The Urban Mind

Cultural and Environmental Dynamics

Edited by
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18. Multilingualism and Language Contact in Urban Centres along the Silk Road during the First Millennium AD

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ABSTRACT
Cities are places of ethnic and linguistic diversity, and thus of language contact. This is illustrated by the oasis city-states along the Silk Roads in Central Asia that developed into cosmopolitan centres of an amazing religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity during the first millennium AD. The growing trade on the Silk Roads, missionary activities, shifting political, religious and military domination, and last but not least climatic changes led to increasing immigration into the cities, creating a multilayered linguistic ecological system of interacting spoken and written codes. A flourishing written culture developed; and the rich activity of urban cross-cultural exchange is not only reflected in art and architecture, but also in a vast variety of texts and manuscripts translated and annotated in more than twenty different languages and nearly as many different scripts. Traces of the cross-cultural contact are also revealed by the individual languages themselves, which changed dramatically on many different levels. An ecolinguisitc study of Tocharian – one of the lesser known tongues of the Turfan and Kucha area along the northern route of the Silk Road – taking into account status, internal variation, domains of usage, concurrent codes and language contact, reveals one aspect of an “urban mind”: namely, the efforts and success of city dwellers to tackle communication in the multilingual settings of the city. In creative processes the speakers in close spatial coexistence changed and adapted their codes, both the spoken and the written ones, and developed new varieties and registers. Tocharian shows traces of the impact of concurrent codes, not only in the lexicon but also on the structural, morphological and morphosyntactic level. For reasons yet to be explored, Tocharian was abandoned as a high-status written code sometime between the eighth and the tenth century AD, and at an unknown point in time it became extinct as a spoken code as well.
Introduction

“At this time there was a big city, Ketumātī by name, twelve Yojanas in length, seven Yojanas in breadth. It was sublime and wonderful, decorated and clean, full of virtuous people. [...] In the city the houses and lanes had no fine dust lumps of earth. The ground was covered totally with gold: everywhere there were stores of gold and silver. There was a great Yakṣa-god, Bhadraśikṣa by name, who always protected this city and cleaned it. If there was any excrement, the earth would split, take it and close again. When a man was near the end of his life, he himself went naturally to the tomb and died there. At this time the world was peaceful and pleasant. There was no worry about being robbed by hateful thieves. In the cities and villages no one closed the door. There were also no calamities of being old and being worried by flooding, fire, wars, famines, poisons, etc. [...] In the ponds of the groves and gardens, there was natural water of eight merits. Blue, red, purple, white, and multicolored lotus-flowers covered them totally. [...] The flowing water was excellent, of which the sweet taste could cure diseases. It rained timely and the crops were flourishing. No injurious grass grew. Having sown once, one could reap seven times. Less labor procured more products...”

This depiction of the ideal city is taken from the Chinese “Buddha-spoken Sūtra of the Descending from Heaven and Becoming Buddha of Maitreya”. Similar descriptions are found in the fifth chapter of the Old Turkic Maitri-simit and in a much more fragmentary form in the East Tocharian version of the Maitreyasamitiṇātaka. The latter two derive from manuscripts dating back to the second half of the first millennium AD, found in oasis cities in the northern part of the Tarim Basin in Central Asia, present-day Xinjiang in China. The Central Asian texts can be read as the utopian counterpart to Juvenal’s famous satire (Satira III) where one of the protagonists is leaving Rome because he finds the city too noisy, too dirty, too unsafe, and hosting far too many foreigners. While Juvenal’s character mockingly condemns his city for its failures, the texts from Central Asia, reflecting the strong bonds of the younger Buddhism to urban culture, present the “urban” in a fairytale-like light. What Juvenal depicts as found wanting in an urban setting, is displayed in an urban scenario of a dream come true in the Central Asian texts: unpolluted air and water, well-functioning ecosystem services, clean streets, green areas, and peaceful neighbours. The issues, though addressed in contradictory manners, are basically the same, and they are familiar ones for any city dweller of today. The ancient texts acquire unexpected up-to-dateness.

However, there is something that is curiously lacking in the texts from Central Asia: in contrast to Juvenal’s protagonist who explicitly complains about the many foreigners in Rome, there is no mention whatsoever of ethnic or linguis-
tic diversity in the Chinese Sutra, the Old Turkic Maitrisimit, or the Tocharian Maitreyasamitiṇātakam.

