

Karaim literature as a source of
information on the spoken language.
A case study of the early 20th-century
Lutsk Karaim dialect

Michał Németh

Jagiellonian University

Abstract

The present article offers a linguistic analysis of a Lutsk Karaim literary work, namely Sergiusz Rudkowski's *Dostlar*, which was published in two parts in 1931 and 1939. The two characters of the drama use colloquial language and therefore the work appears to be until now the only source of knowledge on Lutsk Karaim in its spoken form. The linguistic peculiarities of the drama are compared with other non-literary sources that reflect everyday language used at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The present study has been carried out in order to determine whether the language of the drama was caricatured by the author, and thus exaggerated to some extent, or whether it reflects the factual command of Karaim during that period. In the final analysis, it is safe to say that the drama's language should be treated as a reliable source of knowledge. It is important to note that it contains linguistic elements (swearwords, abusive words, Hebrew elements, &c.) that are absent from all other colloquial linguistic materials.

Keywords

Karaim, spoken Karaim in the 19th century, Slavonic influence, Karaim literature, Sergiusz Rudkowski

1. Introduction

The disparities between the written and spoken varieties of Lutsk Karaim are considerable.¹ Broadly speaking, the most significant difference between the two is the degree of foreign influence. Compared with the spoken language, the lexicon, morphology, and syntax of liturgical texts, Bible translations and printed literature bear relatively few traces of external structural influence. This does not mean in any way that the written sources available to us represent purely Turkic patterns alone. Long-lasting Hebrew or Slavonic influences, to mention just the most important ones, are easy to recognize when reading Karaim secular and religious literature, and have been analysed by a number of authors. But the incomparably higher frequency of (mostly) Slavonic calques and structural influences in the colloquial texts is especially conspicuous.²

Although our knowledge of the latter is gradually expanding, there is still much to investigate if we want to gain an overall picture. The number of sources available is, however, extremely modest. On the one hand, linguists have almost no voice recordings of this extinct dialect at their disposal and, on the other, written colloquial texts are very rare. At present, the only available description of such Lutsk Karaim sources can be found in a study by NÉMETH (2011b).

But should we therefore completely neglect printed sources in this respect? Sacral texts, for obvious reasons, are the “purest” from a linguistic point of view and cannot be of help when it comes to investigating everyday language. In most cases the translations slavishly follow the Hebrew original, for dogmatic reasons, and have nothing in common with colloquialisms.³

On the other hand, literary works are somewhat more useful. However, there are several important factors which force us to treat them with a certain dose of caution. First of all, during the interwar period, when most works of Lutsk Karaim secular literature were written and printed, publications were carefully

¹ This has been the subject of several studies. For a brief characteristics of the Karaim literary and spoken language see KOWALSKI 1929: XIX-XXVIII.

² For the above-mentioned see, first of all, DUBIŃSKI 1969; 1987, JANKOWSKI 2003: 145-147, and NÉMETH 2011a; 2011b: 62-82.

³ For an analysis of the language of the existing Bible translations see JANKOWSKI 2009, OLACH 2013.

prepared and edited by language purists (this phenomenon is presented in detail in NÉMETH 2009). As a result of this process, for instance, we can hardly find any foreign syntactic calques or loanwords – except for the oldest layers of loanwords which already affected part of the native lexicon by then. These non-Turkic structural elements, calques and loanwords were deliberately avoided in order not to “contaminate” the language with what were termed “barbarisms.” And even if the intention of such well-known Lutsk Karaim authors and editors as Aleksander Mardkowicz (1875-1944) or Sergiusz Rudkowski (1873-1944) was to promote the fluency of the Karaim by publishing various type of works that were supposed to attract the attention of what was then the youngest generation of readers, those texts do not reflect the actual command of the language. Let us, however, emphasize this once again: the fight to save a vanishing mother tongue must beyond any doubt be interpreted as a purely pro-Karaim movement rather than an anti-Slavonic or anti-Hebrew one.

Importantly, this movement was patterned after a similar process that took place in Turkey. There, Ottoman Turkish underwent a far-reaching purification process, too. In 1923, the writer and sociologist Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) published his *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (The Principles of Turkism), which, besides offering an outline of his Pan-Turkic ideology, also contained a fairly radical language-reform programme. The enormous number of Arabic and Persian loanwords which had for so long been characteristic of literary Ottoman (above all so-called *Fasih* and *Orta Türkçe*) tended to be replaced by native Turkish (or even other Turkic) words in a top-down manner. How far-reaching the scale of this process was is clearly reflected in the so-called *Tarama Dergisi*, a dictionary that contained ca. 7000 loanwords aligned with their, ca. 30.000 native Turkic equivalents (its full title is *Osmanlıcadan Türkçeye Söz Karşılıkları Tarama Dergisi*, vol. I–II, İstanbul, 1934; for further reading see e.g. LAUT 1998: 163-164). This dictionary gained much publicity abroad, including among Karaims.⁴ Importantly for us, the ideology of the movement

