

Once more on Sogdian-Yaghnobi linguistic relations

The article deals with the questions of interrelation of two Eastern Iranian languages which are particularly close to each other: Sogdian and Yaghnobi. After a brief introduction on the trivia of extinct literary Sogdian of the 1st millennium CE and on the living tongue of Yaghnob in the mountains of Central Tajikistan, I review the previous scholarship on their similarities and dissimilarities. At the end of this chapter a special paragraph is devoted to the reasonability of bilateral comparison of Sogdian and Yaghnobi. Chapter 3 is devoted to the key differences between these two languages and the probable date of their separation, these features being the Sogdian “Rhythmic law”, the position of the augment in the imperfect, the third plural and first plural ending, *y*-umlaut diphthongs and the development of the clusters **δr* and **θr*. I advocate dating the key isoglosses to the 3rd century BCE — 3rd century CE: after the formation of Sogdian writing system and Greek influence and before the “Ancient Letters”, the first substantial group of Sogdian texts (before 313 CE). In the next chapter I deal with shared innovations of the two tongues that happened after the separation of proto-languages. Many of these features were triggered by close contact with Turkic speakers. Chapter 5 focuses on some cultural words and extra-linguistic, chiefly archaeological data. I argue that proto-Yaghnobis played a minimal role in the development of Sogdian trade and cosmopolitan high culture. In the chapter 6 I consider literary Sogdian a koine used by speakers of different closely related dialects. I try to show that some isoglosses visible in certain Sogdian texts were rooted in the dialectal background of their authors, sometimes perhaps the dialects of eastern Sogdiana and Ustrushana, which were closer to Yaghnobi than Samarkand standard was, and I conclude that proto-Yaghnobi had its own (perhaps, quite special) position within the dialects of Sogdian city-states. The article is followed by a list of some 150 Sogdian — Yaghnobi lexical correspondences which came to light after the publication of the dictionary in the book *Jagnobskie teksty* (1957). They are partially based on unpublished archival materials of B. A. Alborov and M. N. Bogoljubov, in a half of cases they were first noticed by this author. The indexes are also available in the form of online supplementary materials.

Keywords: close language relation; Eastern Iranian; Sogdian language; Yaghnobi language; isoglosses; absolute dating of language features.

1. Generalities

Sogdian is an extinct Eastern Iranian language of the Middle period. It is known from written texts in Sogdian (mostly translated compositions of Buddhists, Manichaeans and Christians) as well as a set of indirect attestations (*Nebenüberlieferung*) in the neighboring textual traditions, such as Chinese or Arabic. The language is known from the texts dated to almost the whole of the first millennium CE, which have been mostly found outside Sogdiana proper (the valleys of Zarafshan and Kashka-darya rivers in the parts of present-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan), most significantly in Dunhuang and Turfan in North-Western China, where Sogdians established their trading colonies. The language is generally written in three writing systems: the so-called National Sogdian script (all Buddhist, Zoroastrian (?) and secular texts as well as a good half of Manichaean fragments and several Christian ones), Manichaean script and Syriac script for Manichaean and Christian texts, respectively. All these

writing systems ultimately derive from the Aramaic quasi alphabet (*abjad*), and given the ambiguity of vocalization of the basically consonantal script, they are published in unvocalized transliteration and not in transcription; the records of Sogdian in Indian Brāhmī script are quite limited. The Sogdian texts are relatively numerous: my impression is that they are fewer than the surviving Middle Persian and Khotanese writings but more numerous than those in Parthian, Bactrian, Chorasmian, Tumshuqese, Ṭabarī and Alanic: the other Middle Iranian languages known to us so far.

The translated Sogdian texts are very well understood; some words or phrases in the original, secular compositions, and in inscriptions especially, remain hard to explain, which is partially due to the fact that they are usually written in an ambiguous shorthand script. The Sogdian dictionary (Gharib 1995) includes the lexicon of the main texts published before 1990s, it was more recently complemented by special dictionaries of Manichaean and Christian texts (Sims-Williams & Durkin-Meisterernst 2012, 2022; Sims-Williams 2016a, 2021a). The recent reference grammars are relatively brief book chapters (Sims-Williams 1989a; Yoshida 2009a),¹ so the older language descriptions (especially Gershevitch 1954) as well as a number of individual journal articles and even commentaries to text editions are to be consulted as well.

Few Sogdian texts can be dated exactly; the chronology is largely based on the palaeography, orthography, historical and archaeological contexts. The history of development of Sogdian can be outlined as follows. The earliest (and shortest) texts are coin legends (since the 2nd century BCE?) and some very short inscriptions. The texts on bricks from Kul-tobe in southern Kazakhstan perhaps date to the first centuries of common era. More extensive and better understood are the so-called “Ancient Letters” from a watch-tower in Dunhuang predating 313 CE, recently published together in a handy volume (Sims-Williams 2023); the visitor inscriptions of Upper Indus valley (Sims-Williams 1989b, 1992) are perhaps slightly later. There are several inscription and secular texts of the 6th century from Mongolia, Xian and Turfan areas. The better-preserved Buddhist texts come mainly from Dunhuang (less from Turfan) and are supposedly dated to the 6th–8th centuries. The documents from Mount Mugh, found not so far from Yaghnob, predate 722. These texts are written in a partially archaizing orthography, which reflects the older stage of the language. For example, the very widespread Sogdian suffix coming from Old Iranian **-aka*, and by then pronounced as */-e/*, could be spelt as <-k>, <-’k>, <-’y> or <-y>. The historical and archaeological data suggest that the climax of Sogdian culture falls in the 7th – early 8th centuries, too.

The Manichaean texts, found almost exclusively in the Turfan area, are supposedly dated to the 8th – very early 11th century. Those written in the National script display virtually the same orthographic features as the Buddhist and secular ones. The ones in the Manichaean script are free of ideograms and historical spellings and are more accurate in rendering the actual pronunciation of the time. The Christian texts of the 9th–10th century from Shūipang (Bulayiq) monastery near Turfan demonstrate further simplification of the language reflecting what one may call colloquial pronunciation; the manuscript E5 seems to document the latest stage. The Syriac orthography permitted a better rendering of vowels through not only the *matres lectionis* ’, w and y but also diacritic points.

The Sogdian fragments in a variant of the Brāhmī script are few but nevertheless quite important for understanding the actual pronunciation in Turfan around the late 9th to 10th century (Maue & Sims-Williams 2024). The latest texts in the ‘National’ script are the so-called ‘Turko-Sogdian’ ones from Dunhuang and Turfan; the inscriptions from Semirechie (the latest

¹ The Japanese ‘Lectures on Sogdian grammar’ by Yutaka Yoshida (2022) came to my notice too late to be included in full.

dated one is from 1026 CE, exactly 1000 years ago! — Livshits 2015: 290) have many similar features. Though written basically in Sogdian, they show a simplified grammar and profound influence from Uighur, which concerns not only personal names and lexica, but also phraseology, orthography, and even the sound system (Sims-Williams 2008; Yoshida 2009b; Sims-Williams & Hamilton 2015).

Yaghnobi is a living Eastern Iranian language for perhaps 10 000 to 20 000 native speakers (Panaino 2013a: 463; Mirzozoda apud Novák 2018: 27), but it does not have a literary tradition. All the speakers are bilingual with Tajik and some are tri- or quadrilingual with Uzbek and Russian. Yaghnob is an elevated mountain valley on the left-hand tributary of upper Zarafshan in central Tajikistan, which is difficult to access and poor in amenities. All the surrounding areas (including the uppermost and lower parts of the Yaghnob valley) are inhabited by Tajiks. In some publications, even the recent ones, Yaghnobi is classified as one of the Pamiri languages (Wendtland 2009). There are more than 200 km as a crow fly between Yaghnob and Yazghulom, the closest Pamiri speaking area, the distance that could be crossed in not less than a dozen days in the pre-modern period. However, since Pamiri is an areal term of heterogeneous Iranian tongues, the ecologies and lifestyle of Yaghnob and Pamir are similar, and some lexica is shared (Novák 2013: 214),² this designation can be justified at least partially.

The inhabitants of the Yaghnob valley are agriculturalists cultivating a very limited variety of crops on poor soils in the cold climate and practicing transhumance cattle breeding. All Yaghnobis are Sunny Muslims and are famed for their zeal among the neighbours. The scarce limit of arable land in the valley pressed many Yaghnobis to move outside, to Varzob to the south and Ghonchi to the north; in 1970s the Soviet government forcefully resettled Yaghnobis to the cotton fields of Zafarobod district near Khujand (Loy 2005), but since late 1980s, some of them decided to return to their homeland (with no roads, electricity, shops, schools or hospitals). Nowadays, one half of the older villages are partially populated, at least in summer (many people, especially those retired and children, prefer to spend summer in Yaghnob and return to Zafarobod, Dushanbe or other places in winter). Presently, the government of Tajikistan and international humanitarian foundations make efforts to establish a natural and ethnographic reserve in Yaghnob.

The resettlement and vulnerability to modern life notwithstanding, and contrary to pessimistic predictions from the earliest descriptions on (Akimbetov 1881, Panaino 2013a: 465), the Yaghnobi language demonstrates an outstanding vitality, and in 2008 I was able to collect folk-tales with a handful of previously unattested non-Tajik words in the text (Lurje 2010: 15–16, 2015b).³ The language is relatively well studied, beginning with the pioneering description of Alexander Kuhn made during the so-called ‘Iskandarkul expedition’ of 1870 and thereafter in Samarkand.⁴ The main descriptions are Khromov 1972, 1987; Biemeier 1989; Novák 2010: 220–247. The main dictionaries and glossaries have been prepared by V. A. Livshits and A. K. Pisarchik (in Andreev & Peshchereva 1957), A. L. Khromov (1972), Sayfiddin Mirzozoda (2008). More recently a Yaghnobi — Czech dictionary, aggregating all the previous publications with some novel material and using a uniform transcription has been published (Novák 2010).

Despite the small number of speakers, Yaghnobi has a dialect division. The principal ones are Western and Eastern dialects. The most significant differences between them (Khromov

² Cf. also many terms discussed by Filippone (2013).

³ “Having survived this long, it seems quite likely that Yaghnobi will continue to be spoken by bi- and trilingual speakers who will use Yaghnobi at home” (Durkin-Meisterernst 2008: 415)

⁴ See Iskander-t’ur’a 1881. The photographs of three Yaghnobis who were taken to Samarkand for linguistic records can be found in the ‘Turkestan album’ (Kun 1871: I, fol. 20).

1972: 97–105) include (1) the articulation of inherited * θ : eastern *s*, western *t*; (2) the realisation of * $\bar{a}$ + *y*-umlaut diphthongs: eastern ε , western *ai*; (3) third person singular present ending: eastern -*či*, western -*tišt*; (4) first person plural imperfect and simple preterit ending: eastern -*īm*, western -*ōm* (Novák 2013: 27), as well as certain lexical features. There is no clear border-line between the Eastern and Western dialects and the isoglosses cut across the valley in different spots, so one can talk of transitional dialects and a variety of the Kul side-valley (Khromov 1972: 97–105). A peculiar speech register, usually called “secret language” has been encountered many times (Klimchitskij 1938); I would rather classify it as a sort of language game, not unlike North European kennings, spiced with some humour.⁵

Over the 150 years of documentation of Yaghnobi some changes can be observed. The area covered by the language in the valley apparently did not shrink.⁶ In the early records the cluster *ft* was sometimes rendered as *vd*: *xšīvd*, now *xīšīft* ‘milk’ and *xt* as *yt*: *pirayta* for *piráxta*, *ūyta* for *úxta* (Bogoljubov 1956: 121; 888), some words (e. g. many inherited terms for colours) fell out of use. The preservation of the inherited θ in some early records cannot be proven (Bogoljubov 1956: 87–88).

However, as Rüdiger Schmitt remarked, ‘die Erforschung dieser Sprache [d.h. Yaghnobi — PL] und insbesondere ihres Wortschatzes stand leider nicht unter einem günstigeren Stern’ (Schmitt 2010: 95). Many important works remained unpublished, including *Jagnobskie étjudy* of Carl Salemann,⁷ the field studies of Robert Gauthiot of 1913, the recordings of B. A. Alborov of early 1930s (Lurje 2010: 12–15; Filippone 2013: 635), the doctoral dissertation of M. N. Bogoljubov (Bogoljubov 1956), many text records of Yu. N. Lebedeva of 1955–56, the university diploma of V. S. Nishanov on Yaghnobi syntax (1997). Even the recent dissertation of Lubomír Novák and his article on historical phonology of Yaghnobi and Sogdian remain unpublished (Novák 2013, 2014).⁸

For this article, apart from published material, I had an opportunity to utilize the somewhat amateurish, but very important lexical data of B. A. Alborov, the brilliant dissertation of M. N. Bogoljubov, as well as my field records of the trip to Yaghnob in 2008 and some stray notes made afterwards in Tajikistan in the middle of intense archaeological work. I am grateful to Zarinae Albortæ, the niece of Alborov, who told me of the existence of his manuscript, to Arsenij P. Vydrin of the Institute of linguistic studies, who made the copy for me in Vladikavkaz, and to my Hermitage colleague Alexej Mikhajlovich Bogoljubov, who provided me with a copy of his late father’s dissertation in 2011. I received important advice from Nicholas Sims-Williams, Yutaka Yoshida, Antonio Panaino, Arsenij Vydrin, Adam Benkato, and especially Ilya Yakubovich. Of course, all the responsibility for this paper lies on its author.

⁵ An unnoticed curious example comes from B. A. Alborov’s records (Alborov 1934: 53): Tajik *mullo* is glossed (in modernized transcription) as *γuš čak dórna*, literally “(the one who) grabs (by) ear”. One should keep in mind that a village mullah was also normally a teacher, and a teacher used to fiddle with ears of his pupils.

⁶ Of course, toponymy suggests that dialects close to Yaghnobi were widespread in the whole valley and around it (Khromov 1966b). Cf., e. g., the village and cave *Makševat/Maxševad* on Iskandar-darya, which evidently comes from Yaghnobi *mákša* ‘calf’; the micro-toponymy of Maryēb in the Tajik-speaking middle course of Yaghnob river is mostly Yaghnobi in origin (Lurje 2010); Bogoljubov noticed an interesting dialect variation between toponyms *Muštif* in Yaghnob and *Muždif* in Matcha (Bogoljubov 1956: 122–123).

⁷ The data were used by Geiger (1898) and the first part of the glossary was published by Émile Benveniste (1955). During his second trip to Central Asia in 1908, Salemann was accompanied by A. A. Staël von Holstein, who made photographs and recordings of Yaghnobi and other local languages on phonograph cylinders. The cylinders and photos are kept in the archive of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in Petersburg.

⁸ Both are available on the Internet: <https://independent.academia.edu/LubomírNovák>; <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lubomir-Novak> (accessed on 02.02.2026).

2. Previous studies on the relations of Sogdian and Yaghnobi

Yaghnobi became known to the Western scholarship more than three decades before the first Sogdian texts came to light, just when the area was incorporated into emerging Russian Turk-estan in 1870. The first, often amateurish records of the language, which was immediately recognized as an (Indo-)Iranian vernacular, were put together by Carl Salemann. Using his unpublished *Jagnobskie étjudy*, Wilhelm Geiger wrote the description of the language in the then-standard reference book *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie* on the eve of the 20th century (Geiger 1898).

When the first European expeditions started to uncover medieval texts in Khotan, Turfan and Dunhuang and to transfer them to the libraries in their countries on the eve of 20th century, the description of Yaghnobi was at the desks of the first decipherers. F. C. Andreas, who was the first to identify the “Pahlavi dialect” as Sogdian, noticed its similarity to Yaghnobi, and announced his discovery in the letters to F. W. K. Müller and C. Salemann (see now Sims-Williams 2022: 486–487). Some Yaghnobi forms (quotes as Pāmīr-Dialekte) were provided in the first edition of Sogdian (= “Pahlavi-Dialekt”) fragments by Müller (Müller 1904: 110), and Salemann used extensively the Yaghnobi data in his reedition of first Sogdian texts published by Sachau (Salemann 1907).

It was Andreas himself, however, who realized very soon that Yaghnobi, or Neusoghdisch, cannot be a direct continuation of what he called Mittelsoghdisch in any of its known forms (Andreas 1910: 307).⁹ Although he did not explain his reasoning, he could not help noticing that the development **θr > š*, which was his key argument for identifying Sogdian (apud Müller 1908: 2–3), is alien to Yaghnobi.

