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The Bakhtiaris: an anthropological-linguistic lexical study of Haft Lang nomads of southwestern Iran

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CHAPTER TWO
SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND

2 THE BAKHTIARIS

Bakhtiari refers to both the language and the people who historically are the inhabitants of a region of approximately 75,000 km² in Southwest Iran on both sides of the Zagros mountain range. Their territory used to be called, *χak-e bæχtiari* 'The Bakhtiari ground' or The Bakhtiari Country as depicted in the maps of some early western travelers or explorers of Iran, such as Sawyer[13] (1890) and Layard (1846), among others, shown in Figure 1, below:

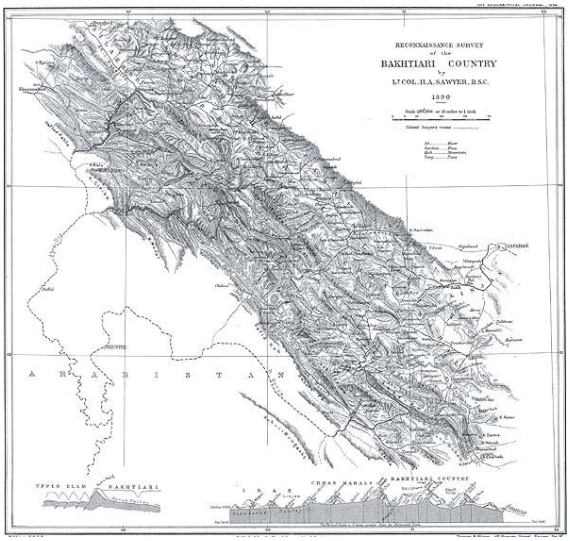

Figure 1: Old maps of the Bakhtiari Land (Sawyer 1890)

13. The following interesting information about this map can be found in the online gallery of SOAS (http://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/bakhtiari-kuch/tribal-life/maps/):
Reconnaissance Survey of the Bakhtiari Country by Lieut Col HA Sawyer BSC.The details of this map were considered 'SECRET', as marked (in large red letters) on the two versions currently in the India Office papers in the British Library. The map shown here was presented at the Royal Geographical Society in 1894, and includes a specially drawn "freehand cross-section from the Persian Gulf to the Iranian plateau. In a general way it purports to show the several parallel ranges, rising step-like to the two highest ranges, which average between 12,000 and 13,000 feet each, and the valley between 7000 to 8000 feet. The space they enclose measures from 10 to 30 miles in width. The map was constructed using "an Indian plane-table, a six-inch theodolite, prismatic compass, six aneroids and six boiling point thermometers . . under the direction of Colonel Sawyer, by the Imam Sharif, KB, the well-known native Indian surveyor, who did most of the plane-tabling, and who persevered with his work, though he was twice on the point of being murdered, and was frequently robbed.".
Map, 1890: Scale 1:1,000,000 or 16 miles to 1 inch. Reproduced here by the kind permission of Cyrus Alai, from his private collection.

At present, however, the majority of Bakhtiaris live in cities, towns and villages in five administrative provinces: Khuzestān;[14] Kohgiluyeh-o Boyer-Ahmad; Esfahān; Chahār Mahāl-o Bakhtiāri and Lorestān. A relatively recent map[15] (figure 2) shows this area in more detail. The map presented in figure 3 shows my attempt to illustrate a more precise image regarding the distribution of Bakhtiari speaking population in present-day Iran. It is quite challenging to explore the internet or the existing published sources in the hope to find an exact map, illustrating the Bakhtiari area that has the consensus of all. It seems that the actual reason behind this confusion lies behind the opacity in the definition of Bakhtiari people who are usualy thought of as belonging to a bigger ethnic group known as Lors. In below paragraphs this issue is discussed in more detail presenting the existing maps and introducing a new map with more precision.

Bakhtiaris belong to the Twelver Shi'ite[16] sect of Islam. According to Ethnologue,[17] Bakhtiari was spoken by around 1 Million speakers in 2001, of which 35% were monolinguals. One third or one quarter of this one Million population, according to different sources,[18] still follow the nomadic life style of their ancestors, migrating twice a year across the central Zagros mountain range in search of fresh pastures for their herds of sheep and goats and also to escape the unbearable climatic extremes of their winter and summer campsites.

The word Bakhtiari consists of three morphemes: Bakht-yar-i /*bæχt-yar-i*/ 'fortune-companion- ATTR. suffix' > 'The lucky/ fortunate ones', but the reason for this appellation is known to no one. There are some legends on the origin of the name (Sardar Asad 1383:49) but they are not the concern of the present research. What is of importance here is the way Bakhtiaris address their identity themselves. It is a common practice to classify the language and the people under a cover term as Lor/ Lori[19] which also includes many people and linguistic communities to the north, south, west and east of the aforementioned Bakhtiari Land. Thus a Lor can be a Feili tribe member living in the Pishkuh area of Lorestan province, a Bakhtiari living in Chelgerd or Masjed- Soleiman (the two major cities in their summer and winter quarters, respectively, with above ninety percent Bakhtiari inhabitants) or further south, or a Bavi living in Basht village which is located in Kugilu[20]! Figures

14. Throughout the present work and especially in this section, the names of the cities and villages and the like, are presented as they are commonly transcribed in the Iranian sources.
15. Available at URL (22-09-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.bakhtiarifamily.com/photos/_BakhtiariMapNew.pdf.
16. Digard, J. P.1988. " Bakhtiari Tribe, Ethnography", in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol.3, pp.553-559.
17. Available at URL (07-09-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=bqi
18. Amirahmadian, B.1378/2000. *Bakhtari Tribe.* Tehran: Dashteatan/ Abtahi, A. 1384/2006. *Oil and The Bakhtiaris*. Tehran: Chap va Nashre Nazar, Organization of Nomads' Affairs, available at URL (07-09-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://ashayer.ir/index.aspx?siteid=1&pageid=160.
19. It is also very common to spell this word as Lur/ Luri, but the actual pronunciation of its medial vowel is as in English word **door** (See the description of the vowel /o/ in 2.3.5 below).
20. Here I tend to represent the names of the cities, provinces and the people as pronounced by natives and locals to prevent the hypercorrection practice of official authorities. These hypercorrec-

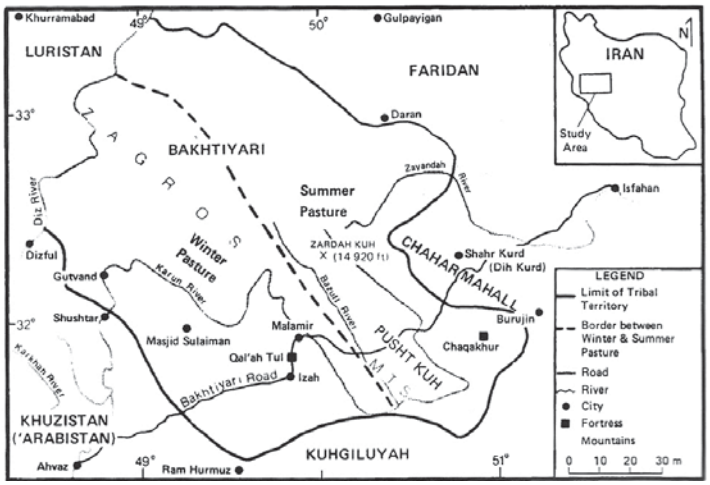

Figure 2: More recent map of the Bakhtiari Land

Figure 3: The main Bakhtiari area in present-day Iran based on the Bakhtiari speaking population

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tions, which are usually an attempt to bring the local names, phonetically and semantically, closer to Persian, can at times destroy all clues to a valid etymology of the word. A very disturbing example is the representation of the place name **Shimbār** /*šimbar*/ as **Shirin Bahār** /*širin-bœhar*/, based on a false etymology that attempts to reflect the beautiful green scenery of the **Shimbār** area with the compound **Shirin Bahār** 'the sweet spring'!

4.a and 4.b below are mainstream maps showing the distribution of Lors and Lori language in Iran.[21]

Figure 4a: Mainstream maps of Lori language/ people distribution

Figure 4b: Mainstream maps of Lori language/ people distribution

21. Available at URL (07-09-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/%20http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/lori-language

In reality, however, Bakhtiaris do not identify themselves as a Lorestani or a Kugilo-Beiramedi Lor, claiming, among others, that those people have a distorted tongue (*zown-e čæp*), and emphasize their own distinction from other Lors, as being first a Bakhtiari. If willing to compromise for a relationship with other Lors, they would say: 'we are a Lor-e Bakhtiari!'. It is true that linguistically, they share a great deal with Kugilo-Beiramedi Lors and to a lesser degree with Lorestānis, as confirmed by Anonby (2005), but there are enough differences in their lifestyle, language and customs to be able to distinguish separate identities for them.

2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE BAKHTIARIS

To give a clearer image of the present day distribution of the Bakhtiari, the map below (Figure 5) is drawn based on my own direct observation during field work trips, through consultation with locals and searching the existing websites and information sources on cities and villages in Iran.

Figure 5: Approximate distribution of Bakhtiari

The shaded area shows the region where Bakhtiaris predominantly live, along with other language speakers such as Persian, Arabic or a Lori variety; and where the Bakhtiari language is either spoken by the great majority of the inhabitants, such as in Masjed Soleimān, Chelgerd, Lāli and Izeh, or where there are a large number of Bakhtiari-speaking inhabitants, as in Shahrekord, Ahvāz, Boroujen and Foulādshahr, or where, at least, Bakhtiari is a familiar language for non-Bakhtiari inhabitants of the indicated city, town or village, such as in Esfahān or Gachsārān. It should be noted that these maps are by no means definitive and they will be modified later and through a more detailed investigation on the ground. They are presented here just to show the lack of precision in the existing available maps on the subject.

By comparison with old maps of the Bakhtiari Land (Figures 1 and 2 above), it appears bright and clear that Bakhtiaris no longer live in the exact same area of their ancestors and have changed their habitat through past decades for multiple reasons. Before the discovery of oil in their territory on 26 May 1908, which can be considered as a turning point in their socio-cultural as well as linguistic life, most of the replacement of the Bakhtiari population was due to socio-political reasons in the form of either forced migration or group exile dictated by the central government of the time[22]. The later moves and replacements, however, have mainly had socio-economic reasons, the most important of which has been the employment in the then so-called Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC), and after 1935, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOP)[23] and the emergence of new company towns in the region and hence the settlement of Bakhtiari employees along with their families in these company-built compounds. This situation holds true to this day. To give an example, since 1990 a large number of Bakhtiari workers have moved to Asaluye[24], a formerly small and insignificant city-port by the Persian Gulf, which after the discovery of a major gas resource, actually the largest natural gas field in the world, has developed into an important industrial center and a major recruitment destination in PSEEZ (*Pars Special Energy Economic Zone*) project. It is worthy of note that, out of the population of some 4,000 to 7,000 of this city, according to different sources, only a couple of hundreds (300-500) are Arabic-Persian speaking locals. The other inhabitants are workers from around the country, and Bakhtiaris comprise a major portion of these newcomers[25]. I did not mark Asaluye in the above map (Figure 4) simply because Bakhtiari workers only commute to Asaluye and they generally do not move there permanently with their families, mainly due to the severe hot and dry climate of the area.

22. Perry (1975) and Sardar Asad (2005) among others.
23. Cronin (2004: 4).
24. Available at URL (07-09-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/%20http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asaluyeh
25. To my knowledge, no exact statistics are available online. In my future trips to Iran, I will certainly try to contact the PSEEZ administrative offices for exact statistics.

Apart from this more or less consistent area of Bakhtiari inhabitants, there are also some islands of Bakhtiari communities scattered around the country, as far as the north-east close to the border with Turkmenistan (Figure 6). This latter community is said to consist of exiles from the time of Nader Shah (1698-1747; he reigned from 1736 to 1747). To what extent they have preserved their language is a matter of question and needs to be investigated. Many of Bakhtiaris living in the big cities such as Tehran, Esfahan and Karaj have started their move rather recently, first during eight years of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) and then gradually, after the war, due to the subsequent deterioration of the socio-economic condition of the war-stricken cities. In other words, after the war, some Khuzestani families stayed in the cities where they found shelter during the war and many more moved to bigger cities to find better universities or socio-cultural opportunities for their children.

Figure 6: The major and minor Bakhtiari areas

2.2 BAKHTIARI NOMADS

According to the statistics of the Organization of Nomads' Affairs[26] based on the nomad census of 2008, Bakhtiari turns out to be the biggest tribal population on the list of Iranian nomads by numbering as many as 187,777 persons; the Qashqai rank second with 112,430 people living in Fars, Bushehr and parts of Esfahān and Char Mahāl-o Bakhtiari provinces. The third place, with a population of less than half of the Qashqai, viz. 47,248, belongs to the Shahsavan (Ilsavan) tribes in Eastern Azarbaijān, Ardebil and Gilān provinces.

