

Acknowledgements

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Conventions

Chinese characters throughout the book are given in traditional (i.e. unsimplified) form. No attempt is made to reconstruct the original structure of non-standard variants (*suzi* 俗字), unless this is relevant to the discussion or the variants are easily recognisable (e.g. 与/與, 无/無, 丑/醜, 万/萬).

The full pressmark of Chinese manuscripts from the Dunhuang library cave at the British Library consists of the prefix ‘Or.8210’, followed by a forward slash, the capital letter S and a unique serial number (e.g. Or.8210/S.5531). For the sake of brevity, I omit the part before the S and write, for example, S.5531 instead of Or.8210/S.5531. Similarly, the capital letter P in pressmarks in this book indicates the Chinese manuscripts from the Pelliot collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the full pressmark of which begins with ‘Pelliot chinois’. Thus, I write P.3932 instead of Pelliot chinois 3932. Both of these abbreviations are already in common use in Dunhuang studies.

The pronunciation of Chinese words is given according to the official Pinyin system. Phonetic reconstructions are given only when relevant, using Pulleyblank’s system (Pulleyblank 1991).