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**Northern Kurdish poetic features with an application to translation**

written by

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and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

with major in

Applied Linguistics

has been read and approved

by the undersigned members of the faculty  
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the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics  
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Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics  
December 2012



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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Northern Kurdish poetic features with an application to translation**

Edward Harry Magin Jr.

Master of Arts

with major in

Applied Linguistics

The Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics, December 2012

Supervising Professors: Dr. Brenda H. Boerger and Dr. Peter Unseth

This thesis is a study of poetic features in Northern Kurdish poetry. The corpus, which represents three periods of Northern Kurdish poetry: Neo-classical, New, and Modern, was gathered in Iraq during the Fall of 2009. While some studies of Northern Kurdish poetry exist in Northern Kurdish, this study is the first of its kind in English. The first part of the analysis is on the phonological level, where I identify verse forms and rhyme schemes found in the corpus. Much of the information concerning verse forms in Northern Kurdish poetry was obtained by means of interviews with poets and an editor of poetry. The second part of the analysis is on the syntactic level, where I identify deviations from common speech and variations in language that poets capitalize on to write their lines of poetry. In the final chapter, I apply these insights to the translation of an English poem into Northern Kurdish. I also analyze a translation of the same poem by a native speaker, identifying the poetic devices employed.



## **DEDICATION**

to my Naphtili, who has been my support throughout this long endeavor



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July 12, 2012



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## Abbreviations and Other Conventions

### Pronouns in Northern Kurdish

gloss	definition	form
1D	first person, direct case, singular	<i>ez</i>
1DP	first person, direct case, plural	<i>em</i>
1O	first person, oblique case, singular	<i>min</i>
1OP	first person, oblique case, plural	<i>me</i>
2D	second person, direct case, singular	<i>tu</i>
2DP	second person, direct case, plural	<i>hîn, hûn, hûîn</i>
2O	second person, oblique case, singular	<i>te</i>
2OP	second person, oblique case, plural	<i>we, hewe</i>
3D	third person, direct case (singular or plural), far demonstrative	<i>ew</i>
3DN	third person, direct case (singular or plural), near demonstrative	<i>ev</i>
3OF	third person, oblique case, singular, feminine	<i>wê</i>
3OFN	third person, oblique case, singular, feminine, near	<i>vê</i>
3OM	third person, oblique case, singular, masculine	<i>wî</i>
3OMN	third person, oblique case, singular, masculine, near	<i>vî</i>
3OP	third person, oblique case, plural (or far demonstrative)	<i>wan</i>
3OPN	third person, oblique case, plural, near	<i>van</i>
REFL	reflexive	<i>xwe, xu, xwo</i>

### Prefixes, infixes, suffixes, particles:

gloss	definition
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ACT	active
ADJP	adjective phrase
COP	copula
DEM	demonstrative
DIR	directional enclitic
EMPH	emphatic marker
EZ	<i>ezafe</i> conjunctive particle
EZ2	<i>ezafe</i> conjunctive particle for secondary constructs
F	feminine
IMP	imperative
IND	indicative
INDF	indefinite
INF	infinitive
INTRG	interrogative
IPFV	imperfective
IRR	irrealis
EZP	<i>ezafe</i> phrase
M	masculine
NEG	negative
NP	noun phrase
NUM	number
OBL	oblique case marker
OPT	optative

PASS	passive
PL	plural
PPFT	past perfect
PRF	perfect participle
QP	question particle

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 *General*

The purpose of this thesis was to gather and analyze a corpus of Northern Kurdish poetry, discuss its poetic features, and apply what was learned to poetic translation. To date very little has been written about Kurdish poetry. This survey and analysis helps to fill the gap of knowledge about one literary art form of the Kurdish people and their rich cultural heritage.

The corpus I collected primarily consists of poems written during the last sixty years<sup>1</sup> in the Northern Kurdish-speaking area of Northern Iraq. The language of this area is often referred to as Bahdini,<sup>2</sup> which comes from the name of the region where its speakers dwell, Badinan. One poet from the Kurdish area of Syria, Cegerxwîn, is also included because of his renown in Iraq and abroad. Translations are presented in Appendix A and interlinear translations, parsed according to Leipzig Glossing Rules (Bickel, Comrie and Haspelmath 2008), are provided wherever useful in the analysis.

Chapter 2 surveys what has already been written on Kurdish and Kurdish-related poetry. It also discusses what scholars have written about the matter of translating poetry. Chapter 3 contains information gleaned from interviews about Kurdish poetry and the history surrounding its development. To help the reader delve into the language and the

---

<sup>1</sup> Some of Ahmed Nalbend's poems are likely older. They were not formally published until 1998.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term Bahdini in this paper when I am distinguishing how a certain aspect of the spoken variety of Northern Kurdish in northern Iraq is or may be different from other varieties of Northern Kurdish. The language varies greatly over a large region and some speakers have difficulty understanding one another.

translations, I have provided a brief grammar sketch of Northern Kurdish in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is the analysis of the corpus. In Chapter 6, I apply what has been learned from the analysis to the matter of translation. In the concluding remarks, I also raise questions concerning future study on the subject.

## ***1.2 Historical overview***

One popular myth about the Kurds' beginning says that, "Centuries ago, Solomon threw 500 of the magical spirits called *jinn* out of his kingdom and exiled them to the mountains of the Zagros. These *jinn* first flew to Europe to select 500 beautiful virgins as their brides and then went to settle in what became known as Kurdistan" (Kahn 1980:xi). According to many historians, however, the Kurdish people are descendents of the Medes, who during the sixth century B.C. built an empire (Lawrence 2008:11). Whatever their beginnings, the Kurds are an ancient people who have lived in their homeland since before recorded history.

After Mohammed's death in 632 A.D, Abu Bakir, the first caliph, began his campaign against the Byzantines, Sassanians, and other ruling empires within the area of Mesopotamia. By 637 the Arab armies reached the Kurdish area. By 644 the Kurdish leaders, who had joined the Sassanian resistance, began succumbing to the new religion, Islam (McDowall 2005:21).

At the start of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman and Safavid empires ruled the Kurdish area. Once Turkey was defeated in World War I, each non-Turkish minority expected to achieve statehood, as Woodrow Wilson's "Programme of the World's Peace" stated that each group should be "assured of an absolute unmolested opportunity of autonomous development" (Short and McDermott 1975:7). However, after the Treaty of Sèvres was signed in 1920 by the Sultan and the Allies, it was never affirmed by the Turkish National Assembly. The Treaty of Lausanne was signed in 1923 without the mention of an independent Kurdistan, and the international community has never again reevaluated the issue (Short and McDermott 1975:7).

### ***1.3 The people and the language***

Northern Kurdish is often called Kurmanjî.<sup>3</sup> The total number of speakers, including those residing outside the main Kurdish area, has been estimated to be between fifteen and seventeen million (Thackston 2006:vii, viii). However, due to a long history of political and socioeconomic upheaval, combined with a lack of research, a trustworthy estimate has yet to be determined. The largest group of speakers is found in an area that spans the borders of Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran. There are also pockets of Northern Kurdish speakers in other areas of Turkey, Iran as well as in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkmenistan.

Northern Kurdish is one of several languages that are considered to be Kurdish. Others include Sorani and even Dimili (or Zaza), which, according to Todd (2002:vi) and other scholars, is too distinct to be called Kurdish. Dimili speakers, however, identify themselves as being Kurdish (Todd 2002:vi). Speakers of Northern and Central Kurdish make up the larger portions of the population that identify themselves as being Kurdish; however, these are considered by scholars to be separate languages. It is not until a speaker of one of these languages is exposed to the other's language for some time that there is any marked comprehension ability. Hence, the factors contributing to whether one considers oneself to be Kurdish depend not just on language but on psychological, social, cultural, economic and political factors (Hassanpour 1989:25).

### ***1.4 The sociolinguistic situation***

The peoples who have resided in Mesopotamia and its surrounding regions have long been influenced by societies that spoke different languages, had different customs, and practiced different religions. The brief historical sketch in §1.2 provides only a few

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<sup>3</sup> Other names for Northern Kurdish are as follows: In Iraq—Badinani, Bahdini, Behdini, Kirmancîa Jori, Kurmanji; in Turkey—Kermancî, Kirmancî, Kurdi, Kurdî, Kurmanji. There are a few other names used in Syria and Iran (Lewis 2011:458, 534). A myriad of dialect names are also used as reference for one's speech type. Such names refer to the region or tribe one is from.

highlights of the events that happened within this ‘cradle of civilization.’ In recorded history, we see that Kurds have likely had contact with Greeks, Romans, Persians, Arabs, Turks, and many others beside. So one can only imagine that the Kurdish worldview(s) must have been challenged throughout the centuries.

The greatest influence on Northern Kurdish in Northern Iraq has been through contact with Arabic speakers. Decades before Saddam Hussein’s rise to power in the 1970s, the medium of instruction for speakers of Northern Kurdish was predominantly in Arabic. Currently, although there is movement to purify the language, speakers of Northern Kurdish still use many Arabic loan words in both spoken and written language. Since the 1990s, schools in the Kurdish area have been free to use their mother tongue as the medium of instruction. In the Northern Kurdish area, students are also learning to read and write in the more widely spoken Kurdish language in Iraq, Central Kurdish, also known as Sorani. Much of the curriculum available is written only in Central Kurdish.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 *History of Kurdish and Kurdish-related poetry, with historical context*

Among Kurds there is no clear distinction between oral and written cultures. Historically, these cultures are intermingled, despite separation of literate elite from the larger illiterate class in society. Additionally, the language groups making up the Kurds borrow from one another and from other influential cultures, i.e. Arabic and Persian narratives. As well, some poets and writers have utilized oral ballads, traditional Kurdish stories, in their written compositions (e.g. *Dimdim*, *Mem û Zîn*, and *Khaj û Siyamend*) (Hassanpour 1996:50).

Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, literature written by Kurds consisted mostly of poetry. Kurds predominately wrote in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, the nearby prestigious languages, rather than in their own language. The earliest Kurdish poetry so well reproduced that of Arabic and Persian poetry that it is safe to propose that such imitative styles were refined by the time of the earliest known poets. Folk poetry, such as song, was more prominent than literature in Kurdish society, and “Kurdish poetry and prose narratives were transmitted orally” (Kreyenbroek 2005).

Throughout history wherever Kurds have resided, there have been social and political situations that have encumbered the development of Kurdish society and culture. To this day, a full record of Kurdish literature has not been produced (Shakely 2002). According to Shakely (2002), the list in Table 1 embodies the best of the works dealing with the history of Kurdish literature.

**Table 1. Important works on Kurdish literary history**

Year	Author	Resource
1860	August Jaba, Russian consul	The Kurdish literature given by Mala Mahmûd Bayazîdî in Erzurûm, Turkey at the end of the 1850s. The texts were recorded and published by Jaba.
1920	Amîn Fayzî	Anjumanî Adîban (Assembly of Writers), Istanbul. This book describes in 147 pages the lives of some Kurdish poets with quotations from their poetry.
1941 & 1956	Rafîq Hilmî	Shi'r û adabiâtî Kurdî (Kurdish poetry and literature), Baghdad. Vol. I, 1941 and Vol. 2, 1956. This work is normally classified as literary criticism. However, it also includes historical materials, like biographical data and descriptions of periods in Kurdish literature.
1952	Alaudîn Sajadî	Mêzhûy Adabî Kurdî (Kurdish literary history), Baghdad. 2nd ed. 1973. This has been one of the most important sources of Kurdish literary history to the present day. Apart from studies on 24 Kurdish poets, it also includes studies on Kurdish history, the tradition of the Kurdish epic, Kurdish mythology, Kurdish journalism and a series of comparative literary studies of old Egyptian, Persian, Chinese, Indian and Hebrew literature.
1968	Dr. Izudîn Mustafa Rasûl	Realism in Kurdish literature, Beirut. This is an Arabic translation of Dr. Rasûl's Russian doctoral thesis, describing Kurdish literature from a Marxist point of view.
1980	Sadiq Baha' Udîn Amedî	Hozanvanet Kurd (Kurdish poets), Baghdad. This book contains biography and poems by 19 Kurdish poets who wrote in the Northern Kurdish dialect.
1983	Prof. Qenate Kurdoev	Tarixa Edebiyeta Kurdî (Kurdish literary history), Stockholm. 2 vol. This is similar to Sajadî's Kurdish literary history.

### 2.1.1 Before 1920

The division of the Kurdish homeland continues to complicate the production of a comprehensive treatise on the history of Kurdish literature. There are still linguistic debates concerning the origin of the Kurdish language and the classification of its dialects and related languages. For example, most Kurdish literary critics and historians “agree that Kurdish art poetry began with Baba Tahir Hamadanî (935-1010)” (Shakely 2002). However, Hamadanî’s language was Lurî (or Lorî), which is regarded by European Orientalists to be a southwestern Iranian language (see 1.3), unlike Northern and Central Kurdish (Shakely 2002).

#### 2.1.1.1 *The Botan school*

Most historians believe that Northern Kurdish poetry was established during the 16<sup>th</sup> century when war began between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. After defeating the Safavids in the Chaldîran war in 1514, the Ottomans began to reinforce existing Kurdish principalities. They also founded new principalities in order to strengthen the border. The area of Botan, which lies in Turkey at the border of Iraq and Syria, was one of the more significant of the principalities. It was in Botan’s capital city, Cezîra, that the first school<sup>4</sup> of classical Kurdish poetry in the Northern Kurdish dialect developed. The leading representative of this school was Malayê Cezîrî who lived between 1570-1640 (Shakely 2002), and who is considered by many to be the “father of Kurdish literature” (Kreyenbroek 1996:95).

Cezîrî, like other early writers, was proficient in Arabic, Persian and Turkish (Blau 1996:21). While his syntax was Kurdish, he drew from his large lexicon of these other languages, as well. Much of his work consists of *qashidas* (longer odes) and *ghazals* (shorter lyric poems) (Kreyenbroek 2005). During this time, Classical Kurdish

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<sup>4</sup> When the idea of a ‘poetic school’ is used, it is meant to refer to a group of people, including poets, who have a common belief about what good poetry should consist of.

literature was greatly influenced by the imagery of the mystical sect in Islam called Sufism (Kreyenbroek 1996:95). Cezîrî's poetry is also considered to be a "fine representative of classical oriental<sup>5</sup> poetry" (Shakely 2002). Shakely writes:

His ties to this tradition are expressed through the strong Sufi elements and through the concept of love in his poetry. In his universe there are no clear borderlines between human and divine love. Thus the reader is often led to ask whether it was the love of God or the beautiful Selma (said to have been the daughter or the sister of the prince of Jezira [Cezîra]) which brought fire to the poet's heart. (Shakely 2002)

Romantic patriotism is also expressed in much of Cezîrî's poetry, where the name *Kurdistan* appears frequently, and he wrote many of his poems in tribute to princes of Kurdistan. These elements make his poetry different from the court poetry written for non-Kurdish rulers in the area (Shakely 2002). During this time, court poets were hired by a ruler to produce poems that praised the ruler's high position, decreeing his authority over an area (De Bruijn 2011).

As mentioned, most of the early Kurdish literature was poetic. Kurdish prose, for the most part, did not develop until newspapers and magazines were created in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Blau 1996:23). Other great poets between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as 'Ali Harîrî (1425-90?), Faqî Tayran (1590-1660), Mala Ahmed Batayî, Selîm Silêman (16<sup>th</sup> century), Ahmed Xanî (1651-1707), and Khanay Qubadî (1700-59), expressed the need for Kurdish linguistic freedom—for Kurds to write in their native tongue (Hassanpour 1996:49). Faqî Tayran, whose pen name means, 'the bird's jurist,' is considered to be a disciple of Cezîrî. He, too, wrote *qashidas* and *ghazals* and is known as the first Kurdish poet to use the *masnavî* (couplet) form for a narrative poem (Kreyenbroek 2005).

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<sup>5</sup> Shakely's exact meaning of 'oriental' is unknown. It seems likely that he is referring to Middle Eastern and Indo-Iranian literature rather than Asian literature, which would encompass literature from the entire continent.

The most revered poet among Kurds of Northern Kurdish is Ahmed Xanî. He was born around 1650 in the town of Khan in the Hakari province of southeastern Turkey, and most scholars believe that he died in 1707 in Bayazid, Turkey. While he played an active role in intellectual life, having established a Kurdish school of literature and worked to build unity in the society, he is best known as the “unrivalled pioneer of the Kurdish national ideology” (Saadalla 2008:11).

When Xanî wrote his long romantic epic *Mem û Zîn* in 1694 (Shakely 2002), which seems to have been inspired by a Kurdish epic called *Meme Alan* (Kreyenbroek 2005), he introduced into Kurdish society the idea of Kurdish nationalism (Hassanpour 1996: 21). Xanî desired for the Kurds to have their own leader who had an appreciation for science, art and poetry, books and *dîwan*<sup>6</sup> (Shakely 2002). While *Mem û Zîn* is certainly a love story, Xanî addresses many other facets of society in the poem (Saadalla 2008:10, 11). In an interview with the Kurdish Globe, Farhad Shakely (2002) stated:

He not only told a most beautiful love story, but also expressed his own political and philosophical ideals and described the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of a very important period in Kurdish history.

Concerning the *methnawî* (or *masnavî*) form of the poem, Hassanpour (1996:49) writes, “Although the poetic form is borrowed from Persian literature, the details of the plot, names, characters and setting are mostly Kurdish.”<sup>7</sup> In the preface to his English translation of the story, Salah Saadalla (2008:10) writes:

The poetical story is more than a tragic Romeo and Juliet...The pages of the book are full of thoughts, often dominated by philosophy, particularly sufism, in which shades of meanings, double-meanings, metaphors, and symbolic expressions, play a major role, and require extra care in interpreting.

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<sup>6</sup> *Dîwan* means ‘an anthology of poems’ (Chyet 2003:161).

<sup>7</sup> The story takes place in Cezîra, Turkey. Scholars have inferred that, due to the detailed descriptions of the geography of the city, Xanî must have lived in Cezîra at some point in his life (Saadalla 2008:10).

In an early section of the poem, Xanî makes the first ever reference to Kurdish literature by mentioning the older poets Malaye Cezîrî, ‘Alî Hariri and Faqî Tayran. It would be another century before a more complete record would be made of Kurdish literature (Shakely 2002).

In addition to *Mem û Zîn*, Xanî produced the first dictionary in Kurdish, called *Nubara Biçûkan*, ‘The Children’s First Fruits,’ an Arabic-Kurdish dictionary in verse. He also wrote lyrical poetry and a 73 *bayt* ‘line’ essay in verse about religion, called *Aqîda Êman*, ‘The Article of Faith’ (Shakely 2002).

### **2.1.1.2 The Goran school**

There were two other important schools of Kurdish poetry that developed in other Kurdish principalities, the Goran school and the Nalî school (Shakely 2002). In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Ardalan (or Erdalan) family, who resided in the Persian province with the same name, gained a measure of independence from the Safavids. During this time they used their newfound liberty to support literacy. This encouraged the development of written literature in their language, known as Goranî, or Hawramî,<sup>8</sup> which is of the Southern Kurdish classification of languages (Kreyenbroek 2005). During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, some religious leaders pioneered the use of Kurdish as a medium of instruction in mosque schools. Poets, however, did not consider literacy an end goal; “For them a literate tradition, together with statehood, were hallmarks of a civilised and sovereign people” (Hassanpour 1996:49).

The Goran<sup>9</sup> (or Hawramî) school of Classical Kurdish poetry reached its climax in the Ardalan Province. The school established standards throughout the region and beyond

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<sup>8</sup> The origins of Hawramî differ from those of Kurdish, but many regard it as a Kurdish dialect, perhaps due mostly to a certain percentage of lexical cognates. The syntax, however, is different from Northern and Central Kurdish.

<sup>9</sup> Goran, or Goranî, is usually used as an umbrella term for Southern Kurdish languages. Hawramî, on the other hand, is the name of a specific language of Southern Kurdish.

(Shakely 2002). According to MacKenzie (1965), Goranî poetry was not influenced by early Northern Kurdish poetry but by local Persian poetic traditions. Poets used decasyllabic meter with a caesura between two rhyming hemistiches,<sup>10</sup> which were commonly found in the folk poetry in the area.

When the Ardalán family fell from power in 1845, Persian replaced Goranî as the court language, eventually bringing an end to the Goranî school. Since that time, writers increasingly used languages other than Goranî in literature (Blau 1996:21). Some of the more famous poets from the Goran School era were Khanay Qubadî (1700-1759), Besarânî (1641-1702), Mawlawî (1806-1882) and Ahmad Bagî Komasî. Mawlawî—along with Melayê Cezîrî (discussed in 2.1.1.1) and Mahwî (1830-1909) (discussed in 2.1.1.3)—is considered one of the three greatest Sufi poets in Kurdish history (Shakely 2002).

### **2.1.1.3 *The Nali school***

In modern day Iraq, on the west side of the Zagros Mountains, another school of classical poetry was established in the area of Baban. Eventually it was referred to as the Nali school (Kreyenbroek 2005). In 1784, Ibrahim, the Prince of Baban, established Sulêmaniya as the capital of the province. At this time, the literary language was a Southern Kurdish dialect (Shakely 2002). When ‘Abd al-Rahman Pasha Baban (1789-1802) succeeded Ibrahim Pasha in 1789, he advocated the use of the language of Sulêmaniya, later to be called Sorani, for poetry and music—in lieu of Goranî. And he designated Sulêmaniye the cultural center for the area (Blau 1996:22).

The founder of the Nali school was the poet Nali, whose real name was Malla Kedri Ahmad Shaweysi Mika’ili (1800-1856) (Kreyenbroek 2005). Some of the other revered poets of this time are Salim (1800-1866), Kurdî (1800-1866), Hajî Qadir Koyî (1817-1897), Sheikh Raza Talabanî (1836-1910), Wafayî (1836-1892), Adab (1862-

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<sup>10</sup> According to Turco (2000: 22), a caesura is a brief hesitation between two parts of a line, the two hemistiches.

1917), and Mahwî (1830-1909). We can see by these later dates that Classical Kurdish poetry continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Shakely 2002). Nali used Perso-Arabic poetic forms, such as the *qashida* and *ghazal*. Until that time they were not part of the literary tradition of the area. Nalî, who is renowned for his lyrical poetry, also wrote mystical verse and poems praising rulers (Kreyenbroek 2005).

Many poets left the city of Sulêmaniya after the Baban dynasty was conquered in 1851 (Kreyenbroek 2005). However, the Sorani literary tradition continued to develop in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But while there were some great poets during this period, and many literary works were written, the culture remained largely oral. Literacy was predominantly found among the clergy and the social elite. Hassanpour writes, “According to one study, 68.5 percent of the poets who lived until 1917 came from the clerical group, while the feudal class accounted for 20 percent” (Hassanpour 1996:50).

Like Xanî, Haji Qadirî Koyî (ca. 1816-94), a great poet from this era, heralded the notion “that Kurds could achieve sovereignty only if they possessed both a literate tradition, the pen, and state power, the sword” (Hassanpour 1996:49). Speaking to his own people, he writes:

Do not say, “The Kurdish language does not attain the purity of Persian.”  
It possesses an eloquence that reaches unequalled heights,  
but lack of solidarity among Kurds  
has debased its value and price. (Blau and Suleiman 1996:156)

Koyî wanted his people to become literate and enlightened to the world around them. While Xanî and Koyî emphasized the need for a literate tradition, both poets valued the oral traditions of their people, borrowing from oral literature as opposed to those available in Arabic and Farsi literature (Hassanpour 1996:49). Koyî left Kurdistan for Istanbul, Turkey where he became familiar with Northern Kurdish and its literature. While there he also became familiar with foreign ideas. Many of his poems, thus, deal with his critique of society and traditional ways (Kreyenbroek 2005).

Sheikh Razay Talabanî, another poet from the Nali school, is considered to have introduced satire to Kurdish poetry (Kreyenbroek 2005). Shakely (2002) writes:

He was a severe social critic, revealing in his poems many injustices, weaknesses and faults in society. His language is exuberant and powerful, the images sharp and poignant to the smallest detail.

Another Nali school poet, Mahwî (1830-1909), is counted as another of the three great Kurdish Sufi poets. His works are considered among the best of classical oriental poetry for both form and content (Shakely 2002).

#### **2.1.1.4 Early publication**

The first texts printed in Kurdish were the *dîwan*, ‘collection of poems,’ written by Mawlana Khalid (1777-1826). He was the leader of the Naqshbandi, a Sufi religious order. The book, printed in 1844 (Nerîman 1977:14), consists mostly of poems in Arabic and Persian, but contains a few in the Hawramî dialect (Hassanpour 1996:61). The first periodical in Kurdish was published on April 22, 1898. Named *Kurdistan*, it was a bilingual Kurdish-Ottoman newspaper (Blau and Suleiman 1996:157). Miqdad Midhat Badir Khan wrote these challenging words in its first issue:

Today, whatever happens in the world is reported in newspapers from which we learn a great deal. Unfortunately, the Kurds – brave and intelligent though they are – live without knowing what is going on in our planet. I am publishing this paper to inform you of the development of events in the world and to encourage you to read and write Kurdish. (Blau and Suleiman 1996:157)

Between 1898 and 1902, thirty-one issues were printed, and publication was expanded to Geneva, London and Folkestone. Eventually, minority peoples in Turkey responded enough to the restrictive governance of Sultan Abdul-Hamid that in 1908 he was constrained to bring about constitutional reform, which granted various people groups (not just Kurds) greater political and cultural rights. One result of this reform was the publication of many other new Kurdish newspapers and magazines (Shakely 2002).

#### **2.1.2 1920-1960**

Prior to World War I, some Kurdish journalism was permitted, but “Kurdish literature had been restricted to poetry and some prose, little of which had been

published” (Blau and Suleiman 1996:157). Since that time, we can distinguish three periods in the development of Kurdish literature: 1920-1960, 1960-1980, and 1980 to present day (Blau 1996:22).

In the years that followed, the use of the press was a key component in the development of the Kurdish and Kurdish-related languages. “The development of the Kurdish language and the Kurds’ literary productivity within the Middle East have since depended on how much freedom each of those four states [i.e. Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria] has been willing to grant their Kurdish minority” (Blau 1996:23, brackets mine). In 1924, Mustafa Kemal of Turkey decreed Kurdish was not permitted to be used in schools, associations or publications. “Later governments followed the same policy of forced assimilation of the Kurds” (Blau and Suleiman 1996:158).

The new borders that were drawn gave half of the Kurdish area to the Turkish state. The other parts were divided among Iran and the two Arab states, Iraq and Syria. A smaller portion of Kurdistan had already become part of the Soviet Union. A portion of that area has since become part of the Armenian Republic. Shakely (2002) writes:

The Kurdish intelligentsia who had been working for the cultural and political Kurdish movement in the Ottoman Empire now settled in South Kurdistan. With them they brought several valuable years of experience and knowledge from their time spent in Istanbul. Among these intellectuals, who originally came from all over Kurdistan, and who now began to play an important role in the cultural life in South Kurdistan, were Tawfiq Wahby (1891-1984), Pîramerd (the pen name of Hamî Tawjiq, 1867-1950), Rafiq Hilmi (1898-1960) and Muhammad Amîn Zakî (1880-1948).

These are the conditions under which Kurdish poetry developed. The socio-political situation in each country where Kurdish and Kurdish-related people reside has differed since the division of the Kurdish area. Hence, any discussion of the development of Kurdish poetry is limited to those periods of time when Kurds have had basic freedoms for written expression. In Iraq, there is the additional factor of having two main language groups, Northern Kurdish and Central Kurdish. These groups are not just geographically separated, but language differences are enough that one group’s development in poetry did not necessarily influence the other (Shakely 2002).

Kurdish intellectuals in Turkey lived their lives in exile, many moving to Syria, where Kurds experienced a period of freedom under the French Mandate, between the two world wars (Blau 1996:24). Northern Kurdish literature developed greatly during this time when “Damascus and Beirut became centers for Kurdish intellectual activity” (Kreyenbroek 2005). Also during this time, the brothers Jeladet Bedir Khan (1893-1961) and Kamiran Bedir Khan (1895-1978) developed a Kurdish orthography in Latin script, which remains in use today. The Hawar school,<sup>11</sup> an intellectual center the brothers were a part of, included Cegerxwîn (1903-1984), the pen name of Şêxmûs Hesên, Qadrîcan (1914-1974), Reşîd Kurd (1910-68), and Nûredîn Zaza (1919-1988) (Kreyenbroek 2005). However, after Syria gained independence following the Second World War, “literary productivity came to an end” (Blau 1996:24) because Kurds lost the freedoms they had previously gained. Once again, intellectuals fled and published from abroad (Blau 1996:24). Many of those associated with the Hawar school left to continue their activities in Paris (Kreyenbroek 2005).

Cegerxwîn, who wrote in the Northern Kurdish dialect, had a profound influence on Turkish and Syrian Kurds, such that some call the time of his writing the Cegerxwîn period. Shakely (2002) writes, “Cegerxwîn took good care of the old heritage from Classical poets like Cezîrî and Ahmed Xanî. His poetry is simple and revolutionary with a strong popular appeal often at the expense of the aesthetic.” Because of his political convictions, Cegerxwîn—along with two other very popular poets at the time, Hazhar (1920-1991), penname for Abdurrahman Sharafkandî, and Hemin Mukriyani (1921-1986)—had to live out much of his life in exile (Shakely 2002).

Kurds in Iraq experienced a limited degree of cultural freedom under the British Mandate (1920-1932). During the 1920s Iraq became the center of Kurdish cultural life, and it has continued to develop since that time. As Kurds made contact with the west, emerging from their isolated existence, poetry began to transform from its classical style

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<sup>11</sup> It seems that the Hawar school was named after a magazine, *Hawar*, that was published during this period.

(Blau 1996:22-3). Goran,<sup>12</sup> whose real name was Abdullah Sulayman (1904-1962), was the first poet from the Sorani-speaking area to break with tradition, writing with stress rhythms which were closer to oral folk styles (Blau 1996:22-3). According to Shakely (2002), Goran “brought about a revolution in Kurdish poetry” and is called “the father of Kurdish modernism.” Up until this time, Kurdish poetry had been shaped by centuries of poetry of other cultures, particularly Arabic. Goran based his poetry on Kurdish identity and themes. He used old Kurdish folksong patterns for meter and form instead of, for example, using Arabic meter. He also purposefully used Central Kurdish in lieu of Arabic or other languages. Goran, like many 20<sup>th</sup> century Kurdish poets, went through various periods in his own work, beginning with a classical period. In his latter years, he wrote in free verse<sup>13</sup> (Shakely 2002).

During this time other poets in the Sorani-speaking area began publishing free verse and prose poetry,<sup>14</sup> addressing social and political concerns (Blau 1996:23). Some of the popular poets from this period are: Salem (1892-1959), the penname of Sheikh Salem Ahmad Azabanî, Delzar (b. 1920) the penname of Ahmad Mostafa Hama Aga, Bekas (1905-1948) the penname of Fakî ‘Abd-Allah, and his son Şêrko Bêkas (b. 1940), Kamran Mokrî (1929-1989), and Kakay Fallah (b. 1928) (Kreyenbroek 2005).

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<sup>12</sup> The poet Goran should not be confused with the Goran school of poetry. The source of Goran’s penname is unknown. Perhaps his heritage was Goranî (or Hawrami), as he was born in Halebja, which was largely Hawrami at the time. His poetry, however, is written in Soranî, the central Kurdish language. No resource states whether or not he knew the Hawrami language.

<sup>13</sup> Shakely does not define his meaning of “free verse.” Turco (2000), taking issue with the term free verse, prefers to use the term **prose poetry** to define poetry that does not adhere to syllabic count and meter. Since the term “verse” is defined as “metered language,” the term free verse is an oxymoron, as “free” implies “unmetered.” Turco (2000) also writes, “Amy Lowell (1874-1925) called prose poetry that utilized many poetry sonic devices **polyphonic prose** rather than free verse.

<sup>14</sup> Blau used the terms free verse and prose to describe the new poetry of this period. However, we are not told how they differ. As mentioned in the previous footnote, the terms are often considered synonymous. Not knowing how the various people who are cited in this paper would define the term “free verse,” the terms prose and free verse are to be considered synonymous throughout the paper.

The publication of magazines in Kurdish also appeared during this period, supporting the growing desire of Kurds to write poetic and narrative essays, short stories and historical fiction in their own language. In spite of many great hardships, Kurdish literature thrived during this period (Blau 1996:23). As Blau (1996:23) writes, “The subject matter of the new writing developed dynamically to deal with social concerns such as women’s issues, education and the family, or the struggle against injustice and the exploitation of peasants.”

The new Iranian regime employed a policy similar to that of Turkey and forbade all publications in Kurdish. There was, however, a short time of freedom for Kurdish literature, from December 1945- December 1946, after the Republic of Kurdistan (also known as the Republic of Mahabad) was formed in December of 1945. “Kurdish writers and poets were honored and Kurdish became the official language within the republic” (Blau 1996:24). During this time a daily newspaper was published as well as a monthly magazine, textbooks, and a children’s periodical. After its demise, many intellectuals fled, mostly to Iraq (Blau 1996:24).

### **2.1.3 1960-1980**

In Turkey, the new constitution of 1961 provided Kurds some freedoms which allowed Kurds to explore their Kurdish identity. Over a period of seven years, some collections of Turkish and Kurdish literature were produced, including Mûsa Anter’s (1920-1992) *Birîna Reş*, ‘The Black Wound’ (1965). Anter was sent to prison for several years for his publications and was eventually killed in Diyarbakir in 1992. In 1968 Xanî’s (2.1.1.1) *Mem û Zîn* was translated into Turkish by M. Emîn Bozarslan, who was imprisoned for publishing the book. From 1967 on, “no significant works” in Kurdish were published in Turkey until the 1990s (Kreyenbroek 2005).

In Iraq, the 1960s were filled with changes in government policies that stripped Kurdish liberties. All publications in Kurdish were banned, and the rest of the decade was filled with fighting and times of ceasefire and truce. Not until the 1970s did Kurds in Iraq once again experience freedom that allowed for personal expression. It was during this

time that intellectuals “rediscovered their Kurdish identity,” after a long period of being affected by Arab society (Blau 1996:24-5). However, soon after Baghdad declared war against the Kurds in March of 1974, many intellectuals, including writers and poets, joined the movement against the central government (Hassanpour 1996:55). A period of freedom was again cut short and literary life for Kurds in Iraq halted in the midst of Kurdish uprisings and perilous wars—wars that wasted much of the Kurdish area. During this time, the regime in Turkey occasionally permitted use of the Kurdish language; however, they, too, continued to deny Kurdish people many basic civil rights (Blau 1996:24-5).

#### **2.1.4 1980 to present day**

During the 1980s many intellectuals in Turkey chose exile and found their way to Europe and other western countries, where they experienced their greatest freedom of expression. Kurdish literature had been forbidden in Turkey and Syria for decades, but now it was able to develop from afar. The greatest “renaissance” in Northern Kurdish literature came via the support of the government of Sweden which assisted Kurdish residents who came to them for refuge. With a large publishing budget provided by the Swedish authorities, literary creativity blossomed among writers, poets and journalists (Blau 1996:25-6). According to Blau (1996:25), more than 300 books in Northern Kurdish have been published in Sweden.

Meanwhile, in countries like Iran, Kurdish books are greatly scrutinized and censored, if published at all. As of the mid-1990s, there were no newspapers being published and Kurdish was not being used as the medium of instruction in schools. It is difficult to assess the present day situation of Iranian Kurds (Blau 1996:25-6).

In Iraq, freedom of expression has developed greatly since the establishment of a no-fly zone in the north of the country in 1991. The Kurdish area continues to develop and remains a haven for speakers of both Northern and Central Kurdish, and there is much activity in all forms of literature, within the bounds that are permitted by the semi-autonomous Kurdish government.

## 2.2 *On translating poetry*

The opinions and attitudes concerning the translation of poetry vary widely, from *it cannot be done and therefore should be left alone* to the opposite extreme, *it is possible and should be done*. Most scholars minimally agree that a translation of a poem is never truly a translation. It can never be to a reader what the original poem was to the original audience. Raffel (1988:12-13) states that “no two languages” are the same phonologically, syntactically or lexically. Neither do any two languages have “the same literary history,” nor the same prosody. He writes, “the impossibility of exact re-creation does not preclude the very real possibility of approximation – and it is precisely on approximation that good translation of poetry must be built” (Raffel 1988:12-13). While Lewes agrees that translation of poetry is approximation, he expresses a more doubtful opinion as to its success in his autobiography *The Life of Goethe*:

Several times in these pages I have felt called upon to protest against the adequacy of all translation of poetry. In its happiest efforts, translation is but approximation: and its efforts are not often happy. A translation may be good *as* translation, but it cannot be an adequate reproduction of the original. It may be a good *poem*; it may be a good imitation of another poem; it may be better than the original; but it cannot be an adequate reproduction; it cannot be the same thing in another language, producing the same effect on the mind. And the cause lies deep in the nature of poetry...The meanings of a poem and the meanings of the individual words may be reproduced; but in a poem meaning and form are as indissoluble as soul and body; and the form cannot be reproduced. The effect of poetry is a compound of music and suggestion; this music and this suggestion are intermingled in words, to alter which is to alter the effect. For words in poetry are not, as in prose, simple representations of objects and ideas: they are parts of an organic whole – they are tones in the harmony; substitute *other* parts, and the result is a monstrosity, as if an arm were substituted for a wing; substitute *other* tones or semitones, and you produce a discord. Words have their music and their shades of meaning too delicate for accurate reproduction in any other form; the suggestiveness of one word cannot be conveyed by another. Now all translation is of necessity a substitution of one word for another: the substitute may express the meaning, but it cannot accurately reproduce the music, nor those precise shades of suggestiveness on which the delicacy and beauty of the original depend. (Lewes 1864:466)

To the contrary, Schlegel (1992:31), in his praise of Christoph Martin Wieland's translation of the works of Shakespeare, expresses his appreciation in many ways—even though it was a prose translation. Before Wieland, a German poet and writer, theatres in Germany largely modeled their productions after the French. The introduction of Shakespeare seems to have had a shocking, but valued, effect on German society. Schlegel (1992:31) writes:

Who would have dared to imagine then that such pagan, unruly, and barbaric plays ascribed by obscure rumor to an Englishman, a certain William Shakespeare, would even have been allowed to be shown before our eyes?

He praises Wieland's translation further in saying that Germans “would be able to learn from it for a long time before they would need a new one, even if the translation they had was not perfect” (1796/1992:31). Agreeing about the importance of Wieland's work, *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature* (Ward and Trent, et al. 2000:23) says that:

Compared with what had preceded it in Germany...it was an achievement no less great than Le Tourneur's French translation at a somewhat later date. And, in one respect, no subsequent translation could vie with Wieland's, namely, in its immediate influence upon German literature.

Later in his commentary, Schlegel (1992:32) writes that Wieland provided a translation that was complete, faithful and good, and he states that it allowed people to say, “We had to have that much to be able to wish for more.” Concerning his hope for a future poetic translation, he writes:

If it were possible to recreate his work faithfully and poetically at the same time, if it were possible to follow the letter of his meaning step by step and yet to capture some of the innumerable, indescribable marvels that do not reside in the letter, but float above it like a break of spirit! It would be well worth the effort. (Schlegel 1992:32)

Schlegel's statement—that Wieland's translation would be useful for learning—conveys one of primary reasons why people continue to perform the arduous task of translating poetry. A society has much to gain from the insights that translation of poetry, and

literature in general, can provide. And Schlegel's last statement speaks to another layer of translating poetry—that is, translating into verse.

In the sections that follow, I discuss factors the would-be translator of poetry must consider for carrying out the task with some success. The information is also of great value to the reader of poetry. In §2.2.4, I introduce some specific models of James S. Holmes (1988) and Boerger (1997) that are very helpful for making translation decisions.

### 2.2.1 The translator as reader

In his book *Factors in a Theory of Poetic Translating* (1978:25-35), Robert De Beaugrande tells us that the **metapoet**<sup>15</sup>—that is, the translator of a poem into verse—must astutely perform the function of reading. Mistakes in a translation of poetry more likely occur, not because of the metapoet's inability to write well, but from his or her reading of the poem. He writes, "The basis of the act of translation is not the original text, but rather the representation of the text that is eventually generated in the translator's mind" (De Beaugrande 1978:25).

The metapoet, like the reader of the metapoem, brings a lifetime of experiences which create expectations when interacting with a text. The mental processing of text is limited by these experiences and is carried out amid the general knowledge of the reader, his or her beliefs, presuppositions and priorities. De Beaugrande (1978:26) says that the "mental representation of the text that finally is registered in the translator's mind is not identical with the original text." Hence, the translation, even before it is produced, may already be flawed by means of incorrect interpretation—the additions, deletions, alterations and substitutions produced within the mind of the translator. The end product will be a misrepresentation of the original to the degree that the original has been misinterpreted. This understanding is affirmed by Wendland (2002b:183-84) in the following statements:

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<sup>15</sup> The term "metapoet" is used to express that a translator of a poem into verse is also a poet. But the product, not being a true translation, is an approximation of the original—a **metapoem**.

The most important element of the extralinguistic setting of any communication event is of course the intended audience or readership. Past translation theory and practice have usually noted the importance of this human component, but often in [a] unilateral sort of way. That is to say, the act of communication is viewed as a message transmission in one direction, where the author or translator contributes more or less everything, and the audience simply “receives” the text, interprets it, and then decides how to respond. Recent studies have shown that this is not the case at all — that communication is truly a “shared” process, where an audience brings *to* a text their own distinct expectations, values, norms, biases, experience, perspectives, and cognitive framework, all of which greatly influence — either to foil or to facilitate — the “message” that they perceive, understand, and ultimately react to.

The metapoet should therefore have a thorough understanding of the reading process, remaining consciously aware of the reader-supplied information he or she is bringing into the reading of the poem. Such will not just aid in the proper interpretation of a poem but will also help in the process of translation, as he or she identifies the expectations of the audience of the metapoem.

One key task of the metapoet is to ascertain the theme of the text, as well as its thematic shifts, so that these, too, can be effectively reproduced in the metapoem. Perception of a theme is what allows the reader to adequately process a text. Once a theme is perceived, the mind of the reader can reduce “the possibilities of meanings and hence the work of sorting out potential ambiguities” (De Beaugrande 1978:74). When the theme eludes a reader, or if there are unexpected thematic alterations, processing of the text slows down. If the textual processing becomes too slow, the metapoet risks losing the reader’s interest. According to De Beaugrande (1978:74), “most writers of informative texts make the theme clear at an early point and alert readers to shifts of theme and to the relationships of new themes to what has gone before.”

However, readers may become troubled when encountering more than one interpretation for a text, since reader-supplied information from their life experiences contribute to the interpretation of a text from the outset. As text-supplied information is processed, the reader progresses toward relying more on such information for interpreting the text, and less on reader-supplied information. In light of this, the metapoet must know

his audience and their cognitive processing abilities and expectations. De Beaugrande (1978:88) writes, “*Only if the reading process is consistently pursued to the point where the interpretation is maximally dominated by text-supplied information can a truly objective translation be produced*, that is, a translation which validly represents the perceptual potential of the original” (author’s italics). Differences in reader-supplied information may likely be the reason for the variation in translations of the same poem. It may explain why “two translators seldom arrive at the same translation, and why literary critics disagree so often” (De Beaugrande 1978:26).

### **2.2.2 Qualifications of a metapoet**

According to Raffel (1991:88), the translator of poetry will ideally meet the following prerequisites:

- (1) The translator must have an extensive awareness of the poetic tradition in the language *into which* he is translating.
- (2) The translator should have a fairly considerable awareness of the poetic tradition in the language *from which* he is translating.
- (3) The translator must have high-order poetic skills in the language into which he is translating: bluntly, the translator of poetry must himself be a poet. (author’s italics)

However, Holmes (1988:11) asserts that the metapoet requires other specific skills and that he or she does not necessarily need be a poet. He writes:

In order to create a verbal object of the metapoetic kind, one must perform some (but not all) of the functions of a critic, some (but not all) of the functions of a poet, and some functions not normally required of either a poet or critic...Linking together these two activities, the critical and the poetic, is an activity which is uniquely the metapoet’s: the activity of organizing and resolving a confrontation between the norms and conventions of one linguistic system, literary tradition, and poetic sensibility, as embodied in the original poem as he has analysed it, and the norms and conventions of another linguistic system, literary tradition, and poetic sensibility to be drawn on for the metapoem he hopes to create.

Rydning (1992)<sup>16</sup> has written about issues that arise when translating into one's second (B) language. Concerning the translation of literary work by someone whose language abilities are anything less than those of a native speaker, Rydning (1992:16-17) writes:

The potential range of stylistic effects in a literary work is at best extraordinarily vast, if not limitless: alliterations, rhymes, rhythmical elements, metaphors, anagrams, word plays, each seen as a challenge by translators who must ensure for their own readers the affective impact intended by the author of the original, by means of stylistic procedures which are true to the target language. The success of this difficult task is closely linked to the translator's skill, a skill which demands aesthetic talent, literary competence and an affinity with the author of the literary text. (translated)

Lederer tells us that Rydning chose to include only functional (non-literary) texts in her research on translation into one's B language, leaving out literary translation. Lederer (2003:160), however, feels that concerning literary work, only poetry should be left out of such a study. She states that "it is accepted that poetry in translation is of no value if it does not touch a chord in the reader as much as the original does and that the writing skills needed depend on the intuition of a native speaker." Her final statement affirms the commonly held belief that the best translators will be native speakers of the receptor language. This seems to be especially true when it comes to the translation of poetry.

### **2.2.3 Non-ordinary language of poetry**

As early as Aristotle, poetic language has been viewed as language that deviated from common discourse. In addition to processing the theme and thematic shifts, mentioned above, non-ordinary language also slows the textual processing of the reader. Comparing ordinary "prose," and non-ordinary "verse," language, Holmes (1988:9) writes:

To put it another way: when we read prose we have an inclination to expect a single, precise over-all message, unambiguous in meaning, and in

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<sup>16</sup> As cited in Lederer (2003:160).

trying to grasp that meaning we will strive to attribute to each semantic unit one single significance that seems most obvious or most logical in the context; when we read verse, however, the form itself serves as a signal to us that our minds should remain open to ambiguities at every rank, and even once we have chosen one specific signification<sup>17</sup> of a word, a line, a stanza, or an entire poem as the chief surface signification, we do not reject other possible significations out of hand, but hold them in abeyance, as so many further elements in the highly intricate communication which we expect a poem to be. In this most complex of all linguistic structures, a whole range of significations, and not simply the signification most obvious or most logical, fuse to create the total 'meaning' and the total effect.

Coping with all of the extra significations, and keeping track of potential significations, can become burdensome for the reader. To understand significations, or "markers," De Beaugrande (1978:17), citing Petöfi (1969), defines two relevant terms for understanding reader expectations when processing a text. The first, **co-text**, is to be understood as "combinations of items within a text." The second term, **context**, includes "co-text plus the factors relevant to the use of the text by writer and reader." Often it is when a word appears in conjunction with another word or words, or co-textually, that the meaning is understood. Sometimes it is the context, not the co-text alone, that helps a reader understand the intended meaning. With regard to the reader's textual processing of available meanings for words, De Beaugrande (1978:39) writes,

It is more probable that the meaning potential of words is automatically reduced somewhat as soon as a context and a topic are established in a particular situation, and that this reduction controls the expectations of both the sender and the recipient of a message within the situation.

The reader is even more challenged by the processing of non-literal language, particularly metaphor. Petöfi (1975:290) defines metaphor as "an interpretable stretch of text in a contradeterminate context." The reader's expectations are not met when confronted with a metaphor. However, he or she possesses the mental faculties to make necessary connections between words, therein discovering the meaning being conveyed.

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<sup>17</sup> "Using the term 'signification' in its largest sense, to include not only the semantic function of a linguistic unit, but also its other functions (acoustic, rhythmic, etc.) within the poem" (Holmes 1988:18).

At least, this should have been the goal of the poet—the reader’s recoverability of the interpretation of the metaphor. If the poet has not allowed for this, he or she may have written with lofty expectations of the reader (De Beaugrande 1978:67).

## 2.2.4 Models for making translation decisions

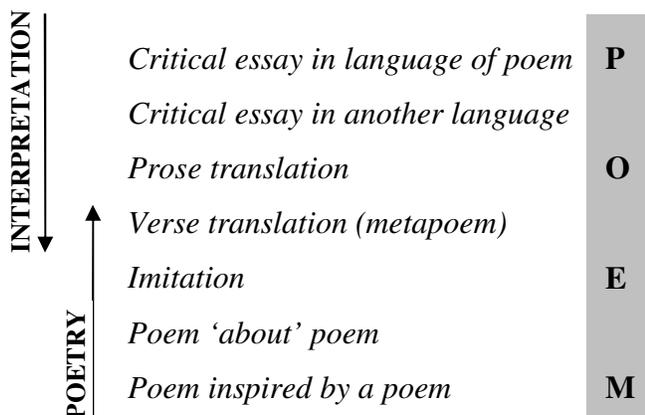
Holmes (1988) provides some models that are very useful in understanding the decisions a translator makes in producing meta-literature concerning a poem. In §2.2.4.1 and §2.2.4.2, I discuss each model and elaborate on some important details. In §2.2.4.3, I present ten principles of Boerger (1997) that address the need for both accuracy and poetic artistry in the translation of poetry.

### 2.2.4.1 *Holmes’ meta-literature model—types of interpretation and types of poetry*

The first model, shown in Figure 1,<sup>18</sup> shows a comparison of two disciplines that are carried out with regard to a poem, the writing of interpretation and the writing of poetry. Seven types of **meta-literature**—that is, the types of things a writer can produce with regard to a poem—are listed according to the number and/or degree of constraints experienced in producing them. Each discipline represents a scale where on one end there is complete freedom. As one moves further toward the middle, the number and/or degree of constraints increase.

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<sup>18</sup> The model in Holmes’ text (1988:24) is laid out differently from the model in Figure 1. However, the content and use of the models are equal.



**Figure 1. Meta-literature concerning a poem**

At the top end of the interpretation scale is the *critical essay in the language of poem*. In such an essay the critic has complete freedom to bring extraneous information into his or her interpretation. Additionally, the critic may write as much as desired to express his or her interpretation of a poem, and such writing does not require any translation of terms in the poem. Next down the scale is the *critical essay in another language*. The writer of this critique begins to experience some constraints. While the essay may still be written as long as is desired, this writer must contend with the task of translation, finding terms suitable for terms in the original text. However, this critic may still draw from extraneous sources. The next degree of constraints is found in the *prose translation*. Here the writer must limit his or her interpretation to the words of the poem itself, leaving extraneous information behind. The length of the product is therefore limited. The prose product is still *not* a poem. Last on the interpretation scale is the *verse translation*, or *metapoem*, which is the point at which interpretation and poetry scales intersect. It is in the production of a metapoem that the metapoet, or translator-poet, experiences the greatest constraints on both scales. The product *is* a poem (Holmes 1988:23). Prose translation and translation into verse form are discussed in more detail in sections §2.2.4.1.1 and §2.2.4.1.2, respectively.

Continuing down the list, the poem that is an *imitation* of the original has fewer constraints than the metapoem. The poet of an imitation takes freedom to change various aspects of the poem as desired, and it is no longer considered a valid interpretation of the original. It may seemingly have some interpretive qualities; however, it has strayed too far to be considered a true evaluation of the original's semantic content (Holmes 1988:23). Imitation poetry is revisited in §2.2.4.1.3 on re-creative translations.

After imitation is the *poem 'about' a poem* and the *poem inspired by a poem*. These poems are devoid of representative features of the original. While they may still possess some semantic content found in the original, the writer crafts a poem that is so estranged from the theme and intent of the original that the connection between the two is very loose.

#### **2.2.4.1.1 Prose translation of a poem**

Prose translations of a poem may be broken down into various forms, such as “literal” and “unbound literary” translations. What is common to all of its forms is that they are all written using prose (Holmes 1988:23). Some people, particularly linguists, find prose translations, such as literal or interlinear versions, useful.

E. Talbot Donaldson (1975:xv-xvi) writes that “only a prose translation, made with no other end in mind than fidelity to the original, can bring out the distinctive qualities of the work. To make it a modern poem is, inevitably, to make it a different poem.” Similarly, John Middleton Murry (1969:129) supported prose translation, saying:

Poetry should always be rendered into prose. Since the aim of the translator should be to present the original as exactly as possible, no fetters of rhyme or metre should be imposed to hamper this difficult labour. Indeed they make it impossible.

Contrary to this opinion, the German philologist and translator Ulrich von Willamowitz-Moellendorff (1992:33), believed in only translating poetry into verse form. Writing with regard to the translation of Homer into prose, he says that the translator “must divest himself of his jewels, in other words lose all the color of life.” In truth, von Willamowitz-Moellendorff did not think Homer was translatable into German, because

there was no epic meter in the language. He believed that a poem was translatable only if there was a verse form in the receptor language that was “analogous” to the form in the original text. Regarding lyric poetry, von Willamowitz-Moellendorff (1992:33) states:

Whoever wants to try them should, in any case, look for a German form analogous to the original in mood and style. Let him decide to what extent he can adapt himself to the form of the original. His intention as a translator will be a decisive factor, as will be his understanding of the text.

Based on my research for this thesis, I am of the opinion that most people would generally side with von Willamowitz-Moellendorff, preferring the translation of poetry into a verse form. However, I also believe that most would be generally satisfied with any verse form, even if there was not an exact match of function in the receptor language.

#### ***2.2.4.1.2 Translation into a verse form***

In the discussion above, we saw that Holmes considers a metapoem—a translation into verse form—to be the best translation of a poem. The next question for the metapoet is: Which verse form should be used? This same issue is addressed by Wendland (2009), who had the following to say with regard to his work in translating Hebrew poetry into a Bantu language:

Having determined the audience and the manner of interacting with them via a “literary functional equivalence” (*LiFE*) translation (Wendland 2006: ch. 3), the search for an appropriate target language genre begins. In this case, our aim is to come as close as possible to an “elegiac” mode, in order to match the original Hebrew text in terms of content, beauty of poetic form, emotive tone, evocative imagery, rhetorical impact, and the oral-aural medium of communication. (Wendland 2009:11)

In addition to the issue of finding a suitable verse form, Wendland raises some additional topics here. Boerger (1997, 2009) also addresses these topics in her principles for translating poetry, which I present in §2.2.4.3.

Holmes (1988:25-7) identifies four approaches translators use for choosing a verse form. The first approach is to use a verse form that is relatively close to that of the original text. In this “mimetic form” approach, the translator takes only the form of the

poem into consideration and does not consider other forms that are found in the receptor language (Holmes 1988:25-6).

The next approach, the “analogous form,” is the process of matching the verse form of the poem to a verse form in the receptor language. This was the approach of von Willamowitz-Moellendorff. Holmes (1988:26) says that translators using this approach focus on “the function of [the poem’s] form within its poetic tradition.” Only then, with this information in mind, does the translator search for a verse form in the receptor language that has a similar function. Holmes calls these first two forms, the mimetic and the analogous, “form-derivative forms,” as both approaches focus on the form of the original text (Holmes 1988:26).

Similar to the analogous form is the “organic form,” which Holmes (1988:27) describes as being “content-derivative.” With this approach, the content of the original poem is used, not the form. Holmes (1988:27) writes that the translator “starts from the semantic material, allowing it [the poem] to take on its own unique poetic shape as the translation develops.” Finally, the last form is known as a “deviant form” or “extraneous,” for it does not take into consideration either the form or the content of the original poem. Holmes (1988:27) says that “the translator making use of this approach casts the metapoem into a form that is in no way implicit in either the form or the content of the original.”

#### ***2.2.4.1.3 Re-creative translation***

For many, referring to a poem as a “re-creative translation” is an oxymoron. If a poem has been re-created, how can it possibly be considered a translation? Many would say it is not even close to being an approximate rendition of the original. However, some scholars—past and present—find great value, and preference, in taking a poem and writing it in a way that brings it “up to date,” modernizing it for use in a new time. As we consider what people have written about “creative” and “re-creative” translation strategies, do bear in mind that the definitions may not be equal between writers. So

while it may be difficult to discern someone's boundaries, it is possible to understand their basic attitudes towards creative endeavors in poetry.

In 1720 the philosopher Voltaire (1992:30) wrote the following words to Anne Dacier, a French scholar and translator of the classics:

I am convinced that we have two or three poets in France who would be able to translate Homer very well; but I am equally convinced that nobody will read them unless they soften and embellish almost everything because, Madame, you have to write for your own time, not for the past.

It seems that Voltaire was likely a supporter of Antoine Houdar de la Motte's method of translation (Sidnell 1998:11). Houdar de la Motte states the following in response to the critics of his translation of Homer published in 1714:

I have followed those parts of the Iliad that seemed to me worth keeping, and I have taken the liberty of changing whatever I thought disagreeable. I am a translator in many parts and an original author in many others. (Houdar de la Motte 1992:29)

Regarding his reasoning for reducing the twenty-four volumes into twelve, he says:

At first sight you might think that this could only be done at the expense of many important elements. But if you pause to reflect that repetitions make up more than one-sixth of the Iliad, and that anatomical details of wounds and the warriors' long speeches make up a lot more, you will be right in thinking that it has been easy for me to shorten the poem without losing any important features of the plot. I flatter myself that I have done just that and I even think I have succeeded in bringing the essential parts of the action together in such a way that they form a better proportioned and more sensible whole than Homer's original. (Houdar de la Motte 1992:29)

Houdar de la Motte only seems to mention in passing the existence of an original context, an original audience that would likely have appreciated many features of the Iliad that he himself finds undesirable:

I have, therefore, only corrected—as far as possible—those defects in the poem that have a shocking or boring effect, since those are unforgivable. I have left the gods their passions, but I have always tried to preserve their dignity. I have not deprived the heroes of their unjust pride, which often appears as “grandeur” to us, but I have deprived them of the avarice, the eagerness, and the greed with which they stoop to looting, since these

faults would bring them down in our eyes. (Houdar de la Motte 1992:29-30)

Here Houdar de la Motte plainly states that the context for the audience in France at the time was much different from that of Homer's audience. He translated for a particular audience, giving his audience something they could appreciate. However, one has to question, can one call his work a translation if it changes the characters' actions and personalities? I would say it is not. If the product is one that strays too far from the original, it is better to consider that product an adaptation of a sort rather than a translation. Such an adaptation would fall into the category of an "imitation" on Holmes' scale in Figure 1.

In support of this view, von Willamowitz-Moellendorff (1992:34), who argues for translation into verse form, writes:

We are faced with a totally different matter when a creative poet takes up an ancient work and transforms it recreatively in his own spirit. This is quite legitimate, even great, but it is not a translation. For translation only wants to let the ancient poet speak to us clearly and in a manner as immediately intelligible as he did in his own time. He must be given words, he must speak through our mouth.

Hence, while von Williamowitz-Moellendorff may have thought Houdar de la Motte's work of value, he would by no means call his version of Homer a translation.

Perhaps translators resort to producing something other than what has been defined as a metapoem *because* the task is so difficult. Wilfrid Thorley (1920:1, 2), a translator of French verse into English, expressed it this way:

In translation, it is a small thing to know, etymologically, the literal equivalent of foreign words, the important thing being to understand their intention, and to render their effect in your own way... This being so with a simple prose statement, the matter is obviously ten times more intricate when we come to poetry, where subtleties of sound are to be reproduced and the sense preserved, while duly conforming to the tyrannous exigencies of rhyme and metre.

However, while Thorley (1920:4) does concede to some sort of re-creation strategy, his philosophy does seem to keep in step with that of the metapoet:

No version of poetry, however faithful, can be good which does not read like poetry: to reproduce a poet's precise wording is a very doubtful need, and in any case an impossible one; to reproduce his effect may be done if we approach the task in prayer and fasting, *steadily set on forgetting his actual words as soon as we have mastered their meaning and got the massed sound of them tyrannously resonant in our ears*. The best translators of poetry are, indeed, those who are least scrupulous of fidelity in detail; they slur over the untranslatable, and insinuate new words and turnings of the original thought that are so perfectly in tune with their originals as to render them far less haltingly than meticulous followers of the text...*The real task of a translator is that of re-creating*, and unless he can bring to his original as much as he takes from it, he had far better leave it alone. To a strict scholar this definition of translation may appear to be just what translation is not; but, though the makers of mere cribs have their uses, they are not such as concern permanent literature, nor do they help us at all to a relish of its savour. (italics my own)

#### **2.2.4.1.4 Apter on Ezra Pound's "creative" translations**

Ezra Pound is considered one of the most influential and controversial poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is particularly known for his translations of classical poetry. In her book *Digging for the Treasure: Translation After Pound* (1984), Ronnie Apter provides some insights regarding some of the poetry nomenclature mentioned above.

According to Apter, the terms "creative," "paraphrase" and "imitation" are not synonymous but represent different types of poetry. Concerning Pound's poem *Sestina: Altaforte*, a translation of a 12<sup>th</sup> century poem by Bertran de Born, Apter (1984:69) writes:

I have called "Sestina: Altaforte" a creative translation, although there are good arguments in favor of calling it an imitation. It is one of the works in which Pound mingled his modes. However, since in my definition a poem is a creative translation insofar as the changes it makes in the sense of the original are criticisms of the original, the conclusions I draw from Pound's critical practice in "Sestina: Altaforte" are relevant to my argument regardless of the category to which the translation is assigned.

While this identifies a creative translation as being different from an imitation, we do not know how it relates to the idea of a metapoem. Apter (1984:4-5) summarizes Pound's philosophy in these words from her opening chapter:

Pound saw translations as new poems in two different, but connected, ways. First, he viewed the past as an active participant in the changing of the present. He selected for translation those poems which he felt displayed desirable qualities lacking in contemporary poetry. His translations from Provençal, Chinese, and Latin were deliberate attempts to change the poetic sensibility of his time. Such translations are in themselves new poems as well as reflections of old poems, because they are intended to belong to the body of contemporary poetry.

Second, he believed that a translation cannot be the old poem; it can only be the old poem viewed from the standpoint of the present. Therefore, insofar as a translation is an augmented view of the past, colored by intervening centuries of experience, it is a new poem.

Pound never set forth his translation theories in any one publication; however, some of his thoughts on the subject are available in his essays and letters (Apter 1984:72). One term that he coined to describe one of his ideas is “logopoeia,” of which he writes:

*Logopoeia* does not translate; though the attitude of mind it expresses may pass through a paraphrase. Or one might say, you can *not* translate it ‘locally’, but having determined the original author’s state of mind, you may or may not be able to find a derivative or an equivalent. (Pound 1968:25)

Apter (1984:73), in response to Pound’s statement, says:

Pound here takes for granted that the translator is interested, not in translating the sense of the original, but in finding an “equivalent” for the original author’s “state of mind.” This formula moves the translator definitely away from paraphrase. Paraphrase is resigned to losing the original author’s verbal mastery, rather than ever saying something he did not say, while imitation, as Dryden (1956:119) explained, permits one to add “new Beauties to the piece, thereby to recompense the loss which it sustains by change of Language...” Pound restricted liberty in “adding new Beauties to the piece” to those which are a “derivative” or an “equivalent” of something in the original poem. Thus, he was describing creative translation, not imitation.

Pound’s interest in the “original author’s state of mind,” and not “the sense of the original,” would either place his idea of a creative poem between metapoem and imitation on Holmes’ model, or it would simply be equal to an imitation. In practice, though,

Pound also produced poems that are not considered translations. For example, regarding Pound's translations of Chinese poetry, Gu (2008:47) writes:

...it has received a low evaluation from scholars of literary Sinology. Of course, Sinologists do not deny the high literary quality of Pound's translation, but they have dismissed it as translation *per se* because they regard it as a free, untrammelled re-creation or re-writing. (author's italics)

Gu (2008:47) also writes that "professional translators of Chinese poetry...deplored his [Pound's] lack of scholarship and disregard for fidelity."

While it is useful to think in all these terms—paraphrase, metapoem, creative poem, imitation—translations may often consist of more than one category. According to Holmes (1988:10-11), the metapoet "inevitably falls into the fallacy of paraphrase, shifting emphases and distorting meanings." Quoting Frost (1955:16), he goes on to say that the poem is "a verbal object whose value is inseparable from the particular words used."

#### 2.2.4.2 *Holmes' "retention versus modernization" model*

A second model Holmes discusses (1988:35-44) delineates the choices that confront the metapoet when translating a poem from another time period. Determinations must not be made just on the linguistic level but also on the literary and socio-cultural levels. For his discussion, Holmes uses translations of a 15<sup>th</sup> century French **rondel**—an older verse form no longer in common use<sup>19</sup>—by Charles d'Orléans. Holmes points out the fact that "the central image of the poem, young men riding on horseback to impress the girls, has lost its compelling force: their counterparts today ride motor-bikes or drive cars" (Holmes 1988:37). Concerning this image, the translator is faced with a decision between whether to "historicize" the poem, retaining the image, or "modernize" it, re-

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<sup>19</sup> Turco (2000:241) describes the rondel as a thirteen line poem form that is "divided into two quatrains and a quintet." The rhyme scheme is described as Abba abAB abbA, where the capital letter indicates a refrain (Turco 2000:129).

creating the image by means of some equivalent in modern day society (Holmes 1988:37).

Later in the chapter, Holmes compares four translators' renditions of the d'Orléans poem on all three levels: *linguistic*, *literary* (which is split in two, as noted below) and *socio-cultural*. For each level, he identifies whether the translator generally chose to historicize or modernize. The literary level is divided between *verse in general* and *rondel form*, as a poet may still choose to write in a verse form but not use the rondel form. Alternatively, a poet may use the rondel-like rhyming scheme but not adhere to its strict seven syllables per line. My discussion below of Holmes' findings is quite summarized; I invite the reader to view his text for more specifics (Holmes 1988:41).

The first translator listed (Adam Khan) was found to have historicized on every level. He predominantly used archaic, Middle English language and retained use of the rondel form. He also retained the socio-cultural themes in the original poem. The next translator (Gavin Ewart) modernized on the linguistic, verse and rondel levels, writing in a modern style and in free verse. This poet, however, retained socio-cultural features of the poem, historicizing on that level. The third translator (Peter Rowlett) modernized on the literary and verse levels, retaining the rondel form (but not the syllable count, which Holmes would view as historicizing on the verse level) and historicizing on the socio-cultural level. Finally, the fourth translator (G.R. Nicholson) modernized on every level but the rondel form (Holmes 1988:41).

The four translations may be summarized on four levels: *linguistic*, *verse (general)*, *rondel*, and *socio-cultural*. Each poet either historicized (H) or modernized (M) on each of these levels. For example, Khan historicized on every level and may be summarized as (H-H-H-H). The other poets are summarized as follows: Ewart (M-M-M-H), Rowlett (M-M-H-H), and Nicholson (M-M-H-M). Holmes (1988:41) observes that none of the translators modernized on every level. Hence, one may surmise that translators of older poetry sense the need to retain something of the historicity of the original in their translations. He also points out that three out of the four translators chose a retentive strategy on the socio-cultural level, which for him raises the question:

Can it be said that the possibilities for re-creation rather than retention are more restricted in this sphere than in the linguistic and the literary, whereas in the other two spheres the pressures against retentive historicizing are greater? And have these possibilities and pressures varied from age to age and from country to country? (Holmes 1988:42)

While he realizes he has only conducted “a preliminary study,” Holmes (1988:41-42) does note that other studies of translations from older poetry have resulted in similar findings.

Holmes continues the discussion by showing how metapoets over the centuries have employed different strategies for producing a metapoem. For example, in the nineteenth century metapoets were given to “exoticizing<sup>20</sup> and historicizing on all planes” (Holmes 1988:49). What is most noteworthy in this discussion is Holmes’ summary of the translator’s conundrum: How can something of quality be produced amid these two juxtaposed positions—to faithfully translate while at the same time write a poem? His discussion is repeated below.

Translation, like many other goal-oriented activities, lends itself to consideration in the light of the theory of games. Viewed from this vantage point, the translation of a text consists of a game set by the translator: the game of producing an acceptable translation... The two basic rules of the game of verse translation are that the final result (1) must match the original to a large enough degree that it will be considered a translation (the criterion of minimum matching or minimum fit), and (2) must be of such a nature that it will be considered a poem (the poetic criterion).

The poetic criterion entails a demand of unity or homogeneity: a poem, whatever else it may be, can be defined as a coherent textual whole. Yet the fact of translation, by its very nature, entails a basic dichotomy between source and target languages, literatures, and cultures—a dichotomy with, moreover, a temporal as well as a spatial dimension. To harmonize the demand of unity and the fact of dichotomy, the translator must resort to a game strategy of *illusionism*: accepting the dichotomy as inevitable, he must map out a general strategy of selecting from his retentive and re-creative possibilities those which will induce the illusion of unity. At the outset there are few further restrictions. But as the

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<sup>20</sup> “Exoticizing” as opposed to “naturalizing.”

translator moves further into the game, each choice limits further choices: the choice of archaic idiom, for example, tends to prohibit later recourse to contemporary slang, and the choice of a strict rhyme scheme and/or metrical system serves to restrict subsequent lexical and syntactic choices quite severely.

Our problem, it would seem, has subtly shifted ground while we have been discussing it. Rather than coming to a definition of the limits of translatability such that we can say “all translation can attain this, and no more”, we have arrived at a polyvalent situation: the verse translator, by virtue of the choices he is required to make in his pursuit of the illusion of unity, presents one possible interpretation (out of many) of the original poem, re-emphasizing certain aspects at the cost of others. It is for this reason that there will always be need of more than one translation of any poem of importance, since several translations present more facets of the original than any one can do. (Holmes 1988:50-51)

In the above lines, Holmes has definitively explained how formidable the task of translating poetry is. However, it is a worthwhile task, especially for those who desire to provide others with glimpses into the lives and thoughts of people who speak languages different from our own. Like Schlegel—so thankful for what German’s could learn from Wieland’s translation of Shakespeare—many still long to learn via the reading of translated poetry.

### **2.2.4.3 *Boerger’s principles for translating poetry***

Boerger (1997) advocates for translating poetry as poetry. To that end she articulates ten principles for translating poetry in an attempt to capture the decision-making process of a metapoet who is trying to balance the two criteria expressed by Holmes in the first paragraph of the quote immediately above. That is, she aims for her principles to address accuracy to the degree that the resulting effort can be viewed as a translation and for the principles to also address artistic and poetic considerations that result in the translation also being viewed as a poem. She applies these principles in her metapoetic translation *POET Psalms*, where the principles are refined and rearticulated as below (Boerger 2009:17).

*Accuracy can include:*

1. representing source language (SL) styles by target language (TL) styles, i.e. poetry by poetry
2. representing SL rhetorical devices when compatible with the TL, or adding them whenever the text lends itself to a device (wordplay, alliteration, metaphor) to reflect their presence elsewhere.

*Linguistic naturalness can include the fact that:*

3. languages in contact borrow from one another, including literary forms.
4. borrowed SL devices often change to conform to TL structures, including literary forms and devices.

*Literary License makes it legitimate to:*

5. combine TL rhetorical devices with borrowed SL ones.
6. alter SL or insert TL metaphorical imagery, as long as meaning is preserved.
7. apply translation principles, including reordering, across a broader range of sentences (verses) than is customarily done in non-literary translation.
8. make adjustments in two directions—a) to adjust semantic content, such as its placement, implicitness, and word choices to accommodate the literary form being used, and b) to adjust the literary form being used to accommodate the semantics.
9. use more than the required number of literary devices within a form, or to add literary devices to a form, in order to compensate for loss elsewhere in the poem.

*Clarity means:*

10. that when form or aesthetics make clarity inaccessible for a majority of (literate?) speakers, the accuracy and TL naturalness must take precedence over form or aesthetics.

I return to these principles in Chapter 6, where I discuss my own and a native speaker's translation of the same poem from English into Northern Kurdish, using some of the same decision-making criteria expressed by Boerger.

### 3. Interviews

During the time of my research in Northern Iraq, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to conduct brief interviews with three poets: Badirxan Sindî, Mihsin Quçan and Mu'eyed Teyb.<sup>21</sup> I also interviewed Reşîd Findî, one of the chief editors of Ahmed Nalbend's entire collection of poems. Below, I present highlights from these interviews.

My interview with Badirxan Sindî was done in English. A translator was used for each of the other interviews. In a number of instances, the translator speaks in third person where the interviewee had spoken in first person. In the discussion that follows, I have changed these instances to first person for easier readability. The full transcriptions of the English provided by the translators are available in Appendix B. Regarding the subject of verse form and syllable count in Northern Kurdish poetry, I refer the reader to §5.3.1 and §5.3.2, where it is covered in detail.

