

for example, a *marutam* composition by Pāṇṭiyaṅ Kāṅappēreyil Tanta Ukkirapperuvaluti, in which a married woman who has just given birth speaks about her philandering husband to her girlfriend: “He used to celebrate these breasts of mine./but now they sag with sweet milk for our son./they are soft and covered with spots.” And here are the words of the fine female poet Auvaiyār, composed in the *pālai* landscape. The heroine is speaking to her friend, as she learns that her lover is leaving. She compares herself to a starving tigress as her mate listens to the bellowing of a stag. She then says, in a moment of intimacy, words that could well have been spoken today: “I have grown so thin it seems I will die, I grieve and I don’t feel like eating./My arms have lost the beauty they once had/and every day I think sadly of how he left me/ with nothing to cure my grief, I sit and do nothing.” In *neytal* poem #390, Ammūvaṅṅār imagines his hero as he recounts his encounter with the beautiful daughter of a salt merchant: “I stood in her way and said, ‘O you with a lovely, curving navel/and arms like bamboo, you didn’t tell us what it costs/for the salt of your body.’” But Paraṅar takes the prize. Hart notes that Paraṅar “is famous for long, extensive (and seemingly overdone) descriptions” (p. 171 n. 1), but I do not find them so. To me, they are masterful, innovative, and emotionally forceful, such as in his *kuṛiṅci* poem #122, in which a heroine speaks to her girlfriend about all of the obstacles to an assignation with her lover, who is within earshot. Here are a few lines from the middle of the poem: “And even if the dogs with their loud barking sleep,/a huge moon, bright as day, spreads with its light in the sky./And even if the moon sets behind its mountain/and thick darkness falls, a loud-voiced owl/living on the rats in our house screeches fearfully/in the middle of the night when spirits roam/. . . One day, when everything was asleep, he, with his fickle heart,/didn’t come, and so, friend, our affair is hopeless . . .”.

As difficult as these poems are, the struggle to read through them is rewarding, and this book in no way diminishes our debt to George L. Hart.

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*Sogdian Epigraphy of Central Asia and Semirech'e*. By VLADIMIR A. LIVSHITS, translated by TOM STABLEFORD and edited by NICHOLAS SIMS-WILLIAMS. Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, pt. II: Inscriptions of the Seleucid and Parthian periods of Eastern Iran and Central Asia, vol. III: Sogdian IV. London: SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES, 2015. Pp. 315. £60.

*Sogdian Epigraphy of Central Asia and Semirech'e* is a landmark volume: the first time that a major edition of the Mugh documents, the only Sogdian manuscripts to have been found in Sogdiana itself, has been published in English. More precisely, it is an English translation of Livshits’ Russian publication consisting of two parts: a re-edition of many Mugh documents—this part being a substantial reworking of the initial publication of the texts a half-century before<sup>1</sup>—and the re-publication (and here, translation into English) of several of Livshits’ articles on Sogdian texts from various sites in Central Asia. The importance of having this book available in English can hardly be overstated, as it will certainly be the standard work on the Mugh documents upon which future research will be based.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the Mugh documents should not be lost on any scholar of medieval Central Asia, the history of the Islamic conquests, or Iranian philology. These seventy-seven documents (seventy-five in Sogdian, one in Arabic, one in Old Turkic) form the only surviving part of the archive of Dhewashtich, the last ruler of Sogdiana before its complete submission to the Muslim conquerors in

1. V. A. Livshits. (2008), *Sogdijskaja epigrafika Srednej Azii i Semireč'ja*, Saint Petersburg. The original publication of the texts was *Sogdijskie Dokumenty s Gory Mug*, vol. 1 *Opisanie, Publikatsii i Issledovanie Dokumentov s Gory Mug* (A. A. Freiman, 1962); vol. 2 *Juriditseskie Dokumenty i Pis'ma* (V. A. Livshits, 1962); vol. 3 *Khozyajstvennye Dokumenty* (M. N. Bogolyubov and O. I. Smirnova, 1963), Moscow.

