

PREFACE

This study was carried out within the project ‘Tracking the Tocharians from Europe to China: a linguistic reconstruction’ (project number 276-70-028) funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) under the guidance of Michaël Peyrot. This book is the result of a four-year PhD project at the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL) under the supervision of Michaël Peyrot and Sasha Lubotsky. It represents a revised version of the PhD dissertation produced in this framework. A new chapter on Tocharian loanwords in Khotanese and Tumshuqese and the final indexes are amongst the most notable additions.

Initially, the project was focused on the historical phonology of Khotanese and Tumshuqese, and the linguistic contacts with Tocharian were relegated to an appendix. During the third year, however, it became clear that Tocharian had preserved many prehistoric loanwords from Khotanese and Tumshuqese that previous scholars had overlooked. When I realised that this new corpus of loanwords could be very significant for the study of Khotanese historical phonology, the research focus shifted to this group of loanwords. The title ‘*watañi lāntaṃ*’ refers to a Tocharian A tune name whose origin and meaning were unclear. In this study (§2.1. s.v. *wātano**), I argue that it is possible to translate it as ‘in (the tune of) the King of Khotan’ and that the Tocharian B match of TA *wataṃ** ‘Khotan’ is TB *wātano**.¹ Thanks to this interpretation, it is now clear for the first time that the name of Khotan was known to Tocharians and borrowed from Pre-Khotanese speakers.

Many people and institutions have contributed to this work during its five years of gestation. I am grateful to Leiden University and the LUCL for welcoming me as a staff member and supporting me throughout the various phases of the PhD trajectory. I am particularly grateful to Michaël Peyrot, who accepted me as part of his project and supervised the research activities that led to the completion of this volume. Sasha Lubotsky was always very helpful and encouraging in all matters Indo-Iranian and Indo-European. Mauro Maggi first taught me Khotanese and Iranian philology during my BA years at Sapienza. He has never ceased to offer his kind advice in the following years, granting me access to R.E. Emmerick’s unpublished notes, crucial for many sections of this study. I also feel very much indebted to Enrico Morano, who first aroused my interest in Middle Iranian languages and texts long ago. Nicholas Sims-Williams thoroughly read the final manuscript and made many important suggestions.

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¹ Tocharian A *w(a)tañi lāntaṃ* ‘in (the tune of) the King of Khotan’ can be read in its Brāhmī original from the manuscript A 24 b5 on the cover of this book. Beneath it, its Old Khotanese equivalent *hvatānā rre* ‘the King of Khotan’ (nom. sg.) from the main manuscript of the Book of Zambasta (Z 5.114) can be found as well.

It is, again, a challenging task to thank all the colleagues and friends who made this study possible. For space reasons, I must limit myself to only a handful of people. First and foremost, I am grateful to Chams Bernard, my colleague in the NWO project. His work on Old Steppe Iranian loanwords in Tocharian complements this study, and many of his ideas found their way into this work. The following colleagues (in alphabetic order) deserve a special mention: Kate Bellamy, Ruixuan Chen, Alessandro Del Tomba, Louise Friis, Athanaric Huard, Stefan Norbruis, Niels Schoubben, Xander Vertegaal, and Abel Warries. Finally, I would like to thank my parents and my brother for their continuous support.

