

# The Khuzistan dialect of Early Judaeo-Persian and modern dialects of the region

Some of the texts of Early Judaeo-Persian (EJP), i.e. Early New Persian in Hebrew script, are attributed to Khuzistan (cf. LAZARD 1968, SHAKED 2009). They show several features less found in other EJP dialects. As far as verbal forms are concerned, these features include a synthetic passive (e.g. *kw'nyhd* “[it] was called”, cf. SALEMANN 1900: 272), and a particular periphrastic perfect tense form, which is not attested in Middle Persian or other varieties of Persian (cf. PAUL 2008 for a discussion of this and its role in the transition of past tense forms from Middle Persian to New Persian).

It seems to consist of the past stem, i.e. the earlier past participle, with past endings and third person singular forms of the verb “to be”, e.g. *r'cy bwdwm hyst* and *s'lt'n kyrdwm bwd* („I have been content“, present perfect, and „I had asked you“, past perfect, cf. PAUL 2013: 132 and 134). However, less frequently a form with the younger past participle in *-a* is likewise to be found, e.g. in the Ahwaz Law Report: *'yst'd' hyst* (PAUL 2013: 132). This state is in contrast with the predominant or exclusive use of this latter pattern in other New Persian varieties (cf. Modern New Persian *goft-e-am* etc.), but it appears in several Southwest and Northwest Iranian varieties.

Perhaps not too surprisingly, modern dialects of Khuzistan and adjacent regions, especially the Luri dialects and Dezfūli-Shushtari, show most similarities with this variety of EJP: a suffix related to the synthetic passive mentioned above (MACKINNON 2015: “Dezfūlī *ō rēzehes zemi* ‘water spilled on the ground.’”), and similar present and past perfect formations (*goft-om a* (Dezfūli), *ašnīd-om bī* (Bakhtiari), cf. MACKINNON 2011).

Focusing on the verbal system, this paper will examine the relationship of the EJP of Khuzistan and modern Southwest Iranian varieties of this region in comparison to data from other EJP dialects.

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