The above brief socio-historical introduction of Bakhtiari people makes it clear that, due to the numerous shifts in their geography and subsequent adaptations necessary for interacting with their new neighbors, the Bakhtiari speakers have developed several varieties of the language over the past decades. The exact description of these varieties would require a vast sociolinguistic project that can only be a desideratum for the future.

The focus of the present research will only be on the variety spoken by the Hamule nomads of the Haft Lang branch (See 2.2.5 below), who live mainly in ***χorbe*** and other countrysides of Chelgerd during the months of April to September and in ***šelal*** and other villages and countryside of Masjed Soleimān from November to March every year.[27]

I will refer to them as nomads, despite the fact that the majority of them have a house in a village, town or city, simply because acquiring a house is a later adaptation to the necessities of modern life. Their children must be accommodated during the school year while their parents are on campsites with their herds. Having said that, their life style still fits the definition of a nomadic life, based on Potts (2014: 29):

> "1. the paramount economic role of herding;
> 2. the extensive nature of herd-maintenance strategies and free-range grazing without the use of stables or the accumulation, storage, and transport of fodder;
> 3. periodic mobility within or between certain pre-determined grazing territories;
> 4. the participation of the vast majority of the group in seasonal migration;
> 5. the orientation of most economic effort toward primary subsistence, rather than production for the market."

Considering the dominant economic activity of the Hamule nomads, i.e. pastoral herd breeding and dry farming of mainly wheat but occasionaly barley and clover, they can further be categorized as semi-nomadic pastoralists, as defined by Potts (2014: 30):

26. http://ashayer.ir/index.aspx?siteid=1&pageid=160 The translation of the name of this organisation is based on Lois Beck (2014).
27. I have tried to explain reasons for this choice in the Preface.

> "*semi-nomadic pastoralism*, defined as 'extensive pastoralism and the periodic changing of pastures during the course of the entire, or the greater part of the year' but which also involves 'agriculture in a secondary and supplementary capacity'."

2.2.1 Tribal hierarchy

In discussing the Bakhtiari tribe's social structure, the first issue one encounters is the binary division of the whole so-called tribal confederation, or *il,* into two subgroups, namely: Haft Lang and Char[28] Lang. The meaning of the first elements seems to be obvious, representing the numbers 'seven' and 'four' in both Persian and Bakhtiari[29], whereas the second part *Lang* remains unresolved. Section 2.2.2 is devoted to a thorough discussion of these crucial terms in Bakhtiari, but before that, a few words about further subgroups of the Bakhtiari are necessary for a better understanding of the dynamics of their nomadic life.

It is a very common practice among scholars and locals that follow and copy the western way of argumentation, to begin the description of the Bakhtiari tribal structure from top to bottom, i.e. from *il* 'confederation, tribe', to *mal* 'a tent and the nuclear family living under it'. These scholars probably had the segmentary lineage system of some other peoples as a model, tribes and peoples such as Semetic or African tribes or some Turkish villages. In anthropological researches this system is explained by '… successive branching of large lineage groups into smaller ones (Schwimmer, 2003).' In the next step, they use or create terms, like *tire* or *bab* (Towfiq, 1987; Digard, 1988; Amirahmadian, 2000), that do not have

28. Short form of *chahār* meaning 'four'.

29. In the later stages of the research, I have come across the Avestan term *cangraŋhāc* with its Pahlavi translation *clk' lc'nyk* meaning 'worthy of pasture' (Schmidt 1980: 216), the first part of which made me doubt to analize Char as 'number four' simply based on the similarity with the word Chahar in Modern Persian and Char in Bakhtiari. In an attempt to provide an etymology for this term, Schmidt (1980: 216) concludes: " Proto-Iranian *cahra can then originally have been the area of wilderness cut down for cultivation and pasturage". This interpretation leads us to the question: Can *Charlang* be interpreted as 'a piece of land made ready as a pasture'? How can we interpret *Haflang*, then? To answer this second question, Johnny Cheung suggested the verbal root *Hap 'to keep, observe' as described in Cheung (2007: 129): "*hap 'to keep, observe' •AVESTAN: OAv. haf- (hap-) 'to keep, observe' Liste: 71 Pres. athem.: IND. 2sg. OAv. hafšī (Y 43.4), 3sg. OAv. haptī (Y 31.22) •SOGDIAN: ? CSogd. pw'd- (m.)'monument, altar' (cf. Schwartz 1967: 137) || (+ *ni-) BSogd. 'nš'yp- (old caus.) 'to envelop, cover', CSogd. 'šyp- 'to bury' (+ *ni-) Pres.: IND. dur. 2sg. CSogd. 'šypysq, 3sg. BSogd. 'nš'ypt; Impf.: IND. 3pl. CSogd. mšypnt, POT. 3sg. BSogd. 'nš'ypt wn'; partic.: perf. pass. CSogd. 'šybty, CSogd. 'šybtyt; Pass.: perf. intr. IND. CSogd. 'šybdy stysq •SANSKRIT: Skt. sap 'to take care, honour, observe' (RV) EWAia II: 698 •PIE *sep- 'to take care of, observe' LIV: 534 | Pok.: 909 •IE COGNATES: Gr. épw 'I take care of, commit, do', Lat. sepelīre 'to bury' •REFERENCES: Werba 1997: 251 f". Is it possible that *Haf* in *Haflang* does not indicate a number but an attribute for the word *Lang*? Can *Haflang* have a meaning similar to 'an elevated piece of land for observation'as opposed to *Charlang* 'a piece of wild land cut down for cultivation and pasturage'? These questions require more investigation in future.

an equivalent reality for Bakhtiari themselves and ignore categories like *kor o beu* 'literally: son and father'[30] which is a quintessential term in describing the Bakhtiari kinship relationships. One example of such a tribal chart (Digard, 1988)[31] is represented below as Figure 7:

Table 15

THE PRINCIPAL SUBDIVISIONS OF THE BAḴTĪĀRĪ TRIBE

īl	*baḵš/qesmat*	*bāb/bolūk*	*ṭā'efa*	
Baḵtīārī	Haft Lang	Dūrakī	Zarāsvand	1
			Gandalī	2
			Mowrī	3
			Osīvand	4
			Bāmadī	5
			Asterekī-Čārbūrī	6
			Sohonī (Hamule)	7
		Bābādī Bāb	Bābādī 'Alī-Anvar	8
			Bābādī 'Akkāša	*9*
			Rökī	10
			Molmolī	11
			Šehnī	12
			Madmolīl	13
			Gomar-Naser	14
			Pepdīnī	15
			Galla	16
		Behdārvand (Monjezī)		17
		Dīnāronī		18
		Jānakī		*19*
	Čār Lang	Mamīvand		20
		Mamsāla		21
		Mogū'ī		*22*
		Kīānersī		*23*

Note: The figures in the right-hand column refer to Figure 14; those in italic denote wholly sedentarized groups (Digard, 1979, pp. 134-35)

Figure 7: The principal subdivisions of the Bakhtiari tribe according to Digard (1988)

The problem with charts such as the above is the fact that the first three divisions, i.e. *il* 'confederation', *bæχš*/ *boluk* 'section' and *bab* 'division' do not have an conceptual reality among the Bakhtiaris and they are simply adopted either from other nomadic tribes' structures, like *boluk* from the Qashqai, or are confused with a socio-political entity. In other words, for instance *il*, in the sense of the 'confederation of Haflang and Chahar Lang tribes', was introduced into the Bakhtiari community for the first time just in the nineteenth century, in 1867 to be

30. It is indeed surprising for me that this term has not been mentioned in any of the sources that I have consulted for this research and which have been quoted here.

31. In his recent book, Une épopée tribale en Iran: Les Bakhtiyâri (2015: 312), Digar has still kept these three first sections (*il*, *baḵš* and *bāb*) but modified the members of the *tāefa* here and there. For instance, he has added a new member to the Hamule tribe, namely, Toshmal, which he believes was one of the *tæš* in the tribe at the beginning of 1970. It is noteworthy that the word Toshmal has two meanings in Bakhtiari: first it is the name of the local musicians and second, as an adjective, it means 'great'and for reasons not known to me, was attributed to the Zarasvand tribe. I have heard from old people that in the old times, *ærdešqæriv* people were affiliated with the Zarasvand tribe and they sometimes were addressed or revered as Toshmal. Therefore, to include Toshmal as a fifth party of the Hamule tribe does not seem to be a right choice.

more precise, when Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar[32], appointed Hossein Qoli Khan[33] as the *Ilkhani* 'the chief of the Bakhtiari confederation'. Ironically, Hossein Qoli Khan and his ancestors were not originally Bakhtiari but descendants of a fugitive boy from the Papi tribe of Lorestan[34]. Before this appointment, *il*[35], if used, would have had a meaning similar to an older and more common term *χeil* [36] 'a group of many people'[37] as can be depicted in some very old *gageriəve* 'mourning songs'[38]. The Qajar dynasty kings had a Turkic-nomadic origin and hence the introduction of many Turkic terms into the political literature of the time; titles and terms such as, *Il-Khan*, *Il-Beig* 'the deputy head of the confederation', *Il-či* 'the king's messenger', *tuman* 'a new currency', *gošun* 'army' and *baš/ baši* 'head, boss'. Some of these terms had already been inherited from Safavid administration which in turn had been adopted from previous Mongol dynasties ruling in Iran from 1219-1507.

A five-level hierarchical structure, however, does exist in Bakhtiari, based on genealogy, in the form of small to large patrilineal or agnatic[39] descent groups

32. The King of Persia, 16 July 1831 – 1 May 1896; he reigned from 17 September 1848 to 1 May 1896. Towfiq (1987: 712) mistakenly, relates this appointment as the order of Moḥammad Shah Qāǰār (5 January 1808 – 5 September 1848) who was king of Persia from the Qajar dynasty (23 October 1834 – 5 September 1848 (Available at URL (17-10-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/mohammad-shah).

33. 1820-1882.

34. "Though thus figuring as Haft Lang, this family is said to have originated from a boy of the Pāpī tribe of Lurs, who was ejected by his fellow tribesmen and recalcitrant subjects, and stayed into the Bakhtiārī country from the west of Luristān." (Lorimer, 1922: 2).

35. The researches of W. Irons show that among the present Turkmen of Iran the word *īl* is applied primarily to a group of tents (*ūba*) whose occupants keep together and live in peace and amity; these groups then form wider confederacies which locally are also named *īl* (corresponding to the *walāʾ* of Ebn Ḵaldūn). At the same time *īli* is used as an adjective to describe relations between tribes, meaning "at peace with" as against *yāḡī* (at war with). Membership of an *ūba* and an *īl* generally depends on genealogy. The members of an *īl* perceive their community as made up of small and large patrilineal descent groups, the smallest consisting of brothers, i.e., sons of the same father, the next of brothers and nephews, i.e., descendants of the same paternal grandfather, the third of descendants of the same great-grandfather in the male line, and so on back to the common ancestor of the whole *īl*. (Irons, 1974: 640-42 quoted from Towfiq, 1987: 707).

36. From the same word, the intensifier *χeili* in Persian and *χeile* in Bakhtiari are derived.

37. Another word for tribe, found in old geographical works mainly with reference to the so-called Kurds of Fārs, is *romūm*, the plural of *ramm* (cf. *rama* "herd, team"), or in some texts *zomūm*, from *zamm*. M. Qazvīnī (V, p. 53) considered *zomūm al-akrād* to be a manuscript error for *romūm*, while De Goeje (BGA VI, p. 250; Ebn Ḵordaḏbeh, Fr. tr., BGA VI, p. 33 n. 2) preferred the reading *zomm* on the basis of the Kurdish word *zūma* (tribe), a suggestion followed by Le Strange (*Lands*, p. 266) but questioned by Minorsky (*EI*[1] IIb, p. 1135; see also Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 27; Schwarz, *Iran* I, pp. 135ff.; Spuler, *Iran*, p. 241 n. 16). Yāqūt (II, p. 821) defines *romūm* as camp sites of and districts inhabited by Kurds (*maḥāll al-akrād wa manāzelohom*). Anyway, in the usage of the present tribes of Iran, *ramm* and *zomm* are seldom, if ever, employed (though *rama* remains current); *ūymāq* and *ūlūs* are also obsolete. As will be seen, a large section of a tribe is now usually termed *ṭāyefa* or *tīra* (Towfiq, 1987: 707). In Bakhtiari the closest term to the concept of a nomad is *mal-i* 'belonging to a mal'.

38. For a brief discussion of the structure and the etymology of this word see footnote 125 below, under the Body parts section (3.1.2).

