II

A SOUTHERN KURDISH FOLKSONG IN KERMANSHAHI DIALECT

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THE Kurdish dialect of Persian has so far received very little attention from Oriental students, though it fully merits study, for while actually nothing more than a Persian dialect it has not submitted to the erosion which time brings about in every language, and which is so marked a feature in the development of modern Persian. Nor has it been subject to that admixture of Arabic words which has become so great a part of Persian since the invasion of the early Muhammadan Arabs. As a consequence it has preserved intact many words now obsolete in the mother language. Preserved from foreign influence, both by the rude and savage nature of the Kurds and by the inaccessibility of their mountainous homes, the Kurdish tongues (for there are many dialects) present an almost fundamentally pure Persian dialect, though much spoiled by corruption in pronunciation and the abbreviation always accompanying this feature of a language.

Some attention has been bestowed upon Kurdish by Russian scholars within the last four decades, but the dialects brought under notice have been those of the extreme north, notably Kermanji and the dialects of Buyazid in the eastern Caucasus, which show very considerable differences from those of the southern Kurds, who exist as far as Kermanshah, a linear distance of some four hundred miles from their most northerly kinsmen.

Generally speaking, the great belt of high mountain

lands stretching from the extreme north-west in a wide crescent to the south of Persia has been the conservatory of the old tongue, which in various gradations is found among the wild inhabitants of this region, from the large race of Kurds through Bakhtiāri, Lurī—northern and southern — Kāzerūni in Fars, Dashtistāni, Tangistāni, Minābi to the confines of the Baluch country, each of which forms a connecting link between its northern and southern neighbours in the same way as do the sub-dialects of Kurdish to those around them.

The dialect here exemplified, as being the most southerly, shows many features which are essentially Kurdish, and many again both common to Kurd and Lur. As the poem here presented is in the Kurdish of to-day, any reference to a Persian word as being obsolete will be to modern colloquial Persian, thus affording a true comparison between modern Kurdish and Persian.

The song is one heard at every gathering in Kermanshah. Its metre is, as is the case with all such poetry, very simple, and varying in some couplets. As the rhyme is confined to the two halves of the couplet, not extending to the preceding and following lines, any number may be added at the will of the singer, and this is in practice very often done. The poem is known as “Qatār-i-Kurdi”, *qatār* being a usual name for any long series of couplets.

1. Khîāl parkanda,¹ dîl tarfitûnam²

Chûn Farhād, shāhid³ i Bisitûnam.

Of thoughts scattered, my heart is distressed ;

Like Farhad, martyr of Bisitûn, am I.

2. Khîālî makai¹ la² tû dîram

Mar³ mirdin⁴ buwait⁵ nāmit la wîram.⁶

Think not that I am far from thee

Unless death take thy name from my memory.

COUPLET 1.

¹ *parkanda*, equivalent of Persian *parāganda*, *parākanda*, "scattered," "dispersed."

² *tarfitûn* (*û* pronounced as German *ü*), "distressed," from the Kurdish verb *tarfitûnin*, "to be distressed;" *am* is the 1st singular present indicative of the verb "to be".

³ *shāhid*, signifying a martyr, from the usage of *shāhid* in connection with the Shi'ah martyrs Husain and Hasan, commonly termed *shāhid* in colloquial Persian.

The last line refers to the well-known tradition of Farhad, who attempted the demolition of the Bisitûn Mountain near Kermanshah in order to gain the hand of Shirin.

COUPLET 2.

¹ *makai*, Persian *makun*, "do not."

² *la*, Persian *az*, "from."

³ *mar*, *magar*, "unless."

⁴ *mirdin*, Persian *murdan*, "to die," or verbal noun, "dying."

⁵ *buwait*, Persian *bibarad*, "that it take." Kurdish infinitive *birdin*, the root *bir* having been corrupted to *wa*, as with the same verb in Luri and southern mountain dialects.

⁶ *wîram* = *wîr* + *am*, "my memory." Cf. Ar. *wîr*, "the mind."

3. Wa¹ maili yārān qarib i dil rish
 Wa giān² i Kishbar wa Sāmeranīsh.³

By the love of friends near the heart's wound,
 By the soul of Kishbar in her Sāmera.

