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CORPUS INSCRIPTIONUM IRANICARUM

Part II Inscriptions of the Seleucid and
Parthian periods and of Eastern Iran and
Central Asia

VOL. III SOGDIAN

**Sogdian epigraphy
of Central Asia and Semirech'e**

by

V. A. LIVSHITS

translated from the Russian by Tom Stableford

edited by Nicholas Sims-Williams

2015

published on behalf of

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Preface to the English edition

This collection of V. A. Livshits' writings on Sogdian documents and inscriptions from Central Asia and Semirech'e, first published in Russian in 2008 and awarded the Ehsan Yarshater Book Prize by the International Society for Iranian Studies in 2010, incorporates substantially revised versions of many of his earlier publications, notably his pioneer edition of Legal Documents and Letters from Mount Mug (СДГМ II, 1962).

For the opportunity to publish an English version of this important volume the Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum is grateful to the author, Vladimir A. Livshits; to Boris V. Erokhin, Director of the Publishing House of the Faculty of Philology of the St Petersburg State University, the original publisher; and not least to the translator, Tom Stableford, formerly Regional Specialist at the Taylor-Bodleian Slavonic and Modern Greek Library, University of Oxford. Thanks are also due to the Union Académique Internationale and the British Academy for their financial support; to Irina F. Popova and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences for the photograph reproduced below as fig. 95; to the editors of the publications in which certain articles originally appeared in English (see p. 313 below); and to several colleagues who kindly assisted the editor by answering his questions or checking parts of the text: Adam Benkato, Bi Bo, Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, Frantz Grenet, Pavel Lur'e and Professor Livshits himself.

The present volume differs from the original Russian edition in a few respects, which it may be helpful to explain. Some corrections by the author have been incorporated and minor errors and misprints corrected. Several photographs which seem to have been accidentally omitted in the Russian edition have been added (with plate-numbers ending with letters a, b, c etc., so as not to disturb the original numbering). To help the reader to locate references to the Russian edition, the original page numbers are inserted in [square brackets]. Similarly, in the few cases where it has been necessary to change the numbering of the footnotes because of differences between English and Russian word-order, the original footnote numbers are specifically indicated. In the signatures of the Mug documents and the Kyrgyz inscriptions the Russian letters Б, В (б, в) etc. have been retained in order to avoid the ambiguity which arises from transliterating Б as B. In the bibliography, Cyrillic authors' names are transliterated in order to allow the two (Roman and Cyrillic) bibliographies in the original edition to be combined in a single list, the rest of such entries being left in Cyrillic script; likewise, where Russian works not listed in the bibliography are referred to in the text, the details are generally left in the original script so that those readers able to make use of these works are not put to the trouble of converting the bibliographical details back into Cyrillic. Finally, all Chinese words cited in the commentaries are now given in the standard Pinyin transcription, the original characters being added wherever this seemed likely to be useful.

Nicholas Sims-Williams
Cambridge, 23 March 2015

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Vladimir Aronovich Livshits

[5] Vladimir Aronovich Livshits was born on 6th October 1923 in Petrograd (St. Petersburg – Leningrad). His father Aron Borisovich (1892-1983), from a forestry family, arrested and exiled in 1937, did not return home until after the war and was later rehabilitated, like many thousands of Soviet citizens. His mother, Revekka Vladimirovna (1891-1975, née Zvasmann) was a housewife.

After secondary school V. A. Livshits entered the Iranian department of Leningrad University, but after the outbreak of war was called up on 14th July 1941, serving in the Red Army until 5th November 1945, and attaining the rank of sergeant. Decorated many times, he took part in battles on the Leningrad and Belorussian fronts, going as far the Wisła and Warsaw.

Returning to the revived Eastern Faculty, in 1948 Vladimir Aronovich graduated with distinction in Iranian Philology and entered graduate school, supervised by the eminent Iranologist Aleksandr Arnoldovich Freiman (1879-1968), one of the founders of Russian Iranian Studies and a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences. In 1952 under the latter's supervision Vladimir Aronovich defended his doctoral thesis on pronouns in Pashto. Most of his thesis has remained unpublished, but its contents have been widely used by his students and colleagues, especially A. L. Gryunberg in his *Outline of Pashto grammar* (А. Л. Грюнберг, Очерк грамматики афганского языка, Ленинград, 1987).

