

9. esá árús-e ke biárdene domád-e sseré, árus o domád šunne še xené-ye dele. árús-e mār o domád-e piér xásse ne vešūn zud berim béen. in-vax gétene, "árús-domád xār báine". esā ma:lúm bīe árús kijā-vačé bīe. domád-e piér tešāng dār-kerde ke hamé-ye ma:lé béšnaen árús-domád xār báine.
10. esá árús širini-re géite še ši-kasúnn-e dáe báxeren. ši-kasún em árúss-e runemá kérdene. intā bīe rāsm-e arusi-e Kerdexé.

Translation

1. First the parents come to a decision to set up a certain girl for their son. They send someone, [usually a] woman of [their] own clan, to the girl's house. The woman, i.e. the suitor, conveys the message of the girl's mother as such: "such and such wants your daughter, Ra'nā, [to serve them as] their cook. Do you agree with this decent plan or not?" The girl's mother, if her heart desires [that] this business should take place, says: "I will tell my husband [and] win his agreement. Come back after two or three days, [and] I will answer you."
2. After three days they [would finally] say the yes or no [answer]. Now that [they] are satisfied, the boy's parents go to solicit the girl. That night they discuss all the issues on offerings and the marriage portion (dowry). At this time the opinions of the boy and the girl are also looked into. They set a certain night for bringing a sheep to slaughter, eating the sweets, cracking the sugar cone, [and] placing the ring on their hands.
3. After these customs [are performed], now [for] one year the girl must keep [her status] as a fiancée and stay in her father's house. During this one year, if one night, at the cock's crow, the boy would go to see his fiancée in the backyard, [and] if the girl's parents would have seen them, [then] though luck! The next day, she would receive a severe punishment (lit. "a load of sticks") from her mother's hand. They would do (lit. "did") this so those two [youngsters] might not see each other, so that they [would] love each other much better, [and that] they might not [ever] be separated.
4. Now that one year is gone, they want to marry. From the bridegroom's house a few girls would carry on their head tray-loads of rice, ghee, sugar and tea [and] would take them to the bride's house.
5. One day is the feast for women. The companions of the bride gather [and] take the bride to the bathhouse. They all express their happiness, sing, cheer, clap and dance. They bring the bride from the public bath [to] her house, [then] they eat lunch and offer gifts to the bride. On the same night *hanābandān* (dyeing-hands-with-henna ceremony) is held in bride's house.

6. Next day is "groom's wedding party". The groom's best men all gather in his house. The groom mounts a horse [and] goes to the "groom-bath" with his friends. On the way back, they go horseracing. The horse[man] who takes the lead takes the prize of a sheep from the groom.

7. They come to the groom's house. The musician, drummer, and oboist are busy playing. The groomsman are all dancing, clapping and expressing happiness. Then they eat the lunch and award gifts to the groom.

8. At sunset the groom's men go for the "bride-bringing" [ceremony]. [While] they mount the bride on a horse and hold in her front a mirror and a lamp, they proceed towards the groom's house. The groom and his best men come to greet the bride. The groom throws at (lit. "hits") the bride's chest a lemon or pomegranate. The bride takes the pomegranate.

9. Now that they have brought the bride to the groom's house, the bride and groom would go in their room. The bride's mother and the groom's father would wish (lit. "wished") that they would quickly come out. [When] that time [arrives] they would say: "bride and groom are all right." Now it was clear [that] the bride had been (lit. "was") a virgin. The groom's father would fire a rifle so that the whole neighborhood was informed that the bride and groom were all right.

10. Now the bride would take the sweets and would offer to her husband's relatives to eat. The husband's relatives in return would unveil the bride. This is the way the wedding customs of Kordekheyl were.

