

The *Dāyi* ~ *Kārgil* of Andkhoy: Language, History and Typical Professions. Discourses on Local Identity

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Summary

On Turkological ground, the existence of “small groups of Khorassanian Turkic speakers along the Amu Darya” had been postulated years ago. Field research in Andkhoy, the northwestern most town of Afghanistan, seems to have yielded proof of this assumption: The *Dayi* / *Kārgil* of the Andkhoy oasis in fact speak a dialect that comes close to Khorassanian Turkic. This paper introduces local knowledge about their historical background, religious and linguistic affiliation, and social and professional attribution, all of which are important elements in the shaping of personal and collective identities.

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The Andkhoy oasis, located in the far northwestern corner of Afghanistan, is home to a mixed population dominated by speakers of Turkic languages (Uzbeks, Turkmens and several smaller ethnic groups) with additional small, local *Fārsiwān* and Pashtun communities. Due to its geographical situation – close to the crossroads of transregional warfare and trade between Iran, Mawarā'unnahr and South Asia, but isolated from them by arid belts – the historical *Andkhudh* enjoyed a contested but relatively independent status until its late incorporation into the empire of the amirs of Kabul in 1869.² Today Andkhoy is a regional administrative and economic centre of some importance, although continuous desertification, a shortage of arable and irrigated land, war, and the decay of local agriculture, stockbreeding and crafts through regional and imbalanced global economic competition have all dealt severe

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² Cf. B. A. Axmedov: *Istoriia Balxa (XVI-pervaia polovina XVIII v.)*, Tashkent 1982: 32ff.; J. L. Lee: *The 'Ancient Supremacy'. Bukhara, Afghanistan and the Battle for Balkh, 1731-1901*, Leiden/New York/ Cologne 1996: 338.

blows to its prosperity in recent decades. Regardless of their economic difficulties, the people of Andkhoy have managed to retain their rich tradition in primary and secondary state and private education. Andkhoy's poets, musicians and learned men are not only important on a regional scale, but have made it into the high – and even the very highest – ranks and positions on the national level.

Many societal issues of relevance to the whole of Afghanistan might be studied in the microcosm of Andkhoy, as can readily be seen from this brief outline. This paper has to confine itself to just one of them: I will attempt to describe the preservation, reification, and creative re-shaping of identities by members of one small ethnic group living in present-day Andkhoy. In these processes, pre-modern and modernist categories and conceptualisations coexist and blend in interesting and sometimes surprising ways. The group under consideration is known as *Dāyi* or *Kārgul*. The study is based upon material I collected during a short field research stay at Andkhoy in the autumn of 2004. My colleague from Andkhoy, Professor M. Sālih Rāsikh, made further inquiries after considering my first draft and he provided some important additional information, for which I am deeply grateful.³

Andkhoy is home to many small ethnic groups (*qawm*⁴) that are said to speak Turkic languages, at least as a second language. These include *Kiyikči*, *Arab* and *Aymāq*, *Dā:yākči~Dāhyākči* and *Qızılbaş*, *Šix* and *Urganji*, *Jōgi*, *Lōli* and *Jat*. In 2004 I was actually searching for native speakers of the *kiyikči* language when one day a gentleman asked if I was also interested in the *Dāyi* and their language, which I was. Mr Tinmas, who runs a chemist's shop and is a teacher at Andkhoy Teacher Training College as well, then said that he was a *Dāyi* himself but could not really speak *Dāyi* any more. He proposed to arrange a meeting with a colleague of his who was also a *Dāyi* and much more knowledgeable about that ethnic group than he was, and who was probably still an active speaker of the language. That meeting and two further encounters the day after took place at the assembly hall of Andkhoy town authority. Officials, clerks, visitors to the offices, and quite a few passers-by and people from the nearby bazaar who had got wind of our meetings participated for anything from a few minutes to several hours. Many of them actively contributed to what soon turned from a typical interview situation into a discussion and at times a chat about linguistic, ethnographic and historical matters pertaining to the *Dāyi* of Andkhoy.⁵

³ I should also like to express my gratitude to my generous host Anuš Sāhib (town authority of Andkhoy), to all the gentlemen from Andkhoy who actively contributed to my work as will be explained below, and particularly to Ustād Hamidullāh, an expert in the ethnography and folklore of his home town, without whose help regarding many practical and scholarly matters this piece of work would not have been possible. Needless to say, no one but myself is responsible for scholarly errors and shortcomings of this paper.

⁴ Unless otherwise stated, the single terms mentioned in brackets are rendered in local majority Uzbek (hereafter cited as U).

⁵ Large parts of the sessions have been recorded on DAT cassettes. These are kept in the Phonogrammarchiv (Archive of Audio Recordings) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna (4 / 14-09-2004)

At our first session – on the evening of 14 September 2004 – Tinmas Sāhib was the only Dāyi present while about thirty local Uzbek and a few local Turkmen gentlemen had assembled. Since no one really spoke the *Dāyi* language, the discussion did not yield much language material. However, from an ethnographic point of view, the discussion was extremely rich; everyone present seemed to enjoy reasoning about language and matters of historical and local belonging. The discussion focused upon *Dāyi* matters, but also yielded a wealth of information and opinions concerning the Uzbeks and Turkmens and their respective languages, customs and so on. The participants appeared versatile in this type of discourse on identity, inclusion/exclusion and delimitation. I did some elicitation of verb forms and word-list-like questioning on semantic domains (parts of the body, animals and further subjects) and tried to inquire about thematic domains that male participants of discussion groups normally enjoy a lot such as popular sports and games, actually more in order to keep conversation going than out of a desire for systematic questioning.⁶ In any case, Mr Tinmas tended to direct the conversation more than I did. The meeting turned into the kind of cultivated social reunion (*maylis*) with a good deal of conversation (*sōhbat*), the type of event at which men in Afghanistan spend much of their time exchanging their thoughts and passing on information while socialising.

We continued the interviews early the following morning. Tinmas Sāhib opened the session and presented us with brief ethnographic and historical notes on the *Dāyi*, which he had recollected overnight in preparation for our meeting. Uzbeks and Turkmens in the group soon joined in and the discussion got underway. Then Mīrzā Bāzār arrived, whom Tinmas Sāhib had invited as an expert in matters of their shared mother tongue and who was an active speaker of the dialect. Bāzārkhān, however, almost immediately said that his language was "a bit changed"⁷, which was to say that he did not feel capable of speaking it well enough. He proposed to bring along a better expert "whose language is still the same"⁸. We agreed to have a short session together before this other person joined us. Bāzārkhān gave a short account of his life – reporting most of it in the Uzbek majority dialect of Andkhoy interspersed with occasional *Dāyi* elements – and after some discussion about *Dāyi* matters with

and are accessible there. I am preparing a complete transcription for a dialectological study to be published later.

