



ISFAHAN XXI. PROVINCIAL DIALECTS

ISFAHAN

xxi. PROVINCIAL DIALECTS

Within the boundaries of Isfahan Province, in addition to a large number of Iranian languages and dialects, we also find a small minority of non-Iranian languages. The Iranian languages of Isfahan Province are of three basic types: (1) Northwest Iranian (NWI) dialects belonging to the Central Plateau Dialect (CPD) group, also called Central dialects (q.v.) or Median dialects by different authors, and two different types of Southwest Iranian (SWI) languages: (2) slightly divergent dialects of Persian, but intelligible to the standard language, and (3) large pockets of Lori (q.v.), spoken in the vicinity of Faridan (locally: Fereydan) area and Lori-Baḳtiāri spoken in the arm of Isfahan province reaching directly south past Semirōm. Persian dialects are found in the towns and villages south and west of Isfahan and in the larger cities, such as Najafābād [Āḍari], Šahrežā [Tāki], etc. In addition, the Central dialect varieties originally spoken by the Muslim populations (but preserved, at least until recently, by the Jewish communities) in cities such as Isfahan, Kāšān, Golpāyegān, and Ḳomeyn (the latter, just outside Isfahan province per se) have been replaced by varieties of Persian, in some cases even in recent memory, but in other cases (e.g., Isfahan) this shift came about centuries ago. Without these later shifts to Persian in large, populous areas, the native CPD should be



considered the largest group of Iranian dialects original to the area. The present entry will concentrate on the dialects in the immediate Isfahan area but not without relating them to other CPD of Isfahan Province and to the CPD group as a whole.

Aside from the considerable Armenian presence in the township of Jolfā in the suburbs of Isfahan, the non-Iranian languages of Isfahan Province are spoken mostly in the Faridan area (Armenian: *peria*), west of Isfahan. In 1964, while conducting field work in the Faridan area, Donald Stilo encountered Georgian spoken in some eleven villages and also about equal number of Armenian-speaking villages. Both of these groups, along with the Armenians of Isfahan/Jolfā, were introduced into the area during the reign of Shah ‘Abbās I (r. 1587-1629, q.v.). In the upheavals of the 1970s in Persia, there was an Armenian exodus from much of Faridan, leaving their houses empty and some villages totally depleted. Most left for large cities (undoubtedly to Isfahan, but also those contacted by Stilo in Tehran and Southern California). Some of the Georgians of the area (and probably some of the local Armenians as well) also left for the then-Soviet Union. Since the Georgians of the area were Muslim (Georgian informants of Faridan claimed they were converted to Islam during the Afghan invasion of Persia in the early 18th century), many preferred to remain in the area and are still a presence there today. A brief preliminary investigation conducted in the Faridan area by Turkologists in 2005 (see below) showed that Faridani Georgian, local dialects of Armenian, as well as Lori and Turkic-speaking villages still formed a quite vital presence in the Faridan area. Characteristics of the Georgian and the Turkic dialects will be discussed briefly at the end of this entry.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following are the two-letter abbreviations for place names used in [Figure 1](#) and [Figure 2](#), along with the three- or four-letter abbreviations used for each dialect in the text of this entry (only if actual examples appear): aa Ārān (Ārān.), ab Abyāna (Aby.), ac Ābčuba (Ābču.), ak Anārak (Anār.), an Ardakān (Ardk.), ar Ardestān (Ards.), az Abuzeydābād (Abuz.), bd Bādrud (Bādr.), bg Bidgol (Bidg.), bj Bijagān (Bijg.), dj Delijān (Deli.), ff Fārfān (Fārf.), fz Fariz(h)and (Fari.), gp Golpāyegān, gz Gaz (Gazi), Isfahani Jewish (IsfJ.), jq Jarquya (Jrqu.), jv Ješuqān, jw Jowšaqaṅ (Jowš.), kd Kamandān (Kamd.), ke Keša (Keš.), kf Kafrān/Kafrud (Kafr.), kj Keyjān (Keyj.), Kāšāni Jewish (KāšJ.), kṅ Komeyn, ks Kṅānsār (Kṅān.), ku Kuhpāya/Qohpāya (Kuhp.), kṅz Kōrzuq (Kōrz.), mb Mārbin (Mār.), mh Maḥallāt (Maḥll.), mm Meyma (Meym.), nj Nohuj



(Noh.), nn Nā'in (Nā'in), nr Narāq (Nrāq), ns Nešalj (Neš.), nz Naṭanz (NaṭzC. [Christensen], NaṭzS. [Stilo fieldnotes]), ol 'Olunābād ('Olun.), pk Peykān (Peyk.), qh Qohrud (Qohr.), qi Qehi (Qehi), ql Qalhar (Qalh.), sd Sedeh (Sed.), so Soh (Soi), sz Sagzi (Sagzavi, abbreviated Sagz.), tq Tarq (tarq), tr Tār (Tāri), tu Tudešk, vr Vārān (Vār.), vd Vendāda (Vend.), vn Vānišān (Vāniš.), vr Varzana 1 (NW), vz Varzana 2 (SW; Varz.), yg Yangābād/Nikābād (Yang.), yr Yārānd (Yār.), zf Zefra (Zefr.), zr Zor (Zori). In addition, Yazdi Zoroastrian (Yaz.), often called "Dari," a CPD of the southeast group, is occasionally mentioned in this entry, but it is not within Isfahan Province and is beyond the boundaries of this figure (see also ISFAHAN i. GEOGRAPHY for a more detailed and comprehensive presentation of the Median-speaking villages of Isfahan Province).

HISTORY AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE CENTRAL PLATEAU DIALECT GROUP

The major division in Western Iranian languages is between Northwestern Iranian and Southwestern Iranian. While the modern SWI languages, for instance, Persian, Lori-Baḳtiāri and others, are derived directly from Old Persian through Middle Persian/Pahlavi, NWI groups are thought to be derived from Median, a language known exclusively through indirect attestation. It is not even known whether Median was actually ever a written language. The only attested NWI language from the Middle period of Western Iranian is Parthian, an independent NWI branch that eventually died out and cannot be considered to be the direct ancestor of any of the known modern NWI languages. Thus the actual histories of the various modern NWI languages are completely unknown in any concrete terms since no data is available on any specific ancestor of these languages. Modern NWI is divided into seven major groups: (1) Caspian (Gilaki, Māzandarāni), (2) Tatic (including Tāti and Tāleši), (3) Kurdish (northern, central, southern), (4) Gurāni (Iran-Iraq border area), (5) Zazaki/Dimli (central Turkey), (6) Baluchi, and (7) the Central Plateau dialects, or simply Central dialects (q.v.), a large group to which most of the dialects of Isfahan Province belong. Parthian is sometimes added as an eighth group, but as an extinct language from the Middle Iranian period, it is not quite parallel with the other groups.

The main concentration of CPD covers a wide area on a northwest-to-southeast axis, extending eastward from Delijān in the northwest through Kāšān and Ārān/Bidgol to Anārak in the east, then south to the dialects of the Zoroastrians and Jews of Yazd and surrounding areas, from there back in a northwesterly direction up to Isfahan and on to K̄vānsār, thence through Golpāyegān and



Ḳomeyn to Maḥallāt and again to Delijān. CPD also includes certain more distant outliers (probably the results of later migrations): Sivandi (north of Shiraz), the dialects of the Jews of Kermān, Borujerd, and Hamadān (q.v.), and the somewhat aberrant dialects of the Ḳur area in the southern Dašt-e Kavir (see CENTRAL DIALECTS for more detailed information about the CPD group). The main bulk of CPD is located within Isfahan Province. Pierre Lecoq (1989, p. 313) further divides the CPD group into four subgroups (see Figure 1): (1) northwestern CPD (Maḥallāti, Vanišāni, Ḳvānsāri, etc.), (2) northeastern CPD (Naṭanzi, Kāšāni Jewish, Abyāna’i, Abuzeydābādi, Yārāndi, Meyma’i, etc.), (3) southeastern CPD (the Jewish and Zoroastrian dialects of Yazd and environs, Kermāni Jewish, Nā’ini, Anāraki, Ardakāni, etc.) and (4) southwestern CPD which includes an area extending from Sedeh (< *seh deh*, “three villages”) and Isfahani Jewish (see xix, above) southeast to Peykān, then northeast to Kafrān and Kafrud, northwards through Kuhpāya and ‘Olunābād to Zefra and then back to Gaz (see also Introduction to Isoglosses below for further delineation of the southwest and southeast subgroups of CPD).

Gernot Windfuhr’s classification of CPD (see CENTRAL DIALECTS) into western, northern-central, southern, and eastern groups corresponds to Lecoq’s classification of northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast groups, respectively. Both scholars add a fifth group to include the dialects of the Tafreš area, at least Āštiāni, Āmora’i and Kahaki. Lecoq (1989, p. 313) also adds Vafsi and Alviri-Vidari here, although he is ambivalent about their status, because they also resemble the Tāti dialects, also known as Azeri, that is, pre-Turkic “Old Azeri.” Windfuhr classifies Āštiāni, Āmora’i and Kahaki among the Central dialects as a fifth subgroup, which he calls northwestern. He does not include Vafsi or Alviri-Vidari but, following Stilo (1981), classifies them with the Tāti family. The present author does not include the dialects of the Tafreš area (Tafreši, Āštiāni, Āmora’i) within CPD but rather reflects Lecoq’s ambivalence about their affiliation. While they share a large number of features with both CPD and Tāti, they also exhibit features, especially lexical items, that are highly idiosyncratic and not at all typical of CPD or of Tāti, and their historical development and genetic affiliations are as yet very poorly understood.

