



KHORASAN XIX. LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF KHORASANI PERSIAN

This article examines the linguistic features of Khorasani Persian as spoken and written in the vast region stretching from Qumes to Marv, which in the inscription of Darius (q.v.; see also [BISOTUN iii](#)) was called Parθava, or “Parthia.”

The adjectival forms of *Pahlaw* in Middle Iranian languages are *Pahlawānīg* and *Pahlawīg*. The more recent forms of the word *Pahlaw* in Persian and Arabic are *Pahla* and *Fahla*, and their adjectival forms *Pahlavi* and *Fahlavi* (see [FAHLAVĪYĀT](#)). Though Persian *Pahlav* and Arabic *Fahla* are the formal continuations of Old Persian *Parθava* and Middle Persian *Pahlaw*, they no longer refer to the historical region of Parthia. According to [Ebn al-Moqaffa'](#) (q.v.; d. 139/757) as quoted in the *Fehrest* (q.v.; Ebn al-Nadim, ed. Tajaddod, p. 15, tr. Dodge, I, p. 24), *Fahla* consisted of the regions of Isfahan, Ray, Hamadān, Māh Nehāvand, and Azarbaijan, that is a region comprising [Media](#) (q.v.).

The word *Pahlawānīg* is attested in a Manichean Middle Persian text (Andreas and Henning, pp. 302-3): When the Messenger of Light (= [Māni](#) [q.v.]) was in Holwān, he called Mar Ammō, one of his companions who knew the *Pahlawānīg* language (= Parthian), and sent him to Abaršahr (q.v.), i.e., the



Nishapur province in western Khorasan. The Sogdian version of the same text also mentions the *Pahlawānīg* language (Sogd. *pyl'w'n'k*), a valuable testimony on the linguistic situation of Iran in the third century CE (Henning, 1958, p. 94; Lazard, 1971, p. 364).

Manichean Middle Persian embodies Middle Persian in its original, provincial purity; the Middle Persian of the books, as the common language of the Sasanian Empire and the language of education of its priests and court singers, was exposed over time to the influence of the older Parthian vernacular language. It eventually became a dialect that lost the peculiarities of its southwestern Iranian origin (Sundermann, 1989, p. 139).

During the Sasanian period (224-650 CE), Pārsīg (usually called Middle Persian or, erroneously, Pahlavi), that is, the language attributed to the region of Pārs, was the official language of Iran. Both Pahlawīg and Pārsīg are connected to the western branch of the Iranian languages (Pahlawīg to the northern branch and Pārsīg to the southern) and are two dialects of the same language. During most of the Arsacid period (250 BCE-226 CE), Pahlawīg, along with Greek, was the official language. Here, we will use Parthian instead of Pahlawīg, and Middle Persian for Pārsīg.

The Manicheans wrote their propagandistic pamphlets intended for Pahlā in Parthian. However, when Middle Persian spread and obtained official status, the use of Parthian gradually diminished, so that, apparently by the 6th century, nothing seems to have been written in Parthian as a living language. A few short private inscriptions in Parthian language and script were found on rock-faces in southern Khorasan, that is, within the territory of Parthia proper; but it is thought that none is later than fourth century CE. [Antoine Ghilain](#) (q.v.) believed that the disappearance of Parthian as a living language took place in the 5th century (p. 28). Moḥammad b. Aḥmad K̅vārazmi (d. ca. 380/990), however, writes (p. 117) that the Sasanian kings conversed in this language in their gatherings (*majāles*). If this is true, then apparently, because of its prestige, Parthian was still used in court circles as an esteemed language for some time after having lost popular currency (see Lazard, 1971, pp. 378-80).

In the Islamic period, we see in Khorasan the use of a developed form of Pārsīg, or Pārsi, which would later be called Fārsi, or Pārsi/Fārsi-e Dari, and in Arabic *al-fāresiya al-dariya* (see [DARI](#)). Ebn al-Moqaffa', an Iranian who wrote in Arabic, said that Pārsi-e dari was the language in Sasanian times of the



capital city Madā'en/Ctesiphon (q.v.); it was also one of the languages of the people of Khorasan and the east, and was based on the language of Balk (q.v.; apud Ebn al-Nadim, ed. Tajaddod, p. 15, tr. Dodge, I, p. 24). Wā'eẓ Balkī (fl. 1214) also stated, quoting Naẓr b. Šomayl (122-204/740-820), that Dari is the language of the people of Balk (pp. 29-30). Ebn al-Moqaffa's considering Dari to have been dominated by the language of Balk apparently means that the standard form of Dari was the one current in Balk. Abu 'Abd-Allāh Maqdesi's statement (p. 334) that the language of Balk is "the best" seems to support this view. Ebn al-Moqaffa's description of the languages of Iran—Pahlavi, Pārsi, Dari, Soryāni, and Khuzi (Ebn al-Nadim, ed. Tajaddod, p.15, tr. Dodge, I, p. 24) indicates the variety of languages existing in Iran at the end of the Sasanian period.

Ebn al-Moqaffa's reference to Balk—and, later, that by Naẓr b. Šomayl—shows that at the end of the Sasanian period Dari had spread from Ctesiphon (q.v.), the Sasanian capital, to Khorasan. Joseph Markwart (q.v.) states that, around the end of this period, Middle Persian had probably reached Toḡarestān (the region of Balk; see BACTRIA), and that later, apparently at the beginning of the Arab domination, appeared as the language of general exchange and everyday interactions (p. 89). Arthur Christensen (q.v.; I, p. 5) regarded the transfer of troops to the east and the establishment of military bases there for the purpose of resisting invaders from Central Asia as the predominant factor leading to the general use of Dari in Khorasan.