Considering the multiethnic and multilingual situation in the oasis city-states of the Tarim Basin during the first millennium AD and the resulting cultural, political and economic dynamics, this is indeed curious. In the Turfan oasis on the northern route of the Silk Road, manuscripts in no fewer than 22 languages written in nearly as many different scripts have been recovered in archaeological excavations (Fig. 1).6 The archeological findings from sites like Kucha (Kučā) further west, Dunhuang in the east, or Khotan on the southern route, display a similar – even if not quite so varied – picture.

In the colophon appended to the end of each chapter of the Maitrisimit manuscript, the writer states that the Old Turkic text is translated7 from Tocharian, and the Tocharian from a Sanskrit original. Even considering that the original version of the text was created somewhere in India,8 it still is surprising that nothing is said about inhabitants of an ideal city, with different vernacular tongues, being able to communicate with each other. Buddhist texts, translated from Indian originals into the languages of Central Asia, were often modified and adapted to

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6 For an overview see Turfan Studies 2007, 9.
7 Or “transformed”, the Old Turkic uses different terms for the two different operations; cf. discussion in Geng, Klimkeit & Laut 1988, 216–217; Tekin 1980, 75. See also Thomas 1989.
8 The Sanskrit version of this text has never been found though.
the conditions and circumstances of the region. With the extraordinary linguistic diversity of the urban centres of Central Asia in mind, we would expect at least some remark on language skills and mutual comprehensibility in an ideal city.

Interestingly, language skills are not mentioned either in another passage of the Maitrisimit, dealing with the wondrous skills and abilities of the young Buddha. In a beautiful scene it is described how the young Buddha Maitreya – without being taught how – can miraculously write hundreds and thousands of characters in different scripts, yet nothing is said about him speaking different languages. This scene is not only an illustration of the prestige of literacy in (later) Buddhism; it could also be taken as an indication that a certain amount of multilingualism was considered a normalcy, part of the “urban mind” in the cities along the Silk Road, just as it is a normalcy in the urban settings of today.

History, geography, climate

The history of Central Asia is one of shifting political and ethnic dominance. Hardly ever under one rule, the political power was divided among many different local rulers, at times under Chinese, and later Tibetan or Turkic, overlordship. Central Asia during the first millennium AD was neither linguistically nor culturally homogeneous. This holds true in particular for the area which is the focus of this study, namely the Tarim Basin in Eastern Turkestan, the present-day Xingjian Autonomous Region in Western China.

During the first millennium AD oasis city-states along the trade routes following the northern and southern rim of the Tarim Basin developed into cosmopolitan centres. The rapidly growing trade along the Silk Road, missionary activities, shifting political, religious and military domination, and last but not least climatic changes particularly during the third and late eighth centuries, led to increasing immigration of different peoples from all over Central Asia.

Situated on the northern and southern edges of the Tarim Basin and the Turfan depression, respectively, and cut off from the south-east monsoon by huge mountain ranges, the oasis city-states were largely dependent on the snow and glacial run-off of the Tien-Shan Mountains in the north and the Kunlun in the south.

According to Yang Bao et al. (2004) it is possible to correlate the expansion and flourishing of Han era settlements (206 BC–AD 220) with a period of higher temperature and increased precipitation between c. 200 BC and AD 270 in northwestern China, Xinjiang included. On the other hand the succeeding period of cooling and decreasing precipitation led to the abandonment of several cities on the southern rim of the Tarim Basin. Ancient Niya and Karadong were abandoned around the end of the third century, Loulan about a hundred years...
The climate data correspond very well with the fact that there are no text findings from the sites of Niya and Loulan later than the 3rd or 4th century AD: due to the devastating droughts people had left the southern cities, and probably moved further north.

As a consequence of the decline of the cities in the south, the main east-west trade routes were shifted to Kucha and Aqsu along the northern rim of the Tarim Basin, bringing not only traders but also waves of new inhabitants with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds into the cities in the north.

