

# Kurds and Kurdish Language Not Related to Sumerians: A Response to Soran Hamarash

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Before we get into the subject matter it would be necessary to explain that the term Kurd originates from KWRT, a Persian (Farsi) meaning “tent-dweller”.<sup>1</sup> The Kurds were sub-Iranian nomads and tribal groups that settled in and around the Zagros Mountains, western modern Iran. Other historians and linguists have shown that the term Kurd meant different things in different places or to different people.<sup>2</sup> This exact term Kurd does not appear in any ancient document.<sup>3</sup> Many scholars argue that the documented history of the term Kurd appeared in the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> Centuries of the Christian Era and that there is little reliable evidence of its presence in earlier times.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the Sumerians were an ancient civilization that existed in southern Mesopotamia, in modern-day Iraq. The two regions inhabited by the Kurds and the ancient Sumerians were, and continue to be, separate. In fact, no ancient Iranian groups from northwestern Iran have ever invaded the region of Sumer at any time in history. Of course, Persian dynasties did invade that region, but long after the Sumerian Civilization has ceased to exist or assimilated into other groups, mainly the Akkadians.

Why do few voices try to characterize Kurdish and Sumerian languages akin or try to classify the ancient Sumerians as the ancestors of the Kurds? Many argue that Kurdish historians are desperate to associate themselves with the people of the Ancient Near East, specially the ancient Mesopotamians. Kurdish politicians and writers feel the need for this connection in order to claim genuine and special historical rights that are typically associated with the indigenous people. However, there is nothing Kurdish that has been archaeologically discovered in northeast Syria<sup>5</sup>, northern Iraq<sup>6</sup> and southern Iraq. The Kurds had infiltrated from southern Turkiye into Syria during and post WWI<sup>7</sup> and from northwest Iran and southeast Turkiye into northern Iraq in the last few centuries. Therefore, for the last few decades, the Kurds began to construct a new history for themselves. They began by claiming that they were Medes, then Hurrians, Mitannis, Gutians, Hittites, and went on and on claiming that they were descendants of almost every ancient group in the Near East, including the Sumerians. In fact, they claim that the ancient Sumerians were Kurds and not the other way around.<sup>8</sup>

No serious scholar would approve that the nomad Kurds are descendants of the ancient Sumerians. Dr. Kahzal Al-Majidi makes that clear.<sup>9</sup> The Iranians and Persians are not Semitic people; they are descendants of the Aryan tribes,<sup>10</sup> that settled in the Iranian Plateau and Parsua respectively. The two groups are an “Aryan” population simply because they speak an “Aryan” language and derive much of their culture from ethnic communities that practiced a kind of culture that is now identified as one “Aryan”.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the term *Aryan* is Indo-Iranian, and Iran actually means *land of Aryans*. Much later

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1 Garnik Asatrian. *Prolegomena to the Study of the Kurds*, Iran and the Caucasus Vol 13, No. 1. Brill, 2009. p.23

2 Accessed 4/25/2024 <https://www.fredaprim.com/pdfs/2024/Kurd%20and%20Ancient%20words.pdf>

3 Accessed 5/1/2024 <https://www.fredaprim.com/pdfs/2024/Kurd%20and%20Ancient%20words.pdf>

4 Garnik Asatrian. *Prolegomena to the Study of the Kurds*, Iran and the Caucasus Vol 13, No. 1. Brill, 2009. p. 82

5 Accessed 4/25/2024 <https://www.fredaprim.com/pdfs/2023/Nothing%20Kurdish%20in%20Syria.pdf>

6 Accessed 4/25/2024 <https://www.fredaprim.com/pdfs/2024/Assyria%20and%20archeology%20in%20Turkey,%20Syria%20and%20Iraq.pdf>

7 Thousands of Kurds crossed from southern Turkiye to Syria after the collapse of Shaikh Sa’eed revolt in Turkiye in 1925 and the crossing of the defeated Kurds into Syria where they were welcomed by the French Mandate authorities.

8 Soran Hamarash. “*The Lost and Untold History of the Kurds*”. Sulaimaniya, Iraq. 2022.

9 Accessed 4/29/2024 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErvqimZa4qQ>

10 Herodotus. *The Histories*. Book 7. 62.

11 Accessed 4/28/2024 <http://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/achaemenian/index.htm>

in history the Persians conquered the Semitic peoples of Mesopotamia and ruled over them at certain intervals, but the Mesopotamians never became Persians, because it is shown that it was never the policy of the Persian kings to force such process.

Kurdish writer and nationalist Soran Hamarash was a guest on a Washington Kurdish Institute (WKI) program hosted by Jean-Philippe Beaudet who is a research assistant with the said institute. Hamarash presents himself as a linguist. He talked about his book, *“The Lost and Untold History of the Kurds: Rediscovering the Beginning of the Western Civilisation and the Origin of the Indo-European Languages”*.

