

CHAPTER 1

1. BACKGROUND TO THE ZARDAYĀNA COMMUNITY AND TEXTS

1.1 Overview

Zardayāna is spoken by the people of the village of Zarda in the province of Kermānshāh in western Iran. Zardayāna belongs to the larger linguistic group of Gōrānī, genetically classified as North-West Iranian. The varieties of the Gōrānī group also have close areal relationships to other Western Iranian languages, such as Kurdish and Persian. For many centuries in Kurdistan, Gōrānī played an important role as a prestigious literary language of the court of the Ardalān rulers (fourteenth to nineteenth centuries CE).¹

A recent estimate of the number of Gōrānī speakers is between 200,000 and 300,000, while an estimate for the number of Zardayāna speakers is not yet available.²

Zardayāna is the name used by the speakers themselves as well as by other Gōrānī speakers. In the wider region, it is commonly referred to as ‘Kurdī’, a general name which covers several Gōrānī and Kurdish linguistic varieties. In scholarly literature, the names ‘Zarde’ī’, ‘Zardeyī’, and ‘Zārdāi’ have also been used.³

The village of Zarda is located about thirty kilometers north of the towns of Kerend and Gahwāre, and about twelve kilometers to the north-east of the larger town of Sar Pol-e Zahāb. It is situated about one hundred kilometers to the west of the provincial capital, Kermānshāh (see maps in Section 1.4.).

Within this area of western Iran, there are many linguistic treasures. Besides Gōrānī and the national language of Persian, there are languages such as Kurdish, Laki, and Luri.⁴ The area is also filled with historical and cultural jewels, including the giant stone reliefs of Taq Bostān and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Bisotun with its famous trilingual inscriptions from the sixth century BCE. There is a wealth of natural beauty as well, found in the high peaks and steep valleys of the Zagros mountain range, the deep caves of Parau, and the snow-fed Sirwan and Zimkān rivers.

In recent times, this area in western Iran has also been a place of horrific human suffering, particularly as a result of the upheavals and destruction of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). The brutal effects of this war reached even into the small village of Zarda. In July 1988, Iraqi forces used chemical weapons to attack this village and its vicinity. It was reported by the

¹ See MacKenzie (2002:3).

² For these figures, see Paul (2007:285). For discussion of the genetic classification of Gōrānī, see Paul (1998b).

³ The name ‘Zarde’ī’ is used in Paul (2007), while ‘Zardeyī’ is used in Mahmoudveysi, Bailey, Paul & Haig (2012), and ‘Zārdāi’ in Mann & Hadank (1930). The village itself is named ‘Zarde’ in Paul (2007) and in Mahmoudveysi et al. (2012), while ‘Zārdā’ appears in Mann & Hadank (2012).

⁴ Kurdish here specifically refers to Southern Kurdish (Kalhorī variety). For a map of languages in this part of western Iran, see Fattah (2000:VI).

people of Zarda that 140 to 172 people were killed, with unknown numbers of people injured and disabled.⁵

Other attacks with chemical weapons were publicized in the European and American media, such as the attacks of Iraqi forces on their own Iraqi citizens of Haṭabja, in which over 5000 people were killed.⁶ But the Iraqi attack with chemical weapons on the civilian population of Zarda village in Iran did not receive such publicity.⁷ In the present volume, members of the Zarda community give their eyewitness accounts of these terrible events.

The language community of Zarda should be viewed according to its place within the wider Gōrānī speech zone.⁸ The Gōrānī speech zone is considered to have once encompassed a much larger area within western Iran, and also within the northern and western regions of present-day Iraq.⁹ Over the centuries, the Gōrānī speech zone is assumed to have become gradually smaller, with many people who had primarily used Gōrānī making a shift to other languages.

Within Iraq, the present-day speech zone includes communities of speakers in and around a number of cities and towns, such as Xānaqīn, Kalār, Haṭabja, Xurmāl, Tawēṭā, Silēmānī (Sulaimaniya), Čamčamāt, Kirkūk, Tūz Xurmātū, and Furqān. Further communities are located in the vicinity of Mosul, Hewlēr (Arbil), and Kōya (Koy Sanjaq).¹⁰

The speech zone within Iran encompasses two primary regions and also a number of scattered communities. The core of the speech zone can be considered to be the region of Awromān, with its major towns of Pāve and Nūsūd. To the south of Awromān, and separated from it by mountains, is the region of Gōrān. The main locations of speakers in this southern area are the villages of Zarda and Gawraǰū.^{11 12}

Other areas in Iran in which Gōrānī is spoken include Kandūle, north of Kermānšāh, and several communities near Qasir-e Šīrīn, such as the village of Ahmadāwā.¹³ Another community of Gōrānī speakers is located near Qorve, east of Sanandaj, which is relatively distant from the main speech zone.