⁶ Although I am aware of the "observer's paradox", I speak Uzbek when doing research because this is the only local language I can use with sufficient ease. My idiolect is a mixture of Northern Afghan Uzbek dialects with "more Andkhoy and Shibirghān" in it than anything else, and additional standard Uzbekistan-Uzbek vocabulary, quite similar to the language of native Afghan Uzbeks who have had extensive contact with Afghan Uzbeks from other regions and watch Uzbekistani TV or have spent some time across the border. (Women usually keep closer to their local dialects, so my idiolect is perhaps a rather "male" one.) In order to keep the echo effect low, I prefer methods of indirect inquiry and observation with as little verbal input on my part as possible.

⁷ U: bizlāni lāhjamız bır andāzā āylanyān

⁸ U: lāhjasi oša lahja

everyone present we engaged in eliciting *Dāyi* vocabulary by semantic order. After that, Bāzārxān went to fetch his aged *Dāyi* friend.

The third session was the most fruitful one because a "really good *Dāyi* speaker" had finally joined us, namely, Mr. Mammad Ismāyil, whom everyone called Ismāyil Dāyi, an 81-year-old gentleman who was very much aware of his ethnic and linguistic identity. In about an hour and a half of intensive work he told the group about his life, his family, his military service in pre-revolution times, about typical *Dāyi* professional work and social life, and about the way life had changed in Andkhoy in the course of his lifetime. Only occasionally did someone from the audience join in with a remark. In a coda to the session, Ismāyil Dāyi summarised his central arguments about language, meaning and identity. Essentially, these three sessions provided the basis for the following observations.

1 Who are the *Dāyi* and where do they live today?

Dāyi / (pl.) *Dāyila(r)* denominates a small ethnic group of people living in and around Andkhoy who are well-known for their specific language and way of life. The word is especially used by non-*Dāyi* people and by *Dāyi* who do not regularly speak the dialect or who live in a predominantly non-*Dāyi* environment. In the *Dāyi* dialect, the appellative *Dāyi* is the reference and address term for Ego's maternal uncle and is also a term of address for unrelated male elders. The word is used by both members and non-members of the group as a term of address for male persons of *Dāyi* affiliation⁹. "This gentleman is also a *Dāyi*,"¹⁰ said Tinmas Sāhib when he introduced Mīrzā Bāzār, and later on he asked him: "Where were you born, *Dāyi*?"¹¹. In fact, I failed to inquire about this point, but I believe that as an ethnonym, the word *Dāyi* applies to male and female persons alike (although I cannot imagine it might work as a term of address for women). The question, however, as to whether the actual ethnonym *Dāyi* is derived from the appellative *Dāyi* – as local opinion has it – or vice versa, or whether they have nothing at all to do with each other and are connected by popular etymology only, must remain unanswered for the time being.¹²

⁹ In the Turkmen dialect of Andkhoy (hereafter cited as T), *dā:yi* also means 'maternal uncle'. However, nobody would think of calling a local Turkmen "Dāyi" in a quasi-ethnic sense of the word.

¹⁰ U: bu_kši_am_bir_Dāyi

¹¹ D: nērdan_duylan_Dāyi_siz?

¹² Dzhikiev renders the name of one sub-group (tribe?) of the 19th century Teke Turkmen as "Dagilār" (Дагиляр), however, the pronunciation of the word remains obscure and there is no additional information given (А. Джикиев: Очерк этнической истории и формирования населения Южного Туркменистана (По этнографическим данным), Ашхабад 1977: 160).

According to Tinmas Sāhib, the *Dāyī* are subdivided into *Kārgillā*, *Nisāylā* ~ *Nisailā*, *Qaradaha* and "a few more *tāyfa*".¹³ Mīrzā Bāzār added several other "tribes of the *Dāyī*": *Sārqaṃiṣ* ~ *Sārīqamiṣ*¹⁴, *Tōqsawāyli*¹⁵, *Gārxur*, *Sābātfurūṣ* and *Urgānj*¹⁶. He also mentioned the *Šāyāllā*, whom he considered to be a "tribe (*tēra*) of the *Nisāylār*". Someone else ventured that the *Šāyāl* were "part of the *Dāyila*" and mentioned yet another group (*tēra*), the *Tōqumōyri*. Bāzārkhān was hesitant to confirm the existence of a sub-group called *Qaradaha* and doubted the existence of the *Kurradaha*, whose name was put forward by a member of the audience. Ismāyil Dāyī, in his turn, called the group to which he attributes himself nothing else but *Kā:rgār* ~ *Kārgāllā* ~ *Kā:rgil* ~ *Kārgil*¹⁷. As for the term *Dāyī*, or any of the above-named denominations of sub-groups, he never mentioned them at all.

If the assumption is correct that *Dāyī* denotes the ethnic group as such and all the others are primary or secondary sub-groups of it, then the *Kārgār* ~ *Kārgil* are certainly the most important primary sub-group.¹⁸ *Kārgilkhāna*, a neighbourhood of Andkhoy, is named after them. "And the *Kārgillār* make up a large number in Andkhoy. Some of them are in [the neighbourhoods of] Bāyibustān, Qurṡān and Lāfī, others live in [the southern district of] Qaramqul and in the [south-eastern] village of Āltibōlak, and some are out there in the district (*uluswāli*) of Arabgul," said Tinmas Sāhib. Someone else added *Tōqquzdaray*, which lies between Andkhoy and Qaramqul. *Tavāči*, a quarter located east-southeast of the city centre, was also repeatedly mentioned as being home to many *Kārgil* / *Dāyī* families. Ismāyil Dāyī lives there. Bāzārkhān is a native of Qaramqul and now lives in *Kārgilkhāna*.

As an ethnonym, *Dāyī* is also known in Khoja Dukku, a district and small town off the road from Andkhoy to Shibirghān, where a clan (*xānawāda*) lives whose members are referred to as *Dāyihāyi Khōjadūkkū*. Apparently, they do not share the linguistic or other peculiarities of the *Dāyī* of Andkhoy. These *Dāyī* must be left out of consideration here.

¹³ The element -lā represents the plural suffix (in U, -r in final position is almost regularly dropped). – The *Kārgil*, *Nisāy*, etc. were characterised as *tāyfa* or *tēra* 'tribe' and also as 'branch', *šāxa*. *Dāyī*, in turn, is understood as "the general name of (the group)" (*umu:m āti*).

¹⁴ A Turkmen gentleman from the audience remarked that *Sārqaṃiṣ* live at Chorju, too.

¹⁵ Other forms proposed: *Tōxsawāi*, *Tōxtawāy*.

¹⁶ Someone else mentioned the *Urganji* (sic!) as a group independent of the *Dāyī*. They were said to live in the neighbourhood of *Urganjikhāna* and "have a special language, just like the *Kiyikči*".