#### *3.1 On the development of Northern Kurdish poetry*

Northern Kurdish poetry is divided into four periods. The Classical period is the earliest period, consisting of poetry written before the time of Ahmed Nalbend (1891-1963), the earliest poet represented in the corpus. The poetry from this period may be summarized as having rhyme—particularly end rhyme—meter and classical forms. The poets of this era used Arabic, Farsi and Turkish in addition to Kurdish, and some poets even wrote entire poems in these languages. Nalbend is considered to be a representative example of the Neo-classical period. While these poets still utilized the poetic devices of

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<sup>21</sup> Each interviewee gave permission for full use of the interview at the beginning of the interview session.

the classical poets, they wrote more predominantly in Kurdish. Still, in Nalbend's poetry there are a good number of Arabic words, which the author may have used in lieu of Kurdish words for reasons of syllable count or meter. The next period in Northern Kurdish poetry is called the New period. According to Professor Mohamed Bakir of Dohuk University, the poetry of Abdulrahman Muzirî (b. 1946), who I was fortunate to hear at a poetry festival in Dohuk during the autumn of 2010, is representative of this style of poetry. My understanding is that there are two elements that mark this period. The first is that poets were moved to write even more exclusively in Kurdish than the poets of the Neo-classical period. The second feature of this time is the beginning of poetry in free verse. One important aspect of poetry that does seem to have carried over from the Neo-classical period to the New period is the themes which poets wrote about. From the information I have gathered, Cegerxwîn (1903-1984), Badirxan Sindî (b. 1943), and Mu'eyed Teyb (b. 1957) would be considered poets of this period, though perhaps some more recent poetry of Sindî and Teyb might be considered as modern. This brings us to the Modern period, of which Mihsin Quçan (b. 1954) is a representative example. The poetry of this period, which began in the 1980s, exhibits freedom from traditional themes and is composed only of free verse form.<sup>22</sup>

### **3.1.1 Neo-classical period**

Ahmed Nalbend was born in 1891 and lived in the town of Barmanê. He did not aspire to learn his father's blacksmith trade, but rather chose religious studies at the mosque where he learned about poetry. Like many of the approximately twenty poets of his time, he was influenced by Ahmed Cezîrî and Ahmed Xanî, two renowned poets from centuries before him. These older poets wrote in the classical style, using form, meter, and rhythm and incorporated words from other languages in their poetry—specifically Farsi, Arabic and Turkish. Nalbend emulated the classical style of these poets but

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<sup>22</sup> The information on the periods of Northern Kurdish poetry was obtained via personal correspondence with Prof. Mohamed Bakir of Dohuk University.

distanced himself from them by writing primarily in Kurdish, while sometimes resorting to Arabic words to meet a desired meter. It is said that Nalbend “loved poetry so much and was so good at it that he would use any scrap. He would have a cigarette box, and write on that cigarette box...a kleenex and he would write a poem” (Findî 2010).

According to Mu’eyed Teyb, this was the first stage in the changes in Northern Kurdish poetry, which would later be called the Neo-classical period. Nalbend was attempting to write in the classical style but “his language was more popular and content had more variety...more subjects, more strategy, more extension.” Although Nalbend did not aspire to become involved in politics, he wrote about Kurdish nationality and the movement for Kurdish independence. Salih Yusef, another poet of the period, was more politically aware and adept in writing about such issues (Teyb 2010a).

Nalbend’s era saw significant change. He was born under the Ottoman Empire and experienced the hope that a Kurdish state would develop during the British occupation of the area which would later become Iraq. Then he saw the destruction of that hope and the tragedies against his people that followed when the Kurdish-speaking area was divided between Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. It was during this time that Nalbend was moved to write poetry because he saw “that the Kurdish culture and...main identity were lost” (Findî 2010).

### **3.1.2 New period**

During the time leading up to Nalbend’s death<sup>23</sup> in 1963, “most of the people...in Dohuk (the largest city in the Northern Kurdish-speaking area) did not know that there was Kurdish literature or Kurdish poets” (Sindî 2010). In the Kurdish area, especially in the city of Zaxo, which is near the Turkish border, Kurdish literature was forbidden. It was not until he was in college (around 1966) that Badirxan Sindî heard that there were

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<sup>23</sup> When the Iraqi military was coming northward, Nalbend killed himself out of fear of being taken prisoner by them and, perhaps, tortured. He had joined the Kurdish revolution in 1961 and felt he was a target because of the things he said in his poetry (Findî 2010).

two famous Kurdish poets, Ahmed Cezîrî and Ahmed Xanî, and read their works (Sindî 2010). Sindî says:

Indeed my first drive into looking for Kurdish literature at that time was the feeling of Kurdishness. And Kurdishness means “the feeling of being a Kurd,” or the feeling that I am a Kurdish man and I have the right to be like all the people who have their freedom and independence—and one of markers of our cultural identity is our language and our literature. (Sindî 2010)

After Nalbend, poets such as Badirxan Sindî and Abdulrahman Muzirî began writing their poetry in a much purer Kurdish. They still wrote in the Neo-classical style, but worked to write without the use of Arabic or other languages of wider communication (LWC). Also during this time, these poets, as well as Cegerxwîn, no longer wrote poems asking God to protect them and make them free, but called out to the people to educate themselves and become more aware of the social, cultural and political issues facing the people (Teyb 2010a).

Until the 1970s, Kurds had only been educated in Arabic. But a peace treaty in 1970 between Mustafa Barzanî, the leader of the Northern Kurdish Kurds, and the Iraqi government gave Kurdish an official status in the country. Nalbend’s poems were published for the first time, and, based on that treaty, one subject in Kurdish was permitted in the schools. This was the first time students were introduced to Kurdish poetry and grammar (Teyb 2010a). It was also during this time that some Northern Kurdish poets in Iraq began writing in free verse,<sup>24</sup> where the classical rules of writing with rhyme, line length (syllable count) and meter do not apply (Quçan 2010). Sindî explains his first experience writing free verse as follows:

This was in 1975 when the Shah of Iran and Saddam Hussein signed what they called the Algerian Treaty. So when I heard it, I was shocked and I couldn’t believe that everything was over, because Kurdish people and the fighters had been fighting for years—from ’61 to ’75. It was for 14 years.

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<sup>24</sup> Sorani poets, and even Northern Kurdish poets in Syria, began writing in free verse before Bahdini speakers (Quçan interview 2010, Appendix B).

And I started to write my poem, and I felt, really, I can't use the *qafîa*.<sup>25</sup> I can't cater to the vowels and consonants. So I put my poem about that subject in a free style, and that was my first time when I wrote in this style. (Sindî 2010)

Mihsin Quçan, Mu'eyed Teyb, Abdulrahman Mizuri and Feisel Mustafa are some of the other poets who also began writing in free verse during this time.

The main subject of the poetry of this time was Kurdistan, and focused on Kurdish rights and their fight for Kurdish independence (Teyb 2010a). Quçan says, "It was all about patriotism—national poetry. For example, if you said "my sweetheart," it was Kurdistan. If you said, "my mother," it was Kurdistan" (Quçan 2010). In 1979, however, the Iraqi Minister of Information set some limits and restrictions on Kurdish communications, affecting the topics allowed in poetry; and in 1982 Mu'eyid Teyb's poems (and likely poems of other poets) were banned, and his family felt threatened. Teyb says, "But some young men liked my poetry—they memorized it. They wrote it by hand and distributed it to each other. That's why some of them are still around. Of course, some have become songs" (Teyb 2010a).

Putting poetry into song was nothing new for Kurds. Many learned Cegerxwîn's poetry through songs by Şivan Perwar, a singer from Turkey (Teyb 2010a). In my initial conversation with Badirxan Sindî, he mentioned that many of his poems were known from being the lyrics of songs by Tehsin Taha, a famous singer in Iraq at the time, who is still revered.

### 3.1.3 Modern period

Starting in 1991, everything changed for Iraqi Kurds. After the US warred against Iraq to free Kuwait, the Kurdish people began to rise up and see themselves as free, without Saddam Hussein. But when America left, Hussein's forces came northward. The Kurds fled for their lives to the mountains in Turkey. There they suffered a great deal, as

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<sup>25</sup> Sindî explains that the word *qafîa* means 'end rhyme.' I have not determined if it can be used more widely, such as for other rhymes or assonance.

it was winter and they had no food or shelter. Many died from starvation and sickness.

This was a huge turning point for the Kurds. According to Quçan (2010):

That America—which was against our beliefs, our ideas—that America itself came to help us and protect us. And we were *peşmerga*, ‘Kurdish military!’ So, we were in Iran and were like rural people; but then we came into the civil life in cities. The Kurdish man who was low esteemed before— now he highly appreciated himself.

Quçan (2010) goes on to say:

We in Iraq were in a closed society. We didn’t know anything about the world, through books and things. But after that—after Saddam,<sup>26</sup> or after the uprising you could say—satellite TV came into Kurdistan and things from Syria came. So there was a great opening up to the world towards Iraq. So all the norms were changed. These factors...affected the norms of writing poetry, of visualizing things—for example, a tree, water, everything was changed. Even how to deal with your children, your wife, took another form. It was the other way around; it was changed. So this fast and successive change affected the way authors thought and wrote.

In 1994, after these changes happened, there was a civil war among the Kurdish people. It was in this year that a new group called “Renewal Forever” was formed, led by Quçan. All of society—mosques, political parties, the university—was against what the group was seeking to do. Renewal Forever sought to challenge society to change its norms. As time passed, some people in the group died; others immigrated from Iraq. While it only lasted about two years, according to Quçan, its effect on society remains. He says:

...such as the poets who were under the effects of that group, as well as painters and those who work in the theatre. Even the religious men—when they go, for example, on Friday to the mosque, they admit that if there’s no renovation, there’s no life. These are the changes that happened in poetry. (Quçan 2010)

Today, most poets in the Northern Kurdish area write in a modern, free verse style. Generally, it is mostly the older poets who are still writing in the Neo-classical

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<sup>26</sup> Saddam Hussein, the fifth president of Iraq.

style.<sup>27</sup> Regarding the issue of themes in present day poetry, Quçan says that because life is less predictable now, the subject matter for poetry has changed. Life in the village was simpler, but with urban life comes a life that is less planned and more reactionary. Quçan says, “Our feelings now are confused. We don’t have fixed style...[or] pure subject to write about...If you read my poems, you can see a mixture of subjects” (Quçan 2010).

### ***3.2 Sindî on present day poetry***

Sindî expressed a couple of concerns regarding the state of Kurdish poets of this generation—the younger poets. First, he calls them “beginners,” saying that they don’t have any “literature roots.” They started reading and writing in the Kurdish language at a time when Kurdish literature was forbidden. Instead of spending time in the classics, most people writing poetry “just imitate the Palestinian poets, French poets, Italian poets, American poets. They read some translated work and try to copy the same experience and the same literature—but they put it in Kurdish language.” Sindî goes on to say:

They think that modern poetry is when you say something illogical, when you say some strange things, when you say some nasty things, when you try to be strangers in your society. They think this is modern literature. They try to pretend that they are the generation of renewing the literature. And some of them say, “No, we are not renewing the literature; we are establishing the literature, and everything that has been said before us, it is *not* literature.” (Sindî 2010)

He admits that this is not the case with all poets, and that there are some very respectable poets in both the Northern and Central Kurdish areas.

### ***3.3 Quçan on poetry and life in the village***

On poetry and how life was in the village years ago, Quçan had the following to say:

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<sup>27</sup> To my knowledge, there are no living poets who write in the older, Classical style of Cezîrî and Xanî. These poets used Farsi, Arabic and Turkish words in their lines of poetry.

In Kurdistan, in winter, the nights are very long. So when winter would come, everything would stop. You could not work outside. You would eat and drink and at night everybody would sit down. There were poems, of course, poetry, and there were stories, and there were poems for crying, for making fun, for nationalism, for everything. And, of course, their fathers would recite poems to children, or the grandfather or grandmother...But they would not say, for example, this is Nalbend's poem or Cezirî's poem. They just recited the poem. (Quçan 2010)

### ***3.4 On themes in Northern Kurdish poetry***

During my interviews and other discussions with Reşîd Findî and Badirxan Sindî, I was given a number of Northern Kurdish terms for poetic themes. These themes are summarized in Table 2. The table also identifies the themes used by three of the poets represented in the corpus.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Quçan was not included as we did not discuss themes much during the interview. He, personally, does not believe that his poems reflect any one subject.

**Table 2. Themes of Northern Kurdish poetry**

Kurdish term	English meaning	Nalbend	Sindî	Teyb
<i>evîn, evînî</i>	love	X	X	X
<i>dawaza</i> <sup>29</sup> <i>jin</i>	erotic	X		
<i>dînî</i>	religious	X		
<i>sêasî</i>	political	X		X
<i>niştimanî</i>	patriotic	X	X	X
<i>edeta Kurd</i>	Kurdish culture	X		
<i>nekamî</i>	calumny	X		
<i>zêmar</i>	keening/eulogy		X	
<i>cevak, cevakî</i>	society, social		X	X
	secularization		X	
	tragedy of an individual			X

I have chosen to refer to these Northern Kurdish classifications as poetic **themes** as opposed to **genres**. I learned through my conversation with Badirxan Sindî that the subject matter of a poem does not predetermine the form (or forms) one should use. Nor does it designate a particular style. The poet who writes with a Classical style may choose freely which form he or she would like to write in. While it is true that in centuries past

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<sup>29</sup> The spelling *dawaz* was provided by Findî, who spoke some English. Other resources for this word, which means ‘to request’ or ‘to demand,’ spell it *daxwez* (Şirîn 2006) and *daxwaz* (Chyet 2003).

there were some expectations of the poet with regard to use of form,<sup>30</sup> as of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until today, this is not the case.

The first theme listed in Table 2 is *evîn*, or *evînî*, which means ‘love.’ Sindî defined his love poetry as “romantic,” a word nonexistent in Northern Kurdish. In saying this, he wanted to distinguish his *evîn* poems from love poetry by other authors where respect for women is lacking. He says (in English), “I prefer to use the word romantic for my poems because I understand love. There is no real love without respect. Love is mixed with respect” (Sindî 2010). He may have said this to distinguish his poetry from another theme. Ahmed Nalbend wrote many poems of the theme *dawaza jin*, which Findî defined, in English, as ‘wanting a woman.’ This is the name given to Nalbend’s erotic poetry, which many Kurds consider vulgar.

Poetry about the concerns of a nation covers many themes. Teyb (2010a) summed up his poetry by saying “most of my subjects are about Kurdistan.” *Sîasî* (political), *niştîmanî* (patriotic) and *edeta Kurd* (Kurdish culture) are three themes that deal with a country and its people. Chyet (2003) defines *niştîman* as ‘homeland, one’s native country.’ For the Kurds— being without their own political state—the word represents the land where they have lived for centuries, perhaps even millennia. Sindî (2010) defined *niştîmanî* as ‘patriotic,’ which would include the desire for nationality. In this sense, it is hard to separate it from *sîasî* poetry. But it is not unusual for themes to cross over one another; nor is it unusual for a poem to contain more than one theme. According to Findî, *Edeta Kurd*, ‘Kurdish culture,’ is a theme Nalbend used; however, I do not have

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<sup>30</sup> For example, traditionally, narrative poems were written in the *methnawî*, or couplet, form (in Persian, *masnavî*). I refer the reader to §5.3.1.2 for the specifics on this form. The treasured story of *Mem u Zîn* by the classical poet Ahmed Xanî is an example of an epic poem written in the *methnawî* form (Kreyenbroek 2005). Another example is the *qasida*, ‘ode,’ the most common form used by the Classical poet Melaye Cezîrî. Considered to have laid the foundation for the Kurdish *qasida*, Cezîrî’s *qasida*’s are devoted to philosophical and mystical ideas. Unfortunately, in English we have few details on this form which in most instances consisted of 30 to 99 couplets (Shakely 1996:329). Turco (2000:216) defines an ode as “any poem that celebrates an event or a person.”

a specific example of this theme in the corpus. In his poem *Xoşe Wekî Cenetê*, 'It's Wonderful Like Heaven,' Nalbend does mention some aspects of Kurdish culture. However, the poem is considered to be *niştîmanî*, since most of it is devoted to the land itself and the pride of its people.

Two other themes closely related to *sîasî*, *niştîmanî* and *edata Kurd* are 'secularism' and *cevakî*, which means 'social.' Sindî did not provide the Kurdish term for 'secularism' but considers it one of the themes in his poetry. He says that this theme is evident in much of his poetry, sometimes to a greater degree, sometimes less. This would also describe much of Cegerxwîn's poetry and is evident in his poem *Dînê Me Tête Zanîn*, 'Our Religion Is Becoming Known.'

The theme *cevakî* was also described by Sindî. He had the following to say:

I have some poems which deal with our social problems in Kurdistan. And we have a lot of social problems, because Kurdish society is changing from old values to new values, from old culture to new culture. That is why we have a lot of problems related to or due to these transitions. We've got some people in the traditional class and some in the modern class in our society. We've got some people who believe in religion deeply and we've got, on the other side, some people who do not believe in religion at all. We've got people who believe in our customs—Kurdish customs—and we have another side; we've got a lot of people who believe in European customs and modern customs. So there is a contradiction in our social life. In my poetry I try to describe these problems and to find some solutions to our problems. So, we can call these poems as poems of the social field. (Sindî 2010)

One of Nalbend's poems, *Ey Ze'îmê Bê Nivêjê Bê Werar*, 'O Leader Without Prayer and Use,' is considered to be of the theme *nekamî*, which is basically the opposite of a eulogy. The word *nekamî* means 'criticism' and, according to Findî, it is a specific theme of poetry that deals with criticism of "one bad person." According to Turco (2000:73), such poetry would fall under the theme of **calumny**, which he defines as "slander or disparagement, defamation of one's character."

Sindî's poem *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, 'Memories of Immortal Barzanî,' exhibits a theme opposite to *nekamî*. It, too, is about an individual, but deals with praising someone who has died. We would call such a poem a eulogy (Turco 2000:78). However,

the only Northern Kurdish term that is appropriate for the poem is *zêmar*. *Zêmar* means ‘mourning’ or ‘sorrow’ (Chyet 2003:689) and perhaps best describes the poem, as the sense of sadness and loss is strongly evident throughout the poem. Sindî describes *zêmar* as:

...a sort of crying—when you are alone and lose something, some valuable thing, especially when you lose one of your relatives or somebody close to you... This sort of crying or sadness we call *zêmar* which is different from the word *girîan*. The word *girîan* means ‘crying.’ This is near to the English word—*girîan* and ‘crying.’ But *girîan* is the crying when everywhere you can cry, like outside the home or at home. People can hear you when you cry... But *zêmar* is when you cry in your loneliness, and you are alone and you cry for some personal thing. (Sindî 2010)

Hence, *zêmar* is closer to the term **keening**, which Turco defines as ‘mournful wailing’ (Turco 2000:79). Eulogy would be an additional theme that can be presented within *zêmar* poetry.

### 3.5 *Sindî on the use of other Northern Kurdish subdialects*

Regarding how the variations in spoken Northern Kurdish are helpful to the poet, Sindî (2010) had the following to say:

The people in Zaxo [where Sindî is from] speak differently from the people in Amedy and Akre and Dohuk. Sometimes the people in Amedy omit one letter, one sound, when they speak, while in Zaxo they pronounce the whole word. So our poets here or in Sulemaniya or in Hawler (the Kurdish name for Erbil) get an advantage from these differences between the subdialects.

As an example, Sindî mentioned the line, *çend car tu hatî*, which means, ‘how many times did you come.’ In Zaksho the word for ‘time’ in this phrase is *car*. In Amedy they say *ca*, leaving off the *r*. If the poet preferred *ca* over *car* for the poem, he or she could use it. Word variations can be especially useful if two versions differ in number of syllables. Also, as end rhyme is one of the most important features of Neo-classical poetry, a word different from the poet’s subdialect may also be useful in forming a rhyme at the end of a line, or elsewhere in a poem.

Concerning the issue of changing spellings, as is sometimes done in English rhymed poetry (e.g. “shower” versus “show’r”), Sindî (2010) says:

If you change the spelling you get something. We call it *hozana*, ‘poem,’ *leng*.<sup>31</sup> *Leng* describes a man who has some difficulty with his legs so that when he walks, he can’t walk in a normal way. So if you change the spelling, you’ll get a *leng* poem. And this is not good for a poet to have a *leng*. It’s a handicapped line. You have to change the words and find the right one which gives the same meaning with the right measurement of the syllables.

Hence, changing the spelling is not permissible. Sindî affirmed after these comments that the words a poet uses must exist in one of the subdialects of the language (Sindî 2010).

### 3.6 *Sindî on use of end rhyme*

According to Sindî, the *qafia*, end rhyme, of a poem is nicer, more musical, if at least the last two letters are the same. One example he used was the end rhyme of *ra* in the words *bira*, *çira* and *gira*. He says that some poets will use the last three letters, but that such rhyming is so difficult as the more letters you use, the less alternatives you have. Regarding his own poetry, he says:

I prefer to use two letters because society sometimes needs a lot of music of the poem, to make them listen to you. This is one of our problems, when you have a message in your poem. When you really care to make the people listen to you, you have to put something in your poem to make them listen. Sometimes it is the meaning, some brave words or sometimes the music itself. So I have to think in my poem, I have to dance in my poem to get their attention to make them listen to what I’d like to say. (Sindî 2010)

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<sup>31</sup> The word *hozana* is another word for a poem or poetry. The word Sindî describes here is *leng*, or *lang*, which Chyet (2003:348) lists as meaning ‘lame, limping’ or ‘awkward.’

### 3.7 *Quçan on imagery in his poetry*

Poetry is understood to be a creative means of expression. One notable moment in my interview with Mihsin Quçan was when he talked about his utilization of popular Kurdish traditions of dream interpretation in his poetry. He says:

In Kurdish tradition, for example, if you see blood in your dream, it means you will depart from something. Or if you see that your tooth is pulled out, it means you will die or something. (Quçan 2010)

Quçan collected these ideas and “put them in his poetry with a new angle, a new way” (Quçan 2010). These are things that the outsider, the person from another culture, cannot know. The outsider has little familiarity with such old traditions and beliefs.

At the writing of this thesis, I did not have the opportunity with a native speaker to identify if this specific dream imagery is present in the corpus. There is one poem by Quçan that deals with blood and begins with references to dreams—*Birînên Şevên Xwînelo*, ‘Wounds of Night Covered in Blood.’ However, I do not see this specific image in the poem, which seems to predominantly be concerned with real life experience—not dreams. Teyb’s *Xewinek*, ‘A Dream,’ also contains dream imagery requiring interpretation.

## **4. A grammatical sketch of Northern Kurdish**

### ***4.1 Introduction***

Kurdish is traditionally divided into three groups: Northern, Central and Southern Kurdish. These languages are in the Western Iranian group of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family of languages (Sweetnam 2005:xix). Northern Kurdish is spoken in Eastern Turkey, Northern Syria, Northern Iraq and Northwestern Iran (Allison 2001:6). There is also a large area of speakers in Northeastern Iran. Pockets of speakers exist in nearby countries, such as Armenia and Azerbaijan, and in large cities of western Turkey, such as Istanbul and Ankara. Kurdish emigrants who speak Northern Kurdish can also be found in many more distant countries, such as Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK, Russia, the USA and Australia.

The grammar herein presented is not meant to be exhaustive but is detailed enough to give the reader a basic understanding of the language in the corpus. While I have utilized the works of MacKenzie, Sirîn, Thackston, Zaxoyî, Sweetnam, and Chyet, I have also drawn from my own experience of living in the Badinan area of northern Iraq. Additionally, my personal communication with Nicholas and Denise Bailey, as well as Shivan Tovi and Perwer Shushi—native speakers of the language—has been invaluable. Northern Kurdish in northern Iraq is often referred to as Bahdini, or by the area of its speakers, Badinan.

### ***4.2 Orthography and phonetics***

Northern Kurdish is written with Latin, Arabic and Cyrillic alphabets, depending on the location of the speakers (Thackston 2006:viii). The more widely accepted Latin orthography is the one that was used by the Badir Khan brothers in the 1930s, which has

some similarities to the system that was adopted in 1926 for writing Turkish. Instead of using the Wahby system, which was closer to English spellings in that it used digraphs *ch, sh, gh, iy, rh, lh* and *uw*, it used the graphemes *ç, ş, x̄, î, ř, í*, and *û* (Hassanpour 1992:374). In Iraq and Iran, an adapted Arabic script, herein referred to as **Kurdish script**, is the primary orthography, though in Iraq some books and magazines are written in the Latin alphabet. An adapted Cyrillic alphabet has been used by Kurds in Russia, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan since the 1930's (Thackston 2006:viii). For the purposes of this study, I have used the Latin script for all poems. All interlinear glossing follows the conventions of the Leipzig Glossing Rules.<sup>32</sup> All examples that are not otherwise referenced come from my own research. Their translations have been confirmed with native speakers of the language.

#### 4.2.1 Vowels

Vowels in Northern Kurdish are written as *a, e, ê, i, î, o, u* and *û*. Pronunciation varies across the area where Northern Kurdish is spoken. Some words are written differently due to dialect differences. The sounds herein described are for the area of focus in this study.

The following is a list of the Latin letters for Northern Kurdish, with International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) equivalents (in brackets). I have also included examples from English and example words for each sound.

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<sup>32</sup> One website where these rules may be viewed is <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>. A pdf document is also available at this website.

a, A	[ɑ]	like ‘a’ in ‘father’	<i>dar</i> (tree, wood), <i>dawat</i> (wedding, dance)
e, E <sup>33</sup>	[ə]	like ‘u’ in ‘cup’	<i>bez</i> (fat, grease), <i>neh</i> (nine)
	[æ]	like ‘a’ in ‘cap’	<i>her</i> (each, every), <i>pel</i> (coal, ember)
	[ɛ]	like ‘e’ in ‘bet’	<i>feqî</i> (fruit), <i>gelek</i> (much, many, very)
ê, Ê	[e]	like ‘ai’ in ‘bait’	<i>mêj</i> (the past, old times), <i>pê</i> (foot, leg)
i, I	[i]	like ‘i’ in ‘bit’	<i>cih</i> (place), <i>fil</i> (elephant)
î, Î	[i]	like ‘ee’ in ‘deep’	<i>pîs</i> (dirty), <i>sîk</i> (market area)
o, O	[o]	like ‘o’ in ‘boat’	<i>roj</i> (day), <i>kor</i> (blind)
u, U	[u]	like ‘u’ in ‘cook’	<i>guh</i> (ear), <i>du</i> (two)
û, Û	[u]	like ‘u’ in ‘boot’	<i>mûz</i> (banana), <i>kûr</i> (deep)

#### 4.2.2 Consonants

The consonants of Northern Kurdish are as follows:

b, B	[b]	like ‘b’ in ‘boy’	<i>baran</i> (rain), <i>ribar</i> (river)
c, C	[ç]	like ‘j’ in ‘jam’	<i>can</i> (beautiful), <i>pênc</i> (five)
ç, Ç	[tʃ] and [tʃ <sup>h</sup> ] <sup>34</sup>	like ‘ch’ in ‘cherry’	<i>çav</i> (eye), <i>maç</i> (kiss)
d, D	[d]	like ‘d’ in ‘dog’	<i>dem</i> (time), <i>sed</i> (hundred)

<sup>33</sup> Regarding the Northern Kurdish dialect known as Kurmanji (referring to the dominant Kurdish language in Turkey), Thackston (2006:1) states that “the [æ] pronunciation of this vowel is taken as standard; for many speakers, however, it is closer to [ɛ], the vowel of English ‘bet,’ in all environments.” I have observed, however, that in the Bahdini dialect, the sound represented by the letter *e* is often closer to [ɜ] or [ə], or somewhere between [æ] and [ə]. I would consider [ɜ], then, to be closer to the medial pronunciation of the vowel. Variation, however, does exist even among the speakers of Bahdini.

<sup>34</sup> In the writing system, there is no difference between the aspirated and unaspirated ç, k, p, and t.

f, F	[f]	like ‘f’ in ‘find’	<i>feqî</i> (fruit), <i>keyf</i> (happiness)
g, G	[g]	like ‘g’ in ‘game’	<i>goşt</i> (meat), <i>mêrg</i> (farm)
h, H	[h]	like ‘h’ in ‘him’	<i>heval</i> (friend), <i>guh</i> (ear)
ħ, Ħ	[ħ]	voiceless pharyngeal fricative	<i>ħeta</i> (until), <i>ciħel</i> (youth)
j, J	[ʒ]	like ‘g’ in ‘beige’	<i>jûjî</i> (hedgehog), <i>mij</i> (fog)
k, K	[k] and [k <sup>h</sup> ]	like ‘k’ in ‘kin’	<i>kur</i> (son, boy), <i>bîk</i> (bride)
l, L	[l]	like ‘l’ in ‘lot’	<i>leş</i> (body), <i>pel</i> (ember, live coal)
m, M	[m]	like ‘m’ in ‘mom’	<i>mişmiş</i> (apricot), <i>kêm</i> (little)
n, N	[n]	like ‘n’ in ‘nun’	<i>nîv</i> (half), <i>nan</i> (bread)
p, P	[p] and [p <sup>h</sup> ]	like ‘p’ in ‘pond’	<i>pak</i> (pure, clean), <i>çep</i> (left, opposite of right)
q, Q	[q]	voiceless uvular stop, like ‘k’ but further back in throat	<i>qelew</i> (fat, plump), <i>fêqî</i> (fruit)
r, R	[r]	flap, similar to the Spanish [r]	<i>rastî</i> (truth), <i>pîr</i> (old) <i>Note:</i> Every word initial ‘r’ is trilled. When a trilled ‘r’ is found elsewhere, it is often indicated in the orthography by ‘rr,’ as in <i>pîrr</i> , ‘very.’ Spelling can vary according to dialect.
s, S	[s]	like ‘s’ in ‘sock’	<i>sarr</i> (cold), <i>bes</i> (but, enough, only)
ş, Ş	[ʃ]	like ‘sh’ in ‘ship’	<i>şev</i> (night), <i>tişt</i> (thing)
t, T	[t] and [t <sup>h</sup> ]	like ‘t’ in ‘toad’	<i>tov</i> (seed), <i>betal</i> (unemployed, nothing to do)
v, V	[v]	like ‘v’ in ‘van’	<i>vîan</i> (life), <i>çav</i> (eye)

w, W <sup>35</sup>	[w]	like ‘w’ in ‘wit’	<i>were</i> (come), <i>kew</i> (partridge)
x, X	[χ]	voiceless uvular fricative, similar to German velar ‘ch’ in ‘Bach’	<i>xanî</i> (house), <i>ax</i> (dirt)
ë, Ë	[ʁ]	voiced uvular fricative	<i>pêëember</i> (prophet), <i>baë</i> (garden)
y, Y	[j]	like ‘y’ in ‘yes’	<i>yarî</i> (game), <i>mey</i> (wine) <i>Note:</i> The same symbol is used for ‘y and ‘î’ in the modified Arabic script. In the Latin based script, ‘y’ is used word initial when it is followed by a vowel. ‘y’ is also used for the diphthongs <i>ay</i> and <i>ey</i> .
z, Z	[z]	like ‘z’ in ‘zoo’	<i>zîv</i> (silver), <i>xîz</i> (sand)
’	[ʕ]	voiced pharyngeal fricative	‘ <i>eciz</i> (upset), <i>du’a</i> (prayer)

### 4.2.3 Diphthongs and sound variation

In Kurdish script (the Kurdish orthography based on the Arabic script) there is no distinction between *w* and *u*. The same is true of *y* and *î*. Therefore, writing in the Latin script varies. Often when a *w* is next to a vowel, the two join to become a diphthong. Such is the case for the word for ‘salt,’ *xwê*. Additionally, variations exist according to region and social identities, such as tribe and religion. Many Kurds of northern Iraq are still very much divided into various tribes and each tribe may exhibit small differences in pronunciation and, ultimately, differences in spelling.

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<sup>35</sup> The same symbol is used for ‘w’ and ‘u’ in the modified Arabic script. In the Latin based script, ‘w’ is used word initial when it is followed by a consonant. When ‘w’ precedes an “*i, î* or *ê*, the sound is a close, back, unrounded semivowel [u], like the French *cuire*.” (Thackston 2006:3)

#### 4.2.4 Glides

A glide is often added when a suffix (*ezafe*<sup>36</sup> conjunctive particle, oblique marker, or indefinite article marker) or **enclitic**<sup>37</sup> (copula) is added to a word ending in a vowel. This is most easily understood by means of example. In example (1), which is a line from the corpus, the word *meyî* consists of the 3PL personal pronoun, *me*, and the 2SG copula, *î*. For glossing, it is customary to consider the glide to be a part of the enclitic, or in other instances as part of the suffix. In this example the copula with the glide is *yî*.

- (1) *baz-ê      baz-an      şah-ê      Kurd-an      ruhînî-ya      çav-ê* (BS1:5)  
 falcon-EZ.M falcon-OBL.PL king-EZ.M Kurd-OBL.PL light-EZ.F eye-EZ.M  
*me-yî*  
 1DP=COP.PRS.2SG  
 ‘Falcon of falcons, king of Kurds, you are the light of our eye.’

In some instances a glide must be changed to a vowel, and in other instances a vowel may change to a glide. In line six of the same poem, shown in (2), the word for ‘wine,’ *mey*, appears twice. In the first instance, *meîya*, the *y* on *mey* is changed to an *î* so that the *ezafe* particle, in this case *ya*, can be added. The change is necessary because the language does not phonologically have consecutive *y*’s. On the second *mey*, a glide is not required and the copula is simply added. The contrast in these two examples needs further research to explain why in the first instance the *ezafe* conjunctive particle *-ya* was added, when seemingly it could have simply been *-a*. The difference between these two examples may be phonological or it may have something to do with the difference between an *ezafe* conjunctive particle being added versus a copula. There’s also a possibility that the reason has something to do with poetics. My purpose is not to

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<sup>36</sup> The *ezafe* conjunctive particle is used to connect modifying nouns, pronouns and attributive adjectives to a head noun. §4.4.2.4 discusses the *ezafe* conjunctive particle as well as other particles and markers that are attached to nouns.

<sup>37</sup> The term enclitic is used to refer to a word that are attached phonetically to end of another word. The Northern Kurdish present tense copula is considered an enclitic. *Ezafe* particles and markers, such as oblique markers, are attached to words but are not considered to be words themselves.

explicate glides here but to make the reader aware that such insertions and changes occur in the language.

- (2) *nê me nal-în=e ji dîr-î meî-ya ‘şq-a* (BS1: 6)  
 do 1DP lament.PRS-1PL=DIR<sup>38</sup> from distance-OBL.M wine-EZ.F love-EZ.F  
*me mey=î*  
 1DP wine=COP.PRS.2SG  
 ‘We do lament from the distance, the wine of our love. You are the wine.’

#### 4.2.5 Contractions

Northern Kurdish has a number of contractions that are prepositional phrases. All consist of a preposition and a third person pronoun, either *wî*, 3OM, or *wê*, 3OF. There are no contractions with plural pronouns. Table 3 presents how these contractions break down. To write without the use of these contractions would be ungrammatical.

**Table 3. Contractions.**

contraction	breakdown
<i>jê</i>	<i>ji + wî</i> or <i>ji + wê</i>
<i>lê</i>	<i>li + wî</i> or <i>li + wê</i>
<i>pê</i>	<i>bi + wî</i> or <i>bi + wê</i>
<i>tê</i>	<i>di + wî</i> or <i>di + wê</i>

Some of these contractions are used in idiomatic verbs. Examples (3) and (4) contain the verb ‘hear,’ which requires the noun *guh*, ‘ear,’ a prepositional phrase (PP), and the copula verb, ‘be.’ In (3) the PP is the contraction *lê*. In (4) a contraction cannot be used, as there is no contraction for *li* plus a 2SG pronoun. The same difference is evident in examples in (5) and (6) containing *jê* and *ji min*, respectively

- (3) *min guh lê ne bî.*  
 1O hear at.3OF not be.PRS.1SG  
 ‘I don’t hear her.’

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<sup>38</sup> This **directional enclitic** appears in Northern Kurdish as the vowel *e* or *a* attached to the end of a verb. More is said about this clitic in §4.4.1.2.

- (4) *min guh li te ne bî.* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:193)  
 1O hear at 2O not be.PRS.1SG  
 ‘I don’t hear you.’
- (5) *heval-êt wî hîvî jê kir-Ø* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:193)  
 friend-EZ.PL 3OM hope from.3OM do.PST-3SG  
 ‘His friend begged him.’
- (6) *te hîvî ji min kir-Ø* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:193)  
 2O hope from 1O do.PST-3SG  
 ‘You begged me.’

Contractions are also found in prepositional phrases outside of their usage in idiomatic verbs.

### 4.3 Stress

All nouns and adjectives ending in a consonant are stressed on the last syllable. Words that end in a vowel, such as *xanê* ‘home’ and *tinê* ‘alone’ often have penultimate stress. Usually when a grammatical element such as an oblique (§4.4.2.2), *ezafe* conjunctive particle (§4.4.2.4.1) or indefinite noun (§4.4.2.4.2) suffix is added, whether it ends in a consonant or vowel, the primary point of stress does not change.

For inflected forms of verbs some other rules must be considered. When a verb begins with a negative prefix, *na-* or *ne-*, the stress falls on the prefix. Other verbal elements, which Thackston refers to as **preverbs**, often receive stress, such as *ve-*, *hil-da-* and *wer-*. Thackston (2006:4) provides a third rule for verbs that states that modal affixes *di-* and *bi-* are stressed; however, personally, in my experience, there are many

instances in Iraq where these affixes are unstressed.<sup>39</sup> A fourth rule of Thackston (2006:5) states that for verbs that possess no prefix, the stress falls on the last syllable of the verb stem.

#### 4.4 Grammar

The grammar sketch that follows is not meant to be exhaustive but to provide the reader an introduction to Northern Kurdish. My hope is that this will enable the reader to become comfortable in perusing the corpus and be able to find answers to most basic questions regarding the grammar. The grammar is based on the Bahdini subdialect of Northern Iraq, which is the dialect that dominates the corpus. Some differences between Bahdini and the Northern Kurdish which is spoken by the Kurds in Turkey and Syria are noted within this chapter as well as in Chapter 5.

##### 4.4.1 Typology

###### 4.4.1.1 Morphological typology

According to Whaley (1997:128), morphological typology is understood to vary on two parameters: Index of Synthesis and Index of Fusion. The Index of Synthesis parameter may be viewed as a continuum where on one end you have the ideal **isolating** language, where every word is monomorphemic. On the other end there is the ideal **synthetic** language, where “complete utterances are formed by affixing morphemes to a

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<sup>39</sup> I have observed that in Bahdini this does not seem to be the case. In the examples Thackston lists, *diaxive* and *biaxive*, ‘talk’ or ‘speak,’ stress is different in each case. In Bahdini of northern Iraq, speakers drop the soft *i* vowel when the modal prefix *di-* is added to a word stem beginning with a vowel. The sound of *di-* changes to *t-*. Hence, another syllable is not added but the speaker says *taxive* with stress on the first syllable. This verb, however, is irregular in that the initial syllable is stressed. When the modal prefix *bi-* is added, a speaker will say either *biaxive*, with no elision of the *i* after the *b*, or *baxive*, as in the case with *taxive*. Stress in the first instance will be on the first syllable of the verb stem, not on the prefix. Also, when a modal prefix is added to a word beginning with a consonant, there is no change in the point of stress.

root” (Whaley 1997:128). The following examples show that Northern Kurdish characteristically represents more aspects of an isolating language. While some words contain affixes (e.g. *bi-bin*, *der-ê*, *tekî-a*, *ber-ê*, *tibil-ên*, *lev-ên*, *ve-d-xwar*), others do not (e.g. *nêrgiz*, *ji*, *ber*, *min*, *têr*, *şîr*), and the language largely consists of separate words. If we compare Kurdish to Chinese, a language that has very few affixes, we would say that it is a bit more synthetic.

- (7) *şîn\_bi-b-in*                      *nêrgiz*    *ji*    *nu\_ve*<sup>40</sup>    *ber*    *der-ê*                      (BS1:11)  
 grow\_IRR-grow-3PL    narcissus    from    new\_again    before    place-EZ.M

*tekî-a*                      *ber-ê*  
 special.music-EZ.F    old-OBL.F

‘May narcissuses grow new again before the door of the old places of worship.’

- (8) *tibil-ên*    *min* *ji*    *lêv-ên*    *te*    *têr*    *şîr*    *ve-d-xwar-Ø*<sup>41</sup>                      (DD:5)  
 finger-EZ.PL 1O    from lip-EZ.PL 2O    plenty milk    drink-IPFV-drink.PST-3SG  
 ‘My fingers were drinking plenty of milk from your lips.’

The second parameter is also best understood as a continuum. On one end is the ideal **agglutinative** language; on the other, the ideal **fusional** language. Agglutinative languages have morphemes that may be easily divided from a word. In fusional languages, like Ancient Greek, individual morphemes contain two or more bits of meaning. In Whaley’s example, shown in (9), each of the morphemes following the verb stem *lu* hold multiple bits of meaning concerning the verb.

- (9) *lu-ō*                      1S:PRS:ACT:IND (I am releasing)                      (Whaley 1997:134)  
*lu-ōmai*                      1S:PRS:ACT:SBJV (I should release)  
*lu-omai*                      1S:PRS:PASS:IND (I am being released)  
*lu-oimi*                      1S:PRS:ACT:OPT (I might release)  
*lu-etai*                      3S:PRS:PASS:IND (He is being released)

<sup>40</sup> Possible alternative translation for *ji nuve*: ‘from now on.’

<sup>41</sup> The verb *ve-xwin* ‘to drink’ allows for the modal prefix *di-* to be inserted after the *ve* portion of the verb. As noted previously, Thackston (2006:35) calls *ve* a preverb, as there are many verbs with such an element that could stand alone as verbs without the *ve*. This is not typical, though, of Northern Kurdish verbs. The *di-* prefix usually cannot be inserted but is at the beginning of the verb. It may be that *ve*, *hil* and similar elements may no longer contain separate semantic data but have become lexicalized and are considered a part of the verb stem.

In examples (7) and (8), aspect markers *bi-* and *d-* were separable from the verb stems, e.g. *bi-bin*, *ve-d-xwar*. However, while this feature points toward Northern Kurdish being agglutinative, the language does have some fusional features, such as verb stem endings, which contain meaning for person and number. Additionally, *ezafe* conjunctive particles and oblique markers contain meaning for gender and number. In example (10) below, the *-im* suffix on the verb ‘make’ contains both person and number agreement. The *-ê* oblique marker on *kêk*, ‘cake,’ reveals that the noun is both masculine and singular, while *-ek* on *kêk* indicates the noun is indefinite. With a maximum of two bits of meaning being represented within any one morpheme, we can say that the morphological typology of Northern Kurdish is less fusional than ancient Greek and that it also exhibits some agglutinative features.

- (10) *ez kêk-ek-ê çê-di-k-im.* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:70)  
 1D cake-INDF-OBL.M make-IPFV-do-1SG  
 ‘I am making a cake.’

#### 4.4.1.2 *Constituent order typology*

Another typological parameter of language is *constituent order*. Scholars, such as MacKenzie and Thackston, agree that the basic constituent order of Northern Kurdish is SOV, as the following examples indicate. In example (11) *biraê min*, ‘my brother,’ is the subject and comes first in the sentence. The object *têştê*, ‘breakfast,’ comes second and is followed by the verb *dixuit*, ‘is eating.’ We see the same order in example (12).

- (11) *bira-ê min têştê di-xu-it.*  
 brother-EZ.M 1O breakfast-OBL.F IPFV-eat.PRS-3SG  
 ‘My brother is eating breakfast.’
- (12) *min çar sêv kirrî-n.*  
 1O four apple buy.PST-3PL  
 ‘I bought four apples.’

Note that in (12) the verb agrees with the object, not the subject. Northern Kurdish is a split-ergative language. Transitive past tense clauses have an ergative construction, where there is agreement between the verb and the object (as opposed to accusative construction

where the verb agrees with the subject). For more details on ergativity, see the discussion on verbs and the verb phrase in §4.4.3.

One other determination that can be made regarding constituent order concerns directional complements. In his reference grammar on Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji), Thackston (2006) states the following concerning constituent (word) order:

Full normal word order is: (1) temporal expression, (2) subject, (3) direct object, (4) miscellaneous prepositional phrases, (5) verb, (6) **directional complement**. Many other orders are possible, but when any element is moved from its normal position it is highlighted or emphasized in some way.

Nicholas Bailey<sup>42</sup> states that the “post-verbal position is reserved for directional complements of certain verbs involving motion towards a goal.” He further states that “it is usually an indirect object of verbs that involve some kind of *motion* towards the indirect object that occurs in that position.” Regarding this position, which he calls GOAL, Bailey also states that “this position is thus reserved for only a restricted set of indirect objects (i.e., ones usually involving motion).” This restriction, which may have some exceptions, may be defined according to the definition of GOAL in Kroeger (2005:54): “the destination or end-point of a motion.”

The examples in (13) and (14) both contain the intransitive verb that means ‘go.’ GOAL is a semantic argument of the verb. Notice that in (13) the GOAL, *Şingar*, a city in Northern Iraq near the Syrian border, is preceded by the letter *e*, which is attached to the verb, *çum*. According to MacKenzie, this letter, which is sometimes written as the letter *a*, is a preposition and should be realized as an enclitic (MacKenzie 1961:198). Throughout this paper I refer to this preposition as DIR, short for **directional enclitic**. In (14) an enclitic is not realized because the inflected form of ‘go,’ *çu*, ends in a vowel. MacKenzie (1961:198) also has similar examples in his text where the enclitic does not appear.

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<sup>42</sup> Personal communication (2012).

(13) *havîn bu-Ø çu-m=e Şingar-ê* (BS2:1)  
 summer COP.PST-3SG go.PST-1SG=DIR Shingar  
 ‘It was summer (when) I went to Shingar.’

(14) *kew-ek bu-Ø lê ne-çu-Ø rav-ê* (BS7:11)  
 partridge-INDF COP.PST-3SG but NEG-go.PST-3SG hunting-OBL.M  
 ‘He was a partridge but he did not go hunting.’

Ditransitive verbs, such as ‘give,’ also require a GOAL. In (15) the GOAL is *bîanî*, ‘group of foreigners.’ The GOAL is again preceded by the directional enclitic.

(15) *dê min di-n=e bîanî* (BS2:66)  
 will 1O give-PRS-3PL=DIR group.of.foreigners  
 ‘They are going to give me to foreigners.’

Lastly, a goal may be metaphoric, as is the situation in example (16). In this poem Ahmed Nalbend is not actually talking about slavery but of his desire for a particular woman. The verb *bum*, ‘I became,’ has to do with a metaphoric transition to another state. It too has an aspect of metaphorically moving towards something and, therefore, also requires use of the directional enclitic, *e*.

(16) *ez bu-m=e xidam* (AN5:34)  
 1D become.PST-1SG=DIR slave  
 ‘I became a slave...’

For more examples and further discussion on the directional enclitic, see §4.4.3.1 where I have provided some of my personal research on the subject.

## 4.4.2 Nouns and the noun phrase

### 4.4.2.1 Nouns

Nouns in Northern Kurdish are masculine, feminine or neuter. Nouns that are neuter are either masculine or feminine, depending on the use of the noun in a sentence. The gender may be revealed by means of an *ezafe* conjunctive particle or oblique suffix, discussed in §4.4.2.4. For example, the word *heval* means ‘friend.’ If you are referring to a female friend of yours, you would say *hevala min*, ‘my friend,’ using the feminine *ezafe* particle, *-a*, to connect the possessive pronoun, *min*, ‘me.’

Gender can only be learned through memorization and language use, as no aspect of a noun reveals its gender. One might find that certain classifications are predominately of a certain gender, such as fruits, which are generally feminine. However, it is primarily through use of the language that one becomes proficient in applying masculine and feminine particles and markers.

#### 4.4.2.2 *Noun inflection*

Nouns are inflected in two cases, **direct**, also referred as nominative case, and **oblique**. In nominative-accusative languages the subject is the most agent-like argument of transitive verbs. It is therefore considered to be in the nominative, or direct, case. Objects, as the most patient-like argument, are considered to be in the accusative case. As inactive elements they are considered to be in the oblique case. Other inactive elements are also considered to be in the oblique case, such as possessors, post-verbal arguments, objects of prepositions, and locations. In Northern Kurdish, the direct case is left unmarked, while the oblique case only has one case marking for a number of cases. Oblique may be viewed as a collective term for a number of case markings found in languages, such as dative, ablative, and locative (MacKenzie 1961:153).

As mentioned, Northern Kurdish is a split-ergative language where past transitive clauses follow an ergative-absolutive system of grammar. Subjects of past transitive clauses are said to be in the ergative case; these are marked as oblique. Objects in past transitive clauses are said to be in the absolutive case. These are considered to be in the direct case and are not marked. Intransitive clauses, having only one argument, are always considered to be in the direct case.

The examples in (17) to (19) show the unmarking of nouns in the direct case and the marking of nouns in the oblique case. The oblique case is marked with a feminine, *-ê*, masculine, *-î*, or plural, *-a* or *-an*, marker. In (17), a transitive present-tense sentence, the subject *medîr*, ‘owner,’ is in the unmarked direct case. The object *kurk*, ‘boy,’ is marked with a masculine oblique marker, *-î*. In (18), an intransitive sentence, the subject, again *medîr*, is correctly left unmarked, in the direct case. Again, this will be true for all

intransitive clauses. In (19), *zelam*, ‘man,’ is the subject of a past-tense transitive sentence, and is correctly marked with a masculine oblique marker *-î*. The object *sêv*, ‘apple,’ is in the direct case and left unmarked.

(17) *medîr kurk-î di-bîn-it*  
 owner boy-OBL.M IPFV-see-PRS-3SG  
 ‘The owner sees the boy.’

(18) *medîr hat-Ø*  
 Şivan come.PST-3SG  
 ‘Şivan came.’

(19) *zelam-î sêv xwar-Ø*  
 man-OBL.M apple eat.PST-3SG  
 ‘The man ate the apple.’

In exception to these rules are the few irregular verbs wherein the object is always in the direct case.

Nouns also take the oblique case when they are in a prepositional phrase or a GOAL (as per the discussion on this subject in §4.4.1.2 on basic constituent order). In (20), the subject *Bêbîn*, a woman’s name, is marked with the feminine oblique marker, *-ê*. *Rezbar* is also a woman’s name. As the object of the preposition *bu*, it is correctly marked with a feminine oblique marker. In (21), *sîk* is a GOAL, a post-verbal argument. It, too, is correctly marked as an oblique.

(20) *Bêbîn-ê ew kirrî-Ø bu Rezbar-ê*  
 Beybeen-OBL.F 3D buy.PAST-3SG for Rezbar-OBL.F  
 ‘Beybeen bought it for Rezbar.’

(21) *Şivan çu-Ø sîk-ê*  
 Shivan go.PST-1SG market-OBL.F  
 ‘Shivan went to the market.’

Some exceptions to these rules for oblique case are presented in §4.4.2.3 on personal pronouns and §4.4.2.4 on noun modification.

So, in review of the above, the direct case is never marked, while the oblique case is marked with a suffix that matches the number and gender of the noun: *-î* for masculine, *-ê* for feminine. If a noun in the oblique case is plural, it is marked with the non-gender

specific marker, *-an* or *-a*, depending on subdialect. There is one exception to this rule. Speakers of Northern Kurdish in Turkey do not mark masculine obliques (Thackston 2006:8). This exception will be revisited in Chapter 5 when discussing examples of Cegerxwîn, whose dialect is from Turkey, not Iraq.

#### 4.4.2.3 *Personal pronouns*

One exception to the rules for oblique case endings is the use of personal pronouns. Northern Kurdish has two sets of personal pronouns: one for direct case, the other for oblique case. Both sets are as listed in Table 4.

**Table 4. Personal pronouns**

Personal Pronouns	Direct Case	Oblique Case
1SG	<i>ez</i>	<i>min</i>
2SG	<i>tu</i>	<i>te</i>
3SG	<i>ew</i> (m/f)	<i>wî</i> (m) or <i>wê</i> (f)
1PL	<i>em</i>	<i>me</i>
2PL	<i>hîn</i> or <i>huîn</i>	<i>hewe</i> or <i>we</i>
3PL	<i>ew</i>	<i>wan</i>
REFL		<i>xwe</i> or <i>xu</i>

Below are some examples using personal pronouns. Examples (22) and (23) contain both direct case and oblique case pronouns. In (23) *Babî*, the recipient, is in the oblique case, as was discussed in section 4.4.1.2 on constituent order typology. Example (24) illustrates the reflexive pronoun *xwe*, which always refers to the subject within the clause in which it is found. Additionally, notice that the prepositional phrase does not end with an oblique suffix. A suffix is unnecessary as the phrase ends with an oblique case personal pronoun. The semantic categorization of possession is always expressed by personal pronouns of the oblique case.

- (22) *min tu dît-î*  
 1O 2D see.PST-2SG  
 'I saw you.'

- (23) *ez dê wan da-m=e Bab-î*  
 1D will 3OP give.PRS-1SG=DIR<sup>43</sup> Father-OBL.M.  
 ‘I will give them to Father.’
- (24) *Sîlev-ê pertûk-êt xwe kirr-în ji dikan-a mam-ê min*  
 Seeluv-OBL.F book-EZ.PLREFL buy.PST-3PL from store-EZ.F uncle-EZ.M 1O  
 ‘Seeluv bought her books from my uncle’s store.’

According to Thackston (2006:18), it is usually necessary to express subject pronouns. However, in some instances, subject pronouns may be left unexpressed in certain contexts.

#### 4.4.2.4 Noun modification

Northern Kurdish has both prenominal and postnominal modification. Most postnominal modification occurs via the *ezafe* conjunctive particle. The term *ezafe* comes from the Arabic word *idāfat*, which means “addition” or “supplement.” Haig states that “within Iranian linguistics it is used to refer to an unstressed vocalic particle which occurs between a noun and an adjective or other nominal modifier” (Haig 2011:363).

Prenominal modification consists of numbers, intensifiers and demonstratives. Such modification does not require any additional particle or connecting word.

##### 4.4.2.4.1 Ezafe conjunctive particle

The *ezafe* conjunctive particle is predominately used to connect postnominal modifiers to head nouns. Such modifiers consist of other nouns, pronouns, adjectives and prepositional phrases. While some Indo-Iranian languages have only a single form of the *ezafe* particle, Northern Kurdish has masculine, feminine and plural forms. As well, in specific situations after an initial *ezafe* particle has been used, a different *ezafe* form is used, which I will refer to as *ezafe for secondary construct*. Such *ezafes* are commonly written as separate words, whereas *ezafes for primary constructs* are particles attached to head nouns. Some researchers have written about other uses of the *ezafe* conjunctive

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<sup>43</sup> The DIR directional enclitic signifies that the action being performed is going toward something. In the case of (23), *Babî*, ‘Father,’ is the RECIPIENT or GOAL of the action.

particle, such as in relativization.<sup>44</sup> A thorough discussion of all of the functions of the *ezafe* conjunctive particle is outside the focus of this paper.

The following table summarizes the *ezafe* forms. The different plural forms reflect dialect differences. The forms *-ên* and *-yên* tend to be the standard for writing.

**Table 5. Forms of the *ezafe* conjunctive particle**

	masculine	feminine	plural
<i>Ezafes</i> for primary constructs	<i>-ê</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-êt</i> or <i>-ên</i>
<i>Ezafes</i> for secondary constructs	<i>-yê</i>	<i>-ya</i>	<i>-yêt</i> or <i>-yên</i>

In example (25), the feminine *ezafe* particle, *-a*, is attached to the end of the head noun *sêv*, ‘apple.’ Its modifier is the adjective *mezin*, ‘big.’

- (25) *min sêv-a mezin xwar-Ø*  
 1O apple-EZ.F big eat.PST-3SG  
 ‘I ate the large apple.’

An example of a noun phrase (NP) modifying a noun is presented below in (26). Here an NP consisting of a demonstrative *wî*, 3OM, and a noun *welat*, ‘country,’ modifies the word *mirov*, ‘person.’ We know that *mirov* is the plural form, ‘people,’ because of the plural *ezafe* particle. Notice too that when an NP is in the oblique state and ends in a noun, the oblique marker goes on the final noun, in this case the word *welat*. The oblique marker must match the gender and number of the noun to which it is attached, not that of the head noun of the clause.

- (26) *mirov-ên wî welat-î* (Thackston 2006:12)  
 person-EZ.PL 3OM country-OBL.M  
 ‘the people of that country’

Example (24), repeated below in (27), shows the usage of singular and plural *ezafe* conjunctive particles, each matching the gender and number of the word to which they are connected. The first *ezafe* is on the word *pertûk*, ‘book.’ The *ezafe* is plural and

<sup>44</sup> Regarding Northern Kurmanji, Haig writes, “*Ezafe* has retained many of the features of its Old Iranian ancestor, including relativizer, demonstrative and nominalizer functions. The Northern Kurdish *ezafe* has also extended its distribution from the nominal into the verbal domain” (Haig, 2011: 363). See also MacKenzie (1961), Sweetnam (2005), and Thackston (2006).

connects the modifying reflexive pronoun *xwe*, which refers to the subject, *Sîlev*, a female name. In the prepositional phrase *ji dikana mamê min*, ‘from my uncle’s store,’ there are two head nouns, *dikan*, ‘store,’ and *mam*, ‘uncle.’ *Mam* is a head noun modified by *min*, 10. The noun phrase *mamê min* modifies *dikan*. In this instance an *ezafe* for secondary construct, *-yê*, is not used, as the second *ezafe* is used to connect the modifier *min* to *mam*, not *dikan*.

- (27) *Sîlev-ê pertûk-êt xwe kîrr-în ji dikana-a mam-ê min*  
 Seeluv-OBL.F book-EZ.PL REFL buy.PST-3PL from store-EZ.F uncle-EZ.M 10  
 ‘Seeluv bought her books from my uncle’s store.’

To add another noun, pronoun or adjective to modify a head noun, an *ezafe* for a secondary construct must be used. In the following example *wî*, ‘him,’ is a possessive pronoun modifying *çav*, ‘eye.’ The plural *ezafe -êt* connects the modifier to the head noun. A second modifier of *çav* is the word *şîn*, ‘blue,’ and it is connected by means of the *ezafe* for a secondary construct, *-yêt*. Thus, both *wan* and *şîn* modify *çav*.

- (28) *çav-êt wî yêt şîn*  
 eye-EZ.PL 3OM EZ2.PL blue  
 ‘his blue eyes’

Regarding situations that require use of an *ezafe* for secondary constructs, Thackston writes:

The extenders [*ezafes* for secondary constructs] are used (1) to add a modifying noun to a noun-adjective construct, (2) to link an adjective modifying the first noun in a noun-noun construct, and (3) to add an additional adjective to a noun-adjective construct. (Thackston 2006:15)

In the instance of example (28), an *ezafe* for a secondary construct is required because an adjective is being added to a noun-noun construct.

As mentioned above, an *ezafe* can also be used to connect a modifying prepositional phrase (PP). In the following example the PP *ji tenîra xwe*, ‘from her bread over,’ modifies *nan*, ‘bread.’

- (29) *Vîan dê nan-ê ji tenîra-a xwe d-et te*  
 Veeyan will bread-EZ.M from bread.oven-EZ.F REFL give.PRS-3SG 20  
 ‘Veeyan will give you bread from her bread oven.’

The discussion above summarizes the uses of the *ezafe* conjunctive particle relevant to the corpus of poems.

#### 4.4.2.4.2 Indefinite state particle

Nouns that are considered to have an indefinite state take the suffix *-ek*. Without this particle a noun is assumed to be in a definite state. The *-ek* suffix is always attached before adding an oblique case marker or *ezafe* conjunctive particle. In example (30) we know that *qelem*, ‘pen,’ has an indefinite state because it has the suffix *-ek*. In (31) the store, *dikan*, that *Āafor* (the man’s name) will build, being in the indefinite state, has the *-ek* marker. It is followed by the singular feminine *ezafe* particle, *-a*, which connects the modifier *nuî*, ‘new,’ to the head noun.

- (30) *Amîna-yê qelem-ek kirrî-Ø?*  
 Ameena-OBL.F pen-INDF have.PRS.3SG  
 ‘Did Ameena buy a pen?’
- (31) *Āafor dê dikan-ek-a nuî ava\_kit-Ø*  
 Ghafor will store-INDF-EZ.F new build.PRS-3SG  
 ‘Ghafor will build a new store.’

#### 4.4.2.4.3 Specific reference marker

Speakers of the Bahdini subdialect of Northern Kurdish also have a noun particle that is used by a speaker when wanting the hearer to know that he or she has something specific in mind. For example, you desire to purchase a specific type of chair. Entering a store it would be appropriate for you to say to the store owner:

- (32) *Min kurskîk-ek-he di-vê-t*  
 1O chair-INDF-SRM IPFV-want.PRS-3SG  
 ‘I want (to buy) a chair.’

The owner of the store now knows that even though you don’t know exactly which chair you want, you do have a specific type of chair in mind. This specific reference marker (SRM) *-he*, or *-e*, must, like the oblique case marker, always follow an indefinite state suffix (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:186).

I have encountered in the corpus one other type of SRM (or possibly two) that I have never read about in any other research on Northern Kurdish. Due to a lack of data, I must leave the subject open for future research.<sup>45</sup>

#### 4.4.2.5 Numbers, quantifiers and intensifiers

Numbers, quantifiers and intensifiers that directly modify a noun never get added by means of an *ezafe* conjunctive particle but come before the noun, as the following examples show. In (33) the number *du*, ‘two,’ modifies *nan*, ‘bread.’ In (34) the quantifier *gelek*, ‘much’ or ‘a lot,’ modifies *îprax*, a traditional food of Kurds and other nearby cultures.

(33) *Min du nan xwar-in*  
 1O two bread eat.PST-3PL  
 ‘I ate two (loaves of) bread.’

(34) *Rezbar gelek îprax-ê çê-di-kit*  
 Rezbar much *îprax*<sup>46</sup>-OBL.F make-IPFV-do.PRS-3SG  
 ‘Rezbar is making a lot of *îprax*.’

#### 4.4.2.6 Demonstratives

Demonstratives also have both direct and oblique cases, as shown in Table 6. When a demonstrative is to be used as a determiner, it must be in the oblique case. The oblique case demonstratives for near, ‘this,’ and far, ‘that,’ have both masculine and feminine forms.

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<sup>45</sup> For those interested in the subject, I would refer you to line 60 of Sindî’s *Gerîanek*. The SRM for further research is the *-î* on the word *ev*. According to my consultant it has to do with the fact that the thing you’re talking about belongs to someone else, not yourself.

<sup>46</sup> A traditional dish, also called *dolma*, made of cabbage, grape leaves and other vegetables that are stuffed with rice, spices and sometimes meat.

**Table 6. Demonstratives.**

Demonstrative	Direct Case	Oblique Case
this (M)	<i>ev</i>	<i>vî</i>
this (F)		<i>vê</i>
that (M)	<i>ew</i>	<i>wî</i>
that (F)		<i>wê</i>
these	<i>ev</i>	<i>van</i>
those	<i>ew</i>	<i>wan</i>

The following examples show some uses of demonstratives. In (35) *wê*, 3OF, defines which book the speaker is referring to. Notice that the oblique marker, *-ê*, on *kitêb*, ‘book,’ is the same as the vowel in *wê*. This will always be so when the noun requires an oblique marker; the demonstrative and the oblique marker on the head noun will always match in gender and number. Example (36) shows an example of the near, plural demonstrative, *van*, ‘these,’ modifying the noun, *qelam*, ‘pen,’ which is marked with the plural oblique suffix, *-a*.

(35) *wê kitêb-ê bi-d-e Azad-î* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:47)  
 3OF book-OBL.F IRR-give-IMP.SG Azad-OBL.M  
 ‘Give Azad that book.’

(36) *van qelem-a ji\_bîr\_ne-k-e* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:47)  
 3OPN pen-OBL.PL forget-NEG-do-IMP.SG  
 ‘Don’t (you-SG) forget these pens.’

In the previous two examples, the demonstratives were used as adjectives. In (37) *ev*, 3DN, is used as a pronoun in an attributive phrase.

(37) *ev-e min=e*  
 3DN-EMPH 1O=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘This is mine.’

In (38) *ev* is used as an adjective, modifying *pertûk*, ‘book.’ Following *pertûk* is the rest of the NP, a feminine *ezafe*, *-a*, connecting the prepositional phrase *di destê te da*, ‘in your hand.’

- (38) *ev pertûk-a di dest-ê te da*<sup>47</sup>  
 3DN book-EZ.F in hand-EZ.F 2O in  
 ‘this book in your hand’

#### 4.4.2.7 *The adjective phrase*

Adjectival modifiers are not connected by means of an *ezafe* conjunctive particle when they are in an adjective phrase (AdjP) that is independent of a head noun. They simply precede the adjective they modify. In (39) *gelek*, in this instance an intensifier meaning ‘very,’ modifies *baş*, ‘good.’ The AdjP *gelek baş* is the attribute of the attributive clause, not a part of the noun phrase (NP) *ev pertûk*, 3DN ‘book.’ Hence, there is no *ezafe* conjunctive particle on the word *pertûk*.

- (39) *ev pertûk gelek baş=e*  
 3DN book very good=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘This book is very good.’

When an AdjP is part of an NP, an *ezafe* conjunctive particle is used to connect the AdjP to the head noun. In (40) the masculine *ezafe -ê* is followed by the modifying AdjP, *gelek xirab*, ‘very bad.’

- (40) *dem-ek-ê gelek xirab*  
 time-INDF-EZ.F very-EZ.M bad  
 ‘a very bad time’

In the case where there are two adjectives in the AdjP, the adjectives are simply joined by the conjunction *u*, as shown in example (41).

- (41) *ev sêv şîrîn u tîrş=e*  
 3DN apple sweet and tart=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘This apple is sweet and tart.’

#### 4.4.2.8 *The noun phrase*

Nicholas Bailey (2011) summarizes the noun phrase of Northern Kurdish as:

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<sup>47</sup> The postposition *da* is commonly used in conjunction with *di* to mean ‘in’ or ‘to.’ While most adpositions in Northern Kurdish are prepositions, there are some postpositions and usually these are used in conjunction with prepositions.

NP = (DEM)(NUM) head-noun ( [ EZP [ NP/ADJP ] ] )

The introduction of the *ezafe* conjunctive particle phrase (EZP) is beyond the scope of this paper. In fact, in the Bahdini subdialect, and perhaps other Northern Kurdish subdialects, there are other functions of the *ezafe* particle that have not been covered in this sketch. However, for the purposes of this paper, the noun phrase represented above is sufficient in most instances. Bailey adds the following to what has already been discussed: a demonstrative (DEM) must precede a number (NUM). Additionally, the representation shows clearly that a post-*ezafe* phrase must be either an NP or an ADJP.

In (42) the noun phrase begins with a modifying ADJP consisting of a determiner *ew*, 3D, and the number *du*, ‘two.’ Postpositionally modifying *pertuk*, ‘book,’ are the color *şîn*, ‘blue,’ and an ADJP consisting of the intensifier *gelek*, ‘very,’ and the adjective *mezin*, ‘large.’ An *ezafe* for a secondary construct is needed for the ADJP to jointly modify *pertuk*.

(42) *ew du pertuk-êt şîn yê gelek mezin bu min b-în-e*  
 3D two book-EZ.PL blue EZ2.M very large for IO IRR-bring-IMP.SG  
 ‘Bring me those two very large blue books.’

### 4.4.3 Verbs and the verb phrase

#### 4.4.3.1 Verb morphology

As mentioned, Northern Kurdish is a split-ergative language, as attested by MacKenzie (1961), Thackston (2006), Şirîn and Buşra (2006), and many other scholars. Intransitive sentences and most non-past transitive sentences use a nominative-accusative agreement pattern. Past tense transitive sentences and some irregular verbs use ergative-absolutive agreement. Past and non-past verb stems often differ, and there are some verbs that are irregular wherein the suffix rules do not apply. Verbs may also have an imperfective, irrealis or negative aspect affix, and in some instances both a negation word, *ne* (like the affix), and an imperfective aspect affix are used.

#### 4.4.3.2 Verb agreement

Verbs in nominative-accusative sentences agree with the subject in person and number, while verbs in ergative-absolutive sentences agree with the person and number of the object. The following examples illustrate these differences. In (43), a present tense transitive sentence, the verb, *bînim*, ‘I see,’ having the 1SG ending *-im*, agrees with the subject *ez*, 1D. Example (44) is in the past tense; the verb ending, again *-im*, agrees with the object *ez*, 1D. Examples (45) and (46) are two more examples of present and past tense sentences showing verb agreement. Example (47) shows a past tense intransitive sentence. Intransitive verbs are always in the nominative case, agreeing with the subject. Northern Kurdish does have some irregular verbs that always follow ergative-absolutive agreement; these are discussed in §4.4.3.5.

- (43) *ez wî bîn-im*  
 1D 3OM see.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I see him.’
- (44) *te ez dît-im*  
 2O 1D see.PST-1SG  
 ‘You saw me.’
- (45) *Cemal nan-î firoş-it*  
 Jemal nan-OBL.M sell.PRS-3SG  
 ‘Jemal sells bread.’
- (46) *Dapîr-ê çend sêv kirrî-n*  
 grandmother-OBL.F some apple buy.PST-3PL  
 ‘The grandmother bought some apples.’
- (47) *ez çu-m=e Dohuk-ê*  
 1D go.PST-1SG=DIR Dohuk-OBL.F  
 ‘I went to Dohuk.’

Verb suffixes are summarized in Table 7 according to the parameters of the tense of the verb and the final phonemic segment of the stem. These endings are generally what you will hear in the Bahdini subdialect of Northern Kurdish. Resources on Northern Kurdish reveal that the language varies from area to area. This is true for aspects of the language other than verbs. The endings for non-past and past tenses vary only in the third person singular.

Table 7. Verb suffixes

person & number	Non-past		Past	
	Post consonant	Post vowel	Post consonant	Post vowel
1SG	-im	-m	-im	-m
2SG	-î	-î	-î	-î
3SG	-it	-t	-Ø	-Ø
1PL	-în	-în	-în	-în
2PL & 3PL	-in	-n	-in	-n

The future tense is periphrastic, employing the word *dê*. It appears immediately after the subject, but before the object, as illustrated in (48). The subject *Şirîn*, a woman's name, is followed by *dê*, 'will' and then the object *birinc*, 'rice.' The verb *çêkit*, 'make,' is last in the sentence. In (49) *dê* is found next to the verb because this is an intransitive sentence and no object or prepositional phrase occurs. The GOAL argument, *mala te*, 'your house,' follows the verb, its normal position.

- (48) *Şirîn dê birincê çê\_k-it*  
 Shireen will rice-OBL.F make\_do.PRS-3SG  
 Shireen will make rice.

- (49) *em dê ê-în mal-a te* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:185)  
 1DP will come.PRS-1PL house-EZ.F 2O  
 'We will come to your house.'

To negate a sentence in the future tense, one must drop the word *dê* and insert the negative affix where appropriate. This contrast is shown in the following examples. In (51), the negative aspect affix, *na*, must be inserted between the two parts of the complex verb. There is therefore nothing in the sentence to signify future tense; it is understood from the context.

- (50) *ez dê nan-î çê-k-im* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:165)  
 1D will bread-OBL.M make-do.PRS-1SG  
 'I will make bread.'
- (51) *ez nan-î çê-na-k-im*  
 1D bread-OBL.M make-NEG-do.PRS-1SG  
 'I won't make bread.'

#### 4.4.3.3 *Verb stems and their conjugations*

For each verb, there are usually two distinct stems, one past and the other non-past. One pair of stems is *axift/axiv*, ‘speak’ (or ‘say’). To say ‘they spoke,’ the speaker uses the past stem *axift*,<sup>48</sup> together with the third person, plural ending *-in*, *ew axift-in*. To say ‘They speak,’ the non-past stem, *axiv*, is required: *ew axiv-in*. In English, we see similar differences, such as *ate/eat* and *went/go* in which a different stem is used depending on whether an utterance is in past or non-past tense.

Verb stems ending in a vowel take a slightly different set of suffixes (see Table 7 above). For example, the past stem of ‘to (cause to) boil (transitive)’ is *kelandî*. To say, ‘I boiled the potatoes,’ a speaker would say *min patat kelandîn*. The verb agrees with the plural object, taking the third person, plural ending *-n*.

#### 4.4.3.4 *Copulas – present, future and past tenses*

The primary copula word is best considered as an irregular form of the verb *bin*, ‘be.’ The past stem is *bu* (or *bû* or *bî*) while the non-past stem can be described as a zero ( $\emptyset$ ) form, which takes just the bare person suffixes, as listed in Table 8. These forms are usually written as being adjoined to preceding words.

