



# BAḲṬĪĀRĪ TRIBE II. THE BAḲṬĪĀRĪ DIALECT

## ii. The Baḳṭiārī Dialect

*Baḳṭiārī*, the dialect and subdialects of the Baḳṭiārs in southwestern Iran (between 31° and 34° north latitudes and 48° and 52° east longitudes), is very closely related to the dialects of the Boir-Aḥmadī, Kohgilūya, and the Mamasanī to the south (population: Baḳṭiārī 570,000, B.-A. 120,000, K. 110,000, M. 90,000). These, together with Lorī to the west and north, constitute the “Perside” southern Zagros group, as opposed to Kurdish dialects in the northern Zagros, with which Baḳṭiārī shares a number of lexical and morphological items and phonological features, e.g., *piā* “man,” *korr* “boy,” *bard* “stone,” *mul* “neck”; the topicalizer and vocative marker *ak(ū)*; the “Zagros-d,” i.e., the intervocalic lenisation, or loss, of *d* (see below). Other typical items, most shared with Fārs dialects, include: *tē* “eye,” *seil* “watching,” *(h)ars* “tear,” *nift* “nose,” *haus* “courtyard,” *tū* “room, house,” *g(y)er* “cliff, rock,” *van/vand* “throw,” *uft/wast* “fall,” *kip/kipist* “fall down.”

*Phonology.* Consonants show some of the typical “Southwest” Iranian changes from Old to New Iranian: 1. initial *\*w* > *b*, *\*waita* > *bēd* “willow;” 2. initial *\*wi/\*wɾ* > *gu*, *\*wi-raica* > *gurūs* “flee,” *\*wɾka* > *gurg* “wolf;” 3. initial *\*y* > *j*, *\*yāmaka* > *jūwa* “shirt, suit;” 4. initial *\*dw* > *d*, *\*dwar* > *der* “door;” 5. *\*k* > *h*, *\*akaina* > *āhan* “iron;” 6. *\*g* > *d*, *\*gāmātar* > *dūwā* “son-in-law;” 7. *\*kw* > *s*, *\*gaukwanta* > *gusind* “sheep;” 8. *\*gw* > *z*, *\*gwan-* > *zuūn/zōn* “tongue;” 9. *\*θr* > *s*,



\*āθrya-āp- > āsiāu “mill.”

Among the main later changes, two are typically Bakṭiārī: 1. intervocalic \**m* > *w*, e.g., *dāmād* > *dūwā* “son-in-law,” *dāman* > *dūwan* “skirt,” *jāma* > *jūwa* “dress, shirt,” *āmad* > *oweid* “came;” and 2. *š* > *s* in the 3rd sing. and plur. personal suffixes –*š*/–*šūn* > –*s*/–*sūn*, and in *īšā* > *īsā* “you” (plur.), and other words, e.g., *angušt* > *angust* “finger.” Other changes are: Initial *x* > *h*, *xār* > *hār* “thorn,” Arabic *xabar* > *hawar* “message.” (Note sporadic *x* > *q* and *q* > *x*: *xurōs* > *qurūs* “rooster,” Arabic *qahr* > *xahr* “anger.”) Initial *xw* > *h* before mid and high vowels, *xwēš* > *hēs* “self, own;” but *xw* > *x* elsewhere, *xwafs* > *xous* “sleep,” *xwar* > *xar* “eat.” Preconsonantal *x* > *h*, *taxl* > *tahl* “bitter,” *tuxm* > *tuhm* > *tōm* “seed,” *f* before *t* > *h*, *raft* > *raht* > *rahd* “went,” *guft* > *guht* > *guhđ* “said” (not in Persian loans like *baft* “weft”), but > *u* before strident, *xwafs* > *xous* “sleep,” Arabic *kafš* > *kouš* “shoe.” Postfricative voiceless stops, mainly *t*, tend to become voiced, *haštād* > *hašđād* “80,” *tariste* > *tarisde* “could;” thus *ft/xt* > *fd/xd* > *hd*, *raft* > *rahd* “went,” *suxt* > *suhđ* “burnt.” Voiced stops, in final position: *b* > *v*, *jēb* > *jēv* “pocket,” *d* is generally lost after long high vowel, *bēđ/bed* “willow,” but *zī* “soon;” intervocalic position, *b* > *w*, *bi-bur* > *buwur* “cut!” *g* > *y*, *tē-gal* > *tī-yel* “eyes,” while *d* > *y* or is lost, *māđiyān* > *māyūn* “mare,” *duxtār* > *duhđār* > *du(w)ar* “daughter, girl.” Geminate *rr/ll* tend to be aspirated > *hr/hl*, \**dar-n* > *darr-* > *dahr* “tear,” \**br-n* > *burr* > *buhr* “break” (intransitive).