Robert Gauthiot, the pioneer of Sogdian studies in France, undertook a research trip to Yaghnob with Heinrich Junker in Summer 1913. The untimely death on the battleground during World War I prevented him from publishing the wealth of his data. In a short report he noticed that the language of Samarkand which extended as far as China could not be a parent of a humble Montagnard Yaghnobi tongue and that the two languages diverge in many points. Moreover, even the more archaic (so-called) Buddhist Sogdian could not be identical to ancient Yaghnobi, but rather was similar to it, and the more developed Christian Sogdian was more divergent. It was interesting to study, Gauthiot remarked, whether they are two different languages or dialects of a single one (Gauthiot 1913: 672, 678).¹⁰

⁹ “Diesen [Yaghnōbī — PL] wird man aber, soweit sich das schon jetzt beurteilen läßt, nicht als den Abkömmling eines der beiden uns erhaltenen mittelsoghdischen Dialekte ansehen dürfen”

¹⁰ “Il n’y avait pas de doute que l’humble parler montagnard d’aujourd’hui et la langue répandue au moyen âge de Samarqand jusqu’en Chine ne fussent parentes; mais il y avait intérêt à rechercher si l’intelligence de l’une pouvait être facilitée par la connaissance de l’autre et si l’on pouvait parler du yagnōbī et du sogdien comme de deux dialectes alliés de très près, ou de deux parlers d’une même langue”; “Que, sur bien des points, le sogdien et le yagnōbī aient divergé, cela n’a rien d’étonnant. Le sogdien d’écriture sogdienne, souvent appelé à tort bouddhique, qui est le plus archaïque, n’apparaît lui-même pas comme identique à la forme ancienne du yagnōbī, mais comme très voisine. A plus forte raison, le sogdien dit « chrétien » diverge-t-il, lui qui est plus évolué”.

In his earlier paper, Gauthiot seconded the opinion of Andreas (Gauthiot 1911: 139). Although he noticed the difference in development of **θr* (1911: 145–148), the similarity of Sogdian *wywsšw* [wxwšw] and Yaghnobi *uxš* ‘six’ led him to the conclusion that the difference of Buddhist Sogdian and Yaghnobi is largely chronological and both preserve archaic features (Gauthiot 1911: 159–160).

In the first part of his Sogdian grammar, Gauthiot noted that Yaghnobi shares most of the features of Sogdian, but not in the form attested in the documents from China, which means that Yaghnobi is a descendant of a Sogdian dialect. In particular, he observes the different development of **θr*, the absence of a prothetic vowel in Yaghnobi, the similarity in the development of **r* (Gauthiot 1914: 25, 42–45, 90–95) and several other important details.

Paul Tedesco, having discovered the Sogdian “Rhythmic law” and the difference between Sogdian “light” and “heavy” stems, immediately noticed that the Yaghnobi inflexion is identical with that of the Sogdian heavy stems (Tedesco 1926: 123 and elsewhere). Some scholars see it as the main difference between the two languages (Bielmeier 1989: 480). In an earlier paper, Tedesco considered the difference of 3Pl *-ant* in Sogdian against *-or* in Yaghnobi as the most significant feature among others (Tedesco 1923: 294–295).

In his article on Sogdo-Yaghnobi correspondences, S. I. Klimchitskij noticed the similarity of potential constructions in the two languages and added 38 unnoticed lexical pairs (Klimchitskij 1937). The linguistic relationship between Sogdian and Yaghnobi constituted a significant topic in the dissertation of M. N. Bogoljubov (Bogoljubov 1956: 148–149 et passim); happily this part of the text was published, albeit in an abridged form (Bogoljubov 1957a). Although Bogoljubov called Yaghnobi “Neo-Sogdian” (новосогдийский) in brackets in the title of his dissertation, he was far from equating the two tongues. In his view, the key differences are: Sogdian δ and Yaghnobi d vs. Old Iranian $*d$ (Bogoljubov argues that in Proto-Yaghnobi, as in a part of eastern Sogdian dialects, there was no fricativization of historical $*d$); the difference in the rendering of $*\theta r$: θr or $\dot{s}$ in Sogdian vs. initial *tir-/sar-* and non-initial *l* in Yaghnobi; the lack of the development $*dr > \delta r > \dot{z}$ in Yaghnobi; the lengthening of *-a-* before *-rt*. Bogoljubov’s observation on the voicing assimilation of historical preverbs in Yaghnobi is also very important. He thought that Yaghnobi originated from an eastern territorial dialect of Sogdian. In the *avtoreferat*, Bogoljubov adds the difference in the position of the augment and the 3pl ending *-or* in Yaghnobi, as well as the difference in some core lexical items (Bogoljubov 1957b: 19–20, 30).

The same year was marked by the publication of Yaghnobi texts collected by M. S. Andreev and E. M. Peshchereva in 1924 and 1927 with the appendix of a dictionary prepared by Andreev, V. A. Livshits and A. K. Pisarchik; the dictionary occupies almost one half of the book (Andreev & Peshchereva 1957: 225–390). It was Livshits who added brief etymological notes to the dictionary, and most of them are on Sogdian, with some 500 forms provided (see Index A in the supplementary materials). The later Yaghnobi dictionaries are generally void of etymological remarks,¹¹ so *Jagnobskie teksty* remain the main source of comparison of the lexica of two languages. Later, Livshits outlined some differences between the two languages and noted that Proto-Yaghnobi was substantially different from literary Sogdian. He thought it could continue the unattested Ustrushana Sogdian dialect (Livshits 1962a: 152). He also raised doubts on the postulated development of non-initial $*\theta r$ into $(l)l$ in Yaghnobi: both examples (*púlla* ‘small, child’ from $*pu\theta ra-$ and *ol* ‘fire’ from $*ā\theta r-$) can be questioned (Livshits 1970 note 29).¹²

A long chapter on Sogdian-Yaghnobi dialect relations was included by A. L. Khromov in his description of the Yaghnobi language (Khromov 1972: 119–135). He critically reviewed Bogoljubov’s viewpoint and reached the conclusion that it is impossible to decide whether Yaghnobi d was articulated as $/\delta/$ in the proto-language or not.¹³ He follows Livshits in doubting the

¹¹ A few stray notes were included in the glossary of Khromov’s book (Khromov 1972: 163–189). Novák (2010) adds references to the language of origin of words in the entries, e. g. (S) for Sogdian, (A) for Arabic, etc; many entries do not have such remarks.

¹² More recently, Novák added another example: *kat(t)ōlá, kattalá* ‘(1) stone shelter made with no wood; (2) ruin(s)’, which he believes to come from $*kata-ā\theta ra-ka-$ ‘house-fire’, Matcha Tajik *katol* (Novák 2013: 115). I would rather see here a metathesis of Persian *kalāt* ‘fortification’; this word, a substandard borrowing from Arabic *qal‘a(t)*, is very common in the south-east of the Iranian world.

¹³ One can add an argument in favour of proto-Yaghnobi $*\delta$: the verb ‘to pass’, $g^u dār-/d^u gār-$ is borrowed from Tajiki *guzaštan*, *guzar* ‘idem’. In Persian, however, it is always spelled with δ (گشتن), it is one of the few cases where so-called *dhāl-e Fārsī* remained as $/z/$ and not $/d/$, and apparently it was pronounced *guḍar-* in some Mavaranahr

development $*-\theta r > l$ and adds some other observations on Yaghnobi: the lack of voicing of clusters with initial $n-$; the lack of future tense, the connection between the Sogdian durative particle $'\text{štn}$ and the ending $-i\text{št}$ in Yaghnobi present and durative past. He followed Livshits in explaining Yaghnobi as a continuation of Ustrushana dialect. In his articles, Khromov discussed some lexical correspondences between two languages (Khromov 1966a, 1970, 2007).

I can hardly name any major edition of Sogdian texts, where some Yaghnobi data would not be included in the commentary. Émile Benveniste devoted a special paper to Sogdian $'\text{štn}$ and Yaghnobi $-i\text{št}$ (Benveniste 1966); the (late) Sogdian absolutive $-ky(')$ and Yaghnobi gerundive in $-ki$ were connected by Yutaka Yoshida (apud Sims-Williams & Hamilton 2015: 54–56); many Yaghnobi excurses can be found in Martin Schwarz's contributions on Sogdian (e. g. Schwartz 1970, 1982, 2021, 2024). Some 150 Yaghnobi parallels (albeit far from exhaustive and often in simplified transcription) are provided in the etymological section of entries in B. Gharib's *Sogdian Dictionary* (Gharib 1995) and are put together in the Index B (included in the supplementary materials).

Analysing the 3pl endings in $-āra$ in Iranian, Xavier Tremblay suggested in a footnote that Proto-Yaghnobi had once undergone the “Rhythmic law”, but later it was lost (as in the late Christian Sogdian manuscript C5). He based this observation on the Eastern Yaghnobi 3sg.prs ending $-čī$, which, he believes, is parallel to Western $-t$ and comes from the Sogdian light-stem ending $-ty$ (Tremblay 2006: 276–277 n. 50). Tremblay's idea was met with some objections (Panaino 2008: 5 quoting the opinion of Elio Provasi), in particular one should note that Eastern $-čī$ functionally corresponds to the Western full form $-ti\text{št}$ of the full paradigm, not $-t$ of the dependent paradigm and, moreover, the “intermediate” forms $-ččš$, $-tčč$ are attested in the speech of Kul side-valley (Andreev & Peshchereva 1957: 236–237; Bogoljubov 1956: 269–271).

Some 20 years ago international field research in Yaghnob resumed. A large team directed by Antonio Panaino of Bologna University worked in summers 2007–2012, and the present author joined the project in 2008. The results, promptly published, barely touch upon the language history, but are very important for understanding historical relations between Sogdiana and Yaghnob (Basello, Guizzo, & Ognibene 2008; Panaino, Gariboldi, & Ognibene 2013). In particular, the authors review critically the romantic concept of Yaghnobis being descendants of Sogdian refugees who refused to accept Islam. In the framework of the mission, a workshop on Yaghnobi was organized in Ravenna in September 2008. Nicholas Sims-Williams and the present author spoke on the topics of Sogdian-Yaghnobi relationship, and that talk ultimately realized in this paper.

Around the same time, Lubomír Novák of Charles' University collected field linguistic data in Yaghnob. He ended up with the already named Yaghnobi-Czech dictionary, a series of articles and a large portion of his dissertation on the Problem of Archaism and Innovation in the Eastern Iranian Languages. In the dissertation, he discusses the relations of the two languages, and in an additional (equally unpublished) paper, he further elaborates upon the question. He notes that the 1pl ending is Eastern Yaghnobi $-im(i\text{št})$ vs. Western Yaghnobi $-ōm(i\text{št})$, and while the first one shares innovation with Sogdian $-ym$, the latter is a continuation of the Old Iranian imperfect $*-āma$ (Novák 2013: 27). He reconstructs moreover the history of stress in Yaghnobi and Sogdian. According to his interpretation, the first two stages were common to both languages, but Stage III was an exclusive Sogdian feature, while Stage IV a late Sogdian feature. His conclusion needs to be quoted in full:

Persian dialects, too. It might have been borrowed in Yaghnobi at the time when intervocalic $/\delta/$ was still pronounced in this Tajik word and the Yaghnobi change of $/\delta/$ into $/d/$ had not yet taken place. Vladimir Aronovich Livshits pointed out this fact in one of our conversations more than 20 years ago. Another relevant example in Yaghnobi is (a) *damón* ‘then, by that time’, if it comes from Arabic *dhamān* دمان ‘time’.

“... the development of Yaghnōbī comes from a deeper history so the language cannot be considered as a descendant of Sogdian or any of its dialects. As I stated above, Sogdian itself is defined by its further development after the shift to *Stress III*. If Yaghnōbī and Sogdian are to be linked to a common ancestor, we need to think about a *Proto-Sogdic protolanguage that developed as one of the dialects of Central Asian Scythians. The development of *Proto-Sogdic has to be from an earlier date as Yaghnōbī also preserved some morphological features, that appear to be peripheral in Iranian (e.g. 3rd pers.pl. verbal ending *-ōr* (< **-ār* < **-r*, i.e. 3rd pers.pl.ind.perf. ending). Also Yaghnōbī nominal inflection shows that it developed independently of the Sogdian *Rhythmic Law* — if a similar feature occurred, Yaghnōbī light stems should be inflected in a two-case system, the same as those of Late Sogdian (see Table 1). During their growth the Sogdic languages/dialects were still in a linguistic contact, as may be illustrated by various common tendencies in their development. Yaghnōbī phonology appears to be rather archaic in some aspects when compared to Sogdian; some basic phenomena of development of both languages may be set even to the period of the turn of the Christian era or even earlier.” (Novák 2014: 10–11)

Novák also provides a South Asian variety of Swadesh word-lists for Yaghnobi and Sogdian (Novák 2013: 161–214) and concludes that a part of Yaghnobi lexica is best explained as a common Pamiri heritage. More recently, Ela Filippone examined the terms of body-parts in Yaghnobi with many etymological remarks (Filippone 2013), and Adam Benkato made an interesting comparison of copulas in Sogdian and Yaghnobi (Benkato 2020; cf. Vydrin 2025).

The similarities of Sogdian and Yaghnobi within Iranian linguistic unity are striking and incorporate virtually all levels of the language: historical phonetics (preservation of non-initial voiceless stops; absence of depalatalization of [tʃ] > [tʂ]; partial preservation of *xt*, *ft* groups; quality differentiation of *ā/ǎ* (Sims-Williams 1981)); morphology (similar plural ending and nominal declension, similar independent and enclitic personal pronouns, preservation of imperfect and augment, *-ki* gerundive, multiple copulas), syntax (similar formation of potential forms) as well as a long list of lexical correspondences. The geographic proximity of Sogdiana and Yaghnob cannot be ignored as well. Consequently, the comparison of these two languages (with only stray notice of other Iranian and non-Iranian tongues), seems a justified approach. The author does not intend to discuss in this paper the position of Sogdian and Yaghnobi on a wider scope.¹⁴

3. The features separating Sogdian and Yaghnobi and their probable dates

In this chapter I discuss the features of historical phonology, morphology and phonotactics that separate Yaghnobi from Sogdian, and try to locate them in history. These main features include (a) the stress patterns and the “Rhythmic Law”; (b) the position of the augment; (c) the third plural ending; (d) the shifts **δr* > *ž* and **θr* > *š* in Sogdian; (e) the survival of *ā+* *y*-umlaut diphthongs in Eastern Yaghnobi and (f) the first plural simple past ending *-om(išt)* in the Western Yaghnobi dialect. As a chronological marker, I will often analyse the data of the “Ancient Letters”, the earliest sizeable, well understood and exactly dated (before 313) group of Sogdian texts (Sims-Williams 2023).

3a. Sogdian “Rhythmic Law” and Yaghnobi verb stress pattern

As has been shown, the absence of the “Rhythmic Law” has been considered the main distinction separating Yaghnobi from Sogdian, while in Sogdian it is a key feature influencing its mor-

¹⁴ In particular, the recent revision of division into Eastern and Western Iranian (Korn 2016, 2019) is not relevant for the discussion below.

phology. It has been extensively studied, and Paul Tedesco, Ilya Gershevitch and Nicholas Sims-Williams made the main contributions to its understanding (Tedesco 1926; Gershevitch 1954: 72–81; Sims-Williams 1982, 1984). Let me quote a brief description from the most recent encyclopaedia entry:

“For understanding of the Sogdian phonology and morphology, the so-called “rhythmic law” is of vital importance [...]. According to this law, the retention or loss of proto-Sogdian final vowels depends on whether they bore a stress; in its turn, the position of the stress in words of more than one syllable is determined by the quantity of those syllables: all stems in Sogdian, whether nominal or verbal, containing a long vowel are heavy and bear a stress, while a stress falls on the endings of light stems that consist only of short vowel(s).” (Yoshida 2016)

The “Rhythmic Law” can be traced in the development of all grammar and heavily affects the verbal paradigm, for example; but it is most visible in the nominal declension, where the light-stem nouns follow the Old Indo-European patterns with modest innovations, while the heavy-stem ones have a simple two-case and two-number agglutinative paradigm. All the Yaghnobi nouns follow the second pattern.

In the latest Sogdian texts, however, the light-stem declension started to disintegrate, and in the Christian manuscript E5 (old label C5), the light-stem m.nom. with final *-i* was often taken as a base for new heavy-stem declension (Sims-Williams 1982: 69–70).¹⁵ In some of the latest Turko-Sogdian inscriptions from Semirechie, the bare light-stem bases seem to be attested: *zmn* for *zmnw* ‘time’ (Livshits 2015: 272) and perhaps *δst* for *δsty* ‘hand’ in a newly discovered inscription (Kol’chenko & Lurje, in print).¹⁶

As discussed above, there are no visible traces of the “Rhythmic Law” in Yaghnobi. In principle, one can hypothesize that in Yaghnobi there had once been a sort of the “Rhythmic Law”, and later the heavy stem pattern, a much simpler one and serving a wider word class, was generalized, and the light stem disappeared without traces.¹⁷ However, the stress pattern suggests the opposite.

In Yaghnobi the stress (Khromov 1972: 16–17) can fall on the ultima or more commonly the penultima; the final *-a* is unstressed, even in most of Tajik loans.¹⁸ The enclitic pronouns and the oblique marker *-i* are unstressed, too. The verbal pattern is more complicated. If the verb root has a long vowel (i. e., *ō*, *ē* or *ū*), or the short vowel of the root is followed by two consonants, the stress remains on the root. If the root has a short vowel followed by a single consonant, the endings with a long vowel (except 1sg.prs *-omišt*) bears stress. If the vowel of the ending is short, the stress remains on the root, even when it features a short vowel followed by a single consonant. Since the oblique marker *-i* (*-y*, *-ē*) is considered short, the basic pattern for both nouns and verbs is essentially the same.

