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**DUNHUANG STUDIES: PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS  
FOR THE COMING SECOND CENTURY OF RESEARCH**

**敦煌學：第二個百年的研究視角與問題**

**ДУНЬХУАНОВЕДЕНИЕ: ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ И ПРОБЛЕМЫ  
ВТОРОГО СТОЛЕТИЯ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ**

**Edited by Irina Popova and Liu Yi**

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## Manichaean Motives in the Turkic Runic Texts from Dunhuang and Tuva

Sergei KLYASHTORNYJ

*Īrq bitig*, the “Book of Omens”, is a literary work which has attracted the attention of many scholars. It is a work whose many cultural implications demand ever deeper levels of scholarly interpretation. Until recently, however, many questions concerning its content, and even its exact date and provenance, have remained somewhat obscure. Due to the brilliant investigations of J.R. Hamilton it has by now become clear that *Īrq bitig* was completed on March 17, 930 AD in the Manichaean monastery of the Great Cloud (*Taygūntan manystan*, Chin. *Dayuntang* 大雲堂). Its author or compiler was a junior cleric (*kičig di(n)tar*) who dedicated this work to his elder brother, the military commander *It Ačuq*.<sup>1</sup>

Considering where the work was created, the profession of its author and his social standing, one might have been expected to find some Manichaean traces in this book. However, there are no such traces or evident links to Manichaean literary tradition in *Īrq bitig*, except for the presence of certain rather vague descriptions.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, in this connection, one excerpt from *Īrq bitig* may be of interest, namely paragraph XIX of the Book of Omens, which relates to the White Horse. The excerpt runs as follows:

### Text

aq (a)t q(a)rš(i)sīn üč boluyta t(a)lulap(a)n (a)γ(i)nka ötügkä ĩdmīš tir. qorqma, (ä)dgüti ötüñ; (a)yīnma, (ä)dgüti y(a)lb(a)r tir. (a)nča bilij; (ä)dgü ol.

### Translation

“A White Horse, having chosen its adversary in the three states of existence, referred it to penance and prayer, it says: “fear not, pray well; do not be afraid, implore well”.”<sup>3</sup>

One should admit that the mini-story looks rather senseless, which led Gerard Clauson to remark: “Paragraph XIX is wholly obscure”.<sup>4</sup> More than twenty five years ago I made an attempt to explain the meaning of this excerpt by suggesting a new reading for the name of its principal hero. Instead of *aq at*, “White Horse”, I read *aq ata*, “White Father”, i.e. a Manichaean priest wearing white garments.<sup>5</sup> My assumption was that the second word had been written not clearly enough or we had here the scribe’s error, but this assumption was rightfully rejected by Peter Zieme.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, the question remained unsolved: neither in Turkic folklore, where a horse is only an attribute or a hero’s assistant, nor in the Manichaean tradition does a horse appear in the quality of a wise spiritual guide or religious teacher. This made it difficult to provide any more or less persuasive interpretation of the whole episode cited here. Buddhist borrowings into Manichaean literature might be able to broaden the limits of possible interpretation: the story of the young prince Boghisattva published by W. Bang in his *Manichaische Erzähler* is one of these borrowings made directly from the Buddhist tradition.<sup>7</sup> The story runs that the young prince leaves his palace to ride along the streets of the city on his white horse *Kanṭhaka* (or *Chandaka*, another name appearing in the text). The prince, for the first time, sees there such things as illness, old age and death. He asks his horse to explain the meaning of these



Pl. 1: “Prince Boghisattva riding on his white horse *Kanṭhaka*.” Fragment of a mural painting in Khocho. Turfan, 9<sup>th</sup> c., source: B. Rowland. *Zentralasien*. Baden-Baden, 1970, 194.

things, and the horse, acting in the quality of his spiritual guide and teacher, tells the prince about the vicissitudes of human life and the cycle of existence.

