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Gerardo BARBERA 'L'Orientale' University, Naples

The Palm in Minâb*

1. Introduction

In the course of my field research in eastern Hormozgân province, and particularly at Minâb, I collected specimens of vocabulary referring to different aspects of the date palm, *Phoenix dactylifera* L. In rural areas of Iran the economic and social relevance of the date palm has engendered a rich and specialized terminology. In fact, every part of the tree has its uses in everyday life: wood, fiber and leaves provide timber and fabric for houses and fences; the leaflets are used for making ropes, cords and baskets; and the fruit provides refreshment for people and, occasionally, food for animals throughout the year.¹

Apart from the intrinsic attractiveness of the subject matter, an autonomous treatment of this limited section of the Minâbi lexicon had its technical advantages, in particular that of provoking active elicitation, as opposed to translation from questionnaires: my language consultants could produce their own set of words spontaneously, a most valuable situation in a field in which the researcher's stimuli run the risk of prevailing over native linguistic awareness.

2. Minâb. Geography and Language

Minâb (57° 04' 30" N, 27° 09' 00" E),² locally Minow, lies some 80 km southeast of Bandar Abbâs in the Persian Gulf, on the main road connecting Bandar Abbâs to Ĵâsk in the Makrân.

* This paper presents some results of documentary linguistic fieldwork carried out in Hormozgân province, Iran (February-March/October-November 2002/June-July 2004), in preparation of my PhD dissertation, *Lingua e cultura a Minâb (Iran sud-orientale). Profilo grammaticale, testi e vocabolario* (Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici, Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Naples, 2005).

¹ Cf. H. A'lam «Date Palm», *Encyclopædia Iranica* VII, Costa Mesa, 1996, pp. 117-124. This article contains valuable information from historical sources, a rich bibliography, and many botanical and philological notes on vernacular terms, which "have been generally neglected by Persian philologists" (*ibid.*, p. 120). G. Redard, «Le palmier à Khur. Notes de dialectologie iranienne [I]», *A locust's leg. Studies in honour of S. H. Taqizadeh*, London 1962, pp. 213-19, remains crucial; as far as Southern Iran is concerned, see A. Sâyebâni, «Xormâ-ye Fin (*moy*)», *Âyande* 9/12, 1362 H/1983, pp. 871-83, and *id.*, «Sanâye'-e dasti az deraxt-e xormâ», *ibid.* 10/2-3, 1363 /1984, pp. 150-59, for the area north of Bandar Abbâs; A. Salâmi, «Xormâ dar farhang-e mardom-e Xešt va Delvâr», *Guyeššenâsi* (= Dialectology. Journal of the Iranian Academy of Persian Language and Literature) 1/1, 1382 H/2003, pp. 53-75, for the area of Bušeher, and for Kâzerun district in south-western Fârs; *id.*, «Xormâ dar farhang-e mardom-e Kermân», *ibid.* 1/2, 1383 H/2004, pp. 37-53, for Bam (with original materials collected by the author), and for small settlements in Southern Kermân, on the north-eastern boundary of Hormozgân (with re-interpreted materials). G. Pâk, «Mâhiâ', 'mox' dar Ĵonub», *Honar-e mardom* 128, 1352 H/1973, pp. 58-73, while containing a vast repertory of terms from villages in the districts of Bandar Bušeher, Bandar Lengeh, Bandar Abbâs, Minâb and from the recently constituted district of Rudân, lacks references to dialect sources.

² *Gitâšenâsi-e Irân*, ed. by A. Ĵa'fari, vol. 3, *Dâyeratolmaâref-e ĵoqrâfiâi-e Irân*, Tehran, 2000, p. 1255, and *Râhnâme-ye šahrestânâh-ye Irân*, ed. by E. Eslah Erbâni, Tehran, 1345 H/1966-67, p. 493. Note 57° 05' N,

It is the regional capital of the homonymous sub-province (*šahrestân-e Minâb*), which includes 13 administrative divisions (*dehestân*) and 360 villages (*âbâdi*). The Statistical Centre of Iran's estimate of the urban population is 45,000, corresponding to 22% of the whole sub-province (205,000). The entire zone is essentially rural, though, in Minâb town, no more than 5% of working population is employed in agriculture.³

The territory of Minâb sub-province is characterized, in its northern and eastern sections, by deformed sequences of rocky heights (including northeast Mount Xâje, 1311 m, and southeast Mount Guk, 1395 m), while, in its central and western sections, there are vast extensions of luxuriant palm plantations with mango orchards. Agriculture is assisted by a modern system of pumps and pipes drawing water from the "Independence Dam" (*Sadd-e Esteqlâl*), an impressive artificial barrier barring Minâb river some 6 km northeast of the town. Minâb river flows from the Mârz range in Bašâgerd mountains for about 160 km south, emptying into the Persian Gulf north of the strait of Hormoz.⁴ Annual rainfall is scant and humidity is high. Summer temperatures are scorching at the point that in June-July the entire zone, especially in the hottest hours of the day, is referred to as "fire" (*âteš*), *tout court*.

It is no surprise that richness in palms and unbearable temperature has been noted in travel accounts relating to Minâb and Ancient Hormoz.⁵ In mid 9th century, the Arab geographer Ibn Khurdâdhbih described Hormoz as "a renowned town with many date palms" and noted that it was "very hot there".⁶

"Great heat" was also suffered by Marco Polo, who visited Hormoz twice, in 1272 and 1293 respectively.⁷ In particular, Marco Polo observed that the inhabitants of [Ancient]

27° 09' E in the *Edâre-ye joqrâfiâi-e Ârteš. Farhang-e joqrâfiâi. Âbâdihâ-ye Kešvar-e Ĵomhuri-e Eslâmi-e Irân*, NG40 – 3, vol. 123, Tehran, 1362 H/1983-84, p. 181; 55° 04' 56" N, 40° 07' 27" E according to the *Farhang-e joqrâfiâi-e Irân. Âbâdihâ*, vol. 8, *Ostân-e Kermân-o Makrân*, Tehran, 1332 H/1953-54, p. 405. I thank Prof. Enâyatollâh Rezâ, Director, Department of Geography, Markaz-e Dâeratolmaâref-e Bozorg-e Eslâmi, Tehran, for kindly putting at my disposal the Dept. library.

³ Data published by the Iranian Government (*Saršomâri-e omumi-e nofus-o maskan. Natâyej-e tafsili-e šahrestân-e Minâb*, 3 - 237, Tehran, 1998), with reference to 1375 H/1997 population. The population is mostly young in Minâb and, probably, in the rest of the area (48.26% less than 15 years, 4.95% more than 65 years; Statistical Centre of Iran, 1997 *Census*, Tehran, 1998).

⁴ For general geographical information on Minâb area, see *Gitâšenâsi-e Irân*, ed. by A. Ĵa'fari, vol. 1, *Kuhâ-ye Irân*, Tehran, 2000², pp. 238, 485; vol. 2, *Rudhâ va rudnâme-ye Irân*, Tehran, 2000², pp. 458-61; vol. 3, *Dâyeratolmaâref-e joqrâfiâi-e Irân*, cit., p. 1255 (note Kuh-e Xâje misprinted *Kurixâje*).

⁵ Minâb history intermingles with the history of Ancient Hormoz (*Hormoz-e Kohne*), the flourishing mainland harbour and bazaar town on the route from Bandar Abbâs to Kermân. Its people moved on Ĵerun Island (current Hormoz Island) around 1300. Though the exact location of Ancient Hormoz has never been identified with certainty, scholars generally agree that it be located some 10 km southwest of the present town of Minâb, cf. V. Fiorani Piacentini, *L'emporio e il regno di Hormoz (VIII - fine XV sec. d.Cr.)*. *Vicende storiche, problemi ed aspetti di una civiltà del Golfo Persico* (= Memorie dell'Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere – Accademia di Scienze e Lettere. Cl. di Lettere – Scienze morali e storiche, 35.1), Milan, 1975, esp. pp. 13, 44, and 105-121, and R. Kauz and R. Ptak, «Hormuz in Huan and Ming sources», *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 88, 2001, pp. 27-74, pp. 31-34. For a historical profile of the territory in the present Hormozgân province, cf. Fiorani Piacentini, «La fascia costiera del Harmuzgân: storia e territorio», *Gruppi socio-tecnici e strutture politico-amministrative della fascia costiera meridionale iranica*, ed. by Fiorani Piacentini (= Biblioteca della "Nuova Rivista Storica", 37), n.p., 1988, pp. 117-56.

⁶ P. Schwartz, *Iran im Mittelalter nach den arabischen Geographen*, 2 vols., Hildesheim, New York, 1969, pp. 242-43.