II

1. abbél-e arusi — šeme xedméť árž hákenem — maslén Nanján-e Hasén xásse Hāj Qolm-Ali-e kijā-re še rikā vesse xār hákenen — níe? xā, gétene, "xāle! te bur bāur, emāre zan déni?" "te bur!"
2. in xāle šie kijā-e mār-e pali. géte — maslén —, "Nanjān-e Hasen téje zan xāne. šemā čečj gēnni?" kijā-e mār, áge véne del rāzi bīe, géte, "sa! men [, še mardī,] Hāj Qolm-Ali-re bāvinem.
3. Hāj Qolm-Ali-re amruz díe. vénje selā-mašveret kérde. ay Hāj Qolm-Ali áge rāzi bīe, piqum dáe čān-tā mardenúmm-e, "félāni, te bēru! félāni, te bēru, ke felon kas xāne bée me kijā-ye xāzendi."
4. un šō hamē já:m bīno. esā, "selum-alek." "alek-selum." [rikā-e pier géte.] "xā te mére éttā qaylonnōker déni?" ya:ni, "še kijā-re" — nā'te — "te detter-re me peser-e háde!" be in suret bīe, "éttā qaylonnōker xāmbi — yā éttā taš-kar, yā éttā pelā-paj xāmbi."

5. Hāj Qolm-Ali esā géte ke "xā, te bur, ay ferdā béru!" se rúz em tafre šine. ay se ruz baie, Hāj Qolm-Ali géte ke "āqā, Nanjān-e Hasen! te felon āqā o felon āqā-re bíār, riš gerō bíelen," ke áge xedā-nakerdē rikā bad dar bemú^s, bā^ren, "āqā! te riš gerō hedāi, kijā-re čē bazúe?"
6. xā, šino. xā:le mayre dakérd bon, da: temen o bis temen o éttā Qorān bíe. ba: den, čel-temen o penjā-temen báie. mé mār-e dōre čel temen mayre báie. xā, géne ke "amruz ke kalle-qand-e xerāb hākérdi, sāl-dige véne bálisi!"
7. esā, kijā-e pier ferdā-šō lās dā^s, perā-šō Nanjān-e Hasen-e géte ke "āqā dass-e dār!" esā zar xāsse^s bíāren. ye meqdār-i zar qerārdād bíe dige. unje ma:lum kérdene ke ferdā-ye arusi čānde zar hāden kijā-re.
8. esā Hāj Qolm-Ali o véne zenā búrd bine xāsse^s jahāz bāxrinen kijā vesse. dá:-tā čāderšō o dé-tā sefre o éttā nano-leng o nano-rasen-e — vāčē hākérdene, tō xāsse^s hāden — xaríe, bičāre hame-re yárde. intā kijā-e jahāz bíe — nā esā dōre ke!
9. xā, Hāj Qolm-Ali Nanjān-e Hasen-e géte ke "āqā! te xāni bār bíāri?" [rikā-e pier géte.] "are!" "bis men dune véne bíāri, bā éttā gesbend o pā^v men qand." "čašb!"
10. esā, rikā^s pier bis men dune o pā^v men qand véne bávere kijā^s sere, bā éttā gesben^d — bávere ke vešun, majles dārénne, xárj hākenen. xā, rafequn bíamúne kijā-e pier-e sere, temum-e xarj-e véne Nanjān-e Hasen-e bičāre háde. kijā^s píer em áge še dāšte, sār kerde. áge nédāšte ádem rá:i kerde — maslen Nanjān-e Hasen-e sere —, géte, "ay bíār! kām hākerde. ay yek men dune véne hádi. éttā gesbend-e dige bíār!" ungender hanuz kerk rasm náie.
11. xā, inti vešun, kijā o rikā, numze bine. aqd hanuz nákerd bine. yek sāl saber kérdene. xāsse^s aruss-e báveren, ungender aqd kérdene. rikā em haq nédāšte in yek sāl kijā-re bávine. balfarz, rikā-e bičāre ke numze baite, xāsse yek šō še numze-re bávine. véne yevāšeki búrd bo o dakefe keččāl-e dele. ay kijā-e pier sedā-re bešnās bo o bāút bo, "šex dakete! kí e? čēči e?", un bičāre-badbáxt em dār-šie.
