

## Foreword

*A Grammar of Şirvan Tat* is a grammatical description of a dialect of Tat, a non-written Iranian language spoken in the Caucasus. It draws on a corpus of Tat spontaneous speech, as well as tales, legends, anecdotes and other folkloric texts collected during interviews with native speakers. It contains a typology-based analysis of different aspects of Tat grammar, as well as comparisons of its most characteristic features with those of closely related dialects and languages, such as Persian, and of other languages spoken in the same region, such as Azeri. In addition to highlighting phenomena that are under-described for Iranian languages, the work seeks to contribute to Caucasian studies as a description of a linguistic variety spoken in an area of intense contact between several language families.

The present book is a revised version of my PhD dissertation defended in 2019 at Université Paris Sciences et Lettres – École Pratique des Hautes Études. Working on this grammar has been an extremely valuable, exciting and rewarding experience not only for setting me the formidable task of documenting an endangered language variety but also as an opportunity to benefit from the expertise of wonderful scholars who committed themselves to assisting me in bringing it to fruition. I express my most profound gratitude to Professor Gilles Authier, who supervised my dissertation, and to Dr Agnes Korn, who closely followed it from its early beginnings and also provided invaluable help in the editing of this volume. This work owes a great debt to their guidance, enthusiastic encouragement and insightful criticism.

It is also my honour to thank all those who have contributed useful and constructive feedback on early drafts, namely (in alphabetical order) Dr Ayten Babaliyeva, Professor Sebastian Fedden, Dr H el ene G erardin, Professor Jost Gippert, Professor Philip Huyse, Dr Thomas J ugel, and Professor Amina Mettouchi. In addition, I am deeply grateful to the PSL–EPHE Doctoral School and the UMR 7192 “Proche-Orient–Caucase” (and its director Professor Thomas R omer) for providing generous financial assistance for my research. My sincere thanks are also due to Dr Christian Rammer for drawing the maps and to Mr. A acamal Soltanov for helpful discussions.

This book would certainly not have been possible without the inestimable help of my field consultants, hosts, drivers, and guides in Azerbaijan and Georgia, to whom I extend my sincere appreciation and thanks, especially to Ms. Ş vk t Mirz yeva, Mr. Tale Qardaşov, Mr. M qbil Sultanov and their families.

I am obliged to Professor Nicholas Sims-Williams (also for his content-related feedback) and Ms. Ursula Reichert for accepting to publish this grammar as part of the distinguished *Beitr ge zur Iranistik* series.

Finally, I would like to make a special mention of my grandmother, Ms. R f q  Murad liyeva, who unfortunately did not live to see this day. To me, she was a constant source of inspiration as both a scholar and a person of outstanding courage and optimism, and it is to her memory that I dedicate this work.