In his book, Hamarash claims that certain Assyrian names of ancient places were translated entirely, or partially, from the original Kurdish to Assyrian during the Assyrian rule (p. xxiv), adding that "these names all showed that Kurdish was the spoken language of the ancient world of Kurdistan, not the presumed Assyrian or Syriac" (p. xxv). In probably Hamarash's main historical revision, he concludes that "Sumerian was not only related to the modern Kurdish language; it was the older form of the New Kurdish ... Some verbs and phrases were identical after 5,000 years" (p. xxv). He adds, "Studying the Sumerian language is like studying Old Kurdish because there are hundreds of words and phrases' meanings and sounds that have not changed" (p. 13). Hamarash goes on and on with his wild claims and states: "it is now clear that the Kurds are the indigenous people of Mesopotamia, the Zagros Mountains and Anatolia. They were the people who initiated two milestone inventions of human civilization, writing and agriculture" (p. 205).<sup>12</sup> In the interview, Hamarash claimed that **sixty-percent of the words that he speaks in his own home are Sumerian words**.<sup>13</sup>

Hamarash's statements are nit-witted and absurd. They are not any different from the many other wild claims nationalist and historian Kurds have made in the last few decades and of which all have been rejected by the scholarly world outside Kurdish society. However, the Kurdish historians and writers continue to spread preposterous claims on the Internet and in their speeches. These claims are driven strictly by Kurdish ethno-nationalism motivations that tie in with their bigger problem of feelings of inferiority. When it comes to Kurdish history, Kurds understand that they were the last people who entered Mesopotamia and Anatolia.<sup>14</sup> The earlier claim of Kurds origin from the Medes became a huge part of Kurdish folklore and nationalism, because the Medes gave them that status of early settlers. This became popular with Kurds ever since Vladimir Minorsky made the suggestion that Kurds originated from Medes and the Medes had collaborated with the Neo-Babylonians, attacked Assyria and led to the fall of the Assyrian Empire in 612 BC. Still, the Medes never conquered southern Mesopotamia – it was rather the Persians. Soon, the Kurdish agenda switched from a homeland in Iran (1946 failed Mahabad Republic<sup>15</sup>), where they historically belonged, to a homeland in northern Mesopotamia (historic Assyria). However, the Kurds (assuming they were Medes) were still not native to Mesopotamia. Hence, a new campaign linking Kurds and ancient Sumerians was initiated.

All genuine linguists agree that lexicon (or vocabulary) is a less reliable factor compared to morphology and syntax in determining the familial relationship of languages as words are the most mobile component of any language and vulnerable to borrowing across languages. For instance, Farsi

12 Accessed 4/24/2024 [https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/119/article/902951/pdf?fbclid=IwAR1LuZakBZtjg926QKxyPbCmWldqjraE\\_8sYw1XNyThL2hI\\_eOkQZDoj6t0](https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/119/article/902951/pdf?fbclid=IwAR1LuZakBZtjg926QKxyPbCmWldqjraE_8sYw1XNyThL2hI_eOkQZDoj6t0)

13 Accessed 4/22/2024 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FuUDNp-XMtI>

14 Kurdish presence in Anatolia dates to post 1514 Battle of Chaldiran as the Sunni Kurds of the Zagros Mountains sided with the Sunni Ottoman Turks against the Shia Safavid Persians. Sultan Selim I rewarded the Kurds by allowing them to settle in the eastern regions of the Ottoman Empire and be a buffer zone between them and the Shia Persians.

15 The Kurds established the Mahabad Republic in January 1946; however, it was crushed by the Iranian Army in December 1946, meaning it lasted 11 months and many of its leaders were either hanged or imprisoned while few escaped.

has over 40 percent of words from Arabic yet Farsi is of the Eastern branch of Indo-European family while Arabic is a Semitic language. There are many ‘so-called linguists’ who assume or force a relationship between linguistically unrelated languages based exclusively on lexicon. This seems what Hamarash has done. This group of so-called ‘linguists’ believe that they are authentic linguists, when, in reality, they are professionally and academically not thoroughly trained as such.

Edward Odisho, a professor of bilingual/bicultural education at Northeastern Illinois University, states that counting 1 through 10 is one of the most basic systems in overwhelming majority of human linguistic culture. This system is often a good indicator of familial relationship across languages. Below, notice the citations of this counting for several languages. For instance, English and German have highly identical pronunciation simply because both represent the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family. Equally, those in Farsi and Kurdish languages are also highly similar yet somewhat different from English and German simply because they represent the Eastern branch of the Indo-European family as opposed to its western branch. As for Sumerian, Turkish and Finnish, they are fundamentally different among themselves and equally so in contrast with Indo-European. There is none whatsoever similarity between Sumerian and Kurdish; moreover, Farsi and Kurdish are the most identical in structure and pronunciation. Consequently, since Farsi, in all its historical forms, has been the medium of well-documented civilization, it is quite logical to conclude that Kurdish has historically and emphatically been influenced by Farsi both culturally and linguistically. As for Sumerian specimens of counting, its stand-alone form is neither relevant to the Indo-European nor to the other examples of Turkic and Finno-Ugric etc.