It is also very similar to proto-Sogdian stress just before the application of the “Rhythmic Law”: the stress fell on the root (*barytone*) when it contained a long vowel or a diphthong, and

¹⁵ The similar fossilization of f.nom. in *-’* had even a wider usage (Sims-Williams 2017: 86); one example in Sogdian Brahmi fragment (Maue & Sims-Williams 2024: 45).

¹⁶ Alternatively, *δst xp* is a compound word meaning ‘by (one’s) own hand’; cf. also (Henning apud Gershevitch 1954: 77 note) on *jmnw*–*jwmn*– in Manichaean Sogdian. Both examples remain doubtful. The expression βγ ‘o, sir’ at the end of a phrase in late Manichaean has been explained as an enclitic to the last meaningful word (Sundermann 2016: 32).

¹⁷ Even in the standard Sogdian, the light stem declension was a sort of recessive gene, while the heavy stem was a dominant one: many borrowings and new formation follow the heavy-stem pattern, even without long syllables or diphthongs (Sims-Williams 1984: 208).

¹⁸ Interestingly, the penultimate stress is attested in Tajik vernaculars of the Yaghnob valley (Novák 2018)

if there weren't any long vowels, the stress fell on the ending (*oxytone*).¹⁹ It seems thus that the difference of the Yaghnobi pattern from the Proto-Sogdian one lies in two facts: in the former the syllable with a short vowel closed by two consonants also had two morae and bore stress;²⁰ and if neither root nor the ending had two morae, the stress remained on the root.

In the Yaghnobi verbal present paradigm, the short vowel was dropped, so the endings of 2pl *-t(išt)/-s(išt)*²¹ and 3sg *-t(išt)* lack the vowel part, while 1sg *-om(išt)*, 1pl *-im(išt)* and 3pl *-or(išt)* preserved the long vocalic part; the 2sg is simply *-Ø(išt)*. In the imperfect 1sg *-im*, 1pl *-om/-im* and 3pl *-or* are explainable virtually in the same way as the present endings, and so does *-Ø* of 3sg (as in the Sogdian imperfect of heavy stems). Less clear are 2Sg *-i* and 2pl *-ti/-si* (Khromov 1987: 681–683), the former could develop from OIr. **-ah* or rather Opt. **-aiš*, or even be influenced by Tajik *-ī*. The latter can be a product of analogy according to the following proportion (the result underlined):

	Present	Imperfect
2sg	<i>-Ø(išt)</i>	<i>-i</i>
2pl	<i>-t(išt)/-s(išt)</i>	<i>-<u>ti</u>/<u>si</u></i>

This model can work for the nominal declension as well, so all the endings safe genitive-dative in *-é* (from **-hya*) and locative *-ī* (from **-yā*) were lost, while the last two merged forming the oblique case ending (as in the heavy stems of Sogdian), however, in view of the declension of plurals in *-t* (see below, 4a), I would not exclude a parallel development.

The “Rhythmic Law” operates holistically in the standard Sogdian grammar, but in the “Ancient Letters” (before 313), it seems that some light stem words lack any endings. However, this feature can be also explained graphically: the final short vowels could remain unrecorded in the script (Sims-Williams 2021: 176). This situation is known from Semitic quasi-alphabets such as Imperial Aramaic (the predecessor of the Sogdian script) or Chorasmian recorded in Arabic-based script.

In essence, my explanation is similar to the one of Novák (2014),²² with four stages of stress, but it is perhaps a more economical one.

3b. The position of the augment

The augment is an old Indo-European particle **H₁é-*, Indo-Iranian **(H)a-*, which preceded the verb root to indicate past tense. It was a facultative feature, and is absent in many languages, including all Iranian ones, save Avestan (rare), Old Persian, Sogdian, Chorasmian, Yaghnobi and Tumshuqese (Ogihara 2019).

The augment in Sogdian and Yaghnobi had different destinies. In Sogdian it appears in the imperfect and usually manifests itself as a lengthening of the final vowel of the preverb. In simple verbs with two initial consonants, the augment *-y-* was often placed between them, a feature based on analogy (Gershevitch 1954: 95). In Yaghnobi *a-* is present in front of the verb in the simple and durative past, be it a simple or a (historically) prefixed verb.

¹⁹ This explanation in fact does not contradict the one proposed by Bogoljubov and his examples of the loss of short syllables in the root (Bogoljubov 1957b: 10–12; Khromov 1987: 991).

²⁰ Note that Gershevitch's explanation of roots with short vowel and final consonant clusters beginning in *r-* or *n-/m-* as an exception to the “Rhythmic law” has been abandoned in favour of newly formed *R* and *N* diphthongs (Sims-Williams 1984: 209–13).

²¹ The final *-išt* is absent in the dependent present, which is a more archaic form.

²² Who quoted my handout of 2008.

In Sogdian, the simple verb does not have an augment. However, due to the tendency to record prothetic vowels with *aleph*, this *aleph* can be mistaken for an augment (Benveniste, 1929: 45; Gershevitch 1954: 95). The augment only after the preverb (or pseudo-preverb) is well attested for the standard Sogdian. In the “Ancient Letters” the imperfect verbal forms seem to be absent,²³ but the imperfects *wytr* and *pr’’γz’(nt)* are attested in an early document from Niya and a mid-5th century one from Turfan (L.M.II.ii.09 R14, 17 and M96: 66, 2, 3 in Sims-Williams 2023: 74, 80). The first cannot help us with regards of augment: the present stem *wytr* < **wi-trya-* is also normally spelt with *y* in the first syllable, but the second one shows an internal augment in contrast with the present stem *prγ’z* (< **fra-gāz-*).²⁴

Summing up, we cannot date exactly the separation of Sogdian and Yaghnobi with regard to the augment; the 5th century is the latest possible date. Before that, it seems that placement of augment was subject to dialectal variation: before the root in proto-Sogdian and before the word-form in proto-Yaghnobi. For an analogy, cf. the position of durative prefix *(*ha*)*mē* with preverbs in Modern Persian *bar-mi-āyad* and Tajik *me-bar-oyad* ‘rises’.

3c. The third plural ending

In Sogdian, the third plural ending of all the attested tenses is -(’)*nt*, as in the majority of Iranian and Indo-European languages. In Yaghnobi, on the contrary, *-ant* is restricted to the subjunctive mood, while the relevant ending is *-or* in all the other temporal forms. In the present and past durative of the main clause this ending is now pronounced *-ošt*, which comes via *-oišt* (Andreev & Peshchereva 1957: 300) from *-orišt*, the form documented in early records. In some western villages *kunōrišt* has been attested up to 1940s (Bogoljubov 1956: 271).

The third plural ending with *R* is also attested elsewhere in Iranian: Avestan athematic optative *-ārə*, *-ārəš* and athematic indicative, injunctive and perfect preterit *-ārə*, Gathic *-arəš*;²⁵ Khotanese active conjunctive *-āru*, optative *-īru*, middle present *-āre*, conjunctive *-āru/-ānde*, optative *-īru*, perfect *-re*;²⁶ Chorasmian indicative *-’r(y)*, imperfect and injunctive *’r*, conjunctive *-’ri*, optative *-yr*²⁷ (Tremblay 2006). So Yaghnobi is not alone to display variation of the elements *NT* and *R* in 3pl.

As said above, Sogdian does not know the 3pl in *R*, unlike the related tongues. One naturally wonders if this fact can be explained by insufficient documentation. Yet, In the “Ancient Letters” alone, I have counted more than 20 forms of 3pl ending in *-’nt*, *-’ynt*, *-ynt* or *-’y’nt*. They include present, optative, intransitive and transitive preterit, optative intransitive preterit.²⁸ Imperfect *pr’’γz’nt* (noticed above) appears in a later, 5th century document from Karakhoja, Turfan.²⁹ To sum up, I think that the third plural verbal endings went separate ways in Sogdian and Yaghnobi before the 4th century CE. Before that the common proto-language might have had the *R* endings in some temporal or modal forms and the *NT* endings in the other ones, as in some Middle Iranian sister languages.

²³ For the past tense, normally the preterit form (sometimes called perfect) is used, as in several Christian Sogdian manuscripts (Livshits & Khromov 1981: 488), which is perhaps a dialectal feature.

²⁴ See (Sims-Williams 2023: 81) on shortening of the root vowel.

²⁵ Vs. *-nt*, *-an* or *-at* (< **nt*) in other moods.

²⁶ In other moods it is *-īndi*, *-ānde*, *-āndu*

²⁷ Here *r* varies with *l* in the so-called “athematic” endings.

²⁸ Of course, in the latter cases it is a 3pl form of copula and the root *δ’r-*, respectively.

²⁹ The plural endings of subjunctive haven’t been attested in Sogdian and are considered to be substituted by injunctive (Yoshida 2022: 356).

3d. The shift of **δr* > *ž* and **θr* > *š* in Sogdian

In many Sogdian words, Old Iranian **dr* > *δr* developed into *ž* and **θr* into *š*, respectively.³⁰ These consonant cluster simplifications were not universal, as in not a few cases we see a metathesis into *rδ* or *rθ* (Gershevitch 1954: 44, 47, 67). This sound-change is alien to Yaghnobi where word-initially these clusters turn into *dir*- and *tir*-/*sar*-, and word-internally **dr* becomes *rd*.³¹

The date of this change in Sogdian is difficult to establish, particularly because the historical *δr* and *θr* were often archaizingly spelled as <*δr*> in the national Sogdian script. This fact indicates, first of all, that the written tradition emerged when they were still pronounced as *δr* and *θr*. I have not met any clear case of spellings with *z* or *š* in the “Ancient Letters” or other early Sogdian texts. Quite suspicious though is the spelling *’tδrtyk* ‘third’ (from **θrityaka*-) in AL 3.26³² (Sims-Williams 2023: 41). In the later texts, the sequence *’tδr* was used to record *š*- (or perhaps *čš*, *š?*): apart from the same *’tδrty(k)*, *’cštyk*, *’štyk* ‘third’ in Buddhist Sogdian we see the spelling *’tδrzm’k* ‘anger’, variant of *δrzm’k/y*, perhaps /(*š*)*žmē*/, a peculiar development of Old Iranian **aižma*- Avestan *aēšma*- (Gershevitch 1946: 138) and *’tδrminw* ‘demon, Māra, Ahriman’, Manichaean and Christian *šmnw* /*šamnu*/, which comes (perhaps as a loan) from the unattested Avestan **ašā-mainiiuš* ‘the worse spirit’ (Sims-Williams 2021b: 59). This spelling would suggest that ‘third’ was already pronounced as /*ə(č)štik*/ in the early 4th century.

In the Upper Indus inscriptions, we meet the names *myšpr[n]* ‘glory of Mithra’ (very indistinct) and *tyδrβntk* ‘glory of Tištriia’ (Lurje 2010a: 258, 399). The latter could be a pseudo-historic spelling based on *myδr* /*Miš*/ ‘Mithra’, or a simplification of **tyšδr*- for **Tiš-θrya*- > *Ti-ʷšš*; in both scenarios, the change of **θr* > *š* already happened. The dating of this group of texts is a difficulty, the hypothesis of Étienne de la Vaissière that they correspond to the time of Hunnish (*xwn*) dominance in Sogdiana in the first half of the 5th century (Vaissière 2005: 82–83) is very attractive but cannot be verified.

In any case, the change *δr* > *ž* has already happened in Sogdian in the eve of the 7th century: the name *δrymtβntk* is rendered as 史射勿槃陀 *Shi Shewupantuo*, Early Middle Chinese *ziah-mut-ban-da*,³³ on a tomb-inscription of 609 CE (Lurje 2010a: 181).

Another approximation of the change *dr* > *ž* can be gleaned from loan-words. The goddess *δrymt*, or *jymt*, the patron of the 11th month (and the theophoric base of the mentioned *Shewupantuo*), was borrowed from Greek *Δημήτηρ*, as becomes clear from the forms *Δηματρ*-, *Δρηματ*- in Bactrian (Sims-Williams & de Blois 2005: 165). The borrowing might have happened in the Hellenistic period of the history of Sogdiana. Another ultimately Greek borrowing, from *δραχμή*, appears in Sogdian as *δrxm*-, without either traces of change into *ž* or metathesis into **/ərδaxm*-. This word does not appear in early Sogdian (Sims-Williams 2016b: 106–107), and in all probability it was borrowed from Middle Persian *drahm*, after the silver drachms of Peroz and Kawad (since late 5th century), their imitations and Bukhar-khuda coins (since mid-7th century) became the most common silver currency in Sogdiana. So, the change

³⁰ Somewhat similar development can be observed in Shughni group and partially in Chorasmian (Edelman 1986: 172–175).

³¹ On a dubious development of the non-initial **θr* into *-ll-* see p. 43 above. It is altogether strange that no clear cases of development of the common cluster **-θr-* are documented in Yaghnobi in the non-initial position. The only relatively safe example is *đirót*, *darós* ‘sickle’ from Old Iranian **dāθra*- (Rastorgueva & Edelman 2003: 440; Wendtland 2009: 178), where metathesis outstepped the long *ā*; although S *δr*’*š*- (if here, cautiously Benveniste 1979: 93) makes the development more complicated (cf. also under *šyš*- in the Appendix). There are plenty of words featuring *l* (excluding clear loans) in Yaghnobi but none of them has a satisfactory etymology.

³² Alongside *’δrtyk* in AL 5.32.

³³ Here and below the reconstructed Early Middle Chinese pronunciation follows Pulleyblank 1991 s. vv.

dr > *δr* > *ž* operated in Sogdian between the 2nd century BCE and perhaps the 4th century CE (while in the late 5th or 6th century it already did not function), and the separation of proto-Yaghnobi should be dated prior to it.

3e. The survival of *ā+y*-umlaut diphthongs in Eastern Yaghnobi

When in late 1990s Mikhail Nikolaevich Bogoljubov taught Sogdian at the Oriental Department of the Saint-Petersburg State University, he rigidly refrained from pronouncing anything³⁴; for him Sogdian was only “reading for the eyes”. When asked why he used to say that, he would point out that even in Yaghnobi it is unclear whether the diphthongs became monophthongs or not. The example of Yaghnobi *raut*, *rou* from **rautah-*, Sogdian *rw**t*, can now be dismissed in favour of *r’w’th* (Schwartz 1970: 301 with reference to Khromov; see appendix), and Yaghnobi *xauk* ‘marmot’ from Old Iranian **hūka*, Middle Persian *hūk/xūg* ‘pig’ is problematic from both phonetic (otherwise unattested *guṇa* form **hauka-*) and semantic viewpoints. Furthermore, there are numerous counterexamples with Yaghnobi *ū* from **au* (Khromov 1987: 654).

The situation with secondary *Y* diphthongs is different: if there was long *ā* in the root, and a suffix featuring *-y-* after a consonant, group of consonants or short syllable, we find *ε* in Eastern Yaghnobi, but *ay* in Western Yaghnobi. Bogoljubov provided a long list of correspondences (Bogoljubov 1956: 134–137): *weš/wayš* < **vāstrya-* ‘grass’, *mēšin/máyšin* ‘serum’ < **mās(t)nya-*, *nipēšin/nipáyšin* ‘grandson’ < **napās(t)nya*, *mēn/mayn* ‘village’ < **nmānya-*. This development is very common in the verbal stems in *-aya-*: *nipéd-/nipáy-* ‘to put’ < **ni-pādaya-*, *pinēš-/pináyš-* ‘to lose’ < **apa-nāsaya-*, *γurēš-/γuráyš* ‘to awaken’ < **vi-grāsaya-*, *sen-/sayn-* ‘bring up’ < **sānaya-*, *pirēž-/piráyž-* ‘run away’ < **apa-rāzaya-*, *bidēž-/bidáyž-* ‘to wrap’ < **upa-dārzaya-*.

This fact cannot reflect a secondary re-diphthongization: the oblique case of *-a* words has *-ay* (e. g. *póday*) in Western Yaghnobi and *-e* (*póde*) in Eastern Yaghnobi (Khromov 1972: 19) and moreover, most of the words discussed have transparent etymologies,³⁵ so Western Yaghnobi *ay* is a very old feature.

Before examining this feature in Sogdian, let us look at some names and toponyms in foreign transmission. The toponymy of Sogdian or proto-Yaghnobi origin in the upper reaches of Zarafshan is controversial: we see *mayn* in the names of boroughs *Sari Mayn* of Iskodar³⁶ and *Mayn* in Kurut,³⁷ but *Tomen*, *Tomin* or *Tūmen* to the east of Ayni, *Veškant*, *Vešab* and *Vēšist*³⁸ which are most likely based on Sogdian *wyš*, Yaghnobi *weš/wayš* ‘grass’. The Arabic rendering of Sogdian names and place-names is very ambiguous in this matter too, cf. e. g. *al-Bayrūnī* or *al-Bīrūnī* for Iranian *Bērūnī* (Blois 2024: 174–176).

