



ČĀL

ČĀL (Šāl), a village in the Qazvīn province, where the Čāli subdialect of Southern Tati is spoken.

1. The village.

Čāl, officially called Šāl, is a village of about 6,000 inhabitants (5,546 according to the 1335 Š./1956 census; Āmār-e ‘Omūmī) situated at 49° 47’ E, 35° 54’ N, 30 km northwest of Būyīn; it is one of several villages in the Rāmand subdistrict (*bolūk, dehestān*) of the Būyīn district (*baḡš*) of Qazvīn (Razmārā, *Farhang* I, p. 123, s.v. Šāl). Rāmand is flat, dry country extending along the base of the Rāmand mountain and is bounded on the north and south by the Daštābī and Zahrā districts respectively. The economy of Čāl is based on the cultivation of cereals and some fruits (esp. apricots, almonds, grapes, watermelons) and on animal husbandry (chiefly sheep and goats). Prolonged periods of drought, such as occurred over several consecutive years in the late 1330s Š./1950s, constitute a recurrent threat. Water supply and water distribution are thus of perennial concern, which not infrequently leads to disputes, sometimes even bloody quarrels and manslaughter. In the late 1330s Š./1950s and early 1340s Š./1960s the village lands had been divided into 17 *bonas* (sections), each consisting of between 40 and 60 *fards* (units), defined as the amount of land that could be ploughed by a single ox. The division of land was reflected in a corresponding division of the population. Each *bona* had a leader, whose office was often hereditary; it was his responsibility to supervise the distribution of water among the plots of land in his section (see Āl-e Aḡmad, pp. 32-36, for a description of the system in neighboring Tati-speaking villages).



The men tilled the land; watered fields and plants; reaped, threshed, winnowed, and stored the harvest; and groomed animals. The women drew water from wells; baked bread; cooked; milked the animals; made cheese, yogurt, and butter; cleaned the houses; and made and dried dung patties for fuel. They also spun wool and knitted socks, plastered the walls of new houses, and watered the animals if their families had no shepherds.

The population of Čāl, like most other Persian villages, followed a “moiety” pattern of affiliation, that is, it was divided into two “parties” (for a general description of the system in the Middle East, see Patai, pp. 177-250). Such a system encourages both cooperation and solidarity within divisions and rivalry and disputes between them. Neither interventions by the police nor the heavy costs of drawn-out court proceedings can dampen the defiant spirit of the Čālis, who have a reputation for being independent and recalcitrant.

The Čālis are all Shi‘ites. The chief cleric in the 1330s Š./1950s and 1340s Š./1960s was Shaikh Moḥammad-Bāqer ‘Āmelī, who was one of my main informants. He was fifty-eight years old when I first met him in 1334 Š./1955, a pious, meticulously clean, modest, and contented man, who lived mostly on income from some animals that he owned and wrote poetry in Persian and Tati under the pen name Bordbār (patient). His long satirical and humorous Tati poem, *Waşlat-e dehqān* (“The Peasant Marriage,” unpublished) contains considerable information on Čāl lore and customs.

Like most Persian villages, Čāl had several quarters (*maḥallas*), but the major division was between Upper and Lower Čāl (locally Gali-kiá and Jarina-ma:la, respectively), with some local variation between the dialects, for instance, Upper Čāli *berbinden* “to cut,” *veškenja* “sparrow,” *nāngun* “pinch” versus Lower Čāli *bervinden*, *meškenja*, and *nāngur*.

2. The dialect.

The dialect of Čāl is described here as a model specimen of the Southern Tati dialects spoken to the southwest of Qazvīn in the Daštābī, Rāmand, and Zahrā districts (see Yarshater, 1962, pp. 241-42; idem, 1969b, pp. 19-20, for other Tati-speaking villages in the region).

Phonology. Čāli has six vowel phonemes: /i, e, ö, a, ā, u/ to which may be added /ē, ō/ of uncertain phonemical status: /ō/ is generally found instead of /ā/ before a nasal, and /ē/ mostly results from the combination of two vowels. In careful



speech /ē/ and /ō/ are realized as diphthongs [e̯i] and [o̯u] but in rapid speech as [e(:)] and [o(:)]. /ö/ is a weakly rounded mid-front vowel [ø]; in loanwords from Persian it replaces [o], as in *mōja* “eyelash,” *Döldöl*, the Prophet’s horse.