English: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

German: eins, zwei, drei, vier, fünf, sechs, sieben, acht, neun, zehn,

Farsi: yek, do, se, chahar, Panj, shesh, haft, hasht, no(h), da(h)

Kurdish: yak, du, se, chwar, penj, shash, hawt, hasht, no, da

Sumerian: diš, min, eš, limmu, ia, aš, imin, ussu, ilimmu, u.

Turkish: bir, iki, üç, dört, beş, altı, yedi, sekiz, dokuz, on

Finnish: yksi, kaksi, kolme, neljä, viisi, kuusi, seitsemän, kahdeksan, yhdeksän, kymmenen.

This implies that it is illogical to relate Kurdish language and culture to Sumerian since Kurdish is historically a non-Mesopotamian language and culture. Nevertheless, some marginal cultural influence is likely possible through the medium of other Middle East cultures such as Aramaic, Arabic etc.,<sup>16</sup> which I will give few examples of later.

Ludwig Paul, an expert on Iranian languages and dialects, agrees with the above. He states that Kurdish is a Northwestern Iranian language in origin, but acknowledges that it shares traits with Southwestern Iranian languages like Farsi due to longstanding historical contacts. Farsi and Kurdish are genetically related, are considered sister languages that belong to the same family branch of Indo-European languages. Sumerian, on the other hand, is completely different and it has no connection to the various Iranian languages.<sup>17</sup> Sumerian did not descend from Proto-Indo-European languages. There is a pretty good corpus of Sumerian literature, since Sumerian was carefully preserved as a literary language by subsequent Mesopotamian cultures of the Babylonians and Assyrians; However, it doesn’t reveal any clear relationship to other languages, living or dead. Meanwhile, Kurdish literature was scarce until recent times. The most important Kurdish document is the 1596 book *Sharaf-Nama* by Sharafkhan Bidlisi, which was written in Farsi, not Kurdish. In fact, 50 percent of Kurdish vocabulary is Farsi which entered the Kurdish language in the last 100 years or so. It is impossible to create any sort of

<sup>16</sup> (Prof. Edward Odisho, personal communication. May 1, 2024)

<sup>17</sup> Garnik Asatrian. “Prolegomena to the Study of the Kurds”, Iran and the Caucasus Vol 13, No. 1. Brill, 2009, pp. 11-12

comparison between Sumerian and Kurdish languages or literature, because the first represents the Cradle of Civilization, while the latter is considered local dialects that lacked documentation due to the nomadic nature of whom Asatryan defines as many ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups living as enclaves in the vicinity of the Kurds and who are traditionally considered part of the Kurdish conglomeration.<sup>18</sup>

When addressing languages, Hamarash does not clarify that in linguistics, his argument of having many Sumerian words in Kurdish language is defined as **folk etymology**, meaning, it is not based on scholarly research. The term folk etymology was coined by Ernst Förstemann in 1852.<sup>19</sup> Folk etymology is a productive process in historical linguistic, language change, and social interaction. In historical linguistics, folk etymology is usually described as a type of false analogy, which alters the form or meaning of an unfamiliar term so as to reflect the connection that speakers think that exists between it and a better-known or better-understood word. When a false etymology becomes a popular belief in a society, it becomes known as folk etymology.

Some of the Kurdish words that Hamarash had provided as being Sumerian, and which are recorded in a list that is spread around when the subject comes up, can, if his claim is true, fall into the category known as **Culture Words** which are shared by many other, but not necessarily related, languages. Translation is used to transfer information whether it is a novel, article, short story or manual which are originally written in one language, but needed to be translated into another language for one reason or another by the people who do not know the original language of the publication. Translation paves the road for words of a foreign language to become popular in a native language. In fact, the Semitic Epic of Gilgamesh was translated into Hurrian, as well as Indo-European Hittite language found on clay tablets excavated in Asia Minor from the second half of the second millennium BC, which means that the Epic of Gilgamesh was studied, translated, and imitated in ancient times all over the Near East.<sup>20</sup> So many people took stories or information from ancient Sumerians, but not necessarily directly or during the same period. Trying to relate Sumerian with other languages is not a new subject. As a matter of fact, in 1913 the Georgian scholar M. Tseretheli tried to connect Sumerian with Georgian. Lately, Prof. Simo Parpola connected Sumerian with Finno-Ugric languages.<sup>21</sup>

Yet, more important to stress is the fact that the most salient feature of Sumerian language is that it is an **agglutinative language**. Turkish, Japanese and Dravidian language (a family of two dozen languages indigenous to and spoken by over 150 million people of southern India—Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam), are agglutinative similar to Sumerian. These languages are among the languages that form words through agglutination. Agglutinative languages form words through the combination of smaller morphemes to express compound ideas. For example, the Turkish term *ev-ler-den* “from the houses” is an example of a word containing a stem and two word elements; the stem is *ev-* “house,” while the element *-ler-* carries the “meaning of plural”, and *-den* indicates “from”.<sup>22</sup> Sumerian is clearly an agglutinative language in that it preserves the word root intact while expressing various grammatical changes by adding on prefixes, infixes, and suffixes. Kurdish, on the other hand, is not an agglutinative language, hence it is not related to Sumerian. Also, the difference between nouns and verbs, as it exists in the Indo-European or Semitic languages, is unknown to Sumerian.

