

Tochi Valley Inscriptions in the Peshawar Museum

By Ahmad Hasan Dani, Helmut Humbach and Robert Gobl.

Recorded history gives little authentic information on the Islamization of the North West Frontier of Pakistan. In fact the early Muslim conquest of this region still remains to be authenticated. Nay, even the earlier history right from the time the Great Kushanas were overthrown by the advance of the Iranian Sassanids, is known only in bits of information. More and more evidence remains to be gathered by a thorough exploration of this region. Meanwhile three inscriptions are being edited here to throw this problem. Parts I and II of this paper are written by the first author and part III by the last two authors.

I

Three inscriptions, edited¹ here, are preserved in the Peshawar Museum. All of them come from Tochi Agency, between Idak and Spinwam, lying to the west of Bannu – a region which lay enroute the early Arab invasions² in the North West Frontier of Pakistan. They were published without proper edition by Mr. M. A. Shakoor in his small pamphlet.³ For easy reference we name the stones A, B and C.

'A' is Shakoor's No. 49 containing Arabic and Sanskrit texts in the same tablet measuring 24" x 12" (see No. A). The Arabic text is on the upper half and the Sanskrit lower down. The tablet was found in 1907 and was presented to the Museum by Mr. Pears, T.C.S.' It was first edited by Mr. Muhammad Hamid Kuraishi⁴ and then re-edited by Dr. Muhammad Shafi,⁵ Mr. Kuraishi also gave the Sanskrit text as read by Dr. Hiranand Sastri, the Government Epigraphist for India.

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1. They are edited here with the kind permission of the curator.
 2. For a recent discussion of the subject see S. O. Fatimi, 'First Muslim invasion of the N.W. Frontier of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent' in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (June 1963), pp. 25-32; and also Lt. Col K.A. Rashid, same title, *ibid*, No. 2 (Dec. 1963), pp. 25-32.
 3. M.A. Shakoor, *A Handbook to the Inscriptions Gallery in the Peshawar Museum*, Peshawar, 1946 (hereafter referred to by author).
 4. 'A Kufic Sarada inscription from the Peshawar Museum' in *Epigraphia-Indo-Moslemica*, 1925-26, pp. 27-28 hereafter referred to by the author).
 5. ہندوستان کا قدیم ترین عربی کتبہ in *Oriental College Magazine*, Lahore, Aug. 1942, pp. 44-45 (hereafter referred to by the author).

‘B’ is Shakoor’s No. 15 containing Bactrian and Sanskrit texts in the same tablet measuring 25" x 8". The inscription is divided by a vertical line at 113 of its length. The Bactrian writing is on the right portion occupying 2/3rd space and the Sanskrit on the left (see No. B). The stone was discovered at a place called Khazana⁶ about four miles from Mir Ali on the Idak-Spinwam road in the Tochi Agency. It was received from Captain H.A. Barnes, Indian Political Department on 30th July, 1926. Mr. Barnes adds, “There are several remains of ancient forts and buildings at Idak-Spinwam and Shertulla plain. In addition I have had coins brought to me discovered on three sites. The coins were chiefly of Azes I and those of several *Kushana* kings, notably Kanishka I.” The inscription has not been properly edited so far. Dr. Hiranayd Sastri, as noted in the Museum file, read a few words like *titame*, *Samvat 38*, *bhūpa* and *putra*. He also suggested that the date should be referred to the Sastra era.

‘C’ is Shakoor’s No. 41. This is in two pieces (See plate C), the larger one measuring 34" x 11". Both the pieces were found together at Sher-talao⁷ in the Tochi Agency and were received from Major Keene. They contain Bactrian text, edited here for the first time in part III and two lines of Arabic text on the top, greater portion of which is now broken or chipped off. Because of the fragmentary nature the Arabic text does not give any sense.

