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## Judeo-Hamadani: The Language of Jews in Hamadan and Its Origins

*The study of the language of religious minorities in Iran is particularly important for understanding the historical development and typology of Iranian languages. Historical and linguistic evidence substantiates the idea that Zoroastrians and Jews in cities in central and western Iran preserved their former vernacular language, whereas the majority of the population replaced it with Persian in the New Iranian period. This paper focuses on the language of Jews in Hamadan and has two main objectives: first, it examines numerous distinctive features of Judeo-Hamadani; second, it reviews and updates recent research to clarify the language origins, using data from new materials recorded during fieldwork in Hamadan from October 2018 to August 2019, and in Yazd in 2017.*

**Keywords:** Judeo-Iranian; Judeo-Hamadani; Dialectology; Typology; Historical Development; Fahlaviyat of Hamadan

### Introduction

The majority of the available literature on the Jewish community in Hamadan notes that this community was the oldest outside of Israel.<sup>1</sup> Ephraim Neumark, who traveled through Hamadan around 1885, writes that there were approximately 800 Jewish families (approximately 5,000 individuals) at the time of his visit.<sup>2</sup> A. V. William Jackson estimates the number of Jews at 5,000 souls in 1903, when he visited Hamadan.<sup>3</sup> Yarshater introduces Hamadan, along with Tehran, Shiraz

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<sup>1</sup>Levy, *Comprehensive History*, 28.

<sup>2</sup>Sarshar, "Hamadān."

<sup>3</sup>Jackson, *Persia*, 148. For more information on the condition of the Jewish community of Hamadan in the nineteenth century see Yeroushalmi, *Jews of Iran*, 251–5.

and Isfahan, as a fairly large Jewish community in Iran.<sup>4</sup> An estimated 4,000 to 5,000 Jews lived in Hamadan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, while only 800 were left by the time of Yarshater's research.<sup>5</sup> However, Sahim's informant, Mrs. Shamsi Rahimi, mentions that only 350 were left in the mid-1970s, and not all of them were native Hamadanis.<sup>6</sup>

At present, the community has been reduced to three families, nine persons. Most of the Hamadani Jews have already left the country and moved to Israel and the United States. During my fieldwork in Iran, I found only two people who still speak this language. My main informant in this research is Mr. Nejat Rasad, seventy-four years old, a resident of Hamadan. He is a retired teacher who taught for many years at the Alliance School,<sup>7</sup> as well as other schools in Hamadan. He now works at the shrine of Esther and Mordechai in Hamadan and provides assistance and information to the tourists who visit the temple. The synagogue at the shrine of Esther and Mordechai holds services on Shabbat and the High Holidays. Hamadan's Jewish Association is still active and under his direction, and he also offers a Hebrew class.

My second informant for this project is Mr. Bijan Asef. He was born in Hamadan and today lives in Tehran. He is a member of Tehran's Jewish Association (Anjoman-e Kalimiyān-e Tehrān). He wrote a manuscript entitled *Kārkāsi (Kārkāsi), Mād, Hegmatāne, Ekbātān, Hamadān* (218 pages) in Persian about Hamadan and, specifically, the Jews of Hamadan. This manuscript was provided to the Jewish community outside Iran, according to the author, and has never been published. In his manuscript, he provides a list of about 250 words, twelve phrases and the verb conjugation of *hordan* "to eat."

At the time I began my fieldwork, the majority of Jewish monuments in Hamadan had been abandoned. The old bathhouses and Kosher butcher shops were no longer active. The oldest synagogue, a small prayer room located in the shrine of Esther and Mordechai, served as the only active synagogue in Hamadan. The other four synagogues, Kenisa-ye Bozorg (lit. the Big Synagogue located on Bābā Ṭāher Avenue), Kenisa-ye Mollā Rebi (or Rabi'), also known as Kenisa-ye Ya'qub Yāri (located near Darb-e Ḥakim-kāne on Kuče-ye Sayyedhā), Kenisa-ye Mollā Abram (located in Pir-e Gorg) and the Alliance Israélite Universelle (also known as Erteḥād) school are inactive, and one was converted into a mosque by the local authorities.<sup>8</sup> The cemetery in Laleh Park was still intact.

My informants call their language *ebri* (Persian *عبری*) "Hebrew" or *zabān-e qadīm* "old language." We know that the language is not Hebrew, but it seems that the term *ebri* is used to define and distinguish it in relation to Persian. The

<sup>4</sup>At the time of his research between 1969 and 1974.

<sup>5</sup>Yarshater, "Jewish Communities," 457.

<sup>6</sup>Sahim, "The Dialect of the Jews of Hamadan," 173.

<sup>7</sup>Alliance School was a Jewish school in Hamadan, founded by the Alliance Israélite Universelle in 1900. In 1977 the number of students at Alliance in Hamadan was 673, with 173 Jews (Netzer, "Alliance Israélite Universelle"). This school was dissolved in 1980, one year after Islamic Revolution.

<sup>8</sup>Sarshar, "Hamadān."

foreign designation of the language is *guyeš/zabān-e yahudiyān-e hamedān* or *guyeš/zabān-e kalimiyān-e hamedān* “The dialect/language of Jews of Hamadan.”

The language I encountered in 2019 was different from the language recorded by Abrahamian, Yarshater and Sahim. By the time I began my work in Hamadan, most of the Jews who spoke the language had either passed away or moved to other countries. The fluent speakers of Judeo-Hamadani (JH) are now unfortunately lost, and this dialect can be considered extinct. When Abrahamian carried out his survey in 1936, there were still communities of fluent speakers who passed the language on to their children. By the time of Yarshater and Sahim, there were only a few speakers left, and children were, for the most part, not learning the language. Sahim states that by the time of her research, most of the Hamadani Jews had either moved to Tehran or emigrated to Israel. During her trip to Hamadan to find supplementary material for her research in the mid-1970s, she found very few people who still spoke this dialect.

The death of Judeo-Hamadani is the result of a language shift in which community members no longer learned their heritage language as their first language. The cultural, political and economic marginalization of Jews created a strong incentive for individuals to abandon their language in favor of Persian, the official and more prestigious language of the country. Such a shift can happen when indigenous populations adopt the cultural and linguistic traits of a majority population in order to achieve higher social status and to improve their chances of finding employment, or when they are forced to adopt the majority’s traits in school.

The two remaining speakers of this language inside Iran, namely my informants, learned Persian as their first language, and do not use Judeo-Hamadani in their daily lives. Instead, they use Judeo-Hamadani in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains.

Due to the influence of Persian, we find language change in phonological, morphological, semantic, syntactic and other features of the language of these speakers. In the domain of the lexicon, any Persian word can be found in Judeo-Hamadani instead of or in addition to inherited forms. The concept of sound changes covers both phonetic and phonological developments. The vowel system has been greatly reduced, and vowels such as *ə* (as in *pəž* “to cook”) and *ō* (as in *dōt* “daughter”) can only be found randomly in a few words. Even in a relatively short time, one can observe the differences between the pronunciation of various words at the time of Sahim’s work in the 1970s and their pronunciation today.

In the domain of morphology, we find a strong influence from Persian. The use of Persian *mi-* as the durative marker instead of *e-* in some verbal forms (as in *mi-beyr-ān* “I cut,” and *ne-mi-zun-ān*, instead of *na-zun-ān* “I don’t know”) and the use of the enclitic copula =*e* instead of =*u* for third person singular (as in *gorošna=m=e* instead of *gorošna=m=u* “I am hungry”) belong to this group of changes.

The language still maintains an archaic appearance, however, at different grammatical levels. In spite of the relatively small body of academic work about Judeo-Iranian, the language is of great importance for the historical linguistics of Iranian languages.

*History of Research on Judeo-Hamadani*

Few texts have been written on the subject of Judeo-Hamadani linguistics. The first study of Judeo-Hamadani was completed by Abrahamian in 1936.<sup>9</sup> His book is a comparison of Judeo-Hamadani and Judeo-Isfahani based on the dialectal features found in the Bābā Tāher Quatrains. In addition to this comparison, his book includes conjugated forms of sixty verbs in Judeo-Hamadani and forty-six verbs in Judeo-Isfahani. Abrahamian's book also includes a short description of phonology and morphology, as well as sample texts in Judeo-Hamadani and Judeo-Isfahani. Yarshater notes the special situation of some Jewish dialects as indicators of Median dialects and offers a number of Median morphological and phonological characteristics of the Jewish languages spoken in the central cities of Iran.<sup>10</sup> However, Yarshater's work on Judeo-Hamadani remains unpublished. From Stilo's contribution, we know that Yarshater made handwritten field notes during research trips to the Jewish communities of Hamadan and Tuyserkan in 1969, and these were made available many years later to Stilo.<sup>11</sup>

The first study focusing specifically on Judeo-Hamadani emerged in 1975, written by Sahim, who wrote her master's thesis on the language of Jews in Hamadan under the supervision of Bahram Fravashi. In 1994, she published a paper in which she examined some phonetic features and the verbal system in Judeo-Hamadani.<sup>12</sup> In her subsequent article, published in 1996, she provides a brief overview of the Jewish dialects of Iran, and, as in the work of Yarshater, she discusses selected characteristics of Judeo-Median.<sup>13</sup>

Recent decades have seen a slight increase in related research, and in 2003 the first serious discussion and analyses of Judeo-Hamadani emerged, contributed by Stilo.<sup>14</sup> The aim of this study was to clarify several aspects of the language of Jews in Hamadan. As a result, the article provides a brief grammatical sketch of the language and is mainly based on data collected by Abrahamian and Yarshater. In his 2008 overview on the culture and language of Jews in Hamadan, Naghzguye Kohan demonstrates a number of phonological characteristics of the language.<sup>15</sup> In a 2014 comprehensive examination of Judeo-Median dialects, Borjjan offers a number of isoglosses across Jewish dialects and takes Hamadani-Borujerdi as a single group. The focus of the present article is the dialectology of Jewish dialects.<sup>16</sup>

The present work contributes to the knowledge about Judeo-Hamadani, especially in the field of historical grammar and typology. I update the findings about the his-

<sup>9</sup>Abrahamian, *Dialectologie Iranienne*.

<sup>10</sup>Yarshater, "Jewish Communities."

<sup>11</sup>See Stilo, "Hamadān."

<sup>12</sup>Sahim, "The Dialect of the Jews of Hamadan."

<sup>13</sup>The term Judeo-Median has been used by various scholars and refers to the Jewish dialects that have been spoken in central Iran. For this topic, see Borjjan, "What is Judeo-Median?"

<sup>14</sup>Stilo, "Hamadān."

<sup>15</sup>Naghzguye Kohan, "Negāhi be."

<sup>16</sup>Borjjan, "What Is Judeo-Median."

torical grammar of Judeo-Hamadani and consider particularly the article by Stilo.<sup>17</sup> In addition to the research questions presented here, I have endeavored to provide as many language materials as possible, since, sadly, my recordings will be the last evidence of the language in Hamadan.<sup>18</sup> My recordings in 2019 suggest that Judeo-Hamadani is heavily Persianized; however, the language still exhibits important archaic characteristics. As the history of Judeo-Hamadani is closely intertwined with other western Iranian languages and the official language of Iran, Persian, it cannot be treated in isolation. In different parts of this work, various characteristics are compared to Parthian, representing the only attested northwestern Iranian languages from the Middle Iranian period. In the second part of the article, an attempt is made to systematically compare the Judeo-Hamadani material with two further northwestern Jewish dialects, namely Judeo-Yazdi and Judeo-Isfahani. Another area of research in this paper is to investigate the possible origins of Judeo-Hamadani.

