

***A Bashkardi version of the chain tale ATU 2034:
The Jackal Retrieves His Tail
Цепочная сказка ATU 2034:
Версия башкарди «Шакал вновь обретает свой хвост»***

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This article presents a text in North Bashkardi, a little studied variety spoken in Southern Iran, with English translation and some notes.¹

Key words: Bashkardi, folk tales, Iranian languages, Ilya Gershevitch

В данной статье представлен текст на северном башкарди, малоизученном языке Южного Ирана, с английским переводом и некоторыми комментариями.

Ключевые слова: башкарди, сказки, иранские языки, Илья Гершевич

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Introduction

Bashkardi (Bš) is the name for a cluster of varieties of the Iranian branch of Indo-European spoken in the region called Bašākerd in Iran, inland from the Strait of Hormuz. The main division is between the groups called North and South Bashkardi (NBš, SBš).

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The NBš text presented here is from a recording made by Ilya Gershevitch (1914–2001) in Iran in 1956.² This material is described in Korn [2015], and another text from these recordings (with morphological glossing) is published in Korn [in press], which to my knowledge is the only NBš text published to this date.

My work on the text below is based on a preliminary transcription and a translation into Persian by Bakhtiar Seddiqi Nejad made in cooperation with Behrooz Barjasteh Delforooz (Zahedan & Uppsala). I undertook several rounds of checking against the sound file, and in the end also consulted a transcription by Ilya Gershevitch with explanations of some words.³ I have also made use of two boxes of Ilya Gershevitch’s vocabulary cards kept at the Ancient India and Iran Trust in Cambridge.

Information about Bashkardi grammar and previous scholarship on Bashkardi can be found in Korn [2017; in press]; Skjærvø [1989a; 1989b].

The text

The transcription of the text to follow is phonological rather than phonetic. Clitics such as the enclitic pronouns, the *ezafe* *-i* and the marker of specificity *-ī/ē/ei* are attached to the preceding word by a hyphen. Other clitic elements such as the copula and *o* ‘and’ are noted as separate words. The text is separated into clauses and accompanied by a rather literal English translation to facilitate the reading, and finite verbs (including past stems in the post-ergative construction) are underlined. The separation of the text into paragraphs is mine; the structure of the text is not indicated in the recording.

As shown by §11, the speaker is from the family Pīrzād (according to Gershevitch’s notes, his full name is Hossein-e Pīrizāda). Owing to the somewhat odd speed of the recording, it

² The text is no. NBš_A4t3 (tape A4, track 3, min. 20:05ff. of soundfile).

³ This material is pp. 19–25 of the bundle “Tape III” in the folder entitled “Tape”.

is difficult to guess his age, but he has an adult voice. The place where the recording was made is not known, and neither is the setting known to us, but it is obvious that several persons are present in addition to the speaker and Ilya Gershevitch. Some background talk is going on among the audience in addition to the remarks transcribed below, but not sufficiently audible to permit any analysis.

§1 Presentation of the characters

<i>rūza-ī rūzahān-ī bū, bū kakā-ī o nauk-ī. ...</i>	Once upon a time, there was a grandmother and a grandson.
{interruption}	
{said aside:} <i>halā bogom?</i>	Should I speak now?
{talk in the background}	
<i>xāb.</i>	Well.
<i>bū-šōn do dāna boz.</i>	They had two goats.
<i>bozūn xwa-šūn dāšt</i>	They milked the goats themselves
<i>o māsenanden-šūn, tū...</i>	and fermented it (the milk)...
{interruption}	
<i>tūla-ī āht</i>	A jackal came
<i>o xwardend-eh.</i>	and he ate it.
<i>dega sar sahar bozūn-šūn dāšt</i>	The [next] morning, they again milked the goats
<i>o māsenanden-šūn,</i>	and fermented it (the milk).
<i>tūla-ī āht</i>	A jackal came
<i>o xwardend-eh.</i>	and he ate it.
{interruption, talk in the background}	

