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Author(s): Mustafa Dehqan

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Zîn-ə Hördemîr: A Lekî Satirical Verse from Lekistan

MUSTAFA DEHQAN

With the exception of a minor mention, which Sharaf Khān (b.1543) made in the *Sharafnāma*,¹ the first information about the most southern group of Kurdish tribes in Iranian Kurdistan, the Lek, first became available to modern readers in *Bustān al-Sīyāha*, a geographical and historical Persian text by Shīrwānī (1773–1832).² These hitherto unknown Lek communities, were probably settled in north-western and northern Luristan, known as Lekistan, by order of Shāh ‘Abbās, who wished in this way to create some support for Ḥusayn Khān, the *wālī* of Luristan.³ Many of the centres of Lekî intellectual life in the late Afshārid and early Zand period, which is also of much importance in that the Zand dynasty arose from it,⁴ are located in this geographical area. One has only to call to mind the names of such places as Alishtar (Silsila), Kūhdasht, Khāwa, Nūr Ābād,⁵ Uthmānwand and Jalālwand in the most southern districts of Kirmānshāh,⁶ and also the Lek tribes of eastern Īlām.⁷ The very mention of these cities and villages already sets in motion in one’s imagination the parade of Twelver Shiites, Ahl-i Haqq heretics, and non-religious oral literary councils which constitutes the history of Lekî new era. But unfortunately little of this is known in the West and Lekî literature remains one of the neglected subjects of literary and linguistic Kurdish

¹For the appearance of this Kurdish tribe in *Sharafnāma*, alongside the Zand, and as subjects of Persia cf. Sharaf Khān b. Shams al-Dīn Bidlīsī, *Scheref-Nameh ou histoire des kourdes I-II*, ed. V. Véliaminoŷ-Zernof (St Petersburg, 1860–62), i, p. 323.

²On the paragraphs that discuss the Leks cf. Zayn al-‘Ābidīn b. Iskandar Shīrwānī, *Bustān al-Sīyāha*, ed. S. ‘A. Mustūfī (Tehran, 1894), p. 522. The Leks and their Kurdishness is also told in *Tawāyif wa Qabāyil-i Buzurg-i Akrād*, a Persian Qājārīd text regarding the Kurdish tribes of Iranian Kurdistan. Cf. S. M. Šamadī, “Risāla-yi Asāmī-yi ‘Ashāyir-i Kurd az ‘Ašr-i Nāširī”, *Pazhūhish-hā-yi Īrānshīnāsī*, *Jild-i Dawāzdahum*, eds. Ī. Afshār and K. Iṣfahānīyān (Tehran, 2000), pp. 535, 558.

³A discussion of this theme is in *Tārīkh-i ‘Ālam-Ārā*, cited in V. Minorsky, “Lak”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition (Leiden, 1986), v, p. 617.

⁴Cf., for example, the relationship between Karīm Khān Zand and the tribe of Ba[y]rānwand, and the activity of Lek tribes in support of Muḥammad Khān Zand in his attempt to seize power from the Qājārīd dynasty: S. H. J. Brydges, *A History of Persia* (London, 1833), p. 46ff.; R. G. Watson, *A History of Persia* (London, 1866), p. 116; E. Beer, *Das Tārīkh-i Zendīje* (Leiden, 1888), pp. xviii–xxvi.

⁵For the natural geography of these districts cf. J. de Morgan, *Mission scientifique, etudes géographiques* (Paris, 1895), pp. 157–213; E. Herzfeld, *Eine Reise durch Luristan, Arabistan und Fars* (Berlin, 1907), pp. 6–15; H. Grothe, *Wanderungen in Persien* (Berlin, 1910), pp. 5–7.

⁶There is little published information about the Leks of Uthmānwand and Jalālwand. The best work known to me is *Markaz-i Āmār-i Īrān, Farhang-i Juḡhrāfiyā’i-yi Dihāt-i Īrān: Ustān-i Kirmānshāhān* (Tehran, 1963). Compare also the scattered and sometimes false notes which are placed in a chapter entitled “Kermānchah” in F. Bémont, *Les villes de l’Iran, des cites d’autrefois a l’urbanisme contemporain I-II* (Paris, 1969–73), ii, pp. 171–190.

⁷For a discussion of Lek community of eastern Īlām cohered to Lekistan cf. *Āmār-nāma-yi Ustān-i Īlām (1377)*, *Sāzmān-i Barnāma wa Būdja-yi Ustān-i Īlām* (Tehran, 1998).

studies. This important oral literature and also some written manuscripts are unpublished and untranslated into western languages. The subject of this article is the translation of *Zîn-ə Hördemîr*, as an example of a genre of Lekî written literature which also provides linguistic data for the Lekî dialect of southern Kurdish.

First however a few introductory remarks need to be made on the brief history of Lekî literature.

I. The Lekî Literature: An Outline

1. Written Literature

Lekî, a dialect of southern Kurdish,⁸ seems not to have been a favourite literary language in the southern Kurdistan; in this respect there is a contrast with the Gôranî tradition of the medieval southern and central Kurdistan. Although many Lek writers were under the influence of Gôranî koinê,⁹ there are also some distinct and essential Lekî materials. The only early work in the southern Kurdistan tradition which may be characterised as a real Lekî material is the quatrain of *al-shi' ʿ bi-l-fahlawîya*, which was written in 716 of the Hijra. The quatrain is preserved in a manuscript entitled *al-As'ala wa al-Ajwiba Rashîdîya*,¹⁰ of the early fourteenth century, and no mention is made of the name of the author in the text witnesses of the work. Though this quatrain is of a rather late date, we may be fairly sure that the work represents one of the earliest specimens of the Lekî inheritance of Kurdish literature.