Objects of art, mural paintings, artefacts, and last but not least thousands of manuscripts vividly reflect the cultural richness, cross-cultural exchange and urban refinement of the city-states in the Tarim Basin. Among the many religions flourishing in the area (Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Nestorian Christianity and, later on, Islam), Buddhism played a crucial part. Spread from northern India to China, Buddhism seems to have been one of the factors attracting and uniting the various peoples in the urban centres. Famous Chinese pilgrims like Faxsien and Xuanzang describe Kucha and Agni as centres of Buddhism, with monasteries housing thousands of monks, engaging in studies, religious service and translation activities. Patrons of these monasteries were not only local (petty) kings but also merchants and traders, craftsmen and their guilds.

The linguistic landscapes of Turfan and Kucha

The linguistic landscapes of Turfan and Kucha during the first millennium AD included not only Chinese, Tibetan, Sanskrit and (Middle Indic) Prakrit, Middle Iranian Bactrian, Sogdian, Pahlavi, Khotan and Tumšuq Saka, Old Turkic and Mongolian, but also lesser known tongues like Tocharian. Together with the different languages a variety of different scripts were in use in the cities of Central Asia, and some of the languages are attested written in up to nine different scripts. The rich findings of both religious and secular texts in the different languages give us a glimpse not only into the daily life and cultural, religious and economic activities of the urban dwellers, but also into the linguistic ecology of the oasis cities: concurrent codes coexisted and interacted in spoken and written, standardized and non-standardized varieties, the different codes and scripts being used for different purposes.

Bilingual texts, texts in so-called mixed languages, translations, colophons, and manuscripts annotated with glosses written in between the lines, reveal one aspect of the urban mind: the efforts and success of city dwellers and of monks in monasteries in the cities and nearby to tackle communication, religious and scholarly matters, commerce and administration in these complex settings of extraordinary ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity.

Implicitly, as will be shown below, the urban mind is also reflected in the

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15 Pinault 1994, 94.
16 Strauch, 2005, 137.
17 Linguistic landscape is used here in the broader sense, not as a technical term; for a discussion see Backhaus 2007, 9–10.
different codes themselves. The spatial closeness and the intense interaction of speech communities with many bi- or multilingual speakers produced contact phenomena and resulted in language change visible on all levels in the different codes. New varieties emerged at the same time as local vernaculars were maintained, but codes were also shifted and eventually died. Results of change and transformation are manifest in the mixed code of Turco-Sogdian, and traces can also be detected in Tocharian.

Tocharian from an ecolinguistic perspective

Tocharian, which belongs to the Indo-European language family and which is attested furthermost to the east, shows phonological, morphological and lexical features that are considered to be typical for the “Western” type of Indo-European languages. Red-haired and blue-eyed figures depicted in mural paintings in the grottoes around Kucha and Turfan in combination with findings of red-haired mummies in the area around Loulan gave rise to interpretations in early scholarship that Tocharian was closely related to the Celtic languages – speculations unsubstantiated by further linguistic evidence.

Tocharian is attested in two varieties that are too different to be mere dialects, namely Tocharian A (also called “East Tocharian” or “Agnean”, TA) and Tocharian B (“West Tocharian” or “Kuchean”, TB), with the bulk of manuscripts dating from the 6th to the 8th century AD. Radiocarbon dating of a selection of manuscripts preserved in the State Library in Berlin suggests a wider time frame, the earliest manuscripts probably dating back to the 4th or 5th century AD and the latest ones to the 11th or 12th. Tocharian A, probably once spoken in and around the kingdoms of Agni and Turfan, is attested in documents from Turfan (Xočo), Qarašahr (Šorčuq, the ancient Agni), Murtuq and Bezäklik. Tocharian B, the language of the Kuchean kingdom, is attested in manuscripts found mainly in and around Kucha (with Ming Öy Qizil, Subaši and Qumtura) but also in the places where East Tocharian material has been found (cf. Map 1). Most of the documents are rather fragmentary, and with the exception of one Manichean hymn in TB, nearly all the material is Buddhist in content or is at least “coloured by Buddhism.”

Status of the Tocharian languages

The concurrent spoken codes in the Kucha and Turfan areas included, among others, the Middle Iranian languages Sogdian, Khotanese and earlier on also Bactrian, as well as Old Turkic (Uighur), Chinese, and Middle Indian Prakrit (Gāndhārī, Kucha Prakrit). All of the above-mentioned languages existed also as written codes, and to these (Buddhist) Sanskrit can be added.

