The Language of the Kharg Island

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Abstract

Khargi is spoken on the island of Kharg in the Persian Gulf. A member of the Southwest branch of the Iranian languages, Khargi is related to the languages spoken in the province of Fārs and along the coastal line down to the Strait of Hormuz, suggesting extensive maritime contact, yet does not lend itself to any of the known subgroups of the family. As Khargi remains largely obscure, this article offers a morphosyntax and lexical analysis based on published texts and those collected by the author. It investigates the linguistic position of Khargi based on comparative-historical phonology as well as areal features, with a look at cross-linguistic influence in the situation of language contact. By contrasting linguistic findings with details of history and economy, an attempt is made to date the original and later human settlements on the island.[1]

Keywords: Southwest Iranian languages; comparative-historical phonology; morphosyntax; lexicology; language typology; language isolate; maritime language contact

The Island of Kharg

Kharg[2] is an Iranian island in the Persian Gulf, situated 25 km off the coast and 50 km northwest of the port of Bušehr. The island is 21 km² in area, bisected by the 29.25° North latitude. The traditional economy of Kharg was based on modest warm-climate agriculture of date palm groves, citrus orchards, and vineyards, irrigated by subterranean channels called *kāriz*, while the nearby, uninhabited islet of Khārgu (Andarovi in local usage) served as pastureland. More remarkably, until recently Kharg was a centre of fishing, pearling, and sea pilotage. This had been the case since medieval times. Since the 1960s, the island has become a crude oil terminal and loading facility, attracting industrial workers from different parts of Iran. The population of Kharg increased from 650 in 1956 to 7,700 in 2011.[3]

Historically Kharg is the only inhabited island associated with the province of Fārs. It has had commercial ties with Bušehr, the terminal point of Shiraz—Kāzerun—Borāzjān—Bušehr highway. The linguistic analysis presented in this paper suggests that Kharg had

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[1]The author would like to express his thanks to the anonymised reviewer of this article for their insightful comments.

[2]Xārg; for the toponym, see §1.9, below.

[3]See W. Floor and D. T. Potts, *The Persian Gulf: Khark: The Island's Untold Story* (Washington, 2017), passim; H. Borjian, "Kharg Island i. Geography", *Encyclopædia Iranica,* xvi/4 (2018), pp. 424–426.

extensive maritime contact with the ports and islands around the Strait of Hormuz, which are historically associated with Kermān more than with Fārs.

The vernacular spoken in the Kharg Island is an isolated variety belonging to the Southwest stock of the Iranian language family. The language was first documented by the Persian publicist Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad in his visit to the island in the late 1950s. He reports in his ethnography that out of the 120 resident households in Kharg, most had migrated from the coastal district of Tangestān and only a minority was local, and in terms of denomination the Shāfiʿi Sunnis were twice as many of Shiʿis. The native speakers characterised Khargi as a dialect close to those of Tangestān and Bušehr, the inland districts standing opposite to Kharg.[4] Āl-e Aḥmad published texts and a short glossary[5] of the Khargi terms related to material culture.

Following the fundamental transformation of the island from an isolated rural society to a petroleum export hub, Kharg has seen a dramatic social and demographic shift. Persian has become dominant in all spheres of life. My interviews in 2016 revealed that Khargi was still spoken by as few as a dozen families, and even therein it was not properly transmitted to the new generation. The rest of the local population of the island was either the indigenous Khargis who had lost the native language or the immigrants from nearby littoral settlements who spoke their own kindred dialects.

Commensurate with the worry of its extinction, the local community has published new materials on Khargi: nostalgic poems by Jamāt Možde[6] (henceforth JM) and proverbs by ʿAbdollāh Amāni.[7] The language of the latter works is in general agreement with that collected by Āl-e Aḥmad with only minor discrepancies. During a telecommuting documentation in 2016, I verified the materials from Āl-e Aḥmad and Možde and elicited additional data. My main informant was Manṣur ʿĀrefinežād, 41 years old, who had earned a postgraduate degree and worked at the Kharg Petrochemical Company. I also interviewed Ḥāj Sheikh Jamāt Možde, circa 70, the chief Sunni clergy of the Island.

1. Phonology

Khargi holds a solid membership in the Southwest branch of Iranian languages (§1.1). Within the Southwest domain, we may identify two isoglosses applicable to Khargi: the outcome of PIE *kw (§1.2) at an Old Iranian stage, and rhotacism of dentals (§1.10), a much younger sound shift.

1.0. Synchrony

The phonemic inventory of Khargi is typical to modern Southwest Iranian. The vocalic system consists of the vowels /ā o u a e i/ and semivowels /ey ow/. The phoneme /ā/ corresponds to [ɒ], much the same as common Persian. Vowel length is not phonemic: historically long vowels are occasionally pronounced long, especially in careful speech, as

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[4]Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad, *Dorr-e yatim-e Xaliǰ, ǰazire-ye Xārg. Goδašte o emruz, ādāb, lahǰe, folklor, monžem be reǰāl-e Xārg o čand gozāreš az farangān* (Tehran, 1960), p. 49.

[5]*Ibid*, pp. 80–106.

[6]J. Možde, *Song-e tiγār: dāstān-e zendegi-e goδašte-ye mardom-e ǰazire-ye Xārg* (Shiraz, 2009).

[7]A. Amāni, *Az Ārākiā tā Xārg* (Tehran, 2015).

in Āl-e Aḥmad's documentation, but my further elicitation revealed that length is not distinctive, even when partially compensating for elision. The consonants are /b p t d k g č ǰ s z f v š x h q γ m n l r y/. The affricates are /č/ [t͡ʃ] and /ǰ/ [d͡ʒ]. As is the case with many Southwest varieties, ž probably does not exist as an independent phoneme, as there is *mezo* for Persian *može* "eyelash". Notable is the distinction between /γ/ and /q/ in the minimal pair *γāč* "mushroom" vs. *qāč* "cross-eyed".

1.1. Old Iranian Stage

Historical-comparative phonology places Khargi squarely within the Southwest Iranian family, the extinct members of which being Old Persian, Middle Persian, and medieval Shirazi. The oldest drifts of this family from proto-Iranian, *ts, *dz, *θr > h, d, s have reflexes in the Khargi words *pah* "goat" (cf. Av. *pasu-* "small cattle"), *ohi* "gazelle" (< MPers. āhūg < OPers. *āθūka-; cf. Av. āsu- "swift" < PIE *ōḱú-s[8]); *demesto* "winter" (cf. Manichaean MPers. dmystʾn), *dehni* "yesterday" (cf. Lori *dinyā*, Judeo-Shirazi *dikna*, MPers. *dīk*;[9] Northwest Iranian Kešaʾi *heze*), *domah* "son-in-law" (cf. MPers. *dāmād*, Av. *zāmātar*); *pos* "son" (< *puθra-), *ās* "hand mill" (cf. Pers. *ās*, Kešaʾi *ār*).

To the oldest stratum of sound changes, we may add the development *št > st that appear in *most* "fist" (cf. Lārestāni *must, mos*, Davāni *mos*, MPers. *must/mušt*, Balochi *mušt*, from PIr. *mušti-, with obscure etymon[10]).

Another possible reflex of the split during the proto-Iranian stage can be sought in the Khargi word *pas*, standing for Pers. *pašimān* "regretful". Should the Persian word be derived from *paš* "after, behind",[11] the Khargi *pas* makes a convincing case for the development of PIr. *sč, which is reflected in the binary Av. *pasca* vs. OPers. *pasā* "after" (cf. Skt. *paścá* < PIIr. *pas(t)-sčā),[12] followed by Parthian *paš* vs. MPers. *pas* "after, behind".[13]

1.2. Proto-Fārs split

The development of PIE *kw, corresponding to PIr. *tsw, has three outcomes in Southwest Iranian languages. These are best reflected in the word "louse", from PIr. *tswiš–: *heš* in Lārestān; *teš* in central-eastern Fārs, to the southeast of Shiraz; and *šVš* in the rest of Fārs, including the Kāzerun area and the littoral band running from Bušehr down to the Strait of Hormuz (see Table 2, Isogloss 3). Khargi *šoš* belongs to the latter group, concordant with the geography of Kharg. The Khargi form follows the chain of developments that retained the Old Iranian sibilant (*tswiš– > *siš > *šVš), as opposed to the Fārs varieties that turned it into the interdental /θ/ at either Old Iranian or Middle Iranian stage, and

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[8]Moḥammad Ḥasandust, *Farhang-e rišešenāxti-e zabān-e fārsi*, 5 vols. (Tehran, 2014), §235.

[9]*Idem, Farhang-e taṭbiqi-mowžuʿi-e zabānhā o guyešhā-ye irāni-e now*, 2 vols. (Tehran, 2010), p. 76.

[10]Ḥasandust, 2014, §4831.

[11]*Ibid*, §1214.

[12]Alexander Lubotsky, "Reflexes of Proto-Indo-European *sk in Indo-Iranian", *Incontri linguistici*, 24 (2001), pp. 25–57, §6.2.

