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PREFACE

This collection consists of twelve articles in Persian on the history of the Tabarī language, spoken by some four million people in the Caspian province of Māzandarān in northern Persia, thus also referred to as Māzandarānī or Mazanderani. Tabari has a history of documentation of nearly a millennium, that is a language second in age, among the living Iranian languages, only to New Persian. It is the only language of the same family besides Persian into which the Koran is translated in pre-modern times. In spite of its long history and numerous speakers, little scholarship is available on Tabari.

The articles in this volume represent all stages of the Tabari language. The first one is a survey of all known Tabari documents until the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth century and the state of scholarship on them. The next three articles explore pre-modern Tabari texts, including translation of several newly-found poems and investigation of a Koran manuscript which is introduced here for the first time. The four articles that follow are on various Tabari texts written in the nineteenth century; previously published by this author in English, these papers are now translated into Persian. The next two articles analyze the texts collected by contemporary scholars. Finally, there is a Tabari text documented by this author and his wife in recent years, followed by an essay on the state of the language and its significance. Preparation of this volume in Persian was made possible through the efforts of the staff at the Research Center for Written Heritage. My thanks go to all those who contributed in the typesetting, proofreading, and publication process, particularly to Mr. Jamshīd Kīānfār, the editor of the journal *Āyina-yi Mīrāth*, Ms. Sitāyish Nūrānīnāzhād, and Ms. Malīha Muhammādī, as well as Dr. Akbar Īranī, the director of the Center.

خلاصه مقالات به انگلیسی

I also wish to express my thanks to my wife and colleague Maryam Borjian, who has been my principal informant of the language ever since I began working on Tabari, and is the co-author of the article on marriage rites in this collection. I dedicate the volume to her.



ENGLISH SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLES

The Written Heritage of Tabari

The Tabarī language can be categorized into two historical periods: pre-modern and modern. The pre-modern period corresponds to the texts written from the tenth to eighteenth centuries. Despite the loss of the early major works in Tabari, a number of poems and individual verses, sentences, and words are preserved by means of the Persian works connected to the province, most notably in Ibn Isfandīār's *Tārīkh-i Tabaristān* 'History of Tabaristan', compiled in the early thirteenth century. The bulk of the pre-modern Tabari materials, however, are found in several manuscripts of the Koran with Tabari words and sentences inserted interlineally into the text or along the margins. There is also a Tabari translation of *Maqāmāt al-Harīrī*, a medieval Arabic work, kept in a single manuscript at Malik library in Tehran. The only detailed study of these translations is published by Ellwell-Sutton on the manuscript of the Koran kept at the Grand Lodge in Edinburgh. Moreover, individual Tabari words are found in works such as *Tuhfat al-Mu'minīn* of Hakīm Mu'min of Tunkābun (seventeenth century), which is particularly rich in the Tabari flora and fauna. In a number of Persian lexicographical works, particularly the *Farhang-i Anjumanārā-yi Nāsirī*, one finds sporadic citations of Tabari lexemes.

Modern Tabari, also called Māzandarānī, is known since the first half of the nineteenth century, when several European travelers, scholars, and diplomats undertook the task of documenting the language. The resulting data is substantial, among which stands out *Kanz al-Asrār*, compiled by Bernhard Andreevich Dorn (1860-66), which includes several collections of verses attributed to the legendary Tabari poet Amīr Pāzvārī as well as stories translated from Persian. More collections of popular poems and songs as well as prose texts and individual sentences and words were published by Aleksander

Borejko Chodźko (1842), Il'ya Nikolaevich Berezin (1853), B. A. Dorn (1865), G. V. Melgunov (1868), and Jacques de Morgan (1904). From the mid-nineteenth century has survived a versified Tabari-Persian dictionary, which is edited by Sādiq Kīā. An ongoing project by this author aims at transcribing, translating, and glossing these works. This paper aims to identify the surviving Tabari texts and introduce the extents of modern scholarship on the history of the language. A comprehensive bibliography is furnished.

Six Quatrains in Old Tabari

The *fahlavī*-type poems deciphered here are in Tabari and have been preserved in a Persian manuscript kept at the Biblioteque Nationale in Paris. The manuscript is dated 763/1362, but the orthography of the Tabari verses suggests that they must have been inserted into the manuscript at a later date. The Tabari poems were carefully copied by the Persian scholar Muhammad Qazvīnī into his notebook titled *Masā'il-i pārisīya* "The Parisian Issues," now kept at the Central Library of the University of Tehran, and recently published by Īraj Afshār.