### *Historical Phonology*

In his valuable work, Stilo details the major North Western Iranian (NWI) phonological developments from proto-Iranian that appear in the Jewish dialect of Hamadan.<sup>19</sup> In the following, I discuss the historical phonology in greater detail and update some of the findings.

#### *Consonants.*<sup>20</sup>

*Old Iranian plosives.* Word-initial *p*, *t*, *k* are preserved in Judeo-Hamadani, while postvocalic *p*, *t*, *k* yield *b*, *d*/*y*, *g*.

Examples: *p* > *p*-, e.g. *pəž*- “to cook” (Prth. *paž*-, NP *paz*-); *-p* > *-b*-, e.g. *āb* (also *ō*) “water” (Prth. /NP *āb*); *t* > *t*-, e.g. *tāz*- “run” (Prth. *taž*-, NP *tāz*-); *-t* > *-d*-, *-y*-, e.g. *bud* “was, been” (Prth. /NP *bud*) and *vāy* “wind” (Prth. *wād*, NP *bād*); *k* > *k*-, e.g. *kaft* “to fall” (Prth. *kafī*) and *kasar* “small” (Prth. *kas*, NP *keh*); *-k* > *-g*-, e.g. *magas* “fly” (Prth./NP *magas*).

Word-initial *b*, *d*, *g* are preserved in Judeo-Hamadani. Word-internal *b* and *g* are preserved. Postvocalic *d* yields *y*.

Examples: *b* > *b*-, e.g. *bud* “was, been” (Prth./NP *bud*); *-b* > *-b*-, e.g. *xomb* “jar” (Prth. *xomb*, NP *xom(b)*); *d* > *d*-, e.g. *dandān* “tooth” (Prth./NP *dandān*); *g* > *g*-, e.g. *gōv* “cow” (Prth./NP *gāw*); *-d* > *-y*-, e.g. *šuy*- “to wash” (Prth. *šōδ*, NP *šuy*), *vāyōm* “almond” (NP *bādām*) and *kiye* “house” (MPrth., MP *kadag*, in NP *kade*).

<sup>17</sup>Stilo, “Hamadān.”

<sup>18</sup>I recorded about ten hours of language materials. The collected data contains both isolate sentences and continuous texts. I give ca. seventy examples (fifty specimen sentences and twenty used in the text) in this article. The main informant is Nejat Rasad.

<sup>19</sup>Stilo, “Hamadān.”

<sup>20</sup>Manichaean Parthian examples are from Durkin-Meisterernst, Dictionary of Manichean Texts.

*Old Iranian fricatives and affricates.* Old Iranian *f* and *x* seem to be preserved in Judeo-Hamadani, while postvocalic *θ* yields *h*.

Examples: *f*- > *-f*-, e.g. *nāf* “navel” (Prth. *nāfag*, NP *nāf*) and *kaf* “foam” (Prth. *kaf*, NP *kaf*); *-θ*- > *-h*-, e.g. *rāh* “road” (Prth./NP *rāh*); *x* > *x*-, e.g. *xar* “donkey” (NP/MP *xar*) and *šāx* “horn” (Prth./NP *šāx*).

Word-initial Old Iranian *č* is preserved, while postvocalic *č* yields *č̣* or *ẓ̌*. The occurrence of both voiced and voiceless consonants as output is surprising.

Examples: *č*- > *č̣*-, e.g. *čin* “pick, gather” (Prth./NP *čin*); *-č*- > *-ẓ̌*- / *-č̣*-, e.g. *rič* “to pour” (MPrth. *rēz*, NP *riz*) and *vāžār* “market” (NP *bāžār*).

An archaic characteristic of Judeo-Hamadani is the preservation of Old Iranian *č̣*.

Example: *č̣*- > *č̣*- and *ẓ̌*-, e.g. *jan/žan* “woman” (Prth. *žan*, NP *zan*).

The only attested example of *\*č̣*- in postvocalic position in my corpus is *derāz* “long” (Av. *darəya-*, NP *derāz*), which may have been borrowed from Persian.

*Old Iranian s and z.* Non-Persian Old Iranian *s* in initial position is preserved in Judeo-Hamadani.

Example: *s* > *s*-, e.g. *suč* “to burn” (Prth. *sōč*-, NP *suz*-).

In postvocalic position, it may be preserved or yield *h*.

Examples: *-s*- > *-s*-, e.g. *ris*- “to spin” (Prth. *ā-rwis*-, NP *ris*-); *-s*- > *-h*-, e.g. *āhan* “iron”<sup>21</sup> (Prth. *āsun*, NP *āhan*)<sup>22</sup> and *rubāh* “fox” (Prth. *rōbās*, NP *rubāh*).

Old Iranian *z* (PIE *\*g<sup>(h)</sup>*) is preserved in Judeo-Hamadani, as in *zun* “to know” (Prth. *zān*, NP *dān*).<sup>23</sup>

Proto-Iranian *\*θr* yields *r* in Judeo-Hamadani as in *pir* “son” (Prth. *puhr*, MP *pus*). In Judeo-Hamadani, as in many NWIr. languages, PIr. *\*šy* yields *sp*, such as in *espid* “white” (Prth. *ispēd*, MP *sefid*).

The only example for proto-Iranian *\*žy* is the word *zovun* “tongue” (MPrth. *izβān*, MP *zabān*), showing a typical NWIr. development.

Old Iranian *š*, irrespective of the PIE origin, seems to be preserved in Judeo-Hamadani.

Example: *šur* “salty” (Prth. *šōr*, NP *šur*) and *miš* “mouse” (NP *muš*).

Old Iranian *h* is preserved in *ham* “also” (Prth./NP *ham*), while it yields *x* in *xā* “sister” (Prth. *wxār*, NP *x<sup>w</sup>āhar*).<sup>24</sup>

*Old Iranian sonorants.* The Old Iranian nasals *m* and *n* are preserved in Judeo-Hamadani, such as in *mi* “hair” (MP. *mōy*, NP *mu*), *nim* “half” (Prth. *nēm*, NP *nim*), *ništ*-<sup>25</sup> “to sit” (MPrth. *nešid*, NP *nešin*) and *vin*- “to see” (Prth. *win*-, NP *bin*-).

<sup>21</sup>Probably a loanword from Persian.

<sup>22</sup>For different opinions on the etymology of this word see Korn, *Towards a Historical Grammar*, 87, fn. 58.

<sup>23</sup>I did not find any examples for its occurrence in postvocalic position in my corpus.

<sup>24</sup>For this development see also Korn, *Towards a Historical Grammar*, 94.

<sup>25</sup>This root only occurs with preverb *be-*, namely *be-ništ*- “to sit.”



Old Iranian *r* is likewise preserved, e.g. *ru* “day” (Prth. *rōž*, NP *ruz*) and *berā* “brother” (Prth. *brād*, NP *barādar*).

Word-initial *u-* is preserved, e.g. *vin-* “to see” (Prth. *wind-*, NP *bin-*), *vāy* “wind” (Prth. *wād*, NP *bād*), *vārun* “rain” (Prth. *wārān*, NP *bārān*) and *veče* “child” (NP *bače*).

Old Iranian *au#* yields *ō*, e.g. in *tō* (Prth. *tō*, NP *to*), and with a further development of *ō* to *ē(y)* in *ĵēy* “barley” (NP *ĵo*). Postvocalic *u* in other contexts would also show the loss of *u*, e.g. *yey* “one” (Prth. *ēwag*, NP *yek*).

Old Iranian *\*i̇* yields *ĵ* in Judeo-Hamadani, as in *ĵēy* “barley” (Prth. *yaw*, NP *ĵo*). In a word-internal context, *kē* “who” (Prth. *kē*, NP *ke*, *ki*) exhibits the possible development of *\*ahia* > *ai* > *ē*.

*Consonant clusters.* Stilo states that Old Iranian *ft* is represented only by *-ft*: *geft-* “take,” *kaft-* “fall” and *dor-of-* “sleep.” However, it seems that it can be changed to *-(h)t* ~ *-(t)t* in Judeo-Hamadani, as in *rōte* “gone” (NP *raft*).

Old Iranian *-xt*, usually parallel to *-ft*, yields *-(h)t* ~ *-(t)t*, e.g. *sot-* “burned” (NP *suxt-*) and *pet* “cooked” (Prth./NP *poxt-*).

Old Iranian *xš-* yields *š*, e.g. *ši* “night” (Prth./NP *šab*), *šost* “washed” (Prth. *šust*, NP *šost*) and *fraš-* “to sell” (NP *foruš*).

The verb *dor-os-* “to sleep” (Prth./NP *xusp-*) shows the loss of Old Iranian *hu-* in the initial position of the verbal stem *-os*. Other examples exhibit typical developments of Persian, namely the change of *\*hu-* to *x*, as in *xon-* “to read” (Prth. *xun*, NP *x<sup>w</sup>ān*), *xor* “to eat” (Prth. *wxar*, NP *x<sup>w</sup>ar*) and *xoč* “own” (Prth. *wxad*, NP *x<sup>w</sup>ad*). The product of OIr. *šī* is *š*, as in *š-* “to go” (Prth. *šaw*). OIr. *rš* yields *š* in Judeo-Hamadani, e.g. *keš* “to pull” (NP *kaš*).

OIr. *rn* yields *r* in Judeo-Hamadani, e.g. *biri-* “cut” (NP *burr*) and *xri-* “to buy” (Prth., NP *xar*).

*Vowels.* Old Iranian short vowels are usually preserved, e.g. *xoč* “own” (Prth. *wxad*, NP *x<sup>w</sup>ad*), *čīn* “pick, gather” (Prth./NP *čīn*) and *suĵ-* “to burn” (Prth. *sōž-*, NP *suz-*). Judeo-Hamadani *pəž-* “to cook” (Prth. *paž-*, NP *paz-*) exhibits the development of *a* > *ə*. Old Iranian short vowels can be elided in word-initial position in polysyllabic words, e.g. *vā* “open” (Prth. *abāž*, Persian *bāz*), but not in *hāmā* “we” (Prth. *am* (*m*)*āh*, Persian *mā*). In *hāmā*, the *-a-* has been lengthened to *-ā-* and an *h-* has been added.

OIr. *ā* seems to be elided in *y-* (NP *āy*).<sup>26</sup> It is preserved in *vāy* “wind” (Prth. *wād*, NP *bād*) but changed to *u* in *zun* “to know” (Prth. *zān*, NP *dān*). As in Persian, *ā* becomes *u* when preceding nasal consonants, a later development. OIr. *i* remains stable, e.g. *dī* (Prth./NP *did*). Original *\*u*, is generally fronted to *i*, for example in *tīt* “berry,” *pīr* “boy, son,” *dir* “far,” *ri* “face,” *did* “smoke,” *āli* “plums,” *gerdi* “walnut” and *xīn* “blood,” and is even found in Arabic loanwords, e.g. *tifān* “storm,” *āris* “bride,” *sābin* “soap,” *sātīr* “cleaver” and *qebil* “accept.”

<sup>26</sup>This form is used in this sentence: *mān ĉe zun-ān key yu* “I don’t know when he/she comes.”

