

Preface

It is high time that something was done about the orphaned state of Balochi studies.

ELFENBEIN 1990/I:1

In the Introduction to his *Anthology of Classical and Modern Balochi Literature*, Josef Elfenbein has outlined the desiderata in Balochi linguistics as follows: there is "no systematic description of the language, no dictionary, no comprehensive description of the dialects". More than ten years later, the situation has changed insofar as a comprehensive Balochi-Balochi dictionary (*Sayad Ganj*) is now available, and a series of workshops and conferences held at Uppsala University has brought to light important new material from a wide range of dialects. However, since most of Elfenbein's statement unfortunately is still true (and will probably continue to be so for some time), any study about the history of the Balochi language as a whole must remain tentative in several aspects. Nevertheless, as the last (also the first and only) systematic treatment of Balochi historical phonology, viz. GEIGER 1890 and 1891, is now more than one hundred years old, one may consider it worthwhile to use the data gathered in the past century to undertake a fresh look at the history of the Balochi language.

The present book is a revised version of my PhD thesis submitted to and defended at the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe University Frankfurt a.M. in 2003. During the writing of the present study, many teachers, colleagues and friends have kindly extended their much appreciated help to me. The staff of the Department for Comparative Linguistics has supported my work in many ways. Sabir Badalkhan, Carina Jahani, Joachim Matzinger, Gerhard Rammer and Pakzad Yusefian have provided me with data and writings. I am indebted to Georg Buddruss, Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, Jost Gippert, Christian Rammer, Ralf-Peter Ritter, Lutz Rzehak and Nicholas Sims-Williams, who read previous versions of the present study, drew my attention to language material and references, and saved me from many errors I would otherwise have committed. Special thanks are due to Jost Gippert, Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst and Nicholas Sims-Williams, who have patiently discussed all sorts of linguistic problems with me, and to Christian Rammer for, among many other things, making the maps in the appendix. Bernice Archer helped with proof-reading, for which I am very grateful. Jost Gippert has accompanied the work on the present study with continuous sympathetic interest in the major and lesser questions that the study of the Balochi language and its history involves. Needless to say, all remaining errors are my own. My thanks are also due to Nicholas Sims-Williams and Ursula Reichert for including this volume in the series *Beiträge zur Iranistik*. – I am thinking with grateful memories of the late Jochem Schindler, who kindled in his students the love for historical phonology and taught us to appreciate the beauty of sound laws.