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18 Ibid, p.5

19 Accessed 4/26/2024 Förstemann, Ernst (1852). "Ueber Deutsche volksetymologie". In Adalbert Kuhn (ed.). *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete des Deutschen, Griechischen und Lateinischen*. F. Dümmler.

20 Kramer, Samuel N. *History Begins At Sumer*. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1981, p. 182.

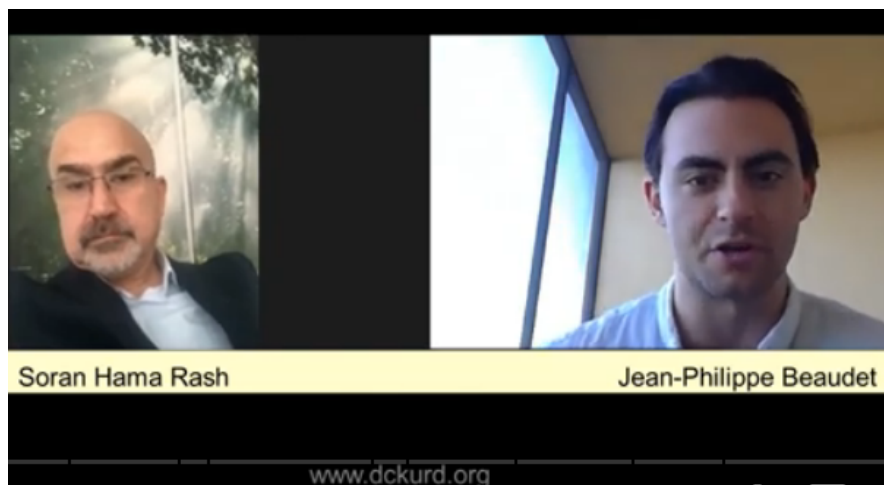
21 (Assyriologist Dr. Zack Cherry, personal communication, April 27, 2024)

22 Accessed 4/26/2024 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/agglutination-grammar>  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/agglutination-grammar>

Linguists relate languages to each other or assign to a family or sub-family based on a joint combination of lexical (vocabulary), phonological, morphological and syntactical features. Of these, the last three are the most reliable as vocabulary is the most susceptible to cross-language borrowing. Hamarash failed to address the phonological, morphological and syntactical features in Sumerian and Kurdish languages to prove if any genuine similarities existed between the two.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, linguists assert that Sumerian's syntax, vocabulary and phonology do not match those of any living Indo-European language, including Kurdish. Sumerian had complex morphology, mostly suffixing (the noun), mostly prefixing (the verb); animate–inanimate class distinction but no sex-based gender; and a large case system. Sumerian is a known linguistic isolate. Its syntax, vocabulary and phonology do not match any living Indo-European language whether Kurdish, Armenian, or Persian. Meanwhile, Kurdish is an the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European languages with multiple dialects spoken by many different cultural, linguistic, and tribal groups known as Kurds living in Iran, Turkiye, Iraq, Syria and Armenia. The closest languages to Kurdish are Farsi, Pashto, northern Luri dialects, Talyshi, Balochi and the old Azeri language. This closeness is attributed to the fact that these languages or dialects are from the same family language or could be based on coincidental similarities in pronunciation or vocabulary that come through culture word, migration, etc.

To justify his claims and findings, Hamarash states that all the current views about the Sumerians are entirely wrong. In another presentation, he states that scholars were not genuine with their narrative regarding ancient history and that such history was set by colonial academic institutions to serve political and ideological agendas. He then states that to understand the history of the Indo-European languages is to understand the history of the Kurds.<sup>24</sup>



Now, we know that the Sumerian language found itself into many other languages, including Akkadian (Assyrian and Babylonian), Amorite, Hebrew, English, Arabic, Farsi, Iranian, Turkish, etc., or some of these languages borrowed from the Akkadian.<sup>25</sup> Sumerian did indeed fan out across Syro-Mesopotamia and Susiana. In fact, Sumerian's influence reached as far as Egypt and in significant fashion.<sup>26</sup> The Semitic Akkadians conquered the Sumerian city states and took in time some of the Sumerian language in the process and the Sumerian words became culture words in Akkadian society. Later, and with the

23 (Prof. Edward Odisho, personal communication, April 29, 2024)

24 Accessed 4/23/2024 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiYnIYBtjhM>

25 Paul V. Mankowski. Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew. Eisenbrauns, 2000.

26 Jerrold S. Cooper. *Sumerian and Semitic Writing in Most Ancient Syro-Mesopotamia*. In *Language and Cultures in Contact*. Proceedings of the 42th RAI. Edited by K. Van Lerberghe and G. Voet. Peeters Press, Louven. 1999.

expansion of the Assyrian Empire and the adoption of Aramaic as the official language of the empire in the middle 9<sup>th</sup> Century BC,<sup>27</sup> many of those Sumerian words spread throughout the empire. We are told that wide use of written Aramaic by the Parthian Dynasties subsequently led to the adoption of the Aramaic alphabet and also Aramaic vocabulary used by several Middle Iranian languages, including Parthian, Middle Persian, Sogdian<sup>28</sup> and Khwarazmian.<sup>29</sup> In fact, we are told that this influence started earlier with “the rise and spread of the Assyrian, and later of the Persian Achaemenid Empire in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century BC made one of the Aramaic dialects the lingua franca of the Middle East, both in its spoken and its written forms.”<sup>30</sup> Therefore, Sumerian found itself in many Persian and Iranian languages through Aramaic and not through Sumerian directly.