**Table 8. Present tense irregular copulas**

person & number	post consonant	post vowel
1SG	<i>-im</i>	<i>me</i>
2SG	<i>-î</i>	<i>-î</i>
3SG	<i>-e</i>	<i>ye</i>
1PL	<i>-în</i>	<i>ne</i>
2PL & 3PL	<i>-in</i>	<i>ne</i>

Examples with present tense copulas are as follows. In (52) the first person, singular copula is attached to the adjective *birsî*, ‘hungry.’ The third person, singular copula is

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<sup>48</sup> Most dictionaries list verbs in the PST.3PL form, including the PST.3PL root in the listing.

attached to the adjective *cuan* in example (53). Because this present tense copula behaves as an enclitic, i.e. it behaves grammatically as a word but phonologically as a suffix, the equal sign, =, is used in our glossing system. The copula is often written as a separate word by writers of Northern Kurdish outside Iraq. However, writers in Iraq tend to attach the copula to the ends of words.

- (52) *ez birsî=me*  
 1D hungry=COP.PRS.1SG  
 ‘I’m hungry.’
- (53) *mahfîr-a te cuan=e*  
 rug-EZ.F 2O beautiful=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘Your rug is beautiful.’

Besides the present tense copula illustrated above (as a zero form), there is also a copula stem *b*, ‘be.’ Non-past forms of *b* are summarized in Table 9.

**Table 9. Conjugations of non-past copula *b***

person & number	present	future
1SG	<i>bim</i>	<i>dê...bim</i>
2SG	<i>bî</i>	<i>dê...bî</i>
3SG	<i>bit</i>	<i>dê...bit</i>
1PL	<i>bîn</i>	<i>dê...bîn</i>
2PL & 3PL	<i>bin</i>	<i>dê...bin</i>

Many of the uses of this ‘be’ word appear as part of complex predicates, which I discuss in §4.4.3.6. Hence, some uses of *b* may not be considered copular. Additionally, only the regular forms of this word can take an irrealis, imperfective or negative affix (see §4.4.3.7 on aspect, mood and negation). Such instances can have the sense of ‘become,’ as example (54) shows.

- (54) *mêz-a wê delal-tir di-b-it* (HS:18)  
 table-EZ.F 3OF graceful-more IPFV-become.PRS-3SG  
 ‘Her table becomes more graceful.’

As mentioned, future tense consists of the word *dê* in conjunction with a regular conjugation of a present tense verb root. For the copula, the same non-past stem *b* is used, also shown in Table 9. Example (55), an attributive clause, shows *dê* with the conjugated

copula word, *bit*. Notice that *dê* is not positioned next to the verb, but is after the subject and before the attribute. If a speaker chooses to omit a subject, because it is understood in the context of conversation, the first word in the sentence will be *dê*.

- (55) *ew dê qehrî b-it*  
 3D will sad COP.PRS-1SG  
 ‘He will be sad.’

In (56) it is necessary for the equative element *dixtur*, ‘doctor,’ to be positioned after the verb, as it is the occupation, or status, the person is moving towards. This phrase supports the argument for an SOV-GOAL constituent order. Also present is the DIR directional enclitic which is cliticized to the copula.

- (56) *tu dê b-î=a dixtur*  
 2D will COP.PRS-2SG=DIR doctor  
 ‘You will become a doctor.’

The past tense copula makes use of the past stem of ‘be,’ which is also written as a separate word. In some subdialects the stem is *bu* (or *bû*); in others, it is *bî*. In Table 10, the conjugations generally follow the normal application of past tense suffixes as defined in Table 7.

**Table 10. Past tense copulas**

person & number	conjugated copula
1SG	<i>bîn</i> or <i>bum</i>
2SG	<i>bî</i> or <i>buî</i>
3SG	<i>bî</i> or <i>bu</i>
1PL	<i>bîn</i> or <i>buîn</i>
2PL & 3PL	<i>bîn</i> or <i>bun</i>

Below are some example sentences with past tense copulas.

- (57) *ez betal bu-m*  
 1D bored COP.PST-1SG  
 ‘I was bored.’
- (58) *tu bi keyf bî-Ø*  
 2D with happiness COP.PST-2SG  
 ‘You were happy?’

(59) *ew dixtur bî-Ø*  
 3D doctor COP.PST.3SG  
 ‘S/he was the doctor.’

(60) *Tu dergeh bu-î* (BS7:15)  
 2D door COP.PST-2SG  
 ‘You were the door.’

#### 4.4.3.5 *Irregular verbs*

Above I discussed the irregular non-past copula forms. Northern Kurdish has some other verbs that have irregularities. Below are the most common of these.

The verb *vîa/vê*, ‘want’ (past stem/present stem) is a transitive verb that always uses an ergative-absolutive agreement system. For this verb, the most subject-like constituent, a semantic *experiencer*, is always expressed by the oblique case, whatever the tense. Examples (61) and (62) illustrate both present and past utterances. In both sentences the subject is the oblique case personal pronoun *min*, 1O. The object, the possessed entity, is in the direct case, having no oblique suffix. The verb in each sentence agrees with the object. The plurality of *sêv*, ‘apple,’ in (62) is handled by the verb agreement, whereas in other situations, such as present tense conjugations of regular verbs, plurality is handled by means of a plural oblique suffix.

(61) *min sêv-ek di-vê-t*  
 1O apple-INDF IPFV-want.PRS-3SG  
 ‘I want an apple.’

(62) *min hindek sêv vîa-n*  
 1O some apple want.PST-3PL  
 I wanted some apples.

The other common transitive verb with ergative-absolutive agreement in all tenses is *hebû(hebî)/heb*, often translated as ‘have.’ However, *hebû/heb* may also be used for non-possessive, existential usages, such as the English ‘There is...’ or ‘I exist.’ The present and past irregular forms are summarized in Table 11.

**Table 11. Non-possessive existential verbs (Thackston 2006:31)**

person	present tense	past tense
1SG	<i>heme</i>	<i>hebûm</i>
2SG	<i>heyî</i>	<i>hebûyî</i>
3SG	<i>heye</i>	<i>hebû</i>
1, 2, 3PL	<i>hene</i>	<i>hebûn</i>

The following is one example of an intransitive usage of this verb.

- (63) *Gotin-ek-e pêşî-yên me heye* (Thackston 2006:31)  
 saying-INDF-EZ.M ancestor-EZ.PL 1OP exist.PRS.3SG  
 ‘There is a saying of our ancestors.’

Table 12 provides the more common forms for transitive uses of *hebû/heb*. Here we can see that the forms are different for questions than for statements or negations. There are also irregular forms for negated verbs.

**Table 12. Irregular forms of *hebû/heb* in the present tense (Şirîn 2002:6)**

Type of sentence	Number	Form of verb
statement	SG	<i>hey</i>
	PL	<i>heyn</i>
question	SG	<i>heye</i>
	PL	<i>hene</i>
negative	SG	<i>nîne</i>
	PL	<i>nînin</i>

Thackston (2006:31-2) also calls *hebû/heb* an “existential verb” and states that Northern Kurdish “expresses possession by the possessive construct followed by the appropriate third person of the existential verb *heye*, ‘there is,’ *hene*, ‘there are,’ *hebû*, ‘there was,’ or *hebûn*, ‘there were.’ Example (64) is one present tense example from his grammar on the language that illustrates this sort of possession. The pronoun *wî*, 3OM, which expresses the possessor, modifies *zarok*, ‘child’ (what is possessed), and is connected to the noun by the plural *ezafe* conjunctive particle *-ên*.

- (64) *pênc zarok-ên wî hene* (Thackston 2006:32)  
 five child-EZ.PL 3OM exist.PRS.3PL  
 ‘He has five children.’ or more literally, ‘There are five children of him.’

Examples in Şîrîn’s language learning series (2006) agree with Thackston’s explanation. The only difference, which may only be common to those who speak the Bahdini subdialect, is that the possessive pronoun may appear sentence initially, as if it were the subject. Consider example (65) from Şîrîn. Here the NP that expresses the possessed entity has the masculine *ezafe* particle, *-ê*. The noun *qelem*, ‘pen,’ however is seemingly without a modifier. I have observed that this is the common order of words for this statement in the Bahdini subdialect.

- (65) *min qelem-ek-ê hey* (Şîrîn and Buşra 2006:103)  
 1O pen-INDF-EZ.M exist.PRS.3SG  
 ‘I have a pen.’

Interestingly, the future and past tenses (in the Bahdini subdialect) follow the normal conjugations for verbs, and the object does not exhibit the possessive construct via the *ezafe* particle. This is evident in both Thackston’s and Şîrîn’s examples for present and past tense. The following examples are from Şîrîn’s grammar reference cards (2002:6). Past tense verbs (not shown) use the stem for past tense, *hebû* (or *hebî*). Example (67) shows how the present stem, *heb*, does not appear in a negated form. The verb is glossed as ‘be.’

- (66) *min kitêb dê heb-it*  
 1O book will have.PRS-3SG  
 ‘I will have the book.’
- (67) *wê êdî biçîk na-b-in*  
 3OF ever child NEG-be.PRS-3PL  
 ‘She will never have children.’

The last two common verbs that exhibit irregular form are *hat/ê*, ‘come,’ and *îna/în*, ‘bring’ or ‘take.’ For both verbs the imperfective aspect marker, *di-* (see §4.4.3.7.1) appears, and is thus written, as a *t-*. The *i* in *di-* elides and the *d* takes on the feature of –voice. Examples (68) and (69) from Şîrîn show each verb with imperfective aspect.

- (68) *her dem ew se'et çar t-ê-t* (Şirîn 2002:7)  
 all time 3D hour four IPFV-come.PRS-3SG  
 'He always comes at 4:00.'
- (69) *her roj ew çiklêt-a t-în-it* (Şirîn 2002:7)  
 every day 3D candy-EZ.PL IPFV-bring.PRS-3SG  
 'She brings candies every day.'

Another irregularity of the verb pair *hat/ê* is its imperative forms. For singular commands, one would say, *were*. For plural commands, one would say *weren*. The verb pair *çû/ç*, 'go,' also has irregular singular and plural imperatives, *herre* and *herren*, respectively.

#### 4.4.3.6 *Complex predicates (complex verbs)*

Many predicates in Northern Kurdish are complex, having two or more parts. The first may be referred to as the nonverbal element, which may be a noun, an adjective, an adverb, a prepositional phrase, or a particle. The second part is what is often referred to as a 'light' verb. The most common light verbs are *bû/b/Ø*, 'be,' and *kir/k*, 'do, make.' These verbs may be used independent of nonverbal elements. However, when they are used with nonverbal elements, they only fulfill part of the verbal expression.

Some complex predicates may or may not be written as one word, although syntactically the nonverbal element forms a verb phrase with the light verb. As an idiom, although the phrase is composed of more than one word, it nevertheless has a single meaning. The nonverbal element cannot be conjugated, and, other than an aspect affix, nothing can occur between the nonverbal element and the light verb. In many complex predicates having a noun as the nonverbal element, the noun is not considered the object in the sentence but part of the verb.

Examples (70) through (72) illustrate usages of complex predicates having a single nonverbal element. In (70), the compound verb is *xilas kim*, 'I finish.' The word *xilas*, the nonverbal element of the compound verb phrase, cannot possibly be the object, as *dersa xwe*, 'my lesson,' is fulfilling that function. In (71) the compound verb *çêdikit*, 'is making,' is written as one word having the imperfective aspect *di-* embedded between

the nonverbal element *çê* and the light verb *kim*, ‘(I) do.’ In (72), which is from a line in the corpus, the compound verb consists of *şîn bibin*, ‘may grow.’<sup>49</sup> In this instance, we know that *şîn*, which by itself can mean ‘green’ or ‘blue,’ is part of the verb and not an object because it does not have an oblique suffix. Additionally, the complex verb itself is intransitive, having a valence of one.

(70) *ez dê ders-a xwe xilas k-im*  
 1D will class-EZ.F REFL finish do.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I finished my lesson.’

(71) *Wahîda mast-î çê-d-k-it*  
 Waheeda yogurt-OBL.M make-IPFV-do.PRS-3SG  
 ‘Waheeda is making yogurt.’

(72) *şîn\_bi-b-in nêrgiz* (BS1:11)  
 grow\_IRR-be.PRS-3PL narcissus  
 ‘May narcissuses grow...’

Other complex predicates have nonverbal elements that consist of two or more words. For example, a common lexical listing of the idiomatic verb ‘hear’ is *guh lê bûn*, where *guh* is ‘ear,’ *lê* is a prepositional phrase consisting of *li*, ‘at’ and *wî/wê*, ‘he/she,’ and the light verb *bûn*, ‘be.’ This is the verb used in example (73). Notice that in place of the contraction *lê* in the lexical listing, the prepositional phrase, *li te*, has the 2SG personal pronoun. A contraction is only available for 3SG pronouns. In (74) the word *ser*, ‘visit,’ must be followed by an *ezafe* conjunctive particle and a personal pronoun or proper name. These elements separate it from the verb *da*, ‘give.’ *Sera wê*, ‘visit of her,’ then, functions as the object of the sentence. This example illustrates why a more proper lexical listing of *sera dan* would be to call it a predicate, not just a verb. Lastly, concerning *xerîb bî*, ‘be missing,’ in example (75), while it is true that *xerîb*, ‘missing,’ is always next to the verb *bûn*, ‘be,’ it is simply an adjective, the attribute in the attributive clause. The expression ‘to miss someone’ also demands a prepositional phrase using the preposition *ji*, ‘of,’ such as *ji min*, ‘of me,’ in (75). In some predicates, such as the one in (73), a prepositional phrase must follow a word in the nonverbal element. However, in

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<sup>49</sup> The meaning for ‘may’ comes from use of the *bi-* prefix on *bibin*, not the word *şîn*.

this instance in (75), the prepositional phrase must precede the word *xerîb*. Note as well that the valence for the English verb ‘miss’ is two, while the valence in Northern Kurdish is one. The same difference in valence is evident in example (73).

(73) *min guh li te ne bî-Ø*  
 1O ear at 2O NEG COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘I didn’t hear you.’

(74) *min ser-a wê da-Ø* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:54)  
 1O visit-EZ.F 3OF give.PST-3SG  
 ‘I visited (and stayed) with her.’

(75) *tu ji min xerîb bî-Ø*  
 2D of 1O missing COP.PST-2SG  
 ‘You missed me.’

Complex predicates could easily be the subject of a separate treatise. Suffice it to say that the reader should simply be aware of their prevalence in the language.

#### 4.4.3.7 *Aspect, mood and negation*

Aspect, mood and negation are herein discussed together because a verb typically only takes one of the affixes associated with these grammatical categories.

##### 4.4.3.7.1 *Imperfective aspect*

The imperfective aspect affix *di* is the most common of the aspect affixes. In most cases it is a prefix; however, for some compound verbs, *di* (or *d*) is inserted between the two parts of the verb. This is best understood via some examples.

In (76) *di* is simply a prefix on the verb *çim*, ‘I go,’ whereas in (77), only *d* is inserted between the two parts of the compound verb, *çêkit*, ‘she makes.’ Speakers of the Bahdini subdialect tend to metathesize the sound sequence *di* to *id*. in order to achieve preferred syllable structures. In this instance, the desired syllable structure is CVC. The sounds reverse because there is an opportunity to delete the weak vowel. The small *i* finds itself adjacent to a strong vowel—the *ê* in *çê*— and the *i* is not uttered. The *d* that remains becomes the coda for the new syllable *çêd*. However, in areas where the Latin

script is the standardized orthography, such as in Turkey and Syria, writing the verb in (77) as *çê dikit* is more common, although it is never pronounced as three syllables.

- (76) *ez di-ç-im dikan-ê*  
 1D IPFV-go.PRS-1SG store-OBL.M  
 ‘I’m going to the store.’
- (77) *Wetfe nan-î çê-d-k-it*  
 Watfa bread-OBL.M make-IPFV-do-3SG  
 ‘Watfa is making bread.’

#### 4.4.3.7.2 Negation

Like the other affixes discussed in this section, the negation marker *ne*, or *na*, is written either as a separate word or as a prefix on a verb. But it may also appear within a compound verb, such as *çê-na-k-et*, ‘he or she does not make.’ Unlike the imperfective aspect affix *di*, the sounds in this affix never undergo metathesis; the vowel is always pronounced. Examples from the corpus, shown below in (78) through (80), illustrate usage of the negative (NEG) affix/word.

- (78) *wî ne-bada-n hizir u bîr* (BS1:43)  
 3OM NEG-surrender-3PL idea and thought  
 ‘He did not deviate from (his) ideas and thoughts.’
- (79) *bi-bure ne-şê-m şîtafk-ê bi dest-a* (DD:21)  
 IRR<sup>50</sup>-sorry.IMP.SG NEG-can.PRS-1SG shadow-OBL.F by hand-OBL.PL  
*bi-kir-im*  
 IRR-do.PRS-1SG  
 ‘Sorry, I cannot touch the shadow.’
- (80) *teyr-ek îna-n verûçkand-in, nav jê ne çu-Ø* (H:4)  
 bird-INDF bring.PST-3PL deplume.PST-3PL name from.3OM NEG go.PST-3SG  
 ‘They brought a bird and deplumed (it), it did not lose its name.’

#### 4.4.3.7.3 Irrealis modality

**Irrealis** is a term used to describe “situations that were not or are not yet a reality, only possibilities” (Whaley 1997:225). The opposite of this, **realis**, represents those

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<sup>50</sup> The discussion on irrealis (IRR) follows in §4.4.3.7.3.

situations that are or were a reality. The verbal prefix *bi-* is best understood as a marker for irrealis moods (IRR), an umbrella term for a number of mood categories, such as subjunctive, conditional, optative, jussive, potential and imperative. In the sections that follow, I discuss many of this marker's multiple functions.

Unlike the imperfective aspect affix *di*, which is occasionally inserted within a compound verb, the irrealis *bi-* always appears as a prefix.<sup>51</sup> In situations where *di* is inserted within a complex verb, *bi-* is never inserted and the exact mood is understood by means of the context. Like the imperfective aspect affix, *di*, the sounds in *bi-* often undergo metathesis, and in some situations the *i* is not pronounced. Sometimes the *i* disappears in the presence of a strong vowel or melds with a like vowel. Below I discuss various situations where this irrealis aspect prefix is used.

Regarding one irrealis mood, Haiman (1995:329) writes, "Belief in its truth is indicative...the wish for its realization, imperative or optative." **Optative** describes the mood(s) wherein someone expresses what they wish or desire. The following examples show the use of the irrealis aspect prefix in expressing wishes.

- (81) *bi xêr bi-ç-î*  
with blessing IRR-go.PRS-2SG  
'Go well.' / 'May you be blessed as you go.'
- (82) *şîn bi-b-in nêrgiz* (BS1:11)  
grow IRR-be.PRS-3PL narcissus  
'May narcissuses grow...'
- (83) *em bi-ç-în* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:245)  
1DP IRR-go.PRS-1PL  
'Let's (or shall we) go?'
- (84) *Xwedê biçîk-êt te bi-hêl-it* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:238)  
God baby-EZ.PL 2O IRR-keep.PRS-3SG  
'May God keep (alive) your children.'

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<sup>51</sup> The separate word *bi* should not be confused with the irrealis marker. It is a preposition usually meaning 'with' or 'by means of.'

**Imperatives** and wishes may seem closely related and, perhaps, difficult to distinguish at times. Unlike wishes, however, imperatives always have verb endings identical to third person indicative endings. Examples (85) through (89) illustrate imperatives with the *bi-* prefix. Example (89) is a negated imperative. Notice that the *ne* prefix supersedes use of the *bi-* prefix. The command is still obvious because the verb is not expressed with the 2SG ending but an ending that is like the 3SG ending. Note also the introduction of the word *ka* in (85) and (87). In these sentences *ka* more or less means “please.”<sup>52</sup>

(85) *ka av-ê bi-d-e min*  
 please water-OBL.F IRR-give.PRS-IMP.SG 1O  
 ‘Please give me (some) water.’

(86) *bi-b-e*  
 IRR-take.PRS-IMP.SG  
 ‘Take it!’

(87) *ka lêtir-ek şerbet-ê bi-kirr-e*  
 please liter-INDF juice-OBL.F IRR-buy.PRS-IMP.SG  
 ‘Please buy me a liter of juice.’

(88) *pencer-ê bi-gire*  
 window-OBL.F IRR-close.PRS-IMP.SG  
 ‘Close the window.’

(89) *van qelem-a ji bîr ne k-e* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:47)  
 3OPN pen-OBL.PL from memory NEG do. PRS-IMP.SG  
 ‘Don’t forget these pens.’

Irrealis may also express a **consultative mood**, a request for agreement or some other type of response. Example (83), repeated below in (90), may be understood this way. In addition to expressing a wish, the speaker is also asking whether another speaker(s) is in agreement or not. The same is true of (91), a phrase that is often a rhetorical question meaning, “There’s nothing I can do.” Example (92) is different in that it is a statement that pragmatically says something like, “Unless you have more to add, I will continue.” So rather than being consultative, it would be called **permissive**, or **jussive**, a mild imperative.

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<sup>52</sup> In other situations *ka* is a question word meaning ‘where.’

- (90) *em bi-ç-în* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:245)  
 1DP IRR-go.PRS-1PL  
 ‘Let’s (or shall we) go?’
- (91) *ez çî bi-k-im*<sup>53</sup> (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:245)  
 1D what IRR-do.PRS-1SG  
 ‘What shall (can) I do?’
- (92) *bila, ez tamam bi-k-im* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:245)  
 OK 1D complete IRR-do.PRS-1SG  
 ‘Let me continue...’

In the functions of the *bi-* prefix that follow, some of them could also be considered as having optative mood. I have treated each mood separately because the syntax is different in each case. While we are stepping outside the boundary of the discussion of the morphology of the verb word, it seems best to keep this portion of the discussion of irrealis together.

#### 4.4.3.7.3.1 Modal verbs

When a verb is used in conjunction with the **modal verbs** *vîa/vê*, ‘want, need’ or *şîa/şê*, ‘can, be able to,’ the *bi-* prefix is added to that verb. These too are situations that, at the moment of desiring or being done, are not realities. The examples in (93) and (94) both begin with a subject and a modal verb, which is followed by a complement clause containing the present tense root of a verb with the irrealis prefix. In these instances the subject is the same for the second verb and, therefore, agrees with it. The modal verbs are always ergative, as was discussed in §4.4.3.5. In (95) we have some distance between the modal verb *divêt* and the verb with irrealis mood, *bînim*, ‘I bring.’ This is because *ez bu te bînim*, ‘I bring for you,’ is a complement clause that has a different subject, a distinct argument of the modal verb.

- (93) *min di-vê-t bi-ç-im mal-ê*  
 1O IPFV-want.PRS.3SG IRR.go-1SG home-OBL.F  
 ‘I want to go home.’

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<sup>53</sup> When Bahdini speakers utter this phrase, they drop the *i* in the *bi-* prefix and the *b* changes to a *p*, so that it sounds like, *ez çipkim*.

- (94) *ez di-şê-m b-ê-m*  
 1D IPFV-can.PRS-1SG IRR-come.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I can come.’
- (95) *te ci di-vê-t ez bu te b-în-im*  
 2O what IPFV-want.PRS-3SG 1D for 2O IRR-bring.PRS-1SG  
 ‘What do you want me to bring for you?’

#### 4.4.3.7.3.2 Modal adjectives

Similar to modal verbs are the uses of **modal adjectives** (or **adjectival verbs**). However, the initial modal adjective clause is always independent of the complement clause that follows. If a complement is not uttered, the information must be understood via the context of conversation. Like the examples above for modal verbs, the examples in (96) through (99) show that the verbs in the complement clauses must receive the irrealis prefix.

The modal adjectives *lazim* and *pêtivî* basically have the same meaning. *Lazim* comes from Arabic; *pêtivî*, as far as I am aware, is of Kurdish origin. In English these words may be translated as ‘must,’ ‘should,’ ‘ought’ or ‘necessary.’ For the adjectival phrase, the copula is used, as illustrated in the examples below. Use of these modal adjectives has the effect of a jussive modality. Example (97) uses the negative version of the modal adjective *baş*, ‘good.’ While other modal adjectives exist, these are certainly the most common.

- (96) *lazim e tu ser-ê xwe bi-şo-î*  
 necessary COP.PRS.3SG 2D head-EZ.M REFL IRR-wash.PRS-2SG  
 ‘You must wash yourself.’
- (97) *gelek ne baş e tu bi-ç-î* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:256)  
 very not good COP.PRS.3SG 2D IRR-go.PRS-2SG  
 ‘It’s very bad that you’re going.’
- (98) *pêtivî ye tu li\_gel ne axiv-î* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:256)  
 necessary COP.PRS.3SG 2D with (her) not speak.PRS-2SG  
 ‘You ought not speak with her.’
- (99) *ne lazim bî-Ø ew bi-ç-it* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:256)  
 not necessary COP.PST-3SG 3D IRR-go.PRS-3SG (it)

*b-în-it*

IRR-bring.PRS-3SG

‘He didn’t need to go and bring it.’

#### 4.4.3.7.3.3 Non-past temporal adverbial clauses

Verbs in temporal adverbial clauses within non-past sentences also must have the irrealis prefix. This is consistent with the irrealis examples we have seen; some action has yet to come to pass. Verbs in time clauses of past tense sentences will *not* have the irrealis prefix.

The examples below are typical of sentences with a non-past tense temporal adverbial clause. Such clauses usually occur at the beginning of a sentence.

(100) *dem-ê tu bi-vê-t, ez dê bu te* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:245)  
time-OBL.F 2O IRR-want.PRS-3SG 1D will for 2O

*în-im*

bring.PRS-1SG

‘I will bring it when you want.’ or ‘When you want, I’ll bring it.’

(101) *wext-ê tu bi-zan-î, bêj-e min* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:245)  
time-OBL.F 2D IRR-know.PRS-2SG say.PRS-IMP.SG 1O

‘When you know, tell me.’

(102) *roj-a ez b-ê-m, ez dê bêj-im* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:245)  
daytime.OBL.PL 1D IRR.come.PRS.1SG, 1D will tell.PRS-1SG

*te*

2O

‘When I come at daytime, I will tell you.’

#### 4.4.3.7.3.4 Non-past conditional clauses

Similar to the time clause examples above, non-past conditional clauses occur at the beginning of a sentence. The examples (103) through (107) are speculative utterances that utilize the word *eger* (or *heker*), ‘if.’ As the speaker is expressing a lack of knowledge about something happening, these too fall under the category of irrealis.

Note that in (106) the prefix *bi-* is not used. It may be that the speaker feels the action to occur is imminent, making it a conditional **predictive** statement. Example (107) has an imperative in the independent clause and no *bi-* prefix in the dependent clause,

where we would expect to see it. In my experience, I have never heard or seen both an independent clause and its dependent clause marked as irrealis. Minimally, these examples show that conditional sentences sometimes mark the verb in the dependent clause as irrealis. According to Şirîn and Buşra (2006:243), “If-clauses almost always require subjunctive verbs,” that is, verbs marked as irrealis.

- (103) *heker te bi-vê-t, ez na-ç-im* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:242)  
 if 2O IRR-want.PRS-3SG, 1D NEG-go.PRS-1SG  
 ‘If you want, I won’t go.’
- (104) *eger ez bi-bîn-im, ez dê bêj-im-ê*  
 if 1D (him/her) IRR-see.PRS-1SG, 1D will tell.PRS-1SG-him  
 ‘If I see him/her, I will tell him.’
- (105) *heker ez ne ç-im, ez dê mîn-im* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:242)  
 if 1D NEG go.PRS-1SG 1D will stay.PRS-1SG  
*li\_gel we*  
 with 2OP  
 ‘If I don’t go, I’ll stay with you.’
- (106) *eger tu rîn-î, ez dê jî rîn-im* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:224)  
 if 2D sit.PRS-2SG, 1D will also sit.PRS-1SG  
 ‘If you sit, I will also sit.’
- (107) *eger ew di-ç-it, tu jî herre*  
 if 3D IPFV-go.PRS-3SG, 2D also go.IMP.SG  
 ‘If he is going, you also go.’

#### 4.4.3.7.3.5 Reason and purpose clauses

Sentences that express a reason or purpose often utilize the conjunctions *da*, *da ku* or *ku*, which may all be translated as ‘so,’ ‘so that,’ or ‘in order to.’ Like many examples previously discussed, the verb in the complement clause must have the irrealis prefix. When the subject after the conjunction is different, it is usually stated. These conjunctions are used with all tenses.

- (108) *ez di-çu-m da ders-a bi-xwîn-im*  
 1D IPFV-go.PST-1SG so.that class.OBL.PL IRR-study.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I went in order to study my classes.’
- (109) *ka av-ê bi-d-e-Ø min da* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:224)  
 please water-OBL.F IRR-give.PRS-IMP.SG IO so.that

*ez tēhnî ne b-im*  
 1D thirsty not COP.PRS-1SG  
 ‘Please give me water so that I won’t be thirsty.’

(110) *te çî tişt nîne da av-ê* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:226)  
 2O that thing not.have.PRS so.that water.OBL.F

*pê bi-kêş-î*  
 with.3O(M/F) IRR-draw.PRS.2SG  
 ‘You don’t have anything for drawing water.’

(111) *ez hat-im mal-a te da\_ku ez ders-ê nîş-a te*  
 1D come.PST-1SG home-EZ.F 2O so.that 1D class-EZ.M teach-EZ.F 2O

*bi-d-im*  
 IRR-do.PST-1SG  
 ‘I came to your house in order to give you a lesson.’

#### 4.4.3.7.3.6 Past tense subjunctive clauses

Some subjunctive moods express “things that couldn’t have or didn’t happen but could have or would have happened if circumstances had been different” (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:333). Each of the examples shown in (112) through (117) require an additional word following the conjugated verb, as illustrated in Table 13. Those that utilize a conditional clause or a modal adjective exhibit the irrealis marker in the independent clause. Through such combinations one can express counterfactual statements, as shown in (112) through (115), and various types of conditional and hypothetical statements, as shown in (116) and (117).

**Table 13. Past tense subjunctive constructions**

person & number	suffix & word
1SG	-î <i>bam</i>
2SG	-î <i>baî</i>
3SG	-î <i>ba</i>
1PL	-î <i>baîn</i>
2PL & 3PL	-î <i>ban</i>

Like verb suffixes, the subjunctive word used in these expressions must match the person and number of the subject in nominative-accusative sentences. In ergative-

absolute sentences, it must match the person and number of the object. For the following irrealis moods the person is represented within the irrealis word which follows the verb. The verb root is conjugated with the suffix *-î*, making it a past participle (PST.PTCP). Some speakers, though, may drop the *-î* suffix because of awkwardness in pronunciation. All of the examples below are from Şirîn and Buşra (2006:333-4).

- (112) *ez çû-î*                      *ba-m*  
 1D go.PST-PST.PTCP could.have-1SG  
 ‘I could have gone.’
- (113) *te sêv xwar-î*              *ba-î*  
 2O apple eat-PST.PTCP could.have-2SG  
 ‘You could’ve eaten the apple.’
- (114) *lazim bî*                      *te sêv xwar-î*                      *ba-Ø*  
 Necessary COP.PST-3SG 2O apple eat.PST-PST.PTCP should.have-3SG  
 ‘You should’ve eaten the apple.’
- (115) *ne lazim bî-Ø*                      *ez çû-î*                      *ba-m*  
 not necessary COP.PST-3SG 1D go-PST.PTCP should\_have-1SG  
 ‘I should not have gone.’
- (116) *heker ez çû-î*                      *ba-m,*                      *ez da*                      *xw-im*  
 If 1D go-PST.PTCP had.1SG, 1D in.order.to eat.PRS-1SG  
 ‘If I had gone, I would have eaten it.’
- (117) *heker min ne şîa-Ø*                      *ba-Ø,*                      *ez ne di-çû-m*  
 if 1O NEG can-PST-PTCP could.have-3SG 1D NEG IPFV-go.PST-1SG  
 ‘If I could have avoided it, I would not have gone.’

#### 4.4.3.8 *Perfect tense*

The perfect tense consists of two things: a past tense root with the suffix *-î*, and a form of the verb *bûn* (or *bîn*) that is similar to the copula. These constructions are summarized in Table 14. Following the table are some examples from Şirîn and Buşra (2006) and the corpus.

**Table 14. Perfect tense constructions**

person & number	suffix & word
1SG	-î <i>me</i>
2SG	-î <i>î</i>
3SG	-î <i>ye</i>
PL	-î <i>ne</i>

- (118) *ez nivist-î-Ø-me* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:296)  
 1D sleep:PST-PRF-be:PST-1SG  
 ‘I’ve been sleeping.’
- (119) *ez ne hat-î-Ø-me* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:296)  
 1D NEG come:PST-PRF-be:PST-1SG  
 ‘I haven’t come.’
- (120) *wan xwar-î-Ø-ne* (Şirîn and Buşra 2006:296)  
 3OP eat:PST-PRF-be:PST-PL  
 ‘Have they eaten?’
- (121) *sut-î-Ø-ye li me ceger* (BS1:14)  
 burn:PST-PRF-be:PST-3SG in 1OP liver  
 ‘The liver in us has burned.’
- (122) *ma min tu vîya-y-Ø-î bu milk u mal-î?* (AN5:33)  
 INTRG 1O 2D love:PST-PRF-be:PST-3SG for land and belongings-OBL.M  
 ‘Did I love you because of land and belongings (money)?’

#### 4.4.3.9 Past perfect tense

The **past perfect** tense describes actions that began and were completed in the past. For past perfect tense, two things must be done. First, the verb root must be conjugated using the suffix *-i*. This verb will not receive the ending that matches the subject (in nominative-accusative clauses) or object (in ergative-absolutive clauses). Additionally, a word that matches the person and number of the subject or object must be added after the conjugated verb, similar to the past tense subjunctive constructions discussed in §4.4.3.7.3.6. Table 15 lists the suffixes with the additional words for each person and number. Following the table are some examples with past perfect construction.

**Table 15. Past perfect tense constructions<sup>54</sup>**

person & number	suffix & word
1SG	-i <i>bîm/bûm</i>
2SG	-i <i>bîl/bû</i>
3SG	-i <i>bîl/bû</i>
1PL	-i <i>bîn/bûn</i>
2PL & 3PL	-i <i>bîn/bûn</i>

- (123) *ez çû-Ø<sup>55</sup> bî-m bajêrr-î* (Şîrîn and Buşra 2006:314)  
 1D go.PST-PPFT PPFT-1SG city-OBL.M  
 ‘I had gone to the city.’
- (124) *ji berî nuke wî ez dît-i bî-m* (Şîrîn and Buşra 2006:314)  
 From before now 3OM 1D see.PST-PPFT PPFT-1SG  
 ‘He had seen me just before now.’
- (125) *min dergeh girt-i bî-Ø* (Şîrîn and Buşra 2006:314)  
 1O door close.PST-PPFT PPFT-3SG  
 ‘I had closed the door.’
- (126) *me dît-i bu-Ø* (Thackston 2006:56)  
 1op see.PST-PPFT PPFT-3SG  
 ‘We had seen (it).’

#### 4.4.3.10 *Passive voice*

Passive voice is usually conveyed by the verb *hat/bê*, ‘come,’ in conjunction with the infinitive form of the verb of action or state. The verb *hat/bê* must be conjugated to agree with the subject. The infinitive form of the verb of action or state, which follows *hat/bê*, consists of the past tense root with the 3PL suffix. In passive constructions, the verb, *hat/bê*, may be transcribed as ‘become/became.’ Below, I have included only a few

<sup>54</sup> Some dialects in Northern Iraq use the vowel *û* instead of *î*. Şîrîn & Buşra’s publications exhibit the use of *î*, as this usage is more common in the speech varieties in the city of Zaxo. Like the constructions for the perfect tense, the added word for the past perfect construction stems from the verb *bûn* (or *bîn*), ‘be.’

<sup>55</sup> According to Şîrîn & Buşra (2006: 314) the *-i* suffix is often not uttered in both pronunciation and writing. Some speakers may change the sound to *î*, therein making it more distinct.

examples. For more information on other passive voice constructions (other tenses), see Thackston's reference grammar on Northern Kurdish (2006).

(127) *ez hat-im dît-in* (Thackston 2006:67)  
 1D come.PST-1SG see.PST-INF  
 'I was seen.'

(128) *ez-ê<sup>56</sup> bê-m dît-in* (Thackston 2006:67)  
 1D-will come.PRS-1SG see.PST-INF  
 'I will be seen.'

(129) *hat-in=e kuşt-in pirpirîk-ên deng-ê* (MX:33)  
 become.PST-3PL=DIR kill.PST.PTCP-3PL butterfly-EZ.PL sound-EZ.M  
*agir-ê birîndar*  
 fire-EZ.M wound.PST.PTCP  
 'The butterflies of the sound of woulded fire were killed.'

Northern Kurdish also has some verbs that have passive constructions without the use of *hat/bê*. However, such verbs do seem to be less common in the language, with most passive voice utterances requiring constructions like those shown above. In (130) *kuzrîn*, 'have been burned,' is a passive verb that does not require the verb *hat/bê*. The ending must agree with the subject, which in this instance is *gulên çîayan*, 'the flowers of the mountains.'

(130) *kuzrî-n gul-ên çîa-yan nêrgiz-ên şeng* (BS4:24)  
 burn.PST.PASS-3PL flower-EZ.PL mountain-OBL.PL narcissus-EZ.PL young  
*u şepal*  
 and bright  
 'The flowers of the mountains have been burned, the young and bright narcissuses.'

#### 4.4.4 Adpositions

Adpositions consist of either one or two prepositions or a circumposition consisting of one or two prepositions with a postposition. Occasionally only a postposition is used. As was mentioned in §4.4.3.6 on complex verbs, certain

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<sup>56</sup> In Northern Kurdish of Turkey, future tense is accomplished via either the word *dê* or an *=ê* enclitic added to the subject (Thackston 2006:42). I have observed that speakers of the Bahdini dialect of Northern Iraq almost always use the word *dê*.

adpositional phrases have a specific placement before a light verb, whether they are attached to another element of the complex verb or are the first part of the complex verb itself. In other situations placement may vary, the adpositional phrase having two or more possible places in a sentence.

Table 16 is a list of some of common adpositions with their most common English translations. Where dots are used (...), the adposition that follows the dots is a postposition. When a postposition is used, the final noun in the PP will not have an oblique marker. Some adpositions have the same English translations. The nuances in adposition usage could be the subject of an entire paper.

**Table 16. Common adpositions**

Adpositions	English
<i>di</i>	in
<i>di ... da</i> <sup>57</sup>	in, into, during
<i>di ... ra</i>	through
<i>di nav ... da</i>	among, in, inside
<i>nav, linav</i>	in, inside
<i>gel, digel, ligel</i>	with
<i>def, li def</i>	with
<i>nav beyna</i>	between
<i>ji derva</i>	outside
<i>ji</i>	from
<i>ji ... ra</i>	from
<i>ji ber</i>	because of
<i>li</i>	at, in
<i>ber, li ber</i>	in front of, under
<i>li ser</i>	on
<i>ser</i>	on
<i>li duîv, li dîv</i>	after
<i>bin</i>	under
<i>bi</i>	with, by means of
<i>bê</i>	without
<i>bu, bo</i>	for
<i>der</i>	out
<i>wekî</i>	as, like
<i>nik</i>	near, next to
<i>dîr</i>	far
<i>berî</i>	before
<i>pîstî</i>	after

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<sup>57</sup> According to Chyet (2003), the postposition *da* indicates position or place. In some dialects it is used without a preposition.

## 5. Analysis of Northern Kurdish poetry

### 5.1 Introduction to the corpus

In June 2010, I went to the Northern Kurdish speaking area of Northern Iraq to collect a group of poems that would become the corpus for this paper. My intention was that the collection would be a good representation of Northern Kurdish poetry in Iraq over the past sixty years. Ascertaining which poets were revered proved to be difficult, as much of the population is illiterate or only nominally literate. Many literates lack exposure to poets, either past or modern. However, I was able to meet with poets and people who read poetry and obtained a body of translated poems, more than I could use in this thesis. In the end, I made the decisions on which poems to include in the corpus based on my evaluation of their overall quality, as well as their ability to represent a range of poetic devices. All of the poems with English translations are provided in Appendix A. All titles of poems come from their original publications or the copies given to me directly by the authors.

The corpus consists of poets from three periods of Northern Kurdish poetry. Representing Neo-classical poetry is Ahmed Nalbend (1891-1963), Cegerxwîn<sup>58</sup> (1903-1984), and Badirxan Sindî (b. 1943). Representing the New Period is Badirxan Sindî and Mu'eyed Teyb (b. 1957). The Modern Period (the poetry of most present day poets) is represented by Mihsin Quçan (b. 1954), Şaban Silêman, Mesud Xalaf, Hizirvan, Deyka Dalyayê and Hisin Silêvanî.

The corpus is also representative of a number of subdialects of Badinan region. Nalbend was from the town of Barmanê, near Amedî. Quçan and Dalyayê are also from

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<sup>58</sup> *Cegerxwîn* is the poet's pen name. His real name was Sheikmous Hasan.

Barmanê. Sindî is from Zaxo, and Silêvanî is from a similar dialect area not far from Zaxo. Silêman is from the village of Oreh, in the Barwarî area, north of Dohuk. The village of Hizirvan is from an area closer to Dohuk. It is not known where Xalaf's dialect is from. Cegerxwîn was included in the corpus because of his renown among Kurds everywhere. He was born near Batman, Turkey and his family fled to Syria when he was 11. While his dialect is a bit different from the rest of the corpus, his influence on Kurds everywhere is undeniable. Kurds in the Badinan area of Iraq are still able to understand much of his poetry.

Many people helped me in the initial selection process to assemble a body of poems to represent Northern Kurdish poetry. After getting many of the poems translated, I was able to form the group of poems that would become the corpus for this paper. Reşîd Findî, vice-president of the Kurdish Academy in Erbil and one of the chief editors of Nalbend's entire collection of poems, chose a poem from each of the five main themes Nalbend wrote in. Cegerxwîn's poems were selected by Haval Zaxoyî, one of the chief editors of a large collection of Cegerxwîn's poetry. Sindî selected poems of various themes from his recent publication, a collection of all of his poems. Teyb also chose poems from one of his publications. Quçan and Dalyayê chose poems from their publications and I received Silêman's and Xalaf's poems through direct correspondence. Lastly, Şamal Akrayî, a journalist and translator, as well as Director of Akray Radio, chose a poem by Silêvanî, and supplied me with his translation of the poem.

## 5.2 *The analysis*

The analysis that follows covers various aspects of linguistics on two levels: phonological and syntactic. Pragmatic functions are also discussed where applicable. This analysis is an empirical study and is, therefore, not exhaustive but consists of those aspects of the poems that I found to be most noteworthy. In §5.3, I discuss the phonological level: verse forms, syllable count, and various rhyme positions. The content of §5.4, the syntactic level, covers syntactic deviations concerning word order, ellipsis,

and free variation, which concerns freedoms a poet may take in forming lines of poetry. I also discuss some constructional schemes, neologisms and shortened phrases.

### 5.3 *On the phonological level*

#### 5.3.1 Verse Forms

This section on verse forms covers the structures used by poets of verse poetry, as opposed to prose—or free verse—poetry, which does not use formal devices on the phonological level to the degree of verse poetry. I am thankful for Badirxan Sindî's input on this topic which he supplied during our interview.

##### 5.3.1.1 *Çuarkî, the Northern Kurdish quatrain*

The verse form that dominates the corpus is called the *çuarkî*, which means 'quatrain' (Sindî 2011). It is in every way similar to the Persian form called *ruba'i*,<sup>59</sup> which is an Arabic word meaning 'foursome.' A poem composed of multiple *ruba'i* is referred to by the plural, *ruba'iyat*. A traditional *ruba'i* consists of two lines of poetry, each consisting of two hemistiches (or half-lines). The rhyme scheme is AAXA, where the first line end rhymes with its own caesura (or center point), as well as the end of the second line (Avery and Heath-Stubbs 1981:9). I have also heard Kurdish poets refer to this form as *çuar beyt*, which literally means 'four lines.' In this study, all *çuarkî* poems, whether originally written as couplets or quatrains, will be discussed as quatrains.

The rhyme schemes varied among authors. Of the Nalbend poems, the most common rhyme scheme was ABAB, CCCB, DDDb, etc. where in the first stanza the first and third lines rhyme and the second and fourth lines rhyme. Then in the stanzas that follow the first through third lines rhyme with one another and the last line rhymes with

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<sup>59</sup> According to Avery and Heath-Stubbs (1981:11), the origin of the *ruba'i* is potentially not from Arabs but from Turco-Central Asia. The constraints with which we are familiar, though, are purely Persian. For information on the origin of the *ruba'i*, I refer the reader to the introduction in *The Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam* by Peter Avery and John Heath-Stubbs, 1981.

the second and fourth lines of the first stanza. Cegerxwîn used the same scheme in writing *Dilê Cegerxwîn*, ‘Cegerxwîn’s Heart.’<sup>60</sup> Examples (131) and (132) show portions from both authors, (131) by Nalbend and (132) by Cegerxwîn. The full texts with English translations may be viewed in Appendix A.

- (131) duhî spêdê li ser banî (AN1:1-12)  
 me dît canek ji xew rabû  
 ji mal derket derê xanî  
 me texmîn kir Zuleyxa bû  
  
 zuleyxa bu sîfet hûrî  
 wekî tîrê ji merra bûrî  
 çû ser avê lirexê jûrî  
 wekî rrojê limin ava bû  
  
 dema zivrî ji ser avê  
 me dît lêda ji nû tavê  
 miqabil çûme hindavê  
 qere puşî girê dabû
- (132) agir bi Kurdistanê ket (CX1:1-6)  
 lewra haware dil;  
 sed bağ u sed bistanî ket  
 manendî bilbil jare dil  
  
 pêtek ji Kurdistanê hat,  
 mêalik u cergê min dipat;  
 aman welat, aman welat,  
 bawer bikin xwînxware dil  
  
 bawer bikin eî yarê min,  
 heval u hem guhdarê min;  
 her gav u her êvarê min,  
 naxoş u hem bêzare dil

Another rhyme scheme used by Nalbend for consecutive stanzas was AAXA, XAXA, etc. In this scheme the first, second and fourth lines of the first stanza rhyme and the third line is free from rhyme. In the stanzas that follow, the first and third lines are

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<sup>60</sup> Each quatrain of *Dilê Cegerxwîn* is written as *du beyt*, ‘two lines’ of poetry, a couplet, with rhymes also at each caesura, the midpoint in each line. This is the traditional form for the *rubai* mentioned by Avery/Heath-Stubbs (1981). Nalbend’s *Ey Malikê Vê ‘Alemê* is also written in the *rubai’iyat* form.

free from rhyming and the second and fourth lines rhyme with the rhymed lines in the first stanza. Example (133) shows the first two quatrains of *Kiçkek Me Divêt*, ‘We Want A Girl.’

- (133) kiçkek me divêt ji nû gehiştî (AN5:1-8)  
 ya ji dêm u rûya xunav ne riştî  
 wextê ji derî bihême xanî  
 rrabît me ax u biket ve piştî  
 gava ko bidet me têşt u şîva  
 bêjît me kuro hilo vî tişt u miştî  
 rengê xu bidem wekî gula geş  
 me’na ku were bi xu vî tiştî

Badirxan Sindî used a rhyme scheme of AAAB, CCCB, DDDDB, etc. in *Mîrê Peyvan*, ‘The Prince of Words.’ For writing *Bila..Bila*, ‘OK..OK,’ Sindî used the scheme AAXA, BBXB, etc. Below are small sections from each poem.

- (134) erê sîlav çima evro melwîl u hişk u zuhayî? (BS7:1-8)  
 kelê boçî tu bê deng u negeşdar u verêlhayî?  
 çira dil tu wesa evro ji kakal ra yê arhayî?  
 gutin yaro bê kew rabu sefer kêşa u zavaye  
 te da rê eî mîrê peyvan bê saz u maz li pêş te biçin  
 şagirdên te heqe çûban bi mewkin ew cilil reş bin  
 heta peyvên te jî seyda li vê ş’rê da jî geş bin  
 xerîbê vê jîlnê bu şeva mirnê jî humaye
- (135) bila .. bila çi bêjit (BS3:1-8)  
 bila dilê min bihêlit  
 dustê mine bi evînî  
 xudê bu min bihêlit  
 sal bu salê di burînim  
 rundika ez lê di werînim  
 xudê dustê min kanê  
 kengî ez dê wî bînim

The final variation on quatrain rhyme schemes in the corpus is found in Cegerxwîn’s *Silav Li Sifra Hazire*, ‘Salute the Feast Is Ready.’ The first stanza is a traditional ABAB pattern, followed by quatrains of the form XXXB, in which the first through third lines are free and the fourth line rhymes with the B lines of the first

quatrain. Only in the final quatrain do we again see rhyme in the first and third lines giving a rhyme scheme of CXCB.

(136) ey sûxteyê bê nav u deng, (CX2:1-8)  
 dijmin li ser balafire.  
 pîr leşker u top u tiveng;  
 seîda ewe, ew mahire.

sed salin ev zeîd u ‘emir,  
 cenge dikel rîşa melê  
 mertal di dest wan de bihuşt;  
 gurzê di dest wan agire.

.....

seîdayê rast u ronîye, (CX2:29-32)  
 lewra cegerxwîn namîdar.  
 zana dizanin ew kî ye,  
 ên ker dibêjin kafire.

The examples above are representative of the quatrain rhyme schemes found in this corpus. As this is such a small sampling of the *çuarî* poetry, with more research one might encounter other rhyme schemes. For example, Turco mentions an *interlocking ruba’iyat* that is common in Arabic and Persian poetry. This *chain verse* has a rhyme scheme of AABA, BBCB, CCDC, ending with ZZAZ, where the third line of the final quatrain circles back to the rhyme in the initial quatrain (Turco 2000:245). Considering the influence of Persian and Arabic poets on Kurdish poets, it would not be surprising to find interlocking *çuarî* poems within the body Kurdish poetry.

The *çuarî* schemes found in the corpus are summarized in Table 17.

**Table 17. Poems using *çuarî* forms**

Poem	Rhyme scheme
AN1	ABAB, CCCB, DDDB,...
AN2	ABAB, CCCB, DDDB,...
AN3	ABAB, CCCB, DDDB,...
AN4	ABAB, CCCB, DDDB,...
AN5	AABA, XAXA,...
BS3	AAXA, BBXB,...
CX1	ABAB, CCCB, DDDB,...
CX2	ABAB, XXXB,...
	CXCB# <sup>61</sup>
BS7	AAAB, CCCB, DDDB,...

### 5.3.1.2 *Methnawî – the Northern Kurdish couplet*

*Methnawî* is an Arabic word used to describe poetry written in rhymed couplets (Sindî 2010). Some poets use the Persian form of the word, *masnavî*, as Kurdish does not have a letter for the Arabic voiceless, interdental fricative ‘th,’ as in the English word ‘thing.’ Another difference is that among Northern Kurdish and related languages, the letters *v* and *w*, and even *m*, are used in alike words. For example, in Northern Kurdish, the word for ‘summer’ is *havîn*. In Central Kurdish (commonly called Soranî), the word is *hawîn*. In at least some Hawramî dialects (Southern Kurdish), ‘summer’ is *hamîn*. Some Northern Kurdish speakers also use the term *du beyt* for *methnawî*, which means ‘two lines.’ However, I have observed that the Arabic and Persian terms are more prevalent.

While I understand *methnawî* to be a popular verse form among Northern Kurdish poets, the corpus contains only two poems in this form, both by the same author. One such poem, Sindî’s *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’

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<sup>61</sup> ‘#’ denotes the end of the poem.

contains 23 couplets. The following are lines 27 through 32 of that poem, illustrating the rhyme scheme of AA, BB, CC, etc.

- (137) dilber u aşiq her êkin lê belê rengê mecaz (BS1:27-32)  
 car bi caran bi îcazet hin li hin dê kin cîaz  
 pir evîna mililetê me êke gel zatê melê  
 ew di dil da nîşte cê ye lê belê çavê me lê  
 zahir u batin êk kese dişir'eta 'şqa zelal  
 ew u Kurdîni êk kesin çî kemal bin çî zewal

The other *methnawî* poem, *Dergehê Jîn U Hîvî Ya*, 'The Door of Life and Hopes,' is composed of 24 couplets. Below are the last six lines of the poem.

- (138) nabitin bu me tewafa ew cihê lê Mem u Zîn (BS4:43-48)  
 nabitin evro biburîn ji tuxîbê Xanîqîn  
 nabitin biçim nik Xanî bu vekim dilê bixwîn  
 nabitin biçim dêrsîmê bikelêşim dilê bievîn  
 dergehê jîn u hîvîa girtîe dîsa çîma?  
 ma ji jîna kurte jîn bit ma ji 'emrê me çî ma?

Sindî informed me that there is a form of couplet poetry in which the poet writes the first line in Kurdish and the second line in Arabic or Persian. This form was popular during the time of Ahmed Cezîrî in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and has fallen out of favor. He knows of no one who presently writes in this form.

### 5.3.1.3 *Tercîa band*

Only one poem in the corpus was written in the *tercîa band* verse form. Sindî had the following to say about *tercîa band*:

*Tercîa* means 'repeating, to repeat something.' It is an Arabic word.  
*Band*<sup>62</sup> means 'to tie something' and it is a Persian and Kurdish word.

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<sup>62</sup> Regarding the word *band*, Sindî (2010) also had the following to say, "*Band* means sometimes 'rope' or 'belt.' It means 'arrested man.' Sometimes it means 'slave'; sometimes it means 'a man who is always related to some other man.' That is why in Bahdîni, we say *ez banî*. It means 'I am in your *band*; I am your servant; I am your slave, you are my lord.'"

*Tercîa band* means when you have to repeat something and to fasten the last word to complete the whole line (Sindî 2011).

Sindî's *Nehat*, 'It Did Not Come,' consists of 16 lines all ending with the sound sequence *za min nehat*. The following are the first six lines of the poem.

- (139) Dîl u êxsîrî ji gelî bun—ser feraza *min nehat*. (BS5:1-6)  
 Mam di'îşîqa wê şepalê—sil u zîza *min nehat*.  
 Çav dinêrim ez bibînim—xuş 'ezîza *min nehat*.  
 Guh min da awaz u lavçan—dengê saza *min nehat*.  
 Ez ji ke'bê ra mirîdim—hec u ferza *min nehat*.  
 Cejne u sunete aşî—pir 'acîza *min nehat*.

This is the only *tercîa band* in Badirxan Sindî's book and I am unaware of any Kurdish poets other than Ahmed Cezîrî and Ahmed Xanî (Shakely 1996:337) who have written in this form. Two popular forms with which *tercîa band* may be compared are the French *villanelle* and the American *terzanelle*. Like the *tercîa band* form, these forms utilize refrains. For details on these forms, see Turco (2000: 273-5, 282-5).

#### 5.3.1.4 *Innovative form for rhymed verse*

Cegerxwîn's poem *Silav Li Sifra Hazire*, 'Salute the Feast Is Ready,' discussed above as example (136), may very well be considered an unorthodox verse form, with its many lines of rhyme-free endings. However, one of the verse poems in the corpus is even more unusual and may best be considered a sonnet. Sindî's *Gerîanek Di Kurdistanê Da*, 'A Walk Through Kurdistan,' is made up of five stanzas, each having 14 lines with a rhyme scheme that can generally be described as AABBCCDDEEFFFZ. The lines rhyme by couplet through to the ninth and tenth lines. Then there is a rhymed triplet composed of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth lines. Finally, the fourteenth lines of each stanza rhyme with each other, with the exception of line 14 of the third stanza which rhymes with its own B lines.

While this generally sums up the rhyme scheme, the denser rhyme schemes actually used in the poem are better seen by way of Table 18 which presents all five stanzas and illustrates the interplay of rhymes across the couplet boundaries. I have

chosen to present each stanza individually so as to make comparison easy; any interlocking rhymes that might exist between stanzas are not presented.

Note that there is no variation at all in the first three couplets, which are always AA, BB, CC. After these, there is repetition of at least one of the couplet rhyme schemes in either the third (stanza 2), fourth (stanza 1 and 4), or the fifth (stanza 3) couplet. The M-dash (—) signifies a **volta**, a semantic shift that coincides with a change in the rhyme pattern.<sup>63</sup> At each volta shift in *Gerîanek Di Kurdistanê Da*, ‘A Walk Through Kurdistan,’ the person or thing to which the poet has spoken begins his, her or its reply, which continues through line 14. In stanzas 1 and 4, the volta occurs with line 11; in the other stanzas it occurs with line 9.

**Table 18. Rhyme scheme of stanzas in BS2**

Stanza	Rhyme scheme
1	AABBCC--DDD'D'—EEEZ
2	AABBCC--C'C'—DDD'D'D'Z
3	AABBCC--DD—EEE'E'E'B
4	AABBCC--DDD'D'—EEEZ
5	AABBCC--B'B'—C'C'C"C"C"Z

The rhyme scheme in stanza 5 is the most concentrated. Two couplets have B-rhymes and two couplets and the triplet having C-rhymes, which all combined give the poem a robust ending. It is not surprising to see such an innovative form—uncommon to Northern Kurdish poetry—among Sindî’s work, as he was among the first of the Northern Kurdish poets in Iraq to write free verse poetry.

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<sup>63</sup> Boerger says the following concerning sonnets and the volta: “The standard sonnet is composed of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter, in which a semantic shift generally occurs at the same point as there is a shift in the rhyme scheme (Turco 2000:263-264). The point of shift is called the volta” (Boerger 2009:243). For details on traditional sonnet forms, see Boerger’s text.

### 5.3.2 Line syllable count

The shortest syllable count per line in the corpus is seven, and occurred in three poems. The longest is sixteen syllables per line and concurs with what Sindî said during our interview about length of lines, “It starts with six or seven...16 is the top.” Table 19 shows a list of the 14 poems, in the corpus of 26 poems, that were written with a regimented syllable count.

**Table 19. Actual or average syllable counts.**

Poem	Syllable Count
AN1	8
AN2	7
AN3	8
AN4	11
AN5	10
BS1	15
BS2	7
BS3	7
BS4	15
BS5	15
BS7	16
CX1	8
CX2	8
CX3	14

In some instances the count seems to be inconsistent, especially in some of Nalbend’s poems. However, an analyst should be careful when making conclusive statements based on an etic perspective. In some situations sounds may meld when spoken, producing elisions of sound, shortening the syllabic count by reading a poem aloud. This is illustrated in some of the examples in the discussion that follows. The degree to which such elisions can be ascertained via the written form reveals that poets who write syllabic verse are primarily concerned with how the poem will sound when it

is spoken or performed. The way syllables are counted seems to be influenced by poetry's oral tradition. This particular topic needs much more direct input from poets in-country, as only they can explain how they determine syllable counts. A complete analysis of poetic meter was therefore not possible, in large part due to a lack of performed poetry.

The most common elision of sound occurs when the weak vowel *i* is excluded from pronunciation. In fact, with few words beginning with *i*, some may argue for its nonexistence in the language. The modified Arabic script of Northern Kurdish does not even include a letter representing *i*. Thackston (2006:5) uses the term **furtive** to describe the appearance and disappearance of this vowel in the language. He writes,

Kurdish does not tolerate all final consonant clusters. When an intolerable final consonant cluster appears, it is broken by the vowel *i*, called the 'furtive *i*,' which disappears when a vowel-initial enclitic or suffix is added to the word (Thackston 2006:5).

However, it is not just in final consonant clusters that the *i* vowel is excluded in spoken Northern Kurdish. For example, the word for 'want,' with the continuous aspect marker *di-*, often loses the short *i* when the *d* can elide with a previous CV syllable to form a CVC syllable. Such seems to be the case in line 28 of Nalbend's poem, *Ey Ze'îmê Bê Nivêjê Bê Werar*, 'O Leader Without Prayer and Use,' shown in (140). Here the first end rhyme, *mezin*, completes the first eight syllables of the line, a hemistich, as *in* in *mezin* rhymes with *min* and *jîn* in the previous line. At the beginning of line 28, *me* joins with *divêt* to sound like *mê d.vêt*. While the *i* is still written when using the Latin script, it is not pronounced. If it was pronounced, the number of syllables from *me* to *mezin* would be nine, inconsistent with the eight-syllable line length throughout the poem. For a breakdown of the syllables in the first hemistich in line 28, see example (141).

(140) xwozîya kesê guh daye *min* şêx u melaw mêt u *jin*<sup>64</sup> (AN3:27, 28)  
me divêt bu wan faîdê *mezin* lew min dewam gazindeye

(141) mē d(i).vêt bu wan faî.dê mez.in

In another poem, *Mîrê Peyvan*, ‘The Prince of Words,’ by Sindî, the word *biçin*, at the end of the 5th line, joins with the previous word *te*, shortening the apparent 17-syllable count by one, as shown in (142). Hence, the poet has taken the performance of the poem into account while forming his 16-syllable count lines.

(142) te da rê ey mîrê peyvan bê saz u maz li pêş te biçin (BS7:5)  
te da rê ey mî.rê pey.van bê saz u maz li pêş te b.(i)çin

In truth, when speakers of the Bahdini subdialect say *te biçin*, it sounds more like *tep çin*. The *b* sounds more like a *p*, taking on the minus voice distinctive feature of the letter ç.

Lastly, as Thackston states, the *i* can disappear at the end of a word when a vowel-initial enclitic or suffix is added. In line 11 of *Dergehê Jîn U Hîvî Ya*, ‘The Door of Life and Hopes,’ shown in (143), the verb *ketin* usually has two syllables. However, because of the *e* directional enclitic, the word *ke.tin*, having a CV.CVC structure, is pronounced *ket.ne*. The *t* becomes the coda of the first syllable, now CVC, and the *n* becomes the onset of the second syllable, *ne*, a CV syllable. The syllabic breakdown is shown in the second line of the example. If the *i* is pronounced, the syllable count for the line would exceed the poem’s syllable count of 15.

(143) canîkên kumêda revîn ketine nav çul u çîan (BS4:11)  
ca-nîk-ên ku-mêd-a re-vîn ket-(i).ne nav çul u çî-an

These elisions of the *i* vowel may be represented by the rule in (144). Concerning the consonants that are marked in the { } brackets, one or the other is required. The consonants in parentheses are optional. To see how the rule works, I have provided two examples. In (145) the word *befir* has two syllables. When *befir* is in the oblique case, the feminine oblique marker, *-ê*, is added and the *i* elides. The resulting word is *bef.rê*. In this

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<sup>64</sup> While this line contains 16-syllables, the syllable *min*, which rhymes with *jin* and *mezin*, happens to occur on the 9<sup>th</sup> syllable, not the 8<sup>th</sup>, where it is to be expected. It seems that Nalbend was content with this deviation in syllable count.

instance, the *r* went from being the coda on the second syllable to being its onset. In (146) the imperfective affix *di-* is added to the word *vêt*. This word is preceded by the pronoun *me*, 10, giving us *me divêt*. In this instance, the *i* vowel is in the affix, not the word stem. Following the rule, the *i* elides. However, this time the orphan consonant, which had functioned as an onset, is join phonologically to the open syllable *me* to function as its coda.

(144) (C) V C i {C} + {C} V (C) → (C) V C {C} + {C} V (C)

(145) b e . f i r + ê → b e f . r + ê

(146) m e d i . v ê t → m ê d . + v ê t

Example (147) illustrates that the rule in (144) applies even when the *i* vowel is not in an aspect affix. The *i* in the preposition *ji* elides and the *j* becomes the coda for the syllable *rêj*. However, in (148) the desired 16-syllable count can only be reached if the *b* in *bi* does *not* syllabify with the diphthong in *buî*. Perhaps, though, the presence of the diphthong does not provide the environment required by the rule above for elision and syllabification. A thorough exploration of this subject is beyond the scope of this study. It requires an emic view from the poets and recorded texts for comparing with written texts.

(147) wekî tîrê ji merra bûrî (AN1:6)  
we.kî tî.rê j(i) me.rra bû.rî

(148) ji turî ra tu dergeh buî bi suzî xuş zêrevanî (BS7:15)  
ji tu.rî ra tu der.geh buî bi su.zî xuş zê.re.va.nî

In BS7, there may be some evidence that a poet may actually have some liberty insofar as applying the rule in (144). In the last line of the poem, the *di* aspect marker on *disujit* must be counted to reach the syllable count of 16, even though *lewra*, a word ending in a vowel, precedes it. In this line there is no other way to reach 16 syllables except to consider *di* a syllable by itself.

(149) gelê lewra disujit dil ku cih kew evro valaye (BS7:24)  
ge.lê lew.ra di.su.jit dil ku cih kew ev.ro va.la.ye

Lastly, one other potential environment for the elision of the *i* vowel is the syllabification of two consonants. In line 10 of *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories

of Immortal Barzanî,' the preposition *ji* must syllabify with the word that follows it, *mezar*, in order to reach the syllable count for the poem, 15. This elision of *i* and syllabification of the orphaned consonant would require an additional rule, which could be established with more proof and research with recorded texts. I am basing my conjecture here on personal experience. For example, when the term *ji mêja*, 'from time past,' is used in Northern Iraq, it is uttered as if it consists of only two syllables,  $\widehat{j}mê.ja$ , as if *j* and *mê* are syllabified into one syllable.

(150) me du'a bu şev u rujan ji mezar u Înis u cin (BS1:10)  
me du.'a bu şev u ru.jan ji me.zar u Î.nis u cin

Another situation where sounds can change and affect the syllable count is when a vowel becomes a glide. The Latin graphemes *î*, a vowel, and *y*, a glide, are represented by the same grapheme in Kurdish script, which is written as  $\zeta$  or  $\zeta$ . The former is written when the sound is word-final, which would only be a vowel. Hence, it is the grapheme  $\zeta$  that represents either a vowel or a glide. When transcribing to a Latin script, one has to make a decision whether to use *î* or *y*.

One example is the word *sufyên* in line 17 of *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, 'Memories of Immortal Barzanî.' The syllable count for the line is 15 and can only be reached if *sufî*, when combined with the plural *ezafe* conjunctive particle *-ên*, counts as only two syllables. Here the *i* must become a glide. The word would then consist of two CVC syllables, *suf* and *yên*. The glide acts as the consonantal onset for the second syllable.

(151) mililetê Kurd pir wefaye sufyên destên tene (BS1:17)  
mi.li.le.tê Kurd pir we.fa.ye suf.yên des.tên te.ne

In (152) two things must happen to reach a syllable count of 7. First, the initial *i* in *dikirin* must elide according to the rule in (144); the *d* becomes the coda for the syllable *pê*, giving us  $pê d(i).ki.rin$ . Second, the word *yarîa*, which consists of the word *yarî* and a feminine *ezafe* particle, *-a*, must be pronounced as two syllables: *yar.ya*. Hence, an *i* changes to a *y* even though the resulting syllable is CV, not CVC.

- (152) pê dikirin yarya bîka (BS2:32)  
 pê d(i).ki.rin yar.ya bî.ka

The phonological occurrence in these last two examples may be represented by the following rule, with sounds represented using the Northern Kurdish orthography. Potentially, the initial consonant in this rule is optional; however, at the writing of this study, I did not have an example to support this notion.

- (153)  $\hat{i} \rightarrow y / CVC \_ V(C)$

The example in (154) may be evidence that the rule in (153) is optional for the poet. In line 1 of *Dergehê Jîn U Hîvî Ya*, ‘The Door of Life and Hopes,’ the  $\hat{i}$  in the words *hîvîa* and *girtîe* must be pronounced as a vowel in order to reach the syllable count of 15. Each word must be pronounced as having three syllables. *Hîvîa* consists of the word *hîvî* and the feminine *ezafe* particle *-a*. *Girtîe* consists of the word *girtî* and the present tense 3SG copula *e*.

- (154) dergehê jîn u hîvîa girtîe dîsa çîma (BS4:1)  
 der.ge.hê jîn u hî.vî.a gir.tî.e dî.sa çî.ma

With all this evidence, one thing is clear. Poets sometimes consider performance when forming lines of poetry. There may certainly be other phonological rules that poets are abiding by when forming lines of poetry. My discussion here is from a purely etic view. Poets of Neo-classical poetry should be consulted before making clear determinations about the distinct system they follow when counting syllables.

### 5.3.3 Rhyme

Rhyme is a defining feature of both Classical and Neo-classical poetry in Northern Kurdish. In the following sections, I discuss various end rhymes, including head, internal and interlaced rhyme, feature rhyme, and what I am calling multisyllabic rhyming sequence.

#### 5.3.3.1 End rhyme

The most common position for rhyme in the corpus is end rhyme. While end rhyme is a dominant feature of Classical and Neo-classical Northern Kurdish poetry, two

of the prose poems in the corpus also exhibit this feature. These are Mu'eyed Teyb's *Firekê Baî*, 'A Sip of Wind,' and Şaban Silêman's *Gutgutik*, 'Rumors.'

### 5.3.3.1.1 True rhyme

The most basic rhyme is called **true rhyme**, which according to Turco (2000:49) "has to do with identical sound, in two or more words, of an accented vowel sound (o'-oa'-ow') together with all sounds following that vowel (o'**ne**-oa'**n**-ow'**n**), while the consonant sounds immediately preceding the vowel differ in each word (bo'**ne**-loa'**n**-grow'**n**).” In the following lines from Nalbend's *Xoşe Wekî Cenetê*, 'It's Wonderful Like Heaven,' the first, second, and third lines of each stanza exhibit true rhyme in each line's final syllable. For example, in lines 9 through 11, shown in (155), the second syllables of the words *bihar* and *hizar* rhyme with *bar*. The fourth lines of all the stanzas in this poem rhyme with one another, exhibiting end rhyme focused on a single syllable. In lines 13, 17 and 20, also shown, *şîn* rhymes with the final syllables of *nazenîn* and *şirîn*.

(155) tazeye lê xoş bihar (AN2:9-20)  
 aǎ u rez u daru *bar*  
 cinsê kulîlka *hizar*  
 gav u dema sûr u *şîn*  
 zwîr u girî bin tiraş  
 yaze letîf xuş u *baş*  
 libsê çîyayî *qumaş*  
 dil vekere *nazenîn*  
 kêrî şiv u *nihal*  
 sergir u rêhel *wirwal*  
 kehni avin *zelal*  
 sar u sivik tam *şirîn*

True end rhymes focused on a single syllable were prominent in the following texts: CX1, CX3, BS7, MT3, AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4, BS1, BS2, BS4 and SS1.

### 5.3.3.1.2 Multisyllabic rhyme

**Disyllabic true end rhyme** was the most common **multisyllabic rhyme** in the corpus. Such a rhyme may occur between individual words or may cross word

boundaries.<sup>65</sup> Disyllabic true end rhyme was also more prevalent than true end rhyme focused on a single syllable. The following couplets from Sindî's *Dergehê Jîn u Hîvî Ya*, 'The Door of Life and Hopes,' exhibit disyllabic true end rhymes. In (156) *lewa* rhymes with *xewa* and *eve* rhymes with *şeve*.

(156) ew çirayên mililetîne şewiq vedan bu me *lewa* (BS4:29, 30)  
bilbilên şermin dixuînin Kurdu dê rabe ji *xewa*

zana u nezan her êkin Kurdînu nabit *eve* (BS4:33, 34)  
lew ji êşa em dinalîn her li me dunya *şeve*

The corpus also contains many examples of multisyllabic end rhyme where rhymes cross word boundaries. These examples are discussed in §5.3.3.1.4 on **mosaic rhyme**. In some instances, there is **identical rhyme**, where a word is repeated in the rhymed sentence.<sup>66</sup> In the discussion that follows, examples (157) through (159) exhibit this type of rhyme.

Multisyllabic rhyme was the most common type of rhyme in *Dilê Cegerxwîn*, 'Cegerxwîn's Heart.' In the example that follows, the rhymes consist of three syllables that cross word boundaries. Such a rhyme is said to have a **compound ending**. The repetition of the word *min* in lines 5 and 6, the word *ew* in lines 7 and 8, and the word *dil* at the end of lines 6 and 8, are identical rhymes contributing to the compound endings. *Yarê min*, *guhdarê min* and *êvarê min* rhyme the final three syllables, as do *naxoşe ew*, *poşe ew* and *seîdoşe ew*. *Bêzare dil*, at the end of line 6, rhymes with *kerare dil* at the end of line 8. Note here that the consonantal onsets of the first syllables of the rhymed

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<sup>65</sup> See §5.3.3.1.4 on mosaic rhyme.

<sup>66</sup> Turco (2003:53) defines identical rhyme as having "identity of sound in the consonants immediately preceding the accented vowel as well as in the following sounds (cy'st, persi'st, insi'st)." For this paper I have opted for Adams' (1997:199) looser definition that does not consider accent. He identifies identical rhyme as simply, "a word rhymes with itself," which is basically the repetition of a word. He uses an example from Emily Dickenson's "Because I Could not Stop for Death" where the end of line 2 and line 4 in a quatrain is the same word, "ground."

sequences are different and thereby fulfill the definition of true rhyme. The repeated words *min* and *ew* in the rhymed sequence are examples of identical rhyme.

