



KOJUR III. THE CALENDAR

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iii. The Calendar

The Ṭabari or Deylami year observed in Kojur consists of twelve months, thirty days each, plus five intercalary days called *petak*, concluding the year. This calendar is in line with the composition of the Jalāli calendar (fixed under the Saljuqs; see [CALENDARS ii](#)), except for the lack of the leap year in the Ṭabari calendar, with the consequence of rotating months that has led to misalignment of several months between the Ṭabari and the Persian civil calendar; in 1966, for example, the March equinox intercepted the 24th day of Unemâ (lexically kindred to the Persian month of Ābān) in the Samā village, a secluded piedmont village near Dašt-e Nazir in the southwestern district of Panjakrostāq (see [Table 1](#); for a list of the Ṭabari months as known in the villages of Samā and Kandelus, see Purkarim, pp. 23-24; Jahāngiri, pp. 184-86).

The beginning of the Ṭabari year, that is, the first day of Siamâ/Arkemâ, afforded no special occasion; instead, the spring equinox was celebrated as [Nowruz](#). The five intercalary days (*petak*) held after Unemâ were celebrated in an atmosphere of festivities, provided that they did not coincide with Shi'i mourning days observed in the lunar calendar (Purkarim, p. 24). Each Ṭabari month begins with a day called *mâr-mâ* "mother-month," on which morning the household repeats the New Year's ritual of *sâl-mej* (year-walk). A person considered to be auspicious is chosen to be the first in the new year to enter the house, a custom believed to be inviting prosperity (Purkarim, p. 21).



The most prominent festival of the Ṭabari calendar was the Tiremâ-sizde, held in the eve of the thirteenth day of the month of Tiremâ (corresponding to the extinct Tiragān festival). It involved gathering of the extended family, eating varieties of fruits and confectionery especially prepared for this night, telling tales and singing songs. The chief characteristic of the festival was a kind of trick-or-treat called *lâlšiš*. Having covered their face and pretending they are dumb (*lâl*), groups of boys would go from house to house and gently strike the residents with sticks (*šiš*), asking for treats such as dried fruit and sweets (Purkarim, pp. 24-27; Jahāngiri, pp. 185-86).

One peculiar feast, already on the verge of disappearing even in memories before receiving proper documentation, must be a remnant of Frawardēgān (see [FRAVAŠĪ](#)). It is observed on the eve of the 26th day of the Nurzēmâ, that is, early in September, in the Miḵsāz valley of Kojur (Jahāngiri, p. 187). The festivity is named variously throughout Mazandaran and eastern Gilan, as Nurzemâ-e Bisəšəš “the 26th of Nurzemâ,” Bistšiš-e Ayd “the feast of the 26th,” Mardālə Ayd “the feast of the dead,” among others (see Borjian).

The Ṭabari calendar and festivals were well intact before the modernization of Kojur. They left a deep impression on local folklore, yielding idiomatic expressions like *tərə unəmâ arkəmâ-e fərsat-ə* “you delay the tasks of Unəmâ until Arkəmâ”; *šarvinəmâ-ye bāməši* “cat of the month of Šarvin (when cats mate; a metaphor for lascivious females).”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Hušang Purkarim, “Marāsem-e ‘id-e Nowruz o jašnḥā-ye bāstāni dar yak-i az dehkadahā-ye Māzandarān,” *Honar o mardom*, ser. no. 66, 1968, pp. 19-27.