



KALĀRESTĀQ II. THE DIALECT

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The Caspian vernaculars spoken in Kalārestāq, together with those of Tonekābon district, may not be properly classified as either Māzandarāni (Maz.) or Gilaki (Gil.) but serve as a transition between these two language groups. The local dialects of Kalārestāq and Tonekābon may therefore be considered, as Donald Stilo proposes (in [GILĀN x. LANGUAGES](#)), as a third, separate language group within the continuum of speeches along the Caspian littoral and adjoining highlands. This group extends approximately between the Čālus river on the east and Rāmsar on the west, and is thus designated as “Central Caspian” by Donald Stilo (see [MĀZANDARANI](#) [pending]), even if the available linguistic data is scanty for the proposed group. The dialect described below belongs to Rudbārak village on the Sardābrud, a few miles upstream from the Kalārdašt administrative center. The material is based on the author’s documentation and published data (Kalbāsi, pp. 145 ff.).

Diachronics. The dialect retains some typical NW Iranian sounds, with considerable mix of SW/Perside traits. From the Old Iranian period, words of non-Perside origin are possibly limited to *aseri* “tear” (s < proto-Ir. *ś), *esfe* “white,” *zofon* “tongue” (retention of *św, *źw), *arak* “hand mill,” *fendāre* “scythe” (r < *θr); cf. SW *asiō* “mill,” *dāz* “sickle,” *āvesan* “pregnant”; note also *husni* “co-wife” < **ha-paθnī-*. Within the Mid. Ir. split, the dialect sides with the NW branch only in *-č- > j, as *jir* “below,” *duj-* “sew,” *suj-* “burn,” *da-mej-*



“step over,” and probably *mej* “raisin,” *sāje* “broom” (but *pač-* “cook,” as in many other NW idioms, and *sāz-* “make”), and in *tej* “sharp” (< root *ti(n)j); otherwise, as in MPers., *j > z (*zenā* “woman”), *y- > j (*jō* “barley”), *dw- > d (*dar* “door,” *adi* “again”), *rd, *rt > l (*māl-/māless-* “rub,” *pel* “bridge”; cf. Gilaki *purd*; Cent. Kd. *pird*).

Within the New Ir. stage, the non-Perside characteristics are the retention of *w-, as in *verg* “wolf,” *valg* “leaf,” *vašnā* “hungry,” *var-kā* “lamb,” *vāron* “rain,” *vin-* “see” (but *bād* “wind,” etc.; note also *fini* “nose”), and the reduction of clusters: *xt, ft > t: *detar* “daughter,” *dut-* “sew,” *sut-* “burn,” *sāt-* “make,” *da-met-* “step over,” *pat-* “cook”; *kat-* “fall,” *xot-* “sleep,” *sot-* “rasp,” (g)ot- “say” (but *vāft-* “weave”); *fr > r: *ruš-/rut-* “sell,” *res-ān-* (the causative formant is probably an analogy with Pers. *ras-ān-* “deliver”) “send”; *fr- > h- in the preverb *hā-* (*hākordan*, etc.), possibly frozen in *hovar* (< *frā-*bara-*?) “lever, crow-bar,” *horeyjun* “hanging”; but *xr- stays: *serx* “red,” *xar-/xari-* “buy” (but *tal* “bitter”); *xm is reduced only in *tim* “seed.” Moreover, *xw > x: *xāxor* “sister,” *xon-* “read,” while *var* “deformed” (< OIr. *xwar-), *še(r)* “self.”