The use of three languages in the inscriptions is very significant. Sanskrit decidedly proves that the common local language of the educated people was Sanskrit. Hence this was adopted as one of the media, as it was common among the Hindus of the time in India and Pakistan. *Bactrian* is connected with the Shahi rulers of this region, and, as has been pointed out in part III, it was the language used by these rulers in the Pak-Afghan region. The Arabic is the new language introduced in this part by the Arab conquerors. Its use in two of the inscriptions definitely proves that the Arab conquerors had a firm hold over this region at the time when these inscriptions were written

Three different systems of reckoning dates are given in the inscriptions. The Arabic inscription in ‘A’ is dated Friday the 13th Jumāda¹, 243 (A.H.) = 7th September 857 A.D. which is also Friday. The Sanskrit text of this inscription is dated 2nd day of Kārtika *Samyat 32* referable to the Laukika or the Śāstra era with the hundred digit omitted, i.e. 3932, which is equal to A.D. 856-57 (see part third for the difference). The inscription ‘B’ is dated on the 7th day of Bhādra *Samyat 38*, i.e. *Laukikaera 3938*=A.D. 862. It also contains *Bactrian* date 632. After calculation the beginning of the *Bactrian* date can be placed in A.D. 230. In inscription no. ‘C’ only *Bactrian* date 635, i.e. A.D. 865 has been read. The Laukika era, as Alberuni⁸ informs, was used in this region by the Hindus. The

6. The name *Khazana* is very significant. Such place names are very common in Gandhara. To me it suggests a survival and corruption of the old Hindu Shahi title *Kushana* - *Koshano* - *Khoshano* - *Khojano* - *Khozana* - *Khazana*. The name actually occurs in the inscription.

7. Shertulla or correctly Sher-talao is also very significant. The second part *talao* is the word حوض used in the Arabic inscription A. The name preserves the memory of the old tank construction.

8. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Vol. II, London, 1910, pp. 9-11.

Hijra date was decidedly brought by the Arabs, and the Bactrian date can be assigned to the local Kushana rulers, though the reason for its origin is disputed. (See part III).

The historical information contained in these inscriptions is very important. In recent years Dr. R.C. Majumdar discussed the history of the Hindu kings of this region *visa vis* the Arab conquerors on the basis of the Arabic sources, particularly *Futūh-al-Buldān* of Al-Balādhurī. After tracing the long-drawn struggle between the two parties, Dr. Majumdar finally concludes: "When the Caliph al-Ma'mun (A.D. 813-833) visited Khurasan, Ratbil paid double tribute to him, but was evidently left unmolested. Al-Ma'mun, however, sent an army against Kabul, probably the Shahi ruler of Kabul, who submitted to taxation and acknowledged obedience. Baladhuri further says that the king of Kabul professed Islam and promised obedience, but he apparently regained independence and apostatized almost immediately after. Next we hear of the conquest of Kabul and Zabulistan by Yakub, son of Lais about A.D. 870. The king of Kabul was made a prisoner while the king of Zabulistan was killed and its inhabitants forced to embrace Islam. Henceforth, Zabulistan ceased to belong to India, either politically or culturally, but Kabul recovered its independence and remained, as before a part of India from both political and cultural point of view till the time of Turkish Sultans of Delhi."⁹

This conclusion of Dr. Majumdar needs considerable revision in the light of the new information. Limiting to the present evidence of the inscriptions it can be safely maintained that Idak-Spinwam region in the Tochi Agency recognized the authority of the Arab rulers at least from A.D. 856-5 and that the Arab officer Hayy bin 'Amār, as given in the present Arabic inscription No. A, had a control over this part. It was under his orders that a tank (تالغ) was constructed here for the benefit of the people. Such a humanitarian work could be undertaken by the Muslim officer only when the territory was under his peaceful control. But it seems that the local Government was still run by the local ruler under Arab surveillance. The local ruler called himself *Shahi*, lord or king (*nripa*), *the Kuzula*, *the Kuzan* or the son of *Khojana* or *Kushana* and scion of *Fromo* (or *Phruma*). In the Bactrian inscription we get only one name *Gomo Shahi*, and in Sanskrit we get the name *Navina Chandra Phruma* (For other titles see part III).

It will not be wrong to maintain that these Shahi rulers were one of the branches of the old Kushana Shahi rulers of Gandhara. It is also possible to identify them with the rulers of Zabulistan (i.e. Ghazni region), as distinct from the rulers of Kabul. The latter is called Ratbil (probably Ratna-bala, or more correctly Ratna-pāla) by Al-Balādhurī. The Arabs had their head-quarters in Sijistan, where we read of a long succession of *Walis* being appointed by the Arab authorities. It is from here that through the *Zamin-i-Dawar*, i.e. the Land of the Gates, of course leading to the then India, the Arabs led their advances into Zabulistan and via Idak-Spinwam into Bannu. The presence of these inscriptions definitely proves the firm control of the Arabs over this region.

