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The Gypsy Languages of Iran

An Overview

Hassan Rezai Baghbidi

Abstract: Apart from the speakers of the two Indo-Aryan languages, Jādgālī and Kholosī, Iran is home to several Gypsy communities that still preserve, to some extent, two varieties of their ancestral languages: Domari and Romani. Traces of Iranian Domari are found only in the jargon developed by these gypsy communities. These jargons are grammatically based on the languages of their host communities, predominantly Persian dialects, but they incorporate a significant number of Domari words of Indo-Aryan origin. In contrast, Iranian Romani (or Romāno, as it is referred to by its speakers) has retained most of its Indo-Aryan features, despite being heavily influenced by Persian and Azari Turkish. This paper offers a brief overview of the primary characteristics of the gypsy languages spoken in Iran.

Keywords: Indo-Aryan languages, Gypsy languages, Gypsy jargons, Domari, Romani

0. Introduction: The migrations of Gypsies have been so extensive that they can now be found in almost every part of the world, where they are known by various names (see: Lyovin 1997: 51; Afšār-e Sistāni 1998: 25-28). The ancestors of Gypsies, who referred to themselves as *ḍomba* in northwestern India (Richardson 2017: 116), migrated westward in three distinct periods: (1) The initial wave of migration occurred around the early 5th century and resulted in the penetration of Gypsies into Iranian lands. According to al-İsfahānī, the renowned Iranian historian of the 10th century, upon the request of the Sasanian king Bahrām V (reign: 420-438), the ruler of India sent 12000 minstrels to Iran to be distributed across various parts of the country (ed. Gottwaldt 1844: 54). The same story is echoed in Ferdowsi's *Šāhnāma*, where Šangol, the king of India, sends 10000 male and female minstrels to Bahrām to entertain his subjects (ed. Osmanov and Nušin 1968: VII/451, verses 2557-2561). (2) The second wave of migration occurred before the 12th century towards the Balkan Peninsula in the Greek-

speaking Byzantine Empire, followed by the widespread dispersion of Gypsies across Europe. (3) The third wave of migration also occurred before the 12th century, during which a number of gypsies spread across the Middle East via Iran, departed Syria, and entered Armenian-speaking regions of the southern Caucasus (see also: Windfuhr 2003: 415; Marushiakova and Popov 2016: 77; Richardson 2017: 117). The first group called themselves *dōm*, while the second and the third groups used the self-ethnonyms *řom* and *lom*, respectively. Therefore, Gypsy languages can be classified into three main branches: Domari, Romani, and Lomavren.

The long-lasting presence of Gypsies in Iranian lands since their first wave of migration, along with their subsequent migrations to Europe and the southern Caucasus, is the primary reason for the presence of Iranian words in all branches of the Gypsy languages. For example, in addition to containing a large number of Greek loanwords, the European branch (i.e., Romani) still retains a significant number of Iranian loanwords such as *ambrol* ('pear'), *diz* ('fortress'), *nišan* ('mark, sign'), *zen* ('saddle'), *zor* ('power, strength'), and even the prefix *bi-* ('without, -less'). Similarly, the Caucasian branch (i.e., Lomavren) not only contains a large number of Armenian loanwords, but also a considerable number of Iranian loanwords such as *barbar* ('equal'), *bazax* ('sin'), *əras-* ('to arrive'), *piyaz(av)* ('onion'), *suz* ('needle') (see also: Hancock 1995: 34-41; Voskanian 2002: 170-177).

The Domari language soon spread beyond Iranian lands and reached the Caucasus, the Middle East, and North Africa, where it developed into two major varieties: a northern variety spoken in the Caucasus, Syria, and Lebanon, and a southern variety spoken in Palestine and Jordan (Matras 2012: 15). In contrast, 12 dialect groups emerged from Romani in Europe: 1. South Balkan Romani; 2. North Balkan Romani; 3. South Italian Romani; 4. Slovene Romani, 5. South Central Romani, 6. North Central Romani, 7. Transylvanian Romani, 8. Vlax Romani, 9. Ukrainian Romani, 10. Northeastern Romani, 11. Northwestern Romani, 12. Iberian Romani (See: Elšík and Beníšek 2020: 399-408). Around the 18th century, some speakers of South Balkan Romani migrated from northern Greece to Iran and settled in various regions (see also: Matras 2010: 39). Their language, which they call *Romāno*, has been heavily influenced by Persian and Azari Turkish, yet it has preserved most of its Indo-Aryan features. However, the Lomavren language did not spread significantly beyond the Caucasus and is now spoken primarily by the older generation of the Lom population in Armenia, Georgia, and Turkey (Voskanian 2002: 169; see also: Voskanian 2011: 811-818).

I. The Domari language in Iran

Gypsies can be found in nearly all Iranian provinces, where they are referred to by various names based on their lifestyle, profession, social status, cultural norms, or hypothetical origins. These names include: *Āhangar*, *Čegini*, *Čingāna*,

Dumaki, Foyuj, Harāmi, Jat, Jugi, Kowli, Lavand, Luli, Luri, Luti, Motreb, Pāpati, Qarači/Qarāči, Qarbālband, Qerešmāl, Qorbati, Sudāni, Suzmāni, Tušmāl, Zangi, Zot, and others (for references to Gypsies in Persian literature see: Xatibi 2018). The word ‘Kowli,’ which is more commonly used in Iran, is often thought to be a distortion of *Kāboli*, i.e., someone coming from Kabul, Afghanistan (e.g., Newbold 1856: 310; De Gobineau 1857: 690; Sykes 1902b: 437; Amanolahi 2000: 109; Digard 2003: 412). However, it has also been linked to the Hindi word *kālā*, meaning ‘black’ or ‘dark’ (e.g., Ivanow 1914: 442). Most Iranian Gypsies live a semi-nomadic lifestyle, earning their livelihood through blacksmithing, carpentry, peddling, begging, fortune-telling, and/or singing. However, due to the lack of reliable census data, it is not possible to estimate their population.

The Domari-speaking Gypsies of Iran were compelled to learn the languages of the host communities in which they lived, primarily Persian dialects, and consequently coexistence and linguistic contact led to the development of several jargons or mixed languages among Iranian Gypsies. These jargons were created to facilitate intergroup communication in the presence of outsiders and to prevent others from understanding. These typically employ the simplified grammar of the host community’s language, combined with a number of Domari-derived lexical items. Additionally, these languages incorporate words from the languages of other minority groups, particularly the secret language of Iranian Jews, known as Loterā’i.

Loterā’i, which appears in variant forms in Persian dictionaries as Lutarā, Lutar, Lutare, Lotra and Lotre, derives from **lo’-tōrā’i*, meaning ‘Non-Toraic.’ This name was chosen by Iranian Jews to distinguish their secret language from the language of the Torah, namely Hebrew (Yarshater 1977: 2). This distinction reflects the fact that most of the vocabulary in this secret language was not Hebrew but Aramaic (see also: Schwartz 2014: 39, 48). Some Jewish Loterā’i words can be traced back to Old Aramaic, which demonstrated that Jewish Loterā’i originated during the Achaemenid period (550-330 BC; see also: Schwartz 2012; Schwartz 2014: 37).

The earliest mention of the Domari people in Persian literature is found in the works of the renowned historian Beyhaqi (995-1077). In his *Tārix*, he refers to the ‘Domani’ people among the minstrels and musicians of the town of Ghaznin, now known as Ghazni in present-day Afghanistan (ed. Yāhaqqi and Sayyedi 2009: I/5). The earliest reference to Loterā’i appears in the 10th century Persian geographical treatise *Hudūd al-Ālam min al-Mašriq ilā al-Mağrib*. Under the description of the town of Astarabad in the Deylaman region, it is stated: “They speak two languages: the one is the Lutarā (i.e., Loterā’i) of Astarabad, and the other is the Persian of Gorgan” (ed. Sotude 1983: 144). Two other early mentions of Loterā’i are available. The first is found in the margin of a manuscript of *Loqat-e Fors* by Asadi Tusi (c. 1000-1073), where *lif* is said to mean ‘beard’ in Loterā’i. The second appears in two verses by the 12th century

poet Suzani of Samarqand, which quote the words *dax* ('good') and *zif* ('bad, wicked') from the Loterā'i of Karkh, a town in Transoxiana (see: Dehxodā's *Loqatnāme*, ed Mo'in and Šahidi 1998: XIII/19805 under '*lutare*', 19873 under '*lif*'). Schwartz (2012; 2014: 39) has demonstrated the Jewish origins of *dax* and *zif* by tracing them back to the Aramaic words *daxyā*, *daxē* ('pure, (ritually) correct') and *zayif* ('false').