Unable to get work in the Russian capitals at that time, V. A. Livshits and his old friend and colleague I. M. Oranskii (1923-1977) headed for Tajikistan, where they taught in colleges and worked in academic institutes, in particular in the Rudaki Language and Literature Institute of the Tajik Academy of Sciences. Their years working in Tajikistan, in the favourable milieu of an Iranian linguistic environment and with Tajik colleagues and students, proved to be exceptionally useful and fruitful not only for the young specialists themselves, but also for Tajik philology and academic [6] life in general. Friends in Tajikistan gratefully remember the activity of the two who were to become outstanding Iranologists.

V. A. Livshits' first published works were dedicated to Pashto and the history of its study (partly in collaboration with I. M. Oranskii). While working in Tajikistan with the remarkable ethnographer Antonina Konstantinovna Pisarchik (1907-1995), the widow of the brilliant student of the life and languages of Central Asia, Mikhail Stepanovich Andreev (1873-1948), V. A. Livshits prepared for the press materials on the Yaghnobi language which had been collected by M. S. Andreev and that other fine expert on the Central Asian way of life, Elena Mikhailovna Peshchereva (1897-1985). These he provided with an etymological dictionary (М. С. Андреев и Е. М. Пещерева, Ягнобские тексты с приложением ягнобско-русского словаря, составленного М. С. Андреевым, В. А. Лившицем и А. К. Писарчик, Москва–Ленинград, 1957). This dictionary, along with the pioneering work of the Norwegian Indo-Iranianist Georg Morgenstierne on the etymology of Afghan and Pamir languages, has long remained one of the most important collections of New Iranian etymologies. From studying the history of Yaghnobi words it was a natural step for V. A. Livshits to turn to working on its immediate Middle Iranian ancestor, Sogdian, and to his becoming the recognised authority that he now is. Such seminal works as V. A. Livshits' articles on 'The inner laws of development of Tajik' (1954), 'Sogdian words in Tajik' (1957), and also the general section on the Iranian languages of the peoples of Central Asia in the collective work *Народы Средней Азии и Казахстана* (Москва, 1962, 131-158, part of the series *Народы мира*), were written in Stalinabad (now Dushanbe) and in part published during this period.

In 1958, during preparations for the Twenty-fifth International Congress of Orientalists, V. A. Livshits went back to the Leningrad Oriental Institute (formerly the famous 'Asiatic Museum', then the Leningrad division of the Oriental Institute, later the Institute of the Peoples of Asia and Africa, and now the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences), where he still works.

Vladimir Aronovich Livshits has made an outstanding contribution to comparative-historical Iranian philology and to the study of modern and ancient Iranian languages. In all, V. A. Livshits has published over two hundred works covering several branches of Iranology, but most of them are dedicated to Sogdian. He has taken part in the deciphering of the archive of Sogdian documents from Mount [7] Mug, located in the upper reaches of the Zeravshan in northern Tajikistan, discovered by A. A. Freiman's 1933 expedition. A study of a volume of legal documents and letters from the Mug archive formed his second doctoral dissertation in 1965 at the Oriental Institute of Moscow. In all his publications of Sogdian documents Vladimir Aronovich examines not only the purely philological problems but also questions of the history and culture of Sogd, aided by his frequent participation in archaeological excavations and journeys to the lands of historical Sogdiana in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kirgizia. Vladimir Aronovich considers it necessary to study epigraphic materials *in situ*, and not from photographs, drawings, copies and prints on some study desk. Unfortunately, this does not always prove possible, especially now, as ever new obstacles and borders stand in the orientalist's way.