39. Patrillineal or agnotic descent is established by tracing descent exclusively through males from a

which only make sense from the bottom up. These levels are: *mal* 'a nuclear family', *kor o beu*[40] 'brothers of the same father', *æwlaḏ* 'grandchildren of a shared ancestor', *tæš* 'clans[41] of the tribe' and *tafe* 'the tribe'. Figure 8 attempts to illustrate this hierarchy:

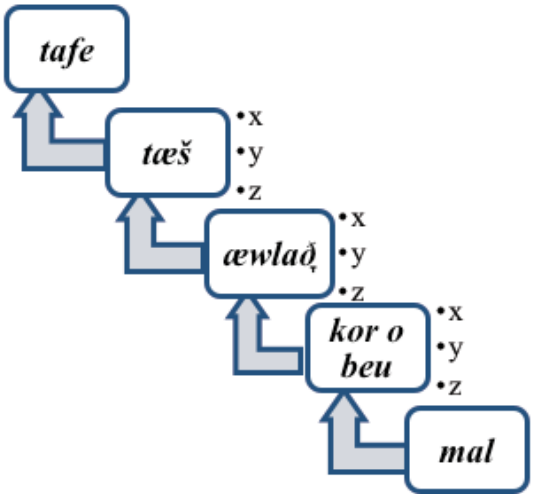

Figure 8: The patrilineal hierarchy of a Bakhtiari tribesman

The relationship between different *tæš* of a *tafe* can be either patrilineal and matrilateral or affinal. Any other grouping above the level of *tafe*[42] is a social decision, based on the needs and necessities of the nomadic life of a tribe at the times of seasonal migration, weddings and funerals, harvest gathering, famine or a natural disaster, local or national conflicts or any other sort of turbulance[43]. In anthropolo-

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founding male ancestor (Schwimmer, 2003: 10)

40. Literally 'son and father'.

41. I used 'clan' here in its anthropological narrow definition as stated by Schwimmer (2003: 22): 'a **unilineal descent group whose members do not trace genealogical links to a supposedly historical founding ancestor**. Rights in the group are simple derived from a father or mother. Clans are usually large groups that are associated with mythical ancestors, who are very often identified as animal species that are considered sacred to the group. They may occur within a complex structure in which they are either nested into larger groups or subdivided into smaller ones in the same fashion as segmentary lineages. Where they are subdivided, the component units are often formal lineages, as in the case of the Akan …'

42. The Bakhtiari pronunciation of the Arabic loan word ***ṭa'efæ'***. According to Vahman and Asatrian 'The presence of a considerable number of Arabic word-forms in the dialect of the Baxtiārīs, unusual for vernacular Persian and even for Classic language might be explained by the Baxtiārī-Arab interrelations and by the fact of the assimilation of certain ethnic groups for arabic origin among them. (Vahman & Asatrian, 1995:10)'

43. The same formula seems to work in other tribes, as well, such as in Baluchi tribes in the Sarḥadd district (south and southeast of Zāhedān), as Towfiq (1987) has quoted from Salzman: '… the Yār Aḥmadzehī and the Gamšādzehī, confirm the importance of descent-based organization. Apart from

gical studies a functional analysis is used to explain the reasons behind the emergence and the development of social organizations. Two theories are mentioned in this regard, one economic and one political, which here can be used as probable reasons behind Bakhtiari social structure. According to Schwimmer (2003: 26):

> The economic theory focuses on corporate land owning patterns. It maintains that individual tenure systems cannot allocate farmland in cultivation regimes that depend upon long fallow periods and extensive land reserves. (This subsistence pattern is labeled **horticultural**.) Since farmers are constantly taking plots out of production and seeking fresh land for new fields, private ownership is not practical. Their long term resource needs are best met by relying on a communal unit to hold land in reserve for the group as a whole. Lineages provide just the right scale and continuity to coordinate these allocations at optimal efficiency. This argument is consistent with the analytical principles of cultural ecology.

As for the remaining categories such as *tafe*, Haft and Char Lang or even once existing Bakhtiari confederation, the political analysis seems applicable:

> The political explanation focuses on the need for social order in stateless societies that lack centralized political systems with formal institutions of law enforcement. Under these conditions, strong and permanent alliances within and between large family based organizations are necessary to establish the sanctions needed to control disruptive behaviour among their members and to assist them when violence does occur. This approach is associated with the structural-functionalist school. (Schwimmer, 2003: 26).

It should be noted that the above mentioned arrangements only held true until the time when there still was an *ilkhan* (1936) or at most until the first decade of the twentieth century and the discovery of oil in their region, when some traces of authority among the *kælantars* 'head of a *tafe*' or *riš-sæfids* 'head of a *tæš*' could still function, to some extant, to regulate tribal affairs. After the new wave of employment in the oil company, finding a noble source of income and independance from local authorities led to the emergence of new kinds of social life. Especially after the weakening of the remaining Khans'authorities by British financial tactics (Cro-

halts, these tribes are constantly on the move, either to gather dates from palm groves in the Māškel lowland or to find pasturage for their sheep in the Sarḥadd highland. Consequently neither territorial groups such as the *bonend*, a collection of mud or mud-brick houses and palm-frond huts occupied during the date harvest, in the Māškel nor herding groups such as the *halk*, a number of families who own a flock and camp together, could become the basis of stable social organization in this district. The reverse is the case because the spatial distribution of the *bonend*s and *halk*s depends on family relationships. In matters such as marriage, prayer, house building, seasonal migration, disputes, etc., lineage is thus the main consideration, not "vicinage." The territorial groups are themselves formed from descent groups, and their bonds of common descent are reinforced by matrilateral and affinal ties (Salzman, 1972: 63).'

nin 2004) which led to their total destruction and loss of power, the need to be attached to a local authority or source of power for protection and survival faded away. Today the word *il* is still in use, habitually, to refer to the combination of the Chahar Lang and Haft Lang as opposed to other ethnic groups like Lorestani Lors or Arabs; but more frequently it is used instead of *tafe*, such as *il-e hæmule* or *il-e bavadi*.

The false assumption of top to bottom hierarchical organization of the Bakhtiari can also explain why not even two of the attempted charts of the Bakhtiari confederation have the same content and the same order of tribes. For instance, in Digar's chart (Figure 7), the Hamule tribe is grouped as Sohoni which itself is part of the so-called Duraki-bab of Haft Lang division. In Amirahmadi, however, Hamule is part of the Bavadi of Haft Lang (Amirahmadian, 2000:47), while in History of Bakhtiari writen by one of the most important and learned chiefs, Sardar Asad the second, Hamule is part of Sohoni but is located among Chahar Lang tribes (Sardar Asad, 1383:619). The reason behind these discrepancies is that only the kin lineage of the tribe i.e. from *mal* to *tafe*, is fixed and cannot be changed under any circumstances. Nobody can change his *tafe*, unless he agrees to be deprived of all his rights on the shared pastures and lands. Even after his death, his widow, if she wants to keep her children, cannot marry into another *tafe*, and if she does, then the children should stay in their father's family custody to be able to inherit their father's share of tribal properties. On the other hand, a whole *tafe* can decide to cut its relation with the neighboring tribes and move or migrate to live in the vicinity of other tribes as was the case with the Hamule tribe (See 2.2.3 below).

The other entity that seems to have been fixed through time is the territories of the Haft Lang and the Chahar Lang. In other words, based on historical accounts of the Bakhtiari, their old songs and tales and old geographical records, what can be conjectured is that this binary division is very old and their territorial regions have also been more or less fixed for many generations, but the tribal groups living in these territories did not always remain the same. Otherwise stated, tribes could change their affinities to the Haft or the Char, in order to receive more support according to shared interests and territorial bonds. In section 2.2.3, on the account of the Hamule tribe's background, an example of this kind of territorial shift is mentioned.

In actual daily life situations, however, if you ask a Bakhtiari, *če kæs-i?*[44] 'Which tribe do you belong to?', he will start directly from a tribe's name such as Babadi, Kianersi, Hamule or Galla, i.e. the two levels of *bæχš* and *taefe* in the above or mainstream charts will be considered as the same level. For more clarification, the dialogue may continue somehow as follows*:*

Q: ze ko Hamul-i-yæl? 'From which Hamule subgroup?'
A: *ze ærdešgærivõ*^{w} 'from Ardeshqariv clan (*tæš*)'

44. This is a very common and typically Bakhtiari small talk initiation question and ice-breaker which also plays an important soicolinguistic role, i.e. to fulfil the urge of a Bakhtiari to ***pey ræsonden*** 'to trace the tribal or kin relations' in order to make ties with a seemingly stranger and to make sure that they are eventually related somehow.

Q: *ko æwlaǰ?* 'whose decendant?'
A: *ze æwlaǰ-e Niaz, kor-e šænbed-om* 'from the decendants of Niaz,
I am Shanbe's son.'

2.2.2 Haft Lang and Chahar Lang: *læng* is not *leng* 'leg'

As mentioned above, Bakhtiari tribes are divided in two general categories: the Haft Lang tribes and the Char Lang tribes. They do not necessarily belong to a shared ancestor, as explained above, and this grouping rather has a socio- historical background. Linguistically, however, Haft Lang and Char Lang constitute the two major dialects of the Bakhtiari language. The question remains: What does the element *Lang* mean?

In the literature on the Bakhtiari over the past two centuries (starting with Layard, 1846), two main explanations of the meaning of *Lang* have always been repeated. These folk etymologies have never satisfied me as valid and correct interpretations of this very important and genuine term in Bakhtiari social history and everyday life. In the following paragraphs I will first cite the existing explanations, then bring forth my reasons for not accepting them, before suggesting a new way of looking at and interpreting this term.

To begin with, I should mention that the existing etymologies embody the notion of *Lang* as a variant of "leng" meaning 'leg' both in Bakhtiari and Modern Persian. But how to explain this phonological change from /æ/ to /e/? I will return to this issue, after bringing up all the justification stories for *Lang*.

For the sake of argument, I will begin by accepting that *Lang* means *leng* 'leg'. Since the same explanation has been repeated in different sources, I prefer to sum them up in separate paragraphs and then mention the sources of the citations.

2.2.2.1 The two brothers story

Once there was a man called Badr who was the ruler of the Bakhtiari or the Big Lor tribes. He had two wives. One of them gave birth to seven sons and the other to four. After Badr's death the Bakhtiari territory was divided between the two wives' children. To distinguish them from each other they got the names of Haft Lang and Chahar Lang, indicating the number of sons in each party. (Mentioned first in Mostowfi's Tarikh-e Gozide [Selected History] in 750 H.Q, 1364 below, and then repeated in Layard, 1846; Lorimer, 1922 and Windfuhr, 1988 to name just a few.)

Evaluation:

My reason for not accepting this explanation that *Lang* means "leng" is a very simple mathematical fact! If *leng* 'leg' is going to represent the number of sons in each party, then they should have been called Chahardah [14] Lang and Hasht [8] Lang! Unless all the poor sons had only one *leng* 'leg'! Garnik Asatrian[45] has

45. Personal communication.

confirmed that counting the legs used to be a common practice for this kind of kin divisions, but he didn't have any answer for why the numbers in this case do not match. It may be argued that *leng* could also be used for 'one pair of legs' then it can be considered as a natural pair. Therefore, "one leg" actually meant 'one (man with) legs'. There is, however, a semantic obstacle facing this argument; i.e. the other meaning of *leng* as 'one half of a pair' as in a phrase like: y*æ leng-e kæwš* 'one half of a pair of shoes'.

2.2.2.2 The tax system explanation

The second very popular explanation is a later but more accepted notion and it seems more probable or at least more logical. It states that since the Safavid era (1501-1736), there has been a tax paying system established according to which the nomads, who were the majority of the Iranian population of the time should pay their share according to the number of their cattle or herds. The tax for the Qashqai tribe, for example, was based on the number of their sheep, whereas the Shahsavan paid on the basis of their camels. For the Bakhtiari, the mare was the basis for counting, in the sense that twenty sheep had the value of one mare. The details of this system are not of concern here[46], but for our discussion, the important point is that Bakhtiari had to pay a tax equal to the price of three mares. The Haft Lang, who were relatively richer, accepted to pay a share of 7/12 of the legs, and the less privileged Chahar Langs a share of 4 /12 and the remaining 1/12 was to be paid by the non-Bakhtiari tribes who came to their territory to live under their support (in Sardar Asad, 1383; Layard, 1846; Safinezhad, 1368 and 1381; Amirahmadian, 1378 and Garthwaite, 1970).

Evaluation:

Accepting the above explanation requires us to accept that this social system basically exists because the central government wanted the Bakhtiari to be divided in this way; whereas this tribal social structure is very integrated into and has a huge impact on the Bakhtiari cultural, social, linguistic and historical life. Therefore, believing that it is an imported or imposed structure leaps out as utterly unrealistic.

Besides, if it is true, then several questions need to be answered, such as: why should just the Bakhtiari be divided or be named after their tax duties and not for example the Qashqai or the Shahsavan tribes? Why is there no such term as Yek Lang 'One Leg' to name the third party who came to live under the shelter of Bakhtiari community?

Moreover, the concept of Haft Lang being richer is not valid because the prosperity of each party has always been tightly related to some temporal factors such as their terms with the central government or the situation of trade in their respective territories and the like. To put it differently, their financial and social status was always changing.

