Mem's betrothal to Zîn #2 (ZK-2)
 3. Zîn #1 throws 2 bouquets in the air, one red and one yellow: if Mem catches the red one, they will achieve their goal in this world; if he catches the yellow one, they will achieve their goal in the next world; he catches the yellow bouquet (MC-1)
 4. ø (PN; HM; LC-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2)
- D.II.D. Çekan renounces his betrothal to Zîn #1, gives her to Mem (with II.J & II.K of Dramatis Personae)
1. a. Çekan renounces his betrothal to Zîn, gives her to Mem (SHa-1; GNa; EP-1)
 - b. same as a. [follows D.I.A] (FK-1)
 - c. Çekan first objects, then renounces his betrothal to Zîn, and gives her to Mem (SHa-2; ZK-1)
 2. Qeretajdîn nullifies his son's betrothal to Zîn #1, so that Mem can marry her (HR-1)
 3. 'Irfo and Cheko both renounce their desire to court Zîn #1, so that Mem alone may have her (OM)
 4. Mem wins the approval of Qeretajdîn and his brothers (FK-2)
 5. Mem renounces his betrothal to Zîn #2 (ZK-2)
 6. ø (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-2; MC-1)
- D.III. Hunting expedition (#2); Mem's feigned illness
- D.III.A. Hunting expedition (#2)
1. a. Hunting expedition (PN; PS; HM; SHa-1; GNa; FK-2; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1)
 - b. same as a. [follows D.I.B-C] (LC-1)
 - c. same as a. [follows D.I.] (FK-1)
 - d. same as a. [follows D.VI.] (ZK-2)
 - e. same as a. [order: D.VI.; D.VIII.B-C; D.III.A] (OM)
 2. Jireed match (ZK-3)
 3. Jireed match and hunting expedition (SHa-2)

D.III.B. Mem's feigned illness

1. a. Mem feigns illness (SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; MC-1)
 - b. Mem feigns illness, at suggestion of Zîn #1 (OM; SHa-1; EP-2; EP-1)
 - c. Mem feigns illness, suggested to Zîn #1 by Beko Awan (ZK-1)
 - d. Mem feigns illness, at suggestion of Qeretajdîn (HM)
 - e. Mem does not wish to go, Qeretajdîn tells Mîr Sévdîn that Mem is ill (PS)
 - f. no feigned illness (PN; FK-2; HR-2)
2. a. Mem goes out with the hunters, then gets permission to return because of headache (ZK-2)
 - b. Mem goes out with the hunters, Hasan čakō send Mem home (LC-1)
 - c. Mem goes out with the hunters, then goes against Qeretajdîn's wishes and turns back (HR-1)
3. a. Jireed match: Mem falls from horse at Qeretajdîn's suggestion (ZK-3)
 - b. Jireed match: Mem hides under horse at horse's suggestion (SHa-2)

D.III.C. Purpose of hunting expedition (#2)

1. a. Purpose: to test Mem's manliness (SHa-1)
 - b. Purpose: to test Mem's manliness: if he hunts well, they will give him Zîn #1, otherwise they won't (FK-1)
 - c. Purpose: to test how skillful a rider Mem is (HR-1)
2. Zîn #1 asks Qeretajdîn to let her see Mem; Qeretajdîn suggests hunting trip to enable Zîn #1 and Mem to have a meeting (HR-2)
3. Beko Awan plans to 'accidentally' do away with Mem (GNa)
4. ∅ = not stated (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-2; FK-2; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1)

D.III.D. Site of Mem and Zîn #1's rendez-vous

1. a. diwan (PN; PS; HM; OM; ZK-3; ZK-2; MC-1)

- b. diwan of Ḥasan çäkō (LC-1)
- c. diwan of Sittīye Zîn (HR-1)
- d. palace (HR-2)
- 2. a. garden (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1)
- b. Mem gets lost on way, goes to nightingale's garden by mistake; Zîn #1 finds him there and brings him to her garden (FK-1)

D.III.E. Hunting expedition (#2) cut short because of:

- 1. a. rainstorm (PS; SHa-1; ZK-1)
- b. hailstorm (SHa-2; FK-1)
- c. suggestion by Beko Awan that it will rain soon (EP-1)
- 2. a. Beko Awan's suggestion (HR-2)
- b. Beko Awan slanders Mem (EP-2)
- c. Beko Awan claims that the hounds cannot follow the scent (HR-1)
- d. Beko Awan tells Mîr Sévdîn that the deer to be hunted are in the garden (GNa; FK-2)
- e. Beko Awan's bet: he has his men pursue him to Mîr Sévdîn's diwan, with instructions that if they overtake him (=Beko Awan), they must kill him: this forces Beko Awan to ride quickly — for his life — to reach the diwan (ZK-3; ZK-2)
- 3. Mîr Sévdîn does not want to go hunting without Mem (MC-1)
- 4. Hunt not cut short: they finish and return home (PN; HM; LC-1; OM)

D.IV. Mem and Zîn #1 are in trouble

D.IV.A. Mem and Zîn #1 almost discovered; Zîn hides under Mem's coat

- 1. Hiding initiated by Mem (PS; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; EP-2; ZK-3; MC-1)
- 2. Hiding initiated by Zîn #1 (PN; FK-2; FK-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1)
- 3. Zîn #1 asks Mem to find her an escape; then she hides under his coat (EP-1)
- 4. Not stated (HM; LC-1; ZK-2)

D.IV.B. Word for coat, cloak, or mantle:

1. a. k'urk = 'fur' (PN; HM; LC-1; FK-2; ZK-3; ZK-2)
b. k'urk û libas = 'fur and garment' (FK-1); k'urk û livas (EP-1)
c. [Armenian] mushtak ժուշտակ = 'fur' (GNa)
2. a. e'ba = 'cloaklike wrap' (MC-1); Ğabā(HR-1)
b. [Russian] voilochnaia aba во́лочная аба = 'felt cloak' (EP-2)
3. a. Qap'ût = 'overcoat' (ZK-1); qāput (HR-2)
b. [Armenian] verark վերարկ = 'overcoat' (SHa-2)
4. kavi:l = 'animal hide' (PS); káuł (OM)
5. [Armenian] farach ֆարաջ = 'cloak?' (SHa-1)

D.IV.C. Mem fails to stand up when Mîr Sêvdîn enters

1. Mem fails to stand up when Mîr Sêvdîn enters (PN; PS; SHa-1; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2)
2. Mem fails to greet Mîr Sêvdîn when enters (HM)
3. Mem fails to stand up and vacate Mîr Sêvdîn's seat when enters (ZK-3)
4. Mem is about to stand up, but Zîn #1 tells him not to, or he will disgrace her (MC-1)
5. Mem stands up, but bows sluggishly (SHa-2)
6. ø [not mentioned] (LC-1; OM)

D.IV.D. Mîr Sêvdîn's reaction

1. a. Mîr Sêvdîn is angered by this (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2)
b. Mîr Sêvdîn is shocked or surprised [ajebbū] by this (HM)
c. Mîr Sêvdîn's anger is delayed (PN; FK-2)
2. Mîr Sêvdîn's reaction is not mentioned (PS; LC-1; OM; GNa; EP-1; MC-1)
3. Mîr Sêvdîn is not angered by this (EP-2)

D.IV.E. Beko Awan's interference

1. Beko Awan comments on Mem's failure to get up (PN; PS; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; ZK-2)
2. a. Beko Awan lights fire beside Mem [and Zîn #1] (FK-1; MC-1)
b. Beko Awan lights fire beside Mem and comments on Mem's failure to get up (ZK-1)
3. a. Beko Awan suggests that they all stand up and pray to God (SHa-1; ZK-1)
b. Beko Awan comments on Mem's failure to get up and suggests that he stand up and pray to God (EP-1)
4. Mîr Sêvdîn says that it is Beko Awan who has tricked him (EP-2)
5. ø (HM; LC-1; OM; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2)

D.V. Qeretajdîn's sacrifice

D.V.A. Qeretajdîn sees Zîn #1's hair sticking out from under Mem's coat, and understands

1. a. Qeretajdîn notices Zîn #1's braids (SHa-2 [footnote #26]; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; HR-2; ZK-1)
b. Hasan çäkõ & Qeretajdîn notice a woman's skirt sticking out from under Mem's coat, and don't know if it belongs to Mîr Sêvdîn's sister or wife, or to Hasan's wife (LC-1)
c. Mem rearranges Zîn #1's braids, and Qeretajdîn notices (EP-1)
2. a. Mem shows Zîn #1's braids to Qeretajdîn (PS; SHa-1; SHa-2 [footnote #26]; ZK-3; ZK-2; MC-1)
b. Mem signals Qeretajdîn with his eyes [narrative interrupted at this point] (HR-1)
3. Zîn #1 shows Qeretajdîn her braids (OM)
4. Beko Awan shows Zîn #1's braids to Mîr Sêvdîn (FK-2)
5. Hasso and Chakko instinctively know that Zîn #1 is hiding behind Mem (PN)
6. It was Qeretajdîn who suggested that Mem feign illness, so he knew of Mem and Zîn #1's rendez-vous ahead of time; he tries unsuccessfully to warn them that Mîr Sêvdîn was coming by making noise outside the diwan (HM)

D.V.B. Qeretajdîn causes diversion; heroic rescue by Qeretajdîn; Items sacrificed:

1. house (burnt) (PN; PS; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1)
2. a. Qeretajdîn's child (burnt) (PS; FK-1; ZK-1)
 - b. child's cradle (SHa-1; MC-1); 4 golden cradles [herçar bormotka zêrîn] (EP-1)
 - c. Qeretajdîn's child: unclear if he is actually sacrificed, but his mother is ready to sacrifice him (OM)
3. a. Hasso's wife (shot) (PN)
 - b. Qeretajdîn's wife (killed with sword) (HR-2)
 - c. Qeretajdîn's wife with child strapped to her breast: unclear if they are actually killed (ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-2)
 - d. Arfo's wife and child (HM)
4. a. horse (burnt) (HR-1; ZK-2)
 - b. horses in stable (killed with sword) (LC-1)
 - c. horse and tent of Mîr Sêvdîn (HM)
5. ø (FK-2)

D.V.C. Items rescued:

1. a. Koran (PS; SHa-2; ZK-3; MC-1)
 - b. books (HR-1)
2. a. horse (FK-1; ZK-3)
 - b. Mem's horse Bor (SHa-2)
 - c. 3 horses (SHa-1)
 - d. 6 horses: Qeretajdîn orders their rescue, his wife leaves them to be burned (GNa)
3. a. child's cradle (SHa-2; ZK-3)
 - b. child's cradle: Qeretajdîn orders its rescue, his wife leaves it to be burned (PS; SHa-1; GNa); 4 golden cradles [herçar bormotka zêrîn]: Qeretajdîn orders their rescue, his wife

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leaves them to be burned (EP-1)

c. child: Qeretajdîn orders his rescue, his wife leaves him to be burned (ZK-1)

4. ∅ (PN; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; EP-2; HR-2; ZK-2)

D.V.D. Beko Awan interferes: tells Mîr Sêvdîn "it's nothing", thereby forcing Qeretaj-dîn to sacrifice yet another precious item, in hopes of getting Mîr Sêvdîn to leave the diwan and come see

1. a. Qeretajdîn has to cause a second diversion (HM; HR-2)

b. same as a., but Mîr Sêvdîn strikes Beko Awan (ZK-3)

2. a. Qeretajdîn has to cause a second and third diversion (ZK-2)

b. same as a., but Mîr Sêvdîn strikes Beko Awan (HR-1)

3. ∅ (PN; PS; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1)

D.V.E. Mem extinguishes flames of Qeretajdîn's manor

1. a. Mem extinguishes flames of Qeretajdîn's manor with the hem of his garment: the infant is saved (GNa)

b. Mem extinguishes flames of Qeretajdîn's manor with a handkerchief (ZK-1)

c. Mem sings to the fire, stating that if his and Zîn #1's love is divinely inspired, it will put the fire out, otherwise their love is a lie; he extinguishes flames of Qeretajdîn's manor with a handkerchief (EP-1)

2. ∅ (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1)

D.VI. Mem and Mîr Sêvdîn's game; Mem's imprisonment

D.VI.A. Game between Mem and Mîr:

1. boardgame

a. chess (PS; HM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1; MC-1)

b. same as a. [follows D.V.A] (FK-2)

c. checkers (ZK-2)

d. same as c. [follows D.VII.A] (LC-1)

- e. backgammon [follows D.II.D] (OM)
- 2. cards (ZK-3; HR-2)
- 3. arrow shooting contest (EP-2)
- 4. ø (PN; HR-1)

D.VI.B. Terms of game:

- 1. a. If Mem wins, he may marry Zîn #1: if he loses, he will be thrown into prison (HM; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1)
- b. If Mem wins, he may marry Zîn #1: if he loses, he will lose his head (SHa-1)
- c. If Mem wins, he may marry Zîn #1: if he loses, he will either lose his head or be thrown into prison (HR-2)
- d. If Mem wins, he may ask for whatever he wants: if he loses, he will be thrown into prison (ZK-1)
- e. If Mem loses, he will be thrown into prison (FK-2)
- 2. a. Whoever wins may ask what he likes of the loser [şendixwaz] (EP-2; ZK-3; ZK-2; MC-1)
- b. If Mîr Sêvdîn wins, he may ask whatever he likes of Mem [şendixwaz]; if Mem wins, he may marry Zîn #1 (EP-1)
- 3. Whoever loses must tell the winner who his beloved is (PS)
- 4. Mîr Sêvdîn asks Mem how he can be overpowered; Mem replies:
 - a. by chains: Mem breaks them; b. by the hair of horse's tail (LC-1)
- 5. ø (PN; OM; HR-1)

D.VI.C. Causal connection between Mem's losing game and his being thrown into prison

- 1. a. Mem in prison as direct result of losing game with Mîr Sêvdîn (HM; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-1)
- b. Mîr Sêvdîn was willing to let it pass, but Beko Awan insisted: Mem in prison after losing game (EP-1)
- 2. Mem and Mîr Sêvdîn are tied at checkers; Mem in prison because he is caught alone with Zîn #1 [follows D.VII.A] (ZK-2)
- 3. Mem in prison because he is caught alone with Zîn #1 (HR-1)

4. Mem in prison as result of being overpowered by horsetail hair (LC-1)
5. a. no causal connection between Mem's losing game and his being thrown in prison (PN; PS; OM)
b. same as a. [follows D.VII.A] (MC-1)

D.VI.D. Zin #1's tunnel and its discovery

1. a. Zin #1 has a tunnel dug between Mem's prison cell and her bedroom (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-1; MC-1)
b. 2 tunnel episodes: a. Zin #1 has a tunnel dug between the kitchen where Mem is working and her bedroom; b. Zin #1 has a tunnel dug between Mem's prison cell and her bedroom (GNa)
2. ∅ = no tunnel (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; EP-2; HR-2; ZK-2)

D.VI.E. After the tunnel is discovered, Mem is moved from first prison to second, worse prison [excluding D.VI.D.2]

1. a. Mem is moved from [non-specific] prison to stone prison (SHa-1; GNa; MC-1)
b. Mem is moved from wooden prison to stone prison (EP-1; ZK-1)
c. Mem is moved from earthen prison to stone prison (FK-1)
2. a. Mem is moved from [non-specific] prison to deep, dark well (SHa-2)
b. Mem is moved from pit to well 40 fathoms deep (ZK-3)
3. Mem remains in original prison cell, and tunnel is plugged up with pitch (HR-1)

D.VII. Qeretajdîn's absence [often precedes VI.]

D.VII.A. Qeretajdîn and brothers leave town on mission

1. a. to fight battle (SHa-1; SHa-2; EP-2; EP-1)
b. same as a. [follows D.VI.] (FK-1)
2. a. to collect taxes (OM; ZK-3; HR-1)
b. same as a. [follows D.VI.] (MC-1)

- c. to collect taxes to rebuild Qeretajdîn's house (GNa; ZK-2; ZK-1)
 3. to deliver Mîr Sêvdîn's gift to Mecca (PS)
 4. a. no mission: Qeretajdîn and brothers leave after having quarreled with Mîr Sêvdîn; they go to Sham [=Syria or Damascus] (PN)
b. same as a. [follows D.VI.] (HM)
 5. Qeretajdîn and brothers do not leave town (LC-1; FK-2; HR-2)
- D.VII.B. Zîn #1 sends message to Qeretajdîn with a man who demands a kiss from her as payment [with II.P of Dramatis Personae chart & D.VII.A]
1. a. Zîn #1 sends letter to Qeretajdîn with a man who demands a kiss from her as payment; she writes in the letter that Qeretajdîn should kill the man after taking the letter from him. Motif K978. Uriah letter. Man carries written order for his own execution. (HM; SHa-1; FK-1; ZK-3; ZK-2)
b. Zîn #1 sends letter to Qeretajdîn with a man who demands a kiss from her as payment; the man is not killed (PN)
c. Zîn #1 sends letter to Hasan çäkō and Qeretajdîn [messenger not specified](LC-1)
 2. ø = this episode is absent (PS; OM; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1)
- D.VII.C. The man demands: [excluding D.VII.B.2]
1. a. a kiss (PN; SHa-1; FK-1)
b. a kiss when he returns from delivering the letter (ZK-3; ZK-2)
 2. marriage (HM)
 3. ø (LC-1)
- D.VIII. Floating motifs
- D.VIII.A. Mem's unmanly behavior [nemerđî]
1. Porter from Jezîra Bohtan gives Mem undesired answer; Mem frightens him; Mem falls from God's favor [C.II.A.4] (ZK-2)
 2. Mem commits unmanly act by hitting Qeretajdîn over the head with a stick; later redeems himself by staying with Qeretajdîn until he regains consciousness, rather than riding off and leaving him defenseless [C.II.B.1b](FK-2)

3. After ignoring Bor's complaint, Mem finally stops and treats the horse's wounds [C.I.B.2] (SHa-1; GNa)

D.VIII.B.Poetry contest (verbal duel)

1. a. [follows D.II.] (ZK-3)
 - b. [order: D.II.D; D.I.; D.VIII.B](SHa-1)
2. a. [follows D.V.] (HM; SHa-2; FK-1)
 - b. [follows D.IV.E.] (EP-1)
3. a. [follows D.VI.A-B] (OM; ZK-2)
 - b. coterminous with D.VI.B.3. (PS)
4. ∅ (PN; LC-1; GNa; FK-2; EP-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1)

D.VIII.C.Result: Mir Sêvdîn orders his men to kill Mem [excluding D.VIII.B.7.]

1. Mir Sêvdîn orders his men to kill Mem; daggers are drawn, and Mem is saved by Qeretajdîn and his brothers (PS; HM; SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; ZK-3; ZK-2)
2. same as 1., but unrelated to the poetry contest/verbal duel (EP-1)
3. ∅ (OM)

D.VIII.D.Qeretajdîn's handkerchief in shape of rabbit as diversion to save Mem & Zîn #1

1. a. While Zîn #1 is serving coffee in the diwan, Beko says to Mir Sêvdîn that if she smiles when she serves Mem his coffee, this is proof of their love; Qeretajdîn fashions a rabbit out of his handkerchief and shows it to the assembly just as Zîn #1 serves Mem his coffee: his handkerchief is meant to account for Zîn #1's laughter and smiling [follows D.V.] (FK-1; EP-1)
 - b. same as a. [follows D.II.D; replaces D.I.](SHa-1)
2. ∅ (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2; MC-1)

E. Final stage - Death of Mem and Zîn #1

E.I. Mem's death

E.I.A. Zîn #1 takes Mem out of prison:

1. a. Beko Awan tells Zîn #1 to release Mem (PS; FK-1; ZK-1)
 - b. Beko Awan tells Zîn #1 to take maidservants and release Mem (EP-1)
 - c. Beko Awan tells Zîn #1 to take 40 maidens and release Mem (SHa-2; ZK-3; HR-1)
 - d. Beko Awan tells Zîn #1 to take 40 maidens and musicians and release Mem (HM)
2. a. Mîr Sêvdîn tells Zîn #1 to take maidservants and release Mem (ZK-2)
 - b. Mîr Sêvdîn tells Zîn #1 to take 40 maidens and release Mem (SHa-1; GNa)
 - c. Mîr Sêvdîn tells Zîn #1 to bring drums and fifes [zurnas] and release Mem (MC-1)
 - d. Mîr Sêvdîn tells Qeretajdîn to release Mem (HR-2)
3. Mîr Sêvdîn and Beko Awan tell Zîn #1 to release Mem (EP-2)
4. Hasan çäkō release Mem from prison (LC-1)
5. Zîn asks for permission to release Mem (OM)
6. ∅ (PN; FK-2)

E.I.B. Mem's death

1. a. Mem is pulled up from dungeon pit by rope; is dead when pulled up (ZK-3)
 - b. Mem is pulled up from dungeon pit by rope; at entrance to pit sheds drop of blood and dies (SHa-2; HR-1)
 - c. Mem is pulled up from dungeon pit by rope tied around his waist; at entrance to pit sheds 2 drops of blood and dies (ZK-2)
 - d. Mem is pulled up from dungeon pit by white rope tied around his waist; he is pulled up and dies (EP-1)
 - e. Mem is pulled up from dungeon pit by yellow rope; he falls dead at the entrance to the dungeon (ZK-1)
 - f. Mem is pulled up from dungeon pit first by white rope; then by yellow rope wrapped around his waist; he is pulled up and dies (FK-1)

- g. Mem is pulled up from dungeon pit by passion flower vine [charkhifalak]; he dies once he is above ground (SHa-1)
 2. a. Mem is pulled up from dungeon pit by Zin #1's braids; he dies once he is above ground (OM)
 - b. Mem is pulled up from dungeon pit by Zin #1's braids; he is pulled half way up, then lets go and falls back down and dies (EP-2)
 - c. Zin #1 descends into dungeon; Mem dies; he is pulled up from dungeon pit by braids of 40 maidens tied to rope (GNa)
 3. a. Beko Awan interferes: he tells Mem that Zin #1 is marrying someone else; proof of this is Zin #1's bridal gown; Mem is pulled up from dungeon pit by rope; when he sees Zin #1 in bridal gown [which is meant for him], he dies (HR-2)
 - b. Beko Awan interferes: he tells Mem that Zin #1 is marrying someone else; Mem dies when reaches mouth of pit (MC-1)
 4. As soon as Mem emerges from dungeon and sees Zin #1, he dies (LC-1)
 5. As soon as Mem emerges from dungeon, 3 drops of blood drip from his nose, and he dies (HM)
 6. Mem asks Zin #1 to bring him a bowl of cold water; after he drinks it, he dies (PS)
 7. Mem's death is stated, without any description (PN; FK-2)
- E.I.C. Prediction regarding sex of person releasing Mem from prison
1. a. If a woman releases Mem, he will die; if a man releases him, he will live (EP-1)
 - b. If a Zin #1 releases Mem, he will die; if a man releases him, he will live (GNa; ZK-2)
 2. a. Zin #1 says it is disgraceful that Mem should be released by a woman (SHa-2)
 - b. Zin #1 says it is a shame that prisoners are brought in by men, then released by women (ZK-1)
 3. ∅ (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; SHa-1; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; MC-1)
- E.II. Zin #1's death:
- E.II.A. When Zin #1 dies vis-à-vis Mem's death

1. She stabs herself to death just after Mem dies (HR-1; HR-2)
2. a. She dies the same day as Mem (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; ZK-2)
b. She dies the evening of the same day as Mem (EP-2)
3. She dies at noon of the next day (GNa)
4. She dies a week later (LC-1)
5. She dies 8 days later (PS; HM)
6. She dies 40 hours or 40 days later (MC-1)
7. Time of her death is not specified (PN; OM; FK-2)

E.II.B. Burial of Mem and Zîn #1

1. a. Although they are buried back to back, they have turned to face each other when graves are opened (PN; SHa-2)
b. same as a.; this is a sign that their love was divine (GNa)
c. Although they are buried back to back, they have turned to face each other and are sweating when graves are opened (FK-1)
d. Zîn #1 instructs Mîr Sêvdîn to bury them back to back; they are found facing each other and sweating; this is a sign that they are divine lovers [aşoqê surê] (EP-1)
2. a. Although they are buried separately, Zîn #1 is in Mem's grave when it is opened (PS)
b. Although they are buried separately, Zîn #1 is in Mem's grave when it is opened; they are found with a curtain between them from the waist down, and embracing above the waist and their mouths touching (HR-1)
c. Although they are buried separately, they are found embracing when the graves are opened, because Beko Awan had gone at night and placed their arms around each other (ZK-3; HR-2)
d. Although they are buried separately, they are found embracing when the graves are opened, because Beko Awan had gone at night and placed their arms around each other; Zîn #1 comes back to life just long enough to ask Mîr Sêvdîn to kill Beko Awan (ZK-2)
e. Although they are buried separately; after their graves are opened, they are buried together in one pit (FK-2)

3. a. Zîn #1 and Mem are buried together (MC-1)
 - b. Zîn #1 is buried in Mem's arms; when the grave is opened, it looks as if they have risen from the dead (ZK-1)
 - c. Zîn #1 is buried beside Mem; Beko Awan finds them embracing when he digs up their graves (SHa-1)
 - d. When Zîn #1 was to be buried, the earth would not yield to the pickaxe except beside Mem; after she was buried, a rumble came from their graves; Beko Awan said that they were embracing in the grave (OM)
4. a. At Mîr Sêvdîn's suggestion they play jireed and throw lance, with understanding that they will open up whichever grave it lands on: it lands on Mem's grave; they open it to find Mem and Zîn #1 together, with a clay sword between them (HM)
 - b. Before her death, Zîn #1 instructs them to play jireed and open both Mem's and her graves with a javelin: if they are lying back to back, her brother is innocent of any wrongdoing (LC-1)
5. ø (EP-2)

E.III. Beko's death and thornbush on Mem and Zîn's grave from drop of Beko's blood.

E.III.A. Beko Awan is killed by:

1. a. Qeretajdîn (PS; SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1)
 - b. Qeretajdîn, in spite of Mîr Sêvdîn's exhortation not to (HM; ZK-3)
 - c. Hasso (PN)
2. a. Mîr Sêvdîn (SHa-1); Mîr Zêydîn (ZK-2)
 - b. Mîr Sêvdîn orders Beko Awan's death (OM)
3. Al Pasha (FK-2)
4. ø (LC-1)

E.III.B. Word for thornbush:

1. a. de:riyak (PS); diŕyan (FK-2); [Turoyo] dîmhe (HR-1); derî(yek) (MC-1)
 - b. dîrîke uncûz (EP-1); dîrîyeke reş (ZK-3); dîrîke xirab (ZK-1)

2. istrî (HM)
3. kelemeke mezin (ZK-2)
4. [Sorani] zî = christ's thorn (OM)
5. [Turoyo] sâlûno (PN)
6. [Turoyo] xulto (HR-2)
7. [Armenian] meshi dzař [մեշի ծառ] (SHa-1)
8. [Armenian] ch'ich'khan p'ush [չիչիքան փուշ] (SHa-2)
9. [Armenian] křni [կռնի] = astragalus (GNa)
10. Beko Awan's blood falls on a bush growing over the graves; his blood becomes scarlet flowers [] (EP-2)
11. ø (LC-1; FK-1)

E.III.C. Legend about the thornbush

1. It is still there to this day (SHa-2; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2)
2. a. Every year it is cut down, but it always grows back (SHa-1; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1)
- b. Every day it is cut down, but it always grows back the next day (GNa)
3. ø (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; OM; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; MC-1)

F. Conclusion

1. a. Concluding formula: May favor befall the parents of those listening [raħmá l dei bábēd gohdāra] (PS; EP-2; ZK-2; MC-1)
- b. Concluding formula: May you be well for me [tu šmera saħ] (PN; HR-1)
2. a. Concluding verse: Mem and Zîn are in heaven, Beko Awan is in hell (SHa-2)
- b. Concluding verse (FK-1)
3. a. Bengîn returns to Yemen; Brahim Pasha comes to Jezîra Bohtan and kills Mir Sêvdîn; he entrusts Qeretajdîn with Jezîra Bohtan; returns to Yemen and makes Bengîn his son + greeting to Oskar Mann [collector] (OM)

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- b. Bor returns to Mukhurzemîn; Al Pasha comes to Jezîra Bohtan and kills off Mîr Sévdîn's tribe; survivors are the Miñî tribe (EP-1)
 - c. Bor returns to Mukhurzemîn; Al Pasha comes to Jezîra Bohtan and kills Beko Awan + concluding line: one side of Jezîra flourishes and the other is in ruins (FK-2)
 - d. Bor returns to Mukhurzemîn; Al Pasha comes to Jezîra Bohtan; he opens the graves and sees that Zîn #1 was worthy of his son; he returns home + concluding verse (ZK-1)
4. Wish that Mem and Zîn #1 attain in the next world what they didn't attain in this + biographical information about the teller [name, father's name, place, and date] (LC-1)
5. Ends with E.III. (HM; SHa-1; GNa; ZK-3; HR-2)

NOTES ON THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF M&Z USED IN THE STUDY

The following discussion is devoted to a consideration of the idiosyncracies of the individual versions of M&Z. In preparing this study, the principles of modification laid down by Stith Thompson in his seminal work The Folktale¹ have been kept in mind. These principles, which are basically a reiteration of what Antti Aarne² and Kaarle Krohn³ devised, are as follows:

1. Forgetting a detail.
2. Adding a detail not originally present.
3. Stringing two or more tales together.
4. The multiplication of details -- usually by three.
5. Repetition of an incident which occurs but once in the original tale.
6. Specialization of a general trait or the generalizing of a special.
7. Material from another tale may be substituted, particularly at the end of the story.
8. Exchange of roles, often of opposing characters.
9. Animal tales may have human characters replace the animals.
10. Human tales may have animal characters replace men and women.
11. Likewise animals and ogres or demons may be shifted.
12. A tale may be told in the first person as if the teller were one of the characters.

¹The Folktale (New York : Holt, Rinehart & Winston, c1946; repr. Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, c1977) pp. 435-7.

²"II. Die Veränderungen in den Märchen," in: Leitfaden der vergleichenden Märchenforschung, FF Communications no. 13 (Hamina : Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemia Kustantama, 1913), pp. 23-39.

³Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethode (Oslo et al. : Instituttet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning, 1926), pp. 59-100; English translation: Folklore Methodology : Formulated by Julius Krohn and Expanded by Nordic Researchers, translated by Roger L. Welsch (Austin : University of Austin Press, 1971), xviii, 192 p.

13. One change in a tale will force others to be made to maintain consistency.

14. As a tale wanders it adapts itself to its new environment.

15. Likewise obsolete traits may be replaced by modern.⁴

Specific examples will be given as we go through each version included in the study. Some general comments about changes that appear in more than one version are forthcoming, however. Thompson's #10, in which animal characters replace human beings, can be seen in the substitution of Mem's horse Bor by his companion Bengîn in a few versions (OM; ZK-3; MC-1). Evidence for considering Bor and Bengîn to be functional equivalents includes the following:

a) The Turkish tale type EB Type 247 Schah Ismail, which also has Kurdish versions⁵, includes the motifs: 1. "Through an apple, which a dervish gives to a childless king, a son is born to him, and a foal is born to his horse," and 3. "The horse warns the son [of all three of the stepmother's attempts to kill him]." In OM the king and his vizier successfully engender Mem and Bengîn[eh] respectively, instead of the king and his horse engendering Mem and a foal.

b) Regarding motif 3. above, with the warning horse, in OM, it is Bengîn rather than Bor who explains to Mem that Zîn's servant is not the girl he has come in search of.[C.III.]

Thompson's #11, in which animals or ogres may fill the same slot, describes the situation in B.I.A. *Discovery of Mem and Zîn* in the motif chart. In B.I.A.1. birds, usually three doves, decide to bring Mem and Zîn together, while in B.I.A.2. it is the jinn that perform this function, and in B.I.A.3. Mem and Zîn are introduced by angels.

⁴Thompson. *ibid.*, p. 436.

⁵For instance: "Shah Ismail and Qamberta" in: D.N. MacKenzie. *Kurdish Dialect Studies-II* (London et al. : Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 4-33.

There is another type of variation which Thompson's list does not directly mention. This type of variation, of which nearly every version of M&Z offers at least one example, consists of the preservation of a particular idea or motif, while situating it in a place in the story which differs from its place in other versions. I call this type of variation *Displaced elements*. In Thompson's #1, by "forgetting a detail" he means its omission; in #2, by "adding a detail" he means the introduction of something from outside the story. By *displaced elements* I mean that a detail has been forgotten in its expected place, and has been added somewhere else in the story: hence, it has neither been omitted nor introduced from outside the story, but rather transposed within the story. For example, in several versions (SHa-2; GNa; EP-1; ZK-1; FK-1), Qeretajdîn's wife hits a messenger over the head with a ladle for having brought an undesired message [D.I.C.], while in ZK-2, Qeretajdîn's wife (Lady Ereb) takes her shoe and hits Qeretajdîn over the head with it, for sending her to test Mem's honor; she is angry with Qeretajdîn for not trusting Mem from the beginning. The idea which this scene shares with other versions, i.e., what I call the *Element of intersection*, is: Qeretajdîn's wife hits a man on the head with an object.⁶

The most salient *displaced elements* in the various versions of M&Z are shown in Figure 4a.

The following section focuses on how each version differs from the general chain of motifs of M&Z. Numbers in brackets refer the reader to the appropriate part of the motif chart included in Chapter Four.

⁶Regarding Qeretajdîn's wife hitting a servant over the head with a wooden ladle [Motif D.I.C. in the motif chart], compare the following Persian proverb:

مثل کنیز کفگیر خورده قر میزند mesl-e kanîz-e kavgîr khordeh qor mîzanad
= [He] complains like a slave-girl who's hit over the head with a spatula. This is discussed more fully in Chapter One.

PN (1869)

This is the first oral version to be collected by a Western scholar. Unusual because it begins with an unrelated (and unidentified) folktale, later switching over to what is unmistakably the story of Mem and Zîn, Hugo Makas⁷ calls this version **lückenhaft** (= 'defective, incomplete'), and Socin⁸ himself calls it **verkürzt** (= 'shortened, abridged') and **entstellt** (= 'deformed, garbled'). This may be considered either #3 *Stringing two tales together* in Thompson's list, or #7 *Substitution of material from another tale*. In the latter case, the substitution is at the beginning of the tale rather than at the end. Prym characterizes the informant for this version, Jano [Dschano], a Jacobite Christian from Kurdistan of Turkey who came to Damascus to escape famine, as being uniquely suited to the task of being a native informant, calling him "der berufene Erzähler seines Heimatortes" ('the appointed tale-teller of his native place). There seems to be a contradiction between the low quality of this version and the highly rated skill of its source. Can a fine tale-teller ruin a story? Perhaps Jano's telling should be seen as an unusual combination of two stories rather than as a garbling of one of them.

HR-1 and HR-2 were collected from the same region and in the same language (Turoyo) 109 years later. Both PN and HR-1 end with the same Kurdish concluding formula.

The way Mem and Zîn meet in this version is unique: [B.I.A.4.] Merchant from Mosul acts as intermediary between Mem and Zîn, carrying letters between him in India and her in Jezira Bohtan (PN). This bears resemblance to a Turkish tale type: **EB**

⁷HM, p. 4.

⁸PS, vol. 1a, p. xix.

Type 188 Hüsni Yusuf. Motifs. 1. A girl who lives cut off (isolated) falls in love with a foreign, distant prince through a description of him. 2. In a letter, she asks him to marry her; the prince sends some things, which symbolize his refusal ... III. Variants. 1. The man's name is ... Şah İsmail ... He is prince of India, Morocco, Egypt. ... An important difference between this Turkish tale and PN is that in the latter, the letter sent in Motif 2. signifies acceptance rather than rejection. Cf. Motif T11.2. Love through sight of picture.

On the way to Jezira Bohtan, Mem stops twice: the first time he feeds his horse, and the second time a snake climbs up his leg. This is an example of Thompson's #5 *repetition of an incident which occurs only once in the original tale*

Displaced elements: In most versions, Qeretajdîn has two brothers, named Arfo (or some variant thereof) and Chako (or some variant thereof) [II.J.]. In PN, Hasso and Chako are the brothers of Mîr Sêvdîn and Zîn #1. There is no Qeretajdîn in this version, and his function is fulfilled by Hasso (and Chako).

Element of intersection: Two brothers of someone + exemplary behavior.

PS (1870)

Al-pasha helps Mem leave, unlike most other versions (ZK-1, EP-1, HM, etc.), where he tries to prevent Mem from leaving. This may be considered an example of Thompson's #8 *exchange of roles*

When Mem goes to the bank of the river to get a token from Zîn, he is not quite forced to go; it is couched in milder terms than in ZK-1 or EP-1: there is no "or else" threat involved in PS. Perhaps this is Thompson's #1, *forgetting a detail*

There is a passage containing a shift from third person to first person, an indication that the informant is identifying with the characters he is telling of. The

passage, which comes at what is perhaps the most suspenseful point in the story, when Mem has hidden Zîn behind his cloak, is as follows:

[?Mem] said, "Bako, early this morning,
Mem had a bad headache,
For this reason I can't speak to Mir Zeidin, Lord of
Bohtan." (PS, p. 78, + note #55)

This is Thompson's #12 *tale told in the first person as if the teller were one of the characters*. This topic will be dealt with more fully in Chapter Six, where context, digression, and the tale teller as performer is discussed.

In the Chess scene [D.VI.], whoever loses must tell the winner who his beloved is. This establishes a connection between the motif of the chess game, common to most versions, and the motif in which everyone in the diwan must tell who his beloved is (cf. also the Turkish romance *Tahir ile Zühre*⁹). However, revealing the identity of one's beloved occurs as a separate episode in many versions; it seems to have no fixed place in the story, and as such appears in the motif chart under D.VIII.

Floating motifs

Displaced elements: Whereas in most versions which include a verbal duel or a contest in which each male present must disclose the identity of his beloved, Beko Awan recites improvised verse, announcing in it that Mem's beloved is a swarthy Arab girl who sells yoghurt in the marketplace. This is meant to taunt Mem into revealing the truth, which he generally does, thereby causing a fight which Qeretajdîn must end through a show of force [D.VIII.B.]. In PS, the roles of Mem and Beko Awan are reversed: Mem sarcastically claims that his beloved is a swarthy girl ('as black as

⁹Fikret Türkmen. *Tahir ile Zühre* (Ankara : Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1983), p. 81.

ink') who sells yoghurt in the marketplace, and Beko Awan replies: "Why don't you say your beloved is Zin?"

Element of intersection: Verbal duel in which Mem's beloved is revealed due to Beko Awan's treachery.

HM (1896)

This is a brief version in which the beginning is more or less skipped: neither the three dove motif nor its functional equivalent, the king of the jinn, is there at all; almost nothing is said about Mukhurzemîn or Mem's origins; neither Bor the horse nor Bengîneh the servant is mentioned. The narration begins at B.III.C. *Mem's parents' reaction to his trip* in the motif chart. Hugo Makas has provided us with enough data about his informant that we may draw the conclusion that the latter was a passive bearer of tradition, to use von Sydow's most useful concept, rather than an active bearer.¹⁰ An active bearer of tradition is recognized in his community as a gifted storyteller, singer, joketeller, dancer, etc., while the audience is composed of passive bearers. Thus, if a member of the audience is asked to perform, his rendition will generally be inferior to that of a recognized performer. This might explain the brevity of this version, and the almost total disappearance of the beginning of the story.

Qeretajdîn is submissive to Mîr Sevdîn, until the final scene, when Qeretajdîn argues with the mîr. This contrasts with ZK-1 and GNa, in which the mîr is afraid of Qeretajdîn. Qeretajdîn, has two brothers as usual, however only one of them, Arfo, is mentioned by name.

¹⁰C.W. von Sydow. "On the Spread of Tradition," in: Selected Papers on Folklore, ed. Laurits Bødker (Copenhagen : Rosenkilde og Baggens Forlag, 1948), pp. 11-18.

Whereas in other versions Qeretajdîn is married to Mîr Sêvdîn's sister, in HM Arfo's wife is Beko Awan's sister (see Displaced elements below). In this version, it is she whom Qeretajdîn sacrifices, rather than his own wife. This has the added effect of getting back at Beko Awan in a unique way. This has a parallel in the other items sacrificed in this version, Mîr Sêvdîn's horse and tent: by doing away with Beko Awan's sister and the Mîr's horse and tent, Beko Awan and the Mîr have a stake in the sacrifice which is unique to this version. Also unusual is that Qeretajdîn's house is not among the items sacrificed.

According to Hugo Makas' notes, pp. 2-3, Beko's treachery is explained by Mem's refusal to marry his daughter.

Displaced elements:

1. In many versions, there are two Zîns, one good and one bad. The bad Zîn (Zîn #2) is the villain Beko Awan's daughter (or sister) [II.F.-H.]. In HM, Mîr Sêvdîn is unsure whether Mem wants his sister Zîn or his (unnamed) wife.

Element of intersection: Two Zîns

2. In many versions Qeretajdîn is married to the sister of Mîr Sêvdîn and Zîn #1 (PS; OM; GNa; ZK-3; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1) [II.L.]. In HM, Qeretajdîn's brother Arfo is married to Beko Awan's sister.

Element of intersection: One of the "three brothers" married to the sister of a high-ranking official.

LC-1 (1901)

Although the beginning of this version is longer and more detailed than most, it is in many ways a truncated version. Many details essential to understanding the story line are not explained, presumably because they are taken for granted by the informant. Alternatively, perhaps this version was collected under unnatural

circumstances, i.e., without an audience, and was therefore incompletely rendered; or perhaps the informant was not an active bearer of tradition.

Names in this version are often accompanied by unusually full descriptive epithets, e.g., *širîn almā, šāhī moyribiāne* [= 'Shirin Alma (Sweet Apple), king of the Mughribis' (=Al Pasha)]; *zālixā xātun, káčkā qorēišiāne* [= 'Lady Zelikha, daughter of the Qureishis' (=Mem's mother)]; and *serāk basān bōzī rawān* [= 'Wide stepping Bozê Rewan (Gray one of going?)' (=Mem's horse)].

In the scene where Mem meets up with Zîn #2 at the entrance to Jezira Bohtan and she tries to trick him into believing that she is Zîn #1, LC-1 is unusual. Although the girl he meets is not identified as Zîn #1's maidservant, he identifies her as such when she tries to pass herself off as Zîn #1: in most versions she tells him that she is Zîn #1 and he believes it until his horse tells him that she is trying to deceive him. In this version, then, Mem is not as easy to fool as in others.

This version lacks the motif of Mem's failing to stand up out of respect when *Mir Zendîn* enters the *diwan*. This would come under Thompson's #1 *forgetting a detail*. However, contrary to his assertion that this occurs most frequently with unimportant details, in the present instance the omission is important: only one other version (OM) lacks this motif.

In the sacrifice scene, horses are sacrificed, rather than children or wives. This could be seen as an example of Thompson's #10 *animal character replaces human being*.

Displaced elements:

1. In most versions, Beko Awan (Bekirê E'wan) is the villain; he is a distinct entity from *Qeretajdîn* and his brothers [I.I.E.]. In LC-1, *Qumsi-bāku* is one of *Qeretajdîn's* brothers. Many of his actions coincide with those of Beko Awan in other

versions, but he is not explicitly called the villain of the story, although **qumst** means 'talebearer, gossip-monger, trouble-maker.'

Element of intersection: Character named Beko who does some unpleasant things.

2. In many versions, Mem and Zîn #1 count the number of minarets in the city as proof that they are in his city: his city has 366 minarets, her city has 66 minarets [B.I.D.1.]. In LC-1, Mem tells Zîn #1 that his city has 366 minarets. In this version, Zîn #1 realizes that she has come to Mem's city by another method (B.I.D.3a)

Element of intersection: Mem's city has 366 minarets.

OM (1903)

This is by far the fullest, most embellished version ever collected. At the end, the teller claims that it took him four nights to tell it; if this is so, it would have been nice to know where he stopped each night, and where he resumed the following night, but unfortunately this is not indicated. Although tedious to read, as an orally recited telling, this version must be viewed as a masterpiece. Motifs which are summed up in a sentence or two in most versions are expounded in great detail in OM, amounting to several printed pages of sung poetry.¹¹ Formulas à la Parry and Lord abound in it, as well as other features that tell us something about Kurdish folk poetics. Mann's informant, Raġman-î Bekir, is the epitome of what von Sydow meant by an active bearer of tradition.¹²

¹¹See for example the narration of Mem and Bengineh's mothers' begging them not to go [B.III.C.4], pp. 41-3 in Mann's original; pp. 71-5 in Mann's German translation; pp. 96-109 in Ayyubiyān's edition [including Persian translation].

¹²von Sydow. *ibid.*

This is the only Kurdish language oral version that I know of in a dialect other than Kurmanji. Although it is in a variety of Soranî ("Central Kurdish") spoken in Iran, known as Mukri, it is the exception which proves the rule that Mem û Zîn is basically limited to the Kurmanji-speaking regions, from where Armenian and Neo-Aramaic versions have also been collected.¹³ Mukri is transitional to Kurmanji, being spoken in a region just south of the Kurmanji area: there are both grammatical features (preservation of gender and case distinctions in nouns) and lexical items (e.g., **ronîştin** for 'to sit' [cf. Kurmanji **rûniştin**], alongside Soranî **daneşîn**) which it shares with Kurmanji. The fact that this otherwise Kurmanji folklore item is part of the Mukri repertoire suggests that the Kurmanji influence on this Mukri dialect extends beyond the linguistic realm, into the realm of folklore as well.

Displaced elements: In many versions, Zîn #2 (Beko Awan's evil daughter or sister) tries to trick Mem into believing that she is Zîn #1; in some versions she evens upbraids him for not remembering her [C.III.]. In OM, When Mem and Bengîneh reach the outskirts of the city of Jezîra Bohtan, they encounter Malik Rehan, Zîn's maidservant, bleaching laundry. Mem stubbornly insists that this is Zîn, and is upset that she is snubbing him. Bengîneh tells him that this is not Zîn, performing the function fulfilled by Bor the horse in other versions. Malik Rehan is not deceiving Mem: she is not trying to pass herself off as Zîn; it is Mem who mistakes her for Zîn.

Element of intersection: mistaking of Zîn #2 for Zîn #1.

SHa-1 (1904)

¹³Ehmedê Xanî's literary version of Mem û Zîn, also originally written in Kurmanji, has been translated into Sorani and is well known by educated Sorani-speaking Kurds. However, I know of no other oral versions that have been collected in Sorani.

This is one of two versions collected by S. Haykuni, published only in Armenian translation, although originally collected in Kurdish. The sung poetry portions appear in Kurdish in the Armenian alphabet, side by side with an Armenian translation.

Chess (kshig) is played three times: 1) Mem and Qeretajdîn + brothers sit on balcony [D.II.A.]; 2) Qeretajdîn brings Mem to the emir's diwan [D.I.B.3.]; 3) Game between Mem and emir [D.VI.A.]. Furthermore, in this version the servant is hit on the head with a stick two times. [D.I.C.]

Both the repetition of the chess game motif and the beaten servant motif are examples of Thompson's #4. *The multiplication of details – usually by three* and/or #5. *Repetition of an incident which occurs but once in the original tale* In this instance it is not readily apparent how these two items differ from one another. I would argue that they should be collapsed into one if not for the clear applicability of #4 as distinct from #5 in HR-1 below.

SHa-2 (1904)

This version, like SHa-1, has been published only in Armenian translation. Therefore, the texture of the original Kurdish is lost. Apparently it was in sung verse, which is unusual for the region which it comes from.

Mem writes a letter to his father, to prove that he has sent the horsemen back; otherwise, Al-Pasha might think that they have deserted Mem, and punish them for doing so [B.III.D.]. This motif may be borrowed from another tale (Thompson's #7).

The doves that brought Mem and Zîn together reappear when Mem stops to tend to Bor's wounds [C.I.C.]. One of their feathers cures Bor. This motif also occurs in GNa.

Jakan [=Chekan], Qeretajdîn's brother who is betrothed to Zîn, is more resistant to the idea of renouncing his betrothal to her than in other versions [D.II.D.]

In this version, social standing plays a larger role than elsewhere: a) Mem tells a man his problem, i.e., that he is lovesick, and the man replies by asking if Mem knows whether Zîn's father is from the same class as his father; b) later, the Mir asks Tazhdin [=Qeretajdîn] if Mem is really a king's son, and Tazhdin assures him that he is; c) Beko Awan complains to the Mir that Mem is an ordinary man who wanders around the palace. This may reflect the tale teller's world view and life experience. Unfortunately, although we know his name and where he lived, we have no data on this aspect of his personality,¹⁴ so nothing can be said with certainty on this matter.

Unlike other versions, Mem stands up when the Mir enters, albeit sleepily and sluggishly [D.IV.C.]. This typifies a type of variation not adequately reflected in Thompson's listing. I would call this variation *action different from, sometimes even antithetical to, what normally happens at a particular point in the story*. It is interesting to note that whereas in other versions Beko Awan complains because Mem fails to rise, in this one he complains because Mem rose sluggishly. This is an example of Thompson's #13 *one change in a tale forces others to be made to maintain consistency*.

GNa (1904)

Collected in Kurdish and translated into Armenian by the Armenian priest G. Nzhdehian, what is unusual about this version is its moral tone. It is likely that because Nzhdehian was a priest, he touched up a few points at the end, to bring the story into line with his religious world view. Hence, when Qeretajdîn [Tazhdin] learns of the death of Mem and Zîn, he is about to "wreak terrible slaughter in the town. ... But a young child, an old man, a woman, a mullah, and a sheikh came

¹⁴This is an example of how limiting oneself to the collection of minimal information about the identity of the informant falls short of what is required to adequately discuss context.

weeping and fell at the brothers' feet, and dropped a wrapped up Koran. The sheikh and mullah told Tazhdin to go and open the grave of Mame and Zine and to ask Mir-Zeydin about their will. 'Don't shed the blood of innocent people.' They should find out the cause of the mischief done and punish only that one." (pp. 238-9). Although this is not the only version in which someone intercedes to prevent Qeretajdîn from slaughtering people indiscriminately when he learns of Mem and Zîn's untimely death, there are versions in which he does shed innocent blood¹⁵.

Hunting expedition (#1) [C.II.B.]: Mem catches a gazelle that Qeretajdîn is unable to catch; Qeretajdîn & brothers praise Mem, and they become blood brothers, whereas in several versions Qeretajdîn is angry at Mem for having intercepted his quarry. The closest Thompson's list comes to accounting for this is perhaps #8 *exchange of roles* however this is not really satisfactory, because Mem and Qeretajdîn do not exchange roles (i.e., Mem does not become angry instead of Qeretajdîn). I am hesitant to use his #1 and #2 as catchall phrases for every omission and accretion, respectively.

In this version there are two tunnel episodes: a) Zîn #1 has a tunnel dug between the kitchen where Mem is working and her bedroom: this is unique to GNa; and b) Zîn #1 has a tunnel dug between Mem's prison cell and her bedroom [D.VI.D.]. This is an example of Thompson's #5 *repetition of an incident which occurs but once in the original tale*

Displaced elements: In many versions, while Mem, Qeretajdîn, and his brothers sit on Qeretajdîn's balcony, Zîn #1 comes by with a caravan of pots and pans, on her way to the fountain to wash them. Mem jokingly says that he wants to collect a tax from the caravan: in other words, he wants to ambush the caravan, a common practice, reminiscent of the eşkiya (brigand) tradition. He ends up bringing back a

¹⁵In OM, it is Mem's grieving father, Brahim Pa[d]i[sh]a[h], who kills whoever crosses his path.

piece of jewelry from Zîn #1, as proof that she wants to marry him [D.II.A.]. In GNa, while Mem, Qeretajdîn and his brothers sit on the balcony, Mem must perform two proof tasks: a) he must go get the stored grain from the town of Sakhlan (cf. Turkish *saklanmak* = 'to hide'); and b) he must bring a gold piece from Zîn #1 as proof that she wants to marry him. Mem performs task a) first, and is ambushed on the way by men hiding (Turkish *saklanıyorlar* --> town of Sakhlan), and kills off all his assailants but three, who turn out to be Qeretajdîn and his brothers. The two proof tasks is a further example of Thompson's #5.

Element of intersection: ambush + Mem (in the normal scenario Mem is the ambusher, but in GNa, he is the ambushee).

FK-2 (1926)

When Mem and Zîn first meet in Mem's bedroom, they are polite to each other, rather than angry, as is the case in other versions. Mem says, "Fine girl [Qîza qenc] ...", and Zîn asks, "Fine young man, what is your name in goodness [Xortê qenc, navê te bi xêr!]", both of which bespeak polite modes of address.

After Mem succeeds in catching a young gazelle which Qeretajdîn is chasing but unable to catch, Mem gives it to Qeretajdîn, who rebukes him for stealing his quarry and they fight until Mem knocks Qeretajdîn unconscious. This is reminiscent of the unmanly deed that Mem commits on his way to Jezîra Bohtan in ZK-2, because of which he falls out of favor with God. However, Mem redeems himself in this version by staying by Qeretajdîn's side until he recovers consciousness.

When Mem reaches Jezîra Bohtan, he stays at the house of Mîr Sêvdîn, rather than with Qeretajdîn. Both this motif and the first one outlined above are examples of a new category I am proposing to add to Thompson's listing, namely *action*

different from, sometimes even antithetical to, what normally happens at a particular point in the story, first mentioned above in SHa-2. This would cover both Mem and Zîn's unusual politeness at their first meeting, as contrary to the quarrel they have in most versions, and Mem's staying somewhere other than at Qeretajdîn's house while in Jezira Bohtan.

This version begins with full detail and sung verse insertions at key points, but is cut short about half way through, i.e., once Mem reaches Jezîra Bohtan¹⁶, and the style becomes telegraphic, as if the teller has run out of time. One conspicuous difference in this truncated section is the complete lack of sung verse.

Displaced elements: In most versions, either Mem shows Qeretajdîn Zîn #1's braids from behind his cloak, or Qeretajdîn notices them himself [D.V.A.]. In FK-2, while Mem is hiding Zîn #1 behind his coat, Beko Awan shows her braids, which are sticking out from behind Mem, to Mîr Sêvdîn.

Element of intersection: X shows Zîn #1's braids to Y.

FK-1 (-1936)

Several of the words used by the informant, , such as *jarîn* = 'to cry or grieve' and *zenan[eke]* = 'woman,' are designated by the lexicographer Kurdoev as **Ю.К.** [Южно-курдское слово = southern Kurdish word], a vague designation that sometimes means Sorani (MacKenzie's "Central Kurdish") and sometimes means Badînanî or Southern Kurmanji (the dialects of Zakho, Akre, Amadiya, and Dehok in Kurdistan of Iraq; of Siirt, Başkale [Van], and Hakkâri in Kurdistan of Turkey; of Qamishli in Kurdistan of Syria; and of Urmia and environs in Kurdistan of Iran). In most respects, however, the language of this version is not Southern Kurmanji. If

¹⁶From the bottom of page 300 of the original to the bottom of page 301, covering in one page what in other versions takes 6-8 pages.

Kurdoev's designation is to be taken into account, then perhaps the informant, like that of ZK-2, was an Armenian who fled from Turkey to Syria or Iraq, later immigrating to Soviet Armenia. If this were so, the fact that the informant spent time in an area where Southern Kurmanji was spoken (i.e., Syria or Northern Iraq) could explain such loan words in an otherwise more northerly dialect. Unfortunately, no information is provided about the informant for this text, which is unusual for a Soviet folkloristic publication.

Displaced elements: In many versions, Mem pretends to be ill when Mîr Sêvîn calls all able-bodied men to go out hunting [D.III.B.]. In FK-1, Mem's horse (Bor) is ill, so Mem cannot go on hunt. In addition, on the morning of the hunt, Mem too says that he is ill.

Element of intersection: Illness, real or feigned, prevents someone from going hunting.

EP-2 (c. 1938)

The test that Mem and Zîn use to determine who is whose guest near the beginning of the story [B.I.D.] is unique. Mem asks what side of the bed the hearth is on. If it is on the left side, they are in Zîn #1's bed; if it is on the right side, they are in Mem's bed. It is on the right side, so they are in Mem's bed. In an essay about Kabyle society in Algeria, Pierre Bourdieu shows that the direction left is associated with femininity, whereas the direction right is associated with virility.¹⁷ The symbolism in this version of M&Z demonstrates the same values.¹⁸ Regarding Thompson's listing,

¹⁷"The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society," in: Jean G. Peristiany (ed.), Honour and Shame: the Values of Mediterranean Society (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, c1966), pp. 193-241, esp. 221 ff.

¹⁸As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, feminine symbolism is often connected with Mem. Not so in this case.

there is once again no adequate heading. This is not #2 *adding a detail* because most versions include the motif of a test as proof of whose room Mem and Zîn are in at this point in the story: rather, this is an alternative realization of a well-entrenched motif. If material from another tale has been substituted (Thompson's #7), it is not clear where else this motif occurs¹⁹.

Al-Pasha, Mem's father, is portrayed as a jolly king, "seated on cushions in the middle, drinking coffee, smoking a pipe, in short enjoying himself." In most versions, Al-Pasha is portrayed as old and worried. In many versions it does not occur to Al-Pasha that Mem might be in love. In EP-2, however, he says to Mem, "You haven't fallen in love, have you?" This is in keeping with his jolly character in this version. My addition to Thompson's listing, first mentioned above in FK-2, namely *action different from, sometimes even antithetical to, what normally happens at a particular point in the story*, is applicable here.

The method of finding a horse occurring in this version is unique [B.III.A.]. A mare tell Mem to go to a ravine in the mountains and to choose one of her sons. In most versions, Mem chooses a scrawny horse from the royal stables (SHa-1; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1). In LT, LC-1 and ZK-2, Mem's horse is caught by fishermen in the sea. Once again, if the motif appearing in EP-2 is borrowed from another tale (Thompson's #7), at this point in time it is not known from which other tale.²⁰ Moreover, because the identity of the informant for this version is not known, it is not possible to look at other stories in his repertoire for clues.

In this version, Mîr Zêydîn [=Sêvdîn] does not blindly follow the advice of Beko Awan says: "Mîr Zêydîn believed Qeretajdîn, not Bekir-Awan."

¹⁹It does not occur in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Bloomington & Indianapolis : Indiana University Press, [c1955]), 6 vols.

²⁰It is hoped that when I finish the Kurdish tale-type index, such questions as these will be answered.

Zîn advises Mem that whatever gift Mîr Zêydîn offers him, he should request for a felt cloak instead [D.I.F.].²¹ In most other versions Mem requests the office of cook: one way of referring to an office which has been bestowed as a gift is to liken it to a cloak. The Arabic word *khil'ah* خِلْعَة = 'robe of honor' was often given by a ruler as a gift to a deserving person. One way to say 'gift' in Kurdish is *xelat*, from Arabic *khil'ah*.²² Requesting a felt cloak is a literalizing of the expression *anîn k'urkê aspêjtê* (lit. 'to bring the cloak of cooking'), an expression occurring in EP-1 with the meaning 'to confer on s.o. the office of cook'.

The contest between Mem and Mîr Zêydîn [=Sêvdîn] consists of arrow shooting, which is unique to EP-2 [D.VI.A.]. This is the only version in which the contest takes place outside: it is usually a board game such as chess or checkers, or a card game.

Zîn's long braided hair has two opposing functions: a) it almost gets Mem into deep trouble by nearly giving away the fact that Mem is hiding her behind his cloak [D.V.A.]; and b) it almost rescues Mem from the dungeon when Zîn comes to release him [E.I.B.2.].

It is truly a shame that the identity of the informant for this version, as well as the Kurdish original, are lost, because it is a version uncommonly rich in individual variation.

EP-1 (1955)

This version is similar to ZK-1, FK-1 in many ways, which is not surprising considering that all three were collected in same general geographical area. On many

²¹Cf. AT 560 The Snake King and Motif L220. Modest request best.

²²Moreover, the German verb *bekleiden*, from *Kleid* = 'dress', cognate to English *cloth*, *clothe(s)*, and *clothing*, has the extended meaning of 'to occupy a post or position, to hold an office' in addition to the basic meaning of 'to clothe or dress'. So also English *vest* and *to invest*.

points the three versions agree, e.g.: a) When Mem chooses a horse, he instructs the stable hands to water it profusely; 2) Two Zîns, and the scene on the bridge at the entrance to Jezîra Bohtan; 3) Handkerchief which extinguishes fire (EP-1; ZK-1; GNa). Much of the poetry is so similar as to suggest a common source.

However, EP-1 begins with the heroic birth of Mem à la Lord Raglan. Mem's mother conceives from the foam of the sea and gives birth through her mouth. She abandons Mem on the seashore, where he is found and adopted by Al-Pasha. This is an example of Thompson's #7 *substitution of material from outside the tale*

One item, the handkerchief [destmall], has several different functions which may be traced throughout the story: a) Used in extinguishing the fire in Qeretajdîn's house; b) Used by Qeretajdîn to prove to the mîr that he [=mîr] stood up when Mem entered the room; c) Used as a toy "rabbit" to save Zîn: by explaining Zîn's laughter as being due to the toy, the secret of her love for Mem is not divulged. Thompson's #4 *multiplication of details* does not cover this, nor does #5 *repetition of an incident which occurs only once* in other versions. What we have here is a concrete item, a handkerchief, occurring in three distinct contexts in one and the same version. If #4 is applicable, the wording of it is too vague to make it unquestionably so.

Displaced elements: In most versions, Mem must reach Zîn #1 in 40 days, or else she will be married off to someone else [B.I.G.1.]. In EP-1, Mem gives the saddlemaker 40 days respite to make a saddle for Mem's trip.

Element of intersection: 40 days respite.

ZK-3 (1959)

Bengîn's attitude changes: at first he had wanted to go home, but Alan-beg [Mem's father] would not let him. Later Mem tells him to go home but he refuses, insisting on staying with Mem instead, as in OM. This could be described as *an*

exchange of roles as in Thompson's #8, but the exchange is a change in the behavior of one character rather than two characters' switching roles. This is the only version in which Bengîn kills himself after Mem's death; three graves are dug in the cemetery, one for Mem, one for Zîn, and one for Bengîn.

At first, Qeretajdîn and Beko are equally suspicious of Mem. Later on, however, Qeretajdîn's suspicion is replaced by trust.

The girl who Mem encounters at the entrance to Jezira Bohtan is Zîn's maidservant Gulishan, rather than Beko's daughter Zîn, who also appears in this version. Although in some versions, Beko's daughter/sister is Zîn's maidservant, in this version they are two separate individuals. If this is an exchange of roles, it is unusual because whereas in many versions one character fulfills both roles, in this version each role has its own character.

No special horse companion in this version. The functions of Bor the horse are filled [Bor is replaced] by Bengîn, as in OM. This is reminiscent of Thompson's #9, in which *human characters replace animals*. However, M&Z is not an 'animal tale.'

Regarding the hunting trip from which Mem is sent home: a) In this version, the hunting trip is replaced by a **cerd** (Cerd = 'manly game of jousting played on horseback'); b) Rather than Mem's asking to be sent home, it is decided that he will go home because he gets off his horse in such a way that it looks as if he has fallen off (cf. SHa-2). This replacement of one motif with another is distinct from Thompson's #6 *Specialization of a general trait* or vice versa: in this case we have one specific motif substituting for another, both of which would both fit under the general heading of *Recreation* or *Manly pursuits*.

The mîr is depicted as incapable of making any decisions, depending on Beko to do so for him, especially when Qeretajdîn returns from his campaign to find Mem in prison (p. 116).

Beko specifically promises to prevent Mem and Zîn from attaining their desire because his own daughter has fallen in love with Mem.

This version features parallelism between Zîn and Mem. For example, when they first lay eyes on one another, they both fall instantly in love, and the same expression is used to describe this for each of them: "[X] falls for [Y] not with one heart, but with 1,000 hearts." This is reminiscent of Thompson's #5, *repetition of an incident occurring only once in the original tale*. His descriptions goes on to say: "Sometimes this may not be an actual repetition but merely an analogy to something in the same or some other story."

HR-1 (1960)

Beko Awan is portrayed as more honorable (sentences 195-214) than in other versions. It is his daughter who is the schemer here. This is arguably Thompson's #8 *exchange of roles*

Parallelism: Beko's daughter Zîn treats Sittiye Zîn at the stream the same way that Beko treats Mîr Zeidîn on the hunt. What was said above in ZK-3 regarding Thompson's #5 is also applicable here.

To save Mem, Qeretajdîn sacrifices: a) his horse; b) his seven-story mansion (after salvaging the books); c) -- almost -- his wife and children. This is an example of Thompson's #4 *multiplication of details by three*

When Qeretajdîn goes off on a mission, instead of making the mîr promise not to harm Memê Alan, he has Memê Alan promise not to leave the house until Qeretajdîn's return, a promise which Memê Alan breaks as soon as Qeretajdîn leaves.

This is an example of the Proppian functions of II. **Interdiction is addressed to the hero** and III. **Interdiction is violated**.²³

Displaced elements:

1. In most versions, Mem must reach Zîn #1 in 40 days, or else she will be married off to someone else [B.I.G.1.]. In HR-1, before Qeretajdîn leaves on a mission, he promises to marry Mem to Zîn #1 upon his return 40 days hence, and asks that Mem not leave the house in the meantime.

Element of intersection: 40 days of respite.

2. In many versions, as soon as Qeretajdîn sees Zîn #1's braids sticking out from under Mem's cloak, he understands what has happened, and what he must do to protect Mem and Zîn #1 [D.V.A.]. In HR-1, Bakko catches Sittiye Zîn as she leaves a tryst with Mämme Ala. As she runs up the stairs, he catches her, takes out a scissors and cuts off a piece of one of her braids, and later shows the hair to Mir Sêvdîn as proof of her relationship with Mämme Ala. Here the braids have a similar function, but this motif does not make sense without reference to the "normal" version.

Element of intersection: Braids of Zîn #1's hair symbolize her relationship with Mem.

HR-2 (1960)

Beko's daughter Zîne [=Zîn #2] is neither evil nor a sorceress. She is as beautiful as Zîne [=Zîn #1] (sentences 51 ff.). This is similar to Thompson's #8 *exchange of roles* in that Zîn #2 is different, but unlike #8, she does not switch roles with Zîn #1.

The game which Mem and the emir play is a card game. It is implied that whoever looks at Zîn is destined to lose, as if she were a jinx. Beko Awan does not put

²³Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* tr. by Laurence Scott, 2nd edition, (Austin : University of Texas Press, 1968), pp. 26-7.

Zîn up to watching the game, but he does cause the two players to change places. The game has a specific function in this version: Mem has asked for Zîn's hand (through Qeretajdîn), and the emir accepts, on condition that Mem successfully beats him at cards. The substitution of a card game for a chess game is another example of one specific motif substituting for another, which I discuss above in ZK-3.

In this version, Qeretajdîn is not absent when Mem is thrown in prison: in fact, he tries to intercede to have Mem released. The prison or dungeon that Mem is thrown into is called gūbo = 'cistern' or bîro = 'well': this is reminiscent of what happens to Joseph in Yusuf and Zulaikha, a story which is very popular among the Kurds. Hence, we have a plausible referent for Thompson's #7 *substitution of material from another tale*

After Mem's death, Zîn kills herself à la Romeo and Juliet. The informant did not know English, so Shakespeare's play would not furnish a direct referent: rather, the motif that Shakespeare used was and is current in oral tradition.

Once buried, Mem and Zîn are turned to face each other by Beko Awan, rather than magically turning to face each other through the power of love. What is most interesting about this is that a real-life explanation is substituted for a supernatural one.

ZK-1 (1963)

[This version, the first one I read, constitutes the criteria on which I have based this comparative study.]

ZK-2 (1970)

Mem falls out of favor with God by unnecessarily frightening a man near Diyarbekir, while Mem is on his way to Jezîra Bohtan.

As a parallel, Qeretajdîn offends Mîr Zêydîn by hosting Mem, thereby making the mîr jealous.

Game of checkers: Mem and Mîr Zêydîn win six games apiece, i.e., they are tied, which is unique to this version. Mem loses the last six games because he can't take his eyes off Zîn, as in other versions. This is followed by a singing contest: in this version it is here that Mem gets himself thrown into prison. Moreover, this sequence occurs *before* the scene in which Zîn hides behind Mem's back, which is peculiar to this version.

Displaced elements:

1. In several versions, Qeretajdîn's wife hits a messenger over the head with a ladle for having brought an undesired message [D.I.C.]. In ZK-2, Qeretajdîn's wife (Lady Ereb) takes her shoe and hits Qeretajdîn over the head with it, for sending her to test Mem's honor; she is angry with Qeretajdîn for not trusting Mem from the beginning.

Element of intersection: Qeretajdîn's wife hits a man on the head with an object.

2. In several versions (PS; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1), the night after Mem and Zîn first meet, Mem thinks it is a dream until he sees her ring on his finger, at which point he realizes it really happened, and faints dead away; in three versions (LC-1; OM; GNa), both Mem and Zîn discover one another's rings [B.II.A.]. In ZK-2, at a much later point in the story, after Mem has already arrived in Jezira Bohtan, he sees his own ring on Zîn's hand and remembers the "dream", i.e., their first meeting.

Element of intersection: Mem remembers meeting Zîn when he sees a ring on someone's finger.

MC-1 (c. 1989)

This version is the only one included in the study which was not already published in written form: I have transcribed it and translated it to the best of my ability. One of the most striking things about this version is that it is uncommonly rich in digressions: the tale teller constantly refers to the "dear listeners" [guhdarê e'zîz], and often interpolates the phrase "as is known" [malûm ya]. Moreover, MC-1 contains some motifs which do not occur in other versions.

The angels who bring Mem and Zîn together are called away to rescue a ship in the Black Sea, and leave the two alone for a while.

Once Mem gets to Jezira Bohtan, he meets with Zîn in a garden, and she tells him that she has two bouquets of flowers, a yellow in her left hand, and a red one in her right. She throws them into the air, telling Mem that if he catches the red one, they will attain their desire in this life, but if he catches the yellow one, they will not attain their desire until the next life. Mem catches the yellow bouquet: hence, their fate is sealed. This is the only version in which their fate is predicted so clearly, although in some versions Mem's father hopes they don't succeed. The color symbolism is similar to that of the Iranian Nowruz celebration Chârshambe Sûrî, the last Tuesday night in the Iranian year, at the end of the month of Isfand, just before March 21. During this celebration, a bonfire is lit, and people jump over it while saying "zardî-ye man az to, sorkhî-ye to az man" (=My yellowness from you, your redness from me). Yellow symbolizes death, while red symbolizes life.²⁴ Furthermore, the symbolism of right hand vs. left parallels the color symbolism: as

²⁴The color yellow appears in connection with death in ZK-1 and FK-1, when Mem is pulled up from the dungeon with a yellow rope, after which he expires [E.I.B.]

explained by Bourdieu in "The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society"²⁵, the left hand represents woman, the possessor of harmful and impure powers, whereas the right hand represents man, the possessor of beneficent, fertilizing and protecting powers. Hence, we have two sets of symbols working together to reinforce one another: both right and red stand for life, while both left and yellow stand for death.

Near the end of the story, after Mem and Zîn have already died, Qeretajdîn, who is carrying Mem's corpse on his head in the hopes that he will wake up, encounters a woman who is washing a black cloth, trying to make it white. When he tells her that no amount of washing will make a black cloth white, she replies that no amount of grieving over Mem will bring him back. Once again, color symbolism is used: this seems to be a feature of this storyteller's style.

These motifs, unique to this version, could very well be examples of Thompson's #7 *material from another tale*. In contrast with his description, however, none of them occurs at the end of the tale.

Displaced elements: In many versions, there are two Zîns, one good and one bad. The bad Zîn (Zîn #2) is the villain Beko Awan's daughter (or sister) [II.F.-H.]. In MC-1, both Mîr Sêvdîn's sister and wife are named Zîn.

Element of intersection: Two Zîns.

In this section, I have laid out the sorts of variation encountered in comparing the various oral versions of M&Z used in this study. Although Thompson's listing was used as a starting point, I have endeavored to show that it needs a great deal of elaboration before it is applicable to a work like M&Z. Thompson is largely quoting Aarne and Krohl, so the shortcomings in his statements are ultimately attributable to

²⁵in: Jean G. Peristiany (ed.). Honour and Shame: the Values of Mediterranean Society (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, c1966), p. 222.

them as well. It is important to note that almost any sort of variation could be described as #1 *forgetting a detail* or #2 *adding a detail*, but this is too vague to be of much use.

As a part of my elaboration of Thompson's listing, I have proposed a new category called *displaced elements*, consisting of motifs which occur in one particular version in a context different from that in which they appear in the other versions. In the *displaced element* a character often performs an action which is normally carried out by (or on) a different character in other versions. There is an *element of intersection* between the more common scenario and the idiosyncratic mutation of it which I have designated as the *displaced element*. Figure 4a. delineates the most salient *displaced elements* I have come across.

Another emendation I have made is the addition of a category for *action different from, sometimes even antithetical to, what normally happens at a particular point in the story*. Thompson's category #8 hints at this, but it is not an exact fit. The phenomenon presents itself often enough in the versions of M&Z to merit a separate category.

I would venture to suggest that both Thompson's listing of types of variation encountered in comparative studies of folk narrative and my proposed emendations reflect on the processes by which human beings remember things, and how the human mind can transpose a detail. Perhaps the tale teller has remembered a particular detail only after having passed the point in the story where it originally occurred, but, not wanting to omit it altogether, he finds a way to incorporate it in the narrative in a new way. Such a notion is well beyond the scope of the present work, but hopefully will be investigated later.

Motif Chart #	Normal attestation	Element of Intersection	Displaced Element	Version
I.E.	Beko Awan is the villain; he is a distinct entity from Qeretajdin and his brothers.	Character named Beko who does some unpleasant things.	Qumsai-baku is one of Qeretajdin's brothers. Many of his actions coincide with those of Beko Awan in other versions, but he is not explicitly called the villain of the story.	LC-1
I.F.H.	2 Zins, one good and one bad. The bad Zin (Zin #2) is the villain Beko Awan's daughter (or sister).	2 Zins	Mir Sevdin's sister and wife are both named Zin.	MC-1
I.J.	Qeretajdin has 2 brothers, named Arfo (or some variant thereof) and Chako (or some variant thereof).	2 brothers of someone + exemplary behavior	Mir Sevdin is unsure whether Mem wants his sister Zin or his (unnamed) wife. Hasso and Chako are the brothers of Mir Sevdin and Zin #1. There is no Qeretajdin in this version, and his function is fulfilled by Hasso (and Chako). Qeretajdin is called Hesen.	HM PN
I.L.	Qeretajdin is married to the sister of Mir Sevdin and Zin #1.	One of the '3 brothers' married to the sister of a high-ranking official.	Qeretajdin's brother Arfo is married to Beko Awan's sister.	LT HM
B.I.D.	Mem and Zin #1 count the number of minarets in the city as proof that they are in his city; his city has 366 minarets, her city has 66 minarets.	Mem's city has 366 minarets.	Mem tells Zin #1 that his city has 366 minarets. In this version, Zin #1 realizes that she has come to Mem's city by another method (B.I.D.3a).	LC-1
B.I.G.1.	Mem must reach Zin #1 in 40 days, or else she will be married off to someone else.	40 days respite	Mem gives the saddlemaker 40 days respite to make a saddle for his trip.	EP-1
B.I.A.	The night after Mem and Zin first meet, Mem thinks it is a dream until he sees her ring on his finger, at which point he realizes it really happened, and faints.	Mem remembers meeting Zin when he sees a ring on someone's finger.	Before Qeretajdin leaves on a mission, he promises to marry Mem to Zin #1 upon his return 40 days hence, and asks that Mem not leave the house in the meantime. After Mem has already arrived in Jezira Bohtan, he sees his own ring on Zin's hand and remembers the "dream".	HR-1 ZK-2

Figure 6a. Displaced Elements.

Motif Chart #	Normal attestation	Element of Intersection	Displaced Element	Version
C.III.	Zin #2 tries to trick Mem into believing that she is Zin #1; in some versions she evens upbraids him for not remembering her.	Mistaking Zin #2 for Zin #1.	Mem insists that Melek Reyhan (=Zin #2), whom he meets at the river at the entrance to Jedra Bohian, is Zin #1, although she denies it. He is upset that she does not remember him.	OM
D.I.C.	Qeretajdin's wife hits a messenger over the head with a ladle for having brought an undesired message.	Qeretajdin's wife hits a man on the head with an object.	Qeretajdin's wife (Lady Ereb) takes her shoe and hits Qeretajdin over the head with it, for sending her to test Mem's honor; she is angry with Qeretajdin for not trusting Mem from the beginning.	ZK-2
D.II.A.	While Mem, Qeretajdin, and his brothers sit on the balcony, Zin #1 comes by with a caravan of pots and pans, on her way to the fountain to wash them. Mem says that he wants to collect a tax from the caravan: i.e., he wants to ambush the caravan, a common practice, reminiscent of the eskiya (brigand) tradition.	ambush + Mem (in the normal scenario Mem is the ambusher, but in GNa, he is the ambushee)	Mem, Qeretajdin and his brothers sit on the balcony; Mem must perform two proof tasks: a) he must go get the stored grain from the town of Sakhan; and b) he must bring a gold piece from Zin #1 as proof that she wants to marry him. Mem performs task a) first, and is ambushed on the way by men hiding, and kills off all his assailants but three, who turn out to be Qeretajdin and his brothers.	GNa
D.III.B.	Mem pretends to be ill when Mir Sévdir calls all able-bodied mem to go out hunting.	illness, real or feigned, prevents Mem from going hunting.	Mem's horse (Bor) is ill, so Mem cannot go on hunt; in addition, on the morning of the hunt, Mem too says that he is ill.	FK-1
D.V.A.	As soon as Qeretajdin sees Zin #1's braids sticking out from under Mem's cloak, he understands what has happened, and what he must do to protect Mem and Zin #1.	Braids of Zin #1's hair symbolize her relationship with Mem.	Bakko catches Sittilye Zin as she leaves a tryst with Mämme Ala. As she runs up the stairs, he catches her, takes out a scissors and cuts off a piece of one of her braids, and later shows the hair to Mir Sévdir as proof of her relationship with Mämme Ala.	HR-1
*	Either Mem shows Qeretajdin Zin #1's braids from behind his cloak, or Qeretajdin notices them himself.	X shows Zin #1's braids to Y.	While Mem is hiding Zin #1 behind his coat, Beko Awan shows her braids, which are sticking out from behind Mem, to Mir Sévdir.	FK-2

Figure 6a. Displaced Elements.

Motif Chart #	Normal attestation	Element of Intersection	Displaced Element	Version
D.VIII. B.	A verbal duel or a contest in which each male must disclose the identity of his beloved. Beko Awan recites improvised verse, announcing it that Mem's beloved is a swarthy Arab girl who sells yoghurt in the marketplace.	Verbal duel in which Mem's beloved is revealed due to Beko Awan's treachery.	Mem (sarcastically) claims that his beloved is a swarthy girl ('as black as ink') who sells yoghurt in the marketplace, and Beko Awan replies: "Why don't you say your beloved is Zin?"	PS

Figure 6a. Displaced Elements.

Analysis: Is Mem a Hero?

It is generally thought that Mem is the hero of the story. In fact, a closer look suggests that in fact much of Mem's behavior is unheroic, if not cowardly¹. Mem is physically very beautiful. It is stated on numerous occasions throughout the various versions on which this study is based that whoever gazed on Mem was bedazzled by his looks. Here are but a few examples:

From Memê Ala's face red roses rained.
 On one day among the days
 Two angels made a bet in heaven,
 One said Zîn is more beautiful, the other said Mem is.
 (PS, p. 71)

May the universe be damned, Memê Ala is very handsome.
 (PS, p. 74)
 [Mir Zeidin] said, "I want you to give me your friend, (=Mem)
 I have been smitten with love for him,
 I want him to bear my tobacco pouch and pipe,
 To always stay by me."
 (PS, p. 76)

The sheikhs and wisemen without exception gladly came to the
 diwan for Memê,
 Due to Memê's beauty, nobody could tell [him apart from] the sun
 and the moon.
 The people of Jezira Botan exclaimed, "This is the son of the king of
 the Mughribis!"
 (LC-1, p. 421. 272)

The eldest sister says to the youngest one:
 "By God, Sister, are Kakeh Mem's cheeks more radiant, or are
 lamps and lighthouses?"

The eldest sister asks her sisters.
 The middle sister speaks thus:
 "From [God's] throne to the chairs [of men],
 From bulls down to fish
 I have searched the whole world

¹I would like to thank my colleague Shayee Khanaka for planting the seeds of this idea. I later discovered that Roger Lescot had come to a similar conclusion many years earlier: moreover, according to him, a major difference between the oral versions of the romance and Eñmedî Xanî's literary version is that in the latter, Mem has "a very lofty soul, and his behavior is not stained by base acts." See his "Introduction" in: Textes Kurdes, Vol. 2: Memê Alan (Beyrouth : Institut Français de Damas, 1942), p. xx.

I have not seen anyone with beauty like Kakeh Meml'sl."
(OM, p. 26b)

Near the window Mem, son of Al-pasha, was sleeping. Mem was handsome, Mem was a hero. Mem was the son of the master of the land of Mukhurzemîn. ... The doves sit on a tree and look in the window, admiring Mem. The younger dove says to the older one, "Sister, there isn't another Adonis like Mem in the world, nor a youth more beautiful than Mem.

(EP-2, p. 98)

Although Mem's looks are beautiful, his actions are a different matter. In most versions the father, Al-pasha, begs and pleads with Mem, his only son, not to leave the kingdom without an heir to the throne, but Mem disregards his father's wishes and rides off in search of Zîn and her city, Jezîra Bohtan. In some versions, Mem goes so far as to say some downright disrespectful things to his old father:

"Mem, my son, don't be disrespectful.
Don't leave the city of Mikhurzemîn, O hope of my old age,
I'll give you five hundred ladies and maidservants."

Mem said:

"Father, what would I do with this house, this land,
I won't sit with you now and deliberate,
I won't drink a cup of coffee or sherbet,
Our relationship is over till the Day of Judgment."
(EP-1, ¶18, p. 189)

"Now my relationship [lit. "sonhood"] to you is null and void."
(ZK-1, p. 20)

In ZK-3, Mem speaks very unkindly to his paternal aunt:

Mem says, "Auntie, it cannot be so,
I have wandered the four corners of the globe, its countries
and towns, a slut more slutty than you is not to be found."
(ZK-3, p.96)

According to Middle Eastern values, Mem's behavior is unacceptable. One's elders are to be respected and obeyed, not abandoned and disowned. To quote Alan Dundes,

one finds that in past-oriented societies individuals are measured in terms of age and how much *past* experience they have. The older they are, the wiser they are thought to be and the more respect they deserve. Children take pride in their parents' achievements and boast of their ancestors.²

E. W. Lane reports that

...children... in general ... feel and manifest a most profound and praiseworthy respect for their parents. Disobedience to parents is considered by the Muslims as one of the greatest of sins, and classed, in point of heinousness, with six other sins, which are idolatry, murder, falsely accusing modest women of adultery, wasting the property of orphans, taking usury, and desertion in an expedition against infidels. An undutiful child is very seldom heard of.³

According to this logic, Mem's turning his back on his parents and upon his past is an unthinkable action, even a sin. In the case of his aunt in ZK-3, Mem even commits an additional offense, by falsely accusing her of adultery, calling her a slut [qalt'ax]. And yet, in spite of all this, Mem is considered a hero. Or is he?

Mem's horse, Bor, speaks to Mem, telling him that the chains that Al-pasha had placed on his [=Bor's] feet in order to prevent Mem from riding off, are still there. Although only a fabulous horse could jump over a city wall with its legs in

²Thinking Ahead: A Folkloristic Reflection of the Future Orientation in American Worldview," in: *Interpreting Folklore* (Bloomington, Ind. : Indiana University Press, c1980), p. 81.

³Edward William Lane. *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians : Written in Egypt during the Years 1833-1835* (The Hague & London : East-West Publications ; Cairo, Egypt : Livres de France, c1895, 1978), 62.

chains, Mem's failure to notice the discomfort of his horse is not in keeping with the actions of a hero:

"Come my Mem, you crazy dandy,
For three nights, three days you
Have been urging me on, like a bird.
It never occurred to you that the chains were eating into
Bor's legs."

(EP-1, ¶23, p. 190)

Bor said, "Hey, my beloved Mem, my boy,
You poor thing, there is no sense in your head,
For several days now you have been jabbing me with spur after spur,
Did you ever think 'The chains and shackles have cut my Bor's legs?'"

(ZK-1, p. 51)

Bor speaks to Mem, he says, "My dandy Mem, you keep
lashing me with your whip, you never think how your Bor is
doing."

(FK-2, p. 297)

Bor said, "Mem, you've been riding me for three days
now,
Tomorrow it will be four full days.
Don't you ever think that Bor's legs are in chains and
shackles,
The shackles and chains have eaten into his legs?
Enough riding me with spurs on thighs!
Anyone else would undo Bor's saddle
Three or four times a day.

.....
My Mem, you're a fine lad,
[But] you're treating me like an Arab or Persian,
Cut the chains and shackles from my legs already!

.....
Mem, you're a light-headed boy,
You don't stay in one place,
The chains and shackles have cut through your Bor's
legs to the bone."

(FK-1, p.267-8)

Apparently Mem has a tendency to be thoughtless when it comes to others:
disparaging side comments to that effect are made to him consistently: "You crazy

dandy" (EP-1); "You poor thing, there is no sense in your head" (ZK-1); "Anyone else would undo Bor's saddle / Three or four times a day", "You're treating me like an Arab or Persian", "You're a light-headed boy" (FK-1). These are not the sorts of comments one generally makes about someone whom one admires. Moreover, the formulaic expression "Don't you ever think that Bor's legs are in chains and shackles" and its paraphrases are ubiquitous. In ZK-1, not only Bor, but Al-pasha also speaks in the same vein:

Al-pasha said, "Hey, my beloved Mem, my son,
Is there no sense in your head at all,
Don't you [ever] think 'My mother is elderly, my father is old?'
To whom can I hope to leave my throne and crown of gold?"
(ZK-1, p. 50)

In one version (FK-1), albeit at a later point in the story, even Zîn rebukes Mem in this fashion:

"My dandy Mem what a crazy boy you are,
Have you no sense in your head?
Why have you stayed [behind] today from the mîr's hunt?"
(FK-1, p. 278b)

Because of Mem's irreverent behavior, in many versions Al-pasha curses him, and predicts that his journey will be ill-fated (HM; ZK-2; ZK-3). In OM, it is even stated that Mem's trip failed because of this:

"...because of my parents' cries of despair, my goal remains
unachieved."
(OM, p. 77)

Similarly, in ZK-2, because Mem frightens a man on his way to Jezira Bohtan, he falls out of favor with God:

"Porter, is Jizîra Bota near or far, how do you see it?"
 The porter said to him, "Young man, Jizîra Bota is very far."
 When he said that, Memê was very disappointed,
 And said, "How, if I'm a year's distance away, did I come here in
 one hour?"
 Memê drew his sword from its sheath,
 Held the sword to the porter's neck,
 The porter turned pale with fear,
 Then Memê fell out of favor with God.⁴ (ZK-2, p. 75)

Once Mem has arrived in Jezîra Bohtan, there are more examples of Mem's less than heroic behavior. The emir of Jezîra announces a hunting expedition, to which he invites all the able-bodied men of the kingdom, together with Mem, the guest of honor. In some versions, Mem malingers so that he can stay behind (or come back early) and be alone with Zîn (SHa-2; GNa; FK-1; MC-1; HM); in others, the plot is hatched by Zîn, and he agrees to play along (OM; SHa-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1). In any case, the implications of this in a Middle Eastern context are clear: hunting is a manly activity, and any male who does not engage in it is considered less than a man. In several versions it is stated that the emir, usually at the suggestion of the villain Beko Awan, wants to test out Mem's manliness:

(249) He [=Beko Awan] said, "It has been several days since Mâmme Ala came to Qara Tajdîn; let's go tell them that Qara Tajdîn and Mâmme Ala should mount their horses, and your and I also will go riding for a while, [we'll go] hunting. (250) We'll see if he is good at riding or not!" [Mîr Zeidîn] said, "Go tell them!"
 (HR-1, p. 280)

Beko says, "No, Qeretajdîn, we were just testing Mem's manliness."

(ZK-3, p. 109)

⁴ lit. "Then God took good luck and good fortune away from Memê." This is as a punishment for Memê's unnecessarily frightening the porter.

In FK-1, Mem's skill as a hunter has a special significance:

The mîr thought a little, then said, "... [T]omorrow I will sound the alarm, so that the *jincîs*⁵ of Jizra come and gather. I will send them all out hunting. Let Mem come also: if Mem can hunt with the men, we will give Zîn to him, otherwise it is too bad."

(FK-1, p. 277)

Whereas in epics the exploits of the hero in battle, hunting, and riding are a major part of the narrative, in this story -- which belongs to a different genre, the romance -- the main character no sooner sets out on a hunting expedition, than he turns back because of a headache⁶. When seen in these terms, Mem's behavior is almost comical.

After Mem gets out of going hunting with the other men, he comes back and has a tryst with Zîn in the emir's diwan (PN; PS; HM; OM; ZK-3; ZK-2; MC-1; LC-1; HR-1; HR-2) or in his garden (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1). The hunting expedition is cut short unexpectedly, and without any warning the emir and his entourage return, and are about to catch Mem and Zîn in flagrante delicto. To risk getting caught would mean total disgrace, in view of Middle-Eastern values regarding extramarital sex. Consequently Mem, hardly a master of discretion, hides Zîn behind his back, and drapes his cloak over her. When the emir enters, it is common practice for everyone to stand up out of respect for him. However, if Mem

⁵According to Kurdoev, *cindî* means 'well-built,' 'of fine physique,' 'stately,' 'well-proportioned,' in speaking of young men; in speaking of a young woman, it can also mean 'beautiful,' 'shapely'. Rather than translate it as 'fine fellows' or some such tiresome cliché, I have left it untranslated.

⁶It should be noted that many versions have an additional hunting scene when Mem is first approaching Jezra of Bohtan (C.II.B.1.a-c: FK-1; ZK-1; FK-2; EP-1). In that hunt Mem outdoes Qeretajdîn, which makes the latter angry at first. In any case, Mem does prove himself at hunting in those versions.

were to stand up, everyone would be able to see that Zîn was hiding behind him, so he remains seated, once again using the excuse that he doesn't feel well. Mem's failure to act respectfully incurs the wrath of the emir (SHa-1; SHa-2; FK-1; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1; ZK-2), who up to then has been well disposed towards him.

This episode is ironic because when the emir first laid eyes on Mem, earlier in the story, Mem's appearance was so imposing that the emir involuntarily stood up when Mem entered his presence. This is a departure from the normal procedure, and it implies that Mem is not the emir's inferior.⁷ The emir himself denies that he stood up before Mem, unable to believe that he could have done such a thing. The following is a typical telling of this episode:

Qeretajdîn says to the mîr, "Your guest is such a guest that when he comes in you will stand up before [him], believe it or not."

The mîr says, "No." he says, "Yes." They bet on it [then and] there.

The mîr sends for his guest. ... Mem sticks his hand in his pocket and scatters gold coins [about], dismounting before the mîr's diwan, entering into the diwan. The mîr stands up, [and] Qeretajdîn throws a handkerchief under the mîr; everyone is seated, including the mîr.

A minute later they have a meal.

After the meal Qeretajdîn says, "Mîr, I have won the bet." The mîr does not believe [him]:

Qeretajdîn lifts up the mîr's knee,
Laughingly picks up the handkerchief,
The mîr is struck speechless.

(FK-2, p. 299-300)

At a later point in the story, Qeretajdîn and his brothers are sent on a mission, either to do battle for the emir, or to collect taxes from a rebellious tribe. The driving force behind this is the villainous Beko Awan, who wants Qeretajdîn

⁷Another interpretation of this episode will be presented later on.

out of the way so that Mem can be disposed of. Mem's accompanying Qeretajdîn on his campaign is rarely even entertained as a possibility⁸. Therefore, once again Mem is excluded from a manly pursuit. In Qeretajdîn's absence, Mem and the emir play a game: usually chess, although other versions have archery (EP-2) or cards (ZK-3; HR-2) instead. Until Mem lays eyes on Zîn, he is the winner. However, once he catches sight of Zîn, who is watching from above, all sense leaves him, and he is beaten by the emir, as a result of which he is thrown into the dungeon, where he eventually perishes. For a limited time, in the lesser sphere of board games and the like (chess is, after all, a battle in miniature), Mem is victorious. He is, at best, a lesser hero.

Although Mem's external appearance makes others treat him royally, he does not return the favor. Even after he is dead, Qeretajdîn and his brothers, who are not yet aware of what has happened, are annoyed that Mem has not come out to greet them upon their return. One of them rebukes him, while another stands up for him, as follows:

Qeretajdîn was nearing the city with his troops.
He said, "Brothers, see how ill-mannered Mem is, he has not come out to greet us." Efin said, "Brother, I fear that all is not well with Mem, otherwise he would have come."
(FK-1, p. 291)

When Qeretajdin and his brothers neared the city, Chekan said, "O brothers, see how ignoble our brother Mem has turned out to be, he has heard that we are coming, but he can't tear himself away from Zîn's side to come out to greet us." Qeretajdin said, "O brothers, something has happened to Mem, my heart fears that Mem may not be well, I don't believe that he could be so ignoble."
(ZK-1, p. 64)

⁸In OM, Zîn is led to believe that Mem has marched off to battle as one of Qeretajdîn's commanders, when in fact he has been thrown into a dungeon.

The wording of the last line of the latter quote, if read carefully, implies that 'he is ignoble, but not that ignoble!'⁹ Even those who most love Mem -- be it his father, his horse, his beloved Zîn, or his blood brother Qeretaidîn -- recognize that he lacks certain good (read: manly) qualities. In spite of his faults, Mem is considered the hero of the story. How can someone act as irreverently as Mem does and still come out smelling like a rose?

If we were to take a literalist approach to folklore, seeing M&Z as an accurate reflection of the Kurdish way of life,¹⁰ Mem's behavior would stick out like a sore thumb. However, in a very important article on the functions of folklore, the late folklorist William R. Bascom states that

the basic paradox of folklore, [is] that while it plays a vital role in transmitting and maintaining the institutions of a culture and in forcing the individual to conform to them, at the same time it provides socially approved outlets for the repressions which these same institutions impose upon him.¹¹

In other words, through folklore, the frustrations of the folk are addressed: things that they can never do in reality, they can derive vicarious enjoyment from

⁹The original Kurdish also bears this out. For "I don't believe that he could be so ignoble," the Kurdish is "bawar nakim, wekî aqas bême'rfet be."

¹⁰B. Nikitine's analysis of version OM takes this approach. See his "Essai de classification de folklore à l'aide d'un inventaire social-économique," in: XVI^e Congrès international d'anthropologie et d'archéologie préhistorique : VI^e assemblée générale de l'Institut international d'anthropologie, Bruxelles 1-8 septembre 1935 (Bruxelles : [Imprimerie médicale et scientifique], 1936), v. 2, pp. 1000-1012.

¹¹"Four Functions of Folklore," Journal of American Folklore, 67 (1954), p. 349; reprinted in: Alan Dundes (ed.), The Study of Folklore (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, c1965), p. 298.

hearing about in a folktale or a ballad. At the same time, the same folktale or ballad offers tacit recognition of the rituals and institutions of the culture¹².

If we apply this logic to M&Z, we can see Mem's disrespectful behavior as providing an outlet on many levels for the Kurdish peasants who constituted the traditional audience for the story. Although such peasants were rarely free to talk back to their feudal lord (ağa) or give him a swift kick in the pants when he really deserved it, by hearing about the adventures of a character like Mem, who could cause a judge and a mufti to go blind and lame (in ZK-2), or who could fail to rise when the emir entered the room without being punished for doing so (in all versions), the audience could vicariously enjoy hearing about what they themselves could not risk doing in real life, namely to act disrespectfully towards authority figures.

At the same time, Mem's failure to rise before the emir when the latter entered the room would not have been a memorable event if it did not contain an action which was in flagrant violation of societal norms. While hearing of this provided an outlet through which the common folk could vent their frustrations at being on the low end of an oppressive authoritarian hierarchy, it also reinforced the idea that the emir was an authority figure, and that as such one was normally obligated to rise out of respect for him when he entered the room.

On another level, the story may be seen as the revolt of a young man against the authority of his father.¹³ In this case, the ability of Mem to choose his own wife without being subject to the approval of his father and other authority figures, and

¹²from which very culture there is a need to escape into fantasy!

¹³This has been discussed in Chapter Three, as an idea suggested by İlhan Başgöz in his structural typology of the Turkish halk hikâyesi.

to be sexually active with her,¹⁴ as well as his ability to go off and live in a place far from his father's residence, would make him an appealing figure in the eyes of those young Kurdish men¹⁵ who did not share his freedom of movement. Mem's impertinent comment to his paternal aunt – his father's sister – can also be explained in this way. On the other hand, Mem's initial success in rebelling against his father's wishes underlined the fact that normally one's father's wishes had to be obeyed without question.¹⁶

Seen in this light, whether the authority being flouted was that of the ruler or that of the father¹⁷, the more the rebellious young protagonist could get away with, the more he was considered a hero. This would reconcile the apparent paradox of Mem's irreverent behavior with his status as a hero.

Whereas in spite of Mem's unheroic behavior he is still hailed as a hero, there is another character in the story whose behavior is exemplary in every way. I would like to suggest that whereas Mem is unquestionably the protagonist, it is Qeretajdîn who is the true hero of the story of Mem û Zîn. In the sources consulted¹⁸, neither a definition nor a complete inventory of ideal heroic qualities

¹⁴Although there are no graphic descriptions of sexual activity between Mem and Zîn, enough things that are unheard of in everyday life appear, such as their waking up in each other's arms when they first meet, that the rest is left to the imagination.

¹⁵or older Kurdish men remembering when they were young.

¹⁶Perhaps the fact that Mem's undertaking eventually fails may be explained by this this is certainly the case in DM, where Mem says "... because of my parents' cries of despair, my goal remains unachieved."

¹⁷Al-Pasha is both at once.

¹⁸Lila Abu-Lughod. Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society (Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, c1986), p. 86 ff., 103; the various essays in Jean G. Peristiany. Honour and Shame: the Values of Mediterranean Society (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, c1966), 265 p.

was forthcoming.¹⁹ However, Yohanan Friedman presents the following concise listing of the ideal moral qualities of Bedouin society embodied in the Arabic term *murū'ah* (or *murūwah*): bravery in battle, self-restraint in times of crisis, generosity and hospitality, protecting the weak, avenging murder, being loyal, and sticking by one's word.²⁰ In Hans Wehr's Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, *murū'ah* is defined as:

the ideal of manhood, comprising all knightly virtues, esp., manliness, valor, chivalry, generosity, sense of honor.²¹

These two inventories dealing with Bedouin Arab society closely parallel the manly traits embodied in *Qeretajdīn*, namely: enjoying good reputation, and being a hunter, warrior, protector, hospitable, ready to make sacrifices, zealous of women's honor, and peacemaker.²²

Whereas many people call Mem irresponsible or light-headed, *Qeretajdīn* is a well-respected member of his community, both admired and feared by the emir of Jezira Bohtan. The following passages indicate how *Qeretajdīn* [and his brothers] are depicted in M&Z:

¹⁹Abu-Lughod has the following to say on the matter: "The honor code is, despite (or perhaps because of) the tremendous amount of anthropological attention devoted to it in studies of both Christian and Muslim circum-Mediterranean cultures, strangely difficult to define." See *ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁰Yohanan Friedmann. "התקופה הטרום-אסלאמית" [Pre-Islamic Times] in: Hava Lazarus Yafeh. Perakim be-toldot ha-'Arvim vaha-Islam פרקים בתולדות הערבים והאסלאם - Studies in the History of the Arabs and Islam (Tel-Aviv : Reshafim, 1972), p. 20.

²¹(Ithaca, N.Y. : Spoken Language Services, c1976), p. 902.

²²If Mem's behavior is typical for a folk romance, perhaps *Qeretajdīn*'s should be seen as harking back to the values typified in the epic.

(181) If you're looking for a man who keeps his word, who is a perfect gentleman in his own house, who would sooner sacrifice his head than break his word, go to the house of Qara Tajdîn! (HR-1, p. 274)

Since the might of the three brothers was great in the land of Jizir, mîr Sêvdîn had given his eldest daughter Perî khatûn to Qeretajdîn, in recognition of their prestige and bravery. Since their reputations preceded them, mîr Sêvdîn promised Zîn to Chekan. (ZK-1, p. 46)

Beko said to Memê, "Memê, if you are looking for bravery and justice, go to Qeretajdîn's house ..." (ZK-2, p. 76)

"...if you are looking for honor and valor, go to Qeretajdîn's house."
(ZK-3, p. 101)

In many versions (GNa; FK-1; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1; ZK-2), Qeretajdîn is seen hunting twice: once when Mem first arrives in Jezira Bohtan [C.II.B. in motif chart], and the second time when the emir invites all the able-bodied men in the kingdom, including Mem (who declines the offer), to go out hunting with him [D.III. in motif chart]. Although in the first instance Mem generally manages to intercept and successfully kill the gazelle that Qeretajdîn is unsuccessfully pursuing, Mem's behavior is seen as inappropriate rather than manly. In any case, Qeretajdîn actively pursues hunting as a pastime, whereas Mem tries to avoid it.²³

Qeretajdîn's hospitality is a major theme in M&Z. In all but four versions (FK-2; PN; HM; HR-2), Mem is his guest²⁴. Qeretajdîn and his wife are depicted as the ideal hosts, taking Mem's horse to the stable, insisting that Mem be given the red carpet treatment by the emir, refraining from asking Mem the purpose of his visit

²³In all fairness to Mem, he goes hunting for recreation in the first part of OM (immediately prior to B.II.C. in the motif chart).

²⁴In MC-1, Mem stays with Qeretajdîn for seven days, then with Mîr Sêvdîn for seven days; in HR-2, he stays with Beko Awan first, then goes to stay with Mîr Sêvdîn.

until three days had passed, spending time entertaining Mem to the exclusion of their other duties, and so forth.

In several versions (FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; ZK-1), Qeretajdîn is so taken with Mem that he forgets to offer him food for three days: although this is generally unthinkable, it is excused in this case because Qeretajdîn was so fascinated by what Mem had to say that he lost track of time, thinking that only minutes had passed, when in fact several days had gone by. This might be seen as a black mark on Qeretajdîn's perfect record, but I prefer to see it as another example of the effect that Mem's beautiful appearance had on people.²⁵

Qeretajdîn is honor-bound as Mem's host to protect him from harm, which includes both covering up his faults, as when Mem and Zîn are almost caught redhanded in the emir's court (or garden) [D.IV. in motif chart], and providing for Mem's protection in his (=Qeretajdîn's) absence [D.VII.].

As Mem's host and protector, Qeretajdîn prevents his own brothers from fighting with Mem over the issue of Zîn's betrothal [D.II.]. Here Qeretajdîn appears both as a peacemaker and as someone willing to make selfless sacrifices. In an essay appearing in Peristiany's *Honour and Shame*, J.K. Campbell states that among the Sarakatsani, Greek shepherds in Epirus, "a father must always put the interests of his own family of marriage before the needs even of a brother."²⁶ This is basically the same value we see being played out at this point in the story of M&Z. If we adjust the term *family of marriage* to include Mem, because he and Qeretajdîn have sworn allegiance to each other by becoming *destbira* or blood-brothers, or if we see Zîn as belonging to Qeretajdîn's *family of marriage* because she is the sister of his

²⁵Cf. the beginning of this chapter.

²⁶"Honour and the Devil," in: Jean G. Peristiany. *Honour and Shame: the Values of Mediterranean Society*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 142.

wife, in either case it is clear that Qeretajdîn puts Mem's desire to marry Zîn before his own brother's betrothal to her.²⁷ This is considered honorable, manly behavior, exemplifying another quality of manliness cited by Campbell, namely "the ability to do something efficient and effective about the problems and dangers which surround him."²⁸

Later on in the story, Qeretajdîn makes an even greater sacrifice, when he instructs his servant to set his own house on fire, in order to create a diversion which will shift everyone's attention from Mem's failure to stand up before the emir to the burning house. In other versions (PS; FK-1; ZK-1; SHa-1; MC-1; EP-1; IOM), Qeretajdîn or his wife knowingly sacrifices their infant son by failing to rescue him from the flames; and in yet other versions (PN; HR-2), he sacrifices his wife instead of his child. In three versions (ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-2), he pursues his wife with their child strapped to her breast, with intent to kill, although it is not made clear whether or not he actually kills them.

There are many Middle Eastern parallels for such readiness to sacrifice a loved one. In the Old Testament, Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac (or Ishmael according to Islamic tradition) -- although he is saved from actually going through with it at the last minute -- is held up as an example of how great Abraham's faith was. In Arabic literary tradition, the pre-Islamic poet al-Samaw'al sacrifices his son to enemies surrounding his castle, rather than hand over to them the armor of another poet, Imru' al-Qays, which has been entrusted to him for safekeeping. In this case, al-Samaw'al's decision to preserve his honor at the expense of his son's life is held up as commendable. There is even a proverb which

²⁷In HR-1, Qeretajdîn nullifies his son's betrothal to Zîn, so that Mem can marry her.

²⁸Campbell. *ibid.*, p. 145.

commemorates such loyalty: awfâ min al-Samaw'al [أوفى من السموات] = more faithful than al-Samaw'al.²⁹

In the folktale known as "The Slandered Maiden" (AT 883A)³⁰ and in the Turkish tale from Dede Korkut's collection "Boğaç Han son of Dirse Han," the father is willing to sacrifice his child without asking any questions, when the child is in fact innocent and has been slandered. Whereas the examples with Abraham and al-Samaw'al exemplify honorable behavior, these tales show that sacrificing children may have a negative side as well.³¹

Nevertheless, in the context of M&Z, Qeretajdîn's sacrifice is another indication that it is his behavior that we are to see as exemplary. We have the fullest description of this aspect of Qeretajdîn's personality in ZK-2, where his proclamation is instrumental in coaxing Mem down off his horse:

Qeretajdîn said, "O guest, our fate is with God,
Come, dismount from your horse."
Memé the stranger neither spoke nor dismounted.
Qeretajdîn said, "Memé, my heart is heavy,
You are most welcome in my house,
From today on you and I are brothers of one mother and father,

²⁹see Reynold A. Nicholson. A Literary History of the Arabs (Cambridge, England, et al. : Cambridge University Press, c1907, 1969), pp. 84-85.

³⁰Summarized as follows: "A man and woman left their daughter with a priest while they made a pilgrimage. The priest attempted to seduce the girl, but she refused him. Angered, he wrote to the father, accusing the girl of grievous acts. The father hence commanded that she be put to death, but she escaped into the forest, where a prince found her and married her. With time the entire story came to light, and the priest was put to death. (Villa)." See: D.L. Ashliman. A Guide to Folktales in the English Language Based on the Aarne-Thompson Classification System (New York et al. : Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 178. Kurdish versions of this tale include: D.N. MacKenzie. "Kiça Hâkimî = The Prince's daughter," in: Kurdish Dialect Studies-II (London et al. : Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 308-317; M.B. Rudenko. Kurdskie Narodnye Skazki (Moskva : Glavnaia Redaktsiia Vostochnoi Literatury, 1970), #32, pp. 77-80; Vardah Shiloh. "ha-Ne'arah vaha-moreh," in: Sipure Zakho : mivfiar sipure Kurdistan [Stories of Zakho : a selection of stories from Kurdistan (in Hebrew)] (Yerushalayim : Nirim, 1986), pp. 46-56.

³¹Considering the difference in the way that Middle Eastern folklore values the sacrifice of loved ones, how would a Middle Eastern audience react to Western values regarding sacrifice of children as typified in the movie [and book] "Sophie's Choice"?

I am ready to sacrifice [my] two brothers, Cheko and Ereb, for you,
 I am ready to sacrifice my whole household for you,
 I am ready to sacrifice Lady Ereb – my honor in this place – for you.”
 Memê dismounted at these words and they walked together towards
 the hall. (ZK-2, p. 77)

Clearly, Mem perceives Qeretajdîn's words as an inducement to stay.
 According to Ayyubiyān,

This [act of] bravery and selflessness on the part of Qeretajdîn has
 become proverbial³² among the Kurds. The subject of sacrifice for
 the sake of one's guest and hospitality in the "cherikeh" of Mem and
 Zîn is one of the basic and most noteworthy points of the story
 [dastan].³³

In several versions (HM; HR-1; HR-2) Qeretajdîn is called *crazy* at this point
 in the story. In PS, he is even given the epithet *crazy(dîn)*, yielding the noun-plus-
 epithet formula *Qeretajdîne dîn*. In spite of his seemingly crazy behavior,
 Qeretajdîn is still held in high regard. Just as Mem is labeled a hero regardless of his
 anti-heroic behavior, by the same token Qeretajdîn's behavior is heroic despite his
 unflattering label.

Another manly trait of Qeretajdîn's is his reputation as a warrior. In ZK-1, it
 is stated that

Mîr Sêvdîn's diwan was served by Qeretajdîn, Chekan, and Efan. The
 three of them were brothers, and all three of them were like the lions of God.
 The fate of the land of Jezîr [46] was in their hands: whatever battles they
 participated in they would return from victorious and revered. (ZK-1, pp. 45-
 6)

³²=lit. "a saying [masal-i sâ'ir ماسال و مثال] and an idiom [zabân zad زبانه زد]

³³Ubayd Allāh Ayyūbiyān. Çirikey Mem û Zîn : Kurdî - Farsî [م و زین] (Tabriz :
 Chāpkhānah-i Shafaq, [1962]), p. 233, note 2.

After his house burns down, Qeretajdîn leaves Jezira Bohtan on a military venture. In some versions (OM; ZK-2; HR-1; MC-1), mîr Sêvdîn sends him and his brothers to collect taxes from a rebellious tribe; in GNa, ZK-2, and ZK-1, they go to collect taxes for the specific purpose of rebuilding Qeretajdîn's house. In other versions (SHa-1; SHa-2; EP-2; EP-1; FK-1), the three brothers go off to fight a battle with the enemy. In no case does Mem accompany them, although in OM Zîn is led to believe that he has. Nevertheless, before departing, Qeretajdîn makes provisions for Mem's protection in his absence: this is yet another example of his role as host and protector. In his absence Mem gets into trouble, which eventually leads to his death. This is not to be blamed on Qeretajdîn, whose honorable intentions are thwarted unbeknownst to him. When he returns, he avenges the death of Mem and Zîn by slicing off the villain Beko Awan's head, thus ending the story with a final act of manliness on the part of Qeretajdîn.

One last manly trait exhibited by Qeretajdîn is his zeal in protecting the honor of women. In ZK-2 and ZK-3, he has his wife adorn herself, then sends her to test Mem's fidelity, by having her attempt to seduce him. Only when Qeretajdîn learns that Mem has acted honorably is he convinced that Mem is trustworthy. In ZK-3, his wife merely reports to him how Mem acted:

When his Lady said this to Qeretajdîn, he said, "May Mem be praised. I know that you are a true brother." From then on Qeretajdîn was very well-disposed toward Mem. (ZK-3, p. 104)

However, in ZK-2 she upbraids her husband for not trusting Mem:

Saying to him, "What sort of crazy man are you?
Your guest has not yet tasted bread in your house, and you are testing his
honor!?"

Your guest is not a rogue, he's the son of kings."
 Then Qeretajdîn said, "Woman, testing has its uses in this world,
 I wanted to test my guest,
 And now he and I have become brothers from one mother and father,
 My house, my children are a pledge to Memê Alan." (ZK-2, p. 78)

Qeretajdîn, then, defines honorable behavior on the part of men by restraint in dealing with other men's women.³⁴ Another example of this is when Zîn sends a letter to Qeretajdîn with a boy who demands a kiss from her as payment [D.VII.B.] (HM; SHa-1; FK-1; ZK-3; ZK-2). Having no alternative, she submits to his demand, but writes in the letter what the boy's price was for delivering it. Qeretajdîn restores her honor by doing away with the boy on the way back.³⁵ Although this may seem devious by Western standards, judging from the last quote above and the following excerpts from ZK-2 and ZK-3, it is not perceived as such by those familiar with the culture:

She handed the letter to the boy and said, "I beg you and the Lord supreme,
 Deliver this letter to Qeretajdîn."
 The young man said, "Girl, how lovely you are in my eyes,
 Give me a kiss, as payment for delivering the letter."
 Lady Zîn opened the letter and wrote in it some more,
 Instructing Qeretajdîn as follows:
 "When you come, bring this boy with you,
 And on the way sever his head from his body,
 [88] I have promised him, that when he returns here safely, he can have a
 kiss from me before your eyes,
 Which would wipe Memê Alan's honor off the face of the earth."
 She handed the young man the letter and said, "Go and come back, then you
 will have earned a kiss."
 The boy, delighted, hurried off,
 Reached the tent of the chief,
 And delivered the letter to Qeretajdîn.

³⁴Notice that this is not the case with regard to Mem and Zîn. I can adduce two reasons to explain this: 1) Hospitality demands that the host (Qeretajdîn) not question the doings of his guest (Mem) – provided that his own wife is not the object the guest's attention; 2) Since God and fate have decreed that Mem and Zîn are meant for each other, Qeretajdîn is aligned with the supernatural in supporting their union.

³⁵Cf. Motif K978. Uriah letter. Man carries written order for his own execution.

Qeretajdîn read the letter,
 Quickly mounted his horse, left off collecting money,
 Unaware of anything else.
 Qeretajdîn said, "Young man, you come with me, hurry up!"
 The boy, delighted, led the way, and off they sped.
 When they were far from the tent, Qeretajdîn stopped the boy in a deep
 ravine,
 Drew his sword from its sheath,
 And struck the boy with it, severing his head from his body. (ZK-2, pp. 87-8)

At the bottom of the letter she wrote, "For Mem's sake I was forced to promise the baldhead that he could kiss me once upon delivering the letter. Otherwise, he would not have delivered it. I trust that you won't let the baldhead return alive." She handed the letter over to the baldhead, and said, to him, [115] "Take the letter quickly; when you come back, I'll let you kiss me once." When the baldhead picked up the letter, he was so happy, he didn't know what to do. He said, "I'll go and come back, then I'll get to kiss Zîn once." Out of joy, he put it now here, now there.

The baldhead made the three to four day trip to the Beraz tribe in a little more than a day, stood before Qeretajdîn, handed him the letter and saluted him, standing in a respectful position. When Qeretajdîn read the letter [and learned] that Mem was in dire straits, and that if they reached him [perhaps they could save him], he summoned Cheko, E'rif, and Bengîn and said, "Tell the boys to pull up the tent stakes, to forget about monetary considerations; let's go try to reach Mem."

Cheko and E'rif pull up the tent stakes together with their servant boys, and they set out. They reach a depression [in the earth]; the baldhead, elated, accompanies them on foot. When Qeretajdîn remembers the situation of the baldhead and Zîn, he draws his sword and swings it at the baldhead's neck: his head falls to one side, his body to the other; and they ride on. (ZK-3, pp. 114-5)

Although one of the functions of folklore is to flout the morals of society, the story of M&Z does not lack moral standards, as Qeretajdîn's manly qualities clearly demonstrate. Whereas Mem represents deviation from societal norms, Qeretajdîn upholds them, by representing the respectable side of the moral standards of society.

Likewise, the villain Beko Awan stands for the fanatical side of morality,

guarding honor like a watchdog. He is the self-appointed guardian of *xîret*³⁶ and *namûs*³⁷. Consider the following passages:

Mîr Zêydîn and Beko were speaking together,
Beko said to Mîr Zêydîn, "My mîr,
Your sister is our honor [namûs],
Qeretajdîn's guest is not one of us,
I can't accept this way, it is of no use." (ZK-2, p. 80)

{71} Bekir said, "My mîr, I am master of my virtue [xîret]. What I say is true. As long as Zîn is in your house, she is your honor [namûs]. Once she has gone to [live in] Qeretajdîn's house, what they do is their business. (EP-1, p. 202)

...Bekir-Awan, brother of Zîn the sorceress, understood Mem's intention. While they were hunting, Bekir-Awan went to the mir and said, "My mir, may we ourselves and our names be erased!"

Mir-Sevdin said, "What are you saying, what sort of talk is this?"

Bekir-Awan replied, "My mir, Mem has tricked you, he has gone with Zîn to the Turkish garden. Both your name and ours have fallen. Who knows who this Mem is? Where is this land (107) Mukhurzemin? Neither you nor I know. For all we know, Mem could be the son of a calfherd or the son of a lambherd. What do we know?" (EP-2, pp. 106-7)

In all three examples, Beko Awan uses the protection of the family honor as an excuse to turn the emir against Mem. In real life, such arguments about *namûs*

³⁶ = lit. "Zeal, Fervor, Striving, Aspiration." This is from Arabic *ghayrah* غيرة, borrowed into Persian as *ghayrat* غیبرت. It can also mean "jealousy", and is used for "sense of honor" or "virtue", particularly vis-à-vis the behavior of the women of one's family, who in a shame society are perceived as representing the family's honor.

³⁷This is connected with the concept of a woman's honor, known as *'ird* عرض in Arabic, and *nâmûs* ناموس in Persian, Turkish and Kurdish (although the word *nâmûs*, ultimately derived from Greek *nomos*, occurs in Arabic also). Cf. Jean G. Peristiany. *Honour and Shame: the Values of Mediterranean Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); John Gulick. *The Middle East: An Anthropological Perspective* (Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear Publishing Co., c1976), pp. 209-211.

undoubtedly prevented many a Kurdish young man from marrying the girl he loved. Beko Awan represents the moral code that Mem is violating, yet the values are turned upside down. Beko is **qumst**³⁸ or **e'wan**³⁹, and Mem is the hero. Beko Awan styles himself an underdog, when in fact he is a bully, as illustrated in the following:

...Her father, Beko, is sitting at the window. When he sees his daughter coming home crying, he gets up and goes to meet her. He says, "My child, tell me what has happened to you!" His daughter replies, "What do you think happened, Father? That guest of Qeretajdin's whom you have betrothed me to took mîr Zêydîn's sister Zîn from me by force in the Mîr's Garden today." When Beko's daughter says this, he says, "My child, no harm done, it's not the first time the powerful have mistreated the poor; it's all right, I swear by God that I won't let them have what they want." (ZK-3, p. 106)

Mem is not really powerful, nor is Beko Awan really poor. However, in seeing himself as the victim, he can justify being the tormentor. He threatens people, using the "buzz word" honor [namûs] to justify his claims:

{84} Before Mem knew what happened, the mîr won this set too, and the chess board was taken away. They continued talking together as before the game.

Bekir said, "My mîr, why have you fallen silent about the bet you made? What are you going to do? You're not children! You played for a bet!"

The mîr said, "Bekir, we didn't mean only today, we will play again many times. Sometimes Mem will beat me, and sometimes I will beat Mem. Bets aren't necessary between us."

Bekir said, "But if Mem beat you at chess, he would be playing with your honor [namûs]. Would that be all right? In that case you would be without honor."

The mîr listened to Bekir, and threw Mem into a wooden dungeon.

{85} And Zîn, what did she do? She had a tunnel put in between the dungeon and her house. ...

³⁸Gossip, informer, Sneak, scandalmonger

³⁹Troublemaker, scheming

{86} Bekir went and saw it with his own eyes, then went to the mîr in his diwan and said, "My mîr, I said before that your sister had completely disregarded her honor [namûs], but you said that Bekir is a slanderer. Well this is what has happened!"

The mîr said, "Throw Mem into a stone dungeon!" (EP-1, p. 206)

In EP-1, the emir would not have gone through with the conditions that had been set before he and Mem started playing chess, namely that if Mem lost he would be thrown in prison, if not for Beko Awan's zealous threat about the loss of honor. Such behavior on Beko Awan's part is reminiscent of the fervor of religious fanatics. This may account for his role as villain, because Kurds tend to dislike religious zealots, seeing them as hypocrites. Several of the tales in Alexandre Jaba's Recueil de Notices et de Récits Kourdes⁴⁰ deal with such personages. Here are two examples:

First Story

They say that once a mullah and two unlettered men were travelling companions. As the three of them were going down the road, they came to the bank of a river, and undressed in order to cross the water. The mullah was in front, and the two unlettered men were behind him. No sooner had they entered the water when the mullah espied four goatskins full of butter, floating on the water headed in their direction. The mullah was the first to get to one of the goatskins and, holding it with his teeth, reached out with his right hand and caught hold of a second goatskin, and with his left hand reached for a third. The mullah's teeth and both hands were full: right in front of his companions he had snatched up three goatskins. There was one goatskin left, which the two companions took hold of. Even though the mullah was holding three goatskins,

⁴⁰(St.-Petersbourg: Eggers et Cie, 1860; repr. Amsterdam: APA - Philo Press, 1979),

he still wasn't satisfied, and he called to them, saying: "Hey, I have a share in that goatskin too!" Because of this, learned people and mullahs have a reputation among the Kurds for being greedy. [They always remember that] he took three goatskins and that still wasn't enough for him, he had to have the fourth one too.⁴¹

Second Story

Among the Kurds, the following exemplary tale is told: When the Prophet [Muhammad], peace be upon him (=PBUH), ascended to heaven, together with the angel Gabriel he went to see the marvels and wonders of the heavens. The Prophet, PBUH, encountered a large angel standing in an expectant position, who held suspended from his neck [by a strap] a huge drum, with a large stick in his hand. The Prophet, PBUH, asked, "What are those, and what job are you responsible for doing?" The angel answered, "O messenger of Allah, whenever one of the learned men gives charity or food to a poor man, it is my duty to hit this drum with this stick, so that all the angels in heaven may know of this act of charity." Then the Prophet, PBUH, asked the angel, "Since you have been appointed this task, how many times have you beat the drum?" The angel answered, "I am still waiting, but so far I have not beaten the drum even once." God knows it is still that way, i.e., the learned (mullahs) of all nations give little

⁴¹ibid., p. 20. My translation.

charity or help: they ask people to give generously to them, but they themselves give nothing to the needy.⁴²

Moreover, the aforementioned folktale AT 883A *The Innocent Slandered Maiden*, of which I have found three Kurdish versions so far⁴³, features a lecherous mullah who slanders an innocent maiden to her father, because she refuses to have sex with him.

Although Beko Awan is not himself a mullah, he feeds on false religiosity. When Mem, who is hiding Zîn behind his cloak, fails to stand up before Mîr Sêvdîn [D.IV.], in several versions Beko Awan interferes, making a big deal out of Mem's lack of respect. In SHa-1, he suggests that they all stand up and pray to God; in EP-1 and ZK-1, he suggests that Mem stand up and pray. It is noteworthy also that in ZK-1, when Qeretajdîn returns to Jezira Bohtan after Mem's death, "Beko went to the mosque, and he took all the copies of the Koran that there were in the mosque and piled them up before the door, so that Qeretajdin could not get in to do him harm." (ZK-1, p. 64)

Consequently, although the concepts of **namûs** and **xîret** are very well-entrenched in the Kurdish way of life, Beko Awan is the villain of M&Z largely because he is perceived as the guardian of these concepts. As a corollary to this, Mem is seen as the hero of the story largely because he violates these very tenets. As demonstrated above, Bascom's notion of the paradox inherent in folklore is very helpful in explaining why this is so.⁴⁴

⁴²*ibid.*, p. 21. My translation.

⁴³See note #29 above.

⁴⁴See note #10 above.

At this point I would like to introduce an alternative interpretation of Mem's behavior. Thus far we have shown that Mem is a hero precisely because of his unheroic or anti-heroic actions. In what follows, I will attempt to show that there is a feminine aspect to much of Mem's persona, which in a male-oriented society is considered unbecoming in a male. I would like to make it clear at the outset that I am attempting here to analyze this material according to the values of traditional Middle-Eastern societies: my personal opinion is irrelevant to -- and therefore absent from -- the ensuing discussion.

This feminine quality serves two seemingly contradictory ends, both diminishing Mem's heroic aspects and increasing his attractiveness. At the beginning of this chapter, it was asserted that Mem is very beautiful. Let us take another look at some of the passages describing his appearance:

From Memê Ala's face red roses rained.
 On one day among the days,
 Two angels made a bet in heaven,
 One said Zin is more beautiful, the other said Mem is. (PS, p. 71)

Due to Memê's beauty, nobody could tell [him apart from] the sun
 and the moon. (LC-1, p. 42 l. 272)

The eldest sister says to the youngest one:
 "By God, Sister, are Kakeh Mem's cheeks more radiant, or are
 lamps and lighthouses?" (OM, p. 26b)

The first line of PS above includes a traditional way of describing the beauty of a girl. Other examples from versions of a Turkish folktale from Erzurum include:
Gülende yüzünde güller açılsın = "When she laughs, may roses open on her

face"⁴⁵ ; **Ben o gızıma bir hediye verirem ki gülende güller açılsın, ayağının basdığı yerlerde çimenler bitsin** - "I will give this girl of mine a gift such that when she laughs roses will open up, wherever her foot steps meadows will grow"⁴⁶. The reference to roses is presumably a symbol of rosy cheeks, a sign of beauty.

The comparison of Mem's brightness to the sun, moon, and lamps in the second and third passages above, from LC-1 and OM respectively, brings to mind other expressions common in the languages of the Middle East for describing a woman's beauty. One expression compares the beauty of a woman to the radiance of the moon on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, when the moon is full. In Kurmanji, the expression is **Heyva çardehê**⁴⁷, literally "the moon of the fourteenth"; it is used as follows: **Riwê te ji heyva çardehê rewşentir e** = "Your face is brighter than the moon of the fourteenth". In Turkish, the equivalent expression is **ayın ondördü kadar güzel bir kız**, literally "a girl as beautiful as the moon's fourteen". In Colloquial Palestinian Arabic, according to Muhawi and Kanaana,

two important components ..., brightness (fairness of skin) and roundness (of face), convey the popular conception of beauty in Palestinian and Arab culture. In popular expression it might be said that the roundness of a beautiful girl's face resembles that of the moon ('alēhā dōrit hal-wijeh miṭl il-qamar), or that her face shines like the moon (wijeh-hā biẓwī miṭl il-qamar)⁴⁸

⁴⁵Bilge Seyidoğlu. Erzurum Halk Masalları üzerinde Araştırmalar: metinler ve açıklama (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi, 1975), p. 277.

⁴⁶*ibid.*, p. 285.

⁴⁷or **Hilva çardehê**

⁴⁸Ibrahim Muhawi and Sharif Kanaana. Speak BIRD, Speak Again : Palestinian Arab Folktales (Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, 1989), p. 60, note 1.

Other expressions which formulate a woman's beauty in terms of brightness include the following from HR-1, a Turoyo version of M&Z:

(7) She is so beautiful that you could call her a firefly (HR-1, p. 256)

and, from the Tale of Kamar al-Zaman in the Arabian Nights:

Hereat marvelled he with great marvel and he sat up and looked at what lay beside him; when he saw it to be a young lady like an union pearl, or a shining sun, or a dome seen from afar on a well-built wall; for she was five feet tall, bosomed high and rosy-cheeked...⁴⁹

Mem belongs to a category of beautiful males commonly found in folk literature, who are often described in terms of feminine characteristics. Other examples include Joseph (Yūsuf in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian, ûsib in Kurdish) in oral versions of the story Yusuf and Zulaikha, based on the story of Joseph in the Old Testament and sūrat Yūsuf in the Qur'ān; Narcissus; Ferhad of the Turkish and Persian romance Ferhad and Shirin; and Churilo Plenkovich, a character in the Russian byliny.

Joseph is pampered by his father, and is passive in situations where manliness would demand an active posture. When Joseph's brothers take him hunting, he does not participate in the hunting, but is rather thrown into a deep pit, a victim of his brothers' jealousy. When he is sold to a caravan heading for Egypt, he is bought and actively pursued by Zulaikha, a woman who is in love with him, whereas one would normally expect the man to pursue the woman. Joseph is

⁴⁹Richard F. Burton (tr.). The Arabian Nights : A Complete and Unabridged Selection, arranged by Bennett A. Cerf (Garden City, N.Y. : Blue Ribbon Books, 1941), p. 255.

uncommonly beautiful, the light emanating from him making it unnecessary to burn lights during the night. The women of Egypt cut their hands while peeling oranges, bedazzled by Joseph's beauty.

Narcissus, a well-known character in Greek mythology, is described as follows by Bulfinch:

He stooped down to drink, and saw his own image in the water; he thought it was some beautiful water-spirit living in the fountain. He stood gazing with admiration at those bright eyes, those locks curled like the locks of Bacchus or Apollo, the rounded cheeks, the ivory neck, the parted lips, and the glow of health and exercise over all. ... He pined away and died ... The nymphs ... prepared a funeral pile and would have burned the body, but it was nowhere to be found; but in its place a flower, purple within, and surrounded with white leaves, which bears the name and preserves the memory of Narcissus.⁵⁰

In colloquial English, the term *flower* refers to an effeminate man,⁵¹ as does also the word *pansy*.

In a Turkish chapbook edition of Ferhad and Shirin, Ferhad is described as follows:

Ferhad's beauty was not less than that of girls. Just as girls are as beautiful as the moon on the fourteenth [of the lunar month], so was Ferhad a full moon on the fifteenth of the month.

His cheek, redder than roses,
His lip, more golden than honey,
His eyes, half in a swoon,
His body, even more languid.⁵²

⁵⁰Thomas Bulfinch. *Bulfinch's Mythology* (New York : Avenel Books, c1978), p. 102-3.

⁵¹In one episode of the television series "All in the Family," Edith and Archie Bunker are discussing whether or not a particular friend of their daughter's is a *flower*.

⁵²Ferhad'ın güzelliği kızlardan aşağı değildi. Kızlar nasıl ayın ondördü kadar güzelse, Ferhad da ayın onbeşi kadar dolgun bir ay parçasıydı.

Yanağı, güllerden al, / Dudağı, ballardan bal, / Gözleri, yan baygın, / Vücudu, henüz aygın."

One might expect a depiction such as this to pertain to a girl rather than to a young man.

The character Churilo Plenkovich appears in Russian bylina. He is so beautiful with his yellow curls that a princess cuts her hand while slicing meat, bedazzled by Churilo's beauty -- similar to the motif mentioned in Joseph and Zulaikha --, and

As they gazed on Churilo's beauty
The nuns in their cells tore off their habits;
As they gazed on Churilo's beauty
The young girls uncovered themselves.
As they gazed on Churilo's beauty
The pretty lasses tore off their head-dresses.⁵³

As is the case in Joseph and Zulaikha, the young man's beauty drives women to become the active pursuers, assuming what is traditionally the male role. In Ferhad and Shirin, it is recounted that Shirin is descended from the Amazons, female warriors who used to go on raids in Anatolia and abduct young men, give them a temporary love potion, mate with them, and only let the female infants live, throwing the male ones off a steep cliff. When the female infants reached a certain age, they were taught to ride horses and use a sword; they cut off their breasts, to prevent them from getting in the way while wielding their weapons.⁵⁴

There are examples of the switching of stereotypical sexual roles in M&Z also. Mem is feminized when Zîn says, "Mem, I don't think I have come to you, for it is

in: Faruk Grtunca Ferhad ile Sirin (Istanbul : Saęlam Kitabevi, 1982), p. 8.

⁵³N.R. Chadwick. Russian Heroic Poetry (NY: Russell & Russell, c1932, 1964), pp. 99-100, verses 270-5.

⁵⁴Grtunca ibid., pp. 10-1.

men who always covet women" (FK-2, p. 293) [and cognate phrases]. The fact that Zîn comes to Mem's place first, rather than the other way around, and that Mem goes to live with her people, rather than the other way around, are actions which would be considered beneath a man in real life. Although we have seen above that these motifs may be seen as a combination of rebellion against one's father's authority and adolescent sexual fantasy, they also involve an unmasculine –and therefore shameful – stigma according to traditional Middle-Eastern values.

The Turks have a special term for a man who lives with his wife's family: *iç gūveyi*[i]si [= inside groom]. The fact that this is not a respected condition is reflected in the expression *iç gūveysinden hallice* [=lit. "in the condition of an *iç gūveysi* "] which means 'so-so,' 'comme ci comme ça,' 'not so great'; and in the saying *iç gūveyisi iç ağrısı* =lit. "an inside groom is an inside pain".

It could be argued that Mem's name has feminine overtones, since **memik** means 'breast'⁵⁵. Other feminine overtones can be gleaned from a comparative study of some of the motifs appearing in M&Z.

In OM and ZK-2, Mem is born to childless parents; they keep him in a dark room; one day he accidentally breaks the window with a bone from soup and sees sunlight for first time [A.2.b-c.]⁵⁶. There are three tale types in the Turkish tale-type index⁵⁷ which resemble this initial situation. They are EB Types 186, 187, and 188. The pertinent information is as follows:

⁵⁵The name Zîn could likewise be seen to have masculine overtones, since there are words meaning 'penis' beginning with z in Arabic (zubb) and Hebrew (zayin), although there is no Kurdish evidence to support this premise.

⁵⁶ZK-2 lacks the bone.

⁵⁷Wolfram Eberhard and Pertev Naili Boratav. *Typen türkischer Volksmärchen* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1953), pp. 213-8.

EB Type 186 Das Perlenzelt (İnci çadırı) = The Pearl Tent. III. Variants. ... a) childless parents beget a daughter from (by/through) an apple given to them by a dervish; they raise her in isolation from the world in a crystal palace. Once there is a bone in her food. The girl accidentally breaks a glass window with the bone, and sees the sun (daylight) for the first time; she flees, and falls in love with the prince of the pearl tent, through the descriptions of him she hears from other. Attestations: k) Ankara 48, 6 (Viranşehir); v) Altın Işık 41-48 (Diyarbakır?) - by Ziya Gökalp (1st ed. 1922, 2nd ed. 1942); w) Kars 2, 179 (Adana); x) Malatya 36-37 (Malatya);

EB Type 187 Der Kristallpalast (Billûr köşk) = The Crystal Palace. Motifs. 1. A king raises his only child, a daughter, isolated from the world in a crystal palace. 2. She realizes one day that there is a world outside, and builds herself a fabulous palace out of glass. 3. The prince of Yemen sees her in the distance; she falls in love [with him];

EB Type 188 Hüsnü Yusuf. III. Variants. 1. ... The girl ... was engendered by a dervish's apple. She breaks (cracks) a window of her crystal palace with a bone. ...

All three of these are identical with the cognate passage in OM, except that a daughter is born -- another piece of evidence for a feminine underpinning to the actions of Mem!

In FK-1, FK-2, and MC-1, Mem is supposed to throw an apple at the girl he wants to marry, during the party thrown for his benefit in his father's garden [B.II.C.]. The only motif in the Motif Index that resembles this is Motif H315. *Suitor test: apple thrown indicates princess's choice.* Once again the motif has feminine overtones, since no corresponding motif indicating a prince's choice is attested.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Obviously the fact that this motif featuring a male protagonist is missing from the Motif Index, while occurring in three versions of M&Z, strongly suggests that the Motif Index is in need of some updating. According to Alan Dundes, throwing the apple is a standard motif for both sexes (personal communication).

At the end of OM, after Mem is dead, his father comes to Jezira Bohtan and replaces him with a woman, Lady Astî:

Lady Astî dressed in black cloth [and] went [and] stood before Brahim Padishah, [And] said, "Padishah, Mem and Zîn are gone, all traces of my father's house have been erased."

Brahim Padishah embraced Lady Astî [and] said, "You are my daughter, I hereby put you in Kakeh Mem's place." (OM, p. 80)

Although a little further on Mem's father adopts Bengîneh as his son, replacing Mem with a woman is significant in light of the other evidence. It appears that many of the actions in which Mem is involved are associated with female characters when they occur in other contexts.

Let us now examine Mem's explicit behavior in the light of this evidence. The following is a list of Mem's main failings:

- 1) deserts parents [B.III.]
- 2) steals Zîn #1 from her fiancé Çekan [D.II.]
- 3) malingers, so can stay home from hunting expedition and have tryst with Zîn [D.III.B.]
- 4) violates norms by a rendez-vous with Zîn [D.III.D.]
- 5) does not pay mîr Sêvdîn his due respect by failing to rise, giving excuse that he is ill [D.IV.C.]

Of these failings, #3 and #5 are particularly suited to further the argument advanced above. Both in #3 and in #5, Mem claims to be sick as an excuse for not doing what is expected of him. While not specifically feminine, such actions are

certainly not gallant, nor do they constitute exemplary behavior to be followed by others. Such behavior conjurs up images of a spoiled child.

Mem's failure to rise in Mir Sêvdîn's presence may be considered symbolic impotence⁵⁹; likewise, at an earlier point in the story [D.I.G.], the mîr's unconscious rising when Mem comes in may be considered symbolic sexual attraction (erection). For those who are skeptical, consider the following quote from PS:

[Mir Zeidin] said, "I want you to give me your friend, (=Mem)
I have been smitten with love for him,
I want him to bear my tobacco pouch and pipe,
To always stay by me." (PS, p. 76)

In many versions it is explicitly stated that when the mîr first lays eyes on Mem, he is instantly smitten with him (PN; PS; OM; SHa-2; GNa; EP-2; EP-1; HR-2; ZK-1; MC-1); in a few more (FK-2; FK-1; ZK-3) it is implicit. The mîr offers him a valuable gift (GNa; EP-2; EP-1; FK-1; SHa-1; SHa-2): as we have seen above, in PS he wants Mem to be his personal tobacco and pipe bearer; in FK-1 he even offers Mem his own position as mîr. The mîr stands up before him in several versions (SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; FK-1), and Qeretajdîn later adduces a handkerchief from under where the mîr is sitting as proof that he did indeed stand up (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-3; ZK-1; FK-1). Hence, the gifts which the emir offers Mem point to the emir's undo attraction for him, replete with sexual overtones.

The gift that Mem accepts in most versions is a job as: cook (GNa), supervisor of the kitchen (SHa-2), cook in charge of serving coffee in the diwan (EP-1), chief of servants in charge of serving coffee in the diwan (FK-1), or servant or doorman

⁵⁹This idea was suggested to me by Professor Norman Mirsky, sociologist at the Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles, CA. At least in Western cultures, women do not rise when a man enters the room: if this is true for Kurdish culture as well, then this would be yet another example of Mem's feminization.

(*SHa-1). Other gifts are: a felt cloak (*EP-2), perhaps a literalizing of the expression *to confer on s.o. the k'urkê aspêjtê* (EP-1) = 'cloak of cooking', as a way of saying 'office of cook'; seat of honor in diwan, across from Mîr Sêvdîn (PS), tantamount to equal status with the mîr; position as leader of the hunt (OM). This latter gift is unusually masculine in character; in PS, Mem accepts the cushy seat of honor beside the emir, without having done anything to earn it. All the others contribute to the idea of Mem as belonging to the traditionally female realm of the kitchen, and the accompanying subservient role. According to traditional Mediterranean values, the home is the domain of women, while the outdoors is the domain of men. The Spanish have a proverb which accurately describes this attitude for the Middle East as well: *El hombre en la plaza, la mujer en la casa* = The man in the townsquare, the woman at home. Stanley Brandes discusses this dichotomy at length in his book *Metaphors of Masculinity*, dealing with a Spanish context, where he states that:

In Monteros, of course, a woman's place is in the home. ... Monteros men, in contrast, consider domesticity of whatever type to be inherently unmasculine. As men state regularly to me, the home is for sleeping or eating; otherwise, a man should be out working or spending time with his friends. No wonder, then, that overly persistent churchgoing men are accorded an aura of effeminacy, as if they were taking upon themselves more than the appropriate share of domestic responsibilities.⁶⁰

Seen in this light, Mem is willing both to settle for a position beneath his social standing, and to compromise his masculinity, by working as a cook in the kitchen and by staying home from the hunting expedition, so that he can be near Zîn. To be a homebody is to be equated with women: in the Spanish example quoted above, the church is an extension of the home, as it is the house of God.

⁶⁰(Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), p. 185.

Mem is more intent on being with Zîn than he is on doing what society expects of him. While this is certainly the feeling of many a young man in love, it carries with it several consequences. The young man so inclined runs the risk of bringing disgrace upon himself, his family, and the family of his beloved: this is what almost happens when Mem hides Zîn behind his cloak [D.IV.] and Qeretajdîn creates a diversion by burning down his own house [D.V.]. Mem's behavior is unmanly to the point that he seems to be a spoiled child used to having his own way, or even worse in a Middle Eastern context, a woman. If I understand the Kurdish correctly, in ZK-2, the emir explicitly calls Mem a woman:

Memê said, "Beko, the one I want is Zîn, it's Zîn and it's Zîn,
A newborn dove, she's gazing down at me through the window
screen,
Unlike you and your father, she's the sister of your prince Mir
Zêydîn."

When Memê said this, Mir Zêydîn got good and mad,
He said, "Memê, the one I want wears a shawl,
[82] The sister of the flaxen shirt,
The sister of the golden necklace,
Sister Memê Alan.⁶¹" (ZK-2, pp. 81-2)

This passage both feminizes Mem and asserts the emir's attraction for him, this time in heterosexual rather than homosexual terms, as the description of Mem is couched in overtly feminine terms. Mem's reaction is to reach for his dagger, which restores some masculinity to him⁶², although in most versions he is rescued by Qeretajdîn and his brothers, unable to successfully defend himself.

⁶¹or perhaps, "Memê Alan herself," or "The sister of Memê Alan." Whatever these last four lines mean, they obviously succeed in insulting and angering Memê to the point of reaching for his dagger.

⁶²Even more so if this is viewed in psychosexual terms, in which a dagger or sword is a symbolic penis. If the vagina is a symbolic sheath, and the very word comes from the Latin word for 'sheath,' paralleled by German Scheide with the same two meanings, then what fits into it must be a symbolic sword (or dagger).

The two impulses, to rebel against parental authority on the one hand, yet not to be thought of as unmanly, come up again and again in the story of *M&Z*. The fact that the story ends tragically, with the death of the two lovers, is also ambiguous. One could argue that because Mem and Zîn meet their death at an early age, they are punished in this life for their actions. As mentioned above, in *OM*, Mem specifically says that his father's curse has caught up with him. According to this logic, the moral of the story would be that if you go against what your parents and society demand from you, your reward will be an untimely death.

However, the value of laying down one's life for a just cause is highly prized in Middle Eastern culture in general, as *Qeretajdîn's* sacrifice and the stories of Abraham and of Samaw'al clearly show. Moreover, there is a Kurdish proverb which states:

Rê	riya	mirinê	be jî,	tu her	li pêş	be
road	road of	dying	be even,	you always	in front	be

=Even if the road leads to death, you must always be first.

From this perspective, Mem and Zîn may be seen as brave for being willing to die for what they believe in, which in this case is the right to love one another despite the opposition of moral society as symbolized by *Beko Awan*, and of family as symbolized by *mîr Sêvdîn*, or by the combination of the two. Although *Qeretajdîn's* heroism lies within the traditional framework, Mem is heroic for the way he transcends that very structure.



CHAPTER SEVEN:
Conclusion



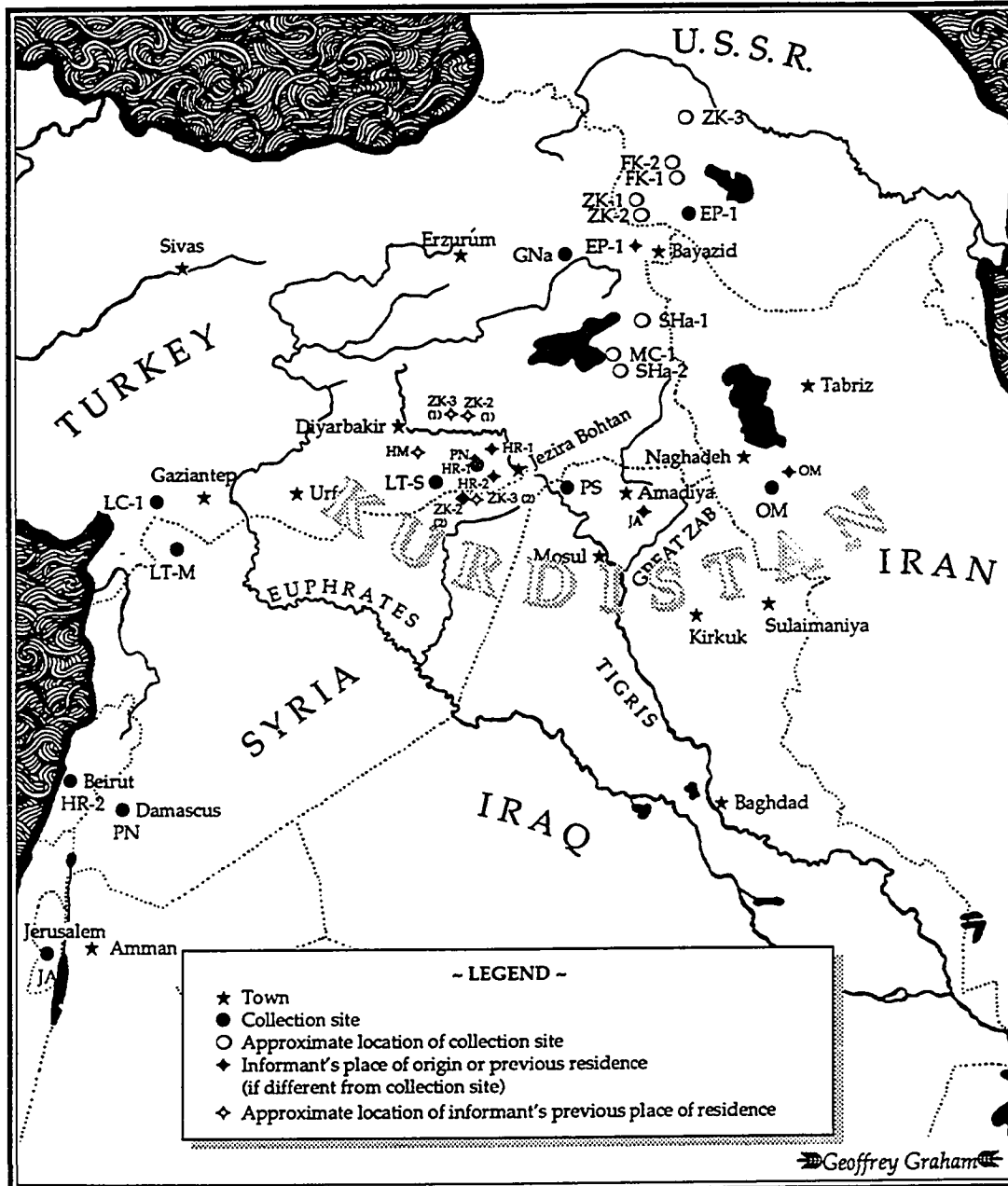


Figure 7a
The Geography of M&Z*

*NOT ON MAP: EP-2; HM's collection site: Brno, Moravia; LT-"Stranvan"; LC-2; FK-3

Geography and Oicotypes: Mapping the Versions of M&Z

We are approaching the end of the present study, which has been based upon a corpus of eighteen versions of M&Z, with occasional references to additional versions (JA; LC-2; LT). Although no two versions are identical, each one is recognizable as a telling of the story. Regarding such differences, I like to use the analogy of clouds in the sky: when one looks at the sky on a day when there are clouds in the sky, no two clouds are exactly alike, and yet we can tell that they are all clouds. Moreover, meteorologists have classified clouds into different types, based on their shape, color, and whether or not they will produced rain, snow, hail, sleet, or the like.

Returning now to M&Z, we can attempt to classify the various versions of it into sub-categories based on criteria which exhibit variation. The accompanying map (Figure 7a.), will be of use in putting the following analysis into a geographical perspective¹.

One of the most obvious differences is the name of Mem's kingdom: in most versions it is called **Muxurzemîn** or a variant thereof, but in a few it is called **Yemen** instead (PS; OM; ZK-3; JA). If we look at the geographical distribution of these four versions, it is apparent that PS and JA were told in Southern Kurmanji by informants from Iraqi Kurdistan, from areas about 60-80 miles northwest of the Great Zab River, the dialect frontier between Kurmanji and Sorani in Iraq. OM was collected in Kurdistan of Iran, in the area south of Lake Urmia, and about 20 miles southeast of Naghadeh, the town which forms the dividing line between Kurmanji and Sorani in Iran. Hence, all three versions are from an area lying to the south of the "Muxurzemîn" versions.

¹I would like to take this opportunity to thank my friend Geoffrey Graham again for designing the map.

Although ZK-3 was collected in Soviet Armenia, the informant (Hovhannîsyan Karapêt) spent his childhood in a village near Batman, about halfway between the cities of Diyarbakır and Siirt in Kurdistan of Turkey: this still does not explain why ZK-3 is a "Yemen" version rather than a "Muxurzemîn" version, for ZK-2, a "Muxurzemîn" version, was collected from an informant (Ohanyan Israêl) who grew up in a village in the same area. It should be noted, however, that between his childhood in Turkey and his adult years in Soviet Armenia, the informant for ZK-3 spent six years, from ages 15 to 21, in a village near Qamişli, in Kurdistan of Syria, a region adjacent to the part of Iraqi Kurdistan where PS and JA originated. Consequently, the fact that the informant for ZK-3 spent some time in a Southern Kurmanji-speaking area accounts for his use of Yemen rather than Muxurzemîn. It seems that the appearance of Yemen rather than Muxurzemîn is characteristic of southern versions.

At this point I should explain the concept of *oicotype*. This term has been borrowed from the biological term *ecotype*, denoting a subspecies adapted to a particular set of environmental conditions. For example, the desert rose is a rose adapted to the desert environment. If we apply this to folklore, it will be seen that the versions of M&Z in which Mem is from Yemen, all of which come from a specific geographic area (the southern zone), constitute an oicotype which is distinct from the versions in which Mem is from Muxurzemîn. Yemen constitutes a southern oicotype for this particular trait [I.F. in the Motif Chart].

The next question is whether or not this is part of a larger southern oicotype which can be identified by a cluster of traits peculiar to the southern versions. In order to test this out, let us take another trait that occurs only in a

limited number of versions: the appearance of the character Bengîn (also Bengîneh, Beglî). The only versions in which Bengîn occurs are OM, LT, ZK-3, ZK-2, JA, and MC-1. There is an overlap of three versions between our Yemen oicotype and this, the "Bengîn" oicotype: OM, ZK-3, and JA. The "Bengîn" oicotype is inexplicably absent from PS. We have yet to account for LT, ZK-2, and MC-1. The informant for ZK-2, Ohanyan Israêl, had an itinerary somewhat similar to that of Hovhannîsyan Karapêt: until age 17, he lived in his native village of Hîznemîre, near Batman; from then until 1966, when he was about 56 years old, he lived in Qamîşlî, in Syrian Kurdistan; in 1966 he moved with his family to Soviet Armenia. Hence, he spent 39 years of his life in Qamîşlî, where Southern Kurmanji is spoken. This being the case, his inclusion of the "Bengîn" oicotype is not so surprising: indeed, it is his omission of the "Yemen" oicotype which seems strange.

As for MC-1, this version was collected in the province of Van, as were SHa-1 and SHa-2. The latter two do not exhibit either the "Yemen" or the "Bengîn" oicotype. They were collected c. 1904, before the great population shifts connected with the Armenian massacres. When I visited Van in 1988, I was struck by the fact that most everyone seemed to have moved there from somewhere else in Kurdistan of Turkey. In keeping with this, the dialect of the informant for MC-1 has definite features suggesting a more southerly provenance², perhaps from Hakkâri or Siirt. Once again the southerly character of a trait can be connected to other Southern Kurmanji features.

LT is problematic, as was mentioned in Chapter One. Of the three

²e.g., the ending for the third person singular of the present tense of verbs is often -itin, a Southern Kurmanji feature. See D.N. MacKenzie *Kurdish Dialect Studies* (London et al. : Oxford University Press, 1961), vol. 1, pp. 181-2, §283. (a).

versions upon which this composite text is based, only the first two need concern us here³: Mişo is from Meqtel in Kurdistan of Syria, not too far from where LC-1 (and LC-2) were collected, and Sebrî is from Mardin in Kurdistan of Turkey, not far north of Qamişli. Meqtel is too far west to be considered Southern Kurmanji, although it is south of the province of Gaziantep in Turkey. The Kurdish of Mardin is considered Northern Kurmanji, although it is near the area where Southern Kurmanji is spoken: nevertheless, other versions collected from informants originally from the province of Mardin (HM; PN; HR-1; HR-2) lack both the "Yemen" and the "Bengîn" oicotypes. Fortunately, Lescot provides enough information on these informants to solve the problem for us when he writes that

Mişo learned the text from his father, who himself learned it from a Kurd from Behdînan.⁴

Behdînan is the part of Iraqi Kurdistan in which Southern Kurmanji is spoken. As in the cases outlined above, a Southern Kurmanji origin is once again correlated with this trait. It is still unclear whether the versions of both of Lescot's informants, Mişo and Sebrî, included Bengîn (or Begli, as he is called there), or whether he only appeared in one and was edited into the other. Because he claims that Mişo's version was taken as 'texte de base,' I am going to assume that Begli appeared at least in Mişo's version. Even if Bengîn did appear in Sebrî's version also, I consider it extremely unlikely that he was called 'Begli' in both Mişo and Sebrî's renditions: some editing must have occurred.

