

Examining the Linguistic Relationship between Parthian and Some Literary Works from Gorgâni Dialect

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Received: 29/12/2018

Accepted: 07/09/2019

Abstract

The term Iranian language is used for any language which is descended from proto-Iranian language, spoken in central Asia. Iranian languages have been spoken in the areas from Chinese Turkistan to the Western Europe. This language (proto-Iranian) comes from proto Indo-Aryan. The Iranian and Indo-Iranian (Aryan) languages belong to the main language called proto-Indo European language.

This language perhaps was spoken in the area of southern Russia. The Iranian languages have three chronological periods: Old, Middle and New Iranian languages. Persian is the only language which has document in three stages. The Iranian languages in old Iranian stage are Median, Persian, Saka and Avesta which have corpus or words in corpus languages. The Iranian languages in Middle stage are Persian, Parthian, Sodian, Bactria, Chorosmian, and Saka languages from which the Parthian belongs to the north west Iranian languages. The Parthian languages have evidences in Middle stage and New stage of Iranian languages. This language has also evidences in Parthian period and Sassanian period.

The Parthian evidences are also from Manichaean literature. The Manichaean literature belongs to Manichaean Religion. It is from Arsakid and Sassanian period and also from Islamic period.

The known Middle Iranian language spoken from about 3 centuries include: Khotanese, Sogdian, Chorasanian, and in Bactria Bactrian was spoken. In Parthia, Parthian was spoken as the language of Arsacids. In pars of pre-Sasanian dynasty, Middle Persian, called Pahlavi was spoken. This language became the official language of Sassanian dynasty. It was the language of Zoroastrian literature called Pahlavi.

Today the Iranian language is spoken in Turkey, Iran, Caucasus, in the west of Chinese Turkestan and Pakistan, Afganistan and Tajikistan. These languages are Ossetic spoken in Ossetia: Digoroo and Iron. Kurdish spoken in three variants in eastern Turkey and Syria, northern Iraq and west Iran, Baluchi, spoken in eastern Iran and western Pakistan and in southern Afghanistan and central Asia and Pashto spoken in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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These languages and dialects can be divided into several larger groups on the basis of grammatical, phonetic and lexical isoglosses.

The languages of southeastern and southern Iran often have /d/ where other Iranian languages have /z/ (for example, *dân*, Farsi to know, but *zân* in Kurdish). Other isoglosses, for example the word for “to do” *kar/Kard* (Kird) and *kun/kurd* (kird), *gōw-goft* in Farsi and *wāč-* (*wāj-/wāxt*) in west Iranian dialects (Kurdi, Gruganni, Taleši and so on).

The start of Parthian period may be placed after the middle of the 3rd century BCE. When the conflict between Seleucus II and his brother Antiochus Hierax opened the way for the eruption of the nomadic Iranian Parthians into the province of Parthia in north west of Iran also the (Seleucid dynasty). After that, they became known as Parthians and they used the Middle Iranian language of north west of Iran (Parthian language).

The subsequent establishment of the Parthian empire took place in two stages: Mithradates I (ca 171-139 BCE) and Mithradates II (ca 124-88 BCE). In this time the territorial expansion completed.

As said, Parthian is one of the Iranian languages the text of which has remained in the middle period of Iranian languages from the Parthians and followers of Manichaean religion. There is no trace of this language in the modern period of Iranian languages. Nevertheless, the New Iranian dialects each follow one of the Iranian languages in the middle and ancient period. Some of the new Iranian languages can be considered the sequel of the Middle period languages. For instance, the Persian language is classified a continuation of Middle Persian and the Yaghnani is a continuation of Sogdian. The question is, can an Iranian dialect in the new era be considered as a continuation of Parthian language?

The study aims to clarify the linguistic links between the Parthian and Gurgâni dialect from the verbal, phonological, and syntactic point of view, by examining the literary works of Hurufiyye sect, written in Sadegh Kia's Gurgâni Dictionary. To this end, words and sentences have been selected from the Turfan and inscriptional Parthian, and have been compared with the words and sentences of the Gurgâni dialect in the Hurufiyye works.

The Hurufiyye works belong to an Islamic sect, which believe in the meaning of the words. This sect had written these works in new Persian, but with elements from Gurgâni dialect.

In the end, the result shows that Gurgâni dialect, in the investigated evidence, can have links with one of the survivors of the Middle Iranian language, the Parthian. This dialect has been prevalent in Gurgâni since the Teymurid era or later, and then has gone into silence.

Keywords: Parthian, Iranian languages, Gurgâni literary works, Hurufiyye sect, Historical linguistics