Another prominent Lekî work is *Jang-i Hamāwan*, a Lekî version of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsî (b.c.940–941).¹¹ It is from the recently published book containing the complete text of Lekî *Shāhnāma*, long lost from other manuscripts, that one learns that its unknown poet was a contemporary of Atābak-i Lur-i Kūchak, Shāh Rustam 'Abbāsî (1468–1525).¹² What is important to notice about the poet's use of *Shāhnāma* is his free adaptation of the episodes of *Shāhnāma* in which they play a new role in the Lekî equivalents.

Here we may mention the most well-known Lekî *manzūma* in Lekistan (and perhaps even in many parts of Iranian Kurdistan) the *Darcenge*, its complete text has been published in a modern careless edition and it is not yet translated into a western language.¹³ There can be no doubt that *Darcenge*'s poet was Sayid Nushād Abu al-Wafā'î, known as Milā Nushād, a fellow of Sulṭān Şahāk (b.c.1272–3?), the founder of the sect of Ahl-i Haqq, and a contemporary of

⁸Lekî dialects have been little studied. Cf. in particular A. Hovelacque, *Grammaire de la langue zende* (Paris, 1878); S. F. Mirchivāghî, *Barrasi-yi Sāktimān-i Dastūrî-yi Gūyish-i Lakî (Xavājavandî)-Kilārdasht* (Tehran, 1990); G. Lazard, "Le dialecte laki d'Aleshtar (kurde meridional)", *Studia Iranica*, XXI (1992), pp. 215–245; and an excellent work on the southern Kurdish dialects (including Lekî) by I. Kamandār Fattah, *Les dialectes kurde meridionaux, étude linguistique et dialectologique*, *Acta Iranica* 37 (Louvain, 2000).

⁹The feature of the Gôranî koinê and its influence in Kurdistan was first pointed out by Ch. Rieu, "Gorani Koine", in *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, II (London, 1881), pp. 728–734.

¹⁰For the manuscript, its contents and its date, cf. *al-As'ala wa al-Ajwiba Rashîdîya* (MSS, The Central Library of the Tehran University, No. 856 and No. 860).

¹¹For the presenting of the manuscript of *Jang-i Hamāwan* and its complete text, see H. Īzadpanāh and 'A. Rouhbakhshan, "Une version laki d'un épisode du Shahnama", *Luqman*, VI (1990), pp. 65–74; H. Īzadpanāh, *Shāhnāma-yi Lakî* (Tehran, 2005).

¹²For details of this ruler, see Ghīyāth al-Dīn Khāndmīr, *Habīb al-Siyar*, ed. M. Dabīrsīyāqī (Tehran, 1983), iv, pp. 497–499; 'Abdī Bayk Shīrāzī, *Takmila al-Akhhār*, ed. 'A. H. Nawā'ī (Tehran, 1990), p. 143.

¹³A version of this *manzūma* was edited in A. Gujri Shāhū, *Az Bistūn tā Dālāhū* (Sanandadj, 1999), pp. 106–113.



Nādir Shāh (1688–1747).¹⁴ The standard topics in *Darcenge* have included the sequence of poet's questions regarding the events of the world and the sophisticated answers of *Darcenge*, an old 'worldy-wise' tree, which are arranged under *manzūma* form.

The fourth important witness, to my knowledge, is the Lekî versions of the so-called *Serencam*, the sacred book of Ahl-i Haqq community.¹⁵ There are many oral Lekî versions of *Serencam* among the Ahl-i Haqq of Lekistan, but existing alongside the oral versions; it

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 113, where the poet's dating is given.

¹⁵ On the *Serencam* and its original Gōranî and Persian texts cf., for example, V. Minorsky, *Materiali dl'a Izučeniya Persidskoy Sekti "L'udi Istini" ili "Ali Ilahi"* (Moskva, 1911); *idem*, "Notes sur la secte des Ahle Haqq", *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 40–41 (1920), pp. 19–97; S. K. Nīknizhād, *Ganjīna-yi Yārī* (MS Facsimile, The Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia, No. 118574); *idem*, *Guftār-i Khān Almās* (MS Facsimile, The Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia, No. 149173).

is notable that written *Serenam* plays a conspicuous role in the early Lekî literature which originated in, or shortly after, 1180 of the Hijra.¹⁶

In addition there are many Lekî manuscripts, entitled *kuḷe bad*, scattered throughout Lekistan. In general, the Lekî word *kuḷe bad* ‘the continuous wind’, which appears numerous times in the Lekî pamphlets of the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century, is used to express their benediction on nature and especially their request for a kind of normal wind which was a very important requirement in the traditional agriculture of Lekistan.¹⁷

Of the persons raised in connection with Lekî literary councils, two in particular are notable from the point of view of those who are interested in the genre of *munāẓara*. These two persons are: Najaf Kalhurî (c.1739–1799) and Tirkamîr (d.1815). Najaf Kalhurî is the master of Turk Mîr Āzād Bakht, known as Tirkamîr, who wrote many Lekî *munāẓara* addressed to his pupil and close friend, and in *tarjî‘band* from.¹⁸ There are also some poems entitled *abyāt ‘ashara* which ascribed to Tirkamîr.¹⁹

Another Lekî written work is the *dīwān* of Milā Manūchihr Kulīwand which certainly was completed in the middle ages of eighteenth century and Manūchihr Nūr Muḥammadî made its text accessible to the scholarly world even by its careless edition and incomplete Persian translation.²⁰ Milā Manūchihr, son of Khusraw b. Muḥammad Khān, was a member of Kulīwand tribe from the western side of Alishtar.²¹ He has dedicated a great specimen of his *dīwān*, entitled *Malik Nisā*, to his lovely wife–Malik Nisā Khānim.

