



ĀŠTĪĀNI

ĀŠTĪĀNI, the dialect of Āštīān, belongs to the group of “Central” dialects spoken in Kashan and Isfahan provinces and some adjacent areas. In 1969, when the writer visited Āštīān, the dialect was still spoken in the Māzerī quarters of the town by some elderly people, and it was well preserved in Šūra, a village of Āštīān mostly populated by Āštīānis. The dialect is similar to that of Āmora, a village of some 250 households (1969) in the nearby Tafreš district, albeit *Āmora’i* is more conservative in preserving the grammatical distinction of the feminine gender. In vocabulary and some phonological features Āštīāni has clear affinities with Vafsi (q.v.).

In the speech of my informants, who included an 85 year old illiterate woman, the sound system did not differ noticeably from Persian, which has exerted considerable influence on the dialect. (In *Āmora’i*, however, *ō* and *ū* are distinguished from *o* and *u*.) The 3rd person sing. and plur. of the attached pronouns as well as some forms of the verb “to go” have regularly *-s* instead of the expected *-š*, a feature shared by Vafsi but not *Āmora’i* (see below for examples). In *sovāḥa* and a number of other words of Arabic origin, *h* is guttural as is the case in Jowšaqāni and some other Kashani dialects.

The nominal system is based on two genders, masc. and fem.; two numbers, sing. and plur.; and two cases, direct and oblique. The fem. marker is an unstressed *-a* which is attached to sing. nouns only; unlike *Āmora’i*, Āštīāni does not distinguish gender in pronouns or verbs, cf. *dāšak-om/bājīa-m hezze estā ešši vārān ba-s-kat* “my brother/sister was about to go (when) rain fell”; *detāka-m/pur-om nāxoš-e* “my daughter/son is sick”. The plural marker is *-gal*



(in rapid speech sometimes *-gel*, before which the fem. marker is omitted (unlike in Āmora’i, which retains it): *xúa-m/xu-gal-om beškīād* “my shovel/shovels broke”. The ending for the direct case, when definite, is unstressed *-i* for masc. sing. (sometimes pronounced *-e*; in Āmora’i *-e*), *-o* for fem. sing., and *-an* which follows *-gal*, for both masc. and fem. plur.: *Hasán-i azīat maka* “don’t bother Ḥasan”; *yān púl-i hā-de Hasán-i* “give that money to Ḥasan”; *Zeynab-o ne-ku* “don’t beat Zaynaba”; *pā bóz-o darvend* “tie the goat’s leg”; *guč-gal-an/boz-gal-ān ba-var ku* “take the rams/goats to mountains”. With past transitive verbs the ergative construction has weakened and the agent is put in the direct case: *bóza alaf-es bāxbard* “the goat ate grass”; *Hasán pur-emon-es ba-kuād* “Hasan beat our son”; *pur-gal-es zan-esān hā-ga* “his sons took wives”.

The pronouns may be divided into detached and attached pronouns. In this first category the oblique case is distinguished only in the 1st and 2nd persons sing. Direct: *az, to, ān* (that)/*yān* (this), *imá, isma, āngala/yāngala*; oblique: *mon, ta* (the rest as direct); attached: *-m, -t, -s, -mon, -tān, -sān*; e.g., *ba mon bure* “come with me”, *bā ta natom* (i.e., *na-et-om*) “I don’t come with you”, *bā ān ešom* “I go with him/her”. By extension, the definite oblique marker *-i* is used after the oblique sing. and the 3rd person plur. pronouns when they are direct objects: *mon-i ne-ku* “don’t beat me”; *ta-i net-kuom* “I don’t beat you”; *em-et-go ān-i/āngalān-i be-kuom* “I must beat him/them”.

