

Hossein Sheikh. *Studies of Bactrian Legal Documents*

Nicholas Sims-Williams

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## REFERENCES

Hossein Sheikh. *Studies of Bactrian Legal Documents*. Leiden & Boston, Brill, 2022. xviii + 88 pp. (Ancient Iran Series 15), ISBN 978-90-04-51997-8 (hardback), 978-90-04-51998-5 (e-book).

- 1 This is a revised and expanded version of the author's Göttingen PhD dissertation. The Bactrian documents which have come to light since the early 1990s include at least 35 contracts and receipts dating from the 4th to the 8th century CE. Sheikh analyses both the external format (e.g. single and double documents, use of sealings) and the internal content and structure (e.g. dating, witness lists, warranty clause) of the Bactrian legal documents. He shows that the Bactrian contracts attest a well-established though gradually evolving tradition and compares each aspect with earlier and contemporary legal documents in other languages of the surrounding area. Some features of the Bactrian documents can be traced back to the Aramaic documents of the Achaemenian period or even earlier Mesopotamian traditions; others must have been introduced in Hellenistic, Kushan or Sasanian times. The Islamic conquest of Afghanistan in the 8th century led to significant changes in legal norms, though Bactrian was not immediately replaced by Arabic as the language of legal contracts. Altogether this is a careful and well-researched study, which will be found useful by both historians and philologists.

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AUTHORS

**NICHOLAS SIMS-WILLIAMS**

SOAS, Royaume-Uni