4. Wārān¹ buwārit² batīa³ bakai⁴ tar
 Wa Sāmera chīm⁵ wa māl⁶ i Kishbar.

Let the rain rain and wet my cheek.
 I go to Sāmera, to the house of Kishbar.

COUPLET 3.

¹ *wa*, Persian *bi*, the *bāyi qasam*, "preceding an oath."

² *giān*, Persian *jān*, "the soul." *Giān i Kishbar*, "soul of Kishbar," which is a common Kurdish name for a woman.

³ *Sāmeranīsh* = *Sāmera* + *n* + *īsh*. *Sāmera*, the allusion to a beauty of Samera of Turkestan; *-īsh*, a possessive termination not necessary to the sense. The medial *-n-* is purely euphonic.

COUPLET 4.

¹ *wārān*, Persian *bārān*, "rain."

² *buwārit*, Persian *bibārad*, "let it rain."

³ *batīa*, "a cloak."

⁴ *bakai*, Persian *bikunad*, "let it make."

⁵ *chīm*, "I go," from Kermanshahi *chīan*, "to go," a survival of the ancient *chīū*, "going."

⁶ *māl*, the Kurdish use for a house.

5. Māl i dūs bār kird wa nā rezā i dil
Allah yārī ¹ bût ² manzil wa manzil.

The friend's steed they loaded with unwilling heart
God be his friend from stage to stage.

6. Bichīm ¹ wa jākai ² Farhād i kihinakan ³
Bidaīm ⁴ wa sardā ⁵ riza i pāra i sang.

Let us go to the place of Farhād the mountain-breaker
And strike our heads with fragments of stone.*

* i.e. in grief for the friend's departure.

COUPLET 5.

¹ *yārī*, Persian *yār-ash* = "his friend." Kermanshāhī uses -i in place of the Persian genitive termination -ash, "of him, her, it."

² *būt*, Persian *bāshad*, "may he be," from infinitive *bān*, "to be."

COUPLET 6.

¹ *bichīm*, "let us go;" see note 5 to couplet 4.

² *jāka* = Persian *jā*, "a place."

³ *kihinakan*, Persian *kūhān kan*, the breaker of mountains.

⁴ *bidaīm*, "let us strike," from *dān*, "to strike," root *da*.

⁵ *sardā*, Persian *sar*, "head," or "heads". The affix -da occurs in Kurdish nouns; usually placed in an objective or a noun preceded by a preposition.

7. Agar Musalmānī rām ¹ la ² jāmita ³

Zardi o zaifim ⁴ paī ⁵ shamāmita.⁶

If thou be a Musulman, mercy is in thy garments.

My pallor and weakness are because of thy delicacy.

8. Yeh ¹ chi dardi bī, ² bī wa duchāram

Sar bī wa sālār, ³ lash ⁴ bī ⁵ wa bāram.

What malady was this, it was from our meeting.

My brain is swelled, my body dead with my load (of love).

COUPLET 7.

¹ *rām*, Persian *rahm*, "mercy."

² *la*, Persian *bī*, *az*, *dar*, "in."

³ *jāmita* = *jām-at-ast*, "is in thy garments."

⁴ *zāifim* = Persian *zāifī-yi-man* (ضعیفی), "my weakness."

⁵ *paī*, "for," "because of." This is still used as most Persian dialects and in old Persian.

⁶ *shamāmita* = *shamām-at-ast*, "thy delicacy is."

COUPLET 8.

¹ *yeh* = Persian *īn*, "this."

² *bī*, Persian *būd*, "was;" the past tense used in a present sense, as is common both in Kurdish and vulgar Persian.

³ *sālār*, "swelled."

⁴ *lash*, Persian *lāsh*, "dead," "a corpse."

⁵ *bīm*, Persian *shudam*, "I became." The Kurds have no proper distinction between the verbs "to be" and "to become".

9. Nishī¹ wa zhangit² manīt³ wa jarda⁴
 Manīt wa sepāi tāzeh fath karda.

Thy lashes and eyebrows are like a robber,
 Like an army newly come from victory.*

* The metaphor is that of the lashes and eyebrows being like the lances and bows of an army.