- (157) Bawer bikin eî *yarê min*, heval u hem *guhdarê min*; (CX1:5-8)  
 Her gav u her *êvarê min*, naxoş u hem *bêzare dil*.  
 Bêzar u pir *naxoşe ew*, kincên *sîyeh – gûn – poşe ew*,  
 Geh *sîne geh seîdoşe ew*, geh *heîderê kerare dil*.

Multisyllabic rhyme was also commonly used by Sindî. The following examples from *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’ show two-syllable, three-syllable and four-syllable compound rhymes, respectively. They illustrate both identical rhyme and true rhyme.

- (158) êş u *derdên mililetê Kurd wî ji hîngê kirne ders* (BS1:41, 42)  
*sehîrezayî u ‘eqil u curet ew mukim lê bune ders*  
 suz u *peyman em didinte gel teda u ala weda* (BS1:45, 46)  
*em bimînîn bête senger meşxelên roka weda*  
*mililetê Kurd pir wefaye sufyên destên tene* (BS1:17, 18)  
*ruh ji êşan pir semaye ‘aşiq u mestên tene*

Sindî also used four-syllable, identical, compound rhymes in every line of his *tercîa band, Nehat*, ‘It Did Not Come,’ provided in full below.

- (159) *dîl u êxsîrî ji gelî bun ser feraza min nehat* (BS5)  
*mam di’îşîqa wê şepalê sil u zîza min nehat*  
*çav dinêrim ez bibînim xuş ‘ezîza min nehat*  
*guh min da awaz u lavçan dengê saza min nehat*  
*ez ji ke’bê ra mirîdim hec u ferza min nehat*  
*cejne u sunete aşî pir ‘acîza min nehat*  
*şivanê deşt u zuzanim berxe nazamin nehat*  
*dawet u şahîan veqetîan can witaza min nehat*  
*têhnî u tav u tehireye siha gwîza min nehat*  
*çend mekir hawar u yeman kes bu duza min nehat*  
*kî wekî me mubitalye kes li rêza min nehat*  
*mam li nêçîrê ji mêje şah u baza min nehat*  
*‘ud u sentur bistirîne xuş awaza min nehat*  
*min bi jehira wê qebîle maru gaza min nehat*  
*ez bi hûkimê mirnê dayme (neqîza) qeza min nehat*  
*derfeye hakim bibînim roja heza min nehat*

### 5.3.3.1.3 Multisyllabic rhyming sequence

Some sequences of syllables exhibit what I am calling **multisyllabic rhyming sequence**. In such instances, more than one syllable is rhymed. True rhyme, as defined by Turco above, occurs when two or more onsets vary while everything after the onsets remains the same. In a multisyllabic rhyming sequence, more than one syllable in the rhymed lines has varying onsets. This is best understood by means of an example. The lines in (160), from Sindî's *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, 'Memories of Immortal Barzanî,' exhibit a representative example of a multisyllabic rhyming sequence. The sounds entering the rhyming sequence are in italics. First, the penultimate syllables of *ru* and *su* rhyme according to Turco's definition of true rhyme. The final syllables of the lines, *jin* and *cin*, also exhibit true rhyme. Potentially, the poet has carefully chosen these words here to capitalize on the phonetic similarity between the sounds *j* and *c*. Both consonants are voiced. One slight difference is that *j* is post-alveolar and *c* is palatal. The other difference is that *j* is a fricative and *c* is an affricate. (Refer to §5.3.3.1.5 for information on articulatory features.)

(160) ayeta Kursî ji berkîr me—*cihêl* u *pîr* u *jin* (BS1:9, 10)  
me du'a bu şev u rujan ji mezar u *Înis* u *cin*

Another multisyllabic rhyming sequence in the same poem consists of *gelî bûn* and *girî bun*, shown in example (161). The vowels *e* and *i* that follow *g* are relatively close to one another, exhibiting **vowel feature rhyme**, which I discuss in §5.3.3.1.5.2. In the following syllables, *lî* and *rî*, also rhyme. The consonantal onsets *l* and *r* are similar in that both are voiced and alveolar. The only difference is that the first is a lateral approximate while the second is a flap. This example is a more complex multisyllabic rhyming sequence. While the consonantal onsets in these and the following examples do not qualify as consonant feature rhyme (see §5.3.3.1.5.1), as the sound similarities are the onsets—not the codas—the word choices do seem intentional on part of the poet, exhibiting poetic artistry. Also italicized are the final four syllables in each line. These too demonstrate multisyllabic rhyming sequence where each syllable rhymes or comes close to rhyming.

- (161) *şînyî u tazî ji gelî bûn*<sup>67</sup> çep u rast u jor u jêr (BS1:15, 16)  
 şev u roj xelkî girî bun kal u genc u jin u mêr

The longest example of a multisyllabic rhyming sequence consists of the last five syllables in lines 6 and 7 of Silêman's *Gutgutik*, 'Rumors,' shown in (162). The onsets for the first, second and fourth syllables, shown in italics, differ while the vowels remain consistent.

- (162) Hindek yê ji *keyfa* pê firî (SS1:6, 7)  
 Hindek yê ji *qehra* pê mirî

Table 20 lists some other multisyllabic rhyming sequences in the corpus.

**Table 20. Additional instances of multisyllabic rhyming sequence.**

AN3	15, 16	<i>mirîn, şirîn</i>	<i>biçîn</i>
BS4	17, 18	<i>-ê barê xubim</i>	<i>-zê malê xubim</i>
BS4	27, 28	<i>ew çar bira</i>	<i>ew çarçira</i>
SS1	9, 11	<i>-hêzin</i>	<i>-bêjin</i>
SS1	16, 17	<i>gurî</i>	<i>xwelî</i> <sup>68</sup>

#### 5.3.3.1.4 Mosaic rhyme

**Mosaic rhyme** is when one rhyme is compound and the other normal (Turco 2000:53). This strategy was used by three of the four poets represented in the corpus who wrote verse poetry, as illustrated below, with both perfect and identical rhyme. In (163) *rabû* rhymes with *Zuleyxa bû* and *derkir, ker kir, and anber kir* rhyme with each other. In (164) *çima* rhymes with *çi ma* and in (165) *memê bu* rhymes with *sîxwecê bu* and *rêbu*.

- (163) me dît canek ji xew *rabû* (AN1:2, 4)  
 me texmîn kir *Zuleyxa bû*

<sup>67</sup> The words *bûn* and *bun* (in line 16) are part of the rhyme. The spelling of this past tense copula varies throughout the poetry. Though one of these is likely a typographical error, I have left the spellings as found in the original text. My consultant advised me that *bûn* is the correct spelling of the word.

<sup>68</sup> The character *و* in the Kurdish script represents both *w* and *u* in the Latin script. Some dialects (perhaps only in certain words) pronounce the diphthong *we* as *u*. My opinion is that this is the rhyme intended by the poet, the accepted spelling of *xwelî* with the dialect pronunciation of *xulî*.

ji mêlaka me xûn *derkir* (AN1:29-31)  
 ewê dil bir ceger *ker kir*  
 miqabil me xûn liber *anber kir*

(164) dergêhê jîn u hîvîa giritîe dîsa *çima* (BS4:1, 2)  
 ma ji jîna kurte jîn bit ma ji ‘emrê me *çi ma*

(165) mirîdê vîna zînê bu nesaxê derdê *memê bu* (BS7:21-23)  
 rundîka tac u stîe bu fîxana sîwxecê *bu*  
 xuş vîe gav u mizê bu ‘evdal bu çav her li *rêbu*

The nine other instances of mosaic rhyme may be viewed in AN1, AN3, BS1 and BS2 in Appendix A.

### 5.3.3.1.5 Sound play

As we have seen in true rhyme, rhymed syllables differ only in the onset of the rhymed sequence. **Feature rhyme**, on the other hand, as defined by Zwicky (1986:68), occurs when codas of two rhyming sequences minimally differ from one another by way of their phonological features. For example, in his paper on rhyme in rock lyrics, Zwicky (1976:677) says that the final sounds in the words “stop” and “rock” are consonants that minimally differ. In this instance, both sounds are plosives and voiceless; the only feature that is different is the place of articulation. For consonant features, refer to Table 21 below. This chart is arranged according to standard phonetic charts. Where there are two graphemes in a box, the one on the left is unvoiced, the one on the right, voiced. In extreme cases of feature rhyme, the sounds may differ by two articulatory features.

For vowel feature rhyme, Zwicky (1976:677) lists the example of “end” and “wind.” The vowels in these words are relatively close in articulation. For the discussion of vowel feature rhyme, see §5.3.3.1.5.2.

**Table 21. Orthographic consonant chart**

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glotto-pharyngeal
Plosive	<i>p b</i>		<i>t d</i>			<i>k g</i>	<i>q</i>	
Nasal	<i>m</i>		<i>n</i>					
Trill			<i>rr</i> <sup>69</sup>					
Flap			<i>r</i>					
Affricate					<i>ç c</i>			
Fricative		<i>f v</i>	<i>s z</i>	<i>ʃ j</i>			<i>x ɣ</i>	<i>ħ ħ'</i>
Approximant	<i>w</i>				<i>y</i>			
Lateral approximant			<i>l</i>					

### 5.3.3.1.5.1 Consonant feature rhyme

Two poems in the corpus exhibit instances of consonant feature rhyme. In (166) the words *hestî* and *destî* exhibit true rhyme. The word *gezî*, however, does not. For the rhyme, Nalbend, the poet of these lines, is relying on the similarities between *s* and *z*—the codas of the first syllables of the rhymed sequences. Both consonants use the alveolar place of articulation and the same manner of articulation, fricative. The only difference is that *s* is unvoiced and *z* is voiced.

(166) *li min ħelîan leş u hestî* (AN1:45-47)  
*me gut mare ezê gezî*  
*bi remza bazinêt destî*

The other instances of consonant feature rhyme occur in Nalbend's *Kiçkek Me Divêt*, 'We Want A Girl.' After the initial quatrain, which has a rhyme scheme of AAXA, the poem follows a rhyme scheme of XAXA, rhyming every even numbered line. The disyllabic end rhymes follow the likes of *mişti*, *tişti* and *zişti*, shown in (167). However, lines 16, 18, 22 and 28, shown in (168), depend on consonant feature rhyme in order to rhyme with the rest of the rhymed lines. In these instances, the sound *j*, the coda of the

<sup>69</sup> See §4.2.2.

penultimate syllable, is considered similar to  $\zeta$  in that both sounds are post-alveolar and fricative. The only difference, again, is the voicing. The consonant  $\zeta$  is unvoiced, while the consonant  $j$  is voiced. One word in (168), *nekujtî*, also differs in that the vowel  $u$  in the penultimate syllable is unlike the vowel  $i$  in the rest of the rhymed words. Potentially this can be considered vowel feature rhyme, which is discussed in §5.3.3.1.5.2. Both vowels are near-close. However,  $u$  is a rounded, back vowel, while  $i$  is an unrounded, front vowel.

(167) bêjît me kuro hilo vî tişt u *miştî* (AN5:6, 8, 10)  
 me'na ku were bi xu vî *tiştî*  
 wey, pa tu neyê kirêt u *ziştî*

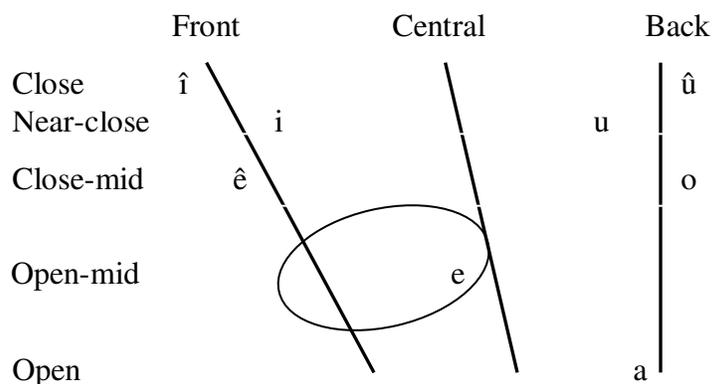
(168) me ji vî terefî dilê *birijî* (AN5:16, 18, 22, 28)  
 wey sed êceb tu hêj *nekujî*  
 befira du şevî liser *nihijî*  
 'Îşqa te ezim jiber *buhijî*

### 5.3.3.1.5.2 Vowel feature rhyme

Vowel feature rhymes may not depend on only one feature difference but on how close the vowels are to each other, which may entail more than one feature difference. For the discussion that follows, I will refer to vowel features as shown in the Northern Kurdish vowel chart in Figure 2. This vowel chart is similar to the IPA vowel chart but contains the letters from the Northern Kurdish Latin script orthography. For ease of reference, I have included the IPA vowel chart as Figure 3.

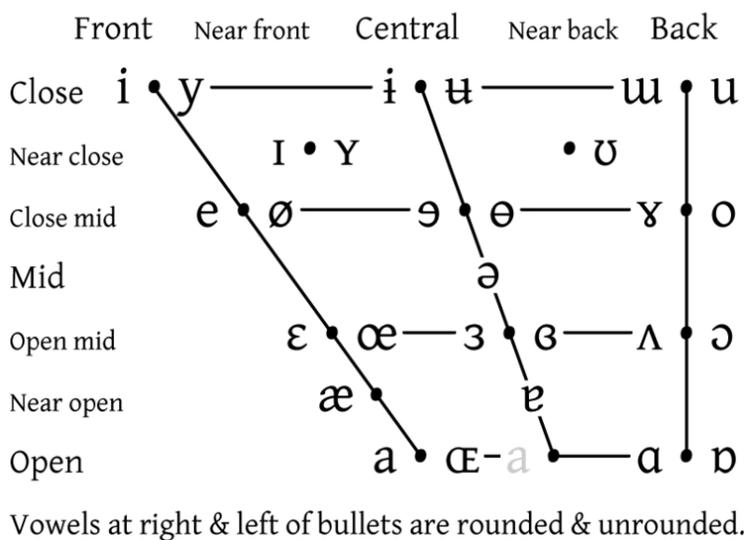
Vowels that are on the immediate left side of a line are unrounded, while those on the immediate right are rounded. The letter  $i$  is unrounded and the letter  $u$  is rounded. Also notice the oval showing the variability of the letter  $e$ . As discussed in Chapter 4, the sound for  $e$  varies from word to word, and, so it seems, from dialect to dialect. Opinions vary insofar as what is believed to be the medial or most common sound for the letter. The oval does not signify that the sounds for  $e$  are sometimes rounded. The sounds are always unrounded, or in the instance of the sound  $/\text{ə}/$ , it is neither unrounded or rounded. In Figure 2, I have chosen to place the letter  $e$  in the position corresponding to the sound  $/\text{ɜ}/$ , a medial position to the sounds of  $/\text{ə}/$ ,  $/\text{ɛ}/$  and  $/\text{æ}/$ , which are the three symbols

analysts have used to describe the sound of the letter *e*. The symbol /ɜ/ is also the sound which I personally believe to be the most commonly spoken sound for words containing the letter *e*, as spoken in the Badinan area of Northern Iraq.



**Figure 2. Northern Kurdish vowel chart.**

## VOWELS



**Figure 3. IPA vowel chart.**

In Cegerxwîn's poem *Dînê Me Tête Zanîn*, 'Our Religion Is Becoming Known,' every even line number ends with either *in* or *în*. Example (169) shows two of these lines from the poem. The difference between vowels *i* and *î* is minimal. The letter *î* is a close,

front vowel. The letter *i* is a near-close, near-front vowel. Both vowels are unrounded. Because of the proximity of both vowels, this rhyme may be considered a feature rhyme.

- (169) bê zar u xet u xwendin, li nav xelkê dewarin. (CX3:6, 8)  
her dem dikin mitala, daxwaz ji wan re havîn.

There were four other vowel feature rhymes that were fairly close, all from different poems. In example (170), there is a rhyme between *û* and *u* in the words *nebû*, *vebû* and *sebu*. Both vowels are rounded. The letter *û* is a back, close vowel, while *u* is a near-back, near-close vowel. These vowels are basically the same distance from one another as the vowels in first example, *i* and *î*. In example (171), *ê* and *î* are a feature rhyme in the rhyme of *Kurdistanê ket* and *bistanî ket*. In this case *î*, at the end of *bistanî*, is a little more distant from *ê* at the end of *Kurdistanê*. However, both vowels have the features of being unrounded and front. The only difference is that *ê* is a close-mid vowel, while *î* is a close vowel. The feature rhyme also works due to it being in a four-syllable sequence.

- (170) ew bideştê xu bal qatil *nebû* (AN4:9-11)  
dergihê fitna ‘iraqê buyî *vebû*  
bu fesada ‘alemê nê ew *sebu*

- (171) agir bi *Kurdistanê ket* lewra haware dil; (CX1:1, 2)  
sed baḫ u sed *bistanî ket* manendî bilbil jare dil

Slightly more distant from one another are the rhymes of *e* and *i*. The two instances where these feature rhymes were found are below in examples (172), where the rhymed words are *serbu* and *girbu*, and (173), where the rhymed words are *alvina*, ‘*ena* and *mewtena*. Both vowels are unrounded. The letter *e* is a front-to-central vowel and the letter *i* is a near-front vowel. Where they differ more is in closeness. The letter *i* is near-close but *e* is between open-mid and near-open.

- (172) çî çaxek bu wî dest pê kir ku Kurdî hîngê bê *serbu* (BS7:10, 11)  
kewek bu lê neçu ravê ji kewgiran nekew *girbu*

- (173) heqe ku ew dar u *alvina* ya bizehmeye u renc u ‘*ena* (AN3:13, 14)  
teşbîhî kepirêt *mewtena* jê barkirin şula meye

Regarding example (173), one may consider that the rhyme is only one syllable, *na*. However, I have two reasons for considering this to be a feature rhyme. First, there

are three lines and two of the three rhymes contain *ena*. Second, if one looks at all of the end rhymes in the poem *Ey Malikê Vê ‘Alemê*, ‘O Lord Of This World,’ one can see that Nalbend was intentionally writing two syllable rhymes.

With this in mind, consider another rhyme from the same poem. Below in (174) is the rhyme of *dileşî*, *xuşî* and *keşî*. On the vowel chart the vowels *e* and *u* are quite distant from one another. Based on the distance and the dissimilarity of the two vowels, it seems best to consider the rhyme of *xuşî* with *dileşî* and *keşî* to be imperfect, not feature rhyme.

(174) hindî we riñ maye *dileşî* nabin dewam xêr u *xuşî* (AN3:29, 30)  
bu çî tu hêyî zehmet *keşî* ‘umrê me her bê faîdeye

Four other rhymes are up for debate as to whether or not they should be considered feature rhymes. In all four instances *i* is to be compared with *u*. The distance between the two vowels is great. The only similarity is that both vowels have the feature of being near-close.<sup>70</sup> The letter *i* is near-front and the letter *u* is near-back. The letter *i* is unrounded while the letter *u* is rounded. In the examples below, the words under consideration are in italics.

(175) dustê min .. boçî *sile* (BS3:9, 10, 12)  
dilê min ji ber wî *kule*  
agirê vîne her *hile*

(176) kincê li sofî *çadire* (CX2: 20,24)  
wî daye ser rêça *gure*

(177) xonavê teff kirin *sunbul* (AN1: 25-27)  
siharê xîv bi bûn sor *gul*  
yamin sot sing u cerg u *dil*

(178) ew ji zik mak da pîlnik bu, şahidî hêbsa *mîsil* (BS1:39, 40)  
hêştâ zarû bû demê ku dîtî ye kivan u *kul*

As mentioned, feature rhyme typically requires two sounds having two out of three features the same. Hence, we probably should consider the rhymes of *u* and *i* as being

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<sup>70</sup> The term ‘near-close’ is found in Diagram 2 and corresponds to use of the term in the IPA vowel chart in Diagram 3.

imperfect feature rhymes, since, in addition to distance, they differ in both backness and rounding.

### 5.3.3.1.6 End rhyme without meter

Two poems that were not written in verse form contained end rhymes. One of these, *Fireka Baî*, ‘A Sip of Wind,’ by Mu’eyed Teyb, was written in 1976. During this time of history, speakers of Northern Kurdish in Iraq were just beginning to discover prose poetry. Perhaps Teyb’s poem reflects this period, a time for discovering new ways while cherishing aspects of tradition. A portion of his poem showing rhymed endings is reproduced below in (179). The rhymed endings are in italics. I have also added letters to designate the rhyme scheme.

(179) Kurdistanê!		(MT3:1-19)
fireka <i>baî</i> ..	A	
ji çâyekê <i>befir lê maî</i> ..	A'	
evroke.. <i>çavbeleka min</i> ..		
ya <i>girêdaî</i>	A'	
li bin kwînekê reş u <i>drîaî</i> ..	A''	
li nav deşteka bê bab u <i>daî</i> ..	A	
roja <i>arîaî</i> ..	A''	
xîzê <i>şarîaî</i> ..	A''	
zerîa min ya		
dî xuhê ra <i>maî</i> ..	A	
ezê ditirsim..		
ji dabera dom <i>befir u xwîn</i>	B	
ji enîa kever..		
ji nejna <i>şirîn</i>	B'	
ji dilê <i>evîn</i> ..	B	
lê bûî <i>birîn</i> ..	B'	
ji cergê <i>zozan</i> ..	C	
lê bûî <i>kovan</i> ..	C	

Clearly, the rhymes are somewhat dispersed and there is no consistent number of syllables per line, though there are many lines having five syllables. Every line does not necessarily rhyme and some rhymes are separated from one another by an intervening line with no rhyme. Rhyme A is a single syllable rhyme that rhymes with the

multisyllable A' and A'' rhymes. The single syllable B rhymes rhyme with the multisyllable B' lines.

In his poem *Gutgutik*, ‘Rumors,’ Şaban Silêman, a younger author whose earliest poems are dated in the year 2000, also used a varied rhyme scheme without holding to any particular verse form or syllable count. Below is a portion from the poem. Again, for ease of viewing, I have italicized the rhymed syllables and provided letters designating the rhymes. Note that rhymes C and F exhibit multisyllabic rhyming sequence, as discussed in §5.3.3.1.3.

(180)	hindek yê ji <i>keyfa pê firî</i>	A	(SS1:6-21)
	hindek yê ji <i>qehra pê mirî</i>	A	
	çîçik dara <i>siharîya</i>	B	
	kurtîya duhî bu êk û dû <i>vedguhêzin</i>	C	
	gulêt baxça <i>êvarîya</i>	B	
	rwîdanêt nwî yêt rojane bu êk <i>dibêjin</i>	C	
	lê tinê gutgutkeke û <i>pistpisteke</i>	D	
	nizanim direwe yan <i>rastîyeke</i>	D	
	hind <i>dibêjin</i> .....	C	
	û dîtina êkê ji <i>evîna min</i>	E	
	tu bûye agir û <i>gurî</i>	F	
	roja paştir tu bibûye rejî û <i>xwelî</i>	F	
	hind <i>dibêjin</i>	C	
	jimêjwere mêrga şaşa <i>têlefona min</i>	E	
	ji mesicêt te <i>buharbu</i>	G	
	maç û dila mil bi mil <i>rêz û qentarbu</i>	G	

### 5.3.3.2 *End rhyme in final lines of a prose poem*

In a prose poem (also called “free verse”) by Sindî the final rhymes, shown in example (181), seem to be intentional. The poem is a reflection about two very different times, the present, not being at all what the poet would have desired for his people, and the past, a time when he was filled with hope. The rhymed ending may serve to aesthetically reinforce the contrast between the times and point the reader/hearer to the past when the hope of the people was greater—a time when rhyme and line length, and perhaps meter, in poetry were more customary.

(181) eman *eman*  
 derdu *yeman*  
 sutim *eman*  
 derdê *giran*

(BS6:42-45)

### 5.3.3.3 Deviation from end rhyme

In some situations a poet settles for a deviation from his or her intended rhyme scheme. The examples shown in Table 22 all show some sort of deviation. In the first example, *ji me* does not rhyme even one of its syllables with the two-syllable rhymes of *jenî* and *renî*. It does, however, rhyme the last syllable, *me*, with the last syllable of even number lines in the poem (not shown), which is not customary for this verse form. In the second example, the intended rhyme is two syllables; however, it seems Sindî settled on rhyming only the final syllable in *darî* with *kê yî* and *befrê yî*. In the last example, Sindî again settled for rhyming only the last syllable, in this instance *ka* in *biçwîka*, with *neyara*, *hara* and *xwîndara*.

**Table 22. Deviations.**

Poem	Line numbers	Rhyme	Deviant
AN3	17, 18	<i>jenî, renî</i>	<i>ji me</i>
BS2	19-22	<i>kê yî, befrê yî</i>	<i>darî</i>
BS2	28, 42, 56, 71	<i>neyara, hara,</i> <i>xwîndara</i>	<i>biçwîka</i>

### 5.3.3.4 Head rhyme, internal rhyme and interlaced rhyme

Occasionally a poet of Neo-classical poetry is inspired to rhyme at the beginning of two or more lines. Such occasions are termed **head rhyme**, which is simply defined as a rhyme that occurs “at the beginnings of lines” (Turco 2000:49). Head rhyme, which is also called front rhyme or initial rhyme, is not to be confused with alliteration, which is “the repetition of initial stressed consonant sounds” (Turco 2000:54).

In lines 30 and 31 of his poem *Duhî Spêdê Liser Banî*, ‘Yesterday Morning On The Rooftop,’ shown in example (182), Nalbend rhymed at the third syllable from the beginning of the lines with *ewê dil* and *miqabil*. Also within these lines is the rhyme of

*ceger ker* with *liber anber*. The following two lines both begin with *şil u mil*, which in two places rhyme with *dil* and *miqabil* in the previous lines. Two other features in these lines are the use of the word *bû* and the phonetic similarity *heyî* in the word *muheyîya* with the word *hemî*. In lines 34 and 35, a different head rhyme occurs with the first two syllables, *kilê* and *dilê*.

- (182) *ewê dil bir ceger ker kir* (AN1:30-35)  
*miqabil me xûn liber anber kir*  
*şil u mil ew muheyîya bû*  
*şil u mil bû hemî gava*  
*kilê rreş her tijî cava*  
*dilê min teyre ket dava*

Some lines in Sindî's *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, 'Memories of Immortal Barzanî,' contain rhymes starting from the beginning and, in most cases, proceeding to the midpoint of the line. Such rhyme that occurs within the line is known as **internal rhyme** (Adams 1997:201) The first example, in (183), is from the first line of the poem. The sequence *xanê xanan canê canan* works to rhyme two noun phrases, ending at the midpoint in the line. The exclamation commands the attention of the reader or hearer, setting the stage for the eulogy that follows. In line 4, shown in (184), the words *bazê bazan şahê Kurdan* rhyme with those in (183). Through these words Sindî reinforces his wish, that Barzanî be remembered for the role he played, and continues to play by way of his example, for the Kurdish people. In example (185), the fourth line from the end of the poem, the rhyme *şahê bazan mîrê qadan wî nebadan* works as a lasting echo, to fix in the minds of the reader/hearer descriptive titles that the poet attributes to Barzanî, as well as the commitment he gave to his people. In this example, the rhyme extends to the 12<sup>th</sup> syllable and the clauses revive the rhymes from lines 1 and 4. Lastly, in line 44, the first four syllables, *lew ji hîngê*, rhyme perfectly with syllables 5 through 8, *ew li sîngê*, serving as a kind of circle back to link with the beginning of the poem.

- (183) *xanê xanan canê canan tu bike lutf u were* (BS1:1)  
 'The khan of khans, soul of souls—be beneficent and come back.'
- (184) *bazê bazan şahê Kurdan ruhinîya çavê meyî* (BS1:4)  
 'The hawk of hawks, king of Kurds—you are the lights of our eyes'

(185) *şahê bazan mîrê qadan wî nebadan hizir u bîr* (BS1:43, 44)  
 ‘The king of falcons, the leader of the battlefields—he did not deviate from (his) ideas and thoughts.’

*lew ji hîngê ew li sîngê cane bexşên genc u pîr*  
 ‘That’s why since that time he (is) in the heart (chest) of the fresh offerings of the adolescent and the old.’

*Dilê Cegerxwîn*, ‘Cegerxwîn’s Heart,’ also contains a couple of instances of internal rhyme. Cegerxwîn added the rhyme of *rişteme* with the words *xateme* and *deyleme*, in line 9, and *hemdeme*, in line 10. These last three words make up the first three end line rhymes of a quatrain.<sup>71</sup> *Rişteme* is an additional internal rhyme.

(186) *geh rişteme, geh xateme, geh padîşahê deyleme;* (CX1:9, 10)  
*bê yar u dost u hemdeme, lew mest u gerdenxware dil*

In another line of the same poem, the beginning words, *geh are dil*, rhyme with the words that begin immediately after the midway point, *geh tare dil*. These may more properly be considered as interlaced rhyme, discussed below. Also notice the rhyme of *are* with *ave*, in the first hemistich, and *tare* with *tave*, in the second hemistich.

(187) *geh are dil, geh ave dil, geh tare dil geh tave dil* (CX1:15)

Considering the additional positions in which rhyme is found in the verse poetry in this corpus, one can expect to find similar rhymes, and perhaps others, if one were to conduct a more extensive survey of Northern Kurdish poetry.

According to Turco, **interlaced rhyme** is when there is a rhyme between the center of one line and the center of the previous or following line (Turco 2000:53). Sindî’s *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’ also contains many instances of this type of rhyme. In the first example, Sindî rhymed the words *hîvîan*, *mirîdan* and *Kurdan*.

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<sup>71</sup> *Dilê Cegerxwîn* is written as couplets but is best considered a poem written in the *çuarkî*, or quatrain, form, because of its rhyme scheme.

- (188) em li ber şewqa *hîvîan* çav melê ye bêye ve (BS1:3-5)  
 tu bike rehimê ji *mirîdan* kengî dê tu hêye ve  
 bazê bazan şahê *Kurdan* ruhîniya çavê meyî

The following are other examples from the same poem. The interlaced rhymes are in italics.

- (189) raza ‘şqê ji qîdem *ra* derde ye u kuvane dil (BS1:7, 8)  
 kî dê sax kit ji ezel *ra* dil geşe u perwane dil
- (190) şînyî u tazî ji *gelî bûn* çep u rast u jor u jêr (BS1:15-18)  
 şev u roj xelkî *girî bûn* kal u genc u jin u mêr  
 mililetê Kurd *pir wefaye* sufîên destên tene  
 ruh ji êşan *pir semaye* ‘aşîq u mestên tene
- (191) wêne ya suz u di lêran xuîaye ser ruîmetê (BS1:37, 38)  
 wer bixuînin ey hevalan ayeta xuş hîmetê

While these rhymes are reminiscent of what you’d expect to see in quatrain form, they are not the dominant feature throughout in the poem, which is written in couplets. Of the 46 lines in the poem, a case could be made for 20 lines as having at least one syllable of interlaced rhyme.

In one couplet from the poem, lines 19 and 20, Sindî uses three words ending in *l*—*dil*, *gul* and *şemal*. This seems quite intentional because in the second line of the couplet, the words in the same positions, *adar*, *azar* and *bajar*, all rhyme. The non-rhyming words in line 19 should be considered as an instance of **consonance**, which is the repetition of the same or similar sounding consonants with different vowels (Adams 1997:200). (Note, though, that *dil* does rhyme with *hil* at the end of the line.) The consonance works, perhaps, to prepare the reader for the perfect rhymes that follow in line 20.

- (192) erê ey *dil* kanê ew *gul* ka *şemala* geş u hil (BS1:19, 20)  
 buçî (*adar*)<sup>72</sup> buye *azar* buçî *bajar* bu kavil

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<sup>72</sup> The parentheses here appear in the original text.

#### 5.4 *On the syntactic level*

In the following sections, I discuss instances of syntactic variation in the corpus. In some instances, an aspect of normal language has not been adhered to, such as normal constituent order. Other instances exhibit ellipsis or some other syntactic tool the poet has used for reason of syllable count, rhyme or some other aesthetic effect.

##### 5.4.1.1 *Constituent order*

The study of constituent orders that deviate from normal constituent order helps one understand what is permissible in a language. Some constituent order shifts may be pragmatically motivated. However, some, especially in poetry, and literature in general, have other motivations. To understand these motivations, we must become familiar with some new terms.

**Foregrounding** is a term that was applied to Mukarovsky's original term, *aktualisace*, when it was translated into English in 1932. It is used to describe a number of stylistic effects in literature at all levels: phonetic (e.g., alliteration, rhyme), grammatical (e.g., inversion, ellipsis) and semantic (e.g., metaphor, irony). Foregrounding occurs when we use language that is other than normal. It causes what is termed as **deautomatization**, the disruption of normal cognitive processes, whereas with normal language, **automatization** occurs, where there is no disruption of normal cognitive processes. The more something is foregrounded, the more conscious it becomes (Miall and Kuiken 1994:390).

Regarding this act of foregrounding, Viktor Shklovsky, the Russian Formalist critic, had the following to say regarding art in general,

The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. (1965:12)

Hence, “the immediate effect of foregrounding is to make strange (*ostranenie*), to achieve **defamiliarization**” (Miall and Kuiken 1994:391).

In his book, *Word Order Variation in Hebrew Poetry: Differentiating Pragmatics and Poetics* (2006), Nicholas Lunn addresses the issue of word-order variations in B-lines of **parallelisms**, a poetic device common in ancient Hebrew poetry. In his chapter on defamiliarized word order in parallel lines, he says:

If pragmatics fails to account for the variation exhibited by parallel lines, then what is the motivating factor that produces such a feature? We would maintain that the characteristics of non-canonical B-lines in parallelisms point us in the direction of a purely poetic manner of word-order variation (Lunn 2006:105).

In the corpus, constituent order deviation was predominately found in poems of the Neo-classical style. In some cases, constituent order deviation may have helped poets reach desired end rhymes, syllable counts and/or meters. A poet may find that while change in constituent order may produce a difference in pragmatic meaning, such as indicating that a certain constituent is focal, such deviation may remain within the bounds of what the poet wants to communicate and may not necessarily be the reason for the change in constituent order. Such may be the case in examples where end rhyme is reached by means of syntactic deviation. However, in some situations, a change from normal word order may simply express a poet’s desire to defamiliarize a word, phrase, or an entire line of poetry, making it more salient, more conscious in the mind of the reader. While prosaic word order abounded in free verse poetry, there were still some noteworthy instances of constituent order deviation.

In the discussion that follows, I provide evidence for various constituent order deviations found in the corpus. The subject of differentiating between pragmatic motivations, such as topic and focus, and poetic effects, such as defamiliarization, is an area for further study.

### 5.4.1.1.1 Verb-Subject

In §4.4.1.2, I showed that normal constituent order for intransitive clauses is Subject-Verb (SV). The corpus contains many instances of deviation from this norm. For example, in Sindî's *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, 'Memories of Immortal Barzanî,' the verb appears before the subject in each of the following two lines. In example (193), the complex verb *şîn bibin*<sup>73</sup> means 'grow' and appears before the subject *nêrgiz*, 'narcissus,' a flower indigenous to the Kurdish region. In (194), the subject, '*endelîb*, an Arabic word for a specific type of bird, appears after the verb *bixuînin*, 'may sing.'

- (193) *şîn\_bî-b-in*                      *nêrgiz*    *ji*    *nuve*    *ber*    *der-ê*    (BS1:11, 12)  
 grow\_IRR-grow-IMP.PL    narcissus    from    now.on    before    place-EZ.M  
*tekî-a*                      *ber-ê*  
 special.music-EZ.F    old-OBL.F  
 'May narcissuses grow new again before the door of the old places of worship.'

- (194) *cardin bi-xuîn-in*                      '*endelîb*<sup>74</sup>    *ew*    *ji*            '*şq-a*    *daber-ê*  
 again IRR-sing-IMP.PL    birds            3D    from    love-EZ.F    sweetheart-OBL.F  
 'Again may birds sing—that song from the love of the lover.'

Sindî also used VS order in line 24 of *Dergehê Jîn u Hîvî Ya*, 'The Door of Life and Hopes.' Here the subject consists of the words *gulên çîayan*, 'the flowers of the mountains.' These come after the passive verb *kuzrîn*, 'has been burned.'

- (195) *kuzrî-n*                      *gul-ên*            *çîa-yan*                      *nêrgiz-ên*            *şeng*    (BS4:24)  
 burn.PST.PASS-3PL    flower-EZ.PL    mountain-OBL.PL    narcissus-EZ.PL    young  
*u*    *şepal*  
 and    bright  
 'The flowers of the mountains have been burned, the young and bright narcissuses.'

In line 24 of *Mîrê Peyvan*, 'The Prince of Words,' Sindî placed the subject *dil*, 'heart,' after the verb *disujit*, 'is burning.'

- (196) *gelo lewra*    *dî-su-jit*                      *dil*    *ku*            *cih*    *kew*    (BS7:24)  
 people that's.why IPFV-burn.PRS-3SG    heart    because    place    partridge

<sup>73</sup> The word *şîn*, by itself, has two meanings: (1) mourning, and (2) blue or green. The verb *şîn bibin* seems to be a metaphorical use of *şîn* that became lexicalized as 'grow' or more literally 'to become green.'

<sup>74</sup> An Arabic word for a specific type of bird.

*evro vala=ye*

today vacant=COP.PRS.3SG

‘People, that’s why the heart is burning, because the place of the partridge today is vacant.’

Sindî put the subject *ceger*, ‘liver,’ after the verb *sutî ye*, ‘has burned,’ in line 14 of *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî.’ Normal constituent order for this phrase would have been *ceger li me sutî ye*. Note that in this line, the prepositional phrase, *li me*, ‘in me,’ is also in an uncommon location, before the subject it modifies. In this instance, *ceger* was likely so positioned to rhyme with *qeder* in line 13, also shown.

(197) *lê\_belê dest-ê Xudan-î ew=e neqîqaş-ê* (BS1:13, 14)  
 yes hand-EZ.M Lord-OBL.M 3D=COP.PRS.3SG painter-EZ.M

*qeder*

fate

‘Yes it’s in God’s hand; he’s the painter of fate.’

*wî wesa ferman-ek da-yî sut-î-Ø-ye li*  
 3OM like.that order-INDF give.PST-3SG burn:PST-PRF-be:PST-3SG in

*me ceger*

1OP liver

‘He gave an order like that; the liver in us has burned.’

Sindî also inverted part of a complex verb, *guh da*, ‘listen,’ putting the subject, *min*, ‘I,’ after the nonverbal part of the verb, *guh* (literally ‘ear’), but before the verbal portion of the idiom, *da*, which literally means ‘give.’

(198) *guh min da-Ø awaz u lavç-an deng-ê saz-a* (BS5:4)  
 ear 1O give.PST-3SG music and song-OBL-PL sound-EZ.M guitar-EZ.F

*min ne-hat-Ø*

1O NEG-come.PST-3SG

‘I listened to melodies and songs—the sound of my guitar did not come.’

Nalbend also used VS word order in *Duhî Spêdê Liser Banî*, ‘Yesterday Morning On The Rooftop,’ probably to rhyme *hestî*, part of the compound subject *leş u hestî*, ‘flesh and bone,’ with *geztî*, ‘had bitten,’ and *destî*, ‘hand,’ in lines 46 and 47, shown below in (199). With normal constituent order, a speaker would have said *leş u hestîyê min hêlîan*. Notice here that in normal speech the personal pronoun *min*, ‘me,’ is attached

to the subject via the *ezafe* *yê* on *hestî*. However, Nalbend put *min* in a prepositional phrase, *li min*, ‘in me,’ and the line remains understandable to the reader. I say more on this aspect of using a prepositional phrase in lieu of a personal pronoun attached via the *ezafe* particle in §5.4.1.1.12.

(199) *li min hêlîa-n leş u hestî* (AN1:45-47)

in 1O melt.PST-3PL flesh and bone  
‘My flesh and bone melted.’

*me gut mar=e ez-ê gezî*  
1OP say.PST-3SG snake=COP.PRS.3SG 1D-EZ.M bite.PST.PTCP  
‘We thought it’s a snake that has bitten me.’

*bi remz-a bazin-êt dest-î*  
by signal-EZ.F bracelet-EZ.PL hand-OBL.M  
‘By means of the signal of the hand bracelets.’

Nalbend also utilizes VS order in a similar way in his poem *Xoşê Wekî Cenetê*, ‘It’s Wonderful Like Heaven.’ In line 54, he put the compound subject *cerg u dil*, ‘liver and heart,’ at the end of the line in order to rhyme *dil* with the words *mil*, ‘shoulder,’ and *sil*, ‘angry,’ in lines 53 and 55, shown here in (200).

(200) *zend u til u bask u mil* (AN2:53-55)

forearm and finger and arm and shoulder  
‘Forearm and finger and arm and shoulder’

*sutî li min cerg u dil*  
burn.PST.PTCP in 1O liver and heart

‘The liver and heart in me are burnt.’

Alternative translation: ‘My liver and heart are burnt.’

*av rîl wan şêr-e sil*  
water rîl 3OP lions angry  
‘Water *rîl*<sup>75</sup> them the lion is angry.’

In line 64 of the same poem, the subject, *pilingê nehîn*, ‘courageous tiger,’ comes after the verb, *hatî*, ‘has come.’ *Nehîn*, ‘courageous,’ rhymes with the rest of the final lines in the each quatrain (not shown). All end in *-în*.

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<sup>75</sup> Meaning unknown.

- (201) *hatî piling-ê nehîn* (AN2:64)  
 come.PST.PTCP tiger-EZ.M courageous  
 ‘It has come, the courageous tiger.’

VS word order was used several times in a free verse poem, *Dahola Êşê*, ‘Drum of Pain,’ by Mesud Xalaf. In (202), the head noun *xweziyên*, ‘desires,’ and the rest of the noun phrase that follows, is positioned after the verb *difirîn*, ‘were flying.’ In (203), the subject *aşûpên bextewariyê*, ‘visions of happiness,’ comes after the verb *bijale bûn*, ‘were scattered.’ In the last example, (204), the passive verb *hatine kuştin*, ‘became killed,’ is before the subject noun phrase beginning with *pirpirîkên*, ‘butterflies,’ the head noun. Minimally, this VS order shows that at least one modern poet, writing in prose, has chosen to deviate from normal constituent order.

- (202) *bê sînor di-firî-n xweziy-ên bê nav û nîşan* (MX:8)  
 Without limit IPFV.fly.PST-3PL desire-EZ.PL without name and address  
 ‘Desires without name and address were flying without limit.’

- (203) *bijale bû-n aşûp-ên bextewar-yê* (MX:32)  
 scatter-PST.PTCP COP.PST-3PL visions-EZ.PL happiness-OBL.F  
 ‘The visions of the happiness were scattered.’

- (204) *hat-in=e kuşt-in pirpirîk-ên deng-ê* (MX:33)  
 become.PST-3PL=DIR kill.PST.PTCP-3PL butterfly-EZ.PL sound-EZ.M  
*agir-ê birîndar*  
 fire-EZ.M wound.PST.PTCP  
 ‘The butterflies of the sound of wounded fire were killed.’

#### 5.4.1.1.2 Adjective Phrase/Noun Phrase-Copula-Subject

The corpus contained both Attributive (adjective phrase as predicate) and Equative (noun phrase as predicate) clauses wherein the subject was put after the copula. Typically the order for copular sentences is Subject – Predicate Adjective Phrase or Noun Phrase – Copula. In one poem in particular, Cegerxwîn’s *Dilê Cegerxwîn*, ‘Cegerxwîn’s Heart,’ one defining feature of the poem is that subjects come at the end of most phrases. For example, in line 4, shown in (205), the attribute *xwînxwar*, ‘terrible,’ with the 3SG copula, *e*, comes before the subject *dil*, ‘heart.’ In fact, the word *dil* and its referent, *ew*, 3D, are subjects at the end of many phrases throughout the poem.

- (205) *aman welat, aman welat, bawer bi-k-in xwînxwar=e* (CX1:4)  
 alas region alas region belief IRR-do.IMP.PL terrible=COP.PRS.3SG

*dil*

heart

‘Alas my home, alas my home—Believe me, (my) heart is terrible.’

Consider also lines 6 and 7 from the same poem, shown in example (206). Line 6 ends with the subject *dil*. The predicate, *naxoş u hem bêzare*, ‘is unwell and always despondent,’ precedes it. In line 7 the pronoun *ew*, 3D, in two places, is a referent of *dil* and in each instance comes after the predicates with attached copulas.

- (206) *her gav u her êvar-ê min, naxoş u hem* (CX1:6)  
 every morning and every evening-EZ.M IO, unwell and always

*bêzar=e*

*dil*

despondent=COP.PRS.3SG heart

‘Every morning and every evening of mine, the heart is unwell and always despondent.’

- bêzar u pir naxoş=e ew, kinc-ên sîyeh* – (CX1:7)  
 despondent and quite unwell=COP.PRS.3SG 3D, garment-EZ.PL mourning –

*gûn<sup>76</sup> – poş=e ew*  
 manner – sorrowful=COP.PRS.3SG it

‘It’s despondent and quite unwell, dressed in garments of mourning; it’s sorrowful.’

Nalbend also took liberty to put the subject after an Adjective Phrase and copula. The normal word order for line 9 of *Xoşe Wekî Cenetê*, ‘It’s Wonderful Like Heaven,’ shown in (207), would have been *bihara lê xoş tazeye*, literally ‘spring in it nice beautiful is.’ However, Nalbend, changed the word order so as to utilize the *ar* ending on the word *bihar*, the subject, at the end of the line, rhyming it with *darubar*, ‘forest,’ and *hizar*, ‘thousand’ in lines 10 and 11, also shown.

- (207) *taze=ye lê xoş bihar* (AN2:9-11)  
 beautiful=COP.PRS.3SG in.it nice spring  
 ‘A nice spring in it is beautiful.’

<sup>76</sup> I am unsure how *kincên sîyeh* and *gûn* fit into the phrases. The translation for *gûn* is questionable. The dashes (–) are part of the original text.

*baḫ u rez u darubar*  
 garden and orchard and forest  
 ‘garden and orchard and forest’

*cins-ê kulîlk-a hizar*  
 specie-EZ.M flower-OBL.PL thousand  
 ‘a thousand species of flowers’

In another poem by Nalbend, *Duhî Spêdê Liser Banî*, ‘Yesterday Morning On The Rooftop,’ we find a similar situation. In line 39, shown in (208), the subject *ez*, 1D, while not at the end of the phrase, comes after the attribute and copula. The normal word order for the phrase is *ez dirêj bûm li kulanê*, which still has *kulanê* at the end of the line. Hence, Nalbend must have had some reason other than rhyme for the order he chose.

(208) *dirêj\_bû-m ez li kulan-ê* (AN1:39)  
 lie.down\_COP.PST-1SG 1D in alley-OBL.F  
 ‘I layed down in the alley.’

Xalaf’s *Dahola Êşê*, ‘Drum of Pain,’ contains an equative sentence with the subject, *ew şev*, ‘that night,’ at the end of the line. It is preceded by the entire predicate, *kefenekî spî bû*, ‘was a white shroud.’ As with the VS order in the previous section, it is interesting to find this constituent order in a prose poem.

(209) *belkî kefen-ek-î<sup>77</sup> spî bû-Ø ew şev* (MX:17)  
 perhaps shroud-INDF-EZ.M white COP.PST-3SG 3D night  
 ‘Perhaps that night was a white shroud.’

In one line from a Sindî poem, I thought I had found another example of a subject being out of place. However, according to my consultant the phrase *nabit eve* is perfectly acceptable in the language, as is *eve nabit*. *Nabit* consists of a negator prefix, *na-*, and the 3SG copula *bit*. *Eve* consists of *ev*, which means ‘this,’ and the specific reference marker, *-e* (SRM). I suppose this particular phrase has become lexicalized in the language. This leaves the possibility of seeing other similar phrases used in common speech where a pronoun subject comes after an equative predicate.

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<sup>77</sup> It seems unusual to see a masculine *ezafe -î* in the Badinan area. Perhaps it is common in the spoken language of area Xalaf’s family came from.



*tu hêye ve*  
 2D exist.PRS.2SG again  
 ‘Be compassionate to (your) disciples; when will you be back?’

Line 1 of the same poem has a similar situation as (211) where an object follows the imperative, *bike*, ‘do.’ In this instance, the object is again an Arabic word, *lutif*, which, means ‘kindness’ or, as it was translated, ‘benevolence.’ According to my consultant, Kurds do not typically add Kurdish suffixes when using Arabic words.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, while it is true that the normal order for Arabic is VSO, Sindî’s confession during my interview with him, that he tries to write in pure Kurdish, precludes us from thinking that he would resort to Arabic word order.

(212) *xan-ê xan-an can-ê can-an tu bi-ke* (BS1:1)  
 Khan-EZ.M Khans-OBL.PL soul-EZ.M soul-OBL.PL 2D IRR-do.IMP.SG  
*lutif u were*  
 benevolence and come.IMP.SG  
 ‘Khan of khans, soul of souls—be beneficent and come back.’

Now, if Sindî were to have used the Northern Kurdish word for ‘kindness,’ *başî*, he would have written *tu bike başîekê*. (Normal SOV word order is *tu başîekê bike*.) The word *başîekê* includes both the indefinite article suffix, *-ek*, and the feminine oblique marker, *-ê*. Hence, *lutif* must be an object and not part of a compound verb. It is possible that Sindî resorted to this Arabic word for some nuance of meaning; however, it seems more likely that he used *lutif* (without the suffixes *-ekê*) because it offered him two syllables versus the four syllables in *başîekê*.

In line 43 of the same poem, shown in (213), a compound object, *hizir u bîr*, ‘idea and thought,’ is positioned after the verb *nebadan*, ‘not surrender.’ Having the object at the end allowed Sindî to rhyme *bîr*, ‘thought,’ with *pîr*, ‘elder,’ in line 44, also shown.

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<sup>78</sup> Some Arabic words have been used for such a long time that they have becoming part of the Kurdish lexicon. One example would be the word for ‘school.’ In the Badinan region of Northern Iraq, both of the words commonly used for ‘school,’ *mekteb* and *medrese*, come from near Arabic equivalents. According to Chyet (2003:673), the Northern Kurdish word for school is *xwendegeh*.

(213) *şah-ê baz-an mîr-ê Qad-an wî ne-bada-n* (BS1:43)  
 king-EZ.M falcon-OBL.PL leader-EZ.M field-OBL.PL 3OM NEG-surrender.PST-3PL

*hizir u bîr*

idea and thought

‘The king of falcons, the leader of the fields,<sup>79</sup> he did not deviate from (his) ideas and thoughts.’

*lew ji hîngê ew li sîngê can=e* (BS1:44)  
 that.is.why from then 3D in chest-EZ.M beautiful=COP.PRS.3SG,

*bexş-ên genc u pîr*  
 offering-EZ.PL youth and elder

‘That’s why since that time he (is) in the heart (chest) of the fresh offerings of the youth and the old.’

In *Gerîanek Di Kurdistanê Da*, ‘A Walk Through Kurdistan,’ Sindî put the object at the end of three lines, likely for rhyming purposes. In the first line of (214), the object *cwanek*, ‘a pretty lady,’ would normally come before the verb *dît*, ‘saw.’ In the first line of (215), the object, *vî canî*, would normally come before the verb, *gurîkim*, ‘sacrifice.’ Lastly, in the second line of (216), the object, *yarîa bîka*, ‘doll games,’ is positioned after the verb, *dikirin*, ‘were playing.’ The line with normal constituent order would have been *yarîa bîka pê dikirin*.<sup>80</sup> The prepositional phrase, *pê*, a contraction of the preposition *bi* and the 3SG oblique pronoun *wî*, refers back to *darek*, ‘a stick,’ in line 31. The rhymed lines are shown in each example.

(214) *min dît-Ø li wêrê cwan-ek* (BS2:3, 4)  
 I see.PST-3sg at there pretty.lady-INDF

‘I saw a pretty lady there.’

*awir di-da-Ø ji alek*  
 wink IPFV-give.PST-3SG from corner

‘She was winking from a corner.’

<sup>79</sup> The word *qad* by itself means ‘field, open space.’ Here it may refer to a battlefield, which is *qada şer*, ‘field of battle.’

<sup>80</sup> The verb ‘play’ is idiomatic and consists of *yarî*, ‘game,’ and the verb *kirin*, which means ‘do’ or ‘make.’ *Yarî* becomes part of the object when modifiers are attached to it, as is the case in this example. There are many similar idiomatic verbs in Northern Kurdish.

(215) *dê gurîk-im vî can-î* (BS2:68, 79)  
 will sacrifice.PRS-1SG this soul-OBL.M  
 ‘I will sacrifice this soul,’

*neman u yan Barzanî*<sup>81</sup>  
 to.be.destroyed and or Barzanî  
 ‘Either to die or be with Barzanî.’

(216) *dar-ek di dest biçwîk-a* (BS2:31, 32)  
 stick-INDF in hand child-OBL.PL  
 ‘A stick in children’s hands.’

*pê di-kir-in yarî-a bîk-a* (BS2:32)  
 with.3OM IPFV-play.PST-3PL game-EZ.F doll-OBL.PL  
 ‘They were playing doll games with it.’

In line 45 of *Dergehê Jîn U Hîvî Ya*, ‘The Door of Life and Hopes,’ Sindî put the object *dilê bi xwîn*, ‘heart with blood,’ at the end of line 45, rhyming *xwîn*, ‘blood,’ with *Zîn*, a fictional character, *Xanîqîn*, a city, and *evîn*, ‘love,’ in lines 43, 44 and 46.

(217) *nabîtin bu me tewaf-a ew cih-ê lê Mem u* (BS4:43)  
 not.allowed for 1OP worship-EZ.F 3D place-EZ.M in.3OM Mem and  
*Zîn*<sup>82</sup>  
*Zîn*  
 ‘We can’t go and worship the place of Mem and Zeen.’

*nabîtin evro bi-bur-în ji tuxîb-ê Xanîqîn* (BS4:44)  
 not.permitted today IRR-pass.PRS-2PL from danger-EZ.M Xanîqîn  
 ‘It’s impossible today for us to pass from the danger of Xanîqeen.’

*nabîtin bi-ç-im nik Xanî bu vek-im* (BS4:45)  
 not.allowed IRR-go.PRS-1SG near Xanî for (him) open.PRS-1SG

<sup>81</sup> According to my consultant, Sindî changed a common Bahdini idiom, *yan Kurdistan yan neman*, substituting *Barzanî* for *Kurdistan*. He also said, “Sometimes people use it as a joke and put a word in between,” a word other than *Barzanî*. In this example, Sindî not only changed the word order but also used the word *u*, which is a conjunction meaning ‘and.’ Somehow my consultant still understood from the line Sindî’s intended meaning. According to Chyet, *neman* is the infinitive form of the word that means ‘to be destroyed’ or ‘to perish.’

<sup>82</sup> *Mem* and *Zîn* are the central characters of one of the most famous pieces of Kurdish literature, *Mem U Zîn*, written by Ehmed Xanî, who is mentioned in line 45 of Sindî’s poem.

*dil-ê bi xwîn*  
heart-EZ.M with blood  
'I can't go near Xanî and open for (him) my heart with blood (sadness).'

*nabitin bi-ç-im Dêrsîm-ê bi-kelêş-im* (BS4:46)  
not.allowed IRR-go.PRS-1SG Derseem-OBL.F IRR-break.body.PRS-1SG

*dil-ê bi evîn*  
heart-EZ.M with love  
'I can't go to Derseem and break in two pieces my heart with love.'

In line 12 of the same poem, the object *cerg u sî*, 'liver and lung,' comes after the verb *piçandin*, 'frightened.' In this case, Sindî must have had some pragmatic or poetic reason for placing the object after the verb. The line could have been written with normal constituent order, still ending with the conjunction *yan*, 'or,' as the conjunction is being used on the sentence-level, to connect the sentence that follows in line 13 (not shown).

(218) *lurîn-a gurg-a li nîv şev-an piçand-in* (BS4:12)  
sound-EZ.F wolf-OBL-PL in middle night-OBL.PL frighten.PST-3PL

*cerg u sî yan*<sup>83</sup>  
liver and lung or  
'In the middle of the nights, the howling of wolves frightened the liver and lung or'

Nalbend also used SVO order in a number of lines in *Kiçkek Me Divêt*, 'We Want A Girl.' In line 5, shown in (219), the object *têşt u şîva*, 'breakfast and dinner,' is at the end of the line, after the verb *bidet*, 'gives,' and the recipient *me*, 3OP. The entire poem only rhymes on the even numbered lines; hence, Nalbend must have had some reason other than end rhyme for this constituent order.

(219) *gava ko bi-d-et me têşt u şîv-a* (AN5:5)  
when that IRR-give.PRS-3SG 1OP breakfast and dinner-OBL.PL  
'When she gives us breakfasts and dinners.'

In the first line of (220), from the same poem, the object, *mirç u maça*, 'kisses and louder kisses,' comes after the verb, *bidem*, 'give,' and the recipient, *te*, 2O. In the following line, the object, *zixt u xiştî* (see footnote concerning the translation), also comes after the

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<sup>83</sup> Seeing the conjunction *yan*, 'or,' at the end of a line in poetry is quite uncommon. However, in Deyka Dalyayê's *Ji Nazên Te Xerîbim*, a prose poem, there are many lines ending with the conjunction *u*, 'and.'

verb and recipient, *bidey me*. In this case, *xiştî* is part of the rhyme scheme of the poem, rhyming with every even numbered line.<sup>84</sup> The constituent orders of these lines, being alike, qualify it as a grammatical parallelism, discussed in §5.4.1.4.2.

(220) *te di-vêt-Ø ku bi-d-em te mirç u* (AN5:23, 24)  
 2O IPFV-want.PRS-3SG that IRR-give.PRS-1SG 2O kiss and

*maç-a*

loud.kiss-OBL.PL

‘You want me to give you kisses and smooches (louder kisses).’

*me di-vêt-Ø tu bi-de-y me zixt*  
 1OP IPFV-want.PRS-3SG 2D IRR-give.PRS-2SG 1OP nail.on.end.of.oxgoad

*u xişt-î*<sup>85</sup>

and staff-OBL.M

‘We want you to give us the nail on the end of an oxgoad (pressure/pounding heart) and the staff.’

The last line of the poem also exhibits SVO order. In (221) the object *tu*, 2D, comes after the verb *vîyayî*, ‘loved.’ Normal constituent order with the same subject, object and verb was used in line 33, shown in (222). In (221) Nalbend is either highlighting the verb or the object. It would be most beneficial to discuss the topic of highlighting, or foregrounding, with poets of the Neo-classical style, as such would provide an emic view on the matter.

(221) *min vîya-yî tu jiber...*<sup>86</sup> (AN5:36)  
 1O love.PST-2SG 2D because  
 ‘I loved you because...’

<sup>84</sup> Many even numbered lines in this poem do not end in a perfect rhyme but exhibit consonant feature rhyme, a subject discussed in §5.3.3.1.5.1

<sup>85</sup> The meanings of *zixt* and *xiştî* may be metaphorical, perhaps also erotic, as this poem is of that theme. Both words are related to working with oxen. *Zixt* is the nail on the end of an oxgoad, for prodding. The translator had translated it as ‘pressure’ or ‘pounding heart.’ *Xişt* can be a staff or a sharp metal point, but may have other meanings as well.

<sup>86</sup> The rest of this line is missing from the original text.

- (222) *ma min tu vîya-y-Ø-î bu milk u mal-î?* (AN5:33)  
 INTRG 1O 2D love:PST-PRF-be:PST-3SG for land and belongings-OBL.M  
 ‘Did I love you because of land and belongings (money)?’

#### 5.4.1.1.4 Object-Subject-Verb

In a number of instances the object preceded the subject. In line 6 of *Bila..Bila*, ‘OK..OK,’ Sindî put the object, *rundka*, ‘tears,’ before the subject, *ez*, 1D.

- (223) *rundk-a ez lê di-werîn-im* (BS3:6)  
 tear-OBL.PL 1D for.him IPFV-shed.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I am shedding tears for him.’

In line 45 of *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’ shown in (224), Sindî positioned the object, *suz u peyman*, ‘promises and pacts,’ before the subject, *em*, 1OP. In this closing statement, Sindî is bringing to the forefront the Kurdish response for all that Mustafa Barzanî has done for his people.

- (224) *suz u peyman em di-din te gel te* (BS1:45)  
 Promise and pact 1DP IPFV-give.PRS-3PL 2O with you  
*da u ala we da*<sup>87</sup>  
 with and flag your with  
 ‘We are giving you promises and pacts that we will be with you and your flag.’

In *Bêla*, ‘House,’ also by Sindî, the normal word order for line 11, shown in (225), is *me banê bêla gêra*. However, Sindî chose to put the object, *banê bêlayê*, ‘roof of the house,’ at the beginning of the sentence, before the subject *me*, 1OP. *Bêla* is a prose poem and, as mentioned, it only has rhyme in the final four lines. Hence, Sindî’s reason for using uncommon constituent order here is something other than rhyme.

- (225) *ban-ê bêla-yê me gêra-Ø u .. u gêra-Ø* (BS6:11)  
 Roof-EZ.M house-SRM 1OP roll.PST-3SG and and roll.PST-3SG  
 ‘We rolled and rolled the roof of the house.’

The consultant who provided me with the normal word order for this line did not include the Specific Reference Marker (SRM)—*yê* on *bêlayê*. A thorough treatise on

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<sup>87</sup> My consultant noted that this *da* is unnecessary but by no means awkward. Sindî used the second *da*, a postposition that is part of the circumposition for rhyming purposes.

SRMs is outside the scope of this paper. But to prove that *banê bêla* is the object of the sentence, I inquired what would be the phrase if the sentence was in the future tense. The response was, *Em banê bêlaî dê gerêîn*. Here there is a masculine oblique marker, *-î*, on *bêla*, proving that the NP *banê bêla* is the object of the sentence.

In line 8 of *Bêla*, Sindî put the object *alayek ji renkê nêrgizan*, ‘a flag of the color of narcissus,’ at the beginning of the clause, before the subject, *min*, 1O. The narcissus, *nêrgiz*, is one of the most beloved flowers in Kurdistan. The flag being of its color seems to be representative of the Kurdish homeland and/or the Kurdish people. Perhaps this is what Sindî is highlighting in this line. Whatever Sindî’s reason, the reader still understands what is being said, and we can assume that any pragmatic or poetic purposes are having their effects.

(226) *min dar ala-yek ren-î* (BS6:7, 8)

1O tree flag-INDF plant.PST-3SG  
‘I planted a flag-tree.’

*ala-yek ji renk-ê nêrgiz-an min pêve-kir-Ø*  
flag-INDF of color-EZ.M narcissus-OBL.PL 1O stick.on-do.PST-3SG  
‘I stuck (on it) a flag of the color of narcissuses.’

Nalbend used OSV order in two of his poems. In line 64 of *Duhî Spêdê Liser Banî*, ‘Yesterday Morning On The Rooftop,’ shown in (227), the normal constituent order would read *bela bû Xudê ew da bû*, with the object, *ew*, 3D, after the subject, *Xudê*, ‘God.’ However, in this instance, Nalbend put *ew* before *Xudê*.

(227) *bela bû-Ø ew Xud-ê da\_bû-Ø*<sup>88</sup> (AN1:64)

trouble COP.PST-3SG 3D God-OBL.M create.PST-3SG  
‘Trouble was, God created her.’

Nalbend also uses OSV order in his poem, *Kiçek Me Divêt*, ‘We Want A Girl.’ In (228), the object, *kiçek*, ‘a girl,’ was positioned before the subject, *me*, 1OP.

(228) *kiç-ek me di-vêt-Ø ji nû gehişt-î* (AN5:1)

girl-INDF 1OP IPFV-want.PRS-3SG from new maturity-OBL.M  
‘We want a girl that has become of age.’

<sup>88</sup> The verb *dabû* here is short for *peyda bû*.

#### 5.4.1.1.5 Object-Verb-Subject

In §5.4.1.1.1 and §5.4.1.1.2, I discussed instances of post-verbal subjects. Below is the only one instance I found in the corpus with an OVS constituent order. In line 9 of *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’ Sindî put the subject at the end of the line, after the transitive complex verb *ji berkîr*, ‘memorized.’ It seems that his motivation was to rhyme the noun *jin*, ‘woman,’ in his compound subject, *me cihêl u pîr u jin*, ‘we—young and old and women,’ with the noun *cin* at the end of the line 10, also shown in (229). It is possible that Sindî left out a conjunction between *me* and *cihêl*; however, it seems more likely that *cihêl u pîr u jin* are descriptive of *me*, as the translation below reads.

- (229) *ayet-a Kursî<sup>89</sup> ji\_berkîr-∅ me cihêl u pîr* (BS1:9, 10)  
 verse-EZ.F *Kursî* memorize.PST-3SG 1OP young and old  
*u jin*  
 and woman  
 ‘We—young, old, and women—memorized the *Kursî* verse.’
- me du’a bu-∅ şev u ruj-an ji mezar u Înis u*  
 1OP prayer COP.PST-3SG night and day-OBL.PL from grave and Înis and  
*cin*  
 evil.spirit  
 ‘We prayed (wished) night and day to grave and (prophet) Înis and evil spirit.’

#### 5.4.1.1.6 Verb–Object imperative clauses without a declared subject

In §5.4.1.1.1 I discussed instances where the verb preceded the subject. Below are some instances of transitive imperative clauses where the verb precedes the object.

Concerning line 38 of Sindî’s *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’ shown in (230), the imperative *bixwînin*, ‘read,’ would normally come at the end of the phrase, after the object. However, Sindî positioned it after the initial imperative, *wer*, which is short for *were*, ‘come.’ What may appear to be the

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<sup>89</sup> *Ayeta Kursî* is *ayet*, ‘verse,’ 255 of *Surat al-Baqarah*, ‘the Chapter of the Cow,’ in the Qur’an. People read it at night before they sleep, believing it will make the devil flee from them.

subject, *hevalan*, is actually a vocative describing the plural undeclared subject, ‘you.’ It is rightfully marked as an oblique. By putting the object noun phrase, *ayeta xuş hîmetê*, ‘verse of good effort,’ line final, he was able to rhyme *hîmetê* with the end of line 37, *ruîmetê*, ‘cheek,’ also shown.

(230) *wêne ya suz u dilêran xuîa=ye ser ruîmet-ê* (BS1:37, 38)  
 picture EZ.F promise and bravery sweat=COP.3SG on cheek-OBL.F  
 ‘The picture of promises and bravery is like sweat on the cheeks.’

*wer(e) bi-xuîn-in ey heval-an ayet-a xuş hîmet-ê*  
 come.IMP IRR-read-IMP.PL O friend-OBL.PL verse-EZ.F good effort-OBL.F  
 ‘Come, read, O friends, with us the (poetic) verse of good effort.’

I considered whether the constituent order in line 38 (above) is normal for sentences with imperatives—that is, placing them before objects. Looking at other examples in the corpus, I did find one other instance where Sindî positioned an object after an imperative. In (231), the object *dengê bilwîlan*, ‘sound of flutes,’ comes after the verb, *guh bidin*, ‘listen.’

(231) *guh bi-d-in deng-ê bilwîl-an ew çewa bu me* (BS4:37)  
 ear IRR-give-IMP.PL sound-EZ.M flutes-OBL.PL 3D how for 1OP

*di-bistir-in*  
 IPFV-vibrate.PRS-3PL

‘Listen to the sound of the flutes, how they are singing for us.’

However, I did find more examples in the corpus to the contrary. In example (232), the object ‘*ud u sentur*, ‘oud and hammer dulcimer,’ is before the imperative *bistirîne*, ‘play,’ or literally, ‘sing.’ In example (233), the object *xewinekê*, ‘a dream,’ is before the imperative *bide*, ‘give.’ The object *ruha min*, ‘my soul,’ is before the imperative *bibe*, ‘take,’ in (234). And in (235), the object *tazî ya Qazî*, ‘funeral of *Qazî*,’ is positioned in its normal place, before the imperative, *nekin*,<sup>90</sup> ‘not do.’ Hence, examples of transitive clauses with imperatives from normal conversation would help us

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<sup>90</sup> The words *ji bîr* before *nekin* is part of an idiom where a PP is part of an expression that utilizes a light verb. Together they function as the English verb ‘remember.’

determine whether verb-initial utterances are as common as those with normal constituent order.

- (232) *'ud u sentur bi-stirîn-e xuş awaz-a min* (BS5:13)  
 oud and hammer.dulcimer IRR-play-IMP.SG nice melody-EZ.F 1O  
*ne-hat-Ø*  
 NEG-come.PST-3SG  
 'Play your oud and hammer dulcimer—my nice music did not come.'
- (233) *xewin-ek-ê bi-d-e min ez pê bi-jî-m* (MT2: quote<sup>91</sup>)  
 dream-INDF-OBL.F IRR-give-IMP.SG 1O 1D by.it IRR-live.PRS-1SG  
 'Give me a dream to live with.'
- (234) *ruh-a min digel xu bi-b-e* (DD:24)  
 soul-EZ.F 1O with REFL IRR-take-IMP.SG  
 'Take my soul with you'
- (235) *tazî ya Qazî ji\_bîr ne-k-in bo bi-k-in* (BS4:23)  
 funeral EZ.F Qazî remember NEG-do-IMP.PL for (him) IRR-do-IMP.PL  
*şînî her sal*  
 mourning every year  
 'Don't forget the funeral of Qazî; mourn for him every year.'

#### 5.4.1.1.7 Position of non-verbal elements in complex verbs

As discussed in Chapter 3, many complex verbs are composed of a non-verbal element followed by a light verb. Sindî, Nalbend and Cegerxwîn all took the liberty of positioning the non-verbal element after the light verb. In example (236), the light verb *bikin* comes before the nominal element *şînî*. Together they mean 'mourn.' Though *şînî* may look as if it is an object, as it ends with an *î*, my consultant informed me that the word *şînî* without the *î* would mean 'blue,' not 'mourning.'<sup>92</sup> Hence, the *î* on *şînî* is part of the word, which is part of a compound verb. In (236), the nominal element occurs after the light verb, an uncommon order.

<sup>91</sup> This example comes from a quote from a Swedish poet, Gunnar Ekelof, which Teyb included at the top of the page on which the poem *Xewinek*, 'A Dream,' begins.

<sup>92</sup> The word *şîn* (without an *î* on the end) with the light verb *biben* means 'grow.' This complex verb is used in line 11 of Sindî's poem *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, 'Memories of Immortal Barzanî.'

- (236) *tazî ya Qazî jibîr ne-k-in bo bi-k-in* (BS4:23)  
 funeral EZ.F Qazî remember NEG-do-IMP.PL for (him) IRR-do-IMP.PL  
*şînê her sal*  
 mourning every year  
 ‘Don’t forget the funeral of Qazî, mourn for him every year.’

In (237), Nalbend put the light verb *biken* before the non-verbal element *pisyar*. The words together mean ‘ask.’

- (237) *bi-k-en pisyar li ħal-ê me* (AN1:59)  
 IRR-do-IMP.PL question of condition-EZ.M 1OP  
 ‘Ask of our condition.’

In line 8 of *Dînê Me Tête Zanîn*, ‘Our Religion Is Becoming Known,’ Cegerxwîn put the nominal element *mitala*, ‘thought, thinking, reflection, pondering,’ after the light verb *dikin*, ‘is doing.’ Kurds in the Badinan region would normally say *mitala dikin*. The word is syntactically joined to the light verb and is not the verb’s object. In (238), the order *dikin mitala* is considered uncommon. While *mitala* looks like a noun with a plural ending, it actually comes from the Arabic word *mutala’ah*, which means ‘reading.’

- (238) *her dem di-k-in mitala, daxwaz ji wan re* (CX3:8)  
 all time IPFV-do.PRS-3PL ponder request from 3OP from  
*havîn*  
 summer  
 ‘All the time pondering. We request only summer from them.’

#### 5.4.1.1.8 Adjective before noun

In line 31 of *Xoşê Wekî Cenetê*, ‘It’s Wonderful Like Heaven,’ shown in (239), Nalbend put an adjective before a noun. A speaker of Northern Kurdish would normally say *bejna rast*, which utilizes the feminine *ezafe*, *-a*, to connect the modifier, *rast*, ‘straight,’ to the head noun, *bejin*, ‘stature.’ In this instance, normal order would not increase the number of syllables, as the *i* in *bejin* elides due to the addition of the *ezafe* particle. Regarding the phrase *xuş zêlam*, my consultant said that, in this case, both *xuş zêlam* and *zêlamê xuş* (which is normal order that utilizes the masculine *ezafe*, *-ê*, to connect the modifier *xuş*) are commonly heard among speakers of Northern Kurdish.

