

MĀZANDARĀN: LANGUAGE AND PEOPLE
(THE STATE OF RESEARCH)

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Introduction

The province of *Māzandarān* forms a long belt south of the Caspian sea, about 480 km broad and 100 km wide. Except for the littoral strip along the coast, which is covered by humid forests, the rest of the province is mountainous. The Alborz range forms barriers parallel to the coast, while the ridges running down to the sea divide the land into a series of valleys open only to the north. The principal ridge is the Mazārchub, which separates Mazandaran proper from Tonekābon. The latter is bordered on the south by the mountain chain of Alborz separating it from the Shāhrud valley in Gilān. In central Alborz rises in isolation the immense volcanic cone of Damāvand, to the east of which stand the ranges of Bandepey, Savādkuh, Shahmīrzād, Hezārjarib, Shāhkuh, etc.

From the mountains of Mazandaran, some hundred short streams run straight down into the Caspian sea. The larger rivers of the province are, from west to east, the Sardāb-rud, the Chālus, the Harāz, which drains the region of mount Damavand and then runs past Āmol, the Bābol, the Tālār, river of Shāhi, the Tejen, of Sāri, and the Neka, which flows from east to west and its valley forms a corner between the southern chain and the mountains, which surround the gulf of Astarābād (Gorgān) on the north (see, e. g., *EI*², s. v. “Māzandarān”).

The old name of Mazandaran is Tabaristān (*Tapuristān* in Pahlavi), possibly from the ethnonym Τάπυροι/Tapyres (of the classical writers), a historical people who occupied mountains north of Kōmish. This people had replaced the Αμαρδοι, who were transplanted by the Parthian king Phrates I in 76 B. C. E. to the region of Khwār, south of Alborz. The Amardoι are believed to have given their name to the

town of Āmol (Āmul). Mazandaran, as the name of the present province, first appeared in the Saljuq period, along with the older name, and had completely substituted Tabaristan by the middle of the Safavid reign.

The early Islamic geographers describe Tabaristan as bordering Daylam in the west and Gurgān (Gorgān) in the east. The latter frontier seems to have always run near Tamīsh(a), on the river Kerrend, where there used to be the wall of Jarr-i Kulbād blocking the narrow strip of lowland between the gulf of Astarābād and the mountains. The chief towns on the plain were Kalār, Chālūs, Nātil, Āmol, Mīla, Mamtīr (later Bārforush (deh) and Bābol), Sārī, and Tamīsha (near present Bandar-e Gaz) (Borjīan 2004c, idem 2001).

The province must have been integrated into the Iranian ethno-geographical continuum long before we have any detailed historical information about it. Yet, since its advent to the historiography of Persia in the early Islamic times, Mazandaran has demonstrated a distinct ethno-cultural identity within the Iranian framework. Mazandarani, for instance, preserved their native calendar and festivals far longer than the inhabitants of the plateau, virtually to the present day (Borjīan 2003a).

No account of any sizeable ethnic impact on Mazandaran has ever been reported, except for several Kurdish migrations into the region. Numerous localities with the prefix *kord-*, e.g. Kord-kalā, Kord-kheyl, Kord-mahalle, Kord-kuy, Kord-ābād, Kord-āsiāb, Kord-koti, Kord-mir, Kordichāl, are found in Mazandaran and surrounding area.¹ In these toponyms, *kord* stands either for the ethnonym “Kurd” or, more often, as a socionym meaning ‘nomad, pastoralist’. The term *kord/kurd* in general is a common denomination of “nomad, shepherd of sheep and goat” in Mazandaran and Gilan, as against *gāleš*, which means in the same region “shepherd of cattle” (see in detail Asatrian 2001: 48-50; idem, 2002: 82f). Another term synonymous with the socionym *kord* is *il*, corresponding to nomads, whether Kurdish or indigenous Mazandarani, as against *gel(ek)* meaning ‘Gilak, sedentary’. Mazanda-

¹ The following localities are cited in *Farhang-e joghrafā'i*, 1976: 229-231: (i) Mazandarani-speaking Kordābād (in Savādkuh), Kordābād (Nur's Nātel), Kordāsiāb (Savādkuh), Kordkheyl (Sārī's Esfivard-Shurāb), Kordkheyl (Sārī's Rudpey), Kordkoti (Āmol), Kordkalā (Shāhi), Kordkalā (Bābolsar), Kordmahalle (Bābol), Kordmahalle (Chahārdānge), Kordmir (Chahārdānge); (ii) “Gilaki”-speaking Kordkheyl (Chālūs), Kordkheyl (Rāmsar), Kordkalā (Nowshahr), Kordmahalle (Rāmsar), Kordmahalle (Nowshahr), Kordmahalle (Kelārdasht), Kordichal (Kelārdasht); (iii) Persian-speaking Kordābād (Shāhrud, in the province of Semnān), Kordābād (Gorgān's 'Alīābād); plus (iv) the following villages in Gorgān, without identifying the language: Kordkuy (between Bandar-Gaz and Gorgān) and Kordkuy (formerly Kordmahalle, in the district of Kordkuy).

ranis call their language *geleki* “Gilaki” or, in the eastern highlands, *tāti* “non-Turkic”.

Language and Historical Written Sources

The earliest mention of the language of Mazandaran, called *Tabari*, is in the early Muslim geographic works. Muqaddasī (or Maqdisī; 10th century), for example, notes: “The languages of Kōmish and Gurgān are similar; they use *hā-*, as in *hā-dih* and *hā-kun*, and they are sweet. Related to them is the language of Tabaristān, save for its speediness”.²

The historical domain of the language was not much different than the present administrative boundaries of the province. On the east it extended to the wall at Tamīsha, beyond which people spoke the “*tōtārā* of Astarābād and Persian of Gurgān” (*Hudūd al-‘Ālam*: 134). The eastern limit of Tabari, however, extended somewhat more eastward than where the contemporary language is spoken today; it would reach Malāt, in which mausoleums of Kīāid rulers of Gilān are located. However, due to several occasions of nomadic influx, the present dialects of western Mazandaran are of a mixed nature (Sotude 1998: 212; see below).

Of the living Iranian dialects, Mazandarani boasts the longest written tradition, roughly matching that of New Persian. This status was achieved in the long reign of the independent and semi-independent provincial rulers, commonly known as Ispahbads, during the centuries after the Arab invasion of Iranian lands.³ The first known work in Tabari, extant only in Persian translation, is *Marzbān-nama*, compiled in the 10th or at the beginning of the 11th century by Ispahbad Marzbān b. Rustam b. Shahryār b. Sharvīn. The same prince compiled a Tabari *divān* called *Nēki-nāma*, about which *Tārix-i Tabaristān* (I: 137; cf. tr.: 86) states that it was the *dastūr-i nazm-i Tabaristān* ‘Rule of versification in Tabaristān’. The existence in the 11th or 12th century of still another versified volume in Tabari, *Bāvand-nāma*, may also be supposed from the following notice in *Tārix-i Tabaristān* (I: 4): “No history of Tabaristan is [now] found other than *Bāvand-nāma*, compiled in verses from oral tradition of the public and the village dwellers”.