Also, the Elamite language in south Eastern Iran was certainly influenced by Sumerian through the Akkadian (Babylonian-Assyrian) language during its contacts with Southern Mesopotamians.<sup>31</sup> Hamarash does not make any efforts to examine whether the Sumerian words he presents exist in the Elamite language and through which they might have entered the Old Persian and were later preserved in Middle Persian and subsequently Modern Persian (Farsi) and from the latter the words might have entered a certain Kurdish language/dialect. He is probably neither scholarly equipped to undertake such an investigation nor it is in the best interest of his nationalistic claims to do so. This is, of course, if his claimed connection between Kurdish and Sumerian is sound.

Culture words play a magic role in spreading languages throughout diverse regions. The following words, for example, descend from a Sumerian root which was transferred to English one way or another, but most likely through Culture Words:

*anšu*, became English *ass*  
*canna*, became English *cane*.  
*Canālis*, became English *channel, canal*.  
*Cannula*, became English *cannula*<sup>32</sup>

Kurdish is related to English too, since both are Indo-European languages. Consider, for example:  
English *dark* – Kurdish *tarik*,  
English *evening* – Kurdish *evari*  
English *name* – Kurdish *nav*

Also, the following words are Arabic originally, but used in English language: *Alcohol, Algebra, Average, Bled, Check, Coffee, Cotton, Candy, Gazelle, Giraffe, Guitar, Harem, Henna, Hazard, Jar, Jasmine, Lemon, Lime, Mascara, Mask, Safari, Sherbet, Sorbet, Shrub, Soda, Sofa, Spinach, Syrup, Zero* and many many others.<sup>33 34</sup>

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27 The adoption of Aramaic did not mean the disappearance of the Akkadian language and script. New discoveries have shown that cuneiform was still used in Assyria in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century of the Christian Era. Also, adopting the new Aramaic alphabet did not mean the disappearance of the Assyrian language which continues on until today.

28 Sogdian is an ancient Iranian civilization between the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, and in present-day Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Sogdiana was also a province of the Achaemenid Empire, and listed on the Behistun Inscription of Darius the Great.

29 Green, Tamara M. *The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran*, BRILL 1992.

30 H.L. Murre-Van Den Berg. *From A Spoken to a Written Language*. Nederlands Instituut Voor Het Nabije Oosten, Leiden. 1999.

31 Woolley, C. Leonard. *The Sumerians*. W.W. Norton & Company. London. 1965. p. 91.

32 <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/cane#English>

33 Accessed 4/26/24 <http://www.modernstandardarabic.com/cognate-list-of-arabic-and-english-words/>

34 Accessed 4/26/24 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_English\\_words\\_of\\_Arabic\\_origin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_English_words_of_Arabic_origin)

What does this mean? Are the British people Arabs? Are the Kurds English people? Also, there are hundreds of Arabic and Turkish words in the Kurdish language.

We read, *the findings of some studies reveal that there are a lot of Arabic loanwords that are used in the casual speech of Sorani Kurdish. Many factors have led to Sorani Kurdish to borrow loanwords; these factors are prestige which relates to religion, politics, and the need to borrow because of the lack of the lexical items in Sorani Kurdish.*<sup>35</sup> This is normal since the Kurds came in contact with the Arabs after the Islamic conquest of the seventh century<sup>36</sup> and Islam and the Arabic of the Koran became a very important part of Kurdish society and that influence continues until current days.

Other loanwords from Arabic, which were perhaps borrowed from Aramaic, were now borrowed by Kurds because of language contact with Arabs show how close the borrowed words are. In fact, they are almost completely identical.