¹⁷ *Kārgil* is the most widely used variant. However, people stress that this is only a colloquial form (U: *kārgildi istilāhan āytadıla*), while the correct form should be *kārgār* 'worker'. The shift of the suffix -gār > -gil does not occur in analogous derivatives. Thus the explanation of *kārgil* as a "corrupted form" of *kārgār* may just be a case of *lectio facilior*, so to speak, with *kārgil* being the original term. The Oghuz nominal collective suffix -gil comes to mind – but what, then, is *Kār*? – Dzhikiev (op. cit.) mentioned the *Karagel*' (*Каргель*) as a Teke tribe of the 19th century.

¹⁸ Perhaps *Kārgil* ~ *Kārgār* and *Dāyī* even denote the same thing. Explanations related to this point were not very clear and sometimes gave me the impression that the terms were interchangeable.

2 The *Dāyi* / *Kārgıl* dialect of Andkhoy

One can be a *Dāyi* without regularly speaking the *Dāyi* language and without even knowing more than a few words and phrases in it. The same phenomenon has often been described with regard to Afghan Pashtuns and Pashto, and in both cases, Pashto as well as *Dāyi*, language is nevertheless rated extremely highly as a marker of ethnic identity in public discourse and personal self-identification. At the very end of our meeting, Ismāyil Dāyi used a most impressive metaphor to illustrate the interdependence of one's mother tongue and identity:

Everyone's language has changed, but I won't allow mine to change! My mother cared for me; she had a hard time. If I now dumped her language in a pit and picked up something else somewhere, then (...) it wouldn't fit. If a man leaves his own clothes at home and puts on another man's clothes, he won't be handsome; they won't suit him.¹⁹

In fact, Ismāyil Dāyi's occasional switching from his mother tongue to Andkhoy Uzbek for the sake of smoother communication – in this case primarily with me, I assume – is not the same thing as Tinmas Sāhib and Mīrzā Bāzār's habitual transition to Andkhoy Uzbek with some occasional switching back to *Dāyi*. Judging from Ismāyil Dāyi's remark, the latter seems to be the dominant linguistic behaviour of *Dāyi* people today. Since living conditions in Andkhoy necessitate constant interaction on the part of the *Dāyi* with a non-*Dāyi*-speaking majority in different communities of practice, accommodation within or outside one's diglossic situation is the tool of choice, as Mīrzā Bāzār put it:

Dialects (always) change to some degree. If you have a lot of contact with other people, dialects will change. We have some old men who have still not abandoned their former dialect. They can't go anywhere else... But as for us, if we sit together with you, for example, then we can speak your [Uzbek] language. And if we sit together with a *Fārsiwān*, we can speak the way the *Fārsiwān* speaks.

Bāzārkhān and Tinmas Sāhib are very much aware of their deficient command of *Dāyi*. "If I speak *Dāyi*, it is not the real thing because I spoke (it only) in my childhood. As a young child, of course, I learnt *Dāyi*", said Tinmas Sāhib²⁰, and Bāzārkhān admitted, "I can't speak the *Dāyi* dialect very (well)"²¹. There seems to be an overtone of regret in statements of this kind, and an element of pride resounds in something Tinmas Sāhib said while exemplifying the correct use of the word *dil* or 'language':

¹⁹ D: hamması- zuwāna aynaldı. man āylantırmā:mā! ānam_manı bāqtı! adā(w) gōrdı. ėndı unı zubān'ı yēna bır yēra t'ıqsam bır ėuqura, bır yēda yena bır nērsan' ālsam so:ra ...(...) yāqmā(y)dı... bır_ādam özını kālatını qōysada öy'ya, yēna bır_ādamı kālasını gıyıb_gıtsa, ö xōşray bölmäydı. öđta öxşamäydı. – The last sentence can be interpreted as either "(these clothes) won't suit him" or "(he) won't look like himself", given the double meaning of öxşa= 'resemble; suit'.

²⁰ U: man Dāyi_gapırsam lapjap kē:māydı munāċün-, ėun māydalıgımdā gapırımman. māyda_baċalıyımdā Dāyi_ki örgänımmän....

²¹ U: dā:da lahjan_am_unċa gaflāālmāymän.

In Uzbek you pronounce [the word] 'language' as *til* – in *Dāyī* it is *dil*. [The *Dāyī*] pronounce the *t* as a *d* – *dil*. (...) If anyone laughs at them, they say hey, that's my language! Why are you laughing at my language!²²

Even at the expense of being ridiculed by speakers of Uzbek, who hold a higher rank on Andkhoy's scale of sociolinguistic prestige, one ought to preserve one's mother tongue – at least theoretically, if not in everyday practice. For Ismāyil Dāyī, giving up his language would have been tantamount to betraying his mother, as he quite forthrightly stated. He did not use terms like *Dāyī* or *Kā:gil(lā) tili* to denominate his language, but would only refer to it as "mother tongue" and "father tongue",²³ and also "the mother tongue of our forefathers"²⁴, thus stressing the interdependence of genealogical and linguistic belonging.

Mīrzā Bāzār put forward some very practical and unemotional arguments in favour of habitual language shift. However, in the back of his mind there was also a kind of a reserve, although in his case it was not unease about "treacherous behaviour" but the discourse of language shift as a loss of authentic culture. At the end of our second session, for example, Tinmas Sāhib asked Bāzārkhān not to forget to bring Ismāyil Dāyī along for our next meeting. Bāzārkhān responded:

OK, we'll be back. As far as I know, he can't speak any other language as well as this one [i.e. *Dāyī*]! I used to have a few books – they were kept in a big chest, but some animals worked their way in and ate them all up.²⁵

The story caused a great deal of laughter since the gentlemen imagined monstrous mice capable of gnawing away at an iron-coated chest and feeding on Bāzārkhān's *Temurnāma* and other heroic epics. But why did he bring this story up at all, out of the blue? A story which was actually meant to be a sad one, but which was compensated with humour by a well-intentioned group of listeners headed by Tinmas Sāhib, who had also experienced language loss like Bāzārkhān? The story contains a widely known apologetic narrative motif: "Look, this is why we have no authentic culture any more." I think this is what came to Mīrzā Bāzār's mind while he praised Ismāyil Dāyī's sound command of his mother tongue, a piece of cultural capital he himself had given away, to his silent regret.

"Everyone's language has changed", said Ismāyil Dāyī with concern, and Bāzārkhān seemed embarrassed when he admitted that his language had "changed to some degree". Those people who participated in our sessions repeatedly engaged in dis-

²² U/D: *til dēysiz ku özbāg dıldı, dā:yda dıl. te:nı dāl äytadı, dıl(...)* birānta kulsa, öz dilim-ā! nē gulasan dılmā dē:di.

