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The Ancient Turkic Book of Reasoning and Revelations "İrq bitig" of X Century

El antiguo libro turco de razonamiento y revelación "İrqbitig" del siglo X

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the texts of legends in the ancient Turkic "The book of reasoning and revelations" ("İrq bitig"). In order to reveal the implicit text layer of legends there are used methods and techniques of comparative approach, hermeneutics, component analysis, as well as some of the techniques of modern linguistics. Identified different ideological incorporation borrowed from other mythological systems to Turkic environment, which were entered by Silk Road: proto-Sumerian borrowing, ideas of Nestorian Christian, Manichean beliefs, ideas of various kinds of Buddhism, some images from the Mahabharata.

Keywords: Acculturation; Buddhism; Nestorian's; Tengrism.

RESUMEN

El artículo analiza los textos de las leyendas en el antiguo libro turco *El libro del razonamiento y la revelación* ("İrqbitig"). Con el fin de revelar la capa de texto implícito de las leyendas se utilizan métodos y técnicas del enfoque comparativo, hermenéutico, análisis de componentes, así como algunas de las técnicas de la lingüística moderna. Se identificaron diferentes incorporaciones ideológicas tomadas de otros sistemas mitológicos al ambiente túrquico, que fueron incorporadas por la Ruta de la Seda: préstamos proto-sumerios, ideas del cristiano nestoriano, creencias maniqueas, ideas de varios tipos de budismo, algunas imágenes del Mahabharata.

Palabras clave: Aculturación; Budismo; Nestoriano; Tengrismo.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a need in modern Turcology to study some texts of Eastern Turkestan, subjected to a "façon de parler", it is the ancient book "İrqi bitig", in which the meanings of parables is difficult to define an explicit value. Information about cultural contacts of the peoples of Central Asia and the ethnic groups that lived in the Celestial Empire, are known mainly from the Chinese annals, besides some information is far from the truth. This is not only an aberration of the range of events, but deliberate distortions in the Chinese narrative sources. Therefore, a particularly large role is in filling gaps in these relations, the analysis of ancient texts, in which we discover vestiges of different cultures of ethno masses of the Great Steppe and its opponents in the face of the Chinese rulers who belittled and maligned culture of the ancient Turks. Despite the negative complementarity between nomadic and settled peoples of China, we observe the phenomenon of acculturation, when the members of the ruling minority sent their offspring to learn in medieval Chinese school. The people from Steppe, who acquired Chinese knowledge, were able to contrast that knowledge against the aggressive intentions of the Chinese emperors. In addition, we observed consequences and effects of the Hellenistic culture in the ancient Turkic texts, which are concepts in the language of the nomads, reflecting the most ancient contacts between representatives of the West and the Great Steppe.

Ongoing research is related to important scientific tasks for the disclosure of the mental world of the ancient Turks of the X century. In addition, we use the comparative-historical method along with cognitive techniques for the analysis of the concepts of this work.

The *purpose* of this article is to analyze and uncover the binary meanings of ancient parables, to determine which specific texts of the middle Ages affected on their appearance.

"İrqi bitig" is written by the anonymous author in the first third of the 10th century AD in the Manichean monastery of "The Great Cloud"; it is found by the second expedition of A. Steyn (1906-1908).

At the request of A. Steyn it has been explored, decoded and published by Wilhelm Thomsen in 1912 (Thomsen, 1912). The text contains 65 small parables, and at the end of the manuscript – a colophon, written in red ink over the Chinese Buddhist text. The book had no title, but all interpreters translated the text before a colophon by this way: "[...] this book of fortune-telling is good!" Therefore this monument of ancient Turkic rune written language became known under the name "The book of Fortune-telling". However meaning of the term "irqi" can mean "guessing and a sign", the "reasoning and a revelation" sent by a deity and "statement" of the deity. That is why we suggest translating the name of this book like this – "The book of reasonings and revelations" (Akishev, 1978).