⁵ These figures were given by people interviewed in our fieldwork. Other estimates are sixty (Paul 2007:286-287), seventy to eighty (Sayyid Fereidoon Hosseini, personal communication), and one hundred and twenty deaths (Iranian media). Another figure is two hundred and seventy-five (Harrison 2005:1).

⁶ Gōrānī is also spoken in Haṭabja.

⁷ As noted by Paul (2007:286-287). It was only many years later that reports of these attacks appeared in the news, such as the BBC report by Harrison (2005) and the article by Dareini (2007) in the Washington Post.

⁸ ‘Gōrānī’ is used here as a general term to cover all the Gōrānī varieties, following usage in Western research, for example, by MacKenzie (1966) and Paul (2007). See further remarks in Mahmoudveysi et al. (2012), and also Leezenberg (1993:7). The name Gōrānī has been also used with specific reference to the variety of the Gōrān region, north-west of Gahwāre (north-west of Kermānšāh) and to the language of the sacred texts and literature of the Ahl-e Haqq (Yāresān) community (MacKenzie 2002:1). Different names are used by speakers and outsiders for the linguistic varieties subsumed under what is referred to here as Gōrānī. Examples of these names include Hawrāmī (Howrāmī, Avromānī), Māčoziwān (Māčo), Kākayī, Šebekī, Bājalānī, Kandulāī, and others; see MacKenzie (2002:1), Mahmoudveysi et al. (2012:6-7), and Mann & Hadank (1930).

⁹ See MacKenzie (1961). It is assumed that, centuries earlier, the Gōrānī group was located in the Caspian provinces, and then migrated south to the Zagros, with some speakers also eventually migrating further west (MacKenzie 2002:1).

¹⁰ See, for example, MacKenzie (1956) and Leezenberg (1993, 1994), and especially the map in Mahmoudveysi et al. (2012:6-7).

¹¹ See Paul (2007) for this information on the Gōrānī speech zone in Iran.

¹² Gawraǰūyī Gōrānī is documented in Mahmoudveysi et al. (2012).

¹³ Thanks to Bahman Hamīd Feyzollāh Bēwyānī for noting the existence of Gōrānī speakers in this village.

The local area of Zarda consists of the village itself, which is called Zarda (also referred to by locals as Bān Goma), and an adjacent hamlet, Sayd Māma. The area also includes the sacred pilgrimage sites of Bābā Yādigār and Dar Dāwud (Hasāw Zangī). The entire area or complex is referred to as Bān Zarda. The village of Zarda lies at about 1100 meters above sea level, while Bābā Yādigār is situated somewhat higher, at 1400 meters. The area is both mountainous and hilly, filled with plateaus, steep slopes, jagged gullies, and canyons. There are also some level fields suitable for the cultivation of crops.

It is estimated that Zarda consists of about a thousand people.¹⁴ The people of Zarda make their living by farming and raising livestock. They tend orchards of fruit trees, producing walnuts, olives, figs, peaches, and pomegranates, and they grow limited crops of wheat and barley. They also raise livestock, especially poultry and dairy cattle, and they herd flocks of sheep and goats. They sell some of the regional products to the numbers of pilgrims and tourists visiting the sacred sites of Bābā Yādigār and Dar Dāwud. The people of Zarda also send some of their produce, such as olives, to Kermānshāh and cities in the north of Iran, in order to sell them and to have them further processed in factories.