The classification and abbreviation of the CPD group as NW, NE, SW, and SE will be used in this entry (see Figure 1, above). The main thrust of the present entry, as mentioned, will be directed toward the SW subgroup of CPD, located in the immediate area of Isfahan and to the east, northeast, and southeast of



the city, but the dialects of other areas of Isfahan Province and a discussion of the relationship of SW to the other CPD subgroups, particularly to the NE group clustered around Kāšān, will also be included.

Explanation of [Figure 1](#): (1) The name Yangābād is listed on most maps as Nikābād. Razmārā (*Farhang X*) gives both names. (2) Eilers (Eilers and Schapka, 1979) has a few notes on a dialect he calls Jarquya. The *Farhang* only lists this name as a *dehestān* that includes Peykān and Yangābād among others. It is not clear to which village in this *dehestān* Eilers' notes refer. A point on the Figure (jq, SW of Isfahan) was arbitrarily chosen to represent both his data and that of Borjiān (see xx above), who uses the name Jarquya to represent the dialects of both Yangābād and its neighboring village, Ḥosaynābād. (3) The name Sedeh is indicative of three separate villages in this area that became unified into one town. The name was then changed to Homāyunšahr in the 1950s and to Komeynišahr after the Islamic Revolution. Moḥammad-Mehdi Esmā'ili (2002) lists a population figure from 1991 of 230,000 for the whole city. The original dialect, while rapidly disappearing, is still spoken in one of the five neighborhoods (*bāvalgun*) of the former village of Varnusfāderān. In the area the dialect is called *velāti* (i.e., *welāyati*); this name also appears in Esmā'ili (2002) and in Ehsan Yarshater's and Ludwig Paul's field notes. (4) Some adjustments to the transcription of place names, as well as of language data throughout this entry, have been made in both Wilhelm Eilers' and Valentin Zhukovskiĭ's transcriptions to compensate for the subphonemic transcription in the former author (see GAZI for further discussion) and the overuse of *o* and *ō* in the latter (e.g., Vonišon, Kafron, etc., where one finds Vānišān, Kafrān in Yarshater's, Krahnke's and others' transcriptions instead).

The Immediate Isfahan area, Isfahan Province, and the Central Plateau dialects. The dialects of the immediate Isfahan area, from Sedeh (present-day Komeynišahr) to approximately 'Olunābād (see the SW subgroup of CPD on [Figure 1](#) (above) as well as the discussion related to composite [Figure 5](#) below) form a rather homogeneous group, but not without the slight range in variation usually found in subdialects extending over a rather large area (for a more detailed discussion of how slight dialect variations generally differ within an extended geographic continuum, see the section entitled "Delineation of the Māzandarāni language zone" under MĀZANDERĀNI.) In order to understand the linguistic position of the dialects of the immediate Isfahan area, one must understand their relationship to the Central Plateau



Dialects, the larger group of which they are a subgroup, as well as the further relationship of the whole Central Plateau group, on a larger plane, to NWI in general and how the latter, in turn, are distinguished from Persian and the SWI group.

THE NORTHWEST IRANIAN NATURE OF CENTRAL PLATEAU DIALECTS

Diachrony. The dialects of the immediate Isfahan area (the SW group on Figure 1) exhibit specific features in the historical development of their sound systems that are shared by most CPD and the latter, in turn, have the typical characteristics of NWI that contrast sharply with SWI, typified by Persian. That is, there are various important sound changes that distinguish NWI, and thus also CPD, from Persian and SWI and even Old Persian, the latter already showing typical SWI characteristics as opposed to Median with typical NWI developments. A fuller discussion of one of the key differences between SWI and NWI, the development of original Proto-Iranian **dz* to **d* in SWI and to **z* in NWI, and the prominent examples of these correspondences as seen in the glosses “know” and “son-in-law,” are found under ISFAHAN xix. JEWISH DIALECTS. Another important gloss demonstrating this correspondence of NWI *z* to SWI *d* is the Isfj. word *ezeri* “yesterday” vs. Persian *diruz* (for details, see [Table 1](#)).

The original NWI form does not appear in Caspian or Northern, Central, or Southern Kurdish, where the initial consonant is *d-* in all cases, borrowed from Persian in the case of the Caspian languages and possibly from another SWI source for Kurdish.

Another typical NWI characteristic, **ts > s*, is very rarely represented in CPD, where it has been almost completely replaced by Persian loanwords such as *ā(h)en* “iron,” *bahār* “spring,” *dah* “ten,” all of which are also found in many other NWI languages and represent the SWI development of Proto-Iranian **ts > h*. Among CPD only three dialects, for example, have preserved the original NWI form of the word “fish” (Av. *masya-*, Parth. *masyag*), as seen in Abuz. *māsā*, Yazdi, Kermāni Jewish *māsi*, where the NWI development of **ts > s* is still retained, while all other CPD, as far as is known, have replaced it with the SWI borrowing *māhi*. Indeed, most NWI have a version of the SWI form and the rare exceptions are, in addition to the CPD forms cited here, Zazaki *māse*, (Tāti) *Ḳo’ini māssā*, (Northern Kurdish) Akre dialect, Farizov: *mesî*, Chyet: *masî* (Central Kurdish), Solaymāniya, (Southern Kurdish) Kermānšahi, (Gurāni) Gahvāra’i *māsi*, Luhoni *māsāwi*.



The most widespread examples of NWI **ts > s* in CPD are the forms *mas* “large” and *kas* “small” (vs. Persian *meh* and *keh*, respectively). *Mas* (and its variants) “large” is found only in the SE and NW subgroups of CPD (and a few other NWI languages); *kas* (in its various forms) “small” is somewhat more widespread. The exact origins of the *keh-kas* pair (small) are somewhat unclear, but it may have been influenced in its formation by the *meh-mas* pair (large). Since their original forms were fairly similar (*mas-/kas-*) and were paired antonyms, they began to mirror each other as rhyming pairs.

LARGE (Av. *masya-*, a comparative form), SMALL (Av. *kasu-*). Within CPD, the NW group generally uses an original comparative form of these roots (but no longer with a comparative meaning), while other CPD areas that have these roots use the plain roots *mas/kas* without *-(s)ar* (see Table 2) These roots show no cognates in Tatic, Caspian, Zazaki, Gurāni, or Northern, Central, and Southern Kurdish and no reflex of *mas* in Baluchi (see Figure 7 for the other forms of “large” in CPD).

**tsw > sp*. Retention of the initial *sp-* cluster is found in Old Iranian in the Median word *spaka* “dog” as well as in a form of Scythian (ultimately borrowed from a variety of the latter into Russian as the word *sobaka*). The simplification of this initial cluster to *s-* within Western Iranian is in fact characteristic of SWI (and probably Kurdish), cf. Old Pers. *saka* and its descendant *sag* in New Pers. and Northern, Central, and Southern Kurdish *sa(g)*.

DOG. The forms with retained *-sp-* found in CPD are: Qohr., Abuz. *espa*; K̄vāns, Vāniš. *esba*, Yaz. *s(e)va*; and Ārān. *e:sbə*. Similar *sp-* forms of this word are found widely in NWI, (N. Tāti) Kalāsuri, Kajali, (Cent. Tāti) Koluri, (Tāleši) Asālemi, Māsāli, Māsula’i, (Semnān area) Semnāni, Biābānaki, Aftari, (Tafreš area) Āštiāni, Kahaki, Āmora’i *esba ~ espa*, (S. Tāti) Čāli and others, Vafsi, Alviri, (Semnān area) Lāsgerdi *asba ~ espe*, (N. Tāleši) Şayyādlari, Jowkandāni *əspa*, (N. Tāti) Harzani *esba*, (Semnān area) Sangesari *əspə*, and with the epenthetic vowel inserted between the first two consonants in (Cent. Tāti) Šāli, Hezārrudi, K̄oini *seba* (N. Tāleši, various dialects), *si-pa ~ sepa*. The only two reflexes of this root that are slightly different are found on the one hand in Kabata’i and Kelāsi *spa* (both Tāromi-type Tāti of the Rudbār area of Gilān) with the unusual initial consonant cluster and on the other hand in Keringāni with the loss of the whole first syllable: *pa ~ pā*, but the latter also has the alternate form *espā*. No representatives are found in the Caspian group (where this word has been replaced by the Pers. form), in Northern, Central, or



Southern Kurdish (where the change of **ts^w* > *s* may be original), or in Zazaki (probably borrowed from Kurmanji).

In a large central area of the CPD zone (see [Figure 2](#)), the original CPD word for “dog” has been replaced by a unique gloss, probably a loanword (< Eastern Iranian?; Krahnke, Isogloss 35): Aby., Fari., Yār., Soi, NatÂzC., Noh. *kuyā*, Anār., Tarq. *kuya*, HamJ., Kuhp., ‘Olun., Keyj., Nāin. *kuye*, Peyk., Fārf., Sagz., Sed., Gazi *kue*, Ards. *küe*, Meym., Jowš., Ābcu., Bādr. *kua*, NațzS. *küwa*, Keš., Sagz. *küva*, Tāri *köva*, Zefr., Varz., Qorz. *kuve*, Kamd., Qehi *ku(v)e*, Isfj. *kuze~kuδe*. Henceforth, since the lines drawn on the various maps below may also encircle dialects for which no information is available (e.g., Ven-dādehi, Tudeški, etc.), a white dot will be placed in the middle of each dialect point that yielded actual information on the given feature presented on the map (or at least for one feature on composite figures).