² “*wa lisānu Qzimis wa Jurjāna mutaḡāribāni yasta‘milūna ilāhan yaḡūlūna hādih wa hākun wa lahu ḡalāwatun wa lisānu ahli Tabaristān muḡāribun lahā illā fi ‘ajalihi*” (Muqaddasī: 368).

³ The earliest coins and inscriptions of Tabarestan were in Pahlavi, later substituted by Arabic and Persian. For inscriptions, see *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* 1978.

From the golden age of the province yet another work in Tabari, titled *Šakara* 'hunting', is attested in *Nawrōz-nāma*.

Despite the loss of the early major works in Tabari, a number of poems or individual verses are preserved by means of the Persian works connected to Tabaristān. These include two Tabari verses in *Qābūs-nāma*, and 11th century work of Kaykāvūs b. Iskandar b. Qābūs b. Vushmgīr b. Zīār, who belonged to a ruling dynasty of Gurgān and Tabaristān. Edward Browne (1895) cites a number of writers in Tabari who grouped around Qābūs but unknown to *tazkiras*.

Ibn Isfandiār's *Tārix-i Tabaristān* (13th century), the major historiography of the province, includes nine verses from Masta-mard (known also as Dēvāra-vez), a Tabari poet affiliated with the 10th-century Daylamite court (I: 139; tr.: 88); and, of the 12th century, two verses from Ispahbad Khvarshēd (I: 108; tr.: 61; cf. Awlīā'-Allāh: 97), one verse from Bārbad-i Jarīr-i Tabarī (I: 113; tr.: 65; cf. Awlīā'-Allāh, 14; Zahīr-al-Dīn, 65), two verses from Guda-bāzō b. Isfahbad 'Alā'-al-Dawla Sharaf-al-Mulūk Hasan (II: 115), and a verse from the poets of Sāri responding to a certain Mujīr (of Baylaqīn?) (II: 97). In addition to these, *Tārix-i Tabaristān* cites more Tabari verses (though undated), a phrase in prose, and a number of individual words, personal names, as well as toponyms.

The other major histories of the province, Awlīā'-Allāh Āmulī's *Tārix-i Rūyān* (14th century) and Zahīr-al-Dīn Mar'ashī's *Tārix-i Tabaristān u Rūyān u Māzandarān* (15th century), both based on Ibn Isfandiār, also contain valuable data on the language. This includes verses of a *tarjī-i band* from Qutb Rūyānī of the 13th century, a verse from certain Amīr-'Alī of the 13th century, six verses from the Chulāvid Kīā Afrās-yāb of the 14th century, four verses from the 'Alid Sayyid 'Abd-al-'Azīm of the 15th-century, and other sentences and phrases. To these one may add other works, such as Mullā Shaykh 'Alī Gilānī's *Tārix-i Māzandarān* (17th century), which has at least one idiom in Tabari (Emādi 1983).

Moreover, there are six *rubā'īs* labeled *tabari* in a manuscript of classical Persian literature kept in the national library in Paris (Suppl. Pers. 1817), which were copied by the late Persian scholar Mohammad Qazvini in his *Masā'el-e pārisiye* (Afshār 2004).

Sadeq Kiā collected and edited all available Tabari fragments from various historical sources (1947: 9-20), and proposed tentative translation of each (: 225-246). This attempt is further extended in Kiā (1943-44) and is commented upon by Davoud Monchi-Zadeh (1969), whose

intention (stated in a footnote) to publish future articles never materialised.⁴ To these one may add short comments of Hammer (1813; a half a page) on two Tabari verses in *Zahīr-al-Dīn* and of ‘Emādi (1980) on a verse in *Qābūs-nāma*.

Individual Tabari words may be found in other works as well. *Tuhfat al-Mu‘minīn* of Hakīm Mu‘min of Tonekābon (17th century) is particularly rich in the Tabari flora and fauna (Kiā 1947: 20; Kiā 1962). In a number of Persian lexicographical works, particularly *Farhang-i Anjuman-ārā-yi Nāsiri*, there are sporadic citations of Tabari lexemes (Kiā 1947: 20; Samadi 1994).

Two major translations are available in Tabari. One is a translation of *Maqāmāt al-Harīrī*, a medieval Arabic work, kept in a single manuscript at Malek library in Tehran. It contains 286 folios of text and translation, and is conjectured to belonging to the early 13th century (Kiā 1944). Notwithstanding its linguistic significance, this translation has not received any scholarly attention and not yet even published. The other document is a dialectal translation of the Qur’an, added interlineally to a manuscript that was written no earlier than the mid-17th century and is kept at the library of the Grand Lodge in Edinburgh. In a linguistic investigation, Elwell-Sutton (1963) places this dialect within the Caspian group, as it has the most in common with Gilaki and Mazandarani, “though there are a number of features that are not recorded for either of these” (: 111). The text yields a vocabulary of approximately 1700 words, of which 600 are specifically Caspian (others are Persian). The study of Elwell-Sutton includes the historical development of the consonant system (: 112-115), morphology (: 115-122), syntax (: 123), and vocabulary (nos. 1-74, verbs; nos. 75-320, nouns, adjectives, etc.) (see also the list of manuscripts in *FVT* 2002: 2879). Texts have survived also in the dialect of Gorgān, closely related to Tabari, from Hurūfīs, the non-orthodox sect of gnostic-cabbalistic tendencies founded by Fazl-Allāh of Astarābād at the end of the 14th century. The documents are published by Huart (1909), based on which a glossary is compiled in *Važenāme-ye gorgāni* (Kiā 1951).

The most popular poet of modern Mazandarani is Amir of Pāzvār (near Bābolsar) who lived probably in the 17th or 18th century. His lyrical-mystical couplets (*dobeyti*s), known as *amiri*s, are widely recited, often as songs, throughout Mazandaran. But due to oral nature of this

⁴ One may expect to find additional Tabari studies in the unpublished works of both late scholars.

literature, the *amirī*s include many supplementary poems said by others. Consequently, *amirī*s should be considered a genre rather than the creation of a single poet. In any case, the poems attributed to Amir Pāvārī are once collected under the supervision of Boris Dorn who published them in the two-volume *Kanz al-Asrār* (St. Petersburg, 1860-66). New efforts are underway to recollect and publish the *amirī*s (see below).

From the 19th century we have *Nesāb-e tabarī*, a versed Mazandarani-Persian dictionary, which follows the example of the Arabic-Persian *Nisāb* of Abū Nasr Farāhī.⁵ It is authored by Amir Teymur Qājār Sāravi, known also as Amir-e Māzandarāni, who was patronised by the ruler of Mazandaran in the reign of Muhammad Shah. Three extant manuscripts of *Nesāb-e tabarī* have been edited, annotated, and published by Sādeq Kiā as *Važenāme-ye tabarī* (1947).⁶ Each of the 853 entries is followed by Persian forms extracted from classical Persian dictionaries, then by Pahlavi, Avestan, and, less often, Sogdian parallels, when available.