Finally, there is a Lekî *dīwān* written by Milā Ḥaqq ‘Alī Sīyāhpūsh, son of Mīrzā Aḥmad,²² who lived from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, on the general theme of *dīwāns*–including religious, lyric, and sometimes epic specimens. Notes in the manuscripts of his modern published *dīwān*²³ reveal that Milā Ḥaqq ‘Alī was a member of Sīyāhpūsh tribe who dwelt on the Alishtar district of Lekistan.

The present writers and their works, as the sole witnesses over a nine hundred year period for a whole genre of Lekî literature are not many. One could extend the list somewhat by including reference to very short specimens and prose sentences in which Leks and their customs are mentioned in passing, or where some of the broader topics common in the Lekî contemporary texts (including many fictitious texts of course) are discussed without any apparent reference to their poets, writers, dates, places, etc. Nevertheless, our list would still be surprisingly short. And this relative paucity of real Lekî texts calls one’s attention to the fact that in the world of Lekistan, Lekî was not the only language in which even the

¹⁶On the Lekî versions of Gōranî *Serenam* cf. Ī. Kāzimî, *Dilfān dar Guḍar-i Tārīkh (Mashāhīr-i Ahl-i Ḥaqq)* (Khurramābād, 2001), pp. 63–75.

¹⁷There are some noteworthy *kuḷe bad* examples, but yet it is important to understand the difference between *kuḷe bad* and *keḷe bad* or *bahārīya*. *Keḷe bads* only explain the spring and its beauties. See Gujri Shāhū, *op.cit.*, pp. 86–93.

¹⁸For the complete text of their *munāẓarāt* cf. M. M. Šālīhī, *Surūd-i Bādīya, dar Aḥwāl wa Athār-i Shu‘arā-yi Kurd wa Lak wa Lur* (Sanandadj, 2001), pp. 55–64.

¹⁹Some fragments of *abyāt ‘ashara* are produced *ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁰See Milā Manūchihr Kulīwand, *Dīwān*, ed. M. Nūr Muḥammadî (Khurramābād, 2002).

²¹On the all Lek tribes of Lekistan, in general, see O. Mann, *Mundarten der Lur-Stämme in südwestlichen Persien* (Berlin, 1910), pp. xxii–xiv; H. L. Rabino, “Les tribus du Louristan”, *Revue du Monde Musulman* (1916), pp. 1–46; and for a recent study on the Kuliwand tribe, in particular, see M. Yūsufī, *Īl-i Kulīwand: Shāmil-i Tawāyif-i Karam ‘alī, Falak al-Dīn, Kulīwand-i Duwum wa Tāyifa-yi Qalā’ī* (Khurramābād, 2003).

²²Gujri Shāhū, *op.cit.*, p. 124, takes the name of his father as Milā Gurg‘alī, but there is no evidence about this claim.

²³See Milā Ḥaqq ‘Alī Sīyāhpūsh, *Dīwān*, ed. ‘A. S. Ḥaqqī Muqaddam (Khurramābād, 2000).

Leks of the traditionally Lekî-speaking communities had to wage a campaign for the literary allegiance of peoples' minds. For Lekî quickly became a minority language in a Kurdish world in which Gôranî was the idiom of almost all public discourse. And Gôranî was in fact the language in whose terms even the very topics of the local problems of Lekistan were set. It is important to mention that of the present writers whose Lekî texts are mentioned here, two of them also have Gôranî works to their credits: Milâ Manûchihr and Milâ Siyâhpûsh.

2. Oral Literature

Much of the material of the Lekî oral literature is naturally of Iranian provenance. This applies most obviously to the scriptural component of Iranian history, but also to the material on the late Arabic dominations of the region.²⁴ Some of the material remains obscure in provenance; some of it looks a bit Turkish, but no sources have yet been identified for it.²⁵ What can be said with confidence is that most of this oral literature, whatever its sources, is not one completely composed from the viewpoint of the Leks; although there are also some original and exceptional Lekî materials.

A well-known oral genre available to modern compiler may be dubbed the astronomical Lekî literature. This literature gives an expansive and colourful account of the Lekî narratives of astronomical events and their effects, the magical power of sun, moon, the week, and the folkloric tales regarding the stars.²⁶

Another genre, and a much more popular genre in every sense, is religious oral literature. The genre is readily divisible into two parts: Shiite oral hymns and Ahl-i Haqq oral *kelams*. The transition from the first group to the second is somewhat makeshift, and it is fair to think of the works as composite. But the relationship between the two groups is more than one of casual juxtaposition, since it is not hard to find cross-references from Shiite doctrines to the Ahl-i Haqq doctrines, shared peculiarities, and common interests.²⁷

The third, which needs to be mentioned only as a curiosity, is the diverse verses regarding the nature and the daily life. They teem with spring, winter, clouds, weather, talismans, treasures, ancient wisdom, and also occasional glimpses of monotheist truth as reflected in the natural symbols of God.²⁸

Also *fal gærtan* 'tell fortunes' is so important in the folklore of some remote districts of Lekistan. So there are many interesting *fâl-nâma* hymns which teem with *milâs* learned in *fal gærtan* and magic.²⁹ These materials are in general somewhat heterogeneous in character,

²⁴For the Arab minority and the Arabic domination of Kurdish province of Îlâm cf. *Jughrâfiyâ-yi Kâmil-i Îrân* (Tehran, 1987), i, p. 370; *Farhang-i Jughrâfiyâ-yi Âbâdî-hâ-yi Kishwar (Îlâm) vol. 56* (Tehran, 1993).