- (239) *rast bejin xuş zelam*<sup>93</sup> (AN2:31)  
 straight stature good men  
 ‘straight stature, good men’

#### 5.4.1.1.9 Possessor before noun

There was one instance in the corpus where a poet put a possessor before the head noun. By putting *me*, 1O, before *dil*, ‘heart,’ shown in (240), Nalbend avoided use of the *ezafe* particle, which would have added an additional syllable to his line. Outside of this line of poetry, I have never observed anyone putting a possessive pronoun before a head noun.

- (240) *me dil(-ê) beñir-a tijt kêm=e* (AN1:58)  
 1OP heart(-EZ.M) ocean-EZ.F full puss=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘Our heart is an ocean full of puss (water of a wound).’

#### 5.4.1.1.10 Number after noun

As mentioned in §4.4.2.5, numbers precede nouns in normal speech. In line 11 of *Xoşê Wekî Cenetê*, ‘It’s Wonderful Like Heaven,’ the third line in example (241), Nalbend put the number *hizar*, ‘thousand,’ after the head noun, *cins*, ‘species,’ and a modifying noun, *kulîlk*, ‘flowers.’ Numbers, as modifiers, are typically part of the noun phrase; however, in this instance, the end of the noun phrase is marked by the plural oblique marker on *kulîlk*. Hence, *hizar* is technically outside the noun phrase, yet understood to be part of it, as it is also a modifier of *cins*. Nalbend likely put *hizar* at the end in order to rhyme it with the words ending the two preceding lines, *bihar* and *darubar*, also shown. In normal language a speaker would say, *hizar cinsê kulîlka*.

- (241) *taze*<sup>94</sup>=*ye* *lê xoş bihar* (AN2:9-11)  
 beautiful=COP.PRS.3SG in.3OF nice spring  
 ‘A nice spring in it is beautiful,’

<sup>93</sup> *Zelam* is translated as plural, ‘men,’ because it is part of an equative sentence that has an understood plural subject via a 3PL copula in line 29.

<sup>94</sup> Chyet (2003) would define *taze* as ‘fresh, green.’

*baḫ u rez u darubar*  
 garden and orchard and forest  
 ‘garden and orchard and forest,’

*cins-ê kulîlk-a hizar*  
 species-EZ.M flower-OBL.PL thousand  
 ‘a thousand species of flowers.’

#### 5.4.1.1.11 *Intentional end-rhyme dissimilarity*

Questions formed with the interrogative words *ka* and *kanê*, ‘where,’ lack the copula. In all but one line in the corpus where these words are used, they appear before the subject. In examples (242) and (243), *ka* and *kanê* appear at the beginning of the line.

(242) *ka reḥim însanê bê esil u neseb*<sup>95</sup> (AN4:24)  
 where merciful person without family ties and ancestry  
 ‘Where is mercy, (you) the person without family ties (background) and ancestry.’

(243) *kanê gundî?* (BS6:17-19)  
 where people  
 ‘Where are the people?’<sup>96</sup>

*kanê ban?*  
 where roof  
 ‘Where’s the roof?’

*ka dil-ê min?*  
 where heart.EZ.M 1O  
 ‘Where’s my heart?’

In (244), *ka* occurs before the compound subject, *mal u mefer*, ‘home and belongings.’ In the first phrase in (245), *kanê* comes before the subject *ew gul*, ‘that flower.’ In the second phrase, *ka* comes before the subject *şemala geş u hil*, ‘bright and lit candle.’

(244) *piştî mirn-ê ka bu wî mal u mefer*<sup>97</sup> (AN4:21)  
 after death-OBL.F where for 3OM home and opportunity  
 ‘After death, where is there for him a home and opportunity?’

<sup>95</sup> *Neseb* is an Arabic word and, therefore, is not given an oblique ending.

<sup>96</sup> Or ‘Where’s the village?’

<sup>97</sup> Chyvet (2003) lists *mefer* as ‘opportunity, chance, possibility.’

(245) *erê ey dil kanê ew gul ka şemal-a geş* (BS1:19)  
 yes O heart where 3D flower where candle-EZ.F bright

*u hil*  
 and lit

‘Yes, O heart, where’s that flower? Where’s the bright and lit (glowing) candle?’

In line 7 of *Bila..Bila*, ‘OK..OK,’ shown in (246), the word *kanê* is at the end of the line, after the subject *dustê min*. I propose that Sindî intentionally diverted from a normal word order in order to make the end of the line more dissimilar from the ending he would have had if he used normal word order. The rhyme scheme for this poem is A-A-X-A. Line 7 is the line that is to be free from rhyming with the other three lines in the quatrain. The line with normal word order would have been *Xudê, kanê dustê min* or perhaps *Kanê, Xudê, dustê min*. The placement of the vocative would not change the ending of *min*, which is very similar to the ending of the rhymed words: *diburînim*, *diwerînim*, and *bînim*, also shown.

(246) *sal bu sal-ê di-burîn-im* (BS3:5-8)  
 year by year-OBL.F IPFV-pass.away.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I’m passing away year by year.’

*rundk-a ez lê di-werîn-im*  
 tear-OBL.PL 1D for.3OM IPFV-shed.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I am shedding tears for him.’

*Xudê, dust-ê min kanê*  
 God friend-EZ.M 1O where  
 ‘God, where’s my lover?’

*kengî ez dê wî bîn-im*  
 when 1D will 3OM see.PRS-1SG  
 ‘When will I see him?’

This discovery shows that in rhymed poems containing obligatory rhyme-free lines, dissimilarity with end of line rhyme is a technique in Northern Kurdish poetry.

#### 5.4.1.1.12 Use of a prepositional phrase in lieu of a possessive *ezafe* construction

Nalbend, in separate poems, took the liberty to use a prepositional phrase in lieu of a possessive *ezafe* construction. For example, the normal way to express “my flesh and bone” would be by means of the *ezafe* construction: -EZ + possessive pronoun, that is, *leş*

*u hestîê min*, ‘body and bone’-EZ-M 1O. However, in the first line in (247), Nalbend expressed the possessive pronoun *min* in a prepositional phrase using the preposition *li*. In the second line in (248), *li min* was also used in lieu of a possessive *ezafe* construction, allowing Nalbend to put the subject, *cerg u dil*, ‘liver and heart,’ at the end the line. In both of these instances, use of the prepositional phrase versus a possessive *ezafe* construction aided Nalbend in rhyming these lines with end-rhymes in other lines of the poem, also shown in the examples below.

(247) *li min ħelîa-n leş u hestî* (AN1:45-47)  
 in 1O melt.PST-3PL flesh and bone  
 ‘My flesh and bone melted.’

*me gut-Ø mar=e ez-ê gezî*  
 1OP say.PST.3SG snake=COP.PRS.3SG 1D-EZ.M bite-PST.PTCP  
 ‘We thought it’s a snake that has bitten me.’

*bi remz-a bazin-êt dest-î*  
 by.means.of signal-EZ.F bracelet-EZ.PL hand-OBL.M  
 ‘by means of the signal of the hand bracelets<sup>98</sup>’

(248) *zend u til u bask u mil* (AN2:53-55)  
 forearm and finger and arm and shoulder  
 ‘forearm and finger and arm and shoulder’

*sutî li min cerg u dil*  
 burn.PST.PTCP in 1O liver and heart  
 ‘The liver and heart in me are burnt.’

Alternate translation: ‘My liver and heart are burnt.’

*av rîl wan şêr=e sil*  
 water rîl those lion=COP.PRS.3SG angry  
 ‘water rîl<sup>99</sup> them, the lion is angry’

#### 5.4.1.1.13 *Word displacements*

In example (249), the preposition combination *ji ber*, ‘because,’ is out of place, distant from the object of the prepositional phrase, *’Işqa te*, ‘your love.’ Normal word

<sup>98</sup> The bracelets signifying that the woman is married. Among Kurds they are one of the most important items given to a woman upon marriage.’

<sup>99</sup> Meaning unknown.

order would be *jiber* ‘*Işqa te ezim buhijî*. My consultant did not take issue with this displacement and said that it “sounds more poetic.” The placement of *ji ber* had no effect on changing the syllable count for the line.

- (249) *Işqa te ezim ji\_ber buhijî* (AN5:28)  
 love-EZ.F you 1D=COP.PRS.1SG because.of melt.PST.PTCP  
 ‘Because of your love, I am the one who is melted.’

In example (250), the word *lewa*, which is often translated as ‘that is why’ or ‘thus,’ is not in its normal place at the beginning of the clause, which begins with *şewiq*, ‘light.’ Looking at the end of line 30, also shown, it seems clear that Sindî put *lewa* at the end of 29 to rhyme with *xewa*, ‘dreaming.’ My consultant said that while *lewa* is abnormal at the end of this clause, it is still acceptable.

- (250) *ew çira-yên mililet=în<sup>100</sup>-e şewiq veda-n bu me* (BS4:29, 30)  
 3dp light-EZ.PL people=COP.3PL-SRM light give.PST-3PL for us

*lewa*

that.is.why

‘They are the lights of the people; that is why they gave off light for us.’

*bilbil-ên şerm=in di-xuîn-in, Kurdu,*  
 nightingale-EZ.PL disgraced=COP.PRS.3SG IMPV-sing.PRS-3SG Kurd

*dê rab-e ji xewa*  
 will awake-IMP.SG from dreaming

‘The disgraced of the nightingales are singing: Hey Kurd, wake up from dreaming!’

#### 5.4.1.2 Ellipsis

**Ellipsis** has been the subject of many books and the term is often defined so as to distinguish it from other syntactic occurrences resulting from pragmatic decisions, such as **sluicing** and **gapping**.<sup>101</sup> In the discussion that follows, I will use the term ellipsis to

<sup>100</sup> The original text has this copular clitic as *-în*, which does not agree with the subject *ew*, the first person, plural direct case pronoun. It may be a typographical error or some unknown meaning.

<sup>101</sup> An in-depth analysis of various types of omissions is beyond the scope of this paper. For a thorough discussion on the subject, I refer the reader to Anne Lobeck’s book, *Ellipsis: functional heads, licensing, & identification*, 1995.

generally refer to the omission of a particular word or phrase that is understood by the hearer (Adams 1997:121).

#### 5.4.1.2.1 Ellipsis of anaphoric subject pronoun

In certain contexts, inclusion of subject pronouns is optional in Northern Kurdish. The hearer can understand an unmentioned referent by means of verb endings, which refer to one of the referents involved in the state of affairs. We still call such instances **ellipsis**, because leaving out the subject pronoun is context dependent.

In line 5 of *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’ the shown in (251) below, Sindî did not include the subject pronoun *tu*, ‘you,’ which would normally come just before *ruhinîya*, ‘light.’ The subject is indicated by the 2SG copula, *yê*, at the end of the line. Additionally, the entity expressed by the subject is known from the context, having just been reiterated by the personal pronoun *tu*, ‘you,’ at the beginning of line 4 and in the second clause of the same line. The anaphor *tu* refers to Mustafa Barzanî, who is mentioned only in the title, but not in the body, of the poem.

(251) *tu bi-ke rehm-ê ji mirîd-an kengî* (BS1:4)  
 2D IRR-do.IMP.SG compassion-OBL.F from disciples-OBL.PL when

*dê tu hêye ve*  
 will 2D come.PRS.2SG again  
 ‘Be compassionate to (your) disciples; when will you be back?’

*baz-ê baz-an şah-ê Kurd-an ruhinî-ya çav-ê* (BS1:5)  
 falcon-EZ.M falcon-OBL.PL king-EZ.M Kurd-OBL.PL light-EZ.F eye-EZ.M

*me=yê*  
 1OP=COP.PRS.2SG  
 ‘Falcon of falcons, king of Kurds—you are the light of our eyes.’

Example (252) from Sindî’s *Bila..Bila*, ‘OK..OK,’ shows both exclusion and inclusion of subject pronouns. In line 5, the pronoun *ez*, 1D, was omitted. However, in the following line, *ez* was included.

(252) *sal bu sal-ê di-burîn-im* (BS3:5, 6)  
 year by year-OBL.F IPFV-pass.away.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I’m passing away year by year.’

*rundk-a ez lê di-werîn-im*  
 tears-OBL.PL 1D for.3OM IPFV-shed.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I am shedding tears for him.’

Inclusion or exclusion of a subject personal pronoun can help the poet reach a desired line length, as seems to be the case in lines 5 and 6 above. However, it is possible that inclusion of a subject pronoun in some instances has some pragmatic purpose, perhaps that of emphasis. It seems likely, though, that Sindî’s motivation for using *ez* in line 6 was to gain an extra syllable for the line. Concerning line 5, the exclusion of the subject pronoun is natural and expected in the given context.

#### 5.4.1.2.2 *Ellipsis of anaphoric object pronoun*

In ergative-absolutive clauses, it is the object that is represented in the verb’s person-number ending, whatever the tense.<sup>102</sup> When an object is referenced by a pronoun, and the context allows, it may be left unmentioned. For example, a person might say, *min dît*, ‘I saw,’ in reply to the question, *Te biraê min dît?*, ‘Did you see my brother?’ The zero ( $\emptyset$ ) ending on the stem *dît* signifies third person, singular agreement with the unmentioned object, which refers to the *bira*, ‘brother.’ If the speaker wanted to include the object pronoun, *ew*, ‘him,’ in the reply, he or she would have said, *min ew dît*, ‘I saw him.’

However, usage of the object pronoun in this instance may seem emphatic. More research is needed to see if poets include object pronouns when there is opportunity for non-utterance, as I found no such situations in the corpus. Additionally, possessing an etic perspective on the language, such discourse level research would require much time with native speakers. From the data available, we can surmise that when the context allows, there does seem to be a tendency in the language to leave object pronouns in ergative-absolutive clauses unspoken, when permitted by the context. Some of these instances are shown in examples (253) through (255). The unmentioned object pronouns

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<sup>102</sup> Some irregular verbs always exhibit ergative agreement.

are in parentheses. For the contexts of each line, see the translations of the poems in Appendix B.

(253) *gut-in belê me (ew) dît-Ø* (BS6:26)  
 say.PST-3PL yes we (3D) see.PST-3SG  
 ‘They said, Yes, we saw it.’

(254) *Xudê (ew) kir-Ø bû bela bû me* (AN1:65)  
 God (3D) make.PST for problem for us  
 ‘God made her a problem for us.’

(255) *taze wesa dil (ew) vîa-Ø* (AN2:35)  
 beautiful like.that heart (3DP) want.PST-3SG  
 ‘The heart wanted them beautiful like that.’

Sindî’s *Bila..Bila*, ‘OK..OK,’ provides some interesting examples of variation in pronoun usage. And since we are dealing with issues of participant reference, I have included a large portion of the poem, shown in (256). The lines in focus in this discussion are 4, 8 and 10.

Line 4 is a response to the previous line, ‘He’s my friend by love.’ The speaker is telling God to protect her *dust*, ‘friend,’ which could also be translated as ‘lover,’ as it is in line 7. In line 4, the object *wî*, 3OM, is unexpressed. (The missing pronoun is within the parentheses.) The verb *bihêlit* is transitive and the translator knew it was necessary in English to include the object personal pronoun, the anaphor ‘him,’ in the translation. As the syllable count for the lines in this poem is seven, Sindî did not need to express the pronoun *wî*, 3OM, but depended on the rules of participant reference in Northern Kurdish that allows for the exclusion of personal object pronouns in certain contextual situations. Also note that in this instance, the missing 3OM pronoun is not represented in this verb *bihêlit*, which agrees with the subject. Hence, this is a case where pronoun ellipsis depends entirely on the rules of participant reference, receiving no help from the person-number ending on the verb.

(256) *bila .. bila çî bêj-it* (BS3:1-11)  
 ok ok what say.PRS-3SG  
 ‘Ok .. ok, what he says.’

*bila dil-ê min bi-hêl-it*  
 ok heart-EZ.M 1O IRR-leave.PRS.IMP-3SG  
 ‘Ok, my heart, let (him) leave.’

*dust-ê min=e bi evîn-î*  
 friend-EZ.M 1O=COP.PRS.3SG with love-OBL.M  
 ‘He’s my friend by love.’

*Xudê, (wî) bu min bi-hêl-it*  
 God (3OM) for 1O IRR-protect.IMP-3SG  
 ‘God, protect him for me.’

line 4

*sal bu sal-ê di-burîn-im*  
 year by year-OBL.F IPFV-pass.away.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I’m passing away year by year.’

*rundk-a ez lê di-werîn-im*  
 tear-OBL.PL I for.3OM IPFV-shed.PRS-1SG  
 ‘I’m shedding tears for him.’

*Xudê, dust-ê min kanê*  
 God lover-EZ.M 1O where  
 ‘God, where’s my lover?’

*kengî ez dê wî bîn-im*  
 when 1D will 3OM see.PRS-1SG  
 ‘When will I see him?’

line 8

*dust-ê min .. boçî sil=e*  
 lover-EZ.M 1O why mad=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘My lover—Why is he mad (at me)?’

*dil-ê min ji\_ber wî kul=e*  
 heart-EZ.M 1O because.of 3OM distressed=COP.3SG  
 ‘My heart is distressed because of him.’

line 10

*bêj-n-ê ez-a razî me*  
 tell.PRS-IMP.PL-3OM 1D-EZ.F accepting COP.PRS.1SG  
 ‘Tell him I’m accepting (what he says).’

In line 8, Sindî utilized the extra syllable of the object personal pronoun *wî* to reach seven syllables. According to my consultant, *wî*, 3OM, could have been excluded. A hearer would still understand that the one whom the woman wants to see is *dustê min*, ‘my lover,’ in the previous line.

Lastly, my consultant informed me that in line 10, it is necessary to retain the personal pronoun *wî*, 3OM, which is the object in the prepositional phrase, *ji ber wî*,

‘because of him.’ If the pronoun was excluded, the reader would have the understanding of, ‘My heart is distressed because he is angry at me’ versus ‘My heart is distressed because of him.’ As it stands, *wî* refers to *dustê min*, ‘my friend.’ Without the anaphor *wî*, the default reference would be the anger of the *dust*, ‘friend.’

Below is another context that does not allow for ellipsis of an object pronoun. At the end of Nalbend’s *Kiçkek Me Divêt*, ‘We Want A Girl,’ the final four lines are spoken by one person to Ehmed. In line 33, the woman states *Ma min tu vîyayî*, ‘Did I love you...?’ Here the object pronoun *tu*, 2D, is included. She repeats the same words in line 36, albeit in a different order. One would think that the context at this point would allow for object pronoun ellipsis. However, according to my consultant, a person can never say only *min vîyayî* and have it mean ‘I loved you.’ The 2D pronoun *tu*, ‘you,’ must also be used. Perhaps some verbs allow for ellipsis while others do not. This is an area for further research.

- (257) *Ma min tu vîya-yî bu milik u mal-î* (AN5:33-36)  
 QP 1O 2D love.PST-2SG for land and home-OBL.M  
 ‘Did I love you because of land and belongings (money)?’
- Ez bu-m=e xidam bu.....*  
 1D become.PST-1SG=DIR slave for  
 ‘I became a slave for...’<sup>103</sup>
- Ehmed tu bi-zan-e ey riĥ-a min*  
 Ehmed you IRR-know.IMP.SG O soul-EZ.F me  
 ‘Ehmed, know, O soul of mine.’
- Min vîya-yî tu jiber...*  
 1O love.PST-2SG 2D because  
 ‘I loved you because...’

#### 5.4.1.2.3 Ellipsis of anaphoric pronoun in a prepositional phrase

Speakers of Northern Kurdish sometimes have an option to leave out an anaphoric pronoun in a prepositional phrase—again, depending on the context of conversation. Recall example (236), repeated below in (258). In the second phrase of the line, the 3SG

<sup>103</sup> Two lines at the end of this poem are missing the final words in the original text.

pronoun *wî*, referring to *Qazî*, a figure in Kurdish history, is missing after the preposition *bo*, ‘for.’ It could have been included; however, inclusion would have given *Sindî* too many syllables for the line.

(258) *tazî ya Qazî jibîr\_ne-k-in bo (wî) bi-k-in* (BS4:23)  
 funeral EZ.F Qazî forget\_NEG-do.PRS-3PL for (him) IRR-do.PRS-3PL

*şînî her sal*  
 mourning every year

‘Don’t forget the funeral of *Qazî*, mourn for him every year.’

In *Bêhna Gulê*, ‘The Smell of the Rose,’ a prose poem, *Hizirvan* left out the 3OM pronoun *wî*, ‘him,’ (or some other noun or noun phrase) after the prepositions *li ser*, meaning ‘on.’ As well, another 3OM object pronoun, ‘him,’ a required argument of the verb *berzekirin*, ‘hid,’ is not expressed. Since prose poetry is closer to natural language, this example likely shows how the ellipsis of pronouns—from both prepositional phrases and object phrases—is a natural occurrence in the language. While English requires both pronouns, they need not be expressed in certain contexts in Northern Kurdish.

(259) *agr-ek boş li ser helkir-in, berzekir-in,*<sup>104</sup> (H:6)  
 fire-INDF large on (him) set.PST-3PL hide.PST-3PL (him)  
 ‘And (they) ignited a massive fire on him (his body), and hid him.’

With this example above, we might conclude that it is the *inclusion* of anaphoric pronouns (in certain contexts) that is a tool a poet can use for reaching a desired syllable count in a poem, as was the case with line 8 of (256) in the previous section.

This study did not investigate identifying other places in the corpus where anaphoric object personal pronouns could have been excluded. Inclusion of an anaphor may often have some pragmatic purpose. Determining the various contexts for inclusion and exclusion was beyond the scope of this paper. Table 23 provides some additional

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<sup>104</sup> From my direct correspondence with Denise Bailey (2012), I learned that for past tense, transitive sentences, there are some situations where agreement with the object does not always apply when the subject of the clause is a third person plural and left unexpressed. The plural *-in* ending is also commonly used when the subject is impersonal, as it is in this entire poem.

instances ellipsis of object pronouns in prepositional phrases. The missing pronouns are in parentheses.

**Table 23. Pronoun ellipsis.**

Poem	Line #	Pronoun	Text
BS4	25	wî	<i>Ristkên şeqê bu (wî) vedan can fîdayên rastî yê</i> Necklets of throats were ready for him to sacrifice his soul for truth.
BS4	45	wî	<i>Nabitin biçim nik Xanî bu (wî) vekim dilê bi xwîn</i> I can't go near Xanî and open for him my heart with blood (sadness).
BS7	11	wî	<i>Kewek bu lê neçu ravê ji (wî) kewgiran nekew girbu</i> He was a partridge but he did not go hunting because for the hunters this partridge is not a hunter.

#### 5.4.1.2.4 Ellipsis of copula

Ellipsis of the third person, singular, present tense copula is quite common in spoken language. Such is the case in the following examples from Cegerxwîn's *Silav Li Sifra Hazire*, 'Salute the Feast Is Ready.' Written Northern Kurdish would typically include the 3SG copula, *e*, on the end of the words *bihuşt*, 'heaven,' in (260), and *namîdar*, 'famous,' in (261). However, we have already seen how performance is an important consideration for the poet when writing poetry. In this instance, leaving off the copula reflects spoken language, and aids the poet in reaching his desired syllable count.

(260) *mertal di dest(-ê) wan de bihuşt(=e)* (CX2:7)  
shield in hand(-EZ.PL) 3OP in heaven(=COP.PRS.3SG)  
'The shield in their hands (is) heaven.'

(261) *lewra Cegerxwîn namîdar(=e)* (CX2:30)  
Thus Cegerxwîn famous(=COP.PRS.3SG)  
'Thus Cegerxwîn is famous.'

In other lines from the same poem, including the title, the copula is included. In these examples the copula appears in its normal position, at the end of each line.

- (262) *gurz-ê di dest wan agir=e* (CX2:8)  
 club-EZ.M in hand 3OP fire=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘The club in their hand is fire.’
- (263) *silav li sifra hazir=e* (CX2:28-29)  
 salute feast ready=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘Salute, the feast (dining-table) is ready.’  
*seîda-yê rast u ron-î ye*  
 teacher-EZ.M truth and light-OBL.M COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘He is the teacher of truth and light.’
- (264) *ên<sup>105</sup> ker di-bêj-in kafir=e* (CX2:32)  
 EZ.PL donkey IRR-say.PRS-3PL infidel=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘The ignorant ones say he’s a blasphemer (infidel).’

#### 5.4.1.2.5 Ellipsis of *ezafe* conjunctive particle

In *Silav Li Sifra Hazire*, ‘Salute the Feast Is Ready,’ Cegerxwîn took liberty to omit an *ezafe* conjunctive particle on the word *dest* in two lines. As far as I am aware, this is not acceptable in Northern Kurdish spoken in Iraq. Cegerxwîn, however, was from southern Turkey and Syria. Many educated people in Northern Iraq have stated that Cegerxwîn’s language is quite different from the speech of the Badinan area, so perhaps his dialect of Northern Kurdish allows this.

- (265) *mertal di dest(-êt) wan de bihuşt(=e)* (CX2:7, 8)  
 shield in hand(-EZ.PL) 3OP in heaven(=COP.PRS.3SG)  
 ‘The shield in their hands (is) heaven.’  
*gurz-ê di dest(-êt) wan agir=e*  
 club-EZ.M in hand(-EZ.PL) 3OP fire=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘The club in their hands is fire.’

However, Cegerxwîn was not the only poet to take this liberty. In several other instances, Sindî omitted an *ezafe* particle. It seems that the omissions were made in order to reach a desired syllable count. In (266), the feminine *ezafe*, *-a*, which would have connected the adjective *reş*, ‘black,’ to the noun *şev*, ‘night,’ is missing. In (267), the noun *cih*, ‘place,’ has no *ezafe* conjunctive particle for connecting to *kew*, ‘partridge.’

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<sup>105</sup> In this example the *ezafe* conjunctive particle is used as a relativizer. In order to function as an NP, *ezafe* requires either a modifier (adjective phrase) or a relative clause.

And in (268), there is no *ezafe* on *dest*, ‘hand,’ to connect to the word *nezana*, ‘ignorant ones.’

(266) *çi tav-ek bu gelo ya geş li çax-ê tarî u* (BS7:17)  
 what morn-INDF for people EZ.F bright in time-EZ.M dark and

*şev(-a) reş*  
 night(-EZ.M) black

‘What a bright sunrise for the people, radiance in the dark time and black night!’

(267) *gelo lewra di-suj-it dil ku cih(-ê) kew* (BS7:24)  
 People that’s why IRR-burn.PRS-3SG heart because place(-EZ.M) partridge

*evro vala=ye*  
 today vacant=COP.PRS.3SG

‘People! That’s why the heart is burning, because the place of the partridge today is vacant.’

(268) *ketî-m=e dest(-êt) nezana* (BS2:14)  
 I fall.PST-1SG=DIR hand(-EZ.PL) ignorant.one-OBL.PL

‘I fell into the hands of ignorant ones (idiots).’

This last example above, (268), is from Sindî’s *Gerîanek Di Kurdistanê Da*, ‘A Walk Through Kurdistan.’ In a similar line from the same poem, Sindî *did* use an *ezafe* on the word *dest*, ‘hand.’

(269) *ketîm=e dest-ê har-a* (BS2:56)

I fell=DIR hand-EZ.M wild.person-OBL.PL

I fell into the hands of wild people (enemies).

Two other examples where an *ezafe* was omitted are provided below. In (270), Sindî left off the feminine *ezafe*, *-ya*, on *gemî*, ‘boat,’ probably to meet a desired number of syllables for the line. In (271) the *ezafe -ê* is missing on *dem*, ‘time.’

(270) *bi Kurmancî gemî(-ya) dar-ê li derîa-yê ziman-ê* (BS7:19)  
 with Kurmanji boat(-EZ.F) wood-EZ.M in sea-EZ.M language-EZ.M

*xweş*  
 nice

‘With Kurmanji, a wooden boat in the sea of nice language.’

(271) *hêjîr-a li dem(-ê) nubar-ê* (BS2:2)  
 fig-EZ.F in time(-EZ.M) spring-OBL.F

‘A fig in the time of spring.’

There were other instances where it looked as if an *ezafe* conjunctive particle was omitted, but after speaking with my consultant, I learned that these instances, which I discuss below, either call for no *ezafe* or an *ezafe* is optional. I have included these examples so that the reader will be aware that the compounding of words occurs in the language.

In (272) *mêr xaz*, ‘brave man,’ is correct without use of an *ezafe* particle. Chyret (2003) lists *mêrxas* as meaning ‘hero, brave person.’ Hence, this is an example of a compound word, two words that have become lexically one. In the same example, an *ezafe* is considered optional in the second noun phrase, *mêr çaka*, ‘man of goodness.’ In (273) the noun phrase *cilil reş*, ‘black clothing,’ is “like one word” according to my consultant. No *ezafe* should be used. In (274), I would have expected to see an *ezafe* on *agrek*, ‘a fire,’ to join with it the adjective *boş*, ‘large.’ However, after perusing other poems by Hizirvan, I noticed that he usually does not use an *ezafe* conjunctive particle on nouns that have an indefinite article suffix, whether masculine or feminine. While I personally have not observed this dropping of an *ezafe* in the spoken language of Northern Iraq, it seems that it is an aspect of at least one of its subdialects.

(272) *nav mêr xaz u mêr(-ê) çak-a* (BS2:44)  
 toward man brave and men(-EZ.M) goodness-OBL.PL  
 ‘toward brave men and men of goodness’

(273) *şagird-ên te heqe çû-Ø-ban bi mewkin ew* (BS7:6)  
 disciple-EZ.PL 2O all go.PST-3SG-SBJV by.means.of procession 3D  
*cilil reş b-in*  
 clothing black COP.PRS-3PL  
 ‘It would have been right for your disciples to go in procession dressed in black clothing.’

- (274) *agr-ek boş li ser helkir-in, berzekir-in,*<sup>106</sup> (H:6)  
 fire-INDF large on (3OM) set.PST-3PL (3OM) hide.PST-3PL  
 ‘And (they) ignited a massive fire on him (his body), and hid him.’

#### 5.4.1.2.6 Ellipsis of oblique marker

As mentioned in §4.4.2.2, obliques are always marked in the Northern Kurdish of northern Iraq. In the Northern Kurdish of Turkey, however, masculine nouns in the oblique case are left unmarked, as is evident in the following example from Cegerxwîn, who was from Turkey and Syria. In line 10 of *Silav Li Sifra Hazire*, ‘Salute the Feast Is Ready,’ shown in (275), there is no oblique marker on *Xidir*. In the Northern Kurdish of Iraq, *Xidir* would have the masculine oblique suffix, *-î*.

- (275) *şêx-ê ko tac u teylesan* (CX2:9-10)  
 sheikh-EZ.M that crown and turban  
 ‘The sheikh with crown and turban, ‘  
  
*weregirt-y-Ø-e reng-ê Xidir.*  
 take:PST-PRF-be:PST-3SG color-EZ.M Khidir  
 ‘has taken the shape of Green Knight.’<sup>107</sup>

Nalbend typically expresses masculine oblique markers, as can be seen in first line of *Duhî Spêde Liser Banî*, ‘Yesterday Morning On The Rooftop,’ which is also the title of the poem. The masculine noun *ban*, ‘rooftop,’ is appropriately marked with the masculine oblique marker, *-î*, as it is the final noun in a prepositional phrase. As well, the feminine noun *spêde*, ‘morning,’ at the end of an adverbial clause, has the expected feminine oblique marker, *-ê*. The final *e* on the end of *spêde* elides due to the presence of the stronger oblique marking vowel.

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<sup>106</sup> From my direct correspondence with Denise Bailey, I learned that for past tense, transitive sentences, there are some situations where agreement with the object does not always apply, such as when the subject of the clause is third person plural and unexpressed. The plural *-in* ending is also commonly used when the subject is impersonal, as it is in this entire poem.

<sup>107</sup> According to the translator, the Islamic figure *Xidir* is close to the Western figure called the Green Knight ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green\\_Knight](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Knight)).

- (276) *duhî spêd-ê li\_ser ban-î* (AN1:1)  
 yesterday morning-OBL.F on rooftop-OBL.M  
 ‘Yesterday morning on the rooftop’

In line 24 of *Ey Ze’îmê Bê Nivêjê Bê Werar*, ‘O Leader Without Prayer and Use,’ Nalbend took liberty to leave off the masculine oblique marker, *-î*, on the word *neseb*, ‘ancestry,’ the final noun in a prepositional phrase. The appropriate oblique marker for grammatical correctness is in parentheses. By leaving off the oblique marker, Nalbend was able to rhyme *neseb* with the fourth line of the rest of the poem’s quatrains (not shown). As well, the syllable count remains at 12 for the line, the line length for the poem.

- (277) *ka rehîm însan-ê bê esil u neseb(-î)* (AN4:24)  
 where merciful person-EZ.M without family ties and ancestry  
 ‘Where is mercy, (you) the person without family ties (background) and ancestry.’

In *Gerîanek Di Kurdistanê Da*, ‘A Walk Through Kurdistan,’ Sindî elected to omit oblique markers on the feminine nouns *alek*, ‘corner,’ shown in (278), and *Kurdistan*, shown in (279). Leaving off the oblique marker on *alek* allowed Sindî to rhyme it with *cwanek*, ‘a pretty woman,’ at the end of line 3, also shown. While rhyme seems to be the primary motivator, the line is also left at 7 syllables, the length it needed to be for the poem. In (279), the motivation for leaving off the oblique is syllable count, as the line would have had eight syllables if the oblique marker was used on *Kurdistan*.

- (278) *min dît li wêrê cwan-ek* (BS2:3, 4)  
 1O see.PST(-3SG) LOC there pretty.woman-INDF  
 ‘I saw a pretty lady there.’

*awir di-da-Ø ji alek(-ê)*  
 look IPFV-give.PST-3SG from corner(-OBL.F)  
 ‘She was winking from the corner.’

- (279) *bu Kurdistan(-ê) mirîd=im* (BS2:24)  
 for Kurdistan(-OBL.F) disciple=COP.PRS.1SG  
 ‘I’m a disciple of Kurdistan.’

Lines 9 and 10 from Sindî’s *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’ shown in example (280), are also missing oblique markers. In line 9, *me—cihêl u pîr u jin*, 1OP ‘youth and old one and woman,’ is the subject of a past tense transitive

sentence. Hence, the final noun of the noun phrase should be marked with an oblique marker, which in this instance is *jin*, ‘woman.’ However, the actual subject in this line may be the pronoun *me*, which is an oblique case pronoun. The words *cihêl u pîr u jin* may simply be a description of *me*.

In line 10, however, *mezar u Înis u cin*, ‘grave and (prophet) Înis and evil spirit’ are the nouns in a prepositional phrase. As discussed, the final noun in a prepositional phrase, in this instance *cin*, ‘evil spirit,’ should be marked as oblique. In order to rhyme *jin*, a feminine noun, with *cin*, a masculine noun, the oblique marker *-î* was dropped. Use of the oblique marker would have not just ruined the rhyme; it would have also extended the line past the syllable count for the lines of the poem.

(280) *ayet-a Kursî ji\_berkir-Ø me cihêl u pîr* (BS1:9, 10)  
 verse-EZ.F *Kursî* memorize.PST-3SG 1OP young and old

*u jin*

and woman

‘We—young, old, and women—memorized the *Kursî* verse.’

*me du’a bu-Ø şev u ruj-an ji mezar u Înis*  
 1OP prayer COP.PST-3SG night and day-OBL.PL from grave and Înis

*u cin*

and evil spirit

‘We prayed (wished) night and day to grave and (prophet) Înis and evil spirit.’

In (281), Nalbend left off the oblique marker on the word *dil*, ‘heart,’ the subject of an irregular verb, ‘want,’ which always demands the subject be in the oblique case. It seems likely that his motivation was to reduce the syllable count.

(281) *taze wesa dil(-î) vîa-Ø* (AN2:35)  
 beautiful like.that heart(-OBL.M) (them) want.PST.3SG  
 ‘The heart wanted them beautiful like that.’

#### 5.4.1.2.7 Ellipsis of preposition

I only identified one ellipsis of a preposition. In line 43 of *Duhî Spêdê Liser Banî*, ‘Yesterday Morning On The Rooftop,’ shown in (282), the reader understands the phrase although the unspoken preposition *bu*, ‘for,’ has been omitted. According to my

consultant, no one would utter this sentence without the preposition. Again, Nalbend's motivation was likely to reduce the syllable count for the line.

- (282) *çi derman=e (bu) leşê ba-wî*<sup>108</sup> (AN1:43)  
 what medicine=COP.PRS.3SG (for) body wind-OBL.M  
 'What medicine is there for the winded body?'

#### 5.4.1.2.8 *Ellipsis of irrealis aspect prefix, bi-*

In one instance, shown in (283), the irrealis aspect prefix, *bi-*, was missing from the command, *fikirê*, 'think.' This was confirmed with a second consultant, who said "that this is the only case in Kurdish where [this] verb is used at the beginning [of a sentence]." He also agreed that "it seems awkward not to have the *bi-* [prefix]." It seems likely that Nalbend left off the prefix in order to meet his syllable count for the line.

- (283) *Dayîk-a me çû-Ø. Bab-ê me çû-Ø;* (AN3:33)  
 mother-EZ.F 1OP go.PST-3SG father-EZ.M 1OP go.PST-3SG  
*(bi-)fikir-ê*<sup>109</sup> *ku bapîr kîve çû-Ø?*  
 (IRR-)think-IMP.SG that grandfather where go.PST-3SG  
 'Our mother left. Our father left. Think about it—Where did our grandfather go?'

#### 5.4.1.3 *Free variation*

This section on free variation covers situations where a poet has freedom to include or exclude a word or put certain words or phrases in less common places. In these examples, inclusion or exclusion generally does not change the meaning of the sentence. I say *generally* because pragmatic nuances in the language would need further study to make wide assertions on the examples covered here. But, because we are dealing with written texts, that is, communication that lacks performance and intonation, it makes sense to cover these areas.

<sup>108</sup> In this instance of a masculine oblique marker being added to a noun, I believe the *w* is a glide insertion for the sake of pronunciation. In the resources available to me, this word for 'wind' is always spelled *ba*. Other poets in the corpus write *ba* with an oblique marker as *baî*.

<sup>109</sup> The *-ê* suffix is unusual, as the singular imperative suffix is *-e*. This may simply be a typographical error in the original text, as my consultant could not explain the appearance of this suffix.

#### 5.4.1.3.1 Use of alternate word forms for reaching syllable count

In §3.5, I shared how Badirxan Sindî informed me that Neo-classical poets will sometimes use forms of words from different subdialects of the Kurdish region. He said that a poet can draw upon such variants in the language in order to find the right word to fit a desired syllable length or rhyme scheme. In this section I look at situations where, potentially, a variant form was used to reach a desired syllable count.

In line 30 of *Gerîanek Di Kurdistanê Da*, ‘A Walk Through Kurdistan,’ shown in (284), Sindî used the word *wek* as meaning ‘like’ or ‘as.’ In line 11 of *Nehat*, ‘It Did Not Come,’ shown in (285), he used *wekî*. Both poems required a specific syllable count in each line. Hence, it is possible that in (285) Sindî utilized a word that was not the common variant in spoken language of his area. Şirin’s dictionary (2006), which is largely composed of Northern Kurdish from Zaxo, the city of Sindî’s upbringing, lists *wek* as meaning ‘like’ or ‘as.’ The word *wekî* is listed meaning ‘if’ or ‘when.’ Comparing this to Chyet’s dictionary (2003), *wek* is also listed as meaning ‘as, like, similar to.’ Further down his definition, he lists *wekî* as an alternative, the resources for this information being Kurdish-Russian and Kurdish-French dictionaries. With more research, one might find that the speakers of Northern Kurdish who worked on the Russian and French dictionaries were from other areas of Northern Iraq, not Zaxo. Unlike Sindî, Nalbend predominantly used *wekî* for ‘like, as,’ (eight times) and only used *wek* twice.

(284) *wek dara tuy-ê werîa-m* (BS2:30)  
 like tree mulberry-OBL.F fall.PST-1SG  
 ‘I fell down like the mulberry tree.’

(285) *kî wekî me mubitalî<sup>110</sup>=e kes li rêz-a min* (BS5:11)  
 who like 1OP afflicted=COP.PRS.3SG person in way-EZ.F 1O  
*ne-hat-Ø*  
 NEG-come.PST-3SG  
 ‘Who is afflicted like us?—no one followed my way.’

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<sup>110</sup> An Arabic word for a problem a person cannot get rid of, such as an affliction or a burden.

The word for ‘but’ varies among speakers of Northern Kurdish. According to Chyet (2003:352), *lê* and *lêbelê* can both mean ‘but.’ The corpus contains examples of both. There were also two examples of *belê* being used for ‘but,’ as shown in (286) and (287).

(286) *belê bê qeyd=e bê lûm=e* (AN1:66)

but without fetters=COP.PRS.3SG without *lûm*<sup>111</sup>=COP.PRS.3SG

‘But it is an unnecessary complaint.’

(287) *xwelî ya wî jî bin ax-kir-in* (H:7, 8)

ashes EZ.F 3OM also below earth-do.PST-3PL

‘They also buried his ashes in the earth.’

*belê jinav xelkî ne-çu-Ø*

but among people NEG-go.PST-3SG

‘but he did not go from among the people.’

However, *belê* can also mean ‘yes,’ as shown in (291). The context provides the correct interpretation.

(288) *gut-in belê .. me dît-Ø* (BS6:26)

say.PST-3PL yes 1OP (3OF) see.PST-3SG

‘They said, Yes, we saw it.’

What I found particularly puzzling were usages of *lê belê* (with the *lê* separated from *belê* in the original text) that had originally been translated as ‘yes.’ These examples are shown in (289) and (290). According to Chyet (2003:352), ‘yes’ is not an optional definition for *lêbelê*. Furthermore, he does not list *belê* as meaning ‘but.’ It only means ‘yes’ (2003:33). However, *belê* is commonly used in Northern Iraq for ‘but.’<sup>112</sup> I asked one of my consultants if *lê belê* could be translated as ‘but yes,’ and she said that this may actually be a better translation. However, she does not use *lê belê* in her common spoken language or poetry, and she finds its usage a little odd. Between hearing her comments and seeing the number of words meaning ‘but,’ it is clear that we are dealing

<sup>111</sup> Meaning unknown.

<sup>112</sup> From personal experience, I can affirm that *belê* is used for ‘but’ in Northern Iraq. Additionally, the word *bes* is used. *Bes*, however, is usually never used in writing in Iraq; *belê* (and perhaps *lê*) is used.

with subdialect differences. What I have shown in this discussion is that there is definitely an opportunity here for a poet to capitalize on, as *lê* and *belê* (and perhaps *lê belê*) can be used interchangeably, providing the poet syllable length options. More research may reveal that poets are capitalizing on these subdialect differences.

(289) *lê belê dest-ê xudan-î ew=e neqıqaş-ê qeder* (BS1:13)  
 but yes hand-EZ.M Lord-OBL.M 3D=COP.PRS.3SG painter-EZ.M fate  
 ‘Yes, it’s in God’s hand; he’s the painter of fate.’

(290) *ew di dil da nîşte\_cê-y-Ø-e lê belê çav-ê* (BS1:30)  
 3D in heart in settle:PST-PRF-be:PST-3SG but yes eye-EZ.M  
*me lê*  
 us on.1OM  
 ‘He has settled in our hearts, yes, but we will keep our eyes on him.’

In *Duhî Spêdê Liser Banî*, ‘Yesterday Morning On The Rooftop,’ Nalbend used two different forms of a word meaning ‘liver,’ one having one syllable, the other two. In line 27, below in (291), he used *cerg*; in line 30, shown in (292), he used *ceger*. Potentially, one of these words was more common to his spoken language; the other from another area. The word *mêlak*, also used by Nalbend several times, is also translated as ‘liver.’

(291) *li min sot sing u cerg u dil* (AN1:27)  
 in 1OP burn.PST-3SG chest and liver and heart  
 ‘My chest and liver and heart in me were burnt.’

(292) *ewê dil bir-Ø ceger ker\_kir-Ø* (AN1:30)  
 3D heart take.PST-3SG liver break.apart.PST-3SG  
 ‘She took the heart and broke apart the liver.’

Nalbend also used two words meaning ‘finger.’ In line 53 of *Xoşe Wekî Cenetê*, ‘It’s Wonderful Like Heaven,’ the word *til* was used. In line 9 of *Kiçkek Me Divêt*, ‘We Want A Girl,’ he used the word *tibl*.<sup>113</sup> Nalbend used *til*, as opposed to *tibl* because it has

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<sup>113</sup> The *a* on *tibl* is a feminine *ezafe*, connecting the modifying reflexive pronoun *xwo* (another spelling for *xwe*). In *tibla* the *i* elided and the *l* became the onset for the second syllable. Such elisions are discussed in §5.3.2 of this paper.

only one syllable. Vice versa, he used *tibil* because it has two syllables. Potentially, one word is the form common to his dialect, while the other is from another subdialect.

(293) *zend u til u bask u mil* (AN2:53)  
 forearm and finger and arm and shoulder  
 ‘Forearm and finger and arm and shoulder’

(294) *tibl-a xwo dirêj bi-k-et me* (AN5:9)  
 finger-EZ.F REFL point IRR-do.PRS-3SG 1OP  
 ‘Pointing her finger at us’

Lastly, the words *ka* and *kanê*, both meaning ‘where,’ are also variations of the same word. Sindî used both forms in two of his poems. In (295) and (296), the places of usage are underlined. In (295), it seems that Sindî was considering both syllable count and word variation in his decision on which words to use. In (296), however, the poem is in poetic prose. Perhaps Sindî wanted to vary the language, or maybe he wanted to keep the sentence with *ka* shorter, for rhythm’s sake.

(295) *erê ey dil kanê ew gul ka şemal-a geş* (BS1:19)  
 yes hey heart where 3D flower where candle-EZ.F bright

*u hil*  
 and lit

‘Yes, O heart, where’s that flower? Where’s the bright and lit (glowing) candle?’

*ka sîar-ê hilm-a mirn-ê kanê mîr-ê tirs* (BS1:21-23)  
 where knight-EZ.M steam-EZ.F death-OBL.F where leader-EZ.M fear

*nezan*

unknowing

‘Where’s the knight of the steam death? Where’s the leader who doesn’t know fear?’

*ka ‘egîd-ê wan dilêr-an evro man=e bê xudan*  
 where fighter-EZ.M 3OP hero-OBL.PL today become.PST=DIR without leader  
 ‘Where’s the fighter of those heroes? Today they became leaderless.’

*av-a Aras-ê di-pirs-it îru kanê gemîvan*  
 water-EZ.F Aras-OBL.F IPFV-ask.PRS-3SG today where sailor<sup>114</sup>  
 ‘The water of Aras<sup>115</sup> is asking, Where’s the sailor today?’

<sup>114</sup> Or perhaps ‘skipper.’

- (296) *kanê gundî* (BS6:17-19)  
 where people (village)  
 ‘Where’s the people?’
- kanê ban*  
 where roof  
 ‘Where’s roof?’
- ka dil-ê min*  
 where heart-EZ.M 10  
 ‘Where’s my heart?’

#### 5.4.1.3.2 Use of alternate word forms for rhyming purposes

In some situations, the choice of an alternate word form, or in this example, word ending, is used for rhyming purposes. Hence, the choice is not for syntactic purposes, as was evident in §5.4.1.3.1, but for rhyme. In line 10 of *Dergehê Jîn U Hîvî Ya*, ‘The Door of Life and Hopes,’ shown in (297), Sindî used two variants of the plural oblique suffix, *-a* and *-an*. The *-an* suffix is the standard for written texts, while the *-a* suffix is common in the spoken language. The first usage is on *hinav*, ‘guts.’ It has the plural ending *-a*. At the end of the line, *dil*, ‘heart,’ has the ending *-an*. Sindî used the *-an* ending on *dil* to rhyme *dilan* with *gulan* at the end of line 9 (not shown). Also worth noting here is the use of the conjunction *u*, ‘and.’ According to my consultant, *u* could be replaced with a comma, which is what the translator used in the English translation.

- (297) *agir-ek berbî-Ø hinav<sup>116</sup>-a u talan-a cerg* (BS4:10)  
 fire-INDF occur in/on.PST-3SG guts-OBL.PL and pillage-EZ.F liver
- u dil-an*  
 and heart-OBL.PL  
 ‘A fire occurred in the guts, pillaging the livers and hearts.’

<sup>115</sup> *Aras* is the name of the river Barzanî and other Kurds crossed to enter into the Soviet Union, in what is now Azerbaijan.

<sup>116</sup> Also defined as ‘organs of the abdominal area.’

#### 5.4.1.3.3 Use of alternate word forms to vary language

The use of alternate word forms for the purposes of varying language was already mentioned in §5.4.1.3.1. In his poem *Gutgutik*, ‘Rumors,’ Silêman used two forms of the word meaning ‘if.’ In line 37, shown in (298), he used the word *ger*. In line 40, shown in (299), he uses *eger*. Note that Silêman’s poetry is in poetic prose, which therefore puts no demands on him for syllable length of line. I think it likely that only one of the forms is used in his common speech. Personally, I have observed many forms of this word meaning ‘if’: *eger*, *ger*,<sup>117</sup> *gel*, *heger*, *heker* and *heku*. Chyet (2003) lists even more possibilities. I recall having a conversation about this word with one friend of mine. I had learned the word *heker*, which is the word used in Zaxo.<sup>118</sup> My friend said, *Em bêijîn eger*, ‘We say *eger*.’ He seemed perplexed with *heker*, perhaps being unfamiliar with the subdialect of Zaxo Kurds. What is important to realize is that there are regional differences among Northern Kurdish speakers and that the language is not yet standardized. In Silêman’s case below, I would surmise that he simply wanted to vary his word usage.

(298) *ger direw bû-Ø* (SS1:37)  
 if lie COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘If it was a lie,’

(299) *eger rast bû-Ø we=bû-Ø<sup>119</sup>* (SS1:40)  
 if correct COP.PST-3SG truth=COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘If it was correct, it was the truth.’

In one poem, Sindî used two words meaning ‘today’ in adjacent lines, *evro* and *îru*. Both words are two syllables long, so Sindî must have had some other reason for his differentiation. In other poems Sindî used *evro*. Potentially, *îru* is commonly used by

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<sup>117</sup> According to my consultant, *ger* is only used in writing.

<sup>118</sup> My introduction to Northern Kurdish came by means of Şîrîn’s dictionary and language learning materials (2006), which are based on the language of Zaxo.

<sup>119</sup> Use of *webû* seems to be idiomatic. If a person says, *webû yan wenabû*, the meaning is, ‘Is it true or not true.’ The word *webû* must then comprise both the noun ‘truth’ (or adjective ‘true’) and the copula. However, the word *we* is not listed in either Chyet (2003) or Şîrîn (2006) as meaning ‘true’ or ‘truth.’

Kurds from an area other than Sindî's. Minimally, this example shows that Sindî, for some reason, chose to vary his language.

(300) *ka 'egîdê wan dilêran evro man=e bê* (BS1:22, 23)  
 where fighter 3OP hero today became.PST-3PL=DIR without

*xudan*

leader

'Where's the fighter of those heroes? Today they became leaderless.'

*av-a aras-ê di-pirs-it îru kanê gemîvan*  
 water-EZ.F aras-OBL.F IPFV-ask.PRS-3SG today where sailor

'The water of Aras is asking: Where's the sailor now?'

In another poem, shown below in (301), Sindî used the Northern Kurdish word for 'life,' *jîn*, three times in two lines. Needing to use 'life' yet again in the final clause of line 2, he resorted to using the Arabic equivalent, '*emir*. While '*emir* by itself is two syllables and *jîn* has but one syllable, when the *ezafe* particle is added, the syllable count for both words is equal: '*em.rê* and *jî.na*. Hence, Sindî had some other reason for using '*emir* here.

(301) *dergeh-ê jîn u hîvî-a girt-y-Ø-e* (BS4:1, 2)  
 door-EZ.M life and hope-OBL.PL close:PST-PRF-be:PST-3SG

*dîsa çima*

again why

'The door of life and hopes is closed again, why?'

*ma ji jîn-a kurt=e jîn b-it ma ji*  
 INTRG as life-EZ.F short=COP.PRS.3SG life COP.PRS-3SG INTRG from

*'emr-ê me çi ma-Ø*  
 life-EZ.M 1OP what remain.PST-3SG

'Is it a short life? It's life. What has remained from our life?'

Being an outsider, it is sometimes very difficult to determine which words in a poem are not from the poet's common language. As the Kurds in Northern Iraq become more unified, we can expect to see poets, and writers in general, borrowing more words from dialects more different from their own. This was confirmed by the poet Hizirvan, who mentioned that he will sometimes use Sorani words in his poems, Sorani being the dominant Kurdish language in Northern Iraq. We may also see the opposite effect, a standardization of the language resulting in a loss of word forms.

#### 5.4.1.3.4 Use of emphatic words

In one example in §5.4.1.3.1, I mentioned the word *belê*, which in some contexts means ‘yes.’ Such words may be used to emphasize something, giving added stress. For the Neo-classical poet, such words may also be seen as “free” words, free syllables that can be added to a line, helping the poet reach a required syllable count. Another word often translated as ‘yes’ is *erê*. Sindî used this word at the end of line 26, rhyming with *berê* in line 25, also shown. Use of the word adds a meaning similar to the adverbial and interjectional uses of ‘indeed’ in English. In this instance, *erê* emphasizes the truth of the proposition.

(302) *lê*            *bi*    *çun-a*            *te*    *her*    *em=în*            *ser*            (BS1:25, 26)  
 however    with    departure-EZ.F 2O    all    1OP=COP.PRS.1PL    in

*zeman-ê*    *te*    *u*    *ber-ê*  
 time-EZ.M 2O    and    past-OBL.M

‘However, with your departure, it’s still us in your time and your past.’

*çunkî*    *tu*    *hey-Ø*            *u*    *her*    *hey-î*            *ruh*    *u*  
 because 2D    exist.PRS-2SG    and    always    exist.PRS-2SG    soul and

*wîjdan=î*,                            *erê*  
 conscience=COP.PRS.2SG    yes

‘Because you exist and always will exist, you are the soul and the conscience, yes.’

Sindî used the word *erê* in two other places, but for non-rhyming purposes. Line 19 of *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’ begins with *erê* and is followed by another interjection, *ey*, which may be comparable to ‘hey’ or ‘O.’ Both *erê* and *ey* helped Sindî reach his desired meter. While they do provide some emotive effects, they are not required in the meaning of the clause. In (304), the word *erê* begins Sindî’s poem *Mîrê Peyvan*, ‘The Prince of Words.’ I suppose such use of an interjection works as an emotional appeal, to grab the attention of the reader, welcoming him or her into what appears to be an ongoing discussion. However, it may be that Sindî’s purpose was to gain extra syllables.

(303) *erê*    *ey*    *dil*    *kanê*    *ew*    *gul*    *ka*    *şemal-a*    *geş*    *u*    *hil*            (BS1:19)  
 yes    O    heart    where    3D    flower    that    candle-EZ.F    bright    and    lit

‘Yes, O heart, where’s that flower? Where’s the bright and lit (glowing) candle?’

- (304) *erê sîlav çima evro melwîl u hişk u zuha=yî?* (BS7:1)  
 yes waterfall why today sad and dry and thirsty=COP.PRS.2SG  
 ‘Yes, waterfall, why are you so sad and dry and thirsty today?’

Another emphasis word, *nê*, is found in line 6 of the same poem, shown in (305). According to my consultant, *nê* has a usage similar to one usage of the word ‘do’ in English—to emphasize or intensify. For example, someone meets with a friend she has not seen in a long time and says ‘I do miss you.’ The word ‘do’ here intensifies the feeling of missing. In the example below, *Sindî* is either emphasizing the action of *nalîn* or the subject *me*, 1OP. More examples are needed in order to determine specifics about how this word is used.

- (305) *nê me nal-î-Ø-ne ji dîr-î meî-ya* (BS1:6)  
 do 1OP lament:PST-PRF-be:PST-3PL from distance-OBL.M wine-EZ.F  
 ‘şq-a me mey=î  
 love-EZ.F 1OP wine=COP.PRS.2SG  
 ‘We do lament from the distance, the wine of our love. You are the wine.’

Concerning the general use of emphatic words, it is difficult to know a poet’s motivation for using them and there are probably many reasons to use them. Similarly, I would expect that Kurdish emphatic words, like those in English, could have been used in many locations in the poems where they were not used.

#### 5.4.1.3.5 Omission of conjunctions and relativizers

In the discussion thus far, we have seen many situations where a poet has taken the freedom to include or exclude some word. Another word that Northern Kurdish poets often leave out is the conjunction meaning ‘and.’ Omission of conjunctions is called **asyndeton**, which literally means ‘without connections’ (Adams 1997: 121). In many situations in Northern Kurdish where a conjunction is not used, there is a tendency to use a conjunction in the English translation, especially when the two clauses are short simple sentences.

Consider the following two examples from Nalbend. In (306), Nalbend used the conjunction *u*, ‘and.’ In (307), there is no conjunction. These are similar situations where the subject is the same for both clauses in the line.

(306) *şêr ew=in u sef dirrî-n* (AN2:60)  
 lion 3D=COP.PRS.3PL and line turn.PST-3PL  
 ‘They are lions and they turn in lines.’

(307) *ewê dil bir-Ø ceger ker\_kir-Ø* (AN1:30)  
 3D heart take.PST-3SG liver break.apart.PST-3SG  
 ‘She took the heart and broke apart the liver.’

As is the often the case with poetry, the poet has a tendency to condense language. In line 13 from Sindî’s *Mirê Peyvan*, shown in (308), the translator decided to use ‘and’ in the translation, whereas the conjunction, *u*, had not been used in the text.

(308) *te sîng\_da ber reşebay-an bi xizmet* (BS7:13)  
 2O lead.PST-2SG in.front.of storm-OBL.PL with service  
*çû-y=e ezman-î*  
 go.PST-2SG=DIR language-OBL.M  
 ‘You led (put your chest) in front of the storms and you served the language.’

In some situations a poet may leave out a conjunction between nouns in a compound subject. In (309), there is no *u* between *Qudsî* and *Mistefa*, while it was used between ‘*zat* and *Xeîrî*, and *Xeîrî* and *Qudsî*, the other nouns making up the subject. Perhaps Sindî left out the conjunction because of syllable count.

(309) ‘*zet u Xeîrî u Qudsî Mistefa ew çar bira* (BS4:27)  
 Ezat and Xayrî and Qudsî Mustafa 3D four brothers  
 ‘Ezat, Xayrî, Qudsî and Mustafa—those four brothers,’

Another word that poets often have freedom to include or exclude is *ku*, which is most often translated as the relativizer ‘that’ or ‘which.’ It can also function as a relative pronoun. In line 14 from *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’ shown in (310), Sindî did not include *ku* between the two phrases. In this sentence, the object *fermanek*, ‘an order,’ functions as the head of the modifying clause, *sutîye li me ceger*, i.e. ‘an order burned the liver in us.’

(310) *wî wesa ferman-ek day-î sut-î-y-Ø-e li* (BS1:14)  
 3OM like.that order.INDF give.PST-3SG burn:PST-PRF-be:PST-3SG in  
*me ceger*  
 1OP liver  
 ‘He gave an order like that, the liver in us has burned.’

Relativizers can often be left out of phrases in English. For example, I can say ‘I read the book that you gave me,’ using ‘that’ as a relativizer in the second clause modifying ‘book.’ Or I can say ‘I read the book you gave me,’ without the relativizer. In this example, the object of the first clause, ‘book,’ functions as its head, filling the gap—the missing argument for the transitive verb ‘gave’—in the modifying clause (Kroeger 2004:165-6). Speakers of English often leave out relativizers when permissible, thereby condensing the language.

I have also observed that the same is true in the speech variety in Northern Iraq, where speakers tend to omit use of the word *ku* where it functions as a relativizer. Conversely, according to Nicholas Bailey,<sup>120</sup> speakers of Northern Kurdish in Turkey tend to use *ku* more often than not.<sup>121</sup> According to my consultant, *ku* is unnecessary in line 35 of example (311). In (312), *ku* is again an extra word that is not required. Its exclusion would not have changed the meaning of the sentence. In both situations, then, it seems that its inclusion helped Sindî reach the desired syllable count.

- (311) *ger zewal-a te hat-Ø-b-it her* (BS1:33)  
 if time.to.pass.away-EZ.F 2O come.PST.PTCP-COP.PRS-3SG always  
*dê mîn-î tu u her*<sup>122</sup>  
 will remain.PST-2SG 2D and always  
 ‘If your time to pass away is come, you will remain (exist) forever.’
- çunkî Kurdînê na-mir-it çav heval=e* (BS1:34)  
 because Kurdishness NEG-die.PRS-3SG eye friend=COP.PRS.3SG

<sup>120</sup> Personal correspondence (2012).

<sup>121</sup> Thackston (2006:75-77), whose grammar exhibits Northern Kurdish in Turkey, also provides some examples of relative clauses that show use of *ku*, usually in conjunction with a preceding *ezafe* conjunctive particle. He does mention that occasionally *ku* is omitted when “the relative is the object in the relative clause.”

<sup>122</sup> The idiom *her u her* is usually translated as ‘forever.’ In this line, I believe this is the intended meaning, though the words are separated in the sentence. The words *dê mîn-î tu*, ‘you will remain,’ immediately follow the first *her*. Having *u her* at the end of the line allowed for Sindî to rhyme the line with *nezer* at the end of line 34.

*bu nezer*

for sight

‘Because Kurdishness doesn’t die, (like how) the eyes are a friend of one’s sight.’

*ku kemal-a te gehişt=e geş stêr-a* (BS1:35)  
that perfection-EZ.F 2O reach.PRS.3SG=DIR bright star-EZ.F

*Muşter-î*

Jupiter-OBL.M

‘That your perfection arrives at the bright star of Jupiter.’

(312) *hêştâ zaru bû-Ø dem-ê ku dît-î-Ø-ye* (BS1:40)  
still child COP.PST-3SG when-OBL.F that see:PST-PRF-be:PST-3SG

*kuvan u kul*  
sadness and grief

‘He was still a child when he saw sadness and grief.’

In some situations the word *ku* is necessary for proper understanding. According to my consultant, *ku* is required in the second line of (313).

(313) *kulîlk-a pîr u lawan=e* (AN1:71-72)  
flower-EZ.F old and young=COP.PRS.3SG  
‘She is the flower of the old and the young’

*ku derman-a me xesta bû-Ø*  
which medicine-EZ.F 1OP sick COP.PST-3SG  
‘which was the medicine for us who were sick.’

#### 5.4.1.3.6 Placement of temporal adverbs

Temporal adverbs may appear in a number of locations in a sentence. According to my consultant, all of the sentences in (314) and (315) are permissible and common in the speech variety of northern Iraq. The most common positions are immediately before or after the subject.

(314) *evro ez dê çî-m=a Dohuk-ê*  
today 1D will go.PRS-3SG=DIR Dohuk-OBL.M

*Ez evro dê çîma Dohukê.*

*Ez dê evro çîma Dohukê.*

*Ez dê çîma Dohukê evro.*

‘I will go to Dohuk today.’

(315) *her roj Şivan sêv-ek-ê xw-it*  
every day Shivan apple-INDF-OBL.M eat.PRS-3SG

*Şivan her roj sêvekê xwit.*  
*Şivan sêvekê her roj xwit.*  
*Şivan sêvekê xwit her roj.*  
 ‘Every day Shivan eats an apple.’

The variable positions of temporal adverbs can aid the Neo-classical poet. In *Ey Malikê Vê ‘Alemê*, ‘O Lord Of This World,’ Nalbend put the temporal adverbial phrase *sal u zeman*, ‘year and time’ at the end of line 7, rhyming *zeman* with the words *eman*, ‘oh’ (at the caesura in the same line) and *neman*, ‘did not remain’ (at the caesura in line 8).<sup>123</sup> While it is possible that Nalbend’s motivation was pragmatic; it seems more likely that he wanted to benefit from the end rhyme.

(316) *ey ‘ebid u însan-în eman hişyar\_bi-b-in sal* (AN3:7, 8)  
 O slave and human-OBL.PL oh wake.up\_IRR-be-IMP.PL year

*u zeman*  
 and time

‘O slaves and human kind, oh, wake up (from) years and time (of sleep).’

*mirn-ê birî-n em kew ne-ma-n heq=e*  
 death take.PST-3PL us partridge NEG-remain.PST-3PL right=COP.PRS.3SG

*mirin rêk-a me=ye*  
 death path-EZ.F 1OP=COP.PRS.3SG

‘Death took us; the partridges didn’t remain; it is right that death is our path.’

Sindî also utilized a temporal adverbial clause at the end of a line for rhyming purposes. In line 23 of *Dergehê Jîn U Hîvî Ya*, ‘The Door of Life and Hopes,’ *sal*, ‘year,’ rhymes with *şepal*, ‘bright,’ in line 24.

(317) *tazî ya Qazî ji\_bîr ne-k-in bo bi-k-in* (BS4:23)  
 funeral EZ.F Qazî remember NEG-do-IMP.PL for (him) IRR-do-IMP.PL

*şînî her sal*  
 mourning every year

‘Don’t forget the funeral of Qazî, mourn for him every year.’

*kuzrî-n gul-ên çîa-yan nêrgiz-ên şeng* (BS4:24)  
 burn.PST.PASS-3PL flower-EZ.PL mountain-OBL.PL narcissus-EZ.PL young

<sup>123</sup> While this poem was published as having been written as couplets, the rhyming scheme is that of a quatrain.

*u şepal*  
and bright

‘The flowers of the mountains have been burned, the young and bright narcissuses.’

#### 5.4.1.3.7 Placement of prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases also have more than one permissible position in a sentence. According to my consultant, every position is viable for the locative prepositional phrase *li Dohukê*, ‘in Dohuk,’ in (318).

(318) *li Dohuk-ê min pertuk-ek kir-î*  
in Dohuk-OBL.F 1O book-INDF buy.PST.3SG

*Min li Dohukê pertukek kirî.*

*Min pertukek li Dohukê kirî.*

*Min pertukek kirî li Dohukê.*

‘I bought a book in Dohuk.’

The flexibility of the placement of prepositional phrases is yet another tool for the poet, particularly for those who write in the Neo-classical style. What might be true for adverbial clauses could also be true for prepositional phrases, that their placement in lines of poetry could result from non-pragmatic decisions. While a particular location for a prepositional phrase might result in some pragmatic effect—as opposed to it being placed in its most common position—the effect may be acceptable to the author. Hence, the motivation may be syntactic and any additional pragmatic effect satisfactory.

#### 5.4.1.4 Constructional schemes

Turco (2000:9) writes, “**Constructional schemes** are strategies for constructing sentences...ways in which words, phrases, clauses, and larger units are grammatically balanced in sentences.” **Parallelism**, for example, is a syntactic arrangement that deeply engages with reason. Adams (1997:108-9) writes, “The parallel syntax itself conveys the meaning: these two (or more) thoughts are equal in importance.” With regard to **repetition**, it is “one of the most basic forms of emotional emphasis” (Adams 1997:113). In this section, I discuss some noteworthy constructional schemes in the corpus and their possible pragmatic effects.

#### 5.4.1.4.1 Repetition and repetitional schemes

The form *tercîa band*, discussed in §5.3.1.3, is an obvious repetitional scheme. The first two lines from Sindî's *Nehat*, 'It Did Not Come,' shown in (319), represent the only *tercîa band* poem in the corpus. Throughout a *tercîa band* poem, each line must end with the same word or words. In the case of Sindî's poem, the refrain is composed of the syllable *za* at the end of a word, followed by the phrase *min nehat*, 'did not come.' Such repetition at the end of a line is known as **epistrophe** (Adams 1997:114). In *Nehat*, most lines display an **antithesis**, which Wendland (2002a:66) calls a "base-contrast" parallelism. The second part of the line contrasts with a key feature in the first part of the line. Most lines state that something *desirable* has not come, while a few lines state that something *undesirable* has not come. In the first part of line 1, a negative thing has occurred. As a result of some people being taken captive, the poet's self-respect has not come. It seems that he would have his self-respect if the people with whom he identifies had their freedom. In the first part of line 2, a positive thing has occurred. As a result of remaining in love, he has not been experiencing negative emotions that can come from falling out of love. In this poem the syntactic repetition works to engage the reader with the poet's emotional states.

(319) *dîl*      *u*      *êxsîr-î*<sup>124</sup>      *ji gel-î*      *bu-n*<sup>125</sup>      (BS5:1)  
 captive and prisoner-EZ.M of people-OBL.M become.PST-3PL  
*ser\_feraz-a*<sup>126</sup> *min ne-hat-Ø*  
 pride-EZ.F      1O      NEG-come.PST-3PL

<sup>124</sup> While this *-î* looks like a masculine oblique marker, functionally it would not make sense. It is unusual for Sindî to use *-î* instead of *-ê* as a masculine *ezafe* conjunctive particle, but the function in this line does seem to be that of an *ezafe* particle. It may also be a typographical error, as there is a small difference between these letters in the Kurdish (modified Arabic) script.

<sup>125</sup> In many of the initial lines of this poem, the subject is first person singular. Potentially there is a typographical error on *bun* and it should have been written as *bum* for first person singular. The original translator had translated the line as, 'I became a captive...' I have chosen to render it, and discuss the line, according to the original text.

‘They became captives and prisoners of people—my pride (self-respect) did not come.’

*ma-m*                    *di*   *’îşq-a*    *wê*   *şepal-ê*    *sil*            *u*                    (BS5:2)  
remain.PST-1SG    in   love-EZ.F   3OF   wave-EZ.M   ill.temper   and

*zîz-a*                    *min*   *ne-hat-Ø*  
discontent-EZ.F   1O   NEG-come.PST-3PL

‘I remained in love with her—my wave of ill temper and discontent did not come.’

Epistrophe was also used throughout much of another poem. In Cegerxwîn’s *Dilê Cegerxwîn*, ‘Cegerxwîn’s Heart,’ the word *dil*, ‘heart,’ is line-final in the initial two lines, the final two lines, and every even numbered line. The word *ew*, 3D, a referent of *dil*, is also repeated twice at the end of lines and four times at caesuras. While the lines of this poem are written as couplets, the form of each couplet is that of a quatrain. See §5.3.1.1 for the discussion of the form of this and other quatrain poems.

Another mode of repetition in this poem is the placement of the subjects *dil* and *ew* (which refers to *dil*) after the copula in equative and attributive clauses, previously discussed in §5.4.1.1.2. Lines with repetition of constituent order deviation would classify such repetitions as instances of grammatical parallelism, a topic discussed in §5.4.1.4.2. In line 13 of the poem, shown in (320), the subject *ew*, 3D, follows *zozane*, ‘is a summer pasture,’ and *Wane*, ‘is Van,’ a city in Turkey is also followed by *ew*. In line 14, shown in line (321), *ew* follows *westane*, ‘is kneeling,’ and *dil*, ‘heart,’ follows *zinare*, ‘is a massive rock.’

(320) *geh*            *çol=e*                                    *geh*            *zozan=e*                                    (CX1:13)  
at.times   waste=COP.PRS.3SG    at.times   summer.pasture=COP.PRS.3SG

*ew*   *geh*            *Dêrik*    *u*    *geh*            *wan=e*                                    *ew*  
3D   at.times   Dereek   and   at.times   Wan=COP.PRS.3SG   3D

‘At times it is the wilderness, at times the summer pasture, at times Dereek and at times it is Wan,’

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<sup>126</sup> Chyet (2003) lists *serfiraz* as ‘proud’ and *serfirazî* as ‘pride’ or ‘self-respect.’ Sindî has *ser.firaz* as separate words, perhaps making it a prepositional phrase, as *ser* is a preposition that means ‘on.’ However, *ser* can also be a noun meaning ‘head.’ There is no listing for *feraz* by itself. Rendering it as ‘pride’ seems to be the most fitting translation.

- (321) *geh sax=e geh westan=e ew* (CX1:14)  
 at.times standing=COP.PRS.3SG at.times kneeling=COP.PRS.3SG 3D  
*geh mûş=e geh zinar=e dil*  
 at.times mûş=COP.PRS.3SG at.times rock=COP.PRS.3SG heart  
 ‘At times it’s standing (strong), at times kneeling (tired), at times it’s *mûş*<sup>127</sup> and at times the heart is a massive rock.’

Also notice the repetitive use of *geh*, ‘at times,’ in these lines. Cegerxwîn uses *geh* in two ways. One, to present **antinomy**, things that are or seem to be opposites to him, such as *Dêrik* and *Wan*, which are cities in the Kurdish area of Turkey. He also uses *geh* to form a group, such as his listing of Berber, Circassian, Turk and Tartar in line 12, shown in (322). It may be that Berber is somehow the opposite of Circassian, and Turk the opposite of Tartar. However, without some help from historians who understand Kurdish history as well as Cegerxwîn’s philosophical stance, I can only presume from the context given that these four people groups are grouped together here as peoples with whom the Kurds engaged in past centuries.