⁴ Cf. the fragment of Szymon Firkowicz’s lecture read during a meeting of the Society of Friends of Karaim History and Literature (= Pol. *Towarzystwo Miłośników Historji i Literatury Karaimskiej*) in Vilnius: “Na wiadomość o tem, że czternastomiljonowy

must have influenced the views of Seraya Shapshal (1873-1961), the Tauride and Odessian hakham (1915-1919), and the hakham of Trakai (1927-1945), who spent near eight years (1919-1927) in the Ottoman Empire (from 1922 on: Turkey).⁵ We can see this influence in the example of the Karaim-Polish-Russian dictionary (KRPS) co-edited by him and published in Moscow in 1974, which contains merely a scattering of Hebrew and Slavonic lexical items. For him — the spiritual leader of the Karaim community — the Hebrew and Slavonic elements that were used in Karaim played the same “role” as Arabic and Persian loanwords did in Ottoman Turkish. Thus, this process had its roots in the language purism movement that gained strength in Turkey in the interwar period and, importantly, also concerned Slavonic elements. This, in turn, is an argument against certain aspects of ALTBAUER’S (1979-1980) theory about the “dehebraization” of Karaim. In fact, incomparably more Slavonic elements have been excluded from KRPS (see also NÉMETH 2012: 63-66) than Hebrew ones. Thus, in order not to distort history, the so called “dehebraization” of Karaim should always be mentioned together with, let us say, “deslavization” of that language.

naród turecki rozpoczął na początku bieżącego stulecia, zaś w ostatnich latach już bardzo intensywnie wprowadza w życie, oczyszczanie języka swego od barbaryzmów, mimowoli nasuwa się myśl, co my mamy robić. Turcy wydali już gruby tom «Tarama Dergisi», w którym od «A» do «Z» są wydrukowane niemal wszystkie wyrazy zapożyczone z języków arabskiego i perskiego i tuż obok są podane ich odpowiedniki, wzięte z dialektów całego świata tureckiego. Jeżeli nie z dumą, to z wielkim zadowoleniem widzimy, że trafiło tam przeszło 330 wyrazów z naszego języka ojczystego” [= The question of what to do is involuntarily brought to our minds by the news of the fact that the 14-million strong Turkish nation started to cleanse its language of barbarisms at the beginning of the present century and is now implementing this process even more intensively. The Turks have already published the thick tome of *Tarama Dergisi*, in which almost all words borrowed from Arabic and Persian are printed, from A to Z, and right next to them are their equivalents taken from all Turkic dialects, too. We can see — if not with pride, at least with great satisfaction — that more than 330 words from our mother language ended up there.] (FIRKOWICZ 1935-1936: 69).

⁵ This period of Seraya Shapshal’s life has been described by, e.g., GAŚIOROWSKI 2010.

Another factor explaining why authors preferred native Karaim vocabulary and phraseology and tended to avoid non-Karaim elements in their writing is that Turkology gained strength in the interwar period, not only in Poland, but also in such countries as Germany, Russia and Hungary. After the first, often erroneous, scholarly reports of Wilhelm Radloff (1837-1918), Karl Foy (1856-1907), Bernát Munkácsi (1860-1937), Samuel Poznański (1864-1921), and Jan Grzegorzewski (1849-1922) at the end of the 19th century and in the first decade of the 20th, the number of reliable linguistic studies on Karaim gradually expanded. More importantly, Tadeusz Kowalski (1889-1948), who is considered to be the founder of modern Polish Orientalistics, visited, on several occasions (from 1925 onwards), the Karaim communities of Trakai, Vilnius, Halych, and Lutsk. Conducting field works and gathering linguistic material for his research was not his only intention — he made considerable efforts to preserve knowledge of the language among Karaims, too. And since the archaic features of the language were emphasized in almost every scholarly work, the users of the language were doubly aware of its importance.

2. Sergiusz Rudkowski's *Dostlar*

Regardless of the intentions of the above-mentioned editors, scholars and authors, what we know is that most of the printed literature cannot serve as reliable material for any research on the colloquial language. All we can do, based on such sources, is to prepare an analysis concerning an “ideal” literary language.

Still, there is one peculiar literary work which might potentially be an important source of knowledge on Karaim as it was spoken at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. It is a 21-page comedy entitled *Dostlar*, which was written by Sergiusz Rudkowski (pen name *Ha-Roddi*) and published in two parts (RUDKOWSKI 1931a; 1939). The reason why the drama is so unique and why it deserves special attention is that the author intended to “unmask” the actual condition of his mother tongue by showing how the members of the community actually spoke. This is stated explicitly in the preface to the drama, where RUDKOWSKI (1931a: 2) writes the following (a non-philological translation of the quoted fragment is provided):

“Kołhyjdym uchuwcułarymny sanamaska ałaj ki jazdym tiziwimni inno bir cajja-satyrłykka da bazwachtły kiltkigie.

Ajyryp bundan symarłajmen bu satyr tiziwni muzhuł tanykka ne kieretkiedein da cajpawga kisti tuwhan tilimniz⁶ bizin jiz-jilłykarda (uturu sanyna christjanłarnyn) XVIII da XX.