²⁵The Turkish elements in Lekistan can be seen, for example, in the historical sources and in the Turkish manuscripts of the Ahl-i Haqq of the region. Cf. the notes cited in H. Howorth, *History of the Mongols* (London, 1888), iii, p. 140; Mu'in al-Dîn Naţanzî, *Muntakhab al-Tawârîkh*, ed. J. Aubin (Tehran, 1957), pp. 42–43; and S. K. Niknizhâd, *Kalâmât-i Turkî* (MS Facsimile, The Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia, No. 119032).

²⁶This subject, and its implications for the oral literature of Ahl-i Haqq of northern Luristan, has been somewhat studied by H. Îzadpanâh, "Gâhshumârî-yi Ahl-i Haqq-i Luristân", in *Arj-nâma-yi Îraj, Muḥammad Taqî Dânişpazhûh-'Abbâs Zaryâb Khu'î I–II*, ed. M. Bâqirzâda (Tehran, 1998), ii, pp. 7–10.

²⁷To my knowledge, the unique published source regarding the oral religious literature of the Leks is R. Ḥasanwând, *Diwân-i Mirzâ Shaḡfî Muşaddiq* (Qumm, 2004), where some Lekî Shiite hymns are published. There are also some Ahl-i Haqq and Shiite oral hymns, gathered by me in Lekistan. I owe a fundamental debt for these hymns to Mr Hesennirô and Mr Siyawexş, whom I interviewed in March 2001, in Ceġajewen.

²⁸See, for example, H. Akbarî, *Girdbâd-i Sar bi Hawâ: Bâzsarâ'î-yi Tak-bayt-hâ-yi Laki* (Tehran, 2005).

²⁹For this genre, see 'A. Rizâ'î and M. Yûsufî, *Fâl-i Chihil Surûd* (Khurramâbâd, 2003).

but the central part of them is one which an eastern audience can readily associate with the *fal* literature.

Another elaborate, and classically the most successful, of these oral traditions constitute what might be called the *hüre* or *hür* 'song'.³⁰ Lekî *hüre*, in the broad sense of material performed by *hürexwen*-the semi-professional singers who perform the *hüre* poems-in-grieving for a bad event, disease, earthquake, flood, a dramatic love, and very rarely a death. Hence they are wide-ranging and yet little studied.³¹ A striking feature of the *hüre* tradition is the diversity of these oral poems. There is no common agreement among the *hürexwens* of Lekistan on the exact locus and detailed structure of each *hüre* and sometimes the problem denoted in it. At any rate, to the *hüre* may be added a further similar Lekî tradition, i.e. *şîn* or *şîn kerdan*,³² in which the women, and only the women or *şînkere*-the semi-professional singers who perform the *şîn* poems-, cry and perform sad poems in mourning for the dead and especially for the young-dead. The female singers perform a number of songs sadly and describe emotion in a variety of way, both directly and through imagery. It is important to notice that the Shiite personalities are playing some religious roles in the women's lament of Lekistan.³³

The seventh important theme, to my knowledge, in Lekî oral literature is found in the poems about local heroes and the wars between the Lek tribes. The Lekî proverbs also provide useful evidence of the Lekî heroic tradition, but we cannot with assurance adduce them as the evidences of Lekî oralist attitudes to the great battles and personalities of past conflicts.³⁴

Finally, on the prose narrative, the Lekî role in the transmission of the Kurdish traditions is, if anything, slighter. Leks play a small part in the ramified prose versions of Kurdish literature scattered in the other parts of Kurdistan. I have collected only some very few Lekî folktales, prose versions of *Ferhad ö Şîrîn*, *hazâr wa yak shab*, and the prose accounts of the modern history of the community.³⁵

II. The *Zîn-ə Hördemîr* of Milâ Mahasan

Mahasan is the most recent famous poet of Lekistan. He lived during the late Qājārīd and early Pahlavī period, but, unfortunately, not much is known about his biography. Most Lek informants date the death of Mahasan between the years 1931 and 1938.³⁶ In the manuscripts, Mahasan regularly called Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān Nūr Muḥammadi, meaning that he was

³⁰The Sōranī *hore/hôre* is almost the exactly equivalent to *hüre*, but its oral literature, like *hüre* literature, has not received any scientific attention. For the same meaning of *hore*, see T. Wahby and C. J. Edmonds, *A Kurdish-English Dictionary* (London, 1966), p. 67.

³¹A semi-skilled deal of the relevant material relating to *hüre* and *hürexwens* is already collected in Z. Muzaffari, *Sūgwārī wa Izdiwāj dar Īl-i Kalhur*, Unpublished MA Thesis (Tehran Central Department of Azad University, 1997).

³²This term and the same ritual of women's lament is also used in some Sōranī districts of the province of Kirmaşan and among the Yezidīs of Badinan. Cf. C. Allison, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan* (London, 2001), p. 75. I am indebted to Mr Azad for Sōranī accounts of *şîn*.