Chinese renderings are also ambiguous: the early 7th century Sogdian king *šyšpyr*, from **sraišta-paira-* ‘best faith’ or rather **θrāšaya-paira-* ‘disseminating faith’ (Cheung 2007: 290–91, 397; Lurje 2010a: 380) is Shasebi (沙瑟毕, EMCh. *šai/šɛ:šit-ʔjit*) and, surprisingly, Arabic *Šašbīr*. The Sogdian word for ‘lady, queen’ *xwt’ynh*, which might have a diphthong of a similar origin (**xwa-tāw-nī-*, **xwa-tāw-nyā-*) is rendered (as a part of personal names) as *Hudianpantuo* (呼典畔陀; EMCh. *xɔ-tɛnʰ-banʰ-da*) in Chinese and *Hkhuttem-Wām* in Tocharian A (Lurje 2010a: 447 with references). The Arabic rendering *Ḥudhayna* (for *Khudayna*, حُدَيْنَة > حُدَيْنَة), as said

³⁴ Any reader of the edition of the Mount Mugh economic documents (Bogoljubov & Smirnova 1963) can notice the same approach.

³⁵ Yaghnobi *nes/nays* ‘nose’ is, however, a complication, see Bogoljubov 1956: 136–137.

³⁶ The place where a cist with well-preserved mummies was found, see <https://fergana.media/articles/139212/> (access 10.01.2026).

³⁷ My record of 07.07.2024.

³⁸ Recorded as *ʔy-wšy-šth* and *wyšβ-* in the Mount Mugh documents.

above, is also ambiguous. The word *rēžkēn* ‘desiring’, from **rāzaya-* in Sogdian in Brāhmī script shows *ē* (Maue & Sims-Williams 2024: 91). Cf. on the contrary *nai d₁[ē]* for *nyδk nyδ’y*, Old Iranian **naida-ka-* ‘no-one’.

In trying to examine whether such diphthongs occurred in the bulk of Sogdian texts, one is hindered by the consonantal scripts where the vowels are quite roughly rendered by prototypically consonant letters’, *w*, *y*. Thus, in National script, we see *wyš*, *np’yδ*, etc., with the vowel rendered as *y* or *y*, as is virtually the case of any long *ē* or *ī*. At any event, there is no trace of the etymological *-y* in the following syllable.³⁹

The common rendering of long vowels by combinations with aleph in non-initial position, namely *y* for *ī*, *ē* and *w* for *ō*, *ū*, is quite unusual in itself for other scripts derived from West Semitic abjads. One can wonder if at the time of the script formation the diphthongs **ai* and **au* had not yet contracted into *ē* and *ō*. However, even in the earliest texts we see *sp’δny* < **spāda-nī*, *nwkmyδnc* < **nawaka-maiθana-*, *nxšpyk* < **nixšap-iyaka-*, *šwt* < **šuta-* but *kš’y* < **kiš-iya-ka-* (Sims-Williams 2023: 1–10). In the “Ancient Letters”, we see for example *nw’y*z ‘to bring together, emass’ < **ham-vāzaya-* and *pr’y*z ‘to flee, run away’ < *apa-rāzaya-*; on the other hand, the name *ct’ysh* corresponds to *Catisa* of Niya documents, *myn-* ‘to remain’ comes from **(d)mānaya-*, *np’ys-*, *np’y*ns-, *npys-* ‘to write’ from **ni-paisa-* or **ni-pinsa-*, etc. So, even in the early texts, the spelling *y* was not an exclusive feature of secondary diphthongs.

Summing up, the monophthongization of *y*-umlaut diphthongs in Sogdian happened at least before the 7th century based on Chinese and Tocharian *Nebenüberlieferungen*, and such diphthongs cannot be distinguished from other *I* vowels in Sogdian texts since an early date.⁴⁰ The spellings like *y* and *w* could initially have been used for diphthongs in the first centuries BCE, when the writing tradition of the National Sogdian script emerged.

3f. The first plural simple past ending *-om(išt)* in the Western Yaghnobi dialect

The opposition of Eastern Yaghnobi 1pl.pst *-īm(išt)* and Western Yaghnobi *-ōm(išt)* was first noticed by Khromov (Khromov 1972: 103–104), and its importance is pointed out by Novák (Novák 2013: 27, 148, 218). According to Novák, the latter ending comes from the Old Iranian imperfect ending **-āma*. The Eastern Yaghnobi form *-īm(išt)*, identical in present and simple past (imperfect), comes from the optative *-aima* or the *-aya*-stem present **-ayamah*. The 1sg ending is *-om(išt)* in both dialects (from **-āma*).

In Sogdian, the 1sg ending is *ām* in the present, *-u* in imperfect, *-ān* in the optative; 1pl is *-ēm* in all tenses and moods, sometimes also *-ēman* (Gershevitch 1954: 111–112). The copula is 1sg *y* and 1pl *y* or *y*mn. Even if they were pronounced differently (*im*, *ēm(an)*), the two are quite similar and both were used to form intransitive preterit.

Note also the synchronic inversion of the copula endings in Yaghnobi: present 1sg *īm*, 1pl *om*,⁴¹ simple past 1sg *óyim* 1pl *iyóm* in all dialects (Khromov 1972: 684). The perfect 1sg is *wófta īm*, 1pl *wóft-om*; pluperfect is *wóft(a) oyim*, *wóft(a) iyom*. Given all this complexity of similarly sounding forms, I wonder if 1pl simple past *-óm(išt)* in Western Yaghnobi could not be an analogical development.

³⁹ Nicholas Sims-Williams reminded me of a counterexample: *mδy’n* ‘middle’ (parallel to *myδ’n*) from **madyāna-*.

⁴⁰ At a first glance, the Christian Sogdian orthography (with its usage of diacritic signs) cannot help much here too. Cf., however, the spelling *npy.d-*np*’d-* for *ni-pādaya-* (Sims-Williams 2016a: 119). Perhaps, more investigation on this subject is needed.

⁴¹ These endings render Old Iranian 1sg.prs **ahmi* and conj **ahāma* respectively.

Let me summarize the discussion in the following table:

No.	Feature	Date of separation
(a)	The Yaghnobi stress patterns and the “Rhythmic Law”	Before the 4 th century (AL)
(b)	The position of the augment	Before the 5 th century (Karakhoja fragment)
(c)	The third plural ending <i>-or/-ant</i>	Before the 4 th century (AL)
(d)	The shift of <i>*δr > ž</i> and <i>*θr > š</i> in Sogdian (vs. the preservation of the clusters in Yaghnobi)	After the 2 nd century BCE (historical spelling in Sogdian, name of Demeter), before the 7 th century (<i>Žēmatvande</i> in Chinese rendering, <i>δraxm</i>), perhaps before the 4 th century (AL, <i>’tδrmyk</i>)
(e)	The survival of <i>ā+i</i> -umlaut diphthongs in Eastern Yaghnobi vs. their monophthongization in Sogdian	Perhaps after the 3 rd century BCE (spellings <i>’y</i> , <i>’w</i> in the National script), before 7 th century (<i>Nebenüberlieferung</i>)
(f)	The first plural simple past ending <i>-om(išt)</i> in the Western Yaghnobi dialect.	Unclear, perhaps an analogical development.

All in all, I would date the separation of proto-Yaghnobi from an early predecessor of the literary Sogdian to the three centuries before or three centuries after the Common Era. We will return to the dialectal isoglosses of Sogdian in chapter 5.

4. Shared innovations

Having separated once upon a time around the turn of the common era, Sogdian and proto-Yaghnobi did not go in two completely different directions, and many features that appeared later are shared by the two languages, as it was often dictated by some more general trends.

4a. As has been shown recently, Sogdian “Ancient Letters” still possessed the historic plural endings, and the new plural in *-tā* was still used as a collective (Sims-Williams 2021); in the later texts it was generalized, and only few traces of the older plural survived. In Yaghnobi, we find only the plural suffix *-t*. This innovation (or a similar one based on the **-θva* collective) is shared by a number of Iranian languages: Ossetic, New Persian, some of Pamiri tongues.

4b. The converbial suffix *-ky*, *-ky’*, although known in standard Sogdian, became (under Turkic influence) very common in the latest texts (Sims-Williams & Hamilton 2015: 54–56), while converbs in *-ki* are also well known in Yaghnobi; sometimes the expressions are very similar: *tnk xr’ ’γ’t kt xwny pwsty cwn ywzy βrt’skn w’βky* “Tang Qara came saying ‘the edict bearer was bringing the document’” (op. cit., G12-13) vs. *γóre nüt atér ‘man túra ben, man túra ben’ wóvke* “she came in the cave saying “look what I will (do) with you”” (Andreev & Peshchereva 1957: 353);⁴² *ZKZY ZKw ’nyw w’tδ’r ny’st ’PZY šw ptr’yšky xwrtý* “who takes other beings and tears them up and eats them” (P2, 457-8 apud Sims-Williams & Hamilton 2015: 55); Brāhmī *pi zki hv[e]r* ‘having crushed it, cause (the patient) to eat (it)’ (Maue & Sims-Williams 2024: 67–68 5B1) vs. *tu xáški žaf* “drink (it) in one gulp (lit., pulling)” (Khromov 1972: 47).⁴³ The Tajik participle in *-agī* is related here too (Sundermann 2016: 32–33).

⁴² “Она вошла в пещеру говоря «смотри что я с тобой (сделаю)»”.

⁴³ “Ты выпей залпом (букв., втягивая)”.

4c. Another feature is the enclitic pronoun used as a possession marker placed after the possessed object. In standard Sogdian, the enclitic pronouns behaved still as Wackernagel clitics and were attached to the first stressed word (usually, a conjunction or an adverb). The forms like Manichaean *frn's* 'his glory' *tmp'r's* 'his body' (L73+L77; So 18196, ed. Yoshida 2001: 111–114), *m'tm* 'my mother' (Durkin-Meisterernst 2006 line 1164), inscriptional *ptryš* 'his father' (?; Livshits 2015: 290 line 14); Christian *cn xwž'mntyš* 'from its demands' (E28/16 R20 ed. Sims-Williams 2017: 106) and others (Yoshida 2009b; Sims-Williams 2015: 158) share the pattern with Turkic, Arabic, Yaghnobi and New Persian forms. Similarly to Sogdian, in Middle Persian we see this construction rarely and only in late texts (Jügel 2016: 44), while in New Persian (as in Yaghnobi) it becomes the norm. In this case, the influence might have come from two sides: Arabic and Turkic.

4d. Another feature described for Yaghnobi are serial verbs. While the first verb in the phrase has the full form, the second and consequent ones follow the so-called dependent, shortened paradigm. Cf. e.g. the following examples *aǰāxim Nūmitkon amón atír* "I stood up and left for Nomitkon"; *odámt bisyór jām avór aǰāx šikóri ašāw* "Many people gathered, stood up and went hunting"; ...*auqót kunóšt x'arór* "they make food and eat" (Khromov 1972: 41–42); *ax parwóz kúntišt, osmúne vek vort* "(the bird) flies, brings him in the sky" (Lurje 2015b: 156). These serial verbs are most common in the description of movement: *aǰāx ašāw* 'stand up (and) go'⁴⁴, *asán awes* 'ascend (and) descent', etc.

I noticed similar double verb expressions (without different paradigm of course) in Christian and inscriptional Sogdian: *'t srpywn 'xšt x(r)[t qw] wyšnt s'r* "And Serapion arose (and) went to them" *r](ty) sxwsdrt ɣryw 'wxšt yty nysty* "[... And] he lifted himself up (and) went down and embarked [on a ship]" (E26/28 V5-6; E26/30 V17 ed. Sims-Williams 2015: 126–133); the expression *βyrt pryp* 'obtained (and) took away' twice in the documents from Hisorak (2,2; 3,2; Lurje 2012: 446–447, 444, 451) is of particular interest here because these texts come from the Zarafshan valley not so far from Yaghnob. Of course, all these serial verb expressions (and similarly Tajiki *girifta burd* "brought having taken") have been influenced by Turkic (Doerfer 1967: 52–56; Soper 1992; Perry 2006).

4e. Simplification of syllable-final clusters (and even apocope of word-final consonants) represent quite widespread features of Yaghnobi and are occasionally detectable in some late Sogdian texts. So, 'full', usually *pwrn* <**purna-*, is rendered as *pwn* in some Christian manuscripts (Sims-Williams 2016a: 159), compare Yaghnobi *pūnn*. The reflex of **xwaipaθya-*, normally Sogdian *xypδ*, appears as *xyp* in several late Manichaean texts (Sims-Williams & Durkin-Meisterernst 2012: 225), inscriptions (Livshits 2015: 272)⁴⁵ and *he-p* in *Brāhmī* transmission (Maue & Sims-Williams 2024: 92), compare Yaghnobi *xēp*, *xap*, *wxap*. For a parallel apocope, see Sogdian *s'* postposition 'towards' from older *s'r* vs. Yaghnobi *sa*.

Finally, I would like to outline very briefly a quite general syntactic difference between Sogdian and Yaghnobi: in the former, there is a plethora of conjunctions, introductory particles and other function words. W. B. Henning complained that on a Sogdian fragment from Turfan, the searching eye encounters only conjunctions, particles, auxiliary verbs, pronouns—a host of meaningless elements, unlike Parthian or Middle Persian (Henning 1958: 91–92). In Yaghnobi, the quantity of modal words and conjunctions is at minimum (Bogoljubov 1956: 389).⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Note the soubriquet of Yaghnobis used by neighbouring Tajiks: *jahak*, lit. 'jumper' (Guizzo 2013: 153).

⁴⁵ Also perhaps *xp* in another inscription (Kol'chenko & Lurje, in print).

⁴⁶ This feature was outlined recently by A. P. Vydrin in the paper 'Yaghnobi dependent forms' at the conference "Indo-Iranian Languages of the Pamir, Hindu Kush and beyond" held at the Institute of Linguistic Studies in Petersburg on 6 December 2025.

I would not ascribe this difference to psycho-linguistic features of speech of eloquent traders and laconic mountaineers (so, Pamiri Shughni is quite rich in this kind of function words),⁴⁷ but rather to more profound influence of Turkic with its tendency to use converb constructions instead of complex sentences.

5. Some cultural traits and extra-linguistic data

Only a handful of words or expressions bear witness to cultural continuity between early medieval Sogdians and present-day Yaghnobis. The word *nimóč* ‘namāz, prayer’, Sogdian *nm’c(yw)* indicates in very broad terms some continuation of worship practice. A number of old words in the sphere of marriage (cf. *k’m* – *komomišt*, *r’t* – *rot*, *xwž* – *xúǰgón*, *pšt* – *pša^h-namónča* in the Appendix)⁴⁸ might indicate continuity of matrimonial customs. Sogdian *xutarne* and Yaghnobi *xutánna* ‘water-mill’, literary ‘auto-mill’ indicate a very important innovation in the agriculture that was implemented around the 6th century⁴⁹ and it is also reflected in the Pamir language Wakhi as *xədorg* etc. (Steblin-Kamenskij 1999: 410). The elements of a water-mill (*prn* – *pann*, *kpc’k* – *kapčák*, *ptš’nh* – *pašáng(?)*) also preserve much of Sogdian lexicon.

In several cases, the similarities are also shared by Tajiks (and beyond), and the direct relation cannot be established. Thus, the Sogdian expression *z’ry r’t* ‘cried pitifully’ (many times in Vessantara Jātaka, the well Sogdianized version of the Buddhist popular story) is parallel to Yaghnobi *zor-zor roy* (Andreev & Peshchereva 1957: 369), but the parallel expression *zor me-giryam*, *giryā kunam zor-zor* also occurs in Tajiki.⁵⁰ The prediction of the sex of a new-born from the shape of its mother’s belly in the Sogdian text So 18700 (Reck 2005) closely corresponds to the popular medicine in Yaghnob (Delaini 2013: 131), but the same practice goes far beyond, including classical Persian texts. The Yaghnobi folk-tales, as is widely known, are closely parallel to the Tajik ones.⁵¹

The borrowings must also be taken into consideration. Sogdians, the traders between China, Steppe, India, Iran and Byzantium, borrowed many words from their close and distant neighbours, not just religious terms (Novák 2013: 213). When referring to ‘sea, ocean’, they used *sumdar-* from Indian *samudra*, for ‘inn’ they used *tīm* from Chinese *dian* (店 EMCh *tēm^h*), the terms for silver coins were borrowed (ultimately) from Greek: *stēr*, *δραχm-* (mentioned in Section 3d), while the designation of bronze or copper coins, *pn-* came more likely from Indian *paṇa-* (Thierry 1999: 325) rather than from Chinese *fen*. For ‘palace’, *šaykan* from Middle Persian *šāhīgān* was used, for ‘dagger’ – *xaⁿγar*, a word of ultimately Hunnic origin (Dybo 2007: 83–85), etc. Even the term ‘caravan’, important as it was for traders, was initially called *s’rt* from Indian *sārtha*, and later *’rxyš* from Turkic *arqış*.

⁴⁷ As noticed by O. I. Belyaev in the discussion at the same conference.

⁴⁸ The expression quoted for *soda* ‘always’ in Andreev & Peshchereva 1957: 323 is a benediction for the bride, but Mirzozoda (2008: 182) provides contexts from other life situations.