³Bengîn does not appear in the Chess Scene, which the third version supplied.

⁴Textes Kurdes (Beyrouth, 1942), vol. 2, p. v.

In any case, at this point both the "Yemen" oicotype and the "Bengîn" oicotype can be considered southern features. In what follows, I will outline other traits that make up the Southern oicotype of M&Z.

The nature of the creatures who conspire to bring Mem and Zîn together [B.I.A. in the Motif Chart] is anomalous, because OM agrees with the northern versions in having three birds serving as the matchmakers, although it differs in making them falcons rather than doves. PS, MC-1 and JA all three have angels rather than birds, and in both PS and MC-1 there are two of them, whereas in JA there are forty of them. The four versions in which the birds or angels are replaced by jinn and their king (ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2) also seem to form a third distinct oicotype: their geographic distribution forms one clearly discernible area -- if we consider the versions ZK-3 and ZK-2 as having gotten this motif from the villages near Batman in which the informants spent their childhood. We will call this the *Ṭūr 'Abdîn-Batman* (or central) zone.

The methods by which Mem and Zîn learn that they are indeed in his place rather than hers [B.I.D.] divide into two main oicotypes: in most northern versions (SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1), they count the number of minarets in the city: in his city there are 366, while in hers there are 66; they count 366. The southern oicotype for this motifeme slot is more extensive than the Southern Kurmanji zone outlined above. It consists of each one of them calling his respective servant; his answers, hers doesn't. The area that this oicotype encompasses includes both the Southern Kurmanji zone and the *Ṭūr 'Abdîn-Batman* zone (PS; OM; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2; MC-1). OM combines this oicotype with Mem and Zîn's walking about the palace, in the course of which Zîn realizes that she is not familiar with her surroundings: this is shared with LC-1, at the western extreme of the Kurmanji speech area.

Whereas in northern versions (including the Tūr 'Abdîn-Batman zone) Mem and Zîn exchange only rings [B.I.F.], in the southern versions (PS; OM; JA; MC-1) they exchange both rings and handkerchiefs.

In most versions Mem's horse is called Bor [I.E.]. However, in an oicotype composed of three versions (LC-1; LT; ZK-2), the horse is called Bozê Rewan⁵. In these same three versions, the horse is a magical creature caught in the sea by fishermen [B.III.A.]. Because Mişo, from Meqtel, Syria, is the source of this motif in LT, it seems to be a regional feature shared with LC-1. We will call this the Western zone. It is harder to account for it in ZK-2: it is not possible to know whether Ohanyan Israêl learned this detail while in Qamişli, or whether he brought it with him from his native Hiznemîre. When Oskar Mann's two unpublished versions from Suruç, southwest of Urfa, finally appear, they may shed light on this issue, because Suruç is located about midway between where LC-1 and LT-Mişo were collected on the one hand, and Qamişli (and Mardin) on the other. Hence, if Bozê Rewan were to appear in them, it would make it more likely that the "Bozê Rewan" oicotype was native to the area stretching from Islahiye in the western part of the province of [Gazi]Antep to Qamişli on the border of Turkey (south of Mardin) and Syria, and therefore Ohanyan Israêl would probably have picked this up in Qamişli rather than in his native village.

Regarding Beko Awan's female relative, whom Mem encounters at the entrance to Jezira Bohtan [C.III.], she is Beko Awan's daughter in all but four of the sixteen versions in which she appears: in those four (SHa-1; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2) she is his sister. This character is absent in two versions (PS; LC-1)⁶, but the

⁵Bozê Rewal in ZK-2, and (serâk basân)bôzi rawân in LC-1.

⁶In LC-1 Zîn has a maidservant named reîhan, but it is not stated that she is related to Bako Awan.

twelve versions in which she appears as Beko Awan's daughter include four of the seven versions from the northern zone (SHa-2; GNa; EP-1; ZK-1), two from the southern zone (OM; MC-1), and all six (PN; HM; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2) from the Tūr 'Abdîn-Batman-Mardin (= the central) zone. Although in versions from the northern (SHa-2; GNa; FK-1) and central zones (HR-1; ZK-2) she too is named **Zîn**, in three versions from the southern zone (OM; MC-1; JA), she is called **Melîk Reyñan** or some variant thereof⁷. Moreover, in the western zone, she is called **Reihan (e)** (LC-1) or **Rihan** (LT-Miço) [II.H.]. The southern and western zones seem to share the oicotype of calling Beko Awan's daughter (alias Zîn's servant) by a name which includes the word Reyñan in it, although the southern zone this is preceded by the word Melîk.

The motif of Mîr Sêvdîn's standing up when Mem enters the diwan [D.I.G.] seems to be a northern oicotype, totally absent from the southern zone, and the Tūr 'Abdîn-Batman zone, with the exception of ZK-3.

The site of Mem and Zîn's rendez-vous [D.III.D.] also seems to divide along geographic lines: in northern versions (and in Eñmedê Xani's literary poem) they meet in the garden, while in the southern and Tūr 'Abdîn-Batman zones, as well as in LC-1 and LT-Miço, they meet in the diwan. Within this latter oicotype there is some variation as to whose diwan they meet in: in LT-Miço and HR-1, they are in Zîn's diwan; in LC-1 they are in the diwan of Qeretajdîn's brothers Hasan çako; in the rest they are in Mîr Sêvdîn's diwan or palace.

Part of the climax of the story includes Qeretajdîn's sacrifice [D.V.B.]. In all versions but one (FK-2) he sets fire to his own house. There is some regional

⁷Melek Rîñan in MC-1.

variation regarding the other items he sacrifices: in the southern and northern zones, he sacrifices his child; in the Tūr 'Abdîn-Batman zone (PN; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2), to which we may add HM, he sacrifices his wife, or is at least ready to, with her child strapped to her breast in three of the versions (ZK-3; HR-1; ZK-2); in four versions -- two from Tūr 'Abdîn-Batman zone (HR-1; ZK-2), one more from Mardin (HM), and one from the western zone (LC-1) -- Qeretajdîn sacrifices his horses. It is noteworthy that none of the northern or southern versions include the sacrifice of Qeretajdîn's wife or horse, and likewise that the sacrifice of his wife is limited to the central (Mardin-Tūr 'Abdîn-Batman) zone.

In the three main versions from the southern zone (PS; OM; MC-1), there is no causal connection between the results of Mem and Mîr Sêvdîn's chess game and Mem's imprisonment [D.VI.C.].

Zîn's secret tunnel from her room to Mem's dungeon [D.VI.D.] occurs in MC-1, although it is absent from PS and OM. Although it seems to be common in the northern zone, it only occurs in two versions from the Tūr 'Abdîn-Batman zone (ZK-3; HR-1).

The scene in which Zîn sends word to Qeretajdîn with a man who demands a kiss from her as payment [D.VII.B.] is totally absent from the southern zone. Both versions from the Batman zone (ZK-3; ZK-2) have it, but of the Tūr 'Abdîn-Mardin zone, it only appears in PN and HM. In the western zone, it is attested in LC-1. The northern zone is split: it appears in two versions (SHa-1; FK-1), and is absent from five (SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; EP-1; ZK-1).

At the end of the story, the legend about the thornbush still being there, or growing back whenever it is cut down [E.III.C.], is totally absent from the southern zone. In the Tūr 'Abdîn-Batman-Mardin zone, the only versions that lack it are PN and HM. Once again, the northern zone is split, this time with

the opposite bias: five versions have such a legend (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; EP-1; ZK-1), while two (FK-2; FK-1) do not. The western zone (LC-1; LT-Mîşo) seems to lack it also.

In preparing the preceding geographical analysis, it was discovered that the versions of M&Z used in the study, plus JA and LT, fit into four geographical zones as follows⁸:

Northern zone (SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-1; ZK-1)

Southern zone (PS; OM; MC-1; JA)

Western zone (LC-1; LT-Mîşo)

Tūr 'Abdîn-Batman-Mardin (=Central) zone (PN; HM; LT-Sebrî; ZK-3; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-2)

The central zone consists of several sub-zones, including the Tūr 'Abdîn versions (PN; HR-1; HR-2), collected in Turoyo, a variety of Neo-Aramaic spoken by Jacobite Christians; the Mardin versions (HM; LT-Sebrî); and the so-called 'Batman' versions (ZK-3; ZK-2).

Although the latter two are designated as belonging to the central zone, because the informants for these two versions, the Armenians Ohanyan Israël and Hovhannîsyan Karapêt, moved from their native region to Qamişlî in Syria, where each spent several years before finally settling in Soviet Armenia, they are more difficult to classify. In certain respects they are very similar: they share motifs which do not appear in any other version. Two such examples are: 1) [D.I.A.1.b.], in which Mem's host Qeretajdîn tests Mem's honor by sending his

⁸It was necessary to exclude EP-2, because the identity of the informant, as well as his provenance, are unknown.

own wife to Mem's room to see if Mem will behave honorably; Mem sends her away; and 2) [D.III.E.2.e.] Beko Awan's bet: when returning from the hunting expedition, he has his men pursue him to Mîr Sêvdîn's diwan, with instructions that if they overtake him (=Beko Awan), they must kill him; this forces Beko Awan to ride quickly -- for his life -- to reach the diwan. In spite of these similarities between the two versions, each has been influenced by the informant's stay in Qamişli, in what is presumably the southern zone, to varying degrees. Consequently, the motifs in them straddle several oicotype zones.

In Conclusion: the Future of the Tradition

In the course of the scholastic year 1990-91, while this study was being written, many important developments were taking place in Kurdistan. "Operation Desert Storm" has affected the Kurdish people in a number of ways. The deadly twins of Saddam Hussein's sins of commission and the American government's sins of omission have combined to create a situation in which once again, in the twentieth century, a people is threatened with extermination through the misuse of modern technology. Although the Kurdish people has finally been given the attention they deserve by the news media, it took what resembles all too closely another holocaust to bring this about. The three to four million Kurds of Iraqi Kurdistan will never be the same again: even if those who survive are eventually able to return to their homes, their experiences will have changed every aspect of their lives, including their language and folklore.

I think it is safe to say that the linguistic situation which D.N. Mackenzie described in his 1961-62 publication Kurdish Dialect Studies will be most valued for its accurate recording of the linguistic situation prior to the cataclysm. When the Kurds had to flee their homes and their villages, they undoubtedly met up with speakers of other dialects, people with whom they would not normally have come into contact. Such contact could have a lasting effect on the language: it would not surprise me if the upheaval of the early months of 1991 will become a terminus post quem for dating radical changes in the development of the Kurdish language.

As a result of the Armenian massacres at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, many Armenian dialects have died out. The holocaust of the Jewish people during World War II has rendered the Yiddish language an endangered species, surviving only as the spoken language of the Hassidic Jews of Crown Heights and

Williamsburg in New York, Me'ah She'arim in Jerusalem, and a few other places. The Neo-Aramaic dialects of the Assyrians, Jacobites, and the Kurdish Jews are also threatened with extinction, both by massacres in the Assyrian case, and by emigration and the ensuing assimilation in all three cases. Fortunately, the world's twenty three million Kurds are too numerous to be as easily annihilated as a people, but their continued existence is nevertheless threatened by the persecutions of the governments that control their fates.

The Kurds of Turkey have also been affected by the war, although in different, more indirect, ways. At the beginning of the war, the Turkish president Turgut Özal announced that the ban on the speaking of the Kurdish language was to be lifted. Many Kurds in Turkey were very skeptical of this gesture on the part of the government, seeing it as little more than an attempt to placate its increasingly angry Kurdish citizens, so that in the event that the war in Iraq spilled over into Turkey, the Kurds of that country would not cause "trouble." Contrary to Özal's expectations, the proposal did not sail through the Turkish parliament. After all, its implications are very ominous in the eyes of Turkish nationalists: if the speaking of Kurdish is permitted, first of all this is tantamount to officially recognizing that such a language exists, which would contradict statements made as recently as 1987 by so-called Turkish scholars. Secondly, once the language is permitted to be spoken, it is only a matter of time before further gains will be attempted, such as the teaching of Kurdish in schools, as well as publishing and broadcasting in Kurdish. This could eventually lead to the possibility of openly conducting linguistic and folkloristic research among the Kurds of Turkey.

Ironically, the state of illiteracy in which the Kurds have been kept, particularly in Turkey, has preserved late into the 20th century the sort of linguistic situation that characterized all languages in the pre-modern period:

a) The language is not standardized, displaying instead pronounced regional variation;

b) The language is not heard on the radio or television (except for broadcasts from the Soviet Union, Iraq and Iran, which the Turkish government has done its best to jam), which contributes to the situation in a) above;

c) Even people who are literate in Turkish are kept illiterate in Kurdish, and have no schooling about what is 'correct' or 'incorrect' grammatical usage in the latter language, which is leading, in my opinion, to such grammatical changes as the gradual demise of the ergative nature of the verb system (evidenced in the past tense of transitive verbs), as well as the encroachment of Turkish words on the Kurdish vocabulary, sometimes displacing even the most basic Kurdish words.

It is paradoxical that this state of illiteracy vis-à-vis Kurdish also preserves the conditions necessary for the flourishing of a strong oral tradition. The introduction of literacy, and the lifting of the ban on the Kurdish language to the point where education in Kurdish were allowed, would slowly begin to erode the tradition that has spawned oral romance traditions such as that of M&Z.

If one wanted to refute the assertion that literacy directly affects oral "epic" traditions, one could adduce the counterargument that the Kurds of the Soviet Union are largely literate in Kurdish, and that several versions of Mem û Zîn have been collected from Kurds and Kurdish-speaking Armenians in Soviet Armenia. If we examine the data at our disposal, we come up with the following chart:

Version	Collection date	Informant	± Literacy	Date of birth	Ethnicity
EP-1	1955	E'tarê Şero	literate	1901	Yezidi
EP-2	-1938	?	?	?	?

FK-1	-1936	XudoêQaşo	?	?	?
FK-2	1926	Fekoê Mraz	?	?	?
FK-3	-1936	Tono Çetoyan	?	c. 1870	?
ZK-1	1963	E'gîtê T'êcir	literate	1922	?
ZK-2	1970	Ohanyan îsraêl	illiterate	1910	Armenian
ZK-3	1959	Hovhannîsyan Karapêt	semi-literate	1926	Armenian

The data are so uneven that it is not possible to draw many conclusions from them. For the eight versions from the Soviet Union, seven of which have been used in this study, we do not know the religious affiliation of five of the informants, the age of three of them, the degree of literacy of four of them, and the identity of one of them. With regard to literacy, of the four informants for whom it is reported, two are literate, one is semi-literate (whatever that means), and one is illiterate.

What can be said with certainty is that no Soviet versions have been collected from people born after the 1920's. At the back of Volume Two of Ordikhane and Dzhaliil Dzhaliilov's massive collection of Kurdish folklore entitled *Zargotina K'urda*¹, there is a section in which biographical information on the informants is provided. Some of the informants were born in the 1930's, including E'tarê Şero's daughter Gulizer, born in 1937, who knows many girls' songs. However, no versions of M&Z have been collected from such informants. Does the lack of collected versions from informants born more recently than the 1930's point to a gap in collection activity, or

¹(Moskva : Nauka, 1978), 2 vols.

are the younger generations – who have been lucky enough to be literate in Kurdish – no longer able to continue the oral tradition of their forebears? In The Singer of Tales, Albert Lord states that oral traditions such as that of the Yugoslav epic singers depend on illiteracy to survive, and that with the growth of literacy, they are doomed to die out².

To my knowledge, only three versions have been collected in Turkey in this century: Lescot's version from Sebrî (LT-Sebrî), a Turoyo version (HR-1) and the taped version I acquired in 1988 (MC-1). The Turoyo version was collected in 1960 from a 60 year-old villager (born c. 1900); moreover, Hellmut Ritter's second Turoyo version (HR-2) was collected in Beirut in 1961 from a carpenter born in 1913 or 1914. The version from the region of Van (MC-1) was supposedly told by a man who was in his forties in the late 1980's: hence we can assume that he was born sometime in the 1940's. Judging from the latter case, the tradition may be slightly less moribund in Turkey, still having *dengbêjes* born a decade later than is the case in Soviet Armenia.

Although Lescot tells us who some of his informants were (Mîşo and Sebrî), he does not tell us how old they were, or exactly when the texts were collected. The book in which they appear was published in 1942, and his earlier book on the Yezidis³ came out in 1938, therefore it is safe to assume that his versions date from sometime between 1936, when Lescot visited the Yezidis of Syria, and 1942, when Volume Two

²Albert Bates Lord. The Singer of Tales. Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 24 (Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press, 1960; reprint New York : Atheneum, 1968 et seq.; reprint Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 20.

³Roger Lescot. Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjâr, Mémoires de l'Institut français de Damas, tome 5 (Beyrouth, 1938), 277 p.

of his Textes kurdes appeared⁴. This still does not help us guess how old Mišo and Sebrî were at the time. However, if they were at least 25 years old, they would have been born prior to 1920, in keeping with my earlier assertion.

As for Iraq, the only versions dating from this century that I know of are the two versions I acquired on cassette tape during a visit to Israel in May and June of 1990. One had been brought from somewhere around Zakho or Dehok in the last year, but the man who sold me that tape knew nothing else about it: he could not provide either the name of the *dengbêj* or information about where he was from, much less his age or degree of literacy. The second version was collected in Jerusalem in 1979 by Jacqueline Alon from Daniel Moshe, an elderly Kurdish Jew from the village of Suwarê, Kurdistan of Iraq. Daniel Moshe, who was in his seventies at the time, has since passed away. He must have been born sometime around the turn of the century, thus belonging to the same generation as E'tarê Şero.

Roger Lescot has the following to say about the *dengbêj* tradition:

The art of the *dengbêj* is in a state of advanced decay. Those who boast of this title nowadays are amateurs with a fragmentary repertoire, no longer, as they were until recently, professional singers attached to the personage of a prince or a tribal chieftain, and possessing a thorough knowledge of most epics, and capable moreover of improvising when necessary to make up for lapses in their memory. At least twenty informants recited for me what they knew of Memê Alan. Most of them knew only the most salient episodes; some of them summarized in prose secondary passages, but not one of them could provide me with an irreproachable whole.⁵

⁴In a report of a talk given by the Kurdish emir Sureya Bedr Khan, it is stated that his brother, the emir Djeladet [Celadet] Bedr Khan collected a version of M&Z in 1928 from a 54 year-old Kurd named Micho [Mišo], a member of the Pijan tribe of the Berazi clan. See: Louis Marin. "Séance du 6 Juin 1931" [Mem-o-Zine, poème kurde] *L'Ethnographie*, N.S. 24 (1931), p. 6. It is not clear if this Mišo is the same man who was later Roger Lescot's informant for the "texte de base" of LT.

⁵Textes Kurdes, Vol. 2: Memê Alan (Beyrouth : Institut Français de Damas, 1942), p. iv. My translation.

The informant for MC-1 was, as Lescot describes, someone for whom reciting Mem û Zîn was a hobby, as he had another profession from which he made his livelihood. Besides Lescot's comment about amateur vs. professional singers, however, I am unable to agree wholeheartedly with his statement. While I too believe that the art of the *dengbêj* is decaying, I do not think that my reasons for believing so coincide with those of Lescot. My argument is that the advent of literacy -- even if limited to the official language Turkish --, together with the introduction of the television and moving picture, have joined forces to threaten the integrity of the tradition of orally recited narratives. Whereas the increase in literacy reduces the number of potential *dengbêj*s the television and its world has seriously decreased the audience for such oral recitations. Even if dramatized versions of Mem û Zîn were to be shown on television⁶, the oral character of the tradition would not be resuscitated.

Lescot apparently subscribed to a devolutionary theory of evolution, in vogue during the Nineteenth Century. According to one such theory, the Unilinear Theory of Evolution, all cultures pass through the same three evolutionary phases, beginning with savagery, going on into barbarianism, and finally reaching a state of cultivation, i.e., culture. Peasant societies, such as that of the Kurds, would be put into the intermediate category of barbarianism. According to another theory prevalent at the time, the Broken-down Myth Theory⁷, all folklore originally existed in a pristine state, and from then on a process of decay set in, which accounted for the degeneration of myths into folktales. Both of these outdated theories have long since been

⁶According to some Syrian Kurds I have met in Los Angeles, there was a television series in Jordan which did just that, but in which the names of the characters were changed to hide the Kurdish provenance of the story.

⁷Stith Thompson. *The Folktale* (Berkeley et al. : University of California Press, c1946,1977), p. 370.

disproven, but Lescot steadfastly clung to the second of them. He was looking for his idea of the 'full' version of Mem û Zîn (or Memê Alan, as he designated the oral versions, to distinguish them from Eñmedê Xanî's literary work), and when he did not find it in the course of his fieldwork, he attributed the lack of what he had expected to find to the decay of the art of the *dengbêj*. As has been discussed at length in Chapter One, in order to come up with what he considered a 'full' version of the story, his literary bias misled him into committing what is perhaps the most basic fallacy of the field of folkloristics: he made a composite (or conflated) text, combining three different versions. From a scientific point of view, this is untenable, because each version is unique, and each *dengbêj* has his own style. Moreover, each region has its own traditional sub-type, which is a composite of the styles of the local *dengbêjes*. Not only does Lescot's composite text combine styles, it also combines dialects -- Mişo resided in Meqtel, Kurdistan of Syria, whereas Sebrî was a native of Mardin, Kurdistan of Turkey. In addition, in no two versions are the characters called by exactly the same names, as the first part of the motif chart in Chapter Four indicates: so, for example, Bengîn is called Bengîneh in OM, and Beglî by either Sebrî or Mişo in LT; to be consistent, Lescot had to touch up one or the other of the versions so that Beglî did not suddenly become Bengîn. There are, of course, many versions in which Bengîn does not appear at all (PN; PS; HM; LC-1; SHa-1; SHa-2; GNa; FK-2; FK-1; EP-2; EP-1; HR-1; HR-2; ZK-1). How do we really know that 'Beglî' was not artificially inserted into Sebrî or Mişo's version, where it did not originally exist?

I find Lescot's attitude all the more objectionable because at the time he was collecting, scholarship had already advanced to the point where the methods he employed were considered outdated and had been discarded, as the following quote from the chapter on collecting folktales in Stith Thompson's The Folktale, which first appeared in 1946, clearly indicates:

...For more than a century scholars have recognized the ideal of accurate recording of tales from as many sources as possible, and in the more and more systematic researches of the past generation there has been increasing interest in promoting field work and insistence that it be skillfully and faithfully carried out. Collecting, classifying, cataloguing, studying by a comparative method, and synthesizing all the results – such is now the goal of all folklorists, whether or not they have come under the direct influence of Kaarle Krohn. But all these activities depend on the first; for no valid studies can be based upon meager or untrustworthy collections.

Though this attitude toward faithful recording of tradition is now so generally accepted by all scholars as to be almost axiomatic, it is not very old, but has gradually developed since the early nineteenth century. Not until there arose an interest in a serious investigation of stories as an important part of human culture could such a feeling exist. For in all the earlier presentations of traditional material the principal motive was to give the reader what would entertain him. The story heard at first hand or more remotely from the unlettered teller was only a frame within which the author employed his own narrative skill. Thus, many of our well-known tales appear in the most diverse literary treatments.

... Throughout the eighteenth century in Europe, after the Galland translation in 1704 made the Arabian Nights popular, folktales were given an Oriental or pseudo-Oriental flavor. And the story collections direct from Arabia and India were conscious and sophisticated literary works. Until the nineteenth century we have only the slightest indication as to what the traditional oral folktale actually sounded like. We know that even the Grimms, who took down their stories as they heard them, had no scruples against reworking them from edition to edition. But by 1840 or thereabouts a number of scholars were making serious attempts to publish authentic oral texts, and since that time there has been an increasing effort to furnish records that are faithful not only to all details of the action but to the narrative style as well.⁸

Lescot is to be commended for being honest enough to indicate that he took liberties with the texts: this is also my comment regarding Prym and Socin, whose version PS dates from 1870. Would it have been too much to expect that in the time that elapsed between 1870 and 1942 some progress would have been made among kurdologists regarding techniques of gathering and evaluating orally collected linguistic materials?

⁸*ibid.*, p. 406-7.

Within the period between 1985 and 1991, I have had occasion to record two different Kurds' summaries of the story of M&Z. Ahmet, a young man from Kurdistan of Turkey, gave me an extremely brief version in Turkish and Kurdish which showed that he only knew the plot in very general terms: a young man falls in love with a beautiful girl, he cannot have her, and therefore falls ill, and dies.

In the English summary I got from Jafer, a man in his early thirties from Kurdistan of Syria, it was clear that he had a grasp of the basic story, but he transposed certain details, saying that Zîn was from the West country (=Muxurzemîn), and Mem was from Kurdistan. I think it is more than a coincidence that Ahmet, who is very much assimilated into Turkish culture, having lived in Adana and Istanbul most of his life, could not provide more than a shadow of the plot, whereas Jafer, who knows Kurdish quite well and has a good feeling for language and regional differences, has a much stronger connection with the folk tradition.

Although neither Ahmet nor Jafer could recite a full version of the story of M&Z, this does not necessarily reflect the demise of the tradition. MC-1 and MC-2 were both recorded in the late '80's -- more or less contemporary with Ahmet and Jafer's brief narrations. If we apply von Sydow's theory of the active and passive bearers of tradition to this situation⁹, we can see that both Ahmet and Jafer are passive bearers, and their modest narrations may be attributable to this, rather than to the death of the tradition. By contrast, the informants for MC-1 and MC-2 are active bearers of the tradition.

The question of the future of the tradition of M&Z and other traditional romances does not depend on the ability of passive bearers of tradition to reproduce such stories: rather does it depend on whether or not there are still young people

⁹C.W. von Sydow. "On the Spread of Tradition," in: Selected Papers on Folklore, ed. Laurits Bødker (Copenhagen : Rosenkilde og Baggens Forlag, 1948), pp. 11-18.

continuing to be trained in the *dengbêj* tradition, and whether the younger generation is still interested in being the audience before which such *dengbêjes* can perform. Although I consider it unlikely that the younger generation is continuing this tradition, I know of no data on the subject. Paradoxical as it may seem, as long as the Kurdish language and Kurdish culture continue to be banned from television and radio, the oral tradition has a chance of persisting in an age where comparable traditions in other cultures are being supplanted by technologically advanced media.



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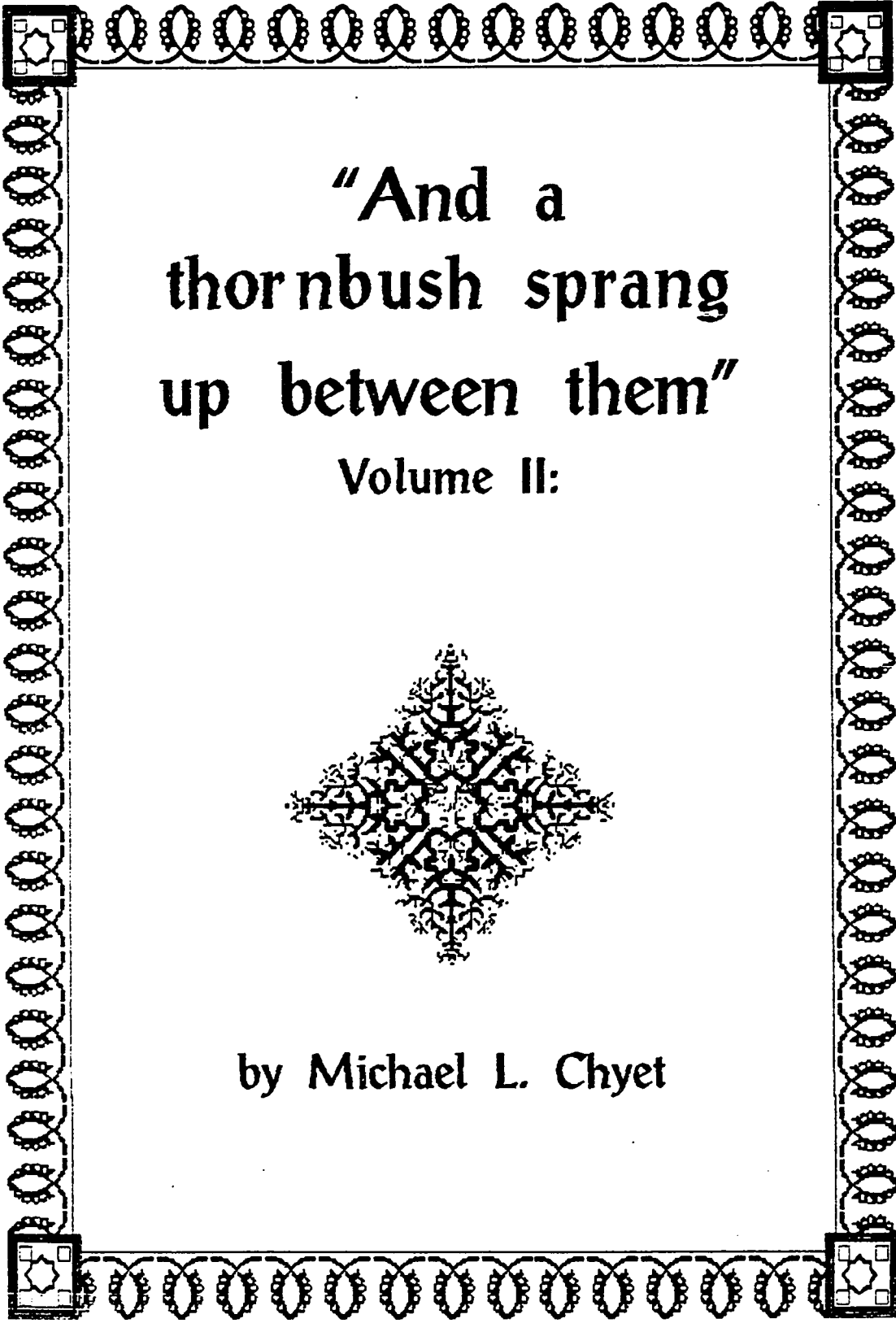
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**"And a
thornbush sprang
up between them"**

Volume II:



by Michael L. Chyet

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Illustrations





Memê Alan

(After Baran, *Destana Memê Alan: Kürçe - Türkçe*, Istanbul, 1978)



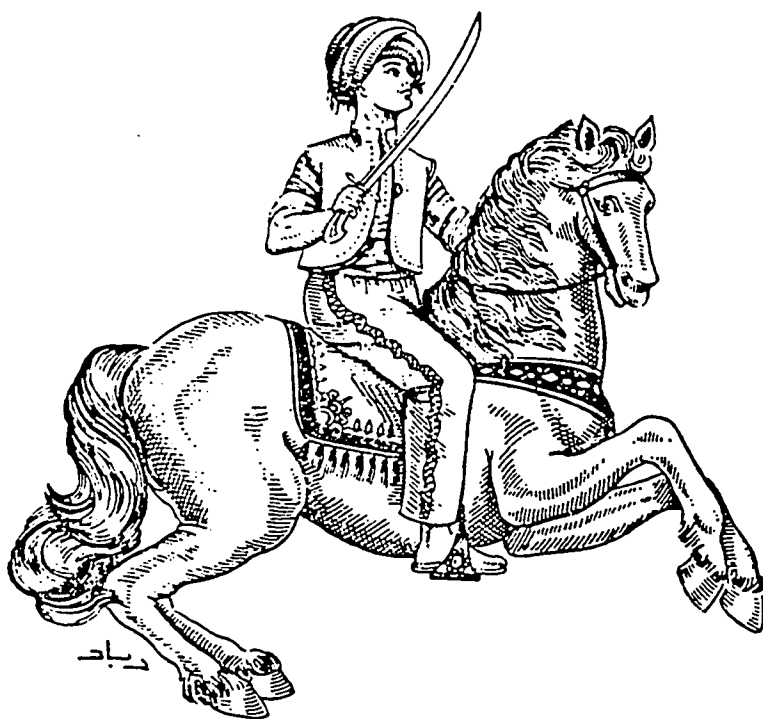
Zina Zedan

(After Baran, *Destana Memê Alan: Kûrtçe - Tûrkçe*, Istanbul, 1978)



Bozê Revan (Colt of the Sea)

(After Baran, *Destana Memê Alan: Kûrtçe - Tûrkçe*, Istanbul, 1978)



Mem on the road to Jezira Bohtan

(After Baran, *Destana Memê Alan: Kürtçe - Türkçe*, Istanbul, 1978)



Bekoyê Awan

(After Baran, *Destana Memê Alan: Kûrtçe - Tûrkçe*, Istanbul, 1978)



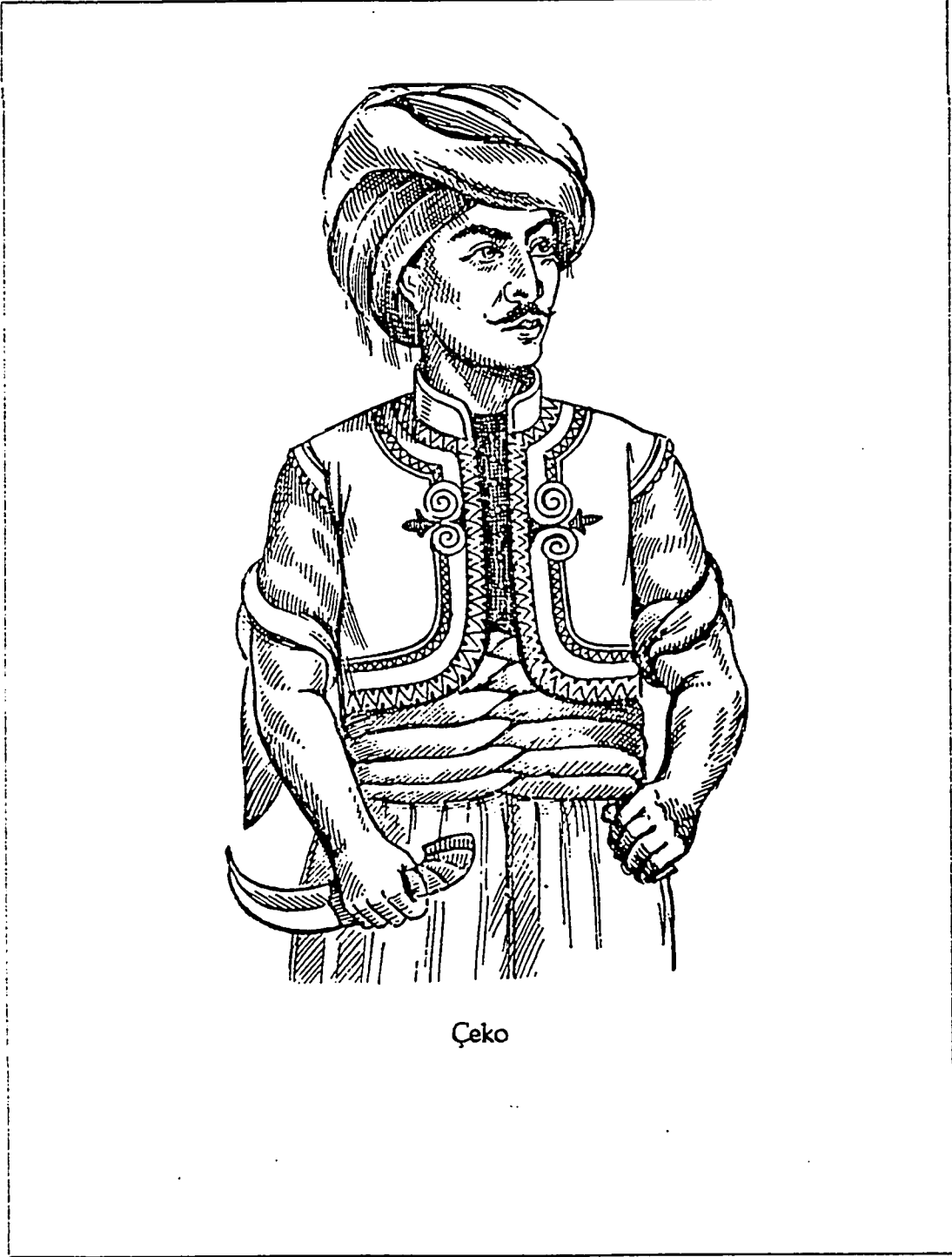
Mir Ezin (Mir Sevdin)

(After Baran, *Destana Memê Alan: Kûrtçe - Tûrkçe*, Istanbul, 1978)



Qeretajdin

(After Baran, *Destana Memê Alan: Kûrtçe - Tûrkçe*, Istanbul, 1978)



Çeko

(After Baran, *Destana Memê Alan: Kûrtçe - Tûrkçe*, Istanbul, 1978)



Translations



Frym, Eugen & Albert Socin. Der Neu-Aramäische Dialekt des Tûr 'Abdîn
; a. Die Texte; b. Übersetzung. (Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,
1881), v. 1, pp. 1-5; v. 2, pp. 1-8, [375] [Neo-Aramaic (Turoyo) text in
phonetic transcription (v. 1) + German translation (v. 2)] {PN}

PN. Collected by Frym and Socin in May 1869 in Damascus, Syria, from Jano ("Dschano"), a Jacobite Christian who had migrated to Damascus three months earlier with a group of his compatriots from the town of Midyat ("Midhjât") in the region of Tûr 'Abdîn, in what is today in the province of Mardin in Kurdistan of Turkey. A plague of locusts which befell Midyat for six consecutive years forced Jano's people to leave their homes. Although in Midyat he worked his own piece of land, in Damascus Jano was reduced to being a simple handyman. He could neither read nor write, but was endowed with the wonderful memory peculiar to the illiterate; he also had good common sense and was a quick learner. As a result of the ethnic mix of his homeland, Jano spoke Kurdish and (Northern Mesopotamian) Arabic in addition to his native Syriac (or *Turoyo*, a Neo-Aramaic dialect), and had also picked up some Turkish during a brief stay in Adana. Jano apparently was uniquely suited to the task of being a native informant, and Frym describes him as "der berufene Erzähler seines Heimortes" (=the appointed tale-teller of his native place). The following text, dictated in the variety of Aramaic called *Turoyo*, is the first one in Frym and Socin's collection. They call it a romantic legend, which Jano told as a true story.

(PN)

[1] There was once an agha¹ Yusif Agha, who lived near the land of India. He had a cousin² whose sister he was in love with. He went to her in secret, while she was still a girl, [and] she became pregnant at home³.

"From whom are you pregnant?" asked her brother.

She said, "I'm pregnant from Yusif Agha."

¹=Village mayor.

²=Paternal lateral male (first) cousin, i.e. the son of his father's brother.

³-Without having been married off, which would automatically have meant leaving her parent's home.

The residents of the village sided with the girl's brother, [and] said, "Yusif Agha, marry⁴ the girl."

He said, "Just because you've tried to force me to, I won't marry her."

Fighting broke out in the village, but no one could overcome Yusif Agha. The girl gave birth to a son and a daughter. They called the boy Mammo, and the girl Aminah. [When] Mammo grew up, he asked, "Who is my father?"

"They said, "Your uncle⁵ is your father."

[Mammo] said, "No, he's not my father."

Mammo fell in love with a girl. His beloved said to him, "Do you know who your father is?"

"Who is it?" he asked.

She said, "It's Yusif Agha: he went to her when she was a girl, and your uncle's people fought with him over it, but they couldn't overcome him. So you were born out of wedlock."

"Is that so?" he said.

"Yes," she said.

He came home, then went and cut off his mother's gold coins⁶, and bought with them a sword and a pair of pistols. He hung the sword over his shoulder, and the pistols from his belt. He went to Yusif Agha's room, without Yusif Agha suspecting anything. [Yusif Agha] said, "Come, Mammo, sit down!" Mammo sat down, and they talked. [Before long] an argument broke out. Mammo pulled out a pistol and aimed it at Yusif Agha. [Mammo] shot straight into his heart, [giving him time] to say only, "Mammo has killed me." Yusif Agha's brothers and sons came after Mammo. They attacked him. A rumor reached Mammo's uncle that he had been killed. Mammo's uncle came to Yusif Agha's room, and they

⁴=lit. "Take"

⁵=Maternal uncle, i.e. your mother's brother.

⁶The headdress or coil of Kurdish and Jacobite women consists of a cap ("Haube" in German) or simply a chain of gold coins worn across the forehead. One would only sell these gold coins in the case of dire need.

went at each other with swords⁷. Mammo slew six of Yusif Agha's people. He came home, [and] everyone in the village came to him saying, "Be our agha!"

"All right," he said, and Mammo became the agha. It took him two years to learn how to be agha.

One of the villagers went into the woods, where a ferocious⁸ lion devoured the man and his mule. People thought he had gotten lost, so two men went out looking for him. They saw blood on the ground, and followed the traces of blood, until they reached the lion's cave. There they saw the cross-bars (*Sattelhölzer*), axe, rope, and pack-saddle. [2] The lion jumped out, grabbed one of them and ate him. The other one ran away. He returned to the village shouting, "There's a ferocious lion there, who has killed the two men."

"What did you say?" asked Mammo.

He told him what had happened. Mammo arose, put on his sword and shield, and went after the lion, taking a cow along with him⁹. The lion came out, and flew into a rage when he saw that Mammo had a sword. All the villagers watched as Mammo swung at the lion, while protecting himself with the shield. The lion could not grab Mammo, while Mammo jabbed [the lion] with his sword. Until noontime they fought together as two men would fight. [Finally] Mammo slew the lion and went home. Mammo had made a name for himself: his fame spread far and wide.

There came to India a merchant from Mosul, who went to visit Mammo. [The merchant] asked, "Are you Mammo?"

[Mammo] said, "Yes."

"We've heard your name in Mosul. You're not married, are you?"

"That's right," [Mammo] said.

"Zine, from Jezirah, the daughter of mir Zerav, is just right for you. She has three brothers, mir Sevdin, Hasso, and Chakko. She lives in the castle of Jezirah, the chains of her gate are made of gold."

⁷i.e., Mammo and his uncle against Yusif Agha's brothers and sons.

⁸=lit. "Crazy."

⁹We are never told why he took a cow with him.

Mammo asked, "Who is going to go there?"

The merchant said, "I am."

"When you get there, give her this ring," said Mammo.

"Gladly!" said [the merchant].

"But bring me back news of her," he besought the merchant.

The merchant went to India, transacted his business, then came back to Mammo's house. He took Mammo's ring and went home to Mosul. Then he rode up to Jezirah, to Zine. He saw her in the window and called to her. She was not willing to speak with the merchant. He called to her again.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I've brought you something from a certain place," he said.

"What have you brought?" she asked.

He said, "Have a look."

She unfastened the belt from her waist and passed it out through the window below which the merchant was standing and at which she was sitting, saying, "Whatever it is, tie it to the end of the belt."

The merchant tied it fast. Zine pulled up the belt, and undid the thing. Then she saw that it was a ring, with a diamond, a pearl, and a stone with Mammo's name written on it. "Where is the owner of the ring?" she asked.

"He's in his own country," he replied.

She said, "I've heard his name, but let me ask you about him. Is he handsome or not?"

"You won't find a finer youth," he said, "I've gone to India and come back to Mosul, nowhere have I seen a better or manlier fellow than he."

"Are you going back there?" she asked.

"Yes," he said.

She sat down and drew¹⁰ a picture of herself on paper, and wrote on the paper, "Come to our country. May it be forbidden for me to marry any man but you. It is not a disgrace for men to seek women, but for women to seek men is a disgrace." She gave the paper to the merchant, but kept the ring.

¹⁰=lit. "Wrote." Cf. Eberhard, Wolfram and Pertev Naili Boratav. *Typen türkischer Volksmärchen* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1953), pp. 217-218, Type 188 *HüsûYasaf*, motif 2.

The merchant returned to Mosul, packed up his bundles of wares and went to the land of India. When he reached Mammo, he went up to him. Mammo said to the merchant, "Welcome! Speak, merchant!"

"What shall I say, Mammo?" he said, taking the paper from his breast pocket, and giving it to Mammo. [3] He looked at the paper and saw Zine's picture and the words she had written him. He kissed the picture and asked, "Where's the ring?"

"Zine has it," he said.

For two years he and Zine sent letters back and forth. Then Zine grew impatient with Mammo. She hired a messenger for 1,000 piasters and sent him to India with a letter for Mammo [in which] she said if he's coming, let him come now, otherwise I'll marry mir Akabir, agha of Van. The man¹¹ went, and after asking around for Mammo, delivered him the letter. Mammo read it, then began to make preparations to go. He mounted his horse, and took forty two of his villagers with him -- they were not his brothers, although in the story they are called his brothers¹². They set out with Mammo, but he didn't tell them where he was going. "Mammo," they said to him.

"Yes?" he said.

"Where are you headed?" they asked.

He said, "I'm going to Mosul. Those who want to come with me are welcome to do so, and those who don't want to may do as they please. I want to go abroad."

They turned around in their tracks and left Mammo. He came across a spring on the way, and slept beside it. There were no villages around the spring. Mammo's horse¹³ had no fodder, and was hungry. Mammo had four loaves of bread. He crumbled them into pieces [and put them] into the horse's feedbag, but the horse would not eat. He said to himself, as there was no one with him, "I don't know why the horse won't eat." By God's grace the horse was given the gift of speech and said, "Mammo!"

¹¹i.e., the messenger.

¹²This is apparently a digression by the storyteller Jano.

¹³-lit. "Mare."

"Yes!" said Mammo.

"Turn around and go back home!"

[Mammo] said, "That's not possible; until I go get Zine, that's not possible."

"As you wish," said the horse, and spoke no more. Mammo spoke to her, but she did not answer. [Mammo] sang to the spring and cried over Zine.

The next morning he got up and travelled another stage¹⁴. He came to a meadow, where he lay down while the horse grazed. A snake came and wrapped itself around his leg.

"Get off, beast!" said [Mammo].

"Don't be afraid, I won't bite you," said [the snake], "for your time is not up yet." The snake got down [off his leg] and said, "If your time had come, I would have bitten you no matter what you might have said."

Mammo got on his horse and continued on his way until he reached the threshing floors before the city of Jezirah. He got down off his horse to see the city from outside. There was one Bakko Awan who was always in the council of the emirs. When he said something, he didn't need to say it twice¹⁵. Bakko had a daughter whose name was Zine also. Bakko's daughter had gone down to the river to wash clothes when she saw Mammo. She fell in love with him. [The first] Zine's relatives had heard that she and Mammo were sending letters to each other. [When] they told her to marry, she said, "I won't marry anyone but Mammo." Everyone in town had heard this, both young and old. Bakko's daughter spoke to Mammo, [saying], "Who are you?"

"I'm Mammo," he said.

"What are you looking for?" she asked.

"For Zine," he said.

She said, "Would you know her if you saw her?"

"Yes," he said.

"I'm Zine," she said.

¹⁴=The distance travelled in one day. See OM, note 1.

¹⁵i.e., He had a good deal of authority.

He looked at her and said, "No, you're not Zine. [4] By the description they give of Zine, there's none prettier than her. You're not pretty. You're lying."

She said, "Mammo, God knows that I'm Zine."

"Your name may be Zine," he said, "but you're not the Zine I'm looking for."

"Mammo, my name is Zine," she said, "I'm the daughter of Bakko Awan. Zine from the house of the prince is my friend."

"Then go call her over here!" he said.

Bakko Awan's daughter went and called, "Zine!"

"What?" she answered.

"Come, let's go down to the river to watch the birds. There is a strange bird there, the likes of which have never been seen. I left my laundry and came after you, so that you might see this bird."

After putting on her shoes, Zine came down and went into town. The townspeople and shopkeepers said, "She has never before left her quarters." They went to the riverbank. Mammo took one look at her, and his heart was on fire. She sat beside him and massaged his heart, while the daughter of Bakko Awan looked on. As [Zine] rubbed his heart, Mammo came to. Then she took one look at Mammo, and *her* heart started burning; Mammo massaged her heart. Her chest was white and soft as silk. Zine revived, and they kissed.

She said, "I'm going home. Get on your horse and come to our house."

"All right," he said.

Zine went home and climbed to the top of the castle. She looked about with flaming heart. Mammo came to the prince, to mir Sevdin, and sat in the [guest] hall.

"Where are you from?" they asked.

"I'm a stranger," he said.

They took one look at him, and saw that he was more beautiful than they. They couldn't take their eyes off him. Zine said to her brothers Chakko and Hasso, "This is Mammo. Treat him with honor and respect." Mammo and the brothers became inseparable.

Bakko Awan's daughter said to her father, "He doesn't want me, he wants Zine."

"I'll have him killed," Bakko said.

One day mir Sevdin said, "Let's go gazelle hunting!" He told Mammo, and Mammo said, "Okay." Zine said to Hasso, "Don't take Mammo hunting! He's a guest! It's a disgrace and besides, Bakko might have him killed."

"Don't worry, Sister, we'll be with him," he said.

The servants saddled up the horses, but Zine came down from her quarters and prepared Mammo's horse herself. Chakko and Hasso saw her, but said nothing, [it was sealed] in their hearts. Mir Sevdin knew nothing of this. They went out to hunt gazelles. A gazelle jumped up, and they ran after it. Mammo caught it and gave it to mir Sevdin, but he refused, saying "It's a gift for you."

"I accept it from you," said Mammo. He then said to Hasso, "I'm thirsty. Let me wait for you at home¹⁶."

"Go!" said [Hasso].

Mammo left them. Zine was on [top of] the castle watching the road¹⁷, saying, "When is Mammo coming?" Then Mammo came, and together they went up to the [guest] hall, where they embraced. [Meanwhile] the brothers came back from hunting and went to the hall, leaving no way of escaping. [Zine] hid behind Mammo, and he covered her with his coat. Mir Sevdin came in, and there was Mammo sitting down. He greeted him, but Mammo did not rise in his presence. If he got up, everyone would have [5] seen Zine. Mir Sevdin and Bakko sat down. Bakko said, "Mir Sevdin gave you greeting, and you didn't rise before him"

"He's like an older brother to me!" said Mammo.

¹⁶=lit. "Let me go home until you come."

¹⁷i.e. waiting. A common way to say 'To wait' in Kurdish is **Ç'avê şx-ê li rîya bk-î bûn** (= lit. "For one's eyes to be on someone's road"). See ZK-1 note 59.

Hasso and Chakko knew that Zine was under Mammo's coat. They winked at each other and said to mir Sevdin, "Let's all go out to the garden."

"I'm not coming," said [mir Sevdin], growing angry.

Then Hasso went out and killed his wife, and set fire to his house, in order to get mir Sevdin to get up and leave the hall so that Zine could escape from behind Mammo. He did this for Mammo's sake. They came and told mir Sevdin, saying, "Hasso has killed his wife, and has set fire to his house." Mir Sevdin got up and left the room. He and Bakko Awan went to see Hasso, leaving nobody in the hall but Mammo and Zine. Zine came out from under his coat and went up to the castle.

Bakko said to mir Sevdin, "Mammo wouldn't rise before you because Zine was under his coat. That's why Mammo didn't get up."

Mir Sevdin and Hasso began arguing. Hasso and Chakko got angrily on their horses and rode off to Damascus¹⁸.

Mir Sevdin had Mammo put in prison. Zine came to the door of the prison, crying over Mammo. Mammo said to Zine, "Don't cry! You're breaking my heart!" She cried, then he cried. From so much grief, Mammo came close to death.

A dervish came along and asked Zine why she was crying. She told him, then asked him, "Where are you going, dervish?"

He said, "I'm going on the pilgrimage¹⁹."

"Aren't you going by Damascus?" she asked.

"Yes, I am," he said.

"Go tell my brothers," she said, "that Bakko has seized Mammo, and he's about to die. They should come without delay."

"Give me a kiss," said the dervish.

"Come and kiss me for Mammo's sake," she said.

He kissed her and then set out. She brought Mammo food, but he would not eat. [Finally] he died, and from so much grief Zine also expired.

¹⁸It will be remembered that the storyteller was living in Damascus and that this version was collected there. This may be seen as a digression.

¹⁹i.e., to Mecca.

They buried Zine and Mammo in the same grave, back to back; by the grace of God they turned around, facing each other. The dervish arrived [in Damascus] and delivered the message to Chakko and Hasso. They mounted their horses and returned home. [When they got there] they asked, "Where is Mammo?"

"He's dead," they were told.

"And Zine?" they asked.

"She's dead [too]."

They opened the grave to cry over them. Mir Sevdin and Bakko went with them. Bakko said, "As they loved each other in this life, so do they love each other in the next life."

"How so?" they asked.

"We buried them back to back, and they've turned to face each other," said Bakko.

Hasso said, "Just as when they were alive you didn't leave them alone, so now in death you won't let them be," and so saying he drew his sword and cut off Bakko's head. A drop of his blood dripped into the grave between Mammo and Zine, which became a thornbush between the two of them. Then the grave was resealed.

May you be healthy for me²⁰.

²⁰[Tu šmera saḥ] = Tu ji me (or: min) fā saḫ. This phrase is in Kurdish. It is a common concluding formula for folktales. HR-1, a Tūroyo version of Mem û Zîn collected by Helmut Ritter in 1960, ends with the same formula.

Prym, Eugen & Albert Socin. "Mâm u-Zîn"/"Mâm und Sîn," in Kurdische Sammlungen, Zweite Abteilung: Erzählungen und Lieder im Dialekte von Bohtan; a. Die Texte; b. Übersetzung. (St.-Petersbourg: Eggers et Cie., 1890), v. 2a, pp. [71]-83; v. 2b, pp. 100-117. [Kurmanji in Latin phonetic transcription (v. 2a) + German translation (v. 2b)] (PS)

PS. Collected by A. Socin in late June (or early July) 1870 in Zakho province of Bohtan (presently in Kurdistan of Iraq). Exact details about the informant are not given, but the following extract from his introduction should furnish some information: "... In about an hour and a half I reached the little town of Zakho on the Habur [River]. I had to cool my heels there for a few days while waiting for letters [to be delivered]; to pass the time, I began to study the Aramaic dialect of the Jews who lived there. I soon realized that Zakho was the ideal place to continue collecting Kurdish material, and consequently decided to prolong my stay there, particularly since the life in the town agreed with me. The heat was not particularly strong, the water of the river wonderfully cool and ideal for both drinking and bathing. The people staying in the khan (=inn) took a lively part in my studies. After a time, I even succeeded in procuring Kurdish singers. But when it turned out to be extraordinarily difficult to get the people who were brought to me to dictate/recite what they knew in an orderly fashion, I realized it would be practically impossible to elicit from them any explanation whatsoever of the texts I had written down; for on the one hand, these people knew too little Arabic -- Zakho lies right at the edge of the area where Arabic is understood -- and on the other, they were simply mentally incapable of meeting the demands which I placed on them. It even got to the point where I got a bad name in town as someone who asks for the impossible, and the singers hesitated to recite any poems for me at all, fearing that I would ask them to explain them as well. In spite of these difficulties, I succeeded in collecting a number of texts, and in having them explained: the latter work was undertaken, generally in the presence of the 'Rawi' (=reciter, tale-teller), by a Kurd who knew Arabic. I got some items from a very aged Jew named Pinehas; he was a native of Zakho and spoke Fellahi (=Neo-Aramaic) as well as Kurdish. Moreover he had a reputation as a master-Rawi, and continually travelled among the Kurdish tribes of Bohtan and Hekkari." (Vol. 1:1, p. xvii) Unfortunately, it is not made clear whether the afore-mentioned Pinehas was the source of the present text.

Mâm u-Zîn (PS)

[71] O peoples of the world,
 Listen to a man,
 We will speak of Zin and Mem.
 O people in attendance,
 Listen with [all] you heart,
 From Memê Ala's face red roses rained¹.

Note: When quoting Kurdish words, the standard orthography will be followed in brackets by the spelling encountered in this text, which is written in a phonetic script predating the Hawar Kurdish orthography in Latin script. E.g. Cih [jîh] means that the standard spelling is 'Cih,' but in the text it appears as 'jîh.'

¹A traditional way of describing one's beauty. Cf. the following from versions of a Turkish folk tale from Erzurum: "Gülende yüzünde güller açılın" = "When she laughs, may roses open on her face" (Bilge Seyidoğlu, Erzurum Halk Masalları üzerinde Araştırmalar, metinler ve açıklama (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi, 1975), p. 277); "Ben o gızıma bir hediye verirem ki gülende güller açılın, ayağının

On one day among the days,
 Two angels made a bet in heaven,
 One said Zin is more beautiful, the other said Mem is.
 This second one said, "Let's bring Zin next to Memê Alan."
 They placed the two of them on one bed,
 They were both asleep, neither of them was awake.
 Then they both woke up,
 They both arose and sat down.

Zin said, "You've come to my place²"; Mem said, "I am in my own castle, not in yours."

Zin said, "I'll call my servants, then they'll come kill you." [Mem said] "Call your servants; if this is your place, let your servants come kill me!" Zin called her servants, "Osman! Shahi Mus³!"

When Zin called,
 No one gave answer.
 [He] said, "Now you know this is my place, not yours,"
 It was Memê Ala who said "Now you know this is my place, not yours."
 Then [she] said, "Memo, for heaven's sake!⁴
 God made this happen⁵,
 This isn't the work of humans,
 This is the work of heavenly angels."

Then [he] said, "Get up and make us something [to eat]." Zin got up and made rice, they ate it together, she boiled a pot of coffee, each one drank two cups.

Then they stuffed their pipes.
 When they had smoked their pipes,

başdığı yerlerde çimenler bitsin" = "I will give this girl of mine a gift such that when she laughs roses will open up, wherever her foot steps meadows will grow" (ibid., p. 285). The reference to roses is presumably a symbol of rosy cheeks, a sign of beauty.

²Çih [jîh] (also Çi) means both "Place" and "Bed."

³In PS, Socin took the liberty of changing this name to *Shahin Mustafa*. I prefer to retain the original form. It is to Socin's credit that he informed us that he was taking liberties with the text: many of his contemporaries were not so scrupulous.

⁴Sitar bike' [Sitâr bikâ] = "Take refuge [in God]." In PS this is translated as "Make no noise!"

⁵lit. = "This happened from [the presence of] the great Lord."

Memê Ala was sleepy.

When he got up to go to sleep, Zin asked him, "What are you going to do?" He said, "I'm going to sleep." [She said] "If you sleep, tomorrow you will get up and say, 'It was a dream, last night I had a dream'". He said, "What do you want?" She said, "We should exchange tokens⁶." He said, "As you wish." So they exchanged rings, then they exchanged kerchiefs⁷. Then [72] they both went to sleep. [Mem] said [to himself], "Satan is a powerful man",

Mem got up and drew his dagger,

Placed his dagger between himself and Zin⁸,

He placed the dagger's handle on Zin's breast, and the dagger's blade⁹ on his own breast, then put his arm around her neck. The two of them slept. When they had both gone to sleep, the angels lifted Zin up [and] took her to her own bed¹⁰. Memê Ala stayed in his bed. When he woke early the next morning, Memê Ala said, "It was a dream." When he went to the water to wash his hands and feet, he took out his kerchief. When he was wiping his face, he realized that the kerchief was not his kerchief, that it was Zin's kerchief, Zin the lady of Bohtan. He looked at his ring, [he saw] Zin's seal [on it], Zin the lady of Bohtan.

Mem was very distressed,

He went to his father in the diwan, told him the news,

⁶Nişan [Nişan] = 1) Sign, mark, token; 2) Engagement ring (i.e. a sign or mark of being betrothed). In PS, this is translated as 'Erkennungszeichen', i.e. "Badge," "Sign by which one can recognize someone or something," which lacks the suggestion of marriage implicit in the word 'Nişan.'

⁷'K'eff' [kâffi] or 'K'off', from the Arabic word *kūfiyah* كوفية, a headdress. Whereas according to Kurdoev among the Kurds it is specifically a women's headdress, among the Arabs it is more often used to designate the man's headdress (the more common word for this, at least in colloquial Palestinian Arabic, is *ḥaṭṭah* حطة). A few lines further on, Mem uses the k'eff' to dry his hands and face, which strongly suggests that the word 'k'eff' means simply a kerchief.

⁸This is a very common motif in Middle Eastern folk narrative. In the Turkish romance *Köroğlu*, the hero *Köroğlu* places his sword between himself and *Telli Nigâr*, his beloved, as a sign that they did not have sex. Motif T351. **Sword of chastity. A two-edged sword is laid between the couple sleeping together**, cf. Aarne-Thompson tale-type 303 **The Twins or Blood-brothers**. In HM's version of *Mem û Zîn*, when Mem's grave is opened up by *Qeretajdin* (at the end of the story), he finds Mem and Zin sleeping in the same grave, with a sword of clay placed between them.

⁹= lit. "Mouth."

¹⁰See note 2 above.

When he told the tale in the diwan,
 Mem's father was amazed,
 He said, "My son, I've never heard the name of Jezira Bohta,
 Whoever you want, I will request for you¹¹."

[Mem] said, "Father, I don't want anyone but Zin the lady of Bohtan. [His father] said, "Come now, my son, I too know that you are handsome, but what you ask is beyond my power. [Mem] said, "Father, if it's beyond your power, I will go out into the world. [His father] said:

"My son, if you want this very much,
 [If] you and Zin have fallen in love,
 Take these one hundred horsemen with you,
 Take this treasure of coins with you,
 And go seek your fortune, see in what direction Jezira Bohta
 lies,
 It is beyond my ken and I've not heard the name Jezira Bohta."
 [Mem] said, "O my father, I won't take any soldiers with me,
 I won't take any treasure of coins with me,
 I will mount my horse,
 Roam the world like a dervish,
 Until I find Jezira Bohta."
 [His father] said, "My son, I won't have it so,
 You are the sole child of my heart, I won't consent."

Mem made preparations, took out his horse and combed him down. He saddled him up, and fastened his saddle-girth¹². He filled his [own] pockets with gold, picked up his equipment, but his dagger in his belt, fastened his sword to his waist, took his golden¹³ lance in his hand and mounted his horse. By the time he

¹¹ Among the Kurds, as among other Middle Eastern peoples, a marriage is initiated by the family of the prospective groom requesting the hand of the prospective bride from her father.

¹² =lit. "girth and over-girth."

¹³ For some reason, PS doesn't like the word "Golden": the German translation reads, "He took the ... lance in his hand", and in the original there is a footnote which explains [rumāna zārīn] as meaning 'rumḥ al-aṣfar' (= "Yellow lance") in Arabic; the reader is then referred to the entry for [Rim] = "Lance" in Jaba and Justi's dictionary, where one finds [rim nezeri] meaning "Bamboo lance."

mounted, his father had assembled two hundred¹⁴ riders for him. Memê Ala was not aware of this, and when he set out and saw two columns of riders were following him, he stopped and said, "O riders, where are you going?" They said, "Your father sent us with you."

He didn't want to go against his father's word.

He got up and went on,

For two days¹⁵ [73] he went on,

Then gave a command to the riders,

He said, "Go home, I can't take it any more, I may not return for up to four years, I don't want to be responsible to your families [if anything should happen to you]. Go on home, I'll go on without you." The riders turned back, [and] Memê Ala went on. He went to Amadiyah¹⁶, from Amadiyah he went further, until he came to Zakho¹⁷; in Zakho he asked the way to Jezir. From Zakho he rode on to Nehervan, from Nehervan he went towards Jezir. When he stopped under a pair of mulberry trees to rest, he saw a gentleman coming towards him; [Mem] asked him, "When a foreigner goes to Jezir, whose house does he go to?" [The man] said, "If he is a ruler, he goes to Mir Zeidin's house, if he's a noble tribesman, he goes to Qaratazhdin's house, if he's a slanderer or a troublemaker, he goes to Bäkroke Awan's¹⁸ house." Then he up and left. Memê Ala rode on and asked for Qaratazhdin's house. He rode on like one who is totally lost¹⁹, [until] one like me²⁰

¹⁴=lit. "one hundred and two hundred", which PS translate as "one to two hundred."

¹⁵[qonax]= "Stage", "The distance travelled in one day of riding." Cf. OM, note 1.

¹⁶A town in Kurdistan of Iraq. The places mentioned in this and the following note are an indication that the storyteller was from this area. In ZK-2, a version from an Armenian who spent his childhood near Diyarbekir, that city's Pîra Reş (Black Bridge) is mentioned, and in HR-1, a Neo-Aramaic (Turoyo) version from a Jacobite Christian who spent his childhood in the Tûr 'Abdîn region of Mardin, the town of Midyat (main town of the Tûr 'Abdîn region) is mentioned. See also note 27 below.

¹⁷Another town in Kurdistan of Iraq, where this text was collected.

¹⁸'Awan' is both Beko/Bekir/Bäkrok's family name and a word meaning "Intriguer," "Troublemaker." This is no coincidence.

¹⁹I am assuming that [xasim] is the same as Arabic ghashim = "Naïve", "Inexperienced"; it is immediately followed by nezana [názāna], which means more or less the same thing.

²⁰An interesting side comment by the storyteller. Unfortunately, we do not know who the storyteller is, much less what he looks like, so it is not possible to fully appreciate this comment.

came out in front of him and led him to Qaratazhdin's house. When they came up to the gate, servants came out, took hold of the bridle, and helped Mem dismount. They spread a felt carpet before him, and placed cushions at his side. Mem stretched out on the cushions, and smoked the pipe they had filled for him²¹. As he was looking about the hall²², Qaratazhdin's wife²³ went from the house to the hall. His eyes fell on Qaratazhdin's wife, who is the sister of Zin, the lady of Bohtan. He thought she was Zin and that she was already married²⁴, so he got up and said, "Bring me my horse".

The servants said, "But Memê Ala²⁵, you can't go until Qaratazhdin comes." [Mem] said, "That was my heart's desire, it is over, I'll get up and ride away." No matter what the servants did, in the end Mem got up; the servants would not bring him his horse, so he got up and got him for himself; then he got on, took his lance in hand, and rode off. He [got as far as] the gate at the bridge, when the servants went to the diwan [of Mir Zeidin] and said to Qaratazhdin, "Come, mîr, such and such is the situation." Qaratazhdin stood up and when he got home he said, "Bring me my horse." His horse was brought out and combed down, a saddle was put on his back. [Then] he said, "Bring me my equipment." His equipment was brought, and he put it on; he took his lance in hand, girded himself with his sword, threw his pair of carbines²⁶ over the saddle's pommel, mounted and rode off, passing the bridge of Jezir. He tightened the stirrups, slackened the reins, and galloped full speed ahead after Memê Ala. He came to the Castle of Dela²⁷, but

²¹This is a portrayal of the ideal way of treating an honored guest. Here we have an example of folklore functioning as a culture reflector, to use Boas' term. Sometimes in folk narrative a society's norms are accurately reflected, as in this passage, but sometimes the opposite is true: sometimes cultural taboos are portrayed as being acceptable in folk narrative, as when Mem and Zin find each other in bed together.

²²[ervân], equivalent to the 'diwan' spoken of in other versions.

²³[harâm], literally "Ritually forbidden," hence the English word "Harem." See also OM note 75.

²⁴=lit. "She has attained her *fiqq* [= '(legal) right'; 'portion']."

²⁵Here PS adds the words 'Em nahêlin' [am nâhêlin] = lit. "We won't let [you]." Again, I must thank Prym and Socin for being honest enough to tell us when they tampered with the text.

²⁶Or, "Double-barreled carbine", according to PS.

²⁷Qaser Dala 1/2 hour east of Jezir on the river.

didn't see him. He ran on to the Pass of Siri²⁸, where he caught up with him. He said, "Hey, Mem, where have you run off to? I'm crazy Qaratazhdin²⁹." He got in front of Memê Ala, and when he did, Memê Ala stopped. [Qaratazhdin] said to him, "Mem, come back." [Mem] said, "Qaratazhdin, I'm not coming back." [Qaratazhdin] said to him, "Mem, come back." [Mem] said, "Qaratazhdin, I'm not coming back." [Qaratazhdin] said, "Then at least tell me what you have on your heart, why you came to my house and why you left dissatisfied!" [Mem] said, "Qaratazhdin, [74] I have no wish in my heart." [Qaratazhdin] said, "That can't be, you tell me the truth, no one leaves my house dissatisfied!" [Mem] said, "Then I'll tell you. I came to your house. ... My situation with Zin is such and such." [Qaratazhdin] said, "So you're Zin's betrothed!" [Mem] said, "So I came to your house, I saw Zin in your house, she has gone back on her word, because Zin and I had made an agreement, but she is married to you, [and] I saw her in your house." [Qaratazhdin] said, "Mem, you're telling the truth, but the one you saw in my house is Zin's sister, not Zin herself, she's Zin's older sister.

Zin is just Zin,
 A newborn dove,
 The sister of my Mir Zeidin.
 Zin is not yet married,
 No one has laid eyes on her yet,
 Not even a cool breeze has touched her body³⁰.
 If this story is true,
 As you tell it,

Then come under the protection³¹ of us four brothers. Mem and Qaratazhdin returned together, passing by the bridge on the way back to Qaratazhdin's house.

²⁸Located one hour east of Jezir.

²⁹[qaratâždînedînim]. There is a pun here: dîn = "Crazy", and the syllable 'dîn' is repeated. 'Crazy Qaratazhdin' is a stock phrase, consisting of name and epithet.

³⁰A curious statement considering the fact that the Stith Thompson Motif Index has a motif T 524. Conception from wind!

³¹[râi u-baxt] 'Bext' is a cultural concept, similar to Classical Arabic 'jwâr'/'istijârah.' In tribal societies, it is important to belong to one or another tribe. When a newcomer arrives on the scene, he must seek refuge or protection (Bext or Jwâr) from one of the local tribes. In the present context, Qaratazhdin has just invited the newcomer Mem to seek refuge with him [and his tribe].

They made up a place³² with cushions for [Mem], and he and Qaratazhdin sat together. Chako, Mako, and mir Mahmud, the other three brothers, sat on their seats, and the coffee kettle was thrown on the fire. Coffee was boiled, and

Each one drank a cup of coffee.

Qaratazhdin was very pleased,

May the universe be damned, Memê Ala is very handsome.

Dinner was made ready,

It was brought in,

The five of them ate their dinner together.

Until midnight they sang songs together,

Then they slept.

In the morning they got up early,

They went to the fountain to wash³³.

Then they returned home and sat down.

Qaratazhdin up and said to Mem, "Bring me Zin's token, so that I will be sure this is right." Mem said to Qaratazhdin, "Show me Zin so that I can show you the token³⁴." [Qaratazhdin] said, "Wait till tomorrow, tomorrow is Friday, Zin will go down to the river, [then] I'll show her to you." That day they got along amiably, and that night they had musicians play for them until midnight, and even later. Then they drank coffee. In the morning they got up early.

In the morning they got up early,

Heated up their coffee,

Each one drank a cup of coffee,

They sat in their places.

As they looked on three maidens approached them,

[Qaratazhdin] said, "Mem, go bring me a token."

Then poor Mem stood up,

He saw the three maidens walking by the river,

Mem got up, came down and greeted khatun Zin:

³²See note 2 above.

³³[nemēž kerīna] = lit. "They performed the ritual ablutions (preparatory to prayer, part of the Muslim prayer ritual)."

³⁴According to PS, this whole sentence was added later. Again, I must thank Prym and Socin for being honest enough to tell us when they changed the text.

[75] [She] said, "O Mem, you have on your head two feathers and
 a sash,
 We have in the world servants and maidens,
 If you've come here to bathe, we will withdraw."
 "It's morning, oh, what a cool morning."
 Mem saw that three girls had come,
 He said, "My lady, tell me who the three [of you] girls are."
 She said, "The last one is the daughter of Bäkroke Awan³⁵,
 The next one is Zin's maidservant³⁶,
 The other one is Zin herself,
 A newborn dove,
 The sister of Mir Zeidin."
 [He] said, "O goose-necked lady,
 I swear by God on high,
 And by the angels around him,
 Until you hand me a token, I won't let you go."
 He said, "O Zin, I swear by God above us,
 And by the angels beside use,
 Until you give me a token, there's no letting you go."³⁷
 He said, "O goose-necked lady,
 You have on your breast a *berber*³⁸, earrings and a
*gelvaz*³⁹."
 She took off a chain of gold coins, bracelets and earrings
 and put them into poor Mem's hands.
 [She] said, "O Mem, I swear by God,

³⁵or Bäkroke the Troublemaker. See note 18 above.

³⁶The text is ambiguous here: it is unclear whether the maidservant's name is Zin, or if she is the maidservant of Zin. Most versions of the story feature two Zins, the one Mem's beloved, and the other the daughter of Bekir/Beko/Bäkrok the villain.

³⁷These two sets of three-line verses are almost identical in form and meaning, the only difference being the rhyme scheme. [ližōra/ lidōra/ dastūra] for the first set, and [lesar-ma/ gal-ma/ nādama] for the second.

³⁸A golden necklace, worn from ear to ear.

³⁹A necklace which hangs down in front.

Seated with his attending angels,
 This is Zin's token, which she has given to Memê Ala.
 O Mem, this is our token⁴⁰ until Judgement Day."

Memê Ala took the token,
 Went straight to Qaratazhdin,
 Qaratazhdin, mir Mahmud and Chako were seated all three,
 Mem showed the token to Qaratazhdin,
 Saying, "O Qaratazhdin, this is Zin's token which I have
 brought you."

[He] replied, "Mem, a most hearty welcome⁴¹!

You and I are brothers⁴² for life. You are under the protection of us four
 brothers⁴³, no one can say a bad word about you."

[76] Although Qaratazhdin was Mir Zeidin's major-domo, he hadn't been to
 the [mir's] diwan for three or four days.

Mir Zeidin sent his servant boy
 Who came to Qaratazhdin
 [And] said, "Mir Zeidin asks,
 'Why haven't you come to my diwan for the past four
 days?'"

Qaratazhdin said to him,
 "Go tell Mir Zeidin that I am not ill-humored⁴⁴.
 A beloved brother [I] has come to me.

Go tell Mir Zeidin about this news." The servant boy went back to Mir
 Zeidin,

⁴⁰See note 6 above

⁴¹=lit. "You have come on the head of me and my father." Cf. ZK-1, note [28].

⁴²**destbira [tt]** is similar to the concept of 'blood brother[hood]' in our culture. See LT, p. 372, note #97.

⁴³See note 31 above.

⁴⁴=lit. "My heart has not stayed [behind]."

[And] said, "O mir, Qaratazhdin is not ill-humored,
But rather a dear friend [] has come to [see] him.
Because of this friend he hasn't come to the diwan for four
days."

Mir Zeidin said, "Boy, go tell them both to come to the diwan."

The servant boy then returned to Qaratazhdin,
Saying, "O Qaratazhdin, Mir Zeidin says:

'This dear friend [] should come to the diwan.' Qaratazhdin, Memê Ala and
the boy got up and went to Mir Zeidin's diwan.

When Mir Zeidin saw Memê Ala,
Mir Zeidin was smitten with love for Memê Ala,

He said, "Qaratazhdin, is this your friend [?]" [Qaratazhdin] said, "Yes, if you
please, this is my friend []." He said, "Qaratazhdin, this is your friend [?]" He said,
"Yes, if you please, he's my friend []." The mir said, "I've become enamored of Memê
Ala; Qaratazhdin, let me ask you something." He said, "Ask, if you please."

[Mir Zeidin] said, "I want you to give me your friend [],
I have been smitten with love for him,
I want him to bear my tobacco pouch and pipe,
To always stay by me."

[Qaratazhdin] said, "My mir, he is your equal⁴⁵: just as you are the bey of
Bohtan, so is he the son of the mir of the Alan tribe, the pasha of Yemen⁴⁶, and
[therefore] your equal."

⁴⁵Beramberê teye [barambarê-tayê] In PS's footnote, we are told that this was originally [bar ham
payâ-tayâ, which would mean something like 'before your feet', perhaps meaning the opposite. In this
context, I concur with PS's choice, as it makes good sense. Again, I must commend Prym & Socin for
their candor.

⁴⁶This phrase was apparently left out after the dictation of the text. In OM's text also, Mem's father
is the king of Yemen.

He said, "Qaratazhdin, I beg your pardon, I didn't know he was of noble birth: if he is the son of the pasha of Yemen, it would not do to make him a servant. Let him sit with me always, his seat across from mine. We will drink our coffee together. Let him be with me from morning till evening, then in the evening you can take him home again*; I will await you and your friend [] early every morning. Do not be offended by these words which I say to you, for I have become enamored of him. [Qaratazhdin] said, "Of course, as you wish, he has come under the protection of (me and) the four brothers. In other words, if anything were to happen to him, my brothers and I would give up our lives for him." [Mir Zeidin] said to him, "Qaratazhdin, don't you worry about anything⁴⁷." In the evening they got up and left the diwan. Zin was listening. That night they went home, and they got up early the next day. Memê Ala said, "O Qaratazhdin, we have come under your protection; I will do whatever you ask⁴⁸."

A cup of coffee was boiled for each one,
Then each one drank his cup.
The servant boy filled their pipes,
Putting a coal⁴⁹ on top of each one;
[77] They went straight to Mir Zeidin's diwan.
Their coming pleased the mir greatly;
He had a throne set up for Memê Ala,
Memê Ala sat on the throne,
Which please the mir greatly.
There was a window between the diwan and the ladies's
[quarters],
Zin came and sat at the window,
Right across from Mem,
Which pleased Memê Ala greatly.
Mir Zeidin said to Qaratazhdin:

⁴⁷=lit. "Don't let anything turn/upset you heart."

⁴⁸=lit. "How[ever] you like, I am at your word."

⁴⁹=lit. "a [piece of] fire"

"Qaratazhdin, I want us to go hunting." [Qaratazhdin] said, "At your service, as you wish." He called accursed Bâko⁵⁰ [and] said, "Go tell the town crier [to announce that] the mir has proclaimed that we must [all] go hunting tomorrow. Bâko got up and went, saying, "As you wish, I will go." He went and told the town crier, "The mir has ordered [that you] go announce in town that he has proclaimed a hunting expedition." They sat around until evening, [then] Qaratazhdin and Memê Ala got up and went home. Memê Ala said to Qaratazhdin, "If you please, I can't go hunting." Qaratazhdin said, "Mem, don't come; when we go, you go sit in Mir Zeidin's diwan and play chess with lady Zin, don't worry about a thing. If Mir Zeidin asks about you, I'll answer for you." [Mem] said, "Yes, if you please." On that day the town crier made the announcement, accompanied by drums and a band of musicians⁵¹. Mir Zeidin went hunting. He went to the plains, leaving the city. At the same time, Memê Ala went to the diwan. Zin, the lady of Bohta[n], descended the stairs, coming to sit beside Memê Ala. They played chess together, oblivious of the whole world.

When Mir Zeidin's hunters went to the plains,
Along came a raincloud.

Mir Zeidin's hunters crossed the plains,
With a raincloud overhead.

When Mir Zeidin inspected the nobles of Bohtan,
He exclaimed to Qaratazhdin,

"O Qaratazhdin, Memê Ala didn't show up for this hunting
expedition."

[Qaratazhdin] answered, "O Mir Zeidin, this morning at
dawn,

Mem was suffering from a headache,
When he got up this morning he could not speak.

O mir, when the morning overtook him,
Memê Ala washed his hands and face,

⁵⁰This is the nickname of the villain Bâkroke Awan. See note 18 above.

⁵¹me'terxane. In Turkish, **mehterhane** = 'Janissary band (of musicians)'. The janissaries (Turkish **yenîçeri**) were an elite corps of soldiers during the period between the 14th century and the late 19th century

[78] And was beset with a fit of shivering,
 He didn't find it at all [fitting] to come hunting with mir
 Zeidin and the nobles of Bohtan.
 Mir Zeidin's hunters went to the plains,
 With a raincloud overhead.
 Mir Zeidin's hunters crossed the plains,
 And along came a raincloud.

[Mir Zeidin] said, "Accursed Bako, go back home, go to the
 diwan,
 Spread out carpets and kilims⁵² in the hallway,
 Wash plates and trays for a feasts.
 Today our hunt is constrained because of the rain."
 Accursed Bako returned home, then headed for the diwan,
 arriving at the door. Morning, early this morning,
 Memê Ala and Zin were playing chess together.
 They were only aware of each other, when cursed Bako
 came to the door.

Memê Ala could do nothing.
 Zin, Lady of Bohtan, could not go to her place. Memê Ala got
 up and sat down.
 He hid Zin beneath [his] sheepskin coat.
 The accursed Bako shook out a rug⁵³.
 Then he saw that Mir Zeidin had arrived at the door of the
 diwan.
 Zin, Lady of Bohtan, was stuck under [Mem's] coat.
 All the nobles of Bohtan assembled in the diwan.
 When Mir Zeidin returned from the hunt,
 He greeted Memê Ala.
 Memê Ala returned his greeting without rising⁵⁴.

⁵²Kilims (called *gelt* in Kurdish), are flat-weave, pileless carpets.

⁵³*taišag* = ? "a piece of carpet." Meaning uncertain.

⁵⁴=lit. "From the buttocks", i.e. 'on his ass'.

Accursed Bako rose up before him and said, "Mem, are you
better than the nobles of Bohtan?

When Mir Zeidin, Lord of Bohtan, passes by,
How⁵⁵ do you greet him?"

[?Mem] said, "Bako, early this morning,
Mem had a bad headache,
For this reason I⁵⁶ can't speak to Mir Zeidin, Lord of
Bohtan."

Mir Zeidin's diwan was full,
The nobles of Bohtan were seated all around.
Zin, Lady of Bohtan, was stuck under [Mem's] coat.

Memê Ala looked around the diwan,
[And] saw Qaratazhdin coming.
Memê Ala waved with his hand to Qaratazhdin.

Qaratazhdin came over to Memê Ala,
Qaratazhdin sat down beside Memê Ala,
Memê Ala could do nothing.
He turned pale⁵⁷.

He showed Qaratazhdin two of Zin's braids under the hem of
his coat.

Qaratazhdin filled up his pipe.
Qaratazhdin [leisurely] smoked his pipe in the diwan,
Until it went out.

Qaratazhdin was very distressed.
This was a serious matter which had befallen him.
Qaratazhdin shook out his pipe in the diwan.

[79] Qaratazhdin rose to his feet,
Both of his eyes red with grief.
Qaratazhdin left the diwan,
He went home, called to his wife,

⁵⁵=lit. "From where."

⁵⁶Note the shift from third person to first person.

⁵⁷=lit. "Memê Ala's [facial] color changed."

[Saying], "Bring out the Koran and the baby's cradle,
I will set fire to our cottage, let it be a sacrifice."
[She] said, "Crazy Qaratazhdin,
We are neither guilty nor at fault.
Why should we burn down our cottage?"
[He] said, "Woman! You've talked long enough about this
matter!
I'll grab your arm and stab you four times!
Is it God's justice that Memê Ala and Zin, Lady of Bohtan,
should be taken to task⁵⁸?"
[She] said, "Qaratazhdin, in that case,
Let only the Koran -- the name of God -- be rescued⁵⁹.
Let the golden cradle stay in its place,
That our good reputation⁶⁰ be known in the world."
Crazy Qaratazhdin got up,
Taking flame in hand,
Set fire to his colorful cottage.
Flames shot up from it, some red and others blue.
[When] word reached the diwan of Mir Zeidin, Lord of
Bohtan,
For haste the slippers on their feet split⁶¹.
Suddenly the diwan was empty.
Even Mir Zeidin got up and left.
When he had gotten as far as the outer gate,
He realized that he had left one shoe⁶² inside⁶³,

⁵⁸Li ber deftera hatin =lit. "To come before the notebooks/registers." In my opinion, this means something like "To be taken to task for something", or "To be held accountable for something." In PS, it is explained as meaning '*den Blicken ausgesetzt sein*' = "To be exposed to glances", i.e. "To be publicly disgraced."

⁵⁹-lit. "Not stay inside."

⁶⁰Nav û namusek [nāv u nāmūsāk] = lit. 'Name and honor.'

⁶¹i.e., Everyone ran out to see the fire so quickly that they split their shoes.

⁶²Pēlav = "A type of shoe, high and pointed in back" (according to PS).

And said, "Bako, go get my shoe." When Bako went back
 [And] grabbed the shoe,
 He saw Zin, Lady of Bohtan, emerge from under Mem's
 sheepskin coat.

Accursed Bako watched with his own eyes,
 As she ascended the stairs [to her room].
 By the time everyone got there,
 The house had burnt to the ground.

Mir Zeidin came back

[And] sat on his throne.

The diwan filled up [again],

The nobles of Bohtan were seated all around.

Mir Zeidin said, "From top to bottom:⁶⁴

Qaratazhdin's house has burned down, we must take up a collection so
 that his [new] house is [even] better than the last one.

Qaratazhdin said one day, "O mir,
 Bring rooks, queens, and a chessboard,
 So that we can ask about each other's beloved⁶⁵."
 Accursed Bako arose,
 Brought rooks, queens, and a chessboard,
 [And] placed them before Mir Zeidin and Memê Ala.
 Mir Zeidin and Memê Ala played chess together.
 Lady Zin was seated at the window.
 Memê Ala beat Mir Zeidin three times.
 Then accursed Bako got up
 [And] said, "Mir, you're [both] still boys,

⁶³=lit. "One of his shoes had stayed in the house."

⁶⁴Ji fiştir fieta pêştir [ze hiştir hâtâ pêştir] =lit. "From camel to front." The saying places more importance on sound (the fact that *fiştir* and *pêştir* rhyme) than on meaning. This is a fairly common phenomenon in Middle Eastern languages. An Arabic example is the expression "Ana fi ħilm wa-lâ fi 'ilm?", meaning more or less "Am I dreaming?". The idea is "Am I in reality or in a dream", however the word 'ilm means 'knowledge' rather than 'reality', but the meaning is apparently deemed close enough to justify not foregoing the rhyme of ħilm (Classical Arabic ħilm = "dream") and 'ilm.

⁶⁵According to the rules of the game, the loser must reveal who his beloved is to the winner.

You're showering one another with blows,
Why don't you get up and change places?"

Memê Ala and the lord of Bohtan got up
[And]exchanged places.

After the rooks, queens, and chessboard were set up,
Memê ala lifted his eyes,
[And] saw Lady Zîn [80] above his head.

He put the chesspieces down any which way⁶⁶.

This time Mir Zeidin, Lord of Bohtan, beat Memê Ala at
chess.

Then he said, "Hey Mem, who is your beloved?"

[Mem] said, "I beat you three times,

But I never asked you who your beloved is⁶⁷.

[Mir Zeidin] said, "Mem, my beloved is a wild bear

With cracked feet and heels,

With a thistle⁶⁸ stuck in her bosom in the marketplace of
the city of Jezir⁶⁹."

[Then] Memê Ala replied, "My beloved is as black as ink⁷⁰,

She is [like] soot [from] flame and fire-brands.

She used to sell yoghurt in the marketplace of
the city of Jezir."

Thereupon accursed Bako arose,

⁶⁶=lit. "badly."

⁶⁷i.e. So why are you asking me about mine?

⁶⁸*Kereng* or *kerger* is cardoon, bot. *Cynara cardunculus*, a large perennial thorny plant related to the artichoke and cultivated for its edible root and leafstalks.

⁶⁹This may seem like nonsense in English, but it rhymes in Kurdish. Mir Zeidin is mocking Mem.

⁷⁰In PS, this last word, [dota] is translated as *soot* (German *Ruß*), presumably for **do**. I think *ink* is more likely, both because another word for soot (*tenî*) is used in the next line, and because in Jaba and Justi's dictionary, the form [dot] **دوت** has a cross-reference to [devit] **دویت**, apparently a misprint for [devid] **دوید** (since [devit] **دویت** does not appear in the expected place in the dictionary), akin to Turkish **divit**, both from Arabic **دواة** = "inkwell", cf. Hebrew **דֵּוּיָה** = "ink."

[And] said, "Mem, why are you telling lies in your beard?"⁷¹
 Why don't you say your beloved is Zin,
 The newborn dove,
 Sister of my prince, Mir Zeidin?"

When Bako said this, Mir Zeidin said in a rage, "Hey, what's
 going on here?"

Grab Memê Ala by the arms and put him to the dagger;
 No sons of fathers shall say a word contrary to the word of
 the man at the top⁷²."

As [those in] the diwan sprang to action,
 Memê Ala pressed his back up against the wall,
 [And] pulled out his crooked dagger,
 They saw Qaratazhdin and his three brothers come in.
 When he saw that they were about to kill Memê Ala,
 Qaratazhdin said, "By Allah the great,
 By the Koran and the [holy] books and registers,
 If anyone stirs from his place, I'll expel his spirit from his
 body."
 Not a soul moved from his place;
 A trembling broke out in Mir Zeidin's diwan,
 Qaratazhdin took Memê Ala by the arm,
 Led him out of the diwan,
 And headed for home.

Accursed Bako said, "Mir Zeidin, you yourself know that in front of
 Qaratazhdin and his three brothers you can't say anything." [Mir Zeidin] said, "Bako,
 what shall I do? I can't strike them: I'm afraid they would kill me." [Bako] said, "Shall
 I give you some advice?" [Mir Zeidin] said, "Tell me!" [Bako] said, "Send for

⁷¹In PS, this is translated as, "Why do you lie to the people in the beard?"

⁷²The meaning of this line is obscure.

Qaratazhdin to come. Since you have to donate gifts⁷³ to the Kaabah⁷⁴, say, 'I beg you, Qaratazhdin, I have to send gifts to the Kaabah: I need you and your brothers to take them there for me. Take a company of horsemen with you and deliver these gifts to the overseer of the Kaabah. I trust no one [else].' After he goes, we can take Memê Ala and throw him in the dungeon; then we'll have a way out.' [Mir Zeidin] said, "Bako, go tell Qaratazhdin to come here." Bako got up and went. He said, "Qaratazhdin, the mir said for you to come."

Qaratazhdin got up and came,

Gave greeting to the diwan.

[Mir Zeidin] said, "Qaratazhdin, I sent word to you,
Something has happened to me."

[Qaratazhdin] said, "Mir, tell me what has happened."

[Mir Zeidin] said, "Last night, I dreamt

That I owed a donation to the overseer of the Kaabah;

I don't trust just anybody to deliver this money, [81] I need

you and your three brothers to take it

[And] deliver it to the overseer of the Kaabah,

Then return in goodness and safety.

[Qaratazhdin] said, "Well, your highness, we wouldn't go [of
our own accord],

But for your sake we will go."

[Mir Zeidin] said, "Put your things together⁷⁵."

Then Qaratazhdin went home. When he told his brothers, they said, "Brother, as you wish: you are our eldest brother, you can do as you wish." He went to the mir and said, "Mir, make your package ready!" [Mir Zeidin] said, "Gladly!" The mir got his package ready and had it tied up. Early in the morning it was loaded up. That night they went home and sat around. The following day they got up, put on their armor, prepared their horses, mounted them and rode off. They loaded up the gifts; a few horsemen went with them, and they left the city. When they were

⁷³Mal [māl] = lit. "Property", from the Arabic māl مال.

⁷⁴Central site of the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca

⁷⁵i.e., Get ready for the journey.

gone, some servants came, took Memê Ala and threw him in the dungeon. They locked the door of the dungeon, leaving [only] a hole in it. Everyday they left him three [loaves of] bread and a pitcher of water. Lady Zin heard that Memê Ala had been taken. She put a black kerchief on her head, and wore black clothes.

Mem remained imprisoned for seven years. At the end of the seventh year, Qaratazhdin returned. His wife said, "God bless it⁷⁶, how have you treated your beloved brother []? You've been gone seven years, while Memê Ala has been imprisoned, thrown into the dungeon. By now his bones have probably rotted away."

The four brothers removed their armor. They entered the diwan,
 Saying, "We've come to set Memê Ala free,
 We will marry him to Lady Zin.
 Otherwise we will smear the diwan of the lord of Bohtan
 with blood and killing."
 Accursed Bako got up,

He would not let Mir Zeidin speak, but said, "He's not our prisoner, he's Lady Zin's prisoner, let her go set him free." He sent word to Lady Zin, saying, "Come set Memê Ala free!" Lady Zin went to the hamman⁷⁷, bathed, made up her eyes, let her hair hang loose. She put on whatever festive dress she had.

Lady Zin adorned herself in green and red⁷⁸,
 Betook herself to the dungeon,
 Saying, "Mem, arise! Goodness has come, strife has ended,
 if God wills it so."
 When Memê Ala lifts his eyes
 [And] sees Lady Zin above him in her finery,
 He softly sheds tears,
 Saying, "Lady Zin, you haven't come to see me,
 You've come to take the sweet spirit from my body."
 Memê stood up

⁷⁶This must be ironic, meaning really "God curse it."

⁷⁷Bathhouse

⁷⁸In a Bulgarian folksong, two flags are ordered, one green and one red. The green one is for battle, the red one for the wedding. It would be interesting to know if the same color symbolism is intended here, on the other side of what was the Ottoman Empire.

[And] asked Lady Zin for a bowl of water.
 Lady Zin ran and brought him a bowl of cold water.
 When she put it in the hands of Mem the miserable⁷⁹.
 Mem the miserable slowly drank,
 [Then] gave up his sweet spirit.
 Lady Zin said, "Every hour has been a year⁸⁰ for me,
 The world has become narrow for me,
 I swear by God, in this world there was only one Mem for
 me."

- [82] Lady Zin put her headkerchief on the ground, put on a black
 one⁸¹,
 Draped the door with colors of mourning⁸².
 Mir Zeidin said, "O Zin, Zin,
 Why are you crying?
 If I could buy you Memê Ala,
 I'd buy him for you with the gold of my treasury.
 Come now, Zin, don't be sad,
 I will assemble the noble of Bohtan for you,
 You choose one for yourself instead of Memê Ala.
 [She] said, "O Brother, from this side to that,
 I will paint [the room] indigo and (alum).
 After Memê Ala, may no boys remain to replace him."

She took Memê Ala's body out of the dungeon, heated up a pot of water, and washed his corpse, [then] went to the market and bought linen cloth, made him a

⁷⁹This is Mem's new -- albeit shortlived -- epithet.

⁸⁰The text has [sá;ag] an obscure form. In PS this is translated as, "Every hour of my life I shall think of this hour."

⁸¹or, made it black or dust-colored by throwing it on the ground.

⁸²[šin u-haš]. Šin has two meanings. a) Mourning b) in Southern Kurmanji dialects, such as the one in which this text was dictated, the word **heşin**, meaning both green and blue, takes the form **šin**. **Heş** is also apparently a shortened form of **heşin**: in Jaba & Justi's dictionary, there is a form [hech] **هش** = indigo, from [hechin] **هشین**.

shroud of linen, sewed it [on him] and took him to the graveyard, dug him a grave, buried Memê Ala, and came back home.

[She] said, "I'm afraid it will rain,
It will leak through to Mem's grave,
Inside, Mem will fall to pieces⁸³.
[Mir Zeidin] said, "Zin, what do you want?" She said, "Mir
Zeidin, by God do as I say,
Take a handful of straw on your breast,
[Then] go spread it over Memê Ala's grave,
Give him a thousand greetings from Zin⁸⁴."
Mir Zeidin arose,
Did as his sister asked,
Took a handful of straw on his breast,
Gave Mem a thousand greetings from Zin.
Praised be the Lord, Memê Ala returned Mir Zeidin's
greeting.
He said, "Your and Zin's greeting is welcome;
Eight days from now,
Mem and Zin will go to heaven together."
Then Mir Zeidin, lord of Bohtan, wept,
Tears fell from his eyes.
He set out for home.

Zin came out to meet him. [She said, "Brother, why are you crying?" [He] said, "As I was walking, some dust got in my eye." She said, "Brother, I know what happened, but tell me the truth." He said, "Sister, it is from God"]⁸⁵. He said,

"Zin, I did everything you told me to,
I took a handful of straw on my breast,
I went and spread it on Mem's grave,
Gave him a thousand greetings from Zin,

⁸³ 'Will fall to pieces' is PS's rendering of this line.

⁸⁴ =lit. "From Zin's mouth."

⁸⁵ According to PS, the sentences in brackets were added later.

Praised be God, Memê Ala returned my greeting
 [And] said, 'Your and Zin's greeting is welcome;
 Eight days from now,
 Mem and Zin will go to heaven together.' "

Zin got up,
 Went to make herself ready.
 Eight days later she died too.
 Responsibility for this was put on her brother⁸⁶, she said,
 "Bury me beside Memê Ala."

Some women washed Zin[’s body], bought her a linen shroud, [then] took her to the graveyard and buried her beside Mem. Then Mir Zeidin brought [83] ten mullahs there, read the Koran over them (this is the custom of the Kurmanj): from Sunday to Friday they recited the sūrah⁸⁷ Yāsīn over the graves.

Mir Zeidin ordered that whoever goes to Mem and Zin's
 grave
 May not bring any weapons.

Seven days later, Qaratazhdin strapped on his dagger. He went to the graveyard and saw Bako there. While he stood, the nobles of Bohtan sat. He said, "Look, in this life⁸⁸ Zin would not let go of him, and in death⁸⁹ too she won't leave him alone." People said to him, "God damn you, while they were alive you never left them alone, now that they're gone you're still not letting them be." Bako said, "Memê Ala has gone to Zin's grave." The mīr said, "Boys, dig up Zin's grave." When they had dug up her grave, they saw that Zin had gone to Mem's grave. Mir Zeidin was very grieved [and] said, "May the Aleppo blight befall the house of Bako's father, may it be forever intertwined with his family." Qaratazhdin stood up, put his

⁸⁶=lit. "She put her sins on her brother's neck."

⁸⁷A chapter of the Koran is called a sūrah.

⁸⁸=lit. "On/above the world"

⁸⁹=lit. "Below the world."

hands on the back of accursed Bako's neck, took out a dagger from his belt, and stabbed Bako with it. A drop of his blood fell between the two of them⁹⁰. At that instant a thornbush grew up between them. At that instant Zin went to her own grave, [while] Memê Ala stayed in his place. The two of them were once again covered with dirt, and everyone went back home. I came from there⁹¹, God's mercy on the parents of the listeners⁹².

⁹⁰i.e., Mem and Zin.

⁹¹This is reminiscent of a common Soranî Kurdish concluding formula for folktales: **Mintî hatmewe û hiçyan nedamê** = "As for me, I came back, and they didn't give me anything."

⁹²This is almost identical to a common Kurmanji Kurdish introductory formula for folktales. Cf. the first several folktales in PS, collected in the Tur 'Abdin district of what is today the province of Mardin, Kurdistan of Turkey

Makas, Hugo. "Mamu und Zine", in *Kurdische Texte im Kurmanji-Dialekte aus der Gegend von Mârdîn*. (St-Petersburg/ Leningrad, 1897-1926; reprint Amsterdam : APA - Philo Press, 1979), pp. [5]-20. [Kurmanji in Latin phonetic transcription + German translation] (HM)

HM. Collected c. 1896 by Hugo Makas from the merchant Mohammed Emîn bin Shermdîn el-Mendilkânî (henceforth Emîn) during the latter's year-long stay in Brûnn/Brno, Moravia (today in Czechoslovakia). Emîn dictated the text to Hugo Makas. Emîn was born in Mardin, to a family of Kurdish chieftains originally from the now ruined town of Mendîle. Emîn's family, known as "beit Ismail beg" was Muslim, and was bilingual in Arabic and Kurdish, as is still common in Mardin today. Emîn himself travelled widely in his business dealings, and although he was illiterate in Arabic script, had a passing knowledge of several languages. According to what Makas says in his introduction, it is possible that 20 years had passed since Emîn, who was approximately 40 years old when this text was collected, had last heard the story recited. He apparently stuck to a fixed form of the story, first telling the whole tale in minute detail in Arabic. In reciting the Kurdish version, he left out certain details, such as the true reason why Mamu died, which he claimed any Kurd would know, and therefore needed no explanation.

Mámu u Zîné (HM)

"Yes lo lo o Father. Last night I saw a dream, in the
dream

I was going around asking where Qaratajdin's house was.
By God, Zîné and I swapped rings."

"O son, don't. You are the son of the mîr¹ of the
Alan [clan].

Whom does your heart desire from the daughters of mîrs
and the daughters of aghas ²?"

Mámu said, "By God, O father, I shall go." Mîr Alan said, "Okay son, go. May God not let your affair turn out right. May your neck break. May your throat dissolve." Mámu went to the country of Jezîrê Botâ. He was a guest at the house of Báko Awân. Báko Awân asked him, "O guest, how are you?" Mámu Alan said, "By God, my mîr, I have come because of [my] love of Zîné."

¹=prince.

²=feudal lords.

Báko Awân said, "My guest, whom are you asking about? That's my daughter." When Mámu Alan looked at Báko Awân's daughter, he was shocked, and struck dumb. Báko Awân took Mámu Alan to the diwan of mîr Sevdîn. When Qaratajdin saw Mámu Alan, he was astounded. He asked him, "O cousin, where are you from?" Mámu Alan said, "O cousin, I am the son of the mîr of the Alan [clan]." Qaratajdin said, "What business do you have in these parts?" Mámu Alan said, "By God, cousin, I have come because of [my] love of Zînê. When I saw Zînê³, I was shocked. The one I saw [6] in my dream was different." Qaratajdin said, "O brother, we are three brothers. You will be the fourth. I know who your betrothed is. It is the sister of mîr Sevdîn. They are going hunting for two or three days. You act sick [so that you can stay behind]. You will see Zînê." Mîr Sevdîn went hunting with his men. Báko Awân went to mîr Sevdîn and said, "My mîr, how can you leave Mámu Alan alone in the diwan? He is a stranger⁴. Perhaps he will see your wife [or] your sister. It is a disgrace among us [to do such a thing]." Mîr Sevdîn said, "Go bring him, even if he is in the middle of dying⁵." The men went and brought Qaratajdin [and] Mámu Alan. He rode on the horse lying on his stomach⁶. They went for half an hour. Qaratajdin went to mîr Sevdîn and said,

"Lo lo o mîr,
We are going hunting and the like,
Dragging a corpse around with us."

Mîr Sevdîn said, "Tie up Mámu's horse. If Mámu feels better, let him go to the diwan. If he doesn't feel better, we will return from hunting, we will take Mámu back to the diwan ourselves." Mîr Sevdîn went hunting with his men. They descended from a hilltop, [and] went. Mámu looked for them, [but]

³According to Makas, Báko Awân's daughter is intended here.

⁴=lit. "That man is a stranger/foreigner."

⁵=No matter what he is doing, bring him to me.

⁶=to feign illness.

they were not apparent. Mâmu Alan got on his horse, and headed for the diwan. When he got to the diwan, he sat down there and fell asleep. Zînê, the sister of mîr Sevdîn, came to the diwan with two maidservants. They looked at [7] Mâmu Alan, and all three girls fell in love with him. The two maidservants said to each other, "He's mine." Zînê said, "He's neither yours, nor hers, nor mine. Each one of us will sing a song⁷ for Mâmu Alan. Whoever's voice makes him wake up and open his eyes, he's for that one." First the one maidservant sang her song, [but] Mâmu did not wake up. Then the other maidservant sang her song for Mâmu, [but] he did not wake up. Zînê sang her song for Mâmu. Before she could finish her song, Mâmu Alan opened his eyes and woke up, and saw Zînê. The two maidservants went away. Mâmu and Zînê stayed there. They fell in love.

Mîr Sevdîn was returning from the hunt. There were two hours of travelling left before he'd reach the diwan. Qaratajdin knew that Mâmu and Zînê had fallen in love. Qaratajdin said to his brothers, "Brothers, what⁸ should we do? I fear that mîr Sevdîn will come to the diwan and see Mâmu and Zînê have fallen in love⁹. They don't know what time we are returning from the hunt. We'll make a racket, and shoot off our pistols. Perhaps Mâmu will hear, so that Zînê, who is with Mâmu, will leave the diwan, so that mîr Sevdîn sees nothing." Qaratajdin and his brothers raise a racket, shoot off their pistols, sing in shrill voices, as they approach the diwan. Qaratajdin was afraid that Mâmu and Zînê had fallen in love¹⁰, and would not hear. Qaratajdin went to his mîr and said, "My mîr, I'll go to the diwan and prepare the coffee and the place. [8] So that when my mîr gets down [off his horse], his place will be ready." Mîr Sevdîn ordered, "Let Qaratajdin go." Qaratajdin went. Bâko Awân said to mîr Sevdîn, "My mîr, it's not necessary for Qaratajdin to go to the diwan to make the place ready. Order him to return." Mîr Sevdîn ordered a

⁷=lit. "throw a song."

⁸=lit. "how."

⁹The original Kurdish could mean 'making love'.

¹⁰Same as note 9.

horseman, "Make haste, go quickly to Qaratajdin, and tell [him] that mîr Sevdîn has ordered him to return: it's not necessary that he go to the diwan." Qaratajdin returned. Mîr Sevdîn and his men went as far as the diwan. Mîr Sevdîn got down off his horse, went into the diwan, and saw Mâmu Alan alone. Mâmu Alan did not greet him, which shocked mîr Sevdîn. Mîr Sevdîn's men came to the diwan and sat down. Mîr Sevdîn ordered Qaratajdin, "Today you give the men coffee." Qaratajdin went around the diwan, giving out coffee. When he came to Mâmu Alan, Mâmu opened his overcoat, and Qaratajdin could see Zînê's hair.

Qaratajdin went crazy, and went out and called his brother Arfo, saying, "What should we do to rescue Mâmu?" Arfo said, "Brother, pretend you're crazy, and go burn down mîr Sevdîn's tent." Qaratajdin went and burnt down mîr Sevdîn's horse and tent. Arfo went to the diwan and said, "My mîr, Qaratajdin has gone stark raving mad: he has burnt up your horse and tent." Mîr Sevdîn stood up. Bâko Awân said, "My mîr, for a horse and a tent you get up? Tomorrow I will bring you [9] better than that horse and that tent ." Mîr Sevdîn returned to his place and sat down. Qaratajdin said, "Brother, this won't do. Let's do this: say to your wife, "Will you give your blood¹¹, so that we can rescue Mâmu Alan?"¹² Arfo went to his wife and said, "Hey girl, will you give your blood for the sake of Mâmu Alan?" Arfo's wife said, "Yes, I'll give my blood for the sake of Mâmu Alan." Qaratajdin went and said to Arfo's wife, "Stand up, and take your son with you. Go seven feet away from me. When I say, 'Run', make a shrill cry and run. When I reach you, I'll kill you and your son." Arfo's wife obeyed Qaratajdin, and ran with her son. Qaratajdin set out after her, reached her and drew his sword. With one blow he struck her down, killing her and her son. Arfo went and informed mîr Sevdîn, [saying.] "My mîr, Qaratajdin has gone stark raving mad: he's killed my wife and child." Mîr Sevdîn stood up. Bâko Awân said, "My mîr, why have you stood up? He killed my sister, no harm done." Mîr Sevdîn said, "Everyone speaks for himself." Mîr Sevdîn got up and went out.

¹¹=life.

¹²According to Makas' notes, Qaratajdin chose Arfo's wife because she is Bâko Awân's sister.

Zinê came out from under Mámu's overcoat and went up. Mîr Sevdîn returned to the diwan and saw the tip of Zinê's caftan. He didn't know whether it was the caftan of his wife or the caftan of his sister. They sat down. Báko Awân said, "My mîr, let's all take an oath by the sword and the Koran. We'll say who our beloved is [10]." Mîr Sevdîn said, "Yes." Mîr Sevdîn was the first to take an oath. All the men took an oath. It was Mámu Alan's turn. Qaratajdin got up and said, "My mîr, this isn't right. I'll swear an oath in Mámu's stead." Mîr Sevdîn said, "If you trust him, take the oath." Qaratajdin took an oath, saying:

"Yes lo lo o Báko Awâno¹³,
 You've placed sword and Koran before Mámu Alan.
 God knows that Mámu Alan does not have a herd of
 lovers¹⁴,
 Except for one of the Arabs; it was the daughter of the lady
 of Qára Oglânî"

Báko Awân said, "My mîr, each one of you should take an oath." Mîr Sevdîn ordered, "Mámu Alan, take an oath." Mámu Alan took an oath, [saying]:

"Yes lo lo o Báko Awâno.
 You placed sword and Koran before me.
 God knows that I don't have a herd of lovers,
 There is only one: her name is Zinê.
 She is the daughter of the lady of Qaratajdin,
 the sister of mîr Sevdîn.

¹³Additional -o at the end of Awâno is a vocative form.

¹⁴This line is troublesome: Makas translates it as "there is no secret about a beloved of Mámu Alan," but understanding 'surâjâ' (suraye) as secret, does not make sense grammatically: perhaps the Turkish *sürû* = 'herd' is meant. 'döstê mámu alân' is also troublesome, as grammatically it could not mean a *female* lover of Mámu Alan's. However, it could be plural (irrespective of gender): If am right, this passage would mean something like 'Mámu Alan does not have a herd of lovers'.

Yes lo lo mîro ¹⁵,
Get up and chop off my head, stuff it up the wife of Báko
Awân.”

Mîr Sevdîn said, “O men, get up; thrust your daggers all around in Mámu Alan.”^[11] Mámu Alan put his hand on his dagger, drew it out, [and] its handle broke: it fell from his hand. Qaratajdin saw Mámu Alan: never in his life had he seen such a man. Qaratajdin got up, went stark raving mad, and said:

“Yes lo lo mîro mîro mîro.
If you so much as throw a rose at Mámu Alan,
I will send mîr Sevdîn’s very head a-flying.”

Mîr Sevdîn said, “Bread and salt are forbidden to you [from now on]¹⁶.” Qaratajdin and his brothers and Mámu Alan got up and left. They walked for three or four hours. Qaratajdin saw that Mámu Alan [was walking] one step forward, and four back¹⁷. Qaratajdin said, “Mámu, I know you are in love with Zîné. Take care of yourself.” Mámu went back to the diwan of mîr Sevdîn. Qaratajdin and his brothers went to Sham¹⁸. Mîr Sevdîn said, “Mámu Alan, let’s play chess. If you win, I’ll give you Zîné. If I win, I will imprison you in the diwan.” Mámu accepted, saying, “My mîr, all right, I accept.” The two of them played together from morning till noon. Mámu won. They went and had something to eat, then returned to their places. Báko Awân was there and

¹⁵Additional -o is a vocative form, as in note 13 above.

¹⁶According to Ibrahim Muhawi and Sharif Kanaana, “Salt symbolizes the bond that holds people together. The phrase “They’ve share bread and salt” (bēnhum ‘ēš u-maliḥ) describes a strong bond, and when someone breaks a trust he is said to have “betrayed the bread and salt” (yixim il-‘ēš w-il-maliḥ).” See their *Speak Bird, Speak Again* (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1989), p. 107, note 10. See also: Ernest Jones. “The Symbolic Significance of Salt in Folklore and Superstition,” *Imago* 1 (1912), 361- ; reprinted in his: *Psycho-Myth, Psycho-History : Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis* (New York : Hillstone, 1974), pp. 22-109, esp. 37-8.

¹⁷=lit. “Qaratajdin saw Mámu Alan [was walking] one foot forward, and four back”, i.e. he kept turning around and looking back, thinking of Zîné.

¹⁸=Syria.

said, "My mîr, change places." Mâmu sat in mîr Sevdîn's place and mîr Sevdîn sat in Mâmu Alan's place. They played on. Then Mâmu Alan just happened to look up and see Zinê. [12] He became bewildered, and lost [the game]. Mîr Sevdîn said, "You have lost. I will imprison you in the diwan."

Báko Awân came to mîr Sevdîn and said, "My mîr, have you imprisoned Mâmu Alan?" Mîr Sevdîn said, "Yes." Báko Awân asked, "Where have you imprisoned him?" Mîr Sevdîn said, "In the diwan." Báko Awân said, "How can you imprison him in the diwan?" Mîr Sevdîn said, "Where should I imprison him?" Báko Awân said, "Let's throw him in the dungeon." Mîr Sevdîn said, "Fine." They threw Mâmu Alan into the dungeon. Zinê was sick [with grief]. Every day she took bread and meat and gave it to Mâmu Alan. Time passed and one day, Zinê saw a traveller¹⁹ coming by. She called out to him, "Hey man!" When the man saw Zinê, he fell in love with her. He turned around, opened his eyes, looked at Zinê and said, "Yes, Zinê, how are you doing?" Zinê said, "O man, can you take a letter for me to Sham? Give it to Qaratajdin²⁰." The traveller said, "I can take a letter in seven days and nights and give it to Qaratajdin. Swear that if I return safe and sound, you will marry²¹ me." Zinê swore, saying, "May God's oath fall on the spirit of my soul. If you return safe and sound, I will marry you." Zinê wrote the letter. In the letter she wrote to Qaratajdin, "As soon as you get this letter, at that very moment kill this man²². I have sworn that I will marry him if he returns safe and sound." Zinê finished the letter [13] and gave it to the traveller. The man took it from Zinê and went on. When he got to the country of Sham, he asked for Qaratajdin. He found Qaratajdin in a coffee house, gave him the letter and left. Qaratajdin opened the letter and read it, [then said,] "Mâmu is in a bad state, and Zinê has sworn to marry this man." He got up, and all three brothers got on their horses and left Sham. They saw the man running. Qaratajdin spurred his horse on, went

¹⁹peya = man or pedestrian/walker.

²⁰lit. = "to the hand of Qaratajdin."

²¹lit. = "take."

²²Motif K978. Uriah letter. Man carries written order for his own execution. This famous motif appears in Shakespeare's Hamlet.

up to the man and killed him. They rode to Jezîrê Botâ in four days and four nights. They rode to the diwan of mîr Sevdîn, dismounted, went inside and greeted [the mîr]. Qaratajdin said, "Where is my brother Mámu?" Mîr Sevdîn said, "My dear, come sit down. We'll bring Mámu Alan in a moment."

Báko Awân went to Zînê and said, "Come Zînê. Go invite forty girls and musicians and go together to take Mámu Alan out of the dungeon." Zînê was delighted. She went and called forty girls and musicians, and they went to Mámu Alan's prison. Zînê called out, "Hey Mámu, get up!" Mámu Alan opened his eyes and said:

"Yes Zînê Zînê Zînê, with black eyes and golden spangles.
 You have not come to take Mámu Alan out of prison.
 You have come to let Mámu Alan's soul out of its cage.
 One eye has gone, one eye remains,
 One hand has gone, one hand remains,
 [14] One foot has gone, one foot remains."

Zînê said:

"A word has escaped the mouth of Mámu Alan;
 Three drops of blood have dripped from the nose of Mámu
 Alan;
 At this time, at this hour Mámu Alan is shivering in the
 dungeon."

They took Mámu Alan[*'s* body] out of the dungeon and placed him in a grave. Zînê died eight days after Mámu Alan. They took her [body] and put her in the grave in another place. Mîr Sevdîn said, "Let's make a bet, and play jirid²³, and see where the lance falls. If the lance falls on Mámu's grave, we'll open up his grave: if it falls on Zînê's grave, we'll open her grave up." They played on Friday, and by the power of God the lance fell on Mámu Alan's

²³A game played on horseback with lances, similar to polo.

grave. They opened his grave. Qaratajdin opened it. They found Mámu and Zînê together in the same grave, with a sword of clay between them. Qaratajdin called out, "Hey Báko Awâno, come see God's strength, what there is here." Báko Awân came and looked from above, and was amazed. Qaratajdin grabbed hold of him and pulled him into the grave. He said, "What is this?" Qaratajdin drew his dagger to kill him. Mîr Sevdîn called out, "Qaratajdin, don't kill him: in the grave, his blood will be harmful." Qaratajdin did not listen to mîr Sevdîn and did not wait. Twenty one times [15] he thrust his dagger into Báko Awân and killed him. They climbed out of the grave, covered it with earth²⁴, and left. Báko Awân's blood became a thornbush on the grave of Mámu and Zînê, which came out of the treachery of Báko Awân.

²⁴lit. "put earth on it."

Le Coq, Albert von. "Hikāyēi māmī ālan," in *Kurdische Texte: Kurmanġi-Erzählungen und -Lieder nebst einer Zāzā Erzählung, gesammelt und herausgegeben in der Urschrift und in Transkription* (Berlin, 1903; reprint Amsterdam : APA - Philo Press, [198-?]), pp. 36-44; ٤٢ - ٥٢ . [Kurmanji in Latin phonetic transcription + Arabic script; translation planned but never published (?)] (LC-1)

LC-1. Collected by Albert von Le Coq in the fall of 1901, from Ja'far Oġlu Seidi Biyā, at Zincirli (Zengirli), near the town of İslāhiye (Eş-Sālihiye) in the western part of the modern province of Gaziantep, i.e. in the extreme western part of Kurdistan of Turkey. We know little about the informant other than the fact that he is a native of Zincirli. The text is in rhyming verse, although it has not been printed as such on the page: in my translation, I have indicated where each line begins and ends. The poetry of this version bears a great deal of similarity to that of ZK-2, which was collected in 1970 from an elderly Armenian man who grew up among the Reshkot (a Kurdish tribe of the Yezidi religion) in the province of Diyarbekir: this fact tells us much about the formulaic character of Mem û Zîn, and of Kurdish verbal art in general. Zincirli is the site of the ancient Greek ruins of Samal, where some important early Aramaic inscriptions were uncovered: Le Coq exploited the opportunity of accompanying an archaeological expedition that was excavating there, to study the language of the indigenous Kurds of the region by collecting a series of texts. The texts, which include two versions of Mem û Zîn, were first published in 1903 in primitive Latin phonetic transcription + Arabic script; a German translation was planned, but was apparently never published.

Hikāyēi Māmī Alan (LC-1)

[36] O Sir, in the country of Mughrib,¹ in the very city of Mughrib, my heart is sad,²

The city of Mughrib is black and wide,
[It rests] on top of forty four stone heaps,
On top of twenty four mountains,

Note: In the text, numbers in brackets [] refer to page numbers in the original text in Latin transcription; numbers in parentheses () refer to line numbers in that text.

¹Mughrib, from the Arabic word for "West," maghrib مغرب , In most versions, the imaginary city which Memê Alan hails from is called Mukhurzemîn or Mikhurzemîn. **Zemîn** is a Persian word meaning 'Land' or 'Country' (cf. Russian zemlia земля); Mukhur-/mikhur- may be derived from the Arabic word maghrib. In one version (MC-1), the place is known as Merxebzemîn, i.e. 'The Land to the West.' In OM and several Southern Kurmanji versions, Mem is from Yemen.

²This last part is 'filler,' unessential to the meaning of the verse. It does, however, serve the important function of setting the rhyme scheme, which in this case is in **-ane**.

[With] three hundred and sixty six town quarters,

Every quarter with three hundred and sixty six slender minarets.

But there are three begs³ in this city, all three are brothers; they have no children, their households are empty, their lineage is lost⁴.

One day⁵ (5) in the city of Mughrib five holidays coincided⁶, one an *eed*⁷ of the Christians,

One an eed of the Jews,

And one an eed of the Muslims,

One the day of the imperial session, and one the day of the Prophets, Friday, Eed of the Seers,⁸

All three begs, the rulers of Mughrib

[Sat] on their imperial thrones watching the people of Mughrib,

Hearing everyone going to visit their father's house in goodness,

³=Princes, chieftains

⁴War wundane =lit. "Their encampment is lost." This is a variant of the curse **Hûn war wunda bin** (Kurdoev) or **Wara wund bin!** (Khamoian), which means "May your race/family perish!" The Arabs have a similar curse, *yikhrab bêtak* **بيتك يخرّب**, "May your household be destroyed."

⁵=lit. "One day from under the days of God."

⁶=lit: "reached each other."

⁷E'yd or Id, from Arabic **عيد** *īd*, is a major religious holiday.

⁸rōyā nabiā wā énbiā rōyā inā īdā paīgāmbārāne =lit. "The day of the nabīs and anbiyā [from nabi **نبي**, Arabic for 'Prophet,' and anbiyā' **أنبياء**, the broken plural of nabī, Friday, the eed of the peyghamber [from peyghambar **پیغمبر**, Persian for 'Prophet,' literally 'Bearer [-bar] of the message [peighām **پیغام**].' Hence, the Prophets are mentioned three times in one line, twice in Arabic and once in Persian.

Young wives⁹ took hold of their children's hands and went to their father's house¹⁰,

Fourteen year-old boys mounted (10) their horses,

Setting out merrily, while the three begs watched from their imperial thrones, from their five-colored mansion.

The three begs saw with their own eyes the happiness of the city of Mughrib,

The three begs looked each other in the eye, stood up and took hold of the keys to the treasury.

They were not indifferent¹¹ to the treasury and its contents,

The three begs followed on each other's heels¹² and went to their imperial thrones, each one holding a handkerchief ready, and crying (15) together.

In the city of Mughrib, 450 sheikhs and *ulemas*¹³ assembled and went to pay a holiday visit to the three begs.

The royal sheikh¹⁴ preceded the ulema

In climbing up the 64 steps.

All around they stood respectfully with crossed hands¹⁵, looking up to see the three begs crying.

⁹=lit. "Brides"

¹⁰This recalls the *zeyf*, when a [newly] married woman goes to visit her father's household. See ZK-2, note #(10).

¹¹=lit. "Their hearts were not cool from the treasures" Although this expression does not appear in the dictionaries, one reminiscent of it does. *Dilê xwe sar kirin* - lit. "To make one's heart *axî*" (rather than *axî*): according to Khamoian, this means: 1) To lose heart, become despondent, discouraged, or disillusioned; 2) To become indifferent.

¹²=lit. "Took hold of each other's foot."

¹³= Learned men, from Arabic 'ulamā' علماء

¹⁴*şexî hünkäre*, a fixed epithet for the sheikhs, or Muslim religious men. One of the epithets of the Ottoman sultans was *Hünkâr*, from Persian *khun[d]kâr* خوندگار. Hence, the Hunkar sheikh would be "a sheikh of the Ottoman sultan (or some other ruler)," or "a royal sheikh."

¹⁵*yâdiyîrdâ* < Turkish *yedi yerde* = "in seven places" i.e. everywhere. *êl-pânça dîwân sîkînîn* < Turkish: *el pençe divan durmak* = "to stand in an attitude of respect with joined hands to stand ready to receive orders." In a Turkish romance epic, "Letif Şah ve Telli Mehriban," collected in Kars

The sheikh and ulemas spent three hours before them¹⁶,
 The royal sheikh respectfully asked the three begs,
 "Sires, what is the cause¹⁷? Today is a special day, the eed of Arafat¹⁸,
 We are not afraid of the seven kings and the nation of Ali Osman,
 We are not afraid (20) of Ethiopia or of India.
 We have no need of treasures or of riches.

What is the reason that on the day of the eed of Arafat you three brothers have burst into tears?"

An hour later the three begs had finished their crying and grieving, and called on the royal sheikh,

"O my sheikh, truly we are not afraid of the seven kings and the nation of Ali Osman,

But I am the master of the land of Mughrib, and of Ajamistan¹⁹

Are under my rule, but the cause (25) of our weeping is that we are three brothers,

We have no children, our lineage is lost,

Fate is not on our side²⁰.

After we die there is no one to sit on the imperial throne,

Our throne will remain in the hands of servants and the like,

We are crying for [lack of] male offspring."

The royal sheikh and the 450 ulema arose in anticipation of the three begs,

by Ahmet Caferoğlu in 1942, there is a recurrent phrase very similar to this one, and in a similar context, i.e. describing the respectful obeisance performed when coming into the presence of a king. The phrase, in Azeri Turkish as spoken by members of the Karapapak or Terekeme tribe is: **yeddi yerde temenah eledi** = "in seven places he made the oriental salute (bringing the fingers of the right hand to the lips and then to the forehead)." See Ahmet Caferoğlu, "Letif Şah ve Tellî Mehriban Hikayesi," *Doğu İllerimiz Ağzlarından Toplamalar*, vol. 3 : Kars, Erzurum, Çoruh İlbaylıkları Ağzları (İstanbul : Bürhaneddin Basımevi, 1942), pp. [19]-47.

¹⁶bârkoşâne, which perhaps means "before their breasts," i.e. in front of them.

¹⁷i.e., of your grief?

¹⁸Arafat is the name of a mountain and the adjacent plain east of Mecca, where devout Muslim pilgrims (Hâjji, plural Hujjâj) spend the ninth day of the Pilgrimage (al-Hâjji)

¹⁹i.e., Persia

²⁰=lit. "Fate is not (or, doesn't take) for us."

They all burst into tears,

The sheikh and elders washed themselves again²¹, turning to face Mecca (30) the Venerated and Medina the Enlightened, in the posture for praying to the Lord of the World, and cried.

The ulemas took out a book of incantations and a seal, looked at the stars and read their fortunes, perusing books of tradition and [the book of] the fairies²².

They wept to the Lord of the World for three days,

In the evening, on Friday night, at **yatsı**,²³

At the hour of the third [division],²⁴

The royal sheikh stood in the posture for prayer, then for the *yatsı* prayer; he performed two prostrations to the Lord of the World; he performed two prostrations, then looked up and saw four brothers.

[37] (35) Four brothers: One was Ezrail, one was Gabriel, one was Michael and one was Israfil, God rest his soul.²⁵ They called out, "O Royal Sheikh! Your begs' house won't flourish²⁶ except from the house of Qureysh²⁷.

²¹i. e., performed the *apres* (Turkish)/*âbdast* (Persian)/*wuđü'* (Arabic), or ritual ablutions that precede the Muslim prayer ritual.

²²This line includes several words whose meaning is not clear. I am guessing at the meaning of the following: *ismî 'azım* = "a book of incantations"; *kitābe sinā* may be a garbled version of the Islamic expression *al-kitāb wa-al-sunnah* **الكتاب والسنة** = the book (i.e. the Koran) and the traditions. For a brief discussion of this expression, see E. W. Lane. *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (reprint: Beirut : Librairie du Liban, 1980), vol. 4, p. 1438, col. 2 at bottom.

²³*Yasılan*. This is for the **Yatsı**, the Turkish name for the fifth daily call to prayer, two hours after sunset. Cf. LT, p. 22 l. 198: "*Şeva li yasıyan be...*," translated as "À l'heure de la prière de la nuit" [=at the hour of the nighttime prayer].

²⁴This could not mean 3:00 for two reasons: 1) It is stated above that night has fallen; 2) *Yatsı* occurs around 8:00 P.M. Moreover, the Kurds divide the day into three-8-hour periods called **Dan/De'n**: the onset of the third period could very well coincide with the fifth call to prayer (*Yatsı*).

²⁵These are the four patron angels, according to Islamic belief.

²⁶=lit. "Their hearth won't grow/be green." See M. Mokri. "Le Foyer Kurde" in: *Recherches de la Kurdologie. Contribution scientifique aux études iraniennes* (Paris : Librairie Klincksieck, 1970), p. 23.

²⁷Tribe of the Prophet Muhammad.

The royal sheikh went to the eldest brother, Rijal Hasan, [who said,] "O my sheikh, good evening to you!" The royal sheikh said, "O my king, last night at the *yats* prayers, the voices of four brothers came to me: these four brothers were angels fo the Lord of the World; by God's decree, according to the angels, your household will [only] flourish from the house of the Sheikh of Qureysh."

(40) The next day thay called the sheikhs and elders, the faithful and mystics, the learned and ulemas of Mughrib, who assembled and mounted their horses and mares, and headed for the house of the Sheikh of Qureysh.

For three days and three nights they roamed around the city of Mughrib,

They came across a community of cadis²⁸, and saw that they were performing the Friday prayers; they came out to look at the community of cadis, and saw a house with four doors,

With forty four arches²⁹,

Three hundred and sixty windows,

They asked whose house this was, and were told, "It's the house of the Sheikh of Qureysh."

They dismounted (45) before the gateway,

And saw that there was a sheikh and a guard standing before each door,

The sheikhs split up [and went] to different rooms,

The royal sheikh went to the diwan of the Sheikh of Qureysh,

Where he was a guest for three days and three nights,

After three days the royal sheikh said to the Sheikh of Qureysh,

"O my sheikh, today I have been your guest together with the 450 ulema of Mughrib for three days and three nights,

Why don't you ask [why we have come]." The Sheikh of Qureysh [said], "Don't I know why you have come³⁰,

Royal (50) sheikh? Sir, it is known that your begs of Mughrib, possessors

²⁸Turkish **kadı camiası** = "Community of cadis [=Islamic judges]."

²⁹Qantirmāne. I am guessing that this is like the Arabic word qanṭarah قنطرة - 'arch,' 'vault.'

³⁰=lit. "Why you were guest."

Of the royal throne are three brothers whose households are empty, their lineage lost,

They have asked you for the daughters of women,
By order of God and the call of the angels."

The Sheikh of Qureysh said, "Call the sheikhs and elders, call the ulema of Mughrib."

324 dervished and sufis and 450 ulemas of Mughrib

Took out a pair of flags and wagons and gloves,

The Sheikh of Qureysh said, "My heart is crazy, brings me wagons and [pêtûn],

(55) Bring out my daughter Zelikha Khatûn,³¹

Send her to the master of the royal throne,

Bring her out by God's command, the shariah, and the prophets."

They brought Zelikha out,

They brought her out of the mansion of the Sheikh of Qureysh,

They took her to the begs' mansion, they made her a guest of the mîr of Mughrib.

The royal sheikh went to the eldest brother [and said],

"O my mîr, I have brought you the daughter of the Sheikh of Qureysh."

Rijal Hasan said, "I am eighty five (60) years old,

I don't need any women,

It is too late for me, don't put me in the hands of women,

There are two brothers younger than me."

The royal sheikh went to the middle brother, Sheikh Ibrahim:

"O Sheikh Ibrahim, I have brought you the daughter of the Sheikh of Qureysh."

Sheikh Ibrahim said, "I am fifty five years old,

I don't need any woman,

There is one younger than me, Shirin Elma³²."

The royal sheikh went to Shirin Elma:

"O my mîr, by the order of God, by the call of the angels,

By the good will of the Sheikh of Qureysh,

(65) [dengî e'rebane purê purê] (flutter?) the flag of the group of ulema.

³¹i.e., Lady Zelikha

³²This is Turkish for "Sweet Apple"

I have brought you the daughter of the Sheikh of Qureysh,
 So that your household may flourish from a daughter of the Qureysh.”
 Shirin Elma said, “There are two brothers older than me,
 Without their permission³³ I won’t marry any woman³⁴.”
 The royal sheikh and Sheikh Ibrahim and the group of the ulemas of Mughrib
 Betrothed Zelikha Khatûn to Shirin Elma.
 Some time passed,³⁵
 Nine months, nine days, nine hours and nine minutes,
 Zelikha brought forth a male child.
 (70) The towncrier called out all over Mughrib,
 However many prisons there were in the city of Mughrib,
 They were all emptied out,
 Many alms and charity were given.
 They sent a towncrier around the city of Mughrib,
 On the day when God on high gave one child³⁶, he gave 366 children,
 They bound up the wages of these children with the mîrs’ treasury,
 They gave sustenance to the parents of these children,
 The three of them³⁷ gave in.
 The sheikhs and ulemas of Mughrib gathered (75) around this child, [asking],

“How is it that

They have named this child Shirin Memê Alan?”
 When Memê was six months old,
 [He was] in his parent’s embrace,
 When Memê turned six years old,

³³=lit. “Without their command/order.”

³⁴=lit. “I won’t go (to) the bridal chamber [Turkish **Gerdek**] of women.”

³⁵=lit. “[he] fell to the day of time and hours.”

³⁶The word used for child is [maḥsûm] محسوم , which seems to be derived from the Arabic word ma’sûm محصوم , originally meaning ‘sinless’ ‘innocent,’ and then by extension coming to mean ‘child’ in Ottoman Turkish and Kurdish.

³⁷Presumably this refers to the three brothers: Rijal Hasan, Sheikh Ibrahim, and Shirin Elma.

Anyone who happened to see him would say, "I suppose he's twelve years old."
 My heart is a crazy heart, *[dîlimin dîlikî dîne]*
 Those who see Memê
 Are all [worthy of] shrines
 and all [38] [worthy of] paradise.
 My heart is an apparent heart, *[dîlimin dîlikî lâxâne]*
 When Memê turned ten years old,
 Those who looked at Memê's face couldn't
 Tell it apart from the sun and the moon.
 They took Memê away from his parents
 And his two uncles,
 They handed him over to (80) teachers and ulemas,
 They made a school pavilion for Mem.
 When he was six going on seven,
 Memê read the Psalms, the Gospel, the Torah and the Koran,³⁸
 He finished reading the four books of tradition³⁹, and read the [book of]
 incantations, the [book of] seals, the art of fairies,
 And they took Memê away from the ulemas.

One day fishermen threw their nets⁴⁰ into the sea, and brought out a sea colt⁴¹;
 they brought the colt and tied him up
 In the stable of the Sheikh of Qureysh.
 The Sheikh of Qureysh gave the fishermen gifts and rewards,
 He (85) sent the sea colt to Memê Alan, and they tied it up in Memê's stable.
 Memê named the wide-stepping⁴² animal Bozî Rewan⁴³.

³⁸The four holy books according to Islam.

³⁹See note 22 above

⁴⁰*lârğî* = Torç/Torvan = "Fisherman"; *târ* = Tor = "Fishnet."

⁴¹See ZK-2, note #[29].

⁴²*Seyrek basan* is the Turkish name given to one of the extraordinary companions (Motif F601.), specifically F681.(1.) 'Marvelous runner.' These motifs occur in a folktale commonly told among the Turks, Kurds, Greeks and Armenians, AT 513C "The Son of the Hunter" = EB 207 + 77.

He called the sons of the sheikhs and elders, got hold of a falcon⁴⁴, and brought out greyhounds and dachshunds,

And went hunting for wild deer.

Past Memê came running some rabbits⁴⁵,

Memê set loose his dachshunds,

The dachshunds came back empty-handed.

Past Memê came running some wild deer,

Memê set loose his greyhounds,

His greyhounds also came back empty-handed.

A flock of turtledoves crossed their path,

Memê set loose his falcons on the turtledoves.

There was a flutter of wings, as the (90) falcons chased the turtledoves through the seven heavens,

The falcons and the turtledoves both disappeared.

Memê called out, "Gentlemen, wish me good luck⁴⁶ and send my greetings to my mother and father,

And to my two uncles.

My greyhounds and dachshunds have come back empty-handed,

My falcons have disappeared together with the turtledoves,

Dilimin dilikî lāyāne,

I have disappointed the sheikhs and the elders.

May the city of Mughrib be forbidden to me;

Until I find my falcons, I won't return home."

The sheikhs and elders⁴⁷ (95) put their arms around Memê's neck and wept,

[Saying], "O my mîr, how can we go back to the city, to your mother and father?"

⁴³Cf. ZK-2, where the horse is called Bozê Rewal.

⁴⁴*tērî sinğar* = some sort of hunting bird

⁴⁵It is unclear what *vēxoadike* means.

⁴⁶-lit. "Make your bread and salt blessed for me." See FK-2 note # (48).

⁴⁷Earlier it was their *sons* who accompanied Memê.

Memê felt adamant, and said, "Brothers, this was my first time, and they came back empty-handed."⁴⁶

How can I face the city of Mughrib?"

Memê dug his spurs into Bozî Rewan,

And left them like a bird escaping its captor's fist.

He wandered through the deserted wilderness,

And the ulema ⁴⁹ of Mughrib returned home empty-handed,

Giving news of Memê to his mother and father,

And to his two uncles,

Who wept for him.

Memê roamed around the barren prairies

Thanks to Bozî Rewan,

He rode for (100) twenty four hours

On Bozî Rewan.

He came to a rose garden,

And dismounted under a cypress tree near a rose covered spring.

Memê washed⁵⁰ and stood in the posture for prayer, when he heard the flutter of the wings of fairies.

The three turtledoves took the form of women,

And entered the rose covered pool.

The youngest sister's name was Sherwaneh,

She noticed Memê Alan,

And saw how beautiful he was; She picked up the clothes of her two sisters and flew to a tree, calling out, "O sisters, (105) let's see⁵¹ between humans [and us, and] women and us, who is the best, the most pleasing, the finest?"

The eldest sister, whose name was Qamer Tai, [said]

⁴⁶This line is not totally clear to me. The translation is my interpretation.

⁴⁹Earlier it was the *sons of the sheikhs* who accompanied Memê.

⁵⁰See note 21 above.

⁵¹*baxallim*, from Turkish *bakallım*. Cf. note 77 below.

"No one is more pleasing than us among humans, but it's a wide and full world, and it can't be without humans.

Our clothes are on the tree, the human must not lay eyes on them, or we will be disgraced.

Sherwaneh said, "My sister, I'm very sorry but until you tell me who is better or more agreeable than us, I won't give you back (110) your clothes."

The middle sister, whose name was Mahî Beirûz, said,

"O Sherwaneh, my heart is sad,

Bring us our clothes from the tree,

The world is wide and full,

It can't be without humans.

We are fairies, we'll be disgraced, Sherwaneh."

[Serwane said], "Come on, sisters, you haven't yet told me from among humans, and us and women, who is the best!"

Mahî Beirûz said, "My sister, I am sorry,

One day I put on my fairy wings,

And flew around the world, corner by corner, and came across a city called (115) Mughrib,

A very great city, with 366 quarters.

In the center of the city I saw a mansion of four colors⁵²,

Before the mansion is a study chamber⁵³,

In front of the chamber is a rose-covered pool,

And a stone mounting block for horses and a place for men to stand.

I saw the most beloved⁵⁴ of boys sitting there.

I asked, 'Who is this boy?'

They said, 'It's mîr Memê Alan, the king of Mughrib.'

I looked [39] at the bottom of the stone, it was pleasant,

The top of the stone was [bedecked with] jewels, with a lit candle on top,

With chains of gold;

⁵²Above, after line (10), it is called a five-colored mansion.

⁵³hûgrake fûqiānā.

⁵⁴sāugülüki lāwāne. Saugülü- must come from the Turkish word *sevgili*, meaning 'beloved.'

This man, wearing a sable cloak, master of the palace mansion with a (120) bronze dome, they call him Memê Alan.

Shirin ⁵⁵ Memê Alan is better and more pleasant than us.

Now bring us our clothes from the treetop, sister, {my heart is grieving},

Memê Alan is better than us."

Sherwaneh said, "O sister, {my heart grieves},

Of women who is better than us?"

Qemer Ta'i said, "O my sister, one day I was roaming from town to town, when I came across a small town of seven quarters,

Every quarter with three minarets,

They call it Jezira Botan.

I saw a mansion of three (125) colors,

Before the mansion [was] a mansion of the Jelalis⁵⁶.

I saw before the mansion of the Jelalis a bronze-capped dome on which the most beloved of girls was sitting..

I asked, 'Whose daughter is she?'

They said, 'She is the daughter of Mîr 'Azîm, the sister of Mîr Zendin, the first cousin of Hasan-Cheko, Qumsî-Beko, Qaratashdin,

Her name is Dilber⁵⁷ Zîn.

She is better and more pleasing than us, {my heart is obvious};

One is Memê Alan, and one is Zîn of Zeydan.

{My heart says} you bring us our clothes from the treetop."

Sherwaneh said, "{My heart is obvious},

I swear to you by the (130) science of fairies,

Until you make Zîn Memê's guest,

I won't bring any clothes down from the treetop.

⁵⁵It will be recalled that his father's name was Shirin Elma

⁵⁶Jelali [Celali] is the name of a Kurdish tribe living in the area extending from the north of Lake Urmia (in Kurdistan of Iran) to the area of Bayazid [Bazid] (in Kurdistan of Turkey, on the Soviet border). According to Jaba and Justi (JJ), it can also mean 'brigand,' which may hint at the attitude some people held about the Jelali tribe

⁵⁷Dilber is a Persian word which means 'one who takes [my] heart.'

My heart says that they are humans⁵⁸ and we are fairies,

But if humans have not laid eyes on us,

We can go away from these trees, {my heart is obvious}.

Between Jezira Botan and the city of Mughrib is a journey of six months,

We can't make Zîn Memê's guest."

But Sherwaneh said, "My sister, a man is standing in the shade of the cypress tree, {my heart grieves},

Until you promise, I won't bring any clothes (135) from the treetops {my heart grieves}."

Those turtledoves are the daughters of the King of the fairies,

They assumed the appearance of turtledoves,

They swore to Sherwaneh {my heart grieves},

"Tonight we will make Zîn Memê's guest,

{My heart grieves}, now bring our clothes from the treetop.

This world is a wide world,

Without human beings⁵⁹ it cannot be."

{My heart grieves}, the three fairies put on their clothes, {my heart grieves},

And headed for Jezira Botan.

{My heart grieves}, Memê finished his prayers,

He looked up and saw these three (140) turtledoves,

With a flutter of wings the falcons announced the place of the turtledoves.

Memê said, "{My heart grieves}," he took the falcons and put them on a bench.

Memê mounted Bozî Rewan and set out for the city of Mughrib.

Memê Alan reached the city of Mughrib,

Great joy befell the city of Mughrib for Memê Alan's sake.

The news reached his two uncles,

About the mîr riding Bozê Rewan, Memê Alan.

{My heart grieves}, Memê entered the (145) bronze covered dome and sat on the royal throne, {my heart grieves},

And the three turtledoves headed for Jezira Botan.

⁵⁸The word used here is *bani âdam*, Arabic for 'sons of Adam.'

⁵⁹The word used here is *insan oğlu*, Turkish for 'son of human.'

In the evening between the two calls to prayer⁶⁰,

They set down on the window sill,

Admiring the loveliness of Zîn of Zeydan.

{My heart grieves}, Zîn called on her forty maidens, {my heart grieves},

The forty maidens came running.

Her oldest maiden was named Reyhan⁶¹.

Zîn called out, saying "Sisters and maidens, {my heart grieves}, last night I had a dream, (150) I have been busy thinking about the dream from last night until the early morning ⁶².

The three turtledoves looked at each other and said, "{My heart grieves}."

Mahî Beirûz said, "My sister Sherwaneh, take care of Zîn and her maidens."

Sherwaneh said, "{My heart grieves},

She cast a spell over Zîn and her maidens, and blew,

{My heart grieves}, Zîn and her maidens fell asleep.

Sherwaneh said, "{My heart grieves}," she called the other [two] fairies,

They tied fairy wings onto Zîn,

Cast another spell, {my heart grieves},

And took her to the city of Mughrib.

At six o'clock they deposited⁶³ her (155) in the bronze covered mansion in the residence of Memê Alan,

Making her his guest.

The turtledoves made for⁶⁴ the windowsill,

From where they observed Memê and Zîn⁶⁵.

⁶⁰i.e. between: Maghrib, the call to prayer at sunset and 'Ashîyah, the call to prayer at about 8:00 P.M. See also note 23 above.

⁶¹lit. 'basil.'

⁶²lit. "until the morning call to prayers," i.e. Fajr, at about 4:00 A.M.

⁶³lit. "threw."

⁶⁴lit. "threw themselves to."

⁶⁵lit. "They did a heavy/serious watching and observing of Memê [and] Zîn."

Memê lifted his head up and saw sitting on his pillow the most beloved of all girls.

Memê said, "(My heart grieves), whose daughter are you, in the middle of the night what are you looking for on my pillow?

Do you have a bad reputation or have you heard my name?⁶⁶

Get up from (160) my pillow⁶⁷,

Are you high on hashish or drunk on wine?"

Zîn said, "*Dilîmin debê*,

Whose son are you?

In the middle of the night [40] what are you looking for on my pillow?

It is the act of the men of an agha

To bribe their way into a lady's bed.

Get up! I will call the Jelalîs, our butchers, they will kill you;

My name has become dirty in the world because of you."

Memê: "*Dilîmin debê*, this is women's work, they call it slander;

If you have been slandered, then no one has seen me send you to your abode."

Zîn said, "Don't say that, *Dilîmin lâxâne*, this is my abode, your are trying to take it over,

You are acting as if you were the master here.

I will call my maidens to have your arms made defamed, but (165) it is a disgrace.

Whose son are you? Get out of my bed!⁶⁸"

Memê said, "*Dilîmin debê*, whose daughter are you, that you are lording it over my abode?

I will give news of this to the derebeys⁶⁹ and heroes of Mughrib,

Then they'll kill you for me, and rescue you from the suffering of the world.

Come, don't defame yourself in my bed and abode, don't lord it over [me]."

⁶⁶=lit: "Have you been slandered or did you hear my name," i.e. "Are you here because you are a loose woman or because you've heard my name [this last a bit vainglorious]?" This use of the word *bohtân* meaning "slander" suggests a pun, because Zîn is from the province of Bohtân.

⁶⁷=lit. "the pillow of my head."

⁶⁸=lit. "Get up from here."

⁶⁹**Derebeyi** is a Turkish word from the Ottoman period. It means 'feudal lord'; 'local potentate'; 'despot.'

Zîn said, "*Dilîmin lâxâne.*"

She called her maidens,

"O maidens! What hashish-smoker is this that has come to my bed tonight?

It's a disgrace⁷⁰! Send news of this to my cousins the Jelaîs, our butchers, so that they will send (170) his arms to the other world for me."

Memê said, "*Dilîmin debê,* as for smoking hashish, whose daughter are you, *Dilîmin lâxâne,* that you are taking over my abode?

Dilîmin debê, where have you come from?

You're shouting [as if] you are taking over my abode!"

Zîn and Memê got into a heated argument,

Memê didn't know, nor did Zîn,

Whose abode they were in⁷¹.

Memê said, "*Dilîmin debê,* you are in my abode, acting as if you own the place, *dilîmin lâxâne,*

Where is your home?⁷²

Dilîmin debê, tell me who your cousins (175) are,

Whose daughter you are."

Zîn said, "*Dilîmin dîne,*

My cousins are Hasan-Cheko, Qumsi Beku, Qaratashdîn,⁷³

My father is Mîr 'Azîm,

My brother is Mîr Zendîn,

They call me Dilber Zîn,

Dilîmin lâxâne,

Our abode is a small city made up of seven quarters,

⁷⁰[aksîge]. This word, which occurs three times on this page alone, does not appear in any of the Kurdish dictionaries. **Eksîk** means 'lacking,' 'deficient,' 'missing' in Turkish, synonymous with **Noksan**, an Arabic borrowing. According to the thirteen-volume dictionary of colloquial Turkish, the *Derleme Sözlüğü*, vol. 5, p. 1698, **Eksîk iş** = "an action or matter considered *ayıp*, i.e. disgraceful." This meaning fits the context of the present text as well; moreover, the language of this text, from the western part of the province of Gaziantep, i.e. in the extreme western part of Kurdistan, is permeated with Turkish words and expressions.

⁷¹=lit. "Their location was which."

⁷²=lit. "What is your abode?"

⁷³Apparently these are the Jelaîs mentioned above.

Known as Jezira Botan,
 In our abode our butchers are the Jelalîs,
Dilîmin dîne,
 For me, Dilber Zîn."
 Memê said, "*Dilîmin lâxâne,*
 Our city is black and wide,
 [With] three hundred and sixty six town quarters,
 Every quarter with three hundred and sixty six (180) minarets lit up in it,
 It rests on top of twenty four mountains,
 On top of forty four stone heaps.
 They call it the City of Mughrib⁷⁴
 My mansion is in the center of the city,
 They call it the four-colored bronze-covered dome,
 With sixty four steps,
 Before my mansion is a study chamber,
 And a stone mounting block for horses
 My pool is a rose[covered] pool,
 Above are cypress trees, below are three pomegranate trees, in front are rose
 bushes⁷⁵,
 They call me the son of the king⁷⁶ of the Mughribîs, Shirîn Memê Alan.
 At my feet is a pleasant stone,
 At my head (185) a bejeweled stone,
 On my head is a candle,
 Made of chains of gold.
 My uncles are Rijal Hasan and Sheikh Ibrahim,
 My father is Shirin Elma.
Dilîmin debê, whose daughter are you?

⁷⁴or, the City of the Mughribîs.

⁷⁵=lit. "rose trees."

⁷⁶=lit. "the shah."

Come, let's walk about this abode and see⁷⁷ where we are⁷⁸.
 Memê and Zîn held hands and wandered about the mansion, corner by corner,
 Down the sixty four steps
 They went to the feet of the sea colt Bozî Rewan,
 When Zîn laid eyes on him, she gasped and grew weak⁷⁹.
 Zîn said, "Memo, *dîlîmin lâxâne*, you are not at fault,
 (190) It is the fault of us women,
Dîlîmin dilekî dîne, then where is my abode? Take me to it!
Dîlîmin leyâne,
 Memê and Zîn climbed the stairs,
 The girl said, "*Dîlîmin dîne*,
 Where is my mansion? Memo, take charge and take me there,
Dîlîmin lâxâne,
 Memê said, "I don't know where your mansion is,
Dîlîmin dilekî dibirî,
 Zîn looked up,
 And called out to Hasan and Cheko, Qumsî Beku, and Qaratashdîn,
 saying, "*Dîlîmin debê*,
 O brothers, come, what has happened to me and this one? It's a disgrace⁸⁰!"
 Not a sound was (195) heard in reply.
 Memê said, "Zîn, be patient, let me call [now]."
 Memê said, "Brothers, *birakhan*, derebeys, where are you? It's a disgrace⁸¹!"

⁷⁷baqâlim - "Let's see" in Turkish. Cf. note 51 above.

⁷⁸-lit. "our location is whose."

⁷⁹kâbe zîne şikiâne = "Zîn grew weak." Although this exact expression does not appear in the dictionaries, Jaba & Justî feature the word [kâbe] كَاب = "knee" (<Arabic ka'b كعب = "heel"); hence, I am assuming that this expression is equivalent to one that does appear in the dictionaries: **Qudûmê [çokê] fk-ê şkest** (=lit. "Someone's knees broke") appears in Khamoian with two meanings: 1) To grow weak; 2) To be terribly frightened; To lose one's head (metaphor).

⁸⁰See note 70 above.

⁸¹See note 70 above.

Through the garden, amid hashish smokers and drunkards it has entered the mansion!"

Memê and Zîn looked up to the top of the mansion, *dîlîmin lâxâne*,
Whence came the gnashing of swords and Egyptian sabres,
The derebeys called down,⁸²

"Memo, fear not, where is the disgrace?"

Zîn threw herself at Memê's feet and said,

"Don't do to me what I threatened to have done to you⁸³!"

Memê called, "O derebeys, *dîlîmin xâne*,

(200) There's no one with me, it must be the blind devil who is laughing, may God's curse be upon him."

Memê's guards and derebeys went back⁸⁴,

Dîlîmin lâ yirmiş bû, Memê and Zîn's rings moved onto each other's finger⁸⁵,
dîlîmin debê,

The daughter of the king of the fairies said to the three turtledoves⁸⁶,

"Sisters, *dîlîmin debê*, Zîn's abode [41] is far, six months away,
Come, let's take Zîn to her parents' abode."

Dîlîmin lâwâkir,

Sherwaneh cast a spell on Memê and Zîn, and blew.

[The sisters] called to each other,

They picked Zîn up and (205) fastened fairy wings to her,
And flew her to Jezira Botan.

Dîlîmin debê, in the seventh heaven, the angels espied,

⁸²Meaning unclear

⁸³=lit. "I did, don't you do."

⁸⁴=lit. "returned empty."

⁸⁵**dengilmiş bû**. **dengilmiş** appears to be the past participle of a Turkish verb. According to the *Derleme Sözlüğü*, *Dingildemek* (and variants) = 'to move, sway, wave (intransitive)' (v. 4, p. 1504). The locations in which this word has been attested include Gaziantep, Maraş, and Osmaniye in the province of Adana, all of which are near the site where this text was collected.

⁸⁶i.e., one of the sisters said to the other two.

Dilîmin debê the body⁸⁷ of a human⁸⁸ in the hands of the fairies,
The angels ran up and took Zîn's bed from the fairies.

Dilîmin leyâne,

The angels said, "What is this? The body of a mortal?"

The fairies said, "It's the body of Zîn of Zeydan,

We brought her from Jezira Botan to the city of Mughrib, made her Memê's
guest,

This is Zîn's bed, we are taking it [back] to its proper place⁸⁹."

Dilîmin debê,

Zîn's bed fell into the hands of the angels,

The fairies (210) flew at⁹⁰ the angels, saying,

"For heaven's sake⁹¹, morning is near, but Jezira Botan is far,

Help⁹² us bring Zîn to her parents' abode,

It's a sinful disgrace for Zîn⁹³,

Dilîmin kânî,

The angels and fairies called to each other,

They took Zîn and set her down at Mîr Zendîn's mansion,

Dilîmin debê,

In the morning, Zîn awoke, and upon seeing Memê's ring on her finger,

She fell deeply in love with him.

In the morning Memê woke up,

[And] while in the posture of prayer,

He saw Zîn's ring,

⁸⁷=lit. "the corpse."

⁸⁸or, mortal. See note 58 above

⁸⁹=lit. "to its owner/master."

⁹⁰=lit. "threw themselves at."

⁹¹Aman.

⁹²{Yardim kin], using the Turkish word for help, Yardım.

⁹³i.e., if we don't get her home by daybreak.