§2 The jackal loses his tail

<i>rau gwar jarråd-ī hamā pīrazā ke</i>	That old woman went to a sorcerer and [said]:
<i>tūla-i xwara-ī hamī māstakūn mon axwared</i>	“A voracious jackal eats this yoghurt of mine.
<i>mō če-kār bekanō.</i>	What shall I do?”
<i>go: šaw kelenč-et bešakūn xau tīγ</i>	[The sorcerer] said: “At night, cut your finger with a blade
<i>o berīz nemek o āvīšen o ... pelpel,</i>	and put salt and thyme and ... pepper [on it].
<i>estera-ī bege a moč-et,</i>	Take a knife in your hand,
<i>entezār bo</i>	[and] wait
<i>k’ tā tūla yāt</i>	until the jackal comes
<i>o māstūn-t axware,</i>	and eats your yoghurt,
<i>yī domb-eh bobor.</i>	then cut his tail!”
<i>xob, rau ī pīrazan</i>	Well, the old woman went
<i>kelenč xwa šakant,</i>	[and] cut her finger,
<i>rīht-eh nemek o āvīšen o...</i>	she put salt and thyme [on it], and...
<i>sūz-eh wor ge dast-eh,</i>	her hand started burning!
<i>šaw a xāw nakaw,</i>	[At] night she did not fall asleep.
<i>estera wa zīr-e moč ge,</i>	She took the knife under her hand.
<i>āht tūla o dar...</i>	The jackal came in [and]...
<i>manjalak māst-ī wor ge,</i>	opened the yoghurt pot.

<i>čānk bū a xwarden,</i>	He started to eat,
<i>žihpang domb-e tūla borri,</i>	bang! she cut the tail of the jackal,
<i>zīr kapāš hešt.</i>	[and] put it under a mat.
{pause}	
{someone else:} <i>xāb.</i>	Well.
<i>xāb.</i>	Well.
<i>raw tūla.</i>	The jackal left.

§3 The jackal decides to get his tail back

<i>sūr-ī paidā bū a hamī turkūn,</i>	A wedding was upcoming for these jackals.
{clears throat}	
<i>... sūr ei turkūn paidā bū,</i>	... a wedding for the jackals was upcoming.
<i>ādam-šō āt:</i>	A man (messenger?) of them came [and said]:
<i>tūla bāstī-t byāyitin</i>	“Jackal, you need to come,
<i>aiš e, hamī... turkūn, aiš-i-šūn.</i>	there is a party, these jackals, their party!”
<i>go: mō arrom karūn hamī pīrazāl,</i>	[The jackal] said: “I will go to this old woman,
<i>domb xwa gerom,</i>	take my tail,
<i>ayām... dar aiš ayām.</i>	[and] come; I’ll come to the party.”
{to the other people present:} <i>hālā gwarun-eh ...(?) boguem</i>	What shall I say about it?

<i>xo ye ei sar nâkahe</i>	Well, he does not manage.
{others present:) ... <i>nâkahe</i>	... does not manage.

§4 The jackal's conversation with the old woman

<i>xob, âht a karôn pîrazâl.</i>	Well, he went to the old woman
<i>go ei pîrazan: domb-e mō beda,</i>	[and] said to the old woman: “Give [me] my tail,
<i>ke arrom dar aiš.</i>	so that I can go to the party!”
<i>go: to šîrûn-e mō beda,</i>	[The old woman] said: “Give [me] my milk,
<i>ke mō domb-e to adaham.</i>	and I will give [you] your tail!”

§5 The jackal's conversation with the goat

<i>xob, rau karûn boz,</i>	Well; [the jackal] went to the goat
<i>gu: boz boz šîr beda wa mō,</i>	[and] said: “Goat, goat, give me milk,
<i>ke mon arrom</i>	so that I can go
<i>to adahom a pîrazan, domb-e xwa agerom,</i>	and give [it] to the old woman, take my tail
<i>arrom dar aiš.</i>	[and] go to the party!”
<i>boz gu:</i>	The goat said:
<i>boru ya moč tâg-e konâr biyâr,</i>	“Fetch a handful of Konar- leaves,
<i>beda wa mon,</i>	[and] give [them] to me,
<i>ke mon axwarom,</i>	so that I eat [them],

<i>šīr-m abū,</i>	[and] I will have milk.
<i>to šīrūn wor ge,</i>	You will take the milk,
<i>boru pīrazan bedah.</i>	[and] deliver [it] to the old woman.”
{pause}	