46. The interested reader can consult Karimi (1973: 46)

The most important fact here is the existence of this division even before the establishment of the aforementioned tax system. In other words, as the story goes, there were already two groups of Bakhtiari, one richer than the other, and then, the tax duties were assigned according to their respective wealth. This is a very clear indication that this binary division should have been older than the Safavid era if the story were right.

2.2.3 Linguistic Analysis

The important point to mention here is the fact that */læng/* and */leng/* are minimal pairs both in Bakhtiari and in Modern Persian. */læng/* means 'to lag/ fall behind' in the compound verb */læng kerden/* or as an adjective it means 'lame', while as mentioned earlier, */leng/* means 'leg' and also 'one part of a pair'. The proponents of the *Lang = leng* notion argue that the ancestors of the Bakhtiari changed the pronunciation of */leng/* to */læng/* for euphemistic reasons, to make it sound more pleasing and not to convey the meaning of */leng/* or */leg/* which is somehow pejorative (Asad, 1383:154-155).

This method of argumentation, I believe, is an urban and modern way of looking at Bakhtiari culture and has nothing to do with the nature of a nomadic culture which is tightly geared to nature and its basic elements. In other words, there is no such euphemistic tendency among the Bakhtiari nomads who are the present-day representatives of their ancestors. Living in a mostly untamed environment they have to be very quick, straightforward in conveying what they mean; otherwise they will lose the simple but practical way of communicating with each other which is so critical for their harsh life style. As a vivid example, they use some words that are considered as taboo for an Iranian urban mind-set, to name different herbs or plants simply because of the obvious resemblance of, for instance, a flower to an animal genitals. They call it without feeling shy or embarrassed, unlike what the urban and more educated members of the tribe would feel. Therefore, the thought of the Bakhtiari feeling shy to use a word which means 'leg' is very romantic and this rationalization is imposed by later, more intellectual members of the society with no basis in their popular culture.

The other important point is that by living and working closely with Bakhtiari nomads, one will never hear someone saying *læng* instead of *leng*, even casually, simply because it will sound absolutely wrong. *leng*, obviously, is used every day in a variety of situations and in different combinations such as:

ǰeɢele leng deraz 'the long-legged lad'; in addressing a tall young boy in a not very friendly way. *leng-a=s=e soft beger*! 'Grab its legs tightly!'; in a goat-milking session, for instance.

leng-a=t=e bešown! 'Move your legs (up and down)'; giving instruction to someone who is trying to cross the river by swimming.

To conclude this section, I would like to add that although the phonological shift from /*æ*/ to /*e*/ is probable in the Bakhtiari language, as in Modern Persian, especially in word-final position/syllable (See 2.3 below), like *χændæ* > *χænde* 'smile/laugh', still, in my opinion, the word *Lang* can by no means be a simple phonological variant of "leng".

2.2.4 A proposed new etymology for Lang

In the search for a meaningful interpretation of *Lang*, my attention was drawn to some Iranian toponyms such as: **Lang-rud**, a city by Caspian sea; **Lang āb**, a village near Bojnurd in the east; **Lang ābād**, a village near Shurāb in the vicinity of Qom in the central part of Iran; **Bandar-e Lenge**, by the Persian Gulf in the south; **Lenjān**, Arabic pronunciation of Lang-ān, near Esfahān and close to the Bakhtiari territory, **Cheshme Langān**[47] in the Central District of Fereydunshahr County, Esfahān Province; and probably **Lankarān**, in today's Azarbaijān and **Pālangān**, in Kordestān province. In the neighboring border areas, **Sālang**, a northern mountain and **Yakāvlang**, a city, in Afghanistan can also be mentioned. This list can probably be extended more but the point here is that the existence of this recurrent term cannot be accidental. Actually it is quite common to see the repetition of a certain word or morpheme in toponyms and in some other words which one can trace in different Iranian city names, such as the ones listed below:

- *gerd/ǰerd*, 'city' as in: Susan-gerd, Chel-gerd, Dast-j/gerd, Boru-jerd, Farhād-gerd
- *kæng*, 'fortress', as in: Kang-ān, Kang-dezh, Kang-āvar
- *deh*, 'village', as in: Deh-dez, Deh-lorān, Deh-dasht
- *dæšt*, 'field', as in: Marv-dasht, Kuh-dasht, Kelār-dasht, Deh-dasht
- *rud*, 'river', as in: Lang-rud, Hasht-rud, Rud-sar
- *sær*, 'head/ end', as in: Rām-sar, Bābol-sar
- *šæhr*, 'city', as in: Pirān-shar, Khoram-shahr
- *šah*, 'king', as in: Shah-savar, Shāh-rud
- *abad*, 'prosperous', as in : Ābād-ān, Khoram-ābād, Ābād-e
- *ærdæ/e*, 'righteous', as in: Arda-bil, Arde-stān, Arda-kān
- *χor*/*χur*, 'sun', as in: Khur, Khur-āsgān, Khur-zoq, Khur-moj, Ākhore, Khor-be
- *čoɢa*, 'mound, hill' as in: Choqā-zanbil, Choqā-khor, Choqā-sorkhe, Choqā-bal, Sar-Choqā

Therefore, one can conclude that, similarly, there has to be an exact definition for the repetitive morpheme *Lang* in the above mentioned toponyms.

In the next step a search began for existing meanings of this morpheme in Bakhtiari or other Iranian languages. In a survey of Bakhtiari words, I came across the word *æw-læng* meaning 'pasture' (Maddadi, 1996:29).

47. Available at URL (14-06-2016): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheshmeh_Langan_Rural_District

I have been informed that in Mashhad, a city in northeastern Iran, the same meaning is expressed by the word *ow-læng*. In these two words the first part means 'water' but to get to the meaning of 'pasture', what can the *Lang* part mean: 'land', 'field' or 'grass'?

Later I found out that in the Chahar Lang dialect of Bakhtiari, there is the word *lengi*, which means 'half of the land which a pair of ox can plough' (Sarlak, 1386:243).

In the preface of a book on the Bakhtiari (Amiri, 1385) it is mentioned that there was a word in pre-Islamic Bakhtiari, pronounced as *lænk* which meant 'river' and the author concludes that *Lang* is the same word with a voicing change in the final consonant.

On the whole, *Lang*, whether meaning 'river' or 'a piece of land' is compatible with the geographic distribution of the Haft and Chahar Lang tribes. Their territories can be assumed as having seven pastures or pieces of land for the Haft Lang and four for the Chahar Lang. There are several rivers in the region and considering the passage of time which certainly has changed the course and volume of the existing rivers and streams, still we can name seven rivers/streams in the Haft Lang area and four in the Chahar Lang.

In my quest to find a reasonable etymology for *Lang*, I presented and discussed my data and hypotheses with Prof. A. Lubotsky, all of which reminded him of a word in Sanskrit which means 'plough', although with an unknown origin. Mayrhofer (1994:477) writes about it:

"*lā́ṅgala-* n. Pflug (RV+) ... – Mi., ni., p**ā.** *naṅgala*, pkt. *laṅgala-*, *ṇaṅgala-*, *ṇaṅgara-* n., hi. *nā̃gal* m. (u.a.) Pflug (Tu [Add] 11006, Tu 11008). Unklar; Fremdwort?".

It seems attractive to assume that Vedic Sanskrit *lā́ṅgala-* 'plough' is related to *læng*, in spite of the fact that its origin is unknown. Both can be due to borowing from another unknown language.

A tradition in Bakhtiari culture can be used in support of this hypothesis, and that is the use of ***hiəš*** 'plough' and other agricultural terms for divisions of land. Some of these terms that are taken from Maddadi (1996) are worthy of notice here:

pa 'the bottom of everything'; a measuring unit equal to 12/5 ***mæn*** 'seven kilograms'. The Bakhtiari measure a piece of land based on the amount of wheat or barley that they can sow in it. One *mæn* means a piece of land that has the capacity to grow seven kilos. Each 12/5 *mæn* equals one *pa*, every four *pa* equals one ga 'cow' and every two ga equals one *hiəš*. Therefore, one plough/ *hiəš* of land means a piece of land that has the capacity to grow a hundred *mæn* or seven hundred kilograms of crop.

Prof. Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst also generously shared his thoughts on the subject as follows:

> The Bactrian term βαγολαγγο /βαγlāng/ has been derived by N. Sims-Williams from *baga-dēna-ka meaning 'container of the gods' and therefore 'sanctuary', a place where the gods stay or where their images or statues or insignia are stored. If Yakub Lang is formed in the same way that would suggest that Lāng alone has the meaning 'sanctuary' and that the first part of the compound a reference to whose sanctuary it is, the gods' or Yakub's, etc. Land belonging to the sanctuary or dedicated to a god might use the term Lāng. The word has a specific Bactrian sound change from *d > *δ > l. βαγlāng is attested for example in the Bactrian inscription at Surkh Kotal and in line 1 there.
> The other interesting word is οαþολανζο /wēšlanz/ or /wēšlanǰ/ in document 66 or **ci** in Sims-Williams' Bactrian documents from Northern Afghanistan II, 2007. There in line 6 it refers to a 'hay field', wēš 'hay' and lanz/ǰ 'field' which in the second part might supply a term related to lāng 'container' here referring to 'field'. (Personal communication, July 2015)

To conclude, we can assume that the word *læng* was used from the beginning to divide, distribute or administer fields or pastures, in the case of the Bakhtiari with a long history of pastoral life. To this day, the distribution of pastures in both divisions of the tribe corresponds to seven and four proportions.

There is no need to say that this is an open question and requires more investigation and begs new thoughts and ideas from others interested in the subject. My aim here is to encourage a new way of doing research in the field of Bakhtiari, avoiding the repetition of previous scholars and questioning the notions which for decades were taken as granted.

2.2.5 Hamule tribe: Chahar Lang or Haft Lang?

As mentioned above (2.2.1), some sources classify the Hamule tribe under the Haft Lang tribes and some under the Char Langs. The Hamule people themselves also think that initially they belonged to Char Lang parties and then moved to Haft Lang. That intrigued me to take on a reading odyssey in search of a historical evidence for this relocation, which finally got me to the passage below from Layard's memoires:

The Suhuni[48] is a large tribe of I'liyat[49]; the chief, Shefi' Khan, is a liberal and able man, and was the wezir of Mohammaed Taki[50]. Having been long accustomed

48. Suhuni is interpretated by locals as *se huni* ' the three housholds', because it is a cover term which refers to the combination of three tribes: Hamule, Baversad and Kahyash.

49. Refering to nomads in older literature which is constructed by adding an Arabic plural suffix ***-at*** and the Iranian attributive suffix ***-i*** to *il*, with the epenthesis of ***-y-*** in the middle. The remnants of this bizarre or mixed-method plural formations still exists in Persian words such as *sæbziǰat* 'vegetables' or *karχane ǰat* 'factories', but the grammatical tradition is obsolete now.

50. /***mohæmmæd tæɢi***/ was the paramount Khan of the Chahar Lang which was Layard's host and

to collect the annual tribute of the tribes, and to devote his attention to their internal polity, he was better acquainted with the state and history of the Bakhtiaris than any other man I met within the country. Although the Chief of the tribe, he is not a member of it, but of an Afshar family long settled in the mountains. He was for some years in Teheran and served as major in Bakhtiari regiment disciplined by Major Hart. The Garmesirs of the Suhuni were originally in Andakau[51] and Shimbar to the north of the Karun, but being strongly attached to Mohammed Taki, they crossed the river and settled in Gulgir and Asemari. This tribe has both good horse and matchlock men. They cultivate corn and barley, to the growth of which the land they occupy is particularly favorable. Since the fall of Mohammed Taki, the Suhuni have recrossed the Karun, and placed themselves under Mohammed Meti and Jafer Kuli[52]. Shefi', their chief, is now a fugitive in the mountains. (Layard,1846: 12).

Hamule has four *tæš*, namely *tiəzgærð*, *ærdešqeriv*, *šeiχ* and *dæwmæmeðị*. It is very customary in Bakhtiari to attribute some character or even totem-like tags (Elima, 1995: 21-25) to one and every tribe or *tæš*, sometimes in a pejorative way. For example they call the people of the Bamedi tribe as *bameðị χers*[53], and the Monjezi people are known as *monǰezi goraz* [54]. The Hamule are called *musir-čin* 'shallot- pickers', apparently because in their summer quarters, the land is rich in wild growing shallots, and this is one of the main activities and sources of income for the women of the tribe, which sometimes provokes some jealousy in the neighboring tribes who do not possess as rich or fertile land.

From the four *tæš* of the tribe, *tiəzgærdun* 'the members of Tizgard clan' are known as *feng* 'seditive', starting many unwanted disputes and fights between the other members of the tribe, especially in the older times when the *kælantær* (See2.2.1 above) of the tribe was chosen from their *tæš*. Some of these *kælantær*s, who were supposed to supervise the affairs of the tribe and act as a link between the Hamule and the Ilkhan, and eventually, the government, would act not quite based on honesty. For instance, in matters concerning the purchase or distribution of the allocated lands and pastures to their own subjects, there were times that they did some mischief such as selling a certain piece of land to several families, the dispute over which continues to this day, even years after they have all passed away.

