

THE POSITION OF ZAZAKI AMONG WEST IRANIAN LANGUAGES

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

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

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

¹ See O. Mann, *Mundarten der Zaza, hauptsächlich aus Siwerek und Kor* (Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen III/4, ed. K. Hadank, Berlin 1932), p. 18.

² “Zaza” denotes the people, “Zazaki” their language. There are other names for this language used by its speakers, e.g. “Dimli” or “zonē mā” (lit. “our language”), but “Zazaki” seems to have gained widest acceptance in scientific publications.

³ The nearest thing to a comprehensive grammar of a single Zazaki dialect published so far is T. L. Todd's *A Grammar of Dimili (also known as Zaza)* (Ann Arbor 1985).

than has been done hitherto the position of Zazaki among the West Iranian languages and dialects. First attempts at achieving this aim have recently been made by Vahman and Asatrian.⁴

The West Iranian languages and dialects are generally divided into a Southern and a Northern group. Already in the Old Iranian period the sound-system of Old Persian (OP), the language of the Royal Achaemenian Court centered in southern Iran, showed specific historical changes opposing it to the more conservative Avestan language (Av.) spoken at about the same time. In the Middle Iranian period this division became more distinct as Middle Persian (MP), the successor to Old Persian spoken in southern Iran, showed further sound changes not shared by Parthian (Pth.), a still comparatively conservative language of northern Iran. Most of the dialectal distinctions attested in Old and Middle West Iranian, and some more in addition, are found in modern West Iranian languages and dialects as well. Although there are a couple of well-defined phonetic laws separating the southwest from the northwest, it must be said that there is, at all historical stages, a varying amount of interdialectal borrowing which blurs the picture; furthermore, due to migrations in all periods, the SW/NW distinction does not for all languages coincide with the geographical reality of today.⁵ One major aim of this paper is to show that the NW/SW distinction is not clear-cut, but should rather be explained in terms of gradation, with each language attributed a position on a scale ranging from the "most northwestern" to the "most southwestern". To facilitate comprehension of this study, a simplified list of the most important West Iranian languages and dialect groups is given below, together with a sketch-map indicating their geographical location (fig. 1 opposite):⁶

⁴ F. Vahman and G. S. Asatrian, Gleanings from Zāzā vocabulary, *Iranica Varia, Papers in honor of Ehsan Yarshater* (Acta Iranica 30, Leiden 1990), 267-75; and G. S. Asatrian, Ešče raz o meste Zaza v sisteme iranskyx jazikov, *Putna-banasirakan handēs* 1990/4, 154-63.

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

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

The linguistic material concerning the modern dialects in this paper is mainly (unless otherwise stated) taken from the following sources. **Caspian**: M. Pāyande-Langerūdi, *Farhang-e Gil va Daylam* (Tehran 1987); **Semnāni**: A. Christensen, *Contributions à la dialectologie iranienne* II (Copenhagen 1935); H. Homādoxt, *Gūyeš-e Aftari* (Tehran 1992); **Central Dialects**: A. Christensen, *Contributions à la dialectologie iranienne* [I] (Copenhagen 1930); O. Mann, *Die Mundarten von Khunsār, Mahallāt, Natānz, Nāyin, Sāmnān, Sīvānd und Sō-Kohrūd* (Kurdisch-Persische Forschungen III/1, ed. K. Hadank, Berlin 1926); M. Moqaddam, *Gūyešhā-ye Vafs va Āštīyān va Tafreš* (Tehran 1949); **Tāleši**: B. V. Miller, *Talyšskij jazyk* (Moscow 1953); L. A. Pirejko, *Talyšsko-russkij slovar'* (Moscow 1976); G. Lazard, Le dialecte Tāleši de Māsūle (Gilan), *Sitr 7/ji* (1978), 251-68; **Āzari**: E. Yarshater, *A grammar of Southern Tati dialects* (The Hague 1969); Y. Zokā, *Gūyeš-e Keringān* (Tehran 1954) and *Gūyeš-e Galin-qaya ("Harzandi")* (Tehran 1957); **Zazaki**: from my forthcoming PhD thesis; **Gōrāni**: D. N. MacKenzie, *The dialect of Awroman* (Copenhagen 1966); **Kurdish**: *id.*, *Kurdish dialect studies* I (London 1961).