J. Hamilton by analyzing colophon terminology hypothesize that this work has been written in the Manichean environment (Hamilton, 1974). There are many words attest to it: manystan ("convent, the monastery") formed from Middle Persian m'nyst'n; dintar ("the Manichean priest") formed from the Sugd lexeme dynd'r, durna ("good sign") which is arising from the Middle Persian word mwrw. These terms are usual for Turkic Manichean compositions. However the word from Sanskrit – yuru ("the spiritual mentor, the teacher") which belongs to Buddhist religion appears here. So, only in one colophon we observe symbiosis of at least two various religious systems, to be exact, one of them is anti-system of Manichaeism. Thus, there has been "swaying" of minds in monastery of "The Great Cloud". Actually, many researchers of this book are right that many places are rightly considered as one of the most difficult for understanding of the ancient Turkic texts.

CROSSROADS OF CULTURES

However the main thing apparently isn't about environment where was written this most difficult for understanding book, the most important is what has affected for the emergence of similar texts. We believe that there were number of such conjectural texts. Several literary Buddhist texts were found in Niye and Krorayna: four Sanskrit shloks, which similar to "Mahabharata" and some other texts by the contents. Our attention was drawn by the manuscript at number of 565 – the conjectural text dated for the Central Asian lunisolar calendar. The text indicated what are favored by each year of a 12-year animal cycle. Apparently, it is one of the most ancient mentions of a 12-year cycle in texts from Central Asia. The Indian term "nakshatr" which literally means "star", "constellation", and in a context it gets indirect meaning "year". Such meaning doesn't meet in one other place. The most probable is that similar texts have formed the basis for creation of the analyzed philosophical book of reasonings and revelations. However some places of this book have appeared as a result of more ancient world outlook systems' influence which have resulted by acculturation's processes between East and West cultures which have laid the foundation of texts "Book of reasonings and revelations". Acculturation is the process, which is representing by consequence of direct and long contact of one ethnic group with another, that changes culture paradigms of both groups' individuals (Saiyn *et al.*, 2017).

In some parables of "The book of reasonings and revelations" we find vestige from the Ancient Chinese "Book of changes" (Blyumkhem and Komissarov, 1991; Kirabaev, 1991; Kobzev, 1989; Shutsky, 1999). The main idea of this book which comprises in its basis, is a variability concept. In prehistoric times before the onset of scripts perhaps during an era of protosumer culture's influence of first sign through the Old Indian means of Indus valley of the Pre-Aryan Civilization, this idea was received by various ethnizes of Central Asia. Ancient people, by placing the person in a space continuum tried to track – whether human activity is contrary to the course of a space fulfillment or it is harmoniously incorporated in the universe course. In short, whether it connotes unhappiness or happiness to a person, and the life of the individual a priori depended on it, that was reflected in equipollency contents of "The book of changes" and in "The book of reasonings and revelations".

The current system of "The book of changes" has been created under the Zhou dynasty and in contrast to the most ancient mantic (oracle) systems of earlier eras, she has received the name "The book of Zhou Changes" (Mozho, 1959). As to the composition this book consists of 64 symbols (ancient Turkic – 65 parables), each of which define a life situation in the evolution over time. "The books of changes" symbols' consist of six features each. These features represent consistent steps, algorithms of the development of this situation. Features consist of two types: integral or interrupted in the middle. Integral lines designate light, active condition, interrupted – darkness, passive condition. So, it is possible to present "The book of changes" as interaction of Light and Darkness (Zinin, 1983). This fundamental feature of "The book of changes" was met by Manicheans and used in creation of the specific Manichean book of reasonings and revelations. For the best understanding and reflection of parables of "The book of reasonings and revelations" it is necessary to stop on definitions of the manichean terms of "The books of changes".