ærdešqerivun, to which my æwlad belong, are called æ*χe espiəð* 'white-colored', apparently because the speakers or representatives of the tribe were chosen from them, believing that they are *meilesi* 'sociable or conciliar'. Interestingly, they are also known as *seng-seng-kon* 'one who takes his time to do a job, sometimes in an excessive way'! After 1925, when Reza Shah Pahlavi ordered the issuing of Identity Cards for all the population, many people belonging to this *tæš* chose Ardeshiri as their family name.

they developed a very close friendship. He passed away in 1851 in Nasser uldin Shah-e Qajar's prison.

51. Andeka /ændeka/ and Shimbār are still the winter quaters of Hamule tribes.

52 /***Mæmæd meiti***/ and /***jæfær ɢoli***/ were Haft Lang chiefs of the time.

53. bear-like.

54. boar-like.

The šei*χun* are known being stubborn and quarrelsome. Sometimes also called šei*χ-e goraz*, pejoratively, apparently for the same qualities, they were known as the best gunmen of the Kh*ā*ns. My paternal grandmother, Shirin, belonged to this *tæš*, and had to marry my grandfather as part of a *hin-bæs* 'stop bloodshed' tradition, to put an end to a severe conflict and bloodshed aroused by the incident of the death of my grandfather's brother, allegedly being shot by Shirin's father.

The *dæwmæmidun* were notorious for being not very tidy and there are even some sayings in the tribe referring to the reluctance of other tribes to reside even temporarily on their encampment grounds. Ironically, this *tæš* are now known to have the most highly educated population of the Hamule, one of them has even become a member of the parliament for some years and now because of the higher social status, the *šora* 'the council of the community under the Islamic administration' is located in their village of Dime and one of them acts as the head of this council.

It should be noted that these are the attributes that the four *tæš* of Hamule give to eachother, while other tribes may give them different names, based on their shared past experiences and also according to their hostile or amicable relationship.

The summer pastures and territory of the Hamule are located in Chahar Mahal-o Bakhtiari province, starting from the vicinity of La Hoshk and Dime, a village locating in the rural district of Shurab of the central division (*bæχš*) of Kuhrang county (Coordinates: 32˚30′32″N50˚13′10″E [55]); spreading northward, on two sides of the road at the skirt of mounts locally called *kolong-e hær-e nær*, *keft-e gorgõæk*, *mol-e zærð̩* and *sælæ tor* towards *χorbe* and *dæšt-e lale*[56] fields, *bænæw-esteki* and *tuf-espiəð̩* villages. Their tents are also scattered according to *tæš* and *æwlad* divisions all around this area and also on the both banks of the river called *æw-e χorbe*. Their winter quarters are more dispersed, but are all located in the Khuzest*ā*n province, mainly in and around the cities of Masjed soleim*ā*n, L*ā*li, Andek*ā* and their surrounding fields, mountains and areas such as *asemari*, *bætevæn*, *šelal* and *sær gæč-e gændom-kal*

55. Available at URL (17-09-2016): http://web.archive.org/web/*/%20http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deymeh,_Chaharmahal_and_Bakhtiari.
56. The field of Crown imperial or Kaiser's Crown in *χorbe* is one of the major touristic attractions of Iran. The major part of this field by inheritance belongs to the Hamule tribe but is now claimed as a national resource.

2.3 THE BAKHTIARI LANGAUGE

Bakhtiari is classified as a southwestern Iranian language. Historically, it is geographically adjacent to New Persian, which explains much about the linguistic similarities of the two languages from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives. There are, however, some elements in Bakhtiari that single it out from the other southwestern Iranian languages.

In phonology, for example, some of the changes from the Middle Persian to New Persian seem to take a different path in Bakhtiari. An example is the change of intervocalic **m* to *w* as in *āmad* > *oweid* 'came'. On the other hand, there are also changes within New Persian that did not happen in Bakhtiari, such as the metathesis of *-hl* > *-lχ*: Bakhtiari and Middle Persian *tahl* versus New Persian *talχ* 'bitter' (Windfuhr 1988: 560).

In addition, Bakhtiari kinship terminology contains some words that are different from all the other Iranian languages; examples include *kiči,* 'father's sister' and *geu*, 'brother' (See section 3.1.1below).

There are some words that seem to have not gone through almost no changes from Middle Persian and are inherited by Bakhtiari, such as MP *bāhi* > Bakh. *båhi* 'arm' or MP=Bakh *angust* 'finger' (See section 3.1.1below).

As for grammar, the passive suffix *-ih* of Middle Persian did not survive in New Persian, but left its trace in some Bakhtiari verbs, such as *χærðən* 'to eat'*, χæhrestən* 'to be eaten'; or *e-der-i-s,* 'you'll tear it' and the passive form *e-der-eh-e,* 'it will be torn' (See section 6.9 below).

Moreover, there are some structures, not productive but frequently used, that represent a more complex syntactic treatment in the language: *næ-god-om-et-es*? (NEG-say.PST-1SG-BP.2SG-BP.3SG) 'Didn't I tell you that?'. This involves a sequence of three arguments which is not possible in Persian, i.e.: *-om=et=es*, that is, a suffix and two enclitics (See examples 97 and 98 in the section 5.6.1.2).

In the main Bakhtiari speaking regions, some other Iranian and non-Iranian languages are also frequently in use by non-Bakhtiari ethnic groups of the area. In Ahvāz, for example, the central city of Khuzestān province[57] with a population of over one million, and as is expected, a multi-ethnic city, approximately 36% of the inhibitants are Arabic speakers. Khuzestāni Arabic, as MacKinnon (2014) points out, is 'of the Persian Gulf type, not fundamentally different from Kuwaiti Arabic'. The Bāzār, one of the major business sections of this very old, historic and now major industrial city, has always been run in the main by the Shushtari, the Beh-

57. Before the large-scale immigration that took place during the 20th century and afterwards, the population of Khuzestan consisted for the most part of two linguistic groups: speakers of Arabic, who lived in the area stretching from the Persian Gulf and the Shatt al-Arab (Šaṭṭ al-ʿArab) river inland to the city of Ahvāz, and speakers of Iranian dialects, who inhabited the area to the northwest and the foothills and mountains of the Zagros range (Mac Kinnon 2014).

bahāni and the Dezfuli merchants and salespersons. While these groups migrated from their respective towns to Ahvāz centuries ago, many of them have kept their dialects, apparently for sociolinguistic reasons.

These three ethnic groups are known by the Bakhtiari, firstly, for their *zown-e* **čæp** 'distorted language'[58] and, secondly, for being very cunning and artful traders which in the eyes of a Bakhtiari nomad is not a virtue. To be so concerned about money or materialistic values at the expense of being kind or truthful to people, is not considered to be moral and the Bakhtiari culture detests it.

Some Turkic nomads also live among the Bakhtiari, some in villages like Khuygān-e Olyā[59] and some in semi-pastoral families which are scattered among the nomadic areas. One family of them, whom I met and spoke to in one of my visits to Mahnesa's mal (see below 2.5.1), erects their tent every year in *tištærdun*, near the Hamule families. There are also some villages in the Fereydan[60] region of the Esfahān province that even have Armenian and Georgian speakers. The Georgian or Gorji people, as Iranians call them, live in several villages of Fereydan or Fereydunshar County, but they only have Lori/ Bakhtiari[61] neighbors mainly in the two villages of Choqyort[62] and Nehzatābād[63] in Cheshmeh Langān Rural District, in the Central District of Fereydunshahr County, Esfahān Province. Armenians live mainly in the village of Zarne[64], in theYeylaq Rural District, in the Central District of Buin va Miāndasht County, Esfahān Province and also in Khuygān-e Olyā.

The socio-linguistic situation of these mixed villages seems to be a perfect subject for contact linguists, since, to my knowledge, no source is available about the effects of these languages on each other over the centuries of contact. The same is true of the Arabic dialects of Khuzestān and their probable borrowings from the Iranian languages of the area and vice versa. I am particularly curious about the language of a Bakhtiari tribe that, supposedly because of decades of living in Arabic-speaking regions, are called Arab Kamari. The attire of this tribe's women still has some Bakhtiari touches but mostly resembles the Arabic attire. Working on each one of these languages in relation to Bakhtiari is also a desideratum to be fulfilled in the future.

58. This is how Bakhtiaris usually express their impression vis-à-vis languages that are similar to theirs; i.e. other Southwestern languages, but which they cannot understand fully.
59. Available at URL (24-12-2016): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khuygan-e_Olya
60. Available at URL (14-10-2016): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fereydan
61. Because I personally have not been to this area, I cannot define what exactly the Wikipedia page means by Lurish dialects of the area. I will certainly ratify this problem in my future trips to the area.
62. Available at URL (17-10-2016): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choqyurt
63. Available at URL (02-01-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nehzatabad,_Fereydunshahr
64. Available at URL (22-10-2016): http://web.archive.org/web/*/%20http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zarneh,_Isfahan

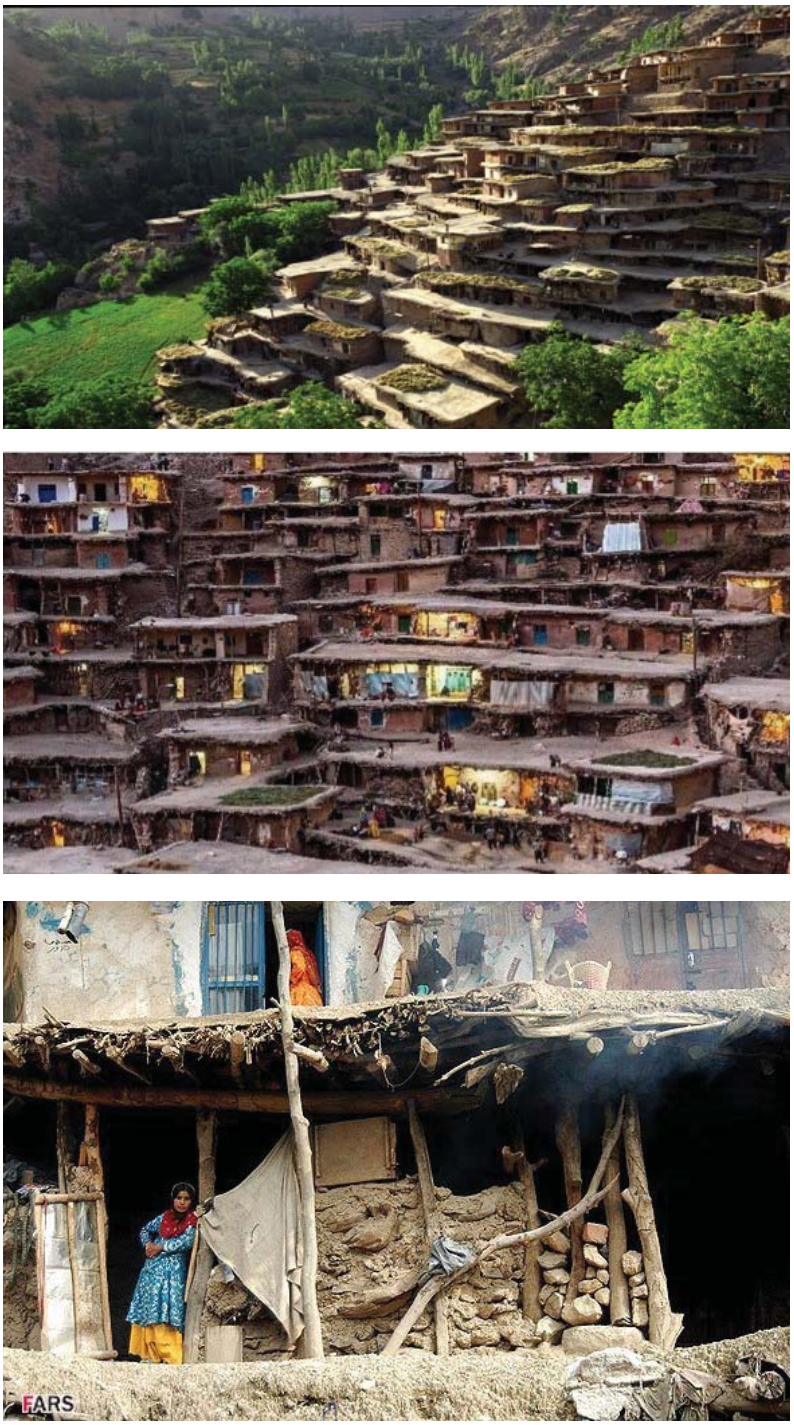


Figure 9 a,b,c:Sar-e Āqā Seyed village with its unique architechure and people

The closest relatives of Bakhtiari, however, continues to be the variety of Kohgiluye-o Boiramadi. Several attempts have been made by scholars to draw a meaningful divide between the languages in the so-called Lori/ Luri continuum. MacKinnon and Amānolāhi, believe that the first line should be drawn between Northern Lori and Southern Lori, in the former's terminology Mac Kinnon (2011) and Lori-e Bākhtari and Khāvari 'Western and Eastern Lori' in the latter's Amanollahi (1991:52). They are spoken, respectively, by the Lor-e Kuchak of the Lorestān province and by the Lor-e Bozorg (the Bakhtiari and the Kohgiluye-o Boiramadi). Anonby (2003-b), not quite satisfied by this distinction, suggested a more refined distinction in the continuum, because he found it "…important from the viewpoint of structure, lexicon, and inter-intelligibility to make an additional distinction between Baḵtiāri and the remaining varieties to the south". He introduced the three-layered category of Northern Lori, Bakhtiari and Southern Lori. I can only add that as a native speaker of Bakhtiari, the variety spoken by the Bakhtiari and the Kohgiluye-o Boiramadi can easily be considered as two dialects of the same language, based on the hands-on criterion of mutual intelligibility while the so-called Northern Lori, for a Haft Lang Bakhtiari is as distinct as Persian. For the Char Lang Bakhtiari living in cities and villages closer to Khoramābād in Lorestān, the degree of mutual understanding is probably higher.

