

## ON THE LANGUAGE VARIETIES OF KARAIMS IN THE CRIMEA

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The aim of this paper is to examine the spoken language of Crimean Karaims and its relationship to the literary variants. The data are drawn from both remaining native speakers and from available published and handwritten sources.<sup>1</sup> The paper is illustrated with two photographs of Crimean Karaim language informants and two samples of a manuscript with a translation into a quadrate Hebrew script, a transliteration based on the modern Turkish standard, and a translation into English.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. CRIMEAN KARAIM – A DISTINCT LANGUAGE OR AN ETHNOLECT OF CRIMEAN TATAR

Some scholars maintain that Crimean Karaim is in fact identical with Crimean Tatar. Radloff (1896: xvi) claimed that Karaims and Krimchaks spoke “the purest Turkish language” varying in the same way as the language of the Crimean Tatars varied in their respective places of residence. In his view, the language spoken by

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<sup>1</sup> After submitting this paper to the editor, I met five further Karaims in the Crimea who had some command of Crimean Karaim. Then in 2002, I heard of four native speakers more.

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Karaims and Krimchaks from Bakhchasarai and Qarasuv Bazar was identical with the language of the Tatar inhabitants of these cities. Doerfer also shared this opinion. In his detailed study on Crimean Turkish Doerfer wrote: "Crimean Ottoman (Krimosmanisch) is also spoken by Crimean Karaims and Greeks who live in these dialect territories" (Doerfer 1959: 273). A similar opinion was expressed by Ananiasz Zajączkowski in his edition of Crimean Karaim *čič* songs: "In view of the Karaim-Tatar similar existence in the Crimea, the material presented here should be in general regarded as Crimean Tatar" (Zajączkowski 1939: 45). It is to be stressed, however, that Zajączkowski's observation refers to a certain type of written literature, not to the language in general. Crimean Karaims themselves did not use a unique denomination of their language in the past. For example, in the title of the famous 1841 Bible edition, the Crimean Karaim language is called Tatar: *Sefer Targum ha-Torah biLšon Tatar*. In document 23 of the Abraham Firkovich collection kept in the National Library of Russia in Saint-Petersburg, file 946, the Turkic language into which the Hebrew text of the grammar *Kelale ha-Diqduq* was translated is called *Lešon Qedar*, i.e. the language of Crimea and the modern Ukraine.<sup>3</sup>

The first serious critique of Radloff's Crimean material was presented by Samojlovič, who pointed out the inadequacies of Radloff's principles in his presentation of language material (Samojlovič 1917).<sup>4</sup> In Samojlovič's view Radloff published samples of modern Karaim, which "undoubtedly developed from the old language under the influence of Crimean Tatars [and] which, similarly to the dialects of the latter, reflected an Ottoman, in general South-Turkish influence" (Samojlovič 2000: 116). We may confirm that there are serious doubts as to the legitimacy of Radloff's statements and the reliability of the material he published. Firstly, it is unlikely that Radloff personally checked what his informants said, in other words, that he really examined Crimean Karaim communities in their actual settlements, although his final conclusion that Crimean Karaim dialect differences follow the differences between Crimean Tatar dialects sounds plausible. Secondly, as Samojlovič pointed out, Radloff collected in fact samples of literature, both written and oral, not the colloquial language. As I learned from my work with Mrs. Aleksandra Bakkal, there is a great difference between the everyday language of Karaims and the literary language they use, see below.

In his preface to Prik's Crimean Karaim grammar, another scholar, Džamajnov, said,

<sup>3</sup> The term *qarayça ~ karajča ~ karajca* 'the Karaim language; in Karaim', as well as *qaray ~ karaj* 'Karaim' (as noted in KRPS 291, 363), was only used by educated Crimean Karaims who do not speak Karaim; my informants AB and NB used only the term *qarayımça* and *qarayım* (absent in KRPS) and maintained that they have never heard the former term.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from the 2nd edition (Samojlovič 2000: 112–121).

Although Crimean Karaim is closer to Crimean Tatar than Western Karaim, it must be recognized as a separate 'dialect', distinct from Crimean Tatar (Prik 1976: 4).

At present, it is hard to evaluate these views, because Crimean Karaim, after a few dozens of endangered existence,<sup>5</sup> is practically extinct. Crimean Karaims agree that the last speaker able to speak the Karaim language fluently and to read the Hebrew-based Karaim writing was Mrs. Sima Mangubi who passed away in 1992 at the age of one hundred and four.<sup>6</sup> Now probably only one elderly lady, Mrs. Nina Bakkal,<sup>7</sup> resident of Topçıköy (today Dolinnoe) near Bakhcharai, remembers a few Crimean Karaim songs, sayings and words. When I visited her in September 2000, she was able to understand and pronounce simple Crimean Karaim sentences. She told me that she did not know anybody able to speak this language. To the best of my knowledge, the best speaker of Crimean Karaim is Aleksandra Bakkal.<sup>8</sup> During my work in May 2000 in Moscow, I tried to arrange a meeting with two other Karaims, Mrs. Ksenia Mangubi, the daughter of the afore-mentioned Sima Mangubi, and Mr. Sergey Shamash, but our attempts to talk to them in Karaim failed.

Another obstacle to evaluate modern Crimean Karaim is the lack of reliable language documentation in publications. Although we do have a handful of samples published in the 1990s, i.e. following the remarkable revival of national movements in the former Soviet Union (e.g. Jalpačik 1993, the only reliable source is Prik's grammar, written in 1949 and published in 1976.<sup>9</sup>

On the grounds of Prik's evidence, some other sources and my own documentation, I am convinced that Crimean Karaim is distinct from Crimean Tatar, even in the same geographical areas and social varieties, albeit the number of distinctive features is not high. It would probably be more plausible to regard Crimean Karaim as an ethnolect of Crimean Tatar, but in a few southern dialects

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<sup>5</sup> This process was well underway as early as the 1920s. In 1976 Džamanov said that Crimean Karaim was almost dead (Prik 1976: 4).

<sup>6</sup> On her see Polkanov 1994: 43–45.