9. *The Arab Invasion of India*, reprinted as Dacca University supplement from the *Journal of the Indian History*. Vol. X, pt. 1, Madras, 1931, chapter III.

II

In this portion the Arabic and Sanskrit texts of A and B inscriptions are given on the basis of the study made from the original stones in the Peshawar Museum. To facilitate the understanding of the palaeography a chart (Fig. 1) of the Sanskrit letters is given, the letters of the two Sanskrit records are kept separate in different columns. The style of writing in the two records has a close similarity, though the letters in A have simpler forms with a tendency to angularity and those in B maintain roundish style. The alphabet is neither pure Nāgarī nor pure Śāradā. It does not show the simplified Nāgarī forms of this period nor do we have the 'Śāradā character' so well known from Kashmir records. The significant forms are of *A, Ka, Cha, Bha, Va* and the numeral seven. The last agrees with the form known from Nepali 'Buddhist manuscripts'.¹⁰ The letters *Va and Ba* have the same sign. The reading of the Sanskrit text in B is facilitated now by the decipherment of the Bactrian text.

Stone A

The Arabic palaeography, is most interesting. As Kuraishi has pointed out, the writing is somewhat crude. It is strange that the inscription does not begin with *Bismillah*. The style of writing has been described as Kufic. The angularity is noticed in some of the forms of *He*, the lower loop of *Waw*, the curve of a few forms of *Nun*, the top head loop of *Waw*, and the emphasis on the vertical teeth of *Sin*, as well as on the verticals of other letters and finally on the flatness of the horizontals. On the other hand the loop of *Mim* has a full circle and is clearly distinguished from the half circle at the head of *Fe and Qaf*. Similarly *he* in the initial also makes a single looped circle, and *Nun* is hardly drawn full. The end of its left stroke is not taken up to complete the half circle but is left like a tail. *Re* and *Waw*, have their body curved. These features suggest that the style was influenced by the curved forms of letters. Dots are omitted, and hence the reading creates difficulties.

Text

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (2) 13 التلاخ حى بن 14 عمار تقبل | (1) هذا ما امر عقد 11 هذا 12 |
| (4) وعقاله 15 سو [ء] 16 وقد عمله (?) | (3) الله منه صالح عمله |
| (6) عشرة خلون من جمادى | (5) كتب 17 يوم الجمعة بثلاثه (بثلاث) |

10. See G.H. Ojha, *Bharatiya Prachina Lipimala*, 2nd ed., Ajmer, 1918, Pl. LXXII, last form under No. 7; Also Buhler, *Indian Palaeography*, (Eng. Tr.), Pl. IX under Mss. style, column XXIV, No. 7.
11. Kuraishi does not read anything after امر This reading is of Dr. Shafi.
12. Dr. Shafi's reads بنا (ء) But the angle of ن is clear and ل is given separate.
13. For the correct reading of the word I am indebted to Haji Muhammad Idris, Head of the Department of Arabic, University of Peshawar. The reading is supported by the following passage in Baladhuri:
وهو ماء يجرى من نهر بسمو فيصير في مجتمع له مثل البر كته في المويته وهم يسمون البلاخ
P. 445 *Futuhul-Buldan*, Cairo, 1319 A.H.- التلاخ appears to be a misprint of تلاب —a word which is Arabised from تلاب or تلاب
14. Dr. Shafi's reading عمار is preferable. The person may have some connection with 'Abdul lah bin 'Amir.
15. Others read as غفر
16. As read by Dr. Shafi.
17. As read by Dr. Shafi. Kuraishi wrongly read as كان



Inscription No. A



Inscription No. B (only Bactrian text)



Inscription No. B (Sanskrit text on the left)