²³ D?: *ānatlı ātatlı* 'mother tongue – father tongue'. When Bāzārkhān talked about Ismāyil Dāyī, interestingly enough he used similar terms (U: *āta tıl āna tıldān başqa tıldā gaplāyālmāydı* "He cannot speak another language than (his) father tongue – mother tongue"), while otherwise he would say *Dāyī, kārgil tili*, etc.

²⁴ D: *ā:ta_bō:anı ānatılı'd*, actually 'our mother tongue of the forefathers', a rather unusual possessive construction.

²⁵ U: *hā bir bārib kēlāyli: awwāldān āxir(g)āčā šu-, āāā..., šu_tıldān başqa tillā gāpla'ālmāyk'ān. manı bir_ādrāq, k'tāblarım bāred. bi kättā sanduydēydi, bu sanduyıni_bōysa tēšibdi qurt kēlibti_iptı.*

cussions on whether there was such a thing as "pure [*Dāyi*] language" any longer, and if so, where it could be found. I was advised to consult women who were mothers and grandmothers, and to go to distant villages and remote neighbourhoods where the language might still be "pure" (*süçčä*)²⁶. Talk about language decay is common among the Turkic speakers of Afghanistan and is by no means confined to intellectual circles. Yet there seem to be no clear ideas about what "pure Uzbek" or "pure Turkmen" actually are – is it the *turkī* of Navāī or Makhdūmquly's poetry, which is still being read at home-based schools? Or is it a remembered or imagined language that one's elders used to speak? It is only safe to say that if a language is considered to be *süçčä*, then that implies "purity" of some kind. Interestingly, Uzbekistani Uzbek and Turkmenistani Turkmen are not considered *süçčä* languages at all since they are just as "contaminated" with Russian as the Turkic languages and dialects of Afghanistan are with Persian. A clear idea of what "pure *Dāyi*" is – if it exists at all – has not been put forward yet. Whenever Ismāyil Dāyi used a word that neither the Uzbek nor the Turkmen speakers would have known, appreciative remarks were made, which implied: "This is the true *Dāyi* language." Authenticity seems to depend upon difference more than on the actual characteristics or condition of the language under consideration.

While members of the speech community and local observers seem to be primarily interested in markers of maximal difference – when comparing neighbouring languages – the Turkologist would actually prefer to get "the whole picture". This is not the place to discuss the *Dāyi* language in detail, however. Anticipating results of a more comprehensive study on the dialect, I only want to say that *Dāyi* appears to be one of the dialects which Doerfer proposed to call "Uzbek-Oghuz or North Khorassani", located "far east on the Amu Darya" and separated from their closest relatives in northeast Iran by Sariq and Ārsarı Turkmen.²⁷ Its morphology, which seems to most closely resemble the dialect of Qorakōl/Uzbekistan²⁸ when compared with other Uzbek dialects, is even "more Oghuz and less Eastern Turkic" than Doerfer had assumed, and is definitely closer to North Khorassani in its "Oghuzness" than to the local Turkmen of Andkhoy. This is probably why – regardless of striking similarities in phonology – people do not usually compare it to Turkmen, but to Uzbek. *Dāyi* shares some lexical peculiarities with Turkmen (or common Oghuz) and some with Qypchaq Uzbek, while the core of its lexicon is similar to the local Uzbek of Andkhoy.

The men present at our sessions shared their metalinguistic knowledge and opinions about the *Dāyi* language with me. Let me quote some examples from that now.

²⁶ More often than not, *süçčä* ~ *süçči* 'sweet' is used figuratively, while *širin* conveys the literal meaning.

²⁷ Cf. Gerhard Doerfer & Wolfram Hesse: Chorasantürkisch. Wörterlisten-Kurzgrammatiken-Indices, Wiesbaden 1993: 6-7.

²⁸ Ўзбек халқ шевалари морфологияси, масъул муҳаррир Ш.Ш. Шоабдурахмонов, Тошкент 1984: 43ff., 147sq., 174, 193 et al.

Many of the interlocutors seemed to agree that *Dāyi* is a "language between Uzbek and Turkmen", as Tinmas Sāhib put it.

In the following samples, most attention has been paid to the phonological character of the language, although phenomena are realised in quite a selective manner: compare voiced *g* and *d* in initial position, for instance, as opposed to voiceless *k* and *t* in Uzbek (*gelaman* : *kélan* 'I come'; *darā:γ* : *tarāγ* 'comb'), which seem to be on everybody's mind²⁹. In non-initial position, however, it passes unnoticed and was not even correctly rendered in every case when Tinmas Sāhib produced "*Dāyi*" samples.³⁰ Uzbeks and Turkmen do not comment on vowel length either, which appears to be preserved (although not systematically). As for verbal morphology, this does not seem to warrant much attention. Tinmas Sāhib presented one very subtle observation concerning the use of the auxiliary verb (in *gétirjāytum* : *kétirjāy édim* 'I intended to bring'), while other, no less striking peculiarities of the auxiliary remained unmentioned (*bilmā:tum* : *bilmāydim* 'I wouldn't have known'; *bā:(r)u* : *bārédı* 'it existed'). The morphology of the noun was not commented upon at all, although some of its features might seem very "strange" from an Uzbek point of view and still others unconventional from a Turkmen one. As far as the *Dāyi* lexicon is concerned, only a few lexemes were mentioned as being "typically *Dāyi*", but everybody seemed to know about them. Afghan Uzbeks do a lot of stereotyping of dialects and dialect speakers through flag words, and this seems to be applied to the *Dāyi*, too: "We [i.e., the Uzbeks] say *q'sqır* 'shout!', they say *aqır*"; "We [i.e. the *Dāyi*] say *dugma* 'button' instead of *tuyma* or *sadaf*, and then *dugma* also means *čiyin* or *tétma* 'bundle', which is *gereh* in Persian...", and so on. The more bizarre the lexeme, the greater interest the local experts took in discussing it. Emotions rose highest when deliberating about the 'knot in the thread of a sewing machine', which is called *lum-lum* in *Dāyi* while in Uzbek it is *kulula* or *sallača* and in Turkmen, *salla*. Mīrzā Bāzār's most emphatic remark, to complete the discussion, referred to the linguistic code of politeness. He stressed that, even when talking to persons low in the social hierarchy, i.e. young female cognates, in *Dāyi* "everyone uses the plural form of polite address; everyone speaks with honour and respect"³¹, by which he evidently claimed difference and superiority for his mother tongue as opposed to local Uzbek and, even more clearly, Turkmen.

After completion of the first draft of this paper, I received an important piece of information from Professor Rāsikh, which shows that at least one sub-group of the *Dāyi* of Andkhoy does not share linguistic proximity to the Uzbeks, but is much closer to the local Turkmen:

²⁹ One Turkmen man was thrilled when this phenomenon was discussed, and he exclaimed (T) a fē:lan turkmāniä yau:γ äkāni! "Say, that's close to Turkmen!"