10. Cha bikam¹ wa dast i yeh naō namāma²
 Shaō³ la pazhārai⁴ khaō⁵ l'im⁶ ḥarāma.

What can I do at the hand of this fresh beauty?
 At night, from thought of her, sleep is forbidden me.

COUPLET 9.

- ¹ *nīshī*, "eyelashes," Persian *muzha*.
² *zhangit*, "thy eyebrows."
³ *manīt*, Persian *mimānad*, idiom for "resembles".
⁴ *jarda*, "a robber."

COUPLET 10.

- ¹ *bikam*, Persian *bikunam*, "may I do."
² *naō namāma*, "fresh beauty."
³ *shaō*, Persian *shab*, "night."
⁴ *pazhārai*, "prepossession of her," "thoughts of her."
⁵ *khaō*, Persian *khwāb*, "sleep."
⁶ *l'im* = *la* + *ī* + *am*, Persian *az man*, "from me." The junction of the two short *a*'s in *la* and *am* usually produces in Kurdish one long *ī* sound.

11. Ham kaft¹ wa wīram² khāsi³ yi Shaukat
Shirīnī yi annām⁴ zhīr i kulkwat.⁵

Also fell to my mind the goodness of Shaukat,
The sweetness of her figure under her tunic.

12. Khānum khānumān bān¹ wa 'amārat
Wa pām mashq makat,² wa chaō³ ishārat.

The lady of ladies upon her housetop
Dances for me with her feet, and beckons with her
eyes.

COUPLET 11.

¹ *kaft*, "fell," from Kurdish verb *kaftin*, "to fall."

² *wīram*, "my memory." See note 6, couplet 2.

³ *khāsi*, "goodness," Arabic خاض. The Persian word *khūb* is seldom used in Kurdish.

⁴ *annām*, obsolescent Persian *andām*, "form," "stature."

⁵ *kulkwat*, the Kurdish woman's garment, a kind of tunic, with full pleated skirts, also called *kulanja* and *kamarchīn*.

COUPLET 12.

¹ *bān*, Persian *bām* and *bāla*, "up," "above."

² *wa pām mashq makat*, a Kurdish idiom for the Persian *bā pā mashq mīkunad barāyi man*. This occurs but rarely, however, in such an involved phrase. In some Persian dialects the sentence, while preserving the same idea of a possessive pronominal termination instead of a separate pronoun and preposition, would read *bā pā mashqam mīkunad*.

³ *chaō*, Persian *chashm*, "eyes."

13. Dam¹ gird a mam² gird, pisht i pāshna³ gird
Masī⁴ yi chaōwakat⁵ min⁶ la dunyā bird.

Round mouth, round breast, round heel,
Intoxication of thy eyes took me from this world.

14. Har chan¹ manīshim² sāl dumātīr³
Khwashīm⁴ kam mau⁵ talkhīm zīātīr.⁶

The longer I remain succeeding years
My pleasure decreases, my bitterness grows more.

COUPLET 13.

¹ *dam*, Persian *dahan*, "mouth."

² *mam*, "the breast." Though no recognized Persian equivalent exists, the words *mīneh*, *mām*, and one or two other variants occur in the same sense in the South Persian and Lur dialects.

³ *pisht i pāshna*, Persian *pusht i pāshneh*, "the heel."

⁴ *masī*, Persian *mastī*, "intoxication."

⁵ *chaōwakat* = *chaō* + *ak* + *at*, "thy eyes." The termination *-ak* is as common in Kurdish as in vulgar Persian for all nouns.

⁶ *min*, Persian *man*, "me," "I."

COUPLET 14.

¹ *har chan*, Persian *har chand*, "however much."

² *manīshim*, Persian *mānīshīnam*, "I sit," "remain." The verbal form with initial *m* is hardly correct Kermanshāhī, which as a rule omits any prefix in present indicative.

³ *dumātīr* = Persian *dumbāltar*, "later," "more behind." The word *dumbāl* is now little used except in the dialects of Yazd and Isfahan.

