



GURĀNI

GURĀNI. Gurāni, taking its name from the dialect now restricted to the region northwest of the village of Gahvāra (35 miles west of Kermānšāh), comprises a group of similar North-west Iranian dialects which includes that of Kandula, 25 miles north-north-west of Kermānšāh, and Bājalānī, in the region around Zohāb and Qaṣr-e Šīrīn, with an offshoot among the Šabak, Šārlī, and Bājalān (Bējwān) villages east of the city of Mosul in Iraq. A more archaic variant in many ways is the dialect of the mountainous Hawrāmān (Avromān, q.v.) area along the Iraq-Persia border to the west of Sanandaj. With the exception of Hawrāmī (Avromānī, q.v.), the available information on all these dialects is unfortunately still very limited and inadequate to provide a full description. Gurāni once also attained the status of a literary language (see below). This literary Gurāni *koinē* differs in its morphology to a varying extent from all existing dialects. In particular its nominal inflection is considerably reduced.

The cradle of all Gurāni dialects (as of the closely related Zaza, or Dimlī [q.v.], dialects), was probably in the Caspian provinces. From there their speakers migrated *en bloc* to the southern Zagros at an unknown early date, and the Iraqi group after them to their present positions. The dialects were presumably once much more widely spoken, but many Gurāni-speaking areas were subsequently overrun by Kurdish speakers, leading to a merging of the two languages evident from the differences between the archaic Northern and the Gurāni-influenced Central Kurdish dialects.

Language. Among the phonological features in which Gurāni resembles the older Parthian, so distinguishing it historically from both Kurdish and Persian,



are (1) the preservation of initial *w-, e.g., *wā* “wind,” *wāt-/wāč-* “say,” *warwa* (Gahv. *wafṛ*) “snow,” but Kand. v-: *vā*, *vāt-/vāč-*, *varwa*, against Kurd, *bā*, *bēž-*, *bafr*; (2) the development of initial *hw- > w- in all dialects (but with occasional secondary h- in Bājalānī), *wē-* “self,” *war* “sun,” *warm* “sleep” (cf. Parthian *xwamr*), *wit-/ūs-* “to sleep,” *wāla* “sister,” *wārd-/war-* “eat” (Bāḷ., *hē-/wī-*, *hōr*, *hōrm*, *hut-/ōs-*, but *wāla*, *wārd-/ōr-*): Kurd. *xō-*, *xwar/xōr*, *xawt-/xaw-*, *xušḱ*, *xwārd-/xō-*; (3) the coalescence of initial *y- and *wy- in y-, *yawa* “barley,” Hawr. *yahar* “liver,” *yāga* “place” (Parth. *wyāg*): Kurd. *ḵaw*, *ḵarg*, *ḵē*; (4) initial *dw- > b-, *bara* “door” (Parth. *bar*): Kurd. *dar*. Others are (5) initial *x- > h-, *har* “donkey,” *hāna* “spring”: Kurd. *kar*, *kānī*; (6) *-rd- > -l- in distinctly non-Persian words, Hawr. *wilī* “flower,” Kand. *zil* “heart”: Kurd. *guḷ*, *diḷ*; (7) the retention of -m, also < *-šm, *zamīn* “earth,” *čam* “eye”: Kurd. *zawī*, *čāw*. The picture is, however, confused by the large vocabulary shared by Gurānī, Kurdish, and the neighboring Lorī and Lak(k)ī dialects. The phonological system of all Gurānī dialects is very similar to that of the neighboring Kurdish dialects, sharing with them the distinctions of palatal *l* and velar *ḷ*, tapped *r* and rolled *ṛ*, of the vowels *ō*, *ē* : *ū*, *ī*, and the use of such Arabic phonemes as ‘, *h*, *ṣ* in areas where these are usual. In Gurānī proper and Kandūlaī *ō* and *ū* have been kept distinct by their progression to *ū*, *ū̄* respectively; Hawr. *čō* “wood,” *ṛō* “day,” *ṛūa* “face,” *tūta* “dog”; Gahv. *čū*, *ṛū*, *ṛū̄*, *tūta*.

