

The Second Book of the Dok'tar

With a new translation and annotations by Graeme Burk

Introduction

1 This is the story of the second visitation of the prophet Dok'tar^a and his sayings that give life.

²For thirteen-thirty-eight years^b the Dok'tar^c had not visited the Land of Un. The people appointed seven judges to see over the land and to discern the will of Kor. ³Among the Judges were Teron, Kalinda, P'inth'i, Boz, Yash'len'ir, Timi and Nod^d. ⁴The judges saw over the land and discerned the will of Kor with righteousness^e.

Signs in the Heavens

⁵Kor warned^f the Judges of the Land of Un of signs in the heavens and that the stars were not in their right sphere^g. ⁶The Judges prayed to Kor for protection, but Kor was not able to offer any. ⁷The heavens rained solid^h for eleventy-ten¹ days, and the villages in the land of Un were devastated. Its storehouses were obliterated and its refuges were destroyed. ⁸And Kor ceased to speakⁱ to the Judges of the Land of Un.

The Arrival of the Dok'tar

2 After Eleventy-five^k more days, the Dok'tar returned to the Land of Un. ²The livery of his vehicle^l was blue and it bore the sign^m:

³Give voice to the guardians of justice

We freely give the people

Hearken for wisdom and aid

⁴Under-Guardians in their conveyances

Heed the cries of distress

Access obversely

⁵The Dok'tar surveyed the Land of Un and was saddened by the destruction. He saw the people praying to Kor and was greatly displeased.

The Dok'tar speaks to the Judges

⁶The Dok'tar came to the people with a changed mortalityⁿ. His tails were brightly coloured^o and his face was like lightning^p.

^a The second of the three books of the prophet Dok'tar is the shortest and, it is believed, the most accurate of the books. The earliest scrolls date from thirty-five years after their writing, which current archaeological opinion states to be around -49583OD.

^b 50-01 years.

^c *Dok'tar* is a transliteration. It is difficult to determine its meaning in the original languages, though it shares the same root words as *Medtech*, *Caregiver*, *Laughing One* and *Stormbringer*.

^d While the other Judges of the Land of Un can be found in the Book of Exploits, Nod is only mentioned in this book. There is no other record of there being a Seventh Judge.

^e *Discerned the will*. Literally 'to extract knowledge'

^f *Warned*. The exact translation is uncertain. The word means 'to sound an alarm' but also curiously has inferences of the colour red.

^g For decades, this was thought to mean that the Unites believed the stars moved on a sphere around the Land. And yet, the archaeological record shows that the Unites understood the concept of planetary rotation.

^h *Rained solid*. The meaning of the phrase is uncertain. Certainly it correlates with destruction caused by what is now believed to be rocks or projectiles from space, establishing many of the craters which Un is best known for. This took place in -51289 OD.

ⁱ About 20-08 days.

^j *Ceased to speak*. Literally 'off the line', an ancient colloquialism.

^k About 20-009 days.

^l The actual words used, *tar* and *dis*, have no translation.

^m The sign on the Dok'tar's conveyance has been, in other translations, a series of riddles. I believe it is actually more faithfully translated as poetry of an ancient obscurantist tradition.

ⁿ *Changed mortality*. Literally 'renewed life'. Some have suggested this to mean that the prophet Dok'tar is actually more than one person, and that this is a 'Deutero-Dok'tar'. And yet, in the narrative itself the Dok'tar is accepted by everyone as the prophet.

^o Many believe that these are literally tails. However, recent documentary evidence would suggest this was an accoutrement worn by the prophet, called 'tails' because of the way it dragged on the ground.

^p A reference to the Dok'tar's teeth, perhaps?

^q Literally 'babies of gelatin'. Possibly a remark on the caul surrounding infants, which were believed to be good luck.

^r Literally 'a machine of adding'

^s Past translations have tried to emphasize a transcendent quality—cf. the New Un Translation: 'Kor is beyond thoughts; Kor is beyond blood'. And yet the original text is actually, shockingly, blunt.