12. ve ferār kérde dar-šie. dar-šio amruz-o-ferdā šie še pier-re géte, "bābā! mére niele^sne še numze-re bávinem. mé-vesse zudter arusi hākenin. [aruss-e] bíārin dige! men keje-ye pell-e ben-je xerāb hākérdeme, ke báttumbe bā^rem "a:bāl-e šaríf?" xámbe čē kenem zan báverem!" xā, vešún em čī-kār kérdeno? zar-re dáno, arusi kérdene.
13. béšnō inje az Nanjān-e Hasen-e bičāre-badbáxt! éttā verzā baxrie čārsad temen. nā čārsad-hezār temen, nāl hameš čārsad-tā tak-temeni! árž hākenem ungender čārsad temen xāle pul bíe. véne sar-re zúe. da:-tā, haš-tā gesben^d kušte. sad men dune dáe. haf-tā temeni dáe, haf da: temen — heftād temen; éttā gušbāl, penjā temen. ay haš^t šabenderuz se sar danbek yárdeno haf das luttí. ya:ni bezan-o-bekub bíe. xā, in bičāre-badbáxt temomm-e xarj-e dáe.
14. xā, ferdā xāsse^s arusi hākenen. un gō^s kalle o gesbend-e kalle-re geitene, kalle-pāče pátene sobāne vesse. pelā pátene — nun rasm náie ke. vése domād-dasse pelā bāxeren. hame majime-ye dele xérdene. vése sat-tā das búre éttā majime-ye dele. qāšeq rasm náie. feqat das-je [xerdene]. āb-e das dai bo yā dani bo.
15. xā, sobāne-re ke xérdene, domād o véne rafequn šine hambom. xāsse^s búren, as^b-tājendi kérdeno, har kás-ē as^b piš dākete, éttā gesbend vése domād-je báire. xā, inti domād-re yárdene hambom. ay hambom-je yárdene sere.
16. ba:d get bine, "āqā! hayde-re hākenin! xāmbi nāhār bāxerim." yek nafér ádem nevéšte. hayde kérdene šissad temen, čārsad temen. me arusi, šissad-o-penjā temen hayde dakérdene. xāle pul bíe. kār be harf náie.
17. xedmet-e šemā arz hākenem, ba:d ez nāhār kušti g^sítene. kušti g^sítenu lučo vandéssene. har kas bene bazú bi bo intā-re géte. in kārā-re ke kérdene, kam-kam domād-e rafequn šine aruss-yār. aruss-e sevār-e asb kérdene yárdene kalek-e hedār.
18. domād o véne dār-o-dasse darvāze-sār heressá bine. domād se-tā kel enār dāšte; vése bázene aruss-e. bá:zi-e das ráj bíe, káte kaše-e dele. bá: zi qár-esse dešmeni dāšte — vére šō rá nédāne — qāyyem zúne. bá:zi — xā — dús dāštene, haminti dém dā^s véne kaše o ve táb zúe géte. de-tā dige-re názue.
19. arz hākenem, esā domād-e pier, Nanjān-e Hasen, vése inje kešik háde. géte, "búrin dele! aruss-domād, búrin dele!" xā, esā aruss-domād^s bičāre xāk-e še sar keje dákenen? berim, hame montazér ene! čē rasm-e bád-ē bíe!
20. tak-tak-tak! domād géte, "bá!e?" domād^s pier géte, "deres nákerdeni hāntā?" domād-e bičāre dakérdē lekelā-re, haminti areq véne sar-tan, éne berim. [domād-e pier persene,] "xār baini?" áge hame čī xār bíe, domād géte, "are." áge nā, arusi be-hám xerde. domād ke géte "are," véne pier