Invited while still a graduate student by the eminent orientalist brothers Igor' Mikhailovich (1915-1999) and Mikhail Mikhailovich (1907-1954) D'yakonov, V. A. Livshits began work on deciphering Parthian documents from Nisa in Southern Turkmenistan. A multi-volume edition of these extremely complex texts with translation and commentary was published in London by the Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum. He has also published a number of works on other Middle Iranian languages – Khwarezmian, Bactrian and Khotanese – along with several articles on Iranian elements in Aramaic and Neo-Babylonian texts, the origin of Turkic runes and other allied questions.

Vladimir Aronovich is distinguished by his candour and generosity to his students, among them more than 20 postgraduates, and colleagues. One has only to look at his publications list, much of which is co-authored, to be assured of his remarkable ability to share his knowledge and experience with other academics. The eminent Iranologist W. B. Henning (1908-1967) once wrote thus of V. A. Livshits' decipherment of Khwarezmian documents: 'In my opinion, his work is not merely competent, but even inspired; the more closely I have studied it, the more have I come to feel that it deserves admiration' (W. B. Henning, 'The Choresmian documents', *Asia Major*, N.S., 11, 1965, 179). It seems superfluous to add to this estimation of a great scholar.

In 1972 V. A. Livshits was awarded a professorship at the Tajik State University, in 1977 membership [8] of the British Academy, in 1986 membership of the Societas Iranologica Europaea, and in 1989 honorary membership of the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East. He is a member of the International Committee of the Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, of the Russian Geographical Society and of the Imperial Russian Palestinian Society, not to mention many academic councils and editorial boards.

Apart from his military awards, Professor V. A. Livshits has been awarded the S. Chakravarti Medal of the Bengal Asiatic Society and the Order of Friendship of the Republic of Tajikistan for his services to scholarship. In 2006 V. A. Livshits was awarded the Prizes of the Government of Saint Petersburg and the S. F. Oldenburg Academic Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences in the fields of the Humanities and Social Sciences, which are awarded annually to outstanding citizens of Saint Petersburg (7 since the year 2000).

**DOCUMENTS FROM MOUNT MUG:
LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND LETTERS**

Foreword

[11] In spring 1932, in the ruins of the fortress of Qal'a-i Mūgh (or Mūgh-Qal'a), the villagers of Khairabad in the Zahmatabad region¹ of the Tajik SSR found a wicker basket and a document written on silk paper in incomprehensible letters. In the course of several months the document went from hand to hand in the villages of the Upper Zeravshan, and thanks only to the efforts of Abdulhamid Puloti, the former Zahmatabad regional Party secretary, did it get to Stalinabad, the capital of the republic, where it was established that the document was written in Sogdian. A photograph of the document was sent to Professor A. A. Freiman in Leningrad. In May 1933 the fortress of Qal'a-i Mūgh was excavated by Puloti and then by A. I. Vasil'ev, at first independently, but later, in November 1933, as part of a USSR Academy of Sciences expedition led by A. A. Freiman. The excavations brought to light 75 documents in Sogdian, one in Arabic, one in Turkic runes², and also a large number of objects of material culture (about 400 items) and some coins.

In 1934 A. A. Freiman prepared a detailed palaeographical description of the documents. It was published in the volume *Согдийский сборник*, dedicated to the finds on Mt. Mug³, which sets out the circumstances of the discovery of the documents⁴, and also offers an archaeological account of the excavations⁵. The study of the Arabic document found in the fortress allowed I. Yu. Krachkovskii not only to date this text accurately, but also to recreate the historical circumstances [12] of the destruction of the fortress⁶. It was established that all the documents belonged to a period no later than the beginning of the third decade of the 8th century (up to August 722). A. A. Freiman showed that the Sogdian documents include two groups of texts – letters and financial records – and that a significant number of these texts, including the one in Arabic, are connected with the name Dhēwāshtīch (the initial reading was 'Dhiwastich'), the ruler of Penjikent executed by the Arabs in 722. *Согдийский сборник* notes that at least some of the Sogdian documents belonged to the archives of other people.

In 1936 A. A. Freiman published a reading and translation of several of the dated financial documents⁷. Then followed editions of a number of financial documents and letters containing Dhēwāshtīch's instructions to his manager (*framāndār*), and also a calendar⁸. In all, Freiman published 13 texts from the Mug collection. These works together with his articles from *Согдийский сборник* are included in the first volume of the series *Согдийские документы с горы Муг (СДГМ I)*.