[13]Ludwig Paul, "Kurdish Language i. History of The Kurdish Language", *Encyclopædia Iranica Online*, 2008; at iranicaonline.org/articles/kurdish-language-i.

then to /t/ or /h/ at later stages.[14] Note that the Persian form of the word (from MPers. *spiš, spuš*), with *sp, corresponds to the Northwest type development.

1.3. Middle Iranian stage

Here Khargi finds its place on the Southwest side of the binary division, due to these sound shifts: *ǰ > z in *zan* "woman", *-č- > z in *zi* "under",[15] *dw- > d- in *dega* "again, other", *y- > ǰ in *ǰoh* "barley".

1.4. *w-

The development of Middle West Iranian initial *w- > b is found systematically, e.g., in *bād* "wind", *bāru* "rain", *bafr* "snow", *korbak* "frog".[16] Note that *w- > b- occurs in all attested vernaculars of Fārs for the words "wind" (*bâd, bâδ, bâ*), "rain" (*bâru(n)*), and "snow" (usually *barf*, but also *bafr*, etc.[17]). This sound change therefore must be deep-rooted in Fārs, quite possibly within Middle Iranian period; it forms a sharp isogloss within New Southwest Iranian, bisecting the Garmsiri languages of Kermān and Fārs.[18] See Isogloss 2 in Table 2. In Khargi the sound change *wi- > go is attested in a closed set, including *goroxt* (< *wirēxt-) "fled" and *gošna* "hungry", as is the case in Persian.

1.5. Lenition

An opposite effect, softening of b > v, is prevalent in Khargi: *vo* "with" (< bā < abāg), *verd-* (< burd-) "carry", *tavar* "axe", *tavesto* "summer", *pā-sovok* "swift", *ow* "water", *ov-e garm* "warm water".

1.6. Consonant clusters

The inlaut cluster *xt survives: *doxt* "girl", *bext-* "sift", *rext-* "poor", *goroxt-* "flee".[19] The group *ft is reduced to *t* in the past stems *got-* "say", *xot-* "sleep", and *gert-* "seize", but is retained in *roft-* "sweep", *baft-* "weave", *šenaft-* "hear"; this anomaly cannot be justified by etymology: the roots of the verbs are all labial: *gaub, *hwap/f, *grab, *raup, *wab/f, *xšnav, respectively.[20] The traces of this reduction may be sought in a noticeably longer vowel in *a-xoˑt-e* "he is sleeping" and gemination of the consonant in *xett-i* "he slept", both carrying an underlying past stem *x(w)uft-. This reduction must be far more recent

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[14]See George Morgenstierne, "Stray Notes on Persian Dialects II", *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskab,* 19 (1960), pp. 121–129; Ḥ. Reżaʾi-Bāḡbidi, "Širāzi-e bāstān", *Guyeššenāsi,* 1/1 (2003), pp. 32–40; H. Borjian, "The Perside Language of Shiraz Jewry", *Journal of Iranian Studies,* forthcoming.

[15]The adverb *ǰow*, in *ǰow istā* "he stood up", if from *hačā-upairi, follows a Northwest development (cf. Parthian ʾž ʾbr, Kurdish *žōr,* Pers. *zabar* "up, above"). Curiously, the northern part of the satellite islet Khārgu is called *bon ǰofre* (Floor and Potts 2017, p. ix). The phrase *bon ǰofre* apparently means "the lower end", in which *ǰofr* "low" is also a Northwest development.

[16]The word can be broken up as *kor-bak*, with onomatopoeic *kor* that may also appear in modern Pers. *qur-bāqe* "frog"; and *bak* < Middle Pers. *wak*, cf. Mazandarani *dār-vak,* New Pers. *bak*.

[17]The data is gleaned from various volumes of ʿA-N. Salāmi, *Ganǰina-ye guyeššenāsi-e Fārs,* 6 vols. (Tehran, 2004–14).

[18]H. Borjian "Kerman xvi. Languages", *Encyclopædia Iranica,* xvi/3 (2017), pp. 301–315, Tab. 1.

[19]Note mixed results in Fārs: Bušehri *doxt*; Somγāni, Pāpuni, Māsarmi, Gāvkošaki *doht*; Pāpuni, Somγāni, Nudāni, Banāfi *doːt*; Kandaʾi *duft* (Salāmi, 2004–14, i-iii), Judeo-Shirazi *duft*.

[20]A mixed outcome is also found throughout Fārs.

than the shift from Old Iranian *-t- to d, else the verb stems would have become *d*-final, thus subjected to rhotacisation discussed in §1.10.

1.7. Final consonants

Elision of the final consonant is the norm: nasals: *nu* "bread", *dondo* "tooth", *darmu* "cure", *zemi* "earth", and in personal endings (§3.5); stops: *demā*[d] "son-in-law", *ban*[d] "tie", *pus*[t] "skin". See also §3.1.

1.8. Fronting of back vowels

A remarkable vocal development is fronting of original ū and ō, as seen in *ši* "husband", *ri* "face", *hani* (for Pers. *hanuz*) "yet", *ohi* "gazelle", *xeyn* "blood" (MJ *xin*), *čipo* "shepherd", *sandiq-āvāz* "gramophone", *sizan* "needle", *bir-* < *būd-* "be", *šer-* < **šid-* < *šud-* "go"; but *kur* (< *kōr*) "blind". Note also the residual *majhul* in *meyz*[21] "table", *še(y)r* "lion".

1.9. *-ak

Contraction of the Middle Persian suffix –ak/–ag can be seen in *ostorg* "star" (< *stārag*), *meyg* "locust" (for Pers. *malax* < Old Ir. **madaka-*), *seyg* "shade" and *hamsoyg* "neighbour" (cf. Pers. *hamsāye* < *ham-sāyag*[22]), and probably in *Xārg* "Kharg Island", apparently from *Xārag*, comparable to Khargi *xārak* "date" (see below).

A renewed –ak is found in *bačak* "child", *beygak* "doll", *toveyak* "pan", *howdak* "basin", *xārak* "date", *pahak* "unripe date" to express endearment or diminution.

There is yet another set, in –e, that has emerged from the Middle West Iranian ak: *čāle* "hearth" (< **čāl-ak* "pit, hollow"), *jume* "clothing", *kiče* "alley", *gordāle* "kidney", *darve* "gorge" (Mid. Pers. *darrag* < **darnaka*); the last two words, due to their idiosyncratic phonology, should not be recent loans from Persian.

A final –a is chiefly a result of contraction: plural marker *ha-* (< *hā*), *xorma* "date" (< *xormā*), *dega* "again, other" (< *dīgar*), *yema* "we" (< *amāh*), *ta* "thou" (< *tō* < **tava-*), *bāla* "up" (< *bālā*), *kārga* "workplace" (< *kārgāh*). The last word is expected to be *kārgah* due to the pattern -āh > ah, in *rah* "road", *kah* "straw", *čah* "pit, well" and other words.

1.10. Rhotacism

The change of dental voiced stop to *r* in intervocalic positions is a regular sound change in past stems:

dār- < dād- "give"	as in *dār=ome* "I gave"
nār- < nihād- "put"	as in *nār-e* "it is laid"
amar- < āmad- "come"	as in *amar-e* "he has come"
šer- < šud- "go"	as in *šer-ah* "I went"
dir- < dīd "see"	as in *=š dir-e* "he has seen"
bir- < būd- "be"	as in *bir-a* "you were"
xatir- < xwaftīd- "sleep"[23]	as in *xatir-e* "he has slept"

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[21] <? MPers. *mēzd*. Cf. Ḥasandust, 2014, §4947.

[22] *Ibid*, §§2921–23.

[23] The past stem formant *-īd is anomalously added to original past stem in *xat-ir-* (see §1.9). Cf. Delvāri *xet-id-*, classical Pers. *xwaft-īd-*. For examples in pre-modern Persian, see Ḥasandust, 2014, §2079. This anomaly is common among the Fārs dialects.

Rhotacism does not occur in non-intervocalic positions: *bid* "it was", *boře* (← borḍ=še) "he carried", *začče* (← zaḍ=še) "he hit", where *d* has become unvoiced in the vicinity of *š* (see §3.1), suggesting that rhotacism is a synchronic feature, with possible allophonic status. It is comparable with the intervocalic tapping of dentals in North American English: *butter* [ˈbʌɾɹ], *leader* [ˈliɾɹ].

I found no parallel to this sound change in the languages of Fārs. On the other hand, rhotacism is common in the Garmsiri vernaculars of Kermān: North Baškardi, Minābi, Hormozi, Kumzāri, and to a limited extent the inland dialects of the Halilrud valley show this feature.[24] Khargi therefore may have been infected by the vernaculars spoken around the Strait of Hormuz through commerce or migration.

2. Noun Phrase

The nominal system of Khargi corresponds to those of Southwest Iranian languages in one way or another. There are prepositions that seem particular to Khargi, including *šā* and *jam* (§2.3) but these do not qualify as isoglosses due to paucity of data for the neighbouring languages.

