

ARABOSOGDICA: PLACE-NAMES IN TRANSOXIANA AS WRITTEN IN ARABIC SCRIPT *

Among all of the non-Persian Iranian toponyms of Mawarannahr that have come down to us thanks to medieval sources (some 1,000 items [1]), the vast majority (80—90%) are those mentioned in Islamic Arabic, Persian and Turkic sources. This multilingual group is united by certain general characteristics — a single cultural environment, a great deal of mutual influence, and, most important, a single tradition of writing. The transmission of Sogdian glosses through the Arabic script is the topic of the present article.

The Persian and Turkic varieties of writing are far better suited to Sogdian phonetics than their Arabic precursor. The Arabic alphabet with all additional Persian letters (*p*, *č*, *ž*, *g* and *β*, Arabic *f* with three dots — *fā* 'ajamī, *fā* *muthallath*, found in some early New Persian and Turkic texts, Chorasmian glosses) can correctly convey virtually all Sogdian consonants. But the Arabic alphabet itself could have served the needs of Sogdian no worse than could the Buddhist (Sogdian-Aramaic), Christian (Nestorian) or Manichaean writing systems (cf. the various difficulties in conveying Sogdian labials with these writing systems). Moreover, one should bear in mind that Persian texts, especially the early ones that are most important for us, often lack all of the necessary diacritics, making them the functional equivalent of Arabic-alphabet texts. Additionally, some Arab authors — especially al-Sam'ānī (henceforth,

Sam.) — often indicate “special” Persian letters in the headings of their dictionary entries [2].

The preceding comments on the means Arabic script possesses to convey Sogdian sounds would hold if the authors of the sources used here [3] had written coherent Sogdian texts rather than individual glosses in a language they appear not to have known at all [4]. Taking into account the slips of the pen that inevitably creep into manuscripts, many words are difficult to recognize. For example, a village in the land of the Qarluqs on the way to Barskhān (a city on Lake Issyk-Kul), Qudāma (206) calls *کترمٹراو* [5], Gardīzī — *کومبرکٹ* and *HA* — *کرمینکٹ* [6]. Only by juxtaposing all of these forms can we reconstruct the name with reasonable surety as *کرمیرکٹ**, Sogdian **krm'yr+knḏh/Karmīr-ka*^θ/ ‘Red Town’ [7].

However, in other cases variant spellings reflect not so much errors and carelessness in transcription, but various ways of conveying the sounds [8]. For example, the well-known settlement and palace of the Bukhār-khudāts to the west of Bukhara, usually referred to in the archaeological literature as *Varakhsha*, is given in the most varied forms in Islamic sources: *Afraxšī*, *Abraxša*, *Awraxšā*, *Faraxša* [9]. This allows one to reconstruct the name as Sogd. **(ʔ)βraxšē*. This article treats precisely such means of conveying Sogdian sounds in Arabic script.

1. Consonants [10]

1.1 Back. We know that Sogdian had three back consonant phonemes (*k*, *γ*, *x*) and one allophone (*g* < *k* in the *ng* < *nk* position). Early Sogdian had a *x*^v sound, later contracted to *xu*. The Arabic alphabet has letters for the first three sounds, but lacks a letter for the fourth (*g*), so the *ng* group was conveyed in two ways: with *-nj* (cf. Arab. *šatranj* < Pers. *šatrang*) or (more rarely) with *nk*. The latter spelling was more typical of Persian usage. Cf. the numerous place-names in *-sank/-sanj*, the majority of which go back to Sogd. *sang* ‘stone’; some of them, however, proba-

bly go back to Sogd. Budd. *snk'/sanga/* ‘monastic community’ (<Old Ind. *saṃ-gha-*). Moreover, one should take into account that *x* could be distorted in the copying process to *ḥ* or *j*, *ghayn* to ‘ayn, *k* > *l* (and *vice versa*). We note especially that Sogdian *k* could also be given as an ordinary *k* or emphatic *q*. While *q* was used primarily in Turkic glosses, it is also found in Sogdian names. For example, the name of the Bukharan settlement *Saqmatīn* in Narshakhī (II, XXII, pp. 8, 52) apparently goes back to Sogd. *(')sk('y)+myḏn*, Old Iran. **uska-maiθana-*, ‘Upper Settlement’ [11]; a very

* For the transcription of Sogdian glosses in Arabic script, we use Greek letters *δ*, *x*, *θ*, *γ*, *β* for the fricatives; emphatic *k* is given as *q*, and with the exception of specially discussed cases we omit regular Arabic endings (*tanwīn*) and give the usual feminine ending (*-at^{um}*) as *-a*. Where possible, transliteration is accompanied by vowel transcription. The voiced affricative *j* given as *j*. The author is most grateful to Prof. V. A. Livshits, Prof. B. I. Marshak, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences I. M. Steblin-Kamensky and Mr. I. Yakubovich for reading the drafts of this paper and valuable remarks on it. If you are interested in the subject of this paper, you are welcome to contact the author at pavlsvlvria@mail.ru.