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Traces of language contact in Niya Prakrit: Bactrian and other foreign elements

Schoubben, N.

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In the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, in the desert oases of NW China, scribes in the Shanshan kingdom were relentlessly writing accounts, letters, and other official documents in the Middle-Indo-Aryan language which we now call Niya Prakrit. This dissertation is the first systematic investigation into the traces that linguistic contact left in the vocabulary and grammar of this language. It is argued that most of the Iranian loanwords in Niya Prakrit were borrowed from Bactrian; that Bactrian influenced Niya Prakrit also in its grammar; that there is no compelling proof for Tocharian substrate influence on Niya Prakrit; and that the Bactrian influence on Niya Prakrit is due to Bactrian-speaking officials of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty using the immediate ancestor of Niya Prakrit as a chancellery idiom.

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