Various other sound correspondences that now distinguish NWI from SWI were not yet in effect in Old Persian and often not even in older versions of Middle Persian and/or Parthian, but represent later stages of sound changes that developed in these languages and presumably in the undocumented predecessors of other (non-Parthian) NWI groups, such as pre-CPD, for example. Some of these later changes are in fact areal phenomena that affect predominately NWI or SWI but, depending on their locations, may include some languages from both groups. Below is a selective list with some representative examples of these later changes:

Medial **-rz-* typically remains in NWI, but becomes *-l-* in SWI. There are, however, many words with the SWI *-l-* reflex that were borrowed into various NWI languages at different time periods. Thus the original NWI word for “tall, high” (variations on a root more or less like **barz*) is not retained anywhere in CPD, having been replaced by Persian (or some other SWI source) *boland* ~ *belend* throughout. A typical NWI example of retained **-rz-* found sporadically in CPD is represented by the present root of the verb “to let, allow” (sometimes also “to put”), although most CPD dialects have a borrowed form with *-l-* e.g., *(h)el-*. Only six CPD dialects were found with the original NWI *-rz-* form. Other NWI groups have the original form quite commonly. It is also found with additional changes of the initial consonant, or the loss of the *-r-* and/or the lengthening of the vowel in Northern Tāti and Gurāni (see [Table 3](#)). In the Middle Iranian stage, the Parthian form also retains the medial *-rz-*, but we also find a change in the vowel: *hirz-*. No representatives of the NWI form were found in the Caspian group or in Northern, Central or Southern Kurdish.



In CPD, and indeed in most NWI, the original consonant clusters **fr*, **θr*, **xr* generally all merge equally to the same range of consonants: **fr* > *hr*, *r*, *h*, **θr* > *hr*, *r*, *h*, **xr* > *hr*, *r*, *h*. The choice of *hr*, *r*, or *h* depends both on the specific dialect and also on the position of the cluster in the given word. The two clusters **fr*, **xr* have generally remained intact in SWI, whereas **θr* generally becomes *s* in SWI (see GAZI and ISFAHAN, JEWISH DIALECT for a more detailed description of the results of these changes and the alternation of *(h)r*~*h(r)* in those dialects). Typical examples of these three Proto-Iranian clusters in NWI are represented in the words (**fr*) “sell,” “send,” and “down” in the immediate Isfahan area (see Figure 5 and accompanying discussion below), (**θr*) “son, boy” “mill,” (**xr*) “to buy,” “wheel,” “red” (see Tables 4-8). Only some of these examples can be demonstrated here.

Table 3. The Verb “Let, Allow.”

Table 4. The Verb “Sell.”

Table 5. The Verb “Send.”

Table 6. The Words “Boy” and “Son.”

Table 7. The Word “Mill.”

Table 8. The Verb “Buy.”

SELL. In the immediate Isfahan area (and HamJ., which shares a component of its origins with IsfJ.), both “sell” and “send” are generally represented by initial *f(e)r*-, indicating that these words are probably a borrowing from some SWI source, but probably not Persian because of the discrepancy in the vowel of the root, for instance, “sell”: Gazi, IsfJ., Kōrz., Qehi, Sagz., Kamd., Zefr. *ferāš-/ferāt*, Sed., Kafr., Jrqu. *f(e)rāš-/f(e)rāt*, ‘Olun. *frāš-/ferāt*, HamJ., Kuhp. *fārāš-/fārāt*, Peyk. *p(e)rāš-/perāt* (Table 4, above).

SEND. The verb “send” in many CPD and some other NWI languages has merged with “to deliver” (i.e., the causative of “to arrive”). This is due to the sound change of **fr* > *(h)r* ~ *h(r)* leaving the reflex *r*- in initial position in “send” in some dialects yielding a form that was probably very close to “deliver,” for instance, something like pre-CPD **resenā* ~ *resnā* “deliver” and **restā* “send” (< **frestā(d)*), which then merged in some dialects. The similarity in the semantics of “send” and “deliver” was undoubtedly also a factor contributing to the merger. This merger did not, however, take place



throughout CPD as we see in those dialects that retain the initial *h-* (Fari., Tāri, NaṭzC.), including the ones that have lost the initial *h-* but retained an extra syllable with an initial *e-* (Ards.), or that have even strengthened it to *x-* as in Keša'i, as well as in (Gilaki) Langerudi, and various Tāti dialects (Table 5, above).

BOY “SON.” *θr > (h)r ~ h(r). Most CPD have a word *pür* ~ *pir* (Av. *puθra-*, OPer. *puça-*, cf. Skt. *putrá*) that in many dialects means both “boy” and “son.” In some cases “son” is distinguished from “boy” by the addition of a final vowel (e.g., *püre*; see Table 6, above). In most cases, however, available sources do not inform us whether this difference between “boy” and “son” is present or absent in a given dialect, since the Persian translation does not specify this distinction. Thus in some dialects only *püre* is given while in others only *pür*. Many may genuinely not have the distinction: boy, son (Avestan: *puθra-*, Old Persian: *puça-*, cf. Skt. *putrá*): Only six CPD dialects (as far as is known) distinguish “boy” from “son”: Deli. *pür* vs. *pürə*, Aby. *pür* vs. *pūra*, Gazi (Yarshater field notes) *püre* vs. *pür*, Abuz. *pür* vs. *pürja*, Färf. *poré* vs. *poreci*, Yaz. *porog* vs. *por* ~ *pórike*, respectively. Maḥll., Vāniš., Meym., Sed., Vār., Neš., Qohr., Keš. *pür*, Zori *püre*, Bijg., Zori, Fari., Yār. *pūra*, KāšJ., Zefr., Anār., Nraq., NaṭzC. *pur*, Kafr., *pure*, Kṽāns., Ārān., HamJ., Isfj. *pir*, Jowš. *pür* ~ *pur*, NaṭzS. *pohr*, Soi *pü'ra*, Yaz., Kermāni Jewish, Ards., Nāin. *por*, Sagz., *pora*, 'Olun., Kuhp., Peyk. *poré*. This root, while it appears in Parth. *puhr*, is not well represented in NWI outside CPD. It appears only in Southern Tāti (Table 6), where most of the dialects distinguish “boy” and “son” (but not in Vafsi or other forms of Tāti) and the dialects of both the Semnān and Tafreš areas (in both of the latter areas it exclusively means “son”). In the following areas, this root only means “son”: (S. Tāti) Alviri *pür*, Vidari *pur*, (Tafreš area) Āštiāni, Tafreši, Kahaki *pur*, Āmora'i *pür* ~ *pur*, (Semnān area) Sangesari, Sorḳa'i *pür*, Aftari *pur*, Lāsgerdi *pur*, *pür*, Biābānaki *pör*, Semnāni *pir*. Elsewhere it has been replaced either by the Persian word *pesar* or by completely different forms, for instance, Vafsi *leyla* “boy” vs. *lāza* “son.”

Another characteristic sound correspondence between NWI and SWI is the reflex of original Proto-Iranian initial *v- ~ *w-, which remains as *v-* in NWI but becomes *b-* in SWI. This is a later development in SWI that was not characteristic of Old Persian. The typical cognates that represent this correspondence are “wind” and “willow” (but see also additional examples of NWI *v-* vs. SWI *b-* with the words “snow,” “rain,” “almond,” “sift,” “widow,” “twenty,” “child,” “lamb,” “nose,” “woods,” “must,” “enough,” under the



various entries for individual NWI languages, dialects or groups).

WIND (Av. *vāta-*, New Pers. *bād*). CPD: Zefr., Kafr., Gazi, Sed., Nā'in., Anār., Varz. *vā*; Fari., Yār., NatzC., Keš., Tāri *vāy*. Beyond CPD, we find this word with initial *v-* in: (C. Tāti) Koluri, Koini, (S. Tāti) Čāli, Alviri, Vafsi, (Tāleši) Jowkandāni, Asālemi, Māsāli, Māsula'i, (Caspian /Māzandarāni) Sāravi, Šahmirzādi, (Semnān area) Semnāni, Aftari, Sorḡa'i, Lāsgerdi, (Lakki) Lakki, (Zazaki/Dimli) Zazaki, (Gurāni) Kandula'i, Tavela *vā*; (Tāleši) Lerik, Anbarān *vo*; (N. Tāti) Keringāni *vu* ~ *voy*; (Semnān area) Sangesari *ve*. Northern and Central Kurdish also underwent the change of **v* ~ *w* > *b-*, and have an initial *b-* in these roots: (N. Kurd.) Kurmanji, (C. Kurd.) Solaymāniya *bā* as does SWI: Pers. *bād*. Within Southern Kurdish, however, Bijāri and Kalhori do have the form *wā*. Certain CPD and other NWI forms are more conservative in that they preserve a final consonant (cf. Pers. *bād*, as also with “son-in-law” above) that is lost in most CPD and other NWI forms: (CPD) Vāniš., Qohr., Jowš., Abuz., Yaz. *vād*, Isfj. *vāδ* ~ *vāz*, (N. Tāti) Harzani *vōr*, Kalāsuri *vur*, (Tafreš area) Āštiāni *vād*, and also the Baluchi form *gwāt* (see the next section).