PIr. \*ʔ is changed into *ar* in labial contexts, e.g. *bart* (Prth. *burd*, NP *bord*), *mart* “died” (Prth. *murd*, NP *mord*) and *pars-* “to ask” (Prth. *purs-*, NP *pors-*), and in neutral contexts, e.g. *tars-* “to fear” (Prth./NP *tars*) and *kart* “did” (Prth. *kird*, NP *kard*), but *ker-* (Prth., *kar-*, NP *kon-*). There is *ir* in palatal contexts, e.g. *gir-* (Prth./NP *gir*).

*Diphthongs.* The OIr. diphthong *ai-* comes out as *i*, e.g. *nim* “half” (Prth. *Nēm*, NP *nim*) and *riġ* “to pour” (MPrth. *rēz*, NP *riz*). The OIr. diphthong *au-* comes out as *u*, e.g. *ru(ž)* “day” (Prth. *rōž*, NP *ruz*), *suġ-* “to burn” (Prth. *sōž-*, NP *suz-*) and *šuy-* “to wash” (Prth. *šōd*, NP *šuy*).

### Phonology

The consonantal system of Judeo-Hamadani is very similar to Persian and has the following inventory: /p, b, t, d, č, ĵ, ž, k, g, q~ɣ, f, v, s, z, š, x, h, m, n, r, l, y/. No other sources introduce the consonant *ž*. Examples of this consonant can be found in *žan* “woman,” *pəž* “to cook,” *ruž* “day” and *vāžār* “market” in my materials.

Stilo mentions that Yarshater’s notes also show a pharyngeal H, especially in Hebrew and Arabic words, and mentions that no other sources show this consonant. Even in Yarshater’s notes, it occurs in very few words. My main informant, Mr. Rasad, clearly uses pharyngeal consonants (/ħ/ and /ʕ/) in Hebrew and Arabic words, such as *bet hayyim* “cemetery,” *ʕeynō* “Friday,” *moʕed* “festival” and *ʕeyn* “eye.”

The vowel system of Judeo-Hamadani has the following inventory: /i, e, ə, a, u, ɔ, o, ā/. Stilo states that *ə* is probably a variant of *e*.<sup>27</sup> Vowel *ə* can be found in *dəməq* “nose,” *bərāt* “for you,” *pəž* “to cook” and *kārəm* “my work.” Vowel *ɔ* occurs in *dōt* “daughter,” *sō* “apple,” *ōlbālu*, *ōbālu* “sour cherry,” *dōle* “water vessel,” *vāyōm* “almond” and *raxtexō* “bedding.” I am not yet positive about the existence of *ā* (between *ā* and *o*); it seems to occur only in *šālom* “hello.”

Judeo-Hamadani’s suprasegmentals, including intonation, tone, stress and rhythm, have been strongly influenced by the current Hamadani dialect.

The most common diphthongs in Judeo-Hamadani from my corpus are: *āā* as in *šāā* “hour”; *ao* as in *naon vāt* “Didn’t I say?”; *uā* as in *kuā* “where” and *buāyān* “I would say”; *ayi* as in *bet hayyim*<sup>28</sup> “cemetery”; *āy* as in *vāy-* “to say,” *āyu* “today,” *āymi* “human,” *kāy* “straw” and *vāyōm* “almond”; *ey* as in *ʕeynō* “Friday,” *heyz* (in Persian حوض) “a centrally positioned symmetrical axis pool in traditional Iranian houses” and *keyčiz* “ladle”; *iey* as in *kiye* “house,” *vābiye* “becomes”; *av* as in *havā* “air,” *davā* “fight,” *maviz* “rosine” and *yavāš* “slowly”; *āv* as in *sāvun* “soap”<sup>29</sup> and *undāv* “there.”

<sup>27</sup>Stilo, “Hamadān.”

<sup>28</sup>A pharyngeal /ħ/.

<sup>29</sup>There is another variant for “soap” in Judeo-Hamadani, namely, *sābin*.



## Lexicon

It is imaginable that the Judeo-Hamadani lexicon contains a considerable number of Hebrew words. Most of these loanwords form the bulk of the words concerning religion and religious practices. Hebrew loanwords have undergone several changes that were common in the JH language itself over the years. These changes influenced the loanwords and changed their semantic, structural and more or less morphological meaning, and even their phonetic appearance. Later, a number of Hebrew loanwords were assimilated into native JH and came to be acknowledged as pure JH. Most of the Hebrew loanwords indicate events, objects and ideas associated with religious services and cultural affairs: *tām* “salt,” *ketubā/ketibā* “marriage, marriage certificate,” *tāmme* “impure,” *moʿed* “feast,” *taʿnit* “fasting,” *haqālā* “cleaning the copper dinnerware with boiling water,” *masā* “Matzo,” *haliq* “a paste,” *lahmā* “bread,” *bet hayyim* “cemetery” (lit. house of life) and the names of days—*šābāt* “Saturday,” *ye-šābāt* “Sunday,” *do-šābāt* “Monday,” *se-šābāt* “Tuesday,” *čār-šābāt* “Wednesday,” *pan-šābāt* “Thursday” and *ʿeynō* “Friday.” A number of words, such as *lašun* “tongue,” *ʿeyn* “eye” and *feste* “pistachio,”<sup>30</sup> do not directly reflect a religious trace.

Contact with other languages, such as Hamadani and Turkish, have also left traces, which provide interesting insights into the external history of the language as they reflect cultural influence from further afield. Numerous common words between current Hamadani dialect and JH can be found in the names of objects associated with the house and household, such as *gʿjin* “threshold,”<sup>31</sup> *seyzun/seyzān* (Hamadani *seyzān*)<sup>32</sup> “cellar,” *dulō/dulāb* (Hamadani *dulābe*) “closet,” *qafā* (*qofā*)<sup>33</sup> “a kind of basket,” *lānʿjin* “a kind of clay pot,”<sup>34</sup> *tandir* “oven,”<sup>35</sup> *tiyānčē* “a small pan”<sup>36</sup> and *mafraš* (originally an Arabic word, which has been used in Turkic varieties inside and in the surrounding area of Hamadan) “a kind of blanket for packing bedding.”<sup>37</sup>

The term *māqāš* “kitchen tongs” (alternatively *maqāš*, *maqqāš*, derived from *manqāš*) is originally an Arabic loanword, but it is also attested to in Hamadani and JH. The term *venadig* (Hamadani *venedig*) “window glass,” comparable to German *Venedig* “Venice,” also appears in Hamadani.<sup>38</sup> It is imaginable that this word refers to high quality glass from Venice, which was probably imported to Hamadan and used for windows.

<sup>30</sup>In Hebrew פִּיטְטוּק.

<sup>31</sup>See Garusin, *Vāže-nāme-ye Hamedāni*, 220.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 170; and Azkāei, *Farhang-e mardom-e Hamadan*, 181–2.

<sup>33</sup>Sahim, “The Dialect of the Jews of Hamadan.”

<sup>34</sup>For more information about this word, see Azkāei, *Farhang-e mardom-e Hamadan*, 238–9 and Garusin, *Vāže-nāme-ye Hamedāni*, 222.

<sup>35</sup>The Hamadani form of this word is *tendur*. The change of *u* to *i* is a common development in JH. For this topic and further examples, see the section on phonological developments.

<sup>36</sup>Garusin, *Vāže-nāme-ye Hamedāni*, 101.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 235.

<sup>38</sup>For further information on this word and other etymologies, see Garusin, *Vāže-nāme-ye Hamedāni*, 252 and Azkāei, *Farhang-e mardom-e Hamadan*, 277–8.

The second group of Hamadani words in JH are body parts, such as *omme/ome* “buttock,”<sup>39</sup> and family members, *ene zāye* “step-siblings.”<sup>40</sup> The names of regional plants and foods of Hamadan also occur in JH, such as *varak* “Alhagi,” *tiq do-rāq/ tiq dolāq* (originally *tiq duq rāq*)<sup>41</sup> “a Hamadani dish made with Spear thistle and yoghurt drink” and *yaxni* “a Hamadani dish consisting of a stew made with bone marrow, potatoes, and beans.”

The words *dasgirāni/dastgiruni* “engagement” and *xāzmeni* (NP. *xāstegāri*) “marriage proposal” in JH are also attested in Hamadani.<sup>42</sup>

A number of Turkic loanwords, such as *yuz* “walnut,” *qāb qōjāq* “kitchen dish” and *qazqun* “large copper pot,” can also be found in JH either transferred through Hamadani or due to direct contact with Turkish speakers in the region.

### *Morphology*

*Nouns.* Substantives in Judeo-Hamadani are very similar to those in Persian. In both of these languages, substantives have no distinction of grammatical gender. There are two numbers, singular and plural, and there is no distinction between the direct and oblique case. The postposition *rā/ro* and its variations *ā* and *o* mark definite direct objects:

1. *kāru*                    *hame-y-e*    *mes-ā-ro*                    *sefid*    *kār-ān*  
should. MV    all-EP-EZ    copper-PL-OM    white    do.PRS.IS  
“I should make all coppers white.”

Variants *ā* and *o* appear after consonants:

2. *Foluni*                    *kiya=š-o*                    *be=š-fārāye*  
that person                    house=3S.OBL-OM    VM=3S.OBL-sell.PP  
“that person sold/has sold his/her house.”

The plural suffix *-(h)ā* is used on substantives to indicate both animate and inanimate, for example, *žan-ā* “women,” *veče-hā* “children” and *mes-ā* “coppers.”

There are two indefinite markers that occur either separately or together: *ye(y)* “one” and an unstressed *-i*. Both forms most commonly occur together:

3. *mān*                    *vey*    *pil-i*                    *pendā=m*    *karde*  
I                    INDF    money-INDF    find=1S.OBL    do.PP  
“I have found some money.”

<sup>39</sup>Azkāei, *Farhang-e mardom-e Hamadan*, 82.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 83.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 119.

<sup>42</sup>Garusin, *Vāze-nāme-ye Hamedāni*, 138.

Comparable to Persian, modifiers in Judeo-Hamadani follow the noun and are generally connected by an Ezafe particle, for instance, *kiye-y-e to* “your house,” *madrese-y-e āliyāns* “Aliyans school,” *nesf-e šeyu* “midnight,” *sāl-e emi* “next year” and *pir-e kākol zari* “a golden topknot boy.”

*Pronouns.* In Judeo-Hamadani, similar to Zoroastrian Dari and a number of other Central Dialects, the historical oblique forms of pronouns have been generalized, and a distinction between direct and oblique case cannot be observed.

The independent forms of personal pronouns in JH are very similar to those in Persian. There are only two differences. The first difference is the *-ā-* vowel in *mān* “I.” The second difference is the form *hāmā* “we” as opposed to the Persian *mā*. The form *hāmā* can also be found in Maḥallāti and Kʿānsāri, Kāšāni and Isfahani dialects.<sup>43</sup>

As a result of the simplification of the case system between Old and Middle Iranian, the use of pronominal clitics largely increased in Parthian and Middle Persian as well as in contemporary western Iranian languages in order to compensate for the deficiency of earlier distinctions.<sup>44</sup>

In comparison to the Old Iranian pronominal clitic system, in which there was a distinction between accusative, genitive/dative and ablative forms, many Middle Iranian and contemporary Iranian languages instead have only a single pronominal clitic form, i.e. oblique, for all these cases. It must be noted, however, that some contemporary western Iranian languages, such as northern Kurdish, Zazaki and Sange-sari, do not have such pronominal clitics.<sup>45</sup>

In JH, similar to Persian and some additional languages, the pronominal clitics for the singular are derived from the Old Iranian genitive/dative pronominal clitics, e.g. 1sg. *-om/am* < OP *-mai-y*, 2sg. *-ot/od* < OP *-tai-y* and 3sg. *-oš/aš* < OP *-šai-y*. The JH pronominal clitics for the plural consist of the singular forms with the inclusion of the plural suffix *-ān*. In addition to this group, certain Iranian languages also have forms deriving from the Old Iranian accusative forms, for example, Sogdian and some Sorani dialects.<sup>46</sup> The JH pronoun forms are shown in Table 1.