<sup>7</sup> Nina Bakkal, born 1934, is half Karaim from her father, who died in war in 1941. She said that she had the best opportunity to speak Karaim until 1937, until her step-grandmother was at life. After the years of her childhood, as she maintained, she had hardly any occasion to speak Crimean Karaim.

<sup>8</sup> For the time being I have been unable to find any other native speaker. However, Crimean Karaims are a rather closed society and there may still be some people who can remember the language of their childhood of the 1920s and 1930s. Aleksandra Bakkal, born 1920, now resident of Moscow, has been living outside the Crimea since the age of seven. She does not use her mother tongue, for she does not have any partner to talk to. Therefore, all her competence is what she learned at home and spoke to her grandparents and father prior to 1939.

<sup>9</sup> Other works were not written with linguistic purpose. The bibliography of a few valuable text editions and papers which came out between the beginning of the 20th century and 1939 can be found in Zajączkowski 1939 and KRPS 1974.

the latter is linguistically an ethnolect of Turkish itself rather than an independent language. Therefore, some varieties of Crimean Karaim should be referred to Crimean Tatar, some to Crimean Turkish, whereas some old written documents should be considered Karaim. For this reason, the term Crimean Karaim seems to be better than any other.

## 2. ON THE HISTORY OF CRIMEAN KARAIM

It is evident that Crimean Karaim and Crimean Tatar were once distinct languages, as were the peoples, and both languages went through a separate, although similar process of evolution.<sup>10</sup>

The analysis of the Crimean Karaim historical linguistic materials and their comparison with modern Crimean Karaim documents demonstrate that in the past Crimean Karaim was more different from Crimean Tatar. Unfortunately, we only have a limited number of Crimean Karaim historical language documents and studies at our disposal. Firstly, there is a study by Gordlevskij on a handwritten copy of the Bible (Gordlevskij 1928), a few lines of a text published by Kowalski in his work on the Karaim of Troki (Kowalski 1929), short language samples in Shapshal (1928), Sulimowicz's edition of a Crimean Karaim fragment of the first Karaim prayer book printed in the Crimea 1734, and the publication of some selected passages of a Crimean Karaim Bible translation, copied probably at the end of the 18th century (Jankowski 1997). There are also a few, very rare, hardly accessible and unstudied Crimean Karaim printed texts listed and annotated in Poznański's bibliography (Poznański 1913; 1918), the largest of which is the Crimean Karaim Bible translation printed in 1841 in Qale (Çufut Qale).<sup>11</sup> All these liturgy language documents show that Crimean Karaim was in the past more similar to Western Karaim, which is obvious, for both go back to the same origin of the 14th century.

Tracing the history of Crimean Karaim, we are inclined to agree with Radloff who says that Crimean Karaims started to acquire Russian education in the second half of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th centuries, thereby assimilating to the Russian language (Radloff 1896: xvii). Indeed, the Russian annexation of the Crimea had a very significant impact on their linguistic identity.

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<sup>10</sup> Naturally, one has to agree with Samojlovič who said that it is unclear whether Old CK was the original language of Karaims or not (Samojlovič 2000: 116).

<sup>11</sup> Unless other old Crimean Karaim printed books will be discovered, his bibliography should be considered comprehensive, for hardly any printed texts appeared after 1918.

### 3. GEOGRAPHICAL CLASSIFICATION OF CRIMEAN KARAIM DIALECTS

Our knowledge of Crimean Karaim dialects in the remote past is very poor. Most of what we know is based on written texts from the 18th century to approximately 1919. Since Radloff's study that related Crimean Karaim dialects to the geographically corresponding Crimean Tatar dialects, it is customary to correlate Crimean Karaim with Crimean Tatar. This is why Crimean Karaim dialects are always classified as Crimean Tatar dialects. This approach seems to be more suitable for the study of those language elements, which are copied and partially copied from Crimean Tatar. However, it is necessary to establish the distinctive vocabulary and grammatical structures, characteristic of Crimean Karaim, and distinct from Crimean Tatar (see section 6, below).

Radloff said that "... the language of the Karaims in Eupatoria shares many features of the steppe dialect" (Radloff 1896: xvi). However, we must keep in mind that the official, literary language used by Karaims in Eupatoria was different. For example, in the 1841 Bible edition (p. 1), Eupatoria was written in an official Turkish form *Gözleve*, as opposed to the Tatar *Közlev ~ Kezlev*. At this point, following Samojlovič, it is important to make a distinction between the spoken and literary language forms.

Unfortunately, we do not have good, reliable dialect material from the recent past, i.e. from the years 1919–45, either. In this respect, Prik's grammar, finished in 1947, does not fill this gap.

The samples of Crimean Karaim appended to Prik's grammar have the following characteristics.<sup>12</sup> Firstly, they are all literary texts and do not reflect the spoken language directly. Secondly, two out of nine samples, notably sample 1 and sample 3, were drawn from manuscripts (*mejumas*). The majority of these texts (samples 1, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9, all proverbs) represent central Crimean Karaim. Sample 3 is central Crimean Karaim with southern elements, sample 5 is southern with central, and only sample 2 is southern Crimean Karaim. How misleading it is to draw linguistic conclusion about the language of Karaims on the basis of recited pieces of literature, is illustrated by sample 5, which is, as said above, predominantly southern with only a few central Crimean Karaim features. This text was recorded from A. Bakkał, with whom I worked. All the colloquial material I recorded from her is typically central Crimean Karaim, whereas most pieces of

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<sup>12</sup> We leave aside WC texts appended to this grammar.

literature in her narration are recited in the southern dialect.<sup>13</sup> The language samples published by Prik are the following:

1. *Yumaqbaşı*; first published by Shapshal 1918, drawn from a *mejuma*, C CK; 172–173
1. *Fuqare bilen ölüm*; recorded from B. Shamash from Simferopol, S CK; 175
3. *Kelinin türküsü*; drawn from Kefeli's *mejuma* dated 1878, written in Eupatoria, C + S CK; 176–177
4. Untitled, the name of informant not provided, C CK; 178
5. *Qaynana*; recorded from A. Bakkal, S + C CK; 179
6. "A lyric song", recorded from M. Sinani from Simferopol, C CK; 180–181
7. Songs referred to as "chastushki"; in fact, these are well-known *çïñs*; recorded from M. Ichajik, C CK; 182–183
8. *Tapmaca*; the same informant? C CK; 183
9. *Atalar sözi*; proverbs, the name of informant not provided; C CK; 184.