And shouted out, "O brothers, *dîlîmin leyâne*,
 I (215) have found a woman's ring,
 I thought perhaps the devil, may God curse him, was laughing at me,
 But wasn't there [a girl], the cousin of Hasan-Cheko, Qumsî Beku, Qaratashdîn,
 The daughter of Mîr 'Azîm, sister of Mîr Zendîn,
 Who they call Dilber Zîn?
Dîlîmin laxâne,
 Call my two uncles for me,
 Let's see⁹⁴ how to get to Jezira Botan."
 They called his two uncles and gave them the news,
 The royal prince, king of the fairies,⁹⁵
 Memê's father Shirin Elma,
 And Memê Alan's mother all gathered about him,
 Memê's uncle, Rijal Hasan, said, "Memo, my son,⁹⁶ *dîlîmin debê*,
 What melancholy⁹⁷ is this that has befallen you this morning?"
 Memê said, "O Uncle, *dîlîmin laxâne*,
 Don't ask me (220) any questions,
 Take out my sea colt Bozî Rewan for me,
 [And] show me the road to Jezira Botan."

⁹⁴See note 77 above.

⁹⁵This does not make sense, because we already know that the three turtledoves are the daughters of the King of the fairies

⁹⁶The Turkish word **Oğul** is used here.

⁹⁷[sawdâ] = 'Melancholy'; 'Love.' Kurdish **Sewda**, Turkish **Sevda** and Serbo-Croatian **Sevdah** all come from the feminine form of the Arabic word for black, sawdâ' سواد. According to old physiology, the body consisted of four humors: Black bile; Yellow bile; Blood; and Phlegm. Melancholy (which derives from the Greek word melas, melan- = 'black') was believed to be the result of an excess of black bile in one's body; melancholy was equated with lovesickness, and so sawdâ' came to mean 'Love' or 'Passion.' This was probably helped along, at least in Turkish, by the similarity in sound between the native Turkish word for 'Love,' **Sevgi** (and the whole root **Sev-**), and **Sevda**, with a similar meaning.

Memê's uncle said, "Memo, I've never heard of this Jezira Botan you speak of,
not from merchants, nor from travellers⁹⁸,

I have only heard in books⁹⁹ that there is a Jezira Botan on Ottoman soil.

Son, this isn't melancholy, it's a devil's curse,

You are sixteen years old,

They call you the son of the (225) king of the Mughribis,

They call you the royal mîr Shirin Memê Alan,

Dilîmin debê,

Get rid of this melancholy,

Let's find you a Mughribi girl."

Memê said, "Uncle, *dilîmin laxâne,*

My melancholy is very great,

It's not the devil,

May God curse him, but I am grateful, *dilîmin dîne,*

Bring me Bozî Rewan,

Put me on the road to Jezira Botan."

Memê's uncle Sheikh Ibrahim called out, "Memo, *dilîmin laxâne,*

They call me the royal kingly mîr in Mughrib,

O son, we are not lacking¹⁰⁰, neither in treasures,

Nor in riches,

But we are three begs with empty households and lost lineage,

None of us (230) knows the road to Jezira Botan.

O son, you are master of the bronze-covered dome, the mansion of the Jelalis,

And master of treasures and riches,

Come, rid yourself of this nighttime dream,

⁹⁸ *gâzira bôtan dedige mâ nâzi dîli tûgârâ wâ nâzi sayîhâ nâbistî.* This sentence includes two Turkicisms: *dedige* and *dîl*. The first is apparently an attempt to apply the Turkish relative verbal participle in *-dik* [*dedigîn* = which you say] to Kurdish. The second is the Turkish word for 'Tongue,' *Dil*. Such Turkicisms are not surprising in a transitional region such as the one from which this text comes.

⁹⁹ Perhaps the informant was illiterate, and unable to *read* in books.

¹⁰⁰ [*yoxsul*-], from Turkish **Yoksul**.

I'll have a golden throne made for you.¹⁰¹"
 Memê said, "Uncle, *dîlimin dîne*,
 You say that Memê is simpleminded,
 My mansion is made of stones of diamond and jewels,
 I already have a golden throne¹⁰², *dîlimin dilikî debîrî.*"
 Memê thought to himself,
 He brought his hands to his uncle's neck,
 And let out a cry.
 Memê's uncle Rijal Hasan shouted out, "*dîlimin (235) debê*
 Call the Sheikh of Qureysh!"
 They called the Sheikh of Qureysh, and he came,
 They called Memê and said, "Memê, get up! The Sheikh of Qureysh is coming."
 Memê Alan went out to greet the Sheikh of Qureysh,
 The Sheikh of Qureysh sat down on Memê's throne,
 He called to Memê, saying, "My son, I've heard that you've fallen into
 melancholy,¹⁰³ *dîlimin xāne*,
 The city of Mughrib is black and wide,
 They call you the master of the sultan's throne,
 Get rid of this melancholy, I'll find you a girl from the tribe of Qureysh."
 Memê said, "O my sheikh, (240) I am indebted to you, you are my grandfather,
 show me the road to Jezira Botan."
 The Sheikh of Qureysh, seeing that there was no possible remedy for Memê, said,
 "*dîlimin laxāne*,"
 They brought out eighty Mughribi horsemen for Memê,
 Took out the sea colt Bozî Rewan,
 With great rejoicing they led Memê out of the city of Mughrib.
 Memê's mother and father wept over him,
 Then his two uncles fell sobbing to the ground.

¹⁰¹[dökmiş kim], from Turkish **Döküş** = 'having poured'; 'having smelted/forged.' Literally, this verse means "I will have a crown throne poured/smelted for you from gold."

¹⁰²=lit. "I am the master of the golden throne."

¹⁰³or, "that you've fallen in love." See note 97 above.

The Sheikh of Qureysh mounted his horse, and called to Memê's friends the derebeys,

"O beys [42], (245) *dîlimin dîne*,

Then bring Memê back *dîlimin dîne*."

For three days and three nights they went with Memê, *dîlimin lâyâne*,

They took Memê to a great highway and said, "Memê, this is the road to Jezira Botan."

Dîlimin lâxâne,

Sixty¹⁰⁴derebeys on horseback¹⁰⁵

Then came back to the city of Mughrib with Memê,

They brought Memê,

Seated him in the City of Mughrib on the golden throne,

They brought news to Memê's uncles, and in the morning once again they gathered around Memê¹⁰⁶,

In the morning Memê woke up to find himself seated on the golden throne,

He (250) said, "O derebeys, *dîlimin lâwâkir*,

What has happened to me¹⁰⁷, *dîlimin dîne*,

Memê's father was crying and mourning over him,

Memê said, "*Dîlimin debêe*,

Take Bozî Rewan out for me, put me on the road."

However many [people] there were in the city of Mughrib, [they all] came,

Memê said to them, "O derebeys, bless for me your bread and salt¹⁰⁸, call out the merchants and travellers for me,

[So that I may ask them] which way to Jezira Botan, *dîlimin lâxâne*."

They brought Memê to the highway, weeping and mourning behind his parents,

¹⁰⁴Or. six hundred (Le Coq's note).

¹⁰⁵-lit. "riders of the derebeys"

¹⁰⁶-lit. "at the head of Memê."

¹⁰⁷-lit. "to my head." This same expression exists in Turkish, Persian, and Neo-Aramaic. The meaning of *kêsâ* is unclear.

¹⁰⁸See note 46 above.

Saying, "Memo, this is the road to Jezira (255) Botan."
 The sheikhs and elders came back from [escorting] Memê.
 Under the guidance of Bozî Rewan, Memê hit the road,
 For twelve days and twelve nights he went, guided by Bozî Rewan,
 Memê said, "*Dîlimin layâne*,
 He washed himself¹⁰⁹ in the posture¹¹⁰ for prayer,
 And wept to the Lord of the world.
 "O God, what melancholy is this
 That has befallen me? I have lost my bronze-covered dome in the city of
 Mughrib."
 After praying he mounted Bozî Rewan,
 And headed for the city of Jezira Botan,
 For forty days and forty nights he rode on to Jezira Botan¹¹¹,
 After (260) forty days, on the outskirts of Jezira Botan there was a great river,
dîlimin layâne,
 Memê espied a girl on the far bank of the river; Memê said, "*Dîlimin layâne*,
 Where can this river be crossed?¹¹²
 The girl called to Memê, saying, "*dîlimin debêye*,
 Promise to marry me¹¹³, and I'll tell you where to ford the river."
 The girl said, "*Dîlimin debêye*, don't you recognize me? It's me!
 Zîn of Zeydan, the sister of Mîr Zendîn,
 Ia am Dilber Zîn!"¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹i.e., performed ritual ablutions required of Muslims before prayer.

¹¹⁰or, "in the place"

¹¹¹-lit. "He beat the road of Jezira Botan"

¹¹²Gaçûti vê avê kužâne =lit. "The crossing/fording of this water/river is which?" Gaçûti, which does not appear in any of the Kurdish dictionaries, is from the Turkish word *Geçit* = 'Passage(way),' 'Mountain pass,' 'Ford.'

¹¹³qaûlu sözike.

¹¹⁴Although not specifically stated in this version, we know from other versions that this woman is the daughter of the villain Beko (called Qumsî Bâku here), and that she is also named Zîn. She is often the maidservant of the 'real' Zîn.

Memê said, "*Dilîmin dîne*,

You're not Dilber Zîn,

Dilîmin debêye,

Perhaps you're Zîn's maidservant, waiting on the road for me,

But (265) tell me where to ford the river."

The girl said, "*Dilîmin lâxâne*,

Until you give me the big promise,

I won't tell you where to cross the river."

Memê said, "*Dilîmin debêye*, tell me where to cross the river,

Perhaps you have dressed up in Zîn's clothes,

Tell me where to cross the river, and I'll also take you with me to the city of Mughrib."

The girl said, "Come, the crossing point is right in front of you."

Memê said, "*Dilîmin lâyâne*,

The mansion of Hasan-Cheko¹¹⁵ is in the center of Jezira Botan,

They call it the Jelâlîs'."

Memê rode Bozî Rewan, and dismounted (270) at the mansion of Hasan-Cheko, [where] he became a guest.

The news reached Jezira Botan,

The sheikhs and wisemen without exception gladly came to the diwan for Memê,

Due to Memê's beauty, nobody could tell [him apart from] the sun and the moon.

The people of Jezira Botan exclaimed, "This is the son of the king of the Mughribis!"

Dilîmin debêye, Zîn's maidservant stopped before the mansion of Hasan-Cheko and Qaratashdin,

She saw that the people of Jezira Botan were gathering,

When Zîn's maidservant caught sight of Memê in the pavilion¹¹⁶ of the mansion, her hands and feet froze,

¹¹⁵It is not clear whether this is two people, Hasan and Cheko, or one person named Hasan Cheko.

¹¹⁶koshak ?=lit. "kiosk" or "pavilion."

After the noon prayers she returned with (275) empty buckets¹¹⁷,
 Zîn asked her maidservant, "What is the reason that you¹¹⁸ have returned from
 the river empty-handed?"

The servants said, "O Zîn, *dîlîmin lāyāne*,

At the mansion of Hasan-Cheko the son of the king¹¹⁹ of the Mughribis has
 alighted, They call him Shirin Memê Alan."

Zîn said, "*Dîlîmin kânî*,

She picked up the buckets,

And headed, *dîlîmin debirî*,

For the front of Hasan-Cheko's mansion,

Dîlîmin debirî,

She headed for the water spring,

Hasan-Cheko saw Zîn as she was going

To the spring; Hasan called out to Memê, saying, "Memo, get up and go

Water Bozî Rewan, the sea (280) colt!"

Memê said, "[mā yāk lē nā bîbe āvê]"

Hasan said, "Nobody may approach Bozî Rewan from in front [žepērā]

[hārî vā gezāye]

[že pārā hārî bā čiftāye]

Except for Memê nobody may

Ride Bozî Rewan."

Memê understood¹²⁰ that Zîn had gone to the river, *dîlîmin xāne*,

Memê mounted Bozî Rewan,

And headed for the spring of roses.

Zîn looked up and approaching her she saw the king of the Mughribis,¹²¹

Shirin Memê Alan.

¹¹⁷i: will be remembered that she had gone to draw water from the river.

¹¹⁸Here *you* is in the plural.

¹¹⁹-lit. "the shah of the Mughribis"

¹²⁰ānamış kir, from Turkish: **anlamış** = 'having understood.'

¹²¹i.e., the son of the king of the Mughribis.

Memê caught sight of Zîn of Zeydan at the spring,
 [And] said, "*Dîlimin debêye,*
 Bozî Rewan is coming,
 Bring water for his (285) bucket."
 Zîn said, "*Dîlimin lâyâne,*
 They call you the son of the king of the Mughribis,
 Come dismount at the spring of roses,
 I'll give you a kiss on both cheeks."
 Memê said, "*Dîlimin dilikî dîne,*
 He gets his kiss from Zîn,
 Memê said, "*Dîlimin lâyâne,*
 Give water," and she watered Bozî Rewan,
 He returned [43] to the mansion of Hasan-Cheko, the mansion of the Jelalis,
Dîlimin dîne,
 They gave news to Mîr Zendîn,
 Mîr Zendîn said, "*Dîlimin lâyâne,*
 Today makes three days that Memê has been your guest, *dîlimin dîne,*"
 Memê Alan, Hasan-(290) Cheko and Qaratashdin,
 Went together to Mîr Zendîn's mansion, *dîlimin lâyâne,*
 For a week they were Mîr Zendîn's guest,
 After that Hasan-Cheko called on Mîr Zendîn and said, "*Dîlimin lâxâne,*
 Let's take up your greyhounds and dachshunds,
 And go hunt mountain goats."
 They called the Jelalîs,
 Mounted their horses,
 And Memê mounted Bozî Rewan,
 They headed for the wilderness and plains,
 Hasan-Cheko called (295) to Memê and said, "You won't last long!¹²² on Bozî
 Rewan,
 You should return to the Jelalîs' mansion."
 Then Memê turned back, dismounting at Hasan-Cheko's mansion, *dîlimin dîne,*

¹²²dâmiş nâbî. Dâmiş is from Turkish **dayanmış** = 'having withstood.' It also occurs in Kurdish as Teyamiş.

The wives of Hasan-Cheko brought Zîn
 To the mansion, and left her with Memê,¹²³
Dîlimin lâxâne, news reached Mîr Zendîn with the mountain goats,
 Qumsî Beku said, "Mîr Zendîn, *dîlimin lâxâne*,
 He returned home riding Bozî Rewan,
 For your sister, Zîn of Zeydan."
 Mîr 'Azim called to Hasan-Cheko, saying, "Let's go home."
 Hasan-Cheko said, "We won't go home, we've come to hunt mountain goats."
 Qumsî Beku said, "*Dîlimin xâne*,
 He went to the house of (300) Zîn of Zeydan."
 Afterward they came back empty-handed,
 They came and dismounted at the house of the three brothers¹²⁴,
 Hasan-Cheko took a look at Memê, and saw a woman's skirt hem sticking out
 from under Memê's cloak,
 Qaratashdin didn't know if it [belonged to] Hasan's wife or [to] Mîr Zendîn's
 sister,
 Or [to] Mîr Zendîn's wife, *dîlimin dine*,
 He gazed at Hasan-Cheko [thinking], "I wonder¹²⁵ if that isn't Dilber Zîn."
 Hasan-Cheko got up, saying, "*Dîlimin debêye*,
 He took his sword in hand,
 Entered the horse stable, putting the horses to the sword,
 Qaratashdin called to Mîr Zendîn,
 Saying, "Come (305) after Hasan-Cheko, *dîlimin debêye*,
 He's killed the horses in the stable."
 Mîr Zendîn got up to go see:¹²⁶

¹²³This parallels the fairies' actions earlier in the story.

¹²⁴Even this reference to three brothers does not solve inconclusively the problem of whether 'Hasan-Cheko' refers to one or two people: the three brothers could be 1) Hasan, 2) Cheko, and 3) Qaratashdin; or they could be 1) Hasan-Cheko, 2) Qumsî Beku, and 3) Qaratashdin. Both enumerations occur more than once in the text.

¹²⁵*ağabā* from Turkish *acaba* = 'I wonder,' from an Arabic root meaning 'to wonder at,' 'to be amazed at.'

¹²⁶*lit.* "to come forward"

Qumsî Beku took hold of the sable coat, and would not let go,
 Hasan-Cheko drew his sword and rode to the mansion,
 [And] set the mansion on fire.

Qaratashdin called to Mîr Zendîn, saying,

"Arise and come forward, Qumsî Beku has taken hold of the hem of the fur coat,
 he won't let go,

Qumsî Beku, O Mîr Zendîn, is about to look under Memê's coat."

Mîr Zendîn asked no question about Qumsî Beku, he went to Hasan-Cheko,
 Then Mîr Zendîn turned and saw through (310) the window, *dîlimin lâxâne*,
 A woman's skirt was sticking out¹²⁷, *dîlimin debêye*,

Doubt befell Mîr Zendîn,

He didn't know if it was his sister or his wife¹²⁸, *dîlimin lâxâne*,

Mîr Zendîn called to Memê, saying, "*Dîlimin debêye*,

Come, let's play checkers, I am restless¹²⁹,

But on condition that we tie ropes of chains about each other."

They played checkers, Memê [won] three times,

Mîr Zendîn [won] twice,

Qumsî Beku called to Memê and said, "Mîr Zendîn is like a father-in-law to
 you¹³⁰,

Let him win once, it's a disgrace (315), [Mîr Zendîn lâ girân nêye],¹³¹

¹²⁷i.e. from under Memê's coat.

¹²⁸i.e. under Memê's coat.

¹²⁹*dişliqâ min nêye* = lit. "My peace of mind doesn't come." *Dişliq* [*dişliq*] does not appear in any of the Kurdish dictionaries, but according to the thirteen-volume dictionary of colloquial Turkish, the *Derleme Sözlüğü*, vol. 4, p. 1473-4, **Dişlik** = 'Peace of mind,' 'Freedom from anxiety,' 'Repose,' 'Quiet,' which fits the present context. Moreover, the geographical distribution of **Dişlik** fits also: it is found in Elâzığ, Urfa, and Kilis in Gaziantep; the present text is also from what is now the province of Gaziantep.

¹³⁰=lit. "is in the place of your father-in-law."

¹³¹This is the end of the rhymed verse: from here to the end is in prose.

Memê forfeited one game¹³², Mîr Zendîn said, "Memo, how can you be overpowered?" Memê said, "I can be overpowered with chains and shackles." Chains and shackles were brought, Memê was tied up. Memê snapped the chains immediately, Mîr Zendîn said, "Memo, in God's name, who are you? How can you be overpowered?" Memê said, "I can only be overpowered by the tail of Bozî Rewan." Mîr Zendîn sent a man to Hasan-Cheko's house to bring a bunch of Bozî Rewan's tail hairs, then tied Memê's feet, and that evening they took Memê and (320) threw him in prison.

Zîn asked, "Where has Memê gone?" They said, "The Mîr has thrown Memê into prison." Zîn took a hodja¹³³ and dictated¹³⁴ a letter to Hasan Cheko¹³⁵ [to the effect] "*Yâ wallâh*, Mîr Zendîn has thrown Memê into prison, come without delay!¹³⁶" Hasan-Cheko and Qaratashdin immediately mounted [their horses] and came asking. They were told that Mîr Zendîn had thrown Memê into prison. Hasan-Cheko immediately went to the prison and called out, "Memo!" Memê said, "Heh," and let out a weak sound. They brought Memê out of prison and took him home. Qumstî Beku went to Zîn and said, "Get (325) dressed up¹³⁷ and go see¹³⁸ Memê without raising your eyes." Zîn immediately got up, got dressed up, and went to Memê. When he laid eyes on Zîn, he gasped and expired on the spot¹³⁹. They carried Memê in a coffin, washed [his body] and took him to be buried. Zîn said, "Brother, in a week

132=lit. "gave a game."

133i.e. a religious teacher, someone who could read and write.

134yazmîz kir, from Turkish **Yazmîş** = 'having written.'

135Although not stated in this version, we know from other versions that at this point in the story Qeretajdin = Hasan-Cheko leaves on a mission, at which time harm comes to Mem.

136=lit. "You (singular) don't stop, come." The fact that *you* is in the singular suggests that Hasan-Cheko is one person. See note 115 above.

137xâ dônatmîş buke, from Turkish **donatmîş** = 'having dressed up.'

138For kâtânîkâ, the meaning of which is unclear.

139=lit. "gave up the sweet soul."

I too shall die; bury me beside Memê's grave; then one day while playing jireed¹⁴⁰, open Memê's grave and mine with a javelin¹⁴¹. If we are lying back to back, you are innocent of any wrongdoing¹⁴²." (330) A week later, Zîn expired. They took her and buried her beside Memê's grave, may they attain [44] in the next world what they couldn't have in this one.

This book was written by Jafer the Agha's son Seydî Efendî, in the vilayet of Aleppo, in the district of Kilis, in the county of Mobat. They call him the son of Jafer Seydo Efendî and it was published by its writer Yusuf Efendi on the first of April, 318.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰Game played on horseback, similar to polo. ' *Djireed* ' is Arabic, meaning stick; it is a Turkish game and shows that the Turks are superior in horsemanship to the other inhabitants of the country. The game is very interesting and is played by several men on their horses. They fling up their *djireeds* in the air to a prodigious height, and as soon as they strike the ground the players are on the spot, hanging over in their saddles till their hands reach the earth, when they grasp the *djireeds* firmly, lift them up, whirl them over their heads, and ride on." from: K.H. Basmajian. Social and Religious Life in the Orient (New York : American Tract Society, 1890), p. 218. At the time the author was writing the term 'Turk' was often applied to all Muslims.

¹⁴¹=lit. "Stick a jireed stick into Memê's and my grave."

¹⁴²=lit. "The world will remain for you." This is the inverse of a curse, Dinê te'â namîne = lit. "The world won't remain for you," i.e. You'll pay for your actions. In most versions, Mem and Zîn are buried in the same grave, back to back, and when the grave is opened a few days later, they are found lying face to face, a sign of their love for each other.

¹⁴³The date is quoted in Turkish, using the Ottoman Muslim Calendar. 318 = 1900 -1901 A.D.

Mann, Oskar. "Mām û Zîn"/"Mem und Zin," in *Die Mundart der Mukri-Kurden*, Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen, 4 (Berlin, 1906), Bd. 1, pp. 24-81; Bd. 2, pp. 40-135. [Sorani (Mukri) in Latin phonetic transcription (Bd. 1) + German translation (Bd. 2); see also Eyyubiyān] (OM)

Ayyūbiyān, 'Ubayd Allāh. *Çirkey Mem û Zîn : Kurdî - Farsî* [چریکی م م و زین] (Tabriz : Chāpkhānah-i Shafaq, [1962]), 277 p. [Sorani (Mukri) in Arabic script + Persian translation; basically O. Mann's version]

OM. Collected by Oskar Mann in the summer of 1903 in Soujbulaq (now Mehabad), Kurdistan of Iran, from Raḥman-î Bekir (or Raḥmān [ibn-î]-Bākir), an illiterate professional bard (shā'ir), a member of the Dēbokrî tribe, from the village of Hājjî Husain in the plain of Mīandûāb. From Mann's notes it is clear that Raḥman-î Bekir was "ungebildet" (unlettered, uncultured). This is the only version in the Sorani dialect that has been collected.

Mām û Zîn (OM)

[24] Brahim Pasha had no sons. Together with his vizier they got up and went to the House of God (=Mecca). They went 12 stages¹. God took pity on them, and sent Veysel Karanî of Mahîdesht² to them. He sent them two apples³ from Paradise. They were asleep, he put them⁴ behind their heads. They should go back, they should not come to the House of God. Those who have come for sons, should go back to their homes; on the eve of Friday (=Thursday evening) they should perform the ritual ablutions, split those apples⁵ in two, eat half themselves, and [give] half to their wives, then they should copulate with⁶ their wives. Their wives' stomachs will get full, and God willing they'll each have a son.

¹**Menzil** = the distance travelled in one day.

²Uways al-Qaranî or Wēsulqranî, a local saint who was a contemporary of the Prophet Muhammad. See M. M. van Bruinessen. "Other saints of Kurdistan," in: *Agha Shaikh and State : or the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan*. Thesis (Utrecht : Rijksuniversiteit, 1978), p. 275-6.

³Ayyūbiyān one apple

⁴Ayyūbiyān it.

⁵Ayyūbiyān that apple

⁶Ayyūbiyān tease

[If] Brahim Pasha has a son, his name should be Kakeh Mem; [as for] the vizier's son, his name should be Bengîneh⁷. They should put them to reading, that they should learn/study. They gave them names, lord and servant, Kakeh Mem and Bengîneh. They gave wet nurses, for two years they were with the wet nurses; then they gave them to the pedagogues⁸, they were with them for three years; then they mounted them [on horses], for two years they road⁹. At that time they took them, brought them to school, they studied under a teacher. For seven years they remained in the cellar, night and day were forbidden them; they didn't know what day and night were. One day they cooked kelle and pacha soup¹⁰, they brought them their lunch. Mem and Bengîneh ate their meal, and played with a bone from their soup. They threw it, and it hit against the window, broke the glass, and flew outside. [A ray of] sunlight came in. "God forgive us," they said, "It is God!" Their teacher was not there, and no matter how much they tried to embrace it, they couldn't catch hold of it.

The teacher came back. Mem and Bengîneh said, "Teacher, God has come to our midst." The teacher said, "Children, that is not God, those are the sun and the moon, God is their owner/master; one of them is night, one is day; if it's daytime, it's light; if the moon rises, it becomes dark, it becomes night." They say, "Teacher, if [25] the world is so pleasant, why have you kept it from us?" He says, "Children, it's not my fault, it's Brahim Pasha's command. Brahim Pasha is the owner of Yemen, he is master of the four great kings." Mem said, "I'm going out." The teacher said, "Children! Prince Mem! Be patient! Don't make my efforts go to waste: for a long time I have been toiling over (=investing effort in) you. Let me go tell Brahim Pasha and see what he has to say." He (=Mem) says, "Teacher, get up and go, bring back news for me!" The teacher got up, and went into the presence of Brahim Pasha. He greeted Brahim Pasha [saying], "Brahim Pasha, I have something to say¹¹. Today

⁷Ayyübiyân Bengîn.

⁸Lala.

⁹=lit. "Learned the art of horseback riding."

¹⁰Soup made from the skull and trotters of sheep.

¹¹i.e. to discuss with you/to tell you.

Mem's mother sent him kelle and pacha soup, he threw a bone (of the meat) at the window pane, it broke the glass and went outside: A ray of sunlight came into their midst, they laid eyes on the bright world. They were complaining to me, saying, "Why have you kept us away from this pleasant world? If day and night exist, why are we in this cellar? We insist on coming out." I asked them to wait a bit¹², and I came to you. He's your son, the choice is yours. Don't let my efforts go to waste."

The pasha at once wrote a letter to Prince Mem: "My child, my son, be patient with me, [wait] till I have a palace built for you." The teacher took the letter back to Mem. Mem ran out to receive his father's letter, he took it, and kissed and touched it to his head¹³. He was very happy, and said, "Teacher, how long are you going to keep me here?" He (=teacher) replied, "My child, your father has written you a letter, I don't know: read it yourself, see what he's written." He read his father's letter, but he wasn't satisfied with it[s message]. He said, "Teacher, go back to the pasha, tell him I won't wait until the building is finished, but I will wait another seven days for his sake." The teacher went back to the pasha (king), and said, "Prince Mem sends you his regards and says, "For his (i.e. the king's) sake, I'll stay here another week, [I swear] by the blessed head of his majesty, I won't stay here any more; if it please you¹⁴, I'll come be a stable hand." He (=the king) immediately responded: "Oh my son, thank God that you have been born, I want the bright world for you, but bear with me just another seven months, so that I can build a palace for you." He sent the teacher back. [Mem] took the letter from him (=the teacher), kissed it and touched it to his forehead. He (=Mem) sent a letter to his mother: "Mother, I've been in this cellar for seven years, and even now is the bright world kept from me." His mother said, "My child, you must heed him: he has proclaimed seven months more: stay three months for me, and four [26] months for your father." So Mem sat there for seven months. Brahim Pasha sent for a freemason, sent for a builder, hired workers, had the building constructed, with alternating gold- and silver-coated mud bricks: in seven months he finished it. Then he sent for his son: "My child, I have made preparations for you, on Friday you must move into your

¹²=lit. "for some time."

¹³A sign of high respect, e.g. shown to the Kuran.

¹⁴=lit. "If you permit me."

palace, with a terrace¹⁵." Friday came around, he went to his building. He sent a message to his father, asking: "Father, what is the name of my palace?" The king responded, "Burji Belek¹⁶". Mem sat in it, and nothing was heard from him for a year.

O creator! You alone are above everyone!
 Three fairies as falcons¹⁷ come down to earth
 Above the palace of Kakeh Mem, the son of Brahim, King of Yemen, they fly
 about.

O creator! You are the one and only!
 Three fairies come down to the world
 They fly about above the palace of Kakeh Mem, the son of Brahim, King of Yemen.

O creator! You are above us
 Three fairies from the seventh heaven drop their anchor,
 At the palace of Kakeh Mem they alight on this side and that.

The eldest sister says to the youngest one:
 "By God, Sister, are Kakeh Mem's cheeks more radiant, or are lamps and
 lighthouses?"

The eldest sister asks her sisters.
 The middle sister speaks thus:
 "From [God's] throne to the chairs [of men],
 From bulls down to fish
 I have searched the whole world
 I have not seen anyone with beauty like Kakeh Mem[']s."

¹⁵or, penthouse.

¹⁶belek = black and white, as the ideal for beautiful eyes, the iris very black, the whites very white,
 cf. Arabic ḥawār حور. In other versions, it is Zīn's palace that is call Birca Belek.

¹⁷terlan.

The eldest sister again says to [her] sisters:

"Sister, let me be a sacrifice for you!

Once I went hunting with the fairies 40 nights and 40 days¹⁸

I got separated¹⁹ from the fairies, it rained and sleeted down on me,

[27] I couldn't find my way, I came upon the city of Jezirah in Bohtan,

I was a guest at the palace of Yaya²⁰ Zîn,

I became a blue dove, at the window opening I perched, on the window sill

When I lifted my eyes to [behold] Yaya Zîn, This lady whom I saw was as beautiful
as Kakeh Mem."

The youngest sister said to her sisters:

"Sisters, let me be a sacrifice for you!

Let's lift up Kakeh Mem and take him to Jezirah and Bohtan,

To see if Kakeh Mem is more delicate, or Yaya Zîn is more beautiful."

The middle sister said to her sisters:

"Sisters, it is not according to rules and regulations,

Who ever heard of the men going after the women?

It's always been that women come to [live with] the men.

Suppose that we take Kakeh Mem and carry him off to Jezirah and Bohtan:

Perhaps God would disapprove, if we couldn't bring Kakeh Mem back here.

Kakeh Mem's honor would be besmirched and he would become unworthy of
respect.

They would say he's a shepherd or a cowherd²¹.

Because Kakeh Mem came into existence by an apple of Paradise, Brahim Pasha
must see them [=Kakeh Mem and Bengineh] at his right and left shoulders the
first thing in the morning²²

¹⁸=lit. "A hunt of 40 nights and 40 days."

¹⁹=lit. "Cut off."

²⁰'Yaya' is a title for a woman. It is equivalent to *xatûn* (khatûn) and *siti* found in other versions of *Mem û Zîn*. See C.J. Rich. *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan* (London : J. Duncan, 1836), v. 1, p. 144.

²¹i.e., a nobody. Cf. ZK-2, p. 73.

²²According to Muslim prayer ritual.

Because he came into existence by an apple of Paradise, whoever sees them, Mem
 and Bengineh, at the end of his prayer ritual,
 Even if he were an infidel, he would, God willing, become a believer.
 If we could not bring Mem back to Yemen the great and powerful,
 If his father doesn't see him at the end of his prayer ritual every morning,
 If he can't find him with his mother, if he didn't pass the night at Burj-i Belek,
 He would wipe out half of Yemen, then destroy the other part²³
 He would tear open the bellies of 70 ministers [viziers] and deputies, with a hide
 on his shoulders²⁴,
 He would kill many a servant and ever-present pipe-bearer.
 God won't like it if we become the cause of killing all these Muslims:
 Therefore, let us go pick up Yaya Zîn and bring her here,
 Let us see whether Kakeh Mem is more delicate, or if Yaya Zîn is [more] beautiful."

The middle sister is very respected.

She says, "Sister[s], fly with your wings, stand guard for me at the balcony and
 window²⁵ whose top has a framework²⁶

[28] Let's see whether Kakeh Mem's cheeks are more radiant or lamps and
 lighthouses [are]

Who is this?^{26a} Fairies [dressed] as falcons"

They were flapping their wings, they were flying up to the seventh layer of
 heaven,

Nowhere did they rest, until they reached the city of Jizîr, they were guests at the
 palace of Yaya Zîn.

They became blue doves, they entered at the window [openings], they perched on
 the windowsill.

²³i.e. He would tear everything apart in search of Mem.

²⁴This is obscure.

²⁵i.e. all openings

²⁶=pointed ornaments

^{26a} **ke bû**. This construction signals a change in the rhyme, which will be adhered to the subsequent verses. See Rhyme Signaling Device in the section of Chapter Five entitled "Kurdish Folk Poetics."

The eldest sister says, "Jemîn, Seffîn²⁷, may I be a sacrifice for you.
 Let us see whether Kakeh Mem is [more] delicate, or Yaya Zîn is [more] beautiful."
 The middle sister says, "Sister[s], God wouldn't like it²⁸ if I lost my faith.
 Kakeh Mem's soul has come from there, he's standing there, wandering about.
 If we say Yaya Zîn is [more] beautiful, Kakeh Mem's soul will get mad, he'll
 complain about us to the master of the earth and heavens:
 If we say Kakeh Mem is [more] beautiful, Yaya Zîn's soul will get mad, she'll
 become a plaintiff against us to the Prophet of the end of time."
 The youngest sister says to her sisters:
 "May I be a sacrifice for you!
 Let's pick up Yaya Zîn and take her to Yemen the great and powerful,
 Let us see [whether] Kakeh Mem is [more] delicate, or Yaya Zîn is [more] beautiful."
 The youngest sister put Yaya Zîn into a deep sleep.
 The middle sister made her stand straight up, put a splendid outfit (garment) on
 her,
 Put makeup on her cheeks
 Adorned her hair²⁹
 Dyed her eyebrows black, made her very clean and lovely.
 They wrapped her tightly in her comforter and pillow, took her consciousness³⁰,
 They took her out through the window,
 They put her on their wings, prayed to God, they started moving, they went to the
 seventh layer of heaven,
 Nowhere did they rest³¹ until they reached the city of Yemen, they were guests at
 Burj-i Belek.

²⁷These are the names of her sisters.

²⁸i.e., It wouldn't be fair. (My informant's note).

²⁹'Bisk' = girl's front hair, left unbraided and hanging down in front of ears, covering cheeks hair behind the bisk /s braided. In some regions, wearing one's hair like this is a sign of being married. (My informant's note).

³⁰=lit. "the spirit of her soul."

³¹or, 'stop.'

They went in through the window opening, they stretched out Yaya Zîn next to mîr Mem³² shoulder to shoulder.

They flew to the window sill.

The eldest sister said to her sisters:

"Sister[s], let me be a sacrifice to you.

[29] Let us see [whether] Yaya Zîn is [more] delicate, or Mîr Mem is [more] beautiful."

The middle sister says, "To me of wretched ancestry!

You are ambitious that I lose my faith,

We should wake them up to see which of them is beautiful, which of them speaks well."

Who was it? The youngest sister [it was] who put Yaya Zîn's spirit back in her³³.

The eldest sister said, "Why didn't you wake Kakeh Mem up?" [The younger sister] said, "She is a woman and a stranger: let's wake her up first, so that later she'll have nothing to be ashamed of³⁴." She woke up, looked around, and saw a man was lying beside her. Then she opened her eyes [and] said, "My God! I haven't been *rendez-vous*-ing with anyone, nobody's messenger has come to me; he must have given money to³⁵ the gatekeepers to get in." Kakeh Mem was undressed, [and] he was not aware of anything, he had fallen asleep flat on his back. Yaya Zîn said, "My God! Is he stupid or crazy? Has a man ever come to a *rendez-vous* in this manner! ³⁶"

Yaya Zîn calls out, "Boy, o boy!

³²- Prince Mem.

³³i.e., Woke her up.

³⁴Theoretically, if they had woken Mem up first, he could have made love to Zîn in her sleep, thereby compromising her honor. By waking Zîn up first, this problem is avoided.

³⁵i.e., bribed.

³⁶or, "Never has a man come to a *rendez-vous* in this manner!"

Are you stupid, are you crazy, are you off your rocker?³⁷
 If you were coming to my bed, why didn't you tell me?"
 Kakeh Mem says, "Lady with the sleepy eyes!³⁸
 By the right of the God who is without partner, has no partner at all!
 I haven't come to your bed secretly,
 This is my house, I have no idea who you are."
 When Yaya Zîn heard Kakeh Mem out,
 At first, she struck his mouth with her fist, blood was flowing from Kakeh Mem's
 mouth like sea water³⁹.
 Kakeh Mem calls out, "Bengîneh, o Bengîneh!
 O knowledgeable servant with the golden cane!
 Take your head out of the goatskin coat⁴⁰
 Bring me my water pitcher⁴¹
 Bengîneh took his head out of the goatskin and felt coat⁴²
 He brought the pitcher and the basin for his master,
 With both palms he hit his head⁴³
 He says, "O my house laid waste! My God! What has happened to my master?"
 Kakeh Mem says, "Take the water pitcher back, [and] go away!
 Nothing has occurred, nothing has happened to me.
 I have pinched my nose,

³⁷-lit. "Is your sense not whole?"

³⁸Çawbengîa, cf Persian khumâr خمار, Arabic 'uyûn nâ'isah ناعسة عيون, a good quality for a woman to have (My informant's note).

³⁹-lit. "A stream or a sea or water."

⁴⁰Ayyûbiyân "Out of the ruined house and guardpost": Oscar Mann has **kawit** = goatskin where Ayyûbiyân has **kawil** = ruined house.

⁴¹For ritual ablutions.

⁴²Ayyûbiyân "Out of the ruined house and tower."

⁴³As a sign of grief, at seeing Kakeh Mem's bloody nose.

[30] A drop of blood has fallen⁴⁴ there.”

Yaya Zîn says, “Young man, this gift from you is not acceptable,
I wonder what Turk this is that you brought with you?⁴⁵

Kakeh Mem says, “Young lady!

By the eternal God!

If you believe me, this is my guard and my head servant.

Lady! To me your eyes are more beautiful than the eyes of falcons!

Your teeth are very much more beautiful than pieces of jewelry.

If you don't accept my head servants, you call on [your] servants male and female.

Yaya Zîn calls out, “O maidservant named Melik Reyhan,

Bring me a veil, lamps and lights!

Tonight more than any other night I've seen something surprising to me, Zîn
with neck in black tentcloth⁴⁶, of wretched ancestry.”

Yaya Zîn calls out, “Maidservant, o maidservant whose name is Esmer!

Bring me the lamp [and] veil at once,

Tonight I have been really bewildered at my situation, Zîn with neck in black
tentcloth and lowly.”

Yaya Zîn calls out, “Maidservant, o maidservant whose name is Gulindam,

Bring me the lamp, light and a full veil,

Tonight of all nights a big [sense of] bewilderment as befallen me, wretched me.”

Who had more beautiful eyes than Yaya Zîn?⁴⁷

No matter how much she called her young servants

There was no one, no one answered her.

Yaya Zîn says, “Young man, from the race of Jinns!

By the love of God above us,

⁴⁴or, ‘dripped.’

⁴⁵Ayyübiyân “What black locust this is ..”: Oscar Mann understands by qarakullaiêke qara kulAh (qara = ‘black’ in Turkish; kulAh = ‘hat’ in Persian) the name of the Azeri Turkish tribe Karapapak or Karakalpak, lit. ‘Black [sheepskin] hat,’ while Ayyübiyân understands qara kulle = black locust. Both agree that qara is from the Turkish word for ‘black.’ In either case, Yaya Zîn is referring negatively to Bengîneh.

⁴⁶A sign of mourning.

⁴⁷i.e., Nobody [responded].

If you won't tell me who your father is, at least tell me what your name is!"
 Kakeh Mem says, "Lady whose throat is [smooth] like a [marble] tombstone!
 I myself am mîr Mem, the only son of Brahim Padishah⁴⁸ of Yemen.
 On the day of war, twelve kings rode out after my father, each one of them master
 of regiments, hosts and armies."
 Kakeh Mem says, "Lady with the sleepy eyes,
 By the love of God above our heads,
 Would you please tell me who your father is, what your name is."
 Yaya Zîn says, "Mîr Mem, soul of my soul,
 I was a Yaya Zîn with long hair
 [31] Sister of mîr Zêndîn, daughter of mîr Awdalan⁴⁹,
 I think God has sent me for you as a gift and a sign⁵⁰."
 Yaya Zîn says, "Sleepy-eyed Kakeh Mem,
 By the love of God above our heads,
 Please tell me the address⁵¹ of your palace and window in the city of Yemen, how
 can I recognize it?"
 Kakeh Mem says, "Khatun, my palace is very high, its tip reaches the seventh layer
 of heaven,
 One brick is gold, one is silver, the master made it in his factory⁵²,
 The sound of angels reaches it from the seventh layer of heaven,
 My palace is a very great and powerful palace.
 The diwan of Brahim Pasha of Yemen is very powerful, he is the master of the
 diwan.
 In the diwan of Brahim Pasha wakils and wazirs⁵³ sit, with goatskins on their
 shoulders.

⁴⁸i.e. King

⁴⁹Awdal = abdal, someone who wants something very badly, etc

⁵⁰Nîşan= 1) sign, token; 2) betrothal, engagement.

⁵¹Nêw nîşan = name and sign, i.e. way to recognize something.

⁵²'Karxane,' a word which can also mean "Brothel."

⁵³=Representatives /attorneys and ministers/viziers.

For dinner and lunch forty trays full of dishes come to the diwan of Brahim Pasha,
in the front room, [yet] the servants, stablemaster and stablehands secretly say,
"He is stingy."

There is a scribe sitting writing out laws⁵⁴, and judges are sent to rule in cities,
On the one hand he gives out rewards⁵⁵, on the other he gives away gold,
On the other hand he has set up a rope⁵⁶ with the executioner there waiting,
On one side soldiers leave, on the other riders⁵⁷ have been set up in parade,
On one side, horse stables, on the other, gelding stables⁵⁸,
On another side are hung the weapons of men.

Mir Mem says, "Yaya Zîn, my life, I don't know more than this, I won't tell you
false things."

Mir Mem says, "Lady, Lady with the sleepy eyes,
By the love of God above our heads,
Please tell me what the address of your palace and window is in the city of Jizîr."

Yaya Zîn says, "Mir Mem, my palace is high, its tip is as high as a mountain,
Clear water in the pond of Kawthar, it pours over marble stone, scatters into four
gardens⁵⁹.

Falcons, shalurs⁶⁰ and shimqars⁶¹, have become brigands there."

Yaya Zîn says, "Mir Mem, my palace is high, its tip reaches the seventh layer of
heaven,

⁵⁴or, "Orders"

⁵⁵'Xelat,' from Arabic khil'ah خِلعة , a robe of honor given as a reward.

⁵⁶i.e. a noose.

⁵⁷i.e. knights.

⁵⁸Stables specifically for castrated horses

⁵⁹or, "a garden called Çwarbağ" = lit. "Four Gardens."

⁶⁰Either 1) birds with stilt-like legs, e.g. storks, or 2) type of bird used in hunting, according to OM, Germ. tr., p. 55, note 43.

⁶¹Falcon-like bird used in India on elephant hunts, according to OM, Germ. tr., p. 55, note 43.

[32] The masterbuilder has come from India, the architect from Bukhara, the
 plaster from Tarikistan⁶²,
 The bricks of my palace, (alternately) one is of gold, one the jewels of factories,
 Whatever valuable stone the divers have taken out of the sea of the Nile and
 Oman,
 Whatever Indian fabrics [you can find], I have put there a merchant, who does not
 have 500,000⁶³, he would not know their value⁶⁴,
 Mir Mem, my dear, let's get to know our surroundings, let's count our blessings."
 Who was it? This couple of young lovers.
 They picked up three kinds of lamps⁶⁵,
 They searched all the windows there were:
 It was Kakeh Mem's palace: the Lady had no sign⁶⁶,
 The lady was amazed by God's deed, she was sorry for what she had said,
 Kakeh Mem says, "Yaya Zîn, why did you accuse me wrongly?"
 Yaya Zîn says, "Mir Mem, don't be angry with me too much,
 I was a cloud among the clouds of the sky⁶⁷,
 I have descended with the raindrops for you
 So that we may make merry and enjoy life."
 Yaya Zîn says, "For God's sake! Mir Mem, don't be angry with me, don't turn your
 back on me.
 I was a cloud among the clouds⁶⁸ of Paradise.
 The Lord of the plains has thrown me for you onto the plains."

⁶²= lit. "Land of darkness"

⁶³i.e. Is not rich.

⁶⁴i.e. He cannot even deal with them, because he does not understand their value.

⁶⁵Fener, fanos, & çira.

⁶⁶i.e. She saw nothing familiar.

⁶⁷OM = houri: Should we understand by **haurîég** ... **le haurîekani** 'a cloud among the clouds' as Ayyûbiyân and my informant did, or 'a houri among the houris' as Oscar Mann did? In Sorani Kurdish. **hewr** = cloud, and **horya** = houri, so its really up in the air (I could not resist the pun!).

⁶⁸or, 'Houri among the houris,' as in note 67 above.

Who were these two lovers in the shape of falcons?
 They exchanged handkerchiefs and rings as a sign⁶⁹
 They put their arms⁷⁰ around each other's necks,
 They came back over the carpets, prayer-mats and rugs,
 They sat together, counting their blessings.
 Yaya Zîn says, "My God, Mir Mem, when you get up tomorrow morning, you may
 remember this dream,
 If you don't become a messenger to me, or come after me to the forsaken city of
 Jizîr,
 O Lord, you will be responsible for me on the day that God holds court⁷¹, when
 court is held.
 Kakeh Mem says, "Yaya Zîn, soul of my soul,
 [33] When I get up tomorrow morning, God forbid that you won't be here
 anymore.
 If I don't pick up a dervish's keshkul⁷², and a wooden cane [from a young tree],
 If I don't follow you like a beggar, and find food bit by bit⁷³.
 O Lord, may I die an infidel, let a woman's headdress be wrapped about my head⁷⁴.
 Yaya Zîn, my life, whatever females God has created, whether Jewess, European,
 Yezidi, Russian, or Christian,
 May everyone else have them but me, other than you they are all as mothers and
 sisters to me⁷⁵."

⁶⁹Of betrothal?

⁷⁰=lit. "hands."

⁷¹Presumably this means "On the Day of Judgment."

⁷²=Container carried by beggars.

⁷³=lit. "Bread by bread."

⁷⁴We can infer from this that according to this value system, being an infidel is as shameful as treating a man as a woman.

⁷⁵'fielal' (ritually pure, kosher) vs. 'fieram' (ritually unclean, unkosher, 'treyf'): in this context, **fielal** is used for all members of the opposite sex with whom sexual contact and marriage would be considered licit, and **fieram**, for all those with whom the same would be considered incest, i.e. parents, siblings, siblings of one's parents.

Yaya Zîn says, "Woe is me, pitiful and irreligious me,
 Whatever males God has created in the world,
 Whether Jew or Armenian⁷⁶, may everyone but you who would normally be
helal (allowed), may he be *heram* (forbidden),
 All of them for me are like fathers and brothers!"
 Who are these two lovers in the shape of falcons?
 They put their arms⁷⁷ around each other, they kissed⁷⁸.

The fairies said, "If we don't return her, we will be disgraced before God, but if we
 do take her back, we will be blamed by her.
 The eldest sister said, "One is forgiven by God, but not forgiven by other people⁷⁹."
 Who was it? The youngest sister, the loveliest.
 She begged God and his chosen prophet,
 "O Lord, may it rain sleep for the lovers of God's court."
 They suddenly fell unconscious.
 Who was it? Those fairies as falcons.
 The three sisters took counsel together,
 "Let's not be disgraced by the court of the provider of sight⁸⁰,
 But rather let us wrap Yaya Zîn in the five fingers of our hands,
 From here let's take her to her bed,
 Bring her back to the city of Jizîr, tomorrow she won't be ashamed, the helpless⁸¹
 one.
 Now what should we do with Kakeh Mem, will he stay in his place⁸²?"

⁷⁶i.e. Christian.

⁷⁷See note 70 above

⁷⁸=lit. "Put their mouths on each other's mouth."

⁷⁹This is a proverb, according to my informant.

⁸⁰i.e., by God.

⁸¹=lit. "Tongue-tied."

⁸²or, 'bed'

She says, "The provider of sight will provide a remedy."
 So who was this fairy with the beautiful figure?
 They quickly wrapped Yaya Zîn in their hands,
 They put her on their wings,
 Until they took her up to the seventh heaven.
 They did not stop until they brought her to the city of Jizîr, and placed her in her
 bed.

[34] In the morning when Kakeh Mem wakes up
 He calls out, "O beautiful-eyed Bengîneh!
 Yaya Zîn was with me, why don't I see her, isn't she still with me?"
 Bengîneh says, "Mîr Mem, by God, who is above our heads,
 I don't know about anyone, I've seen no one."
 Kakeh Mem calls out to him, "Bengîneh, I'm sad, and very thoughtful.
 Bring the water pitcher and basin so that I may perform my ritual ablutions."
 Who was it? Bengîneh of the beautiful figure,
 Who brought the pitcher and basin for his master.
 When he had washed, he took his handkerchief out of his breastpocket,
 When he looked at his finger, Yaya Zîn's seal and ring had been left behind with
 him.
 At once he fainted, he became speechless⁸³,
 His eyes would not open, he wasn't aware of the people around him.
 Bengîneh brought smelling salts⁸⁴,
 And placed them before Kakeh Mem's mouth.
 At once Kakeh Mem's eyes opened, he regained speech.
 Kakeh Mem calls out, "Bengîneh, fix me a bed, for I'm done for."
 Kakeh Mem calls out, "Bengîneh, I'm boiling inside,
 Tell my father that Kakeh Mem's trouble is serious, he's very ill!"
 Who was it? Bengîneh of the beautiful figure,
 He called out again and again,
 Went to Brahim Pasha's diwan, and stood.

⁸³=lit. "His tongue broke."

⁸⁴=lit. "Medicine for fainting."

Brahim Pasha says, "Sleepy-eyed Bengīneh,

But where is your master, I don't see him."

He [=Bengīneh] says, "May I be a sacrifice to you, my heart is troubled, it won't calm down.

Kakeh Mem's trouble is grave, he has fainted."

When Brahim Pasha learns this, he gets up, an uproar comes about in this diwan.

Who was it? Brahim Pasha of the beautiful figure.

His tears flowed like a river.

Who was it? The respected Brahim Pasha,

Who was climbing up stairs (and windows)

Who was it? Brahim Pasha of the beautiful figure.

He opened the door, and drew the curtain

[35] Who was it? Dapper Brahim Pasha.

He held Kakeh Mem's head, put it in his lap.

He says, "My child, let me be a sacrifice to you,

Where does it hurt, what is giving you pain?

My child, it's good that your father know what your pain is,

So that I can send for Aristotle and Loqman⁸⁵,

Perhaps there is someone who would know (for me) of a cure for your sickness."

No matter how much his father spoke and pleaded,

Kakeh Mem would not speak or give answer.

Brahim Pasha says, "My child, where is your pain, may my house be destroyed.

My child, for you I give my life and my faith⁸⁶

My child, my heart is on fire, mīr Mem, my whole body is on fire⁸⁷

My child, for you I give my eyes and the whole city of Yemen⁸⁸

⁸⁵Luqmān ḥakīm, celebrated philosopher, fabulist, and doctor.

⁸⁶=lit. "I'll cause my soul to circle around you, and my faith from head to foot = my entire faith."

⁸⁷i.e., I'm devastated. (My informant's note).

⁸⁸=lit. "I'll cause my eyes and the whole city of Yemen to circle around you."

My child, cane for my hand⁸⁹, light of my two eyes,
 My child, strength of my liver, hymn of my tongue⁹⁰,
 My child, If anything happens to you, I won't consider myself master of Yemen.
 My child, my offspring, my sweet sight,
 My child, open your eyes, so that I may see you once again."
 Mîr Mem says, "Father, I was a child, I became a student.
 I went beyond being a student, and became a mullah⁹¹,
 I went beyond being a mullah, and became a judge.
 My dear father, immediately and without hesitation, I want you to ask for a wife
 for me."
 Brahim Pasha says,
 "My child, may this care and this worry fall on your's father's soul⁹².
 My child, for your sake I'll throw into the sea a raft with a bridge,
 My child, may your blessed honoring come, I'll go ask for the hand of the daughter
 of the king of Egypt.
 My child, may your care and complaints befall me,
 My child, for your sake I'll throw into the sea rafts and ships,
 My child, may your blessed honoring come, I'll go ask for the hand of the daughter
 of the king of India.
 My child, may your cares and struggles befall me,
 My child, may your blessed honoring come, I'll go ask for the hand of the daughter
 of the king of the East."

⁸⁹Perhaps a reference to the expression **gocant pîrl** = 'cane of old age', a way of referring to the youngest child (French 'le benjamin'), who is someone for the parents to lean on in their old age. (My informant's note).

⁹⁰Both my informant and Ayyübiyânconcur on **wêrd** meaning 'religious hymn,' (Cf. Persian **vird** ورد) in contrast to O. Mann's interpretation, 'du dessen Namen ich immerfort im Munde führe,' lit. "Du tägliche Arbeit meiner Zunge" = "You whose name is always on my lips (lit. "in my mouth"), lit. "You daily work of my tongue."

⁹¹Type of Muslim religious leader.

⁹²i.e., May your father suffer in your place. My informant feels that this is the sort of thing one would only say to an only child (taqane تاقانه), which Kakeh Mem is.

He says, "Dear father, I want neither Egypt nor Sham⁹³,
I swear by the Ka'bah⁹⁴, the house of God⁹⁵
My heart has encamped at Yaya Zîn's⁹⁶.

[36] Except for Yaya Zîn, all the hial (allowed) of the world are heram (forbidden)
to me⁹⁷,

Father, if it's true that you are going to get me a bride,
I want Yaya Zîn, the one with the [beautiful] hair,
Sister of mîr Zêndîn and daughter of mîr Awdalan,
If you want to know where they are from, it's the city of Jizîr Botan."

Brahim Pasha said, "Jizîr is not part of God's realm." His wakils and wazirs⁹⁸ said, "No, it's not." He said, "Well, for me it isn't fitting, me being a king, to marry my son to the daughter of a servant of mine." They said, "There's an old wazir, fetch him to find out whether Jizîr exists or not." They brought the wazir, he was in a cage, they brought him and set him down in the diwan of Brahim Pasha.

Brahim Pasha said, "Wazir, I say the city of Jizîr is not in God's realm. Is it or isn't it?" The wazir said, "Well, the city of Jizîr is here in the west: for seven years your father the king gave the city of Jizîr to me instead of paying me a salary. It could not provide for my expenses⁹⁹." When Brahim Pasha learned that, he got angry and annoyed, and left. Kakeh Mem got up from his place¹⁰⁰, then sat down.

⁹³=Syria

⁹⁴Holiest place in Islamdom, center of the rituals performed during the pilgrimage to Mecca (hadj).

⁹⁵House of God' is rendered twice, once in Kurdish (ma'îxu'ra) and once in Arabic (bêt Allâh بيت الله)

⁹⁶i.e., "I want only her."

⁹⁷See note 75 above.

⁹⁸See note 53 above.

⁹⁹i.e., It's a poor town.

¹⁰⁰i.e., He rose out of respect for his father.

The wazir told him all the roads and landmarks of Jizîr. Kakeh Mem gave him 1000 liras out of gratitude. Brahim Pasha sent the executioner to wait for the wazir, [saying], "When he comes down from Kakeh Mem's chambers, cut off his head and bring it to me."

When they brought him down, he saw that the executioners were standing in the alley. The wazir recognized them, [and] said, "Call those executioners." He gave them some money as a reward¹⁰¹ and said, "Will you allow me to go to the diwan, or are you going to cut my head off?" They said, "Yes, you can go to the diwan." They picked him up and took him to Brahim Pasha's diwan. He said to Brahim Pasha, "Padishah, I suppose that death is good for me. For what reason did you order that I be beheaded?" He said, "I have only that one son. I said, 'Jizîr does not exist': why did you say it does?" He said, "Your honor, I did not know that he had dreamt about it. Command him to go hunting. The city of Yemen has forty gates, and forty quarters; choose forty beautiful girls and women from each quarter, bring them and hold a party for him. When he returns from the hunt, bring out minstrels and dancers for him, place lions and monkeys in his path, place servants and musicians¹⁰² on his path. If he comes back safely from hunting, the one he saw at night in his dream, out of these women and girls, one of them is bound to look like her. Kakeh Mem will take a liking to her, if she's a girl (i.e. unmarried), then there's no difficulty, her father will like it if Kakeh Mem, son of Brahim Pasha, asks for her hand; if she's a woman (i.e. married), call her husband, make him a wazir, give him much gold, make him divorce his wife, then with good omens marry her off to Kakeh Mem. [37] God willing, he'll settle down." Brahim Pasha said, "Good for you, wazir! Give the wazir a reward." He received plenty of money.

Kakeh Mem was hunting until midday. Brahim Pasha planned a party for him with provisions. Everyone who had a daughter said, "God willing, he'll want my daughter." Whoever had a wife, was crying, saying, "The king will take away my wife. Where should I take mud from to put on my head¹⁰³? I'll lose my wife."

¹⁰¹an'âm انعام . See also note 55 above.

¹⁰²or, "Singers."

¹⁰³This is a custom practiced at funerals.

Bengtneh said, "Kakeh Mem, what is that uproar all around the city of Yemen?" Kakeh Mem said, "The city of Yemen has 1000 tricks." Bengtneh said, "Let's go home." They cut short¹⁰⁴ the hunting expedition, and headed for home. When they reached the outskirts of the city, they saw a feast, with minstrels and dancers, lions and bears. Bengtneh said, "Mîr Mem, see how much your father loves you, see how many amusements he's created for you." Brahim Pasha dispatched young boys to welcome him; then he sent the mayor out to greet him; then he sent out religious leaders¹⁰⁵ to welcome him. Kakeh Mem reached the young boys, said hello to them, reached the mayor and greeted him, reached the religious leaders and got off his horse in their midst, and promised a reward for them. There he mounted his horse [again]. Minstrels and dancers came out to welcome him, and he rewarded them. He arrived at the feast. He put his head on the front of his saddle, and didn't look at anyone. He went toward the door of his diwan, where he dismounted. The feast was cancelled. Everyone who had a daughter said, "What should I do? I'm more in debt. He didn't ask for my daughter[']s hand], so what am I to do?" The ones who had wives said, "O God, many thanks. I did not lose my wife." News was given to Brahim Pasha, [as follows], "Your Highness, Kakeh Mem came back; he didn't want anyone." Brahim Pasha said, "Go bring the wazir, I will strangle him [for sure]." Later he sent someone and said, "Cut off his head, I don't want to lay eyes on him again." They said, "Your Highness, don't cut off his head, let him come here, so that we see what his solution is." They sent after him, and brought him. He arrived at the diwan of the king of Yemen and said, "Your Highness, I deserve to lose my head¹⁰⁶." He [=Brahim Pasha] said, "Why did you tell¹⁰⁷ about Jizir? I only have one son." He [=the wazir] said, "Your Highness, it's no big deal. Draw up an army for him of 12,000 men, and appoint someone to be in charge. Provide him with an arsenal and send it with him. Let him go for twelve stages¹⁰⁸: at every

¹⁰⁴or, "Cancelled"

¹⁰⁵Sayyids and melas (=mullahs).

¹⁰⁶=lit. "I am good for having my head cut off."

¹⁰⁷=lit. "Bear witness."

¹⁰⁸See note 1 above.

stage¹⁰⁹ 1,000 men should leave him. Then he'll be alone. Where will he go? He too will come back. Marry him to whichever padishah's daughter you like." Kakeh Mem sent to his father and said, "If you allow me, I'll go now." Brahim Pasha said, "If he gives me a week, I'll make preparations [for his departure]."

Let's talk about Yaya Zîn now. [38]

The fairies picked up Yaya Zîn and took her back to the city of Jizîr. In the morning Yaya Zîn woke up and cursed Melik Reyhan (one of her servants), "Why didn't you wake me up? I've missed my prayer time." Melik Reyhan said, "What was I to do, you went out walking about all night¹¹⁰, you woke up too late." She said, "In that case just bring me some water to wash my face¹¹¹ with. She washed her face, and took out her handkerchief to wipe her eyes: it was Kakeh Mem's handkerchief¹¹². She looked, [and saw that] she had his ring and seal on her finger. She said, "Bring me a veil, I am going to Qaratajîdîn's house, to my sister Lady Astî." She went to Qaratajîdîn's house, [and] Lady Astî came out to greet her, taking her by the arm and accompanying her up the stairs. They sat down together. Lady Astî was her elder sister, the wife of Qaratajîdîn. She said, "Sister, why have you become to pale and thin?" She [=Zîn] said, "Sister, here, take these!" She put the handkerchief and ring in front of Lady Astî. Lady Astî looked at it [and saw that] it was the signet ring of Kakeh Mem, the only son of Brahim Pasha of Yemen. She said, "Sister, where did you get these from?" She said, "By God, I don't know. They took me to Yemen last night."

"I didn't understand anything, o wretched me with neck in black.

There they had me swear by the thirty parts of the Koran."

Then aside from this, Lady Astî is old (=wise), she herself knows.

Lady Astî says, "Woe is me, o wretched me with neck in black,

It was Mir Mem from Yemen who put the thirty parts of the Koran in front of you.

¹⁰⁹i.e. Every night.

¹¹⁰'şewgerdî,' cf. Persian shabgardî شَبگَرْدِی

¹¹¹=lit. "Eyes"

¹¹²In PŞ Mem and Zîn exchange both rings and handkerchiefs. In this version, this is the first mention of exchanging handkerchiefs.

He won't give it up, he'll come here, he won't lose his faith."

Lady Astî says, "Yaya Zîn, my dear,

That Mir Mem who swore on the Koran with you,

He's destined¹¹³ not to give up, he'll bless us with his coming.

Then Yaya Zîn says, "What should I do, poor and wretched me, shameful me, how will I pass the time?"

Lady Astî said, "I should build you a *seko*¹¹⁴ by the river of Jizîr. I'll send [someone] to buy you 200 rolls of *jâw*¹¹⁵. You have forty maidservants, together with them, bleach some of it, make sweat caps¹¹⁶ out of some of it, [so that] your sorrow will be dispersed by the riverside. God willing I'll send someone to my older brother¹¹⁷ to give me two plows and two men. I'll plow for myself, my allowance is small, I cannot get by with what I have. We'll send them [=the two men] (to wait) by the road, when Kakeh Mem and Bengîneh come, the plowmen will bring us the good news.

They had sent Melik Reyhan out, they called her in. Melik Reyhan had an armband on, she put it before Yaya Zîn and said, "I won't be your servant [39] anymore." Yaya Zîn said, "Why not?" She said, "Yaya Zîn, you go for night walks, and don't take me along." Khatûn Zîn said, "Where did I go?" She said, "Every night you've gone out walking: why don't you take me with you?" She said, "Why are you getting mad at me? When they come, let's make a deal: the agha (master) is for me, the servant is for you." They made a pact, and went back home. They sent for [someone] to buy *jâw*, and set things up. They went to the river of Jizîr.

¹¹³- lit. 'His fate is dear.'

¹¹⁴ *seko* is a raised, square platform, elevated about a meter above the ground, with a smooth surface, serving as a place to sit. See O. Mann's note in the German translation, p. 67-8, note 83.

¹¹⁵-Cheap cotton material.

¹¹⁶'Araqîn.'

¹¹⁷Ayyübiyân had 'Kakeh Mem' instead of 'older brother,' which must be an error.

"Now let's say two words about Kakeh Mem in the style *nadirî*¹¹⁸
 This is the order of Rahman Bakirî¹¹⁹
 Who is both Kurmanj and Dêbokirî¹²⁰
 For the sake of Dr. Mann, the eternal one¹²¹
 There was no news or message,
 Kakeh Mem's preparations were going along bit by bit.
 In the city of Yemen there came out 12,000 horsemen according to the register.
 Kakeh Mem says, "Bengîneh!
 Go see the army that my father has prepared for me.
 Who was it? Bengîneh the rosy and fresh¹²².
 He went and got his horse out of the stable.
 When he was about to ride off, he uttered God's name.
 From one end to the other he inspected the army, and came back (to his starting
 place).
 He started calling one after the other,
 Until he got to the stable door and dismounted.
 Who was it? Respected Bengîneh,
 Around whom gathered stable hands and servants.
 He says, "We have a long [and far] journey ahead of us.
 Who was it? Bengîneh the rosy and fresh.
 He climbed up the stairs, and drew open the curtain of the door,
 Until he came and greeted his master Mir Mem.

¹¹⁸Possibly a style of singing. O. Mann himself was not sure what was meant by this. I believe that the choice of the word *nadirî* was determined by the fact that it sets the rhyme scheme for the next couple of verses, which end as follows. *nâdirî; bakîrî; dêbökîrî; nâmîrî.*

¹¹⁹Name of the singer of this tale.

¹²⁰Name of a Kurdish Mukrî tribe north of Mehabad in Kurdistan of Iran.

¹²¹These last three lines, as also the final lines of the story, constitute an interesting digression on the part of the singer of this tale. See: İlhan Başgöz. "Digression in Oral Narrative : A Case Study of Individual Remarks by Turkish Romance Tellers," *JAE* 99 (1986), pp. 5-23.

¹²²guṭbaw

He said, "Bengîneh, this army that our father has prepared for us¹²³, I wonder how it is? Is it complete?

Bengîneh says, "My master, many of them are no good¹²⁴.

O master, I'll seek refuge with you, in their good horsemanship there is no fault.

That army which father made for us, in my opinion, serves no purpose for you and me."

Kakeh Mem said, "Go away, are you crazy, wretched one, would my father deceive me?"

Who was that? Respected Kakeh Mem.

[40] He insisted, and said, "Bring out the gray horse¹²⁵ for me.

Who was it? The stablehands rosy and fresh.

They saddled up the gray horse, decked him out with two reins.

Along with Bengîneh they were calling out one after the other:

"The gray horse has come out, is standing by the door of the diwan."

However many people there are in Yemen, they all were looking out their windows.

Mir Mem behaved disrespectfully¹²⁶, and did not say goodbye to his parents.

Who was that? Respected Kakeh Mem.

As he was coming down the steps, people grabbed him by the arms on both sides.

He put his foot in the grey horse's stirrup, and climbed up onto his bejewelled saddle.

Some people were saying, "It is the sun!", others were saying, "It is the moon!"

"O Lord, may those with evil glances not see him!"

About 2,000 people were standing on either side.

Servants and wakils were saying, "go, don't stay around, take the news to Brahim Pasha."

¹²³Using the first person plural here ('Our father,' 'us') suggests that on some level, Mem and Bengîneh are perceived by the teller to be brothers.

¹²⁴Ayyübiyân "They are so many that I cannot see their end."

¹²⁵Espt bor.' Although Mem's horse is not specifically named 'Bor' in this version, the word 'bor' with the meaning of "gray" is still used to describe him. The word 'bor' can also mean "Horse."

¹²⁶'bëxäretî.'

Who was it? The loyal wakils and wazirs.

"Take the news to Mem's mother and Bengîneh's mother, they should not long for their sons, perhaps they'll come, they'll set their sons' necks free¹²⁷."

Who was it? The perfect wazir.

They send a message to Bengîneh's mother.

Bengîneh's mother, when she learns of this, says, "I put my head in a dyer's jar.

I send up a great cry, the city of Yemen has become a desert, Jizîr will become a grave and graveyard, barren.

Bengîneh's mother was walking, with bitter mourning and crying.

She called out one after the other,

She brought the news to Mir Mem's mother.

She says, "Mir Mem's mother, don't you know what has happened?

They say that Burj-i Belek has been left in Yemen without a master."

Mem's mother when she learns this,

Tears started rolling down from both eyes,

Mem's mother when she learned this,

She throws herself down from the castle, until she reaches the balcony,

Bareheaded and barefoot she comes to the alley,

She comes to the street and starts to cry.

[41] Till she reaches Burj-i Belek, "Wakils and wazirs, where is my only son?"¹²⁸

The wakils and wazirs say, "[Woe to us] for we are prisoners¹²⁹,

Must you remember your son now?

Burj-i Belek has become deserted and desolate, he has left on a journey to the city of Jizîr."

¹²⁷i.e. Absolve them of their debts, cf. Turkish **hakkını helâl et** said to someone leaving by his friends staying behind. According to O. Mann, when someone is unhappy about another's departure, there is a belief [or superstition - my note] that a curse is resting on the neck of the one departing, which curse must be removed if the journey is to be successful (German translation, p. 70, note 91).

¹²⁸Everything before this point was translated with the help of my informant, a native speaker of Sorani from Kirkuk, Iraq. Everything from this point on was translated by the author.

¹²⁹i.e. in trouble.

When Mem's mother learns this,
 She says, "People of Yemen, come put on my head dirt and dust from the
 streets¹³⁰!"
 Then she calls out, "[My] son! Mîr Mem, Soul of my soul!
 May my suffering be blessed to you, together with the milk of my breasts.
 Don't go to the city of Jizîr, it's an unlucky city, and comfort is hard to find
 there¹³¹."

Bengîneh's mother says, "My son, [woe] to wretched me!
 Remember the hard work of your poor mother!
 My lamentations have gone up [to God] over Mem and Bengîneh¹³², graves and
 cemeteries are the fate of the city of Jizîr¹³³."

Mîr Mem's mother says, "Woe is me, pitiful and ruined of ancestors,
 My son, Mîr Mem, I carried you inside me for nine months, nine days, nine hours,
 and nine minutes, despite the pain¹³⁴.
 You were freed from my belly¹³⁵, and came into the hands of the midwife,
 You were freed from the midwife, and came into the hands of the nurses.
 My son, Mîr Mem, you were freed from the nurses, and came into the hands of the
 pedagogue(s), who brought you to the diwan.

¹³⁰Putting dirt on one's head is a sign of mourning.

¹³¹=lit. "and its comfort [wisrâ'ati < Arabic *istirâḥah* استراحة → Persian *istirâḥat* استراحت
 & Turkish *istirahat*] is very heavy." Ayyübiyân has wis'et: *ويصعبت* for wisrâ'at-.

¹³²plural in the original, as if a *Mem û Bengîn* were one entity, and she were lamenting two such
 entities

¹³³Ayyübiyân *gor û gorxanyan* = "their graves and cemeteries." He translates as "Their graves and
 burial places will be in the city of Jizîr."

¹³⁴*birk* برك = 'lumbago,' according to Wahby and Edmonds' dictionary.

¹³⁵*hezêre*=lit. "treasure"; "water tank"

My son, they sent you to school¹³⁶, for seven years you did not see the light of day¹³⁷ in the cellar.

People of Yemen, come put a black tent cloth on me, because of a youth like Mir Mem; the city of Yemen will become a desert, and desolate Jizîr will flourish."

Bengîneh's mother says, "My son, why are you such a thoughtless child?"

Son, the journey before you is a rare one¹³⁸,

Son, you¹³⁹ may be free of your mother's milk, [but] don't abandon¹⁴⁰ your master!"

Mem's mother says, "O Yemen, Help! Succor!

My son, Mir Mem, stop beside your mother, speak two words with me!

I will take treasures and arsenals for you out of the city of Yemen,

My son, I will become your messenger, and go myself to the city of Jizîr of Bohtan,

I will bring Yaya Zîn for you, the city of Jizîr also will I buy with earth and wind; O little father¹⁴¹, with all its accoutrements I will fetch it here."

Kakeh Mem says, "Mother, woe is me!"

[42] I have sworn that I must go after her to Jizîr."

Mem's mother says, "My cry of help is to God, the one and only!

A fire has broken out in me, I have no cure for it,

The city of Yemen is deserted and desolate; What can I do? It is without master!"

136=lit. "They put you before books"

137=lit. "the world's light"

138=be nadîr. 'A rare one' is a guess, since **nadîr** [< Arabic *nādir* نادر] means 'rare.' Possibly chosen for its rhyme. See note 118 above.

139=lit. "your neck"

140=lit. "don't take your hand from"

141=lit. "father of the mother"

Bengîneh's mother says, "My child, woe is to thoughtless me!
 My child, you must never abandon¹⁴² Mîr Mem, the son of Brahim Pasha."
 "Alas and alack!
 My maternal pains have been in vain in the world;
 God gave me an only son, ?I was appointed over him, but have lost him.?"

Mem's mother says, "My child, Mîr Mem, God has not permitted me to sit
 confidently.
 My child, now in old age, I¹⁴³ has encountered an empty house¹⁴⁴."
 "People of Yemen, sayyids and mullahs, young men!
 Let me be a sacrifice to your pairs of eyes!
 Lock the gates of Yemen for me, so that I can say two words to my only son."
 "Sayyids and mullahs, beloved of God!
 In all of your breasts are the chapters of the word of God;
 Come with me, let's go to Mîr Mem, you ask for me, perhaps he will come back
 with me."

Bengî's mother says, "A fire has broken out in me, my liver has been destroyed.
 The lord and servants are headed for desolate Jizîr."
 "What am I to do? Woe to irreligious¹⁴⁵ me!
 What am I to do? Why doesn't Brahim Pasha respond to Mem and Bengî's call
 for help?"

Mem's mother says, "What am I to do? Woe to imprisoned me!
 I have no one to give me advice or help,
 No matter what I do, I cannot let go of my son.

¹⁴²lit. "lift [your] hand from"

¹⁴³-lit. "my neck"

¹⁴⁴i.e. the lack of offspring, or sterility

¹⁴⁵bê seLa =lit. "without prayer", i.e. someone whose prayer is not heard or answered, because he fails to pray properly.

I should take up a keshkûl¹⁴⁶ and a walking stick, become a dervish, and wander behind Mir Mem, until I reach the city of Jizîr."

Bengîneh's mother says, "What am I to do, my child, my soul?
I renounce Yemen, even if it is great and important;
I will become a wanderer¹⁴⁷ and find bread [by going] from door [to door],
I will pass through every city, until I come to the city of Jizîra Bohtan.
The people of Jizîr will say, 'This pair of young men have their maidservant with them.' "

Kakeh Mem says, "Woe to estranged, irreligious me!
Tell my mother, '[I swear] to God, I won't be coming back,
For I have sworn by the word of God."

[43] Mem's mother says, "My child, my sweet sight¹⁴⁸!
Stand still, let me embrace you and have a good look at you."

Kakeh Mem says, "Don't even think about it,
It's no use [trying to] embrace me,
It's no use, I'm not coming back.
My mind is made up¹⁴⁹, I must go to Jizîra Bohtan.
Let go of me, o Muslims!"

Bengîneh's mother says, "Woe is me, pitiful and ruined of ancestors!
By God, allow Mem and Bengîneh to go to Jizîra Bohtan.
Come, entrust them to God as guarantor, as a surety to the prophet for all eternity."

Mem's mother says, "My child, woe to irreligious me!

¹⁴⁶See note 72 above

¹⁴⁷elçî =lit. "messenger." See also note 288 below.

¹⁴⁸çide =lit. "eye" [literary word]

¹⁴⁹seferim le ber e=lit. "I am intent upon this trip"

A fire has broken out in me, in my heart the light has been extinguished;
The city of Jizîr will prosper, the city of Yemen is without its master's son."

Kakeh Mem says, "What am I to do, my fate¹⁵⁰ has changed.
People of Yemen, sayyids and mullahs all together!
I am leaving, may your luck¹⁵¹ increase, may your houses prosper¹⁵²!"

The people of Yemen, the sayyids and mullahs, say, "We are blind;
We give you to God as guarantor, we entrust you to the prophet!"
Who was it? Respected Bengîneh,
He let out a shout, called up the troops,
The troops set out¹⁵³, waving their banner.
In the course of one hour all the preparations were made,
They waved their banner, left Yemen behind them, and headed for the desolate
city of Jizîr.

Then they brought news to Brahim, king of Yemen:
"In Yemen, a fire has broken out which no one can extinguish,
Brahim Padishah should send [a messenger] to Burj-i Belek, to find out why Kakeh
Mem did not remain there."
Brahim Padishah says, "You foolish people!
Go bring Kakeh Mem here to me!"
The wakils and wazirs says, "Brahim Padishah, woe to wretched you!
Didn't you know that Kakeh Mem has gathered an army and gone to the city of
Jizîr?"
When Brahim Padishah has learned this, he begins to weep and lament,
He says, "Now that I have no son, what am I to do in desolate Yemen?"

¹⁵⁰=lit. "day"

¹⁵¹or , wealth.

¹⁵²According to OM, **Dewlet ziyad û mallawa** is a general parting formula.

¹⁵³Where OM has **bâr dâkirt** [**bar dekird**] = "they loaded up", hence "they departed", Ayyûbiyân has **befî dekird** = "to make something be forward?"

"Respected wakils and wazirs!
I implore you, take treasures and trinkets to my son."

[44] The wakils and wazirs stood up [then and] there,
They say, "Let me be a sacrifice to you, Brahim Padishah, the perfect one,
Kakeh Mem is an intelligent man, he has taken his own travelling allowance."

Brahim Padishah says, "What am I to do? Fire has taken hold of me, my heart is
not at rest,
My child, I will make the city of Yemen a sacrifice to you, may my death come
before yours."

Who was it? Kakeh Mem the rare one,
Until evening he rides on, in the evening he camps for the night,
[And] says, "Bengîneh, you must go look in on the army, regiments and troops for
me,
Then come back: you must prepare supper for me."

When their day's march was over for the night,
One commander turned back with one thousand men.
When the sun shone the next morning,
The bugle was sounded, the banner was raised,
They loaded up and headed for the city of Jizîr,
By the time evening arrived, their day's journey was over.

Kakeh Mem says, "Beautiful-eyed Bengîneh!
Take a walk among the troops, find out if anyone is out of sorts."
Bengîneh circulated among the troops, and brought news for Mîr Mem,
Saying, "My dear master [agha], no one is out of sorts, no one is suffering
discomfort,
But last night one commander turned back with one thousand men."

Mîr Mem says, "Bengîneh, young lad!
Thank you, by the grace of God!

Undoubtedly, Brahim Padishah, my father, has doublecrossed me.”
 ”Bengîneh, why are you so lost in thought?
 Your master would gladly die for you.¹⁵⁴
 For tonight, make [only] light preparations.
 By God, I will die rather than return home.”

That evening all they did was rest.
 In the morning, when the sun rose,
 [The troops] were called up, the flag was hoisted,
 They head for the city of Jizîr, Yemen has been left behind.
 They march until evening,
 [When] once again they stop, the troops set up camp.

Mir Mem says, ”Bengîneh, walk among the troops, find out if the army is
 complete¹⁵⁵.
 [45] Tears came pouring down from Bengîneh’s eyes, you might say, a sea [of tears].
 Mir Mem says, ”Bengîneh, what is wrong? What has happened?
 If you miss your parents, you too should turn back!”

Bengîneh says, ”Woe is to estranged me, whose house is ruined!
 [I swear] by God himself, by the prophet for all eternity!
 I won’t leave you until God’s guest¹⁵⁶ comes to take my soul away.”

Who was it? Respected Bengîneh.
 He sat together with Mir Mem, and they entertained each other
 Until morning, when the sun raised its head from the east,
 Then they raised their banner, [and] got the troops ready,
 Little by little they marched toward the city of Jizîr.
 At the time of the noon prayer, news was brought to Mir Mem:

¹⁵⁴=lit. ”Your master will die for your two eyes.”

¹⁵⁵i.e, if everyone is there and accounted for.

¹⁵⁶i.e Azrael, the angel of death.

"Greetings to our beautiful-eyed master!
 Did you know that three commanders and their troops have not stayed with us?
 Kakeh Mem says, "What can I do? It is God's will!
 What am I to do? My father has doublecrossed me."

Kakeh Mem says, "Bengîneh, woe to irreligious me!
 It is not good that we torture people, neither does it please God.
 Come, for my sake become a commander, and take the army back for me."

Bengîneh says, "Mîr Mem, I thought I was respected by you.
 I did not come to amass wealth, or to carry away hords of treasure.
 My master [agha], may I be a sacrifice to you, I am one of the estranged and poor,
 Until my dying day, I will be your gray horse's groom."

Mîr Mem says, "Bengîneh, what am I to do? Imperfect and foolish me!
 May I be a sacrifice to you, may all of desolate Yemen be your sacrifice also¹⁵⁷.
 May my eyes be a sacrifice to you, together with my entire belief¹⁵⁸!
 Come, for my sake take the army back to Yemen, I cannot get along with these
 people.
 Perhaps God and the prophet will find out about my abandonment and solitude.
 My mind is made up, God willing, I won't return until I go to desolate Jizîr.
 Then my father will say, 'I had an only son, his name was Mîr Mem, he was the
 owner of Burj-i Belek, where is he [now]?'¹⁵⁹
 Then my mother will say, "My child, for nine months and nine days I carried you
 inside me, now where is my only son?"
 [46] Then Bengîneh says, "Mîr Mem, both of us are thoughtless,
 Evening has descended, let us set up camp for ourselves
 The people have their eyes on us, because we are the great commanders of the
 army."

¹⁵⁷=lit. "I will make desolate Yemen circle about your head."

¹⁵⁸=lit.. "my belief from head to foot"

¹⁵⁹This line has been omitted from Ayyûbiyârîs edition.

When they finish speaking with each other there,
They call up their troops, plant their banner[’s pole] in the ground.

Mîr Mem says, “Bengîneh, go around and see who is without provisions, and who has provisions left.”

Bengîneh says, “Mîr Mem, you come with me to settle accounts,
As long as Brahim Padishah(’s head) is pleased, the troops’ provisions won’t be scanty¹⁶⁰.”

Mîr Mem says, “By God, Bengîneh, with these words you have made me agitated,
I have a long way to go¹⁶¹, it is a long and arduous road.
My father’s army is numerous, but it is not a source of confidence¹⁶².
My father has done this so that I won’t go to Jizîr, so that I will turn back.”

Bengîneh says, “Mîr Mem, no matter what I advise you to do, what I say is not carried out.
By God, when a man gives his word as a pledge, he must not renege on it,
Or else God, the great master, will be angry with him.”

Mîr Mem says, “Bengîneh, you are not bringing rest to my heart¹⁶³,
I would not renounce Yaya Zîn for all the world,
Even if I were to lose my head, by God, I would not renounce her for all the world.”

¹⁶⁰According to Oskar Mann, this means “the money will last until we have returned to Brahim Padishah, until he rejoices at our return.”

¹⁶¹=lit. “My road or way is far”

¹⁶²Oskar Mann’s translation of the second half of this line is questionable, because it does not fit the context: “let there be confidence.” I have preferred Ayyübiyânîs interpretation here. Ayyübiyân omits the word *bela*.

¹⁶³=lit. “You are not making it so, that there be well-being in my heart”

Bengîneh says, "Mîr Mem, Yaya Zîn is now waiting for you, she is renouncing everyone else."

Mîr Mem says, "Bengîneh, don't shoot any more arrows at me, or cast me into anxiety.

I won't renounce Yaya Zîn, until it is judged in God's court whether I am right or wrong,

Now let us rest, so that the army troops recover [their strength]."

Who was it? Respectable Bengîneh.

He says, "Tomorrow we will carry out this plan,

God knows how many more days of travel we have until [we reach] Jizîr."

The next morning, the bugles are sounded, the banners are hoisted.

That night four commanders, each commander with one thousand men, had turned back.

Mîr Mem says, "Bengîneh, what should I do? I have no teacher's paper, pen or seal left with me,

Bengîneh, what should I do? All of my lessons have been exchanged for longing for Yaya Zîn."

Bengîneh says, "Won't you listen to reason?^{163a} The army troops have gotten dispersed in the wilderness."

[47] Kakeh Mem says, "Woe to you, sad of heart and wretched one!

[I don't want] Brahim Padishah's army to be with me at all, [I don't want] them to help or advise me,

[I swear] to God, [even] if there's not another living soul with me, I won't come back until I've reach the city of Jizîr."

^{163a} *Carê îley gerê*, rendered by O. Mann as 'Nun nimm einmal an,' and by Ayyūbiyān as *حال*

Bengîneh says, "For me whatever the service (and preparation) may be, may the journey you are setting out on be blessed, by God!

Why do you sadly say, 'My liver is burning,

It is a long, hard trip, full of hot trouble¹⁶⁴?

[I swear] to God who is without equal, as long as my soul is in my body, I will be your stablehand, I won't turn back!"

Mîr Mem says, "Bengîneh, what should I do? What is the solution for me?

[I swear] to God, I know that my journey to Jizîr is one time only¹⁶⁵."

Bengîneh says, "What can I do? Your hand is powerless, there is no solution for you,

Because they have sworn by the Koran and the word of God,

Go! May your heart not be troubled, everyone's hope is in God."

That day, they rode two by two until sundown,

The army did not reach an inhabited place, it camped in the deserted wilderness.

That night three commanders, each commander with one thousand men, turned back.

In the morning when they woke up, no one was left.

Then Bengîneh came, sat beside Mîr Mem, and cried and cried.

When Mîr Mem lifted his eyes, he saw Bengîneh crying, you might say his tears were a sea, a river, a stream.

Mîr Mem says, "Bengîneh, why are you crying, what has happened?"

Bengîneh says, "O beautiful-eyed Mîr Mem!

Of that army, which our father had fitted out for us, not even a single muleteer is left."

Kakeh Mem shouts out, "Esteemed Bengîneh!

¹⁶⁴germ kuḫawa Ayyūbiyā does not know what this means.

¹⁶⁵I understand this to mean that he knows he won't ever return home, but according to Oskar Mann it means that his journey to Jizîr must be made "mit einem Male" = at once.

Bring me my gray horse, hold him by both reins,
You too absolutely must go back; I will make the journey to the city of Jizīr alone.

Bengīneh says, "What can I do? If only I would go blind in both eyes!
I told you back there that the army was of no use;
Now, even if you chop off my head from behind, I won't turn back."

Mīr Mem became furious, and beat Bengīneh on his head and behind his ears with
this gold stick.

[48] He says, "I will go alone, you must turn back."

Then Bengīneh says, "By God! By your beating [me], I don't stop being your
servant,
Until I reach the city of Jizīr, I will follow you, bareheaded and barefoot."

Then Mem says, "Clever servant, we have been left behind in the desert,
Come, let us relinquish servanthood and masterhood¹⁶⁶,
Come, let us become brothers of the same mother and father until this world of
ours is destroyed."

Then Mem and Bengīneh reach an agreement.

This pair of lonely horsemen have come down from Yemen,
They don't know the way to Jizīr, there is no one for them to ask.
From the morning they ride until eventide,
They reach the nighttime quarters, then settle in there.

That evening they make a plan together:

"We have no mother or father, there is no one to come to our call for help;
By God, we have no white-bearded elder [to advise us], our only hope is God and
his prophet."

Then when it is [again] morning, this pair of horsemen mounts [their horses],
And they set out, asking the way to the city of Jizīr,

¹⁶⁶Ayyūbiyānhas *ḫulameti-* instead of [*āghāyāti-*], thus changing the meaning slightly, viz. "Come, let us relinquish servanthood and slavery." In either case, Mem is suggesting that they treat each other as equals, doing away with the distinctions of master and servant.

Then they go down, calling on God's help¹⁶⁷,
 That day that pair of lonely horsemen went on, having renounced the world:
 "God! We are going out in search of our desire, who will come to our call for help?
 We have no one else but God and Ghaws of Baghdad¹⁶⁸."
 That night they don't reach an inhabited place, they stay in the deserted wilderness.
 They content themselves with one another; there was no one to say two words to
 them, for entertainment.
 Then they give thanks, and pray to the prophet.
 That night [while] they are sleeping, the great Ghaws of Baghdad comes to them
 When they awake on the following morning, there is an old, white-bearded¹⁶⁹
 man with [them], for the delight of the world.
 They ask him, "Where are you going? Where are you coming from? Do you know
 anything about the city of Jizîr, which way [leads] there?"
 The white-bearded man says, "You are guests, welcome, on my eyes (=very much
 welcome),
 [49] By God, I know my way around, I know [the way] to the city of Jizîr."
 Then, when this pair of horsemen sets out in the morning,

¹⁶⁷=lit: "They made a cry for help. 'O Powerful one!'"

¹⁶⁸Perhaps this name was chosen because of the rhyme *dinyâya hânâya ghausî baghdâya*. According to Oskar Mann, Ghaws-i Baghdâdî is 'Abd al-Qâdir Gîlânî. In the new edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam, W. Braune has written an article on 'Abd al-Kâdir al-Djîlânî (1077-1166), which describes him as a "Hanbalite theologian, preacher and Şûfî, who gave his name to the order of the [Qâdirîyah]," and is considered by some to be the greatest saint of Islam. There is a collection of legends about him by al-Shaţţanawfî, called *Bahjat al-Asrâr*. The saying "My foot is on the neck of every saint of God" is closely associated with him. The nickname Ghaws-i Baghdad is derived from the term Ghawth غوث (helper), the head of a spiritual hierarchy of saints, according to an Islamic theosophic system of belief. See "'Abd al-Kâdir al-Djîlânî," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Series vol. 1, pp 69-70; and M. M. van Bruinessen, "Ghawth/qutb," in: *Agha Shaikh and State : on the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan*. Thesis (Utrecht : Rijksuniversiteit, 1978), p. 251-2. According to B. Nikitine, his tomb in Baghdad is an important pilgrimage site. See his "Essai de classification de folklore à l'aide d'un inventaire social-économique," in: *XVle Congrès international d'anthropologie et d'archéologie préhistorique : Vle assemblée générale de l'Institut international d'anthropologie Bruxelles 1-8 septembre 1935* (Bruxelles : [Imprimerie médicale et scientifique], 1936), v. 2, p 1009.

¹⁶⁹Note that the Persian form *rîsh safîd* سفید ریش is used here, whereas elsewhere in this version the Sorani form **ridênsîpt** is used.

Veysel Karanî of Mahîdesht¹⁷⁰ rescues them,
They go down to the city of Jizîr.

Who was it? The young men Mem and Bengîneh.
The earth folded itself over for them¹⁷¹, by the grace of God¹⁷²,
Until they reached Yaya Zîn's plowman: there they stopped¹⁷³.
Then those horsemen shout out, "Hey plowman, what place does this plow belong
to?"

The plowman says, "O pair of horsemen, this plow belongs to the city of Jizîr,
[If] you ask me 'Whose plow is it?',
[I] will say, 'If you didn't know, this is Yaya Zîn's man!'
Welcome, lonely horsemen who have come here,
Come, get down off your horses, have something to eat¹⁷⁴ with me,
Let me bring the good news to young Yaya Zîn,
As a sacrifice for your heads, she will begin to hand out gifts¹⁷⁵."

Then Mem and Bengîneh says, "O great God, a thousand thanks!"

Who was it? Beautiful-eyed Mem and Bengîneh,
They dismounted at the source of a well.

Who was it? The handsome plowman,
He let go of the plow, [and] brought the good news to Yaya Zîn.

Who was it? The beautiful young son of the plowman,

¹⁷⁰First mentioned at the very beginning of this version.

¹⁷¹i.e., their journey was shortened, cf. ZK-3.

¹⁷²=lit. by the grace of **the sight of the eyes**, a euphemism for 'God'.

¹⁷³=lit., "were [his] guests"

¹⁷⁴=lit. "a piece of bread"

¹⁷⁵or, garments of honor.

He ran and brought bread for Mem and Bengîneh.
 They ate the bread and gave thanks,
 Then they gave the plowman a reward.

Who was it? Beautiful-eyed Mem and Bengîneh,
 They went together to the source of the well,
 [Saying], "Praise be to God, this is the well of treasures¹⁷⁶!"

Who was it? Delicate Mem and Bengîneh,
 They shouted out, "O mighty God!
 Here we have entered the city of Jizir; May God free us from suffering."

Who was it? Graceful Mîr Mem,
 He grasped the cup, and brought it overflowing from the source of the well,
 And turned it over above Bengîneh's head, making him pretty¹⁷⁷.

Who was it? Perfect Bengîneh,
 Mashallah¹⁷⁸, you might say he is a spring flower on whom the sun has shone.

These esteemed master and servant
 [50] Mashallah! You would say one of them is the sun, the other you'd say is the
 moon.

Then they sat down at the source of the well, one on either side,
 Until an answer and news came from Yaya Zîn.
 The plowman went away shouting, [and] came back galloping,
 Bringing good news for Mem and Bengîneh,
 They stuck their hands in their pockets several times, they gave several pieces of
 gold to the plowman.

¹⁷⁶According to Oskar Mann, this is because they received good news beside it.

¹⁷⁷or, 'colorful'

¹⁷⁸An expression of admiration.

Kakeh Mem says, "Plowman, where should we stay?
 The plowman says, "Let me be a sacrifice for you,
 The messenger is on the way, to speak with [you about this]."
 They sat down there, shoulder to shoulder
 They performed four prostrations¹⁷⁹ and implored God [saying]:
 "God! We are lonely and foreign,
 Who will take us in¹⁸⁰, that we may be his guests?
 O lord God, may our desire be achieved, may our heads be saved here!"

Who was it? The pair of delicate youths,
 They put their feet in the stirrups, [and] mounted [their horses].
 "O Light of the eyes (=God), we are going down to the city of Jizîr."
 They came down, the pair of poor horsemen;
 They came and reached the river of desolate Jizîr.
 When they glanced upward,
 They saw that all the washerwomen¹⁸¹ had stood up.
 Then Mir Mem said, "Beautiful-eyed Bengîneh!
 The one there who you see standing there
 She is the Yaya Zîn who has brought me here."

Kakeh Bengîneh says, "Kakeh Mem, it isn't so,
 It is surely her servant."

Kakeh Mem says, "Bengîneh, what do you say, shall I say something to her¹⁸²?"
 "O washerwoman, doing your bleaching by hand,
 We are lonely and foreign,

¹⁷⁹From Arabic rak'ah: رَكْعَةٌ, defined in Hans Wehr's Arabic-English Dictionary as "a bending of the torso from an upright position, followed by two prostrations (in Muslim prayer ritual)."

¹⁸⁰=lit. "be our host"

¹⁸¹or bleachers. They were doing laundry on the banks of the river.

¹⁸²=lit. "Shall I know a word from her?"

For your sake we have come from the city of Yemen to Jizîrê Botan.”

Melik Reyhan says, “O pair of horsemen from a far off land!
Welcome to this place! Your shoes on my eyes¹⁸³!
That Yaya Zîn who has brought you has forty maidservants like me attending to her.”

Kakeh Mem says, “Beware of women! Now she is snubbing me¹⁸⁴!
What are you saying out of fear of God? [Have you forgotten what you swore to me] on the Koran?!
[51] You have left Yemen plundered and spoiled¹⁸⁵, and now you are snubbing me!?”

Melik Reyhan says, “O pair of strange horsemen, soul of my soul!
I have never seen Yemen, [I swear] to God, [who is] peerless and eternal.
The lady who brought you here
-- Fear God and trust what I say! --
From time immemorial has had forty maidservants attending to her.”

Kakeh Mem says, “Beautiful-eyed Bengîneh!
This one is snubbing me, what is the reason?”

Bengîneh says, “She is not snubbing [you], [I swear] to God, it isn't her:
The garment which that one (=Yaya Zîn) brought to Yemen,
This one is wearing, it is a gift to her [from Yaya Zîn];
The coat that this one here is wearing is Yaya Zîn's, which she has given to this one.”

183A variant of the standard Kurdish formula for welcoming: **Ser seran û ser çavan** [in Kurmanji] = [You have come] on heads and eyes; **Be ser çawan** [in Sorani] = [You have come] on eyes.

184He thinks that he is addressing Zîn herself, when in fact he is talking to her maidservant.

185i.e. you left it without me to carry on my father's name.

Bengîneh says, "This one is hardly the one who swore with you, my master, by your head!"

Kakeh Mem says, "Bengîneh, because we have encountered her, let's ask her at whose house we should stay¹⁸⁶,

He calls out, "Lady, my dear Lady!

Who is generous and hospitable¹⁸⁷, that we can go be his guest?

Lady, for the love of God, we are strangers, don't try to trick us!"

Melik Reyhan says, "Woe is to wretched and orphaned me!

May whoever tries to trick you go blind, may he be deprived of [God's] grace!

Boy, may God make whoever tries to trick you into an infidel!

Boy, if you have come with a purpose, take the true words from me:

Boy, may I be responsible for you! Don't go anywhere but to the house of Ka Bekir.

He is a good and generous man, who knows the value of a guest.

Boy, my dear, you are a boy without peer,

May whoever tries to trick you go blind, may he be deprived of religion!

If you've come to find bread (=food) -- may your sins be on my neck -- go to the house of mîr Zêndîn.

Boy, you are a very sweet boy,

May whoever tries to trick you, my God, not see the goodness of youth¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸⁶=ij: "We should become guest at whose house"

¹⁸⁷لوتی. According to O. Mann, this means something like 'guest loving' [gastliebend]. The word لوتی is an adjective derived from the Biblical name Lot, which is لوط in Arabic. Lot was Abraham's nephew, who was visited by the three disguised angels in the city of Sodom, which angels -- guests in his home -- he protects from being sexually abused by his fellow Sodomites. Whereas in English we have taken the term *sodomy* from this story, the Muslim world has taken the term لوطی, (literally 'of Lot'), which means 'homosexual'; 'homosexuality' is liwāṭah لواطه. This is a modification [some would say: a garbling] of the original story, since it is supposedly Lot who protects his visitors from potential harm, whereas the Islamic term لوطی suggests that Lot was the one committing the offense. Interestingly enough, the use of the term in the present context restores Lot's original role, implying that he be remembered as the archetypal hospitable and protective host -- what Qeretajdîn is in the story of Mem û Zîn.

¹⁸⁸According to Oskar Mann, this means "May he die young"

[52] If you've come in search of manliness -- may your sins be on my neck -- go to the house of Qeretajdîn.

No one may hinder you¹⁸⁹, [or] say anything bad about you."

Kakeh Mem says, "Bengîneh, you are a very wise man, I have left behind me the [opportunity to] be padishah of Yemen, shall I now go act as someone's servant in exchange for bread?"

He continues, "Bengîneh, you are a very special Bengîneh, Mir Mem has not come from the city of Yemen in order to clear away cup after cup of coffee with obsequious phrases¹⁹⁰.

I have come with a specific purpose: it is better that we go to Ka Bekir's house."

He says further, "Bengîneh, my soul! O soul of my soul!

It has taken me twelve months and twenty four days to come here,

I have left behind the city of Yemen, what a great and mighty city it is!

I won't go to the house of Qeretajdîn, to be given morcels of bread out of charity.

Don't say 'May your heart not be troubled': it is the advice of women.¹⁹¹

[If] I go anywhere, I'll go stay at Ka Bekir's house."

Then Yaya Zîn asks God for help: "God! You are a thoughtless God¹⁹²,

Both magnanimous and powerful,

That pair of horsemen has come from Yemen, having undertaken a journey of twelve months and 24 days,

O Lord, make it with you godly power so that they go to Qeretajdîn's house, rather than to Ka Bekir's!"

She says, "[This is] my plea before God!

¹⁸⁹=lit. "put a log on your load"

¹⁹⁰be seceqeserî. According to Oskar Mann, Mirza Jewad's explanation was: When a servant is serving his master and guests, he murmurs such phrases as **teseddûqit bim** or **tesedduql serit bim** [Wahby & Edmonds attest be seceqe-t bim = 'may I be your sacrifice (formula of devotion)'. A simpler translation, again according to Oskar Mann, would be: "for the sake of a few alms."

¹⁹¹Oskar Mann's translation of this line is: "May your heart not be troubled: Don't say it is the advice of women."

¹⁹²According to Oskar Mann: "a God without doubt"; according to Ayyûbiyân thoughtless = you are not thinking of me.

Since he is without equal, unique and solitary,
 Eternal
 That pair of horsemen has come here at my wretched bidding,
 O Lord, may they not stay at the house of my older brother the mîr.
 O God! You are without equal, without peer!
 That pair of horsemen has come at my bidding, o wretched me.
 They have left behind them [the chance of] being padishah of Yemen,
 O God! Let them not go to Ka Bekir's house, let them go to my sister's house;
 Qeretajdîn is a righteous man, he is generous, hospitable, he will treat them
 very well."

Who was it? Esteemed Kakeh Mem and Bengîneh,
 [53] The people of Jizîr were standing on either side.

Who was it? Respected Kakeh Mem and Bengîneh,
 They greeted the crowd [by waving] with both hands,
 [The people of] Jizîr responded on both sides.
 Then Melik Reyhan pulled a veil over her head,
 And hastily followed Mem and Bengîneh.
 Mem and Bengîneh urged on their horses.

Who was it? Precious Mem and Bengîneh.
 They stopped nowhere until they reached Ka Bekir's gate,
 The people of Jizîr were watching them from both sides.
 There was no one at Ka Bekir's door¹⁹³
 To come take the reins of the two horsemen[']s horses]¹⁹⁴.

¹⁹³or, house. For a very fine discussion of the use of words for *door* or *gate* to refer to a royal court, see Hans Wehr. "Das 'tor des Königs' im Buche Esther und verwandte Ausdrücke", *der Islam* 39 (1964), pp. 247-260. See also FK-2, footnote #14.

¹⁹⁴According to Ayyûbiyân it is customary that there always be a servant and a groom posted at the gate of every great Kurdish family, so that when a guest arrives, they can welcome him, take his horse by the reins and take it to the stable, leading the guest to the guest quarters, until the head of the family comes to sit with him. If we apply this logic to the present situation, then not finding anyone to greet him at the gate, Mem has reason to feel insulted.

Who was it? Respected Kâkeh Mem,
 Who shouted out, "Beautiful-eyed Bengîneh!
 It is not my fault, the advice of the two of you has been followed,
 A foreigner is like a blind-folded falcon.
 Many people have suffered from the words of women.
 In my opinion, Ka Bekir's household has not [yet] received any guests, nor does it
 (do they) give bread to (=feed) anyone."
 He continues, "Bengîneh, sweet Bengîneh!
 It is best that we go to Qeretajdîn's house;
 He is a fun-loving man, who does not skimp on hospitality."

Who was it? Delicate Mir Mem,
 Who said, "O people of Jizîr, [white]bearded elders!
 Which street is Qeretajdîn's house on, so that we can go there?"

Who was it? An outstanding man,
 Everyone followed behind him,
 As he showed Qeretajdîn's house to Mem and Bengîneh.

Who was it? People of faith,
 Who brought the good news to lovely Lady Astî:
 "A pair of handsome foreigners has just come here."
 When Lady Astî heard this, she stood up in the diwan [and said], "Let me go bring
 greetings to these guests."
 Lady Astî shouts:
 "Let the unschooled¹⁹⁵ and learned come: mullahs, sayyids and village elders."
 She sent them one by one down the road [to greet Mem].

Who was it? Falcon-eyed Lady Astî

¹⁹⁵or, young naïve.

[54] She sent for her servants and white-haired elderly women¹⁹⁶,
They took a bottle of rosewater [and] sprinkled the room and upper storeys with it.

Who was it? Lady Astî full of hot trouble¹⁹⁷.
She sent for a sacrificial ram,
The sacrificial perambulations were done in front of Mem and Bengîneh¹⁹⁸.
When Mem and Bengîneh reached the street [where Qeretajdîn lives],
Young people came out to greet them, as they began passing out gifts.
They passed by there pleasantly,
On the road there were white-bearded elders¹⁹⁹,
When they passed by, sayyids and mullahs stood up.

Who was it? Beautiful-eyed Mîr Mem,
He greeted them and dismounted in their midst.
Then Bengîneh, the very precious,
Took arms and equipment from Mîr Mem,
Kakeh Mem stood there, [while] Bengîneh went to the harem²⁰⁰.
When Lady Astî learned of this matter,
She descended from the [high] windows,

¹⁹⁶Ser-sipî = 'wise old lady,' 'lady companion.' According to Ayyūbiyān such elderly women were respected for their wisdom and experience, and were often taken as companions by women of the upper classes.

¹⁹⁷See note 164 above.

¹⁹⁸According to Oskar Mann, "When an official or the like came to a village, before he got down off his horse, the peasants led a ram in a circle around him three times, then slaughtered it. In older times, a bull was used, whence the name *gav-gerdûn* = 'circling of a bull' for the ritual. The sacrificial animal was slaughtered at the feet of the official, who would then step on it or have his horse tread on it. The words *gav* and *gerdûn* are the Persian, rather than the Kurdish, forms, and the custom is practiced throughout Persia e.g. in Fars and among the Guran." (OM, German translation, note 161, pp. 93-94). See also Nikitine's "Essai de classification de folklore à l'aide d'un inventaire social-économique," pp. 1009-1010. [full reference in note 168 above]

¹⁹⁹Note the Persian form again, as in note 169 above.

²⁰⁰According to Oskar Mann, in order to put down Mem's equipment. Ayyūbiyān's translation, however is different: "Bengîneh, who is a confidant (*maḥram* محرم), goes forward."

And said, "Brother, my dear!
 Why have you come here so late?
 Come, sit down, let's speak a few²⁰¹ words together.

Bengîneh says, "Lady, beauty-eyed!
 I cannot sit down, my master is standing outside [waiting]."
 Then Lady Astî sent for the sayyids, mullahs, and elders,
 [saying], "Release Kakeh Mem for me right away."
 When the messenger came from that side,
 He spoke to the sayyids and mullahs.
 They let Kakeh mem go, saying, "May your wealth increase, your household
 prosper."
 When Kakeh mem was released, everyone knew of it.
 [When] he headed for Qeretajdîn's harem quarters, Lady Astî learned of it.
 She came out to welcome them, she embraced him, saying, "Dear brother, why are
 you so late in coming to desolate Jizîr?
 My bright world became dark, because of you my life thread was cut.
 Dear brother, come, let's go to the upper storey room."

Who was it? Esteemed Mîr Mem,
 He climbed up the stairs,
 Windows were opened for them on both sides,
 [55] They sat down with Lady Astî [as] sister and brothers, the esteemed ones.
 Bengîneh stood before them respectfully with hands folded²⁰².

Who was it? Beautiful-eyed Lady Astî
 And Mîr Mem, they held a conversation with one another,
 Bengîneh was given permission to sit down.

²⁰¹=lit. "two"

²⁰²Oskar Mann describes **destewnezer** as follows: "The [servant] holds his hands (**dest**) in front of his belly, so that the one wrist covers the other, fixing his gaze (**nezer**) on the master's mouth; while speaking with the master, the servant must neither gesticulate nor let his eyes wander." (OM, German translation, note 164, p. 95). Wahby and Edmond's dictionary attests the expression: **des(t)ewkemer** (**des(t)ewnezer**) **westan** = 'to stand with hands folded as sign of respect, stand respectfully.'

Mem and Bengîneh and Lady Astî sit down shoulder to shoulder,
 Lady Astî says, "My guest is the son of the padishah of Iran²⁰³."
 She says, "Woe is to wretched and homeless me!
 What should I do? My guest is the only son of Brahim, padishah of Yemen."
 She goes on to say, "What should I do, orphan that I am!
 Qeretajdîn is at Mir Zêndîn's diwan, he does not know that this guest has come."
 She says, "Master gatekeeper! Come [stand] before the window of the upper
 chamber²⁰⁴,
 Go faithfully [and] give the news to Qeretajdîn, but don't let my older brother
 know."

Who was it? The beautiful-eyed gatekeeper,
 He reached the doorway of the mîr's diwan, raised the curtain,
 He picked up [Qeretajdîn's] shoes and showed them to Qeretajdîn,
 Mîr Zêndîn looked around,
 He said, "Master gatekeeper, why have you come after Qeretajdîn? What is for
 lunch?"
 The gatekeeper says, "Mîr, may I be a sacrifice to you!
 Anything you [want to] eat is there, but two guests have just arrived."
 As Qeretajdîn got up from [his place in] the diwan,
 He went down the stairs, and took a (sidewards) glance at the gatekeeper,
 Asking, "What's the news? What has happened?"
 [The gatekeeper] said, "God be praised, nothing has happened.
 Two guests have come to us, in the center of town.
 They are very noble guests: Lady Astî sent for you in haste."
 Qeretajdîn says, "I am quite sure²⁰⁵,
 These guests are very welcome, I know them very well."

²⁰³According to Ayyūbiyān in order to glorify Mem even more, the teller exaggerates and says that Mem's father is the padishah of Iran, rather than the padishah of Yemen.

²⁰⁴=lit. "the window *and* the upper chamber, an example of hendiadys. According to Oskar Mann, Lady Astî calls down from the upper chamber to the gatekeeper who is below in the courtyard, to tell him to stand opposite the window where she is seated, to hear her command. (OM, German translation, note 165, p. 96)

²⁰⁵=lit. "I am a diver". i.e. "I know the profound points of the matter"

Who was it? Qeretajdîn full of hot trouble²⁰⁶,
 When he reached his own door, he didn't stop anywhere,
 Until he climbed the stairs, raised the curtain, he didn't stop anywhere,
 Until he reached Mîr Mem and greeted him,
 Saying, "And on you be peace and God's grace, you are very welcome²⁰⁷, fine lad!"

[56] Who was it? Melik Reyhan the beauty-eyed,
 She threw a shawl over her head,
 [And] came striding up the street.
 When she reached the door of Ka Bekir's house²⁰⁸,
 She saw that that guest had come, [but] there was no one left at her father's house.
 Melik Reyhan says, "Woe is to dark-headed and orphaned me!
 Have you seen how the door of my father's house has been cut off from the way of
 livelihood?"
 She says, "Father, you are an infidel!
 Eighty people a day used to find shelter in your house,
 [Now] news has reached all four lands: they say 'Bekir Agha²⁰⁹ doesn't take in
 guests'.
 Bekir Agha, what shall I do? You are a precious Bekir Agha,
 Bekir Agha, you are my protection²¹⁰,
 How did it happen that a guest, finding no place in your house, went to
 Qeretajdîn's house?"

²⁰⁶See note 164 above

²⁰⁷=lit. "On my eyes"

²⁰⁸Ka Bekir is her father in this version.

²⁰⁹Ka Bekir is henceforth called Bekir Agha or just plain Bekir.

²¹⁰=lit. "You are a hedge or fence for me." According to Oskar Mann, Mirza Jewad explains this verse as follows. "You are a hedge or hindrance to me", i.e., "You prevent anything good from happening to me" (OM, German translation, note 171, p. 97); Ayyūbiyān explains it as meaning that "just as a fence surrounds a garden, so you enclose me and guard my honor" (Ayyūbiyān note 2, p. 163).

Bekir Agha says, "By the one who is the master of goodness!
The reason why they have come (in all the world),
I won't let them achieve any of their goals, by God!"

Melik Reyhan says, "Alas! 1,000 times alas! See how my father's house has sunk
down!
Enemies will say, 'At Bekir Agha's house there is no straw or barley for guests²¹¹'.

Mîr Zêndîn sent [a messenger] to Qeretajdîn, [asking him] who has withheld his salary, who has said something [bad] to him, why he doesn't come to the diwan. Qeretajdîn replies, "Thanks to him²¹², no one can say anything to me; but a few years ago, I had a brother, who went away. Thanks to him (=Mîr Zêndîn), he has come back. His name is Kakeh Mem: it is because of him that I have not come." The mîr ordered him, "Arise, bring Kakeh Mem and come here." [Qeretajdîn] said, "Please, let it pass today; tomorrow I will come to see the mîr together with Kakeh Mem."

There was another prince, named 'Irfo²¹³, who had also come to Qeretajdîn's house, also because of Yaya Zîn. There was [yet] another prince, named Cheko who had also come to Qeretajdîn's house, [and] also because of Yaya Zîn. Qeretajdîn did not know the name of 'Irfo or Cheko's father, [57] but he knew that Kakeh Mem was the son of Brahim, padishah of the city of Yemen. And the city of Jizîr was always ruled by Yemen.

So on the following morning, Qeretajdîn, 'Irfo, Cheko, Kakeh Mem and Bengineh, all five of them got up and went to the mîr's diwan. Bekir had placed a

²¹¹or their horses. From this point on, the story is told mainly in prose.

²¹²=lit. "In the shadow of his (i.e. Mîr Zêndîn's) forehead." For "in the shadow of" meaning "thanks to", cf. Turkish **sayesinde**.

²¹³According to Oskar Mann, Raîmân pronounced this name in two ways: 'irfô or 'arfô.

messenger in their midst: when they went to the diwan, Bekir also left his house and came. He also reached the mîr's diwan.²¹⁴

Now he²¹⁵ tells of the princes, the fine ones,
 They reach the mîr's diwan, greeting him abundantly,
 Mîr Zêndîn says, "And upon you peace and the grace of God, you are most
 welcome!"
 They showed Kakeh Mem where to sit.

'Irfo came first, he was the big brother; Cheko came after him, he was the middle²¹⁶ brother; Kakeh Mem came after them, he was the youngest brother. When they went to Mîr Zêndîn's diwan, the mîr ordered [Mem] to sit at the head of all of them, and he himself sat down beside him. Over and above the expenses [of being host], Qeretajdîn [was in the habit of] putting 50 tumans²¹⁷ behind the heads²¹⁸ [of his guests] every Thursday night²¹⁹, saying, "They must not pay any

²¹⁴The next four lines are in rhymed verse, after which according to Oskar Mann the prose narrative is resumed: Ayyübiyân considers the three sentences that follow the next four lines to be in rhyming verse also and arranges them accordingly on the page

²¹⁵i.e. the poet, according to Oskar Mann.

²¹⁶The word for 'middle' used as an ordinal, as in *first, middle, and last*, is *nêwînjî* <nêwîncî> in OM: *نێوینجی* <nêwîncî> in Ayyübiyân and *نێوینجی* <nîwîncî> in Kurdoev's Sorani dictionary; it does not appear in Wahby and Edmond's dictionary. The word is interesting because it consists of a Kurdish word (Naw/Nêw = 'inside, interior, center, middle': cf. also Nîw = 'half') plus the Turkish ordinal number suffix -*inci*. This suffix is also added onto cardinal numbers to make ordinals in Neo-Aramaic dialects spoken in the same region as this Sorani Mukri Kurdish dialect: see Irene Garbell, The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Persian Azerbaijan: Linguistic Analysis and Folkloristic Texts (London et al.: Mouton & Co., 1965), p. 56, §2.21.22 and "The Impact of Kurdish and Turkish on the Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Persian Azerbaijan and the Adjoining Regions," *JAOS* 85 (1965), p. 166, §1.22.3.

²¹⁷Persian monetary unit.

²¹⁸According to Oskar Mann, this means "behind their pillows"

²¹⁹i.e. eve of the Muslim sabbath.

travel expenses with it, [or] my honor would be damaged²²⁰; bread is not enough of a gift: it is shameful for me to even mention the bread of cowards²²¹."

Day and night they sat there, the mîr would not let them go. Lady Astî sent a man [saying], "Ask my older brother why he hasn't allowed Kakeh Mem to come back!" The mîr spoke: "I'll let him go, but he must come back to me for supper. Why does my sister give something to Qeretajdîn, but does not give me anything? Here I've let Kakeh Mem go, he has come back [to you]; for supper he must return to me." Kakeh Mem got up and went. 'Irfo, Cheko, and Qeretajdîn all went away. [Only] the mîr and Bekir Agha were left. [The mîr] said, "Bekir Agha, let's make a plan: Kakeh Mem is so noble, that no matter what I do, the city of Jizîr is not worthy enough for me to give him it." Bekir said, "Who is he, that the city of Jizîr is not worthy enough for you to give him it?" The mîr spoke: "[I swear] to God, I don't know whose son he is; but he's very noble." Bekir Agha said, "You know best²²², do as you wish." The mîr spoke: "I don't have anything else. Perhaps I should give him Yaya Zîn and her palace." Bekir Agha said, "Amen²²³." The servants brought the good news to Yaya Zîn, [saying], "Tonight your older brother is giving you to Kakeh Mem." Yaya Zîn said deliberately, "That Kakeh Mem, where is he from?" Yaya Zîn was given the good news, that night Yaya Zîn was happy and gay: she sent the good news to Lady Astî²²⁴, [saying], "Such a thing has taken place in our²²⁵ older brother's house."

[58] Lady Astî says, "Lord God, many thanks!
May those [two] yound men reach their goal.
Then Bekir Agha and the mîr began plotting.

²²⁰=lit. "would go." I.e. they must be taken in as guests.

²²¹or. "of beggars", according to Oskar Mann.

²²²This is reminiscent of the Turkish expression '**sen bilirsin**' 'I have come across this expression both in Neo-Aramaic (Turoyo) [HR-1] and in Kurmanji [MC-1].

²²³=lit. "May it be blessed"

²²⁴Her older sister.

²²⁵=lit. "my"

The mîr says, "Let's give her to him this evening!" [Bekir Agha] says, "If you please, my lord, don't give her [to him] this evening; [first] go home, ask Yaya Zîn, saying to her, 'Sister, I have given you to Kakeh Mem. Don't tell him that I have not spoken to you about it²²⁶; If you are not willing, I won't give you to him."

She said²²⁷, "My dear brother, burn me up, if you wish, I won't disobey you."

Bekir said, "It has fallen through for this evening, let it wait until tomorrow night."

Bekir got up and went home, going along the street that leads from Qeretajdîn's house to mîr Zêndîn's house. Bekir put gold pieces in his breast pocket, [and] went down the street. He gave a dirhem to every slut²²⁸ and whore [he encountered]; for some he had coats made, others he gave sugar, he completely filled up the street [with them]. He said to them:

"When I tell you tomorrow morning,
Each one of you should come out of her house,
With mud on her head, with her collar rent,
Crying, 'Alas and alack! Yaya Zîn has been stricken with leprosy, and has been removed from the city of Jizîr!'

So that Kakeh Mem thinks that Yaya Zîn has been stricken with leprosy, and has been removed from the city of Jizîr."

In the morning the women came out to the street and started to weep and wail. Kakeh Mem came out and said, "What is this?" The women said,
"Woe is to miserable us!
Our livelihood has been suddenly cut off!
For three days now Yaya Zîn has been stricken with leprosy: they have given her a donkey and a saddlebag and sent her out of the city²²⁹."

²²⁶=lit. "Don't say. 'He hasn't said to me about it'

²²⁷Here the story jumps ahead, as if the preceding command had already occurred.

²²⁸nîz =lit 'catamite,' 'pederast'; 'coward'

²²⁹According to Oskar Mann, "When someone gets leprosy, he is given a donkey and a saddlebag by his fellow villagers, the leper must leave the village and must beg for a living. Big cities have

Kakeh Mem says, "Now what should I do? I have taken an oath with her, and have travelled twelve months and twenty four days to get here. Now what am I to do with a leper?!"

He says, "Woe is to worry-worn and orphaned me!"

Heartbroken, he got up and went to the diwan

They showed Kakeh mem to his seat; he took this as a [sign of] respect.

The mîr turned to Bekir [and] said, "Let's give Yaya Zîn to Kakeh Mem." [Bekir] said, "If you please, let's have supper, then we can speak of it." Their supper was brought in, they ate, [and] were finished. The mîr said, "Qeretajdîn, why don't you speak?" [Qeretajdîn] said, "If you please, the floor is yours; whatever you [59] say, I will obey."

[The mîr] said, "Qeretajdîn, I hereby give Yaya Zîn, with her palace and estate, to Kakeh Mem."

Kakeh Mem said, "My God! If I accept her, they will say, 'What a fool! He has accepted a leper'. If I reject her²³⁰, I will be breaking my oath²³¹."

The mîr said, "Qeretajdîn, I hereby give Yaya Zîn together with her palace and estateto Kakeh Mem²³²." Kakeh Mem said, "My mîr, I hereby accept, and give her back to you."

The mîr said, "Qeretajdîn, this time I'll say it to Kakeh Mem himself; Kakeh Mem, I hereby give Yaya Zîn to you together with her palace and estate." Kakeh Mem said, "My mîr, I hereby accept, and give her back to you." He said further, "Mîr, however I would gladly accept [the office of] leader of the hunt from you."

'Irfo [and] Cheko were delighted, because Kakeh Mem did not want Yaya Zîn.

Qeretajdîn was deeply concerned, [and] got up to go out of indignation at Kakeh Mem for not wanting Yaya Zîn. The mîr spoke: "Qeretajdîn, sit back down! Kakeh

special leper colonies at a safe distance; alms and provisions for the unlucky ones are left daily at a specific spot, from where they are regularly picked up, unless stray dogs have gotten there first." (OM, German translation, note 176, p. 101).

²³⁰=lit. "If I don't want her"

²³¹=lit. "I am an oath-taker with her"

²³²According to Oskar Mann, the practice of the mîr's addressing himself to Qeretajdîn, even though Mem is himself present, is typically Kurdish and Persian.

Mem has not accepted Yaya Zîn from me; I will ask him for something, so that he will give it to me."

Kakeh Mem said, "Yes, if you please, whatever you say, [I will] gladly [do]." [The mîr] said, "Give me that servant of yours, Bengîneh." [Mem] said, "If you please, may he be yours!"

Who was it? Respected Bengîneh²³³!

He let out one shriek after another,

He put down Mîr Mem's felt cloak and staff

He let out one shriek after another,²³⁴

Saying, "O God! What has happened to me in strange lands!"

"Mîr Mem has brought me [to use me] as a bill of exchange."

He went [and] picked up [Mîr Zêndîn's] felt cloak and staff, and stood behind Mîr Zêndîn.

Kakeh Mem stood up and headed all alone for Qeretajdîn's house.

When he lifted up his hears, Lady Astî said, "God! What should I do? What has befallen me?"

If Kakeh Mem did not want my sister, why did he swear to here by the word of God?"

As Mîr Mem left, he looked over and saw 'Irfo and Cheko playing the saz²³⁵ and snapping their fingers [out of joy].

Qeretajdîn was deeply concerned.

When Bekir heard the whole story,

He got up lightheartedly and left the mîr's diwan

He went to [see] Yaya Zîn; his steps were very joyous.

He gently lifted Yaya Zîn's [chamber] curtain,

Then deliberately stepped back out.

²³³At this point, the story resumes in verse form for a while.

²³⁴Ayyūbiyān omits this verse the second time.

²³⁵a stringed instrument with a long neck.

[60] Yaya Zīn says, "Ka Bekir, please come in, tell me²³⁶ what happened this evening in the diwan."

When Bekir heard this,

He went to Yaya Zīn [and] sat down in [her] room.

Yaya Zīn says, "Ka Bekir, tell me, so that I may know what happened, what was discussed."

Bekir says, "What should I do? Your brother is crazy and degenerate.

I don't know what to do, your brother doesn't know the ways of the world²³⁷.

A whoreson, a tramp has come; no one knows anything about his family.

This evening your older brother presented you to him three times, [but] he did not accept you (in the diwan)."

Yaya Zīn says, "Tell me, what does this talk mean?

Bekir Agha, I can't accept (=believe) this, it is pointless chatter.

What is the name of the one they gave me to?"

[Bekir] says, "I don't know; they call him Kakeh Mem; he's a yellow-bellied tramp!"

Yaya Zīn says, "O wretched²³⁸, miserable me!

Bekir, this is your fault, I'll have all 32 of your teeth pulled with a tongs."

Bekir says, "What shall I do? What is my sin?

That Mir Mem is a very foolish tramp.

Your brother does not know people, you are not important to him."

When Bekir finished speaking,

He got up lightheartedly, lifted up the curtain, and made his retreat.

As for Yaya Zīn, she was crying and greatly distressed.

She said, "God! If this man did not want me, why did he swear to me by the word of God [when we were] in Yemen?

Miserable, orphaned me!

Tomorrow I must see Kakeh Mem, to find out why he left behind the [chance to become] padishah of Yemen if he didn't want me, [and why] he travelled twelve months and 24 days to desolate Jizir."

236=lit. "that I may know"

237=lit. "the ways of supporting oneself"

238=lit. "idle-headed"

Early one morning,
Four lions²³⁹ held a meeting on Qeretajdîn's roof.

Yaya Zîn said, "Why don't they (=the servants) wash the trays and plates every day [instead of] sending them dirty to the diwan, [so that] my older brother is always fighting [about it]?" She said to her maidservants, "Bring them! I'll take them to the water basin at my older brother's house; I'll wash them today [so that] every supper and luch they will go thus to the diwan. She put a shawl over her head and set out. [Her servant] carried the plates and trays, following behind.

[61] Cheko says, " 'Irfo, Qeretajdîn, Mir Mem, soul of my souls!
Who is the tall, beautiful-eyed one going down to the spring²⁴⁰?"
'Irfo says, "Cheko, Mir Mem, Qeretajdîn, upon my life,
That lady is the lady that the three lions are lusting after."

Yaya Zîn is Qeretajdîn's sister-in-law²⁴¹. They were ashamed to call to her in Qeretajdîn's presence. Qeretajdîn said, "Bring me the Koran." He swore [an oath] on the Koran for 'Irfo, Cheko, and Kakeh Mem, saying, "As long as I am alive, Yaya Zîn belongs to the three of you; whichever one of you God gives her to, she shall be his."

Qeretajdîn says, "Let Kakeh Mem go stand in her path, lest he say to her, 'I am the youngest brother, they don't consider me a man.'"

Cheko says:

"Whoever Yaya Zîn accepts will be our eldest brother.
We are three brothers with horses grey,
All three have maces, lassoes and fine equipment.

²³⁹Ayyübiyân explains the 'four lions' as meaning Zîn's three suitors ('Irfo, Cheko, and Kakeh Mem), plus Bengîneh. Since Bengîneh has just been handed over to mîr Zêndîn,

he is no longer Mem's companion. As will become clear below, the fourth lion is Qeretajdîn himself.

²⁴⁰or, well.

²⁴¹i.e. the sister of his wife, Lady Astî.

Get up [and] go, by God! May your beloved be blessed, my congratulations!"

'Irfo says:

"We are three brothers with horses chestnut,
All three have maces, lassoes, sword and shield,
Mir Mem, my boy, get up [and] go! May your beloved be blessed, my best wishes!"

Kakeh Mem just stood ther, poking the floor with a stick, saying nothing.

Qeretajdîn says:

"Mir Mem, may your [misfortune] fall on me together with these word and these burdens,
May the lord God not take these brothers from you until Judgement Day²⁴²
Get up [and] go; perhaps the man will learn something from his beloved."

They all said to Kakeh Mem, "Get up [and] go!" He said, "Boys, may you be well²⁴³. May it be time for the noon time prayer, may it be in the center of town, with three lions like you standing here, how can I turn my back on you and go to the noon time prayers? How can I go stand in the mîr's sister's path? By God, even if my heart bursts, I cannot go"

'Irfo, Cheko and Qeretajdîn stood up and descended from the roof; they brought out their horses, and swore by the Koran, "When Yaya Zin speaks with Kakeh Mem alone, if anyone in the streets and alleys [of the city] speaks of it or meddles in their affairs, we will cut off [that person's] head."

Who was it? Respected Kakeh Mem,
He put his ermine cape over his shoulder,
His steps were very spritely.

²⁴²=lit. "until God holds court."

²⁴³=lit. "May your houses not be destroyed"

[62] 'Irfo prayed and recited Ayat al-kursi²⁴⁴ to the end,
 Then [Kakeh Mem] went to the spring and greeted Yaya Zîn.
 Yaya Zîn did not return poor Mîr Mem's greeting,
 But rather said, "Don't be young and disgraced!
 The people of Jizîr are assembled on the rooftops,
 If you need some water²⁴⁵, make your ablutions and go!"
 Mîr Mem says, "God! What a mess I'm in²⁴⁶!
 1,000 curses on my father, then on the fathers of all men!
 [First she said,] 'Go on a trip of twelve months and 24 days, leave the kingship of
 Yemen in the lurch, base yourself on the talk of women, [and] come here.'
 Now she says, 'If you need some water, make your ablutions and go, the people are
 wicked²⁴⁷ and demonic.' "

Who was it? Respected Mîr Mem.

He threw his cape over his arm, and turned back disappointed.

Yaya Zîn said, "God! He came, said what he had to, and I broke his heart; it is not he who has broken his oath, it is I. I shall die young, I shall die an infidel. Let me call to him, so that he comes back; maybe I can have a few words with him."

²⁴⁴The Throne Verse, an Islamic prayer. It is verse (Āyah) 256 of sŪra: al-baqarah, the second chapter of the Koran.

²⁴⁵OM: āgār ḥājātī āwēt hāia [eger hacetī awēt heyel; Ayyūbiyān [eger awit dewē heyel]

²⁴⁶=lit: "How my house has been ruined"

²⁴⁷Shimr According to Steingass, Shimr شمر is the "name of one of Yazid's generals, who slew Husain [the son of Ali] in the plains of Karbalā; hence vile, merciless wicked." See: F. Steingass. *Persian-English Dictionary* (London et al.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, c1892), p. 759. Nicholson refers to him as Shamir ibn Dhī al-Jawshān, "a name for ever infamous and accursed." See: R.A. Nicholson. *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, c1907), pp. 196-8. According to Hava Lazarus Yafeh, "It is considered a duty of all Shiites to curse all those who participated in the massacre at Karbala, starting with the Caliph Yazid, who was responsible for the campaign against Husayn, and ending with the murderer Shamir, who personally killed Husayn. The Sunnites also tend to observe this duty, because of the blow to the family of the prophet and his descendants" [my translation] See: Hava Lazarus Yafeh. פרקים בתולדות הערבים והאסלאם [Studies in the History of the Arabs and Islam] (Tel-Aviv: Reshafim, 1972), p. 181, note 13.

Yaya Zîn called to him, "Boy! O boy!

(?) Just as the Angel Gabriel is beloved, he has called to his beloved (=God or Muhammad)!

Boy, [I swear] by the God who created Moses out of light, so that at dawn he could speak 1,001 words at the throne of God.

Boy, for the love of God who created 'Isa (=Jesus), the soul of God, out of light, so that the dead would revive in their graves.

Boy, whatever believers and angels I ask to intercede,
For my sake, this time come back!"

This time Kakeh Mem turned over his right shoulder,
Prostrated himself before God [and] prayed to the prophet,
Then he went to the spring and greeted Yaya Zîn.

Yaya Zîn answered, "And upon you be peace and the grace of God, you are most welcome²⁴⁸, Mir Mem, fine lad!

Last night when that disturbance occurred in the diwan, why didn't you mention pitiful me?

Upon you be peace and the grace of God, you are welcomed by wretched me,
Last night why did you reject my brother's offer²⁴⁹ in the diwan?"

[63] If you don't consider yourself a man, why did you place me before the 30 parts of the Koran?"

Kakeh Mem says, "Yaya Zîn, you are most virtuous,

Kakeh Mem did not come to clear away cup after cup of coffee with obsequious phrases²⁵⁰,

May God rain down the wrath of the seven layers of heaven on Ka Bekir's head²⁵¹!

Yaya Zîn! The sun shone on me, and reached its station at breakfast time,
Yaya Zîn's cheeks are lovelier to me than a flask of rosewater.

²⁴⁸=lit. "on both my eyes"

²⁴⁹-lit. "Why did you not accept me from my brother"

²⁵⁰See note 190 above.

²⁵¹=lit. "shoulder"

If only I were that goblet in her hand, so that Yaya Zīn could cast me on the surface
of the water.

The sun shone on me, and reached its station at the noon time prayer,
Yaya Zīn's cheeks are lovelier to me than a lemon blossom.

If only I were that goblet in her hand, so that Yaya Zīn could cast me with blessed
hand on the surface of the water.

The sun shone on me, and reached the evening watch,
Yaya Zīn's cheeks are lovelier to me than a pomegranate seed.

If only I were the bowls and plates, so that Yaya Zīn could cast me with blessed
fingers on the washing slab.

The sun shone on me, and reached its station at the night time prayer,
Yaya Zīn's cheeks are lovelier than vine blossoms.

If only I were that goblet in her hand, so that Yaya Zīn could cast me with blessed
fingers on the edge of her lips.

O lord God! You are merciful; let nothing else come between Yaya Zīn and me.

The sun shone on me, and reached its station at the bedtime prayers,
Yaya Zīn's cheeks are lovelier than lily blossoms.

O Lord, may I be damned on the day that God holds court and passes judgement.

Yaya Zīn! [I swear] to God, I won't renounce you until my dying day.

Yaya Zīn! A fire has broken out in me, my liver is burnt,

I am a foreigner; Bengīneh has also been taken from me.

The city of Yemen has gone from my grasp, I have also sacrificed it for you.

Yaya Zīn, if you have no knowledge of me, something very bad has befallen me.

You and I will not see the fulfillment of our desire,

Your neck is lovelier than a flask of rosewater;

If you can, with your blessed hand -- my tongue is broken -- give me a drink of
water!"

[64] Yaya Zîn says, "Woe is me²⁵², my heart is in mourning;
 Mir Zêndîn's wolfish glance is more unpleasant than a boar's bristles,
 In the middle of the city of Jizîr, at the noon time prayer, how can you ask me for a
 cup of water?"

Kakeh Mem says, "Yaya Zîn, strength of my heart²⁵³, light of my eyes!
 Now I am a stranger in every city (=wherever I go),
 (?) Even if I am without soldiers and troops, I still don't consider your brother the
 mir my groom or servant;
 I am a stranger, and homeless because of you.
 No one knows how beautiful Yaya Zîn is!
 I have abandoned my throne and my position for her:
 The steward of all women is the devil.
 She won't give me a drop of water now, yet calls others demonic!"

Who was it? Yaya Zîn the pretty-eyed,
 She grasped the water cup, took a bracelet off her wrist, pulled a ring off her finger,
 She removed the earrings from her ears, pulled out a needle from her chinstrap,
 She put them in the water cup,
 Dipped the cup into the fountainhead, and handed it to Kakeh Mem.
 He drank the water, and put the bracelet, ring and chinstrap²⁵⁴ in his breast pocket,
 [And] handed the cup back to Yaya Zîn. She says, "Now, Mir Mem, live and be
 well!"

Kakeh Mem says, "Woe is me, foreign and homeless!
 Now I am a stranger, no one knows my rank.
 Yaya Zîn, by God himself, by the Koran!
 I won't go from here until you make a rendez-vous with me."

Yaya Zîn says, "Wretched, orphaned me!"

252=lit. "My neck is in black"

253=lit. "liver." See note 276 below.

254=Kirmek = "chinstrap for a woman's headdress" according to Wahby & Edmonds.

I have forty maidservants, I cannot lay my hopes on any one of them;
I have no place that is safe from them;
This is why I am ashamed and reserved."

Mîr Mem says, "[Even though] I'm a stranger [here], I know of a good place,
A fire has broken out in me, its crackling has fallen on me;
At the time of the sultan's breakfast, our rendez-vous will be in the niche²⁵⁵ of the
mosque."

Yaya Zîn says, "God! How shamefaced I am!
On one side of my brother's mosque he holds his diwan; the wakils and wazirs²⁵⁶
sit there, their cloaks over their shoulders.
[65] On the other side sit the Sufis, their prayer sheets about their necks.
Ther in the niche of the mosque the mullah recites questions regarding this world
and the world to come.
In the front rooms, the servants and pipe-fillers (=hookah-bearers) are at hand.
Even when my brother's mosque seems empty and deserted, the twelve blind
Koran reciters remain in its corners;
On one side is a tekke, on the other, a khangah²⁵⁷.
This is good for the Muslims to fulfill their religious obligations there;
O Lord, thank you 1,000 times for your works!"

Who was it? Kakeh Mem and Yaya Zîn the rosy-cheeked.
They had fixed their rendez-vous time.

²⁵⁵mi'rāj معراج = 'ascent to heaven,' presumably an error for miḥrāb محراب = 'niche pointing towards Meccair. mosques'

²⁵⁶See note 53 above.

²⁵⁷Tekke is the Turkish, khāngāh (خوانگاه) the Persian, and zāwiyah (زكوية) the Arabic names for a type of establishment of Muslim religious orders or brotherhoods, with classrooms and a hospice, usually attached to the tomb of a Muslim saint. According to Oskar Mann, tekke (=tekke) refers to a tekke of the Qadiri order (See note 168 above), while xaneqa (=khāngāh) refers to one of the Naqshabandi order. (OM, German translation, note 192, p. 112). See also Nikitine's "Essai de classification de folklore à l'aide d'un inventaire social-économique," p. 1008.

When the noon hour came,
Mir Mem said, "Yaya Zîn, my life, live and be well!"

Yaya Zîn said, "By God, don't leave sad old me;
Bengîneh is no longer at your side, you have no one to comfort you;
What should I do? Whom shall I send to you to be your servant?"

Kakeh Mem said, "Yaya Zîn of the beautiful eyes!
May my soul be a sacrifice to you, together with my entire faith;
We'll discuss these things tomorrow, God willing."

Who was it? Mir Mem the rosy-cheeked.
He said, "Yaya Zîn, my life, live and be well!"

Yaya Zîn said, "What shall I do, poor me?
Mir Mem, go, go, I entrust you to God, as a ransom to the prophet."

Who was it? Mir Mem the rosy-cheeked.
He returned to 'Irfî, Cheko, and Qeretajdîn;
He went and greeted the three brothers.

Cheko said, "See the work of God of the heavens;
Mir Mem, welcome back from your pleasant errand;
I know that Yaya Zîn, she is full of tricks; no one can get the best of her."

Mir Mem said, "Qeretajdîn²⁵⁸, don't strike me with swords, don't kill me with
slander!
A man is not one who leads astray the daughters of simple folk²⁵⁹,

²⁵⁸Presumably this is a slip: he meant to say 'Cheko'

²⁵⁹**Kirmanj** (also Kurmanj, Kurdmanj) is the name by which the Kurds of the northern part of Kurdistan call themselves, and **Kurmanji** is their language. In addition, as M.M. van Bruinessen rightly says "a complication is that also some southern tribes [of which the reciter of this version is an example -- my note] call themselves Kurman[î] and their language therefore Kurman[î]ji, although it is very different from the northern dialects" (M.M. van Bruinessen. *ibid.*, p. 30). Kurmanj [Kurmanç in

A man is one who can collect bracelets as tax²⁶⁰ from the daughters of princes."

'Irfî said, "Mîr Mem, by God! Welcome back, lad!
That Yaya Zîn of the beautiful eyes,
[66] In my opinion, her word to anyone is not to be trusted."

Kakeh Mem said, "'Irfî, don't kill me with swords!
A man is not one who leads astray the daughters of these poor people;
A man is one who can collect bracelets and earrings from the daughters of
princes."

Who was it? Mîr Mem of the beautiful eyes,
He greeted 'Irfî, Cheko and Qeretajdîn,
Took the bracelet and earrings from his breast pocket and laid them out before
them,
Saying, "Kakeh Mem will stand by and be the servant of whoever receives these."

Qeretajdîn says, "By God! Mîr Mem, more power to you²⁶¹!
May God, the great ruler, prolong your life!
[She] is worthy only of you, you [alone] should receive [them];
You are the greatest of all; everyone of us should take your shoe on his eyes²⁶²."

'Irfî says, "Mîr Mem, my soul!
I will be your servant, standing by you."
Cheko says, "Mîr Mem, 100 times congratulations²⁶³ for you [new] status as eldest
brother!"

Kurdish orthography] also has the meaning of 'simple peasant': this is the meaning intended in the present context:

²⁶⁰-lit. "bracelets and taxes"

²⁶¹-lit. "May you not die!"

²⁶²See note 183 above.

²⁶³-lit. "thanks"

Then mîr Zêndîn said to his servants, "Go bring Kakeh Mem here."
 The mîr's servants came galloping,
 Saying, "Peace be upon you, Mîr Mem; the mîr has requested your honorable
 presence."

When Mîr Mem hears this,
 He takes 'Irfo, Cheko, and Qeretajdîn, and goes to the diwan.

Who was it? Mîr Mem the rosy-cheeked.
 He reaches the diwan and greets the mîr,
 Saying, "Upon you be peace and the grace of God; welcome, fine lad!"

The mîr says, "Let's not babble,
 Let's bring the backgammon board, and sit down to gamble."

They sat down together, the mîr and mîr Mem the youth,
 For a period of five hours they did battle, shoulder to shoulder.
 Kakeh Mem was beating the mîr, making minced meat out of him²⁶⁴

[The mîr]²⁶⁵ said, "Let's trade places." [Mem] said, "All right, if you wish."
 Bekir had advised that they trade places.

Kakeh Mem got up and sat in the mîr's spot; they picked the mîr up and put
 him in Kakeh Mem's seat. They continued playing, [but] the mîr could not defeat
 Kakeh Mem.

The mîr said, "Let's drink coffee."

Bekir said secretly to the mîr, "Let Yaya Zîn come [67] serve the coffee."

Yaya Zîn brought the coffee [and] said, "Hey Bengîneh, give it to them."

²⁶⁴=lit. "reduce his head to ruins"

²⁶⁵Or possibly Bekir.

The mîr said, "Yaya Zîn, you serve the coffee yourself." Bekir said to the mîr in secret, "Challenge Kakeh Mem to a verbal duel²⁶⁶."

The mîr says, "Kakeh Mem, by God, who is without equal, I swear,
There is no peer for him, He is a king without peer,
I think that since you were born, there's been no one you would call "dear"²⁶⁷.

Mîr Mem says, "Mîr, I am most grateful to you, you have been quite nice,
My beloved is one of a kind, a *hourî* from paradise."

The mîr says, "Your beloved's ears are pointy, her ears are very mousy,
Your dear one cannot raise her head for all the nits -- she's lousy!"

Mîr Mem says, "Mîr, I am indebted to you, don't make me say it twice,
My beloved is one of a kind, a *hourî* from paradise.
It is she who is our cup-bearer, pouring coffee in cups clear as ice."

The mîr says, "What you say is false, the words of a queer one,
Since you were born, you've never had a dear one!"

Mîr Mem says, "Woe is to me, a foreigner, homeless today,
Because I am a guest here, no one believes what I say.
I do have a beloved -- believe what I tell you, okay?
As Qeretajdîn and his friends know, my beloved just served you *café*!"

²⁶⁶According to Ayyûbiyân "It is a centuries-old custom among the Kurds that young men, warriors and even dignitaries on the battlefield and in verbal disputes, begin reciting poetry (with musical accompaniment of course) and songs expressing their feelings and intentions in verse, creating epic poems: skill in this art is greatly valued. This is most practiced among ardent youths and renowned warriors, to better demonstrate their worth and valor, and so that the young generation might take an example of bravery in an enlightened, warm and exciting atmosphere from their mentors." [my translation] (Ayyûbiyân p 211, note 1). See also Alan Dundes, Jerry W. Leach and Bora Özkök. "The Strategy of Turkish Boys' Verbal Dueling Rhymes," *Journal of American Folklore* 83 (1970), pp. 325-349, reprinted in: Alan Dundes *Parsing Through Customs: Essays by a Freudian Folklorist* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 82-117

²⁶⁷In this and the following, I have tried to make the lines rhyme, to convey the feeling of the poetic aspect of the duel.

Qeretajdîn said to the mîr, "Is she a whore, that you've made her serve coffee in the diwan²⁶⁸?"

He grabs Kakeh Mem by the arm and takes him home. Yaya Zîn writes Kakeh Mem a letter²⁶⁹:

"Come, let us pray before God, master of the earth and the heavens,
 -- My brother loves to go hunting -- for God to send the North wind, let it pour
 down rain,
 Tomorrow my brother will go gazelle²⁷⁰ hunting in the plain of Germian,
 Kakeh Mem should [pretend to] be sick, so that no one knows how bad the pain is,
 Tomorrow morning at the time of the sultan's breakfast let us rendez-vous in the
 diwan."

Then they bowed down [and prayed] to God. While the whole household slept, [God] sent the North wind [and] let it pour down rain. The mîr sent for Kakeh Mem, saying, "No king has ever hunted gazelles as we will tomorrow."

Kakeh Mem replies, "Teli the mîr for me without delay,
 I am so ill that -- [I swear] to God -- I could barely make it to my saddle."
 [68] They brought this news to the mîr,
 Saying, "Mîr, if you please, Kakeh Mem is quite ill."
 Bengîneh says, "Good heavens²⁷¹! Now that my master is all alone, what has
 happened to him?"
 The mîr says, "Bengîneh, don't cry; without Kakeh Mem, my going hunting is [as
 good as] forbidden."

²⁶⁸This line could also mean, "Have you brought this whore to serve coffee in the diwan?" This is how Oskar Mann has understood it.

²⁶⁹According to Ayyûbiyân the following "letter" was recited in a special tone by Raḥmān-i Bekir, in verse (Ayyûbiyân p. 215, note 1)

²⁷⁰Note the Persian form āhū. آهو rather than the Kurdish form as[i]k.

²⁷¹=lit: "My house has been destroyed"

Bengîneh, get up [and] go, don't delay,
 I beseech you, tomorrow's hunt will be fine: bring me word of Mîr Mem.
 When you go there [and] bring word from there,
 You must tell my sister, Lady Astî, to take good care of Mîr Mem.
 God willing, I will put Aristotle and Luqman²⁷² over him, I won't let Mîr Mem
 die of any ill."

Who was it? Rosy-cheeked Bengîneh,
 He rushed out crying,²⁷³
 When he reached Mîr Mem, he said, "May I be your sacrifice, where does it hurt?"
 [Mem] said, "Bengîneh, don't be alarmed; I've made a rendez-vous with Yaya Zîn.
 My heart is fiery like a master [blacksmith's] furnace.
 When you go back to Mîr Zêndîn, tell him that Mîr Mem's pain is great, that he is
 very ill."
 When Bengîneh left, he brought this news to his master in the diwan.

[Bengîneh] says, "Mîr Mem is sick, no one knows what his cure is."
 Mîr Zêndîn says, "What is to be done? [The hunt] is off; I won't go hunting
 tomorrow without Mîr Mem."
 He says, "My dear Bengîneh, sweet Bengîneh!
 Bring out the horses, let's mount them and go to Kakeh Mem at Qeretajdîn's
 house."
 Bekir Agha says, "Why are you such a tongue-tied mîr?"
 At this time of night don't wake up Qeretajdîn's whole household,
 We will mount in a little while, there's an hour left until morning."
 The mîr says, "Hey Bengîneh! Get ready, saddle up my horse!
 God willing, we'll go to Qeretajdîn's house for Kakeh Mem's recovery."

[69] Who was it? Esteemed Bengîneh.
 He saddled up Mîr Zêndîn's horse, and pulled the reins tight.

²⁷²i.e., the best doctors.

²⁷³This line is omitted in Ayyûbiyârîs edition.

He called out the greyhounds and pups on this side and that.
The mîr came and stepped into the stirrups, and climbed onto the inlaid saddle,
Saying, "Bengîneh, by my head, go on ahead, bring me news of Kakeh Mem!"

Who was it? The rosy-cheeked mîr.
He rode on, galloping and rushing,
He came and dismounted at Qeretajdîn's house,
Saying, "Brother, don't make yourself sick, this summer hunt²⁷⁴ is not to any
king's liking."

Mir Mem says, "Mîr, you are not very thoughtful,
No matter how much I try, Mîr Mem cannot keep himself on his horse.
Mîr, don't hold yourself up²⁷⁵; something bad has befallen me.
I would like to hunt even more than you,
But I am ill with no choice, my liver has been cut out²⁷⁶."

The mîr says, "I won't achieve my desire,
I must take you hunting with me!"

Who was it? The esteemed mîr.
He said, "Bengîneh, go take Kakeh Mem's horse out,
Wake up 'Irfo and Cheko for me!"
Bengîneh went and brought out Kakeh Mem's horse.

Lady Astî says, "Bengîneh, keep the reins loose on this side and that!"
When Bengîneh brings out Mîr Mem's horse, he steps in the stirrups and mounts,

²⁷⁴ *reşefaw*, lit. "black hunt", is the name for hunting done in the summer, because in the summer the ground is dark, as opposed to *spîfaw*, lit. "white hunt", hunting done in winter across snow-covered fields [my translation] (OM, German tr., p. 117, note 195). *Ayyübiyân* adds that *reşefaw* is also a term for hunting under a bad omen, boding failure in the hunt. (*Ayyübiyân* p. 221, note 2).

²⁷⁵ i.e., Don't cancel the hunt.

²⁷⁶ i.e., I have lost my courage (=es enfiel mir der Mut: OM, p. 61, note 61). B. Nikitine states in his article "Essai de classification de folklore à l'aide d'un inventaire social-économique," p. 1004, that "it is a common Islamic belief that the liver is the seat of one's courage and vitality." [my translation]

No matter what he does, he had no strength, the poor [thing].

Lady Astî says, "Dear brother, don't make Kakeh Mem go on this journey."

Mîr Zêndîn says, "Sister, don't cause problems, or I won't achieve my desire;

If I have to carry him by the arm, I'm taking Kakeh Mem hunting."

Kakeh Mem was shivering as he came down from the upper floor,

Stepped into the stirrup, but unable to mount his horse's saddle, he fell under its belly.

The mîr said, "Why are the horse's reins so loose?" He pulled them tight and put Kakeh Mem on his horse. [But] no matter how much he tried, he could not keep himself up.

The mîr said, "Let him get down, he is very sick. It is a shame that Kakeh Mem will not be with me on the hunt. Go tell Bekir Agha to mount." Bekir said, "My horse is lame; Tell the mîr to go on; I'll find a spare horse and catch up with him." Bekir did not go hunting, [but] sent a spy²⁷⁷ to [observe] Kakeh Mem.

[70] Kakeh Mem sat until breakfast, then went very slowly to the mîr's diwan. He reached the diwan and sat down. Yaya Zîn got up and went over to Kakeh Mem.

Who was it? Beautiful-eyed Mem and Zîn.

Yaya Zîn came and greeted Kakeh Mem,

He said, "And upon you be peace and the grace of God, welcome Lady, white-necked²⁷⁸, beauty-eyed!"

They embraced and put their mouths together.

Bekir knew that Kakeh Mem had come to the diwan;

He had placed a spy over him to keep an eye on him.

He spied on them well;

²⁷⁷=lit. "messenger"

²⁷⁸kêlgirdîr. **Kêl** means 'tombstone,' hence =lit. "with a neck as slender as a tombstone."

The two of them fell asleep, that pair of children,
 The mîr was hunting until the sun started to go down.
 He called out, "It's a pity, Cheko, that Kakeh Mem was not with [us], I didn't enjoy
 the hunt very much."

They headed for home, [and] Qeretajdîn said [to himself], "I know that Kakeh Mem and Yaya Zîn have fallen asleep in the diwan; if you don't wake them up, he won't wake up." He shouted, "Bengîneh, Come here, I want to tell you something. You run on ahead; I'll come out after you; I'll throw a javelin at you from afar, [but] don't you turn around to look at it; just keep on going until [you reach] the house. Run in and wake up Mem and Zîn."

When the mîr said, "He was frightened by the javelin, and that's why he hasn't come back!" Qeretajdîn said, "I'm telling [you], Mîr, he was not frightened. He's gone [on ahead] to go [and] dismount at the door of the diwan, to take his master's²⁷⁹ bridle himself." The mîr said, "That's a good plan."

When Bengîneh arrived [at the diwan], he saw that Mem and Zîn had fallen asleep, they were dead to the world. He said, "It would be a shame to wake them up, [but] if I don't, the mîr will come in and find out and chop off our heads." Bengîneh looked and saw: here comes the mîr!

Bengîneh says, "O Mîr Mem, woe is to wretched me!
 A fire has broken out in my body, it has seized me all at once;
 Kakeh Mem, wake up from this sleep: an ox in the shape of the mîr has reached
 the edge of the city, he is approaching!
 Oh, woe is me, stranger and captive!
 Mîr Mem, wake up from this sleep, your foreignness is showing²⁸⁰;
 An ox in the shape of the mîr has reached the gates of Jizîr, he is approaching!"

Kakeh Mem awoke [and] said, "Bengîneh, what is this?" [Bengîneh] said, "May your house not be ruined, the mîr is approaching: Why don't you get up and [71] get

²⁷⁹i.e., Mîr Zêr.cîr's

²⁸⁰=li: "is being remembered"

out of the diwan?" [Mem] said, "Bengîneh, look and see how far away he is²⁸¹." Bengîneh went out on the roof, he took a look [and saw that the mîr] had just about reached the edge of the city. When he went back in, he saw that Mem and Zîn had gone back to sleep.

Bengîneh said, "Woe is me, my liver is on fire!²⁸²

My master won't amount to anything²⁸³.

Hey boy! Mîr Mem, wake up from that sweet sleep; an ox in the shape of the mîr has come back from the hunt!

Dress me in the black garments [of bereavement] once and for all²⁸⁴!

Mîr Mem, wake up: an ox in the shape of the mîr has reached the gates of the city, he's approaching!

Mîr Mem, woe is me, foreign and bereft!

An ox in the shape of the mîr has reached the door of the diwan."