It must be noted that the clitic pronouns are used as agreement markers in past transitive constructions:

4. *be=m-gefte*  
 VM=1S.OBL-take, PP  
 “I have taken/I took.”

<sup>43</sup>See Windfuhr, “Central Dialects,” Table 29.

<sup>44</sup>Gholami, “Pronominal Clitics,” 113.

<sup>45</sup>Windfuhr, “Isoglosses: A Sketch,” 462.

<sup>46</sup>See Korn, “Western Iranian Pronominal Clitics,” 162–3.

Table 1. Personal pronouns in Judeo-Hamadani

	Independent forms	Clitics
1S	<i>mān</i>	= <i>Vm</i> <sup>a</sup>
2S	<i>to</i>	= <i>Vt</i>
3S	<i>u(n)</i>	= <i>Vš</i>
1PL	<i>hāmā, mā</i>	= <i>Vmān</i>
2PL	<i>šomā</i>	= <i>Vtān</i>
3PL	<i>unā</i>	= <i>Všān</i>

<sup>a</sup> V means vowel.

5. *mān to- rā be=m-diye*  
 I you -OM VM=1S.OBL-see. PP  
 “I have seen you/I saw you.”

As Stilo observes, clitic pronouns are quite mobile in JH and there is a general tendency for them to move forward, particularly to the left, even inside the verb whenever possible.<sup>47</sup>

6. *be=m-e-šnofte dōt=et ābestan=u*  
 VM=1S.OBL-DUR-hear.PP daughter=2S.OBL pregnant=be.3S  
 “I have heard that your daughter is pregnant.”

Demonstratives in JH are *in* “this,” *un* “that” and *hamin/hamun* “this/that very (same).” The plural forms are *inā* “these” and *unā* “those.”

Reflexives are *xo(č)*- + clitic pronouns: *xoč=am*, *xoč=at*, *xoč=aš*. It seems that /č/ drops before plural clitics: *xo=mān*, *xo=tān*, *xo=šān*. For example, *xoč=at zun-i* “You know yourself” and *barāye xoč=aš* “for himself.”

### Verbs

*Lexical preverbs.* The most common preverbs found in JH are *he-*, *vā* and *vor-*, which precede the verb. The preverb *he-* (< \**frā*) is attested by these examples: *he-niš* “sit!,” *he-ne-gir* “Don’t buy (it),” *he=d-gefte* “you have bought” and *he-de* “give (it)!”

Stilo identifies how Judeo-Isfahani and the dialects of the immediate Isfahan area have an *i-* ~ *e-* preverb instead of JH *he-*, as in *i-gi(r)* “take, get,” *i-ni* “sit,” *e-tā* “give” and *e-n-* “put.”<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup>Stilo, “Hamadān.”

<sup>48</sup>Stilo, “Isfahan.”

The preverb *vā-* occurs in these examples: *vā-pars* “Ask!,” *vā-puš-ān* “I put on,” *vā-nə=m-nevešt* “I didn’t write,” *vā-ker-ān* “I open” and *vā-n-eyšāy-ān* “I didn’t stand.” The preverb *vor-* is found in *vor-os* “rise, stand up.” In some cases, preverbs do not create any change in the meaning of the root, but sometimes, for example in the instance of *vā-ker-ān* “I open,” we find a total meaning change. In JH, preverbs precede the negative particle, the clitics and durative particle and always occur in the initial position:

7. *he-gir-ān*  
PV-take-PRS.1S  
“I buy/I take.”
8. *he=m-e-gefte*  
PV=1S.OBL-DUR-take.PP  
“I have bought.”
9. *he-ne=m-e-gefte*  
PV-NEG=1S.OBL-DUR-take.PP  
“I have not bought.”
10. *he=m-geft*  
PV=1S.OBL-take.PST  
“I bought.”
11. *he-ne=m-geft*  
PV-NEG=1S.OBL-take.PST  
“I didn’t buy.”

*The verbs “to be.”* The enclitic copula in the present is identical to the verbal suffixes (Table 2):

12. *fəkr ker-u mā(n) veče-y=ān?*  
thought do.PRS-3S I child-EP=COP.1S  
“Does he/she think that I am a child?”

In addition to the enclitic copula, there are two additional “to be” forms, namely “to be” of existence and “to be” of location, consisting of the preposition *der* and an enclitic copula (Table 3).

### *Tenses*

The present and imperfect tenses are formed with a suffixed and unstressed *e-*, also called the durative marker, as in *e-ker-u* “makes, does.” Very often in word-initial position and after *ā* in internal position, *e-* seems to be elided: *vāy-u* “he/

Table 2. Enclitic copula

	Verbal suffixes	Enclitic copula
1S	<i>-ān</i>	<i>=ān</i>
2S	<i>-i</i>	<i>=i</i>
3S	<i>-u</i>	<i>=u</i>
1PL	<i>-im</i>	<i>=im</i>
2PL	<i>-id</i>	<i>=id</i>
3PL	<i>-end</i>	<i>=end</i>

Table 3. Present form of the verb “to be”

	“to be” – existence	“to be” – location
1S	<i>hān</i>	<i>der-ān</i>
2S	<i>hi</i>	<i>der-i</i>
3S	<i>hu</i>	<i>der-u</i>
1PL	<i>him</i>	<i>der-im</i>
2PL	<i>hid</i>	<i>der-id</i>
3PL	<i>hend</i>	<i>der-end</i>

she says.” The durative prefix *mi-* appears only very occasionally and is clearly the result of Persian influence, e.g. *mi-beyr-ān* “I cut.” The prefix *be-* is used in JH to form the subjunctive (*be-š-im* “we would go” and *be-kr-i* “you would do”), imperative (*be-gir* “take it!”), preterit (*be=m-vād* “I told”), the present perfect tense (*be=m-e-šnofte* “I have heard”) and the past perfect tense (*be=m-xorte bo* “I had eaten”).

The progressive tense seems to be formed on the basis of the colloquial Persian construction with the modal verb *dāštan*, e.g. *mān dār-ān bar-gard-ān az kenisā* “I am returning from synagogue.” The secondary preterit suffix *\*ā(d)* is attested in JH, e.g. *zun-ā(d)* “knew” and *pars-ā(d)* “asked.” The causative marker *en* is attested in JH, as mentioned by Stilo in *béxandene* “make (someone) laugh!”<sup>49</sup>

Similar to a number of NWIr. languages, JH also has the present stem structure, which is identified by a suffix *-n-* or *-nd-*, as in *vin-* “to see.”<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup>Stilo, “Hamadān.”

<sup>50</sup>For the languages that have a similar present stem structure see Gippert, “Zur dialektalen Stellung des Zazaki,” 92.



*The Historical Background and the Origins of Judeo-Hamadani*

The dialect spoken by the Jews of Hamadan, similar to the Jewish dialects of Isfahan, Kashan, Borujerd, Yazd, Kerman and others, has been described as belonging to the Central Dialect group of northwestern Iranian languages according to traditional subdivisions of Iranian languages.

However, some limitations to the subgrouping of Judeo-Hamadani need to be acknowledged here. First, there should be a consideration of the use of the terms “northwestern language” and “Median dialect.” Recent linguistic evidence shows that the traditional subdivisions of Iranian languages into western and eastern branches, each of which are split into subsequent sub-branches, is in various respects problematic, and new models are needed to account for them.<sup>51</sup>

Judeo-Hamadani has also been described as belonging to the “Median dialects,” a term first used by Yarshater and later followed by scholars including Borjjan and Stilo.<sup>52</sup> The term “Median dialects” has been extensively used instead of the Central Plateau Dialect group of northwestern Iranian languages.

The term “Median dialects” is rather controversial, and there is no general agreement about its use. One major problem with this term is that Median is attested only by some loanwords in Old Persian and a few other non-Iranian language sources, and its grammar and dialectology are totally unknown. Since the grammar of Median is unclear, a number of scholars believe that we cannot be sure that Median is the predecessor of this group of modern Iranian languages. The term “Median dialects” may also be used to refer to the languages that were and are spoken in the territory of ancient Media. If the designation “Median dialects” refers to the historical region known as Media, then the use of the term seems acceptable.

One theory regarding the origin of Judeo-Hamadani is offered by Stilo and Borjjan. In an investigation into Judeo-Median, Borjjan follows Stilo’s conjecture that Hamadani Jewish “is probably not original to Hamadān area and will most likely prove to stem from different CPD areas.”<sup>53</sup> The reason for this theory is not clear but it may have had something to do with the information from Stilo’s informants, whom he encountered in 2001–02. He states:

The Jewish community of Hamadān claims to have mostly migrated there from Yazd in the 18th century. Members of the Jewish community of Tuyserkān also spoke of their derivation as from Yazd, but they also claim a portion of them came from Isfahan, which is most likely true for Hamadān as well.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>For this topic, see Korn, “A Partial Tree of Central Iranian”; and Korn, “Isoglosses and Subdivisions of Iranian.”

<sup>52</sup>Yarshater, “Azerbaijan”; Borjjan, “Median Succumbs to Persian”; Borjjan, “Kashan”; Borjjan, “Isfahan”; Stilo, “Isfahan.”

<sup>53</sup>Borjjan, “What is Judeo-Median,” 129.

<sup>54</sup>Stilo, “Hamadān.”

Nevertheless Borjian underlines the discontinuity between medieval Hamadani and JH:

the historical Median spoken in the Hamadan region is known from a limited number of medieval poems, which are sufficient to make clear that the extinct Median variety native to the Hamadan region belonged to the Tati dialect type of northwestern Iran, rather than the Central Plateau type of central Iran. This historical arrangement might lead us to the inference that only population movements from central Iran could have occasioned the presence of the existing Jewish dialects in the Hamadan area (p. 279).<sup>55</sup>

Much of the historical research to the present day suggests evidence disproving the theory that the origin of Judeo-Hamadani could be from Yazd. According to Amnon Netzer, the reason that the Jews of the southern neighborhood in Yazd speak only New Persian with a Yazdi accent is that they came from Hamadan.<sup>56</sup> The community members in Yazd<sup>57</sup> also hold the view that at least one group of Jews of Yazd originally came from Hamadan.<sup>58</sup>

A considerable number of historical sources document the existence of Jews in Hamadan in different periods. These sources include a report from the twelfth century estimating that the Jews in Hamadan numbered from 30,000 to 50,000 around 1167.<sup>59</sup> The records show that the community of Jews in Hamadan was one of the oldest and largest in Iran, and it is very unlikely that they “mostly migrated there from Yazd in the 18th century” as claimed by Stilo’s informant(s). I tend to be more careful about the Judeo-Hamadani stem from different CPD areas and particularly from Yazd.

The studies that have produced estimates of this theory fail to offer detailed and comprehensive data to support their claim. For example, the selected isoglosses across Jewish dialects offered by Borjian provide us with a basic comparison pattern,<sup>60</sup> but most of these characteristics can be viewed as having a low degree of diagnostic reliability to clarify the relationship of Jewish dialects and the history of migrations of Jews from one city to another. A comparison of JH with Judeo-Yazdi (JY) and Judeo-Isfahani (JI) provides us with important information and may help us to better understand the origins and history of these dialects. Since all three dialects exhibit similar historical phonological developments common to NWIr. languages, a number of other characteristics also need to be considered. In what follows, I focus on selected differences of these dialects.