Most dialects present a distinction of two numbers and two cases (direct and oblique) in the nominal inflection, but only Hawrāmī has preserved a further consistent distinction of two grammatical genders. This manifests itself not only in the singular of the nominal, pronominal, and adjectival declensions, but also in the singular substantive verb. In Kandūlaī only traces of this distinction were still observable at the beginning of this century. The singular oblique morpheme in Kandūlaī and Bāḷa-lānī is -ī, where Hawrāmī has masculine sing. -ī, feminine -ē. Hawrāmī also keeps the case distinction in the common plural, masc. and fem. direct -ī, oblique -ā: in Kandūlaī the plural ending -ān can appear in both cases, while -ī appears only after cardinal numbers. The collective suffix -gal, -yal also serves widely as a plural ending. Most dialects (but not the literary *koinē*) share with the neighboring Kurdish two stressed determinative suffixes, masc. -ak’a, fem. Hawr. -ak’ē, Kand. -ak’ī, and in combination with a demonstrative adjective -’a. The suffix -aka has so close a bond with the noun that it precedes both inflectional endings and possessive suffixes. Singleness and indefiniteness are expressed by a suffix -ī or -īk, Hawr. -ēw, fem. -ēwa: e.g., Hawr. *har*, pl. *h’arē* “ass(es)”; *h’arēw* “an ass,” *harak’a*, pl. *harak’ē* “the ass(es),” *harak’a-m* “my ass,” *harak’ay* / *harak’ay-m* /



harak'ā-m (bāra) “(bring) the ass / my ass / my asses,” *ī har'a* “this ass,” *ā harī'a / harī-m-'a / harā-m-'a (bisāna)* “(buy) that ass / that my ass / those my asses”; *māh'ara*, pl. *māh'arē* “she-ass(es),” *māh'arēwa* “a she-ass,” *māharak'ē* “the she-ass.” An *ežāfa* (q.v.) is found in Haw-rāmī (-ū for the genitive, -ī with epithets) and Kandūlāī (-ī generally): other dialects, like the *koinē*, have -ī. Determined by -*aka* or -*a*, however, the noun phrase forms an open compound, as in the neighboring Kurdish. Attributive adjectives are uninflected except in Hawrāmī, where they concord with the words they qualify. Thus *har(ēw)-ī pīr* “an old ass,” but *har-a-pīrak'a* “the old ass,” *ā harā-pīrak'ē* “those old asses”; *māharēwa-y pīrē* “an old she-ass, *māhara-pīrak'ē* “the old she-ass,” *ā māhara-pīrē-m-'a* “that my old she-ass.” The personal and demonstrative pronouns are, by dialect: Hawr. *min* “I,” *tō* “thou,” *ēd* “he (here),” *ād* “he (there),” *'īna* “this,” *'āna* “that,” *ēm'a* “we,” *šim'a* “you,” *'ēdē*, *'ādē* “they,” *'īnē* “these,” *'ānē* “those” (the third person forms all declining for the feminine singular, and having an oblique in -*išā* in the plural); Bāj. *am'in*, *at'ū*, *ēd / aw*, *ēm'a*, *ešm'a*, *eš'an*; Kand. *am'in*, *tū*, *ā / aw*, *īm'a*, *šum'a*, *īs'an / awš'an* (except for *ā*, all having an obl. in -*ī/-y*).

The verbal system is based on a present and a past stem. From the latter an infinitive is formed with the endings -(a)y, or literary -(a)n. The imperfective and subjunctive particles are *ma-*, Hawr. *mi-*, and *bi-* respectively. After *ma-* there is often reduction of the initial consonants *b*, *d*, *g*; thus Kand. *maw* can mean “I come,” “it becomes” (lit. *mabō*), “he gives” (*madō*), and “it is necessary” (*magō*). The personal endings of present tenses are Hawr. sing. 1 -*ū*, 2 -*ī*, 3 -*ō*, plur. 1 -*mē*, 2 -*dē*, 3 -*ā*; Kand. -*ū*, -*ī*, -*ū*, -*im*, *dī-ān*; but Gahv., -*im*, -*ī*, -*i*, -*ām*, -*a*, -*in*. In the *koinē*, -*m* and -*n* occasionally appear in the first per. sing. -*ū(m/n)*. The preterite endings are Hawr. sing. 1 -*ā(nē)*, 2 -*ī*, 3 -*∅*, plur. 1 -*īmē*, 2 -*īdē*, 3 -*ē*, Kand. -*n*, -*ī*, -*∅*, -*īmī*, -*īdī*, -*ī*. The past tenses of transitive verbs are inflected ergatively, with the agential suffixes -*im*, -*it*, -*iš*, -*mā(n)*, -*tā(n)*, -*šā(n)*. The substantive verb, and auxiliary of the perfect tense, is Hawr. sing. 1 -*anā*, 2 -*anī*, 3 masc. -*ā*, fem. -*ana*, plur. 1 -*anmē*, 2 -*andē*, 3 -*anē*; Kand. -*anān*, -*anī*, -*an*, -*anmī*, -*andī*, -*anī*. Hawrāmī has further tenses, an imperfect formed from the present stem with the “nasal stem” endings -*'ēnē*, -*'ēnī*, -*'ē*, -*'ēnmē*, -*'ēndē*, -*'ēnē*, and a similar conditional tense formed from the past stem. Passive stems are formed with the morphemes -*yā-*, -*ya-*, and causatives with -*nā-*, -*n-*, e.g., *wātay*, *wāč-* “say,” *wāčyāy*, *wāčya-* “be said”; *ešāy*, *eš-* “be painful,” *ešnāy*, *ešn-* “hurt.” Some characteristic verbs are: *āmāy* (lit. *āmān*), *a-* “come,” *bīay*, *b-* “be, become,” *gēlāy*, *gēl-* “wander,” *karday*, *kar-* “do, make,” *kīānāy*, *kīān-* “send,” *lūāy*, *l-* “go,” *midrāy*, *midra-* “stand,” *wārday*, *war-* “eat,” *wītay*, *ūs-* “sleep,”