The mîr pulled the reins tight, came to a stop, [and] said, "Bengîneh, by God! How is Kakeh Mem?" [Bengîneh] replied, "I don't know. [Ever since] I came back, I have been standing here." At this moment, Bekir Agha came up to the mîr [and] said, "Agha, welcome! I hope the hunt went well²⁸⁵." The mîr said, "come, let's look in on Kakeh Mem." Bengîneh knew that he was in the room with Yayeh Zîn. He said, "My Lord, dismount: I'll send a man to see how Kakeh Mem is." The mîr dismounted [and] they took his horse. He went into the house. Bengîneh came and called Kakeh Mem.

281=lit. "See if he is far or near."

282 Cf. note 276 above

283=lit. "won't see or find any wish or desire"

284=lit. "Put on me the cloth of black houses at one time." Oskar Mann understands by this the black goat-hair tents of nomads (OM, German tr., p. 120). I think that Ayyübiyân's interpretation, seeing the black houses as a sign that there has been a death in the family (Ayyübiyân p. 229), is more to the point. According to this, if Mem and Zîn don't get up immediately, they are as good as dead, and Bengîneh will dress in black to mourn them.

285=lit. "May your hunt be blessed"

He said, "Once there were two lovers,
Both of them giddy and drunk with sleep.
Master, I beg you! Wake up from that deep sleep, you've missed your last
chance^{286!}"

The mîr came in [and] entered the diwan. Kakeh Mem had no choice: he hid Yaya Zîn under his cloak [and] leaned against the corner of the room. 'Irfo, Cheko, Qeretajdîn, Bekir Agha, everyone came in and sat down. The mîr said, "Well, Kakeh Mem, how are you?" [Mem] said, "God willing, the hunt went well! I am fine." [The mîr] said, "Kakeh Mem, no king has ever seen the likes of today's hunt; it's a pity you were not with [us]." Yaya Zîn showed Qeretajdîn a lock of her hair from the corner of [Mem's] cloak. When Qeretajdîn saw it, he called his servant [and] said, "Go to my seven-gated [house], put dry grass on it, and set it on fire, so that my house burns down."

One fire broke out on this side of the world,
Another one broke out on the other side of the world,
Qeretajdîn's house burned down completely.
[72] Bengîneh says, "Mîr, a fire has broken out in Qeretajdîn's house; what a
merciless fire!
If you don't get up, the city of Jizîr will burn down, will be destroyed.
You are a thoughtless mîr!
The North Wind has come, it will carry the fire over to your palace,
If you don't get up, your palace and manor will catch fire."

Mir Zêndîn says, "People of Jizîr, wakils and wazirs, let's go, don't delay,
Hurry up, let's put out the fire at Qeretajdîn's house!"

Bengîneh says, "Woe is to irreligious me!
Mîr, if you yourself don't get up, the fire is so mighty, there will be no remedy."

When the mîr hears this,

²⁸⁶=li: "You have played and lost all prayer"

A panic breaks out in the diwan.
 The mîr went out self assuredly,
 [And] headed for Qeretajdîn's house.
 When the mîr hurried off,
 Doors and windows were opened for him,
 Bekir Agha alone stayed behind.
 Kakeh Mem stood up immediately
 With Yaya Zîn, the beauty-eyed.
 He said, "Yaya Zîn! Because of Bekir the devil we have not achieved our desire."
 Mem and Zîn entered the front room,
 [And] began to cry.
 It is the work of Bekir, to be sure²⁶⁷!

Mîr Mem says, "Yaya Zîn, how can I look Qeretajdîn in the eye?
 I should send a messenger²⁶⁸
 To bring all the riches of Yemen for him."
 No sooner were these words spoken,
 [When] Yaya Zîn said, "Kakeh Mem, something major has befallen us."
 He said, "Yaya Zîn, let me put my arm around you, let me put two kisses on your
 cheek."
 When his mouth touched Yaya Zîn's cheek,
 The handkerchief she had in her hand fell to the ground.
 Bekir rushed up, he did not hesitate,
 He snatched up Yaya Zîn's handkerchief.

[73] Kakeh Mem says, "What shall I do before the Almighty?
 Shall I kill Bekir of Mergewer²⁶⁹ once and for all?"

²⁶⁷lit. 'God knows'

²⁶⁸yêlê <yêlê>, from Turkish **elçi** = 'messenger', 'ambassador.' See also note #147) below.

²⁶⁹Name of a well known Kurdish district to the north-northeast of Ushnu, in Kurdistan of Iran. **Bekirî Mergewere** is the way that the proverbial villain of the story of Mem û Zîn is known in this region. In Kurmanji, he is known as **Beko E'wan** (=Beko the Troublemaker). Mergewer, in addition to being a place name, sounds like Persian marg-âvar مرگ آوار = 'death-bringer.'

Yaya Zîn says, "Woe is to irreligious me!
What shall I do? Today things are bad, [but] killing Bekir is out of the question."

Mîr Mem went to Qeretajdîn's house, and Yaya Zîn went back to her house.
Kakeh Mem went and greeted the mîr and Qeretajdîn.
Qeretajdîn's house burned down, the people of Jizîr all flocked to it.
Qeretajdîn the Lurî²⁹⁰ addressed his wife in the Arabic language²⁹¹,
[Saying,] "Wait, bring [our] son's cradle [out of the fire]!"

Lady Astî replied, "I don't like this house or this situation.
I don't want this child or this son,
So long as the yellow-necked and many-freckled one²⁹² remains safe and
unharmèd."

Then the mîr sat down. The fire was put out. Qeretajdîn's house had burnt to the ground. The mîr said, "Come on, let's take up a collection for Qeretajdîn's house." He said, "I hereby give Qeretajdîn one room with all its furnishings; Bekir Agha, what will you give him?" Bekir Agha said, "If you please, I won't give [him] anything." [The mîr] said, "Bekir Agha, why not?" [Bekir] said, "Why should I give something to someone who burns down his own house?" The mîr said, "I don't understand. What do you mean²⁹³?" [Bekir] handed him the handkerchief and said, "If you please, these [two] were in the diwan when you came back from hunting; Kakeh Mem put Yaya Zîn under his cloak; Qeretajdîn found out about it and sent [a servant] to his house, [to] set it on fire and burn it down, so that Yaya Zîn and Kakeh Mem could be saved. If you don't believe me, this handkerchief is Yaya Zîn and

²⁹⁰The Lurs inhabit Southern Kurdistan (currently in Iran), and speak a dialect that is distinct from both Kurdish and Persian.

²⁹¹Actually he speaks in a combination of Turkish and Kurdish. Dur [Turkish: Stop!] getir [Turkish: Bring!] Ianikî [Kurdish: the cradle of] kurî [Kurdish: the boy (oblique case)].

²⁹²i.e., Yaya Zîn.

²⁹³=lit. "What is this talk?"

Kakeh Mem's, I took it from them in the diwan, lest you say, 'Bekir is a devil, he is [trying to] steal the honor of my daughter! Why should I give my house to such a man? It has happened [before] that a servant has betrayed his master.' "

The mîr said, "Bekir Agha, you are right. What is the right thing [to do]? How can I get rid of Kakeh Mem without Qeretajdîn, 'Irfo and Cheko's knowledge?" [Bekir] said, "If you please, let's do it [in such a way that] Bengîneh doesn't know." They got up and went home.

Bekir said, "We have a province that never pays taxes. Let's dig a dungeon²⁹⁴ for Kakeh Mem, no one will know about it." In a month they had finished the dungeon.

Bekir said, "Send for 'Irfo, Cheko, Qeretajdîn, Bengîneh and Mîr Mem to come here, let us deliberate." They sent for them, and they all came.

The mîr said, "Boys, what should we do? We have a province that is disobedient, it won't pay its taxes." They said, "Whatever you command, we will do." The mîr said, "It's best for you to go, [74] leave Kakeh Mem here with me; I'd be unhappy all alone." They said, "Make preparations for us, send out the troops for us. Either we'll lose our heads, or we'll bring you money and booty."

They called up the troops in the city of Jizîr,

The cavalry mounted their horses, the army assembled in rows.

The mîr came and sat in the diwan,

Saying, "Load up the beasts of burden (mules) from the treasury and bring them;

Go bring order to that province for me, I'll bring you joy and faith."

He began to award 'Irfo, Cheko and Bengîneh with robes of honor.

Again he gave gifts to everyone.

They called Qeretajdîn to the diwan,

They made [him] a large gift, so that everyone would know.

Then they were dismissed [and told], "You must go tomorrow."

They arose without thinking,

Each one went back, seeking out his home.

When that night was over,

²⁹⁴According to Ayyûbiyân formerly in Kurdistan dungeons [prisons] were in the form of deep pits which had to be dug out. [Ayyûbiyân p. 243, note 1]

[And] the next morning came,
 The trumpets were blown, the banners were raised;
 The mîr himself got up and came out to them.
 They saw the troops off -- what a great, fine army!
 'Irfo, Cheko, Qeretajdîn and Bengîneh warmly bade Mîr Mem farewell.
 The mîr, Kakeh Mem and Bekir Agha turned back.

The mîr said secretly to Bekir, "If Yaya Zîn finds out, our plans are ruined. We must say that Kakeh Mem is in command of the troops [and] has marched off in that direction." Then Mîr Zêndîn and Bekir threw Kakeh Mem in the dungeon; Bekir and the mîr went to the diwan together. Kakeh Mem had a greyhound. When he learned that they had imprisoned Kakeh Mem, he went to Yaya Zîn's door.

Yaya Zîn said, "My maidens and servants, you are very brave,
 Kakeh Mem has gone with the troops, this greyhound pup has come back, take good care of him."

Every day they gave the greyhound pup bread. He would scarcely nibble at it, pick it up and take it to Kakeh Mem, throw it into the dungeon. For forty nights it was so. One day they brought news that the troops had returned. Yaya Zîn said, "The troops have come back, why is the greyhound pup so weak (thin)? I don't know that to do out fo shame before Kakeh Mem."

[She] said, [75] "Bring him and give him bread in my presence so that I can see how you feed him [and] why he is so weak." They threw the bread before him, he took a nibble at it, picked it up and carried it off. Yaya Zîn followed him, saying, "Girl, where is he taking the bread?" They said, "Every day we give him bread [and] he takes it [and] goes off." The pup reached the dungeon, [and] threw down [the bread] before him. When Yaya Zîn went and looked, she realized that Kakeh Mem was in that dungeon. She cried, saying,

"I have been disgraced, I am an orphan!

I thought you were a commander of the troops, that you went to bring order to those tribes."

Mîr Mem said, "Yaya Zîn, my soul!

For forty nights my place has been in [this] dungeon because of what Bekir said,
My lunch and dinner have been a dog's morcel."

Yaya Zîn says, "Woe is to disgrace and orphaned me!
The only son of Brahim Padishah of Yemen has come to the city of Jizîr at my
suggestion, on his own and without a master."

Mir Mem said, "God, thanks to you for your mercy!
I had no idea that there was such a demon as Bekir in the city of Jizîr.
Woe is to homeless me,
I have no other words but 'thank you!
Make your braids into a rope and see if you can't bring me out of this dungeon.
If you bring my head out, lay it on your lap;
Then I'll give thanks that God's angel[s] of death have come to take my soul."

Yaya Zîn said, "When Brahim Padishah of Yemen finds out,
He will sack the city of Jizîr, because of his son he will cut off the life line from my
kith and kin."

Then Melik Reyhan came over there,
She was covered with dust from head to toe,
Saying, "Yaya Zîn, may I be your sacrifice, what has happened?"

Yaya Zîn said, "Melik Reyhan, have you come to cry false tears²⁹⁵?
Don't you know that you cannot be good because you are one of Bekir's children?"

Melik Reyhan says, "May I be your sacrifice, may my eyes go blind!
I thought Mir Mem was a commander of the troops, that he had gone to bring back
money and booty.
Now cries have gone up around me [saying] 'He is in prison, humiliated and
bewildered.' "
Then good news came, the army and troops were scattering about the city of Jizîr.

²⁹⁵=lit. "to cry in play"

Then they brought the news to Yaya Zîn.

[76] When Yaya Zîn finds this out,

She smears herself from head to toe with mud and [dark dye],

She comes down the streets of the city of Jizîr, [and] begins to cry.

'Irfo, Cheko and Qeretajdîn had brought a horse as a gift for Kakeh Mem; they rode
it around the caravanserais and streets.

Yaya Zîn says, "Qeretajdîn, where is your master?

Because he is your master, you left him behind; for forty nights his meals have
been a dog's food in the dungeon."

Bengîneh says, "If I don't die, if I live and remain alive,
I will bring the troops and army of the city of Yemen,
[And] annihilate the descendants²⁹⁶ of the mîr and Bekir."

'Irfo says, "I am 'Irfo,
A horned ram,
I will skin your brother from the shoulders down!"

Qeretajdîn says, "I am Qeretajdîn,
I am a bloody-clawed panther;
If I don't die, I will skin your brother from the shoulders down!"

And Cheko says, "I am Cheko by name,
Out of grief for Mîr Mem, I have gone blind in both eyes.
Sister, Yaya Zîn, don't complain about me, I have gone blind in both eyes²⁹⁷.
Now I must raze the city of Jizîr to the ground, I must destroy it.
Sister, tell me whether Mîr Mem is dead or alive!"

Yaya Zîn says, "What can I do, pitiful and dispossessed me!

²⁹⁶=lit. "roots of the children"

²⁹⁷Ayyûbiyân omits this phrase the second time.

He is neither dead nor alive; he is rotting away in the dungeon.”

Then those four lions descended to the street, in tears,

They all went over to the dungeon.

They said, “Yaya Zîn, shall we kill the mîr [first] or let Kakeh Mem out of the dungeon?”

Yaya Zîn says, “I beg you, don’t delay,

Do something to let Kakeh Mem out for me!”

Then Yaya Zîn wove her braids together²⁹⁸, and threw them into the dungeon,

Kakeh Mem threw them around his neck and [under] his arms; they began to pull him up.

Yaya Zîn says, “Give him to me.” She picks up his head [and] puts it in her lap.

Kakeh Mem says, “O Lord, I offer thanks to God, the Merciful!

[77] Yaya Zîn, I cannot see²⁹⁹; where are ‘Irfo, Cheko, Qeretajdîn and Bengîneh?”

Yaya Zîn says, “My liver has been cut out, there is no one left for me!

Don’t you know that they have come back from the army and are all standing around you?”

Kakeh Mem says, “Yaya Zîn, tell them to set my neck free, may you live and be well!

My last look fell on you; because of my parents’ cries of despair, my goal remains unachieved.”

When Yaya Zîn hears this, she begins to weep and cry³⁰⁰.

²⁹⁸=lit. “made her braids in rings - in rings”

²⁹⁹=lit. “My eye does not see”

³⁰⁰=lit. “She begins with hoops and crying.” According to Oskar Mann, çember [câmbâr] means “To dance around crying out of grief” [OM, German translation, p. 129, note 211].

By the mercy of God, guests³⁰¹ are coming to Kakeh Mem to take his soul.

Who was it? Kakeh Mem the beautiful-eyed.
 He let his eyes linger on Yaya Zîn's face.
 'Irfo, Cheko, Qeretajdîn and Bengîneh began to weep.
 Mîr Zêndîn got up and went to them in the diwan,
 He too, like them, began to weep.
 He says, "Sister, Yaya Zîn, let's bring Kakeh Mem to the diwan."

Bengîneh says, "O Mîr, I beg you, don't lay a hand on him!
 He was entrusted to me by Brahim Padishah, I must take him back to Yemen."

The mîr says, "Bengîneh, my soul!
 I didn't know that [it was] the son of Brahim Padishah who came here.
 I know that Jizîr will be destroyed over him³⁰².
 It is advisable that his grave be here by me."

Qeretajdîn says, "It must be here, because he is Yaya Zîn's guest."

'Irfo and Cheko say, "We'll take him to the graveyard ourselves,
 Because Mîr Mem was Yaya Zîn's beloved, until death Yaya Zîn [will remain] our
 sister³⁰³."

Bengîneh says, "We are without a master and without a country!
 Because Mîr Mem is a foreigner, let's go dig his grave ourselves."

Mîr Zêndîn says, "By God, Bengîneh, turn back from your word!
 I didn't know he was Brahim Padishah's son, may I go blind in both eyes!
 I've already sent someone to dig his grave."

³⁰¹See note 156 above.

³⁰²i. e., to avenge his death.

³⁰³i. e., no one else will marry her.

They took Kakeh Mem and washed [his corpse] on a washing board,
 They lowered him into the grave, handed him over to the earth,
 They let out a shriek, [then] turned back [and went home].
 [78] Then when night came, a heavy downpour of rain broke out,
 Yaya Zîn began to cry over Kakeh Mem, [saying,]
 "The only son of Brahim Padishah of Yemen died young because of orphaned me.
 May that which is permissible in the world be forbidden to me until Judgement
 Day;
 What should I do, disgraced and wretched me!
 They are sending the news to Yemen to Mir Mem's mother and father,
 O God! What will become of the city of Jizîr with Yemen's cannon and artillery!
 What should I do? It is out my hands, miserable me!
 They will destroy the city of Jizîr for me, none of my clan will remain."

Who was it? Bengîneh with heart burnt up.
 He came to Yaya Zîn [and] said, "Yaya Zîn, my eyes are blind, my master is no
 longer alive³⁰⁴."

Yaya Zîn said, "Bengîneh, my ancestors have been uprooted, an arrow has pierced
 my liver!"

Bengîneh said, "I must go back to the city of Yemen alone. Farewell to you!"

Yaya Zîn said, "Go! What should I do, wretched me!
 Go, may God be your guarantor, I entrust you to the prophet."

Who was it? Respected Bengîneh.
 He dyed his horse and hound black³⁰⁵ and returned to Yemen.
 For twelve months and 24 days he rode, weeping and lamenting,

³⁰⁴=lit. "has not remained"

³⁰⁵As a sign of mourning.

Until he reached the gates of Brahim Padishah of Yemen, letting out shriek upon shriek.

Brahim Padishah came out [and] said, "Bengîneh, what has happened to Kakeh Mem, what has befallen him?"

[Bengîneh] said, "Brahim Padishah, may I be your sacrifice, a pain befell him, he carried out God's will."

Brahim Padishah said, "Bengîneh, what have you done to poor, childless me?!"

What should I do, how can I get to the city of Jizîr from Yemen?

When Mem's mother learns of it, she calls up the army and troops,

On that very night they hoisted banners and raised flags.

Bengîneh let out shriek upon shriek [and] returned to the city of Jizîr.

He said, "I'll go to the city of Jizîr, to my fresh young master."

He marched downward for twelve months³⁰⁶ and 24 days,

He surrounded the city³⁰⁷, camped [and] set up cannons and artillery.

[79] Yaya Zîn sent [word] to Mîr Zêndîn: "Allow me to go to Kakeh Mem's grave." The mîr consulted with Bekir [and] said, "Shall I allow her to go or not?" [Bekir] said, "If you please, allow her to go; I know that they will come because of the cries. Maybe they won't destroy us for the sake of Yaya Zîn." The mîr spoke: "Let her go to his grave, she has [my] permission." Yaya Zîn went weeping to his grave. When she reached Kakeh Mem's grave, she called to him.

She said, "God, don't let me be haughty or sullen,

You yourself give life and take life away,

Kakeh Mem, my life, can't you lift your head even once?"

Kakeh Mem said, "Lady, why are you so crazy and foolish?

Your cheeks are much prettier than a rose covered handkerchief.

³⁰⁶Ayyûbiyân has "24 months"

³⁰⁷or. "He came into the vicinity of the city"

Until the world is destroyed, no man will ever lift his head from the muddy house³⁰⁸."

Yaya Zîn said, "By God, there is no one other than you who should remain alive. Don't keep me alive any longer because of the pain, Let me die beside Kakeh Mem's tombstone. God, you are generous [and] powerful! God's guest³⁰⁹ comes and takes Yaya Zîn's soul away.

They brought the news to Mîr Zêndîn: "Yaya Zîn is dead." The mîr spoke to Bekir: "Go dig her a grave." They said, "Dig the grave right there." No matter where they struck the pickaxe, the earth could not be dug up, except for beside Kakeh Mem. They finished the grave, they buried Yaya Zîn, covered her up, [and] said, "Come, let's go home." A rumble³¹⁰ came out of Kakeh Mem and Yaya Zîn's grave. Bekir said, "Aha! They don't ever stop! Even in the grave they are embracing."

He said, "Mîr, you are an honorable mîr!
You blame me for everything that happens.
Your sister the whore³¹¹ won't keep her hands to herself even on the Day of Judgement."

The mîr said, "He has done everything imaginable to me, kill him now!" Bekir threw himself between the graves of Kakeh Mem and Yaya Zîn, [and] his blood was spilt between their graves. It turned into a thornbush and started growing there.

Their work was done,
'Irfo covered himself with ash from head to foot,
Cheko dyed himself black,

³⁰⁸i. e., the grave

³⁰⁹See note 156 above

³¹⁰or, frightening sound.

³¹¹This word is omitted in Ayyûbiyârîs edition. in its place are three dots (...).

They made a plaintive lament for Mem and Zîn,
In sadness everyone returned home.

[80] They gave Brahim Padishah the news that Yaya Zîn was also dead, [and] that they had buried her beside Kakeh Mem.

Who was it? Brahim Padishah the courageous³¹².
He said, "Let no one say to me 'Now [that] Mem and Zîn [are gone], spare the city of Jizîr!
Tomorrow I will raze it to the ground, I will throw it upside down into the river."

Then when the morning came,
Brahim Padishah awoke from sleep
[And] said, "What shall I do? Out of grief over Mîr Mem I have gone blind in both eyes."

The cannons and soldiers were directed toward the city of Jizîr.
Bengîneh's master was gone, he himself was the commander, his insides were burnt up.
He headed for Bekir's house; he cut off the head, he split open the breast of whoever he met [on the way],
He headed for Mîr Zêndîn's house, not one was saved, not one remained alive,
Until their traces were completely erased.
Lady Astî dressed in black cloth [and] went [and] stood before Brahim Padishah,
[And] said, "Padishah, Mem and Zîn are gone, all traces of my father's house have been erased."

Brahim Padishah embraced Lady Astî [and] said, "You are my daughter, I hereby put you in Kakeh Mem's place."
He embraced Lady Astî [and] went to Mem and Zîn's graves, to finish them up.
They reached the graves, together with the army and troops they mourned them.

³¹²or, "the fresh one". according to Oskar Mann.

Who was it? Fresh young Brahim Padishah.

Blindness beset both his eyes.

He said, "My lot in old age is childlessness and distress.

Child, Lady Astî, I won't return to the city of Jizîr; it's an unlucky city, comfort is hard [to come by in it].

Child, the city of Yemen has no successor and is ruined."

Lady Astî said, "Out of grief for Mem and Zîn, it is time that I turn away from religion.

I have neither father nor brother to sit beside for protection."

Brahim Padishah said, "Child, I hereby give the city of Jizîr as a pledge to Qeretajdîn as long as he lives³¹³;

Now that my Kakeh Mem is gone, my hope has fallen on Bengîneh."

Qeretajdîn said, "What shall I do, Brahim Padishah, I cannot act as master, my liver is burnt up.

[81] I did not do much for Mîr Mem, my labor was for nothing.

God knows, he was your son; but none of my kin is left either."

On the next day he made preparations, for seven days good deeds and sacrifices were performed for Mem and Zîn.

Then the banners were hoisted and the flags were raised.

Jizîr was handed over to Qeretajdîn, and they returned home.

Brahim Padishah, out of grief, blind in both eyes,

For twelve months and 24 days the army marched back,

Entered the city of Yemen, everyone put mud on;

He made Bengîneh his son, and set him over the city of Yemen.

³¹³=lit. 'until death'

O Lord! May Raḥmân Bâkir never die! In four days he completed this poem for the German master³¹⁴.

Jesus, the spirit of God, stood at the head of the German master.

Lord Master, may you travel the seas in perfect health, and send greetings to your mother and sister!

³¹⁴ i.e., Oskar Mann.

Haykuni, S. [հայկունի, Ս.], ed. "Mam ow Zin [Մամ ու Զին]," *Eminyān azgagrakan zhoghovadzow [Էմինյան ազգագրական ժողովածու] = Eminsk ǐ Etnograficheskiǐ Sbornik*" [= Эминск ǐй Этнографическǐй Сборникъ] 5 (1904), pp. 201-227. [Armenian translation of a Yezidi Kurdish version from the village of Shamaghi in the the region of Van] (SHa-1)

SHa-1. The teller is Oskan Ohanian, from the village of Şemsettin (Shamshatin) near Özalp in the province of Van. This tale is also spread among the Yezidi people in general; as a dedicated tradition they are required to learn it; each Yezidi insists that Mam and Zin were Yezidi and for that every religious person knows how to sing; in it the Kurdish listener finds the special customs [of the Yezidis?]. The sung poetry that appears throughout this text is given both in the original Kurdish [in Armenian characters] and in Armenian translation; for the rest of the text, only the Armenian translation is provided.

MAM AND ZIN (SHa-1)

English summary by Anne Avakian
Berkeley, California, June 1989

[201] Al Pasha had only one son, Mam, a fine looking boy. If out of sight one hour, the father worried. One day while Mam was lying down, three doves came and stood at his window. They admired Mam. Could there be one such as he anywhere? One dove says that there is one in Jezir, and that the two will attain their desire.

The doves went to Jezir, stopped at Zin's window, compared the beauty of Mam and Zin, and felt they were suited for each other. They appealed to God and got another dove garment for Zin and took her to Mam's window, then put her on Mam's mattress.

At midnight Mam wakes up, find a woman at his bosom and wants to know how she came. She declares he came to her, and they quarrel.

[202] Mam says that if he came, she should put on the light. She did not know where the light was, so Mam got up and put it on. They talk about how she will leave and she says those that brought her will take her. They were awake all night, so the doves could not take her. Zin told Mam that when she goes he will have to come after her, for she is a woman, and also the daughter of Mir Sevdin and the granddaughter of Gharatzhdin, and that her name is Zin. They exchanged rings. The doves arranged that God's bead of sleep fell into the ears of Mam and Zin, and they took Zin back.

Mam awoke; no woman there, and he became very sick. Al Pasha was told and he came, but could not help. Mam's mother brought two old women; the very old

one said that Mam was not sick; he had seen a woman. Al Pasha was told, and that Mam was to get married.

[203] Al Pasha says that he would gather all the women and girls and take them to Baghe Torgri, then let Mam throw an apple to the one that suits him. Mam views the women and girls, but does not toss the apple to any of them. One of the girls said she would sing to him to find out why she was not chosen. Mam says that the one he wants is not there, -- her name is Zin.

Word was taken to Al Pasha that Mam did not want any of the girls; the one he wanted was in Jezir Botan. Many were called to find out the location of Jezir and Al Pasha was informed that nobody knew.

[204] Mam decides to go after Zin, but he is sick for two weeks. Then he gets up, goes to the stable, selects a worthless looking horse, instructs the groom to feed the horse well.. This was the horse to take him to Jezir. Mam puts the horse in fetters [?], saddles the horse, then Mam gets some gold and rides off. His father sent some horsemen ahead of Mam to frighten him, and perhaps Mam would return, but Mam went by another route.

They went three days and nights, but found no way. They rode on and on, the fetters hurt the horse and God grants speech to the horse, who sings to Mam that enough is enough, he should get off and give some water. By God's will he will get him to Jezir Botan, but [205] Mam pays no heed. The horse complains some more. They come to a resting place. Mam eats, wants to go on, but the horse refuses. Mam tends to the horse's feet, and leaves him in the meadow while Mem sleeps for a few hours.

[206] Mam catches the horse, thanks God the horse is healed. With God's help the horse tells Mam to shut his eyes, he will take him to Jezir.

At Jezir Botan, Bekir Avan had a sister whose name was also Zin. She says that in forty days Mam will come. Every day she takes wool and goes to the fountain and spins it while she waits for him. Let that be.

Mam rides on, sees a rabbit and catches it. He rides off and sings about the desolation of the area. Mam asks a man about the location of Jezir. Bekir's sister finishes spinning in forty days and wonders why Mam has not yet come. In disgust, she throws away the ram [=remil] because it did not reveal when Mam was to come.

[207] But soon Mam arrives and she is sorry she threw away the ram. She goes to the fountain and pretends to wash her hands. Mam appears and she greets him by name

and he is puzzled how she identified him. She pretends she is his Zin, and he doesn't believe her. God grants speech to the horse Bor, who tells Mam that this is not the true Zin. She leads travelers astray. She tries to hold back the horse, but lets go, and Mam goes on; the horse takes him to the door of [208] Arfo, Jako, and Gharatazhdin. Zin's elder sister Sutin, wife of Gharatazhdin, sends Jako to the door to see who is there. The servant is so bedazzled by the sight of Mam that he just stands there for an hour or two. Another servant is sent, and she too stops dead in her tracks. Finally Sutin goes and brings Mam in. Her husband and his brothers are not home. Mam asks why she does not sit with him. She says that she is a strange woman and he is a strange man; perhaps her husband might allow it, but her brothers-in-law might not. Mam comments that they have that custom too. Mam says he will go if his horse is brought out.

Sutin sits on one side, Mam on the other. They have tea. Gharatazhdin and his brothers are at Mir Sevdin's divan. Sutin sends her servant after them to come see the visitor.

[209] Gharatazhdin says that if the man is after money, let Sutin pay him and send him on his way. The servant reports to Sutin, and she wants to know why the men have not come. He tells her, and she hits him with a stick and orders him to go after the men. He goes, and they want to know what happened to his head. He tells them. Gharatazhdin and his brothers come, meet Mam, and are so captivated that they talk for three days and nights without eating. Finally they eat, then go to the roof of the palace and take the kchik/kshig [=chessboard] with them. Word gets to Zin and she [210] sees from a window that they are playing, but she is not sure if one of them is Mam. So she sings; Mam turns and recognizes her and loses his wits, and he too sings. The brothers wonder how Mam and Zin know each other.

Zin gathers up utensils, gives them to her servants, and loads up a caravan and goes to the fountain [to wash them]. Mam sings to the brothers that the prince's caravan is going by, is there no one to go and get a token [=collect a toll] from it. They say that it is the prince's caravan, so they cannot go after tokens. Mam asks what they will give him if he rides and gets a token from the caravan. They say they will give him whatever he wants. In their minds they think that he may as well go back where he came from, that Zin will surely disgrace him.

[211] Mam goes and gets Bor, mounts and heads for the spring [=fountain]. He greets Zin and she accepts with grace, and suggests that he dismount and visit with

her, but Mam says he just wants a token to take back to Gharatazhdin. She reaches into her pocket and takes out a magical gold piece. He takes it to the brothers and they are amazed that she gave him the gold piece. Gharatazhdin sings that the three brothers with the red horses will bring Mam the Alan what his heart desires. Arfo sings:

[212] "We have three black horses, and we will bring Mam the Alan a beauty." Jako, who was betrothed to Zin sings that they are three brothers with grey horses, "Let us say sincerely that Zin is for Mem."

Gharatazhdin proposes that they go to Mir Sevdin's divan. The three brothers leave Mam and go to Mir Sevdin, who wonders why the guest did not come along. Mir Sevdin wants to know why they were late in coming to tell about the unusual guest, and he wants to see him. A servant is sent to Sutin to send Mam to see Mir Sevdin. He makes the request and she whacks him on the head with a stick and tells him to go to Mir Sevdin and tell him that Mam is not his *layik* [=T halayk = servant]; Mem must be greeted by horsemen at the door if he is to go and see Mir Sevdin. The servant goes back and Gharatazhdin asks why his head is bloody.

[213]The servant tells him that Sutin did it. The brothers went and got musicians, then went to Mam and rode with him. Mam distributed gold coins along the way. For three days and nights they played *kshig* [=chess]. Then Mam asked Mir Sevdin if it was the custom of the country to be without food that long. Food was brought, and they ate. Mir Sevdin asked that Zin serve tea. When it was Mam's turn, she served the tea and they smiled.

Bako asked Mir Sevdin whether he had noticed how Mam and Zin had smiled at each other. Bako had hardly finished when Mam took out the rabbit he had made [out of a handkerchief], everyone laughed. Bako told Mir Sevdin that when Zin comes to fill Mam's cup that instead Mir Sevdin should take the cup and drink. He did so, and tears fell from his eyes, it was so *tek* [?]. "Was it not as I said?" asked Bako.

[214]Mir Sevdin realized that there was something in the tea. He said that they should all get up, sing songs and have fun. Mam's turn came, but he refused. Bako said to Mir Sevdin not to force Mam; he would sing in Mam's place. He sang that Mam's lover is an Arab, her lips are black, and that he had seen her with his own eyes in the Kunchu quarter.

When he said that, Mam sang that Bekir had lied through his moustache, that Mam's beloved is an angel from heaven; his beloved is Zin, sister of Mir Sevdin, daughter of Mir Tazhdin, and granddaughter of Mir Atlas; she is in the palace¹.

[215] Mir Sevdin is irritated by Mam's words, and Mam gets up and sings with a dagger in his hand, saying that he has only one God. Gharatazhdin sings that if anyone attempts to hurt Mam, he will be met by hundreds; Arfon and Jakon join in supporting Mam; they take him by the arm and go home.

[216] Gharatazhdin tells Mir Sevdin that they willingly gave Zin to Mam. But the Mir says that he has not given her and says they should go out gazelle hunting to test Mam's manhood.

The Mir says in the morning he will offer Mam a precious gift. Word reaches Zin. She goes to Mam and tells him that she knows that her father is going to offer him something but that he should not accept anything else but the job of chavush [=servant or doorkeeper].

In the morning Mir Sevdin calls Mam and says that he has no gift worthy of Mam, but would like to give him a principedom. Mam declines the offer, saying that he wants to be a chavush.

Gharatazhdin and his brothers get their things together in preparation for the hunt. Zin hears of this and tells Mam to feign illness, and not to go. On the following day Mir Sevdin wants him to go, but Mam says that he is sick.

[217] They depart. Mam is sick in bed; Zin comes, and they embrace. She says that the place is not isolated enough, so why don't they go to the Torgri Garden for seven days and make merry. So they go, lie down on a mat, and fall asleep.

Heavy rain and hail comes. Mir Sevdin tells his servant to go to Torgri Garden and start a fire so they can warm up, and then go home. The servant enters and sees a man and a girl, but is not sure if it is Mam and Zin. So he sings to Zin that she should get up, and she asks the servant not to reveal her and Mam's secret. He promises not to. But just as they are getting ready to flee, they see Mir Sevdin at the gate with his horsemen. What to do?

[218] Mam hides Zin under his cloak and sits at the hearth. Mir Sevdin comes in and greets Mam, who does not stand up. This disturbs Mir Sevdin. Gharatazhdin and his brothers come in and see Mam in front of the fire, and they tell Mir Sevdin that

¹This relationship does not match what is stated earlier. [Miss Avakian's note]

Mam is sick. Mam takes Gharatazhdin's hand and has him sit beside him, and from behind puts Zin's hair in Gharatazhdin's hand. Bekir [=Bako] is aware that there is someone under the cloak, so he says to Mir Sevdin that they should all stand and pray to God. Mam remains seated, like a corpse. Gharatazhdin tells his brothers that he is going home, but that they should keep their eyes open, and he gives similar instructions to his servant. Gharatazhdin goes straight home and tells his wife:

[219] "Go pull out our horses and the boy's cradle." He plans to set fire to his palace. Sutin wants to know with whom he has quarreled. He tells her to get up, -- enough of her talking against him; Mam and Zin are in danger of death. From the distance the servant sees smoke rising. Mir Sevdin wants to know what is happening. Kourken [Gurgîn] his grandson is burned up. When Mir Sevdin hears that, his heart and lungs catch fire [=he is very upset]. They get up and go to Gharatazhdin.

[220] When they are halfway there, Bekir tells Mir Sevdin to go on ahead. Then Bekir turns back and through the window he sees Zin get out from under Mam's cloak and sit down beside him. Zin sings to Mam, "Did you see what the milk brothers [=blood brothers] did?" Then they get up and go their separate ways.

Bekir tells Mir Sevdin everything, and the Mir says, "What can I do? They have slipped out of our hands." Gharatazhdin, Jakon and Arfon have burned up; there is nothing left but one; they took out only one boy and three horses.

Bekir said to Mir Sevdin that the house of Gharatazhdin and his brothers has burned down. What to do? They went from village to village and collected money, and gave it to Gharatazhdin to rebuild his house.

God knows how much later the Tatars came to Gharatazhdin with a message that the king wants him and his brothers for military service. Bekir tells Mir Sevdin that the Tatars have come to take Gharatazhdin and his brothers into the army. What to do? No strong men will be left at home; he proposes that one brother be allowed to stay home.

[221] Gharatazhdin said that all three of them had been called up and would go, taking Mam too. Mir Sevdin and Bekir said that Mam should stay back and help them.. Gharatazhdin said, "He can stay, but if anything happens to him, you and your household will burn down."

They took Mam to Mir Sevdin's divan, and for ten to twelve days Bekir went travelling among the villages. When he came back, he said that wherever he went people were saying that Zin is Mam's lover. What to do?

Mir Sevdin says that he cannot do anything about it because of the agreement and vow he has made before God. Bekir says that the two of them could play chess. Mir Sevdin invites Mam to play chess; if Mam wins, Zin will be his; if the Mir wins, he figures that he will have Mam's head chopped off. Mam thinks that the worst that could happen would be for Mir Sevdin to take away his horse. So be it.

They play, and Mam wins two games. Bekir wonders what to do. He tells Zin that Mam is agitated. If he brings her before Mam, Mam may take one look at her and start losing. So Bekir suggests that the players switch places. When Mam sees Zin, he forgets how to play. He loses and is taken to prison. After he is in prison, [222] for twenty or thirty days, Zin hires men to dig a tunnel to Mam's cell. At night she goes to see him, and in the morning returns to her place.

Mir Sevdin calls Bako and tells him to go see how Mam is doing. When he sees him in good shape, he tells Mir Sevdin, who also goes to see him. Mam is taken to a stone prison, and Zin cannot get him out. Within three months his condition deteriorates.

[223] One day a dervish comes by, and Zin asks him where he is going. He says that he is just looking around. She asks if he might be seeing Arfon, Jakon or Gharatazhdin, and he answers that he might. She offers him gold, clothing, or whatever else he wants if he will only take a letter to them for her. The dervish looks her over and says that all he wants is a kiss. She tries to dissuade him, but he insists on the kiss. There is no way out, so she gives him a kiss and writes the letter. In it she tells Gharatazhdin that Mam is in prison, and that she had to give the dervish a kiss in order to get him to deliver the letter.

Gharatazhdin reads the letter and tells his brothers that Mam has been imprisoned and that Zin had to give the dervish a kiss before he would deliver the letter. They turn on the dervish, curse him, and cut his throat.² The three brothers come home and see Zin and Sutin dressed in black. Word reached Mir Sevdin that the three brothers had arrived. He called Bekir to go see how Mam was doing, then suggests that they go hide, lest the brothers harm them.

[224] Bekir goes to Mam and tells him that he has come to release him. Mam cannot lift his head. Bekir tells to Mir Sevdin. He suggests that Zin take her forty

²C: Motif K978. Uriah letter. Man carries written order for his own execution. This famous motif appears in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

servants and go to release Mam. Mir Sevdin tells Zin that he hereby gives her to Mam and that she should go and release him. Zin and her forty servants gladly go to release Mem from prison. Bekir's sister is among them. She says, "Instead of our going, there is a passion flower vine³, send it down to get him out; if we go the evil eye will strike us, and he will die in prison." Zin says that the other Zin, Bako's sister, wants to leave Mam to die.

Zin goes to the opening of the dungeon and tells Mam that she has come to release him. He recognizes her voice, but he says that she has come to take his soul. Zin lets down a rope to tie around his waist. He tries to stand on his feet, but is very weak. They pull him up. He asks Zin to kneel so that he can lean against her. He leans against her, and dies. Zin sings, "May my father be ruined for sending a woman to go release a man from prison."

Word reaches Mir Sevdin that Mam was released and that he died. Mam is buried. There is much rain that day, and Zin gathers dirt and puts it on Mam's grave.

[225] Bekir has his eye on Zin. He tells her that that is enough; that he will give her a horse so that she can go find herself a man. She replies, "Let Bekir and Mir Sevdin remain alive while Mam the Alan blackens in the tomb." She sings that Mam died at noon, she will die by evening. She gets very sick, dies in the evening, and is buried beside Mam.

The three brothers return. Sutin, Zin's sister, is dressed in black. Bekir tells Mir Sevdin that they should go out to meet the brothers before Sutin sees them. When Gharatazhdin approaches with his brothers, they see that the house is draped in black; either Mam or Kourken has died. Sutin goes and tells them what has happened. Mir Sevdin and Bekir go out to meet the brothers, but seeing Sutin, they flee and hide, fearing that they will be killed.

[226] Gharatazhdin tells his brothers to lift their swords [against the Mir and Bekir]. They search through the town, but do not find them, so they go home. Bekir tells Mir Sevdin that there is no way out; if they are found, they will be burned. He suggests that they go to the bazaar, get a bolt of cloth, and go to Gharatazhdin and stand before the cradle and say, "Here is our sword, our neck, and our shroud." This they

³ժարհիֆալակ [չարիֆիֆալակ] This is the Persian: ժարհ-ի ֆալակ فلك چرخ, which was taken into Turkish as çarhifelek; although it literally means "circle of the celestial sphere," it is the name of a tropical plant with sturdy vines, the passion flower [botanical name: Passiflora].

do. Arfon and Jakon get up to kill them, but Gharatazhdin restrains them; one does not kill a guest in one's house. So they happily leave the house, and Bekir says to Mir Sevdin, "Did you see how I managed things? They didn't do anything to us!"

[227] Bekir waits a few days, then goes to Mam and Zin's tomb, digs a hole in it and sees that Mam and Zin are embracing, having a merry old time. He comes back happy and tells Mir Sevdin. Mir Sevdin tells Bekir that they should go to the graveside, and if Mam and Zin are alive, they should bring them back with them. Mir Sevdin gets up, puts on his sword, and goes with Bekir to the tomb. "Where are they?" he asks. Bekir points them out, but Mir Sevdin is aware that Bekir is lying, and says that he cannot see them.

Bekir comes and looks. Mir Sevdin takes out his sword and strikes off Bekir's neck. His blood spurts skyward. Mir Sevdin tries to keep the blood from falling onto the grave, but a drop falls on it, and a meshi tree grows there. Each year they cut down that tree, but it grows again.

Haykuni, S. [հայկունի, Ս.], ed. "Mamazin [Մամազին]," Eminyān azgagrakan zhoghovadzow [Էմինյան ազգագրական ժողովածու] = Eminsk և Etnograficheski Sbornik [=Эминск И этнографический Сборник], 5 (1904), pp. 227-264. [Armenian translation of a Yezidi Kurdish version from region of Van] (SHa-2)

SHa-2. Originally told in Kurdish by the Yezidi Onbashi Mehon, from the vicinity of Van. He was at one time a policeman in [Doğul]bayazid, after that a rifleman of the Pakrevant prelate, and for several years has been living in the Siniga Mountains (on the Soviet border) in the Yezidi village of Aslanlu. He knew Armenian well, and with his and Kisag Nalbandian's help, S. Haykuni translated Onbashi Mehon's version into Armenian, trying to preserve the poetic texture of the original. Some of S. Haykuni's notes indicate an awareness of more than one version of the story.

Mamazin (SHa-2)

English summary by Anne Avakian
Berkeley, California, July 1989

[227] In olden times, Mam the Alan was sleeping in his room. Likewise the coy and beautiful Lady Zin was asleep [in her place].

Three sister doves came down from heaven, and sat at Zin's window. Said the youngest. "Have you seen such a one as Zin in the world?" "Yes," said the eldest, "brave Mam of the Alpasha clan, son of King Kachants, is more handsome." "Is there any way they can marry?" asked the youngest dove.

[228] The eldest said that if God wills, it will be easy, they would take Zin to Mukher Zamin, to be near Mam. The doves asked God to send down a dove skin. God heard their prayer. Lady Zin saw it, wore it, and became a dove, and they flew to Mam.

Mam, in deep sleep, awoke, saw Zin, and was surprised. Zin was not only as beautiful as the moon, but was also endowed with a combination of intelligence, humility and modesty¹. Mam was enchanted by her beauty. For three days and nights he thought he had seen a dream.

The three doves took Zin and flew off, returning [to Mam] on the fourth day. Mam wondered how he could keep Zin. He could hardly speak. "Beautiful *hourî*, once more you have come to my father's city." "Handome, brave youth, you have come to my father's city."

¹In Kurdish one word is used to express these three traits. [S. Haykuni's note]

[229] Mam says that if he is from her city, how many minarets are there? She says, "166." He says that in his father's city there are 366. So they count the minarets, and find that Mam was right. They exchange rings and introduce themselves. She says she is Zin, daughter of the king of Jezir-Botan, that her father is Mir Sevdin, her father's brother's name is Mir Tazhdin. She says that this is her last visit to his father's world. He will have to come find her.

Mam did not want to let her go, but when the time came for her to leave, Lady Zin put the bead of sleep in Mam's ear and flew away. Mam woke up and saw nothing. How had he been unable to hold her? Had it been a dream? She was more beautiful than the Houris.

[230] Perhaps she would come some day to console his burning heart. He waited ten to twenty days, but the beautiful, glorious maiden did not reappear.

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In his bitter condition, Mam is wasting away. His mother sorrowfully tells her husband that Mam is drawing his last breath, and [Mam's father] rushes to his son to find out what the trouble is, lest he lose his mind. Mam says that he is sick, and his father says that he will find a cure for his pain. If Mam wants to marry, his father will ask for the hand of the daughter of the King of Istanbul.

Mam feels helpless. His father, confused and sorrowful, returns home, where he finds the judge and lawyers, and Mam's mother lamenting over his son. He sings to his companions that Mam is very sick.

[231] When the companions hear this they stand up and decide to go see Mam. His mother precedes them to Mam's door, and finds it locked. She asks him to let her in, so that she can see his condition. She hangs on his neck and says, "My son, if you love God's man², you must tell me truthfully what your trouble is."

"Akh, mother I am sick. It is God's will, that's all I know."

²Several times in this tale the Yezidi expression 'God's man' is used. I became interested in finding out about whom it is said. Some Yezidis told me that they use it for Christ when they are with Armenians, and for Muhammad when they are in the presence of Muslims, but I think it is more likely that they say it to the Melik's tavuzin (sarayel) [=devil], since they worship it. [S. Haykuni's note] Apparently Haykuni subscribed to the commonly held misconception that the Yezidis are devil worshippers.

"Mam, may the milk of my breasts be *halal*³ to you."

Mam's mother realizes that Mam's pain and torment is from within, but she cannot identify the sickness by looking at his face.

Mam tells his mother that no matter what he says or does, she may not believe it, but he is very sick. From the crowd sitting around, one discreet man turns to Mam's mother and says, "Since you love God and respect God's man, let me talk to Mam privately."

[232] Mam and that man retire to talk quietly. The man urges Mam to tell him his problem, and Mam responds that since God has been mentioned, he is obliged to tell him. He tells the man that Lady Zin is his pain. The man asks Mam if he knows Zin's nationality, her family, her world, and whether her father is from the same class as Mam's father.

Mam tells what he knows about Zin, and the man reports to Mam's father, who thinks at length about it. He does not even know what direction Jezir Botan is in, or what kind of ruler Mir Sevdin is. Mam's father summons two men who have seen something of the world. One says that he has not seen or heard of Jezir Botan, that he has never heard about it from his forefathers.

[233] The other man says that he knows about Jezir, but that he is 130 years old and his legs are too weak to manage a horse. When Mam hears about this, he gets very excited. Finally he sends word to his mother to wish him *halal*⁴; his father also wishes him *halal*, but wonders why Mam is in such a hurry to go to a strange land. Mam says he has decided to go.

[234] Mam's parents realize that it is hopeless to try to detain Mam, so Mam's father has eight or ten horsemen ride with Mam⁵. They go on more or less, stopping at a meadow where there is a fountain. They sit under a tree there and drink water. Mam

³The word *halal* signifies deep gratitude to someone. Since it is not an Armenian word, I have kept it. [S. Haykuni's note] See EP-1 note #36]

⁴See note 3 above.

⁵There are several ways for Mam to depart [according to different versions]: the Mir [=Mam's father?] sends out an order to gather the beauties of the world; Mam is put in their midst to choose one of them; [Mam's father?] requests the daughters of the vezir [=vizier] and vakil [=minister of state] to attract Mam's heart with their sweet songs; from all sides songs are sung, but Mam does not look at any of them; this happens a total of three times; finally Mam mounts his horse Bor, and rides off. In one version, Mam's father has the doors of the fortress locked and places fetters on Bor's feet, but [Mam], riding on the horse with fettered feet, jumps over the fortress wall and rides off. [S. Haykuni's note]

looks at his companions who are sad and longing for home. He releases them, telling them to go back to their families, but the men say that Mam's father may not believe them, and might think that Mam is lost.

[235] They request Mam to write a letter. He does so, and gives it to the horsemen, asking them to pray for him. They leave. Mam is confused about what he should do next. For three days and nights he rides Bor, who is lame. When the pain becomes unbearable to Bor, he sings, asking why Mam is so childish and why it never occurs to him that "his Bor's hands⁶ are in pain."

When Mam hears that Bor is so affected, he gets down and cuts the fetters with a strike of his sword.

[236] Both Mam and Bor are tearful, and Mam asks the Lord to find a way for him. He has been insensitive, has gone astray, and is sorry that he hurt Bor. Mam falls to the ground, and ponders, trying to guess what direction Jezir lies in, to the right or the left?

Once more the three doves come down from heaven and roost on the tree branch above Mam. They feel sorry for his condition. They say that when they fly away one feather will fall. When Mam awakes and dips the feather in water and rubs it on Bor's feet, he will be cured in three hours. Mam awakens and does as they said. Bor sees Mam's suffering and encourages him, stating his intention in song.

[237] Bor tells Mam to tie his [=Bor's] two front feet with a handkerchief and that Bor will get Mam to Jezir Botan on the 41st day. They ride on for forty days, and on the 41st reach the land of Perri⁷.

On the way Mam meets a ploughman⁸. They greet each other, and Mam is welcomed. The man describes the beauty of Jezir.

⁶The horse's forefeet are called "hands" by Kurds. [S. Haykuni's note]

⁷There was a village near Kharput [Harput or Elâzığ] that bore that name. [A. Avakian's note]. This could mean "the land of the peris [=fairies]."

⁸Idzk'vor [Լճքուհր] According to Kouyoumdjian's Armenian-English Dictionary, Idzel Լճէլ = 'to yoke', 'to couple'. Since in most other versions at this point in the story Mem meets up with a farmer or ploughman [Kurdish *cotkar*, from *cot* = 'pair'; 'plough', cf. Persian *joft* جفت --> Turkish *çift*], and because the verb that Idzk'vor is derived from means something similar, I am guessing that Idzk'vor, which does not appear in the dictionaries that either Miss Avakian or I consulted, means 'ploughman' too. [M.L. Chyet's note]

[238] Mam rides on, and reaches the town. Nearby is a spring; a girl is sitting by it. She greets Mam, calling him Mamet Alanian. She identifies his father, tells of Mam's long journey and that he has come for Zin. She mentions the ring, saying that it accidentally fell into the stream. Mam is suspicious that this is not his Zin and that he has come in vain. His horse understands his dejection [239] and tells him that this girl is Bako's daughter, an expert in sorcery⁹ who often upsets people's plans. The horse urges that they go on before it gets dark.

Bor carries Mam onward, coming to a stop before Gharatazhdin's door. Lady Göl Peri comes out and is attracted to her guest. She takes him in. Gharatazhdin has two brothers, Jakan and Afan. All three are nephews of the Mir¹⁰ who sit in the Mir's court [diwan]. Khatun [=Lady] Göl Peri sends a man to summon them with the message that [240] a grand guest has come, and that they should come home quickly. They come and honor Mam for three days, and don't return to the Mir's court. Meanwhile, the Mir sends a man to find out why they have not come back. The Mir is told about the guest, and invites them to bring him along. Lady Göl Peri gives the messenger a terrible blow. He asks her why she hit him.

She tells him to get lost, to go to *khalam*, saying, "Go tell your Mir to get a band of seven musicians and to spread carpets from his door to mine, and to decorate the court if he wants her guest to come. The servant returns to the Mir, who wants to know why Gharatazhdin, his brothers, and their guest have not come. The servant tells the Mir what his own sister has demanded.

[241] Mam proceeds, scattering gold as he goes to the crowd which has gathered. Before Mam arrives, Tazhdin goes and talks to the Mir face to face. The Mir asks him why he has not appeared at court, and Tazhdin tells him that it is because his guest is very important. He tells him that when the guest comes, the Mir should stand. The Mir wants to know what kind of guest he is that he should have to stand up for him¹¹.

When Mam comes in, the Mir is amazed; in a hurry he stands up to greet him and to hold his hand. Just then Tazhdin drops a handkerchief under the Mir. The Mir is so

⁹Some say that Bako's daughter, through sorcery, knew everything; others say that Bako was the sorcerer and that he revealed secrets to her

¹⁰=lit: "sons of the Mir's brother"

¹¹They say that Mam was very handsome. Whoever caught sight of him became enraptured, and spent three days and nights being hungry, thirsty, and sleepless. [S. Haykuni's note]

enraptured by Mam that for three days and nights all he does is talk with him. Lady Gül Peri comes in, angry that her guest has been kept without food, and asks the Mir if he has imprisoned him. The Mir does not like what she says, so he turns to her [his sister] and says [242] that if his arm could reach his dagger, he would put an end to her.

It seemed to the Mir that he had only been talking for a day, but Gül Peri says that it has been three days, and the crowd agrees with her, but has not dared to say so to the Mir. The Mir recognizes his error, and orders his servants to bring bread and food. Mam sits and eats, takes leave of the Mir, and goes back to his quarters.

The Mir turns to Tazhdin and says, "Didn't you say that I would stand up in front of the guest?" "Yes," replies Tazhdin, "You stood up, and held his hand. If you don't believe me, stand up and see. You will find a handkerchief under you."¹²

The Mir says that he was unaware how the time passed. Tazhdin takes his leave, and does not make an appearance for three days.

The Mir calls Tazhdin back and questions him about Mam: where is he from, who are his parents. Tazhdin says that he does not know.

[243] The Mir has Mam brought in, and wants to know if he is the son of a king or a vizier. Mam says that he is just an ordinary person, and this angers the Mir. He turns to Tazhdin and says that the guest is not telling the truth¹³. He orders that Mam be taken away, and that information about him be brought in the morning. Mam and the three brothers return to Shahnashin, the grand palace¹⁴.

Shahnashin was a grand palace, surrounded on all sides by vineyards, villages, and dwellings. Tazhdin, his brothers, and Mam the Alan go to the rooftop and sit on carpets. They play chess for half a day. Let Mam and Tazhdin play there, and let us turn to Lady Zin.

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¹²Tazhdin dropped the handkerchief under the Mir so that if he denies that he stood up, Tazhdin will have the handkerchief as proof.

¹³From Mam's appearance they surmised that he was of nobility, and when he denied it, the Mir got angry [S. Haykuni's note]

¹⁴Shahnashin was the traditional palace of the dan. They say that when brothers and nephews separate, they divide the principedom into two, with the principedom on one side, and the palace on the other: in this way, Tazhdin got the palace Shahnashin. [S. Haykuni's note]

"Zin," says Lady Zin, "Gather up my servants, take 10-20 horses and mules, and load up all the pots and pans and go to the fountain." The servants load up quickly and, taking Lady Zin with them, they unload their things at the fountain.

[244] Mam looks down from high up on the rooftop and sees Zin leading the caravan. When he sees her, he falls over. The three brothers wonder what has happened. Mam says that he would give the whole world for the leader of that caravan.

Zin was already engaged to Jakan, and when he hears Mam say this, he gets very upset. When Gharatazhdin realizes this, he tries to calm his brother down with a song. He tells Mam that what he sees is not an ordinary caravan that he should stop it and demand a tax of it. The leader, Lady Zin, the daughter of Mir Sevdin, is betrothed to Jakan.

The three brothers all go and collect a tax from the Kurdish caravan, but first there is one requirement: they must get permission from the Mir. "I will go get a permit¹⁵."

The three brothers insist that it is impossible and impractical¹⁶.

[245] Mam jumps up and thinks about neglected Bor. He finds him in poor condition, and cleans him up. The horse tells him that he has been neglected, but when Mam needs him, he comes. Mam tells Bor not to abandon him, and Bor says that he will take him wherever he desires to go. Mam leaps into the saddle and rides to the fountain.

[246] When Zin sees Mam, she takes the cup from her maidservant, fills it with water, and offers it to Mam. Mam says, "Lady Zin, Lady Zin, can you give me the *tlumsa zerin*¹⁷?"

¹⁵Presumably for Mam. [A. Avakian's note]

¹⁶Zin was betrothed to Tazhdin's brother Jakan. If another person so much as talked about Zin, murder might be the result. Tazhdin cautions Mam so that his brother Jakan does not get upset. However, Mam is their guest, and according to custom, if a guest were to ask for someone's wife (though it never happened), he would not be refused.

¹⁷Tlumsazerin means a magical gold piece which is the largest piece of gold in a necklace. When Zin gives it away, the magic [or enchantment] in it would be lifted, the work of Zin and Mam would be done, and Tazhdin and his brothers would have to give up all hope of Zin. [S. Haykuni's note] **tlumsazeřin** **դլմսազերին** from Kurdish **tilimsa zēřin** = 'golden talisman', from metathesis of **T'ilism** = 'Talisman, charm, amulet,' from Ar **řilasm** **طلمس** [cf. also Turkish **tilsm**], + **zēřin** = 'golden.' [M.L. Chyet's note]

When Zin heard this, she removed the gold piece from her necklace and dropped it in the cup and gave it to Mam. Mam drank the water,^{17a} then mounted his horse and went and laid the gold piece before Gharatazhdin.

Mam took the horse to the stable, then went upstairs to the house.

Tazhdin noticed Mam's condition and told his brothers about it, proclaiming that they were now four brothers, and suggesting that they go around Jezir and bring Mam to the desired of his heart [=Zin]. This upset Jakan, who sang to Tazhdin that what he had said hurt him very much.

[247] Jakan's heart is in pieces, to whom is he giving away his betrothed? Tazhdin says that Mam is their guest and a worthy brother. Afan sings that Tazhdin is like a father and has arranged it so. Jakan also finally joins in with the idea that Mam should have the one who is the beauty of the world¹⁸. The three brothers vow that Mam's desire is to be fulfilled.

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The Mir sends word to Gharatazhdin to bring Mam. When they come, the Mir takes Tazhdin aside and asks whether Mam is really a king's son. Tazhdin assures the Mir that he is indeed a king's son. The Mir accepts him as one who has come to meet Tazhdin¹⁹ [248] and who one is obligated to be hospitable to. The Mir welcomes Mam to his court. Zin had heard the day before that her father was going to give Mam some important gift. Zin calls Avan Bako's daughter²⁰, tells her that the Mir has taken Mam to the court, and asks her to find out what he intends to do. Avan Bako's Zin says that she has learned that the Mir is planning on giving the town of Istanbul to Mam, so that he might rule there

^{17a} This is reminiscent of the Iranian practice of taking an oath, *søgand khørdan* NDRwX dnwš, in which a swearer whose honesty was seriously in doubt would drink water containing sulphur or gold. See Martin Schwarz. "Pers. *Saugand Khurdan*, etc. 'To Take an Oath' (Nor. 'To Drink Sulphur')." in *Études Irano-Arvernes-offertes à Gilbert Lazard*, *Studia Iranica*, Cahier 7 (Paris : Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 1989), pp. 293-5.

¹⁸ Jakan reluctantly agrees, but he doesn't have the heart to mention Zin by name, instead mentioning her qualities. [S. Haykuni's note]

¹⁹ The Mir assumed that Mam had heard about Tazhdin's fame and had come only to see his glory and honor. [S. Haykuni's note]

²⁰ Avan Bako's daughter is also called Zin, and she was a maidservant of Mam's Zin. She is the one who had seen Mam at the spring before he entered the town. [S. Haykuni's note]

and spend his life there. [Lady Zin] pleads with her maidservant Zin to find some work that Mam can do there, as a way of keeping him there at her father's palace.

Mam appears before the Mir and says that he cannot accept Istanbul. The Mir says that it is his desire to promote Mam, and he asks Mam what it is that he wants. Mam tells him that he wants to serve in his court. The Mir assigns him to be supervisor of the kitchen.

A former worker in the kitchen asks Mam why he is depriving him [=the worker] of his living, and why he is killing his [=the worker's] children. Mam says that the circumstances of his situation are unusual. By God's mercy he will give the former worker his own salary, but he asks that the worker not reveal this to anyone.

[249] Mam takes Lady Zin and they talk secretly. For a year or two it is so with Mam; he is only attentive to Zin. He forgets about his own hunger and forgets the Mir's mealtimes.

Bako Avan is a slanderous gossip. He is a big official of the Mir's, and he is seeking an opportunity to get Mam away from the Zin he worships²¹. Bako Avan goes to the Mir and says that Mam is a careless man; his work shows that he is an ordinary man who wanders around the palace. The Mir says that Mam is his man and that he forgives him his faults. But Bako continues his slandering.

Zin notices all this and says to Mam that they will be disgraced if they continue. Mam goes to the Mir's court and asks to be released from his service. The Mir lets him go, but requires that Mam come to his court three times a day.

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One day the Mir summons Gharatazhdin [250] and says that it is a suitable day for horse *chrinti*²², and instructs him to get things ready. Mam is also to play, in order to show his skill. But Bor has again been neglected. The horse scolds Mam, and Mam feels

²¹Through sorcery he wanted to give his daughter Zin to Mam. When he did not succeed, he became an enemy [S. Haykuni's note]

²²This must be jireed [Turkish *cirit*; Kurdish *cerîd/cirîd*], a game played on horseback, similar to polo. Both the game and the javelin used in the game are called jireed. See ZK-3, note #109a; and LC-1, note #139; for a fuller account.

sorry and begs forgiveness. Bor tells him to put the golden saddle on him, and Mam does so, then mounts Bor and goes out to the square.

400 of the Mir's horsemen come and ride along with the brothers. The Mir calls one of the brave young men and tells him to go hit Mam's *chrint*, to find out how patient Mam is. The brave horseman wields the *chrint* in his hand, and rides back and forth on his horse, [251] watching the direction of the *chrint*, in order to knock Mam over with one blow. Bor instructs Mam to crawl under his [=Bor's] belly, and let the strike fall on Bor²³. Bor tells Mam to press the stirrups from both sides, so they will meet and drop a *chrint* from above, so that it will strike his right arm. Mam does as he is bid, and the Mir says that it is enough. Mam's fame spreads, and they go home happy.

Dayspass. The Mir calls his nephew Tazhdin and asks when the next hunt will be. They want to see what a good hunter Mam is. Zin hears about this and sends her maidservant Zin to Mam, to tell him not to go, but rather to say that he is sick. In the morning they go hunting, and Mam says he is sick.

[252] The Mir asks where Mam is. Tazhdin says that he is sick. So they go without him. Lady Zin sends her maidservant Zin to go quickly and tell Mam that he should meet her in the enclosed vineyard. Zin goes alone, with Mam following cautiously. They meet and are happy.

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Let them be, and let us turn to the hunters. They enter the forest, but after a few hours have passed, a terrible hailstorm comes up. They get wet, and the Mir suggests that they go home. Meanwhile, Bako is thinking of something. He tells the Mir that they should go by way of the vineyard, because two hunters have gone there, "Let's see what they have got."

They all enter the vineyard of Surgri. Mam and Zin are there enjoying themselves, unaware of what is about to befall them.

²³ have written: "vertically" in place of the Kurdish word that signifies neither higher than the head nor to pass lower, but directly to the point. [S. Haykuni's note]

The Mir calls his chavush [=servant] to build a fire in the farm house. The chavush finds Mam and Zin asleep, and does not want to awaken them. The more he thinks, the harder it is for him to find a way.

[253] How can he separate the lovers? He goes back and forth, trying not to make any noise, yet he cannot delay too long. Suddenly Mam and Zin wake up and see the fire and the chavush standing beside them. Mam asks why he is so confused. The chavush tells Mam to hurry, for the Mir will soon be there. Mam tells Zin that their situation is very precarious, and that she must hide under his cloak. Mam sits down and sings quietly.

The Mir enters happily and loudly greets Mam, who stands up sleepily and sluggishly and bows before the Mir. Bako is suspicious, and knows that Mam is confused. He takes the opportunity to point out to the Mir Mam's disorderly manner, that he was sluggish in his greeting.

When Bako sees that the Mir was upset, [254] he looks at Mam and the people stand silently by while the Mir and Mam look at each other. Mam sings sadly that he is sick and could scarcely make it to the vineyard, and asks the Mir to find a cure for his pain. Bako knows that Mam is in love with Lady Zin. He sings loudly to arouse Mam, and to get him to talk²⁴.

Bako sings to the Mir that the person Mam loves has lips that are freckled²⁵, and has the face of an Arab -- no need to give her name.

Mam is aroused, and sings that Bako is lying through his moustache. "If you want to know, her name is Zin, her father's name is Mir Sevdin, her brother's name is Mir Tazhdin." when Tazhdin and his brothers hear the song, they whisper to him, "What are you saying? Be careful lest something happen to you!" Mam sings the same words again, and is so excited that he calls on his men to unsheath their daggers.

[255] This they do, but Gharatazhdin and his brothers get very insensed and threaten to put anyone who moves to the sword. Tazhdin sees that Mam is in grave danger. Quickly he sends word to Lady Gül Peri that Mam and Zin are in danger²⁶, and that she

²⁴Bako knew that Mam had gone with Zin to Surgri vineyard, and he thought he would find them together, which would disgrace Mam. When he does not see Zin, he sings just to arouse Mam. [S. Haykuni's note]

²⁵or perhaps cracked? [M.L. Chyet's note]

²⁶Some say that Gharatazhdin saw Zin's braids sticking out from under the cloak, and understood that there was great danger; others say that Mam himself revealed her braids to Gharatazhdin, forcing him to

must hurry to save the life of their honored guest. He directs her to take the cradle, Bor, and the Koran out of Shahnashin palace, and to set it on fire.

In an instant, Shahnashin is in flames, and people run to help from all sides. When Mir Sevdin hears about the fire, he runs out and forgets about everything else. Mam is free; he sends Zin home and he himself hurries towards the fire.

[256] Mam looks sadly upon the scene, shedding bitter tears over Gharatazhdin's loss. Not even a quilt is left.

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For three or four months, the Mir and Tazhdin are enemies over Mam. One day, an enemy comes and surrounds the Mir's lands. The Mir has no forces to meet the invading army. He curses Bako for causing the falling out between him and his relatives. The Mir is so worried that he goes to Gharatazhdin and says, "I did you harm, will you do me good? I need your help." Tazhdin says that he is ready to do the Mir's will. The Mir wants Tazhdin to be the general of the army that will drive out the enemy invaders. Tazhdin accepts.

[257] Tazhdin tells the Mir that he will leave Mam as a pledge with him until his return, and that he expects the Mir will return him in the same condition he was in when he left. 5,000 brave soldiers gather, with Tazhdin proudly at their head.

Once more Bako goes to the Mir and complains that something should be done to Mam for his sins. The Mir says that he is a pledge, and that he cannot touch him. Bako suggests that the Mir and Mam should play *satrij* [=chess], and whoever loses will be punished. The Mir tells Mam to play *satrij*, and if Mam wins, Zin will be his. If Mam loses, the Mir will put him in prison.

Bako runs to Lady Zin and tells her about the wager. At first she is a bit doubtful, but Bako insists that it is so. Lady Zin dresses up and puts on her gold, then goes to stand in front of the window.

[258] Mam is winning. Bako suggests that they trade places. When they do, Mam is captivated by the sight of Zin, and he gets confused, so that the Mir is the winner. The Mir orders his servants to tie Mam up and to drop him into the dungeon. Mam looks at

divert the Mir and the crowd's attention by setting fire to his beloved palace. Tazhdin took this upon himself only to preserve the family tradition of hospitality. [S. Haykuni's note]

Zin and says that he has lost his soul. She tries to encourage him. Mam is thrown into a dark and narrow dungeon, and is cruelly tortured.

Zin engages three miners and asks them how well they can keep a secret.

[259] She gives them ten gold pieces to dig a tunnel from the prison to her room. The two lovers meet happily.

One day Bako asks his daughter what Lady Zin does with her time. His daughter answers that Lady Zin is always weeping, but at nightfall she always asks her maidservant to leave. Bako suspects something and goes to the Mir and asks why he is so lax and indifferent. Bako tells him about the tunnel. The Mir does not believe it, but Bako takes him, and they see Zin sitting on the bed. When she sees her father, she jumps up and stands.

[260] Bako tells the Mir to lift the quilt. The Mir scolds Zin; her heart trembles and she is tongue-tied. The Mir turns to Bako for advice. Four servants are summoned and told to drop Mam into the deep, dark well.

Mam is there for a year and a half, suffering a great deal. Tazhdin's soldiers fight for three years and return victorious. The Mir is confused: how can he face Tazhdin? The Mir tells Bako that he is going to behead him [=Bako]. Bako begs for forgiveness, then runs to Zin and says he has good news for her, [261] that she is going to wed Mam, and that she has permission to release him from the dungeon.

When she hears this, she says, "May my father's house be ruined, that Mam should be released from the dungeon by a woman."

Zin calls her 40 maidservants, and they go to the prison, where she sings to Mam that she has come to free him from his suffering. He replies that she has not come to save him, but rather to kill him. The 40 servants drop a rope down into the well and pull Mam out. He turns to Zin and sighs, and he sheds a drop of blood; with that drop of blood, his soul flies out of his mouth.

When Zin sees that Mam is dead, she pulls her hair out by the roots, and sings, "Mam died in the morning, may I not reach the evening time."

[262] The Mir sees the soldiers returning, and terrified of Tazhdin, he says to Bako, "May your house be ruined." They decide to flee and hide, locking the door behind them.

Gharatazhdin learns of what has happened. Even though the Mir and Bako have fled, even if they were to get into a mousehole, they will not be saved. The Mir and Bako go to the fortress, disguised as women. The three brothers attack the fortress. The Mir sees danger approaching, death is threatening his clan. He begs the nobles to beg Tazhdin to forgive him. They approach Tazhdin and ask for the Mir to be forgiven. Tazhdin grants this, then tells them to take Mam and Zin and bury them together, then to cover the bride and groom with earth.

[263] Eight days pass, and Tazhdin says, "Let's go and see if Mam and Zin are lying back to back or face to face." Bako hears about this. By night he goes to the grave and sees that they are sleeping face to face. He rushes to Tazhdin and tells him that Mam and Zin are alive.

The next day they go to the graves, taking Bako with them. They open the graves and say, "Unjust Bako you liar, where are the Mam and Zin that you saw alive?"

Bako bends over the grave as if to feel it, and Tazhdin pulls out his sword and strikes Bako a fatal blow; his head falls to one side, his body to the other; he dies a dog's death.

A drop of blood spurts from Bako's neck and falls between the two lovers. The blood turns into a *chichkhan poush* [=thorny holly?]. The two souls turn into two roses, and grow on each side, but cannot meet because the *chichkhan* does not allow them to be joined.

[264] It grows long between the two of them, leaving the two lovers longing. The *chichkhan* does not allow them to meet, and forever they remain so.

Every year the roses grow, but the *chichkhan* is a hindrance.

The bride and groom have gone to heaven.

Bako burns in hell; his body in the grave does not rest.

- Nzhdehian, G. K. [ՆՅԴԵՏԵԱՆ, Գ. Բ.]. "Mamo yev Zinē : k'rdakan zhoghovrdakan vēp" [Մամօ եւ Ջինէ, քրդական, ժողովրդական վէպ = Mamo and Zine, Kurdish folk romance], *Azgagrakan Handes* [=Ազգագրական հանդես], 11 (1904), 197-240. [Armenian translation of Kurdish oral version from Eleşkirt, in what is now the province of Ağrı, Turkey; see also Macler] (GNa)
- Macler, Frédéric. "Une Forme Arménienne du thème des amants malheureux," *Revue des études Arméniennes*, 2 (1922), 91-116. [AP95.A7R4 v. 2-3; French summary of Nzhdehyan's Armenian literary version]

GNa. Armenian translation of a Kurdish oral version from Eleşkirt (Alashkerd), in what is now the province of Ağrı, Turkey. This version was collected and translated by the Armenian priest G. Nzhdehian, circa 1904. Several of Nzhdehian's explanatory notes are useful and interesting. This version has a moral tone that is atypical: I suspect that because he was a priest, he touched up a few points at the end, to make the story coincide with his religious world view. Frédéric Macler, translator of a great deal of Armenian literature into French, published a French summary of it in 1922. Anne Avakian made an English summary for me directly from the Armenian text, i.e. without referring to the French summary. Her summary includes several details germane to my analysis which Macler glossed over.

Mamo yev Zine (GNa)
English summary by Anne Avakian
Berkeley, California, March 1989

[197] Mir-Shamdin was from the generation of the kings of Mar [=Media], and one of the ancestors of Badir-Khan Beg. Mir-Shamdin lived in Jezira Bohtan¹, the sole head of his country. After the death of Mir-Shamdin², his son Mir-Zeydin sat in his place as free and sole lord of that country.

¹The town of Bohtan's Jezir, with Jezir as town and Bohtan as country, but according to the rules of the Kurdish language, they are used as a pair, the town coming before the country. [Nzhdehian's note]

²Միր-Շամդին. Some say Mir-Sanzin [Միր-Սանտին]. [Nzhdehian's note]. Both of these are given in Eastern Armenian: both because the text is in Eastern Armenian, and because the town of Eleşkirt (Alashkerd), where the text was collected, is the traditional dividing line between Eastern and Western Armenian, such that the Armenians living to the east of Eleşkirt generally spoke dialects of Eastern Armenian, and those to the west of it spoke dialects of Western Armenian [according to Professor James Russell of Columbia University]. The dialects exhibit phonological, lexical, and morphological differences. [M.L. Chyet's note]

Mir-Zeydin's sister, Khanum-Peri, was married to her paternal uncle's son whose name was Ghara-Tazhdin. They had children; one of them was Gurgin, who was also known as Ghavaz-Chavush. He will appear in our story³.

Ghara-Tazhdin's brothers were Kakan and Jakan. These last two were not yet married. They were very strong and courageous young men. No other mortal could lift their armaments up off the ground, let alone use them. Each dagger, lance, and shield weighed 300 pounds, and the youths were very skilled in their use. Their job was to [198] watch over the land like guardian angels, to collect taxes, look into complaints, suppress revolts, and the like. Although Mir-Zeydin was the ruler, his work was carried out by the three brothers. Mir-Zeydin feared his nephews. He was their slave: he loved and respected them, and in return they were always ready to sacrifice themselves to carry out his word.

Mir-Zeydin also had another sister, named Zine. She was very beautiful, and in all of Bohtan, none could surpass her. She was fourteen years old. Her brother wanted to bring girls to serve her, but she said, "Let my name serve me⁴." Nonetheless, he brought her forty girls, all of whom had the name Zine. He paid the parents of each girl the equivalent of their weight in gold. One was the daughter of a notable of Jezir, Bakir-Avan. She was dark, pock-marked, large-nosed, old, and a *samdar* [=fortune teller]: this Zine was secretly against Mir-Zeydin's younger sister Zine [Lady Zine].

According to Kurdish custom, Lady Zine was engaged to Kakan, Ghara-Tazhdin's brother, and their wedding was to take place several months after the events of this story.

Mir-Zeydin's palace was surrounded by high ramparts with seven steel gates guarded by 24 men. Inside was a beautiful garden, a plane tree in the middle, [199] and a marble pool. Lady Zine and her attendants enjoyed the place.

One day near sunset, Zine ordered her attendants to leave. She put down her quilt and went to sleep. Three doves came and sat in the tree: one was the mother of the other two. They were fairies⁵ who had come from heaven. When they took off

³They have at least one other child in this version, an unnamed infant. [M.L. Chyet's note]

⁴*Eira navê min ji mifa xizme: ke*. This is quoted in Kurdish, but in Armenian letters.

⁵or houris. Nzhdehian has 'fairies', followed by 'houris' in parentheses.

their feathers, they became beautiful girls. Ordinary mortals could not wear their feathers unless God found them worthy.

The mother dove told her daughters that Zine was the one sleeping by the pool, and that her fate was tied to Mame⁶, son of Al-Pasha of Mkhur-Zaman. She was engaged to Kakan. Unfortunately, there was no extra suit of feathers to dress her in, or they would take her to Mame. The two younger doves were sorry to hear their mother's words, so they sang to God, and God sent down a suit of feathers for Zine. By a miracle, Zine became the fourth dove.

[200] She flew with the other doves to a distant land, to an unfamiliar place where the prince Al-Pasha reigned. The land was called Mkhur-Zaman. The doves brought Zine to Mameh's window. He was asleep, and around his bed were four candles, two above and two below. The doves put Zine under the quilt and removed her feathers. She became her former self, still asleep and unaware of what had transpired.

Later she awoke and, seeing a young man beside her, was both astonished and angry. By what right had he come to her room? Mame was also surprised and angered to find a strange girl in his bed. Both demanded an explanation. Zine sang that her father⁷ has seven steel gates guarded by 24 men.; how dare Mame come and kiss her breasts? Mame answered that his father also has similar protection; why had she come to cause loss of his life?; may her house be ruined. They argued. Zine disclosed that her native town, Jezira Bohtan, has 66 minarets. Mame said that his town of Mkhur-Zaman has 366 minarets.

[201] They went to the window, and by the light of the moon, they counted the 366 minarets. Zine apologized and ascribed her coming to God, but it remained a mystery. They yielded to God's will, and exchanged rings. Zine wanted to leave, but Mame objected. She insisted that if he were a real man, he would undergo any trouble necessary to find her, and that only then would he be able to marry her and know the value of a woman. After telling each other the names of their native countries, cities,

⁶Although in the title the form 'Mamo' appears through the narrative he is referred to as Mame (𐭌𐭕𐭎𐭅𐭆) (to be pronounced in two syllables Mah-meh) [A Avakian's note]

⁷Although Mir-Zeydin is initially presented as Zine's older brother, later on Zine identifies him as her father. [A Avakian's note] This occurs in other versions as well. see HR-1 note #108; and EP-1 note #109; Cf. note 12 below.

and relatives, they again fall asleep. The doves came and put a bead of sleep⁸ in Zine's ear so that she would sleep soundly, then dressed her in dove feathers and took her home, leaving her in her bed in the garden. When Zine awoke, she thought it had been a dream, and it was almost morning. She was angry that her attendants had let her sleep so long, and she threatened to cut their hair. She went into the house, and noticed the ring on her finger, engraved with the words "Mkhur-Zaman and Mame." She fainted. Her dream had been true!

Mkhur-Zaman, a distance of forty days from Jezira Bohtan, was a well-populated place where Al-Pasha was king.

[202] Al-Pasha had grown very old and had only Mame, age 18, who was the apple of his eye⁹, especially since Mame was the only son he had from his late wife. Mame was very intelligent, clever, strong, and handsome. His father called him Mamo or Mamek.

Every morning Mame, dressed in his golden threaded garments, helped his father dress, poured water on his hands, got his coffee and his pipe ready, and waited on him. Mame was, in a word, his father's life.

After the meeting between Mame and Zine, Mame did not come to his father's bedside to serve him. Al-Pasha thought that something must have happened, perhaps Mame was sick, so he sent a man to bring word. The man found Mame asleep, and woke him up. Mame's first word was "Zine". The man said that no Zine was there. Mame thought he was dreaming, said nothing, got up and went to wash. When he poured water on his hands, he noticed the ring with the words "Jezir Bohtan and Zine" engraved on it. He fell down in a faint, able only to say that he was very sick. He was put to bed.

Al-Pasha understood Mame's situation, so he sent an order throughout the country that whoever had a daughter should dress her up and bring her on the appointed day to his garden for a dance. [203] Perhaps his Mame would find his Zine. When the news got around, whoever had a cow sold it, and bought fine clothes and adornments for his daughter, then waited for the day to arrive, so that they could gather at the garden.

⁸Armenian villagers also believe that there is such a bead which, when dropped in the ear, will put one to sleep [Nzhdehian's note]

⁹Miss Avakian translates this literally, as "the light of his eyes"

At Al-Pasha's command, all the beautiful girls of the country came and danced. Each one hoped to be chosen as Mame's bride, later to be queen.

Mame came into the garden, but not one girl was like Zine. He turned back dejected and hopeless.

Mame told his father that Zine was the sister of Mir-Zeydin, and that if he didn't find her, he would die. His father questioned whether the place and people really exist. Mame requested four *kods*¹⁰ of gold. He took the gold, and gave one *kod* to the tailor for a [204] golden threaded suit, one *kod* to the saddler to make an elaborate saddle, and one *kod* to the swordsmith to make a fine sword. He asked to see 80 of his father's horses to find out if any were capable of making the journey. Not one was suitable. Just as he was leaving, he saw a scrawny horse and gave one *kod* to the horse's groom to put the horse in shape. The name of this horse was Por.

When 39 days had passed, Mame got ready to go; his new suit of clothes, saddle, and sword surpassed his expectations. Al-Pasha knew that Mame wanted to leave the next day, so he ordered the horse's groom to chain Por's feet so that he would not be able to move; perhaps that would put an end to the dangerous journey. By Al-Pasha's orders the doorkeepers locked the gates, but Mame did not know about it. He put on his new suit of clothes, tied the sword on his left side, and stood in the courtyard and sang [205] to his workers to get Por ready, and he called on God to make his wish come true. The mullah was reciting the morning *azan*¹¹ when Mame was setting his foot in the stirrup. Suddenly Al-Pasha came out of the house and Mame asked his father to wish him well. Al-Pasha was amazed at his son's appearance, wondering what the evil eye had in store for Mame and Zine. Once more Mame asked God for help, moved the stirrup, and Por jumped over the high ramparts, chained feet and all.

Mame bade his father farewell, and disappeared in a cloud of dust. His father fainted. When they revived him, he ordered forty youths to pursue Mame and bring him back; if that failed, they were to accompany him and protect him. Mame's

¹⁰Originally a wooden measuring container, also a unit of measurement, equal to 2 kilograms according to Izoff's dictionary, and ranging between 8 and 12 pounds in different regions according to Bakaev's and Kurdoev's dictionaries.

¹¹Islamic call to prayer, recited from the minaret of the mosque five times a day.

mother¹² and servants went after him also, and they [206] finally caught up with him and tried to dissuade him, but to no avail. His mother begged him not to sadden them in their old age, saying, "Don't knead our bread with tears! Why are you leaving your father's throne vacant?" Mame stopped his mother and told her that God was taking him, that it was his fate¹³, whatever the outcome. The horsemen followed him, but Mame ordered them to turn back.

Mame went three or four days without resting. Por's feet hurt, but Mame paid no attention. Finally Por asked God to give him the faculty of speech, to help free his feet. God granted his wish.

[207] Por complained to Mame, and finally Mame heeded Por, drew his sword, and with one blow freed Por from the chains. Por had been injured, so they had to stop for awhile to rest.

[208] Mame regretted being thoughtless, but the horse consoled him and told him that doves would come and leave three feathers which, when dipped in water and brushed over Por's wounds, would heal them. And so it happened.

[209] The newly healed Por could not be surpassed by a speeding bullet. At a wooded place, Mame noticed three horsemen who were after a deer. Mame sped and killed the deer so that they could not claim it. They were also taken aback by Mame's suit of clothing, appearance, horsemanship, and cleverness. Mame handed the deer over to them. The horsemen praised Mame's nobility and kissed his forehead.

[210] They said that they must become brothers, so they mixed their blood together, then drank, and became blood brothers. They bade each other farewell. The three horsemen were Ghara-Tazhdin and his brothers. Mame regretted that he had not asked them directions to Zine's country.

[211] Bor consoled Mame, and Mame felt relieved. He encountered a farmer, who told him how to get to Jezir. Mame gave him some gold, but the man was fearful of Mame because of his clothing and speedy horse. He thought Mame was a soul-taking angel. Mame tried to reassure him, but the man still seemed fearful. So Mame

¹²: was previously stated that Mame's mother was dead, but the storyteller inadvertently resurrects her from the dead for this occasion. Cf. note 7 above.

¹³=lit. "it was written on his forehead." This is one way to say 'fate' or 'destiny' in the languages of the Middle East. Compare Kurdish **enînivîs** and Turkish **alın yazısı**, lit. "that which is written on the forehead." with Persian **sarnavâst**: **سرنوشت**, lit. "that which is written on the head."

started off, then changed his mind; he started on the road that the farmer had pointed out to him, then turned around, thinking that perhaps he had been misled, but the man reassured him, and this time Mame believed him.

[212] Mame continued on his way, and soon saw the minarets of Jezir. South of the town was an old willow tree beside a spring so very cold that its water would snap a cucumber in two. A prince had built a marble arch and basins in which water collected. The spring was called Kanîyê Zampîlîyê, which means *marble fountain*. Beautiful girls and young brides came to fetch water there. Without this fountain, Jezir would be of no significance, just lifeless and sad. The day Mame came, a girl was standing by the fountain spinning wool with a spindle. This was one of Zine's servants, the daughter of Bakir, the ugly Zine mentioned earlier. Nobody like her, and she had never married. She knew the art of sorcery from a book she kept. She knew about Zine turning into a dove and going to Mkhur-Zaman, about her meeting Mame and their pledge, and about his coming in forty days. [213] For this reason she had collected the wool of forty sheep to wash and spin while she waited for Mame. Mame talked to her for a while. She said she had come to the fountain to wait for him, and had waited so long without eating that she claimed she had forgotten his ring at home¹⁴. Mame asked the girl for a cup of water, which she gave to him. Mame's horse cautioned him that this Zine was in the habit of misleading young men. She pretended that she was the sister of Mir-Zeydin¹⁵. Mame is suspicious, because the Zine he had met was beautiful. He asked to see the ring, and she said that she had forgotten it at home. But how did this Zine know all about him?

[214] P'or wanted to leave, but she barred the horse's way, which angered Mame. He knocked her over, got on his horse, and rode off. Zine swore revenge.

[215] Mame wondered about the local customs; his horse reassured him that there would be no problem, and Mame let the horse direct him. P'or brought him directly to the residence of Ghara-Tazhdin. Ghara-Tazhdin sent his wife, Khatun-Peri, to see if the visitor was friend or foe. Khatun-Peri was amazed to find such a

¹⁴There is disagreement among the storytellers about the ring that Mame had traded with Zine. Some tell this point with a tale, some with a song. The former say that Zine said, "I was keeping your ring in my mouth; while washing at the fountain it fell in, and now I am looking for it, but have been unable to find it." [Nzhdehian's note]

¹⁵Once again. Laçy Zine is referred to as Mir-Zeydin's sister, as at the beginning of the story. See note 7 above.

fine youth. She invited him in, and when Tazhdin and his brothers saw him, they recognized him as their new blood brother. They talked much, and waited on Mame. The many administrative duties of the three brothers are mentioned.

[216] Tazhdin was usually so busy that he had no time to wipe his nose. Sometimes he had to stay close to Mir-Zeydin. However, for three days he and his brothers spent all their time with Mame. Mir-Zeydin was enraged that Tazhdin had neglected him; he sent a man to see what was going on, and when the man came, he was so enraptured with gazing at Mame that he just stood there and listened. Then Mir-Zeydin sent another man, who came and told Tazhdin, "My Lord, the prince is calling you." Just then Khatun-Peri was serving food; with the ladle in her hand, she gave the servant a whack on the head, immediately cracking his skull. The blood and oil from the food mixed together and covered his face, and he went out and told the prince everything that had happened.

After the meal, Tazhdin sent word to Mir-Zeydin that he had such a fine guest that he could not leave his side. Then Mir-Zeydin ordered that the guest be brought before him, but Tazhdin demanded that the streets be decorated, carpets be spread out, that he be escorted by seven sets of fife and drum if he was going to invite him. Mir-Zeydin met the demand and so Mame went with honor to Mir-Zeydin's house. He entered the door boldly, and Mir-Zeydin stood up at once.

[217] Before Mame went in, Ghara-Tazhdin had told Mir-Zeydin about Mame. He [=Tazhdin] was waiting to see how Mame would be received. When Mir-Zeydin saw Mame come in, he was unable to keep his princely demeanor, and he stood up, like a lower official. That is what Tazhdin wanted: he immediately dropped his handkerchief on Mir-Zeydin's cushion. Mir-Zeydin did not notice, and sat on the handkerchief. Mir-Zeydin talked with Mame for a long while, treating him with respect.

Three days passed, yet Mir-Zeydin felt as though only an hour had passed. Tazhdin reminded Mir-Zeydin that he had not yet made arrangements for food to be served, also pointing out how in his excitement the Mir had stood up before Mame. The Mir denied this, but Tazhdin showed him the handkerchief on which Mir-Zeydin was sitting. Mir-Zeydin was convinced. Food was served, then coffee was brought in by Lady Zine.

To this dinner were invited, among others, Bakir-Avan, father of Zine the sorceress. She had told her father to look carefully at Lady Zine when she served

coffee, to see if Mame and Zine showed rings, and whether they smiled at each other or not. If they did, then he would know that the young man was Al-Pasha's son. Bakir observed them, and when he noticed, he went and told his daughter.

When Tazhdin and Mame returned home, they spread a carpet on the roof and sat on it for pleasure, to watch the town. [218] Soon they saw Lady Zine and her forty attendants with forty camels carrying utensils to be washed. Mame sang that he would capture the caravan.

The three brothers did not like this, for Lady Zine had been pledged to Kakan. Kakan got angry, but was restrained by Tazhdin's silence. Impatiently, Jakan said, "It is not a caravan, but rather a group of lovely girls going to wash pots and pans at the spring." Kakan pulled out his dagger to strike Mame, but Tazhdin held him back, saying that one does not kill one's blood brother. After all, they did not yet know the purpose of Mame's visit.

[219] Mame did not know about Kakan's engagement to Zine. He told all about meeting Zine and what happened. Tazhdin was unable to decide what he should do about Lady Zine, his uncle's daughter, who was engaged to his brother Kakan. To work against God and fate would be unfortunate for Lady Zine.

Tazhdin finally said that he would approve giving Lady Zine to Mame on condition that Mame go to the town of Sakhlan and bring back the grain stored there; he would settle for nothing else.

The road to Sakhlan was very dangerous, and there were many brigands there; many people had been killed on that road in the past. Tazhdin wanted to test Mame's courage. If he succeeded, it would be worth giving Lady Zine to Mame. Meanwhile, he gathered 200 mounted youths, and set up an ambush to attack Mame.

[220] Mame was naive; he did not suspect that Tazhdin would expose him to any danger. He had heard about the difficulty of the journey, but he went ahead on his horse. He looked around cautiously and went on to the next perilous part of the journey, a deep ravine with steep cliffs and an impenetrable forest. Only a thin line of sky could be seen overhead. This was where caravans would be robbed, so he watched closely. Suddenly 200 horsemen sprang out of the woods. But Mame did not lose his composure.

[221] Mame did not let their swords or pikes touch him. He slaughtered them as though he were harvesting grapes. Only three men were left, the rest had either been killed or wounded, or had fled. Mame was going to go after the three survivors, when

one of them begged to be spared -- he turned out to be Tazhdin himself, and Mame saved him and his brothers.

They reached home and recounted Mame's bravery with pride, having decided that he should have Lady Zine. There was one more test to put Mame through, however, but they did not want to mention it until Zine was informed about Mame. Zine was told that she should go to the fountain with her forty attendants; Mame had to go there and get a gift from her. Lady Zine was adorned with many gold coins on her breast and forehead; the central gold piece was worth the taxes of Jezira Bohtan for seven years. [222] Zine would give that gold piece to the one she loved. They sent Mame to get the gold as proof of her love.

Mame mounted Por and went. There was Lady Zine with her forty attendants. He asked for the gold piece. She placed it on his knee and told him to show it to Tazhdin. He gave the gold piece to Tazhdin, and he placed it before his brothers. Tazhdin said that all three of them would mount their white horses and tell the world "Congratulations to Mame and Zine." Kakan declared that they would mount their black horses and declare the same, and [223] Jakan said they would mount their red horses and declare the same for Mame and Zine¹⁶.

Then Ghara-Tazhdin's eldest son, Ghavaz-Chavush, passed by Mir-Zeydin, who asked him what the boy's father and uncles were doing and why they had not come to his court. Ghavaz-Chavush said that they had promised Lady Zine to Mame. Mir-Zeydin did not believe it, and he wrote a note to Khatun-Peri summoning her. When she came, she verified it. Mir-Zeydin did not want to oppose Tazhdin's actions. Since Mame was a fine boy, he agreed that they should go through the formalities. Bakir had been sitting beside Mir-Zeydin; he went home and told his daughter everything. She went to Lady Zine and spoke to her like a sincere friend, saying, "Your brother does not want Mame to stay in this town; he will call Mame, offer him a horse or a sword, and send him on his way. Mame may have anything he desires -- except you. Go tell Mame not to ask for your hand. Go at once! Send a man to Mame telling him not to ask for your hand, lest he incur the prince's anger. I suggest you instruct Mame to ask for the job of cook, because then you will always be able to see each other."

¹⁶The three brothers had nine horses three white, three black, and three red, which they rode only for hunting and fighting. [Nzhdehian's note]

Lady Zine was innocent and kind hearted, she did not see anything behind the sorceress' words. Mame did not know of Tazhdin's promise, and Khatun-Peri forgot and said nothing.

[224] Later Mame was visiting Mir-Zeydin one day, when the Mir asked Mame why he had come from Mkhur-Zaman, a distance of forty days away; after all, he must have had a reason. The Mir went on to say that he want to give Mame a gift, but he could not match Mame's clothes, sword, or horse. What would he like? Mame hesitated, then said that while he was *still* at home he had had a dream in which an old man had told him to come work as a cook for Mir-Zeydin.

Mir-Zeydin was upset and disappointed, and he looked down on Mame for seeking such a low job. Mame put on the garments of a cook¹⁷. Zine the sorceress had other ideas of getting revenge.

When Mame entered the kitchen, Lady Zine cut off forty of the gold pieces hanging from her head, and paid forty workers to dig a tunnel from the kitchen to her bedroom: [225] in this way, the two of them were in communication for three months.

For the first three days, Mame served fine food, but after that he paid little attention to the food, serving it at irregular hours. This disturbed Mir-Zeydin. Zine the sorceress that Lady Zine and Mame had only spent one night apart since Mame had become cook. She revealed this to Bakir-Avan her father, and he wanted to tell Mir-Zeydin. Bakir-Avan came to the Mir with a worried look on his face. Mir-Zeydin wanted to know why Bakir looked worried, and Bakir replied, "Why shouldn't I worry? People have begun looking down on you, Mir-Zeydin. Every day Mame and Zine have been together -- that Arab [i.e., Mame] has a secret tunnel to Lady Zine's room, which explains the irregularity of the meal service around here."

Mir-Zeydin felt as though a dagger had pierced his heart, and did not know what to do, as he was not sure if Bakir was telling the truth. Finally he suggested that they go and see for themselves. The secret had been discovered. From then on, Mir-Zeydin looked upon Bakir as his faithful [226] servant, and decided to get his advice about everything. Bakir advised him to get rid of Mame in one way or another, to "salt his head" [=to kill him]. But Mir-Zeydin was afraid of Tazhdin and his brothers. Bakir suggested going on a hunt, and arranging for Mame to be shot while out hunting; then how would Tazhdin or anybody else know who did it?

¹⁷This may be a way of saying "Mame assumed the office of cook". [M.L. Chyet's note]

Mir-Zeydin considered this very sensible advice, and had the hunt arranged. When the time came for the hunt, Mame pretended that he was sick. When Bakir heard this, he cut off the straps of his saddle and said that he had to sew them on. Instead, he hid in the garden and watched Mame and Zine there. The hunt was called off. Tazhdin felt that there was something behind Bakir's behavior. He told his son Ghavaz-Chavush to go to the garden. Ghavaz-Chavush went and found Mame and Zine asleep.

[227] Ghavaz-Chavush decided not to wake them up, but he sang, "O Lord, there is a cloud over us, Mame has his lips between Zine's breasts. The decisions of Mir-Zeydin cannot be revoked." Lady Zine awoke suddenly and urged Chavush to keep their secret; he said that even if he were threatened with 360 daggers he would not tell the secret. While Chavush was saying this, some men came into the garden. Zine recognized Kakan, Jakan, Bakir, and Mir-Zeydin surrounded by the garden hedge, and Lady Zine saw no way out. But Mame told her not to worry, but to get under his mantle and hide. When Mir-Zeydin came in, he gave a sweet greeting to Mame, who replied in the language of the Persians and Arabs. But Bakir said that when a prince enters, it is surprising that a servant should not rise to his feet. Mame said that he could not even move his hands and feet to pray, he was so sick.

[228] Bakir told Mir-Zeydin that Mame's pain was under the fur mantle, and Mir-Zeydin asked Mame why he had come to the garden. Mame said that he thought he had seen a deer, but it turned out to be another creature, and he described the unusually beautiful creature. Bakir said that he was ashamed to name what the Arab had in mind. Mame interrupted him to say that the person he had in mind was not there -- Zine was engaged to Kakan. Mir-Zeydin ordered the servants to stir up Lady Zine, and to make Mame stand up.

[229] Tazhdin tried to pacify Mir-Zeydin. His brothers said that they would fight to help Mame. Tazhdin sent his son home, with directions to tell his mother to take out six horses and the baby's cradle, and to set the house on fire. Perhaps in this way he might save Mame.

Tazhdin then turned to his brothers and scolded them for just standing there doing nothing. When Mame prepared coffee and put it on Tazhdin's knee, when Mame lifted his hand, Tazhdin noticed Lady Zine's braid of hair sticking out from behind the mantle. He recognized that a major disaster was upon them. Chavush ran to Khatun-Peri [230] and told her to free the child quickly and get the horses out, and to

set fire to all the buildings, for Mame was in great danger. Khatun-Pari said that she had vowed to set fire without taking the child and horses out: let them be sacrificed for Mame. Perhaps salvation would be found for their souls. So Chavush rushed back to the garden and carried this sad news, saying, "Father, why are you standing there? Our palace is on fire, as are the horses and child." When he said this, a bitter pain went through Tazhdin and his brothers. The brave youths of Jezir hurried out. Mame held Lady Zine by the arm and said, "Get up, get ready to get out of this place, let God take revenge on the person responsible for this event."

When Mir-Zeydin, Tazhdin and his brothers, and the other men of Jezir who were present heard this news, they quickly ran out to extinguish the fires. No matter how hard they tried, they could not diminish the fire, nor could they save the child or the horses. Lady Zine told Mame that the fire had been set because of them, and that only Mame could put it out. That just by shaking the hem of his garment, the flames would immediately go out. Mame did so and said to the fire, "Blessed one, in me and you is God's judgement, however more you burn, you will not burn as much as the fire that is within my heart." The fire slackened, the horses were saved, and a piece of cloth left on the child's neck which was scorched and in flames turned into a golden ring and remained on the back of his neck. The child was still alive. Aside from those [231] nothing else was left from the fire: everything else had turned to ashes.

Bakir was not idle. When the horsemen left the garden, he hid under a tree to see why Mame would not stand up. Was Zine really under the fur mantle? When they got up, Bakir went and told Mir-Zeydin. The Mir asked Bakir's advice, and Bakir asked his daughter, and according to her advice Bakir told Mir-Zeydin to give the taxes of one year to Tazhdin to rebuild his house, and to send the three brothers together with Mame to collect the taxes. It would take them at least six months. Two things would be accomplished: firstly, the taxes would be collected and Tazhdin's house would be built; and secondly, Mame would miss Zine and would not be used to the weather, and consequently would die. Mir-Zeydin followed Bakir's suggestion, but again Mame feigned sickness and stayed home. Tazhdin had written a contract, with Mir-Zeydin's seal on it, that if in his absence of seven months any harm came to Mame, then Tazhdin would destroy Mir-Zeydin's palace and his children. Thus Mir-Zeydin was restrained from harming Mame. Bakir, aware of this, did not want to give away the idea of killing Mame, but in some way he wanted to "salt his head". He was worried about the destruction of the house and the children. His daughter helped

him with a new idea: "A day after Tazhdin's departure, there was a great outcry about Mame's engagement to Lady Zin. The commotion would be lessened if Mame were given a slight punishment without harming him, before giving Lady Zine to him. Let the Mir and Mame play a game of chess: if Mame wins, give Zine to him; if the Mir wins, let him put Mame in a dungeon for six months. After repenting there for six months, he will come out; [232] in two weeks he will get cleaned up, eat, drink, gain weight, and two weeks later he will appear before Tazhdin and his brothers. Mame is noble; he will not tell the brothers. If he wins the game, you will marry Lady Zine to him, and when Tazhdin and his brothers return, they will be happy." Like a child, Mir-Zeydin was deceived by this advice. He called Mame and they played chess. This became the last blow in crushing Mame.

The game was set for seven rounds: whoever won the seventh round first would be the winner. Mame won the first three. Bakir looked on, a little worried. He went to Lady Zine and told her about the game, but turned the story around so that Mir-Zeydin was winning. He suggested she come and sit at the window, and Mame, upon seeing her there, would probably take heart and be more likely to win. Bakir had the players change sides. When Mame saw Zine at the window, he forgot how to play and got all confused.

[233] The game proceeded, and Mir-Zeydin won. Bakir took Mame and dropped him into a dungeon. That night Lady Zine cut off forty more of her gold pieces and hired forty workers, and overnight they made a tunnel from Zine's bedroom to the dungeon. Then for three months Zine and Mame were together; Mame consoled Zine. After three months had passed, Bakir asked his daughter about Mame's condition. From her book of sorcery she learned that the couple had been together every night. Bakir told Mir-Zeydin about that. Mame was transferred to a stone dungeon so that Zine could not find a way in. That new dungeon was a pit that was forty ropes¹⁵ deep, and hardly wide enough for one or two people; it was damp and cold, a well in which Mame had to spend the next three months. From the roof of the dungeon he received dry bread once or twice a day. The roof was both a skylight and a door. In those three months Mame lost his health. His skin turned yellow, he went

¹⁵A rope is 4-5 arshins long, although in the song below, the wording "come down a staircase of 40 steps" indicates that it was 40 kangun deep. [Nzhdehian's note] Kangun: [կանգուն] is an ell. but ell's vary in length in different countries. [A. Avakian's note]

blind. His body shriveled up; he was unable to move. Dirt, lice, and worms covered him. Mame was in this condition when the time came for his release. But he did not even think of getting out.

[234] He was dejected and disgusted with life, because of the destruction of his health and the depravity of men. He only thought of his death.

For the last time Bakir asked his daughter about getting Mame out. She said that he would live if another person came to take him out, but if Lady Zine took him out, he would surely die.

Bakir went to Mir-Zeydin, who was asking who should take Mame out. Bakir was silent, so the prince assumed that he wanted to do it. Bakir said that Mame would assume that he would be taken to a worse place, but if Lady Zine were to go, Mame would be happy and would come out unharmed. So Mir-Zeydin directed Zine and her forty attendants to go. Each one said, "I am Zine, I have come to take you out." But Mame said, "You are not my Zine, I will not come out." Then his Zine came and said she had come to free him.

Mame said that she had not come to save him, but rather to be the cause of the death of a homeless, miserable refugee. He told her to lower the staircase of forty steps and come to him to see his condition. She went down into the damp dungeon in a hurry and embrace Mame, at which point Mame died. She said, "May God ruin my father's house."

[235] The grieving Zine wept and told her attendants to tie their hair to the dungeon rope and bring Mame up.

When Mame had heard Zine's voice, he wanted to straighten up, but his spine broke, and from joy his heart had burst, and he died. Zine put his head on her knee and wept. News was sent to Mir-Zeydin, and he hurried to the place, had the body removed and buried according to custom. Then he consoled Lady Zine and told her not to worry; if not Mame, another would be found; if she did not like Kakan, another would be found. She made no reply, only covered her eyes and wept. At night, when all were asleep, Lady Zine sewed a garment out of black cloth, and covered her head with a black cloth in place of a wedding veil. She went out of the house, and sat on Mame's grave weeping until morning.

There were two stones on Mame's grave, and the tombstone was in between them. Lady Zine's braids, which were in 80 parts, 40 on either side, were cut and tied to the stones on either side. She had wept so much that the ground had turned to

mud. The next morning Mir-Zeydin had noticed something dark; he thought a wild animal had taken Mame's body out and eaten it.

[236] He went out to see what it was, and found Lady Zine weeping. He pleaded with her to go home and change her clothes, but she refused.

The Mir told her that he would find another man for her. Zine replied, "May my father's house be torn from its foundations. Who ever saw an imprisoned man being taken out by a woman instead of by men?" Zine continued to lament, declaring her father¹⁹ an enemy. She wanted to die and hoped that by evening she would be gone.

[237] She wanted her water heated in the same container as Mame's, and the fire burned in the same *ojakh* [=fireplace]. Then she wanted to be placed in the same grave as Mame, their bodies back to back. Let Tazhdin and his brothers, the mullahs and elders of Jezir be told the story; then let the grave be opened. If they find that the bodies are face to face, their love was from God. She blamed her father [!], saying that he would burn for his sins. She hoped he would never see a happy day, and so on. If they find the bodies are back to back, then their love was from hell. Tazhdin and his brothers should not kill anyone on their account.

At noon Lady Zine died. Her instructions were followed, and the grave was sealed. A few days later Tazhdin and his brothers returned with their soldiers.

[238] When Tazhdin's brothers approached the garden, Jakan said that if Mame were alive, he would not have waited a month; he would have set out to meet them on the way.

Quickly they came to Khatun-Peri's door and asked about Mame, and she said that Mame was sick in bed. But the wind blew her veil and all three saw the signs of mourning for Mame and Zine on her. "Are you dead, each of you leaning on your *lakhd*²⁰?" roared Tazhdin, and ran to wildly attack Jezira Bohtan. "Brothers," said huge Kakan, "my anger is enflamed", and he raised his *lakhd* to wreak terrible slaughter in the town. But Jakan cried out with a terrible voice, "First find Bakir and

¹⁹See note 7 above

²⁰According to Miss Avakian, *lakhd* is a 'mace' or a 'dub'.

give me that liar; I will not leave a building standing in Baghnis²¹.” He went on to say that he dropped his *lakhd* at the corner of the fortress. After doing this he proposed that they move to Sham [=Damascus]. But a young child, an old man, a woman, a mullah, and a sheikh came weeping [239] and fell at the brothers’ feet, and dropped a wrapped up Koran. The sheikh and mullah told Tazhdin to go and open the grave of Mame and Zine and to ask Mir-Zeydin about their will. “Don’t shed the blood of innocent people.” They should find out the cause of the mischief done and punish only that one. Mir-Zeydin and Bakir were brought and questioned. All the blame fell upon Bakir. Tazhdin asked Bakir whether the love of Mame and Zine was from heaven or hell. “Bakir, you sly, fraudulent schemer with the appearance of a pig, may God kill your child, just as you brought an end to their lives.” He told Bakir to look closely at the grave, “Have they really turned face to face?” When Bakir looked down closely, a sword came down on his head, ending his life. His head rolled onto the other side of the grave. A drop of blood fell between Mame and Zine.

[240] A thorny *kfni*²² grew as a permanent testimony to the betrayal of two victims who in their lifetime were persecuted, tormented, tortured, and crushed. Although together, they lived apart; they could not enjoy each other’s love and entered the earth *bémuraz*²³. But even there they did not remain free of terrible ghosts. The embodiment of Bakir in the form of a thorny shrub still separated them in their black grave.

And men, still holding him in contempt and always remaining vengeful for what he did, hung up a branch of Bakir’s treacherous shrub so that every day whoever walked by would cut it down, but the next day they found that it had sprouted again.

²¹ Baghnis [ԲԱՂՆԻՍ] is equivalent to the Kurdish word *hemam*, meaning ‘bathhouse.’ Here it is probably the name of a neighborhood in the city of Jezira Bohtan. [Nzhdehian’s note]

²² Kfni [ԿՈՆԻ], botanical name *Astragalus*, is a thorny plant like a wild pear, but fruitless, on which the villagers look with contempt. [Nzhdehian’s note] One kind of *Astragalus* is known in the United States as *Locoweed* because when cattle eat it, they go crazy. [A. Avakian’s note]

²³ *Bémuraz* or *Bémiraz* is Kurdish for “without having attained their desire.” In Nzhdehian’s text, the Kurdish word appear in Armenian letters. [M.L. Chyet’s note]

E'vdal, E. "Mem û Zine = Mem û Zînê," in *Folkloro Kyrmança* (Erevan, 1936), pp. 293-301. [Kurmanji in outdated Latin script] (FK-2)

FK-2. Collected in 1926 by E. E'vdal from Fekoê Mraz, in the village of Gozelderê, nehîya (=county of) Aġbaranê, Soviet Armenia. The text was published in 1936. Unfortunately, no other information is available about the informant or the conditions under which the text was collected.

Mem û Zine = Mem û Zînê (FK-2)

[293] Mem was the son of Al pasha, from the city of Mughur-Zemîn, and Zîn was the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn, from Jizîra Bôla. She was the sister-in-law¹ of Qeretajdîn.

One day Zîn has a headache and she instructs her maidservants to spread out her bed in the garden, so that she can go sit there for a while and relax, and unburden her heart² among the roses and lilies.

The maidservants lay out Zîn's bed in the private garden. Zîn lay down in the garden. In the garden there was a marble pool.

Zîn was very beautiful, she shone like a candlestick, giving her light across the water of the marble pool.

All of a sudden there came the fluttering of three doves, setting down at the enclosed garden³ on Friday, [where] they undress in order to bathe in the marble pool. One said to the other, "This place smells of (black-haired) girls⁴ -- look! A girl is sleeping in the garden!" One tells the other that it is Lady Zîn, who is so beautiful that she wonders if there is anyone⁵ in the world more beautiful than Zîn. Another one of them says, "Yes. Memê Ala is more beautiful than Zîn."

One dove says, "Let us cast a divine spell, we are three, let lovely Lady Zîn be the fourth."

They sing:

¹baltûz = wife's sister. In other words, Qeretajcîn's wife was Zîn's sister in this -- and many other -- versions.

²bîna wê derê =lit. 'let her breath come out'

³Two names are used to refer to the garden in both Mem's and in Zîn's territory: Xasbağçe = 'private garden,' and Toŋkîrî = 'enclosed garden.' See also FK-1 note # [115].

⁴serfeş, lit. 'black of head,' means "young girl," according to Jaba and Justi.

⁵=lit. 'if there are people [or, men]'

"O Lord, you make a command,
 Make mîr Sêvdîn's Zîn the fourth one of us,"⁶
 A doveskin⁷ came down from above.

The three doves take Zîn by the hand and lead her, setting down at Memê Ala's window.

"Mem was sound asleep,⁸
 Suddenly someone shakes him,
 He finds a tender bride at his side⁹.

Mem says, "Fine lass, who dared¹⁰ let you come into my palace, into my bed?"

Zîn says, "Fine lad, what is your name?"¹¹

"My name is Mem, my father's name is Al pasha."

"Mem, I don't think I have come to you, for it is men who always covet women."

"Fine lass, tell me¹² how many minarets there are in your father's city."

[294] "In my father's city there are 66 minarets." They made a bet [regarding whose city they were in] and went up to the roof of the palace [and] counted: in the city there were 366 minarets. At that point, Zîn admits that Mem was right.¹³ Mem and Zîn return to Mem's room¹⁴, sit and very sweetly talk with each other.

⁶This verse has close analogues in ZK-1, EP-1, and FK-1.

⁷Pos. = 'animal skin.' Motif: F821.1.6 **Dress of feathers**

⁸=lit. 'Mem in sweet slumber had gone to sleep'

⁹=lit. 'at his head' Cf. Turkish: yanibaşında

¹⁰=lit. 'The mouth of no one fell'

¹¹=lit. 'Your name in goodness?' This is a polite way of inquiring.

¹²=lit. 'Now you say/:eli'

¹³=lit. 'Zîn puts down [her] hand to Mem.'

¹⁴The word I have translated as *room* is qasr in the original, from the Arabic word for castle (qasr قصر, whence also the Spanish: alcázar). The use of the castle for a part of it, i.e. Mem's quarters, is

Zîn says, "My dear, fine Mem, those who have brought me will take me away. If Chekan, Efan, and Qeretajdîn hear [of this], they will leave your ear [as] the biggest piece of you."

Mem said, "Let's exchange rings: no matter how many swords and shields your father has,¹⁵ they won't succeed in removing you from my influence."

Mem and Zîn speak a great deal and rejoice in each other, then they lie down and go to sleep.¹⁶

The three doves come down from the tree(top), [and] insert slumber pearls in Mem and Zîn's ears.¹⁷

They leave Mem sleeping, and take Zîn back home.

[When] Mem awakes and does not see Zîn in his bed, he is greatly disappointed¹⁸. He thinks for a moment and says, "My soul¹⁹, it must have been a dream²⁰, [but] no ... after all, she was speaking with me until midnight, and she said, 'You must come after me in another forty days, otherwise I will be lost to you, for they will marry me off.'"

Mem is impatient; he summons his father's servants and says, "O servants, tell me the truth:

Servants, [if] you have the locks on the gates opened,
Zîn will be saved for me.

reminiscent of the widespread use of words for *door* or *gate* to refer to a royal court. For a very fine discussion of this phenomenon, see Hans Wehr, "Das 'Tor des Königs' im Buche Escher und verwandte Ausdrücke", *Der Islam* 39 (1964), pp. 247-260. See also FK-1 note #178).

¹⁵or 'even if your father has many swords and shields'

¹⁶-lit. 'go to sleep, lie down'

¹⁷Motif D1364.32 **Jewel causes magic sleep**. Cf. D1071. **Magic jewel (jewels)**: D1071.1. **Magic beads**; D1364 **Object causes magic sleep**.

¹⁸-lit. 'he became very tearful, fell before himself'

¹⁹**Canim** is Turkish (or possibly Sorani Kurdish); the Kurmanji form would be **canê min**.

²⁰**Xewa şeva** which must be a misprint for **xewna şeva**, particularly since the word **xewn** which means 'dream' appears elsewhere in the text. **Xew** means 'sleep,' cognate to Persian **خواب** *khvâb*.

One messenger says, "Mem either you have had a dream,²¹ or you have come across a deceitful woman, who has fooled many like you.²²"

[Mem replies:]

"The one I speak of is no daydream,
The one I speak of is Zîn, the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn,
The sister-in-law of Chekan and Qeretajdîn.

The one I speak of is a bride-like girl,
Her waist is [as thin as] a green leaf,²³
Her fingers are soft and tender,
She lives in Jizîra, she is the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn."

Mem falls onto his bed in a dead faint. The servant boys bring news of this to Al pasha.

[295] Mem's father comes forth and says, "O servant boys, get Mem up on his feet and take him to [my] private garden, let him rest a little, so that later I can learn what his heart desires, what he wants, [whether] love has carried him away, or what²⁴.

They took Mem, [and] Al pasha instructed the inexperienced youths²⁵ to go up to Mem and ask him what his heart desires -- for inexperienced youths get right to the point²⁶ -- then to come tell him²⁷.

²¹-lit: "seen a dream"

²²In this and other versions, Mem's horse Bor is given the gift of speech just long enough to warn Mem about the daughter of the villain Beko, she is also called Zîn, and when Mem first arrives at Jizîra Bora, she tries to fool Mem into thinking that she is his beloved Zîn. Bor's warning regarded the evil Zîn is worded very much like this messenger's comment. See also note 78 below.

²³**K'axêzekî hêşîne** is similar to an expression found in Khamoian's phraseological dictionary [M. U. Khamoian *Kurdsko-Russkii Frazelogicheski Slovar'* (Erevan : Neşireta Akademya RESS Ulma 1979), 273 p.]. **Belgê k'axêz**, lit: 'a sheet [leaf] of paper,' is used to mean "very thin." Thin waisted girls are also spoken of as ideal in Balkan folksongs (e.g. Bulgarian **tânka snažka** тънка снажка).

²⁴-lit "how it was"

²⁵**Cahil**, from Arabic **jahil** جاهل = 'ignorant,' has the following meanings in Kurdish: "young"; "inexperienced," "naive"; "stupid."

²⁶-lit: "say things early/soon to each other"

Mem chatted with his friends, [and] told them that what had happened to him should not happen to anyone²⁸, he says, "The one I speak of is Lady Zîn, if you ask where she lives, [it is] Jizîra Bota, she is the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn [and] the sister-in-law of Qeretajdîn."

When Mem washes his face, he notices Zîn's ring with her face [engraved] on its stone. His sense of reason goes flying out of his head, and he falls [and almost] breaks his head.

The servant boys tie up his head, [and] he faints.

Later he comes to. [When] he goes to the diwan of the khans²⁹, they tell Al pasha, [who] listens to what Mem has to say³⁰, and has it announced in his city³¹ that whoever has a daughter should dress her up and send her to the enclosed garden; if someone's daughter has no clothes, [that person] should sell his sheep and cattle and buy clothes for his daughter; "whichever girl my Mem desires,³² I will betroth her to my Mem."

The girls come and stroll about the enclosed garden.

They also bring Mem in among the girls, but he doesn't show interest in³³ anyone [of them].

One girl says, "Mem, among birds you are a falcon,
Why have you been haughty to your mother and father?
Why don't you want a girl from your father's city?"³⁴

"The one I speak of is a tender bride,

²⁷-lit: "come tell me"

²⁸-lit: "to any slave or bondsman"

²⁹i.e. princes

³⁰-lit: "senses Mem's words"

³¹-lit: "gives news to his city"

³²-lit: "My Mem's heart falls to which girl"

³³-lit: "listen to"

³⁴There is a comparable passage in EP-1, in which the falcon (baz/be'z) and the rhyme scheme are the same as here. See EP-1, section (14).

Her waist [is as thin as] a green leaf,
Her name is lovely Lady Zîn.

She's the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn,
The [future] sister-in-law³⁵ of Qeretajdîn,
She lives in Jizîra Botan.

If you don't believe me,
Look at the stone of her ring."

One girl throws an apple at Mem, and out of anger he throws it [with such force] against the wall of the enclosed garden that the apple bursts into a million pieces.³⁶

When the girls see Mem do this, they run out and go about their business, having lost hope.

[296] Mem goes³⁷ to a tailor in his father's city and says to him, "Tailor, you must make me a suit of clothes that people will marvel at.³⁸ Next, Mem goes to the stable. Twenty horses were lined up in the stable; Mem puts his hand on the back of each one, [and] their backs [all] fall four fingers' breadth] under his hand.

But finally Mem puts his hand on the back of a thin horse [that is] different: it does not bother him.³⁹

Mem says, "I swear to God, if anything will bring me to my goal, it is this [horse]. I must have him well cared for so that he can do what my heart [dictates].⁴⁰"

Mem leaves the stable and says to two boys [who are] his servants, "You take such good care of this horse [that] people will marvel: when you water his rump, it

³⁵ **Bûk** = 'bride'; 'wife of one's brother.' Earlier she was referred to as **baltûz**, 'sister of one's wife.' See EP-1 note #:16!

³⁶-lit. "the apple becomes scattered"

³⁷-lit. "gets up, goes"

³⁸-lit. "You must sew for me a suit of clothes in such a way that people's *k'êf* will come with it." **K'êf** means approximately 'pleasure,' 'joyous feeling,' 'desire'; it occurs in many idioms.

³⁹i.e., Mem's hand on his back does not bother him.

⁴⁰-lit. "that of my heart"

should come out his mane; when you water his mane, it should come out his rump.⁴¹

Next, Mem goes to the silversmiths. He gives them a lot of money and tells them to make a very fine jewelled saddle. One silversmith agrees [to do it].

When Mem's father finds out that Mem is making preparations to leave the city, he has the city well surrounded with walls, [and] posts a notice at the western gate and another at the eastern gate, announcing that no one has permission to leave the city until the end of the month.⁴²

One day, Mem calls his servant boys and tells them to bring out the horse [to see] how it has been cared for. Mem looks at the horse, and admires his agreeable appearance⁴³. At that point he names the horse Bor⁴⁴. Mem gives his servant boys a few gold coins and goes to the goldsmith⁴⁵ [and says]:

"Goldsmith, are my clothes ready?⁴⁶"

⁴¹Avê saxriya kin. bijiyafa bavêje. avê bijirîya kin saxriyafa bavêje. In this case, we have the same word twice in the same sentence, different where it should be identical. The form **bijirîya** rather than **bijiyara** (bijî = '(horse's) mane' + -ya = plural oblique case ending + -fa = suffix particle indicating motion to which) may simply be an error, either a typo or a slip of the tongue. In addition, another explanation is possible: we know that this verse is formulaic, as other versions of it exist (ZK-1: EP-1). Perhaps it was learned as a unit, the meaning of the individual words already of secondary importance. In such a case, if a word were garbled by one transmitter in the chain of transmission, the garbled form could become frozen, becoming part of the tradition. In *Die Muncîr der Mukri-Kurden*, Oskar Mann has an excursus on the content and form of Eastern Kurdish folk epic in which he states that: "ja sehr häufig die alte Textform mechanisch überliefert worden ist, die nun der Barde selber nicht mehr versteht und bisweilen nach seinem Verständnis umformt" = "very often the old form of the text is mechanically passed on, and the bard himself no longer understands it and sometimes reshapes it according to his understanding." The sentence in question may be an example of what Mann had in mind.

⁴²=lit: "At one time, Mem's father finds out, that Mem is seeing [to] his preparations, he will go from the city outside, therefore he gives walls to be made around the city, he puts a paper [at] the gate of the west, another also [at] the gate of the east, information is given, that no one has the order to go out from the city, until the head of the month that comes." For 'the end of the month,' cf. Turkish: **aybaşı**. lit. 'month head'

⁴³Fewasa merfa pêfa tê =lit: "the interest of people comes to him"

⁴⁴**Bor** means 'horse.' In some versions Bor is known as Bozê Fewal.

⁴⁵The storyteller switches from tailor [f'erzî] to goldsmith [zêrkîr] in midstream.

⁴⁶=lit. "Have you made my clothes ready?"

"Yes, my lord"⁴⁷."

Once again Mem puts his hand in his pocket, takes some gold out and gives it to the goldsmith. The goldsmith is delighted with the gold.

Then Mem sings a song:

"Ay! My hard working boys,
May your bread and salt be blessed,⁴⁸
Bring my Bor out of the stable."

Mem is all prepared, he mounts Bor and is about to leave the city, but when he sees that the city has been surrounded with [297] a wall, he is surprised, [wondering] how he will be able to leave his father's city.⁴⁹

Ay! when Mem spurs Bor on,
Bor pricks up his ears,⁵⁰
[And] flies Mem over the wall like a bird.

They give news to Al pasha that Bor has carried Mem away.

Al pasha doesn't believe it [and] says, "But I put my Mem's horse in shackles and chains, how could he go [anywhere]?"

Al pasha sounds the alarm,
[And] sends out his ministers and councillors after Mem.

Al pasha says, "Tell Mem that I cannot leave my throne and crown to the hopes of the people. He should return; he should not go, it is very bad for us."

At that point⁵¹ Mem takes his leave of everyone and heads for Jizira Bota. He travels for forty whole days.

⁴⁷-lit: "Yes, I [am your] servant." **Ez xulam** or **Ez benî** is a polite expression.

⁴⁸ Expressions about bread and salt are very common in the languages of the Middle East. To say that 'we have eaten bread and salt together' is rather like saying "we have grown up together", or "we have sat on the pot together."

⁴⁹-lit: "Mem sees [to] his preparation completely, mounts Bor and does to leave the city, but when he looks around the city entirely walled in, Mem remains astounded, how should he do?"

⁵⁰ Bor guhê xwe ciqirpîne =lit: "Bor blinks his ears."

⁵¹-lit: "there [at] that place"

Bor speaks to Mem, he says, "My dandy Mem, you keep lashing me with your whip, you never think how your Bor is doing.⁵²"

Bor says moreover, "Mem, get a hold of yourself.⁵³"

Mem dismounts and sees [that] Bor's right leg is still in shackles and chains. He says:

"Woe is me, my wretched, humiliated one,
The chains and shackles have cut my Bor's legs to the bone,"
Mem takes out his trusty sword⁵⁴,
Throwing it at Bor's legs, cutting the chains and shackles,
Getting rid of them once and for all.⁵⁵

Mem takes out a handkerchief; his heart is low and he cries. His Bor speaks to him, saying, "Wretched one, do not cry, take heart, [when] a lion dies, the hide remains, [when] a man dies, his name remains; perhaps you are afraid of the road, [or] that someone will strike you, [or] take me from you. What is wrong?"

Treat me gently with your handkerchief." Mem doesn't question what Bor says⁵⁶; with his handkerchief he wipes Bor's [wounds] clean, then kisses Bor's eyes. Beside a well near a meadow, Mem throws his cloak over himself and goes to sleep. Later he gets up and goes to Bor, fondles him again, putting his saddle and gear on him again, [then] says, "Allahu akbar⁵⁷"

⁵²=lit: "You never say what the condition of your Bor is, what it is not."

⁵³=lit: "to you there is no awareness of yourself."

⁵⁴Zilfeqar, from Arabic Dhū al-faḡār: **ذُو الْفَقَّارِ**, the name of Ali's trusty sword.

⁵⁵These lines have close analogues in ZK-1 and EP-1 #24

⁵⁶=lit: "Mem doesn't fall [from] Bor's <xatir>", i.e. Mem doesn't undermine Bor's authority (a translation suggested by the Kurdish-Russian dictionaries), or Mem takes Bor at his word.

⁵⁷Arabic for God is great, an Islamic invocation.

[298] He rides off⁵⁸, passing through a barren plain; he sees a man, who is Qeretajdîn himself. Qeretajdîn is chasing after⁵⁹ a young gazelle⁶⁰ in order to catch it, [but] Mem sees that his⁶¹ horse is tired. Suddenly Mem sets out after the young gazelle, letting go of Bor's reins [so that] in the flash of an eye⁶² Bor is upon the gazelle. Mem catches the gazelle, brings it to Qeretajdîn and gives it to him, saying, "Here is your game, please take it."

Qeretajdîn says, "Cousin, our house is not the house of traitors, why did you take my game out of my hands?" Mem says, "Cousin, the game is for you, now just stay away from me."⁶³

Qeretajdîn picks up a stick to hit Mem over the head with. Mem takes the stick from Qeretajdîn's hand [and] commits an unmanly act, delivering Qeretajdîn a blow⁶⁴ [with it]. Qeretajdîn falls off his horse, breaks his head, his red blood comes spurting out, he is in great distress,⁶⁵ and loses consciousness⁶⁶. Mem puts Qeretajdîn's head in his lap⁶⁷ and weeps over him. Then he puts his belt⁶⁸ over Qeretajdîn's wound and bandages his head well.

Then Mem says to himself, "It's been forty days since I've seen another human being."

⁵⁸=lit: "rides goes"

⁵⁹=lit: "gives on"

⁶⁰=lit: "kid of gazelles"

⁶¹ i. e. Qeretajdîn's

⁶²dest-dest =lit: "hand-to-hand" an expression meaning 'at once' 'straight away'

⁶³=lit: "go all far from me"

⁶⁴Apparently **comaxek** can mean 'a blow with a stick' as well as simply 'a stick'

⁶⁵=lit: "his heart becomes bad or spoiled"

⁶⁶=lit: "sense goes [from] Qeretajdîn's head"

⁶⁷=lit: "gives Qeretajdîn's head on his knee"

⁶⁸=lit: "the edge of his leather strap"

Suddenly Qeretajdîn comes to [and] opens his eyes, to find⁶⁹ Mem standing over him.

Qeretajdîn expresses gratitude that Mem had not ridden off and left him and his horse unattended⁷⁰. Qeretajdîn says, "Cousin, now you are my older brother, and I am your younger brother, May God not shame either of us for this goodness⁷¹." They part company, [and] Mem rides on. He encounters a farmer who shows him the way to Jizîra, [and] Mem gives the farmer much money.

Bekoê Ewana had a sister who was a fortune-teller; her name was Zîn also. She knew that Mem was in love with Zîn [and] that he had left his father's city because of her and come to strange lands.

Bekoê Ewana's sister takes wool and washes it at a river. [When] Mem comes passing by her, he heartily greets her, [and she] says, "You are most welcome,⁷² my sweet, fine dandy, son of Al pasha!"

Memê Al pasha was astonished, [and] said, "Fine lass, how⁷³ do you know that I am the son of Al pasha? Do you read fortunes⁷⁴?"

Zîn [the fortune-teller] said, "I am your beloved."

[299] Mem said, "If that is so, tell [me], you came to my palace; if [it was] you [who] came, where is my signet ring?"

⁶⁹-lit: "he sees or watches"

⁷⁰-lit: "that Mem did not leave him and his horse without master and did not go"

⁷¹-lit: "May God on the face of goodness not give either of us shame" If there is a special expression here, it does not appear in any of the dictionaries

⁷²Tu ser serî, herdu ç'e'va =lit: "You [have come] on [my] head, both eyes," typical Kurdish expression of welcome

⁷³-lit: "from where"

⁷⁴-lit: "could it be that you have *remil*?" Remil is from the Arabic word for sand. According to EP-1, 'Remil' is a way of telling fortunes that is widespread in the Middle East. It consists of specially marked cubes (or dice) which are thrown onto a board, and by checking in a special fortune-telling book, the combination of markings on the cubes and on the board are interpreted to predict the future. See also Ibrahim Muhawi & Sharif Kanaana Speak Birc, Speak Again: Palestinian Arab Folktales (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1989), p. 318, note #5.

Zîn said, "Yes, I went to your palace and came back. Your ring flew off my hand and fell into the river; the waves carried it away, before I knew what was happening⁷⁵."

Mem did not believe [her and] said, "No, that's not so."

Zîn said, "Mem, when you came in,

I stood up to greet you,⁷⁶

Your signet ring fell from my back,⁷⁷ [and] fell into the marble pond."

Bor said:

"Mem, take my reins from the hands of this profligate,

She is the sister of Bekoê E'wana,

She has fooled many like you⁷⁸."

[When] Mem is about to ride off, Zîn leaps⁷⁹ at Mem's reins [and] tells him the truth [and] that he should make her the maidservant of Sêvdîn's Zîn when he marries her.

Beko's sister says, "If you seek generous hospitality, go to the house of mîr Sêvdîn; if you wish to go to the house of real and brave men, go to the house of Qeretajdîn, E'fan and Chekan; but if you want villains, go to the house of Bekoê E'wana, who is my brother. Mem takes his leave of Beko's sister Zîn and rides on, stopping before the castle of mîr Sêvdîn, [and] dismounts.

Lady Gulperî was mîr Sêvdîn's wife. She leads Mem's Bor to the stable. Mem goes to the [guest] chamber [where] they put down a mattress for him, [and] he sits.

Lady [Gulperî] sends a boy after mîr Sêvdîn [with a message] that he should come straightaway to see his guest⁸⁰.

⁷⁵-lit: "I don't know how it was"

⁷⁶-lit: "I stood up toward you"

⁷⁷-lit: "fell before my back or belt"

⁷⁸See note 22 above.

⁷⁹-lit: "throws herself"

⁸⁰-lit: "that he not stop, come to his guest"

The boy goes and tells mîr Sêvdîn; Qeretajdîn is sitting [nearby]. He knows that it is [about] Mem, [but] he keeps his mouth shut⁸¹.

Qeretajdîn says to the mîr, "Your guest is such a guest that when he comes in you will stand up before [him]⁸², believe it or not⁸³."

The mîr says, "No," he says, "Yes." They bet on it [then and] there.

The mîr sends for his guest. When Lady Gulperî hears this from the boy⁸⁴, she hits him on the head with a cooking ladle⁸⁵, breaking his head. She says, "Go tell [him] that Gulperî's guest is not so frivolous as to fall behind a servant boy and go to their house. From my house [300] to their house let them spread out carpets [and] bring drums and reed flutes, and play them for me and my guest on the way, if they really want us to come to them⁸⁶."

The servant boy conveys⁸⁷ Lady Gulperî's words to the mîr, and the mîr arranges it⁸⁸ so that Mem may go to the mîr's diwan.

Mem has his Bor brought out. He mounts him [and] Bor dances on the carpets. Mem sticks his hand in his pocket and scatters gold coins [about], dismounting before the mîr's diwan, entering into the diwankhaneh. The mîr stands up, [and] Qeretajdîn throws a handkerchief under the mîr⁸⁹; everyone is seated, including the mîr.

A minute later they have a meal⁹⁰.

⁸¹-lit. "he bites his lips"

⁸²it is customary for everyone to stand up when a mîr or other ruler enters the room, as a sign of respect for him. Mem is apparently regarded so highly, that with regard to the mîr, the usual practice would be reversed, so that even the mîr would stand up out of respect for Mem when the latter entered the room.

⁸³-lit. "let there be your belief," i.e. "may you have belief"

⁸⁴-lit. "hears the boy's words"

⁸⁵-lit. "rice ladle"

⁸⁶-lit. "so that we may go to them"

⁸⁷-lit. "does"

⁸⁸-lit. "does thus"

⁸⁹i.e. under where the mîr was sitting.

⁹⁰-lit. "eat bread-food"

After the meal⁹¹ Qeretajdîn says, "Mîr, I have won the bet." The mîr does not believe [him]:

Qeretajdîn lifts up the mîr's knee,
Laughingly picks up the handkerchief,
The mîr is struck speechless.

Mem, Chekan, E'fan, and Qeretajdîn go out onto the roof of the *zêrhel*⁹².

By now Zîn has heard that Mem has come. She takes up [her dirty] dishes [and] carries them to the spring, to have them rinsed by⁹³ her maidservants. Mem sees Zîn from afar, recognizes her and sings about [her]:

"A heavy caravan has come [and] passed,
One⁹⁴ should take from it bribes and taxes."

Chekan said, "That is no beggar's caravan, that is the caravan of heroes." Qeretajdîn said, "We have seen each other's blows before each other's eyes: Mem and Zîn are secretly in love with each other⁹⁵. Let us make an agreement [that] if Mem brings a token of truth⁹⁶, [we will] know⁹⁷ that they have long been secret lovers,

⁹¹-lit: "bread eating"

⁹²The word *zêrhel* appears only in Kurdoev's dictionary, and only with the meanings of "a golden ingot or bar" or "gilded." Judging from other versions it seemed at first that some sort of palace (*K'ock û sera*) was intended. However, in the glossary of B Nikitine's as yet unpublished *Shandirani Kurdish*, made available to me by Professor MacKenzie, I have found the form *herzal*, meaning "a summer shelter of reeds erected on the roof"; moreover, in D. Izdî's *Kurdish-Turkish Dictionary [Ferheng Kurcî-Türkî]* (Den Haag: Komeley Xwendikarani Kurd le Ewropa, 1987), p.86, the form *herzalik* appears with the following meanings: 1) hut, shack; 2) throne-like structure on four poles on which one sits while watching over vineyards and the like; 3) inside the house, a raised platform in which beds and the like are placed. I think that *zêrhel* is a metathesized variant of the word *herzal* [ik], denoting some sort of raised platform in which people sit while on the roof or balcony.

⁹³-lit: "at the hands of"

⁹⁴-lit: "Mar"

⁹⁵-lit: "Mem and Zîn, as they exist, are the lovers of [i.e. in] secret"

⁹⁶*Nişana fastiyê* *Nişan* means 'symbol,' 'sign,' 'token,' as well as 'engagement or betrothal'; *Rastî* is the abstract noun of *rast*, which means 'right' (both direction and correct) and 'true'

[and] may their union be blessed⁹⁵; otherwise, we will brandish swords, and then that man will wish that he never left his home⁹⁹."

Mem gives fair Zîn a sweet greeting [and] Zîn says, "My dear Mem, are you out of your mind?¹⁰⁰ E'fan, Chekan and Qeretajdin are standing atop the roof: we will cause a scandal¹⁰¹!"

Mem said, "Zîn, if you give me a token of truth, you will rescue me from disaster; otherwise, I am done for¹⁰²." Zîn gives Mem a token of truth. Mem takes it to the heroes¹⁰³, and they calm down considerably¹⁰⁴."

The three brothers make Mem their fourth brother.

* *
*

One time the three brothers go hunting. Mem and Zîn go take a stroll in a private garden.

[301] The mîr says to Bekoê E'wana, "Beko, come, let's go hunting."

Beko says, "Mir, I swear to you, two young gazelles are roaming about in your private garden; [send] a manservant to watch them." When Beko and the mîr come to the garden, Zîn hides under¹⁰⁵ Mem's coat, and Mem sits down¹⁰⁶.

⁹⁷-lit: "Know" (imperative mood)

⁹⁸-lit: "to each other blessed"

⁹⁹-lit: "their envy to that man: the one that did not leave his house", i.e., then Mem will envy those who stayed at home, because he will be in dire straits

¹⁰⁰-lit: "Wretched Mem, you are not aware of yourself"

¹⁰¹-lit: "We will overturn the millstone of the mill of victories on your head." In Khanoian's phraseological dictionary this is explained as meaning 'to cause a scene or scandal'; 'to cause a war'; and 'to impose a penalty'

¹⁰²-lit: "I died"

¹⁰³; e, the three brothers

¹⁰⁴-lit: "their hearts calm down: by little pieces"

¹⁰⁵-lit: "gives herself before"

¹⁰⁶-lit: "has sat down"

Beko says, "You see, my mîr, we come pass by here, Mem is so arrogant that he won't take the trouble to rise before us: If Mem won't rise before you today, before whom will he rise?"

Memo says, "Beko, I am ill."

Beko shows the mîr Zîn's braids beside Mem¹⁰⁷; the mîr burns with anger; they turn and go back.

The mîr and Beko go to the upper room [and] play chess. Then Mem comes and plays with the mîr: Mem defeats the mîr three times.

Beko advises Zîn to come stand near Mem; Zîn does so.

Mem lays eyes on Zîn and loses his mind; the mîr defeats him and throws Mem into prison according to their condition¹⁰⁸.

When they take Mem out, they bring his horse Bor to him. He kisses Bor's eyes over and over again¹⁰⁹, then they let Bor go, and at Mem's bidding, Bor heads for Mughur-Zemîn, while Mem dies in Jizîra.

Zîn cries and wails over Mem, but what can she do? Mem is no more.

Sometime later, Zîn also dies, of grief. They keep their corpses until Efan, Chekan, and Qeretajdîn return from hunting.

When Bor reaches Mughur-Zemîn, Al pasha immediately senses that something has happened to Mem¹¹⁰. He gets up, collects his army, and heads for Jizîra: he reaches Jizîra, [and comes] to the grave of his Mem.

They inform Al pasha that Beko was the cause of Mem and Zîn's demise]. They summon Beko and the mîr and go to the grave, taking the two corpses and putting them into a pit together.

Al pasha sends Beko's head flying. [and] a drop of Beko's blood falls between Mem and Zîn; it grows in the middle [and] becomes a thornbush.

¹⁰⁷i.e. Zîn's hair is sticking out from under Mem's coat.

¹⁰⁸ser çarara xwe Qilîr has several meanings originally from the Arabic word *qarâr* قَرَار meaning 'decision,' in Kurdish it can mean, inter alia, 'condition,' 'stipulation.' This meaning is particularly likely, since in another version (ZK-2), this passage specifically starts with the setting of conditions, as follows: "If you beat me seven times, you can have whatever you want, and if I beat you, I can have from you whatever I ask for."

¹⁰⁹:êr = 'sated,' 'satisfied,' 'having eaten, or done something to fulfillment.'

¹¹⁰=lit. "that a wonder or strange thing has come to Mem's head"

So also Qeretajdîn sends the mîr's head flying.
One side of Jizîra flourishes, the other is in ruins.

E'vdal, E. "Mem û Zine = Mem û Zînê," in *Folkloro Kyrmança* (Erevan, 1936), pp. 261-292. [Kurmanji in outdated Latin script] (FK-1)

FK-1. Collected by E. E'vdal from Xudoê Qaso, in the village of K'arvanserê, neñiya (=county of) Añbaranê, Soviet Armenia. The text was published in 1936. Unfortunately, no other information is available about the informant or the conditions under which the text was collected.

MƏM Y ZINE = Mem û Zînê (FK-1)

[261] Mem was the son of Al pasha, the pasha of Mughur Zemîn.

Mem had the final say in his house.¹

One fine day, three beautiful doves went flying, [and] set down at Mem's window.

The three doves were talking together: the youngest one said to the eldest, "Is there anyone else as beautiful as Mem in the world? We must find him a mate."

The eldest said,

"I have found, I've found,
A lovely, pretty girl,

She lives in the city of Jizîra Bota."

The three doves flew to Zîn's window and set down; they looked through the window, [and] what did they see? Forty maidens waiting on Lady Zîn hand and foot.² One by one the maidens left the lady's side [and] went home.

The eldest dove said, "This is the one I've found; Do you think she's fitting for Mem?" The youngest sister said, "Oh yes, she's fitting!" and she asked of God:

"God, you make a command,
Send down a dove's gown,
We are three, make Zîn our fourth."

¹According to Kurdoev. Ser t'ivdiarekê xwe bûn - БЫТЬ при своем мнении, стоять на своем, i.e. to insist on one's opinion.

²=li: "Forty maidens with hand upon hand, waiting on Lady Zîn (Zîn-xatûn)."

A doveskin³ came down from above, the doves dropped a slumber pearl in Zin's ear⁴, dressed her in the doveskin and flew away with her.

You God of grace,
 I'll tell this time,
 What fate had in store for Zin and Mem.
 When the doves picked up Lady Zin,
 They passed from iand to land,
 Putting her down at Mem's window.
 [262] When the doves brought Lady Zin down,
 Mem was asleep, he didn't know
 What had happened at all,⁵
 They made Zin's wrists
 Be Mem's pillow and cushion.

Then the doves went and put down at the window.

Sometime during the night Mem woke up and found a perfect woman sleeping in his arms. Mem didn't make a sound. Zin also woke up and realized that someone was in her bed.

Zin said, "Okay you smart aleck [pê hatol], who told you to come get in my bed without asking me?"

Tomorrow I'll have you drawn and quartered by Erfin, Chekin, and Qeretazhdin⁶."

"Zin, do men go out after women, or do women [go out] after men?"

"Men go out," she said and stood up.

They both took lamps,
 Counted all the minarets,

³p'os: = 'animal skin.'

⁴This motif appears in FK-2 HR-1, HR-2 and ZK-2 also. See also HR-1, note #16; and HR-2 note #11. Motifs D1364.32. Jewel causes magic sleep; D1071. Magic jewel (jewels); D1071.1. Magic beads; D1364. Object causes magic sleep.

⁵=lit: "What the pain is, what the state is."

⁶=lit: "I'll have Erfin, Chekin, and Qeretazhdin rip open your stomach."

Zîn was Mem's guest.⁷

Zîn roamed about Mem's house, and saw that her personal belongings were not here, that the building had a different character.

Mem took up candle and lamp,
The doves took up Zîn's curtain,
So that Mem would not die of love for Zîn.⁸

Mem said, "Did you come [to my house], or did I [come to yours]?" Zîn said, "I have come [to your house]."

"Very good, but [what is] your father's place of residence⁹, your country? Who are your parents? Whose daughter are you?"

"I'm Lady Zîn, daughter of Mîr Zêvdîn, sister of Mîr Sêvdîn, granddaughter of Mîr Atlas, from Jizira Bota, owner of a many-colored palace, [and] a green gown¹⁰; if you speak truthfully, I'm the sister-in-law-to-be¹¹ of Qeretazhdin.

Mem and Zîn picked up lanterns,
Climbed up the staircase,
Went to the tops of the towers,
They counted the lamps one by one,
Together there were 366 of them.

Mem said, "Now what?"

⁷As in a few other versions, Mem and Zîn figured out that Zîn was in Mem's room, rather than vice versa, by counting the city's minarets: according to EP-1, there were 66 minarets in Jezira Bota, but 366 in Mukhurzemîn, and after trying to count them they knew they were in Mukhurzemîn.

⁸These last two lines are somewhat unclear to me.

⁹Çi war (or dîwar). There are two possible etymologies for this word: either it is borrowed from Arabic *qawâr* جوار = 'neighborhood,' or it is a combination of the two Kurdish words Çi = 'place,' 'bed' and War = 'encampment.'

¹⁰K'êxibe appears in ZK-1 as K'êxibe. Although this exact form does not appear in any of the dictionaries, Kurdcov has a form **K'ixme** = 'type of women's overgarment,' of which K'êxibe and K'ixbe may be variants. I think the 'green gown' is a reference to her wedding gown. Erich Brauer says "the dress of the Jewish bride is red, whereas the bridal gown of the Kurdish woman is green." [see his *Yehude Kurdisan*, (= The Jews of Kurdistan) (Yerushalayim : ha-Makhor ha-Eretsyste'eli le-Folklor ve-Etnologyah, 1946), p. 71]

¹¹Êk, besides meaning 'bride,' may also mean 'sister-in-law' or 'daughter-in-law,' 'wife of one's brother or son,' equivalent to Turkish **yenge**. See ZK-1, note # (54). In other words, Zîn is already betrothed to one of Qeretazhdin's brothers.

[263] Zîn said, "O slave of God¹², it is only fitting that you should be in such a city."

Then the two of them came down, went to the castle, and got in bed, amid chatter and laughter.

Zîn said, "Those who brought me will take me away."

"Memê delal, I know that you are fond of me¹³, now we must exchange rings, [for] in forty days¹⁴ they will marry me off. You must come to my wedding, or else I will be lost to you¹⁵."

Mem said, "Zîn, know that 40 days from now I shall come to your land."

Let's get back to the doves. The eldest one said, "O sisters, we brought Zîn for Mem, but tomorrow Zîn's father¹⁶ will destroy both of them, unless we bring Zîn back to her father's house."

"Yes, let's take her."

Mem and Zîn slept; the doves dropped slumber pearls into their ears, dressed Zîn in her doveskin, took her by the wings, conveyed her to her land, placed her in her bed, and went about their business.

The sister of Bekrê Ewana was a sorceress; her name was Zîn also. She read her *remil* ¹⁷ [and found out] that Zîn had woken up late that day, and she said, "I'll bet Zîn went to Mughur Zemîn and slept in Mem's arms."

In forty days Mem will come to marry¹⁸ Zîn.

¹²A typical Islamic way of referring to human beings. Cf. Arabic 'abd Allāh عبد الله

¹³-lit: "that your heart is very much in me."

¹⁴-lit: "rights"

¹⁵-lit: "I will go from your hand"

¹⁶-lit: "Zîn's father's house"

¹⁷*remil* is explained in a footnote to EP-1 as a widespread method of telling fortunes, consisting of specially marked dice that are thrown onto a board with the help of a special fortune-telling book, the markings on the dice and the board are interpreted to predict the future, or as in this case, to tell what has already happened. See my EP-1, note #149.

¹⁸-lit: "to take"

Zîn the sorceress was jealous. There was a spring on the road to Mughur Zemîn. She took some wool:¹⁹ and went to the spring.

It was noontime. Lady Zîn woke up and saw her maidens standing around her.

One maiden said, "My fine Zîn, why have you woken up so late today?" Zîn didn't answer, she sighed²⁰ and sank into a reverie.

At that same time Al pasha's diwan was full of people [who] had flocked around, waiting for Mem. The coffee and food was ready, they were looking around in anticipation²¹, wondering when Mem would come.²²

Al pasha summoned his manservants²³ and said to them, "My fine manservants, when is my delicate and naïve Mem coming?" One of his manservants replied:

"He tells us before the group,
We will act like God,²⁴
Mem is sleeping late²⁵."

[264] "O manservants, it cannot be so,
It's not his habit,
He's sick today, that's why he isn't here."

The manservants went to [see] Mem, and sat around his bed, rubbing his feet and kissing his forehead to wake him up. The head servant said, "Mem, get up, it's late, the assembly in your father's diwan is waiting for you, hurry up, let's go!"

Mem got up, got dressed, and went to the marble sink; the manservants came with him.

¹⁹to spin while waiting

²⁰Qîmek/Qîmek hatê. As this did not appear in any of the dictionaries. I am guessing at the meaning

²¹-lit: "their eyes were on the road"

²²From other versions we know that it was Mem's job to serve coffee in his father's diwan.

²³Çawîş, like Turkish **çavuş**, means a military sergeant, but it can also mean a servant.

²⁴The meaning of these two lines is unclear to me

²⁵-lit: "Mem's eye comes to morning sleep"

Just as Mem was about to wash his face, he noticed Zîn's ring on his finger, and fell into a swoon over the sink. The manservants sent word to Al pasha, saying, "Long live the pasha, your Mem has fainted over his marble sink."

The people of Al pasha's diwan, together with the viziers and attorneys [wekil], got up and went to [see] Mem.

Everyone²⁶ took a look at Mem and saw that he was gone.²⁷

When Al pasha saw that Mem appeared to be in bad shape, he lost control.²⁸ Everyone there tried to console him.

A moment later, Mem came to and the rosy color returned to his face²⁹. Everyone brought Mem to the diwan. Mem's mother encountered Al pasha and said:

"I beg you,³⁰
Tell me the truth,
What's wrong with my Mem?"

"O woman³¹, Mem is a little indisposed³², but he's not too bad, don't worry³³.

Mem's mother sobbed, she went to [see] Mem, then she bowed her head and informed Mem that she would make him well³⁴.

The maidservants told Mem's mother not to worry, that love had carried Mem away.

²⁶Umma'e' =lit. "The assembly"

²⁷=lit. "He was not there" i.e. he was unconscious

²⁸=lit. "He went out of hand," i.e. in colloquial English, "He lost it" or "He freaked out."

²⁹=lit. "The rose of his countenance was bright, a little color came to it."

³⁰=lit. "May you give the permission of God."

³¹=lit. "slave of God" See note 12 above

³²bé k'êf =lit. "without *pleas:re*" K'êf, from Arabic kayf كَيْف, is a Middle-Eastern concept that is not easy to translate. It comes close to our idea of 'fun,' but it can also mean 'hashish'.

³³=lit. "don't be afraid."

³⁴The second half of this sentence is not totally clear to me

News of what the maidservants had said reached Al pasha, that "love had carried Mem away".

Al pasha greatly rejoiced and said to those assembled around him, "Go sound the alarms! Call all the aghas and beys and have them send their daughters to the enclosed garden³⁵."

Al pasha sent messengers to Mem [telling him] to come sit in the enclosed garden, to have a look at the girls and choose one for himself. [265] The manservant went and conveyed this to Mem. Mem made no reply, [so] the manservant went back to the pasha.

Mem had to take an apple and go to the garden, as required by the customs of the people of Mughur Zemîn, and throw the apple at the girl who stole his heart³⁶. Mem thought, and said to himself:

"Could *Zîna delal* be among them? I'll go see what's what."

Memê Alan took his apple and headed for the enclosed garden. The girls were strolling through the garden two by two.

Mem went and sat down in the middle of the enclosed garden, and saw that the one he wanted³⁷ was not among those girls. For this reason Mem was very disappointed, he hung his head low in despair.

All the girls passed before him two by two [until] only three girls were left. The first one came and went, [but] Mem paid no attention, then the other two came and passed by. The girls were amazed that Mem paid no attention to anyone; many of them said, "Why did they have us gather here for nothing?"

The vizier's daughter said:

"Mem, among birds you are a falcon,
You were pampered by your parents,
Why don't you want the daughter of a bey?"

³⁵baê t'orkiri =lit: "enclosed/ferenced-in garden." In some other versions, the word *Torkiri* is capitalized, making it a proper noun.

³⁶=lit: "who had fallen to his heart." I witnessed the following at an Assyrian wedding in Turlock, California in August of 1990. The groom took an apple (rather than the bride's garter belt) and threw it over his shoulder, where it was caught by one of several eligible bachelors who had gathered. The belief is that the one who catches the apple is going to be married soon. Cf. Motif H315. Suitor test: apple thrown indicates princess's choice.

³⁷=lit: "the one he said."

"The one I want³⁸ is Lady Zîn,
 The daughter of Mîr Zêvdîn,
 The sister of Mîr Sêvdîn,
 Who lives in Jizîra.
 She lives in a palace,
 She isn't here,
 The sister-in-law of Efin and Qeretazhdin,
 The fiancée of Chekin,
 She wears a green gown."

When Mem told them this, they all stepped aside, and Mem got up and went about his business.

Word reached Al pasha that Mem had not liked any [of the girls]. He sounded the alarm, saying, "However many old and experienced men there are, viziers and attorneys of [noble] origin, have them all come to me, so they can tell me where Jizîra Bota is."

Everybody gathered, but nobody [could] give any information. Mem got up and went to his father's stables, called the stablehands and said to them, "You must [266] choose a good horse for me." Then Mem walked around with them, saw a lean horse and said to the lads, "Fatten up this horse, take good care of him, and I'll give you gold."

Mem took some gold pieces out of his breastpocket and gave them to the lads and left. Next he went to a tailor and had fine clothes made. At the saddlemaker's he had a saddle with fine stone made for his horse; at the silversmith's he had a fine sword smelted of gold and silver, then went home.