2.1. Inflection

Plural markers are *–ha* and *-o* (apparently from *–hā* and *–ān* respectively), e.g., in *zenha* "women", *čišo* "eyes". These suffixes are comparable with Buš. *–a*, while *–gal* prevails in the vernaculars of Fārs proper. As in Persian, the *eżāfa* is allowed: *bāl-e domb-e gorbe* "on the tail of the cat".

Definitiveness is marked with *–o*, *–a*, and *–ak(u)*, as in *i mardo* "this man", *māsta* "the yog-urt", *širakaku* "the milk", but is not obligatory, especially when a noun takes a personal clitic, as displayed in examples (34, 39), below. Similar markers are current in Bušehri, as opposed to commonly *-u* and *-a* elsewhere in Fārs. Indefiniteness is marked with *–i/-γ*, usually accompanied by the numeral one, as in *yak ruz-i* "one day" and example (42) below. See also §4.5.

There is no case in Khargi. The accusative remains unmarked; Khargi, as many other varieties in Fārs, does not favour the Persian-type *–rā*, as shown in the following examples.

(1) *astak-ak-eš   si pah hā-di-ah*
     kernel-DEF–3SG.POSS   to goat PREV-give.PR–1SG
     "I'll give its fruit-stone to the goat".

(2) *asb   zin=eš   ka*
     horse   saddle=3SG.AC   do.PST
     "He saddled horses".

2.2. Pronouns

Independent personal pronouns are sg. 1 *mo/me*, 2 *ta/to*, 3 *u*; pl. 1 *yema*, 2 *šemā/šoma*, 3 *inhe*. Demonstratives are *i* "this", *ā* "that", *hami* "this very", and *hamu* "that very".

[24]Borjian, "Kermān", 2017.

The oblique set of personal pronouns consists of the clitics sg. *-m, -t, -š*; pl. *-mu(n), -tu(n), -šu(n)*, with potential connecting vowels. These clitics may either be proclitic or postclitic, especially when acting as agent in transitive past tenses (§3.6). As indirect objects the oblique pronouns are signalled by prepositions (§2.3). The clitics may act as experiencer alone (*γād-šu šar-e* "they have forgotten") or when interfaced with the verb "be" in structures expressing possession and modality (§§3.8, 3.9.2).

As in Persian, the personal clitics function as possessive determinants, as in *pil-me* "my money" and *ri-š* "his face", and can be hosted by the stem *xo–* to express emphasis (3) or reflection (4):

(3) *xārak-ak-eš*   *xo-m*   *be-xor-ah*
    date-DEF–3SG.POSS   REF–1SG   SBJV–eat.PR–1SG
    "I myself would eat its dates".

(4) *goče*   *šā*   *xo-š*
    he.said   to   REF–3SG
    "He said [it] to   himself".

2.3. Adpositions

Khargi is entirely prepositional. Some of the Khargi preposition seem characteristic to the island or shared only with the nearby littoral communities.

A remarkable preposition is *šā*, as a variant to *si* "to, for". The latter is frequently attested in Southwest Iranian languages, while Delvāri has both *šey* and *sey* synonymously. Examples:

(5) *si-m bia* "bring [it] for me"
(6) *si-t hādāyah* "that I give [it] to you"
(7) *šā-š resi* "he reached him"
(8) *šā ši-š* "to her husband" (JM)
(9) *avem šā to boguyah* "I want to tell thee"[25] (JM)

Other common prepositions are: *ǰam*[26] (for Pers. *píše, názde*) "to, by, beside", *pi* (for Pers. *péye, donbâle*) "after, following", *pi* (for Pers. *píše*) "with, in the presence of", *pas* "behind", *meyl* "toward" (as in *meyl-e čowl* "toward the depression"), *vo* "with" (see §4.6), *zi* (< zir) "under", *bāl* (< bālā) "over". In the examples below propositional phrases are placed in square brackets. Note the random position of agent clitics (§3.6) at the end of the prepositional phrase (12, 14) or on the verb (13).

(10) *gorbe*   *be-šo*   *[ǰam   mox]*
    cat   PREF-go.PST   to   palm
    "The cat went to the date palm".

(11) *be-šur-e*   *[pi   bu-še]*
    PREF-go.PST.3PL   after   father-3sg.POSS
    "They went after (i.e., to find) his father".

[25]Cf. §3.9.1.
[26]Likely from *ǰam* ʿ, or, as Āl-e Aḥmad construed, *ǰanb*.

(12) *[pas   kamar]=eš   nāre*
      behind   waste=3SG.AC put.PP
      "He has placed [it] behind [his] waste".

(13) *[vo   tir]   be-ze=še*
      with   arrow   PREF-hit.PST=3SG.AC
      "He hit [it] with arrows".

(14) *miš   [bāl-aš]=aš   čašt*
      ewe   on-3SG.OBJ=3SG.AC   sit.PST
      "The ewe sat on it".

3. Verb phrase

A remarkable feature of Khargi is that the imperfective aspect can be expressed with two morphemes, *a-*, shared by some other Southwest Iranian languages, and *ze-*, seemingly particular to Khargi (§3.3; Table 2, Isogloss 5). Another prefix, *be-*, marks the present subjunctive (§3.2). The infix *-est-*, a weighty isogloss in typology of the region (Table 2, isogloss 7), has low occurrence in Khargi (§3.4). The transitive past is ergative (§3.6), allowing the agent clitics to float freely within the clause.

3.1. Stems

There are two verb stems in Khargi: the present stem serving the present-future tenses in both indicative and subjunctive moods, and the past stem, employed in all past tenses. Unlike the Lārestāni and Kermān's Garmsiri groups, Khargi does not employ the past stem for present tenses (Table 2, Isogloss 6). When the stem is word-final, its final consonants may disappear: *ama^r* "he came", *ša=rof^t* "he swept", *če=mu ke^rd* "what we did" (see also §1.7).

3.1.1.

Aremarkable morphophonemic feature of Khargi is that when /t/ and /š/ are joined at morpheme junctions they are perceived and therefore written as *č* [t͡ʃ], as demonstrated in the following examples:

(15) *goče* (← got=še) "he said"
      gerče (← gert=še) "he seized"
      arexčo (← a-rext=šo) "they used to poor"

  This feature extends to the morphemic intercept d+š, in which the dental stop becomes unvoiced:

(16) *borče* (← bord̥=še) "he carried"
      začče (← zad̥=še) or *zadše* "he hit"
      axončo (← a-xond̥=šo) "they used to sing"

3.2. *Subjunctive*

The subjunctive and imperative are marked with *be-*,[27] as in *be-guy-ah* "that I say", *be-ga* "say!" The subjunctive prefix is replaced with lexicalised preverbs *hV-* and *vV-*, e.g., *ho-či* "sit!", *hā-da* "give!", *he-novis* "write!", *šekār ho-kon-ah* "that I go hunt", *vo-ruf-ah* "that I sweep", *vā-st=aš* "he seized".

3.3. *Imperfective*

Khargi is distinguished by having two imperfective markers, *a-* and *ze-*. The latter, which is far more frequent in JM's material, principally marks the habitual. However, the data suggest, as demonstrated in the examples that follow, that both markers may function as both progressive and habitual with a random distribution. It is not clear which condition favours each of the two morphemes. A free distribution of the two morphemes becomes obvious for the verb "become" (§3.7).

(17) *mo   a-š-ah*
    I   IMPF–go.PRS–1SG
    "I (will) go".

(18) *xiš   a-karš-e*
    plow IMPF–draw.PRS–3SG
    "He is plowing".

(19) *bār=šu*   *a-ke*
    load=3SG.AC   IMPF–do.PST
    "They were packing/loading up". (JM)

(20) *hame   šam=šu*   *ze-gert*   *šov-e*   *došambe*
    all   candle=3PL.AC IMPF–kindle night-EZ Monday
    "They all would kindle candles on Monday eves". (JM)

(21) *ze-gard-e*   *ǰomlegi* *tuye* *velāʾat*
    IMPF–turn-3PL entirely in   village
    "They all return to the village". (JM)

    In addition to the aforementioned imperfective markers, we also find *mi-/me-*, standing between the negation marker and the stem in example (22). In (23) and (24) *me-* seemingly co-occurs with *ze-*, preceding the stem **stad-* or **stānd-* "take", with a possibility of *me-* having been integrated to the verb stem.

(22) *mo   pil*   *ne-mi-de-γ-ah*
    I   money NEG–IMPF–give.PR–EPEN–1SG
    "I will not give money".

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[27]On the role of *be-* in the modal system of Southwest Iranian languages, see Thomas Jügel, "Die Verbalpartikel BE im Neuiranischen", *Indogermanische Forschungen* 118 (2013), pp. 299–320.