Within the Bakhtiari itself, the locals would mention two major dialects, Haft Lang and Char Lang, and within Haft Lang variety, they think that the *Mœwri* and *Bavadi* tribes speak another variation. In my field visits, I did not notice major differences within *Bavadi*. The dialect that struck me as very special, however, was the one that is spoken in a very old and remote village called *sær-e aɢa seyed*[65], in which the shrine of one the Shi'a Imāmzade, Āqā Seid is located. He is among one of the most sacred *pirun*[66] of the Bakhtiari, especially for the Haft Lang. I have some recordings of this variety but unfortunately I have not yet had the time to work on it.

It is worthy of note that I have also heard the mention of a secret language, *tošmali*, used and spoken only by Toshmals who are the local musicians.

To conclude this section, I would like to mention the phenomenon of a rather abrupt and widespread borrowing from English that started almost at the same time of as the appearance of the oil and the British in the Bakhtiari region until approximately the Islamic Revolution of 1979 when the Americans, Hindi[67] and other English speaking employees of the Oil Company and related corporations

65**. Sar Aqa Seyyed** is a village in Miankuh-e Moguyi Rural District, in the Central District of Kuhrang County, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, Iran. At the 2006 census, its population was 1,360, in 208 families. Available at URL (07-09-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sar_Aqa_Seyyed

66. *pir* is the term that Bakhtiaris and some other Iranian peoples use to refer to their sacred figures. In Bakhtiari the word Imāmzade or Emāmzade 'born by an Imam, decendant of an Imam' is not used. Every tribe affiliates itself with a pir, the most popular ones include: pir-e boveir; Soltun Bereim; aqa Seid; Bava zeid. To learn more about sacred places in Bakhtiari see Brooks (2002).

67. At that time, Hindi doctors were employed to work on very remote villages and towns.

and organizations were forced to leave the country. This borrowing is very significant because the loan words and expressions are used specifically in this area and not in other parts of Iran. In 1996, while still an M.A. student, I did a relatively thorough research on this subject, and collected a list of about 350 loan words and published them in the linguistic quarterly of The Iranian Academy of Language and Literature (Zolfaghari, 2002). The article was in Persian, but I have added a shorter and translated list here in Appendix 1. In the next section, parts of this research will be presented in the body of a choronological sociolinguistic overview of the language.

2.4 THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION

In 1996, as part of my master's thesis, I started a field work investigation to see whether the Bakhtiari language, which at that time I was advised to call a dialect, is in danger of extinction, and whether the speakers were shifting to Persian or would maintain their language. This was the first research of its kind to be conducted on the Iranian languages. Therefore, I had no model to follow. With the guidance of the supervisors[68] of the project, I devised a questionnaire, containing some 32 open and muliple-choices questions, incorporating all the relevant factors concerning language use in different social domains. Around a hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed among women and men of five age and three educational groups[69] in the city of Masjed Soleimān, which has over 90 percent of Bakhtiari speakers. The interviews and collecting the data took around six months, and then the results were processed using SPSS software. Some of the results were unexpected and did not support the initial hypothesis of the project, but in general a decline of 0,4% per decade of the use of Bakhtiari was calculated. This we considered to be an optimistic result and we realized that the variety of Bakhtiari used in Masjed Soleimān could not be considered endangered, mainly due to the robust attitude of its speakers towards their culture, language and traditions (Zolfaghari, 1997, 2001, 2003). Some of the tables and charts are reproduced here as representative of the research.

As I will explain in the following paragraphs, the results of my MA research, carried out nearly two decades ago, may now be considered to be outdated. Not only the socio-linguistic factors in favor of their language use have not changed during the past two decades, but they have also been intensified by the introduction of new technology and media facilities. As an example, when in 2009 I started to look for online sources on Bakhtiari to consult for my present research, I was completely astonished by the number of Bakhtiari or Lori blogs, webpages and sites

68. Prof. Yahya Modaressi, a prominent Iranian socio-linguist and Prof. M. Dabir Moqaddam, an internationally credited Iranian typologist and linguist.

69. Age groups: 19<, 20-29; 30-39; 40-49 and 50>.
Educational groups: illiterate- primary school (Year 6); year 7-high school diploma and university level.

propagating the language and the culture, each in its own professional or amateur way. Nowadays, one of the most amusing hobbies of the young Bakhtiaris is producing funny text messages, incorporating old and traditional verses and sayings in a modern context, like changing the old complaint of a lover to his beloved for not glancing at him while passing each other on the migration route, by substituting it with his complaint of her not responding to his WhatsApp smilies or text messages[70]!

On Facebook there are hundreds of different ethnic pages. I am aware of some 30 different Bakhtiaris alone, almost all of them are trying to promote the language, the music, the history and the culture in general. Stand-up comedians, short videos, music video clips, documentaries, pop and even rap songs are among all the different contemporary ethnic Iranian reproductions of their cultural interests.

There are numerous books, mainly poetry and proverbs, written and published every month. Last year we even witnessed the birth of a Bakhtiari Encyclopedia of 700 pages, compiled and written by only one author without bibliographical references[71]! Recently another Bakhtiari encyclopedia has been published, its title, *Bakhtiarica*[72], modeled after the prestigious *Iranica* or perhaps *Britannica*.

It is worth mentioning that these more passionate and less scholarly activities are not limited to the Bakhtiari, but can be seen more or less from nearly every other Iranian ethnic group. The exact reasons behind these vigorous representations of interests and sometimes prejudices about one's ethnic origins in Iran are hard to find and explain and it certainly requires a thorough sociological investigation which is beyond the scope of the present research. One incident, however, may indicate the idea that a major factor involved here is a fight for identity which sometimes is felt to be under attack by the mainstream Persian culture. In 2014, a TV series was produced and broadcast by the national TV called *Sarzamin-e Kohan* 'The Ancient Land', following a story which began around the WWI. In the fourth episode, a Persian who is involved in a dispute with the family of one of the prominent Bakhtiari Khans[73], accuses him of being a puppet in the hands of the British

70. *ær bin-i zæng ni-zæn-om, ni-d-om pæyam-i/ dir-a-dir dus=et dar-om, hær do tiy=am-i* 'If I don't send you an SMS, I love you from a far, as much as my two eyes', where the words for SMS (*pæyam-i*) rhymes with 'my eyes' (*tiyam-i*).

71. The author is a Hamule from *dæwmamedi tæš*. I was very eager to see and read this book, because in one of her interviews the author claimed that this book is a joint production of her father and her own and she was trying to transfer his knowledge and information to the next generations. I have met her late father, who was one of the respected *riš sæfids* 'respected elderly member' of the tribe and that made me have high expectations from the book. When I finally received the book via post, my expectations turned out to be unrealistic. This young author has apparently chosen to follow the existing practice of the local scholars, compiling the fragmented information in a non-scientific or scholarly manner.

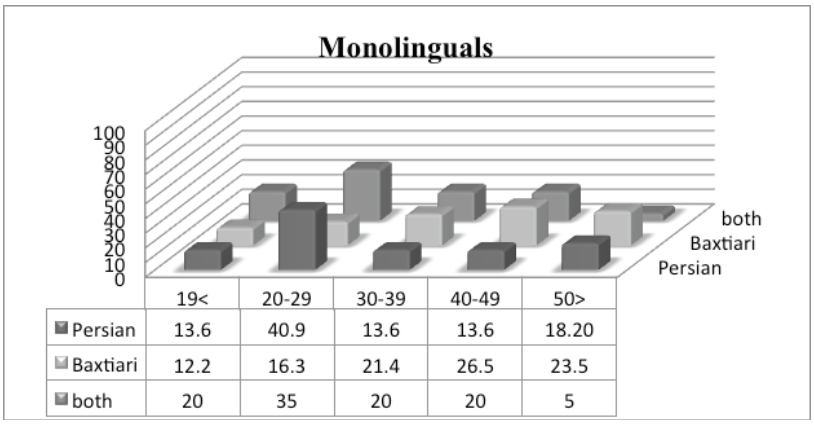
72. I haven't seen the book yet, and only saw the book cover on one of the Bakhtiari Facebook pages.

73. A portrait of Sardar Assad, the second, hung on this family's living room wall, indicating their affinity with the so-called great Ilkhans. Later, the director of the film, to ratify this unexpected reaction, claimed that all the personages are fictional and do not represent any historical figure, but this one portrait was enough for the Bakhtiari mob not to believe him.

and a traitor to the country. The next day, there were thousands of Bakhtiaris in the streets of Esfahān, Ahvāz and some other cities, protesting against the national TV, the film and its director, accusing them of a conspiracy against the Bakhtiari. They continued the demonstrations and protests, backed by some open letters of prominent Bakhtiari poets, writers and scholars to the point that the authorities decided to prevent the series from being broadcast. Now, the point is, I was sure that most of those protestors in the streets had not even watched the film, and I even called some Bakhtiari relatives to check this. It turned out to be true. They, however, joined the crowd for the simple reason that they felt the Bakhtiari should always be united against an outsider's attack. Almost the same reaction can be seen every time there is an election in the country. They will vote for a Bakhtiari candidate, no matter how incompetent he is, chanting a Bakhtiari saying: *liš-e χom-un bæh ze χuv-e mærdom=e* 'Our own bad is better than the others' good one'!

From a linguistic point of view, we can only conjecture that this rigorous solidarity can at least play a positive role in preserving the Bakhtiari language and lead to the production of more cultural materials. Having this socio-cultural introduction in mind, now we can consider and interpret the following charts more conveniently.

The first chart shows the percentage of Persian and Bakhtiari monolinguals in the research community:



	19<	20-29	30-39	40-49	50>
Persian	13.6	40.9	13.6	13.6	18.20
Baxtiari	12.2	16.3	21.4	26.5	23.5
both	20	35	20	20	5

Figure 10: Percentage of monolinguals in Persian or Bakhtiari

As can be seen in figure 10 above, in 1996, the percentage of Persian monolinguals in the younger group was less than in the age group of 20-29 and equal to older groups of 30-49 and 40-49. This was unexpected and at the same time promising for the maintenance of the language. The reason that the age group of 20-29 had more Persian monolinguals and at the same time the highest percentage of Bakhtiari-Persian bilinguals (35%) was the result of the migration of this group to Persian speaking cities during their teenage years and younger, due to Iran-Iraq war.

In the next diagram, we tried to figure out what languages people are multilingual in and to what degree. The question was: Which language did you learn as your first language?

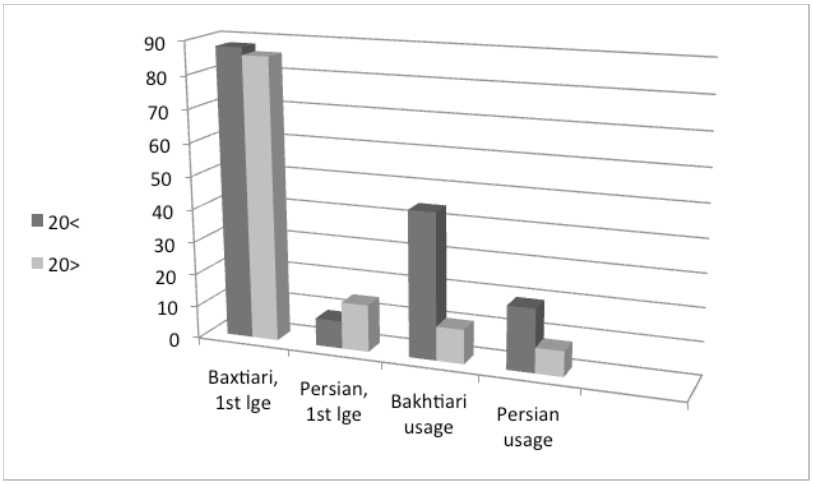


Figure 11: Percentage of the first language (Persian or Bakhtiari)

A high percentage of both age groups of younger than 20 and older, still considered Bakhtiari their first language (87,9% and 85,7% for Bakhtiari versus 8,6% and 14,3% for Persian, respectively). As expected, the younger group used Persian more than Bakhtiari (fourth pairs of columns 19,2% versus 7,7%). Contrary to the hypothesis, though, the younger generation used Bakhtiari more as well (44,3% versus 10,4%). It means that the children younger than 20 years of age learned and used Bakhtiari four times more and Persian around three times more than the older group, which is a very good indication for the survival of a language (Zolfaghari,1996: 202).