Eight days later all of Memê Alan's clothes and equipment³⁹ were ready, and Mem prepared himself to go.

News reached Al pasha that his son intended to go away.

The pasha commanded the people of the city to lock the gates of the walled city and to chain and shackle the horses. Everyone did as he said.

³⁸-lit. 'the one I say.'

³⁹K'incû riñet. *Riñet* must be for *Rext* = 'armor,' because *Riñet* means 'calm,' 'comfortable' (from Arabic), and this makes no sense.

That The next day Mem sent for his clothes and effects, saddled up his horse⁴⁰, picked up his armor and said to his servant boys:

"Go
light
a th
The boys brought Bor out, Mem kissed his forehead, saddled him up and
he mounted him, in order to depart for Jizra Bota.

"You bring out my Bor⁴¹,
Put on him the saddle of rubies and jewels,
I am making a journey to Jizra -- to Zîn."

Mem made his foot the basis of strength,
Took hold of the reins of health,
Got up on the saddle of power.

Mem rode away from home,
He was without boys or servants,
His parents were wretched and miserable.

Al pasha lifted up his eyes,
Cast down his face,
Crying a lake of tears,
Which came spilling down his face,
He said, "Mem has no goodness for me,
My Mem is an awful son,
He has no sense in his head,
Who can this city hope for?"⁴²

[267] Many people [tried to] advise Mem, but he would not listen⁴³, he called his horse Bor from the start. Mem rode Bor up to the city wall, the gatemen also begged him [to listen], but he would not.

⁴⁰-lit. "put on his horse the saddle that he had had made."

⁴¹Suddenly his horse has a name.

⁴²i.e., to rule it when I am gone.

⁴³-lit. "There was no submission in him," i.e. He would not give in.

Memê Ala spurred Bor on,
 Bor flew over the wall,
 He came to three roads.

All three roads sloped downward, Mem did not know which of the three roads led to Jizîra Bota.

Mem said to Bor,
 "Bor, my lean Bor,
 I swear by the almighty,⁴⁴
 Take me on the road to Jizîra.
 Bor, my white Bor,
 I swear by God,
 You know what has happened to me,
 Take me on one of these roads."
 Bor took the middle road, Mem said nothing.
 Mem continued on his journey,
 Bor said, "Mem, you've been riding me for three days
 now,
 Tomorrow it will be four full days.
 Don't you ever think⁴⁵ that Bor's legs are in chains and
 shackles,
 The shackles and chains have eaten into his legs?
 Enough riding me with spurs on thighs!
 Anyone else⁴⁶ would undo Bor's saddle
 Three or four times a day.

I hope that when I've rested,
 I'll walk better [when] I set out,

⁴⁴-lit. "You make it the right of the almighty."

⁴⁵-lit. "say"

⁴⁶-lit. "in your place"

I'll take you to Jizra on my back.

My Mem, you're a fine lad,
[But] you're treating me like an Arab or Persian,
Cut the chains and shackles from my legs already!

Dismount, give me fistfuls of water,
Undo Bor's chains and shackles with your own hands,
Tomorrow I'll take you, drunk, to Jizra.

[268] Dismount, give me handfuls of water,
Undo my chains with your fingers,
I'll take you to Jizra, to the beauties.

Mem, you're a light-headed boy,
You don't stay in one place,
The chains and shackles have cut through your Bor's
legs to the bone."

Mem reached a spring adorned with lilies, camomile, roses and basil. He dismounted.

Mem got down off Bor,
Pulled a handkerchief from his waist,
Mem saw that Bor was in bad shape,
Tears rolled down his cheeks.

Mem put hand on hand,
And stood facing south⁴⁷,
Bor took a step, he could barely move⁴⁸.

⁴⁷or Qiblah, the direction of Mecca; i.e., he prayed to God.

⁴⁸Although I could not find a meaning for *dibeste* other than 'to tie,' 'to bind,' the context strongly suggests a meaning more like 'to limp along,' 'to move'.

Mem went and alighted at another spring: he was beside himself, because he saw that the chains and shackles had eaten at his Bor's legs.

Mem put his hand in his pocket: he saw that he did not have the keys [to unlock] the chains and shackles. He thought:

Mem pulled out his trusty sword⁴⁹,
Swung at the chains and shackles, getting rid of them
once and for all,
Because of them, Bor had become weak and thin.

Mem was very troubled, and he cried,
Saying, "Woe is me, you're weak and thin, your neck is
broken,
The chains and shackles have reached the bones of
my Bor's legs,
Which way to Jizra Bota, what plain is it in?"

The Mem got up, took a handkerchief out of his pocket, folded it in two, washed Bor's leg and tied it up; then he let Bor out to pasture in the meadows.

Mem sat down by the spring and let out a sigh. He felt sad and on the verge of tears, then he cried.

He put his saddlebag behind his head, threw his cloak over himself, and fell fast asleep.

Mem slept for a moment, then got up. Bor's leg had gotten somewhat better. He stepped into the stirrup and mounted, then Bor said to Mem:

[269] "Give me spring water to drink,
Wrap me up with handkerchiefs,⁵⁰
And I'll take you quickly to Jizra Bota."

Mem put his foot in the stirrup of power,

⁴⁹Zilfeqar, named for the famous sword of the early Islamic personage Ali.

⁵⁰=lit. "Take care with handkerchiefs"

Took hold of the reins of health⁵¹,
And pulled himself onto the saddle of strength.

Bor galloped along.⁵² On the road, a rabbit leapt out in front of Bor⁵³. Mem rode Bor on, he pursued it, caught it and brought it up to his saddle; [then] he took a handkerchief out of his pocket, made the handkerchief into the shape of the rabbit, threw it in his saddlebag and let the rabbit go.⁵⁴

Mem and Bor came upon a barren plain, Bor suddenly was given the gift of speech and spoke to Mem like a human being, saying, "Drive me on."

Bor lightly picked up Mem,
Took the reins out of his hands,
Mem could not tell day from night.

"Oh, what a barren steppe,
Neither traveller, nor plow, nor plowman,
Of whom to enquire
Which way to Jizra!"

Mem tired Bor out, then took his reins in his hand and looked about in all directions, and spotten a plowman in the distance, who was the plowman of Jezira Bota.

⁵¹According to Kurdoev, there is an expression *şirika sefiyetê* = 'watchchain,' however, such an expression would make no sense in this context. *Sifet/sefiyet* has two meanings: 1) Clock or hour (<Arabic *sā'ah* *ساعة*); and 2) Health (<Arabic *ṣiḥḥah* *صحة*). These two words are sometimes confused in Turkish as well, e.g. *Saatler olsun* for *Sahhatler olsun* = 'May there be health,' a blessing said to someone who has recently had a bath or a haircut. Moreover, a few lines above in this same version [p. 266 of the original text], a similar formula, using the same three words (*qewetê* = 'power,' *sefiatê* = 'health,' *dewletê* = 'strength'), is used. Therefore, I think *şirika sefiyetê* means something like 'the chains/reins of health,' rather than 'watchchain'.

⁵²=lit. "was going quickly"

⁵³=lit. "in front of Bor's legs"

⁵⁴Motif : Handkerchief shaped like rabbit. See also note #120 in my EP-1.

"What a dry plain,⁵⁵
 It seems to be a completely treeless wilderness,⁵⁶
 I don't know if that is a plowman,
 Or a beautiful bird of prey⁵⁷."

Bor said, "Let your fingers drop my reins⁵⁸
 Enough jabbing me with spurs,
 I'll quickly take you to Jezra Bota.

Mem approached the plowman; the plowman saw a horseman coming towards him, sparkling from head to toe. Mem approached the plowman.

Mem reached the plowman and greeted him,
 The plowman said, "And upon you be peace,⁵⁹
 My fine and gentle king."

[270] "O horseman, rider of the grey sided [horse],
 The mounted horse is roaming about,
 Go wherever he takes you."

"O plowman, to tell the truth,
 Answer me this question,
 I don't know what country or place this is."

O horseman, these are the plows of Jezra Bota,

⁵⁵Çi besteke xalf-p'ûşe = lit. "What an empty--dry grass plain. P'ûş = 'dry grass,' 'straw'.

⁵⁶Dixuêne deşteke her t'ûşe = lit. "It seems a wilderness of every t'ûşe. According to Kurdoev, T'ûş = 'Glade,' 'clearing' [DUXEBA]; 'Valley' [DUXEBA]; 'Hollow,' 'depression' (geog.) [DUXEBA]; Izolt has Çihê tûş = 'Place of danger' [tehlike yeril].

⁵⁷Qerqas = snowy white; perhaps this is a typo for Qereqûş = 'bird of prey' which, unlike Qerqas would rhyme with Xalf-p'ûşe and T'ûşe in the preceding lines.

⁵⁸=lit. "Let go of my reins with fingers"

⁵⁹i.e. the plowman returned his greeting in Islamic fashion.

Home of aghas, begs and nobles,
Once evening comes, brothers can't count on brothers⁶⁰."

Mem thrust his hand into one pouch of his saddlebag
And said, "Plowman, take this gift,
It's a first-thing-in-the-morning reward."

Mem gave the plowman a handful of gold, took leave of him and headed for Jezîra Bota.

He went on a bit, then regretted it, almost turning back towards the plowman, but did not turn back, going on [instead].

On the way, he came across a gazelle, and saw a horseman pursuing it, wanting to catch it; no matter what he did, he could not overtake it. Mem took off after the gazelle, and the horseman asked, "Who are you? Why have you come before me? How dare you⁶¹ take the prey of begs and nobles?" Mem got quite angry and said, "Who says so?" and punched him, knocking him off his horse, but come see! He himself did not let the rider dismount.⁶²

Mem gave him his prey, and they introduced themselves. Mem asked, "Where are you from?"

"I am Qeretajdîn," Mem replied, "And I am Mem, Qeretajdîn's guest." Qeretajdîn said that he wanted to go hunting, and that Mem should head for Jizîra and ask for Qeretajdîn's house, and go there.

Qeretajdîn took his leave of Mem, and Mem set out. There was a bridge on the way, which Mem now headed for.

On the bridge was Beko Ewan's sister, Zîn,
Her calling⁶³ was fortune telling.

⁶⁰This may refer to a stereotypical reputation of the inhabitants of Jezîra Bota. It is a formulaic expression with a parallel in EP-1, #37, p. 193.

⁶¹-lit. "Whose soul is there?"

⁶²This is unclear to me. Perhaps it means that he punched the horseman hard enough to knock him off his steed, but made sure that he didn't in fact fall off.

⁶³Genc û qala wê -lit. "Her argument and quarrel"

When Mem was coming to the spring⁶⁴,

Zîn stretched out her neck and saw a horseman coming from afar, he drew near to her and gave her greeting:

[271] Mem greeted Beko's sister Zîn,
She grabbed the reins of Mem's horse and said,
"And upon you be peace!⁶⁵"

Mem looked at (this) Zîn, and sighed as he said to himself, "This must be Zîn, how else would she know my name? In my father's kingdom were there none like this⁶⁶ that I could have married?" Mem grew sad and cried, when suddenly he remembered Zîn's ring.

What a dunderhead⁶⁷ Mem is,
He asked for a sign from Zîn,
If there is no sign,⁶⁸ let her surrender.

Zîn bowed her head and thought to herself, "Oh! Had I only stolen Mem's ring from Zîn, the mîr's daughter, I could have gotten Mem today with it."

"Mem, when you came up this hill,
I got so excited⁶⁹ on the bridge
That the ring flew off, and the water⁷⁰ carried it off."

⁶⁴Which was apparently in the vicinity of the bridge.

⁶⁵See note 59 above.

⁶⁶i.e. ugly.

⁶⁷lawekî ser mest -lit. "boy with an inebriated head"

⁶⁸i.e. if she can't come up with proof that she is the Zîn with whom he exchanged rings.

⁶⁹-lit. "I gave soul to my hands and eyes"

⁷⁰-lit. "wave of water"

Mem was a little taken aback; he thought to himself, "I guess it must be so."

Bor said, "Mem, you are a crazy boy,
The one you see⁷¹ is not that Zîn,
She is the sister of Bekir Ewan,
You should never have anything to do with her."

Mem said, "Zîn, let me go, I want to go, let go of Bor's reins."

Zîn said, "If you grant me my wish, I'll let go."

Mem gave Zîn his word that he would carry out his promise. Zîn said to Mem, "It is true, I am not Lady Zîn⁷², but when you marry her, my wish is that you take me also with you, that I may be her maidservant, just as I am now." Mem assented, saying, "On my eyes."⁷³

Zîn let go of Bor's reins, and Mem drove Bor on, while Zîn went about her business.

Bor said, "I am your fine, blue Bor,
Enough of hurting me with the spurs,
I'll take you [to where you will be] the guest of the noblemen
Chekîn, Erfin, and Qeretajdîn.

[272] Mem and Bor wandered from street to street,
They saw every building in Jizra,
And stopped at the gate of the house of those three.

Bor brought Mem to the gate of Qeretajdîn's house, and the earth was shaking beneath Bor's feet.

⁷¹-lit. "The one [which] you say"

⁷²Zîn khatûn.

⁷³i.e., Gladly.

Lady Perf⁷⁴ instructed the servants, saying, "Go outside and see what that rumbling is." A servant went outside, took one look at Mem, and fainted dead away.⁷⁵

Another servant went: he also fainted. Then a group of servants went out together, and Lady Perf went with them. The [previous] servants came to.

Mem said, "Whose house is this?" Lady Perf said, "It's the house of Qeretajdîn."

Mem dismounted, Lady Perf put her arm around him⁷⁶, and brought him to the palace; they tied Bor up in the stable.

Mem took a walk about the palace, admiring its beauty.⁷⁷ Lady Perf stood at the lower end of the hall,⁷⁸ with clasped hands. Mem did not accept this custom, and said, "Please come closer up!"

"Brother, I cannot," [she replied] "I have masters who will be coming in. For all I know, one might accept it, but the others won't."

"In that case, I will get up and go. Bring my shoes!⁷⁹" But Lady Perf would not let Mem go.

They became [like] brother and sister. Mem sat on one side of the room, and Lady Perf on the other side.

⁷⁴Perf Xanim, Qeretajdîn's wife

⁷⁵-lit. "from Mem's imposing aspect he fell fainted."

⁷⁶-lit. "fell under Mem's arm"

⁷⁷-lit. "Mem went and came in the palace, the palace was beautiful."

⁷⁸In Persian and Kurdish, a room – particularly the hall of a ruler – has a lower part, which is the part nearest the door, and an upper part, which is the other end of the room. The lower in rank one is, the closer to the door one must situate oneself. The word I have translated as *hall*, is qer in the original, from the Arabic word for castle (qaṣr قصر), whence also the Spanish alcázar). The use of the castle for a part of it, i.e. the diwan, is reminiscent of the widespread use of words for *door* or *gate* to refer to a royal court. For a very fine discussion of this phenomenon, see Hans Wehr. "Das 'Tor des Königs' im Buche Esther und verwandte Ausdrücke," *der Islam* 39 (1964), pp. 247-260.

⁷⁹In the Middle East, it is customary to remove one's shoes upon entering someone's house. A hospitable host has pairs of slippers to offer to any and every guest, to be put on as soon as the guest's own shoes are removed.

Lady Perf called the servants. They came and stood before her. She instructed one of the servants,⁸⁰ saying, "Go tell mîr Sêvdîn that a very dear guest of his has come, and to come immediately⁸¹!"

The servant went to the diwan, and took off his shoes. When Bekir Ewan saw Badîn over his right shoulder, he frowned.

Badîn said, "Please [come], a very dear guest of yours has come."

Bekir Ewan angrily said, "Go see what he wants. Have him go away. What does he want with the diwan!"

The servant immediately turned around and went back to Lady Perf.

She said, "Boy, where of the men of the diwan?"

"My Lady, they didn't come."

There was a cooking ladle in the Lady's hand, she beat the servant over the head with it, [almost] breaking his skull, and said, "This time go call them so that they come. A very dear guest of theirs has come."

[273] The servant Badîn went back to the diwan. Those assembled saw blood dripping from his head.

Beko Ewan said, "Boy, what do you want?"

"What do I want? Lady Perf is summoning the three brothers."

Qeretajdîn, Chekîn and Erfin got up and went home. When they went inside, they were awestruck by Mem's appearance. Chekîn and Erfin put down a mattress for Qeretajdîn [to sit on], and then went and stood at the lower end of the room.

Qeretajdîn sat down on the mattress. Mem was a very pleasant guest.

They spoke together for three days and three night, [wrapped in] pleasant [discussion].

The next day food was prepared and brought in on a tray⁸², and Qeretajdîn said, "Help yourself Mem, there's plenty more!"

⁸⁰We soon learn that his name is Badîn.

⁸¹-lit. "don't stand/stop, come!"

⁸²sifre. This is a pan-Mid Eastern concept: a laid table, anyplace where food is laid out, rather than the physical table. According to E.W. Lane: "The food of the traveller; ... the food that is prepared for the traveller, ... or for a journey ... This is the primary signification ["because it comes from a root *s-f-r* سفر meaning 'to travel' - my note] ... Hence, the receptacle thereof, the piece of skin in which it is put ... [This is commonly of a round form, with a running string; so that it is converted into a bag to contain the food, at one time, and at another time is spread flat upon the ground, when persons want to

["I refuse to eat," said Mem]⁸³

"Why Mem?"

"How?"

"Why how?"⁸⁴

"You only feed your guests once a day, 'one day's!"

"Mem, don't find fault with sitting down to eat. Would you believe that we were so taken with your looks, that we forgot?"

When Qeretajdîn said that, Mem sat down and ate.⁸⁵

When they had finished eating, the food was taken away.

Mem excused himself and retired to his room.

When Zîn heard that Mem had come, she rose a span off the ground⁸⁶, and instructed her servant to go see who Qeretajdîn's guest was, and to ask where he came from.

The servant went to Lady Perf and asked her about Mem.

Lady Perf said, "My guest's name is Mem, the son of Al pasha, who is the king of Mughur Zemîn."

The servant went back to Zîn and reported the news about Mem piece by piece.

eat upon it.] And hence, The thing [whatever it be] upon which one eats ... [in the desert, it is generally a round piece of skin ... : in the towns, in the houses of the middle classes, *a round tray of tinned copper*, [italics mine] which is usually placed on a low stool; and in the dwellings of some of the highest classes, and the lowest respectively, of silver and wood]." In accordance with the italicized section above, which is identical with what I have seen both in Turkey and Palestine, I have translated *sifre* as 'tray.' See: E.W. Lane. *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London : Williams and Norgate, 1872; reprinted: Beirut : Librairie du Liban, 1980), vol. 4, p. 1371, column 2. Cf. *Ar sufrah* سفره , P *sofreh* سفره , T *sofra*.

⁸³A line must be missing because the next thing Qeretajdîn says is obviously in response to a comment of Mem's. Judging from what follows, I assume that Mem's missing comment is something like "I refuse to eat," because later Qeretajdîn says something that convinces him to eat.

⁸⁴I think this is meant to be slightly humorous.

⁸⁵Hat ser sifre =lit. "He came over the *sifre*."

⁸⁶This calls to mind such English expressions as "She jumped for joy," and "She was in seventh heaven."

Once Zîn went outside and saw four men playing chess on the balcony of the palace⁸⁷ She recognized the three brothers [and thought to herself] "I'll bet the other one playing with them is Mem; I'll sing a song⁸⁸; if it's Mem, he'll look at me."

"Cheko, Erfin, Qeretajdîn are brothers,
They have made their place on the roof of the palace,
I know the one among them is my Memê Alan."

[274] After the son, Mem turned around and beheld Zîn.

"Hey brothers! Zîn the beauty is at the window,
With black⁸⁹ eyes and the breast of a quail,
I have one eye on the ground, the other in the air."

When the three brothers saw how overcome Mem was with love for Zîn, they did not respond. The next morning, Zîn got up and adorned herself, took food and maidservants from her father's house, and off they went to the spring of Zemalê. Zîn, like a dove, led the girls and ladies past the gate of Qeretajdîn's house.

Mem turned and looked over his right shoulder and saw a caravan of girls and ladies passing by. He saw Zîn among them and said:

"Lady Zîn is passing with her fine cousins,
From her black eyes, blessed eyeshadow rains,
I have one eye left, the other has gone dark."

⁸⁷-lit. "on the palace"

⁸⁸-lit. "throw a song"

⁸⁹belek = the ideal quality of eyes: very white whites and very black pupils. This is the equivalent of the Arabic adjective [and concept] *aḥwar* أحور , with its corresponding abstract noun *ḥawar* حور , which according to Arberrry signifies "intense blackness of the pupils and whiteness of the surrounding parts of the eyes." See: A.J. Arberrry. *Arabic Poetry : A Primer for Students* (Cambridge : at the University Press, c1965), p. 41, note 8. There is also an Arabic adjective *ablaq* أبلق meaning 'piebald' (of horses and the like), i.e. "spotted or blotched with black and white," in which those two colors are again juxtaposed.

"Mem, I am Qeretajdîn,
 Master of the blue swords,
 Whenever a caravan passes by,
 We collect a tax from it,
 But we cannot collect from this caravan."

Erfin: "The caravan you speak of belongs to the mîr,
 No one may dare cross its path,
 Except for us three brothers."

Cekin: {Hoye}, 104 {hoye}
 You are the very pretty tablet
 On the eyebrows {t'elbî goyl}
 Why do you say these thing, {t noyl}⁹⁰

Mem said, "Brother, bring out my horse Bor,
 Saddle him up with jewels and stones,
 My trip is to the bridge, to Zîn."

Qeretajdîn said, "Brothers, Mem's horse is a big nothing, it's not worth a kopeck,
 let's give Mem leave to go see Zîn."

The two brothers accepted Qeretajdîn's word. They had Mem's horse brought
 out, and one held the reins while the other saddled her up, and mounted Mem on
 her.

Memê Alan said, "Brothers, I shall go to Zîn. If I succeed in collecting a tax from
 her, know that I am your brother; if I fail, I won't stay here, but will return whence I
 came."

[275] Mem took leave of the three brothers and rode off in pursuit of Zîn.

Mem greeted Zîn,
 Zîn said, "And upon you peace."⁹¹

⁹⁰What Cekîn says is unclear to me.

⁹¹See note 59 above.

Welcome, Mem⁹²,
 My sweet, delightful dandy,
 Come, dismount."

"No, I won't dismount, my lovely Zîn, I have given my word, and must keep it:
 I have told the three brothers
 That I would not touch the ground near you today,
 That I would ask for a good tax from you.⁹³

Zîn said to her servants, "See how perfect my Mem is?"

Zîn took out a golden talisman,
 [Worth] the taxes of Egypt for seven years,
 She held it up for her sweet dandy,
 And gave it to Memê Alan.

When Mem took the talisman from Zîn's hand, he immediately went back⁹⁴
 The three brothers saw Mem coming back,

Qeretajdîn said, "Mem has most certainly brought something from Zîn."
 When Mem brought the golden talisman,
 And put it down lovingly before the three brothers,
 They were awestruck.

When Qeretajdîn took one look at the talisman, he recognized it and knew that
 Zîn had indeed given it to him. He said:

"We were three brothers, now we are four, our horses black,
 Let's roam calmly around Jizîra,

⁹²-lit. "You have come on my eyes."

⁹³This line is somewhat obscure, but the meaning is suggested by the context. Dîbêye = Divêye? (Min divêt = 'I want' or 'I need,' in Southern Kurmanji dialects).

⁹⁴This is my guess for the sentence <Dest bi dest veqerîta>.

Let's roam around and bring a brigand."

Erfin: "The four of us with bay horses,
Let's roam around Jizra proudly,
Let's bring the one whom Mem wants."

Chekî: "Brothers, why don't you tell the truth? A household of [real] men
[must stick] with the truth:

"Our four horses are gray,
Let's roam around Jizra looking for a fight,
Lady Zîn was mine, may Mem be happy with her.⁹⁵"

[276] When they finished speaking, they went to Qeretajdîn's house.

Qeretajdîn said to Mem, "Mem, this is your house, you sit here, we will go to mîr
Sêvdîn's palace⁹⁶."

The three brothers left Mem and went to mîr Sêvdîn's house.

Mîr Sêvdîn said, "Well, my lions, what sort of guest was he, that you stayed with
him so long?" Qeretajdîn answered the mîr [as follows]:

"My mîr, my guest is such a guest,
A very dear boy, the son of royalty,
A sweet young man, very fine and dandy.
When he comes in,
You will rise before him.⁹⁷"
The mîr said, "Please sit down, it's none of your business,
When he comes in,
I won't rise before him."

⁹⁵i.e. although Lady Zîn was betrothed to Chekî, with this sentence he renounces his claim to her.

⁹⁶Perhaps the diwan is intended rather than the whole palace. See note 78 above and FK-2 note 14.

⁹⁷This is the opposite of what would normally be the case.

With a groan Beko Ewan lifted up his head and said, "Have the servant Badîn go invite Qeretajdîn's guest to come here." The servant went to invite Mem.

When the servant came in, Perf said, "What do you want?"

"Qeretajdîn said for Mem to please come."

Perf screamed at the boy, "Get out of here, you hypocrite!"

Badîn turned around and went back to the diwan.

The mîr said, "Where's the guest?"

"He didn't come."

"Why didn't he come?"

"Perf yelled at me and said, 'Get out of here, hypocrite!'"

Qeretajdîn thought for a minute and said, "We'll have to go after Mem on our horses."

Many men got up and mounted [their horses]. They [went and] put Mem on his horse and brought him to mîr Sêvdîn's palace.

When Mem came in, those assembled rose before him -- even the mîr got up, then they all sat down. Qeretajdîn laughed.

The mîr said, "Qeretajdîn, why are you laughing?"

"My mîr, something struck my fancy, and I just laughed."

The mîr said, "No, tell me the reason⁹⁸ why you laughed."

"What shall I say? You rose to your feet, and I put a handkerchief beneath you. The mîr said that he had not risen before Mem. First he⁹⁹, then Qeretajdîn, then the whole assembly requested that the mîr stand up so that they could see whether or not the handkerchief was under the mîr.

[277] When the mîr got up, they looked and saw the handkerchief under him. Everyone laughed, including the mîr.

Those assembled got up and dispersed.

Food was brought and they ate. Then Mem and the mîr had a long talk.

⁹⁸-lit. "meaning"

⁹⁹It is unclear who this refers to.

The mîr realized how serious Mem was about Zîn,¹⁰⁰ and said, "Mem what you ask is not within my power, but I will give you my mîrtî,¹⁰¹ and let you rule over the people!¹⁰² You are my superior.¹⁰³

"No, keep your mîrtî, I will be your subject."

Qeretajdîn said, " No, let Mem serve as the chief of all the servants."

In order to see Zîn, Mem put on the clothes of a servant and ran to and fro about the diwan.

Mem was familiar with coffeehouses,¹⁰⁴ and Zîn would come there in order to see him.

The first time Mem went to the coffeehouse, he suddenly saw Zîn, and they fell into each other's arms. Just at that moment Beko Ewan walked by. Beko reported to the mîr that Mem was kissing Zîn. The mîr made no reply.

It was two hours past midnight.

The assembly had dispersed. [Only] the three brothers, Qeretajdîn, Chekîn and Erfîn remained with the mîr.

Qeretajdîn openly said to the mîr, "Mîr, forgive us, we have given Zîn to Mem.¹⁰⁵"

"Are you serious?"

"I swear to you, we have done so."

The mîr thought a little, then said, "Boy, am I a traitor, or you? In that case, tomorrow I will sound the alarm, so that the *jindîs*¹⁰⁶ of Jizîra come and gather. I will

¹⁰⁰-lit. "The mîr saw that Mem's desire/intention for Zîn was bad."

¹⁰¹i.e., office or rank of mîr. "Emirship" or "emirhood"?

¹⁰²meznaya &ê = "leadership of the people/tribal confederation." Meznayî or Mezin[tî] is the abstract noun for Mezin, which means 'old' or 'big' as well as 'person in position of authority'.

¹⁰³or perhaps, "You are greater than me."

¹⁰⁴In many versions, before Mem left Mukhurzemîn, he had been in charge of serving coffee in his father's diwan.

¹⁰⁵i.e., in marriage.

¹⁰⁶According to Kurdoev, cindî means 'well-built,' 'of fine physique,' 'stately,' 'well-proportioned,' in speaking of young men; in speaking of a young woman, it can also mean 'beautiful,' 'shapely'. Rather than translate it as fine fellows or some such tiresome cliché, I have left it untranslated.

send them all out hunting. Let Mem come also: if Mem can hunt with the men, we will give Zîn to him, otherwise it is too bad.¹⁰⁷

Qeretajdîn informed his brothers of what the mîr had said. The three brothers got up to take leave of mîr Sêvdîn, and left.

Just at that time Mem's horse Bor had fallen into a well, his belly had swollen up, and Mem sat in the stable at Bor's head and wept.

Moreover, Beko had also given Bor swamp water [to drink], and Bor kept on getting progressively worse.¹⁰⁸

[278] Mem lifted up his head and said to Bor,

"O servants, you hypocrites,
I've come from a northern land,
Why have you forgotten this creature?"

Then Mem wanted to talk to Bor, but it was no use, Bor had gotten angry and would not speak to him anymore. Mem wept again.

When Qeretajdîn saw that Mem had not come, he went to the stable and asked Mem, "Mem, who are you late?"

"What can I do? Don't you see what state my Bor is in?" Qeretajdîn took Mem to the palace, and they went to sleep.

The next day the alarm was sounded for the horsemen to go out hunting.

Qeretajdîn said to Mem, "Mem, get up! The horsemen have gone, let's go with them." Mem woke up and said:

"Here I am, unwell, in bed,
I cannot lift my head off the pillow,
I am homesick for my country.¹⁰⁹"

News reached the fellows that Mem was ill. They all came to see him, but no matter what they did Mem did not get up from his bed, and said, "O fellows, there is a

¹⁰⁷-lit. "It is tough/difficult."

¹⁰⁸-lit. "How(ever) much Bor went, he became that much bad."

¹⁰⁹-lit. "My eyes have remained on the road of the homeland."

pain in my brow. I shall die in your country, in a foreign land,¹¹⁰ with no one to care for me."

Qeretajdîn said, "Mîr Sêvdîn, give leave to these jindîs and me, come away from Mem, let's go out hunting once again."

The mîr made no response.

The jindîs followed each other out, leaving two by two.

Just then Zîn became pensive, thinking to herself, "Did Mem go [out hunting with them]? My strange Mem, when will he return from hunting?"

Then she got up and went to the diwan¹¹¹ to put away Mem's bedding; she opened the door of the room, and found Mem still in bed. Zîn was startled, but then she [started to] go, and Mem called to her, saying, "My dear, sweet natured¹¹² Zîn, what frightened you? Come closer."

Then Zîn came toward Mem, threw her arms¹¹³ around Mem, touching his neck for an instant, and said,

"My dandy Mem what a crazy boy you are,
Have you no sense in your head?
Why have you stayed [behind] today from the mîr's hunt?"

"My poor Zîn, they do this to every brave lad who comes,
Your red cheeks are like a sheet of paper.¹¹⁴"

[279] Zîn said, "My poor Mem, since you did not go hunting, get up and get dressed, come to the Khas Bakhcheh¹¹⁵. The three brothers have gone hunting with

¹¹⁰This is similar to part of one version of the Judeo-Spanish folk song, "Arvoles yoran por luvias": "En tierras ajenas yo me vo morir" = "I shall die in foreign lands."

¹¹¹See note 78 above.

¹¹²xûn şîrin =lit. "sweet blooded"

¹¹³=lit. "herself"

¹¹⁴Perhaps the smoothness of the paper is intended here.

¹¹⁵=lit. "Private garden." The term *Hasbahçe* occurs in Turkish folk stories of the same genre as Mem û Zîn, e.g. Tahir and Zühre, Kerem and Asîl.

the jirds, they won't be back for another six days, let's pass the time in the garden until they come [back]."

Mem got dressed and headed for the garden, but he took a wrong turn and went to the nightingale's garden [by mistake], while Zîn went to the Khas Bakhcheh.

In the garden Mem encountered a nightingale and said:

"Nightingale, why do you weep so?
Your neck bent over that rose,
There are hundreds of thousands of roses here.

Rose, why are so delicate and naïve¹¹⁶?
You pass your days in one color,
But still you are not [up to] Zîn's facial color and complexion.

Nightingale, you [?] of the whole earth,
You are not a salve for one's troubles,
You are a friend of the mice under the earth."

Just then Zîn went looking for Mem, and finding him in the nightingale's garden, she said, "My poor Mem, today you did not go hunting, but you come to converse with nightingales that cannot speak."

Zîn took Mem by the arm and led him to the Khas Bakhcheh, where they indulged in the pleasures of the world.

A moment later they embraced and fell fast asleep.

On that same day clouds suddenly gathered, and hail and rain¹¹⁷ came down together.

The hunters of Jizîra gathered and headed for Jizîra. Mîr Sêvdîn said to his servant Badîn, "Badîn, go and open the gate of Khas Bakhcheh by the time we get there."

¹¹⁶At the beginning of this version, Mem's father uses this same expression, nazîk-nazan, in speaking of Mem himself.

¹¹⁷This is reminiscent of Şilope = mixed snow and rain. The word is used in Ağrı and Van at least.

Badîn went on ahead. A moment after he opened the gate of the garden, the hunters reached the garden and dismounted. They led their horses to the stable and went into the Khas Bakhcheh, [after] Badîn said, "Please come in, o jindis."

They entered, passing by a corner¹¹⁸ of the garden.

The servant Merdîn happened on the place where Mem and Zîn were sleeping.

[280] When Servant Merdîn went there,
He saw Mem and Zîn in a bad state,
Fear took hold [of him], and he froze in his tracks.

When the servant came in,
Mem was sleeping, with Zîn beside him.
He only nodded at Servant Merdîn.¹¹⁹

Servant Merdîn said to himself, "Up till now I have been her father's servant, this could not be Zîn's doing; why did she do this today?" Then he thought a little and said:

"Mem you rascal¹²⁰, get up quickly,
Take your mouth away from Zîn's cheeks,
The mîr is coming, get up and find a way out."

Mem awoke to find the servant standing at his head, and said to him:

"I won't take my mouth away from Zîn's cheek,
Until there are 100 daggers [pointed] at my breast."

¹¹⁸The word k'osek- is ambiguous. It could come from: a) k'oşk (same derivation as English kiosk and Turkish köşk), meaning a pavilion, or gazebo-like structure, or b) k'oşe = goşe, meaning a corner. Other interpretations are also possible.

¹¹⁹Or perhaps Servant Merdîn nodded at him.

¹²⁰mal şewtf -lit. "one whose house has burnt down"

Mem would not let himself be indebted to anyone, he pulled his head back under his cloak and went back to sleep. The servant said to Zîn:

"In the south¹²¹ a black cloud has appeared,
Bursting with rain and hail,
[Meñbut t'erk'eşe] were dispersed

In the south a piece of white cloud appeared,
It rained and hailed all over,
It dispersed Jizîra's jindîs."

Lady Zîn lifted up her eyes,
Shed tears on her her red cheeks,
No color was left in her face.

"O my hardworking servant,
May the food of my hands be blessed for you,
Don't ever reveal my secret."

"[Just as] God is great,
Even if the mîr takes off my head,
Those words will not pass my lips."

[281] Now there was the sound of loud voices¹²²,
The servant recognized the mîr's voice,
Zîn got under Mem's cloak.¹²³

The mîr went up to Mem and greeted him,

¹²¹See note 47 above.

¹²²=lit. "yelling and screaming"

¹²³=lit. "Zîn fell inside the fur-coat and dress"

Mem said, "And upon you be peace,¹²⁴
It is truly a pleasure to see you.¹²⁵"

[But] when the mîr entered,
Mem did not rise before him,
He only nodded to the mîr.

The mîr said, "<Werin min û vî zemanî>
In my whole life, I have never seen the likes of this khan¹²⁶
No one has the right to do this here.¹²⁷"

Mem said, "Mîr, you went hunting, I stayed in bed,¹²⁸
All my sense left my head, all that remained was an [empty]
shell,
I opened my eyes [and found myself] in this place."

The mîr said to Mem,
"Tell me truthfully,
What were you doing in my garden?"

"In you garden I saw a gazelle,
Not [merely] a gazelle, a ravishing beauty,
With black¹²⁹ eyes, my idea of perfection."

¹²⁴See note #(59) above.

¹²⁵-lit. "You [come] on [my] head, [and on] both my eyes," a common Kurdish formulaic greeting.

¹²⁶i.e., ruler.

¹²⁷-lit. "It is above anyone's mouth to come to this place"

¹²⁸or, "in my place"

¹²⁹See note 89 above.

The servant advised him, saying, "Say 'I don't know if it was a houri or an angel.'" Mem said, "My dandy mîr, the truth is, I don't know if it was a houri or an angel."

A moment later the three brothers as well as Beko came to where Mem was.

Beko said, "O assembly, we are cold, we should light a fire here." The mîr agreed with Beko. Beko lit a great fire right beside Mem; when the fire became bright, Mem's sides were burning from the heat. Under his cloak, Zîn kept silent.

Mem said, "Tajdîn,¹³⁰ you left in the morning, now it's midday,
The fire is roasting my ribs one by one,
Bekir and the mîr are tormenting me.¹³¹"

Mem raised his hands in Tajdîn's direction,
Tajdîn understood what was going on all in all,
He espied Zîn's braids one by one.

[282] Qeretajdîn thought and said,
"What a fire! What burning!
Mem is ill, he's not responsible for his actions,¹³²
[That's why] he tried to greet the mîr from the ground¹³³.

Beko, you know this, you are his mortal enemy,
You are lighting fires above and below him,
You should be sitting closer to the fire than him¹³⁴."

Beko: "Qeretajdîn, enough of your blunders,
It is now prayer time,

¹³⁰i.e., Qeretajdîn.

¹³¹min dîkin de'w û doze -lit. "trying to start a fight with me," or "bringing charges against me."

¹³²-lit. "he is not aware of himself"

¹³³i.e., without rising.

¹³⁴I am not sure about the meaning of this line.

We, together with Mem, must rise to our feet,
 Face toward the south¹³⁵,
 Pray to God,
 [And] prostrate ourselves on the ground."

Qeretajdîn: "Yes, Beko, we will rise to our feet,
 But Mem is sick, he will stay [seated] on the ground,
 Don't you say anything unkind about it."

Qeretajdîn said to the mîr, "My mîr, how many years has it been since someone
 came to see¹³⁶ us? Today this nobleman has come to visit us, [so] why, Beko, are you
 making trouble for this man? If Beko does not leave him alone, I will slice open his
 [=Beko's] stomach with my dagger. I've not done so already for the sake of the jindîs.

Qeretajdîn pulled on the sheath of his dagger,
 The jindîs all headed out,
 He felt greatly troubled.

Qeretajdîn went home,
 He had words with Lady Perf,
 He said, "Take out the young stallion."¹³⁷

[Lady Perf said,] "Qeretajdîn, what different disasters
 Will befall only me and you?
 Don't let people say 'Why are you burning up this building?'"

Resho¹³⁸, you heroic, dark-colored [horse],

¹³⁵See note 47 above.

¹³⁶-lit. "to conquer us"

¹³⁷Although not spelled out here, we know from other versions that Qeretajdîn has decided to burn down his own castle, to create a diversion which will save Mem and Zîn's honor. Qeretajdîn wants to take out the young stallion to ride off somewhere, but also possibly to save it from the burning castle.

¹³⁸=Black one.

You resemble the [storm]clouds of April;
I don't know who you have argued with."

After hearing this, Qeretajdîn became mournful, then said to Lady Perf:

[283] "Enough piling words upon words,
Mem and Zîn may today be taken to task,
Bekir is a slanderer, he'll put Mem to the dagger."

"In that case,¹³⁹
Take the young stallion,
Make haste! Mount him [and ride off]"

Mîr Sêvdîn, heading for Qeretajdîn's castle, saw the servant [Merđîn] pacing back and forth¹⁴⁰, and said, "Servant, what is wrong?"

"My mîr, the mendene tree¹⁴¹ is a black tree,
From it comes a bright green and red flame,
Inside, noble Gorgîn¹⁴² has burnt up.

The mendene tree is a wet tree,
From it comes a green flame,
Inside, golden Gorgîn has burnt up."

When Merđîn said these words,

¹³⁹=lit. "If your word is such." Notice that Lady Perf's words in this verse are quite terse. She has indeed stopped 'piling words upon words'.

¹⁴⁰=lit. "coming and going"

¹⁴¹Such a tree name does not appear in any of the dictionaries or word lists I consulted. The closest I could find was Menendiarmudu in the *Derleme Sözlüğü*, vol. IX, p. 3161: in the Turkish of Gümüşhane (between Trabzon on the Black Sea coast and Erzurum, in what is today northeastern Turkey), this apparently refers to a type of green pear which, when it ripens in the summer, turns yellow.

¹⁴²From other versions we know that Gorgîn was Qeretajdîn's infant son. These verses have a parallel in ZK-1, p. 59.

The mîr was filled with sorrow¹⁴³,
The jindîs came behind him, two by two.

When Merdîn gave this report,
The mîr's heart fell to pieces,
The jindîs left the garden altogether.

Beko said: "Mîr, please come to this palace,
I'll go look into this case,
Who did it, set the fire.

Please come to the private palace,
Listen to my analysis,
I don't know if the horsecloth burned up, or the *palas*¹⁴⁴,

When the jindîs of Jizîra left the garden, Beko hid himself in it. When Mem and Zîn got up, Beko was watching.

Mem and Zîn rejoiced, and spoke [animatedly]. Zîn said to Mem:

"Mem, you saw what the master did,
We have been saved from disgrace¹⁴⁵,
They blew up a landmine, and rid us of it.....

[284] The three brothers are men of their words,¹⁴⁶
No one can burn down the castle,
[Or] their goodness will be told.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³-lit. "The liver and upper chest organs of the mîr were burning"

¹⁴⁴*palas* means 'a coarse woolen pileless carpet'; 'sackcloth'; 'horsedoth'. *Cilik*, which appears in the same line, also means 'horsedoth'.

¹⁴⁵-lit. "from before the swords." This could mean figuratively 'the putting to death [of offenders] to save oneself from disgrace'.

¹⁴⁶-lit. 'boys of saying'

¹⁴⁷Perhaps this means 'or else they will carry out their threat'.

Mem put on his cloak; he and Zîn headed for Qeretajdîn's castle. The castle was burning. Beko suddenly got up from behind the cover¹⁴⁸ of the trees and left: Mem was just too greedy¹⁴⁹.

Beko went, it was all over. By the time Mem and Zîn reached the castle, the fire had been put out.¹⁵⁰

Four or five days later, Beko went to the mîr and said, "My mîr, we must collect some gold, and give about 100 gold pieces to Qeretajdîn¹⁵¹: [if we do this,] it is possible that he will no longer be at odds with us.

Then they sent for Mem. The three brothers, Zîn and the jindîs went to the mîr. Zîn made coffee for the assembly, and gave it to them.

Beko asked, "How is it?" The mîr said, "It's cold water." Zîn gave the mîr another cup, and the mîr this one a lot; he cried.

Beko said, "My mîr, why are you crying?"

The mîr said, "You died, that's why I'm crying!" and the mîr gave Beko a slap on the cheek.

It was Beko's turn for coffee, and Qeretajdîn kne that when Zîn gave Beko coffee, Mem would laugh.

On the way [to Jizra], Mem had made a rabbit from a handkerchief. Qeretajdîn took it out of his pocket and threw it to the crowd.¹⁵²

Everyone laughed, and Mem and Zîn laughed with them. Beko incited the mîr.

The mîr was informed that they were laughing at the rabbit.

¹⁴⁸-lit. "the castle [of the tree]"

¹⁴⁹bû qjîna Memê = lit. "Mem's screaming happened." Cf. the following expression in Khamoian: *Qîrîn ji filanê tê* =lit. 'Screaming comes from *someone*' which means that someone is too greedy. [Qîrîn = Qîrîn] If this idiom sheds light on the sentence at hand, it would mean something like "Mem was just too greedy." But if so, then what sort of greed is intended? Perhaps this means that Beko found Mem and Zîn's secret tryst an example of greed, or of some other negative quality.

¹⁵⁰-lit. "the group had extinguished the fire"

¹⁵¹to help him rebuild his castle.

¹⁵²A Kurdish friend of mine, a twenty-eight year old woman (in 1988) from Kirkûk, Iraqi Kurdistan, told me that as a child she remembers seeing 'rabbits' made out of handkerchiefs for entertaining children. This must be a traditional Kurdish game. This motif occurs also in EP-1. See EP-1, note #120).

When the crowd dispersed, Beko took the gold that had been collected and placed it before Qeretajdîn, who made no reply.

Later on, the crowd returned to the castle and sat down. The gold had stayed with Beko; once again he placed it before Qeretajdîn, and the group said, "Qeretajdîn, for our sake you must accept the gold."

Qeretajdîn, not wanting to offend the crowd, picked up the gold and sent it home.

Beko groaned [and] said, "Mîr, why don't you speak, and show how generous you are?"

[285] Mem said, "Beko, today you must recite a song about me¹⁵³."

Beko said, "Mem's beloved, I have seen you,
A black, mangy Arab,
I saw her selling yoghurt¹⁵⁴."

Mem: "Beko, you are lying through your teeth¹⁵⁵,
Fibbing from head to toe,
Mine is a hourî among hourîs."

Beko: "The one my Mem is in love with,
Is a black Arab with cracked lips,
I saw her collecting yoghurt¹⁵⁶ in a bucket."

Mem: "Beko, that one isn't my beloved,
My beloved is Lady Zîn,
The daughter of mîr Zêvdîn,
The sister of mîr Sêvdîn,

¹⁵³=lit. "in my stead"

¹⁵⁴Dew (Sorani *dô*, Persian *dûgh* دُغ), is a drink made of yoghurt and water. The Turks call this *ayran*, the Armenians - *t'an*. It is not clear to me what *selling dew* refers to: perhaps it has a sexual connotation?

¹⁵⁵=lit. "you are lying in our faces"

¹⁵⁶See note 154 above.

Owner of a green gown¹⁵⁷,
I'll say it again, it's Lady Zîn."

The mîr said: "Boys, reprimand this nobody,
Grab hold of him, stick daggers in him."

Qeretajdîn: "If you harm Mem,
I'll cut off your heads one at a time."

Efan: "Before you cause our brother Mem to perish,
I'll harm 100 of you and kill 500 of you."

Cheko: "Before you do away with Mem,
I'll do you all in."

Forty pairs of strongmen blocked the doors of the diwan,
Mem stood behind the door, a dagger in hand,
For fear, no one stirred from his place¹⁵⁸.

Qeretajdîn said angrily, "Mîr, may your house also be ruined, may your honor
put you in your grave. You do as Beko bids, but Beko is a villain, he is deceiving you."

Qeretajdîn and his brothers¹⁵⁹ got up and went back to their castle. The next day
they gave the mir a note, declaring war¹⁶⁰.

Beko and the mîr went to see the four brothers. The mîr said, "Qeretajdîn,
[foreign] nations have come at us, they will destroy us, we must go to war.

The three brothers told the mîr that they would go to war, but that Mem [286]
would not go with them. Then they instructed the mîr to take good care of Mem.

As soon as the decree went out, all [ablebodied men] headed for war.

¹⁵⁷See note 10 above.

¹⁵⁸=lit. "no one changed his seat"

¹⁵⁹=lit. "with all three brothers," including Mem.

¹⁶⁰wekî şefe.

A few days later, Beko went to a shepherd, giving him some gold, and said [to him], "You must soil Mem and Zîn's names, saying that they are profligates." The next day it was announced around town that Zîn had committed adultery.

When the mîr heard this, he was even more ready to explode. Then Beko got up and went to the mîr, saying to him, "Mîr, now that the three brothers are gone, let's get even with Mem¹⁶¹."

The mîr said, "How can we do that?"

Beko and the mîr agreed on a way to get Mem [thrown] into jail.

They summoned Mem, [and] the mîr said to him, "Memê delal, let's you and I play chess. If you beat me, Zîn is your with our blessings, but if I beat you, I'll throw you in prison."

Mem agreed to the mîr's conditions.

They began to play. Mem beat the mîr two times. When Beko saw that things were going badly [for the mîr], he whispered in the mîr's ear, saying, "Summon Zîn to come to the window: let Mem see her and lose his concentration, so that you can win."

Beko went to Zîn and said, "My poor Zîn, Mem has beaten the mîr two times at chess, there's only the third round before Mem is totally yours¹⁶², because they are playing over you. Go to the window now, so that Mem can see you, and get so happy that he wins more quickly."

Zîn obeyed Beko and stood by the window. [Meanwhile] Beko went to the players,

And said: "Come on, mîr, you are both boys,
You are beating each other's queen¹⁶³,
Why don't you switch places for a little while?"

The mîr and Mem switched places,
Their castles and queens chipped away at each other¹⁶⁴,

¹⁶¹Were em sêrekê serê Memê çêkin.

¹⁶²-lit. "before you attain Mem"

¹⁶³or, knight.

¹⁶⁴hev bîrastin. Bîrastin does not appear in any of the Kurmanji dictionaries. The closest that I could find is bîraz, which in Sorani can mean 'roughening by chipping (especially a mill-stone),' and by

The mîr said, "Beko, you were right!"

Mem said, "At the window my Zîn is like a slap in the face!¹⁶⁵
Her golden locks fall down in curls
My eyes have gone dark, I'm taking a castle instead of a pawn.

[287] The mîr said, "Mem, I've beaten you, yes beaten you,
I've chased you into ruin,
I'll throw you into the stone prison.¹⁶⁶"

Mem said, "Mîr, you've won one game, I've won two.
Zîn is neither alive nor dead,¹⁶⁷
Why are you arresting me without cause?"

When the mîr won the game from Mem, Beko tied Mem's hands behind his back and said, "Mem, you are a prisoner of the mîr." Then Beko took Mem and threw him into the earthen¹⁶⁸ prison.

Zîn was very troubled, and went home.

The next day, Zîn summoned workers and secretly told them to dig from under her house to Mem's prison [cell], to make a large underground tunnel!¹⁶⁹, so that Mem could secretly come to Zîn's house.

extension 'scolding' or 'censuring'; it can also mean 'stone lining of a grave, of an underground water channel, etc.'

¹⁶⁵şaka şemaqa. According to Kurdoev, şemaq is a variant of şelmaq, which means 'slap in the face,' 'box on the ears'.

¹⁶⁶These three lines are almost identical in this version and ZK-1 (for the original Kurdish text, see Dzhaliil & Ordikhan Dzhaliilov. *Zargotina K'urda*, vol. 1, p. 60).

¹⁶⁷i.e., see what a state Zîn is in.

¹⁶⁸or 'ashen'

¹⁶⁹herqeke mezin. Herq- does not appear in any of the dictionaries, but the Arabic word kharq خرق , which means 'hole,' 'opening,' seems to fit.

Beko went once or twice to the prison, and noticed that Mem was in fine condition.¹⁷⁰ He locked the prison gates, went to the mîr and said, "My mîr, do prisoners grow thin or plump?"

"They grow thin."

"Then why is Mem in such fine condition?"

The mîr and Beko went to the prison, had the door of Mem's cell opened, and took him out of his cell. Beko was right, Mem had not grown thin.

Consequently, they took Mem and threw him in the stone prison.

When they had locked the gate of the stone prison on Mem, they went back and stood before the door of the earthen prison.

Before the mîr's eyes, Beko jumped into the cell, and kept on going until he came out at Zîn's house. The talk about Zîn, that she continually took Mem to her house, proved correct.

A few months later, it was rumored that Qeretajdîn was returning from war with his army, and that they would soon reach home.

Beko thought [and] said, "If Qeretajdîn comes and finds Mem in prison, he will lay waste to the whole city. Beko went to Zîn.

Zîn only ate once every two days, she cried constantly, great tears came flowing down her red cheeks.

Beko said, "Zîn, enough of these tricks,
Enough causing tears to flow!¹⁷¹ down your cheeks.
Go release Memê Alan [from prison]."

Zîn made herself ready,

[288] She quickly came down from her room,¹⁷²

And went to her thin Mem.

On the way, a dervish crossed her path, and Zîn said, "*Dewrêş baba*, where are you going?"

"I'm going travelling."

¹⁷⁰-lit. "that the rose of Mem's cheeks was bright."

¹⁷¹-lit. "to rain"

¹⁷²See note 78 above.

"I'll give you a letter; take it to Efn, Chekîn and Qeretajdîn."

"I won't take it."

"Why won't you take it?"

"If you give me a kiss, I'll take it." Zîn held up her cheeks for the dervish [to kiss], and he showered them with kisses. The dervish was a sheikh.¹⁷³

Zîn wrote Qeretajdîn what was necessary, then added that in exchange for delivering the letter, the dervish kissed her and that he had asked for the kiss.

The dervish set out.

Three days later, the letter reached Qeretajdîn. Qeretajdîn read the whole letter and said, "Dervish, why did you ask for a kiss from Zîn?"

The dervish said, "No!"

Qeretajdîn killed the dervish.^{173a}

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Zîn went and stood before the stone dungeon.

Her tears did not stop coming down. Even the stones themselves wept at Zîn's state.

Zîn said, "Mem, look up at once,
My stature is tall, my forehead is sparkling,
It's time to rejoice, lay aside grief.¹⁷⁴"

Mem said, "Zîn, you have not come to set me free,
You know not, o heart of mine,¹⁷⁵ what you are saying,

¹⁷³Apparently, sheikhs had the right to receive things that others would be refused. For example, according to Kurdoev, *şêxê biskê* is 1) "a sheikh with the right to receive a portion of wool when sheep are shorn," and 2) among the Yezidis, a sheikh who performs a religious ritual on a (male) child on the day of his birth or later."

^{173a}Motif K978. Uriah letter. Man carries written order for his own execution. This famous motif appears in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

¹⁷⁴-lit. "Rejoicing has come, change grief."

¹⁷⁵i.e., Zîn.

You have come to lose me totally.¹⁷⁶

Zîn: "My poor Mem, my mind is crazy,
My stature is tall, my cheeks are dripping,¹⁷⁷
It's time to rejoice, leave aside all grief."

Zîn lowered a white rope into the dungeon,
She threw it to Memê Alan,
Mem was slow to move.

[289] All his joints were twisted and torn,¹⁷⁸
The blood came out on his fingernails.

She threw into the dungeon a yellow rope,
Mem wrapped it around his waist, brought himself up,
And expired on the spot.

May God lay waste to the land of the *jinnâs*,
May it be ruined and razed to the ground,
It is evil the way they keep apart the hands of those in love.

Zîn's servant went to the dungeon, [and] Zîn said to him:
"Servant, wretched one,
Do me a favor, God bless you,
[Go] see who that is,¹⁷⁹ my heart has gone to pieces."

¹⁷⁶As in note 166 above, these three lines are almost identical to their counterpart in ZK-1 (see Dzhailil & Ordikhan Dzhaililov. *Zargotina K'urda*, vol. 1, p. 62).

¹⁷⁷Gulgul could mean "dripping [with tears]," or perhaps "rosy," which might be a more appropriate parallel with the sparkling forehead a few lines above.

¹⁷⁸=lit. "His finger-joints and joints were twisted/torn"

¹⁷⁹Apparently she sees someone approaching from a distance.

The servant went to call the Lady:¹⁸⁰ to come to Zîn.
 Perf hurried to her,
 Bringing face and hair together.¹⁸¹

When she saw the corpse of unlucky Mem, she was dumbstruck. The mîr and Beko also came to [view] Mem's corpse. Zîn lamented her situation, saying:

"My mîr, won't you tell me,
 Beko was your witness,
 Mem and Zîn are going to hell."

Lady Perf: "May it be so,
 May the heads of your three lions be lost,
 Mem's condition may certainly be so."

Beko: "I took an oath by Yasîn,¹⁸²
 That today Mem would be won over,
 I would give away the property of Medina¹⁸³
 For the sake of Lady Zîn.

So enough of these tricks,
 Enough of shedding tears on these rosy cheeks,
 As we have come, so shall we also die."

Lady Perf: "O Zîn, who would have thought!¹⁸⁴
 When Mem headed for Jizîra,

¹⁸⁰Sitiya, from colloquial Arabic sitti (<sayyidati), 'my lady'. This apparently is a reference to Lady Perf, Zîn's sister (and Qeretajdin's wife). In some versions, Perf is known as Sitiya throughout.

¹⁸¹I am not sure what this idiom means.

¹⁸²The name of a surah or chapter of the Quran.

¹⁸³The second holiest city of Islam.

¹⁸⁴=lit. "by the grief of Mem's heart"

These disasters would befall Mem and Zîn."

[290] "Zîn, I swear by Mem, over whom you weep,
At the sight of him no one acted supportively.¹⁸⁵
At his death, Mem's eyes were without mother or father."

They took Mem's corpse,
Placed it on a black stretcher,
The two sisters mourned him deeply.

Zîn's heart was melting, her tears were coming down like raindrops on her red cheeks, with aching heart she said:

"Sister, the clouds of April are thick,
Snow and rain come down together,
In the grave, Mem's sides will ache.

Tonight will be a wet night,
Snow and rain will rise together,
Around Mem's shroud it will be wet."

Beko scowled sharply at the two sisters, then stepped forward and said:

"Enough of these tricks,
I'll swing a ball at the polo¹⁸⁶ field,
Pick one up from Jizîra Bota,¹⁸⁷
Memê Alan is no more."

Zîn said, "Beko, that is out of the question,
For me the earth's surface has been lost,

¹⁸⁵-lit. "no one was cushion and arm rest"

¹⁸⁶Kaşo is a game played on horseback, similar to polo.

¹⁸⁷Apparently this means "choose a suitor from Jizîra Bota [rather than a foreigner]"

You would be happy to have Zîn for yourself."

Lady Perf said, "Beko, cause of Mem and Zîn's ruin,¹⁸⁸
May you find no goodness on the face of the earth,
Zîn has been laid low to the point of death."

Zîn said, "Zîn's cry for help reaches as far as Shems¹⁸⁹ of the
sunlight,
Dust has quietly fallen on [her] string of buttons,
Mem is dead, Zîn won't live to see the noon.

Zîn's cry reaches the saint of the cliffs,¹⁹⁰
Dust has fallen on [her] string of earrings,
Zîn won't live to see the evening."

When the maidens took Zîn home,
How sick and indisposed [she was],
The maidens were her pillows and armrests.¹⁹¹

When they brought Zîn home, mîr Sêvdîn and the jindîs of Jizîra [291] came and gathered around Zîn. She was in bad shape, she had grown pale,¹⁹² the dust of death was all over her face.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸=lit. "culprit of Mem and Zîn"

¹⁸⁹According to Bakaev, Şems is the name of a Yezidi deity, often employed in blessings and curses. The name derives from the Arabic word for sun, shams شمس. This passage has analogues in ZK-1 (see there, note # (86)), and in EP-1 (see there, note # (152)).

¹⁹⁰In EP-1, şexs is translated as 'saint.' The corresponding passage there and in ZK-1 has şexsê êvara = 'the saint of the evening' instead of şexsê zinara.

¹⁹¹i.e., they physically supported her.

¹⁹²=lit. "the color had gone from her"

¹⁹³=lit. "mouth and lips"

When she opened her eyes and saw the jindîs of her father's city gathered around her, she lifted up her head, saw the mîr, and said:

"Mîr Sêvdîn, I am dying, you will be left,
Place my grave together with Mem's,
Position¹⁹⁴ us back to back."

On that same day, Zîn too passed away. They made her a funeral, buried her, then returned home.

* *
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Qeretajdîn was nearing the city with his troops.

He said, "Brothers, see how ill-mannered Mem is, he has not come out to greet us." Efn said, "Brother, I fear that all is not well with Mem, otherwise he would have come."

The city came into view. From afar they could see that the city was in mourning.¹⁹⁵ The brothers rode on toward Lady Perf's quarters, and came to the gate. Lady Perf came out and gave news of Mem and Zîn.

She said, "You left, year has overtaken year,
Have you forgotten what pain is, what grief?¹⁹⁶
Mem and Zîn have entered their graves.

May mîr Sêvdîn be every mîr,
May Beko be law and order,

¹⁹⁴Bsêwrfnîn, from an unattested verb *Sêw[i]randin. I am guessing that it means "to position," "to line up."

¹⁹⁵-lit. "that in the city is mourning"

¹⁹⁶-lit. "Don't you know what pain is, what <fiwal> is?" Fawal, from Arabic aḥwāl إحوال, the broken plural of ḥāl حال, means "situation," "condition."

May Mem be in the *pir's* heaven.¹⁹⁷

May mîr Sevçîn be joyous,
May Beko be arrows and quiver,
May Mem be black <ber ferake>"

Qeretajdîn made no reply, but slowly turned and said,
"Brothers, these people have had it,¹⁹⁸ go around
Cutting off heads, leaving children alone,
Spill blood immeasurable.

Brothers, make haste,
Draw your swords from their sheathes,
Avenge the deaths of Mem and Zîn."

Everyone¹⁹⁹ heard that the three brothers had come and that they were about to wreak havoc on the city and its people. They sent their notables to the three brothers.

[292] Their elders²⁰⁰ threw themselves at the feet of Qeretajdîn and his brothers, who made no reply.

The elders caused them to dismount, gave them a royal reception, and tried to negotiate with them. [Meanwhile], three months passed.

Beko and the mîr moved to a house whose walls were guarded²⁰¹.

¹⁹⁷ber felekê pîr. Pîr, literally 'old man,' is a term used both by Islamic Sufis and by Yezidis. It refers to a spiritual leader in both. In addition, in Yezidi mythology, this is the name given to guardian-gods, e.g. the guardian-god of cattle, of sheep, etc. According to Steingass' Persian-English dictionary, pîr-i falak **فلك پیر** refers to the planet Saturn.

¹⁹⁸e'ol hatîye -lit. 'the end (of life) has come'

¹⁹⁹cimae't -lit. 'the group'

²⁰⁰rîspî -lit. 'white-beards'

²⁰¹pêla. The meaning 'guarded' or 'protected' did not appear in the dictionaries, but it makes more sense in the context than the following meanings found in the dictionaries for p'êl: "wave (of the sea)"; "time," "period"; "blowing (of the wind)"; "horn (of an animal)"; "cleverness."

Beko said, "Mîr, this is not right. Come, let's go throw ourselves [on the mercy of] the three brothers, maybe they will find a solution for us. The next day they went to the three brothers dressed as dervishes.

Qeretajdîn recognized them [when] the two of them threw themselves at the feet of the three brothers.

Qeretajdîn said, "I pardon you." Beko and the mîr rejoiced and returned home.

The following day, Beko went to Mem and Zîn's tomb, to recite a dirge²⁰².

When Beko opened the door of the tomb, it seemed to him that Mem and Zîn had sweated hailstones. He reported to the mîr that Mem and Zîn were still alive.

The people of Jizra went to the tomb of the two of them. Qeretajdîn, Chekîn and Efin remembered Mem and Zîn. The three brothers thought that the couple had fooled them,²⁰³ that they were not dead. They too went to the tomb, [and] saw that Mem and Zîn were in fact dead, their faces turned to face each other.²⁰⁴

Beko was standing at another grave.

Qeretajdîn drew his sword and aimed it at Beko's neck, then swung it.

Good are the three months of summer,
 Very fine are the summer pastures of Fereshin,
 Nowhere on earth can be found Memê Alan and Zîn.²⁰⁵

²⁰²dewrkê. Although the form Dewrjîk does not appear in the dictionaries, Izoff has a form Dûrikê miriya meaning "dirge," "lament," "funeral song."

²⁰³-lit. "us"

²⁰⁴It will be remembered that Zîn instructed mîr Sêvdîn to bury her beside Mem, positioning them back to back (see above, note 194). In other versions, it is explicitly stated that they were buried back to back, and when the grave was opened a few days later, they were lying face to face.

²⁰⁵This three-line verse ending is almost identical with that of ZK-1.

Jndi, Hajie, ed. "Mam i Zin," in Kurdskie Epicheskie Pesni-Skazy. (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), pp. 98-[111]. [Russian translation only; original was lost during the blockade of Leningrad] (EP-2)

EP-2. Collected and translated into Russian by O.L. Vil'chevskii. Reprinted from Skazki Narodov Vostoka [= Tales of the Peoples of the East] (Moscow & Leningrad, 1938). The original Kurdish text was burnt during the blockade of Leningrad (during World War II), and consequently we have only the Russian translation.

Mam i Zin (EP-2)

(98) Lo-lo, fellow, fellow among fellows!
 This is the story of Mem the sufferer,
 Mem, son of Al-pasha.
 The story of two unlucky lovers,
 This is the song of Zin of the black eyes
 And her fortune, ordained by fate.
 This is the song of Zin of the golden locks,
 The story of Mem's brave and wise
 Friend Karatadjin,
 Of the cruel Mir-Sevdin,
 The story of the villain Bekir Awan,
 Of matters which happened in Bakhtan¹...

Here is the story of Mem and Zin:

Two doves were flying in the sky,
 Two doves were cooing and singing,
 Two doves alit on a tree,
 Two doves looked in the window...

Near the window Mem, son of Al-pasha, was sleeping. Mem was handsome, Mem was a hero. Mem was the son of the master of the land of Mukhurzemín. And where is this land of Mukhurzemín, how does one walk or ride there? Neither you know nor I – no one knows.

¹-Bohtan, the province in which the city of Jezir (Cizir), or Jezira Bohtan, is located.

The doves sit on a tree and look in the window, admiring Mem. The younger dove says to the older one, "Sister, there isn't another Adonis² like Mem in the world, nor a youth more beautiful than Mem. Can there be a girl (99) worthy of Mem, son of Al-pasha, master of the land of Mukhurzemin?"

The older dove answered her, "Truly, Sister, there isn't another Adonis like Mem in the world, nor a youth more beautiful than Mem. You are still young, you don't know a lot yet, but I have flown over the whole world, and have seen many wondrous things. I know of a girl worthy of Mem, I know a beauty more lovely than Mem: she is the daughter of Mir-Sevdin, the master of Jezira Bota. Zin alone is worthy of Mem, Zin alone is more beautiful than Mem."

Two doves flew out of the tree,
Two doves flew around the world,
Two doves sank into the sky,
Two doves set down at Zin's bedside...

The younger dove says, "Sister, there is no other girl as beautiful as Zin in the world, nor a beauty as lovely as Zin. Only Mem, son of Al-pasha, is worthy of her. How shall we bring them together?"

The older dove says:
"Sister, we will obtain a doveskin³ [for her]."
Two doves were flying in the sky,
Two doves were cooing and singing,
They obtained a doveskin⁴
And brought it to the girl's bedside...

The world is full of wonders! What do we know about these doves? The doves dressed Zin in the doveskin, Zin became a dove, and off they flew.

²красавец - lit. "Handsome man."

³пкыркы голубныѳ i.e. set of dove feathers/wings. Motifs F821.1.6. Dress of feathers; D1069.2. Magic feather dress; D1520.35. Magic transportation by feather-dress.

⁴From God, according to ZK-1 and EP-1.

Three doves were flying in the sky,
 Three doves were cooing and singing,
 Three doves flew around the world,
 Three doves set down at Mem's bedside.

The doves removed Zin's doveskin, put Zin in Mem's bed, then flew away. During the night Zin accidentally brushed against Mem's leg. Mem woke up, and Zin did too. Zin said to Mem, "You so-and-so, how dare you come and lie down in my bed? Don't you know where you've lain down? You're lying in the bed of Zin. I am Zin, daughter of Mir-Sevdin, niece of Karatadjin, sister of Arfin⁵, fiancée of Chekin⁶. I am Zin, mistress⁷ of the Green Castle, daughter of the master of Jezira Bota."

Zin thought she was in her own bed! Mem said to her, "What are you talking about, you so-and-so, how dare you come and lie down in *my* bed? Don't you know where you've (100) lain down? You're lying in Mem's bed. I am Mem, son of Alpasha, master of the land of Mukhurzemin."

Mem didn't know doves had placed Zin in his bed. Poor Mem had been sleeping and didn't see them.

Mem and Zin starting quarreling. He said, "This is *my* bed!", and she said, "This is *my* bed!" Then Zin said to Mem, "Okay, since you say that this is your bed, tell me what side the hearth is on: when I'm lying in my bed, the hearth is on the left side."

Mem said, "Okay, when I lie in my bed, the hearth is on the right side."

They looked and saw that the hearth was on the right side of the bed – so the bed was Mem's! Mem won the bet, while poor Zin lost. She didn't know that doves had dressed her in a doveskin and brought her to Mukhurzemin, where they placed her in Mem's bed.

⁵Or possibly "Arfan" / "Erfan."

⁶Or possibly "Chekan." In this version, it doesn't seem to matter that Zin is already betrothed to someone else, as no further mention is made of it.

⁷Or "owner."

They fell into each other's arms, and slept that way until dawn. Early in the morning Zin gave Mem her ring, saying, "Let this ring be a token of our night together." Mem took the ring, and the two of them fell asleep.

The doves came back in the morning, dressed Zin in her doveskin, and flew with her to Jezira Bota, where they placed her in her own bed, then flew away.

Mem woke up sad. He had no memory of what had happened during the night. Mem was sad and bored. The time came for Mem to go to Al-pasha's diwan, but Mem didn't go. Al-pasha sent a servant after Mem, to call him to the diwan. The servant saw that Mem was sitting around [looking] sad and bored. Mem told the servant, "I hear and obey, I'll be there soon" Mem began to get ready to go to the diwan of Al-pasha. He took a pitcher and a basin to wash his hands. When he looked at his hands, he saw a ring on his finger. He remembered Zin and what she had said. Then he set out for the diwan of Al-pasha.

Mem came to the diwan. Ministers⁸, deputies⁹, and the people of the diwan were seated there. Al-pasha was seated on cushions in the middle, drinking coffee, smoking a pipe, in short enjoying himself. Mem didn't have his own place, but generally sat beside Al-pasha, pouring his coffee and stuffing his pipe. [On this day] Mem sat in the corner examining his ring.

Al-pasha said to Mem, "Mem, why are you sitting in the corner? Why are you sad and bored? You haven't fallen in love, have you?"

Mem said, "I'm in love with Zin, daughter of Mir-Sevdin, niece of Karatadjin, sister of Arfin, fiancée of Chekin. I'm in love with Zin, mistress of the Green Castle, daughter of the master of Jezira Bota."

(101) Al-pasha said, "Where is Jezira Bota?" (We don't know where Mukhurzemin is, how should they know where Jezira Bota is?)¹⁰ Mem said, "I know where Jezira Bota is. I am in love with Zin, daughter of Mir-Sevdin, master of Jezira Bota. I will go to Jezira Bota. Here is the ring she gave me last night."

⁸Wazîr.

⁹Wektî.

¹⁰It is ironic that no one has ever heard of Jezira Bota, since in fact it is Mukhurzemin that is an imaginary place. Jezira Bohtan really exists. It should be noted, however, that in Southern Kurmanji [and Mann's Mukri (OM)] version, Mukhurzemin is replaced by Yemen, which is, like Jezira Bohtan, a real place.

Al-pasha assembled scholars, wisemen, dervishes, mullahs, ministers, deputies, he gathered all the men, to see if anyone knew anything about Jezira Bota.

They said, "There is no such place as Jezira Bota. Nobody knows anything about such a place. Mem is crazy! Where is this Jezira Bota?"

Mem said, "You don't know where Jezira Bota is and neither do I, but here is the ring that Zin, daughter of Mir-Sevdin, master of Jezira Bota, gave me last night. I'm going to Jezira Bota. I'm not crazy."

The whole diwan said, "We never heard of Jezira Bota: where is it? There is no such place! Mem is crazy."

Mem left the diwan. He went to the Turkish garden. (Al-pasha had a large garden in which nightingales sang, flowers bloomed, and brooks babbled. It was a good garden). Mem went to the Turkish garden and grew sad.

Al-pasha said, "Send the daughters of the ministers and deputies to him in the garden; let them cheer him up."

The minister's daughter and the deputy's daughter went to the Turkish garden. When Mem saw them, he said, "Minister's daughter, Deputy's daughter, what do you want from me? I am sad over Zin, daughter of Mir-Sevdin, master of Jezira Bota. I don't need you. I have given my word, and I will keep it. This ring is a token of what I promised last night."

The minister's daughter and the deputy's daughter left Mem alone in the garden. Mem got up and returned to the city of Mukhuzemin. He went to the bazaar, and headed for a weapon-maker's shop.

"Peace be upon you, weapon-maker! Hammer me out a sword, a fine sword. Take as much money, gold, and jewels as you need."

The weapon-maker replied, "All right. In three days I will make you a sword."

Next Mem went to a blacksmith.

"Peace be upon you blacksmith! Prepare for me a horse harness. Take as much money, gold, and jewels as you need."

The blacksmith replied, "All right. In three days I will make you a horse harness."

Mem went out to look for a horse. He went to the fields, to the plains, to the mountains. Mem saw many horses, many fine (102) horses, but he couldn't find one right for him. Finally Mem came upon a mare.

"Peace be upon you, mare!" said Mem, "Get me a horse!"

The mare replied, "All right, I'll get you a horse. Go to the such-and-such mountains, to such-and-such a ravine, where a herd of Arabian horses grazes. Those are my sons, choose whichever one you want."

Mem went to the such-and-such mountains, to such-and-such a ravine. He saw a herd of grazing horses. There were Arabian horses, Turkmen horses, Karabagh horses.

Off to the side, by a brook, Mem saw a foal grazing. He went up to the foal and said, "Here is my horse." Mem took the horse and returned to town, where he put the foal in the stable. Mem said to the stable-man, "Peace be upon you, stable-man, take good care of this foal, he's my horse."

Two days had passed since Mem left Al-pasha's diwan. Mem returned home, lay down on his bed and fell asleep.

Al-pasha followed Mem around¹¹. He was afraid that Mem would leave and go to Jezira Bota. The weapon-maker came to Al-pasha and said, "Mem has ordered a sword." The blacksmith came to Al-pasha and said, "Mem has ordered a horse harness." The stable-man came to Al-pasha and said, "Mem has gotten a horse."

Al-pasha went and threw the horse in shackles. The following day Mem went to the weapon-maker and took his sword; he went to the blacksmith and took the horse harness; he went to the stable, and saw that his horse was in shackles.

The horse said to Mem, "Don't be afraid, Mem. If you want to reach Zin, I will take you to Jezira Bota. I will smash these chains. Saddle me up!"

Mem saddled up the horse, led it out of the stable, then put on his sword, mounted his horse, and looked at the ring.

Al-pasha and the whole diwan looked at Mem, thinking, "How will Mem go while the horse is shackled up?"

Mem mounted his horse and said to him, "Horse, if you are my horse, take me to Jezira Bota. I have a rendez-vous with Zin, daughter of Mir-Sevdin, master of Jezira Bota."

The horse snorted, neighed, moved his head, kicked with his feet, and the shackles fell off. He jumped up, and in three leaps Mem had vanished from view. Al-pasha and his diwan were awestruck. But let us return to Mem.

¹¹i.e., Al-pasha kept tabs on Mem.

Mem rode for one, two, three days. He passed by unknown places and strange lands. As he passed through a field, he saw a farmer plowing. Mem went up to the farmer. "Peace be upon you," said Mem, "What is the name of this land, (103) who is its ruler, and what is he called?"

The farmer answered, "Peace be upon you, horseman, do you really not know this country? This is Jezira Bota; its ruler is Mir-Sevdin, and he has a daughter Zin."

Mem exclaimed, "May you be well, o farmer, what you have told me is good news. I will make it to Zin, I will keep my word!"

Mem took his leave of the farmer and went on to Jezira Bota. Let's leave Mem and betake ourselves to Jezira Bota.

There were two Zins in Jezira Bota: one was the daughter of Mir-Sevdin, the other one, who was the sister of Bekir-Awan, was a sorceress and enchantress. By looking in books and by other methods, she found out that Mem was coming to Jezira Bota. She got up, covered her face¹², and went to a well on the edge of the city. Mem came to the well to water his horse. This Zin gave the horse some water and said, "Peace be upon you, Mem, son of Al-pasha, master of the nighttime pact¹³."

"Peace be upon you, Zin, I have carried out our agreement," answered Mem, thinking that the real Zin had come to the well.

Mem got down off his horse and asked Zin to uncover her face. Zin the sorceress, delighted, uncovered her face. Mem took one look at her and was horrified. "Why," he said, "have I undergone so much suffering, why have I come so far from my native land, to see an ogress like this!" Zin the sister of Bekir-Awan was ugly: [she was] swarthy and had a long nose. "Zin resembles a black Arab. In my father's kingdom there are lots of these!", thought Mem to himself.

Once again Zin said, "Peace be upon you, Mem, son of Al-pasha, master of the nighttime pact!"

Mem's horse understood the trick. Mem's horse grasped how sly Zin, the sister of Bekir-Awan, was, and said to Mem, "Mem, this is not the real Zin. This is the sister of Bekir-Awan. She is a sorceress and an enchantress. By looking in books and by other methods, she found out about your secret. Let's go on into the city."

¹²It is common for Muslim women to cover their heads with kerchiefs, and their faces with veils. In fact, in traditional Muslim society it is unacceptable for women to go around uncovered.

¹³This is apparently a reference to Mem and Zin's nighttime introduction.

Then Mem grasped how sly Zin, the sister of Bekir-Awan, was and caught on to her trick. He turned the horse around and left the well.

Zin, the sister of Bekir-Awan, was left alone at the well. Mem went on into the city, having avoided trouble. Mem entered the city, and approached the river. Zin, the daughter of Mir-Sevdin, was sitting by the river with her girl friends. As soon as Mem saw Zin the beauty, he recognized her black eyes, and his heart started pounding. He urged his horse on and leapt over to the other side of the river with a single bound. Mem's horse stopped beside Zin.

Mem bent down and kissed Zin. Zin accepted Mem's (104) kiss, removed her golden amulet (which was worth the entire taxes of Egypt for seven years) and handed it over to Mem.

Mem took the amulet from Zin's hand and wore it on his chest. He took one [more] look at Zin, then with one bound crossed back to the other side of the river on his horse.

Zin's girl friends stood admiringly by, watching Mem and Zin's encounter, exclaiming, "Praised be Mem, praised be Mem, son of Al-pasha!" Let's leave Zin with her girl friends and see what Mem is up to.

After riding around the city, Mem came to Karatadjin's house. Karatadjin was Zin's uncle¹⁴, Mir-Sevdin's general. Mem dismounted, took his horse by the reins, and came up to the house. Setiya, Karatadjin's wife, came out to greet Mem, took the horse, and escorted Mem into the house, where she seated him on the carpet, on cushions. Mem became Karatadjin's guest.

Mem stretched out on the cushions and took a nap. After all, to reach Jezira Bota he had ridden for three days without dismounting.

Setiya put Mem's horse in the stable, feeding him hay and barley, then went out to the yard and called Karatadjin, saying, "Come here, we have a very honored guest."

Karatadjin went into the chamber, greeted Mem, and sat down beside him. They began talking, and they talked until lunch, they talked until dinner, they talked until midnight, they talked until morning. Setiya entered the room and said, "Karatadjin,

¹⁴Russian, like English, does not distinguish between maternal and paternal uncles, whereas Kurdish does, like most other Middle Eastern languages. Although the original Kurdish text certainly made it clear whether Karatadjin was Zin's *Ap* or *Mam* (=Paternal uncle) or her *Xw/a'* (=Maternal uncle), the Russian translation uses the word *дядя* (*dyadya*), which could be either. This is a small example of how important details can be lost in translation.

let me feed our guest; you've already been talking for three days, and our guest has not yet eaten or rested from his journey."

Karatajdin said, "Oh, I thought we had only been talking for an hour, the conversation was so interesting!"

Setiya brought a tray with food into the chamber, and set it down before Mem. They started eating. Let's leave them, and go see what Mir-Sevdin is doing.

In the morning Mir-Sevdin came to his diwan. He saw that Karatadjin was not there, and sent a servant after him. The mir's servant went to Karatadjin's house and said to Setiya, "My mother, where is Karatadjin? The mir is summoning him to the diwan."

Setiya replied, "My son, tell the mir that Karatadjin has a guest, and that Karatadjin can't come to the diwan. How can one leave a guest?"

The servant returned to the mir and gave him Setiya's answer. After hearing her answer, he said to the servant, "Go tell him to come, and to bring his guest with him."

The servant set out for Karatadjin's house, went in and said to Setiya, "My mother, Mir-Sevdin says, 'Karatadjin should come and bring his guest with him'".

Setiya said to the servant, "My son, tell the mir that our guest (105) is a very special guest. If the mir must, let him come here. Karatadjin cannot go to him."

The servant returned to the mir and gave him Setiya's answer. The mir flew into a rage and shouted, "Hey, servants, give me a sharp dagger, I will slice Karatadjin's body into tiny pieces!"

Karatadjin heard the mir shouting, as his house was next door to the mir's house. He got up and went to the mir. "My mir," said Karatadjin, "I have come; why have you summoned me?"

Mir-Sevdin said, "Why haven't you been coming to my diwan? I haven't seen you here for two days already."

Karatadjin replied, "My mir, I have a guest¹⁵; it is not good for a host to leave the house when there is a guest there."

Mir-Sevdin said, "Come to me with your guest."

¹⁵=lit. "A guest has come to me."

Karatadjin replied, "My mir, my guest is a very special guest. Order carpets and palases¹⁶ to be spread out between my house and yours, have zurna and drum¹⁷ players placed on the path, then will I permit my guest to come to your house. [Only] such a welcome would be fitting for my guest."

The mir said, "Okay, I will order carpets and palases to be spread out between your house and mine, I will have zurna and drum players placed on the path, I will give your guest such a welcome; but if he turns out to be unworthy of such a welcome, I will have your heads cut off."

Karatadjin replied, "I agree. You will have my head and my guest's head cut off if he turns out to be unworthy of such a welcome. Let your throne be witness to this."

The mir said, "Okay, let my throne be witness to this."

Carpets and palases were spread out from Karatadjin's house to the house of the mir, zurna and drum players were placed on the path, and Karatadjin and Mem went to see the mir.

The mir stood with his servants at the threshold of the palace, saw Karatadjin and Mem coming, and shouted in an angry voice, "Karatadjin, I will have your head and your guest's head cut off!"

Karatadjin replied, "My mir, I agree, but your throne must bear witness. Enter the palace and sit on your throne."

The entire diwan agreed, [saying,] "Karatadjin is right."

Mir-Sevdin entered his palace, sat on his throne, and started talking with Mem. He talked for an hour, he talked for another hour, he talked for a third hour. Karatadjin approached the throne and said, "My mir, our guest must be fed. He will think, 'What sort of customs do they have, they talk for three hours without even giving so much as a morsel of food!'"

The mir said, "Oh, Karatadjin, I thought we were only talking for a minute. (106) Your guest is a good guest, he is worthy of the welcome I gave him."

Karatadjin replied, "My mir, your throne be witness to our agreement!"

¹⁶Palas = Coarse woolen napless carpet.

¹⁷Def û zime = Drum and zurna. The *Def* (or *Defol*) is a drum made of a large, wide wooden hoop covered on both sides with hide and beaten with a thin stick on one side and with a wooden mallet on the other. It usually accompanies the *Zime* (Turkish Zurna, South Slavic Zurna/Zurla, < Persian surmay), an oboe-like reed instrument made of wood and producing a shrill sound.

The mir said, "Karatadjin, you have won the bet!"

Karatadjin replied, "My mir, my stakes were my guest's head!¹⁸."

Mem remained in Mir-Sevdin's palace and became his beloved guest. Every day Mem attended the mir's diwan.

Once Mem met Zin. She said to him, "Tomorrow my father will say to you, 'I want to give my beloved guest a gift. Choose whatever you want: do you want an Arabian horse, do you want an Egyptian sabre, do you want a Gurani!¹⁹ club, do you want an Iranian shield? Choose whatever you want! Don't take anything, but instead ask for a felt cloak."

The next day Mir-Sevdin sent for Mem. Mem came to the mir's diwan and sat in his place. They drank coffee, smoked pipes, and amused themselves.

The mir said to Mem, "I want to give you a gift. Choose whatever you want: do you want an Arabian horse, do you want an Egyptian sabre, do you want a Gurani club, do you want an Iranian shield?"

Mem replied, "My mir, I have no need of an Arabian horse, or of an Egyptian sabre, or of a Gurani club, or of an Iranian shield. Give me a felt cloak."

"As you wish," said the mir.

They brought a felt cloak and gave it to Mem. It just so happened that Mem again met Zin. Zin said to him, "Tomorrow my father will go out hunting. He will invite you too. Pretend you're sick, and when everyone has gone, we will go to the Turkish garden."

Mir-Sevdin had a Turkish garden too. Every ruler has a Turkish garden.

The next day the mir sent word to Mem, saying, "I am going hunting today, make yourself ready!"

¹⁸=lit. "I played by means of the head of the guest."

¹⁹The Gurans live in southern Kurdistan, in and around Kermanshah, Iran, and speak a group of dialects (called 'Gurani') related to Kurdish. They consider themselves Kurds, and therefore so must we. There is a small literature on their language, including the following:

•Benedictsen, Age Meyer. *Les dialectes d'Awromân et de Pâwâ*, revus et publiés avec des notes et une esquisse de grammaire par Arthur Christensen (København : Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 1921), 128 p.

•Mann, Oskar. *Mundarten der Gûrân, besonders das Kändölâ, Auramâni und Bâdschâlâni*, bearbeitet von Karl Hadank, *Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen* (Berlin, 1930).

•MacKenzie, D.N. *The Dialect of Awroman (Hawrâmânî Luhôn) : Grammatical sketch, texts and vocabulary* (København : Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 1966), 140 p.

•Minorsky, V. "The Gûrân," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 11 (1943), pp. 75-103.

"Pardon me, my mir," replied Mem, "I am not well."

Everyone went. Mem alone remained. Mem and Zin went to the Turkish garden.

Bekir-Awan, brother of Zin the sorceress, understood Mem's intention. While they were hunting, Bekir-Awan went to the mir and said, "My mir, may we ourselves and our names be erased!"

Mir-Sevdin said, "What are you saying, what sort of talk is this?"

Bekir-Awan replied, "My mir, Mem has tricked you, he has gone with Zin to the Turkish garden. Both your name and ours have fallen. Who knows who this Mem is? Where is this land (107) Mukhurzemin? Neither you nor I know. For all we know, Mem could be the son of a calfherd or the son of a lambherd. What do we know?"

The mir flew into a rage and shouted, "Hey, servants, give me a sharp dagger, I want to slice Mem's body into tiny pieces!"

Everyone went back. When they approached the Turkish garden, Mem noticed the hunters and hid Zin under his felt cloak. He sat down as if he were sick.

The mir approached, and saw that Mem was sitting alone in the Turkish garden, looking unwell, wrapped in his cloak.

"Bekir-Awan," shouted the mir, "it is you who has tricked me!"

Bekir-Awan saw that Zin was not there; Mem was sitting alone, wrapped in his cloak.

Karatadjin saw Mem sitting wrapped up in his cloak, with tresses of Zin's hair sticking out from under the cloak. Poor Zin was small enough not to be seen under the cloak, but her hair was so long that it stuck out from under the cloak and touched the ground.

Karatadjin immediately guessed [the situation] and sent off his servant, saying, "Fellow, run, set my house on fire."

The servant ran swiftly, set Karatadjin's house on fire, and everyone rushed off to see the blaze.

Mem alone remained. Zin came out from under the cloak and ran home. From that time on, Mem spent every night with Zin. Bekir-Awan saw, but could do nothing; his sister Zin saw, but could do nothing. Mir-Sevdin believed Karatadjin, not Bekir-Awan.

Zin, the sister of Bekir-Awan, was a sorceress and enchantress. By looking in books and by other methods she launched a hostile army against Mir-Sevdim. Enemy troops came to Jezira Bota and surrounded the fortress.

The enemy troops went around with swords and shields, with lances and daggers, with cannons and rifles, saying, "Victory is ours²⁰!"

Mir-Sevdim gathered his servants and armed forces, his detachments of horsemen, his brave army. Mir-Sevdim's warriors came with swords and shields, with lances and daggers, with cannons and rifles; they came to the service of their mir.

Karatadjin, Mir-Sevdim's general, stood at the head of all of his troops. Karatadjin prepared to march. He saddled up his Arabian horse, took his sword and shield, his lance and dagger, his rifle and cartridges.

When Karatadjin had equipped himself, he made ready to march and set out for the mir's diwan.

(108) Karatadjin came to the mir's diwan, politely greeted the mir and concluded a new agreement with him. "My mir," said Karatadjin, "I am ready to serve the mir, I will lead your troops to battle, I will mow down these infidels, I will scatter their regiments, I will feed their flesh to the dogs and the crows. Victory is mine! But while I am fighting, you must promise not to touch Mem. Mem is my guest, I am answerable for his head."

"All right," said Mir-Sevdim, "I give you my word that I won't touch Mem until you return."

Karatadjin took leave of the mir and went out to wage war. Mem remained in Jezira Bota. Every morning Mem spent in Mir-Sevdim's diwan, every evening he spent with Zin in the Turkish garden.

One day Bekir-Awan came to the mir and said, "My mir, may we ourselves and our names be erased!"

Mir-Sevdim said, "What are you saying, what sort of talk is this?"

Bekir-Awan replied, "My mir, Mem spends every evening in the Turkish garden with Zin; both your name and ours have fallen. Who knows who this Mem is? Where is this land Mukhuzemin? Nobody ever heard of such a land. Mem says that he is the son of Al-pasha, but who really knows his father and mother? For all

²⁰-lit. "The war is ours!"

we know, Mem could be the son of a calfherd or the son of a lambherd. What do we know?"

Mir-Sevdin said to Bekir-Awan, "I gave my word to Karatadjin that I wouldn't touch Mem until he came back!"

Bekir-Awan replied, "My mir, I know what to do. Call Mem to the diwan tomorrow and say, 'Let's have an arrow shooting contest. If your arrow lands further away, you can ask me for whatever you want; if my arrow lands further away, I will do with you as I please.' If your arrow lands further away, you say, 'Mem, I will throw you in the stone dungeon.' If Mem's arrow lands further away, he will ask for Zin, and we will lock him up in the stone dungeon. You won't break your word to Karatadjin."

The mir said, "All right, tomorrow I'll do just as you said."

That evening Mem went to the Turkish garden with Zin. Zin said to Mem, "Tomorrow my father will invite you to an arrow shooting contest. He will say, 'If your arrow lands further away, you can ask me for whatever you want'. If you win the contest, ask for me."

The next day Mem went to the mir's diwan. Mir-Sevdin said to him, "Let's have an arrow shooting contest. If your arrow lands further away, you can ask me for whatever you want; if my arrow lands further away, I will do with you as I please."

Mem said, "All right."

(109) The mir shot, and his arrow fell nearby. Mem shot, and his arrow flew across the field, falling by the river. The mir shot a second time, and the arrow fell only a little further away; Mem shot again, and the arrow vanished from view, falling on the other bank of the river.

Bekir-Awan saw that Mem was winning, so he hurried off to Zin and said to her, "Zin, come out of the house and watch Mem; he keeps shooting and losing. The mir's arrows lie further afield. They're about to shoot for the third time."

Poor Zin, unaware of Bekir-Awan's intentions, left the guest hall and stood opposite Mem. Zin stood before Mem's eyes as the sun would, blinding his eyes, so that he could see nothing. The mir shot, and this time his arrow fell far afield, near Mem's first arrow. Mem was looking not at the arrow, but at Zin. Mem shot, and the arrow landed on his own foot. Mir-Sevdin shouted, "Mem, you've lost! I can do with you as I please. I want to throw you into the stone dungeon!" And they threw Mem into the stone dungeon.

Let us see what Karatadjin is doing. Karatadjin led the mir's troops to battle, defeated the enemy troops, scattered the regiments of the infidels, fed their flesh to the dogs and the crows. Karatadjin captured three provinces of the enemy, collecting countless taxes and tribute. He loaded up blackbreasted camels with gold and jewels and came back with the troops to Jezira Bota.

Mir-Sevdin, hearing that Karatadjin had crushed the enemy and was approaching Jezira Bota with his troops, was frightened and called Bekir-Awan. Bekir-Awan came to the diwan and stood before the mir, as is fitting.

"Bekir-Awan," said the mir, "Karatadjin is coming with the troops. What should we do? I promised Karatadjin that I wouldn't touch Mem, and here we've thrown him into the stone dungeon!"

Bekir-Awan replied, "My mir, Karatadjin won't be back for another three days. Tell Zin to release Mem from the dungeon."

The mir consented. They called Zin and told her to release Mem from the stone dungeon.

Poor Zin's heart was all aflutter. She ran straight to the dungeon, and when she got close, said to Mem, "Mem, beloved Mem, sun of my eyes, Mem, my father has ordered me to release you from the dungeon."

Mem replied from the dungeon:

"O Zin, o my Zin of the black eyes,
O Zin, o my Zin of the golden locks.
Leave Mem in the dungeon, forget it,
In the dungeon Mem's bones have rotted."

(110) "I can't leave the dungeon," said Mem.

Zin thought of a way to rescue Mem; she would try everything for her beloved. She let down her braids into the dungeon. Mem grabbed hold of them, and she tried to pull him out. Poor Mem had completely exhausted his strength while in the dungeon. His hands and legs grew weak, his bones rotted. When Zin had pulled him half way up, Mem's strength failed; he let go of Zin's hair and fell to the bottom, where he expired.

Seeing that Mem was dead, poor Zin began loudly to sob:

"O Mem, o my beloved Mem,

O Mem, o my handsome Mem,
O Mem, light of my eyes, Mem,
O Mem, joy of my heart, Mem,
They've separated me from you, o Mem,
They've left you in the dungeon, o Mem,
You expired this morning."

They buried Mem on the very same day. Mir-Sevdin said, to console Zin:

"Don't cry, Zin, don't cry, Zin of the black eyes,
Don't cry, Zin, don't cry, Zin of the golden locks.

What do we know about Mem? Where did Mem come from, who were his father and mother? Where is this land Mukhurzemin? We know nothing about it. For all we know, Mem could be the son of a calfherd or the son of a lambherd. What do we know? Don't cry, Zin, don't sob, Zin. I will find you another husband, I will marry you to the king of the Turks, to the shah of Iran, I will find you a good husband!"

Zin replied, "I won't marry the king of the Turks, I won't marry the shah of Iran, I don't need another husband.

Mem died this morning,
Zin has one day left to live."

Zin died that evening, and they buried her beside Mem.

Karatadjin arrived on the following day with the troops, bringing much gold and jewels. Karatadjin rid Jezira Bota of its enemies, fed the infidel troops to the dogs and the crows, and conquered three hostile provinces.

Karatadjin came to his house. Setiya greeted him with the words, (111) "Karatadjin, Mem is dead, Zin is dead, and they were buried yesterday. Bekir-Awan killed Mem and Zin."

Karatadjin replied, "If she's dead, she's dead; what can I do about it?"

The next day Karatadjin got up and went to the mir's diwan. Mir-Sevdin was sitting, drinking coffee, smoking his pipe, giving himself to pleasure. The ministers and deputies were seated at the sides, with Bekir-Awan. Karatadjin came into the diwan, and bowed before the mir as is fitting. He placed gold and jewels before the

mir, he placed heads of the enemy before the mir, and said, "My mir, I have done my part, I have rid Jezira Bota of its enemies."

Mir-Sevdin said, "Praise be to you, Karatadjin, request from me whatever you wish, you deserve a reward from me."

Karatadjin replied, "My mir, let us go for a walk."

The mir consented. They got up and went. Bekir-Awan wanted to go home unnoticed. Karatadjin said to Bekir-Awan, "Bekir-Awan, let's go for a walk."

What could Bekir-Awan do? He replied, "All right."

They walked until they came to the tomb of Mem and Zin.

Karatadjin went up to their tomb and said, "My mir, who killed them? Who killed Mem? Didn't you give me your word that you wouldn't touch Mem?"

Mir-Sevdin said, "Bekir-Awan advised me; Mem lost fair and square, I didn't touch him."

Karatadjin made no answer to the mir, drew his sword, and with one blow sliced off Bekir-Awan's head. Bekir-Awan's blood watered Mem and Zin's grave. Some drops of Bekir-Awan's blood fell on a bush growing over the grave. The drops of Bekir-Awan's blood blossomed as scarlet flowers.

Two doves were flying in the sky,
Two doves were cooing and singing,
Two doves alit on the bush of scarlet flowers,
Two doves sang the story of Mem and Zin:
"Where is our Mem, son of Al-pasha,
Where is Zin, our beauty?"

You are still alive, while they have long since become dust under the earth.

The story of Mem and Zin has reached an end. May favor befall the parents of those present and those listening.

- Jndi, Hajie, ed. *Kurdskie Epicheskie Pesni-Skazy*. (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), pp. 66-[97]; 183-[209]. [Russian translation + Kurmanji in Cyrillic script; includes bibliography of other versions] (EP-1)
- Ward, Alan, ed. *Mem û Zîn : Mam and Zin, Kurdish National Epic*. (Amsterdam : International Society Kurdistan [ISK], 1968), 49 l. [Edited version of EP-1 with English translation]

- EP-1. Collected by Hajie Jndi in 1955 from E'tarê Şero [pronounced 'Shero'], age 55, of the Kurdish tribe Ortilî, which inhabits the Ashtarak region of Soviet Armenia. E'tarê Şero, who was born in 1901 in the village of Soybilax [Soğukbulak] in the county (kaza) of Surmeli, Kurdistan of Turkey, was a literate peasant who lived in Nork, a suburb of Erivan, capital of Soviet Armenia, until his death in 1974. He was a jolly fellow who loved to talk, and knew, wrote, and collected most types of Kurdish folklore, including folktales, romances, and songs. Two versions of the story of Yusuf and Zulaykha (Ūsiv ū Zeliġe) have been collected from him ([1965] Ch.Kh. Bakaev. *Rol' IAzykovykh Kontaktov v Razvitii IAzyka Kurdov SSSR* (Moskva : Nauka, 1977), p. 189-211 and [pre 1976?] M.B. Rudenko. *Literaturnaia i Fol'klornye Versii Kurdskoj Poemy "IUusuf i Zelikha"* (Moskva : Nauka, 1986), pp. 300-310; 336-247), as well as two written versions of Zembilfiroş ([1933] Ordikhane Dzhaliġ & Dzhaliġe Dzhaliġ. *Zargotina K'urda = Kurdskiġ Fol'klor* (Moskva : Nauka, 1978), #10, pp. 189-194 and [1933] Zh.S. Musaelian. *Zambil'frosh : Kurdskaia poema i ee fol'klornye versii* (Moskva : Nauka, 1983), pp. 110-116). It should be noted that the translator became aware of Alan Ward's work only after translating it himself, and comparative notes were subsequently added.

Mem û Zîn (EP-1)

(1) There was a shrine by the name of Ardawid(ê), beside the city Mikhurzemîn. At this shrine there lived a maiden. The maiden had lived there for seven years. One day she saw three riders coming across the water, their horses gray. These riders were coming towards her. The maiden was very confused and flustered, [and] said, "Who has ever seen horses riding on the sea without their feet touching the water?" The riders came and got down off their horses in front of the shrine. They said:

"Fair maiden, we have come after you. You must get ready, we will take you for a ride."

The maiden asked, "Why? Who are you?"

They said, "We are the guides of luck and fortune."

The maiden said, "Well in that case, mount your horses brothers, I am coming with you."

(2) The riders mounted their horses. One of them seated the maiden behind him ¹, and they started out over the sea. When they reached the middle of the sea, the maiden got very thirsty and asked for water. The rider took hold of the girl's arm, pulled her down towards the water, [and] said:

"Sister, drink some water."

The maiden filled her palms three times with water and drank. While she was drinking the water, she also took in some foam from the sea². From this very sea foam, the maiden got pregnant. After she drank the water, the riders took her back home to that pavilion³, and left.

After that the maiden felt that she was pregnant. "Oh my God" she said, "What has befallen me? I am a virgin living at this shrine; everyone passes by here, what will they say about me? How did this happen to me? I'll jump into the sea, to save myself from the pain of the world." But she didn't have the nerve to do it⁴. She waited until nine months, nine hours and nine minutes had passed. This maiden gave birth through her mouth, she brought forth a boy. The boy shined like a torchlight amid the maiden's hands and feet, like a golden lamp. He [184] was like a bright star that falls from the sky. She had no milk to suckle him with⁵. The maiden thought about killing the boy, but she didn't have the heart to do it, there was nothing she wouldn't do to keep from making a bad name for herself. The maiden gave a lot of thought to what she should do. Then she wrapped the dear child in a bunch of clean rags and took him to the seashore, where she left him. People always say these words:

(3) Mem appeared from his mother's lap⁶,

¹-lit. "threw the girl on his horse's back."

²-lit. "Foam of the sea also fell inside her heart."

³-the shrine.

⁴-lit. "But the sweet spirit did not allow/let."

⁵-lit. "There was no breast for him to suck."

⁶This contradicts the earlier statement that the maiden gave birth through her mouth.

Nobody knows whose lover he'll be.
 The city of Mikhurzemîn is black and dark,
 No human being⁷ can see it,
 Al pasha lives in it.
 One day out of love and mirth,
 Al pasha went to the seashore,
 And heard the voice of this child.
 "Hey" he said, "God, the creator⁸
 I have become old in strength⁹,
 Today you have given me this child."
 He took the child in his arms
 Took him joyously and quickly home,
 "Here" he said [to his wife], "Slave of God¹⁰, a merciful gift."
 In the world there are limits and borders.
 This boy became a son to Al pasha,
 He grew up to be as big as a city.
 — What a world of chaos,
 How many people have come up in it,
 One is Mem, one is Zîn,
 One is Ferhad, one is Shirin¹¹,

⁷lit. "No one of the sons of Adam."

⁸**Beyt'ilfar**, an obscure word, which looks like Arabic bay: al-fa'r **الفأر بيت**, meaning *House of the mouse*. This does not seem to make sense. In Jndî's Russian and Ward's English translations, it is rendered as *Creator*.

⁹**Li tayatê** is obscure. **Teyet** means 'strengthening,' but I am not sure that **tayat** is the same as **teyet**. The Russian translation omits it, saying only 'I have grown old (alone)'. I know of no connection between **tayat** and 'being alone'. I follow Ward's English translation in rendering it as "old in strength."

¹⁰An Islamic way of referring to human beings. Kurdish: **e'vda xadê (xwedê)**, literal translation of Arabic 'abd Allâh **عبد الله**.

¹¹A reference to the well-known romance of Ferhat and Shirin, which has numerous Turkish and Persian versions.

One is Leylê, one is Mejrûm¹²,
 In the world they came up,
 Did not achieve their luck and fortune,
 There are many slanderers and traitors¹³,
 Now we come to the story of Zîn.

Zîn lived in the city of Jizîra Bota. She was the daughter of Mîr Seydîn, niece of mîr Sêvdîn¹⁴. She was beautiful, she shined¹⁵ like the sun, she was like a virgin houri in paradise.

{4} She had forty maidservants at her beck and call. She was the sister-in-law-to-be⁶ of Qeretajdin, the betrothed of Chekan. One day she led her maidservants to the garden of Torkirî, and made a picnic for herself. She went for a stroll, then gave an order to her servants, saying:

"You go home and I'll go to my resting place to sleep for a while."

The servants went. Zîn too went and slept. There was a tree above her resting place. Three doves came and alighted on the tree. The doves were houris: two of them were the daughters, and one was their mother.

{5} [185] When the daughters laid eyes on Zîn, they lost all sense of reason. They said to their mother:

"Are there men in the world as beautiful as Zîn?"

¹²A reference to the well-known romance of Layla and Majnûn, which has numerous Arabic, Turkish, Urdu, Persian, and Kurdish versions.

¹³*Nemama*, presumably from Arabic *nammâm* نمام = 'Slanderer,' 'Calumniator.'

¹⁴*Brazî* means the child of one's brother, as opposed to *xwarzî*, the child of one's sister. From this it is clear that in this version, mîr Seydîn and mîr Sêvdîn are brothers.

¹⁵*Perîlamiş*, from Turkish *parlamiş*, past active participle of *parlamak* - 'to shine.' There are perfectly good native Kurdish words for to shine, e.g. *Biriçîn*. However, the style of this informant is marked by the use of several Turkish verbs.

¹⁶*Bûk* means: 1) Bride; 2) Girl marrying into the family: hence, for the groom's parents it means 'Daughter-in-law,' while for the groom's siblings it means 'Sister-in-law.' In Hebrew also, *kalah* (קלה) means both 'bride' and 'daughter-in-law.'

Their mother said, "Children, Memê Alan lives in the city of Mikhurzemîn; Zîn is not half as beautiful as Mem."

The doves made a pact to take Zîn to Mem, and then to bring her back. They began by praying to God, in order to get a dove's plumage¹⁷ for Zîn:

- (6) "Oh Lord, make a command,
 Bring down a dove's garment,
 We ourselves are three,
 Make Zîn the fourth one of us."
 God made a command,
 Plumage¹⁸ came down from above,
 The three houris became four.
 Mem in his white tower
 Fell into a sweet slumber,
 Lest someone dare to go to his bed.
 It was getting on towards midnight,
 Memê Ala fell asleep,
 How should he know that Zîn was coming?
 These four darling houris
 Travelled a year's distance in one hour,
 Now things will begin to happen.
 The four doves flew to a treetop.
 They went through the heavens,
 And landed at Memê Ala's window.
 They take the plumage from Zîn's back¹⁹,
 Put out the candle and lamps at Mem's head.
 They placed Zîn beside Mem on the bed,
 Mem lifts his head [awaking] from sweet slumber,
 And sees a ravishing beauty in his arms,

¹⁷-lit. "skin/plumage of doves." Motif F821.1.6. **Dress of feathers.**

¹⁸-lit. "skin."

¹⁹-lit. "neck."

Not a beauty, but rather a houri,
A fairy among the houris.

Mem said:

"I swear, by God,
Not even a houri of heavenly provenance
May dare to look at my bed and pillow!"

Zîn said:

"You should collect your senses,
My name is Tellî Khatûn²⁰ and Zîn,
No one may look at my bed and pillow."

[186] Mem said:

"I swear by the almighty,
I will tell you, and you will believe me,
Tell me how many minarets there are in your father's city!"

Zîn said:

"I swear by God the great,
Who is considered above us all,
In my father's city there are sixty six minarets."

Mem said:

"I swear by God the great,
In my father's city there are
Three hundred sixty six minarets."
In the darkness in the house at night,
They used the occasion,
[To go] to the terrace on the roof.

(7) Mem and Zîn went down together to Mem's pavilion and terrace. When they looked out on the city, they saw that one could count the beasts and birds of the wilderness and the stars in the heavens, but one could not count the minarets.

When they got down from the pavilion, Zîn said:

²⁰cf. Tellî Nigâr, Koroğlu's wife.

"Mem, you know that those who brought me will take me away, so let's exchange rings. From time immemorial men go after the women, women don't go after the men."

They exchanged rings there.

(8) The doves put Mem to sleep, put Zîn's plumage on her back²¹, and together lifted themselves and took her to the place from which they had taken her.

Let us return to Mem. Once around midnight Mem woke up, and wondered to himself, "Was that a dream, or wasn't it? If it was real, where is she?" Mem kept saying this over and over to himself, over and over like an ailing seventy²² year-old man. He remained in this condition until dawn.

(9) It became time for the mîr's²³ breakfast. Al pasha said:

"Boy, why don't you go see why Mem is late today? Why hasn't he come distribute coffee in the diwan?"

Two men went to look in on Mem. They saw that Mem was distressed. They went and told Al pasha,

"Mem is distressed."

Al pasha and his entourage went to see Mem. They asked him how he was. Mem said,

"Well, today I'm very ill."

The whole group returned to the diwan. Al pasha had advisers, who consulted together, then said to Al pasha,

"Mem is not sick, his problem is that he's heartsick, or that he wants to get married, but is ashamed to tell you."

(10) [187] On their advice Al pasha made a proclamation in the city of Mikhurzemîn, saying

"All married women and unmarried girls, men and youths, all must come tomorrow to my garden Torkîf to play and amuse themselves with singing and

²¹See note 19 above.

²²The text says 'seven,' which must be a printing error. Ward's English translation reads: "like a man seven years sick."

²³-Al pasha's

dancing. I will ask for the hand of whatever woman or girl my Mem takes a liking to²⁴."

Everyone who had a cow sold it, and outfitted his daughter with fine clothes, saying,

"Maybe Mem will choose my daughter."

The next day the garden was filled with people: girls, brides, men, youths, children.

(11) Al pasha sent two men to Mem, saying,

"Boys, go tell Mem to come enjoy himself in the garden."

The men went to Mem, and said,

"C'mon, Mem, let's go to the garden: that should cheer you up."

Mem got up. They brought water for him to wash his face with. He had taken a towel to dry his hands and eyes, when suddenly he saw Zîn's ring [on his finger]. When he saw the ring, he knew that she had really been there. He fainted on the spot. They sprinkled him with water here and there, put their hands on his heart; he came to and went with them to the garden. He went and sat down by the fountain pool. A little while later he threw his coat over his head and became silent. He sat like that for some time.

(12) The daughters of the noblemen came and encircled Mem, saying to him,

"This Mem will take one of *us*, he wouldn't take the daughter of a simple peasant²⁵."

They took turns singing songs for Mem. One of them was a blind musician, in the manner of an ashik²⁶ [*] she said,

"If Mem takes anyone, he'll take me." She came up to Mem, and became a royal pain²⁷.

(13) The judge's daughter said:

²⁴-lit. "whichever woman or girl he puts a hand on."

²⁵kurmançê xam = 'a naive or simple Kurmanj or Kurd.'

²⁶=folk poet and singer.

²⁷bû bela nisîfetiê = 'was an unlucky disaster.'

"Come Mem, you soldier,
Why have you hidden under your fur?
Don't cry; marry the judge's daughter."

The mentor's daughter said:

"Come Mem, you're crazy,
Why have you hidden under your green fur?
Get up and marry the mentor's daughter."

The vizier's daughter said:

"Come Mem, you're haughty,
You're hiding under your green fur on purpose!
You've been wanting the vizier's daughter."²⁶

{14} [188] The blind one said:

"Come Mem my falcon,
You've long been in love with me and my saz [*],
You won't find another like me to ask for."
Mem looked up and saw that even
The blind one had come to sing to him.
He lifted up his head and said,
"You daughters of my father's noblemen,
You are like mothers and sisters to me,
Except the one Mem alone knows!"
When Mem said these words,

²⁶With rhyme, the following more or less catches the mood of the original:

"Come Mem, you're so haughty,
You're hiding under your green fur just to be naughty,

What you really want is the vizier's daughter's body!"

The girls and women were disappointed²⁹,
They left the garden Torkîrî two by two.

{15} Mem got up and left the garden. He went to his father's treasury, filled a saddlebag with gold coins, and went to the marketplace. He went to the saddler and said,

"What must I give you to have you make me a saddle the likes of which no man has yet ridden on, completely inlaid³⁰ with rubies, pearls, and jewels?"

The saddler wanted one hundred gold coins, Mem gave him two hundred, and gave him forty days to do it in. Next he went to the tailor, he bought clothes that were worth three hundred gold coins, then went to see his father's horses.

His father had forty horses: all were pedigreed. Whichever ones Mem touched on the back, their backs broke under [the pressure of] his hand. He wasn't crazy about any of the horses. When he was about to leave, he saw the horse used for carrying water coming towards him. Mem put his hand on the horse's back, and the latter raised his back four fingers' breadth under Mem's hand. Mem called the stableman and said,

"Boy, how much does my father pay you a month?"

"He gives me ten gold coins a month, my mîr."

{16} Mem said, "I'll give you fifteen gold coins a month. You take this horse and give him the treatment reserved for the finest steeds³¹, and for forty nights water him so well that when you water his croup, it will come out his mane, and when you water his mane, it will come out his croup.³²

The stableman said, "My mîr, even if you gave me nothing, I would be obligated to take care of him, because I'm your father's stableman."

²⁹-lit. "The hearts and livers of the girls and women were burning."

³⁰ *qur'aniî; kî*, another compound from a Turkish verb.

³¹-lit. "Tie it up at the head of the finest horses."

³²Cf. ZK-1: "For two weeks you take care of this Bor so that if I water his mane from the front, it will come out his croup." Ward's translation has: "... for forty days treat it so that when you wash its crupper the water splashes its mane and when you wash its mane the water splashes its crupper (i.e. thoroughly)."

News reached Al pasha that Mem was making preparations to depart. Al pasha went to the stables, and had steel chains put around the four legs of Mem's horse. Then he went and locked the city gates, and took the key and put it underneath his own mattress. "Now let's see if he goes anywhere," he thought to himself.

{17} Time passed, and Mem's forty days were up. He went to see the saddle and suit of clothes, and found them prepared as is proper. He brought his saddle and [189] clothes home³³. Then he went to Bor³⁴. He saw that Bor was as is fitting [for a fine horse to be]. Mem took Bor out, put his saddle and harness on him, and mounted him, but he was unaware that Bor's four legs were in chains.

Mem took Bor outside,
Put on him the bejewelled saddle³⁵,
With his foot in the stirrup, he said, "O God and Prophet"
Bor was blessed and leaped over the wall at once.

News reached Al pasha that Mem had gone.

"But Bor was chained and the gate was locked; how did it happen?"

Al pasha and his entourage went after Mem. They saw that Mem had started out and was riding. Al pasha said in a song:

{18} "Mem, my son, don't be disrespectful.
Don't leave the city of Mikhurzemîn, O hope of my old age,
I'll give you five hundred ladies and maidservants."

Mem said:

"Father, what would I do with this house, this land,

³³lit. "He picked up his saddle and clothes and brought them to his house."

³⁴Suddenly the horse's name is Bor. In this version we are not told that Memê names him. 'Bor' is both a word for 'horse' (one of many) and the name of Memê's horse.

³⁵This line is hard to translate: Lê kir zîné Al bavî ceware. See note 83 below.

I won't sit with you now and deliberate³⁶,
 I won't drink a cup of coffee or sherbet [*],
 Our relationship is over till the Day of Judgment."
 Here is Mem's dear mother³⁷.
 She wipes the tears from her red face,
 And says: "Mem, my son, don't go, may my milk be blessed unto you³⁸."

{19} No matter what they did, Mem would not turn back. Even in chains, Bor flew like a falcon. But some of Al pasha's notables got on their horses and followed Mem, saying:

"Let's go together with Mem, our blood isn't redder than his [*]."
 Al pasha sat down with his entourage, and watched Mem from behind.
 Al pasha's song:

{20} "Mem, my son, don't be disrespectful.
 I'll give you five hundred ladies and maidservants,
 Don't leave the city of Mikhurzemîn, O hope of my old age.
 I don't know [why, but] fate³⁹ won't let Mem see Zîn,

³⁶Here the Russian word *sovet*, which means 'advice,' is used!

³⁷Actually, his adoptive mother.

³⁸Compare the following passage from an Arabic text in the dialect of Qartmin, province of Mardin, Turkey: 13. *ê qât mādām mant jo'ân, haqq f-mæn xalaqni w xalâq³⁸k, bē kef alla ta'āla xalaq hatt³⁸t baydāt, w šakkāl³⁸n, k³⁸llū kama ba'ḏu-we. nīy³⁸ta, ḥaliba ḥalāl kāl'* (p. 165). German translation: 13. Sie sprach: "Nun, da du nicht hungrig bist ... Bei dem, der mich und dich geschaffen hat: So wie Gott der Herr diese drei Eier geschaffen und sie verschieden gestaltet hat, so ist doch alles einander gleich!" Ihre Absicht ... sie war eine ehrenwerte Frau (wörtlich: ihre Milch [die sie von ihrer Mutter getrunken hatte], war rechtmässig. (p. 167). from W. Fischer & O. Jastrow. *Handbuch der arabischen Dialekte* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980), p. 165-167. Apparently there is a formulaic expression which exists at least in Arabic (as spoken in Kurdistan) and Kurdish, 'For a woman's milk [which she drank from her mother] to be legitimate,' meaning that that woman is honorable. Cf. also OM, p. 41, German tr. p. 73, Eyyubiyān p. 102. In the context of this version, it may mean that Mem's mother relieves her son of his obligation to her. Cf. Turkish 'Hakkını helâl et.' There is also an adjective 'Şirhelal' = lit. "With legal milk," which Kurdoev translates as "Noble," "Honest," "Sincere."

³⁹'Nazar' = lit. "the glance," i.e. the evil eye.

[190] She⁴⁰ will drag him from country to country,
 Once again he will lay eyes on his mother and father,
 O Lord, with your generous help,
 I will call a conference here,
 To find out what fate has in store for Zîn and Mem.

{21} Mem rode on. The knights of his father's nobles rode after him. Mem looked back, saw his father's knights following him, and said to himself, "I'll wait here until they come, then I'll tell them to go back; it's a shame, just because I'm going, why do they need to come?" Mem waited, and the knights arrived.

Mem's song said:

{22} "O nobles of my father,
 You return to your roots and source,
 I leave to you for safekeeping⁴¹ my old father.

When Mem said this, all the knights went back. Mem rode on. For three days and three nights he rode Bor in chains. He didn't know that Bor was chained. The chains cut into Bor's legs, [and] Bor said:

{23} "Come my Mem, you crazy dandy,
 For three nights, three days you
 Have been urging me on, like a bird⁴².
 It never occurred to you that the chains were eating into Bor's legs."
 He said: "My Mem, you are free,
 For the past several nights you've urged me on with your hand,
 It never occurred to you that the chains were biting into Bor's legs

⁴⁰It is unclear from the Russian translation whether Zînê or fate (sud'ba судьба, feminine in Russian) is meant here.

⁴¹'Anemetî' = Arabic amānah امانة, Turkish emanet, something entrusted to another for safekeeping.

⁴²'Teyare'

They've eaten the skin, bones alone remain."

He said: "My Mem, you are blind,

For three nights you've urged me on.

It never occurred to you that the chains were wounding Bor's legs."

- {24} Memê delal leaped to the ground,
He unsheathed his trusty sword⁴³,
Pounced on the chains and shackles,
Cut the chains as if they were cucumbers.
He said: "I swear by the All-mighty,
I have become wretched,
My Bor is in bad shape."

Bor said:

- {25} "Mem, have no worries,
Wrap up my legs in handkerchiefs,
Give me water from the spring's source⁴⁴,
Treat me tenderly with your fingers,
[And] I'll get you to Jizîra Botan."

{26} [191] Mem wrapped up Bor's legs, took his saddle off his back, took the bit out of his mouth, led him out [to pasture] in the meadow, then went and lay down beside the spring. One, two, three, four days. When Mem got up, he went straight to Bor. He looked and saw that Bor was⁴⁵ [sturdy] as before, that white hair was growing

⁴³Zilfeqare' - Dhû al-faqâr **الْفَقَّارِ** ذُو، the name of the prophet Ali's sword.

⁴⁴Selefêd **ç'e'vkanîyane**: Both 'selef' and **ç'e'vkanî** / **ç'avkanî** mean 'spring source.' **Kanî** by itself means 'spring' while **ç'av** means 'eye': This parallels 1) Arabic 'ayn **عَيْن**, meaning both 'eye' and 'spring'; and 2) Persian chashm **چشم**, meaning 'eye,' and chashmeh **چشمه**, meaning 'spring.' Chashmeh was borrowed into Turkish as **çeşme** meaning 'spring' or 'fountain,' and from there was borrowed into the Balkan languages: South Slavic **česma**, Romanian **cişmea**.

⁴⁵doxme = ?Sturdy? In Turkish, **tökme** can mean 'solid' or 'sturdy' (of furniture).

over the wound. He saddled and harnessed Bor, and jumped on his back. Mem rode for thirty seven days without stopping. He went until he reached the plain of Jizîra Bota. But Mem had no idea what place he was in. Bor said to Mem:

{27} "Lift your head and look into the valley,
The Plain of Jizîr is a dry grassland,
You will see a figure [in the distance].
Is it a farmer or a black eagle?"
My crazy Mem
Urges Bor on⁴⁶ with his right spur,
Blessed Bor, in the twinkling of an eye⁴⁷,
Comes up beside a farmer.

{28} When Mem laid eyes on the farmer, he expressed gratitude, saying, "It's been nearly forty days and nights that I've been on the road, I have not yet laid eyes on another human being, until I saw a farmer just now." Mem sang:

{29} "Farmer, swear by God,
I'll give you two handfuls of gold coins,
Tell me truthfully,
Which way to Jizîra Bota?"
The farmer said:
"I swear by God,
I'll tell you the truth,
The very road you are on is the road to Jizîr."

{30} Mem gave the farmer two handfuls of gold coins and rode on. He went a fair distance, then returned to the farmer, thinking, "There are 1,000 Jizîrs, I didn't ask

⁴⁶-lit. "Scares Bor."

⁴⁷'Nava feyzil e'ynêta' This is obscure. e'yn - could be Arabic 'ayn عَيْن, meaning 'eye'

who is the ruler of Jizîr, or any details about it⁴⁸." When Mem turned back, the farmer said [to himself], "My God, he's coming back to kill me!" Because there was a custom in their country first to give men money, and then to kill them. As for their enemies, they certainly gave money first, then killed them. First they would pay off their sins, then they would kill. Mem called to the farmer from a distance, saying:

"My dear man, why are you running away? I have a few things to ask you. Come tell me who the mîr and agha of Jizîr are."

[The farmer] replied, "The mîr of Jizîr is Mîr Seydîn, his comrades-in-arms and heroes are Erfan, Chekan and Qeretajdîn."

[192] When he said this, Mem once again gave him a handful of gold, and rode on. In order to rejoice, the farmer unharnessed his oxen and went home. On that very day, Qeretajdîn had gone out hunting with his brothers. The daughter of Bekir Ewan was a sorceress, whose name was also Zîn: she had foretold⁴⁹ that Mem would come today. She therefore went and stood on the Bridge of Zembelî, saying [to herself], "When Mem comes, I'll tell him that I am Zîn, and tell him not to go to Jizîr, but rather to take me away from here."

[31] Mem rode on and on, until he saw three horsemen chasing after a gazelle: no matter what they did, they couldn't catch it. Mem set Bor on the gazelle, and he immediately caught it. Qeretajdîn and his two brothers came up behind Mem and said to him:

"Hey, whose hunting game is this that you've caught?"

A word from them, a word from Mem, with one hand Mem threw Qeretajdîn down from his saddle, [and] said:

"I'll throw you on the ground, make mincemeat⁵⁰ out of you."

Erfan and Chekan said to their brother:

⁴⁸lit. "I didn't ask [who] her [=Jizîr's] agha [is], her prince [mîr], her news."

⁴⁹In a note to the Russian translation, *remil* is described as a way of telling fortunes that is widespread in the Middle East. It consists of specially marked cubes (or dice) which are thrown onto a board, and by checking in a special fortune-telling book, the combination of markings on the cubes and on the board are interpreted to predict the future.

⁵⁰*Elep'arçe* = 'many tiny pieces.'

"Come, let's go, the man felt sorry for us, [and therefore] caught the animal⁵¹ for us."

Mem said, "I'm a stranger; I meant you no harm, I just felt sorry for you, and caught the gazelle for you."

Mem gave them the animal. They rode away, and Mem headed for Jizîr.

(32) Mem rode onto the Bridge of Zembelî,
 He saw a girl sitting on the bridge,
 Mem greeted the girl.
 The girl said: "On my eyes⁵² Memê Alan!"
 Mem said: "How did you know my name?"
 She said: "I know that you are Mem,
 That you've been on the road for forty days and nights,
 All for the sake of me -- beautiful maiden."
 Mem said: "Maiden, O maiden,
 May fire rise from under your heels,
 Why isn't my ring on your finger?"
 She said: "When my Mem appeared here,
 I lost all my sense,
 The ring fell off my finger.
 The ring fell off my finger and onto the Bridge
 of Zembelî and was lost."

⁵¹**Nêçîr** = hunt (as a noun), game animal. This is cognate to Persian *nakhchîr* نَخچیر = hunt, which was borrowed into Classical Hebrew as *nahshîr* נַחֲשִׁיר.

⁵²Standard Kurdish greeting of welcome, with parallels in Arabic ('alâ rāsî wa-'aynî = lit. "on my head and eye," but the idiom means 'gladly'), Persian (*chashm* چشم = lit. "eye" but idiomatically means 'OK'), and Turkish (*baş üstüne* = lit. "on my head," but idiomatically means 'gladly,' and in the Turkish of Karā, one even hears *göz üstüne* = lit. "on my eye," a literal translation of the Kurdish).

{33} Bekir's daughter Zîn said: "Mem, I can see that you're having second thoughts, you acting coldly towards me⁵³. For forty days and nights I've been sitting on this bridge [sewing] on my embroidery frame⁵⁴ [waiting] for you: the cold has gotten to me, the dust of the flocks has gotten all over me, making me black. If you won't marry me, I'll [193] call on the noblemen of Jizîr [to cut you into such tiny pieces] that the largest part of you will be your ear."

{34} Mem was perplexed and bewildered, he didn't know what to do next, [and] said: "My God! My father was ready to give me 500 ladies with their maidservants, and I've come here for this filthy black one? I've abandoned my house and fortune, and my father." Bor saw that Mem was about to burst with grief, and said to Mem:

{35} "Mem, this is the daughter of Bekir Ewan,
She is a sorceress, with her dice
She leads many travelers like you astray.
Throw her on the saddle and croup of [your] own [horse],
Urge me on with your right spur,
With God's permission she'll find herself on the ground."

{36} Mem picked her up and seated her behind him⁵⁵, and said forcefully:

"Come, God be with you, I'll take you, for this must be my fate."

When he seated her behind himself, he spurred Bor on, and Bekir's Zîn fell off onto the ground, in a dead swoon⁵⁶. Mem became concerned⁵⁷, got down off his

⁵³-lit. "You have lapsed into deep thought, you're making you heart cold towards me."

⁵⁴K'erge appears in Bakaev's dictionary as K'ergah, and like Turkish *gergef* means 'embroidery frame.'

⁵⁵-lit. "threw her on his horse's back."

⁵⁶-lit. "She didn't die this year, it's seven years since she died." I.e., she looked as if she had been dead for seven years already.

⁵⁷Two reliable sources (Kurdoev and Khamoian) translate the expression *k'etiu nav mitalan* as 'to lapse into a reverie,' 'to become lost in thought'; in the Russian translation, the passage in question is translated as *Memë began to shake*; Jaba & Justi explain the word [metâla] as meaning 'groaning'; 'anxiety,' 'concern.' Only this last meaning makes sense here.

horse over her, put his hand to [her] heart [and] sprinkled cold water on her. She revived a little, [and] opened her eyes. Mem said:

"I swear by God, when I marry the lady Zîn, I'll will come bring you to be her maidservant."

In this way they came to an agreement⁵⁸.

Mem rode on to the city. Bor once again spoke to Mem:

- (37) "Mem, this is Jizîra Botan,
They knead their yeast with blood,
When the sun goes down, brothers won't even care for their own brothers,
Wrap your head in your blue⁵⁹ overcoat,
[Even] the glances of their suckling infants⁶⁰
Are enough to take out fishes' eyes in the sea."
- (38) Mem wraps his head in his blue overcoat,
Sets the bridle on [Bor's] croup,
Blessed Bor takes Mem from street to street,
Arrives before the residence of Qeretajdîn.
Khatûn Perî⁶¹ sees this from the balcony,
Comes down⁶² the stairs,
[And] says, "Servants, take my brother's horse to the stable."
She takes Mem by the arm,
[And] says, "Brother, please, this way to the diwan,

⁵⁸=lit. "They made their words one."

⁵⁹**Hesîn** can mean both 'blue' and 'green.' Although there is another word, **kesk**, which only means 'green,' **hesînayî** or **hesînaîî** means 'greenery, vegetation.' It is curious that this word has both meanings, particularly because there is a type of cat from the town of Van (Wan) which is all white, with one blue eye and one green eye. It would be interesting to see how the Kurds distinguish between the two pigments in this situation. According to a note in the Russian translation, the color blue (or green) in this context is meant to protect Memê against the evil eye.

⁶⁰=lit. "Infants in front of [nursing] mothers."

⁶¹Khatûn [=Lady] Perî is Qeretajdîn's wife and Zîn's older sister.

⁶²**Jorda**, short for **jî jorda**, here means 'from above,' i.e. 'down(ward).'

This guest is most welcome⁶³.
 Khatûn Perf comes to the diwan,
 Puts down seven mattresses in place of one,
 [194] Seats Mem among them.
 Mem takes the overcoat off his head,
 Khatûn Perf sees with both eyes,
 Mem gives off brightness to the blue tower⁶⁴,
 She sends a man to fetch Qeretajdîn.

(39) The servant went to Qeretajdîn [and] said:

"My mîr, khatûn Perf says for you to come, a much revered guest has come".
 Qeretajdîn and his two brothers headed for his house.

Qeretajdîn and his brothers came inside,
 They greeted Mem first,
 They became as four brothers speaking together.

They sat and talked with Mem for three nights and three days, yet it was to them a day, an hour, and a minute. Khatûn Perf prepares food and places it before them. But out of joy for Mem's visit, they gaze on Mem's brightness, and forget about food and drink⁶⁵.

(40) Mîr Seydîn sees that there are so many plaintiffs [at his court] that there isn't room for a pin to fall⁶⁶. He sends a messenger to khatûn Perf, telling her to send Qeretajdîn immediately.

⁶³See note 52 above.

⁶⁴This line is obscure. 'Nûr û nedera Memê daye birca hêşne' lit. *The light and glance of Memê gave to the blue tower*. What the blue tower refers to we are not told, but we can assume it refers to Qeretajdîn's residence. See also note 59 above. Ward's translation reads: "The light and beauty of Mem lit up the dark tower."

⁶⁵=lit. "Bread and water don't fall to their minds."

⁶⁶=lit. "They are putting their feet on each other's tongues," a vivid description of a crowded situation.

The boy went and saw that khatûn Perf was stirring the food with a ladle. He said, "Khatûn Perf, the mîr says for Qeretajdîn to come immediately, the plaintiffs are eating each other up".

[41] When he said that, khatûn Perf hit him in the forehead with the ladle. Red blood came out. The boy said, "Even if I die, I want to go have a look at Mem [first]." He went to the diwan and stood and looked at Mem. The mîr sent a second man, saying:

"Boy, tell Qeretajdîn to come. What sort of guest does he have? For three days he has neglected the door of the diwan⁶⁷."

This boy went to Qeretajdîn and valiantly requested [him to come]. Qeretajdîn got up and went alone to the mîr. The mîr said, "You've locked the door of the diwan now for three days and nights; the plaintiffs are eating each other up."

Qeretajdîn said to the mîr, "My mîr, I swear by God that I had no idea three days had passed: to me it seemed like a minute and an hour. My guest is such a person that if he came to your door, *you* would stand up before *him*.⁶⁸

[42] The mîr said, "Our family⁶⁹ has never stood up for anyone."

[195] Qeretajdîn went back home. When the mîr's meal⁷⁰ was ready, he sent a man to fetch Mem, Qeretajdîn and his brothers. Qeretajdîn filled Mem's pockets with small coins⁷¹, and said, "When you leave, scatter the coins in all directions, so that the people distribute them among themselves, to avert the evil eye⁷²."

⁶⁷-lit. "He has left the door and diwan without a master," or "without care." Apparently Qeretajdîn had the keys to the diwan.

⁶⁸It is customary for everyone to stand up when a mîr or other ruler enters the room, as a sign of respect for him. Memê is apparently regarded so highly, that with regard to the mîr, the usual practice would be reversed, so that even the mîr would stand up out of respect for Memê when the latter entered the room.

⁶⁹Mala me = lit. "household," "house."

⁷⁰Nan = lit. "bread."

⁷¹Guroş = Petty coin. Cf. German Groschen, Arabic qirsh قرش / ghirsh غرش (plural qurūsh قروش / ghurūsh غروش), Turkish kuruş.

⁷²See note 39 above.

{43} They got into the carriage and went.

When Mem went inside
He greeted the mîr first,
The mîr returned his greeting⁷³,
Rising ever so slightly to his feet.

{44} While they ate their food, they spoke a little, [and] the mîr was in awe of Mem. When Mem came in and the mîr stood up before him, Qeretajdîn threw his handkerchief under [the mîr's] seat.

The spoke for a long time, then Qeretajdîn said to the mîr, "My mîr, Mem has already been here a few days, [but] has not yet seen our city: Please allow us to go to [the roof of] my palace⁷⁴, so that Mem can look [out over the city].

The mîr gave them leave. They took Mem, but Qeretajdîn came back to the mîr [and] said, "My mîr, didn't you say 'I won't stand up before Memê?'"

The mîr said, "My boy, I didn't get up."

{45} Qeretajdîn [reached down and] took his handkerchief out from under the mîr's seat and showed it to him. The mîr said, "Well, even if I did stand up, I wasn't aware of it."

Mem, Qeretajdîn and his two brothers went up to [the roof of] Qeretajdîn's palace, sat down and talked. Khatûn Zîn's residence was across from that of Qeretajdîn. She had heard that Qeretajdîn had a very honored guest, but she didn't know that it was Mem.

⁷³Muslims greet each other by saying "al-salāmu 'alaykum" **السلام عليكم** (Peace be upon you), to which the reply is "wa-'alaykum al-salām" **وعليكم السلام**.

⁷⁴In the Russian translation, this is rendered as "the tower of my palace," but the original Kurdish has only 'sar k'oc'k û serê min' = "On [to] my köşk and saray" (Turkish köşk = "Pavilion"; saray [from Persian serāy **سرایی** = "Palace"). It would make sense to view the city from a high position, such as a terrace or a tower, but there is nothing in the text to suggest a tower per se.

Zîn went onto her balcony, looked over at Qeretajdîn's house, and saw Mem sitting there⁷⁵. She didn't restrain herself, but on the spot sang a song about Mem for all to hear:

- (46) O maidservants, you look,
On Qeretajdîn's roof is an important delegation.
One is Qeretajdîn,
One is Erfan, one is Chekan,
The fourth – may my head and yours
Be a sacrifice⁷⁶ for Memê Alan.

[196] Mem heard Zîn's voice, looked over and saw her perched at the front of the balcony, singing to him. Mem said, "By God, let them kill me, but I too will sing a song for Zîn." Qeretajdîn and his brothers heard Zîn's song. [Then] Mem sang:

- (47) O brothers, you look,
Look at that headdress,
At that silken neck kerchief,
A voice has floated to my ears⁷⁷,

⁷⁵=lit. "And saw that Memê was also on it." This, as well as the fact that Zînê specifically goes to her balcony across the way, suggests that the people at Qeretajdîn's house are sitting on a balcony or terrace. See note 74 above.

⁷⁶This type of expression is common in the languages of the Middle East. Compare Arabic *fidāka abî* **أبي فداك** /wa-fidan la-ka abî/ **لك فدى** = "May my father be thy ransom"; *ju'iltu fidāka* **جعلت فداك** = lit. "May I be made your ransom," i.e. "Could I but sacrifice myself for you!" (Wehr); Persian *qurbān-i to/shumā* **تو/ شما قربان** = "[May I be] your sacrifice," a common greeting; Turkish 'kurban olayım' = "May I be a sacrifice," a way of saying "Please!" "I beg you!," Christian Neo-Aramaic *ana xlapux* = "I [am] your replacement."

⁷⁷*Dengek li min t'esele bû*. This line is hard to translate, because the dictionaries don't the exact form 't'esele,' and I am not totally sure that 't'esel,' which does occur, is the same thing. Originally from Arabic *tasallî* (*tasallin*) **تسلل**, meaning "entertainment," "diversion," originally "consoling oneself," or a garbling of *tasā'ul* **تسأل**, meaning "[self-directed] question" (this last thanks to Jaba

I don't know if it's a houri's voice, or an angel's.

At that point Qeretajdîn's two brothers wanted to strike Mem, but their big brother would not let them, saying, "Calm down brothers, what do Mem and Zîn's words mean^{78?} Theirs is nothing but a nighttime dream."

(48) Zîn saw that songs were of no help, so she gathered her old copperware^{78a} and loaded up two or three camels, and went to the spring to wash and polish her copper. The spring was right next to Qeretajdîn's residence.

When Mem saw that Zîn had gotten dressed up and was leading a caravan to the spring, he said, "By God, let them kill me, but I will sing a song for Zîn and her caravan." He sang:

- (49) "Brothers, a great caravan has come,
My head, boys and imams, is in confusion,
It has been on people's lips,
How much there must be there to tax⁷⁹,
It is worthy of Memê Alan,
That someone should extract taxes and tolls from it⁸⁰."

& Justî), the Kurdish dictionaries have the following: 1) Kurdoev: Test, check, revision; Investigation, consideration; Visit; Paying attention [The Hebrew root BQR manifests a similar cluster of meanings]; 2) Jaba & Justî: Consolation; Consultation, conference, putting of many heads together; 3) Izolt: Consolation, solace; 4) Khanoian: To visit; To look at. Perhaps the meaning of the verse is "A voice has diverted/consoled me." Alan Ward's translation is "I have heard a voice."

⁷⁸- lit. "What will come of Memê and Zînê's words?"

^{78a} sifrê xweyf kevn. Alan Ward translates this as "old dining tables." Sifrê- appears to come from Sifre, meaning 'the place where food is served' whether it be a tray, a table, or a tablecloth: see FK-1, note #182). However, it is possible that Sifrê- is from Sifir, which means 'copper' or 'copper vessel.' In either case, copper trays and the like are intended, as is born out by parallels to this passage in other versions.

⁷⁹Bac û bertil - lit. "Tribute and ransom," can mean 1) "Bribe" [بَرَاطِيلَ] also means bribe in Colloquial Syro-Palestinian Arabic; 2) "Taxes and tolls."

⁸⁰Verses 2-6 are difficult to understand. In Jndî's Russian and Ward's English translations, 'K'ar-barê' is rendered as "Amber": "It is all loaded with amber." However, 'K'ar û bar' means "Preparations (as for a journey)": 'K'ar-bar' could easily be a variant of 'K'ar û bar.' Moreover, according to Kurdoev, 'Li ser hev bûn k'ar û bar' can mean "To be alarmed," "To be in confusion."

Erfan and Chekan had their hands on their swords,
 Qeretajdîn comes in between them,
 Saying: "Brothers, I swear by the one in whose hands we are,
 Theirs is nothing but a nighttime dream."

{50} Qeretajdîn said to Mem, "Mem, the one you are talking about is my sister-in-law to be⁸¹, the betrothed of Chekan. Get on your horse and go to the spring: if you succeed in collecting tribute from her, know that you will be our big brother, and we your little brothers. But if you can't collect tribute from her, we will banish you⁸², you can go straight home. If you ever show up around here again, [we will cut you up into so many pieces that] the largest part of you will be your ear."

Then Qeretajdîn said in song:

{51} "Mem, it is not your caravan,
 It's the sister-in-law of Qeretajdîn,
 [197] Betrothed to Chekan from birth,
 Her names are teli khatûn and Zîn,
 Nobody has dared
 To exact tribute from her."

Mem took his Bor [from the stable], saddled him, mounted him and rode to the spring:

{52} Mem brought Bor outside,

The full line runs 'Serê min, xulam, îmama, k'ar-bare,' = lit. "My head, boys, imams, is k'ar-bar. I find "confused" a more likely meaning than either *amber* or *preparations*. Although the meaning of these lines is not totally clear, there is a comparable passage in ZK-I which deals with collecting taxes and tolls from Zînê's caravan. Whatever the literal meaning, it is clear that the caravan is linked to Zînê, and that speaking amorously of Chekan's fiancée Zînê annoys Qeretajdîn's brothers to the point of wanting to run Memê through with their swords.

⁸¹ See note 16 above.

⁸² =lit. "Put you out of our borders."

Put on him the jewel-laden⁸³ saddle
 Rode him to the roadside spring,
 Mem rode to the spring,
 Greeted the maiden Zîn,
 Put Bor's muzzle in the spring water.
 Zîn returned his greeting⁸⁴,
 Saying, "Welcome, renowned agha!"
 He said, "While on the roof we said things,
 I put my trust in you,
 But I fear you won't do what I ask."
 Zîn said, "Mem, collect your wits,
 Keep Bor's mouth in the water⁸⁵,
 The woman you're talking about isn't here."

(53) Then freely Zîn got up,
 Reached for her neck chain⁸⁶:

⁸³'Albavî' does not occur in any Kurdish dictionary; both Jndi and Ward translate it, wrongly in my opinion, as "belonging to Al-pacha." 'Bav' does mean father, but according to the story, Memê went and commissioned the making of the saddle himself, without the help – or approval – of his father. Sometimes Kurdish words creep into the colloquial Turkish of Eastern Anatolia, and can be found in the Turkish *Derleme Sözlüğü*, a dictionary of colloquial Turkish gathered (hence 'derleme' = gathering) from all over Anatolia. In the *Derleme Sözlüğü*, there is a word 'Ala baba,' equivalent in meaning with the Standard Turkish 'Akbaba,' meaning "Vulture" or "Daisy." In some languages, the word for "Daisy" is the same as the word for "Pearl," e.g. Arabic *lu'lu'* لؤلؤ = "Pearl," and *zahr al-lu'lu'* الزهر اللؤلؤ lit. "Pearl flower," meaning "Daisy"; There is a widely distributed word which takes the form *margalit* מרגלית in Hebrew = "Pearl"; *morvârid* مروارید and *marjân* مرجان in Persian = "Pearl"; *marjân* مرجان in Arabic = "Small pearls," "Coral"; *Mercan* in Turkish = "Coral"; 'Margarita' in Spanish = "Pearl," "Ox-eye daisy"; 'Margherita' in Italian = "Pearl," "Ox-eye daisy." I therefore infer from all this that 'Albavî' can mean "Pearl" as well as "Daisy," which would make perfect sense in the given context: 'Lê kir zîne albavî û cewarê' = "He put [kir] on him [lê] the saddle [zîn] of pearls [albavî] and jewels [cewar]."

⁸⁴See note 73 above.

⁸⁵-lit. "Don't take Bor's mouth out of the water."

⁸⁶Tok û benf. According to Kurdoev, *t'oq* is a "Hoop" or a "Circle" [from Arabic *ṭawq* طوق]; According to Jaba & Justî, *benf* is a "Small gold or silver chain worn around the neck." In Jndî's

"My Lord," she said, "What does your heart desire?"
 Precious Zîn got up,
 Took her neck chain
 Broke off three gold coins,
 [And] said, "Here: one is for tribute, one for ransom,
 The third is for my betrothal to Chekan,
 It is worth Jizîr's expenses for seven years."
 Mem took the tribute and ransom in his fingers,
 Rode back to the three brothers,
 The three of them conceived great awe for Mem.

Mem took out two gold coins, and said, "Here, brothers, here's some tribute and ransom for you."

{54} They would not accept the two gold coins, so Mem gave them the betrothal coin. This they accepted.

Qeretajdîn said:

"We are three brothers, our horses are grey,
 We have clubs of fire⁸⁷ in our hands,
 We roam the world in search of fights,
 We will bring for our brother
 Black-browed and dark-eyed Zîn the blessed."

[198] Erfan said:

"We are three brothers, our horses are black,
 In the world of heroes we are very well-known⁸⁸,
 We will bring for our brother
 Black-browed and dark-eyed Zîn the charming."

Russian translation, *tok û bent* is translated as "Neck chain," and is explained as being a woman's adornment consisting of silver coins.

⁸⁷i.e. Torches.

⁸⁸K'ifş = lit. "Obvious," "Apparent."

Chekan said:

"We are three brothers, our horses are bay⁸⁹,
We roam the land with clubs of fire,
We will bring for our brother
The one his heart desires."

(55) That is how they spent that day, having all agreed to marry Zîn to Mem. They whole-heartedly regarded Mem as their older brother. Some days passed. Mîr had food prepared, [and] invited all four brothers, saying, "I will also reward Mem."

Before long Zîn heard that the mîr was inviting Mem to give him a gift. She sent a message to Mem not to accept any gift but the office of cook⁹⁰, so that they could be together everyday and have their fill of taking pleasure in each other.

(56) The mîr invited Mem, and after they finished eating, said to him, "Mem, even if you are not of noble birth, by God you are noble, even if you are the son of a cowherd, by God you are a prince! Tell me what I can give you as a reward!"

Mem said, "Well, my mîr, all I want is the position of cook, to be a part of your court⁹¹ for a few months."

The mîr said, "Give Mem the position of cook⁹²."

Mem became the mîr's coffee server⁹³. Now Mem and Zîn spent a great deal of time together⁹⁴. Laughing, joking, and chattering, they brought the morning coffee to the diwan at noon, and the noon coffee in the evening.

⁸⁹Kumeyt, from Arabic kumayt كُمَيْت , a word used in Classical Arabic poetry to describe a dark-bay colored , i.e. reddish-brown, horse.

⁹⁰K'urkê aspêjtê = lit. "Fur coat of cookhood." I follow Jndi in rendering this as "The office/position of cook." Ward has "Accept no gift but the cook's dress." It is noteworthy that a different word for "fur coat" or "cloak" is used in the scene where Zîn hides behind Mem's cloak, namely Qapêt.

⁹¹=lit. "To come and go for a few months in your diwan."

⁹²=lit. "Bring the fur coat of cookhood, put it on Memê."

⁹³According to Jndi, a position reserved for those closest to a prince or mîr, carrying with it the responsibility of serving coffee at governmental meetings and deliberations.

⁹⁴=lit. "Memê and Zîn now stood in a place beside each other."

Bekir said to the mîr, "My mîr, your diwan gets its morning coffee at noon, and its noon coffee in the evening: This brings shame upon your name; Mem is intent on shaming you."

The mîr said, "Bekir, where he comes from that's the way it's done⁹⁵; He'll learn, don't worry."

{57} After some time passed, the mîr made an announcement to the nobles of Jizîr, saying, "Tomorrow we must go hunting [and] take Memê Ala with us."

Zîn said to Mem, "Pretend you're sick⁹⁶. When they come to you tomorrow, tell them you're sick. Let them mount their horses. Once they have mounted, they will certainly not dismount. Once they have gone, they won't be back for six or seven days. Let's you and I go to the garden of Torkîf and take pleasure in one another."

{58} The next morning the mîr went with the nobles of Jizîr, Qeretajdîn, and his two brothers to wait for Mem. They sent word to Mem, saying, [199]"Brother, mount your horse".

Mem sent word back to the mîr: "Tell the mîr that I am not well today".

The mîr had no intention of dismounting; He led the nobles and they went off hunting. Mem and Zîn got dressed up and headed for the garden of Torkîf. Bekir Ewan had stayed at the rear of the horsemen. When he was leaving he saw Mem and Zîn going to the garden of Torkîf. He rode on ahead and caught up with the hunters. A black storm cloud came out [and] it started to rain. Bekir said to the mîr, "My mîr, it will rain a lot, let us ride to your garden of Torkîf and dismount. I just saw two young fawns⁹⁷ in your garden. We can capture them, and make a meal out of them, until the rain stops."

The mîr listened to Bekir, but Qeretajdîn doubted Bekir's words, saying:

{59} "From the south appeared a huge storm cloud,
Bringing forth thunder, lightening and rain,

⁹⁵=lit. "Surely the custom of their country is thus."

⁹⁶=lit. "Throw yourself sick."

⁹⁷'Du karê xezala'=lit. "Two kids of deer." 'Kar' is a kid, the young of goats, but can also be used for the young of deer. This passage compares Memê and Zînê to two gazelles, which is reminiscent of Classical Arabic and Hebrew 'gazelle poetry,' in which the beauty of pre-pubescent boys and girls is likened to the delicate grace of gazelles. In addition, it implies that the hunters are after them.

I know the fate of Memê Alan."
 Qeretajdîn, crazy and mad,
 Called upon Badîn chawish⁹⁸
 [And] sent him to the garden of Torkîrî.
 He said, "Go, make things ready for the mîr,
 Bear all laws and rules in mind,
 Chase out any beasts you may find."
 Badîn chawish entered [the garden],
 Greeted Mem first thing,
 Found him lying down, in Zîn's arms.

Mem said:

"Hey chawish, let this be a secret,
 Whoever guards this secret of mine,
 Will find favor with the All-powerful."
 [Chawish] said: "Mem, enough said,
 Even if above my head [I hear] the gnashing of daggers,
 I won't let a word out of my mouth."
 Mem said: "I swear by God the Almighty,
 Until my head falls off,
 666 pairs of daggers
 Won't pull my mouth from Zîn's breast."

{60} By the time they finished talking, the horsemen and hunters were pouring in through the gates of the garden. Zîn stayed under Mem's overcoat. Mem threw the coat over his knees, put Zîn underneath it, and pretended to be ill. Mem was in trouble.

{61} The household servants [made] a hue and cry,
 Zîn [heard] among them the familiar voice of the mîr,

⁹⁸-lit. "Sergeant," from Turkish *Çavuş*.

[200] She said, "Mem, find a way for me to escape."
 Zîn got under his overcoat.
 The mîr came in from outside,
 Greeted Mem first⁹⁹,
 Mem returned his greeting,
 But did not rise before him.
 Bekir said, "My mîr, who has ever seen [such a thing],
 [When] the mîr and viziers come inside,
 They greet the servants first,
 The servants do not [even] rise while greeting in return!"

{62} Mem said:

"Bekir, I am ill with many wounds,
 My head won't stay put on four pillows,
 [For me] to rise to my feet in greeting the mîr."

Bekir said:

"Mem, there is no exception for the sick,
 You rise to your feet at once,
 Perform a farz¹⁰⁰, two namazes¹⁰¹,

⁹⁹This is apparently contrary to the normal practice: because of the mîr's superior rank, Memê should initiate the greeting. However, according to Islamic custom, it is the person entering upon someone already present who must greet first, by saying al-salāmu 'alaykum (= "Peace be upon you"), presumably to reassure those already in attendance that the newcomer has peaceful intentions. I infer from the present context that showing respect to a superior takes precedence over Islamic custom. See note 73 above.

¹⁰⁰Religious duty required of all Muslims, from Arabic farḍ **فرث**.

¹⁰¹Islamic prayer ritual, from Persian namāz **نماز** [and Turkish namaz] (Kurmanji nimêj; Sorani niwêj).

Or don't you worship God either¹⁰²?"

Mem said:

"Bekir, when the sick get well,
They will rise to their feet from the start,
This worshipping will be for God."

Bekir said:

"Mem, you are crazy and mad,
Collect your wits about you,
What have you put under your blue¹⁰³ coat?"

{63} Qeretajdîn said:

— "My mîr, Bekir is a big liar,
The harness of Mem's horse is gold,
He brought it to the garden of Torkîrî to console himself¹⁰⁴,
But [out of] shame before the mîr he hid it under his blue coat."

Bekir said:

"The one who Mem loves
Is a black Arab with tattooed lips.
You can believe father Bekir,
[That] she'll carry a kettle of yoghurt around Jizîr,

¹⁰²I have taken a little liberty with the text by making this last line into a question. However, this captures the feeling of the original, if I understand it correctly Ward's translation is "maybe this will be merit for God."

¹⁰³See note 59 above

¹⁰⁴=lit. "To disperse/scatter his troubles."

Qeretajdîn will carry around cups and goblets,
He'll bring a cup to Mem."

[201] Mem rearranges Zîn's braids under the coat,
Qeretajdîn sees it with his own eyes.

- (64) Qeretajdîn knits his brows,
Summons Erfan and Chekan,
[And] says, "Badîn chawish, you pass out the cups!
"I will go set my colorful manor on fire.
May my golden cradle¹⁰⁵ burn up,
So that my brother gets out of this predicament."
Qeretajdîn goes to his house,
Says to khatûn Perf with grief and spite,
"Take out the four golden cradles,
I am setting the manor on fire,
Perhaps it will get Mem out of this predicament."

(65) Khatûn Perf said:

"Dark color is Arab color,
May it be so for me!¹⁰⁶
Let the four golden cradles stay in their places,

¹⁰⁵In the Russian translation and in Alan Ward's English translation, the word *bormotk* is rendered as "children," although it is grammatically in the singular (*Bra bişewitê bormotka zêfîne*). I have not found it in any of the Kurdish dictionaries. The motif of leaving an infant in its cradle in the burning house occurs in many versions of *Mem û Zîn*, which lends some credence to the alleged translation of 'Bormotk' as "Child[ren]." However, the word 'zêfîn' means "golden"; would one speak of 'golden infants' or is some other item of value intended, such as the baby's cradle? At the same point in the story, ZK-1 has the following: "Dara minarê dareke sorê,

Jê diçû alava k'eske û more,
Navda şewitîn bêşka kufîn, hespa Bore."
"The tree of the minaret is a red tree,
Out of it came green and purple flames,
In it were burned the baby's cradle, and Bor the horse."

Consequently, I suggest that *bormotk* may mean "cradle." The word *dergûş* is also translated by some as "cradle" and by others as "infant."

¹⁰⁶According to Jndi, the black color of the face is a symbol of disgrace and shame.

