



KOROSH I. THE KOROSH PEOPLE

Geographical distribution

The Korosh (کوروش) tribe (*tāyefe*, تآیفة) is scattered across large areas of southwestern Iran, from Hormozgan all the way to Khuzestan, and onto the Iranian plateau. In general, Korosh communities are found in villages near large towns and cities, and in the suburbs of these cities. In total, the group probably numbers well over 10,000 people (Nourzaei et al., 2015), but because they are typically distributed in small groups, and are located in many communities, it is difficult to give a precise figure. Three areas with significant concentrations of Korosh are [Bandar Abbās](#), around [Shiraz](#), and across the southern part of [Fars Province](#) (ibid.) (see [Figure 1](#)).

Of these three areas, the one with the largest number of Korosh is that of Bandar Abbās in Hormozgan Province. There, Korosh are evenly divided between Bandar Abbās, where they are mostly found in the eastern suburbs, and the villages between Bandar Abbās and Mināb. In many of these villages, such as Jallābi and Hassan Langi, they constitute the majority of the population. There are also some Korosh living in the city of Mināb and in villages to the south, as well as to the northwest in the Rudbār District of southern [Kerman Province](#).

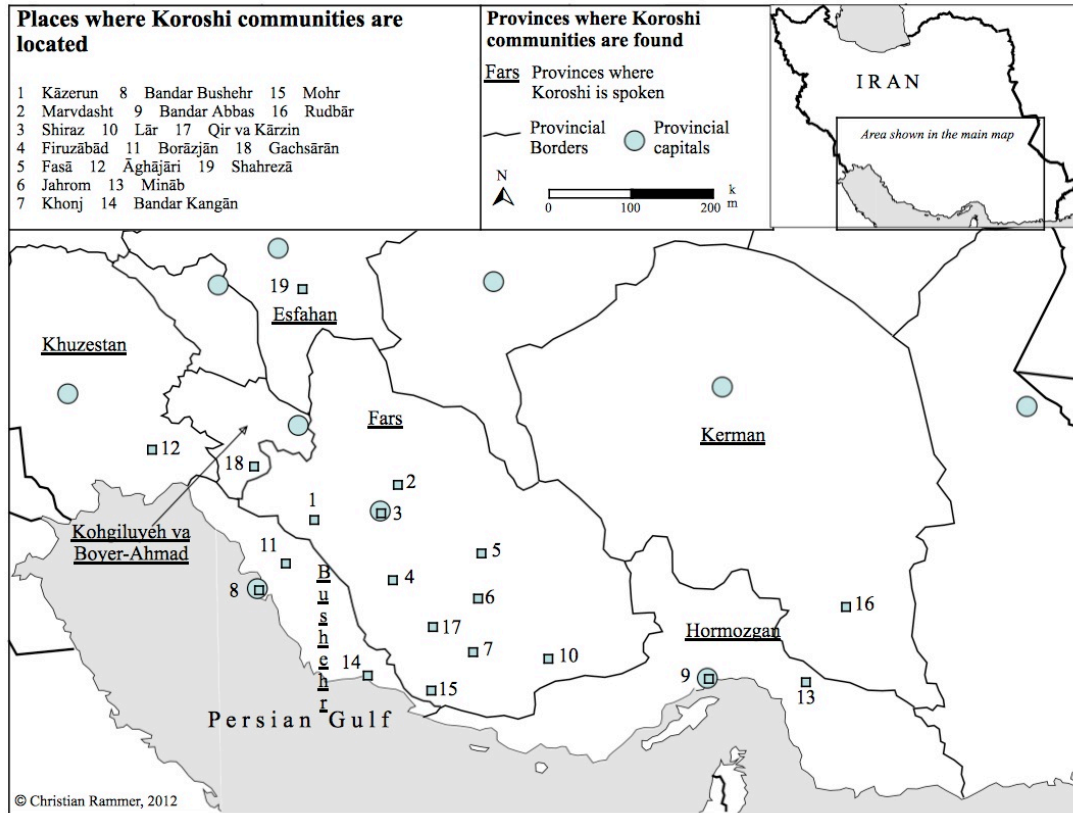


Figure 1. Map of the distribution of the Korosh. (Source: Nourzaei et al., 2015, p. 22)

A second group of Korosh are found in pockets across the southern part of Fars Province, where they live in the districts of Lār, Lāmerd, Khonj, Mohr, Qir va Kārzin, [Jahrom](#), [Fasā](#), and [Firuzābād](#). In most of these places, the Korosh live in small groups as parts of larger communities, but in the village of Galehdār, in Mohr district, they make up most of the population. There are also Korosh living near this area in several communities along the coast, from Bandar Kangān in Hormozgan Province all the way to Bandar [Bushehr](#), and in from the coast, in [Borāzjān](#).

The third concentration of Korosh is centered in the northwestern part of Fars Province, where they are located in the suburbs of Shiraz and in the districts of Marvdasht and [Kāzerun](#); in the latter district, many live in the municipality of Gereh-Bālādeh. There are also some Korosh families living in the nearby district of Gachsārān (Dogombadān) in the province of Kohgiluyeh va Boyer-Ahmad, and further away in [Āghājāri](#) (Khuzestan Province) and Shahrezā ([Esfahan](#) Province).