Tanymahymda menim jatady kyryjdahy kierek kałdyrma mereslikkie bizin kielgien kabillerimizgie askan tirliginden tuwhan dżymatnyn diwił inno biliwler anynicin ne edi jachsy da satyr, wałe ałaj ezi anynicin ne edi chor da jasły.

S. R.”

Translation

I would kindly like to ask my readers not to presume that I have written this work only for fun and endless laughter.

I repudiate this, and I dedicate this cheerful play as sad testimony to the process whereby our mother language was gradually brought to ruin in the period between the 18th and 20th centuries (contrary to what Christians believe about us).

It is my firm conviction that the heritage left to our unborn generations should be augmented not only by good and joyful pieces of knowledge concerning the past life of our home community, but also by those bad and mournful ones.

S. R.

Even though the author intended to present colloquial language accurately, the satirical nature of the drama forces us to treat it with caution. As is usually the case with works caricaturing the use of dialects or idiolects, the features they contain may just as well be exaggerated. Furthermore, Sergiusz Rudkowski's language and style cannot be classified as standard forms, either, the preface quoted above being a very good example of this fact. In his works he often used words and grammatical constructions not found in other authors' publications.

⁶ A misprint. Should be: *tilimiz*.

Remarkably, his texts published in the journal *Karaj Awazy* were often accompanied by explanatory footnotes added by the editor, Aleksander Mardkovich — see e.g. RUDKOWSKI (1928; 1931b; 1931c). Obviously, his family connections with Crimean Karaims may have been the reason for the frequent use of words absent from the language of other Lutsk Karaim authors.⁷ In addition, his attitude towards his mother language was also somewhat extravagant.

Nevertheless, the author's intention expressed in the preface suggests that the drama itself should be a reliable source. To judge whether this is true, a concise examination of the text is called for.

2.1. Text sample

First of all, let us quote a short sample of the text to present an overall picture of the work. Both parts are written in the same style — there is no significant difference between them (the second part was written one year after the first, even though it was published eight years later). The language of the work's only two characters (*Jakowusio* and *Semelcio*) is linguistically coherent, which shows that the entire work is carefully premeditated.

- “Semelcio⁸ — [...] kacan asty artyk necik sahat jarym dzaman da siz kajtmadynyz to bitin toj poperti⁹ chlewgie... Tymos paradowattedi litarniesibe alynda...
 Jakowusio¹⁰ — Biliwli chaz bałabbjit...
 Semelcio — Nece bracie bizni anda edi to kirip chlewgie ujuduk!... ujuduk da actyk awuzlarymyzny...
 Jakowusio — Zwiesno chaz rozdziawałar...

⁷ His mother, *Zara Rudkowska*, née *Sinani* descended from a Crimean Karaim family. He visited the Crimean peninsula several times; between 1917 and 1918 he spent there several months since, as a court clerk, he was evacuated to Kiev and later to the Crimea by the tsarist authorities (see NÉMETH 2006: 7).

⁸ A Slavonic diminutive form of Kar. *Szemoel* (< Hebr. שמואל = Eng. *Samuel*).

⁹ Slavonic glosses are written spaced out.

¹⁰ A Slavonic diminutive form of Kar. *Jaakow* (< Hebr. יעקב = Eng. *Jacob*).

- Semelcio — Edi neden bracie, warjacie, bo wyrezattin chłewde neni inno kieźlerin kierdi!... porezattin bar kuskurtnu, porosielerni, lochałarny, tełnyj inekłerni, kojłarny! cystyj Plewna!...
- Jakowusio — Nu bo egier rezatme to rezatme!... ne ma chaif edi fatygamny?...
- Semelcio — Pewne... berdin inno tync bir atłarha...
- Jakowusio — E, bo atłarny to men, cocku, sianowattem!... atłar!... elhejm men ałaricin!...
- Semelcio — Kierip ospunu baryn, Tymos firjatetti kicli da omłetti!... a Sakon skomandowatti izdeme sizni bo chłewde johediniz... kob zdorow
- Jakowusio — Ehe! sukaj witra w poli!.. oj buw taj nema taj pojichaw do młynna!...
- Semelcio — Posiukattler, posiukattler¹¹ da taptlar sizni tyckałararasyn... fasołłyńniede...
- Jakowusio — On kudy zanesło!... to majbołma zrywattik fasolkałarny krupnicokka!... kierti?...
- Semelcio — Hmm... neinace..."

(RUDKOWSKI 1939: 11-12)

Translation

- Semelcio — [...] when already more than a half an hour has passed and you did not return, all the wedding guests set off to the pigpen... *Tymos* strutted with his torch ahead...
- Jakowusio — Of course, he, as the host...
- Semelcio — Every single one of us was astonished when we entered the pigpen...! We were astonished and just gaped...
- Jakowusio — Of course, as the gapers do...
- Semelcio — We had our reasons, brother, since you have wiped out everything you have seen in the pigpen...! You have wiped

¹¹ Here, a misprint in the original: there is *posiukatler* instead of *posiukattler*.