Does this mean that Teron is tacitly admitting that Kor is not alive? Ancient tradition held that these are a form of

⁷Enticing the people with offspring made of gelatin^q, he was taken to the Judges of the Land of Un. ⁸He came before the seven Judges and, seeing their prostration to Kor, was angered further. He spoke to the Judges:

⁹Why have you not heeded the words

Given to you in visitations past

The worship of Kor is empty

¹⁰Kor does not live, Kor does not feel

Kor is an Engine of Mathematics^r

Kor is an instrument

Do not heed to the voice of Kor.

The Judges respond to the Dok'tar

¹¹Teron, one of the seven appointed to see over the land of Un and to discern the will of Kor rose to the place of judgement and spoke to the Doctor:

¹²The People have heeded your wisdom, prophet.

Kor does not draw breath; Kor does not think or bleed^s

¹³Kor is an engine^t of our ancestors

But Kor is an engine of our lives

¹⁴Kor gives us sustenance, Kor gives us refuge

Kor gives us wisdom; should we not give Kor worship?^u

As we honour the tree for giving us shelter, so we honour Kor.

The Dok'tar seeks the mind of Kor

3 The Dok'tar found the words of the judges of the land of Un a mystery^v to him. ²He turned his understanding^w to the cries of the people. Kor had not spoken to the people of the Land of Un for Eleventy-five days. ⁴The Dok'tar pulled the sandals of Kor again^x to entreat Kor to speak. But the voice of Kor did not answer.

⁵The Dok'tar then sought to determine the mind of Kor^y as he had in the days when Kor ruled with might and power^z. ⁶The Dok'tar chipped away^{aa} at the mind of Kor and found that Kor's mind had been afflicted by a grave illness^{bb}.

catechesis—a deliberate statement of unbelief on the part of the Dok'tar to elicit a demonstration of belief on the part of the people. But the original texts support an entirely different theory: that the Dok'tar's statement of unbelief is simply echoed by Teron.

^t The roots of the word are the same as those used for *machine*, *device* and, curiously, *spools (of ribbon?)*.

^u In the light of his previous remarks, Teron seems to advocate a non-realist position: Kor is not alive but Kor is worshipped *in spite of this*.

^v The verb is unclear. This could mean that it was found to be an axiomatic truth (as one found in a riddle), or that he was mystified by their sayings.

^w *Turned his understanding*. There is an inference of dismissiveness in the phrase.

^x *The Dok'tar pulled the sandals of Kor again*. It translates literally 'sandal again'. It has been supposed that these sandals were ceremonial.

^y Literally 'he set his face (inside) the face of Kor'.

^z cf. 1 Dok'tar 17:48

^{aa} The verb is unclear, but it involves making a motion as with an axe or a machete.

^{bb} Curiously, while the exchange between the Dok'tar and Teron establishes that Kor is not alive, the 'grave illness' ascribed to Kor is some sort of communicable disease.

A Heavenly Visitation

4 The Dok'tar still sought to determine the mind of Kor and began to delve into the riddles^a at the heart of Kor^b to heal Kor's affliction. ²The Dok'tar discerned that Kor's ailment was sent from the heavens^c to confound Kor^d. ³The Dok'tar interceded^e with those who tested Kor, saying:

⁴Who has trespassed the people of Un?^f

What creature challenges their servant, Kor?^g

*⁵Let your light come down^h from the heavens
Make your faces known to us.*

⁶The Dok'tar had scarcely finished his saying when there came creatures who dwelled in light, bringing tidings from the heavens. They were robed in light and wore a second headⁱ. ⁵The Dok'tar offered them offspring made of gelatin and admonished them for bringing this affliction on the Land of Un. ⁶The Chief Priest among them spoke to the Dok'tar:

We heed your call, Great Prophet

Your charity and good deeds are hallowed in the land of Cal^j

⁷Yet the voice of Mem'Fram^k urges us:

'Deliver destruction on the land of Un

Vex their sovereign, Kor'

⁸We are the elect of Mem'Fram and

Mem'Fram's faithful servants

⁹The Dok'tar was displeased at the Chief Priest's saying, and tossing his tail round his neck, addressed the Chief Priest:

¹⁰What is this foolishness you speak?