1. The term *yuan* designates – "beginning", "initial", "great".
2. The term *heng* designates – "to make a sacrifice" and "to taste sacrifices". According to T. Takata, a hexagram Heng – the mirror and symmetric representation reflecting the victim of the priest (oracle) and accepting the victim of a deity, that is the victim penetrated to a deity. Therefore the sign has received meaning "get", "reach", and in further evolution of semantics (semantic shift of a lexeme) has received meaning "fulfillment", "development" (Tadasuke, 1925). The similar phenomena were known in Central Asia even before "The book of changes". This is evidenced by the find of K. Akishev's archaeological expedition – a small tiny stone ritual yellowish vessel from a burial ground of Karatom (the 4-3rd centuries BC) (Akishev, 1978). We offer experience of decoding of the inscription on this ritual subject. In our opinion, the sign G [!] is Aramaic (5th century BC) which goes back to a Phoenician sign of the 10-9th

centuries BC^x, that is a solar symbol of Tengri (Sky). Other signs (~, ~ [𐰚]) belong to signs of the Libyan letter – a branch of Afrasian languages, native speakers of them splited up near the Libyan Desert in III millennia BC, and a certain part of migrants has appeared on the Iranian plateau, and then has moved to territory of a Turkic and Aryan ecumenes. So, Phoenician and other alphabetic systems' elements, for example, of the Libyan, have penetrated into Central Asia. It is necessary to arrange signs on the ritual vessel vertically and to read from top to bottom: [ytya] "to stream", "disappear", "pass" (the translation of the author). It must be noted that this round ritual ball was put in a mouth to the dying Sons of the Sky, apparently, to ease transition of soul after death on the Sky. Probably during the Zhou dynasty era this burial ritual had been borrowed from Central Asian ethnizes. Further, as a result of semantic shift the word "ytya" has gained the following meanings: "he has sent" ("A small inscription of Kul Tigin"), "to send" ("Tonyukuk's Monument") (Kairzhanov, 2004; Zholdasbekov and Sartkozha, 2006).

3. The term li came into being as a result of sign hae and dao ("knife", "to divide") reduction. Yulian Shchutsky indicates that " (...) any line, which is creating a subject as much separates it from one subject as connects it with other, puts objects in contact, it is clear why in a philosophical context this word means 'registration', 'definition' (...)" (Shchutsky, 1999). However in a context this word (sign) can have meaning "favorable".
4. The term Zhen is understood as ~ ("verkny", "strong") by commentators of "The book of changes". The paleographic analysis shows that in form Zhen we have similarity of signs Zhen and dynes ("tripod", "firmness"). Today is known that "The book of changes" is written between the 8-7th centuries BC and, as indicated by Endo Tahakis, the place of creation of this book Central Asia (Endo, 1925). The origin of the term dynes indirectly testifies to it, because Chinese have signaled indigenous of Altai as dinlinam, they were the related tribes of kipchak, they were Caucasians of a special trunk, shamanism, which disseminated on the southeast too, was developed in their limits and in cults. In the context of "The book of changes" this sign has received meaning "firmness".

So, the phrases constructed of signs yuan, Heng, li, Zheng are Manichean formulas, primary meaning of them has been subject of annihilation. Note that these formulas are much more ancient than other text. Apparently, they are rudiments of earlier guessing system, which sources can be found in clay tablets of ancient shumer (Labat, 1948).

IMPORTANCE OF MANICHEN TERMS

The peculiarity of the ancient Turkic "Book of reasonings and revelations" is that Manichean terms aren't used in it (Zinin, 1988), but their relevance is used, that is, we see only semantics of these terms which sometimes is expressed covertly, implicitly in parables.

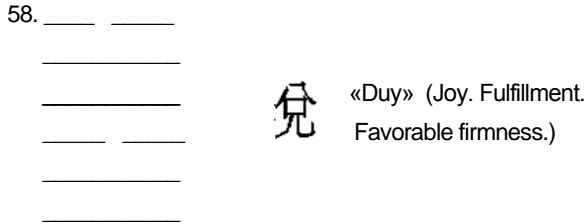
This is evidenced by quantitative characteristic of Manichean terms' semantics in the text of "The book of reasonings and revelations". From 65 parables only 48 have Manichean meaning, other 17 are reflected by passive existence that met the sacral requirements of the Manichean doctrine of "The great cloud" monastery (Kairzhanov, 2013).

I will give one textual comparison – the 29th parable of "The book of reasonings and revelations" with the 58th hexagram and the aphorism of "The book of the changes", which have amazing equipoise proximity with each other.

