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Old and Middle Iranian Studies

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THE POSITION OF ZAZAKI AMONG WEST IRANIAN LANGUAGES

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Zazaki is a West Iranian language spoken by approximately two million people in south-eastern Anatolia, to the northwest of the Kurdish-speaking regions. Since the beginning of the twentieth century Zazaki has been accepted by linguists as a language in its own right,¹ no longer merely as a Kurdish dialect. Nevertheless until recently the Zaza people were generally held to be Kurds speaking a special dialect of Kurdish. Due to the oppressive policy of the Republic of Turkey towards minorities and their languages, until fifteen years ago there existed practically no indigenous Zazaki written literature, and so no means by which the Zaza people could find out anything about their own language and cultural identity.²

Only after the military coup d'état of 1980 and the subsequent emigration of Turkish leftists, many of them Kurds, to countries of Western Europe publication in Zazaki started in exile —then still under the label “Kurdish dialect”. In 1984 AYRE (“mill”), the first exclusively Zazaki journal, was published by the pioneer of Zaza nationalism Ebubekir Pamukcu (d. 1993). Considered an outsider among the Zaza, or even a “Turkish agent” trying to split off the Zaza from their Kurdish sister people, Pamukcu finally saw some fruits of his labour when in the early nineties a stronger awareness of their own cultural identity started to gain a foothold among the speakers of Zazaki. At present the further development of the Zazaki language and culture is endangered by the Turkish policy of “purifying” Eastern Anatolia of its indigenous Kurdish and Zaza population, as well as by the long-standing process of forced and unforced assimilation (to Turkish and Kurdish). As there is also religious and political discord even amongst the Zaza themselves, it is far from certain whether the “making of the Zaza nation” will reach a successful conclusion.

Although the history of Zazaki studies is already 140 years old, we still lack a comprehensive grammar of even one of its dialects or a reliable survey of its dialectology.³ During the last four years I have been preparing my PhD thesis, which is intended to supply this want. In what follows, I first give an outline of the historical phonology of Zazaki and then sketch a couple of morphological features—with the aim, in both cases, of determining more precisely

¹ See O. Mann, Mundarten der Zaza, hauptsächlich aus Siwerek und Kor (Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen III/4, ed. K. Hadank, Berlin 1932), p. 18.
² “Zaza” denotes the people, “Zazaki” their language. There are other names for this language used by its speakers, e.g. “Dimli” or “zonê mâ” (lit. “our language”), but “Zazaki” seems to have gained widest acceptance in scientific publications.
³ The nearest thing to a comprehensive grammar of a single Zazaki dialect published so far is T. L. Todd’s A Grammar of Dimli (also known as Zaza) (Ann Arbor 1985).
than has been done hitherto the position of Zazaki among the West Iranian languages and dialects. First attempts at achieving this aim have recently been made by Vahman and Asatryan.  

The West Iranian languages and dialects are generally divided into a Southern and a Northern group. Already in the Old Iranian period the sound-system of Old Persian (OP), the language of the Royal Achaemenian Court centered in southern Iran, showed specific historical changes opposing it to the more conservative Avestan language (Av.) spoken at about the same time. In the Middle Iranian period this division became more distinct as Middle Persian (MP), the successor to Old Persian spoken in southern Iran, showed further sound changes not shared by Parthian (Pth.), a still comparatively conservative language of northern Iran. Most of the dialectal distinctions attested in Old and Middle West Iranian, and some more in addition, are found in modern West Iranian languages and dialects as well. Although there are a couple of well-defined phonetic laws separating the southwest from the northwest, it must be said that there is, at all historical stages, a varying amount of interdialiectal borrowing which blurs the picture; furthermore, due to migrations in all periods, the SW/NW distinction does not for all languages coincide with the geographical reality of today. One major aim of this paper is to show that the NW/SW distinction is not clear-cut, but should rather be explained in terms of gradation, with each language attributed a position on a scale ranging from the "most northwestern" to the "most southwestern". To facilitate comprehension of this study, a simplified list of the most important West Iranian languages and dialect groups is given below, together with a sketch-map indicating their geographical location (fig. 1 opposite).

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5 E.g. "northwestern" Baluchi is spoken in the SE, but "southwestern" [N.-]Tātī in the NW.

6 The NW/SW dichotomy is also a simplification (and will be questioned below). The dialect grouping followed here corresponds in general to that proposed by P. Lecoq in his articles dealing with NWIr. dialects in R. Schmitt (ed.), *Compendium Linguarum Iranicarum* (Wiesbaden 1989) (= CLI). Some of the dialect groupings are more or less geographical and by no means uniform (esp. the CD); nevertheless this grouping seems to be a justifiable compromise for the moment.

