

语言背后的历史

THE HISTORY BEHIND
THE LANGUAGES

Essays of Turfan Forum | 西域古典语言学高峰论坛论文集
on Old Languages | 新疆吐鲁番学研究院◎编
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In the subsequent times the region of Turfan has fallen under Mongol, rule and was progressively de-christianised and then islamized^[1]. The production of Syriac, Christian Uygur and Sogdian manuscripts stopped.

Linguistic situation of the manuscript can also produce a clue to the establishing of its origin and date. The main text is written in Syriac, one part is written in New Persian with Syriac letters and additionally some glosses in Old Uygur were added by later hands. The New Persian (old Dari) started to be used in Sogdiana and along the Silk Road about 12th cent^[2]. It yielded later to Turkic and Mongolian^[3] so that its usage was restricted to Central and Eastern Iran. Old Uygur used for marginal notes remained in use for some time.^[4] Thus, date of this manuscript could be established only approximately. Syriac Mss. ceased to be produced about the time of the fall of Kaghanate, so the probable date is about 13th cent. About the milieu which produced this manuscript we have little evidence. Obvious clue is the content of the text: it could be nothing other than the Eastern Christian ("Nestorian") community either of Turfan or of the area. Only Christians made use of such marriage ceremonials.

Paleography of the text is rather complicated. Its Syriac writing is a Central-Asian variety of the Nestorian ductus. It oscillates between Mesopotamian Eastern cursive and stylized Estrangelo. The main part written in Syriac has a traditional writing profile. The text will be published shortly by myself.

What regards New Persian written with Syriac letters it is a special case. We know several such texts and they have some features in common. F. Müller gives a description of particular letters used to write in New Persian biblical Psalms:

ⲁ for New-Persian δ;

two non-Syriac letters for f and XX for x (خ).

ⲥ for č and ġ^[5].

This indicates a probable Sogdian milieu or at least a place where Sogdian writing habits were still present. All this points to the Turfan area.

Text

The marriage formularies in the liturgical history do not constitute a very variable part of Christian

[1] В.В.Бартольд, Туркестанвэпохумонгольскогонашествия //с/св9т., т.1. — М., 1963.

[2] Ju. A. Rubinchik, *Sovremennyy persidskiy yazyk*, Moscow, 1960, 124; cf. a new work by Anton Pritula: *П р и т у л а А. Христианствоиперсидскаякнижность XIII XVII в в . Saint-Petersburg, 2004.*

[3] Cf. Saguchi introd.

[4] See P. Zieme, "Das nestorianische Glaubensbekenntnis in einem alttürkischen Fragment aus Bulayiq", *Ural-altaische Jahrbücher*, vol.15, 1997, pp.173–180.

[5] F.W.K. Müller, *Ein syrisch-neupersisches Psalmenbruchstück aus Chinesisch-Turkestan*, *Festschrift Eduard Sachau*. Berlin, 1915, pp.215–222, esp. 216; N. Sims-Williams has completed the description in his paper, delivered at Turfan Conference.

ceremonial (or rite). The Syriac-speaking world has two main varieties of it: western and eastern one. The western I tried to describe in my article specially dedicated to the *status quaestions*. At that time I had to leave the Eastern Syriac rite aside. However there is not much to say about it. Its structure corresponds to the course of the matrimonial ritual formed about the 4th century in the Antiochian area and adopted subsequently by Syrians and Byzantine Greeks. But certain features make out of it a very specific kind. First it is its archaic character, the groom's shepherd, the epitropos and father of the bride remain integral parts of the ritual thus confirming the pre-Christian Jewish as well as Roman legislative character of the rite.

With the finding of a new witness from Turfan to this archaic rite we become more informed about the development of the formulary in the Eastern Syriac milieu outside Mesopotamia. Here are its main elements missing in the printed text and present in the rite from Turfan: two *memre* or sermons, detailed dialogues and prayers before the espousals. But also the remaining portion of the text leaves the impression of a somewhat free composition. With the finding of the Ms. AS syr.1 we are confronted with the necessity to reconstruct more carefully the history of the matrimonial rite in the Church of the East.

The Espousals should begin with the assembling of the guests and participants in the house of the bride's father. Next goes the ceremony of checking the candidacies. And then the dowry (cabin) should be given. Here the manuscript presents its particular character, as the following text is written neither in Syriac nor in Sogdian (as one may suppose) but in New Persian (also called Dari). The identification was made by N. Sims-Williams.

We must point to two important publications in connection with the marriage ritual in the Iranian area and in Central Asia. Maria Macuch in her article on the Pahlavi marriage contract demonstrated that the Sasanian law legislation was well preserved as late as 13th cent^[1]. The document in Pahlavi the roles of the bride (future wife-*pādixšāy*) and bridegroom are described and the legal consequences are well depicted. The dowry (*pēšīgān wāsuhragān*) is of special interest, as this custom was well present in the Christian milieu in Turfan, as our manuscript shows. The marriage contract in New Persian has a close relative in the Pahlavi contract analyzed by M. Macuch.