⁷ *Milione. Versione toscana del Trecento*, ed. by V. Bertolucci Pizzorusso (with annotated index by G. R. Cardona), Milan, 1975, pp. 50-51 and pp. 604-05 (s.v. "Cormos"). "Cormoz"/"Curmoz" should be the original noting according to Cardona.

Hormoz used “salted fish and dates and very big fruit” (probably mangoes) to keep themselves healthy, and that they made “a wine from dates and very many spices”, which caused an “immediate flux” to those unaccustomed to it.⁸ In 1622, another Italian traveller, Pietro della Valle, experienced a rather more difficult stay in “Minà”. By that time Minâb had become “[una] fortezza di poca considerazione, fabbricata sopra certi colli o monticelli, a piè della quale sta la villa di capanne, pur come le altre, sparse tra gli alberi delle palme”.⁹

It is to the German physician Engelbert Kaempfer that we owe years later the most detailed report on the palm in Hormozgân.¹⁰ In 1684, Kaempfer participated as a secretary and doctor in the Swedish legation of King Carl XI to Russia and Persia. When the lieutenant colonel, Ludwig Fabritius, brought his mission in Iran to an end, Kaempfer chose to extend his stay by four years, working from time to time as a board doctor in the Dutch East India Company. It was under the shade of a date palm on Ĵerun island, “nostris *Ormuus*, vulgo Persarum *Hormuus*”, that Kaempfer wrote, or better “meditated” over his Latin description of the palm in the IV *fasciculus*.¹¹ We shall briefly see how the terminology documented by this author at the end of the 17th century on Hormoz Island extraordinarily matches that of Minâbi (Ancient Hormozi) documented in more recent times.¹²

Very few scholars have ever done research in this area, and only scattered materials have been published so far. In 1956, Dr Ilya Gershevitch of Cambridge University together with his wife Lizbeth traveled through the “largely unsurveyed wilderness of Bashâkerd”,¹³ of whose dialects “nothing was known”.¹⁴ Their itinerary was decided upon at Minâb.¹⁵ However, very little was published by Gershevitch during his lifetime, despite his very detailed fieldwork.¹⁶

⁸ *Milione*, cit., pp. 50-51.

⁹ *Viaggi di Pietro della Valle, il pellegrino, descritti da lui medesimo in lettere familiari all'erudito suo amico Mario Schipano, divisi in tre parti cioè: La Turchia, La Persia e L'India, colla vita e ritratto dell'autore*, 2 vols., ed. by G. Gancia, Brighton [but Turin], 1843, vol. II, pp. 313-14.

¹⁰ *Amoenitatum exoticarum politico-physico-mediciarum fasciculi V, quibus continentur variae relationes, observationes & descriptiones rerum Persicarum & ulterioris Asiae, multâ attentione, in peregrinationibus per universum Orientem, collectae ab auctore Engelberto Kaempfero*, Lemgo, 1712 (repr. 1976, Tehran).

¹¹ *Amoenitatum exoticarum fasciculus IV. Continens relationes botanico-historicas de Palma Dactylifera, in Perside crescente*. See the *Catalogus relationum*, *ibid.*, p. 660 and cf. *ibid.*, p. 670.

¹² Kaempfer does not mention Minâb. Instead, he mentions Ĵahrom, Lâr, Darâb, the coastal strip east of Minâb up to Sirik known as Biâbân, “*Carmania deserta nunc Meckraan dicta*”, Ĵâsk, Kermân. However, it is not clear if he himself visited these places (cf. Kaempfer, *Amoenitatum Exoticarum*, cit., pp. 668-70).

¹³ I. Gershevitch, «Travels in Bashkardia», *Journal of the Royal Central Asiatic Society* 46, 1959, pp. 213-25, p. 213.

¹⁴ With the exception of the few “Observations on some dialects of western Baluchistan and others akin to them” by E. A. Floyer, *Unexplored Balūchistan*, London, 1882, pp. 465-75. Cf. G. Morgenstierne, «Balochi Mischellanea», *Acta Orientalia* 20, 1946-48, pp. 253-92, p. 253: “In Bashakard, east of Bandar Abbas, and according to the L[inguistic] S[urvey] of I[ndia] map on the very fringe of the Bal[ochi]-speaking territory, Floyer discovered a peculiar language ... Unfortunately much of Floyer’s Bashakard manuscript was lost. But the few words he quotes suffice to show that Bash[akardi] is related to, but not a mere dialect of Bal[ochi]”. Cf. also E. Filippone, «Ilya Gershevitch and New Western Iranian», *The scholarly contribution of Ilya Gershevitch to the development of Iranian studies*, ed. by A. Panaino, Milan, 2006, pp. 11-24, p. 13.

¹⁵ “Mīnâb is ... easily the most charming and unspoiled town we saw in Persia” (I. Gershevitch, «Travels in Bashkardia», cit., p. 212).

¹⁶ On October 2004, following a suggestion from Prof. P. Oktor Skjærvø, I made a short trip to Cambridge, and looked for Minâbi materials in Gershevitch’s bequest at The Ancient India and Iran Trust. Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams, who had already sent me a copy of the audio recordings, authorized me

Minâbi, locally Minowi, was studied for the first time in recent years by Prods Oktor Skjærvø, who spent some hours interviewing people in the town in spring 1972.¹⁷ Most recently, Hassan Mohebbi Bahmani, a local linguist who at times has collaborated with my research, has completed and published his MA thesis: “A linguistic study and description of Minabi dialect” (in Persian).¹⁸

Minâbi belongs to the dialects of southeastern Iran, along with Banderi, Baškardi and Kumzari/Lâraiki (Munsandam Peninsula of Oman and Lârak Island, Iran).¹⁹ The languages of Hormozgân form a linguistically homogeneous area and a geographical transition from Balochi to Lârestâni in Southern Fârs. As far as the terminology of the palm is concerned, the Minâbi vocabulary appears to correlate very closely with the vocabulary sparsely documented for Banderi, rather than with Baškardi or other languages from inner Hormozgân.²⁰ There are many other features, however, that make Hormozgân a homogenous area both culturally and linguistically; recently, the linguistic label “Hormozgâni” was proposed by the present writer.²¹

Minâbi is used in everyday life, and is still being largely passed on to the next generation; nevertheless, its use e.g. in school is deprecated. All Minâbi speakers, with the exception of a few elderly people, seem to be bilingual in Persian. Persian is the language of

to look into each of the two big boxes containing notebooks, unpublished manuscripts and maps, and very kindly gave me the possibility to make photocopies of Notebook II, b. This contains field notes on Minâbi grammar and sketches of objects of material culture, e.g. “ja’la”, a large clay pot with globular body and small cylindrical neck, used for storing water (which I have briefly illustrated in a presentation entitled “Dialect research in *Bashkardia*” during the “Giornate orientalistiche cagliesi II – First Austro-Italian symposium of Iranology”, Cagli, 19 September 2005). I would like to express all my gratitude to Mrs Charlotte de Blois and Prof. François de Blois, and to Dr Ursula Sims-Williams and Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams, for their kind hospitality in Cambridge.

¹⁷ P. O. Skjærvø, «Notes on the dialects of Minab and Hormoz», *Norwegian Journal of Linguistics* 29, 1975, pp. 113–28.

¹⁸ Thesis submitted in 2004 to the School of Graduate Studies, Širâz University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA and published as H. Mohebbi Bahmani, *Barrasi va towsif-e zabânšenâxt-i-e guyeš-e Minâbi*, Tehran, 2006. This work is a brief and interesting description of Minâbi grammar. It contains some short texts, and a notable glossary of about 1,100 entries (partly covering the materials quoted in the grammar) of what the author seems to consider “pure and genuine” Minâbi words as opposed, e.g., to Minâbized Persian.

¹⁹ The only published notes on Minâbi historical phonology are those by Skjærvø, «Notes on the dialects of Minab and Hormoz», *cit.*; see also id., «Languages of Southeast Iran», *Compendium Linguarum Iranicarum*, ed. by R. Schmitt, Wiesbaden, 1989, pp. 363–69; id., «Baškardi», *Encyclopædia Iranica* III, London, New York, 1988, pp. 846–850 (a brief resumption for Russian readers has been drawn from it by V. V. Moškalo, «Baškardi gruppa dialektov», *Jazyki mira. Iranskie jazyki*, 1. *Jugozapadnye iranskie jazyki*, Moscow, 1997, pp. 194–98); id., «Iran iv. Iranian languages and scripts», *Encyclopædia Iranica* XIII, New York, 2006, pp. 344–77, p. 357. As far as Banderi, the dialect of Bandar Abbâs, is concerned, this is used in broadcast media. The dialect of one of the greatest actor of the Persian Gulf history, that of what is still the biggest commercial harbour in Iran, as well as being the language of pop music known on both sides of the Gulf, has never received more than marginal scientific attention in Iran. It has substantially come to the Iranological attention thanks to M. S. Pelevin, «Dialekt bandari južnogo Irana», *Strany i narody vostoka* 30, 1998, pp. 109–22, a brief article containing information from Pelevin’s fieldwork in 1994. Cf. also the Banderi poetical prose in S. Sangbor, *Yâd-et-en* (“Do you remember?”), 2004², Bandar Abbâs; Q. Vakili, *Koludang* (“Nest”), Bandar Abbâs, 2004.

