The documents found on Mount Mugh arguably offer the best available corpus for beginning readings in Sogdian texts. Unlike the majority of the Sogdian manuscripts, found along the Silk Road and mostly representing translations from other languages, the Mugh documents stem from the Sogdian heartland and represent original compositions. Their genres vary from simple administrative records to elaborate legal texts and diplomatic correspondence. This progression is conducive to using them as a step-by-step introduction to Sogdian grammar, preferably before the students are exposed to samples of translated and contact-induced literature with their idiosyncratic syntactic and stylistic features. From the historical viewpoint, they offer a unique glimpse at the daily life of the upper Zarafshan valley in the period of the Arab conquests (early 8th century CE) and many of them specifically refer to the events of this conquest. The Mugh collection essentially encompasses the private archives of Dhēwāštich, ruler of Panjikant, and his closest associates, who were beleaguered by the Arabs in the castle on Mount Mugh and eventually had to surrender. From the comparative perspective, the Mugh corpus arguably represents the closest functional counterpart to the Bactrian documents from Northern Afghanistan, whose publication revolutionized (some would say, created) the field of Bactrian studies. Despite the difference in script, the Sogdian and Bactrian letters and legal texts are frequently comparable at the level of discourse formulae and thus reflect a common scribal tradition, which must ultimately go all the way back to the provincial Achaemenid chanceries.

Given all these unique features of the Mugh documents, it is rather unfortunate that their Russian translation remained the only one to be consulted.
for some fifty years. Excavated in Tajikistan in the early thirties of the last century, the documents were mostly published in the early sixties by a team of Saint Petersburg scholars. The largest and arguably the most interesting parts of the archive were deciphered by Vladimir Aaronovich Livshits, then a relatively young philologist and now a patriarch of Iranian Studies. A particular challenge to this decipherment came from the cursive variety of the Sogdian National Script, which is closely related to the Sutra Script of the Buddhist Sogdian texts, but frequently does not distinguish the shapes of many letters. Livshits quickly established himself as the guru of Sogdian palaeography with his first monographic edition of the Mugh documents (V.A. Livshits, *Sogdijskie dokumenty s gory Mug, Vypusk 2: Juridicheskie dokumenty i pisma*, Moscow, 1962).

In the years to follow, Livshits kept actively contributing to the study of Central Asian epigraphy and was entrusted with the publication of many newly found Sogdian inscriptions. But the last half a century also saw much progress in the understanding of Sogdian grammar. Even the transliteration of the Sogdian National Script underwent improvements. Nicholas Sims-Williams was able to show that the eight-century texts still made a distinction between the ⟨x⟩ and ⟨γ⟩ signs and identified a number of new heterograms, which had been formerly read as Sogdian forms. Furthermore, Ilya Gershevitch, Frantz Grenet, Étienne de la Vaissière, and myself published several papers devoted to improving the interpretation of individual texts found on Mount Mugh. The combination of these factors prompted Livshits to undertake a new revised Russian edition of the Mugh documents and related texts. It appeared as V.A. Livshits, *Sogdijskaja epigrafika Srednej Azii i Semirechya*, Saint-Petersburg, 2009, being accompanied this time by photographs of the edited texts. The volume under review represents an English translation of the above Russian work, edited by Nicholas Sims-Williams. The main differences of the English edition, as listed in the Introduction, include the correction of minor errors and misprints, supplying the missing photographs, unifying the Cyrillic and Roman bibliographies, and updating the Chinese transliteration.

Turning to the evaluation of the volume under review, I must state at the very beginning that we are dealing with an important work, which will be useful for linguists and historians alike. At the same time, it is necessary make it clear that that this edition cannot be regarded as definite, but reflects, first and foremost, the personal contribution of Livshits to Sogdian studies. This comment must not be taken in the spirit of disparagement, which would be indeed inappropriate in the instance of the greatest Russian Iranologist alive and the person from whom I have seen nothing but kindness since the very beginning of my academic career. They are rather meant to illustrate the