- out all the poultry, all the piglets, sows, cows in calf, sheep... It was like the Siege of Plevna...¹²
- Jakowusio — You know, I don't usually slaughter, but when I do it, I do it right! Is there a reason to begrudge my efforts...?
- Semelcio — I see... You only have left the horses in peace...
- Jakowusio — Yes, fellow, since I have much respect for the horses...! Horses...! I could die for them...!
- Semelcio — Seeing all this, *Tymos* lamented strongly and fainted... while *Sakon* ordered a search for you, because you were not there in the pigpen...
- Jakowusio — Аha! Шукай вітра в полі¹³...! Ой був та й нема, та й поїхав до млина¹⁴...!
- Semelcio — They kept searching and finally found you among... beanpoles...
- Jakowusio — Behold, that is where we ended up! We have been probably harvesting beans for a barley soup...! Haven't we...?
- Semelcio — Hmm... if you say so...

2.2. Linguistic remarks

The lecture of the analysed drama, compared to the available colloquial and near-colloquial sources (above all MARDKOWICZ 1933 and NÉMETH 2011b), allows us to draw the following conclusions.

It is obvious at first sight that the two characters address each other very colloquially. First of all we encounter a number of valuable Karaim non-literary

¹² The Siege of Plevna was a major battle during the tenth Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) fought in 1877 in the Balkans by a joint army of Russia and Romania against the Ottoman Empire. The siege is considered to be one of the fiercest battles in the second half of the 19th century.

¹³ A Ukrainian idiom meaning more or less 'well you won't see it again' or 'you won't ever find it' (literally: 'search for wind in a field').

¹⁴ A fragment of an Ukrainian humorous song entitled *Видно хату, видно хату, видно й зрушу* (ДЕЛ et al. 1967: 800).

forms, such as the following: *eki ajakly* ‘two legged’ shortened in two different ways as *ekiajkly*¹⁵ (I:7)¹⁶ and *ek’ajakly* (I:7); the variant *etkary* (I:5, I:8) of *ajtkary* ~ *artkary* ~ *atkary* (see KRPS) ‘back’¹⁷; the very unusual dative case suffix *-he* in the words *kiecehe* ‘to the night’ (I:5) and *polelerhe* ‘to the fields’ (II:9)¹⁸; the word *kiśkiej* ‘may it fall’ (I:5), that documents the *ti-* > *ki-* change¹⁹, which is characteristic rather of Halych Karaim; the abbreviated verbal form *ajtym* ‘I will say’ (II:13) < (liter.) *ajtyrmen*, in which the future tense marker *-r-* is syncopated and the shortened form of the personal ending is used (*-m* < *-men*); *tonhuz-indyry* ‘pigpen’ (II:3), which is an interesting example of Karaim word formation — the literal meaning of the word is *pig-barn*; &c.

The large number of Slavonic abusive words and swearwords in the text is very conspicuous, which makes the work absolutely unique, see, e.g., *ne za cholera* ‘what the hell!’ (I:3); *pśiarnik* ‘dog whipper’ (I:7); *małpa* ‘monkey’ (I:7); *hak tobi u pecinki* ‘appr. buzz off’ (II:3); *durak* ‘fool’ (II:5); *lycho twoji matery* ‘Ukrainian curse’ (II:6); *ropucha* ‘colloq., pejor. old bag, old hag’ (II:9); *swinia* ~ *swynia* ‘(you) swine’ (II:11); cf., respectively, Pol. *co za cholera* id., Russ. *что за холера* id., Ukr. *що за холера* id.; Ukr. dial. *псюрник* id. (see also our commentary below); Pol. *małpa*, Ukr. *мавна* id.; Russ. and Ukr. *дурак* id.; Ukr. *лихо твоїй матері* id.; Ukr. *гак тобі в печінку* id.; Ukr. *ронуха* ‘frog’ and Pol. *gorucha* ‘toad’; Russ. *свинья* and Ukr. *свиня* id. In fact,

¹⁵ We quote the material in the original orthography; the phonetic value of the material is less important here. For a detailed analysis of Lutsk Karaim phonetics and phonology cf. NÉMETH 2011a, and 2011b: 21-30.

¹⁶ For the sake of simplicity we quote the language material referring to the part number (I or II) and, after the colon, the page number.

¹⁷ This suggests the following chronology of phonetic changes: *ajtkary* > **ejtkary* > *etkary*; the latter form, without *-j-*, emerged probably due to analogy to *atkary* (etymologically, the original form was *artkary*, cf. Kiptchak *art* ‘back’, see e.g. VON GABAIN 1959: 62. The *aj* > *ej* change might, in turn, be a feature of the author’s idiolect as it is characteristic above all of Crimean Karaim, see JANKOWSKI 2003: 141. Cf. also footnote 7 above.

¹⁸ The *-he* variants of this suffix are not noted in Karaim grammars, except for NÉMETH 2011c: 63. The process of its appearance is explained in NÉMETH 2011a: 92-94.

¹⁹ This alternation (*ti-* ~ *ki-*) is of Ukrainian origin, see NÉMETH 2011a: 80-85.

the characters express their emotions predominantly by using Slavonic, mostly Ukrainian collocations.

The Ukrainian influence is considerable, which is often underestimated when it comes to linguistic descriptions. The analysed text contains a number of Ukrainian loanwords, calques, sayings, cf. e.g. *hej, hej, zelenoju hej kozaky iduuuť* [a fragment of a cossack's song entitled *Ой, на зорі*] (I:3), *a z resztu* 'never mind' (II:3); *bida* 'misfortune' (II:3), *od napasti to ne propasty* '(saying), appr. not to die of misfortune' (II:3), *sidalo* '(hen) roost' (II:3), *wepryk* 'wild boar' (II:3), *coho dobroho* 'what new?' (II:5), *oj buw taj nema taj pojichaw do mlyna* [a fragment of a folk song] (II:12), *oj posijaw kozak hrecku, na dubbowym na wersecku* [a fragment of a cossack's song] (II:12), *sukaj witra w poli* '(saying) you won't ever find it' (II:12), &c. reflecting, respectively, Ukr. *a z reшту; біда; сідало; веприк; чого доброго, ой був та й нема, та й поїхав до млина; ой, посіяв козак гречку, на дубові на вершечку; від* (dial.: *од*) *напасти не пропасти; шукай вітра в полі*, &c.

Besides Ukrainian, we can also find (literary and dialectal) Polish and Russian elements in the text, cf. *mosienznyj* 'made of brass' (I:4), *bracie* '(voc.) my brother' (I:6), *warjacie* 'you fool' (I:11), *ksionska* 'book' (II:4), *psecie* 'after all' (II:4), *pozahusta* 'please' (II:4), *scupak* 'pike' (II:4), *napsyklad* 'for example' (II:5), *niestrawność* 'indigestion' (II:5) reflecting, respectively, Pol. dial. *mosiężnyj* (lit. *mosiężny*²⁰), Pol. *bracie, wariacie, książka, arch. przecie* (lit. *przecież*), *szczupak, na przykład, niestrawność*, and Russ. *пожалуйста*. Much higher is, however, the number of those forms which sound the same in at least two of these languages, and therefore we cannot settle their exact origin, cf. e.g. *obruc* 'hoop, band' (II:7) < Russ., Ukr. *обруч* id., *zahartowanyj* 'hardened' (II:7) < Pol. dial. *zahartowanyj*, Ukr. *загартований*; *zaraz* 'immediately, quickly' (II:7) < Pol. *zaraz*, Ukr. *зараз* id.

Interestingly, the number of blends between the respective Slavonic forms is very high, too. Such data are all the more important as the words are noted more or less phonetically in Latin script. Such forms have already been noted

²⁰ The dialectal *-yj* adjective ending was quite expansive in the Polish south-eastern Kresy dialect, see e.g. Kość 1999: 119.

in NÉMETH (2011b: 95-98), but those were originally written in Hebrew script and often not vocalised. Therefore, only a certain part of the respective material could have been unambiguously interpreted as containing phonetic or morphologic blends. This is mostly because the phonetic value of a number of letters may have differed in Lutsk Karaim texts even within the same document, see e.g. the use of the letters *gimel* (ג), *yodh* (י), or *waw* (ו), and also because there was no settled or consistent way of noting palatal consonants (for a detailed description see NÉMETH (2011b: 101-130). In Slavonic glosses, therefore, the latter ones must have been hypothetically assumed.

To give an example, thus far the Polish word *póki* ‘until’ and its Ukrainian equivalent *noku* id. have appeared in written form in Lutsk Karaim texts as פּוֹכִי, פּוֹכִי, פּוֹקִי and פּוֹקִי (see NÉMETH 2011b: 310, 312). What we could do is to assume literal Slavonic forms *puki* (< Pol.) and *poky* (< Ukr.) unless the word was vocalised with a *hōlām* and *waw* (ו) and written with a letter *kaph* (כ), which in the vast majority of cases was used for noting a palatal *k*’ (as is the case in the variant פּוֹכִי), or unless it was vocalised with a *shūrūq* (י) and noted with a letter *koph* standing predominantly for a velar *k* (as would be the case in פּוֹקִי*). In the latter two cases the words must have been read as *pok’i* and **puky*, respectively. We have not encountered פּוֹקִי*, but we did come across פּוֹכִי, and we transcribed it as *poki*, which was merely a hypothetical solution at the time²¹, even though it was based on philological data. This assumption is now somewhat confirmed by *poki* (II:3) attested in *Dostlar*, which is a blended form of Pol. *póki* and Ukr. *noku*.

In the latter group we also find collocations that contain words from different languages, cf. *nigdy w świti* ‘never ever’ (I:5) < Pol. *nigdy w życiu* id. ↔ Ukr. *ніколи в свімі* id.; *pod wecer* ‘towards the evening’ (I:5) < Pol. *pod wieczór* id. ↔ Russ. *нод [= пад] вечер* id.; *pśiarnik* ‘dog whipper’ (I:7) < Ukr. *псар* id. ↔ Ukr. dial. *псюрник* id.; *strasno nawet podumatme* ‘it is terrifying at the very thought’ (II:5) < Pol. *to straszne nawet pomysleć* ↔ Ukr. *страшно*

²¹ Even though the form *poki* appears in MARDKOWICZ 1933, see below; this publication contains a number of printing errors and therefore we found it somewhat unreliable in this case.

навіть подумати; *za psebaceniem* ‘pardon the expression’ (II:5) < Pol. *za przeproszeniem* id. ↔ Ukr. *за вибаченням* id.; *ciekawa brechnia* ‘interesting rumours’ (II:5) < Pol. *ciekawa plotka* ↔ Ukr. *цікава брехня* id.; &c.

There are also a considerable number of Slavonic calques and idioms. Their presence is especially important as they reflect structural, and not simply lexical, influences.²² Since the conclusions offered by the analysed text cannot go beyond what we have presented in a detailed description of this phenomenon in NÉMETH (2011b: 62-76), we will limit ourselves to presenting a number of representative examples:

ajt edirek ‘you’d better say’ (II:3) calques Pol. *lepiej powiedz* id., Russ. *скажи лучше* id., Ukr. *скажи краще* id. (KarL. *ajt* ‘say (imperat.3.sg)’ = Pol. *powiedz*, Russ. *скажи*, Ukr. *скажи*; KarL. *edirek* ‘better (adj.; adv.)’ = Pol. *lepiej*, Russ. *лучше*, Ukr. *краще*);

a necikze ‘yes, indeed’ (I:5), cf. Pol. *a jakże* id., Russ. *а как же* id., Ukr. *а як же* id. (KarL. *a* ‘(a particle introducing statements) and’ < Pol. *a* id., Russ., Ukr. *a* id.; KarL. *necik* ‘how’ = Pol. *jak*, Russ. *как*, Ukr. *як* id.; KarL. *-ze* ‘intensifying particle’ < Pol. *że* id., Russ., Ukr. *же* id.);

berze tync (II:4) ‘come on!’, cf. Pol. *daj że spokój* id., Russ. *дай же покой* id., Ukr. *дай же спокій* id. (KarL. *ber* ‘give (imperat.2.sg)’ = Pol. *daj*, Russ., Ukr. *дай*; KarL. *-ze*: see *a necikze*);

cystyj Plevna ‘exactly like [the siege] Plevna’ (II:11); even though the idiom is not typically calqued, noteworthy is the fact that the Slavonic adjective has been morphologically adopted in Karaim, i.e. it is used in a Slavonic masculine form even though *Plevna* is a feminine form (this phenomenon is well known from other sources, too); in this place *cystyj* ‘clean’ has the meaning of ‘pure’ or ‘sheer’ and reflects the meaning Pol. *czysty* ‘1. clean, clear; 2. pure, sheer’, Russ. *чистый* id., and Ukr. *чистий* id.;

kaan bu alaj hudettes ‘where do you reprimand [me] from’ (II:3), the whole expression calques Slavonic collocations, cf. e.g. Pol. *skąd to tak ganisz* id. (KarL. *kaan* ‘where from’ = Pol. *skąd*; KarL. *bu* ‘this’ = Pol. *to*; KarL. *alaj*

²² For a detailed description of the Slavonic structural influence see NÉMETH 2011b: 62-76.

‘so, in such a way’ = Pol. *tak*, KarL. *hudettes* < Ukr. *zydumu* ‘to reprimand, to express dissatisfaction’ (see also below);

kaas joharyistne ‘somewhere above’ (II:5) calques literally Pol. *gdzieś na górze* id., Russ. *где-то наверху* id., Ukr. *десь нагорі* id. (KarL. *kaas* ‘somewhere’ < *kaa* ‘where’ + *-es* ‘a particle expressing indefiniteness’ = Pol. *gdzieś*, Russ. *где-то*, Ukr. *десь*; *johary* ‘upper part’ = Pol. *góra*, Russ. *верх*, Ukr. *гора*; KarL. *istne* ‘postp. on (superess.)’²³ = Pol. *na*, Russ., Ukr. *на*);

meni durakba prozwatti ‘he called me fool’ (I:5), where the use of the accusative (*meni*) and instrumental case (KarL. *-ba*) is used to calque the government of the Slavonic equivalents of *prozwatti* ‘to call’, cf. Pol. *nazwał mnie głupcem* id., Russ. *меня дураком обозвал* id., Ukr. *мене дураком прозвав* id.;

ne za cholera ‘what the hell’ (I:3) calques literally Pol. *co za cholera* id., Russ. *что за холера* id., Ukr. *що за холера* id. (KarL. *ne za* ‘what kind of’ = Pol. *co za*, Russ. *что за*, Ukr. *що за*; KarL. *cholera* ‘med. cholera; colloq. damned thing’ = Pol. *cholera*, Russ., Ukr. *холера*);

poki nendis pekloha zawestetmedin ‘until you have taken [us] to some kind of hell’ (II:3); the use of the negative verb *zawestetmedin* (< Ukr. *завесту* ‘to lead, to take’, see also below) calques Slavonic patterns, cf. e.g. Pol. *aż do jakiegoś piekła nie zaprowadziliście* id.;

tiwił inno ‘not only’ (I:6) calques Pol. *nie tylko* id., Russ. *не только* id., Ukr. *не тільки* id. (KarL. *tiwił* ‘not’ = Pol. *nie*, Russ., Ukr. *не*; KarL. *inno* ‘only’ < Pol. *ino*, Ukr. *іно*); KarL. *tiwił* ‘not’ is used in the role of a negative particle under Slavonic influence.