³³I am grateful to Mrs 'Alemtac for this information and performing some Lekî *şîns*.

³⁴For the Lekî proverbs, see 'A. 'Askari 'Ālam, *Zabānzad-hā-yi Lakī* (Khurramābād, 2004) and K. 'Ālīpūr, *Dastūr-i Zabān-i Lakī, Darb al-Mathal-hā wa Wāzha-nāma* (Khurramābād, 2005). For oral accounts of Lekî local heroes I am indebted to Mr Şīralī Nezerī, a knowledgeable Lek of Gurge tribe of Kenever.

³⁵I heard these folktales and historical accounts from many people in Lekistan and Tehran in 2006. Among them are Mr Selman, Mrs Zeke, and Mr Nürīdīn.

³⁶Cf. Gujri Shāhū, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

from Nūr Muḥammadī family of Kulīwand tribe in Alishtar. The topical agenda of the literary disputes with Leks in his Lekî unpublished *dīwān* set under a basic heading: satirical works and parodies. Mahasan does not hesitate to quote the religion, the love, and the nature in defense of his poetic authority. In fact his work abounds not only with comic effect, but with real allusions to the comic daily life of his people and 'buffoon friends'.

1. Text

The *Zîn-ə Hördemîr* is the first important fragment of the works which the incomplete and unclear manuscript of his Lekî *dīwān* contains. The manuscript of *Zîn-ə Hördemîr* in the personal collection of Muḥī al-Dīn Şāliḥī is a satirical text in which the poet, Mahasan, describes the saddle of Hördamîr-his close friend or, possibly, an imaginary character. Since the poem is very popular throughout Lekistan, there are some different versions of *Zîn-ə Hördemîr* but all of them, including the present version, are incomplete. Each verse consists of two rhyming hemistiches, but some hemistiches are not legible. Apart from the truncated version of the poem which was reproduced in a Gōranî-Lekî anthology printed in Khurramābād,³⁷ we fortunately also have some oral versions of the text which are somewhat helpful for establishing the readings.

The text is presented in a phonemic transcription that represents the Lekî dialect of Alishtar. In the transcription system I have used resembles that used by J. Bedir Khan,³⁸ though with some modifications in favour of conservation. The main features of the system employed here are: a distinction between o and ö, u and ü in Lekî dialect. The *kasra* mark in the Perso-Arabic script of the text implies two distinct phonemes: i and ə. In other matters the system is standard. To facilitate reference to the variants, the edition of Gujri Shāhū who apparently does not know Lekî dialect, is indicated in the notes of the present edition as ZaG. Further variants for the same words are: Zo1 and Zo2- the oral versions that I have heard from Meşiy Sörab and other Lek informants.

*zîn-ə Hördemîr*³⁹

- 1 *zîn-ə Hördemîr, zîn-ə Hördemîr, ● beyan kem ösaf-ə zîn-ə Hördemîr:*
 fisordey kohen, heftsed pəşt kebîr, ● her çî şa hetiyə, kwəl hat-ə ve vîr!
 rîxte ö wîrde, çün⁴⁰ köne hesîr, ● meyšûm ö bedyömn, vîney dayapîr!
 'iyvət meşmarəm: mə nüne dilgîr, ● gilegîm nekəy ve lay xan ö mîr!
 5 *qeltan teqeltuq,⁴¹ çeknetî⁴² zîn həy! ● bî teng, bî quşqun, bî sîne bîn həy!*
pusîdey pîfaļ, bî 'ereqgîr həy! ● ey büzîne şəkl⁴³! kar-ə kebîr həy!

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 98–100.

³⁸ As noted in J. Bedir Khan and R. Lescot, *Grammaire kurde (dialecte kurmandji)* (Paris, 1970), pp. 3–7.

³⁹ The proper noun *Hördemîr* means literary 'little Amîr' which is a word of derivation from *hörd/hürd* 'little, small, tiny' and *emîr* 'emir, ruler, chief'.

⁴⁰ Zo2 çüy; ZaG çün.

⁴¹ *qeltan* 'saddle tree' and *teqeltuq* 'saddle leather' occur in H. İzadpanāh, *Farhang-i Lekî* (Tehran, 1988), p. 26, p. 95; and probably correspond to Turkish language. Cf. Kāshgharī, Maḥmūd b. Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad, *Dīwān Luḡhāt al-Türk*, ed. S. M. Dabīrsiyāqī (Tehran, 1996), p. 487.

⁴² Zo1 çekuş.

⁴³ ZaG ey deskar pişey. The reading is doubtful.

