

Relationship between the Old Avesta and the Young Avesta

The linguistic relationship between the Old Avesta and the Young Avesta is rather difficult as it was never one that can be discerned between two natural languages. When the Young Avesta was a living language the Old Avesta was already dead. The contacts mainly involved lexical influence of the Old Avesta on the Young Avesta and phonetic/phonological and syntactic influence of the Young Avesta language on the Old Avesta Texts (mainly the Gathas and Yasna Haptanghaiti). After the Young Avesta became extinct in due course, both text corpuses (Old as well as Young Avesta Texts) came to depend only on the oral transmission by the Zoroastrian priests and the language contact was now mainly characterized by phraseological influence. Phrases and parts of phrases from one language (mainly from Old Avesta) were used in the canonization of texts in the other (especially Young Avesta). The proper distinction of these contacts has been recently seen and which has helped in solving many problems in the Young Avesta grammar but much needs to be done in the years to come...

Best wishes,

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