Fig. 1. Sketch-map showing the geographical location of the most important West Iranian languages and dialect groups.
A glance at the oldest stratum of NW/SW-isoglosses attested already in Old Iranian shows unequivocally that Zazaki belongs to the NW group (which indeed has never been contested):

IE (Indo-European) *ḱ/*ḡ > NW s/z, SW θ (⟩ h) / d, cf.
Zaz. des “10” ~ Av. dasa, OP (in Elam.) *daθa (⟩ MP dah)
Zaz. zān- “to know” ~ Av. -zān-, OP dānā-
IE *kw/*gw > NW sp/zb, SW s/z, cf.
Zaz. (diaL. of Kulp) espe “dog”7 ~ “Median” spaka, OP *saka- (⟩ MP sag),
Zaz. ziwān “tongue” ~ Av. hizzuā-, OP hizān-
IE *tr/*tl > NW θr (⟩ hr), SW ç (⟩ s), cf.
Zaz. ḥître (< *h[ᵊ]ɾē) “3” ~ Av. ṭritiia-, OP ṭitiya-, both “3rd”

However not all languages figuring as NW in the lists given above behave in a straightforwardly “northwestern” way for all three phonetic changes. MacKenzie has shown that both Kurdish and Balūči, although basically NW, regularly show the SW change *tr/*tl > s.8

Coming now to the NW/SW-isoglosses attested in Middle Western Iranian but not yet in Old Iranian, the following four changes further confirm the NW character of Zazaki:

IE *d(h)w- > NW b-, SW d- (Av. and OP still dv-), cf.
Zaz. kē-ber “(house-)door” ~ Pth. bar, MP dar

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7 Unless otherwise stated, “Zazaki” means the dialects of Čermik-Siverek throughout this study. In most Zaz. dialects (except Kulp) “dog” = kuik; Kd. seg; in most other NW dialects isbe or the like.
8 Bal. pusag “son” < *puhra-ka-, NKd. xwās “barefoot” ~ Av. x'ā.aʊθra- “having one’s own footwear” (MacKenzie, The origins of Kurdish, TPS 1961, 68-86, pp. 76f.; cf. Zaz. werwāy, Gör. wirwā, both with the same metathesis < *wāwir < *xwāwəθra-). Here words other than the numeral for “3” have been chosen, as this has been borrowed by many NW dialects from Persian, i.e. in a SW form, e.g. Kd. sē “3”; CD (Kahakī) se “3”, but pūr “son” < *puhr < *puhra-; Casp. (Gil.) se “3”, and even pəsər “son”, but dārə “sickle” < *dāθra-. 
IE \(*\text{-}tw{\text{-}}{\text{-}}>\text{NW }{\text{-}}f/-w{\text{-}},\ SW {\text{-}}h{\text{-}} (\text{Av. }{\text{-}}\theta\beta{\text{-}}, \text{ OP }{\text{-}}\theta\nu{\text{-}}), \text{ cf.}

Zaz. čewres “forty” \sim Pth. \(*\text{çfarst, MP }\text{çehep}^9

IE \(*k(u)\text{pal}>{\text{NW } (j >)}{\text{ř}}, \ SW z^{10} (\text{Av.}, \OP \text{ç}), \text{ cf.}

Zaz. joy “from/of him/her”\text{"11} \sim Pth. až, MP az “from”

IE \(*g(u)(h)\text{pal}>{\text{NW } (j >)}{\text{ř}}, \ SW z (\text{Av.}, \OP j), \text{ cf.}

Zaz. jin-ēk “woman” \sim Pth. žan, MP zan

Zaz. arjān “cheap” \sim Pth. aržān, MP arzān

As in the case of \(*tr{\text{/}t}l > s \text{(see above)}, \text{ Kurdish and, maybe, Balūči are the only NW dialects which show the SW development \(*d(h)w{\text{-}}>d{\text{-}.12 For \(*k(u)\text{pal}{\text{/}g(u)(h)\text{pal} > NW } (j >)}{\text{ř}}, \ SW z \text{ (where Kd. and Bal. show NW ř)}, \text{ Zazaki (with the affricate } j) \text{ seems to have preserved a phonetically older stage of development than does Parthian with the fricative ř}. \text{ However, } j \text{ and ř seem to be distributed at random among the NW dialects.13}

When we come to the next sound change, the situation becomes a little more complicated:

IE \(*y{\text{-}}>\text{NW } y{-}, \ SW j{-} \text{ (Av.}, \OP y{-}), \text{ cf.}

Zaz. jīyā “separate” \sim Pth. yuð, MP jud(āg)

Zaz. jôw “barley” \sim (Av. yauua{-}), MP jw

Zaz. j(uw)ā{-}mērd \text{"14} “young man” \sim Pth. yuwān, MP juwān, both “young”

Zazaki has SW j{-}, while Gōrānī, Āzārī (Ker.) and sporadically some Central Dialects (Sīvandī, Vafsī, Nā‘īnī) have, like Parthian, kept original y{-}. Even if Āzārī might be deleted from the list, as its initial y{-} could be the result of a secondary change (j > y as in yan “woman”,

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9 The Pth. word occurs only once (cfr(s)lf, M 4912 v 4) and is only partly legible, but -f- is certain; cf. also Av. čaθβar sattr. The Zaz. numeral “four”, čihār, is apparently a SW borrowing, but Gōrānī and Āzārī (Chālī), both ědār, have preserved traces of the Ofr. labial w. Pth. -f- and (modern dialects) -u/-w- seem to be independent developments of -tw-.