<sup>55</sup>Borjian, “Judeo-Iranian Languages.”

<sup>56</sup>Gindin, “Yazd”; and Netzer, “Studies in the Spoken,” 20.

<sup>57</sup>Personal communication with Mr. Mashallah Kohan, a community member in Yazd.

<sup>58</sup>In 2017, I undertook a fieldwork trip to Yazd in order to document Judeo-Yazdi. The Yazdi examples are from my collected data during that fieldwork.

<sup>59</sup>For this topic, see Netzer, “Hamadan.”

<sup>60</sup>Borjian, “What Is Judeo-Median,” 131.

Table 4. Personal pronouns

	Independent forms			Enclitics JH	Enclitics	Proclitics JY	Enclitics JI
	JH	JY	JI				
1S	<i>mān</i>	<i>mo</i>	<i>mun</i>	= <i>Vm</i>	= <i>Vm</i>	<i>em=, me=,</i> <i>ma=</i>	= <i>Vm</i>
2S	<i>to</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>to</i>	= <i>Vt</i>	= <i>Vt</i>	<i>ed=, te=, ta=</i>	= <i>Vd</i>
3S	<i>u(n)</i>	<i>em,</i> <i>eno</i>	<i>un</i>	= <i>Vš</i>	= <i>Vš,</i>	<i>eš=, še=, ša=</i>	= <i>Vš</i>
1PL	<i>hāmā,</i> <i>mā</i>	<i>mā</i>	<i>āmā</i>	= <i>Vmān</i>	= <i>un,</i> <i>um</i>	<i>um=</i>	= <i>Vmun</i>
2PL	<i>šomā</i>	<i>šomā</i>	<i>šemā</i>	= <i>Vtān</i>	= <i>tun,</i> <i>tum</i>	<i>tun=</i>	= <i>Vdun,</i> <i>=Vδun,</i>
3PL	<i>unā</i>	<i>enā/</i> <i>onā</i>	<i>unā</i>	= <i>Všān</i>	= <i>šun,</i> <i>=šum</i>	<i>šun=</i>	= <i>Všun</i>

Note: V: Vowel.

In phonology, it seems that JI is the most conservative dialect, with its preservation of medial and final *\*d*, both medially and finally as *δ~z* and occasionally also medially as *-d-*, e.g. *keze/keḏe* “house” (JH *kiye*, JY *kéro* “house”). An innovation in JI is the development of *s > θ*, as exemplified by *xuruθ* “rooster,” *eθbed* “white,” *lebāθ* “cloth” and *keniθā* “synagogue.”

In the pronominal system, the independent form of first person singular, namely *mān*, in JH is different from all other Jewish dialects. Just as in most other Iranian languages, pronominal clitics are part of the pronominal system of JY, JH and JI. The first observation to be made about the clitics (see Table 4) is that JY uses pronominal proclitics in the preterit (*em=, ed=, eš=* and *um=, tun=, šun=*) and imperfect of transitive verbs (*me=, te=, še=*; also *ma=, ta=, ša=*) along with modal verbs, e.g. *ma=y-vā ve-š-in* “I should go” (see also Table 5), while JH and JI use only enclitics. The use of the pronominal proclitic as a subject agreement marker in past transitive constructions is shared by various languages and dialects within Fars, Yazd, Kerman and the Hormozgan area. The plural forms of pronominal clitics are derived from corresponding singular ones by the addition of the ending *-ān* in JH and *-un* in JY and JI, which is indeed the oblique plural suffix for nouns. The plural ending *-un* for first person plural in JY shows another set of clitics, which is probably inherited.

Different from JY, in JH and JI, the preverb *be-* is used for the preterit, and the pronominal enclitics are suffixed to *be-*.

The present enclitic copula and intransitive past suffixes are identical to the person endings, with the exception of third person, the singular copula *en* and the “zero” suffix for the preterit (Table 6).

Table 5. Transitive preterit

	JH	JY	JI
1S	<i>be=m-xord</i> “I ate”	<i>em=di</i> “I saw”	<i>be=m- bart</i> “I brought”
2S	<i>be=t- xord</i> “you ate”	<i>ed=di</i> “you saw”	<i>be=t- bart</i> “you brought”
3S	<i>be=š- xord</i> “she/he ate”	<i>eš=di</i> “she/he saw”	<i>be=š- bart</i> “she/he brought”
1PL	<i>be=mān- xord</i> “we ate”	<i>um=di</i> “we saw”	<i>be=mun- bart</i> “we brought”
2PL	<i>be=tān- xord</i> “you ate”	<i>tun=di</i> “you saw”	<i>be=dun- bart</i> “you brought”
3PL	<i>be=šān- xord</i> “they ate”	<i>šun=di</i> “they saw”	<i>be=šun- bart</i> “they brought”

Table 6. Person endings of verbs and the enclitic copula

	Person endings			Enclitic Copula (EC)		
	JH	JY	JI	JH	JY	JI
1S	<i>-ān</i>	<i>-in</i>	<i>-un</i>	<i>=ān</i>	<i>=in</i>	<i>=un</i>
2S	<i>-i</i>	<i>-eš</i>	<i>-e, -i</i>	<i>=i</i>	<i>=eš</i>	<i>=e, =i</i>
3S	<i>-u</i>	<i>-o, -e, -i</i>	<i>-u, -u(v)</i>	<i>=u</i>	<i>=o, =e, =i</i>	<i>=u, =u(v)</i>
1PL	<i>-im</i>	<i>-ām</i>	<i>-im</i>	<i>=im</i>	<i>=ām</i>	<i>=im</i>
2PL	<i>-id</i>	<i>-et, -ed</i>	<i>-id, -it</i>	<i>=id</i>	<i>=et, =ed</i>	<i>=id, =it</i>
3PL	<i>-end</i>	<i>-un, -on</i>	<i>-end, -ent</i>	<i>=end</i>	<i>=un, =on</i>	<i>=end, =ent</i>

The forms of the person endings of verbs are very similar in JH and JI, while JY differs in employing other forms. The 2S form *-eš* is not shared by other northwestern languages but can be found in the form of *-iš* in southern Fars, for example in Lār and Bastak.<sup>61</sup>

JI uses a suffixed and unstressed *-e*, also called the durative marker, for present and imperfect (pres.: *band-ún-e*, *band-i-e*, “I hit, you hit,” etc.; imperf.: *ārté-d-e* “you used to bring,” *šé-nd-e* “they used to go”),<sup>62</sup> while JY uses the durative prefix *a-* (e.g. *a-bin-ām* “I see,” *a-š-e* “he/she goes”). JH uses *e-* (e.g. *e-ker-e* “he/she does”), though *e-* is often deleted (e.g. *vāy-ān* “I say”). The prefix *be-* is used to form the subjunctive, optative, imperative, preterit and perfect tenses in all three dialects.

All three dialects share the suffix *-ād*, which forms secondary past stems, with Parthian “and several contemporary languages such as Zazaki and Semnani, while Persian and Balochi use a suffix deriving from *\*ita-*,”<sup>63</sup> e.g. JI *parθā-* “asked,” *zunā-* “knew,” JH and JY *zunā(d)*, *parsā(d)* “asked.” All three dialects combine a present stem from the denominative *<\*waina-a-* with the past stem *did-* (*<\*dita-*),

<sup>61</sup>Ivanow, “The Gabri Dialect,” 77, See the table Southern Group.

<sup>62</sup>Stilo, “Isfahan.”

<sup>63</sup>Korn, “A Partial Tree of Central Iranian,” 414.

e.g. JY *a-bin-ām* “we see,” *eš=di* “she/he saw,” JH *bin-ān* “I see,” *be=m-diye* “I have seen,” JI *be-ven-id* “you (Pl.) would see” and *bi=m-di* “I saw.”

I could not find any remnant of a new optative ending (Parthian *-ēndē*) in these dialects. It seems that the optative is expressed with the subjunctive. Stilo refers to two JI examples from Yarshater, *xedā bé-š-keš-ā-Ø* “may God kill him” and *xedā ‘omr-ot še t-ā-Ø* “may God give you (long) life,” and points out that the optative only occurs in the third person singular and is formed with the optative marker *-ā*, in which case the third person singular *-u* is suppressed.<sup>64</sup>

Based on at least a partial comparison of some of the important characteristics mentioned above, we can see that the origin of Judeo-Hamadani cannot be Yazd. Judeo-Yazdi differs in its possession of a number of distinctive characteristics, including a proclitic functioning as a subject marker in post-ergative constructions and with modal verbs, another personal ending system and different person endings and enclitic copulas. Concentrating on only non-typologically marked characteristics and looking only at similarities that are considered normal for northwestern Iranian languages yields incorrect assumptions about the origins and history of JY and JH.

A comparison of JY and Zoroastrian Dari of Yazd (ZDY) can help us to better understand the origin of JY. The similarities between these two languages confirm the possibility that they could partly reflect the former vernacular languages of the city of Yazd. Both languages are very similar in morphological innovations, and, with regard to the fact that such innovations are of particular importance in determining language affiliation, these typologically marked characteristics can be taken as a starting point to establish a genetic relationship. A full discussion of the affiliation of ZDY and JY lies beyond the scope of this article, and I hope to continue this discussion in the future.<sup>65</sup> For the time being, the crucial point is the possible origin of Judeo-Hamadani.

An opportunity to look at the matter from a different perspective is offered by a considerable amount of poetry composed in the old dialects of the Pahla and Fahla regions. This source helps us to at least begin to close the gap by providing more historical and comparative data as a basis for understanding the origin and history of Judeo-Hamadani.

The importance of Fahlaviyat for the study of the language of Jews in Hamadan and Isfahan motivated Abrahamian to compare material from these languages with that found in Bābā Ṭāher quatrains.<sup>66</sup> In his comprehensive investigation, he was able to show a number of similarities, though the author offers no explanation for them. Another drawback is that the study fails to draw a distinction between inherited characteristics and innovations through language contact.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup>Stilo, “Isfahan.”

<sup>65</sup>I gave a talk about “Establishing the genetic relationship between Zoroastrian Dari (Behdini) and Judeo-Yazdi” at ZAS in Berlin in 20 October 2018 and discussed the genetic similarities between these languages.

<sup>66</sup>Abrahamian, *Dialectologie Iranienne*.

<sup>67</sup>For dialectology of Bābā Ṭāher Quatrains, see Gholami, “Guyeš-šenāsi-ye aš‘ār-e bābātāher.”

This section builds on the idea that the languages of Fahlaviyat of Hamadan and Judeo-Hamadani meet certain criteria and are thought to have arisen from a common language, namely the former vernacular language of Hamadan. I test the hypothesis that Judeo-Hamadani could be a remnant of the vernacular language of Hamadan before it was replaced with Persian.

Fahlaviyat include poems composed in the former dialects of the Pahla and Fahla regions. From a linguistic point of view, the Pahla region consisted of western, central and northern Iran.<sup>68</sup> There are linguistic differences between the Fahlaviyat of different regions. The Fahlaviyat, as survivals of the Central Plateau dialects, have certain linguistic affinities with Parthian, although in their existing forms they have been strongly influenced by Persian. The Fahlaviyats shown in Table 7 have been considered as the Fahlaviyats of Hamadan and are of crucial importance for the research question of this study.