**Table (1): Loanwords from Arabic to Kurdish. Words in grey are originally from English.**

	English	Kurdish	Transcription	Arabic
Military Ranks	Colonel	عمید	?əcid	عمید
	Brigadier General	عمید	?əmid	عمید
	Major	رائید	ra:ʔəd	رائد
	Major General	لیوا	lɛwəʔ	لواء
	Higher Major General	لیوای روکن	lɛwəʔ ru'kn	رکن لواء
	Chief of brigade	نامر لیوا	amr lɛwəʔ	لواء امر
	Chief of troop	نامر فوج	amr fəɖʒ	فوج امر
Religion	Jurisprudence	فقیهه	fəhəh	فقیهه
	Religious law	شاریعت	shriʔəh	شريعة
	Legislation	شەڕ	ʃəʔ	شرع
	Ameen	نامین	a: min	Ameen. أمين
	Sheikh	شینخ	ʃiɪx	Sheikh. شيخ
	Mosque	مزگوت	dʒamɛʔ or məsʒed	جامع او مسجد
	Fidel	کافر	kafir	کافر
Politics	Dictator	دیکتاتور	diktəʔ	دکتاتور
	Minister	وزیر	wəzɪr	وزیر
	Politician	سیاسی	siəjsi	سیاسی
	Massacre	ئەنفال/قەرکردن	anfəl	انفال
Others	Bad guy	سەرسەری	sərsəri	سرسری
	Shoes	قۆندەرە	gundərəh	قوندرة
	Column	عموود	?əmod	عمود
	Bag or purse	چانتا	dʒantʔəh	چنطة
	Shirt	قەمیس	gəmisʔ	قميص
	Pants	پانتۆل	bantʔəlɔn	بنطلون
	Tie	ریبات	rɛbatʔ	رباط
	Notebook	دەفتەر	dəftər	دفتر
	Book	کتێب	kutub	کتاب
	Chair	کۆرسی	kursi	كرسي
	Counter	کەوتنەر	kawintər	كاونتر
	Passport	پاسپۆرت، جەواز سەفر	dʒawaz səfər	جواز سفر

And the examples of exact Arabic words in Kurdish language are plentiful.<sup>37</sup>

35 Hayder Touma Jasim Al-Saedi. *Borrowing Loanwords from Arabic to Sorani Kurdish*. Misan University. 2015

36 Hassanpour, 1999

37 Accessed 4/25/2024

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297668874\\_Borrowing\\_Loanwords\\_from\\_Arabic\\_to\\_Sorani\\_Kurdish](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297668874_Borrowing_Loanwords_from_Arabic_to_Sorani_Kurdish)

Many linguists and historians agree that Kurdish society was tribal and simple until post WWI. Even learned Kurds admit to this fact. Dr. Omar Miran<sup>38 39</sup> wrote that Islam brought the writing system to the Kurds. The Kurds did have a spoken language but did not have a writing system, which is a sign of primitive society. He added, there was no specific poetry rules, no special architectural design, no comprehensive language or cultural heritage.<sup>40</sup>

So, what does that mean? Why do we hear from Hamarash about Kurdish-Sumerian connection, but no Kurdish-Arab connection considering all the Arabic words in Kurdish language? It would be interesting to compare this Kurdish-Arabic borrowing words to some of the so-called Kurdish-Sumerian words of Hamarash's list. This applies also to the high possibility of Kurdish borrowing from the Elamites and the Aramaic influenced Farsi.

In his book titled "*The Meadows of Gold*", the 9<sup>th</sup> Century al-Mas'ūdī reports that there is no agreement (among the people of his day) surrounding the origins of the Kurds. One tradition dictates, explains Al-Mas'ūdī, is that they (the Kurds) may have separated from the Arabs earlier and then migrated and settled into the mountains of Persia and among other foreign nations.<sup>41</sup> Also, Dr. Khazal al-Majidi, an expert on civilizations and religions, said that Kurdish language is not Sumerian, Kurds are not Sumerians and certain genetic studies founded that forty-six percent of the Kurds were Arabs.<sup>42</sup>

What else do we know about the similarities of language between Kurdish and other ethnic groups? There are too many words that are very similar between Kurdish and Balochi, which is spoken in Balochistan, a region in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.<sup>43</sup> What keeps Hamarash from not exploring Kurdish relationship with the Balochi people. Well, in reality, the Kurds and Balochi both belong to the same Iranian language family. Many of the words that Hamarash provides in his list might as well be found in the other Iranian languages such as Persian, Urdu, Balochi and others that are all not related to Sumerian. And since Kurdish dialects/languages are classified as Iranian languages, thus they are not related to Sumerian as well. For all that, Hamarash's postulation does not find support among linguists.

Also, it is interesting to see that the Kurdish words that Hamarash claims to be Sumerian are not so in reality. In fact, some of them are almost completely different, contrary to the Arabic words in Kurdish language, yet the Kurds make the wild connection with Sumerian:

Sumerian: **nîta, Nîtah**; Kurdish: **Nêr, Nêrî** (*Male, Man*)

Sumerian: **ui**; Kurdish: **Wil** (Old Hawrami and Laki Dialects), **Gul** (*Flower*)

Sumerian: **gur**; Kurdish: **Gewre** (*In Sumerian: Large, High, Deep; In Kurdish: Big, Large*)

Sumerian: **a-de**; Kurdish: **Avdan, Awdan** (*Irrigate, Pour Water*)

Sumerian: **zi**; Kurdish: **Jî, Jê, Jîn, Jîyan** (*Live*)

Sumerian: **zu**; Kurdish: **Zan, Zanîn** (*Know*)

Sumerian: **gud, guõx, gu**; Kurdish: **Ga** (*Bull, Ox*)

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38 Dr. Omar Miran was born in Shaqlawa, Arbil. He obtained his B. Sc. in Law from Baghdad University in 1946, then his Doctorate degree from the Sorbonne in 1952, where he specialized in the history of the people of the Middle East. He was assassinated in northern Iraq while driving on his way home. His father was assassinated in the 1940s in the Kurdish region and in public by Mulla Mustafa Barzani himself as it was reported. Both Father and son were very critical about the Barzani's leaderships policies, which they categorized as dangerous for the Kurdish people.

