The Tocharian Gender System: A Diachronic Study
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Cover Page

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STELLINGEN

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1. Tocharian has three genders: the masculine, the feminine, and the alternating gender. The latter is not a peripheral gender-like category: it is a gender value in its own right.
2. Although Tocharian alternating nouns historically derive from Proto-Indo-European neuter nouns, the Tocharian alternating gender is different from the Proto-Indo-European neuter gender.
3. Tocharian did not inherit a gender system different from that of the other non-Anatolian Indo-European languages.
4. The evolution of the Tocharian feminine cannot be used to substantiate the early split-off of Tocharian.
5. Phonological mergers resulting from consonant apocope and a drastic reduction of word-final vocalism caused morphological developments, e.g. reanalysis and shift of endings, in the (Pre)-Proto-Tocharian nominal system. This led to a heavy restructuring in the inherited morphology, from both a functional and a formal point of view.
6. Unlike the general assumption that Tocharian is of only minor importance for the reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European nominal system, the Tocharian nominal system retained many archaisms.
7. Typological and cross-linguistic comparisons are of major importance for the understanding of both the synchronic and the diachronic aspects of gender systems of ancient languages.
8. Analogy, like all other mechanisms of change, is not an explanation, but rather something to be explained.
9. Theoretical frameworks should always be adapted to data, not vice versa.
10. Research is the perfect balance between work in isolation and collaborative cooperation.
11. As Walter Belardi said: "Bisogna avere le spalle larghe per lavorare nel mondo accademico" – "One must have big shoulders to work in academia".