Recovering Old Tabari from Extant Texts

The old period of Tabari corresponds to the texts written from the tenth to fifteenth centuries, preserved sporadically in the Persian works connected to the province. One of the oldest Tabari quatrains is found in the famous eleventh-century *Qābūs-nāma*. Ibn Isfandīār's *Tārīkh-i Tabaristān* (early thirteenth century), the major historiography of the province, includes nine verses from Masta-mard (known also as Dēvāra-vəz), a Tabari poet affiliated with the tenth-century Daylamite and Ziarid courts; and, from the twelfth century, two verses from Ispahbad Kh'arshēd, one verse from Bārbad-i Jarīr-i Tabarī, two verses from Gurda-bāzō, and a verse from the "poets of Sāri". From the thirteenth century, we have a *tarjī`-band* by Qutb

Rūyānī, one of the best preserved poems from the old period of the language. *Tārīkh-i Tabaristān* cites more Tabari verses, though undated, and a short passage in prose, perhaps forged to sound archaic by the author or his source or informant. The book also contains a number of individual words, personal names, and toponyms in Tabari.

The other major histories of the province, namely Awlīā'-Allāh Āmulī's *Tārīkh-i Rūyān* and Zahīr-al-Dīn Mar'ashī's *Tārīkh-i Tabaristān u Rūyān u Māzandarān* (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, respectively), both having borrowed lavishly from the aforementioned Ibn Isfandīār, offer contemporary linguistic data: a verse from certain Amīr-'Alī of the thirteenth century; three *dubaytīs* from the Chulāvid Kīā Afrāsyāb of the fourteenth century and two from the 'Alid noble Sayyid 'Abd-al-'Azīm of the fifteenth-century; as well as individual sentences and words. All these Tabari fragments were collected in *Vāzhanāma-yi Tabarī* by Sādiq Kīā, who proposed tentative translation. His work was commented upon and elaborated by Davoud Monchi-Zadeh.

Additionally, there are two quatrains in Tabari preserved in the otherwise Persian *Jāmi' al-Alhān* (fifteenth century) among other dialect poems (published recently by 'Alī-Ashraf Sādiqī), and six more quatrains, added to a Persian manuscript kept at Biblioteque Nationale in Paris, identified and studied by this author.

This article organizes and publishes the abovementioned materials, evaluates the former studies, and provides a comprehensive glossary.

A Zaydi Translation of the Koran in Tabari

One of the Tabari translations of the Koran is found in the MS no. 17982 kept at the Majlis library in Tehran. The manuscript consists of the second half of the holy book in 388 folios, each page consisting of the scripture surrounded by a comprehensive *tafsīr* in Arabic. The later is clearly Zaydi, the Islamic denomination once practiced throughout Tabaristān. The Tabari translation, added interlineally as

well as along the margins, is word-by-word, written by a reader in a crude but distinct hand, and sometimes amended by a second reader. The readers were probably students who would write down the words of their Tabari-speaking instructor. This paper studies the *suras* xcv to cxiv, that is the last twenty *suras* of the Koran.

The Oldest Known Texts in New Tabari:

The Collection of Aleksander Chodźko

This article identifies, transcribes, translates, glosses, and provides a grammar for a set of seventeen poems and songs collected in the 1830s by the pioneering Polish Orientalist and folklorist Aleksander Borejko Chodźko, who published the songs using Perso-Arabic characters. The verses are the oldest known documents in the Mazandarani language, also known as New or Modern Tabari. The texts were collected from various locations in Mazandaran and hence represent more than one dialect of New Tabari. The linguistic analysis shows that Tabari has undergone no fundamental change in the last two centuries, though certain words and grammatical traits have already ceased to be used in the language. While comparing the texts with other surviving Tabari documents from the nineteenth century does yield some answers, a number of questions remain for future studies.