10 Except in anlaut, where both NW and SW have kept č.

11 In some Čermik-Siverhek dialects, joy occurs in certain expressions such as qandē joy “therefore”, apparently deriving from a combination of *hacā (whence MP az and Pth. až) with some form of the demonstrative *awa- (possibly a generalized descendant of the genitive *awahya). In other dialects, the combination of *hacā with *awa- has built (or retained) a more complete paradigm denoting some (mostly genitive) “oblique” functions of the third person pronoun, e.g. in Eğil-jējējēnī (“of him/her/Them”) (in Pirān, *č > ř in: žeylēzēnī).

12 Professor Elfenbein (private communication) kindly informs me that, while most Bal. dialects have d- in dar “door” and dīgar “other” (both borrowed from Persian?), in EHB dialects there occurs a poetical ipti, probably from *dwitiya- (cf. Pth. bid “other”).

13 Some Senn. and Central dialects have j{-}: Casp. (Gil.) medially -j- (ja “from” < *hacā), but in anlaut z{-} (zan- “to beat” < *jan{-}); Āz. (Ker., but not StTātī) regularly ř, but in anlaut y{-} < j- (yan “woman”, yare “to beat”).

14 Some Alevi (i.e. northern) dialects of Zazaki have juwāmērd, all others jāmērd.
see above), and although it cannot be ruled out that Zazaki has borrowed all these words with initial ū-, Zazaki here seems to be opposed to (NW) Parthian, Görānī and Āzarī. In the next isogloss:

IE *sw- > NW wx- (> w-), SW xw- (> x[w]-) (Av. huu-., x̂-., OP huv-), cf. 
Zaz. wer- “to eat”  ~ Pth. wxar-, MP xwar-,

the actual pronunciation of Pth. wx- is not clear; rather than [wx] it was probably pronounced as “devoiced w”, like e.g. wh- in early modern English.\(^{15}\) If we take some combination of w and h as a NW starting-point, two different NW developments seem to have taken place: the deletion of the labial element w, leading to Āz./Tāl. h- (hār- “to eat”), or the deletion of the aspirate, yielding w- or v- (Zaz. wer-, Gör. wār-, Bal. vār-).\(^{16}\) Both developments seem to be equally “far away” from the SW development to x(w)-.

The development of OIr. *rd and *rz is more difficult to understand than any of the sound-changes considered so far, and maybe cannot yet be reduced to a common denominator from the linguistic material available.\(^{17}\) For the two well-known examples *zrd- “heart” and √hrz “to let, allow” in Pth. and MP, Pth. has (as usual) preserved the OIr. consonants, while MP has changed both *rd and *rz to simple l:

OIr. *-rd/*-rz (< IE *-rd(h), *-ld(h) / *-rg(h), *-lg(h)) > NW -rð/-rz, SW -l, cf.
Pth. zirð “heart”  ~ MP dil (Av. zărāḍ-)
Pth. hirz- “to let, allow”  ~ MP hil- (Av. hărāz-)

Looking at rd not in the zero-grade (with IE vocalic r) but in the guna-grade complicates the picture. Pth., together with Manichaean MP, shows simple r as against Zoroastrian MP l, and both Pth. and MP lengthen the short a (perhaps as compensation for the lost d):\(^ {18}\)

OIr. *rd > NW r, SW r/l (Man./Zor.), cf.
Pth. ārag “side”  ~ MP (Man./Zor.) ārag/ālag (Av. arādā-)
InscrPth. sārār “leader”  ~ MP (M./Z.) sērār/sālār (*sara-dāra-)
Pth. wār- “to grow, rejoice”\(^ {19}\)  ~ MP (M./Z.) wār/-wāl- (√wrd)

\(^{15}\) See MacKenzie, Notes on the transcription of Pahlavi, BSOAS 30 (1967), 17-29, p. 26 n. 29.

\(^{16}\) In some isolated Central dialects, e.g. Sivandī and Xūrī, *xw- has yielded f- (Xī./Sī. fin “blood”, fār- “to eat”) (P. Lecoq, Le dialecte de Sivand, Wiesbaden 1979; B. Farahvašī, Vāzenāme-ye Xūrī, Tehran 2535).

\(^{17}\) See already MacKenzie, “The origins of Kurdish”, p. 77: “The outcome of the groups rd and rz in the various non-Persian dialects is far from certain, words having been borrowed in every direction”.