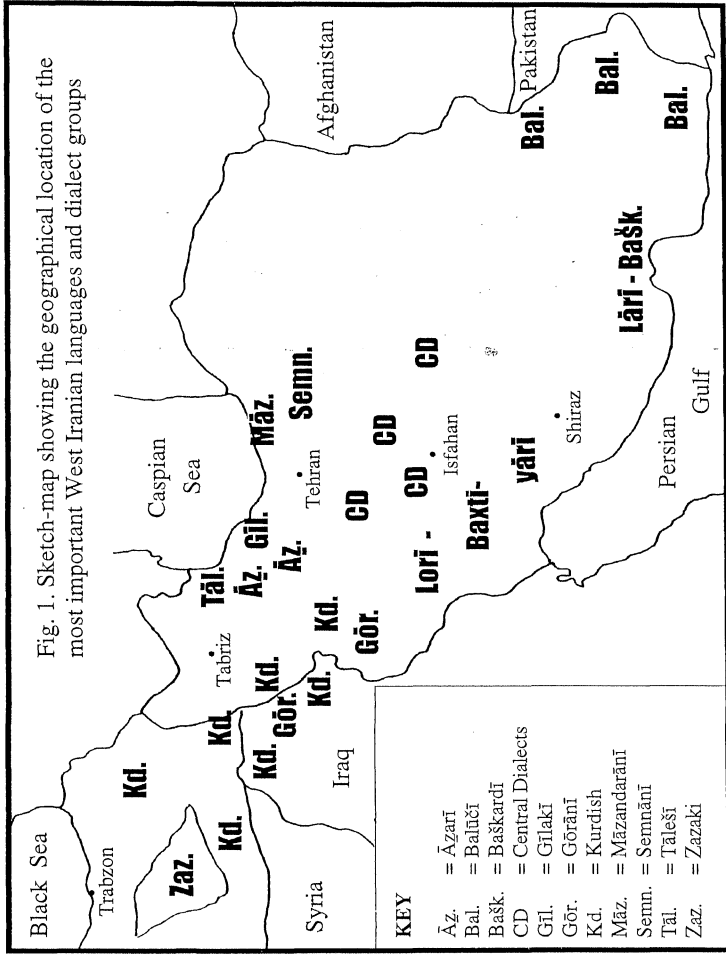


Fig. 1. Sketch-map showing the geographical location of the most important West Iranian languages and dialect groups

KEY

- Āz. = Āzarī
- Bal. = Balūči
- Bašk. = Baškardī
- CD = Central Dialects
- Gīl. = Gīlākī
- Gör. = Görānī
- Kd. = Kurdish
- Máz. = Mázandarānī
- Semn. = Semnānī
- Tál. = Tālēšī
- Zaz. = Zazakī

SW	NW
Persian	Caspian (Gilakī, Māzandarānī)
Lāri/Baškardī	Semnānī (with adjacent dialects: Sangesarī etc.)
Fārs dialects	Central dialects (CD)
Lorī-Baxtiyārī	Tālešī (Tāl.)
(Northern) Tātī	Āzarī (i.e. STātī, Harzandī, Keringānī etc.)
	Zazakī (Zaz.)
	Gōrānī (Gōr.)
	Balūčī (Bal.)
	Kurdish (Kd.)

A glance at the oldest stratum of NW/SW-isoglosses attested already in *Old Iranian* shows unequivocally that Zazaki belongs to the NW group (which indeed has never been contested):

IE (Indo-European) * <i>k</i> / <i>*g</i> > NW <i>s/z</i> , SW <i>θ</i> (> <i>h</i>) / <i>d</i> , cf.	
Zaz. <i>des</i> “10”	~ Av. <i>dasa</i> , OP (in Elam.) * <i>daθa</i> (> MP <i>dañ</i>)
Zaz. <i>zān</i> - “to know”	~ Av. - <i>zān</i> -, OP <i>dānā</i> -
IE * <i>k</i> <i>w</i> / <i>*g</i> <i>w</i> > NW <i>sp/zb</i> , SW <i>s/z</i> , cf.	
Zaz. (dial. of Kulp) <i>espe</i> “dog” ⁷	~ “Median” <i>spaka</i> , OP * <i>saka</i> - (> MP <i>sag</i>),
Zaz. <i>ziwān</i> “tongue”	~ Av. <i>hizuuā</i> -, OP <i>hizān</i> -
IE * <i>tr</i> / <i>*tl</i> > NW <i>θr</i> (> <i>hr</i>), SW <i>ç</i> (> <i>s</i>), cf.	
Zaz. <i>hīre</i> (< * <i>h</i> [<i>ʰ</i>]rē) “3”	~ Av. <i>θritiia</i> -, OP <i>çitiya</i> -, both “3rd”

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

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

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

⁷ Unless otherwise stated, “Zazaki” means the dialects of Čermik-Siverek throughout this study. In most Zaz. dialects (except Kulp) “dog” = *kutik*; Kd. *seg*; in most other NW dialects *isbe* or the like.