The Turkic (Uyghur) marriage blessing from Qurutqa (a village to the north from Turfan), published by Peter Zieme is a heterographical text (Uyghur text written with Syriac letters) from Mongol times (it even uses the Mongolian designation for Christians *ärkägün*). The text does not run a parallel to the new Persian contract but has some affinities with the prayers in the main Syriac liturgical

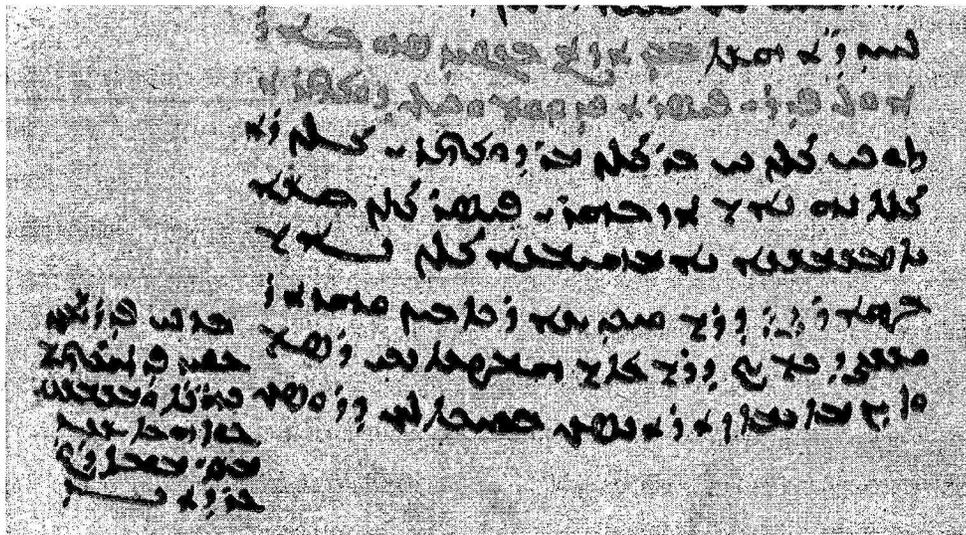
[1] M. Macuch "The Pahlavi Model Marriage Contract in the Light of Sasanian Family Law", *Iranian Languages and Texts from Iran and Turan*, R. E. Emmerick Memorial volume (*Iranica* 13), pp.183-205; cf. D. N. MacKenzie, "The Model Marriage Contract in Pahlavi with an Addendum", KR Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee volume, Bombay, 1969, 103-112.

formulaire. However I think that all three texts have something in common. Marriage customs reveal quite archaic background which was represented in a series of ancient texts.

Here we reproduce the text and the photo.

The marriage (dowry) contract from fol. 2b

1. Photo



2. Reading

[Syriac: ܒܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ] b'd 'z'n bgwyd sh b'r

'wl pdry pysr' wdwwm wkyly ddwxtr'

tw ky fln ny br fln mr dwxtry fln r'

nh n'm 'z bhry pysr fln ܘܢܐ

y' mšmšn' y' mhymn' fln n'm

bys'r ... drm wykdy n' r k'byn whz'r

wšššd km yš drm x'm hmšn'nky rsm

w'yn m'nm'd 'z 'nst bwyk'lt drwst.

Added in the margin:

bzny pdr fln // gwyd pdr rhktm (?) // khn' wmšmšn' // gw'h b'šnd // mšr mm'rk // grd'nd

3. Translation:

[Syriac: ...to one another. Now:] After that let say three times

first father of the girl and then the keeper of the girl
“You that are so-and-so son of so-and-so to the daughter of so-and-so
by the name so-and-so for the account of the son of that priest
or deacon or believer by the name so-and-so
[bring] an offering of ... drachms and one dinar as a marriage portion and thousand
and six hundred non less silver drachms as it is accustomed,
and this ... is for that under a legal right.”

[Margin:]Do it this way: father so-and-so should say: // “I am the father of the pair.// Then the priest or deacon // are witnesses that it is decided.”

This looks to be one of the few known early specimens of the New Persian texts written with Syriac letters. All of them originate from central Asia if not directly from Turfan. In 1915 F.W.K. Müller draw attention to the Ms. MIK III/12 which he described as a Syriac-New-Persian Psalter^[1]. Later W. Sundermann has added to this text Ms. SyrHT 153 with the remaining part of the text^[2]. N. Sims-Williams reported the existence of two folios from an unpublished pharmacological Ms. M 7340 and n. 175.

Actually we have no strict analogies from Turfan (the Pahlavi text discussed by M. Macuch is a particular one and is not Christian in origin), so the marriage contract could be considered a unique one. The context of the contract purports us to suppose that Christian community where the Taipei text was written was multilingual. Some Christians spoke New-Persian in their everyday life but the language of worship was Syriac.

[1] Müller, Op. cit.

[2] W. Sundermann, “Einige Bemerkungen zum syrisch-Neupersischen Psalmenbruchstück aus Chinesisch-Turkestan”, *Mémorial Jean de Menasce.*, eds. Ph. Gignoux and A. Tafazzoli, Louvain, 1974, pp.440–452.