

ETHNOCULTURAL CONDITIONS OF THE ARISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOGDIAN WRITING

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Annotation:

The article examines an overview of the era of ancient Turkic monuments from the point of view of the emergence of the first types of writing from the origin of the Turkic (rune-like) writing until the adoption of Arabic script. The influence of ethnocultural and ethnoconfessional conditions on the emergence and development of Sogdian writing is considered.

Keywords: Turkic writing, Sogdian writing, Xuan Zang, B.G. Gafurov, Nabidzhona Rakhimov, N. Sims-Williams.

Discussion:

When describing the writing of the Turkic peoples of antiquity, one should especially take into account their ethno-confessional characteristics, which in many ways were the main reasons for the development of written culture in one way or another. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the history of Turkic statehood, which can shed light, among other things, on the emergence and formation of one or another type of writing of the Turks and, accordingly, the Uyghurs. The Sogdian script is the immediate predecessor of the Uyghur script, which in turn descends from the Mongol script, still used by the Mongols living in Inner Mongolia (autonomy of China), and ultimately the Manchu script. As is known, for the first time monuments of Sogdian writing were found not in Sogd, but on the territory of Eastern Turkestan, on the territory of the Sogdian colonies. They were written in the Syriac, Manichaean and Sogdian alphabet itself [3, 8, 9]. The Sogdian script was a cursive script of Aramaic origin. Chinese traveler Xuan Zang reports that the Sogdian alphabet had more than 20 characters. This was confirmed by archaeological finds: for example, during excavations of the citadel of ancient Penjikent, a large fragment of ceramics with the complete Sogdian alphabet was found [2, 354]. The alphabet had 23 letters, but actually 18-19 characters were used.



Along with letters, ideograms were used to convey some words. Shards with scribal exercises in the Sogdian language were also found during the excavations of Merv. The contents of some monuments of Sogdian literature are given in the work of B.G. Gafurov “Tajiks”.

Sogdian script arose as an offshoot of Aramaic to record the Sogdian language (a language from the Iranian family, close to Pahlavi). It was widespread in the vicinity of ancient Samarkand, in the 3rd-10th centuries AD. Like many other alphabets that descended from Aramaic, Sogdian has three types of letter styles, depending on their position at the beginning, end or middle of a word.

A modification of Sogdian is the Old Uyghur script, adopted by the Mongols and giving rise to a number of variants, including the Old Mongolian and Manchu scripts.

Early Sogdian texts (Kul-Tyube, inscriptions, “Old Letters”) are written in a font close to the Aramaic prototype, the direction of writing is from right to left. However, the writing of the later, “classical” time underwent serious changes: italic, that is, continuous writing of letters within a word, spread and became mandatory, and the line was rotated 90 degrees counterclockwise, that is, texts were written from top to bottom. Researchers have traditionally seen Chinese influence in this change, despite the left-to-right arrangement of lines and pages; in the academic tradition, it is customary to parse these texts by arranging the lines horizontally.

According to Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor of Khujand State University Nabijon Rakhimov, there is no doubt that the letters belong to the Sogdian written culture. However, Sogdologists still argue about every sentence in these letters and their exact dating. Some controversial issues also emerged in connection with the new, updated translation carried out by the modern British scientist N. Sims-Williams. But, undoubtedly, the “old Sogdian letters” stored in the British Museum remain the most important written source for the study of Sogdian colonies along the routes of the Great Silk Road. Sogdian letters, the authors of which were immigrants from Samarkand, indicate that during this period trade and postal communications between Sogd and China were quite intense. For example, in the letter, which was included in science under the name “Nanayvandak’s Report,” a detailed account is given of life in the Sogdian colony, the difficulties and hardships of the colonists due to the invasion of the nomadic Huns, the tragic fate of the



Sogdians who died of hunger, etc. This letter was written by the Sogdian Nanaivandak (translated as “slave of Nana,” Nana is the name of the goddess of fertility in Bactria) and addressed to a certain head of merchants in Samarkand, Nanaidvar. In the letter, the Sogdian reports that he hired several weavers to fulfill orders in the cities of Dzhikvuan and Vuvey. Some types of goods are mentioned - woolen and linen fabrics and musk. The agent informs his boss in Samarkand that he has sent 32 weights of musk to Dunhuang (a weight is a measure of weight, approximately 8 kg). Musk, passed through the musk deer's tonsils, was used as an aromatic and strengthening substance. The Sogdians were the first to systematically arrange letters in words vertically. Influenced Uyghur, Mongolian and Manchu writing.

It was in Sogd that Manichaeism (a modification of Zoroastrianism) became particularly widespread. Sogdian writing was used to record religious (Buddhist, Manichaean, Nestorian and Zoroastrian), as well as for Turkic monuments, secular texts - letters, legislative acts, inscriptions on coins, etc. In the 20th century The “Mug Archive” was discovered on Mount Mug near Penjikent.

From the 7th century The official language of the Eastern Church of Mani becomes the Sogdian language, which spread in the Sogdian colonies of Chinese Turkestan. From the 10th century The capital of Sogd, Samarkand (Marakanda), becomes the center of Manichaeism, whereas previously for a long time it was Babylon.

At the same time, old Sogdian documents stored in the British Museum have repeatedly attracted the attention of researchers. This was due to the fact that a number of issues regarding the location and content of the text remained controversial. For example, the workers did not indicate the exact level of the destroyed watchtower where the letters were found. But most scholars are inclined to believe that the letters date back to 313 or 314 AD. The letters contain very important historical material: information on the ethnic composition of cities and trading posts, names of specific people, historical events and events of private life. Since three letters are of a commercial nature, there is interesting information about trade operations, methods of trade and goods - silk, spices, jewelry, etc.[4; 5, 36-42]. There is even information about 100 noble Sogdians, immigrants from Samarkand, who lived in Dunhuang during this period. Sogdian letters often mention silk, but without specifying the quantity. According to the researchers, these could be small



batches, mainly from 1.5 kg to 40 kg (10, 100). And this amount of cargo could be carried by several horses or camels.

Conclusion. Thus, according to the texts of the “old Sogdian letters”, already at the beginning of the 4th century. AD Sogdian colonies existed in Luyang, Chang'an, Langzhou, Wuwei, Jiquan and Dunhuang. The Sogdians, the inhabitants of these trading posts, played a leading role in international trade along the routes of the Great Silk Road. The Old Sogdian Letters are important because they are the only source on Silk Road trade written by the traders themselves, rather than by customs or tax officials. The contents of the letters confirm the opinion of A.M. Belenitsky that the emergence of merchant trading posts in various locations was accompanied by the founding of entire communities, the influence of which was not limited to trade alone, but extended to culture and religion. A more thorough analysis of the contents of the “old Sogdian letters” will allow us to obtain new materials on the history of the Sogdian colonies and the Great Silk Road.

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