The history of Zarda village is not recorded, but as a visitor to the village in 1902, Oskar Mann wrote that local tradition included the existence of a king, Yezdedshird, who ruled during the Sasanian period (224-651 CE). Under the rule of this king, Zarda was a much larger town or city, a conclusion which is supported by the extent of ruins surrounding the present-day village, including the remains of a fortress.¹⁵

The people of Zarda village belong to the Ahl-e Haqq religious community, also referred to as the Yāresān. This community has a wealth of oral traditions, beliefs, customs, and social structures. They also have much sacred literature, written in an older variety of Gōrānī. The community maintains many beliefs, including that of history taking place in cycles, creation by God of the world in the form of a pearl, and the belief of divine beings taking form and living on earth. Members also observe customs such as a sacred communal meal and a gathering to pray and hear hymns. The hymns and other oral traditions are passed down through the generations and serve in the transmission of religious and other types of knowledge of the community. Within the community structure, there are distinct roles and functions of priestly and lay families. The most sacred sites of the community are Bābā Yādigār and Dar Dāwud, located next to Zarda village.¹⁶ Many people come as pilgrims to these sites from other locations in Iran.¹⁷

1.2 The sociolinguistic situation

Zardayāna is spoken as the primary language by the entire population of Zarda village, with the exception of a few people from other language groups who have joined the village population through marriage.

The sociolinguistic situation involves several other language groups. Most speakers of Zardayāna have some degree of contact with standard Persian, which is the official language of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Persian is used in all educational institutions and government

¹⁴ In his 1902 visit to Zarda village, Mann noted ninety households (Mann & Hadank 1930:471).

¹⁵ See Mann & Hadank (1930:471). Another known name for this king is Yazdgerd.

¹⁶ For this general information on the Ahl-e Haqq, see Kreyenbroek (1996) and also Mir-Hosseini (1996).

¹⁷ Thanks to Sayyid Fereidoon Hosseini (personal communication) for helpful background information on the village of Zarda and the community.

offices, and in print and audio media, such as newspapers, television, and radio. Many people in Zarda also have contact with colloquial Persian through communication with the numbers of people who come from other areas of Iran as tourists and as pilgrims to Bābā Yādigār and Dar Dāwud.

Zardayāna speakers have contact as well with varieties of Southern Kurdish, which is the main trade language in western Kermānšāh province.¹⁸ They refer to all these varieties with the general name ‘Kurdi’. In particular, Zardayāna speakers have the greatest degree of contact with the Southern Kurdish variety of Kalhorī.¹⁹ Most of the people of Zarda village can communicate in this variety at some level.

People of Zarda also have some contact with Central Kurdish (Sorānī) through media produced in Iraqī Kurdistan. There are a number of films, television programs, radio shows, and music in this standard. They also have contact with Gōrānī varieties spoken by members of the Ahl-e Haqq community living in other areas.

In 1979, about three families from Zarda moved to Dawra, a village near the Kurdish town of Kalār, north of Xānaqīn, in Iraqī Kurdistan. Two people from this group also provided texts for this study (see next section). The people from these families have had contact since that time with primarily Central Kurdish (Sorānī).

1.3 Fieldwork procedure

The initial visit to Zarda village for purposes of linguistic research of Gōrānī dialects was made in 2004 by Ludwig Paul, who was accompanied by Sayyid Fereidoon Hosseini. Details of this visit and the fieldwork are presented in Paul (2007). Paul’s fieldwork and subsequent research resulted in the evaluation of Zardayāna as a Gōrānī variety with endangered status.

After this initial visit, further visits were made in order to record language material for the Dokumentation Bedrohter Sprachen (DoBeS) Gorani Documentation project. Three visits were made by Parvin Mahmoudveysi, during which she recorded the texts for the current volume.

The first of these visits took place on October 1-2, 2007, in Zarda village. On this visit, Parvin Mahmoudveysi was accompanied by Sayyid Fereidoon Hosseini and Geoffrey Haig. They were graciously hosted by Houšang Karam Veysi. The second visit by Parvin Mahmoudveysi took place on March 4-6, 2011, in the village of Dawra, near the Kurdish town of Kalār, located in Iraqī Kurdistan. She was kindly hosted by Say Eqbal Hosseynī. The third visit was made on March 14-17, 2011, when Parvin Mahmoudveysi returned to Dawra village, where she was again hosted by Say Eqbal Hosseynī. These visits resulted in the recording of many texts.

The fieldwork involved interviews with speakers of Zardayāna in private homes, either in the main living room or another guest room. Most of the speakers were interviewed by Parvin Mahmoudveysi, who communicated in her native language of Hawrāmī of Pavē, which is linguistically close to Zardayāna. The people interviewed would respond in Zardayāna. Some of the speakers were also interviewed by Sayyid Fereidoon Hosseini, who is originally from the town of Gahwāre in Kermānšāh province, and who speaks and understands Zardayāna and other Gōrānī dialects of the area. Another fieldworker who participated in the interview of

¹⁸ See Fattah (2000) for information on Southern Kurdish in Iran.