Origins and identity.

The name Korosh (*Koroš*) and, consequently, the ultimate ancestry of the people, has been linked by some members of the tribe to the Qoreyshi tribe of Arabia or, variously, to [Cyrus the Great](#) (*Kuroš-e kabir*).

Some oral accounts state that, several hundred years ago, the Korosh came from [Bampur](#), Dalgān, Irandegān, and the Lāshār District (all of them near [Irānshahr](#) in Sistan and Baluchestan Province), traveling from there along the Makrān coast to the Bandar Abbās area, where a large portion of the tribe has settled. Another group that makes up the Korosh may have come to Bandar Abbās from Rudbār in Kerman Province. From Bandar Abbās, the Korosh then presumably spread out to Fars Province and neighboring areas.

Although the provenance of the tribe is situated in [Balochistan](#), and the language is closely related to southern varieties of Balochi (see the beginning of the “Linguistic overview of Koroshi” in part ii, below), the Korosh have a distinct identity. Some of them confirm a historical and ethnic connection to the Baloch, but for some people in the southern Korosh communities, Korosh is seen as an autonomous tribe, and some of those in northwestern Fars Province see the tribe as affiliated with the larger Qašqā’i *il* (قبائل “tribal confederacy”; Koroshi *yel*) (see Windfuhr, 1989a, p. 248). Most Korosh clans among the various Qašqā’i tribes with whom they are associated are known to the Qašqā’i simply as *Koroš* or *Dārġa* (Nourzaei et al., 2015).

Culture and way of life. The traditional livelihood of the Korosh is animal husbandry, and camels have been an important part of this lifestyle. While those in southern areas worked for themselves as camel herders, the clans who migrated to the northwest as a result of drought eventually gained a place in the larger Qašqā’i society as camel herders for the *il*. The place of animal husbandry and, in particular, camel herding, is diminishing. Many Korosh have taken up farming, and those who have relocated to cities are often employed in industry and trade.

The musical heritage of the Korosh, as with many aspects of their culture, varies according to the regions where they are found. Especially in the north, they play a type of flute they call *kalam* (and more widely known in the area as *nay šāhmīrzā*) when driving camels. This instrument is identical to the *nal* of Balochistan. Those living in Hormozgan have *sāz* clarinets and large *dohr/dohl* drums in common with neighboring Bandari populations. Korosh women in the north are permitted to sing in the presence of men. This



contrasts with the situation in the south, where gender segregation has until recently been prominent.

Korosh communities adhere to the Shi'ite branch of Islam. Until recently, Korosh weddings were distinctive, but in the north, Koroshi wedding traditions have now been replaced by those of the Qašqā'i, and in the south, by those of Bandari city dwellers. Funerals and commemorations of deceased relatives are elaborate.

Korosh men do not wear regionally distinct clothing. Korosh women in the north wear the same colorful dress as Qašqā'i women (see [CLOTHING xxiv](#)), including a pleated dress covered by a long shirt, and a triangular scarf held on with a cloth headband. Until about the time of the Islamic Revolution of 1978-79, Korosh women in the south wore clothes similar to those worn by the Baloch. At present, they often wear a black *čādar* "chador" and share the colorful *borka* "face mask" (P. *neqāb*) in common with Bandari people.

Traditional crafts, as in other parts of Iran, include the weaving of carpets (*qāli*) and mats (*jājim*). Carpet and mat designs as well as colors are very similar to those of the Qašqā'i (see [CARPETS xiv](#)); for example, one of the patterns used by the Korosh, known as *māhī-dar-ham*, is a well-known Qašqā'i pattern. Names of other patterns include *korzakorza*, *kalleaspī*, and *kallešīrī*. Games played by children include *kawkolābar* (P. *kolāhbāzi* "hat game"), *hawaylayb* (P. *čubbāzi* "stick game"), *jammāz* (P. *šotorbāzi* "camel game"), and *alaxtar* (P. *bāzi bā yek pā* "one-legged game").

Language use and vitality.

Use of the Koroshi language (outlined in section ii, below) varies greatly among the regions where it is spoken. In the south, where Korosh represent most of the population in their communities, the language is in vigorous use by all members of the community. [Bandari](#) and (to a smaller extent) [Farsi](#) are invariably used there as languages of wider communication when Koroshi speakers come in contact with speakers of these varieties. In contrast, Koroshi speakers there use their own language when communicating with members of Baloch communities.

At the northwestern end of the Koroshi language area, multilingualism is the norm: in addition to speaking Koroshi, the Korosh here speak [Qašqā'i](#), [Persian](#), and, in the communities near Kāzerun and [Gachsārān](#), [Lori](#) as well. Because they are a minority in this segment of the language area, Koroshi tends to be



limited to home domains; and among children there, Qašqā'i and Persian are replacing Koroshi as the primary language of communication.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

see at end of section ii.