We know that attacks on Khorasan by the Chionites (q.v.) began in the 4th century. The first entrance of Dari into Khorasan probably took place in the same century or, as is more likely, beginning in the 5th century. In Khorasan, Dari was profoundly influenced by Parthian. In addition to a great number of words, it was also influenced by Parthian with respect to phonetics and phonology as well as grammar. Wolfgang Lenz (q.v.) listed many Parthian words used in Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma* (pp. 251-316). Of course, a number of Parthian forms and roots are also notable in Middle Persian—or, in the terminology of some scholars, "Zoroastrian Pahlavi" (=Middle Persian) or "book Pahlavi" (*Pahlavi-ye ketābi*). These elements probably entered the official language from the very beginning of Sasanian rule, when Pārsīg became the official language of the court. For example, the word *čiš*, meaning *čiz* 'thing', entered Middle Persian from Parthian; the original southern form, *tis*, also appears in some Judeo-Persian texts, and it is its more ancient form, **tsis*, which is today pronounced *t s es* in Davān, a village to the



northeast of *Kāzerun* (q.v.). The word *čiz* is probably itself also an altered form of Parthian *čiš*. The aorist root of the verb *dādan* ‘to give’ is *day* in Manichean Middle Persian, but *dah* in Parthian. The Persian word *ranj* ‘trouble, suffering’ is also *ranj* in Parthian, and *ranj* in Middle Persian, taken from Parthian; the Manichean Middle Persian form is *ranz*. The word *panj* ‘five’ is *panj* in both Parthian and Persian, but *panz* in Manichean Middle Persian. The forms *dah*, *ranj*, and *panj* did not therefore enter New Persian directly from Parthian, but through Middle Persian.

We do not have much information about Dari in the late Sasanian period. The oldest examples of Dari Persian are phrases attributed to Sasanian rulers, or others, found in Arabic sources (see Šādeqi, 1978). Apart from these phrases, we also have two letters in Judeo-Persian, in Hebrew script. One of these letters is deficient, as four sides of it have perished; therefore many sentences are incomplete. This letter was found by Sir *Aurel Stein* (q.v.) in the late 19th century in the ruins of *Dandān Öiliq* (q.v.), and it is thus known as the “Dandān Öiliq Letter.” A number of scholars have studied this letter, including Bo Utas, to whose transcription and translation of the text Gilbert Lazard (1988) has provided some emendations. The language of this letter is Dari Persian, but very ancient, perhaps from the mid-8th century. The *ergative constructions* (q.v.) of transitive verbs in the past are absent from this letter. The past and past perfect tenses correspond to their forms in classical Dari Persian: *foruḵta bud* ‘he had sold’; *foruḵta buda ast* ‘he had had sold’. But instead of *ke* at the beginning of a relative clause, as in Middle Persian, *ī* is used: *kār-ī farmudi-aš saḵt konom tā karda bovad* ‘I will insist till the work you ordered is done’. This construction is also seen sometimes in texts from the 11th and 12th centuries (see below). There is only one ancient word in this letter that is not seen in classical texts: *bendom* ‘I find’, *bendādom* ‘I found’ (MPers. *windādan*). W. B. Henning (q.v.) thought that the 8th century was too early for the writing of this letter (Henning, 1958, pp. 79-80); however, the extreme scarcity of Arabic words in it may support the suggestion of the 8th century as the date of its composition. The word *rikēbayn*, a mispronunciation (*emāla*: pronouncing *ā* as *ē*) of *rekābayn* ‘stirrups’ is apparently the only Arabic word. On the other hand, there are two Sogdian words, *cmkwy* ‘harp’ and *ndryk* ‘eunuch,’ in it, which may indicate the letter’s connection with some decades later than the beginning of the 8th century.

Several years ago, the first page of another commercial letter in Judeo-Persian was found, which is nearly complete and intact. Two Chinese scholars, Shi



Guang and Zhang Zhan, published this letter in 2008 and added detailed comments on it in Chinese (see also Yoshida). In Lazard's 2014 article, based on the reading of "an unknown individual" (Lazard's words), brief information was given on the letter's linguistic characteristics, which are summarized here: They include early pronunciations, such as *abā* 'with', *andar* 'in', and *ayāftan* 'to find'; the conditional mode in Middle Persian forms such as *agar...rasād* 'should he/it...arrive', and *nāmada bād* 'let it not happen'; passive adjectives are used in the present perfect without the suffix *-a*: *nebešt budi* 'it was written'; the sign for the enclitic *ežāfa* (q.v.) is *-i* instead of *ke* at the beginning of a relative clause, such as: *ān-e nebešt budi* 'that which was written' (Lazard, 2014, p. 90). *Kasra* instead of *ke* is also seen in some Persian texts (see Šādeqi, 2016, pp. 3-7). Given the fact that a closed community, such as the Jewish community in a predominantly Muslim society, would tend to be more conservative with respect to language, one cannot date such documents with any degree of precision. What is certain is that this letter has an early date, and it was probably written around the 8th century.

Another early text, preserved with the Manichaen fragments from Turfan in Berlin, is in a non-Persian script. It consists of two pages of a translation of the Psalms into Persian in Syriac script. In 1915, Friedrich Müller published the upper section of these two pages (pp. 215 ff.). Much later, Werner Sundermann discovered another part of these two leaves, and published all the existing segments with a re-examination of the text published by Müller (1974, pp. 441-52). In 2011, Nicholas Sims-Williams undertook a new transcription, translation, and publication of this text. It, too, has early characteristics, such as the use of the gerund without the suffix *-a*, as in *payrāst budand* 'they were prepared'; the use of preposition *p=pe* or *pa* instead of *be*, which is seen in some other Persian texts such as the *Tafsir-e Qor'ān-e pāk* and the Judeo-Persian text published by David Neil MacKenzie (q.v.; 1968); the use of the present stem of the verb *dādan* with *t* instead of *d*, which is still used in Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and eastern Iranian Khorasan: *thyd* 'give', *thd* 'gives', etc.; the use of some words that apparently are not used in Dari Persian, such as *pādyāvand* 'strong', which occurs also in MacKenzie's text: *ram* meaning *mardom* 'people'; *gorāg* for *kalāg* 'crow' (seen also in Baluchi); *mānešn* for *kāna* 'house' (evidently a historical spelling for *mānešt*); *jud-ābitar* for *košktar* 'drier'; *kāmad*, from the verb *kāmestan* meaning *kāstan* 'to want'; *ē-rā-ke* for *zirāke* 'because'. Only two Arabic words are found in this text: *ḥadd* 'border' and *jomla* in *jomlagi* 'summation'. This translation is probably from the 9th



century; but in it some dialect words may also be seen.