¹⁹ See Fattah (2000:26-27) for an overview of Kalhorī.

Text 1 was Heshmat Hosseyni. Geoffrey Haig was also present during the first field visit, and was in the process of learning and communicating in Zardayāna.

Nine speakers from Zarda village participated in the interviews and provided texts, while two speakers from Dawra village also provided texts. The main speakers were men and women with ages ranging between forty and sixty-two years old. A few younger speakers also participated in the discussions.

All of the people interviewed were considered excellent speakers of Zardayāna. Their speech exhibits little or no obvious code-switching into Kurdish, the second language of most, though there is some evidence of borrowing from Kurdish and Persian.

As mentioned above, the speakers from Dawra village were living away from the original community of Zarda, and though they knew Zarda very well, they were no longer maintaining its use in the family domain. As a natural consequence of their sociolinguistic environment, their speech shows a few differences from the speech of people living in Zarda village, especially in the areas of the lexicon and grammar. Some of these differences are mentioned in footnotes to the texts.

More specific information about the speakers is provided in the individual introductions to the texts in Chapter 4.

The texts consist of both monologues and dialogues. The subject matter is broad and includes both narrative and expository discourse. Texts 1, 2, and 3 are lengthy accounts of the speakers' personal experiences during the Iraqi military's chemical gas bombings of Zarda village in 1988.

A section of Text 3 also includes a discussion of local plant life and agriculture.

Texts 4 and 5 contain discussion and observations about the village and local wildlife. Text 4 also gives an account of the speaker's personal encounter with a leopard.

Text 6 is a well-known folk tale about a mother goat, her kids, and a wolf disguising himself in order to deceive the goat kids and eat them. This text is also presented with interlinear morphemic glossing in Chapter 3.

Text 7 is a traditional narrative about a man who endures many hardships, with thematic similarities to the ancient narrative of Job.

Text 8 is also a traditional narrative about two kings, a maiden, and her love for a young man who lives as a snake and leaves his home to dwell in a land of giants.

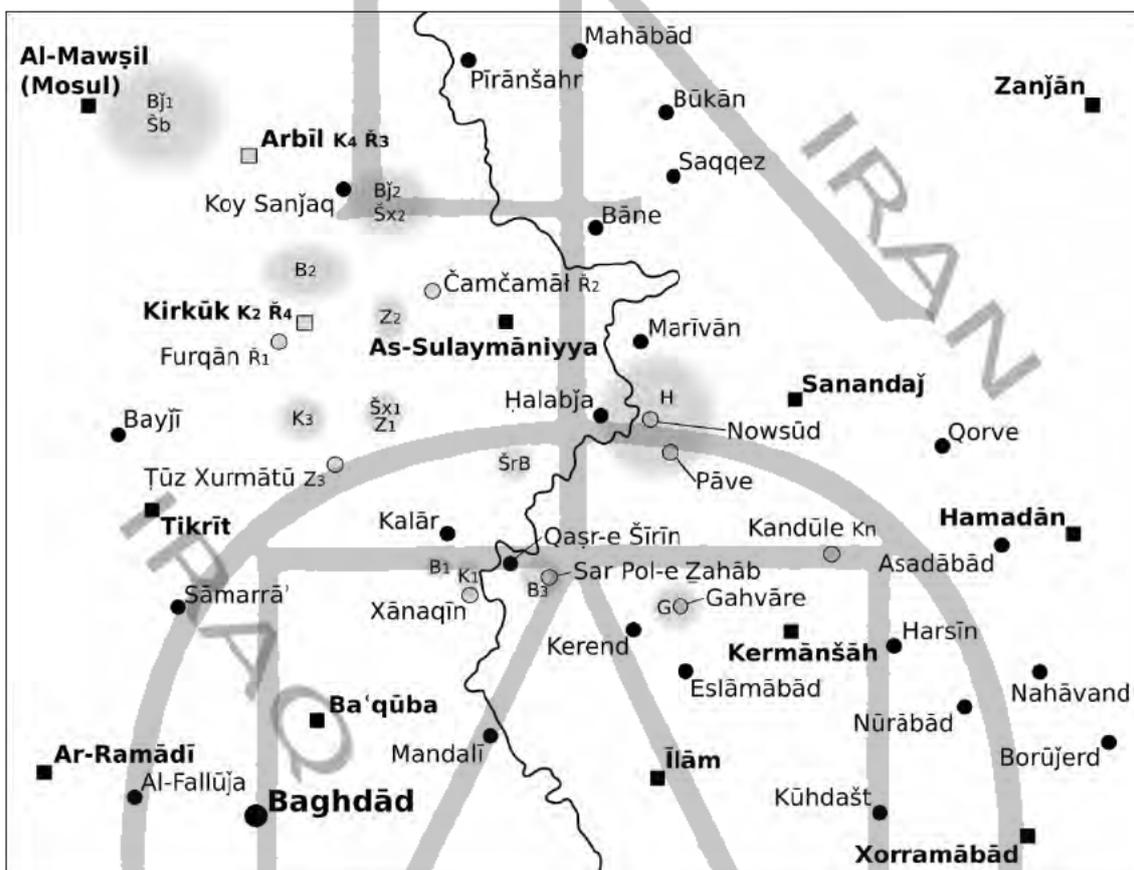
The texts were recorded with a Zoom H2 recorder with built-in microphones, in a linear WAV-format at 44 KHz frequency. At a later stage of editing, the program Adobe Audition was used to adjust the volume of the recordings.