³⁰ Correct renderings were *düşdim* : *tüşdim* 'I have understood'; *sājā äydaman* : *sājā aytaman* 'I tell you'; incorrect ones: *gitāmān* instead of *gidāmān* : *kétaman* 'I go'.

³¹ U: hamması sissizlab gaplaşadı, izzad_béradı hurmat bérad.

As a remarkable matter of fact, those members of that (*Kārgil*) *qawm* who live in Āltibölak speak Turkmen. They give their daughters to the Turkmen and take (brides) from these and their dress is also Turkmen. Those who live elsewhere speak Uzbek, but it's a different dialect from the [majority of] Uzbeks. They give their daughters to the Turkmen, but the Turkmen do not give their girls to these *Kārgil*.³²

This remark primarily emphasises that language may be the most obvious marker of *Dāyi* identity, but it is not an indispensable one – the *Dāyi* of Āltibölak are recognised as a distinct *qawm* even though they have linguistically merged into the Turkmen majority population.³³

Secondly, the remark quoted above points out a whole set of features which, along with language, mark *Dāyi* and other *qawm* identities according to local observers: ethnographic features such as dress (and food, housing, tools and modes of production, crafts and trade...), and genetic and social reproduction. We shall return to the latter features a little later; these play a central role in local discourses, yet, interestingly enough, have no place in modernist conceptualisations of identity. Right now we shall briefly touch upon notions of and opinions on historical belonging, which participants of our meetings considered as highly relevant to the delineation of the *Dāyi*'s identity.

3 Historical traditions

Our elders used to say that many years ago, two or three hundred years ago, our people came as migrants from Iran to Afghanistan..., (but) I cannot say (more) precisely.³⁴

This information provided by Tinmas Sāhib is supported, although in a slightly different version, by a piece of information given by Ustād Hamidullā, a very knowledgeable Uzbek amateur folklorist and ethnographer from Andkhoy. He related that the *Dā:ī:lar*, as he called them, claimed a place called Saryāyāč in Iran to be their original home. Written sources do not yield much information on Iranian immigrants to Andkhoy. According to the *Fihris at-Tavārīkh* of Rizā Qulī Khān, Shāh 'Abbās had "transplanted" Afshārs from Khorāsān into Andkhoy. Local nobility, at least partly, was Afshār as late as the early 19th century.³⁵ Sufijān Āyā, an influential mid-20th century *Dāyi* scholar from Andkhoy, used to claim descent from "the Afshār or Awshār *tāyfa* (tribe) of the Turkmen", as he called it;³⁶ unfortunately, we do not know which sources his opinion was based on. Linguistic evidence

³² Written communication, 10 April 2007.

³³ The above-mentioned "Dāyi of Khoja Dukku", who share the language of their surrounding Uzbek majority *qawm*, may be another case in point.

³⁴ U: bizlāni šı yašsrylarmız äytē:dilāki, kōp_il āldın, ikki_uçız_il āldın, bizlāni qawmlarıwuz ērāndān afyānesdāñā muājir bölē-kēlyān_ēkān, dēw äytē:dilā. man daqi:q aytālmēymān.

³⁵ Cf. Histoire de l'Asie Centrale (Afghanistan, Boukhara, Khiva, Khoqand) depuis les dernières années du règne de Nadir Chāh (1153), jusqu'en 1233 de l'Hégire (1740-1818) par Mir Abdoul Kerim Boukhary, publ., trad. et annotée par Charles Schefer, Paris 1876: 261; 249.

³⁶ Written communication by Prof. Rāsikh, 10 April 2007.

does not suggest any particular affinity of the *Dāyi* language, for example, to the dialect of the Afshārs of Kabul.³⁷ Thus, the vague local historical tradition pointing to Iran remains to be confirmed, especially with regard to the question of how the *Kārgıl/Dāyi* as a group were related to the upper-class Afshār immigrants.

A Turkmen participant at the second meeting expressed the opinion that the *Dāyılā* had actually been part of the Qara Turkmen before they came to Andkhoy. After their immigration, their language underwent significant changes and only a few features of pronunciation still resemble Turkmen today.³⁸ The main pasture grounds of the Qara Turkmen during the 19th century were, indeed, located west of Andkhoy, just across the British-Russian demarcation line of 1884.³⁹ However, neither linguistic evidence nor any further narrative tradition confirms this view.

Although it is not actually a historical tradition, another piece of information also deserves to be quoted here. Ustād Hamidullā proposed that the original name of the *Kārgillā* was *Karkililār*, 'people from Karki'. Karki is located about 120 kilometres to the north-northwest on the Amu Darya in what is now Turkmenistan. Andkhoy is home to many migrants (*muhājir*) from across the border, but such people are normally aware of their special status, know about their recent migration background and maintain all this as constitutive elements of their ethnic identity.⁴⁰ The *Dāyi*, in turn, do not seem to have any such traditions. If they really had come from Karki – which is not supported by linguistic evidence anyway – their postulated migration must have taken place well before the 20th century.

4 Genealogy and kinship

When some men from our group of respondents encouraged Mīrzā Bāzār to tell his life-story, he opened his narration as follows:

My name is Bāzār and my father's name is Ešānqul.⁴¹ Hmmm... my grandfather's name was Awazmurāt, the name of his father was Khōjamurāt, the name of Khōjamurāt's father was Šā: murād, the name of Šā: murād's father was Säydmurād. I know them by heart as far as this, but that's all I can recall. How many are there? Was it six?

In fact, it was only five, but this is still more of a genealogy than most Afghan Uzbeks – including those from the northeast who have basically kept tribal traditions

³⁷ Cf. the chapter on "Afšār-e Nānakčī" in Gerhard Doerfer & Wolfram Hesse: *Südghusische Materialien aus Afghanistan und Iran*, Wiesbaden 1989, 71-123.

³⁸ T/U: Da:yılā aslan qara turkmanlardan. (...) tillāri aylanšib qālyān. "The Dāyi are originally (part) of the Qara Turkman. (...) Their language has undergone changes."

³⁹ Cf. the map in Hermann Roskoschny: *Afghanistan und seine Nachbarländer. Der Schauplatz des letzten russisch-englischen Konflikts in Zentral-Asien*, Leipzig s.a.

⁴⁰ Compare also Audrey Shalinsky: "Uzbek Ethnicity in Northern Afghanistan", in: *Die ethnischen Gruppen Afghanistans. Fallstudien zu Gruppenidentität und Intergruppenbeziehungen*, ed. Erwin Orywal, Wiesbaden 1986, 290-303: 290sq. et al.