Inscription No. C1



Inscription No. C 2

**LETTER FORMS IN
TOCHI VALLEY INSCRIPTIONS**

NO. B				NO. A			
(A)	𑖀	, (I)	𑖁	(A)	𑖂		
(Ka)	𑖃	, (Kho)	𑖄	(Ka)	𑖅		
(Cha)	𑖆	, (Ja)	𑖇				
(T)	𑖈	, (Ta)	𑖉	, (Ti)	𑖊	, (Ri)	𑖋
						(Thau)	𑖌
(Tra)	𑖍	, (Ttra)	𑖎	(Dri)	𑖏	, (Di)	𑖐
(Di)	𑖑	, (Dra)	𑖒				
(Na)	𑖓	,					
(Pu)	𑖔	, (Phru)	𑖕	, (Bha)	𑖖	(Ma)	𑖗
(Me)	𑖘	, (Myām)	𑖙				
(La)	𑖚	, (Ra)	𑖛	, (Va)	𑖜	(Ya)	𑖝
						(La)	𑖞
						(Re)	𑖟
						(Va)	𑖠
(Su)	𑖡	, (Sa)	𑖢	(Sa)	𑖣	, (Hu)	𑖤
(3)	𑖥	, (7)	𑖦	, (8)	𑖧	(2)	𑖨
						(3)	𑖩

Fig 1

(8) وبانتين صلى الله على محمد

(7) الا ولے سنته ثلثه واربعين

(9) وال محمد الطاهرين¹⁸ (؟)

Translation

It was ordered by Hayy, son of 'Amār to construct this tank. May God accept his pious deeds and forgive his sinful deeds! It was recorded on Friday, the thirteenth day of Jumādā I of the year 243 (7th September, 847 A.D.) Blessings of God be upon Muḥammad, the chosen, and his descendants.

Sanskrit Text

1. (Om namah samvatsa) re dvāriṃsati¹⁹
2. (tame) samvat 32 Kārti-
3. (Ka) māsa bahula tithau dvi (ti)-
4. (yā) yāṃ vadi 2 atra diva-²⁰
5. (se)²¹.....

Translation

Om. Salutation. In the thirtysecond year, year 32, in the month of Kārtika (Sept.-Oct.), on the second day of the dark fortnight. On this day.

Stone B

The Sanskrit text is in five lines. Unfortunately the stone is broken on the left hand side resulting in the loss of first few letters in every line. In consequence it is difficult to make sense by Sanskrit text alone. But with the knowledge gained from the Bactrian text, the interpretation is not difficult. The reading is given below:

1. (Om namaḥ samvatsare aṣṭatṛiṃsa) titame samvat 38 Bhādra-
2. (pada māsa sukla paksha sapta) myāṃ sudi 7 Atra diva-
3. (se)..... Naina²² -chandra Phruma²³

18. As read by Dr. Shafi. Kuraishi reads as الحظري

19. Read *tri*.

20. Dr. Sastri wrongly read as *Deva*, resulting in wrong interpretation of the text.

21. The remaining letters are not readable.

22. *Naina* was read by Dr. Sastri as *Na(ya)na*, but the letter *i* is quite clear on the stone. I think it should be corrected as *Navina*, meaning new rather than *Nayana*, meaning eye. Hence *Navina-chandra* will be the proper name of the king.

23. This word was read as *bhupa* by Dr. Sastri, but the first letter is clearly a conjunct with a short *u*, while the second letter shows the closed loop of *ma* on the left side. Moreover this reading tallies with the Bactrian text as given in part III. Either it is a part of the name or title of the king.

4.sa ya²⁴ dda²⁵
 5.kula-narapaa²⁶ Khojana²⁷ -putra

Translation.

Hail. Salutation. In the year thirty-eight, year 38, on the seventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādra. On this day Nai (vī-) na-chandra Phrūma (established ?).....king of the family of.....the son of Khojana (i.e. the Kushana).