- ey je siyləm ben! kunelet ket həy! • ey doxt örçenya, gişt⁴⁴ naşî git həy!
 řiköw asənket, ben řiköw müy həy! • ey zerde boxûr!tepale düy həy!
 baļ-ə teqeltuq büne kəlaş çek! • çerm-ə pese zîn, hemüney řiteq!
 10 qaç-ə zîn, ey töwr mər-x-ə ser bəřya! • ya meseļ⁴⁵ dimax, mələj-ə dəřya!
 la çep, miyl e ras, la ras e döma! • çəman xerî kə hüsyase qoma⁴⁶!
 serkelepete, daya pîs rəst-ə! • dömləqöm⁴⁷ şûaļ, cöme seg list-ə!
 qeltaq səs ö sül, xome gingîşya, • [Line cut off at the edge of folio]
 dehene deskar Ūsa ‘Iyn ‘Elî, • sî gwəļmîx eřin, ey Dör-ə Celi!
 15 tife řüy büt-ə, e naşî ūsat! • kəy tō zînikîn, ta bar bənme cat⁴⁸!
 deskar sîřac-ə kut-ə galan həy! • ne çün zîn-ə berg, ne çün paļan həy!
 eger paļanî, çîye nerm nîyîn? • er zîn-ə bergî, kîn çî çerm nîyîn?
 er kîselîkîn, pes gönət kû-ə? • aj hængətîne, ey töwr-ə⁴⁹ lîvi!
 şîvey zîn nərî, ‘ereqçîn çete? • xenik bərdîne, ey töwr-ə pete!
 20 kesîf ö kinəf, pîs⁵⁰ ö çek ö çül! • lö köj öwr hat-ə, çün naxön-ə xûļ!
 kas-ə kel terkîb, ey mînganmeni! • kurteşîř destûr, ej mərdî seni!
 tötö⁵¹ şəş ö řəşk, ca ej kîk⁵² sen-ə! • ey heřî er ser! [some words are omitted]
 mə e vîrət bü ceng-ə Hefleşger, • şîraq ö şurûq-ə gwərz-ə ga ve ser!
 řimökut-ə gwərz e gupey isper, • jü kare xiciļ, ūsay ahenger!
 25 zîn vət-ə: Xwəda ‘eqļ ö ferzendət bə, • gahî je uqat, beļkem⁵³ pendət bə!
 ceng-ə Hefleşger her döne biye! • çen rezm-ə şahan ver je evəm dîye!
 beļkem bəzanî tarîx-ə Semûd! • veqt-ə gumrahî, Şedad ö Nimrüd!
 esge mə⁵⁴ bîme, hezar saļ sazya[me]⁵⁵! • besî xan ö beg ve beyna tazya[ne]⁵⁶!
 îse pîr bîme, bî des ö bî pa, • ve mörür-ə dehr, keftəme ve ca!
 30 tarîxî büşəm, xû bəğərîn⁵⁷ yad, • sî gəļ Dereşîer dîme ve abad!

2. Translation

The translation is meant to remain as close as possible to the Lekî words, grammar, and syntax. As the composition of this text is generally poor, in some instances, certain material is added in parentheses for clarification.

⁴⁴ ZaG kwəļ.

⁴⁵ ZaG möyne. Reading doubtful; spelled *māynh*

⁴⁶ Zo1 and Zo2 çəman xerî bî hüsyase ve qoma.

⁴⁷ This rarely word is quoted in *İzadpanāh*, *ibid*; p. 60.

⁴⁸ A different version of 15 is in ZaG. The complete form is as follows: *tifəm bü e řüy deskar-ə ūsat • Heqq ūsat bəkəy ve nusvay besat.*

⁴⁹ Zo2 ve meseļ.

⁵⁰ The other Lekî equivalent of this word, i.e. gen, is in ZaG.

⁵¹ An alternative possible reading: *lölö*.

⁵² ZaG yeke; Zo1 ej yeke.

⁵³ ZaG şayet; Zo2 şatîş.

⁵⁴ ZaG işge hem.

⁵⁵ For the truly Lekî *sazyame* ‘I have passed’.

⁵⁶ For the expected present perfect verb *tazyane* ‘they have attacked’.

⁵⁷ The reading *bəkerîn* is also possible.

The Saddle of Hördamîr

- 1 The saddle of Hördamîr, the saddle of Hördamîr, • I state the qualities of the saddle of Hördamîr:⁵⁸
 An old (saddle who has) worn away, (and has lived for) seven-hundred generations,⁵⁹
 • (A saddle) who remembered all the previous kings!
 (You) higgledy-piggledy, like an old mat, • (You) unlucky and inauspicious, like a grandmother!
 I criticise you (for your qualities): probably (it is better) you would not be annoyed (with me for doing this), • Do not complain to khan and emir (about my critique)!
- 5 Hey, saddle! Your saddle tree (and) your saddle leather are like a hammer! • Hey, (I hope that) you would become (a saddle) without caving, without saddle's back fixer, (and) without saddle's chest fixer!
 (You) the rotten (and) the fetid, hey, (a saddle) without saddlecloth! • O (you) the ape shape! Hey, (you) the old-fashioned ware!
 O look at me! Hey, your loads fell (down)! • O a darned stitch, hey, all of them (are) inexpert stitches!
 (But) your iron stirrup, hey, (come and look at his) thin stirrup-leather! • O pale (saddle)! Hey, you are the smoke of the cow-dung (dried for fuel)!
 (I hope that your) saddle leather's handle would be the heel of the shoe! • A saddle with a sheep's leather, a wallet (full) of excrement!
- 10 O saddlebow, you are like a beheaded hen! • Or like a nose which its (inside) brain is torn!
 (You are a crooked saddle and if you would be set in) the left side, you move towards the right side, (if) the right side, (you move) towards the back⁶⁰! • Like a donkey who has stood on the twist (of the road)!
 (His) head and neck are like a grandmother (who) cleansed her leprosy! • (His) used rein licked the bowl of dog!
 (Your) feeble saddle tree, (your) knotty decorative thread, •
 The handmade rein of Master 'Ayn 'Alî, • There are thirty pegs over it, O Clear Cycle!⁶¹
- 15 Spittle on the face of your inexpert manufacturer (i.e. Master 'Ayn 'Alî)! • You are not a saddle, until I can put a load on you!
 Hey, (you are) a handmade (saddle) of the saddler of the herd of cattle! • Hey, (you are nothing) neither like a good-looking saddle, nor like a pack-saddle!
 If you are a pack-saddle, why are not you soft? • If you are a good-looking saddle, why are not you leathery?