⁴ *khwashīm*, Persian *khūshī-am*, "my pleasure."

⁵ *maū*, Persian *mīshavad*, "becomes."

⁶ *zīātīr*, Persian *zīādtar*, "more."

15. Khānumī la mulk i Kalhur ¹ kirdia ² tür ³

Dinān ⁴ chün sadaf, qāmat chün bulür.

A lady from the Kalhur land has quarrelled,*

(Her) teeth like mother of pearl, her stature like crystal.

* i.e. quarrelled and run away from the Kalhur.

16. Khānum tuna ¹ Ali, chomas,² tuna Dāūd

Pichakat ³ lāwa ⁴ ta būnam ⁵ chaōwat.⁶

Lady, for Ali's sake—(thou of love) frenzied eyes—
for David's sake,

Remove thy veil, that I may see thy face.

COUPLET 15.

¹ *Kalhur*, a large district and tribe of Kurds west of Kermanshah, noted for their ferocity and power.

² *kirdia*, Persian *karda ast*, "has made," "done."

³ *tür*, "quarrel." The verb here inverted is the compound *tür kirdin*, a parallel to Persian *qahr kardan*, "to quarrel," "to take offence at."

⁴ *dinān*, Persian *dandān*, "teeth."

COUPLET 16.

¹ *tuna*, Persian *tur*, "for the sake of." *Tuna* also occurs in Luri and South Persian dialects.

² *chomas*, Persian *chashm-mast*, "frenzied."

³ *pīchakat*, Persian *pīcha-at*, the small square black horse-hair veil worn by the women of Kermanshah and Turkish Arabia out of doors.

⁴ *lāwa*, "take off," "remove," inf. *lāwān*.

⁵ *būnam*, Persian *bibīnam*, "let me see."

⁶ *chaōat*, Persian *chashmat*, "thy eyes."

17. Min ki sufim sâf¹ taōba kirda bîm²

Qamar simā³ dîm⁴ imān harda bîm.⁵

I who am a Sūfi had entirely renounced (Sufism).

(When) I saw the silvery moon I was released from faith.

18. Kāfir kūshtitam¹ maḡar khūnītam²

Kushtai khālakai³ chālī⁴ tanītan.⁵

Pagan, thou hast slain me, am I at feud with thee?

Killed (am I) by the mole in the hollow of thy neck.

COUPLET 17.

¹ *sâf*, Persian صاف, "smooth," here used in the sense of "entirely".

² *bîm*, Persian būdam, "I was."

³ *simā*, Persian sîmāb, "quicksilver," "silver."

⁴ *dîm*, Persian dîdam, Kurdish inf. *dîan*.

⁵ *harda bîm*, "I was released;" Kurdish *harda bîan*, "to be released," "to be free."

COUPLET 18.

¹ *kūshtitam*, Persian *kushtî marā*, vulgar Persian *kushtîm*, "thou slewest me."

² *khūnītam*, Persian *khūnī-at-am*, "am I at blood-feud with thee?" *Khūnī* is the usual vulgar equivalent of *khūndārī*, "a blood-feud."

³ *khālakai*, Persian *khāl*, "a mole."

⁴ *chāl*, "a hollow, depression," obsolescent Persian.

⁵ *tanīt*, Kermanshāhī *tanī*, "the neck," the lower part of the throat.

19. Khālī wa tū naīm¹ mar² wa Sekīna
Humā³ kūtasāī⁴ wa takht i sīna.

A mole like thine I never saw, except on Sekīna;
She had moulded it upon the breadth of her breast.

20. Dastam bikīshīn¹ wa kur² giānī³
Wa māli⁴ dūs⁵ chīm⁶ shaō⁷ wa mīmānī.⁸

Lead me by the hand, me of little strength;
To the lover's house let us go to-night to the feast.

COUPLET 19.

¹ *naīm*, Persian *nadīdam*, "I saw not."

² *mar*, *magar*, "except."

³ *humā*, Persian *ū*. The word is unusual in Kermanshāhī dialect, properly belonging to that of Sina of Kurdistan.

⁴ *kūtasāī*, Persian *kūbīda ast*, "is, or has, hammered" (pounded, moulded).