The verbal system is based on two stems, present and past. Tenses are formed with the help of personal endings and two modal prefixes: *e(t)-* for imperfective (present and past) and *ba-/be-* for the imperative, subjunctive, and the preterit. The personal endings are the same for all tenses, except for the 2nd person sing. imperative and the 3rd person sing. past tense, which have no ending. (For the indication of persons in past transitive verbs see below.) The personal endings are: *(o)m, -i, -o* (in careful speech *-ā*), *-(i)me, -(i)de, -(o)ne*. The modal prefixes are omitted when a prefix of the stem (*der-/dar-, he-, hā-, vā-, var-, bar*) or a nominal complement is present. Examples: Imperative: *ba-var* “carry!”, *basse* “go!”, *der-puš* “dress!”, *buaz* “run!”, *ne-ku* “don’t hit!”, *besside* “go! (plur.)”, *varji-ka* “jump!”, *diri-riz* “pour!”. Present (also used for future): *et-om* “I come”, *et-xār-om* “I eat”, *der-puš-om* “I dress”, *na-zān-om* “I cannot, I do not know”. Subjunctive: *ba-du-me* “we run”, *xodā ba-s košo* “may God kill him!”. Preterit: *viā-m* “I was” (as auxiliary), *ba-kat* “he fell”, *var-gerdā-ne* “they returned”, *be-miā-ne* “they came”, *xoš-genā* “became dry”. Imperfect (habitual and continuous past): *et-keṭiā-m* “I used to fall”, *e-šiām* “I



was going”, *er-rasām* “I was arriving”, *et-xandā-(i)y* “you (sing.) were laughing”. The periphrastic tenses (perfect and pluperfect) are formed with the help of the present and past tense of “to be”. Perfect (examples only from 3rd person sing.): *be-rasā-(y)e* “has arrived”. Pluperfect (also used for subj. perf.): *bessi vi* “had gone” (“was”, however, is *bi*). In the past of the transitive verbs the passive construction is used, with attached pronouns, which are normally placed after the prefixes or the logical object, indicating the persons; the imperfective prefix however follows the attached pronouns. Examples: *hā-m gat* “I took”, (but *pul-om (h)ā gat* “I took the money”; cf. *pul-es hā-m gat* “I took his money”), *mār-om ba-košt-e* “I have killed a snake”, *ba-m vāt* “I said”, *der-etān pušt* “you dressed”, *der-om-et pušt* “I used to dress”, *hā-m nešān-e* “I have seated”, *ba-m xorda vi* “I had eaten”, *šu-m dā-e* “I have given in marriage”.

In “to want to” from the base *gu-* the attached pronouns precede the imperfective prefix, and are themselves preceded by a prothetic *e-*: *e-m-et-gu basom*, *e-t-et-gu basi*, etc. “I want to go, you want to go, etc.”, *em-et-guād buāzom* “I wanted to say”.

Āštīānī vocabulary, like its morphology and syntax, has been strongly influenced by Persian. Still, the (north)west-Iranian or “Median” character of the dialect is clearly evidenced by words such as *pur* “son”, *zenía* “woman”, *zāmā* “son-in-law”, *kúa* “cat”, *esbá* “dog”, *verg* “wolf”, *vāma* “almond”, *hezzeri* “yesterday”, *bar* “door”, *bā’la* “spade”, *xúa* “shovel”, *úa* “water”, *šivi* “shirt”, *kárga* “hen”, *milič* “sparrow”, *esbéza* “louse”, *sía* “apple”, *kāláka* “melon”, *noxia* “pea”, *kiá* “house”, *lengeri* “tray”, *dim* “face”, *ennā* “here”, *kāmin* “which”, *jiši* “what?”, *kownā* “where”, *buaz/vašt* “run away”, *buan/vand* “throw”, *ba-kat* “it fell”, *be/bi* “be”, *babram/-ā* “cry”, *dar-xos/xot* “sleep”, *hānda/hāndard* “stand, stay”, *basse/bessi* “go”, *var-gi/vares gat* “lift!/he lifted”, *hā-de/hā-s da* “give!/he gave”, *var-xošār/var-es xošārd* “press/pressed”, *be-ruš/be-s rut* “sell!/he sold”, *be-vašā/ba-s vešenā* “it burned (intrans.)/he burned (trans.)”.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also M. Moğdam, “Gūyeshā-ye Vafs o Āštīān o Tafreš,” *Irān-kūda* 11, Tehran, 1318 *Yazdegerdī*/1949 (contains a list of Āštīāni words, some phrases, and a few samples of poems in Āštīāni by M. A. Bolbol, but does not attempt an analysis of the dialect).

Ş. Kīā, *Gūyesh-e Āštīān. I. Vāža-nāma*, Tehran, 1335 Š./1956 (a list of Āštīāni words in Persian script).

For the position of Āštīāni among Iranian dialects see [Central Dialects](#).

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