So that by my sinning a good deed will come¹⁰⁷ .”
 Qeretajdîn goes to his house,
 Takes from his pocket steel and flint,
 Sees the chawish before his very eyes,
 Whom he sends to the garden of Torkîrî,
 Saying, “Go tell the mîr that my colorful mansion¹⁰⁸ is on fire,
 That my four golden cradles burnt up in it,
 By this time tomorrow not a single noble will remain alive.”

{66} Chawish said:

“Mîr, did you know that Qeretajdîn,
 That brave one, has gone mad,
 He has burned down his colorful mansion,
 Tomorrow he will destroy you and your nobles.”
 When the chawish said these words,
 Mîr Sêvdîn¹⁰⁹ was greatly troubled¹¹⁰,
 He left the garden with his nobles two by two.

{67} The mîr and his nobles swiftly left the garden and headed for Qeretajdîn's house. Zîn and Mem remained. When Zîn came out from under [Mem's] overcoat, [it was] as if someone had thrown a bucket of boiling water on her, she had perspired so much. She wrapped herself in her shawl and headed for home. Bekir had gone to

¹⁰⁷According to Jndi, this difficult line means that by letting the {children} burn up, khatûn Perf will have contributed her part toward rescuing Memê from his dilemma.

¹⁰⁸**xanîê rengîne, or xan-manêrengîne.** This is a formulaic epithet + noun, also common in epic poetry.

¹⁰⁹According to what we are told fairly early on in this version, mîr Seydîn is Zîn's father, and mîr Sêvdîn is his brother, i.e. her uncle. Perhaps the narrator slipped here and said Sêvdîn when he meant Seydîn. (Reminiscent of the 'nodding of Homer'!). A little bit later, in section {70}, mîr Seydîn is mentioned. See note 14 above, as well as HR-1 note # {108} and GNa note # {7} for similar occurrences.

¹¹⁰=lit. 'Mîr Sêvdîn's heart and liver were burning.'

wait for Zîn on the road, having hid himself in a niche in the [city] wall. Mem got up and headed for the flaming manor. As Zîn was on her way, she looked over and saw Bekir in a niche in the wall, and she said in song:

"Go away, Bekir, master of plot and intrigue,
You are the fox behind these happenings!^{110a}
Why are you the author of unhappiness?¹¹¹"

{68} [202] Mem reached the flaming manor, and saw that the flames had engulfed the building, and that the nobles of Jizîr had gathered around, and were running this way and that, out of fear of Qeretajdîn. Mem said [to himself], "I'll say two words to the fire: If my love is divinely inspired¹¹², it will put the fire out, but if it is not, then Zîn and I, our love is a lie." He sang:

{69} "Go away fire, from the fortress,
Between you and me is a divine decree,
What do you want from my brother's house?
Go away fire, without name or breath,
Enough running through our house,
You are on fire, just as I am.
Go away fire, treacherous one,
Without home or hearth,
Enough burning with a flash."
My Memê delal
Took out a handkerchief,
Threw it into the flames,
Instantly they went out.

^{110a} Translation borrowed from Alan Ward's edition.

¹¹¹ These two lines are very difficult to translate. I am not totally sure my translation is accurate, but it is in line with the Russian translation.

¹¹² =lit. "If I am a lover of secret love." The Russian translation explains this as meaning "If my love is sent from on high." Ward render it as "If I'm a true lover."

Qeretajdîn the sagacious
 Draws his blue¹¹³ sword,
 From its sheath with a shout,
 Sees no nobleman of Jizîr about him.

{70} They dispersed, each one going to his own home. The four legitimate¹¹⁴ brothers went home. Mîr Seydîn¹¹⁵ went and sat in his diwan alone. Bekir came in and began slandering. The mîr said,

"Bekir, enough of your slander. Zîn may be my sister¹¹⁶, but she is their *bak*¹¹⁷: whatever they agree to, we will also agree to. I have not yet seen anything dishonest in Mem. If you keep this up, one day we will cause the destruction of men, and disaster will reign forever."

¹¹³See note 59 above.

¹¹⁴**Sîrfîtal** - lit. "With legal milk," which Kurdoev translates as "Noble," "Honest," "Sincere." This is more or less equivalent to the Arabic term *ibn ḥalāl* **ابن حلال**, meaning "Legitimate son" or by extension "Respectable fellow." See note 38 above.

¹¹⁵See note 109 above.

¹¹⁶This contradicts what was stated above. In section {3} we are told that Zînê is mîr Seydîn's daughter. In other versions, e.g. HM, the relationship between them is one of brother and sister. See note 14 above.

¹¹⁷See note 16 above.

{71} Bekir said, "My mîr, I am master of my virtue!¹¹⁸ What I say is true. As long as Zîn is in your house, she is your honor!¹¹⁹ Once she has gone to [live in] Qeretajdîn's house, what they do is their business. Besides that, you send for Mem today, invite him to come here; when it comes time for coffee to be served, have Zîn serve it. If she laughs and turns away when she is handing Mem his cup of coffee, know that I speak the truth, but if she doesn't laugh, know that I am lying."

The mîr listened to Bekir, and sent for Mem and the three brothers, saying, "Zîn, Mem is ill, you pass out the [coffee] cups and glasses."

{72} The mîr's diwan [filled with people] noisily sitting down. Zîn distributed coffee, and when it was Mem's turn, when she gave him a cup, she turn [203] away and laughed. Just before this, Qeretajdîn [took out] his handkerchief and made [it look like] a rabbit!¹²⁰; when Zîn laughed, he threw it before Zîn, so that people would say that she was laughing because of the handkerchief. When Zîn laughed and turned away, Bekir said:

{73} "Who has [ever] seen the daughter of aristocrats passing around cups,
Bringing a cup to her father's servants?
The servant will become [too] insolent!^{120a}
To pass out cups in the mîr's diwan,

¹¹⁸Xîret - lit. "Zeal," "Fervor"; "Striving," "Aspiration." This is from Arabic ghayrah غيرة borrowed into Persian as ghayrat غیبرت . It can also mean "Jealousy," and is used for "Sense of honor," particularly vis-à-vis the behavior of the women of one's family, who in a shame society are perceived as representing the family's honor. This is connected with the concept of a woman's honor, known as 'ird شرف in Arabic, and nāmūs ناموس in Persian, Turkish and Kurdish (although the word nāmūs, ultimately derived from Greek nomos, occurs in Arabic also). Cf. Jean G. Peristiany, Honour and Shame the Values of Mediterranean Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); John Gulick, The Middle East: An Anthropological Perspective (Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear Publishing Co., c1976), pp. 209-211.

¹¹⁹'Namūs' See note 118 above.

¹²⁰A Kurdish woman I used to know, a twenty-eight year old woman (in 1988) from Kirkūk, Iraqī Kurdistan, told me that as a child she remembered seeing 'rabbits' made out of handkerchiefs as a way of amusing children. This must be a traditional Kurdish game. See also FK-1, note #[54].

^{120a} =li: "thick-ribbed"

He should remember his place!¹²¹.”
 The mîr knitted his brow severely,
 [And] said, “O scoundrels!¹²² get up quickly,
 Make mincemeat of Mem for me,
 Let his heart and liver be raised on the tips of your swords.”
 Like rabid wolves they arose,
 Heroes and warriors all fell in together,
 Mem said, “Mîr, now don’t you run away!”
 On the spot Memê delal jumped up,
 Made a shield for himself out of diwan cushions,
 Drew his sword from its sheath,
 Was about to remove the mîr’s liver.
 He said, “Mîr, if you [try to] harm me,
 I’ll do in three hundred of you,
 I’ll knock down four hundred off the terrace,
 But first I’ll liquidate you.”

{74} Qeretajdîn the deft
 Took hold of!¹²³ his [steel] blue sword.
 He regarded the mîr with contempt,
 [And] said, “Make yourself ready now.
 Erfan and Chekan,
 The bells of war,
 Are behind Memê Alan.”

¹²¹=lit: “It is necessary that he see himself in a heavy anchor,” which is explained by Jndi as meaning “He should keep himself according to his position.” Ward has: “he must keep to his own place”

¹²² Geli emekherama’-lit. “O you whose food is forbidden.” Although the word emekheram is not found in the dictionaries the following expression does appear both in Kurdoev and Khamoian: ‘Emekê min [li] te helal be,’ which means: 1) Bon appétit! Eat with hearty appetite; 2) May my labor bring you benefit; 3) I bless you. By replacing ‘helal’ with its opposite ‘heram,’ we can get an idea of what the word ‘Emekheram’ is supposed to mean. Someone whose food is not blessed, i.e. a freeloader, good-for-nothing scoundrel. This is also relevant to the previous discussion about ‘şrihelal’ and like expressions. See footnotes 38 and 114 above.

¹²³ Soranîa heşîr: kir hidîr.’ This is how ‘Hidîr’ is rendered in the Russian translation. It does not appear in any of the Kurdish dictionaries I consulted. Ward has: “he gripped his blue-steel sword.”

The heroes and warriors arose at once,
 No one took pleasure in the four brothers;
 The brothers took Mem with them,
 Took him out of the mîr's diwan.
 They left and went that way,
 Two horsemen came swiftly down the road,
 A battle proclamation in their hands.

{75} When Qeretajdîn laid eyes on the horsemen, he noticed that they both had grey horses, but they had turned black from sweating so much. An order to do battle was sealed in a box¹²⁴. They brought it and handed it over to Qeretajdîn. When he opened it and read it, he understood that it was an order by the mîr Belg-Mikhar, written to Mîr Seydîn [as follows]:

[204] "In twenty four hours I want an army of twelve thousand [12,000] mounted soldiers from you. Qeretajdîn and his two brothers should be the commanders of the troops. If you don't carry out this order, you will lose your head."

{76} Mîr Belg-Mikhar was the support of all the mîrs in the world. Qeretajdîn took the edict and returned with it to Mîr Seydîn's diwan. [When he appeared there] he saw that one [of the mîr's advisers] said, "I would destroy him!" another said, "I would beat him!" Qeretajdîn gave the edict to the mîr and said, "Here, take this edict: it's for you. Now let them 'destroy me', 'beat me', or do whatever they like."

{77} After this, Qeretajdîn returned to his own home¹²⁵.

¹²⁴This is the Russian rendering of this obscure sentence. The original reads as follows: 'Hukumekî seferîê zîmrût kirî nav zilfêdaye.' = "An order [hukumekî] of battle/campaign [seferîê] was made [kirî] emerald [zîmrût] in/among [nav ...-da] curls [zilfê]." Jaba and Justi's dictionary lists a word [zoumour] meaning "Sealing wax," which sounds like 'zîmrût' = "emerald," and does seem to make more sense than the latter word. However, in the previous sentence, the colors grey [boz] and black [qîmer] are mentioned, and emeralds are green, another color. Nevertheless I fail to see how Jndi came up with "box" or "chest" for 'zilf' = "curl/lock of hair." This is one of many times that the Russian translation must be taken with a grain of salt, although in all fairness there are also instances where it has included very useful explanatory notes. Ward translates this as: "They were carrying a sealed order for a campaign."

¹²⁵No explanation is offered regarding the amount of damage to Qeretajdîn's house as a result of the fire.

When the mîr took a look at the edict, he became greatly distressed and said to Bekir, "Confound you!¹²⁶ because of your meddlesome slandering, you've made them¹²⁷ my enemies. Without Qeretajdîn and his brothers, where will I find twelve thousand horsemen? Who else will leave home to become a fighter? If the sound of those three lions is not heard in Jizîr, what will happen? I will lose my head!"

Bekir said to the mîr, "My mîr, I know! Let Qeretajdîn become mîr in your place. Let's go to his house and throw ourselves at his feet; you tell him that Zîn is their *bak*, if they are willing to give her to Mem, it's all right with you. Then they will agree."

{78} The mîr and Bekir went to Qeretajdîn's house, and the mîr said this to him.

Qeretajdîn agreed, [and] said to the mîr, "You can go back home now, this is my affair now."

The mîr and Bekir went home. Qeretajdîn, Erfan and Chekan got on their horses and rode to the center of Jizîr waving their torches¹²⁸, saying, "All those who have horses should be ready tomorrow morning in the square¹²⁹."

The nobles of Jizîr didn't sleep that night, they went and stood in the square from the evening on. Twelve thousand did not show up: fifteen thousand did! At dawn Qeretajdîn sent an order to Bekir, saying, "You absolutely must come with us, or else I will cut off your head."

No matter how much Bekir begged and pleaded, in the end he too joined the troops. Qeretajdîn instructed khatûn Perf, saying, "Take care of Mem¹³⁰; when I come back, we will marry him to Zîn."

{79} The troops left. On the way, Bekir threw himself at [the mercy of] Erfan and Chekan, saying, "Ask for permission from Qeretajdîn for me to go back. I am not

¹²⁶-lit. "May your house be destroyed." A common curse. See ZK-1 notes #[25] & #[39].

¹²⁷i.e. Qeretajdîn and his brothers.

¹²⁸Gurzêd at'aş' = lit. "Clubs of fire."

¹²⁹Meydana şêr = lit. "Square or plaza of war."

¹³⁰It is curious that the question of Memê's joining the expedition is not even mentioned.

even on the payroll, and besides, Zîn is already Mem's betrothed, what trouble can I cause?"

Somehow they got permission for Bekir to return home. He went to the mîr, and found him sitting alone in the diwan. Bekir said to him, [205] "My mîr, why are you sitting alone? With one like Memê Ala as your brother-in-law¹³¹, why don't you invite him to come to you so that the two of you can talk, so that you won't be bored?"

The mîr summoned Mem and had him brought over. They were talking together, when Bekir said:

{80} "My mîr, you are both respected.

Bring some game to play.

Become engrossed in it, so you won't be bored."

They brought chess and began [to play]. Bekir said:

"You're both pros, you should place bets¹³² before playing chess."

The mîr said, "What should the stakes be?"¹³³

Bekir said, "I'll say a word, but you must agree to it; if the mîr wins, he can ask whatever he wants, but if Mem beats the mîr, tomorrow we will put Zîn on horseback, and take her to Qeretajdîn's house where she will dismount¹³⁴, until they¹³⁵ come back."

¹³¹ *Zava*, cognate to Persian *dâmâd* داماد, is the male counterpart of *bride* (See note #16) above).

Hence, in addition to meaning "Bridegroom," it refers to a male marrying into one's family, and can mean either "Son-in-law" (vis-à-vis the bride's parents) or "Brother-in-law" (vis-à-vis the bride's siblings). It is the latter meaning that fits the present context.

¹³² *Bi şert'*=lit. "On condition."

¹³³ *Emê ser çi bilizin?*'=lit. "What should we play for/over?"

¹³⁴ This is a description of a wedding procession. He means that if Memê beats the mîr at chess, Zînê will be able to marry Memê.

¹³⁵ i.e. Qeretajdîn and his brothers

(81) Both the mîr and Mem agreed to what Bekir said. They began to play chess. Eh, the poor mîr, even if Azrael¹³⁶ came [to his aid], he could not have beat Mem at chess. Mem didn't give the mîr a moment's rest.

Bekir went to his daughter [and] said, "My child, bring your dice¹³⁷ and tell me what the outcome of Mem and the mîr's game] will be."

She threw her dice¹³⁸, and said, "Father, if you don't bring Zîn and have her stand where Mem can see her, the mîr doesn't have a chance¹³⁹. But if Mem looks at Zîn, he'll lose himself, [and] the mîr will beat him."

Bekir quickly went to Zîn and said, "Zîn, come to the mîr's diwan. The mîr and Mem are playing chess, and if Mem beats the mîr, they have agreed that they will mount you on a horse tomorrow and marry you to Mem. This is what I've done for you."

(82) Zîn got all dressed up in her Sunday best¹⁴⁰, and went and stood where the mîr could see her. Bekir saw that Mem was only two moves away from beating the mîr. He said to the mîr, "My mîr, why don't you get up and change places, you'll be more comfortable."

They got up and changed places. Zîn now stood before Mem's eyes. When Mem caught sight of her, he looked at her in wonder and amazement. The mîr made his attack, and was one move away from beating Mem.

Bekir said, "My mîr, hit each other real hard, get all worked up!"

The mîr said:

(83) "Mem, I've beaten you, I've won,
I'll shown you who's boss¹⁴¹,

¹³⁶Azrael is the angel of death according to Islamic tradition.

¹³⁷See note 49 above.

¹³⁸Reml vekir' = lit. "Opened the raml (See note 49 above)."

¹³⁹ = lit. "Next to Memê the mîr is like a child [at the game of chess]."

¹⁴⁰Mina bazîlîrganê Hemsîk û Heyaê' = lit. "Like the caravan of Hemsîk and Heya." I have not been able to find a reference to the story of Hemsîk and Heya, but this expression is explained in Khamolan as meaning "Elegantly," "Beautifully [dressed]."

¹⁴¹Lî mala met'ê hasê kîr' = lit. "I've chased you into the house of *met*." In EP-7, *met*' is translated as "Checkmate," which actually comes from the Persian/Arabic expression "shâh mât"

Know that I will throw you into a stone dungeon."

[206] Mem said:

"My mîr, no, I've won also,
I'll shown you who's best¹⁴²,
Didn't I say I would throw you into a stone dungeon?"

[84] Before Mem knew what happened, the mîr won this set too, and the chess board was taken away. They continued talking together as before the game.

Bekir said, "My mîr, why have you fallen silent about the bet you made? What are you going to do? You're not children! You played for a bet!"

The mîr said, "Bekir, we didn't mean only today, we will play again many times. Sometimes Mem will beat me, and sometimes I will beat Mem. Bets aren't necessary between us."

Bekir said, "But if Mem beat you at chess, he would be playing with your honor¹⁴³. Would that be all right? In that case you would be without honor."

The mîr listened to Bekir, and threw Mem into a wooden dungeon.

[85] And Zîn, what did she do? She had a tunnel put in between the dungeon and her house. Night and day she brought Mem to her private quarters¹⁴⁴, where they had fun, joked and feasted.

(shāh شاه is Persian for 'King'; māt مات is Arabic for 'Died') -lit. "The king has died."

However, there is another word 'Met' (without aspirated t), which means "Paternal aunt," "Father's sister." ZK-1 has an almost identical passage at this point in the story, which features a line which means literally: "I have chased you into the house of the Jews" (See ZK-1, note #69)). According to Khamoian, the actual meaning of this latter expression is "I have subjugated you," "I have made you knuckle under," "I have shown you who's boss." Because of the similarity of the two texts, I assume that the version in the present text, featuring **Met** instead of **Cihû[d]** (= "Jew"), has the same meaning, whatever meaning we attach to the word **Met**.

¹⁴²-lit. "I've chased you into the house of defeat." See note 141 above.

¹⁴³·Namûs' See note 118 above.

¹⁴⁴·Herema xwe' 'Herem' is the private part of a house, where only the women and males who are family members (i.e. brothers and sons) may set foot.

Bekir went to his daughter [and] said, "My child, bring your dice¹⁴⁵ and tell me what will happen to Mem."

She threw her dice¹⁴⁶, and said, "Father, isn't Mem supposed to be in prison? Zîn has had a tunnel put in from the dungeon to her house. Now Mem is at Zîn's breast night and day."

{86} Bekir went and saw it with his own eyes, then went to the mîr in his diwan and said, "My mîr, I said before that your sister¹⁴⁷ had completely disregarded her honor¹⁴⁸, but you said that Bekir is a slanderer. Well this is what has happened!"

The mîr said, "Throw Mem into a stone dungeon!"

[And] they threw Mem into a stone dungeon.

Let Mem stay in the dungeon. Zîn did nothing but cry bitter tears all day and night¹⁴⁹. Mem stayed in the dungeon for nearly six months and became ill there. Bekir once again went to his daughter and said, "My child, tell me what will happen to Mem."

She said, "Qeretajdîn will return shortly. If men go to take Mem out of the dungeon, he will get well, but if women take him out, he will die."

Bekir went to the mîr [and] said, "Come, let's let Mem go, I've heard that Qeretajdîn is coming."

The mîr said to Bekir, "Go free Mem from the dungeon."

Bekir went to Zîn [and] said, "Girls, I've requested permission from the mîr that Mem be set free. Go set him free."

{87} Zîn took her maidservants and a rope and went and called to Mem from the mouth of the dungeon, saying, "I've come to let you out."

[207] Mem sang out to Zîn from inside the dungeon:

"O Zîn, you rose, o you rose,

¹⁴⁵See note 49 above.

¹⁴⁶**Renzal vekir** -lit. "Opened the raml (See note 49 above)."

¹⁴⁷See notes 14 and 116 above.

¹⁴⁸'Namûs.' See note 118 above.

¹⁴⁹-lit. "Day and night Zîn's [only] foods were crying and tears."

Wretched one, you have not come to let me out,
I know you will lose me."

Zîn said:

"Servant girls, throw into the well the rope so slender,
Throw it to Mem so tender,
May the roots of my father's house be ripped out!¹⁵⁰
Servant girls, throw into the well the rope so white,
Throw it to Mem my knight,
My Mem has been smitten with blight!¹⁵¹."

{88} When Zîn threw the rope into the dungeon, Mem tied it around himself. Together with her maidservants, Zîn pulled him up. Eh, such is the strength of women! Mem began to sway to and fro, and by the time they pulled him up, his back was broken. When they took him out, he took one [last] look at Zîn's eyes, and expired.

Zîn said:

"Servant girls, look at Zîn's belt [and] buttons,
I will call out for help to the saint!¹⁵² on high.
Mem is dead, Zîn won't live past noon.
Look at my belt and earrings,
I will call out for help to the saint of the slopes.
Mem is dead, Zîn won't live past the evening."

¹⁵⁰A curse. See note 126 above, and ZK-1 notes #125 and #139.

¹⁵¹'Zelûtt'=lit. "Poverty," "Beggary"; "Humility."

¹⁵²'şexsê berfoja.' This is translated by Jndi as "Saint." 'Şexs' from Arabic *shakhs* شخص means "Person." Berfoj is defined by Kurdoev as "the sunny side of a building", "mountain slope on the sunny side": three lines further down, 'Berfoja' is replaced with 'Berwara,' which also means "Slope." There is a parallel passage in ZK-1, (see ZK-1 note #181), in which *şexsê (or-şexsê) navroja* (=the sheikh of noon) and *şexsê êvara* (=the sheikh of evening) are mentioned. In FK-1, there is a similar verse, with *şemsê berfoja* = 'Sheims (Yezidi deity) of the sunny places' instead. This may reflect Yezidi religious beliefs and terminology.

{89} Zîn and her maidservants carried Mem's body and put it to rest in the ground. Zîn said to her servants, "You can go home now, I will watch over Mem's grave like a hawk."

Khatûn Perf also decked out her house for mourning and dressed in black.

Bekir went to the mîr and said, "My poor fellow! Why are you so sad? Come, let's go take a walk."

The mîr and Bekir went out walking. The mîr saw Zîn's figure standing over Mem's grave. He did not know it was Zîn, [and] said, "Bekir, for God's sake, go over to Mem's grave and see whose figure is standing there."

{90} Bekir went over to the grave, and saw that it was Zîn. He went back to the mîr and said, "My mîr, even though Mem is dead, he is still not rid of your sister."

The mîr felt sorry for his sister, he went over to her and said:

{91} "Come Zîn, woe is me,
I'll set up a polo contest^{152a} in Jizîr,
If you see one [you like] he'll be your Mem."

[208] She said:

"Brother, my father's palace is big,
May a cannonball hit it and knock out its foundations,
Who ever saw women setting a prisoner free?¹⁵³
Brother, whatever nobles there are in Jizîra Botan,

^{152a} K'aşholoyel. K'aşo is the name of a Kurdish game that resembles polo or pall-mall, i.e. a game in which a wooden ball is driven with a mallet. Alan Ward's translation of this line is "I'll organize a shinty game in Cizîr." According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 'shinty' = shinny, a schoolboys' version of the game of hockey. Whether hockey, polo, or pall-mall, this is reminiscent of the game of jireed (javelin throwing) played in connection with opening Mem and Zîn's graves in versions HM and LC-1.

¹⁵³In ZK-1, there is a very similar passage. This suggests that the prediction of Bekir's daughter Zînê the fortuneteller regarding the sex of those who lets Memê out of the dungeon, namely "If men go to take Memê out of the dungeon, he will get well, but if women take him out, he will die" is a commonly held belief. See what follows note 149 in the main body of this text, and ZK-1 note #176). This belief is curious, because in folklore it is generally women who are a symbol of life (giving birth, preparing food, etc.) and men a symbol of death (hunting and fighting, both of which involve killing).

They are all my fathers and brothers¹⁵⁴,
Except for the soul of Memê Alan."

(92) Zîn said, "Brother, because you have always listened to Bekir the slanderer, you have caused us great misfortune. I shall die very shortly; let my death be on your head¹⁵⁵. You open up Mem's grave and bury me next to him, placing us back to back. I know that Qeretajdîn will come open up our grave. [When he does so] if you see that we are lying there face to face, with perspiration pouring out of us like little hailstones, know that our love was divinely inspired¹⁵⁶. But if you don't find us so, then it is your responsibility to throw our bodies into the wilderness."

(93) Zîn died on the spot. The mîr buried her beside Mem, as she had requested.

News was brought that Qeretajdîn was on his way home. The mîr and Bekir went and hid in the mosque library¹⁵⁷, and looked the door behind them. Qeretajdîn and his troops approached Jizîr. He looked at his city and at his palace from afar with binoculars.

(94) Qeretajdîn passed the binoculars before his eyes.
He sees khatûn Perî [sitting] like a hawk on the upper terrace.
He says, "Woe is wretched me,
My house looks sad and in mourning¹⁵⁸."
Erfan takes hold of the binoculars,
Passes them before his eyes,

¹⁵⁴i.e. Marrying them would be considered incest, and would therefore be inconceivable.

¹⁵⁵=lit. "On your neck."

¹⁵⁶See note 112 above.

¹⁵⁷**Misfiëbxane** =lit. "Place in which holy books (Misfiëb/Misfiëf, from Arabic *maṣḥaf* مصحف) are kept." In ZK-1, Beko hides in a mosque and takes all the copies of the Koran in the mosque and piles them up before the door, so that nobody can get in to harm him. It is also possible that Misfiëb comes from the Arabic word *madhhab* مذهب , meaning 'religion,' 'religious sect.'

¹⁵⁸The tragic burning of the children (bormotk) is not intended here.

Doesn't see Mem and Zîn.
 Chekan takes the binoculars from them,
 Passes them before his eyes,
 [And] says, "The place looks woeful."

[95] They moved on swiftly, and headed for home. They reached the city. The elders of the city went out to Qeretajdîn [to beg him] not to lift a hand against the people of the city, because it was God's will that Mem and Zîn die.

However many elders of Jizîra Botan [there were],
 All with their arms under their abas¹⁵⁹,
 They said, "Mem and Zîn's death was God's will."

Qeretajdîn said:

"I will turn the mill of fate,
 Feeding it with heads rather than grains of wheat,
 [If you don't hurry up and] bring me Mem and Zîn."

[209] Erfan said:

"I will prepare the mill of fate,
 Turning it with heads rather than grains of wheat,
 [If you don't hurry up and] find me Mem and Zîn."

Chekan said:

"I will draw my sword,
 Hack off heads from shoulders,
 Turn houses upside down,
 Until I see Mem and Zîn."

¹⁵⁹E'va[ne]/E'ba, from Arabic 'abā' عباءة - "Felt cloak."

(96) All the people of Jizîr said to them, "Mem and Zîn's death was God's will. Nobody killed them."

The troops came and camped near Mem and Zîn's grave, and Qeretajdîn had the grave dug up. He also allowed the mîr and Bekir to be present. When they opened up the grave¹⁶⁰, they found them face to face, with perspiration pouring out of them like little hailstones, [and] light streaming forth.

Bekir craned his neck over the grave and said, "By God, Mem and Zîn are still alive, they aren't dead."

(97) When he said this, Qeretajdîn gave Bekir's neck a blow with his sword which sent his head flying onto another grave, while his body stayed put. But a drop of his blood fell into the grave, between Mem and Zîn. This drop of blood grew into a thornbush between them. Until today they still say that two beautiful and fragrant roses grow on Mem and Zîn's grave, but there is an unsavory and prickly thornbush between them, preventing the roses from being next to each other.

Mem and Zîn's grave is on the road to Jizîr, near the tower of Belek¹⁶¹. No matter how many times people have cut down the thornbush and sprinkled yoghurt and water¹⁶² on its roots to keep it from growing back, the same time next year it always grows back.

(98) After that everyone went home, and the mîr Belg Mikhar made Qeretajdîn the ruler of Jizîr. He also gave each brother a golden claw to wear¹⁶³ as brave horsemen.

After this Mem's horse Bor left the stables and headed for Mikhurzemîn. He went to Al pasha and told him one by one all that had happened.

(99) Then Al pasha gathered a great army, and went and captured the city of Jizîr. He annihilated Mîr Seydîn's entire tribe. Only one man survived, [and that]

¹⁶⁰-lit. "The door of the grave."

¹⁶¹See OM for an explanation of this tower (birca Belek) within the framework of the story.

¹⁶²'Dew,' equivalent to Persian *dûgh* *دوغ* and Turkish *ayran*, a drink made of yoghurt and water.

¹⁶³In Jndi's Russian translation, this award is described as a "golden emblem of distinction in the shape of a falcon's claw to be worn on one's helmet."

because he was not in Jizîr [at the time]. [Because of this] there are still people from that lineage alive today.

The people of that tribe are numerous; they belong to the Millî tribe¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶⁴According to Kurdoev, the Millî are a Kurdish tribe inhabiting the region of Diyarbakir in Kurdistan of Turkey, and living to the northwest of Lake Urmia/Reza'iyeh in Kurdistan of Iran. Jaba records the "Millî" tribe as inhabiting Diyarbakir and environs, and numbering 4000 families in 1857. He asserts that their aghas were descended from the ancient family of Temir-pasha Millî. A smaller group of about 400 families is listed as inhabiting the area around Van and Erciş (a town on the northern shores of Lake Van).

Dzhalilov, Ordikhane & Dzhalil Dzhalilov. "Mem û Zîn (şaxa 3)" in *Zargotina K'urda = Kurdskiî Folklor* (Moskva : Nauka, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 90-118. [Kurmanji in Latin (Hawar) script] (ZK-3)

ZK-3. Collected in May of 1959 from Hovhannîsyan Karapêt, a semi-literate Armenian who was born in 1926 in a village that he calls Mêrn[al], province of Diyarbakir [probably Mirinan, called in Turkish Doluca, in what is now the newly created province (il) of Batman (c.1990), formerly part of the province of Siirt. Source: the Turkish gazetteer *Köylerimiz* (Ankara : Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1968) put out by the İller İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü]. In 1941, his father's household moved to the village of Şemast, province of Qamişli, Syria. In 1947, the family moved to Soviet Armenia, settling on the sovkhos Masîsé in the nehiya (county) of Şahûmyan. Hovhannîsyan learned the story of Mem û Zîn around the age of 13-14 in Syria, from a dengbêj named Xudêda, a Kurd of the Reşkot tribe.

Mem û Zîn (ZK-3)

[90] O peoples of the world and the earth,

[You will] have a look at what happened to Zîn and Mem¹.

O (turning to) the direction of the group^{1a},

[You will] take a look at what occurred to Zîn and Mem².

[He says,] One day the king of the ifrits³, when he held his diwan (assembly),

Thus did he speak, talk, and say:

¹=lit. 'what story came to the head of Zîn and Mem.' The expression *hatin serê fik-ê*, literally 'to come to someone's head,' also exists in Turkish (*başına gelmek*), in Persian (*sargozasht سرگذشت* - 'event,' 'story'), and in Neo-Aramaic (e.g. *sêlêbrêšê* = 'it happened to him': dialect of Zakho [Polotsky in *An Aramaic Handbook*, part II/2])

^{1a}This line is difficult to translate.

²A rhyming translation of this in English is
 O peoples of the earth and world,
 See what on Zîn and Mem has unfurled,
 O members of the human race,
 To Zîn and Mem just what took place.

Although this captures the spirit of the type of rhyming involved in the original, such slavish rendering of the texture of the original would, in my opinion, trivialize the content. Therefore, I have opted to remain as true as possible to the meaning, rather than to the texture of the text.

³E'rifit = Demon, or, ifreet. The word *e'rifîlê ânal* is a metathesis of the Arabic word *'ifrit عفریت*, which means 'demon' or 'devil'. In another version, ZK-2, the form is *fer'îlîl*. The word may be derived from an Iranian form *âfarid*, meaning either 'a creature' or 'a blessed [one],' perhaps a tabooistic euphemism for 'a cursed one' (suggested by Professor Martin Schwartz, personal communication).

[91] "O ifrits, boys, which of you has seen two heads that are alike on one pillow?⁴
 One ifrit gets down on his knees in the middle of the diwan,
 Saying, "Yes, my mîr, I have seen two heads that are alike."
 The king of the ifrits says, "O hero, do speak, speak much,
 Speak your piece in the diwan of the mîr and rulers.
 I make three oaths in the name of god,
 If what you say does not come to pass,
 You will lose (hilqetîni =) your head from between your two shoulders."
 The ifrit says, "Yes, my mîr,
 If what I say does not come to pass,
 May my head and my property, all of it, be a ransom⁵,
 Call your executioner,
 Have him take a knife to my head,
 That my head may be removed⁶ from my shoulders,
 I have but one head, I will make it a sacrifice to Memê Ala and Stîya Zîn."

[He says,] this is Stîya Zîn,
 A new-born dove⁷,

⁴This is reminiscent of the Turkish blessing "Bir yastıkta kocasınlar" - May they grow old on the same pillow, said to a newlywed couple.

⁵Miçilge. The dictionaries that attest this word, i.e. İzolî, al-Hacîyah al-Ĥâmicîyah, & Anter, give the meaning 'bet,' 'wager'. However, the Arabic root r-h-n رهن includes words meaning 1) 'bet' and 2) 'pledge,' 'deposit as security,' 'ransom'. Apparently the closely related meanings are both applicable to the Kurdish word *miçilge* as well. Moreover, the idea of offering oneself as a ransom for someone else is common in the languages of the Middle East. Although attested in Persian as muchalkā چ لکا

م /muchalkāh مچلکاه /muchalkah مچلک and in Turkish as müçelge [مورچلکا] (15th cent.),

the word and concept are of Mongolian origin: see Gerhard Doerfer, Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer neupersischer Geschichtsquellen vor allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeit (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963-75), vol. 1, #370.

مورچلکا = 'legal document, by which one obligates oneself to perform a particular deed by oath and by contract, with the simultaneous fixing of certain reprisals or countermeasures in case of breaking of said contract' (my translation).

⁶-lit. "opened"

⁷Cf. other versions

Possessed of a crown of golden amber,
 The sister of mîr Zêydîn,
 The cousin of Qeretajdîn,
 Her native land is Jizîra Botan.
 This is Memê Alan,
 The son of the beg of the Alas,
 His father is the commander of eighty cities,
 His native land is the city of Yemen⁸.

It is Friday evening, all of Zîn's servants and maidens have dispersed, only Gulishan ⁹ remaining at her side. Zîn says, "Gulishan my girl, we have not gone to my aunt's¹⁰ house recently, we haven't had fun. Today all the servants and maidens have dispersed, gone home, you and I alone remain, let's go to my aunt's house, and have some fun for a while." Gulishan says, "My Lady, when have I ever contradicted you?¹¹ Get ready, and let's go to your aunt's house."

Zîn stands up, puts on a nice suit of clothes, makes up her eyes with kohl. Gulishan prepares the lamps, and they approach the doorway¹², to go to the house of Zîn's aunt. By God's decree, two ifrits of the jinn throw a slumber bead³ into Zîn's ear, take hold of her arms and take her to the city of Yemen, setting her down at the doorway to Mem's room. When Zîn wakes up from deep¹⁴ sleep, by divine providence, [when] she looks about the room, she sees two golden lamps hanging on

⁸Cf. OM.

⁹The form of her name varies in the text: sometimes it is Gule'yîşan, sometimes Gule'îş, and sometimes Gule'yîş. I have normalized it as **Gulishan**.

¹⁰Paternal aunt, i.e. father's sister.

¹¹-lit. "When have you said that I have broken your words?"

¹²-lit. "the threshold of the mouth of the door"

¹³Motif D1364.32. **Jewel causes magic sleep**. Cf. D1071. **Magic jewel (jewels)**; D1071.1. **Magic beads**; D1364 **Object causes magic sleep**.

¹⁴-lit. "sweet"

one¹⁵ side of the room, and two silver ones on [92] the other¹⁶ side of the room. In the center of the room was posed a bedstead [inlaid with] rubies and pearls with a prince <şêxzadê> lying on it whose brightness outshone the four lamps. [He says,] Zîn falls for him not with one heart, but with 1,000 hearts. She wants to enter [the room], but remains at the door¹⁷. When Mem awakes from a deep sleep, he looks over at the door and sees by divine providence an innocent gazelle, a houri from paradise, standing at the doorway. At that moment Mem's heart falls for her not with one heart, but with 1,000 hearts. Mem thinks to himself, "My God! Can there be such a thing in the world? I am not a child that people should dress up their daughters and send them after men." He says, "It is no use, I will call to her, to see who¹⁸ this is."

Mem says, "Maiden, my heart is very <bi k'îne> (=resentful?)
I am not a child, that your mother and father should dress you up and
send you to me,
I make three oaths in the name of God,
If you don't <hîlnaynî> (=get off?), you will see with your own eyes a
great tragedy."

Zîn takes a minute to think, then says, "I am Zîn, I am the sister of the mîr of Botan[n], if people say this to me, why should I stay in the world?"

Zîn says, "O prince, say whatever you will,
Say these things <ji serê> (=on behalf of?) yourself and your 70
ancestors,
I make three oaths in the name of God: if you get off of this bed, that is
fine¹⁹; if you don't,
You will lose your head from between your shoulders to the nobles
<cindî û mîfirdîyê> of Botan[n]."

15=lit. "this"

16=lit. "that"

17=lit. "she holds herself at the door"

18=lit. "what person"

19=lit. "if you take it off this bed, take it off"

Mem says, "Lady, you may say the room is your room, but I say it's mine, [and] that you are my guest²⁰. Come sit beside me on the bed, call your servants and maidens, and I'll call my boys. The room belongs to the one whose servants answer, and the other one is his guest²¹." Zîn assents, saying, "You speak well." She gets up and goes over to the bedstead of rubies and pearls, sits down beside Mem and says, "Which of us should call first?" Mem says, "O women, you fallen trees! Let it be your turn first, you call your servants and maidens."

Zîn says, "My favorite one, the one they call Gulishan,
Kindle your lady's lamps in the courtyard,

[93] Take a look in pleasure and <li sohbet û rēwşê>."

[He] says, may she be struck blind, Gulishan, as she was far away, she did
not answer Lady (Stiya) Zîn,
And next it was Memê Alan's turn.

Mem said, "Lady, did your servant answer you?" Zîn said, "No!" Mem said, "Then is it my turn?" Zîn said, "Yes, it's your turn!"

Mem says, "My father's servant boy, whom they call Bengîn,
In charge of 500 boys, very dear to his master's²² heart,
Boil some coffee for your master."

(He says), Bengîn, a very gallant servant boy,
Boils the coffee, putting it down before them,
At the doorway he [stood], his hands crossed²³,
Asking his master for permission [to leave] the diwan.

Mem says, "Bengîn my boy, my heart is very <bi k'îne>,
Your master has a very dear guest sitting in his room."

²⁰=lit. "that you have come to me"

²¹=lit. "the other one has come to him"

²²mîr, i.e. emir.

²³=lit. "hand put over hand"

Mem says, "Lady, now is the room my room or yours?" Zîn says, "Your servant answered you, the room is yours. I am your guest²⁴." Mem says, "Lady, God on high must have seen us worthy of each other, as he has brought us together today. We will remain together this evening, as sister and brother, with pure hearts, until daybreak. At daybreak, when we get up, we will call a mulla and jurisprudents²⁵, have them make us a Hanafi marriage²⁶. I will be yours, and you will be mine."

Thus they entertained themselves until late at night. They exchanged rings. [When] they became sleepy and wanted to lie down, Mem's trusty sword²⁷ was hanging above his ruby and pearl bedstead. He said, "Lady, let's put this sword between me and you: if something illicit stirs in my heart tonight, this sword will kill me, if something stirs in your heart, it will kill you. If nothing stirs in our hearts, tomorrow we will have them make us a Hanafi marriage. I will be yours, and you will be mine."

(He says), Mem and Zîn lay down their heads and sleep. The ifrits of the jinn stand over them <di bengî> (=debating?). Half of them say, "Zîn is [more] beautiful," and half of them say, "Mem is [more] beautiful." There were some elders among them who said, "O ifrits, Zîn may be beautiful: what is it to us? Mem may be beautiful: what is it to us? They are [so] worthy of one another that even God on high considers them so. Come, let us take Zîn by the arm, and take her [94] to Jizîra Botan, and put her back in her bed." All the ifrits of the jinn say, "Yes, you are right." Two ifrits of the jinn get up and take Zîn by the arm, take her back to Jizîra Botan, and put her back in her bed.

In the darkness of daybreak, when Mem wakes up, he gropes about²⁸ on his bed with his hand, [but] there is no one beside him. He says, "My God! What have you brought down on me? Was it a dream? That was no dream! Was she a jinn? That was no jinn! Here is her ring, on my finger, there is nothing false here²⁹." Mem gets up,

²⁴-lit. "I have come to you"

²⁵Fecîya, from Arabic faqîh فقيه .

²⁶-lit. "Let them throw a <me'reke ñenîfi> over me and you." Hanafi is one of the four main sects (madhhab) of Sunni 'Islam. The other three are Shâfi'i, Hanbalî, and Malîkî.

²⁷-lit. "sword of killing"

²⁸-lit. "moves his hand about"

²⁹-lit. "this is no matter of lies"

bareheaded and barefoot, wearing only shorts and a shirt, and begins pacing now on this side of the room, now on that side of the room, crying now to the earth, now to the heavens. Aman³⁰, a thousand times aman, from the pain in his loving heart his eyes turned red, his blood spilt, all he lacked was a handful of ashes <bi zêrek> (=mixed with gold?) to put on his head³¹. He shouts out,

"My father's servant boy whom they call Bengîn,
At the head of 500 servants, his master is fond of him, the dear and
sweet one."

(He says,) after Mem says this, Bengîn stands ready by his side, saying, "O my mîr, what is wrong³²? Tell me." Mem says, "Bengîn my boy, that [girl] who was with me last night, where did she go, can you tell me?"

Bengîn says, "My dear mîr, last night I did not pass by³³ your room, nor did I see anyone with you. What do I know of jinn or fairies? Whatever you saw before your eyes, where can I go get it?" Mem said, "I don't know. You are my servant, you are always at my doorway, everything -- be it jinn or fairy -- that is inside, must have passed by you. Go and get her! If you don't, you will see a great tragedy with you own eyes!" Bengîn said to himself³⁴, "If I don't lie to him, rescue myself from his grip -- he is very upset -- he might have my head cut off." Bengîn says, "O my mîr, [if] you give me permission, I'll go to town, and whether jinn or fairy, if she hasn't left town, tonight I will bring her here." Mem says, "Go! I give you one half hour to find her and bring her."

Bengîn leaves the room, thinking to himself, "My God, I have been working for them for 10 to 15 years, no one ever treated me unfairly or paid me less than I deserved³⁵. If I <bidime rē> were to set out from here and go home, Mem's father

³⁰An exclamation meaning 'Oh!', 'Mercy!', 'Help!'.

³¹-lit. "a handful of ashes ... did not fall to his hand." Putting ashes on one's head is a mourning custom.

³²-lit. "what happened?"

³³or perhaps "enter"

³⁴-lit. "in his heart"

³⁵-lit. "lessened my salary"

would be angry, he would say, 'What a dishonest³⁶ servant: if he was going, he should have gone, but he should have come to ask my permission and then have gone.' I must go to Mem's father, tell him about Mem's situation, and [95] from there take my leave of him and set out for home. Bengîn heads for Alan-beg's room. He comes to the doorway, and Alan-beg still has his cloak on his arm in the early morning darkness³⁷. He is 80 years old; he has picked up his water pitcher to perform his early morning ablutions. When Bengîn sees him, he greets him, Alan-beg returns his greeting and says, "Bengîn my boy, what is the matter? What brings you to me this early in the morning³⁸? Has someone treated you unfairly, or have you been paid too little, that you should come to me in this early morning darkness?" Bengîn says, "No, may you be well (for me in this world), <bi saya xudê û serê te> (=Thanks to God and you?), no one can pay me too little or treat me unfairly, I've come to tell you of Mem's situation," he says, "I don't know if it's the jinn or fairies who have appeared before Mem's eyes, [but] Mem has told me, 'Go bring [her to me], or else I'll put your neck to the sword and send your head a-flying.' I am a simple creature³⁹, where am I to go get her from? I request that you give me leave to go home." Alan-beg says, "No! Bengîn my boy, he who does 15 years of honest service for someone⁴⁰ is better than that person's son. I would let Mem go, but I won't let you go. Let's go to Mem: I will calm him down." Alan-beg leaves his water pitcher in the house, throws his cloak over his shoulder, and they set out with Alan-beg in front and Bengîn behind⁴¹. They reach the doorway of Mem's room. When they <li derf didin> knock on the door, Mem opens the door for them.

³⁶şirñeram. Cf. EP-1, notes #38 and #114, where şirñelal = of noble character. Şirñeram, its opposite, must mean something like 'ignoble'. Khamoian gives the expression şirê min te ñeram be (lit. "May my milk be forbidden to you"), meaning "I curse you" (said by mothers to ungrateful children).

³⁷=lit. "dark[ness] of daybreak"

³⁸=lit. "What is your condition, this daybreak you have headed for me and come to me"

³⁹=lit. "I [am] poor one of God"

⁴⁰=he who has someone's trusted servant for 15 years

⁴¹=lit. "he sets out/falls into step in front of Bengîn, with Bengîn after"

When Alan-beg catches sight of Mem, bareheaded and barefoot, wearing only shorts and a shirt, pacing about first on this side of the room, then on the other side of the room, he cries out to earth and to heaven. His eyes turn red, they flow with blood. As great as Mem's pain is from the grief of his love-stricken heart, the grief of his father Alan-beg is a thousand times greater. All sense and reason leave his head⁴², and he says to Mem:

"Beloved of my heart, Mem of the Alans,
Your father is commander of 170 cities,
I shall marry my son to⁴³ the daughters of emirs and rulers,
Mem my son, whatever happens to you⁴⁴, happens to us all,
Curses on her who is the devil."

Mem says, "Father, do devils have rings to exchange with people?" Alan-beg says, "No, my son." Mem says, "Father, if you do not believe me, come see her ring [96] <bi şané e'rfitā> (=with a mark of the ifrits?) with your own eyes." No matter what Alan-beg does, he cannot get Mem to agree, and [finally] he says to his servant boys, "Boys, one of you go call Mem's aunt⁴⁵ and tell her Mem's situation is <bi vî awiye> (=thus?). Let her come: if she can't calm Mem down, no one can⁴⁶." One of the servant boys goes and calls Mem's aunt.

When Mem's aunt hears about his situation, she quickly gets up and heads for Mem's room. When she knocks on the door, Mem opens it for her. When Mem's aunt catches sight of Mem, all sense and reason leave her head. His aunt says:

"Mem my boy, my heart is very much <bi k'îne>,
I don't know which of those sluts has appeared before my Mem's eyes."
Mem says, "Auntie, it cannot be so,

⁴²-lit. "sense and reason do not remain in his head"

⁴³-lit. "bring my son to"

⁴⁴-lit. "comes to your head"

⁴⁵-lit. "paternal aunt," i.e. Alan-beg's sister.

⁴⁶-lit. "no one can make him agree"

I have wandered the four corners <qurm> of the globe, its countries and towns, a slut more slutty than you is not to be found."

Mem's aunt gets up with a grievous heart, and heads for home. They send word to Mem's father, telling him that even his aunt could not get him to agree (consent/assent). Alan-beg send for Mem, saying, "Mem my boy, give me two weeks⁴⁷: in all the lands and cities that are under my command, I will circulate⁴⁸ a black and blue/green letter. Fortunetellers will read fortunes⁴⁹, mullahs will look in their Korans, if anyone can give me information about Jizra Botan, for money⁵⁰, for battle, for whatever the circumstance, I will bring it to my son." Mem says, "My dear father, I cannot give you two weeks' respite: if I were still alive at the end of two weeks, I would perish <bibe'cim> from grief. I can give you [only] one week's⁵¹ respite."

Alan-beg circulates a black and blue/green letter, fortunetellers read fortunes.

Seven days pass, but Alan-beg receives no answer. Mem sends [a message] to his father, saying, "Father, I gave you a week's respite to bring me an answer⁵². Seven days have passed, and you have given me no answer. I am asking you to tell me if you have found out any information about Jizra Botan or not." Alan-beg says, "Mem my son, during the past seven days I have sent out⁵³ to all the lands and cities that are under my command a black and blue/green letter; fortunetellers have read fortunes, mullahs have looked in their books: there is no one who can give any information about Jizra Botan." Mem says, "O Father, I am asking you then not to hold/close your heart <dile xo negrî>, [but rather] give me leave to go on my way." Mem's father says, [97] "Well, my son, if you do as your father wishes⁵⁴, you won't go; otherwise, do as you like⁵⁵."

47=lit. "fifteen days"

48=lit. "make and send"

49=lit. "throw sand"

50=lit. "property of the world"

51=lit. "seven days"

52=lit. "an answer of goodness"

53=lit. "made, sent"

54=lit. "if you do that [one] of your father"

Mem says, "There is no choice⁵⁶; if I didn't go, I would perish from grief. In that case, it is better that I go." Mem calls out, saying:

"My father's servant boy whom they call Bengîn,
 At the head of 500 servants, his master is fond of him, the dear and
 sweet one,
 Get up and bring your master's horse from the stable."
 (He says,) when Mem says this, Bengîn, a very <serbeste> boy, goes
 speedily,
 Brings Mem's horse from the stable,
 Putting a blessed saddle on its back,
 Fastening seven belly straps around its belly,
 Thrusting a bit in its mouth.

(He says,) when they brought Mem's horse out into the courtyard,
 --May it never happen here⁵⁷-- screaming, mourning and crying <k'ete
 çerd û p'erdê Alayî di begêda> {broke out in the domains of
 Alan-beg}
 Mem says, "Bengîn my boy, my heart is very resentful <bi k'îne>,
 You come ride with me, let us ride all about Alan-beg's <çerd û p'erd>
 {domain}
 And see with our own eyes
 ?They went in our hands, they came in the hands of God,
 ?May the grief of Alan-beg's <çerd û p'erd> {domain} not remain grief
 in my heart.

⁵⁵=lit. "if you do that of yourself, you are in your own pleasure (k'êf)"

⁵⁶=lit. 'remedy,' 'cure'

⁵⁷=lit. "far from here"

Mem says to himself, "I am a rose, you are basil <riñan >; You are Leyla, I am Majnun; You are Zîn, miserable, headshaven⁵⁸, I am Mem.." (He says,) when Mem and Bengîn return from [riding] around Alan-beg's <çerd û p'erd> (domain), while they are on the way, Mem's mother went down to the water (river), [and] they informed her of Mem's condition. When she came home and laid eyes on Mem, her heart ached. Mem's father said:

"Mem my son, my heart is very resentful,
Your parents' hair and face are white,
If you leave us two old people here and go away, we will very soon <ji
îro pêştir>, [and] the throne and crown of Yemen will remain
unclaimed (without owner/master).
If you leave us two old people here and go away, may God not let you
attain your desire with that daughter of the ruler of Botann."

Mem's mother said, "Mem my son, ?I don't feel sorry for you <heyfa min nayê li te heyfê>: if you leave both of us old people here and go away, we will die <ji îro pêştir>. This lovely palace will be left to the people. If you leave us and go, [98] I pray to God that you will not attain your desire with Lady Zîn." Mem's father said, "My God, don't cry over me, ?pain from children <derdê kezebê> is a great pain, <qewî dîsa ku ser deste>. Mem my son, if you disobey me and go, may God not let you attain your desire with that little lady in Botann."

Mem's father summons his notables (council of elders), [and] assembles them on the roof of his palace. He says, "O notables, what can we do to make Mem turn back?" They decide to send⁵⁹ 1,000 riders out with him: every hour one hundred riders will turn back, until the point when perhaps sens will come to his head and he'll come back. If he doesn't come back, <t'ucara wîna t'une>." Tears come pouring out of the eyes of Mem's father and mother, like the water of mills and springs. Both of them

⁵⁸p'orkuf -lit. "short of hair," is an expression designating women who have lost a male relative, and have cut their hair while mourning them.

⁵⁹-lit. 'prepare'

stand up straight <dibin řep> on the roof of the palace, and fall down. They lose their sense⁶⁰ and -- far be it from this place -- they go blind in both eyes.

When Mem leaves the city, 1,000 riders set out with Bengîn and him. Every hour one hundred riders turn back. After 10 hours have passed, all 1,000 riders have turned back. A little bit of sense comes to his head, [and] he says, "Bengîn my boy, it seems to me⁶¹ there were many riders with us; where have they all gone?" Bengîn says, "My mîr, it is true that there were many riders with us. Every hour one hundred riders turned back [and] went home. We have been on the road for 10 hours: of all the 1,000 riders who came with us, every hour 100 of them have turned back and gone home." Mem says, "Bengîn my boy, you also have a home, you also have children: you turn back too, go home. Don't put the responsibility for you and your children on my neck (=). Bengîn says, "No, my mîr, as long as you are alive, you are my mîr, [and] I am your servant. I won't leave you."

After having this talk, Mem and Bengîn set out. When it was almost 2:00, they encountered an old man and said, "Good day to you, Uncle." The old uncle said, "Good day to you too, and welcome. Where do you fine young lads come from, [and] where are you going?" Mem says, "Uncle, we are merchants looking for some sheep." The old uncle says, "No boys, you aren't merchants, you have come with a purpose in mind, but this purpose of yours has been cursed by your mother and father; if their curse is accepted, your purpose won't come to pass/be fulfilled. If you listen to God and your old uncle, you will turn back from here [and] go home." Mem says, "O Uncle, it's no use <Çê nabe>. Whether or not I attain (reach/realize) my goal, I have no choice, I must go. If I didn't go, perhaps out of grief, I would perish." The old uncle says, "If you don't listen to what I say, you're on your own <ûn bi k'êfa xone>." Mem and Bengîn take their leave of the old uncle and set out.

[99] As soon as they turned their backs on the old uncle and went on, the old man shortened their journey⁶². It became evening for Mem and Bengîn, they were the guests of a meadow. They set their horses loose on the meadow, took down their saddlebags, made tea and coffee for themselves, and drank it. Mem said, "Bengîn my

⁶⁰=lit. "their sense goes"

⁶¹bi e'lami min -lit. "according to my knowledge." Cf Arabic bi-'ilmî بعلمي.

⁶²=lit. "made their road near"

boy, this is a foreign land, there are no aghas or servants here (=), we should sleep in shifts, so that on one can strike a blow at us, so that nothing happens to us which would get back to our country, so that they won't say, 'They went with a purpose, they camped out on the way (lay down), and someone did this thing to them'." Bengîn said, "Mem, since you know [best], let it be as you [say]." Mem said, "Bengîn my boy, I am very tire, <bedêla êvarê> ____ evening I will go to sleep until midnight. When you shift is over, call me [and] I will get up and stand [watch], and you will go to sleep." Mey put his head under his cloak and went to sleep. Bengîn stood watch until 12:00 at night. Bengîn thought to himself, "By God, when I call Mem, he will get up and relieve me, and I will lay down my head and sleep. This time it won't do, by God, even if I die from [lack of] sleep, I won't call (wake) him." Bengîn stayed on until daybreak, he did not wake Mem up.

Rays of sun beat down upon Mem's face. Mem woke with a start, sat up and looked around to see that the sun had risen, <ç'e'vê Bengîn ji xewa venabin> ?Bengîn's eyes have not been open from sleep?. Mem says, "Bengîn my boy, why didn't you call me, so that I could get up and relieve you (take my shift) so that you could have slept a little, so that your eyes wouldn't be open from sleep. Now we are going to set out, how are you going to [stay awake]?" Bengîn says, "My mîr, I hope you will forgive me." Mem says, "This time I forgive you⁶³, but don't do it again!" Bengîn ssays, "It's good that you've forgiven me this time. Next time, I promise, I won't do such a thing." Mem says, "This time, I forgive you. Get up and make us some tea, we will eat and make ourselves ready, so that we can set out."

Bengîn gets up and makes tea. He and Mem eat breakfast. [Then] Bengîn brings the horses, places their saddles on their backs, tightens their belly straps, puts their bits in their mouths, they throw their saddlebags onto their backs, put their feet in the stirrups, they hop onto the horses' backs, with their faces toward the heavens and their backs toward providence, and they set out.

By the time it was noon, they encountered a farmer (plowman), [and] wished him good day, saying, "<Qewat be ji te'ra> ?=Kolay gelsin (greeting said to someone working), plowman!" The plowman says, "Good day to you too, and welcome, strangers." Mem says, "We would like to ask [100] you a question, plowman." the

⁶³-lit. 'you've done it'

plowman says, "Ask⁶⁴," Mem says, "For the love of God, tell us, where this plow is from." the plowman says, "This plow belongs to Jizîra Botan". When the plowman says this, Mem is very disappointed and greatly grieved, saying, "May my father live and be well⁶⁵, as he is the commander of 170 cities, I gave him a seven day respite, [but] he could not find out anything about Jizîra Botan. Now only two days have passed, and we have reached Jizîra Botan." He thrusts his hand into his pocket, fills his hand with gold, rewards the plowman and says, " We are very grateful to you for having given us this good news." They take their leave of the plowman and go on. Once again they stop. Mem and Bengîn say to each other, "Son of a gun! (=Malava) The plowman told us that this place is Jizîra Botan, yes but he did not <t'i rē û dirba rēmi me neda> ?direct us on any roads/ give us any road directions?. Let's go tell him: where we're going, maybe he can show us the way?" As soon as they turn around, the plowman says, "No doubt they have had second thoughts about their gold: they will come catch me, chop off my head, and carry off my gold." The plowman dropped his plow and ran off. Mem called to him and said, "My dear plowman, come, we want to ask you a few questions." The plowman said, "No, you've given me some gold, [and] you've had second thoughts about it. You want to come catch me, hit me and take you gold from me." Mem says, "Come, dear plowman, <em ji te xeber nadin> ?we won't speak against you?, nor will we take your gold from you." When Mem said this, the plowman turned around and went to them, saying, "Tell me what you want!" Mem says, "<Em hîvî dikin> We are not from this place, we are travellers. Can you give us a few directions, so that we [know] how to go?" The plowman says, "This place is Belek Tower <Birca Belek>, that place is Banê K'ilyasê, and that place is the Mir's Garden <BağçêMîraye>." When the plowman says this, Mem is very pleased. They take their leave of the plowman and head off. They come to Belek Tower and see someone standing on the tower⁶⁶ – don't eat or drink, just look at her stature⁶⁷. She was

⁶⁴=lit. "say"

⁶⁵=lit. "May my father's house flourish [be built up] so much"

⁶⁶In other versions, it is Beko's daughter, who is also called Zîn, is the girl encountered here. A little further on, Zîn's maidservant Gulishan is suddenly mentioned. Therefore, in this version it is possible that the girl who Mem encounters at the entrance to Jizîra Bota is Gulishan rather than Beko's daughter Zîn.

bleaching cloth, hanging it up over the pond. When she laid eyes on Mem and Bengin, she fell for Mem not with one heart, but with 1,000 hearts. When Mem greeted her, she returned his greeting and spread out her cloth on the road. Mem thought to himself, "Our affair has gone wrong. We have come so far, and nobody has blocked our way, [until] this <bêbavê> fatherless one/bastard (blocked our way). It looks like our affair won't advance from this point." They ask her for water, [but] she won't give them any, saying, "You must give me your word that you will turn back from here and go home, and take me with you⁶⁸."

Mem thinks to himself, "If I say 'We won't take you', it might make our affair go bad. I'll give her my word that when we turn back, I'll take her⁶⁹ with me. When we go home, I'll [101] marry her to Bengin⁷⁰." Mem says, "I promise that when we turn back to go home, I'll take you with me." [Then] Mem asks her for water, [and] she gives them some. They drink the water, dismounting at the pond. Mem washes his face and hands⁷¹ and relaxes a little.

When Zin came back from Mem's, she told her servants and maidens, "I had such and such a dream, we exchanged rings." When Gulishan⁷² recalled these words, she said, "Undoubtedly this is the man our lady dreamed about."

Mem asks her, "Where shall we go⁷³?" Gulishan says, "Go to the Mir's Garden until evening. When the horsemen return from hunting to come home, they will notice you in the garden and come to you, [and] whatever is on your minds⁷⁴, you will tell each other."

⁶⁷Formulaic expression meaning '[She] is so beautiful, you can't take your eyes off [her],' i.e. the person's beauty is such that one forgets to eat and drink, cf. Turkish *Yeme da yanında yat* = [Something is so delicious that] don't eat it, just lie down beside it.

⁶⁸This could also mean 'marry me'

⁶⁹=lit. 'you'

⁷⁰It was stated earlier that Bengin is already married.

⁷¹=lit. "washes his mouth and face, takes his ritual ablutions"

⁷²See note 66 above.

⁷³=lit. "Where should we and shouldn't we go?"

⁷⁴=lit. "in your hearts"

Mem and Bengîn get up and go to the garden. Its grass <çayır> is knee-deep. They let their horses loose in the grass and they themselves sit down in the shade of the trees.

When it was nearly 4:00, they saw dust rising from the bottom of the plain/wilderness, which turned out to be a group of horsemen. At their head was someone with an arrow in his mouth (?= a sharp tongue?) <tîrkeke devê wîdaye>, the smoke of his pipe became fog and clouds before the feathers/wings of the sky <li ber p'eîê e'zmanâ bûye mij û e'wr> <u usa ji destê hev û dinê diîrevînin> ?=causing to flee from each other's hands? Nobody knew who the arrow (?=sharp tongue) was pointed at. Mem said, "The smoke of his pipe is thick, may his house not be ruined by the smoke of their pipe!"

The horsemen approach little by little. When they reach the <tîrabağçe> ____ of the garden, they notice Mem and Bengîn, [seeing] that there are two people in the garden, each one like the <têjkê fakimekî> ?=crown of a king?, don't eat or drink, just look at their stature. The one who was at the head of the horsemen, with an arrow in his mouth (=sharp tongue?), was Faithless Beko. He said to his servants, "Boys, you go on home, I'll be coming." The boys go on home.

Beko reaches the road and dismounts, takes his horse by its reins (bridle) and walks toward [Mem and Bengîn]. They reach each other and shake hands, Beko greets them and they return his greeting. Beko says, "You good men, who are you, where do you come from and where are you going?" Mem says, "Dear Uncle, we are merchants in search of a few sheep." Beko thinks to himself, "By God, <şêla we ne ya t'êcirîye> you don't look like merchants, but so be it." Beko says, "Come, let's go home." Mem says, "No, Uncle, we'd like to ask you a few questions." Beko says, "Please, ask!" Mem says, "For the love of God, in this city whose house does one go to stay at?" Bengîn says, "Well, to tell the truth, if you are looking for tea and coffee, you should go to mîr Zêydîn's house, if you are looking for depravity and wickedness, come to you Uncle Beko's house, if you are looking for honor and valor, go to Qeretajdîn's house. Mem [102] says, "May depravity and wickedness be far from you, [true] men don't get involved in this⁷⁵, nor are tea and coffee important to them⁷⁶. For [true] men, honor and valor are good." Beko says, "Well then, if that's what you want, wait [here] until

⁷⁵=lit. "this is not the business of men"

⁷⁶=lit. 'us'

5:00. The mîr's horsemen will pass by. The mîr never looks around from side to side, he always looks straight ahead: he'll pass by without seeing you. At 6:00, the horseman Qeretajdîn and his brothers Cheko and E'rif will come, see you <tîra we>, <fêtana nêyne ba we>, they won't ever pass you buy." Beko takes his leave of them, mounts his horse, and heads for home. Mem and Bengîn remain sitting there. At 5:00, the mîr's horsemen come passing by after hunting, [and] by God's design they don't see Mem and Bengîn. At 6:00, the horseman Qeretajdîn and his brothers Cheko and E'rif are returning from <jî xêbê binê beñyê> ?=from of the bottom of the plains, from hunting. When they reach the <tîrabaçe> the of the garden, they have a look inside the garden and see two men there, don't eat or drink, just look at their stature. They dismount, lead their horses by the reins, and walk over to the two of them. They reach and greet each other. Mem returns their greeting. Qeretajdîn says, "Fine young lads, please come home with use." Mem says, "No, [first] you must tell us something." Qeretajdîn says, "Speak!" Mem says, "If you give us the hand of brotherhood⁷⁷, we will come with you to your house, otherwise, we won't come." Qeretajdîn thinks to himself, "<ferez van merivê hanêkê gotin> these men said 'We are merchants', well, they don't look the part: they are surely the rulers of their land. If I don't give them the hand of brotherhood, they will return to their country and say 'Curses on the rulers of Botan, for <geze nanê xo> their bread, they wouldn't give us the hand of brotherhood'. By God, that would involve/include me too, I should give them the hand of brotherhood."

They pledge brotherhood to one another. All five of them mount their horses and head for home. When they reach the gateway, Qeretajdîn shouts out, "Lady! Tell the servants to come <serê hespê bigrin> take/see to the horses." When Qeretajdîn uses the name "Lady⁷⁸", <t'irpînt> ?=a shudder goes through Mem, and he says [to himself], "What a blunder I've committed!/ What a wretch I am! Undoubtedly it is Zîn [that Qeretajdîn called to]: we have pledged brotherhood, so I can neither kill [him] nor kidnap [her]. <Dibe lûba-lûba wîna> _____, he says, "<Ez

⁷⁷=lit. "if you make us *destebira*". Destebira[tl] is a type of fictive kinship, similar to bloodbrothers.

⁷⁸stiyê

k'etime t'ayê> = _____⁷⁹. They put down a place (mattress) for him, then take him and put him on his place (or - they seat him).

For three nights and three days Qeretajdîn cannot tear himself away from [Mem]⁸⁰, [and] doesn't go to see the mîr. The mîr says, "It seems that Qeretajdîns is making an assembly <hevalbend> for himself, and doesn't bother to come see me anymore." Beko says, "No, my mîr, you are wrong: if this guest who is at Qeretajdîn's house were at your house, you would sit with him for six nights and days, not just three nights and days [as Qeretajdîn has]: of his company or his countenance [103] you would never tire." The mîr says, "Beko, what difference is there between my guests and Qeretajdîn's guests? Let's send [a message] to Qeretajdîn to come here with his guest."

They send a servant boy to Qeretajdîn's house to tell him to come to [the mîr's] chamber together with his guest. The boy goes to Qeretajdîn's house and says, "Uncle Qeretajdîn, the mîr has said that [you] should come to [his] chambers together with your guest." Qeretajdîn says, "You go, I will come." The boy goes. Qeretajdîn gets up and says, "Mem, you are ill, don't get up from your place: I'll go to [the mîr's] chamber to see what he wants⁸¹ (and I'll come back)." Qeretajdîn gets up, throws his cloak over his arm, and heads for the mîr's chamber. When Qeretajdîn arrives there, he opens the door, enters the room, and greets Beko and the mîr. They return his greeting, and they sink into conversation. They speak of Mem, saying that there is not another man like Mem in the world, nor will there ever be one. Qeretajdîn and Beko say, "When he enters the diwan, <ez mîr dibînim> ?=I have yet to see a man whose butt sticks to his chair and does not stand up before him." The mîr says, "Beko, Qeretajdîn, as far backas I can remember, I have never stood up before a commoner, nor will I." Qeretajdîn and Beko say, "No my mîr, when Mem comes to the diwan, you will have no choice but to stand up before him." <Dik'evine miqatê> ?= They start debating, [and] the mîr says, "Go tell Mem to come, then it will become clear."

They send a servant boy after Mem. When the boy comes [and] tells Mem that Qeretajdîn said for him to come to [the mîr's] chamber, Mem gets up, throws his sword

⁷⁹=lit. "I have fallen into a fever." According to Bakaev, this expression is used to chide a person for being lazy, slovenly, or weak.

⁸⁰=lit. "doesn't get up from before [Mem's] head"

⁸¹=lit. 'says'

over his shoulder, throws his cloak over his arm, and they set out with the servant boy in front and Mem behind⁸². They arrive, (and) Mem enters the [mîr's] chambers. When he greets the mîr of Botan, they are all amazed, and do not know how they stood up from their seats before him. The mîr also, without thinking about it, stands up before him. Qeretajdîn says to himself, "If I don't put my handkerchief⁸³ on the mîr's seat, he'll say 'I did not stand up before Mem'." So he puts down his handkerchief on the mîr's seat. They all sit down, the mîr also sits down, and they sink into a discussion with Mem. Qeretajdîn and Beko say, "My mîr, did you stand up before Mem?" The mîr says, "No!" Qeretajdîn says, "My mîr, if my handkerchief is not on your seat underneath you, you will know that you did not stand up: but it is under you, then you will know without a doubt that you did stand up." The mîr stands up and looks at his seat, and Qeretajdîn's handkerchief is under him. The mîr says, "Beko, Qeretajdîn, after this it is clear that everything you have said about Mem is true."

The mîr, Qeretajdîn, Beko, and all the [notables] converse with Mem until their assembly disperses. Qeretajdîn and Mem come home and [continue] talking, until dinner is brought to them. They eat dinner, [then] Mem gets up and goes to his room, [and] Qeretajdîn goes to his room. Qeretajdîn [104] says to his wife, "Woman, while we were coming home through the garden, Mem was fit as a fiddle, but as soon as he laid eyes on you, he began to feel ill. Get up and put on a nice suit of clothes, make up your eyes with kohl, throw slippers on your feet, and go to Mem's room, so that we can test his brotherhood, to see if he is a true brother or a false one."

Just as Qeretajdîn says, his Lady⁸⁴ puts on a lovely suit of clothes, throws slippers on her feet, and heads for Mem's room. When she goes to Mem's room, he says to her, "My sister, this place is a guest room. In case you've lost your way, your way is this way, go through there." When Mem says this to her, she turns around, goes back to Qeretajdîn and says, "This is how Mem reacted: he said to me, 'My sister, in case you've lost your way, this place is the guest room, your way is that way, go your own way.'" When his Lady said this to Qeretajdîn, he said, "May Mem be praised <ji tefa û ji şîrê

⁸²Cf. note 41 above.

⁸³Kevnik or Kewnik =lit. 'rag'

⁸⁴Şîya could either be her name or her title.

teṛa>⁸⁵. I know that you are a true brother." From then on Qeretajdîn was very well-disposed toward Mem⁸⁶.

Several days pass, their assemblies always taking place. One day the mîr, Qeretajdîn and Beko decided in [the mîr's] chamber that these men⁸⁷ are deceiving them⁸⁸, saying that they are merchants, while they don't have the <şel> of merchants. There are no heroes or champions like them. If they could convince Mem to stay there with them, they would last forever⁸⁹. Beko and Qeretajdîn say, "What can we do to convince him?" The mîr says, "If we marry him off to one of our womenfolk, then instead of leaving us, he would stay with us." The three of them decide to marry him to Zîn, the daughter of Uncle Beko.⁹⁰ They all agree, saying, "Good, let Qeretajdîn tell Mem this evening, and if he accepts, we'll betroth her to him."

In the evening Qeretajdîn comes home and says to Mem, "My brother, today we have found a girl for you." Mem says, "Who is it?" Qeretajdîn says, "Zîn, the daughter of Uncle Beko." Mem hadn't seen her⁹¹, and thought to himself, "Maybe this Zîn is the one I saw". He said to Qeretajdîn, "Brother, if you have all agreed, I am with you."

The next day they go to the [mîr's] chamber, and Qeretajdîn says, "Mem is willing." All the notables of Botan get up and go to Beko's house and tell him that they have come to betroth his daughter to Mem. They get Beko's consent, and Mem is betrothed to Beko's daughter⁹².

⁸⁵=lit. "May Mem be allowed to you and to your milk"

⁸⁶=lit. "Qeretajdîn's confidence comes well with Mem"

⁸⁷i.e. Mem and Bengîn

⁸⁸=lit. 'us'

⁸⁹=lit. "If we could convince Mem to stay here with us, there is no ceasing of us in the world"

⁹⁰As in other versions, there are two Zîns.

⁹¹unless the girl bleaching cloth when he first came to Jizîra Bota was she. See note 66 above.

⁹²=lit. "they place Mem's betrothal on Beko's daughter"

Several days pass, Mem's betrothed Zîn⁹³ has heard that Mem has come. She writes a letter and sends it to Mem, saying, "Mem, he who came for sugar [105] and got vitriol⁹⁴ is you: he who came for the lady and got her servant is also you. If you don't believe [me], come on Friday to Belek Tower and take a look in the Mir's Garden, then it will be clear who is the lady and who is the servant."

Mem became troubled, saying, "My God, when will Friday come, so that I can go to Belek Tower, to the Mir's Garden, and finally see Zîn with my own eyes? Then I will gladly welcome death."

On Friday Mem says to Qeretajdîn, "My brother, please, if you don't mind <erke ko tu dilê xo negrî>, in the ten to fifteen days since I've been here, I have not gone outside. Come with me today, let's go to Belek Tower and take a look into the Mir's Garden, perhaps I'll breathe a little easier." Qeretajdîn says, "No, my dear brother, you are ill, you aren't well yet <hêja baş saxlam nebûyî>. If we go, you will catch cold and fall ill, and I will look bad⁹⁵." Mem says, "My brother, please, get up and let's go, I will dress warmly <ezê xo germ dadim>." Qeretajdîn does not want to offend him, so he gets up and he and Mem prepare to go. They set out with Qeretajdîn in front and Mem behind. They ascend Belek Tower and sit down. At 10:00 in the morning they notice that four young ladies of Botan have come to the garden. Qeretajdîn says to Mem, "Brother, do you know these young ladies?" Mem says, "Brother where would I know them from?" Qeretajdîn says, "How could you not know them? Take a look at them, they are like four doves, who on one day in the springtime⁹⁶, in the chill of the dawn, beat their wings, and in so doing remove all dust from them⁹⁷. Do you see the one in front? They call her Lady Zîn, a new-born dove, possessed of a crown of golden amber, the sister of mir Zêydîn, the cousin of Qeretajdîn; the one after her is the daughter of your brother Qeretajdîn; the one behind her is your brother Qeretajdîn's wife; the last

⁹³It is not immediately clear whether this refers to the Zîn who came to him in his room at the beginning of the story, or the one to whom he has just been betrothed. Logically, it should be the former.

⁹⁴Şeb or Şev is alum or vitriol.

⁹⁵-lit. "my house will become bad or ruined"

⁹⁶-lit. "April and May"

⁹⁷-lit. "put their feathers and wings, beat their feathers and wings together, the dust and smoke goes from on their feathers and wings"

of all is the betrothed of my brother⁹⁸, the one whom I will marry to my brother, by the words of the prophet of God." Mem says, "No, brother, I don't need the last one: the first one is mine." Qeretajdîn says, "Brother, how could you agree [to marry the last one]? If the mîr finds out about this, he won't leave any of us alive." Mem stands up, draws his sword from its sheath, and says to Qeretajdîn, "My dear brother, all the grief and pain I have been suffering is over Lady Zîn. If you can't accept that, let's part on bad terms, and I will go." Qeretajdîn says, "No, brother, go [see her] if you want to."

Mem descends from the tower to go to the Mîr's Garden, to Zîn. She is singing a song about herself and Mem.

[106] She sings, "My Mem is thin of stature – a young willow, step by step, pace by pace, he has come from a strange land, from the city of Yemen to the city of Jizra Botan, and he is most welcome⁹⁹."

Qeretajdîn's daughter says:

"Mem, uncle, my heart is very resentful,
 When a wretched rose blossoms, a wretched nightingale sticks its beak
 into it, making it its companion¹⁰⁰, slowly getting into it and
 taking it away,
 I don't feel sorry for you, today the moustache of wretched Mem will
 fall before the face of¹⁰¹ Lady Zîn,
 Mem, you are my uncle¹⁰², the light of my father's two eyes,
 Rosy, in the Mîr's Garden, you are my aunt's¹⁰³ guest.
 Uncle Mem, my heart is very resentful,
 Don't say, 'I'm a stranger, I have no one to care for me here',
 My father and my two uncles are your servants,

⁹⁸i.e. Mem.

⁹⁹-lit. "he has come on my eyes and those of my 1,000 fathers"

¹⁰⁰Γewîn = 'twin'

¹⁰¹perhaps this means 'will be subordinate to'

¹⁰²paternal uncle

¹⁰³maternal aunt. But Zîn, as her father's sister, is her paternal aunt [met(ik)].

They stood by the doorway of the lair¹⁰⁴,
 Before they kill one or two of us, we will bring down forty of them."

In the Mir's Garden, when Mem and Zîn are reunited¹⁰⁵, they rush at each other like ten stars fallen together. Qeretajdîn's daughter goes over to them, takes her veil off her head, and [holds it over them] to shade the two of them with it. When Beko's daughter sees what Mem and Zîn are up to, she tears her garment¹⁰⁶, throws away all the rings on her fingers and gold about her neck, tears out half of her hair, and heads for home in tears. Her father, Beko, is sitting at the window. When he sees his daughter coming home crying, he gets up and goes to meet her. He says, "My child, tell me what has happened to you!" His daughter replies, "What do you think happened, Father? That guest of Qeretajdîn's whom you have betrothed me to took mîr Zêydîn's sister Zîn from me by force¹⁰⁷ in the Mir's Garden today." When Beko's daughter says this, he says, "My child, no harm done, it's not the first time the powerful have mistreated the poor; it's all right, I swear by God that I won't let them have what they want."

Qeretajdîn calls down to his daughter from the tower, saying, "My child, call Mem: if the mîr hears of this, we will have to wage a new war here." His daughter replies, "Father, leave them alone, let them wake up and get up on their own. I won't call them."

After two hours had passed, Mem comes to his senses. He and Zîn wake up, [107] he throws his cloak over his arm, throws his sword over his shoulder, and goes to Qeretajdîn. No one knows about them, other than Beko.

Qeretajdîn and Mem come home. A few days later, Mem, the mîr and Beko are sitting together in a room. Beko and the mîr say, "There is no day better than today, the three of us are alone, let's tell each other the name of our beloved." Mem says, "Sorry, but I have no beloved, nor will I falsely use the name of people's daughters." Beko says, "Mem, why are you so afraid? I'll tell my beloved's name first." And he begins:

¹⁰⁴It is not clear to me what this line and the next are referring to.

¹⁰⁵-lit. "reach each other"

¹⁰⁶-lit. "shirt"

¹⁰⁷-lit. "with blows and force"

"The beloved of my heart, they call her Fatima,
When I walked by the tower, that palace,
Then she came out to greet me gladly, openly, and with sighs."

Beko and the mîr say to each other, "Now whose turn is it?" They say it's Mem's turn. Mem says, "If you please, leave me alone. I have no beloved here whose name I could tell you." The mîr says, "It's my turn," and he says:

"The beloved of my heart, Begîm Khan,
When I walked by the tower, that palace,
Then she came out to greet me gladly and openly."

Once again the mîr and Beko say, "Now it's Mem's turn: we have both told the name of ours." But no matter what they do, Mem says, "I have no beloved here, nor will I falsely use the name of people's daughters."

The mîr says, "No matter who Mem is in love with,
I'll give you rubies and pearls, jewels, money, and treasures."

Beko says, "My mîr, I know the name of Mem's beloved. The mîr says, "Beko, if you know the name of Mem's beloved, you must say it."

Beko says, "My mîr, Mem's beloved is a black, wine colored (?)
<şîrabî(ne)> slave,
With a bucket of yoghurt in her hand,
She wanders about the market of Jizîra,
Every young man who takes a spoonful from her
Gives her 15 pinches in her side."

[108] When Beko says this, Mem is greatly angered and distressed.

He says, "My mîr, what Beko says

Has me quite upset <P'eñya dilê min disott>¹⁰⁸
 I do have a beloved, they call her Zîn,
 A new-born dove,
 The sister of mîr Zêydîn,
 The cousin of Qeretajdîn."

When Mem says this, the mîr says, "Servant boys, scoundrels¹⁰⁹, rise up against Mem. Certainly God did not make us for such a day."

Forty servants rise up against Mem, [and] Mem responds with his hands, mace, and dagger. Mem, seeing no escape, puts his back to the wall. By God's decree, on either side of him the walls fall down, while his dagger is in his hand. Not one of the mîr's servants dares to approach Mem.

The mîr has three sons,
 The eldest of his sons is called Gurgîn,
 News of this is immediately brought to Cheko, E'rif and Qeret'ajdîn,
 My father's servant is called Bengîn.

When the news is brought to Cheko, E'rif, Qeret'ajdîn and Bengîn, Bengîn gets up bareheaded and barefoot, wearing only underwear and a shirt, picks up Mem's sword and runs towards the mîr's diwan. When he reaches the doorway of the diwan, he catches sight of Mem with the wall collapsed on either side of him, his dagger in hand. As much as Bengîn's heart aches [for Mem], until Mem gives him permission, he may not enter the mîr's diwan. When Mem looks at the doorway and notices his naked sword in Bengîn's hand, he calls out:

"My father's servant boy whom they call Bengîn,
 At the head of 500 servants, his master is fond of him, the dear and
 sweet one,
 Put your master's sword into his hand,

¹⁰⁸-lit. "has burned the precious part of my heart"

¹⁰⁹Cf. BP-1, note # {122}.

Today in the chambers of the dog mîr Zêydîn I will do some bloody killing."

When Mem says this, Bengîn enters the diwan and is about to put Mem's sword in his hands. [Just then] the three brothers Cheko, E'rif and Qeret'ajdîn come through the door and greet Beko and the mîr. Qeretajdîn says, "Beko and mîr, blessed God has given us a dear brother, who [109] has none of the faults of human nature. Are you intent upon destroying our brother Mem?" Beko says, "No, Qeretajdîn, dear brother, we are not seeking to destroy Mem, we are testing out his manliness. May we go blind - - poke out our eyes with our own fingers - - if we were to erase someone like Mem from the world." Qeretajdîn takes Mem by the arm, and leaves the diwan [with him], saying, "Beko and mîr, if you are so manly and clever, that's fine, we will take our brother Mem home and you can prepare for battle." Beko says, "No, Qeretajdîn, we were just testing Mem's manliness." When they say this, Qeretajdîn's anger subsides, [and] they talk until noon. After noon, they get up and go home.

That evening the mîr sends out a town crier through the city [saying] "Everyone who has a horse - - and those who don't should buy one - - at dawn we will all go out and play *jereed*^{109a}!"

^{109a} *Jereed* is a game played on horseback, using blunt javelins called in Arabic *jarid* جريد , made of palm branches stripped bare of their leaves [*jarada* جراد means 'to strip bare']: hence the word for javelin is also the name of the game. The follow description, from E.W. Lane's *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, should explain what is happening in the present text: "The combatants usually consist of two parties, of different villages, or of different tribes ..., each party about twelve or twenty or more in number, and each person mounted on a horse or mare. The two parties station themselves about 500 feet or more apart. A person from one party gallops towards the other party, and challenges them; one of the latter, taking in his left hand four, five, six, or more gereeds, each six feet, or an inch or two more or less, in length ... and very heavy ... pursues the challenger at full gallop. He approaches him as near as possible - - often within an arm's length - - and throws, at his head or back, one gereed after another, until he has none left. The gereed is blunt at both ends. It is thrown with the small end foremost, and with uplifted arm, and sometimes inflicts terrible, and even fatal, wounds. The person against whom the gereeds are thrown endeavours to catch them, or to ward them off with his arm or with a sheathed sword, or he escapes them by the superior speed of his horse. Having sustained the attack, and arrived at the station of his party, he tries his skill against the person by whom he has been pursued, in the same manner as the latter did against him...." (pp. 350-351). For a brief explanation of *jereed* [*jirit*] in a Turkish context, see Warren S. Walker & Ahmet E. Uysal, *Tales Alive in Turkey* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1966; reprinted Lubbock, Texas : Texas Tech University Press, 1990), p. 262, note #24; also, in the same book, tale #1, "The Blind Padishah with Three Sons," features a *jereed* match (pp. 10-24, esp. p. 22ff.). See also V.J. Parry, "Djerid," in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New ed. (Leiden : E.J. Brill, 1960-), vol. 2, pp. 532-3 for a discussion and bibliography; and "Chapter 6: Indoor and Outdoor Games" in: M. M. Ahsan, *Social Life*

At dawn, the mīr's horsemen, those of Beko, and those of Qeretajdīn were each supposed to go out separately and play *jereed*. At dawn the mīr's horsemen, those of Qeretajdīn and those of Beko all went and stood in separate groups in the main square. Mem came out from among Qeretajdīn's men and stood in the middle of the square; from the mīr's men, one by one his heroes and champions went and joined Mem¹¹⁰. All of the mīr's men who come out, are defeated by Mem. Finally the mīr looks around and sees that not 17 of his men are left beside him¹¹¹. The brightness leaves his eyes, he is very distressed, thinking, "How is it that Mem has defeated so many of my heroes and champions today?" He draws his sword from its sheath, and from his seat holds it out to Mem in the middle of the square. Qeretajdīn thinks to himself, "If I don't call out to Mem, he will challenge the mīr also, and we will have a war on our hands."

Qeretajdīn says, "Beloved of my heart, Mem of the Alans,
Get hold of yourself, the ruler of Botan has come to you,
Take hold of your horse's reins with both hands and tighten them,
Let yourself down, <biniya Silekane> (?=slaps on your buttocks)."

After Qeretajdīn says this, Mem tightly grasps his horse's reins with both hands, [and] gets down on the ground^{111a}. The mīr challenges him. The three brothers, Cheko, E'rif and Qeretajdīn go stand over Mem. Qeretajdīn says, "Beko and mīr, God has given us a brother, [and] it is clear that you two want to destroy him, our brother Mem." Beko says, "What has happened to you, Qeretajdīn? <Mocē te dīsa weke me'siya hatine me>¹¹². Mem has fallen, [and] thank God, nothing has happened to him. Let Mem go home, and we will return to our pleasure. If I am not telling the truth, there are many [110] heroes and champions here, let them say whether or not I am telling the truth. From when Jizira was built until now, we have never brought as

Under the Abbasids: 170-289 AH/786-902 AD (London & New York : Longman, 1979), pp. 243-264, for a discussion of the importance of horse-racing and the like in an early Islamic context. *Jereed* also appears in LC-1 (note 139), SHa-2 (note 22), and HM (note 22).

110-lit. "come out to him"

111-lit. "that 17 of his men did not remain around him"

111a This passage has an analogue in SHa-2, pp. 250-1, and note 22.

112-lit. "Once again your waves have come to us like/as fish"

many horsemen together as we have done for Mem's sake. If we did as you wish, we would put an end to our pleasure¹¹³, we would all have to get up and go home. Mem fell, [and] thank God, nothing has happened to him. Let Mem go [home], [and] let us carry on with our amusement." When Beko finished speaking, everyone agreed, saying, "Beko is right, let Mem go home, let us carry on with our amusement."

They set about preparing to send Mem home, carrying on with their amusements. Beko thought about Mem's going home: "By God, as soon as he is out of sight, he won't go home, he'll go to Zîn. Let's go secretly find Mem and Zîn together."

Beko said, "Horsemen, I have something to say to you." They said, "Speak, Beko." He said, "Let's make a bet today. I'll keep a little distance away from you. I'll ride on, and you let your horses race, pursuing me up to the door of the mîr's diwan, on condition that even if <ceh bik'evne pêşya we>, or the road is bad, you won't let your horses slow down until [you reach] the door of the diwan. If any one of you catches up with me, you must cut off my head with a blow of your sword, my blood is permitted to be spilt¹¹⁴." They all agreed, saying, "There is nothing better than this." Qeretajdîn said, "Very well, if I catch up with him, I'll slice off his head, so that we're rid of him."

Beko goes a little distance away from them and says, "Come on!"

When Mem went, he did not go home; he went to Zîn, and in the [mîr's] chamber they engaged in the amusements and jokes of mankind. They placed a watchman at the door, so that if the horsemen should come in unexpectedly¹¹⁵, he would let Mem know, and Zîn could go to her room. However, the watchman, who had never seen so much money in his life¹¹⁶, sat himself down and was slowly counting his money. He had lost track of what was going on around him¹¹⁷. [Meanwhile], Beko was leading all the horsemen, and they were all trailing behind him. Beko was also free¹¹⁸ with his horse. The horsemen were trying to catch up with him. Qeretajdîn also wanted very

113=lit. "cause our pleasure to disperse," cf. T keyfîni kağırmak.

114=lit. "legal to you," i.e. no blood revenge would be exacted for killing him.

115=lit. "secretly"

116=lit. "in his father's life." Apparently they bribed him.

117=lit. "he had no awareness of the wind[s] of fortune"

118, e. 'fast'

much to overtake him, and even exhausted his horse [in the endeavor], but Beko was in first place on his horse. Beko had a noble Seklawi¹¹⁹ horse, which is why he made the bet with them. No one beat Beko to the door of the [mîr's] chamber. Once the poor watchman finally noticed, the horsemen were already there. There was no longer any chance for him to go tell Mem [of their arrival], so that Zîn could go to her room. In one leap, all of the horsemen were standing in the mîr's diwan. The servants were tending to their horses, and all of the notables entered the room. Mem had no way to escape: he positioned Zîn behind his back, and threw his cloak over himself, having sat down in the mîr's throne. It was an old custom of the mîrs of Botan, that when [111] the mîr entered the diwan, [if someone was seated on his throne] no matter how old that person was, [the latter] must relinquish the throne to him.

The mîr went down one side of the room, then up the other side, very distraught because Mem was sitting on his throne and would not rise before him. Qeretajdîn made eyes at Mem, [as if] to say, "My brother, let the mîr sit on his throne!" Mem was not timid, he showed Qeretajdîn Zîn's braid under his cloak, to explain that the situation was thus and so.

Qeretajdîn said to his brothers Cheko and E'rif, "Brothers, things are bad, the two of you draw your swords and one stand on either side of Mem, don't let anyone touch him until I get back from the house."

Qeretajdîn went home [and] said to his wife, "Woman, Mem is in trouble: he has sat down on the mîr's throne in the diwan, [and] Zîn is behind him [hiding] under his cloak. What should we do to rescue him once more from this mess?" His Lady says, "Qeretajdîn, do what you think is right¹²⁰." Qeretajdîn removes his horse, his Koran – they had a Koran – and his son's crib from the house and sets his whole manor on fire. Some goodpeople¹²¹ go tell the mîr, "Qeretajdîn has burned down his whole abode; go see what's the matter with him." When the mîr is about to get up, Beko doesn't let him, saying, "No, my mîr, it's a trick!" Qeretajdîn's entire manor burns down. Qeretajdîn says, "Lady, that brother of yours has not left his diwan. What should we do to rescue Mem once again? Is there anything else left?" His Lady says, "We have

¹¹⁹**Seklawî** or **Seglawî** is a type of fine horse. According to Jaba & Justi, it comes from the name of a district near Feloudja, west of the Euphrates River.

¹²⁰-lit. "as you know, so do for yourself"

¹²¹-lit. "there are some masters of goodness"

nothing left but the little crib." Qeretajdîn says, "Woman, go tie your infant¹²² to your back, put your slippers on your feet, and keep a small distance away from me. Run as much as you can, so that I don't catch up with you. If I catch you, I'll kill you and the boy together."

Qeretajdîn's Lady goes and does just as he says. She goes a little distance away from Qeretajdîn, and jumps. Qeretajdîn pursues her with his sword drawn. [When] they reach the door (?) of the mîr's diwan, his Lady lets out a scream and jumps away. When her screams reach the ears of her brother mîr Zêydîn, the mîr starts to get up, [but] Beko says, "My mîr, stay put, it's a trick!" The mîr gets good and angry [and] says, "Beko, you see that Qeretajdîn is very upset: with his sword drawn he is chasing after his Lady. If he catches her he'll cut her head off." Beko keeps saying, "It's a trick!" and the mîr gets so annoyed that he gives Beko such a slap in the mouth that two or three teeth fall out. When the mîr leaves the diwan, there is no one left there, everyone goes out [to see] about Qeretajdîn.

Zîn gets up from behind Mem [and] goes to her room. The mîr says, "Beko, who was that who left the diwan?" [Beko] said, "My mîr, her garment was like that of your wife, [but] I don't know."

[112] They took Qeretajdîn, and all returned to [the mîr's] chamber. [This time] Mem yielded the mîr his throne. The mîr went and sat down on his throne, and they talked until the assembly dispersed in the evening, [and] they all went home.

The next day once again the notables assembled. They spoke about Qeretajdîn, who had burned down his entire manor. They did not have the wherewithal to rebuild a manor the likes of Qeretajdîn's, so they started thinking^{122a}. The mîr said to Beko, "Beko, if you can't find a solution, it's no use." Beko said, "My mîr, this matter does not concern me, I will always be unacceptable to you. Whenever I tell you something, although¹²³ what I say is always right, none of you ever listens to me."

¹²²The dictionaries give "infant's shoe" for the word p'ap'ûçk. Perhaps it is actually the shoes that are meant, as Qeretajdîn also tells his wife to put on her slippers.

^{122a} Cf. B. Nikitine's comment, in speaking of social customs as reflected in Mem û Zîn: "Another, very meritorious custom is to be mentioned, that of collective aid to a person whose house has been destroyed in a conflagration" [my translation]. See his "Essai de classification de folklore à l'aide d'un inventaire social-économique," in XVle Congrès international d'anthropologie et d'archéologie préhistorique: Vle assemblée générale de l'Institut international d'anthropologie, Bruxelles 1-8 septembre 1935 (Bruxelles: [Imprimerie médicale et scientifique], 1936), v. 2, p. 1010.

¹²³=lit. "because"

The mîr said, "All right, Beko, tell us what we should do to rebuild Qeretajdîn's manor. If your words are correct, they will be well known."

They begged Beko, saying, "Tell us, Beko!" He said, "My mîr, you all know that when the subject comes up in conversation, Qeretajdîn and his brothers Cheko and E'rif say that there is no man more manly than they. If they are indeed so manly and clever, we have been unable to collect taxes from the Beraz tribe for seven years: let Qeretajdîn and his brothers go get them. With [the money they collect] we will build a manor even more splendid than the one he had before¹²⁴."

The next day they call Qeretajdîn and say, "Qeretajdîn, as you know, it is not in our power to build you a mansion like the one you had before. When it comes up in conversation, Qeretajdîn, you say that there is no man more manly than you¹²⁵. Since that is so, it has been seven years since we collected taxes from the Beraz tribe: you and your brothers go get them, [and] we will build you a fine manor." Qeretajdîn says, "So be it."

The following day, Qeretajdîn and his brother Cheko and E'rif go and mount their horses together with Bengîn, to go to the Beraz tribe. They entrust Mem to Stîyê [with the understanding that] he will not leave the house to go anywhere at all. Then they set out.

A few days later, Beko and the mîr are sitting together. Beko says, "My mîr, it's been a few days since Qeretajdîn went off to the Beraz tribe, Mem is all alone in the house, he must be bored. Let's invite him to come here to [sit with] us. Maybe he'll feel better." They send for Mem, saying that the mîr and Beko are in [the mîr's] chamber, and inviting Mem to come join them. Stîyê would not allow it. Beko was forced to go himself to beg her to give Mem permission to come to them. [After] he pleads with her a great deal, Stîyê gives Mem permission. Mem goes to the [mîr's] room and talks with Beko and the mîr until evening. Once again the assembly adjourns, and everyone goes home.

¹²⁴-lit. "Not a manor like that of him before, one even better than it with it we will build."

¹²⁵-lit. "us"

[113] The next day Mem gets tired of staying at home¹²⁶, so he goes to Beko and the mîr. And so it happened that Mem got into the habit of getting up every day and going to [the mîr's] diwan.

One day Mem, Beko and the mîr were sitting in the diwan, [when] the mîr said, "Today let's play [cards¹²⁷] on the condition of *shandilkhaz*: whoever wins can make a demand of the loser, and the loser must grant it." Mem and the mîr play. They make an agreement that whoever wins seven times can ask whatever he wants of the other. Mem beat the mîr six times, only one game remained. Beko got to thinking, "By God, one more game and Mem will beat the mîr, and then he'll ask for Zîn, and achieve his goal. What if I were to go tell Zîn to get all dressed up and stick her head through the skylight? Maybe Mem would be distracted by her and the mîr would beat him."

Beko goes to Zîn's room and says [to her], "Zîn, Mem and your brother are playing on the condition of *shandilkhaz*. Mem has beaten your brother six times, if he beats him once more, your brother will have to give him whatever he asks for. I know that Mem is in love with you, [I'm sure] he'll ask [to marry] you. Your brother will be forced to give you [to him]. Go put on a nice set of clothes, make up your eyes with kohl, and go stick your head out the skylight of the cage¹²⁸; soon we'll be celebrating your marriage."

Zîn does just as Beko said: she gets all dressed up, and goes towards them, sticking her head out of the skylight.

Beko returns to the mîr and Mem, and says to the mîr, "My mîr, in my childhood when we used to play knucklebones¹²⁹, one place was luckier than the others." Mem says, "Beko, if it's because of where we are sitting, let's trade places." Mem and the mîr get up and switch places. Mem sits in the mîr's place, and the mîr sits in Mem's spot. Mem's eye falls on the skylight, and sees that Zîn has stuck her head out of her cage through the skylight. When he sees her, all reason goes out of Mem's head, he has one eye on the cards and one eye on Zîn.

¹²⁶=lit. "his patience does not come at home"

¹²⁷It is only clear that in this version they are playing cards rather than chess because of one sentence, appearing three paragraphs further down: "Mem keeps one eye on his cards, and one eye on Zîn."

¹²⁸Presumably the cage (*qefes*) refers to the harem or women's quarters.

¹²⁹Хар û k'ap[ə]. K'ap, f. = Knucklebone [Russian *babka бабка*, al'chik *альчик*].

The mîr beats Mem seven times. Mem says, "State your conditions!" The mîr says, "Beko, what shall we ask for?" Beko says, "My mîr, what shall we ask for? We have a well 50 meters deep: let's take Mem and put him at the bottom of the well, and leave him there for three or four days¹³⁰. Those are our conditions. They ask Mem, "How's that?" Mem says, "If it is true that you will keep me at the bottom of the well for [only] three or four days and then let me out, that's fine." Beko and the mîr say, "After three or four days we'll let you out."

They tie a few ropes together and tie them around Mem, [then] let him down into the bottom of the well. Zîn has a tunnel dug from her room to the bottom of the well, [and] secretly takes blankets and mattresses to Mem, [and] feeds him like a king. And so it happens that Mem's bed is better than ever.

[114] One day Beko says, "Why don't I go to the well and see how Mem is doing?" He goes and stands over the well and says, "Mem, walk back and forth for me down there, so that I can see how you are." Mem walks back and forth. When Beko sees him, he notices that he is better than [those] outside. Beko says nothing, and goes straight to the mîr and says to him, "My mîr, today I went to the well to see Mem, and he's better than [those] outside. As far as I know, the appearance of people at the bottom of a well should not be better than those above ground, but Mem's appearance is better than others." The mîr says, "You are right, people under ground and people above ground should not look the same¹³¹. The mîr and Beko go investigate <oxîlme dikin> the bottom of the well. They find the tunnel that Zîn made to go to Mem every day. Some people walk through it, coming out at Zîn's room. The mîr is annoyed [and] says to Zîn, "From now on you won't go near the well. If I hear that you've gone to the well one day, I'll kill you." He removes Zîn from that room, takes her to [another] part of the city [and] gives her a beautiful palace there, saying, "I don't want anyone except Beko to give Mem bread and water or to care for him." They take Mem from there, and put him in a dungeon forty fathoms¹³² deep. Every day Beko takes [him a loaf of] salted barley bread, and sprinkles ashes on it.

Ten days pass.

¹³⁰-lit. "after three-four days we will take him out"

¹³¹-lit. "be [of] the same color"

¹³²-lit. "spears," i.e. a unit of measure equal to the length of a spear.

Zîn thinks to herself, "If I don't send word to Qeretajdîn, Mem will die at the bottom of the well. She takes a fine piece of paper and writes, "Beko and the mîr have put Mem at the bottom of a dungeon; his bread and water are in Beko's hands. If you don't get to Mem soon¹³³, he will die at the bottom of the well." A baldheaded servant boy was in Zîn's employ, [and she] said [to him], "Baldhead¹³⁴, come take this letter to the Beraz tribe and give it to Qeretajdîn. I'll give you as much money as you want." Baldhead said, "No, my Lady, if you don't give me your promise, I won't go." Zîn said, "What promise?" He said, "If you promise that once I've returned, I can give you a kiss¹³⁵, I'll go to the Beraz tribe. Otherwise, as long as I can remember I've always been poor, and the money you would give me wouldn't make me rich, so I wouldn't go to the Beraz tribe." Zîn realized that Mem might die at the bottom of the well [if Qeretajdîn did not receive the news, so] she said, "I have no choice¹³⁶." At the bottom of the letter she wrote, "For Mem's sake I was forced to promise the baldhead that he could kiss me once upon delivering the letter. Otherwise, he would not have delivered it. I trust that you won't let the baldhead return alive¹³⁷." She handed the letter over to the baldhead, and said, to him, [115] "Take the letter quickly; when you come back, I'll let you kiss me once." When the baldhead picked up the letter, he was

133=lit. "If you reach Mem soon, you reach him; if you don't reach him,"

134K'eç'elok. The Bald Boy is a standard figure in Middle Eastern folklore, known in Turkish as Keloğlan, in Persian and Azeri Turkish as Kachal کچال, in Arabic as al-Aqra' الأقرع, and in Kurdish as K'eç'elok. Generally the Bald Boy is a trickster figure who wins out in the end, unlike his fate here. Although generally appearing in folktales as the main character, he also occurs in some episodes of the Turkish *hikâye* of KÖROĞLU, which belongs to a genre of folk story similar to Mem û Zîn.

135=lit. "come to your face"

136=lit. "It makes no use," i.e. There is no use protesting.

137Motif K978. Uriah letter. Man carries written order for his own execution. This famous motif appears in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as well as being an integral part of the plot of several tale-types, including AT 428 *The Wolf*, and AT 930 *The Prophecy*. Moreover, it also occurs in a medieval Arabic novel, *Akhbār al-kibār al-tiwāl* = *الطوال الكبير* أخبار، by al-Dinawarī (from Dinawar, a town in Persian Kurdistan), which tells the story of the exploits of the Persian epic hero Bahrām Chūbīn.

so happy, he didn't know what to do. He said, "I'll go and come back, then I'll get to kiss Zîn once." Out of joy, he put it¹³⁸ now here, now there.

The baldhead made the three to four day trip to the Beraz tribe in a little more than a day¹³⁹, stood before Qeretajdîn, handed him the letter and saluted him, standing in a respectful position. When Qeretajdîn read the letter [and learned] that Mem was in dire straits, and that if they reached him [perhaps they could save him]¹⁴⁰, he summoned Cheko, E'rif, and Bengîn and said, "Tell the boys to pull up the tent stakes¹⁴¹, to forget about monetary considerations¹⁴²; let's go try to reach Mem¹⁴³."

Cheko and E'rif pull up the tent stakes together with their servant boys, and they set out. They reach a depression [in the earth]; the baldhead, elated, accompanies them on foot. When Qeretajdîn remembers the situation of the baldhead and Zîn, he draws his sword and swings it at the baldhead's neck: his head falls to one side, his body to the other; and they ride on.

Zîn goes up to the roof of the palace to watch for them¹⁴⁴. She sees dust rising from the bottom of the plain, and says, "Those must be Qeretajdîn's men."

Zîn sings, "You've come, master of my father,
The one they call Qeretajdîn,

¹³⁸Perhaps the letter is meant by "it."

¹³⁹Qonaxê sê-çar rōja, k'eç'elok rōj û de'nekî diçe -lit. "A three or four *qonax*[- *manzil* = stage of a journey, the distance travelled in a day] journey the baldhead made in a day and a *dan/de'n*[-one third of a day, an eight-hour period]. This appears to be a formula. Compare the following: Qonaxa sê meha kir ya roj-de'nekêye = 'The *qonax* of three months he made in a day and a *de'n* 'in the story of Memê û E'yşe [Jndi, Hajie, ed. *Kurdskie Epicheskie Pesni-Skazy* (Moskva : Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), p. 142, paragraph #32], and: Dibêjin, "Riya şehere Tulusxemê rîya heft rōjana," / Bi îzna xwedê kurê teê nav rōj de'nekîda biqedine = 'They say, "The journey [-lit. 'road'] to the city of Tuluskhem is a seven-day journey,' / With God's permission your son will carry it out in a day and a *de'n* 'in the story Sêva Had' (*Kurdskie Epicheskie Pesni-Skazy*, p. 151, paragraph #3).

¹⁴⁰-lit. "Either you will reach him, or you won't reach him"

¹⁴¹i.e., to break camp or start packing up, in preparation for leaving.

¹⁴²-lit. "Let them not be masters of (i.e., guard or control) the money and property of the world"

¹⁴³i.e., before it's too late.

¹⁴⁴-lit. "her eye is on the road," a Kurdish way of saying 'She is waiting.'

Master of the green edged sword,
 To rescue from the dungeon
 The wretched prisoner of my father's house."

She goes on to say:
 "You've come, beloved of my heart,
 Red Qeretajdîn,
 Master of the purple edged sword,
 To rescue from the dungeon
 The wretched prisoner of my father's house,
 With a blow and a mighty response."

By the time Zîn finishes her song, Qeretajdîn reaches Jizra with his brothers Cheko and E'rif, together with Bengîn and all their servants. They turn onto the road [leading to] the gate of the mîr's diwan, and approach.

The mîr and Bengîn hear that Qeretajdîn has come. They go stick their heads out of the skylight and see Qeretajdîn standing there holding his sword drawn, and saying, "Where will you go today? <Xo têxine k'êderê>. Become birds, fly to the heavens if you will, today I will break your wings and feathers no matter what." The mîr says, "Beko, now what?" Beko says, "My mîr, what [do you mean] 'Now what? This has nothing to do with me. I said, 'Imprison him' <girtîye xelkê bigre>, [116] I did not say, 'Imprison him and don't let him go'. No matter what trouble happens, I will get myself out of it. If you are a clever man, get yourself out of it." The mîr can find no solution; he begs Beko to get him out of it this time, [but] no matter what he does, Beko says, "It's not my affair¹⁴⁵." One last time, the mîr pleads with Beko, saying, "Will you save me?" Beko says, "My mîr, saving you is very easy. If you promise to give Zîn to Mem, I'll get you out of this." The mîr says, "Beko, I hereby give Zîn to Mem. I leave permission to marry her off, and everything pertaining to her, in your hands. When you go get Mem out, we'll marry them off with seven drums and seven zumas¹⁴⁶."

¹⁴⁵or, "Leave me out of it."

¹⁴⁶A zurna is a wind blown reed instrument. This expression means 'We'll make them a fancy wedding.'

When the mîr says this, Beko says, "Qeretajdîn, relax, Mem's position is better than mine or yours. The mîr has just given permission to marry Zîn to Mem, so why are you upset?"

Qeretajdîn thinks to himself, "Mem's grief and suffering has all been [over] Zîn. If the mîr gave Zîn to him, it would all be over, everything would right itself." He says, "Beko, that's fine!" Beko goes to Zîn's room and says, "Qeretajdîn has come back from the Beraz tribe, and your brother mîr Zêydîn has given in. Get all dressed up, take forty maidens of Botan, go to the top¹⁴⁷ of the well, and bring Mem up from the bottom of the well; [then] we will make your wedding."

Zîn gets all dressed up, takes forty maidens of Botan and goes with them to the top of the well. They form an enclosure, standing side by side surrounding the well.

Zîn says, "Beloved of my heart, Mem of the Alans,
The master of my father, see for yourself,
I have brought forty maidens of Botan and have made [with them] a
hedge for my Mem,
If I don't die today, I will make my Mem the mîr and king of Botan's
groom¹⁴⁸."

Mem says, "Zîn, it's not so, it can't be so,
Going back seventy generations I am forbidden from being the son-
in-law of the king of Botan¹⁴⁹."

Zîn says, "Master of my father, get hold of yourself, _____
<t'îfaq hatine serê mêrane>,
If I don't die today, I'll make Mem the brother-in-law of the mîr of
Botan."

¹⁴⁷-lit. "the mouth"

¹⁴⁸Zava, cognate to Persian *dāmād* داماد, means 'groom,' and by extension also 'brother-in-law' or 'son-in-law' vis-à-vis the siblings or parents of the bride respectively. The corresponding female terms is *Bûk*, meaning 'bride,' and also 'sister-in-law' or 'daughter-in-law' vis-à-vis the groom's family.

¹⁴⁹-lit. "Being the son-in-law of the king of Bota is forbidden to me and my 70 fathers [ancestors]"

Mem says, "Zîn, you have not come to let me out,
You've come to set free the drop of breath left in me!¹⁵⁰"

(He says), When they threw a rope down to Mem at the bottom of
the well,

Angels from the mouth of the Lord of the world greeted Mem with
an embrace in the bottom of the well.

[117] When they brought Mem out to the top of the well,
—May it never happen here!¹⁵¹— screaming, mourning and crying broke
out in the domains of Jizîra.

Zîn says, "O masters of goodness,
Take up picks and shovels,
Take my Mem to the grave of lions!¹⁵²
O God and forty angels,
By forty earths and forty skies,
After my Mem [is gone], don't keep me alive beyond the evening
watch!¹⁵³"

All the nobles of Botan gather there.

Bengîn says, "Beloved of my heart, Memê Alan,
Mem my son, my heart is resentful,
I don't pity you,
The hair and face of your parents are white,
Very soon they will die,

¹⁵⁰—lit. "You've come, there is the end point of the soul, you will let it out."

¹⁵¹See note 57 above.

¹⁵²Lions are a symbol of bravery.

¹⁵³The evening *dan/de'n*. See note 139 above.

Leaving the throne and crown of Yemen unclaimed¹⁵⁴."

Bengîn goes and points the hilt of his sword at the ground, and the tip of the sword at his belly, and says, "After Mem[']s death], let me not remain alive." Mir Zeydîn, [seeing] how much Zîn was crying, says, "Sister, what you and Mem desired did not happen, but don't worry, I'll marry you to someone even better than Mem." [But] no matter what they did, they could not get Zîn to agree.

Zîn falls ill. They take her home and put her to bed. Not two hours pass, when her prayers are heard¹⁵⁵, and she dies too. Graves are dug for all three of them. They dig the graves of Mem and Zîn next to each other, and Bengîn's apart from them. All the nobles of Botan go to the graveyard, bury Mem, Zîn, and Bengîn, and return home.

A few days pass. One day, in the mîr's diwan, the subject of Mem and Zîn comes up. They say, "It was something [ordained] by God, but we prevented it from happening¹⁵⁶." Beko says, "No, you're wrong, o nobles of Botan, God had nothing to do with the matter. This was the work of the devil. If you don't believe me, let's go at dawn and open up Mem and Zîn's graves: if they are not in each other's arms, you will know that everything I [have said] is a lie." They all say, "All right, Beko."

In the evening Beko goes and opens up Mem and Zîn's graves. He puts them both in one grave, and puts their arms around each other. Then he covers up the grave, and returns home. He says to himself, "I brought them together with my own hands: what if they get up from the grave and go back to their own graves?" [118] Beko could not believe that in the morning, they would go to Mem and Zîn's grave and that what he said would turn out to be right.

At dawn all the nobles of Botan, and Beko with them, go to Mem and Zîn's grave. Qeretajdîn had gone out hunting. He comes back from hunting and says, "Stîyê, now who has died? Why are so many people gathered at the graveyard?" Stîyê says, "What [do you mean] 'Who has died'? Even after Mem and Zîn are dead, they aren't rid of Beko!" Qeretajdîn says, "No?" Stîyê says, "That's right!" Qeretajdîn does not dismount, he goes straight to the graveyard, draws his sword, and points it at Beko. The mîr says,

154-lit. "ownerless"

155-lit. "her curses are accepted"

156-lit. "We did not let their desire for each other be"

"Qeretajdîn, we have taken Mem and Zîn out of their [common] grave, we are burying them again in their separate graves. Don't implicate poor Beko. <Çendî welat zinaye, hew çend aşê me pê bi fitil û baye> _____." Qeretajdîn says, "No, my mîr, Beko has already done enough." He swings his sword at Beko's neck, and he falls in two pieces: his body falls to one side, his head to the other. He goes to the graves, and in front of everyone he puts Mem and Zîn in their [common] grave once more. A drop of Beko's blood drips from the blade of his sword [and falls] between Mem and Zîn, becoming a black thornbush between the two of them. No matter how many years they have cut down the thornbush, it always grows back.

All the nobles of Botan, after burying Mem and Zîn once again, and Beko, return home.

Ritter, Hellmut. "Sittîye Zîn und Mämme Alâ," in *Ṭūrōyo : die Volkssprache der syrischen Christen des Ṭūr 'Abdîn* (Beirut ; Wiesbaden : Franz Steiner Verlag, 1969), v. 2, pp. 256-297 [*Ṭūrōyo* (a Neo-Aramaic language) in Latin phonetic transcription + German translation on facing pages] (HR-1)

HR-1. Collected for Hellmut Ritter by his native assistant Besim in 1960 from Yūsuf Mälke Asmar, a 60 year old native of the village of Kfärze in the Ṭūr 'Abdîn region of the province of Mardin, Kurdistan of Turkey. Yūsuf seemed to be almost more comfortable in Kurdish than he was in Ṭūrōyo, which can be seen by the decidedly Kurdish flavor of the material collected from him. Numbers in brackets [i] refer to page numbers, while those in parentheses () refer to sentences.

Sittîye Zîn und Mämme Alâ (HR-1)

[256] (1) (He said)¹ One night² the prince of the jinns had a toothache. (2) He could bear the pain no more, unable to sleep because of the tooth. (3) So he called his slaves, his servant spirits, and said, "O servant spirits! Tonight, won't you tell me a story, so that I can forget my toothache?" (4) His servant spirits gathered around him, from hither and yon, and those assembled [said], "O emir³, what shall we tell you?" (5) He said, "Tell me about the land; perhaps I will forget about my tooth." (6) One of them stepped forward and said, "O my mir! In the city of Gziro there is a girl who they call Sittîye Zîn: she is the daughter of Mîr Sheref, the sister of Mîr Zeidîn, the cousin of Qara Tajdin. (7) She is so beautiful that you could call her a firefly⁴." Her description pleased the prince. (8) Another came forth [and said], "O emir! There is a boy they call Mämme Ala. You could say, 'By God! He looks like he was peeled

¹ Many of the sentences in this text begin with an untranslatable "He said."

²-lit. "One night of the nights of God."

³i.e. "Prince."

⁴Brightness and beauty are often connected in Middle Eastern folklore. A very common way of describing a woman's beauty is to say that she is as beautiful as the moon on the fourteenth of the (lunar) month, when the full moon is out. E.g. in Kurdish: *Riwê te ji heyva çardehê rewşentir e* = "Your face is brighter than the moon on the 14th [of the lunar month]."; in Turkish: *Ayın ondördü kadar güzel bir kız* = "A girl as beautiful as the fourteenth of the (lunar) month."

from inside an egg⁵ (9) There is no one more handsome or charming than he⁵." (10) The two servant spirits flew at each other's throats, this one shouting, "Mine is more beautiful" and that one shouting, "Mine is more handsome!" (11) The emir said, "Stop making such a racket! Take slumber pearls⁶ and put them in your pockets and go! This one should go to Gziro and that one should go to Mämme Ala! (12) Bring them here together with their beds and bedding to this assembly!" (13) One of them set off for the city of Gziro, crawled under the girl's bed, slipped the slumber pearl in her ear, and grabbed her bed, bedding, and everything he could think of⁷ and Poof! he brought it all to the emir's diwan. (14) The other one, who went to the boy, did the same, took the boy's bed and everything else, loaded himself up, and brought it all to the emir's hall. (15) With the slumber [258] pearls still in their ears, the emir came and lifted the handkerchiefs from off their faces, and covered them again, while they slept on. (16) The emir was dazzled by their appearance. He was unable to say, "She is more beautiful than he," or "He is more handsome than she," for they were both so charming and so beautiful. (17) The emir just looked and looked at them, until he had had his fill of looking. (18) "Well, O emir, now what should we do with them?" (19) He said, "With the slumber pearls still in their ears, grab them and take them away to Mämme Ala's diwan! But then you must crawl under their beds and take the slumber pearls out of their ears, then listen and see what they say!" (20) So the servant spirits took them away to Mämme Ala's diwan and took the slumber pearls out of their ears, then crawled under their beds and hid.

(21) As for the girl, she woke up and looked about. What did she see? There was a man's bed beside her. (22) The girl began raving, "What is this business, and who is this man who has come to me?" (23) She looked around the room, and it looked just like her room, and her bed, and her things. (24) The boy looked about: there was a

⁵Although the sentence literally means "There is no young man more handsome or charming than he," in context the way I have translated it makes more sense.

⁶*Âmirto di-şamîqo* in German: Schlafperle. Apparently it is believed that when one of these slumber pearls is placed in someone's ear, that person will fall asleep immediately, and not wake up until the pearl is removed from his ear. Motifs D1364.32. Jewel causes magic sleep; D1071. Magic jewel (jewels); D1071.1. Magic beads; D1364. Object causes magic sleep. This motif also appears in FK-1, FK-2, HR-2, and ZK-2.

⁷*û-jahr u zuqqûmeida* =lit. "Her poison and zaqqum." This apparently means something like our expression "Everything but the kitchen sink." Zaqqum is a mythical infernal tree with exceedingly bitter fruit which is mentioned in the Koran.

girl beside him, a girl so beautiful and charming, truly a wonder! He fell in love with her. (25) Mämmme Ala looked about the diwan: it looked just like his room, and his bed, and his assembly room. He decided to wait.

(26) The girl began making noise. (27) Since men have a little more sense than women, Mämmme Ala said to her, "Lady, wait a little! (28) This is surely the work of jinns. (29) Don't make any noise! You must have servants⁸ at your beck and call; call them and see if they come! And if I call my servants and they don't come, then you will know that -- God forbid! -- I have committed this bit of folly by coming to you. (30) But if I call mine and you call yours, and yours don't come but mine do, then you will know that you have come to me." (31) "Yes," she said, "that is the right decision." (32) Mämmme Ala said, "Lady, shall I call mine or will you call yours?" (33) She said, "I'll call mine." (34) "Yes," [260] he said, "Call your maidservants!" (35) The lady called her maidservants. (36) She said, "Hälîma!" But she didn't appear. "Fäṭîma!" But she didn't appear. "Medîna!" But nobody appeared. (37) Then she said, "Well, not one of my people has appeared; you call yours now!" (38) So he called his servant, "Kelesh!" "At your service, sire⁹," came the reply. "Stay where you are, boy! O Lady," he said, "have I come to you, or have you come to me?" (39) "Well, whoever you are," she said, "it looks like I have come to you." (40) "Well," he said, "Never mind!¹⁰ sit down; it doesn't matter!"

(41) They both sat down again, each on his own bed; they enjoyed each other's company very much, and fell in love with each other! (42) They chatted and rejoiced together, until they got tired. (43) When they got tired, Sittiye Zîn said, "Mämmme!" He answered, "What is it, my Lady?" She said, "We're tired and we're going to sleep! [But first] let's promise¹¹ to have [only] each other so long as we live. (44) If this is the work of jinns, it could happen that while we are sleeping, we may vanish from before each other's eyes. (45) So take my ring and put it on your finger! It's possible that you won't think of me anymore after I vanish; when your eye falls on my ring,

⁸=lit. "[male] servants and maidservants."

⁹ *Buyurun efendim*, in Turkish.

¹⁰ *Neyse*, in Turkish. I have heard Kurds use this expression while speaking Kurdish.

¹¹=lit. "Let's give each other our word."

however, you'll remember me and come after me." "Yes," said [Mämme], "that is a good idea." (46) The girl gave her ring to Mämme Ala, who put it on his finger, then they gave each other their solemn word. (47) The girl said, "Anything is possible in this world; if I should vanish and you want to come after me, (48) then get yourself to the great water¹², and follow the water until you get to the city of Gziro! (49) If you come, that's fine, and if you don't come, that's up to you¹³." He said, "That is good." (50) When they had enough of chatting, they gave each other their word, put their hands behind each other's neck¹⁴, placed a curtain between themselves from the chest down, and clung to each other from the chest up. (51) Each one put his hand behind the neck of the other, and they fell asleep.

(52) After they were fast asleep, the jinns came out again, put the slumber pearl in the girl's ear, and Poof!¹⁵ [262] picked up her bed and brought her back to the city of Gziro, leaving her in her room. (53) The jinns removed the slumber pearl from her ear, then returned to their homes, where they remained.

(54) In the morning the girl awoke, stretched out her hand to the side, and it hit the ground with a bang¹⁶. "Mämmo!" [she called], but there was no Mämmo there. (55) Mämme Ala stretched out his hand toward the girl. "Sittiye!" [he called], but as God would have it, there was neither hide nor hair of Sittiye¹⁷. (56) Woe is me! He grew very sad! "Now," he said, "what will happen?" (57) Sittiye was grieving because she didn't see Mämme Ala, and he didn't see her! May God make it easy on them, they were burning inside¹⁸.

¹²i.e. the Tigris River, called 'Dijlah' in the local languages.

¹³hat kud² ab-lit. "You know." This is a literal translation of the Turkish expression 'Sen bilirsin,' which is used when the speaker wants to avoid taking responsibility for an action, depositing it squarely on the shoulders of his interlocutor. Perhaps it should be understood as meaning 'You know [what's best].'

¹⁴=lit. "head."

¹⁵=lit. "O Allah and O God."

¹⁶=lit. "[Her hand] said 'Raç' and touched the ground."

¹⁷=lit. "'Sittiye,' may God give, no Sittiye and nothing."

¹⁸=lit. "May God make it easy, a fire fell to their innards."

(58) Mämme Ala got up. His servant came to him and filled his water pitcher, (59) and handed it to him. [Mämme] went out and washed himself, then spread out his prayer rug or whatever¹⁹, to pray²⁰. (60) He said his prayers²¹, then remained seated with his head bent forward. (61) His servant said, "O my God! O dear me²² (62) I have worked for this man for years, and he has never been fretful or sad for a single day; I have noticed that today he is out of sorts. (63) I want to ask him what is the matter." (64) He placed his hands one on top of the other and bowed low to the ground before his master, [saying], "O Mämme Ala! May it be something good²³! Tell me what is on your mind today.²⁴" (65) [Mämme] answered, "Man, such and such is my situation. (66) From last night until early this morning I was in great spirits, and Sittiye Zîn was with me, (67) I fell asleep and slept a little, and this morning when I woke up, Sittiye Zîn was nowhere to be found.²⁵ (68) For this reason, a great sorrow has descended upon me²⁶. (69) I don't know where in the world she has gone, or

¹⁹The narrator is Christian, and therefore not completely familiar with Islamic prayer rituals. We get a clue to this in the wording 'his prayer rug or whatever.'

²⁰Muslims must perform ritual ablutions or washing (Arabic wuḍū' وضوء; Turkish *aptes* from Persian *ābdašt* آبداشت; Kurmanji *destnimêj*) before performing the prayer ritual (Arabic ṣalāh صلاة; Turkish *namaz* from Persian *namāz* نماز; Kurdish: Kurmanji *nimêj* / Sorani *niwêj*). For a complete description of the Islamic prayer ritual, see: Edward William Lane *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians Written in Egypt during the Years 1833-1835* (Hague & London: East-West Publications, 1978 [1895]), chap. iii: "Religion and Laws," pp. 69-115.

²¹=lit. "He prayed his prayers and finished his prayers."

²²Ya mālava! = lit. "O one whose house should prosper." This is a Kurdish expression used in wishing someone well. See note 35 below and ZK-1, note #43).

²³hêd-xêr = lit. "One of good." This expression has equivalents in other Middle Eastern languages, e.g. Palestinian Arabic *khayr inshallah* and Turkish *hayırdır [inşallah]*. If someone comes to see you unexpectedly, you would say this expression, meaning 'I hope you come with good intentions'; in my opinion, this fits into the larger Middle Eastern world view, in which strangers and newcomers are perceived as potentially hostile until proven otherwise.

²⁴=lit. "Today tell me your desire what it is."

²⁵=lit. "This morning I woke up, I see not Zîn and not anything."

²⁶=lit. "A great sorrow has crept into my heart."

where the city of Gziro is located. This is what has been bothering me." (70) "So what should I do?" he said.

(71) Mämme Ala stayed this way for a day, two, three, twenty, a month; his spirits were low and he steadily deteriorated. (72) His servant informed his father. "O Ala," he said, "your son's spirits are very low, he's very unhappy: go talk to him! (73) You had better get some doctors, physicians, medications and the like for your son: he could go anytime now²⁷." (74) He went to his son [and said], "Well son²⁸, what is wrong with you?" "O father," he replied, "Such and such [264] is my situation. (75) Bring me Sittiye Zîn if you can; otherwise, you are no longer my father, and I am no longer your son." (76) "My son, Sittiye Zîn, where is she?" said [his father]. "In the city of Gziro," he replied. "Son, as old as I am, I have never heard the name of Jizra Bota²⁹. There is no such place." (77) "Father," [Mämme] said, "there must be such a place. Here on the ring on my finger [it says] the city of Gziro. [What you say] is impossible: there *is* [a place called] Gziro."

(78) The father went out looking: he went around the city, asking young and old, in hopes that people would tell him something about Gziro, that they would say, "Yes, there is a place called Gziro," but no one had ever heard of it³⁰. (79) He came back and said, "By God, I haven't found it³¹. (80) No one could tell me any about it, no one said it exists, either nearby or far away." (81) [Mämme] said, "Father, it exists. Go search the whole country [for it!]" (82) The father mounted [his horse], filled his saddlebag with money for the trip, and hit the road, going out into the world. (83) He wandered about for seven or eight days. (84) One day he came to an inn like the inn of Midyat³². (85) He reached the inn at one or two at night, and he saw a merchant

²⁷=lit. "Either he is going today or he is going this evening."

²⁸Lāwq a Kurdish word meaning "son."

²⁹Notice that the father uses the Kurdish form 'Jizra Bota' [Cizra Bo(h)tal], rather than the Turoyo form 'Gziro.'

³⁰=lit. "People hadn't seen it, hadn't heard of it."

³¹=lit. "I haven't seen it." In Kurdish, also, the verb *Ditin* means both 'To see' and 'To find.'

³²Midyat is the principal town of the region of Tūr 'Abdīn, where Turoyo, this dialect of Neo-Aramaic, is spoken. The provincial capital is the city of Mardin.

coming towards him. (86) He too was staying at the inn, and they started talking about this and that³³: "Where have you come from and where are you going, Merchant³⁴?" (87) He replied, "Well, I have come from the city of Gziro." (88) "You don't say!" "That's right," said [the merchant]. "You've come from the city of Gziro?" "Yes," he said. "Then Gziro exists?" "Yes, it exists," he replied. (89) "Wonderful!" said [Mämme's father], "May your house prosper 100 times!³⁵ I have been looking for the city of Gziro for a month or two, but no one has told me whether or not it exists, either nearby or far away; now you're telling me, 'I have come from Gziro', so it's true! It does exist!" (90) "Why, yesterday at this time I was in Gziro," said [the merchant]. "May your house prosper; it is good!"

(91) The man returned to his son. "Well, Father, what have you done?" [266] "It exists, Son!" he replied. "Didn't I tell you it exists?" said [Mämme]. (92) [The father] said, "It exists, Son, but no one knows whether it is near or far, no one knows where it is. Now the rest is up to you.³⁶" "That's fine!" said [Mämme].

(93) What did the father do? He gathered up forty servants and brought them to his son, and made them responsible for him.³⁷ (94) He said to them, "Go with my son, and every day," he said, "one of you return! (95) Today one, tomorrow one, the next day one, until your forty days are up. (96) When your forty days are up, not one person will remain with him; he will be all alone. (97) If he gets scared and begins to feel sorry for himself and comes home, well and good; if he doesn't come home, the responsibility is his, and he can go wherever he wants to."

(98) The son filled his saddle bag with coins, goods and travel money, mounted his horse, and set out with his servants behind him. (99) He rode on; today one

³³-lit. "They slipped into talking of the earth."

³⁴-lit. "Head merchant."

³⁵Cf. note 22 above.

³⁶-lit. "Both from you and from yourself now."

³⁷-lit. "and put his sin on the necks of these forty servants." This expression exists in Kurdish also *Gune[h] kirin stûyê kesekî* = lit. "To put a sin on someone's neck," meaning 'To consider someone guilty of committing a crime.' See M.U. Khamoian. *Kurdsko-Russkii frazeologičeskii i slovar* (Erevan : Izdatel'stvo A.N. Armianskoj SSR, 1979), #126 under letter Γ, p. 79.

turned back, the next day³⁸ one turned back -- why should I give you a headache³⁹? By the end of the forty days, all forty servants had turned back, and he remained all alone. (100) [Mämmê] said, "I vow that either the birds will eat my flesh in the wilderness, or else, since I won't return home, I will reach Sittiye Zîn." (101) He rode on a while longer, and with God's help he reached the great water⁴⁰. (102) When he reached the great water, he cheered up considerably⁴¹, (103) and said, "Now she told me to follow the water, so I will stick by the water until I get to the city of Gziro!" (104) He rode straight on, for a week or ten days, (105) His provisions ran out, he had nothing left in his saddlebag but a slice of bread. (106) He sat and thought to himself, "My provisions have now run out, I will die in the mountains; I don't know a soul, and there is no one to take care of me⁴²." He sat down in the middle of the road. (107) It was a day like today, foggy and dark; the clouds [hung so low that they] reached the ground, now raining and now hailing; and he was immersed in his sad thoughts.

[268] (108) It just so happens that he had nearly reached Gziro; he only had to go as far as from here to Āstil⁴³. But strangers are blind⁴⁴. (109) There was a plowman there who came out to the middle of the road; the furrows came out as far as the

³⁸Ramhîl = lit. "Tomorrow."

³⁹i.e. by laboriously enumerating every day. This is a way of saying "To make a long story short."

⁴⁰See note 12 above.

⁴¹=lit. "his heart became broad." A similar expression exists in Kurdish: 'Bêna/Bihna min fire[h] bû' - lit. "My breath has become wide." The opposite of this is 'Bêna min teng bû' - lit. "My breath has become narrow," which means "I am upset."

⁴²=lit. "to be my master." A similar expression exists in both Turkish and Kurdish. The Turkish is 'Birisine sahip çıkmak' - lit. "To turn out to be the owner to someone"; the Kurdish is 'Lê xweyf kirin/bûn' = lit. "To do/be owner to him." The idea here is that a stranger has no family who will protect him or care for him: while on the road one needs someone who will fulfill this role: somebody who will take charge of one.

⁴³ = lit. "there remained like from here to Āstil [a town near Midyat]." This comment, which is repeated in sentence #320, is an example of what İlhan Başgöz calls *digression*, i.e. when "the narrator ... stands before an audience interjecting himself into the narrative." See his "Digression in Oral Narrative: A Case Study of Individual Remarks by Turkish Romance Tellers," *IAE* 99 (1986), pp. 5-23.

⁴⁴A proverbial statement.

middle of the road. (110) "May God give you strength,⁴⁵ plowman!" [The plowman] replied, "May you be well, may Allah grant you long life!⁴⁶" "Where are you from, plowman?" asked [Mämme]. "I'm from the city of Gziro." "From Gziro?" "Yes," [the plowman] replied. "Where is Gziro?" (111) "You must be kidding!⁴⁷" he said, "You've reached it!" "But it can't be!" "But yes!" said [the plowman] "you're only a quarter of an hour away!" (112) "Wonderful!⁴⁸" [Mämme] said, "May God's house prosper!" (113) He ate his [last] piece of bread there, and when he had finished it, he mounted his horse; (114) By the grace of God, the weather cleared up, and he was very happy. (115) He rode on until he caught sight of the city. (116) When he saw it, he was just opposite it, as close as from here to the lower khan⁴⁹.

(117) Zîn the daughter of Bakko and Sittÿe Zîn, her mistress, had just brought their laundry to the washing stream. (118) When they came to the washing place, Bakko's daughter's eye fell on him. (119) She took an immediate liking to the horseman; she was a maidservant. (120) As for her mistress, when she looked and saw the horseman, she recognized him as Mämme Ala on horseback. (121) She said to herself, "It is surely he! He has come!" She was ashamed before him, and turned her back on him. (122) Bakko's daughter said to herself, "By God, I swear that I will test this horseman out! (123) I will spread out a piece of laundry in the middle of the highway. (124) If this horseman is a gentleman⁵⁰, son of a noble father, he won't tread on our laundry, but rather will tap on the horse's neck and sidestep it; (125) But

⁴⁵In many Middle Eastern languages, there are blessings or greetings which one says when passing by someone working. In Turkish, one says 'Kolay gelsin,' lit. = "May it come easily," and in Colloquial Palestinian Arabic, il-'äfeyeh, lit. = "Good health."

⁴⁶Many of the greetings mentioned in note 45 above have fixed responses, such as these.

⁴⁷-lit. "May your home be destroyed." In this context, the expression is a mild expletive, rather than a serious curse.

⁴⁸The Turkish expression 'Hay hay,' which means "Aye aye sir" may actually be the origin of the English expression 'Aye aye.' In Turoyo the meaning has changed.

⁴⁹A khan is an inn. This sentence could only have meaning to the original audience, for no one else could know how far it is to the lower khan. This is another example of digression. See note #143 above.

⁵⁰He uses the Kurdish word 'Cwamêr' for this.

if, God forbid, he is a profligate⁵¹ and a scoundrel, he'll trample our laundry and just ride on." (126) She took a piece of laundry, then went and spread it out. (127) Her mistress, Sittîye Zîn, exclaimed, "Maid-servant! I'll have your head! What do you have against a son of the people? (128) Why are you blocking the road, so that people cannot pass by?" (129) [The maid-servant] said, "My Lady, what do you have against me? (130) Why [270] should what I do bother you? I am having fun." (131) She did not heed her mistress, but rather went and spread out the piece of laundry in the middle of the road. (132) Mâmmê Ala noticed from afar that the piece of laundry had been spread out [on the road]. (133) He said to himself, "I will certainly not tread on their laundry; instead, I will tap on my horse's neck and have him sidestep it." (134) When he came up to the piece of laundry, he tapped his horse's neck with a stick and went around the edge of it. (135) Zîn, the daughter of Bakko, said to herself, "May my head be one hundred times a slave to his head!⁵² (136) When you die, you will belong to the earth; while you are alive, you are mine! I won't let you go!" (137) Mâmmo came near the stream. (138) Sittîye Zîn, his betrothed, was ashamed before him and turned her back, and remained that way.

(139) Mâmmo said to himself, "I know! I'll test them by asking them for a cup of water! (140) Let's see whether the servant brings it, or the lady!" (141) Mâmmê Ala asked them for a cup of water, (142) the lady was shy, and the maid-servant ran and took the cup from her lady's hand. (143) "Give it to me," said [the maid-servant], "O my Lady; I'll bring the water to our dear guest!" (144) She took the cup and held it under the stream, washing it two or three times, then put one hand under the cup, filling it with water, then put her [other] hand up to her chest and brought the cup for the horseman. (145) He noticed that it was the maid-servant who brought it. He said to himself, "It would be a disgrace for me to take it from her hand!" He tapped the horse's neck and rode off. (146) "Hey, horseman, drink!" (147) He said, "I cannot drink your water!" (148) He tapped on his horse's neck. (149) The girl threw the cup into the stream and ran after the horseman. (150) She grabbed the horse's bridle. (151) "O horseman!" she said, "I pray to God and then to you! I have noticed that you are a stranger; yet you have not drunk our water. Tell me whose guest you are!" "O

⁵¹He employs the Kurdish word 'Tolazlel,' meaning an adulterer, profligate, or libertine.

⁵²This expression indicates admiration.

woman," he said, "Let go of my horse! I want to ride on. What do you think you're doing? You are but a woman!" (152) She said, "Tell me whose guest you are! Who are you going to [see]?" (153) No matter what he did^{52a}, she would not let go of his horse. (154) He said, "Woman, I'm going to God's house. Let me [272] go to God's house." (155) "Ooh," she said, "he's crazy! What sort of man is he?" (156) She let go of his horse and went back to her mistress. (157) Her mistress said, "You crow! You wretch! What do you think you're doing to the sons of good people? How long you held him up! What is he to you?" (158) She replied, "My Lady, I don't know if he is crazy or drunk on arak⁵³. (159) I asked him whose guest he is, he said he was going to the house of God. (160) May I be a sacrifice to God, where is the ladder that he climbs up to God?" (161) [Sittiye Zîn] said, "I'll have your head! He's going to the mosque⁵⁴. That is the house of God⁵⁵." (162) She went and sat down, while he rode on to the mosque⁵⁶. (163) He sat in the mosque, not knowing anyone; while Zîn [Bakko's daughter] went to her mistress. (164) When the maidservant noticed that Mämme Ala had gone to the mosque, it ate away at her soul, she couldn't stand it anymore. (165) She said, "My Lady⁵⁷" "What is it?" she replied. "I am sure that our laundry

^{52a} *simle lû-simle*. This is identical to the Kurdish expression *kir nekir*. Both mean literally "[he] did, [he] did not," but are used to express the idea "no matter what [he] did, ..." or "regardless of what [he] did, ..."

⁵³ Arabic 'araq عرق , a strong colorless liquor made of anise, similar to Pernod, which turns milky white when diluted with water.

⁵⁴ Here 'Mizgeft' (<Arabic masjid مسجد), the Kurdish word for mosque, is used. See note 56 below.

⁵⁵ It is interesting to note that a Christian, as all speakers of Turoyo are by definition, should have such a favorable attitude towards a mosque. This suggests how strongly the informant identifies himself with the (Muslim) Kurds. To the best of his ability, he tells the story the way a Kurd would, even down to minute details such as this.

⁵⁶ Here and in the following sentences the word used for mosque is 'cēmi' (<Arabic jāmi' جامع). It is curious that in the space of two sentences two different words for 'mosque' are used by a Christian informant. It would be nice to know if there is any difference in connotation between the two words as used by the speaker. As for denotation, according to Hellmut Ritter's dictionary, Turoyo agrees with Arabic (and Turkish) in defining a *mizgäfte-masjid (mescit)* as smaller than a *cēmi' / cēmi'* = *jāmi' (cami)*. See note 54 above.

⁵⁷ 'Xatûna min': this he says in Kurdish.

won't be getting any whiter today, there's no use in continuing to wash it. (166) Let's gather up our laundry and take it home; we can come back tomorrow morning!" (167) "Girl, I'll have your head! We haven't even put our laundry in the water twice yet. (168) Stay put; we still have to wash our laundry!" (169) "No, my Lady, I'm sure that it won't get any whiter; let's go home!" (170) And without waiting for her mistress, she threw her laundry together, put it in a washbasin, threw it on her shoulder and off she went, saying, "I'm going; come or don't come as you see fit!" (171) Her mistress was forced to take her laundry home. (172) But the other one could stand it no longer. (173) When the mistress had gone home, the servant also went home. (174) She went home and said, "Okay, where's the mosque⁵⁸?"

(175) She came up to him and what did she see? There he is sitting all alone in the mosque, without a soul around. (176) She said, "Horseman!" He said, "Huh?" She asked, "What are you doing here?" (177) He replied, "Woman, I don't know anyone, that's why I'm sitting here." (178) She said, "Get up, get up, get up! I'll bring you to some people!" (179) "But I don't know to whom I should go," he said. "I'll tell you," she said. "Speak!" he said. (180) She said, [274] "Listen! If you're looking for your bread to eat for one day, two, three, a month, go to the house of Mîr Zeidîn! (181) If you're looking for a man who keeps his word, who is a perfect gentleman in his own house, who would sooner sacrifice his head than break his word, go to the house of Qara Tajdin! (182) And if you're looking for a man who understands and turns words into lies, then [go] to the house of my father, Bakko 'Awan!" (183) He said, "I'm not looking for a man of lies, nor for bread by the day or month. (184) I am looking for a man who possesses honor, who would sooner sacrifice his head than break his word, and who is a perfect gentleman." (185) "Then Qara Tajdin it is!" she said, "Mount your horse so I can take you to Qara Tajdin's house!" (186) The young man mounted, and the girl took hold of the horse's halter, dragging him to Qara Tajdin's house. (187) She led him back and forth and up and down⁵⁹, and brought him safe and sound to her own house. (188) She seated him in her own house, saying, "This is Qara Tajdin's house." "This is?" "Yes," she replied. (189) "May God

⁵⁸Once again, the word 'Mizgeft' is used.

⁵⁹-lit. "She took him, she brought him, she spun him around."

let it prosper, it is good," he said. (190) The man was a stranger⁶⁰! The girl showed him all the honors due a guest, (191) to the point where she even said, "He shouldn't [have to] step on the ground!" (192) She took care of him herself, (193) thinking, "I wonder if his heart will change towards me, so that I can seduce him!" (194) The girl sat with him, [showering him] with coffee, tea, cigarettes and the like. Bakko 'Awan wasn't at home; he was with the mîr.

(195) When the girl went outside -- what work could she have to do?-- (196) Bakko 'Awan came in from outside. (197) As soon as he came in, Mämme Ala rose before him.⁶¹ (198) "Please come sit down, Qara Tajdin!" (199) [Bakko 'Awan] said, "I ask God's forgiveness!⁶² I am not Qara Tajdin! I am his servant, Bakko 'Awan." (200) When he said this, it came as a blow to Mämme Ala⁶³; his face fell, and he became sad⁶⁴. (201) He became very sad, hung his head low, and began to brood. (202) In this condition, he saw the daughter come in. (203) Zîn, the daughter [of Bakko 'Awan], came in and noticed that her guest was very sad, that his head hung low, and that he was engrossed in thought. (204) "O Father," she said, "what did you say to my guest?" (205) He replied, "Daughter, I came in from outside, [276] and he rose and said 'Agha⁶⁵, please come over here!' and I said 'I'm not the agha, I'm his servant', and then he made this face." (206) She said, "Father, you are not welcome!⁶⁶ (207)

⁶⁰i.e. How should he know any better?

⁶¹As a sign of respect. See EP-1 section [61].

⁶²Arabic astaghfir Allāh **استغفر**, an expression used when someone criticizes himself or unduly praises the person addressed. In this case, Bakko 'Awan is implying that to be mistaken for Qara Tajdin is too great a compliment.

⁶³=lit. "When he now said thus, [it was] like you are hitting the ear of Mämme Ala."

⁶⁴=lit. "His facial expression turned over and his heart broke."

⁶⁵A local landowner, member of the upper class. Thus it is clear that Qara Tajdin was supposed to be an agha.

⁶⁶=lit. "You have not come in goodness and you have not come on my eyes!" Normally when someone comes in, he is welcomed with the expressions "You have come in goodness" [Kurdish: Tu bi xêr hati] and "You have come on my eyes" [Ser ç'avê min hati]. Here, these two expressions -- taken over word for word from Kurdish into Tûroyo -- are turned on their head by being used in the negative, a practice which would be unthinkable in real life, because of the disrespect it would show.

May your neck break and your eyes fall out, Father! (208) I had slowly but surely made him tame,⁶⁷ and then you made him wild and let him go off into the world. (209) Father, I swear⁶⁸, if you don't bring this man to me and let us take one another [in marriage], I am no longer your daughter, nor are you my father!" (210) He said, "My child, I vow to you, that when he dies he will belong to the earth, but as long as he lives, he will be yours. (211) I am your father, Bakko 'Awan; what are you worried about?" (212) "Well then," she said, "what else shall I say?" (213) [Bakko 'Awan said] "O honored guest, where do you want to go?" He said, "To Qara Tajdin's house." (214) [Bakko 'Awan] said, "Get up, and I'll take you!" Bakko 'Awan led the way and took him to Qara Tajdin's house, and saw that he was settled there.

(215) As for Qara Tajdin, for three days and three nights he didn't ask his guest [anything]⁶⁹. (216) After three days, he had to dispose of the matter he had come for. (217) After three days, [Qara Tajdin] welcomed him⁷⁰, (218) [and asked,] "O honored guest, tell me what your purpose is. Where are you coming from, where are you going, and why have you come?" (219) [Mämme Ala] said, "O Qara Tajdin, I have come to God and then to you because of Sittiye Zîn. (220) I want you to request Sittiye Zîn for me.⁷¹" "Sittiye Zîn?" "Yes," he said. "Believe me, o honored guest, Sittiye Zîn is my [future] daughter-in-law, the fiancée of my son. (221) But since you have [come] from distant lands [and] made a request of God and then of me, I vow that I will take her from my son and give her to you." (222) "I am very thankful to you," said [Mämme Ala]. "So stay here!⁷²"

(223) Mämme Ala stayed with Qara Tajdin for a day, two – a month went by in this fashion. (224) It was known that Mämme Ala loved Sittiye Zîn very much. "By

⁶⁷Ritter translates this as, "I had slowly made him trust me ..."

⁶⁸-lit. "May it be forbidden to me."

⁶⁹This is an accurate portrayal of Kurdish etiquette regarding hospitality.

⁷⁰-lit. "gave him a 'bi xêr hatin' [Kurdish for "Welcome"].

⁷¹In Kurdish and other Middle Eastern cultures, the prospective groom does not directly ask for the bride's hand in marriage; rather, the groom's family and friends ask the girl's father for the hand of his daughter in marriage. Here, Mämme Ala is asking Qara Tajdin to perform this function for him, by asking Sittiye Zîn's father to marry her to Mämme Ala.

⁷²-lit. "Sit!"

God⁷³," he said, "when will I see her?" (225) Qara Tajdin said to him, he said, "Brother!" "Huh?" [Mämme Ala] replied. "Brother, [278] do as I say, and don't disobey me⁷⁴! (226) Is there anyone sweeter than my daughter-in-law? She was my daughter-in-law, I have given her to you; I will give her to you. (227) But be patient with me⁷⁵!" "Let it be so!" said [Mämme Ala].

(228) The second that Qara Tajdin leaves the house⁷⁶, Mämme Ala [has] his eyes on Sittiye Zîn's quarters. (229) "By God," he says, "When will I go there and see her?" (230) When Qara Tajdin leaves the house, Mämme Ala goes out too. (231) Finally he manages to reach the audience hall of Sittiye Zîn. (232) He goes and sits beside her, and they have such a good time together that he forgets himself and remains there.

(233) Bakko 'Awan looks around; he wanders around slowly and seems to see Mämme Ala sitting with Sittiye Zîn. (234) He comes and tells Mîr Zeidîn: "O my mîr, Mämme Ala is surely sitting with Sittiye Zîn. (235) Sittiye Zîn and he are talking together, he's talking to her." "It can't be!" "But it is," said [Bakko 'Awan]. (236) "Well, what do we do?" "What to do? We must do something to him." (237) [Mîr Zeidîn] said, "But dare we do anything because of Qara Tajdin?" "So be it!" he said. (238) Bakko 'Awan said, "My mîr!" "What?" he said. "I am going now; I know for certain that he is sitting with her, (239) I am going to see if I can catch them there. And then, when you come, I will hand him over to you." [Mîr Zeidîn] said, "Go!"

(240) Bakko 'Awan came running; as soon as he got to the middle of the courtyard, Sittiye Zîn caught sight of him. (241) As he reached the door, the girl got up and whoosh! up the stairs she climbed to the roof⁷⁷. (242) Bakko 'Awan wasted no

⁷³Xudêwq' using Xwedê/Xudê (cf. Persian khudā خدایا), the Kurdish word for "God."

⁷⁴-lit. "Don't go out of my words." This expression also exists in Turkish: 'Birisinin sözünden çıkmak,' and in Kurdish: 'Ji xebera kesekî derk'etin.'

⁷⁵The expression 'fiş li-hêviyeidi,' = lit. "Remain in hope/waiting of me" = "Wait for me," is a calque of the Kurdish expression 'Hêviyê man/bûn/sekînîn' (unless the Kurdish is a calque of the Turoyo expression, not altogether out of the question: when two languages have co-existed as long as Kurdish and Neo-Aramaic have, it is sometimes impossible to know which language has borrowed a shared word or expression from which).

⁷⁶-lit. "Goes out from inside."

⁷⁷'mîddâra,' a small room with its own special staircase, on the roof of a house. In Ritter's dictionary, it is defined as: a guestroom; a large room; a room on the second (=top) floor.

time, he caught the girl halfway up the stairs, took a scissors to her braids, cut off a piece from one of her braids and put it in his pocket. (243) When he had put it in his pocket, Bakko 'Awan went out, and Mämme Ala also got up and ran off. (244) Bakko 'Awan showed the hair to Mîr Zeidîn: "O my mîr, here is her hair, I cut it from her braids⁷⁸. He is with her⁷⁹." "It can't be!" "But it is," said [Bakko 'Awan]. "Oh well⁸⁰."

[280] (245) That day he got away; as soon as Bakko 'Awan went home, his daughter assailed him with blows and questions⁸¹. (246) "O Father," she said, "when are you going to bring me that guest?" (247) He said, "Take it easy, my child! I have sworn not to let him and Sittiye Zîn attain their desire; when he is dead, he will belong to the earth, while he is alive, he is yours." "Quickly! When?" she asked.

(248) One day Bakko 'Awan said to Mîr Zeidîn, "My mîr!" "Huh?" he said. "My mîr, if I don't tell you, can't you figure it out for yourself⁸²?" "What is it, Bakko?" asked [the mîr]. (249) He said, "It has been several days since Mämme Ala came to Qara Tajdin; let's go tell them that Qara Tajdin and Mämme Ala should mount their horses, and your and I also will go riding for a while, [we'll go] hunting. (250) We'll see if he is good at riding or not!" [Mîr Zeidîn] said, "Go tell them!"

(251) Bakko 'Awan went and said to Qara Tajdin and Mämme Ala, that the mîr says for them to mount their horses and prepare themselves, so that we can go hunting for a while, to breathe some mountain air, then come back." "Okay," they said, "we'll go."

⁷⁸Whereas above (sentence #242), the Semitic word *gid(ā)lāt* is used for "braids," in this sentence a form of the Kurdish word *keç* is used.

⁷⁹It is not immediately clear how this proves that Sittiye Zîn was sitting with Mämme Ala, but I believe it is a "displaced element": in other versions, Qeretajdîn sees Zîn's braids sticking out from under Mem's cloak, and immediately understands what has happened and what must be done. Here the braids have a similar function, but without knowledge of the more usual context, the significance is lost.

⁸⁰See note 10 above.

⁸¹-lit. "with sticks and words"

⁸²*'û-g-mublât bîr'* = lit. "Don't you bring thought/mind/memory?" 'Bîr' is a Kurdish word which means "memory." Common Kurdish expressions using it include: *Bîra min çû* = lit. "My memory went" = "I forgot"; *Hat bîra min* = lit. "It came to my memory" = "I remembered." This is parallel in usage to the Persian word *yād* یاد.

(252) Qara Tajdin and Mämme Ala got on their horses, and together with Bakko 'Awan and Mîr Zeidîn, the four of them mounted, called out their hunting dogs and hounds, and set out. (253) They had gone no further than the distance from here to that slope over there, when Mämme Ala felt like turning back, he wanted to return home. (254) Qara Tajdin said, "Brother, ride on!" [Mämme Ala] said, "I don't feel well. I want to go back to the house." (255) "Brother," [Qara Tajdin] said, "Listen to me, ride on, don't turn back!" (256) Mämme Ala's heart was with Sittiye Zîn, he wanted to go to her. He tapped on the horse's neck, not heeding them, and turned back. (257) Bakko 'Awan said, "Let him go, leave him alone!" (258) Mämme Ala rode home, tied up his horse in the courtyard, and no sooner had he arrived than poof! he was at the audience hall of Sittiye Zîn! He went and sat down beside her.

(259) Bakko 'Awan knew that Mämme Ala had gone to Sittiye Zîn, and said to Mîr Zeidîn, "My mîr!" "Huh?" replied [the mîr]. "It is [282] certain that our hounds can't sniff out game today, they're no use in hunting; let's turn back today, we can come again tomorrow!" (260) "Bakko," said the mîr, "we haven't even gotten there yet or let the hounds loose or anything!" (261) [Bakko 'Awan] said, "It's just not right, my mîr, they can't follow the scent." (262) And Bakko 'Awan placed himself at the head of the hounds and called to them, and before you knew it, he was heading for home. (263) He rode home, with Mîr Zeidîn behind him, and Qara Tajdin too -- the three of them rode.