Words of Loterā'i origin soon made their way into the secret languages of other minority groups. For example, a group of beggars in the 10th century, known as the Banū Sāsān (i.e., 'the sons of Sāsān'), devised a secret language based on Arabic. This language was referred to in medieval Arabic sources as *luḡat al-mukaddīn* ('the language of beggars') and, after the 13th century, as *luḡat al-ḡurabā'* or *lisān al-ḡurabā'* ('the language of strangers'). In addition to Jewish Loterā'i words (see e.g., Bosworth 1976a; Schwartz 2014: 50), this secret language incorporated a few Iranian loanwords, such as *qantat* ('city') (cf. Sogdian *kanθ*) and *kabštar* ('camel') (cf. Persian *šotor*) (see: Bosworth 1976b: 95-96; Richardson 2017: 154).

The vocabulary of the jargons spoken by Iranian Gypsies consists of genuine Domari words, Jewish Loterā'i words, loanwords from surrounding languages, words of unknown origin, and several artificially created words. One notable lexical characteristic of the mixed languages of Iranian Gypsies is the distortion of words in various ways. For example, in the Qorbati language of Khenejin in the Iranian Markazi Province, *lāxa* from Persian *xāla*, *xāle* ('maternal aunt'), *lāmu* from Persian *amu* ('paternal uncle'), and *lib* from Persian *sib* ('apple') (see: Moqaddam 1949: 27, 47).

1.1. Research background on Iranian Domari

Unfortunately, Iranian Domari has not yet been fully researched, and previous studies have been limited to word samples. Some of the earliest of these can be found in Ouseley's travelogue, where, during his visit to Tabriz in June 1812, he recorded a few words of the Qarāči 'tribe' of Tabriz (Ouseley 1823: 401). A few additional 'Persian Gypsy' words were published in the 19th century by Newbold (1856: 311) and de Gobineau (1857: 695-696). At the beginning of the 20th century, Sykes (1902a: 345-349; 1902b: 438) published a significant number of words in the Qorbati language of Kerman in southern Iran. In a short note appended to Sykes' paper, Dames (1902: 350) analysed the Indo-Aryan origin of some Qorbati words, noting that Qorbati was not 'a true language,' but rather 'an artificial secret dialect or jargon.' In 1903, de Goeje (1903: 40-45) compared some Iranian Gypsy words, published by Ouseley, Newbold, de Gobineau and Sykes with those spoken by Gypsies in other regions, particularly Syria and Egypt. The first examples of words and sentences in the Jugi and Gudāri languages of Astarabad were later published by de Morgan (1904: 304-307). Shortly afterwards, Sykes (1906: 303-310) compiled a comparative list of 96

words from the Qorbati languages of Jiroft and Sirjan in southern Iran and Khorasan in north-eastern Iran. Again, Dames (1906: 311) appended a note highlighting the Indo-Aryan origins of some of these words. De Goeje and Sampson (1907) also contributed notes to the Qorbati words published by Sykes in 1902 and 1906. The extensive notes of Patkanoff (1908: 229-257; 1909: 246-266, 325-334) on the dialects of Transcaucasian Gypsies also included a number of Qarāči words and terms used by the Gypsies of Baluchestan. Ivanow (1914: 445-455) described and published some of the key phonological and morphological features of the language spoken by the Gypsies of Qa'enat in north-eastern Iran, along with a short vocabulary and a sample story text. A few years later, he documented the languages of Gypsies from Neyshabur, Sabzevar, Birjand, Gonabad, and Qa'en, who had migrated to Mashhad (Ivanow 1920: 284-291). In this later work, he published new vocabulary and corrected errors in his 1914 paper.

Parallel efforts have been made to collect and describe the secret languages of social and religious minorities. Romaskevich (1945: 142-143) collected a few words from the secret language of the Darvish community in Isfahan in 1914. Ivanow published a vocabulary of the secret language of the Banū Sāsān, based on a late 16th century manuscript he had seen in Bukhara (Ivanow 1922: 379-383). He also recorded a short list of words used by the Xāksāri Darvishes of Shahr-e Babak in southern Iran (Ivanow 1927: 244-245). The exact location of Soltanabad, whose 'Persian Gypsy' vocabulary was published by Wirth (1927), remains unclear because many villages in north-western Iran share the name Soltanabad. Some scattered words from Iranian Gypsy languages have also been found on websites, such as terms from the Gypsy language of Bam in southern Iran (see: Oprisan 2004).

Moqaddam (1949) was the first Iranian scholar to study the Qorbati dialect in Khenejin. In addition to documenting Qorbati vocabulary, he provided Qorbati sentences and explanations of its phonology and word formation (Moqaddam 1949: 23, 26-109, 131, 142-152). Kiyā (1961: xiii-xiv) briefly introduced some of the main lexical characteristics of the mixed languages of Iranian Gypsies, such as polysemy and the distortion of Persian words (e.g., *lamir* from Persian *xamir* 'dough', *guščam* and *gušuzā* from Persian *guš* 'ear'). He also demonstrated that the languages of the Gudār of Gorgan and the Xorāy of Mazandaran were grammatically based on the Mazandarani language. Sotude (1962: 471-477) published a short vocabulary of the Selyari language spoken in 14 villages in Firuzkuh. Amanolahi (1978: 284-285) documented a few words from the secret languages of wandering musicians in Iran, including the Āšiq of Azarbaijan, the Čalli of Baluchestan, the Luti of Ilam, Kermanshah, Kurdistan and Lorestan, the Mehtar of Mamasani, the Navāzanda of Torbat-e Jam, the Sāzanda of Band-e Amir and Marv-Dasht, and the Bakhtiari Tušmāl. Bolukbāši (2000) discussed some of the main features of Gypsy languages and Lutarā varieties in Iran. In the summer of 2000, the author of this paper conducted

linguistic fieldwork on Shirazi Qorbati, documenting the findings in 2006 (see: Rezai Baghbidi 2006). Other Iranian scholars have introduced or studied Gypsy languages or Lutarā varieties, including the Lutarā of Gorgan and Chula'i Lutarā (Nasri-ye Ašrafi et al. 2002: V/ 2509-2519, 2521-2524), the Kālesi language (Balāli-Moqaddam 2005), the Selyari language (Dumāniyān 2007; Baširnežād 2011; Balāli-Moqaddam 2015; Navā'iyān and Zabihi 2020), the Jugi language of Mazandaran (Hāšemi 2011), the language of the Borumand family (Hoseyni-ye Ma'sum 2014), and the Arranaji Lutarā which is grammatically based on the Tāti language (Sabzalipur and Delgarm 2016). What remains certain about these so-called Gypsy languages is that they are primarily jargons based on the languages spoken by the communities in which the Gypsies live. Only a few original Indo-Aryan words are still traceable in them.

1.2. Linguistic features of Iranian Domari

Iranian Domari varieties can be classified into four main groups on the basis of their personal pronouns: (1) those with two distinct forms for the direct and oblique (e.g., Qarāči); (2) those with the suffix *-ri* (e.g., Qorbati of Qa'enat); (3) those with the suffixes *-ki* and *-ri* (e.g., Jugi of Astarabad); (4) those with the suffixes *-ki* and *-ri*, and Persian enclitic pronouns (e.g., Qorbati of Khenejin) (Table 2.1; see also Windfuhr 2003: 418).