\(^{19}\) It is hardly possible to interpret all these Pth. forms as Persian loans. Another prominent r/l-case without an attested Pth. equivalent (but with NW equivalents in modern dialects, see below) is the word for “year”, MP (M./Z.) sār/sāl (Av. sərād-).
A case “in between” is the word for “rose”, showing guna-grade in Pth., but zero-grade in MP:

Pth. wâr “flower” (< *warda-) ~ MP (Z.) gul (< *wûda-)

In modern Iranian, the distinction between zero-grade and guna-grade has disappeared. Only the NW languages Zazaki, Görânî, Āzarî and Talešî show clearly regular “northern” developments of rd and rz (which in the case of rd means the loss of d):

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olr. *rd</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>ĕ</td>
<td>l, r (?)</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olr. *rz</td>
<td>rz</td>
<td>rz</td>
<td>(r)z</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples (borrowings are indicated by a following +):

**rd**

“heart” del+/diļ+21 zeñî zil, diļ+ del diļ+ del
“year” sor (< *sâr) señî săł săł săł22

**rz**

“high” belant+/barz berz barz boland bilind boland
“spleen” ?/siparz serpez (*-perz) sipiļ+ seperz+ sipiļ seporz+23
“to let, allow” harz-? erz-24 âz- -hl- hêl- hel-

In all Āz., Tāl., Zaz. and Gör. *rd is reduced to r, in the case of Zazaki alone to a strong “trilled” ĕ phonologically different from plain r. In Zaz., unlike Āz. and Tāl., the change of *rd to ĕ causes no compensatory lengthening of a (as can be seen in the forms for “year”). In Āz., Tāl. and Zaz. *rz remains unchanged, as basically in Gör., which however in some words shows velarized l beside r as outcome of *rd.

In the other NW dialects some sound-changes are difficult to account for, e.g. Balûčî burz “high” but il- “to let”. Dialects of the Semnānî group have rz in some words (Semn. seperz could be a Pers. loan) but l in others, such as the verbs “to rub” (mâl-) and “to let, allow” (-hl-), which are unlikely to be loans.25 The Kurdish “NW” examples here are few and, as it has been

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20 In NKurd. l is replaced by l, in some CKurd. dialects (e.g. in Arbil) by r.
21 Del must be a SW loan in view of d < *g(h) (see above). Gör. has zil (beside diļ) “heart”, but preverb hur- (~ Av. arxdva-), see MacKenzie, “The origins of Kurdish”, 1477.
22 The word for “rose” quoted above provides no isogloss here, as all NW dialects have borrowed SW forms in -l-l (Āz./Tāl. vel/gul, Zaz. vil/ik), Gör. wilî, Semn. vel, gol, Kd. gut; note the forms with w-/y- borrowed before the SW change w- > g-/. The Iranian word for “rose”, in its still earlier (or NW) form ward, was borrowed by Armenian and Arabic as well.
23 This is a NW loan, but cf. ZorMP spul “id.”.
24 Zaz. erz- [change of meaning] > “to throw”; Gör. âz- with loss of r before z as in mûz “spine” < *marz.
25 Sangesari alone has -rz- in harz- “to let” against all other Semn. dialects. Amongst other things (e.g. š as outcome of IE *tr/*tr), this led P. Lecoq (Le classement des langues indo-aryennes occidentales, in C.-H. de
shown that Kurdish has undergone considerable substratum influence by Görānī, can probably be explained as loans. The majority of the CD (left out above) seem to have regular l from both rd and rz, but the most northern group of CD around Vafs, inclining towards the Āzārī group, might be an exception. Altogether it might be concluded that the “NW” outcomes of *rd/*rz in all these dialects—except Sangesari, some northern CD and maybe Balūcī—could be due to loans and that these dialect groups do not regularly share the NW developments of *rd/*rz.

The isoglosses considered so far may conveniently—and in a simplified form, without question marks—be summarized in the following diagram (where it should be noted that the isoglosses are not in the same order as introduced above):

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*k/*g</td>
<td>s/z</td>
<td>s/z</td>
<td>s/z</td>
<td>s/z</td>
<td>s/z</td>
<td>s/z</td>
<td>s/z</td>
<td>s/z</td>
<td>h/d</td>
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<td>-ž-</td>
<td>-ž-</td>
<td>-j-</td>
<td>-ž-</td>
<td>j,ž</td>
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<td>j,ž,ž</td>
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<td>-ž-</td>
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<td>ž̄</td>
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<td>esp</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>esb</td>
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<td>s</td>
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<td>hr</td>
<td>(ya)r</td>
<td>(h)r</td>
<td>(hī)r</td>
<td>h(*r)</td>
<td>30 (h)r</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
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<tr>
<td>*d(h)w</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
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<td>b</td>
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<td>d(?)</td>
<td>d</td>
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<tr>
<td>(OIr.) *rd/*rz</td>
<td>r(š)/rz</td>
<td>1,r/rz</td>
<td>t/rz</td>
<td>ř/tz</td>
<td>ř/rz</td>
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<td>l/l</td>
<td>l/l(rz)</td>
<td>l/l(ř)</td>
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<td>*sw</td>
<td>wx</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>h</td>
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<td>x(u)</td>
<td>x(u),f</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>x(w)</td>
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<td>*lw</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>w</td>
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<td>*y-</td>
<td>y-</td>
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<td>j-</td>
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<td>j-</td>
<td>j- (y-)</td>
<td>j-</td>
<td>j-</td>
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</tbody>
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27 E.g. Vafsī esbeza, Āštīyānī esborz, both “spleen” (Moqaddam, Gīyešā ..., p. 32).