⁴¹ D/U: ātim bā:zār, ā:tamni ā:dī ešānqul. – The fact that Bāzārkhān, while otherwise speaking regular Andkhoy Uzbek, spontaneously switched to the Dāyi form ā:dī 'his name' rather than using U āti or T a:dī was warmly welcomed by the assembly.

until today – can come up with. Bāzārxān's parents were cousins (FaBrSo/FaBrDa) and so were the parents of his parents.⁴² Such a tight pattern of cousin-marriage is exceptional even in northern Afghanistan, where close relatives are preferred primary marriage partners anyway.

Knowing one's genealogical roots seems to be more important for *Dāyi* people than for Turkmens, let alone Uzbeks from Andkhoy. Like Bāzārxān, Ismāyil Dāyi introduced himself by means of a short genealogy without having been specifically asked to do so. Among Uzbeks and Turkmens from Andkhoy, I have never come across a person who chose that way of introducing himself or herself on their own initiative:

My name is Mammad Ismāyil. My father's name is Muhammadqul. My grandfather's name was Qā:r'atal.

At the audience's request, he added the name of his great-grandfather, Hā:šim, but then admitted that he did not know any more, although he felt he ought to have done. However, there were other facts related to Ismāyil Dāyi's origin which he readily mentioned:

I am from Andkhoy. A *Kārgār*, in other words. I'm a *Kārgār* and my forefathers lived as *Kārgār*, and I haven't forgotten [our] mother tongue! I [still] speak [my] mother tongue and *father tongue!⁴³

Along with genealogy, the essential components of personal identity, it seems, are local belonging, attribution to a particular estate (class? profession?), and language.

With regard to kinship terminology – agnates as well as cognates – *Dāyi* seems to differ from all the surrounding languages in quite striking ways. I can give only one example here. The *Dāyi* use the lexeme *ēna* 'mother' – which is otherwise used only by Qypchaq Uzbek speakers far outside the Andkhoy oasis – as the most emphatic flag word of their linguistic identity. When resuming his explications at the end of our session, Ismāyil Dāyi dwelled upon the conveyance of true meaning as the reason for keeping up a given language, and he underpinned that theory by the example of "mother":

āna doesn't mean anything! If (on the other hand) we say *ēna*, then meaning can be found from that (word) *ēna*. *āna* won't work. (...) My girl, if we talk to each other, then the only point is that [our] words should mean something! If one talks nonsense, it just won't do.⁴⁴

Ismāyil Dāyi has two wives. He talks about the elder one as "my own/real wife" and refers to her son and daughter as "my son" and "my daughter". When asked if there

⁴² D/U: ātam minan enam ikkisi amakibača, ikki amakibačani awlādi. "My father and my mother are cousins and the children of cousins." – Here again Bāzārxān pleased the audience by using D *ēna* 'mother' rather than U *āna* or T *ejā*.

⁴³ D: man özüm şu anxöydan! kargär a! özüm kargärman. āta böwam kargär ök'an, ānatılını hāniz mā qöywüryänim yöγ! ānatılı ātatılı manda bā!

⁴⁴ D: ānadan ma:nı çiqmā:di! ēna dēsāy ēnadan ma:nı tāpıladı. āna bölmäydi. (...) bür, qızım, bür maxsat, bür gapırsāy, şu gapdan bür nērsa ma:nā tāpılsa. šāyad. bē:ma:nā gapı- gapırsa önnan, bömaydı.

were any children from his second marriage as well, he referred to them as "her sons" and "her daughters",⁴⁵ which probably means that this was a levirate marriage. Levirate, which would be indicative of an imperative on endogamy and clan structure, is practised among the Turkmens (albeit irregularly). It is rather exceptional among the Uzbeks of northwestern Afghanistan. Polygamy due to reasons other than lack of progeny occurs almost exclusively among the *nouveaux riches* of the region. For men of modest means such as Ismāyil Dāyi, a second wife is normally out of reach and a second marriage would not be approved by the community anyway. (However, I do not know if these standards observed by Uzbeks generally apply to *Dāyi / Kārgil* as well.)

As was mentioned above, the "Turkmen" *Dāyi* of Āltüböläk exchange brides with the local Turkmens, while *Dāyi* from elsewhere are only accepted by the Turkmens as bride-givers. I failed to inquire about marital relations between *Dāyi* and local Uzbeks. With only fragmentary information on matters of genealogy, kinship and marriage at hand, there is no point in discussing group identity issues in more detail from that angle. On the other hand, our sessions yielded some rich material on aspects of individuals' construction of identity.

5 What does it mean to be a *Kārgil* ~ *Kārgār*?

Ismāyil Dāyi, who was the person in the group of respondents most deeply conscious about and faithful to what he understood as its traditions, exclusively used *Kārgār* ~ *Kārgärlär* ~ *Kārgil(lär)* to denominate himself and his kin; he did not use the term *Dāyi* at all. Bāzārkhān did not explicitly apply the term *Kārgār* to himself. Interestingly, though, the way he explained both names gives us reason to assume that *Kārgār* might actually be the emic term for the group under consideration, while *Dāyi* might originally be an etic one. According to Mīrzā Bāzār, *Kārgār* is a *taxallus*, that is, a self-given name. In opposition to that, *Dāyi* is understood to be a *laqab*, a name bestowed by elders or outsiders. This is what Mīrzā Bāzār said:

Dāyi is what they say in Persian. They call us *Dāyi*... Now the *taxallus Kā:rgār*, I should say, is the following..., a servant or a worker, a craftsman, [or something] like that...⁴⁶

When I asked Ismāyil Dāyi what he had in mind when he called himself and his kin *Kārgār*, he explained the term as follows:

Kā:rgār means – ehm – that he is a man who is committed. He is committed, and from that..., the meaning of *kā:rgil* has remained from that, from the word 'committed'. (...) If we decide to carry out a piece of work, (as a real *kā:rgār* we) will see it through.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ D: öz ayālınnammanı bir öylüm bir qıdım bā! – [U: ikkilānci ayālızdān nēçta awlād-?] – D: ikkilānci ayālınnān uç öylü bā ikki qıyzi bā.

⁴⁶ U: dā:yi dēb pārsıda äytadı. bidlāni dā:yi äytād-, ändi kā:gār dēyman taxallusi şundäy bir bā: gē: bir xidmadgā:r bir kārgār hunarmānnān ana şunnāy...