gête, "lútti bákutendin! árus-e-domād xār bainē." tefəngdār tefəng-e baito, yak-martabə dār-hākərdē. esā temum-e ma:le-ye ādemun dúnne ke árus-domād xār bainē.

21. ay un šō, árus-e mār vésse domād-esse pelā bápəje. gušt o kerk deres hákene bávere domād^e sere. intā-re mār-pelā gétene. xā, Hāj Qolm-Ali o véne zenā — árus-e pier-mār — o véne berār-xāxerun pelā-re geiteno šine domād^e sere. šom xərdəno pišum xərdəno ay domād-e kalle-ye de-temen o pāš-temen pul dāne.

22. arz hákenem, fərdā sevāi árus-e bičāre vésse sembār-e táš hákene — sembār véne mār baxrié. vešune te:dād vésse estekān bičle. vešun in čāi-re baxərdene, haminti de-temen o pāš-temen árus-e pul dāne. inti árus-e runemā kərdene. ay ve šie še mār-e sere, gête, "nənā! me šī-mār-e sere, bis temen méré runemā hákərdene." xā, véne mār xəšāl b'ie, gête, "ā bārikella! xenābedun."

23. in-em naql-e diruz-e ši bakerdén. alān ke nie ke.

Translation

1. The wedding [process] begins with this — let it be offered to your kind view — for example, Hasan-e Nanjān (Hasan, Son of the Lady), wants to match his son with Hāj Gholām Ali's daughter. Would this be the case, they would ask, say, an aunt to go and ask for the hand of the girl.
2. This aunt would go to the girl's mother, saying: "Hasan-e Nanjān is asking for your daughter [for his son]; what is your opinion?" The girl's mother, if she were in favor [of such a marriage], would say: "Wait until I see Hāj Gholām Ali, [my husband]."
3. The same day she would see Hāj Gholām Ali and consulte with him. Then, if he complied, he would send a message to a few men [of his village], inviting them to the proposal feast.
4. At the night [of proposal] everybody would gather and greet one another. [The boy's father] would ask: "okay, are you going to give us someone who can prepare a water pipe?" You should note that he wouldn't simply ask for the hand of the girl; he would rather ask for someone who could prepare a water pipe or use the oven or cook.
5. Hāj Gholām Ali would put off his final answer to the next day. They continue evading for three days. After this period, Hāj Gholām Ali would ask Hasan to bring

several well-known people [of the village] to pledge that the boy would treat the girl with care and respect after they marry.

6. All right, they would go [on]. The marriage portion would be a maximum of ten to twenty tumans and a [volume of] Koran. Later it became forty and fifty tumans; it was forty tumans in my mother's times. Anyway, they would say, "if you break the sugar cone today, you should lick it a year from now".¹⁰

7. The girl's father would wait for another night. Two nights later [in another gathering] he would tell Hasan: "Hold your hand!"¹¹ Now it was the turn to discuss the amount of the gold to be offered [to the bride's clan]. There it would be established how much gold would be given to the girl.

8. Now it was the turn of Hāj Gholām Ali and his wife to buy the dowry for their daughter. Ten pieces of bed sheets, ten tablecloths, the sheets and rope for hanging the hammock. [These would be used when] the baby would be born and he or she was to be swung [in the hammock]. This poor fellow would buy all these and carry them all. Such were the girl's dowries, quite unlike these days.

9. Then, it was Hāj Gholām Ali's turn to demand Hasan to bring some stuff: "You must bring twenty maunds of rice, a sheep and five maunds of sugar cubes". "Yes sir," would be Hasan's reply.

10. Now, the boy's father must take twenty maunds of rice and five maunds of sugar cubes and a sheep to the girl's house, and these were to be consumed at [the upcoming] banquets. The poor Hasan should pay all the money spent in the girl's father residence. Of course, the girl's father would help out if he were well off. If that was not the case, then [even] more demands would be placed on the boy's family: to bring more rice or another sheep. Chicken was not customary in those days.

11. This way, the boy and girl would become fiancées, but they had to wait a year until the official marriage ceremony is held. The couple was banned from seeing one another in this one year of restraint. Let's assume that at one night the poor boy attempted to visit his fiancée. Having taken a secret trip [into her house, it was likely] that he would slip into the depression [dug] in the backyard, the girl's father would hear the noise, and the poor boy would run away.

12. Having taken flight, he would soon go to his father complaining that he was not allowed to see his fiancée, and insisted that the wedding ceremony be moved to an earlier date. He would complain that his individuality was not properly honored. What was the result? The gold would be exchanged and the wedding [was moved forward].

13. Listen here about the poor Hasan. Now he has bought an ox for four hundred tumans — not 400,000 tumans — it was merely 400 one-tuman [bills]. This amount — I should say — was a lot of money in those days. He would kill it (the ox) in addition to some eight to ten sheep. He would offer a hundred maunds of rice, seven tumani (i.e. gold coins) with the value of seventy *tumans*, and a pair of earrings for fifty tumans. Then he had to bring a sufficient number of musicians to play during eight nights and days [of the wedding ceremony]. The poor man was responsible for all these costs.

