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Detail from above the entrance of Tehran's fire temple, 1286š/1917–18. Photo by © Shervin Farridnejad

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Contents

Articles

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 1 | Alisher Begmatov: Two Sogdian Toponyms in Arabic and Chinese Sources, and their Attestation as Commodity Terms in Sogdian and Uyghur Economical Documents | 1 |
| 2 | Alberto Cantera: Avestan texts in context (2): the <i>Nērang ī ātaxš abrōxtan</i> and the “eternal fire” | 7 |
| 3 | Henry P. Colburn: A Parthian Shot of Potential Arsacid Date | 35 |
| 4 | Omar Coloru: The city of brotherly love. The language of family affection in the Artaxiad dynasty between the Hellenistic and the Parthian world | 41 |
| 5 | Majid Daneshgar: Persianate Aspects of the Malay-Indonesian World: Some Rare Manuscripts in the Leiden University Library | 51 |
| 6 | Charles G. Häberl: <i>priuš</i> and <i>zur</i> : Two Transliteration Artifacts in the Mandaean <i>Great Treasure</i> | 79 |
| 7 | Charles W. King: The Hunnic attack on Persia: Chronology, context, and the accounts of Priscus and Thomas | 85 |
| 8 | Agnes Korn: Notes on a Middle Persian sound change: Greek Ἀναίτις and features of vowel length | 101 |
| 9 | D. T. Potts: The spurious fifth century date for the cultivation of sugar cane (<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>) in Khuzestan | 111 |
| 10 | Hossein Sheikh: From Mesopotamia to Khotan: Payment clauses in Eastern Middle Iranian languages and their historical backgrounds | 118 |
| 11 | محمد توکلیان: یک امپراطور ناشناخته در نقش برجسته شاپور یکم ساسانی: تنگ چوگان؛ بیشاپور ۳ | 137 |

Reviews

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 12 | Hossein Sheikh: Scheunchen, Tobias. Cosmology, law, and elites in late antiquity: Marriage and slavery in Zoroastrianism, Eastern Christianity, and Islam (Arbeitsmaterialien zum Orient 32). Baden-Baden: Ergon Verlag, 2019. 144 pages. ISBN-13: 978-3956504679. 32,00 €. | 160 |
| 13 | Sun Wujun: Review of Ge, Chengyong [葛承雍]. Hu Han Zhongguo yu Wailai Wenming 胡漢中國與外來文明 [Han and Hu: China in Contact with Foreign Civilizations]. Beijing, Sanlian Shudian, 2019. 5 vols. (in Chinese with English abstract) | 163 |



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Two Sogdian Toponyms in Arabic and Chinese Sources, and their Attestation as Commodity Terms in Sogdian and Uyghur Economical Documents

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The Arabic and Chinese textual sources provide us with most of the information on early medieval Sogdian settlements. However, the geographic notes recorded in them are often vague. The paucity of Sogdian textual sources does not allow us to resolve this ambiguity. In contrast to well-known major cities, such as Samarkand or Bukhara, which remained crucial political and cultural centers in the medieval period and later, the names of smaller localities have often been forgotten and re-named by their own inhabitants or neighboring dwellers in later periods. This hinders us from identifying the archaeological sites with names attested in the historical textual sources.

Two such locality names encountered in the Arabic and Chinese historical sources are the object of this paper. One of them is *Widhār* (ودار، ودار)، a settlement in Sogdiana, which presumably may have been located in the north-western vicinity of Samarkand. According to the Arabic sources, this settlement was once a distinguished center for manufacturing fine cotton fabrics. Among these, *Widhārī* or *Widhārīyya* (وزاریة), a fabric named after this locality was highly praised. It was otherwise specified as “brocade of Khurāsān (دیباج خراسان)” by a ruler in Baghdād as recorded by Al-Muqaddasī (BGA, III, p. 324).

The other one is *Boxide* (鉢息德), whose current location is disputed. Some arguments have been made in favor of equating it either with Panjikent located about 60 km south-east of Samarkand city, or Quldor-tepa, an archaeological site situated approximately 25 km south-east of Samarkand city. *Boxide* is referred

to as the capital or central fortress of the *Mi* (𐰽𐰺) principality, one of several city-states of Sogdiana as mentioned in the Chinese historical annals, otherwise known as Maymugh in the Arabic and New Persian textual sources.

In this paper, I demonstrate previously unnoticed attestations of these two toponyms in Sogdian and Uyghur economical documents as commodity terms, which may serve to clarify some hitherto unrecognized aspects of these settlements during the early medieval era of the region.

1. *Widhār* (ويزار، وزار، ودار)

This toponym has been thus far known only from early Arabic sources. Its exact location is not certain. Al-Muqaddasi's notes (BGA, III, p. 324) suggest that it may have been located in the eastern vicinity of Dabusia (40°01'46N 65°45'56E), a large archaeological site located between Bukhara and Samarkand. However, the notes provided by Ibn-Hawqal (BGA II, p. 496, p. 499, p. 520) are more precise, and they indicate that it was situated in the northern or north-western vicinity of Samarkand, between Ishtikhan and Kabudhan. Although Al-Samā'nī (p. 576a, 579a, 581a) locates it 4 *farsakh* away, twice as far as Ibn-Hawqal reports, he also informs that it was not far from Samarkand. *Widhār* would have then been located somewhere south of the modern district of Payarik. The Arabic sources stress its importance in textile production. *Widhārī*, a fine yellowish cotton textile woven in *Widhār*, was arguably the most famous. Its production appears not only limited to *Widhār*, but also widely manufactured under the same brand in Dabusia (BGA III, p. 324).

According to the description of Ibn-Hawqal (BGA, II, pp. 520-521), who himself wore garments made of this fabric for five years, this fabric was soft as silk, dense, and had a yellowish color and did not lend itself to bleaching. It was in great demand, and in Khurāsān it was worn by everyone from emirs and viziers to warriors and "common people", which meant merchants, wealthy artisans and other townspeople who were not in government service, but who were able to purchase such clothes. The price of *Widhārī* clothing ranged from 2 to 20 dinars (See Belenitskiy, Bentovič, Bol'sakov, 1973, p. 273).

In one of the Turfan Uyghur documents recently published by Moriyasu (2019, p. 151), *WD'RY*, a strikingly similar term to *Widhārī* is encountered. This unidentified term has been kindly brought to my attention by Professor Peter Zieme. Moriyasu (2019, p. 151) explains it as an unknown (cloth) term. *WD'RY* is evocative of the textile term in the Arabic sources - *Widhārī*. This newly discovered Uyghur term could refer to the Sogdian textile, and is likely to have been introduced to the Uyghur kingdom from Sogdiana.

The translation of the Uyghur document (U 5545) in Moriyasu 2019, p. 151, lines 02-03:

"To // // //, *WD'RY* (material) for making clothes of one person. To // //ZWN, fine cloth for making clothes of one person."

Thus, *WD'RY* as attested in this document is most likely a textile term named after *Widhār*, its place of production in Sogdiana. Although it is thus far not attested in Sogdian, according to the hitherto attested Arabic and Uyghur forms, we would assume it to be *wδ'r* or *wyδ'r*. Lur'e (2004, pp. 138-139) has offered as its etymology 'uneven (i.e. mountain, earth or the like)' by comparing its stem with Yaghnob *dor*, prefixed by either by **ui-* or **ava-*. While this etymology seems likely, it is also reminiscent of Buddhist Sogdian *w(y)δ'yr* (**ui-dāraya*) 'arrange, adjust' (See Henning 1940, p. 62, Gharib 1995, pp. 402-403).

Confirmation of this term in Uyghur documents, suggests that the enthusiastic records of Ibn-Hawqal

are not exaggerated. *Widhārī* may have been a popular cotton textile in Turfan and neighboring regions too. In a Sogdian fragment from Turfan, which has recently been published by Yoshida (2020), *swyδ'ny wš'yny* “Sogdian cotton cloth” is encountered. This also indicates the popularity of Sogdian cotton textiles in the Turfan oasis, as well as the close economic ties between Sogdiana and Turfan.

According to the Arabic sources, naming textiles after their place of origin is quite common. Another notable Sogdian textile in the Arabic sources is *Zandanījī*, which is also called after its place of origin - Zandana near Bukhara. It is noteworthy that according to Al-Muqaddasī (BGA III, p. 324) there was also a textile called *Samarqandī*.

2. Boxide (鉢息德)

Boxide is referred to have been the center of *Mi* (米), one of the nine states of the so-called Zhaowu (Zhaowu-jiuxing 昭武九姓) as recorded in the Chinese historical accounts (*Xin Tangshu* chap. 221, p. 6247). The principality of 米 (**miē*^x) which has been variously recorded in the Chinese sources as 迷密 (**miē mī*^x), 彌末 (**miē muat*¹), 弭秣賀 (**miē^x muat¹ γa^H*), was noted to correspond to Maymurg in the Arabic and New Persian sources, nearly two centuries ago by Abel-Rémusat (1829, p. 233).

Although speculations on the location of its capital *Boxide* have been made as early as the 19th century, it remains uncertain to this day. Tomaschek (1877, pp. 80-81) has proposed to identify *Boxide* with *Βάσιστα* (in Diod. Lib. XVII, prol. 26), or its presumed Iranian form *Bazista*, a locality where Alexander and his army may have hunted animals. Tomaschek (1897, p. 178), thus, further cautiously offered that it might have been located in south-east of Samarkand, possibly Panjikent, Magian or the valley of Urgut. This interpretation seemed attractive to numerous archaeologists and historians, including Mončadskaya (1959), Staviskiy (1959), Smirnova (1970, p. 94). Staviskiy (1959) discussed this matter in detail and proposed to identify *Boxide* with Quldor-tepa (39°29'38N 67°10'12E), an archaeological site located approximately 25 km south-east of Samarkand. While this site is indeed one of the biggest sites in the south-eastern area of Samarkand, which could qualify as a central city or fortress of *Mi*, the geographical information provided in the Chinese sources does not comply with its distance from Samarkand. In fact, the core problem with this identification is that the Sogdian toponym in question is based on its modern Chinese pronunciation.

The Middle Chinese form of *Boxide* (鉢息德) is assumed to be **puât sĭək tək* (See Ma 1987, Yoshida *apud* Kuwayama 1992, pp. 163-166). Thus, its Middle Chinese pronunciation is dissimilar and cannot be related to *Βάσιστα*. Neither, does **puât sĭək tək* correspond to Panjikent, contrary to what Ma (1987) claims. Nevertheless, its distance from Samarkand, as Ma (1987) argues, matches well with the distance between Samarkand and Panjikent as recorded in the Chinese sources, in which **puât sĭək tək* is noted to be located 100-120 li (ca. 50-60 km) south-east from Samarkand. As mentioned above, the archaeological site of Panjikent is located 60 km south-east of Samarkand (around Afrasiab). Yoshida (*apud* Kuwayama 1992, pp. 163-166), Grenet and de la Vaissière (2002), de la Vaissière (2005, p. 120) too agree that **puât sĭək tək* should be identified with Panjikent based on the geographical distance given in the Chinese sources. Moreover, Yoshida (*apud* Kuwayama 1992, pp. 163-166) suggests that **puât sĭək tək* may correspond to *ptsytk* in Sogdian, and explains that it might have been another name (epithet) for Panjikent.

Incidentally, *ptsytkh*, a strikingly similar form to **puât sĭək tək* has been encountered as a commodity term in the Mugh documents. It has been listed twice in Mt. Mugh A-1 (lines 9-10) and twice more in document B-1 (line R6-7). All the commodity terms referred to in document A-1 have previously been explained as precious stones by Bogolyubov & Smirnova (1963), Bogolyubov (1981) and Livšits (2008).

However, I have argued that all these terms may rather denote textile-related products (Begmatov 2019). I have further conjectured that *ptsytkh* is a textile-related term and may refer to ‘rug, carpet’. Its etymology, as suggested by Livšits (1962; 2008, p. 165) and Yoshida (*apud* Kuwayama 1992, pp. 163-166), might be formed from *ptsyt-* past stem of *pts’c* ‘to arrange’.