WILLOW (Av. *vaēti-*). Most CPD and other NWI languages have a form *vi-(dār)* ~ *via-(dār)* ~ *vid* for the word “willow,” corresponding to Pers./SWI *bid*, (see Table 9).

**v-* > *g*: In a development related to the previous one, initial **v-* ~ **w-* remains as *v-* in most NWI languages but has changed to *g-* in SWI. The latter sound change is an areal feature that includes, in addition to Persian, most languages located in eastern Iran, such as Kuri, Baškardi, Bandari, Fini and Baluchi, where the sound change is the most robust and includes more instances of **v-* > *g-* than those found in Persian (cf. the Baluchi forms *gist* “twenty,” *gēš* “more,” *gēt* “willow,” or *gwāt* “wind”; Kuri *gārun* “rain,” *gāzi* “game,” *gin-* “see (pres.),” *galg* “leaf,” *gištar* “more”; Bandari *gin-* “see (pres.),” for all of which Persian has undergone the change of **v-* > *b-*, presented in the previous section). This is a later development in these languages and was not yet in effect in the Old Iranian period (and thus would not have been a feature separating Old Persian from Avestan or Median). This retention of original **v-* in NWI is typified by the words “to pass” and “wolf,” while the New Persian form *gorg* also is derived from this same root via the **v-* > *g-* sound change (or more fully, **v-* + vowel > *gu-*, which was already in effect in the Middle Iranian period; cf. Middle Persian and Parthian *gurg*). See also additional examples of NWI *v-* vs. SWI (and Kuri, Baluchi, etc.) *g-* with the words “hungry,” “flee,” “boar,” under the entries for individual NWI languages).



TO PASS (intransitive). It derives from Proto-Iranian, Avestan, and Old Persian *vi-tar-* “to cross over, go across” (cf. Sanskrit *tṛ-*, pres. *táratī*, lacking the preverb *vi-*), which underwent the following sequence of developments for NWI, with various modern languages stopping at different stages in the process, as indicated: *vi-tar-* > *vi-dar-* > *vi-yar-* > *vi-ar-* > *ver-* (others, e.g., IsfJ.: *vi-tar-* > *vi-dar-* > *vi-ḡar-* > *vi-zar-*). On the other hand, Persian and most forms of SWI went through the following stages: *vi-tar-* > *vi-dar-* > *vi-ḡar-* > *gu-ḡar-* > *go-zar* (but note that while contemporary Persian stands at the last stage given here, the written form, with an Arabic *ḡāl*, was codified at the previous stage, *gu-ḡar-*). We find the forms of the verb stem “to pass” in contemporary CPD (see Table 10), each of which may be compared to one of the stages in the derivation from the Proto-Iranian stem for this word given above. Most Caspian dialects have adopted the Persian word, but Rašti (and possibly other dialects) still has the stem *də-var-/ də-varəst*. While Kurdish dialects have not undergone the **vi > go-* change, they do show instead the typical Kurdish change of **v- > b-* (see wind and Table 7) for the root “pass”: (N. Kurdish) Standard Soviet Kurmanji: *buhur/buhurī ~ bihur/bihuri* —, Chyet: *buhur/ buhurt*, Akre *bir/biri* —, Zakho *būr/būri* —; (C. Kurdish) Solaymāniya *būr/būrd*, Sorani *bwēr~bōr/bward*.

WOLF (cf. Sk. *vṛka-*, Proto-Iran. **vṛka-*, Av. *vəhrka-*). The majority of CPD dialects have borrowed the Persian word *gorg* and have lost their original *varg-* type form of this word. Within CPD, only Jowšaqāni, Farizandi, Yārāndi, Abyāna’i, Ardsestāni, Tāri, and Keša’i have retained *varg*; Zefra’i has *verg* and Qohrudi has *var* (but Lecoq, 2002, gives Qohr. *varg*). All in all, the form is well represented in five of the seven modern branches of NWI: (C. Tāti) Koluri, Kelāsi, Kabata’i, Koini, Kajali, (S. Tāti) Tākestāni, Sagzābādi, Dānesfahāni, Vafsi, (N. Tāleši) Anbarāni (C. Tāleši) Asālemi, (S. Tāleši) Tāleš-Dulābi, Māsāli and Māsula’i; (Semnān area) Aftari, Semnāni, (Gurāni) Tavela *varg*. Only slightly different is the form *verg* of (S. Tāti) Razajerdi, (Tafreš area) Āštiāni, (Caspian) Tonkāboni, Kelārdašti, Sāravi, Ura’i, Kaṭirābādi, Shahmirzādi, (Semnān area) Biābānaki, Mo’menābādi, but (S. Tāti) Čāli has made this word into a feminine noun: *vārga*. Other dialects of the Semnān area have: Sangesari *vark*, Sorka’i *vorg*. Within Gurāni we find Luhoni and Bājalāni *warg*, and within Kurdish, Mokri has the form *wurc*. Within the Caspian group, only the Gāleši and Māčiāni dialects of Gilaki, as far as is known, have preserved the original NWI word with *vərg*, whereas all other dialects have replaced it with the Persian variant. With a lengthening and/or other change of the vowel, we find (N. Tāti) Harzani *vorg*, Keringāni *varg ~ vārg ~ vorg*, Kalāsuri has *vārg ~ vorg*, (C. Tāti)



the so-called Marāḡa’i dialects of the Alamut area (Mušqini, Garmārudi, Dikini) with *vārg*, (N. Taleši) Archivan *vāg* and Astara with *vāk* ~ *vag*.

*y- remains as y- (vs. SWI j-), as is seen in the Isfahani Jewish forms *yuš/-ā* “boil,” *yuz/yuss-* “find,” *iye* “barley.” This last word is also well represented throughout CPD as well as in most NWI groups.

BARLEY (Av. *yava-*). CPD: Deli., Bijg., Qalh., Nrāq., Meym., Qohr., Ards., Isfj., Olun., Zefr., Nāin. *ye*, Soi, Keš., Anār. *ya*, NaṭzS. *yah*. In some cases in CPD, an initial *i-* (as in Isfj.), and occasionally even an extra *hi-*, is added creating an extra syllable: Jowš., Sed., Gazi *ie*, Abuz., Fār., Jrqu., Peyk. *hie*. Beyond CPD in other NWI we find similar forms in (N. Tāleši) Āstārā, (N. Tāti) Harzani, (C. Tāti) Koluri, Gandomābi, (S. Tāti) Vafsi *yav*, while most other Southern Tāti dialects share the development represented by Kīārāji *yow*. Gurāni has the forms: Tavela *yav*, Bājalāni *yaw*, Luhoni *yā’wa*. No representatives of the original NWI form of this word are found in Caspian or Northern, Central, or Southern Kurdish.

Important Lexical Items. Certain lexical items from CPD, some of which are shared with other NWI while others are unique to CPD, to give only a brief list, include: ladder (Table 11), game, buy (Table 8), cut, lose, lost, break, say (see Table 13, Table 14, Table 15).

LADDER is represented by a similar gloss in most NWI, but there are no representatives in Zazaki, Gurāni, or North, Central, or South Kurdish (Table 11).

GAME is clearly attested in Middle Persian (*kādag*) and Sogdian (*kātē*), but it is not found in modern SWI. It, however, still exists in most NWI dialects (see Table 12).

The two verbs, “buy” and “cut,” retain a final *-n* in their present roots in NWI: buy (see above under *xr; see also Table 13 and Table 14).

In addition to the previous section, where we also find special lexical roots in CPD that are typical of other NWI (but not of SWI), the following is a small representative list of lexical items that are typical of CPD as a group but are either not found in other NWI groups or found there only sporadically. Some of these examples represent lexemes that are particular to CPD. One such case is the lexical item “lost” in the compound verbs “to lose, get lost.” CPD has a range of variants: *mak* ~ *max* ~ *mah* ~ *māh*. The only dialect beyond CPD to



have this word is Vafsi (*mākk-om-ā kard* “I lost (it)”), where it is clearly a borrowing from CPD. Given the close proximity of Vafsi to the CPD group, especially northwestern CPD, Vafsi has an unusually heavy presence of CPD lexical borrowings (see Table 14)

An interesting lexical item that is found throughout CPD and seems to be shared only with Gurāni and no other modern groups of NWI is the root “to break” (Table 15).

Another verb that is absent from SWI is *vāj- ~ vāž-/vāt* “to say” in NWI. This distinction goes all the way back to the old Iranian stage, where Old Persian is also missing this verb root, but has instead *gaub-*, the source for Modern Persian *gu-/goft*, vs. Av. *vačah-* (Skt. *vac-*) The New Persian word *vāža* “word” is not an original SWI form but a loanword into Persian from Parthian (as is typical of Persian words with the sound *ž*). While Persian does have the SWI form *āvāz*, it is not a verb form.

The root *vāj-/vāt* of the verb “say” is typical for all NWI (except Caspian). Some CPD dialects retain the *-j-* of the present root in all forms of the present system (present, imperative, subjunctive, optative). A significant group in the SW areas of CPD (the Sedeh-Peykān-Ardestān triangle), however, drop the *-j-* of this root throughout the present system (see Table 16). The loss of this *-j-* is in fact one of the minor isoglosses in a rather large complex of isoglosses (also called an “isogloss bundle”) that set the immediate Isfahan area apart from the rest of CPD (see also Figure 5). Dialects of the transitional areas that have forms both with and without the *-j-* (e.g., Abyāna’i, Soi, Keša’i) are discussed below under *Buffer zone phenomena*.