One of two texts from Eupatoria, being a song recorded by Prik (1976: 178) is really like northern Crimean Tatar of Eupatoria, e.g. *üyin bolur* as opposed to S *eviñ olur* 'you will have a home', whereas the other, drawn from a 1878 manuscript, although predominantly northern, reveals some southern traits, e.g. *qız gitti*, as opposed to C and N *qız ketti* 'the girl has gone' (176). The same northern features are present in a tale recorded by Shapshal in Çufut Qale (172–173). The text recorded from Shamash in Simferopol (175), does not represent the dialect characteristic of Simferopol region, which is central Crimean, but is basically Turkish, as the language of coastal settlements between Baidar and Sudak. The other text recorded in Simferopol from an informant called Sinani is quite different and is typical of the Simferopol region, with the forms like *bolmaz* '(it) will not be', but *sevdim* as opposed to N *süydüm* 'I loved'.<sup>14</sup> This text contains two forms which are untypical of central Crimean Tatar, and may be attributed to

<sup>13</sup> The question is more complicated than it seems. As I experienced in site, literary works do not normally change in rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and word order, but they are often being adapted phonetically and morphologically to the dialect of the performer. The adaptation is only applicable if a given genre exists in related dialects. If, for example, a speaker of Northern or Central CTat performs a *mane* or *türkü*, they will not change it, for this genre is unknown in their dialects, the same as a native speaker of the southern dialect will never change a *noğay beyiti*, as it only exists among steppe people and must be performed in Northern CTat.

<sup>14</sup> Note, however, that even my informants from Bakhchasarai, that is a city located more to the south than Simferopol, pronounced only *süy-*. This fact may weaken the reliability of the text.

Crimean Karaim: *saç* versus CTat *saç* 'hair' and *sözledim* 'I told' which is not used in Crimean Tatar, and corresponds to CTat *ayttım*.

As for the present Crimean Karaim dialects, I have to rely on my own language documentation from 2000. However, both of my informants are from the same city, Bakhchasarai, and there is no comparable material available from other Crimean Karaim dialect areas. In principle, the vocabulary and grammatical structures used in the language of both AB and NB are similar. The similarities are the following:

- Old Turkic *b-* is preserved in every absolute initial, e.g. *bol-*, *bar*, unlike S CTat *ol-*, *var* 'to be' and 'there is', respectively; the only exception was noted in the expression *Alla razı olsun* 'thank you' (AB);
- Old Turkic *γ* has changed into *y*, as in central and northern CTat, e.g. *üyren-* 'to learn', versus S Ctat. *öğren-*; this is more consistently realized in the pronunciation of NB, whereas AB once pronounced *soğuş*, instead of *suvuş* 'cold';
- the negative particle was *dugul* (AB) and *dügül* (NB), as opposed to the predominantly S Ctat *degil* and the N Ctat *tuvul* 'no; [is] not';
- the change *y > ğ* was evidenced in one word only, *süt tegaran cuvurdu* 'a little milk has run out', otherwise there is always *y-*, e.g. AB *yılay* 'he is weeping', cf. S CTat. *ağla-*, but N CTat *cıla-* (Üseinov 1994: 10; 357 only as *cılavuq*);
- grammatical verb suffixes are typically north-western, e.g. *bilem* 'I know', versus south-western *biliyurum* (but not the N *bilemen*); *bilmeyim* 'I do not know', versus *bilmiyurum* (but not the N *bilmeymen*); *alğan* versus south-western *almış*;
- noun case suffixes are north-western, e.g. *qızını* 'girlACC', versus *kızı*; however, *kötünü* 'her buttocks3POSSACC', and not *kötün*;
- no noticeable Turkish influence of recent date, e.g. the word for 'to work' is *işle-* and not *çalış-*;
- the word for God, notwithstanding different religion, is normally *Alla*, borrowed from CTat., both in expressions, e.g. *Alla saqlasın* (NB) 'save God', and in religious context; some other religious terms related to religion are also common, e.g. *sünnet* 'circumcision' (SSh).

There were also differences in phonetic form and vocabulary of AB and NB. In general, the language of AB revealed more southern traits. For example, NB *kiçke* 'small' (cf. Nog. *kişkey* NOS 168), versus AB *küçük*. AB also used the southern term *oruç* 'fast' in *oruç tutamız* 'we fast', while SSh used the corre-

sponding C and N CTat *oraza tutamız*. On different kinship terms in the speech of AN and NB see 6. 1, below.

In conclusion, the analysis of the language of my two informants shows that the Crimean Karaim dialect they speak is very close to the territorially corresponding Crimean Tatar dialect, though not the same. Firstly, it is more resistant to the influx of Turkish vocabulary and phonetically more conservative. Secondly, this dialect is also resistant to some expansive features of northern Crimean Tatar. And lastly, it has preserved a few expressions, which, although of recent origin, are only rarely used in C CTat (e.g. *Alla razı olsun*, versus CTat *sav bol ~ sağ ol; aybetmeñiz*, versus CTat *bağışlañız* 'excuse me').

It must be stressed again that, unfortunately, we do not have any language material from other cities and regions, e.g. Feodosia, not to speak about Eski Qırım, Taş Yargan, Qarasuv Bazar, Yalta, and the newly inhabited Crimean cities like Sevastopol (CTat. Aqyar), Simferopol (CTat. Aq Mescit ~ Aqmeçit), Kerch and Armiansk.