2. It should be noted that all comments made in this review are to be taken as applying to the author’s (= Livshits’) work, rather than to that of the editor and translator, who deserve much gratitude for making this essential work available to a broader audience.

the 720s. Originally the lord of Panjikent, Dhewashtich proclaimed himself king of all of Sogdiana just as Bukhara and Samarkand were being overrun by Qutayba ibn Muslim and his forces. He was then himself defeated shortly thereafter, around 721, seemingly at Mount Mugh, the fortress east of Panjikent where the documents were found in the 1930s. While some of this is recorded in Arabic histories such as that of al-Ṭabari, the Mugh documents provide a unique glimpse of the Sogdian perspective on these turbulent political and military events as well as the only record of daily life and administration in early eighth-century Sogdiana.

The Mugh corpus consists thematically of two parts. Letters exchanged between various Sogdian officials including Dhewashtich are nearly half the collection—two highlights are the Sogdian translation of an Arabic letter sent to Dhewashtich by ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn Ṣubḥ on behalf of Sa‘īd ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz the governor of Khurasan (ed. p. 88) and the Arabic version of a letter sent from Dhewashtich to the commander al-Jarrāḥ ibn ‘Abdullah.<sup>3</sup> The rest of the collection is composed of four contracts, including the only examples of Sogdian marriage contracts, and a host of “economic” documents, mainly receipts and orders for goods.

On the whole, Livshits’ readings and interpretations are excellent—he is, after all, one of the foremost Sogdian epigraphers and certainly the scholar with the longest firsthand experience in deciphering Sogdian texts from Central Asia. As with any text edition, it is possible to quibble over the interpretation of this or that form or the reading of this or that letter; for those interested in doing so, good quality photographs are provided for almost every manuscript edited.<sup>4</sup> Livshits’ linguistic commentary to the texts is often enlightening, and he makes a good effort to integrate relevant scholarship published in the intervening decades. It must be said, though, that his penchant for listing cognates to Sogdian words from as many Iranian languages as possible is at times overwhelming and unnecessary, especially when the Sogdian word is perfectly well understood. Livshits also gives introductory comments to each manuscript, usually discussing aspects such as the attested date or well-known historical figures mentioned, sometimes at length.

These introductory comments, however, are both a plus and a minus. In reading the edition of the contracts (pp. 17–52), for example, we come upon an excursus about Dhewashtich and a hard-to-identify ruler called Tarkhun (pp. 52–56); their identities and relative dates are important because several of the documents, including the contracts, are dated according to their reigns. But in it Livshits does not actually tell us when he thinks the two reigned; for this one should look at comments on p. 17 as well as, slipped into a philological commentary, on p. 48. Yet given the importance of analyzing these dates, nowhere does the author attempt to present a historical overview that integrates all the documents; instead, one has to proceed document by document in order to find Livshits’ arguments about their relative chronology and contexts. Or instead, at least some kind of timeline or summary situating the documents and the events they describe would have been welcome. In fact, just this kind of work was undertaken by F. Grenet and É. de la Vaissière in their article “The Last Days of Panjikent,” in which they offered a reconstruction of the historical events described in certain Mugh documents complete with a tentative chronology.<sup>5</sup> Though Livshits takes this article into account in places, the interested historian should nevertheless read it alongside the present book.

The lack of an overview also extends to the contents of the letters, where there are no charts or tables clarifying the various personages involved, making it difficult to figure out the larger-scale relationships

3. The Arabic letter was not re-edited by Livshits, but was published by V. Krachkovskaya and I. Krachkovskiy in the publication announcing the discovery of the Mugh documents: “Drevnejshij arabskij dokument iz Sredney Azii” (in *Sogdijiskij Sbornik*, ed. A. A. Freiman, Leningrad, 1934, pp. 52–90). Recently, further Arabic documents stemming from the same milieu have been found at Sanjar Shah, a fortified town near Panjikent; see O. Haim et al., forthcoming, “The Earliest Arabic Documents Written on Paper: Three Letters from Sanjar Shah (Tajikistan),” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*.