In the next step, women and men were asked about their language choice in domestic domains. The hypothesis was that women, being less sociable and busier at home use Bakhtiari more than Persian. The results in figure 12, however, followed:

language use gender	Persian	Bakhtiari	both
male	08,0	79,5	9,1
	31,8	71,4	40,0
female	26,8	50,0	21,4
	68,2	28,6	60,0

Figure 12: Percentage of the language choice in domestic domains

Both groups chose Bakhtiari over Persian (79,5% for men and 50,0% for women). However, men used Bakhtiari almost twice as much as women, while women use Persian at home almost twice as much as men (68,2 % versus 31,8%). Therefore, the related hypothesis which assumed a higher usage of Bakhtiari in a domestic domain, was not supported. One explanation for this unexpected result could be the more active role of women in the literacy of the children.

Another question was whether they try to hide their Bakhtiari accent while speaking Persian (answer indicated by Yes) or not (No) and give reasons for each choice. We assumed that the positive answer to this question can be an indication of low esteem in using their mother tongue which is not promising for the maintenance of the language. Figure 13 shows the results:

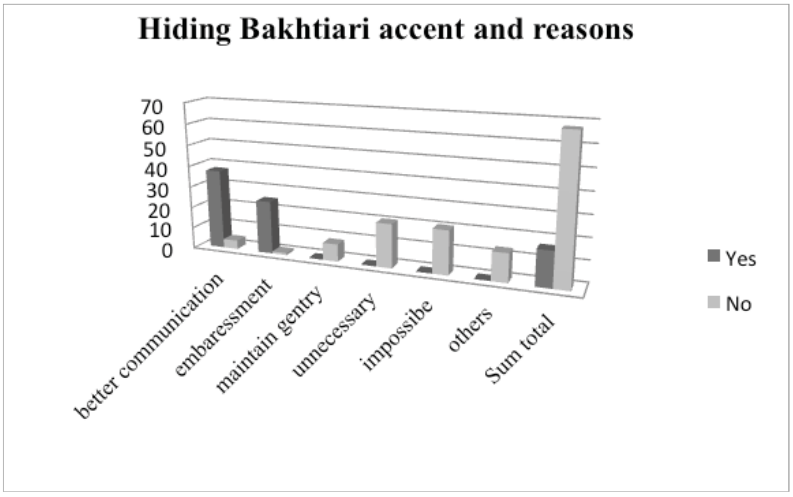
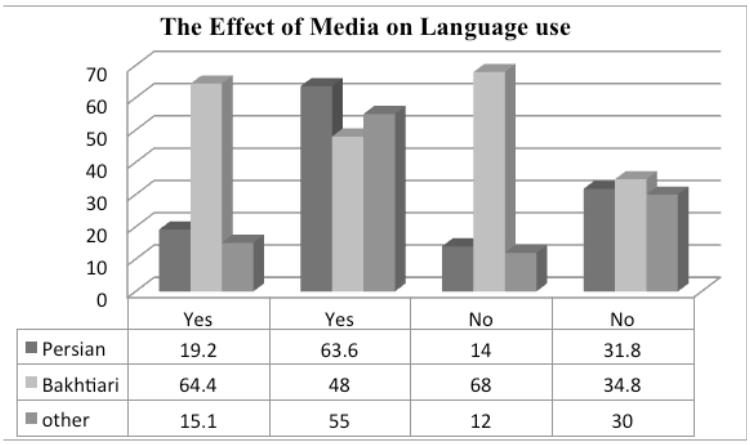


Figure 13: Percentage of hiding Bakhtiari accent and reasons for doing or not doing it

In the sum total columns we can see that 67,4% of them did not hide their accents as opposed to 16,7% who did. The major reasons were because they found it unnecessary or impossible to do so (both with 20,6% frequency). The people who were trying to hide their accent, however, were doing it only 25% out of embarrassment, but more than 37/5% for maintaining better communication, both of which are promising for the survival of the language.

To end this section, I will present yet another diagram which relates to the much debated issue of the effect of the media on language use and its maintenance. Diagram 14 sums up the usage status of media in Masjed Soleimān and its interaction with people.



	Yes	Yes	No	No
Persian	19.2	63.6	14	31.8
Bakhtiari	64.4	48	68	34.8
other	15.1	55	12	30

Figure 14: Percentage of the effect of media on language use

The participants of the research were asked whether there are Bakhtiari Radio and Television broadcasting in their town and how it affects the usage of Persian and Bakhtiari. The ones with a positive answer used Bakhtiari in a higher rate at home (64,4% versus19,2% Persian), while in the group with the negative answer, again the usage of Bakhtiari is higher than Persian (68% versus 14%). The positive group also used Persian at home more than Bakhtiari (63,6% against 31,8%)! This was another case where we didn't receive the expected results, i.e. the fact that the media affects the usage of the native and local languages negatively. Instead we found that in Masjed Soleimān, the media did not have any direct effect on the language use.

Presenting all the results of the 1996 research is not the goal here, because there are just too many charts, diagrams and statistics involved to investigate the usage of the Bakhtiari in different social domains by different age and gender groups with different educational backgrounds. The final results, however, were of importance since they showed that in 1996, in the main Bakhtiari city of Iran, the practical situation of Bakhtiari was not endangered and as mentioned above, a decline of 0,4% per decade could be diagnosed between consecutive generations. It would be very useful to repeat this investigation now to see whether this prediction was true or only desired.

2.5 CONSULTANTS

Six out of seven consultants of the present research belong to the Hamule tribe, the first five from *tæš-e ærdešgæriv*, and the last one from *tæš-e tiəzgærd*. The last one, Maddadi, is also a Haft Lang but from *almæhmiədi* tribe.

1. Mahnesa Zolfaghari-Ardeshiri, 61, widow, housewife/herder.

Our great-grandfathers were patternal cousins and hence the same family name indicates a shared ancestor, Zolfaghar /*zolfægar*/. She married another *ærdešgæriv* member who unfortunately passed away 19 years ago and left her to raise their 13 children single-handedly, the oldest still being a teenager at the time. This astonishingly beautiful lady is one of the smartest and most courageous women that I have ever seen in my life. She has a profound knowledge of the nomadic, herd-breeding lifestyle and when asked, she is very generous in sharing her expertise with others. I met her for the first time some twenty ago, during her father's funeral, found her very strong and intelligent and through years we were able to develop a very deep friendship of mutual understanding. She was my host and closest companion through the very difficult and dangerous migration route in autumn 2007. Mahnesa, together with Homa (5. below) are my main gates access to the world of nomad women and only they can answer my questions that are related to the community's realm of taboo. Mahnesa has never lived in a city and in all her life has just seen five major Iranian cities, namely Ahvāz, Masjed Soleiman, Esfahān, Shahrekord and Tehran and some in-between smaller ones. Interestingly she is not unfamil-

iar with other continents, having traveled to countries such as Spain, Mali and Thailand to attend conferences and workshops on nomadic societies organized by IUCN CEESP[74] to share her local knowledge and experiences as a representative of Iranian nomads.[75]

2. Esfandiar Ardeshiri, 39, married, herder and driver.

He is Mahnesa's oldest son and now the head of family. He is a very smart and resilient young man, being weakened for many years by addiction to opium, but was always treated by Mahnesa as the most respected and trustworthy son, which I could not fully comprehend, considering his severe condition. Five years ago, however, he decided to get rid of the addiction, and in one go, came out clean and healthy, got married and in my last trip in December 2014, I saw him as a loving fa-

74. From their website: "IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges" and "CEESP, the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, is an inter-disciplinary network of professionals whose mission is to act as a source of advice on the environmental, economic, social and cultural factors that affect natural resources and biological diversity and to provide guidance and support towards effective policies and practices in environmental conservation and sustainable development. Available at URL (25-09-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/ceesp/

75. During 2005-8, I cooperated with CENESTA (Available at URL (07-09-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.cenesta.org/) an Iranian NGO linked to IUCN, and introduced them to Bakhtiari tribes and helped them to initiate one of their preservation projects in the Hamule tribe territories: Available at URL (07-09-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/%20http://www.cenesta.org/?page_id=2150.

ther of his beautiful daughter, and only then I realized why his wise mother always loved and respected him for his strength and reliability. His van has always been a source of income and transportation for the family, but the main source of income for this extended family has always been their herds of sheep and goats. He now lives with his new family in a tent next to his mother's. The last time I was their guest on New Year's Eve of 2014, he kindly stayed up all the night, taking over the role of his mom who answered my questions until 3 in the morning.

3. Omidvar Ardeshiri, 37, single, student, B.A in Civil Engineering.

He is Mahnesa's second son and is regarded as her *kor-e šæhr-i* 'urban son'. He regulates the family's affairs in the city, and supervises his younger siblings' schooling and accommodation in a village near Masjed Soleimān during the school year. He is also now an active member in CENESTA preserving project in the Bakhtiari area. He is my connecting consultant through social media and other new technological facilities, calling and texting him through Viber, WhatsApp or Facebook to ask questions which he either answers directly or after consulting Mahnesa or others in the tribe.

4. Negahdar Ardeshiri, 31, single, herder.

He is Mahnesa's third son who has always lived as a nomad. Genetically, his eyes have a dropped-lid condition, which was one of the reasons that he had never wanted to go to school, probably in fear of being bullied. But despite his physical condition, he is very high-spirited, lively, big-hearted and a bundle of laughs. He is always at the center of late night gatherings around the hearth, singing local songs, playing his handmade Ney[76], or recounting or even making very funny stories. Everybody loves him and sometimes people from other tents decide to come all the way up to the top of the ***tištærdun*** mount and valley, where their tent is located, to stay a night or two in the joyful and heart-lightening company of Negahdar. One of the most memorable and hilarious nights was one summer night in 2013 when I was working on the calling systems of shepherds and per my demand, he produced, one by one, all the sounds and voices that one can hear from the domestic animals in different situations (being hungry, angry, thirsty, mating, crying, …) and performed all the different whistles, shouts and interjections that are normally used by the nomads to communicate with their herds. He performed all these with great mastery and enthusiasm and sometimes we even had to witness some competition between other members of the family to either correct Negahdar or show off their own more skillful performances, which in the end all of them failed in combat with Negahdar and they only created the most hilarious scenes that almost split our sides laughing.

76. A traditional wind instrument: Available at URL (14-09-2017): http://web.archive.org/web/*/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ney

5. Homa Ardeshiri, 57, married, housewife, high school diploma.

Homa was born and raised in Masjed Soleimān, therefore she has always been a city girl, but because her father, the late Gharib Ardeshiri[77], was a self-learned man and for many years was respected as a *riš sæfid* of the *tæš*, she has learned a lot about the Bakhtiari tradition, rituals and social dynamics. She is married to my first cousin, and that made her very approachable and close to me. On my field trips she usually is kind enough to accompany me and acts as a mediator when asking a question that can be tricky for cultural reasons, and this very intelligent and witty lady helps me to get the right answer without creating any inconvenient situations.

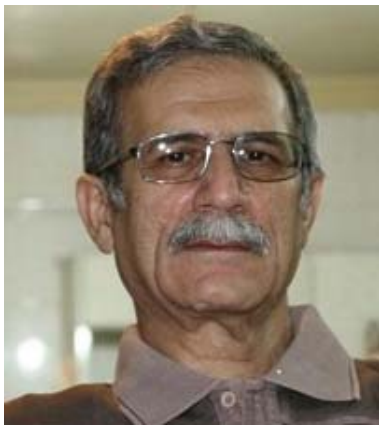
6. Huri Taheri-Zolfaghari, 65, widow, housewife, primary school education.

She is my aunt, my father's brother's wife. She lived as a nomad until she married my uncle, an employee in the National Oil Company. She has lived most of her life in Masjed Soleimān and at present lives in Ahvāz. She is my main consultant in regard to questions related to Bakhtiari customs and socio-cultural history. With her sharp memory and rich mental lexicon, she can remember how things were in the past or how they used to be called or performed. She is also very smart, and after moving to the city, taught herself how to read and write to a level that could help her children with their school work. She is my role model with her resilience and hard work and while I was active in the nomadic areas to help them with their issues with governmental organizations, she was and is my most trusted advisor. She is usually the first one to contact, when I have a burning question in my office in Leiden, sending my questions to her daughters or sons through different mobile applications or Facebook, and most of the time she can provide me with a definitive answer. From a year ago,

77. To my knowledge, he was the only one in Hamule tribe who knew the *Shahname* by heart and could read or recite it in the traditional Bakhtiari way.

she has started writing her memoires, and has shared her worries and doubts about her level of literacy with me, but when I assured her that I will edit them with great pleasure, she has become more encouraged to continue. Now I am enthusiastically waiting for her work, knowing that they will contain very precious and original information about the everyday and social life of the Bakhtiari from at least the second part of the previous century to the present.