Apart from NW-SE distinctions, the dialect tends to change the original postvocalic stops into fricatives/vowels: (1) labials: *ole* “smallpox,” *ōsār* “bridle,” *gō* “cow,” *tō* “twist,” *ču* “wood,” *tu(v)ar* “axe,” *tāvesson* “summer,” *darvon* “doorman,” *sef* apple (cf. *sōzmani* “potato”), Ar. *levās* “clothing” (thus -p- in *sepus* “bran” must be a secondary development); (2) dentals: *piar* “father,” *mār* “mother,” *berār* “brother,” *roxone* “river,” *kili* “key,” and the past stems *bi-* “be,” *di-* “see,” *či-* “cut,” *āfari-* “create,” *dā-* “give,” *essā-* “stand,” *imā-* “come,” *zā-* “hit,” *ša-* “go”; (3) palatals: *duru* “lie,” *du* “buttermilk,” *xi* “boar,” *diar* “other,” *yelā* (also *kelāč*) “crow” (but *royon* “ghee,” *tey* “blade”). Another feature is the assimilation nd > nn, as in *donnon* “tooth,” *vanne* “binding net,” *anne* “so/this much,” -(e)nne (3rd pl. person ending); mb > m(m): *hammas* (EMaz. *ambās*) “viscous,” *demāl* “following,” *hamone* (Pers. *anbān*) “scrip, bag,” *amur* “plyers,” *eškeme* “rumen”; st > s(s): *gossen* “sheep,” but not in *davast-* “close,” *parasdu* “swallow.”

Vowels. (1) Development of *ā before nasals to /o/ and occasionally to /u/ pairs the dialect with Maz. rather than with Gil. (which characteristically retains the vowel in the original but shortened form), e.g., *bom* “roof,” *jon* “soul,” *nom* “name,” *šom* “supper,” *šonza* “sixteen,” *mon-/moness-* “stay,” *mion* “middle,” *fenjon* “cup,” *čone* “chin,” *jome* “garment,” *lone* “nest,” *šone* “shoulder,” and *ving* “voice,” but not in recent borrowings, such as *šāns* “luck,” and in the causative stem formant -ān-, which, therefore, can be a late loan as well. (2)



Retention of the front *majhul* is found often in the original length, e.g., *sēr* “satisfy” (contrasting with *sir* “garlic”), *dēr* “late” (< **dagr*), *mēx* “nail,” *hēme* “firewood,” *mēve* “fruit,” *tey* “blade,” *pa:rez* “self-restraint” (cf. MPers. *pahrēz* “defense, care”), *les-* “lick,” *pēč* “twist,” but not in *fini* “nose,” *jir* “below,” *dim* “face,” *šir* “lion,” *nevis-* “write.” (3) Fronting of the higher back vowels is the norm, e.g., *mi* “hair,” *zi* “early,” *di* “smoke,” *ši* “husband,” *xi* “boar,” *gi* “excrement,” *gali* “throat,” *terāzi* “scale,” *tim* “seed,” *mišt* “fist,” *tandir* “oven,” *nāzik* “thin,” *dikon* “shop,” *bi-* “be,” *pis-* “decay,” but not in *kur* “blind,” *roxone* “river,” and not before nasals: *xun* “blood,” *mum* “wax,” though *bi* (Pers. *bum*) in *kuribi* “(blind) owl” might be an exception. (4) The Caspian trait of turning the original diphthongs to short monophthongs is attested in just a few words: *nu* “new,” *tube* “remorse” (but *nōkar* “servant”), *γirat* “zeal” (but *peyyom* “message”).

