

When Did Sogdians Begin to Write Vertically?

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Abstract

The Sogdian script originates from the Aramaic script employed in Sogdiana during the Achaemenid dynasty (550-331 BCE). The Aramaic script comprised twenty-two letters and was written horizontally from right to left. Its Sogdian descendant inherited both number of letters and the writing direction. However, a Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, who visited Sogdiana in 630 CE, reports the vertical writing of the script and his witness is borne out by inscriptions from the latter half of the 6th century onward. In this paper the author tries to find out when the Sogdian script began to be written vertically. For that purpose a group of short inscriptions discovered in the Upper Indus area are taken into consideration. Since both vertical and horizontal writings are found among them, the author assumes that the Sogdians began to write vertically when the inscriptions were executed. Consideration of the historical background of the route connecting Gandhara and Sogdiana leads the author to date the material to the latter half of the 5th century, hence the script changed its writing orientation during that period.

0. Introduction

Both Professor H. Kumamoto and I have been studying Pre-Islamic Iranian philology in Japan for the last thirty years and naturally have had close contact with each other. I have learned and benefited much not only from his outstanding articles on the Khotanese texts and on the history of Khotan but also from his profound knowledge in Indian as well as Iranian studies unsparingly imparted to me in personal communications. Long ago, when we were colleagues at the Shitennoji International Buddhist University, we even collaborated in publishing two Middle Iranian inscriptions found on two pieces of sandalwood preserved for more or less 1,300 years in the Hôryûji Temple in Nara, Japan: one in Pahlavi was read by Kumamoto and the other, a brand in Sogdian script, by myself.¹ It is my greatest pleasure to dedicate this paper to the volume commemorating his retirement as a token of my profound gratitude for his long-standing help and friendship and I hope that he likes it, even though its subject is the writing direction of Sogdian script and is hardly linguistic.

1. Two Problems of the Sogdian script

¹ See our contributions to Tono (1987).

There are several questions surrounding Sogdian script. One is concerning when and how the Uighur script developed from the Sogdian. N. Sims-Williams (1981) proved that the development was quite smooth, and that there was no deliberate effort to create the Uighur script distinct from the Sogdian. Recently, I have envisaged the possibility that it was the so-called “Turco-Sogdians”, or bilinguals in Sogdian and Uighur, who first wrote the Uighur language in the script familiar to them, cf. Yoshida (forthcoming a). In other words, it was not the Uighurs who adopted the Sogdian script to their mother tongue, but the Turco-Sogdians who being fully accustomed to Sogdian script applied it to write the other of their two mother tongues.² Even so one must still explain the sharp difference between the Sogdian and Uighur alphabets: the latter totally lacks four letters D (daleth), Ṭ (teth), ‘ (ain), and Q (koph) out of the total twenty-two letters of the Aramaic alphabet and adds the three extra letters Š, M, and X at the end, cf. T. Moriyasu (1997). Although the first four letters were never used in writing Sogdian either, the Sogdian alphabets of the eighth century does comprise them and puts signs like letters in the places where they used to occupy. These signs have nothing to do with the original shape of each letter. For example, a sign for ‘ (ain) is that of a numeral “100”, while the letter ‘ (ain) is known to have merged with R (resh) long before.³

Another vexing problem is when and why the Sogdian script began to be written vertically. It was W. B. Henning who first drew attention to the fact that the script was once written vertically. In his monumental article, he writes as follows:

Auch die besonders aus dem Mongolischen und Mandschuiischen bekannte Änderung der ursprünglichen Schriftrichtung, von oben nach unten in nach rechts fortschreitenden Kolumnen, statt von rechts nach links in Zeilen, ist bereits dem Sogdischen zuzuschreiben; das wird nicht nur durch die Stellung von Abbildungen und Beischriften in chinesischer oder indischer Schrift, sowie durch die Schriftrichtung in *pothi*- Büchern (z.B. in der Hs. des *Vessantara Jātaka*) bewiesen, sondern sogar für das Heimatland durch das direkte Zeugnis Hüan-tsangs; die Christen und Manichäer schlossen sich von dieser Neuerung aus, die übrigens zur Zeit der ‘Alten Briefe’ noch nicht eingeführt worden war.⁴

In this paper I try to find out the time or period when the Sogdian script changed its writing orientation. One of the reasons why I have selected this subject is that even after Henning’s clear statement many non-Sogdianists still assume the horizontal orientation of the Sogdian script and

² One Turco-Sogdian text, Text A of Sims-Williams and Hamilton (1990), could reflect the situation. Obviously, one and the same person wrote the entire text, because in the text sentences in Sogdian and Uighur alternate without any discernible reason and without any observable difference in handwriting.

³ On the Sogdian alphabets see V. A. Livshitz (1970), idem (2008: 298-305) and Y. Yoshida (1995: 75-79). For the merger of letters ‘ (ain) and R (resh) see Henning (1958: 34) and Sims-Williams (1972). A letter D (daleth) was also no longer distinguished from R (resh) already in the Ancient Letters of the early fourth century, on which see Sims-Williams (1975: 134-139). What we find in the corresponding place of the Sogdian alphabets is a sign for the numeral 20.

⁴ Cf. Henning (1958: 56). Henning’s mention of the *pothi*-book of the Sogdian *Vessantara Jātaka* seems to imply that the vertical orientation can be proved only for short-lined *pothi*s, and that he tries to avoid his judgment about the writing direction in the long-lined *pothi*-books. Quite recently, Ch. Reck was able to ascertain the vertical orientation also for long-lined *pothi*s, cf. Reck (2009). For the two types of *pothi*-book format see Yoshida (2008: 461-462, nn. 5, 7). Curiously, Henning does not state anything about Uighur script. However, it is now widely accepted that it was also written vertically, cf. Kara (1996: 539).

repeat the mistaken view in their books for the general readership.⁵ Apparently, this is partly due to the still common habit of Sogdianists to reproduce manuscripts and inscriptions in the way they are accustomed to read them, and partly because Iranianists do not pay much attention to the writing direction in their descriptions of scripts.⁶

2. Horizontal and Vertical Orientations of Sogdian script

The Sogdian script goes back to the Aramaic script employed in Sogdiana during the Achaemenid Dynasty. During the Achaemenid period, Aramaic or Imperial Aramaic served as its administrative language and was employed all over its territory from Gandhara in the east to Egypt in the west. After the corruption of the empire, Imperial Aramaic ceased to be written and the local Iranian scribes began to write their own languages with the same Aramaic script. When and how this “Iranianization” of the administrative languages began and proceeded is hard to realize. However, consensus has been achieved about the Parthian affiliation of a number of the ostraca from the first century BC discovered from the ruined city of Nisa, the ancient capital of the Parthian Empire. Obviously, from the Parthian period (ca. 210 BC – 224 CE) onward Iranian dialects or languages were represented by the Aramaic script.⁷ It is to be noted in passing that the things developed differently in Gandhara, where the Aramaic script was totally remodeled to write the local Middle Indian dialect or Gandhari. The Gandharan script, now called Kharoṣṭhī, is much superior to the Iranian counterparts originating from the Aramaic script in that the former can represent every vowel of Gandhari, while the latter are simple consonantal scripts lacking vowel signs. Nevertheless, the both share the horizontal writing direction from right to left.

Let us first see Xuanzang’s (602 - 664 CE) report mentioned by Henning; he travelled through Sogdiana in the summer 630 CE⁸:

字源簡略本二十餘言。轉而相生 · · · 粗有書記豎讀其文。

The primary characters are few; in the beginning they were twenty or so in number: the words are composed by the combination of these; ... They have some literature and read the sentences vertically.⁹

It is clear that Xuanzang’s report accords very well with what we now know about the Sogdian alphabet and is likely to have been based on his own observation. Therefore, he must also have witnessed the local people writing and reading the script vertically. In fact his second observation

⁵ The latest example known to me is a book by M. Hamada, *Chûdajia no isurâmu*, Tokyo 2008, p. 49.

⁶ For example, P. O Skjærvø does not refer to the problem in his otherwise very useful essay entitled “Aramaic scripts for Iranian languages” published in 1996. Differently, Yoshida (2009: 279), where I wrote: “By the end of the sixth century, this Sogdian script came to be written vertically rather than horizontally from right to left.”

⁷ Mention should be made of the Aramaeo-Iranian inscriptions of Aśoka dating back to the third century BC. Their language is generally assumed to be a local East Iranian language, cf. H. Humbach (1979). Differently, Skjærvø (1996: 516).

⁸ Recently, de la Vaissière (2010) showed convincingly that Xuanzang left China not in 627 but in 629; he stayed two months in Kucha before crossing the Tianshan Mountains, obviously waiting for the spring to come.

⁹ Translated by me from the Chinese text edited in the *Taisho Issaikyo*, vol. 51, p. 871a. Cf. also S. Beal (1884: 27). The reason why I do not cite Beal’s translation is that the Chinese text he translated from is corrupt in this particular place.

has been born out by discoveries of Sogdian inscriptions from the latter half of the 6th century onward. Let us look at two examples. One is a Chinese Sogdian Shijun's epitaph dated to 580 CE unearthed in Xi'an and the other is a wall inscription found on the famous wall-painting of the 7th century excavated in Afrasiab or the ruined site of pre-Mongolian Samarqand.¹⁰ (figs. 1 and 2)

One mural painting discovered in Panjikent depicts a scribe holding a wood stick and writing letters vertically. (fig. 3) In this connection, it is to be noticed that when written on paper or parchments one can hardly detect the writing direction. Nevertheless, there are a few cases where the vertical writing is ascertained. One is a manuscript So 14830 of the German Turfan collection. It is in fact a Chinese text transcribed in Sogdian script where Chinese characters were filled in just after the Sogdian part was copied. The pronunciation of the Chinese characters enables one to date the text to the first half of the 8th century.¹¹

Then, one may ask whether there is any trustworthy evidence that indicates the horizontal orientation of the Sogdian script. The answer is affirmative. First, one can refer to the Kultobe inscriptions recently discovered in Kirghizia. (fig. 4) The inscriptions are written in a very archaic script and are dated to the 2nd or early 3rd century CE by F. Grenet, mainly based on the historical consideration.¹² The oblong shape of the largest fragment no doubt betrays the horizontal orientation. Then what was the case with the so-called Sogdian Ancient Letters of the early 4th century?¹³ Henning does not give any reason why he assumes the horizontal writing for them. They were discovered by A. Stein from one of the watch towers protecting the Jade Gate, which is located to the west of Dunhuang. Each letter is written on one complete sheet of Chinese paper. The unique layout how the body of letters occupy the space can be compared with the Aramaic letters of the Achaemenid period discovered in Egypt. On a sheet of paper or papyrus, a wide margin is allowed to the right of the text; if necessary, this area is used for a continuation of the text, written vertically from top to bottom. Let us see and compare the Sogdian Ancient Letters and the Aramaic letters discovered in Egypt. (figs. 5, 6, 7, and 8)

The recently discovered Bactrian letters follow the same pattern, although in the case of Bactrian, the Greek letters were written horizontally from left to right so that the space is left along the left margin. (fig. 9) In other words Bactrian letters are just a mirror image of Sogdian or Aramaic letters. Accordingly, one can easily suppose that this unique way of writing letters is a legacy of the Achaemenid rule of Sogdiana and Bactria, and that the tradition goes back to the Aramaic letter writing.¹⁴ Therefore, there is nothing to prevent one from recognizing the horizontal writing for the Ancient Letters of the early 4th century.¹⁵

¹⁰ For the general view about the dating of the mural see Grenet (2006: 43).

¹¹ For the manuscript, see: <http://www.bbaw.de/forschung/turfanforschung/dta/so/images/so148300>. My study of this manuscript will be published soon, cf. Yoshida (forthcoming b). See also Yoshida (1995) for the detailed analysis of the Chinese pronunciation reflected in the transcription.

¹² Cf. Sims-Williams, Grenet, and Podushkin (2007: 1025)

¹³ The dating of the letters is now settled, cf. Sims-Williams and Grenet (1987).

¹⁴ In this connection one may be reminded of the epistolary formulae shared by Aramaic, Sogdian, and Bactrian letters, cf. Sims-Williams (1991, 1996, 2006).

¹⁵ Sims-Williams discerns two formats among the Bactrian letters, i.e. format 2 and format 3, cf. Sims-Williams (2012: 10-13). What is described above follows format 3, while in format 2 no space is left along the two margins. The same layout is commoner among the Aramaic letters and one may assume that these two formats existed already in the Achaemenid period. Similarly in Ancient Letter II, the lines, which are written along the narrow side of a sheet,

3. Horizontal and Vertical Orientations among the Upper Indus Inscriptions

So far I have narrowed down the time when Sogdian script began to be written vertically to a period between the early 4th century (Ancient Letters) and the latter half of the 6th century (Shijun's epitaph). Can one go one step further? In this connection let us see the so-called Upper Indus inscriptions. They are short scribbles, more than 650 in number, left by the Sogdians who visited the places along the Upper Indus valleys.¹⁶ The inscriptions are typical visitors' inscriptions, usually comprising a personal name, with or without a patronymic or other personal details such as a family name or title. Let us see one example:

pysk ZK βγγδβ'r BRY "Pesak the son of Vaghithvār" (Sims-Williams 1989-1992, vol. I: 30, no. 385)

On a palaeographic ground Sims-Williams (1989: 134) dates the inscriptions to such a vague period as the 4th to 6th centuries CE, which happens to coincide with the time I have just assumed for the possible date of change in the writing orientation. Sims-Williams (*ibid.*) states that some inscriptions display a more cursive or irregular style than the Ancient Letters, and that there is nothing to suggest that any of the inscriptions are as late as the documents from Mt. Mug of early 8th century. As a whole the handwriting of the inscriptions seems to me to be archaic but uniform and does not suggest such a long time span as a few centuries for their execution.¹⁷ In this connection one may also refer to de la Vaissière's observation (2005: 82): "One finds only *xwn* son of X, and never X son of *xwn*. ... on the one hand ... the end of Sogdian commerce on the Upper Indus took place while contacts between *xwn* and Sogdians were very important — yet for all that not going back further than a generation — and on the other hand ... this end occurred quite abruptly." I shall come back to the problem surrounding the name *xwn* "Hun" in the next section.

Let us see whether the Sogdian script is inscribed horizontally or vertically. I reproduce the photographs of one each of two rocks (Rocks 36 and 39). (figs. 10, 11, and 11a) The one in figure 10 (36: 38) is written vertically and happens to be the longest among the materials. I cite its text and translation, because it mentions the Sogdian designation of Tashkurgan and is of some interest from the viewpoint of the route taken by the Sogdians:

nnyβntk ZK nrsβ 'γ-kym kw 10 'HRZY MN k'rt βγncytk y'n pt'yst 't xrβntn twxtr pr'ys'n rty
ZKw 'HY pr šyr wyn'n 'M wγš' "(I, Nanai-vandak the (son of) Narisaf have come (here) in/on
 (the day/year) ten and asked a boon from the spirit of the sacred place Kârt (that) I may arrive

run from the right margin to the left without any space. It seems to me that the two formats existed also in Sogdiana. However, the reason why one was employed in preference to the other escapes me; one may think of the purposes of letters, but as far as I can see no particular difference in contents is observed among them.

¹⁶ They are published by Sims-Williams (1989-1992). The accompanying photographs are of excellent quality but most of them are close-ups of inscriptions, which often do not allow one to examine the writing direction.

¹⁷ Later Sims-Williams (2000: 531-535) slightly changed his opinion and assigned some of the inscriptions to the third century because of the morphological archaism and the dating of a carving, which obliterates them. Consideration of the historical background leads me to prefer to date the entire corpus to one period extending less than a century. However, I admit that there is no compelling reason to regard all of them to be contemporary. Unfortunately, the Sogdian palaeography is still ill-developed and does not enable one to find out the dating of the inscriptions.

at Kharvandan (= Tashkurgan) very quickly and see (my) brother in good (health) with joy.”¹⁸

It is noticeable that the Sogdian lines are inscribed both horizontally and vertically. Theoretically, this could be due to the limited spaces on rocks. However, if one compares the Sogdian inscriptions with those in Brāhmī or Kharoṣṭhī discovered in the same area, one realizes that the latter are consistently written horizontally, cf. figures 11 and 11a.¹⁹ In my opinion this situation betrays the Sogdians’ inconsistency or vacillation in the orientation of writing their script. In other words, the Sogdian script was beginning to be written vertically when the Upper Indus inscriptions were executed.

4. Dating of the Upper Indus Inscriptions

Then, can one date the inscriptions more precisely? In fact in his book on Sogdian traders, E. de la Vaissière tries to discover the specific date for these inscriptions. He mentions two key words or rather key names: *xwn* “the Hun” and *m’ymrʔc* “(originating from) Maymargh”, e.g. *xwn ZK βrz’kk* “Hun the (son of) Varzakk” and *m’ymrʔc ZK nwn BRY* “Maymarghach the son of Nun”. I cite his arguments:

This onomastics of ethnic origin [i.e. *xwn* “Hun” Y.Y.] is historically inconceivable before a conquest of Sogdiana by the Huns, followed by a period of calm and of fusion between the Sogdian population and the nomadic invaders.²⁰ I will show in the next chapter that this fusion cannot date back before the very end of the 4th century, and belongs much more probably to the 5th century. A second fact corroborates this dating: at Shatial, at least eight people possessed a name connected to the town of Maymargh, which is mentioned for the first time in the second third of the 5th century in the *Wei shu*. ... In a very hypothetical way, all of this then leads one to postulate an end to the Sogdian presence on the Upper Indus during the first half of the 5th century. (de la Vaissière 2005: 81-83)

It seems to me that one can slightly revise de la Vaissière’s dating. In order to discover the more precise date of the inscriptions, one should refer to the following three sources.

(1) A passage attested in the *Wei shu*, which is based on the information obtained in 457 CE:

The country of Sute 粟特 is situated to the west of the Pamirs. It is what was Yancai 奄蔡 in ancient times. It is also called Wennasha 温那沙. It lies on an extensive swamp and to the

¹⁸ For the English translation see Sims-Williams (2000: 527). On the identification of *xrβn* with Tashkurgan see Yoshida (1991: 237-239).

¹⁹ Figures 11 and 11a show the southwest face of Rock 39. As far as one can see, some ten Brahmi inscriptions there are all written horizontally.

²⁰ One may be reminded of the case where a Bucharan king Qudibo 屈底波 (Middle Chinese **kuət tiei puâ*) was named after Qutaiba ibn Muslim (669/670 - 715 CE), who conquered the city in 706-709 CE. According to a Chinese source Qudibo brought a tribute to the Tang court in 744 and 745 CE, cf. E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux*, St. Petersburg 1903, notes additionnelles, pp. 74-75.

northwest of Kangju 康居. It is 16,000 *li* distant from Dai 代. Formerly, the Xiongnu killed the king and took the country. King Huni 忽倪 was the third ruler of the line. (cf. de la Vaissière, 2005: 107)

(2) The clay sealing recently discovered in the Swat area, which bears the following Bactrian inscription:

[...]*[**]ζ[**]ο βαγο ολαργο υοναν(ο) Ραο ο(α)ζ(αρκ)ο (κ)οΡανοΡαο σαμ(α)ρκ(α)[ν](δ)
ο (αφΡ)υ(α)νο “... lord Ularg(?), the king of the Huns, the great Kushān-shāh, the afshiyān of Samarkand” (A. Ur Rahman, F. Grenet, and N. Sims-Williams 2006: 125, 128)²¹

(3) The newly discovered Turfan Chinese document issued by Gaochang Kingdom of the Kan family and dated to 474 and 475 CE.²² It records the number of laborers and horses provided by the kingdom for the envoys from Rouran in Mongolia, Uḡḡyāna, Song in South China, Karghalik, the country of Brahman or India, and Karashahr. The envoys headed either for Karashahr or for the northern mountains and beyond. Rong Xinjiang argues that the envoys were dispatched to the Rouran court in Mongolia and stayed in Turfan during the journey to and from Rouran. Thus Karashahr was headed for in their return journey. In Rong Xinjiang’s (2007) opinion, the reason for sending envoys to the Rourans must have been the political pressure built up by the Hephthalites, which forced the surrounding countries to seek for help from the Rourans, the other super power of the day.

As de la Vaissière (2005: 108) rightly argues, Xiongnu of source (1) can only be the Kidarites. Although some uncertainties surround the precise dating of each event, the general development of the Kidarite history can now be reconstructed more or less safely. They rose in Bactria in the early 5th or possibly the late 4th century and later invaded and seized Sogdiana in the north and marched to the south and took Gandhāra.²³ The invasion into Sogdiana was described in source (1) dated to 457 CE as the event accomplished during the period of Huni’s grandfather. But later the Hephthalite expansion in Bactria or Tukharistan split the Kidarite Empire into two parts, one in Gandhara and the other in Sogdiana. It was early in the 6th century that Sogdiana was seized by the Hephthalites, on which see below.

As our source (3) suggests, the pressure was still or already felt in 474 and 475 CE. Uḡḡyāna of the document is most likely to represent the descendant of the Kidarite Kingdom based in Gandhara,²⁴ while the country of Brahman, as Rong Xinjiang supposes, denotes India under the Gupta Empire. Though there is no mention of the Kidarites, source (2) contains self-designation of “Kushan-shāh” by a king of Huns ruling Samarqand and the ethnic identity of the king as a Kidarite

²¹ Three seal impressions attest essentially the same inscription, cf. J. Lerner and Sims-Williams (2011: 181-182, 201). In the transcribed text a letter *P* stands for a letter representing [š].

²² The document is reproduced in Rong Xinjiang et al. (eds.), *Xinhuo Tulufan wenxian*, Beijing 2008, pp. 162-163.

²³ I follow Grenet’s scenario for the rise and fall of the Kidarite and Hephthalite empires, which is largely adopted by de la Vaissière (2005: 107-110), cf. Grenet (2002) and idem (2010). For the different view favoured by numismatists see Cribb (2010) and Errington (2010).

²⁴ In 477 the last embassy was sent to the Chinese court by the Kidarites of Gandhāra, cf. Grenet (2002: 221).

can hardly be doubted, cf. Grenet (2010: 272). From the later Islamic sources we know that Afshīn was a title borne by a ruler of Pre-Islamic Samarqand.²⁵ Incidentally, Wennasha 温那沙 (Middle Chinese **uən nâ ša*) of source (1) can be identified with the Chinese transcription of υοναν(ο) Ραο “the king of the Huns” of source (2). The fact that the clay sealing of a Samarqand king was discovered in the Swat area may suggest that the two brother Kidarite kingdoms exchanged correspondence in the language of their original country, i.e. Bactrian, rather than in Sogdian. The reason for this correspondence is also to be looked for in the expansion of the Hephthalite power from Bactria, which in turn leads one to infer that the route taken by the envoys avoided Bactria and followed the Upper Indus valleys. Probably the route was also traced by Sogdian traders of the period, who left their inscriptions in some places along the Upper Indus valleys. It may even be inferred that the letters were conveyed by these Sogdian traders.

The so-called “Stroganov ball” should be placed against this historical context. (fig. 12) On this silver vessel I was able to read a short inscription in Sogdian, which runs as follows:

ZNH ZY pty'δ dyn'kk xwn BRY “This vessel (belongs to) Dhenakk (the) son of Hun.”

The bowl was discovered in Perm and is now housed at the Hermitage Museum.²⁶ The style of its relief leads F. Grenet to suppose that it was executed in Tukharistan at the end of the 5th or in the 6th century but was commissioned by a Sogdian by the name of Dhenakk, whose father was called Hun, cf. Grenet apud A. ur Rahman et al. (2006: 129, n. 32).²⁷ In view of the Upper Indus inscription, where *xwn* only appears as the first member of the *x ZK y BRY* “x the son of y” construction, this inscription is likely to be younger than the Indus texts by one generation.²⁸ Thus, the production of the bowl may well have been commissioned by a Sogdian nobleman when Sogdiana was already under the Hephthalite rule. The conquest is dated to 509 CE by Grenet and de la Vassière. For the sake of convenience I cite the argument from de la Vassière (2005: 110-11):

In 509 the Hephthalites conquered the country (i.e. Sogdiana, Y.Y.), in which the Kidarite dynasty had probably been waning since the 470s, weakened by defeats at the hand of the Sassanids and the Hephthalites. While the written sources do not make mention of this conquest, it is strongly suggested by the replacement of Sogdian by Hephthalite embassies at the Chinese courts, beginning in 509, for this was in reality a matter of substitutions of one group for the other: no Hephthalite embassy was conducted between the years 456 and 509, while the Sogdian embassies were numerous at that time; the situation was then abruptly reversed, with the complete disappearance of Sogdian embassies and the sudden appearance of

²⁵ Ghūrak, king of Samarqand, is called *Ghūrak Ikshīd al-Sughd Afshīn Samarqand* by Ya'qūbī, cf. de la Vassière (2007: 28). The Sogdian etymology of *afshīn* proposed by Grenet (2010: 272) is hardly persuading. I cannot see any reason to doubt its Kidarite origin, though we do not know anything about their language.

²⁶ Cf. Marschak (1986: 35 and fig. 16).

²⁷ Marschak (ibid.) supposes that it was manufactured in the 6th or 7th century.

²⁸ Since *xwn* is also attested in the Mug documents (cf. Lurje: 441-442) of the early 8th century, this name alone can hardly suggest any period. Nevertheless, the Sogdian script is archaic in that x (heth) shows a typical form distinct from γ (gimel) and the inscription seems to be more or less contemporary with the Upper Indus inscriptions. Cf. also Marschak's relatively old dating of the bowl solely based on the style of the carving.

numerous Hephthalite embassies.

In my opinion, the Indus inscriptions came to end not because the Hephthalites divided the Kidarite empire but because the two Kidarite states were conquered by them.

5. Conclusion

If my arguments developed above prove to be correct, the Upper Indus Sogdian inscriptions are likely to be dated to the latter rather than first half of the 5th century, and accordingly the Sogdians had begun to write vertically by then.²⁹ In any case, it was when all these scribbles were inscribed that the writing direction was changing.

Why did Sogdians prefer to write vertically? Unfortunately, I have no convincing answer. The Chinese influence has long been considered and I think this can really be the case. Nevertheless, one should still inquire into the reason why it was during this particular period that the Chinese influence became so strong among Sogdians.³⁰ In this connection one may also consider the fact that the Chinese surnames of the Sinicized Sogdians or the so-called Zhaowu 昭武 surnames representing their home oasis cities, such as Cao 曹 (Kabudan), Shi 石 (Chach), Shi 史 (Kish), etc. also came to exist during this period, cf. Saito (2009).³¹

Before concluding my paper, I must emphasize that, as Henning points out, even after this period, the Sogdian script seems to have continued to be written horizontally as well, especially when the script was applied to codex style books like Manichaean or Christian scriptures.³² It may also have been the case with Zoroastrian books, of which two paintings have recently been discovered. One is a Penjikent mural (cf. de la Vaissière and Riboud 2003) and the other is a relief

²⁹ Incidentally, Grenet (2010: 272) now proposes to date the Swat seal “towards the end of the Kidarite period, in 450s and 460s”. Cf. also de la Vaissière’s somewhat contradictory remark on the dating of the Indus inscriptions (de la Vaissière 2005: 108):

The Sogdian cities sent embassies to China until 441, after which a break occurred until 457. ... It was probably during this period that the Sogdian onomastic system extensively assimilated the given or family name *xwn*, which is found in the inscriptions of the Upper Indus.

This is echoed by his following assertion (de la Vaissière 2005a: 20):

À mon sens ces *Xwn* sogdiens sont nés sous les dynasties kidarites de Sogdiane, et ont gravé leurs noms sur les rochers du Haut-Indus avant 460 et brusque expansion ephthalite en Bactriane, région qui sépare la Sogdiane de ces cols, qui a coupé la route.

³⁰ The Chinese influence may also explain the layout of Mug letters where names of either addressor or addressee are indented depending on the social status of the two. This layout is not encountered in the Ancient Letters. On the other hand, the similar indenting found in a Bactrian document of 771 CE (cf. Sims-Williams 2012: plate 102) may rather be due to the Sogdian influence. (On the uniqueness of this late document see also Sims-Williams 2006: 701-702.) Similarly, the vertical writing of Choresmian attested on an ossuary may also be due to the prestige of the Sogdian culture, cf. W. Seipel (ed.), *Weihrach und Seide. Alte Kulturen an der Seidenstraße*, Vienne 1996, p. 306, plate 170.

³¹ On the Zhaowu surnames, see Yoshida (2003). Among the Zhaowu surnames An 安 and Kang 康 are older than the others which came to exist in the late fifth or early sixth century. Among the two, An used to refer to Arshak or Parthian. Even in the sixth century those people from Central Asia and bearing the surname An were not all Sogdians. During the Liang Dynasty (502-557 CE) a country called Mo 末 or Merv dispatched An Mozipan 安末柔盤 (Middle Chinese **mât tsi b'uân*) to the court and Sasanian Persia, An Gouyue 安狗越 (**kau jiwat*). The former obviously represents *Marzbān* and the latter *Kawād*. I owe the reference to these names to Dr. M. Kawakami, who is preparing an article on the foreign embassies sent to the Liang court.

³² However, some Manichaean Sogdian texts are written on scrolls and one may assume vertical writing in those cases. In fact, a painting and seal impressions found on the two letters discovered in Bāzāklīk clearly show the vertical orientation, cf. Yoshida (2000).

found in a tomb of one Chinese Sogdian named Anqie, who died in Xi'an in 579 CE. (fig. 13) In the relief, one person in the lower right corner is holding a booklet in his left hand and seems to be reciting a hymn or a magic spell from it during a religious ceremony. Co-existence of vertical and horizontal writings among Sogdians can be compared with the modern Japanese or Chinese habit and is far from being odd.

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ソグド文字の縦書きは何時始まったのか？

吉田豊

キーワード：ソグド語，ソグド文字，中世イラン語，アラム文字，シルクロード，キダ
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要旨

ソグド文字は、アケメネス朝ペルシア（550-331 BC）時代の公用語である帝国アラム語を表記するアラム文字に由来する。このアラム文字は 22 文字からなり、右から左に横書きした。ソグド文字は、アルファベットを構成する文字の数も文字を書く方向もアラム文字のそれを受け継いだ。しかるに西暦 630 年にソグド地方を通過した中国僧の玄奘は、『西域記』においてソグドでは文字が縦書きされていると記述している。彼の報告の正しさはソグド語の碑文によって確認されるが、それら縦書きの碑文はどれも 6 世紀後半以降のものであり、それ以前のいつ横書きから縦書きに移行したかは判然としない。そこで本稿ではインダス川上流で発見される 650 点以上ものソグド語崖壁銘文群に注目する。これらは古風な文字で書かれており相対的に古い時代に属することは明らかである。しかもここでは縦書きの銘文と横書きの銘文が混在しており、これらが刻まれた時期にソグド文字が横書きから縦書きに移行しつつあったものと推測される。筆者は銘文群に現れる「匈奴」を意味する人名 xwn に注目し、それが自らフンと名乗ったキダール族が 5 世紀前半にソグド地方を征服した事実と関連づけられるとして、銘文の時代を 5 世紀後半に比定する。そしてこの時期にソグド文字の縦書きが始まったと結論した。

（よしだゆたか 京都大学文学研究科）



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

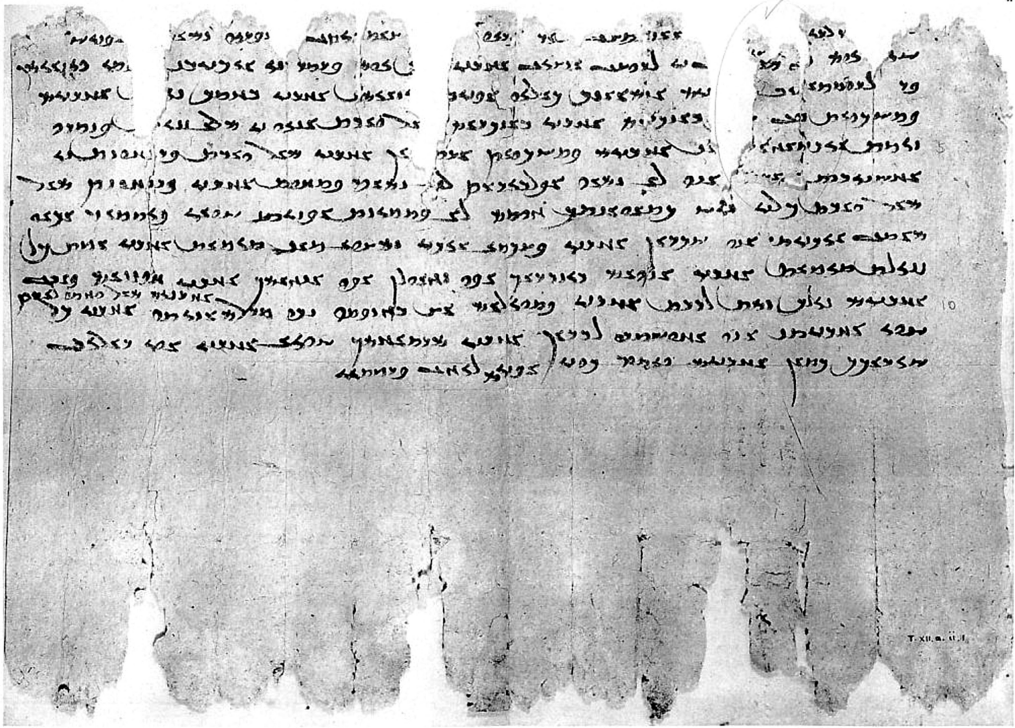


fig. 5

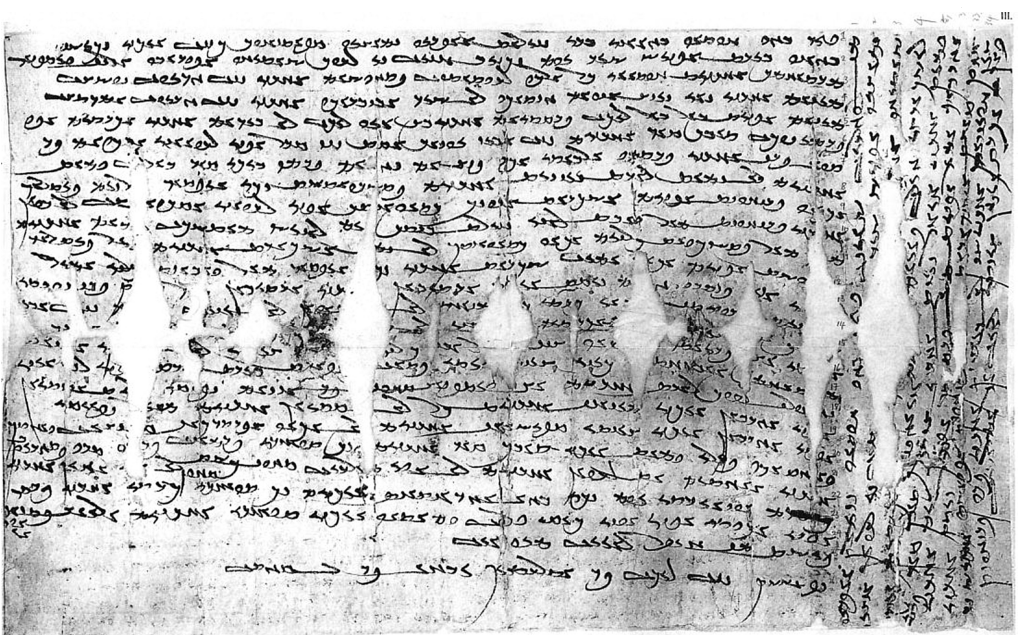


fig. 6

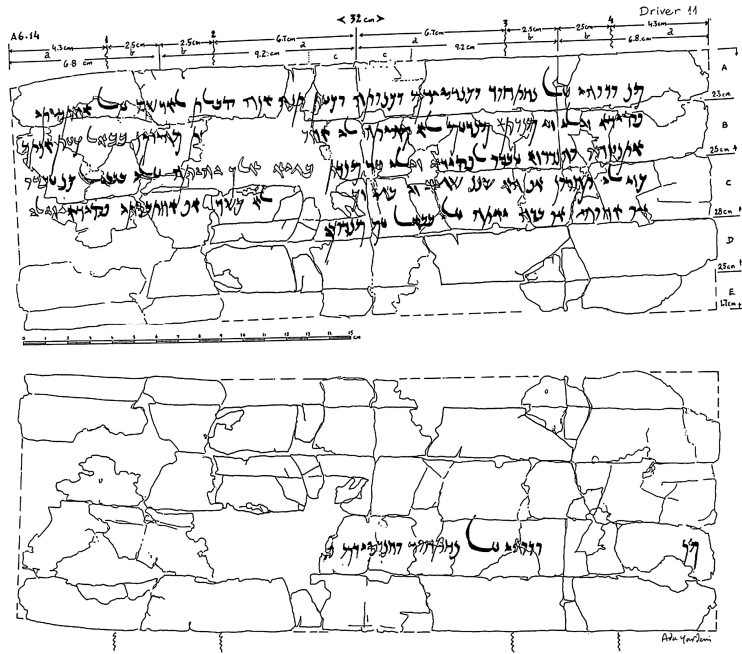


Fig. 7

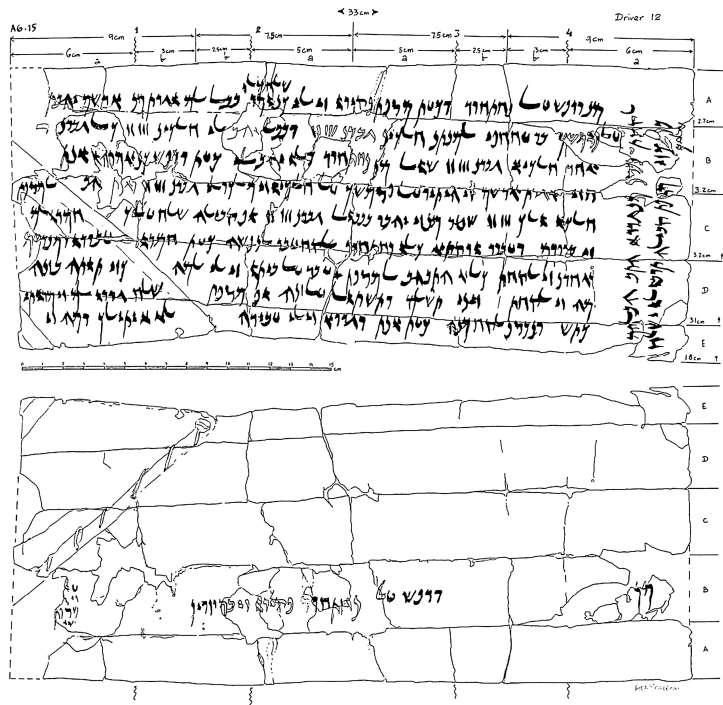


fig. 8