4. This is another boon, as images of the manuscripts were only available in a rare and extremely hard-to-find loose-leaf folio published by the Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum as *Documents from Mount Mugh* (= CII Part II, Vol. III, I) in 1963, and are also not available online.

5. F. Grenet and É. de la Vaissière (2002). “The Last Days of Panjikent,” *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 8: 155–90.

between them and which players were involved with which sides of what was surely a complicated political landscape. The historians who would use this valuable text edition must then compile such materials for themselves; certainly a challenge without some knowledge of Sogdian. Likewise, a map noting the many place names mentioned in the documents and how they correspond to modern places (which many do, e.g., *kwcnt* = Khojand) would have been very useful.

At the beginning of this review I referred to this edition as “a major” one. I included the indefinite article “a” because it is not comprehensive: not all of the Mugh documents are re-edited, while some are re-edited in passing in the commentary to another document or even in footnotes.<sup>6</sup> In this it reflects Livshits’ original work on the Mugh documents, in which he concentrated on the letters. Here, forty-nine documents are re-edited, according to my count, including the thirty-four Sogdian letters, the four contracts, and eleven of the economic documents—leaving over twenty Sogdian documents un-re-edited since the publication of *Sogdijskie dokumenty s gory Mug* in 1962–63 (see n. 1). Thus again, scholars wanting to work further on the Mugh documents will need to do a substantial amount of their own digging before they can figure out which texts require fresh study. A comprehensive index of all the Mugh documents and whether they are re-edited or not in this volume would appear to me to be at least a minimum.

It therefore seems worthwhile to give here a brief listing of which Mugh documents have been re-edited by Livshits; a more detailed overview with bibliographical references and remarks has to be left for another time. Documents edited in the volume under review: A1–3, A5–7, A9–11, A13–20, B3–5, B7–10, B14–19, B4, B7, B11, B13, B15–19, B24, B26, B27, Nov. 2–6, No. 23, 1.I. Documents not edited: A4, A8, A12, B1, B2, B6, B11, B1–3, B5, B6, B8–10, B12, B14, B20–23, B25, Nov. 1, Nov. 7/8. Non-Sogdian documents not edited: B12 (Arabic), B13 (Old Turkic).

The second part of the volume consists, as mentioned, of various articles containing editions and analysis of other Sogdian texts, including on ceramics, wood boards, coin legends, silver dishes, and frescoes, and graffiti on rocks. Most of them (e.g., the innocuously titled “Sogdian Documents from the Fortress of Chilkhujra,” pp. 217–25) are not only text editions but actually contain detailed historical arguments which, again, it would have been useful to repeat or move to a unified section.

Despite the absence of some things that would have further facilitated the book’s value as a research aid in several different fields, there is no doubt about its importance: it will certainly be the first stop not only for information on the Mugh documents but also for epigraphy from Sogdiana in general.

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6. For example, document B-19 is edited on p. 58 n. 144, while document A-20 is on p. 68 n. 31. For B-4 see p. 165, for B-27 see p. 164, for A-13 see p. 55. None of these is listed in the table of contents.

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*Turco-Sogdian Documents from 9th–10th Century Dunhuang.* By NICHOLAS SIMS-WILLIAMS and JAMES HAMILTON. Translated by NICHOLAS SIMS-WILLIAMS, with an appendix by WEN XIN. *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, pt. II, vol. III/3. London: SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES, 2015. Pp. 120, 50 pl. £40.

The first edition of the *Turco-Sogdian Documents from 9th–10th Century Dunhuang* was published in co-operation between Nicholas Sims-Williams and James Hamilton already in 1990 in French under the title *Documents turco-sogdiens du IX<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècle de Touen-houng* (short title: DTS). The amount of interest with which this publication was met can be clearly shown by the numerous published reviews in almost all relevant scientific journals.<sup>1</sup> The French edition is now long out of print. When one of the

1. The complete list of published reviews is given in the final part of the Preface to the English edition (p. 9).