Table 2.1: Classification of Iranian Domari varieties based on their personal pronouns.

			Qarāči (cf. Patkanoff 1909: 265)	Qorbati of Qa'enat (Ivanow 1914: 447)	Jugi of Astarabad (cf. De Morgan 1904: 306)	Qorbati of Khenejin (Moqaddam 1949: 87)
1 st person singular	direct		<i>ma</i>	<i>me-ri</i>	<i>mo-ki</i>	<i>xo-ki-m</i>
	oblique		<i>mi-ra</i>			
2 nd person singular	direct		<i>tu</i>	<i>te-ri</i>	<i>to-ki</i>	<i>xo-ki-t</i>
	oblique		<i>te-ra</i>			
3 rd person singular	direct	masculine	<i>hu</i>	<i>u-ri</i>	<i>u-ri</i>	<i>u-ri</i>
		feminine	<i>ohe</i>			
	oblique	masculine	<i>hu-ra</i>			
		feminine	<i>ohe-ra</i>			

As mentioned earlier, the Domari varieties in Iran are, in fact, jargons or mixed languages that utilise a simplified grammar derived from the language of the host community. In addition to their genuine Domari words of Indo-Aryan origin, they include words from various other sources, including the languages of other minority groups. For example, excerpts from my fieldwork on Shirazi Qorbati are provided here to demonstrate that the Qorbati variety follows the phonological and grammatical structure of Shirazi Persian, although most of its vocabulary is distinct. Shirazi Qorbati belongs to the fourth group.

Shirazi Qorbati has no grammatical gender. There are two numbers: singular and plural. The plural morpheme is *-ā*: *mārez-ā* ('men'), *jāde-ā* ('boys'). The suffix of definition is *-u*: *dirak-u* ('the girl'), *jāde-u* ('the boy'). Indefinition is indicated by *ye* ('one'), the suffix *-i*, or both: *ye mārez*, *mārez-i*, *ye mārez-i* ('a man'). Adjectives follow nouns, and possessors follow the possessed. Almost always, the linking particle *-e* (*-y* after vowels) is used between them: *mārez-e dax* ('good man'), *mārez-ā-y dax* ('good men'), *jāde-y Ali* ('Ali's son'), *dile-y xokimun* ('our house'). A definite direct object is marked by *-e*: *mār xokim-e tevārt* ('The snake bit me'), *mār-e meytennam* ('I killed the snake'). Comparative adjectives are formed by adding the suffix *-tar*: *dax-tar* ('better'), *letew-tar* ('bigger'). Superlatives do not have a specific marker and are expressed syntactically.

Personal pronouns in Shirazi Qorbati are listed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Personal pronouns in Shirazi Qorbati.

		enclitic	reflexive
1 st person singular	<i>xokim</i>	<i>-m</i>	<i>xokim</i>
2 nd person singular	<i>xokit</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>xokit</i>
3 rd person singular	<i>uri</i>	<i>-š</i>	<i>xokiš</i>
1 st person plural	<i>xokimun</i>	<i>-mun</i>	<i>xokimun</i>
2 nd person plural	<i>xokitun</i>	<i>-tun</i>	<i>xokitun</i>
3 rd person plural	<i>uriyā</i>	<i>-šun</i>	<i>xokišun</i>

Demonstrative pronouns: *iri* ('this'), *iriyā* ('these'), *uri* ('that'), *uriyā* ('those').
Interrogative pronouns: *ku 'i* ('who?'), *čekam* ('what?').

Table 2.3 presents the Shirazi Qorbati numerals.

Table 2.3: Shirazi Qorbati numerals.

1	<i>yakāt</i>	11	<i>yāzzagilā</i>	21	<i>bisyeggilā</i>
2	<i>dohāt</i>	12	<i>davāzzagilā</i>	22	<i>bisdogilā</i>
3	<i>sehāt</i>	13	<i>sizzagilā</i>	25	<i>bispangilā</i>
4	<i>čārḥāt</i>	14	<i>čārdagilā</i>	30	<i>sigilā</i>
5	<i>pahāt</i>	15	<i>punzagilā</i>	40	<i>čelgilā</i>
6	<i>šiṣḥāt</i>	16	<i>šunzagilā</i>	50	<i>pañāgilā</i>
7	<i>haḥḥāt</i>	17	<i>hivdagilā</i>	60	<i>šasgilā</i>
8	<i>hašḥāt</i>	18	<i>hiždagilā</i>	70	<i>haftādgilā</i>
9	<i>nohāt</i>	19	<i>nuzzagilā</i>	80	<i>haštādgilā</i>
10	<i>dahāt</i>	20	<i>bisgilā</i>	90	<i>navadgilā</i>
100		<i>lādoy</i>			
1000		<i>lādoy letew</i>			
10000		<i>lādoy letewtar</i>			
100000		<i>lādoy letew-e letew</i>			
1000000		<i>lādoy letew-e letew-e letew</i>			
157389		<i>lādoy pahāt-e haḥḥāt-e sehāt-e hašḥāt-e nohāt</i>			

The verb has two stems: present and past. Verbs are inflected for person, number, mood, and tense. The present stem is used to form the present indicative, subjunctive, and imperative. The past stem is used to form the simple past, continuous past, present perfect, and past perfect. Infinitives are formed by adding the suffix *-an* to the past stem. Past participles are formed by adding the suffix *-e* to the past stem. The present indicative and continuous past employ the prefix *mi-*, while the present subjunctive and imperative employ the prefix *be-* (also realised as *bi-* and *bo-*).

The personal endings of Shirazi Qorbati are listed in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Shirazi Qorbati's personal endings.

	present	past	imperative
1 st person singular	<i>-am</i>	<i>-am</i>	
2 nd person singular	<i>-i</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>-ø</i>
3 rd person singular	<i>-e</i>	<i>-ø</i>	
1 st person plural	<i>-im</i>	<i>-im</i>	
2 nd person plural	<i>-id</i>	<i>-id</i>	<i>-id</i>
3 rd person plural	<i>-an</i>	<i>-an</i>	

For example:

Table 2.5: Inflection of the Shirazi Qorbati verb *gavidan* ('to go'), present stem: *gav-*, past stem: *gavid-*.

present		past		imperative
indicative	subjunctive	simple	continuous	
<i>mi-gav-am</i>	<i>be-gav-am</i>	<i>gavid-am</i>	<i>mi-gavid-am</i>	
<i>mi-gav-i</i>	<i>be-gav-i</i>	<i>gavid-i</i>	<i>mi-gavid-i</i>	<i>be-gav</i>
<i>mi-gav-e</i>	<i>be-gav-e</i>	<i>gavid</i>	<i>mi-gavid</i>	
<i>mi-gav-im</i>	<i>be-gav-im</i>	<i>gavid-im</i>	<i>mi-gavid-im</i>	
<i>mi-gav-id</i>	<i>be-gav-id</i>	<i>gavid-id</i>	<i>mi-gavid-id</i>	<i>be-gav-id</i>
<i>mi-gav-an</i>	<i>be-gav-an</i>	<i>gavid-an</i>	<i>mi-gavid-an</i>	

Table 2.6: Inflection of the Shirazi Qorbati verb *homāštan* ('to say'), present stem: *mār-*, past stem: *homāšt-*.

present		past		imperative
indicative	subjunctive	simple	continuous	
<i>mi-mār-am</i>	<i>be-mār-am</i>	<i>homāšt-am</i>	<i>mi-homāšt-am</i>	
<i>mi-mār-i</i>	<i>be-mār-i</i>	<i>homāšt-i</i>	<i>mi-homāšt-i</i>	<i>be-mār</i>
<i>mi-mār-e</i>	<i>be-mār-e</i>	<i>homāšt</i>	<i>mi-homāšt</i>	
<i>mi-mār-im</i>	<i>be-mār-im</i>	<i>homāšt-im</i>	<i>mi-homāšt-im</i>	

<i>mi-mār-id</i>	<i>be-mār-id</i>	<i>homāšt-id</i>	<i>mi-homāšt-id</i>	<i>be-mār-id</i>
<i>mi-mār-an</i>	<i>be-mār-an</i>	<i>homāšt-an</i>	<i>mi-homāšt-an</i>	

The main difference between the simple past and present perfect lies in the placement of stress: in the simple past, the stress falls on the last syllable of the past stem, whereas in the present perfect, it falls on the final syllable. Additionally, in the 3rd person singular, the present perfect is formed by the past participle of the verb (ending in *-e*; Table 2.7).