28 Professor Elfenbein, who kindly provided me with more examples of *rd/*rz in Bal., e.g. zirde (poetical, as against colloquial dil) “heart”, barzī “saddle-bag” (cf. Av. barzīš - “cushion”), but pulang (< *prda-) “mountain cat”, ispulk “spleen”, favours rz as the “true Balūcī” development of *rz.

29 *g(h)w* is absent from this list, as its SW outcome without -w- is attested only in Old Persian (hīzan- or hazān-); the modern dialects all showing the NW form zabān, zuwān or the like, it provides no isogloss. The h- of Xūrī ḥezūn (Farahvašī, Vāženāme-ye Xūrī, p. 1) seems to be prothetic, from *ezwān, rather than etymological.

30 In the Tālešī dialects of today, the word for “three” is se. Miller, *Talyshskij jazyk*, p. 228, however quotes (from an early work of de Morgan) hai “three”, which can be explained as *hrai.
Although this diagram is still very provisional and has gaps—some of which may never be filled—it justifies, in my opinion, the assumption of a “scale of northerness” with Parthian at its positive and the SW languages of today at its negative pole. There is a northern belt of linguistically “northern” languages from Zazaki in the west through Görâni, Āzârî, Talešî and the Central Dialects to Gilâki and Semnâni in the east, interrupted and in fact sometimes reduced to small linguistic islands today by (from west to east) Kurdish, Azeri-Turkish and Persian. As we know that the two centres of expansion of New Persian were Khorâsân and Fârs, it is not surprising that the three dialect groups geographically closest to these regions—viz. the Central, the Caspian and the Semnâni dialects—show less northern traits than do Zaz., Gör., Āz. and Tâl., though more than Kurdish and Balûčî, which apparently separated from the rest of NW Iranian earlier than the other languages.

In order to define more exactly the position of Zazaki within West Iranian it is appropriate now to turn to morphology. Like most other NW languages of the “northern belt”, the dialects of Zazaki show a two-case system in the nouns, with an oblique ending generally going back to the Old Iranian genitive ending *-ahya. In Zazaki this oblique ending -i is only attached to masculines, there being no general feminine oblique ending. But in most Čermik-Siverek dialects of Zazaki there is an ending -(e)r sporadically attached to feminine nouns in the oblique case. Its origin is the old ending *-ar of relationship terms. Zazaki -(e)r, although actually denoting the oblique case of relationship terms of both genders, must in recent times have started spreading to feminines in general, thus making up for the want of a general ending of the feminine oblique.\textsuperscript{31}

\begin{align*}
\text{Zaz. (CS):} & \quad \text{pî “father”, obl. pêr (< *piyer < *pidar < *pitara)} \\
& \quad \text{mâ(y) “mother”, obl. mâr (< ... < *mêtara)} \quad \text{(fem., +anim., +rel.)} \\
& \quad \rightarrow \text{jînêk “woman”, obl. jînéker} \quad \text{(fem., +anim., -rel.)} \\
& \quad \rightarrow \text{žîp “jeep”, obl. žîper} \quad \text{(fem., -anim., -rel.)}
\end{align*}

In accordance with its origin, in the Zazaki texts I examined while working on my PhD thesis, -(e)r is much more frequently attached to animate than to inanimate feminine nouns: among the former 53\% can take the oblique ending -(e)r, among the latter only 14\%. An oblique suffix -r is attested in other dialects of the “northern belt” as well. In Görâni it is extinct; but in Talešî and Semnâni it still exists in its “etymologically correct” usage, attached only to the oblique case of relationship terms:

\begin{align*}
\text{Tâl. (Mâsûle):} & \quad \text{p̄a “father”, obl. p̄ar} \\
& \quad \text{mâ “mother”, obl. mōr} \\
\text{Semnâni:} & \quad \text{pîa “father”, obl. pīar} \\
& \quad \text{bāre “brother”, obl. bār̄ar}
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{31} In some dialects bordering to the Čermik-Siverek region, -(e)r is confined to relationship terms only. In other dialects, e.g. that of Bingöl, there exists no oblique ending -(e)r.
Interestingly, in some STâtî dialects of Āzarî -r has spread from relationship terms, in a way comparable to that of Zazaki, not to feminine nouns but to other nouns denoting human beings:

Āzarî (STâtî: Câlî):  
\[\text{pia “father”, obl. piar} \]  
\[\text{teta “daughter”, obl. tetar} \]  
\[\rightarrow \text{cupun “shepherd”, obl. cupunar} \]  
(human, +related)  
(human, -related)

When one looks for a historical explanation for this, the first thing to observe is that neither MP nor Pth. show any general ending for the oblique singular of nouns. But Sims-Williams and Skjarvø have shown some years ago\(^{32}\) that the suffix \(-r\) in some varieties of MP serves to mark the oblique case of relationship terms (in much the same way as in Tâl. and Semn., see above). Surprisingly, on the other hand, there seems to be no oblique form for relationship terms in Parthian. Although Pth. \textit{pidar} “father”, as the only such term, still shows the old \(r\)-ending, this is a “frozen” form generalized for all possible case functions (just like \textit{pedar} “father” in New Persian):

\[\text{MP:} \quad \text{pid “father”, obl. pidar; mād “mother”, obl. mādar} \]  
\[\text{Pth.:} \quad \text{pidar “father” (= obl., rect.); mād “mother” (= obl., rect.)} \]  
\[\text{duxt “daughter” (= obl., rect.)}^{33}\]

This leads to a still unanswered question of West Iranian dialectology: why Parthian, spoken nearly 2000 years ago, should be in its noun morphology more modern than any of the closely-related NW dialects spoken today.