⁵⁸The opening formula of describing someone or something, such as *zîn-ə Hördemîr*, *zîn-ə Hördemîr*, *beyan kem etc.*, recurs also in exactly the same form at the beginning of many Kurdish fragments of central and southern Kurdistan.

⁵⁹The translation adopted here for *hefîsed pəşt kebîr* follows the established meaning of the phrase *ejdad* in Lekî, although it seems somewhat strained here. One might think of a possible meaning such as 'to turn backwards' in the present contexts.

⁶⁰The passage is not entirely clear and other translations are also possible.

⁶¹The most notable usage of the phrase *Dör-ə Celî* in the idiomatic meaning is in satirical contexts. It is in daily usage among the Lek nomads of İläm.

If (you are not a saddle and) you are a tortoise, then where is your (sings of) life? ● You have yawned, O (you) like a madman!⁶²

You have not the saddle form, why you want the saddlecloth? ● You have carried henna (with you), O (you are) like an old worsted!

20 (You) dirty and shop-soiled, (you) leprosy and loose! ● The cloud came (over) the side of (his) mountain (i.e. saddlebow), (a cloud) like the nail of giant!

(You) the deaf (and) the dwarf, O speaker with a twang! ● (You are) a worn-out who takes instruction from the dead!

The traffic of the louse and the pediculous louse caught the place of flea! ● O dust on your head!.....

Probably you would remember the Haflashgar war, ● The noise of the cow-head mace!

The noise of mace on the knob of shield, ● The blacksmith master is ashamed of that!

25 The saddle said: God would give to you the intellect and the offspring, ● Sometimes (He) maybe would give to you an advice!

The Haflashgar war has been this recent yesterday! ● I have seen some wars of the (ancient) kings (of a long time) before that!

Maybe you would know the history of Thamūd! ● (Maybe you know) the time of the perversion of Shaddād and Nimrod!

I have been at that times, I have passed (over the events of world) for thousands of years!

● Many of the khans and lords have attacked (on me) in between!

I have grown old now, (and I have been) a shiftless, ● In the course of history, I have fallen into bed!

30 I would tell you about a date, you would remember (it) as well, ● I have seen the populous Darrashahr⁶³ thirty times!

3. Glossary

The glossary includes most Lekî words which are not the same in Persian or Arabic. Numbers in parentheses refer to the text lines and the order is that of the English alphabet.

Abbreviations:

adj.	adjective
imper.	imperative
neg.	negative
perf.	perfect
pl.	plural
pres.	present
pron.	pronoun
sg.	singular
subj.	subjunctive

⁶²The translation offered here constitutes an attempt to accept the hemistich as it stands, but the result is rather strenuous.

⁶³On the Darrashahr or Badra and its situation see L. Muḥkam Pāyān, *Farhang-i Ābādī-hā-yi Īrān* (Tehran, 1960), p. 194.

- aj hængæt-* yawn, pres.perf.2sg.*aj hængætîne* (18)
aj hængætîne- → *aj hængæt-*
asæn آهن iron (8)
baļ 1.hand; 2.wing; 3.handle (9)
bedyömn inauspicious (3)
beļkem maybe (25, 27)
ben- → *kærd-*
ben řiköw stirrup-leather (8)
berg good-looking (16, 17)
beyna between (28)
bə- → *da-*
bəğərîn- → *gərt-*
bənmə- → *heşt-/həşt-*
bərd- carry, pres.perf.2sg.*bərdîne* (19)
bərdîne- → *bərd-*
bərya be-headed (10)
bəzanî- → *zanəst-*
bî- be, become, pres.perf.1sg.*bîme* (28, 29), subj.2sg.and 2pl.*bîn* (5), pres.perf.3sg.*bîye* (26),
 subj.3sg.*bü* (23), subj.2sg.*büne-* (9), subj.3sg.*büt-ə* (15), pres.2sg.*nîyîn* (17), subj.2sg.*nüne*
 (4)
bî without, -less (5, 29)
bîme- → *bî-*
bîn- → *bî-*
bîye- → *bî-*
bü- → *bî-*
büne- → *bî-*
büt-ə- → *bî-*
büzîne ape (6)
bûşəm- → *vət-*
cöm bowl (12)
çek heel (9)
çeknetî چکنتی hammer (5)
çek ö çüil loose (20)
çen some, an unspecified number of something (26)
çəman 1.like (11); 2.as if
çî why (17)
çîye 1.why (17); 2.for which: on account of which
çün چوین like, similar (3, 16, 20)
da- give, subj.3sg.*bə* (25)
daşt- have, to hold or maintain as a possession, pres.2sg.*nəřî* (19)
daya/dayapîr grandmother (3, 12)
deskar دسکار handmade (14, 16)
dərya torn (10)
dimax 1.nose (10); 2.brain; 3.pride