#### 4. SOCIAL VARIETIES OF CRIMEAN KARAIM

Although Radloff (1896: xvi) said that the language of educated people differed from the language of common people everywhere, we do not have any direct evidence of this. However, we may deduct that office-holders in khan's service in the past, and later in Russian service (which demanded knowledge of Crimean Tatar, e.g. Simha Babovich, Semen Duvan), and Karaim intellectuals who cooperated with Crimean Tatars (e.g. Iliä Kazas), knew Crimean Tatar very well and their language could be influenced by literary Crimean Tatar. It must be noted that Crimean Karaims were familiar with Crimean Tatar, Turkish, as well as Arabic writing. On a number of documents in the Firkovich collection there are various notes written with Arabic letters, sometimes quite professional. In calculations, the Arabic numbers were used (in Arabic, not European form). On the other hand, Karaim men of God and educated people who maintained ties with western Karaims in Poland and the Karaim community in Turkey had a good command of Hebrew, as well as Western Karaim and Turkish, respectively. Some of them, e.g. Pigit, Lutzki, Abraham Firkovich, Shapshal, moved from country to country and contributed to the intellectual life of various communities.

Among the common people there were craftsmen and traders, who were in commercial contacts with representatives of other Crimean nationalities. They also had to know the official Crimean Tatar language, beside the local variant, which was probably close to their language used at home and within the Karaim community. Many Crimean Karaim family names reflect their crafts, e.g. Maqsı-



macı ‘producer and seller of *maqsıma* (kind of beverage)’, Qazas ‘silk manufacturer and seller’, Çapçakçı ‘cooper’.

Naturally, the fact that educated people knew the official Crimean Tatar language does not imply that they used it at home and in the community. Clearly, every one who is able to speak the higher, prestigious language will use it in contacts with outsiders, including Turkologists who visited them and made their observations. Even social varieties of language depend on their geographical setting. Aleksandra Bakkał told me that the Sevastopol branch of her family was deeply assimilated to the Russian language and culture, whereas her grandparents from Bakhchasarai did not speak Russian at all and cultivated national traditions.

## 5. WRITTEN AND ORAL LITERATURE

In this section, we shall examine Crimean Karaim literature<sup>15</sup> from the linguistic point of view. As already observed, Crimean Karaim literature existed in written and oral form and should be distinguished from colloquial Crimean Karaim in both linguistic structure and function. Written literature can be subdivided into religious and secular literature. It may be assumed that basic types of religious literature survived in both manuscripts and printed books. Religious literature included Bible translations (Jankowski 1997), prayer books (Sulimowicz 1972; 1973), sermons and orations (Poznański 1913: 41), and catechisms (Poznański 1918: 76). Printed secular literature included grammars, dictionaries, and textbooks for the study of Hebrew, as well as calendars and other occasional papers.

The Turkic language of these books has not yet been studied. Fortunately, we can have some insight into it from a paper by Harviainen (1997: 102–114). Harviainen published four sentences from an undated grammar published in Eupatoria by Abraham Firkovich.<sup>16</sup> Here I shall quote the second and the fourth sentences, converting them from the Hb. script to a standard Tur. writing with an additional diacritic for [ŋ] and maintaining Hb. diacritics for Hb. terms (in bold):

**Yod ħireqlen niqud**<lenmekten> gayrı **tenu**‘alarıñ birilen geldikte o yoddan evvel gelen **şewaniñ** okuması tebdil olur da **ħireqniñ** okumasına beñizer, mesela ... ‘if a shwa comes before a vocalized yod except for a hireq, the pronunciation of it changes to the pronunciation similar to a hireq, for example ...’ Kaldı ki **ħireqlen niqudlengen** yoddan evvel gelen **şewa** tebdil olmaz, adeti üzere okulır, mesela ...

<sup>15</sup> It must be noted that sharp distinction between Crimean Karaims and other Karaims who spoke Turkic languages is not well-grounded, especially in relation to the past, for Karaim communities in Eastern Europe maintained close ties.

<sup>16</sup> The title of this grammar is *Kelale ha-Diqduq bilšon Qedar ‘al Derek Še’elot u Tešubot*. It is listed in Poznański’s bibliography with a slightly different vocalization (Poznański 1913: 43).

However, while before a yod vocalized with a hireq, the shwa does not change and is pronounced as usually, for example ... (Harviainen 1997: 112, fn. 38).

As we can see, the language of this book is basically Turkish (*olur, olmaz, evvel, beñzer, gelen*) with an admixture of non-standard Tur. elements: *-len* instead of *-le*; *-gen* instead of *-en*, and *-ulır* instead of *-unur*. The first one may be attributed to dialect forms, since it occurs in various Oghuzic dialects, whereas *-gen* can be both Kipchak and Eastern Turkic, also used, however, in Ottoman Turkish. The suffix *-l* in *okulır* in the place of *-n* (*okunur*), can be again Kipchak.<sup>17</sup>

The first examples of secular Crimean Karaim literature in Cyrillic writing were probably published in 1911 in the journal *Karaimskaja Žizn'* in Petersburg. However, these years mark not the emergence, but the decline of the Crimean Karaim literature and language.

Many more documents of both religious and secular character are preserved in manuscripts. There were numerous Crimean Karaim translations of Bible chapters, and probably also prayers.<sup>18</sup> Secular literature is best known from the manuscripts called *mejumas*. As is well known, the first and the only *mejuma* was published by Radloff. However, Radloff's publication is not a critical edition of a *mejuma*, this is a text of a *mejuma* set in Hebrew printed characters after the narration of [J]. Erak, with addition of portions of other *mejumas* and poems of Erak. Furthermore, not the whole text of the basic *mejuma* was published (Radloff 1896: xvii). The contents of that part of *mejuma* which was published in Hebrew script were described and examined by Samojlovič (2000: 117–119). The titles of 15 sections of *mejuma* transcribed into Cyrillic letters were provided by Radloff in the table of contents in 1896.

Katyk's *mejuma* that I have recently examined<sup>19</sup> also contains pieces of literature, with little influence from the spoken language. The language of poems and

<sup>17</sup> As said above in section 1, I have studied a manuscript of this grammar in the Firkovich collection in St. Petersburg. The future analysis should demonstrate if it is identical with the printed version. The language of the manuscript is also predominantly Turkish, although it contains some Kipchak elements, cf. e.g. the first sentence: [1] *Belli beyandır bu bütün dünyadaki* [2] *her dilniñ direkleri dikilmiştir* 'as is well know, there have been set up pillars for all languages in this world'.

<sup>18</sup> I have also some documentation of oral religious literature. These are prayers recited by Mr. Tiryaki, the hazzan of Eupatoria, recorded during a service in the kenesa in 1999. The language of these prayers is very archaic, almost identical with WK, safe the Crimean pronunciation. I am not sure if it was taken from WK prayer books, and this is why I did not decide to include them in the present study.

<sup>19</sup> The manuscript is undated, probably from the beginning of the 20th century, written very untidily on pages of a notebook with many mistakes; the last or a few final pages are missing. On p. 1 there is an annotation in Russian with Cyrillic letters: *Mèdžuma Katyka SPB* 'Katyk's *mejuma*, S[t] P[eters]b[urg]'; it is unclear whether it was property of Aaron Katyk, the author of the play *Yaddes*, published in 1919 in Eupatoria. The pages have two pagina-

prose stories is southern Crimean Tatar, more exactly Turkish mixed with Tatar words, e.g. p. 113 *beyaznı mahtayır* 'he praises the white [colour]'. It is interesting that titles of some stories are written in central or even northern Crimean Karaim, while the language of the stories themselves is Turkish, e.g. *Aşık Garıpnıñ türküsü ve meselesi*<sup>20</sup> 'the song and the story of Ashik Garib' (pp. 25–97).

Among the manuscripts in the Firkovich collection there are documents which until now have not been mentioned in the scholarly literature. They include various administrative, juridical and financial notes, records and letters. One document from file 946 is a register of expenditures made for reconstruction or building works. The register, written in Turkish with a Hebrew semicursive typical of Crimean Karaim, records construction materials and payments made to workers on a weekly basis. Although the majority of case suffixes are Turkish, e.g. *dülger ustaya yedi gündelik* 'salary for seven-day-job for the carpenter', there are also Kipchak case suffixes, e.g. *Ahmedke* (אַחַמְדְּכֶּ) *bir gündelik* 'one daily salary for Ahmed'. Although Turkish, this language is heavily influenced by the local Crimean language, e.g. titles, *Abraham aqayğa* 'to/for Abraham [HONORIFIC]' and words used normally in the Crimea, *aqça* ~ 'money', *ruble* 'ruble', *ırğat* 'day labourer' etc.

The evaluation of the language of religious literature is a more complex task than that of secular literature, because religious literature is better evidenced and it spans a period of one hundred and fifty years at least.

In practice, only religious texts and the texts closely related to religion demonstrate Hebrew influence. The strongest influence is revealed in translations from Hebrew in which syntactic structures and word order are copied into Karaim. Hebrew lexical influence is not so extensive. In any case, the number of Arabic and Persian loanwords in Karaim translations from Hebrew surpasses the number of Hebrew borrowings. According to my calculations, only 38, i.e. 6.4 %, out of all 593 words listed in Sulimowicz's wordlist to the 1734 prayer is of Hebrew origin. In the samples of the Bible translation (Jankowski 1997), 33 Arabic, 31

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tions, the full one starts with number 1 and ends up with number 206. On p. 97, there is a kind of inner colophon, which contains the name of the copyist, Baruh Mangubi. The manuscript contains poems of *türkü* and *semahi* type, as well as stories, called *mesele*; on the last page there is one *tekerleme*.

20 The Ar. > Tur. word for the '(fairy) tale' is in KRPS hk *masal* (404), thk *mašal* (406), and *maasa* (400); the latter is cited from Radloff's dictionary, in which is provided as *ma'asa* (מעשׂה, vol. iv, 1985); the compilers of KRPS did not include another Karaim variant of this word from Radloff's dictionary: *mäsäli* (מַסְאֵלִי) = *mäsälä* (מעשׂלה, vol. iv, 2108); in Katyk's *majuma*, this word is written either מַסְאֵלִי (91) or מַסְאֵל (92), suggesting two readings: *masal* and probably *masale* or *mesele*.

Persian and only 9 Hebrew words have been found.<sup>21</sup> Whatever the figures, this Hebrew vocabulary in the language of Crimean Karaims is clearly a distinctive feature of Crimean Karaim. Examples of Hebrew loanwords, mostly religious terms encountered in prayer books, are the following:

*hehal* < Hb הֵיכָל here: ‘altar; ark’ (in KRPS attested only for h, 159, 166)  
*tešuva* < Hb תְּשׁוּבָה ‘repentance’ (in KRPS attested only for t, h, 522,  
 568); cf. CTat. *tevbe* ~ *tövbe*  
*tefila* < Hb תְּפִלָּה ‘prayer’ (KRPS k 568); cf. CTat *dua*.

My informants hardly used any Hebrew words in their speech. The only characteristic word was *erbi* ‘teacher (of religion)’ < Hb. *rabbi* (attested in all three Karaim dialects, KRPS 665). Another, quite obscure word was *purim* < Hb. *purim* ‘remission of sins’. It is not clear, if they used the latter word as a Russian loan, since it is not noted in KRPS and is normally rendered by Karaim *bošatlıq* (in various phonetic forms).

For Hebrew, Prof. Juri Polkanov uses the term *lešon qodeš* ‘Hebrew’; *lit.* ‘Sacred Language’ (absent in KRPS); cf. CTat. *ibraniy*.

A number of Hebrew loanwords in Crimean Karaim were included in KRPS from Shapshal’s list. Although Shapshal’s material is absolutely reliable, we do not know which entries were drawn from manuscripts and which from the spoken language.

## 6. FEATURES DISTINGUISHING CRIMEAN KARAIM FROM CRIMEAN TATAR

Distinctive features are to be found at most linguistic levels. Below, we shall point to only a few of them.

### 6.1. Names, surnames and kinship terms

In addition to the surnames demonstrated in section 4, above, we shall point to a few others, which, although of Turkic origin, were not used by Crimean Tatars. These names are quoted from the list of subscribers and donors of the 1841 edition of the Bible: *Babalı* (388), *Kögüş* (389), *Ponarlı* (? < *Pınarlı*, 387), *Saqal*, (387), *Yantıq-baş* (390). Some names of this kind were in fact used by Crimean Tatars, but as nicknames, whereas Karaims used them as official names. This list

<sup>21</sup> Among the words labelled as “of unknown or unclear origin”, Prof. Marcel Erdal (personal communication), established one Arabic and one Hebrew word more, thus the final figures are 34 for Arabic and 10 for Hebrew.

can be extended with names from other sources, e.g. *Külte* and *Kumuş* (*Kümüş*), (KRPS 675–676). Surnames derived from toponyms such as Kefe (Feodosia) and Mangub, e.g. *Kefeli*, *Mangubi* (KRPS 676–677) were not used by Crimean Tatars, either. Female names drawn from the grave inscriptions edited by Abraham Firkovich were the subject of Dubiński's study (1994). Among these names there are names of Turkic origins that are not used by Crimean Tatars any longer, e.g. Aqbike, Altınqız, Bikeçe, Biçe, Biyana, Bikelek, Biykeneş, Töteş (190–196) and others. Interesting is Murat as female, not male name.

Among the kinship terms related to me by Nina Bakkal, there are some specific items. For example, the word for 'son' is *ulan*, standard CTat *oğul*, which corresponds to the Kipchak *ulan* 'boy', as in Noghai (NOS 382), but in a number of languages it has also the meaning 'son' (ĖSTJa 1, 411); the word for 'uncle' is *aqa*, which in Crimean Tatar has a phonetic equivalent *ağa* 'elder brother', and in Noghai semantic equivalent *agay* 'uncle' (Üseinov 1994: 10; NOS 10); the word *aqay* in the dialect of NB has the same meaning as in central and northern Crimean Tatar, that is 'husband', similarly as *apay* was used in the designation of 'wife'. In contrast, AB used in these designations the words *qarı* and *qoca*, which are identical with southern Crimean Tatar. Another peculiarity of the dialect of NB is the word *tota* for 'aunt', which is normally used in Crimean Tatar dialects in the designation of 'older sister'.

## 6.2. Food terminology

Food terminology constitute a firm part of the vocabulary even of those peoples who changed their language for another. This is especially so if food names are related to distinctive religious feasts. Here are listed only those food names which are of Turkic origins, but unknown to Crimean Tatars: *ayaqlıq* (KRPS k 51; Aleksandra Bakkal: *ceviz ayaqlaq* and ~ *ayaqlaçıq*), *taqımçıq* (Lebedeva 1992: 16), *sarımçıq* (Lebedeva 1992: 164) 'kinds of pastry', as well as the famous, but debatable *hazar qatmagı* 'kind of halva' (Lebedeva 1992: 223–224), which are translated as 'Khazarian halva'. It is unclear whether it really recalls Khazar times or is a kind of popular etymology. Spinach in the name of a cooked meal is called *alahan* (Lebedeva 1992: 86). This word is absent from KRPS and Üseinov (1994), but listed in Radloff (1893: 357) in the form *alaxan* 'Sauerklee'. The Crimean Tatar equivalent is the European word (via Turkish) *ispanaq* 'spinach' (Üseinov 1994: 111).

### 6.3. Names of weekdays

KRPS gives the names of weekdays in all the three Karaim dialects. Aleksandra Bakkał remembered the following days: *yuhkün*, *yuhbaşkün*, *ortakün* and *şabbat-kün* ‘Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Saturday’, although she counted them from Monday, telling that *yuhkün* is Monday (evident influence of the modern European calendar in which a new week begins on Monday).

### 6.4. Old Crimean Karaim words absent from Crimean Tatar vocabulary

In KRPS, there are other words shared with Western Karaim and absent from Crimean Tatar. As the historical vocabulary of Crimean Tatar is insufficiently known, we do not know if these words were present in the past in this language and then replaced with new words, mostly of Turkish provenance. Here are a few examples only. CK *tavusul-* ‘to perish’ (KRPS thk 504), CK *tavuşlu* 1. ‘strong’, 2. ‘bold’ (KRPS k 544, in *h* and *t* *tavuşlu* and *tavuşlu*, respectively).

The Crimean Karaim word for ‘step’ is both the archaic *atlam* (KRPS thk 83), unknown in Crimean Tatar, and the modern *adım*. Beside *aqşam* ‘evening’ (KRPS k 59), as in modern Crimean Tatar, Crimean Karaim also possesses the old word *iñğır* (KRPS k 651), as WK *ingir*, *iñyir* etc. The Crimean Karaim word for ‘holy; sacred; saint’ is *ayruqsı* and *ayruksu*, as in WC (*t ajrïksi*, *h ajrïksi* etc., KRPS 54–55), although Prik provides the word *eziz* < Ar. ‘azîz, also listed in KRPS (655, although only in the meaning ‘dear’); however, the word *aziz* for ‘saint etc.’ is also known in the two Western Karaim dialects (KRPS 49).

There are some other, very interesting words, e.g. *tırqı* ‘table’, mentioned by both A. Polkanov (1995: 34) and Prik (1976: 161), absent from KRPS and unknown in Crimean Tatar.

### 6.5. Phonetic differences

There are a few phonological processes well known from some Turkic languages and attested in Crimean Karaim, but not evidenced in the extant dialect material of Crimean Tatar. These processes produce phonetic differences. One is *i* > *ü* before the labial *m*, e.g. *küm* ‘who’ (Jankowski 1997: 26–27), CTat. *kim*; AB *eküm* ‘doctor’ (in *çaqırırım ekümnü* ‘I shall call a doctor’), CTat. being *ekim*. The other is *a* > *e* before *j* (a feature shared with the Troki dialect of Western Karaim) and sometimes *ç*, e.g. AB *eyteler* < *aytalar* ‘they say’; *eciyim* < *acıyım* ‘I am sorry; I feel compassion’; *seç* < *saç* (KRPS k 500).

### 6.6. Different syntactic structures

Both Western Karaim and Crimean Karaim have SV as the basic word order in sentences with intransitive verb. However, in sentences with transitive verb, in contrast to Crimean Tatar which is a typical SOV language, spoken Crimean Karaim seems to have the main word order SVO, e.g. *Universitette oqudum lemse* 'I learned German at university' (AB); in many cases, an adverbial complement also comes after the verb, e.g. *Men de aşarım siz bilen* 'I shall eat with you, too' (AB). However, the SOV word order also occurs, e.g. *Men seni eciyim* 'I am sorry because of you' (AB).

Crimean Karaim seems to make little use of converbs and converbal clauses. Modal verbs are linked with the main verb in the infinitival forms *-mAyA* ~ *-mA*: ~ *-mA*, similarly to Western Karaim, e.g. *laırdı etmeye bolmay* '[she] cannot talk' (NB), cf. literary CTat. *laf etip olamay*, N CTat. *lap etalmay* (< *ete almay*); *kerek edi işleme* 'One had to work' (AB).

## 7. CONCLUSION

This paper does not satisfactorily reply to the most interesting questions, what was the spoken Crimean Karaim like and what differences were between the regional and social varieties of Crimean Karaim. It is because the documentation of spoken Crimean Karaim is very poor. Unfortunately, there is little chance to get any oral documentation more.

Nevertheless, an attempt was made to outline the existing studies and critically evaluate them. New evidence was also presented. Based upon existing material, it can be assumed that Crimean Karaims preserved their native language over the centuries, although Karaim, being very similar to the central dialect of Crimean Tatar gradually assimilated to it. Because none of these languages was strictly standardized, it would be illusory to look for a homogenous language and misleading to try to construct it. It is very likely that Karaims, similarly to Crimean Tatars, always used diversified language varieties. At the same time, the written language must have been better codified, yet its standard also changed over time. This is what concerns Karaim proper. On the other hand, Karaims must have always been open to speak the language of their rulers, the Crimean khans. They probably used a different language in contacts with external world, and a different language at home and within their own community. It is like their dual names, something well-known in minority language strategies. Their distinct native language must have existed as long as other distinctive features of their culture exist-

ed. However, in the period of 18th–19th centuries while Crimean Karaim was rapidly assimilating to Crimean Tatar, the linguistic situation changed more to diglossia than bilingualism.

Much better perspectives are in relation to written language, for archival documents, old printed books<sup>22</sup> and manuscripts are preserved and await further research. Both religious and secular written literature of Crimean Karaims deserve to be discovered and studied. The examination of the extant archival documents of non-literary value such as administrative, economic, financial, juridical and epistolary works may also shed light on the colloquial, spoken Crimean Karaim as used in the past.

### Abbreviations

AB	=	Aleksandra Bakkal
Ar	=	Arabic
C	=	Central dialect
CK	=	Crimean Karaim
CTat	=	Crimean Tatar
h	=	Halicz dialect of WK in KRPS
Hb	=	Hebrew
k	=	Crimean Karaim in KRPS
N	=	Northern dialect
NB	=	Nina Bakkal
Per	=	Persian
S	=	Southern dialect
SSh	=	Sergey Shamash
t	=	Troki dialect of WK in KRPS
WK	=	Western Karaim

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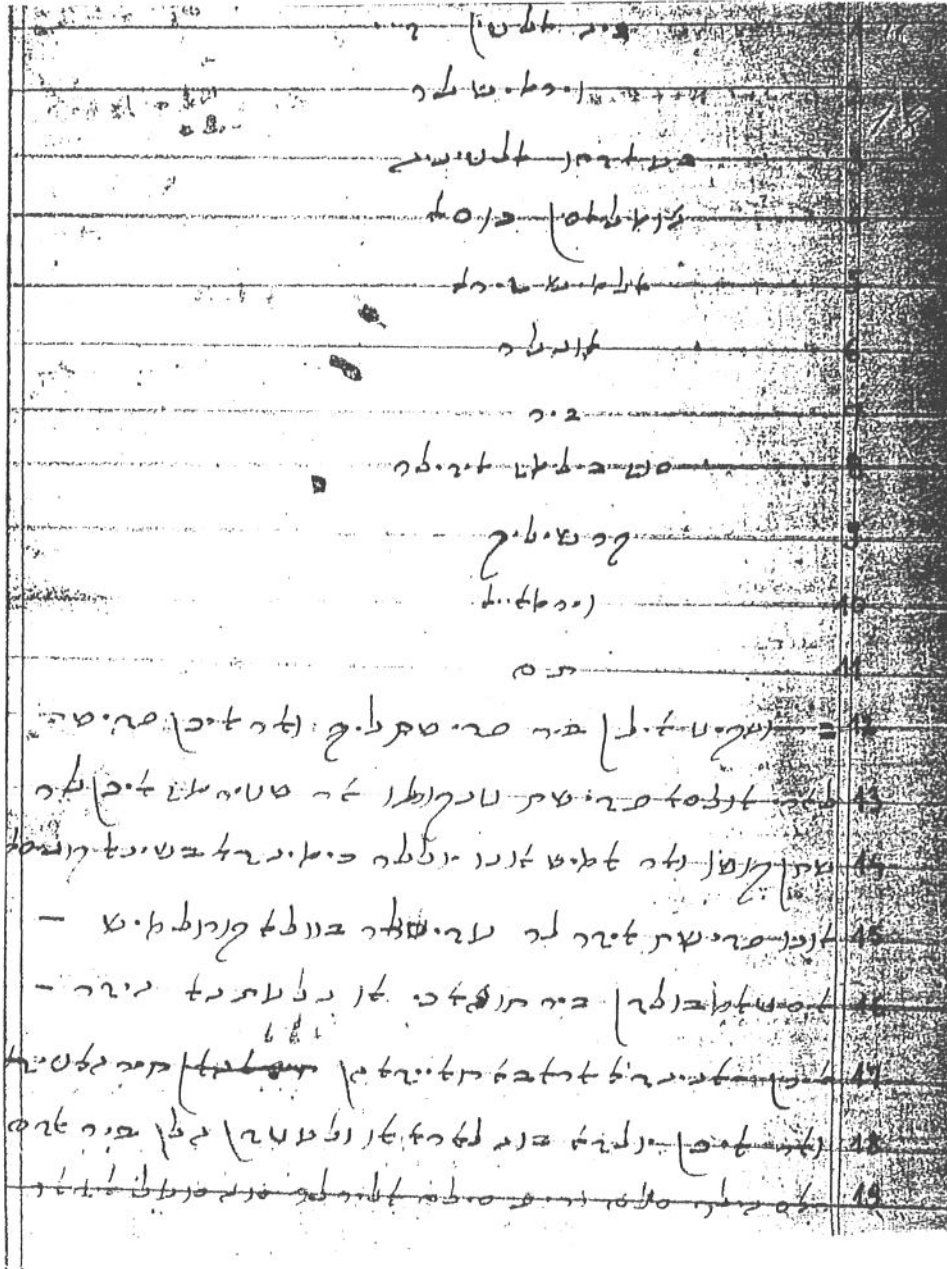
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<sup>22</sup> At this point, it is worth mentioning that the first Karaim printing house in the Crimea started its activities in 1731, that is about one hundred and fifty years before Ismail Gasprinski founded the first Tatar printing house in Bakhcharai in 1883.