They say: a certain man was a hazardous player, he started a risk game after leaving his son with his wife as collateral. He not only didn't lose the son and his spouse, but also returned ninety sheep which

were lost by him before. His son and his wife were rejoiced and happy. So know – it is good luck! (Kairzhanov, 2012).

Figure 1: "Duy" (Joy. Fulfillment. Favorable firmness.)

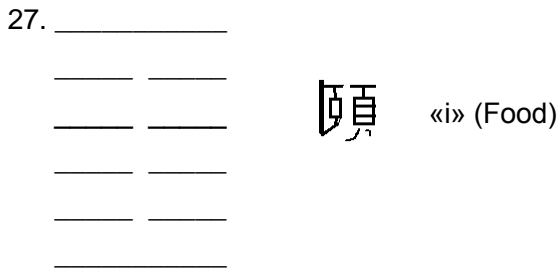


The third six. Joy – from arrival. – Misfortune!

By the content of this text joy has to extend to other people. Any closing in itself of one who feel joy alienates him from the real world and leads to unsuccessful acts. Manicheans could adapt the idea of the hexagram's movement, which responds to their doctrine, that is the movement begins from the lower line to top. In other words, the person should release his spirit from Darkness' particles and to rise to the Sun, that is, through an intermediate lunar step by fasting.

X. "I am the leopard gritting my (sharp) teeth; my head is hidden in canes. I am brave and courageous. So know!"

Figure 2: "i" (Food)

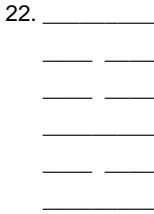


Firmness – to fortunately. Behold cheekbones: (they) get (something that fills a mouth). IV. The fourth six. To eat to insides got blown up. – Happiness. The tiger looks, being fixed, in an emphasis, his desire – to pursue. The abuse won't be.

As indicated in the interpretation of "The Zhou book of changes" "danger from the fifth line is expressed in tiger's image. This "tiger" only threatens and doesn't attract because an exit down to the first line is possible". We believe that thing that brings together "İrq bitig" and the Chinese classical "The book of changes" is a feeling of the general equipoise of Manichean semantics, although by the content they don't coincide with each other.

XXIII. "They say: the young man has found a tail of a cuckoo. Let there will be a happy bride in a headdress with the brush (executed from feathers of this bird). So know – it is the benefit!"

Figure 3: "Bi" (Furniture. Fulfillment. Small it is favorable to have a place to act)



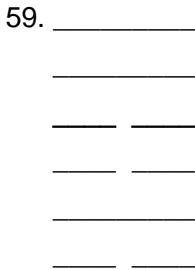
賁 «Bi» (Furniture. Fulfillment.
Small it is favorable to have a place to act)

III. The third nine. Decoration! Furniture! – Eternal firmness – fortunately.

In "The Zhou book of changes" this place is interpreted as the crisis of the negative process, which operating not so intensively and even splendor of furniture isn't dangerous. This decoration just weakens the negative influence of this situation, but doesn't remove it. Therefore the aspiration to save the resistant attitude to curvy beauty of a dress allows reaching the happy result of all process. There is equipoise of semantics in a parable of "I'rq bitig" and in the hexagram of Chinese "Book of changes".

VIII. *"They say: I am a snake with the gold head. My gold belly was cut by a saber: the body and the head, opposite each other, rolled outside of the house, at the road. So know – it is nasty!"*

Figure 4: "Huan" (Smashing. Fulfillment)



換 «Huan'» (Smashing. Fulfillment)

III. The third six. You will shatter your body. – You won't repent.

We find interpretation of this place in "The Zhou book of changes", which has probably interested the author of "I'rq bitig": permanence of this process presents a greatest danger in the process of fragmentation. If identity, that is somewhat indivisible, will be subjected to the process of fragmentation or division, the favorable outcome is impossible. In this case the person is forced to bitterly lament that he hasn't stopped the process of fragmentation in time. However the following part of the comment meets the requirements of the Manichean doctrine: because the third position by own semantics is looked outside and disintegrated inside, because in this case the person shouldn't regret, for he operated in keeping with position which was taken within this current situation. So, ambivalent semantics is felt both in "I'rq bitig", and in the Chinese "Book of changes".