- dî-* see, pres.perf.1sg.*dîme* (30), pres.perf.3sg.*dîye* (26)
dîme- → *dî-*
dîye- → *dî-*
doxt stitch (7)
döma back, behind (11)
dömləqöm/dömləxom rein (12)
döne دونه yesterday (26)
Dör-ə Celî Clear Cycle! (14)
dü/düy smoke (8)
e 1.to, towards, in (11, 23); 2.on, up, over (24); 3.that (15)
ej from, of (21, 22)
-el plural ending: *kunel* (7)
er 1.if (17, 18); 2.on, up
eřin 1.for 2.over, up (14)
esge at that time, then (28)
ev/eve he, she, that (adj. and pron.) (26)
ey O (7, 8, 10, 14, 19, 21)
-ə 1.*izāfa* marker 2.verbal suffix 3.the stress given to a word when spoken, especially in order to show importance
'ereqîn/ 'ereqîr saddlecloth (6, 19)
ga cow (23)
galan گالن cattle (16)
gərt- catch, seize, subj.2sg.*bəgəřin-* (30)
gəř گەř time, occasion (30)
gilegî complain (4)
gingîşya knotty, be confused (13)
giřt all, whole (7)
git stitch (7)
gön 1.power; 2.soul; 3.life (18)
gupe knob (24)
gwəřmîx peg (14)
gwəřz mace (23, 24)
hat-/het-/yəhat- come, past.3sg.*hat/hat-ə/het/het-ə/yəhat* (2, 20), pres.perf.3sg.*hetiye/hatiye* (2)
hat-ə → *hat-/het-/yəhat-*
hemüine wallet (9)
heřt-/həřt- put on, subj.1sg.*bənme* (15)
heři dust, ash (22)
hetiye- → *hat-/het-*
hezar thousands (28)
həy hey! (5, 6, 7, 8, 16)
hüsy- stand, pres.perf.3sg.*hüsyase* (11)
hüsyase- → *hüsy-*
isper shield (24)

- îse* ايسا now (29)
je from, of (25, 26)
jü جو [je+e/ev/eve] of that (24)
kas deaf (21)
kebîr old-fashioned (2, 6)
keft-/ket- fall, past.3sg.*keft/ket* (7), pres.perf.1sg.*keftəme/ketəme* (29)
keftəme- → *keft-/ket-*
kel dwarf (21)
kem- → *kərd-*
ket- → *keft-/ket-*
kə that (11)
kəlaş shoe (9)
kərd- do, make, imper.2pl.ben (7), pres.1sg.*kem/mekem/mehem/meem* (1), neg.imper.2sg.
nekəy (4)
kinəf shop-soiled (20)
kîk flea (22)
kîsef tortoise (18)
köne old, belonging to an early period (3)
köj کۆج mountain (20)
kû where (18)
kune load (7)
kurteşîr worn-out (21)
kut herd (16)
kwəf all (2)
la/lay لای 1.side (11); 2.the space beside one
list- lick, past.3sg.*list-ə* (12)
list-ə → *list-*
lîvi لوی 1.mad; 2.madman (18)
lö side (20)
meysûm unlucky (3)
mə probably (4, 23)
mə/mən I, me (28)
mələj brain (10)
mərdî dead (21)
mərx hen (10)
mînganmeni twang (21)
mü/miü hair (8)
naxön nail (20)
nekəy- → *kərd-*
nərd- → *daşt-*
nîyîn- → *bî-*
nüne- → *bî-*
-ö and (3, 4, 13, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29)
örçenya darned (7)

- öwr* cloud (20)
pałan pack-saddle (16)
pes sheep (9)
pete پته old worsted (19)
pəšt generation (2)
pîfał پینال fetid (6)
pîs بیس leprosy (12, 20)
qaç-ə zîñ saddlebow (10)
qeltan/qeltaq/qeltax saddle tree (5, 13)
qom/qoma قما twist (11)
quşqun/quşqin saddle's back fixer (5)
rəst- cleanse, past.3sg.*rəst-ə* (12)
rəst-ə → *rəst*
rəşk pediculus louse (22)
riköw stirrup (8)
rimökut/rimkut noise (24)
riŋeq/riŋəq excrement, waste matter especially discharged from the bird's body (9)
riŋte ö *wırde* higgledy-piggledy (3)
rü/riy face (15)
sał year (28)
sazy- pass, pres.perf.1sg.*sazyame* (28)
sazyame → *sazy-*
sen- 1.buy; 2.catch, seize, pres.3sg.*seni/meseni* (21), past.3sg.*sen/sen-ə* (22)
sen-ə → *sen-*
seni → *sen-*
ser 1.head (10); 2.mind
serkelepete head and neck (12)
səs ö *siil* سس و سویل feeble (13)
səyl look (7)
siřac saddler (16)
siŋe/siŋeven saddle's chest fixer (5)
şəş louse (22)
şiraq ö *şurûq* noise (23)
şive شیوه form, face (19)
şulał شوال used (12)
tazy- attack, pres.perf.3pl.*tazyane* (28)
tazyane → *tazy-*
teng/tenge caving (5)
tepale cow-dung (8)
teqeltuq/teqeltu saddle leather (5, 9)
tif spittle (15)
tö/tön you (sg.) (15)
tötö traffic, communication especially between animals and insects (22)
töwr طور like (10, 18, 19)

- úsa* master (14, 15, 24)
ve 1.on, up (2, 23, 28, 29, 30); 2.with (29); 3.in (29)
ver before (26)
vət- tell, say, subj.1sg.*búšəm* (30), past.3sg.*vat/vat-ə/vət/vət-ə* (25)
vət-ə → *vət-*
víney وینه like (3)
vír memory, remembrance (2, 23)
xenik/xeni henna (19)
xome decorative thread (13)
xú 1.well (30); 2.Ok!
xúf giant (20)
Xwəda God (25)
zanəst- know, subj.2sg.*bəzani* (27)
zerde boxár pale (8)