Introduction to isoglosses. While conducting fieldwork on the dialects of the Isfahan area in 1969, Ehsan Yarshater was told by his informant from ‘Olunābād (90 km east of Isfahan, north of the Isfahan-Nā’in road) that his dialect was also fairly close to the dialects of Sagzi, Kuhpāya and certain other points along this road and that all these dialects are what the people of the area called “*bure-beše*” dialects. Another informant from the village of Fārfān, east-southeast of Isfahan and south of Kuh-pāya, named other villages in his area whose dialects he also called “*bure-beše*” along with his own. In these dialects *bure* means “come!” and *beše* means “go!” and these are typical words that stand in stark contrast to both standard Persian and to the southeastern subgroup of CPD in the area of the Nā’in-Anārak-Yazd triangle. Except for the dialects within the latter triangle, *bure-beše*-type forms are also found in all



other subgroups of CPD (Vāniš. *bure-baš*; Bādr. *bure-baše*; Jowš. *huri-beše*; Kāns. *búre-baš*). In fact, the words *bure* “come!” and *beše* “go!” are common throughout NWI languages, for instance, Āštiāni, Kahaki, Āmora’i *búre*, Vafsi *búri*, Shahrizādi *búru*, Kalārdašti (Rudbārak district of Māzandarān) *bóro* “come!” (NB: not “go!”) and others.

The informant from ‘Olunābād then explained that, along the road from Isfahan heading eastward toward Nā’in, the “*bure-beše*“-type dialects like his own stop at about the villages of Tudešk and Mešgenān (loc. Moš-kenān), which, according to him, are not of the “*bure-beše*” type but resemble much more the dialect of Nā’in. The words for “come!” and “go!” in the latter area are, for instance, Na’in. *yur* (Anār. *iyur*) and *ušo* respectively. An informant of Krahnke’s from the village of Ābčuba—also within the latter area, just to the east of the “Olunābād-Tudešk dividing line—told him in the early 1970s that his dialect was of the “*osme-sigā*” type rather than of the “*bure-beše*” type. In these dialects *osme* and *sigā* mean “now” and “thus, this way,” respectively. What the speakers of these dialects are doing when they use the terms such as “*bure-beše*” and “*osme-sigā*” to refer to their dialects and others that they can understand vs. the dialects of another group that are not so easy to understand is using a layman’s concept of isoglosses to classify their languages.

An isogloss is a certain characteristic feature, whether a lexical item such as *bure*, *beše*, *yur*, *ušo*, *osme*, *sigā*, etc. or a grammatical pattern (e.g., the formation of the present tense, a certain type of noun plural formation), that is in use in the dialects/languages located within a certain geographic area. It is usually understood as a way of representing the distribution of a certain feature on a map in the form of a line drawn around the area where the given pattern of interest is shared by all the languages or dialects found there. Outside the line, that is, beyond the isogloss, the given pattern is no longer in effect and another isogloss or other isoglosses pick up. The lexical isogloss introduced above in Figure 2 shows the distribution of the *kuya*-type word for “dog” found in a large number of dialects in the CPD area (black dots outside the encircled zone indicate that either the information is known and the response is negative or that no information is available on that dialect). Thus if we plot the occurrence of *bure*, *beše*, *yur*, *ušo*, *osme*, and *sigā* on a map and draw a line around the zones where each of these words occur, the result will be six different isoglosses. Actually, however, these lexical items would turn into more than one isogloss each on a map since, for example, the *osme*-type word is not just opposed to one other word for “now” outside the isogloss, but



to three other words: a *zonun*-type word, a *zogun*-type word, and a much more widespread *hat(on)*-type word extending beyond the map to Vafsi and Alviri, resulting in four isoglosses just for the semantic concept of “now” (see [Figure 3](#)). Karl Krahnke (pp. 219-22) classifies the *zonun*- and *zogun*-types as one isogloss (*zo*-type, Krahnke Isogloss 36), although it is more convenient to consider them as two separate but similar isoglosses. Likewise, the words meaning “this way, like this, thus” appear in three different forms in the area (see [Figure 4](#)), which means that in plotting only “now” and “this way, thus” onto maps, we come up with at least seven different isoglosses.

Krahnke draws thirty-nine isogloss maps, each covering one linguistic feature represented by more than one isogloss and supplies the data along with a discussion of the comparative and historical background on each of them. The present article provides additional new isoglosses, concentrating on Isfahan province and, within that province, on the immediate Isfahan area (see also [CENTRAL DIALECTS](#)).

Isogloss bundles. Each isogloss line on a map may seem to differ in a completely random fashion from the next. Some isoglosses, however, may seem more congruent. The northern areas on [Figure 3](#) and [Figure 4](#), for example, centering more or less around Kāšān, show that the two isoglosses “now” and “this way,” while they do not conform exactly to each other (but since there are no available data from the northwestern areas of [Figure 4](#), this isogloss may indeed be more consistent with [Map Three](#) than the maps currently show), are quite consistent with each other, at least in the large bulk of the area they both cover. The differences on these two figures between the isoglosses for these two words for the southern area, however, show that the dialects from Isfahan towards the east are not as consistent. In other words, the two isoglosses “now” and “this way,” at least, do not seem to show any special correlation and thus do not reveal much valuable information about these southern areas on the maps. In order to obtain a truer picture of the relatedness of a group of dialects and the areal bond among them, if there is one, it is necessary to gather and compare a much larger number of isoglosses, preferably by superimposing them on one another, to see if a particular geographic area turns out to be more and more heavily covered by different isoglosses. In this way, as greater numbers of isoglosses pattern over most of the same areas—especially so in the central area, or the “epicenter,” and less so in the peripheral areas—they start to form “bundles” and relationships begin to emerge from the picture presented by the convergence of numerous



patterns. [Figure 5](#) shows such a bundle of isoglosses centered in the immediate Isfahan area.

In addition to the examples given above (*bure-beše*, *osme-sigā*) that even native speakers use to typify their dialects, [Figure 5](#) shows a total of eleven important isoglosses that set the immediate Isfahan area apart from the rest of CPD. This is a small, representative example of an isogloss bundle. Here the actual isogloss lines have been omitted and only the areas where the majority of them are in effect have been shaded. Numbers referring to the eleven isoglosses are listed for each location where they occur. Given the paucity of adequate materials on CPD and the lack of detailed information on each isogloss in publications (or even unpublished field notes), however, it is not always possible to ascertain whether certain features are present or absent in any given dialect. All features lacking an answer (either affirmative or negative) are put in parentheses with a question mark. The darker the shading on the map, the thicker the bundle which then helps us determine the degree of relatedness of the given dialects or languages. The darkest shading on [Figure 5](#) represents the core area with a bundle of from seven to eleven of these isoglosses. The areas with medium shading have from three to four of the isoglosses in effect and the lightest shading is for areas having only one to two of the isoglosses. Unshaded areas imply that none of the features occur in those dialects. Note that all eleven isoglosses are present in Sedehi, nine are present in Peykāni, Kafrāni, Gazi, and Sagzavi, but as we progress farther to the east (or to the northwest), the number diminishes until we reach Nā'in and Anārak in the east or Meyma, Jowšeqān, Delijān, Maḥallāt, etc. in the northwest, where none of the isoglosses are in effect.

The eleven isoglosses indicated on [Figure 5](#): (1) The 3rd sing. of the present and subjunctive is formed with a suffixed *-u*, which is also the enclitic of the copula (to be; see [Table 17](#)). (2) the durative marker *-e*, the equivalent of Persian *mi-*, is suffixed after person endings to form the durative (i.e., the present and imperfect) tenses ([Table 17](#); see also GAZI and ISFAHAN JEWISH DIALECT for more detailed information on points (1) and (2), ZEFRA'I and HAMADĀN ix JEWISH DIALECT for point (1)). (3) “Down” is generally a form like Gazi *gāre* (< Av. *gufra-*, *jafra-*, cf. New Pers. *žarf*, and see discussion of **fr* > (*h*)*r* above). (4) “Woman, wife” (Krahnke, isogloss 10) has two unusual modifications: in the Isfahan area we find *jinji* ~ *zinji* ~ *dzindzi* (the darkest shaded area on [Figure 5](#)), while beginning with Tudešk and moving eastwards, the form is *enju* (not included on [Figure 5](#)). (5) “Say” (see [Table 16](#)); (6) “Large”



bele (and variants; Krahnke, isogloss 28; see *Diachronics of the gloss “large”* below); (7) “Wall” (Krahnke isogloss 31) has a medial *-z-* in this core area: Gazi, Sed., Sagz., Kamd., Qehi, Zefr. *dezār*, Kuhp. *dəzār*, Qorz. *dezzār*; (8-9) “Here” generally has an initial *y-*: (8-9) ‘Olun., Jrqu., Kamd., Kuhp., Qehi *yohon*, Sagz. *yon*, Gazi, Qorz. *yā*, IsfJ. *yun*, but (9) in some cases, there is also a final *-c(e)* (Sed. *yā* ~ *yāce*). (10) “Father” is a variation on a form found in, for instance, Sed. Jrqu., Kamd., Qehi, Sagz. *puo*, Peyk. *pue* (but does not include forms like *pia*, and variants). (11) “Out” is *kū* in most of the darkest shaded locales, and generally has the following contrasting pairs: Sed., Kafr., Qorz., Kuhp., Kamd., Qehi, Sagz. *kū* “out,” *ku* “mountain” and IsfJ. *ki* “out,” *ku* “mountain.”