The consonants are /p, b, t, d, č, ĵ, k, g, x, x^v, f, v, s, z, š, (ž), h, (ʔ), m, n, l, r, y/. /x^v/ represents a labialized post-velar fricative that appears only before *ā*, as in *x^vāka* “sister” (cf. *xāka* “earth”), but its occurrence is limited (only two other words occur in my fairly extensive notations: *x^vār* “good, well,” and *x^vāh- /x^vāst-* “to ask in marriage”). /ž/ occurs only before *d* in a limited number of words, like *hežda* “eighteen,” *dorožd* “coarse, big,” but, as it does not contrast with /ĵd/ in the available material, it is most probably an allophone of /ĵ/. The glottal stop (ʔ) occurs only in careful speech in imitation of Persian; in loanwords of Persian or Arabic origin /ʔ/ (from ’ or ‘) is replaced by lengthening of the preceding or following sound or by the glide /h/, or it is dropped, as in *allōn* < *al’ān* “now,” *ra:yat*, *rayyat* < *ra’iyat* “peasant,” *ma:lum* < *ma’lūm* “evident,” *nāl* < *na’l* “horseshoe,” *sā(h)at* < *sā’at* “hour.” /q/ is dorso-velar, with allophones ranging from plosive [q] (e.g., when geminated) to fricative [ɣ] (e.g., when intervocalic). /y/ occurs initially, medially, and, less frequently, in final position, as in *yuš* “hot,” *konya* “housewife,” *annay* “now.”

The stress has marginal distinctive function, as in the minimal pairs *lía* “hole” and *liá* “kick” and *vātán* “to say” and *vā’tan* “say!”; normally it is predictable (see Yarshater, 1969b, pp. 57-60).

Morphology. Čāli is one of the more conservative Southern Tati subdialects and has preserved such archaic features characteristic of the modern “North-west” Iranian language group as case and gender distinction, adjectives preceding the noun, and postpositions (see, e.g., Windfuhr, pp. 258-61, LeCoq, passim).

Nouns. The nominal declension is based on a system of two grammatical genders, masculine and feminine; two numbers, singular and plural; and two cases in nouns but three in pronouns. Definition (definite vs. indefinite) is marked only in a definite direct object, which under certain conditions is put in the oblique case: for example, *alaf undi čuārē* “give grass to the sheep!” in contrast to *aláfe undi čuārē* “give the grass to the sheep!” (cf. Yarshater, 1969b, pp. 65ff.; cf. also the use of the ending *-ar*, below). Gender is distinguished in substantives (only in the singular), adjectives, certain pronouns, and some verbal forms. The gender marker in nouns is *nil* (= no ending) for the masculine and unstressed *-a* for the feminine, as in *guar* “(male) calf,” *guára*



“(female) calf” (cf. Yarshater, 1969a, pp. 281-301, for details).

The two cases are distinguished in the masculine singular and in the plural (where gender is not distinguished), but not in the feminine singular (see Table 16).

In the oblique plural *-n* appears only before a vowel. Examples: *bar beškias* “the door broke,” *báre beškenj* “break the door!” *x^vā’kē bešend* “the sisters left,” *čemā x^vākō mabarā* “don’t you carry our sisters!” and *jozōnešō bečind* “they picked cotton pads.”

Nouns in *-á* or *ā’* have their oblique in *-ē* and drop the final vowel before *-ō(n)*: *xöyyá* “(wooden) shovel,” *zōmā’* “son-in-law”; oblique *xoyyē*, *zōmē*; oblique plural *xöyyō*, *zōmō*. Nouns in *-i* do not change in the oblique singular and tend to drop the plural morpheme in the direct case: *sāri barōmenda* “the stars rose.” Nouns in *-u* have their direct plural in *ō*, before which *-u* is elided: *zārō(n)* “children.”

In Čāli and other Rāmandi dialects nouns denoting relatives form the oblique singular with the ending *-(á)r* (see cases): *piá/piár* “father,” *mā’ya/mār* “mother,” *x^vā’ka/x^vāker* “sister,” *téta/tetar* “daughter,” *pur/purar* “son,” *zaniá/zaniár* “wife” (but not the related *teti* “girl,” *purá* “boy,” and *zaniá* “woman”; see Yarshater, 1969b, pp. 88-89), *dāyi/dāyar* “mother’s brother,” *umi/umiar* “father’s brother,” *hivar/hivarar* “husband’s brother,” *hōva/hōvar* “co-wife,” *xōsura/xōsurar* “husband’s father,” *zōmā/zōmār* “son-in-law.” By extension the ending *-(á)r* has spread also to nouns denoting human beings when defined by a preceding genitive or a possessive pronoun or adjective: *je dehe varziar-ar ... bār nārd* “the farmer[s] of this village did not get (lit., “bring”) crops,” *čamā čupunar-ku* “from our shepherd.” Proper names never take *-(a)r*.