A Translation from *Tūfān al-Bukā'*:

The Oldest Known Prose Text in New Tabari

This paper glosses and analyzes a text in Mazandarani, documented in the early 1840s by the Russian Orientalist and linguist Il'ya Berezin, and published in his *Recherches sur les dialectes persans*. The book was the first of its kind on Iranian dialectology, but due to its inaccuracies and incoherent transcription it has largely been ignored since its publication in 1953. The text studied in this article is a translation from the Persian *Tūfān al-Bukā'*. Berezin published the text

in Perso-Arabic characters without any linguistic remarks. Although its vocabulary is largely that of modern Persian, the text is still of considerable interest to the Iranist for the lexical and morphological data it offers. The poor orthography of the text did not allow us to elucidate on all words and grammatical traits, some of which are perhaps already extinct. A number of problems remain to be addressed: *mudem* (?) 'souvenir', the verb stems *denhu-* 'put' and *mu-* or *mun-* 'pass', and conjugations of 'to be' and 'to become', among others.

A Tabari Account of the Babi Incident at Shaikh Tabarsī

A mid-nineteenth-century Mazandarani document on the Babi-state conflict at Shaikh Tabarsī is the subject of this study. Collected in 1860 in the town of Bārfurūsh from an eyewitness of the incident, the text was published five years later, in Persian script, by the great German-Russian scholar Bernhard Andreevich Dorn. It is the first known prose document based on natural speech in the modern Tabari language. The text is meant to contribute to the study of the language of Mazandaran, particularly to its development since the composition of the text. It may also serve as a supplementary historical document for the historic incident it narrates.

Two Tabari Manuscripts from the Qajar Period

This article transcribes, translates, and explains two Tabari texts written in 1889 in the Caspian town of Bārfurūsh. The manuscripts appear as facsimile in the fifth volume of *Mission scientifique en Perse*, compiled by the French scholar Jacques de Morgan in the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries. The language of the texts is fundamentally similar to the living Mazandarani dialects, but not without extinct words and grammatical traits, which could be identified only by drawing on other surviving Mazandarani documents of the same period. The texts are not only of

dialectological interest, but also contribute to the study Mazandaran's modern history.

Verbs in the Mazandarani Dialect of Velātrū:

From the Texts Published by Ann Lambton

In her *Three Persian Dialects* (1938), the late Ann K. S. Lambton provides texts and vocabularies on the dialects of Mayma and Jawshaqān, villages located in central Persia, and on the dialect of Velatru, a mountainous village north of Tehran, situated off the road leading from the capital to the Caspian town of Chālūs. Velatru'i has been characterized as a marginal sub-dialect of Mazandarani, and the purpose of this paper is to investigate the extent of this relationship by examining the morphology of the Velatru'i verbs. The results of the analysis confirms this affinity, though an outstanding Mazandarani trait such as the gemination of the nasal element (< Old Iranian participle formant *-ant-) in the personal endings of the present tense has been attenuated in this dialect.

The Komisenian Dialect of Aftar

This paper consists of a brief account of the village of Aftar, situated on the southern borders of the province of Mazandaran, followed by a historical phonology and descriptive grammar of its dialect. The data is extracted from the documentations of Sādiq Kīā and Georg Morgenstierne.

An Iranian dialect, Aftari is grouped both diachronically and typologically together with some other dialects spoken around the town of Simnān, located east of Tehran, on the Great Khurāsān Road along the southern foothills of the Alburz chain. For this group the designation "Komisenian", after the old name of the province, is proposed by the author. Komisenian belongs to the Caspian stock of the Northwest branch of Iranian languages.

Like the neighboring Caspian dialects to its north, Aftari is a language of postpositions, and it has a relatively elaborate system of personal and demonstrative pronouns. Aftari shares with Tabari the element *-enn-* in present indicative, a remnant of **-ant-*, an Old Iranian present-participle formant. In terms of ergativity Aftari holds a position between Tabari, which has none, and the Central Plateau Dialects which have preserved the system. Remnants of the Middle Iranian ergativity remain in Aftari as a distinct set of personal endings for the past transitive; these used to act as agents of transitive verbs. Thus the transitivity still plays a role in the past conjugation, but there are indications that the difference is fading away, most notably in 3rd person singular forms. The intransitive past tenses are marked by *-št-* preceding the personal endings, except for the 3rd person singular which has neither. The perfect tense has various constructions, often merging with the preterit, and thus may not be authentic to Aftari.