(23) *isā   dega   az   u   ta   ze-me-stun-a?*
     now   again   from   he   you   IMPF–IMPF–take-2SG
     "Now, do you take it back from him?"[28]

(24) *u   ze-me-stā=še   az   meskin=o   gedā*
     he   IMPF–IMPF–take=3SG.AC   from deprived=and   poor
     "He would collect from the deprived and poor". (JM)

The marker *a-* connects Khargi to the Garmsiri languages of Fārs and Kermān (Table 2, iso-gloss 5),[29] as against the coastal dialects of Bušehr and Delvār and further north in Fārs proper, which employ *mi-*.[30] Its occurrence in Khargi is testimony to the mixed nature of the language.

The imperfective marker *ze-* is unmatched in the Iranian languages known to me. The closest morpheme I could find is Delvāri's indeclinable *hasey/hey*.[31] These may derive from an adverbial word—a typical source for the creation of new verbal tense and aspect markers.

3.4. Perfective

The perfect tenses are built on the past participle, which is represented by two distinct morphemes in Khargi. The prevailing form of the past participle is formed by suffixing *–e/-a* to the past stem and is used in the perfect tenses:

(25) *inǰa nāre bi* (for Pers. *nehāde bud*) "it had been put here"
(26) *česte bid* (for Pers. *nešaste bud*) "he was sitting"
(27) *kasi na=š=dire* "no one has seen" (JM, p. 58)

(28) *har-ki   deruq-i=š   got   ke   me=m*
     every-who   lie-INDEF=3SG.AC   say.PST   that   I=1SG.AC
     na-šnafta   be
     NEG-hear.PP   be.SJCT?.3SG
     "Whoever told a lie that I had not heard…"

The other morpheme *est-* is attested only in a few sentences in the Khargi data. Most notables are:

(29) *koǰ bir-est-a* (for Pers. *koǰā budi/budei?*) "where were you?" or "where have you been?"[32]
(30) *key umar-est-a* (for Pers. *key āmadi/āmadei?*) "when did you come?"[33]
(31) *hame az tars-e ǰen bir-est-e tarsun* "they were all dreadful of the jinni"[34]

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[28] Āl-e Aḥmad, 1960, p. 105.
[29] A similar marker exists in Central Plateau *e(t)-*, etc. See Donald Stilo, "Isfahan xxi. Provincial Dialects" in *Encyclopædia Iranica,* xiv/1 (2007), pp. 93–112; cf. North Kurdish *di-*, etc.
[30] Among West Iranian, Persian, Tati, and Semnani also employ *mi-/me-*. The source is apparently Persian, via grammaticalisation of the adverb *hamē* in early New Persian.
[31] Cf. Delvāri indeclinable *hasey/hey*, signifying continuous action, as in *æftow hey mi-ze* "the sun is rising", *hasey mi-xor-om/mi-xærd=om* I am/was eating (Moḥammad Dabir-Moqaddam, *Radešenāsi-e zabānhā-ye irāni* [Typology of Iranian languages], 2 vols. (Tehran 2014), ii, pp. 917–918.
[32] Āl-e Aḥmad, 1960, p. 106.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] Možde, 2009, p. 58.

The exact function of *–est–* cannot be discerned from these only examples. This morpheme is found in Lārestāni and a good number of the dialects of Fārs proper (Table 2, Isogloss 7). Across the strait that separates Kharg from the coastal line, Daštestāni has this morpheme but Bušehri and Delvāri do not.[35] It is hard therefore to judge whether *–est–* in Khargi is a recent influence from another language or a fading morpheme.

3.5. *Person markers*

The verb endings are suffixed to the stem in all present tenses and the past tenses of the intransitive verbs. (For the past transitive, see §3.6.) The personal endings display a certain degree of variation in the data from which the following set is inferred: sg. 1. *-ah*, 2. *-a*, 3. *-e/a/i*, pl. 1. *-e* (JM *-i*), 2. *-e*, 3. *-e*. The plurals are levelled due to elision of final nasals (§1.7). The endings make up for two isoglosses in Table 2.

The first singular has lost its nasal element and developed a glottal, apparently to contrast the second singular. Other Southwest Iranian languages have the general form *–am* (Isogloss 8), while Davāni has *-e*.[36]

The second singular stands distinct from the rest of the Fārs varieties, who normally have a mid or high vowel (*-e* or *-i*), whereas Lārestāni distinguishes itself by the ending *-eš* (Isogloss 9).

The third singular present suffix *-e* (< *-at) has lost its final consonant. Its varying forms in the data can be a result of what Ilya Gershevitch called the "crushing" phenomena that occurs in a subset of stems found in the languages of the area.[37]

3.6. *Agent Clitics*

The transitive past tenses employ a split ergative construction typical to many West Iranian languages (Table 2, Isogloss 4).[38] Instead of utilising suffixial person makers (§3.5) the agreement with the subject is attained via pronominal clitics (§2.2). These are designated here, in the context of verbal agreement, as agent clitics (AC).

Agent clitics fill various positions within the Khargi sentence. They are allowed to attach on the stem, either before or after it: *mo=di ~ di=me* "I saw". A frequent position of the AC is on light verb components, e.g., *piāda=š ke* "he dismounted [it]" (see also example (2), above). AC may attach to verbal negative (32)[39] or to an overt subject, particularly in a clause initial position (33).

(32)　*na=m=dire*
　　　NEG=1SG.AC=see.PP
　　　"I have not seen"

(33)　*inhe=šun　　got*
　　　they=3PL.AC　say.PST
　　　"they said… "

[35]Cf. Gernot Windfuhr, "Fārs Dialects", *Encyclopædia Iranica*, ix/4 (1999), pp. 362–373, Table 5.

[36]*Ibid*, Table 4.

[37]Ilya Gershevitch, "The Crushing of the Third Singular Present", in *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume*, (ed.) M. Boyce and I. Gershevitch (London, 1970), pp. 161–174.

[38]For Delvāri, see Dabir-Moqaddam, 2014, ii, pp. 937–347.

[39]Cf. Delvāri, in which the imperfective prefix is not a possible host; see Geoffrey Haig and Fatemeh Nemati, "Clitics at the syntax-pragmatics interface: The case of Delvari pronominal clitics" paper presented at ICIL5, Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, 23–25 August 2013; at www.researchgate.net/profile/Fatemeh_Nemati, example 33.

The most frequent position of the AC is on the object. It can be the direct object (34, 35) or indirect object (36–39). It is possible that the object itself is a pronominal clitic that is hosted by a preposition, as in (14), (37) and (38). Note also (39a), where the AC is attached to a prepositional phrase with two prepositions.

(34) *čah=ša*   *rof*
     well=3SG.AC   sweep.PST
     "He swept the well".

(35) *hič=eš*   *no-got*
     none=3SG.AC   NEG-say.PST
     "He said nothing."

(36) *šir-ak-aku*   *māst=aš*   *hā-ke*
     milk–DIMIN–DEF   YOGURT=3SG.AC   PREV-do.PST
     "He turned the milk into yogurt".

(37) *yak* *tok-i*   *ow*   *zi-m=et*   *na-ki*
     one little-INDEF   water under=1SG.OBJ=2SG.AC   NEG-do.PST
     "You didn't put a bit of water under me".[40]

(38) *čah* *ow*   *si-š=eš*   *dah*
     well water PREP-3SG.OBJ=3SG.AC   give.PST
     "The well gave him water".

Agent clitics are obligatory; they may not be suspended in cases of same-subject verb sequences. In the following examples (b) and (c) are ungrammatical:

(39) a. *ow*   *borḁ=še*   *[zi*   *bon*   *mox]=eš*   *ke*
        water carry.PST=3SG.AC under below palm=3SG.AC do.PST
        "He carried the water [and] put [it] at the foot of the date palm".
     b. **ow bord zi bon mox=eš ke*
     c. **ow borḁ=še zi bon mox ke*

(40) a. *čāk=šun*   *za*   *o*   *delxeši=šun*   *ke*
        clap=3PL.AC hit.PST and   happiness=3PL.AC do.PST
        "They clapped and rejoiced".
     b. ** čāk=šun za o delxeši ke*
     c. ** čāk za o delxeši=šun ke*

Clitic agents occasionally appear with non-past forms: *be-xar=še* "that he eat". The limitation of this construction requires further investigation. The extension of ergativity to present tenses has sporadic evidence in the varieties spoken throughout Fārs, as well as in historical data.[41]

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[40]Āl-e Aḥmad, 1960, p. 83.
[41]See ʿA.-A. Ṣādeqi, "Guyeš-e qadim-e Kāzerun", *Maǰalle-ye zabānšenāsi,* 19/1 (2004), pp. 1–41; especially p. 5.

3.7. Be, become

Copulas are the same as personal endings, with some degree of variation in vowels; the past forms are built on the stem *bi–*. Worth mentioning is third person singular: its present form may appear as emphatic *he*, which is used in existential contexts (41, 42), but as the copula it appears as clitic, e.g., *či-e* "what is it?" *pos ke-ɣ-a* "whose son are you?" The third singular with a nasal (*-en*), the norm in many Iranian dialects of the south, has sporadic occurrence in Khargi data: *yak man vazn-eš=ene* "it weighs one maund", corresponding to Pers. *vazn dārad* or *vazn-aš ast*; the latter structure belongs to the category of possession (§3.8). Note that possession (§3.8) and modality (§3.9) can be constructed impersonally with "be" and the personal clitic as experiencer.