²⁰ Some comparative aspects of the palm vocabulary in Minâb and in southern Iran will be treated in G. Barbera, «The palm in Minâb and Southern Iran: An etymological survey», forthcoming.

²¹ During the “First Austro-Italian symposium of Iranology”, cf. n. 16, above.

education²² and administration, and partly, at least more recently, the language of interethnic communication, especially with neighbouring Balochi communities.²³ Speakers of Minâbi commonly consider Minâbi as a substandard language, a “dialect” (*gap e Minowi*); in spite of that, Minâbi cannot be considered, in strictly sociolinguistic terms, as a dialect of any of the major languages of the area.

3. The Palm

The materials of this enquiry were collected during almost all phases of my fieldwork. Generally speaking, only a few, usually aged people proved to be in full command of specialized vocabulary.²⁴ Descriptions of the palm and palm products (including constructions and handicrafts) were preliminarily based on pictures representing, e.g., the morphology of the tree or the shape and structure of objects and traditional village dwellings. My main consultants were Mr Bâqer Moallemi, who is a school teacher, and Mr Nâser Moallemi, who is a baker, but also owns a palm grove and has good agricultural knowledge. In due course, elicitation took place in the palm groves themselves, in the low-lying villages of Pošt-e Šahvâr and Tombânu, with the assistance of Mr Qolâm Bârâni, an agriculturalist, and downtown at the “Thursday Market” (*panjšambe bâzâr*) of Minâb, where palm handicrafts are regularly sold. Documentation was complemented by pictures and video shots.²⁵

The local term for the date palm is *moy*.²⁶ In Minâb, however, both Arabo-Persian *naxl* and Persian *deraxt e xormâ*, or just *xormâ*, are heard and used alongside *moy*. There is no specific word for a palm grove, matching Persian *naxlestân* (this last being also very rarely heard). Agricultural estates, which mostly include palm plantations, are rather generically referred to as *bâyân* “gardens”, just like in rural dialects of Sicily, where *giaddina* (“gardens”) mostly

²² The level of education is high in the town: in 1997, 78.33% among 36,299 individuals 6 years and older were alphabetized (82.28% men, 74.34% women), Statistical Centre of Iran, 1997 *Census*, cit., p. 40. In Minâb town, one can find at least two primary schools and different types of secondary schools. The closest universities are the Âzâd universities of Bandar Abbâs (Hormozgân) and Ĵiroft (Kermân). The rate of alphabetization and instruction has rapidly increased in recent years, as compared with 1.48% alphabetized people in the entire county of Minâb in 1967 (*Râhnâme-ye šahrestânâhâ-ye Irân*, cit., pp. 493-94).

²³ Balochi communities are reported as living in a number of small settlements. An idea of the Balochi settlements in the district from the early 20th century in *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, 'Oman, and Central Arabia*, ed. by J. G. Lorimer, repr. London, 1970, pp. 1212-1225.

²⁴ In recent years, the process of attrition by Persian has been further accelerated by socio-economic transformations (more employees in public administration), and especially by the media. Many young people receive more stimuli from the Internet than from sitting around old story-tellers.

²⁵ Aspects of documentary linguistic fieldwork through a video made without special equipment, were illustrated in different occasions in 2004, in Naples, at the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, and in England (“Language and folklore in Eastern Hormozgân: A video report on recent research at the mouth of the Persian Gulf”, SOAS, London University; *id.*, “Friday Lectures”, The Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge).

²⁶ This word is widespread in Western Iranian dialects (with variants *mox*, *mok*, *mog*, etc.). It is documented in Middle Persian as *muy* (cf. Redard, «Le palmier à Khur», cit., p. 215, n. 2), and appears in the form *mox* as a lexical rarity in New Persian (cf. *Farhang-e Ĵahângiri*, ed. by Rahim Afifi, Mašhad, 1980, p. 771, being the main source of *Borhân-e Qâte'*, ed. by M. Moin, Tehran, 1979³, p. 1972). Southern Baškardi *bû^wf* “date palm” (recorded at Garu, and at Minâb from speakers of Gwâfr) is due to inner-Baškardi developments.

refer to orange groves. Palm groves or large and small groups of trees in gardens may be also referred to as *moyân* “palms”.²⁷

The date palm is a dioecious plant, i.e. a plant in which the reproductive organs are differentiated in male, *moy e nar*, and female, *moy e mâda*, individuals. Propagation is achieved hazardingly from scattered stones, *estak*, or vegetatively by planting offshoots, *damileng* or *moyoluk*. This happens during *saraton*, a period starting at the beginning of *tir* month in summertime and lasting over forty days. During the same period, dates change in colour and taste.

Two young trees are commonly distinguished by the dimension of their trunk: *tuhm* (or *tohm*) has a short trunk, up to 150 cm, while *moy e jong* (or *jong*), has a trunk as tall as an adult human being, not exceeding the height of 2 m.

The root, *pâr*, of the tree is deep. The trunk or stem, *konta*, has no branches, *dowl*: it is straight, *râst*.²⁸ It can be very high, particularly in such varieties as *mordâseng*, *šâhâni*, and *âlmehtari*, the latter growing more quickly than any others.

A brownish fibre, *sis*, develops around the bases of the fronds on the trunk. The frond, *tay*, is a compound pinnate leaf which, in some varieties, may reach the length of 5 m. It is named according to the stage of its growth and position relative to the crown, *sar e moy*:

- a) apical, *marow* (or *morow*);
- b) median, *gartay*;
- c) terminal, *tay*.

The latter is also a cover term for any date palm frond. The following parts of it are identified:

- a) the broad and roughly triangular base, attached to the trunk, *bonlot*;
- b) the strong middle stalk, *lot*, covered with scattered thorns, *xâr* (or *xârak*);
- c) the midrib, *mahr*;
- d) the leaflets, *piš*.

The fronds are progressively cut as they dry, being reduced to a stump, *towtuk*. The bases of *towtuk*, also *bontowtuk* or *pâtowtuk* will serve as footholds for the collector of dates.

Male trees that will provide pollen, *hârtey*, are grown with female trees, which will bear the fruit. Pollination, *iwâr dâden* or *iwâr kerden*, is practiced artificially: a specialized worker, *moybor*, extracts the male spadix, *iwâr* or *nar*,²⁹ from the spathe, *daluk* (*kerâzey* when

²⁷ Note the word *moyestân*, which seems to be historically attested with geographical reference to the Minâb area at the time of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (“Hormoz is a town on the coast. It is also called Mūgīstân”, cf. P. Schwartz, *Iran im Mittelalter*, cit., p. 244), and later with the general meaning of “palm grove”, reported by Kaempfer as considered already “ancient” at the end of 17th century: “It seems, judging from people’s words, that they prefer to denominate it [scil. the palm] with the specific term of *moch* or with *nachl* rather than with the generic word *dirâcht* “tree” [i.e. *deraxt-e xormâ* – G.B.]. They also indicate a “palm grove” with the proper appellation *nachlistaan*, or rather with the older but commonly heard Persian appellation *moghestoon*, not *dirachtestaan*, i.e. plantation of trees” (Kaempfer, *Amoenitatum exoticarum*, cit., p. 666; translations from Latin by the author throughout the contribution). The meaning of “palm grove” attributed to *moxestân* has also been recorded in ancient Persian dictionaries, cf. *Farhang-e Jahângiri*, cit., p. 771, s.v. *mox* “*deraxt-e xormâ-râ guyand va bâq-e xormâ-râ moxestân xânand*”.

²⁸ Cf. also certain morphological remarks on the palm in the *Liñ piao lu i* treatise by Liu Sün (T’ang period) in China: “This tree may be seen in the suburbs of Kwañ-čou (Canton). The trunk of the tree is entirely without branches, is straight, and rises to a height of from thirty to forty feet”, in B. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica. Chinese Contributions to the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran*, Taipei, 1967 [1919], p. 386.

²⁹ *Rudâni narteri*.

dried), and sprinkles the pollen – which even smells of human sperm – on pistillate flowers, as at Khur.³⁰ From *daluk*, both in Minâb and in Fin,³¹ skilled agriculturalists draw a quiver-shaped bucket, by scraping off the inner part. This is given to children. During picnics in the gardens, children will carry drinkable water smelling as sweet and fragrant as the first, unripe, drupes that were previously encased in the spathe.