(264) As they rode, Mämme Ala and Sittiye Zîn were so wrapped up in each other⁸³ that they forgot themselves. (265) All at once Mîr Zeidîn was at the door. (266) When he opened the door, the girl no longer had any way to run and hide on the roof. (267) She silently lifted up Mämme Ala's cloak and sneaked under it from behind, hiding⁸⁴ behind him. (268) As she was hiding behind him, Mîr Zeidîn came in from outside, and Mämme Ala didn't rise before him. (269) Mîr Zeidîn was very displeased and angry. "How can it be," he asked angrily, "that I come in from outside and a man doesn't rise before me?" (270) Bakko 'Awan also came in, and all the notables of Gziro assembled before [Mîr Zeidîn]. (271) A murmur arose among those assembled. The room filled up. (272) Until the mîr speaks, it is forbidden for anyone

⁸³-lit. "they made harmless scuffles with each other."

⁸⁴-lit. "staying behind him."

else to speak. (273) There was no speaking in the room. No coffee, no speaking, nothing.

(274) Qara Tajdin came home and asked his wife and sons, "Where is Mämme Ala?" "We haven't seen him." (275) "Oh, the poor wretch! He's a goner, they've caught him!" (276) Qara Tajdin goes to the mîr's hall, sees that it is so crowded with the mîr and notables that there is no room to set one's foot down, and no one is speaking with anyone else.

(277) Qara Tajdin called to Bakko 'Awan: "Bakko, quick! Bring the coffee pot!" (278) He brought the coffee pot and put it on the fire; Qara Tajdin quickly made coffee, and with his own hands passed it around the assembly.⁸⁵ (279) He brought a cup to his brother, [saying] "Stand up, Mämme Ala!" The latter signalled with his eye, as if to say, "She is under the cloak!"

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[Break for a completely different topic: a poem the narrator's nephew composed for the metropolitan (priest) in Mardin is recited]

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[284] (280) He went home and said, "Bēgi Khanim⁸⁶!" She said, "Yes, Qara Tajdin?" (281) He said, "I'm sure that if I don't act as crazy as before⁸⁷, our brother won't be saved from there." "Well," she said, "do what ever you want⁸⁸, Qara Tajdin!" (282) "Bring out my horse," he said, "I swear that I will kill it!" (283) She brought out his horse, and stopped it in the middle of the courtyard. (284) He drew his pistol from his belt and shot his horse three times, knocking it down in the courtyard. (285) [Bēgi Khanim] called for help: "Help!" she said, "100 times help! Qara Tajdin has once again gone crazy, and has killed his racehorse!" (286) News reached the diwan of the mîr. The mîr started to get up, [saying,] [286] "What is this

⁸⁵It will be recalled that Qara Tajdin is an agha, himself a notable, and it is therefore normally beneath him to serve coffee. See note 65 above.

⁸⁶Bēgi Khanim = "Lady Bēgi" Qara Tajdin's wife.

⁸⁷In many versions, Qara Tajdin even has the epithet *Dîn* = "Crazy."

⁸⁸=lit. "Your hand to yourself! The thing that you want, do!" "Your hand to yourself" (*igûx li-rûhux*) is an idiom which means "Do whatever you want." Cf. note 13 above.

all about⁸⁹?" (287) Bakko 'Awan said, "Stay where you are, my mîr, I'll go see what it is!" He went to the door and came back. (288) "It's nothing, my mîr," he said, "It's just some boys: one stole another one's marble⁹⁰, and that one is reproaching him for it; it's nothing," and they sat back down.

(289) Qara Tajdin saw that his action had had no effect. "Bēgi Khanim," he said, "nothing has come of it." (290) "Do whatever you want!" she said, "But you won't rescue your brother from prison this time either." (291) He said, "I swear, bring all my books out [of the house]! I will set my seven story mansion on fire!" (292) She brought out his books, and Qara Tajdin took a match -- may it never happen here -- to his own house. He set fire to the seven stories of his mansion. (293) The woman again called for help. "Qara Tajdin has once again gone mad," she said, "and had set fire to his whole mansion!" (294) The news reached the diwan itself. (295) Just as the mîr was about to get up, Bakko 'Awan said, "No need to get up, my mîr! I'll go see what it's all about!" (296) He went out for a while, then came back and said, "My mîr, it's nothing! Some boys are fighting: this one hit that one, so that one is reproaching this one. It's nothing." And again they sat down.

(297) When Qara Tajdin saw that this had had no effect either, he called Bēgi Khanim, his wife, and said, "Bēgi Khanim!" "Here I am⁹¹!" she said. (298) "Come over here!" he said, "Take our⁹² sons and tie them to your chest, then bind yourself tightly, and run [at a distance of] three steps ahead of me, from here to the door [of the mîr's diwan]!" (299) I swear, I will take my sword and set out after you; when I catch up with you at the door of the diwan, I will kill you. (300) So be prepared!" "As you wish,⁹³" she said.

⁸⁹=lit. "What is the call for help?"

⁹⁰The game is played as follows: Coins are placed on the ground, one for each player. Each player tries to hit one of the coins with his marble (gare/xare): if he succeeds, the coin is his; if he fails, his marble stays wherever it has rolled to; if said marble is hit by another player, the owner of said marble must forfeit the game. See Hellmut Ritter. *Tūrōyo : die Volkssprache der syrischen Christen des Tūr 'Abdîn*, B: Wörterbuch (Beirut ; Wiesbaden : Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979), p. 176.

⁹¹Libe, cf. Arabic labbayka لبيك. This is the response of a loyal servant to the master's call.

⁹²'Your' in the original.

⁹³See note 13 above.

(301) She prepared herself, tied her infant to her chest, tied the seams of her pants legs tight and whoosh! she fled before him. [288] (302) As she fled, Qara Tajdin took out his sword and set out after her. (303) She screamed for help as he pursued her. (304) At the door of the mîr's diwan, she⁹⁴ burst through the door into the room, (305) shouting, "Help! 100 times help! He's killing me⁹⁵!" (306) When she burst into the diwan, the mîr and his assembly all rose at once. (307) When they stood up, the girl slipped out from under [Mämme Ala's] cloak and leapt up the steps to her rooftopquarters.

(308) When Qara Tajdin noticed that his friend had gone out with them⁹⁶, he said, "Hooray! May God's house prosper 100 times! I have rescued my brother; now let whatever happens happen!" [and so saying] he took his brother by the arm and brought him home⁹⁷. (309) When he brought him home, --⁹⁸ this is Qara Tajdin, a tough man; he gave the people of the city of Gziro instructions, (310) and began his mansion again in exactly the same dimensions as before, and [when it was finished] he lived in it.

(311) When he had gotten settled in it, Bakko 'Awan went home. May God save us, what a scene his daughter made! "Father, where is he? When are you going to bring him to me?" Her father said, "Daughter, don't worry, I will bring him. Whenever it will be, I will bring him, and you and he will have each other⁹⁹."

(312) A couple of days later, Bakko 'Awan said to Mîr Zeidîn, "My mîr, until when will I [have to] tell you. (313) Send Qara Tajdin to collect taxes for the son of

⁹⁴=lit. "The girl"

⁹⁵=lit. "He has killed me."

⁹⁶The members of the assembly?

⁹⁷The fact that there was no home to bring him to after the fire is quickly forgotten! Such is the logic of folk narrative.

⁹⁸It seems that the story teller has just now remembered about the fire.

⁹⁹=lit. "You will be each other's desire." This expression exists in Kurdish also.

the sultan, from the Shammar¹⁰⁰, for instance. He should go take taxes from them for the last seven years¹⁰¹. (314) If they refuse to pay taxes, no one can go take the taxes from them unless Qara Tajdin goes to collect them; none of us can go." "Go tell him, Bakko!" said [the mîr].

(315) Bakko 'Awan went and said to Qara Tajdin, "The mîr says that you must go collect taxes¹⁰²." "All right," he said, "I'll go." (316) Qara Tajdin readied himself for the trip and called to his brother Mämme Ala: "Mämmo!" "Huh?" he replied. [290] "Mämmo, I'm going. (317) I vow before God and give you my word that I will be back in forty days. On the forty first day, if I am still alive, I will marry you to the girl¹⁰³. (318) But during these forty days you must not budge from the house!" "I won't budge," he said. (319) Qara Tajdin took his leave of [Mämme], and went off. Mämme Ala stayed indoors with his two nephews.

(320) Qara Tajdin had scarcely gotten as far as Āstil¹⁰⁴, when Mämme Ala went out the front gate, saying, "By God, when will I go to Sittiye Zîn?" (321) He saw his chance and zoom! he went to Sittiye Zîn. He went and sat down right beside her. (322) Qara Tajdin had gone, and Mämme Ala didn't think about him at all¹⁰⁵. (323) When he sat beside the girl, once again they rejoiced and amused themselves, until Bakko 'Awan and the mîr caught the girl and him red-handed. (324) "My mîr, I have been saying all along that Mämme Ala and the girl were aware of each other: you

¹⁰⁰The Shammar are a Bedouin tribe that lives in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula. See Bruce Ingham, *North east Arabian Dialects* (London and Boston: Kegan Paul International, 1982), esp. p. 15ff.

¹⁰¹In other versions of the story, e.g. EP-1, Zîn has been given a piece of jewelry equivalent to the value of seven years of taxes.

¹⁰²-lit. "It is necessary that you go for their taxes, go take them from them, and come."

¹⁰³-lit. "if I don't die, I will bless the girl on you."

¹⁰⁴See note 43 above.

¹⁰⁵-lit. "Mämme Ala had no *haj* of him." Haj (or hay) is a Kurdish word which has been taken over directly into Turoyo and other Neo-Aramaic languages. In Kurdish, 'Haj/Hay ji kesekî t'unebû' means "He was unaware of someone," as in the proverb 'Têr zikê birçî haj t'une' = "Someone who has had enough to eat (i.e. one who is sated) is not aware that there are hungry bellies." In the present case, Mämme Ala has forgotten (=is not aware of) the promise he made not to leave the house until Qara Tajdin's return: in Proppian terms, this is a violation of an interdiction, which will have dire consequences.

said, 'It isn't so'. Now see if they are sitting together or not!" (325) "Well, Bakko," said [the mîr], "what should we do with him? Let's kill him!"^{105a} (326) [Bakko] said, "My mîr, we can't kill him, for if we kill him today, tomorrow Qara Tajdin will come back from strange lands, and here we will have killed his brother. Then he will certainly kill us and finish us off. (327) Instead, let's throw him in the dungeon underground; by the end of 40 days he will die of hunger. (328) Then we can say 'He died by God's decree'." "Bakko, you know best!"¹⁰⁶, said [the mîr].

(329) So they tied a rope around his waist and lowered him down into the dungeon. (330) The dungeon was 40 ells deep, and poor [Mämme] stayed inside it where no bread or water reached him. (331) They also placed guards at the door of the dungeon, with strict instructions not to let any water get to him.

(332) Sittiye Zîn realized that they had put him in prison. "Now what shall I do with him? No bread or water is reaching him, he'll die of hunger." (333) She brought in artisans, and from her quarters she had them dig¹⁰⁷ [292] a type of tunnel that led to the underground dungeon, to Mämme Ala. (334) She had them dig a tunnel such that a man could fit in it. (335) Through this she brought him food to eat.

(336) Bakko 'Awan noticed that for a day, two, a week, Mämme Ala was not getting any thinner, and his spirits were not low. "What's going on here?" (337) He made up an excuse to go to Sittiye Zîn's quarters, to her room. (338) And what did he see? She had a tunnel dug from her room down to the dungeon, and was bringing him food. (339) He came and told Mîr Zeidîn, the father¹⁰⁸, "My mîr, you say they've put Mämme Ala in the dungeon. You didn't say that he has once again sneaked into God's graces, and is enjoying himself there, and is pleased with the food, which, by the way, come to him three times a day." "But it can't be!" "But it is," replied [Bakko]. (340) [The mîr] said, "Go plug up the tunnel with pitch and tar!"

^{105a}This motif has a parallel in the story of Bizhan and Manizhah in the Shahnameh. See: Reuben Levy (tr.) *The Epic of the Kings: Shah-Nama, the National Epic of Persia* (London et al. : Routledge & Kegan Paul, c1967, 1985), pp. 152-172.

¹⁰⁶Cf. note 13 above.

¹⁰⁷=lit. "she opened"

¹⁰⁸It should be noted that at the beginning of the story, Sittiye Zîn is referred to as "the daughter of Mîr Sheref, the sister of Mîr Zeidîn." See also EP-1, note #109: a similar slip occurs in that version.

(341) Bakko 'Awan didn't wait an instant, (342) he plugged up the tunnel with tar, and tied him up tightly, so that he stayed there. (343) Food and water no longer reached poor Mämme Ala. (344) In one day, two, a week, he grew weak, and his spirits sunk, as expected. (345) By the end of the thirty ninth day, there was still life in him.

(346) Bakko 'Awan went and said to the mîr, "My mîr!" "Huh?" said [the mîr]. "My mîr, let's let him go! (347) He has only today left, tomorrow Qara Tajdin will come. He'll come back and see his brother lying there dead; then he won't leave one of us alive. (348) So let's let him go!" [The mîr] said, "Bakko, you scoundrel¹⁰⁹, go let him out!" (349) "I can't go let him out; tell your daughter Sittiye Zîn to go let him out!" "Go tell her!" said [the mîr].

(350) Bakko 'Awan came to Sittiye Zîn, the daughter, and said, "Sittiye!" "Huh?" He said, "Sittiye! Your father said 'Let her go around the city of Gziro and gather forty girls like herself, have them get all dressed up and go let Mämme Ala out of the dungeon, so that I can marry her to Mämme Ala¹¹⁰. [294] Today I will marry them.'" (351) What more could Sittiye Zîn ask for? She was delighted, and set out to round up forty girls like herself, who she dressed up and brought to the gate of the dungeon. (352) She came to the gate of the dungeon and called to Mämme Ala. She said, "Mämmo, beloved of my heart! I've come to set you free!" (353) "May God destroy your father's house," he said, "O Sittiye, you certainly haven't come to set me free! You have come to take out the last breaths of life left in me! Throw me the rope!" (354) Sittiye Zîn threw down the rope, and began shouting for joy¹¹¹ down into the dungeon. (355) He tied [the rope] around his waist for her to pull him up, (356) She pulled him halfway up from the dungeon, and grabbed his hand to pull him to the mouth of the pit¹¹². (357) When his hand came this far out of the mouth

¹⁰⁹Qwāro -lit. "one who should be buried"

¹¹⁰-lit. "I will give her and Mämme Ala to each other."

¹¹¹Hēlholo, equivalent to Arabic zaghānī زَغْرِيْبَة, ululations which women call out on joyous occasions such as weddings

¹¹²or, cistern. Note that from here on out, the 'dungeon' (zārzāmiye) is referred to as a 'pit' (gūbo).

of the pit, a drop of his blood dripped on the stone door of the pit¹¹³, and he gave up his life to those present. Mämme Ala died at the mouth of the pit. (358) As soon as Sittiye Zîn saw that Mämme Ala had died at the mouth of the pit – God forbid – she burst out crying, and ate her heart out crying and lamenting. (359) She said, “Now after his eyes [have closed], it is forbidden for me to continue living!” (360) She swiftly took out her penknife and thrust it into her heart, (361) and killed herself, throwing herself on top of him.

(362) The two were finished there; Bakko ‘Awan said, “O my mîr! They are dead, so let’s take them to the graveyard!” (363) They took the two of them and brought them – May it be far from this place – to the graveyard, prepared their places and buried them. (364) While they were still at the graveyard Qara Tajdin returned from tax collecting. He did not stop at home, but rather rode straight to the graveyard. (365) “What has happened¹¹⁴?” “It’s Mämme Ala and Sittiye Zîn.” “But it can’t be!” They all said, “But it is so.” “Eh!”

(366) May it be far from this place – They buried them; then they went home by turn. (367) They buried them the way they bury, one here and one over there¹¹⁵ by the entrance gate, (368) Three or four meters apart from each other.

[296] (369) As they were on their way home from the graveyard, Bakko ‘Awan said, “Mîr Zeidîn!” “Huh?” said he. “You think that Mämme Ala and Sittiye Zîn are now dead! Go open up their graves now, and look! (370) If they don’t have their arms around each other, and their mouths aren’t touching, you can cut off my head.” (371) Mîr Zeidîn said, “May your house be destroyed, can’t they even be free of you once they’re [buried] under the ground?” (372) Because Qara Tajdin was so concerned, they opened up the graves and looked: and indeed, it was true. (373) From the chest down there was a curtain between them, and from the chest up their arms were behind each other’s neck, and their mouths were touching.

¹¹³şoxûrto = well-enclosure, a stone with a hole in the center used for covering a well.

¹¹⁴Min-yo min lû-yo? = lit. “What is there, what isn’t there?” This expression also occurs in Turkish (Ne var ne yok), Kurdish (Çi heye çî t’une), Iraqi Arabic (shaku maku), and Armenian (ի ն չ կա յ չ կա յ = inç’ ga ch’ga).

¹¹⁵The narrator indicates this with a gesture.

(374) Because Qara Tajdîn was so angry and sick of him, he pulled out his sword and sliced off Bakko 'Awan's head. (375) He said -- apologies to those present -- "May your father boil, can't they even be free of you once they're [buried] under the ground?" (376) While he stood there, a drop of Bakko 'Awan's blood dripped between the two [of them] and became a thornbush; even now there is a thornbush between them, even to this very day ... And you remain healthy for me!¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶This ending, which is in Kurdish, is a common concluding formula for folktales. PN, a Tūroyo version of Mem û Zîn collected in the same area in 1869, ends with the same Kurdish formula!

Ritter, Hellmut. "Mammo und Zine," in Türöyo : die Volkssprache der syrischen Christen des Tür 'Abdîn (Beirut ; Wiesbaden : Franz Steiner Verlag, 1969), v. 2, pp. 500-519 [Türöyo (a Neo-Aramaic language) in Latin phonetic transcription + German translation on facing pages] (HR-2)

HR-2. Collected by Hellmut Ritter in Beirut in 1961 from Sleimân Hanna Maskôbi, a carpenter born in 1913 or 1914 in Midin, a village in the Tür 'Abdîn, in what is now the province (il or vilayet) of Mardin, Turkey. The family name Maskôbi (=Muscovite) was originally a nickname given to Slēmân's father Hanna, who as a soldier in the Turkish army during the First World War was captured by the Russians. When, after a seven year absence, he was the only one to return from the war, his stories about his experiences earned him the name Maskôbi. In 1926, when Sleimân was about 13 years old, the family spent six months in Aleppo (Halab), Syria, after which they settled in Beirut for three years. In 1929 they moved to Jerusalem, remaining there until 1949, at which time they returned to Beirut, where Hellmut Ritter was introduced to Sleimân 12 years later. In Hellmut Ritter's opinion, Sleimân's version of M&Z is superior to both Dschano's (PN) and Yūsuf Mälke Asmar's (HR-1). The village of Midin (Middo, Midih) is 32 kilometers east-southeast of Midyat, the center of the Jacobite Christians, who speak a neo-Aramaic language called Türöyo. The dialect of Midin differs in a few minor points from the Türöyo spoken in the neighboring villages. Numbers in brackets [] refer to page numbers, while those in parentheses () refer to sentences.

Mammo und Zine (HR-2)

[500] (1) They say that once the king of the jinns was sitting in the diwan, having gathered his men around him. (2) Each one of them talked, each about something different. (3) Their king said to them, "Tell me what you have seen in your wanderings about the earth!" (4) One of them raised his hand [and] said, "O King, if you give me leave, I will speak." [The king] said, "Speak!" He said, "I have seen a girl in the place they call Bota, praised be God, praised be [502] he who created her! I have never seen one more beautiful than her in all the world. (5) A girl that, when she goes out walking, the eye is ashamed to gaze on her." (6) Another one got up and said, "O my King, I have seen a young man, among the [tribe of] Ala, praised be God! I say that there is no other young man as handsome as he in the whole world." (7) The king said to them, "Now it is night, go and put slumber pearls¹ in their ears, and pick the two of

¹Motifs D1364.32. Jewel causes magic sleep; D1071. Magic jewel (jewels); D1071.1. Magic beads; D1364. Object causes magic sleep.

them up, once they've fallen asleep, and bring them here to this diwan. (8) Let's see whether what you say [about them] is true or not!" (9) They arise -- they are jinns, now remember -- in the blink of an eye, and go bring the girl from the place [called] Bota, and the young man from the place of the Ala. (10) They bring in both of them asleep on their beds, and place them in the center of the diwan. (11) The jinns look at them, praise their lord and say, "It is true! These two should have one another: there is no one more beautiful, more deserving of each other than they! How do we let them have one another, how do we introduce them to each other?" (12) The king says, "Pick them up and take them to the young man's room², and let them wake up! Let them see one another, and [from] tonight until the morning, let them stay together, [then] early in the morning³ put them to sleep, and return the girl to her place, but he should remain in his room!" (13) The jinns arose and picked up the two beds and took them to the place of the Alat, and put them in Mammo's room -- the boy's name is Mammo. -- (14) They put them there and woke them up.

(15) This one⁴ got up and looked about: there was another bed in his room! "Who is here?" (16) The girl says, "Who are you?" The two don't know: he says, "This is my place," and she says, "No! This is *my* place⁵!" (17) In the evening she went to sleep in her room, and she knows that she didn't go anywhere⁶, and the same for him⁷. (18) The young man, Mammo, looked and said, "Hey, girl! If this is your place, don't you have a servant?" She said, "Yes, of course I do⁸!" (19) He said, "Call [504] you servant! If she is at the door, then it is I who have come to you, and I shall leave!" (20) She starts calling, she calls her servant, but there is no [one] there; no one answers her. (21) He said, "Then now it's my turn, I will call my servant. If my servant is at the door, then you have come to me." (22) He calls his servant once, and [the latter] says,

²-lit. "to the room in the young man's chambers"

³-lit. "face of the morning"

⁴e. Mammo.

⁵-lit. "No, I am here!"

⁶-lit. "didn't budge and didn't go out, and didn't go anywhere"

⁷-lit. "and he also thus"

⁸-lit. "Yes! How is there not to me?" - "How could I not have one?"

"Here I am!" [Mammo] says, "Stay [where you are]!" [The servant] says, "Do you want something, my Master?" [Mammo] says, "No, I don't want anything, stay [where you are] and go to sleep!" (23) Then he says to her, "See? You have come to me." (24) They gaze at one another and fall in love; there is none more beautiful than the two of them. They fall in love and start talking: each one tells something, where he's from, and the like⁹. (25) He says to her, "Where are you from?" She says, "I am from the place of Bota, my brother is the emir of Bota, and we live¹⁰ in the palace of Bäläk." (26) She describes to him the place, the city in which her brother lives. She has no father: she has a brother and a married sister. She describes to him where they live¹¹; they remain [so] until morning. (27) They exchange rings and swear to each other that they will marry no one else¹². (28) They remain so until the early morning, [when] they become sleepy and lay down their heads and sleep. (29) Mammo gets up in the morning and sees that there is no one there. He is all alone in his room. (30) He looks around and says, "O God! Was it a dream? But I saw her and spoke with her! Here is her ring on my finger¹³." (31) She also got up in the morning and found¹⁴ herself alone in her room. (32) She calls her servant: there she is at the door. She¹⁵ is going crazy. She sees that the ring [on her finger] is not her ring, it has been switched. (33) And she knows that it was not a dream: she had [actually] spoken with him: she had seen the boy, and he had seen her, and they had exchanged rings!

(34) Now, let's return to the boy! With every passing day he got thinner and thinner, the boy got thinner, as if some disease had befallen him; he wouldn't eat or drink, or anything, he was constantly sad and gloomy. [506] (35) What¹⁶ should he do

⁹=lit. "from where he is, from where he is not"

¹⁰=lit. "we are"

¹¹=lit. "they are"

¹²=lit. "that one of them will not take, except they become the destiny of each other"

¹³=lit. "on my hand"

¹⁴=lit. "saw". In Kurdish also *Dîtin* can mean both 'to see' and 'to find'. Cf. HR-1, note 31.

¹⁵i.e. Zîne, the girl from Bota.

¹⁶=lit. "how"

to go find¹⁷ that girl and bring her back¹⁸? (36) One day he goes to his father; his father says to him, "My son! What's wrong with you? Why are you like this? Why have you gotten [so] thin? Why don't you eat? What are you lacking?" (37) [Mammo] says, "Father, I lack nothing, but I have seen [something]; if I tell you I've seen something, as one usually sees things¹⁹, you won't believe me; I'll tell you that [what] I've seen [is] a dream. (38) I've seen a girl ... oh, I've never seen the likes of her anywhere, not in folktales, nor in descriptions²⁰. (39) And I want you to give me permission to go looking for her, to bring her back²¹. [His father] says, "My son! Strange lands are not for us, we²² cannot let you go. (41) Not one of us, of our family, has gone to a strange land and come back. We have no luck in strange lands. (42) You have many cousins²³ here, the whole city is there before you; whatever girl you like, regardless of whether she be married or a virgin, we will give her to you, we will bring her for you²⁴! (43) Now if you go away, no one knows what will happen to you. You will go to a strange land, no one will know you there, nor will you know anyone, you won't be able to do anything²⁵, you won't accomplish anything." (44) [Mammo] says, "Father, never! I love that girl and besides her, I declare all girls on earth ḥarām²⁶ for me; If not her, I won't marry²⁷ any girl [at all]." (45) No matter what his father did, he had no control over him. (46) The boy goes and mounts his horse, his father gives him money; what

17=lit. "see". See note 14 above.

18=lit. "return, bring her"

19=lit. "seeing of customary practice"

20Waṣf = "description". Also, in Arabic poetry, waṣf is the name of a genre of poetry used in describing the beauty of women. Perhaps it is this genre of poetry that is being referred to here.

21This could also mean "to marry her".

22Perhaps this is the "royal we".

23=lit. "paternal uncles' daughters"

24or, marry her to you.

25=lit. "to bring, do a thing"

26Undean or forbidden.

27=lit. "take"

he can give him, he gives him; he mounts his horse, and departs. (47) He goes riding through lands in which he doesn't know whether he is coming or going. (48) He asks after the place he's headed for [as follows]: "Which way to Gzîro²⁸?" (49) They tell him, "It's to the west." (50) He passes a month travelling in this way, until he arrives. They say, "This is Gzîro."

(51) He went and there was a girl at a well, drawing water. (52) He saw her and took a good look at her, [then] said, "This must be the one I saw in my sleep, [508] she resembles her to a tee!" (53) This was, they say, the daughter of Bakko 'Awan, the emir's adviser. (54) This girl was also very beautiful, and looked like Zîne -- Zîne, the girl he had seen in his sleep -- she also resembled her in her beauty. (55) He asked her, "Maiden, where do you live²⁹? Where do you people live?" (56) She says, "We live³⁰ in such-and-such a house, our house, we say, is near the emir's palace, it's three or four houses away from the palace; (57) My father's name is Bakko 'Awan, if you'd like, you may come to us!" (58) The man, Mammo, enters the city and asks for Bakko 'Awan's house; they direct him [and] lead him; he comes to Bakko 'Awan's house and enters as a guest. (59) -- They receive guests there³¹: in those mountains a man, who may be a stranger, they take him in, whichever house he goes to³² -- (60) He settled there. In the evening, Bakko 'Awan had dinner brought out and they dined, then they went to the assembly at the emir's. (61) They go and sit down; the emir looks at him³³ [and thinks]: "Praise be to God! What a young man, what a handsome fellow is this

²⁸The full name of Zîne's homeland is Jezîra Bohta in Kurdish, or Gzîro Bota in Turoyo. The town of Jezîra (Gizre) still exists, in the province of Mardin, Turkey, on the Tigris (Dicle) River. Bohtan is the Kurdish name for the region in which Jezîra is situated.

²⁹=lit. "Where are you?"

³⁰=lit. "are"

³¹i.e., in Gzîro.

³²This is a revealing digression. Gzîro is not in the mountains, but rather on a flat plain, on the Tigris (Dicle) River (see note 28 above). However, the man telling the story is from the Tur 'Abdin, a mountainous area in the same province. My guess is that telling the story made the informant think back to his native region, and that in his mind he identified (read: confused) Gzîro/Jezîra with his native Midîn. For a discussion of the functions of digression in oral narrative, see İlhan Başgöz. "Digression in Oral Narrative: A Case Study of Individual Remarks by Turkish Romance Tellers," *JAE* 99 (1986), pp. 5-23.

³³i.e., Mammo

one with Bakko 'Awan!" (62) He says to Bakko 'Awan, he says, "Where is this man from?" (63) Bakko 'Awan says, "O my emir! He is a stranger, he came to me today. I don't know where he is from." (64) [The emir] says, "Well, let him be welcome³⁴! Very good! Let him stay here two or three days, let him stay two or three days, then ask him where he's from and why he has come, from what place he has come."

(65) They say: he stayed three days, as is customary among the Arabs³⁵; after three days [had passed], he said, "O so-and-so! Tell us where you've come from and what your reason is!" (66) [Mammo] said, "I have come, I have, from among the Ala; I have come [because] I have a goal here; (67) I saw a girl in my sleep, she is supposedly³⁶ from this place; (68) I have come [because] I want to ask for her [hand] if I find³⁷ her." (69) Now Bakko 'Awan's daughter fell in love with the young man when she first saw him and said to her father, "Father! I want that boy."

(70) While he was staying in Gzîro, Mammo realized that the girl that he had seen³⁸, the daughter of Bakko 'Awan, was not the Zîne that he had come after. (71) Word gets around³⁹, the girl Zîne finds out that Mammo has come to the city and [510] is looking for her⁴⁰. (72) She has a brother-in-law -- called Qara Tâjdîn -- she says to him, "O my sister's husband! Do me a favor, let me see that young man; he has come from a distant land, he wants to see me." He says, "All right!"

³⁴ahla u sahla, which is Arabic for "welcome", literally "family and easy", the idea being "[you have come to] family [and have trod on] easy (or, soft) [ground]. Arabic is spoken in Mardin, as well as Turoyo, Kurdish, and the official government language Turkish, but it should also be remembered that the informant has lived most of his life (since age 13) in Arabic-speaking countries (Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine).

³⁵As stated in the previous note, mentioning the Arabs may reflect the informant's having lived among Arabs for most of his life, even though they have nothing to do with the story being told.

³⁶=lit. "they say she is"

³⁷=lit. "see". See note 14 above.

³⁸i.e., at the well

³⁹=lit. "word comes"

⁴⁰=lit. "is wandering on her". This is identical to Kurdish **li ... geřin**: in both Turoyo and Kurdish, 'to wander about for [=in search of]' is the normal way of saying "to look for", "to search for", "to seek".

(73) He comes and speaks to the emir, Mîr Sêvdîn, and says to him ⁴¹, "Let's go out hunting today." (74) [The emir] says, "Make the horses ready, prepare the stuff and let's go!" (75) [Qara Tâjdîn] sends word to his wife⁴² and tells her, "Let Zîne be with you, and go [together] to your brother's palace, and the young man will be in the palace; after we set out for the hunt, for the hunt we'll set out, [then] he and I will return. (76) We will return," he says, "We'll make an excuse: He'll say he has a headache: [saying] 'My head aches, I can't come,' he will return." (77) They did so. They went out hunting, the emir and his people, [and] Bakko 'Awan with him. When they have gone a short distance from the city, (78) Mammo says, "O my mîr! My head aches, I cannot come [with you], I want to go back, if you will permit it⁴³." (79) [The emir] says, "It's all right with me⁴⁴, go back!" (80) He goes back to the palace, he comes in and finds the girl there. They sit down together. (81) Bakko 'Awan was a devil. He knew about the whole matter. (82) He said to the emir, "O my mîr! Today your guest" - (83) We left [something] out. The guest who was ... the guest Mammo had gone to stay with the emir, he had become the emir's guest; he left Bakko 'Awan's - (84) He said, "Your guest had a headache and went back, so our day has not been very good, let's all turn back!" (85) He deceived⁴⁵ the emir; he [succeeded in] making the emir and everyone [else] turn around and come [home].

(86) They came and passed through the gate of the palace, and there were Mammo and Zîne sitting together. (87) She had no place through which to go out, through which to climb out of the room or of the pavilion ⁴⁶, so she sneaked under [Mammo's] cloak and stayed there. (88) The emir came in, [but] he⁴⁷ did not stand up before him; the emir was greatly angered. (89) She stayed sitting like that, [and] he

41=lit. "his brother-in-law says to him"

42It will be remembered that Qara Tâjdîn's wife is Zîne and Mîr Sêvdîn's sister.

43=lit. "if you give the command"

44=lit. "There is no worry." This expression also exists in Kurdish: *Xem nîne*.

45=lit. "laughed on the head of"

46*köçake/koşke*, cf. Turkish *köşk*, Kurdish *koşk*.

47i.e., Mammo

could not get up, for if he got up, the emir's sister would be visible under his cloak. What should he do?⁴⁸ [The emir would] cut off his head!

[512] (90) Thus they sat down; the emir was very angry, he didn't speak. (91) They sat down, and coffee was passed out. [When] the coffee came to him, he said, "Today I want a man who is the son of a [noble] father to serve me a cup of coffee!" (92) The emir's brother-in-law⁴⁹ understood⁵⁰; he got up and took the coffee thing⁵¹, [then] went and gave him coffee. (93) From under the cloak Zîne's hair could be seen⁵², he knew that Zîne was sitting under [Mammo's] cloak, and that therefore he [=Mammo] could not get up. (94) He [=Qara Tâjdîn] stepped back [to see if] Mîr Sêvdîn was looking at them: no, he had neither caught on nor seen anything.⁵³

(95) Qara Tâjdîn went out. He started a fight with his wife. (96) The woman cried for help; they brought news to the emir: "Qara Tâjdîn is coming after your sister with a sword, trying to kill her! Get up and go see him!" (97) He [=the emir] was about to get up, [when] Bakko 'Awan said, "Let him be! He's crazy, (98) and he'll return to his senses. Do you really think he'll kill her?" He got [the emir] to sit down again.

(99) Qara Tâjdîn saw that the emir did not come out. He wanted the emir to come outside so that the girl could come out from under [Mammo's] cloak, [and] so that the boy would be saved from the mess he had fallen into. (100) He went and set fire to the pavilions, to his own house. (101) News came to the emir: "Qara Tâjdîn has set his own house on fire, he's gotten so raving mad, he's set his house on fire; go to him, maybe you can talk some sense into him!" (102) The emir got up, Bakko 'Awan said, "Sit!" [The emir] said, "Drop dead⁵⁴," slapped him and shut him up, (103) he shut him up and said to him, "Last time he almost killed my sister, and now he has

⁴⁸-lit. "How?"

⁴⁹i.e., Qara Tâjdîn.

⁵⁰-lit. "knew"

⁵¹i.e., the coffee tray

⁵²-lit. "showed"; "appeared"

⁵³-lit. "no, he did not know, did not see a thing"

⁵⁴-Dêmiî' =lit. "Hey, die!" The particle *dê* also exists in Kurdish, where it has the form *de*. It is used with imperatives, to urge someone to do something, e.g. 'De bigre!' = "Come on, take it!"

set his house on fire. Let's go see what his trouble is!" (104) He got up and so did his people with him, they went out. (105) [Then] the girl Zîne got out from under the cloak, she went and entered the palace. (106) She entered; then the emir returned, having seen that they had succeeded in pacifying him [=Qara Tâjdîn]; [he and his men] came and sat down again.

[514] (107) They sat down, and Bakko 'Awan said to the emir, "You see that guest who is with you, the stranger, who you said was a good man? When you returned from hunting, he didn't rise before you." -- (108) The intelligence of these people -- after all they were Kurds⁵⁵ -- He got very angry: how could he, a guest, get it into his head not to rise before him?

(109) In the evening, Qara Tâjdîn brought Mammo to his house [and] said to him, "How could you do this thing today?" (110) [Mammo] said, "Well, Qara Tâjdîn, you know how it is; we were in such and such a situation, and you people came and walked into the room on us, and I had no alternative⁵⁶, I put her under the cloak." (111) [Qara Tâjdîn] said, "Then there's no problem. Let us see now, this evening we'll go ask for her from him according to custom!"

(112) They went in the evening, and Qara Tâjdîn said to the emir Mir Sêvdîn, "This young man has come to ask for your sister, he's come from a distant place; he wants your sister." (113) [The emir] said, "All right, but I have a condition." [Qara Tâjdîn] said, "What is it?" (114) -- Who told [the emir to say] that? Bakko 'Awan told him [to say] that. -- (115) He said, "Let's play a game of cards, he and I. If he defeats me, I'll give her to him, but if I win, I'll cut off his head." [Qara Tâjdîn] said, "All right."

(116) They sat down and played. The palace had a window on the inside. (117) Zîne was sitting in the window watching them. Mammo's back was to her, he did not see her. (118) Her brother sees her, he looks at the cards [and] looks at his sister, [and] loses. He loses the first round. (119) Bakko 'Awan noticed. He saw how things stood. (120) He said, "My emir, it's [no good] this way. You are not sitting in a good place⁵⁷. Go [sit] in his place, and let him come [sit] in your place!" (121) Now [Mammo] was a

⁵⁵-lit. "Kurmanj". This comment bespeaks a negative attitude toward Kurds, or at least reflects a stereotype that they are quick to anger. This is also the only time that the characters in the story are specifically called Kurds (Kurmanj).

⁵⁶-lit. "I could not that there be for me an escape."

⁵⁷-lit. "Your place is not good"

guest, the poor thing did not object. (122) They got up, he went to the emir's place, the emir sat in his place. (123) They sat and played; [Mammo] raised his head [and] saw little Zine⁵⁸ opposite him. (124) He stopped paying attention to the cards or to anything else, he threw them as they came. [516] [The emir] beat him. (125) The emir won three times in a row. He said, "Now throw him in prison!" (126) They took him [and] threw him in prison. But what sort of prison did they have? It was a well, a cistern; they put him in a cistern. (127) They put him in a cistern, and every evening they threw him a cake of dry bread; and he stayed there.

(128) Qara Tâjdîn ran around⁵⁹, doing everything he could⁶⁰ to save the young man, until the emir knew the whole story: how Bakko 'Awan had poisoned their relationship⁶¹, and wanted to give [Mammo] his daughter; (129) He didn't [want to] let [Mammo] ask for the emir's daughter; when the emir understood, he said, "Go release him! Go take him out of the well!" (130) He asked [his] sister, "Do you want him?" She said, "I want him!"

(131) They went, [but] Bakko 'Awan went on ahead, he went and said, "Mammo! Mammo!" [Mammo] said, "What is it?" [Bakko 'Awan] said, "By God, Zine will be married tonight." (132) [Mammo] said, "That cannot be; We gave each other our word: she won't get married [to anyone else]." (133) [Bakko 'Awan] said, "You'll see, she will come tonight to take you out of the well, She will tell you 'Come out!' and she will be wearing a bridal gown. (134) And if she isn't wearing a bridal gown, then I am a liar." (135) Now poor [Mammo] had grown weak, and was not in good shape.

(136) After Bakko 'Awan went, Zine came and called to him, "Mammo! Here is the rope! Tie it around your waist⁶²!" (137) He says to her, "Zine, have you come to deepen my watchamacallit, my wounds, (138) after all these things I've gotten caught up in, for your sake? And now you want to go marry [someone else]?" (139) She said to

⁵⁸Zinäk.

⁵⁹=lit "goes and comes"

⁶⁰=lit. "he does self-sacrifice [fadāwiye] before him"

⁶¹=lit. "put between them discord [fiṭnah]", i.e. sewed discord between them.

⁶²=lit. "tie/hang yourself to it"

him, "Damn you⁶³! I've come to rescue you, and yet you tell me I am going to marry⁶⁴ someone else." (140) He said, "By God! You are making fun of me [with] all this!" (141) She said, "Come out!" She gave him the rope, he pulled on it and saw that she was indeed dressed in a bridal gown – but she was wearing it for him! (142) As soon as he saw her that way, he fell: his heart broke⁶⁵, he gave up the ghost. (143) She looked about: when she saw that her beloved was dead, she pulled out his dagger and stabbed herself in the heart, [518] she killed herself over him. (144) The emir came and looked: there were the two of them, he was dead and she had killed herself. (145) He was angry: she was [his] sister, and he had been his guest. He was very sad. (146) They went and buried them – may it never happen to you⁶⁶.

(147) Now Bakko 'Awan didn't want to leave them alone⁶⁷, even after they died⁶⁸. (148) He came in the evening to the emir and said, "O my emir! Something bad happened between them⁶⁹." (149) [The emir] said, "It can't be, what you are saying is not so." (150) [Bakko 'Awan] said, "I'll prove [it] to you. Let's go in the morning and dig up the grave. (151) If they are not facing each other,⁷⁰ then it's true that I am lying; but if they are facing each other, then [even] in death they turn to face one another." (152) They got up in the morning and went to open up the grave: Lo and behold, the two of them were facing towards each other. (153) That Bakko 'Awan had gone at night and opened the grave and turned their faces towards each other, then went and told the emir [what he told him]: (154) In the morning they went and opened the grave, and behold, it was as he said. (155) For three nights [in a row], he repeated this.

63=lit. "May your house be destroyed"

64=lit. "and you still say to me 'You are going to marry'"

65=lit. "hurt"

66=lit. "May it be far from your (plural) face". Cf. (Colloquial) Arabic ba'id 'amāk **بعيد عنك**.

67=lit. "turn from them"

68=lit. "even in death"

69=lit. "those, there was no-goodness between them"

70=lit. "If their faces are not facing each other"

(156) On the last night, Qara Tâjdîn said, "By God, there is something strange here⁷¹"
(157) He went at night and stood⁷² guard over the grave. (158) At midnight he saw Bakko 'Awan coming. [Qara Tâjdîn] waited until [Bakko 'Awan] opened the grave and was about to reach out and turn their head toward each other, (159) then [Qara Tâjdîn] pulled [his] sword on him and said, "[Even] in death you won't leave them alone?" He drew [his] sword and cut off [Bakko 'Awan's] head. (160) His blood fell between the two [of them], and became a thornbush between them. (161) To this very day there is a thornbush between their graves. (162) They call it the grave of Zîne and Mammo, and [say that] even in death he would not leave them alone.

71=lit. "this thing, there is in it, there is in it [a] thing!"

72=lit. "was"

Dzhalilov, Ordikhane & Dzhalil Dzhalilov. "Memê û Zîné (şaxa 1)" in *Zargotina K'urda = Kurdski ĭ Fol'klor*. (Moskva : Nauka, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 45-65. [Kurmanji in Latin (Hawar) script] [ZK-1]

ZK-1. Collected in April 1963, from E'gîtê T'êcir, in the village of Siçanlı (now called Avt'ona), district of Talîn, Armenian SSR. E'gît, who is literate, was born in 1922 in the village of Baysizê, district of Talîn, and moved to Avt'ona in 1947. He learned the songs he knows from his father, T'êcirê K'eleş and his paternal uncle, Rêşîdê Al'aşî.

Memê û Zîné [ZK-1]

[45] Mem was the son of Al-pasha. Al-pasha was the pasha of the city of Mukhurzemîn. Al-pasha and his wife were quite old, and Mem was all they had in the way of offspring. They loved their *Memê delal*¹ very much. Not only his parents loved Mem, but indeed all the members of his father's diwan² and all of Mem's friends and companions also loved him very much, because Mem was an intelligent, conscientious and very beautiful young man. For this reason both Al-pasha and his coterie liked Mem always to stay in the diwan. Mem would get up early every morning, go to his father's diwan, and distribute tea and coffee. This was Memê delal's job.

When Mem grew up and it was time for him to marry, Al-pasha was in a constant state of anxiety, and thought, "How will a girl meet his beloved Mem, who is worthy of him?" Several times Al-pasha summoned Mem's friends and instructed them to learn Mem's thoughts, to find out which girl Mem loves, so that they could ask for [her hand] for him. But Mem would give no word to his friends, because at that time Mem was not in love with anyone.

This trait of Mem's kept his mother and father in a state of constant anxiety. In this fashion the days passed for Memê delal and his old father Al-pasha. Mem was as untroubled as his father was impatient.

Let us leave Al-pasha, his old wife and Memê delal in the city of Mukhurzemîn, take a journey of forty days to the land of Jizîr, and reach Jizîra Bota.

¹=fine Mem.

²=court.

The mîr³ of Jizîr, mîr Sévdîn, resided in the city of Jizîra Bota. Mîr Sévdîn had a daughter, whose name was Khatûn Zîn⁴. Zîn was more beautiful than the houris - - so beautiful, so perfect, all in all a ravishing beauty. Zîn had matured by then: the time had come to marry her off.

Mîr Sévdîn's diwan was served by Qeretajdîn, Chekan, and Efan. The three of them were brothers, and all three of them were like the lions of God⁵. The fate⁶ of the land of Jizîr [46] was in their hands: whatever battles they participated in they would return from victorious and revered. One day they took some of the notables and noblemen of the city of Jizîr, and went to mîr Sévdîn's court, brought the question (or-word) of manliness, to ask for [the hand of] lovely Zîn for Chekan, the brother of Qeretajdîn. Since the might of the three brothers was great in the land of Jizir, mîr Sévdîn had given his eldest daughter Perî khatûn to Qeretajdîn, in recognition of their prestige and bravery. Since their reputations preceded them⁷, mîr Sévdîn promised Zîn to Chekan. Afterwards they showed their great satisfaction with lovely Zîn through [the gift of] a golden talisman, equal in value to seven years' worth of Jizîr's taxes^{7a}.

A few days passed. Lovely Zîn and a group of her maidservants took a long stroll in her father's private gardens [Xas-baxçê], and returned contented to their diwan. The maidservants prepared lovely Zîn for a nap so that, tired from the day's outing, she might rest a little. Zîn got into her bed, and gave leave to her maidservants to go rest up also.

Much of the night had passed when three charming doves landed on the window of the diwan in which Zîn was sleeping. When the doves saw delicate Zîn, they were astonished. The youngest sister said to the eldest sister, "Sister, can humans also be this beautiful? Have you ever in your life seen anything so

³=emir, prince.

⁴=Khatûn means "Lady."

⁵=courageous warriors.

⁶=lit. "the taking and leaving (of the land)."

⁷=lit. (?Their manliness in advance was to each of them?)

^{7a} or, expenses.

beautiful in the world?" The eldest sister said, "Sister, I've seen a young man who is more beautiful than this girl, he is the son of Al-pasha in the city of Mukhurzemîn." Both younger sisters begged the eldest sister, saying, "Sister, why don't we bring this delicate girl to that young man you speak of? They are both delicate and beautiful, let them rejoice in each other." The elder sister consented to her sisters' [demand], and they prayed to God and dressed Zîn up.

"Oh God, you make a command,
Send down a dove's attire
We are three, lovely Lady Zîn will be the fourth,
At the hour of midnight, in the city of Mukhurzemîn, set
her down at the window of Memê delal."

These blue-winged doves
Flap their wings and attire,
They take lovely Zîn with them,
To the blue sky, wander from land to land,
At the hour of midnight they put down at Mem's window.

They removed the dove's garb from Zîn, and put Zîn in Mem's bed. Not many minutes intervened before lovely Zîn woke up, and saw that a delicate youth was at her bosom. Zîn was very surprised, got angry and said,

[47] "My dear [Qurba], my father has seven gates of steel,
Completely surrounded by guards and sentinels,
How dare you⁸ put your
mouth near the birthmark on my chest?"

Mem said, "My darling, my father has seven gates of iron,
Watchmen and guards stand before them,
I can tell that you are going to trouble me today."

⁸=lit. "the limit of whose father."

A big quarrel ensued between them. Zîn was saying, "You have come [to my house]" Mem was saying, "No, you have come [to *my* place]"

Zîn and Mem took lamps and candlesticks,
 Counted the minarets one by one,
 There were 366 of them,
 Then Zîn knew that she was the guest of fine Mem.

Delicate Zîn was [finally] convinced that she was Mem's guest. They fell in sweet love with each other; Zîn took off her ring and gave it to Mem, and took his ring for herself, saying, "Mem, my dear, those who brought me here will take me away again. I am the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn, from the city of Jizîra Bota, I am the sister-in-law of Qeretajdîn, the betrothed of Chekan, I am the owner of the green gown⁹. My dear, these are my attributes." But Mem said, "Why are you going out of my hands? I won't let you go!" And with these words of love they embraced and went to sleep.

When the doves saw that Mem and Zîn were sound asleep, they dressed Zîn up as a dove, took her, and a couple of hours later they put her in her own bed in the city of Jizîr, at the palace of mîr Sêvdîn, in her own apartment.

Let us return for a moment to the diwan of Al-pasha. The diwan was astir with the notables of the city of Mukhurzemîn. They were all waiting for fine Mem, but Mem did not show up. That day he was very late, the tea and coffee in the diwan were waiting for Mem to come, but Mem was not present in the diwan.

Al-pasha called two messengers, and said, "Boys, go see why my Mem is late today, has something happened to make him unhappy?" When the messengers opened the door of Mem's bedroom, they saw that Mem was sleeping sweetly. Love had brought Mem to believe that lovely Zîn was still in his arms. When the messengers called to Mem, he got up, but he was very sad and forlorn. He felt as if he had lost something precious. He considered what had happened to him last

⁹=K'êbê. In FK-1, the form is *k'êbe*. Neither k'êbê nor k'êbe appears in the dictionaries, but Kurdoev has *k'êbe* = 'type of woman's overgarment,' which may be a variant of the same word. I think the 'green gown' is a reference to Zîn's wedding gown: Erich Brauer says "the dress of the Jewish bride is red, whereas the bridal gown of the Kurdish woman is green" [see his *Yehude Kurdistan* [= The Jews of Kurdistan] (Yerushalayim : ha-Makhon ha-Eretyisre'eli le-Folklor ve-Etnologyah, 1948), p. 71]

night to be a dream. The boys brought water, so that Mem could freshen up his hands and face. While Mem was washing [48] his hands, he noticed the ring on his finger, and he immediately lost his senses and fell down in a swoon. The boys were distressed, and sent news to Al-pasha's diwan that Mem was ill, that he was in a bad way.

When old Al-pasha and his wife heard these words about Mem, they felt weak, as if their souls had flown away. In a subdued condition they came with the elders of the court to Mem's sleeping quarters. What they saw was a grave, dark misfortune: Mem was laid low, he was pale¹⁰, his blood was boiling^{10a}. Al-pasha and his entourage debated a great deal among themselves, one said it was the flu, one said it was a cold, one said it was out of fear. In short, no doctors in the surrounding assembly could comprehend Mem's illness. Al-pasha and Mem's mother were sick over him. There was no one left in town whom Al-pasha had not called on, neither hermit, nor doctor, nor elder. No one knew fine Mem's problem.

In the city of Mukhurzemîn there was an experienced old man. News of him reached Al-pasha. As is clear to you all, Al-pasha's love for his beloved Mem was unique. He would offer up his old age, as if he were the physician of the heavens, for his delicate and perfect Mem^{10b}. When Al-pasha heard of this old man, he got up and went to see him. He took the old man by the arm and brought him to see Mem. When the experienced old man saw Mem, he said, "O noblemen, may Al-pasha be well, I have good news for you: Mem is not sick, he's in love! Call an ashik¹¹, have him come play his saz¹², by God's leave Mem will get well, and we will marry off our beloved Mem." The advice of the experienced old man was

¹⁰=lit. "there was no color left in him."

^{10a} xûn ber bîye gol =lit. "his blood had become hot." According to Bakaev, **Gol bûn** could have two possible meanings, either a) 'to be warmed up,' 'to be heated up'; or b) 'to be blocked or dammed up.' In addition, Khamoian's phraseological dictionary has **Gola xûnê**, which he translates literally as 'lake of blood' (from Turkish *göl* = 'lake'), and for which he gives three meanings: a) 'someone looking for an excuse to fight,' i.e. 'troublemaker'; b) 'hell,' 'inferno'; and c) 'slaughter,' 'carnage,' 'big fight' or 'great disorder or tumult.' I find Bakaev's definitions more likely, as the context clearly shows that Mem is ill.

^{10b} This is a difficult sentence. My rendering is only an approximation.

¹¹=folk poet and singer.

¹²=a string instrument.

immediately carried out. An ashik came, and Al-pasha ordered him to sing a love song for Mem. The ashik began to play his saz. At the sweet sound of the saz and the crooning of the voice of the ashik, Mem opened his eyes, [awakening] from a [deep] sleep. When Mem opened his eyes, the good news was passed around the city of Mukhurzemîn to young and old alike. Al-pasha and his entourage had no wings, or they would have flown¹³.

They got Mem up. His servant boys put clothes on him, and brought him to the diwan of Al-pasha. Al-pasha and the noblemen of his diwan deliberated about the marriage of Mem. Al-pasha ordered that, "Whoever has even one goat, should [sell it] to buy fancy garments, to dress up their daughters and daughters-in-law, and tomorrow morning all the girls and women¹⁴ of the city should come to the garden of Tûrkiñ, so that we can see who my Mem will fall in love with."

The people -- it was Al-pasha's command -- even those who had only one goat, [sold it and] bought fancy dresses for their daughters¹⁵ and sent them the following day to the garden of Tûrkiñ. The girls and women¹⁶ of the city of Mukhurzemîn, each one with the love of Mem in her heart, strolled arm in arm [49] into the private garden of Mem's father. At this time fine Mem and his servants were sitting in the garden. Mem was so cool and aloof, it was as if he were alone in the garden, for the comings and goings of such beautiful and noble creatures did not move Mem in the least. The daughter of the vizier of Mem's father paraded back and forth¹⁷ several times before Mem, but he didn't look at her even once. Then, out of grief for loving Mem, she said:

"Fine Mem, why are you playing hard to get?
Take your head out from beneath those furs and clothes,

¹³out of joy.

¹⁴=unmarried (girls) and married (women) alike.

¹⁵=lit. "Made expenditures, adorned their daughters.."

¹⁶See note 14.

¹⁷=lit. "Came and went."

Don't you want one of the daughters of the judge, mufti¹⁸,
or aghas?"

Mem said, "Vizier's daughter, the one my heart loves,
She is not here,
She lives in Jizîra Bota,
She's the daughter of mîr Sêvdîn,
The sister-in-law of Qeretajdîn,
The betrothed of Chekan -- lion of the earth,
She has a green gown,
The name of this beauty is Lady Zîn,
The likes of you will never see her color or face."

When Memê Ala¹⁹ said these words,
Fire and flames erupted in the hearts and breasts of the girls
and women,
They left the garden of Tûrkîf, two by two.

The dignitaries of the city of Mukhuzemîn and Al-pasha were upset over Mem, because their plan did not work and Mem had spoken about a country that nobody knew anything about.

Mem went to the stables of his father's horses, called the stablehands and said, "O servants, show me a bay horse that will take me to my desired destination a long way off." Whatever illustrious bay horses they brought to show to Mem, when he pressed down on their backs, their backs went low under the pressure of his hand²⁰. Mem's father had a horse which they used for hauling water until evening, because its back was wounded and it was weak. Mem said, "Enough of this, I'll try that one too." When Mem pressed down on its back with his hand, its back rose up four

¹⁸An official expounder of Islamic law.

¹⁹Memê Ala[n] is Memê's full name. The romance itself is often referred to as *Memê Alan*, to distinguish it from Ahmed-i Khani's poem *Mem û Zîn*. However, the people I met in Turkey used 'Mem û Zîn' for both.

²⁰A sign of weakness.

fingers' breadth. Mem said, "O servants, I tell you, for two weeks you take care of this Bor²¹ so that if I water his mane from the front, it will come out his croup²². I will give you a reward to your liking." [After] Mem had given them instructions, he went to the one who makes saddles, and said to the master, "Fashion a saddle for my horse made completely of rubies and pearls." Next he went to the tailor, and instructed him regarding his clothes.

[50] Mem thus prepared himself for his journey. Old Al-pasha was in a sorry state. He called Mem to him, and together with his council of notables advised Mem to give up this plan. Al-pasha said, "Son, you know your mother and I have grown old, we have nobody else but you, why are you doing this to us, leaving us desolate?" But no matter what Al-pasha and his entourage, or his own friends and companions said, they could not change Mem's heart. His thoughts would fly to Jizîra Bota, [to be] with lovely Zîn.

Mem's appointed time had arrived, his horse and saddle, equipment and weapons were all ready. Mem gave them²³ three times what they deserved, so that they would not be offended but rather would wish him well. Mem had gotten his things together, and was to leave the following day. They gave the news to Al-pasha, saying, "Mem is leaving tomorrow." Al-pasha summoned the gatekeepers of the city of Mukhurzemîn, and instructed them as follows: "Lock the gates of the citadel with steel, if Mem can get out, I'll have your heads cut off." He also told his horse grooms to chain Mem's horse Bor.

Al-pasha said, "Hey, my beloved Mem, my son,
Is there no sense in your head at all,
Don't you [ever] think²⁴ 'My mother is elderly, my father
is old?'
To whom can I hope to leave my throne and crown of gold?"

²¹=horse, and also the name of this particular horse.

²²cf. EP-1: "for forty nights water him so well that when you water his croup, it will come out his mane, and when you water his mane, it will come out his croup" (paragraph 16).

²³the stablehands, saddler, etc.

²⁴=lit. "say."

Mem said, "Hey, Al-pasha, my beloved father,
I know that my mother is elderly, my father is old,
?Bless what I am about to embark on,
Now my relationship to you is null and void."

No matter what Al-pasha did, Mem would not come back, Al-pasha wept and cried bitterly.

Mem said, "O boys and servants,
Bring my Bor outside,
Put on him the saddle of rubies and pearls - father of
jewels,
I am headed for Jizîra Bota."

The gates of the city of Mukhurzemîn were locked up tight, Mem's Bor was chained up according to Al-pasha's command, but love had brought fine Mem to the point where he could see nothing but the face of lovely Zîn, nothing else attracted his attention: not his mother and father, nor the golden throne and crown of Mukhurzemîn, nor even his friends and companions. Mem begged the gatekeeper to open the gates of the city; but the keys were in the hands of Al-pasha, he didn't have them. Mem was very angry and troubled.

When fine Mem spurred Bor on,
Bor flew over the city walls like a bird,
He said, "Yallah²⁵, God and great one."
Bor finished off the wall in one try.

[51] Mem passed beyond the city wall, he was beside himself. Bor was flying like a bird, but nonetheless Mem whipped him again and again, dug the spurs into his sides, it seemed to him that Bor was going too slowly. Bor saw that at the hands of young, love-smitten Mem his situation was not good, the chains and shackles had cut his legs, so he spoke to Mem.

²⁵Arabic Yâ Allâh ﷻ يا - O God.

Bor said, "Hey, my beloved Mem, my boy,
 You poor thing, there is no sense in your head,
 For several days now you have been jabbing me with spur
 after spur,
 Did you ever think 'The chains and shackles have cut
 my Bor's legs?"

Hey, my young, love-drunk Mem,
 For several days now you have been riding me, spur against
 haunch,
 Did you ever think 'The chains and shackles have cut
 my Bor's legs, the bones are exposed ²⁶?"

When Mem heard the words of his Bor,
 He promptly leapt down off Bor's back to the ground,
 He unsheathed Zilfeqare²⁷,
 And cut the chains and shackles.

Mem said, "Woe is me my unhappy, miserable, poor,
 humiliated one,
 The chains and shackles have cut my Bor's legs, the bones
 are exposed,
 I don't know which direction to Jizîra Bota, which plain?"

Bor said, "My beloved Mem, don't worry at all,
 Leave me for three days at the springs of these wells,
 Tie up my wounds with a handkerchief,
 By God's leave, on the fourth day I will take you to Jizîra
 Bota, the place of beauties."

²⁶=lit. "have remained."

²⁷From the name of the prophet Ali's famous sword, Dhū al-Faqār **ذو الفقار**.

Mem removed Bor's saddle, washed Bor's feet with pure water, wrapped them with his handkerchief, and led Bor to the meadow encircling the spring, draped his cloak over his head, and lay down to sleep beside the spring. For several days he had remained without bread or water, and the grief of being in a strange land plus Bor's wounds had rendered Mem very troubled. After a day or two had passed, Mem took a look at Bor's feet, and saw that the wounds had healed. Mem saddled up Bor and after praying to God, went on his way. Bor, you might say, flew. Mem could not tell if he covered much ground or little, it seemed that Bor was crawling. Mem thought to himself:

"What a desolate plain,
Neither bird, nor fowl, nor plow, nor farmer,
I don't know, which way to Jizîra Bota?"

[52] Mem once again spurred Bor on, and when he had gone a long way, he looked and saw the vague image [of a man] in the distance. He rode on, and when he got near he saw that it was a farmer. He approached the farmer, and greeted him. When the farmer saw Mem, he was dumbstruck, and said, "Can humans also be this beautiful and perfect?" The farmer returned Mem's greeting, saying, "On my eyes²⁸, dandy young man." Mem asked, "My dear man, what country do these plowed fields belong to?" The farmer said, "Dandy young fellow, they're the fields of Jizîr." Mem gave the farmer a handful of gold [pieces] and urged Bor on.

Mem had gotten quite far from the farmer, when he thought, "May God not destroy my house²⁹, I am really foolish, I didn't ask the farmer 'the fields of which Jizîr?' There are a thousand Jizîrs^{29a}!" Mem turned back and once again approached the farmer, and asked, "My dear man, I beg your pardon, you said these

²⁸-Standard Kurdish greeting of welcome, with parallels in colloquial Arabic ('alâ rāsî wa-'aynî = lit. "on my head and eye," but the idiom means 'gladly'), Persian (chashm = lit. "eye" but idiomatically means 'OK'), and Turkish (baş üstüne = lit. "on my head," but idiomatically means 'gladly,' and in Kars, one even hears göz üstüne = lit. "on my eye," a literal translation of the Kurdish).

²⁹An expression. Compare colloquial Arabic yikhrab bêtak = "May your house be destroyed." See also note 43 below.

^{29a}Jizîr is from the Arabic word jazîrah جزيرة, which means 'island.'

are the fields of Jizîr, but which Jizîr? Who is your respected [ruler]? Who are your brave men?" The farmer said, "My dear boy, I am from Jizîra Bota, our mîr is Sévdîn, our brave men are Qeretajdin, Chekan and Efan, our city is the city of beauties." Then Mem was convinced that this Jizîr is the one he was in search of.

When Mem had gotten very far from the farmer, he looked and saw in the distance someone mounted on a horse pursuing a fawn. No matter what he did, he could not catch it, and the mare under him was black with sweat. Mem's [sense of] justice would not accept this, he wanted to help the hunter, so he spurred Bor on, [and] the fawn soon tired under Bor's feet. Mem dismounted to pick up the fawn, when the mounted hunter came up to him, and said, "My dear boy, how dare you³⁰ go after my game? Who do you think you are³¹, to do such a thing? Let us fight here and now, and may the best man win³²." Mem said, "My dear man, I did you a favor, I felt sorry for you and your bay horse, but if you want to fight, let's fight, no problem."

They got themselves ready, with swords drawn they mounted their horses. Mem said, "My dear fellow, let's not jeopardize the animals we are [sitting] on, let's wrestle with each other". The hunter agreed, and they dismounted. They tied up their horses and went at each other, but Mem's strength was that of love: when he gave the hunter a shake, the hunter fell down. Mem drew his sword³³, knelt over his [opponent's] chest, and said, "My dear fellow, I am satisfied, I won't kill you, I won't incur your people's vengeance; looking at you I can tell that you are a man of virtue." Then they embraced. The hunter asked Mem, "Where do you come from? Where are you going? Tell me your name and origin." Mem told him everything one by one. Then the other one said, "Brother Mem, I am Qeretajdin, the bravest of Jizîra Bota. From today on I am your brother, and you are welcome. I won't be back from hunting today, but I beg you to be a guest at my house. Just ask which house is Qeretajdin's, [53] they'll take you there. Go rest until I come, you've come a long way, and are tired."

³⁰=lit. "the limit of whose father."

³¹=lit. "How many heads do you have?"

³²=lit. "May God give to me or to you."

³³See note 27 above.

Qeretajdin took his leave of Mem, and went on hunting. Mem rode towards the city of Jizîr.

In the city of Jizîr there was [one called] Bekoyê Ewan. Beko was a troublemaking slanderer. Beko was mîr Sêvdîn's uncle³⁴, and Beko had a daughter, also named Zîn. Zîn was a fortuneteller³⁵. On that day, Zîn looked at her fortune telling book^{35a}, and saw that Mem, the son of Al-pasha of the city of Mukhurzemîn, was coming to Jizîra Bota for Lady Zîn, [the daughter] of mîr Sêvdîn. She went and gathered up the wool of her father's house and betook herself to a spring on the road to Jizîr. She went to the spring and began washing the wool. At that very moment Mem rode up to the spring and, seeing a girl there, greeted her, wanting to ask her some questions. She returned his greeting, "Alaykum al-salâm³⁶, my dear Mem, son of Al-pasha."

Mem said, "Girl, how do you know that I'm Mem,
Mem, son of Al-pasha?"

Zîn said, "How could I not know that you're Mem,
Mem, son of Al-pasha,

It's been forty one days today [you've been] on this road,
For my sake -- noble, delicate Zîn."

Mem said, "Fair maiden, if you are Zîn,
Zîn the daughter of the mîr of Jizîr,
Why has your appearance changed?³⁷
Where is my ring of betrothal?"

³⁴-lit. "paternal uncle."

³⁵Re'mildar = 'fortuneteller.' See note #49 of EP-1 for an explanation of *re'mil*.

^{35a}re'mil. See note #49 of EP-1 for an explanation of the fortune telling practice known as *re'mil* (often translated as *geomancy*).

³⁶Muslims greet each other by saying al-salâmu 'alaykum **السلام عليكم** (Peace be upon you), to which the reply is wa-'alaykum al-salâm **والسلام عليكم**.

³⁷-lit. "Why have you not remained color and face?"

Zin said, "My Mem, I have been here waiting for you for
seven days,
The dust of the flocks [of sheep] has gotten on me,
I look a mess³⁸,
When I saw you, my love, the ring fell off my finger, and
was lost."

When Mem heard these words from the girl, he was most distressed, and thought, "You could have broken my neck, were there no Arabs³⁹ in my father's city? Have I left my father's house, left my old father and mother, and the throne without an heir for the sake of this Arab?"

Bor saw that Mem was upset, and said:

"Poor Mem, let's be on our way,
Take my bridle out of the hands of this profligate,
She is the daughter of Bekoyê Ewan,
She is on this road day and night,
Fooling thousands like me and you."

[54] When the daughter of Bekoyê Ewan saw that her secret was exposed, she let go of Bor's bridle, and said, "Mem, when you marry Zin, will you take me on as Zin's handmaiden?"

Bor said, "Mem, let's be on our way,
There's the city of Jizîra Bota,
By the time the sun sets, may the lords and masters not be
forgotten."

Mem let go of Bor's bridle, and Bor went straight up to the palace of Qeretajdin, and stopped. When Peri-khatun, Qeretajdin's wife, came out of the house, she was

³⁸=lit. "I have not remained color and face."

³⁹Arab (E'reb) = 'swarthy,' by extension: 'ugly person.' This word also has this meaning in Turkish, Bulgarian, Serbian, etc.

so happy to see Mem that she went down the steps by herself. Instead of sending the servants, she herself took Mem's bridle, saying, "Please dismount, dear guest, you are welcome in the name of my sister"⁴⁰. They led Mem's Bor to the stables. Perikhatun took hold of Mem's arm, and led him up to the diwan. She spread a mattress⁴¹, and put cushions beside Mem. She and the servants stood before Mem and served him.

Several hours had passed since Mem's arrival. Khatun-Peri and the servants were so taken by Mem's beauty and perfection that they forgot to offer him any food. Qeretajdin had not been to the mîr's diwan for three or four days: He was at his own home, with Mem, his beloved guest. After four days passed, the mîr said, "Send a boy after Qeretajdin, it's been four days, why doesn't he come to the diwan? We're up to our necks in plaintiffs⁴²." A servant boy went to Qeretajdin's house, but when he laid eyes on Mem, he forgot [what he came for]. In this way, the mîr ended up sending three or four men. Later, when Qeretajdin went to the mîr's diwan, the mîr said, "Qeretajdin, may God make your house prosper⁴³, what have you been doing at home for the last three or four days?" Qeretajdin said, "Mîr, [I swear] by your head, a very dear guest has come to me, I couldn't bear to leave his side." The mîr said, "Malava⁴⁴, your guest is not a prophet, you could have brought him with you." Qeretajdin said, "Mîr, [I swear] by your head, my guest is greater than prophets. When my guest comes in from outside in just a minute, you will stand up before him⁴⁵." He and Qeretajdin made a bet and sent chawish⁴⁶ Mêrdîn to Qeretajdin's house to [bring] Mem.

⁴⁰=lit. "You come on the eyes of my sister." See note 28 above.

⁴¹Mattresses are used in the Middle East as couches are in our culture, as seating for guests.

⁴²=lit. "Plaintiffs are stepping on each other's tongues." By 'plaintiffs' are meant people coming to the court to air their grievances.

⁴³An expression for wishing someone well. This is the opposite of the expression noted in note #[29] above.

⁴⁴=lit. "One whose house prospers." See note 43 above.

⁴⁵A sign of respect usually practiced by others to the mîr.

⁴⁶=sergeant.

When chawish Mêrdîn went to Qeretajdin's house and told Peri-khatun that he was sent to bring Mem, Peri-khatun cracked him over the head with a wooden ladle, and said, "My guest is not the guest of beggars, that you can have him come to you!" She took a ladle to chawish Mêrdîn's head, and broke his skull, so that blood was flowing. The chawish returned to mîr Sévdîn's diwan with a long face, saying, "May the Mîr be well, look what your daughter did to me⁴⁷: she hit me, and didn't let me take her guest, saying 'My guest is not the guest of beggars, that you can have him come to you. Unless Qeretajdin comes with some notables, I won't let my guest leave the house'."

[55] The mîr sent Qeretajdin and a few of the nobles of the diwan after Mem. They brought Mem to mîr Sévdîn's diwan. When Mem came in, the mîr rose from his seat involuntarily. When he rose from his seat, Qeretajdin threw his handkerchief, which was at hand, under the mîr. The mîr gave his seat to Mem. Mem and the notables were seated, and after greeting one another, food was brought to the diwan, and as they ate they began asking questions. Each said something about his own country and its customs and traditions.

Zîn had found out about Mem's arrival from the first day. When Mem would come to the mîr's diwan or leave it, she would always see Mem and melt out of love for him.

After several days had passed, one day Mem, Qeretajdin, Chekan and Efan were walking around on the roof of Qeretajdin's palace. From afar Zîn saw her beloved Mem and the three brothers. She went and tied up a light caravan [[?]bazirganekî sivik], took the copper utensils from her father's house, and went with her maidservants to the spring with the excuse of washing the copper things, so that she could see her Mem: the road passed by the side of Qeretajdin's palace. When Zîn's caravan approached Qeretajdin's palace, Mem saw his dear, dainty Zîn at the head of the caravan and sang out:

"If all three brothers will permit,
I will go before this caravan, and exact from it heavy tolls
and taxes."

Chekan said, "That caravan is not a caravan of beggars,

⁴⁷-lit. "did to my head."

That is the caravan of princes and rulers,
 Nobodymaydare⁴⁸ to
 Intercept it, to exact from it tolls and taxes."

Qeretajdin saw that Chekan and Efan had their hands on the hilts of their swords, wanting to strike Mem; Mem was also ready for a fight. But Qeretajdin was acquainted with Mem's skill, and said, "O brothers, we are brothers, as your elder brother, listen a little to my words. Why are you angry at our brother Mem? You've made ready your swords, do you want to strike Mem? Is this how you show respect to an honored guest? What will the nobles of Jizîr and the world say about you tomorrow? Put your swords back in their sheaths and listen to me. Let Mem go to the spring to water his horse: if he brings back a sign from Zîn, let Zîn be legally Mem's; if he doesn't, we'll cut off his head." In this manner, all three brothers consented to Mem's request]. They stayed on the roof of the palace, while Mem descended from the roof, and said to the servant boys:

"O boys and servants,
 Bring my Bor outside,
 [56] Put on him the saddle of rubies and pearls – father of
 jewels,
 I am headed for the spring behind the houses".
 Fine Mem rode up to the spring,
 He gave a sweet greeting to Zîn-khatun the maiden.
 Zîn said, "Alaykum al-salâm⁴⁹,
 My dear, dandy Mem."
 Mem said, "Zîn, o Zîn, wretched one, make haste,
 Bring me a sign,
 [Or else] my head will be cut off today."
 Zîn immediately comprehends Mem's words,
 She raises and lowers her right and left hand,

⁴⁸=lit. "The limit of nobody's father." See note 30 above.

⁴⁹See note 36 above.

Plucks a string of gold coins from her forehead⁵⁰,
 Places it on fine Mem's knee,
 And says, "My fine Mem, take this, may your heart not be
 angry with me."
 Mem says, "Come on Zīn, they say: Women are fickle^{50a},
 You give me a reliable sign,
 Which will be believed by the brothers."
 This is Zīn, crazy Zīn,
 She raises and lowers her right and left hand,
 She plucks off of her necklace the gold of her betrothal⁵¹
 [equal in value to] the taxes of Jizīr for seven years,
 Places it on fine Mem's knee,
 And says, "Mem, my dear, take this, may your heart not be
 angry with me."

Fine Mem makes haste,
 Betakes himself to the palace,
 Places the gold of her betrothal on Qeretajdin's knee.
 Chekan sees this wonder with his own eyes,
 Sheds⁵² tears from his black⁵³ eyes,
 He says, "May God not accept this, who has ever seen a
 man, take another man's betrothed from him by
 force."
 Qeretajdin said, "O brothers, we are three brothers, all
 three of our horses are grey,
 We roam the world in search of fights,

⁵⁰Qol, m. = 'a string with coins sewn to it, hung from the forehead of women as an ornament.'

^{50a} This is either a traditional saying or a commonly held belief, or both.

⁵¹ The talisman for her engagement to Chekan.

⁵² =lit. "causes to rain."

⁵³ Belek = the ideal quality of eyes: very white whites and very black pupils.

Zîn is my sister-in-law to be⁵⁴, may she be happy
with Mem."

Efan said, "O brothers, we are three,
All three of our horses are chestnut color⁵⁵,
We go to wars in the world,

Zîn is my *bûk*⁵⁶, I say [let her be] legally Mem's."

Chekan said, "O brothers, we are three, our horses are all
three black,

[57] We roam the world, light-headed,
Zîn is my fiancée, may she be legally Mem's."

The three brothers and Mem embraced each other on the roof of the palace, they got along like brothers, without hatred or fighting.

The mîr sent out a decree, that Qeretajdin, his brothers and Mem should prepare themselves together with the entirety of the noblemen of Jizîr to go out hunting on the following day. Beko went to Zîn, and said, "Zîn, tomorrow your father, Qeretajdin and the nobles will go out hunting, and won't be back for several days. If you and Mem find each other appealing, tell Mem to pretend to be sick⁵⁷, so that he doesn't go hunting." Zîn was young and naive, so was Mem, and love had brought them to the point where they could find no fault with the words of Beko the slanderer.

When Mem went in the evening to the diwan of mîr Sêvdîn, as soon as Zîn saw him, she said, "Memo my sweet, you know that tomorrow my father, Qeretajdin and the notables will be going hunting. When they come⁵⁸ to you, pretend you are sick, don't go, let's stay here, and have our fill of talking together."

⁵⁴**Bûk** means 1) Bride; 2) Girl marrying into the family: hence, for the groom's parents it means 'Daughter-in-law,' while for the groom's siblings it means 'Sister-in-law.' In Hebrew also, kalah אָרָא means both 'Bride' and 'Daughter-in-law.'

⁵⁵Şê = Chestnut-colored (Kurdoev); Horse whose forehead and three legs are white (Anter; Izofî); Horse or mule of yellowish color (Izofî).

⁵⁶See note 54 above.

⁵⁷=lit. "throw himself sick."

⁵⁸=lit. "say."

Mem accepted Zîn's words. The following morning when Qeretajdin called Mem, he said, "Brother, I'm feeling weak, I'm very ill, I can't hold myself on Bor's back." Mîr, Qeretajdin and the notables rode off, heading for the hunt.

Mem and Zîn guessed that the riders were by now quite far from the city, they fell into each other's arms, and walked towards the garden of Tûrkîrî. At the same time, Beko pretended to be busy with his horse's saddle girth, and stayed behind, to keep an eye on Mem and Zîn⁵⁹. When he saw that Mem and Zîn had entered the garden of Tûrkîrî, the hunters were still not all that far from the city. Black storm clouds came out and it began to rain so hard that the mîr and his notables could not see the road. They got only as far as the garden of Tûrkîrî.

Chawîsh Mêrdîn called out from the gate of the
garden of Tûrkîrî,
Zîn recognized the voice of her father's sergeant,
She ran, and hid under [Mem's] fur coat and clothes.

The mîr and his notables gathered in the garden. Their clothing was totally soaked. Beko lit a fire right next to where Mem was. Zîn had hidden underneath Mem's overcoat, he was pale with fright⁶⁰. Beko said, "Mem, are you so sick that when the mîr comes, you don't rise before him?"

The mîr said, "Come, look, I have never
Seen anyone like this khan⁶¹,
Who has seen [such a thing], that when the mîr comes in
from outside,
Is he a precious servant, that he doesn't rise before him?"

[58] Mem said, "Mîr, you went hunting, I stayed in my
place,

⁵⁹-lit. "his eye was on the road of Memê and Zînê." This expression, *ç'avê ... li rîya ... bûn* (for one's eyes to be on someone's road), is one way of saying 'to wait for someone' in Kurdish.

⁶⁰-lit. "Blood had not remained in Memê."

⁶¹=feudal lord, i.e. Memê.

My sense of reason has gone, [only] my shell⁶² remains,
I opened my eyes [and found myself] in this place."

Beko said, "O notables, rise to your feet all,
For the sake of the name of God,
Let's perform a farz⁶³, two namazes⁶⁴."

Beko wanted Mem to rise to his feet, so that the mîr and notables would see Zîn, to bring a great disgrace⁶⁵ on Mem and Zîn.

Mem said, "Beko, I swear to you in the name of God,
I am ill, I can't pick my head up⁶⁶,
I can't perform a farz, two namazes."
Mem said, "Qeretajdin, you've gone, it's noon.
Fire is burning my ribs one by one,
The mîr and Beko are arguing with me."
Beko said, "Mîr, Memo the boy
Is trying to fool you and the notables,
Let him rise to his feet, what is that beneath his colorful
overcoat?"
Memo said, "Beko, enough of doing wickedness,
Bor's harness and bridle are beneath my overcoat,
I've come to a strange land, I'm homesick⁶⁷."
Beko said, "Mîr, why should the house of the masters of
Jizîr be ruined?"

⁶²=mold, outer shell, body.

⁶³=religious duty required of all Muslims from Arabic farḍ فرض .

⁶⁴=Islamic prayer ritual, from Persian [and Turkish] Namaz {Kurmanji nimêj}; Sorani niwêj}.

⁶⁵=lit. "disaster."

⁶⁶=lit. "My head won't rise from the ground."

⁶⁷=lit. "My breath comes out of it."

Let Memo show Bor's harness and bridle,
So that the notables of Jizîr can have them made that way
for their horses."

Memê Ala⁶⁸ waved to Qeretajdin with his hand,
Qeretajdin could make out each one of Zîn's locks [of hair]
under the coat,

He saw that Mem and Zîn were in a bad state.
Qeretajdin put his hand on the sheath of his blue sword,
And said, "Mîr, our destiny⁶⁹ is not in our hands.
Our destiny is in the hands of one above,
Your house always brings great wonders on our house."
Chekan says, "Mîr, our destiny is not in our hands,
Your house always brings great wonders on our house,
With hatred will I finish off whoever hurts our brother
Mem."

Efan says, "Mîr, our destiny is not in our hands,
Your house always brings great wonders on our house,
If you let Mem get hurt,
I'll kill one hundred, destroy two hundred."

Qeretajdin saw that a great misfortune was hovering over Mem and Zîn⁷⁰: the notables of Jizîr had their hands [59] on their swords, and when they were just about to unsheathe them, he called his chawish and said, "Boy chawish, don't just stand there, go to Peri-khatun, tell her that Qeretajdin said to take only the cradle of Gurgîn out of the house, to set the colorful palace on fire, so that Mem and Zîn may escape this crisis⁷¹.

⁶⁸See note #19) above.

⁶⁹e' col, from Arabic ajal **آجال** = 'appointed time that each one of us is fated to die.'

⁷⁰=lit. "had stopped in front of Mem and Zîn."

⁷¹i.e. perhaps the fire will distract people's attention away from Mem and Zîn.

Chawish Mêrdîn betook himself to Qeretajdin's house, and told Peri-khatun that "This is the situation, Mem and Zîn are in grave danger. Qeretajdin said to set the palace on fire taking only the cradle of Gurgîn out of the house." When Peri-khatun heard these words, she was upset, and didn't even take the cradle out, saying, "Gurgîn is not better than Mem and Zîn." She set the colorful palace on fire, and flames encircled the building. Chawish Mêrdîn went to the garden of Tûrkîrî and shouted out:

"The tree of the minaret is a red tree,
 Out of it came green and purple flames,
 In it were burned the baby's cradle, and Bor the horse.
 The tree of the minaret is a green tree,
 Out of it came green, red, and blue flames,
 In it were burned the horses of the four brothers, and
 handsome Gurgîn.^{71a} "
 When chawish Mêrdîn said these words,
 Fire and flames engulfed the hearts of Qeretajdin and his brothers,
 They left the garden with the notables, two by two.

The notables and Qeretajdin hurried to the palace, to put out the fire. Only Mem and Zîn stayed in the garden. But Beko again hid himself from them. When Mem got up, he and Zîn hurried off. Then Beko reported to the mîr, saying, "Mîr, I swear to you, after you [left] I saw such a pair of gazelles..."

Mem went to the palace and saw that flames had engulfed Qeretajdin's residence, and no matter what the people of Jizîra Bota did, the fire would not go out. Mem threw his handkerchief on the fire, saying, "Do you think you are greater than the flames in my heart?" The flames went out, but the palace was badly damaged. [Nevertheless] Qeretajdin and his brothers, Peri-khatun and her maidservants, were only concerned about Mem and Zîn, and said, "Let Mem be rid of this difficulty." Their colorful palace was not on their minds, nor their treasury, nor their belongings, nor even little Gurgîn, whom Peri-khatun had left in his golden cradle in the palace, so great was their love and respect for fine Mem and Zîn.

^{71a}These verses have a parallel in FK-1, p. 283.

A few days passed, and the mîr and his notables thought that they should help Qeretajdin rebuild his palace. Qeretajdin and his two brothers made ready to go out and collect the amount of money equal to Jizîr's taxes for seven years, [60] to rebuild their palace with it. Before they set out they warned the mîr, saying, "Mîr, if even a small misfortune befalls Mem our brother, we will raze the city of Jizîr to the ground." After warning the mîr and his notables, they left.

Every day Mem got up and went to the mîr's diwan, and returned in the evening to Qeretajdin's house. Peri-khatun always paid a great deal of attention to fine Mem. She knew that Mem was a stranger, that he had nobody here, that Qeretajdin and his brothers were not at home.

One day Beko said, "Mîr, may God increase your kingdom, you and Mem sit around until the evening, don't you get bored? Why don't you occupy yourselves with something, so that your days don't pass in that manner, since you sit around until evening?" The mîr said, "Beko, what should we do, so that we don't just sit around?" Beko said, "May you be well, Mem and you could play chess⁷² with the condition that if Mem wins, you give him whatever he wants, but that if you win, you'll throw him in prison." The mîr said, "Beko, in truth you speak well, we will do as you say." Mem agreed, and they placed a chessboard between them, and played. They decided to play three games, and whoever won, would get his wish. It didn't take Mem long to beat the mîr twice. Beko saw that there was only one more time for Mem to beat the mîr. When Mem won, he would certainly ask [to marry] Zîn, and the mîr would carry out his promise.

Beko went and called Zîn, and said, "Zîn, get up, your Mem has beaten the mîr twice [at chess], there's only one turn left, before he gets you from the mîr. Get up and come see." Zîn was naive, and did not know Beko's tricks: she got up and adorned herself, then went and stood by the window behind her beloved Mem. Beko said, "Mîr, it shouldn't be this way, each time you play you should change places, but you haven't done so. I swear that nobody does it that way, for this game you and Mem should switch places." The mîr said, "Beko, I guess you're right, we should switch places this time." And he and Mem switched places. Mem was now facing the window, in which Zîn was standing. Out of love for Zîn, Mem no longer

⁷²The word used in the Kurdish is 'k'işik.'

saw the chessboard. The mîr switched the bishop and the knight, to his heart's content. Mem's eyes were glued to beautiful Zîn in the window.

The mîr said, "Mem, you wretch, I have beaten you, I
 have,
 I have made you knuckle under⁷³,
 I will throw you today into the stone dungeon."
 Mem said, "Mîr, my beautiful Zîn, the houri, was standing
 in the window,
 One eye was glued to the window, the other went blank⁷⁴."

The mîr beat Mem three times [at chess], because Mem's love of Zîn caused him to forget himself. The mîr ordered them to throw Mem into the wooden dungeon. This pleased Beko very much, [61] but made Zîn miserable. From morning till night she shed tears⁷⁵ and grieved for her beloved and foreign Mem.

One day Zîn got an idea and called some ditch diggers⁷⁶, and said to them, "O brothers, you must make a tunnel from my quarters to the dungeon my Mem is in. I'll give you as much gold as you want, only you must be quick about it, and you must not tell anyone my secret, as if I were your sister." The ditch diggers agreed to Zîn's conditions, and began to dig the tunnel. For every heap of dirt that they dug up, Zîn and her maidservants dug up ten. In this manner Zîn's tunnel was ready three days later.

Day and night Zîn brought Mem to her quarters, where they could not get enough of each other's love. Much time passed in this way. One day Beko said to his daughter, "My daughter Zîn, go see how Mem is doing in the dungeon, to make sure that nothing has happened to him. [Otherwise] when Qeretajdin and his brothers return, they'll destroy us and the whole city." When Zîn looked at her fortune telling book, she was surprised: it almost looked as if he hadn't been

⁷³=lit. "I have chased you into the house of the Jews."

⁷⁴=lit. "dark."

⁷⁵=lit. "caused it to rain water and tears."

⁷⁶or sewer worker; *Leçemçi* from Turkish *lâğımca*.

imprisoned, his appearance [was so fine] that people were afraid to look at him -- roses and lilies fell from Mem's cheeks. She said, "Father, Mem is not imprisoned, day and night Zîn is with him, and she takes better care of him than his own parents did."

Beko was waiting for something like this: he went to the mîr, and said, "Mîr, may God not destroy your house or your name, wasn't Mem supposed to be imprisoned? Go take a look and see who is better off, you or him? Go see what wonders your daughter has worked."

When the mîr, Beko, and the notables go take a look, they are astounded. Zîn had a tunnel dug from her quarters to the dungeon that Mem was in, and in this manner she took care of him. The mîr was very angry and ordered them to put Mem in a stone dungeon.

They threw Mem into a stone dungeon.

After a few days passed, Mem was in terrible shape⁷⁷, he looked disheveled, there was dust on his mouth. Mem, the darling son of a pasha, had [always] been well cared for. In the cold stone dungeon, because of the dampness and filth, Mem could not fall asleep⁷⁸. He lost his appetite⁷⁹, and day and night he spent worrying and languishing. No matter how much Mem languished in the dungeon, lovely Zîn languished and pined for him even more. Day and night, tears were never absent from her eyes or those of [her sister] Peri-khatun. They waited and waited for Qeretajdin and his brothers to return, but they were hopelessly late. In the dungeon, Mem's condition got worse day by day.

One day Beko said to his daughter, "Daughter, go see how Mem is doing now!" The girl looked, and said, "Father, Mem is in a bad way, he won't last more than two or three more days [62] under these conditions. Qeretajdin and his brothers are approaching, so go find a remedy, or else Qeretajdin will lay waste to the city and exterminate us if he sees Mem in this condition."

Beko hurried to the diwan of mîr Sêvdîn, and said, "Mîr, may God not destroy your house, Qeretajdin and his brothers are nearby, and Mem is in bad shape in the

⁷⁷=lit. "There was no soul left in Memê."

⁷⁸=lit. "Sleep did not fall into Memê's eyes."

⁷⁹=lit. "Bread, water fell."

dungeon, he has lost his strength. When Qeretajdin sees Mem in that condition, he will lay waste to the city and many people will be killed. Until he returns, he put you in charge of Mem." The mîr said, "Beko, it is because of your tricks that this has happened to Mem, now tell me what we should do." Beko said, "You must give them permission to let Mem go free." The mîr agreed, and told Beko to set Mem free. Beko silyly went to Zîn to give her the good news, saying, "I have good news for you! Your father has ordered that Mem be set free. Go adorn yourself, set your beloved Mem free." Beko said these words with a heavy heart, because he did not like Mem and Zîn's love for each other, it made him jealous.

Lovely Zîn forgot her tears of not too long ago, went and made herself up, put collyrium on her eyes, and walked to the dungeon. When Zîn [stood] at the entrance to the dungeon and saw Mem in his condition in the dark dungeon, Mem was very much ashamed and upset. He seemed very frightened⁸⁰. He looked and saw a pretty servant girl coming to lead him away. Mem looked disheveled, he was pale. Zîn called out from the door of the dungeon, saying, "My beloved Mem, I have good news for you, I've come to take you away from here."

Mem said, "Yes, my beloved Zîn, you have not come to
take me away,

Wretched one, you have come to lose me my head."

When lovely Zîn threw a yellow rope into the dungeon,

Wound it around [him], brought up Mem out of there,

Mem fell dead at the entrance to the dungeon.

Zîn said, "My father's city is a great city,

May cannonballs make it level with the ground,

⁸⁰ *cûcîkê dilê Memê qetîya* =lit. "You might say that the chick in Mem's heart burst." This exact expression does not appear in the dictionaries, however I did find a similar one in Khamoian's phraseological dictionary, and a parallel expression in the Neo-Aramaic dialect of the Jews of Zakho, Iraqî Kurdistan. Khamoian has *Dil-hinavê şî-ê qetîyan*, =lit. 'for the heart and inner organs of someone to break off,' which is explained as meaning "for someone to be very frightened." In a Neo-Aramaic text collected by Professor Hans Jakob Polotsky, the following expression occurs: *mestêlabbâ qte'lâmê-zdô'sa*=lit. 'the hair of her heart broke from fright' [see Franz Rosenthal, ed. *An Aramaic Handbook* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967), pt. II/1, p. 75.]. In a personal communication with Professor Yona Sabar at UCLA, he explained that in order to understand the latter expression, one should imagine the heart as if hanging by a hair: if one is very frightened, that hair may break off, and the heart will fall.

Who has ever seen that prisoners are brought in by men,
yet released by women^{81?}"

Zîn and Peri-khatun took Mem's body home, and dressed him in cloth: the mîr and his notables [came and] filled up Qeretajdin's house. The entire city of Jizîr was in mourning that day.

The mîr said, "Yes, Zîn, O Zîn,
Wretched one, the notables of Jizîr are blaming us,
They are saying, Mem was the son of Ala, he loved Zîn."

Beko said, "Yes, Zîn, O Zîn,
Wretched one, there is no sense in your head,
Find yourself someone from the notables of Jizîr,

[63] Consider him Memê Ala."

Zîn said, "Beko, your eyes are the eyes of a pig,
Your tail is like the tail of a fox,
Woe to you, wretched one, how do they break the hand of
good fortune and desires?"

The mîr said, "Yes, Zîn, O Zîn,
Wretched one, that's enough, mourn for him,
If I could buy you a Memê Ala today,
I'd throw gold on the scales,
And buy him for the sake of sweet Zîn^{81a}."

⁸¹Cf. EP-1, where it is stated that: If men go to take Memê out of the dungeon, he will get well, but if women take him out, he will die.

^{81a}This imagery is reminiscent of an episode in the story of Joseph and Zulaikha (Potiphar's wife), which is very popular among the Kurds. When Zulaikha sees Joseph, she buys him by putting him in one pan of the scales, and filling the other with his weight in gold pieces. For Kurdish versions of this popular Middle Eastern story, see the late M.B. Rudenko's monograph Литературная и фольклорные версии курдской поэмы "Юсуф и Зелиха" [=Literary and folkloristic versions of the Kurdish poem "Yusuf i Zelikha"] (Moscow : Nauka, 1986), 367 p.; CH. Kh. Bakaev. Язык курдов СССР [=The language of the Kurds of the USSR] (Moscow : Nauka, 1973), pp. 313-346] and his Роль языковых контактов в развитии языка курдов СССР [=The role of linguistic contact in the development of the language of the Kurds of the USSR] (Moscow : Nauka, 1977), pp. 147-211]; D. N. MacKenzie. "Yusif û Zilaxā = Joseph and Zuleikha," in: Kurdish Dialect Studies-II (London et al. : Oxford University Press, 1962), pp.188-201; Yona Sabar. "Joseph and Zulikhaye," in: The Folk Literature of the Kurdistanis Jews: an Anthology, Yale Judaica Series, vol. 23 (New Haven & London : Yale University Press, c1982), pp. 11-15; Otto Jastrow. "Josephslegende," in:

Zîn, grieving deeply, with incessant tears, together with Peri-khatun dressed in black⁸² and mourned Mem bitterly and sorrowfully. In this foreign country, there was no close relative to sit beside Mem's body other than Zîn and Peri-khatun.

Fine Mem, boy,
No one is nearby - neither mother, nor father, nor even
sweet relations,
Except for Peri-khatun and delicate Zîn.

The mîr ordered that Mem's funeral begin⁸³. They picked up Mem's body, and the entirety of the people of Jizâr, notables and aristocrats, noblemen and the mîr, went to the gravesite. They buried Mem⁸⁴, and returned. Only lovely Zîn and Peri-khatun stayed by the grave. Zîn had no will to live⁸⁵, her beautiful eyes had gone blind, her rosy cheeks had lost their graceful color, dust had accumulated on her mouth and lips, not even tears flowed from her eyes: Zîn had become dry, she just looked at the grave of Mem, the beloved of her heart.

Zîn said, "Tonight, is the night of rains,
Water will go into the holes of mice and snakes,
It will be wet around the shrouds of the beautiful.
Tonight, the night will be wet,
Hail and rain will come down,
In the graveyard the tombstone of my Mem will be wet."

Peri-khatun could find no words with which to console her dear sister. She knew whom Zîn had lost. She was very sad about delicate Zîn's broken heart.

Der neuararmäische Dialekt von Hertevin (Provinz Siirt) (Wiesbaden : Otto Harrassowitz, 1988), pp. 148-163.

⁸²Reş girêdan = 'to cover one's head with a black kerchief, as a sign of mourning.'

⁸³-lit. "that they pick up Mem's corpse."

⁸⁴-lit. "delivered Mem to the ground."

⁸⁵-lit. "There was no spirit left in Zîn."

Zîn said, "I call the sheikh of noon for help,
 ?Dust has clung to my string of earrings and buttons,
 Mem died in the morning, I won't live to see the noon.

I call the sheikh of evening⁸⁶ for help,
 ?Dust has clung to my rings and strings and earrings,
 Mem died in the morning, I won't live to see the evening.

[64] Peri-khatun looked at Zîn and saw that it was useless, she was in a bad way, she took Zîn's arm and took Zîn home, where she immediately passed away.

The next day the notables of Jizîr and the mîr took lovely Zîn's body to the gravesite. They dug up Mem's grave and positioned Zîn in her beloved Mem's arms, then returned.

Mem and Zîn had been dead for several days. Peri-khatun had lost interest in her house and chores⁸⁷. From morning until evening, she wrapped herself in a black shawl⁸⁸, and did not go far from the graveyard. Nothing the mîr or his notables could say would console Peri-khatun. At that time news came that Qeretajdin and his brothers were on their way back, that at any moment they would reach Jizîr. A shiver of worry ran through the hearts of Beko and the mîr. Beko went to the mosque, and he took all the copies of the Koran that there were in the mosque and piled them up before the door, so that Qeretajdin could not get in to do him harm.

When Qeretajdin and his brothers neared the city, Chekan said, "O brothers, see how ignoble our brother Mem has turned out to be, he has heard that we are coming, but he can't tear himself away from Zîn's side to come out to greet us." Qeretajdin said, "O brothers, something has happened to Mem, my heart fears that Mem may not be well, I don't believe that he could be so ignoble." When they

⁸⁶Here the text has an inconsistency: in the preceding verse, it had *şêxê navroja* = sheikh of noon, but here it has *şexsê êvara* = person of evening with *şexsê* instead of *şêxê*. This could be a printing error. In EP-1, there is a similar passage, in which *şexsê* is used both times (see EP-1 note #152)).

⁸⁷=lit. "Peri-khatun's hands had gotten cold from her house and condition."

⁸⁸The Kurdish is *egaleke reş*. See note #182) above.

reached the edge of the city of Jizîr, they saw that the city was decked out in black. They asked shepherds and cowherds and found out that Mem and Zîn had passed away. Qeretajdin and his brothers were dumbfounded⁸⁹. They laid waste to one section of the city. Nobody told the mîr or Beko about them. Peri-khatun, all dressed in black, went to Qeretajdin, and said, "Swear by this black shawl on my head that you won't destroy these innocent people, that you won't connect them with the deaths of our beloved Mem and Zîn. Come rest a little, then you will meet the culprits." Qeretajdin and his brothers immediately realized that the one who did this was the culprit Beko. They told Qeretajdin where Beko was. When he went and looked, he saw that Beko had fled inside the mosque and filled the doorway with Korans and [other] books. No matter what Qeretajdin did, Beko would not come out, so Qeretajdin swore, saying, "I won't kill you, come let's go to the graveyard." But he hid his sword underneath his overcoat.

The mîr, Qeretajdin, and the notables went to mourn by the graves of Mem and Zîn. When they opened the door of the tomb, it looked to them as if Mem and Zîn had arisen, you might say that the smile of love was on their mouths. Beko stuck out his neck and said, "Mîr, I swear by your head, come see! It looks like they've arisen." Just then Qeretajdin took out his sword and sent evil Beko's head flying. A drop of his blood fell between Mem and Zîn, and it became a bad thornbush. Every year, no matter how many travellers have gone there and tried to pull it out, it always grows back.

[65] Qeretajdin took Mem's [horse] Bor from the house, tied Mem's clothes and weapons to Bor's back, and let him go. Bor went until he reached the city of Mukhurzemîn. They let Al-pasha know, by saying, "Mem's Bor has come, but there's no Mem." Al-pasha gathered his army, let Bor lead him back to the city of Jizîr, and said, "I want to see that my Mem's chosen one is worthy of him, otherwise I will raze the city of Jizîr to the ground." When he and Qeretajdin opened the door of the tomb, and when Al-pasha saw Zîn, he said, "You are worthy of my Mem, mercy be upon him, may they be happy together in the other world."

He stayed a few days in the city of Jizîr with his army, then headed back to his own land.

⁸⁹=lit. "In front of the eyes of Qeretajdin and his brothers became smoke."

Good are the three months of summer,
Very fine are the summer pastures of Fereshîn,
Nowhere on earth are Memê Ala or khatun Zîn.

Dzhalilov, Ordikhane & Dzhalil Dzhalilov. "Mem û Zîn (şaxa 2)" in *Zargotina K'urda = Kurdskiĭ Fol'klor* (Moskva : Nauka, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 65-90. [Kurmanji in Latin (Hawar) script] {ZK-2}

ZK-2. Collected in 1970 from Ohanyan Israēl (Isē Vartē), resident of the sovkhos Artēnilyé] in the district of T'alin, Soviet Armenia. Ohanyan Israēl, an Armenian, was born in 1910 in what he describes as the Armenian and Yezidi village of Ĥiznemîre, province of Diyarbekir, in what is today Kurdistan of Turkey [=Haznamir, called in Turkish İnpınar, in the county (ilçe) of Beşiri, province (il) of Siirt*, according to the Turkish gazetteer *Köylerimiz* (Ankara : Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1968) put out by the İller İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü]. He grew up among the Reşkot, a Kurdish tribe. At age 17, his family moved to Qamişli, in what is now Kurdistan of Syria. In 1966, he moved his household to Soviet Armenia. Ohanyan, who is illiterate, knows Kurdish very well -- perhaps better than he knows Armenian. He knows a great many Kurdish songs and stories of the Reşkot tribe, which he claims to have learned from Yahoê Mistê Qulo, a native of Bolind, a village adjacent to Ĥiznemîr. Ohanyan's version of Mem û Zîn is almost entirely in verse.

Mem û Zîn {ZK-2}

[65] Every time, every time, among the times,

The emir of the jinn¹ calls out, "O musicians², I implore you³,

When you assemble⁴ and set to tuning up your sazes, tell first the story of Lady Zîn and Mem."

*This part of Siirt is now in the newly formed province of Batman.

¹All Middle Eastern peoples believe in the existence of the jinn. The following is E.W. Lane's description of them: "The jinn are said to be of pre-Adamite origin, and, in their general properties, an intermediate class of beings between angels and men, but inferior in dignity to both, created of fire, and capable of assuming the forms and material fabric of men, brutes, and monsters, and of becoming invisible at pleasure. They eat and drink, propagate their species (like, or in conjunction with, human beings), and are subject to death, though they generally live many centuries. Their principal abode is in the chain of mountains called "Kâf," which are believed to encompass the whole earth ... Some are believers in El-Islâm; others are infidels ... Of both the classes of genii, good and evil, the Arabs stand in great awe, and for the former they entertain a high degree of respect." [Edward William Lane. *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians Written in Egypt during the Years 1833-1835* (Hague & London : East-West Publications, 1978 [1895]), chap. x "Superstitions," pp. 223 ff.]

²Gell sazbanda = lit. "O saz players." A saz or tembûr is a wooden stringed instrument with a long neck.

³Ez li bextê weme = lit. "I am at your luck." According to Khamoian, this means "I beg or implore you." See Khamoian #2-9, p. 118.

⁴The word 'caşya,' which appears to be a verb, is obscure.

All the musicians⁵ said together, "O my mîr, our hearts are heavy,
 The city of Mukhurzemin is a great city, very weighty,
 This city contains three hundred and sixty six stone heaps,
 Each heap contains three hundred and sixty six town quarters,
 Each quarter contains three hundred and sixty six minarets,
 Each minaret serves three hundred and sixty six houses,
 The castle and palace of Alan-pasha is on four anchors,
 Two of its anchors in the middle of the sea,
 Two of its anchors on the tops of mountains,
 The castle contains four storeys,
 Each storey contains three hundred and sixty six rooms,
 In every corner of the castle is a stone of rubies and diamonds,
 These stones shine out over the middle of the sea.
 In every room three scribes are seated,
 In chairs, their hands on the table,
 Their pens like the venom of snakes⁶,
 Every day they take a thousand [men] and throw them in the dungeon, and set five
 hundred free.

Oneday⁷,
 A great feast came over this city, the Feast of the Sacrifice⁸.
 [66] Nephews went to visit their uncles,

⁵Saz û sazband - lit. "Saz and saz players." This is an expression meaning something like 'all the musicians,' 'every last one of the musicians.'

⁶i.e. pitch black, a reference to the ink.

⁷=lit. "One day of God's days."

⁸Also known as the Feast of Immolation (Arabic عيد الأضحية *عيد الأضحية*) or Greater Bairam (Turkish **Kurban bayramı** or **Büyük bayram**), on the 10th day of the Islamic month of Dhū al-Hijjah **ذو الحجة**. This is the most important feast of the Islamic year, during which every Muslim slaughters a sheep (or goat), hence the name. Visiting and congratulating one's friends and relatives is an important custom connected with this feast. For more details see: Edward William Lane. An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians Written in Egypt during the Years 1833-1835. (Hague & London : East-West Publications, 1978 [1895]), chap. iii: "Religion and Laws," p. 98; chap. xiv: "Periodical Public Festivals," p. 481.

Nieces went to visit their aunts,⁹
 Brides left the homes of their fathers-in-law,
 Headed for the homes of their fathers,
 And went to visit their parents¹⁰.
 There were three noblemen¹¹ whose luck was dry¹², whose houses were empty,
 They got up from the chairs and tables,
 Went to the top of the towers and castles,
 The three of them sat and cried of their plight to their Lord,
 The sound of their crying went up to God on high, went to the heavens.
 God on high sent Khizir¹³ to the three of them,

⁹= lit. "Sisters' sons went to visit their mothers' brothers, / Brothers' sons went to visit their fathers' brothers." In translating English words such as 'nephew' and 'uncle,' it should be noted that the Kurds, like most Middle Eastern peoples, distinguish between the husband's and the wife's side of the family. For 'nephew, Kurdish has *Xwarzî* = "Sister's son" and *Bî|razî* = "Brother's son"; for 'uncle,' *Xîwjal* = "Sister's brother" and *Ap* or *Mam* = "Father's brother." There is even a proverb which reflects the difference between the two: *Li şera xal û xwarzî; li xwarina, mam û brazî* = "For battles, maternal uncle and nephew; for food, paternal uncle and nephew." For parallels to the passage in question in other versions of *Mem û Zîn*, see LC-1, p. 36, lines 4-10 [of original transliterated Kurdish] and LT, p. 3, lines 11-19.

¹⁰*Çûne zeyane*. *Zeyî* refers to a married woman who goes back to visit her father's household. These last five lines realistically reflect Kurdish kinship relations and holiday customs. See also note 9 above.

¹¹*Milûk* = lit. 1) "Owner (of land, etc.); 2) "Governor (of a province)." The word comes from the Arabic broken plural *mulûk* ملك = "kings." (The singular is *malik* ملك).

¹²*K'urdê wan kore* = lit. "Their Kurd is blind." In a note to the text, this is explained as meaning "They have no luck"; "Their luck is down." This is similar to the expression '*Ocaxa wan kor bû*' = lit. "Their oven was blind," which means either "They are childless" or "They have no luck." Notice the connection of an oven with fertility, a common motif in folklore [See: M. Mokri, "Le Foyer Kurde" in: *Recherches de la Kurdologie. Contribution scientifique aux études iraniennes* (Paris: Librairie Klincksieck, 1970), pp. 22-23]. In the present context (as in LC-1 and LT), the three noblemen are childless.

¹³*Xocê Xizir*, equivalent to Turkish *Hızır* and Arabic *Khizr* خضر, often identified with Elijah the Prophet in the Jewish tradition. *Hızır* is generally depicted as a little old man with a long white beard who appears out of nowhere to help people in trouble, rather like a *Deus ex machina* figure. The name comes from the Arabic *khizr*, from the root for 'green'; this suggests a connection with fertility. For a monograph in Turkish on the belief in *Hızır*, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *İslâm-Türk İnançlarında Hızır yahut Hızır-İlyas Kültü* [The *Hızır* or *Hızır-Elias* cult in Islamic-Turkish Beliefs] (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1985), 229 p. For a brief discussion of al-*Khizr* in an Egyptian context [in English], see Susan Slyomovics, *The Merchant of Art: An Egyptian Hilali Oral Epic Poet in Performance* (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1987), p. 12.

He dressed up like a dervish,¹⁴
 [And] said, "I know that the three of you are brothers,
 The eldest of you is named Alan-pasha,
 The youngest of you is named Ūsiv-khan¹⁵.
 At dawn open the gate of your treasury of gold,
 All three of you mount your horses,
 Fill up your saddlebags with gold,
 And head for Egypt¹⁶, for the quarter of the Qureyshis¹⁷.
 Go to the house of Qulîkhan,
 Qulîkhan from the line of the prophets,
 Sit on the mattress¹⁸ of the suitors¹⁹,
 Ask for the hand of Teli²⁰ Ishan.
 Give one saddlebag full of gold for the attire, harness, and bride-money²¹,

¹⁴This is a very common motif in Kurdish folklore in particular, and in Middle Eastern folklore in general. Dervishes generally dress in rags and look rather like our homeless do today. In folktales, often a king dresses up like a dervish and sets out to seek his fortune. Motif K1817.1. **Disguise as beggar (pauper)**, cf. Aarne-Thompson tale-type 900 **King Thrushbeard** and Eberhard-Boratav tale-type 190 **Der Granatapfel**.

¹⁵Ūsiv or Ūsib is the Kurdish form of the Arabic name Yūsuf, i.e. Joseph.

¹⁶Bajarê Misirê = lit. "The city of Egypt."

¹⁷Qureysh is the name of the tribe to which Muhammad, the prophet who founded Islam, belonged. The word quraysh قُرَيْشٌ means "shark," cf. Hebrew karish קָרִישׁ.

¹⁸In the Middle East, it was (and in some places still is) customary to sit low to the ground on mattresses, rather than on chairs.

¹⁹**Xazgîni** (or **Xwezgîni**) is the practice of coming to ask for the hand of a girl on behalf of the prospective groom. This is equivalent to Persian khāstegāri خَواستگاری. See also note 95 below.

²⁰Têlî, which is one of many words for "beautiful" in Kurdish, is also a woman's name. In some versions of the Turkish *destan* 'Koroğlu,' Koroğlu marries a girl named Telli Nigâr. In Turkish, 'telli' means "characterized by tel [=wires]," i.e., in speaking of a bride or young girl, it means "adorned with very thin silver or gold-colored wires" [See *Redhouse Çağdaş Türkçe-İngilizce Sözlüğü* = Contemporary Turkish - English Dictionary (Istanbul, 1963), p. 384.] Both Têlî Işan and Telli Nigâr are double names denoting females.

²¹**Qelen** may be defined as: "Money paid by bridegroom to bride's family"; according to Jaba and Justi, "Trousseau given to the fiancée, which the parents keep for [the newly wed couple?]" or "Price of purchasing a wife"; and according to Bakaev, "Bride-money." This is the equivalent of Turkish

And distribute one saddlebag full of gold to the blind, the crippled, and the poor,
God will give you a son, whom you will name Memê Alan."

The next day they prepared themselves,
In the morning they opened the gate of the treasury of gold,
Filled up their saddlebags with gold,
Mounted their horses,
And headed for Egypt.
They went to the quarter of the Qureyshis,
To the house of Qulîkhan,
Qulîkhan from the line of the prophets,
They sat on the mattress of the suitors,
And asked for the hand of Teli Ishan,
For Alan-pasha.
One saddlebag of gold they emptied out [to pay] the bride-money,
One saddlebag of gold they spent on clothing and harnesses for both of them²²,
One saddlebag of gold they distributed to the poor and wretched,
To the deaf and the blind,
They married Teli Ishan to Alan-pasha,
And headed back to the city of Mukhurzemin.

[67] In the city of Mukhurzemin there were wedding festivities,
Their wedding lasted for seven days,
Khizir again came to them,

başlık . The following is a proverb illustrating the use of *qelen*: *Keç'a mîran bi qelenê gavana nayê* - "For the daughter of an emir, a cowherd's trousseau won't do." [See: Roger Lescot. *Textes Kurdes* (Paris : Paul Geuthner, 1940), vol. 1, p. 219, #219, & Ordikhane Dzhaliil & Dzhaliile Dzhaliil. *Mesele û Met'elokê K'urda bi Zimanê K'urdi û Rûsî - Kurdskie Poslovitsy i Pogovorki na Kurdskom i Russkom Iazykakh* [=Kurdish proverbs and sayings in Kurdish and Russian] (Moskva : Glavnaia redaksiia vostochnoi literatury, 1972), p. 171, #822]. The dictionary of colloquial Turkish known as the *Derleme Sözlüğü* has the form *galın*, defining it as 'the money which the groom gives to the bride's family,' and listing it as occurring in the following regions: Emirdağı-Afyon; Sungurlu-Çorum; Malatya; Gaziantep; Telin, Gürün-Sivas Pınarbaşı-Kayseri; Niğde (the underlined ones coincide with Kurdistan). [See: "galın (II)," *Türkiye'de Halk Ağzından Derleme Sözlüğü*. (Ankara : Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1963-1982), v. 6, p. 1901]. The Russian word *kalym* **КАЛЫМ** = "bride-money" is related to this word also.

²²i.e. the bride and the groom.

An apple in his hand as a gift.
 He split the apple into two,
 Gave one half to Teli Ishan,
 And one half to Alan-pasha,
 Saying, "In nine months and nine days, God will give you a son, you will name him,
 as I have instructed you, Memê Alan."

When nine months and nine days had passed,
 God gave them a son,
 Whom they named Memê Alan.
 The children of people grow by years and months,
 But Memê Alan grew by hours and minutes²³,
 And when he was big, they sent him to school,
 Memê learned all the languages of mankind,
 The Lord of the world placed under his tongue two drops from King Solomon's ring,
 And Memê learned the languages of birds and beasts.

Memê's father placed him in a room,
 He²⁴ loved his son very much,
 He²⁵ was very precious and dear to his father's heart.

²³Motif A511.4.1. Miraculous growth of culture hero; cf. T615. Supernatural growth. This motif is also found in the Islamic version of the story of Abraham or Ibrahim [see: Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Kisā'i. *Qisas al-anbiyā'* (=Stories of the prophets) (Leiden : E.J. Brill, 1922), pp. 128-130] and the Russian bylina of Volkh Vseslavevich. Compare the beginning of Memê Alan as seen in the present version with that of Volkh Vseslavevich in the following: "... For indeed a hero was born, / A hero, young Volkh Vseslavevich: / Fish submerged deep into the sea, / Birds ascended high into the sky, / The auroches [sic] and deer sought the mountain tops, / Hares and foxes the thick of the forest, / The wolves and bears hid in the fir-grove, / Sables and martins in the holms. / And when Volkh was one hour and one half old, / He spoke in a thunderous voice: / "Hail mistress, dear mother, / Young princess Marfa Vseslavevna! / Do not swathe me in crimson linen, / Do not gird me with a silken sash, / Swathe me mistress, mother dear, / In tough armor plates of steel, / On my daring head golden helmet place, / And on my right you place a mace, / Indeed a heavy mace of lead, / A heavy mace of one thousand pounds" / And when Volkh was seven years old, / He was sent by his mother to learn to read, / And Volkh learnt quickly to read ..." [see: Alexander, Alex E. *Russian Folklore: an Anthology in English Translation* (Belmont, Mass. : Nordland Publishing Co., c1975), pp. 228-229.]

²⁴i.e. Alan-pasha

²⁵i.e. Memê Alan.

Bengîn opened the door to his room,
And said, "Water, food, whatever Memê wants, he should ask Bengîn for."

One day Bengîn came to the room and saw that Memê was afraid, and was pressing his head up against the wall²⁶. Bengîn said, "My pasha, what is the matter? Why are you doing that?" There was a ray of sunlight which was streaming into the room, and Memê was afraid of it. Since they had put him in that room, he had not seen the sunlight.²⁷

Bengîn went and told Memê's father, saying, "My pasha, ever since we put Memê in that room, he hasn't seen the sunlight. Today a ray of sunlight streamed into his room, and he was afraid of it." Memê's father said, "That was very wrong of us. Go take Memê out of that room and put him in a ship, let him roam and see the world, let him learn some sense."

They took Memê and put him on a ship, and the ship went around on the sea²⁸. Memê passed six months in this way, then the ship returned once again to the city of Mukhurzemin. Three fishermen were standing on the shore, and when they laid eyes on Memê's ship, they said, "For Memê's sake, let's cast our net to the bottom of the sea." They cast their net to the bottom of the sea, and it became heavy. They pulled in the net with great force, and lo and behold there was a horse's foal in it.²⁹ The foal was just six months old. He was grey. They took him home, and took care of him. When him was a year old, [68] how happy Memê was with his foal!³⁰ Memê

²⁶This is the only section of ZK-2 that is in prose.

²⁷OM also features this motif. In fact, the motif is given in full detail there, whereas in this version it is sketchy and unclear.

²⁸=lit. "on the face of the seas."

²⁹The motif of getting a special horse from the sea appears in the Turkish *destan* of Koroğlu as well. This also occurs in LC-1: see note #41 (p. 38, l. 84). Motif B184.1.3. Magic horse from water world; B71. Sea horse. Horse living in sea; B401.1. Helpful water-horse. Under the first motif listed above, there is a reference to Chalatiants in the *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 19 (1909?), p. 152.

³⁰It must be assumed that the fishermen gave the foal to Memê.

rode on him, and taught himself how to ride. When two years had passed, Memê had learned how to ride. They called the horse Bozê Rewal³¹.

Let's leave Memê and his horse here, and go to the diwan of the emir of the jinns.

The assembly of the emir of the jinns³² convened,
 An aged ifreet³³ of the jinn arose in the assembly, stood upright,
 And called out, "My mîr, I have wandered about the earth and under the seas, among
 slaves and masters,
 In the whole world, among jinns and mortals, I haven't seen any young man as
 beautiful as Memê Alan,
 Or the likes of Lady Zîn³⁴ among girls and brides.
 Memê Alan is in the city of Mukhurzemîn,
 Lady Zîn is in the city of Jizîra Bota, in the Tower of Belek³⁵."
 The emir of the jinns said, "Hey ifreet, what a big mouthed³⁶ ifreet you are!
 You keep blasting³⁷ the diwan and the assembly with your talk.
 If what you say is a lie, I will take a sword to your neck,
 I will sever your head from your body."
 The ifreet said, "My mîr, my heart is heavy,

³¹Bozê Rewal means "The gray one of the pre-pubescent youth." Rewal actually has two meanings according to Kurdoev: 1) Youth who has not yet sprouted facial hair; 2) Way of life or way of walking; Situation. In EP-1 and Z-1, the horse's name is not Boz but Bor, which means both "horse" and "grey."

³²See note 1 above for a description of the jinns.

³³ferfitt = 'Demon.' The word ferfitt is a metathesis of the Arabic word عفريت *ʿafriyya*, meaning 'demon' or 'devil.' In another version, ZK-3, the form is e'rfitt (*ê cinal*), which is closer to the Arabic form, which itself may be derived from an Iranian form *âfarid*, meaning either 'a creature' or 'a blessed [one],' perhaps a tabooistic euphemism for 'a cursed one' (suggested by Professor Martin Schwartz, personal communication).

³⁴'Stiya Zîn' in this version.

³⁵Birca Belek.

³⁶Zîman dirêj' = lit. "With long tongue."

³⁷dirêjî = lit. "You pour/spill." This word, which comes at the end of the line, rhymes with 'zîman dirêjî' in the previous line. See note 36 above.

May my head be a sacrifice for Lady Zîn and Memê Alan."

The emir of the jinns summoned four servants,
Two he sent to the city of Jizîra Bota,
Two he sent to the city of Mukhurzemîn,
He gave them instructions about Memê Alan and Lady Zîn,
Saying, "Bring their two beds this very hour,
Set them down in the assembly of the jinns."

In an hour they brought their two beds,
They put slumber pearls in their ears,³⁸
Into the assembly of the jinns their beds were brought.
The emir of the jinns gathered all of his jinns,
Lifted the handkerchiefs from off their faces.
The emir of the jinns said, "That ifreet spoke the truth, there's no lie in what he
said."
The emir said, "O ifreets! It is only fitting that both their heads should rest on a
single pillow,³⁹
Get up and take their two beds to the city of Jizîra Bota, set them down in Lady Zîn's
room."
The aged ifreet said,
"O my mîr, who has ever seen a young man go to the girl's place?
Listen to me and don't disregard my words,
[69] Take both their beds to the city of Mukhurzemîn, set them down in Memê Alan's
room,

³⁸Apparently it is believed that when one of these slumber pearls is placed in someone's ear, that person will fall asleep immediately, and not wake up until the pearl is removed. This occurs in HR-1 also. Motif D1364.32. **Jewel causes magic sleep.**

³⁹i.e., that they should be married to each other. A common Turkish greeting used in congratulating newlyweds is **Bir yastıkta kocasınlar** = "May they grow old on the same pillow." There is also a Kurdish proverb **Du serê çê naçine ser be'igîki** = "Two good heads don't fit (lit. 'go') on one pillow." In the story behind it, a man sees an industrious man married to a lazy woman, and a lazy man with an industrious wife. When he asks why the two industrious ones aren't together, he is given this proverb in response. [See Ordixanê Celîl & Celîlê Celîl (Dzhalilov). *Mesele û Met'elokê K'urda* = *Kurdskie Poslovitsy i Pogovorki* [=Kurdish Proverbs and Saying] (Moskva : Nauka, 1972), pp. 377-378].

Remove the slumber pearls from their ears,
 Let them wake up and rejoice in each other,
 They will be swept away by love⁴⁰.
 And so saying, they picked up the beds of Lady Zîn and Memê Alan,
 The emir of the jinn and ifreets took them to the city of Mukhurzemîn, setting them
 down in Memê Alan's room.
 Those two are humans, these four are jinns,
 Jinns are not visible to human eyes.⁴¹

My heart is heavy, heavy,
 Memê Alan and Lady Zîn became aware of each other,
 Fear and awe entered their hearts,
 They were amazed⁴² at themselves and at each other.
 Lady Zîn said, "Young man, what are you doing in my room?⁴³
 Ever since the day God gave me to my parents,
 I have forbidden myself to look at boys."
 Memê said, "Girl, what are you doing in my room?
 As for me, I am Memê Alan,
 I have forbidden myself to look at girls."
 Memê said, "Lady Zîn,⁴⁴ if I have come to your room, call your servants."
 Lady Zîn said, "Guleishe, commander of my forty servants,
 Bring a lamp for your lady to the gate of the yard,
 Come see this sight, this conflict, for yourself."
 No matter how much Lady Zîn called, none of her servants appeared,

⁴⁰Muñbeta wan ê hev hiftne = lit. "Their love will lift up one another," i.e. They will be carried or swept away by love for each other.

⁴¹= lit. "Humans in the world don't see jinns with their eyes."

⁴²'Şaçis mane' *Şaçis* does not appear in any of the dictionaries. Judging from the context and the form of the word, I am assuming that it is equivalent in meaning to 'şaş' which means "surprised" or "amazed," and is also used in conjunction with the verb 'man.'

⁴³=lit. "What is your business in my room?"

⁴⁴We are not told how he knows her name, when they have not yet introduced themselves! Such is the logic of folk narrative.

She said, "Memê, you call your servant."

Memê called the commander of his eighty eight servant boys,

"My dear and sweet Bengîn,

Hurry, rush, and make haste,

Boil me up some coffee,

Pour it in two porcelain cups and put them on a golden tray,

Give one to Memê Alan, and one to Lady Zîn."

Bengîn immediately rushes off,

Boils coffee for his mîr,

Pours it in two porcelain cups,

Puts them on a golden tray,

[And after] opening the door, gives one to Memê Alan, and one to Lady Zîn.

When she sees this marvel, this wonder with her own eyes,

Then Lady Zîn believes that she has come to Memê Alan's room,

And that this place is Mukhurzemîn.

Lady Zîn is carried away by love for Memê,

[70] She jumps up from her bed and throws herself onto Memê Alan's bed,

They throw their arms around one another,

[She] says, "I know that this thing has been ordered by God,

At the hands of the emir of the jinns."

Then Memê Alan and Lady Zîn became aware of each other,

They fell to joking and talking,

They exchanged rings with each other,

Until before dawn their heads sank and they fell asleep.

The ifreets⁴⁵ put slumber pearls in their ears,

Picked up Lady Zîn's bed and took it back to Jizîra Bota.

When the sun shined, Memê awoke, and saw that there was no one around,

He immediately rose to his feet,

Put on his royal garments, put his crown on his head,

And headed for the assembly of his father, Alan pasha.

⁴⁵See note 33 above.

He went and opened the door to the room and saw that the noblemen, judges⁴⁶ and muftis were all assembled.

Memê called out to the assembly:

"Father, last night I had a dream,

On one side of you is a judge,

On one side of you is a mufti,

Have them look at the papers to find out what the meaning⁴⁷ of my dream is."

The judge and mufti together called to Memê.

They said, "Your dream is that of a young man,

Whatever you saw,

Came over all of us.⁴⁸"

Memê called out to them,

"If my dream wasn't a divine dream,⁴⁹

So help me God, let me become blind and deaf in both eyes and ears,

Let me become lame in both legs and both hands,

So that I have to walk on my hands and knees.

If my dream is true, if it's divine,

May both of you become blind and deaf in both eyes and ears,

May both of you become lame in both legs and both hands,

So that you have to walk on your hands and knees."

Memê's words⁵⁰ went up to the Lord on high, went up to the heavens,

And the judge and mufti became blind and deaf in both eyes and ears,

They became lame, and had to walk on their hands and knees.

Those in the assembly looked at each other in amazement.

⁴⁶**Qazî**, an Islamic judge. From Arabic qaḍīn قاضي (qāḍī) (قاضي) --> Persian qāzī قاضي and Turkish **kadı**.

⁴⁷**Hecran**. Although the dictionaries define this as "separation," from Arabic hijrān هجران, in this text it appears several times in a context that suggests a meaning such as "interpretation of a dream." See also note 134 below.

⁴⁸i.e., when we were your age

⁴⁹i.e., if it wasn't sent by God.

⁵⁰= lit. "voice."

Memê said, "Father, the dream that I had,
 I'll tell it to you truly,
 [71] Lady Zîn came last night from Jizîra Bota in the evening,
 If you don't believe [me], Bengîn saw [her] with his own eyes,
 He boiled coffee for us,
 Both of us drank coffee,
 We exchanged rings with each other,
 My ruby and diamond ring, with my name written on it,
 And this here is her ring, on my finger -- it's gold,
 The name of Jizîra Bota, the Tower of Belek is written on it."
 Memê took the ring off his finger,
 And walked towards his father,
 Handed the ring to his father.
 His father looked at the ring,
 Beat his knee with his hand,
 Saying, "No one has ever seen such a great marvel⁵¹."
 He called up forty or fifty gendarmes,
 And said, "Make haste, hurry, ask around in the city of Mukhurzemîn,
 Bring me anyone who has heard of Jizîra Bota."

The gendarmes wandered around the city of Mukhurzemîn,
 But no one said, "We've seen Jizîra Bota",
 No one had heard of it.
 Khizir, the one who gave Memê his name,
 Disguised himself as an old man, as white as cotton,
 Sat down at near the gendarmes' path,⁵²
 All of them came and gathered around him,
 They all asked him,
 "Uncle, you haven't seen Jizîra Bota either, have you?"
 He said, "No my sons, I haven't seen Jizîra Bota,
 I heard about it from my father,

⁵¹ e' cêba giran could be positive ("a great marvel") or negative ("a great disaster").

⁵²=lit. "on the mouth of the road of the gendarmes."

When I was fourteen years old, my father said to me,
'I went to Jizîra Bota with a caravan'."

Memê's father said, "Memê my son, my heart is heavy,
As many towncriers⁵³ as there are, they should come out to the minarets,
Let them call as many girls and brides⁵⁴ as there are,
Have them all leave their homes and come right here,
You go mingle among them,
Choose a girl to your liking from among them,
[72] Forget about Jizîra Bota,⁵⁵
I will make my son the son-in-law of viziers and rulers."
Memê said, "Father, my heart is windy⁵⁶,
My heart is swaying, like the waves of the sea,
As for the girls and brides of the city of Mukhurzemîn, they should all call me
'brother', and I shall call 'sister'⁵⁷
[All women] on the face of the earth except for Lady Zîn."

Memê's father started to cry,
He let out a moan, which became rumored about,
Memê's mother caught wind of the rumor,
She ran out of the house,
Went to the diwan of Alan pasha,
And saw Memê in the diwan.
Everyone in the diwan was mourning and crying,

⁵³'delîlî.' I am assuming that this is some form of the word *delal*.

⁵⁴i.e. both unmarried girls and married women.

⁵⁵-lit. "Make your heart cold from Jizîra Bota."

⁵⁶'li bêye.' This word, which appears also in Le Coq's versions collected in Zîncirli in 1901, is obscure. It could be the preposition *li* + the oblique case of *ba* = "wind" + the copula *-ye*, meaning altogether "it is from the wind." As it appears at the end of the line, its main function seems to be to introduce a rhyme scheme that lasts for the next several lines. So also "My heart is heavy, heavy" on p. 69 [pagination of the original] above. This is a rhyme signalling device, discussed in the section of Chapter Five entitled "Kurdish Folk Poetics."

⁵⁷This implies that it would be incestuous to marry any of them.

Memê's mother put her hand on his shoulder,
And said, "Memê my son, my heart has found you,
Tell your mother, what this is all about?"
Memê told his mother everything,
He took out his ring, handed it to her, and she looked at it.
Memê's mother let out a shout,
"Bengîn, commander of eighty eight servant boys,
Go quickly and make haste,
Take Bozê Rewal out of the stable,
Saddle him up with an Erzurum saddle and seven straps,
Fasten a saddlebag full of gold pieces to his back,
Adorn him with a garland of flowers,
Fasten his shiny sword to Bozê Rewal's side.
Go quickly and make haste, bring a box of Memê's clothes from his room,
Gather up your eighty eight servant boys,
Open up the box, dress Memê in his clothes,
Have everyone arrange his buttons and his clothes,
The beloved of my heart will be heading for strange lands,
May he not harbor grudges against his parents or his servants."

Bengîn goes quickly and makes haste,
Takes Bozê Rewal out of the stable,
Saddles him up with an Erzurum saddle and seven straps,
Fastens a saddlebag full of gold pieces to his back,
Adorns him with a garland of flowers,
Fastens his shiny sword to Bozê Rewal's side.
He runs to Memê's room, brings a box of Memê's clothes,
Gathers up his eighty eight servant boys,
Opens up the box of Memê's clothes,
Dresses Memê in his clothes,
Has everyone arrange his buttons and his clothes.

[73] Memê put his foot in the stirrup and mounted Bozê Rewal,

Every last one of the citizens of Mukhurzemîn gathered round Memê,⁵⁸
 When they saw him, they began to bleat like ewes and lambs,
 They were weeping over the golden throne⁵⁹ and over Memê.
 Memê had Bozê Rewal head for Alan pasha's diwan,
 He stopped in front of the diwan, taking his leave of those there and giving them
 greeting,
 Memê's father did not rise, but kept on crying,
 Saying, "Memê my son, my heart is windy,⁶⁰
 This trip does not bode well,⁶¹
 So help me God, may the legs of Bozê Rewal break at the two front knees,
 May you be reduced to walking on roads and highways,⁶²
 May ten years pass before you reach the city of Jizîra Bota.
 May you become a shepherd and a cowherd among people,⁶³
 As you leave the golden throne and crown, and city of Mukhurzemîn without a
 master,
 For some old woman."
 Memê's mother said to Memê's father,
 "Why do you speak so to the beloved of my heart?
 Why are you cooking his kidneys and liver in front of my eyes?
 He is about to leave for strange lands, don't make him grieve."
 Memê's mother said, "Memê my son, your trip bodes well,
 God help me, may Bozê Rewal become a windy horse for you,
 May you go in peace to the city of Jizîra Bota,
 And return safely to your mother,

⁵⁸= lit. "However many people there are in the city of Mukhurzemîn, they gathered around Memê."

⁵⁹i.e., losing Memê as the heir to the throne.

⁶⁰See note 56 above.

⁶¹= lit. "Your luck and [horoscope] signs are not those of goodness."

⁶²= lit. "May you fall to 'pedestrianness' (peyatî) on roads and highways."

⁶³Shepherds and cowherds are considered low class, i.e. several steps down from being the son of the ruler. Cf. OM, p. 27.

May your father's food and the milk of your mother's breast be blessed to you.⁶⁴

Memê took leave of his mother and father,
 Raised Bozê Rewal's bridle and took to the roads and highways,
 The fish of the sea stopped and gave greeting,
 Every last one of the citizens of Mukhurzemîn wept.
 Memê's father called up forty gendarmes,
 Bade all forty to get on their horses,
 And said, "Riders, twenty of you keep to his right side, and twenty to his left side, be
 his advisers,
 Maybe you can make him turn back from the road to Jizîra Bota,
 As you know, the golden throne and crown have lost their master."⁶⁵
 The forty gendarmes mounted their horses,
 Twenty placed themselves on his right side, and twenty on his left, becoming his
 advisers,
 No matter what they did, Memê would not turn back,
 The gendarmes became disgusted,
 [74] Memê took his leave of them and continued on alone.
 Over wilderness and desert, steppe and plain,
 Summer went and winter came,
 Memê Ala was on the verge of going insane.⁶⁶

Memê neared a village,
 He saw an old man sitting by the edge of the road.
 Memê called to the uncle,
 Stopping before him,
 And said, "Uncle, you are old, come ride with me, let's you and I become travelling
 companions."

⁶⁴See EP-1 note #38).

⁶⁵- lit. "the golden throne and crown have remained ownerless." This means that there is no heir to the throne when Alan pasha dies.

⁶⁶These last three lines rhyme more or less in the way the original Kurdish rhymes throughout.

The old uncle said, "Son, good for you! You ride on, I will go take a leak,⁶⁷ and then you and I will be travelling companions."

Memê rode on a little,

He turned [and looked] back, there was no uncle there,

He had disappeared from sight,

This uncle was Khizir⁶⁸, who with his own tongue had given Memê his name,

He suddenly appeared on the breast of Memê's horse, and the horse rode on,

Memê couldn't see him, and the horse flew like the wind.

The city of Diyarbekir was a year's distance away, but in an hour Memê reached

The Black Bridge, this close to Diyarbekir,⁶⁹

Khizir got off the horse's breast on the bridge and took hold of Bozê Rewal's harness.

Khizir turned into a twenty year-old youth, but Memê couldn't believe his eyes,⁷⁰

Memê took one look at him, fear and awe took hold of his heart.

Memê was very much afraid.

Khizir said, "Memê my son, don't be afraid, these things are the will of the lord on high,

Your trip bodes well,

From here on our paths must part.⁷¹"

Khizir disappeared and Memê rode on,

⁶⁷ez heta p'êşkek av birêjim = lit. "until I spill out a little water."

⁶⁸See note 13 above.

⁶⁹The P'ira Reş, or Black Bridge, is a stone bridge which crosses the Tigris River to the south of the city of Diyarbekir. It is visible from the Mardin Gate (Mardinkapı), the gate to the old walled city of Diyarbekir which looks south, on the old road to the town of Mardin. It should be remembered at this point that the informant was originally from the village of Hiznemîr, in what he describes as the district of Diyarbekir. (Actually, the village is today part of the newly formed province of Batman, but until recently belonged to the province of Siirt, just east of the province of Diyarbekir.) Similarly, in PS, a version collected in Zakhô, the narrator has Mem passing through Zakhô on his way to Jizîra Bota.

⁷⁰The second half of this line includes an idiom that is not sufficiently well documented in the dictionaries. In Kurdish, the whole line reads as follows: "Xocê Xizir xwe kire xortekî bîst salî, ko Memê ne hêjaye dîtina wîye."

⁷¹= lit. "My hand and yours have parted from each other."

He entered the city of Diyarbekir, where everyone gathered around him,
 No one had seen such a beautiful rider as this in all the world.
 Memê looked back and went on,
 He left the city, and saw a porter with a sack of flour on his back.
 He stood before Memê and stared at him,
 Saying, "Horseman, you are worthy of Lady Zîn in Jizîra Bota, who lives in the Tower
 of Belek."
 This porter had come from Jizîra Bota,
 Memê was very pleased with him,
 [75] And said, "Porter, is Jizîra Bota near or far, how do you see it?"
 The porter said to him, "Young man, Jizîra Bota is very far."
 When he said that, Memê was very disappointed,
 And said, "How, if I'm a year's distance away, did I come here in one hour?"
 Memê drew his sword from its sheath,
 Held the sword to the porter's neck,
 The porter turned pale with fear,
 Then Memê fell out of favor with God.⁷²

Memê then passed before the door of a mill,
 The miller was sitting before the mill's door,
 He took a look at Memê,
 He had never seen anyone the likes of him in the whole world.

⁷²= lit. "Then God took good luck and good fortune away from Memê." This is as a punishment for Memê's unnecessarily frightening the porter. The expression 'Siñûd û iqbâl,' which I have translated as "good luck and good fortune," is composed of two Arabic words: Siñûd or siñûd is from the Arabic form su'ûd سَعُود , broken plural of sa'd سَعْد = 'good luck'; iqbâl/iqbal/ëxbal (the latter form preferred by Kurdoev) is from Arabic iqbâl إقبال , verbal noun (maşdar) of the 4th form of the root q-b-l, meaning 'welfare,' 'prosperity,' 'good fortune.' In the introduction to his "Kurmân'i-Texte aus dem Tûr'abdin 2. Yeziden" *Oriens* 25-26 (1976), pp. 1-37, the late Hellmut Ritter notes that a characteristic of the Kurdish speech of the Yezidis is their pronunciation of the phoneme ع (el') as ح (fi), and gives the example /suñûd/ instead of /su'ûd/. We know that the informant from whom the present text was collected, Ohanyan Israëli, grew up in a village which was inhabited by Armenian Christians and Kurdish-speaking Yezidis. Hence, it makes sense that Ohanyan Israëli, who uses the form siñûd, should use the Yezidi pronunciation of the word (rather than si'ûd).

He said, "That horseman there is worthy of Lady Zîn, in the city of Jizîra Bota; in the Tower of Belek, she sits at the upper window."

Memê said to him,

"Son, is Jizîra Bota far or near, how do you see it?"

The miller said, "Young man, you look like an excellent rider,

Your horse looks like a windy horse⁷³,

Jizîra Bota is just under your horse's feet,

Ride on this way, and you'll be in Jizîra Bota in five minutes!"

Memê's heart lit up like a rose when you water it.

Memê stuck his hand into his pocket,

Took out a handful of gold from the pocket,

Gave it into the miller's hand,

Saying, "May this gold be blessed unto you,

Take me to the road to Jizîra Bota.⁷⁴"

The miller fell into step in front of Memê and led him to the road to Jizîra Bota.

Then the miller returned to the mill, closed the mill's door, cut off the mill's water, took himself to Diyarbekir,

Went to a tailor, and had a fine suit of clothes made for himself.

Memê went on towards Jizîra Bota, and when he came close to it, he saw a well⁷⁵,

He dismounted at the well, drank water, and set his horse out to pasture,

Expressed his thanks to God,

Took out his bread, ate his food and relaxed,

Unaware of the winds of fate.

He looked up and saw three riders coming by,

With their greyhounds and pups behind them,

These riders were riding bay horses,

The sides of their mares were covered with rabbits tied to them,

⁷³i.e. a horse as swift as the wind.

⁷⁴Riya Gîzra Bota teml mi de û ji mira bivtne. The expression *teml mi de* does not appear in any of the dictionaries, but it does appear in ZK-3 in a similar context. *Ti fê û dirbe fêmi me neda*, which means something like "He didn't show us the way." The expression *Rê [û dirba] teml fê-ê dan* must mean something like "to show *someone* the way (or road)," "to give *someone* directions on how to get somewhere." See also note 170 below.

⁷⁵or "a spring."

[76] They passed by Memê without greeting him.
 Memê remembered his father's curse⁷⁶, and he beat his knees with his hands and
 wept,
 Beko looked at him with a scornful glance,
 Noticed that the horseman had a golden crown on his head,
 That he looked like the son of a sultan,
 Beko called out to mîr Zêydîn and Qeretajdîn,
 Saying, "My mîr, you are so well-bred,
 Why didn't you greet that horseman at the well with the golden crown?"
 Mîr Zêydîn and Qeretajdîn turned and looked,
 And said, "Beko, hurry over to that horseman,
 Quickly bring him to us;
 That horseman will be our guest, he is very distinguished."
 Beko went and stood by Memê,
 Giving greeting to those present and to him,⁷⁷
 Saying, "Get up, these here are mîr Zêydîn and Qeretajdîn."
 Memê is delighted, he is filled with love,⁷⁸
 He gets up and mounts his horse, he and Beko spur on [their horses],
 They come to mîr Zêydîn and Qeretajdîn,
 Memê greets them and causes them to stop.
 Mîr Zêydîn says, "Guest, you are most welcome,⁷⁹
 You will be our guest, we can tell that you are a most distinguished guest."

The four of them rode on,
 Mîr Zêydîn, Qeretajdîn and Beko said to each other,
 "We don't know, of the three of us whose guest he should be."

⁷⁶- lit. "his father's words"

⁷⁷It is not clear to me what is meant by "those present."

⁷⁸I am not totally sure what the second half of this line means. The Kurdish is eşqa mîfubetê hêja wî hiltîne.

⁷⁹- lit. "you have come on our heads and on our eyes." This is the standard way of saying "Welcome" in Kurdish.

Beko said to Memê, "Memê, if you are looking for bravery and justice, go to
 Qeretajdîn's house,
 If you are looking for corruption, disloyalty and slander, come to my house -- [I am]
 Beko the dishonest and unreliable⁸⁰."
 Memê said, "I am not one for corruption or disloyalty,
 If I were a mîr, if I were a prince,
 I would not leave the city of Mukhurzemîn, my father's kingdom,
 I am looking for the house of a courageous man -- the house of Qeretajdîn."
 Then mîr Zêydîn became angry with Qeretajdîn,
 And said, "I am the mîr, yet the sons of monarchs come stay at *his* house.
 These words of Memê's wounded him in his heart,
 But they didn't speak together, and rode on.
 Mîr Zêydîn and Beko headed for home,
 Qeretajdîn and Memê stood before the door of the room.
 LadyEreb⁸¹ came out to receive them,
 [77] She saw what a distinguished guest had come to Qeretajdîn's house,
 Qeretajdîn said, "O guest, our fate is with God,
 Come, dismount from your horse."
 Memê the stranger neither spoke nor dismounted.
 Qeretajdîn said, "Memê, my heart is heavy,
 You are most welcome in my house,
 From today on you and I are brothers of one mother and father,
 I am ready to sacrifice [my] two brothers, Cheko and Ereb⁸², for you,
 I am ready to sacrifice my whole household for you,
 I am ready to sacrifice Lady Ereb -- my honor in this place -- for you."
 Memê dismounted at these words and they walked together towards the hall.
 When the townspeople found out,
 They all converged on Qeretajdîn's hall,

⁸⁰'bêdîn' actually means "religionless."

⁸¹Qeretajdîn's wife.

⁸²As Lady Ereb is Qeretajdîn's wife in this version, in this line Ereb must be a mistaken for Erfan, the name given to one of Qeretajdîn's brothers in other versions.

Musicians⁸³ gathered in Qeretajdîn's hall,
For four hours musicians played, singers sang, and dancing boys⁸⁴ danced for Memê
Alan.

Memê did not speak, not with his heart, not with his tongue,
Everyone headed for home,
Memê and Qeretajdîn alone remained in the hall.
They made up Memê's bed, and Memê went to sleep.
Qeretajdîn went and said to Lady Ereb,
"Woman, how sullen our guest is,
He doesn't speak, we don't know what's wrong with him,
When I said to him, 'O guest, I am ready to sacrifice for you [my] two brothers, Cheko
and Ereb, my whole household, and Lady Ereb, my honor in this place,'
Only then would he dismount from his horse.
So get up and get dressed,
Put your slippers⁸⁵ on your feet,
Go to this guest, let's see what our guest's nature⁸⁶ is like.
If his nature is good, he and I are brothers,
But if his nature is bad, let him not even stay the night in this house."

Lady Ereb got up and got dressed,

⁸³See note 5 above.

⁸⁴K'öçek <Turkish köçek = "youth who performs erotic dances in woman's garb" [see: C. Robert Avery, S. Bezmez & M. Yaylalı. Redhouse Çağdas Türkçe-İngilizce Sözlüğü - Contemporary Turkish-English Dictionary. (Istanbul: Redhouse Yayınevi, 1983)]. For a discussion of this institution, see Metin And. A Pictorial History of Turkish Dancing from Folk Dancing to Whirling dervishes - Belly Dancing to Ballet. (Ankara: Dost Yayınları, 1976), pp. 139 ff.; figs. #27, #32, #36, #48, #60, #62, #74, #82, #83, #84, #90, #110.

⁸⁵Şim û me'sane = lit. "slippers and yellow-leather slippers." *Şim*, or more commonly *Şimik*, is a common word for slipper: Cinderella is known in Kurdish as 'Şimikzêrîn' = "[girl of the] Golden slipper." The only definition for *Me'sane* that I could find was in JJ: [mas] مس - "Slipper of yellow leather."

⁸⁶The commonest forms of the word for 'Nature' are **Tebî'e't** (Kurdoev) and **Tebî'iyet** (Bakaev), from Arabic *ṭabī'ah* طبيعة. In this text, the form is **Tibî'iyet**, once again replacing the ع (el') with ح (h), typical of Kurdish as spoken by Yezidis. See note 72 above.

Put slippers on her feet,
 Went and stood at the door of Memê's room,
 And called out, "Memê, my heart is windy,
 Please get up on your feet,
 Come open the door of the room,
 Let's you and I indulge in joking and chatter together."
 Memê got up on his feet,
 And said, "Lady Ereb, my heart is heavy⁸⁷,
 You and I are sister and brother,
 [78] Qeretajdîn and I are brothers from one father and mother,
 My name is Memê [son of] Alan-pasha."
 When Memê said this, Lady Ereb turned around and went to Qeretajdîn,
 Took her slipper off her foot,
 And Bang! let Qeretajdîn have it on the forehead,
 Saying to him, "What sort of crazy man are you?
 Your guest has not yet tasted bread in your house, and you are testing his honor?
 Your guest is not a rogue⁸⁸, he's the son of kings."
 The Qeretajdîn said, "Woman, testing has its uses in this world,
 I wanted to test my guest,
 And now he and I have become brothers from one mother and father,
 My house, my children are a pledge⁸⁹ to Memê Alan."

Memê and Qeretajdîn go to sleep,
 Morning came for those present and for them,
 In the morning they went out for a walk among the gardens.
 Lady Zîn had heard that an honored guest had come to their house,
 She called Zîn the daughter of Beko and four other maidservants,

⁸⁷This four-line answer, in rhyming verse, constitutes a refusal on Memê's part to be alone with the wife of his host.

⁸⁸Hayelajeyê, a word which does not appear in the dictionaries. The onomatopoeic quality of the word and the context suggest the translation I have chosen.

⁸⁹i.e. Qeretajdîn would be willing to sacrifice his house and children for the sake of Memê Alan, foreshadowing of what is to come.

She dressed Zîn [the daughter of Beko] in her clothes, took off her ring and put it on
 [the other Zîn's] finger,
 And the four others picked up jugs of water.
 Zîn the daughter of Beko put on Lady Zîn's clothes,
 Put her ring on her own finger,
 And set out for the spring,
 [While] Qeretajdîn and Memê were sitting on chairs.
 Zîn the daughter of Beko and the four maidservants passed by them,
 When Memê's eyes fell on the one in front,
 He saw his ring on her finger,
 Then he remembered the nighttime dream,⁹⁰
 As they went to the spring, Memê could not take his eyes off of them.
 Qeretajdîn said, "Memê my brother, you keep looking at those girls, choose one of the
 five for yourself,
 I'll bring her before you, house and all."
 Memê said, "Qeretajdîn my brother, my grief is [for] the first girl,
 The ring on her finger, how it glistens."

The two of them sat by the door,
 The five maidservants filled their jugs, and passed by again.
 Qeretajdîn said, "Memê, you go home, I'll go to the house of the first girl."
 [79] Memê was elated⁹¹, he was in great spirits.
 Qeretajdîn went to Beko's house, greeting him and his family.
 Beko said, "Qeretajdîn, by God's goodness, you have never [before] come to my house,
 What is on your mind⁹² today?
 Let me know what is on your mind."
 Qeretajdîn said, "Beko, I have come to request your daughter for my guest,
 He is very precious and dear to my heart."

⁹⁰i.e. when Lady Zîn appeared in his bedroom, etc.

⁹¹=lit. "Memê's heart was very good."

⁹²=lit. "in your heart."

Beko said, "Welcome, welcome,⁹³ put down something as a pledge.⁹⁴"

Qeretajdîn put down two gold pieces as a pledge for Beko's daughter.

Qeretajdîn returned home and said, "Memê, don't worry, don't trouble your heart about your request,

I have made the request for you, may God do the rest."⁹⁵

The Lady, Beko's daughter,⁹⁶ went to Lady Zîn,

Laughing and full of giggles.

Lady Zîn said, "Beko's daughter, what is this laughter, what are these giggles?"

Zîn, the daughter of Beko, said, "My father has given me to Qeretajdîn's guest,⁹⁷

And two gold pieces were put down as a pledge to me."

She made Lady Zîn's heart grieve and ache strongly,

And [the latter] said, "I will take forty of my maidservants and pass by the gate of Qeretajdîn's house with them,

I'll make myself and his guest aware of each other."

Lady Zîn got dressed up,

Put golden slippers on her feet,

Put her ring of rubies and diamonds on the finger of her right hand,

Took forty maidservants with her and marched by the gate of Qeretajdîn's house with them.

Memê once again noticed the one in front,

Lady Zîn walked by slowly, nodding with her head to Memê.

⁹³=lit. "You have come on my head and my eyes." Cf. note 79 above.

⁹⁴i.e. of engagement.

⁹⁵=lit. "May God bring [you] to each other." This passage accurately reflects the practice of *xwezgînî*, i.e. the way one would go about requesting the hand of a girl in marriage to a suitor. See also note #19) above.

⁹⁶Zîn, Beko's daughter, is referred to here as 'Sîya qîza Bek'o' = "The Lady daughter of Beko." Hitherto in this text, the term *Sîyya/* has only been used in conjunction with Lady Zîn and Lady Ereb.

⁹⁷=lit. "to the guest of the house of Qeretajdîn."

Qeretajdîn said, "Memê my brother, you get up and go to the spring, see your
betrothed with your own eyes,

If she's not to your liking⁹⁸, I will withdraw the pledge.

Memê was elated, he got up from beside Qeretajdîn and swiftly headed for the spring,
He went to the spring, and he and Lady Zîn saw each other at the mouth of the
spring,

They laughed together, and remembered their nighttime dream,
Embraced⁹⁹ and kissed each other.

Zîn, the daughter of Beko, saw this with her own eyes,

She wept and let out a cry,

[80] Went home and said, "Father, Qeretajdîn's guest and Lady Zîn are engaged."

Beko said, "Zîn my child, I am Beko the dishonest and unreliable,

So long as I live, I won't let Memê Alan and Lady Zîn obtain their desire."

Memê said, "Lady Zîn, my heart is windy,

I have come to the city of Jizîra,

I have entered strange lands,

I don't know which girl is whose daughter."

Lady Zîn said, "Memê Alan,

Don't you remember your nighttime dream?

You have requested the daughter of Beko the dishonest and unreliable rather than
Lady Zîn."

The maidservants filled up their jugs and headed for home,

Leaving Lady Zîn and Memê alone at the mouth of the spring.

Beko went to the hall of Mîr Zêydîn and said, "My mîr, go see where Memê Alan and
your sister Lady Zîn are.¹⁰⁰"

Mîr Zêydîn went out to where they were,

⁹⁸=lit. "according to your heart."

⁹⁹=lit. "Brought their hands to each other's neck."

¹⁰⁰=lit. "You go out beside Memê Alan and your sister Lady Zîn, there they are, in that place."

Lady Zîn was going home, and Memê was going to Qeretajdîn's house.

Qeretajdîn said, "Memê, what has kept you there so long?¹⁰¹"

Memê said, "Qeretajdîn, the one I wanted was Lady Zîn,

The sister of Mîr Zêydîn,

You have betrothed me to¹⁰² a gypsy daughter of a gypsy, the daughter of Beko the dishonest and unreliable."

Mîr Zêydîn and Beko were speaking together,

Beko said to Mîr Zêydîn,, "My mîr,

Your sister is our honor,

Qeretajdîn's guest is not one of us,

I can't accept this way, it is of no use."

Mîr Zêydîn said, "Beko, let's make up something that only you and I know about,

Let's play checkers."

Beko went and summoned Qeretajdîn and Memê, bringing them to sit in the hall.

[Mîr Zêydîn] said, "Memê, I know that you are a good player, you look like one,

So let's you and me play, setting conditions as follows¹⁰³:

If you beat me seven times, you can have whatever you want,

And if I beat you, I can have from you whatever I ask for,

[81] Qeretajdîn, Beko, and this assembly are witnesses,

They have sat down between you and me."

The two of them set down the checkers before them,

They sat down on felt [mats] near the door of the hall,

Playing together and unaware of anything else.

Lady Zîn went out to view them through the skylight,

Memê's back was to her,

¹⁰¹=lit. "What was your condition, until now you remained there?"

¹⁰²=lit. "You have requested for me..."

¹⁰³=lit. "We will place between us the condition of *şendilxaz*." *Şendilxaz* does not appear in any of the dictionaries: the second part, *Dilx[w]az* or *Dilxwez*, means "Heart's desire." A note to the Russian translation of EP-1 explains this as being "a wager or game in which the victor has the right to request whatever he pleases [from the loser]" (note #45, p. 92).

Mîr Zêydîn was facing her.
 Six times Memê beat Mîr Zêydîn,
 [And] Beko said to Mîr Zêydîn, "My mîr, get up and trade places,
 Some spots are unlucky for [some] people,
 Perhaps [this way] you will be more equally matched!¹⁰⁴"
 Mîr Zêydîn said, "Memê, get up, let's trade places."
 Memê said, "I have six and you don't have one yet,¹⁰⁵ but let's trade places anyway."