Before proceeding to examine the language of Fahlaviyat of Hamadan, it is necessary to consider certain limitations. The most important limitation lies in the fact that the Fahlaviyat have been Persianized to such an extent that in its present form it hardly possesses the archaic and dialectal characteristics of the original local language. Another limitation involved here is that the readings and meanings of many words are uncertain, and there are a considerable number of variants in different manuscripts (e.g. *Tāriḳ-e Gozida* (TG)). These limitations mean that study findings need to be interpreted cautiously. In order to understand the limitations and complications of working with Fahlaviyat, I look at Fahlaviyat in ‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni’s letters as an example and offer an effective way of studying these materials.

‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni (k. 525/1131, q.v.) quoted a few verses that seem to be in different languages. Tafazzoli points out that these verses are probably in his own dialect, namely Hamadani.<sup>69</sup> ‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni uses the name *Owrāma* for a group of these verses.<sup>70</sup> Another group of verses in his letters are called *Fahlavi*,<sup>71</sup> and, in one case, *Še‘r*.<sup>72</sup> He also cited a *bayt* from Bondar Rāzi,<sup>73</sup> and another *bayt* from Šeyḥ Abu-al-‘Abbās Qaṣāb.<sup>74</sup> However, difficulties arise when we consider the language of all these verses as identical. Let us discuss this issue in detail.

The key problem with the analysis of dialectal verses in ‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni’s letters is that many words cannot be read and understood. Šādeqī tried to translate a number of these verses, but most of his interpretations are questionable, and many words were left untranslated.<sup>75</sup> In particular, the corrections in some cases are problematic and cannot aid the reader in understanding the meaning of the verses.

Despite these limitations, some dialectal characteristics can be recognized:

<sup>68</sup>Tafazzoli, “Fahlaviyāt.”

<sup>69</sup>Tafazzoli, “Fahlaviyāt.”

<sup>70</sup>‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni, *Nāmeḥā*, II, 168, 173, 176, 371, 411, 444.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 330; and see Afšār, “Fahlavi.”

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 314.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 82.

<sup>74</sup>This *bayt* is called also *Owrāma*.

<sup>75</sup>Šādeqī, “Fahlaviyāt-e.”



Table 7. Fahlavīyat of Hamadan

Abbreviation	Name	Date	Number of Bayts
BT	Bābā Ṭāher Quatrains	From eleventh century	Maximum 354
BTK	Bābā Ṭāher Konya	Fifteenth century	13
AQN	‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni, Nāmeḥā	Twelfth century	13
ATM	Anonymous Sufi Text, Mahdavi Private collection <sup>a</sup>	Eleventh–twelfth century	12
RS	Rāḥat al-ṣodur wa āyat al-sorur <sup>b</sup>	Thirteenth century	5
TR	Al-Tożihāt-al-Rašidiye by Rašid al-Din Fażl-Allāh Hamadāni <sup>c</sup>	Fourteenth century	2
KSR	Ketāb-e Solṭāni by Rašid al-Din Fażl-Allāh Hamadāni <sup>d</sup>	Fourteenth century	2
AAR	As’le va Aḡvabe-ye Rašidi <sup>e</sup>	Fourteenth century	2
DA	Daqā’ eq al-še’ r <sup>f</sup>	Fourteenth century	1
TG	Tāriḡ-e Gozida by Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi <sup>g</sup>	Fourteenth century	9
SF	Şeḡāḡ al-fors by Nakḡjavāni <sup>h</sup>	Fourteenth century	2
MCP	Miscellaneous Codex 3423, Paris Collection, a collection of historical texts (4 bayt) <sup>i</sup>	Fifteenth century	4
JA	Jāme ‘-al-alḡān <sup>j</sup> by Marāḡi	Fifteenth century	6

(Continued)

Table 7. Continued

Abbreviation	Name	Date	Number of Bayts
BM	Berlin manuscript	Sixteenth century	4

## Notes:

<sup>a</sup>For information about this manuscript see Rāstgufar, “Nokte-sanjihā-ye ‘erfāni.”

<sup>b</sup>Two quatrains and a single *bayt* quoted by Moḥammad Rāvandi in the section *zeker-e ḥāndān-e ‘alaviyān-e ḥamedān* “Mention of Alawite dynasty in Hamadan” and were called fahlaviye. See Rāvandi, *Rāḥat al-ṣodur*, 45–6; for translation of these Fahlaviyat see Adib Ṭusi, *Fahlaviyāt-e lori*, 11–12.

<sup>c</sup>For information on this manuscript and another copy, see Šādeqi, “Fahlaviyāt,” 17–18. Since two *bayts* in TR are probably from Faḥr-al-Din, who is originally Lor, some scholars such as Mīnovi believe that these verses are written in his own dialect, namely Lori. However, it reflects clear northwestern characteristics and, in my opinion, it could not be Lori. See Mīnovi, “Toḥihāt-e Rašidiye.”

<sup>d</sup>Perhaps another copy of Al-Toḥihāt-al-Rašidiye by Rašid al-Din Faḥl-Allāh Ḥamadāni. See Šādeqi, “Fahlaviyāt,” 20, fn. 2.

<sup>e</sup>Rašid al-Din Faḥl-Allāh Ḥamadāni, *As’ale va Afvabe-ye Rašidi*, I, 57. For these *bayts*, see also Šādeqi, “Fahlaviyāt,” 21–2.

<sup>f</sup>Ḥalāwi. *Daqā’eq al-še’r*, 90. This *bayt* is by a certain Qāzi of Sajās (a town between Hamadān and Abhar) and cited by Ḥalāwi.

<sup>g</sup>Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi, *Tāriḩ-e gozida*, 747–8. Kāfi-al-Din Karāji was apparently from Karāḩ-e Abu Dolaf, a town between Hamadān and Nehāvand. In TG, it is mentioned that this poet has good verses in Karāji language. This book contains the following Fahlaviyāt:

- *bayt* by Kāfi-al-Din Karāji in Karāji language (ibid., 747–8);
- *bayt* repetition (another variation of the first three *bayt*) (ibid., 747);
- *bayt* by ‘Ezz al-Din Ḥamadāni (ibid., 740). See Tafazzoli, “Fahlaviyāt.”

<sup>h</sup>See Naḩjavāni, *Šehāḩ al-fors*, 73. The occurrence of the name of Alvand mountain may indicate that the poem was composed in the dialect of Hamadan, as mentioned by Tafazzoli, “Fahlaviyāt.” The author of the text identifies the language of the quatrains as Pahlavi. There seems to be a connection between this Fahlavi and the Fahlvi of the Berlin manuscript (for a comparison see ‘Emādi, “Šenāsā’i,” 140–42). Both quatrains have the same meter and radif and the part *vi ta xoš ni* “without you is not good” is similar in both of them.

<sup>i</sup>For images of these Fahlaviyat, see Yāri Goldarre, “Se Pāre,” 54. In the first Fahlavi, the occurrence of the name of Alvand mountain may indicate that the poem was composed in the dialect of Hamadan. The second Fahlavi mentions the name of Kāfi-al-Din Karāji, the poet of Fahlavi in Tāriḩ-e gozida. The Fahlavi of Paris Codex by Kāfi-al-Din Karāji is not mentioned in Tāriḩ-e gozida. The language of Fahlaviyat of Paris Codex is very simple in comparison to Tāriḩ-e gozida.

<sup>j</sup>‘Abd-al-Qāder Marāgi, *Jāme’-al-alḩān*, II, 139–42. For reading and translation of these Fahlaviyat, see Šādeqi, “Aš’ār-e maḩalli-y-e Jāme’-al-alḩān”; and Ṭabari, “Fahlaviyāt-e Jāme’-al-alḩān.”

Bayt of Bondār Rāzi:

13. *vay=om*      *ān*      *rōj*<sup>76</sup>      *ke*      *deym*<sup>77</sup>=*et*      *na-ven-im*<sup>78</sup>  
 bad=1S.OBL    that    day    that    face=2S.OBL    NEG-see-1PL  
 “Bad for me that day, in which I don’t see your face.”
- va-nez(?)*      *ān*      *rōj*<sup>79</sup>      *ke*      *deym=am*      *namā-y-i*  
 and-also    that.DEM    day    that    face=1S.OBL    show.PRS-EP-2S  
 “and also, the day, in which you show your face to me.”

This *bayt* shows the development of \**-č-* > *-j-* (*rōj* “day”), the preservation of *v-*, and a later change of *-d-* to *-y-* in *vay* (NP *bad*) as well as the use of the present stem *ven/vin-* “to see.” All of these characteristics are typical of northwestern Iranian and also attested in Judeo-Hamadani.

In his letters, ‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadani quoted a *bayt* of Šeyḥ Abu-al-‘Abbās Qaṣāb:

14. *čandān*                      *bar-am*      *te-re*<sup>80</sup>                      *man*      *nām*  
 so much                      take-1S    you.2S-OM                      I.DIR    name  
 “So much I mention your name.”
- pā-i*                      *divār-i*                      *varāy*                      *mi*      *nām*  
 foot-EZ                      wall-IND                      call. IMP                      my      name  
 “may you call my name by wall.”<sup>81</sup>

A number of characteristics clearly show that the language of this *bayt* could not be the same language found in example (13). The construction *mi nām* (POSS-SB) “my name” is common in Gilaki and Mazandarani. Since Šeyḥ Abu-al-‘Abbās Qaṣāb came from Amol, it is possible that his language might be Mazandarani. The basis for some scholars’ assumption that the language of this verse is Hamadani is therefore unclear. If the language of this verse were Mazandarani, then the reading *te-re* “you” would be correct.

‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadani’s letters contain a number of Fahlaviyat termed Owrāma. Some examples illustrating the similarities with JH are provided here:

<sup>76</sup>Alternatively *rūj*.

<sup>77</sup>Written *veym*.

<sup>78</sup>A *bayt* of Bondār Rāzi, see ‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni, *Nāmeḥā*, II, 82 (71st letter).

<sup>79</sup>Written *ruh*.

<sup>80</sup>The reading of *te-re* is uncertain. Written *nr*. Sadeqi (“Fahlaviyāt-e”) does not read it.

<sup>81</sup>Both the reading and translation of this verse are uncertain.

*Owrāma 2:*

15. *ke mā xod āšeq-ān rā vā-šenās-im*  
 that we.DIR ourselves lover.PL OM PV-know.PRS-1PL  
 “We recognize ourselves the lovers.”
- ke deym-e āšeq-ān rā rang ne-bb-u*<sup>82</sup>  
 that face-EZ lover.PL OM color NEG-be.SBJ-3S  
 “the face of lovers would have no color!”

The use of the preverb *vā-* is similar to what is found in JH and exemplified here in *vā-pars-* “to ask.” The verb *nebbu* (NEG-be.SBJ-3S) is identical in JH. The verbal ending *u* for third person singular is also attested in JH.

*Owrāma 3:*

16. *siyā vāšāme-y-e*<sup>83</sup> *pišin amā kaž*  
 black veil-EP-EZ before we crooked  
 “our black veil was always crooked.”
- va-o*<sup>84</sup> *dar-ān če kard o in če-bō*<sup>85</sup>  
 and-3S.DIR in-that what do.PST.3S and this what-be.PST.3s  
 “and what he did regarding that and what was this?”

The pronoun (*h*)*amā* is a common form in Central dialects, for example, in Xuri. The form *bō/bu* “was” is also attested in Judeo-Hamadani.