In the domain of religious (Buddhist) literature and teaching, both of the

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21 Lane 1966; Pinault 2002, 245; for a discussion see Peyrot 2008, 15–17. Westtocharian interlinear glosses in East Tocharian manuscripts indicate that the two languages were not mutually understandable.
22 Tamai 2005; for a discussion see also Peyrot 2008, 201–214.
Tocharian varieties can be assumed to have been prestigious codes in and around Kucha and Turfan, not only among Tocharians themselves but also among speakers of Old Turkic. This is suggested by Uighur interlinear glosses and Turkic names in colophons of Tocharian Buddhist documents, which reveal that Uighur speakers both used Tocharian manuscripts and commissioned and donated their copying. Tocharian – besides Sogdian and Chinese – played an important role in Uighur Buddhism.23 Uighur Buddhist texts were translated from Tocharian (again explicitly stated in colophons, e.g. the above-mentioned Maitritisimit), and a major part of the Uighur Buddhist technical terminology was not copied directly from Sanskrit/Prakrit into Turkic, but rather – as revealed by typical phonetic adaptations – through Tocharian mediation.24

Tocharian metre names and lexical copies attested in Tumshuq Saka documents indicate that (West) Tocharian was of high prestige even among the speakers of the Middle Iranian Saka language of Tumshuq, situated to the west of Kucha.25 Less clear and probably much more complex are the interactions and relations of Tocharian with (Middle Iranian) Sogdian. Lexical copies from Sogdian into Tocharian suggest Sogdian to be the dominating code. But as Yoshida points out, some Sogdian Buddhist terms are copied from Sanskrit through Tocharian,26 and at least in one known case the scribe of a Sogdian document claims that his text has been translated from Tocharian.27 “Tocharianizing”28 orthography in a medical bilingual Sanskrit-Sogdian text, one of very few Sogdian documents written in Brāhmī script, further complicates the picture. Is it just a question of orthography, and who in this case is the writer of such a document? Is it a Sogdian speaker with Tocharian orthography as part of his standard written code? Or is it a Tocharian speaker writing a bilingual Sanskrit–Sogdian document inserting orthographic (or phonetic) features of his own language into the manuscript? Or could the writer be a multilingual (or rather “multiliteral”) Uighur with both Tocharian and Sogdian as written codes? Taking into consideration the close contact of Sogdians and Uighurs on the one hand and Tocharians and Uighurs on the other, and the fact that Uighurs wrote and copied both Sogdian and Tocharian manuscripts,29 this does not seem impossible. Further research on the interrelations of Tocharian, Sogdian and Uighur, both as written and as spoken codes, is urgently desired.30

23 Different hypotheses about the role the Tocharians and Sogdians, respectively, played in the spread of Buddhism among the Uighurs have been brought forward, cf. Tremblay 2007, 108–114 with references to Laut, Moriyasu and v. Gabain. See also Yoshida 2008a, 325–358
27 Sims-Williams 1983, 138; Yoshida 2008a, 338 fn.16 with references.
29 For Uighurs as writers of Sogdian manuscripts see Yoshida 2008a, 341–344.
Domains of use and internal variation

The situation of Tocharian A is somewhat unclear. Since only canonical and non-canonical Buddhist literature is attested, and because of the lack of linguistic variation and the uniformity of the texts transmitted, it has been assumed that Tocharian A was no longer a spoken language at the time the manuscripts were written or copied. This is supported by the observation that there are West Tocharian glosses in an East Tocharian manuscript (THT 1027 = TA 394), but not vice versa. East Tocharian glosses in Sanskrit manuscripts, one medical fragment and two unpublished small fragments of a monastery record written in TA, lead to the claim that TA was a spoken language after all. Further research is needed here, but for now Tocharian A can be described as a highly standardized written code used for religious purposes, both by Turkic speakers and West Tocharians. The non-literary traces of Tocharian A, colophones which appear at the end of individual sections of akṣara charts (syllabaries) attested in THT 605 and THT 1128, and which contain short phrases like “this is the third art (section?)”, “these arts (sections?) were donated as a gift by Toṅkitsā” etc., do not contradict this picture: both the writing and the donating of manuscripts constitute religious acts.