The fertilized female spadix develops into a bunch of dates, *huš* (fig. 1), consisting of a main stalk, *pang*, branching into many peduncles, *tileng*, to each of which dates are attached by hard perianths, *pejk*.³² Male individuals usually have a short *pang* of about 60 cm, differently from female individuals and especially of female palms of the *zarek* variety, which absolutely have the longest *pang*, about 150 or 160 cm. The basal part of the date stalk, *sarpangi*, of male palms is an edible marrow, which is being discarded during pollination.

Date palms bear fruit in around 5 years. The fruit, the “date” itself, is a drupe, *dâna*, with fleshy pericarp, *gušt*. Dates go through different phases of ripening. The least ripe drupe, *koney*, still enveloped in the spathe, is followed by *pengeruk*, just emerged from the spathe, and in sequence by phases referred to as *xamal*, *kong*, *ratab* and, finally, *xormâ*, which is the most common word for “date” throughout Iran. The term *ratab* is common with the meaning of “fresh date”, and, in the Arabic form *rotab*, is also found in Persian and in most Iranian dialects.

A date which is “aborted”, as it were, before becoming *kong* is called *meng*; a date turned sour because of moist air is called *torošey*. Particularly tasty are half-ripe dates, *dumpâzg*. The unripe fruits of such palms as *halow* and *zarek* are harvested about eight days after they have become *kong*. Then they are boiled, packaged and sold to Indian traders. In India, they are eaten with milk. The *kong* dates of the *gerdân* variety are very sour, *zeng*; nevertheless, they are sometimes surreptitiously mixed with *kong* dates from *halow*, and sent to India anyway. A variety of particularly sweet and soft *kong* is *karahm*, belonging to such palms as *kalahsorx* and *xârukâzâri*. Dates which have been dried in the sun for about 20 days turn to *salenk*. Rotten *salenk* are boiled together with wheat bran and then given to cows as a feeding.

Kaempfer describes the ripening of dates on Hormoz Island as follows³³:

“At the beginning of June, more rapidly than in any other place, the *chamèl* dates take the shape and the size of olives, while the small stones harden, and the pulp, having reduced its moisture, becomes harder, with no change in taste and colour.³⁴ Fruits at this stage are called *charèk*, *kong* elsewhere. Towards August, they reach the full appearance of what is to be a date, and shimmer green at the utmost. Their shape is now conical, the small stone has grown harder, the pulp is somehow softer, but almost parted; it is a little hard, unripe. Although these are so indigestible and sour, people very often eat them with voluptuousness, being unable to wait patiently until they ripen ... In August, sooner or later, dates

³⁰ And elsewhere in Iran, cf. Redard, «Le palmier à Khur», *cit.*, p. 215; Pâk, «‘Mâhiâ’, ‘mox’ dar Jonub», *cit.*, p. 61; A’lam, «Date Palm», *cit.*, pp. 120-121.

³¹ “Az qalâf-e sâlem-e nar kârgarân-e bâzowq barâ-ye baččehâ now’-i dulče misâzand va baččehâ dar ân âb mirizand” (Sâyebâni, «Sanâye’-e dasti az deraxt-e xormâ», *cit.*, p. 154).

³² Cf. A’lam, «Date palm», *cit.*, p. 121.

³³ Cf. Kaempfer, *Amoenitatum exoticarum*, *cit.*, pp. 700-701. Note Hormozi *chamèl* = Minâbi *xamal*, Hormozi *dumpâz* = Minâbi *dumpâzg*, Hormozi *charèk* = Minâbi *kong*, Hormozi/Minâbi *ruteb/rotab*, *xormâ*, “churmâ”.

³⁴ In contrast with my data as mentioned above.

ripen, and therefore abandon the former appellation to take the name of *dumpàz*. Actually, they do not ripen in such a way as the other fruits do, gradually softening in all their matter at the same time. Instead, in the manner of a rotting fruit, they first acquire a soft macula, and the matter, especially in the extremities where it is rawer, in few days turns into soft pulp. However, they must be picked up very quickly, because the softness of their pulp could cause their calyces to break if they fall down spontaneously. Popular taste by far likes *dumpàz* better than ripe dates, maybe for the hardness of their rawer part blent with the pulp makes the mouthful more agreeable to chew; or maybe because they satisfy the pangs of appetite that for quite a time had increased in people towards the first fruits of the year ... When they are ripe, they are picked. Then, they must be arranged in heaps and must be exposed to the sunbeams, so that, once the remaining rawness has been deposited, owing to exposure to the sunlight they may soften fully and become sweeter. Thus, after they have passed all the phases of ripening and have dried up, they take the name of “dates” (*dactylos*), and precisely they are called *churmà* by the Persians and *tamr* by the Arabs. However, it has been accepted as customary to denominate the fresh ones with the peculiar Arabic word *ruteb*, distinguishing them from the less fresh ones which receive the name of *churmà*.”

Dates are hand harvested. During the harvest, workers travel to Minâb from afar.³⁵ For intensive as well as for occasional harvesting, the practice of picking dates from the trees is rudimental and risky (fig. 2, with demonstration from a short tree). First, the collector fastens a strong rope belt, *parwend*, as a sling around the trunk; a pad, *poškapali*, occasionally softens the tightening of the rope on the back. Then he climbs, planting his feet onto *bontowtuk* and *towtuk*, rising up with the rope belt tightened in the higher part of the back or around the groins at standstill. Depending on such conditions as the height of the trunk and the weight of the bunch, he acts as follows: if the bunch is heavy and is located at a certain height, he will shake it (this operation being described as *moy takânden* “to shake the palm”) in order to free some dates and reduce its consistency and weight; then, he throws it down on a large net, *lih*, which two men hold at the foot of the tree. However, for *âlmehtari* and *mordâseng*, and for other high trees, the collector will send the bunch down on a thin rope, *hušger* (= *riz*), so that the dates might not be bruised.

Date palm varieties are recognized by a plethora of names of which a commentary is not possible here. The following table contains a list of the most common date palms in Minâb, together with some information on the colour of the dates and period of harvesting.³⁶

³⁵ The same is reported by the English traveller Floyer at the end of 19th century: “Minab signifies muddy water, but should convey no reproach to the river, for the gardens are due to the mud it has brought down. The place is about fifty-four miles over fiery desert from Bandar Abbas. It is the sylvan retreat of the merchants of the Bandar, and during the date harvest draws to itself all the able-bodied men of the countries for a hundred miles round” (Floyer, *Unexplored Balūchistan*, cit., p. 140).

³⁶ The most common colour labels used for fruits are *zard* “yellow”, and *kermez* (Arabo-Persian *qermez*) or *sorx* “red”; dates that are *surati* “pinkish” are typical of *halow*. Harvesting exceptionally begins at the end of May for *âlmehtari*, becoming more intensive in the following months for all other varieties (note: *xordâd* 22th May – 21st June; *tir* 22nd June – 22nd July; *mordâd* 23rd July – 22nd August; *šahrivar* 23rd August – 22nd September; *mehr* 23rd September – 22nd October).

name	date colour	time of harvest
<i>âbdandân</i>	<i>zard</i>	<i>mordâd</i>
<i>âlmehtari</i>	<i>zard</i>	15 th <i>xordâd</i> – 8 th <i>tir</i>
<i>âzâr</i>	<i>zard</i>	from end <i>mordâd</i>
<i>gentâr</i>	<i>zard</i>	from 15 th <i>mordâd</i>
<i>gerdân</i>	<i>zard</i>	after <i>halow</i> palm, up to 25 th <i>mordâd</i>
<i>gwardiwâl</i>	<i>zard</i>	beginning of <i>mordâd</i>
<i>halili</i>	<i>zard</i>	15 th <i>šahrivar</i> – end <i>mehr</i>
<i>halow</i>	<i>surati</i>	<i>mordâd</i>
<i>kalahsorx</i>	<i>sorx</i>	after <i>âlmehtari</i> , from 8 th <i>tir</i>
<i>korusi</i>	<i>kermez</i>	15 th <i>šahrivar</i> – <i>mehr</i>
<i>mordâseng</i>	<i>zard</i> (mostly)	beginning of <i>mordâd</i> up to 25 th
<i>moštâi</i>	<i>zard</i>	<i>mordâd</i>
<i>nabâti</i>	<i>zard</i>	<i>tir</i>
<i>rabi</i>	<i>zard</i>	beginning of <i>mordâd</i>
<i>šakari</i>	<i>zard, kermez</i>	8 th – 15 th <i>tir</i>
<i>šakarpâra</i>	<i>zard, kermez</i>	beginning of <i>tir</i> up to 25 th
<i>šâhâni</i>	<i>zard</i>	<i>mordâd</i>
<i>xasab</i>	<i>zard, sorx</i>	<i>šahrivar</i>
<i>xâruk</i>	<i>zard, sorx</i>	some, like <i>âlmehtari</i> , from 15 th <i>xordâd</i> to <i>tir</i> ; some others, after <i>mordâseng</i> , from 25 th <i>mordâd</i>
<i>xârukâzâri</i>	<i>zard</i>	end <i>tir</i> – 15 th <i>mordâd</i>
<i>xeneyzi</i>	<i>kermez</i>	15 th – 25 th <i>tir</i>
<i>zardân</i>	<i>zard</i>	<i>mordâd</i>
<i>zarek</i>	<i>zard</i>	<i>tir</i>

