

The Iranian Languages

Edited by
Gernot Windfuhr

ROUTLEDGE LANGUAGE FAMILY SERIES

THE IRANIAN LANGUAGES

The Iranian languages are a major Indo-European language family, and with between 150 and 200 million native speakers represent the western branch of Indo-Iranian. This volume, consisting of fifteen chapters contributed by leading experts in the field, offers an introductory overview of Iranian dialectology and typology, followed by detailed discussions of the principal languages of Old, Middle, and New and Modern Iranian. The language chapters follow the same pattern and sequence of topics, taking the reader through the significant features not only of phonology and morphology, but also of syntax, from phrase level to complex sentences, and pragmatics. In addition, they also address issues of lexis and sociolinguistics. Ample examples on all levels are provided with detailed annotation for the non-specialist reader, and annotated sample texts conclude the chapters.

This volume is a unique up-to-date resource for scholars of Iranian, Indo-Iranian, and Indo-European studies as well as of linguistics, in particular linguistics typology, language contact, and diachronic linguistics, and will be a welcome companion of undergraduate and postgraduate students in these fields.

Gernot Windfuhr is Professor of Iranian Studies at the University of Michigan. He has published widely on Persian and Iranian languages and linguistics and related languages, as well as on other aspects of Iranian culture including Persian literature and pre-Islamic Iranian religions.

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FOREWORD

Sixteen colleagues have contributed to this volume: In addition to this editor, these include Prods Oktor Skjærvø, Yutaka Yoshida, Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, and Ronald E. Emmerick for the Old and Middle Iranian languages; John R. Perry, Ludwig Paul, Ernest N. McCarus, Carina Jahani and Agnes Korn for the West Iranian languages; Barbara Robson, Habibullah Tegey, D. (Joy) I. Edelman, Leila Dodykhudoeva, and Elena Bashir for the East Iranian languages; and Charles M. Kieffer for the Southeast Iranian languages. In collaborating with these colleagues, this editor did aim to attain as much equal sequence and coverage of the topics as possible in each chapter. Admittedly, that hands-on approach sometimes proved challenging for both parties, but was appreciated by others, and gratitude is due to all contributors for their patience.

The present volume could only appear because of the generous help in the editorial tasks by a number of these colleagues. Greatest gratitude is due to Prods Oktor Skjærvø, both for his advice and assistance in editing several chapters, and for his hands-on data-processing expertise and the availability of his data bases.

Work on this volume began some twelve years ago. Sadly two dear colleagues passed away, Ronald E. Emmerick in 2001 and Habibullah Tegey in 2005. In addition, the project encountered repeated critical challenges that threatened its completion. Most recently, it was only by the extraordinary gracious collaboration of Carina Jahani and Agnes Korn who, in spite of numerous other commitments, accepted the challenge of composing the chapter on Balochi in just a few months, that this volume could finally appear.

My fond appreciation goes to a good number of my former students at the University of Michigan, including Donald L. Stilo, Iraj Bashiri, David J. Peterson, and Karl J. Krahnke, and their enthusiasm and inspiration during work on earlier dialectological projects. For the present project doctoral student Rev. Harry Weeks assisted the project with his sophisticated editing and typesetting of earlier drafts, until his untimely death in 2005. I am likewise grateful for those students who diligently worked on the multiple aspects of the project during its various phases, most recently doctoral student Robert Haug who produced the excellent four essential maps for Chapter 2 on the typology of the Iranian languages.

The original impetus for this volume came from a letter in December of 1996 sent by Jonathan Price, then Commissioning Editor at Curzon Press (since merged with Routledge/Taylor & Francis). Once the project got started a couple of years later, he also worked with me editorially until 2005 and earned my lasting gratitude. I am equally grateful for the cordial cooperation with successive editorial teams who took his place following the commercial mergers. These include most recently Senior Production Editor Geraldine Martin, Editorial Assistant Samantha Vale Noya, and, at Swales & Willis, Production Managers Colin Morgan and Richard Willis, and copy-editor Thérèse Wassily Saba for their stellar efforts during the production phase of this volume. I would also like to thank all editorial teams who have collaborated with me on this project for

their patience during delays that occurred over the years. Finally, I am grateful to Routledge/Taylor & Francis for assuming the editorial costs involved in preparing this volume.

Gernot Windfuhr
Ann Arbor,
April 27, 2009