Table 2.7: The simple past versus the present perfect in Shirazi Qorbati.

simple past	<i>gavid-am</i>	<i>gavid-i</i>	<i>gavid</i>	<i>gavid-im</i>	<i>gavid-id</i>	<i>gavid-an</i>
present perfect	<i>gavid-ám</i>	<i>gavid-í</i>	<i>gavid-é</i>	<i>gavid-ím</i>	<i>gavid-id</i>	<i>gavid-án</i>

The past perfect is formed by using the past participle of the main verb (ending in *-e*) followed by the simple past of the verb *bidan* ('to be') (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8: The past perfect in Shirazi Qorbati.

past perfect	<i>gavid-e bid-am</i>	<i>gavid-e bid-i</i>	<i>gavid-e bid</i>	<i>gavid-e bid-im</i>	<i>gavid-e bid-id</i>	<i>gavid-e bid-an</i>
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The passive is formed by using the past participle of the main verb (ending in *-e*) followed by the verb *hāvidan* ('to become') in an appropriate tense: *čevide mi-hāv-e* ('it is eaten'), *čevide hāv-id* ('it was eaten'), *čevide hāvid-e bid* ('it had been eaten'), etc.

The causative is formed by adding *-on-* (present causative stem), *-onn-* (past causative stem), or *-onn-an* (causative infinitive) to the present stem: *pehidan* ('to fall'), present stem: *pey-*, past stem: *pehid-*; but: *pey-onn-an* ('to cause to fall; to throw'), present stem: *pey-on-*, past stem: *pey-onn-*.

Denominative verbs are constructed from an auxiliary verb added to a nonverbal element such as a noun or adjective. Some of the most common auxiliary verbs are: *henāštan* (present stem: *narun-/nār-*) ('to do'), *dālidan* (present stem: *dāl-*) ('to receive'), *tevordan* (present stem: *tevor-*) ('to strike'), *veynidan* (present stem: *veyn-*) ('to give'), *varsonnan* (present stem: *varson-/arson-*) ('to take'). Some examples: *bāki henāštan* ('to play') (*bāki* 'play'), *bučāk henāštan* ('to rot') (*bučāk* 'smell'), *dax henāštan* ('to make') (*dax* 'good'), *gal henāštan* ('to put on') (*gal* 'body'), *peyduz henāštan* ('to find') (*peyduz* 'visible'), *šowkā/šowkitā henāštan* ('to weep') (*šowkā/šowkitā* 'weeping'), *vākul*

henāštan ('to open') (*vākul* 'open'), *zennegi henāštan* ('to live') (*zennegi* 'life'), *dennik dālidan* ('to bite') (*dennik* 'tooth'), *gāl tevordan* ('to think') (*gāl* 'thought'), *šekāl tevordan* ('to hunt') (*šekāl* 'prey'), *holčāki veynidan* ('to push') (*holčāki* 'push'), *telkāmi veynidan* ('to press') (*telkāmi* 'pressure'), *lābā varsonnan* ('to vomit') (*lābā* 'up').

II. The Romani language in Iran

Around the 18th century, a group of South Balkan Romani speakers migrated from northern Greece to Iran and settled in various regions. The descendants of these migrants now refer their language as *Romāno*. Another name for this language is *Zargari*, as most speakers reside in the village of Zargar, Qazvin Province, in northwestern Iran. The Iranian variety of South Balkan Romani is therefore variously referred to as Iranian Romani, *Romāno*, or *Zargari*. Iranian Romani closely resembles other South Balkan Romani varieties spoken in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Turkey (Matras et al. 1997: xvii; Matras 2002: 6; Elšík 2020: 183).

According to the Iranian gazetteer, the village of Zargar had a population of 160 families in 1999 (*Farhang-e Joqrāfiyā* 'i 1999: XXVI/304). Based on the most recent Iranian population census available on the official website of the Statistical Centre of Iran, the village of Zargar had 187 families, totalling 588 people, in 2016. Most of the village's inhabitants are trilingual, speaking Romani, Azari Turkish, and Persian.

The German Egyptologist Brugsch, who travelled to Iran in 1860-1861, reported that the Zargar tribe was descended from Alexander the Great and that they used many Greek words in their language, particularly Greek numerals. However, he confused the Zargari language (i.e., Iranian Romani) with a Persian-based artificial language of the same name. The words he quotes (Brugsch 1862: I/339) are, in fact, examples of artificial Zargari, where Persian words are divided into CV syllables, each syllable followed by a similar one beginning with *z*, e.g., *ye-ze-ki-zi* ('one') derives from Persian *yeki*, and *de-ze-h* ('village') comes from Persian *deh*.

One of the Persian sources in which the Zargar tribe is given a mention is the travel account of Hoseyni-ye Farāhāni written in 1885. While describing his travel to Qazvin, Farāhāni writes:

"... There is a road of four *farsangs* going from the Qeshlaq caravanserai to the Kavanda caravanserai. It is covered with red earth and becomes muddy during the rainy season. The Zargar tribe of Qazvin live far from and near the road between the two caravanserais. They are all unmerciful robbers, robbing clandestinely and dirtily. Whenever they find an opportunity, day and night, they come to the road in a begging pose, and if they find two or three people unarmed, they rob them of their possessions"

(ed. Golzāri 1983: 16-17).

There are various contradictory oral accounts about the history of the Zargar tribe (see e.g., Kalbāsi 1993: 38-39; Xādemoššari'e-ye Sāmāni 1994: 29), but the account recorded by Windfuhr (1970: 289) as told by the elder of the Zargar village appears more reliable. According to this version, Nāder Shāh (reign: 1736-1747) brought three highly skilled goldsmith (Persian: *zargar*) brothers from Rum/Rumelia, a historical region in the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire, to Iran. He granted them grazing grounds in the area of what is now Zargar village as winter pastures, and lands in the mountains west of Zanzan for summer pastures. They were also granted exemptions from taxation and military service. During the reign of Rezā Shāh (reign: 1925-1941), the descendants of these brothers settled permanently in the winter pastures, built their homes, and abandoned their summer grounds.

II.1. Research background on Iranian Romani

Windfuhr published the first introductory paper on Iranian Romani in 1970. Tehranizāde-ye Quchani published a short Romāno-Persian glossary in 1991, which was then translated into German by Djoneydi in 1996. In 1993, Kalbāsi published a paper on the morphology of Iranian Romani. In 1994, Xādemoššari'e-ye Sāmāni wrote his MA dissertation on the Romāno spoken in the Zargar village. He published a short report in 2004. A full description of the Romāno of the Zargar village was published by the present author in 2003, based on fieldwork conducted in 2000-2001. The inhabitants of the Zargar village are typically trilingual in Romāno, Azari Turkish and Persian. However, as the languages of communication within neighbouring communities and education are Azari Turkish and Persian, respectively, Romāno is not effectively transmitted to the younger generation. This process of attrition, further accelerated by exogamy, threatens the complete extinction of Romāno.

Iranian Romani is spoken not only in Zargar village but also in Baqerabad-e Tork and Abyek in Qazvin Province, Shahriyar and Qeshlaq-e Zargarha in Tehran Province, and Quchan in Razavi Khorasan Province. According to the inhabitants of Zargar village, some relatives have migrated to the Iranian cities of Abadan, Khoy, Orumiye (Urmia), Salmas, Shiraz, and Tehran, but all have forgotten their ancestral language.

