Acknowledgments

My first debts in this work are to teachers of mine in the 1990s. It was my good fortune that Hans Henrich Hock introduced me to historical linguistics when I was a first-year college student and to Sanskrit when I studied for my master's degree in classical philology. Ladislav Zgusta (1924–2007) showed me the way into Indo-European linguistics when I never imagined that I might one day teach courses on that subject. Stanley Insler (1937–2019) introduced me to Old Persian, Middle Persian, and Parthian in the Indo-European framework. Without those teachers I would never have written this. There were others, too. Beatrice Gruendler showed me different approaches to historical linguistics in the context of Semitic and Arabic. Dimitri Gutas above all taught me the value of precision in textual scholarship and for historical research. Nicholas Sims-Williams, who encouraged me many years ago to go deeper into Iranic languages – "Why not?" was very persuasive! – has more recently earned my renewed thanks as an enthusiastic guide in Bactrian. Adam Benkato has helped me with Sogdian and provided detailed and beneficial comments on an early draft of this book. John McWhorter read an early draft of Chapter 2, which owes much to his publications, and gave encouraging feedback. The many students in my courses in Old Persian, Avestan, Middle Persian, Parthian, and Early New Persian over the years, at the University of Southern California, The Ohio State University, and Yale University, and in my iterations of the seminar "Historical Sociolinguistics of the Ancient World" at Yale, helped me to refine the argument and presentation. I offer my profound thanks to the three anonymous readers, who gave useful pointers, suggestions, challenges, and corrections, as well as encouragement. Countless others – teachers, students, friends, colleagues – helped me in too many ways to enumerate, and I ask for their grace for my not listing all of them.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 20:51:37, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009727709

I am grateful to Yale University for supporting the publication of this book in Open Access form.

Special thanks go to Michael Sharp of Cambridge University Press for his efficient facilitation of the publication of this book and to Pam Scholefield for preparing the index.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 20:51:37, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009727709