Joy has to extend to other people by the content of this text. Any closing in itself of one who feel joy alienates him from the real world and leads to unsuccessful acts. Manicheans could adapt the idea of the hexagram's movement, which responds to their doctrine, that is the movement begins from the lower line to top. In other words, the person should release his spirit from Darkness' particles and to rise to the Sun, that is, through an intermediate lunar step by fasting.

Thus, our comparisons and matchings lead to a conclusion: the Manichean ideas have had significant effect on many parables' content of this ancient Turkic Written Language mysterious monument, that shown by contrasting Light (Goodness) also Darkness (Evil).

INVESTIGATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ACCULTURATION

Acculturation's ways show us communications of examined monument of literacy with Orkhon Turkic culture tradition, which represented not only in shaman content, but also in language and in composite and stylistic features of the book from monastery of "The Great Cloud".

So, the evidence of deep connection with the Mongolian shamanism and the Tibetan Bon was reflected in a Turkic written language certificates were reflected. We find these rudiments also in the analyzed book. Cf. e.g. following parable: *"The reservoir ran low, and the drain froze. How the reservoir can run low when it is princely? How the channel can freeze when it is exposed to the sun? So know! there are some difficulties at the beginning of this deity, then again it will be good!"*.

Let's note that the role of the Thunderer, which generally acts as special categories of spirits act, is carried out by Mongolian shaman callings for the Supreme inhabitant of heaven Tengri, precisely, Hisaga-tengri (Neklyudov and Tengri, 1990) who is considered "the beginning in clouds". In mythology of bonds the goddess Lumo gets the leading place (Ogneva, 1990), who acts as a first man: a blue sky appears from her head, the moon – from the right eye, the sun – from left, planets – from upper teeth. When the goddess closes the wonderful ox-eyed eyes, night goes on, when she opens the day begins. The thunder is born from the goddess Lumo's voice. The last function of Lumo gets it close to Hisaga-tengri: clouds appear from her breath, a rain – from tears, wind – from nostrils, the rivers – from beautiful eyelids, the earth – from a body. Thus, Lumo brings a rain, contributing fertility. Then it becomes clear that the content of one parable from "The book of reasonings and revelations" in which colors of clouds differ: "Tell: there was a gray cloud. It was over the people. There was a black cloud. It was over all things. Cereals have ripened, herbs have grown. The cattle and people felt good. Well – it's good!" Soothsayer-priests determined what ceremonies should be made in honor of Lumo by color of clouds, their form and the movement. Only after the performance of the ceremonies in honor of Lumo and the Supreme Tengri together will be made, reservoirs will be filled with water, the frozen drain from blue heaven will melt, that is, the fertile rain will shower giving life to existence in all its form on the earth. How to resolve the difficulties on the Lu's way? Only by a sacrifice which eliminates obstacles in their way. Ethnographic material of the Yakut ceremonies' description of sacrifices was collected in G. V. Ksenofontov's work (Ksenofontov, 1992). This relict of shaman and Bon region can be found in some customs of the modern Turkic people, for example, when Kazakhs come together at any reservoir and sacrifice sheep to appease, apparently, Lu, that is, to stop withering heat. I will note that they any more don't remember and know neither about shamanism, nor about Lu, but this rethought and turned sacrifice ceremony relict – Tasattyq transmitted from mother's milk from generation to generation. We find other traces of acculturation in the content of some parables of the studied ancient Turkic book. For example, some parables have appeared under the influence of the Indian manuals about the signs and beliefs containing assessment – opposition (bad or good) of the same type, as in "The book of reasonings and revelations". Cf., *"I am a predatory eagle with gold wings. Prey for me will never be exhausted: I grasp what I like and eat my favourite, being in the sea. Since the most ancient times after cremation of the dead Indians throw out remains in Gang water, and birds of prey (buzzards) collect "tribute", the semi-burned corpses, eating "loved". Perhaps, these sacral customs was described by the anonymous author from Miran?*

Christian traces of acculturation show some parables of "The book of reasonings and revelations". Christian literature was carried by Christian merchants to the east by the Great Silk way. It was studied in

the Christian communities and monasteries which were built along a trade path where colonists Nestorians were located with representatives of other faiths.