II.2. Linguistic features of Iranian Romani

Unlike Iranian Domari, Iranian Romani retains most of its Indo-Aryan phonological and morphological features. Iranian Romani has four short vowels (*a, e, o, ö*), four long vowels (*ā, i, u, ü*), and twenty-nine consonants (*p, ph, b, t, th, d, k, kh, g, q, ʔ, m, n, f, v, s, z, š, ž, x, γ, h, č, čh, ĵ, l, r, w, y*) (Rezai Baghbidi 2003: 126-127). There is a tendency in some speakers to reduce the tripartite distinction between the voiceless non-aspirates (*p, t, k, č*), voiceless aspirates (*ph,*

th, kh, čh), and voiced non-aspirates (*b, d, g, j*) to a bipartite one, either between the voiceless aspirates (*ph, th, kh, čh*) and voiced non-aspirates (*b, d, g, j*), or between the voiceless non-aspirates (*p, t, k, č*) and voiced non-aspirates (*b, d, g, j*) (Windfuhr 1970: 272-273). The most distinctive feature of Iranian Romani phonology, borrowed from Azari Turkish, is ‘vowel harmony’, e.g., *bu-lovu* (‘moneyless’), derived from **bi-lovu* (with the Persian prefix *bi-* ‘without, -less’).

Iranian Romani nouns exhibit two genders (masculine and feminine), two numbers (singular and plural), and a two-layered case system. Layer I, consists of the nominative and oblique cases (Tables 2.9 and 2.10), while Layer II comprises secondary cases formed by adding case suffixes to the oblique (Table 2.11). The case suffixes in Iranian Romani may be influenced by vowel harmony (Rezai Baghbidi 2003: 130).

Table 2.9: Iranian Romani Layer I case suffixes for vowel stems.

	vowel stems			
	masculine		feminine	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
nominative	<i>-o</i>	<i>-e, -a</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>-a</i>
oblique	<i>-es</i>	<i>-en</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-en</i>

Table 2.10: Iranian Romani Layer I case suffixes for consonant stems.

	consonant stems			
	masculine		feminine	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
nominative	<i>-ø</i>	<i>-ø, -e, -a</i>	<i>-ø</i>	<i>-ø, -a</i>
oblique	<i>-es</i>	<i>-en</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-en</i>

Table 2.11: Iranian Romani Layer II case suffixes.

genitive/dative:	<i>-ke</i>
ablative/instrumental:	<i>-tār</i>

ablative	- <i>dan</i> (after temporal adverbs)
ablative:	- <i>āl/-ār</i> (after local adverbs)
locative:	- <i>te</i>
locative:	- <i>i</i> (after toponym)
vocative:	- <i>ā</i>

Inanimate nouns often have the same nominative and oblique forms: *kher* (m.) ('house'), *pani* (m.) ('water'). Masculine proper names take -*es* (-*s* after vowels) in the nominative and oblique: *Parviz-es gölu* 'Parviz went'; *Parviz-es dikhlo* ('I saw Parviz'); *Ali-s ajili* ('Ali came'); *Ali-s dikhlo* ('I saw Ali'). Feminine proper names take -*a* (-*na* after vowels) in the nominative and oblique: *Parvin-a geli* ('Parvin went'); *Parvin-a dikhlo* ('I saw Parvin'); *Ferešte-na ajili* ('Ferešte came'); *Ferešte-na dikhlo* ('I saw Ferešte').

Words ending in consonants, especially monosyllabic ones, often have the same form in both nominative singular and plural: *murš* (m.) ('man; men'), *dād* (m.) ('father; fathers'), *bār* (m.) ('stone; stones'); but: *dis* (m.) ('day'); *dis-e* ('days'); *čhib* (f.) ('language; tongue'); *čhib-a* ('languages; tongues'). Some words demonstrate irregular plural forms: *čhā*, pl. *čhā-vu* (m.) ('boy; son'); *jukel*, pl. *jukl-e* (m.) ('dog'); *šoru*, pl. *šoru* (m.) ('head'); *bori* (f.), pl. *boy-r-a* (f.) ('bride; daughter-in-law').

Examples of layer II case suffixes: *Alis-ki* ('Ali's; to Ali; for Ali'), *madrāsas-tār* ('from school'), *Alis-tār* ('with Ali'), *čāqus-tār* ('with a knife'), *ij-dan* ('since yesterday'), *opr-āl* ('from above'), *āngl-ār* ('from the front'), *veškis-ti* ('in the mountain; to the mountain'), *Teran-i* ('in Tehran; to Tehran'), *devl-ā* ('O God!').

There is no definite article in Iranian Romani, but indefiniteness for both genders is shown by the numeral *yek* ('one') or by *yedana* ('one piece of'): *yek murš* ('a man'); *yedana čhay* ('a girl').

Iranian Romani personal pronouns are inflected as in Table 2.12 (Rezai Baghbidi 2003: 133).

Table 2.12: Iranian Romani personal pronouns.

	I	thou	he	she
nominative	<i>min</i>	<i>tu</i>	(<i>k</i>) <i>ovā</i>	(<i>k</i>) <i>oya</i>
oblique	<i>mān</i>	<i>tut</i>	(<i>k</i>) <i>olus</i> , - <i>les</i>	(<i>k</i>) <i>olā</i> , - <i>la</i>
dative	<i>māngu</i>	<i>tugu</i>	(<i>k</i>) <i>olusku</i> , <i>leske</i>	(<i>k</i>) <i>olāgu</i> , <i>lake</i>

ablative/instrumental	<i>māndār</i>	<i>tudār</i>	<i>(k)olustār, lestār</i>	<i>(k)olādār</i>
locative	<i>māndu</i>	<i>tudu</i>	<i>(k)olustu, leste</i>	<i>(k)olādu</i>
	we	you	they	
nominative	<i>āmun</i>	<i>timen</i>	<i>(k)olā</i>	
oblique	<i>āmun</i>	<i>timen</i>	<i>(k)olun, -len</i>	
dative	<i>āmungu</i>	<i>timenge</i>	<i>(k)olungu, lenge</i>	
ablative/instrumental	<i>āmundār</i>	<i>timendār</i>	<i>(k)olundār; lendār</i>	
locative	<i>āmundu</i>	<i>timende</i>	<i>(k)olundu, lende</i>	

The enclitic pronouns *-les*, *-la* and *-len* are only used after verbs: *dikhani-les* ('I see him') (= *olus dikhani*).

The dative forms of personal pronouns are not used in genitive functions; possession is expressed by possessive pronouns, whose nominative cases are shown in Table 2.13 (Rezai Baghbidi 2003: 135).

Table 2.13: Nominative cases of Iranian Romani possessive pronouns.

	I	thou	he	she
masculine	<i>miro, mi-</i>	<i>tiro, ti-</i>	<i>leske, les(ke) kiro, les-</i>	<i>lake, la(ke) kiro, la-</i>
feminine	<i>miri, mi-</i>	<i>tiri, ti-</i>	<i>leske, les(ke) kiri, les-</i>	<i>lake, la(ke) kiri, la-</i>
	we	you	they	
masculine	<i>āmāro</i>	<i>tumāro</i>	<i>lenge, len(ge) kiro, len-</i>	
feminine	<i>āmari</i>	<i>tumari</i>	<i>lenge, len(ge) kiri, len-</i>	

Iranian Romani has borrowed its reflexive/emphatic pronouns from Azari

Turkish: *özüm* ('myself'), *özin* ('yourself'), *özi* ('himself, herself, itself'), *özimiz* ('ourselves'), *öziz* ('yourselves'), *özlari* ('themselves'). There are also two 3rd person reflexive possessives inflected by case, gender, and number (Table 2.14).