4. Palm Handicrafts and Other Products

The wood, *dâr*, of the trunk or stem, *konta*, is not a high quality wood, but it has tensile strength and, therefore, either as whole, *tâfâl*, or split in halves, *kaši*,³⁷ provides lumber for traditional dwellings in villages, *lahar*, or in countryside, *serg*.³⁸ Coarsely sawn, the trunks are employed as beams, *tir*, and, in particular, they are used as ridge beams, *bâyđâr*³⁹ or as vertical pillars, *pâya*, these last being topped on the roof level by a fork in order to embed the former. Similar but smaller pillars without forks, *pâkarey*, together with *kaši*, are installed in the huts long sides. Split trunks may also serve in building a characteristic downspout, *pandeyâri* (or *pâneyâri*). From the wood, a type woman's shoes, *kapkâp*, was once made, and also not rarely a coffin, *pâlaki*. No particular use other than fuelling is recorded for the root, and for the shoots that develop on the trunk, *kačaki*. These are discarded so that they might not damage the mother palm.

³⁷ In Rudân, two terms were recorded which distinguish the trunk split in halves, *derowk*, from the trunk split in quarters, *rasp*.

³⁸ See the *serg* sketch (fig. 8). This has been drawn from *serg* photographs and is intended to be an abstract representation of different *serg* hut typologies. Huts built entirely of palm elements are not rare; nevertheless they are not the rule either. In many cases, *pâya* and *pâkarey* pillars are made of a different wood, e.g. *karat*, *Acacia Arabica L.*

³⁹ A single *bâyđâr* may close the sloping roofs of *lahar* dwellings; two *bâyđâr* beams may sustain the flat horizontal roofs of *serg* huts.

From the leaflets of the apical frond, *marow*, a type of refined, shallow, circular basket, *tulak*, is woven, which is used during harvest as a container for decayed dates. But most containers are produced from the leaflets of the middle or terminal fronds: *goffâ*, shallow and oblong, to keep bread; *kantela*, small, cylindrical and slightly bellied, with cover, to keep sewing utensils; *katel*, deep and bag-like, with double cloth handles, to keep small fish; *konduk*, shallow and large, to keep bread or flour; *manxala*, deep and large, to carry dates and citruses during harvest; *pari*, deep and conical, to keep squeezed dates, *xormâ lepâšta* or *xormâ loki*, for ruminant feeding. Such containers still serve, especially in villages, the functions indicated above, but their present use in Minâb town is mostly ornamental.

To obtain a *pari* basket, dry leaflet strips, *bal*, of different length are first stitched. Then, they are soaked into water, usually inside a steel basin, *tašt*. In two days *bal* soften. Then the upper and lower rim of each single strip is joined to the rims of other strips by means of a thick thread, *duz*, proceeding from the bottom in a conical way. The leaflet is also used to produce a circular tray, *sop*, many types of fans, *gowzen*, of different shape, and a characteristic mat, *tak*.

The midribs, *mahr*, become available as a lath-work by cutting off the leaflets and by stitching together the resulting sticks so as to form small or big panels: *mahrey*, for fencing kitchen-gardens – so that domestic animals might not burst into them; *mahreng*, for blocking – as a gate, 1 × 1.50 m – the main entrance of gardens or animal enclosures; *mahrengi*, for containing dates when they squeeze the date syrup, *šira*. For this purpose, a *mahrengi* lath is fixed in a circle inside the surface rim of a cylindrically shaped dried mud disk, *ĵâ šira* (or *ĵâye šira*), raised about 30 cm from the ground level. By the force of the dates' own weight, over a long period the date syrup oozes out and pours through a channel into a container placed at the base of the disk, be it a tin, *ballâsi*, a pot, *manĵal*, or any other container, *zarf*.

The midribs are also stitched so as to form a partitioning panel, *kolenderi*, designed with square meshes. Crammed or not with leaflets, *kolenderi* panels are used for bounding the external sides of any huts (see the sketch, fig. 8), or for delimiting a secluded room inside *serg* huts, *ganzira*, in which household objects or clothes are stored.

The dry leaflets are joined together into large, *sewend*, or smaller, *pâtak*, trellis-works. While the latter will close the lateral short sides of *serg* huts or of *kotuk* huts, the former can be employed for a number of other uses. They may provide covering for upper horizontal or sloping roofs, *sar e serg* and *hawârg* (see the sketch, fig. 8). They may also be spread out on the ground of a *moštâ*, to dry dates on them, or may be planted on the ground one after the other in order to form a *powruši* (or *powriši*) partitioning, bounding the external sides of *moštâ* or of traditional village courtyards. Finally, they may be used to cover and soften the sitting surface of *gofâra*, a bed-structure formed by a framework of palm-wood crosspieces.

From the leaflet a long rope, *čilak* or *dorohni*, is woven. This type of rope is used for binding date bunches in order to carry them more easily during harvest. However, most threads and cords are woven from the fibre: *riz*, thin and long; *duz*, thicker and shorter than *riz*, 1.5 to 2 m; *parwend*, much thicker and stronger than the latter. From the fibre, a type of shoe with a short sole, *sowâs*, was also obtained in the past, being common among workers. Still in the past, the fibre would have been ripped off the trunk in case of physical needs, and used as a cloth, *siskun*, for personal cleanliness. The fibre has also been used as a grillwork with mud and beams in building joisted floors.

Brooms are obtained from the pinnate section of the dry frond, *ĵâruâmoš*, or from the peduncles of the bunch of dates, *ĵâruk*. By sectioning the upper part of the main stalk of the bunch of dates, as if peeling a banana into four parts, one obtains *ĉârĉâarak*, a children's toy resembling a sword.

5. Killing the Palm

On two occasions, at Minâb under the supervision of Mr Nâser Moallemi and Mr Bâqer Moallemi, and at Rudân, under the supervision of Mr Manuĉehr Sa'did Rudâni and Mr Seyed Ebrâhim Sâber, two healthy palms were generously felled specially for me to document the practice of "killing" a palm to eat its sweet heart.⁴⁰

Killing healthy palms is considered unlucky in southern Iran. At Tangestân, Bušehr, and in many other cultures, felling a tree is reputed to be tantamount to striking down a person.⁴¹ But both at Minâb and Rudân the pleasure of eating some heart of the palm during the Friday holiday easily compensates for the unlucky consequences of such a felling.

In Minâb, Nâser decided that a young palm, *tuhm*, be killed. By means of a sharp-pointed iron spade, *mantul*, about 1.5 m long, Mr Ebrâhim Bazrafšân, a gardener (fig. 3), began by scooping out the base of the crown and then, little by little and bending laboriously over the young spike, using a toothed sickle, *dâs*, he began to peel off the fibre from around the terminal bud's yellowish tissues, *sohk*. At Rudân, Manuĉehr's worker, Moin, faced a more sturdy and older palm. Differently from what may happen at Khur, where, apparently at risk of one's own life, the worker seems to approach the heart of the palm acting as if he were going to collect the fruits,⁴² Moin, dripping with sweat, went through a lot of effort to cut into the base of the trunk. In the space of half an hour, at a height of some 60 cm with respect to the external root level, the trunk is ripped off by so large a wedge that just a slight push made it bend down over the ground (fig. 4). Thus, the palm comes to its end forever (fig. 5).⁴³ Its last trace is a stump of the trunk, *bonmoy*, that must be burnt as soon as possible to exterminate infesting worms.

The palm's heart, *kur*, is a "white, soft, fleshy, crumbly, sweetish, tasty matter",⁴⁴ which is eaten fresh with pleasure bordering on amazement (figs. 6, 7).

⁴⁰ "Lorsqu'un arbre male est sterile, on le "condamne à mort". L'abatage, qui a généralement lieu dans un jour de fête, se fait en deux temps. Un homme, pieds nu et s'aidant d'une corde, grimpe d'abord jusqu'au bouquet et, à l'aide du couteau *dâs* se met à ébrancher l'arbre; à mesure que les couches de fibre apparaissent, il les coupe et les ôte. La branche de pointe *dâllâk*, très longue et serre comme un éventail fermé, tombe à son tour. Dégagé, le cœur de l'arbre décapité est un cône d'un blanc laiteux, qu'on sectionne à la base avec une longue scie *ârg* à manche *dastâ* de corn *šâx*. C'est le "fromage" du palmier *panir-è mûg*, qui pèse de 3 à 7 kg suivant l'arbre et qu'on mange débité en cubes: nourriture un peu fade, mais riche, très fin et fort appréciée" (Redard, «Le palmier à Khur», *cit.*, pp. 218-19).