Buffer zone phenomena. When two opposite or variant isoglosses of the same feature meet, there can sometimes be an overlap in the area (buffer zone) between them. In such a case, the dialects within this overlapping area get both possibilities, and when a language gets two options for the same thing from two different sources, it often takes advantage of both and uses them differently. The dialects in these overlapping areas of CPD have innovated some way of using both isoglosses, thus accommodating both zones simultaneously. A minor buffer zone effect was introduced above with the verb “to say” in those areas that have two forms of the present root both with and without the final *-j-* (Table 16). In the extreme western (Vāniš. *ed-āj-u* and *b-āj!*) and eastern areas (Anār. *e-vāj-a* and *i-vāj!*) we find that the *-j-* is always retained, but deleted throughout the paradigm in the south (Gazi *vā-u-e* and *bé-vā!*, Jrqu. *vo-u-e* and *b-uā!*). In the central areas where the two types overlap, the *-j-* is retained in most forms as in the zones to the east and west, but, in adapting to the areas to the south, they drop the *-j-* only in one form, the imperative, e.g., (present) Qohr., Keš. *a-vāj-un*, Soi *a-vāj-ān*, Fari. *a-vāj-on*, KašJ. *vāj-ān*, Tāri *a-j-ō*, Zefr. *vāž-ān* “I say,” (subjunctive) Qohr. *bá-vāj-un*, Tāri *be-vāj-ō*, Keš. *bé-vāj-un*, Zefr. *b-ā’ž-ān* “that I say,” but (imperative) Keš., Soi, Fari., KašJ., Tāri, Zefr. *bé-vā!* “say!,” Qohr., Fari. *bá-vā!* “say!”

Another example consists of the isoglosses showing the distribution of two important variants for “to sit” (both with the preverb *ha-*) in CPD. Some dialects use the verb root (pres./past) *hā-ni(n)(g)/k-/hā-nišť*, while others use the root *hā-cin-/hā-cešť* (see Figure 5, isogloss 2). In the Isfahan area a suffixed *-e* is used to form these tenses (see xxii, below), whereas in other areas of CPD, we find a prefixed *e(t)-*, which in the various dialects takes the variants *e- ~ a- ~ et- ~ at- ~ ed- ~ to-*. It seems that no one has thus far explicitly stated that the suffixed *-e* of the Isfahan area and the prefixed *e(t)- ~ a(t)-* of the rest of CPD



(and beyond) are, in fact, just variants of the same form. The reasons that have led the present author to this conclusion are as follows:

1) In some dialects, particularly in those of the NW group of CPD, the *-t* ~ *-d* of this morpheme appears consistently before both vowels and consonants (Kāns. *it-xusān* “I hit,” *id-vāzān* “I say,” *ít-ārān* “I bring”; Mahll. *at-keron* “I do,” *ad-vojon* “I say,” *at-iyon* “I come”). This formation before consonants shows that the *-t* is an integral part of the morpheme and not just a transitional consonant to the initial vowel of the verb root. The same *et-* ~ *at-* ~ *ed-* morpheme also appears in the Tafreš area including Vafsi, a clearly Tāti language, whose variants of this morpheme, *at-* ~ *ad-* ~ *ar-* ~ *an-*, etc. (*at-ārom* “I bring,” *ar-vinom* “I see,” *ar-karom* “I do,” *an-nevisom* “I see”), also show that the *-t* is not only retained before roots beginning in consonants but actually adapts to the following consonant and is not simply a transitional consonant to a following vowel (for a detailed discussion see VAFSI as well as Stilo, 2004).

2) It is clear that *e-* ~ *a-* and *et-* ~ *at-* (all prefixed) are originally identical as seen in the consistent use of the *-t* variants in the central areas of CPD before roots that begin with vowels: Jowš. *a-pic-am* “I twist,” but *at-ār-am* “I bring”; Qohr. *a-k-ūn* “I fall,” but *at-ār-ūn* “I bring”; Tāri *a-ker-ō* “I do,” but *at-ār-ō* “I bring”; Aby. *e-kar-ān* “I do,” but *et-ōzmar-ān* “I count”; Ards. *e-ker-ō* “I do” but *et-oroš-ō* “I sell.” See discussion in Windfuhr (CENTRAL DIALECTS, pp. 249-50); Krahnke [pp. 182-87] also comes to a similar conclusion.

As we move eastward, the durative marker gradually disappears and the form with final *-t* is even less common. Thus in Nā’ini, no tense-aspect marker appears before consonants, for instance, present tenses *biri, biri, bira* “I, you, he takes/carries away,” or *der-k-i, der-k-i, der-k-a* “I, you, he falls,” but the original *-t* still shows up as a remnant before vowels (in the durative tenses): (present) *tāri, tārém* (= *t-ār-i, t-ār-ém*) “I, we bring” or *tosi* (= *t-os-i*) “I get up” and imperfect *ši-t-ārt* “he would bring” vs. the non-durative tenses, for example, (subjunctive) *yāri* (= *i-ār-i*) “that I bring,” and (preterit) *mu-yārt* (= *mu-i-ār-t*) “I brought.” Certain dialects have an even rarer remnant of the original *-t*, for example Zefra’i in which the *-t* is generally lost before roots with initial vowels (*v-i-essān* “I stand,” *viesson* [= *v-i-essā-un*] “I would stand” (where *i-* < **et-*), but still appears in the imperfect forms of one verb: *t-emon* “I would come,” cf. preterit *b-omon* “I came” and *y-ān* “I come.”

3) In other cases, while the dialect no longer uses the *t-* in the original *at-*, one can tell that it did have it at some point in its history, but through a process of



redivision of the word, the original *t-* of the durative marker was transferred permanently from *at-* to the verb root, just as “an ewt” in an older form of English became today’s “a newt.” In these dialects the *t-* has become a permanent part of the verb root and is used even in non-durative tenses that did not originally take *at-* (e.g., Qohr. *tengas-/tangašt* vs. Meym. *enges-/angašt* “look,” Soi *angis-* [pres.], and others). Thus while the Qohrudi present tense is *a-tangisun* “I look—” almost identical to Soi *at-angisom*—the Qohrudi subjunctive, *bátengisun* (*bá-tengis-un*) and the preterit *batangaštun* (= *batangašt-un*) show that the initial *t-* is now part of the root (but not in Soi). In another such case, the root of the Nā’ini verb “to hear,” which also requires the preverb *ver-* (Krahnke, isogloss 27), originally began with a vowel (i.e., **ver-ašno(v)-/ašnoft*), but both roots now begin with *t-*, which appears even in the non-durative tenses: Nāin. (pres.) *mi ver-tašnovi* “I hear” vs. (imperative) *vér-tašno!* “hear! listen!” and preterit *mi vér-om-tašnoft* “I heard.” Thus it is clear that Nā’ini at some point in its history had the *et-* ~ *at-* marker, at least before vowels, but has since lost the use of this prefix, except for two or three roots in which it still alternates (“bring,” “rise”; see Point (2)) and except for (at least) one root shown here in which the *t-* has become lexicalized as part of the root (“hear”).

4) The affix *et-* is probably not ancient as a verbal marker in CPD but may have been introduced later, possibly even as late as the early modern period. There is no way of documenting the emergence of this morpheme in the verbal system, but there is good reason to hypothesize that it developed in a similar process, and possibly even about the same time, by which *mi-/hami* (< Mid. Pers. *hamē*) became part of the verbal paradigm of Modern Persian: *hamē* was at first an unattached and mobile independent word appearing before or after the verb and even at a distance from it. It then became permanently prefixed as *hamē-*, which then changed to *mē-*, then to *mi-*). Like *hamē*, *e(t)-* may derive from some adverbial word—a typical source for the creation of new verbal tense and aspect markers (Heine and Kuteva, pp. 144-47)—which also was most likely an independent, somewhat mobile word that eventually, through a series of stages, became bound to the verb, similar to the development of New Persian *mi/hami*. Although the origin and development of *et-* are unknown, the reasons for positing the original mobility of this affix stem not only from hypothesizing about it based on the example of *hamē* (although it very plausibly was a parallel scenario), but also because, as will be demonstrated in the next three points, *et-* seems to have had its own history of mobility and is still somewhat mobile in the modern languages.



5) It is still mobile in Yazdi Zoroastrian, where it precedes the verb root in the affirmative but follows it in the negative: *evaji* “you say” (= e_1 - vaj_2 - i_3) vs. *navajie* (na_4 - vaj_2 - i_3 - e_1) “you₃ don’t₄ say₂ (durative₁),” *etāt* “he comes” (= et_1 - \bar{a}_2 - t_3) vs. *nāte* (n_4 - \bar{a}_2 - t_3 - e_1) “he₃ doesn’t₄ come₂ (durative₁).” The durative marker in Yazdi Zoroastrian (but not Yazdi Jewish) is thus a prefixed *et-* in the affirmative before a vowel and *e-* before a consonant but a suffix in the negative.

6) Another characteristic of this morpheme that shows its current mobility in CPD is found in the dialects of the immediate Isfahan area, where, as already noted, it always follows the root. Please also note that it does not always *directly* follow the root and can in fact be somewhat distant from it. In other words, both agent and object pronominal affixes may intervene between the verb root and the tense/aspect marker *-e*: (Gazi) present: *yuz-ān-e* “I’ll find,” *yuz-ān-ež-e* “I’ll find him,” imperfect: *xorté-m-e* “I used to eat,” but *ibize-m xorté-yye* “I was eating melon,” and in the modal “want”: *gú-d-e* “you want,” *har-ci-d gu-e* “whatever you want,” (for a detailed description, see xxii, below; and xix, above. JEWISH DIALECT).