[When] they got up and traded places,
 Memê directly faced Lady Zîn in the window,
 [And] Mîr Zêydîn's back faced Lady Zîn in the window.¹⁰⁶
 Memê and Lady Zîn exchanged glances,¹⁰⁷
 Beko¹⁰⁸ picked up every checker¹⁰⁹ that Memê put down,
 Out of love for Lady Zîn, Memê lost all sense of reason,¹¹⁰
 Mîr Zêydîn won six, and Memê lost six.¹¹¹
 Beko said, "My mîr, enough playing, let's have a verbal duel!¹¹²"

¹⁰⁴=lit. "Perhaps you both may be like each other."

¹⁰⁵=lit. "I am six and you are not yet one."

¹⁰⁶=lit. "Memê's face fell on Lady Zîn in the window, / Mîr Zêydîn's back fell on Lady Zîn in the window."

¹⁰⁷ *Avîr*, or more commonly *Avîr*, generally means "a disdainful or scornful glance," "a scowl." Although a negative connotation is attested in all the dictionaries consulted, in this context the connotation must be neutral, if not positive.

¹⁰⁸Is Beko playing Memê's opponent, or is Mîr Zêydîn? This is an example of "the nodding of Homer."

¹⁰⁹Kevir = lit. "stone."

¹¹⁰= lit. "From love of Lady Zîn sense and reason don't remain in Memê's head."

¹¹¹= lit. "Mîr Zêydîn became six, Memê remained six," i.e., they were tied. In all other versions, Mîr Zêydîn wins out at this point.

¹¹²= lit. "We will throw songs [k'îlamal] at one another." Poetry contests are very popular in the Middle East. Among the Turks, poetry contests (*atışma*) are common among *aşîks*, or bards. Verbal dueling rhymes, particularly among boys, are very popular. [See: Alan Dundes, Jerry W. Leach & Bora Özkok. "The Strategy of Turkish Boys' Verbal Dueling Rhymes," *Journal of American Folklore* 83 (1970), pp. 325-349; reprinted in: Alan Dundes. *Parsing Through Customs* (Madison, Wisc.: The

Beko said, "Memê's girl is of the tribe of Reshkot,¹¹³
 Shoe nails have gnawed the heel of her foot,
 With my own eyes I saw her selling yoghurt in Jizîra Bota¹¹⁴."

Memê said, "Enough of you and these words, you knave,
 If I get my hands on the hilt of my glaive,
 We will surely fill up each other's grave¹¹⁵."

Beko said, "Memê's girl is from Dudan^{115a},
 The nail of the shoe of her sole is gone,
 With my own eyes I saw her buying and selling yoghurt in Jezîra Bohtan¹¹⁶."

Memê said, "Enough of you and your palaver,
 Once I touch the hilt of my Egyptian saber,
 We'll fill up the earth with all sorts of cadavers¹¹⁷."

University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 82-117.] What is different about this phenomenon as it appears in this text is the fact that here it is engaged in by adult males, whereas among the Turks, to quote Mark Glazer, "These duels never take place in front of grown men. First of all, the adolescents participating in such a duel would not dare for such behavior to take place in front of grown men. Respect for elders is too important for such behavior to take place in front of them. Furthermore, such an attempt would be strongly and physically interrupted by any grown men even if attempted."

¹¹³Ya Memê=lit. "The female one of Memê." It should be remembered that the informant grew up among the Reshkot tribe.

¹¹⁴This is the first bout of the verbal duel. I have tried to mimic the end rhyme. In Kurdish, the rhyming words are: reşkoti; k'oti, difrotî. In English, I have supplied: Reshkot; foot; Jizîra Bota.

¹¹⁵=lit. "Beko, enough of you and these words, / When we put our hands on the hilt of our dagger, / We will fill each other's tomb and grave." In Memê's response, the rhyming words in Kurdish are: xebera; xencerâ; mezela.

^{115a}Dudan is a village near Zirikan in the county seat of Şêrwan, near Siirt, in Kurdistan of Turkey.

¹¹⁶In Beko's beginning of the second round, the rhyming words in Kurdish are: dudanî; hilanî; dibir û danî.

¹¹⁷Or perhaps: "Enough nonsense from your mouth has been spilt, / Once I touch my Egyptian saber's hilt, / We'll fill up the earth with men dead and killed." In Memê's response to Beko's second bout, the rhyming words in Kurdish are: mirt'îbiya; k'ose misirîya; mirîya û kuşîya.

Memê said, "Beko, the one I want is Zîn, it's Zîn and it's Zîn,
A newborn dove, she's gazing down at me through the window screen,
Unlike you and your father, she's the sister of your prince Mîr Zêydîn."

When Memê said this, Mîr Zêydîn got good and mad,
He said, "Memê, the one I want wears a shawl,¹¹⁸
[82] The sister of the flaxen shirt,
The sister of the golden necklace,
Sister Memê Alan.¹¹⁹"

Memê and Mîr Zêydîn reached for their daggers,
Qeretajdîn was not there with them,
Memê had no hope against them.
They all came after Memê together,
Memê has put me in a sorry state.

Lady Zîn said, "I will ¹²⁰ search through all the children,
Until I find Gurgîn, the son of my sister,
I will get Memê Alan out of this situation."
Lady Zîn looked around,
And found Gurgîn below the palace, among other children,
She called out to him,
[And] said, "My dandy one, Gurgîn,
Hurry up and make haste,
Take news to your father Crazy Qeretajdîn,
Say, 'Father, my aunt says that your guest has no means of escape,
He has had to use the cushion at his side as a shield."

Gurgîn hurried up and made haste,

¹¹⁸Şare û şarîbane, the meaning of which is not entirely clear.

¹¹⁹or perhaps, "Memê Alan herself," or "the sister of Memê Alan." Whatever these last four lines mean, they obviously succeed in insulting and angering Memê to the point of reaching for his dagger.

¹²⁰-lit. "I will cause my eyes to wander among the children."

He [went and] called out to his father,
 Saying, "Father, our guest has no means of escape
 From the hands of Beko and Mîr Zêydîn."

Qeretajdîn got up, unsheathed his Lahore sword,
 Arranged his shield on his shoulder,
 [And] set off for Mîr Zêydîn's hall.
 Like a wolf with bloodied mouth,
 He waved his sword at Mîr Zêydîn,
 Took Memê by the hand, led him away from those villains,
 [And] brought him home with him.

Beko and Mîr Zêydîn had another conference,
 Saying, "Let's do some hunting for Memê's sake,
 We'll invite Memê and Qeretajdîn
 To come riding and hunting with us.
 My mîr,¹²¹ you get two servant boys,
 Have each one of them secretly point a pistol at Memê,
 Qeretajdîn won't be aware of us,
 And you will avenge your sister's disgracing of your honor.
 The two youths should then hurry to the desert of Hêmûd,
 [83] They should stay there for a while,¹²²
 Qeretajdîn will calm down, he'll say 'No harm done'".

They summoned Qeretajdîn and Memê,
 And went out hunting,
 Memê, Mîr Zêydîn, Qeretajdîn and Beko mounted their horses,
 Four servant boys left with them,
 Their greyhounds and pups followed them.
 They came to a desolate plain, a rabbit crossed their path,
 The greyhounds and pups set out after it,

¹²¹Beko is speaking.

¹²²-lit. "Year[s] and month[s]."

The four youths and Beko also went after the rabbit on horseback,
 [While] Memê and Mîr Zêydîn and Qeretajdîn stayed behind in a gorge.
 Memê said to Qeretajdîn, "My head hurts, I don't feel well, I've taken leave of my
 senses."

In the presence of Mîr Zêydîn he got down off his horse,
 Sat down and cried.

Qeretajdîn said, "Mîr Zêydîn, let Memê go home, he's not himself today,¹²³
 Let's just hunt for ourselves."

Mîr Zêydîn gave Memê permission to go.

Mîr Zêydîn and Qeretajdîn set out after rabbits.

Memê once again mounted Bozê Rewal,

[And] headed for Jizîra Bota,

He spurred¹²⁴ on the horse and it flew,

When he came to Mîr Zêydîn's courtyard, he dismounted,

Tied up his horse, [and] went into the hall; when he and Lady Zîn saw each other,
 they were excited,¹²⁵

They beamed¹²⁶ at each other and then laughed,

They embraced and rejoiced in each other.

Beko came back to Mîr Zêydîn and Qeretajdîn, but nowhere could he see Memê,
 Beko put his mouth to Mîr Zêydîn's ear, secretly saying to him "This hunt was for
 Memê Alan."

"Hurry and gather up your youths,

Let's head homeward."

Beko called over his youths,

Had them assemble,

¹²³-lit. "There is no condition of God for him."

¹²⁴-lit. "He gave heel to the horse."

¹²⁵bi hev fîsiya bûn =lit. "They became aware of one another."

¹²⁶bû p'irqîna wan ji hevfa. The word *Pirqîn* does not appear in any of the dictionaries, but perhaps it is synonymous with *îrîqîn*, meaning "To shine."

--Beko's mare was very light, there was no other bay horse like her--
 He said to them, "I will [set out] ahead of you and bridle [my mare],
 Each of you bare his sword, and if you succeed in catching up with me,
 Strike my neck with your swords, and send my head a-flying!¹²⁷"

[84] Beko bridled his horse,

The riders rode neck in neck, [but] no one could overtake him.

Beko reached Mîr Zêydîn's courtyard, and saw that Bozê Rewal was tied up there,
 He ran into the hall, opened the door and saw Lady Zîn and Memê seated side by side
 on a mattress,¹²⁸

He closed the door on them and went out,

[And] stood by the doorway.

Mîr Zêydîn and the youths reached the courtyard and dismounted;

Qeretajdîn went home, he did not accompany them.

Beko called to the youths,

[And] said, "By order of Mîr Zêydîn you must come to the hall, no one at all should
 go home."

The boys entered the hall, Beko sat down on a felt [mat],

Mîr Zêydîn went to his house, changed his clothes,

Refreshed himself,

[Then] came to the hall, giving greeting to his diwan.

The youths and servants and Beko stood up,

[But] Memê wouldn't get up off his ass.¹²⁹

Mîr Zêydîn was perturbed, he scowled and sat down.¹³⁰

¹²⁷This mini-contest is supposed to show how powerful Beko's horse is: even though he bridles, i.e. restrains, his horse, he is ready to wager on pain of death that no other horse will be able to overtake his horse. Perhaps this whole exercise is intended to get back to Mîr Zêydîn's court as soon as possible by racing.

¹²⁸It should be remembered that mattresses take the place of couches and chairs: people sit closer to the ground than in the West.

¹²⁹=lit. "Memê, his ass/rear/butt/backside [qûna wî] did not rise from those places and that ground."

¹³⁰Mîr Zêydîn *simbêlê wî melûl bûn*, *me'dê wî qermeç't*, *ji xwe'ra rûniştiye* =lit. "Mîr Zêydîn, his whiskers became gloomy, his stomach faded, he sat himself down." For someone's whiskers to be dark, gloomy, or sad apparently means "To be angry"; although the exact expression *Simbêlê wî melûl bûn* does not appear in the dictionaries, in Bakaev's dictionary I did come across the word

Beko sang out to Mîr Zêydîn,
 Saying, "O youths, our prince, Mîr Zêydîn, gave greeting to his diwan,
 [And] we all stood up,
 But Memê did not rise from his place on the ground."
 Beko said, "My mîr, Mîr Zêydîn, I swear that Memê's cloak is a dome,¹³¹
 I suspect that there is something under it,
 Who has ever seen such a thing as one person with two pairs of shoes,
 One pair a man's and one pair a girl's."

Mîr Zêydîn and his youths frowned and sat down,
 Qeretajdîn noticed this and hastened to the hall,
 Saw the coffee pourer standing at the doorway,
 [And] said, "Coffee pourer, why do you think the hall is so deserted?"
 The coffee pourer said, "My mîr Qeretajdîn, Mîr Zêydîn came in from outside,
 Gave greeting to his diwan,
 The youths and servants and Beko stood up,
 [But] Memê wouldn't get up off his ass.
 Beko said, 'My mîr, Mîr Zêydîn, I swear that Memê's cloak is a dome,
 I suspect that there is something under it,
 [85] Who has ever seen such a thing as one person with two pairs of shoes,
 One pair a man's and one pair a girl's."
 Qeretajdîn said, "Coffee pourer, quickly boil up some coffee,
 Then come bring it to me,
 I'll¹³² go around the hall with it,
 To see what is going on there."

The coffee pourer boiled up the coffee,
 He poured it into cups and brought it to Qeretajdîn,

Simêlreş = 1) [Someone with] black whiskers; 2) Angry, annoyed, irritated. As for 'His stomach faded,' although again not in the dictionaries, both Kurdoev and Khamciian have the expression *Madê xwe tîrîş kirin* -lit. "To make one's appetite/stomach sour," i.e. "To frown, make a face, To be dissatisfied."

¹³¹-lit. "I swear by my mîr's forehead, Memê's cloak is *qube*". *Qube* has two meanings: 1) Rough, coarse, vulgar; 2) Dome, cupola; Arch.

¹³²-lit. "He will go around...." This must be another example of "the nodding of Homer."

Who brought it to the hall, stopping before Memê.
 He said, "Memê my brother, our mîr Mîr Zêydîn came in from outside,
 Gave greeting to his diwan,
 The youths and servants and Beko stood up,
 Why didn't you rise from the ground?"
 Memê said, "Qeretajdîn, you have seen my heart,¹³³
 Love has taken over my head and my eyes,
 I can explain it this way¹³⁴,"
 [And] he pointed to the braids under his cloak.¹³⁵
 Qeretajdîn understood Memê's situation,
 And hurried out of the hall,
 [And] when he reached home, he set it on fire.

A cry and a shriek and a clamor arose,
 The news reached the hall, Mîr Zêydîn found out,
 And stood up,
 [But] Beko said, "Mîr Zêydîn, his house is old and decrepit, he's burning it down on
 purpose,
 Don't leave the hall, I will have it completely rebuilt."
 Qeretajdîn saw that no one left the hall,
 [So] he drew his sword and drove it into his horse's back,
 His horse was a *k'êş* horse,¹³⁶
 Such a horse had never been seen in the world.
 The news reached Mîr Zêydîn
 Who stood up when he found out.

¹³³or possibly, "I have given you my heart."

¹³⁴This line is obscure. If *Bucran* means "Explanation," which it seems to in this text, although the dictionaries only define it as "Separation" or "Departure," then it may mean something like "My explanation is from this." See note 47 above.

¹³⁵Although not spelled out in this version, it is clear from all the other versions that Zîn hides behind Mem, under his cloak, when the others enter unexpectedly and almost catch them together.

¹³⁶[Hespê k'êşeyel]. *K'êş* by itself means "Weight" or "Pulling" or "Walking, going." None of the dictionaries gives a definition specifically related to horses.

Beko said, "Mîr Zêydîn, my mîr, I have ten foals, they are better than his horse was,
I'll give him all of them."

Qeretajdîn saw that no one left the hall,

[So] he said to his wife, who was Mîr Zêydîn's sister,

"Lady Ereb, get up and fasten the infant¹³⁷ to your garment,

Then flee before me,

I swear before the Lord on high,

When I overtake you, I will run you and the child through with the sword, and kill
you."

Lady Ereb fastened the infant to her garment,

And swiftly headed for her brother's house,

[86] Running and screaming.

[When] she reached the doorway her brother, Mîr Zêydîn, heard her screams,

[And saw] Qeretajdîn with a sword in his hands,

Like a wolf with bloodied mouth.

Mîr Zêydîn stood up, opened the door, and ran out.

Beko said, "Mîr Zêydîn, my mîr, who ever heard of

Someone killing his own wife and child,¹³⁸

Except for Crazy Qeretajdîn?"

This got on his nerves,¹³⁹ [and] Mîr Zêydîn gave Beko a smack on the mouth and
nose,

Then left the hall and asked Qeretajdîn,

"Qeretajdîn, was it you who went crazy, you who did the killing,

You who set his house on fire?"

The youths and servants all left the hall, leaving Memê and Lady Zîn.

Qeretajdîn lifted Memê up by the arms,

¹³⁷or, the infant's cradle.

¹³⁸It is not clearly stated in this version if Qeretajdîn actually carried through with the killing. In some versions (such as HM) he actually does, whereas in others (e.g. HR-1) he stops short of committing the act.

¹³⁹*Beta xuyê birî da.* This is obscure, but may come from the expression *Betka ... birin* = "To get on someone's nerves." The fact that Mîr Zêydîn slaps Beko supports this idea.

Beko left Jizîra Bota out of fear for Qeretajdîn, and no matter how hard Qeretajdîn
 tried he couldn't find him,
 But if Qeretajdîn found him,
 He would take a sword to his neck and sever his head from his body.

Mîr Zêydîn said, "Qeretajdîn, your house and home are in ruins,
 Take yourself to the great tribes, collect this year seven years' worth of taxes and
 tributes."

Qeretajdîn said, "Mîr Zêydîn, my brother, I will put Memê into a room, that nothing
 may happen to him,¹⁴⁰
 And then I will go to the wealthy¹⁴¹ tribes."

Mîr Zêydîn placed Memê in a room and provided servant boys,
 Saying, "Brother Qeretajdîn has entrusted me with Memê,¹⁴²
 Qeretajdîn has gone down to the tribes, may he harbor no grudge against me.¹⁴³"

Beko came back to Jizîra Bota, to the house of Mîr Zêydîn,
 He passed before Memê's room, looked in through the skylight,
 [And saw] Lady Zîn and Memê sitting in the room,
 Laughing together, embracing each other out of pleasure and joy.
 Beko went back to Mîr Zêydîn

¹⁴⁰The second part of this line is unclear, but the context suggests that my translation approximates the meaning.

¹⁴¹rengîn = 1) Colorful; 2) Wealthy.

¹⁴²*Emanet*, entrusting a person with something until one's return, is a very important concept in the Middle East. The entrusted person is honor bound to protect that which has been deposited with him, even if doing so means sacrificing the life of a loved one. For an account of the story of the Arab poet al-Samaw'al ibn 'Adiyâ' and how he sacrificed his son to the enemy rather than hand over the coats of armor that Imru' al-Qays, another poet, entrusted to him, see: Reynold A. Nicholson. *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge, England, et al. : Cambridge University Press, c1907, 1969), pp. 84-85.

¹⁴³-lit. "may his heart not stay [back] from me."

And said, "My mîr, honor!¹⁴⁴ is very treacherous, come see the two of them with your own eyes."

Mîr Zêydîn and Beko went and saw them with their own eyes.

Mîr Zêydîn said, "O servants, grab Memê by the hands, and put him at the bottom of the dungeon."

[87] The youths and servant boys picked Memê up by the arms and took him to the bottom of the dungeon.¹⁴⁵

Memê was all screams and cries and shrieks,

[As] he remembered what his mother and father had said.

Beko counselled Mîr Zêydîn,

Saying, "I am leaving Jizîra Bota, lest Qeretajdîn find me,

But if men go release Memê,¹⁴⁶

Memê's soul will remain in his body,

He is a brave man, he will take his own revenge,

[So] let Lady Zîn go release him.

If Lady Zîn goes to release him,

His innards will burn, his flesh will melt,

He will see the dirt of his grave with his own eyes.¹⁴⁷"

Lady Zîn went to the marketplace of Jizîra Bota, and stopping before the door of a shop,

She saw a poor young man, his clothes ripped, standing at the doorway of the shop,

He took gold out of his breast pocket,

¹⁴⁴For a discussion of *Namûs*, see EP-1 note #118), and: Jean G. Peristiany. *Honour and Shame the Values of Mediterranean Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); John Gulick *The Middle East: An Anthropological Perspective* (Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear Publishing Co., c1976), pp. 209-211.

¹⁴⁵=lit. "...and took him to the mouth of the dungeon and put him in the bottom of the dungeon."

¹⁴⁶i.e. from the dungeon.

¹⁴⁷Cf. EP-1, paragraph [86], in which Bekir's daughter Zîn says, "If men go to take Mem out of the dungeon, he will get well, but if women take him out, he will die."

The shopkeeper said to the poor boy, "Son, what is this gold for, what has happened?¹⁴⁸"

The poor boy said to the shopkeeper,

"Make change for these gold pieces, give me silver coins, twenty piasters and five piasters,¹⁴⁹

Qeretajdîn has camped out below our tent,

I will use this money to pay tax on our sheep,¹⁵⁰ he is collecting taxes from us.¹⁵¹"

Lady Zîn stood there,

And listened to what he said.

The poor young man had his gold changed, took his coins,

¹⁴⁸=lit. "What is there and what isn't there?" This is a way of saying 'What's new?' or 'What's going on?'. It has analogues in Turkish (Ne var ne yok), Armenian (ի՛նչ կայ չկայ = inch' ga ch'ga), Iraqi Arabic (shakū makū), and in Neo-Aramaic -- at least the Turoyo dialect (mîn-yo mîn lō-yo): see HR-1 note #114).

¹⁴⁹Ev zêrê hana ji mîfa hûr bike, t'emam bike mecdîne, quruş û qerxîne = lit. "Make tiny this gold for me, completely make 20-piaster-silver-coins, piasters and five-piaster-coins." A *meadîye* was an Ottoman coin worth 20 piasters, and a *qerx* (according to two dictionaries: Anter and Ziyâ al-Dîn Pâshâ) was worth five piasters.

¹⁵⁰Qamçûra paz. According to Roger Lescot, "[t]he agha [or tribal chief] collects certain taxes on the tribe's internal affairs, notably on the sale of livestock: these taxes are called *qamçor*..." [my translation] see Roger Lescot. *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjâr*. Mémoires de l'Institut français de Damas, tome 5 (Beyrouth, 1938), p. 164, body of text & note 2. The word *Qamçûr* only appears in one dictionary, that of Izolî, where it is defined as "Tax, Animal tax" [Vergi, hayvan vergisi]. According to Izolî, the form *Kamçûr* also exists, cf. Armenian khamch'owr խամժուր /kham'ch'owr խամիշուր = 'sheep tax', Tatar qubçur = 'animal tax' and Uigur qubçir = 'general tax on behalf of the government' [from: V.M. Nadeliaev et al. (ed.) *Drevneturkiskii slovar'* [Древнетюркский словарь = Old Turkic dictionary] (Leningrad : Nauka, 1969), p. 462; originally of Mongol origin, see: Gerhard Doerfer. *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen : unter besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer neupersischer Geschichtsquellen vor allem der Mongolen-und Timuridenzeit* (Wiesbaden : Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963-75), vol. 1, #266. قېچۇر = 'type of tax, originally most commonly collected in kind (primarily in cattle), it later came to denote set taxes levied on nomads and farmers' (my translation); and Modern Mongolian говчуур /говчуур govčuur /губчуур guvčuur = 'impost,' 'tax' [from: Gombojab Hangin et al. *A Modern Mongolian-English Dictionary* (Bloomington : Indiana Univ., 1986), p. 121] (*Special thanks to Anne Avakian for this etymology*). The dictionary of colloquial Turkish known as the *Derleme Sözlüğü* (mentioned above in note 21) has the forms *gamçûr* from Erzincan, Bitlis, and the towns of Ağın and Keban in Elâzığ, and *kamçor* from the town of Erziş on the northern shores of Lake Van = 'animal tax' [hayvan vergisi] [see: *Türkiye'de Halk Ağzından Derleme Sözlüğü*. (Ankara : Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1963-1982), v. 6, p. 1907; v. 8, p. 2615]. Paz = Pez, equivalent to Arabic ghanam غنم = "(flock of) sheep"; it is cognate to Latin pecus and German Vieh.

¹⁵¹=lit. "He is taking his payment [heqê xwe] from us."

And walked away from the shop, [when] Lady Zîn called out after him,
 Saying, "Young man, wait, I want to entrust you with something."
 The young man stopped, and Lady Zîn wrote a letter,
 In which she said, "Qeretajdîn, stop collecting animal taxes and hurry back,
 They've put Memê at the bottom of the dungeon,
 Come to him quickly."
 She handed the letter to the boy and said, "I beg you and the Lord supreme,
 Deliver this letter to Qeretajdîn."
 The young man said, "Girl, how lovely you are in my eyes,¹⁵²
 Give me a kiss, as payment for delivering the letter.¹⁵³"
 Lady Zîn opened the letter and wrote in it some more,
 Instructing Qeretajdîn as follows:
 "When you come, bring this boy with you,
 And on the way sever his head from his body,
 [88] I have promised him, that when he returns here safely, he can have a kiss¹⁵⁴ from
 me before your eyes,
 Which would wipe Memê Alan's honor off the face of the earth.¹⁵⁵"
 She handed the young man the letter and said, "Go and come back, then you will
 have earned a kiss."
 The boy, delighted, hurried off,
 Reached the tent of the chief,
 And delivered the letter to Qeretajdîn.
 Qeretajdîn read the letter,
 Quickly mounted his horse, left off collecting money,
 Unaware of anything else.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵²-lit. "In my eyes how sweet your blood is"

¹⁵³-lit. "I will take from you the value of the letter." In the original, this is worded in the same way as "he is collecting taxes from us," a few lines earlier. See note 151 above.

¹⁵⁴-lit. "that he will receive a kiss from my face."

¹⁵⁵-lit. "will remove the *âret* and *namûs* of Memê Alan from the world." See note #145 above. This is an example of Motif K978. Uriah letter. Man carries written order for his own execution. This famous motif appears in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

¹⁵⁶but the contents of the letter.

Qeretajdîn said, "Young man, you come with me, hurry up!"
 The boy, delighted, led the way, and off they sped.
 When they were far from the tent, Qeretajdîn stopped the boy in a deep ravine,
 Drew his sword from its sheath,
 And struck the boy with it, severing his head from his body.
 He drove his horse on, bridling him,
 His horse rode over rocks¹⁵⁷, his knees were broken,
 Qeretajdîn grew pale, he carried his sword in his arms and hurried on,
 Swiftly arriving in Jizîra Bota,
 [Where] Lady Zîn was waiting for him at the side of the road.
 [As] they proceeded together into town,
 Lady Zîn cried out to him,
 Saying, "Qeretajdîn, you crazy dandy,
 Quickly unsheath your sword,
 You've said 'I am a brave man', go bring Memê Alan out from the bottom of the
 dungeon."
 Lady Zîn said, "You are my Qeretajdîn of the beautiful neck,¹⁵⁸
 Bring your shiny sword out of its sheath,
 You've said 'I am a brave man', go free Memê Alan from the bottom of the
 dungeon."

Qeretajdîn broke down and cried, made haste and hurried
 To the diwan of Mîr Zêydîn,
 Beko had spoken his piece and was hiding.
 Qeretajdîn said, "Mîr Zêydîn, bring Memê Alan out from the bottom of the dungeon,
 If you don't, I swear, the city of Jizîra Bota will be rolling in blood."
 Mîr Zêydîn became afraid and called his sister Lady Zîn,
 Swearing to her by the prophet Mohammed,
 "Go bring Memê Alan out from the bottom of the dungeon,

¹⁵⁷=lit. "His horse's legs fell on rocks," i.e. came across obstacles.

¹⁵⁸According to Kurdoev, *Gerdanzer*, literally "yellow of neck," means "possessed of a beautiful neck (or throat)."

By the law¹⁵⁹ of God and the prophet."

Lady Zîn was delighted,
 She gathered up her maidservants,
 Went and stood at the door of the dungeon,
 [89] Lady Zîn picked up a rock from the ground and threw it [all the way] to the
 bottom,
 And when the rock hit the bottom of the dungeon, it brought Memê back from his
 sleep, his pain and his grief.
 Lady Zîn said, "Memê, the dungeon is totally surrounded with meadows and fields,
 My maidservants have formed a circle¹⁶⁰ around the dungeon,
 I have made up my eyes for you, I've hung fringes and tassels of gold¹⁶¹ from my
 brow,
 I will take you by the hand and bring you to the diwan of Mîr Zêydîn, I will ask for
 you in marriage¹⁶²."
 Memê said, "O Lady Zîn, your father's prison is a great prison,
 God help me, may a cannonball fall on its foundations,
 May its stones be blown apart,¹⁶³
 Who has ever heard of imprisoning the son of royalty in a dungeon,
 Allowing women to release him from it?"
 Lady Zîn said, "O Memê Alan,
 I will let down rope and twine for you,

¹⁵⁹Shari'ah, the Islamic code of law.

¹⁶⁰-lit. "a line."

¹⁶¹zêr û t'erwêze. *Zêr* is definitely 'Gold,' but *T'erwêze* does not appear in any of the dictionaries. Perhaps it is a metathesis of *Tewrêz*, the city of Tabriz in Iranian Azerbaijan.

¹⁶²If I understand this passage correctly, this is the reverse of the usual practice: it is usually the family of the prospective *groom* who initiates such proceedings, but here the prospective bride, Zîn, is saying that she wants to ask her brother Mîr Zêydîn's permission to marry Mem. This reversal is not uncommon in folktales and the like. For Turkish examples, see the collected texts of Ahmet Caferoğlu (in nine volumes); for Arabic examples in English translation, see: Ibrahim Muhawi & Sharif Kanaana *Speak Bird, Speak Again* (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1989).

¹⁶³-lit. "May stone not stand on stone."

Tie it tightly¹⁶⁴ around your middle,
 I will bring you up from the bottom of the dungeon and take you to the mîr's diwan."
 Lady Zîn lowered the rope to the bottom.
 Memê tied it around his middle,
 Lady Zîn and her servants took hold of it and pulled it up rhythmically,
 Memê moved halfway up the pit,¹⁶⁵
 Both of Memê's vertebrae¹⁶⁶ were pressed together by the rope,
 [As] they pulled Memê up to the entrance of the dungeon, two drops of black blood
 dripped out of Memê's nostrils,
 And he gave up his spirit before Lady Zîn's eyes.
 Lady Zîn let out a cry, saying, "O benefactors,
 Take up shovels and hoes,
 Dig Memê a grave fit for lions and heroes."
 The benefactors assembled and buried Memê in a grave for lions and heroes,
 [While] Lady Zîn wept and cried, saying,
 "O Memê son of Alan-pasha,
 Killing and capturing are the ways of men,
 I don't grieve for you, I grieve because your father's crown and throne in the city of
 Mukhurzemîn have no heir because of me!¹⁶⁷"
 With these bitter words, she gave up her soul over Memê's grave,
 The soul was removed from her body.

Beko came to Mîr Zêydîn and said, "My mîr, your sister has gone mad, she has gone
 crazy,
 She won't leave Memê's grave and come home!¹⁶⁸"

¹⁶⁴bi t'erbîyet û bi t'ekbîre =lit. "with good breeding and with recognition of the greatness [of God]."

¹⁶⁵At this point, the dungeon has become a *Bîr* = 'Well' or 'Pit.' Cf. HR-1, note 112.

¹⁶⁶Herdu movikê pişta Memê. Apparently we only have two vertebrae according to Kurdish anatomy! Perhaps something other than the vertebrae proper are intended. *Movik* by itself means 'Joint' (i.e., between two bones).

¹⁶⁷=lit. "... because the throne and crown of your father ownerless in the city of Mukhurzemîn because of me is orphan[ed], has remained ownerless."

¹⁶⁸=lit. "From over Memê's grave she doesn't come home."

Mîr Zêydîn and Beko went and stood over Memê's grave,
 [90] And saw that Lady Zîn was also dead,
 They had her grave dug beside Memê's grave."

Beko came the next day, opened their graves and put them in one grave,
 Put their hands around each other's necks and went to Mîr Zêydîn,
 Saying, "My mîr, what a strange dream I had last night."
 Mîr Zêydîn said, "What did you dream?"
 [Beko] said, "I dreamed that Lady Zîn and Memê were in one grave, with their hands
 around each other's necks."
 Mîr Zêydîn didn't believe him,
 He summoned Qeretajdîn,
 [And] Beko, Mîr Zêydîn and Qeretajdîn went to the graveyard.
 Beko opened the door of the tomb, and by order of God on high he saw a row of
 stones between the two of them,
 Lady Zîn stood up and said,
 "O Mîr Zêydîn, my powerful brother,
 At your waist is a sword,¹⁶⁹
 Let's you and I act according to the sharî'ah,
 With God, until the day of judgment."

Mîr Zêydîn unsheathed his sword,
 And struck Beko with it, severing his head from his body.
 The sword knew the way by itself,¹⁷⁰
 And said, "You, too, see Beko's blood with your own eyes!"
 There was no soul left in Lady Zîn's body,
 She didn't see Beko's blood with her own eyes.
 Beko's blood dripped from the sword drop by drop,

¹⁶⁹=lit. "A sword of zeal." See note 145 above.

¹⁷⁰çîr re'mî xwexwe dide. If re'mî is the same as femî in note #[74] above, then my translation is possible. If it is from Arabic raḥm رَحْمَة = 'pity,' then it could mean something like "the sword took pity [on itself]," however this is rather unlikely considering the Yezidi accent of the informant: see notes 72 and 86 above.

And fell on the grave; a large thornbush grew there, which is still there for the world
to see.¹⁷¹

My tale has gone to the plain,
The parents of those present and listening have gone to paradise.

¹⁷¹=lit. "there grows there a large thorn[bush] and the world together sees [it] with its own eyes."



Text & Translation



Mem û Zîn. 90 minute tape. Acquired in the province of Van, Kurdistan of Turkey, in 1988. {MC-1}

MC-1. Recorded circa 1988 in the region of Van. Because of the political situation in Turkey today, the details regarding the age, name, and whereabouts of any Kurdish informant must be withheld in order to insure protection from the Turkish police. Suffice it to say that the informant is in his forties and recites stories like Mem û Zîn as a pasttime only, being gainfully employed elsewhere. Unlike most other versions included in this study, this one has been transcribed from the original tape. Hence, such details as the intonation of the speaker and the presence or absence of pauses between phrases can be documented. The language of this version includes many Turkish words and forms. These have been indicated in the transcription by italics. The Kurdish text is followed by an English translation.

{MC-1}

< *Tempo: slow and deliberate, pausing(#)* often >

(1) ...Niha em # li vilayeta Wanê # [.....]da nin, # mi jî bi zanîna xwe # ji guhdarê e'zîz ra bibêjin <=bibêjim>: Esselamu e'lêkum wa rahîmatû Ilahi wa berekatuhu.

(2) [Memo kurê padişahê Merxêbzemînê, navê bavê wî Al-paşa biye. Al-paşa # *hükümdarê* # melmeket biye, de guhdarê e'zîz, paşa biye.

(3) Zîn, # qîza mîrêkane, yanî, # xûşka mîr Sêvdîn biye -- bavê wî tunebiye -- bal birê xwe -- xûşka mîr Sêvdîn, # li bajarê Cizîra Botan mîne. Ew camêra hanê ji *hukümdarê* # Cizîra Botan in.

(4) Axayê min binêre, îşê xwedê k'a çawa li hev tên. (5) îş li bal e'vda gelek zor e, ama ji bal xwedê wisa *qolaye*, # tu tişt nîne, guhdarê e'zîz.

(6) *Malûm*, yek li bajarê Merxêbzemînê biye 'aşîqek, # êk jî # li bajarê Cizîra Botan biye. (7) *Malûm*, # guhdarê e'zîz, # bi îrada xaliqê 'alîyê, # bihîstina ko me jilî # camêran bihîstî, # em dikarin bi vî şeklî ji we ra # arz bikin ve in <=hûn> guhê xwe bidnê.

(8) Dibê, # rojekê # di xewa xweda, # Memó # Zîn ji Cizîra Botán dî. Ew xewnê hanê, # mînanê qasidekî hate li Memo. (9) Bi vî şeklî, guhdarê e'zîz, *önce* em *başlangıcıya* xwe biken, # k'a çi şeklî digêhene hev:

(10) Go bira êvarê ser cîha-anê <? çiya-anê>,

Du meleke ji e'smanan diken şev û ro bi dîwa-anê,

Bi emrê xaliqê 'alîyê înadî danane bajarê # Merxêbzemîne <cima>

oda Memê Ala-anê.

(11) Aṡayê min, # zamanê ko Zîn raket danîne # dîvana Memê Alan. Memo çavê xwe ji xewê vekir, <dîna xwe dide> horfîyek ji horfîyekê cennetê # di dîvana Memoda rûniştiye -- *Allah Allah!* (12) Mem[lo dibêje ev xlewne *acaba* yan # eseñî ye?" <Heyat bû xebitî dîne> xwedê eseñî ye.

< *Tempo: faster, few pauses*

(13) Heyran go, "Tu çi kesî? Tu çima hatî maqamê mi?" Evî go, "Zilamê xerîb, k'a tu çima hatî oda min, maqamê min?"

(14) *Malûm*, pirsîyar ji hev kirin, go, "Tî kî?" Go, "Ez xûşka mîr Sêvdîn im, navê min Zîn e." Jê pirsî, go, "Tu kî?" Go, "Ez Memê Alan im, kurê padşahê Merxêbzemînê me."

(15) *Malûm*, *mücadele* kirin: evî go, "Oda min e," evî go, "Oda min e."

(16) "*Öyleyse*," go, "*Mademki* tu dibêji, 'Ez xûşka mîr Sêvdîn im,' *malûm*, mêrkê maqûl *eğër* paşa bit, # vezîr vûzaratê wî, kurê wi, -- e -- dîsa xulamê wî hene, *eğër* ko # tu jî şahzade bî, # *malûm*, xedamê te hene. (17) Tu gazî ke xedama xwe, ezê gazî keme xulamê xwe. Eker ku xulamê mi hat, # heyran, ev e tu hatî oda min. (18) *Eğër* ko xulamê min ne, ama xedama te hat, eva mi *tecavûz* kirîye, emê *özür* tev *dilemiş* ken." Go, "Gazî ke, mi *söz* daye te."

(19) Ve Zîné wiha kire gazî:

"O navê xedameke min heye Melek Rihîa-anêye,
Melek Rihîane ti ba min bîne destekî gula-anêye,
fro şahzadek li min mêhwa-anêye."

(20) Sê caran gazî kir, guhdarê e'zîz, nehat. (21) Ewa go, "Melek Rihan nehat, zilamê qenc, Memo," go, "Tu gazî ke xulamê xwe." *Sıra* da # Memê.

(22) Memo wiha kire gazî:

"Navê xulamekî min heye Bengî-îney,
Xulamê min zilamekî pîr emî-îney,
Tu legen û mesîna ji miîra bî-îney,
Du ruke't nivêja subê li min neboñî-îney."

(23) Bengîn ma, tue'cib ma. Heyran go, "Aşayê min," ewa 'aqil awêt, "wallahî," go, "ezê ji bavê wî ra bêjim bila bizewicînit. (24) Heyran sevdâyê zewacê <dayê liil sêrên>. Zemanê xwe *gayp* kirîye. Nizanit ê k'a şew see't çend e. *Hiç* see't danzde dibe du ruke't nivêja subê li min neboŕîne?!"

(25) Bengîné xulam *cevap* da:

"Memo," Bengîn go, "Memo, mabirab tu nabînî selam <davêjê>
Eve şevan e nivê şevan e ne çaxê destnivêjê!"

(26) Zamanê ko xulamê wî *cevap* da, Zîné tue'cib ma, "Ya rabbî!" go, "Heqîqaten tukes bi îşyê te aqlê wî nágehetin." (27) Zanî ko # dîwana # Memê Alan e, *malûm*, bi îrada xaliqê aliyê, ewana gehîştne hevde, bi vî şeklî. (28) Ama, guhdarê e'zîz, zamanê ku Xidir Nebî, Xidir Eylas ew fierdu zîlamê hanê, yanî du melekê min e'smana pişî gotin? Ewan înadin gehandne hev, di vê anê dane, *gelmiyek*¹ # di beŕira *Qaradenizê* da keti bî tengasîyê, ve îmdad # ji xwedê ji wan zîlama xwastin, ew fierdû çûne îmdada wan. (29) Ewana çûne wê derê, ew fierdu, Memo û Zîn, bal hev ma bûn. Zîné ko zanî oda wî ye, jêra teslîm bî.

(30) Memo dîsa wiha ji Bengîné xulam ra got:

"Go Bengîné xulam derî veke, bibîne wisa herdu çava-anêy,
Vê subê dîwanê camêran bite xeberdan û bi dîwa-anêy,
Tu ji boy xwedê şahid ve înkâr neke me'sûqa Memê
Ala-anêye."

(31) Bengîné xulam derî vekir, dîna xwe daye horîyek ji horîyekê cennetê heqîqatennaête înkâr kîrî. (32) "Ya rabbî!" dibê, "Roj nederkevitin, tek şewqa wê ye." *Malûm*, bedewîyâ Memo û Zîn # *meşhûr* e, guhdarê e'zîz. (33) Ew fierdu mane odê ji şere lhev ra xeberdan, *şibhat*² kirin. înadin gustîlê xwe di vê anê # ve

¹=Gemîyek. Gemî = 'ship,' from T gemî.

²=Şohbet. T sohbet etmek = 'to talk.' Sohbet is from Arabic şuhbah *صحبة*, meaning 'friendship.' In Persian it became şuhbat *صحبت*, and came to mean not friendship itself, but rather what friends do when they are together, i.e. talk. The Turks (and Kurds, apparently) took the word from the

destmalê xwe bi hev guhartin. (34) Wexta ku bi hev guhartin, rābîn, rāzan, go, "Ĥeyran, ewehe min xwedê, ez te em gihande hev, lakin bêbextî ji *ara* me da çê nabitin. (35) *Ara* min û te qur'an, şehadê min û te qur'an, bêbextî ji *aramin* te tu nebitin. Şîr danane orta hev, guhdarê e'zîz, rāzan. (36) Wexta ku rāzan, Xidir Nebî, Xidir Eylas # Ĥeyran go, "Min ev Ĥerdu însanê şîrê xammêti danane ber hev: niha rābin eger ku bê emrîya xwedê biken, emê di agirê cehenemê da bişewitin." (37) Hatin dîna xwe daye Ĥeqîqaten Ĥerdu bi <bext û rara> rāzane tekrar mînanê xewnekê. (38) Zîn rakirin ji bajarê Merxêbzemînê danane oda Zînê. Danane Cizîra Botan oda Zînê. Zînê çavê xwe vekir, dîna xwe daye, ne zîlam, ne Memo, tukes tune, ama di tulfîya wê da # gustîlek li ser nivîsiye Memo. (39) Memo çavê xwe vekir xewê, dîna xwe daye Ĥeyran, ew Ĥîrfîya ko dîtî bal tune. **Ey-wah!!** (40) Ewa got, "Kî ye kir, kî ye kir? Bengînê xulam kir! Ji xwedê pêşvatir ji me ji Bengîn tukes bi vê sufa min nizan têda ne. (41) Ewa ev dîtîye, Bengîn bîye. *MuĤakkak* ewa çî kirîye, Bengîn kirîye!" Gazî kire Bengînê xulam.

(42) Guhdarê e'zîz, k'a çî jê ra <got>:

"Memo go Bengîne xweş Bengî-îney,
Ewa şevê tu min dîtî, xatûnê ji mi ra bî-îney,
Tu nanî rabe ku topê çaw hinde çara serê xwe bibî-îney."

(43) *Malûm*, guhdarê e'zîz, **ama!** îşê xwedê mêze kel Memo mînanê xewnekî <wetî>, "Bengînê xulam # nikare înkâr bike, bi çavê xwe dîtîye!" (44) Zan ti ku # agirê e'sqê da serê Memo. Memo <*dedîğîn*> nizanitin bi emrê xwedê ku wiha çê bîye. 'Aqîlê wî Ĥeta li vê derê, guhdarê e'zîz, jê nehate su'al kirinê. *Malûm*, bi emrê xwedê ye jî. (45) Evî zîlamî rābî, xo awête bavê Memo. Bavê Memo # Al-paşa bî, go, "Al-paşa, **ha-a-a!!** Ĥikayê kurê te ewe ye. Ez bibêjim, belê. Ne wisane mi bi çavê xwe dîtîye, lakin bi îrada xwedê ew mesela ha çê bîye! Ti emrê bajêr bide destê min, *çoluk çocuk*ê min hûre, Memo agirê e'sqê da serê *çoluk çocuk*ê min ... serê mi jêke³, *çoluk çocuk*ê min belengaz û perîşan bin." (46) Go, "Emir emir e Bengînê xulame." (47) Bengînê xulam # rābû, delal dane gazî kirin di nava şehîrî dane. Go, "Ĥeçî kesek ku qîzekî wî hebe, *yaşê* wî yanzdeh jî bigoñ be, ew jinê ku em bibêjin

Persians, together with its modified meaning. Such occurrences are quite common. The metathesis in the Kurdish form is noteworthy.

³He corrects himself.

'jinebî' mane, *yaşêwan genç* be, çiyê wan heye wê bifroşe bixemilînin li ber koçka bavê ... li ber koçka kuîrê padşah Memo derbaz be⁴. (48) Memo sêwa xwe li kî bide, evê wê ji xwe hilde." (49) <Ĥeyran deka kî> nake, ew pîrî Ĥeyştê salî <ji hana> heyecanê, rābîn destmala xwe li xwe kirin, çarşefê xwe li xwe(y) kirin, di bazarê çî hebû firotin we xemilandin mînanê qîzekî lêkir. (50) "Ĥeyran," gote, "<te sede te bî şans olarak sêwa wî qaymîş be li serê me jî ke, ewa em bine jîna Memê Alan, kuîrê padşahê Merxêbzemînêye!" _____ anîn ber koçkê derbaz kir. (51) Memo Zîn diye, horiyek ji horiyê cennetê ye, ewanê li ber te derbaz bin mînanê e'rebekî řeşî lêv deqandî jê wetrî.

(52) Tekrar gote Bengîn:

Memo go, "Bengîne xoş Bengî-îney,
 Temamê ciwat û qîzan dicivî-îney,
 Tî li ber oda mi da diboîrîne we ti dê Memo bê'aqil û sewda li
 serî nî-îney,
 _____ qîzina wî tamamê Merxêbzemînê bixapî-îney."

(53) *Tövbe!* Memo qe bera xwe nadê, guhdarê e'zîz. (54) Tekrar rābî, çû xo avête Al-paşa go "Al-paşa, îro ji te, emrê bajêr bide destê min." (55) "Hay hay" go, "Bengîne xulam, lewra ku tu xîramê kuîrê minî Ĥeyat û çî Ĥez biket, emir emirê te ye." (56) Evî rābî delal dane gazî kirinê, go: "îro Al-paşa bi e'skerê xo ve wê heîne geşî û seyranê. Ew kesê ku dixwazit bi *gönüllü olarak*, bira *qatılmış*ê me bibitin."

(57) Çend Ĥieb suwar suwar bûn, berê xwe dane deştê. (58) Bengîne xulam rābî, <wiha> gote li Memo, go, "Memo!" Go, "Can!" (59) Go, "Memo, bavê te bi pîrê esker hilda çû pey me'sûqa te!" **We-e-ell** teze ji Memo xweş hat, 'aqilê wî hate serî. (60) Navê hespê wî # Bor e. *Efendim*, Bor daîma # di tewlêda bîye, rûyê rojê nedîtî. Evê Ĥeywanê daîma *qaytîl* bîye. (61) Evî rābî, kurkê xwe serê xwe kir, di vê qeydê ra li agirê e'sqê li serê da bî, nezani ku qaydê ji lingê da wa *kir<ket?>*. (62) Ama bi vî şeklî hespê xwe suwar bû, bera xwe da deştê ku here bigîhe û eskerê bavê xwe herin me'sûqa Memo bînin bên. (63) Evî rābî, bera xwe da suwar, suwar tamam zivîrî hatin. Ew mabxirab agirê e'sqê serê da qet zivîre. (64) Ĥeyran, em bibêjin *epey çû <ço>*. E'sker tamam zivîrî hat. (65) Agir bi dilê Bengîne xulam ket, go Ĥeyran,

⁴He corrects himself again.

"Xaliqê aliye li vî zilamê hanê rê wiha anîye, lakin aˆayê min <merpekê xira[m/b]> bîne, xwedê jê rabin biçe serê min bilav û serê Memo rabin. (66) Râbî hespê xwe suwar bî, berê xwe da, *efendim*, çû, gihîşte Memo. (67) Wexta gihîşte Memo, go, "Esselamû e'leykum, ya Mem." Zivîrî go, "E'leykum esselam, ser çavan û ser seran!"

(68) Ve # bi stiranê gotê:

"Wesselamu e'leykum ya Memê ca-anê,
Bila serê Bengîné bi *çoluk çocux* bite qurba-anê,
Memo bila tenê neketin serê rê û dirba-anê,
Zamanê <rûştê nav û> welatê xerfê bila nebê jî bêxwey û
bêxuda-anê."

(69) <Lawo> li Memo hiddet hat, Memo wiha cewab dayê:

"Go <_____> qelpê bextê xulama-anê,
Te me'şûqa Memê dîtiye bi herdu çava-anê,
Ji bona aşqa Zînê ez ke[ti]me serê rê û dirba-anê,
Lawo, tuê geŕe here ne <__> *çoluk çocukê* xwe dane <axas
daxwazê xulaman di berê kerek na-anê."

(70) 'Aynî zamanê ku bi vî şeklî jê ra got, Beko, # na --- yanî Bengîné xulam⁵ ze'f jê ra mutee'sir ma # go, "Aˆayê min, diqewimitin, ez *özür dîlemiş* dikim, *malûm ya*, ji biçûkan xeta ji mezinan êda⁶. (71) Bi vî şeklî, hespê wî daîma qeyd kirî, wisa çû heya sê-çar rojan wisa çû heyran. (72) De Memo nizane ka bajarê Cizîra Botan kî derê ye, wê kuda heŕin, ve Memo wê çawa bibîne? (73) Ama # bal Memo ze'f e, bal xaliqê aˆayê tu nîne, guhdarê e'zîz! (74) Ev zilam qederekê çûn, lakin # qeydê lingê hespê bîrî. (75) Bengîné xulam *düşmüş* bî⁷, go, "Ez ji Memo ra bibêjim, 'Heyran, meŕa heywan heywana nedaye, em bêhnekê bidine wan heywana, bila em

⁵He corrects himself again.

⁶A proverb?

⁷More often **duşurmiş bûn** = 'to think' < Turkish düşünmek, even though this appears to be from the Turkish verb düşmek = 'to fall.'

ji parîyekî nan bixun.' (76) Ez bi wî şekî bibêjim, mutleq Memo <ne dîsa li> min bişeydit, lo, xwedê çawa, ez ji wisa." (77) Jê ra negot. Qederekê derbaz bûn, çûn, (78) Hesp bi Memo <rane>, guhdarê e'zîz, bi awayî riwayeta hate gotinê # jê ra ziman hat, (79) ka çi dibêjit, guhdarê e'zîz:

Bor go, "Memo tu nedî selam bi mestî
Hey, mala te bişewite, tu dizgîna min bîye qasekê rawestî,
Hey, mala te bişewite, agirê e'şqê li serê te daye, sewda li
serê te nîne, qeydekê lingê min bîrî, gihand hestî."

(80) Memo go, "Eywah! Eva xwedê ko bi canê min <bi keti bitin>." (81) Kurkê xwe kêşa serê xwe, go, "Hêya hespê min lê lingê wî qenc nebe, tûka sipî li birîna nê, <sê edwat> li canê mi keti bit, ez ji bona Bor ji vê e'rdê narabim." (82) Guhdarê e'zîz, xaliqê alîye vê zû lihev bîne. (83) *Efendim*, Xidir Nebî, Xidir Eylas # herdu # zatê mibarek # heyran go, "Bi îrada xaliqê alîye zîlamê ha ketîye serê, lakin em derdê wî dîsa bi îrada xaliqê alîye belkin derman bikin." (84) 'Aynî deqê dane, zamanê ko # *epey* himmet kir, birîna Bor qenc bû, tûka sipî lê hat. (85) Memo serê xwe rakir, dîna xwe daye, heqîqaten # birîna Bor # sax bîye, ve tûka sipî lê hatiye. (86) Qederekî serê xwe tekrar danan, ewan # herdu zatê *mûbarek* # Bengînê xulam ve hespê ve, Memo bi hespê wî Bor ve, rakir, danî Cizîra Bota li serê sê rêya.

(87) *Efendim*, Memo çavê xwe vekir, dîna xwe d[ay]lê, hêla **hewar!** (88) Heyran qîrçîna darêdarumane, boîna me'nekane, qîre qîra dîkane, vêle vêlê şivan û gavanane, fiir fiira çemek zîra şetê di Cizîra Bota ne, çiyekî xerîb e, *qorman* e, ji Memê ze'f xerîb hat, kur go, "Bengînê xulam he're, rabe, ka em li kîj mekanî ne?" (89) *Malûm ya*, xaliqê alîye ji bal wî tiştek nîne, rabin <bi her sê hatin> qederek <_____> zîlamêkî hatin. (90) Memo silav lê kir, *sorî* jê kir. Evî wiha ji Memo mêze kir, guhdarê e'zîz, ji ber bedewîya Memo ew zîlam çawa ku <merin mêşke> kir serê wî jêkir bi xûna xweda <difilifilit>, 'aynî bi vî şekî ser serê xwe filifitî. (91) Bengîn go, "Memo, su'al ji te ... selam ji te⁸, su'al ji min," go, "heqîqaten bedewîya te ze'f e, millet ji ber vê bedewîya te tee'mil nake, *sersam* dibitin." (92) "Hay hay!" go, "Bengînê xulam bila --" [[interruption]] (93) ... qederekî hatin, hatin serê sê rîyan. Rê bîne sê. (94) Memo ma di teredûdê dane, "*Eceba*," go, "ez kîjan rê da

⁸He corrects himself again.

biçim?" Ama go, <Hez miraze heyran> ezê *dizgîna* hespê <da ma> li ser <bûjan/dûjyar>. (95) Hesp kîjan rê tihêrê, di vê rê da biçim. *Yalnız, sen* gotinê xwe wiha dibêjite hespê, yanî Bor.

" _____ Boro <ke faraşînoy>
Serê wan <he perê> qantirmane xwe bide di rêkeke <jar ji
boy Memo jar derfînoy>"

(97) *Malûm ya*, guhdarê e'zîz, bi vî şekî zaman ku jê ra got, êca Bor jê ra xeber da, go:

"Memo, eker tu ne bajoy bi desta-ane
Tu xulamê < _____ >
< _____ > ezê te bajome tax kê _____ mîrane"
Go, "Memo, eger tu bajoy _____
_____ tu yê yemê bidey min bi kêşane
Ezê te bajome ta xîyara-ane"

(98) *Dizgîna* Bor danî li ser <bûjan>, evê heywanê rîyek jê <rane>, *efendim*, û girt bera xwe da, hate, rast <bol/bûl> hat. (99) Yanî şetê Cizîra Botan *gêçit* heye, guhdarê e'zîz, *rastgele* mêre li ka tê ji wî çemî derbaz be, evî heywanî wisane neçû li derê buhur. He! Qiseta me bête li ser Zînê. Bila Memo <hey der> Borê here were, ka çî şekî wê derbaz be aliyê Cizîrê.

(100) Êca, em ji Zînê hindekî beşî dikin, guhdarê e'zîz. (101) Zemanê ko Zînê çavê xwe vekir, dîna xwe daye, Memo ko li oda wî da nîne. (102) Ewê hîrmetê jî zef ma <di e'dûtê> danê, *malûm*, qisma jina dibê, <paryekî> giran e. (103) Beyan nekir, subê fâbû, ze'f *mûteesir* ma. (104) Melek Rîfîanê go, "Xêr bit, xanima min, îro eñwalek ji te peyda bûye. Dêrdê te çîye?" (105) Go qet "Na!" Go, "Ez xîdama te me, lazim e tu ji mi ra bibêjî," (106) *Malûm*, go <çîstê wa jina> ji xwedê. Ha! Li hikayet, guhdarê e'zîz, mi çawa ji we ra gotî, ewî bi wî şekî hêdîsa xwe ji Melek Rîfîana qîza Bekirê Direwîn xîdama -- e -- Zîna xûşka mîr Sêvdîn e. (107) *Malûm ya*, guhdarê e'zîz, ewî hikaye ko jê ra got, *yalnız* -- e -- qîza Bekirê Direwîn, Melek Rîfîan, *sihirbaz* bî. Çawa *sihirbaz* bî? Rêmil jî diawêt, wexta ku rêmil awêt, dîna xwe daye, mabeyna çil rojan danê, Memo, ev zîlamê ko dibêjîtin wê derkete Cizîra

Botan. (108) Rôja ku sî û nehê danê, rabi, çû bal xanima xwe, go, "Xanima min, îro temam *gencê* me dişne [=diçine] li <barajê> ve [li] şetê Cizîrê, bi îzna me bide, ez jî biçim!" (109) "Hay hay," go, "ser çavê min! Tu jî rabe, hefe!" Ama, rabi, çû li oda Zîne da gustîla Memo ku navê Memo li ser da, destmala Memo kire cêba xwe. (110) *Efendim*, çend cil xwe rā hildan, <ma hina> cilada hat bi derê⁹ şetê Cizîra Botan disekine. Ama, xereza wê ne ku bala wa cil dişo, xereza wê ev e: (111) Zilamê xerib ka ji kîderê derkeve, Memê bibîne, Memê ji xwe rā bîrevîne, guhdarê e'zîz. (112) Ewa ku hate li berê şetê Cizîra Botan, dîna xwe daye, du suwarê <teke> suwar a-a-a [li] dûr xuya kirin. "Ehe!" go, "Wellahî, hebe nebe Memo ewe ye!" (113) Hat, hat, hat, hate raste buhur, derbaz <diwî>, aliyê avê, ama Melek Rîfîan hey <xwe dem dê wanda/ ?zengîya wanda?> digirin. (114) Wexta ku ji bendê girt, Memo go, "Bengîne xulam, ez ku su'alekî ji vê nazenîne bikem, îzna te heye?" Gote ki, "Tu zanî, axayê min!" (115) Memo ji qîza Bekirê E'wan di xaliqê aliyê ku îşan lihev bîne, tîne, guhdarê e'zîz, ku <xira ke>, fiendê bavê kesî nîne çê ke. (116) Jê su'al kir, ka wê çi bêjî:

Memê go, "Werê, nazenîne şikil cindî-î,
Bejna te zirav e, şitêla bî-î,
Tu bi xatirê Alî Muhiemed bike, tu ji me rabe, bêje du'xîf, em
bine mêhwanê kî-î?"

(117) *Malûm*, guhdarê e'zîz, Melek Rîfîan ev *kelime* jî hilda, wiha ji wan zilama rā got:

Go, "Eğer ku tu mîr î, bajo [li] ber derê mîr Sêvdî-în ey,
Eğer tu mêr î, bajo [li] ber derê Çeko û Arîf, Qeretajdî-în ey,
Eğer tu xeberê te hene, bajo [li] ber derê Bekirê Direwî-în
ey."

(118) Memê jê rā go,

Go, "Ey, şikil cin dîye reb il e'lemîne mezin miraza te çê bî-îne,

⁹Cf. T dere = 'brook,' 'stream'; P darreh دەرە = 'valley'

Qedera te serêyekê baş bigerî-îne,
Belê ewara te xêr, roja te [bi] xweş bimirî-îne."

(119) Xatirê xwe jê (lê?) xwastin, guhdarê e'zîz, *devam* kir. Wexta ku *devam* kir, Melek Rîfhanê go, "Hey! Mi ji wan nepirsî, wellahî ewa diqewime Memo bitin!"
(120) Melek Rîfhan pey ket, jê su'al kir:

"Erê," go, "zilamê xerîb min ji we ra, gote, du'xfî
Hîn ji xwe ra min beyan bikin ka hûn kî-îne?"
Wiha <çîye>, "Ez Memê Ala-an im,
Evê dûmahîkê Bengîne xula-am e."

(121) Eywah! <ku' wê ewan> Memo e, <kes berdide/ez berdidim?>! Melek Rîfhanê jê su'al kir:

"<Bu kadar> qelpe bextê paşa-ane,
Hey mala te xirab be, çima naê bira te <odê>, şihadê min û te
qur'a-ane?"

(122) Memo dêna <dîna> xwe daye, ku rûyekî pîs, lêv deqandî, heyran, "*Eğer* ku yê wiha bitin, wellahî, di bajarê melmeketê bavê milyone hebî. (123) Ku'ro dêmek <li xwe bêje li seba vî,> eva reşa pîsa derketibîm <evê/evî> melmeketê hanê. Ku'ro Bengîn lawo, ewa min te dîtî ewa ye!" (124) Bengîn go, "*Tövbe, tövbe, a'xayê min!*" *Devam* kirin. (125) *Devam* kirin, Melek Rîfhanê dîsa pey ket:

Go, "Erê # *yabancı okadar* qelpe bextê paşa-ane!
<O dê> şihadê min û te her qur'a-ane,
A ji te ra destmala te, gustîla tulîyan me jihev guha-ame!"

(126) Memo qederekî *düşmüş* bî, heyran go, "Ji min, ji Bengîne xulam, ji vê hürmetê tukes pê nizanite <dêdî nura> têda ne.!" (127) Zîne ji xidama xwe ra gotiye, eywah qîza Bekirê Direwîne, guhdarê e'zîz, biqewime ku xaliqê aliye emrê wî bi vî şeklî ye, gerek lazim e mêra ji qedere ra ji stiyê [stuyê] xwe xwar kir, guhdarê

e'zîz. (128) Memo rabi, zengîya xwe jê ra *boşanmîş*¹⁰ kir, heyran go, "Nesîbê me ji xwedê emê *gêrî* biçin!" (129) Qederêkî *gêrî* hat, hespê dêna xwe daye, heyha! Memo, qîza Bekirê Direwîn anî # ve, guhdarê e'zîz, bi rîwayeta ku me bihîstî – *tabî*, ewa fierfa qur'anê nîne – çawa hatiye gotinê me ji (jî?) camêran bihîstîye, (130) *tekrar* divê Bor < *gel daha* > xebêrdan kir ka wê çî jê ra bêjî:

Bor go, "Memo tu < _____ > nîni selam bidî-îne
Ewa tu dibêjî, ew nî-îne,
Ewa qîza Bekirê Direwîn e, te dixapî-îne,
<Cadeke> terkîya xwe <dişeqîne>."

(131) Zemanê ku ev *kelime* ji Buhur <Bor> seh kir, Memo, "Weyyy! Heyat (heyak?) û quweta wî hebî," <heft quwet> ji xaliqê aliye hat, wisa li e'rdê da guhdarê e'zîz, ez bibêjim deh, tu bibêjî <heftin lima ku pere sū li hev miş kin>. (132) Nazenîn ma <e'rdê/îevdê>, lakin <nazenîna evî ja> jê ra got, go, "Erê, Memo, Memo, heyran, te ez nebirim, nebirim. Te çima <eseqat> kirim <lo e'hdê we'de> bi car min keti bin, min û bavê min, heyra ku <avranê> di <cavê> min, û bavê min û hebe, heyran, tu negiheyştî vê meqseda xwe." (133) We *devam* kirin, hatin. Wexta ku *devam* kirin, Memo go, "Xulamê min, em bine mêhwanê kî?" (134) "Aşayê min," go, "Tu dizanî. Ji te ra *tarîf* nayê kirinê." (135) "*Öyleyse*" go heyran, "<Kevirê mêran danî, mêr xerab (ke/ket/kir). Mêrkê mêr mêrê bikuje, vê mêrê biwa şêra jî. Lo mêra xwe dawite ber bextê mêra>." (136) Emê heñe mala Qeretajdîn bine mewan. Bera xwe da, <hala> ber derê Qeretajdîn. "Esselamu e'leykum." "E'leykum esselam." (137) *Efendim*, hespê wan zilama hilkişandin hindur dane. Qeretajdîn wiha li Memo fukurî, ji cemala Memo **heyran!** mutefîr ma, *dünya* xwe winda kir! (138) Guhdarê e'zîz, bila Bengîn li wê derê bisene. Ava xwe, nanê xwe bixo, Bengîn haj tu îşî nema. (139) Meydan vêca xwedê hiez bike bibe ya Memo, ya Qeretajdîn. (140) Ewan zelaman gel hev xebêrdan # sufibet kirin, ji subê hetayî merxebê. (141) Heta merxebê ji hev sufibet kirin, ji subheta Memo, heyran, gul

¹⁰cf. Turkish **boşandırmak** = 'ati, eşeği dörtnal ile rahvan arasında koşturmak' [to make a horse or donkey run at a speed between a gallop and an amble]. Attested for the village of Doğanbey, Beyşehir, in the province of Konya, Central Anatolia. See: *Türkiye'de Halk Ağzından Derleme Sözlüğü* (Ankara : Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1963-1982), vol. 2, p. 743.

dihate barîné. Tajdîn jê tu zemana têr nebû. (142) Gu[h]darê e'zîz, çawa ku xaliqê alîye emir kirî ev zelumê hanê, yanî Memo û Zînê fikaya wî hate gotinê, fieta <(h)al> man mêwanê Qeretajdîn, -- e -- Memo bi wî şeklî ji birayê xwe Qeretajdîn rā[ne] *îzah* kir. (143) Wexta ku *îzah* kir, Qeretajdîn mêrkê zana bû, zanî(n) ku belê ew e'şqa ha ji terefê xaliqê alîyê ye. (144) Ama tu îşî mêze kel! Xûşka # Zîneyê jina Qeretajdîn e. Navê wî Sitî ye. Ama Zîn jî nişan kirîya birayê Qeretajdîn, Çeko, e. (144) Wexta ku heyran ev *kelime* hanê ji Memo seh kir, bî *yardımcıyê* Memo, guhdarê e'zîz. (145) Go, "Bira, ez tu destebirayê axiretî, <lo ehd bit>, çi bête ser min, ez *esirgemiş* nekim, heyat wi heyata min ji *dünyayê* bitin." (146) Subheta xwe *dewam* kirin, fieta se'et bî danzdê şevê.

[[Interruption]]

-îye

Pênc deqîqe îzin bide li *düşman* ser kanî-îye

(147) *Malûm*, guhdarê e'zîz, tekrar îzin da çû, çû di nava Xasbaxçe, heyran dîna xwe *daye xatûn Zîn* li ser kanîya şadûrawan rûniştîye, ew *ova* ku jî tazîk dawêje ji qudretê, *bûlbûl* ser gulan ruñiştê jê rā dixûnitin, *efendim Zîn* di halê xwe da daîma *düşmiş* dibitin, Memo aqil û <xîm> xeyalê wê dane. (148) Di pîş alî sekînî, jê rā go:

"Esselamu e'lêkum Xatûn Zî-îney

Ewham û xeyalê ku tu dikêşî # dûr nîne, nêzîk bibî-îney."

(149) Zînê serê xwe rakir, ew wiha lê fukurî, nas nekir, jê rā wiha go:

"Ne ser seran, û ne ser herdu çava-ane

Tu weke <şenwane>

Ezê niha gazî kem mîkanê Botan <min pirtîya dê rakem>

asîma-ane."

(150) Ze'f dilê Memo ma, guhdarê e'zîz, agirê e'şqê li serê didaye. (151) *Tekrar* wiha gotê:

"Weke bareke qelpe bexte qîza mîreka-aney

Odê şhadê min û te her qur'aney

Gustîla tuliya li ser da nivîsiye Memê Ala-aney."

(152) Guhdarê e'zîz, wexta ku serê xwe raker, Memo dî, aqil ji ser çû, qîrîn hat ji kezebê dane alê xwe awête pêsîra Memo, *efendim*, mabeyna niv see'tê nehişar ketne wê derê. (153) Herdu bi hevra rabin, *tekrar* ser kanîya şadûrawan lehîstin bi hev ra, hinday xebardan -- e -- go, "Memo, mi du baq gul kirîne, yek sor e, yek zeî e, heyran, ezê wan fierdu gulan ya sor destê min ê rastîye, ya zeî min ê çepî ye. (154) Ezê hawa bawêjim. Tu xwe bavêje gulan. Eker ku te baqa gulê sor girt, heyran, emê bi *dûnyayê* bigehene mirazê xwe, ama te ya destê min ya zeî girt, ya çepê, emê bin axretê bigehene mirazê xwe. (155) *Efendim*, di vî awayî dane gula xwe avêt, wexta ku avêt, *tesadûf* Memo ya zeî girt. (156) Wexta ku ya zeî girt, Memo piçekî dilê wî ma, jê ra go, "Mabxirab, ewê kirne min te ye de ka xaliqê aliye wê çi binivîse?" Tesellî danê. (157) Xatirê xwe jihev hatin, Memo ji bajêr ... ji Xasbaxçê¹¹ ve ku derkeve, dîna xwe daye, bilbilekî *rût* # *belengaz* # *perîşan* li ser gulê rûniştîye, wisa jê ra dixûnitin, ji kezebê dilane. (158) Eywah! "Kuro," mi go, "Qey *dûnyayê* da *dertlî* ez im. Heyran, ewe heywaneke ji min *dertlî* ye." (159) Evê bilbilê ziman hat, go, "Memo, tu bidî xatirê xwedê, tu serê min û e'sqa gula min *Zîne* xwe da mi nekî, bibêje!" (160) Ka de ji bilbilê ra çi dibêje, guhdarê e'zîz:

Memo go, "Bilbila xweş bilbi-ilê,
Savdayê te yê min xweşti-irê,
Rengê Zîna min li gula te geşti-irê."

(161) Berê xwe da hat li mala Qeretajdîn. *Efendim*, evê rojê wisa kêfxweş bû, wisa ku subhîet kir ji Memê. Memê ji Me-... Tajdîn¹² ra -- Qeretajdîn heft roja *sohbeta* Mem neçû dîwana Qeretajd -- e -- mîr Sêvdîn¹³. (162) Mîr Sêvdîn < > kelime, su'al kir, go, "*Acaba* Qeretajdîn çima naête dîwanê? Diqewimit tiştek ji me

¹¹He corrects himself.

¹²He corrects himself.

¹³He corrects himself.

señ kiri bitin." (163) *Malûm*, Qeretajdîn pehlewane wan biye, yanî xerocdarê¹⁴ miletê biye, daîma pêşîya miletê ew biye, *başpehlewane* # mîr Sêvdîn e.

[[Interruption]] (164) "... xweş hatiye, *misafirê* min heye, ez îro neşeme, ez subê têm." Çûn e'ynî bi vî şeklî ji mîr ra got. (165) Mîr go, "Bila ev *misafirê* xwe bînin # dîwana min." (166) *Efendim*, evî rabi, Memo hilda, ew Memo tev çûne dîwana mîr. (167) "Esselamu e'lêkum," "E'lêkum esselam." Gazî kir, dîna xwe daye, hêqîqatenciqa Qeretajdîn metîhê # Memo kirîye, wesfê # subîeta (?subîeta) # Memo, wesfê # xweşkûkiya ve bedewiya Memo, tukes nikare bide, guhdarê e'zîz. (168) Mîr Sêvdîn jî, Feyeran, wisanî aşîçî bî, îdî ewqalsî. (169) Memo go, "--Çend rōj *misafirê* te heye?" go, "Qeretajdîn?" "--Wellahî," go, "Heft rōj e." "--*Öyleyse*" go, "Tu dizanî, heft rōj e jî *misafirê* me bitin." (170) Qeretajdîn biselkine "Ey," go, "Hayhay, tu zanî, mîrê min."

(171) *Efendim*, heft rōjan ma *misafirê* mîr Sêvdîn. Weku ma *misafirê* mîr Sêvdîn, véca hêrto ev û Zîne hev dibinin. (172) Kêf kêfa Memo ye, guhdarê e'zîz! Memo ji xaliqê aliye tiştê wiha dixwe # di mala Zîne danê. Mîr Sêvdîn ew [bi] xwe ji Memo hêz biket, û bike *misafirê* xwe û hêrto bi Xasbaxçe da lihev hat *görüsmüş* bîn. (173) De ka dayîna xwedê ji kî ra dibê, guhdarê delal!?

(174) *Malûm*, guhdarê e'zîz [[Interruption]] -ne çiyayî fav û nêçîrê. (175) *Malûm*, zamanê ku gone, "Memo # subê em diçne nêçîrê # temamê suwar suwar bin bera xwe <dane # he qolekî we da>," (176) Guhdarê e'zîz, berê nêçîr <isa bûn> herdu dihev neçûn bibînin du qevlan, em bibêjin qevlek bi vî alî, yek bi vî alî !! noqta xwe dida dan orta wê noqtê danê bi hev ra *görüsmüş* dibin. (177) De ka kî nêçîr kirîye bi vî şeklî -- e -- herkesê nêçîra xwe nîşa dida. (178) Zamanê ku jê ra gotin, subê rabi, herkes suwar bûn, bera xwe dane çî herkes aliyekî va çû, **ama** Memo xwe nexweş exist, hêla di nava ciya dane. (179) Wexta hêla nava ciyan, ev, Zîne di oda mîr Sêvdîn ra *görüsmüş* bî. *Al şeftali, ver şeftali, gel keyfin, keyfin gel* (180) <Dê da> mîr Sêvdîn <çwet> çiyayî digere, Qeretajdîn ji qolê¹⁵ dihate, ewana herdu hatin bi hev ra *görüsmüş* bîn, go, "Ka Memo?" (181) "Wellahî," go, "*Mirim*, Memo nexweş e, nehatiye." (182) "*Öyleyse*" go, "bila bê Memo fav û nêçîr ji min

¹⁴According to Bakaev, xerocdar = a) tax-payer; b) head of an economic section or department.

¹⁵According to Izolî, qol = a military unit.

heram bit." E, *tekrar* dizivîre. (183) Temam zivîrîn hatin, *efendim*, bi şîngîna suwara, Sîtiyê xwe gîhande ber derê dîwanê, go, "Memo, mala te xirab e, wellahî mîr Sévdîn [[interruption]] (184) ... temamê xulaman û xizmetkaran hespê wan kişandin, û Beko gel # mîr Sévdîn # û Qeretajdîn ewana ha[ti]ne li dîwana mîr, (185) ama, guhdarê e'zîz, berê # *sobe* tunebûn, bixêrî hebûn, mêrkê maqûl axa begler daîma ber bixêrî ciyê germ bû, yanî di qulçê odê danê, bixêrî çêkiri bûn. (186) Memo jî # xweda ser doşeka mîr Sévdîn e'bayê xo awête pişt xwe, Zîne awête li bin e'bayê, *efendim*, ewan go "Esselamu e'lêkum." (187) Memo kir ku ji ber rabe, go "E'lêkum esselam we rehimetu llah û berekat, *mîrim* ." (188) Wexta ku kir rabit, Zîne paşa kir, "Mala te xera nebit, tu çawa dikey, tê me rezîl key!" (189) Ama Beko E'wan zanî ku Zîne li bin kurkê Memo # di qulçê odê dane. (190) Evê rojê jî, guhdarê e'zîz, *nôbetçiyê* odê Beko E'wan bî. Xulam bî *ya!* (191) Emir da xulamê mayî, go, "Çiqa darê palûtê¹⁶ ê *yaxîlî* hene, hemû îro ji me ra bîne. Axayê min ji raw û nêçîrê zivîriye, cemidiye, ezê li odê germ kem." (192) Guhdarê e'zîz, dibê, wisa ode germ kirîye, Memo ji şerm û fedî german danê. (193) Dibê yek metre xûya Memo ji e'rdê da çûwe. Awayî gotina ku guhdaran me bihistî, guhdarê e'zîz. Memo ze'f mutelîerî, ze'f maxdûr ma. (194) Çend bendê farsî awêtne Qeretajdîn pê - e -- nezani, guhdarê e'zîz, véca ka wê çî şeklî ji birayê xwe Qeretajdîn ra bibêjit, wê çawa jê ra *anlamiş* biket, wê çawa rabit biçitin *yardimê* bidete birayê xwe, guhdarê e'zîz, (195) em bi dîsa gotinê bibêjin:

Mem zêde bû bi xem û meta-ale
 Çû bal gote bira çî ña-ale
 Ema bi îşaret û bi îma
 Pîrsî ji Memê bira bi remz û î-îma
 Bi <tûner du k_____ ji mislê-êta>

¹⁶The following is information about the types of fuel burned in stoves in Armenia, which is basically the same region as that inhabited by the Kurds:

"The two basic forms of fuel available in Armenia were wood and dried dung. Wood burned longer and, if well seasoned, did not smoke very much; the villagers preferred it for the *ojakh* [=oven], but used it sparingly. Dried dung, called *goashgoar* [the form *Keşkûr* exists in Kurdish; my note], burned hotter, but initially smoked a great deal and did not last long. ... Pine cones and dried weeds were also gathered and burned in place of scarce wood. Some oil and gas were available, but they were very expensive and were seldom used for fuel. ... Informant 5, from Kharzeet, said that walnuts, which were abundant in his community, were pressed for lamp oil." [Susie Hoogasian Villa & Mary Kilbourne Matossian. *Armenian Village Life Before 1914*. (Detroit : Wayne State University Press, 1982), pp. 34-5.]

Rabe bi kevira cihad û xeba-at
 Zîn maye di bin kurkê Memê-ê da-ya
 Memê maye bû xiyal û xemê-ê da.

(196) *Malûm* , dîsa jî *anlamış* nebi Qeretajdîn, dîsa Memê wiha gote Qeretajdîn:

Go, "Bira, şev nîne, rî-o-jê
 Yalî dijîminya kê beden <diş xo jê>
 Düşer mufedey xûy ji bedenana davê-êje
 Tu rabe genc û malê zêfîn bisoje

(197) *Malûm* , guhdarê e'zîz, zamanê ku ev *kelime* ji Qeretajdîn ra got, Qeretajdîn eser kir ji cigera wî, "Eywah," go, "Bira, em ketine tengasîyê" -- kezîyê Zînê, di milê e'bayê da nişsa Qeretajdîn da. (198) Qeretajdîn rabi, berê xwe da mala xwe, ka çi dibêje:

Zanî ko qewî xrab e-e eñwal
 Rabi bila ji bezê wî ço-o mal
 Wekî xezeb çûyî li de-erda,
 Zanî ko Sitîyê ligel xebe-er da
 Go, "Rabe Sitî li me bine-yengê
 fro me ligel cewahir û malê xwe cengê
 Bo min, bo te bes e Qur'an û mal nemanê.

(199) Sitîyê go, "Ser bête feraşî-îné
 Mela bixwînit Yasî-îné
 Bi danzde şîran xwîn bibet birî-îné
 Ez agir na, berdeme şaneşîné."
 Tajdîn go, "Sitî mesxe bi dil dilxebe-eran
 Memo û Zîn ketîye nava kitab û fierf û tefsê-êran
 Bil ha yekanê bo tîlne rabin Memo dane li xence-eran."

(200) Sitîyê go, guhdarê e'zîz,
 Sitî gote, "Tajdî-îne,
 Quranê kerîm¹⁷ ji mal derî-îne

¹⁷On the tape it sounds like "Kalamê qedîm" = 'the old songs']

Memo aşiq e, me'sûqa wî Zî-îne
 Tajdîn ji Memo tu zamanan xayîn nî-îne
 Quranê kerîm li mal derfne,
 Bila bitin Memo qurbana Memo landika kuî-îne."

- (201) Agir girt ber xanûma-anan
 Wan kirin gazî û <çima> fişa-anan
 Aqreba û qewm û mile-et hat
 Wan kirin ecayîbeke pîr xe-ebat
 Aga weku mîrî [or u kû li mîre] xulama-ane
 Xalî kirin ev seray û bûsta-ane,
 Ev jî ko bi Zîna vê hewa-arê
 Memê maye fiyîr, gote ya-arê:
- (202) "Rabe, tu here heremsera-ayê
 Da ez biçime agir û nîda-ayê."
 Esbab û temam û defî-îney
 Emlak û cewahir û xezî-îney
 Cumle di feya bira da so-otin
 Navê wî heta niha qencî tête go-otin
 Agir berdaye xanûma-anê
 Cewab gehîşte mîrê Bota-anê
 Hatin hewara şeherê zama-anê
 Tajdîn xilas kirîye Zîne û Memê Ala-anê.

(203) Zamanê ku agir berda <derbanê> xwe, <guîm> bi diwana mîr ket,
 guhdarê e'zîz, got, "Agir girtiye derbanê Qeretajdîn, Nestiran

[end of side one of tape]

[[interruption]] (204) ...ti ji me ji weîa gotîye, guhdarê e'zîz, <sê dan nika vê
 bandê> îşkal bike, temam ha[lt]ne hewarê, mîr jî hat, Memo jî xwe nexweş êxist bi
 evê rojê *ya!* Ew jî rabî pişt tête mal, ku bête hewarê, ama Beko E'wan xwe li salona
 odê danê, fiyran, mabî guhdarî (205) Zamanê ko Zîne li bin e'bayê derket hat çû
 hîram- -- e -- oda xwe -- hîramserayê¹⁸ # ha[lt]ne odê danê, di fiwşê danê, Beko
 herdu dîtin, (206) "E-e-e!" go, "Memo! Ez Beko me, qey min nedizani Zîne li bin

¹⁸He corrects himself.

e'bayê li pişt te bû!" (207) Kuŕo go, "Beko, tu bi xatirê xwedê, lawo, bela xwe ji me wîhîla ket. Tu çî ji me dixwazî? <Biñne>, lawo, em bigehene miraza xwe." (208) Go, "Te *eziyet* daye qîza min, fieta ku ji destê min be, e nahêlim, Memo." (209) Ama Memo hate fiiddetê, *demirek* çawa avêt, parasîyeke *Bekir efendî* li wê derê şkinan. (210) *Bekir efendî* di vê parasîya şkestî berê xwe da, çû mala xwe. Bila stuyê wî jî şkestîya hingî! (211) Çû mala xwe, heft roja sil bî, guhdarê e'zîz, nehate dîwana mîr Sêvdîn. (212) Mîr Sêvdîn jî ze'f ji wî Bekirî] hez kir, -- yanî merfekî direwîn bû, ze'f <mekşeta> wî xweş bû, mîlet jê hez dikir. (213) Cewab şand, go, "Ca bêjne, Bekir bila bê, heft roja ka ev çima naêtin?" (214) Çû bal wî go, "Mîr Sêvdîn divê bila bête dîwanê." "Ko hefe serê mîr Sêvdîn bixu gel mîrantîya wî. Ez naême dîwanê, çünke ez mêrkê go *şereffî* me, ez bêşeref nînim." (215) Kuŕo êca "Çima" go, "lao?" <Bekir? go> "Evî înadîya bo <wey> înadîya mala xwe he(z) ji Zîne dike: wîjdana mîrnî *tañammûl* naket: fieta ku ew li wê derê bitin, ez naême dîwana wî." (216) Çûn jê ra gotin. Mîr hate fiiddetê, "Yo! Ewa çî ye Bekir dibêje?" (217) Gazî Bekir kir, go, "Beko, *eğer* tu subê <t> nekî serê te lêdim." (218) "Hay hay!" go, "a'xayê min! *Tecrûbe* bike!" go, "Tu, Memo, hûn *satranç* bileyzin, mabeyna # bîst û çar deqîçe <bira> ez <bênim/deynim>. Niv see'tê de go ez vî <we so> bikim. *Eğer* ku min ne<bêna>, serê mi ji te ra fielal bitin! Hay hay!" go. (220) Mîr hate fiiddetê, 'aciz bî, êdî nego 'Hej xûşka te Zîne diket,' navê jina mîr Sêvdîn jî Zîn bû, navê xûşka wî jî Zîn bû, guhdarê e'zîz! (221) Ka wê -- e -- mîr Sêvdîn çawa gazî bike, guhdarê e'zîz.

(222) Mîr go, "Memê!"

Go, "Can!"

Go, "Îro ez dixazim, ez tû em satrançek bileyzin."

(223) " *Mîrim* ," go, "Hay hay! Tu çawa hez bikey! ... Em çawa bileyzin?"

Go, " *Yalnız* ," go, "şandixaz {şamdixaz?}"

"Ser çavê *mîrim* !"

(224) Ve mîr bi lûxatê xwe stiranê wiha gote, guhdarê e'zîz:

Mîr rîbû, hate şaneşî-îné

Nêzik e serayê nazenî-îné

Rûnişt we gote pêşikaran:

(225) "Hûn gazî ken li bo -- li bo ya-aran

Tenha ji mîr Memê bixwî-înin

Tajdîn li gel bira nexwî-înin

firo li Memê ezê xede-eb (bi)ke-em

- Sûcekî wî heye ezê ede-eb ke-em
- (226) Mîr gote Memê bi kîn û ke-erbê
 "fro me li gel te ceng û fie-erbê
 Rabe were ji mîr miqa-abil
 Bêşik bi te ra ez im mica-adil
 Şertê mi gel te ê serfî-iraz
 Herçî te divêye ji boy di-ibxaz."
- (227) Hem sohbet <stûhmet> û hem demê Memê-ê bû-û [boyu?]
 Hem şahî wi hem xemê Memê-ê bû-ûn [bo wan?]
 Wan kirin tekelim û xeberdan
 Anîne kişik û texta ji de-erdan
 Sê dest birin ji mîr tema-amî
 Mîfsid vegeŕiya ji wî meqa-amî
- (228) Beko binêr çî hîle ra-akir
 Ew suŕa xef bû ji mîr beya-an kir
 Rêx û fil û kerkedan ku ha-atin
 Dîn mîr û mu'allimê xwe ma-at in
 Wan dî ku Memo bi pend û ba-azê
- (229) Bekir go, "Te *mîrim* du destê ta-azê"
 Bekir go, "*Mîrim*, leyîz kene dest bi do-oy-orin,
 Ya qenc ew e tu Memê cihan li hev bigo-oin."
 Mîr rābû hate cîyê Memê-ê ca-y-ar [=car]
 Mem rābû hate cîyê Zîn lê dîyar.

(230) *Efendim*, zamanê ku bi vî şeklî Beko E'wan cî bi wan dane goîndandinê [sic], hêya ku sê dest -- e -- ve Memo ji mîr bir çû, ev car pişta wî li pencerê bû. (231) Wexta ku ewan cî li hev guhurîn (goîrîn?), çavê Beko E'wan jî hîlê bû. (232) *Efendim*, zamanê ku cî li hev guhurîn, Memo ewha serê xwe kir, dîna xwe daye pencere li jor, yanî şebeş jor tê xuyanê. (233) Beko rābî, çû, gote Zînê, go, "Zînê!", go, "Mala te bişewite, derkewe li pencerê, hey mala bavê te şewitin. (234) Memo Z- -- e -- mîr Sêvdînê birayê te çîqa xweş kişkê <delal> bileyzin. Bide xatirê xwedê, tu bînnêkê naê seyr/seh nakey?" (235) *Efendim*, çû xapan îna, ha dana <te> pencerê. Zamanê ku Zînê wiha lê mêze kir, çavê Memo ma li Zînê, Zînê dît, a-qil ji serê

Memo çû. (236) Memo êdî # ji kişkan bêxeber ma: daîma # hêfza wî, çawê wî ma li kulek û li pencera. (237) Gu[h]darê e'zîz, bêje ka bi stiranê emê çawa ji we ra bêjin:

Çavê Memo dît nazik û nazenî-îne
 Fil û feres ji destê xwe dertî-îne
 Çawê Memo ma li kulek û şûşe şebe-ekan
 Evê malxirabê hespê xwe avête dewsa wan peya-akan
 Mîr bir ji Memê tamam şeş de-estek
 Ji e'şqa Zînê, Memo biye se-erme-y-est [=sermest]

(238) Guhdarê e'zîz, şeş dest mîr temamî ji Memo bir çû. (239) Ama, mîr ji Memo hêz diket, di vê awayê danê ku şeş dest jê bir çû, mîr dîsa gote, go, "Memo! Daxaza xwe bixwaze!" (240) Ama, di wî *arayî* danê, Beko E'wan dîsa çû, gote Zînê, go, "Mala bavê te bişewite, tu qîz î, tu şerm nakî, tu fedî nakî? Tu here bila hendek xanima mezin bê li wan temaşe ketin." (241) *Efendim*, go, "Subê tê biçî malan <xendivê> te -- e -- dibêje xûşka mîr Sêvdîn e # dihere, şerm e, bila xanima mezin bêtin!" Yanî, jina mîr Sêvdîn. (242) Çû, go, "Xanima mezin, çîqa xweş dileyzin, ew hêrdu! Tu behnekê seyr bike, tu bi xatirê xwedê! Çima? Got[în]a min neşkîni!" (243) *Malûm*, xapan îna ev dana şûna (şîna) Zînê. Navê wê Jin [=Zîn] e, ama jina mîr Sêvdîn e. (244) We mîr Sêvdîn wiha gote Memo, dîsa, guhdarê e'zîz:

Mîr gote, "Memo, meleyîz di-ixazî!"
 Mem gote, " *Mîrim*, te çî ye da-axaz?"
 Mîr gote, "Memê, xerez nema-a lê-ye,
 Mexset[al] te çî ye bi keş û fîa-alê."

(245) Dîsa mîr gotê da:

"Şertê min ewe ew: Tu [bidî min?] Zî-înê."

(246) Guhdarê e'zîz, zamanê ku ev *kelime* got, mîr Sêvdîn serê xwe rakir, jina xwe Zînê di pencerêda dît, (247) "Ey!" go, "Qeda bi qelpebextê însanê wî zamanî" go, "însanê şîrê xammêti daîma wiha bête'sl e," go. (248) Hêyran, "me çawa kir mezin ji te mêze dikir, ewê jî hat fieta wê derecê tu ji namûsa mêranê xebera dibêjî. (249) Kuŕo, niha wa Zîn jina min e, hey mala te neşewite!" hêyata hêrs û fiiddetê (250) mîr Sêvdîn ka wê çî bibêjtin:

Mîr ... [[interrupted]]

(251) "*Mîrim*," go, "ya qenc ew e tu û Qeretajdîn lihev werin; Qeretajdîn tu bişîne xeracê salê li ciyekî *başçe* em ê bigirin Memo bi vî çaxî bavêjne zîndanê, fieta ew bê wê ew jî bimire(w). (252) Bi vî şeklî, tu dikarî, *yoksa birden* tu rabî Memo -- e -- vinda bikey qarîşî bibe Qeretajdîn ze'f jê fiex diketin ve qîre me temama bînitin." (253) "Wellahî," go, "Tu baş dibêjî. *En iyisi* me wisa kir." *Tekrar* hatin, hev hatin # dîsa bîna berê subhîatê xwe kirin. (254) Rabû Qeretajdîn emir kir, go, "Tê herf filanderê xeracê salê." (255) Tajdîn <sanê> xeracê salê; wana girtin, destê Memo girtin, awêtne zîndanê, guhdarê e'zîz. (256) Zîdana kevir¹⁹ e, Zîné ah û figan kir, şew nema, rōj nema, çû xwe gehande ewanê ku li binê -- e -- e'rdêda leşma lêdin, du hebê leşemçiyê başê ku wiha *çevik*, *efendim*, suî -- e -- weşart, dîtin fiexê wa zêde-zêde dayê. (257) Bi rōj keşîfî kirin -- e -- zîdana Memo fieta mêr bê li oda Zînéda <de kew ka> çend metrêye. (258) Bi vî şeklî di oda Zînédanê lédan leqem, çûn gihîştne # zîndanê bal Memo. (259) Wexta gehîştne bal Memo, Memo dîna xwe daye li binê e'rdê xirta-xirta ê tê wi deng ê tê go, "Wellahî ewe hebe-nebe li binê e'rdê danê cenawirek e behna însan kirîye <hat ke>, elbet rōja min wihaye <şakir e> ji emrê xwedê ra, guhdarê e'zîz."²⁰ (260) Wexta ku dîna xwe da hat, "Wesselamû e'lêkum ya Memo" "We e'lêkum essalam bira," go, "Tu kîyî? Tu jî bîna min ketî zîndanê?" (261) Go, "Tu îşê xwe mêze ke!" Heyran Zîné Memo di vê zîndanê danê - awayî gotina rîwayeta me bihîstî, guhdarê e'zîz -- dibê, Memo # tam # deh mehan wisa xweyî kir, çawa ku <gürî> ku têda bêxweyî kirinê. (262) Deh mehan rabî Beko, rōjekî çû, go, "Kuîro, wa deh meh e. *Acaba* niha Memo nemirîye?! Ez rabim biçime ser Memo, ka fiawalê wî çiyê, niha mirîye?!" (263) Çû ser derê birê, go, "Memo!" Go, "Çi dibêjî le'în?" Go, "Hîalê te keyfa min?" Go, "<Te bê di bin zêr mêrkê> zîndanê me." (264) Ama # zîndanê Memo wisa ne, fiexran, ji derwe *daha fazla* dihatîye xweyî kirinê." (265) Çû bal mîr, go, "*Mîrim*!" Go, "Can!" Go, "Mêrê girtîyan <bi gîre> *beslemiş* dikey, yan girtîyan <bi gîre> ze'îf dibe, dimire?" (266) "Ev çi xeber?" go, "Here, mala te şewite," go, "Memo wisa xweyî tu dikey tu <e'yn bê> kurê <kodêran> e." (267) Memo li wê derê dîsanê bi şeytanîya Beko derxistin, avêtin zîdana kevir.

¹⁹This is probably a mistake for Zîdana dar[în] = 'a wooden dungeon,' as Mem is later transferred to a Zîdana kevir = 'a stone dungeon.' Moreover, this would agree with what happens in many other versions.

²⁰It was my decision to put the closing quotation marks here.

(268) Zîné tu *kere* li zîndana kevir da nedît, guhdarê e'zîz, mabeyna mehekî danê. (269) Ew zaman [ʔzilam] wisa lê hat, tek hestî-post ma. Tek hestî-post ma, yanzde mehê Qeretajdîn derbaz bî, bî meha danzde, zivîrî hat, cewab dane # Mîr Sêvdîn, go, "Qeretajdîn ji # xeracê salê zivîrî." (270) Beko xwe gehande -- e -- Mîr Sêvdîn, go, "*Mîrim* !" Go, "Çiye?" Go, "*Mîrim* , tu zanî -- e -- Memo hej kî dike, hej kîjan Zîné?" (271) Go, "Ne hej jinê dike?" "Na," go, "Mîrê min, hej xûşka ... [taped over] go, "Memo hej jina te nake, hej xûşka te Zîné dike." (272) "Hey," go, "Mala te bişewite, ya! Kuŕo, maxirab, ewqas jî bêbextî dibe! Te fieta niha çima nedigote me? (273) Me ewqas ezîyet da wî însanê hanê! Kuŕo, " go, "cewabê bidne Zîné, bila du heb def û zurne hilde, here ji xweŕa Zîn -- e -- Memo derfînit!" (274) Cewab dane Zîné, go, "Mîr Sêvdîné birayê te # gotiye 'Bila # du heb def û zurne hilde, min # Zîné da Memo, bila biçit Memo ji xweŕa derfînit!'" (275) *Malûm ya! Kêfa Zîné xweş bî!* Râbû, du heb şande pey [ʔpêş] du heb -- e -- *dawûlcî* hatin # ewana bi def û zurnê lê dîxin # ku herin Memo ji binê bîrê da derfînin. (276) Beko li wê derê dîsa le'îniyê kir, çû li ser bîrê sekinî ser zîndanê, go, "Memo!" Go, "Çi dibêjî, le'în?!" (277) Hin go "Memo! Mizgîniya mi li te! Me Zîné da mêr. Ha Zîné wê niha bi def û zurne bê li ser derê bîrê ji te xatirê xwe bix(w)aze heŕe." (278) "E," go, "Le'în! Heya niha te <bera xweş me [ʔxwe ji me] na wekî> heyan xwedê bila bi serfirazî mirazê wan bike. Bila <xweş ma wek ez> binê bîrêda *zaten* mirîme." (279) Ama qelbê Memo ma li ser dengê dawûlê. Wextekî dîna xwe daye, dengê dawûlê hajê [ʔhejê] li tê, guhdarê e'zîz, bi riwayet ku me bihîstî, em ji weŕa dibêjin, fieta ku dengê dawûlê lêdixê, rûh ji qalip *ayrînuş* dibit. (280) Gehîşt ser derê [ʔdevê] bîrê, Zîné # ji Memoŕa go, "Memo!" Go, "Can!" Go, "Ez hatime te derfînim." (281) "Ey," go, "Mala te bişewite! Tu nehatî min derfîni!" (282) We wiha gotêdanê:

"Memo ez hatime te derfînim
Sebra dilê xwe bibî-înim
Hesreta deh salan bê bîrî-înim."

(283) Memo çend bendê farsî avêtin, yanî got, Zîné jê fe'm nekir, *tekrar* wiha gotê:

"Ey," gotê, "Xatûn Zîn, tu nehatî min derfîni,
Tu hatî xatirê xwe li min bix(w)azî, belê rûha şîrîn ji qalip
bikeşî-îni."

- (284) Guhdarê e'zîz, zamanê ku # du heb # awêtin binê bîrêda Memo ji zîndanê <deynadin> derxistine li ser -- e -- rûyê *dûnyaê* # cewab dane Qeretajdîn.
- (285) Wexta ku Qeretajdîn *görmîş* e şehrîda bû, ama jêra gotin, go, "Beko bi le'niya xwe birayê te awêtne zîndanê, lakin Zînê çû teze ji zîndanê da daynin."
- (286) Ewî dibê bi rîwayeta ku me bihîstî, heta gehîşte li ser derê zîndanê, sed heb Bekir kuştin, navê wan Bekir hê negehandîye Bekirê # E'wan yanî, Beko E'wan.
- (287) Qeretajdîn ze'f ji Memo hez [dilkir, go, "êda xwedê heçî kesek ku navê wî Beko be, ez lêdim bikujim." (288) *Efendim*, zamanê derxistine li ser derê [?devê] birê, xaliqê aliye emaneta xwe jê stand, yanî teqdîr mu'ada wî tamam bî, wefat kir.
- (289) Birayê wî Qeretajdîn gehîşte, dana di nawa -- e -- tabûtekî dar ser serê xwe ge'rand. (290) Ewî zilamî <êdan merê berê sû xwar> go, "Heta ku li bedena <badûnê> Memo nê, ez ewî -- e -- cenaze li ser serê xwe nadanim e'rdê." (291) Şew roj girîya û kalîya, Beko E'wan dişa şeytanîyeke mezin li wê derê kir, rabi, çû [çol] ba li pîrekê, go, "Pîrê, tu rabe, kerkonekî reş, çend heb qalibê sabûnê sipî bi her li derê <çemê şetê> Cizîrê, û, *efendim*, ewî kerkonê reş sabûnê bi serda [?serfa] bihesû.
- (292) *Şayet* Qeretajdîn hate li berde derbaz bî wê *mu'heqqeq diqqeta* wî bikêşe, çûnkî tiştê reş sipî nabe. Wê ew ji te ra bibêje wiha zamanê ku Qeretajdîn wiha ji te ra go, tu jî bibê, 'Mala te neşewite, te diye qe mîrkê mirî rabe? Wekî ku ewa reş e, sipî nabe, *oyleyse* ew mirîye ser serê te jî mirîye, ranabe.'
- (293) Bi teşîqqa wî evê rabi wisa <ki pîrê ko kerkutaneke> reş hilda çû li ber şetê Cizîrê sekînî, du heb sabûnê sipî serda hejandin. (294) *Efendim*, Qeretajdîn hat derbaz bî, *diqqeta* wî kêşa, dîna xwe daye < > pîrekê bê aqil li ber derê -- e -- çem rûniştîye *efendim* sabûnê li ser kerkonê reş dibe tîne.
- (295) "Yaw," go, "Pîrê bidî xatirê xwedê, ewa çî heş e ji te? Ewe reş e, sipî nabe, tu sabûnê ser <dibî tînî>."
- (296) "ê," go, "Madem tu ze'f zana yî, de ka ji xwe binhêre mirîye ser serê te jî mirîye, qe ranabe." *Malûm*, bi emrê xaliqê aliye bî.
- (297) "Haqîqaten," go, "Tu rast dibêjî."
- Îna hat birayê xwe bir çû. Bi e'zîzî defîn kir, bir çû mezela. (298) *Efendim*, Zînê çend gotinê xwe pê ra gotin. De ka çawa dibêje. (299) Piştê mirina Memo dilê wê ze'f şewitî, ama bi rîwayetekê dibêjin çil rojan, bi rîwayetekê dibêjin çil sae'tan <ser> maye, heqîqîya wê her xwedê dizanîtê, guhdarê e'zîz, (300) lakin Zînê wiha jê ra digo:

Go, "Memo <rûya> mi şehîd mi ro-ojan,
Memo li ser *dûnyayê* <ne ve kir û beden> pişko-ojan,
De'nê Memo têda mirnê gel me de'nê navro-ojan."

- (301) Zîn go, "<Hûrîya> mi şehîde berwa-arê,
Li ser *dûnyayê* ne gote min ya-arê
Himmat [?Hürmet] da min <moye> mîne mezin de'nê Memo
çoye neghme de'nê êva-arê."

(302) *Efendim*, zamanê ko min bi vî şeklî çend gotinê xwe jê ra gotin, *malûm*,
, Qeretajdîn < > ji boy Memo gelek *hüzûntû*, gelek *derîf*, gelek *mahzûn* bî. (303)
Bi riwayeta ku me bihistî, em ji we ra bêjin, guhdarê e'zîz, Zînê ji emrê xwedê cî
anî, dibe ku zamanê # Zînê jî bir çûn defîn bîken, ew fiêrdû 'aşîq ba li hev # defîn
kirin, guhdarê e'zîz. (304) Li ser mezelan -- em dibê[n] ziyaretan -- çavê Qeretajdîn bi
Beko E'wan ket. (305) Ve Qeretajdîn dilî wî ze'f şewitî, ka çi jê ra go:

"<Ra> Beko le'în serê bi <me-esan>
Jehîrîye dene di ta-asan
Baîsê aşîq û meqsed û mira-azan."

(306) Qeretajdîn dibê wisa hate fiiddetê, guhdarê e'zîz, dibê: gehîşte Beko,
niyeta wî ew bî, mînanê rûya <por sêwî/pol sêwî> li serê da # bîne, ama ewî çaxî
weta [=?wexta] rakir bi fiêrs û fiiddeta wusan e'rdêda dibê parçiyê -- e -- Beko E'wan
rêbû jî hewa ve. (307) Guhdarê e'zîz, dibê ev çax *tabî ki* me çawa ku bihiste, em jî
we ra dibêjin. (308) Ewa ne fiêrfa Qur'anê ku *yanîş* bitin, me çawa bihistî *malûm*,
em jî ji we ra dibêjin. (309) Dibê ev çaxê xwîna wî wisa dibê pekya çûye ketiye *ara*
Memo û Zînê an hat derîyeke orta <hevkan> dibê, şîn dibe. *Tabî*, min nedîye,
guhdarê e'zîz.

(310) Riwayeta Memo û Zînê bi vî şeklî -- e -- *sonda* xudê -- e -- selamê xwe li
ser temamê guhdara bike, guhdarê e'zîz -- e -- *malûm*, me me'zûr bibînin, (311)
fikaya Memo û Zînê me çawa bihistî, me wisa ji we ra got -- e -- xwedê selametîya
me we, Memo û Zînê fiêdîsa wê bi dengê [... ..] daîma in [=hûn] dikarin [... ..] da ji
xwe ra hildin. (312) Rêfîme li dê û babê gotî û guhdarê ê guhê xwe detê ê ku -- e --

gotî jê guhdarê e'zîz, em xweş tev dîkin bi xatirê we û silam li ser we temama bit <isa>.

{MC-1} [translation]*

< *Tempo: slow and deliberate, pausing(#) often* >

(1) Now we are in the province of Van in the quarter of [...] ¹, and we will tell the dear listeners to the best of our knowledge: May peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah and his blessings. ²

(2) [Memo was the son of the kîjng of Merghebzemin, his father's name was Al-pasha. Al-pasha was the ruler of a kingdom, dear listeners, he was a pasha.

(3) Zîn was the daughter of emirs, that is, the sister of mîr Sêvdîn -- she had no father ³ -- she lived with her brother -- the sister of mîr Sêvdîn, in the city of Jezira Bohtan. This nobleman was from the [line of] rulers of Jezira Bohtan.

(4) My lord, see how God's works come together. (5) Work is very hard for mortals ⁴, but for God it is so easy, it is nothing, dear listeners.

(6) As is known ⁵, once there was one in love in the city of Merghebzemîn, and there was one also in the city of Jezira Bohtan. (7) As is known, dear listeners, by the will of the creator on high, what we have heard ⁶ from the nobles, we can offer you in this form, and you may listen to it.

(8) (He says) ⁷ one day in his sleep, Memo saw Zîn from Jezira Bohtan. This dream came to Mem like a messenger. (9) In this manner, dear listeners, first we will begin [by telling] how they came together.

* Underlined words are in Turkish in the original.

¹Withheld to protect the identity of the teller.

²This blessing is in Arabic.

³i.e., her father was dead.

⁴=lit. "slaves"

⁵or "of course" or "obviously". This is Turkish malûm/malûm, from Arabic ma'lûm معلوم.

⁶=lit. "the hearing which we have heard"

⁷Beginning a new thought with an untranslatable "he says" or "he said" is very common.

(10) (He said) [it is] evening on the mountains,
Two angels from heaven pass night and day in the diwan,
By order of the creator on high they brought [her] and put [her] down in
the city of Merghebzemîn, in the room of Memê Alan.

(11) My lord, when Zîn went to sleep, they put her in Memê Alan's diwan.
[When] Mem wakes up and opens his eyes⁸, he sees a houri from paradise sitting in
hi's diwan ... By God! (12) Mem says, "I wonder is this a dream or is it real? <Ûeya t bû
xebitî dîne> by God it is true.

< *Tempo: faster, few pauses*

(13) He⁹ said, "What person are you? Why have you come to my abode?" She
said, "Strange man, why have you come to my room, to my abode?"

(14) As is known, they asked each other "Who are you?" [She] said, "I am the
sister of mîr Sêvdîn, my name is Zîn." She asked him "Who are you?" [He] said, "I am
Memê Alan, the son of the king of Merghebzemîn."

(15) As is known, they argued: this one said, "It's my room," that one said, "It's
my room."

(16) "In that case," [he] said, "As long as you say 'I am the sister of mîr Sêvdîn,'
as is known, it is reasonable to assume if someone is a pasha, he will have viziers and
ministers, boys -- that is -- servant boys. If you are a princess, as is known, you have
maidservants. (17) You call your maidservant, I'll call my servant boy. If my servant
boy comes, then it is you who have come to my room. (18) If my servant boy doesn't
come, but your maidservant does, then I have trespassed we will beg forgiveness of
one another." He said, "Call [your servant], you have my word."

(19) And this is how Zîn called:

"Oh, Servant of mine named Melek Rihan,
Melek Rihan, bring me a handful of flowers,

⁸=lit. "opened his eyes from sleep"

⁹Ûeyran, =lit. "amazed, in awe, admiring", apparently can go untranslated.

Today a prince is visiting me¹⁰."

(20) She called three times, dear listeners, [but] no one came. (21) She said, "Melek Rihan has not come, fine fellow, Memo," she said, "You call your servant boy." It was Mem's turn.

(22) This is how Mem called:

"Servant of mine named Bengîn,
My servant who is a very loyal fellow,
Bring me basin and pitcher,
Don't let me miss my two prostrations of morning prayers."

(23) Bengîn was dumbfounded, he was. He said, "My lord," he gave advice, "By God," he said, "I'll tell his father to marry him off. (24) The love of marriage has gone to his head. He has been wasting¹¹ time. He doesn't know what time of night it is. At twelve o'clock who ever heard of missing the two prostrations of morning prayers?"

(25) The servant boy Bengîn answered:

"Memo," Bengîn said, "Memo, you poor thing, don't you see,
It's nighttime, midnight, and no time for washing hands¹²."

(26) When his servant boy answered, Zîn was dumbstruck. "My Lord!" she said, "In truth no one can comprehend your works." (27) She knew that [she was at] the diwan of Memê Alan, [3] as is known, by the will of the creator on high, they had been brought together, in this manner. (28) But, dear listeners, when the prophet Khidir, Khidir Eylas [had] those two fellows -- [remember] the two angels from heaven I mentioned earlier? -- when they brought [Mem and Zîn] together, at that very moment, a ship in the Black Sea got into danger, and requested help from God [and] from those fellows, [so] both of them went to help them. (29) [When] they went there,

¹⁰=lit. "is a guest to me."

¹¹or losing

¹²i.e., the ritual ablutions performed before prayer, according to Islamic practice.

the two of them, Mem and Zîn, remained with each other. Zîn, who knew now that it was his room, yielded to him.

(30) Mem once again called his servant boy Bengîn like this:

“(He said) Bengîn my boy open the door, and see with your own eyes,
[What] tomorrow morning will be discussed in the diwan of the nobles,
For the sake of God, you are my witness, so don’t deny Memê Alan’s
beloved.”

(31) The servant by Bengîn opened the door, [and] saw a houri from paradise who in truth could not be denied. (32) “My Lord!” he says, “the sun is not shining, it is just her radiance.” As is known, the beauty of Mem and Zîn is famous, dear listeners. (33) The two of them stayed in the room and chatted. At that moment they exchanged rings and handkerchiefs. (34) After they exchanged them, they were going to bed, [when Mem] said, “By God, you and I have been brought together¹³, but deceit must not come between us. (35) The Quran is between us, the Quran is our witness, may there be no deceit between us. They put a sword between them, dear listeners, and went to sleep. (36) When they had gone to sleep, the prophet Khidir, Khidir Eylas, said, “I have brought these two naive¹⁴ people together: now get up, if they go against God’s command, we will burn in hellfire.” (37) They came and saw that the two were in truth sleeping once again as [in] a dream. (38) They took Zîn from the city of Merghebzemîn and put her in her own room¹⁵. They put her in her own room in Jezira Bohtan. Zîn opened her eyes and looked about: no man, no Mem, there was no one there, but on her finger was a ring with Mem’s name written on it. (39) Memo opened his eyes and woke up¹⁶ and looked around, but the houri he had seen was not around. Good heavens! (40) He said, “Who did it? Who did it? My servant boy Bengîn did it! Besides God, Bengîn and me, no one knows about my secret. (41) The

¹³=lit. “have reached each other”

¹⁴According to Kharoian, the expression **isanê sirê xammêti** (=lit. “people who have sucked raw milk”) means ‘rough, crude, unpolished.’

¹⁵=lit. “in the room of Zîn.”

¹⁶=lit. “opened up his eyes [from] sleep”

[only] one who saw her was Bengîn. Surely whoever did this was Bengîn!" He called his servant boy Bengîn.

(42) Dear listeners, what did he say to him?

Mem said, "Bengîn, good Bengîn,
Last night I saw you; bring me the lady,
If you don't, get up <ku topê çaw hinde> find a way to save your
head¹⁷."

(43) As is known, dear listeners, just look at God's work! Memo <mîrane xewnekî wetî>, "The servant boy Bengîn cannot deny it, he saw her with his own eyes!" (44) He knows that the ardor of love had come over Memo. Memo did not know that this had happened by divine command. His sense, up to that point, dear listeners, <had not been asked>. As is known, it is by God's command. (45) The fellow [i=Bengîn] ran to Mem's father. Mem's father was Al-Pasha. [Bengîn] said, "Al-Pasha, ha-a-a! This is your son's story; Yes, let me tell [you], I haven't seen it with my own eyes, but this matter has come to pass through God's will! Give me command over the city, my children are small, in the heat¹⁸ of love, Memo wants to chop off my children's ... my head; my children will be wretched and miserable." (46) [Al-Pasha] said, "An order is an order, my boy Bengîn." (47) The servant boy Bengîn sent heralds to go announcing throughout the city that 'Everyone who has a daughter whose age is over eleven, [and] those women who(m) we call *widows* who are young in age, should sell all they have and dress them up, then let them pass by the palace of the father of ... let them pass by the palace of the son of the king. (48) Whoever Mem gives his apple to, will become his wife¹⁹. (49) _____ Eighty year-old women, out of excitement, put on their kerchiefs, put on their headscarves, sold what they had in the market, and adorned themselves [to look] like girls. (50) Each one said, "If I am lucky, the apple might land on my head, and I could become the wife of Memê

¹⁷This line is unclear from 'get up' onward. ZK-3 has the following at this point: "... You are my servant, you are always at my doorway, everything -- be it jinn or fairy -- that is inside, must have passed by you. Go and get her! *If you don't, you will see a great tragedy with you own eyes!*"

¹⁸=lit. "fire"

¹⁹=lit "he will take her for himself."

Alan, the son of the king of Merghebzemin!" They took them in front of the palace.
 (51) Mem saw [only] Zîn, a houri from paradise, all the rest passed by him like an Arab woman with cracked lips.

(52) Once again he said to Bengîn,

Mem said, "Bengîn, good Bengîn,
 The entire group of girls is gathering
 You will make them pass by my room, and you will [do something to]
 Mem the senseless one,
 _____ his girls will fool all of Merghebzemin.

(53) What a pity! Mem paid no attention, dear listeners. (54) He [=Bengîn] got up and went and threw himself at Al-pasha, saying, "Today give into my hands the control of the city." (55) "Gladly," he said, "Bengîn my boy, if you can find out who my son loves, it is yours to rule." (56) He had the town heralds announce: "To day Al-pasha and his troops wil go out riding. Anyone who wishes to volunteer, may join us."

(57) Some horsemen mounted their steeds and headed for the wilderness. (58) Bengîn went and said to Mem, "Memo!" [Mem] said, "Yes?" (59) [Bengîn] said, "Memo, your father has gone after your beloved with a troop of soldiers!" **Well!** now Mem was delighted, [and] his sense came back to him. (60) His horse's name is Bor. Let's see, Bor was always in the stable, he has never seen the light of day. That animal was chained up all the time. (61) He (=Mem) put his cloak on over his head, in the heat of passion he did not notice the chains, he did not know that chains were on his [horse's] legs. (62) In this manner he mounted his horse and headed for the wilderness, to catch up with his father's troops, to bring back Memo's beloved. (63) He headed for the horsemen, [and] they all turned back. [But] that poor soul, with the heat of love in his head, did not turn back. (64) Let's say that he went on for quite a bit. All the troops turned back. (65) Bengîn's heart was burning with pity, he said, "The creator on high has taken him on this trip, but my lord <merpekê xira[ø/m/b] bîne>, may I lose my head (?). (66) He got on his horse, set out, efendim, went and caught up with Memo. (67) When he reached Mem, he said, "Peace be upon you, Mem." [Mem] turned and said, "And upon you be peace, welcome!"

(68) And he said in song:

"And peace be upon you, o Mem, my soul,
 May Bengîn's head be a sacrifice to his children,
 Just so long as Mem doesn't take to the roads
 _____ may it not be without master."

(69) Mem was angered, he answered as follows:

"He said, _____ fickle luck of the boys,
 You have seen Mem's beloved with your own eyes
 Because of [my] love for Zîn, I have taken to the highway
 Boy, you turn around and go [home] _____"

(70) At the same time that he said that to him in that way, Beko, no -- I mean Bengîn the boy was very moved and said, "My Lord, may I ask forgiveness, as is known, <ji biçûkan xeta, ji mezinan êda>. (71) Thus with his horse in chains the whole time, he went on like that for another three or four days. (72) Mem does not know where the city of Jezira Bohtan is; how will he get there, how will Mem find it? (73) Although it seems like a big deal to Memo, it is nothing for the creator on high, dear listeners! (74) The men went on a while, but the chains cut the horse's feet. (75) Bengîn the boy thought to himself, "I'll say to Mem, 'My dear boy, it was not beasts that gave us beasts (?), let's give our beasts a breather, so that we too can eat a piece of bread.' (76) If I say it in that way, Memo will certainly not get angry at me. Why, whatever is [good for] God is [good for] me too. (77) But he didn't say anything to him. They continued on their way. (78) As for the horse with Mem, dear listeners, I have heard it said that the horse was empowered to speak, (79) and this is what he said, dear listeners:

Bor said, "Memo, you don't give greeting, as if drunk,
 Hey, may your house burn down, would you let up a little on my reins,
 Hey, may your house burn down, the fire of passion is in your head,
 there is no sense in your head, the chain has cut my leg, it has
 reached the bone."

(80) Memo said, "Oh my! It is God who has fallen on my soul (?)." (81) He pulled his cloak up over his head, and said, "Until my horse's leg gets better, until white hair grows over the wound, no matter what befalls my soul, I won't get up off the ground for Bor's sake." (82) Dear listeners, the creator on high brings this about quickly. (83) Well, Khidir the prophet, Khidir Eylas, both blessed beings, said, "By the will of the creator on high, this man has fallen on his head (=down), but by God's will perhaps we can cure his ills." (84) At that very moment, when he showed a good deal of magnanimity (or, exerted himself a good deal), Bor's wound healed, and white hair grew over it. (85) Memo raised his head, and took a look: in truth Bor's wound had healed, and white hair had grown over it! (86) They put their heads down (=rested) again for a while; those two blessed beings picked up Bengîn the boy and his horse, and Memo and his horse Bor, and brought them to Jezira Bohtan, where three roads meet.

(87) Well, Mem opened his eyes, and took a look: Good heavens! (88) There was the creaking of trees, the neighing of hack horses, the crowing of roosters, the lowing of shepherds and cowherds, the rushing of a river, because there is a river in Jezira Bohtan. A strange new place. It seemed very strange to Mem; the fellow said, "Bengîn my boy, come on and get up; let's find out what place we are in!" (89) As is known, it is nothing for the creator on high; they got up, and went on a little until they came to a man. (90) Memo greeted him and asked him: [where they were]. When he took one look at Memo, dear listeneres, because of Memo's beauty, this man, as when <a sheep?> is beheaded and rolls around in its own blood, in just this way his head rolled around. (91) Bengîn said, "Memo, you asked -- you did the greeting, I'll do the asking," he said, "in truth your beauty is great, people won't be able to endure your beauty, they will go crazy." (92) "All right!" [Mem] said, "Bengîn my boy, let --" [[interruption]] (93) ... they went a little until they came to three roads. The road split into three. (94) Memo hesitated. "I wonder," he said, "which road I should take?" He said, (95) "<I'll let the horse decide> Whichever road he chooses, I'll take that road. (96) Only, he tells this to the horse, i.e. Bor.

" _____ Bor <ke faraşînoy>
<There's a fork in the road> choose the road <for Mem>"

(97) As is known, dear listeners, after he said this to him, then Bor spoke and said:

"Memo, if you don't drive me on with your hands,
 You give me a servant _____
 _____ I'll drive you to the quarter of _____ emirs.
 And Mem, if you drive me on with spurs,
 Give me food (or, a mouthbit) _____
 I'll drive you to _____."

(98) He put Bor's bridle on the _____, and the animal rode on a road, well, and set out, coming straight on. (99) The river of Jezira Bohtan has a ford, dear listeners, one comes to cross that river anywhere, this animal did not go to the place of crossing. Heh! He goes back and forth, not sure how to cross to the side of Jezira Bohtan.

(100) Now we will speak a little about Zîn, dear listeners. (101) When Zîn opened her eyes, she saw that she was not in Mem's room. (102) <The lady was very bewildered>: as is known, a woman's lot is a grave lot. (103) She didn't explain/show it, she got up in the morning, and was very upset. (104) Melek Rihan said, "What's wrong, my Lady, something has come over you today. What is troubling you?" (105) [Zîn] emphatically said, "No!" [Melek Rihan] said, "I am your servant, you must tell me!" (106) As is known, <go çistê was jina> is from God. Hah! The story, dear listeners, as I have told it to you, in the same way she [told it] to Melek Rihan, the daughter of Bekir the Liar, the servant of Zîn sister of mîr Sêvdîn. (107) As is known, dear listeners, she told her the story, only -- uh -- the daughter of Bekir the Liar, Melek Rihan, was a sorceress How was she a sorceress? She threw dice, and when she did, she could see that within forty days, Memo, the man [Zîn] was talking about, would get to Jezira Bohtan. (108) On the thirty ninth day, she went to her mistress and said, "My Lady, today all our young people are going down to the river of Jezira, please give me permission, so that I can go too!" (109) "Certainly!" said [Zîn], "gladly! You go too!" But she went to Zîn's room, and took Mem's ring, which had his name written on it, and his handkerchief, and put them in her pocket. (110) Well, she took some [dirty] clothes, and went and stood by the river of Jezira Bohtan. However, she did not intend to wash the laundry, her intention was this: (111) Wherever a stranger comes

from, she will see Mem, and escape with him, dear listeners. (112) When she came to the bank of the river of Jezira Bohtan, she could see two horsemen visible off in the distance. "Aha!" she said, "By God, that has got to be Memo!" (113) He came, came, came, he came to the ford, to cross over the river, but Melek Rihan caught hold of their reins. (114) When she caught hold of their reins, Memo said, "Bengin my boy, do I have your permission to ask that gentle one a question?" He answered, "You know best, my Lord!" (115) If the creator on high, who causes things to happen, dear listeners, causes something bad to happen, no one dare put them aright: Memo [went up to] the daughter of Bekir Awan. (116) He asked her [a question]: here's what he said:

Mem said, "O gentle one, of lovely form,
Your stature is slender, a young willow,
For the sake of Ali [and] Muhammad, tell me straight out, whose house
should we stay at?²⁰"

(117) Naturally, dear listeners, Melek Rihan picked up on his words, and here's what she said to these [two] men:

She said, "If you are a prince, ride to the gate of mîr Sêvdîn,
If you are a man, ride to the gate of Cheko and Arif, Qeretajdîn,
If you have nothing to say, ride to the gate of Bekir the Liar."

(118) Mem said to her,

He said, "Hey, jinn-shaped, may the Lord of heaven bring your desires
topass,
<Qedera te serê yekê baş bigeñine>
Good evening to you, may you have a good day."

(119) They took their leave of her, dear listeners, and continued on their way. When they continued on their way, Melek Rihan said, "Hey! I didn't ask them; By God, I bet that was Memo!" (120) Melek Rihan ran after him, and asked him:

²⁰=lit. "whose guest should we be?"

“O strange man, I have told you the truth,
 Disclose your identity to me, who are you?”
 <He spoke> thus, “I am Memê Alan,
 This other one is Bengin my boy.”

(121) Oh my! <“One of them was Memo, and I let him go!”> Melek Rihan asked him:

“Hey <so much fraud> of the pashas,
 May your house be ruined, why don't you recall the room, and your and
 my oath on the Koran?”

(122) Memo took a look and saw a dirty face and cracked lips. Dumbfounded, “If this is so, by God, in my father's kingdom there were millions like this one. (123) Oh boy! This means,” he said to himself, “I have come to this kingdom for this swarthy, dirty one. Bengin lad, the one I saw was this one!” (124) Bengin said, “A pity, a pity, my Lord!” And they continued on their way. (125) They continued on their way, Melek Rihan once again ran after them:

She said, “O stranger, <so much fraud> of the pashas,
 What of your oath and mine on the Koran,
 Here is your handkerchief, we exchanged fiddings!”

(126) Memo thought for a while, then said, “Except for me, Bengin my boy, and this woman, nobody knows about it.” (127) Zin told her maidservant. Oh my! The daughter of Bekir the Liar, dear listeners; it could happen that this is the order of the creator on high, men must bow their heads before destiny, dear listeners. (128) Memo set [his horse] to galloping with his spurs, and said, “It is our fate from God that we go back home!” (129) He turned around and started back, when the horse looked and, lo and behold! Memo had taken the daughter of Bekir the Liar, and, dear listeners, in the version that we heard -- of course, this is not a verse of the Koran -- as I heard it told by the nobles, (130) Once again Bor was made to speak and here's what he said:

Bor said, "Memo, you _____ give greeting,
 The one you are talking about is not this one,
 This is the daughter of Bekir the liar, she is fooling you,
 <The Turkish witch is shaking herself.>"

(131) When he heard these words from Bor, Memo [said], "Hey! Strength and life to you!" Seven [kinds of] strength came from the creator on high, so also on earth, dear listeners, I might even say ten, you say <_____>. (132) The gentle one ended up on the ground, but she said to him, "Okay, Memo, so you won't take me. Why did you <drop> me <lo e'hdê we'de bi car min keti bin> if my father and I can help it, you won't achieve your desire." (133) Then they (=Mem and Bengîn) continued on their way. Why they continued on their way, Memo said, "My boy, whose house should we stay at?" (134) "My Lord," said [Bengîn], "You know best. You are not to be directed in this matter." (135) "In that case," he said, "<Kevirê mêran danî, mêr xerab (ke/ket/kir). Mêrkê mêr mêrê bikuje, vê mêrê biwa şêra jî. Lo mêra xwe dawite ber bextê mêra>" (136) Let's go to Qeretajdîn's house, let's be his guests. They set out and stopped at Qeretajdîn's gate. "Peace be upon you!" "Upon you be peace!" (137) Well, they (=Qeretajdîn's servants) took hold of these men's horses and brought them inside. When Qeretajdîn beheld Memo, he was awestruck by his beauty, he lost track of where he was! (138) Dear listeners, let Bengîn stay there. Let him drink water and eat his food; Bengîn was aware of nothing. (139) By God's will, let us focus on Memo and Qeretajdîn. (140) These [two] men talked together, they chatted, from morning until evening. (141) Until evening they chatted, roses rained from Memo's words. Tajdîn never got tired of them. (142) Dear listeners, what the creator on high had ordained for these persons, that is Memo and Zîn, he told the story [from the start] until they became Qeretajdîn's guests -- uh -- Memo explained thus to his brother Qeretajdîn. (143) When he had explained it, Qeretajdîn, who was a smart man, understood that indeed this love was from the creator on high. (144) But just look at the thing! Zîn's sister was Qeretajdîn's wife. Her name was Sîtî. Moreover, Zîn was the fiancée of Qeretajdîn's brother Çeko. (144) When [Qeretajdîn] heard these words from Memo, he decided to help Memo, dear listeners. (145) He said, "Brother, you and I are eternal bloodbrothers, let's make a pact that whatever happens to me, I will spare nothing, my life is <expendable>." (146) They continued their chatting until twelve o'clock at night.

[Interruption]

Allow the enemy five minutes at the well

(147) Of course, dear listeners, he gave him permission, so he went to the private garden, and saw Lady Zîn sitting at the fountain, <ew *ova* ku jî tazîk dawêje ji qudretê> a nightingale sat over the roses and sang to her, well Zîn was constantly thinking to herself, Memo was in her thoughts. (148) He stood behind her, and said to her:

"Peace be upon you Lady Zîn,
The dreams you are undergoing are not far off, bring them closer."

(149) Zîn lifted her head, she looked at him but did not recognize him, and spoke to him thus:

"You are most unwelcome,
You are like <>
If I were to call the people of Bohtan, <I would raise my masses> to the
heavens."

(150) Memo's feelings were hurt, dear listeners, the fire of passion was going to his head. (151) Again he spoke thus:

"<Such unreliability from the> daughter of princes,
The room, the Koran is my and your witness,
The fingerring on which is written Memê Alan."

(152) Dear listeners, when she lifted her head and saw Memo, all sense left her head, a scream came from deep inside her, and she jumped into Memo's embrace, and for about half an hour they fell down in a swoon right there. (153) The two of them got up, went and frolicked at the fountainhead, then she spoke -- uh -- she said, "Memo, I have bought two bouquets of flowers, one is red, one is yellow; the red ones are in my right hand, the yellow ones in my left hand. (154) I will throw them into the air; you go after the flowers. If you catch the bouquet of red flowers, we will achieve our desire in this world, but if you catch the yellow ones from my left hand, we will achieve our

desire in the next world. (155) Well, in this fashion she threw her flowers; when she threw them, as luck would have it Memo caught the yellow ones. (156) When he caught the yellow ones, Memo was a little disappointed, [she] said to him, "You poor thing, this was only your and my doing; I wonder what the creator on high will decree²¹?" She tried to comfort him. (157) They said good bye to one another, Memo was about to leave the city ... [I mean] the garden, when he noticed a naked, wretched, miserable nightingale sitting on a rosebush, singing to him from the bottom of its heart. (158) My goodness! "Boy," I said, "I thought I was the only one in the world with problems, but this creature is in a worse state than I." (159) The nightingale spoke, saying, "Memo, for God's sake, <tell me that you won't let anything happen to my beloved Zîn!>" (160) Let's see what he tells the nightingale, dear listeners:

Memo said, "Nightingale, good nightingale,
Your love is better than mine,
Zîn's color is brighter than your roses."

(161) He left [the garden] and came to Qeretajdîn's house. Well, that day he was so happy, he chatted with Mem. Mem [said] to Me- ... Tajdîn -- for seven days Qeretajdîn was so wrapped up in talking with Mem that he didn't go the Qeretajd -- uh -- to Mîr Sêvdîn's diwan.²² (162) Mîr Sêvdîn asked, "I wonder why Qeretajdîn has not been coming to the diwan? <Perhaps he has heard something from us>." (163) As is known, Qeretajdîn was their champion, that is he was <the head of the people's economic section>²³, he was always sympathetic to the people, he was Mîr Sêvdîn's top champion.

[[interruption]] (164) "... welcome, I have a guest, I cannot not [come] today, I will come tomorrow." They went and told the mîr exactly what he had said. (165) The mîr said, "Let them bring their guest to my diwan." (166) Well, he took Memo, and

²¹=lit. 'write'

²²Throughout this sentence the informant keeps getting the names of the characters mixed up. Perhaps he is tired or distracted.

²³=tax collector? Tax collectors are generally detested rather than beloved. In other versions of M&Z Qeretajdîn is sent to collect taxes from a tribe that has been delinquent about paying tribute. Also, the mîr may have needed Qeretajdîn to intercede with people coming to the court with complaints.

together with him they went to the mîr's diwan. (167) <After exchanging greetings> [the mîr] saw exactly how right Qeretajdîn had been to praise him; no one can properly describe Memo's way of speaking, Memo's outstanding beauty, dear listeners. (168) Mîr Sêvdîn was as amazed as he was enamored [of Mem]. (169) Memo²⁴ said, "How long have you had this guest?" Qeretajdîn said, "By God," he said, "it's been seven days now." "In that case," [the mîr] said, "let him be my guest for seven days also." (170) Qeretajdîn stopped, "Um," he said, "Okay, you know [best], my mîr."

(171) Well, for seven days he was Mîr Sêvdîn's guest. While he was Mîr Sêvdîn's guest, he and Zîn saw each other every day. (172) Memo's joy knew no bounds, dear listeners! That Memo could receive²⁵ such a thing from the creator on high, to be in Zîn's house, that Mîr Sêvdîn would himself be so fond of Memo as to make him his guest, so that everyday [he and Zîn] could go see each other in the private garden. (173) Whom could he tell about God's gift [to him], lovely listeners?

(174) Of course, dear listeners, [[interruption]] ... to the mountains for hunting. (175) Of course, when they said, 'Memo, tomorrow we are going hunting, all the horsemen should mount [their horses] and head for <their unit>' (176) Dear listeners, formerly hunts were like that, the two [units?] did not go together; imagine two groups, let's say a group on this side, and one on that side, with a point in the middle; from that point they could see each other. (177) In that way they could see who caught what -- uh -- everyone would show his quarry. (178) When they told him [about the hunt], in the morning everyone got up and mounted [their horses], and headed for his place, but Memo pretended to be sick, and stayed in bed. (179) When he stayed in bed, he and Zîn saw each other in Mîr Sêvdîn's room. Take a peach, give a peach, come pleasure, pleasure come! (180) While Mîr Sêvdîn was roaming the mountains, Qeretajdîn came from his unit, and the two of them saw one another; [the mîr] said, "Where is Memo?" (181) "Well, you see," [Qeretajdîn] said, "my Mîr, Memo is sick, he didn't come." (182) "In that case," [the mîr] said, "may I be forbidden to hunt without Memo." So he turned around [and went home]. (183) Everyone turned around and came home; well, with the clatter of horsemen, Sifî went to the doorway of the diwan, and said, "Memo, you poor thing, Mîr Sêvdîn [[interruption]] (184) ... all the servants

²⁴This must be a mistake for 'Mîr Sêvdîn.'

²⁵=lit. 'eat'

and attendants tied up their horses, and Beko came to the mîr's diwan with Mir Sévdîn and Qeretajdîn, (185) but, dear listeners, formerly there were no stoves, there were hearths, a reasonable man, aghas and begs -- there was always a warm place beside the hearth -- in other words, in the corner of the room they built a hearth. (186) As for Memo on Mir Sévdîn's couch²⁶, he threw his cloak over his back, and threw Zîn under the cloak; well, they [=Beko and company] said, "Peace be upon you." (187) Memo was about to get up, saying "Upon you peace and the mercy of God and blessings, my Mir." (188) When he was just about to get up, Zîn said from behind, "Are you crazy!? What are you doing, do you want to ruin my name?" (189) But Beko Awan that Zîn was under Mem's cloak in the corner of the room. (190) What's more, dear listeners, on that day it was Beko Awan's turn to look after the room. He was a servant, after all! (191) He gave orders to the other servant, saying, "Today bring me as much oily oak wood as you can find!" My master has come back from hunting and is very cold, I will heat up the room." (192) Dear listeners, the room was made very hot indeed, and Memo was in the heat of shame and disgrace. (193) You might say that a meter of sweat flowed from Memo onto the floor. This is the way I heard it told, dear listeners. Memo felt very perplexed, very much wronged. (194) He recited some Persian verses to Qeretajdîn -- uh -- he didn't know [what was happening], dear listeners; how should [Mem] tell his brother Qeretajdîn, how should he make him understand that he should go help his brother, dear listeners. (195) Let's say it like this:

Mem was overcome with worry and concern,
 He went and said, "Brother, what is the situation?"
 But with gestures and signals,
 He asked Mem his brother with hints and signals,
 < _____ >
 Get up with the stones of effort and toil,
 Zîn is stuck beneath Mem's cloak
 Mem is stuck with care and worry.

(196) Naturally, Qeretajdîn still did not understand, so Mem spoke thus to Qeretajdîn:

²⁶=lit. 'mattress'

He said, "Brother, it is daytime, not night,
 <_> enmity <_____>
 <_____>
 You set fire to your treasury and house

(197) Naturally, dear listeners, when he said these words to Qeretajdîn, it affected Qeretajdîn deep inside, "Oh my!" he said, "we are in trouble!" and he showed Zîn's braids to Qeretajdîn from the sleeve of the cloak. (198) Qeretajdîn got up, and headed for home; let's see what he said:

He knew that matters were very bad
 He got up and hastily went home
 Like the wrath of God he ran inside,
 He knew he had to speak with Sîfî.
 He said, "Get up Sîfî, <li me bin-yengê>
 Today we [will wage] war on our jewels and wealth,
 For me and you the Koran is enough, our wealth won't remain.

(199) Sîfî said, "<Ser bête ferasîn>
 May the mullâh recite [the Koranic chapter] Yasîn,
 With twelve swords may blood be spilt²⁷,
 I won't set fire to the palace."
 Tajdîn said, "Sîfî, [this is no time for joking]
 Memo and Zîn [are in danger of coming before the law]
 For this one thing, they may run Memo through with dagger."

(200) Sîfî said, dear listeners:

Sîfî said, "Tajdîn,
 Take the holy Kuran out of the house,
 Memo is in love, his beloved is Zîn,

²⁷=lit. 'cut'

- Tajdîn has never betrayed Memo,
 Take the holy Kuran from the house,
 May our child's cradle be a sacrifice to Memo."
- (201) They set fire to the manor,
 They shouted and screamed,
 Relatives and people and folks came,
 They [put much effort into this calamity]
 Aghas and servants of emirs
 Vacated that palace and garden
 [At the gravity of the call for help]
 Mem was astounded, he said to his beloved,
- (202) "You get up and go to the women's quarters,
 So that I may go to the fire and the call for help."
 Clothes and all treasures,
 Property and jewels and goods,
 He burned them all for the sake of his brother,
 Until now his name is still remembered in goodness
 He set fire to his manor
 News reach the emir of Bohtan
 They went to the summons of the city of time,
 Tajdîn rescued Zîn and Memê Alan.

(203) When he set fire to his court, the rumbling reached the Mîr's diwan, dear listeners, they said, "Qeretajdîn's court has caught on fire, no songs ...

[end of side one of tape]

[[interruption]] (204) ... I've told you, dear listeners, <sê dan nika vê bandê îşkal bike>, they all answered the call for help, even the mîr came. Remember that Memo had pretended to be sick that day? He too got up and came to the house, to answer the call for help, but Beko Awan had stayed behind in the parlor, to spy on them. (205) When Zîn came out from beneath the cloak, she went to the harem- -- uh -- to her room -- to the harem (women's quarters): when they came to that room, when they were in the yard, Beko saw the two of them. (206) "Hey-y-y!" he said, "Memo! I am Beko, do you think I didn't know that Zîn was under the cloak, behind you?" (207) The boy said, "Beko, [it must be God's will that this calamity has befallen us!] What do

you want from us? You'll see, we will achieve our desire." (208) [Beko] said, "You have made my daughter suffer, as far as it is within my power, I won't let you, Memo." (209) Memo got good and mad, he threw a piece of iron with such force that one of Bekir Efendi's ribs was broken on the spot. (210) Bekir Efendi headed for home with his broken rib. May his neck be broken in addition. (211) He went home, and was mad for seven days, dear listeners, and did not come to mîr Sêvdîn's diwan. (212) Mîr Sêvdîn was very fond of this Bekir, – true, he was a liar, but his <mekşet> was good, and people liked him. (213) He sent word [to Beko], saying, "Tell Bekir to come; why hasn't he come for the last seven days?" (214) [A servant] went to him and said, "Mîr Sêvdîn says that he (=Beko) should come to the diwan." "Go eat Mîr Sêvdîn's head, together with his manliness. I am not coming to the diwan, because I am a man of honor, I am not dishonorable." (215) "Why [won't you come?]" he said. "<Evi înadîya bo wey înadîya mala xwe> is in love with Zîn: my conscience cannot bear it; as long as he is there, I am not coming to his diwan." (216) They went and told him (=mîr Sêvdîn). The mîr was furious, "Hey! What is Bekir talking about?" (217) He summoned Bekir, and said, "Bekir, if you don't come, I will have your head chopped off." (218) "Gladly my Mîr!" he said, "Why don't you test him?" he said, "You and Memo play chess, I'll come in twenty four minutes later. I'll do that for half an hour. (219) If I don't [come], my head is yours! Gladly!" he said. (220) The mîr was furious, he was upset, for [Beko] hadn't said 'He is in love with your sister Zîn': both mîr Sêvdîn's wife and his sister were named Zîn, dear listeners! (221) Let's see how mîr Sêvdîn invites him, dear listeners.

(222) The mîr said, "Mem!"

[Mem] said, "Yes?"

[The mîr] said, "Today I want you and me to play chess."

(223) "My Mîr," [Mem] said, "Gladly! Whatever you wish! ... How should we play?"

[The mîr] said, "Only," he said, "*shamdilkhaz*²⁸ (= Winner take all)."

"Fine with me, my Mîr!"

(224) And the mîr sang the following, dear listeners:

²⁸This means that the winner may ask the loser for whatever he wants, and the loser is obligated to fulfill his request.

- The mîr got up and went to the manor
 It is near the palace of the gentle one
 He sat down and said to the [leaders]:
- (225) "You summon, summon the lovers
 Only Mem should appear before the mîr,
 Tajdîn and his brothers should not appear,
 Today I will get angry at Mem,
 He is guilty of something, I will straighten him out."
- (226) The mîr said to Mem with hate and spite
 "Today we are at war with you
 Come stand opposite the mîr
 There is no doubt that I am in conflict with you
 My conditions for you are those of the victorious one
 Whatever you want for your desire."
- (227) [Both talking and breathing were about Mem]
 Both joy and grief were about Mem,
 They spoke and discussed,
 They brought out the chesspieces and the board
 [Mem] won three complete rounds
 The troublemaker returned at this juncture.
- (228) See what pranks Beko played,
 He revealed to the mîr a secret that was hidden from him
 The rook, the bishop, and the [knight?] were going,
 They saw that the mîr and his [pieces?] were on their way to check mate,
 They could see that Mem was [about to win]
- (229) Bekir said, "Well, my Mîr, two new rounds."
 Bekir said, "My Mîr, [you are losing]
 It is best if you and Mem trade places."
 The mîr got up and sat in Mem's place
 Mem got up and came to a place where Zîn could be seen.

(230) Well, when Beko Awan had them trade places in this way, up to the third round in which Mem beat the mîr, his back was to the window. (231) When they traded places, may Beko Awan's eyes fall out, (232) Well, when they traded places,

when Memo looked up, he saw the window above, that is the opening above was visible. (233) Beko went and said to Zîn, "Zîn!" he said, "For heaven's sake²⁹, come over to the window, for your father's sake³⁰. (234) How well Memo and Z- -- uh -- and Mîr Sêvdîn your brother are playing chess. For God's sake, don't you want to watch for a little bit?" (235) Well, she fell for it and went to the window. When Zîn looked out at them, Memo's eye rested on Zîn; when he saw her, his took leave of his senses. (236) From that point on Memo knew nothing about chess: all his concentration and looks were fixed on the window opening. (237) Dear listeners, let's see how we can tell you in song what happened:

When Memo caught sight of one delicate and gentle
 He let go of the bishop and the queen
 He could not take his eyes off the skylight and the window pane
 The poor thing moved his knight instead of his pawn
 The mîr beat Mem exactly six times
 Out of love for Zîn, Memo was oblivious

(238) Dear listeners, six whole times the mîr beat Mem. (239) But the mîr was fond of Memo, and consequently even though he beat him six times, he still said to him, "Memo! Name your wish!" (240) But, in the meantime, Beko Awan once again went to Zîn and said, "For your father's sake, you are a girl; aren't you ashamed of yourself? Go let the lady of the house come watch them for a while." (241) Well, he said, "Tomorrow you will go home and your <xendiv?> will say 'Mîr Sêvdîn's sister is goint, what a disgrace! the lady of the house should come!' In other words, Mîr Sêvdîn's wife. (242) [She]³¹ went and said, "My Lady, how well they play, the two of them! Come watch them a little, for God's sake! Why not? Don't go against what I say!" (243) Of course, she fell for it and stood in the place where Zîn had stood. Her

²⁹-lit. 'may your house burn down.'

³⁰-lit. 'may your father's house burn down.'

³¹It is not clear who went. It could be either Zîn #1 or Beko Awan.

name is also [Zîn]³², but she is Mîr Sêvdîn's wife. (244) Here is what Mîr Sêvdîn said to Memo, dear listeners:

The mîr said, "Memo, don't play with [your wish!]"
 Memo said, "My mîr, what do you desire?"
 The mîr said, "Mem, I will hold no grudges,
 What is your goal, in plain language?"

(245) [Mem]³³ said to him:

"These are my conditions: You [give me] Zîn."

(246) Dear listeners, when he said these words, Mîr Sêvdîn looked up and saw his wife Zîn in the window. (247) "Oh!" he said, "Look at the insolence of this person" he said, "such crude people are always this unprincipled," he said. (248) "No matter how much we adults take care of you, you have the nerve to go this far in speaking of people's honor. (249) Boy, Zîn is my wife, you scoundrel!" Out of rage and fury, (250) Let's see what Mîr Sêvdîn says:

Mîr ... [[interrupted]]

(251) "My Mîr," he said, "It would be good if you and Qeretajdîn came together [for a meeting]; you send Qeretajdîn to collect taxes in other places for a year, then we will grab Memo and throw him in prison; by the time he [=Qeretajdîn] comes back, he [=Mem] will be dead. (252) You can do it this way, or else all at once you can -- uh -- "lose" Memo, so that Qeretajdîn, who is very fond of him, interferences, and destroys all of us." (253) "By God," [Mîr Sêvdîn] said, "You speak well. It would be best to do it that way [=the way you said]." So they [= Mîr Sêvdîn and Qeretajdîn!] met together, and spoke together, as before. (254) [Mîr Sêvdîn] ordered Qeretajdîn, saying, "You will go to such-and-such a place [to collect] taxes for a year." (255) Tajdîn <went to collect?> taxes

³²He says 'jin' [=woman], but he must mean 'Zîn.' The word jin must have been on the tip of his tongue, because it occurs later in the sentence.

³³In the original it says 'the mîr,' but this must be a slip of the tongue.

for a year; they grabbed [Mem], they arrested him and threw him in prison, dear listeners. (256) The prison was made out of stone³⁴, Zîn cried and wailed, she didn't let a night and a day pass [before] she went to those who dig tunnels under -- uh -- the ground, and found two good, very skilled ditch diggers, well, who could keep a secret, and paid them very, very well. (257) [In a day they figured out how many meters to dig so that a man could go from Mem's prison to Zîn's room.] (258) In this way they dug a tunnel from Zîn's room and they went until they reached the prison, where Mem was. (259) When they got to where Mem was, Mem noticed a scraping sound coming from under the ground, and thought, "By God, it must be that underground a creature [like a man has come], I am most certainly thankful to God for this day, dear listeners." ³⁵ (260) While he was watching [the ditch digger] came [and said] "Peace be upon you, Memo!" "And upon you peace, brother," [Mem] said, "Who are you? Have you also fallen into prison, like me?" (261) He said, "Just look at your affair!" Zîn took care of Mem -- according to the version we have heard, dear listeners -- while he was in prison for ten whole months, [just as he was supposed to be left uncared for]. (262) After ten months, one day Beko got up and said, "It's been ten months. I wonder if Memo is dead by now?! I'll go visit Memo, to see how he is doing, if he is dead yet!" (263) He went to the opening of the pit, and said, "Memo!" [Mem] said, "What do you say, cursed one?" [Beko] said, "Are you as I want you?" [Mem] said, "[Come down and take a look] at my prison." (264) But Mem's prison was not the way [Beko expected], it was much better kept up than before. (265) [Beko Awan] went to the mîr and said, "My Mîr!" [The mîr] said, "Yes?" [Beko Awan] said, "Do you nourish men in prison, or do prisoners weaken and die?" (266) "What are you talking about?" said [the mîr]. "Come on, you wretch," [Beko Awan] said, "[You have cared for Mem like the apple of your eye]." (267) At that point they took Memo out, thanks to Beko's devilry, and threw him into a stone dungeon.

(268) In the stone dungeon not once did he get to see Zîn, dear listeners, within the [next] month. (269) During that time, he became no more than skin and bones. He became no more than skin and bones, and Qeretajdîn had been gone for eleven months. The twelfth month came, and he returned; this news was brought to Mir

³⁴This is probably a mistake for zîdana dar[în] = 'a wooden dungeon,' since Mem is later transferred to a stone dungeon. Moreover, this would then coincide with what happens in several other versions.

³⁵It was my decision to put the closing quotation marks here.

Sêvdîn: 'Qeretajdîn has returned from a year of tax collecting.' (270) Beko went to -- uh -- Mir Sêvdîn and said, "My Mir!" [Mir Sêvdîn] said, "What is it?" [Beko Awan] said, "My Mir, do you know -- uh -- whom Memo loves, which Zîn he loves?" (271) [Mir Sêvdîn] said, "Doesn't he love [my] wife?" "No," [Beko Awan] said, "My Mir, he loves [your] sister -- [[taped over]] he said, "Memo doesn't love your wife, he loves your sister Zîn." (272) "Oh my!" [Mir Sêvdîn] said, "May your house burn down! Boy, you wretch, how can such dishonesty exist? Why didn't you tell me before now? (273) We have caused that poor soul such grief! Boy," he said, "send word to Zîn to take two [sets of] drums and fifes³⁶ and go release Zîn -- uh -- Memo!" (274) They sent word to Zîn, saying, "Your brother Mir Sêvdîn has said, 'she should take two [sets of] drums and fifes; I have given Zîn to Memo, she should go release Memo!' " (275) Naturally, Zîn was delighted! She sent two people after two -- uh -- drummers [who] came, they played their fifes and drums, to come release Memo from the bottom of the pit. (276) Beko once again committed an accursed act, he went to the pit and stood at the head of the dungeon and said, "Memo!" [Mem] said, "What do you say, accursed one?" (277) Then [Beko Awan] said, "I have good news for you! We have given Zîn to a man. Zîn is about to come with drums and fifes to the opening of the pit to take her leave of you³⁷." (278) "Hey, you accursed one!" [Mem] said, "Until now <bera xweş me [?xwe ji me] na wekî>, may God let them attain their desire. In any case I was going to die at the bottom of the pit. (279) But Memo's heart was crushed by the sound of the drums. When he saw that the sound of the drums was coming towards him, dear listeners, in the version which we heard, which we are telling you, by the time the sound of the drums [reached him], his soul took leave of its shell. (280) When [she?] reached the opening of the pit, Zîn said to Memo, "Memo!" He said, "Yes!" [She] said, "I have come to release you." (281) "Hey," he said, "May your house burn down! You have not come to release me!" (282) And this is what he said to her:

"Memo, I have come to release you
To see the comfort³⁸ of my heart

³⁶The instruments played at wedding celebrations.

³⁷or, to ask your permission.

³⁸-lit. 'patience'

To [erase] the longing of ten years."

(283) Memo recited some Persian verses, that is he told [her], but Zîn did not understand, so once again he spoke to her as follows:

"Hey," he said, "Lady Zîn, you have not come to release me,
You have come to take your leave of me, to pull out my sweet
soul from its shell."

(284) Dear listeners, when they sent two to the bottom of the pit and took Mem out of the dungeon, bringing him out into the light of day³⁹, they sent word to Qeretajdin. (285) When Qeretajdin had taken a look around town, they told him "Beko in his accursedness had your brother thrown into prison, but Zîn has just gone to release him." (286) According to the version which we have heard, by the time he reached the gate of the prison, he had killed one hundred Bekir, people named Bekir, but he didn't get to Bekirê Awan, that is Beko Awan. (287) Qeretajdin had been very fond of Memo, and said, "I swear by God that I will kill everyone whose name is Beko." (288) Well, when they brought [Mem] to the mouth of the pit, the creator on high claimed that which he had deposited with him, in other words the time allotted to him was up, he passed away. (289) His brother Qeretajdin arrived, and put him into -- uh -- a wooden casket, and went around with it on his head. (290) [That man swore a solemn oath] saying "[Until Mem comes back to life] I will not let this -- uh -- corpse touch the ground." (291) Night and day he wept and mourned; Beko Awan once again performed a dastardly deed, he got up and went to an old woman, and said, "Grandma, go get a black cloth and a few bars of white soap, and go to the banks of the river of Jezira, and, well, rub that black cloth with the soap, (292) if Qeretajdin happens to pass by, it will certainly attract his attention, because black things cannot turn white. He will say something to you about it; when he says something to you, you tell him, "May your house not burn down [=You poor thing], have you ever seen a dead man rise up [from the dead]? Just as this is black and it won't turn white, likewise that corpse on your head is dead, it won't rise again."

³⁹=lit. 'the face of the world'

(293) Encouraged by him, she got up and took a black cloth and went and stood at the bank of the river of Jezirah, rubbing [the cloth] with two pieces of white soap. (294) Well, Qeretajdîn passed by, and she caught his attention; he looked and saw a foolish old woman sitting on the banks of the river, well, going back and forth over a black cloth with soap.

(295) "Oh," he said, "Grandma, for heaven's sake, what do you think you're doing⁴⁰? That [cloth] is black, it won't become white, but you keep going over it with the soap."

(296) "Well," she said, "if you're so smart, just take a look at the corpse on your head: he is dead, he won't rise again." Naturally, this was by order of the creator on high.

(297) "Actually," he said, "you are right."

He brought his brother, and tenderly buried him in the cemetery. (298) Well, Zîn said some things to him. Let's see what she had to say. (299) After Memo's death she was very upset, in one version they say she lasted for forty day, in another version they say forty hours; only God can know for sure which is correct, (300) but she said to [Qeretajdîn]:

She said, "May Memo be my witness for the days,
Memo, while on earth, did not open up buttons,
[Whatever time of day that Memo died], for us it will be the noon
hour."

(301) Zîn said, "May houris be my witness at the incline,
[On earth I have no beloved]
[I have made an effort], Mem's time has passed, I won't live to see the
evening hour."

(302) Well, when I said these few things to him, naturally Qeretajdîn became very sad very griefstricken, very sorrowful. (303) In the version that we heard, which we are telling you, dear listeners, Zîn took her place [in heaven] by God's decree. They took Zîn to bury her, and they buried the two lovers side by side, dear listeners. (304)

⁴⁰=lit. 'what smartness is this from you?'

At the graveside -- we call it a shrine -- Qeretajdîn caught sight of Beko Awan. (305)
And Qeretajdîn was so upset, that let's see what he said:

"Accursed Beko, with your head <bi mesan>
Give him poison in bowls
The saboteur of love and purpose and goals."

(306) Qeretajdîn got so enraged, dear listeners, that he caught up with Beko, with the intention [of giving him a knock on the head], but at that time he swung with such fury and force that pieces -- uh -- of Beko Awan rose into the air. (307) Dear listeners, what happened next, of course, exactly as we heard it, we will tell it to you. (308) This is not a verse of the Koran, if cannot be wrong, just as we heard it, naturally, we will tell it to you. (309) Then his blood, you might say dripped, getting between Memo and Zîn, and a thornbush sprung up between them, and grew. Of course, I did not see it, dear listeners.

(310) The telling of Memo and Zîn is like that -- uh -- finally may God -- uh -- extend his greeting to all the listeners, dear listeners -- uh -- naturally, you should forgive us, (311) just as we heard the story of Memo and Zîn, we have told it to you -- uh -- may God be our protection; the events of Memo and Zîn as sung by [...], you can always obtain it at [...]. (312) [God's] mercy on the parents and the listeners who have lent their ears, and that which -- uh -- has been said, dear listeners, may it entertain us; goodbye and greetings to all of you.