The verb "become" is built on the present stem *b–* and past stem *bi(r)–*. It takes the imperfective markers *a–* or *za–* (§3.3) and the preverb *vā–*. Examples: *ǰam abe* "gather ye", *tešne zabiri* "we would become thirsty", *vābe* "that it become; it became", *vābire* "it has become". More data is needed to arrive at a full paradigm for this verb.

3.8. Possession

The verb "be" in accompaniment of the pronominal clitics (§2.2) function in lieu of the verb "have".[42] In the data, the copula always follows the clitic directly, while the latter is attached to the end of the object clause. Note that in (45) the clitic is hosted by the indirect object clause *pi bu-t* "with your father" in order to stay next to the copula.

(41) *doxt-em   he*
     daughter-1SG   is
     "I have a daughter / daughters". (JM)

(42) *[ɣa=xrus-e   telā-i]-m   he*
     one=rooster-EZ   gold-INDEF–1SG   is
     "I have a golden rooster".

(43) *šā   [dovazzah   vazir]-eš   bid*
     king   12   minister-3SG   it.was
     "The king had twelve viziers".

(44) *dâr-ak-e   xoda   ahvâz-eš   ni*
     wood-DEF–EZ   god   voice-3SG   isn't
     "God's wood has no voice". (proverb, Amini)

(45) *bu-me   sisad   toman   [pi   bu-t]-eš   bid*
     father–1SG.POSS   300   toman   PREP   father–2SG.POSS–3SG   it.was
     "My father lent 300 *toman*s to your father".[43]

3.9. Modals

The verb "want" is expressed by two means, the stem *ve–* (< MPers. abāy-) and the impersonal *eskār*. They are interchangeable as far as the data reveals.

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[42]Persian-type "have" is used occasionally, e.g., *pil dār-ome* "I have money" (Āl-e Aḥmad, 1960, p. 107).
[43]Āl-e Aḥmad, 1960, p. 86. The literal meaning of the sentence is "My father had 300 *toman*s with your father".

This feature forms Isogloss 11 in Table 2. The forms employed in Southwest Iranian for "want to" are various but most are derived from MPers. xwāh- : xwāst- and abāy- : abāyist-. Both forms are discernible in the Kāzerun area: Pāpuni *om=xâs*, Nudāni *om=mies* (< °vest?), Dahleʾi *em=vâvi* (<°vist?) "I wanted".[44] In Lārestān the predominant form is *a-vi-* : *a-vess-*, but we also come across murky forms such as Banāruʾi *madâz* "I wanted".[45] The Garmsiri dialects of Kermān have both forms, e.g., the past forms are *veɣt-/vâst-* and *xâst-* in the Halilrud valley, *xâst-* and *wâst-* in Mināb, and *vâst-* in Bandar Abbas.[46] In coastal Fārs, near Kharg, there is Del. *xâ-*[47] while Dašti is reported to employ *televun-* : *televund-* to express "want".[48]

3.9.1

The present stem *ve-* and past stem *vess-*, also found in the vernaculars of Fārs and Lārestān, are preceded in Khargi by the imperfective marker (§3.3) and succeeded by pronominal clitics (§2.2); the conjugation for the three singular persons is *avem, avet, aveš,* neg. *neɣ va-me/-te/-še*. The dependent verb is subjunctive (§3.2):

(46) *a-ve-m   si   to   be-gu-ɣ-ah   song-e   tiɣār*
     IMPF-want-ISG   to   you   SJCT-say.PR-EPEN-ISG   story-EZ   past
     "I want to tell you the tale of the past". (JM)

3.9.2.

The impersonal *eskār* has an obscure origin. It may be formed on *vess* "must" (which serves also as the past stem of the verb "want"; §3.9.1) and the noun *kār* "deed, duty".[49] The only other dialect known to have it is Ardakāni, spoken in northern Fārs.[50] For the third person singular the forms are: present *eskār-eš-e* (with contracted form: *eskāš*), neg. *ne-š-eskār-e*, past *š-eskāre bi*. The pronominal clitic signifies the experiencer; thus the underlying meaning in (47) is "to me water is must". We may analyze the same sentence in light of the possession structure introduced in §3.8, resulting in the meaning "I *have* need for water". A corresponding form in Delvāri is displayed in (50). When *eskār* expresses modality, the verb appears in the subjunctive mood (48).

(47) *ow   eskār=em-e*
     water must=ISG.AC-is
     "I want water".[51]

(48) *eskār=em-e   sovār   ho-čin-ah*
     must=ISG.AC-is   mount   PRVB-sit.PR-ISG
     "I want to mount [a horse]".

[44]Salāmi, 2004–14, i-ii, Sentence 91.
[45]*Ibid*, V.
[46]Borjian, "Krman", 2017.
[47]Dabir-Moqaddam, 2014, ii, p. 913.
[48]M. Naɣzguy-Kohan, "Dastgāh-e feʿl dar guyeš-e dašti" (Verbal system in the Dašti dialect), in *Jašnnāme-ye doctor ʿAli-Ašraf-e Ṣādeqi*, (ed.) O. Ṭabibzāde (Tehran, 2003), pp. 61–69.
[49]Comparable form in earlier Persian: *ū-rā quvvat-i saxt ba-kār bāyist* "he needs a strong power" (Sijistānī, *Kašf al-Maḥjūb*, (ed.) H. Corbin [Tehran, 1949], p. 62).
[50]Windfuhr, 1999, Table 6.
[51]Āl-e Aḥmad, 1960, p. 107.

(49) *harče*   *xān*   *š=eskār-e*   *bi*   *az*   *kadxodā*
     whatever khan 3SG.AC=want-PP   it.was from headman
     "Whatever the khan had wanted from the village headman…" (JM)

Delvāri

(50) *una* *mi-xa=šu-en*   *dærs* *bo-xun-en*
     they IMPF-want.PR=3PL.AC-is lesson SBJC-read.PR-3PL
     "They want to study".[52]

4. Lexis

Khargi has retained a basic stock of Iranian words. There are idiosyncratic vocabularies relevant to traditional economy, especially fishing. Some verbs of high frequency lend themselves to typological comparison within Southwest Iranian.

4.1.

Counterintuitive to an Iranian language spoken in the Persian Gulf, the data display no preponderance of Arabic elements in the lexicon of Khargi, not any more than a typical Iranian vernacular,[53] notwithstanding frequent contacts with the communities encircling the Persian Gulf. Table 1 compares a list of Khargi words with Persian equivalents which are either Arabic loans or contain Arabic elements.

4.2.

song "tale" should be a contraction of *sānag, which is built on the Iranian root *sanh[54] and suffix *-aka (cf. §1.9). If so, the word is related to Parthian and Middle and New Persian *afsāna(g)* "story, tale", which carries the Old Iranian prefix *abi-. A possible related word is *vâsunak*, the wedding songs sang by the womenfolk in Shiraz.[55]

4.3.

tiove "shore" can be broken down into *ti* and *ove*. The latter consists of *ow* "water" (§1.5) and the suffix *-ak (§1.9). The component *ti* in Fārs has the meaning "end, tip", thus possibly related to Pers. *tah*, Tajik *tag*. There are however reasons to assume that *ti°* has a sense of direction or destination. It can be compared with the Judeo-Shirazi preposition *a-te* "in, into" (author's field notes). A medieval manuscript in Kāzeruni contains the proposition <ty> with possible directional sense, comparable to Pers. *az piš-e*.[56] Considering the fronting of back vowels (§1.8) in all these Fārs varieties, we may as well assume that *ti* < tu "in, inside". See also §4.4.

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[52]Dabir-Moqaddam, 2014, ii, p. 913.

[53]Cf. the mischaracterisation by an early twentieth century report: "The village [of Kharg] consists of about 120 houses inhabited by some 600 degenerate Arabs talking a mixture of Persian and Arabic. Seven-eighths of the population are Sunnis" (Government of India, *Military report on Persia*, 4 vols., [Simla, 1924]; available at www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100023505832.0x000030; Vol. IV, part 2, Fars, Gulf Ports, Yazd and Laristan, p. 36). Thanks to Dr Willem Floor for introducing this reference to me.

[54]Reflected in Av. *saŋh-*, cf. OPers. *θaⁿh-* "to declare, say" (Ḥasandust, 2014, §413).

[55]A. Faqiri, "Marāsem-e ʿarusi dar Širāz", *Honar o mardom*, ser. no. 162 (1976), pp. 76–80.

[56]Ṣādeqi, 2004, p. 8.; cf. *idem*, *Takvin-e zabān-e fārsi* (Tehran, 1978).