⁸ Bal. *pusag* “son” < **puθra-ka*-, NKd. *xwās* “barefoot” ~ Av. *x’ā.aoθra*- “having one’s own footwear” (MacKenzie, *The origins of Kurdish*, *TPS* 1961, 68-86, pp. 76f.; cf. Zaz. *werwāy*, Gör. *wirwā*, both with the same metathesis < **wāwir* < **xwā*^h*uθra*-). Here words other than the numeral for “3” have been chosen, as this has been borrowed by many NW dialects from Persian, i.e. in a SW form, e.g. Kd. *sē* “3”; CD (Kahakī) *se* “3”, but *pūr* “son” < **puhr* < **puθra*-, Casp. (Gil.) *se* “3”, and even *pāsər* “son”, but *dārə* “sickle” < **dāθra*-.

- IE **-tw-* > NW *-l-w-*, SW *-h-* (Av. *-θβ-*, OP *-θv-*), cf.
 Zaz. *čewres* “forty” ~ Pth. **čafarst*, MP *čehe*⁹
 IE **k(u)pal* > NW (*ǰ* >) *ž*, SW *z*¹⁰ (Av., OP *č*), cf.
 Zaz. *joy* “from/of him/her”¹¹ ~ Pth. *až*, MP *az* “from”
 IE **g(u)(h)pal* > NW (*ǰ* >) *ž*, SW *z* (Av., OP *ǰ*), cf.
 Zaz. *jin-ek* “woman” ~ Pth. *žan*, MP *zan*
 Zaz. *arjān* “cheap” ~ Pth. *aržān*, MP *arzān*

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

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

- IE **y-* > NW *y-*, SW *ǰ-* (Av., OP *y-*), cf.
 Zaz. *ǰiyā* “separate” ~ Pth. *yuδ*, MP *jud(āg)*
 Zaz. *ǰow* “barley” ~ (Av. *yauua-*), MP *jaw*
 Zaz. *ǰ(uw)ā-mērd*¹⁴ “young man” ~ Pth. *yuwān*, MP *juwān*, both “young”

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

⁹ The Pth. word occurs only once (*cf(s)ft*, M 4912 v 4) and is only partly legible, but *-f-* is certain; cf. also Av. *čatharə.sat-*. The Zaz. numeral “four”, *čihār*, is apparently a SW borrowing, but Gōrānī and Āzarī (Čāli), both *čuar*, have preserved traces of the OIr. labial *w*. Pth. *-f-* and (modern dialects) *-u/-w-* seem to be independent developments of **-tw-*.

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

¹¹ In some Čermik-Siverek dialects, *joy* occurs in certain expressions such as *qāndē joy* “therefore”, apparently deriving from a combination of **hačā* (whence MP *az* and Pth. *až*) with some form of the demonstrative **awa-* (possibly a generalized descendant of the genitive **awahya*). In other dialects, the combination of **hačā* with **awa-* has built (or retained) a more complete paradigm denoting some (mostly genitivic) “oblique” functions of the third person pronoun, e.g. in Eǧil: *ǰelǰalǰēnī* (“of him/her/them”) (in Pīrān, **č* > *ž* in: *žey/žāl/žīnī*).

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

¹³ Some Semn. and Central dialects have *ǰ-*; Casp. (Gil.) medially *ǰ-* (*ǰa* “from” < **hačā*), but in anlaut *z-* (*zan-* “to beat” < **jan-*); Āz. (Ker., but not STātī) regularly *ž*, but in anlaut *y-* < *ǰ-* (*yan* “woman”, *yare* “to beat”).