⁴¹ Cf. *Barresi-e xormâ va masâel-e ân dar šahrestân-e Tangestân I*, ed. by the *Sâzmân-e barnâme va budĵe-ye ostân-e Bušehr*, n.p., 1364 H/1985-86 (mimeograph), p. 10; cf. also A'lam, «Date palm», *cit.*, p. 121.

⁴² Cf. n. 40, above.

⁴³ "Cutting off the terminal bud will kill the palm (pace Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 13.9), even if the whole tree is not cut down" (A'lam, «Date palm», *cit.*, p. 121).

⁴⁴ Kaempfer, *Amoenitatum Exoticarum*, *cit.*, p. 688. Cf. also: "The Persians commonly call the palm's head's medullar *mayz-i ser*, or more properly *kuur*; when the palm's head has been chopped, the tree necessarily dies" (*ibid.*).

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LIST OF MINÂBI WORDS RELATING TO THE PALM⁴⁵

<i>bal</i>	strip of dry leaflets used in the preparation of <i>pari</i> baskets; <i>band-e piš ke dar dorost kardan-e sabad-e pari be kâr miravad</i> .
<i>bây</i>	agricultural estate, esp. date palm; <i>bâq, maxsusan naxlestân</i> . Cf. <i>moyân</i> .
<i>bâydar</i>	ridge beams in traditional huts (see the sketch, fig. 8); <i>tir az čub-e deraxt-e xormâ ke be zir-e saqf-e bâlâ-ye kaparhâ yâ xânehâ-ye kapari be kâr miravad</i> .
<i>bonlot</i>	basal part of the palm frond; <i>bon-e čub-o šâxe-ye barg-e deraxt-e xormâ va yâ qesmat-e entehâ-ye lot ke be konde-ye deraxt-e xormâ vasl-ast</i> .
<i>bonmoy</i>	stump of the palm trunk; <i>bâqimânde-ye konde-ye deraxt-e xormâ ba’d az boridan-e ân</i> .
<i>bontowtuk</i>	basal part of the cut fronds; <i>bon-e towtuk</i> . Also <i>pâtowtuk</i> . Cf. <i>towtuk</i> .
<i>čârčârak</i>	children’s toy resembling a sword, obtained by sectioning into four parts the basal part of the date stalk; <i>asbâb-e bâzi-e baččegâne-ye mânand-e šamšir ke az pust kandan-e pang dar čâr qesmat be dast miâvarad</i> .
<i>čilak</i>	a rope braided from the palm fibre, used for carrying date bunches; <i>rismân-i-st ke bâ alyâf-e deraxt-e xormâ, sis, bâfte mišavad</i> . Also <i>dorohni</i> .
<i>daluk</i>	spathe of the palm encasing the spadix; <i>espât va yâ qalâf-e deraxt-e xormâ</i> . Cf. <i>kerâzey</i> .
<i>damileng</i>	small palm shoots; <i>pâjuš-e kuček-e deraxt-e xormâ</i> . Cf. <i>moyoluk</i> .
<i>dâna, dâneye xormâ</i>	drupe, date drupe; <i>dâne, dâne-ye xormâ</i> .

⁴⁵ The definitions presented here have been obtained by discussing with my Hormozgâni friends definitions of palm morphology and products as described in specialized works on the date palm in Iran. The English description of the date palm morphology has been based on H. W. Barreveld, *Date Palm Products* (= FAO Agricultural Services Bulletin, 103), Rome, 1993, and A’lam, «Date palm», *cit.* The transcription of Minâbi is a broad phonological one. Persian is represented in the phonemicized transcription adopted by Gilbert Lazard (with *č* for *c*, and *j* for *j*).

<i>dâr, dâr e moy</i>	wood, palm wood; <i>čub, čub-e konde-ye deraxt-e xormâ</i> .
<i>dâs</i>	a toothed sickle, used for tearing fibres from the palm trunk; <i>now'-e dâs-ast barâ-ye boridan-e alyâf-e deraxt-e xormâ</i> .
<i>deraxt e xormâ</i>	date palm; <i>deraxt-e xormâ</i> . Also <i>moy, naxl, xormâ</i> .
<i>dorohni</i>	a synonym of <i>čilak</i> .
<i>dumpâzg</i>	half-ripe date; <i>xormâ-ye nimraside</i> .
<i>duz</i>	a thread braided from the palm fibres, used for sewing dry leaflet strips into <i>pari</i> basket (it is a <i>riz</i> cord, six times thicker); <i>rismân-i ke az alyâf-e deraxt-e xormâ bâfte mišavad va dar bâham duxtân-e bal be kêr miravad</i> .
<i>estak</i>	stone, kernel of the dates and of other fruits; <i>haste-ye xormâ va amsâl-e ân</i> .
<i>ganzira</i>	store-room in a <i>serg</i> being closed by a <i>kolenderi</i> panel; <i>qesmat-i-st az xâne-ye tâbestâni, serg, ke maxsusân bâ kolenderi baste šode-ast va barâ-ye negâhdâri-e vasâyel-o ajnâs-e xâne be kêr miravad</i> .
<i>gofâra</i>	a bed framework of palm wood crosspieces covered with <i>sewend</i> trellis-works; <i>now'-i čârčub-e dorost šode az čub-e konde-ye deraxt-e xormâ ke bâ sewend mipušânand va ru-ye ân mardom derâz mikašand</i> .
<i>goffâ</i>	a shallow and oblong palm leaflet basket (35 × 25 cm), used for keeping bread; <i>sabad-e kuček-i-ast ke az piš dorost mišavad va dar ân nân migozârând</i> .
<i>gowzen</i>	fans made of palm leaflets, esp. from apical fronds, <i>marow</i> ; <i>bâdbezan-i ke az piš-e barg-e deraxt-e xormâ, maxsusân marow, dorost mišavad</i> .
<i>gušt, gušt e xormâ</i>	pulp, date fleshy pericarp; <i>gušt, gušt-e xormâ</i> .
<i>gwartay</i>	median frond of the palm; <i>barg-e miâne-ye deraxt-e xormâ</i> .
<i>hawârg</i>	sloping roof made of <i>sewend</i> trellis-works (see the sketch, fig. 8); <i>sâyebân-i be jens-e sewend-ast ke dar sar-e šib-e xânehâ-ye kapari be kêr miravad</i> .
<i>hârtey</i>	pollen of the male palm; <i>garde-ye deraxt-e xormâ-ye nar</i> .
<i>huš, huš e xormâ</i>	bunch, bunch of dates; <i>xuše, xuše-ye xormâ</i> .
<i>hušger</i>	a thick cord made of strands of palm fibres, used to collect dates from high trees; <i>now'-i tanâb-e seft-o koloft az jens-e riz ke az alyâf-e deraxt-e xormâ, sis, bâfte mišavad va barâ-ye pâin âvordan-e xuše-ye xormâ az deraxt be kêr miravad</i> .
<i>iwâr</i>	male spadix. Also <i>nar</i> .
<i>iwâr dâden, kerden</i>	to pollinate (artificially); <i>bârvar kardan-e deraxt-e xormâ</i> .
<i>járûâmoš</i>	type of broom obtained from the pinnate section of the dry frond; <i>now'-e járû-i ke az piš dorost mišavad</i> .
<i>járûk</i>	type of broom obtained from the peduncles of the cluster of dates; <i>now'-e járû-i ke bâ rešte-ye xuše-ye xormâ, tileng, dorost mišavad</i> .
<i>járû šira, járû šira</i>	cylindrically shaped dried mud disk in which the date syrup is produced; <i>járû-ye maxsus-e fešordan-e xormâ-ye barâ-ye šira</i> .
<i>jong</i>	young palm tree, esp. when the trunk is 1.5 to 2 m long; <i>deraxt-e xormâ-ye javân-ast ke konde-ye ân 1, 5 tâ 2 metr mibâšad</i> . Also <i>moy e jong</i> . Cf. <i>tuhm</i> .
<i>kačaki</i>	shoot having developed roots while still attached to the mother palm; <i>pâjuš-i ke dar baqâl-e deraxt-e xormâ-ye mâde be vojûd miâyad</i> .