The actual work on the Zardayāna texts involved several stages. As a result of the fieldwork, a total of twenty-six texts were collected and recorded, as well as several videos.²⁰ The names of the individual texts and the metadata were entered into a catalogue in preparation for their storage in the long-term digital archives of the Max Planck Institute of Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, the Netherlands. For publication in the present volume, eight texts were selected on the basis of thematic content, length, quality of recording, and representation of Zardayāna speakers. The total time of these eight texts is ninety-three minutes and thirty seconds.

²⁰ Eleven texts were collected in Zarda in 2007, and fifteen texts were collected in Dawra in 2011.

The eight texts were transcribed with an orthography based on the Latin script. This orthography was originally developed for the transcription of Gawraǰūyī Gōrānī and then adapted for Zardayāna.²¹ The texts were translated into German and English in several stages, and then they were edited and finalized in English. These transcriptions and translations were done in the software program of ELAN (EUDICO Linguistic Annotator), which also contained the corresponding audio material.²² The transcriptions and translations were then entered into the software program of FLEx (SIL Fieldworks Language Explorer) in order to analyze the morphology, to create interlinear glosses, and to develop a lexicon.²³

1.4 Maps of the Gōrānī-speaking area and of Zarda village and area



Map 1: Overview of the traditional Gōrānī-speaking area²⁴

²¹ See Mahmoudveysi et al. (2012) for the Gawraǰūyī material and orthography.

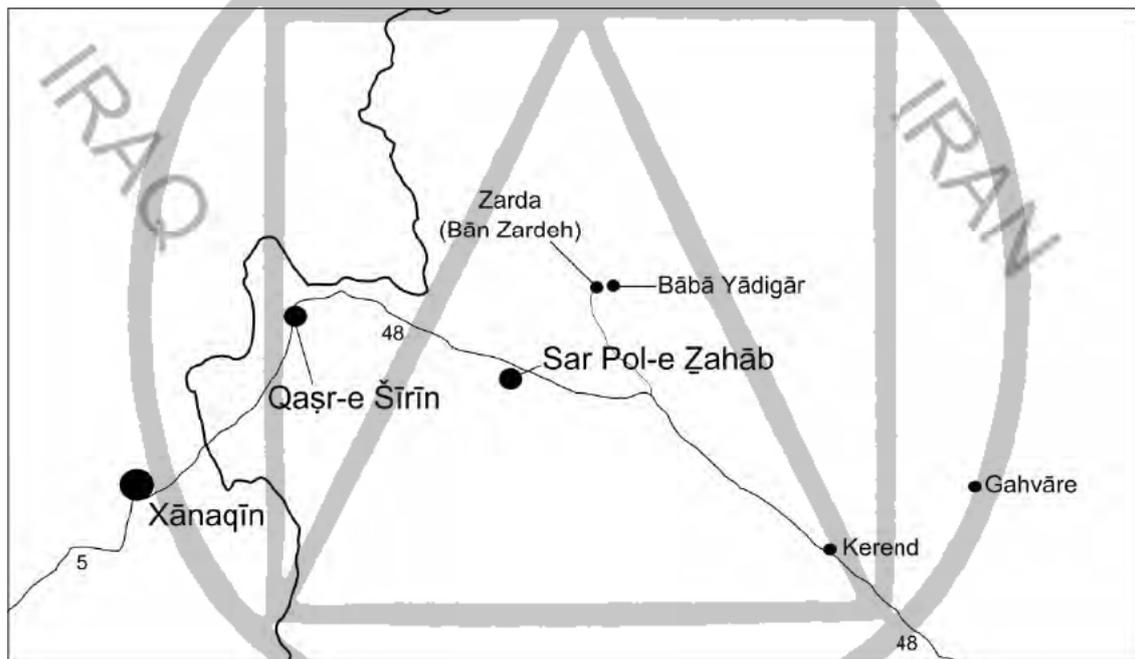
²² Cited as ELAN (EUDICO Linguistic Annotator), Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, The Language Archive, Nijmegen, the Netherlands. See <http://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/elan/>; and for an example of a further reference, see Sloetjes & Wittenburg (2008).