Geographical Distribution of Mazandarani

Mazandarani is spoken in a number of towns including Sāri, the provincial capital, Āmol, Bābol, Shāhi, etc. Most Mazandarani, however, still dwell in a series of loosely-knit villages spread over the Caspian littoral. Considerable migration has occurred in modern times from the foothills of Alborz into the plains and towns of Mazandaran. This demographic change combined with the spread of Persian is gradually limiting the use of Mazandarani. A great majority of the population of the province (about three million) is bilingual, and in urban centres bilingualism is giving way to Persian.

On the other hand, in the last few decades, there have been a growing number of literary publications in Mazandarani, mostly poetry, and attempts have been made to collect and publish proverbs, idioms and vocabulary of various localities. Since its advent in the late 1960's, Radio Mazandaran broadcast partly in Mazandarani, as does more recently the province's television. Nonetheless, the literary awareness paid by Mazandarani to their language is not as pronounced as that of their western neighbours in Gilān, and definitely

⁵ It appears that more Mazandarani *nisāb*s survives; 'Allāme 1949: 100f. quotes part of a *nesāb*; Najafzāde 1996: 15 claims to have seen about twenty of them.

⁶ Another edition is published by Mohammad-Kāzem Golbābāpur as *Nesāb-e māzandarāni*, Bābol, 1361/1982.

much less than those expressed by the groups with strong ethno-religious identities such as the Sunni Kurds and the Baluches.

The present geographical domain of Mazandarani extends from the border of Gilān in the west to the plains of Gorgān in the east. The southern border reaches, somewhat unexpectedly, beyond the lofty chain of Alborz, to include Firuzkuh and Damāvand, and continues all the way south to the outskirts of Tehran in Lavāsānāt, Rudehen, etc. The village of Velātru, the dialect of which is recorded by Lambton (1938), is located off the Tehran-Chālus highway. On the south-east border of Mazandaran, there is a cluster of villages around the town of Semnān, namely Sangesar, Sorkhe, Lasgerd, Aftar, and particularly Shahmirzād, the dialects of which share significant traits with Mazandarani. Moving westward, Mazandarani gradually blends into Gilaki. The dialects of the region extending from Tonekābon to Kelārdasht (historical Ruyān) are transitional between Gilaki and Mazandarani, and due to differences in forms and vocabulary there is limited mutual intelligibility with either Gilaki or Mazandarani. These transitional dialects should probably be considered a third separate language group of the south Caspian region.

Therefore, what we call here Mazandarani proper extends roughly from Nur in the west to Behshahr in the east.

Subdialects are generally mutually intelligible, at least in Mazandaran proper, but none is considered the standard or formal Mazandarani. Dialectal continuum varies in two directions: east-west (variation across the river-valleys) and north-south (lowland *vs.* highland). Almost every locality has its own subdialect, and even neighbouring villages may exhibit substantial differences in phonological system (see table below). The lexicon, however, is fairly uniform across the province.

Location	Kandalus	Velatru	Yush	Amol	Ferim	Espivard-Shurab	Sari	Hezarjarib
Source	Jahangiri 1988	Lambton 1938	Tahbaz 1963	Mahjuri 1977	Sotude 1962a	Borjian	Yoshie 1996	Shakeri 1997
sister		<i>xāxer</i>	<i>xaxor</i>	<i>xaxer</i>		<i>xaxer</i>	<i>xaxer</i>	<i>xaxer</i>
we		<i>amā</i>	<i>amow</i>			<i>ema</i>	<i>ema</i>	<i>ema</i>
white	<i>esbe</i>	<i>espi</i>	<i>?spi</i>	<i>esp/be</i>	<i>esbe</i>	<i>esh/pe</i>	<i>espe</i>	<i>esp/be</i>
face	<i>dīm</i>	<i>dīm</i>			<i>dīm</i>	<i>dīm</i>	<i>dīm</i>	<i>dīm</i>
eyebrows	<i>belfa</i>	<i>balfer</i>	<i>belfa</i>		<i>berfe/ befre</i>	<i>befre</i>	<i>abru</i>	<i>berfe</i>
tear				<i>asli</i>	<i>asri</i>	<i>asli</i>	<i>asri</i>	

weeping	<i>berma</i>	<i>berma</i>	<i>berma</i>	<i>berme</i>		<i>berme</i>	<i>berme</i>	<i>berme</i>
hen	<i>kerg</i>	<i>kerk</i>	<i>kerk</i>	<i>kerk</i> ⁷	<i>kerg</i>	<i>kerk</i>	<i>kerk</i>	<i>kerk</i>
bear	<i>as</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>os</i>		<i>a(r)s</i>	<i>xers</i>	<i>as</i>
cat	<i>bame'i</i>	<i>bam'i</i>	<i>bam'i</i>	<i>bame'i</i>	<i>bam'i</i>	<i>bame/i</i>	<i>bame</i>	<i>bam'i</i>
louse	<i>esbij</i>		<i>spij</i>	<i>espic</i>	<i>esbij</i>	<i>esp/bij</i>	<i>espic</i>	<i>esp/bij</i>
water	<i>o</i>	<i>u:</i>	<i>ow</i>	<i>o/u</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>o(:)</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>o</i>
water-mill	<i>asio</i>	<i>asiu</i>	<i>asiow</i>	<i>asiu/o</i>	<i>asyo</i>	<i>asyo/asio</i>	<i>asiu</i>	<i>asio</i>
cloud			<i>meh</i>		<i>meha</i>	<i>mia</i>	<i>abr</i>	<i>mia</i>
willow	<i>feyk</i>	<i>fek</i>	<i>fög</i>	<i>fik/fek</i>	<i>fek</i>	<i>fik</i>		<i>fek</i>
swimming					<i>hasnu</i>	<i>hasno</i>	<i>hasenu</i>	<i>has(e)no</i>
to come	<i>bimuan</i>	<i>bijmu-</i> <i>bemu-</i>		<i>biamuen</i>	<i>bemu-</i>	<i>biamuen/</i> <i>bemuen</i>	<i>biamuen</i>	
come!				<i>beru</i> <i>bemuen</i>	<i>beru</i>	<i>beru</i>	<i>beru</i>	
to say		<i>bu:t-</i>		<i>baut-</i>		<i>baut-</i>	<i>baut-</i>	
to eat		<i>buard-</i>		<i>baxurd-</i>		<i>baxerd-</i>	<i>baxard-</i>	
to strike			<i>bazuan</i>	<i>bazuen</i>		<i>bazuen</i>	<i>bazuen</i>	
to see	<i>haršan</i>	<i>hareš-</i>				<i>haršan</i>	<i>haršaen</i>	<i>heršaen</i>
pres. ending 1st pers. sg.		<i>-ma</i>	<i>-mme</i>	<i>-mme</i>		<i>-mbe/</i> <i>-mme</i>	<i>-mbe</i>	<i>-mbe</i>

Mazandarani belongs to the North-Western or Median branch of Iranian, and, together with Gilaki, Tālīshi, and the group of dialects around Semnān forms the so-called Caspian *Sprachbund* (cf. Asatrian 1995). A system of isoglosses consisting of pre-Mazandarani, the predecessor of the dialects around Mazandaran (Semnān excluded), pre-Harzandi in Northern Azerbaijan, and Dimli (Zaza) in Eastern Anatolia is proposed (Windfuhr 1989: 252; idem in Azami-Windfuhr 1972: 13-16).