¹⁴ Some Alevi (i.e. northern) dialects of Zazaki have *juwāmērd*, all others *jāmērd*.

see above), and although it cannot be ruled out that Zazaki has borrowed all these words with initial \check{y} -, Zazaki here seems to be opposed to (NW) Parthian, Gōrānī and Āzarī. In the next isogloss:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁸ Cf. already H. Reichelt, *Iranisch, Grundriß der indogermanischen Sprach- und Altertumskunde*, II: *Die Erforschung der indogermanischen Sprachen*, IV/2 (Berlin-Leipzig 1927), 1-84, p. 59.

¹⁹ It is hardly possible to interpret all these Pth. forms as Persian loans. Another prominent *r/l*-case without an attested Pth. equivalent (but with NW equivalents in modern dialects, see below) is the word for “year”, MP (M./Z.) *sār/sāl* (Av. *sarəd-*).

A case “in between” is the word for “rose”, showing *guṇa*-grade in Pth., but zero-grade in MP:

Pth. *wār* “flower” (< **warda*-) ~ MP (Z.) *gul* (< **wṛda*-)

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

	Āz./Tāl.	Zaz.	Gör.	Semnānī	CKurd. ²⁰	Pers.
OIr. * <i>rd</i>	r	ṛ	l, r (?)	l	ī	l
OIr. * <i>rz</i>	rz	rz	(r)z	l	ī	l

Examples (borrowings are indicated by a following +):

rd

“heart”	del+/dīl+ ²¹	zērī	zīl, dīl+	del	dīl+	del
“year”	sor (< * <i>sār</i>)	serī	sāl	sāl	sāl	sāl ²²

rz

“high”	belant+/barz	berz	barz	boland	biṭind	boland
“spleen”	?/siparz	serpez (*-perz)	sipil+	seperz+	sipil	seporz+ ²³
“to let, allow”	harz-/?	erz- ²⁴	āz-	-hl-	hēt-	hel-

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

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

²⁰ In NKurd. *l* is replaced by *l*, in some CKurd. dialects (e.g. in Arbil) by *r*.

²¹ *Del* must be a SW loan in view of *d* < **g(h)* (see above). Gör. has *zīl* (beside *dīl*) “heart”, but preverb *hur-* (< Av. *arədvā-*), see MacKenzie, “The origins of Kurdish”, p. 77.

²² The word for “rose” quoted above provides no isogloss here, as all NW dialects have borrowed SW forms in *-l-l* (Āz./Tāl. *vel/gul*, Zaz. *vil(ik)*, Gör. *wilī*, Semn. *vel, gol*, Kd. *gut*; note the forms with *w-/v-* borrowed before the SW change *w- > g-*). The Iranian word for “rose”, in its still earlier (or NW) form *ward*, was borrowed by Armenian and Arabic as well.

²³ This is a NW loan, but cf. ZorMP *spul* “id.”.

²⁴ Zaz. *erz-* [change of meaning] > “to throw”; Gör. *āz-* with loss of *r* before *z* as in *māz* “spine” < **marz*.

²⁵ Sangesarī alone has *-rz-* in *hārz-* “to let” against all other Semn. dialects. Amongst other things (e.g. *š* as outcome of IE **tr/*tl*), this led P. Lecoq (Le classement des langues indo-aryennes occidentales, in C.-H. de

shown that Kurdish has undergone considerable substratum influence by Gōrānī, can probably be explained as loans.²⁶ The majority of the CD (left out above) seem to have regular *l* from both *rd* and *rz*, but the most northern group of CD around Vafs, inclining towards the Āzarī group, might be an exception.²⁷ Altogether it might be concluded that the “NW” outcomes of **rd/*rz* in all these dialects—except Sangesarī, some northern CD and maybe Balūčī²⁸—could be due to loans and that these dialect groups do not regularly share the NW developments of **rd/*rz*.

