

PREFACE

This work is a part of a broader project that I planned years ago in the frame of the *Ethnolinguistics of the Iranian area Project*, directed by Adriano V. Rossi for over fifteen years (funded by the Italian Ministry for Scientific Research, last code no. 9710425417). My task was to collect and describe the Iranian body part terminology in a cross-linguistic perspective and with a motivational approach, contributing in this way to a better knowledge of the Iranian lexicon in a comparativistic view. For this purpose, I have been collecting for years words and expressions relevant to the anatomical lexicon from ancient and modern Iranian languages, mostly using as sources published dictionaries, glossaries and running texts, and for some languages, mainly Balochi, but also Persian, Baxtiāri, Kurdish, Ossetic etc., spoken texts recorded by me and other scholars, working with native speakers. The data-base produced so far contains several thousands of words and appears to be of remarkable interest, considering that a great amount of native lexicography – often difficult to trace in Europe – has been included into the analysis.

The first step of this project was the publication in 1995 of *The pupil of the eye in the Iranian languages* in the series *Etnolinguistica dell'area iranica*, Naples. The present book, in which the words for ‘finger’ and the names of every single finger in the Iranian languages are surveyed, is the second one. Hopefully, further issues will be published in the near future.

The idea to concentrate on the finger lexical domain in Iranian originated from a research conducted in Balochistan with the help of many Balochi speakers in the 1980s, whose results have been published in a provisional version in the early 1990s and in its definitive version (with considerable delay) as FILIPPONE 2000–2003.

A draft of the present study was more or less completed around 2000. For several reasons I preferred to let it decant for some years before its publication. This settling period proved to be useful because in the meantime a relevant amount of fresh material was added to that already recorded, also thanks to recent publications, especially from Iran, where dialectology has been receiving increasing attention and interest. Moreover, I had the opportunity to add important suggestions coming from many scholars on single items.

A preliminary presentation of a few results of this research was done on the occasion of the first Italo-Austrian Iranological meeting held in Cagliari (17–19 september 2005), at the beautiful library of Prof. Gherardo Gnoli’s

private residence, when a more strict cooperation between the Italian scholars active in Iranian philology and the scholars of the Institut für Iranistik of the Austrian Academy of Sciences started up. To me, that meeting was a chance to develop productive and pleasant scientific relations with new colleagues, and also warm friendship with some of the members of the Institute, in particular Prof. Bert Fragner and Doz. Velizar Sadovski. It was there that the idea originated of publishing the present essay in the framework of the *Veröffentlichungen zur Iranistik* of the Academy, as a first issue of a project of several volumes under the general title “Onomasiological Studies on Body-Part Terms”.

Scholars and friends to whom I have applied during the years and who have contributed in different ways to this publication, are many. I would wish to mention here (in alphabetical order) at least the most involved: Dr Sabir Badalkhan; Prof. Paolo Calvetti (for Japanese); Prof. Mauro Maggi; Dr Enrico Morano; Prof. ‘Ali Ašraf Sādeqi; Prof. Martin Schwartz; Prof. Werner Sundermann. To Prof. Hasan Rezāi Bāybidi I am particularly grateful for his important contribution both as a scholar and as a Persian native speaker. Many cordial thanks are due to Prof. Rüdiger Schmitt, who read a preliminary draft of this work, and kindly provided me with precious suggestions and annotations. I also remember with gratitude and love the kindness with which Prof. Ilya Gershevitch read (almost twenty years ago) a preliminary study on the Balochi finger names. Special thanks are due to the Italian young researchers working on Iranian dialectology, Dr Gerardo Barbera, Dr Matteo De Chiara and Dr Daniele Guizzo, all of them having generously placed at my disposal their unpublished data on Minābi/Baškardi, Pashto and Tāleši respectively. I am much indebted to my dear friend Velizar Sadovski for all that he has done as editor of the series, responsible for the volume, on our meetings both in Austria and in Italy.

I want to thank all my Balochi friends, which I always remember with affection. I also want to express my gratitude to my Ossetian friends; my thought runs in particular to the late Vitaly Gussalov, whose untimely death deeply saddened all Italian friends of Ossetia. Heartful thanks also go to all my occasional Iranian and Pakistani informants. They have been many, and I cannot mention all. I will quote by name only one of them, Mr Ebrahim Širāzi, a Shirazi taxi-driver who volunteered to help me in my research, personally asking the finger names to people who crowded a bookshop at Shiraz. The data elicited on that occasion resulted of no particular interest, but his enthusiastic willingness in helping me was really moving, and I consider

Mr Širāzi's kindness as emblematic of the friendly attitude of many people I met during my research in Iran and Pakistan.

Last, but not least I have to acknowledge uninterrupted suggestions and support by Adriano V. Rossi, my former tutor in Iranian philology and (subsequently) my husband. Working alongside him is for me an unwavering source of joy.

This book is dedicated to the memory of my father, Francesco Paolo Filippone.