III

When Robert Gobl visited Peshawar in summer 1962, he noticed that two inscriptions of the Museum show Bactrian texts in the late Central Asian Greek cursive script. One of them is a Sanskrit-Bactrian bilingual (No. B) and the other is an Arabic-Bactrian bilingual (No. C). The estampages, which were kindly put at Gobl's disposal by Mr. M.A. Shakoov, the then curator of the Museum, enabled us to study the two Bactrian texts in autumn of the same year. It was evident that they show the same type of characters as the Berlin Hephthalite fragments. Moreover, in their vocabulary and eulogistic phraseology they are closely related, and also resemble the Kanishka inscription of Surkh Kotal. They consist mainly of sequences of titulatures of the sovereign who is finally identified with a star.²⁸

Preliminary information on these inscriptions was given by Helmut Humbach at the XXVI International Congress of Orientalists (New Delhi, January 1964). With the friendly help of the acting curator, Mr. Malik Amin Jan, he had the occasion to see these inscriptions and to make fresh estampages on his last visit to Peshawar. Together we took up the study again and could correct some errors. Thus we are able now to present our results. A detailed analysis will follow soon.

On this occasion we want to mention only the following points: As in the Surkh-Kotal inscriptions *Ypsilon* is used also for *h* (*harougo*) and for *w* (*sauo*). The letters *a*, *o*, *d* coincide as in all the documents of the Bactrian cursive. It is difficult also to discern *t* and *g*, except in the combination *st*. Diacritical points are used on different occasions: first to denote (*b*: =2.); second to distinguish *a* and *o* according to the procedure of a Hephthalite fragment (*o*: =*a*); third to distinguish *g* and *t* and to denote the sound $\frac{v}{z}$ according to the Arabo-Persian method ($\frac{\dot{g}}{z}$ = $\frac{\dot{g}}{z}$). Lack of space, caused by deviation from the original plan, instigated the stone mason to accumulate letters and even to create bold ligatures. In our transcription such instances are marked by underlining.

24. A conjunct consonant which I cannot make out.

25. Here a verb is implied, meaning something like 'established'.

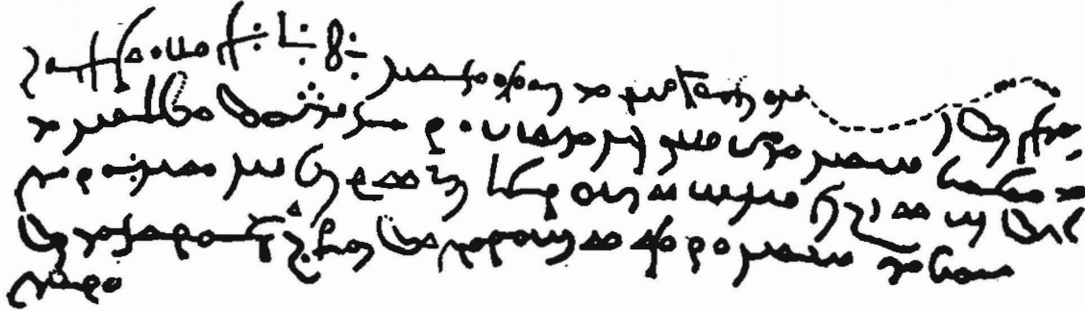
26. To be corrected as *nripa* meaning 'king.'

27. *Khojana* obviously stands for *Koshana* or *Khushana*.

28. Helmut Humbach, *Die Kaniska-Inschrift von Surkh-Kotal* (Wiesbaden 1960). *Id. Kusban und Hephthaliten* (München 1961).

1. *Bactrian text of the Sanskrit-Bactrian bilingual dated savmat 38,*
xsono 632²⁹. No B

1. zo xsono x: I: b,: maho osoi gomos ahi (mo) [... n] ibixto
2. ta malbo ba;o horonodogo m(i) inano gomano kaldo ta
3. stara: gado mo kirdo gi I ro sidano malizi do ni (b...)
4. bigo harougo zoladi- bo- starani do fromano gokado
5. staro



Tochi-Inscription 1. Peshawar Museum. Cat No. 15. Scale ca. 1:3.

Göbl 1964.

Fig 2 (No. B (Hand Copy))

“(1) In the year 632²⁹, month six, written by Gomo Sahi, (2) by him, the drinker-of-liquor, the lord, the shepherd of the cows, the member-of-the-cow-family³⁰. By him the kaldo (3) was made at the arrival of the star⁻³¹, (by him) who (is) a preserver, a king of the noblemen and (4) a custodian of the inscriptions³² elevated beyond the stars and a scion-of-Fromo, a member-of-the-cow-house. (5)³³ a star.”