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

IE	Pth.	Gōr.	Āz.	Zaz.	Tāl.	Semn.	Casp.	CD	Bal.	Kd.	Pers.
<i>*k/*g</i>	s/z	s/z	s/z	s/z	s/z	s/z	s/z	s/z	s/z	s/z	h/d
<i>*k(u)pal</i>	-ž-	-ž-	-ž-	-j-	-ž-	ǰ,ž	-j-	ǰ,ž,z	-j-	-ž-	-z-
<i>*g(u)(h)pal</i>	ž.	ž	ž (y-)	j	ž	ǰ,ž	j (z-)	ǰ,ž,z	j	ž	z
<i>*k_w</i> ²⁹	?	sip	isb	esp	asb	esp	s	esb	?	s	s
<i>*tr/*tl</i>	hr	(ya)r	(h)r	(hī)r	h(*r) ³⁰	(h)r	r	r	s	s	s
<i>*d(h)w</i>	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	d(?)	d	d
(OIr.) <i>*rd/*rz</i>	r(ð)/rz	l,r/tz	r/tz	ī/tz	r/tz	l/l(rz)	l/l	l/l(rz)	l/l(?)	l/l	l/l
<i>*sw</i>	wx	w	h	w	h	x(u)	x(u)	x(u),f	v	x(w)	x(u)
<i>*tw</i>	f	u	u	w	h	h	h	h (u)	h	h	h
<i>*y-</i>	y-	y-	y-	j-	j-	j-	j-	j- (y-)	j-	j-	j-

Fouchécour and P. Gignoux (ed.), *Etudes irano-aryennes offertes à Gilbert Lazard*, Paris 1989, 247-64) to detach Sangesarī from the rest of the Semnānī dialects.

²⁶ Thus G. Asatrian and V. Livšic, *Origine du système consonantique de la langue Kurde*, *Acta Kurdica* 1 (1994), pp. 97f.

²⁷ E.g. Vafsī *esbeza*, Āštiyānī *esbərz*, both “spleen” (Moqaddam, *Gūyešhā ...*, p. 32).

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

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

³⁰ In the Tālēšī dialects of today, the word for “three” is *se*. Miller, *Talyšskij jazyk*, p. 228, however quotes (from an early work of de Morgan) *hai* “three”, which can be explained as **hrai*.

Although this diagram is still very provisional and has gaps—some of which may never be filled—it justifies, in my opinion, the assumption of a “scale of northernness” with Parthian at its positive and the SW languages of today at its negative pole. There is a northern belt of linguistically “northern” languages from Zazaki in the west through Gōrānī, Āzarī, Tālešī and the Central Dialects to Gīlakī and Semnānī in the east, interrupted and in fact sometimes reduced to small linguistic islands today by (from west to east) Kurdish, Azeri-Turkish and Persian. As we know that the two centres of expansion of New Persian were Khorāsān and Fārs, it is not surprising that the three dialect groups geographically closest to these regions—viz. the Central, the Caspian and the Semnānī dialects—show less northern traits than do Zaz., Gōr., Āz. and Tāl., though more than Kurdish and Balūčī, which apparently separated from the rest of NW Iranian earlier than the other languages.

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

Zaz. (CS):	<i>pī</i> “father”, obl. <i>pēr</i> (< <i>*piyer</i> < <i>*pidar</i> < <i>*pitara</i>)	
	<i>mā(y)</i> “mother”, obl. <i>mār</i> (< ... < <i>*mātara</i>)	(fem., +anim., +rel.)
	→ <i>jinēk</i> “woman”, obl. <i>jinēker</i>	(fem., +anim., -rel.)
	→ <i>žip</i> “jeep”, obl. <i>žiper</i>	(fem., -anim., -rel.)

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

Tāl. (Māsūle):	<i>pā</i> “father”, obl. <i>pār</i>
	<i>mā</i> “mother”, obl. <i>moār</i>
Semnānī:	<i>pia</i> “father”, obl. <i>piār</i>
	<i>bāre</i> “brother”, obl. <i>bārār</i>

³¹ In some dialects bordering to the Čermik-Siverek region, *-(e)r* is confined to relationship terms only. In other dialects, e.g. that of Bingöl, there exists no oblique ending *-(e)r*.

Interestingly, in some STātī dialects of Āzarī *-r* has spread from relationship terms, in a way comparable to that of Zazakī, not to *feminine* nouns but to other nouns denoting *human* beings:

Āzarī (STātī: Čālī):	<i>pia</i> “father”, obl. <i>piar</i>	
	<i>teta</i> “daughter”, obl. <i>tetar</i>	(human, +related)
	→ <i>cupun</i> “shepherd”, obl. <i>cupunar</i>	(human, -related)

