



GĪLĀN X. LANGUAGES

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Introduction: linguistic diversity. In Gīlān there are three major Iranian language groups, namely Gīlakī, Rūdbārī, and Ṭālešī, and pockets of two other groups, Tātī and Kurdish. The non-Iranian languages include Azeri Turkish and some speakers of Gypsy (Romany, of Indic origin). Gīlakī is spoken by possibly three million people as a first or second language, and has had a budding literature and fledgling prose publications, including newspapers, but both Gīlakī and Ṭālešī are rapidly losing ground in many cities of Tavāleš due to heavy immigration of people from Azarbaijan.

Dialectology. The five Iranian languages in Gīlān belong to the Northwestern branch of Iranian. Gīlakī, which has two main dialect types, eastern and western, with the Safidrūd River as the general border, is a member of the Caspian subgroup. Tātī and Ṭālešī (Talyshi) together make up the larger dialect chains which together make up the larger Tatic family (not to be confused with Tat-Persian spoken in pockets north of the Baku area). Among these, the two Tātī pockets in Gīlān, Kalāsī and Kabata'ī, have their closest relatives in Upper Tārom in Zanjān province. Tālešī is a dialect chain of three main types, southern, central, and northern; and southern Ṭālešī is closer in type and mutual comprehension to some forms of Tātī than it is to central or northern Ṭālešī. Rūdbārī may originally have been a subgroup of Tatic that has largely adapted structurally to Gīlakī.



In the citations below, Gīl. = common Gīlakī/all dialects; WG and EG = Western and Eastern Gīlakī; Lāh. = Lāhījānī; Gāl./Lang. = Gālešī/Langarūdī as in Pāyanda; Māč. = Māčīānī (unlabeled forms cited below are WG/Raštī; EG refers to Lāhījānī unless otherwise stated).

Diachronic developments. Due to heavy influence from Persian and SW Iranian, the typical NW Iranian have been retained only sporadically: IE *ǵ > Proto-Ir. *dz > z: *zama* “son-in-law, bridegroom, wife’s brother” but SWI *d*, as in Gīl. *dan-* “to know,” *dil* “heart” *diruz* “yesterday.” IE *k_u > *tsv > *sp*: *səbaj* “louse,” but SWI *s*, as in Gīl. *səg* “dog.” IE *tr > Ir. *θr > hr- > r-: *dare* “sickle,” but SWI *s-*, as in Gīl. *se* “three,” *pəsər* “son.” Initial Proto-Ir. *d_u > *b*: Gāl. *bər* “door,” but SWI *d-*, as in WG *dər* “door,” Gīl. *de*, *digər* “else, other.” Ir. -rt > -rd/-rt, as in *purd/t* “bridge” (cf. Pers. *pol*). Ir. -šm > -m in *čum* “eye” besides *čušm*. Retention of initial IE *l in Gāl. *luas* “fox” (cf. Skt. *lopāśá*, Pers. *rūbāh*).

Later changes include: Initial Ir. *fr- > WG: *f-*, EG *h-*, as in the preverb *frā- > WG *fa-*, EG *ha-*, e.g., WG *fa-gift-*, Lang. *ha-git-* “to take from, to buy,” but SWI *fr*, as in Gīl. *furuš-* “to sell,” *fərma-* “to command.” Initial Ir. *xr- > *h-*: *hin-* “to buy,” but SWI *xr-*, as in Gīl. *xurus* “rooster,” *xərəd* “wisdom.” Initial Ir. *w- > *v-* versus SWI *g*, as in WG. *višta* “hungry,” Gāl. *vəšnə* “hungry,” *vuruj-* “to flee,” *vərg* “wolf,” but also WG *guriz-* “to flee,” *gurg* “wolf,” and Gīl. *gul* “flower,” *guzər-* “pass”; Gīl. *v-* versus SWI *b-* as in *vásti* “must,” *var* | *varəst* “to precipitate (rain, snow),” *vəstə* “enough!,” *və-gərd-* “turn, return,” *vini-* “nose” (in *vinizək* “snot”), Lang. *va* “wind,” *vəlg* “leaf,” *vərf* “snow,” Māč. and Gāl. *vi-* “willow,” but also Gīl. *bad* “wind,” and WG *bərg* “leaf,” *bərf* “snow,” *bid* “willow,” *badam* “almond” (note Mid. Ir. *vyāg-* “place” > Gīl. *jiga*, cf., Solaymānī/Mokrī Kurd. *jēga*, South Tātī *yaga*, K̄vānsārī *yaya*). Ir. *ft-, -xt > -(h)t > -(t)t, exemplified in EG past stems: (a) *ft* > *t* in *git-* “took,” *kət-* “fell,” *gut-* “said,” *xot-* “slept,” but SWI *ft*, in WG: *gift-*, *kəft-*, *guft-*; *xuft-*; (b) *xt* > *t*, in *sut* “burned,” *pet* “cooked,” *dut* “sewed,” *sat* “built,” but WG. *soxt-*, *pəxt-*, *doxt-*, *saxt-*; note also Gāl./Lang. *dətər* “daughter.” Initial Ir. *xw > *x*, as in *xab* “sleep,” *xast-* “wanted,” *xand-* “read,” *xiš* “relative” (probably all borrowed words), and *xaxur* “sister.” Ir. *č > *j*, as in *suj-* “to burn,” Māč. *vürüj-*, Gāl. *vuruj*, “to flee,” but SWI *z* as in WG *pəz* “to cook,” *guriz* “to flee”; note alternates *je* ~ *az* “from,” *duj* ~ *duz-* “to sew”; but *č* is retained in WG alternate: *pəč-* and Gāl./Lang.: *puč-* “to cook”).

More recent changes include weakening or loss in intervocalic and final position: Loss of *d* as in Gīl. *mar* “mother,” *per* “father,” Lang. *məar*, *pier*, Gīl. *bərar* “brother,” *du* “smoke,” *zama* “son-in-law.” Loss of *γ*, as in Lang. *duro* “lie,” *du* “buttermilk,” but WG: *doq*, *duroq*.