It seems likely that *ptsytkh*, the commodity term attested in the Mugh documents may have been named after its place of production, similar to *Widhārī*, *Zandanījī* or *Samarqandī* discussed above. This term thus indicates that there might have been a Sogdian toponym - *ptsytk* /*patsaytik*/, to which 鉢息德 (**puât sjak tāk*), the Sogdian city or fortress name recorded with the Chinese characters, appears to correspond well. This form looks different from Panjikent, but identical to the presumed Sogdian form suggested by Yoshida. Provided that the geographical information reported in the Xin Tangshu is accurate, *ptsytk* may have been an epithet (another name) for Panjikent, as proposed by Yoshida (*apud* Kuwayama 1992, pp. 163-166). Alternatively, *ptsytk* may have been an original name for this city or settlement, one of the “five cities”, as the etymology of Panjikent indicates. Over a time, as *ptsytk* expanded or gained popularity, it became a representative part of Panjikent. Thus, Panjikent began to predominantly refer to this locality. Later, *ptsytk* became obsolete and survived merely as a commodity term (or it may have still referred to a certain part of Panjikent) in Sogdian, whereas in Chinese sources, it continued to point to Panjikent. This could be a reason that the Arabic sources do not refer to *ptsytk*, instead they only mention Panjikent and Maymugh. Nevertheless, this hypothesis still requires further archaeological and textual evidence. If the distance provided in the Chinese sources is inaccurate, Quldor-tepa could indeed be another candidate to be identified as **puât sjak tāk*.

By the time the Arab geographers and historians collected geographical information on Sogdiana, considerable administrative changes seem to have taken place, as the geographical information provided in them do not often harmonize with the Chinese ones. One hopes that increasing archaeological excavations in this part of Sogdiana will bring more data which would allow us to better understand its administrative geography.

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Contents

Articles

- | | | |
|----|---|------------|
| 1 | Alisher Begmatov: Two Sogdian Toponyms in Arabic and Chinese Sources, and their Attestation as Commodity Terms in Sogdian and Uyghur Economical Documents | 1 |
| 2 | Alberto Cantera: Avestan texts in context (2): the <i>Nērang ī ātaxš abrōxtan</i> and the “eternal fire” | 7 |
| 3 | Henry P. Colburn: A Parthian Shot of Potential Arsacid Date | 35 |
| 4 | Omar Coloru: The city of brotherly love. The language of family affection in the Artaxiad dynasty between the Hellenistic and the Parthian world | 41 |
| 5 | Majid Daneshgar: Persianate Aspects of the Malay-Indonesian World: Some Rare Manuscripts in the Leiden University Library | 51 |
| 6 | Charles G. Häberl: <i>priuš</i> and <i>zur</i> : Two Transliteration Artifacts in the Mandaean <i>Great Treasure</i> | 79 |
| 7 | Charles W. King: The Hunnic attack on Persia: Chronology, context, and the accounts of Priscus and Thomas | 85 |
| 8 | Agnes Korn: Notes on a Middle Persian sound change: Greek Ἀνάτις and features of vowel length | 101 |
| 9 | D. T. Potts: The spurious fifth century date for the cultivation of sugar cane (<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>) in Khuzestan | 111 |
| 10 | Hossein Sheikh: From Mesopotamia to Khotan: Payment clauses in Eastern Middle Iranian languages and their historical backgrounds | 118 |
| 11 | محمد توکلیان: یک امپراطور ناشناخته در نقش برجسته شاپور یکم ساسانی: تنگ چوگان؛ بیشاپور ۳ | 137 |

Reviews

- | | | |
|----|---|------------|
| 12 | Hossein Sheikh: Scheunchen, Tobias. Cosmology, law, and elites in late antiquity: Marriage and slavery in Zoroastrianism, Eastern Christianity, and Islam (Arbeitsmaterialien zum Orient 32). Baden-Baden: Ergon Verlag, 2019. 144 pages. ISBN-13: 978-3956504679. 32,00 €. | 160 |
| 13 | Sun Wujun: Review of Ge, Chengyong [葛承雍]. Hu Han Zhongguo yu Wailai Wenming 胡漢中國與外來文明 [Han and Hu: China in Contact with Foreign Civilizations]. Beijing, Sanlian Shudian, 2019. 5 vols. (in Chinese with English abstract) | 163 |