The drama provides especially rich linguistic material as far as the adaptation of Slavonic verbs is concerned. It is important to note that the verbal forms attested in the analysed drama fit in well with the model of adaptation briefly presented by DUBIŃSKI (1969: 141-142; 1987: 180-181), and supplemented and

²³ The postposition *istne* is a transitional form between *ístine* and *isne* — to the best of our knowledge not attested yet, i.e. a result of the so-called *Mittelsilbenschwund* process in *ístine* > *istne* > *isne*. Even though all these forms are etymologically dative case forms, they have a locative meaning and therefore they agree with the relevant Slavonic equivalents.

described in detail by NÉMETH (2011b: 91-94), cf. e.g. *kukurikatetmejdler* 'they do not crow' (II:3) < Ukr. *кुकурікати* 'to crow' + KarL. *et-* '(auxiliary verb) to crow' [+ the respective grammatical endings]; *zawestetmedin* 'you did not take' (II:3) < Ukr. *завести* 'to lead, to take' + KarL. *et-*; *hudettes* 'you reprimand' (II:3) < **hudetetes* < **hudytetes* < Ukr. *зідуми* 'to reprimand, to express dissatisfaction' + KarL. *et-*; *wodtin* 'you have lead' (II:3) < **wodyttin* < **wodytettin* < Ukr. *водити* 'to lead, to take' + KarL. *et-*; &c.

Interestingly, a number of grammatical errors have been deliberately introduced into the text. By means of this the author most probably wanted to provide a realistic notion of the poor condition of the language. A good example is the expression *wantuchicin* in which KarL. *wantuch* 'a sack made of thick hemp linen' (< Ukr. arch. *вантуча* id., see ISUJa I 185) is used with the primary postposition *icin* 'about' instead of the secondary postposition *icinde* 'inside'. In fact, since we know that *icinde* is used with the genitive case, the expected expression would be *wantuchnyn icinde*. An unintended error can be ruled out here as in all other works of S. Rudkowski these postpositions are properly distinguished.

Another noteworthy example of the use of erroneous forms is *diwel'm* 'I am not' (II:7) < *diwil'men*, in which the *-men* copula suffix is irregularly abbreviated into *-m*, and thus confused with the *-men* verbal personal ending, which has an *-m* variant in Lutsk Karaim.

Comparing the above data to the available Lutsk Karaim non-literary texts known from MARDKOWICZ (1933) and NÉMETH (2011b) we can clearly say that almost all these phenomena are well known from the colloquial language used in private correspondence at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th, and therefore must be treated as reliable linguistic facts. The only exception is the presence of abusive words and swearwords, the use of which, for obvious reasons, was limited in private correspondence. A good illustration of this is, for instance, the following fragment of an open letter to the entire Karaim community in Lutsk written in 1868 by an unknown author, quoted from MARDKOWICZ (1933: 6)²⁴:

²⁴ The whole letter is critically edited in NÉMETH 2011c: 217-233. We quote this fragment after MARDKOWICZ 1933 so as not to use different transcription systems in this

“[...] Wienc baknysz haligine za wremje, kełniz terk da kerek ystyrma choros da baślama staracetme necikte kutułma bu gezeradan. Bo dosyt uze ałajda bardy haligine kachyry kazionnyj pałatanyn, a dotoho ki ne nowyj hoddan hanuz kirmedi kaznaha jasakta bir choros. A kaznoce-
jstwodan har aj barady wiadomostłar kazionnyj pałataha to biri birine ystrynsa, to bahniz ki awur bołur jenme bu gezerany. Wienc bu belgili seźlerni uchunuz da ezinizde cuwstwowatiniz kim bunu necik najtezrek ispołnitme, poki hanuz bardy zaman. Bo srok turady do pierwoho maja. To bunu pamiatatiniz.”²⁵

Translation

Thus be aware of the time now [= time is of the essence now], come quickly, and it is necessary [= important] to collect [some] grosz and to start to make efforts [to find out] how to avoid this decree. Because now there is already quite enough anger with the fiscal chamber anyway and, additionally, [it is enough] that since the New Year not a single grosz in tax has reached the treasury. And every month lists go [= are sent] to the fiscal chamber; so if they are gathered, one after another, then take notice [of the fact] that it will be difficult to overcome this decree. So read these notable words and take note yourself, too, that this [issue] is to be carried

paper. We have altered this fragment in a few instances — where amendments are suggested by the original manuscript. All these amendments are marked and commented upon in NÉMETH 2011c.