39 Accessed 5/3/2024 <http://www.targetexploration.com/academics.pdf>

40 Accessed 6/6/2022 <https://alahadnews.net>

41 Al-Mas'ūdī (896–956) was an early Arab historian, geographer. and regarded as the *Herodotus of the Arabs*.

42 Accessed 4/26/2024 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErvqimZa4qQ>

43 Accessed 4/29/2024 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1g-6e8l15HI>



Sumerian: **ur**; Kurdish: **War, Hewar** (*Sumerian: City, Place; Kurdish: Place, Area, Land*)<sup>44</sup>

Prof. Odisho states, it is important to understand that in the 7000 worldwide languages the range of basic sound units (phonemes) is predominantly between 20 to 40 units. Very few languages fall outside these limits. It is, therefore, natural for many languages to share similar sounds; however, such phonetic similarity does not assign them to the same origin. It is primarily the morphology and syntax of a given language that help a linguist to assign languages to the same family. True, vocabulary is important, but its units (words) are most vulnerable to be borrowed across languages even if they belong to different families. Obviously the thousands of Arabic words in Spanish do not make the latter a Semitic language. A few marginal 'similarity' in sounds and 'vocabulary' between Spanish and Arabic does not grant them familial linguistic relationship. By the same token, some accidental similarity between Sumerian and Kurdish does not establish a fundamental relationship between them as claimed by Hamarash.<sup>45</sup> The root of a language is its grammar, which does not change. The language is like a tree, the roots are its grammar while the leaves are its vocabularies. The leaves drop, just as the vocabularies change; however, the roots remain and even grow and become stronger with time.

Why is Hamarash not writing a paper on a comparison between Kurdish and Sumerian grammar? Also, why is Hamarash insinuating that no other Indo-European language has that same status of having Sumerian words in them. I call on the genuine Sumerian and Kurdish linguists to investigate Hamarash's list since I am not a linguist. However, why is he misleading the readers by indicating that the "h" used in Kurdish is used in Sumerian as well in his list of words he provided? The Sumerian language does not have the pronunciation of "h". Sumerian language uses "ḥ" (or kh) and not the simple "h".

It is argued that Sumerian died<sup>46</sup> some 4000 years ago. We know also that sub-Iranian nomadic and tribal Kurds are not mentioned in ancient times. Therefore, there was no contact between the two groups at any time. Thus, a none mediated folk etymology or Culture Words effect will not play a direct role in any so-called Kurdish-Sumerian case. We also know that Kurdish literature did not exist in Sumerian times, which makes it impossible for Kurds who are known for not being unique, homogeneous or literary people in earlier times of their nomadic history to record and preserve Sumerian words. Furthermore, scholars tell us that the earliest written record in Kurmanji is a small monophysite liturgical prayer in Armenian script, attested in an Armenian manuscript from the Collection of Matanadaran in Yerevan (No 7117, folio 144b) and copied between 1430 and 1446 from a presumably older original. The text is, likely, translated from Greek, as the Classical Armenian version has a conjunction before "Holy" and "strong"/"immortal", lacking in the Kurdish rendering. These few words constitute all we have from the earliest periods of Kurdish, for the first Kurdish texts in Arabic script—mainly poetry—date back to the 16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Several small textual pieces, again in Kurmanji, are found in the oldest copy of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi's *Seyâhatnâme* which reflect the spoken Kurmanji of the period (unlike the Kurdish poetry influenced by Classical Persian literature and abounding with Arabo-Persian borrowings). Kurdish written literature emerged on the basis of Kurmanji and is manifested by such authors as Malaye Djiziri (circa 1570 - 1640), Faqiye Tayran (circa 1590 - 1660), 'Ali Teremakhi (16<sup>th</sup> - beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> c.), as well as Ahmade Khani (1650 - 1707), the author of the famous love poem "Mam and Zin" and few others in later times.<sup>47</sup>

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44 These and many other words have been distributed around by Hamarash and other Kurds or Kurdish supporters and are text or e-mailed to people who question this connection between Kurdish and Sumerian languages.