Other miscellaneous consonant changes: *nd* > *d*, as in WG: *du-xan-*, *du-xad* “call, invite” (cf. Pers. *xān/xānd-*), *də-vəd-* “to close, to tie.” *p* > *b* > *v*, as in *va-vurs-* “ask” (cf. Pers. *pors-*); *va-vixt-*, Lang. *fī-vit* “tied, wrapped,” but *di-pext-* “idem,” *luas* “fox,” *aseyā*, *aseyow*, “mill,” but WG *asiab*, *ruba*; note devoicing in Māč. *juraf* “socks,” *jif* “pocket” vs. WG. *jurab*, *jib*. Ir. *b-* > *v-* in *bərd-* “carry, take away” vs. *fə-vərd-* “swallow,” *va-bin* ~ *va-vin* “to cut,” *də-bəd-* ~ *də-vəd-* “to close, tie.” *r* may be dropped in clusters, as in *kud* “made” < *kurd*, *gift-* “to take” < *grift*, *bin-* “to cut” < *brin-*, *bij-* “to roast, fry” < *brēj-* (cf. Sangesarī *berin-*, *beriz-*; Vafsī *birin-*, *biriz*). Other typical Northwestern Iranian features not found in Gīlakī, such as the retention of initial *y-* vs. SWI *j-*, have been totally lost probably due to heavy borrowing from Southwestern Iranian.

In some cases, the Southwestern Iranian borrowed root has become the primary word in the modern language, but the original Northwestern Iranian equivalent, or a Gīlakī innovation, is found as a doublet in frozen form, often in compounds, e.g., WG: *duz-* “to sew,” but *fuduj kudən* “to darn,” *az* ~ *jə* “from,” *damad*, *zama* “son-in-law, bridegroom.”

Vowels. The distinction of length is lost in both the inherited and borrowed words, and the resulting merger often includes original *majhūl* vowels as well. Thus, long *ī* > *i*, as in *fil* “elephant,” *bil* “spade,” and short *i* > *i*, as in *dil* “heart.” Long *ū* > *u* in *mur* “ant” and short *u* > *u* in *pur* “full,” note *gul* “flower” (< *gul*), *gul* “deceit” (< *gūl*); occasional *u* > *o* in Arabic loan words, as in *sob* “morning,” *roxsət* “permission, leave,” *šoql* “occupation,” *sol* “peace,” but also *buxar* “steam,” *fursət* “opportunity” *hukumət* “government.” Due to heavy influence from Persian, there is considerable variation. Earlier long *ē*, *ō* are retained as mid vowels *e*, *o*, or merge with *i*, *u*; thus *ē* > *e*, as in *der* “late,” *seb* “apple,” *bex* “root,” *tey* “blade,” but > *i* in *tiz* ~ *tij* “sharp,” *bi* “without,” *bivə* “widow.” Similarly *ō* > *o*, as in *doxt-* “sewed,” *soxt-* “burned,” *xob* “good,” *kob-* “to pound,” but > *u* in *dust* “friend,” *ruz* “day,” *mum* “wax,” *zur* “strength.” There are doublets such as *mex* ~ *mix* “nail,” *gor* ~ *gur* “grave,” including alternation in present and past stems, as in *soxt* ~ *suz-* “to burn,” *doxt* ~ *duz-* “to sew,” and contrasts such as *sir* “garlic” vs. *ser* “satiated.” The retention of *o* < *ō* and *o* < *u* may be conditioned by back consonants (*k*, *g*, *x*, *g*, *h*), e.g., present stem *duz-*, but past stem *doxt*, *sob* < *subh*, but it is inconsistent, as in *buxar*, *hukumət*. The diphthong *ow* merges with *o*, as in *nobet* “turn,” *julo* “forward.”

In terms of historical morphology, the most significant features are two tense formants in Eastern Gīlakī (see Table 6a): (1) the present tense formant, *-ən-*, which originates in Indo-European **-ent-*, the formant of the active present



participle. This feature unites Eastern Gilakī with Māzandarānī, the dialects in the Semnān area (including Šahmīrzādī, Sangesarī, Aftarī, Sorḡa'ī, Lāsgerdī, but not Semnānī itself), Northern Tātī, and Zāzākī/Dimlī (q.v.) in eastern Turkey (immigrated from former Deylam abutting on Gilakī-speaking areas). (2) The past conditional formant, *-èn-* (see Table 6a), which parallels the conditional *-èn-* in Gōrānī/Gūrānī (q.v.; found north of Kermānšāh and in the area of Mosul) and in Baluchi past subjunctive *-ēn-* (Rastorgueva, pp. 336-37), is suffixed to the past root and used in irrealis conditional sentences in all three languages. In both of these features, Western Gilakī behaves more like its western and southern neighbors, since the present and imperfect tenses are formed the same way they are in Southern Ṭālešī, in Kolūrī Tātī, and in Rūdbārī.

Phonology. Consonants are similar to Persian, except that uvular *q* has only voiced fricative pronunciation in all positions, e.g., *γurban* [γurbšn] “sacrifice.” The Gilakī vowel system sounds radically different from other Iranian languages and seems quite elusive. Eastern Gilakī vowel phones have never been clarified, and transcription in this article (ə, š, I, U, etc.) is not meant to imply phonemic status. While Arthur Christensen (1930) distinguishes twenty-one vowel phones and Rastorgueva (1971) posits nine phonemes for western Gilakī, there are probably not more than six or seven phonemes: *i, u, e, o, ə, a1* (*a2?*). Russian sources transcribe *a1* and *a2* as *a* and *â* respectively and distinguish between *kari* “you plant” and *kâri* “working (adj.)” or *mašin* “machine, automobile” and *mâlik* “landowner.” The present author has not been able to find any such distinction. The symbol *â* usually represents a low, back, rounded *a*, but this sound only occurs in the heavily Persian-influenced speech of some bilinguals; *a1* and *a2* seem to be pronounced exactly the same in most situations and contrast only marginally. That is, while *a2* always remains constant, *a1* has a wider allophonic distribution, alternating between central [a] and [æ>] (*dâšti* “you had” is often pronounced [dæ>šti], almost identical to Pers. *dæšti* “a field”). Only in cases of potential ambiguity are *a1* and *a2* clearly distinguished, e.g., *gila1n* [gilan] “Gīlān” vs. *gila2n* [gilæn] “mud (pl.)” The pronunciation [æ] is heard more commonly in Lāhījānī. Further confusion is caused by the reflexes of original proto-Ir. **a_j* in Gilakī as *ə* in all positions except initial, where it is also realized as *a*, e.g., *atraf* “sides,” *asban* “horses,” *adəs* “lentil.” The phoneme *ə* alternates between [ə], [e], [e], and final [I]: *xəstə* [xəstI] “tired.” Gilakī *e* and *o* are seen in: *der* “late,” *bihem* “I bought,” *vapəxtəm* “I wrapped (it), wound (it) around,” and *kor* “girl,” *sob* “morning,” and *xob* “good.”