A number of texts from the 10th and 11th centuries also contain early and dialectal characteristics, some of which will be dealt with at the end of this article. But many Khorasani texts of this period are written in standard classical Persian; and with the exception of early words, which later fell completely out of currency, there are no dialect words in these texts. Various classical, standard, 10th and 11th-century texts substantiate this claim: Moḥammad Ġazāli (q.v.; 450-505/1058-1111) wrote two books, *Kimiā-ye sa'ādat* (q.v.) and *Naṣiḥat al-moluk*, in standard classical Persian, in which almost no dialectal characteristics can be seen, or else such words are very few. For instance, such words in the *Kimiā*, which became virtually obsolete after the 12th century, include: *āzmāneš*, for *āzmāyeš* 'trial, test'; *asta* for *hasta* 'fruit stone, pit'; *bestāk* along with *gostāk* 'overly familiar (persons)', 'bold, rude'; *bonješk* for *gonješk* 'sparrow' (*Naṣiḥat al-moluk*, p. 184); *neḡuša*, meaning "secretly listening to someone, eavesdropping," for *niōša*; *bāzidan* for *bāktan* 'playing; gambling' (in the context of chess, gambling and pigeon-flying), from Middle Persian *wāzidan*; and some infinitives and analogical past tense verbs such as *sarāyidan* for *sorudan* 'to sing, recite' and *jahidan* for *jastan* 'to jump'. The Middle Persian consonant *w* changes to *g* or *b* in New Persian; and the forms *bestāk* and *bonješk* cannot be considered dialectal.

In the *Naṣiḥat al-moluk* as well there are only a few early and dialectal forms, such as *kuhan=kwhn* for *kohan* 'old, ancient' (p. 67); *kahriz* for *kāriz* (q.v.) 'subterranean canal' (pp. 189, 242); *āḡāz* for *āvāz* 'voice, sound' (p. 297); *šugin* for *šukgen* 'dirty'; *diruz* for *diruz* 'yesterday'; *zafān/zufān* for *zabān* 'tongue, language' (p. 169).

The situation is the same for the language of Neẓām-al-Molk Ṭusi's (408-85/1018-92) *Siar al-moluk* (qq.v.). It has only a few early or dialect words, such

as: *rawišn* for *raveš* 'conduct'; *bērān* for *virān* 'ruined'; *ādēn* for *āyin* 'custom'; *tābān* for *tāvān* 'compensation'; *barzidan* for *varzidan* 'work, practice'; *avām* for *w/vām* 'loan, debt', from Middle Persian *abām*; and *F/Vistā* for Avesta (pp. 258, 265).

It is also notable that Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma*, composed earlier than *Siar al-moluk*, was also written in standard classical Persian. Some particular forms, such as *miža* for *moža* 'eyelash/es'; *goyāzanda* for *godāzanda* 'boiling;



burning'; *bad-Irān* for *ba-Irān* 'to Iran'; *bad-Afrāsiāb* for *ba-Afrāsiāb* 'to Afrāsiāb', appear in the Florence manuscript dated 1217-18 and have entered Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh's edition. Except for *bad* instead of *ba/e*, these are dialectal. The same is true of the works of the poets of the Ghaznavid (q.v.) period, such as Farroḳi Sistāni, 'Onṣori (qq.v.), and others, which have almost no dialectal elements. Maḳdesi states that the language of Ṭus and Nesā (Nisa, q.v.) is close to the language of Nishapur (p. 334). Therefore, the view of Parviz Khanlari (q.v.), who maintained that Persian appeared in its classical form in the 6th century (Kānlari, I, pp. 269-75), seems to be incorrect. This language was separated from the languages of various regions of Khorasan, which had their own dialectal forms or possibly early forms no longer current in classical Persian, and was not the language of any particular region—just as official Middle Persian was also not the language of any particular region, and had, several centuries earlier, become separated from the Middle Persian current in Fārs, which later acquired the status of a dialect.

One can reasonably suppose that the Khorasani writers who wrote in classical Persian spoke a local form of Persian in their own towns or villages. Here, we will not be concerned with describing classical Persian, which has, with some changes, survived to the present time, but will only study the characteristics of texts whose authors were influenced by their own local form of Persian. From among the huge number of such texts, we will only discuss those written in two major cities/regions of Khorasan: Nishapur and Herat (qq.v.). Then we will consider various types of Persian current in several Khorasan regions at the present time. However, it should be noted that Asadi Ṭusi (q.v., d. 465/1072-73) collected in his *Loḡat-e fors* early and dialectal words and forms found in the poetry of the Samanid and Ghaznavid periods. Some of these words were borrowed from Sogdian, such as *naḡz* 'elegant, precious'; *faḡ* 'idol'; *tart-o mart* 'ruined, useless'; and others, which were pointed out by Henning (1939, p. 94). Some others, with the consonant *l*, came from Balk, such as *linj* 'to draw out'; *alfaydan* for *anduktan* 'to accumulate'; and *mol* 'wine' (see Lurje and Yakubovich, 2017, pp. 319-41). Some others were taken from other eastern Iranian languages, such as *espayōl* or *aspyōl*, meaning *esparza* and *bazraqatunā* 'fleawort', which the dictionaries define as "horse's ears," and which was taken from one of the eastern languages, such as Sangliči or Eškāšemi (q.v.), because *guš* 'ear' is pronounced *voḷ* in Sangliči and *vol* in Eškāšemi (Morgenstierne II, p. 394).

Characteristics of Nishapuri Persian. The first person to point out the



characteristics of Nishapuri Persian was Maqdesi (p. 334). He states that the language of Nishapur is “eloquent and easily understandable,” except that at the beginning of words, that is, in the imperative form, they put a *kasra* and add *y* (=ē) as in *bē-gō* ‘say’ and *bē-šaw* ‘go’ and add a useless *s* to present perfect verb forms, as in *beḵvard-ast-i* for *ḵvarda-i* ‘you have eaten’; *be-goft-ast-i* for *gofta-i* ‘you have said’; and *be-koft-ast-i* for *kofta-i* ‘you have slept’.