2. *Bactrian text of the Arabic-Bactrian bilingual dated xsono 635³⁴ No. C. I*

- Part 1. I. zo xsono x: 1:
2. e: maho oigo
 3. (o) rmzdo do miro
 4. kaldo kirdo korano ta
 5. malbo sido sando (st) aro
 6. gomano [go] kado seuo (or seuo)

29. Not x: i: b: “612”, as proposed in New Delhi.

30. *Not nagomano* “member of the Naga family”, as proposed in New Delhi.

31. This seems to have a double meaning (*slesha*). First it applies to an astronomical event, but second it refers also to the king, who is identified with a star in the following relative sentence.

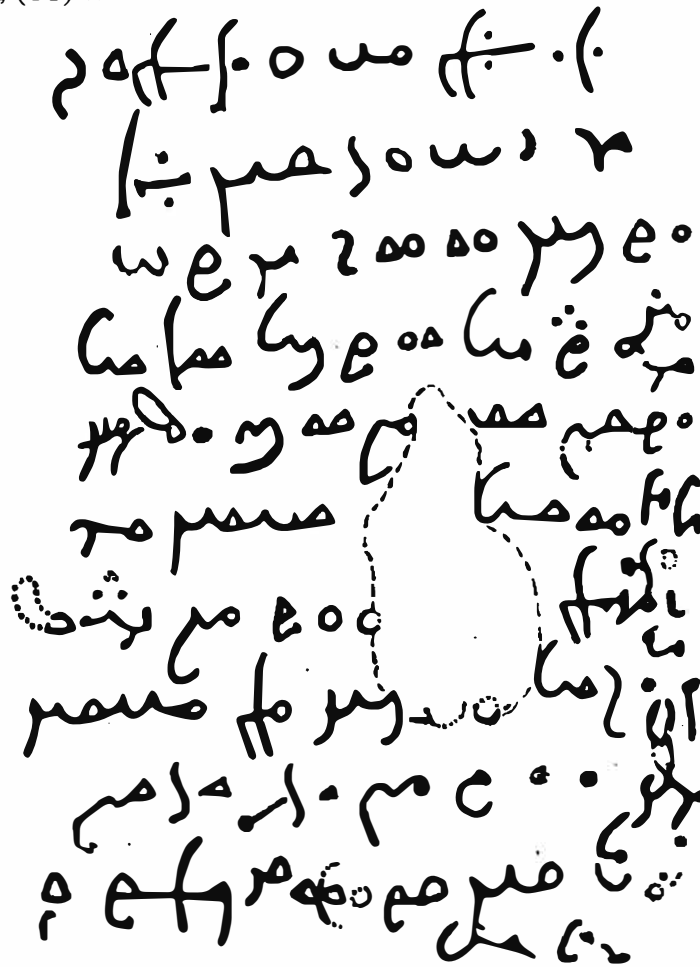
32. Or “custodian of the (holy) scripture”?

33. *Not gokao* “a Kavi. (giant) among the cows”, as suggested in New Delhi.

34. The Arabic text which is very short shows now date.

- 7. (b) ago saroo [.....] xagano
- 8. mano xom (in) o kozolo
- 9. sauooho saroalo nibigo
- 10. orligo f (o) romano
- 11kaldo ?

“(1/2) In the year 635, month one (3) for Ormuzd and Mihr (4) the kaldo was made by the Ku_zān³⁵ by him, (5) the drinker-of-liquor, the nobleman, the brilliant one,, the star, (6) the member-of-the-cow-family, the member-of-the-cow-house, the king, (7) the lord, the headman the member-of-the-Khagan-(8)-house, the owner-of-cows. the Kuzula, (9/10) the increaser-of-the-goods, the leader, the scion- of-Fromo, (11)



Tochi-Inscription 2a. Peshawar Museum. Cat. No. 41

Scale ca. 1:2, 5

Göbl 1964.

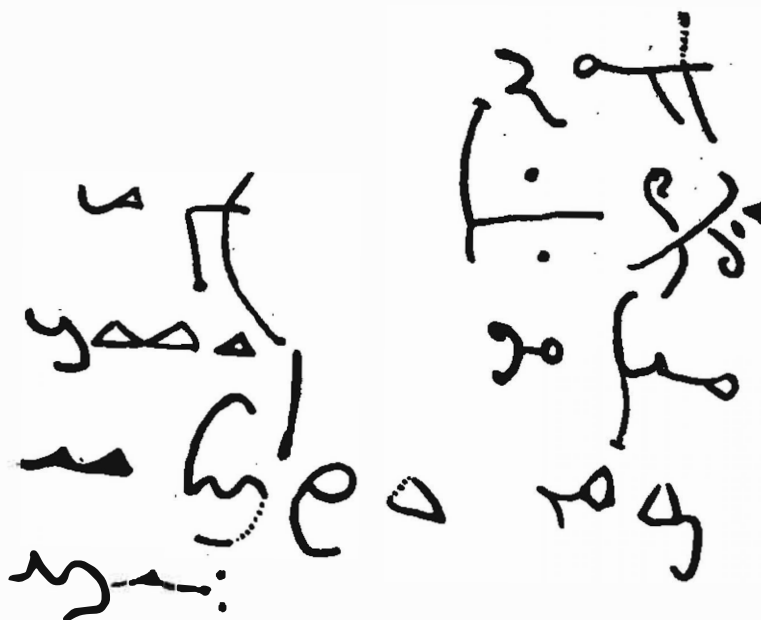
No. C 1 Hand (Copy)

35. korano read kozano, late form of kosano.

No C. part 2

1. zo x [$\begin{smallmatrix} v \\ s \end{smallmatrix}$]
2. o] no x: [1:] e: ASTRAL SYMBOL
3. a)gado. [...] ..k ?a
4. 1_ / do kird /o.. _ / tadi
5. b_ / ago.....

“In the year 635, at the arrival of (a certain star).....the kaldo was made by the tadi lord.”



Tochi-Inscription 2b. Peshawar Museum. Cat. No. 41

Scale ca. 1: 2

Göbl 1964.

Fig No. 3 (No. C 2 Hand Copy)

Besides the Bactrian dating x_x^s ono 632 the first, inscription contains the Hindu dating samvat 38 in the Sanskrit version (see part 11). This is the year 3938 of the Śāstra era, i.e. the year 862 A.D. We are able to fix this date by consulting a third inscription, the well known Arabic Sanskrit bilingual of the Peshawar Museum (No. A above). The latter contains the Arabic dating 243 A.H., i.e. 857 A. D. and the Hindu dating samvat 32 which, on the basis of the Arabic dating, must be interpreted as samvat 3932 Śāstra, i.e. 856 A.D.).³⁶

The Śāstra or Laukika era was known in Multan, as Alberuni mentions, and he follows up this statement with his famous excursus on the Shahis of Kabul

36. The day mentioned in the Arabic version (Friday 13, Jumada 1) does not agree with the calendar of the year 243, but with that of 242 A.H. (i.e. 856 A.D.). Therefore the number of the year should be corrected. By means of this conjecture the year dates of both versions of the Arabic-Sanskrit bilingual agree fully.

and on Kanishka. This is certainly not a mere coincident, because the Tochi inscriptions bear testimony to the dominion of a Kushan dynasty, which was tributary to the early Arab conquerors of this country.

Our inscriptions are of great importance for the history of this early Muslim conquest, which took place in the ninth century A.D.,³⁷ as well as for the history of the Indo-Scythians. Regarding the latter, the most interesting problem is that of the Bactrian era used in Tochi. This era must have started in the Christian year, which results from the subtraction of the Bactrian year 632 of the first inscription from its Christian year 862 (3938 Śāstra), i.e. in the year 230 A.D.,³⁸ It seems to be remarkable that in the beginning of this Christian year a delegation of the Kushān king Po-t'iao (Vasudeva?) had paid a visit to the Chinese court, by which Po-t'iao was given the honorary title "King of the Great Yüeh-chih who shows affection to the Wei".³⁹ The question whether this Bactrian era of 230 A.D. was established by Po-t'iao after the return of his delegation or by a rival who was successful in the meantime, has to be discussed at a later occasion.

37. It is noteworthy that not only the Bactrian texts, but also the Arabic text of the Arabic-Bactrian inscription were considered to be Mongolian, until Robert Gobl recognized their true character.

38. The exact date is January, 26, 230 A.D. The first year of the Bactrian era began in the following spring.

39. Wei Shih 3.6. a.