Stress. Stress is mostly syllable-final, but some morphemes, particularly in verb forms, require stress shifts: *xayám* “I want,” *náxayám* “I don’t want,” *bəxástidi* “you/they wanted,” *bəxastá-bid* “you/they had wanted,” *facukəstán-dərimi* “we are climbing,” *duúćəkəstə-bu* “it hadn’t stuck.” More Eastern Gilakī verb forms take initial stress than western Gilakī: EG *pórsənəm* “I ask,” *báporsəm* “that I ask (subjunctive),” *báporsem* “I asked,” *báporse-bum* “I had asked,” *hə́dyenə-bum* “I would have given,” but other stress rules are common to all dialects. Note the following stress contrasts: Gil. *xaná* “legible,” *xána* “the khan (dir. obj.)”; *ruzí* “daily sustenance,” *rúzi* “some day, per day”; *bidári* “wakefulness,” *bidári* “you are awake”; WG *vavursám* “I ask,” *vávursəm* “that I ask”; *bídín* “see!” *bidín* “irreligious”; EG *xánəm* “I want,” *xaná* “lady.”

Noun phrase: Number. One plural, *-an* (Lang. *-ən*, Lah., Gāl. *-on*), for all noun types: *seb-an* “apples,” *kor-an* “girls”; Lang. *kərk/kərkən* “chicken/s”; Lah., Gāl. *kərk/kərkən* “chicken/chickens.” Unstressed suffixed *-i* indicates indefiniteness (singular or plural): *xob duktúri-ə* “He/She is a good doctor,” *xob cizáni aya naha* “There are good things here.”

Object marking. Unstressed *-(y)a/-ra* (*-ra* with *ki* “who” and *či/čə* “what” and with most pronouns in Western Gilakī [see Table 5 for EG pronouns], *-ya* after nouns ending in vowels, *-a* after other nouns) marks both direct and indirect objects: WG *mən dastán-a həsán-a/tə-ra bugúftəm*, EG *mu dastán-ə həsán-ə /tə bútəm* “I told the story (dir. obj.) to Hasan/to you (ind. obj.).” WG *ána ána fadám*, EG *únə únə hádam* “I gave it (dir. obj.) to him (ind. obj.).”

Modifiers. Most possessives and adjectives precede the head noun, with a “reverse- *ežāfa*-like” connector, e.g., noun-noun possessives: WG *məhin-ə zakan* “Mahīn’s children,” *baγ-ə gulan* “garden flowers” (not “flower garden” as in Persian); EG (Lang.) *xərs-ə kutə* “bear cub,” *kərk-ə owlə* “chicken pox”; adjectival modification: WG *pilla-yə zakan* “big children,” *surx-ə gul* “red flower”; EG (Lang.) *sərd-ə aw* “cold water,” *kul-ə caqu* “sharp knife.”

Ežāfa. In addition to modifier + head noun, the Persian *ežāfa* construction with modifiers following the head noun also abound, probably exclusively as borrowings: *rúz-ə təvəllud* “birthday,” *ijazə-yə xuruj* “exit permit,” *kár-ə šəbanə* “night work,” *hərf-ə muft* “worthless talk, nonsense.”

Deixis (words that point to specific items, places, manners). Demonstratives are: (adj.) *a* “this,” *u* “that,” *ha/hu* “this/that very (same)”; (pron.) *an* “this one,” *un* “that one,” (plurals: *ašan, ušan*), *han/hun* “this/that very (same) one”; *uy, uy-*



danā, uy-ta “that (other) one” (pron., adj.) (< *u + i* “one”): *kitāb-a úyta-ya fadám* “I gave the book to that one,” *uy-ta xiaban* “that other street.” Other deictics are: *áya* “here,” *úya* “there,” *háya* “right here,” *húya* “right there,” *ára/úra* “this/that way (direction),” *ato/uto* “so, such a, this/that way, this/that kind of,” *hato/huto* “this/that very way, just like this/that, this/that very kind of.” In Māč. *hin* and *hun* are not intensives as in the other dialects, but the usual demonstratives, cf., words derived from them: *hišon* “they,” *hi(n)tor* “this way,” etc.

Personal pronouns. A special set of possessive pronouns exists preceding the head noun as other possessives do. Generally pronominal suffixes do not occur, but are increasing due to Persian influence: *bə gəmān-əm* “I guess,” *šni šoon/šoón-əš* “his going,” *xúdəš* “himself”; EG: *nevištēnēš sœxt-ə* “It is hard to write (lit: its writing),” *œmu xówemun š’ne* “We are sleepy” (alternate forms with full pronouns probably exist as a more common occurrence). When possessives are used independently, a meaningless *šin* (EG *ši/še*) is required: *mi šin* “mine,” *həsən-ə šin* “Hassan’s,” etc. (see Table 5, above).

Reflexives. Gīlakī has two reflexive forms: *xu* (*xo*) and *xud-* + pronominal suffixes (the latter probably borrowed from Persian). *Xu* only occurs in the third person, with an obligatory pronominal suffix in the plural, i.e., *xušan:xo-ra bide* “he saw himself,” *xu per* “his own father,” but pl. *xušan-a biden, xušan-ə per*. Other persons use the regular personal pronouns, sometimes interchangeably with *xud:-tu be ti per bušói* “you take after your father,” *ti-məra/xudət-ə mərəc bəbər* “take it with you.” *Xud-* (any person) occurs as either a reflexive, Lang. *xúdæšə cakun-vakun bugud* “she gussied herself up,” or as an emphatic, especially when alone: *xúdəm bugúftəm* “I said it myself” (*xu* may also occur here: Lang.: *mu xu buššom* “I went myself”). *Xud-* may also be used with suffixes after the head noun or before the head noun with an *ežāfa* (and no personal suffixes, as in Persian): *həsən xúdeš, xúd-ə həsən* “Hasan himself.”