*Owrāma 5:*

17. *tā dam be-zad*<sup>86</sup> *ān mah-e mast o hāmuš*  
 once breathe VM-hit.PST that.DEM moon-EZ drunk and calmed  
 “once breathed that drunk and calmed moon.”
- gerta-m lāfin-e tan=at dar āuš*  
 take.PST=1S.OBL blanket-EZ body=2S.OBL in arms

<sup>82</sup>Written *tbw*. For this verse, see ‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni, *Nāmeḥā*, II, 176 (81st letter).

<sup>83</sup>*Siyā vāšāme* means “bad fate, bad luck.”

<sup>84</sup>Uncertain. Written *v’*.

<sup>85</sup>The rhythm of this part is problematic. Both reading and translation is uncertain. For the verse, see ‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni, *Nāmeḥā*, II, 374 (100th letter).

<sup>86</sup>Suggested by Šādeqī, “Fahlaviyāt-e,” 16, written *n’ dm brw* unlikely *nādem boru* “go regretful!”

“I held blanket of your body in (my) arms.”

buhān-am	češi	be-guš-e	davāt	bar-am
sing.SBJ.1S	something	to-ear-EZ	?	take.PRS-1S

“I would sing something and reach (it) to the ear of your ... ?”

āj-i	be-reqāl	āj-i	zavāreĵ	bā	guš <sup>87</sup>
hit-2S	to-palm tree	hit-2S	barberries. PL <sup>88</sup>	with	hear

“you hit it to the palm tree and berberis with ears!”<sup>89</sup>

Similar to that which is found in JH, this Owrāma shows the development of *ft* > *t* as in *gerte* “taken” instead of Persian *gerefte*. \**j*- remains as *ĵ*- in *āj*, and is similar to JH *jn* ~ *jen*- “hit” (Prth. *žan*-, NP *zan*-).

In the first volume of ‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni letters, there are three quatrains.<sup>90</sup> These verses can be understood with difficulty. Many words cannot be read or translated. The only important characteristic is again the development of *ft* > *t* in *got* (NP *goft*).

Despite the *bayt* of Šeyḥ Abu-al-‘Abbās Qašāb, which could not be Hamadani, the other Owrāmas in ‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni’s letters and Fahlavīyat exhibit largely the same set of northwestern grammatical properties as Judeo-Hamadani. Linguistic data from Fahlavi sources of Hamadan suggest a number of similar characteristics to JH in the domains of phonology, morphology and syntax and can be summarized as follows:

1. Phonological characteristics. Both Fahlavīyat of Hamadan and JH share the following phonological developments:

- \**č*- > *-ž*- ~ *ĵ*-, e.g. in *āj* (Pers. *az*): “from” in all Fahl. except BT, BTK, *až* in BT and BTK, in JH *az* (Persian form), *ĵir* in JH *vāj*- in BT “to say,” with further weakening to *-y/Ø*- in *vā(y)*- in JH “to say,” *rōĵ/ruĵ* “day” in BT, AQH, ATM, *ruž*, *ru* in JH (Pers. *ruz*), *vāžār*, *vājār* “market” in JH (Pers. *bāzār*), *suĵ*- “to burn” in JH.
- \**v*- > *v*-, e.g. in *vin*- (Pers. *bin*-) “to see” in BT, JH, *vas* (Pers. *bas*) “enough” in ATM, *vād* in JH and RS (Pers. *bād*) “wind,” *vel* in BT, BTK (Pers. *gol*) “flower,” *vad* in BTK, AQH, MCP (Pers. *bad*) “bad,” *veče* “child” in JH.
- \**y*- > *y*-, e.g. *yā* (Pers. *ĵā*) “place” in BTK, RS, JH.
- \**dz* > *z*-, e.g. in *zun*-, *zān* “know,” in SF *ḍān*- (Pers. *dān*) in BT, TR, SF, JH.
- \**ĵ*- > *ž*- ~ *ĵ*-, e.g. *žan*- in BT, BTK (Pers. *zan*-) “to hit,” *žira* in BT (Pers. *zire*) “caraway,” *ĵande* (Pers. *zende*) “alive,” *žen* “hit,” *žan* “woman” all in JH.

<sup>87</sup> ‘Ayn al-Qożāt Hamadāni, *Nāmebā*, II, 444.

<sup>88</sup> Unlikely a plural of *zāreĵ* “partridge.” The shape of a palm tree is long, opposed to the wide shape of barberries as a shrub, and it is probable that the poet means that “you hit it to the palm tree and berberis with ears.”

<sup>89</sup> The meaning of this part is completely uncertain.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 314, 330, 370. For more discussion, see Šādeqi, “Fahlavīyāt-e,” 16–17.

- *\*tsv > sp~sb*, e.g. *espid* in JH, BT, BTK (Pers. *sefid*) “white.”
- *\*-xt > -(h)t ~ -(t)t*, e.g. in *sot-* “burned,” *vāt-* “said,” *dot* “daughter” all in JH, *vāt-* “said” in RS, *bāht* “lost” in RS, *sāht* “made” in BM.
- *\*-ft > -(h)t ~ -(t)t*, e.g. in *kat* in BT, SF “fallen,” *gert* in AGH “took” (Pers. *gereft*), *got* in AGH (Pers. *goft*) “said,” *rōte* “gone” in JH (Pers. *raft*).
- Original *\*u*, even in Arabic borrowings, is generally fronted to *i* both in BT and JH, e.g. *hani(z)* in BT (Pers. *hanuz*) “still,” *tit* “berry,” *qebil* “accept” in JH.

2. Morphological characteristics. Both Fahlaviyat of Hamadan and JH share the following morphological features:

- “To be” of location can be found in both JH and Fahlaviyat, e.g. *daru* “is” in JH, *darim* “(we) are” in RS.
- Imperative sing. of “to come” in both JH and BT is *bur* “come!”
- Verbal ending 3s is *-u* in both BT and JH *āyu* “he/she comes,” in DA: *-e*.
- Present stem of the verb “do” is *ker-* in both BT and JH.
- Durative prefix *e-* is attested for the present and imperfect in JH and *ad-* in BTK instead of Pers. *mi-*.
- Suppletive paradigm *\*waina-* / *dita-* “see”<sup>91</sup> is attested in both JH and Fahlaviyat, e.g. *vin-ān* “I see,” *be=m di* “I saw,” *diye-m* “I have seen” in JH, and *vin-ēm* “I see,” *diye-m* “I have seen” in BT.

3. The post-ergative construction. In at least two Fahlaviyat, namely BTK and JA, we find a post-ergative construction:

18. *xon=om* *ad-xord* (BTK)  
 blood=1S.OBL DUR-eat. PST  
 “I have bitten the bullet” (Lit, “I have eaten the blood”).
19. *ke=š* *ad-āfarid* (JA)  
 COJ=3S.OBL DUR-  
 create.PST.3s  
 “that he has created.”

A difference between Fahlaviyat and JH is the use of a distinct durative marker. In BTK and JA, *ad-* is used, while in JH, the prefix *e-* occurs:

20. *he=m-e-gefte* (JH)  
 PV=1S.OBL-DUR-take.PP  
 “I have bought.”

<sup>91</sup>Korn, “Isoglosses,” 262.



In spite of the shared similarities, a set of differences can be found between FH and JH:

- *-ā-* vowel in *mān* in JH “I,” as opposed to *man* and *men* in other Iranian languages, is not attested in Fahlaviyat.
- *-ān* verbal ending for 1S PRS and INT. PST occurs only in JH *beyr-ān* “I cut,” *dar-kaft-ān* “I fell” and not in FH.
- The durative marker is *ad-* in FH, but *e-* in JH.

After conformational analysis of the linguistics data collected during fieldwork in Hamadan and Fahlaviyat of Hamadan, we are now in a position to suggest some ideas concerning the origin of Judeo-Hamadani. I believe that the similar archaisms and shared innovations between JH and FH provide evidence to further support the theory outlined at the beginning of this study: Judeo-Hamadani could be a remnant of the former vernacular language of Hamadan. This means that the language of Hamadan was a northwestern Iranian language before being replaced with Persian in the New Iranian period.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the question must be answered as to how and why the Jewish community, more or less a speech island, has maintained its distinct character while in contact with the surrounding speech communities. Several ingredients are necessary to bring about the preservation of this language among the Jews in Hamadan. First, I assume that the reason for the preservation of this language has been its origin in the character of the Jewish community in Hamadan. The historical evidence shows that the Jews of Hamadan earned their living by specializing in different kinds of gold- and silversmithing, glass-cutting, silk-weaving, dealing in second-hand clothes and tanning skins. Many of them were masons, blacksmiths, tailors and shoemakers, and some practiced medicine.<sup>92</sup>

In spite of these activities and having contact with the Muslim population in their business lives, they maintained their own ways in terms of cultural and religious life. Their religiously and culturally based community consisted of the speakers with the highest degree of maintenance of the language. It seems that the community boundaries and conservative circumstances were a matter of language survival. However, linguistic convergence due to contact with Persian has led to the loss of much of this distinctive character and to the extinction of Judeo-Hamadani in modern times.

A slightly different development of the vernacular language of Hamadan has been documented by means of Fahlaviyat. The quality and quantity of the differences between JH and Fahlaviyat suggest the influence of further factors on the vernacular language. The language of Fahlaviyat can be considered a continuum of the oral literary tradition, in which the focus is on poetic beauty and meter rather than on the use and preservation of inherited forms.

It is possible to hypothesize that the remnants of the former vernacular language of Hamadan can be found in the current dialect of the city and in a number of dialects

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<sup>92</sup>Sarshar, “Hamadān viii: Jewish community.”

of villages and remote places around Hamadan. Today's language of Hamadan reflects a limited number of characteristics found in JH and Fahlaviyat. Preverbs *vā-* and *hā-* (\* fr-> h-), which are widely used in JH and Fahlaviyat, are attested in the current language of Hamedan. The verbal prefix *hā* is attested in *hā-ǰastan* "jump" and *hā-dāštan* "lift."<sup>93</sup> The preverb *hā* occurs in the form *he* in JH and is used in verbs such as *he-gir* "take" and *he-ni* "sit." The preverb *vā-* appears for example in *vā-ǰastan* "release," *vā-ǰidan* "unfasten, untie, or loosen (something)"<sup>94</sup> and *vā-vidan* "become" in the current Hamadani dialect.<sup>95</sup>

Another important characteristic that can be interpreted as a remnant of the former vernacular language in the current language of Hamadan is the attaching of the plural suffix *-ān* to the person endings of the first and second plural verbs, e.g. *rafđ-im-ān* "we went," *rafđ-in-ān* "you went," *rafde bāš-in-ān* "would you go (past)" and *mi-r-im-ān* "we go."<sup>96</sup> The person ending *-imān* is attested in Bābā Ṭāher quatrains, for example in *be-š-imān* "we would go" and *mi-koš-imān* "we kill."<sup>97</sup>

It seems to me that the data which have become available from new fieldwork and from the Fahlaviyat sources invite a new assessment of the former languages of Hamadan, Yazd, Kerman, Isfahan, Kashan and other cities that replaced their former vernacular dialect or language with Persian in the New Iranian period.

### *Conclusion*

The first part of this article was devoted to select features of Judeo-Hamadani grammar that are of crucial importance for the study of the historical development of the language and its typology. Judeo-Hamadani coexisted alongside Persian and persisted due to the isolation of the community and its cultural and religious distance from the surrounding population. For this reason, JH exhibits a considerable number of conservative grammatical characteristics. As far as external influence of the contact language is concerned, Judeo-Hamadani is heavily Persianized. A crucial development that can be observed in the last eighty years of Judeo-Hamadani is in the domain of phonology and includes the reduction of the vowel system and the loss of a homogeneous stress system. Judeo-Hamadani's suprasegmentals, including intonation, tone, stress and rhythm, have been strongly influenced by the current dialect of Hamadan.

