
This is the result of the author’s years of labour on anatomical terminology in Iranian, the first part of which (*The Pupil of the Eye in the Iranian Languages*, Etnolinguistica dell’area iranica 5, Napoli) appeared over 15 years ago, in 1995. Irrespective of its other merits, this monograph is a comprehensive repository of nearly all terms on related subjects in Iranian, including Old, Middle, and New Iranian periods, culled either by personal efforts (during field research) or from the available literature. Moreover, as far as I know, it is one of the rare Western publications on Iranian comparative lexicology where the NPers. colloquial vocabulary, mostly from the urban vernaculars of Iran and Central Asia, is largely cited and analysed. It is equally unique in covering almost all relevant local literature published in Persian-speaking countries, not easily accessible to Western scholarship. I noticed, however, the lack of several important titles in the Bibliography: A. Shamlu’s multi-volume (although not complete) dictionary of Pers. colloquialisms, *Ketāb-e kūč*; M.-A. Jamal-zade’s *Farhang-e loyāt-e āmyāne*, and Dodixudo Saymiddinov’s *Vožašanosī zaboni forši miyona*, published in Dushanbe in 2001, a generally good work (edited by Prof. V. Livshits), studying the vocabulary of MPers. in synchronic (sometimes historical) perspectives. Some remarkable publications in Kurdish lexicography and historical lexicology are also missing.

Clearly seen in this book is a sound critical attitude to the so-called *Farhangs*, Pers. Classical dictionaries. Currently ‘A.-A. Dehkhoda’s *Loγat-nāme* (14 vols.) embraces almost the whole lexical bulk of Persian from the earliest texts till the 20th century language (except for the vocabulary of J.-Pers.), including the material of *Farhangs*. However, due to the lack of consistency and a critical methodology, all the so-called *taʃīfāt*, misspellings or scribal errors, found their way into it. This dictionary, therefore, must be approached with great caution. An example of a critical approach to Pers. lexicography is *karšak* ‘little finger’, which is

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1 ‘Alī Ravvāqī, the editor of the Qur’an-i quds, has published later, in 2002, a voluminous vocabulary (*Delta farhanghā-yeye farsi*) including important lexical *addenda* to *Loγat-nāme* (never identified before), gleaned from different texts (cf., e.g., gindādan ‘to find’, sard ‘stairway’, etc.).
correctly qualified (p. 174) as a “misspelling” of kalīčak id. in the Lo yat-nāme.  

Also, the author pays due attention to phonosymbolic formations, a stumbling stone for those who try to find etymons for every word. In analysing forms like Khorasani čūčag ‘small, very small’, čūča ‘small, infant’, Kurmanji čūčık ‘small, little; child’, čičık ‘little bit’, etc. (p. 65, fn. 63, pp. 150-152, 171-172), she rightly points to their ideophonic nature. One may perhaps add here also NPers. čočūl(e) ‘clitoris’, dial. čūl ‘little boy’s penis’ (Arm. dial. čučul id.), Kurm. čūk ‘small’, etc. Incidentally, Kurm. čičık denotes, along with the meanings mentioned by the author, also ‘young girl’s nipple’. But again, in discussing the lexical set type of Kurm. bičūk ‘small’, the writer considers it as a separate group (pp. 153-154): in fact, all the forms of this lexical set are ideophones, constructed by the widespread pattern p/b/kVč/ǰ-, with -k suffixes. A parallel pattern is v/wVj/č-(Vč/ǰ), like Kash. vūǰūj/č(a), vēǰūj, etc. ‘small’. Regarding the first pattern, cf. also Kash. būǰūl(a), and Arm. dial. puč-ur, kuč-ur ‘small’, with –l/-r- extensions. Cabolov’s derivation of Kurd. bičūk, as the overwhelming majority of etymologies proposed by this author, is, indeed, out of discussion.


In the subsequent chapters she draws an exhaustive panorama of ‘finger-terms’ in Iranian—as generic names and those of particular fingers—analysed on a comparativistic and cross-linguistic perspective and carefully classified in respective paragraphs. Generally, the writer’s findings are substantiated and well-grounded. However, in my view, several points require comments.

1) I do not think, for instance, that Pers. anγū/ol ‘finger’ and the whole set of similar forms in Iranian dialects can be -l- derivatives from *anga-, as is stated by the writer (see pp. 57ff.). The reconstruction of an Iran. *angu-li- (cf. Skt. angul/ri- ‘finger, toe’) as a direct ancestor of this group seems to be unreasonable. In New Iranian, at least in Western Iranian, there are no reliable examples showing -l- in dispense of Ilran.

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2 If it is not a member of the kar-group meaning ‘mushroom’ in New Iranian, metonymically applied to the ‘little finger’!