The main developments of the vowels are as follows: Long \**ē* generally remains *ē/ě*, indefinite suffix –*ē*, *lē/ěs* “lick,” *xwēš* > *hěš*. (Note *ī* > *ē* in several Arabic loans, *taqsīr* > *tasxēr* “fault.”) Long \**ō* tends to remain unchanged, *durōq* > *durō* “lie,” *kōh* > *kō* “mountain,” but is raised to *ū* before dentals and palatals, *dōst* > *dūst* “friend,” *dōz* > *dūz* “sew.” Bakṭiārī *ū* changed further to *ī* before non-strident dentals, *mōđ* > *mūd* > *mī* “hair,” *zūd* > *zī* “soon,” *xūn* > *hīn* “blood.” Long \**ā* tends to be quite rounded in Bakṭiārī and is raised to *ō* before Bakṭiārī *ī/y*, *bādū* > *bāhū* > *bōhī* “arm,” *xāya* > *hōya* “egg;” pre-nasal *ā* is raised to *ō/ū*, e.g., *xāna* > *hōna* “house,” *šām* > *šōm* “dinner,” especially in frequent suffixes, e.g., *asp-ūn* “horses,” and the 3rd plural suffix –*šōn* > –*sūn*. *Ā* is sporadically changed to *a(h)*, *šāh* > *sah* “black,” *mān* > *mahn* “remain.”

Bakṭiārī *ah*, *ih*, *uh* (from preconsonantal *ā*, *x*, *ft*, and *rr/ll*) tend to be lowered to *ē*, *ē*, *ō*. This change, together with the change *ft/xt* > *hd* and the intervocalic loss of *d*, results in characteristic contracted verb forms, *rahđ-um bī/rē-m bī* “I had gone,” *giriđ-um/girē-m* “I took,” *suhđ-um/sō-m* “I burnt.” Hiatus is avoided by the insertion of *n* before: 1. forms of the substantive verb, *dast-e kē-n-i* “In whose hand is it?” 2. personal suffixes, *dāđ-e-n-um* “He has given to me” (*dāđ-e*



3rd sing. perf.); 3. the direct/indirect object marker *a*, *alī-n-a* “(to) Ali”; 4. the *ē* preceding relative clauses, *tāzī-n-ē ke . . .* “the hunting dog who . . .” Vocalic verb stems insert a *h*-like glide before endings, *bū-h-e/bū-’-e* “that he be.”

*Grammar.* The plural has three markers: inanimate *ā*, human *ūn* and *gal*, animals all three. Of these, *gal* appears to imply the notion of collective set; e.g., *māl-ā* “tents, houses,” *ded-ūn/dedū-yel* “sisters,” *gā-w-ūn/gā-h-ā* “cows,” *guar-gal* “calves.” The specific direct/indirect object is marked by *a*, *har dī gyāgū-n-a kušden* “They killed both brothers,” *daftarī-n-a qam neid* “For D. there is no sorrow.” Indefiniteness is marked by *ē*, *ya kār-ē* “a task.” Topicalizer/endearment *ak*, *yār-ak-um* “my friend,” *dā-k-e pīr-um* “my old mother.” (Note *ak* after pronouns in *be mun-ak ci tovūn* “What strength is there to me?”) Vocative: *ey* and *ak*, *dūst-ey/dūst-ak* “o friend!” (*Ak* is to be distinguished from optional *k* after *ā*, e.g., *pā-m/pā-k-um* “my foot.”) Dependent nominals are connected to their head noun by *i* (often elided after vowel), *gul-i bustūn* “the rose of the fragrant garden.” Frequent prepositions: *wā* “with, to,” *we/bi* “to” (note *we bā-t* “with you”), *wur* “on, in(to),” *sī* “for, to,” *tēy* “before, to,” *ze* “from,” *men(-i)* “in,” *cī* “like.”

The pronouns, personal suffixes, verbal endings, and the present and past of “to be” are shown in [Chart 5](#).

The direct/indirect object forms add (*n*)-*a*. *Yō* is the general referential pronoun, but “this one” when in contrast with *hō* “that one”. *Yō/hō* only occur independently, *yō gul-e bustūn-e u hō šounam-es-e* “This one is the rose of the fragrant garden and that one is its dew,” *dāng ye-n-en* “the complaints are this,” *yō ke . . .* “this one who. . .” *hō ce bīd* “Who was that?” *Ū/ī* occur both independently and before nouns, *ū bard* “that stone,” *ī piā* “this man;” *ī* may occur before the substantive verb and relative clause, *ī-n-um/in-ūn-īm* “Here I am/we are!” *na ī-n-e* “Isn’t it this one?” The plurals of *ī/ū* occur rarely, *ce hesāw-e ze īnūn īxōī* “What reckoning do you want from these?” *ūnūn kē bīd-en* “Who were those people?”