<i>kantela</i>	a small, cylindrical and slightly bellied basket made of palm leaflets (15 × 20 cm), with cover, used for containing sewing utensils; <i>now'-e sabad-e kuček-i-st be šekl-e ostovâne ke az piš dorost mišavad. In sabad barâ-ye gozâštan-e vasâyel-e duxtani be kâr miravad.</i>
<i>kapkâp</i>	type of ancient women's clogs with high palm wood soles; <i>now'-e kafš-e čubi-e zanâne-ye qadimi-ast ke kaf-e ân boland-ast va az čub-e deraxt-e xormâ dorost mišavad.</i>
<i>karahm</i>	a variety of sweet and soft kong, esp. of such palms as <i>kalahsorx</i> and <i>xârukâzâri</i> ; <i>now'-i dâne-ye kong-e narm-o širin-e maxsus-e deraxt-e xormâ-ye kalahsorx-o xârukâzâri.</i>
<i>kaši</i>	half-split palm wood beam embedded in small forked wood pillars (see the sketch, fig. 8); <i>tâfâl-i ke dar har do taraf-e derâz-e xâne-ye kapari be kâr miravad va dar bâlâ-ye sar-e pâkarey takye mikonad va bâham baste mišavad.</i>
<i>katel</i>	type of large and deep bag made of palm leaflets (40 × 50 cm), with double cloth handles; <i>now'-i xorjin-e bozorg-i-st ke az piš dorost mišavad va do tâ daste-ye pârc̄ei dârad va dâxel-e ân mâhi migozârand.</i>
<i>kâl e piš, ya kâl e piš</i>	a single leaflet of the palm frond; <i>ya tâ piš.</i>
<i>kerâzey</i>	dried spathe of the palm, from which the bunch with the first dates has emerged; <i>espât va yâ qalâf-e xošk šode-ye deraxt-e xormâ. Cf. daluk.</i>
<i>kolenderi</i>	a partitioning panel made of midribs (see the sketch, fig. 8); <i>šabake-i ke az čub-e barg-e deraxt-e xormâ, mahr, dorost mišavad.</i>
<i>konduk</i>	a large and shallow basket made of palm leaflets (10 × 40 cm), used for keeping bread or flour; <i>now'-i sabad-e bozorg-o kam'omq ke az alyâf-e xormâ dorost mišavad va dar ân nân-o ârd migozârand.</i>
<i>koney</i>	date drupes enveloped in the spathe; <i>avvalin marhale-ye xormâ-i-ast piš az pengeruk ke dânehâ-ye ân hanuz dâxel-e espât va yâ qalâf-and.</i>
<i>kong</i>	unripe, green date drupes, esp. in the stage which comes after <i>xamal</i> and before <i>ratab</i> ; <i>mive-ye nâras-o sabz-e xormâ ke dar marhale-ye ba'd az xamal va piš az rotab-ast.</i>
<i>konta</i>	trunk or stem of the palm tree; <i>konde va yâ sâqe-ye deraxt-e xormâ.</i>
<i>košten</i>	to kill the palm in order to eat its heart; <i>koštan-e deraxt-e xormâ barâ-ye xordan-e panir-e ân.</i>
<i>kotuk</i>	1) small village hut with tent structure; <i>kapar-e rustâi-e kuček</i> ; 2) open shelter, with flat roof resting on four wood pillars and open on all sides.
<i>kur</i>	date palm heart, “palm cheese”; <i>panir-e deraxt-e xormâ.</i>
<i>lahar, laha</i>	1) traditional village dwelling made of palm elements and mud, with sloping roof, often consisting of a series of palm leaf huts connected to each other; <i>xâne-ye kapari-e rustâi ke bâ čub-e deraxt-e xormâ va gel dorost mišavad</i> ; 2) also a synonym of <i>tak</i> (2); 3) nowadays, a general term for house, home; <i>xâne.</i>
<i>leh, lih</i>	coarse rectangular jute net with two wood sticks along its shorter sides, used during date harvest; <i>now'-i tur az jens-e guni-st ke bâ do tâ čub dar do taraf-e ân baste šode-ast va dar mowred-e čidan-e xormâ be kâr miravad.</i>
<i>lot</i>	middle stalk of the palm frond; <i>šâxe-ye miâne-ye barg-e deraxt-e xormâ-ye bedun-e piš.</i>
<i>mahr</i>	midrib; <i>čub-o šâxe-ye barg-e deraxt-e xormâ.</i>

<i>mahrey</i>	a fence made of palm leaf midribs, used for bounding kitchen-gardens: <i>divâr-e šabake-i ke az čub-e barg-e deraxt-e xormâ, mahr, dorost mišavad va barâ-ye bastan-e jâliz be kâr miravad.</i>
<i>mahreng</i>	garden gate made of midribs (commonly 1 × 1.5 m); <i>šabake-i ke az čub-e barg-e deraxt-e xormâ, mahr, dorost mišavad va be jâ-ye dar-e bâq be kâr miravad.</i>
<i>mahrengi</i>	a lathing made of palm leaf midribs, used during the production of the date syrup; <i>šabake-i ke az čub-e barg-e deraxt-e xormâ, mahr, dorost mišavad va dar mowred-e fešordan-e xormâ barâ-ye šire be kâr miravad.</i>
<i>marow, morow</i>	apical frond of the palm; <i>barg-e deraxt-e xormâ ke bolandtar az sâer-e barghâye deraxt-e xormâ-st.</i>
<i>mantul</i>	sharp-pointed iron spade, used for cutting the palm's trunk or for planting offshoots (about 1.5 m long); <i>now'-e bil-e âheni-st barâ-ye boridan-e čub-e deraxt-e xormâ yâ kâştan-e pâjuš.</i>
<i>manxala</i>	a large palm leaflet basket, used for carrying dates or citruses; <i>now'-i zambil-e bozorg ke az piš dorost mišavad va dar mowred-e haml-o naql-e xormâ yâ morakkabât be kâr miravad.</i>
<i>meng</i>	a date which is “aborted”, as it were, before becoming kong; <i>mive-ye xormâ-i ke dar hâlat-e nimeras bâqi mimânad va rošd-e ân motevaqqef gardide-ast.</i>
<i>moy</i>	date palm; <i>deraxt-e xormâ.</i> Also <i>naxl, xormâ.</i>
<i>moyân</i>	palm grove; <i>naxlestân.</i> Cf. <i>bây.</i>
<i>moybor</i>	a worker specialized in the artificial pollination of female date palms, but also in cutting palm fronds and bunches; <i>kârgar-i ke kâr-e ân bârvar kardan-e deraxt-e xormâ-st va ham boridan-e piš-e deraxt-e xormâ va xušehâ-ye xormâ.</i>
<i>moy e jông</i>	see <i>jông.</i>
<i>moy e mâda</i>	female palm; <i>deraxt-e xormâ-ye mâde.</i>
<i>moy e nar</i>	male palm; <i>deraxt-e xormâ-ye nar.</i>
<i>moyoluk</i>	shoot of the date palm; <i>pâjuš-e deraxt-e xormâ.</i> Cf. <i>damileng.</i>
<i>moy takânden</i>	the act of shaking bunches to lighten their weight during harvest; <i>xuše takândan.</i>
<i>moštâ</i>	enclosure in which dates are piled-up during summer harvest and in which they dry; <i>mohavvate-ye barâ-ye gerdâvordan-e xormâhâ dar fasl-e tâbestân va barâ-ye xošk kardan-e ânhâ.</i>
<i>nar</i>	male spadix. Also <i>iwâr.</i>
<i>naxl</i>	date palm, <i>deraxt-e xormâ.</i> Also <i>moy, xormâ.</i>
<i>pandeyâri, pâneyâri</i>	downspout made of palm wood; <i>nardebân-i ke bâ čub-e deraxt-e xormâ dorost mišavad.</i>
<i>pang</i>	main stalk of the bunch of dates; <i>šâxe-ye xuše-ye xormâ.</i>
<i>pari</i>	a deep and conical receptacle made of strips of twisted dry palm leaflets (20 × 35 cm), used for keeping squeezed dates; <i>now'-e sabad-i-st ke bâ bandhâ-ye piš, bal, dorost mišavad va dar ân xormâ lepâšta migozârând.</i>
<i>partak</i>	type of worn-out palm leaflet mat; <i>now'-i hasir-e puside va kohne ke az jens-e tak-ast.</i>