What manner of nonsense is this?

You know from ages past

The worship of Mem'Fram is empty^l

¹¹Mem'Fram does not live, Mem'Fram does not feel

Mem'Fram is an urn of pins^m

Do not heed the voice of Mem'Fram

¹²The Chief Priest answered:

You speak the truth, Great Prophet

We see that Mem'Fram is an empty peapod

¹³And yet Mem'Fram is our home, our meat

Our warmth, our protection and our hope

^a The term implies some form of cryptic communication.

^b *At the heart of Kor.* I have used 'heart' as it seems the most poetic choice of phrasing. The actual term is somewhat obscure; it refers to a place where something collects from another place, as a heart with its arteries or a lake with its river tributaries.

^c *Sent from the heavens.* The active verb form would suggest something directly coming from the heavens, like an attack. However, another possibility is indicated in the passive verb form, which is used in the same sense as starlight on a planetary body.

^d Past translations have chosen a triumphalistic approach. The new Un translation says 'to test Kor', which emphasizes Kor's ability to, ultimately, rise above such things. But the actual text seems to suggest something far harsher than a 'test', though it can be translated that way. However, if Kor is believed to be not alive, then it seems that there is no test that it need triumph over.

^e Curiously, the Dok'tar's intercession does not take place in the sacred chamber of prayer (cf. 1 Dok'tar 8:13).

^f This invocation is something of an anomaly. Most of the dialogues in the Second Book of Dok'tar follow the standard Unite poetic convention of seven-line stanzas except for this one, which is four lines long.

^g For decades there has been controversy surrounding the translation of the subject-verb agreement on this one verse. Is it 'their servant, Kor' or 'their servant of Kor'? Both interpretations have been used elsewhere. For example in the Book of Exploits (93:7), P'inth¹ is described as 'the faithful servant of Kor'. And yet, in the Third Book of the Captivity (10:5), Sater is referred in relation to Carke as: 'Carke, and his faithful

servant, Sater'. The controversy is as much theophical as it is linguistic. Is the Dok'tar the servant of Kor, or is Kor the servant of the people of the land of Un? Given the evidence I have presented of the Dok'tar's profession of non-belief and his statement (2:10) that Kor is 'an instrument', I believe that the only possible translation that would be contextually faithful would be 'their servant, Kor'.

^h Compare this to 4:2; this is most definitely used in the passive, 'starlight' sense.

ⁱ *Wore a second head.* Almost certainly a helmet

^j There was never a Land of Cal in the geographical region of the Land of Un. Some scholars have suggested that they might perhaps be a fictionalization of the Land of Uae, who lived northeast to the Land of Un. The fictionalization may have been done so as to not engender hostility with them. Some critics have suggested that the Land of Cal might be a completely fictional construct, not based on any particular city-state but rather to demonstrate the 'shadow-side' of the people of the Land of Un. They are only mentioned one other time, in 3 Dok'tar 7:32: 'He came from beyond the heavens, from beyond the land of Cal'

^k *Mem'Fram* is a transliteration that shares the same root as *portrait*.

^l The Dok'tar echoes his previous dialogue with Teron.

^m *Pins.* It is inferred from the phrasing that these are the sorts of pins that would be used in connecting one object to another in construction, as opposed to the sort used for sewing.

ⁿ Traditionally, this has been rendered as a cynical counterpoint to the presumed catechesis with the Dok'tar and Teron. And yet, in actuality, the Chief Priest gives the same answer

¹⁴*Therefore we worship Mem'Fram*

And are faithful to the commandments of Mem'Framⁿ

Mem'Fram wills us to destroy this people and its Sovereign.