Apparently, the only text that is specified as composed in the Nishapuri language is a *do-bayti* (q.v.), which, because the words are not pointed, is incomprehensible, but apparently it rhymes in the word *bu*, meaning *bāšad* ‘may be’. This *do-bayti* is from an anthology kept in the Mar‘aši Library in Qom dated 1252 (see Afšār, p. 6). In the *Asrār al-tawḥid*, the word *nāvona* ‘a used bed-sheet’ has been recognized as clearly Nishapuri (Mayhani, p. 80). In Moḥammad b. Abi’l-Barakāt Jawhari Nišāpuri’s *Jawāher-nāma* (q.v.; dated 1196), several Nishapuri words have also been noted (see Neẓāmi, pp. 67, 167, etc.). From the fact that the above-mentioned *do-bayti* has been clearly recognized as Nishapuri, we may conclude that the language current among the inhabitants of Nishapur at the time when this poem was recited—probably in the 12th or 13th century—was different from classical Persian. On the basis of some expressions related from Abu Sa‘id b. Abi’l-Ḳayr (q.v.) in the *Asrār al-tawḥid* (if these are indeed attributable to Nishapur and not to Abu Sa‘id’s birthplace, Mayhana), there were also grammatical differences in the language of the Nishapuris. Someone asked Abu Sa‘id: *Ma-rā ba-paḍir* ‘Accept me’. The shaikh said: *Ne-t wā*, meaning *na-bāyad-at* ‘It is not appropriate for you’; *ma-t bēnamā, enšā’ Allāh mabinamat* ‘God willing, I won’t see you’ (see Mayhani, introd., p. 109, text, p. 116).

In order to acquire some knowledge of the characteristics of Nishapuri Persian, we shall look at some texts that were definitely written in Nishapur. Then we shall add to these the characteristics of other texts written in some towns and villages around Nishapur and share some linguistic features with the Nishapuri texts. These texts consist of the *Tafsir* by ‘Atiq Nišāpuri Surābāni (erroneously: Surābādi; d. 494/1100), published on the basis of the Torbat-e Jām manuscript as *Tarjama wa qeṣṣaha-ye Qor’ān*; Maydāni Nišāpuri’s (d. 518/1124) *al-Sāmi fi’l-asāmi*; Abu Ja‘far Bayhaqi’s (d. 544/1150) *Tāj al-mašāder*; Abu ‘Abd-Allāh Zawzani’s (d. 486/1093) *Ketāb al-mašāder*; the *Tafsir-e Šonqoši*; and an early partial translation of the Qor’an published as *Tarjama-i āhangin az do joz’-e Qor’ān*. The characteristics of Surābāni’s *Tafsir* were briefly studied by Lazard (1963).



The suffix denoting continuous action of the verb in the past and the “unreal/irrealis mood” conditional in Surābāni is *-ēḡ* instead of classical Persian *-ē* (see Lazard, 1963, sec. 450). The same pronunciation existed in Herat (see below).

The *-ē* indicating the indefinite article in Surābāni is usually shortened to *-e*: *asb-e* for *asb-i* ‘a horse’; *waqt-e* for *waqt-i* ‘a time’; *gomān-e* for *gomān-i* ‘a belief, assumption’.

In Surābāni, the *Tarjama-i āhangin*, Bayhaqi, Zawzani and Maydāni, the preverb *farāz* is changed to *fā(z)* or used along with it (i.e., *farāz*; see Sādeqi, 2012, p. 357).

In the *Tarjama-i āhangin* and Maydāni the words *mehin* and *behin* are found as *mēhēn* and *bēhēn* ‘greatest’, ‘best’. The form *bēhēn* is also found in Zawzani (Sādeqi, 2012, p. 357).

In Surābāni, the final consonants of words following a vowel or a vowel plus consonant are usually dropped; for example, *hanu* for *hanuz* ‘still’; *hazā* for *hazār* ‘a thousand’; *darnāk* for *dardnāk* ‘painful’; *sa* for *sar* ‘head’; *ba-dānas* for *ba-dānest* ‘he/she knew’.

Initial *g* or *v/w* of Middle Persian changes to *b* in some words: *beraviḡan* for *geraviḡan* ‘to admire; follow; ally with’ (Surābāni; *Tarjama-i āhangin*; Šonqoši); *binjiḡan* for *gonjidan* ‘to be contained (in)’ (*Tarjama-i āhangin*); *bezand* for *gazand* ‘wound’ (Šonqoši); *barzidan* for *varzidan* ‘to work, practice’ (Bayhaqi; Zawzani).

The consonant *ḡ* indicating the second person plural of verbs is dropped in Surābāni: *kardi* for *kardiḡ* ‘you did’; *bāši* for *bāšiḡ* ‘you might be, you are’, etc.

In Surābāni the nasal *n* after the long vowel *ā* is sometimes dropped: *išā* for *išān* ‘they’; *āšyā* for *āšyān* ‘nest’; *nā-nevisandegā* for *nā-nevisandegān* ‘not writers’).

In Surābāni verb endings in many cases take the following forms:

Singular	Plural
1st <i>-ym = -ēm</i>	<i>-m = -em</i>
2nd <i>-y = i</i>	<i>-nd = -end</i> or <i>-and</i> ; -
3rd <i>-d = aḡ; yḡ = ēḡ</i>	<i>d = -eḡ</i>
	<i>-yḡ = -ēḡ</i>



In cases where in classical Persian the direct object takes *-rā*, in Surābāni in many instances this particle is not used.

After the verb *goftan* ‘to say’, where in classical and modern Persian the connective/relative *ke* is used, in this text, as in Middle Persian, *kū* is used.