The second part of this article outlined the problems concerning the origin of Judeo-Hamadani in Yazd. It focused in particular on the differences, which are typologically marked characteristics with a high degree of diagnosticity, between Judeo-Yazdi and Judeo-Hamadani and noted the problems of establishing a genetic

<sup>93</sup>Examples from Azkāei, *Farhang-e mardom-e Hamadān*, 280.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 271.

<sup>95</sup>In JH *vāvidan*, Example from ibid., 272.

<sup>96</sup>Examples from ibid., 61.

<sup>97</sup>For further discussion on the suffix *-imān* see Gholami, "Guyeš."

relationship between these two dialects. Through the use of Fahlaviyats of Hamadan as a corpus and a comparative study of Judeo-Hamadani and Fahlaviyat, the relevant similarities have been recognized. The most remarkable observation to emerge from the data comparison was that these languages could have a singular origin, namely the former vernacular language of Hamadan before it was replaced with Persian in the New Iranian period.

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Appendix A. Abbreviations

Av.	Avestan	OM	Object Marker
DIR	Direct	PIE	Proto-Indo-European
DUR	Durative suffix	Pir.	Proto-Iranian
EP	Epenthesis	PL	Plural
EZ	Ezafe Particle	PP	Past Participle
gen.	genitive	PRS	Present
IMP	Imperative	Prth.	Parthian
INDF	Indefinite	PST	Past
JH	Judeo-Hamadani	PV	Preverb
JI	Judeo-Isfahani	S	Singular
JY	Judeo-Yazdi	SBJ	Subjunctive
MP	Middle Persian	VM	Verbal marker
MPrth.	Manichaean Parthian	ZD	Zoroastrian Dari
MV	Modal Verb	ZDY	Zoroastrian Dari of Yazd
NEG	Negative		
NP	New Persian		
NWIr.	North Western Iranian		
OBL	Oblique		
OIr.	Old Iranian		

Appendix B. Specimens of Judeo-Hamadani

- (1) *žan lah mā rā he=š-tāye be mir=aš*  
 woman bread OM PV=3S.OBL-give.PP to husband=3S.OBL  
 “The woman has given bread to her husband.”
- (2) *mān bezbešey xeyli be-tarsiy-ān*  
 I last night very VM-fear.PST-1S  
 “I was very scared last night.”
- (3) *mān heze b-umy-ān kiye-y-e to*  
 I yesterday VM-come.PST-1S house-EP-EZ you  
 “I came yesterday to your house.”
- (4) *āru umy-ān kiye-y-e to*  
 today come.PRS-1s house-EP-EZ you  
 “Today I come to your house”
- (5) *be=m-gefte az vāžār*  
 VM=1S.OBL-take.PP from market  
 “I took (it) from market”

- (6) *bur* *be-š-im* *undāv*  
 come.IMPV VM-go.PRS-1PL there  
 “Let’s go there!”
- (7) *davā* *ne-ke*  
 fight PROH-do. PRS  
 “Don’t fight!”
- (8) *xu=m* *be=m-karte*  
 self=1S.OBL PV=1S.OBL-do.PP  
 “I did myself.”
- (9) *āš-e* *nīji* *balqur* *bārā=t* *pāž-ān*  
 soup-EZ mung bean bulgur for=you.OBL cook.PRS-1S  
 “I cook the soup of mung bean and bulgur for you.”
- (10) *eynām-ā=š* *xub* *kār* *ker-u*  
 eye-PL=3S.OBL good work do.PRS-3S  
 “His eyes work well.”
- (11) *bur* *tā* *bā* *ham* *ve-š-im* *bet hayyim*  
 come. IMPV until with together PV-go-1S cemetery  
 “Let’s go together to the cemetery!”
- (12) *be=m-e-šnofte* *ārīsi-y-e* *dōt=et=u*  
 VM=1S.OBL- wedding- daughter=2S.OBL=COP.3S  
 DUR-hear.PP EP-EZ  
 “I have heard that it is the wedding of your daughter.”
- (13) *mān* *bā* *to* *če-kr-ān*  
 I with you what-do.PRS-1S  
 “What should I do with you?”
- (14) *gun* *be-š-ān* *tehrun* *kiye-y-e*  
 want.MV.1S PV-go.PRS-1S Tehran house-EP-EZ  
*pir=em*  
 son=1S.OBL  
 “I want to go to Tehran, (to) the house of my son.”
- (15) *qalat* *ker-u* *harf-i* *be-žan-u*  
 mistake do.PRS-3S word-INDF VM-hit.PRS-3S  
 “He/she has no right to say something!”
- (16) *inā* *či* *bu* *he=d-gefte*  
 these.DEM what be.PST.3S PV.DUR=2S.OBL-take.PP  
 “What are these (things) you have bought?”

- (17) *gun* *xiyāršur* *ve-gir-ān*  
 want.MV.1S sour cucumber PV-take.PRS-1s  
 “I want to buy sour cucumber.”
- (18) *hezbešey az tars tā sob meje*  
 last night from fear until morning eyelash  
*ne=m-je*  
 NEG=1S.OBL-hit.PP  
 “Last night I could not close my eyes from fear until morning.”
- (19) *un rādiyo o xāmuš ke sedā=š maqz-e*  
 that radio OM off do.IMP voice=3S.OBL brain-EZ  
*mā* *be=š-perde*  
 PRON.1PL VM=3S.OBL-take.PP  
 “Turn that radio off! Its sound annoys me!”
- (20) *be=š-(v)ād xin=et kam=u*  
 VM=3S.OBL-say.PST blood=2S.OBL less=COP.3s  
 “He said that you have anemia.”
- (21) *kāru taqviyat be-kr-i*  
 should.MV improvement PV-do.PRS-2S  
 “You should improve your health.”
- (22) *mān ĉe zun-ān in tor vā-bu*  
 I. DIR what know.PRS-1S this way PV-be.PST  
 “How should I know this happened?”
- (23) *mir=eš be-marte*  
 husband=3S.OBL VM-die.PP  
 “Her husband died.”
- (24) *ye sar-salumati be-h=eš b-uāy-ān*  
 one healthiness to-EP=3S VM-say.IMP-1S  
 “Tell her a health blessing!”
- (25) *xab ne=y be-š-i xab ne=y ne-š-i*  
 good NEG=COP.3S VM-go.PRS-2S good NEG=COP.3S NEG-go.PRS-2S  
 “It is not good that you come (and) it is not good that you don’t come.”
- (26) *qorbun=eš be-v-ān vača=m*  
 offering=3S.OBL VM-become.PRS-1S child=1S.OBL  
*āqāy=u barāye xoč=aš*  
 gentleman= COP.3s for self=3S.OBL  
 “I would sacrifice (myself) for him, my child is such a gentleman.”

- (27) *dōt kāru naʿjib va sangin bu*  
 girl should.MV noble and heavy, dignified COP.3S  
 “A girl should be noble and dignified.”
- (28) *az bas sard=u āym-i yax e-ker-u*  
 insomuchcold=COP.3s man, human- ice DUR-do.PRS-  
 INDF 3S  
 “It’s so cold that you freeze.”
- (29) *āru gu=mān korsī rā var-gir-im*  
 today want.MV=1PL.OBL Korsi OM PV-take.PRS-1PL  
 “Today we want to remove Korsi.”
- (30) *āru be-š-im kiye-y-e dāči āš-e nazri*  
 today PV-go.PRS-1PL house-EP-EZ sister soup-EZ vowed  
*be=š-pešte*  
 VM=3S.OBL-cook.PP  
 “Let’s go to the house of (our) sister today, she cooked food dedicated  
 with a vow.”
- (31) *mān ĉe zun-ān key y-u*  
 I.DIR what know.PRS-1S when come-3S  
 “I don’t know, when he/she comes.”
- (32) *āxe dōt=eš vānhā dər=u*  
 because daughter=3S.OBL there in=COP.3S  
 [“to be” of location]  
 “Because her/his daughter is there.”
- (33) *nə-zun-ān vāllā ĉi b-uāy-ān*  
 NEG-know.PRS-1S really what VM-say.PRS-1S  
 “I don’t really know, what I should say.”
- (34) *zoqāl=am be=m-šoste xošk vā-biye*  
 coal=1S.OBL VM=1S.OBL-wash.PP dry PV-become.PST  
 “I have also washed coal, it has become dry.”
- (35) *kāru avaz=eš ker-ān*  
 must.MV change=3S.OBL do.PRS-1S  
 “I should replace it.”
- (36) *voros be-še dar-e dokun-e maš bāqer*  
 stand.IMPV VM-go.IMPV door-EZ shop-EZ a title PN  
 “Hurry up and go to the store of Mash Bagher!”
- do qerun hede labuy-e tāze*  
 two Qerun give.IMPV beetroot fresh  
 “Buy fresh beetroot for two Qirans!”





- (43) *yekam sab ke tā bārā=t pil*  
 a little bit patience make.IMPVuntil for=2S.OBLmoney  
*vār-ān*  
 bring.PRS-1S  
 “Wait a moment that I bring you money;”
- beše vājār har-či gu=d he-gir*  
 go.IMPV market everything want.MV=2S.OBL PV-take.PRS  
 “go to the market and buy everything that you want.”
- (44) *mā yey pil-i pendā=m karde*  
 I.DIR one money-INDF finding=1S.OBL make.PP  
 “I have found some money.”
- gu=m be=š-ān he=d-ān be sāhab=eš*  
 want=1S.OBL PV=go.PRS-1S PV=give.1S to owner=3S.OBL  
 “I want to go and give (it) to the owner.”
- (45) *mān be-št-ān qasābi gišt-e xab-i*  
 I.DIR VM-go.PST-1S butcher shop meat-EZ good-INDF  
*be=š-košte*  
 VM=3S.OBL-kill.PP  
 “I went to the butcher shop; (the butcher) killed a good meat.”
- (46) *gu=m ye-zare gist be-xus-ān tu-y-e yāne bā*  
 want= a little bit meat PV-soak-1S inside-EP-EZ dish with  
 1S.OBL
- piyāz ye gondi dorost kār-ān tā nāhār ba-xr-im*  
 Onion one, a Gondi preparation make.PRS- until lunch VM-eat.PRS-  
 1S 1P  
 “I want to soak some meat in a dish with onion and make a Gondi (meatball) that we eat (it) for lunch.”
- (47) *az bas zolāle-y=u in vače nā-zun-ān*  
 insomuch naughty-EP=3S.OBL this child NEG-know.PRS-1S  
*če-kr-ān*  
 what-do.PRS-1S  
 “Insomuch is this boy naughty (that) I don’t know, what (should) I do.”
- (48) *hālā nesv-e šey koā š-i*  
 now half-EZ night where go.PRS-2S  
 “Where do you go right now at midnight?”
- (49) *be xāl=et buā nāhār kāči be=m pošte*  
 to aunt=2S.OBL tell.IMPV lunch kachi PV=1S.OBL cook.PP  
 “Tell your aunt that I cooked Kachi for lunch.”

- (50) *bur*                      *kiye-y-e*              *bāmā*              *dor-e*              *ham*  
come.IMPV              house-EP-EZ              1P.POSS              round-EZ              together  
*ba-xr-im*  
PV- eat.PRS.1P  
“Come to our house to eat together!”