Table 1. Lexical comparison between Khargi and Persian

Khargi	Persian	Meaning	notes
māmi	*ʿamme*	"paternal aunt"	
beyg	*ʿarus*	"bride"	
beyɣak	*ʿarusak*	"doll"	with diminutive *-ak* (§1.9)
mox	*naxl*	"palm tree"	
čāk, šap	*kaf*	nominal element of the verb for "clap, applaud"	cf. *šappak* in some dialects of Fārs
gordāle	*qolve, kolye*	"kidney"	
ga	*vaqt*	"time"	as in *če-ga* "when?"
gah	*šarq*	"east"	likely from *pagāh* "dawn" or a related word, cf. Judeo-Shirazi *so:b-e gah* "early morning"
isă	*ḥālā*	"now"	
usā	*baʿd*	"then"	
gohr	*esterāḥat*	"rest, relax"	
gelāte	*sahm*	"share, portion"	
ǰume	*lebās*	"clothing"	
zād	*ɣazā*	"food"	
bal(ak), tak	*ḥaṣir*	"straw mat"	
ri-gošune	*hadye*	"gift"	probably from *ruy-gošāyande* "face-opener"
diār	*maʿruf, žāher*	"well-known, appearing"	
odi	*vožu*	"wudu, ablution"	likely from *āb-dast*, now lost in Persian, but may as well be a contraction of *wuḍū* with fronted vowel (§1.8)
bong	*azān*	"adhan, call to prayer"	from *bāng*, now lost in Persian
sāmān	*asbāb, asās*	"furniture"	cf. Urdu *sāmān* "luggage" (from Persian)
ɣār	*ǰazr*	"ebb"	
gure	*qollāb*	"hook"	
gim	*ṭoʿme*	"fish-bait"	
tiove	*sāḥel*	"shore"	see §4.3
song	*qesse*	"tale, story"	see §4.2

4.4.

Herte-boland is a toponym on the shore of the neighbouring Khārgu island (locally called *Andar-ovi*),[57] onto which the islanders used to unload their flocks for autumn graze (§6.2). It is probable that *herte* is made up of *ēr* "low" and °*te* "toward" (cf. *ti* in §4.3), leading to the toponymic outcome "low-toward-high", that is, the low-lying, sandy shores of the island rising toward the inner grasslands.

4.5.

toi, toɣ "one", as in *toi-šun* "one of them", *toi-band* for Pers. *yek-band* "uninterruptedly". It is possibly from the classifier *-tā*, used along numbers to count things in many Iranian languages. The final vowel can be the indefinite marker *–i* (§2.1).

4.6.

vo "with" is a comitative preposition (§1.5) equivalent to and cognate with Pers. *bā* (< MPers. *abāg*). It is included in Table 2, as Isogloss 10, for its contrastive stance against certain other Southwest varieties. Lārestāni has *xod*.[58] The prevalent comitative preposition in

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[57] *Andar-ovi* means "in the water". The strait between the Kharg and Khārgu islands is called Mow-xur, a toponym apparently consisting of *miān* "middle" and *xor, xowr* "estuary", a term prevalent along littoral Persian Gulf.
[58] See Borjian, "Kerman", 2017, Table 1, Isogloss 22.

Fārs proper is *poɣ* (< pay-e "following"), while there is *amrey* (< hamrā́he) in Davāni and *vā* in Kāzeruni Persian.[59]

4.7.

čin- : *čest-* "sit", as in *a-čin-e* "he sits", *ho-čin-ah* "that I sit", *ačeste* "they used to sit". The intriguing *č*-initial stems are also found in the coastal dialects of Fārs (Delvāri past stem *čes-* and Dašti *vâ-nax-* : *čezde-*) and in vernaculars around Kāzerun: Dahle'i and Banāfi *u-či-* : *čes-*, Davāni *hū-či-* : *hâ-yiss-*, Dusirāni *ho-ni-* : *čas-*.[60] Other Southwest languages have different forms, as shown in Table 2, Isogloss 12.[61] The Persian stems, *nešin-* : *nešast-*, derived from the proto-Iranian root **had* (PIE **sed*) "sit" and the prefix **ni-* "down", fused into **nišed* per the RUKI sound law.

Interestingly, the *č*-initial stems are prevalent in northern and western Central Plateau languages: *hā-čin-* : *hā-češt* and the likes.[62] Based solely on the Central Plateau evidence, Cheung[63] proposes, with reservation, the root **čaiH²* "to rest, sit down". There is however another possibility: since in all the languages having *č*-initial stems for the verb "sit" there is also an original prefix **ad-* (§3.3) as the imperfective formant,[64] it is likely that the *č*-initial stems are the outcomes of the fusion of **ad-* and *š*-initial stems.

4.8.

The verb "go" has a suppletive set of stems in Khargi: present stem in *be-ra-Ø* "go!" (< **raw-*), *be-š-a* "that he go", *a-š-e* "he goes" (< **šaw-*); past stem in *be-šo-Ø* "he went",[65] *šar-e* "he has gone" (< **šud-*), *raf^t* "he went" (< **raft-*). Interestingly, suppletive stems are also found in the nearby coastal vernaculars but in the opposite direction: Dašti *š-* : *raft-/-št-*, Delvāri *š-* : *raft-*.[66] See the comparative list in Isogloss 13, Table 2 for "I (will) go". Curiously the latter phrase is used as an identifier for the Lārestāni group, which is called *ačemi* by its neighbours (from Lāri *a-č-em* "I go"), and for the Garmsiri group of Kermān, which is amusingly characterised as a language of *aram–nâram*, contrasting to Persian *miravam–nemiravam* "I go–I don't go".

4.9.

amar-, the past stem of the verb "come", has the underlying form āmad- (§1.10). The Khargi form is thus typologically Persian, contrasting with the form *and-* used in Delvāri,[67] Dašti,[68] and most dialects of Fārs and Lārestān, and extends into Garmsir of Kermān.[69] The forms are listed in Table 2 under Isogloss 14.

[59]Salāmi, 2004–14, Sentences 41 and 56 in all volumes.
[60]*Ibid*, I, ii.
[61]Cf. Borjian, "Kerman", 2017, Isogloss 17.
[62]See Stilo, 2007, Figure 6; H. Borjian, "Kashan ix. The Median Dialects of Kashan", *Encyclopædia Iranica,* xvi/1 (2012), pp. 38–47, Isogloss 8.
[63]Johnny Cheung, *Etymological Dictionary of the Iranian Verb* (Leiden, 2007).
[64]For historical roots of this morpheme, see Stilo 2007, pp. 106–108.
[65]Past with *be-*, found also in Bušehri, Davāni, etc. in "go" is a reflex of the earlier perfective *be-* (Windfuhr, 1999).
[66]Dabir-Moqaddam, 2014, ii, pp. 915, 928.
[67]*Ibid*, ii, pp. 916, 929.
[68]Naɣzguy-Kohan, 2003, p. 388.
[69]Borjian, "Kerman", 2017, Isogloss 20.

4.10.

Khargi words characteristic to Fārs include: *dey* mother, *bard* "stone", *taš* "fire", *kom* "belly", *sur* "salty", *muri* "ant", *rešmiz* "termite", *komutar* "pigeon", *hā* "yes". Partial agreements and idiosyncrasies include the following.

> *gonz* "wasp" agrees with *gonǰ*, common in Fārs, vs. *be(n)j* and *bez* in central-eastern Fārs and *bâz* in Lārestān; cf. MPers. <wpc, wpz> *wabz*.
>
> *kač* "mouth" is common in Fārs along with *kâp*.
>
> *čil* "mouth" is also found in Arsanjān.
>
> *lus* "lip" is distinctive, vis-à-vis *low* and *lonǰ* in Fārs and *loč* and *livir* in Lārestān.
>
> *nāx* "throat, windpipe" compares with *naf* in Arsanjān and localities to its south (cf. Pers. *nāy*); otherwise, *goli/gori, xer, korkor, bot, boloru* in the rest of Fārs.
>
> *tih* "eye", glossed by J. Āl-e Aḥmad[70] with a question mark, compares well with North Lori *tia* and Bakhtiāri *teǰ*.[71] The main word for "eye" in Khargi is *čiš*.
>
> *nimešk* "butter", compares with *nemešk* in Evazi (Lārestān) and the Balochi dialect of Korosh spoken in Fārs; otherwise *kara* or the like prevails in the rest of Fārs.
>
> *širu* "he-turtle" and *hamas* "she-turtle" stand alone vs. *kâsapošt* and *kalapošt* in Fārs.

4.11.

Old borrowings from Arabic include *howdak* (< ḥawż) for Pers. *howz* "basin", *mazǰed* "mosque", *hadi* (<? ḥadīṯ) "word, speech" (§6.3), *ǰes* (< ǰisr) "bridge", *do(w)at* (< daʿwat "invite") "(wedding) feast" (also in Hindi). Note also *šambet* "Saturday", cf. earlier New Pers. *šanbad* < šabbaθ. The English loan *gelās* stands for Pers. *livān* "glass".

4.12.