Thanks to the kindness of A. A. Semenov and B. A. Litvinskii, who gave me photographs of several documents (on parchment and paper), I became acquainted with the Mug documents at the end of 1957. After autumn 1958 I got the opportunity to work on the originals, which were in the

¹ Now the Aini region.

² The Chinese texts found during the excavations are not, in this context, documents. Their Verso was intended by the Sogdians for use as writing paper.

³ Freiman 1934.

⁴ Freiman 1934.

⁵ Vasil'ev 1934.

⁶ Krachkovskaya, Krachkovskii 1934 (v. also И. Ю. Крачковский, *Избранные сочинения*, I, Москва–Ленинград, 1955, 182-212). On the process of deciphering this document see И. Ю. Крачковский, «Над арабскими рукописями», *Избранные сочинения*, I, 110-115.

⁷ Freiman 1936.

⁸ Freiman 1938.

Leningrad section of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia (now the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the RAS). During my work I managed to pick out some legal texts, primarily contracts, which were not mentioned in the description of the Mug collection in *Согдийский сборник*. It also became clear that the Mug letters contain data characterising the political and military situation in Sogdiana and neighbouring regions between 711 and 722. The documents give us a basic picture of the social structure and economic life of Sogd at the end of the 7th century and in the first quarter of the 8th. The first results of this work were published in 1959-1960 in several articles (15 documents in all). In the second volume of *Согдийские документы с горы Муг* (Москва, 1962, here 'СДГМ II'), entitled *Юридические документы и письма* 'Legal documents and letters', I published 45 documents: legal texts (contracts and receipts), letters, and also financial documents which mention [13] some of the people who figure in the letters. In my commentary I also brought in some of the financial texts⁹.

This book contains a new edition of these documents. In preparing it I have tried to take account of work published over the last fifty years in the Sogdian field, including transliterations and translations of some of the Mug documents which have appeared in Russia and abroad. In every case data from preceding publications are cited.

This book retains the division of the documents according to the series established by A. A. Freiman in *Согдийский сборник*, viz., I, I, the document found in spring 1932¹⁰; B, the documents obtained from A. Puloti in May 1933; A, the documents obtained by A. I. Vasil'ev in summer 1933; Б, the documents found by A. A. Freiman's expedition in November 1933; Nov., the documents sent to Leningrad by A. Puloti in 1934.

Photographs of the Mug documents kept in St. Petersburg in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the RAS have been published in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*¹¹. Palaeographic data in the present edition are, as a rule, cited very briefly, because detailed information on the state of the text (degree of preservation, number of lacunae, etc.) can be found in A. A. Freiman's *Согдийский сборник*¹². The transliteration system is the standard one: *c* represents *č*; [] indicates the complete restoration of a letter, () a partial restoration; a hyphen indicates the absence of a link with the following letter. A detailed description of the handwriting remains to be done (there are about 20 different hands in the collection). The translation is as far as possible literal and line by line. The commentary contains both philological explanations and comments on the interpretation of the documents as historical sources.

The Mug documents are undoubtedly among the most difficult of Sogdian texts to interpret. The difficulties are connected not only with idiosyncratic writing (a type of cursive [14] in which many letters in the middle of a word can look the same) and a poor state of preservation, but also hitherto unknown words, syntactic and stylistic peculiarities, together with a large number of names, titles, official designations and toponyms.

⁹ For a complete edition of the financial documents, v. СДГМ III (М. Н. Боголюбов, О. И. Смирнова, *Хозяйственные документы*, Москва, 1963).

¹⁰ The original has been lost, see below, p. 88.

¹¹ Фотоальбом. *Документы с горы Муг*, Москва, 1963.

¹² Freiman 1934. For the Nov. series palaeographic data can be found in an 'Inventory of Sogdian manuscript documents' compiled by A. A. Freiman, the manuscript of which is kept in St. Petersburg in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences.