

Tocharian and Indo-European Studies

Founded by Jörundur Hilmarsson

Edited by

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VOLUME 17 · 2016

Museum Tusulanum Press

2016

Tocharian and Indo-European Studies, Vol. 17
© Museum Tusculanum Press and the authors, 2016

ISSN 1012 9286

ISBN 978 87 635 4557 0

Published with support from the Department of Nordic Studies and
Linguistics, University of Copenhagen

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Museum Tusculanum Press
Dantes Plads 1, 3.th.
DK 1556 Copenhagen V
www.mtp.dk

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The tender ghost: Tocharian B *lalaṃṣke* ‘tender’ : Tocharian A ?¹

Ilya B. Itkin

The present article is dedicated to the question of the declination of the Tocharian A match of the Tocharian B adjective *lalaṃṣke* ‘tender, gentle, delicate’. On the basis of the analysis of both already known and newly discovered text examples it is argued that against the traditional opinion the N. Sg. m. and N. Pl. m. forms of the Tocharian A adjective are not ****lālaṃṣkāk** and ****lālaṃṣke**, but *lālaṃṣke* and *lālaṃṣkeñ* respectively. This observation confirms the assumption that the Tocharian A adjective *lālaṃṣke* was borrowed from Tocharian B and allows to draw a parallel between the declination of this adjective and the adjective *empele* ‘terrible’.

According to an opinion widely shared among scholars of Tocharian, the citation form, i.e. the N. Sg. m., of the Tocharian A adjective corresponding to Tocharian B *lalaṃṣke* ‘tender, gentle, delicate’ is not attested in the texts. As this very form is the object of our interest, we will temporarily designate it as the “L-adjective”. Whilst in Sieg, Siegling and Schulze’s grammar and in Poucha’s *thesaurus* the L-adjective is presented as *lālaṃṣk-*, i.e. merely as a stem (Sieg, Siegling and Schulze 1931: 508; Poucha 1955: 266), at least starting with the grammar of Krause and Thomas (1960) its citation form is reconstructed as *lālaṃṣäk**. Indeed, Tocharian A *-säk* is the only possible correspondence to Tocharian B *-ške*: consider the closest parallel B *eṃṣke* ‘until, while’ : A *eṣäk* ‘above’ (Burlak 2000: 91) (even though this correspondence is not widely recognized because of the semantic difference).

1 The author sincerely thanks S. I. Pereverzeva for translating this article into English, and A. V. Kuritsyna, S. V. Malyshev, I. A. Seržant, M. V. Vyzhlakov and the anonymous reviewer for their assistance in the preparation of the article and critical remarks.

All researchers unanimously treat the Tocharian A form *lālaṃṣke* as N. Pl. m. The authors of the 1931 grammar proposed that apart from *lālaṃṣke* the grammatical meaning in question can also be expressed by the form *lālaṃṣkāñ* (Sieg, Siegling and Schulze 1931: 120). This opinion was shared by Krause and Thomas: “A **lālaṃṣāk* : Pl. N. m. -*ṣke* (neben -*ṣkāñ*), f. -*āñ*, -*ās*” (1960: 115; cf. also p. 151). But the extravagance of such a solution is obvious: in this case the N. Pl. m. of this adjective would be the same as the N. Pl. f., which is absolutely odd for Tocharian A morphology. So it is not surprising that in Thomas (1964: 135] the N. Pl. m. *lālaṃṣkāñ* is already tagged with a question mark, and in Van Windekens (1976: 628) it just cannot be found (although regarding grammatical information Van Windekens in general rigorously follows Thomas’s glossary).

Thus, according to the present state of scholarship, five forms of the L-adjective known today are the same as those presented in Poucha’s *thesaurus*: N. Pl. m. *lālaṃṣke*, N. Sg. f. *lālaṃṣkā*, Acc. Sg. f. *lālaṃṣkā[ṃ]*, N. Pl. f. *lālaṃṣkāñ*, Acc. Pl. f. *lālaṃṣkāś*.

The interpretation and status of all four feminine forms of the L-adjective are unambiguous. To illustrate this, we will give all the contexts known to us in which these forms can be found:

1 N. Sg. f.:

sās lālaṃṣkā (6 b3) ‘this delicate one’ (about the artificial girl)

klyomiṃ l[ā]laṃṣkā (318+319 b8) ‘noble and delicate’

/// (*lā*)(*am*)*ṣkā śaśi* (THT 1969 a1) ‘the delicate Śaśi (queen of the Moon)’²

2 Acc. Sg. f.:

lālaṃṣkā[ṃ] sne natyāṃ wakyō (399 b5) ‘in gentle (and) weak voice’

2 For the photographs and transliterations of unpublished fragments from the Berlin collection tagged with the index THT see Tamai (2007); the restoration of missing letters and the grammatical interpretation of these fragments, unless otherwise specified, is ours.

/// [l]ā[l](aṃ)ṣkāṃ /// (THT 3944 fgm. b, b1 without context)

3 N. Pl. f.:

/// l(yu)tār memaṣ lālaṃṣkāñ /// (162 a3) ‘exceedingly delicate’

4 Acc. Pl. f.:

sne mañik lālaṃṣkāś podhisatvenās pokem ṣkāṛā kakārkurāṣ (71 b6) ‘having tied the Bodhisattva’s flawless, tender arms to the back’ (translation according to CETOM)

lālāṣkāś aśānyo smimām akmalyo (313 a6) ‘with tender eyes and smiling face’ (*lālāṣkāś* is lapsus calami instead of *lāl<aṃ>ṣkāś*).

The situation with the masculine forms is quite different.

Consider firstly two tokens of the form *lālaṃṣke* (the latter with the strengthening particle =*kk*) that occur on the same leaf of a manuscript of the Buddhist drama *Maitreyasamiti-Nāṭaka* (this manuscript from Yanqi was published in 1998):

/// (*kapśa*)ñi : oñi cmoṣi ājānai lyutār memaṣ lālaṃṣke mā nu ṣāṣtru : (YQ-6[II.8] b3) ‘(his) body: human, of noble descent, exceedingly delicate, but not tired’ (Ji, Winter and Pinault 1998: 106–107)

/// [g](a)[ndha]rveñi lāñś lālaṃṣkekk ats rape ypeñc || (YQ-6[II.8] a5) ‘the kings of the Gandharvas play, very softly indeed, music’ (ibid.).

Although the reconstruction (*kapśa*)ñi in the first fragment is quite likely to be correct, the translation above can make a somewhat confusing impression probably because of a bit unhappy usage of the mark “:”: it looks as if all the mentioned features characterize the Buddha’s body. However, as the word *kapśa*ñi ‘body’ is feminine, the L-adjective and the past participle of the verb *ṣtār*- ‘endeavour, become tired’ in this case should have

been *lālaṃṣkā* and *ṣāṣṭrus** respectively (with the same number of syllables, which excludes any presumptions regarding morphological licentias metri causa).³ Thus, the attributes given refer not to Buddha's body but to Buddha himself; we consider the translation 'born in the appearance of a man, noble, exceedingly delicate, with no evidence of tiredness' to be more precise.⁴ But the most important matter is that the form *lālaṃṣke* stands in the coordinated row of attributes in the SINGULAR and thus should also be interpreted as a singular form.

The translation of the second fragment is, from our point of view, absolutely correct: if the form *lālaṃṣke* in this fragment were not an adverb but an adjective, i.e. an attribute of the noun *rape* 'music; musical instrument', one would expect the Acc. case. However, adverbial usage is typical for N. Sg. m. forms of adjectives and totally impossible for the N. Pl. m.

No comments regarding these grammatical inconsistencies are provided in Ji, Winter and Pinault (1998).

Another extremely important example of *lālaṃṣke* can be found in one of the THT fragments:

/// (lā)la(m)ṣke wāt prākrā /// (THT 1490 a2).

Despite the mutilated context, this is doubtlessly a comparative expression of the type "One (is) X, the other (is) Y", where X and Y are antonyms:

/// (sas lā)la(m)ṣke wāt prākrā /// '(One) (is) tender, the other (is) hard'.

3 Similarly, the fragment *kū pākār tā(k tsopa)ts kapśño empele* : (340 b3) is translated in Carling (2009: 75) as 'a dog appeared, with a great body, a horrifying [one]'. But the collocation ***tsopats* (N. Sg. m. instead of Acc. Sg. f.) *kapśño* is morphologically impossible, whereas the expected *tsoptsām kapśño* would fully meet the metre requirements. This means that not only the adjective *empele*, but also the adjective (*tsopa)ts* relate to the masculine word *ku* 'dog': 'a dog appeared, great and horrifying in (his) body'.

4 The anonymous reviewer of the present article proposed a slightly different and, in our opinion, extremely interesting interpretation of the expression *oñi cmoṣi ājānai*: '(a horse or elephant) of good race born in human form'.

It is clear that such simple and logical reconstruction is made possible only by the presumption that the form (*lā*)*la(m)ṣke* is a N. Sg. m. If it were a N. Pl. m., then the syntax of the line given could hardly be interpreted.

At the same time there is a fragment in the corpus of Tocharian A texts that certainly contains the N. Pl. m. form of the L-adjective (which is proved by the forms *cem*, N. Pl. m. of the pronoun *sām* ‘this, he’, and *śāsōṣ*, N. Pl. m., past participle of the verb *śo-* ‘to live’):

• *cem śkaṃ lālaṃṣk.[ñ] s_uk(am) śāsōṣ* (356 b2 + 407 a2) ‘And these tender ones, having happily (lit. ‘in happiness’) lived...’

The vowel following *sk* is not preserved in either of two copies of the line in question – neither in the text № 356, nor in the text № 407. However, the consonant [*ñ*] in the text № 356 can only be part of this form of the L-adjective, cf.: “Ergänze nach No. 407^a, 2: *lālaṃṣk-ñ^a*” (Sieg and Siegling 1921: 198, fn. 2). It is this very fragment that made Sieg, Siegling and Schulze propose that the L-adjective has the N. Pl. m. form *lālaṃṣkāñ*. Nonetheless, while the reconstruction of this form as ***lālaṃṣk(ā)[ñ]* is, as stated above, morphologically impossible, we assume that there is no obstacle to reconstructing it as *lālaṃṣk(e)[ñ]*, which was also considered in Sieg, Siegling and Schulze (1931: 120).

This way, we have three examples in which the form *lālaṃṣke* is to be interpreted as N. Sg. m., whereas in the fragment with the unambiguous N. Pl. m. form (356 b2 + 407 a2) it differs from *lālaṃṣke*. Such a situation looks surprising because, for instance, Poucha (1955: 266) analyses three occurrences of *lālaṃṣke* as N. Pl. m., of which not even one is reconstructed. Consider these examples:

a *lālaṃṣke k[a]nt śāk wākñā* /// (195 a5; reading according to Sieg and Siegling 1921: 96)

Carling (2009: 98) interprets the part following *lālaṃṣke* as *k[a]n tśāk-wākñā* /// ‘a melody precisely in this manner’, and so does CETOM. However, such an interpretation is unacceptable for several reasons:

- the word *kaṃ** ‘melody’ turns out to be written with final *n* instead of *ṃ*, which almost never happens;
- the shift of the virāma (*k[a]nt* \ *ṣäk*, whereas the proposed word division is *k[a]n tṣäk*) cannot be explained;
- in Tocharian A the form *tṣäk* stands only before the conjunction *śkaṃ* ‘and’ (253 b8, 347 a1); as for the particle =*äk*, its addition before *wäknā* seems to have no parallels. On top of that, the collocation *ṣäk wäknā* ‘of six kinds’ has an exact parallel in Tocharian B *śkas yäknesa* (cf. B 9 a4, 41 a6, etc.) and probably in Tocharian A itself, cf. (?) *ṣä(k) w(äkñā) ///* (287 a2; see CETOM, where this line is given as 287 b2).

By contrast, the reading proposed by the publishers and suggesting a never-before-seen word *kant* ‘?’ seems to be in some way supported by the fragment THT 3032 b2, which Carling cites as */// tkāl kek kant* : (Carling 2009: 99 with no reference to the line). Remarkably, in that case the interpretation of *lālaṃṣke* as a N. Sg. m. form agreeing with *k[a]nt* is obviously preferable to its interpretation as a N. Pl. m. form, which, just as in the case of fragment THT 1490 a2, lacks a satisfactory syntactic explanation. As for the word *kaṃ**, it is feminine and thus, like the word *kaṣaṃni*, cannot co-occur with the form *lālaṃṣke* at all (notably, Carling does not even mention the presence of this form in the line 195 a5).

From our point of view, however, the configuration of the two damaged akṣaras following the word *lālaṃṣke* allows to propose the reading *lālaṃṣkek[k] a[ts] ṣäk wäknā ///* as the most credible. In this case the passage in question turns out to be somewhat similar, on the one hand, to the line YQ-6[II.8] a5, and on the other hand, to the end of the line 301 b2: *rape ypār pāñ wäknā ///* ‘played music of five kinds’. It is possible that originally it was something like ‘(did something) of six kinds, very softly indeed’⁵. The reading in question seems to be preferable in line THT 3032 b2, too: */// ·kāl kekk at[s] :* (translation impossible because the line is too short), taking into account another close parallel: *mā kekk atsaṃ ///* (70 a4) ‘truly, of nobody’.

5 At the same time, as G.-J. Pinault noted to us (p.c.), the reconstruction ‘(play music) of six kinds...’ is hardly possible, as in the Indian tradition there are constantly five kinds of music and never six.

At any rate, taking the form *lālaṃṣke* as N. Pl. m. is almost excluded for 195 a5.

- b *košeši sa*_[a3]·*o-i wlyepe lālaṃṣke* – – (*pā*)*kār tākar=ām* (24 a2–3) ‘of silk ... his ... became (lit. ‘appeared’) soft and tender’

This fragment tells about the hands of the potter Bṛhaddyuti, which miraculously turned from rough and coarse into soft and tender.

It is the similarity to the clear N. Pl. m. *wlyepe* that led to a similar interpretation of *lālaṃṣke*. The difference between them, however, is that the literal sequence *lālaṃṣke* stands before the break and thus may be not a whole word but a part of the form *lālaṃṣke(ñ)*.

In Carling (2009: 166) the reconstruction and the translation of the fragment in question is the following: *košeši sa(rk) o(k)i wlyepe lālaṃṣke (tsarām pā)kār tākar-ām* ‘like a thread (?) of silk (a pair of hands), soft, tender, were visible to him’. It is indeed very likely that the word ‘thread’ serves as a basis of comparison – firstly because it is the only Tocharian A noun known at present that begins with *sa-* and fits both the size of the gap and the meaning, and secondly once again because of a similar comparison in another text, cf. *lyäklyäm wrokši sarkk oki sa[m] kamañ* (217 b2) ‘his teeth are of equal size like a string of pearls’. Apart from completing *lālaṃṣke* to *lālaṃṣke(ñ)*, Carling’s reconstruction requires only replacing *sa(rk) o(k)i* by *sa(rkk) o(k)i*: doubling of the last consonant before the conjunction *oki* ‘like, as if’ is obligatory in such position, cf. *sarkk oki* (217 b2 (cf. above), 59 a1) ‘like a thread’, and also, for example, *wašt oki* (258 a4) ‘like a house’, etc. (Burlak, Itkin 1999: 78). According to the proposed corrections, the reading of 24 a2–3 should look as follows:

košeši sa(rkk) o(k)i wlyepe lālaṃṣke(ñ tsarām pā)kār tākar=ām
‘like a thread of silk, his hands became (lit. ‘appeared’) soft and tender’

- c || *kapsiññā lyutār memaṣ lālaṃṣke* /// (291 b7) ‘on the body, extremely delic(ate) ...’

As was shown by Pinault, text № 291 has parallels in the Turkic version of the “Maitreyasamiti-Nāṭaka”. This allows to establish that in the given

fragment the L-adjective is related to ‘blue curls of hair’ (*tseṃ yokašīñi spartwañ*) and thus in fact is a N. Pl. m. form (Pinault 1999: 204, 211). One cannot but agree on this; nonetheless there is no Uighur parallel, no matter how precise, that gives information about the MORPHOLOGY of Tocharian A words. Meanwhile, as the text breaks immediately after *lālaṃṣke*, just like in line 24 a3, the reconstruction of the final *ñ* turns out to be both possible and necessary: *kaṣīññā lyutār memaṣ lālaṃṣke(ñ tseṃ yokašīñi spartwañ)* ‘On the body, extremely delicate ([and] of blue colour are the curls of [his] body hair)’ (translation according to CETOM).

Two more cases of usage of the L-adjective can be added to the examples (a–c). They regard the texts that are not included in Sieg and Siegling (1921). Both of these examples also require certain corrections.

d /// (*lyutār me*)*maṣ lālaṃṣke* /// (THT 1136 b4; reading according to CETOM) ‘exceedingly delicate ...’

The text THT 1136 is published on CETOM by M. Peyrot on the basis of G.-J. Pinault’s transliteration; the translation of line b4 is ‘... of this extraordinarily tender (f.) ...’ (!). The mark “(f.)” is certainly a misunderstanding: all the feminine forms are derived from the stem *lālaṃṣkā-*. Meanwhile, the reexamination of photograph of the text THT 1136 allows for revealing a indubitable anusvāra to the right of [e]. This way, the line THT 1136 presents a not attested before, but expected form of Acc. Sg. m. of the L-adjective *lālaṃṣk[em]*.

e : *treyo ñwasam maññ oki lālam_[b6](šäk)* /// (YQ-31[II.13] b5–6) ‘slim like the three-day-old moon’ (Ji, Winter and Pinault 1998: 130–131)

Although the structure of the collocation *treyo ñwasam* remains unclear, the translation given seems rather convincing. As can be seen from the context, the mutilated (yet again!) *lālam* /// is the beginning of the form N. Sg. m. The phantom ***lālam(šäk)*, which unfortunately appears in the glossary to the edition of the Yanqi manuscript (ibid: 295) and in the dictionary by Adams (2013: 592) even without “*”, should definitely be replaced by the correct *lālam(ške)*.

Thus, the analysis of all presently known examples of masculine forms of the L-adjective definitely shows that its N. Sg. m. is well attested in the texts as *lālaṃṣke*, whereas its N. Pl. m. can be reconstructed with certainty as *lālaṃṣkeñ**. This leads to at least two significant conclusions.

Firstly, the correlation B *lalaṃṣke* : A *lālaṃṣke* irrevocably proves the old hypothesis that the Tocharian A lexeme is borrowed from Tocharian B (see, e.g., Van Windekens 1976: 628 with previous bibliography). In connection with this it seems reasonable to recall the question of the vocalism of the two first syllables in the Tocharian B word. The form *lalaṃṣke* itself does not provide certain information on this subject, because its stress is unknown. The scholars generally presuppose the stress on the second syllable; particularly, Peyrot (2010: 139) interprets the form N. Sg. f. *lalaṃṣka* as /laləṃṣka/ (in our notation, /lālāṃṣkā/). Such an analysis is confirmed by the form Acc. Du. m. /// *läṃṣki* (B PK NS 83 b3). On CETOM the missing first syllable of this form is reconstructed as *la*, but a no less likely reconstruction would be (*lā*)*läṃṣki*: the text PK NS 83 pertains to “archaic” (in the terminology of Stumpff and Peyrot) texts, in which unstressed /ā/ is often spelt just as *ā*, cf., for instance, *ākālko* ‘wish’ in line b4. The vowel correlation in the pair B *lalaṃṣke* /lālāṃṣke/ : A *lālaṃṣke* is typical enough for the borrowings from Tocharian B into Tocharian A (Peyrot 2010: 139).

Most probably, the adjective ‘flattering’ (Tocharian B *pautarṣke*), which is known in Tocharian A only by the Acc. Sg. f. *potarṣkāṃ* (6 b6), is also borrowed from Tocharian B and, likewise, should be reconstructed not as *potarṣäk**, but as *potarṣke**.

Secondly, after all the corrections made, the paradigm of the adjective *lālaṃṣke* turns out to have a rather unusual declension for a Tocharian A adjective, but it is not unique: it coincides (accurate up to palatalization in feminine forms) with the paradigm of the adjective *empele* ‘terrible’, also borrowed from Tocharian B:

	<i>lālaṃṣke</i> ‘tender’		<i>empele</i> ‘terrible’	
	m.	f.	m.	f.
N. Sg.	<i>lālaṃṣke</i>	<i>lālaṃṣkā</i>	<i>empele</i>	
Acc. Sg.	<i>lālaṃṣk[em]</i>	<i>lālaṃṣkā[m]</i>	<i>empelem</i>	<i>empe[ly](ā)m</i>
N. Pl.	<i>lālaṃṣk(e)[ñ]</i>	<i>lālaṃṣkāñ</i>	<i>(e)mpeleñ</i>	
Acc. Pl.		<i>lālaṃṣkās</i>	<i>empeles</i>	<i>[e]mpelyās</i>

The model of formation of abstract nouns (with syncope of *-e* before *-une*) also coincides: *lālaṃṣkune*, *empelune*.

This parallelism allows for a more certain reconstruction of unattested forms of both adjectives: Acc. Pl. m. *lālaṃṣkes**, N. Sg. f. *empelyā** and N. Pl. f. *empelyāñ**.

Hopefully, this work can be regarded as a small step forward into further studies of the bewitchingly interesting Tocharian morphology and towards a better understanding of Tocharian texts.

[RECEIVED: MARCH 2016]

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TOCHARIAN AND INDO-EUROPEAN STUDIES (abbreviated TIES) was founded in 1987 by Jörundur Hilmarsson and appeared under his editorship in Reykjavík, Iceland, until his death in 1992. Vol. 6 appeared posthumously in 1993 under the editorial finish of Guðrún Þórhallsdóttir who also supervised the continuation of the Supplementary Series up to vol. 5 in 1997. Vols. 7 to 10 were published by C. A. Reitzel Publishers Ltd., Copenhagen. Subsequent volumes are published by Museum Tusulanum Press in Copenhagen.

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Museum Tusulanum Press
Dantes Plads 1, 3.th.
DK 1556 Copenhagen V
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