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SAMPLES OF KATYK'S MAJUMA<sup>23</sup>



<sup>23</sup> A detailed graphological and linguistic analysis of these samples is not a subject of this paper. The samples are just to give the Reader an idea of Crimean Karaim handwriting.

פסוק

אן רש קינאס קלקטיילד נטעל נטעל ווא פ שטענדיג  
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 קעלענדיג וואס פון שטיינדיג זאלען זענען זענען  
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 קעלענדיג וואס פון שטיינדיג זאלען זענען זענען  
 קעלענדיג וואס פון שטיינדיג זאלען זענען זענען

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15	בן סאלע נא געשיק קרייב	אן אים ניקרד בוכטען און
16	היילע "בני אוקוויילע	זענען זענען "בני אוקוויילע
17	טאט זענען קעלענדיג	זענען זענען אוקוויילע
18	זענען זענען זענען	זענען זענען זענען
19	זענען זענען זענען	זענען זענען זענען
20	זענען זענען זענען	זענען זענען זענען
21	זענען זענען זענען	זענען זענען זענען

## TRANSCRIPTION

[18]

[1] Bir altın, deyi,<sup>24</sup>

[2] vermişler.

[3] Bahadağ<sup>25</sup> altınıñ

[4] cümlesin köse

[5] almış. Zira<sup>26</sup>

[6] onlar

[7] bir

[8] söz bilmez idiler

[9] karşılık

[10] vermeye

[11] t m.<sup>27</sup>

[12] Bir vakit ilen bir padişahlık var eken. Padişah- [13] ları ölse, padişah < ><sup>28</sup> araştırmaz ekenler. [14] Şahin kuşu var imiş. Onu yollar: kimiñ de başına konsa, [15] onu padişah ederler. Adiseler<sup>29</sup> böyle kurulmuş.<sup>30</sup> [16] İstanbul'dan<sup>31</sup> bir hoca ki vilâyetine<sup>32</sup> gider [17] eken yanında araba haydağan hurgatı<sup>33</sup> da [18] var eken. Yolda bunlara o vilayetden gelen bir adam [19] rasgelir. Selâm verip salâm alırlar. Soñ sual eder

[97]

[Colophon]

[14] Bu masalğa 'Aşık Garib [15] derler. Bunu okuyanlar [16] tamaşada<sup>34</sup> kalırlar. [17] Ve bunu yazanğa [18] Baruh Mangubî [19] derler. [20] t m.

24 Reading uncertain; probably Tur. *deyi*, more frequent forms being *diye* 'saying', a converb which comes after direct speech; another possible reading is *deyivermişler* 'they said'.

25 b' dħw.

26 I thank Mr. Keijo Hopeavuori for suggesting me this reading.

27 The abbreviation of the Ar. formula *tammāt tamām*, placed at the end of a manuscript or a chapter of it; written with *taw*, which was used in Ar. and Hb. words only.

28 tnqwmw; reading uncertain.

29 Tur. *hadise* < Ar. *ḥādīṭa*.

30 Standard Tur. *kurulmuş*.

31 'ystmbwldn.

32 'w gl'tg'.

33 ḥ'ydyd'gn {ḥyyd'g'n} ḥyrg'ty.

34 tm's'n'.

**TEXT IN HEBREW LETTERS**

[18]

[1] ביר אלטיק דיי

[2] וירמישער

[3] בעאדחו אלטיניג

[4] גומלאסין כוסא

[5] אלמיש זירא

[6] אונלר

[7] ביר

[8] סוז בילמאז אידילר

[9] קרשיליק

[10] וירמאייא

[11] ת ם

[12] ביר ועקיט אילן ביר פדישחליק ואר איכן פדישה [13] לארי אולסא פדישח  
טנקומו אר שטירמז איכןלר [14] שחן קושו ואר אמיש אונז יוללר כימיג דא בשינא  
קונסא [15] אונז פדישח אידר לר עדישער בוולא קורולמיש – [16] איסטאמבולדן ביר  
חוגאכי או גלעתגא גידר – [17] איכן יאנינדא אראבא חאיידאגן { חירגאטי דא [18]  
ואר איכן יולדא בונלארא או ולעטדן גלן ביר אדם [19] ראס גילר סלם וריפ סילם  
אלירלר סוג סועל אידאר

[97]

[15] בו מסאלגא עשיק קריב – [16] דירלר. בוני אוקויאנלר [17] טמאשא נא  
קאלירלר. [18] ואבונז יזאן גא [19] ברוח מנגובי [20] דירלר [21] ת ם

## ENGLISH TRANSLATION

[18]

[1] He said, 'One gold[en coin],' [2] and they gave. [3–5] The beardless man took all the gold[en coins] of the price. It is because [6–8] they did not know what to respond. [10] The end.

[12] Once upon a time there was a kingdom. When their king [13] died, they did not look for <a new> king. [14] He had a falcon. He released it. Upon whose head it would perch, [15] this one will be made king. The things have been arranged like this. [16] A learned man set off on a journey from Istanbul [17] along with his servant who led the cart, heading for his country. [18–19] A man from this country met them while they were underway. They greeted him and he returned the greeting. Then he asked [...].

[97]

[15–16] This tale is called 'Ashik Garib. Those who read it, [17] will enjoy. [18–20] The name of the writer [copyist] is Barukh Mangubi. [21] The end.



*Fig. 1. Aleksandra Bakkal (Moscow 2000)*



*Fig. 2. Nina Bakkal (Topçıköy 2000)*