The second morphological feature which I shall investigate here is the formation of present stems in modern West Iranian. Henning stated already 40 years ago that Zazaki, Tâleşi and some Āzarî, Semnâni and Caspian dialects derive their present stem from the old present participle ending in *-\textit{ant-}.\(^{34}\) Lecoq already used this isogloss for his study,\(^{35}\) and now I shall take a fresh look at it. The formation of present stems in these dialects “works” as indicated in the following list:


\(^{33}\) There are some “extremely uncommon” Pth. counter-examples, e.g. \textit{pid “father”}; Sims-Williams, \textit{loc. cit.}, p. 171, concludes that “it would seem likely that the forms \textit{pidar ...} and \textit{duxt (...) were generalized in Parthian at an early date”.

\(^{34}\) The ancient language of Azerbaijan, \textit{TPS} 1954, 157-77, p. 175.

\(^{35}\) “Le classement des langues indo-aryennes occidentales”, p. 258.
Görani is absent at first sight, but Lecoq\textsuperscript{36} saw that the hitherto mysterious Görani imperfect infix -en- can be explained by the same “thème duratif du présent” -nt-.\textsuperscript{37} This explanation becomes all the more probable as the Gör. imperfect is built from the present stem, unlike the other past tenses built from the past stem. A possible counter-argument to this explanation would be the Zazaki imperfect suffix -ē(n), if this should be linked to Gör. -en-.\textsuperscript{38} The forms listed above still present some difficulties, e.g. the reduction of nd to n in some dialects and to d in others, or the fact that Āz. and Tāl. form the present tense from the past stem for some verbs (e.g. “come” and “say”). But altogether, the occurrence of this formation in at least one dialect of each group points to a common origin. Now, if one compares WIr. present tense formations with *-nt- (left column) to those without *-nt- (right column, all forms meaning “I go”):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zaz. (CS)</th>
<th>Āz. (Harz.)</th>
<th>Tāl. (Lenk.)</th>
<th>Semn. (Aft.)</th>
<th>Gil. (Lāh.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;to go&quot;</td>
<td>ūi-n-</td>
<td>ūe-nd-</td>
<td>ūe-d-</td>
<td>ūe-nn-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;to come&quot;</td>
<td>ūe-n-</td>
<td>ūāmā-nd-</td>
<td>ūome-d-</td>
<td>ūā-nn-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;to say&quot;</td>
<td>ūvā-n-</td>
<td>ūōt-n-</td>
<td>ūvot-ed-</td>
<td>ūvā-nn-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;to see&quot;</td>
<td>ūvin-en-</td>
<td>ūvin-n-</td>
<td>ūvin-d-</td>
<td>(?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;to do&quot;</td>
<td>ūke-n-</td>
<td>ūkō-nd-</td>
<td>ūkerd-ed-</td>
<td>ūke-n-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

one thing becomes apparent immediately. Those dialects which have not retained and further developed the -nt-participle have used other means to form the present tense, by attaching mū-, di-, et- or the like as modal prefix to the present stem. There are even dialects belonging to one of the NW groups listed in the left column which employ a modal prefix, e.g.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>min mi-l-u</td>
<td>a(z) me-še-m</td>
<td>a ma-š-ūn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

but they have modal prefix instead of *-nt- and thus further confirm the assumption that each dialect has chosen either of two ways to build up its present stem. The isogloss separating *-nt-

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., en passant and without references.


\textsuperscript{38} Zaz. -ēn (or -ē in some dialects), invariably attached to the past stem, forms the imperfect for all persons and numbers (e.g. Zaz. [dial. of Kur] kewt-ēn “[I, you ...] fell [several times]”).
formations from those with prefix does not exactly correspond to the SW/NW distinction. This isogloss could therefore be considered less ancient than the phonological isoglosses discussed above, but as it affects a central area of verb formation in which borrowing usually plays no role, it is nevertheless significant. Altogether, in the formation of the present tense in modern West Iranian, two perfectly complementary morphological strategies can be witnessed, one of which, the present participle in *-nt-, is confined to almost the same groups of NW dialects as those which have preserved the "relationship-r" as oblique marker.

Combining the phonological and the morphological evidence, the findings arrived at so far can be summarized in the following manner:

1. The study of historical phonology shows that Zazaki, besides Göranî, Āzarî and Tâleštî, figures among the "most northern" of the WIranian dialects of today, but in "northerness", if "northern" is understood as "different from (SW) Persian", Zazaki ranks after Göranî and Āzarî, owing to the development of initial *y-.