Furthermore, we find the depiction of the prince Boghisattva riding on his white horse *Kanṭhaka* on one of the mural paintings in the Manichaean temple of Khocho (pl. 1). The investigation of this scene undertaken by H.-J. Klimkeit proves that the painting belongs to the Manichaean artistic tradition: the greeting gesture (*vitarqa-mudrā*) of Boghisattva is made with his left hand according to the Manichaean ritual.<sup>8</sup>

One might suggest that the Buddhist image of the prince Boghisattva riding his white horse (and his spiritual guide) *Kanṭhaka*, which then came into the Manichaean literary and artistic tradition, was further developed in paragraph XIX of *Īrq bitig*. In this story, the horse-teacher turns into an independent personage, separated from the one whom he is supposed to teach, and who is not specified in the text. The horse urges him to pray and repent, which is required to overcome the enemy (the dark

<sup>1</sup> HAMILTON 1975, 7–19.

<sup>2</sup> GABAIN 1964, 215–216.

<sup>3</sup> TEKIN 1993, 12–13.

<sup>4</sup> CLAUSEN 1961, 221.

<sup>5</sup> KLYASTORNYJ 1981, 129–131.

<sup>6</sup> ZIEME 1984, 378–379.

<sup>7</sup> BANG 1931, 7–9.

<sup>8</sup> KLIMKEIT 1984, 91–95.

forces?), and these admonitions and appeals merge in the text with the common Turkic tripartite cosmogony schema, revealing the whole complicity of the development of Manichaeism within Turkic environment.

If the suggested interpretation of paragraph XIX of *Īr̄q bitig* does not go beyond the framework of a probable hypothesis, then it is possible to trace the presence in the Old Turkic Book of Omens of what is doubtless a Manichaeism motif.

I did, moreover, find one further trace of the Manichaeism in the Old Turkic inscriptions in the Elegest-II (E-52) epitaph from Tuva. It was there, not far from the bank of the Yenisei, that a stele bearing a three-line runic inscription in honor of Kyrgyz khan's nephew, a military commander surnamed the Handsome One, was discovered. In the last line of the inscription a warlord with a non-Turkic name is mentioned, apparently connected with the inscription's main personage.<sup>9</sup> This reference probably indicates his presence during the memorial service (*joy*), which is routinely recorded in Orkhon epitaphs, but it has yet to be verified in the Yenisei ones.

The Elegest inscription has been published many times, but the most complete and most accurate reading of the signs was supposed by I.V. Kormushin:<sup>10</sup>

- 1) körtlä sajun bän äçim qanym-a
- 2) bögü tärkän är ärdämindä
- 3) čač bar sayra sajun

Further I offer my own translation of the inscription which differs from the Kormushin's one only in detail:

- 1) Oh my uncle (elder brother)-khan! I am a military commander (surnamed) the Handsome!
- 2) I am a wise ruler (from a khan's kin) and a virtuous warrior! (or: I, Bögü-tärkän, a virtuous warrior!)
- 3) Warlord Bar Sayra (Sahra) from Chach.

I.V. Kormushin translated the last line without any commentary.

- (3) Bar Sayra-sangun the Sogdian.

Indeed, in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, Chach (the Tashkent oasis) was a Sogdian city-state bordering, and with close contact to, the nomadic Steppe.<sup>11</sup> In the interpretation of the last line two critical moments should be considered.

Firstly, the personal name is written according to the formula accepted for the spelling of names of "western foreigners" (*hu*) in Chinese texts.<sup>12</sup> If the ethno-territorial origin of a person mentioned in the text were indicated in Sogdian manner it would be take a form *c'cn'y* ("of Chach", "Chachian").