wīarday, *wīar*- “pass,” *xūāy*, *xū*- “laugh,” *yāwāy*, *yāw*- “reach.” Several verbs are compounded with the pre- and post-verbal adverbs *hur* “up,” *-an’a* “on,” *-ar’a* “down,” *-aw’a* “back, again,” which sometimes modify their meanings unpredictably, e.g., *awa-karday* “open,” *awa-wārday* “drink,” *ana-yāwāy* “understand.” Typical prepositions are *ba* “on, to, etc.,” *čan’ī* “with,” *ja* “from,” *pay* “to, for,” literary *na* “in, to.” These can combine with postpositions, the combinations also building absolute forms, e.g., *ja . . . -ana* > *čana* “in,” *ba . . . -ana* > *pana* “to,” which govern pronominal suffixes appearing earlier in the sentence, e.g., Hawr. *wāčē ba ēma* = *wāčē-mā pana* “he kept saying to us.”

Literature. Under the independent rulers of Ardalān (9th-14th/14th-19th cent.), with their capital latterly at Sanandaj, Gurāni became the vehicle of a considerable corpus of poetry which, until the rise in the last century of a literature in Kurdish, found currency throughout south-east Kurdistan. Gurāni was and remains the first language of the scriptures of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq sect (q.v.) centered around Gahvāra. Prose works, in contrast, are hardly known. The structure of Gurāni verse is very simple and monotonous. It consists almost entirely of stanzas of two rhyming half-verses of ten syllables each, with no regard to the quantity of syllables. There is a regular caesura at the middle of the half-verse, and a syllabic *ežāfa* or the conjunction *ū* “and” which would otherwise fall in this position is elided:

dimā-y ḥamd-i zāt[-i] | jahān-āfarīn

yāwām pay ta’rif[-i] | šā-y kāwar-zamīn

“After praise of the Being who created the world

I have reached a description of the King of the Land of the West.”

Only the first half-verse of lyric poems is often reduced to five syllables:

čirāk ja kaw-dā

nīmašaw āmāy | ja šīrīn kaw-dā

“O light (of my life), in a dream,

At midnight you came in a sweet dream.”

The long esoteric *kalāms* of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq consist mostly of double verses in monorhyme, with the first five-syllable half-verse repeated at the end of the



second:

bīān wa lā-wa

ḡulāmān wa nāz | bīān wa lā-wa

durr-imān nīān | n-ay baḥr ū āwa

binyāmīn āwird | durr-iš na-škāwa

“Let them come to the (sea)side,

Let the servants come with grace to the (sea)side.

We have set the Pearl in this ocean and water.

Benjamin brought (it), he has not broken the Pearl.”

The names of some forty individual poets writing in Gurāni are known, but details of their lives and even dates are for the most part unknown. Perhaps the earliest, Malā Parēšān, author of a *maṭnawī* of more than 500 lines on the Shi‘ite faith, is reported to have been “still alive” in 801/1398-99. Most, however, including Maḥ-zūnī, Shaikh Moṣṭafā Taḳṭī, Kānā-y Qobādī, Yūsof Yāska, and Aḥmad Bag Kōmāsī, lived in the 11th-13th/17th-19th centuries. One of the last to complete a *divān* in Gurāni was Malā ‘Abd-al-Raḥīm (1806-82) of Tāwa-gōz, south of Ḥalabja, known as Ma’dūmī, or more often Mawlawī. Besides the works of such named poets there exist a dozen or more long epic or romantic *maṭnawīs*, nearly all anonymous, on subjects known from Persian literature: *Bījan ū Manīja*, *Ḳuršīd-i Kāwar*, *Ḳusraw ū Šīrīn*, *Laylī ū Maḡnūn*, *Šīrīn ū Farhād*, *Haft-ḳwān i Rustam*, *Sulṭān Jumjuma*, etc. Collections of manuscripts of these works are to be found in the national libraries of Berlin, London, and Paris.

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