14. Then, the day before the wedding, they would cook the head of the cattle and the sheep for the breakfast [which was served] with rice — bread was not consumed in those days [in the Caspian littoral]. The stew pilaf was to be served to the group accompanying the groom. They would eat in large trays. Some hundred hands would be stretched into the tray — the spoon was not in use then. They would use one hand [only], the ewer and basin may have been available or not [to wash hands before and after the meal].

15. Then, after having had breakfast, the groom and his friends would go to the bathhouse. In their way, there would be a horse race and the winner was entitled to receive a sheep from the groom. This was the way the groom was taken to the bathhouse. Then they would bring [him] home from the bath.

16. There was the gift-receiving ceremony before lunch. Someone would take note. The gifts were between 400 and 600 tumans. It was 650 tumans in my wedding. This was a great amount [of money] and not just words.

17. After the dinner — let it be offered to your kind view — it was the time for the wrestling. The prize was called *lucho*, which was a sheep that would be given to the winner. After this part, the groom's friend would gradually go for the bride-carrying ceremony. [It consisted of] mounting the bride and carrying her towards the groom's residence.

18. The groom and his companions would be waiting at the gate. He would hold [in his hand] three pomegranates to be thrown to the bride. Some [grooms] had a precise hand, and the [thrown object] would land [exactly] into the [target, that was the bride's] bosom. Some [grooms] would hit it hard [in retaliation for] the hardship they had suffered in their covert overnight visits. There were also others who were in love with one another, [in this case, the groom] would softly toss the pomegranate so that the bride grasps it [in the air]. [In this case, the groom] wouldn't throw the other two [pomegranates he was holding].

19. Let it be known that now it was the Hasan's turn, the groom's father, to send the bride and groom into the bridal chamber and stand guard at the door. The poor

bride and groom were now very nervous [seeing that] the people were waiting outside. What a silly custom!

20. [Hearing] the knock at the door, the groom would reply: "What?" "Have you not finished?" his father would ask. The groom would put on his clothes hurriedly and come out in sweat. His father would ask: "Was everything all right?" If the groom's reply were not positive everything would be over. As soon as the groom had said the yes, his father would say: "Beat on your drums, musicians! The bride and groom made it." The gunman would take his rifle and begin firing [into the air]. Now everyone in the neighborhood would take notice that the couple had made it.

21. It was now the bride's mother's turn to cook for the groom in the same evening. They would cook meat and chicken and carried it to the groom's house. This was called "mother's pilaf". The bride's parents and her brothers and sisters would carry the evening meal to the groom's house, [where] they would dine and have desert, and then they would present the groom two- and five-tuman [bills].

22. The morning after — I should bring it to your notice — it was the bride's duty to ignite the samovar — the one bought by her mother [as dowry]. She ought to place a cup for each of them (i.e. the guests). As they drank the tea they would tip the bride with [money bills of] two and five tumans. This is how the bride is unveiled. Then she would return to her mother's home and say: "Mom! In my mother-in-law's house I collected twenty tumans in the *runemā* ceremony." The mother would of course be very grateful of both her daughter and her in-laws.

23. This was the story of marriage in those days; now it is not [the same way].

Linguistic Remarks

Māzandarāni, a Northwestern Iranian language, is the spoken language of Māzandarān Province, populated by about four million soles, but its usage has been steadily marginalized in favor of Persian in the last few decades.¹² The dialect in which the texts are narrated belongs to the lowland Māzandarāni group of dialects. It is fairly central to the chain of mutually-intelligible idioms extending from Nur in the west to Behshahr in the east, along the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. To assist the reader in understanding the language of the texts, it seems necessary to explain briefly certain traits of the dialect. With a few exceptions, diachronic observations are beyond the scope of this study.

Phonology. The consonants are essentially similar to those in Persian, except that uvular *q* is a voiced fricative [ɣ] in all positions and that *k* and *g* are not palatalized as they do in Persian before the front vowels. The vowels are *a, e, i, ā, o, u* (almost as in colloquial Persian), as well as *ε*. The latter has a wide allophonic distribution,