Table 2.14. Iranian Romani 3rd person reflexive possessives.

	singular	plural
masculine	<i>pi(ro)</i>	<i>pumāro</i>
feminine	<i>pi(ri)</i>	<i>pumari</i>

Examples: *piro dād/pu-dād* ('his own father; her own father'), *piri day/pi-day* ('his own mother; her own mother').

Attributive adjectives usually precede nouns that they modify. Both attributive and predicative adjectives agree in gender and number with the nouns to which they refer (Table 2.15).

Table 2.15: Iranian Romani adjective endings.

masculine	feminine	plural
<i>-o</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>-e</i>

Examples: *lāčho murš* ('good man'), *lāčhi juvel* ('good woman'), *lāčhe qaqina* ('good hens'), *kāvā bāšno pārno si* ('This cock is white'), *kaya qaqini parni si* ('This hen is white').

Unlike European Romani adjectives, Iranian Romani adjectives do not have comparative or superlative forms (see also: Elšík 2020: 167; Elšík and Matras 2006: 145). They are either expressed by words such as *but* 'very' and *dāhā* 'more' (Rezai Baghbidi 2002: 246), or expressed syntactically, e.g., *kāvā lāčho si* ('This is good'); *kāvā kolustār lāčho si* ('This is better than that'); *kāvā sir fendār lāčho si* ('This is the best of all').

After numbers larger than one the plural form is always used, e.g., *yek čhay* ('one daughter; one girl'); *oxto čhaya* ('eight daughters; eight girls'). Ordinal numbers, except *aval* ('first'), are made with the suffix *-(e)dino* and agree in gender and number with the noun they modify, e.g., *šov* ('six'); *šovedino murš* ('the sixth man'); *šovedini juvel* ('the sixth woman').

Iranian Romani verbs have two stems: present and past. The present stem is used to form the present indicative, the subjunctive, the imperfect, and the imperative. The past stem forms the simple past/present perfect and the pluperfect. The past stem is usually, though not always, created by adding the

suffix *-l* or *-d* to the present stem: *dikh-/dikhl-* ('to see'); *māng-/māngl-* ('to want'); *xā-/xāl-* ('to eat'); *l-/l-* ('to get; to buy'); *biken-/bikend-* ('to sell'); *beš-/bešd-* ('to sit'); *čor-/čord-* ('to steal'); *d-/d-* ('to give').

The suffix *-ay* converts intransitive/transitive present stems into causative present stems. The past stem of such causative forms ends in *-āvd*: *nāšay-/nāšāvd-* ('to make run', from *nāš-* 'to run'); *piyay-/piyāvd-* ('to make drink', from *piy-* 'to drink'). The second type of causative present stem is formed by adding the suffix *-ar* to adjectival and nominal stems, with the past stem ending in *-ard*: *šukhar-/šukhard-* ('to cause to become dry, to dry', from *šukho* 'dry'); *čikar-/čikard-* ('to cause to be muddy, from *čik* 'mud').

The mediopassive stem is formed with the addition of the suffixes *-iv* (present) and *-il* (past) to the past stem of the transitive verb: *čhindiv-/čhindil-* ('to be cut', from *čhin-/čhind-* 'to cut').

The personal endings are shown in Table 2.16 (Rezai Baghbidi 2003: 139).

Table 2.16: Iranian Romani personal endings.

	present indicative	present subjunctive	simple past/ present perfect	imperfect	pluperfec t	imperativ e
1 st person singular	<i>-ā,</i> <i>-ani</i>	<i>-āv</i>	<i>-om</i>	<i>-āvās</i>	<i>-omās</i>	
2 nd person singular	<i>-esā,</i> <i>-esani</i>	<i>-es</i>	<i>-ān</i>	<i>-esās</i>	<i>-ānās</i>	<i>-ø</i>
3 rd person singular	<i>-elā,</i> <i>-elani</i>	<i>-el</i>	<i>-ās</i>	<i>-elās</i>	<i>-āsās</i>	
1 st person plural	<i>-āsā,</i> <i>-āsani</i>	<i>-ās</i>	<i>-ām</i>	<i>-āsās</i>	<i>-āmās</i>	
2 nd person plural	<i>-enā,</i> <i>-enani</i>	<i>-en</i>	<i>-en</i>	<i>-enās</i>	<i>-enās</i>	<i>-en</i>

3 rd	-enā,	-en	-e	-enās	-esās	
person						
plural	-enani					

Examples: *dikhā/dikhani* ('I see'), *dikhāv* ('I should see'), *dikhlom* ('I saw; I have seen'), *dikhāvās* ('I was seeing'), *dikhlomās* ('I had seen'), *dikh* ('see!').

It should be noted that the 3rd person singular simple past/present perfect ending for causative and mediopassive verbs is *-i* (not *-ās*), and the 3rd person singular pluperfect ending for such verbs is *-isās* (not *-āsās*).

The present participle is formed by adding the suffixes *-eni/-enis* (m.) and *-enisa* (f.) to the present stem, while the past participle is formed by adding the suffixes *-o* (m.), *-i* (f.), and *-e* (plural) to the past stem: *čhini/eni/čhinenis* (m.), *čhinenisa* (f.) ('cutting'), *čhindo* (m.), *čhindi* (f.), *čhinde* (plural) ('cut').

As previously mentioned, the present perfect has the same form as the simple past. However, under the influence of Persian, the present perfect can also be formed with the present tense of the auxiliary verb *isi/pey* ('to be') (i.e., *som*, *sān*, *sī*, *sām*, *sen*, *sī*) added to the past participle of the main verb: *bešdo-som* (m.)/*bešdi-som* (f.) ('I have sat down').

The infinitive is formed by adding *-ipey* to the present stem: *čhini/pey* ('to cut'). Infinitives borrowed from Azari Turkish end in *-meki* and are conjugated in their original Turkish forms (see also: Elšík and Matras 2006: 320): *akmeki* ('to plant'), *akiram* ('I plant'), *akam* ('I should plant'), *akdim* ('I planted'), *akmišam* ('I have planted'), *akirdim* ('I was planting'), *akmišdim* ('I had planted'), *akaḡiyam* ('I will plant'), *ak* ('plant!').

The adverb of negation is *nā* and the adverb of prohibition is *mā*: *nā-xālām* ('we did not eat/have not eaten'), *mān* (from *mā-ān*) ('Do not bring!').

The modal verbs *ašti* ('can') and *garak* ('must') are not conjugated for person and tense: *ašti ḡani* ('I can go'), *n-ašti ḡālās* ('he/she could not go'), *garak xāv* ('I must eat'), *garak xāvās* ('I had to eat; I must have eaten').

Unlike many European Romani varieties, Iranian Romani is an OV language. Pronominal objects can appear before or after verbs. In the latter case, 3rd person enclitics (i.e., *-les*, *-la* and *-len*) are often used: *āmūn na-dikhesān/na-dikhesān āmūn* ('you do not see us'), *olus dikhani/dikhani-les* ('I see him'). Direct objects often precede indirect objects: *min parsina Parvināku lom* ('I bought a dress for Parvin').

Resumptive pronouns are not uncommon, especially the 3rd person plural enclitic pronoun *-len*: *Hesenes čhaya kotusi[-len]* ('Hassan's daughters are there'), *dār piter[-len]* ('Open the doors!').

III. The lexicon of Iranian Domari and Romani

One of the key words used to identify Domari and Romani varieties is the term

for ‘horse,’ which is cognate with the Hindi word *ghoṛā* and traces back to Sanskrit *ghoṭa-*. However, this term is likely not a genuine Indo-Aryan word and seems to have entered Sanskrit from another language (Mayrhofer 1956: 361-362; Mayrhofer 1992: 517). To illustrate this point, here are some cognate words for ‘horse’ found in Iranian Domari, Romani, and various Lutarā varieties: Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *gura*; Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *agora*; Gudāri of Astarabad: *gorā*; Iranian Romani: *gerās*; Jugi of Astarabad: *gōra*; Kālesi: *kuri*; Lutarā of the Āšiq of Azarbaijan: *agura*; Lutarā of the Bakhtiari Tušmāl, of the Luti of Ilam, Kermanshah, Kurdistan and Lorestan, and of the Sāzanda of Band-e Amir and Marv-Dasht: *gowra*; Lutarā of the Xāksāri Darvishes of Shahr-e Babak: *gure*; Lutarā of the Mehtar of Mamasani: *qual*; Qorbati of Birjand, Neyshabur, Qa’en and Sabzevar: *gorō*; Qorbati of Jiroft, Sirjan and Khenejin: *gorā*; Qorbati of Kerman: *ghora*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *gare*; Qorbati of Soltanabad: *gora*; Selyari: *kur, kuri*; Selyari of Ramsar: *gurun*.

