

Foreword

I am honoured to present the inaugural volume of the *Journal of Iranian Linguistics*, dedicated to a field with a rich academic tradition that offers ever-expanding possibilities for the future. This field continues to reveal the complex intricacies of the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family and its interactions with neighbouring languages.

Iranian linguistics, as an area of historical and comparative linguistics, encompasses a vast geographical and cultural landscape. It spans from the ancient languages such as Old Persian and Avestan to diverse modern languages like Persian, Kurdish, Balochi and Pashto, as well as the various modern Iranian dialects spoken within and outside of Iran. This field holds unique interdisciplinary value, as the Iranian languages have significantly shaped literary traditions over centuries.

As a result, Iranian linguistics is crucial not only for understanding the evolution and current state of the languages, but also for grasping the broader historical narratives of Central Asia and the Iranian plateau, the extensive region of historical Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, and beyond.

While there are many well-regarded academic journals in the broader fields of Iranian and Oriental Studies, as well as numerous reputable publications in the sphere of Linguistics, where scholars of Iranian languages are able to introduce their research, the lack of any journal solely dedicated to Iranian linguistics has left a notable gap in the field. The *Journal* aims to fill this gap by providing a dedicated platform for researchers to share their findings, foster scholarly dialogue, and expand the boundaries of knowledge within this diverse and multifaceted field.

The main goal of the *Journal* is to bring together scholars who approach this field from various perspectives, whether through structural, historical, sociolinguistic, or comparative methods. The scope of the *Journal* encompasses a broad range of topics within Iranian linguistics, including but not limited to phonology, phonetics, syntax, morphology, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, computational linguistics, language policy, and language acquisition. The *Journal* aims to cover all language periods - Old, Middle and New Iranian.

This first volume offers contributions that reflect the *Journal's* scope and mission. From Sogdian and Middle Persian to New Persian and modern Iranian dialects, including those of endangered varieties, these articles embody the breadth and depth of Iranian linguistics. They encircle

explorations through deep philological approaches, as well as discussions on dialectal variation and language contact.

Enrico Morano examines a Manichean Sogdian manuscript in Sogdian script from Mani's *Book of the Giants*, shedding light on the historical linguistic landscape of Central Asia. He specifically focuses on two unpublished fragments in Sogdian script from the Berlin Turfan collection, both from the same page and glassed together. These fragments contain a cosmogonic text concerning the falling of the demons/archons to the four directions of the earth, as well as part of the myth of the creation of the protoplasts by the archdemons *Šaqlūn* and *Pēsūs*.

Hassan Rezai Baghbidi offers a new possible etymology for the classical Persian particle *mar*. He conducts a comprehensive review of previous studies then posits that the particle serves as a focus marker derived through a grammaticalisation process from the Bactrian word *μapo* [*mar*].

Paola Orsatti analyses the little-studied syntactic construction of Early and Classical New Persian which involves dependent constructions (phrases and clauses) of a verb in the form of a past participle, drawing primarily on examples from Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāme*, including other early poetry and prose texts.

Salman Aliyari Babolghani explores the development of the initial *Vs/šC-* in Middle and New Persian through his study of the words *šekam* and *šotor*, drawing on a broad range of materials from South-Western Iranian languages, as well as data from other linguistic sources, including contact languages of Middle Persian.

Habib Borjian presents insights into the Khonji dialect of Lārestān. His research highlights this dialect's unique phonological and grammatical features, thereby contributing to a better understanding of its historical development and contemporary usage.

In the realm of structural linguistics, **Songül Gündoğdu**, **Arsalan Kahnemuyipour**, and **Marcel den Dikken** investigate the distribution of the *ezafe* morpheme in adnominal clauses across three Iranian languages: Persian, Northern Kurdish, and Zazaki, demonstrating that the behaviour of *ezafe* in these languages challenges the case analysis of *ezafe*, suggesting instead a compatibility with the inversion analysis of *ezafe*.

Mohammad Rasekh-Mahand demonstrates that in Persian the clitic =*hā* and the particle *ke*, both serve as mirative markers alongside their other functions. He furthermore shows that the use of the perfect form of verbs in Persian can, in certain context, operate as a mirative strategy, in addition to its primary role of signaling indirect evidentiality.

Mohsen Mahdavi Mazdeh and **Sarah Nehzati** examine low vowel dissimilation in Mazandarani.

As the inaugural issue, this volume also reflects the collaborative effort of numerous individuals. I would like to extend my gratitude to our editorial board, whose expertise and vision have been instrumental in shaping the direction of the *Journal*.

I am also grateful to the reviewers and contributors whose dedication and high standards of scholarship have ensured the academic rigour of this issue. And last but not least, I am particularly thankful to the associate editors Artyom Tonoyan and Hakob Avchyan, who have organised the complicated process of preparing and publishing of this journal and without the support of whom this project would have been impossible.

We believe that the *Journal of Iranian Linguistics* will serve as a productive platform for scholarly work in the field, significantly contributing to the growth and visibility of Iranian linguistics.

Finally, we invite all of our colleagues to join us in this endeavour, not only to explore the contributions in this inaugural volume, but also to actively engage with the *Journal*, opening the floor for dialogue and establishing a common platform to share the results of studies and investigations on the diverse range of topics encompassed by Iranian linguistics.

Vardan Voskanián

Editor-in-Chief

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