COUPLET 20.

¹ *bikīshīn*, Persian *bikashīd*. Inf. *kīshīn*, "to pull," "draw."

² *kur*, "feebleness."

³ *giān*, Persian *jān*, "body," "soul;" *kur giānī*, "bodily weakness."

⁴ *māl*, Kurdish use of the Arabic word for "house".

⁵ *dūs*, Persian *dūst*, "friend," "lover."

⁶ *chīm*, "let us go;" see note 5, couplet 4.

⁷ *shaō*, Persian *shab*, "night."

⁸ *mīmānī*, Persian *mihmānī*, "a feast," "banquet."

21. La Sari Mil¹ banürî² Kerind diyāra³
Har kas dūs dirit⁴ chaō intazāra.

From Sar i Mil, by her light, Kerind is visible.
Who has a lover sits with expectant eyes.

22. La düro¹ hātim² bishnāsa³ dangam⁴
Garta⁵ qaribî nîshtîa⁶ la rangam.⁷

I am come from afar, hear my cry ;
The dust of strange (lands) has settled upon my face.

COUPLET 21.

- ¹ *Sar-i-Mil*, the remains of an old pillar set to mark the road from Harunabad to Kerind (near Kermanshah) and distant from the latter about 5 miles.
² *banürî*, Persian *bi nūrash*, "by her light."
³ *diyāra*, "is apparent."
⁴ *dirit*, Persian *dārad*, "he has."

COUPLET 22.

- ¹ *düro*, Persian *dūr*, "afar."
² *hātim*, Persian *āmadam*, Kurdish infin. *hātin*, "to come," this form having arisen from the preservation of the older Persian verb *āīdan*, "to come," to which *h* has been prefixed, as often occurs with similar words in Kurdish.
³ *bishnāsa*, Persian *bishinās* or *bishinū*, "hear!"
⁴ *dangam*, Persian *bāngam*, "my cry."
⁵ *gart*, Persian *gard*, "dust."
⁶ *nîshtîa*, Persian *nîshasta ast*, "is sitting," "settled upon," Kurdish inf. *nîshtin*.
⁷ *rangam*, "my colour," here used for "face".

23. Kamarchîn¹ i makhmal, gūshwārān wa gūsh
Mirda² la mazār tīarat³ wa hūsh.

Her tunic is of velvet, earrings in her ears,
The dead from the tomb she brings to life.

24. Lāl bām¹ la zwān² pai³ Laili nāmī
Khāl dānai ferang,⁴ zulf dasta i dāmī.⁵

May I be dumb of tongue, of one named Laili
(Her) mole (is) of rare beauty, her locks a cluster of
nets.

COUPLET 23.

¹ *kamarchîn* ; see note 5, couplet 11.

² *mirda*, Persian *murda*, "the dead."

³ *tīarat*, Persian *mīārad* or *mīāvurad*, "she brings."
Kurdish infinitive *awirdin* and *hawirdin*. This verb,
together with *hātīn*, takes prefixial *tī* in Kermanshāhi
in the present indicative, a variant of the similarly
used *dī* and *da* in more northern dialects.

COUPLET 24.

¹ *bām*, Persian *bāsham*, "may I be."

² *zwān*, Persian *zabān*, "tongue."

³ *pai*, Persian *barāyi*, "for."

⁴ *dānai ferang*, a term used in Kurdish to express any
small article of great beauty.

⁵ *dasta i dāmī*, a cluster of nets (for the ensnaring of the
enamoured), a common Persian metaphor.

25. Banā kird ghārat i sarmāya i hūsham
Lungi Majnūni aō dā¹ wa dusham.

She undertook the plunder of my stock of sense,
The cloth of Majnūn she gave me for my back.*

* i.e. she made me like Majnūn, mad for love of Laili.

26. Chan¹ jaur chan jefā, chan khākisāri
Shwān² i bī muz³ u haqq nā diyāri.

How much trouble, how much anguish, how much
lamenting?

Nights without reward, and right unrecognised!

27. Sa jwōām ka¹ ta dil nīā² būm³
Kam das⁴ la dāmām Shaikh o mulla būm.

Then release me that my heart be at rest,
That my hand be not stretched out to skirts of
Mulla and Shaikh!

COUPLET 25.

¹ *dā*, Persian *dād*, “gave.”

COUPLET 26.

¹ *chan*, Persian *chand*, used in Kurdish indifferently for
“how much” and “how many”.

² *shwān*, Persian *shabān*, “nights.” This plural for *shab*
is obsolete in Persian.

³ *muz*, Persian *muzd*, “reward,” “price.”

COUPLET 27.

¹ *sa jwōām ka*, Persian *pas javābam kun*, “then make me
my reply,” i.e. “release me”.

² *dil nīā*, “with heart at rest.”

³ *būm*, Persian *bishavam*, “that I become.”

⁴ *das*, Persian *dast*, “hard.”

28. Fedāi mālakai ¹ pāyi Paraōit ² bām ³
Fedai didakai ⁴ shaō bi khaōit ⁵ bām.

May I be the sacrifice of thy house at Paraō's foot,
Sacrifice of thy eyes upon sleepless nights.

29. Har ¹ tiait ² har chit ³ cham ⁴ wa gilāwa ⁵
Chün kaok ⁶ i nisār khiāl wa hilāwa.⁷

(Thou) ever coming, ever going, with straining eyes,
Like a partridge of the desert rising to fly.

COUPLET 28.

¹ *mālakai*, "a house," the termination *-akai* being quite optional and ruled by no custom.

² *Paraōit*, "thy, Paraō," the possessive referring to *mālakai* in conformity with Persian usage, when a possessive is added to the last of a series of nouns used adjectivally. Paraō is a high range of mountains north-west of Kermanshah.

³ *bām*, Persian *bāsham*, "may I be." See note 1, couplet 24.

⁴ *didakai*, Persian *dida*, "eyes."

⁵ *khaōit*, "thy, sleep," the possessive qualifying *dīdakai*.

COUPLET 29.

¹ *har*, the same word as in Persian, but possessing in Kurdish a wider meaning, here signifying "incessantly".

² *tiait*, Persian *mīāyī*. See note 3, couplet 23.

³ *chit*, Persian *mīravī*, "thou goest."

⁴ *cham*, Persian *chashm*, "eyes."

⁵ *gilāwa*, "tiredness, straining." The word is *gilā* with termination *-awa* or *-wa*, which is frequently added in Kurdish poetry.

⁶ *kaōk*, Persian *kabk*, "partridge."

⁷ *hilāwa*, "flying," "rising."

30 Chaôm kaft¹ wa zîd u mawân² i Laili
Anûm³ jûsh hâwird,⁴ gîriyâm⁵ khaîli.

My eyes fell upon the place of Laili;
My grief came to boiling, and my tears many.

31. Min ki Kerind shâr¹ dim² wa wirâna³
Sar i Pul⁴ dim wa jây bâyaqush⁵ khâna.

I (who) have seen Kerind town a ruin,
And Sar i Pul the place of owls' nesting.

The word *ki* is here not necessarily to be translated as a relative pronoun, being used in an emphatic sense, which is a common use in vulgar Persian as in Kurdish, as Persian *man ki chand martaba guftam?* "how many times have I spoken?"

COUPLET 30.

¹ *kaft*, Persian *uftād*, "fell," from Kurdish inf. *kaftin*, "to fall."

² *zîd u mawân*, a Kurdish expression somewhat equivalent to the Persian *maqām va makān*, "residence and place."

³ *anûm*, Persian *andûh-am*, "my grief."

⁴ *hâwird*, Persian *âvard*, "brought."

⁵ *gîriyâ*, Persian *girîā*, "tears."

COUPLET 31.

¹ *shâr*, Persian *shahr*, "a town."

² *dîm*, Persian *dîdam*, "I saw."

³ *wîrâna*, Persian *vîrân*, "ruin," a now obsolete word.

⁴ *Sar i Pul*, or more correctly *Sar i Pul i Zohâb*, near the Perso-Turkish frontier post of Qasr i Shirin, a Kurdish town.

⁵ *bâyaqush*, "an owl" (Turkish).