The direct case is used for the subject, the vocative, the indefinite direct object, and the singular direct object in present-tense constructions if inanimate and defined by a genitive or pronominal adjective (cf., *čama janjal bār* “bring the threshing machine,” *Hasane zaminbexrin* “buy Ḥasan’s plot!” but *zamine bexrin* “buy the plot!”). The oblique case is used in the following instances: in the genitive, as in *Hasane zamin* “Ḥasan’s plot”; as agent in transitive past-tense constructions (i.e., the logical subject of a past transitive verb), as in *Amir Arsalāne kamar-eš debast* “A. A. fastened the belt,” *čemen piar bāt* “my father said”; as a definite direct object (but see above), including in transitive past-



tense constructions (which shows that the original passive construction of transitive past tenses is no longer felt), for example, *Šāh Ebrāhīm-eš zanar bārd* “Shah E. brought the wife” (for the past-tense constructions in Southern Tati, cf. Yarshater, 1969b, pp. 235ff.); with postpositions, as in *piar-öm ku āvāl-āger* “ask my father!” *Hasane rā āva bār* “bring water for H.” (Yarshater, 1969a, pp. 221-55).

Adjectives. Attributive adjectives generally precede their nouns; they are followed by unstressed *-a* and do not distinguish gender: *kamba kār* “a brief work.” Predicative adjectives take unstressed *-a* in the feminine: *čemen miša apāra nāxeša bia* “my ewe was sick last year,” *em pis bu/ema pisa bia* “this (masc. and fem.) was bad.” The feminine of *i* “one, a” is *ya*.

Pronouns. The personal pronouns distinguish three cases: direct, oblique (also genitive), and agential (used in transitive past-tense constructions), as well as an enclitic form (see Table 17). The enclitic pronouns are used as genitive, direct object, and agent: *piar-i ku* “from your father,” *bediam-eš* “I saw him,” *ay-šō banjand* “they cut him.”

The demonstrative pronouns are *em* “this” and *ā* “that” (identical with the independent third-person personal pronoun). The demonstrative pronouns merge with certain prepositions. Used adjectivally the pronouns do not distinguish gender and number and have only one form for the oblique and agent (see Table 18).

Verbs. The verbal system in Tati dialects is based on two stems (present and past), four moods (imperative, indicative, subjunctive, and optative), two numbers, and three persons. The tenses are formed from the present and past stems, with the addition of verbal prefixes (*be-*, *mi-*) and personal endings. From the present stem are formed the present indicative, imperative, subjunctive, and optative; all other tenses are formed from the past stem. The past tense of transitive verbs follows the so-called “passive” or “ergative” construction, which contains three basic elements: the agent (the logical subject), the verb, and the (logical) direct object (historically grammatical subject). In this construction the agent is in the oblique case and, when a noun, is often resumed by an enclitic pronoun, the function of which is to indicate the person; the (logical) direct object is in the oblique case (for exceptions see above), though in more conservative subdialects (e.g., Eštehardi) it is in the direct case. For example, in the sentence *Hasan-e hasār-eš darund* “H. swept



the yard” *Hasan-e* is the agent in the oblique case, *hasār* the definite direct object in the direct case, *-eš* the enclitic pronoun resuming the agent, and *darund* the verb; in *Šāh Ebrāhīm-eš zanar bārd* “Shah E. brought the wife” *Šāh Ebrahim* is the agent in the oblique case, *zanar* the definite direct object in the oblique case, *-eš* the enclitic pronoun resuming the agent, and *bārd* the verb. The verb does not take personal endings indicating the logical subject, the persons normally being indicated by the enclitic pronouns, which are most often attached to the direct object (e.g., *hökm-eš biardē* “he has given orders”), though they may also be attached to other words, including the verb itself (e.g., *bind-em, bind-i, bind-eš*, “I saw, you saw, he saw”).

In Čāli gender is distinguished in the present of “to be” and in intransitive verbs in the singular of the preterite, the imperfect, the perfect, and the pluperfect (in some Rāmandi dialects the distinction extends even to the third-person singular of the indicative present and the subjunctive; cf. Yarshater, 1969b, pp. 198ff.). The feminine is formed from the masculine by addition of an unstressed *-a*, which, however, is contracted with preceding vowels (usually *e/i + a > ē*) and precedes the personal endings in the first and second persons. Thus from “to be” we have: 1st sing. *yim/yēm* (enclitic *-im/ēm*) “I (fem./masc.) am”; 3rd sing. enclitic *-e/-ē*, e.g., *em daggá x^vār-e* “this (male) goat is good,” *em béza x^vār-ē* “this (female) goat is good”; past 3rd sing. *bu/bía* “he/she was”; from “to run” we have past 1st sing. *bettatim/bettatēm* “I (fem./masc.) ran”; 3rd sing. *bettat/bettata* “he/she ran.”

Five sets of verbal endings are employed. The past-tense endings are identical with the enclitic forms of “to be” (the copula) except in the 3rd sing, of the preterite and the imperfect. In the past tenses formed from the past participle (see Table 19) the endings are contracted with the *-á* of the participle. The conjugation of the copula and the personal endings of regular verbs are set out in Table 19. The independent forms of the copula in the present tense add *y-*, for instance *yim/yēm* “I am” (masc./fem.).

A periphrastic “progressive present” is formed by the infinitive or a verbal noun followed by a locative postposition, *-u* or *-(e)ndu*, and the present of “to be,” examples: *xordan-u-ind* “they are eating” (corresponding to Pers. *dārand mīk^vorand*), *zāymōn-u-ya* “she is in labor, is giving birth,” *vāzi-ndu-ind* “they are playing.”

Čāli is rich in periphrastic past tenses formed from the past participle of the main verb (the past stem plus *-á*) and forms of “to be.” These are the perfect,



with the present of “to be”; the perfect subjunctive, with the subjunctive of “to be” (*bōmía bēm* “that I should have come”); the pluperfect with the preterite of “to be” (*beltajassá bim* “I had run”); the progressive pluperfect, formed from the pluperfect by addition of the prefix *mi* to the main verb or the auxiliary (*miašta bima* or *biašta mibima* “I had been running”); the “distantial” or “quotational” pluperfect, with the perfect of “to be” (*māje nōmia bia bē* “he says he had not come”); the subjunctive pluperfect, with the subjunctive perfect of “to be” (*aga ta nōmia bia bāš* “if you had not come”); and the remote pluperfect, with the pluperfect of “to be” (*xoyyá neškiasa bia bu* “the shovel had not been broken”).

The causative present stem is formed from the simple present stem by adding *-en*, occasionally *-enden*, and the past stem from the present causative stem by adding *-as(s)*: *uxosenassen* “to put to sleep,” *bājenden* “make say! teach!”

The present passive stem is formed by adding *-i* to the present active stem and the past stem from the present passive by adding *-as(s)*: *āyari-/āyarias(s)* “to be opened, to bloom,” *rinji-/rinjias(s)-* “to be poured.”

The past participle is formed from the past stem by addition of *-á*: *uyardá* “kindled”; when the stem is “plain,” that is, without preverbs, *be-* is added: *bepātá* “scattered.” The infinitive is formed from the past participle by adding *-en* to the past stem: *bejunden* “to chew,” *upāten* “to scatter, winnow.”

The verb *go-/gavas* “to want to, to intend, to desire” takes no personal endings; if the subject is a noun it is in the oblique case, if a pronoun in the agent case. If the object is a noun it follows the rules for case and definition given above for transitive past-tense constructions; if it is a pronoun it is in the oblique case. Both may be resumed by enclitic pronouns: *men-i ešta menego* “I also don’t want you.” “Must” is expressed by the invariable form *migō*: *az migo čendu yaröm?* “what [lit. “how”] must I do?”

The following preverbs occur: *be-*, *ā-*, *de-*, *u(n)-*.

Post- and prepositions. Čāli (and other Tati dialects) normally uses postpositions; prepositions are infrequent and appear to be borrowings from Persian. Postpositions are *ku* “from, in,” *u* “from, in, with,” *-(e)ndu* “in, with,” *-(r)ā* “for,” *-ā* “in.” Prepositions are *dā* “until,” *bi* “without,” *be* “to, on, with,” *dar* “in,” *bā* “with,” *barāye* “for.” The *ežāfa* is not used in Čāli except in Persianized constructions.



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[Table 16](#). Case endings.

[Table 17](#). Personal pronouns.

[Table 18](#). Demonstrative pronouns.

[Table 19](#). The copula and personal endings.