What follows is a comparative list of some common Indo-Aryan words in Iranian Domari, Romani, and Lutarā.

‘Blood’: Qorbati of Kerman: *lu*; Qorbati of Qa’ enat: *luhut* (Hindi: *lohū*; Sanskrit: *lohita-*).

‘Canal’: Jugi of Mazandaran: *kulya* (Sanskrit: *kulyā-*).

‘Cold’: Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *si, sild, silda*; Iranian Romani: *šil*; Jugi of Astarabad: *seylok*; Qorbati of Jiroft: *sīlkā*; Qorbati of Qa’en: *seylāk, silākī*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *sirāti*; Qorbati of Sirjan: *sīrāt*; Qorbati of Soltanabad: *selekoba*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *silak* (Sanskrit: *śītala-*).

‘Ear’: Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *kian, qan*; Iranian Romani: *kān*; Kālesi: *halkerne*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *kan*; Selyari: *halkernā, halkerne* (Hindi: *kān*; Sanskrit: *kārṇa-*).

‘Fire’: Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *ag*; Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *ayk, ak, aq*; Iranian Romani: *yāg*; Qorbati of Jiroft: *āgī*; Qorbati of Neyshabur and Sabzevar: *agi, agir, ōgi*; Qorbati of Qa’en: *ogi* (Hindi: *āg*; Sanskrit: *agnī-*).

‘Hair’: Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *val*; Iranian Romani: *bāl*; Qorbati of Jiroft and Kerman: *palmak*; Qorbati of Qa’ enat: *wāl*; Qorbati of Sirjan: *vāl* (Hindi: *bāl*; Sanskrit: *vāla-*).

‘Meat’: Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *masi*; Iranian Romani: *mās*; Jugi of Mazandaran: *māsi*; Qorbati of Birjand, Neyshabur, Qa’en and Sabzevar: *masi, masil, masir* (Hindi: *māms*; Sanskrit: *māmsā-*; Vedic: *mās-*).

‘Night’: Gudāri of Astarabad: *arat*; Iranian Romani: *rāt*; Jugi of Astarabad: *nomārat*; Qorbati of Qa’ enat: *rāt*, *rōt*; Qorbati of Soltanabad: *ruat* (Hindi: *rāt*; Sanskrit: *rātri*-).

‘Nose’: Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *nak*; Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *nak*, *nank*; Iranian Romani: *nāk*; Jugi of Astarabad: *bowrnoghī*; Qorbati of Birjand, Neyshabur and Qa’ en: *barnōgi*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *bermāq*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *burnāq* (Hindi: *nāk*; Sanskrit: *nakrā*-).

‘Very’: Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *baghu*, *bahu*, *buhu*; Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *buhu*; Iranian Romani: *but*; Qorbati of Birjand, Neyshabur and Qa’ en: *bohōt*; Qorbati of Khorasan: *buhūt*; Selyari of Ramsar: *bitun* (Hindi: *bahut*; Sanskrit: *bahutva*- ‘abundance’).

‘Water’: Dialect of the Gypsies of Baluchestan: *pani*; Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *bani*, *pani*; Iranian Romani: *pāni*; Jugi of Astarabad: *powno*; Lutarā of the Darvishes of Isfahan: *pōnī*; Qorbati of Bam: *puni*; Qorbati of Birjand, Neyshabur, Qa’ en and Sabzevar: *panew*, *punew*, *punow*; Qorbati of Jiroft and Sirjan: *pūnū*; Qorbati of Kerman: *ponū*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *punew*, *punu* (Hindi: *pānī*; Sanskrit: *pānīya*-). Cf. Selyari: *vār*; Kālesi: *vār* (Hindi: *vār*; Sanskrit: *vāri*-).

‘Water-pot’: Jugi of Mazandaran: *palika* (Sanskrit: *paligha*-).

A number of words in Iranian Domari, Romani, and Lutarā have a Jewish origin, tracing back to either Aramaic or Hebrew. It has been previously demonstrated that the word *dax* (‘good’) in the 12th century Lutarā of Karkh originates from the Aramaic *daxyā*, *daxē* (‘pure, (ritually) correct’). This word is still in use, with slight pronunciation variations, in several Qorbati and Lutarā varieties. Two additional terms with Jewish roots are as follows:

‘To say’: Jugi of Astarabad: *homo’ aštan*; Qorbati of Kerman: *imaštan*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *homāštan*, present stem: *mār*-, past stem: *homāšt*-; Qorbati of Khenejin: *homāštan*, present stem: *āmār*-, past stem: *homāšt*- (Jewish Lutarā of Mashhad: *meštā*-; Aramaic: *mešta* ‘ē ‘to say’, *āmar* ‘said’).

‘Water’: Gudāri of Astarabad: *mīōm*; Lutarā of the Bakhtiari Tušmāl, and of the Luti of Ilam, Kermanshah, Kurdistan and Lorestan: *meyow*; Lutarā of the Čalli of Baluchestan: *meyab*; Lutarā of the Xāksāri Darvishes: *moy*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *miyow* (Jewish Lutarā: *mayem*; Hebrew: *māyim*; Aramaic: *mayyā*).

A number of words in Iranian Domari, Romani, and Lutarā are borrowings from the Iranian or non-Iranian languages of the host communities:

‘Belly’: Lutarā of the Borumand family: *batn*; Lutarā of the Darvishes: *batnā*; Selyari of Ramsar: *bitin* (Arabic: *baṭn*); Qorbati of Khorasan: *šīkamtūm* (Persian: *šekam*).

‘Crying’: Jugi of Mazandaran: *berme* (Mazandarani: *berme*).

‘Duck’: Jugi of Mazandaran: *sikā* (Mazandarani: *sikā*).

‘Ear’: Qorbati of Kerman: *guški*; Qorbati of Khorasan and Sirjan: *gūš* (Persian: *guš*).

‘Fire’: Jugi of Astarabad and Qorbati of Kerman: *narak*; Qorbati of Soltanabad *norek* (Arabic: *nār*); Qorbati of Khorasan: *ātaš* (Persian: *ātaš*).

‘Meat’: Lutarā of the Borumand family: *lahm*; Lutarā of the coppersmiths of Kāzerun: *lahme*; Lutarā of the Darvishes of Isfahan: *lahmekī*; Lutarā of the Xāksāri Darvishes: *lahmegi* (Arabic: *lahm*).

‘Night’: Lutarā of the Borumand family, Lutarā of the Xāksāri Darvishes, and Qorbati of Jiroft, Kerman, and Sirjan: *layl*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *leyl* (Arabic: *layl*).

‘Nose’: Lutarā of the Borumand family: *anf* (Arabic: *ʿanf*); Qorbati of Jiroft, Kerman, and Sirjan: *damāq* (Persian: *damāq*); Qorbati of Khorasan: *bīnī* (Persian: *bini*).

‘Tree’: Dialect of the Qarāči of Tabriz: *dar* (Persian: *dār*); Qorbati of Kerman: *darraxt*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *redaxt* (Persian: *deraxt*).

‘Turtle’: Jugi of Mazandaran: *kavez* (Mazandarani: *kavez*).

In Iranian Domari and Lutarā varieties, loanwords are sometimes distorted in various ways. These distortions include changes in vowels or consonants, the transposition of sounds or syllables, or the addition of redundant affixes, making it difficult to recognise the original form. Here are some examples of distorted Persian loanwords in the Qorbati dialect of Shiraz: *angur-čāki* (‘grape’) (Persian: *angur*); *bād-kāmi* (‘grape’) (Persian: *bād*); *bāki* (‘play’) (Persian: *bāzi*); *be-dālidān* (‘to tear’) (Persian: *daridan*); *doguri* (‘other’) (Persian: *digari*); *do-hāt* (‘two’) (Persian: *do*); *garm-ut* (‘warm’) (Persian: *garm*); *lābā* (‘top’) (Persian: *bālā*); *lemāre* (‘number’) (Persian: *šomāre*); *leyxi* (‘very’) (Persian: *xeyli*); *lokā* (‘hat’) (Persian: *kolāh*); *lokoft* (‘thick’) (Persian: *koloft*); *mā-čāki* (‘moon’) (Persian: *māh*); *redaxt* (‘tree’) (Persian: *deraxt*); *rop* (‘full’) (Persian: *por*); *rotoš* (‘sour’) (Persian: *torš*); *šekāl* (‘hunting’) (Persian: *šekār*); *šeter* (‘camel’)

(Persian: *šotor*); *yāzza-gilā* ('eleven') (Persian: *yāzdah*); *zard-ulā* ('yellow') (Persian: *zard*); *zevun-čāki*, *zevun-kāmi* ('tongue') (Persian: *zabān*).

Iranian Romani contains a number of Greek words which date back to the period before the 18th century, when the ancestors of its speakers lived in northern Greece, e.g., *āndāmā* ('together') (Greek: *αντάμα*); *durom* ('road') (Greek: *δρόμος*); *eftā* ('seven') (Greek: *εφτά*); *enna* ('nine') (Greek: *εννέα*); *luludi* ('flower') (Greek: *λουλούδι*); *oxto* ('eight') (Greek: *οχτώ*); *qoqālā* ('bone') (Greek: *κόκκαλο*); *sārāndā* ('forty') (Greek: *σαράντα*); *tirāndā* ('thirty') (Greek: *τριάντα*); *zimi* ('soup') (Greek: *ζουμί*). On the other hand, the long-lasting presence of Iranian Romani speakers among the Azari Turkish-speaking population of Qazvin Province of northwest Iran paved the way for Iranian Romani to borrow a large number of words from Azari Turkish, e.g., *boluti* ('cloud') (Azari Turkish: *bulut*); *dōbiki* ('knee') (Azari Turkish: *dōbik*); *kuyruka* ('tail') (Azari Turkish: *kuyruk*); *naštaliki* ('breakfast') (Azari Turkish: *nāštāloq*); *qaši* ('eyebrow') (Azari Turkish: *qāš*); *qatiki* ('yoghurt') (Azari Turkish: *qātoq*); *saremsaki* ('garlic') (Azari Turkish: *sarimsāq*); *süti* ('milk') (Azari Turkish: *süt*); *tosbāqās* ('tortoise') (Azari Turkish: *tosbāqā*); *tulkina* ('fox') (Azari Turkish: *tulki*); *yārpaki* ('leaf') (Azari Turkish: *yārpak*).

A common lexical feature of Iranian Domari, Romani, and Lutarā is the occasional use of both genuine Indo-Aryan words and non-Indo-Aryan loanwords in different meanings: Arranaji: *kalāj* ('prayer') (Persian: *kalāq* 'crow'); Arranaji: *miš* ('woman') (Persian: *miš* 'ewe'); Arranaji: *rušāna* ('water') (Persian: *rowšani* 'light'); Iranian Romani: *murš*; Lutarā of the Borumand family: *māre*, *mārē*; Qorbati of Jiroft and Sirjan: *māruz*; Qorbati of Kerman: *māris*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *mārez* ('man') (Sanskrit: *māriṣa*- 'respectable man'); Iranian Romani: *per*; Qorbati of Jiroft and Sirjan: *pītū*; Qorbati of Shiraz and Khenejin: *pitu* ('belly') (Sanskrit: *peṭa*- 'basket'; cf. Hindi: *peṭ* 'belly'); Jugi of Mazandaran: *leben* ('yoghurt') (Arabic: *laban* 'milk'); Kālesi and Selyari: *zardi* ('fire') (Persian: *zard* 'yellow'); Lutarā of the Bakhtiari Tušmāl, and of the Luti of Ilam, Kermanshah, Kurdistan and Lorestan: *nahur*; Lutarā of the Darvishes, and Qorbati of Jiroft, Kerman, and Sirjan: *nuhūr*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *nuhur*; Qorbati of Soltanabad: *nur* ('eye') (Talmudic Aramaic: *nəhōrā* 'eyesight'); Qorbati of Kerman: *tirang*; Qorbati of Shiraz: *tireng*; Qorbati of Soltanabad: *tirenk* ('ox; cow') (Hindi: *turang*; Sanskrit: *turaṅga*- 'horse'); Qorbati of Shiraz: *čekal*; Qorbati of Khenejin: *čekeli* ('soil') (Hindi: *cikil*; Sanskrit: *cikila*- 'mud'; cf. Iranian Romani: *čik* 'mud'); Qorbati of Shiraz: *kāštā* ('tree') (Sanskrit: *kāṣṭhā*- 'wood'; cf. Iranian Romani: *qāšt* 'wood; tree'); Qorbati of Shiraz: *sokāl* ('tomorrow') (Sanskrit: *sakālam* 'early in the morning'; Hindi: *sakāl* 'early in the morning'); Qorbati of Sirjan: *munīr* ('fire') (Arabic: *munīr* 'shining').

Polysemy is exaggeratingly abundant in Iranian Domari and Lutarā varieties: Arranaji: *pāmāj* ('horse; donkey; car'); Qorbati of Shiraz: *bohur* ('bicycle; motorcycle; car'); *duhut* ('liver; meat; bone'); *pāveri* ('sky; cloud; sun'); *šildā'i* ('honey; sugar; jam'); *til* ('oil; fat; butter'); Selyari: *teji* ('needle; knife; sword;

scissors’).

An interesting common feature of Iranian Domari and Lutarā varieties in their word-formation systems is an exaggerated tendency to compounding: Arranaji: *yuza-liv* [‘walnut + leaf’] (‘banknote’); Qorbati of Shiraz: *nuhur-e pāveri* [‘eye of the sky’] (‘star’); Selyari: *bezu-taj-vār* [‘two + foot + water’] (‘duck’); *garez-ketme* [‘stone + ground’] (‘mountain’); *parduk-taj-verāz* [‘small + foot + boar’] (‘car’); *taj-šemer* [‘foot + clothes’] (‘sock’); *zardi-vār* [‘fire + water’] (‘oil’); Selyari of Ramsar: *dize-vāš* [‘head + grass’] (‘hair’); *kuk-vāš* [‘eye + grass’] (‘eyebrow’); *luču-vāš* [‘lip + grass’] (‘moustache’).

IV. Conclusion

Gypsies have lived in Iran since the early 5th century and have been known by various names, reflecting their lifestyle, profession, social status, cultural norms, or geographic origin. The Domari branch of Gypsy languages, once dominant in Iran, is now no longer spoken. Nevertheless, Domari lexical items remain in nearly all the jargons used for intergroup communication by Iranian Gypsies. These jargons use a simplified grammar of the host language and incorporate words from other minority groups, notably the secret language of Iranian Jews known as Loterā’i. Despite their fragmentation and geographical dispersion, Iranian Gypsy groups exhibit striking similarities in communication strategies and word-formation processes. The Romani branch of Gypsy languages emerged in Iran around the 18th century, following the migration of several South Balkan Romani speakers from northern Greece. The data presented in this paper from various Gypsy languages of Iran shed light on an important part of a linguistic continuum extending from the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, and Afghanistan through Iran to the Middle East, the Transcaucasus, the Balkan Peninsula, and Europe.

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