Adpositions. Gīlakī probably originally had only postpositions, but prepositions borrowed from Persian are increasing. Postpos. *-jə(n), -ja* “from,” *-re* “for,” *durun, mian* “in, within,” *-məra, am(a)ra* “with,” *bija, virja* (EG *værje*) “near (person),” *jir* “under,” *sər, ru* “on,” *jor* “above”; Lg. *muson* “like,” *vas(t)i* (Lg. *visin*) “for, for sake of,” etc. Examples are: *bay-ə ja* “from the garden,” *ti-re* “for you,” WG/EG: *ti mərəa, dāst-ə mərəa* “with you, with the hand,” WG *áb-ə durun/áb-ə mian* “in the water”; *mi bija/mi virja* “near me,” (EG equivalents: *áb-ə mian, mi værje*), Māč. *mi-ji* “from me.” Prepositions are: *az/jə* “from,” *ta* “until, up to,” *bə* “to,” etc. Postpositions and prepositions often alternate: *ti per-jə /az ti*



per “from your father,” or are used slightly differently: EG *áb-ə mian* “in the water”; *mian-ə dārd-ə sār* “in trouble.” Occasionally both occur together: *az ún-ə ja* “from it.” Postpositions occasionally take the objective form of pronouns: *ti-ja* or *tāra-ja*, Ga.: *tārə-ji* “from you.”

Verbs. The major differences in grammar between Western and Eastern Gilakī are found in the verb (see Table 6, Table 6a, and Table 7).

Verb stems. Gilakī generally retains a clear distinction between present and past roots of verbs, with the same types of connections between the two roots as in most other Iranian languages, e.g., Pres. root + *-əst*: *jav/javəst* “chew/chewed”; +*-d/-t*: *man/mand* “stay/stayed,” *kəf/kəft* “fall/fell”; +*-e*: *kəš/kəše* “pull/pulled,” (and all causatives, see below); +*-a*: *is/isa* “stand/stood”; *-n* dropped from Pres. root: *hin/he* “buy/bought”; Pres. root + various changes: *šor/šost* “wash/washed,” *xus/xuft* “sleep/slept,” *guriz/guroxt* “flee/fled” (and many others). Some verbs have alternate past roots formed with different processes: *gərd/gərdəst~gəšt* “go/went around, look/looked for,” *kob/kobəst~koft* “pound/pounded.” A certain number of verb roots have been converted to the invariable element of a compound verb: *xəndə kud-* “to laugh,” *amuj da-* “to teach” (still a simple verb root in Māč. *amuj*), etc.

Preverbs. Preverbs further expand or specify the root lexically and have proliferated in form and use, especially in Western Gilakī: *də-/di-*, *du-*, *fa-/fə-/fi-*, *fu-*, *jə-/ji-*, *ju-*, *va-/vi-*; rare forms: *a-*, *i-*, *u-*, *ca-*, *cu-*, *ta-*. Note the lexical function of preverbs: *kəf-* “to fall,” *va-kəf-* “to attack,” *də-kəf-* “to fall (into),” *jə-kəf-* “to fall down”; *xus-* “to sleep,” *u-xus-* “to attack”; *fu-xus-* “to attack,” *ju-xus-* “to hide”; *cin-* “to pick (fruit), pile up,” *u-cin-* “to gather,” *di-cin-* “to pile up,” *fu-cin-* “to peck”; *gift-* “to take, catch,” *fa-gift-* “to take from, buy,” *jə-gift-* “to wean”; and the latter verb in Lang.: *git-* “to take, catch,” *ha-git-* “to take from, buy,” *vi-git-* “to pick up,” *dš-git-* “to start (raining, snowing),” *va-git-* “to escape (from someone’s clutches).” Other contrasts in Lang.: *kutane* “to pound (generally),” *fu-kutane-* “to pound body against something,” *dš-kutane* “to punch,” and *gərdəst-* “to go around, wander,” *va-gərdəst-* “to turn around (partially), turn back, return,” *ju-gərdəst-* “to snap out (of place),” *də-gərdəst-* “to turn over, turn around (completely).” Eastern Gilakī has fewer forms: *də-*, *u-*, *ha-*, *va-*, *vi-*, rare: *ca-*, *to-*. WG *fa-* is EG *ha-*. Some Western/Eastern Gilakī differences: WG *va-vurs-* “to ask,” *va-vin-* “to cut,” vs. EG: *pors-*, *bin* (but, *va-pors-* “to investigate”) and WG *va-kəft-* “to attack” vs. Lang. *va-kət-* “to fall off one’s feet (from fatigue).” There does not seem to be support for the claim (Rastorgueva, p. 127) that alternate forms of preverbs are determined by the following vowel, e.g.,



WG *fa-*: *fa-da-* “to give,” *fa-cukəst-* “to climb,” *fa-gift-* “to get, buy,” *fa-kəš-* “to pull out”; *fī-*: *fī-caləst-* “to wring,” *fī-biš-* “to roast”; *fu-*: *fu-rad-* “to chase,” *fu-duš* “to milk,” *fu-bost-* “to spill (intrans.),” *fu-cin-* “to peck.”