Verbs. (1) Authentic irregular past stems may end in /Vt/ (< *xt, *ft), /rd/, /št/, /st/ (only in *vast-*) in vowels (< *Vd- < *Vt), according to the aforesaid rules, or in /yt/, in (g)*eyt-* “take” (< **grab-*; for parallels in Maz., see Borjjan, 2008). It is hard to tell whether *xari-* “buy,” *biri-* “cut,” *pās-* “guard,” *xāys-* “want” are derived from the original OIr. participles or are formed regularly by suffixing -i- or -s(s)- to their pres. stems (see below). (2) The past stem of *čo-/čot-* “suck” and *jo-/jot-* “chew” must have developed within the dialect, possibly modeled on the verbs of high frequency like *go-/got-* “say” (else OIr. *-t- would have been softened to d > zero; cf. MPers. *jōy-/jūd-* “chew”) or the /-t/ derives from *ft, shaped at an earlier stage (cf. the etymologically inexplicable /ft/ in Yidg. *žaf-/žaft-* “chew,” Yaghn. *žav-/žafta* “eat”; Cheung, s.v. **j̄iauH*). (3) “Do, make” has the SW pres. stem *kon-*, but the general Iranian form may have been preserved in *ken-su-kar-ak* (lit. butt-glow-do + suffix) “glow worm,” and, less likely, in *mes-kar* “coppersmith” (cf. Borjjan, 2008). (4) *angen-/angeness-* “snatch, rob” (cf. *engen-/enget-* “drop, put”) is likely to be from the root **θanj-* “pull.” (5) Stem ablaut is found in *kal-/kaless-* (intr.) “spill,” *kāl-/kālī-* (tr.) “pour.” (6) The Caspian characteristic of retaining the OIr. participle *-ant- in the present indicative (see GILĀN ix) has a faint reflex of an -n- in Set I endings 2nd and 3rd sg. and probably 2nd pl. (Table 2). The imperfect formant -imi-, however, appears to be a secondary formation.

Phonology. The phonemes are similar to those of Tehrani Persian. The following phonological rules apply. (1) /i- + -e/ > /ia/ [ijæ] in person endings, e.g., *ba-resāni-a* (< ending -e) “he sent,” *bar-imi-anne* (< ending -enne) “you/they used to carry”; /-e, -i/ > /y/ when prefixed by vowels other than /i/,



e.g., *bimā-y* (< ending *-e*) “you (sg.) came,” *bašo-yn* (< ending *-in*) “that you (pl.) go,” *beyri* (< *be-šir-i*) “that you take.” See also Noun phrase, below. (2) Stress, generally word-final in nominals, is absorbed by modal prefixes in verbs. As a result of the stress shift, the stem’s vowel is raised: (/a/ > e): *páč-ene* “it cooks,” *ná-peč-ene* (neg.), *bá-peč* “cook!”; *kán-eme* “I dig,” *bá-keness-eme/bá-keni-ame* “I dug”; (/o/ > u) *dóⁿ-me* “I know,” *bá-dun* “know!”; *tóⁿ-me* “I can,” *bá-tun* “be able!” Since the past stem is always realized with a prefix (Table 3), it is impossible to establish the precise quality of its vowel(s); e.g., for “carry” the pres. stem manifests itself in *bár-* and *bá/ná-ber-*, while the past stem only in *bá/ná-berd-*, from which one may infer the two possible plain forms **bard-* and **berd-* (the latter is indeed more plausible diachronically). (3) Stems in /-n/ lose it as a rule to the nasal element of endings or of the durative marker, in the present indicative and the imperfect (*da-veⁿ-me* [not **daveneme*] “I close,” *eškeⁿ-me* “I break,” *zaⁿ-me* “I hit,” *zaⁿ-mi-ame* “I would hit,” *hā-koⁿ-mi-anne* “they used to do”) but not if the stem is causative (*sujān-eme* “I burn”). Exceptions are the verbs *kan-/kaness-* (or *kani-*) “dig,” *xon-/xoness-* “read,” *xan-/xaness-* “laugh” (e.g., *xan-eme* “I laugh”), with a possible underlying /d/ at the end of their pres. stem, as found in Maz. (see Borjian, 2004). Note: stems in /-r/ are stable, unlike Maz. (4) /g/ is lost before a prefix in (g)o-/(g)ot- “say”: *go-me* “I say,” *n-o-me* (neg.), *b-o* “say!” *b-o-y* “that you say,” *b-ot-eme* “I said”; (g)ir-/(g)eyt- “seize”: *gir-eme* “I take,” *ne-yr-eme* (neg.), *ne-yr-i* “that you take not,” *be-yt-e* “he took,” *hā-yt-an* “to seize.” (5) /h/ tends to drop in (h)ass- “be” and (h)el-/(h)ešt- “allow” (*el-eme* “I let”) but only incompletely after prefixes: *be:l* “let!” (i.e., *be-el*, not **b-el*, as in *b-es* “stand!”), *ne-ešt-eme* “I didn’t let.”