Heravi Persian. ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān Jāmi (q.v.) states in the introductory pages to his *Nafaḥāt al-ons* that ‘Abd-Allāh Anṣāri (q.v.) wrote his *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣufiyya* in the *Heravi* (Herati) language. In the authentic writings of Anṣāri, there are linguistic characteristics that do not appear in other contemporary texts. We have three Persian books of his: the *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣufiyya*; part of a Qor’ān commentary (*tafsir*) attributed to him; and another text of his sayings and (private) prayers (*monājāt*, q.v.), collected under the title *Kalamāt-e Šayḳ-al-Eslām* (ed. Šafi’i Kadkani).

The *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣufiyya* was first studied in 1923 by Vladimir Ivanow (q.v.), who noted most of its linguistic characteristics. Ivanow’s edition was based on the only manuscript known at the time, which is now held by the Asiatic Society of Bengal and is dated to 1606. Gilbert Lazard’s description (1963) is also based on Ivanow’s edition. The data for the present discussion are taken from the edition by Moḥammad Sarvar Mawlā’i (1983), which he based on five manuscripts. In his introduction, Sarvar Mawlā’i discussed the book’s linguistic characteristics in detail (see Anṣāri, 1983, introd., pp. 119-76). We have also taken note of Ivanow’s comments.

Characteristics of the Ṭabaqāt. The third person singular of the present tense of the verb *budan* ‘to be’ is *-id* instead of *ast*. The conditional present forms of this verb are also as follows: *bm* (= *bovam*), *by* (= *bovi*, *bāši*), *nby* (= *nabāši*), *byd* (= *bovid*, *bāšid*), *bnd* (= *bovand*, *bāšand*). In one instance, instead of *id*, *hʷn* is used (in two manuscripts), or *hʷnʷ* (in one other manuscript; p. 157). *Hʷn* is also used several times in Maybodi’s *Kašf al-asrār*, which is based on Anṣāri’s *Tafsir* (introd., p. 145), and also in *Bakš-i az Tafsir* (Anṣāri, 1996, pp. 213, 229).

The forms for the simple present tense of the verb *šodan* ‘to become’ are: *šm*, for *šavam*; *šy*, for *šavi*; *šyd*, for *šavid*; and *šnd* for *šavand*.

The personal pronoun *mā* ‘we’ takes the form *amā*.

-ēd is used for *-ē*, the indicator for an unachieved conditional in classical Persian.



The ergative construction is used in several instances: *ō-t ba če bešnākt*, for *urā ba-če bešnākti* ‘by what [features, signs] did you recognize him’ (Anšāri, 1983, p. 636); *giram ke-m to be ‘elm yāft*, for classical *giram ke man to-rā ba-‘elm yāftam* ‘let [us] presume that I found [i.e., recognized] you by [my] knowledge’ (Anšāri, 1983, p. 167); *az donyā biāmadi wa-at marā našnākt*, for *az donyā biyāmadi va ma-rā na-šenākti*, ‘you came from the world and did not recognize me’ (Anšāri, 1983, p. 644). This construction had gone unnoticed by any earlier scholars of Anšāri’s works.

Use of the verb *kāmestan/kāmidan* ‘to desire, to want’ before another verb denotes “to be about to” do something indicated by the verb.

The verbs *davidan* ‘to run’ and *tāftan* ‘to shine (sun), to be warm’ are used in the forms *davestan* and (*var, dar*) *tā(w)/bestan* (compare the use of *k^vāhistan* for *k^vāstan* in *Bakš-i az Tafsir*; Anšāri, 1996, pp. 131, 137).

The *-ē* of the indefinite article is shortened to *-e*: *nur-e (=nur-i) tāwid* ‘a light shone’; *qawm-e (=qawm-i)* ‘a people, group’ (Anšāri, 1983, pp. 213, 541).

Between two vowels, or after a vowel, *b* is changed to *v/w*.

It uses *ī, ē* instead of *in, u* from Middle Persian *ēd* ‘this’.

It uses *-ī* instead of the connective *ke* (Anšāri, 1983, p. 515).

It uses *ke* in the sense of *waqt-i ke*, ‘when...’ (Anšāri, 1983, p. 631).

It uses *a* in the sense of *āngāh* ‘then’, along with a suffix pronoun, exactly as the form is used in Middle Persian, but pronounced *ā*: *ar-aš dust yāft, aš nur yāft, var dar ṭalab be-mirad, aš šafi’ yāft* ‘If he found him as a friend, then he found a light’ (Anšāri, 1983, p. 136).

It uses *anō* ‘there’ from Middle Persian *ānōh* ‘there’.

The vocabulary of this and other *Heravi* (Herati) texts has been studied in detail by ‘Ali Rawāqi (2016).

Characteristics of “Bakš-i az Tafsir”. The third person singular in the present potential tense is constructed with *-ā*, in the form used in Parthian: *tā dar yād dārā zirakān va-kodāvandān-e kerad* ‘So that the clever and the wise remember’ (Anšāri, 1996, p. 237). In Parthian, this suffix is *-ā(h)*. The third person singular in this tense occurs in this form in some other texts as well,



among them the poetry of Mawlawi (Rumi; see Abu'l-Qāsemi, p. 63). This construction is also seen in the *Asrār al-tawhīd*: 'ayš koš bā 'may the feast be enjoyed' (Mayhani, p. 224). But in this book, this suffix has also spread to the first and second persons singular: *Mat binamā ba morād rasida-i* 'I hope to see you not having obtained your wish' (Mayhani, p. 295); *Hič kār-rā mašā'ia* 'I hope you were suited for no work' (Mayhani, p. 302); *Nābinā gardiā* 'May you turn blind' (Mayhani, p. 247). This construction is also seen in the Persian Psalms, as Sims-Williams has noted (p. 368). In Moḥammad Rāzi's *al-Mo'jam*, the *alef* (ā) at the end of these forms is considered the *alef-e do'ā* 'the *alef* of prayer, wish' (Rāzi, p. 155).

The indicator of the third person singular present tense takes the form *-ēd*: *k'āhid* for *k'āhad* 'he wants' and *namā'id* for *namāyad* 'it shows' (Anṣāri, 1996, pp. 234, 254).

The negative particle *na-* is used before the auxiliary verb, as in *dānesta na'id* for *nadānasta'id* 'you didn't know' (ibid., p. 209).

It uses *tā* 'so that, until' in the sense of *yā* 'or', from Old Persian *yatā*.

It uses *yām* for *yā*, from Middle Persian *ayāb* 'or', changing the final *b* to *m*. *Yām* is also used in several other texts, as in Qomi's *Tarjama-ye Tārik-e Qom* (p. 11), *K'ābgozāri* (p. 52) and, repeatedly, in Ṭusi's *'Ajā'eb al-maḵluqāt*.

Došvār 'difficult' is pronounced *dežvār*, which is the Parthian pronunciation.

Viža is used in the form *oviža* 'special' (Anṣāri, 1996, pp. 140, 185, 290).

Man 'I' is vowelled *men*.

Characteristics of "Kalamāt-e Šayḵ-al-Eslām." This text shows virtually the same features as the other two texts attributed to Anṣāri, such as the ergative construction (Anṣāri, 2015, p. 249); *-i* is used instead of relative *ke* (pp. 256, 258, etc.); *-i* instead of the *kasra* of the *ežāfa* (ibid., pp. 232, 233); *ke* instead of *har ke* 'whoever' (pp. 198, 213, 283); shortening of *-ē* of the indefinite particle to *-e* (pp. 211, 217, etc.); *kāmestan* used in the sense of *nazdik budan* 'being near, about to' (p. 252); the use of early forms, such as *joḍ* for *joz* 'except' (pp. 226, 228, etc.); *amā* for *mā* 'we' (p. 256); *i* (=ē) meaning *in* 'this' (p. 243); *dežvāri* for *došvāri* 'difficulty' (p. 253); *ezdudan* for *zedudan* 'to rub off' (pp. 235, 236, 267). Dialectal forms also occur: *šenāḡ*, *šenā* 'swimming', in place of *šināw* (=senāḡ) (p. 219); *bēhāna* for *behāna* 'figurative' or 'invalid' (as opposed to *ḥaqq*



‘truth’); زبانه = *zavān* or *zafān* ‘language, tongue’ (p. 182), but in other instances in the forms *zavān* or *zafān*; *banda’i* for *bandagi* ‘servitude’; *amāl* for *hamāl* ‘equal’ (pp. 220, 250, 255); *ayna* (ʾynh) for *āyena* ‘mirror’ (pp. 259, 264).

Karyā (*kry*) is used for *karidār* ‘buyer’ (p. 281; also in the *Ṭabaqāt*, Anṣārī, 1983, p. 412); *āguš* for *āgūš* ‘bosom’ (p. 284); *aniz*, repeatedly for *niz* ‘also’; *f*-, in place of *b*-, (pp. 210, 211, 257); *far* for *bar* ‘upon’ (p. 215); *fā*, *pā*, along with *farā*; *vā* (= *bā*) ‘with’ (p. 231); *-em*, for *-ēm*, the indicator of the first person plural: *agar az dustānem kašyat az miān bardār va agar az mehmānānem nikumān dār* ‘If we are friends, put fear aside, and if we are guests, treat us with respect’. In many words, *b* between two vowels is changed to *v* or *w*.

The characteristics of modern Heravi/Herati Persian are discussed by Moḥammad Āṣef Fekrat. On the basis of his research, two historical vowels, *ō* and *ē*, are still used in Herat. The endings of verbs in the simple past are: *-om*, *-i*, *-o*, *-ēm*, *-ēm*, and *-am*. The future tense is formed by the addition of the unconjugated verb *kā* to the beginning of the simple past forms (e.g., ... *kā-raftom*, etc.). At the end of the third person singular of the simple past, just as in some other Iranian Khorasani languages, the suffix *-ak* is added (e.g., *goftak*, for *goft* ‘he said’). The progressive aspect is formed by adding the particle *hay* or *hay hay* in an unchangeable form before the simple present and the past progressive tenses: *hay menwesēm* (= *dārim minevisim*) ‘we are writing’; *hay hay mēzad* ‘he kept on striking’.

Today, dialects and local forms of Persian are used in different regions of Khorasan; some of these have distinctive grammatical constructions not taken from classical Persian. Here will be discussed the language of three towns for which relatively good descriptions are available.

Persian current in Nishapur. We have no description of Nishapuri Persian; but we have more information about Sabzavār, which neighbors Nishapur. We have good descriptions of the village of Boruḡan, from the rural district of Kāh in Bāštīn section from the Dāvārzān subprovince, which is not that far from Sabzavār. Apparently the language of this village differs little from that of the regions around Sabzavār. In Boruḡan, the two vowels /*ō*/ and /*ē*/ still exist, and create some contrast (see Boruḡani). The compound consonant /*k^v*/ also still exists in some words. The group of diphthongs creates contrast: /*aw*/ with /*ow*/ and /*ay*/ with /*ey*/. In some words, the guttural consonant *ḥ* occurs in words of Arabic origin such as *haykal* and also in Persian words such as *handaq* ‘moat, trench’ (Ar. *kandaq*): thus, *ḥaykal*, *ḥandaq*.



At the beginning of verb forms in the simple past, the present perfect, and the progressive pluperfect, the preverbs *be/-bo* are added: *beraftom* for *raftam* ‘I went’; *boḳordēyom* for *ḳorda-am* ‘I have eaten’; *beḳereye-biyom* for *ḳarida budam* ‘I had bought’. With the addition of the negative indicator *na-* to these forms, the preverb/prefix *be/bo* is dropped; but in the village of Češām (former Češom), the negative indicator follows *be/bo*: *benaref* for *naraft* ‘he didn’t go’. In the imperative or the conditional in the sense of the imperative, *na-* follows *o/be*: *benāškeni* for *naškeni* ‘don’t break (it)’. In the third person singular of the simple past, as in Herati/Heravi Persian as well as some other varieties of Khorasani Persian, including Qučān, the suffix *-ek* (*-ak* in Qučān) is added: *gofték* for *goft* ‘said’.