Negation. Negation is expressed by an obligatorily stressed, prefixed *nV-*, which has the same four alternations as *bV-* (see below): *nə-xayəm* “I don’t want,” *nú-goftəm* “I didn’t say,” *ní-dinəm* “I don’t see,” *n-amo* “he/she didn’t come.” Western Gīlakī present and subjunctive fall together in their negative forms: *dinəm* “I see,” *bídinəm* “that I see,” *nídinəm* “I don’t see, that I not see”; *usanəm* “I pick up,” *úsanəm* “that I pick up,” *uúsanəm* “I don’t pick up, that I not pick up”; *nV-* always follows preverbs, and is then expressed in two variant forms: (1) preverb + *-nV-*, (2) preverb + vowel of preverb repeated, nasalized, and stressed: *dunácəkə*, *duúćəkə* “doesn’t stick,” *dənákəfəm*, *dəkəfəm* “I don’t fall” (latter forms probably best analyzed *du-ún-cəkə*, *də-án-kəfəm*). Eastern Gīlakī has more vowel alternates to the negative but, as mentioned, phonemic status of the vowels is not clear: *nəšənəm* “I don’t go,” *nóxonəm* “I don’t want,” *núdonəstəm* “I didn’t know,” *ne’porsənəm* “I don’t ask.” Here the negative form with preverbs is *-n:-vítəm*, *víntəm* “I picked up/didn’t pick up,” *hádyenəm*, *hándyenəm* “I give/don’t give.”

Non-finite forms. There are two non-finite forms each derived from the present stem (present participle 1, present participle 2) and the past stem (infinitive, past participle). Present participle 1 (present stem + *-əndə*): *bər-əndə* “winner, winning”; present participle 2 (present stem + *-an*): *xəndə kun-an* “laughing.” Infinitive (past stem + *-ən* or *-n* after vowels): WG/EG: *kəft-ən/kət-ən* “to fall,” *amo-n/əməš-n*, “to come,” but monosyllabic stems repeat vowel: *ze-en* “to strike” (EG: *zə-ən*), *šo-on* “to go.” Past participle (*bV-/preverb-* + past stem + *-ə* or \emptyset after vowel): (WG/EG) *bə-kəft-ə/bə-kət-ə* “fallen,” *fa-gift-ə/ha-git-ə* “taken,” *bamo/bemma* “come” (= *b-amo-∅/b-emma-∅*).

Personal endings. There is no distinction in past intransitive and transitive conjugations (as opposed to other NWI; see Table 5, Table 6, and Table 6a). In Western Gīlakī (a) 3rd singular present differs from subjunctive/past; (b) 2nd and 3rd plural are identical; (c) and the final vowel is optional in plural. In Eastern Gīlakī the 3rd person singular subjunctive ending of those present stems that consist of one consonant is *-un*, *-on*: *bú-g-on*, *bí-š-un*, *bú-b-on* “that he/she says, goes, becomes,” e.g., Lang. *va bazar bəšun* “he/she must go to the bazaar.”

Tenses. (a) Present. The present has no marker (\emptyset) in Western Gīlakī and



Gālešī, but a suffixed *-(ə)n-* in most other dialects (see Diachronics, above): WG *gə, dəvədə, xayə*; Gāl. *gue, də-bəsə, xay*; Lāh./Lang. *gŪnə, dāvədənə, xánə* “says, closes, wants.” The sounds *r-* and *n-* generally drop before the *-(ə)n-* suffix: *xor-*, *(vi-)gir-*, *dan-*, *din-* > EG *xónəm, víginəm, dónəm, dínəm*, but WG: *xorám, girám, danám, dinám* “I eat, pick up (take), know, see.”

(b) The tense/aspect marker *bV-* is used in the formation of the common Gilakī subjunctive, imperative, past and perfect tenses (see past participles above) and is omitted when a preverb or the negative particle is present. Three Western Gilakī alternates, *bə, bi-*, and *bu-*, are determined by the vowel of the following syllable and a fourth variant, *b-*, occurs directly before a vowel, e.g., (subj., past) *bídínəm, bídíem* “I should see, I saw,” *búxurəm, buxúrdəm* “I should eat, I ate,” *bášəm, bušóm* “I should go, I went,” *b-ávərəm, b-avárdəm* “I should bring, I brought.” In verbs with no vowel in the present stem (*-š-* “go,” *-g-* “say,” *-b-* “become,” etc.), Western Gilakī *bV-* changes according to the vowel of the ending: *bášəm, bíši, bášə, bíšim, bušóm* (1st-3rd sg. and 1st pl. subjunctive, 1st sg. past of “go”). Western Gilakī *bV-* is stressed in the subjunctive and imperative, and unstressed in the past, and perfect tenses. In Eastern Gilakī *bV-* is stressed in all forms and the alternates are somewhat different, e.g., (subj., past) *bábinəm, bábeəm* “I should cut, I cut,” *bóxorəm, bóxordəm* “I should eat, I ate,” *bázənəm, bázyeəm* “I should strike, I struck.”

(c) Imperfect marker is an unstressed, suffixed *-i* in Western Gilakī, as in *xórdim* “I used to eat,” *káftim* “I used to fall,” *danástid* “You knew,” *gúftid* “They used to say,” but no marker (\emptyset) in Eastern Gilakī, as in *xórdəm, kátəm, donástən, gútən* “I used to eat, fall, know, say.” Since the imperfect 3rd sg. ending is \emptyset in both dialects, the 2nd sg. and 3rd sg. fall together in Western Gilakī, as in *xórdi* “you, he/she used to eat” (< 2nd sg. *xord-i-i*, 3rd sg. *xord-i-∅*), but remain separate in Eastern Gilakī, as in *xórdi*, “you used to eat” (< *xord-∅-i*) vs. *xórd*, “he/she used to eat” (< *xord-∅-∅*). Eastern Gilakī past and imperfect fall together in their negative forms, e.g., *bóxordəm* “I ate,” *xórdəm* “I used to eat,” *nóxordəm* “I didn’t eat (simple or habitual),” as do all verbs with preverbs (affirmative and negative), e.g., *váporsiem/vámporsiem* “I investigated/didn’t investigate” (both forms are simple or habitual).

(d) Progressive (all examples mean “I am/was taking”) has three present/past forms in Western Gilakī: (1) infinitive plus *be4* “be in,” as in *giftán-dərəm/giftán-dubum*, (2) invariable *kəra* (< proto-Ir. **kā/ār-* “work, doing”) preceding a fully conjugated present or imperfect, as in *kəra girám/kəra gíftim*, or (3) both types combined, as in *kəra giftán-dərəm/kəra giftán-dubum*. Eastern



Gīlakī forms only parallel Western Gīlakī types (1) and (3) with: (1) the infinitive (minus final *-n*) plus *be*⁴, as in *gité-dərəm/gité-dəbum* and (3) by an invariable *ka* inserted between the elements of type (1), as in *gite-ká-dərəm/gite-ká-dəbum*.

(e) Future. Western Gīlakī future is formed with the conjugated present of *xastán* “to want” plus the infinitive. The process is reversed in Eastern Gīlakī, in which an invariable present form of *xastán* (devoid of personal ending) is followed by the conjugated subjunctive, e.g., WG *xayəm guftán* “I shall say,” *xayí guftán* “You will say,” etc. versus EG *xan bú-gom*, *xan bégi*, etc.

(f) Perfects. Most dialects of Gīlakī have lost the present perfect, merging most functions with the past: *mən fərda ta a moqe vagərdəstəm* “I will have returned by this time tomorrow” (but see Dialects below). Other perfect tenses are formed with *buon* “be¹,” as in *mən yəblən buguftá-bum* “I had already said it.” Perfect subjunctive forms are *buguftá-bim*, *buguftá-bi*, *buguftá-be*, *buguftá-bim*, *buguftá-bid*, *buguftá-bid*, e.g., *núkune bugúftá-be* “I hope he hasn’t said (anything),” *mən xayəm ta fərda in moye bərəsé-bim* “I want to have arrived by this time tomorrow.”

(g) Past subjunctive and conditionals. Past subjunctive and conditionals exhibit two completely different situations in Western and Eastern Gīlakī. The past subjunctive in Western Gīlakī has coalesced with the perfect subjunctive, except for an optional 3rd sg. *buguftá-bi*, which is interchangeable with *buguftá-be* (see above sec. f). The past subjunctive is used in various present and/or past contrary-to-fact (irrealis) senses both in if-clauses (in the protasis) and other situations: *agər zudtər bamó-bim*, *həsən núšoi* “If I had come sooner, Hasan wouldn’t have left” (present or past situation), *mi dil xasti*, *mi pəsər kučik bu* ¹, *giləki yad bəgiftí-be~ bəgiftí-bi* “I wish (that) when my son was little he had learned (would have learned) Gīlakī” (¹= sustained subordinate clause intonation, implying “when”). In some cases, however, the past subjunctive is interchangeable with the past perfect with no difference in meaning: *vássi zudtər buguftú-bum* (past perf.) /*bugoftí-bim* (past. perf./past subj.) “I should have said something sooner.”

Eastern Gīlakī, while it has no tense like the Western Gīlakī past subjunctive, has instead three additional formal tenses, conditional¹⁻³, used for various expressions of conditionality. The first two are formed by the addition of a conditional marker *-en-* to the past root (hence not the same as the present *-ən-*, but parallel to forms in Gūrānī, Dimli/Zāzākī and Baluchi, qq.v.), and are



distinguished from each other by the presence or absence of the perfective marker, *bV-* (there is no distinction with preverbs): *bóxordenæ-bum* vs. *xórdænæ-bum*. While these two forms sometimes contrast with each other, they are often interchangeable. The three conditionals are used in the following situations: (1) in either clause of present contrary-to-fact sentences (less commonly): *æger mo xassæm, xótènæ-bum* “If I wanted to (right now), I would sleep”; *æger hæva rošèn-æ bona-bu, mu èrè núbom* “If the weather were better (would get better), I wouldn’t be here.” The imperfect tense is most common in both clauses of this type of sentence: *æger mo donæstæm, tæ gúttam* “If I knew (now), I would tell you.” (2) in either clause of past contrary-to-fact sentences (more commonly): *æger mu donæstæm, diruz tæ gÚttænæ-bum* “If I had known, I would have told you yesterday”; *æger tu mš búttænæ-bi, i ettefaqdánkætænæ-bu* (or past perfect: *dánkætæ-bu*) “If you had told me, this would not have happened.” Note the following contrast between imperfect and conditional2 in the apodosis in the following contrary-to-fact situations: *š’ge mu donæstæm, ta gÚttam* “If I knew, I would tell you (present situation),” *æ’ge mu donæstæm, ta gÚttæna bum* “If I had known, I would have told you (past situation).” (3) After *kaški/ey kaš!* “I wish, would that,” conditional2 may be used, but the past perfect is more common (conditional1 may not be used): *kaški/ey kaš mi dævš hæc ruz bóxordenæ-bum/bóxordæ-bum* “I wish I had taken my medicine every day.” (4) Occurring alone in the sense of “should have”: *zudtær gÚttènæ-bi* “You should have said (something) sooner!” (5) In a past subjunctive usage: *be:tær bu tæ búttænæ-bum* or *gÚttænæ-bum* “It would have been better to tell you/It would have been better had I told you.” The third additional tense, conditional3, is simply the past perfect, minus the perfective marker (*bV-*): *xórdæ-bum*. The present author has collected only two examples of this tense, and both were interchangeable with the past perfect, the other two conditional tenses presented in this section and even the imperfect: *š’gš bæxástæ-bum* (protasis), *mo xórdæ-bum, bóxordæ-bum, xórdænæ-bum, bóxordenæ-bum* “If I had wanted (to), I would have eaten it”(four interchangeable forms in the apodosis, the last of which is possible but not common), *bæyÉsti zudtær gÚtti-bi, bÚtti-bi, búttènæ-bi, gÚttènæ-bi, gÚtti* “You should have said (something) sooner” (5 possibilities, “all very acceptable” according the native speaker).