§6 The jackal's conversation with the tree

<i>xob, raut a karūn konâr.</i>	Well, he went to the Konar-tree
<i>go: konâr to ya moč-ī tâg beda</i>	[and] said: “Konar-tree, give [me] a handful of leaves.”
<i>– aga na xo agen</i>	– Unless, well, they say [in fact]:
<i>konâr konâr tâg da?</i>	“Konar, Konar, give [me] leaves”? ...
{various voices saying something}	
{someone else:} ... <i>be hamâ-tau bogô.</i>	... say [it] that way.
<i>hamâ-tau bogom?</i>	Should I say [it] that way?
{confirmation from the others present}	
<i>xob.</i>	Well.
<i>gu: konâr konâr tâg da,</i>	[He] said: “Konar, Konar, give [me] leaves,
<i>tâg barom bozâ,</i>	[so that] I carry the leaves to the goat,
<i>boz gerom šīrâ,</i>	take milk [from] the goat,
<i>šīr dahom zâlâ</i>	[and] give the milk to the woman,
<i>(yūš makanī šemâ)</i>	(Don't make noise!)

<i>zâl gerom dümâ, tûlaga-î sîrâ.</i>	... [and] I take the tail [from] the woman for the jackals' wedding."
{someone else:} <i>waht-o künegî agõ</i>	[Someone else:] "Sometimes I [also] say '?.'"
{background:} <i>tûlaga...</i>	(background:) "the jackals..."
<i>gu...</i>	[The tree] said:
<i>to kolût-it âverd a-sar mon konâr ke</i>	"[As soon as] you'll have brought a nest [and] put [it] onto me the Konar-tree,
<i>ke mõ tâg bedaham barâ-i to.</i>	so that I will give leaves to you."

§7 The jackal's conversation with the bird

<i>rau karûn kagâr.</i>	[The jackal] went to the Kagar-bird.
<i>(ya morg-î dar mahal mâ ha, kagâr-eh agûî)</i>	(There is a bird in our region; we call it Kagar.)
<i>go: kagâr kagâr kolût de,</i>	[The jackal] said: "Kagar, Kagar, give [me] a nest,
<i>kolût barom konârâ,</i>	[so that] I carry the nest to the Konar-tree,
<i>konâr gerom tâgâ,</i>	take leaves [from] the Konar-tree,
<i>tâg barom bozâ,</i>	carry the leaves to the goat,
<i>boz gerom şîrâ,</i>	take milk [from] the goat,
<i>şîr barom zâlâ,</i>	carry the milk to the woman,

<i>zāl gerom dümâ, tūlaga-ī sīrâ</i>	[and] take [my] tail [from] the woman for the jackals' wedding."
<i>(âxa ... tūlag ... sūr ... tūlaūn ar).</i>	(After all... the jackal... it was the jackals' wedding.)
<i>gu: to yakk-ei â, yak dūn-i gandom-et âver,</i>	[The bird] said: "[As soon as] you... (?) you'll have brought some grains
<i>dâ barâ-i mon kagâr,</i>	[and] given [them] to me the Kagar-bird,
<i>ke mō kolut a-sar to bekanō.</i>	I'll make a nest for you."

§8 The jackal's conversation with the field

<i>rau karūn zamīn,</i>	[The jackal] went to the field
<i>gu: zamīn zamīn dān deh,</i>	[and] said: "Field, field, give [me] grain!
<i>(dān yānī gandom)</i>	("Grain" means wheat.)
<i>dān barom kagârâ,</i>	[so that] I carry the grain to the Kagar-bird,
<i>kagâr gerom kolutâ,</i>	take a nest [from] the Kagar-bird,
<i>kolūt dahom konârâ,</i>	give the nest to the Konar-tree,
<i>konâr gerom tâgâ,</i>	take leaves [from] the Konar-tree,
<i>tâg barom bozâ,</i>	carry the leaves to the goat,
<i>boz gerom šīrâ,</i>	take milk [from] the goat,
<i>šīr dahom zâlâ,</i>	give the milk to the woman,

<i>zâl gerom dümä, tūlaga-ī sīrâ.</i>	[and] take [my] tail [from] the woman for the jackals' wedding.”
<i>gu: to âb-et barâ-i mon âverd</i>	[The field] said: “[As soon as] you’ll have brought water for me
<i>o ke ke mō sauz bom,</i>	and did [in a way] that I’ll become green,
<i>bâ dūn bom,</i>	[that] I’ll have grain,
<i>bedaham-et.</i>	I’ll give [it] to you.”