²³ FLEx (SIL FieldWorks Language Explorer) has been developed by SIL International; see <http://fieldworks.sil.org/flex/>.

²⁴ This map is a slightly modified version of a map in Mahmoudveysi et al. (2012:6). The place names on this map and on the following local map have been spelled according to various (national and language) conventions, and thus there are occasional inconsistencies in spelling. It should also be noted that the shaded places marked on the map represent areas where Gōrānī varieties are in actual use, and that members of the various tribes live in other places as well, such as in the major towns and cities of the area.

Key to the abbreviations of tribal names and place names

B (Bēwyānī)	B1: Sarqizil, Bardī ‘Alī Xwārū/Žūrū, Say Mişafā, Gōrī Ginūž, Kānī Širna; B2: Bēwyānī Gawra/Biçük and about another fifteen villages; B3: Bēwyān, Dūšamnān (their main places in this area), Sar Pol-e Zāhāb, Dāraka, Qaḷama, Šāy Tōtyā, Barxu Bārānī Xwārū/Žūrū, Mişjūryānī Ambar/Awbar, Tangī Hamām, Sarqalā
Bj (Bājalānī)	Bj1: several villages near Al-Mawşil (members of the tribe are also present in Xānaqīn, Kalār, etc.); Bj2: Kānī Māz, Taqtaq, Sē Girdkān, Qāmīš, (Kōya (Koy Sanjaq), Dukān)
G	Zarda and Gawrajū villages
H	Hawrāmān area (Center: Pāve and Nowsūd)
K (Kākayī)	K1: Xānaqīn, Mēxās, Qarāmīn, Malā Rāhmān, Dārā, Qaḷama, ‘Alī Bāpīr, Rāmazān, Tapa Čarmē, Hāji Mişafā; K2: Kirkūk (districts Hayy ‘Askarī, Usarā’ al-Mafqūdīn etc.); K3: around Tōpzāwa (center of the Kākayī), ‘Alī Sarāy, Ğarja Kōyī, Ma’tiq, Dāquq, Zaqaq; K4: near Arbil: Sufaya, Wardak, Kabarlū, Tūlaban, Gazakān
Kn	Kandūla: three villages
Ř (Řōžbayānī)	Ř1: Furqān; Ř2: Čamčamāl; Ř3: Arbil; Ř4: Kirkūk and Laylān (near Kirkūk)
Šb (Šabak)	several Šabak villages near Al-Mawşil
ŠrB (Šaraf Bayānī)	villages around Bamō
Šx (Part of Šēxānī)	Šx1: villages near Qādir Karam: Qaşqa, Wēla, Şawak etc.; Šx2: Kānī Māz, Taqtaq, Sē Girdkān, Qāmīš, (Kōya (Koy Sanjaq), Dukān)
Z (Zangana)	Z1: Qādir Karam; Z2: Bakragarā, Sipasar and many more (in Xānaqīn, Kalār, Kifri (between Kalār and Tūz Xurmātū), Arbil and surrounding area and in the surroundings of Al-Mawşil); Z3: Tūz Xurmātū



Map 2: Zarda village and area