- (322) *geh Berber=e geh Çerkes=e geh* (CX1:12)  
 at.times Berber=COP.PRS.3SG at.times Circassian=COP.PRS.3SG 3D  
*Turk=e geh Tatar=e dil*  
 Turk=COP.PRS.3SG at.times Tatar=COP.PRS.3SG heart  
 ‘At times it’s Berber, at times it’s Circassian, at times it’s Turkish, at times the heart is Tartar.’

Other repetitions were more subtle, such as the phrase *xatwîna min*, ‘my dear,’ repeated five times in Silêman’s *Eşqa Dihokî Ya*, ‘Dohukîan Love.’ The phrase works to keep the reader empathetically engaged in the message of the poem. He also repeated the word *evîn*, ‘love (northern Kurdish),’ eight times and its Arabic equivalent ‘*eşiq*, ‘love (Arabic)’ four times. The poem is a comparison of two juxtaposed loves—not between Kurds and Arabs, but between false love and true love. One love is a counterfit love that he says is present and active in the city of Dohuk, and he describes some of the ways in

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<sup>127</sup> Meaning unknown. *Muş* is the name of a province in the Kurdish area of Turkey, however use of it seems vague here (whereas in the line above there is a comparison drawn between *Dêrik* and *Wan*). According to Omar, *mûş* (with a different vowel) can mean ‘unknown land’ (Omar 1992).

which this false love is carried out. At the end of the poem, Silêman describes what real love consists of.

Quçan repeated the vocative *helo*, translated as ‘eagle,’ five times in his free verse poem *Befir Ya Li Vêrê*, ‘Snow Is Here.’ He also repeated the word *befir*, ‘snow,’ nine times in the poem as he paints a picture of the winter season. In another poem by Quçan, *Birînên Şevên Xwînelo*, ‘Wounds of Night Covered in Blood,’ the word *xwîn*, ‘blood’ and variations of *xwîn* appear 16 times. The repetition works to etch into the mind of the reader just how horrifying were the experiences described throughout the poem.

There were a number of repetitions in Teyb’s poem *Kî Dê Merwa Tena Ket?*, ‘Who Will Comfort Merwa?’ The subject of the poem, the girl *Merwa*, and the vocative, *ey Xudayê Mezin*, ‘O Great God,’ are each repeated four times. Additionally, seven lines begin with the interrogative *kî*, ‘who.’ In these lines the poet is putting forth rhetorical questions that function as requests to God himself, asking him to intervene on Merwa’s behalf. The poem also repeats other images and figures, such as comfort, lack of family, and *kîna reş*, ‘black malice,’ the cause of Merwa’s desperate situation.

Silêvani repeated the title of his prose poem, *Ew Xanîma Henê*,<sup>128</sup> ‘That Woman,’ at the beginning of each of the seven stanzas. Additionally, the second line of each stanza begins with the word *ewa*, ‘she who.’ Repetition is part of the form and serves to emphasize the woman who is the focus of the poem. In each stanza the reader learns something new about her.

In his poem *Dergehê Jîn U Hîvî Ya*, ‘The Door of Life and Hopes,’ Sindî repeated the initial two lines of the poem as a refrain in lines 15 and 16, 31 and 32, and the closing lines, 47 and 48. These lines are reproduced in example (323) below. The repeated lines remind the hearer of the gravity of the issue being presented.

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<sup>128</sup> According to my consultant, the word *henê* is used to “refer to or point to something.” The author could have simply said *xatîma henê*, leaving off the word *ew*, a demonstrative here. Perhaps by using both *ew* and *henê*, the statement is emphatic.

(323) *dergeh-ê jîn u hîvî-a girt-y-Ø-e* (BS4:1, 2)  
 door-EZ.M life and hope-OBL.PL close:PST-PRF-be:PST-3SG

*dîsa çima*

again why

‘The door of life and hopes is closed again, why?’

*ma ji jîn-a kurt=e jîn b-it ma ji*  
 INTRG as life-EZ.F short=COP.PRS.3SG life COP.PRS-3SG INTRG from

*‘emr-ê me çi ma-Ø*

life-EZ.M 1OP what remain.PST-3SG

‘Is it a short life? It's life. What has remained from our life?’

Another repetition in the same poem occurs in lines 42 through 46, just before the end. Each of these lines, shown in (324), begins with the word *nabitin*, a word that seems to function as a modal adjective. Like other modal adjectives, the verb that follows it must have the irrealis prefix, *bi-*. According to my consultant, *nabitin* may be translated as ‘impossible, cannot, is not going to.’<sup>129</sup> Such repetition at the beginning of lines is called **anaphora** (Adams 1997:114) in rhetorical terminology. The repetition builds and then concludes with the refrain in (323), Sindî’s last effort to instill the theme of his poem in the mind of the reader.

(324) *nabitin bu me bi-bîn-în jêr u jur u çep* (BS4:42)  
 not.allowed for 1OP IRR-see.PRS-1PL bottom and top and left

*u rast*

and right

‘It’s impossible for us to see it from bottom and top and left and right.’

*nabitin bu me tewaf-a ew cih-ê lê Mem u* (BS4:42)  
 not.allowed for us worship-EZ.F 3D place-EZ.M in.3OM Mem and

*Zîn*<sup>130</sup>

*Zîn*

‘We can’t go and worship the place of Mem and Zeen.’

<sup>129</sup> The opposite of *nabitin* is *dibitin*.

<sup>130</sup> *Mem* and *Zîn* are the central characters of one of the most famous pieces of Kurdish literature, *Mem U Zîn*, written by Ehmed Xanî, who is mentioned in line 45 of Sindî’s poem.

*nabitin evro bi-bur-în ji tuxîb-ê Xanîqîn* (BS4:44)  
 not.allowed today IRR-pass.PRS-2PL from danger-EZ.M Xanîqîn  
 ‘It’s impossible today for us to pass from the danger of Xanîqîn.’

*nabitin bi-ç-im nik Xanî bu vek-im* (BS4:45)  
 not.allowed IRR-go.PRS-1SG near Xanî for (him) open.PRS-1SG

*dil-ê bi xwîn*  
 heart-EZ.M with blood  
 ‘I can’t go near Xanî and open for him my heart with blood (sadness).’

*nabitin bi-ç-im Dêrsîm-ê bi-kelêş-im* (BS4:46)  
 not.allowed IRR-go.PRS-1SG Dêrsîm-OBL.F IRR-break.body.PRS-1SG

*dil-ê bi evîn*  
 heart-EZ.M with love  
 ‘I can’t go to Dêrsîm and break in two pieces my heart with love.’

Nalbend also used a type of repetition in two of his poems, in which he repeats a large portion of a quatrain in the first line of the following quatrain. In poetic terms, such interlocking repetition—whether in sounds rhymes or words—which connects one stanza to another is called **chaining** (Turco 2000:147). For example, line 36 in *Xoşê Wekî Cenetê*, ‘It’s Wonderful Like Heaven,’ shown in (325), is the last line of a quatrain. Nalbend began the next quatrain with the same words that began the previous line, *ev wetenê*, ‘this country.’

(325) *ev weten-ê dil ħeb-în* (AN2:36, 37)  
 3DN country-EZ.M heart exist.PST-3PL  
 ‘This country that embraces and nourishes the heart.’<sup>131</sup>

*ev weten-ê hu spehî*  
 3DN country-EZ.M so beautiful  
 ‘This country so beautiful.’

The other occurrence of anaphoric chaining in this poem occurs in lines 60 and 61, shown in (326). The first two words of the last line in a quatrain are repeated as the first two words at the beginning of the next quatrain. It seems that the author uses the repetition as a means to continue the same line of thought in the next quatrain.

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<sup>131</sup> Alternative translation by mother-tongue speaker: ‘This heart-welcoming country’ The plural ending *-în* on the verb stem *ħeb*, is confusing, as the subject appears to be singular.

(326) şêr ew=in \_\_\_\_\_ u *sef dirrî-n* (AN2:60, 61)  
 lion 3D=COP.PRS.3PL and line turn.PST-3PL  
 ‘They are lions and they turn in lines.’

şêr ew=in \_\_\_\_\_ u *xurt u mest*<sup>132</sup>  
 lion 3D=COP.PRS.3PL and strong and stimulated  
 ‘They are lions and brave and stimulated (intoxicated with strong emotion).’

Nalbend’s poem *Duhî Spêdê Liser Banî*, ‘Yesterday Morning On The Rooftop,’ contains various kinds of repetitions. In the examples below, the repeated words are underlined as above. In some lines only one word is repeated, such as, *Xudê*, ‘God,’ and *xunav*, ‘dew,’ in (329) and (330). In other places a number of words are repeated, such as the phrase *ji mêlaka me xûn*, ‘from our live blood,’ in (331). Example (327) is an instance of **anadiplosis**, the act of repeating the last word or phrase in a line at the beginning of the next (Adams 1997:115). In (334), another instance of anadiplosis, Nalbend basically repeated the phrase *Xudê da bû*, ‘God created,’ but changed the compound verb *da bû*, ‘created,’ to *kir*, which means ‘made.’ Note that *bela*, ‘trouble, problem,’ also appears in both lines in this example.

(327) *me texm-în kir* \_\_\_\_\_ Zuleyxa<sup>133</sup> bû-Ø (AN1:4, 5)  
 1OP think-1PL do.PST-3SG Zuleykha COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘We thought she was a Zuleyxa.’

Zuleyxa bu-Ø \_\_\_\_\_ *sîfe hûrî*  
 Zuleykha COP.PST-3SG look-EZ.PL huree  
 ‘It was Zuleykha, the looks of a heavenly wife.’

(328) *çû-Ø* \_\_\_\_\_ hal *bu min* \_\_\_\_\_ ne-hêla \_\_\_\_\_ *bû-Ø* (AN1:16, 17)  
 go-PST-3SG state for 1O NEG-leave.PRS.3SG COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘She went; left me feeling crazy (high love/sexual emotion).’

ne-hêla \_\_\_\_\_ *bo kes-ê* \_\_\_\_\_ hal-ek  
 NEG-leave.PRS.3SG for person-EZ.M state-INDF  
 ‘She didn’t leave anyone in peace (made everyone crazy).’

<sup>132</sup> *Mest* can also mean ‘drunk, intoxicated with alcohol.’

<sup>133</sup> According to Islamic tradition, *Zuleyxa* is the name of the Pharoah’s wife, the one who loved the prophet Joseph.

- (329) *Xudê heq taze kêşa bû-Ø* (AN1:20, 21)  
 God freckle fine place COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘God chose a fine place for that freckle.’  
*Xudê suret muneqîqeş kir-Ø*  
 God verse-EZ.PL decorative do.PST-3SG  
 ‘God made decorative caligraphic verse.’
- (330) *sihar-ê zû xunav da=bû-Ø* (AN1:24, 25)  
 morning-EZ.M dew give=COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘Early in the morning it gave dew.’  
*xunav-ê teff kir-in sunbul*  
 mist-EZ.M make-PST-3PL flower.bud  
 ‘The dew made the bud of a flower.’
- (331) *ji mêlak-a me xûn za=bû-Ø* (AN1:28, 29)  
 from liver-EZ.F 1OP blood spring=COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘From our liver sprang blood.’  
*ji mêlak-a me xûn derkir-Ø*  
 from liver-EZ.F 1OP blood flow.PST-3SG  
 ‘From our liver blood poured out.’
- (332) *şil u mil ew muheîya bû-Ø* (AN1:32, 33)  
 beautiful 3D alive COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘Beautiful—she was alive.’  
*şil u mil bû-Ø hemî gava*  
 beautiful COP.PST-3SG all time.  
 ‘Beautiful she was all the time.’
- (333) *hewar<sup>134</sup> u sed hewar babû* (AN1:56, 57)  
 oh.my and hundred oh.my father  
 ‘Oh my! and a hundred oh my’s father!’  
*hewar ez ‘aşq-ê wê me*  
 oh.my 1D love-EZ.M 3OF COP.PRS.1SG  
 ‘Oh my! I am in love with her.’
- (334) *bela bû-Ø ew Xudê da\_bû-Ø* (AN1:64, 65)  
 trouble COP.PST-3SG 3D God create.PST\_COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘Trouble was, God created her.’  
*Xudê kir-Ø bû bela bû me*  
 God make-PST-3SG for problem for 1OP  
 ‘God made her a problem for us.’

<sup>134</sup> A call for help.

(335) *ev-e fexr-a me hemy-a bû-Ø* (AN1:68, 69)  
 3DN-SRM pride-EZ.F 1OP all-OBL.PL COP.PST-3SG  
 ‘This was the pride of all of us.’

*ev-e fexr-a me Kurd-an=e*  
 3DN-SRM pride-EZ.F 1OP Kurd-OBL.PL=COP.PRS.3SG  
 ‘This is the pride of the Kurds.’

Cegerxwîn utilized the same sort of repetition in one line of *Dilê Cegerxwîn*, ‘Cegerxwîn’s Heart.’ In line 7, shown in (336), he repeated the words *naxoş* and *bêzar*, which were used in the second hemistich in line 6, also shown, to describe his ‘heart.’ Furthermore, *pir*, which means ‘quite’ or ‘fully,’ echoes the usage of *hem*, ‘always,’ in line 6. Both words represent the greatest degree in their domains of time and quantity. We could also refer to this as a miniature **chiasmus** (defined in §5.4.1.4.4), since Cegerxwîn reversed the order of *naxoş* and *bêzar*. The subject *ew* in line 7 is a referent of *dil* at the end of line 6; hence, the subject is also repeated in 7. This repetition works to emphasize the condition of the author’s heart, in hope of spawning empathy in the reader.

(336) *her gav u her êvarê min, naxoş u hem* (CX1:6)  
 every morning and every evening 1O, unwell and always

*bêzar=e dil*  
 despondent=COP.PRS.3SG heart  
 ‘Every morning and every evening of mine, the heart is unwell and always despondent.’

*bêzar u pir naxoş=e ew, kincên sîyeh –* (CX1:7)  
 despondent and quite unwell=COP.PRS.3SG 3D garments mourning –

*gûn<sup>135</sup> – poş=e ew*  
 manner sorrowful= COP.PRS.3SG it  
 ‘It is despondent and quite unwell, dressed in mourning garments; it is sorrowful.’

A final significant repetitional scheme was found in Sindî’s *Gerîanek Di Kurdistanê Da*, ‘A Walk Through Kurdistan.’ At the beginning of each verse, he says that he ‘went,’ *çum*, ‘came,’ *hatim* or ‘searched for,’ *gerîam*, some place, and there he met someone (or a metaphoric “someone” or a group of people represented as one

<sup>135</sup> I am unsure how *kincên sîyeh* and *gûn* fit into the phrases. The translation for *gûn* is questionable. The dashes (–) are part of the original text.

person).<sup>136</sup> Then he asks the “someone” a series of questions. The end of each stanza contains the answers to the questions by the “someone” he is speaking with. In the final line, the “someone” states that he or she fell (*ketîme*) into some bad situation.<sup>137</sup> So there is repetition of words as well as form in each verse, which provides balance in the poem.

#### 5.4.1.4.2 Grammatical parallelism

According to Turco (2000:9), “parallel sentence structures are constructional schemes, and the prosody that uses them is called **grammatical parallelism**.” Turco was applying these terms specifically regarding prose poetry. Mesud Xalaf’s *Dahola Êşê*, ‘Drum of Pain,’ a prose poem, contains one such parallelism in lines 30 and 31, shown in (337). The parallelism works to give each line equal weight. Both are passive sentences beginning with the predicate and followed by the subject, a very uncommon constituent order for prose poetry. Normal word order for line 30 is *aşûpên bextewariyê bijale bûn*. The fronting of the predicates potentially works to make them more salient in the mind of the reader. But details regarding how foregrounding actually works in Northern Kurdish is an area requiring further research.

(337) *bijale*                    *bû-n*                    *aşûp-ên*                    *bextewar-yê*                    (MX:30)  
 scatter.PST.PTCP COP.PST-3PL    visions-EZ.PL    happiness-OBL.F  
 ‘The visions of the happiness were scattered.’

*hat-in=e*                    *kuşt-in*                    *pirpirîk-ên*                    *deng-ê*                    (MX:31)  
 become.PST-3PL=DIR    kill.PST.PTCP-3PL    butterfly-EZ.PL    sound-EZ.M

*agir-ê*                    *birîndar*  
 fire-EZ.M    wound.PST.PTCP  
 ‘The butterflies of the sound of wounded fire were killed.’

Similarly, recall the discussion of lines 11 and 12 from Sindî’s *Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*, ‘Memories of Immortal Barzanî,’ in §5.4.1.1.1, repeated below in (338). In these lines, Sindî placed the subject after the verb. In line 11, *şîn bibin*, ‘grow,’ comes

<sup>136</sup> In the third verse he meets himself.

<sup>137</sup> The end of the last verse varies from the norm. In this instance, the city (not a person) responds by stating her resolve to stand forever with Barzanî against those who mistreat the Kurdish people.



*digel elind-î hişîar\_di-bu-în*  
 with dawn-OBL.M wake.up\_IPFV-be.PST-1PL  
 'With the dawn we were waking up.'

Neo-classical poetry within this corpus also contained additional grammatical parallelisms. Consider example (340), two lines previously seen in §5.4.1.4.1 on repetition. Notice the similarity in the structure of the lines. In both, the poet states that (1) he cannot go; (2) to some place (near Xanî/Dersîm); (3) to do some action (open/break); (4) his heart; (5) with some thing (blood/love). The near grammatical parallelism creates balance between the lines, allowing the reader to understand that Sindî finds the prohibition described in each line equally distressing.

(340) *nabitin bi-ç-im nik Xanî bu vek-im* (BS4:45)  
 not.allowed IRR-go.PRS-1SG near Xanî for (him) open.PRS-1SG

*dil-ê bi xwîn*  
 heart-EZ.M with blood  
 'I can't go near Xanî and open for him my heart with blood (sadness).'

*nabitin bi-ç-im Dêrsîm-ê bi-kelêş-im* (BS4:46)  
 not.allowed IRR-go.PRS-1SG Dersîm-OBL.F IRR-break.body.PRS-1SG

*dil-ê bi evîn*  
 heart-EZ.M with love  
 'I can't go to Dersîm and break in two pieces my heart with love.'

In another grammatical parallelism by Sindî, shown in (341), the parallelism works together with the rhyme scheme. The first half of each line begins with the people and is followed by an attributive phrase. Note that the description of the people in the second line is metaphorical. The second half of each line, while slightly different grammatically, contains a rich description of the people. Both lines end with *tene*. The second line, being a continuation of a description of the Kurdish people, is perhaps best understood as a **figure of amplification**. Adams writes, "figures of amplification extend the meanings of an otherwise plain statement, building a sense of magnitude, and sometimes generating further levels of figuration" (1997:117). The descriptions of the Kurdish people in both halves of line 18 deepen our knowledge of the poet's opinion of those who supported their now deceased leader, Mustafa Barzanî.

(341) *mililet-ê Kurd pir wefa=ye sufî-ên dest-ên* (BS1:17, 18)  
 people-EZ.M Kurd so loyal=COP.PRS.3SG Sufi-EZ.PL hands-EZ.PL

*te=ne*

2O=COP.PRS.3PL

‘Kurdish people are so loyal; they are the Sufis of your hands’

*ruh ji êş-an pir sema=ye<sup>141</sup> ‘aşiq u*  
 soul of pain-OBL.PL full dance=COP.PRS.3SG lover and

*mest<sup>142</sup>-ên te=ne*

stimulated.one-EZ.PL 2O=COP.PRS.3PL

‘The pained soul is full of dancing; they are your lovers and stimulated ones (intoxicated with strong emotion).’

The two lines previous to the example above, shown in (342), also exhibit a degree of grammatical parallelism. Both lines contain a four-part noun phrase that takes up the second half of each line. Each four-part noun phrase is made up of pairs of opposites. In line 15, the noun phrase consists of *çep u rast u jor u jêr*, ‘left and right and up and down,’ a description of the directions from which people came to grieve the loss of Mustafa Barzanî. The noun phrase in line 16 consists of a description of the people who were doing the grieving, *kal u genc u jin u mêr*, ‘old and adolescent and woman and man.’ The first halves of each line are also structurally parallel. Both lines begin with noun phrases consisting of two nouns connected by the conjunction *u*, ‘and.’ Line 15 begins with *şînyî u tazî*, ‘mourning and condolence;’ line 16 begins with *şev u roj*, ‘night and day.’ Both of these are followed by a word meaning ‘people,’ *xelkî* and *gelî* (*gelî* happens to be in a prepositional phrase, *ji gelî*), as well as the copula *bûn*. Hence, the whole of line 16 is basically grammatically parallel with line 15.

(342) *şînyî u tazî ji gel-î bû-n çep u* (BS1:15)  
 mourning and condolence from people-OBL.M COP.PST-3PL left and

*rast u jor u jêr*  
 right and up and down

‘There was mourning and condolence from people, from the left to right and up to down.’

<sup>141</sup> *Sema* here means ‘dance, dancing’ or ‘heaven, arch of heaven/sky’ (Omar 1992).

<sup>142</sup> *Mest* is also the word meaning ‘drunk, intoxicated with alcohol.’

*şev u roj xelk-î girî bû-n kal* (BS1:16)  
 night and day people-OBL.M cry.PRS.PTCP COP.PST-3PL old

*u genc u jin u mêr*  
 and adolescent and woman and man

‘Night and day people were crying, old and adolescent, women and men.’

Two other lines in the same poem seem to exhibit an intentional parallel. The subject of line 9, shown in (343), consists of three nouns, *cihêl*, *pîr* and *jin*, ‘young,’ ‘old,’ and ‘woman.’ These describe *me*, 1OP, the pronoun that precedes these nouns. Line 10, also shown, ends with a prepositional phrase containing three nouns, *mezar*, *Înis* and *cin*, ‘grave,’ ‘(prophet) *Înis*’ and ‘evil spirit.’ Thus, the part of the structure that is parallel consists of noun + *u* + noun + *u* + noun. While this is a less significant grammatical parallelism, it does seem clearly intentional on part of the poet. It is an attempt to create syntactic similarity in conjunction with the phonological similarity of *jin* and *cin*.

(343) *ayet-a Kursî ji\_berkir-Ø me cihêl u pîr* (BS1:9, 10)  
 verse-EZ.F *Kursî* memorize.PST-3SG 1OP young and old

*u jin*  
 and woman

‘We—young, old, and women—memorized the *Kursî* verse.’

*me du’a bu-Ø şev u ruj-an ji mezar u Înis u*  
 1OP prayer COP.PST-3SG night and day-OBL.PL from grave and *Înis* and

*cin*  
 evil.spirit

‘We prayed (wished) night and day to grave and (prophet) *Înis* and evil spirit.’

Lastly, Nalbend’s *Kiçek Me Divêt*, ‘We Want A Girl,’ exhibits grammatical parallelism in lines 23 and 24, shown in (344). The parallelism here is not only grammatical similarity. It may also be considered antithetically parallel. In line 23, the poet is stating what the woman wants from the poet. In line 24, the poet, speaking in the first person plural, is telling the woman what he and other men want from her. The pronouns, verbs and objects parallel each other across the lines. However, in line 23, instead of using the 1D pronoun *ez* with *bidem*, ‘I give,’ to parallel with *tu*, 2D, in line 24, Nalbend chose to use the optional relativizer *ku*, ‘that,’ as it rhymes with *tu*.

(344) *te di-vêt ku bi-de-m te mirç u* (AN5:23)  
 2O IPFV-want.PRS-3SG that IRR-give.PRS-1SG 2O kiss and

*maç-a*

louder.kiss-OBL.PL

‘You want me to give you kisses and smooches.’

*me di-vêt-Ø tu bi-de-y me zixt* (AN5:24)  
 1OP IPFV-want.PRS-3SG 2D IRR-give.PRS-2SG 1OP nail.on.end.of.oxgoad

*u xişt-î*

and staff-OBL.M

‘We want you to give us pressure (pounding heart) and a staff.’

#### 5.4.1.4.3 Synthesis

Thus far in my discussion of parallelisms, I have focused on syntactic parallels. In this section, I highlight some lines of poetry that are semantically parallel. In the last example, (344), I mentioned that the lines may be considered as being antithetical, as it seems that Nalbend was expressing opposing ideas. In discourse terms, this parallel would be called **base-contrast**, where the second line contrasts with the first line, the base.

Turco describes **synthesis** as a parallel structure of consequence, providing the example, “I love you; therefore, I am yours” (Turco 2000:9). These two clauses may be more specifically defined as having the causal semantic relation of **ground-conclusion**, where the first clause, ‘I love you,’ provides the basis or evidence for the conclusion in the second clause, ‘therefore, I am yours.’ Ground-conclusion is just one of many terms Wendland uses to describe causal relations (Wendland 2002a:98).

The first four lines of *Dilê Cegerxwîn*, ‘Cegerxwîn’s Heart,’ previously discussed to illustrate syntactic repetition, contain four examples of synthesis that build on one another to lay a foundation for the rest of the poem. All four lines are shown in (345). The discourse term to more specifically describe the semantic relation between each line’s two clauses would be **reason-result**, rather than ground-conclusion, the term for Turco’s example. Wendland (2002a:98) describes a reason-result relation as, “Because one event happens, therefore another occurs.” The first half of each line speaks of the

atrocities carried out upon the homeland of Kurdistan. The second half of each line speaks of the disastrous effect it has had on the author. Such repetition and balance in the initial four lines of the poem work to prepare the reader for balance throughout the poem, which Cegerxwîn delivers on, albeit through other poetic devices discussed elsewhere in this paper.

(345) *agir bi Kurdistan-ê ket-Ø lewra hawar=e* (CX1:1)  
 fire in Kurdistan-OBL.F devastate.PST-3SG thus cry.for.help=COP.PRS.3SG

*dil*

heart

‘Kurdistan ravaged by fire, thus my heart is a cry for help.’

*sed baḫ u sed bistan-î ket-Ø* (CX1:2)  
 hundred garden and hundred meadow-OBL.M devastate.PST-3SG

*manendî bilbil jar=e dil*  
 like nightingale miserable=COP.PRS.3SG heart

‘A hundred gardens and a hundred meadows devastated—I, dejected, like a disheartened nightingale.’

*pêt-ek ji Kurdistan-ê hat-Ø, mêalik u cerg-ê* (CX1:3)  
 flame.INDF from Kurdistan-OBL.F come.PST-3SG lung and liver-EZ.M

*min di-pat-Ø*

me IPFV-burn.PST-3SG

‘A flame came from Kurdistan, burning my lung and liver.’

*aman welat, aman welat, bawer\_bi-k-in xwînxwar=e* (CX1:4)  
 alas home alas home believe\_IRR-do.PRS-IMP.PL terrible=COP.PRS.3SG

*dil*

heart

‘Alas my home, alas my home—believe me, (my) heart is terrible!’

#### 5.4.1.4.4 Chiasmus

**Chiasmus** is a parallel or antithetical structure that repeats terms in inverse order (Adams 1997:111). The following English example from Turco shows an inverse parallelism based on similarity.

(346) I vied with the wind, she fought the air, (Turco 2000:12)  
 and as she lost, I was victorious.

The chiasmus in Cegerxwîn's *Dînê Me Tête Zanîn*, 'Our Religion Is Becoming Known,' is based on antithesis, focusing on difference rather than similarity. In the second half of line 5, shown in (347), there is prepositional phrase that contains a list of areas of knowledge the elders possessed. The phrase comes after the verb. All of the nouns in the prepositional phrase are Arabic words by intention. In line 6, also shown, a list in a prepositional phrase comes at the beginning of the line, before the verb. I have underlined each list for ease of reference. In this instance, the description characterizes the situation of the common folk, who were left ignored by the elders. The elders are being rebuked here, not just for ignoring the people, but for ignoring their own language. The term **base-contrast** best describes the semantic relation expressed by these lines (2002a:98). Hence, this specific chiasmus exhibits both syntactic and semantic levels of parallelism.

(347) *xwe pîr di-k-in di wez'ê hem sirif u* (CX3:5)  
 REFL aged IPFV-do.PRS-3PL in morphology all grammar and

*ni'hu u mintiq*  
 syntax and logic

'They make themselves old (season themselves) in morphology, syntax and logic (in Arabic).'

*bê zar u xet u xwendin, li nav xelk-ê* (CX3:6)  
 without language and script and literacy into people-EZ.M

*dewar-in*

herd=COP.PRS.3PL

'We, the herd of people are without language, script and ability to read.'

Example (348) visually represents this chiasmus.

(348) religious leaders  
       aspects of language (in Arabic)  
       aspects of language (in Northern Kurdish)  
       common people

#### 5.4.1.5 Neologisms

Adams (1997:131) states that **neologisms** "are the creative acts of diction, the minting of new words." Sometimes a new word may be a combination of two words or a

variation on an existing word (Adams 1997:132). I did not find a single neologism in the poems of this corpus. While analyzing the poems, I sometimes thought that I had found a newly created word. However, I eventually learned through a native speaker that the word was known by speakers of Northern Kurdish. Adams (1997) also writes, “poets have a legacy of such creations, often quite memorable.” I must remind the reader how small this corpus is, and that the poems selected for analysis are only a subset of those collected. A greater inventory of Northern Kurdish poetry would be needed before determining whether or not poets are using neologisms for expressing ideas in their poetry.

#### 5.4.1.6 Shortened phrases

In the following examples, words or word combinations were shortened, probably to help the poet meet a desired number of syllables. The missing parts are in parentheses. In (349), the command *were*, ‘come,’ is missing the final vowel, *e*. No resource that I have seen mentions *wer* as a short form of *were*. Nor have I personally observed its usage in everyday conversation. Even if *wer* is spoken, it is not the form common to literature. Sindî would therefore be using a colloquial term in his poem. In (350), the word *ji* takes on the meaning of *ji ber* or *ji ber hindê*, ‘because.’ It does not mean what *ji* typically means in isolation, a preposition meaning ‘from, of, out of, made of.’

(349) *were*(*e*)      *bi-xuîn-in*      *ey heval-an*      *ayet-a*      *xuş*      (BS1:38)  
 come.IMP.SG    IRR-read.PRS-IMP.PL    O    friend-OBL.PL    verse-EZ.F    good

*hîmet-ê*

effort-OBL.F

‘Come, read, O friends, with us the (poetic) verse of good effort.’

(350) *kew-ek*      *bu-∅*      *lê*      *ne-çu-∅*      *rav-ê*      (MT:11)  
 partridge-INDF    COP.PST-3SG    but    NEG-go.PST-3SG    hunting-OBL.F

*ji (ber) kewgiran*<sup>143</sup>      *ne-kew\_gir*      *bu-∅*

because hunter      not-partridge\_catcher      COP.PST-3SG

‘He was a partridge but he didn’t go hunting because for the hunters this partridge

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<sup>143</sup> Literally ‘partridge hunter.’

is not a hunter.’<sup>144</sup>

## 5.5 Summary

In this chapter I analyzed the corpus of poems in Appendix A on two levels. On the phonological level, I discussed verse forms (§5.3.1), syllable count (§5.3.2) and various types of rhyme (§5.3.3). A couple of the more uncommon findings include an innovative form for rhymed verse (§5.3.1.4), multisyllabic rhyming sequence (§5.3.3.1.3), and the presence of consonant and vowel feature rhyme (§5.3.3.1.5). On the syntactic level, I demonstrated that Northern Kurdish poets sometimes deviate from normal constituency order at both the sentence and phrasal levels (§5.4.1.1). I also discussed instances of ellipsis, some of which are natural in the language (§5.4.1.2). In some situations, discussed in §5.4.1.3, a poet was found to have capitalized on certain freedoms in the language, such as the placement of an adverbial clause. In other situations, I conjectured that I found instances where poets utilized a word from a subdialect of Northern Kurdish that is likely outside their particular area—that is, outside their own spoken language. In §5.4.1.4 where I discuss constructional schemes, the dialogue is dominated by instances of repetition. I also provide in this section examples of parallelism, a less common feature in Northern Kurdish poetry. Lastly, I discuss the issues of neologism (§5.4.1.5) and shortened phrases (§5.4.1.6). The analysis as the whole provides the reader with many insights concerning poetic features in Northern Kurdish poetry.

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<sup>144</sup> A partridge hunter uses a partridge to catch other partridges.

## 6. Application and concluding remarks

In this chapter, I apply what I have learned through the analysis in Chapter 5 to the translation of a short poem into Northern Kurdish, specifically, the Bahdini subdialect, while also drawing from §2.2 on translating poetry. The poem I chose to translate is *Allah* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882). I was not able to ascertain why Longfellow chose the name *Allah*, the Arabic word for ‘God.’ The poem *Allah* was appreciated enough by George Whitefield Chadwick (1854-1931) that he set it to music and published the song in 1887 (Chadwick 1887:2, 3). I thought the poem ideal to translate as it was written in quatrains, similar to verse forms found in the Neo-classical poems in the corpus. Additionally, I liked the subject matter of the poem and found the content and grammar simple enough for producing a translation.

My reasoning for translating *Allah* into verse form is two-fold. First, after considering what others have said about translating verse poetry—specifically, those mentioned in §2.2—I find myself in agreement with Holmes (1988), Thorley (1920), von Willamowitz-Moellendorff (1992), Boeger (1997 and 2009) and others who would prefer to see the metapoem matched to an appropriate form in the receptor language. This was what Holmes proposed in the discussion of his meta-literature model, presented in Figure 1 in §2.2.4.1, where options for interpretation of a poem are scaled against options for poetic translations. In this model, the metapoem lies at the intersection of interpretation and poetry. The closest interpretation option is the production of a prose translation. This option was considered by Holmes to be insufficient, because a strictly prose translation—as opposed to prose poetry—is not poetry. On the other side of the metapoem is the imitation of a poem, which is viewed as being a poem, but one that strays too far from an ideal interpretation of the original.

As I see it, verse poetry depends on certain poetic devices, as does prose poetry, and, certainly, some of these devices are used in both styles. But to retain the *poetic effects* in the original poem, it seems logical to employ as many of the original's poetic devices as possible within the translated poem, cf., Boerger's first and second principles for the translation of poetry (1997:36; 2009:17), discussed in §2.2.4.3. If the poetic devices in the original are inappropriate or not reproducible in the receptor language, then devices common to the receptor language should be employed. Such a decision aligns with Boerger's fourth principle. Hence, I do not agree with Donaldson (1975), or Murry (1969:129), who said that "poetry should always be rendered into prose."

The second reason I chose to write a verse translation is the audience. While most writers of poetry in Northern Iraq are writing prose poems these days, I am not convinced that prose poetry is the style preferred by the general public. My opinion is based on the many conversations I had while in Northern Iraq. While some people would mention various prose poets during our conversations, it is the poets of the Classical and Neo-classical styles that received the highest praise—especially from poets themselves! I do wonder why most poets have so quickly abandoned the Neo-classical style. It seems to have developed out of a desire to leave the past behind and grab hold of everything new. My interview with Mihsin Quçan was most enlightening in this regard. Events over the last two decades have drastically changed the lives of the people of Northern Iraq. To write freely—in free verse—is perhaps just one of the many ways people are expressing their newfound freedoms. But I have opted to utilize a verse form familiar to Northern Kurdish speakers, believing that there is still a vast readership for poetry of the Neo-classical style.

With respect to Holmes' four approaches to verse translation, as discussed in §2.2.4.1.2, I chose to produce an "analogous form," to translate the poem into a verse form known in the receptor language. I personally felt that a verse form familiar to the people would provide a wider readership and be well received. With consideration to Holmes' "retention versus modernization" model, discussed in §2.2.4.2, my decision was to retain, or "historicize," on the verse level, but use a form common to poetry in the

receptor language. With regard to the linguistic level, no attempt was made to use older language and every attempt was made to use pure Northern Kurdish in the translations, which is presently the norm among Northern Kurdish poets. These decisions may be viewed as modernizing on the linguistic level. Regarding the socio-cultural level, I did not find that the subject matter of the poem provided much opportunity for historicizing or modernizing. Even if there were situations that could be modernized, I would likely prefer to retain socio-cultural aspects of a poem, as I feel they would provide some of the more interesting features of the poem. Undoubtedly, some who do not believe in God may not appreciate the poem. But to change “God” to “It” for such an audience would certainly be inappropriate, as God is the central figure of the poem, and the lines speak of his character and intervention in the affairs of humankind.

I was fortunate to receive the help of Perwer Shushi, a poet in her own right, who is actively writing in the Neo-classical style. She possesses a B.A. in journalism from an American university and works as a writer and editor. Though she presently lives in the United States, she remains very connected to her homeland in Northern Iraq. Having become familiar with Northern Kurdish poets from Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Europe, she has a profound knowledge of the language and how it differs by location.

My work with Shushi began by providing her with my own translation of the poem, which tended toward being more “literal.” After making some adjustments as per Shushi’s recommendations, we reached the version found in (351). I will discuss this version before moving on to Shushi’s own translation of the poem in (352).

### ***6.1 My version of Allah, after Shushi’s input***

The rhyme scheme that I used in my version of the poem in (351) is AAXA, BBXB, CCXC, where the X line is free of end rhyme (see §5.3.1.1). The syllable structure for each quatrain is 11-11-10-11. In my original version, I attempted to keep the syllable count consistent in every line. However, I learned from Shushi that Northern Kurdish poets, such as Cegerxwîn, often reduce the syllable count of the line that is free from end rhyme by one syllable. For the reader and listener, it gives the poem a sort of

‘break,’ as Shushi described it to me. The break adds a pleasing aesthetic feature to the rhythm of the quatrain. This conforms to Boerger’s fourth principle, that borrowed forms are often modified to conform to receptor language practices (1997:37). Concerning rhyme, I only attempted to rhyme the final syllable of each line. If I had chosen Holmes’ “mimetic form” approach (§2.2.4.1.2), I would have applied Longfellow’s form to the translation, with syllable counts for the three quatrains being 7-6-7-6, 9-7-8-6, 7-6-7-6, and the rhyme scheme being XBXB, CDCD, XEXE.

In the discussion that follows, I convey modifications that were made to my original translation (not shown) so that the reader may understand some aspects of the decision-making process. Some modifications were made by me while others were made by way of Shushi’s recommendations.

(351) Allah gives light in darkness,

*Xwedê çira li\_nav tarî-yê di-d-et*  
 God light in.midst.of darkness-OBL.F IMPV-give.PRS-3SG  
 ‘God gives light in the midst of darkness,’

Allah gives rest in pain,

*Xwedê aram-î li\_nav derd-an di-d-et*  
 God rest-OBL.M in.midst.of pain-OBL.PL IMPV-give.PRS-3SG  
 ‘God gives rest in the midst of pain,’

Cheeks that are white with weeping

*Wext-ê ru spî bun ji\_ber girî-yê*  
 when-OBL.M cheek white become because.of crying-OBL.F  
 ‘When cheeks become white because of crying,’

Allah paints red again.

*Xwedê dîsa bi sorr-î boyax di-k-et*  
 God again with red-OBL.M dye IMPV-do.PRS-3SG  
 ‘God dyes the red again.’

\*

The flowers and the blossoms wither,

*Gul u kulîlk-ên buhar-ê di-wêry-in,*  
 flower and blossom-EZ.PL spring-OBL.M IMPV-wither.PRS-3PL  
 ‘The flowers and blossoms of spring wither,’

Years vanish with flying fleet

*Hemî sal tim belez av\_u\_av di-ç-in*

every year EMPH quickly down.the.river IMPV-go.PRS-3PL  
 ‘Every year quickly goes down the river’

But my heart will live on forever,  
*Belê dil-ê min dê her\_u\_her j-ît,*  
 but heart-EZ.M 1O will forever live.PRS-3SG  
 ‘But my heart will liver forever,’

That here in sadness beat  
*ku li vêrê melûlî lê\_da-Ø li min*  
 that at here sadness beat.PST-3SG in 1O  
 ‘that here in me sadness beats’

\*

Gladly to Allah's dwelling  
*Bi keyfî ez dê ç-im=a mal-a Xwedê*  
 with happiness 1D will go.PRS-1SG=DIR home-EZ.F God  
 ‘With happiness I will go to the home of God’

Yonder would I take flight  
*Ez hez di-k-im bi-firr-im=a li wêrê*  
 1D desire IMPV-do.PRS-1SG IRR-fly.PRS-1SG=DIR LOC there  
 ‘I desire to fly there’

There will the darkness vanish,  
*Li wêrê tarîtî dê winda b-it*  
 LOC there darkness will vanish COP.PRS-3SG  
 ‘There darkness will vanish,’

There will my eyes have sight.  
*Bînahî dê hê-t-e çav-an li qad-ê*  
 sight will come.FUT-3SG-DIR eye-OBL.PL in open.space-OBL.F  
 ‘Sight will come to the eyes in the open space.’

In the first quatrain, my original poem was missing the imperfective aspect marker, *di-*, on the verbs *det*, ‘give’ and *ket*, ‘do’ at the end of the first, second and fourth lines. Because Shushi used the aspect marker in her version, and seeing that these actions are indeed imperfective aspect, I added the affix. However, this put me over the syllable count in those lines. For the first line, Shushi recommended changing *ronahî*, ‘light,’ which has three syllables, to a synonym, *çira*. Regarding my use of the preposition(s) *li nav*, Shushi agreed that it was correct but also said that I could have used *di nav...da*. Use of the circumposition *di nav...da* would have provided the same meaning, but would have increased the syllable count by one.

In the second line, we had multiple options for the words for ‘rest’ and ‘pain,’ and so the decisions were not difficult. In order to reduce the syllable count, I changed *tenahî*, ‘rest,’ to Shushi’s suggestion, *aram*. In the third line of the quatrain, we were left in a quandary after adding the required feminine oblique ending, *-yê*, to the final word *girî*, ‘crying,’ for the syllable count was now too great. I inquired about changing *bune spî*, ‘become white,’ which was utilizing the directional enclitic (DIR), *e*, on *bun*, to simply *bun spî*. Shushi replied that people do not always speak the *e* enclitic, so that would work. I also asked if there was a difference between the order: *bun spî* and *spî bun*. She said that in this instance, *spî* sounds nicer before *bun*, though both are grammatically correct. With *spî* before *bun*, the directional enclitic is not an option. Lastly, in the fourth line, Shushi recommended using the verb *boyax diket*, ‘dye.’ This made more sense to her than the literal translation of the verb *sibix diket*, ‘paint.’ *Boyax diket* is the verb used by women when putting henna on their skin, or for dyeing cloth.

In the second quatrain, I needed more syllables in the first line and chose to add the word *buhar*, ‘spring.’ It seemed an appropriate addition since the blossoms and flowers of the spring months are the ones that vanish quickly. The addition does not really take away anything, nor add much, to the overall image of the line, and corresponds to Boerger’s eighth principle discussed in §2.2.4.3, which allows for adjustments in word choices to accommodate the form (2009:17), in this case the number of syllables per line. Shushi also provided me with the word for ‘wither,’ *diwêryin*, a word which was not in my dictionaries. In the second line of the quatrain, I struggled to find enough syllables. I settled for the use of an idiom, *av u av diçin*, which I found in the translation of Hisin Silêvanî’s poem *Ew Xanîma Henê*, ‘That Woman.’ This decision accords with Boerger’s sixth principle (1997:38), which allows for the alteration or insertion of target language metaphorical imagery, as long as meaning is preserved. This idiom is a metaphor for something that quickly ‘disappears’ by falling into a river and

quickly floating away downstream.<sup>145</sup> As Shushi did not argue for its removal, I left it in because of the number of syllables it provided compared to alternatives. Needing one more syllable for the line, Shushi recommended using an emphatic word *tim*, a word I was not familiar with. Chyet (2003) lists *tim* as meaning ‘always’ and ‘often, frequently.’ However, a friend of mine affirmed Shushi’s explanation saying, “It is a rather poetic word just used for emphasis—no more, no less.” I also had the option of using the words *gelek zî*, ‘very fast,’ in place of *belez*, ‘quickly,’ as *gelek zî* offers an additional syllable. Having this option is ideal in case the idiom that I used needs to be changed.

For the third line of the second quatrain, I had an option of using either *habît*, ‘exist,’ or *jît*, ‘live.’ Shushi felt that both words convey the same meaning in this sentence. Having changed to a 10-syllable count for the third line in each quatrain—the non-rhyming line—I chose to use *jît* over *habît*. Also, regarding syllable count, I was able to use *belê*, ‘but,’ as opposed to *lê*, which also means ‘but.’ If I wanted to change the verb to *habît*, whatever the reason, I would be able to use *lê* to retain the syllable count.

In Northern Kurdish, there is one characteristic of the language that can be either helpful or challenging for the metapoet. Verbs naturally come at the end of a sentence, the general constituent order being SOV (see §4.4.1.2). When the person, number and tense remain consistent, the verb endings naturally rhyme. Prepositional phrases that might naturally occur after a verb can often be moved to another location in the sentence, as discussed in §5.4.1.3.7. However, if a change occurs with the person, number or tense, the ending on the verb changes and some other means for rhyming the line must be found. Such is the situation in the final line of the second quatrain. Not only does the number change for this line but also the tense of the verb. After much discussion about this line, we decided to retain, from my original translation, the prepositional phrase *li min*, ‘in me,’ at the end for the rhyme. Lacking words to correctly describe the beating of a heart, Shushi offered *lê da*, which literally means ‘strike, hit, beat.’ It is a word people

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<sup>145</sup> I would need to ask more native speakers to make sure usage of this idiom is appropriate for the given context.

use to describe a situation where the heart beats faster than normal, such as being scared or shocked. However, Shushi feels that the line, while understandable, comes across as a bit awkward. As we will see in Shushi's version of the poem, more creativity may need to be employed. Lastly, I should mention that *ku* in this line is required, not optional, as is often the case (see §5.4.1.3.5).

In the first line of the final quatrain, I needed more syllables and chose to use a verb *çim*, 'I go,' which is used to express what will happen to the soul after death. I also included the subject pronoun *ez*, 1D, which does not need to be included (see §5.4.1.2.1 on anaphoric subject pronoun ellipsis). I also included the directional enclitic, *a*. In the second line, I had begun with *min divê*t, 'I want.' However, needing another syllable—and desiring something more expressive to capture the sense of 'would' in this line, which is being used to express intention or inclination—Shushi recommended *ez ĥez dikim*, 'I desire,' which provides a bit of the emotive element that was missing. Struggling to find a rhyme to end this line, I moved *li werê*, 'there,' to the end (see §5.4.1.3.7), settling for the similarity between the consonants *r* and *d* in *wêrê* and *Xwedê*, 'God.' The sounds represented by the letters *r* and *d* are produced at the same alveolar place of articulation, and both are voiced. The only difference is the manner of articulation; one is a flap and the other a plosive, respectfully. This is similar to the sound play discussed in §5.3.3.1.3 on multisyllabic rhyming sequence.

In the third line, Shushi was able to provide me an alternate word for 'darkness,' *taritê*, which has one more syllable than *tarê*, the word I had used. She also recommended using *winda bit* for 'vanish,' as she was not familiar with the word I used from Chyet's (2003) dictionary. The final line of the poem was very difficult to rhyme. I had settled for *bînahîyê*, 'sight.' However, after working with Shushi, we decided to change the line by making 'sight' the subject, and Shushi came up with the word *qad*, which means 'field' or 'open space.' With the feminine oblique ending, *-ê*, *qadê* would rhyme with *Xwedê*. The image has been changed slightly, which is advocated by Boerger in her sixth principle regarding metaphorical imagery (1997:38). But, even though the *qad* is metaphorical here, it still conveys the central image—that when one is finally with God,

sight will be free, without life’s limitations. One may simply view the added metaphorical imagery as an explication of the original image.

Overall, both Shushi and I were pleased with the end result in (351). The translation can be said to be a true metapoem, remains close to the original, and in no place does it stray enough to be considered an imitation. Perhaps a couple lines slightly qualify for a “creative translation.” However, the use of a couple explications and an idiom are certainly within the bounds of what a metapoet—as defined by Holmes (1988), Boerger (1997, 2009) and others—is permitted to do when producing a metapoem.

## 6.2 *Shushi’s version of Allah*

For her version of *Allah*, shown in (352), Shushi (2012) chose to use the same verse form that I had used for my more “literal” version: AAXA, BBXB, CCXC. Her syllable structure for each quatrain is 12-12-11-12. As mentioned, in this verse form Shushi prefers to reduce the number of syllables in the third line—the line free from rhyme—by one, a common poetic device of Northern Kurdish poets. One particularly nice feature about Shushi’s version is that she produced end rhymes with two syllables, which provides a nicer reading than my version which rhymes only one syllable. I should also mention that Shushi did not make her own version “from scratch,” but, having read and provided feedback on my version, she created a more readable, better sounding poem. Hence, Shushi’s version exhibits similar features of my version. She used an “analogous form,” as discussed in §2.2.4.1.2. In relation to Holmes’ “retention versus modernization” model, she chose to historicize on the level of verse form and modernize on linguistic level. Regarding the socio-cultural level, the subject matter did not provide many features for historicizing or modernizing.

- (352) Allah gives light in darkness,  
*Xwedê ruhî-yê li\_nav tarî-yê di-d-et*  
 God light-EZ.M in.midst.of darkness-OBL.F IMPV-give.PRS-3SG  
 ‘God gives light in the midst of darkness’
- Allah gives rest in pain,  
*Xwedê aram-î li\_nav jarî-yê di-d-et*

God rest-OBL.M in.midst.of misery-OBL.F IMPV-give.PRS-3SG  
 ‘God gives rest in the midst of misery.’

Cheeks that are white with weeping

*Ew rûy-ên spî buîn ji\_ber girîyan-ê*  
 Those cheek-EZ.PL white become.PST-3PL because.of crying-OBL.F  
 ‘Those cheeks that became white because of crying’

Allah paints red again.

*Xwedê bi reng-ê sorr dişan rewşen di-k-et*  
 God with color-EZ.M red again illuminate IMPV-make.PRS-3SG  
 ‘God illuminates with the color of red again.’

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The flowers and the blossoms wither,

*Gul û kulîlk-ên buhar-ê her di-weş-in*  
 flower and blossom-EZ.PL spring all IMPV-wither.PRS-3PL  
 ‘The flowers and blossoms of spring all wither,’

Years vanish with flying fleet

*Sal tim berze di-b-in u bi lez di-meş-in*  
 year always vanish IMPV-be.PRS-3PL and with haste IMPV-go.PRS-3PL  
 ‘Years always vanish and go with haste.’

But my heart will live on forever,

*Lê dil u can-ê min dê her\_u\_her jît-Ø*  
 but heart-EZ.M and soul-EZ.M 1O will forever live.PRS-3SG  
 ‘But my heart and soul will live forever,’

That here in sadness beat

*Her\_çende birîn-ên dil-ê min ne\_xweş=in*  
 although wound-EZ.PL heart-EZ.M 1O trying=COP.PRS.3PL  
 ‘Although the wounds in my heart are trying.’

\*

Gladly to Allah's dwelling

*Bi keyf û xweşî(-î) bo mal-a Xwedê dê ç-im*  
 with happiness and pleasure(-OBL.M) to home-EZ.F God will go.PRS-1SG  
 ‘With happiness and pleasure I will go to the home of God’

Yonder would I take flight

*pêtivî=ye bu min li wêrê bi-firr-im*  
 necessary=COP.3SG for me LOC there IRR-fly.PRS-1SG  
 ‘It is necessary for me to fly there’

There will the darkness vanish,

*(Li) wêrê tarî-ya jîn-ê dê winda b-it*

(LOC) there darkness-EZ.F life-OBL.F will vanish COP.PRS-3SG  
 ‘There the darkness of life will vanish,’

There will my eyes have sight.

(Li) wêrê çav-an dê vek-im, çi\_car na gir-im  
 (LOC) there eye-OBL.PL will open.PRS-1SG, never NEG close.PRS-1SG  
 ‘There I will open the eyes, I will never close them.’

I initially thought that the first line of Shushi’s version was lacking a syllable. However, the *h* in *ruhnîyê* is actually pronounced as a separate syllable, even though the word is usually not written as *ruhinîyê*, with an *i* after the *h*. Concerning the second line, Shushi used the word *jarî*, which she described as ‘misery,’ for the translation of ‘pain.’ The word *jarî* may be viewed as a slight improvement in the poem, as ‘misery’ perhaps adds an emotional element to the type of ‘pain’ that requires ‘rest,’ whereas the first thing one may think when hearing the English word ‘pain’ in Longfellow’s version is physical pain.

Instead of making the third line a dependent clause, as I had done, Shushi kept it as the object of the fourth line, beginning the line with the determiner *ew*, ‘those.’ This actually keeps the phrasing closer to the original, which is not an issue, as the syntax also works very nicely in Northern Kurdish. Also, it is worth noting that Shushi’s word for ‘crying,’ *girîyan*, is synonymous with the word for ‘crying’ in my version, *girî*. Shushi used both words in her upbringing and does not discern any difference between them. In the final line of the quatrain, Shushi gained two syllables by saying *rengê sorr*, ‘red color,’ as opposed to simply *sorr*, ‘red,’ which is what I used in my more literal version. By doing so she gained two syllables. Another change in this line is the word *rewşan*, ‘illuminate,’ which Shushi felt was more poetic than my literal *boyaş*, ‘dye.’ *Rewşan*, a very positive image, also connects nicely with ‘light’ in the first line of the quatrain—another application of Boerger’s sixth principle (1997:38).

In the first line of the second quatrain, Shushi added the word *her* ‘all,’ which is simply an explication of implied information in the original. She also used *diweşin* for ‘whither,’ which is a synonym for the word she recommended for my version. In the second line, she used the emphatic *tim* (see §6.1). To express ‘flying fleet’ she decided to

create an independent clause, joining it to the first clause with the conjunction *û*, ‘and.’ I appreciate this creativity of Shushi—to translate the event of ‘flying fleet’ into the prepositional phrase *bi lez*, ‘with haste,’ and the verb *meş*, another word for ‘go.’ Though she changed the syntax, she retained the basic meaning being conveyed.

In the third line of the second quatrain, Shushi gained needed syllables by expanding ‘heart’ to include the *can*, ‘soul.’ This reminds me of Sindî’s use of the two nouns *jîn*, ‘life,’ and *hîvî*, ‘hope,’ to represent one basic idea in *Dergehê Jîn U Hîvî Ya*, ‘The Door of Life and Hopes,’—that idea being “everything good.” In Longfellow’s poem, ‘heart’ represents the part of a person that lives after death. Hence, *can*, ‘soul,’ may rightly be viewed as an explication of the metaphoric meaning of ‘heart.’ Also, note that Shushi used *lê* for ‘but’ instead of *belê*. She also had the option, as I did, to use *habît*, ‘exist,’ or *jît*, ‘live.’ For Shushi, both verbs would provide the same meaning.

In the final line of this quatrain, Shushi decided to change the image, as it was difficult to convey Longfellow’s image in Northern Kurdish (see the discussion of my version of the poem in §6.1). Shushi’s decision is in concord with Boerger’s sixth principle, which was introduced previously. I had to speak with Shushi a second time about the image she chose, as the literal translation of *nexweş* ‘not well,’ which would seemingly convey some redundancy in the line. Obviously, a ‘wound,’ the new image, is something that is ‘not well.’ The issue here had to do with the meaning of *nexweş*, which, according to Shushi takes on a different meaning in this context. Shushi thought that the English word ‘trying’ or ‘difficult to bear’ conveyed the sense of *nexweş* in this use of the word. So, still utilizing the extension of the heart image represented in ‘beat,’ Shushi settled for an alternate image to convey the situation of the present life, the life bound to a failing human body—but a life that still can experience the hope of eternity with God.

In the first line of the final quatrain, Shushi expanded the idea of ‘gladly’ by adding to *keyf*, ‘happiness,’ the word *xweşî*, ‘pleasure,’ therein gaining some syllables. She gained another syllable by means of the conjunction *u*, ‘and.’ She also chose to end the line with a verb, moving the GOAL—the prepositional phrase *bo mala Xwedê*, ‘to the home of God’—before the future word *dê*, ‘will.’ Recall from §4.4.1.2 that the normal

constituent order of Northern Kurdish puts the GOAL after the verb. This change in location of the prepositional phrase, discussed in §5.4.1.3.7, allowed her to more easily rhyme lines two and four, as both lines are also in the first person, singular present tense. I must also note that this is the only line in her poem that does not have a two-syllable rhyme. Concerning syllable count, Shushi had the option to utilize the anaphoric subject pronoun *ez*, 1D, which may be left unuttered due to context (see §5.4.1.2.1). However, she did not need the word as she had already reached her desired syllable count.

In the second line, Shushi again put a GOAL prepositional phrase, *li wêrê*, ‘there,’ before the verb. By ending the first line with the verb, she was able to more easily rhyme the end of the line. The situation is the same for the final line of the quatrain. Also notice that she used the prepositional phrase *bu min*, ‘for me,’ in lieu of the subject *ez*, ‘I,’ which is an optional syntactic shift in the language (see §5.4.1.1.12). Using *bu min* also added another syllable to the line. She also retained the image of flying with use of the word *bifirrim*, ‘I fly.’ Recall that the second line in the previous quatrain utilized a flying image in ‘flying fleet.’ Perhaps Longfellow intentionally juxtaposed these two lines by means of the flying image. In one the years are taken from us; in the other we, like our years, will go to the one who possesses years and time.

In the final two lines, Shushi left off the locative preposition *li*, ‘at,’ on *wêrê*, ‘there,’ at the beginning of both lines, as use of it would have given her too many syllables in each line. Recall from §5.4.1.2.7 that the ellipsis of a preposition was found in one instance in the corpus. In the third line, she expanded ‘darkness’ to *tarîya jînê*, ‘darkness of life,’ which seems to simply explicate via her interpretation that the darkness is the “general” unknown things and difficult, perhaps evil things, of this life. In the final line of the poem, Shushi expands the notion of God giving sight upon death by affirming the eternal nature of the act with *çi car nagirim*, ‘never I (will) close (them).’ The subject of this clause is the first person, singular. The object is *çavan*, ‘eyes,’ which is understood as being the poet’s eyes, without use of the referent pronoun *min*, 1O. In this line, Shushi has left the modifier ‘my’ implied, which is perfectly acceptable given the context. And

instead of using a word for ‘sight,’ as I did in my more literal version, she changed the verb to *vekim*, ‘open,’ as opposed to using the possessive verb ‘have.’

Shushi’s poem in (352) certainly has more appeal than my version in (351), which is to be expected by an ideal translator of poetry. The receptor language is Shushi’s native tongue, and given her years in the US and level of education, she fulfills the requirement that a good metapoet know the source language very well. Shushi also fulfills the third ideal requirement of a metapoet: she herself is a poet. In the discussion of her poem, I have shown that many of the poetic devices she employed were also employed by poets represented in the corpus. Other translation decisions were found to be in accord with Boerger’s (1997, 2009) principles for translating poetry. Her decision to change the image in the line, “that here in sadness beat”—line 4 of the second quatrain—may be considered by some to be too free and, therefore, an imitation. However, given the difficulty in translating the line, I personally feel that she conveyed much of the sense of the original and that her translation of the line should be considered, minimally, a “creative” translation. The poem as a whole is a true metapoem, bearing the hallmark of a poet.

### 6.3 *Concluding remarks*

The purpose of this thesis was to analyze a body of Northern Kurdish poetry, identify poetic features contained therein—consisting of variants from normal speech—and apply what has been learned to the translation of poetry into Northern Kurdish. The process of choosing poems for the corpus presented opportunities to interview three poets and an editor of poetry. These interviews allowed me to gain an emic view on Northern Kurdish poetry, which added important information to the study.

Noteworthy findings include the following: On the phonological level, I identified several types of rhyme, including multisyllabic rhyming sequence (see §5.3.3.1.3), where multiple syllables are rhymed. I also identified instances of consonant and vowel feature rhyme—where poets capitalized on the similarities between consonants and vowels when forming end rhymes (see §5.3.3.1.5). Allowance for the use of such poetic devices

expands the poet's range of possible choices. I also identified a situation where a poet intentionally changed the normal syntax so that the final word in the line would be *dissimilar* to the end rhyme of the other lines in the quatrain. While the decision of the poet to change the order was phonologically motivated, the device employed was syntactic, which is why I placed the discussion in the syntactic section of the paper (see §5.4.1.1.11). On the syntactic level, every possible deviation from normal SOV constituent order was found except for verb initial phrases (with declared subjects). The only verb initial phrases were two imperative clauses where the subject is naturally not declared. For equative and attributive clauses, there were no instances where a copula followed the subject when the subject was placed after an adjective phrase or noun phrase (see §5.4.1.1). Regarding ellipsis (§5.4.1.2), it was discovered that it is the use of anaphoric pronouns that is a tool for the poet, as pronoun ellipsis is often permitted because of the language's rules concerning participant reference. Other instances of ellipsis exhibited freedoms taken by the poets. In §5.4.1.3 on free variation, we saw how poets varied word usage by utilizing more than one word form. Potentially, poets capitalized on the language of other subdialects of Northern Kurdish—spoken language having minor differences from their own—for these variations. More research is needed on this subject before drawing any conclusions.

The whole of this analysis reveals numerous variations that are found in poetic language. While most of these poetic devices were utilized by Neo-classical poets, some continue to be employed by modern poets. One poem in the corpus worth highlighting is Şaban Silêman's *Gutgutik*, 'Rumors,' which is a modern poem that utilizes end rhyme, a poetic device that was not employed in any of the other modern poems in the corpus; nor have I seen it in any other modern poems I have read. Due to Silêman's immense popularity in Northern Iraq, it would be worthwhile to conduct a more extensive analysis of his poetry to see to what degree he uses end rhyme and, perhaps, other poetic devices identified in the analysis in Chapter 5.

The analysis and its application have provided an initial step in the study of Northern Kurdish poetry and has at least partially answered the question, as concerns

poetic language: “What is possible?” As Kurds continue to write and expand their literary culture, they may also desire to increase the number of translated works from other cultures. My hope is that this study will be useful to them in accomplishing this task. This study may also be useful to researchers of other Indo-Iranian languages.

Concerning the translation of older texts, one wonders what type of translation Kurdish people would prefer. Most writers of today are writing in the modern style. However, after speaking with many Kurds about poetry, I am not convinced that modern poetry is the preference of the general public. As discussed in §2.2, there are many other considerations in producing a metapoem. If, say, a Kurdish metapoet was writing for a wide readership and wanted to translate a poem by Rumi, a famous Persian poet of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it would seem practical and necessary to answer this question: *What type of translation will my readers want?* I look forward to continuing my research in Northern Kurdish poetry to help answer such questions.

## **Appendix A – The Corpus of Northern Kurdish Poems**

The following poems were gathered during the Fall of 2009. The translations were produced by various native speakers in Northern Iraq. Light revisions for clarity and readability were made as I interacted with native speakers in the USA. The poems are listed in alphabetic order according to the acronym assigned.

## AN1

by Ahmed Nalbend  
translated by Ibrahim S. Abdullatif

*Duhî Spêdê Liser Banî*  
**Yesterday Morning On The Rooftop**

*Duhî spêdê liser banî,*  
Yesterday morning on the rooftop,

*Me dît canek ji xew rabû.*  
We saw a beauty rise from sleeping (wake up).

*Ji mal derket derê xanî.*  
She left the house by the front door.

*Me texmîn kir Zuleyxa<sup>146</sup> bû.*  
We thought she was a Zuleyxa.

*Zuleyxa bu sîfet hûrî.*  
It was Zuleyxa, the looks of a *hûrî*.<sup>147</sup>

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*Wekî tîrê ji merra bûrî.*  
Like an arrow she passed us.

*Çû ser avê li rexê jûrî;*  
She went to the water (river/stream) by way of above;

*Wekî rrojê limin ava bû.*  
Like the sun she set (disappeared).

*Dema zivrî ji ser avê,*  
When she came back from the water,

*Me dît lêda ji nû tavê.*  
We saw the sun hit upon her anew.

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<sup>146</sup> In the Qur'an, Zuleyxa was the wife of Pharoah who loved the prophet Joseph.

<sup>147</sup> Heavenly wife in the Qur'an.

*Miqabil çûme hindavê.*  
Facing (her) I went above her (to look).

*Qere puşî girê dabû.*  
She had tied her cumberbun.

*Wekî tavê libejnê da,*  
As the sun stroke her stature,

*Me dît şubhî gula spêda.*  
We saw bloom the morning flower.

*Wesa geş bu dinav rrêda.*  
She was so radiant on the way (path)

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*Çû hal bu min nehêla bû.*  
She went; left me feeling crazy (high love/sexual emotion).

*Nehêla bo kesê halek.*  
She didn't leave anyone in peace (made everyone crazy)

*Deqîqe li min bibûn salek.*  
Minutes became a year.

*Li enya wê hebû xalek;*  
On her forehead there was a freckle;

*Xudê heq taze kêşa bû.*  
God chose a fine place for that freckle.

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*Xudê suret muneqîqeş kir,*  
God made decorative caligraphic verse,

*Du zulfa liser rruya reş kir.*  
Two black braids on her cheeks.

*Enî gul bû şevê geş kir;*  
The forehead was a flower; at night it glowed;

*Siĥarê zû xunav dabû.*  
Early in the morning it gave dew.

*Xunavê terr kirin sunbul;*  
The dew made the bud of a flower;

25

*Siĥarê xîv bi bûn sor gul.*  
In the morning the bloom had become a red-colored flower.

*Li min sot sing u cerg u dil;*  
My chest and liver and heart in me were burnt;

*Ji mêlaka me xûn za bû.*  
From our liver sprang blood.

*Ji mêlaka me xûn derkir.*  
From our liver blood poured out.

*Ewê dil bir ceger ker kir.* 30  
She took the heart and broke apart the liver.

*Miqabil me xûn liber anber kir.*  
In front of us the blood was weighed.

*Şil u mil ew muheŧya bû!*  
Beautiful—she was alive!

*Şil u mil bû hemê gava,*  
Beautiful—she was all time,

*Kilê rreş her tijî cava.*  
Eyes filled with black mascara.

*Dilê min teyre ket dava;* 35  
My heart is an eagle fallen into a trap;

*Ewê tîra xu lêda bû.*  
She had stricken with her arrow.

*Leşê min kefte berjanê.*  
My body fell into pain.

*Du sê aviro bilez danê.*  
Two, three glances were quickly given to it.

*Dirêj bûm ez li kulanê,*  
I layed down in the alley.

*Li hîvîya min newesta bû.* 40

She had not waited for me.

*Epsîyar kir li vî lawî,*  
Questioned of this handsome (man),

*Tu saxî yan tu wê<sup>148</sup> tawî?*  
Are you healthy or sick (feverish)?

*Çi dermane leşê bawî?*  
What medicine is there for the winded body?

*Qîamet hat limin rrabû.*  
Doomsday came (and) overcame me.

*Li min hêltan leş u hestî.*  
My flesh and bone melted.

45

*Me gut mare ezê gezî!*  
We thought it's a snake that has bitten me.

*Bi remza bazinê destî.*  
By means of the signal of the hand bracelets.

*Ewê qebrê me kula bû.*  
She had dug our grave.

*Ji zendê spî çiringêne,*  
From (her) white forearm, the sound of metal bracelets hitting each other,

*Nizanim dewleta kêne .*  
I don't know what country she is from.

50

*Hemî kes 'aşiqêt wêne;*  
Everyone is in love with her;

*Lewa min leş tijî tabû.*  
That is why my body was filled with fever.

*Şekir barî ji deq u lêva.*  
Sugar flowed from the lips and tattoo (on her chin).

---

<sup>148</sup> In speaking a person usually says 'yê.' However, 'wê' is used in poetry.

*Memik sor bûn wekî sêva.*  
The breasts became red like apples.

*Hema çu kes neaxêva.*  
She left without speaking to anyone.

55

*Hewar<sup>149</sup> u sed hewar babû!*  
Oh my! and a hundred oh my's, father!

*Hewar ez 'aşqê wême!*  
Oh my! I am in love with her!

*Me dil behîra tijî kême.*  
Our heart is an ocean full of puss (water of a wound).

*Biken pisyar li hâlê me;*  
Ask of our condition;

*Behalê me nehesya bû.*  
She was unaware of our condition.

60

*Evê canê gelek kuştin.*  
This beauty killed many.

*Ji mal u qûwetê rriştin.*  
Spilled them of their wealth and energy.

*Zikên qebira ji wan miştin.*  
Bellies of graves are full of them.

*Bela bû ew Xudê da bû.*  
Trouble was, God created her.

*Xudê kir bû bela bûme.*  
God made her a problem for us.

65

*Belê bê qeyde bê lûme.*  
But it is an unnecessary complaint.

*Nebêjin ez tinê hûme.*  
Don't say I am the only one like this.

---

<sup>149</sup> A call for help.

*Eve fexra me hemya bû.*  
This was the pride of all of us.

*Eve fexra me Kurdane—*  
This is the pride of the Kurds—

*Bihara deşt u zozane,*  
She is the spring of plains and wilderness,

70

*Kulîlka pîr u lawane*  
She is the flower of the old and the young

*Ku dermana me xesta bû.*  
Which was the medicine for us who were sick.

*Evê tîrek limin daye*  
She struck me with an arrow;

*Leşê min her tijî taye.*  
My body is filled with fever.

*Herê ma kê rihek maye*  
Oh say, who has a soul left (remaining)

75

*Ku wê çav pê helîna bû?*  
Upon whom she has gazed?

*Mejî ruh ço çi xem nîne.*  
Brain and soul left without sorrow.

*Gelek şibhî me kuştîne.*  
She killed many like us.

*Beyan ke, Ehmed, ew kêne?*  
Explain, Ehmed, who are they?

*Me got, behsê Dihokya bû.*  
We said, they were Dohukees.

80

## AN2

by Ahmed Nalbend  
translated by Ibrahim S. Abdullatif

*Xoşê Wekî Cenetê*  
**It's Wonderful Like Heaven**

*Xoşê wekî cenetê,*  
It's wonderful like heaven,

*Ev cihê Kurda yeqîn.*  
This place of the Kurds indeed.

*Qable bo lezetê*  
Capable for providing pleasure

*Germ u nerm u baş hîn*  
Warm and pleasant and cool

*Mêrg u çîmen com u av*  
Orchards and meadows, *com*<sup>150</sup> and water

5

*Rewneq u zax u hetav*  
Shine and brightness and sunlight

*Sal u meh u gav bi gav*  
Year and month and moment by moment

*Mu'tedil u her bijwîn*  
Steady and always alive

*Tazeye lê xoş bihar*  
A nice spring in it is beautiful

*Bax u rez u darubar*  
Garden and orchard and forest

10

*Cinsê kulîlka hizar*  
A thousand species of flowers

---

<sup>150</sup> Meaning unknown.

*Gav u dema sîr u şîn*  
Moment and time red and blue

*Zwîr u girî bin tiraş*  
Hilly terrain and crying underneath bushes

*Yaze letîf xuş u baş*  
*Yaze*<sup>151</sup> beautiful, wonderful and good

*Libsê çîtaî qumaş* 15  
Clothes of the mountain fabric (cloth)

*Dil vekere nazenîn*  
Heart is opening gracefully

*Kêrî şîv u nihâl*  
Valley (small) and valley (smaller)

*Ser gir u rêhil wirwal*  
On top of the hill and rough path

*Kehnî avin zelal*  
Clear-watered springs

*Sar u sivik tam şîrîn* 20  
Cold and light, sweet-tasting

*Deşt u nîzar u beten*  
Deserts and shady side of mountain and hill (hill front, not the whole hill)

*Bêna beħeşîê diden*  
They give aroma of paradise

*Kê heye hu xuş weten?*  
Who has such a beautiful country?

*Kamile dinya u dîn*  
It's complete (full), earth and religion

*Kurd delalîn u beşuş* 25

---

<sup>151</sup> Meaning unknown.

Kurds are dear and happy

*Dîn persin 'erd xuş*  
Religion worshipers, wonderful land

*Jin bi ħeya perdepuş*  
The women (are) respectful, (wearing) headscarfs

*Ehlê dil u xem revîn*  
Residents of heart and from sorrow flee

*Lawin u can xas u 'am*  
They're beautiful and pretty, specific and generally

*Keys u fesalek tamam*  
Chance and opportunity complete

30

*Rast bejin xuş zelam*  
Straight stature and good men

*Layqê wan ħuru 'în*  
They're deserving of those heavenly wives

*Ax u hewa u gîa*  
Earth and wind and grass

*Cehwer u rengê çîa*  
Beauty and mountain color

*Taze wesa dil vîa*  
The heart wanted them beautiful like that

35

*Ev wetenê dil ħebîn*  
This country that embraces/nourishes the heart

*Ev wetenê hu spehî*  
This country so beautiful

*Wesif u kemal muntehî*  
Looks and beauty complete (perfect)

*Wek te hebîr agehî*  
Like you there should be interest

*Şêr u piling lê şihîn*  
Lions and tigers are active (love life) on it

40

*Ev cihe pîr zax u nur*  
This place is full of brightness and light

*Kesk u zer u al u sur*  
Green and yellow and flag and red

*Nîne wesa bê qusur*  
There isn't anyplace flawless like this

*Misr u Yemen Hindî Çîn*  
Egypt and Yemen, India and China

*Kurdê cesed sax u bisit<sup>152</sup>*  
Brave and well and brave Kurd

45

*Zîrekin u xurt u çist*  
They are brave and strong and nimble

*Bext u qirarek dirist*  
Right luck and decisiveness

*Şerker u tîj u emîn*  
Warrior and hot and (yet) trustworthy

*Sîng u ber u gerdena*  
Chest and face and necks

*Xastîye misk u xena*  
In-need of perfume and henna (colorant)

50

*Neqşê Xudê pêvena*  
The design God put upon it

*Zax u cemal tê husîn*  
Brightness and beauty rubbed against it (put upon it)

*Zend u til u bask u mil*  
Forearm and finger and arm and shoulder

---

<sup>152</sup> Meaning unknown.