§9 The jackal’s conversation with the water

<i>rau karūn âb.</i>	[The jackal] went to the water.
<i>go: âb âb âb de,</i>	[He] said: “Water, water, give me water.
<i>âb barom zamīnâ,</i>	[so that] I take water to the field,
<i>zamīn gerom dānâ,</i>	take grain [from] the field,
<i>dān barom dahom kagârâ,</i>	hand the grain over to the Kagar-bird,
<i>kagâr gerom kolutâ,</i>	take a nest [from] the Kagar-bird,
<i>kolūt dahom konârâ,</i>	give the nest to the Konar-tree,
<i>konâr gerom tâgâ,</i>	take leaves [from] the Konar-tree,
<i>tâg dahom bozâ,</i>	give the leaves to the goat,
<i>boz gerom šīrâ,</i>	take milk [from] the goat,
<i>šīr dahom zâlâ,</i>	give the milk to the woman,
<i>zâl gerom dümä, tūlaga-ī sīrâ.</i>	[and] take [my] tail [from] the woman for the jackals’ wedding.”

§10 The resolution of the chain

<i>xob, zamĩ...</i>	Well, the field...
<i>yâw šīlam bū,</i>	became soaked with water.
<i>âverd dâr-eh ba zamīn,</i>	He (the jackal) brought [water and] gave [it] to the field,
<i>zamīn gandom-eh sauz bū tā rasī,</i>	the field's grain became green and (lit. until) it became ripe.
<i>čer-e, bord dâr-eh wa kagâr,</i>	He picked up [some grains], handed [them] over to the Kagar-bird;
<i>kagâr bâl-eh kex,</i>	the Kagar-bird flew,
<i>âh nešt a-sar konâr,</i>	sat down on the Konar-tree
<i>kolūt-e xwa bax.</i>	[and] made its nest.
<i>konâr a xwa takand,</i>	The Konar-tree shook itself
<i>reh tâg,</i>	[and] let leaves fall (lit.: poured leaves).
<i>tâgūn wor çe,</i>	[The jackal] gathered the leaves;
<i>bord dâr-eh wa boz,</i>	he handed [them] over to the goat.
<i>boz mâya o jū hamsar,</i>	The goat [got] milk;
<i>došt-eh bādya-i šīr,</i>	he (the jackal) milked a jug of milk.
<i>bord dâr-eh wa hamâ pīrazā.</i>	He handed [it] over to that old woman.
<i>pīrazan dar-eh â (?) âverd</i>	The old woman brought it out (?),
<i>hamâ domb-e xwa yâr a</i>	that tail of his was underneath [the mat]

<i>kerm zara,</i>	it was worm-smitten.
<i>dâr-eh ba hamâ tûla,</i>	She gave [it] to that jackal.
<i>čer-eh tûla o rau.</i>	The jackal picked it up and went.

§11 The speaker takes leave from his audience

<i>mõ tâ hamîrâ havâr bürom.</i>	Until here I've been with you.
{someone else:} <i>pâmîl pîrzâda.</i>	Family Pirzada.
<i>pâmîl-om pîrzâda.</i>	I am from the Pirzada-family (lit. my family [is] Pirzada).

Notes

1. That the text is in North Bashkardi can be seen by the following features:

- Old Iranian postvocalic *t* yields *r* (SBš *-t*): *dâr* ‘gave’, *zar* ‘hit’, *čer* ‘picked up’ (all §10, Persian *dād*, *zad*, *čīd*), *bür-om* ‘I was’ (§11, *būd-am*), *ar* (§7 copula past, see 2. below), and there is *d > r* in *ham-îrâ* ‘here’ (§11, Balochi *idā*);⁴

- the plural pronominal clitics are derived from the singular ones by the suffix *-ûn/-ôn* (*-môn/-mûn*, *-tôn/-tûn*, *-šûn*, §1 etc.) vs. non-derived SBš *-an*, *-ox*, *-eš*;

- the 1PL verbal ending is *-îr/î* (SBš *-om*): *agûî* (§7).

- the negation *na-* with the TAM prefix *a-* yields *nâ-* (vs. the reverse order in SBš *a-n-*): *nâkahe* (§3).

However, typically SBš perfect forms in *-x* occur towards the end of the text, viz. *kex* ‘done’ and *bax* ‘bound’ (§10), whose NBš equivalents would be *kerd-eh* and *bast-eh* (cf. Persian *kard-e*, *bast-e*).