<i>parwend</i>	a large and stout cord made of strands of palm fibres (2 to 3 m), used as an aid in climbing palms; <i>vasile-i az tanâb-ast koloft-o mohkam ke az alyâf-e deraxt-e xormâ, sis, dorost mišavad va barâ-ye bâlâ raftan az deraxt-e xormâ be kê miravad.</i>
<i>pâkarey</i>	small palm wood pillar supporting low lateral beams in traditional houses and huts (see the sketch, fig. 8); <i>sotun-e kuček-i-st be ĵens-e pâya (ke sar-e ân be surat-e V misâzand).</i> Cf. <i>pâya</i> .
<i>pâlaki</i>	palm wood coffin; <i>tâbut-i ke az ĉub-e deraxt-e xormâ dorost mišavad.</i>
<i>pâneÿâri</i>	see <i>pandeyâri</i> .
<i>pâr</i>	deep root of the palm and of any other tree; <i>riše-ye amiq-e deraxt-e xormâ va sâer-e deraxthâ.</i>
<i>pâtak</i>	small palm leaf trellis-works, used for covering the country huts short sides (see the sketch, fig. 8); <i>vasile-i-st be ĵens-e sewend barâ-ye pušêš-e qesmat-e pâin-e kaparhâ.</i>
<i>pâtowtuk</i>	basal part of the cut fronds; <i>bon-e towtuk</i> . Also <i>bontowtuk</i> . Cf. <i>towtuk</i> .
<i>pâya</i>	vertical wood pillar topped by a fork (see the sketch, fig. 8); <i>now'-i sotun-e boland ke bâ ĉub-e deraxt-e xormâ dorost mišavad va sar-e ân šiâr-e dâyerei dârad.</i> Cf. <i>pâkarey</i> .
<i>peĵg</i>	date perianth; <i>kolâhak-e xormâ.</i>
<i>pengeruk</i>	first (visible) date fruits that have just emerged from the spathe; <i>marhale-ye xormâ-i-st ba'd az marhale-ye koney va piš az marhale-ye kong, ya'ni avvalin dânehâ-ye xormâ ke az kerâzey birun oftâde-and.</i>
<i>piš</i>	leaflets of the palm frond (perceived as a whole). Cf. <i>kâl e piš, tay</i> .
<i>poškapali</i>	a cloth pad that may soften the tightening of the <i>parwend</i> cord on the back; <i>vasile-i-st pâŗei ke qesmat-e pahn-e ân be tanâb-e parwend baste mišavad va be pošt-e kamar-e xormâĉin mioftad.</i>
<i>powruši, powriši</i>	a partitioning that bounds village courtyards and that may also bound the external sides of <i>moštâ</i> ; <i>divâre-i ke bâ sewend dorost mišavad.</i>
<i>ratab</i>	fresh date; <i>rotab, xormâ-ye tâze.</i>
<i>râst</i>	straight, said of the palm trunk; <i>râst.</i>
<i>riz</i>	a thin thread made of palm fibres, used for sewing <i>pari</i> baskets or for tying domestic animals; <i>yek now'-i rismân-i-st ke bâ alyâf-e deraxt-e xormâ, sis, dorost mišavad. In rismân barâ-ye duxtân-e sabad-e pari va barâ-ye bastân-e sar-o pâ-ye heyvânât-e ahli mowred-e estefâde mišavad.</i>
<i>salenk</i>	unripe dates dried for domestic (esp. ruminant) animal feeding; <i>xormâ-ye puside va xošk šode-ye maxsus-e heyvânât-e ahli.</i>
<i>saraton</i>	period starting at the beginning of <i>tir</i> month (22 nd June – 22 nd July) and lasting over forty days. During <i>saraton</i> , dates change in colour and taste.
<i>sar e moy</i>	crown topping the trunk of the palm; <i>tâĵ va yâ kalle-ye deraxt-e xormâ.</i>
<i>sar e serg</i>	flat roof of <i>serg</i> huts (see the sketch, fig. 8); <i>saqf-e bâlâ-ye xâne-ye kapari, serg.</i>
<i>sarpangi</i>	the basal (often edible) part of the date stalk, which is discarded during pollination.
<i>serg</i>	traditional country hut (see the sketch, fig. 8); <i>xâne-ye kapari.</i>
<i>sergak</i>	small <i>serg</i> ; <i>serg-e kuček.</i>

sewend	large palm leaf trellis-works, used for giving shadow; <i>vasile-i-st barâ-ye pušêš-e saqfhâ va barâ-ye sâxt-e xânehâ-ye kapari ke az beham bâftan-e barg-e deraxt-e xormâ be vojûd miâyad.</i>
sis	date palm fibre; <i>alyâf-e deraxt-e xormâ.</i>
siskun	fibres that have been ripped off the trunk and that could have been used in the past for personal cleanliness in case of need.
sohk	yellowish tissues around the heart of the palm; <i>qesmat-e dowr-e panir-e deraxt-e xormâ.</i>
sop	a circular palm leaflet tray (diameter of the external rim: 35 cm); <i>zarf-e gerd-o mosattah ke be vasile-ye piš dorost mišavad.</i>
sowâs	type of shoes with a short palm fibre sole, used by workers in the past; <i>dar zamân-e qadim now'-i kafš bude-ast bâfte šode az alyâf-e deraxt-e xormâ. Kaf-e in kafš nozâk-ast.</i>
šira	date syrup; <i>šire-ye xormâ.</i>
tay	date palm frond or leaf; <i>barg-e deraxt-e xormâ.</i> It is usually perceived as the branch of the palm tree. Cf. <i>piš.</i>
tak	1) a mat interwoven with palm leaflets (different measures, commonly 1.5 × 3 m); <i>hasir-i ke bâ barg-e deraxt-e xormâ, piš, mibâfand</i> ; 2) beehive hut, type of small hut covered with palm leaflet mats; <i>now'-i xâne-ye kapari-e kuček-ast ke maxsusan bâ hasir-e tak pušânde mišavad.</i> Also a synonym of <i>lahar</i> (2).
tašt	a steel basin in which palm dry leaflet strips are soaked before being sewed into <i>pari</i> baskets; <i>tašt-i-st ke dar ân bal-e piš gozâšte šode-ast va tu âb narm mišavad.</i>
tâfâl	1) scraped down palm trunk, used in building traditional houses and huts; 2) also, generally, palm lumber; <i>alvâr-e deraxt-e xormâ.</i>
tileng	peduncles of the cluster of dates; <i>rešte-ye xuše-ye xormâ-i ke dânehâ ru-ye ân rošd mikonand.</i>
tir	palm wood beam; <i>tir-i-st az ĵens-e čub-e deraxt-e xormâ.</i>
torošey	dates having turned sour because of moist air; <i>xormâ-ye torš šode barâ-ye havâ-ye martub.</i>
towtuk	terminal part of the cut frond which is left on the tree; <i>qesmat-i-st az entehâ-ye čub-e barg, bonlot, ke ba'd az boridan-e barg ru-ye tane-ye deraxt bâqi mimânad.</i> Cf. <i>bontowtuk, pâtowtuk.</i>
tuhm, tohm	sampling of the palm; <i>nehâl-e-deraxt-e xormâ.</i> Its trunk is 50 cm to 1 or 1.5 m high approximately. A village variant is <i>tohm.</i> Cf. <i>ĵong.</i>
tulak	a shallow, circular basket made of the leaflets of the palm apical fronds (15 × 30 cm), used for keeping rotten dates during harvest; <i>sabad-e gerd-o kam'omq ke az barg-e deraxt-e xormâ, maxsusan marow, dorost mišavad.</i>
xamal	unripe, green dates, esp. in the stage which comes after <i>pengeruk</i> and before <i>kong</i> ; <i>mive-ye nâras-o sabz-e xormâ ke dar marhale-ye ba'd az pengeruk-ast va piš az kong.</i>
xâr, xârak	thorns of the palm leaf; <i>xâr-o tiq-e barg-e deraxt-e xormâ.</i>
xormâ	1) date; <i>xormâ</i> ; 2) ripe date; <i>marhale-ye xormâ-i-st ba'd az rotab</i> ; 3) date palm; <i>deraxt-e xormâ.</i> Also <i>moy, naxl.</i>
xormâ lepâšta	squeezed dates for domestic (esp. ruminant) animal feeding; <i>xormâ-ye fešorde-ye barâ-ye heyvânât-e ahli.</i> Also <i>xormâ loki.</i>

<i>xormâ loki</i>	a synonym of <i>xormâ lepâšta</i> .
<i>zeng</i>	sour, with special reference to the sour <i>kong</i> dates of the <i>gerdân</i> palm variety; <i>talx</i> , <i>maxsusân dar bâre-ye mivehâ-ye kong-e gerdân</i> .

PLATES

- Fig. 1. Bunches of *kong* dates. Minâb.
- Fig. 2. Mr Bâqer Moallemi showing the use of *parwend*. Minâb.
- Fig. 3. Mr Ebrâhim Bazrafšân “killing” *tuhm*. Pošt-e Šahvâr, Minâb.
- Fig. 4. Moin “killing” a palm. Khatif, Rudân.
- Fig. 5. Moin on the dead palm. Khatif, Rudân.
- Fig. 6. Eating the heart of the palm. Khatif, Rudân (Mr Manučehr Sa’did Rudâni, left, with the heart in his hand).
- Fig. 7. Eating the heart of the palm. Pošt-e Šahvâr, Minâb.
- Fig. 8. *Serg* (sketch by Gianluigi Furlan and Gerardo Barbera).