Noun Phrase. The plural markers are *-ón* for the animate nouns (*mardomon* “people”) and, more frequently, *-(e)šón* (*rikāšon* “boys,” *ayozešon* “walnuts”); *-kón* is used in *zenākon* “women,” *merdākon* (pl. of *mardî*) “men.”

Cases and postpositions. The oblique marker *-e* is suffixed to the head noun, in possessives (*mar-e xone* “snake’s house”), adjectives (*gat-e dameč* “big calf”), and objects of postpositions (*veher-e dele* “in the hole,” *mār-e āsere* “for the mother”); after vowels, *-e* may either vanish (*moryone esfe* “egg white,” *xō dari peres* “wake up from sleep!” *hudi hamrā emi* “we will come together”) or turn to a glide (*vače kijā-y kaš dabia* “the child was in the girl’s bosom,” *še jā-y sardari neres* “don’t rise from your place!”). Postpositions are the norm: *dele* “in,” *hamrā* “with,” (*sar*)*dari* “from,” *sar* “on,” *ben* “under,” *jor* “above,” *jir* “below,” *var* “at,” (*v*)*āseré* “for,” *duni* “about, for,” *pišin* “front,” etc. *-(r)e* marks the definite direct objects (*ve-re bajjoteme* “I chew it”) and indirect objects:



pičā-re hassekā hādāme “I gave bone(s) to the cat,” *ušon-e bad ine* (lit. bad will come to them) “they get irritated,” *došon-e men-e hāden* “give me the churning pot!”

Pronouns. Personal pronouns have three basic forms (Table 1). Examples are: *ton-o men* “you and I,” *tére porsenne* “they will ask you,” *ame mār* “our mother,” *on kerk me hasse* “that hen is mine,” *me hamrā āšnā a* “s/he is acquainted with me,” *un šéme duni harf bezā* “he talked about you.” Demonstratives are *in* “this,” *un/on* “that,” *išon* “these,” *ušon* “those.” The reflexive *še(r)* “self” functions as an emphatic (*amā šer bimāmi* “we came ourselves”), reflexive pronoun (*āyne-ye dele šére ešeme* “I watch myself in the mirror”), or possessive (*še jonekā-re baruš* “sell your she-calf!” *še xone dabia* “he was in his [own] house”; cf. *ve xone dabia* “he was in his [= someone else’s] house”).

Verb Phrase. Stems. Past stems are formed regularly by adding *-i* to the present stem: *kelāš-/kelāši-* “itch”; *-i* follows the causative formant *-ān*, which is suffixed to the present stem, e.g., *xos-/xot-* “sleep,” *xosān-/xosāni-* “put to sleep.” Another frequent past-stem marker is *-ess*, as in *vār-/vāress-* “precipitate.” The “present” stem is used in the imperative, the present indicative and subjunctive, and, surprisingly, the imperfect (as is the case in northern Tatic; see, e.g., Yarshater, p. 100), while the preterit, the past participle, and the infinitive are built on the past stem (see Table 3).