Commitment and dedication recurred as central notions in Ismāyil Dāyī's account of his life. The way he embedded these terms in his narration suggests that he did not just claim them as individual characteristics of his own, but also understood them as typical features of all his fellow *Kārgillā* of both sexes. This idea of commitment is not confined to the realm of professional labour, but seems to be a sort of philosophy of life that extends to whatever one does. Ismāyil Dāyī remembered his military service as follows:

All those troop commanders and stuff, they all appreciated me: 'Bravo! You haven't had any hospital [leave] or illness or absences [on your record]! How did you manage to get by? Did you live on [supplies from] your own household?', they said. 'Well, no,' I said, 'Since I've come here to restore the reign of Islam, I've been working with dedication!'⁴⁸

"Working with dedication" and similar phrases which Ismāyil Dāyī used over and over again echo the element *kār* 'work' of the ethnonym *Kārgil*. Ismāyil Dāyī's self-identification seems most directly and closely associated with labour, craft and professionalism. His account suggests that there exists a specific kind of labour which is even more indicative of "*kārgar*-ness" than others: sometime after being discharged from the army, Ismāyil Dāyī found the ideal job, namely, he was employed in the processing of sheep guts and karakul skins. Ismāyil Dāyī did not explicitly say that "all the *Kārgārlā*" earned their living that way, but his craft seems to have been typical of the *Kārgārlā* at that time. Belonging to a social group that is characterised by a very specific kind of labour, and holding a positive, affirmative attitude towards that type of work appears to play a decisive role in the shaping of *Kārgil* individuals' and the *Kārgil* group's identity, perhaps even more than notions of descent, locality, or shared historical memory and socio-political goals.⁴⁹

At least at the climax of Ismāyil Dāyī's working life in the 1960s and 1970s, *Kārgār* work was a cross-breeding of dependent labour and personal entrepreneurship. The men would purchase sheep intestines and skins from butchers or directly from the stockbreeders at their own risk⁵⁰; if they knew little or nothing about quality, the

⁴⁷ D: *kā:rgār ma:n(ā)sı bır ma:tā köp_bır, bā:γāyrat ādamak'an. bāγāyratak'ān, ēazu-šünñān, kā:rgıl ma:nāt šünñan qā:γan- bā:γāyrātli: qu:lidan qā:γan. (...)bır wadapāyi i:wā:rgidāg böytaG' şu_wadıpanı, dındırā'ik'ān.* – There is no *tindir= / *dindir= 'to take care of sth., to settle sth.' in U or T; the non-Dāyī participants of the meeting noticed the exotic word with approval and admiration.

⁴⁸ D: *mayı tamā:m-bır öša yēwar pēwar pırqa, riyāsat arkān, hamması tāmbarđı. ā:parın tandan nē šapāxānayn_bā, nē sanda ma:ridiñ_bā. nē sand(a)_γāyr' ā:zirıñ_bā. sān qandāy öttēy? öyi(ñ)da guzarān āttiy'ñ dedi. yā-u man āyttımman dın_ıslām dawlatın burda_kı ētmaya gēldım, ixlās_minam_man kā:r_ādaman!*

⁴⁹ While socialist ideology had quite a few followers in Andkhoy prior to 1978 and during the PNDP era, Ismāyil Dāyī did not appear to have been influenced by the kind of class and labour discourse this would be likely to have promoted.

⁵⁰ D: *ru:damı ödını, qastāwlanān ālattēy. qastawda yā maynānñan. ana ölan'-, bāyla, ālu gelattı ana öšaları, xandārley_ēdāttēy.* "As for the guts, we would purchase them from the butchers. At the butchers', or from out of town. Out there (from) the pastures, the stockbreeders would bring them along and we would buy them."

material would go to waste during the curing process and the loss was all theirs. They would clean, cure, fashion and bundle the guts – again, this whole working procedure was called *kār* by Ismāyil Dāyi – and the master would ship the products to Germany and Poland via Kabul⁵¹. Karakul skins were finished and traded the same way. Although the workers bore the entire business risk themselves, they were not free to organise the work process. If they wanted to attend feasts, for example, they had to get their master's consent first.⁵² Their wage was ten Afghani a day, which would easily have fed a small family in those days. Then times changed, brokers started buying up the raw material and taking it away, and there was no more manufacturing on the spot. Ismāyil Dāyi's sons are no longer in their father's semi-dependent business, but earn a modest living as day-labourers.

Ismāyil Dāyi may have led a typical *Kārgār* life in pre-revolution times, keeping to low-capital and low-income semi-dependent entrepreneurship due to a shortage of land and water or even because of total landlessness. By and large, people with his status seem to be confined to day-to-day job opportunities, even today. However, this does not mean that all *Dāyi* were toilers or remained excluded from social mobility during the 20th century. Bāzārkhān, who also comes from a modest background, worked his way up from petty farming to the positions of a village teacher and clerk working for the town administration of Andkhoy. All of his daughters and sons have received higher education and are in teaching or other white-collar professions. Tinmas Sāhib lectures at the Teacher Training College, runs a chemist's shop and belongs to the leading intellectual and political circles of the city. The reputation of members of the *Dāyi* community in teaching, law, theology and the verbal arts extends well beyond the borders of the province and *Kārgār* and *Dāyi* are personal *taxallus* names that occur among *loya jirga* members and high-ranking regional politicians. The highest position a *Dāyi* is remembered for would have been *qāzi'lquzzāt*. Qāzi Bābā Murād, father of Sufijān Āγā, who was mentioned above, and a member of a dynasty of learned men, was Supreme Judge of Afghanistan during the reign of Amir Abdurrahmān Khān.

6 Rumours

The fact that a *Dāyi* was *qāzi'lquzzāt*, which is a supreme function in state administration and orthodox religious learning, testifies to the fact that this person's identity as a Sunni Muslim is beyond any doubt, and most probably the same would hold true for his fellow *Kārgillar* as such. However, things do not seem to be quite as straightforward as that. I have repeatedly heard non-*Dāyi* from Andkhoy say that the

⁵¹ D: muni bāylass kā:bul_yewāratēy. bō:y'wıt. bıllā kār adāttēy. "We would tie them into bundles and send them to Kabul. [Or actually,] our master would. We [only] did the basic work."

⁵² D: bir jašn bōl'sa, yā bir tōy bōlsa, uja, bāy'wud, bıdlanı qōywurattı. bırruz-yarımruz, āzād bōlattēy. "If there was a public or private feast, then our master would allow us to go. We would get time off work for a day or half a day."

Dāyi are "Sunni today, but who knows what they may have been a few centuries ago". Suspicion of a Shiite past was not substantiated or specified in my presence, but the rumour was clearly in the air. Evidence of strict endogamy and an originally low rank in the social hierarchy seems to fit in with such rumours. In this context it is worth recalling Mir Abdulkarim Bukhāri's account of the situation of Andkhoy in the 1810s, when the oasis was "governed by Rahmatullāh Khān Afshār. Previously people there had followed the Shia, but under Afghan domination the inhabitants became Sunnites"⁵³.

