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Tale of Two Brothers

This Soqotran tale was recorded from Fatima Salim Sho'o (ca. 19) near her family small cave at Mauna Mountain in the north-western Muri area of Soqotra island just near the airfield and the camp in 1980. Her father Salim 'Abdella Sho'o, her mother Maryam Keshen, and both of her brothers Sa'id and Sa'ad were also there. Fatima, a young clever Bedouin woman, never went to school. Here is a beginning of the tale which is very close to the famous Egyptian tale of Two Brothers from the d'Orbiney papyrus. (With English translation.)

`a2ho

1. **tru 2agi ya2ti[ano , ya2ti[ano - `in 2egi `a2ho.**
two men loved each other, loved each other - because the two men (are) brothers.
2. **2omar : `ax , ninhi!**
(the one of them) said: o, brother!
3. **2omar : `a?**
(the other) said: what?
4. **2omar : `inim yi`ezin-ki?**
(he) said: what will divide us (du.)
5. **2omar : ye`ezin-ki ? nefa2en 2aje.**
(he) said: will divide us (du.)? deed of a woman.
6. **- mon - nefa2en 2aje ? `ep ! bidik!**
who - deed of a woman? ep! (you) lied!

7. **Zomar : suwa` a` , bidik . `in kar `ol bidik!**
 (he) said: good, (I) lied! but (I) didn't lie!
8. **sfer , sfer hag (1) - wa yhi ba2al.**
 the man went away, went away - and he got married.
9. **Zuqal , ximi t-6 d-hi `ije (2) , wa d-se hag , 5eher-a-s (3),**
 (he) left, (he) married to him(self) his wife, and her man, her brother-in-law*,
 [*here "her man" is not her husband but her brother-in-law]
10. **Zuqal `iyhe xa.**
 (he) left them (du.) here.
11. **Zigebe `ije , Zigebe hag , 5eher-a-s.**
 the woman wanted, the woman wanted the man, her brother-in-law.
12. **we 5eher-a-s `ol Zigib (h)i-s.**
 and her brother-in-law didn't want her.
13. **`in 2a[in d-hi min ninhi,**
 because (he) loved his elder brother,
14. **we xtaram (4) (h)o-s de t-`ixteram d-hi ninhi.**
 and respected her the same as his elder brother.
15. **min `ayyamat-ulla `ime2e d-se b-2ag gedax.**
 one day of Allah('s days) (she) heard her man came (home).
16. **4o `ime2e - be[are d-se 3alaq,**
 once (she) heard - (she) tore her dress,
17. **be[ake d-se xanq,**
 broke her necklace,
18. **be[are d-se sarwil (5) - *ca2al (6) 2aqalo.**
 tore her pantaloons - made herself abandoned*.
 [*proposed translation]
19. **Zomero : ya` ! 2a tqab de-he ! ber ho 2aryana (7)!**
 (she) said: hey you! don't enter to me! because I (am) naked!

20. **2omar : mon ta t-6ige?**

(he) said: who (is) who did (it) so?

21. **2omer o : d-(h)et ninhi!**

(she) said: your brother*!

[*the same Soqotri word is used for "an elder brother" and "a brother" regardless of his age]

22. **d-(h)et ninhi de t-2uqalk het `inhe de-xa –**

your brother who left you to me here* –

[*or "with me"]

23. **6ege b-e (8) te-ne (9).**

(he) made me so (now).

24. **2omar : suwa`!**

(he) said: good!

25. **2omar : na2a , fel ho-6 l-i6ga-6?**

(he) said: now, what (is for me) to do to him for you?

26. **2omere : na2a , t6oge-6 , t6oge-6 `inhe –**

(she) said: now, (you) do to him, (you) do to him for me -

27. **teqa[of mo-y hed (10), teqa[of mo-y hed!**

cut off his hand, cut off his hand!

28. **`um ba2d `ol " t6oge-6 - tiqa[of mo-y hed " - 4ahar.**

after this, "do to him - cut off his hand," (he) went (away).

29. **w-ol 2ad bileq , kise min `ol yixeleb l-hi `ileyten,**

and (he) didn't let, (he) found (him) among milking his cows.

30. **4o kise min `ol yexeleb l-hi `ileyten –**

once (he) found (him) among milking his cows -

31. **qo[of mo-y hed be sayre.**

(he) cut off his hand with a knife.

32. **2omar : hat ! `ol 2omark ha-k?**

(he) said: you! didn't (I) say (to) you?

33. **bici d-yi`ezin-ki k-ol mere?**

nothing (is) to divide us (du.) but a woman?

34. **4ahar w-ol 2ad bileg - khon gi55e5 (11) ...**

(he) went away and (he) didn't let - became a castrate* ...

[“castrate” is our suggested translation]

NOTES

(1) - **hag** < **2ag** is not a dialectal variant but a variant of the pronunciation within the same North-Western Soqotri dialect which seems to be stylistically determined

(2) - **`ije** < **2aje** - see (1)

(3) - **5eher-a-s** = **5eher-** + **-s** with additional **-a-**

(4) - Arabic borrowing " **`ixtarama** "

(5) - from Arabic "**sirwa:l**"

(6) - this item is not clear.

(7) - Arabic borrowing - in Soqotri it should be " **foto2o** " (m. **fota2**)

(8) - **b-e** < **b** + **ho**

(9) - **te-ne** < **ta** + **na2a**

(10) - the word here ("hand") is used as a euphemism for penis.

(11) - **gi55e5** < **qi5a:5** Arabic law term for punishment through cutting off.

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