The verbsto be. Gilakī distinguishes six verbs “to be” for combinations of equation, existence, animateness, humanness, containment, and emphasis (cited here in 3rd sg., affirmative forms; EG forms differ only in be5; it is not known if be6 exists in EG): (1) *-ə* (neg: *nýə*), a general, neutral copula(enclitic



in the affirmative), as in *həsən duktur-ə* “Hasan is a doctor,” EG *mi nom irej-I*, “my name is Iraj”; (2) *íssə* (transcribed *isə* in Rastorgueva), used only in the present affirmative and generally in those places the enclitic copula cannot occur: (a) independently, as in Gíl. *íssə?* “Is he?” or (b) stressed, as in Gíl. *həsən duktur íssə* “Hasan is a doctor,” but may also be used in the same places as the copula (no special emphasis), as in *a məyâzə ci məyâzə íssə?* “What kind of store is that (store)?” (Kerimova, Mamedzade, and Rastorgueva, p. 121); (3) *isá* (neg: *né:sa*), location (with human subjects), as in *həsən aya isá*, EG *həsən e isá* “Hasan is here”; (4) *dár-ə* (neg: *dəníyə, dínnə*) “be in” (usually with inanimate subjects, but full distribution is quite complex): *čay yurí-ə durun dár-ə*, EG *čay yurí-ə mien dár-I* “The tea is in the teapot”; (5) *nahá* (neg: *nána*), EG: *hánna* (neg: *nánna*), inanimate existence “there is,” hence only occurring in the 3rd person: *pála nahá búxurim?* “Is there any rice to eat?”; EG *kisey mien pul hæ’nnə?* “Is there any money in the bag?” (6) *mane* occasionally replaces *nahá* (in dependent forms only): *ita cəšmə vásti u yár-ə mian bámanə~nahá-bi* “There must be a spring in that cave”; *isa, nahá,* and *mane* still function as “to stand,” “to put,” and “to stay” respectively, but lose their original senses when used as “to be,” as in *həsən utay-ə xab-ə durun isá* “Hasan is in the bedroom” (even when sitting or sleeping). Note that a contrast in verbs may have implications for the noun in both dialects, as in EG *pəley mien jujš isə* “There is a chick in the rice” vs. *pəley mien jujš dár-ə* “There is chicken in the rice.” The first sentence indicates that the chicken is alive, whereas the second sentence means that it is cooked chicken.

Statives (a past participle used as an adjective with no tense or action implied; the action is completed and its results are in a fixed state, e.g., “a broken glass,” “the glass is broken”). As is the case in some Iranian languages (cf. Sangesarī, Windfuhr and Azami), Vafsī, and others, a special stative form exists sporadically for certain Gílakī verb forms, and examples are not easily uncovered, due to the general tendency to avoid the grammatical situations that require statives. These forms consist of the past participle without the addition of *bV-*. When *bV-* is present, it forms the past participle as part of the perfect tenses that contrast with the stative forms: Stative (no action, a description of a state): *səg xuftá-bu* “The dog was asleep, lying” (Kerimova, Mamedzade, and Rastorgueva, p. 268) vs. past perfect (an action) *səg buxuftá-bu* “The dog had gone to sleep, had lain down.” The stative forms, however, are indistinguishable from the perfect tenses either when the verb root takes a preverb (since preverbs remain in all verb forms) or in the negative forms, e.g., *vavostá bu* “it was open” and “he/she had opened (it)” < *va-v/bostən* “to



open.” The stative may also occur in attributive uses, as in EG *vapitə čušm* “crossed eye (lit: twisted eye).”

Modals. Modals are Gi. *xa/xast* “to want,” WG *tan/tanəst*, EG: *ton/tonəst* “can,” and WG *va/vas(t)i*, EG: *všne~bayæd/bayésti* “must,” WG *ša/šasti*, EG: *šane/?* “must, should,” Gil. *b/bost* “be possible, acceptable (= become),” e.g., WG *xástim bágəmə váli núguftəm* “I wanted to say (something), but I didn’t,” *be tu a kára búkuni?* “Is it possible (i.e., would you mind?) for you to do this (work, favor)?”; EG *mašin všne rošen-æ bon* “The car must start (i.e., turn on).” “Can” occurs in a personal sense either with the subjunctive or with a full infinitive (less commonly, frequency depending on dialect): *kaški tanəstim bášəm/kaški tanəstim šoon* “I wish I could go.” The last three modals listed may also be used impersonally with a full infinitive, e.g., WG *náša guftən*, EG *nášane gutən* “it shouldn’t be said”; WG/EG: *nəva dəs zeen/zəən* “one must not touch it”; *šasti šoon* “one should go (there).” The past forms of both verbs for “must” given here, WG/EG *vas(t)i /bayésti* and *šasti/??*, have essentially lost any sense of tense and are used interchangeably with the present forms. The sense of time is conveyed by the present subjunctive, perfect subjunctive, or past subjunctive of the following verb, e.g., WG *mašin nána, piyadə va/vasi bíšid* “There is no car, you will have to walk”; EG *bayæd/bayésti hæ’dyenæ-bom váli hæ’ndam* “I should have given it, but I didn’t.”

Change of state. The verbs *kudən* “to make, do” and *bostən, boon* “to become” with adjectives form causatives and inchoatives respectively. In both cases an unstressed *-(v)ə* is optionally added between the adjective and the verb. In tenses formed with *bV*, either *-a* or *bV-* is usually eliminated: *mən livən-a púr-a kúdəm, mən livən-a pur bukúdəm* “I filled the glass” and *livan púr-a bo, livan pur bubó* “the glass became full” vs. *livan pur bu* “the glass was full.” The alternate *-va* occurs after *a* (and occasionally elsewhere), as in *sia-va bo(st)* “it turned black,” *sia-va-m-bo(st)* “It didn’t turn black.” When an *-ə* vowel is followed by the *-ə* particle, the former vowel is then lost, as in *kar-ə duruzə > kar-ə duruza-bo(st)* “It turned into a two-day affair.” This particle may also occur with nouns, as in *áb-a bo(st), áb-va-bo(st)* “it turned to water, it melted,” *zən-o šohər-a bóstid* “they became husband and wife.”

Causatives and passives. The causative marker is *-an*, added to the present stem, but the present is marked with the infix *-an-* and the past with the infix *-ane-*: *pər/pərəst* “to fly” > *pəran/pərane* “to make fly” and *gərdan/gərdane* “to make turn.” The passive is formed analytically, as in Persian, but occasionally the suffix *-(v)a*, which is an additional formant to indicate a change of state, is



added to the past participle, as in *buxurdé bubo(st)*, *buxurd-á bo(st)* “it was eaten.”