Tocharian B, on the other hand, displays considerable linguistic variation. It is attested in religious and profane texts, and different chronological stages (Archaic, Classical, and Late) as well as different registers (literary and colloquial) can be distinguished. Apart from canonical and non-canonical Buddhist literature, administrative and economic texts, medical and grammatical treatises, graffiti, caravan passes (“laissez-passer de caravans”) and private and business letters are attested. Religious literary documents were found both in the Kucha and the Turfan area, whereas non-religious, non-literary documents were restricted to the Kucha region. Kucha seems to have been the original home of West Tocharian, which was then spread to the east with Buddhist missionary activities, probably during the seventh century AD. According to Peyrot, both a spoken and a written variety of West Tocharian were imported to the Turfan region, and it can be shown that even the West Tocharian substandard colloquial code secondarily developed into a literary norm in Turfan lateron.

Variation is not only revealed in the West Tocharian language, but also in the script and the materials used to write it down. Different varieties of Brāhmī are

32 The same manuscript contains also Uighur glosses. Both the West Tocharian and the Uighur glosses seem to be written by the same hand, probably by an Uighur speaker, cf. Winter 1963, 242–243; Peyrot 2008, 154.
33 Malzahn 2007a, 290–291 with fn.48; for an overview see Malzahn 2007b, 301–319.
34 Pinault 2007, 180 fn. 19.
35 Malzahn 2007a, 290 fn. 48.
36 Schmidt 1983a, 279; Pinault 2007, 180 fn. 19; Malzahn 2007a, 290 fn. 48.
37 For an overview and discussion on the interrelations of the different varieties of Tocharian B see Peyrot 2008, chapter 4. Peyrot takes into account the earlier works of Winter, Lane, Schmidt and Stumpf.
38 Schaefer 2009, 288–289.
39 Cf. e.g. Pinault 1987; 1998; Schmidt 2001a.
41 Peyrot 2008, 206.
used for different purposes: religious (Buddhist) texts are written with a reed pen in a formal script on paper or birch bark in the traditional oblong Indian *pustaka* (“Poṭhi”) format, whereas monastery accounts and other administrative/economic texts are written in a non-formal, cursive variant of Brāhmī (“Kloster-schrift”), the scribes then using brushes on Chinese paper scrolls. Wooden tablets, birch bark and cloth are also used for commercial and administrative texts. Some of the commercial documents, dealing with the selling and buying of wine from the Kucha area, are bilingual, with (Middle Indian) Prākrit written in Kharoṣṭhī on the one side, and West Tocharian written in Brāhmī on the other.42

**Concurrent codes and language contact**

Traces of several concurrent codes can be seen in the Tocharian lexicon, reflecting clearly how the different codes were used in different domains. Some of the administrative economic terms (terms for measurements and money) – inserted globally (“loanwords”)43 – are copied from Chinese.44 Chinese administrative influence is also visible in the way the Tocharians signed their documents: small ink lines mark the breadth of the thumb (or a finger joint?) of the person verifying a document, accompanied by the term *kapci* and the name of the witness given in the genitive case, ‘finger (breadth) of X’. TB *kapci* is clearly a copy containing the Chinese word *zhi* ‘finger’; however, the linguistic details are not fully understood.45

Lexical copies from different Iranian languages reflect different chronological stages as well as different areas and domains of contact.46 The oldest layer of copies, inserted before the separation of the two Tocharian varieties, comes from an Old Iranian language (Old Sakan?)47 and contains mainly military terminology: TB *tsain* (kind of) weapon, *kertte* ‘sword’, TA *perat*, TB *peret* ‘axe’, TA *ratäk*, TB *retke* ‘army’ etc. Copies from the Middle Iranian languages Bactrian, Sogdian, Khotanese and Parthian again contain military but also administrative and economic terminology, reflecting political and military domination as well as commerce. Copies of (Indian) Buddhist terms with typical Iranian phonetic adaptations reveal the role that the Iranians played in the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia.48 Of the Middle Iranian stratum, copies from Bactrian are the oldest, and most of them seem to have come into Tocharian after the split into the two varieties.