In the future tense also, as in Herati, the word *ḳa*, from the verb *ḳvāstan*, is placed before the conjugated forms of the verb in question: *ḳareftom* for *ḳvāham raft*, *ḳa refti* for *ḳvāhi raft*, etc. This construction also occurs in Sabzavar and other villages, but is becoming less frequent. In the case of the negative, the negative indicator *na-* comes before *ḳa*: *na-ḳa reftom* for *na-ḳvāham raft* ‘I will not go’.

Preverbs are widely used: *vā* as in *vāndōḳtan*, for *andāḳtan va pahn kardan* ‘to spread out, for example a tablecloth or bedding’; *ver*, as in *verkešeyan* for *kašidan* ‘to pull’; *de/di* as in *debistan* for *bastan* ‘tie, bind’; *digziyan* for *gozidan* ‘to choose’; *foru*, as in *foru-kuftan* ‘to fight with someone and injure him’; *de*, as in *de-kuftan* ‘to press one’s foot on, turn around, twist’.

The first part of the word *howsā* ‘there’ is probably borrowed from Parthian *hō*.

A detailed lexicon of the dialect of the town of Sabzavār has been compiled by Ḥasan Moḥtašam (1996). The book’s introduction contains a brief, sixteen-page discussion of the differences between Sabzavāri and “official” Persian. Some of these differences, which also differ from what has been written above, are as follows: In Sabzavāri Persian, there is an initial consonant cluster produced by dropping the vowel between two consonants, e.g., *psar* for *pesar* ‘son, boy’; *bča* for *bačča* ‘child’; *plašt* for *palašt* ‘impure’.

The vowel *ē* changes to *e*, as in *mek*, for *mēḳ* ‘nail’; *sev* for *sēv* ‘apple’; *bed* for *bēd* ‘willow’; *zer* for *zēr* ‘beneath’. But *ō* has changed to *u* (modern): *rud* for classical *rōd* ‘river’; *pust* for classical *pōst* ‘skin, hide’.



The vowel *ū* has changed to *ī* (modern *i*): *'aris, tābit, ami*, for *'arus* 'bride'; *tābut* 'a bier, coffin'; and *amu* 'a paternal uncle; churn'.

K^va is changed to *kā*, as in *noḳād* for *noḳod* 'bean'; *kārden* for *ḳordan* 'to eat'. Apparently the intermediary stage in this development was *kō*, because the words *rowšan* 'bright' and *rowqan* 'oil' are pronounced *rāšan* and *rāqan*. *Rōbāh* 'fox' becomes *rāvā*; *kahwan* becomes *kōhan*, then *kāhan* 'old'.

Ān and *ām* have changed to *on* and *om*: *meydon* for *meydān* 'square'; *non* for *nān* 'bread'; *bādom* for *bādām* 'almond'. In some words, the *n* has been dropped and the *ā* changed to *-u*: *āvizu* for *āvizān* 'hanging'; *resmu* for *rismān* 'rope'; *miyu* for *miān* 'middle'.

The vowel *ā* in the initial syllable of a word usually becomes *e*, and sometimes *a*: *evešu* for *āvišan* 'oregano'; *zeni* for *zānu* 'knee'; *beleš* for *bāleš* 'pillow'; *jerow* for *jāru* 'broom'. The change of *ā* in the initial syllable to *a* usually appears in forms in which the vowel in the second syllable is already *a*: *ama* for *āmad* 'he came'; *ataš* for *ātaš* 'fire'; *ḳana* for *ḳāna* 'house'; *ahan* for *āhan* 'iron'.

Instead of the (attributive) suffix *-i, -u* is used: *ḳemiru* for *ḳamiri* 'doughy'; *česbu* for *časbi* 'sticky'; *noḳādu* for *noḳodi*, 'related to peas'.

The simple past, present perfect, past perfect and past conditional are used with the preverb *be-*: *beḳārdom* for *ḳordam*, *beḳārdem* for *ḳordim*, *beḳārde* for *ḳordid*. The future is formed by adding *ḳa*, from the verb *ḳ^vāstan*, at the beginning of the conjugated forms of the verb: *ḳa-ḳārdom* for *ḳ^vāham ḳord*, *ḳa-ḳārdem* for *ḳ^vāhim ḳord*, *ḳa-ḳārde* for *ḳ^vāhid ḳord*.

Persian current in Qā'en. There is a detailed linguistic description for Qā'en, a city in southern Khorasan, by Režā Zomorrodīān (1989). Qā'eni consonants are like Persian, except that *ž* does not exist. The historical vowels *ō* and *ē* still exist in Qā'eni. There is one other vowel which does not exist in standard Persian, that is, open *ε*, as opposed to */e/, /ε̄/, and /a/*. There are also the diphthongs */au/* and */ai/*, in contrast to */ou/* and */ei/*.

In Qā'eni, the preverbs *b-/be/bo/bi* are also added at the beginning of the simple past, present perfect, past perfect and imperative forms: *bo-ḳārdom* for *ḳordam* 'I ate'; *be-baft ε yom* for *bāfta-am* 'I have woven'; *b-um ε d ε yem* for *āmada budim* 'we had come'; *bi-y-āyei* for *be-yā'id* 'Come! [pl.]'.



The future tense is constructed in the three persons singular by adding *be/bo* to the conjugated forms of the verb *ḵvāstan* and attaching the non-changeable form of the main verb: *bo-ḵom-bāf* for *ḵvāham bāft*, *be-ḵei-bāf* for *ḵvāhi bāft*, *be-ḵ ε bāf* for *ḵvāhad bāft* ‘he/she will weave, etc.’. But in all three persons plural the verb *ḵvāstan* does not change, while the main verb in question is conjugated: *be-ḵ ε -bāftem* for *ḵvāhim bāft*, *be-ḵ ε -bāftei* for *ḵvāhid bāft*, *be-ḵ ε -bāftan* for *ḵvāhand bāft*.

Preverbs are also in use, as in *va/vā*: *va-dada* for *dādan*; *va-j ε sta* for *jastan*, *jahidan* ‘to jump’. In the case of the conditional and imperative modes and future tense this preverb takes the form *vā*; in the remaining tenses and modes it is pronounced *va*.