A piece of oral tradition somewhere between mockery and ethnic slander states that the *Kārgil* have inherited the sword that cut off the head of Imām Husayn and that the sword is kept by the richest and most influential *Kārgil* family. People like to make fun of *Dāyi* by asking them, "Whose home is the sword in?", to which the *Dāyi* respond by giving the name of a wealthy family of their *qawm*. Of all the markers of ethnic difference at work in Afghanistan, confessional denomination seems to be the one that leads to strictest delimitation in matters of everyday life and symbolic as well as actual reproduction. In the case of the *Dāyi*, sincere segregation in historical times – if it ever existed for denominational reasons – has been played down to the level of a joke in which both sides can participate on equal terms. Serious surface discourse does acknowledge a difference, but does not trespass into discrimination.

7 Who are "the others" in the eyes of the *Dāyi* ~ *Kārgār*?

The fact that I was particularly interested in *Dāyi* matters may have temporarily granted *Dāyi* identity some extra glamour which it does not enjoy at all times. However, the general attitude of non-*Dāyi* people towards "the *Dāyi*", regardless of residual clouds, seems to be thoroughly positive (which is remarkable in Andkhoy because there is a lot of mutual reserve among some of the ethnic groups there). It seems to me as if *Dāyi* could pass for Uzbeks in everyday life unless they insisted on being different; drawing borders around the group today seems to depend on *Dāyi* initiative more than on the will of others.

Our *Dāyi* ~ *Kārgār* speakers had various criteria of delimitation in mind when they mentioned "the others" and would call "the others" by different names in accordance with the respective criteria. The most apparent and important marker of identity is language. When Tinmas Sāhib and Mīrzā Bāzār discussed *Dāyi* matters from the point of view of language, they would quite unsurprisingly talk about the *Dāyi* as opposed to "the Uzbeks" and their language *ōzbaki*, or speak of "the Turkmens" and *turkmāni*, just as anyone else present at the meetings would have done. An occasional reference to "the people of Andkhoy" (as opposed to the *Dāyi*, that is), meaning the local Uzbeks – just as if an inhabitant of Andkhoy were automatically

⁵³ Schefer, *Histoire...*: 249 (my own translation).

an Uzbek – may have been echoing the Uzbeks' claim to primacy in the town. The way in which Tinmas Sāhib, who is almost totally "Uzbekised" in terms of language usage, positioned himself in the course of our sessions is particularly interesting since it demonstrates how flexible personal identities can be. He started using the oppositional pair "the *Dāyi* say – we say", in which he adopted the position of an Uzbek, but later he shifted to an equidistant "the Uzbeks say – the *Dāyi* say", and occasionally talked about the *Dāyi* as "us", fully identifying himself with the group as opposed to anyone non-*Dāyi*. Variability in self-identification has repeatedly been observed and described in Uzbek and, more generally, Turkic-speaking societies.⁵⁴ Our example proves that a person who lives in a diglossic situation – albeit with a clear personal preference for the "superior" variety – is likely to switch identities back and forth along with language varieties.

When talking about major lexical differences between his language and Uzbek, Ismāyil Dāyi used two particularly interesting names to denote the "other":

The *adā:lā* say *āna* 'mother' – we say *ēēna*!

and

My forefathers would have said *enam* 'my mother', (while) the *ālamā(n)lā* now say *ā:na*.⁵⁵

Now, one typical feature of inter-ethnic behaviour in Andkhoy is to refer to each other with derogatory ethnonyms – half in mockery, half-seriously. The local Uzbeks call the Turkmen *Turman*, while the latter call the Uzbeks *Tāt*. Surprisingly, Ismāyil Dāyi, when mentioning the Uzbeks⁵⁶ with disdain, preferred to use the name *Ālamān*, which is well-known from historical sources. It denotes, among other things, 16th-19th century raiders or irregular troops associated with Uzbek khans in the region south of the Amu Darya⁵⁷, but is not used in northern Afghanistan today. The other name Ismāyil Dāyi applied to those who use the wrong word for 'mother' can be interpreted as *Adār* or *Azār*, again with a plural suffix. Is this name possibly the same as the one contained in the *Burj-i Azarān* of Balkh?⁵⁸ I have no plausible explanation for this at the moment.

Whenever Ismāyil Dāyi put himself and his kin in opposition to others, he would allude to yet another oppositional relation, namely, the oasis-steppe or agriculturalist-pastoralist divide:

⁵⁴ Cf. for example Shalinsky, op. cit., 295ff.

⁵⁵ D: manı āta_bōßam, enam, ālamā(n)lā şupilā böyta ā:na dēadi.

⁵⁶ Out of the local people, only the Uzbeks use *āna* 'mother'; the Turkmen equivalent would be *ejā*.

⁵⁷ Audrey Burton: "Who were the Almān?", *Bamberger Zentralasienstudien*, eds. Ingeborg Baldauf & Michael Friederich, Berlin 1994: 257-61.

⁵⁸ South-easternmost tower of the old wall of Balkh, cf. city map in Major C.E. Yate: *Northern Afghanistan or Letters from the Afghan Boundary Commission*, Edinburgh/London 1888: 257.

From the barren land, from out there on the pastures, the stockbreeders would bring [the sheep guts and skins] and we would purchase them.⁵⁹

It does not matter whether these pastoralists are Turkmens or Uzbeks, or even Pashtun Kuchis. The *Kārgār* craftsman and citizen of Andkhoy use the ethnically indifferent term *bāyla(r)*, which applies to any pastoralist and/or nomadic population, thus falling back on a major mode of social delimitation from pre-modern times.

8 Conclusion

The *Dāyi* ~ *Kārgil* seem to identify themselves and be identified by others primarily through linguistic difference. Their language is different from the local Uzbek as well as Turkmen dialects in a significant way, and this is what sets them apart from both major ethnic groups living in the Andkhoy oasis. Many though not all the features of their language suggest a close connection to North Khorassani (Uzbek-Oghuz), which coincides with a vague local historical tradition pointing to Iran and actually suggests that originally an upper- and a lower-class element of the group may have existed. This tradition would contradict another – again, very vague – piece of historical tradition that points to today's Turkmenistan.

Language is the only criterion with which everyone seems to be concerned. Other "modernist" criteria of ethnicity, such as historical belonging and territoriality, are intensely discussed by intellectuals. Along with these identity-making criteria, we have been able to observe a number of "non-modernist" ones as well, including self-attribution to, and pride in, a socio-professional category ("labourer") and way of life (one's own lifestyle as an oasis-dweller as opposed to the pastoralist nomads). Oral tradition remembers confessional differences, albeit as an issue that has become historical and can be treated with humour by group members as well as outsiders. Discussion can even bring residual categories to the surface (*Ālamān*, *Adār*), which may refer to historical oppositions that have otherwise completely fallen into oblivion.

⁵⁹ D: maynānnan, ana olannan bāyla, ālu_gelattı_ana oşaları, xarıdārley_ādattëy.