The personal suffixes have the following functions: 1. possessor, *dast-um* “my hand” (the independent possessive is expressed by pronoun + “to be,” *hama kas-emū tu-n-īm* “We all are yours”); 2. direct object, *bexared um/bexare-m* “that he eat me,” *burd es-e* “He has taken it;” 3. indirect object, *šou iyām tu-n-a* “Tonight I come for/to you;” 4. object of prepositions, *sī-t* “for you,” *wur-s* “on it.” Note the use of the direct object function to express existence, *tā zinde-t-e* “As long as you are alive,” *neid-et* “You are not here” (compare colloquial



Persian 3rd sing. *nist-eš* “He isn’t here”). Similarly, the direct object is used, *tā tu-n-a hest* “as long as you are here” (German “Solange es *dich* gibt”).

The verb system is typically West Iranian. In the present “to be” has non-emphatic enclitic forms, as indicated in the table above, distinguished from the emphatic forms based on *hest*, *hed/neid-*, *du mō diyer hedum* “I will be here two more months.” Note the frequent use of *na* separated from the verb, *na hō-n-i* “Isn’t it that one?” The regular verbal paradigm is shown (verb *kun/kerd* “do,” 1st sing.; traditional terms added) in [Chart 6](#).

The aspectual, modal, and negative prefixes are as follows: non-general imperfective aspect *ī*, neg. *n-ī*</em>; present subjunctive, *be/neg. na*</em>; imperative, *be/neg. ma*. The optative suffix is *ā*. In addition, the 3rd sing. of the past may prefix *be*, *be-kard* “he did it.” These precede the directional-locational prefixes *wā*, *wā-b* “become,” *wer*, *wer-ār* “bring forth,” *der*, *der-ār* “bring out:” *be-wer-isde* “he has stood up,” *n-ī-wer-isde* “he was not standing (up).”

As opposed to the progressive/inchoative present, the general present expresses general habitual action, *ze šūmī tā dam-a suv vazan-um zane šūr* “From nightfall to morning my Vazan wanders about.” The optative expresses wishes, *tu-n-a (be-)bīn-a-m* “Oh, may I see you.” Stative forms are distinguished from perfect forms by adding the endings after *bīd*, [*nišeste bī*]-*m* “I was sitting” vs. [*nišest*]-*um bī* “I had sat down.”

The causative suffix is *n/ūn*, *sūz-n* “burn (something),” *pīc-ūn* “twist (something).” The intransitive past ending is *ist*, *buhr-isd* “it broke” vs. *bur-īd* “broke it,” *xam-isd-e* “it is (has) bent over.” (Pseudo-)passive is expressed by the perfect participle ending in *-é + (wā-) b* “become,” *beste bīd-um* “I was tied.” Modal verbs (all followed by the subjunctive) are: *tar/tarisd* “can,” *ke tare z-es berūhe* “Who can go away from her?;” *wā/wāstī* “must,” *amšou wā duhdar-a bedīn bi mu* “Tonight you must give your daughter to me;” *xā(h)/xāst* “want,” *ixōm ruvum bi šahr* “I want to go to the city.”

*Syntax and conjunctions.* 1. *cūn* “because;” 2. *ayer/ar* “if;” general condition with general present, *ar kunī, xarj makun* “If you make it (i.e., a loan), do not spend it;” factual condition with present indicative, *ar har neidī, īfamī* “If you are not an ass, you will understand,” *ar bi xou ībīnum-es, makun-um z-ī xou bēyār* “When I am seeing her in my dream, do not wake me up from that sleep;” pre-condition to other action with past, *ar duhdar-i tu bi fulūn kasūn nadādī, duhdar-et īmīre* “If you do not give your daughter to so-and-so, your



daughter will die;” 3. *tā*, temporal clauses, *tā tari* “as long as you can;” 4. *ki*, temporal clauses, *tu ki rahdī* “when you went,” final clauses, *muntazir bī ki jēv-i hō-n-a buwure* “He was waiting for him to pick his pockets,” object clauses, *dīd um ki neid* “I saw that he was not there;” relative clause, *har ki mandīr-i homsā-s-e, šou be šōm xouse* “Whoever waits for his neighbor, will sleep without dinner,” *tāzī-n-ē ke bi zūr fešnen šekāl, šekāl nīkone* “The hunting dog whom they send to hunt by force will not hunt.”

Sample verses: *ayer mu bāl dāšt-um/ī perīd-um//zi dīn-i parīrū/ī-daunīd-um//zi ī sīna-ispēd/yār-i Fāyiz//bi har qīmat ī-fruhd/ī-xerīd um///* Persian: *agar man bāl dāštam/mīparīdam//az dombāl-e parī-rū/mīdavīdam//az īn sīna-safīd/yār-e Fāyež//be har qeymat mīforūkt/mīkarīdam///* “If I had wings, I would fly. I would run after the fairy-faced girl. From this white-bosomed girl, the beloved of Fāyež, I would buy at whatever price she would sell.”

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