The preverbs *v ε r* and *d ε* are also used: *V ε r*: *v ε r-ḵ ε sta* for *barḵāstan* ‘to rise’; *v ε r-gofta* for *goftan* ‘to say’; *d ε*: *d ε -b ε sta* for *bastan* ‘to close’; *d ε -ḵ ε zida* for *dar ḵazidan* ‘to hide; creep into a corner’.

The preposition *h ε* corresponds to *hā* in Māzandarāni and central dialects; it is itself derived from *frā*, the shortened form of Middle Persian *frāz* ‘forth, forward’, corresponding to classical Persian *farā(z)*. This preposition has two meanings: (1) it indicates direction, as in *h ε y bāy dada*, for *ba-bād dādan*, *farā bād dādan* ‘to cast to the winds; to waste’; (2) it denotes being in a certain place, as in *h ε tu ḵun ε*, for *dar ḵāna* ‘in the house, at home’.

There is also one postposition in Qā’eni that does not exist in Persian: *-eg ε*, which conveys the large size of the basic word: *sibeg ε* ‘large apple’; *sageg ε* ‘large dog’. Zomorrodīān has also published a lexicon of Qā’eni (2006).

Injā ‘here’ and *ānjā* ‘there’ are expressed *heiḵā* and *houḵā*. Evidently the first word is constructed from *ē+jā* and the second from *ho+jā*; *ē* has been taken from Middle Persian *ēd*, ‘this’, *hou* from Parthian *hō* ‘that’.

Persian current in Birjand. Birjand (q.v.) is south of Qā’en and is in fact the southernmost town of Khorasan. There is an old, brief description of Birjandi Persian by Vladimir Ivanow (1928, pp. 246-55), but this description is no longer relevant. Jamāl Reżā’i published a complete and precise description of Birjandi Persian in 1998. According to Reżā’i, Birjandi consonants are the same as Persian, but without *ž*. There are three long vowels, *ō*, *ā*, and *ē*, in Birjandi, and one other vowel, /ə/. This last vowel is used as the final vowel of a phrase or a



single word, and is an allophone of /a/ or /e/; for example, *ḵordā* for *ḵordan* ‘to eat’; *pardā* for *parda* ‘curtain’. The vowel /ē/ is a continuation of the older usage of /ē/; but this is not the case for /ō/, which is taken either from early /ā/ preceding /n/ and /m/, as in *jōm* for *jām* ‘cup, goblet’ and *nō(n)* for *nān* ‘bread’, or following *oh*, as in *zōr* for *zohr* ‘noon’.

Verbs, whether intransitive or transitive, are conjugated in two ways. The first construction follows the ergative construction of Middle Persian, either by using the attached pronominal suffix after the vowels *o* or *e*, or by bringing the separate pronouns before the verb, which in both cases is constructed with the unconjugated form of the verb, as in: *om gof(t)* (= *goftam* ‘I said’), *et gof(t)* (= *gofti*), *eš gof(t)* (= *goft*), *mā gof(t)* (= *goftim*), *tu gof(t)* (= *goftid*), *šu gof(t)* (= *goftand*); and *om honšast* (= *nešastam* ‘I sat’), etc.

In the case of such forms as *mo gof(t)*, *to gof(t)*, *u gof(t)*, *mā gof(t)*, *šemā gof(t)*, *unō gof(t)*, *mo honšas(t)*, in all these conjugations the prefix *be/bo* usually precedes the verb stem, as in: *om beraf(t)*, *mo beraf(t)*, unless the verb is preceded by a preverb, in which case *be/bo* is not used.

The second construction is exactly the same as in Persian, except that the prefix *be/bo* is added to all of the conjugated forms, as in *beraftom*, *bebordom*.

In the present perfect, the prefix *be/bo* is added to all forms in all conjugations.

The past continuous is formed by adding the continuous preverb *ma/me* to all forms.

The future tense has two conjugations: (1) The verb *ḵvāstan*, with the prefix *o/be*, is conjugated, while the main verb is unchanged, as in *beḵom raf(t)* for *ḵvāham raft*; (2) the auxiliary verb remains unchanged, while the main verb is conjugated, as in *beḵā raftom* for *ḵvāham raft*, *beḵā rafti* for *ḵvāhi raft*, and so on.

The negative sign *ne/a* comes after the prefix *be*: *be-ne-yārdom* for *nayāvardam* ‘I did not bring’; *da-na-basti* for *nabasti* ‘you [sg.] did not close’.

In the case of numerals, an interesting point is that in counting from twenty upwards the smaller number comes before the larger: *yakbist* for twenty-one, *nōsi* for thirty-nine, and so on.



In the case of pronouns, worth mentioning is the use of *-de* in place of the attached pronoun for the third person singular when it is an object: *ma-barem-de* for *mi-barim-aš* ‘we carry him/her/it’. The adverb *inje* for *injā* ‘here’ is also used in place of the third person singular pronominal suffix when it is a possessive pronoun: *dar-inje* for *dar-aš* ‘its door’; *šāk-inje* for *šāk-aš* ‘its branch; its horn’.

As for suffixes, there is only one not used in Persian: *-eyə*, indicating honor, esteem, nobility, wonder, and occasionally belittling: *xar-eyə*, for *kar-e bozorg* ‘large donkey’; *deraḳt-eyə* for *deraḳt-e bozorg* ‘large tree’. This is comparable to the suffix *-egε* in Qā’eni.

In attaching the *-i* of the gerund to words ending in *ə*, the intervening consonant *g* is not used, and the vowels *ə* and *-i* are changed to *-ey*: *tošney* for *tešnagi* ‘thirst’; *zendej* for *zendagi* ‘life’; and so on.

Jamāl Režā’i has also published a detailed lexicon of Birjandi (1994).

There are also descriptions of the Persian current in other cities in Khorasan, including *Esfarāyen* (q.v.) and Ṭabas; and a good number of lexicons have been published for various cities.

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