Due to the profound influence of South-Western Iranian, however, many Median characteristics have continued only sporadically in Mazandarani (Borjian 2003b). In more recent times, the economic prosperity of the province and its geographical proximity to Tehran have further intensified the process of persianisation: heavy influx of vocabulary, significant syntactic imprint (*izāfa*, prepositions, etc.), and even morpheme borrowing. Virtually one-to-one correspondences between Mazandarani and Persian are routine (and at times unavoidable): *dāšte bime šime* (cf. colloquial Pers. *dāšte budam mirāftam*) 'I had been going'. One thus gets the incorrect impression that Mazandarani, particularly its urban forms, is merely a dialect of Persian. It is in fact a mixed language and is becoming increasingly more so.

⁷ From Humand 1990.

Despite an enormous Persian influence, many native elements have resisted persianisation. Mazandarani remains a language of postpositions with a system of declension for the personal pronouns (Borjjan 2004a). Its verbs contrast those of Persian not only in stems and endings but also in tenses and moods (cf. Borjjan 2004b). The vocabulary alone makes Mazandarani mutually unintelligible with respect to Persian (cf. *esā* ‘now’, *geder* ‘time’, *berme* ‘weeping’, *dim* ‘face’, *vasni* ‘co-wife’, *kijā* ‘girl’, *rikā* ‘boy’, *verk* ‘wolf’, *kerk* ‘hen’, *telā* ‘rooster’). In spite of the neighbouring Turkmen settlements, Turkic direct influence is quite minor in Mazandarani. Noteworthy are Russian borrowings, which may have taken place during the Russian presence in Mazandaran in the 19th century: *semeške* ‘sunflower seed’ (Russ. *semečki*), *simāfur* ‘forehead’ (Russ. *semafor* ‘semaphore, signal-post’), *soske* ‘hair clip’ (Russ. *soska*), *viāz* ‘stretching’ (Russ. *v’yaz*), *prāxud* ‘ship’ (Russ. *paraxod*), *sučke* ‘furnace for drying tobacco’ (Russ. *suška*), etc.

Literature Survey

Bibliographies and Literature Review

Major bibliographical works are Afshār 1959ff.; idem 1955; idem 1961 (nos. 4214-4230); idem 1989; Rast 1953; *Fehrest* 1977 (: 613-619); Besharat 1977; Golbon 1977 (: 82-96, on dialects); Nawabi 1987 (: 595); *Ketābnāme* 1993; Hāshemiān 1996; *Bābol* 2000 (: 606-617, on literature); Nāseh 2001; *FVT* 2002 (: 2875-2882); and various issues of *Abstracta Iranica*.

A general review of the history of research is given by Sokolova–Gryunberg (1962: 132-134); Oranskii (1963: 151-154); Redard (1970: 111f.). Rastorgueva–Edel’man’s (1982) article offers an extensive bibliography of works on Caspian languages. However, none of these publications mention recent fieldwork, i. e. the bulk of the available corpus on the language (see below).

Nineteenth-century Studies

Several European travellers and diplomats collected ethnographic and linguistic data from Mazandaran, e. g. James Fraser’s (1826) travel notes that include precious ethnographical data from Gorgān, Mazandaran, and Gilān.

One of the earliest collections of poems belongs to the Polish scholar Aleksander Borejko Chodzko (1842, 1852), whose book (1942) has a section on Mazandarani including 17 *amiri* couplets and two

popular songs from Rostamābād (: 568-581, with extensive linguistic comments) with English translation (: 510-517).

Another pioneering effort in dialect studies of Mazandarani was by Il'ya Nikolaevich Berezin (1853) who offers a grammar (I: 75-99), including the conjugation of 26 irregular verbs (I: 91-95), Mazandarani sentences (II: 13-19), popular songs, including couplets and *amiris*, with French translation (II: 57-72), the Persian text of a passage from *Tufān al-Bokā* with its Mazandarani translation (II: 72-79), and, in vol. III: 2-149, a vocabulary of Mazandarani (along with Persian, Gilaki, Gabri, and Eastern Kurdish). Berezin includes in his linguistic study the works written by Chodzko. It should be noted, however, that the lexemes exemplified in these works and many other works of the time are of restricted usefulness, chiefly because many of them merely indicate a slightly deviating pronunciation of Persian words.

The contribution of Boris Andreevich Dorn to the study of Mazandarani is substantial. The best known is *Kanz al-Asrār* (Dorn 1860-66), prepared in collaboration with Mirzā Shafi' Māzandarāni, and consists of the following sections: prose translation from Persian (Sa'di's *Gulistān*, etc.) to Mazandarani (I: 1-122); on Amir Pāzvāri (I: 124-129); *amiris*, i. e. poems attributed to Amir Pāzvāri (I: 130-160); *facetiae* (*hazliyāt*) (I: 161-164); Amir's *divān* (II: 1-276); *ibid.* with diacritical marks (II: 488⁸-554). The prose translation from Persian to Tabari is full of Persianisms, thus of limited value. But the *amiris*, in spite of poor translation, have lately received considerable attention (see below). In his other publications, Dorn provides additional Mazandarani texts with translation (1865: lff., an account of the suppression of Bābi movement in Mazandarani; 1866), and even more Mazandarani linguistic materials in his travel report (1862) and in *Caspia* (1875, on Russian raids on Persia), where he pays supplemental attention to Mazandarani, along with Gilaki, Tāti, and Talishi (: 217-220).

The travel notes, collected for Dorn in 1960-61 by a certain Mirzā Ebrāhim (*Safarnāme-ye Astarābād o Māzandarān*), contain geographic and economic data; comparable are Khanykov's (1866) notes on the social life of the province.

Melgunov, who visited the Caspian provinces twice, in 1858 and 1860, has two major contributions to the Caspian region that contain Mazandarani materials. His essay on the South Caspian provinces (1861) received extensive comments from Dorn (1863). Melgunov's article (1868) is on the vocabulary of Gilān and Mazandarani, the lat-

⁸ Page numbers are skipped from 277 to 487.

ter of which has a list of words (: 195-202), vocabulary for local flora and fauna (:209-215), and ten short poems including *amiri*s (: 216-218). The most valuable of all is the flora, though it is far from being flawless.