2. A number of significant morphological isoglosses, two of which (relationship *-ar, present tense in *-nt) have been discussed in some detail, point to a similar northern belt of NW dialects, but with Göranî more at the periphery, and the Semnânî group more in the centre of "northerness".

3. Both historical phonology and morphology detach Kurdish and Balûčî (and to a lesser degree the heterogeneous Central Dialects) from the rest of the NW. The features separating Göranî from the "core of northerness" may be attributed to Kurdish influence.

If one now tries to translate this summary into a picture of historical migrations, problematical as this may always be, the following sketch emerges:

1. In ancient times (late 2nd millennium B.C. approx.) there was a continuum of closely related NWIr. dialects spoken from the northwest to the northeast of present Iran, distinct from the SWIr. dialects spoken further south.

2. Later, but still in pre-Achaemenian times, the forefathers of the (NW) Kurds and Balûčs of today were the first to split off to move towards the south and southeast respectively. Possibly Zazaki may still have been spoken at this period around the ancient region of Daylam south of the Caspian Sea, if the name Dimlî (< *Daylami?), as Zazaki is called today by speakers in some parts of its area, permits us to make this connection.

3. Centuries later, maybe during the rise of the Parthians and the accompanying westward movement of various (mostly NW) tribes from the ancient province of Parthia, the Göran and

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39 There is even a SW dialect combining a modal prefix with *-nt-, if -en- in NBaškardi a-kerdén-om "I am doing" (P. O. Skjærvø in CLI, p. 367) should be so understood.

40 The usage of modal prefixes with m- in Gör. (Awr.), Āz. (STatî: Tâk.) and Semn. (see above, as compared to dî-, a- etc. in "less NW" dialects) raises the question whether these are recent Persian borrowings. The variety of these prefixes in the various dialects (e.g. Semn. mî-, mâ-, ma-), and the fact that in Gör. one would rather expect the borrowing (if any) to be from Kd. (a-), would speak against this.
Zaza tribes made their home in northeastern Mesopotamia, forming the furthest western links in a chain of NWIr. peoples stretching as far as Transoxania.

4. Centuries later, maybe during the Sasanian period, all NW dialects started to be gradually influenced and superseded by (Middle) Persian (most of all the Central Dialects, being closest to Fārs, the centre of MP); in the west Zazaki was driven more to the north and northwest by Kurdish, but still remained in contact with the northern chain of NW dialects (Āz.-Tāl.-Sēnn.-[Casp.]) for some time. Gōrānī, on the other hand, soon found itself surrounded by a sea of Kurdish, in which it would eventually end up reduced to small language islands, having in its turn exerted a considerable influence on southern and central Kurdish dialects.41

It goes without saying that the time schedule presented here is purely conjectural and probably will always remain so, as there is no extralinguistic evidence which may help to place these movements more exactly in time and place. But it is hoped that this picture at least serves to illustrate the hypotheses proposed earlier in this paper and to make them more easily comprehensible.

**APPENDIX: SOME INTERESTING ZAZAKI WORDS**42

ādir “fire”: only NW dialect preserving dental d from the *t of *ātara-; other NW dialects have forms like Gör. (Awr.) er, Vafsī āyr, or like Tāl. ots̄š borrowed from NP āteš < MP ātāxš < *ātṛša-; Kd. has āgīr. As intervocalic *t- usually yields y in Zazaki (cf. Zaz. keye in n. 42), the d of ādir might be not etymological but hiatus-deleting, as the g in Kd. āgīr also seems to be.

āqil-hend “blind” (“mind-blind”) (dial. of Kulp, other Zaz. dialects have kōr) ~ Pth. hand, Av. anda-; Pašto rūnd “id.”, if < *ṛta-anda-,43 maybe shows a “reinforcing” component *ṛtā-comparable to āqil.44

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41 As shown by MacKenzie in “The origins of Kurdish” (summary on p. 85). The westward movement of Turcophone tribes from the NE, travelling along exactly the same route as that of the Parthians centuries before and eventually Turcizing the whole of the ancient province of Āzarbāyjān, must already have started during the same period.

42 The vocabulary of Zazaki contains many archaic Iranian lexemes not extant in NP, but most of them are etymologically transparent, e.g. keynek “girl” (cf. Av. kainīā-, MP kanī(z)ag), key(e) “house” (< *kata-ka- to Ṋkan “to dig”, cf. Sogd. kanθ “city”, MP kadag “house”, NP kad-xodā “house-master”), or at least attested in other Wlr. languages, e.g. berm- “to weep” (~ Pth. brasm- “id.”, cf. Skt. brham- “to flicker”? More words are given in the two articles by Vahman/Asatrian and Asatrian mentioned above, p. 164 n. 4). In the following, I confine myself to some less transparent words not dealt with, or not satisfactorily dealt with, so far. Whenever I here speak of Zazaki as the only NW dialect preserving a certain NW trait, this is done with the reservation that for some dialects our sources are still quite limited.