*Sufî li min cerg u dil*  
My liver and heart are burnt

*Av rîl wan şêre sil* 55  
Water *rîl*<sup>153</sup> them, the lion is angry

*Rengê gula ser hejîn*  
Color of flowers swayed (back and forth) upon it

*Min bi eqîn sund xar*  
I swore with faithfulness

*Kurdî her êk u hizar*  
A Kurd to me is equal to a thousand others

*Her çî cihê lê hewar*  
Any place there is a call (for help)

*Şêr ewin u sef dirrîn* 60  
They are lions and they turn in lines

*Şêr ewin u xurt u mest*  
They are lions and strong and stimulated (intoxicated with strong emotion)

*Ûkum dema bête dest*  
Whenever authority comes to hand (in power)

*Fîle*<sup>154</sup> *ji singê verest*  
(Like) an elephant escapes from the chest

*Haî pilingê nehîn*  
It has come, the courageous tiger

Note: The poem continues; the balance was not translated.

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<sup>153</sup> Meaning unknown.

<sup>154</sup> According to Chyet (2003), one resource from MacKeznie has *fil* as an alternate spelling of *fêl*. *Fêl* can mean “action, activity, feat, deed.”

## AN3

by Ahmed Nalbend  
translated by Ibrahim S. Abdullatif

*Ey Malikê Vê 'Alemê*  
**O Lord Of This World (Universe)**

*Ey malikê vê 'alemê, dinya hemî milkê teye.*  
O Lord of this world (universe), all the Earth is your property.

*Yek serî helîne ji vê xemê, lutfê te her kafîye.*  
(If) One raises his head (in prayer) from this worrying, your blessing is enough.

*Tu her heyî dê her hebî; kes nîne tesbînî tebî.*  
You're always present and will be present; there's no one like you

*Rebî, tu xêfarê mebî hîvî li dergahê teye.*  
O Lord, may you be our forgiver; hope only exists at your door

*Tu her heyî; em dê mirîn; dinya betal em jêk kirîn.* 5  
You always exist; we will die; this empty world has torn us apart.

*Lazim şev u roja bigirîn; heqê me dayîm sucdeye.*  
We should cry night and day; it's our duty to be bowing in prayer (to you).

*Ey 'ebid u însanîn, eman, hişyar bibin sal u zeman.*  
O slaves and human kind, oh, wakeup (from) year and time (of sleep).

*Mirinê birîn em; kew neman; heqe mirin rêka meye.*  
Death took us; the partridges didn't remain; it is right that death is our path.

*Rêka me her mirina bi heqe; dinya betal u leq leqe.*  
Our path is always the rightful death, the world is empty and shaky (out of balance)

*Kê baş vîa ew ehmeqe (walahî) me ji wê tubeye?* 10  
Who really wanted that fool?<sup>155</sup> By God, we ban (ourselves) from that person.

*Me ji wê bese ev saxîye ew 'aqîbet ya fanî ye.*  
Enough of that, this is health, that the end is mortal.

---

<sup>155</sup> Feeble-minded individual.

*Kê baş nevêt ew rûyê spî ye çunkî heqîqet her weye?*  
Who doesn't really want that white cheek (honor), because truth is always right?

*Heqe ku ew dar u alfina ya bi zehmete u renc u 'ena.*  
It is right that that wood and fodder is with difficulty and tiredness and suffering.

*Teşbîhê kepirêt mewtena<sup>156</sup> jê barkirin şula meye.*  
Similar are sheds of countries, leaving them is our job.

*Rêka meye her dê mirîn; heqe liser me jê biçîn.* 15  
Our path is that all will die; it is our duty to leave it.

*Ew hind ya liber me şirîn; ma em nizanîn qehebeye?*  
To us, she is so desirable; do we not know she is a prostitute?

*'Alem hemê wê jêk jenî; herdem be êkî ji me.*  
Everybody tears her apart (plows), always (she is) with one of us.

*Paşî bu lêmişt u renî ku dujminek bi hîleye.*  
Then it became a flood and avalanche which is a deceitful enemy.

*Kenî ew qehebeye ya dev xweşe paşî bela u serkeşe.*  
Laughter, it is that whore—a sweet-talking mouth, then trouble and control.

*Hindî vekêşîn ser keşe bê şerim u stir u perdweye.* 20  
No matter how much we pull back, it draws us, unashamed and unbound and without curtain (restriction).

*Xoşîya bidet bawer neke; hindî ji ye bêxê xu jêveke.*  
Be happy and do not believe; for as long it lives it wants to pull away (apart).

*Çunkî yeqîn pîs mesleke bê bawer u bê qâdeye.*  
Because dirty filth is the situation without belief (trust) and without base (faith).

*Kî hate têda berzekir, 'ehid u wefa digel wan nekir.*  
Whoever came to it (to live on it) became lost, never kept promises and was unfaithful.

*Pêxembera dest jê vekir zanî ku ya xar we'deye.*  
Prophets withdrew their hands because they knew she was crooked.

---

<sup>156</sup> Meaning unknown.

*Wan guh neda ser leh'tekê, dît ya xirabe kupekê.* 25  
They did not listen (give into) 'wait a minute;'<sup>157</sup> they saw she was evil from the start.

*Ma kê bi dewam xwo hewcekê bese; we lê ev paleye.*  
Who continuously has enough; we are such laborers (insistent) at it.

*Xwozîya kesê guh daye min—şêx u melaw, mêr u jin.*  
Lucky are they that listen to me—sheiks, priests, men and women.

*Me divêt bu wan faîdê mezin; lew min dewam gazindeye.*  
We want for them big profits; that is why I continue to criticize.

*Hindî we riî maye dileşî nabin dewam xêr u xuşî.*  
For as long as you have life in your body, deeds and happiness will cease to continue.

*Buçî tu hêyî zehmet keşî? 'Umrê me her bê faîdeye .* 30  
Why are you still struggling? Our life is unprofitable (meaningless).

*Dinya me roje yan şeve; heçîya çu ya dî hate ve.*  
Our world is day and night; whenever one goes, the other arrives.

*Hindî hebîn tertîb, eve sal u zeman ev madeye*  
For as long as we have been organized, this has been the case for years (and time - forever).

*Dayîka me çû. Babê me çû. Fikirê ku bapîr kîve çû?*  
Our mother left. Our father left. Think about it—Where did our grandfather go?

*Kî hatîye têda u neçû pêş çavê xasa wek seye.*  
Who is come unto (Earth) and has not gone away from sight is like a dog.

Note: The poem continues; the balance was not translated.

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<sup>157</sup> A request for a very short period of time.

## AN4

by Ahmed Nalbend  
translated by Ibrahim S. Abdullatif

*Ey Ze'îmê Bê Nivêjê Bê Werar*  
**O Leader Without Prayer and Use**

*Ey ze'îmê bê nivêjê bê werar,*  
O leader without prayer and use,

*Wekte bê eqilek ne rabo se 'eceb.*  
No one like you-without intelligence and surprising-has risen.

*Roj u şev nifrîn li ser te sed hizar.*  
Day and night, a hundred-thousand curses are upon you.

*'Aqibet dujmin te bun Kurd u 'Ereb.*  
Finally, Kurds and Arabs became your enemies.

*Qatilê me'sumekê<sup>158</sup> 'alî neseb—*  
The murder of a very righteous man of a great lineage—

5

*Wî esilda qet nebun 'aqil u edeb.*  
He, from his ancestry downward, has never had intelligence and manners.

*Bu nexuşîya umetê xu kir sebeb.*  
For the pains of the community he made himself the reason.

*Pêkve umet maye ħeyrî rast u çep.*  
Together the community is staring (in awe) right and left.

*Ew bi destê xu bal qatil nebû.*  
He, with his own hands (will), was not the murderer of height (person).

*Dergihê fitna 'Iraqê buyî vebû.*  
The door of chaos has opened in Iraq.

10

*Bu fesada 'alemê nê ew sebu.*  
The mischievous spy (trouble maker) between community was that dog.

---

<sup>158</sup> Someone prevented from doing wrong.

*Sut li xelkî qelib u mêlak u kezeb.*

Burnt (in distress) in the people the heart, liver and lung.

*Mude'î bu wî şefî'u (alimthinbîn).*

Petition for him, comfort (him) (guilty ones).

*U ħekem bu wan îlahul' alemîn.*

And the judge for them be the humankind's Lord.

*Wî me ferma cehnem u dêwê le'în.*

He welcomed us to hell and the nasty demon.

15

*Fayde naken bu wî ew nav u ruteb.*

It will not profit him that name and rank.

*Ew kerê, têjkê kerî, dayî makere.*

That donkey, son of a donkey, the mother a jennet (female donkey).

*Mudde'î digel wî yeqîn pêxembere.*

Time with him is right (true) Prophet.

*Ew bu çuna cehinemê bê şik fere.*

For him to go to hell is, without a doubt, necessary.

*Hate ser emirê, xudê qehir u xezeb.*

He came to power, the god of sorrows and distress.

20

*Pişî mirnê ka bu wî mal u mefer?*

After death where is there for him a home and opportunity?

*Ew, wekî ji dinya betal, derkefte der.*

He, like the empty universe, went out (thrown out).

*Man di dilda sed kul u qehir u keser.*

He remained in heart, a hundred sorrows, sadness and grief.

*Ka rehîm însanê bê esil u neseb?*

Where is mercy, (you) the person without family ties (background) and ancestry?

*Lazime bo wî şev u roj her girî.*

It is necessary for him to cry day and night (from sorrow).

25

*Cehnema helbûy u bo wî sincirî*

Hell is burning (for him) and for those chains (for him to be beaten with).

*Xolyeka germe ewî bi xo werkirî.*

Hot ashes he poured over his head (what trouble he put himself in).

*Cehnemê bo wî şev u roje, qebeqeb.*

Hell is calling on him night and day, calling him like a quail's call.

*Wî neman çare beman, tedibîr u dad*

He was left without a solution, a lead (pathway) and justice

*Ku li'Îraqê rrakirîn fitne u fesad.*

For rising (putting in) disobedience and troubles in Iraq.

30

*Dujminê wî xalqe (reb ali'bad),*

The enemy of the Creator (Lord of worship),

*Ku eve heqê teye ey bê edeb,*

That this is your justice, O you, without manners (disgraceful),

*Wî bi emirê xu wekî kuştî melik.*

Like he killed, with his own order, the king.

*Xaliqî digel wî 'nade u kerib u rrik.*

The Creator is angry and offended with him.

*Wî mu'in heşirê kî ye dabçîte nik?*

Who does he have as a helper to go to in the Judgment Day?

35

*Bê şefî' ma bû hewar u bê teleb.*

He is left without a career, calling for help and without request.

*Ew heta mirnê biket her ta'etî.*

Even if he labors until death, he still worships.

*Faîde naket bu şirikê le'netî*

It will not benefit the friend of the blasphemer (Satan)

*Nê eve te'ne bişirîet vê ketî.*

This is the mocking that he is hit with by the Shariaa (Islamic Law).

*Ew ze'amet bu çîye liser wî leqeb?*

That status is for what with that title?

40

*Fexirê 'alem wî li xwo dujmin kirî*

*He has made an enemy of the Good-Doer of the humankind (God).*

*Dujmin seyîd, bu wî sax u mirî.*

The enemy was a religious person, for him (while) alive and dead.

*Wî bi fesadê agir u cehinem kirî.*

He purchased fire and hell with mischief.

*Puyçe şule ew nihu buî muntexeb.*

It is a hollow work that he has become selected (chosen for).

Note: The poem continues; the balance was not translated.

## AN5

by Ahmed Nalbend  
translated by Ibrahim S. Abdullatif

*Kiçkek Me Divêt*  
**We Want A Girl**

*Kiçkek me divêt ji nû gehiştî,*  
We want a girl that has become of age,

*Ya ji dêm u rûya xunav ne rijtî.*  
From whose face has not dripped dew (a virgin).

*Wextê ji derî bihême xanî,*  
When I enter the house through the door,

*Rrabît me ax u biket ve piştî.*  
Arouse from me sexual arousal, and (then) do it again (repeat).

*Gava ko bidet me têşt u şîva,*  
When she gives us breakfasts and dinners,

5

*Bêjît me kuro hilo vî tişt u miştî,*  
She tells us to get us this thing and that thing (a table full of things),

*Rengê xu bîdem wekî gula geş.*  
(So that) my appearance is that of a blossomed flower (healthy).

*Me'na ku, "Were bi xu vî tiştî."*  
I mean, "Come and eat this thing."

*Tibla xwo dirêj biket me,*  
Pointing her finger at us,

*"Wey, pa tu neyê kirêt u ziştî."*  
"O! You so not ugly and ziştî."<sup>159</sup>

10

*"Leqet nehêt girêdan."*  
"Leqet<sup>160</sup> will not become tied (together)."

---

<sup>159</sup> Meaning unknown.

*“Ĥaşa guneh bît tu...”<sup>161</sup>*  
 “Forbid that you are a sinner.”

*Ku digel me biket herru tirana.*  
 So that she always jokes with us.

*Me’na ku, “Quza tu çendê miştî.”*  
 Meaning that, “Vagina, how full you are. (are you?)”

*Xalîke hilu miskîn tijî...<sup>162</sup>*  
 Empty it. Get up, quiet one, fill...

15

*Me ji vî terefî dilê birijî.*  
 From this side we have burnt the heart.

*Vî barê giranê hinde sala,*  
 This heavy load for so many years,

*Wey sed ëceb tu hêj nekujî.*  
 O’! A hundred times over (I am) surprised it hasn’t killed you.

*Min gut, “Ne weye; ewê xu sil kir.”*  
 I said, “That is not how it is (untrue); she become upset.”

*Tu ji vê direwê yeqîn keliştî.*  
 You surely became torn by this lie.

20

*Ka fikire ruya çi qurmiçîne?*  
 Think—(your) checks—what wrinkles (them)?

*Befira du şevî liser nihijî.*  
 You did not leave the two-night-old snow.

*Te divêt ku bidem te mirç u maça.*  
 You want me to give you kisses and smooches.

*Me divêt tu bidey me zixt u xiştî.<sup>163</sup>*

<sup>160</sup> Meaning unknown.

<sup>161</sup> It seems likely that the end of the line was missing from the original text.

<sup>162</sup> It seems likely that the end of the line was missing from the original text.

We want you to give us pressure (pounding heart) and a staff.

*Min êke meta' eza difiruşim.* 25  
This is my first time that I sell boasts (of myself).

“*Ĥeq sîne pir me da vehiştî*”  
“Truth is *sîn*<sup>164</sup> come down from us,”

*Dibêjît me linav nîvîn.*  
She tells us under the sleeping sheets (on the bed).

*Işqa te ezim jiber buhiştî*  
Because of your love, I am the one who is melted

*Gava binvim, amin bixurrîtin,*  
When I sleep, if mine itches,

*Kar rabe seqîl—Tu êk teniştî?* 30  
Wake up, sleepy one—Are you one sided?

*Ey, bê 'eqlê xiştîm u bê fehim.*  
O, (you're) brainless and stupid (unaware like an infant).

*Meqsed me heye tu tê gihiştî.*  
You understood we had intentions

*Ma min tu vîyayî bu milk u malî?*  
Did I love you because of land and belongings (money)?

*Ez bume xidam bu.....*  
I became a slave for...

*Ehmed tu bizane ey riha min* 35  
Ehmed, know, O soul of mine.

*Min vîyayî tu jiber...\**  
I loved you because...\*

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<sup>163</sup> The meanings of *zixt* and *xiştî* may be metaphoric, perhaps even erotic, as this poem is of that theme. Both words are related to working with oxen. *Zixt* is the nail on the end of an oxgoad, for prodding. *Xişt* can be a staff or a sharp metal point, but may have other meanings as well.

<sup>164</sup> Meaning unknown.

*\*Ev cihên vala di destinvîsê da di valane.*

\*The empty places are empty in the author's original work.

Quote from Perwer Shushi (2012): "Using your name near the end of a poem comes from an Arabic tradition. It indicates ownership of the poem. So when people read the poems in other places, they would know who wrote it."

## BS1

by Badirxan Sindî  
translated by: Masoud Salim Ismail

*Bîrewerîa Barzanî Yê Nemir*  
**Memories Of Immortal Barzanî**

*Xanê xanan, canê canan—tu bike lutf u were.*  
Khan of khans, soul of souls—be beneficent and come back.

*Dil liber destê xûrbetê bendî ye u bê mefere.*  
Heart in the hand of estrangement is a slave and has no way out.

*Em li ber şewqa hîvîan, çav melê ye bêye ve.*  
Infront of the treasure of hopes we are looking forward that you will be back.

*Tu bike rehîmê ji mirîdan; kengî dê tu hêye ve?*  
Be compassionate to (your) disciples; when will you be back?

*Bazê bazan şahê Kurdan—ruhinîya çavê meyî.*  
Falcon of falcons, king of Kurds—you are the lights of our eyes.

5

*Nê me nalîne ji dîrî meîya ‘şqa me meyî.*  
We do lament from the distance, the wine of our love. You are the wine.

*Raza ‘îşqê ji qîdem ra derde ye u kuvane dil*  
The secret of love is from the steps of pain and the heart is grief

*Kî dê sax kit? Ji Ezel ra dil geşe u perwane dil.*  
Who will bring it to life? For God the heart is glowing and the heart is a butterfly.

*Ayeta Kursî ji berkir me cihêl u pîr u jin.*  
We—young, old, and women—memorized the *Kursî*<sup>165</sup> verse.

*Me du’a bu şev u rujan ji mezar u Înis u cin.*<sup>166</sup>

10

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<sup>165</sup> *Ayeta Kursî* is *ayet*, ‘verse,’ 255 of *Surat al-Baqarah*, ‘the Chapter of the Cow,’ in the Qur’an. People read it at night before they sleep, believing it will make the devil flee from them.

We prayed (wished) night and day to grave and (prophet) *Înis* and evil spirit.

*Şîn bibin nêrgiz, ji nuve ber derê tekya berê.*

May narcissuses grow new again before the door of the old places of worship.

*cardin bixuînin ‘endelîb ew ji ‘şqa daberê.*

Again may birds sing—that (song) from the love of the lover.

*Lê belê, destê Xudanî ewe neqîqaşê qeder.*

Yes, it’s in God’s hand; he’s the painter of fate.

*Wî wesa fermanek dayî sufî ye li me ceger.*

He gave an order like that; the liver in us has burned.

*Şînyî u tazî ji gelî bûn çep u rast u jor u jêr.*

There was mourning and condolence from the people, from the left to right and up to down.

15

*Şev u roj xelkî girî bûn kal u genc u jin u mêr.*

Night and day people were crying, old and adolescent, women and men.

*Mililetê Kurd pir wefaye; sufyên destên tene.*

Kurdish people are so loyal; they are the Sufis of your hands.

*Ruĥ ji êşan pir semaye ‘aşiq u mestên tene.*

The pained soul is full of dancing; they are your lovers and stimulated ones (intoxicated with strong emotion).

*Erê, ey dil, kanê ew gul? Ka şemala geş u hil?*

Yes, O heart, where’s that flower? Where’s the bright and lit (glowing) candle?

*Buçî (adar) buye azar buçî bajar bu kavi*

Why had March become pain? Why did the city become ruined?

20

*Ka sîarê hilma mirnê? Kanê mîrê tirs nezan?*

<sup>166</sup> My translator for this poem translated the word *cin* as ‘elf.’ Dictionaries list *cin* as ‘demon’ or ‘evil spirit.’ The translation of ‘elf,’ however, may be somewhat appropriate. Once when I was speaking about *cin* with a neighbor in the town where I was living in Northern Iraq, he said that *cin* were not necessarily good or evil, but they are creatures you cannot see that can cause trouble for people. Perhaps the term ‘mischievous elf’ or ‘gremlin’ would be more appropriate a translation considering their worldview.

Where's the knight of the steam death? Where's the leader who doesn't know fear?

*Ka 'egîdê wan dilêran? Evro mane bê xudan.*

Where's the fighter of those heroes? Today they became leaderless.

*Ava Arasê dipirsit, "Îru kanê gemîvan?"*

The water of Aras<sup>167</sup> is asking, "Where's the sailor today?"

*Kanê curtê xurte mêran? Ka mêvanê nexîşivan?*

"Where's the Wildman of the wild? Where's the guest of *nexshivan*?"<sup>168</sup>

*Lê, bi çuna te, her emîn ser zemanê te u berê,*

25

However, with your departure (leaving), it's still us in your time and your past,

*Çunkî tu hey u her heyî ruh u wîjdanî, erê.*

Because you exist and always will exist; you are the soul and the conscience, yes.

*Dilber u aşiq her êkin lê belê rengê mecaz.*

Sweetheart and lovers are the same, but their color admissible.

*Car bi caran bi îcazet hin li hin dê kin cîaz.*

Sometimes by your permission they will make some differences.

*Pir evîna mililetê me, êke gel zatê melê.*

Full of love, our people—we have a country which we ourselves are parts of.

*Ew didil da nîşte cê ye, lê belê çavê me lê.*

30

He has settled in our hearts, yes, but we will keep our eyes on him.

*Zahir u batin êk kese di şir'eta 'şqa zelal.*

The appearance and the inside are the same in the justice of pure love.

*Ew u Kurdînî êk kesin çi kemal bin çi zewal.*

He and Kurdishness are one person whether by being perfect or by passing away.

*Ger zewala te hatbit, her dê mînî tu u her,*

If your time to pass away is come, you will remain (exist) forever,

*Çunkî Kurdînî namirit, çav hevale bu nezer,*

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<sup>167</sup> Aras is the river Mustafa Barzanî and others with him crossed when entering the Soviet Union.

<sup>168</sup> Meaning unknown.

Because Kurdishness doesn't die, (like how) eyes are a friend of one's sight,

*Ku kemala te gehîşte geş stêra Muşterî.*

35

That your perfection arrives at the bright star of Jupiter.

*Tali'ê Kurdan geşaye manê tu ew perwerî.*

The luck of Kurds is joyous because you are that leader.

*Wêne ya suz u dilêran xûîaye ser ruîmetê.*

The picture of promises and bravery is like sweat on the cheeks.

*Wer bixuînin ê hevalan ayeta xuş hîmetê.*

Come, read, O friends, with us the (poetic) verse of good effort.

*Ew ji zik mak da pilink bu, şahidî ħebsa Mîsil.*

He was (still) a tiger when he was a baby, when he witnessed the Mosul prison.

*Hêştâ zaru bû demê ku dîtî ye kivan u kul.*

40

He was still a child when he saw sadness and grief.

*Êş u derdên mililetê Kurd wî ji hîngê kirne ders.*

He then took advice from the pains and aches of Kurdish people.

*Şehirezayî u 'eqil u curet ew mukim lê bune ders.*

He strengthened his expertise, cleverness and bravery from the life lesson.

*Şahê bazan, mîrê qadan—wî nebadan hizir u bîr.*

The king of falcons, the leader of the battlefields—he did not deviate from (his) ideas and thoughts.

*Lew ji hîngê ew li sîngê cane bexşên genc u pîr.*

That's why since that time he (is) in the heart (chest) of the fresh offerings of the adolescent and the old

*Suz u peyman em didinte gel teda u ala weda.*

45

We are giving you promises and pacts that we will be with you and your flag.

*Em bimînîn bê te, senger, meşxelên roka weda.*

We remain without you, ramparts, lights of your way.

## BS2

by Badirxan Sindî  
translated by Masoud Salim Ismail

*Gerîanek Di Kurdistanê Da*  
**A Walk Through Kurdistan**

*Havîn bu çume Şingarê,*  
It was summer when I went to Shingar,

*Hêjîra li dem nubarê.*  
A fig in the time of spring.

*Min dît li wêrê cwanek.*  
I saw a pretty lady there.

*Awir dida ji alek.*  
She was winking from the corner.

*Tîtî ya zêra li ser enî*  
The golden decoration on her forehead

5

*Dilê min girt u hincinî.*  
Took hold of my heart and made it vibrate.

*Min gutê, "Kiça kê yî?"*  
I asked, "Whose daughter are you?"

*"Torîna kê malê yî?"*  
From which nobleman's house are you?

*"Tu gula kê baxçê yî?"*  
"You're a flower from which garden?"

*"Nêrgiza serê kê yî?"*  
"Whose narcissus's head are you?"

10

*Gutî, "Ez Kurdistanim."*  
She said, "I'm Kurdistan."

*"Xuştivî ya Kurdanim."*  
I'm the dear of Kurds

“*Evîndara şî’ranim.*”  
 “I’m the lover of poems.”

“*Ketîme dest nezana.*”  
 “I fell into the hands of ignorant ones.”

\* \* \*

*Hatîme Dîarbekrê,*  
 I went to Diyarbakir,

15

*Cihê Pîran u befrê.*  
 The place of Peeran<sup>169</sup> and snow.

*Nalîna kewî têtin;*  
 The moan of the partridge is coming;

*Birîndare wê dikêtin.*  
 It’s wounded and it’s singing.

*Min gutê, “Kewê kê yî?”*  
 I asked, “Whose partridge are you?”

“*Çima li nav befrê yî?*”  
 “Why are you in the snow?”

20

“*Çira yê birîndarî?*”  
 “Why you’re wounded?”

“*Xwîndarê destê kê yî?*”  
 “Who has done this to you?”

*Gutî, “Ez şêx Se’îdim.”*  
 He said, “I’m sheikh Saeed.”

“*Bu Kurdistan mirîdim.*”  
 “I’m a disciple of Kurdistan.”

“*Şêx Se’îdê Pîranim,*”  
 “I’m sheik Saeed Peeran,”

25

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<sup>169</sup> A religious leader in Kurdish history.

*“Şurşivanê Kurdanim.”*  
 “A revolutionary of Kurds.”

*“Bê kes u bê xudanim.”*  
 “I have no relative and I’m alone.”

*“Ketîme dest neyara.”*  
 “I fell into the enemy’s hands.”

\* \* \*

*Bu Mehanadê gerîam.*  
 I searched for Mahabad.

*Wek dara tuyê werîam,*  
 I fell down like the mulberry tree,

30

*Darek didest biçwîka.*  
 A stick in children’s hands.

*Pê dikirin yarîa bîka.*  
 They were playing doll games with it.

*Min gutê, Ev çi darî?”*  
 I asked it, “What a stick are you?”

*“Wek rebena livî warî”*  
 “Like a poor stick in this place”

*“Li kulana di xişandin,”*  
 “Has been slipped in the streets,”

35

*“Ji nîvê ra şikandin.*  
 “Has been broken from the half.

*Gutî, “Ez dar ala bum.”*  
 It said, “I was a flag stick.”

*“Nav beyna çwar çira bum.”*  
 “I was amid the square (in Mahabad).”

*“Swînd u qesa merdabum.”*  
 “I was the promises and words of man.”

“*Ez qîbleya Kurda bum.*”  
 “I was the *qîbleya*<sup>170</sup> of Kurds.”

40

“*Siha serê xorta bum.*”  
 “I was the shadow (fear stick) for young, energetic people.”

“*Ketîme dest biçwîka.*”  
 “I fell into the hands of children.”

\* \* \*

*Ser evraz çum Şikaka,*<sup>171</sup>  
 On the upward slope I went toward Şikak,

*Nav mêr xaz u mêr çaka.*  
 To brave men and men of goodness.

*Şerker u xurt u zurin.*  
 They are fighters—strong, and very much so.

45

*Turk u ‘Ecem li durin*  
 Turks and ‘*Ecem*<sup>172</sup> are surrounding it

*Xurrîna şêrî têtin.*  
 The roar of lion is coming.

*Şewqa ji çavan pêtin.*  
 The light from the eyes is sorrowful.

*Min gutê, “Lawê kê yî?”*  
 I said, “Whose pretty one are you?”

“*Tu şêrê kêş warê yî?*”  
 “You’re a lion of which field (homeland)?”

50

“*Aşiq u mestê*<sup>173</sup> *kê yî?*”

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<sup>170</sup> The direction one faces Mecca when praying.

<sup>171</sup> An area in Turkey where there is a large Kurdish tribe.

<sup>172</sup> Means ‘the original Iranians,’ according to Perwer Shushi.

“Whose lover and euphoric one are you?”

“*Xwîndarê destê kê yî?*”

“The blood enemy of whose hand are you?”

*Gut, “Simkuyê Şikakim.”*

He said, “I’m Semku Shekak.”<sup>174</sup>

“*Serê xu ez şur nakim.*”

“I will not put down my head.”

“*Kurdîni yê ji bîrnakim.*”

“I will not forget Kurdishness.”

55

“*Ketîme destê hara.*”

“I fell into the hands of wild people (enemies).”

\* \* \*

*Hatîme ve Şingarê,*

I came again to Shingar,<sup>175</sup>

*Def wê şerimin u jarê.*

Beside that shy and poor girl.

“*Kakal<sup>176</sup> nav kakilî.*”

“You are the core inside the core.”

“*Tuî şîşa evî<sup>177</sup> dilî.*”

“You’re the glass of this heart.”

60

“*Çima tu ya pir janî?*”

“How come you are full of pain?”

<sup>173</sup> While *mest* means “drunk” or “intoxicated,” it can also be used to describe a person’s euphoric state, whether it be of one’s emotions, a deep conviction or sincere care for someone or something.

<sup>174</sup> A great figure from Kurdish history in Turkey.

<sup>175</sup> A city near Iraq’s border with Syria.

<sup>176</sup> The core of a kernel or seed.

<sup>177</sup> The *î* on *evî* is a type of Specific Reference Marker (SRM), an aspect of the language that needs further research.

*“Pusîde u kovanî.”*

“You are full of cares and grievous.”

*“Tu buçî zîz u silî.”*

“Why you are angry and disgruntled?”

*“Berê xu dî wî milî?”*

“Why do you turn your head away?”

*Gutî, “Ma to nizanî?”*

She said, “Don’t you know?”

65

*“Dê min dine bîanî.”*

“They are going to give me to foreigners.”

*“Lê min swînde bixudanî.”*

“But I am promised to the one who owns me.”

*“Dê gurîkim vî canî,”*

“I will sacrifice this soul,”

*“Neman u yan Barzanî.”*

“Either to die or be with Barzanî.”

*“Naçim digel xwîndara.”*

“I’m not going with enemies.”

70

## BS3

by Badirxan Sindî  
translated by Şîvan Toma

*Bila .. Bila*<sup>178</sup>  
OK .. OK

*Bila .. bila, çi bêjit.*  
Ok .. ok, what he says.

*Bila dilê min bihêlit.*  
Ok, my heart, let (him) leave.

*Dustê mine bi evînê.*  
He's my friend by love.

*Xudê, bu min bihêlit.*  
God, protect him for me.

*Sal bu salê diburînim.*  
I'm passing away year by year.

5

*Rundka ez lê diwerînim.*  
I am shedding tears for him.

*Xudê, dustê min kanê?*  
God, where's my lover?

*Kengî ez dê wî bînim?*  
When will I see him?

*Dustê min .. Boçî sile?*  
My lover .. Why (is he) mad (at me)?

*Dilê min ji ber wî kule.*  
My heart is distressed because of him.

10

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<sup>178</sup> This poem became a song which was published and played on Kurdish radio in Baghdad by Gulbhar (a female artist) in 1967.

*Bêjnê eza razî me.*

Tell him I'm accepting what he says.

*Agrê vînê her hile.*

The fire of life is still lit (glowing).

*Dustu .. manê te zanî.*

Hey lover .. you already know.

*Ez sil nînim bi giranî.*

I'm not mad so heavily.

*Dustê min evro gufî,*

Today my lover said,

15

*"Tu xwîna nav dilanî."*

"You are the blood inside hearts."

## BS4

by Badirxan Sindî  
translated by Masoud Salim Ismail

*Dergehê Jîn U Hîvî Ya*  
**The Door of Life and Hopes**

*Dergehê jîn u hîvîa girtye dîsa, çima?*  
The door of life and hopes is closed again, why?

*Ma ji jîna kurte? Jîn bit. Ma ji 'emrê me çi ma?*  
Is it a short life? It's life. What has remained from our life?

*Spêdeya bêtin. Çi lêbkim ger di gencî da nehat?*  
The morning is coming. What shall I do with it when it doesn't come early?

*Nêrgîza warê me werîa u xunavek pêda nehat.*  
The narcissus of our land have withered and without a dewdrop having fallen on it.

*Taqeta çerx u sema me nema, yarê bizan* 5  
The energy to play around and party is no more—know it, friend

*Şînî î u girîn bu me man şerbeta ah u xeman.*  
Mourning and crying remained for us, the juice of moaning and distress.

*Lew dinalim; lew dikalim; bilbilê .. hêlîn herfit!*  
That's why I am lamenting; that's why I am growing old; the nightingale .. the nest has been ruined!

*Sed hîzar hêlîn herfîtin! Dijmino, te heq kerfit.*  
One hundred thousand nests are ruined! Enemy, you destroyed the justice.

*Bilbilê bê kes mişexte u kavile fezê gulan.*  
The single nightingale is an exile and the farm of flowers are a ruin.

*Agirek berbî hinava<sup>179</sup> u talana cerg u dilan.* 10  
A fire occurred in the guts, pillaging the livers and hearts.

*Canîkên kumêda revîn ketine nav çul u çîan.*

---

<sup>179</sup> Organs of the abdominal area.

The pretty funny girls escape and landed in the deserts (wilderness) and mountains.

*Lurîna gurga li nîv şevan piçandin cerg u sî yan*

In the middle of the nights the howling of wolves frightened the liver and the lung or

*Agirek kete dilê me u çirîskê jê veneyî.*

A fire has fallen inside our heart and a spark separates (us) from it.

*Kete asmana u nivêstî, Kurdu! Tu hebî u heyî!*

Enter the skies and write, Kurds! You exist and will always exist!

*Dergehê jîn u hîvîa girtîe dîsa çima?*

The door of life and hopes is closed again, why?

15

*Ma ji jîna kurîe? Jîn bit. Ma ji 'emrê me çi ma?*

Is it a short life? It's life. What has remained from our life?

*Te divêtin ez bimînîm ketîe barê xu bim.*

You want me to remain the fallen of my own load/burden.

*Ez mêvanê warê xu bim deruzê malê xu bim.*

I became the guest of my place and became a beggar of my own house.

*Barekê êk car girane u pesare rêka mejê*

A heavy load, one that is absolutely heavy, and our way is upward.

*Şêx 'Ubeîd u Şêx Se'îdê ruhine rêka wa li metê.*

Sheikh Ubayd and Sheikh Saeed – It's bright, their way coming toward us.

20

*Fenerên tarîxê digeşin, ruhîna çav u dilan.*

The torches of history are bright;(they are)the light of (our) eyes and hearts.

*Dê çi xûnîm? Berperan av ruyê u êş u kulan.*

What will I read? Papers of shame and pain and sorrow.

*Tazî ya Qazî jibîr nekin; bo bikin şînî her sal.*

Don't forget the funeral of Qazî; mourn for him every year.

*Kuzrîn gulên çâyan nêrgizên şeng u şepal.*

The flowers of the mountains have been burned, the young and bright narcissuses.

*Ristikên şenqê bu vedan can fîdayên rastî yê.*

Necklets of throats were ready for him to sacrifice his soul for truth.

25

*Çûn ser sêdar u qînanan heware<sup>180</sup> li Kurdîni yê—*  
They went on the gallows and ropes; the call for help is for Kurdish identity—

*'zet u Xeîrî u Qudsî Mistefa—ew çar bira,*  
Ezat, Xeîrî, Qudsî and Mustafa—those four brothers,

*Rohnîa çav u dilan—Her geşin ew çarçira.*  
The light of our eyes and hearts—They are always bright, those four lamps.

*Ew çirayên mililetîne şewq vedan bu me lewa*  
They are the lights of the people; that is why they gave off light for us

*Bilbilên şermin dixuînin, “Kurdu dê rabe jixewa!”* 30  
The disgraced of the nightingales are singing, “Hey Kurd, wake up from dreaming!”

*Dergehê jîn u hîvîa girtîe dîsa çima?*  
The door of life and hopes is closed again, why?

*Ma ji jîna kurte? Jîn bit. Ma ji ‘emrê me çi ma?*  
Is it a short life? It's life. What has remained from our life?

*Zana u nezan her êkin. Kurdînu nabit eve.*  
Literate and illiterate are one. Kurds, this is unacceptable.

*Lew ji êşa em dinalîn; her li me dunya şeve.*  
That's why out of pain we moan; the world is always night for us.

*Karwanên şevan diburin, lawik u heyran<sup>181</sup> xuşin.* 35  
The night convoys are passing, special songs are enjoyable.

*Risteyîn stêran disujin bu me harin; lew geşin*  
The lines of stars are burning. For us they are mad. That's why they are bright.

*Guh bidin dengê bilwîlan, ew çewa bu me dibistirin.*  
Listen to the sound of the flutes, how they are singing for us.

*Xuşe lê dengê narînan<sup>182</sup> dilê me tijî kulin*

---

<sup>180</sup> *Hewar* is a call for help.

<sup>181</sup> These two words are used together to represent a certain type of Kurdish song, one that is almost a chant.

<sup>182</sup> Songs that women will sometimes sing at a wedding.

It's joyful, the sound of songs; (however) our hearts are full of sorrow.

*Her emîn heta ev sale xewneke bişên bijîn.*

It's still us until this year, a dream you can live with.

*Wek hemî xelkên cîhanê, wan sinûra ji xo vedîn.*

40

Like all people of the world, we separate those borders from us.

*Xewneke bişêm bibînim—devrê dilê min xast.*

It's a dream that I can see—the place my heart requested.

*Nabîtin bu me bibînin jêr u jur u çep u rast.*

It's impossible for us to see it from bottom and top and left and right.

*Nabîtin bu me tewafa ew cihê lê Mem u Zîn.*

We can't go and worship the place of *Mem* and *Zîn*.<sup>183</sup>

*Nabîtin evro biburîn ji tuxîbê Xanîqîn.*

It's impossible today for us to pass from the danger of *Khanaqeen*.

*Nabîtin biçim nik Xanî bu vekim dilê bi xwîn.*

45

I can't go near *Xanî* and open for (him) my heart with blood (sadness).

*Nabîtin biçim Dêrsîmê bikelêşim dilê bi evîn.*

I can't go to *Derseem* and break in two pieces my heart with love.

*Dergehê jîn u hîvîa girtîe dîsa çima?*

The door of life and hopes is closed again, why?

*Ma ji jîna kurte? Jîn bit. Ma ji 'emrê me çi ma?*

Is it a short life? It's life. What has remained from our life?

---

<sup>183</sup> *Mem* and *Zîn* are the main characters in one of the most famous pieces of Kurdish literature, the epic poem *Mem u Zîn*, written by *Ehmedî Xanî*, who is mentioned in line 45.

## BS5

by Badirxan Sindî  
translated by Masoud Salim Ismail

*Nehat*  
**It did not come**

*Dîl u êxsîrî ji gelî bun—ser feraza min nehat.*

They became captives and prisoners of (another) people—my self-respect<sup>184</sup> did not come.

*Mam di'îşqa wê şepalê—sil u zîza min nehat.*

I remained in love with her—my wave of ill temper and discontent did not come.

*Çav dinêrim ez bibînim—xuş 'ezîza min nehat.*

I anticipate seeing (her)—my lovely dear did not come.

*Guh min da awaz u lavçan—dengê saz<sup>185</sup> min nehat.*

I listened to melodies and songs—the sound of my guitar did not come.

*Ez ji ke'be<sup>186</sup> ra mirîdim hec u ferza min nehat.*

I am a follower of *ke'ib*—my pilgrimage and religious duty did not come. 5

*Cejne u sunete aşfî—pir 'aciza min nehat.*

Peace is a celebration and tradition—the one who's upset with me has not come.

*Şivanê deşt u zuzanim—berxe nazamin nehat.*

I am the shepherd of deserts and summer pastures—my fine lamb did not come.

*Dawet u şahyan veqetyan—can u taza min nehat.*

All weddings and dancing has been cut off—my pretty and excellent lady did not come.

*Têhni<sup>187</sup> u tav u tehreye—siha gwîza min nehat.*

It's dry and sunny and hot—the shadow of my walnut (tree) did not come.

---

<sup>184</sup> 'Pride.'

<sup>185</sup> *Saz*—in Turkish, *bağlama*—is a stringed instrument with a long neck.

<sup>186</sup> The black stone in Mecca.

<sup>187</sup> Literally 'thirsty.'

*Çend mekir hawar u yeman—kes bu duza min nehat.* 10  
 No matter how much we cried for help and mourned, no one joined me in my cause

*Kî wekî me mubitalye kes li rêza min nehat.*  
 Who is afflicted like us?—No one followed my way.

*Mam li nêçîrê ji mêje şah u baza min nehat.*  
 I continued hunting for a long time—my king and hawk did not come

*'Ud u sentur bistirîne—xuş awaza min nehat.*  
 Play your oud and hammer dulcimer—my nice melody did not come.

*Min bi jehira wê qebîle—maru, gaza min nehat.*  
 I accept her with her poison— snake, I'm not crying for help

*Ez bi hûkimê mirnê dayme (neqza) (\*) qeza min nehat* 15  
 I, with the sentence of death given me (the opposition)—my misfortune did not come.

*Derfete hâkim bibînim—roja heza min nehat.*  
 Chance is the judge I see—my lucky day did not come.

**BS6**

by Badirxan Sindî  
translated by Masoud Salim Ismail

***Bêla***  
**House**

*Ji kelekên 'ewra,*  
From the rafts of clouds,

*'Ewrên hizira,*  
Clouds of thoughts,

*Min gundek avakir.*  
I created (constructed) a village.

*Di wî gundî da min bêlayek çêkir.*  
In that village I made a house.

*Ez çume serbanê bêlayê*  
I went onto the roof of the house

5

*U ji bejna dilbera xu*  
And from the body of my lover

*Min dar alayek renî.*  
I plant a flag-tree.

*Alayek ji renkê nêrgizan min pêvekir.*  
I stuck a flag of the color of narcissuses on it.

*Min dilê xu ... dilê xem giran*  
I made my heart ... heart of great sorrow

*Kire bagurdan.<sup>188</sup>*  
into a roof roller.

10

*Banê bêlayê me gêra u .. u gêra.*  
We rolled and rolled the roof of our house.

---

<sup>188</sup> A roller used to make the soil (clay) on roof flat

*Welê gelu,*  
But people,

*Dîsa hinde dilupên barana*  
Again some drops of rain

*Têne xwarê.*  
Fell down.

*Ez ji xewa giran rakirim*  
I awoke from the heavy dream

15

*Ez hiştar kirim*  
I became aware (conscious).

*Kanê gundî?*  
Where are the people (village)?

*Kanê ban?*  
Where's the roof?

*Ka dilê min,*  
Where's my heart,

*Helgirê xema giran?*  
The bearer of heavy sorrows?

20

*Min piştara 'ewrên heval kirin*  
I asked the clouds of friends,

*Gelu,*  
People,

*Kesek ji we bagurdanek dîtê ye?*  
Has anyone of you seen a roller?

*Bagurdanekê ji dil u çavan?*  
A roller from heart and eyes?

*Ji bejna canan çêkirî?*  
That has been made from the body of souls?

25

*Gutin, Belê .. me dît*

They said, Yes .. we saw it.

*Ji serê çîayê hîvîyan*  
From atop the mountain of hopes

*Girêle dibî*  
it was rolling down

*Kete binê nihala xema gelîyan.*  
It fell to the bottom of the ravines of sorrowful canyons.

*Bagurdanê te qet qet kirin.* 30  
Your roller was cut into pieces.

*Hwîr kirin.*  
They smashed it in pieces.

*Kirin tisbeħ..*<sup>189</sup>  
They made it into rosaries ..

*Hizar tisbeħ jê çêkirin.*  
They made thousands of rosaries from it.

*Li (super markîê) têne firutin.* 35  
They are being sold in the market.

*Siraye .. siraye*  
Rows of traffic (and) rows of traffic

*Siraye li tisbeħan.*  
Rows of traffic for the rosaries.

*Bi xudîkên tirumbêlên nwî tu b vedikin,*  
They're hanging them by the rearview mirrors in their new cars

*Bu cwanî.*  
For decoration.

*Tisbeħên ji leşê bagurdanî çêkirî.* 40  
Hand rollers that have been made from the body of roof top roller.

---

<sup>189</sup> A closed string of beads used for prayers, much like Catholic rosary beads.

*Bi tirumbêla vedikin ..*  
They're hanging them in cars ..

*Eman, eman,*  
Ah, ah,

*Derd u yeman—*  
Pain and sorrow—

*Sutim eman—*  
Ah, I am burned—

*Derdê giran.*  
Pain heavy.

## BS7

by Badirxan Sindî  
translated by Şîvan Toma

*Mîrê Peyvan*  
*The Prince of Words*

*Ji seydayê sadiq biha'alidîn ra pêş kêşe 1983*  
Presented to Mr. Sadiq Baha' Al-Deen 1983

*Erê, sîlav, çima evro melwîl u hişik u zuhayî?*  
Yes, waterfall, why are you so sad and dry and thirsty<sup>190</sup> today?

*Kelê, boçî tu bê deng u negeşdar u verêlhayî?*  
Fortress,<sup>191</sup> why are you quiet and unobservant and indifferent?

*Çira, dil, tu wesa evro ji kakil ra yê arhayî?*  
Why, heart, are you today so aggravated from the core of your being?

*Gutin, yaro bê kew rabu sefer kêşa u zavaye*  
They said, Friend, he got up without the partridge, journeyed away. And he is the groom!

*Te da rê, ey Mîrê Peyvan, bê saz u maz li pêş te biçin.* 5  
You went on your way, O Prince of Words, without having people walk before you.

*Şagirdên te heqe çûban bi mewkib ew cilil reş bin*  
It would have been right for your disciples to go in procession dressed in black clothing

*Heta peyvên te jî, seyda, li vê ş'rê da jî geş bin.*  
Even your words also, teacher, would in this poem have radiated.

*Ûerîbê vê jîlnê bu şeva mirnê jî hu maye.*  
The stranger of this world has been left like this for the evening of death.

---

<sup>190</sup> Chyet (2003) states that *hişik* means 'dry' for inanimate things, whereas *zuha* means 'dry' for living things.

<sup>191</sup> Or 'castle.'

*Ji warê bê kesan, kes bu li baîxî xirş ew pir berbu.*

From the homeland without caretakers, there was somebody in the barren garden guarding it.

*Çi çaxek bu wî dest pê kir ku Kurdî hîngê bê ser bu.*

10

What a time began for him when Kurds at that time were without a leader.

*Kewek bu lê neçu ravê ji kewgiran<sup>192</sup> nekew girbu.*

He was a partridge but he did not go hunting because for the hunters this partridge is not a hunter.<sup>193</sup>

*Bi rastî (Sadiqî) lewra dil bi navête avaye.*

Actually (Sadiq), that is why the heart is flourishing by your name.

*Te sîng da ber reşebayan bi xizmet çûye ezmanî.*

You led (put your chest) in front of the storms (and) you served the language.

*Me hulên tîj çî car neşîan bikulin ber derê xanî.*

The sharp scepters never could dig at the threshold of the house.

*Ji turî ra tu dergeh buî bi suzî. xuş zêrevanî.*

15

For the jackal you were the door with promise; you are a good guardian.

*Bi pîrî jî qelem geş bu ewî xizmet ne berdaye.*

Even in his old age the pen was sharp (and) did not stop the service (work).

*Çi tavek bu gelo ya geş li çaxê tarî u şev reş!*

What a bright sunrise for the people, radiance in the dark time and black night!

*Çirabu ew li ber çavan helat u gut ezim Ateş—*

It was a candle that choked in front of the eyes and said, I am Atesh. —

*Bi Kurmancî gemî darê li derîayê zimanê xweş.*

With Kurmanji, a wooden boat in the sea of nice language.

*Ji pêş Le'lan wî peyv girtin. Niquvanê me Kurdaye*

20

In front of Le'lan he held the words. He is the diver of us Kurds.

*Mirîdê vîna Zînê bu nesaxê derdê Memê bu.*

---

<sup>192</sup> Literally 'partridge hunter'

<sup>193</sup> A partridge hunter uses a partridge to catch other partridges.

He was the disciple of the love of Zeen. He was the ill one from the sorrow of Mem.

*Rundika Tac u Sitê bu, fîxana Sî u Xecê bu.*

He was the tear of *Tac* and *Sitê*, the mourning of *Sî* and *Xecê*.

*Xuş vîê gav u mijê bu 'evdal bu çav her li rêbu.*

He was the dear one of time and fog; he was the quiet one, his eyes always on the road.

*Gelo! Lewra disujit dil ku cih kew evro valaye.*

People! That's why the heart is burning, because the place of the partridge today is vacant.

## CX1

by Cegerxwîn  
translated by Behrooz Shojai

*Dilê Cegerxwîn*  
Cegerxwîn's Heart

*Agir bi Kurdistanê ket, lewra haware dil;*  
Kurdistan ravaged by fire, thus my heart is a cry for help;

*Sed bax̄ u sed bistanê ket manendî bilbil jare dil.*  
A hundred gardens and a hundred meadows devastated—I, dejected, like the disheartened nightingale.

*Pêtek ji Kurdistanê hat, mêalik u cergê min dipat;*  
A flame came from Kurdistan, burning my lung and liver;

*Aman welat, aman welat—Bawer bikin, xwînxware dil!*  
Alas my home, alas my home—Believe me, my heart is terrible!

*Bawer bikin, êt yarê min, heval u hem guhdarê min;* 5  
Believe me, O my lover, friends and all listeners of mine,

*Her gav u her êvarê min, naxoş u hem bêzare dil.*  
Every morning and every evening of mine, the heart is unwell and always despondent.

*Bêzar u pir naxoşe ew, kincên sîyeh – gûn – poşe ew.*  
It is despondent and quite unwell, dressed in garments of mourning; it is sorrowful.

*Geh sîne, geh seîdoşe ew, geh heîderê kerare dil.*  
At times light-hearted, at times it is Seidosh, at times it is the Smiter Haydar.<sup>194</sup>

*Geh Rişteme, geh Xateme, geh Padişahê Deyleme.*  
At times it is Rustem, at times it is Khatem, at times it is the King of Dailaman.

*Bê yar u dost u hemdeme, lew mest u gerdexware dil* 10  
It is without lover and friend and companion, that is why my heart is drunk and twisted.

*Geh şahe ew, geh bêkese, geh Kurde ew, geh Farse*

---

<sup>194</sup> The nickname of the fourth Khalif, Ali.

At times it is the king, at times it is forlorn, at times it is a Kurd, at times it is a Persian,

*Geh berbere, geh çerkese, geh turke, geh tatare dil*

At times it is Berber, at times it is Circassian, at times it is Turkish, at times the heart is Tartar.

*Geh çole geh, zozane ew, geh Dêrik u geh Wane ew.*

At times it is wilderness, at times summer pasture, at times Derik and at times it is Wan.

*Geh şaxe, geh westane ew, geh mûşe, geh zinare dil*

At times it is standing (strong), at times it is kneeling (tired), at times it is mûş<sup>195</sup> at times the heart is a massive rock.

*Geh are dil, geh ave dil, geh tare dil geh tave dil.*

15

At times the heart is a flame, at times the heart is water, at times the heart is obscure, at times the heart is the light of the sun.

*Murxê seher der dave dil, lewra cegerxwîn pare dil.*

The heart is like the entrapped songster; that is why Cegerxwîn's heart is lacerated.

---

<sup>195</sup> Meaning unknown. *Muş* is the name of a province in the Kurdish area of Turkey, however use of it seems vague here (whereas in the line above there's a comparison drawn between *Dêrik* and *Wan*). According to Omar, *mûş* can also mean 'unknown land' (Omar 1992).

## CX2

by Cegerxwîn  
translated by Behrooz Shojai

*Silav Li Sifra Hazire*  
**Salute the Feast (Dining-table) Is Ready**

*Ey, sûxteyê bê nav u deng,*  
Alas, the unknown wretch,

*Dijmin li ser balafire,*  
the enemy is above the airplane,

*Pir leşker u top u tiveng.*  
A full army and canons and muskets.

*Seîda ewe, ew mahire.*  
He is the master; he is the skillful one.

*Sed salin ev zeyd u 'emir,*  
Hundreds of years are this *zeyd*<sup>196</sup> and life

5

*Cenge digel rîşa melê.*  
In battle against the pen of the priest.

*Mertal di dest wan de bihuşt,*  
The shield in their hands is heaven,

*Gurzê di dest wan agire.*  
The club in their hands is fire.

*Şêxê ko tac u teîlesan*  
The sheikh with crown and turban

*Weregirtye rengê xidir.*  
has taken the shape of Green Knight.<sup>197</sup>

10

---

<sup>196</sup> Meaning unknown.

<sup>197</sup> The muslim/islamic figure Khidir is close to the Western figure of Green Knight

*Rûniştê li birca belek*  
He resided in the colourful fortress

*Şahê ‘ecem şah nadire.*  
(Against) the Persian Shah—the Shah is Nadir.

*Ew sofîê dîl u reben*  
That severe ascetic Sufi

*Serqot u xwas u tazî ye,*  
Is bare-headed and barefoot and naked,

*Digirî bi hawar u fîfan,*  
Weeping in lamentation and moaning,

15

“*Şêxê me ‘Evdilqadire.*”  
“Our Sheikh is Abdulqadir [Geilani].”<sup>198</sup>

*Carek li şêx ew nanerî*  
He never beheld the sheikh

*Da zanibe rast u derew.*  
To see how righteous he is.

*Kincê li şêx u şal u qumaş—*  
Garments on the sheikh are of the best fabric—

*Kincê li sofî çadire.*  
The Sufi goes about in rags.

20

*Axa bi deh gundên xwe ve*  
The landlord, owner of ten hamlets

*Bawer dike keîxusrewe.*  
Is imagining himself to be Xerxes.<sup>199</sup>

*Talanker u diz u keleş—*  
Marauder and robber and plunderer—

---

<sup>198</sup> The head of the Naqshabdi Sufist Order.

<sup>199</sup> Likely Xerxes I of the Persian Empire.

*Wî daye ser rêça gure.*  
He has taken the path of the wolves.

*Halê me kurmanca eve!*  
(Behold!) This is the state of us Kurds!

25

*Em dê çilo serbest bijîn?*  
How can we gain our freedom?

*Herçî ko çûyî guh medê;*  
Forget the bygone ages;

*Silav li Sifra hazire.*  
Salute, the feast (dining-table) is ready.

*Seîdayê rast u ronî ye.*  
He is the teacher of truth and light.

*Lewra Cegerxwîn namîdar.*  
Thus (that is why) Cegerxwîn is famous.

30

*Zana dizanin ew kî ye,*  
The versed (educated) ones recognize him,

*Ên ker dibêjin kafire.*  
The ignorant ones say he is a blasphemer (infidel).

## CX3

by Cegerxwîn  
translated by Behrooz Shojai

*Dînê Me Tête Zanîn*  
**Our Religion Is Becoming Known**

*Nifûnekê ji yezdan dikim, tu bêje amîn;*  
I beseech the Lord, say Amen,

*Şêx u melayê Kurdan belengaz u geda bin*  
Let the Kurdish Sheikh and preacher lament in mendicancy

*Lewra yekê ji wana qanûn bi zarê Kurdî.*  
None of them wrote the law in Kurdish

*Ji bo me çênekir qet, ji ber vê em nezanin.*  
for us at all, not one bit. That is why we are ignorant.

*Xwe pîr dikin di wez'ê hem sirif u ni'hu u mintiq;* 5  
They make themselves old (seasoned) in (elaborating on) morphology, syntax and logic  
(in Arabic)

*Bê zar u xet u xwendin, li nav xelkê dewarin.*  
We, the herd of people are (left abandoned) without language and script and  
ability to read.

*Payz u hem zivistan, her sê mehên biharê,*  
Autumn and all of winter, all three months of spring,

*Her dem dikin mitala. Daxwaz ji wan re havîn.*  
All the time they are pondering. We request only summer from them.

*Her dem dibên emin ê ko warsê nebî ne;*  
They were always asserting, "We are the ones to bear the legacy of the prophet."

*Lê def u çerx u govend wan kirine ayîna dîn.* 10  
But they turned the drums and dancing into a rite of religion.

*Dibên, eger bi Kurdî 'lim ko bête xwendin,*  
Alleging that, if the knowledge was acquired in Kurdish,

*Em dê bibin Qizabaş, Kurd u Bixar u Maçîn.*

We shall convert to Qizilbash (Shiite Persians), Kurd and Sugdians and Trans-Chinese.

*Feqî bi xwe nezane, seîda dinêrî qamûs;*

The student of religion being ignorant, the teacher searching through the dictionary;

*Her yek bi dil dibêjin em miftiyê zemanin.*

Each one claims that they are the keyholder of the era

*Bi Kurdî ger bixuînin bê renc u bê giranî;*

[Let us] read in Kurdish without toil and drudgery;

15

*Bê qeîd u şerîh u hâşî cahil bi xwe dizanin.*

Even the ignorant would learn without conditions or deviations

*Dînê me tête zanîn bi her ziman u her xet,*

Our is becoming known in all languages and scripts,

*Bi Kurdî yan Firengî, yaxûd bi xetê Latîn.*

In Kurdish or European or even in Latin script.

*Welalhî bûm ceger xwîn ji derdê şêx u seîda;*

By god, shekh and preachers made me to despondent (Cegerxwîn).

*Qelem digel zimanim her dem bi ax u nalîn.*

The pen along with my tongue, always in torment and anguish.

20

## DD

by Deyka Dalyayê  
translated by Şamal Akreyî

*Ji Nazên Te Xerîbim*  
**I Miss Your Childlike Ways**

*Demê çipkên baraneka hûr sema liser pişta serbanê me dikir,*  
When the wispy rain danced on our rooftop,

*dengê baranê xemeka dijwar di dilê min da darand.*  
the sound of the rain was arousing a fierce sorrow in my heart.

*Ez dihimbêza teda mîna naneka gerim dinav devê birsîtekê lexrîn da*  
In your embrace I was like a warm loaf in a hungry mouth

*Dinav êk da buhjin u*  
We were dissolving into each other and

*tibilên min ji lêvên te têr şîr vedxwar u*  
my fingers were drinking plenty of milk from your lips and

5

*hemî leşê te dikire buhar.*  
your whole body was turning into spring.

*Hêşta ew aşiqim..ewa har*  
I still love you..she who is wild (wildly in love)

\* \* \*

*Demê hetaf zer ki jiber tavyên ewran xu vedşêrin.*  
Then the pale ray hid behind the sunlight of the clouds.

*Tu dibuye şev;*  
You were becoming night;

*ez dibume stêr.*  
I was becoming a star.

10

*Tu li min digerîaî*  
You were looking for me

*bu maçeka ser pê.*  
just to have a swift kiss.

*Te şer gel turîê dikir*  
You were quarrelling with the darkness

*xu dimin werdikir u*  
you were throwing yourself at me and

*şevê sema liber maçên bilez dikir.....?*  
the night was dancing with (our) swift kisses.

15

\* \* \*

*Eve çend buhar burîn u*  
Many springtimes have gone and

*ez henasên te helid kêşim.*  
I breathe your respiration.

*Ji xerîbîê neşêm êdî ji te dur kevim u*  
Due to (my) longing for you, I still cannot go (fall) far from you and

*tu hindê nêzîkî.*  
you are so close to me.

*Hindî sîtafka min.*  
You are my shadow.

20

*bibure, neşêm sîtafkê bidesta bikirim.*  
Sorry, I cannot touch the shadow.

\* \* \*

*Ez xewnekim di fincana qehwa te da;*  
I am a dream in your coffee cup;

*tu şehîdê barana eşqê.*  
You are the martyr of the passionate rain.

*Ruha min digel xu bibe u*  
Take my soul with you and

*ez u tu dê digurekê da nivîn u*  
you and I will sleep in one grave and

25

*da ji te dur nekevim...?*  
so I don't stray far from you.

\* \* \*

*Payîzan te naz dikirin*  
During the autumns were making you delicate (to be spoiled)

*Nazên te digel belgan diwerin.*  
Your childlike ways were falling with the leaves.

*Min jî baxçek ji şîhrên bê hudeyî dane baî u*  
I, too, threw a garden of absurd poems to the wind and

*tu dibuye zarukekê şuîm u*  
you were turning into a restless child and

30

*şer digel baî dikir..*  
wrestling with the air..

*Tu neşêî hemî belga vedeî u*  
You cannot collect all the leaves and

*şîhrên min vêdeî...*  
you cannot gather my poems...

*Tu nabînî...?*  
Don't you see?

\* \* \*

*Demê tu li stivankê gerdena min dinêrî,*  
When you look at my necklace,

35

*ji çavên te ditrsim.*  
I am afraid of your eyes.

*Ne ku maçekê ji min bidizî u*  
not that you will steal a kiss from me and

*dujeha xerîbîa xu bikeye sêva beheştê u*

to turn the hell of your longing into a night of paradise and

*zuî serda biçî u*  
quickly become deceived and

*min ji beheştê derbêxî.?* 40  
cast me out of your heaven.

\* \* \*

*Liser şeqama u*  
On the streets and

*libin dara berî u*  
among the trees of the wilderness and

*mezarê bê nav,*  
unnamed graves,

*em dû belatînk buîn.*  
we were two butterflies.

*Tejî henasên me haratî bu.* 45  
Our breath was full of wild lust.

*Digel baî difrîn u*  
We were flying with the wind and

*digel rujê ava dibuîn u*  
we were setting with the sun and

*digel şevê dinivistîn u*  
we were sleeping with the night and

*digel elindî hişîar dibuîn.*  
we were waking up with the dawn.

*Hîvî dikem xu ji min ne vedze* 50  
I hope that do not hide from me.

*min nehêle.....??*  
Do not leave me!

Note: The dots and question marks in the lines of Kurdish are from the original author. Not understanding their purpose at times, I have used punctuation that seems appropriate for the English translation.

## H

by Hizirvan  
translated by Zeerak Kamal

*Bêhna Gulê*  
**The Smell of the Rose**

*Gulek birîn, ji binê kirin, bêhin jê neçu.*  
They cut a rose, cut it off; it did not lose the smell.

*Xabûr girtin; bi sed sikiran tev kirine cu.*  
They blocked the Khabor;<sup>200</sup> with a hundred dams turn it into streams.

*Dîsa hemî çûne serê; xabûr her çu.*  
The streams came together again; the Xabor continued to flow.

*Teyrek înan verûçkandin—nav jê ne çu.*  
They brought a bird and plucked it—it did not lose its name.

*Turevanek kuştin, goşt lê pirtirkirin,* 5  
They killed a writer (scholar), cut his corpse into pieces,

*Agrek boş li ser helkirin, berzekirin.*  
And ignited a massive fire on him (his body) and hid him.

*Xwelî ya wî jî bin axkirin,*  
They also buried his ashes in the earth,

*Belê jinav xelkê neçu.*  
But he did not go from among the people.

---

<sup>200</sup> A river that goes through the city of Zaxo.

## HS

by Hisin Silêvanî  
translated by Şamal Akreyî

*Ew Xanîma Henê*<sup>201</sup>  
**That Lady**

*Ew Xanîma henê,*  
That lady,

*ewa digel wêskî dihal diçit—*  
who gets into an intoxicated state—

*sed sofî li ber pê nê wê av u avdiçin.*  
hundreds of sufis disappear under her feet.

\* \* \*

*Ew Xanîma henê,*  
That lady,

*ewa li ber perdê*  
who behind the curtains

5

*dihizira ra mayî—*  
goes deep into thoughts—

*runahîa dilê wê*  
the light of her heart

*perdê spîtir lêdikit.*  
turns the curtain whiter.

\* \* \*

---

<sup>201</sup> According to my consultant, the word *henê* is used to “refer to or point to something.” The author could have simply said *Xanîma henê*, leaving off the word *ew*, a demonstrative. Perhaps by using both *ew* and *henê*, the statement is emphatic.

*Ew Xanîma henê,*  
That lady,

*ewa di duîkêlê ra mayê—*  
who is stuck in the smoke—

10

*xweşe sîha girinjîna wê*  
it's nice, the shade of her smile is delightful

*dema pêkê xwe radikit*  
when she picks up her shotglass

*u dil ji min*  
and from me my heart

\* \* \*

*Ew Xanîma henê,*  
That lady,

*ewa cigarê bi destê çepê digirit.*  
who holds her cigarettes with her left hand.

15

*şewqa lêvên wê xweşî jê dizêt, u*  
The brightness of her lips— pleasantness springs from it, and

*dirijit ser mêzê, u*  
pours it out on the table, and

*mêza wê delalitir dibit.*  
her table becomes more graceful.

\* \* \*

*Ew Xanîma henê,*  
That lady,

*ewa Xudê di cwanê da dahêalî u*  
who God dipped into beauty and

20

*têkde delalî.*  
every bit of her is graceful.

*Dema pêkê vala têdikit u bilind dikit u*

When she fills her empty shotglass and picks it up and

*hêdî, hêdî xweşîê li me direşînit,*  
gradually sprinkles gladness on us,

*şewqa zendê wê*  
the brightness of her wrist

*şemalkê ruhî dîkî.*  
makes the candle brighter.

25

\* \* \*

*Ew xanma henê*  
That lady

*ewa destê xwe danî bin serê xwe.*  
who puts her hand under her head.

*Çend delale!!*  
How gorgeous is she!!

*xuzî ez destê wê bam*  
I wish I could be her hand.

\* \* \*

*Ew Xanîma henê,*  
That lady,

30

*ewa wek wê ne.*  
who no one can be compared with.

*Li vê şevê, ewa enî spêde.*  
On this night, her forehead is the morning.

*Ava bit mala wê,*  
Bless her home, (may her home prosper)

*şad kir şeva me.*  
She has made our evening cheerful.

## MQ1

by Mihsin Quçan  
translated by Karwan Harbi Omarkhan

*Birînen Şevên Xwînelo*  
**Wounds of Night Covered in Blood**

(rojanên girtêkîne di bendîxanê da)  
remembering the days of my capture

*Dibêjin xewin*  
They say that dreams,

*ji turê xwe der dikevin*  
they leave their nets.

*xewna têda dihêt xwîn.*  
Blood comes forth from a dream within.

*Min di xew da didît*  
In a dream I was seeing

*sîngê esmanî yê derbuwî*  
the chest of the sky had opened

5

*yê bûn birîn*  
and became a wound.

*Rûyê erdî hizar carî yê kelşî*  
It had cut the face of the earth a thousand times.

*roj ya sûr bûn ya buhijî*  
The sun became red and melted

*kuçik û tenîr*  
the fireplace and oven

*bi ser û çavên nanbêja ve*  
on the face of bakers,

10

*yên peqîn*

those who are exploited.

*Jê dizêtin xwîn*  
blood springs up from it.

*Heku xelk diçûne kezaxa,*  
When people go to work,

*tîrkên mêwa jê dibarî xwîn.*  
even the leaves of the trees are bleeding.

*helandina hemî coxîn û miştaxa* 15  
Welding all threshing floors and spreading floors

*dibû bager ... dwîkêl û xwîn.*  
was becoming a snowstorm ... smoke and blood.

*Me nan kerkir—*  
We start eating (cut bread)—

*pirî nav xwîn.*  
full of blood.

*Çi kirase me dixo werdikir,*  
What kind of dress did we wear,

*hemî leşê me dikire xwîn?* 20  
making all of our body blood?

*Ji lehîa xwînê, çîa dirîn,*  
From the flood of blood, the mountains are torn apart,

*bajêr dibirin,*  
sweeping the cities away,

*dar û bar, û serên biçwîka vedirîn.*  
the trees and riverbanks, and opening the heads of children.

*Didanên min xir di helweşîan*  
All my teeth are gone (deteriorated)

*ji çavên min şilqa veda—* 25  
From my eyes spill tears—

*agr û xwîn.*  
fire and blood

\* \* \*

*ez hiştar bûm.*  
I woke up.

*Pêyek giran dergehê malê ra havêt.*  
A heavy foot slammed the door.

*Dilê min di sîngê min da*  
My heart inside my chest

*bibû çîçkek xo di helavêt*  
became a sparrow and is beating

30

*wek revdên gurga bi jor ketin.*  
like a group of wolves they came.

*Tiveng kirne di sîngê min ra u*  
They put the gun inside my chest and

*binav qab qiloza ketin.*  
rumaged through my things.

*Pertûkên min*  
My books

*vewjartin nîva malê*  
they tossed them into the middle of the house,

35

*per perkirin, pirtkandin.*  
cut the papers of my books and damaged them.

*nivînên me hemî dane ber singîa,*  
They took a knife to all of our bedding,

*xir dirandin.*  
tearing them all.

*"Li çi digerin têşkên zinayê,*  
"What are they looking for, these bastards,

*gîfankên bajêrvanîê,*  
these bastards employed by the municipality,

40

*kirmên axê û maşotên,*  
caterpillars of dirt and (little green) worms,

*Xoşî û hîvî?"*  
Pleasantness and hope?"

\* \* \*

*Şelyaî pêxas*  
(He has) barefoot pajamas,

*bi ser û çavên herî û xwîn ve.*  
mud and blood on his face again.

*Di kulanada jorda dibirim.*  
I am walking along the road.

45

*Ez pê dihesîtam.*  
I recognize him.

*Xelk pencera yê vediken u*  
People are opening the windows and

*careka dî zwî, zwî digirin.*  
then they quickly, quickly close them.

*Li kulanê*  
On the road

*kes ne dwêrîa xo bi min haî det,*  
everyone is afraid of defending me,

50

*li ser milê xo zivirin.*  
turning their heads.

*Herçende, min ji dil bawere*  
Albeit, I believe in my heart

*heku bi şevê dimînin bi tinê,*  
that when I am alone in night,

*yan di degirin*  
or crying

*li ser mêzên vexarnê,*  
at the drinking table,

55

*dikel diçin, bo min digirin.*  
the smoke (that) is going (up), it is crying for me.

\* \* \* April 14, 1985

*Heku şevê*  
When the night

*xo bi dehmanên bajêrî ve dikir tilove*  
made itself *tilove*<sup>202</sup> on the hem of the city

*xo dikir pinî û pêve dirist*  
made itself a patch and sewed itself on it

*heku qeralê tarîê*  
whenever *qeral*<sup>203</sup> of the dark

60

*çengên xo didan*  
gave their wings

*şenge kezîên kehrebê*  
beautiful woman, braids of electricity

*dikêşane ber sîngê xove,*  
pulls them to her chest,

*dimêtin ... dimêtin,*  
sucking ...sucking,

*berdane ve zerupêfî u xav û sist.*  
She released (them) tired and disheveled.

65

*Li dirêjîa cadên bajêrî*

---

<sup>202</sup> Meaning unknown.

<sup>203</sup> Meaning unknown.

In the long roads of the city

*qêjîên bajêrvanîê dibehîn.*  
the whole municipality is screaming.

*Kêm dibû girî.*  
Very few people were crying

*Zer dibû kenî*  
They were pale (unhealthy), laughing

*Bê dengîyê xîveta xo veda ji nwî.* 70  
Without a sound, their shelter (tent) was appearing new.

*Bajêr dinivst.*  
The city was sleeping.

*Hingî, dêmê te geş dibû*  
At that time, when you were maturing

*dinav mêrgên hizirên min da,*  
among the field of my thoughts,

*te dinav olîên xewnên min da*  
you in the faith of my dreams

*dikir şev bêrî* 75  
shared an evening of fellowship

*digel dilê min da reqsî.*  
with my heart you dance.

*Hemî bihavên<sup>204</sup> leşê min*  
All over my body

*sivig destekê lê gêrî*  
quickly washing up.

*Te hwî kirbûm yarêka mit,*  
You had taught me a silent game

---

<sup>204</sup> Meaning unknown.

*car mendehoş da rawestî û*  
sometimes drunk and standing and

80

*rik û rik çavên min nêrî.*  
way by way you looked into my eyes.

*Car da xo keî befir û barî.*  
Sometimes you made yourself snow and came down.