¹⁵And then the light, and the creatures that dwelled within it, were no more.

The Dok'tar approaches Mem'Fram

5 Then the Dok'tar entered his vehicle and emerged beside the tabernacle of Mem'Fram in Grand Court of the Land of Cal^o. ² There he met a Teacher^p dressed in cloaks of night, whose face was long-dead^q. It was he who whispered falsehoods^r into the heart of Mem'Fram. ³The Dok'tar prophesied to the people of the Land of Cal:

Woe be upon you, people of Cal

You have heeded the voice of a false prophet

⁴Your Teacher utters lies and has controlled Mem'Fram

Mem'Fram is but a marionette, dancing to his tune

And the people of the Land of Cal dance to his damnation

⁵Remember your teaching:

'Seek courage within yourself and the journey will become clear'^s

⁶The Teacher^t replied:

One man's lie is another man's truth

One man's false prophet is another man's saviour.

⁷I hold no strings; Mem'Fram speaks for the people

The people worship Mem'Fram and do his will

⁸As Mem'Fram does the will of his people^u

Why do you listen to this unwashed Unite?

Serve Mem'Fram. Mem'Fram gives you life.

⁹At the teacher's order, the people surrounded the Dok'tar. The Dok'tar spoke to the people:

¹⁰The Teacher deceives you all!

He does not serve Mem'Fram.

He does not serve the people

The Teacher serves himself.

¹¹The Teacher wishes to desolate the Lands of Cal and Un

To possess the secrets beneath the soil^v

Listen to your heart. You know what is right.

about his God as Teron did about his own.

^o It has been postulated that there is a lacuna in the text at this point. Traditional Unite narratives describe the details of a journey (cf. the travels of Hashorn in the Third Book of the Exile), but here the Dok'tar, bizarrely, steps into his vehicle and emerges somewhere else. A number of apocryphal accounts have attempted to fill this lacuna, including tales where the Dok'tar encounters dragons made of iron, or walking serpent soldiers who live in ice, but these have been discredited over the centuries.

^p The term literally translates as someone who has Mastery of philosophy (and other areas). As this is what we would now call a Teacher, or a Professor, I have translated it thus.

^q The root words involved imply flesh that has decomposed.

^r *Falsehoods.* Literally 'incorrect truths'

^s The remark echoes the Doctor's consolation to Nor in 1 Doctor 53:19 – 'I have shown you the way / all the time was the power within you'

^t Tradition has held that the Teacher is set up within the narrative as an equal and opposite to the Dok'tar. Equally skilled, and equally adroit at language. Modern criticism has held that the Teacher is too easily defeated to be a true equal.

^u The Teacher speaks almost entirely in circular tautologies, which traditionalists hold up as an example of his skill and craftiness, and modern critics hold up the lack of content as an example of his base incompetence.

^v An almost entirely accurate prediction, as in 19-135 years, the discovery of zytan-7 ore would completely change the shape of commerce in the Unite region.

6 But the people of the Land of Cal were minded to war, their minds cleaned by the sayings of the teacher. 2They readied themselves to stone the Dok'tar, when behold, the Dok'tar held up the mind of Kor on a stone^a tablet^b. 3The Dok'tar placed the tablet at the entrance of Mem'Fram's tabernacle and prayed^c before it. 4The mind of Kor was the mind of Mem'Fram, and the heart of Mem'Fram was the heart of Kor^d.

Mem'Fram-Kor Gives Judgement

5Then did Mem'Fram in Kor, and Kor in Mem'Fram, speak:

*The Dok'tar was wise in his thoughts
For he knew that, just as in one was sickness
And the other, madness
That in the other was calming
And the one, healing
6Thus we are one in wholeness
And one in judgment*

^a The translation is uncertain. It refers to a mineral, the implication that is non-metallic.

^b It is inferred that the tablet containing the 'mind of Kor' is a small one, perhaps no bigger than a child's thumb.