Jaques de Morgan (1904) includes a list of 877 glosses tabulated for seven localities in Mazandaran (Rehne, Bārforush, Semnān, Āmol, Kelārsak, Tonekābon, and Kojur) and two localities in Gilān (Rasht and Menāre-bāzār) (: 200-243), as well as grammatical notes on the dialects of Bārforush including examples of declension and conjugation (: 242-246), and the facsimile, without translation, of two manuscript texts written by inhabitants of Barforush in 1889; legendary accounts of the towns of Āmol (5 pp.) and Bārforush (9 pp.).

The first attempt to place Mazandarani within the Iranian linguistic framework is made by Wilhelm Geiger in the *Grundriss* (1898-1901), where the Caspian dialects (Mazandarani, Gilaki, Tālīshi, Tāti, Semnāni) are collectively studied from a historical point of view. Notwithstanding its groundbreaking nature, the linguistic materials used by Geiger came from earlier and generally unreliable works, particularly those of Dorn, and are brimful of persianisation. However, Geiger's study has remained to this date the main source of the majority of subsequent studies on Mazandarani. Based on this study, Christensen (1935: 18f.) made a brief comparison of Mazandarani with dialects around Semnan.

Early Twentieth-century Travellers and Researchers

Inostrantsev (1909) wrote on the history of the province. Claude Anet's (1924: 64-134) description of his 1909 trip from Tehran-Damāvand-Bārforush (Bābol)-Mashhadsar (now Bābolsar) to Russian Turkestan offers predominantly geographical data. The most notable contribution to the study of social life and economy of Mazandaran is that of Rabino (esp. 1928), which contains certain linguistic data as well.

A. K. S. Lambton (1938) has a short chapter on the dialect of Velātru (: 79-92), a highland village not far away from Tehran. The dialect, however, belongs to the Mazandarani group. In spite of its brevity and lack of phonemic normalisation of the vowels, this work is widely used, as a major documentation of a Mazandarani sub-dialect, by later scholars (e. g. Rastorgueva-Edel'man 1982; Lecoq 1989).

Russian Studies on the Language of Mazandaran

Pakhalina-Sokolova (1957) provide a brief but substantial characterisation of Mazandarani.

Zav'yalova's (1956) study of the phonology of Mazandarani (and Gilaki) is the first serious attempt of its kind. Her materials came from Berezin (1853), Melgunov (1868), Dorn (1860-66), as well as "two informants", whose names and origins are not given. Her proposed vocal phonemes *i e ə a u o*, though not typical of most dialects of Mazandaran proper, have been widely adopted by other researchers as the standard vowels of the language.

Rastorgueva-Edel'man's (1982) chapter in the *Osnovy* is the most extensive Russian study of Mazandarani and Gilaki, to which are added the dialects of Shahmirzād and Velātru. Its treatment of Mazandarani chiefly draws on the materials provided by Dorn, Geiger, and Zav'yalova. The section on morphology lacks certain significant aspects of the dialect, e.g. the past and present continuous tenses. Although the methodology is meant to be comparative-historical, key characteristics, such as the preverb *hā-* < **fā-*, are not identified. Nearly all lexemes treated in detail are rather Persian borrowings.

Japanese Studies of the Dialect of Sāri

Japanese scholars have published two monographs on the dialect of Sāri. Tetsuo Nawata's (1982) short monograph in German includes a section on morphology, a 180-item vocabulary list, and two short texts (the latter of which is a duplicate of the first passage of Dorn's *Kanz al-Asrār*). The author acknowledges that his work is necessarily incomplete and perhaps faulty, being based on only a few days of fieldwork with an informant. Comrie's review (1985) indicates many of its inconsistencies. Another review claims to have identified certain inaccuracies.⁹

Satoko Yoshie's (1996) book is more comprehensive and is based on the data collected from an articulate but urbane informant. Its value lies primarily on the tales, related by the latter (: 54-69, transcription with English translation), which are perhaps the most extensive textual materials on Mazandarani prose ever published in a single volume other than *Kanz al-Asrār*. The grammatical analysis (: 5-52) is exclusively synchronic, and not without flaws.¹⁰ The vocabulary (72-110) does not exclude loanwords blended into the extremely Persianised vernacular of Mazandaran's capital town.

⁹ G. Shokri in *Farhang*, no. 13, Winter 1371/1993: 263-273. The reviewer's remarks, at least in part, are not valid, e.g. Nawata is correct in translating *me ja:* to German "von mir" (: 7), that is "from me".

¹⁰ E.g. what the author perceives as the present perfect tense (: 36) is merely a phonetic variant.

Western Contribution

Western interest in the dialect almost ended after Geiger (1898-1901) and Lambton (1938).¹¹ Nevertheless, one should mention the important study by Azami-Windfuhr (1972) on Sangesari, a dialect closely allied with Mazandarani. Pierre Lecoq (1989) draws a brief comparison (less than 2 pages) among Mazandarani proper, Velātru'i (as by Lambton 1938), and Sangesari. In his numerous comparative studies, Windfuhr draws data from Mazandarani among other languages (e.g. 1989,¹² s.v. "Cases" in *EIr.*). Other works include a thesis by A. Sergeant (1978) on the dialect of Bābol and two unpublished papers by H. A'lam (1969) on the dialect of Sāri (transformational approach), and by Choksy (in the late 1980s), who summarises Mazandarani verbs based on materials collected from Sāri in 1969 (by A'lam[?]); it overlooks, however, the important tense of subjunctive pluperfect.

Despite the growing interest since the mid-20th century in Iranian ethnography, few Western studies are published on Mazandaran (cf. *EIr.*, s.v. "Anthropology" and "Ethnography"). The only major studies are on the changing rural life: Thompson (1976) on peasant marketing in Mazandaran, and Mir-Hosseini (1986) on modernisation of Kelārdasht. However, a few more general studies include Mazandaran as well. Thompson (1981) obtained his rural data on petty traders from Bābol. Bazin (1988) investigates the geographical dynamics of ethnic and professional groups in Caspian provinces. Bromberger's studies (1985, 1986a, 1986b, 1988, 1994) on rural culture of Gilān in particular and Caspian region in general furnish data on Mazandaran as well.

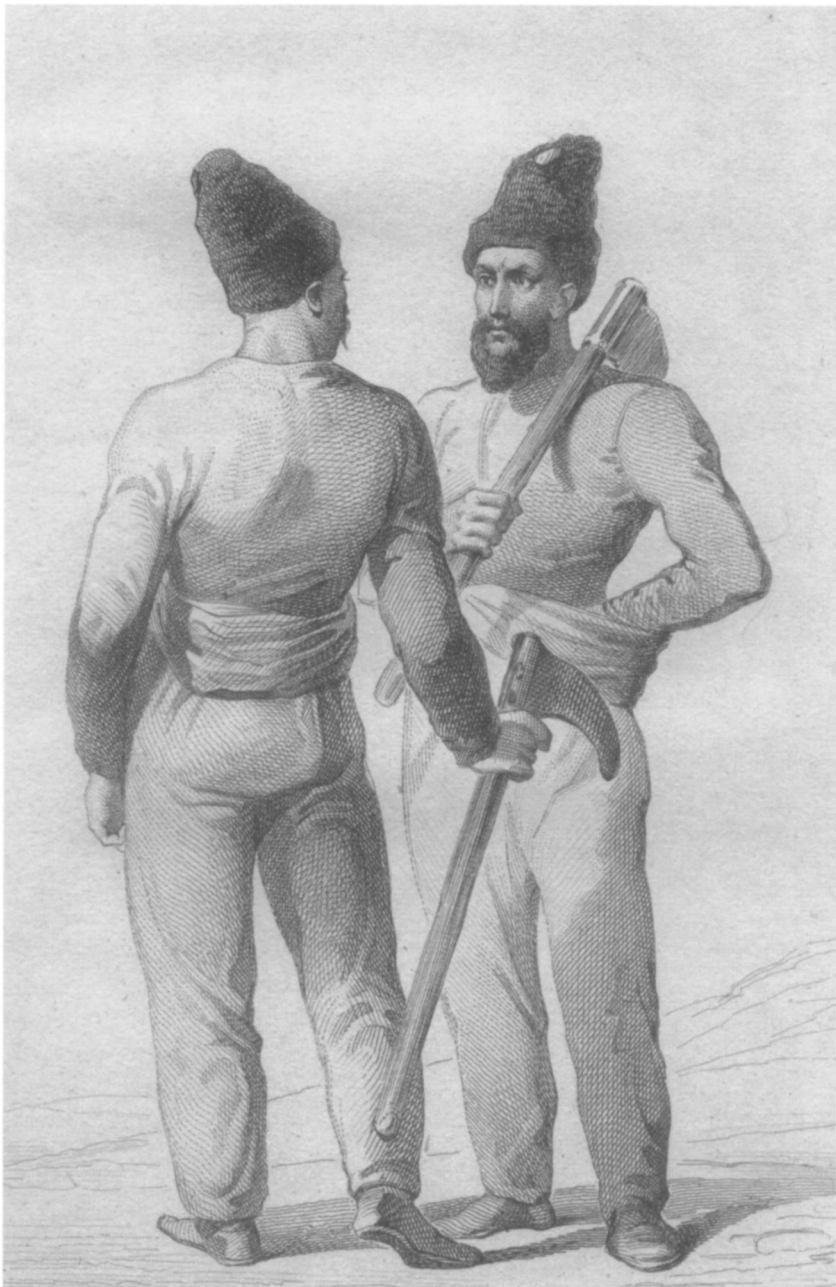
Latest Collection of Linguistic Data.

Extensive collection *in situ* of Mazandarani materials, including words and phrases, proverbs and idioms, poetry and tales, appear mainly in Persian publications. One may find dozens of such publications in books and magazines, especially since the mid-20th century,¹³ as well as unpublished materials, in university theses and in the studies by local pundits.

¹¹ Morgenstierne (1955: 173) has only a short passage on Caspian dialects with a mention of Mazandarani.

¹² In this valuable article, the statement (: 257) that Mazandarani has preserved the inflectional passive marked by inherited *-i- (e.g. Sangesari *eātende* 'he is standing up' vs. *eātinde* 'he will, is going to stand up') is not tenable for Mazandarani proper.

¹³ S. M. Tāheri Shehāb (2002), who compiled his book in the early 1950s, cites no publication in the chapter on Mazandarani-language literature.



“Naturels du Mazenderan” (M. Louis Dubeux, *La Perse*, Paris, 1841)

In lexicography, serious contributions include those of Sotude 1962a,b ('Aliābād of Ferim and Selyeri'¹⁴), idem 1963 (Semnān and its villages), Tāhbāz 1963 (: 106-115; Yush). The flora of Persia appears in Sābeti (1976), which is organised by species rather than by locality. Pārsā (1979) limits his study of the flora to Northern Persia.

The remaining lexicographical works may be summarised as follows: Mahjuri 1977 (: 131-151, Eastern Mazandaran); Partavi 1979 (: 159-247, Amol); Jahāngiri 1988 (: 190-243 and passim, Kandalus); Najafzāde 1989; Humand 1990 (: 58-70, Āmol; 92-105, Nur and Kojur); Samadi 1992b (words common to Mazandarani and Gilaki); Khorshidiān 1994 (: 101-176, Sari); Hejazi 1995; Shokri 1995 (: 158-363, Sāri); Kalbāsi 1997 (: 163-272, Kelārdasht); Yazdānpanāh 1997 (: 251-301, Sāri?); Nasri et al. 1998 (various locations); Qā'emi 1999 (Kordkuy); Teymurifar (s. a., Damāvand). Additionally, one may find glossaries in the unpublished literature, which includes several university theses: Nuriān 1962 (Shāhi), Dehgān 1989, Haddādi 1994 (Āmol), Ja'fari 1995 (Savādkuh), Na'imī 1998, Shākeri 1998 (: 79-177; Sayyedkheyl in Hezārjarib), 'Allāme 1998 (: 399-420, Tonekābon), Bāqerpsandi 1999 (Tonekābon), Moqaddam (forthcoming), and the manuscript of Rostami 1991 (: 75-83, Kordkheyl near Sāri).

Lately, a comparative dictionary of various Mazandarani dialects has been published. The first edition (Nasri et al. 1998) ceased after one volume (letters *ā*, *alef*, *b*). The second edition, in five volumes, came under the new title of *Farhang-e vāžegān-e tabari* (FVT 2002) with the following glossaries: Mazandarani-Persian (: 3-2113), Persian-Mazandarani (: 2117-2304), by subject (: 2307-2330). The last volume contains article on various subjects, including a grammar. The lack of methodology and accuracy, however, renders this massive compilation of limited usefulness (cf. the review by Mahmudi 2004).

There are several collections of proverbs, idioms, phrases and expressions. Mahjuri's *Farhang-e Māzandarāni* (1977), published posthumously (the author died in 1952), has 212 proverbs rendered in Persian orthography. The author was from Āmol or Bābol, but materials are said to have come from all Eastern Mazandaran. Sotude (1963) published 180 Firuzkuhi proverbs. Partavi's *Farhang-e 'avām-e Āmol* (1979) includes 129 idioms and expressions and 764 proverbs. Binā'i's collection appeared ca. 2000. The compilation of Rahimiān et al. (2004) includes some 4,600 items from the Mazandarani-Gilaki dia-

¹⁴ Selyeri is a secret language spoken in several villages around Firuzkuh. Another known secret idiom is Kalesi in the district of Āmol.

lects spoken in the district of Rāmsar. Books by Khorshidiān 1994 (Sāri); Ma‘tufi 1997 (Gorgān); Yazdānpanāh 1997 (Shāhi?); and Javādiān et al 2001 are wholly or mostly dedicated to proverbs and idioms. Shorter works include, but certainly not limited to, “Maṣālāh” 1946; Fereyduni 1961; Hoseynzāde 1964 (: 100f., Bābol); Majidzāde 1972a, b and 1973, Yusofi 2001 (: 77-106, Savādkuh).

The largest part of the linguistic corpus of Mazandarani is poems, by and large couplets (*do-beytis*), which are often sang as songs in the rice fields across the province (cf. Qorbāni 1996). Among them *amiris*, verses attributed to Amir Pāzvāri, form the most admired literary genre, and therefore have received particular attention (for a comprehensive bibliography, see *Babol* 2000: 608-617). Barzegar (1955) edited a section of Dorn’s *Kanz al-Asrār* (see above). *Amiris* appear in a number of publications, e.g. Najafzāde (1996: 149-228, 78 couplets). In addition to individual articles on life and style of Amir Pāzvāri (e.g. Basāri 1976, Esmā‘ilpur 1992, Neyestāni 1997 and 2001, Kabiri 2001), at least two collected works have been published: Nasri-Asadi, eds. (1997, reviewed by Mohammad Dāvudi in *Farhangkhāne* 1998: 270-281), and *Farhangkhāne* (1998, with many repetitions). New efforts to collect *amiris* are reportedly in progress (cf. Sotude 1998).

Other forms of popular songs have been published more recently. Next to the *amiris*, the most popular genre is the *tāleb tālebā*, lyrical poems attributed to Tāleb of Āmol, the renowned 17th-century poet of the Indo-Persian school (Basāri, 1997). A collection of the *tālebās* from the districts of Āmol and Bābol is published in *Maṣnavi-e Tāleb o Zohre* (Gudarzi, ed., 1997). Another versified story, *Manzume-ye Hožabr Soltān* (2000), on the early 20th-century insurgent, comes from several local accounts.

Other known Mazandarani poets of the modern times are Zohre Cholāvi and Rezā Kharāti. The latter was from Kojur, lived in the late Zandid and early Qajar period, and his poems are partly collected and published (in Saffāri 1968; 16 couplets in Humand 1990: 76-91; also in Mir-‘Alinaqi, 1999). Nimā Yushij (1947 and 1984; also in Tāhbāz 1963, Binā’i 1992, etc.), who is widely acknowledged for introducing to Persian readers the modern form of poetry, also wrote poems in his mother tongue. There are many other contemporary poets who have published in popular Mazandarani or have introduced their own styles.

All forms of poetry have received relatively wide publication either in separate volumes or in periodicals and collections. These include Fakhṛā’i 1928; Hajim 1935; Nikpur 1941 (Shahsavāri songs with mu-

sical notes); *Āhanghā* 1944 (songs and music); Māhvand 1946; Shāyān 1947; Nāzemi 1947 (Āmol and Bābol); Tabari 1948 (Savādkuh); “Maryam bānu” 1950 (song with musical notes); “Do tarāne” 1950 (with musical notes); Zohari 1953; Hejāzi 1957 (Savādkuh); Balāli 1957a, b (Sāri); Saqafi 1958 (2 songs from Savādkuh); Pishnamāz 1958 (Bābol); Khazā’eli 1960; Zohari 1960; “Do tā yār” 1960 (song with musical notes); Basāri 1960 (2 couplets); Darvish 1961 (fable from Nā-ye in Nur); Khāvarinezhād 1961a,b,c, 1962, 1963 (Bāboli songs with musical notes); Āzmude 1962 (2 *roba’is* and a *sodāsi*); Yazdān-Latif 1962 (a couplet); Maleki 1962 (Nowruz-khvāni); Peymān 1962 (a child song for fending the crows off); Golbābāpur 1965 (4 couplets); Hejāzi 1965a, b; Janābiān 1966a, b; Tāheri 1967; Saffāri 1968 (short pieces from 41 poets, mostly contemporary); Majidzāde 1971a (a poem by the author) and 1971b; Mansur 1976; Mahjuri 1977 (: 62-107, 91 couplets); Partavi 1979 (Āmol); Bani-Asadi 1980; Humand 1982; Mehdiān 1983; ‘Abdoli 1989 (: 233-256, with a glossary: 297-302, villages of Tappesar and Ābdang in Shirgāh; reviewed critically by Samadi 1992a); Humand 1990 (: 76-91, Nur and Kojur); Samadi 1991 (350 songs); Qeysari 1992 (62 couplets and a *ghazal* from Nur and Kojur); Zamāni 1992; Mobashsheri 1994 (songs and music); Najafzāde 1996 (: 20-145)¹⁵; Javādiān, ed., 1996; Kiāni 1996 (a 171-line versified story (*manzume*) on the river Sejru in Bandepey, Babol); Musavi 1997; Kabiri 1998; Heydari 1999 (97 poems, often couplets); Maqsudi 1999 (includes poems in the dialect of Shahmirzād); Jalili 1999; Kabiri 2001 (songs from Sāri); Yusofi 2001 (: 108-129, 42 couplets from Savādkuh; 132-135, lullabies; 138-143, *Manzume-ye Taqi o Ma’sume*); Bābānezhād 2001 (a versified story of 246 lines on the river Kelāru, plus couplets emulating *amiris*); Humand 2001 (102 couplets); Elāhi 2001 (with a few Mazandarani poems); Mohammadi-Kordkheyli 2002 (poems of Aqā Mir from Kordkheyli; near Sāri). Mazandarani poems also appear in the thriving press of the province, such as the weekly newspapers *Juybār*, *Ẓarxiz*, *Bašir*, and *Peyk-e Xazar*.¹⁶

Mazandarani prose, however, is quite rare; few find it worthy to put in writing anything but poetry and songs. Likewise, there have been few attempts to collect prose materials other than proverbs and idioms. Dorn’s venture to translate Persian classics into Mazandarani proved imitative and almost worthless. Worth-mentioning materials

¹⁵ Many of these poems were formerly published in the “Farhang o mardom” feature of *Ettelā’āt-e haftegi*, since 1986.

¹⁶ The Tehran-based weekly magazine *Ettelā’āt-e haftegi* published in its feature “Farhang o mardom” Mazandarani poems and folklore regularly in 1987-90 (*Bābol*: 606-608, 582f.).

appear in Balāli 1946 (a tale); Yoshie 1996 (tales from Sāri); and Voskianian 1998 (short tales from Firuzkuh, with glossary).

Persian Works on the Language

University attendance in Persia boomed in the last two decades, and as a consequence an increasing number of formal theses and quasi-academic articles have appeared on Mazandarani, particularly on its grammar. These are, of course, at different levels of scholarship, but, generally speaking, later Persian works are short of accuracy and methodology, and authors often lack a basic knowledge of dialectology. All in all, these works add little to the dialectology of Mazandarani.¹⁷

The older publications, however, are somewhat more useful, for being free of superfluous linguistic jargons, but especially for the data they furnish within the grammar. Ebrāhim Mahjuri (1977), for instance, has a conjugation of 85 verbs, and his treatment of morphology, though brief and amateurish, demonstrates salient features of Mazandarani, in contrast to later works that do not differentiate modern borrowings from Persian.

General descriptions of Mazandarani appear in Shāyān 1947 (: 180f.); Barzā'i 1965; Bābā-'Askari 1971 (: 262-266, Behshahr); Mojta-hedzāde 1972 (: 36-41, Nur); Sādiq 1973.

Grammar studies include Teymurifār (s. a., Damāvand); Kabiri 1958; Surtiji 1960 (Sāri); Nuriān 1962 (Shāhi); Dargāhi 1966 (verbal nouns, Āmol); Gorjizāde 1969 (verbs, Bābol); Sādātīān 1971; Kolbādi 1975 (Sāri); idem "Tahlil" (word structure?, Sāri); Hāji-Mashhadi 1986; Mashhadi 1986 (Gorgān); Samare 1988 (verb structure, Kelārdasht); Fakhr-Ruhāni 1989 (negation, eastern Mazandaran); Humand 1990 (Āmol); Mircherāghi 1990 (Laki dialect of Kelārdasht); Shokri 1990 (verb structure, Sāri); Samā'i 1991 (Tonekābon); Sarmast 1992 (Hasankiādeh) Dargāhi 1993 (preterit and imperfect); Kalbāsi 1993 (verbal prefixes, Kelārdasht); Aghagolzadeh 1994 (verbal phrases, eastern Mazandaran); Haddādi 1994 (Āmol); Velāyi 1994 (verb structure, Āmol); Hamidi 1995 (word formation); Ja'fari 1995 (Savādkuh); Shokri 1995 (Sāri, reviewed by Naghzguy 1996); Surtiji 1996 (bound morphemes, Sāri); Kalbāsi 1997 (Kelārdasht); Puyānfār 1997 (word formation); Shākeri 1998 (Seyyedkheyl in Hezārjarib); Bāgherpasandi

¹⁷ This general judgment is based on the works seen by this author. There are exceptions, e. g. Sādeqi 2000, who, in a review of three publications, gives insightful comments on phonology of Mazandarani. He maintains that the vocal system of Mazandarani possesses, in addition to the six phonemes it shares with Persian, a central mid-open vowel.

1999 (Tonekābon); Musavi 2000 (word formation); Abdi 2002 (causative); Shokri 2002a (verb, Sāri); Shokri 2002b (verb, Rāmsar); Mojibi 2002 Majidi (word formation); Ahmadasab 2003 (Sangechāl, between Bābol and Āmol).

Studies have also been made on other subjects. On phonology, in addition to its treatment in other works, we have Humand 1990 (Āmol, reviewed by Sādeqi 2000) and Ja'fari-Āhangar 1998 (Shahi). A scholarly study is Sādeqi (2000) who reviewed three works. On etymology we have Hejāzi 1993 (mostly folk etymologies); Shamshiriān 1995 (dialect of Surak) and Na'imi 1998. Borbor (1999: 200f.) collected from the available published works the Mazandarani "reduplicated compounds" such as *anj-anj* 'setting free, making public', *dā-dā* 'father', and *dim-dim* 'very end'. Comparative studies include three university theses on subdialects: Jahāngiri 1973 (on the distribution of Mazandarani dialects); Dehgān 1989 (comparative glossary); Mo'meni 1995 (language atlas of the "northern slopes of the central Alborz"). Qarib 2004 compares the structure of the perfect and the pluperfect in various Mazandarani dialects and Sogdian. Shokri 2000 (the past perfect, Sāri and Rāmsar), as well as Kalbāsi (2002, 2003, 2004), are inaccurate, hastily-prepared compilations.

Persian Ethnography

Persian works on the ethnography of Mazandaran include valuable data. The following monographs written on localities are wholly or partly ethnographic: 'Allāme 1949 (: 107-129, also: 224-253 on music, Āmol); Purkarim 1962; Tāhbāz 1963 (Yush); Hoseynzāde 1964 (Bābol); Purkarim 1969 (Ālāsht); idem 1970 (Samā, Chālus highlands); Bābā-'Askari 1971 (Behshahr); Mojtahezāde 1972 (Nur); Nushin 1976 (Chālus); Yusofiniā 1977 (Lengā of Tonekābon); Partavi 1979 (Āmol); Jahāngiri 1988 (Kandalus); Āqājāniān 1991; Ahmadi 1994 (Kojur); Āzari 1996 (Nowruzkhvāni); Abu'l-Qāsemi et al. 1997 (Tonekābon); 'Allāme 1998 (Tonekābon); Qā'emi 1999 (Kordkuy); Malekpur 1999 (Kelārdasht); Yusofi 2001 (Savādkuh).

Shorter works include Sotude 1945 (dance-play in forests of Chālus); Mobashsheri 1958 (music); Nazari 1961 (beliefs); Barzā'i 1965; Purkarim 1967 (Ālāsht, in Savādkuh); Purkarim 1968 (feasts of Samā in Chālus highlands); Kākvn 1969; A'zami 1970 (beliefs of Sangesar); Kandi 1970 (mostly Āmol, houses in particular); Majidzāde 1972c (wrestling); Mirshokrāyi 1979 (drama); Pāyande 1987 (Nowruz in Tonekābon); Yazdānpanāh 1988 (wrestling); Rostami 1991 (Kordkheyl near Sāri); Lavanji 1992 (Āmol district); Kuhi 1992 (tribes); Dānā

1994 (raining rites in Tonekābon); Nasri 1995, 1996a,b, and 1997 (music); Ruhi 2000 (Sāri); Borjjan 2003a (calendar and festivals of Espivard-Shurab district, near Sāri). One may also find relevant articles in the journal *Abāxtar*, which began to be published in Sāri a few years ago.

Unpublished monographs prepared (often hastily) in the Bureau of Cultural Heritage of Mazandaran are: Mallāhi–Hasani 1995 (Behshahr); Mallāhi 1998 (Āmol); Hasani et al. 2000 (material culture); Barzegar 2000 (Sāri); Qolipur et al. 1996 (Kojur); idem 2000 (Yush); idem 2001a (Savādkuh); idem 2001b (district of Tonekābon).

Conclusion

Despite its large number of speakers, Mazandarani is poorly represented in the Iranistic scholarship. Western scholarly works are essentially based on limited, largely inaccurate, linguistic data collected by early European travellers, and neglect the materials published more recently in Persia. Kīā's *Vāženāme* remains the single-most important study of the dialect, with some etymological attention, but it has not been pursued. The diachronic studies in the true sense of the word are almost nonexistent, save the early attempt by Geiger in the *Grundriss*, and the Russian works which extend Geiger's but a little. The largest manuscript on the language, namely the translation of *Maqāmāt al-Harīrī*, remains unpublished. Despite nearly two centuries of exploration, one may argue that the knowledge of this important Iranian people and language has not been cumulative.

As to the ethnography of Mazandaran, studies are sparse. Many traditions and customs specific to Mazandaran have been lost. Most materials collected recently by this author survived only vaguely in the people's memories. It is, therefore, hard to exaggerate the significance of any future research.

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