7) That the suffixed *-e* in the immediate Isfahan area was at one time more mobile and probably also occurred initially is seen in the verb root “drink” in Isfahani Jewish, where the remainder *t-* from the original durative marker has become a frozen part of the verb root (as in Point 3, above), but fixed to the beginning of the root (e.g., *tanj-/tanjā*) and is now used in both durative and non-durative forms, both present and past (e.g., *tanjuve* “he drinks,” *bétanj* “drink!,” *be-š-tanj(en)ā* “he drank”). The initial position of the *t-* here shows that the marker **et-* must have been initial in this dialect at some point in its history. Further cognates of this word exist in (C. Tāti) Koini (with no initial consonant) *enj-/ent* and (with initial *h-/x-*) in (S. Tāleši) Māsāli *hinj-/hint*, Māsulai *xənj-/xənt-* and (C. Tāti) Koluri *henj-/hent*, all meaning “to drink,” and by extension also in Sangesari *də-(y)inj/(h)et* “to swallow.” This root also occurs as “to pull” in Kuri *henj-/heid* ~ *het*, in (Semnān area) Aftari *anj-/a(n)t*, Semnāni *enj/(h)et*, Sangesari *inj/(h)et*, and in Zazaki *ānj-/ānt*. This root has other related meanings in other languages as well: Soi *henj-/het* “sprinkle,” (S. Tāti) Kīāraji *hōnj-/hōt* “to water,” and in Gazi *enj-/enjā* “to irrigate,” all ultimately derivable from Av. *θang-*, *θanǰaya-* via the semantic shifts: “pull, draw > draw water > irrigate, water, sprinkle > drink,” all of which are still attested in NWI as shown here. Note that the Sangesari stem itself conveys the two senses at both ends of this spectrum, which are only distinguished by the use of a preverb: *inj/(h)et* “to pull,” and *də-(y)inj/(h)et* “to swallow.” An



alternate analysis of Isfj. *tanj-/tanjā* sees this form still derived from Avestan *θanj-* “pull,” but with the initial *-t-* derived directly from Old Iranian *θ* (cf. the *t-* in the Shirazi dialect word *tanj-* “drink,” Skjærvø, p.c) rather than through *θanj- > hanj- > anj-* and subsequently accruing an initial *t-* from the tense-aspect marker **et-*.

8) The tense formant *e- ~ a- ~ et- ~ at- ~ ed-* is also the same one that appears in most SWI dialects in a zone that extends from south and southeast of Isfahan to the Persian Gulf. Note the alternate forms of the durative marker before consonants vs. vowels in the Fini dialect (NW of Bandar ‘Abbās) *a-g-am* “I say” but *at-ā-m* “I come,” Bandari *a-zan-om* “I hit,” *e-gin-i* “you see,” but *at-a-m* “I come,” and the (Lāri) Bidšahri forms (present) *a-xeləm* “I buy,” *a-ger-am* “I take,” but *ad-ia-m*, *ad-ie-yš* “I, you come,” *ad-ār-əm* “I bring” and (imperfect) *a-xáteda-m* “I would sleep” *m-a-geret* “I would take,” but *m-ad-ou* “I would bring.” Note also that Kumzari, an Iranian dialect spoken in Oman, due to the metathesis of the final *-t* of this morpheme to initial position, retains *-t* as *ti-/ta-/t-* (sometimes *it-*) in the present tenses of all verbs (e.g., *ti-kum* “I do”).

The Lori-Bakhtiāri durative marker *i-* (and variants) also belongs here but no *t* appears before vowels (e.g., *i-dē* “you give,” *i-kūam* “I pound,” *i-yom* “I come”). The use of this morpheme (without *-t*) for the formation of the durative tenses also extends south-southwest from Isfahan, again to the Persian Gulf (cf. Angāli in Bušehr area: *ī-šīn-om* “I sit,” *ī-g-om* “I say,” *ī-x-om* “I want,” but *ī-ā-m* “I come”). Extending to the northwest, it is even plausible that the Kurdish tense-aspect markers (N. Kurdish) *dī- ~ da- ~ t-* and (C. Kurdish) *a- ~ da-* are also this same morpheme but this interpretation is far from certain.

This tense formant with the variants *e- ~ a- ~ et- ~ at- ~ ed- ~ to- ~ ti- ~ i-* and possibly even *dī- ~ da- ~ t-* thus seems to be an isogloss extending northwards from Kumzari and Bandari on both sides of the Persian Gulf in an almost unbroken chain all the way to Hamadāni Jewish and Vafsi, the southernmost Tāti language located just to the east of Hamadān. In addition, it extends to the west along the Persian Gulf to the Bušehr area, and possibly even to Northern and Central Kurdish in the northwest.

A note on the third singular present ending -u. As demonstrated in Figure 5 and accompanying notes above, the person marker *-u* (which is also the enclitic form of the copula) is unique to the immediate Isfahan area within CPD. Outside CPD, it occurs in both Gurāni and Zazaki/Dimli as the masculine 3rd sing. person marker *-o ~ -u* (the feminine is marked separately with *-ā*), for



example, (Gurāni) Bājalāni *ma-kar-o*, Kandulai *ma-kar-u* “he does”; Zazaki *est-o* “he is” (but *est-ā* “she is”). Note also the final person ending in the Zazaki sentence *mormek āmā ka to-re non byār-o* “a man came to bring you bread” (Stilo field notes, Dersim dialect). This morpheme is probably also the same as the Vafsi feminine copula form *-o(æ)* (e.g., *zene-s-oš* “she is his wife”).

The diachrony of the gloss “large.” The seven different isoglosses for the words meaning “large” in CPD, as shown on Figure 7, can all be reduced historically to two sources: (pattern 1, 2) *mas* and *massar*, discussed above under the change **ts > s* (see also Table 2), and (pattern 3-7) the shaded areas on Figure 7: *bale*, *gord*, and three others that are restricted (as far as we have data for) to one locale each, Zefr. *būr(g)*, Kuḥp. *vəzār-k*, and Ḳuri *gozār*, all of which derive from Old Iranian **vadraka-* OPers. *vazraka-* (cf. New Pers. *bozorg*).

Patterns 1 and 2: *mas*, *massar*-type. The origins of this root and its variants (discussed above) derive from a different root from the forms discussed in the next four points.

Pattern 3: bele-type. Eilers (1979) has already pointed out the derivation of the Gazi form *bele* (isogloss 6 on Figure 5, above) from a probable SWI form, **vardak-* “large,” which is a metathesized form of an unattested, but expected, Old SWI word **vadraka-*, paralleling the actually attested Old Persian form *vazraka-*, itself considered to be a borrowing from Median. The attested NWI form *vazraka-* versus the expected SWI word **vadraka-* demonstrate the typical NWI *-z-* vs. SWI *-d-* correspondence that was demonstrated with “know,” “son-in-law,” and “yesterday” under *Diachrony* above. The forms *bale* and *gord*, because of the presence of an original *-d-*, were probably borrowed into CPD from the hypothetical SWI form, which would have undergone the following stages of development from Old SWI to the borrowing that became the modern form in the Isfahan area: **vadrak(a)- > *vardak- > barda(k) > bala*. The form *bala* ~ *bale* “large” also involves the two changes of **v- > b-*, as in “wind” and “willow” discussed above, and *-rd- > -l-*, which parallels the change of *-rz- > -l-* (see “allow” (Table 3), above in the *Diachrony* section and also the word “flower,” below).

Pattern 4: gord-type of the Kāšān area presents a slightly different outcome of a series of changes derived from the same hypothetical Old SWI word proposed above: **vadrak(a) > *vard(ak) > gurd*, following the sound change of earlier *wa- ~ va- > gu- ~ go-* as was noticed in the forms of “wolf” and “pass” discussed above, and which we also find in **ward ~ *vard > *val > New Pers.*



gol “rose, flower.” In the oldest stage of this word, **ward* ~ **vard* “flower,” we find the form as it was borrowed into Arabic, Armenian and other languages of the area, whereas the intermediate stage, **val*, is close to Tāleši and Northern Tāti, Semnāni *vel*, as well as to the feminine forms of Vafsi and most Southern Tāti *véla*, and (Gurāni) Tavela *vīli* “flower” of today.

Pattern 5 and 6: bürg- and vazīrk-types. The Zefra’i form *bür(g)* would also have a similar history, for instance, **vadrak(a)* > *vadark* > *vadarg* > *bu(d)arg* > *bürg*. The third stage listed here, *vadarg*, is more or less what we find in the Kuhpāya’i form, *vazīrk*, although it may also derive from the form introduced in Pattern 7.

Pattern 7. Gozār-type in Kūri may be a modification of an earlier NWI form **vazra(ka)*:- **vazra* > *vazar* > *gozār*, also including the change of *vV-* > *go-* ~ *gu-*, which is especially typical of Kūri and Baluchi.