A Mazandarani Account of Rural Marriages in South Caspian Littoral (with Maryam Borjian)

This article consists of an account of the traditional marriage rites in rural Māzandarān. It is related in the dialect of Ispīvard-Shūrāb, a rural district in central-eastern Mazandaran, with a dialect representative of the Mazandarani proper. The account is on various stages and rites involved in a typical traditional marriage, including the proposal and betrothal, observances prior to the wedding ceremony, wedding procession, bridal chamber, and unveiling feast, taking altogether a period of slightly more than one year. Hardly any of these traditions has outlasted the generations succeeding that of the aged informant, Sayyid Hasan Sādātī Kurdkhaylī, a 72-year-old retired farmer, who used to assist his brother Husayn, the minstrel of the village in his youth. The text is related in natural speech, passionately at times, and entirely free of affectionate language.

Therefore, it is expected to contribute to the study of the largely ignored ethnography and language of Mazandaran.

Mazandarani: Language or Dialect?

Spoken by some four million inhabitants of the Caspian province of Māzandarān in northern Persia, Māzandarānī has various dialects current in the towns of Sārī, the provincial capital, Āmul, Bābul, Shāhī, Bihshahr, etc. Most of the population, however, dwells in a series of loosely-knit villages spread over the littoral lowlands as well as in the piedmonts and higher valleys of the province. The urbanization of this prosperous province in recent decades and its proximity to Tehran has resulted in the widespread use of Persian, gradually marginalizing Mazandarani. While the more secluded localities still retain their distinct dialects, the urban variants are increasingly becoming a mix language, to the extent that one gets the incorrect impression that the Mazandarani is merely a dialect of Persian. Mazandarani has in fact become a much-reduced language, as is the case for her sister Gilakī and many other idioms that seem to share the fate of extinction in the near future.

The author attempts to define Mazandarani from two viewpoints: dialectal and social. A sociolinguist may consider Persian as the only major language in Persia that meets both criteria of standardization and written status; everything else is something else (dialect, vernacular, patois, etc.). Turkish, Turkmen, and Arabic do indeed meet these criteria, but in neighboring countries. Kurdish and Balochi too are shared with tribes across the national borders, but they lack standard forms, and literacy in them alone is not sufficient to make a person "literate" in Persia – thus both are commonly believed to be dialects. Other "dialects" spoken in Persia are non-written, including Mazandarani and Gīlakī, despite their large number of speakers. Then there are several arrays of speech communities in individual or groups of villages and townships, from the Tatic groups in the northwest to the vernaculars of Simnān and those spread over the

central Iranian Plateau as far south as the towns of Isfahan and Yazd, as well as the so-called Perside group, namely Lurī, Bakhtīārī, and the dialects spoken in southern provinces. None of these have been historically independent of neither the Persianate civilization nor Persian, once the *lingua franca* of the Iranian world and beyond. An exception is Armenian, spoken by a sizeable well-off urban community with a strong sense of ethnic identity, who have their own schools and press tuned with those in the neighboring Armenia. So is Assyrian, the language of a distinct church with members spread all over the world.

But there are no commonly accepted *linguistic* criteria for differentiating between a language and a dialect (or vernacular or patois). However, if we take the mutual intelligibility as a criterion, we will arrive at the following conclusions for Mazandarani: (1) most of its dialects are mutually intelligible, and (2) even the persianized forms of Mazandarani are not intelligible to the speakers of Persian. In fact the dissimilarities between the two languages are profound; the linguistic traits such as abundance of postpositions, binary nominal cases, verb structure, and, above all, the lexicon set Mazandarani quite apart from Persian. But what really discards the incorrect notion that Mazandarani is a "corrupt" form of Persian is diachronic investigation. While Persian is a southwest dialect, comparative-historical phonology places Mazandarani in the northwest group of the Iranian language family, together with the Gilakī, Tatic, Komisenian, and Gorani-Zaza subgroups, and the Central Dialects. Nonetheless, Mazandarani (like its Caspian sister Gilakī) shows some serious inconsistencies in this respect, e.g. the characteristically SW *s* in a seemingly authentic word like *ōs* "pregnant" (< OIr. *ā-puθra-*). Lastly, Mazandarani is a language with a history of documentation second in age only to New Persian, among the living Iranian languages. Its history has not received the attention it deserves.