⁴⁹ I am not aware of mill-stones discovered in antiquity period sites in Sogdiana. They become numerous since the early medieval period. The name *xwtiyy’urn* however appears in the Upper Indus inscriptions (Lurje 2010a: 449–450), and Nisaeen Parhian personal name *hwtrn* is older (Schmitt 2016: 112–113), maybe the innovation came from Western Asia.

⁵⁰ Checked in the National Tajik corpus, <https://tajik-corpus.org/>. Unfortunately I overlooked that fact in Lurje 2010b: 780 n. 3, and it led to a hasty conclusion.

⁵¹ I take the opportunity to note that the “Tale” about Ali and Imam Mahdi, which I recorded in 2008 and published in 2015 (Lurje 2015b), is also known by Panjakent townsfolk.

Yaghnobi has, of course, a very large number of Tajik loans (including those of ultimately Arabic origin), the share of Turkic (Uzbek and likely Kyrgyz)⁵² and Russian loanwords is also significant; some words, as noted above, are shared with the Pamir languages. In contrast, loanwords dating back to the pre-Islamic period are very few. They arguably include *šiwina*, *šawén* ‘home-made cotton garment’ vs. Sogdian *wšwynk* ‘sort of fabric’, etc., if indeed from *βύσσος*, cf. Turkic *böz*, Russian *bjaz*’ (Sims-Williams & Hamilton 2015: 67–68) and *kr’nx*, *kr’x*, *qrx* ‘paralyzed’, Yaghnobi *karáx*, *kírax* ‘numb’, if from Indian *grāha*- (Henning 1946: 715; Schwartz 1982: 86; Sims-Williams 2015: 153). Noteworthy both *šavina*⁵³ and *karaxš* are attested in Tajiki (Rakhimi & Uspenskaja 1954: 182), Persian *karax(t)*. The correspondence of S. *ryz’kh* ‘rice’, related to Indian *vrihi*- and (γ*urda*)*režónna* ‘rice, grain’ (secret word) is dubious, see Appendix under *ryž*-. If *rouča*, *rúča* ‘fast’ indeed comes from Sogdian *rwc* ‘day’ (as Tajiki *rūza*, Middle Persian *rōzag* <*lwck*> ‘fasting’), it would indicate that Western Middle Iranian borrowed (in Achaemenid period?) calendar with the day-names ending in *-rwc* was used by proto-Yaghnobis before Islam (see Appendix).⁵⁴

The safest common pre-Islamic loan is Sogdian *’rk* ‘duty, corvée labour, work’, Yaghnobi *ark* ‘work’, which had been ultimately borrowed, like Middle Persian *harg* ‘duty, tax’, Bactrian *vapγo*, Yidgha *hory* etc., from Akkadian *ilku* ‘land tax, duty’ via Aramaic **halkā* (Henning 1958: 41; Schwartz 2004; Sims-Williams 2007: 272).⁵⁵ In this respect, the much discussed Mt. Mugh document B-7 (Livshits 2015: 156–157) is particularly important. The letter from an unnamed ruler of Martshkat to Wishtam, the ruler of Kishtud, informs that the people of Parghar came and did not stop doing their work (*’rkh*) and [following] orders, but then many of them ran away, so that no more than seven people remained; the author asked to catch the fugitives. Antonio Panaino’s attractive idea that the people from Parghar mentioned in the letter were in fact the inhabitants of Yaghnob (Panaino 2013b: 47–51) is not without difficulties.⁵⁶ It is clear though that *’rk* ‘duty, work, corvée labour’ was an important part in the mountaineers’ economy of the early 8th century. The Proto-Yaghnobi’s contacts with the rulers of Sogdiana minimally constituted of corvée service. Their distant land was hardly a part of the flourishing culture and long-distance trade of the pre-Islamic Central Asia.

The viewpoint that Yaghnobis are refugees from mainland Sogdiana who were driven away by Arab and Mongol invasions is an old (Gauthiot 1914) and still enduring viewpoint (Gunya 2002: 18–21). It is especially favoured by Tajik historiography (as discussed in Panaino 2013a) and appears very commonly in the romanticized journalist and travel-blog accounts. At the same time, this viewpoint seems to corroborate modern Western theories of the mountain-

⁵² Not all of them are shared with Tajik. Yaghnobi *kátta* ‘big’ from Uzbek *qatta* is not common in Tajik.

⁵³ I incidentally heard this Tajik word in Panjakent.

⁵⁴ Alternatively, as Sims-Williams suggested to the author, the inherent reflex of Old Iranian **raučah*- might have existed in proto-Sogdian.

⁵⁵ Iranian etymologies of Sogdian *’rk* and cognates have also been proposed (Rastorgueva & Edelman 2000: 198; Cheung 2007: 131–132). The similar specialized meanings of Akkadian *ilku* (Kienast 1980) and Middle Persian *harg* are, however, noteworthy.

⁵⁶ The main rationale for Panaino’s hypothesis is that the relevant people came down (*’wxšt’nt*), and Parghar is below Martshkat (modern Hisorak, opposite to Madrushkat in Matcha). Yaghnob, however, is higher than Hisorak, and in order to gain Hisorak from Yaghnob, one has to traverse a pass across the Zarafshan Range. As I am going to show elsewhere, the pre-modern *Falghar* did not correspond to the modern Aynī district of Tajikistan as a whole, but only to its Zarafshan part. The valley of Fan-darya and its tributaries (now the part of the Aynī district) was then the *Fan* or *Iskandar* district, and Yaghnob was sometimes considered its part, and sometimes a separate entity. It is very likely that *srwcyk xwβw* of the Mount Mugh documents corresponds to the Fan principedom, named after *srw*- for modern Sarvoda, its main centre (Lurje forthc.).

ous “Regions of Refuge” (Aguirre Beltran 1979) and of upland movement in Southeast Asia and beyond to escape state violence (Scott 2009).

As we have seen above, the proto-Yaghnobi language was closely related, but different from Sogdian, at least since the Hellenistic period. Yaghnobis did not share the advances of the highly developed Sogdian civilizations, at least *en masse*. Extralinguistic evidence tends to support this view. The petroglyphs indicate that the valley was inhabited (at least, as a pastoral ground) since late antiquity (Passarelli 2008: 108), and there is limited evidence for the presence of pre-Islamic strongholds in the valley (Panaino 2013b). At the same time, the mitochondrial DNA data, ambiguous as they are for historical conclusions, suggest that Yaghnobis are genetically quite distant from the neighbouring Tajik population (Cilli et al. 2013).

More can be said about the better investigated 6th–9th century archaeological sites of the Upper Zarafshan valley, which share geographical proximity and some ecological similarity to Yaghnob: Mount Mugh, Kum, Gardani Hisor in Parghar, Hisorak in Matcha and some others.⁵⁷ Although elements of their élite culture are quite similar to the lowland Sogdiana (Panjakent and further west) and lowland Ustrushana (especially the Shahrstan oasis) with respect to monumental architecture, fortifications and decorations, everyday life was very much different. Money economy in the highlands was at its minimum; the buildings were almost all of one floor; the structure of the household was different, without any reception rooms, and much more stone was in use as opposed to mudbricks. The pottery of lowland Sogdiana is predominantly wheel-made and that of highlands was predominantly hand-formed, which is a very important ethnic indicator, burial customs were different, too (Lurje 2022: 260). Moreover, the more recent historical records show that the highlanders were more often moving to the lowlands for a better life (Arandarenko 1889: 160–163; Mukhtarov 1978: II, 117–119),⁵⁸ than vice versa, although this occasionally happened at the moments of danger, in search of temporary refuge.⁵⁹

6. Isoglosses in Sogdian and conclusions

In the course of the previous discussion, we have treated Sogdian as a uniform language. It is well known that the main differences between the texts in the National, Manichaean and Christian scripts are not of a dialectal nature but reflect different stages of the same language and different distance between the written and colloquial registers. It is natural to suppose that the vernacular of Samarkand, the largest city of Sogdiana, its nominal capital, the seat of Manichaean archegos and Christian metropolitan, served as a base for its literary language (Yoshida 2016), so to say, the Sogdian *koine*.

However, spoken reality in the confederation of Sogdian city-states was more complex. The 10th century geographers noted both similarities and differences in the speech of various parts of Sogdiana (al-Muqaddasī edited by de Goeje 1906: 335–336). Through the analysis of rich toponymical data, we can distinguish some features of the Bukharan dialect of Sogdian (Lurje 2015a). Moreover, a different, more archaic script was used in the pre-Islamic Bukhara oasis (Djakonov, Kaufman, & Livshits 1954).

Even the written language was not as uniform as it appears at first glance. The recent study shows a similar use of articles in the Buddhist Vessantara Jātaka and the Christian

⁵⁷ Apart from this, there are bronze-age petroglyphs, Sarmatian-type burials and antiquity period pottery documented in the area (Isakov, Jakubov & Karimova 2020, vol. II).

⁵⁸ The common 19th – 20th century cases of labour migrations (Dynin 1914: 73) and mercenary forces (Babadzhanov 2010: 118–119) might be mentioned too.

⁵⁹ Cf. the well-studied case of highland Ustrushana (Stark 2008).

“Deeds of Pethion” (C2/E27, 1), which indicates their dialectal affinity (Wendtland 2011: 350). The translator or scribe of the Sūtra of Causes and Effects tended to write the final *-i* with *aleph* and not with *yodh*, contrary to the common practice, and this habit is probably indicative of his dialectal background (Sims-Williams 2025a); the dialect variation of usage of past verbal forms in Christian Sogdian has been recently scrutinized by Yutaka Yoshida (2022b: 605–610).

I suppose that some particular Sogdian texts include the features that are close to Yaghnobi and perhaps mirror the fact that their authors originated from the eastern extremity of Sogdiana or Ustrushana. So, Vessantara Jātaka of Dunhuang and Nirvāṇasūtra of Turfan use the durative particle *ʾstn* (equal to Standard Sogdian *skwn*, which is also present there), similar to Yaghnobi *-išt* (Benveniste 1966). In two or three texts we meet *km-* ‘neck’ and *rx-* ‘mouth’, which are distinct from standard Sogdian *γrδʾk* and *kwcʾkh* and similar to Yaghnobi *kāma* and *rax* (see Appendix), respectively. The lack of the prothetic vowel before consonant clusters in Sogdian texts in Brāhmi transmission and small proportion of forms with prothesis in Christian Sogdian could reflect the pronunciation patterns that were more similar to Yaghnobi, where epenthesis is used instead.

In some cases, forms from a dialect close to proto-Yaghnobi may have entered the standard Sogdian. As M. N. Bogoljubov noted, in Yaghnobi historical **a* before *rt* regularly realizes as *ort* (Bogoljubov 1957a). The standard Sogdian perfect passive participles (ʾ)βyʾrt⁶⁰ from βyr- ‘to obtain’ (Yaghnobi *ver*, *vyórta*) and δβʾrt from δβr- ‘to give’⁶¹ share the same isogloss.

I tried to show above that Yaghnobi and standard written Sogdian separated from each other in their main features perhaps around the beginning of the common era, not earlier than the 3rd century BCE and not later than the 3rd century CE. Having separated they, however, underwent some parallel innovations, partially inspired by Turkic adstrate. Although in Yaghnobi there are very few traces of participation in the high culture of the Sogdians, and their ancestors did not move from the lowlands in the course of the documented history, yet some dialectal forms similar to Yaghnobi (and perhaps used in the wider area of eastern, highland Sogdiana or Ustrushana) appear from time to time in Sogdian texts.

The lexical parallels between Sogdian and Yaghnoby, which are enumerated in the Appendix and Indexes, further show the profound relation of the two. More than one hundred years after Gauthiot posed the question if Sogdian and Proto-Yaghnobi were two closely related languages or dialects of the single language, it is still impossible to give a definitive answer: even the definitions of language and dialect vary significantly. It is impossible to prove, but I strongly suppose that native of early medieval Yaghnob, if happened to learn Sogdian literacy, would not consider it learning a foreign language and would regard it a script of his own, with some peculiarities of the literary language needed to be learnt. We all have spent time and efforts learning our literary mother tongues at primary school.

Addendum

After this paper had almost been finished, I got access—through the kindness of its author—to the very recent and very important paper “Yaghnobi and the Sogdian ‘Rhythmic Law’” (Sims-Williams 2025b), which is an elaboration of the talk I attended in Ravenna in 2008.

⁶⁰ The consistent spelling with *aleph* in the middle makes the explanation of *plene* writing of short *a* unlikely. Note βyrt in Manichaean texts (Sims-Williams & Durkin-Meisterernst 2012: 61), byrt in Christian (Sims-Williams 2016a: 58–59).

⁶¹ Also in 3Sg pres δβʾrt(y) commonly in Buddhist texts (beside δβrt(y)), but it is spelt without *aleph* with other endings δβrʾnt, δβrʾy (MacKenzie 1976: 99). Similarly to the case of βyrt/byrt, only the forms δβr-/δβrt and θbr-/θbrt are attested in Manichaean and Christian texts. Note Yaghnobi *tīfar-*, *tīrafta*, *sʾrafta* due to metathesis. Novák gives among others the participle *tʰfōrta* but does indicate his source (Novák 2010: 164).

The author shows convincingly that “Rhythmic law” never did affect Yaghnobi, and the development of the nominal inflexion attested in C5 into the Yaghnobi one is impossible; the “Rhythmic Law” was already active in the “Ancient Letters” (as seen from prothetic vowels). Paul Tedesco’s argumentation about the “Rhythmic Law” was more nuanced than what I assumed. Xavier Tremblay’s explanation of *-či* ending is rejected on the same grounds as above in the present paper and the analogous formation of 2pl *-ti/-si* is similar to the one proposed above. Sims-Williams thinks that the augment *a-* was stressed in Proto-Yaghnobi.⁶²

The main divergence between the opinion expressed above and that of Sims-Williams is that the latter thinks that stress never fell on the final vowel in proto-Yaghnobi, while I take seriously the modern verbal stress pattern, which prompts me to conclude that the long syllable of the ending obtained stress if there was no long syllable in the root. The conclusion of Sims-Williams is also quite similar: “Yaghnobi must have diverged from Sogdian at an extremely early date”.

After that I received – again through the kindness of the author – the Japanese “Lectures in Sogdian Grammar” of Yutaka Yoshida (2022), where, on p. 461–468 there is a short hand-list of Sogdian-Yaghnobi lexical correspondences. The Yaghnobi side of the list is based on *Jagnobskie teksty*, while Sogdian counterparts include all the known vocabulary. A large number of the new parallels in the Appendix below and Yoshida’s list are virtually identical. However, I overlooked the similarity of several words, and I gladly acknowledge Yoshida’s primacy;⁶³ very interesting is the comparison of S. *’βt’rnky* and Y. *bildinga* ‘Ursa Maior’, although the phonetic correspondence is highly unusual.

7. Appendix. Sogdian-Yaghnobi lexical connections after *Jagnobskie teksty*

The only systematic collection of Yaghnobi and Sogdian lexical correspondences in the dictionary to *Jagnobskie teksty* published in 1957. Since then, many correspondences have been noticed by the scholars who published Sogdian texts and researchers of Yaghnobi; however, they were rather stray notes on individual lexemes scattered in a large number of publications; many of them were utilized in the *Sogdian Dictionary* of Badrizamon Gharib. A systematic analysis of body part terms, an important group of lexics, was published by Ela Filippone (Filippone 2013). Many until now remain unnoticed and some moreover are based on unpublished Yaghnobi materials collected by B. A. Alborov, M. N. Bogoljubov (and some by the present author).⁶⁴

This appendix is designed to incorporate all such correspondences but I readily admit something might have been overlooked. The appendix includes a large group of forms which appear similarly in both Sogdian, Tajik and Yaghnobi. While some of them are Sogdian heritage in the present-day Transoxiana, the others are similar development from Old Iranian to Sogdian, Yaghnobi and Tajiki, so one cannot make a clear conclusion what has been inherited in Yaghnobi and what has been borrowed.

⁶² As it appears in Vedic as well (MacDonnell 1910: 315).

⁶³ S. *pyx* ‘finger-joint’ – Y. *pax* ‘finger’; S. *prn’y-* – Y. *parr-/párta-* ‘to fly’, S. *mž’* – Y. *míja* ‘eyebrow’, S. *γwš’yck* – Y. *γúšak* ‘pitcher’, S. *βrpyx* – Y. *farbéx* ‘fat’. I leave out his comparisons of S. *nym’k* – Y. *néma* ‘side’ and S. *šy-* – Y. *ši-* ‘to freeze’ because they need profound philological analysis on the Sogdian side; Y. *čayzlóy* has T. *loy* ‘dirt, clay’ in the second part and has little to do with S. *r’γ*, Y. *roy*.

⁶⁴ Some obvious cases are lacking in the *Jagnobskie teksty*, perhaps as a slip of pen. Some others are mentioned vaguely in the Russian-Yaghnobi glossary (371–391) as these lexemes weren’t documented in the texts of the volume themselves.

Apart from independent words, some suffixes were also included. As a rule, the Old Iranian etymons and cognates in related languages are not included, but I intend to discuss the rare or abnormal phonetic or morphological changes, and quite often try to explain the semantic side. I admit that some of the pairs still remain controversial.

The Sogdian form(s) are followed by Yaghnobi one(s) and the Yaghnobi-Sogdian index can be consulted in the online “Supplementary materials”. For Sogdian, the common words can be consulted in the dictionaries (Gharib 1995; Sims-Williams & Durkin-Meisterenst 2012; Sims-Williams 2016a)⁶⁵ and use to limit myself to one or two most characteristic forms, the rare words are provided with full references. For the Yaghnobi words included in Novák’s dictionary, I use his system of transcription, the others are rendered as they appear in primary recordings.⁶⁶

Abbreviations

A. — Alborov 1934; AL — “Ancient Letters”; B. — Bogoljubov 1956; Br. — Sogdian in Brāhmī script; CS — Christian Sogdian; F. — Filippone 2013; Gh. — Gharib 1995; Ja. T. — Andreev & Peshchereva 1957; Kh. — Khromov 1972; L. — Lurje, records of 2008; M. — Mirzozoda 2008; MS — Manichaean Sogdian;⁶⁷ N. — Novák 2010; S. — Sogdian; SW — Sims-Williams 2016a; S.-B. — Salemann’s materials in Benveniste 1955; S.-D. — Sims-Williams & Durkin-Meisterenst 2012; T. — Tajik; Y. — Yaghnobi, YY — Yoshida 2022a.

1. ’k’wc-, ’kwyt ‘to hang’ – okuč- ‘to hang’, okučun-, causative of the former (A., 62),⁶⁸ cf. Y. kúča ‘earring’.
2. ’βt’r’nkty ‘Ursa Maior(?)’ (Sims-Williams apud Sundermann 1990: 31 n. 71), Avestan *haptō.iringa-*, Persian *Haft awrang* — *bildínga* ‘star, Ursa Maior’ (in the vernacular of Kul side-valley)⁶⁹ with YY. The phonetic correspondence is quite unusual, but it would be a rush to dismiss it.
3. ’δry, šy ‘three’⁷⁰ — *šaráy/tiráy* ‘three’ (missed by accident in Ja. T.)
4. ’m’nk mγδy ‘apple-fruit’ (Sims-Williams & Hamilton 2015: 71, F19) — Y *man*, *mannak* ‘apple’ (B., 8, 161, 767), an archaic word, usually *seb* from T., apples (as any other fruit-trees) do not grow in the Yaghnobi populated part of the valley (Andreev 1970: 44–45).
5. ’nδ’w-/’nδwt- ‘to annoit, to apply’ — *andōwa* ‘plaster, stucco’ (B., 155), more likely from T. *andova* (articulated *andowá* in surrounding dialects), as initial **ham-* realizes as *in-* in Y. (cf. *ínkir*, S. ’nk’yr ‘oven’ and *insáxs* below).
6. ’ns’xs-/’ns’yt- ‘to be arranged, fixed, successful’ or historical abstract ’ns’k ‘suitable, fitting’- *insáxs* (so accented in N., 72; M., 94) ‘to get used to, to be in good relations’.⁷¹
7. ’nzβr-, ‘to withdraw’ (AL), *nyzβ’r-* ‘to take away’ — *žavár-*, *živár-/žayáta* ‘to take out’ (Yoshida apud Bi, Sims-Williams, and Yan 2017: 317; Sims-Williams 2023: 38; YY).

⁶⁵ Note that B. Gharib did not distinguish systematically γ from x, which I do, so e. g. ’xšy’k should be looked upon ’γšy’k there.

⁶⁶ Alborov used the obsolete Latinization of Tajiki, and I changed it into modern Iranological one (e. g., not š but š̌, not ç but ĵ, not q̄ but γ̄).

⁶⁷ CS and MS are indicated only when necessary.

⁶⁸ My elderly informant from Nometkon gave the correct translation of *okučón* after a minute consideration. It was deep in his passive vocabulary.

⁶⁹ B., 678, adds T. *palding* which is otherwise unknown to me.

⁷⁰ Only (’)δry in Manichaean, secular and Buddhist texts, while šy, š̌ in Christian (unlike (’)štyk ‘third’ in the majority of texts). Perhaps, in a numeral of the first decade the old articulation /əθrē/ survived in many dialects. Cf. in this case Y. *avt/aft* ‘seven’, while in all other cases **vd > ft*. Nicholas Sims-Williams kindly reminded me of *qθry* beside *qšy* ‘now’ even in C texts.

⁷¹ ‘Унс гир, муросо кун’; ‘zvyknout si na něco’.

8. 'pδr'y- 'to protect', from *apa-θrā-(?) — *matratá* 'bolt (on the door of a mosque)' (Showeta; Lurje 2015b: 161–162), from *hama-θrāta*- 'co-protected' (Cheung 2007: 394). Doubtful.
9. 'py'wnt-, *pywnt* 'to reveal, to uncover' — *buyūnt(a)* 'pocket' (also YY)?⁷²
10. 'psm'k 'chowry, yak-tail, fly-whisk, ornament, Skt *cāmara*', from *apa-samaka- 'wiper away' (MacKenzie 1976: 60) — *pisám-* 'sweep out' (Kuhn's materials), *písama* 'rubbish, garbage' (B., 804, etymology without S. word; Kh., 177).
11. 'stm 'al last' (Sims-Williams apud Sundermann 1996: 105; note 21, 2001:II, 731), Avestan *ustāma* — *sītām* 'back, backside', *sītamakō* 'backwards'.⁷³
12. -'str, superlative and comparative suffix of heavy stems (Gershevitch 1954: 192) — -istar old suffix in the words *rītistar* 'before', *sarhád(d)istar* 'higher' (B., 185, 212), cf. *mástar(tar)* 'close, nearby' (N., 104).⁷⁴
13. 'wpt-/wpst- 'to fall' — *pit-* 'to fall' (recorded in Showeta; Lurje 2015b: 162), from Old Iranian *pat-, here without preverb, cf. Khotanese *pat-* (Cheung 2007: 300–301).
14. 'xšy 'to gnaw', *xšāya[mante]* 'itching' (Br., Maue & Sims-Williams 2024: 42) — *x'šóy-* (MacKenzie 1970: 44; Gh., 28; YY)
15. 'ycyn '?' (Sims-Williams & Hamilton 2015: 53; E5) — *ičin* 'thread', Rushani *incav-* 'to sew', see more under *syncyn*.
16. 'yšty (inf., Sims-Williams apud Sundermann 1990: 32 n. 82; Gh., 88) 'to boil' — *eš, éšta* 'to boil'; the prefixed verb 'βy'yš- is given in Ja. T., 251.
17. 'zm(w), *zmy* 'brushwood' (Livshits 2015: 219, 225) — *ízim* 'brushwood' (MacKenzie 1976: 77).
18. *bn* 'long' (CS, SW., 53) — *van(n)* 'long', <*baržna (Sims-Williams 1985: 55; cf. B., 863; YY).
19. *βnt* 'bond, fetter, bundle, parcel' — *Y vānt* 'hay-sheaf' (MacKenzie 1976: 93; Gh., 105; YY).
20. *βr'n* 'breath' — *firón* 'smell' (Benveniste 1959: 80; B., 715; Gh., 106).
21. *βr'yc, βr'')ytch* 'sheepskin', lit. 'shorn' (?; Mt. Mugh documents; Livshits 2015: 71, 135)⁷⁵ — *viríč-/virícta, virín-/viríta* 'to cut, sheave' (Livshits, loc. cit.)
22. *βry 'dam' (widely documented in toponymy Lurje 2016), from *bag-ra- 'dividing one' — *vary* 'upper edge of a field' (where water is collected for irrigation).
23. *βry'm'k, pry'm* 'yearling, one year child' (Sims-Williams apud Sundermann 1981: 196; line 503; Reck 2005, 2V8) — *faryúmč* 'heifer, fresh cow' (noticed also by YY).
24. *βrpyx* 'fat (?; noun)' (hapax in Mt. Mugh documents; Bogoljubov & Smirnova 1963: 32, n. 20; Begmatov 2019: 153; Sims-Williams 1983: 44: a Middle Persian borrowing) — *farbíh, farbéx* 'fat (adjective)', T. *farbeh* (with YY).
25. *βstywnp, fstxwmp* 'to propel, repel' — *čumf-/čúmfta* 'to push' (Gershevitch apud Sims-Williams 1983: 49; Novák 2013: 192; YY), if from *pcxwmp-.
26. *βwr-* 'brown, grey' (Mt. Mugh, Bogoljubov & Smirnova 1963: 39), commonly in PNs (Lurje 2010a: 150–151) — *vur* 'colour-term'⁷⁶ (also YY), T. *būr* is farther phonetically.
27. *βykp'r* 'outside' — *vēkpōr(a)* 'outside, outer' (B., 863, also *vēkpár*).

⁷² Even though 'pocket' (Tajik *kisa*) was historically not a pouch in the dress but a sack attached to the belt, the semantics remain unclear. Maybe a 'secret language' formation from the verb *b'γúnj/b'γúšta* 'to steal' (**buyúnjna* > **buyútna* > *buyúnta*?)

⁷³ Acc. to B., 185, 839 from **pastāma-*; alternatively, S. 'stm is a variant of *stmb* 'stern, severe, coarse' (S-D., 179).

⁷⁴ Novák refers to Khromov and Mirzozoda, but I could not find this word in those dictionaries. The first part of the last word could be a reflex of first person deictic **ima-* (cf. *máskē* < **ima-arda-sara-*; *ín(n)ūr* 'today?'), or interjection *ma, ma^h* 'here (it is), *voilá*', which is borrowed from Turkic via T. (note that the root of *sarháddestar* is Arabic).

⁷⁵ The same explanation is advocated by Begmatov (2019: 236); Bogoljubov & Smirnova (1963: 40) refrain from translating it; cf. Middle Persian 'kblyt 'lamb', lit. 'once-sheared' (Huyse 1999: II, 111–112).

⁷⁶ 'Серый, бурый' in Ja. T. 349; 'фиолетовый' in B., *vūryúrda* 'голубоглазый' and *vūrmijá* 'с выцветшими бровями' (Kh., 184), 'хокистарранг, бър' (M., 45); 'hnědý, šedohnědý' (N., 182).

28. *βyk*, *fyq* ‘shoulder’ — *ḥik* ‘shoulder’ (B., 134, 713; Benveniste 1959: 80; YY).
29. *bz-*, Pl. *bzyšt* (CS) ‘goat’ (Müller 1912: 22–24; SW., 59) — *vuz* ‘goat’ (also YY).
30. *c’f c’f* ‘all around’, *prc’βt* ‘surrounding, enclosure’ from **kap-/cap-* ‘to hold’ — *čáfa* ‘pasture for horses’ (Kh., 164), suggested by A. L. Khromov and M. Schwartz in Sims-Williams 2017: 239; the semantics need further elucidation.
31. *cšm-* ‘eye’ — *tišm* ‘eyelid’ in Kuhn’s records (B., 860). The first *t* is a result of dissimilation, as Parachi *teč*, *teč’*, *čeč* (Jefimov 2009: 241) < **čašman-*.
32. *cγwt-* ‘owl’ — Y. *čyγúz* ‘woodpecker’ (Ja. T., 241); owl (M., 239); in Ja. T., it is compared to S. *cγz-*, which is in fact ‘frog, toad’; YY provides *cγwt-* ‘owl’ which is difficult in view of the final consonant; the explanation as a T. loan *čuyz/čuyd* ‘owl’ (in itself from East Iranian, see Henning 1939: 96), is preferable.
33. *cym-* ‘eye’ — *čimm-* in *čimmakí kun-* ‘to wink’, T. *čašmak zadan* (Kh., 165; Rastorgueva & Edelman 2003: 240), also *čom*, *cēm* in Pamiri tongues, Khotanese *tsejmä-*.
34. M *δrβ-* ‘to tremble’ (S.-D., 73) — *darf* ‘am abhang gelegenes land’, ‘mountain ridge’ (S.-B., 154; N., 34), cf. the village *Xisóki darv*. Semantic shift remains unclear.⁷⁷
35. *drs* (CS) ‘skin’ (SW, 71), Brahmi *δarsne* ‘made of skin’ (Maue & Sims-Williams 2024: 89) — *dorsēna wita* ‘woolen rope’ (Ja. T., 248; Benveniste 1959: 80).
36. *δxš-* ‘to hurt’⁷⁸ — Y *daxš-* ‘to hurt’ (Gershevitch 1959: 181; YY).
37. *fr’wyšcy* (+ spelling variants) ‘forgetfulness’ — *firómič* ‘forgetfulness, forgetting’ (MacKenzie 1976: 101; YY); partial contamination to T *faromūš* according to (Schwartz 2024: 424).
38. *γδ-* ‘log, wooden beam’ (Lurje 2008: 223–224), Avestan *gaḍā* ‘club, mace’, Khotanese *geihā* ‘wood’, Ossetic *qæd/γædæ* ‘wood, log’ — *γáda* ‘a log, part of bridge’ (Kh., 168), also T. *γada* in Matcha (Khromov 1962: 194), Panjakent.⁷⁹
39. *γmy* ‘humble’ — *γam* ‘sorrow’; T. also *γam* ‘sorrow’, so more likely a loan (Persian — Tajik word itself is an East Iranian borrowing).
40. *γn’w-* (CS) ‘to slumber’ (SW., 84) — *γinōu-* ‘to nap’, cf. Persian, T. *γanaaw-/yunudan*, an East Iranian loan (Schwartz 2024: 431).
41. *γδβk* (MS), *γdbyc* (CS) ‘bitch’ — *kutγáfčak* ‘puppy’ with *kut* ‘dog’ in the beginning.
42. *γrβ* ‘many, much’ — *γaftar* ‘much, many, more’ (S.-B., 152; B., 723; M., 51), from comparative **γarf-tar* with dissimilatory loss.
43. *γrw-* ‘cane, bamboo’ (Yoshida 1996: 169), Avestan *grauua*, Parthian *grww* — *γaráu* ‘bamboo’ (Kh., 168).⁸⁰
44. *γwβ-* ‘to praise, to glorify’, *γwβcyk* ‘praised’ (Ragoza 1980: 34; fr. 40, 11) — *γúči* ‘singing bird’⁸¹, from **γúvči*; for semantics cf. Persian *parastū* ‘swallow’, from the verb *parastīdan* ‘to praise’; the suffix might be affected by *síča* ‘sparrow’.
45. *(-)γwδn* ‘covering’ (from **gaudana-*, in *nγwδn* ‘dress’, *crpγwδn* ‘ointment’, *β’rγwδn* ‘perfume?’), *rytγw(w)δδ* ‘face cover, veil’, Brāhmī script *g₁₀ d₁āṃ* (Maue & Sims-Williams 2024: 83) — *γūdán*, *γúd’in-* ‘mountain sagebrush, which is used as mat’ (Ja. T., 259).
46. *γwordtq* (CS) ‘kidneys’ — *γúrkak*, *gurkák* (Sims-Williams 1985: 178; F., 644); the second form influenced by T. *gurda*.

⁷⁷ Moreover, as Nicholas Sims-Williams suggested, the first consonant in S was probably *θ*, not *δ*, as evident from CS *wyθrbynyc*, Manichaean Bactrian *pydhrβ*. Perhaps this connection should be disapproved.

⁷⁸ All contexts are broken; S.-D. 76, s. v. *dxšny* and SW, 73 s. v. *dxšcyk* consider the meaning unclear; the relation to Y. word is considered as an option by Sims-Williams (2017: 231).

⁷⁹ In the document from Muhammad Bashshara mausoleum near Panjakent of 1213/1798–99 (Jegani & Chekhovich 1984 Doc. 92, 4094): *čūbi yadai taxtai pul* ‘logs of wood of the bridge’.

⁸⁰ Bamboos do not grow in the cold arid zones such as Yaghnob. Perhaps, a kind of tall cane of riverbed is meant.

⁸¹ ‘Lerche’ (S.-B., 153); ‘ласточка (swallow)’ (B., 722); ‘skřivánek (lark)’ (N., 60)

47. $\gamma w\check{s}'yck$ 'jar, pitcher' (lit., 'the one with ear > handle?') — $\gamma u\check{s}\acute{a}k$ 'small earthenware pitcher' (MacKenzie 1970: 56; YY)
48. $\gamma zt'(kyn)$ 'debauched, licentious' — $\gamma a\check{z}d kun-$ 'to stain' (Kh., 168).⁸²
49. $k'\beta$, $k\beta t$ 'to split' — $kaf-/kafta$ 'to crack', T. *kafidan* is closer in meaning and vowel quantity.
50. $k'm-$ 'to wish' — *kom-* in *inč kāmāmišt*, *kāmām* 'ein weib nehmen' (S.-B., 161; B., 746).
51. $k't$ 'dumb, deaf' — *kóta* 'stupid, crazy' (M., 108; N., 87)⁸³, cf. English *dumb* and *dumb bunny*, German *dumm*.
52. $k'z'kh$ 'hut, little house' (Henning 1945: 158, n.) — *kóza*, *qozá* 'hut; dwelling on summer-camp', T. *koza*.
53. $k\beta n-$ 'few, a little' — *káv'in* 'few' (S.-B., 160; Benveniste 1979: 184; B., 86, 758; Ja. T., 379).
54. *km'*, *qm'y* 'neck' (fem.), the word attested in one Manichaean (M112, 21)⁸⁴ and one Christian (E28/10 R12) context.⁸⁵ — *káma* 'neck' (cf. Yoshida & Lurje apud S.-D., 97; F., 643; YY).
55. *kpck*, *kpc'kk* 'unit of volume', perhaps 5 liters or less (Bogoljubov & Smirnova 1963: 30–31) — *kapčák* 'a utensil in water-mill, a trowel used to pour grain from chest to millstones' (B., 750; Kh., 171; Khromov 1966a: 130);⁸⁶ the word *kafčok* is used in this sense in Zarafshan T. as well (Steblyn-Kamenskij 2008); *beli kafčok* means 'scoop spade' to distinguish from *bel* 'bayonet shovel'.
56. *kšph* 'turtle' — *kíspha*, *késpa* 'large basket'; dubious: the variation *šp/sp* needs explanation, and land turtles in the area are quite small.
57. *kwβ-* 'peak of mountain' (hapax *kwβty* in SSeele, 162, Obl.pl.); as the text is a translation from Parthian, the borrowing from *kōf* can be envisaged (Sundermann 1997: 157),⁸⁷ or rather *kwf* 'wave' (Sims-Williams 2017: 68) — *kúva* 'hunchback' (B., 758), cf. Khotanese *ku-vaa-* 'heap' (Bailey 1979: 63).⁸⁸
58. *kwn* 'anus' (Sims-Williams 1976: 66) — *kun* 'anus',⁸⁹ T. *kun*.
59. *qwšy* (CS) 'side, flank' — *kuš* 'furrow' (B., 755), semantics need further elucidation.
60. *kyrm-* 'snake, worm' — Y *kír'im* 'worm, dragon' (Ja. T., 273), but also 'snake' (A., B., 732, 397, 752, 768; Gauthiot 1914: 93; N., 86; YY);⁹⁰ in T., *kirm* is 'worm' only.
61. *m'n'kH* 'part of head' (Sundermann 2002: 140, 22; S.-D., 108) — Y *maná^h* (and variants) 'chin', Persian (glossed as Mawarannahr word), T. *manah* (F., 640–641).
62. *m'n'nt'k* 'resembling' — *-mōnta* postposition 'alike' (B., 158; YY).⁹¹

⁸² 'Грязнить, пачкать'.

⁸³ 'Гүл, гаранг'; 'hloupy, ospalý'.

⁸⁴ The reproached Manichaean hierarch is accused of washing *km'* in the water ('pyy 'pryw km' sn'yyskwn). Werner Sundermann initially compared it to Persian *kamā* 'a sleeve; old cloth sewd together, whereon bread is laid to be baked in the oven' (Sundermann 1980: 294) and later preferred explaining it as knife, a loan from Turkic *qamγa* (Sundermann 2007: 407, 2016: 31). This explanation is questionable as *qamγa* is expected to be written *x'mγ' or alike in S. The similarity of this word to Y. *káma* and plausibility of 'neck' in this context was noticed independently by Y. Yoshida and myself.

⁸⁵ Sims-Williams 2017: 78, 86, the story of Mar Awgin. Here *qm'[y]* (γ)*d[']* 'the wound on his neck' is confirmed by Syriac original.

⁸⁶ No. 20 on the scheme in Steblyn-Kamenskij 1999: 465.

⁸⁷ Sogdian toponyms containing *Kūf* are few and can be questioned (Lurje 2004: 122–123).

⁸⁸ YY takes the obsolete meaning of *kwβ* 'foam' and compares to *xáf(a)* 'scale, foam' (which has good Pamiri parallels).

⁸⁹ Cf. also *tobkúna* (Ja. T., 377), *xankúna* 'upper part of a canal' (L), from *tóba*, *xan* 'irrigation canal'.

⁹⁰ Cf. in the tale recorded in Tagi Chanor in 2008: *Kirim wóvta man zahr kunómišt* 'the Snake said "I make venom"' (Lurje 2010: 14).

⁹¹ Other sources give *mýnta*, *mínta*, *mě(n)ta*, *má(i)nta* from *myn(t)* (Ja. T., 285; B. 313, 315, 348; N. 106; Gh., 206: *mayanta*)

63. *m'y*, *m'yš*, *m'yšt* (CS) 'indeed' (?) 'particle indicating that a quotation follows' which has been compared to Tocharian B *mai* 'doch, etwa, peut-être' (SW., 104; Sims-Williams 2019: 71) — *may*, *máy-š* 'cautiously' particle 'take care, this way' (Ja. T., 285; M., 120; N., 105);⁹² semantics need elaboration.⁹³
64. *mrγ* 'wood, meadow' — *mary* 'wet place covered with grass; marshy lawn', T. *šebar*, cf. T. *maryzor* (Andreev 1970: 99; B., 769).⁹⁴
65. *mrz*- 'to rub' — *γumórz*, *γómorz* 'an open place for overnight stay of cattle on summer camp' (the place where cows stay cramped⁹⁵)?
66. *mwry* (MS) 'channel, pipe' S.-D., 117); *mwry*- (CS) 'tunnel' (Sims-Williams 2015: 145; SW., 109) — *mur* 'kitchen, oven',⁹⁶ cf. Matcha T. *mūr*, *mūro* 'hollow, tight gorge in the mountains' (Khromov 1962: 177).
67. *myn*- 'to think, consider, imagine' *myn'y* 'thought, decision, apperance' — *mayna* 'memory' (B., 775, with etymology).
68. *myš* (CS) 'sheep, ewe' (hapax E27/12r12, SW., 112) — *męš* 'sheep' (also YY).
69. *mz* 'eyelash' — *mī(ǰ)a* 'eyelash', T. *mijja*.
70. *n'wn* 'river (?)' ⁹⁷ — *noy* 'valley' (MacKenzie 1976: 114).
71. *nγ'm* 'time, moment'⁹⁸ — *γum*, *γom* 'time, fois'.
72. *nγn*- 'bread' — *nayama*, *niyama* 'time to eat (usually lunch)' (M., 129),⁹⁹ cf. T. *noništa*. The ultimate *m* remains difficult to explain.
73. *nnsβwn'kh* 'nostril' (Sundermann 2002: 138, 11) — *naysvúna* 'nostril' (F., 641–642; YY).
74. *nnšk-*, *nšq-* 'palm (of the head)' (Yoshida 1984: 145–146; Sims-Williams 1995: 60)¹⁰⁰ — Y *nišk* 'palm' (Novák 2013: 186; Sims-Williams 2015: 150; F., 633; YY).
75. *ny's-/ny't-* 'to take' — *nos-*, *nóta* 'to take' (MacKenzie 1970: 62; Gh. 249).
76. *nyn'kkh*, *nyn'k-* 'pupil (of an eye)' (Sundermann 2002: 139; Yoshida 2019: 96) — S *nínak* 'pupil', T. *ninak* (cf. YY).
77. *[nyp]š* 'honeycomb' (?) (Schwartz 1982: 188; Schwartz apud Sims-Williams 2020: 41) — *nípša* 'comb', *nīpós-/nīpošta* 'to comb'; as one can see, the Sogdian word (hapax in So 15490 = Ps. 19, 11) is fragmentary and this restoration is a learned guess based on Y. word.
78. *p'rδwnp* 'crupper' — *pordúm* 'undertail strap' (B., 800), Persian *pārdum*, T. *pordum* (Gershevitch 1946: 147).
79. *pc'w* 'to agitate, uproar, quarrel, disturb' (Henning 1936: 68; Sims-Williams, Schwartz, and Pittard 2014: 51) — *čow-* 'to press'. The two verbs are different in meaning, so the Sogdian one perhaps with the preverb **apa-* or **upa-*, 'to release from press'?

⁹² 'Осторожно'; 'боэштиёт, эштиёткорона, чунон, хамчунон'; 'opatrný, opatrně'

⁹³ From Old Iranian **(H)may-* 'to fix(ate)' > 'concentrate oneself' (Imp.)? Or rather onomapoetic?

⁹⁴ Other sources provide the meaning 'the grass best consumed by cattle', apparently herbs from such lawns.

⁹⁵ Cf. in Tienshan realia: "One night there was a blizzard in the mountains. Sharp, stinging snow clung on the horses' manes, it made their tails heavy and hurt their eyes. The herd was restless. The horses huddled together, trembling. The old mares snorted nervously and drove the foals into the middle of the herd..." Chingiz Aitmatov, "Farewell, Gyulsary", tr. F. Glagoleva, 1969, II, 11.

⁹⁶ On Yaghnobi kitchens which are hardly more than some place around an oven under a central chimney, see Andreev 1970: 103–105.

⁹⁷ Alternatively, *n'wznth*, plural of *n'wh* 'boat' + *-wzn* 'course' (cf. *'nxrwzn*), as (Sims-Williams 1978: 260)

⁹⁸ *γ'm* "pace" (Henning 1940: Y16) is purely a restoration.

⁹⁹ 'Вақти хурук (бештар дар мавриди хуроки нисфирузӣ)'; N., 111, gives with optional second *n*: *nayám(n)a* / *n'iyám(n)a*. Cf. *niyamma* '(time of) haying' (secret, Kh., 175; Khromov 1966a: 131). Ilya Yakubovich suggests here the reflex of *nγ'm* 'time, moment'.

¹⁰⁰ Likely also *n(n)šk'* and *p(š)'nnšky* 'back of the hand' in the "Book of Limbs" (differently Sundermann 2002: 144).

80. *pδ-* ‘foot, step, *pied(mont)*’ — *pad* ‘sole, footstep’ (more distant *pδ’k*, compared in Ja. T., cf. the following; also YY).
81. *pδ’k* ‘on foot’ — *dog* ‘footstep’ (S.-B., 153); for the loss of *p* cf. Y. *dara* ‘stomach’, S. *kδ’r’k*, Y. *tuxóy-* ‘to kill’, S. *ptxw’y-*. The suffix vowel quantity, however, seems to differ.
82. *pδn’y* ‘wide’, Old Iranian **paθana-* — *patan/m* ‘wide’ (? , A.),¹⁰¹ *pátaxan* ‘large irrigational canal’ (L., in Nomitkon),¹⁰² from **patan-xan*, cf. *bidóvanka* ‘belt’ from **bidon-vanka*.
83. *pr* preposition ‘to, on, at, in, for, upon’, ‘in exchange for’ (AL and Turko-Sogdian) — *par* ‘for, at’ (Khromov 1970; Sims-Williams 2023: 58; YY).
84. *prn’y* ‘to fly’ — *parr-/párta* ‘to fly’ (as noted by YY), T. *par(r)idan*.
85. *p(r)št* ‘lips (pl.)’ — *pša^hnamónča*, *pašmúnča*, *pišahmónča* ‘old woman who opens (T. *namon-dan*) the face of the bride during wedding’, T. *rūynamō*; maybe also in *puškúnča* ‘oven cover’ (M., 163). For the loss of historical **r* before *š* cf. *tišpa* ‘bitter’ from **tršpaka-* (Khromov 1987: 653), *fišóm-* ‘to send’ from *fra-šāma-*, S. *’βš’m*.
86. *pst’* (CS) in *pst’ mrx’ z’y* ‘low-laying flat land’ (SW., 146) — *past* ‘low-lying’, T. *past*.
87. *pšm-* ‘wool’, *’pšm’knty* ‘wool-stuffed’ (MacKenzie 1976: 60; So. 10200(8) in Yoshida 2007: 470 n. 27; Begmatov 2019: 40–41)¹⁰³ — *pášim*, T. *pašm*.
88. *ptywnt-/ptywst-* (CS) ‘to cover, to hide’ — *tuyunt-/tuyúntta* ‘to cover freshly sown seeds with soil’ (M., 197; N., 173).
89. *ptš’nhk*, *pcnk* ‘torture device, cross’ — *pašáng* ‘wooden part of a water-mill some 1,5 — 2 meters long’ (M., 153; N., 130).¹⁰⁴
90. *ptšm’r* ‘number, count’, *ptšm(’)-r* ‘to count, to think’ — *pušmára* (A.),¹⁰⁵ verb *p^ušmar-* (Junker 1914: 11–16); S. *pt-* normally corresponds to Y *tu-/du-* (*ptxw’y-* ‘to kill’ — *tuxóy-*, *ptywš-* ‘to listen’ — *duyúš-*; *ptr’yš-* ‘to tear apart’ — *diríš-/diráyš-* and *ptywnt-* — *tuyunt-* above; unlikely *ptr’yz-* — *tiráš-*, see under *š’š-*), but there are a handful of cases of the loss of *t*: *ptz’n-* and *bizón-* ‘to know’,¹⁰⁶ *ptš’nhk* — *pašang* and *pty’p* — *biyop* in the list; one can follow Junker and derive from **upa-(h/š)mar-* (and **apa-zān-*, B., 235) as well.
91. *ptxšnyk* ‘?’ (a hapax in P22, 8; ed. Benveniste 1940: 156) — *pītaxš-* ‘to cover’ (archaic). The words of S prediction *kδ xwr βγγ krmыр-β’tk ptxšnyk β’t ZY kyw’n krm’yr-γwn’k wy[n’t* should be supposedly translated as ‘if the Lord Sun is *covered by red glove, and Saturn is visible in red colour’.¹⁰⁷
92. *pty’p-* (MS) ‘to reach’ — *biyóp-/biyópta* ‘to catch up’, cf. under *ptšm’r* — *pušmára* on the pre-verb.¹⁰⁸
93. *pyδ’r* postposition ‘for’ — *piyóra* postposition ‘for’, an archaic word, now *báxša*, *xotír*, noticed several times (B., 42, 101, 314–15, 881; Kh. 60, Ja. T., 375). The change of *δ* into *y* is irregular, but cf. *’δc* — *oč* ‘something’, M. *kδ’m* — *kom* ‘which one’.

¹⁰¹ Indistinctly written, confirmed by one informant in Kashi, but in an ‘unsure’ way.

¹⁰² Definitely not **kátaxan*.

¹⁰³ Begmatov follows Livshits (1962b: 155 n. 14) in reading *pšm* in B-1, but it is hindered by the fact that a light-stem noun is very much expected. It is noteworthy that this reading option is absent in the reedition (Livshits 2008, 2015).

¹⁰⁴ The shaft of the wheel with its wedge, thus a cross-shaped device?

¹⁰⁵ Confirmed in 2008 by an elderly informant from Gharmen and, in an unsure way, the informant from Nomitkon.

¹⁰⁶ The variation of voiced and voiceless initial consonant follows the voicing of the first root consonant, see Bogoljubov 1957a.

¹⁰⁷ From **apa-tač-*, inch. **apa-taxš-*, cf. T. *andoxtan* ‘to throw’, Ossetic Digor *taxun* ‘to equip, dress up’ (Cheung 2007: 374–375)?

¹⁰⁸ The comparison with more common *’βy’p-* meets phonetic difficulties, and derivation from **api-āp-* (B., 101, 683) is possible (cf. Chorasmian *byfs-*), though such a verb is not attested in S.

94. *pyrwt* ‘moustache’ (Sundermann 2002: 141) — Y *burút* ‘moustache’ (F., 634), T. *burūt*, from Turkic (and ultimately Tocharian?) In view of initial *p-/b-* difference the direct continuation of S. word in Y. is unlikely.
95. **pys* ‘spotted, exemic(?)’ in the common personal name *pysk* (Lurje 2010a: 320–21; Rossi 2013) — *pes*, *pe’s* ‘false lepra, eczema’ (A.), T. *pes*, Middle Persian *pēs*.
96. *pyx* ‘knot, vertebra, node, joint’ — Y *pīx*, *pīnx* ‘splinter’, *pinx* ‘bird’s paw’ (Khromov 1966a: 134), also in Matcha T. *pīx* ‘splinter, thorn’; semantics unclear. YY compares *pyx* ‘finger-joint’ with *pax* ‘finger’ (a rare word, surely related to *pāx(x)a* ‘bunch of fives’).
97. *r’γ* ‘plain’ — *roy* ‘piedmont’ (N., 143), T. *roy*.
98. *r’n’(kh)* ‘belt’ — *ron* ‘thigh’; T. *ron* (also YY).
99. *r’t* ‘gift’ — *rot* ‘marriage gift’ (Khromov 2007; M., 170).
100. *r’w’t’h* ‘plain’ — *rówut*, *rou’t* ‘side mountain valley’ (Schwartz 1970: 301 with reference to Khromov); likely a *vṛddhi* formation of **rautah-* ‘river’ (Sims-Williams and Bi 2022: 495–96).
101. *ryzy* ‘fabric made of wool’ (Sims-Williams & Hamilton 2015: 30; mount Mugh and late documents) — *ráyza* ‘trousers made of wool’, ‘coarse home-made wool cloth’ (B., 810; Livshits 1962b: 155; Gh., 342; YY); T. *rayza* (glossed as Badakhshan and Kashmir word in medieval Persian dictionaries).
102. *rwc* ‘day’ (from Western Middle Iranian) or rather *rwcyk*, *rwtk* ‘provisions’ — *rouča*, *rúča* ‘fast’ (B., 49, 817), T. *rūza*.
103. *ro-m* ‘hair’ (Br., Maue & Sims-Williams 2024: 55–56) — *róma* ‘pubic hair’ (hypercorrection from **rúma?*), *rúmoč* ‘id.’ (Kh., 179; also YY).
104. *rwps* ‘fox’ — *rúpas* ‘fox’ (Khromov 1987: 653; N. 145).
105. *rwtk* ‘entrails’ (So14700(16)b/TiiT N, 11) Gershevitch, Frog-plain, p. 209) — *rúta* ‘intestine’ (Gershevitch 1975: 209; YY), T. *rūda*.
106. *rx’(h)* ‘face, mouth’ (L40, 2; Afr, 2) — Y *rax* ‘mouth, chaps, hole’ (Livshits 2015: 240); cf. also (Kh., 135; Novák 2013: 214 F., 642), T. *rax* ‘crack’.
107. *ryr’kH* ‘part of mouth, saliva’ (Henning 1940: 5, fr. IV, 10; Sundermann 2002: 140) — Y *réra/rira* ‘gums’ (Khromov 2007).
108. *rys-* ‘to lick’ (VJ, 990 ed. Benveniste 1946) — Y *les-* ‘to lick’, T. *lesidan* (noted by B., 762).
109. *ryž-* ‘to desire’ or *ryz’kh* ‘rice’ — (*γurda*)*rižóna* ‘rice’ (secret word, B., 717, 827; N., 62); ‘healer who uses to cure eyes with grain or rice; grain’ (M., 61; N., 62). One would tend to compare it to S. *ryz’kh* ‘rice’ (Bailey 1979: 364; Gh., 349; YY); however, despite Pašto (*w*)*riža*, the Manichaean form glossing Middle Persian (*b*)*rync* is *ry(z)[’]*, not ***ry(j)[’]* (M 4164, 2 in Morano 2005: 221), and in Brāhmī script we see *rzā* (Maue & Sims-Williams 2024: 66–68) so Yaghnobi *ž* is unexpected. Moreover, until recently rice was a very expensive and rare commodity in the mountain region (Dynin 1914: 84), and in pre-Islamic layers of Sogdiana one has not met rice (*oryza sativa*) during archaeobotanical analysis (Mir-Makhamad et al. 2024: 19); perhaps it was limited to élite consumption. I suppose that here the Sogdian root *rēž-* ‘to desire’ was frozen to indicate a (mostly) luxury foodstuff.
110. *s’γr*, *swγr* ‘saddle’ (?)¹⁰⁹ — *xūšsaryrī* ‘horse (with beautiful crupper)’ (B., 169), T. *saryrī* ‘crupper, la peau de chagrin’, Persian *sāγrī*, usually considered a Turkic loan (Doerfer 1965: III, 222–225).

¹⁰⁹ Mugh, B-19, 6; B-12, 3 (Livshits 2015: 132–33); in the first example, Bogoljubov and Smirnova read *γnyr*’ (for *xnyr* ‘dagger?’; final aleph might indicate a position after numeral), Begmatov (2019: 185) follows Livshits, who adds Ossetic, Pashto *sary*. In the second case, the reading *swx’n* as a PN is preferred (Bogoljubov & Smirnova 1963: 48; Lurje 2010a: 358; Begmatov 2019: 117–118).

111. *s't* 'all' — *sóda* 'forever' (Ja. T., 323; M., 182; N., 155); the correspondence is problematic due to unexpected vocalization and change of meaning.
112. *swnp-*, *swmb-/swft* 'to bore' — possible nominal derivatives in *sūf* 'aperture in the millstone' (B., 850), *sum* 'a hole in a shoe' (N., 156), *súmba* 'a piston in a hollow piece of wood used as a kind of blow pipe game'¹¹⁰.
113. *syncyn* '?', a hapax in the late Dunhuang document E5 (Sims-Williams & Hamilton 2015: 49–53), cf. *'ycyn*, *ičín*¹¹¹ — *sínčín* 'needle'.¹¹²
114. *-šwft-* 'dense' in *w'šwftt* 'aussi serré' (P2, 1016, ed. Benveniste 1940: 48)¹¹³ — *šuft* 'dense, tight' (M., 251;¹¹⁴ N., 162)
115. *šwt'* (CS) 'furrow, field' (E26/1 V12 ed. Sims-Williams 2015: 20) — *šudgór* 'arable land, tillage' (Ya. T., 328), T. *šudgor*.¹¹⁵
116. *šx-* 'branch' + *'stk* 'bone' — *šixastáka*, *šikastáka* 'armpit'. YY compares *š(n)x-* to *šox*, (which corresponds to S. *š'x*, T. *šox* 'branch' better in its vocalism).
117. *šyš-/šyšt* 'to be scattered, dispersed', *šš-*, *šyš-*, *δr''š-* 'to scatter, to disperse' — *tīrá(y)š-/tīrašta* 'to fall' in the western dialect (Cheung 2007: 397).¹¹⁶
118. *-t'r-* 'string' in *cmbt'ryh* 'string of a lute' (Henning 1940: 16, a 1); **δst'rch* 'ten-stringed' (SW., 71) — *tor* 'thread, string', T. *tor*.
119. *t'r'c* (MS) 'plunder, booty', 'the final world period' (M767iiR5 in Haloun and Henning 1952: 212; S.-D., 190) — *toroř* 'plunder', T. *toroj*, from Turkic (Doerfer 1965: II, 435–436).
120. *tbr-/tyt-* (CS) 'to insert' — *dīvár-*, *dīyáta* 'to bring in, lead in' (Sims-Williams et al. 2014: 40; YY).
121. *tβs-/tβt-* 'to get hot' — *tasp* 'heat, sultry weather', T. *tafs*, *tasp*, verb *tafsidan* (a S. loan?).
122. *ty'r* 'khum, pythos' (Livshits 2015: 274–278) — *tayorá* 'wooden dish', T. *tayora* 'basin'.
123. *tpy* (CS) 'jar, pitcher', *rwyny tpy* 'jar of the oil' (E27/94v21 ed. Sims-Williams 1985: 170, 177; SW., 194)¹¹⁷ — *tībāngča* 'wooden dish for oil', T. dialectal *tabanč*, standard *tabaq*. As reminded by Nicholas Sims-Williams, S *tpn* 'coffin', Persian *tabangōy*, Chorasmian *tpnkwk* might also belong here (Henning 1965: 177).
124. *tr-*, *tyr* (CS) 'to go' (SW., 194) — *tir-/tórta* 'to go (out)' (also YY).
125. *tr'nk()* 'torture' — *tarāṅg kun-* 'to pull, tighten', T. *tarang* (comparison of B., 857).

¹¹⁰ Long and partially contradictory explanations in M., 184; N., 156.

¹¹¹ The expression *nm'y bykp'r trny 'ycyn šxy syncyn βyrtý L' (x)cy* is translated as 'In this (person), (who is) outwardly soft (but) **inwardly** hard, no **faith** (?) is (to be) found' (semibold preserved as indicating hypothetical translation); James Hamilton explains *'ycyn* as Turkic *ičín*, instrumental of *ič* 'interior', and in *syncyn* an instrumental of *sinči* 'general appearance, dress etc.', which appears only in late Anatolian Turkish and Mongolic *šinji* in the sense 'omen, notice' (the common Uighur antonym to *ič* 'inside' is however *taš* 'outside'). The general meaning is 'outwardly soft, inwardly hard', an opposite to the Chinese auspicious concept 'inside softness, outside hardness' of the "Book of Changes", or 'outwardly mild, inwardly hard' in Tangshu; this explanation presupposes the knowledge of Chinese classics by a Turko-Sogdian textile trader.

I plead for a totally different option: 'it seems (BS *nm'y*) outside one cannot find (either) soft thread (or) hard needle'; the author seemed to search for higher quality goods.

¹¹² Also in a series of expressions: *i sinčini sari* 'on the top of the needle, on the edge of extinction' (Basello, Guizzo, and Ognibene 2008); *anáx xápi sínčín nóstišt* 'he/she fancies, imagines (takes his/her needle)' (Kh., 180); in the secret language it denotes 'child', 'person', 'official' (M., 179; N., 153).

¹¹³ Differently, to Persian *sift* 'tight, thick' (Henning 1946: 724).

¹¹⁴ 'Зиц, цафс'.

¹¹⁵ In Persian *šudgār* is a rare word; cf. early spellings *šudýār/šulyār/šudkār* (Lazard 1963: 146).

¹¹⁶ The comparison of *tīraš-* to *ptr'yz-* 'to raise up, to erect' (Ja. T., 336) is hindered by semantics and irregular correspondence of *ž* and *š*. The relation to S. *ptryš-* 'to tear apart' is also questionable in view of regular Y *dīriš-*, *dīráyš-*.

¹¹⁷ Perhaps also *tpc* 'measure of barley' in Hisorak document 3, if not to be read as *tsw* (Lurje 2012: 472).

126. *trp'r'k* 'acid' — *tíšpa* 'sour' (B., 147; Novák 2013: 95); different developments of Old Iranian **trp-ša/ra-*.
127. *tš-, tšycq* 'kind of axe' — Y *tešá* 'small hoe', T. *teša*; in view of vowel and accent, a T. loan.
128. *w'z* 'wing' — *vóza, wóza* "open oven made of stones; half of close oven tandur", semantics remain unclear.
129. *wynh* 'famine, starvation' — *wáynič* 'small plant with edible berries' (the one consumed because of big hunger?)
130. *wr'n* (CS) 'lamb' — *rōn, run, ruwón* 'lamb' (B., 57, 63, 824; Schwartz 1982: 63; Tremblay 2006: 277; YY).
131. *wrnh, wrn* 'wool' (P19, 20 in Benveniste 1940: 232; So 14822 in Reck 2016 No. 724) — *vánna, wánna* 'fallen snake-skin'?
132. *wryc-/wry(t)-* 'to pour' — *rīxs-/rīxta-* 'to crumble', as noted by YY, Y. form is built with inchoative suffix *-s* and does not necessarily contain a preverb. T. *rextan* differs in its present stem *rez*.
133. *wšyny, wšwyn'k, šwy:nny* etc. 'cloth made of linen or cotton' (Sims-Williams & Hamilton 2015: 67–68), Bactrian *οιπογγυο* (Sims-Williams 2002: 228) — *šiwína, šawén* 'home-made cotton garment', T. *šavina*.¹¹⁸
134. *wyt̪ δ'rwk* 'willow-tree?' (M2006 R4 in Boyce 1960: 85; S.-D., 211; Sims-Williams & Bi 2022: 495) — *wet* 'willow'.
135. *wyt, wyt'k* 'cord' (several times in Mugh documents, Livshits 2015: 136; Begmatov 2019: 241; Sims-Williams and Bi 2022: 495) — *wíta* 'cord, rope' (also YY).
136. *wyx* 'root' — *wexčák* 'a kind of plant which is used as fuel when dry' (M.,¹¹⁹ N., 184)
137. *x'm(k)* 'raw' — *xom* 'raw', T. *xom*.¹²⁰
138. *xnt-* 'to laugh' (VJ, 1355, CS E30/6v16) — Y *xant-/xánta-* 'to laugh', T. *xandidan* (noted by B., 883); YY, adds S. *'sx'nt, qtsx'ncyk* 'joke'.
139. *xrw̄m, xwr̄m, xwr̄wm* 'earth' — *xūrmá* 'earthenware bowl', T. *xurma* (semantics unclear).
140. *xwc-* 'nice, pleasant' — *xwač* 'nice' (Old Yaghnobi, B., 42, 892, quoting Kuhn and noticing Sogdian counterpart).
141. *xwž-/xwšt-* 'to ask, request, beg' — *xújgón, xūžgón, xūšgón, xūšyón*, B. *xwžgún* 'matchmaker' (in wedding),¹²¹ T. *xostgor* (from *xostan* 'to demand').
142. *xyp* 'own', the late form of *xypδ* (see 4e above) — *xep, xap* 'own, private'.
143. *xyr'k* 'dim, stupid' — *xíra* 'dark, dim, dirty', T. *xira* (MacKenzie 1976: 105; Gh., 181).
144. *-y'w* suffix of language 'in X-ian' — *-yow*, suffix of similarity (Gershevitch apud Khromov 1970: 230 n. 8).
145. *ywc-/ywxt-* 'to teach' — *yučón-* 'to teach, admonish, moralize' (Kh., 186, with etymology).
146. *ywy/yγw* (CS) 'yoke' (E28/18r27 Sims-Williams 2017: 114) *ywyk* 'yoke-bone' (Ch/So 16201/iii/41 Sundermann 2002: 142), *ywy* 'name of a lunar mansion' (M549i+R1) — *yuy* 'yoke' (F., 634), T. *yuy* (also YY).
147. *yxn-* 'ice' (Sims-Williams apud Sundermann 1990: 26, n. 33) *-ix, ex* 'ice', *īxn* 'icy' (B., 157) and likely *Yaγnób* itself (Khromov 1987: 644), a very cold river.
148. *z'ry* 'pitifully' — *zor-zor, zorí* 'pityfully', T. *zor, zor-zor*.
149. *zyβ-, jβ-/zyβ't-* 'bite, chew' — Y *žav-/žafta* 'eat, slurp'

¹¹⁸ My records in Panjakent; apparently not in dictionaries.

¹¹⁹ In a contribution that I was unable to access.

¹²⁰ B., 881, provides *xomak* 'rawhide, bastard, miscarriage'.

¹²¹ From Tajiki (with question mark) in Ja. T., 362, but I have not found such a word in T. The suffix is unclear, S. *-k'n, -k'ny* is denominal (Gershevitch 1954: 162).

150. *z-βr'yt'k* 'burnt, roasted' (So 14185(2)r, 123; Yoshida apud Reck 2009: 389; S.-D., 232) — *viráy-/viráyta* 'to roast'.
151. *zrywn'k* 'green', *zrywn* 'vegetable' — *zaryúna* 'yellow' (B., 186; N., 203).
152. (')*zr'ync-* 'to save, to release' — *zirínč* 'wooden gate' (Kh., 186), the similarity noticed by Schwartz (1982: 125), but the semantics remain unclear (both from 'asylum'?).

8. Indexes

Index A (Sogdian forms quoted in the dictionary of *Jagnobskie teksty*), Index B (Yaghnobi forms quoted in the 'Sogdian Dictionary' of Badrizamon Gharib) and Index C to this paper are included as online supplementary materials at <https://jolr.ru/jlr24/lurje.pdf>.



Literature

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П. Б. Лурье. Еще раз к вопросу о взаимосвязи согдийского и ягнобского языков

В статье анализируются вопросы взаимосвязи двух восточноиранских языков, особенно близких друг другу: согдийского и ягнобского. После краткого введения с общей характеристикой мертвого согдийского языка I тысячелетия н. э. и современного языка долины Ягноба в горах центрального Таджикистана, автор рассматривает историографию исследований об их сходствах и расхождениях. Особый параграф в конце этого раздела обосновывает целесообразность двустороннего сопоставления согдийского и ягнобского. Третий раздел посвящен ключевым различиям двух языков и вероятной дате их размежевания. В качестве таковых рассмотрены согдийский ‘ритмический закон’, положение аугмента в имперфекте, окончания первого и третьего лица множественного числа, дифтонги, образованные вследствие умлаута у и развитие кластеров *δr и *θr. Мы обосновываем период между III в. до н. э. — III в. н. э. как разделение основных изоглосс. Это время после образования согдийского письма и эллинского влияния

и до «Старых писем», самой ранней крупной группы согдийских текстов (до 313 года). В следующем разделе мы исследуем общие инновации, имевшие место после размежевания праязыков. Ряд таких черт являются следствием интенсивных контактов с носителями тюркских языков. Раздел 5 посвящен некоторым культурным словам и экстралингвистическим, в первую очередь, археологическим данным. Мы стремимся доказать, что протоягнобцы принимали самое скромное участие в развитии согдийской торговли и космополитичной высокой культуры. В разделе 6 мы рассматриваем литературный согдийский как койне, которое использовалось носителями разных близкородственных диалектов, и стремимся показать, что некоторые изоглоссы, которые можно увидеть в тех или иных согдийских текстах, были основаны на диалектных особенностях их авторов, происходивших, в том числе, из восточного Согда или Уструшаны, где речь была ближе протоягнобскому, чем самаркандский стандарт. Мы приходим к выводу, что протоягнобский занимал свое (быть может, весьма особенное) место среди диалектов согдийских городов-государств. К статье прилагается список из 150 согдийско-ягнобских лексических соответствий, выявленных позже словаря в книге «Ягнобские тексты» (1957). Часть их основывается на архивных материалах Б. А. Алборова и М. Н. Боголюбова, примерно в половине случаев эти соответствия были выявлены автором. Дополнительные указатели доступны в формате онлайн-приложения к статье.

Ключевые слова: близкое родство языков; восточноиранские языки; согдийский язык; ягнобский язык; языковые изоглоссы; абсолютные даты языковых признаков.