2. The text is of the type called “Kettenmärchen” (“chain tale”) in the German tradition of folk tale studies. In these tales, the main character sets out to find or recover a certain item from

⁴ For this phenomenon, see the comprehensive article by Édel'man [2006].

a person or animal, who in turn demands another item from a third character, for which yet another object or action turns out to be necessary, and this again depends on ... In the end, the main character manages to satisfy a condition, goes on the reverse journey and achieves his goal.

Studying some 1300 folk tales in Persian, Marzolph [1984: 31] finds that chain tales only amount to some 3% of his corpus. But he mentions specimens closely resembling our tale [Marzolph 1984: 19]: A cat, jackal or fox loses its tail because it stole an old woman's milk (alternatively a mouse gets its tail ripped off by a cat), and the series of actions performed in order to retrieve the tail [Marzolph 1984: 257–259] are likewise similar – though not entirely identical – to those in our text.

In the so-called *Aarne-Thompson-Uther index (ATU)*, a reference work classifying folk tale types, our text belongs to no. 2034 “The Mouse Regains its Tail” [ATU II: 526f.]. The *ATU* lists numerous versions from many parts of the world (Europe, East Asia, East Africa and the Americas), to which the Bashkardi version can now be added.

It is not clear whether the elements that distinguish the present version from those already known (e.g. the tree asking for a nest, which is not found in Marzolph's corpus and not noted in *ATU*) are specific to Bashkardi, or to the speaker, or have just not been noted in other languages until now. The element of the tail having got worms does sound like a personal addition, though.

Some elements of the style and textual structure are discussed in Korn [2020]. The introductory phrase corresponds to the Persian formula *rūz-ī (būd), rūzgār-ī (būd)* ‘It was a day, it was a time’, but the more common formulation in Bashkardi (and Balochi) is *hast-a yak X-ē* ‘There was a X’. Tales which show *hast-a* seem to me to be more of oral style and are typically composed of a whole series of motifs which is strung together somewhat loosely, while our text has the form of a classical folk tale, matching one of the types noted in *ATU*. It is possible that it contains formulaic language, giving the impression of literary style.

3. That the specific form of our text is perhaps not “only” the speaker’s personal version of the tale might be seen by his interactions with the audience, which I have on purpose not edited out. Some of the remarks aside seem to be explanations, possibly addressed to Ilya Gershevitch; others seem to seek input from the Bashkardi audience.⁵

A case in point is §6, where the speaker interrupts himself to check the precise formulation of how the jackal addresses the tree, rather suggesting the existence of a fixed form. The sentence approved by the audience includes *tâg da* ‘give [me] leaves’ while what the speaker first suggests is *to ya moč-ī tâg be-da*. The latter is not only more precise (‘a handful of leaves’), but also marks the imperative ‘give’ with the prefix *be-*, which is not present in the other version; it could be so that traditionally the imperative had no prefix in Bashkardi, while apparently the speaker would spontaneously have used one. There is a parallel variation for the TAM prefix *a-* (e.g. *gerom* vs. *agerom* in the text). Compared to Middle Iranian, both prefixes are innovations. It seems that compared to Gershevitch’s recordings (dating from 1956), Bš varieties of today have generalised these prefixes (maybe under the influence of Persian *mī-* and *be-*). For the dialects of the cities of Minab and Bandar Abbas, which are outside Bashkerd, but rather closely related, Barbera [2005: 64–67] and Pelevin [2010: 62], respectively, note generalised *a-* for the present tense and *be-* (with phonetic variants) for the subjunctive and imperative.⁶ The competing forms shown by our text would then document a change in progress.

Note also that the textual variant *konâr konâr tâg da* fits better metrically, which is another indication for it being the traditional form. The series of envisaged actions likewise sound like metric

⁵ Unfortunately, what the audience says is not really audible.

⁶ South Bashkardi patterns differently: in the SBš dialect of Dahwast described by Seddiqi Nejad [2010: 138–140], *a-* is used the present tense and the imperative while there is *be-* and zero for the subjunctive.

or at least rhythmic text (as often happens in repeated sections of fairy tales). This could also be the reason that the directional *-ā* is present not only in the sentences with ‘I bring/carry/give ... to ...’, but also in those with *gerom* ‘I take/get (sth. from someone)’, where we would not expect a directional marker.

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