From Middle Iranian, namely Bactrian or Sogdian, not only global lexical but

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42 Cf. Schmidt 2001a, 7–36.
43 To describe the different phenomena of language contact, Lars Johanson’s code copying model is followed here, cf. Johanson 2002, 8–18. Entities copied entirely, i.e. as a block of material, combinational, semantic and frequentational structural properties are called “global copies”. Copies of only selected structural properties of a block are called “selective”.
45 For the realia, see Kumamoto 1987, 151–154 and Rong 2005, 125; Cf. also Lubotsky & Starostin 2003, 262 fn. 5 with refs.
47 Schwarz 1974, 409; Pinault 2002, 245; Tremblay 2005, 422–425; see also Sims-Williams 2002, 239.
also copying of suffixes is attested, as in the case of the productive feminine suffix West and East Tocharian -ānc that was copied from Sogdian -ne or Bactrian -avə蹉.\textsuperscript{49}

The bulk of lexical copies, however, comes from Indo-Aryan (Indian) languages. Prakrit, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and Sanskrit are the codes for the domain of religion, scholarship and medicine, Prakrit also for administration and commerce. Interlinear glosses in Sanskrit manuscripts, and Sanskrit documents with characteristic mistakes, prove that Tocharians used, wrote and copied Sanskrit texts, but they also translated and transformed them. On the basis of the Buddhist texts in Sanskrit a Tocharian literary code is formed, the bilingual metrical texts bearing witness to this creative process.\textsuperscript{50}

Not all the items in the core terminology of Buddhism in the Tocharian lexicon are global copies (‘loanwords’) from Sanskrit or Prakrit; some of the central terms are selective ones (‘loan translations, loan formations’), and interestingly, in a number of cases they are different in the two Tocharian languages. For instance, of the key term skt. dharma ‘law, righteousness; substance, factor, (Buddhist) religion etc.’ only the wide range of semantic properties is copied into the two Tocharian codes (TA märkampal, TB pelakne), the terms themselves being genuinely Tocharian. The same holds true for skt. satya ‘truth’ (TA kärme vs. TB empreṃ), skt. dubka- ‘suffering’ (TA klop vs. TB laklā), skt. punya- ‘merit’ (TA pni vs. TB yärpo) and skt. karman- ‘action’ (TA lyalpu vs. TB yīmor). This provides us with valuable information on chronology: the split into the two languages seems to have been completed by the time the Tocharians became Buddhists.

Phonological adaptations of lexical copies reveal Middle Indian or Middle Iranian mediation of much of the Sanskrit Buddhist terminology, and some of these copies even give us a rare glimpse into phonetic features of Tocharian: TB sphařir ‘jewel’ (< Mind. *sphaṛira- < *sphaṛiya- < Sanskr. sphaṛika-) is copied from Sanskrit through Middle Indian (Prakrit) mediation. The substitution of the Indian retroflex ṭ/ṭ with an r in Tocharian (also seen in TB prahāṛ for Sanskrit prahāṇa\textsuperscript{51}) only makes sense if Tocharians pronounced their r apico-alveolarly, that is, with the tip of the tongue against the upper gum.

Names of monks copied from Sanskrit with different grades of phonetic adaptation (Jñānakupte < Skt. Jñānagupta, TB Saṅketava < Skt. Saṅghadeva) confirm the important role of Sanskrit as one of the languages of Buddhism in the urban centres of Central Asia. The names of Tocharian kings on caravan passes, partly adapted global copies from Sanskrit (TB Swarnatepe < Skt. Swarnadeva) and partly selective ones (TB yṣaṣe pyāpyo ‘golden’ + ‘flower’ copied from Skt. Swarnapuspā ‘gold-flower’), indicate that the rulers of Kucha in the beginning of the 7th century AD were Buddhists.

Tocharian being high-status codes in Kucha and Turfan at least until around 900 AD, no lexical copies from Old Turkic into Tocharian can be expected, and hardly any have been found.\textsuperscript{52} A closer look at Tocharian morphology and syntax, however, reveals impact that goes far beyond lexical copying. Both East and West Tocharian developed a two-storey case system, with so-called secondary cases inflecting agglutinatively, that is to say, in a manner typical for Turkic but not for Indo-European languages. Agglutination is considered to be one of the

\textsuperscript{49} For a discussion see Tremblay 2005, 436; see also Schaefer 1997, 171–172.