DIALECTS

There are many subdialects of Gilaki, and, progressing to the east, it gradually blends into Māzandarāni. The intermediate dialects of the area between Tonokābon and Kalārdašt serve as a transition between Gilaki and Māzandarāni. The differences in forms and vocabulary lead to a low mutual intelligibility with either Gilakī or Māzandarānī, and so these dialects should probably be considered a third separate language group of the Caspian area. Some additional Eastern/Western Gilakī differences are the following:

Phonology. A medial *d* is lost in the negatives of two WG verbs: *danám* and *nánəm* “I know” and “I don’t know” (EG *dónəm* and *núdonəm*), and *darám* and *nárəm* “I have” and “I don’t have” (EG *dánəm* and *nódanəm*), but EG *dínəm* and *báyənəm* “I see” and “that I see” (WG *dínəm* and *bídinəm*). Langarudi seems to have lost this medial *d* altogether in the verb *di-*, as in *inə* “he or she sees.” Medial *g* is sometimes lost in eastern Gilaki (e.g., *vítəm*, *bútəm*), though not in western Gilaki (e.g., *fa-gíftəm*, *bugúftəm*) and Gāleši (e.g., *vi-gítəm*, *bəgut*). An original *a*: before a nasal is raised to *o* (e.g., *da:-* > *dónəm* “I know” vs. WG *danám*), but only if the nasal is not part of the stem (e.g., EG *xa-* > *xánəm* “I want” and *dar-* > *danám* “I have”).

Grammar. The main areas where eastern Gilaki differs from western Gilaki concern the verbal system (see Table 6, Table 6a, and Table 7): different formation of present and future tenses and imperfect; three eastern Gilaki conditionals correspond to one western Gilaki past subjunctive; different stress patterns for past and present tense; different plural personal suffixes; and two versus three progressives. A unique negative form of *tonəstən* “can” exists in eastern Gilaki: *mányem* “I can’t” and *mányəssəm* “I couldn’t.” Gāleši, and possibly Langarudi, seem to distinguish a present perfect: Gāl. *bəmurdi* “you died” and *bəkət* “he fell” vs. *bəmurday* “you have died” and *bəkəti* “he has fallen.” The western Gilaki preverb *fa-* corresponds to the eastern Gilaki *ha-*: WG *fa-dám* and EG *há-dam* “I gave.” Even though Āstāna is on the east bank of the Safidrud river only 9 km from Lāhijān, in Āstāna’i the present tense has no marker and if formed as in western Gilaki, while its other conjugations follow the rules of Lāhijāni. Gāleši, or at least the dialect of Deylamān as described by Maḥmūd Pāyanda Langarudi, is located well within the limits of eastern Gilān, yet its present tense has also no marker. In general, however, Gāleši contains



many features of both western and eastern Gilaki.

PERSIAN INFLUENCE ON GILAKI

Since the time depth between southwestern Iranian and northwestern Iranian is greater than that of, for example, English and Swedish within the Germanic languages, Gilaki and Persian differ on almost all grammar points mentioned above. Time depth within western Iranian, however, is not an absolute measure of distance, since northwestern Iranian and south-western Iranian have coexisted within the same cultural zone for millennia, during which Persian has consistently been by far culturally dominant. All Caspian languages contain many lexical items (e.g., *dan*- “to know,” *xast* “to want,” *guft*- “to say,” *tanest* “can”) and certain grammatical features (the loss of the conjugation of transitive verbs and the use of *ra*) that most likely show quite early influence of Persian.

More recently, however, due to both the economic importance of the Caspian and the Gilān’s proximity to Tehran, Gilaki has been under-going a massive, indelible Persian imprint: heavy influx of vocabulary (e.g., Pers. *pəsər*, *duxtər*, *damad*, *negah kudən* have replaced the native *rey*, *kor*, *zama*, *fəndərəstən*), significant syntactic interference (e.g., *ežāfa*), changes in vowel pronunciation, and even morpheme borrowings. One thus gets the erroneous impression that Gilaki is merely a dialect of Persian. Yet it is a mixed language, and is becoming even more mixed. Virtual one-to-one correspondences between Gilaki and Persian are commonplace, and often unavoidable: Gil. *məšyul-ə taayi kudən durust kudən-əšām-u yəzā bid* (Rastorgueva, 1971, p. 140) and Pers. *mašgūl e tahiya kardan dorost kardan e šām o gādā būdand* “they were busy providing and making dinner.”

Not all native elements of Gilaki are lost. Gilaki verbs have been particularly resistant: e.g., WG *u san/sad* “to pick up,” *də gan/gad* “to throw,” *bu-bux/əst* “to rot,” *va vin/ve* “to cut,” *məj/məxt* “to crawl, wander around,” *va məj/məxt* “to look for;” Lang. *də rgen/e* “to hang up,” *varjin/rje* “to slice, mince,” *va viškan/e* “to kindle, light,” *də var/əst* “to pass by,” *fu čurusane* “to hold back tears,” *hə klašt* “to scrape” (WG *fa-kəlašt*), *fu rus/æs* “to scratch”; Lang. *də rayen/e* “to stuff (esp. food),” *gæn/æss* “to bump into”; and Gāl. *jur/æs* “to look for,” *pir/æs* “to look at.” Other elements have also sporadically resisted Persianization: e.g., WG *čičini*, Lang. *mæl(i)jə*, Āstānāī *čušnək* “sparrow;” WG *hæsə*, Gāl./Lang. *isə* “now;” WG *sukule*, EG *təla* “rooster;” Gāl./Lang. *hənde* “again;” Lang. *kæsæni* “each other;” *xuræm* “good;” *lako(y)* “girl;” *rika* “boy;” *burmə*



“weeping.” Note also the long list of features, in which the Gilaki verb system differs from the Persian one. In addition to the examples, quoted above, one can find contrasts such as this: Gīl. *káfš-ə táxt-a in yədər bəsavane, de ná-ša dukudān* (Kerimova, Memedzade, and Rastor-gueva, p. 205) and Pers. *takt e kafš-rā īn qadr sābid, dīgar namišavad pušid* “he or she wore down the soles of his or her shoes so badly that they can no longer be worn.”

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