Some features of Khargi persist in the current Persian variety spoken on the island: *mo* "I", *bid* "was", *pil* "money", *goroxt* "he fled", *diār oftād* (for Pers. *peydā šod*) "it appeared, emerged". A similar Persian variety was featured in the film *Tangsir* (1973), based in Bušehr.

5. Linguistic Position

To arrive at an approximate position of Khargi among Iranian languages, I have incorporated fourteen isoglosses, or features, that differentiate Khargi from some or all varieties spoken in Fārs and Kermān. The features are listed in Table 2. Features 1 to 3 are phonological, 4 to 9 grammatical, and 10 to 14 lexical. Isogloss 3, "louse", qualifies as lexical as well, but it is listed as phonological for the significant role it plays in the discussion on historical sound changes (§1.2).

In order to show a meaningful and concise comparison with kindred Southwest Iranian languages, besides Khargi seven languages or language groups are listed in Table 2: (1) The group of dialects spoken in coastal districts nearest to Kharg, that is, in Tangestān and Daš-testān, represented here by Delvāri and Dašti, which have received some scholarly atten-tion.[72] (2) A continuum of dialects traditionally called the Fārs dialects, designated in this

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[70]Āl-e Aḥmad, 1960, pp. 95, 99.

[71]Erik Anonby and Ashraf Asadi, *Bakhtiari Studies: Phonology, Text, Lexicon* (Uppsala, 2014).

[72]For Delvāri, see Dabir-Moqaddam, 2014; Haig and Nemati, 2013. For Dašti, see Naɣzguy-Kohan, 2003.

study as Fārs proper, spoken around Kāzerun and Shiraz.[73] (3) Another distinct group, the Lārestān dialects, spoken in a large area in the southeast of Fārs province.[74] (4) Adjacent to the latter, the vernaculars spoken in the vicinity of the Strait of Hormuz and extended northward to the Halilrud valley in southern Kermān, altogether designated as the Garmsiri dialects of Kermān.[75] (5) The Lori group of dialects, including Bakhtiāri, covering a large expanse in southwestern Iran.[76] (6) Persian, i.e., New Persian, which has undergone major evolution during a period well over a millennium, with grammatical features such as the imperfective marker *mi-* (Isogloss 5) having emerged and apparently been passed to other Iranian languages. The vast domain of Persian as lingua franca has resulted in local Persian forms, such as perfect with *-est-* (Isogloss 7), which is absent in mainstream Persian and thus received a negative mark in the table. (7) Middle Persian, the only language of the Middle Iranian period representing the Southwest branch of the family; during its long period of usage ergativity (Isogloss 4) eventually faded out. To this comparative table Medieval Shirazi would have been added had sufficient studies were available.

A glance at Table 2 reveals no obvious pattern as to what languages Khargi shares most features with. Isogloss 3, "louse", a weighty distinctive feature due to unlikelihood of being a loanword, must be a shared inheritance of Khargi with the languages of Fārs shown in the table; this feature at once excludes Lārestāni as a *genetic* kin to Khargi. Another major feature, the imperfect marker *a-* (Isogloss 5), allies Khargi, in an entirely opposite direction, with Lārestāni and other Garmsiri varieties to its east, versus the Fārs groups. But there might be an explanation for this: The morpheme *mi-* — having been grammaticalised in New Persian as late as the 12th century,[77] most likely in the northeastern province of Khorāsān, where the language emerged as a literally medium — extraordinarily quickly diffused southwestwardly, reached Fārs, seemingly its capital city Shiraz first, as attested in historical data, then continued infecting the vernaculars along the trade route via Kāzerun and Borāzjān down to the coast, but here the expansionist wave was offset by the waves of the Persian Gulf from reaching the Kharg island.

The idiosyncrasies of Khargi are found in several features, first and foremost in verbal endings (Isoglosses 8 and 9), pointing to a substratal variance not matched with any other known variety spoken in southern Iran. Outstanding are also the doublets in Isoglosses 5 and 11. The imperfective marker *ze-* (Isogloss 5) seems characteristic to the island so far as the data at hand reveal — another evidence of Khargi's alienage to the dialect continuum spoken along the adjacent coast, unless we consider Del. *hasey* as a possible relative. As to the other doublet (Isogloss 11), the word *eskār* "want" is only shared

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[73]These include the varieties of Somγān, Māsaram, Pāpun, Burenǰān, the Jewish community of Shiraz, etc. The documentation by Oscar Mann (*Die Tājīk-Mundarten der Provinz Fārs* [Berlin, 1909]), together with other data, received an extensive analytical-descriptive study by A. A. Kerimova ("Dialekty farsa", in *Osnovy Iranskogo Jazykoznannija* [Foundations of Iranian Linguistics], iii/1 [Moscow: Academy of Science, 1982], pp. 316–363) and a comparative study by Windfuhr (1999). A survey of this group is conducted by Salāmi (2004–14, i–ii). In Fārs proper there are also the well-assimilated dialect of Davān and old enclaves such as the Kurdish varieties of Kalāni and ʿAbduʾi.

[74]A survey of the area is found in Salāmi, 2004–14, iv–v.

[75]Borjian, "Kerman", 2017.

[76]Among many sources, see Sekandar Amanolahi and W. M. Thackston, *Tales from Luristān (Matalyā Lurissн): Tales, Fables and Folk Poetry from the Lur of Bālā-Garīvā* (Cambridge, 1987); Anonby and Asadi, 2014.

[77]See P. N. Xānlari, *Tārix-e zabān-e fārsi,* 3 vols. (Tehran, 1995), ii, p. 222.

with Ardakāni in northern Fārs, a variety otherwise unrelated to Khargi as expected from geographic remoteness. To the doublets we may add the triplet outcomes of Middle West Iranian*-ak in Khargi (§1.9).

A hint of contact-induced borrowing through maritime is rhotacism (Isogloss 1). Its occurrence in Khargi is limited to verb stems while it is in force in the languages spoken in islands and littoral and inland areas around the Strait of Hormuz and Bandar Abbas. Having a low density of its use, the borrower therefore should be Khargi and the lender the Garmsiri language group of Kermān, which are otherwise genetically and typologically distant from Khargi,[78] as revealed in Isoglosses 2 to 9 and 12 to 14.

The emerging taxonomy, heterogeneous as it is, is further muddled by the outcome the verb "come" (Isogloss 14) that bounds Khargi to Persian and Lori as opposed to all other major Southwest Iranian languages, may receive some justification when we turn our attention to the history of the island, which is long and convoluted and strikingly at odds with the small size and inhospitable climate of Kharg.

<center>***</center>

The archeological remains on Kharg are remarkable as they are witness to the island's significant maritime position between the Indian Ocean and Mesopotamia. The complexes of antiquity on Kharg include magnificent catacombs that carry architectural traits found also in the Fertile Crescent during the Seleucid and Arsacid dynastic rules. There are Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian traditions adduced from cemetery relics; a temple of likely Zoroastrian origin, later turned into a mosque; the remains of a well-equipped Christian monastery—all pointing to the importance of Kharg as a staging point for commercial vessels travelling between India and the Shatt al-Arab in late antiquity.[79]

Substantive historical data only start to emerge from the Fourteenth Century, when Kharg was reported to be under the control of the ruler of Hormuz. During the Dutch East India Company's commercial activity in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries a large fort was constructed on the northwest corner of Kharg, and the island attracted traders of various nations, leading to a sizable Christian community that reached 10,000 in number at its highest point.[80]

What do we make of this multifaceted, multi-ethnic setting to explain the development of the native Iranian language spoken on Kharg? The centuries long European maritime presence has left no significant linguistic trace. Had there been a Dutch-based creole formed on the island, it became extinct, as did the creoles which originated in Dutch colonies in the Americas and Southeast Asia. We find no converts that would have survived from Christian denominations possessing monasteries on the island. There is no trace of the Armenians who once had a sizable presence on Kharg in conjunction to both commerce and seminaries. Arab tribes akin to those living along the northern shores of the Persian Gulf have been reported residing also on Kharg at least since the Eighteenth Century, but we find no massive Arabic borrowing that would evince population mix. These

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[78]Borjian "Kerman", 2017.
[79]Floor and Potts, 2017, pp. 1–17.
[80]J. R. Perry, "Mir Muhanna and the Dutch: Patterns of piracy in the Persian Gulf", *Studia Iranica,* 2/1 (1973), pp. 79–95; especially p. 93.