The main problems I faced with in my research are those typical of all extensive works (typological and universalistic), and concern the nature of the available sources. The unevenness in the linguistic documentation used is striking, but unavoidable. For some of the Iranian languages involved in the survey, data have been collected through interviews, questionnaires and recordings of spontaneous speech, mainly ordinary fieldwork conversations with a large number of native speakers; however, the documentation concerning the majority of the languages (both ancient and modern) results from desk work, through sorting dictionaries, glossaries and texts. Unfortunately, data extrapolated from dictionaries rarely can be considered as exhaustive. This is of course due to the uneven quality of the available lexicographical works. For some languages, we can rely on research traditions and comprehensive descriptions, which allow for a shared understanding of the relevant linguistic systems at a diachronic level, and also provide precious insights into the cultural, historical, religious etc. frameworks. For other languages, systematic studies are completely wanting. Some languages have a long written tradition, some others do not. Furthermore, a series of terms pertaining to colloquial registers are commonly not recorded at all even in major dictionaries for different reasons (including taboos). It should be added that data retrieved from lexicographical repertoires are to be considered with great care because contexts, transmitters of the message and in general the sociolinguistic categories of usage are often completely disregarded, and the diachronic dimensions are levelled. It follows that in most dictionaries, terms no more existing in a particular language or restricted to a particular stylistic level and condition are mixed up with terms of common use. The consequence is that I had no possibility of examining the collected data according to a contextualized, pragmatic conception of onomasiology, which focuses

on the actual choices made for a particular term as a designation of a particular referent.¹

Nevertheless, I still think that some inaccuracies in the details do not generally invalidate the results achieved in identifying associative patterns active in the denomination processes. I hope, therefore, that the amplitude of the lexical data here gathered and commented on can somehow manage to counterbalance the mentioned inconsistencies of the sources.

Another crucial problem for works like the present one is that of the transcription systems. Some of the languages taken into consideration have a long written tradition, as is the case with Persian, whose writing system, the Arabo-Persian script, has been in use for centuries. To let gain access to readers who are not specialists in Iranian languages, and are not accustomed to that alphabet, Persian words have been quoted in a phonemic transcription (*not* transliteration), according to the modern standard pronunciation of Iran. I followed in the main the lines of LAZARD's (1990a) transcription, which is tendentially phonemic. Some minor modifications have been introduced; in particular (1) ǰ transcribed q and ǰ transcribed γ (though the problem of the phonemic status of the uvular voiceless stop and the corresponding voiced fricative in the modern standard of Iran seems nowadays mostly settled in favour of one single phoneme); (2) the mid-back vowel transcribed \bar{a} (LAZARD: \hat{a}).

A tendentially phonemic transcription has also been used for Balochi. To avoid misunderstandings, I preferred following the traditional praxis of opposing tense vowels to lax ones, differentiating the two sets by means of a macron (\bar{i} , \bar{u} , $\bar{a} \sim i, u, a$), instead of using the IPA symbols ([i], [u], [a] ~ [ɪ], [ʊ], [ə]) according to the guidelines of the *Balochi Comparative Etymological Dictionary Project* (Department of Asian Studies, L'Orientale University, Naples).

For all the other Iranian languages, I have stuck where possible to the systems used by the individual authors of the written sources from which any single expression has been extrapolated. In a few cases, minor phonetic details have not been reproduced. As a downside of this procedure, it follows that it could be possible to find two quotations of the same word from a given language with different transcriptions because different sources, with different approaches and traditions, have been used. In case of ambiguity, the reader has to go back up to the original source, which is always (directly or indirectly) retrievable. When a quoted word is not followed by the reference to its source, this means that the source in question is considered as the

¹ For a use-oriented conception of onomasiology, see GRONDELAERS – GEERAERTS 2003.

“main one” for that given language, being mentioned once and for all in the list of language/dialect abbreviations (see p. 11). The choice of the “main source” for a language is only based on the amount of terms selected for the present investigation and here quoted, and it does not imply an evaluation of any particular work. In source references, the number of page is not given when the work from which the quoted word is taken, is (or contains a section which is) alphabetically ordered, and this concerns dictionaries, glossaries or any kind of works provided with a lexical list. The glosses defining Iranian words extrapolated from dictionaries whose target language is other than English, are generally translated into English; the original gloss is added only when relevant to the discussion of a particular term and/or considered useful in order to avoid misunderstanding.

An especially burning question, also implying sociolinguistic and ideological problems, is represented by the means of transcribing the different forms subsumed under the cover term ‘Kurdish’. The Kurdish varieties have different writing traditions, using different alphabets (with several sub-variants). Kurdish items taken out from dictionaries using the more or less standardised Roman-based orthography originally developed by the Bedir-Khan brothers in the 1930s or phonetically more detailed variants of this orthography (mostly northern and central dialects) are quoted according to the spelling adopted by each author. Kurdish items taken out from dictionaries using Arabo-Persian script (mostly southern varieties: HAZĀR 1990, SAFI-ZĀDE 2001, etc.) are transcribed according to the lines commonly adopted by Iranian scholars. Therefore readers must be extremely careful. Note in particular the opposition $\bar{a} : a$ in Southern Krd. (quoted in transcription from Ar.-Prs. writing) as contrasted with the opposition $a : e$ in Northern / Central Krd. (quoted in its traditional Roman alphabet). Note also Southern Krd. \check{j} = Northern / Central Krd. c , Southern Krd. \check{c} = Northern / Central Krd. \check{c} .