*Min sîngê xwe dikire kêrî*  
I was making my chest a knife

*dema rojê kezîkên xo berdanexwar*  
when the sun dropped its braids (rays) (onto the earth)

*da buhujî*  
so that it melted

85

*yan da zîzbî*  
or was angered

*li direka dwîr xo veşêrî*  
In a place she hid herself.

*ev serê çend şevane*  
The early start of so many nights

*li min hizrete*  
I've been wishing

*mezela min*  
My room

90

*berê şimka te maçî ket*  
the upperside of the sandle you kissed

*Ne bêjîye min*  
Don't tell me

*têşke seyên li ber dergeha.*  
the bastards are on our doorstep.

*Nahêlin bi jora min bikevî.*  
I won't let them enter my room.

*Yan ji ber rengê goma xwîna di jora min ve* 95  
Or is it because of the color of the pool of blood inside my room

*tu newêrî?*  
that you are afraid?

*Were, Xanîm.*  
Come, lady.

*Hêvke şîwarên lêvên xo*  
The remnant of her lips

*li ser leşê min*  
on my body –

*çawa bizotkê cigara* 100  
how the smoke

*guvenda xo ya girêdaî,*  
creating its own dance,

*ya xwe kirîe rêzke mêrî*  
making itself a row of ants.

\* \* \* May 2, 1985

*Li evê dirê*  
In this place

*rêveçûna şev û rojan ya aloze.*  
walking in the night and day is unusual.

*Rojê, kirasên reşê liber, û* 105  
The day, wearing a dark cloak (overcast), and

*şev her şeve.*  
night is all night.

*Ev dîware di reşandîne,*  
This wall is being scattered,

*hemî navên mirovane,*  
all of them are the names of people,

*xudanên wan,*  
the owner of them,

*bo bîrhatin,*  
for remembering,

110

*bi neênuken xo yên helkolayin,*  
with his fingernails digging something,

*navên nwî tob şere ligel navên kevin,*  
the new names fighting with old ones,

*hindek nava*  
some names

*nêrên nanî yên liser serî,*  
bringing the basket of hot bread on the head,

*perindeyên dixon û direvin.*  
and the birds are stealing (the bread) and leaving (flying away) quickly.

115

*Hindek nav dixwînelone—*  
Some of the names were bloody—

*dixwînelone.*  
bloody.

*Çipkên xwînê yên jê dikevin.*  
Drops of blood were falling down.

*Eve li vêrê—*  
This is here—

*navê (Hemuî)*  
name of ‘Hamoî’

120

*navê (Temer)*  
name of ‘Temer’

*navê (Silwî)*  
name of ‘Silwee’

*navê hemî û her kesekê.*

name of all and everybody.

*Ji derê mala xo derketî û*  
He left the door of his home and

*li kes û karên xo berzebuwî* 125  
disappeared from his family and daily life.

*Eve li vêrê şev, xwîne*  
This here night, it is blood

*(şev û xwîn ya têkhelbuwî).*  
(night and blood mixed together).

\* \* \* June 20, 1985

*Hero ..... hero*  
Every day ... every day

*keratekê diînin sermin.*  
They're bringing keratekê<sup>205</sup> onto me.

*Dest û pê n min yê giroc buwîn,* 130  
My hands and my feet have become useless,

*nahên bermin.*  
too difficult to work.

*Pisîara çend nava ji min diken;*  
They are asking me for some names;

*min çi caran nebîstîne.*  
I never heard any of them.

*Hindek kirîaran palden min.*  
They accused me of something.

*Bi serê tekem* 135  
I swear by my head. (You have to believe me.)

*Min ev dave neristîne*

---

<sup>205</sup> Meaning unknown.

I didn't set these traps.

*Yên li hîvîê min sîçeloken.*

They are hoping to make me guilty.

*Min sîç nîne—*

I'm not guilty—

*ji bilê navê te serbarî û*

with the exception of your name and

*navê welat*

the name of (my) country

140

*di dilê min da dinivistîne*

sleeping in my heart.

\* \* \*

July 3, 1985

*Bêhin dikem.*

I am smelling.

*Bêhna gemara mirnê dihêt.*

The dirty smell of the dead is coming.

*Diqulê ra min çav lêbû.*

I am looking through a hole.

*Memkê çepê yê zerîekê—*

The left breast of the beautiful woman—

145

*bi kêrê birî.*

cut by the knife.

*Mêhvanê nwî—*

The new guest—

*pezkanî berda axê û serjêkirî.*

sent the sheep to pasture and beheaded (them).

*Ev kalê birex min ve dikenît,*

This donkey beside me is laughing,

*serê xo li dîwarî didetin.*

150

hitting his head against a wall.

*xêzana wî bi xanîve sot.*

They burned his family inside the house.

*Kurê wî dane ber leqa,*

Put forth his son to be bitten (throwing his son to the dogs)

*verot kelot,*

wearing out his clothes,

*helawîst û heta mirî.*

left him hanging until dead.

*Bêhin dikem*

I am smelling

155

*bêhna mirnê ... bêhna tirsê.*

the smell of the dead ... the smell of fear.

*Ditirsim bîstên van daî diza*

I am afraid twenty of them are paid thieves. (I'm afraid of those terrible people.)

*Vê carê li serê min bikevin.*

This time they are going to do the same thing to me.

*Çi sîtafka didet bin derî,*

Each shadow appears under the door.

*Her pêjneka ji derve bihêt.*

Each rape victim comes from outside.

160

*Tezîk bi leşê min dikevin.*

I am shivering with fear. (Shivering is falling on me.)

*Aî, lê Xanîm..*

Oh, but lady..

*Çend gelekên didilê min da,*

How very much that is inside my heart,

*Dê bo te bêm.*

I'm going to tell you.

*Ger carekê çavên min bi çavên te bikevin*  
If sometime my eyes meet your eyes

165

*da bêjme te*  
to tell you

*mêr dibine çi*  
what does a husband become

*demê mirin delnig û hiçka lê digirît û*  
when death's grip is taking off the cuffs and pants cuff and

*neşên biarîên,*  
they cannot provoke,

*neşên birevin*  
they cannot escape,

170

*Birastî, nazdar,*  
In fact (beautiful) lady,

*girkekê keftî dilê min.*  
I am shivering for fear. (A shiver fell in my heart.)

*Ditirsim bîstên van daî dîza,*  
I am afraid twenty of these sons of robbers,

*vê carê liser min bikevin.*  
that this time they are going to do the same thing to me.

## MQ2

by Mihsin Quçan  
translated by Karwan Harbi Omarkhan

*Befir Ya Li Vêrê*  
**Snow Is Here**

*Helo . .*  
Eagle

*Li nik me befir wa di barî*  
By us it is snowing

*Li ba hewe jîk befir dikevît?*  
Is snow also falling by you all?

*Mitayê me . . erê . . erê*  
Our goods...yes...yes

*yê li kolana*  
on the roads

5

*yê hewe jîk*  
and yours also

*li kulana ye?*  
Is it on the roads?

*Yan jî avahî bi dest dikevît*  
Were you able to find shelter?

*Helo . .*  
Eagle

*Esmanê me yê azrî*  
Our sky is agitated

10

*car yê qêrî ya radihêlît*  
Sometimes shouting and screaming

*ji helma wî diçîtin gurî*  
from its breath it's steaming hot

*Hindek cara diket girî*  
Sometimes it cries

*heku li birîna xo dinêrît*  
whenever it looks at its wound.

*Ew birîna . .*  
That wound . .

15

*çavên stêra bo derkirî.*  
that the stars took out their eyes for

*Helo . .*  
Eagle

*Befrê nihâl yê pir kirîn*  
Snow filled the ravines.

*dawetên me yê bir kirîn*  
covered our weddings

*Rêkên li gondê me birîn.*  
It cut off the paths to our village.

20

*Helo . .*  
Eagle . .

*Sehkene me . .*  
Look at us . .

*em yê li nav derîa befrê da*  
we are in the sea of snow

*li kolanên me*  
on our roads

*li ser banên me*  
on our roofs

25

*li ser mujîlankên çavên me*  
on our eyelashes

*befre . . befre*  
snow . . snow

*li derazînka*  
on the doorsteps

*li nav zevîka*  
on the fields

*li ser mil û pirçên biçwîka*  
on the shoulder and hair of children

30

*befre . . befre*  
snow . . snow

*evê befrê . .*  
This snow . .

*rwîyin kiçên me sorkirin,*  
made the cheeks of our girls red,

*maçî kirn*  
made kisses

*li pêş çavên me*  
in front of our eyes.

35

*Ne got şerme*  
It did not say, "it is shameful."

*Helo . .*  
Eagle . .

*Dar û barên me ditazîne.*  
It makes our trees and riverbanks cold.

*Hemî tişt li ba me di tezîne,*  
Everything is cold where we are,

*jibilî xwîna dilê me . .*  
except for the blood of our heart . .

40

*Tinê germe,*  
It is only hot,

*tinê germe.*

it is only hot.

**MT1**

by Mu'eyed Teyb

translated by Newzad Hirorî

translation was published in: KRISTIANSEN, GEORG. 2009. *From genocide to self-rule*, adaptation of the Swedish text by Gudrun Winfridsson. Riga, Latvia: Livonia Print.

*Kî dê merwayê tena ket?*  
**Who will comfort Merwa?**

*Kî dê Merwayê tena ket?*  
Who will comfort Merwa?

*Ev soratîa hwîn, bi dev û lêvên merwayê ve dibînin ne sorava dayka wê ye*  
This red colour, on Merwa's lips is not the lipstick of her mother,

*yarî pê kirîn.*  
which she used to play with.

*Ew xwîne xwîn...*  
The colour is blood, real blood...

*Ev pinîên reş û şînên,* 5  
Those black and blue marks

*hemî leşê wê dapoşîn*  
covering her body,

*ne nîşanin; ne bwîaxên resmî ne...*  
not a symbol; not a portrait...

*Ew seçme ne û birîn.*  
They are cuts and wounds.

*Ev girî û hawara diket jî - bi xudê nenazdarîne - ew êş û azarin.*  
She cries and pleads for help – by god, they weren't babied (spoiled) - they are suffering and hurt.

*Cergê wê birîn...ey Xudayê Mezin* 10  
Her liver is wounded...O Great God,

*kî dê vê tîfala birîndaru bê xudan tena ke?!*  
who will comfort this wounded and orphaned child?!

-----  
*Ey Xudayê Mezin,*  
 O Great God,

*Kî dê vê kîna reşa, wekî jehrê, wekî şevî bi ser vî welatî da digirît binbir û fena ket?!*  
 Who will eliminate and extinguish this black malice—like poison, like night—that is  
 over this country?!

\* \* \*

*Evro spêdê*  
 This morning (When this day dawned)

*Merwayê babek hebû.* 15  
 Merwa had a father.

*Her gaveka*  
 Often

*destên xo bilnd kirban li milê xo dikir.*  
 (whenever) she lifted her arms, he would set her on his shoulder.

*Evro spêdê,*  
 When this day dawned

*Merwayê daykek hebû.*  
 Merwa had a mother.

*Her gaveka diber ra çûba* 20  
 Whenever she would pass by (her),

*she would kiss her.*  
*maçî dikir.*

-----

*Evro spêdê*  
 When this day dawned

*Merwayê du xwişk û birayek hebûn.*  
 Merwa had two sisters and a brother.

*Bi qelem û defterên wan yarî dikirin.*  
She played with their pens and books.

*Evro nîvro kes jê nema.* 25  
In the middle of the day her family was no more (they were all taken away).

*Ey Xudayê Mezin,*  
O Great God,

*kî dê vê hemî kîna reş binbir û fena ket?*  
who will uproot and annihilate all this black malice?

*Ey Xudayê Mezin,*  
O Great God

*Merwa ya digrît,*  
Merwa is crying,

*kî dê tena ket?!* 30  
who will comfort her?!

*Eger sibe ji birînên xo jî ra bû*  
Even if tomorrow she recovers from her wounds,

*mezin bû û bû bwîk,*  
(and) grows up to be a bride,

*kî dê karê wê ket u*  
who shall make her beautiful (prepare her, make her ready), and

*kî dê dest û tilên wê xena ke?!*  
who shall colour her hands and fingers with henna?!

## MT2

by Mu'eyed Teyb  
translated by Şerzad Barzanî

*Xewinek*  
**A Dream**

*Xewinekê bide min ez pê bijîm*  
“Give me a dream to live with

*yan fireka jehirê ez pê bimirim.*  
Or some poison to die with.”

Gunnar Ekelof  
Swedish Poet

*Şivêdî, Da!*  
Last night, Mom!

*Min xewinek dît!*  
I saw a dream!

*Xewina te xêre, kurê min!*  
Your dream is a blessing, my son!

*Hêdî bêje..*  
Gently tell me..

*Dîwar bi guhin!*  
The wall has ears!

5

*Yadê min dît..*  
Dear Mother, I saw..

*goya zemîn dibû mehfwîrek*  
the ball of the earth changing into a rug.

*Xudê ji asimana hate xwar.*  
God at once descended from the heavens.

*Wî serek girt;*  
He took one side

*min serek girit* 10  
I took one side (the other).

*Me daquta..me daquta..me daquta*  
We shook it, over and over again.

*Paş em firîn. Çûîne ser stêreka bilind..*  
Then together we flew. We went on a star far away..

*Hemê çîa u bajêr u gund*  
All of the mountains and cities and villages

*bûne..zeryek nivistî u ruîs.*  
became a beautiful woman, sleeping and naked.

*Şane, şane me hêv kirê..* 15  
With pride, with pride we looked at it

*Ne tax maîne,*  
There was no crown (district),

*ne pîstal maîne u*  
no (military) boot (authority) remained and

*ne polîs!!*  
no police!!

## MT3

by Mu'eyed Teyb  
translated by Şerzad Barzanî

*Fireka Baî*  
**A Sip of Wind**

*Kurdistanê!*  
Kurdistan!

*fireka baî.*  
A sip of wind, (please),

*ji çîayekê befir lê maî.*  
from the top of a snow capped mountain.

*Evroke..çavbeleka min..*  
Today .. my black eyed girl..

*ya girêdaî*  
is in chains

5

*li bin kwînekê reş u drîaî.*  
under an impudent (black and torn) tent,

*li nav deşteka bê bab u daî.*  
in the middle of a desert, without father and mother,

*roja arîaî.*  
where the sun is terribly hot

*xîzê şarîaî.*  
the sand is burning all over.

*Zerîa min ya*  
My beauty too

10

*di xuhê ra maî.*  
continued to perspire.

*ezê ditirsim..*  
I am afraid

*ji dilbera dêm befir u xwîn*  
of the sweetheart with the fair and rosy complexion

*ji enya kever..*  
of the forehead covered with dark hair

*ji bejina şîrîn* 15  
for her sweet stature

*ji dilê evîn..*  
for her amorous heart..

*lê bûî birîn..*  
but it became a wound..

*ji cergê zozan..*  
for (her) soul (lung) of the summer pasture..

*lê bûî kovan.*  
but it became a sorrow.

*Ezê ditirsim..* 20  
I am afraid..

*roja arîaî..*  
that the hot sun

*kirêt biket..*  
will make her face ugly

*hizar deqa..li enîê bidet..*  
by making a thousand moles on her face,

*rengê çîa..*  
that the beauty of the mountains

*ji dêmî bibet!* 25  
will be erased from her face.

## MX

by Mesud Xalaf  
translated by Şamal Akreyî

*Dahola Êşê*  
**Drum of Pain**

*Êş, destebirakê hezê ye,*  
Pain is a companion of desire

*hez di zîndana leşê me de rizî ye.*  
Desire in the prison of our body is decayed.

*Tu êdî ber bi nemana êşê ve diheliyayî.*  
You are forever melting in order to reach the end of pain.

*Bejna te berhema derûna nepeniyê bû.*  
Your stature was a creation full of secrets.

*Wekî berê nema têhna rojan dişikest,* 5  
It is no longer as before (when it) was quenching the days' thirst,

*Ne jî,*  
Not also,

*wekî berê, te guh li ber sirûdên biharistana helbestê bel nedikir.*  
As before, you didn't listen to the poem of spring seasons

*Şînahî dihatin xewa me, hingê xewnên me şîn dibûn.*  
We dreamt of greenness—thus our dreams were turning green (growing).

*Bê sînor difirîn xweziyên bê nav û nîşan,*  
Desires without name and address were flying without limit.

*Em li ber derazînka hesreta xwe de, li xwe digeriyan,* 10  
We were at our sorrow gate, looking for ourselves.

*Di kefa destên me de stêr dirêjiyan,*  
From the palms of our hands stars were falling down.

*Asîman keçel dibû,*  
Heaven (the sky) was becoming bald,

*Şev sêwî, tenha û belengaz.*  
The night was and orphan, lonely and miserable.

*Min bê dengiya dengê te guhdarî dikir.*  
I was listening to the silence of your voice.

*Carina jî zemawenda dîtîne dûr diket,* 15  
Sometimes the festivity of the sight was also wandering far away,

*Carina jî, tu bê xatir diçûyî,*  
Sometimes you were also leaving without farewell,

*Û rengê te li cê jivanê dima.*  
And your color would remain at the place of rendezvous.

*Belkî kefenekî spî bû ew şev,*  
Perhaps that night was a white shroud,

*Belkî jî, ne raxhatina du hêşiran bû.*  
Perhaps it was also the crossing of two tears.

*Min bê te, ji van şûnwaran bar nedikir,* 20  
I without you, I was not leaving from this homeland,

*û nik dareke tûwê, min destmala te diveşart.*  
and next to a mulberry tree, I hid your handkerchief.

*Dema ku tixûbên hez kirina te ziwa dibin,*  
When the borders of your love are becoming empty,

*Ev cîhan tar û mar dibe ji peyvên mirina serwext.*  
This world is becoming dark and forsaken from the words of timely death.

*Çima, dilo, tu hez dikî dûr bikevî?!*  
Why, sweetheart, do you like to be far away?!

*Dizanim,* 25  
I realize

*Teniyatî di rojên dûriyanê de,*  
That loneliness in the distant days

*Sermediya veşartina tîke dilekî gunehkare,*

Is the eternity of hiding a broken down passion,

*Û aryanên ser lêveke xatirxwastiye.*

And the pains on a lip has been the bidding of farewell.

*Awirvedanên çiyayên kovanê, bi ser keskegotinên salên me de digirtin,*

The glances of the mountains of griefs are covering our years of fresh sayings

*Di wê werzê de kenê te pîrejinek bû,*

During that season your laughter was an old lady,

30

*Hebûna kulîlkan, di bin ebayê welatê tozê de vajî dibû,*

There were buds being turned upside down under the covering of the dusty land,

*Bijale bûn aşûpên bextewariyê,*

The visions of happiness were scattered,

*Hatine kuştin pirpirîkên dengê agirê birîndar,*

The butterflies of the sound of wounded fire were killed,

*Ji quntarên çiyayê Toros jî,*

Also, from the Toros mountain,

*Dengê bilûreke, xwedankuj<sup>206</sup> dihat.*

It is the sound of a flute, the killer was coming.

35

*Êdî, tu jî, ber bi hembêza jandariyê ve diçûyî û hêdî hêdî, hêmin û asûdeyî.*

You as well were approaching the embrace of pain and slowly becoming restful.

*Sîbera reşê şevê konê xwe vegirt ser bejna te.*

The shadow of the black night occupied its tent over your stature.

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<sup>206</sup> The person taking ownership in doing the killing.

## SS1

by Şaban Silêman  
translated by Ibrahim Abdullatif

*Gutgutik*  
**Rumors**

*Gutgutkeka bazarî.....*  
A rumor from the market...

*Yê dibêjin, tu heş min dikeyî?*  
They are saying, do you love me?

*Pist pisteka dihête kirin....*  
A secretive gossip is taking place....

*ku tu ya tu 'işqa min dikeyî .*  
as if “will you love me” (“fall in love with me”)

*Vê gutgutkê .....*  
This gossip....

5

*Hindek yê ji keyfa pê firî.*  
Some are flying out of happiness (on clouds).

*Hindek yê ji qehra pê mirî.*  
Some have died by sorrow from it.

*Çîçik dara siharîya,*  
The birds (in the) morning tree

*kurtîya duhî bu êk û dû vediguhêzin.*  
exchange the summary of yesterday.

*Gulêt baxça êvarîya*  
The flowers of the evening garden

10

*rwîdanêt nwî yêt rojane bu êk dibêjin.*  
tell each other the new (fresh) daily news.

*Lê tinê gutgutikeke û pistpsteke*  
But there is one gossip and rumor;

*nizanim direwe yan rastîyeke.*  
I don't know if it is a fact or a lie.

*Hind dibêjin .....*  
Some say.....

*û dîtina êkê ji evîna min,* 15  
and seeing someone for love,

*tu bûye agir û gurî*  
you became the fire and flame

*roja paştir tu bibûye rejî û xwelî.*  
(on) the day after you had become coal and ashes.

*Hind dibêjin,*  
Some say,

*jimêjwere mêrga şaşa têlefona min*  
for a long the plain of my telephone screen

*ji mesicêt te buharbu,* 20  
from your messages was spring,

*maç û dila mil bi mil rêz û qentar bu.*  
(images of) kisses and hearts, shoulder to shoulder, (were) in line and *qentar*.<sup>207</sup>

*Hind dibêjin .....*  
Some say.....

*tu ya digel min hatîye dîtin,*  
(that) you have been seen with me,

*sîyar li piştta 'ewrekî.*  
riding on the top of a cloud.

*Di xilweta 'eşqê di cizbe çuyî.* 25  
In the passion (heat) of love you indulged.

*Emê li pişt stêra berze bûn,*

---

<sup>207</sup> Meaning is uncertain; *qenter* means 'a line of camels.'

We have become lost beyond the stars,

*û pirça te di destê minda*  
and your hair in my hands

*ya bûye sîlaveka reş.*  
has become a black waterfall.

*Ji gurrîya birîsêt maçêt me,*  
From the flame (heat) of the lighting of our kisses,

*şeva reş dibû rojek geş.*  
the dark night became a radiant day. 30

*Lê tinê gutgutkek û pistpisteke;*  
But there is one gossip and rumor;

*Ez nizanim direwe yan rastîyeke.*  
I don't know if it is a lie or a truth.

*Lê ev gutgutke hîvîyeke.*  
But this rumor is a hope.

*Xewneka jînê bi cih dîînît.*  
It is a dream that is bestowing life.

*Lê ev pist piste dermaneke;*  
But this is rumor is a remedy; 35

*tev birîna dikewînît.*  
it heals wounds.

*Ger direw bû,*  
If it was a lie,

*eve xoştirîn direwe.*  
this is the best lie.

*Di bajêrê me da hatîye kirin.*  
It is has been done (told) in our cities.

*Eger rast bû, webû.*  
If it was correct, it was the truth. 40

*Eve dergehê beheştê;*  
This is the door to heaven;

*bi dar û melben li ber min hate vekirin.*  
with (its) wood and columns it has opened for me.

## SS2

by Şaban Silêman  
translated by Ibrahim Abdullatif

*'Eşqa Dihokî Ya*  
**Dohukian Love**

*Xatwîna min..*  
My dear..

*Li kulanêt bajêrê me*  
In the alleys of our city

*hero evîneka dihête tîror kirin.*  
everyday a love becomes (the victim) of terror.

*Evcar çewa, 'eşq bi aşkrayî—*  
This time, love is in open view (not in secret)—

*ji me dihêt qebwîl kirin?*  
will it be accepted of us?

5

*Xatwîna min..li bajêrê me*  
My dear..in our city

*ew kiça bi 'eşq gulekê,*  
that girl with a love flower,

*yan bi evîn silavekê,*  
or with a love-filled hello,

*yan ji dildarî ramwîsanekê*  
or from passion a kiss

*pêşkêşî kurekî biket,*  
presents to a boy,

10

*êkser dihête serjêkirin.*  
instantly becomes beheaded.

*evca çawan*  
So how to

*'eşq û evîn bi aşkrayî—*  
Love (Arabic) and Love (Kurdish) in open—

*Li vî bajêrê dê ji me dihête qebwîl kirin?*  
In this city will this be accepted of us?

\* \* \*

*Xatwîna min..*  
My dear..

15

*ev di bajêre.. seyîr, û entîkeye.*  
this in the city.. is unexpected and astonishing.

*Bi roj, hemî miruvên Xwedêne.*  
In the daytime, everybody is pious.

*Bu rwîmetîyê, hemî di lêne.*  
For show (to others), everyone is ready.

*Hemî tobedarin,<sup>208</sup>*  
Everyone is penitent,

*teqwadarin, sucdeberin—*  
religious, bowing (in prayer to God)—

20

*û bi şev û nîv şevan,*  
and at night and in the middle of the night,

*behra pitir, gîyanewerin,*  
most of them are animals,

*bêy êkudu bi heramî.*  
without each other's knowledge (secretly) in sin.

*Li pawanê duxînêt hev diçerin.*  
In path of each other's belts and zippers they prey.

\* \* \*

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<sup>208</sup> One who promises to never do something unrighteous again.

*Xatwîna min..*  
My dear..

25

*Li Dihokê*  
In Dohuk

*pîrekalêt heştê salî*  
80-year-old elderly men

*bi hêz û vejena dolarî—*  
with strength and the shaking of the dollar—

*pîlan li berin.*  
plans are in mind.

*Her şev kiçekê di hingêvin,*  
Each night they descend upon a girl,

30

*desta li sîng u*  
hands on chest and

*berêt çarde salî digerin*  
on the frontage of 14-year olds they journey

*heta xudanêt bazbenda û niviştuka.*  
until the vendors of horoscopes and niviştuka (religious writing to ward off evil spirits).

*Bêy (bsm allh) û bi hîmmeta mîrê ecina,*  
Without (in the name of Allah) and with power of the king of the Jin,

*liser bişkojkêt memka diçerin.*  
on top of nipples of the breast they graze.

35

*Û sîyasetvan û avakerêt medenîyetê*  
And the politicians and the builders of civility

*bi bend û birge û peyrewê mafê afretê,*  
with the lines (of articles) and lines (of laws) and programs of (in the name of) women rights,

*her şev her êkî li her teniştêkê,*  
each night each one of them next to each other (in the bed),

*du li berin.*

two are with them.

*di ser hindê ra, li Dihokê*  
On top of that, in Dohuk

40

*hemî bu 'eşq û evînê,*  
all of them for love (Arabic) and love (Kurdish),

*lomekar û hetikberin.*  
are criticizers and defamers.

\* \* \*

*Xatwîna min,*  
My dear,

*ez çî bikem*  
what can I do

*ku em li Dihukê bizanîn,*  
when we in Dohuk know

45

*merem ji evînê bi tenê—*  
that the purpose of love is only—

*ne girtin û hilmirîstina lêvaye.*  
not holding (kissing) and kissing lips (only).

*Merem ji evînê bi tenê—*  
The purpose of love is only—

*ne talankirina sîng û beraye.*  
not ransacking the chest (breasts) and frontage (of the female).

*Merem ji evînê bi tenê—*  
The purpose of love is only—

50

*ne têk şidandna kimaxa û*  
not holding tight (with hands) the thighs and

*têk werdana pêyaye.*  
cuddling of the feet.

*Merem ji evînê*

The intention of love

*ewe—*  
is that—

*mirovî dilekê pak hebît,*  
for one to have a clean heart,

55

*mirov bi zanît*  
for one to know

—*cihê mirovî bitinê têdaye.*  
—there is space for only person (in that person's heart).

3/12/2000

## **Appendix B – Interviews**

The following interviews with Badirxan Sindî, Mihsin Quçan, Mu'eyed Teyb and Reşîd Findî have been lightly edited for readability. The interview with Badirxan Sindî was done completely in English. The interview with Reşîd Findî was mostly done with a translator; however, occasionally Findî interjected English into the conversation. For the other two interviews, I utilized a translator. Note that the translator changed the interviewees' responses, which were spoken in first person, into third person. I have left these translations as they are, in order to do the least editing possible.

### INTERVIEW WITH REŞÎD FINDÎ

Mr. Findî is the chief editor of the five volumes of Ahmed Nalbend's poetry. The interview was held in November of 2009 at Spirez Printing. The translator was Silêman Silêman.

EM: I'll begin with some questions just concerning use of the interview, to use it for my research. So, I need your permission to use this interview in my research, in my thesis paper.

RF: Yes, that is right.

EM: And is it OK if this is published even in a journal or in a book.

RF: No problem.

EM: Can you first just state your name?

RF: Reşîd Findî Yehya Dosky, the vice-president of the Kurdish Academy

EM: Can you tell us what your job was on Nalbend?

RF: My sole purpose was the editor of Nalbend's creative poetry. I was the main editor and one of the main gentlemen who typed his poetry. His friend—Nalbend's friend named Tahir Mahi—Tahir Mahi collected all his poems on paper, but in an old type of writing. Then after that, we collected them. We collected and typed them, and afterward typeset them for the press.

EM: That's a lot of work.

RF: That collection of his poems is five books. I read all of them three times.

EM: What do we know of Nalbend's beginning? What started him writing poetry?

RF: Nalbend didn't go to school. His main school was going to the mosque. After that he got his mullah cleric, religious title. With his religious reading he picked up writing poetry. He was born in 1890. During that era the Turkish were ruling, the

Ottomans. It was during this time that he picked up his religious skills, and then while going to the mosque, picking up his religious skills, that's where he picked up his poetry skills. In the year 1918 the First World War ended. The Iraqi state was founded in 1921. After the First World War, in 1921, what he found was that the Kurdish culture and our main identity were lost. That's where he picked up and he started writing poetry. Wilson was the president of the United States. Wilson, the president of the United States back in 1921, he pretty much guaranteed that after the war each prominent state or country would be recognized as a country. One of the major countries that occupied the Middle East, especially Iraq, was Britain. They divided Kurdistan into many regions. That's when they split Kurdistan, which is the way it remains, between Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. This kind of lost the whole identity of Kurdistan and its poetry, because now it's divided four ways. This division was one of the main sources for their poetry, their love—from the 1920s to the 1930s. And that's when they (Nalband and other writers in general) started writing about the Kurdish people and the culture.

EM: So was Nalband influenced by other poets?

RF: One of his influences was Xani...and Cezîrî, they were two of his influences. The religious side of the poetry came because he was a Muslim cleric. The side of his love poetry came from the fact that he had three wives—three wives but not at the same time. One wife died, the second wife died, the third wife died. So that's why his love poetry...it's so powerful. Because he actually felt it, you know, he lived it. All of his wives died, the three of his wives: the first one died, the second one died, and the third one died. And so that's why his love poetry is very strong. And then towards the end of his life expectancy, that's where you see the erotic side of his poetry. His more political side of the poetry came in 1921, after, you know, we didn't get our state or country, and he was a Muslim cleric. He saw that there was a lot of Arabic in the parliament, and, you know, the Kurdish people were not having their say. So that's where the political or the antagonistic side of his poetry came from. The side of the poetry where he talks about other people in a nice way, or puts them on a high pedestal, is because all of these people helped him in his poetry, or whatever he needed help with. So that's why there's some

poetry that he wrote that deals with a certain person and he praises him or talks in a good way about him, and this is because sometime in his life that gentleman helped him with something. It may have been financially, it may have been emotionally, it may have been with a book or it may have been with a home or anything of that kind.

In 1961 he joined the Kurdish revolution. In 1963, after two years of the revolution, the Ba'ath party came to be recognized in Iraq. In that same year, the Ba'ath attacked the Kurdish people. Their military charged through Kurdistan. He was feeling as if they were coming for him, because of his writing. Because of this, the fear of being captured by them, and God knows what was going to happen to him, he actually stabbed himself multiple times in the stomach. In September 1963 he killed himself because of the fear of the Ba'ath party capturing him.

EM: Here in Dohuk?

RF: In the region of Barwarê. He was in a village, a village named Xişk Haşa. He killed himself in Xişk Haşa. After he killed himself, the Kurdish military (*peşmergas*)—they attacked the Ba'ath party and forced them to run back down toward the south, toward Baghdad. And they feared for their lives and ran all the way towards Dohuk. Unfortunately the sad thing, see, is he killed himself before that happened.

SS: The next thing he's going to talk about is some types of his poetry.

EM: Let me ask one more quick question. Is Nalbend the name of a village?

RF: His full name is Ahmed Amîn. Oh, *nalbendî* is the word for someone who fixes the hooves of a horse. His dad—that was his profession. I don't know the name in English, the profession where they put the horseshoe on the feet.

EM: Blacksmith?

SS: He says the name in English is "blacksmith."

RF: His dad—that was his profession. He (Nalbend) chose to go and study religion. He didn't follow in his dad's blacksmithing work, but took his father's title. He

was from the village of Amediya. His dad was originally from Amediya, but his occupation was based in Barmarnê.

When Nalbend came into poetry, he was one of the new poets, the new form of the Kurdish language. The poets before Nalbend wrote in three different languages: in Farsi, in Kurdish, in Arabic. When he came and he started writing, he kind of distanced himself from those poets and wrote only in Kurdish. It was not only him; there were other poets. About 20 poets...Salih Hyusî, Mela Anwir Mahî...

SS: The poets he just named were a few of them that followed him and only wrote in Kurdish.

RF: He loved poetry so much and was so good at it that he'd use any scrap, he'd have a cigarette box, and write on that cigarette box. And he would take a napkin and write a poem on it. Anytime he wrote a poem, he'd pretty much duplicate it. He wrote two copies. One copy for him, one for his good friend Tahir Mahi.

EM: What are the classifications, the themes, subjects, of Nalbend's poetry. He mentioned them in a previous conversation. I didn't record them.

RF: The themes of Nalbend's poetry were love poetry (*evîn dar*), erotic poetry, religious (*dîni*) poetry and, I guess, politics (*sîasî*) you can say.....and Kurdish culture. That was the fifth one.

EM: What forms did he use? *Çwarkî*?

RF: *Çar. Ruba'i*. The new (modern) type of poetry he didn't write.

EM: Did he write any in the style of *tercîa band*?

RF: I haven't seen it.

SS: Is that a Kurdish word?

EM: Kurdish and Arabic.

RF: The example that you wrote, he said that we have the same type of examples. It's very, very familiar. They call that *Zarrora Şiarê*, 'necessary.' It's Arabic and means

‘necessary.’ Sometimes, like you said, for example, they’d take the Turkish Kurdish, and, because of that word’s syllable length or sound, put that word in the poem. So sometimes, like you said, it’s where one word might have been too long, or you reached 16 (but want 15). They’ll take one word that has the same meaning to reach that 15, or sometimes they’ll use the abbreviation. You can see for instance in some of the examples when he (Nalbend) used the months in Arabic. But he’d tweak it so that it fits to his poem. It’s the same month but written in a different type of form, abbreviated to fit the style of his poetry. The early poets were really good at this when they wrote in different languages. And sometimes you couldn’t distinguish the differences. Nalbend also wrote some of these types of poetry. These were some of their experiences of the early poets and their knowledge of three, the ones that we know of, three languages, which is Farsi, Arabic and Kurdish, Turkish. There might’ve been more. This is what they know for sure. This knowledge of language was kind of like a bakery with dough. However they wanted to form the dough, they could form their poetry.

EM: For the *ruba’iyat*, the *çar*, are there different names for the different *qafîas*?  
209

RF: He said if he had more time presently, he’d bring you all the types of *qafîa*. Right now he can’t remember. But in the next meeting, he’ll be more than happy to tell you.

EM: I can see different *qafîas*. I see but I want to know if there are names for them.

RF: Next time I’ll bring them for you.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> My present understanding of the word *qafîa* is that it means ‘rhyme scheme’ or perhaps ‘verse form.’

<sup>210</sup> I was not able to meet with Mr. Findî again during this time of research.

### INTERVIEW WITH BADIRXAN SINDÎ

The interview was held in Sindî's home in the Fall of 2009. It was conducted entirely in English.

EM: First, Doctor, thank you for all your help thus far and the opportunity to ask you some questions?

BS: Yes. You're welcome, anytime.

EM: First, can I ask you to state your full name?

BS: My name is Badirxan Abdula Sindî

EM: Thanks. And regarding these questions I'm going to ask, and your answers, is it your understanding then that, is it OK for me to use them for my linguistics study, for my paper.

BS: Yes, I agree with you to use all of this information.

EM: And you understand that these things could be published in a journal.

BS: Yes.

EM: Thank you. First, can you tell me how did your interest in writing poetry begin?

BS: In the beginning, yes. When I was in secondary school, I remember that I was really interested in reading poetry. But at that time it was forbidden for us in Kurdistan, especially in Dohuk and Zaxo, to talk about Kurdish literature or Kurdish poems. So at that time, most of the people here in Dohuk didn't know that there was Kurdish literature or Kurdish poets. They didn't know. But I had heard when I was in college—after that stage—I heard that there were two famous poets. One was Ahmed Cezîrî and the other was Ahmed Xanî. Ahmed Cezîrî is usually called Melaye Cezîrî. I tried to get their literature work, their poems. It was so difficult to get them, but finally I got one, a hand written copy of Melaye Cezîrî and really liked it. That was in 1966 or '67. And after one year, I got some of Ahmed Xanî's work, and since that time I started to study Kurdish literature and to look for Kurdish literature, and I tried to get some

contact with poets. Indeed, my first drive into looking for Kurdish literature at that time was the feeling of Kurdishness. And Kurdishness means “the feeling of being a Kurd” or the feeling that I am a Kurdish man and I have the right to be like all the people who have their freedom and independence—and one of the markers of our cultural identity is our language and our literature. Because, as you know—and I think we talked about this subject last time—we have a very big problem, which is the Kurdish problem. Kurdistan is divided into four pieces and is ruled by four foreign countries, four foreign governments: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria. The drive was patriotic. This was my drive to look for our Kurdish literature. And when I was in the college, I started to write some simple poems about Kurdistan and about our rights, and these simple poems became songs. The students, Kurdish students in the university in Baghdad—not in Kurdistan, because at that time we did not have a university here—the Kurdish students started to sing these poems, and that’s why I felt very happy and encouraged to write more. Yes. So, this was my start with Kurdish literature.

EM: You mentioned Ahmed Cezîrî and Ahmed Xanî. Who are your favorite poets, and why do you like them?

BS: Yes. I can’t say who is my favorite, Ahmed Xanî or Melaye Cezîrî. I love both of them, but I love Ahmed Cezîrî as a poet of poetry technique and a poet of love and emotional feeling. And I love Ahmed Xanî as a man who addressed the Kurdish issue, because he was a patriotic poet and he had philosophical ways in thinking. So we can consider Ahmed Xanî one of the best Kurdish thinkers. He was so clever in bringing logic and thoughts into the poem. So really, I respect both of them. And I can say that if I am a poet, I can say I am a student of two teachers—Ahmed Xanî and Melaye Cezîrî.

EM: Well, I think you’re a poet. Many people are reading your work, for sure. Can you speak about changes that have occurred in Bahdini poetry, both good and bad?

BS: Actually, because of the political situation, most of our poets of this generation, and the young poets—they didn’t read the classic literature and they have no idea about what has been written before now. Because most of this literature was

forbidden, and they started after the Kurdish society here in Iraq got its freedom; that's when they started to read and write in the Kurdish language. So they are beginners. They began with no roots really—with no real roots, literature roots. They try to copy the available literature of other countries or other nations. So, we can say there are a lot of poets here in Dohuk—and even in Sulemaniya and Erbil<sup>211</sup>—who just imitate the Palestinian poets, French poets, Italian poets, American poets. They read some translated work and they try to copy the same experience and the same literature, but they put it in the Kurdish language. As I think about it, this is a bad thing...maybe a bad thing. Because I believe that the original literature is the literature which grew in this society with a good respect to the past and with a good view to the future. That is why we can see a lot of work in Badinan and Soran. Some poets who think these are the modern poems—They think that modern poetry is when you say something illogical, when you say some strange things, when you say some nasty things, when you try to be strangers in your society. They think this is modern literature. They try to pretend that they are the generation of renewing the literature. And some of them say, no, we are not renewing the literature; we are establishing the literature and everything that has been said before us, it is *not* literature. To them, Kurdish literature is starting now. These are extremists and most of the people—they don't like this sort of literature because they say they can't even understand what they are saying when reading these poems. Something strange. Something foreign from logic. Even the poet sometimes doesn't know what he is saying. But on the other side, we have got some Kurdish poets who have done respectable work and they try to give a message through their poems, and depicted themselves. They read the previous work, like Xanî and Cezîrî and the whole history of Kurdish literature. So we have some famous and very good poets in Kurdistan in general, such as Sherko Bekas in Sulemaniya, Abdulrahman Mezurî in Badinan, Mu'eyed Teyb in Badinan, as well as some others.

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<sup>211</sup> Duhok, Sulemaniya and Erbil are cities in the Kurdish region of Northern Iraq.

EM: We talked about five different names for your types of poems. We say them in English...subjects. What are the Kurdish words for those classifications? For example, patriotic.<sup>212</sup>

BS: We say *niştimanî*, *hozana niştimanî*. It means the poems that describe patriotic feeling.

EM: Eulogy

BS: *zêmar*, *hozana zêmarî*—And *zêmar* itself means a sort of crying—when you are alone and lose something, some valuable thing, especially when we lose one of our relatives or somebody close to us. He travelled away and never returned or passed away. So, this sort of crying or this sort of sadness we call *zêmar*, which is different from the word *girîyan*. The word *girîyan* means ‘crying.’ This is near to the English word, *girîyan* and crying. But *giran* is the crying when everywhere you can cry, like outside the home or at home. People can hear you when you cry. This is crying. But *zêmar* is when you cry in your loneliness, and you are alone and you cry for some personal thing. So, we call it *zêmar*.

EM: We had the subject of love or a romantic poem. Do you have two words to describe those two, or is there just one word?

BS: In Kurdish we use the word *evîn* and *evînî*—the same thing. We use it for the meaning of ‘love.’ We don’t use ‘romantic’ because romantic is not in the Kurdish language. But I think there is a difference between romantic poems and love poems, although we don’t have this sort of classification, or these two words like you have. You have love and romantic love, and you can use both of them for the same meaning, maybe. But I think, I prefer to use the word romantic for poems—for my poems—because I

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<sup>212</sup> During my initial conversation with Sindî, which was not recorded, he shared the Kurdish names of the themes he writes in. I had taken down some notes, to which I was referring during the interview. Sindî agreed with my English translations of his Kurdish terms as we talked about them during this original discussion.

understand love. There is no real love without respect. Love is mixed with respect. That is why I prefer the word romantic rather, or more, than the word love itself. I don't know if I explained it very well to you—my idea.

EM: Another one we talked about was social issues, problems in society. What would you call these?

BS: We call it *cevakî*. *Cevak* means 'society' and *cevaki* means 'social.' So, I have some poems which deal with our social problems in Kurdistan. And we have a lot of social problems, because Kurdish society is changing from old values to new values, from old culture to new culture. That is why we have a lot of problems related to or due to these transitions. We've got some people in the traditional class and some in the modern class in our society. We've got some people who believe in religion deeply and we've got, on the other side, some people who do not believe in religion at all. We've got people who believe in our customs—Kurdish customs—and we have another side; we've got a lot of people who believe in European customs and modern customs. So there is a contradiction in our social life. In my poetry, I try to describe these problems and to find some solutions to our problems. So, we can call these poems as poems of the social field.

EM: The last one is secularization.

BS: Yes, yes...Our Kurdish language has been affected too much by Arabic because of respecting Islam and the Islamic Qur'an, the Islamic Bible. We lost a lot of our traditions, our customs. We started to think as an Arab somehow because of the religion. Most of the people think that Arabic language is the language of God because the Qur'an is written in Arabic. They believe that in the second life all nations will speak in Arabic. Most of the people in my country respect Arabic language more than their own language. But now we have started to think in different way. I am one of these poets, but there are a limited number of secular poets. Because you have to be very brave to write on this subject. And this feeling is reflected in my poems, a few words in one poem or sometimes in the whole poem. You can feel this in a lot of my poems.

EM: Thank you. Can you describe the different forms you use? The first one was 2 lines. You called it *methnawî*.

BS: *methnawî*, yes

EM: Another one you called *çuarîkî*. There are different types of *çuarîkî*.

BS: *çuarîkî*, yes.

EM: Sometimes the first and the third, the second and the fourth. You also mentioned *tercîa band*. Can you say something about that and what it means?

BS: *Tercîa band* is two words. *Tercîa* means ‘repeating, to repeat something.’ It is an Arabic word. *Band* means ‘to tie something’ and it is a Persian and Kurdish word. *Band* sometimes means ‘rope.’ It means ‘belt.’ It means ‘arrested man.’ Sometimes it means ‘slave.’ Sometimes it means a man who is always related to some other man. That is why in Badinan, we say *ez banî*. It means ‘I am in your *band*, I am your servant, I am your slave, you are my lord.’ Can you imagine the originality of this word?

EM: It expresses humility?

BS: Yes. *Tercîa band* means when you have to repeat something and to fasten the last word with the whole line in the poem.

EM: Are there any other forms that you do not use that other poets use?

BS: Actually, I use the Classical way and the Modern way. I use both of them.

EM: Beside *methnawî*, *çuarîkî*, *tercîa band*, there are no other names?

BS: There is another way. There *was* another way. Now nobody uses that way of writing a poem, which consists of a line of Kurdish—one line using the Kurdish language, another line using the Arabic or Persian. Melaye Cezîrî used this way in some poems. I haven’t used it because I try to use only Kurdish. I would say that you only find a very few non-Kurdish words in my poems. All of my work is written in a pure Kurdish language. So I didn’t use that style, mixing Arabic and Kurdish language.

EM: Are there any forms that are uniquely Kurdish?

BS: Most of our styles in writing poems—it's the same as those used in Iran or in Arabic language or even in Turkish. All these nations have the same ways of writing poems.

EM: And you mentioned that the meter, or the number of syllables in poems—Is this always the choice of the author, or do you have names for the length of lines or meters?

BS: It starts from six to seven and goes up to 16; 16 is the top. It is the poet's choice how to write. This we call it "the way" of the poem. But in Arabic language, there is something more complicated than our style. They call it *bahar*. Bahar means 'the sea.' There are 16 oceans or seas in Arabic language. It is so very complicated and our Classical poets—Kurdish poets—used these *bahars*, like Melaye Cezîrî. It gives the poems more rhythm and more music, really. It gives the poems a sort of music. It is something like musical tones and the time in musical notes. Every sign in musical writing is dependent on the time, half or quarter. When we use this 16 or 14 we...well, two things control us in this measurement—the vowel and the consonant. (pause in interview)

EM: When we paused, you mentioned the special form in Arabic that is very difficult. We are saying that for the length of a sentence—the line in poetry—the poet is limited by the vowel and consonant. What were your thoughts when you said that? You were going to say something else.

BS: This is the basic thing. In Arabic poems and Kurdish poems, always in the area of the Middle East—this is the basic measure of a poem, the "way" of the poem. Because as you know, any speech in the world is based on vowels and consonants. So, when we try to analyze any line in traditional or Classical poems, you will find the same number from the first line to the final line. This is the simple way of measuring the poems. But in Arabic, as I told you, there are the *bahars*. They developed something more complicated from this basic thing, vowels and consonants. They derived 16 aspects of measurements or 16 different styles of measuring the sound, such as VCCCV, VCVCV,

CVVC, and each one gives you a sort of a music. I respect this thing, but it is so difficult and so complicated.

EM: In the traditional poem, what can a poet do to make a line fit the meter, for example, if it is 15 syllables and he wants only 14? Can he change spelling?

BS: If you change the spelling you get something. We call it *hozana*, ‘poem,’ *leng*.<sup>213</sup> *Leng* describes a man who has some difficulty with his legs so that when he walks, he can’t walk in a normal way. So if you change the spelling, you’ll get a *leng* poem. And this is not good for a poet to have a *leng*. It’s a handicapped line. You have to change the words and find the right one which gives the same meaning with the right measurement of the syllables. To make the total of the line go with the other lines, 16 or 15 or 8 or 9. It’s up to you.

EM: Sometimes in American poetry, and I think you see this sometimes in Shakespeare, he will take a letter out. For example, the word “shower.” Like a rain shower. But it will be spelled as if it is one syllable not two. You say the word “shower” but when it is said in the poem its ‘show’r,’ and it’s spelled s-h-o-w-‘-r. The ‘e’ is taken out. Do you understand? So, can you do this in Kurdish?

BS: Yes, we do this in Kurdish. This is because Kurdish has some subdialects. The people in Zaxo [where Sindî is from] speak differently from the people in Amedy and Akre and Dohuk. Sometimes the people in Amedy omit one letter, one sound, when they speak, while in Zaxo they pronounce the whole word. So our poets here or in Sulemaniya or in Hawler (the Kurdish name for Erbil) get an advantage from these differences between the subdialects. I am from Zaxo, but when the word I need doesn’t go with my poem, I’ll take it out and use the same word in a subdialect that consists of one syllable, not two, like in my subdialect. For example, I take it from Akrê or Amedîya and use it in my poem to go with other lines in my poem. Do you understand me now?

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<sup>213</sup> The word *hozana* is another word for a poem or poetry. The word Sindî describes here is *leng*, or *lang*, which Chyet (2003:348) lists as meaning ‘lame, limping’ or ‘awkward.’

EM: So a word has to exist already elsewhere so people understand? So you have to use a word from a dialect that exists?

BS: Yes. I can give you an example about this thing. Like to say *çend car tu hati?*—*çend car*, which means ‘how many times,’ *çend car*. In Zaxo they say *çend car*. The last letter is *r*. *Çend carA..tu hati?* *Çend cara tu hati?* In Akrê or in Amedîya, they say *çend ca tu hati?* The *r* is omitted now. *Çend ca*, which means *çend cara*; the *r* is omitted. So if I’m writing a poem with 15, and I put *çend cara*, and it becomes 16, I’ll take out *çend cara* and put *çend ca*, because it gives the same meaning. But *çend ca*, so it’s one syllable less. There are a lot of examples which gives the poet some ability. It gives the chance to vary.

EM: Yes. You said the end of the line is called *qafîa*.

BS: Yes. Actually, the *qafîa* will be nicer and more musical if the last two letters are alike, not just the last one letter, as in *ra*. Like, you say *bira*, and the second line is *dira*. It means ‘a lot of areas.’ And the third line is *çira*. *Çira* means ‘why’ in some places. And you say, *gira*; it means ‘some people holding something.’ It is not just the *a* but *r* and *a*. It makes the poem stronger and more perfect. And some poets use the three last letters the same. This is so difficult because the alternatives will be less than one letter, the alternatives of words that end in the same three letters. I try to use two letters. I prefer to use two letters because society sometimes needs a lot of music of the poem, to make them listen to you. This is one of our problems, when you have a message in your poem. When you really care to make the people listen to you, you have to put something in your poem to make them listen. Sometimes it is the meaning, some brave words or sometimes the music itself. So I have to think in my poem, I have to dance in my poem to get their attention to make them listen to what I’d like to say.

EM: On to a different subject. I believe you said something about a moment of time that you were feeling something so strongly that you had to write the poem as free. It was your first.

BS: Yes. It was the time I wrote my first free poem. Free of ‘way’ (form)

and free of *qafîa*. Because I couldn't write at that time, because the subject was so passionate, so emotional, and I was really astonished when I had that experience. Everything was off. Everything was gone. That was when all the Kurdish fighters had to withdraw to Iran and put down their weapons, and there was no revolution. This was in 1975 when the Shah of Iran and Saddam Hussein—they signed what they called the Algerian Treaty. So when I heard it, I was shocked and I couldn't believe that everything was over, because Kurdish people and the fighters had been fighting for years—from '61 to '75. It was for 14 years. And I started to write my poem, and I felt, really, I can't use the *qafîa*, I can't cater to the vowels and consonants. So I put my poem about that subject in a free style, and that was my first time when I wrote in this style. And later I started to write some other poems in this way.

EM: Did you say you were the first to do this? Did other Kurdish poets write this way?

BS: Yes. There were some others before me who wrote Kurdish poems in Dohuk—not in Sulemaniya—but in Dohuk. They wrote some poems without *qafîa*, but there was measurement and 'way.' But I wrote at that time without *qafîa* and without 'way.' Pure, free poem. So, that is what Mu'eyed Teyb said on the back of my book.

EM: Can you say something about the performance style of poets? Kurdish poets perform their poems when they present them. They don't just speak them; they have a way of saying them. Where did this way come from? Is it Kurdish? Do other cultures perform this way or is this a Kurdish way?

BS: No, I can't say it is a Kurdish way. It is something in the Middle East. The Persian people—they read in the same way. The Arab people read in the same way. It is a common way.

EM: It's very old, I guess.

BS: Yes.

EM: Is there anything else you think I should know about analyzing Kurdish poetry? Are there any other thoughts you have that will help me in analyzing Kurdish poetry? Things I haven't asked you.

BS: Yes. (pausing of recording)

EM: What do you see as the ambition, the drive, the desire or things that poets past, present and future have? What they hope to gain?

BS: In my opinion, if you put most of the Kurdish poets in the same room, together their ambition would be for Kurdish independence. To have our independent state which we call *dawlet*. We want to have our freedom and, according to the human rights, we have full right to get rid of this situation which was established by Britain after the First World War. We need to be just like Persian people or Turkish. We need to be an independent state. Some of the poets—they deal with this subject openly. Some others like to but don't write about it for some political reasons maybe. Most of my poems deal with this subject in a symbolic way, indirectly. So, this is one of the common goals which all of the Kurdish poets really want to achieve in the future.

The second subject or second desire is social freedom, to get freedom in our life, especially the freedom of relations between male and female in society. We have really severe traditions about this subject, and as I think and as I believe, the Kurdish society before Islam was more free than this time, because the Islam religion limits the relationship between male and female and love. And I think this doesn't go with our nature as a Kurdish people. We need a lot of freedom. We are in the twenty-first century and it is still forbidden to announce—for any young man and young girl—to announce that they are in love. It is a crime. Girls are killed now. Some fathers, some families have to kill their daughters when they feel or they know that she is in love with somebody. We write indirectly in our poems about this subject. We condemn this type of life. It is not our life. Really, it is an Arabic or Islamic life which they enforced us to adopt 15 centuries ago. If you read our history before Islam, we were more modern than now. At

that time we respected women more than now. It was forbidden at that time to have two wives.

The third subject is: the poets try to criticize the matter of democracy in our society. They talk about democracy. We believe in democracy. We respect democracy. We love democracy, but on earth we don't apply democracy. We don't apply democracy. Do you follow me? You can't find democracy practically. You can't find it. We talk about it. We love it. We like it, but we don't try to have it really, and to live in it. This is one of our—I don't know if this is the right word in English—but one of our duplicities. We have a dual personality, most of us. For instance, I write about love and I have some poems and songs which describe love as a nice thing and a beautiful thing. Not just me but this is an example. Me and other poets or other educated people. We talk about love. We like love; we describe love as a beautiful feeling, but we don't let our sister love somebody. So this is the duplicity. What I mean is that we have double personalities inside us. And most poets try to criticize this sort of people. We have to adapt; we have to work and do according to our beliefs. But unfortunately, until now, we couldn't establish such a society. I think the people in Europe and America are better than us and Eastern societies in this subject. When they believe in something, they exercise that thing in their life and they do it.

And the fourth desire of poets, which I started—I think till now I am the only one in Badinan adopting this style. Or I talk about it most commonly. It is the matter of secularism. We should adopt secularism, and we shouldn't mix religion and government, religion and school. I am not in agreement with teaching religion in schools. I am not in agreement with our condition now, when the teacher of religion comes to class. He says all the Christian people should leave now because we have a religion subject. I can't stand this and I struggle against these things. How can I establish a democracy in this society when our education system and our teachers in schools make this sort of discrimination between pupils. "You go out because you are Christian. I have a special thing to speak to my Muslim students." I can say this is a sort of crime, it is a social

crime. So these are the main subjects which drive the real poets in Kurdistan, and in Badinan especially, as far as I know, which make them write their poems.

EM: Thank you so much for your time. I enjoyed it.

BS: Thank you. You're welcome. Anytime.

### INTERVIEW WITH MIHSIN QUÇAN

The interview was translated by Shivan Toma and was conducted at the office of *Metin* magazine.

EM: I'll begin with a couple of questions regarding interviewing for my research.

Well, first, can you state your full name?

MQ: His name is Mihsin Mihamed Xovir, but he is known as Mihsin Quçan

EM: Is it your understanding that I am here to research for my university?

MQ: It's OK.

EM: And that what comes out of this interview could possibly be published in my paper or a linguistic journal.

MQ: No problem.

EM: Thank you very much. I wondered if you could begin by telling us how your interest in poetry began.

MQ: When he was eight years old, he was in a village called Barmanê. As a result of 1961 revolution, it's called "September revolution," his family moved to Mosul, due to the war, I mean. In Mosul he felt that he was a stranger, an outsider because he among the Arab children, he was the only Kurdish child. They spoke differently than him. Continuously he was longing for his village, his little dog, for his mountains, for snow and these things. So these dreams, which were lost from him in his childhood, he tried to visualize them in his mind, in his imagination. And day after day his imagination grew bigger and bigger.

In Arab places, Arabic places, poetry is advanced there. They like poetry a lot. It's just like eating and drinking, I mean. Their proverbs are all in verse and poetry. And when he saw himself different from them, at the same time he liked that he also has his own poetry which is like theirs, I mean, but different—in Kurdish. So he experienced homesickness for his homeland, for his village and these things; and his being among a

culture in which poetry is advanced, he saw that it was a good chance for him to increase his knowledge about his own culture through poetry. And he continuously educated himself through reading poetry, studying, writing and memorizing poetry. And then he started to write poems. And in the 70s he published his first poems, and at the very beginning the critics said that a new star is shining in Kurdish poetry. So this was his beginning, his starting point.

EM: Who were your favorite poets, and why do you like them?

MQ: There's another problem with us Kurds, that is, Kurdish people. At the beginning, he didn't know anything about Kurdish poetry. But he had a friend, a Christian friend, his name was Theodor Yuhena. He was the first one to write some of Xanî's poems for him. So at that time he liked Xanî. But after that he liked all the Classical Kurdish poets. But it was too late, I mean, because he already started without knowing anything about Kurdish poetry. But for him he regards Cezîrî the best poet, not only on the level of the Kurdish world, I mean, but all over the world.

EM: Can you speak about the changes in Kurdish poetry as it developed?

MQ: At the beginning Kurdish poetry consisted of the likes of Cezîrî, Fekir Tehran, Nalbend. It was written in their Classical form with one line here and one line on the other side. But starting from 1972, the beginning of the 70s, you can say modern poetry started with Mihsin Quçan, Abdulrahman Mizuri, and Feisel Mustafa. Some people say Mihsin Quçan came at the first. Some say, for example, the other one. But with these there poets, Kurdish poetry was changed into the modern style. As for Sorani before them, it was changed before them. Even Kurmancî<sup>214</sup> was changed before them in Syria, like Mir Amadat, but they didn't know about each other.

Starting from the 80s, like 1981, 1982, Kurdish poetry was just in one form. I mean, after it was free verse, free poetry. It was all about patriotism—national poetry. For example, if you said “my sweetheart,” it referred to Kurdistan. If you said, “my mother,”

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<sup>214</sup> Quçan is likely referring to poets like Cegerxwîn who's family fled to Syria when he was young.

it was Kurdistan. But after a while, he was the first one. In the 80s, he by himself, as something unique for him, changed Kurdish poetry into something psychological—to make like a psychological revolution inside yourself. He took this angle in poetry, I mean. So if you see, for example, realistic poetry, there was a group of people who wrote realistic poetry. But he found himself alone in writing psychological poetry. And then in 1985, he started his modern movement in poetry. He wrote about death, deterioration: the names are *Helweşîan*, ‘Deteriorated,’ *Melen*,<sup>215</sup> *Bûn*, ‘Being.’ These are names of his poems.

And then in 1991, a huge change happened in all Kurdish people. It was something that was not expected, an unexpected change. All the ideas, mentalities, values of the Kurdish man at that time were changed and new things came in their places. All the educated people at that time had a socialist background, like Lenin; but at that time everything was deteriorating, let’s say, changing. The war against Iran was ended and the chemical weapons ended. America warred against Iraq so that it would come out of Kuwait. And the uprising started, and then the Kurdish people saw themselves as free, without Saddam now. And soon after, a mass immigration happened among Kurds when they escaped to Turkey in the mountains, and they suffered a lot of starvation and things—and this was another turning point in Kurdish life. And it was just like a nightmare or a dream, that America—which was against our beliefs, our ideas—that America itself came to help us and protect us. And we were *peşmerga*, ‘Kurdish military!’ So, we were in Iran and were just like rural people; but then we came into the civil life in cities. The Kurdish man who was low esteemed before—now he highly appreciated himself.

Maybe he will make this speech long so that you will know about our background, why we in Iraq were in a closed society. We didn’t know anything about the world, through books and things. But after that—after Saddam,<sup>216</sup> or after the uprising

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<sup>215</sup> Meaning unknown.

<sup>216</sup> Saddam Hussein, the fifth president of Iraq.

you could say—satellite TV came into Kurdistan and things from Syria came. So there was a great opening up of the world towards Iraq. So all the norms were changed. These factors, which we discussed, affected the norms of writing poetry, of visualizing things—for example a tree, water, everything was changed. Even how to deal with your children, your wife, took another form. It was the other way around, it was changed.

So this fast and successive change affected the way authors thought and wrote. In 1994, after these changes happened, there was a civil war among the Kurdish people. In this year, 1994, a new movement called “Renovation Forever” grew and Mihsin Quçan was leading it. At this stage, mosques and religious leaders, political parties, the university, the whole of society with all the norms—all were like fire against this group, because there was a feeling of pride in this group. This group lasted not so long, only two years. And it was practicing everything, like civil life, in addition to writing poetry. So this group was finished. Some people died, some people immigrated. But its effect is still there, such as the poets who were under the effects of that group, as well as painters and those who work in the theatre. Even the religious men—when they go, for example, on Friday to the mosque, they admit that if there’s no renovation, there’s no life. These are the changes that he says happened in poetry.

EM: You mentioned your poetry is psychological. Can you explain that and give an example?

MQ: This is one example of psychological poetry, “Coming Back From Tired Thinking.” It’s a long poem, but, for example, the psychological effect is that the poet is describing, or is talking, to his sweetheart, to his beloved, saying:

“If your eyebrows were like more (*untranscribable word*) and your hair was gray, you would be just like my mother.” So he’s making a comparison between his mother and his beloved.

EM: So would you say this is just one theme of your poetry?

MQ: You can say it’s a theme, but it’s limited to a short period, from 1980 to 1985.

EM: What are the other subjects you write about?

MQ: He doesn't believe in pure subject in poetry, as seen if you read his poetry, his poems. You can see a mixture of subjects because in the previous days in rural areas, for example, if you were a shepherd, you'd go outside to take care of your sheep and then you'd come back. But now, if we go outside in this urban setting, we don't know what we will do. For example, if he goes home, maybe a neighbor will have a car accident and he will go to see him. Or perhaps someone has a newborn baby, or someone has died. So he says our feelings now are confused. We don't have fixed style and he doesn't have a pure subject to write about. And when he wrote, many times when he'd write poetry, he would cry and the paper would get wet. So he would tear it out and get another piece of paper, because a different subject would come into his mind.

Another feature of his poetry is paradox, when two different things become just like each other. For example, in one of his poems he says, hatred and love inside me become like each other. So there were moments in his life that hatred and love are just the same, and also death and life.

EM: So none of your poems are in the Neo-classical form, is that correct?

MQ: Not all of them.

EM: He has some in Neo-classical form?

MQ: So this is an example that shows he has the Neo-classical form. These are here for documentation.

EM: But presently you don't write anything in Neo-classical form?

MQ: No, now he is not a classic poet. Now he is, you can say, he's a warrior against everything. For example, everything that is low he wants to make it high. And he doesn't care about meter and rhythm or anything. He just leaves the image. Even the buildings in our city, he says, "I'm against them. I have a different idea in my mind. I live with them." He sees that our buildings, our traffic lights, all things are trivial—even social values are trivial for him. He's against them, I mean.

EM: So strictly image, and the sounds of words are not important. Is it true? You translated that he said that he is writing about the images he creates with the words. So the sounds of words—even they're not important.

MQ: He doesn't care about sounds of words, he says; it's not something important for him. He can make ugly words beautiful with a new sense. In practical life he can, out of thorns, make a beautiful rose.

EM: Kurds have a specific way of presenting their poetry when they speak it. Can he speak about this tradition?

MQ: This is something of the individual. Everyone has their own style for reading poetry. He says, I read it one way, another person reads a different way. But the point is how to read this thing. For him, he has his own style of reading, and he is well known for putting music with the words. But now there is something bad in our society for poetry, which is reading just by eyes. Poetry is not just to be read by eyes but by mouth to the ear. That's the way it should be.

EM: Before people were writing poetry, when he lived in the village—did people have poetry that they remembered, and maybe fathers shared with children, and they spoke this way?

MQ: He says in Kurdistan, in winter, the nights are very long. So when winter would come, everything would stop. You could not work outside. You would eat and drink and at night everybody would sit down. There were poems, of course, poetry, and there were stories, and there were poems for crying, for making fun, for nationalism, for everything. And, of course, their fathers would retell poems to children, or the grandfather or grandmother. There was something like that. But they would not say, for example, this is Nalbend's poem or Cezîrî's poem. They just recited the poem.

EM: Who are the other, most popular, poets that write in this 'new style,' *nî xaz*?

MQ: He says, those poets who write in my style, modern poetry, are Şamal Akrêyî, Hizirvan, Mustafa Silîma, Şikrî Şabas, Dr. Arif Hêto, Şaban Silêman recently,

Sadîq Şabak, if you can call him a poet, all of them—except for Mula Tehsin, who he is a religious one, who thinks the change, to renew, is something like a sin. Although he's a friend of his, Mula Tehsîn. But when he had his own group, Mula Tehsîn, as a religious man, fought them, was against them.

EM: Just two more questions.

MQ: You're welcome.

EM: Can you briefly state the different periods you spoke about, the different styles of Kurdish poetry, beginning with the Neo-classical?

MQ: First Neo-classical, then free style [New Period], and then the psychological period, which was a short period, then modern poetry.

EM: Is there anything else you think I should know about Kurdish poetry for my linguistic analysis?

MQ: He says poetry by itself is something funny, you can say, and amusing. He says, when we say a word, for example, it doesn't mean that word. It's a figurative word; we mean something else. You say something but you mean something else. So maybe a set of images are in just one word. So when you come to do the analysis on the language of poetry, it is very, very different than any other types of language, like everyday language. He says, for example, he has a poem that he wrote right after he was released from prison. He says he wrote about dreams. Like in Kurdish tradition, he says, for example, if you see blood in your dream, it means you will depart from something. Or if you see that your tooth is pulled out, it means you will die or something. He says he collected these ideas and he put them in his poetry with a new angle, in a new way. And also a verse from the Qur'an—he says that when Joseph the prophet was one of the prisoners, he saw a dream about some people that would die. He put these ideas in his poems. So he says his reader should be someone who is educated, especially so that he understands the taste of this poetry. Not all people can read it.

EM: Thank you for your time.

MQ: No need. Not at all. No need for...thanks.

### INTERVIEW WITH MU'EYED TEYB

The interview was held at Spirez Printing and was translated by Shîvan Toma.

EM: First, can you state your name?

MT: His name is Mu'eyed Teyb

EM: I've come today ask you some questions about poetry, your life. Is it OK with you that I use this information in my research for my college?

MT: I give permission for you use anything that I say for your research, for any kind of research.

EM: And, it's also your understanding that this could be published in a journal or my thesis?

MT: It's up to you. You can publish it anywhere you like, in a journal, in a book.

EM: Thank you. Can you tell us how your interest in poetry began?

MT: He says, at that time, we were Kurds, but we were studying in Arabic; school was in Arabic, in his generation. In 1970, there was peace between Barzanî and the government, the Iraqi government. Based on that peace treaty, one subject of Kurdish was studied in school. So that was the first time that he came across Kurdish poetry, Kurdish grammar, these things. So he was interested in Kurdish, and he liked that because he saw that even in Kurdish there was poetry. A collection of poems by Ahmed Nalbend was published at that time; it was a small one. He liked it very much, more than the Arabic poems that he was used to. And he felt afterwards that he also could write poems just like these poems. Thus he started, and the beginning, the real beginning was around 1974-1975.

EM: You were in college, university by then?

MT: No, he was in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, in secondary school.

EM: So, who are your favorite poets and why do you like them?

MT: Kurdish, you mean?

EM: Yes

MT: When he first became interested in Kurdish poetry, he was introduced to Nalbend's poems. At the beginning he was reading those. But after that he came across more modern poets like Badirxan Sindî; his language was nice, it was beautiful, and the content was also good. Then he moved to some Classical poets like Cezîrî and Xanî. And he also, he says, he liked some non-Kurdish poets, like Arabic poets.

Concerning Cegerxwîn, he only knew of him by means of Shivan Perwar's songs. He says this is a great problem for Kurdish. For Kurds—they didn't have books about them. Only after that, when they were bigger, I mean older, they knew about Cegerxwîn and Cezîrî and others. There were no books. Because Kurds were not living freely, there was no freedom in Kurdistan. Maybe one poet in Dohuk was very famous, I mean, a very good poet. But if you would go to Erbil, nobody would know him. Or if you went to Mosul or Cezîre or Iran, nobody would know him. Kurds lived in a country that was not their own country—and the other parts were not independent—that's why Kurds didn't know each other. The second problem is the difference of dialects. For example, Sorani poets are not popular here. And vice versa, Bahdini poets are not popular there. Maybe because they cannot understand each other, that's why.

EM: Can you speak about the changes, the development, of poetry? What has been good? What has been bad?

MT: From where till when?

EM: From Nalbend to now.

MT: Concerning Nalbend, he was Neo-Classical. He was attempting to write like Cezîrî and Xanî, but his language was more popular and his content had more variety, I mean, more subjects, more strategy, more extension. This was the first stage of the change. And Nalbend also talked about Kurdish nationality, about the movement of independence of Kurdistan. But as a political man, he was not that educated. Salih Yusef,

you can say, was more knowledgeable about political issues than Nalbend; he was more aware. Then after that Badirxan Sindî and Abdulrahman Mizuri—their language differed from Nalbend's language. Nalbend's language had some Arabic words. But concerning Abdulrahman and Badirxan, their language was a purer Kurdish.

Another change happened in Nalbend's time. He was used to asking God to protect us and make us free. But Abdulrahman Mizuri, Badirxan Sindî and also Cegerxwîn—they asked people to become aware, to become educated. As for our era, our poetry, you know, before there was rhythm and meter and these things. But for him (Teyb, the interviewee), he wrote in free verse, free poetry without meter and (untranscribable word). In the past they were more like preachers, giving lectures to people. But for him, no; now he's writing as an individual man for humanity.

EM: Can he just mention what are the subjects of his poems?

MT: Most of his subjects are about Kurdistan. They are either about fighting for their rights, for their independence and these things. And also, he has written about the tragedies of an individual man. Also about love, and about humanity and about nationality.

EM: So, did he begin writing in form and then stopped, or did he begin with free?

MT: In the beginning, 1974, he wrote form poetry. But since 1976, he has written in free verse. And regarding his form poetry, when he was in the *peşmerga*, 'Kurdish military,' in 1982, his family felt threatened, so they banned his poetry. So his verse poetry (poems with Neo-classical forms) no longer exists. There's only one poem, which is here in this book. Because in 1979, the minister of information of Iraq set some limits, restrictions, his family prevented him from sharing and distributing his poems. That's why his family was afraid in 1982; they banned them. But some young men liked his poetry—they memorized it. They wrote it by hand and distributed it to each other. That's why some of them are still around. Of course, some of his poems have become songs.

EM: Who do you think most influenced your poetry?

MT: As a person, he cannot say anybody who influenced him. But Kurdish folklore songs affected him. He always feels he is indebted to them, which is there in the old methods and these things of Kurds.

EM: Is there anything that you think that will be useful in my analysis of Kurdish poetry, or his poetry specifically?

MT: He says you can make benefit of many printed things that are written about his own poetry, like masters theses and graduation papers by undergraduate students in 4<sup>th</sup> year and also some printed books. So you can see many like texts or subjects written about them. Otherwise he doesn't know exactly what you need. But regarding the language of Kurdish poetry, if you start from Classical period, Ottomans and Persians, Afghani, these nations which were not Arabs, they were influenced by Arabic. So you will see many Arabic words or phrases in their language. This was about 300 to 400 years ago. The second stage started in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century. Then Kurdish language was more pure, but it still contained a lot of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words. As for nowadays, you know that day after day Kurdish language is progressing, becoming more developed, and the number of those who write in Kurdish is much more than before. You know, when he started in the 1970s, until the 80s, only nine to ten people used to write in Bahdini, of course. But now there are hundreds because there are many magazines and newspapers issued in Kurdish.

EM: *Memnun, memnun*, 'Thank you, thank you.'

MT: *Ser çava* ('over my eyes,' an untranslatable Kurdish idiom). Thank you.

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