Table 2. Selected Isoglosses[81]

	ref.	MPers.	Persian	Lori	Fārs proper	Fārs, coastal	**Khargi**	Lārestāni	Kermān Garmsiri
PHONOLOGICAL									
1 -d- > r	§1.10	–	–	–	–	– ?	**+**	–	+
2 *w-	§1.4	w	b	b	b	b?	***b***	b	g(w)
3 "louse"	§1.2	spiš	šepeš	šeš	šeš	šeš	***šoš***	heš	šVš
GRAMMATICAL									
4 ergativity	§3	+	–	–	+	+	**+**	+	+
5 impf. marker	§3.3	–	mi-	i-	mi-	mi-, h(as)ey	*ze-* ***a-***	a(t)-	a-
6 pr. prog. on past stem	§3.1	–	–	–	–		–	+	+
7 perfect with -est-	§3.4	+	–	–?	+	+	**+**	+	–
8 ending 1 sg.	§3.5	-ēm	-am	-am	-om, etc.	-am	*-ah*	-em	-om
9 ending 2sg.	§3.5	-ē	-i	-i	-e(γ)	-ey	*-a*	-eš	-i
LEXICAL									
10 "with"	§4.6	abāg	bā	vâ	poγ, etc.		***vā***	xod	vâ xwey
11 "want"	§3.9	xwāh-	xʷāh-	xâ-	ve- xâ-	xâ-	***ve-*** *eskâr*	vi-	vey- xâ
12 "sit", pr.	§4.7	nišin-	(ne)šin-	neš°	ni- či-	č°? nax-	***čin-***	šin-/ni-	nin(d)-
13 "I go"	§4.8	raw-, šud-	miravam	iraw-	mišam	mišom	*ašah*	ačem	aram
14 "come", past	§4.9	(ā)mad-	āmad-	umâd-	and-	and-	***amar-***	(h)ond-	hond-, yaht-

[81]Legend: Cells shaded gray carry features shared by other Southwest Iranian languages. Crosshatching marks features specific to Khargi.

all lead us to the conclusion that the native Iranian populations, notwithstanding their engagement in international commerce, lived their private lives in relative segregation from seemingly transitory alien communities. Subsequently, one may wish to know the roots of the Khargi aboriginals.

A key point in the sustainability of a human community on Kharg is water supply. Low precipitation supports little if any dry farming on the island. As said in the introduction, the underground water is brought from aquifers in the central foothills down to the fields by means of manmade subterranean channels called *kāriz*. As sustainable farming on Kharg had only been possible because kāriz assured a continuous water supply, the presence of a permanent community there cannot predate the spread of the kāriz, which came about under the Achaemenid rule in the Near East (550–330 BCE).[82] Supporting evidence in Kharg might be rock graffiti with a short piece of writing in Old Persian cuneiform, which was discovered during road construction in 2007. It reads, according to a preliminary decipherment, "The not irrigated land was happy [with] my bringing out [of water]".[83] Even though this reading has neither been confirmed nor disputed by other experts, it accords perfectly with the possible beginning of a permanent human settlement on the Kharg island.[84]

The Old Persian inscription, if authentic, suggests a Persian colonisation of the island under the Achaemenids. The Iranian dialect of those settlers can very well be the ancestor of Khargi, and there is no contradicting evidence to make this hypothesis implausible. At the same time the multidirectional agreements Khargi shows with various South Iranian language groups implies polygenesis. Given the divergent historical contexts of the island, this outcome is hardly surprising. Kharg's population was surely composed in part of refugees, sailors, and skilled labourers who settled on the island individually or in groups, and new settlers[85] would have added strata to the original language. This multilayered Iranian-speaking community sustained itself by means of highly specialised skills of agriculture, purling, and piloting sea commerce before the advent of petroleum industry which changed the sociolinguistic texture of the island.

[82]Xavier de Planhol, "Kāriz iv. Origin and Dissemination", *Encyclopædia Iranica,* xv/6 (2012), pp. 573–578.

[83]R. Bashash, "Newly found Old-Persian cuneiform inscription of Kharg Island deciphered", *CAIS: The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies* (University of London), 9 December 2007; at cais-soas.com/News/2007/December2007/09-12.htm.

[84]A strikingly similar development, albeit in an entirely different setting, can be found in Biābānak, in the fringes of the salt desert in central Iran. Its settlements served the caravan routes established ca. Eighth Century CE and sustained themselves on date palm plantation irrigated by the kāriz. Their languages display mixed traits similar to those found on the language of Kharg. See H. Borjian, "The Dialect of Khur", in *Mélanges d'ethnographie et de dialectologie irano-aryennes à la mémoire de Charles-Martin Kieffer* (Studia Iranica, Cahier 61), (ed.) M. De Chiara, A. V. Rossi, and D. Septfonds (Paris, 2018), pp. 77–98.

[85]An early twentieth century account by J. G. Lorimer describes the Kharg village consisting of 120 houses, with inhabitants being partly recent settlers from Bahrain, Mināb, and elsewhere, as well as tribesmen who gave conflicting accounts of their origin. See J. G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, 2 vols. (Calcutta, 1908), ii, p. 1020. The report also alludes to the resemblance between Khargi and Kumzari, which is not entirely incorrect as long as the affiliation of both languages to the same language family is concerned.

6. Texts

6.1. Introductory sentences of a song ("tale"):[86]

*to-i bid to-i nebid. yak pirezan-i bid. raf, mazǰed *raf. yak pil-i di-še. goč̌e beša māst bexare. bešo māst bexar-še. bāl-e sandiq nā-še. xošše bešo pey badbaxti-še. isa ke ama, māst-a gorbe xarde-še. hǐč-eš nogut. bešo yak tovar-i ovar-še o ǰam xoš-eš nah. gorbe ama ǰam pirezan xetti. pirezan tovar vāst-aš o bāl-e domb-e gorbe zad-še. gorba-š got, «domb-e rangin-rangin-am hāda!» pirezan-eš got, «bera māstak-am bia!» …*	There was one—there was no one (i.e., once upon a time). There was an old woman who went to a mosque. She saw some (lit. one) money. She said that she should go buy yogurt. She went and bought yogurt, put [it] on the box, and herself went after her business. When she returned, [a] cat had (lit. has) eaten the yogurt. She said nothing. She went and brought an axe and put [it] nearby. The cat came and slept next to the old woman. She took the axe and hit onto cat's tale. The cat said: Give my colourful tale! The old woman said: Go bring my yogurt!

6.2. Verses from Song-e Andarovi[87] (the tale of the Khārgu Island):[88]

tovesto bešo vaqt-e xišu bi	The summer gone—harvest time it was,
vaqt-e pah garte o gale mišu bi	the time for catching goats and flocks of ewe it was.
paha ǰam=šu vāke vo band tu gard-ešu	They would gather the goats—with bands on their neck.
sāheb-eš tiγār dam tiove bešo	The herders—in the past—would go to the seashore
paha zi=šu=ke ǰam Herte-boland	[Having crossed the sea] they would drop off the goats by Herte-Boland.[89]
hame vāz=šu=ke tu gard-ešo band …	The bands were opened [from] their necks all.
das tu xahk=šu ve^{rd} sange dar-amah	Digging the soil, fish[90] would come out;
bāl-e gure=š ne o xo-š xune amah	he would put [it] on the hook and himself came home.
hamik=šu nabi, dam tiove bešo	[When] they had no firewood they would go to the seaside.
kami dār š=āstah o pey gow bešo…	Picking up some wood and going after the cows …
u reh=eš vāstah bešo zi konah	He took his net and went under the cedar tree.
demesto ama, me č̌e hokonah?	"The winter came, what should I do?", [he would say].

6.3. Proverbs:[91]

âdam ke gošna-š=obi bard ham a-xo
A hungry person would eat stone as well.

ard-me bext=me, orbiz-me allâg=em kerde
I have sifted my flour, and hanged my sieve.

si kas be-merg ke si-t tow be-ger-e
Die for the one who would become feverish for you.

hadi râs az bečak ešnof-e
Hear true words from children!

nâdo ne a-don-e ne pors a-kon-e
The ignorant neither knows nor asks

[86]From Āl-e Aḥmad, 1960, pp. 81–82.
[87]From Možde, 2009, pp. 16–17.
[88]Khārgu is an uninhabited satellite island 4 km north of Kharg. Khārgu was used by the inhabitants of Kharg as pastureland in autumn. Khārgu is called Xwayrij in Arabic sources.
[89]Herte Boland was a place on the shores of the Khārgu island. See also §4.4.
[90]*Sange* is fish (pomadasys kaakan) native to Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. Možde (2009), p. 17 translates the word to "turtle" is unsound since we find *širu* "he-turtle" and *hamas* "she-turtle" in Al-e Ahmad, 1960, p. 103.
[91]From Amāni, 2015.

Abbreviations

:	a colon symbol separates present and past stems
AC	agent clitic
Av.	Avestan
Buš.	Bušehri
COP	copula
DEF	definite
Del.	Delvāri
DIMIN	diminutive
EPEN	epenthesis
EZ	eżāfe
IMPF	imperfect
INDEF	indefinite
Ir.	Iranian
JM	J. Možde
MPers.	Middle Persian
NEG	negative
OPers.	Old Persian
Pers.	Persian
PIE	proto–Indo–European
PIIr.	proto–Indo–Iranian
PIr.	proto–Iranian
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PP	past participle
SPR	present
PREF	prefix
PREV	preverb
PST	past
PTCP	participle
REF	reflexive
SBJ	subject
SBJV	subjunctive
SG	singular
V	any vowel

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