7. Zohrab Maddadi, 65, married, retired teacher, B.A. in Persian literature.



In addition to his book, *Vazhe Name-ye Zaban-e Bakhtiari*, which has been my main reference book from the beginning of my research on Bakhtiari since 1996, he has always been very generous and helpful in answering mainly my grammatical questions. When in doubt about my analysis, I could either call him directly or receive an answer through email and mostly through his daughter's (Pouye Maddai) Facebook page. Among many Iranian researchers or interested locals writing on the subject, I have found only Maddadi's work to be a solid, reliable source, mainly due to the honesty, perseverance and precision that he applies to his work.

2.6 A TYPICAL SUMMER DAY IN *eilaɢ-e χorbe*

The following paragraphs attempt to illustrate a typical day in the life of a nomad family in the area related to this study. This description is based on my participatory observations during several years of facilitatory activities among these families while they were in their summer campsites in the *χorbe* area east of Kuhrang county in Charmahal-o Bakhtiari province. Their activities, concerns, relationships, livelihood and hobbies may differ from other Bakhtiari nomads even in the remaining countryside of Kuhrang. For instance, in this community handicrafts are rarely practiced, while among Mauwri or Arpanahi tribes who reside in the West and North-west areas of Kuhrang, some women spend the major part of their day weaving carpets, kilims or other weaving crafts. *musir čini* 'shallot picking and processing', on the other hand, is almost exclusively done by women of Hamule tribe.

A typical day in our nomads' household begins with the ding-donging of the herd bells in the dawn mingled with a variety of noises and whistles that the watch dogs and the shepherds produce to direct the herd in certain directions. In every nomad's household, based on the size of the herd and man force, the herding will be taken up by two or three male and rarely young female and adolescent female members of the family. In some cases the family can afford to hire a shepherd. These members, who, as mentioned before, are usually very young boys, are the first to get up and with an admirable commitment, leave their bedding very early, in spite of constant vigilance of the previous night in fear of a wolf or thief attack, start their daily routine energetically and with great sense of responsibility. They begin the day by ***beinæt kerden*** and ***ču zeiden*** of the herd; both mean the counting of the herd. Then they grab a ***torbe*** 'a small cotton bag' and lead the herd towards the pasture.

The lady or mother of the family gets up at dawn, wakes the lads up and after the herd has left, she goes back to bed for some warmth in the cold mornings of *eylaɢ*. Not long after, she will be the one to make the first fire of the day in the ***čale*** 'the fire place dug in the ground', then grabs the twenty-liter plastic containers, which nowadays have substituted the traditional ***mæšk*** 'goat-skin water container', and alone or accompanied by girls of the neighboring households, walks towards the nearest spring to fetch the water necessary for the first half of the day. The weather in *eylaɢ* can get very cold during the summer nights and early mornings and the springs of the area are also known for their freezing cold water. Therefore, for a woman dressed in rather worn-out clothes, carrying two heavy water containers on a rugged path which causes splashing of the water on her feet and dress is not always a very pleasant daily routine. In the early mornings, however, sitting under a ***bohun*** 'the black tent made out of goat hair' and looking out, one can see a usually smiling girl/woman coming back from ***sær-e æw***[78], without even being asked directly to do such a troublesome task.

78. literally 'on the head of water' which means a stream or spring mouth.

ISNA / PHOTO: Mohammad Mohammad ali pour

Then it's time for ***hevir šešniden*** 'kneading of wheat dough' and ***čå(h)i rast-kerden*** 'making tea'. Many of the elderly Bakhtiaris are used to drinking ***čå(h)i našta***[79] and after two or three cups of tea with several sugar cubes, the daily chores begin. One of the female members, usually the mother or the grandmother gets ready for baking the quintessential part of a Bakhtiari diet, i.e. the ***tiri***[80] bread, a very fine, round and almost transparent kind of bread. She will spread the baking table cloth and put ***tæwsi*** 'a round and low wooden table-like board on which the dough is spread' in the middle of it and the special rolling pin ***tir*** (hence the name *tir-i* for the bread) on the baking board. A round, convex-formed piece of iron, ***tæwe***, will be placed on the fire pit to make a sort of open air oven. Then it's time for ***moče kerden*** 'making small ball-like pieces' of the dough which has now rested enough, cutting it into rolled pieces, the size of a small ball.

79. *našta* 'fasting' so *čåhi našta* means drinking tea before eating bread or breakfast.
80. The name is taken from the device, *tir*, that is used to make it.

The dough balls will be rolled out on the board using the rolling pin and then the most difficult part, ***tir zeiden*** begins, which distinguishes a professional baker from an amateur; that is, turning the bread on the *tir* and beating it against the board several times to make it bigger and wide enough to match the size of the *tæwe* (see the pictures below),

and then the bread will be rolled down on the *tæwe*.[81]

In the meantime, the sun has risen and the rest of the family has gotten up; one is looking for a jar of water to wash his or her face, the other is on the way to a far and hidden place to use as toilet (in case they have not made a camping toilet), whereas another one is running to shoo a ***čarbõʷ*** 'quadruped' or ***heyvõʷ*** 'donkey or mare/ horse' that erratically wandered into the crops to graze.

When the bread is ready, everybody gathers around the breakfast tablecloth for ***nõʷ χærden*** 'bread-eating /eating in general'. Bread, yoghurt, honey, homemade butter, kebab, ***toχm*** 'egg' and ***tære lori***[82] fried in animal fat and rarely cheese are the items served as breakfast, based on the season and the wealth of the family.

If the family is in possession of a dairy cow, it should be milked before the breakfast. Milking the cow is always a woman's job, only in rare occasions when

81. Available at URL (26-01-2017): https://web.archive.org/web/*/https://fa.wikipedia.org/wiki/دهستان_کفشکنان

82. *tære* is a dark green herb that is very popular in Iranian cuisine, but not very known in Europe. It is apparently from the family of ***Allium ampeloprasum***, but the so-called by Bakhtiaris *lori* species grow wild and picked up by women, dried and powdered to be served with some food and drinks.

for some reason no woman is present in the ***mal***[83], a male member will take over this role. Therefore, if in a family, the lady of the house has both responsibilities of baking and milking, she will then get the baking dough ready on the previous night in order to have time to do both of these very quintessential daily jobs in the morning. After milking the cow, the milk is put on the hearth to boil, then after it cools down, they will add *čit*[84] to it to make yoghurt out of it. ***du zeiden*** 'making yoghurt drink' is also one of the morning's chores.

During breakfast, the family members will talk about the day's program and the division of duties among each other and then everyone sets off to do her or his allocated job. The girls and women get busy with washing ***dælfa***[85] 'dishes' and collecting *ǰa-ha*[86], tidying up their ***bohun*** and ***hive čiden*** 'firewood-picking'.

The men and boys gussy themselves up and get ready to go to town, in this case to Chelgerd, for the daily shopping, going to ǰahad[87] to hand in a request for their agricultural needs, such as fertilizer or technical help with the machinery, going to the communication office to call their relatives in the *gærmesir*[88] 'the warm lands/cities' for those few people who still do not have mobile phones and doing other domestic chores.

83. ***mal*** refers to either one tent and its members, several tents with members that are relatives or in a more abstract sense, to the area where these tents are erected.
84. Starter, a spoonful yoghurt added to the pot of milk to change it to yoghurt.
85. From Arabic zærf 'container' plus the plural suffix ***-a***, but with a dissimilation in the last consonant cluster!
86. Literally, place-PL but bed and bedding in general.
87. *edare-ye ǰæhad-e kešavarzi* 'The office of Agricultural Jihad'; so are named the Agriculture offices after the Islamic Revolution.
88. As opposed to ***særdsir*** or ***eylaɢ*** which means the cold areas.

Women often go to the town for ***hæb gerehden***[89] 'pill getting' or ***sizen zeiden*** 'needle-hit /vaccination' in the health center and buying fabrics or other personal necessities. If there are several young girls in the *mal*, usually the more *šæhr-i*[90] 'urban' ones who are literate, volunteer to go to the town to take care of the affairs of all the other female members of the family.

In each *mal*, there exists one vehicle, most frequently a Nissan, Zamyad or Toyota van, belonging to one of the male family members and at the service of the whole *mal*, not necessarily free for all, though. Sometimes there is just one vehicle for several *mal*, then there would be an unspoken agreement that every morning, at a certain time, all the women and men of the surrounding tents get up early, do their morning chores fast and quickly to gather together by the car on time, to go to the city/ town.

At the time of harvest, the rest of the family, young and old, get together for ***deræw kerden*** 'harvest-doing'. Harvesting starts from early morning, before sunrise and goes till the sun sets. Usually, one or two women and elderly people stay at the *mal* for ***zor rast kerden***[91] 'noon-make-do /to prepare lunch' and to take the food and water or tea to the fields for everybody. If the fields are not very far from the ***bonevar*** 'the seat of the tent', the harvesters will come back to their tents, eat lunch around noon, take a nap and drink some cups of tea, and then go back to continue harvesting.

89. pill-receiving, which means to get contraceptives for free from the birth control advisors in the *beh-dašt* 'the health center'.
90. city-attributive suffix.
91. *zor* is a loan from Arabic *zohr* 'midday'.

In our community under research, the end of May till the end of July is the time for picking and processing wild shallots. Therefore, many women, especially in the afternoon hours after finishing their daily chores, will be busy boiling, chopping, sweetening and drying the shallots to make them ready for the market. When a fair amount of clean and dried shallots are ready, then one or two of the women and girls take them to sell in the shops that they usually do business with. Sometimes they sell ***musir-e golo***, the unprocessed shallots, i.e. the wild shallot bulbs, at a significantly lower price. As an example, in 2006 the price of one kilogram of dried shallots was approximately six thousands Tomans,[92] while the price of one kilogram of shallot bulbs was only five hundred Tomans, i.e. 12 times cheaper than the dried ones.

So pass mornings and early noon hours. If the family is in possession of a small inherited garden, then somebody should take care of that, too, water it, usually in a traditional way by making furrows on the course of a stream to lead the water towards the garden.

By noon, and before lunch, the herd comes back from grazing on the mountain pastures for ***čast χæws*** 'mid-day rest/ sleep'. The ***biyæl*** 'goat-kids' and the ***bæriyæl*** 'lambs' which are kept in the ***kolæ čomčit***[93] 'pen', are set free to join their mothers to be breast fed. This act which is called ***bære mendal***, is one of the cutest scenes in a nomad's world, and the spectator can be amused for quite a while and enjoy witnessing how babies find their moms by special calling sounds. The scene of kids and lambs that have lost their moms, either because they are sold or slaughtered, can also be very sad and hearing their whining and moaning is very heart-breaking. Then it is time for ***gæle be dõʷ zeiden***, [94] and the goats are milked. If the lambs

92. In today's exchange rate around 1,5 Euros but in 2006 around 4 Euros per Kilo.
93. a place made with straws to keep the little kids and lambs.
94. Literally, herd-to- place-hit which means leading the herd towards the milking place.

are already sold, the ***mišun*** 'the ewes' are also milked, if not, the lambs are still allowed to be fed by their moms. Then the whole herd rests for a while, and some time after lunch they will again ***kænen be koh*** 'move towards the mountains'.

In this community, for several years, arrangements were made with the help of the Ministry of Agriculture, The Organization of Nomads Affairs and The Organization of Techniques and Crafts Education, to have some sewing and carpet weaving training courses in their campsites for about two months. The instructors, the materials and the equipment were provided by the above-mentioned organizations and were set up in a white tent among the nomads black tents. Most of the women and girls attended these courses and did the final exams to attain their diplomas. Some of them could later get loans by presenting these diplomas to the Agricultural Bank to start their own small businesses.

In the evenings, immediately after the return of the herds, the animals are milked again, and the procedure of processing the milk starts all over again. The women start ***tæš va-kerden*** 'fire-open-do /to make fire' again, bring water and firewood, make dinner ready, and clean the dishes and the tents and other chores. After dinner, the members of two or three tents get together around the hearth for a chat or just to pass time under an incredibly beautiful, starry sky. They are especially fond of the moonlit nights when they can enjoy the moon light and spare some gas or oil by turning off their lanterns. ***toχmæk eškænden***[95] and playing cards are among the most favorite pastime activities.

šæw keni[96] is the last important chore to be done at midnight, and after about an hour, the herd is taken back and let towards the ***gaš***[97] 'pen' and afterwards: sleep.

95. seed-breaking that refers to eating pumpkin or sunflower seeds; a very popular snack.
96. night-breaking 'the late night grazing of the herds'.
97. a pen surrounded by a stone or wooden wall to keep the herds.