Therefore isn't surprising that the ancient Turkic people (Keraites and Naimans) and other ethnizes of Central Asia so well knew Antiquated and New treasured texts. Besides, Christian Turkic peoples differed from their brethren by belief in one feature – the free attitude to sacral literature. Cf. e.g., one parable from "The book of reasonings and revelations" which is a peculiar continuation of the evangelical parable of the prodigal son (Arutyunova, 1976; Bazin, 1974).

"They say: (certain) son, get angry with his parents, left (the house). But then after many years of wanderings came back home. He told: "Yes I will be taught by my mother and I will hear words of my father".

In an evangelical parable is narrated about a certain person, who divided the property between sons; younger went away with the share to the distant party and there has chiseled the part of father's inheritance (Gumilev, 1993; Krongauz, 2001; Meletynsky, 1990; Stepanov, 1975). Having felt need and deprivations, he returned to his father; father took pity on him and forgave him all sins – before the Heavens and before the relatives, having told:

"We will begin to eat and have fun! Because this son was dead and has recovered, disappeared and was found". The eldest son got angry with father. The text of a parable ends by father's words: "My son! You are always with me, and everything that's mine is yours; and it was necessary to be happy and have fun, because your brother was dead and has recovered, disappeared and was found".

CONCLUSION

So, "Book of Reasoning and Revelation" (İrğ bitig) reflects, first of all, the mythological essence of the ancient Turks (Tengrism, shamanism). In the texts of parables we find not only traces of Manichaeism, Christianity, Buddhism, but also rudiments of various philosophical systems of the Hellenistic and early Christianity. First of all, these are some of the postulates of the Gnostic philosophers, who seem to have borrowed the ideas of the struggle between light (good) and darkness (evil), while his followers from the monastery of the "Great Cloud" in the analyzed monument reflected these ideas in some parables.

Например, в XV притче автор сталкивает свет и тьму, в результате которого свет одерживает верх: «Üzä tuman turdī, asra toz turdī. Quş oylī uça aztī. Kijik oylī jügürü aztī. Kişi oylī joriju aztī. Jana Täñri qutınta üčünč jılta qop äsän tükäl körüşmiş qop ögirär säbinür, — tir. Anča bilinlär: ädgü ol! It is said: it was haze in the sky, it was dust on the ground. Birds (generation of birds) flew and lost their way. Animals (offspring, calves) ran and lost their way. People's children walked and went astray. In the third year again by the grace of Tengri everything was prosperous and perfect (literally "saw each other"). They were all happy and had fun. So, you know – this is enlightenment!

Here the gnostic pleroma sends aeons to the person, and at that moment people are excluded from time, that is, the redeemer descends from the world of light to darkness, in order to sacrifice himself, to include all in timelessness, then to literally push everyone to the eternal Light-God.

These conclusions are based on the study of the language of this literary monument and on the data that were obtained with the help of hermeneutics, text linguistics and comparative studies, which enabled us to reveal and illuminate the general cultural and historical background of the study. This background of a bygone era was in constant variability and depended on changing different worldview paradigms of cultures, for example, the positions of Manichaeism and Buddhism were strengthened only in monasteries near some medieval towns, and the rural population continued to worship its ancient gods, but here too there was a transition among nomads into the fold of a new confession. This applies to some Turkic-speaking tribes – kereites and naimans, who adopted Nestorian Christianity in 1007. In the urban environment, among the merchants, the process of adaptation to a new Manichean or Buddhist religion was observed, which took

place under the influence of incorporated ethno-cultural massifs. Although here there were sacral zigzags – by this time (the second half of VIII century) – by the decree of the Uigur Khan Idigan Manichaeism turned into a state religion, which led to dramatic consequences – loss of independence.

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