Faridani Georgian (FG), even though it was brought to the Isfahan area around the very beginning of the 17th century during the reign of Shah ‘Abbās I, was still quite alive and robust in the mid-1960s when Donald Stilo conducted fieldwork on the language and was still reported so in 2005. Villagers of the area in the 1960s reported the existence of some eleven villages with an approximate total of 16,000 Georgians. In fact one of the rural districts (*dehestān*) listed in Razmārā’s *Farhang* (X, pp. 166-67) (Isfahan Province) is called Gorji (*šahrestān* of Faridan, *bakš* of Dārān District, *dehestān* of Gorji) with 25 (22 on page 220) villages and over 24,000 inhabitants. Of these villages, nine were listed as having Georgian either as the primary or a secondary language. Others certainly existed; for instance, Miāndašt, reported in Razmārā (*Farhang* X, p. 189) as Persian-speaking, was in fact the home of one of the Stilo’s informants, who reported that it was a Georgian-speaking village (see also GEORGIA viii. GEORGIAN COMMUNITIES IN PERSIA).

While Faridani Georgian has accepted many Persian, Lori and local Turkic loanwords, especially in the areas of material culture and governmental, educational, and administrative spheres, it has retained the large mass of the original Georgian lexicon found in normal, everyday speech. Even a brief sketch of the richness of Georgian grammar would be beyond the scope of this article, but a few of the characteristics of phonology, lexicon, and a few verb forms can be listed here. For comparison purposes, the standard Georgian (SG) equivalent of the examples below will be listed in parentheses after each word; the sign (=) indicates that the word is the same in Standard Georgian



equivalents as in Faridani Georgian.

The vowels of Faridani Georgian consist of *i*, *e*, *o*, *u* and *a* ~ *ǣ* (the last two are free alternates, with *ǣ* often more common in the speech of some individuals, including Stilo's main informant, Moḥammad-ʿAli ʿAṭāʿi of Āḳora, now Fereydunšahr).

The features of Faridani Georgian are quite typical for a Georgian dialect and it has not lost any of the defining characteristics of the Georgian language: it has retained a rich consonantal system (see Table 18), all the Georgian cases, and the highly complex verbal system of Georgian, with even further complexity in some areas of verbal aspect than standard Georgian.

The consonantal system of Faridani Georgian (as SG) includes two characteristics that are common among languages of the Caucasus, including Armenian: the contrast of aspirated and glottalized (also called ejective) consonants (aspiration is indicated here by a superscript *h* and glottalization with an apostrophe) and a distinction of two sets of affricates: the *c*-series (*c* = "ts") and the *č*-series. Of the consonantal inventory, *q^h* and *y* do not occur in standard Georgian but do exist in various dialects; *f* is a phoneme found in loanwords in Faridani Georgian, but not in standard Georgian. The consonants transcribed here as *v* and *w* are probably alternates of the same sound in Faridani Georgian, with *w* found more commonly, but not exclusively, after vowels. The following pairs show the contrasts of some of the consonants: *p^huri* (= "cow," *p'uri* (= "bread," *huri* "blond" (Pers. loanword); *q^hæri* (SG: *xari*) "ox," *k^hæri* (SG: *k^hari*) "wind," *k'æri* (SG: *k'ari*) "door"; *c'ili* (SG: *rc'q'ili*) "louse," *dzili* (= "to sleep"; *iyo* (SG: *aiyo*) "that you pick up," *iGo* (SG: *iq'o*) "he was"; *Gorebi* (SG: *gogebi*) "girls," *yorebi* (= "pigs," *gorebi* "mountains" (SG: "hills"); *q^h* of FG is an older sound that has merged with *x* in SG: FG *p^heq^hi* vs. SG *phexi* "foot," FG *q^hari* vs. SG *xari* "ox" (see also "calf" below).

Consonant clusters (generally without epenthetic, i.e., transitional, vowels), for which Georgian is renowned, are also quite robust in Faridani Georgian. A small sampling is given: *t^hma* (= "hair," *k'bili* (= "tooth," *č^hxili* (= "fingernail," *c^hxori* (SG: *c^hxvari*) "sheep," *dzma* (= "brother," *k^hmari* (= "husband," *Gmac^hili* (SG: *q'mac^hvili*: "young man in teens") "child," *q^hbo* (SG: *xbo*) "calf," *t^hxa* (= "goat," *mze* (= "sun," *c'Gali* (SG: *c'q'ali*) "water," *dye* (= "day," *t'Geli* (SG: *brt'q'eli*: "flat") "wide," *č'le* (SG: *mč'le* "lean") "thin," *t^hbili* (= "warm," *vzivar* (= "I am sitting," *hč'am* [*xč'am*] (SG: *č'am*) "you eat," There are some longer clusters : (3) *t'k'bili* (= "sweet," *c'Gran* (SG: *c'q'nari* "quiet") "slowly, quietly,"



mq'vanda ~ *mq'wanda* (SG: *mq'avda*) "I had (animate direct object)," *mt'k'ivis* (SG: *mt'k'iva*) "it hurts me," *gt'k'ivis* (SG: *gt'k'iva*) "it hurts you," *vk'debi* (SG: *vk'vdebi*) "I die," *vsGidoph* (SG: *vq'idulob*) "I sell," *rc'Gaw* (SG: *rc'q'av*) "you irrigate," *sxnis* (SG: *xsnis*) "he opens," *vk'lav* (=) "I kill," *mc'Gurian* (SG: *mc'q'uria*) "I am thirsty," *c hxrā* (=) "nine," *c'Glis* (SG: *c'q'(a)lis*) "water (genitive)," *vjdebi* (=) "I sit down"; (4) *vt hk hvi* (=) "I said," *vrc'q'aw* (SG: *vrc'q'av*) "I irrigate," *gvt'k'iws* (SG: *gvt'k'iva*) "it hurts us," *vsxni* (SG: *vxsni*) "I open," *hsxni* (SG: *xsni*) "you open," *gvk'lav* (=) "you kill us," *gvc^hxela* (=) "we are hot"; (5) *vmč'ldebi* ~ *vč'ldebi* "I become thin."

The verbal system, in addition to having many conjugation types and many irregular patterns within each, is also characterized by a large number of different forms for each verb. Faridani Georgian has eleven different tense-aspect-mood forms (present, future, subjunctive, past, past subjunctive, etc.). In addition, these eleven forms can each be made passive, causative, passivized causative, double causative, passivized double causative, for instance, (future) *gaurec^hxaws* (SG: *gaurec^hxavs*) "he will wash," *gairecxebis* (SG: *gairecxeba*) "he will be washed," *gaarec^hxvinaws* (SG: *gaarecxinebs*) "he will make (someone) wash," *gairec^hxwinebis* (SG: *gairec^hxineba*, rarely used) "he will have it be washed (by someone)."

Faridani Turkic. A brief fieldwork trip to Faridan for gathering recordings of the Turkic dialects by Christiane Bulut of Mainz University during the preparation of this entry has provided data for her preliminary description of some of the characteristics that distinguish these dialects from, or unite them with, Azeri/Azərbayani Turkish (see Azərbaycan viii), "Peripheral Azərbaycani" (Stilo: 1994) of the Hamadān-Sāva area, and Qašqā'i. While all these Turkic variants of western Persia and the Republic of Azərbaycan are quite close and, for the most part, mutually intelligible, there are some significant features that separate them. Two important features that separate Azərbaycani from Peripheral Azərbaycani and Qašqā'i is the formation of the 2nd persons singular and plural of the past tenses on the one hand and the non-past forms on the other. In both cases, the older Oghuz Turkic velar nasal, *-ŋ* (the sound of English or German "ng"), still pronounced in some forms of Qašqā'i (*gediræŋ* "you go" in speech of Stilo's Kaškuli informant; *-ŋ* is also retained in Turkman), has been changed to a dental-alveolar *-n* in Azərbaycani (*gedirsšn*) and Turkish (*gidiyorsun*), but it is generally lost or converted to a diphthong in Central Persia (*gediriy* in Bayādestān Turkic, directly west of Sāva). The latter type is also shared by Faridani Turkic. The second distinguishing characteristic is



found in these same forms just quoted: the 2nd persons singular and plural retain the -s- in the person ending of the present, the optative/subjunctive and the future in Azarbaijani (*gedæjæk-siniz* ~ [dialectal forms] *gedæjæh-siz*, *gedajax-siz* “you (pl.) will go”) and Turkish (*gidecek-siniz*), but eliminate it in Peripheral Azarbaijani, Faridani (*gedejeg-eyz*), and Qaşqā’i (present, optative/subjunctive). Thus while Faridani Turkic shares most features with Peripheral Azarbaijani dialects spoken farther north, it also shares some features with Qaşqā’i, for instance, the retention of -n- in the third person plural pronoun: Qaşqā’i *onlar*, Faridani *onnar* “they” vs. standard and Bayādestān *olar*. Other features separate Faridani from most of the others, for example, the formation of the 1st and 2nd person present perfect forms with the participial form -ib- ~ -ip-, which is generally characteristic only of the 3rd person, e.g., Faridani *gediblær* “they have gone,” but also *gedibæk* “we have gone” vs. Azarbaijani *gedipdilær*, but *getmişik*, respectively. Still other features connect these dialects to most Turkic forms of Persia, for instance, the incorporation of the possessive suffixes into the verb of existence to form an independent “to have” verb-like word: Faridani *var-īmiz* “we have.” Note the following preterit conjugation from the village of Golamir (the source of the other Faridani forms cited above): *getdim*, *getdiy*, *getde*, *getdik*, *getdiy*, *getdelæ(r)* “I went, you went, etc.”

See also [DIALECTOLOGY](#).

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