In such cases in Turkic runic inscriptions forms like *soydaq* ("of Sogd", "Sogdian"), *buqaraq* ("of Bukhara", "Bukharian") were also used.<sup>13</sup> These forms coexisted with the toponym *Soyd*. In Chinese texts, on the contrary, proper names of Sogdians were preceded by Chinese designation of the city-state where kin of the respective person came from: for example *Kang Shier* (i.e. "Shier from Samarqand"), "Shi Wannian" (i. e. "Wannian from Chach"). The surname "Shi" is a Sogdian surname (and indicates Tashkent).<sup>14</sup>

Almost all these refer to Sogdians who lived within China and neighbor states (Turkic Kaghanate, the "Western Land") through several generations, and traditionally they had only kept records of their previous homeland.<sup>15</sup>

Secondly, the specific form of the name which begins with *bar* (Syriac "son") refers either to its Semitic origin, or to its confes-

sional identity. In our situation, a Sogdian (a Chachian) bearing a Semitic (Syriac) name was most probably related to one of the religions spread in Central Asia and China by Syrians. There were two such religions: Christianity (Nestorianism) and Manichaeism. It is evident that only etymology of the second part of our name, *sayra*, could cast some light upon the resultant problem. In this case, Turkic runic spelling accurately renders the phonetic version of the Syriac *sahrā* ("the Moon"), and, consequently, the whole phrase *bar sayra (sahrā)* could mean "son of the Moon".<sup>16</sup>

The cult of the Sun and the Moon is absent from Christianity, but is widespread and well attested in Manichaeism.<sup>17</sup> Theophoric, the name of a Sogdian military commander, clearly indicates the Religion of Light. The very fact of a Sogdian's presence in the Yenisei basin in this case most likely confirms relations between the Yenisei Kyrgyz and East Turkestan or the Western Regions, where there were many populous colonies of Sogdian natives (immigrants or descendants of immigrants from Sogdian cities including Chach).<sup>18</sup> Active contacts between the Yenisei Kyrgyz and East Turkestan and China proper dated from the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> c. AD. Therefore we can suppose that the inscription Elegest-II was most probably composed during that period.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The analysis of one of the lists of foreign honorary guests at the commemorative feast of Kul-tegin is presented in KLYASHTORNYJ 1964, 126.

<sup>10</sup> KORMUSHIN 2008, 144.

<sup>11</sup> On the ties of Chach with the Steppe see KLYASHTORNYJ 1964, 157–161.

<sup>12</sup> HENNING 1940, 8–10.

<sup>13</sup> On the interaction of terms *soydaq* and *Soyd*, as well as *buqaraq* see KLYASHTORNYJ 1964, 127–129.

<sup>14</sup> PULLEYBLANK 1955, 104.

<sup>15</sup> PULLEYBLANK 1952, 317–356; ARAKAWA 2008, 67–94.

<sup>16</sup> MARGOLIUTH 1927, 62. I am grateful for Semitologist N.S. Smelova for her kind help.

<sup>17</sup> KLIMKEIT 1983, 11–23.

<sup>18</sup> IWAMI 2008, 41–65.

<sup>19</sup> KLYASHTORNYJ 2008, 207–211.

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### 敦煌及圖瓦突厥古文本中的摩尼教主題

謝爾蓋·克里昂什多爾內

古突厥語文獻《預兆書》(Irk bitig) 出自敦煌, 於930年成書於摩尼教的大雲堂。此外, 在葉尼塞河岸邊的圖瓦, 出土了吉爾吉斯可汗侄子的如尼文碑銘, 該碑銘注明日期為九世紀下半葉。本文通過探討這兩種文獻系統中反映的摩尼教傳統, 證實中世紀早期, 摩尼教信徒在葉尼塞河流域、東突厥斯坦和西域地區廣泛存在, 並對這些地區的宗教文化和傳統產生巨大影響。

### Манихейские мотивы в тюркских рунических текстах из Дуньхуана и Тувы Сергей Кляшторный

В статье рассматриваются два памятника на древнетюркском языке: *Irk bitig*, «Книга знамений» из Дуньхуана, составленная в 930 г. в манихейском монастыре Даюньтан 大雲堂, а также обнаруженная в Туве на берегу Енисея руническая эпитафия, посвященная племяннику кыргызского хана, которая датируется второй половиной IX в. В обоих памятниках прослеживается влияние манихейской традиции, что свидетельствует о большом влиянии манихеев на культурную и религиозную традиции региона в раннем средневековье.