\textsuperscript{50} Thomas 1989; Schmidt 1983b; 2004; Pinault 2002, 271–279.

\textsuperscript{51} Schaefer (forthcoming).

\textsuperscript{52} But see Lubotsky/Starostin 2003.
“attractive” features of the Turkic languages, and here we probably have a first case of code copying where speakers of the dominated code, Old Turkic, inserted (“imposed”) a Turkic pattern into the dominating code, Tocharian, where it then continued to operate as substratum influence. Imposition of an attractive Turkic pattern and subsequent substratum influence might be the explanation for another striking feature of Tocharian, namely the extensive use of converb constructions as a clause-combining strategy. Not only “absolutives” (ablatives of verbal abstracts), but also “middle participles” (ending in TA -māṃ, TB -(e)māne) function as converbs in both the Tocharian varieties. With their particular semantic, morphological and syntactical properties, middle participles were considered as “deviating” in earlier studies: they almost always appear uninflected in TA and always uninflected in TB; they do not participate in the general semantics of the middle and are used more in a “subordinating” function than in an attributive one. A closer look at the texts reveals that they are mostly used in a sentence-adverbial and a so-called chaining or plot-propulsing function. In other words, they are used in functions typical for converbs in the Asian languages and especially in the Turkic. Here again one could assume that speakers of Old Turkic, probably bilingual ones, imposed a syntactic pattern of their own code into the prestigious one, Tocharian, using Tocharian morphology. Under the assumption that -māne/-māṃ formations fossilized and eventually became re-analysed as converbs, both their morphology and their semantics find an explanation. The fact that -māne/-māṃ formations are built from roots otherwise inflected only actively (‘activa tantum’ like TA nas TB nes ‘to be’, TA/TB i ‘to go’, TB nāsk ‘to bathe’, TA/TB lānt ‘to go out’, and TA skē, TB skai ‘to try to, to make an effort’), supports the assumption of a newly established category.

Such impact on the morphosyntactic system of a code presupposes sufficiently intense and close language contact, and it implies a considerable amount of bi- or multilingual speakers. In our case Turkic speakers imposed some of the features of their language into Tocharian. When and where that happened is unclear. Further research that attends to the chronology and different linguistic stages of the texts might give new insights.

By the end of the 8th or 9th century AD Tocharian seems to have ceased being a written code for the domain of religion, administration and economy in the city-states of Kucha and Turfan, as only a few Tocharian manuscripts are attested after the 9th century. That does not mean, however, that Tocharian also disappeared as a spoken code; it may well have been used as a means of oral communication far beyond that time. Like the equally prestigious Sogdian, Tocharian disappeared and gave way to Turkic and/or Chinese. We do not know anything about the circumstances that made the urban dwellers abandon their language in the end, and – unlike in the case of Turco-Sogdian – we have no direct witness to the mixing of the codes. What we can see, however, is a fascinating example

53 Johanson 2002, 45.
54 For definition and terminological matters, see Haspelmath 1995, 1–55.
55 Schaefer, Converbs in Tocharian (in prep.).
56 Schmidt 1969, XIII fn. 1.
57 Dietz 1981, 144.
60 Aydemir 2008.
of a language being formed, changed and adapted within urban settings of an extraordinary cultural and linguistic diversity.

A deeper study on the linguistic ecology of the oasis cities in Central Asia that includes evidence from all the languages involved is an urgent desideratum. Of special interest in that context are the interrelations of Tocharian, Sogdian and Uighur and the bi- or multilingualism and “multi-literacy” of their speakers.\[^{61}\] The task is not only to gain understanding of mechanisms of creative linguistic processes that determine the relations between different codes, but also to see if it is possible to relate types of contact phenomena to specific types of contact situations, in particular urban ones. In order to achieve these goals cooperation is needed with specialists from different philologies (Iranian studies, Indology, Chinese, Turkic languages), linguists specializing in language ecology and socio-linguistics, but also historians, anthropologists and archaeologists.

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\[^{61}\) Cf. also Yoshida 2008a.