45 (Prof. Edward Odisho, personal communication, April 29, 2024)

46 We must understand the difference between a dead and extinct language.

47 Garnik Asatrian. *Prolegomena to the Study of the Kurds*, Iran and the Caucasus Vol 13, No. 1. Brill, 2009, p. 16

Now, if we assume that the claimed 60 percent of the Kurdish words mentioned by Hamarash were Sumerian, then we must agree there is only one conclusion to such hypothesis which states that Sumerian, Farsi, Iranian (including Kurdish) belong to one language family. This still needs to be proven, because we do not know if the Farsi counterpart words versus those Kurdish words provided by Hamarash are the same as well since Kurdish and Farsi are very closely related and from the same family. Also, Hamarash's supposition does not mean that the ancient Sumerians, Persians, and Kurds are one people. That would be the silliest historical narrative to assume. The Germanic language family includes Dutch, Danish, Norwegian, German, English, Swedish, Icelandic, Scots, among other languages. If Hamarash's supposition is valid, then the German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, etc. people are all English people. Which scholar is ready to risk losing his/her reputation by considering such proposition? Different people share speaking one language, but they are not necessarily one people.

At the same token, the Portuguese language is a Romance language that is Neo-Latin derived from Vulgar Latin. It is spoken by approximately 210 million people worldwide. In addition to Brazil and Portugal, it is also expressed in Angola, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Macau, Namibia, Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guyana and many others. If we subscribe to Hamarash's bizarre hypothesis, then we can also claim that the European Portuguese people are the same as the people of Macau (south China Sea), Namibia (south Africa) or those in the Martinique (in the Americas) since they all speak Portuguese.

Considering all the above, I would like to ask Hamarash, have you presented your theories at any non-Kurdish Assyriological conference? Have you been a guest on a program along with other reputable linguists and scholars to discuss your theories? Have you published your hypothesis in any academic journal? The answer to all these questions is no. Why, because no legitimate scholarly body will accept to consider seriously such amateur and coincidental stuff. By the way, Hamarash's book was self-published in Sulaimaniya, Iraq and not by any reputable or scholarly institution. We could say with confidence that Hamarash's project is nothing but a shameless personal exercise in ethnonationalism, where he uses a faulty idea to emphasize that the Kurds are not only as a separate ethnic group, their language is very unique, but also insinuate that Kurds were at the doorsteps of earliest civilizations. Hamarash's claims have no weight, because, first, they are not supported historically and archaeologically and second, because no scholar would agree with his assumptions or conclusions.

I would like to conclude with a scholar's review on Hamarash's book. The review was published by Michael Gunter who is a professor of political science at Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tennessee and is considered an authority on the Kurds. Gunter writes, "Reading Hamarash's unorthodox, even iconoclastic claims about Kurdish origins reminded this reviewer of some of the similar claims made 30 years ago by Mehrdad Izady in *The Kurds: A Concise Handbook* (1992). At first heralded by many, but in a rather short time, numerous of Izady's assertions regarding the Kurds' prehistoric importance were discredited".<sup>48</sup> This is a slap on Hamarash's face, because Izady<sup>49</sup> was ridiculed by scholars for his claims and Hamarash will face the same fate.

Of course, the campaign of rewriting the Kurdish history continues. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) hired many Internet scholars, wannabe historians and pseudo linguists from around the world, paid them handsomely to indoctrinate students at home and to publish material that backs the new campaign of rewriting a new Kurdish history.

48 Accessed 4/29/2024 <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/119/article/902951/pdf>

49 Accessed 4/29/2024 <https://www.fredaprim.com/pdfs/2007/MehrdadIzady-HistoryOfKurdishChristianity.pdf>

Finally, Dr. Ferdinand Hennerbichler had taught at the University of Sulaimaniya from 2012 - 2020<sup>50</sup> and is now a staff member retired within the KRG education system. He has written that only a few authentic Median words were documented; therefore, too few for any sweeping assumption to concretely substantiate that a linguistic connection between Kurds and Medes existed.<sup>51</sup> Thus, it was logical to abandon the Kurdish-Mede connection that has been already rejected by many and concentrate on the new Sumerian connection where the Sumerians were basically Kurds from the north who migrated to southern Mesopotamia and established in time the Sumerian civilization. Hennerbichler writes, “They [Kurds] may represent the descendants of the first shepherds that occupied the Kurdistan highlands since the first Neolithic”.<sup>52</sup> These Kurdish so-called scholars use vague language and expressions that can be interpreted in very different ways or use indefinite adjectives, such as may be, few, many, perhaps, etc. in their writing to confuse and mislead the readers and drive them in the new planned direction. It is no wonder that those scholars do not publish their claimed findings with reputable publishers and institutions. Like Hamarash who published his book in a local company in Sulaimaniya, Hennerbichler published his paper at Edition Winterwork, which is a mere print shop in Borsdorf, Germany.

Kurds should be proud of being Kurds and stop politicizing history. The Kurds are neither Medes nor Sumerians. Also, Kurdish language is not linked to the Sumerian language, because of the monumental difference between the Sumerian that is behind the “Cradle of Civilization” and the simple Kurdish language, which does not have a deep literature due to the well-known simple nature of the nomadic life of the various Kurdish tribes until the last 100 years. Shared vocabularies between languages is common, but that alone does not mean that those languages are the same or belong to the same family of languages.

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50 Accessed 4/30/2024 <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ferdinand-Hennerbichler>

51 Ferdinand Hennenbichler. *The History of Kurds*. Edition Winterwork (Printshop). Germany. 2011

52 Ibid.