When one looks for a historical explanation for this, the first thing to observe is that neither MP nor Pth. show any *general* ending for the oblique singular of nouns. But Sims-Williams and Skjærvø have shown some years ago³² that the suffix *-r* in some varieties of MP serves to mark the oblique case of relationship terms (in much the same way as in Tāl. and Semn., see above). Surprisingly, on the other hand, there seems to be no oblique form for relationship terms in Parthian. Although Pth. *pidar* “father”, as the only such term, still shows the old *r*-ending, this is a “frozen” form generalized for all possible case functions (just like *pedar* “father” in New Persian):

MP:	<i>pid</i> “father”, obl. <i>pidar</i> ; <i>mād</i> “mother”, obl. <i>mādar</i>
Pth.:	<i>pidar</i> “father” (= obl., rect.); <i>mād</i> “mother” (= obl., rect.)
	<i>duxt</i> “daughter” (= obl., rect.) ³³

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

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

³² N. Sims-Williams, Notes on Manichaean Middle Persian morphology, *StIr* 10 (1981), 165-76; P. O. Skjærvø, Case in Inscriptional Middle Persian, Inscriptional Parthian and the Pahlavi Psalter, *StIr* 12 (1983), 47-62, 151-81.

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

³⁴ The ancient language of Azerbaijan, *TPS* 1954, 157-77, p. 175.

³⁵ “Le classement des langues indo-aryennes occidentales”, p. 258.

	Zaz. (CS)	Āz. (Harz.)	Tāl. (Lenk.)	Semn. (Aft.)	Gil. (Lāh.)
“to go”	ši-n-	še-nd-	še-d-	še-nn-	šū-n-
“to come”	ye-n-	āmā-nd-	ome-d-	ā-nn-	ā-n-
“to say”	vā-n-	öt-n-	vot-ed-	vā-nn-	gū-n- (PL)
“to see”	vīn-en-	vīn-n-	vīn-d-	(?)	ī-n- (PL)
“to do”	ke-n-	kö-nd-	kerd-ed-	ke-nn-	kū-n- (PL)

Görānī is absent at first sight, but Lecoq³⁶ saw that the hitherto mysterious Görānī imperfect infix *-en-* can be explained by the same “thème duratif du présent” *-nt-*.³⁷ This explanation becomes all the more probable as the Gör. imperfect is built from the present stem, unlike the other past tenses built from the past stem. A possible counter-argument to this explanation would be the Zazaki imperfect suffix *-ē(n)*, if this should be linked to Gör. *-en-*.³⁸ The forms listed above still present some difficulties, e.g. the reduction of *nd* to *n* in some dialects and to *d* in others, or the fact that Āz. and Tāl. form the present tense from the past stem for some verbs (e.g. “come” and “say”). But altogether, the occurrence of this formation in at least one dialect of each group points to a common origin. Now, if one compares Wlr. present tense formations with **-nt-* (left column) to those without **-nt-* (right column, all forms meaning “I go”):

Zaz. (CS)	<i>ez ši-n-ā</i>	Pers.	<i>man mī-rav-am</i>
Āz. (Harz.)	<i>man še-nd-en</i>	Lakī	<i>me ma-č-em</i>
Tāl.	<i>az še-d-am</i>	Kurd.	<i>ez di-č-im</i>
Casp. (Gīl.)	<i>man šū-n-em</i>	CD (Xuns.)	<i>mon eš-š-ān</i>
Semn. (Aft.)	<i>a še-nn-ī</i>	CD (Mhll.)	<i>mun āt-š-ōn</i>
Semn. (Sanges.)	<i>a šu-nd-ī,</i>		

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

Gör. (Awr.)	<i>min mi-l-u</i>
Āz. (STātī: Tāk.)	<i>a(z) me-še-m</i>
Semn.	<i>a ma-š-īn,</i>

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

³⁶ *Ibid.*, *en passant* and without references.

³⁷ E.g. Gör. *lu-en-* “to go”, *-en-* “to come”, *wāč-en-* “to say”, *wīn-en-* “to see”, *kar-en-* “to do” (all imperfect stems).

³⁸ Zaz. *-ēn* (or *-ē* in some dialects), invariably attached to the past stem, forms the imperfect for all persons and numbers (e.g. Zaz. [dial. of Kur] *kewt-ēn* “[I, you ...] fell [several times]”).

formations from those with prefix does not exactly correspond to the SW/NW distinction.³⁹ This isogloss could therefore be considered less ancient than the phonological isoglosses discussed above, but as it affects a central area of verb formation in which borrowing usually plays no role, it is nevertheless significant.⁴⁰ Altogether, in the formation of the present tense in modern West Iranian, two perfectly complementary morphological strategies can be witnessed, one of which, the present participle in **-nt-*, is confined to almost the same groups of NW dialects as those which have preserved the “relationship-*r*” as oblique marker.