Affixes. (1) Preverbs may further specify the stem lexically, e.g., *(da-)kaf-/kat-* “fall (into)”; *engen-/enget-* “drop, put, let behind,” *dangen-/danget-* “drop into”; *(da-)gerd-/ger^dess-* “(re)turn”; *hā-kon-/kord-* “do,” *da-~* “squeeze into”; *dār-/dāšt-* “hold,” *pe-~* “raise,” *dim-~* “throw down”; *ess-/essā-* “stand,” *per-~* “rise” (*-r-* is an epenthesis). Preverbs replace the modal prefix. (2) The modal prefix *b(V)-* marks the imperative, subjunctive present, preterit, past participle, and infinitive. The vowel varies often as a function of sound environment, e.g., *ba-ččo* “suck!” *ba-bir-im* “that we cut,” *be-pāč(-e)* “scattered,” *bo-moness-e* “he stayed,” *b-ot-eme* “I said,” *bu-(v)āftan* “to weave.” (3) The duration infix *-(i)mi-* (cf. WGil. *-i-*) marks the imperfect, *el-imi-ame* “I would put/let,” *za-mi-a* “he used to hit.” (4) The negative marker *n(V)-* precludes the modal prefix *b(V)-* and the preverb *hā-*, but normally coexists with other preverbs. Exx. *(ni-)ār-eme* “I (don’t) bring”; *(n-)eš* “(don’t) look!”; *hā-den-em* “that I give,” *na-den-em* (neg.); *hā-ko~me* “I do,” *nakome* (neg.); *da-(ne-)kef* “(don’t) fall!”; *pe-ne-dār* “don’t rise!”; but *neress* is the negative of *peress* “rise!” *ma-* appears but rarely in prohibitions: *ma-česbān* “don’t stick!” (5) Personal endings are



shown in Table 2. Set I marks the indicative present, II the preterit and imperfect and the present of substantive verbs, and III the subjunctive present, all subjected to the variations stated under Phonology. Imperative endings are zero (sg.) and *-in* (pl.). Epenthesis /e/, inserted after consonants, is normally omitted after /l, r, y/ for the 2nd and 3rd sg.: *kal-ne*, *xor-ne*, *xāy-ne* “you/he spill(s), eat(s), want(s).” In Set II endings, the 3rd sg. is zero after vowels other than /i/, and the 2nd sg. is zero only after /i/: *bey-š^a-i* “you went,” *bey-ša-∅* “he went,” *b-imā(-y)* “he/(you) came”; *ba-di(-a)* “you/(he) saw,” *bar-imi(-a)* “you/(he) would carry.”

The choice of the stems and affixes, which are highly redundant for the limited number of possible verb forms (Table 3), together with the phonological processes explained above, help keep the verb forms distinct. For instance, in spite of the obvious collapse of the 2nd and 3rd persons (both in sg. and pl.) in the pres. indicative, the singular still remain distinct from the plural for the stems ending in /-n/ (including all causatives), owing to the loss of the /-n/ in such situations, e.g., *viⁿ-ne* “you (sg.) see, he sees,” *viⁿ-nne* “you (pl.), they see.” Nevertheless, there remain such merges as *ba-šo-y* “that you go, that he goes”; *ba-ters-i* “that you fear,” *ba-tersi-∅* “you feared.” Notable irregularities are: (1) “come”: *boro* “come!” *ime/eme* “I come,” *niame* (neg.), *imia* “he used to come,” *nimia/niamia* (neg.); thus the pres. stem may be deduced as *e-* or *i-*, while the past stem is *imā-*. (2) *šo-/ša-* “go”: the past stem employs the modal prefix *bey-* (*béyša* “he went,” *beyšá* “gone”), with an intrusive /y/ that occurs also in Central Dialects (see Krahnke, p. 213; JARQUYA ii).

Be and *Become*. Substantive verbs are the copula and the existential/locative verb, which share stems with “become,” as shown in Table 2.