²⁵ Obviously, the Slavonic glosses, the Slavonic-origin verbs and the Ukrainian pronunciation of Russian words can be easily identified in the text without at least a basic knowledge of Karaim. There are, however, a number of Slavonic calques in the letter, cf. e.g. *baknysz za wremje* ‘be aware of the time’ in which the Russ. or Ukr. prep. *za* appears with the verb *bak-* ‘to see’ as a syntactic calque of Russ. *смотреть за* or Ukr. *бачити за* meaning ‘to take care of, to be aware of’; the word *alajda* ‘anyway’ calques Pol. *i tak* ‘anyway’ or Russ. *u max* id. (in which KarL. *-da* ‘and’ = Pol. *i* ‘and’ and Russ. *u* id.; KarL. *alaj* ‘in such way’ = Pol. *tak* ‘so, in a such way’, Russ. *max* id.); *srok turady* ‘the time limit is’, where the Karaim verb *tur-* ‘to last’ calques the use of the Russ. *продолжаться* in the expression *срок продолжается* ‘the time limit lasts’.

out as soon as possible while there is still time [left], because the time limit lasts [= is] until the first of May. Thus bear this in mind.

Last, but not least, there is an important and very interesting feature of the language in *Dostlar* which must be discussed separately, namely the number of Hebraisms used in it. Their role, beyond any doubt, is to emphasize the shared cultural heritage of Karaims and Jews even if this was admitted unenthusiastically by certain circles of activists. This reluctant attitude towards Jews is pilloried by Rudkowski in both parts of the drama in which the two characters often present obviously ridiculous views about Jews. Just how ironical the author is can be seen in the language of the two characters rich in Hebraisms. This contrast is one of the hidden or additional meanings, the addressees of which the Karaims of Lutsk were supposed to be.²⁶

May the following examples, absent from Karaim dictionaries, suffice to illustrate what we have mentioned above: *ezara* 'help' (II:12), cf. Hebr. עזרה id.; *immach semo we zichro* 'may his name and memory be obliterated' (I:7), cf. Hebr. ימח שמו וזכרו id.; *mappala* 'defeat, ruin' (I:6), cf. Hebr. מפלה id.; *masemecha* 'gladdening' (I:6, I:7), cf. Hebr. משמח id.; *maskil* '(honorific) great scholar, maskil' (I:8; II:4; II:11), cf. Hebr. משכיל id.; *nekiewa ~ nekewa* 'female' (I:7), cf. Hebr. נקבה id.; *pakid* 'official (a person)' (II:16), cf. Hebr. פקיד id.; *sewach lismo haggadol* 'praise be to His great Name' (II:16), cf. Hebr. שבח לשמו הגדול id., &c.

To sum up, the language employed in *Dostlar* appears to represent a very rich and reliable source of information on the colloquial features of Karaim. It includes a number of details which allow the reader to capture the process of the linguistic assimilation of Karaims living in Lutsk. It is, perhaps, also a valuable source of knowledge on Hebrew as spoken by Karaims at the beginning of the 20th century.

²⁶ How important the common cultural heritage of the Jews and Karaims was for Serghiusz Rudkowski is also reflected in his pen name *Ha-Roddi* and by the fact that he went to great lengths to teach Hebrew to his sons, Selim (not Shalom (sic!)), as asserted by KIZILOV 2009: 307) and Nazim Rudkowski (personal communication of Nazim Rudkowski).

Abbreviations

adj. = adjective; **adv.** = adverb; **appr.** = approximately; **arch.** = archaic; **colloq.** = colloquial; **dial.** = dialectal; **Hebr.** = Hebrew; **imperat.** = imperative; **Kar.** = Karaim; **KarL.** = Lutsk Karaim; **lit.** = literally; **liter.** = literary; **med.** = medical; **pejor.** = pejorative; **pl.** = plural; **Pol.** = Polish; **postp.** = postposition; **prep.** = preposition; **Russ.** = Russian; **sg.** = singular; **superess.** = superessive; **Ukr.** = Ukrainian; **voc.** = vocative.

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Michał Németh (born 1980) is assistant professor in the Institute of Linguistics at the Jagiellonian University. His main interests lie in historical linguistics and etymology. He studied Turkish and Hungarian philology at the Jagiellonian University. He holds a PhD degree in Linguistics (2011) from the Jagiellonian University. He authored a number of studies, among which are two monographs on the Karaïm entitled *Unknown Lutsk Karaïm Letters in Hebrew Script. (19th–20th Centuries). A Critical Edition* (= *Studia Turcologica Cracoviensia* 12, Kraków 2011) and *Zwięzła gramatyka języka zachodniokaraïmskiego z ćwiczeniami* [= *A concise grammar of western Karaïm with exercises*] (= *Prace Karaïmoznawcze* 1, Poznań 2011).

²⁷ On the title page erroneously: *kotarmat*.