āwirā “pregnant”: only modern NW dialect with NW -r- from the *-hr- of *ā-puṭra-
(tanū)- (cf. MP ābus(tan), āhestan).

āyām “weather” ~ Pth. āyām, Sogd. niyām, Xwar. ɣm, all “time”, Av. gāman- “step (for
measuring)”. For the semantic development, cf. Italian tempo “time; weather” < Latin tempus
“time”; for y < g, cf. Zaz. āyā “awake” (MP āgāh), Zaz. (Alevi) niyā-dāyiš “to observe” (MP
nigāh “look”).

derg “long”: only NW dialect to preserve -g (~ Av. darāga-, MP dagr “long” [> NP dīr,
with change of meaning, “late”]; Tāl. darōz and Āz. [Harz.] dōrōz “long” are borrowed from
NP derāz “id.”). After -r-, g is also preserved in Zaz. mergi (fem.) “meadow, pasture” (Av.
marzā-) (not to be confounded with Zaz. merg (masc.) “death” ~ MP marg). After a vowel,
*g > Zaz. y (see āyām above) or w (as in rew “soon” ~ Av. rayav-, Pth. ray “swift”, cf. Āz.
[Ker.] rav “soon”).

dew “village”: only modern dialect (besides STāṭi doh, dōh)45 still showing a reflex of the
old ending -u (OIr. *daḥyu- “land” > *daṃw > dew) (cf. NP deh, Āz. [Ker.] + Tāl. dī “village”).

gānī “necessary” (dial. of Pirān) ~ Pth. gawānīg; in other NW dialects g(u)- means “to
want” and/or “to have to” (e.g. Semn. a mā-g-ān “I want”); cf. Sogd. ḡw’ncyk (ṅgu).

gūnī “blood” ~ InscrPth. gōxan (Av. vohunī-) with unexplained g- (no other NW dialect
has g-, e.g. Gōr. winī, Āz. [Ker.] vun, Kd. xwīn).

meṛi “mouse” ~ Av. marzēdā- ?- (“eine Landplage Margianes”, AirWh.)46 Cf. Āz. [Ker.]
mīrā, Gōr. mita “mouse”; see above for Zaz. fī, Āz. r, Gōr. f < *rd.

pirnike “nose” (Alevi, i.e. northern dialects): explaining Sogd. pr’ynk “opening of the
mouth(?)”?47 (Incidentally, the “nose” is still missing from the list.) As an etymology,
*parana-(ya-)ka- (to *parana- “in front”,48 cf. OP paranam) could be conjectured; or, less
likely, *pari-naha-ka- “(the part) around the nose” (with *naha- as a shortened form of [Av.]
nāh- “nose”), from which the Sogd. word could be derived through metathesis (> 
*parsi-hanaka- > *paryank > parenk).

rey “moment” (some Zaz. dialects) (mostly in combination with suffix -nā denoting “one
more ...”, e.g. reynā “once again”; other dialects have rāy, ri- or other etyma such as fin, qor
“moment”) ~ Av. rātu- “period, time” (cf. Zaz. key “house” ~ OIr. *kata-)?49 Or: rey ~
Khotanese rāyā “time” (< *rātī-)?

46 The meaning of this Av. word is unclear. S. Wikander, Vayu (Uppsala-Leipzig 1941), pp. 190ff., takes
it as an abstract “abusing, mocking”.
47 W. B. Henning, Sogdica (London 1940), pp. 5f.
48 Whence Henning, ibid., p. 26, explains Pth.(?) *pannīg “forehead”.
49 In support of this etymology Professor Sims-Williams kindly refers me to Khotanese bāda- “time”,
Christian Sogdian prtn “time, occasion” < *upa-r(a)tu- (see N. Sims-Williams, BSOAS 46, 1983, p. 49, with
reference to an unpublished suggestion by Martin Schwartz).
vistirē “daughter-in-law” ~ STātī (Tāk.) visite “husband’s sister” < *visāh-duxtar- and *visāh-duxtā respectively.50 Like Tāk., Zaz. shows a more “original” meaning as compared to MP wisduxt “princess”, and in this word alone preserves old *duxtar- (today Zaz. “daughter” = keynā). As a feminine noun, vistirē can take the fem. oblique ending -er originating from “relationship-r” (see above), i.e. vistirē-er-, thus showing “double relationship-r”.

wesār “springtime” (Alevi dialects: usār) < *upa-sarda- (cf. Tāl. āvāsor, Āz. [Harz.] āvasör, NP ābsālān; but Paštto psarlay requires *upa-sarada-ka-). This word might indicate that Zaz. seři “year” is not from *sarda-, but from a secondary form *šēda- not attested in other Iranian languages.

zinjī “nose” (non-Alevi dialects): the Zaz. dialect exclave of Mutki (close to Bitlis), where zinj means “chin”, provides the etymology (*zanaka-); cf. Semnānī zunjī “mouth”, where *zanaka- has wandered up the face only half as far as in Zaz.

zūrī “lie”: only modern Wlr. dialect continuing OP zūrah- “deceit” (but early NP [Firdausī] zūr “lie”).