The copula uses Set II endings in the indicative present and the past, and has the following forms: pres. (*hass*)-*eme*, *-e*, *-e* (*-a* after vowels), *-emi*, *-enne*, *-enne*, neg. *niame*, *nia*, *nia*, *niami*, *nianne*, *nianne*; preterit *biame*, *bi*, *bia*, *biami*, *bianne*, *bianne*; subj. *bum*, *buy*, *buy(e)*, *buym*, *buyn*, *bun*. Examples are: *un gāleš e/hasse* “he is a herder,” *sēr-e* “is sated,” *tašnā-a* “is thirsty,” *kāški xob bu-ye* “let’s wish he is well” (cf. *xob bu-ne* “he becomes well”). Perfect tenses are formed by the past participle (see below) and the past and subjunctive copula: (pluperfect) *beyša/neyša biami* “we had/hadn’t gone,” (perfect subjunctive) *baberde buym* “we may have carried.” The dialect lacks the present perfect.

The locative has the affirmative (neg.) forms (1st sg.): pres. *dar-eme*



(*da-ni-ame*), subj. *da-bu-m* (*da-ni-bu-m*), past. *da-bi-ame* (*da-ni-bi-ame*). Examples are: *čanni miškā dār-e sar dare* “so many sparrow(s) are (is) on the tree,” *vene uje dabuy* “you must be there,” *kile dele kāšem dabia* “there was seaweed in the ditch.” This verb conjugates as the auxiliary in progressive tenses: (pres.) *dar-e bar-ne* “you are/he is carrying,” (past) *da-bi(-a) bar-imi(-a)* “you were/(he was) carrying.”

Modals. The verb *vene/vese* “must” is impersonal and is followed by the subjunctive of the main verb: *vene badone* “he must know.” Other modals are *xā(y)-/xāys-* “want” and *tun-/tuness-* “can,” e.g., *xāy-ne vali na-tuⁿ-ne da-gerd-e* “he wants to but cannot return.”

Verbal nouns. (1) The infinitive is *bV-/preverb + past stem + -(á)n*: *be-pās-an* “to guard,” *ba-šurd-an* “to wash,” *b-ešnosť-an* “to hear,” *b-essā-n* “to rise,” *hā-dā-n* “to give,” *ba-či-an* “pick (fruits).” (2) The past participle has similar construction except the suffix is *-é*, which appears after consonants in the periphrastic perfect tenses (see above) but often drops in adjectives: *ba-pis-e* “decayed,” *ba-pét* “cooked,” *be-xāšt* “mixed,” *bo-monéss* “stayed,” *da-ger^déss* “returned,” *da-gerdāní* “turned, inverted,” *ba-dí* “seen,” *b-imá* “come.” Examples are: *ve eškam davést e* (lit. his stomach is tied) “he has constipation,” *šoxm-bezā* “tilled,” *sar-jir-anget* (lit. dropped-down head) “unpretentious,” and probably *veress-an* (Pers. *vardana*) “rolling pin.” (3) Present stem is found in *vanne* (from *van-* or *vann-* “close, fasten”) “binding net,” *dār-koten-ak* “woodpecker” (probably the same stem as in *ba-koton-ø* “pound!”) *ba-kotoni-ame* “I pounded”), *pačēnā* (Pers. *pazā*) “capable of being cooked,” *ho-r-eyj-un* “hanging.”

Vocabulary: *bālekin* (lit. arm’s butt) “elbow,” *berme* “weep(ing),” *bili* “duck,” *čakan* “jaw,” *dālvāz* “falcon,” *esar* “then,” *gerze* “rat,” *hameru* “wild pear,” *jake-jarš* “garbage,” *kale* “oven,” *kamal* “straw, chaff,” *kāti* “ladder,” *keš* “urine,” *kuli* “nest,” *lal* “mosquito,” *lāp* “slice,” *laš* “swamp,” *malije* “ant,” *marji* “lentil,” *meček* “finger,” *parjen* “sieve,” *pelle* “blister,” *šāš* “moth,” *šeft* “crazy,” *sex* “roasted,” *sim* “frown,” *taš* “fire,” *tek* “lip,” *telā* “cock,” *tur* “insane,” *xoš* “kiss,” *zur* “dung.”



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