^c The word is used in the sense of invoking a formula or form of words, which would therefore be consistent with the Dok'tar's non-belief in either Kor or Mem'Fram

^d *The mind of Kor was the mind of Mem'Fram, and the heart of Mem'Fram was the heart of Kor.* This marks an important shift in the theological life within the Land of Un. Rather than believing in separate, distinct gods, the creation of Mem'Fram-Kor creates a God who represents a bi-unity—two but one.

^e Past translations have made the departure of Mem'Fram-Kor sound as though it is a reward for faithfulness—they have

proven their devotion and so do not require direct intervention. For example, The New Un Translation says: 'You have heeded our sayings faithfully / We need not dwell alongside you anymore.' And yet, the actual original text makes the negative connotations abundantly clear—ie. they have approached the sayings of their God with *too much* faithfulness and devotion. In light of the non-realist approach both Unites and Calians have taken with Kor and Mem'Fram, this is a damning indictment of their devotion to Gods they don't believe in but worship anyway.

^f Following from this, Mem'Fram-Kor are not actually *rewarding* the collective peoples of Un and Cal, but rather *punishing* or *dismissing* them for their all-too-diligent worship.

^g The earliest ending of the book is both fascinating and disturbing in its starkness. *Alone* literally translates 'to themselves'.

*The peoples of the land of Un and Cal
Have listened to our voice too well^e
7We shall not dwell with you henceforth^f
We shall find a tabernacle of our own
8Heed the sayings of the prophet
Seek the truth of your own sayings
Find the good in your deeds*

9And Mem'Fram-Kor was silent and the people were alone.^g

An ancient ending^h

7 The Dok'tar returned to the People of Un and found them disconsolate at the judgment of Mem'Fram-Kor. 2He said. 'A vehicle half-full of conviction has the same value as a vehicle half-full of unfamiliarity. There is one six and there is another six.'ⁱ

3He entered his vehicle and behold there was a sound of breathless moaning and the Dok'tar had become a memory^j to the people of the Land of Un.

^h This later ending appeared on manuscripts of the Second Book of the Dok'tar approximately 07-12 years after the first known extant texts. It does little to add to the actual story, except perhaps to bring closure to the Dok'tar and the people of the Land of Un.

ⁱ One of the reasons the veracity of this ending has been debated so vigorously is the Dok'tar's final saying which is not only given in prose (as opposed to Unite poetry), but actually makes little sense. Contextually, it seems as though it is not a saying of the Dok'tar but done in the style of the Dok'tar. And yet, the prophet does seem to enjoy speaking within an obscurantist tradition.

^j *Become a memory.* The term literally translates 'lost material substance in the present moment'.

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E s s e n t i a l s

I've always felt that one of the essential elements to **DOCTOR WHO** has been its secular quality. The **DOCTOR WHO** universe is explicable, and that in it which is not, well, there's an explanation somewhere, because there is a scientific explanation to everything. Moreover, there's no such thing as magic (at least not until *Battlefield* and the BBC Books!), and there are no Gods. In fact, aside from a brief flirtation with Buddhism during the Jon Pertwee years, **DOCTOR WHO** tends to regard religion with utter disdain. Religious figures in **WHO**—with the exceptions of K'ampo Impoche in *Planet of the Spiders* and Tavius in *The Romans*—are routinely exposed as incompetent, duped, malicious or, very often, all of the above.

As a practicing Christian I should perhaps find this offensive. And yet, I prize it above all the many wonderful qualities of **DOCTOR WHO**. While so much television science fiction has lurched toward meaningless, fey, new-age mysticism (even Vulcans pray these days), **DOCTOR WHO** was always set in a world where the answers to everything were not very far from you—you just had to have an open mind and ask the sometimes-dangerous questions. This is a value I wish more people had, whether they are religious or not.

It struck me the best way to celebrate this essential element was to play with one of **DOCTOR WHO**'s most beloved plot elements in this area, and to tell a Doctor Who story in a genre that hasn't been explored before: the religious text.

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