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

1. The study of historical phonology shows that Zazaki, besides Gōrānī, Āzarī and Tāleši, figures among the “most northern” of the WIranian dialects of today, but in “northernness”, if “northern” is understood as “different from (SW) Persian”, Zazaki ranks after Gōrānī and Āzarī, owing to the development of initial **y-*.

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

3. Both historical phonology and morphology detach Kurdish and Balūči (and to a lesser degree the heterogeneous Central Dialects) from the rest of the NW. The features separating Gōrānī from the “core of northernness” may be attributed to Kurdish influence.

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

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

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

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

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

⁴⁰ The usage of modal prefixes with *m-* in Gōr. (Awr.), Āz. (STāfī: Tāk.) and Semn. (see above, as compared to *di-*, *a-* etc. in “less NW” dialects) raises the question whether these are recent Persian borrowings. The variety of these prefixes in the various dialects (e.g. Semn. *mī-*, *mā-*, *ma-*), and the fact that in Gōr. one would rather expect the borrowing (if any) to be from Kd. (*a-*), would speak against this.

Zaza tribes made their home in northeastern Mesopotamia, forming the furthestmost western links in a chain of NW Ir. peoples stretching as far as Transoxania.

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

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

APPENDIX: SOME INTERESTING ZAZAKI WORDS⁴²

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

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

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

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

⁴³ G. Morgenstierne, *An etymological vocabulary of Pashto* (Oslo 1927), p. 66.

⁴⁴ Professor Sims-Williams kindly draws my attention to Christian Sogdian *znt* “blind” < **uz-anda-*, with “reinforcing” **uz-* (see N. Sims-Williams, *The Christian Sogdian manuscript C2*, Berlin 1985, p. 60).

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

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

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

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

gānī “necessary” (dial. of Pīrān) ~ Pth. *gawānīg*; in other NW dialects *g(ū)-* means “to want” and/or “to have to” (e.g. Semn. *a mā-g-ān* “I want”); cf. Sogd. *γwṃcyk* (√*gu*).

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

mēri “mouse” ~ Av. *marəδā-* ?- (“eine Landplage Margianes”, *AirWb.*)⁴⁶ Cf. *Āz. [Ker.] mūrā*, Gör. *mīta* “mouse”; see above for *Zaz. r̄*, *Āz. r*, Gör. *t* < **rd*.

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

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

⁴⁵ J. Āl-e Aḥmad, *Tāt-nešīnhā-ye bolūk-e Zahrā* (Tehran 1958), p. 149.

⁴⁶ The meaning of this Av. word is unclear. S. Wikander, *Vayu* (Uppsala-Leipzig 1941), pp. 190ff., takes it as an abstract “abusing, mocking”.

⁴⁷ W. B. Henning, *Sogdica* (London 1940), pp. 5f.

⁴⁸ Whence Henning, *ibid.*, p. 26, explains Pth.(?) **pannīg* “forehead”.

⁴⁹ In support of this etymology Professor Sims-Williams kindly refers me to Khotanese *bāḍa-* “time”, Christian Sogdian *prtw* “time, occasion” < **upa-r(a)tu-* (see N. Sims-Williams, *BSOAS* 46, 1983, p. 49, with reference to an unpublished suggestion by Martin Schwartz).

vistirī “daughter-in-law” ~ STātī (Tāk.) *visite* “husband’s sister” < **visa^h-duxtar-* and **visa^h-duxtā* respectively.⁵⁰ Like Tāk., Zaz. shows a more “original” meaning as compared to MP *wisduxt* “princess”, and in this word alone preserves old **duxtar-* (today Zaz. “daughter” = *keynā*). As a feminine noun, *vistirī* can take the fem. oblique ending *-er* originating from “relationship-*r*” (see above), i.e. *vistirī-yer-*, thus showing “double relationship-*r*”.

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

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

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

⁵⁰ W. B. Henning, The survival of an ancient term, *Indo-Iranica, Mélanges présentés à G. Morgenstierne* (Wiesbaden 1964), 95-7, p. 95.