

Michał NÉMETH (Kraków)

### SOME DISPUTABLE SLAVIC ETYMOLOGIES IN CRIMEAN-KARAIM\*

1. In each dialect spoken by the Karaims, a good many Slavic loanwords are to be found as a result of the considerable Slavic influence. The strongest and most lasting Slavic impact was exerted on the Western branch of the Karaim language, spoken in Troki and Halicz.<sup>1</sup> This influence was also exerted on Crimean-Karaim, but not to such an extent. Here, the occurrence of Slavic loanwords is less frequent than in the other dialects. Let us merely mention that after the conquest of the Crimea by the Turks in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottomans directly influenced the languages of all the Kipchak tribes of the peninsula, thus changing the linguistic appearance of the area.

Our main source of information has been the Karaim-Russian-Polish dictionary (Baskakov). Turning to it for Slavic loanwords, one can divide them into three groups: loanwords from Polish, from Russian, and from Slavic languages in general; however, as the Slavic forms are very similar to one another, it is not always possible to say exactly from which language a given word was borrowed.

The dictionary edited by Baskakov, Šapšal and Zajączkowski recovered the lack of a Karaim dictionary that would include the vocabulary of all three dialects.<sup>2</sup> Since the aim of the authors was not to produce an etymological dictionary, in some entries, as regards Slavic loanwords, the references to the origin of a word seem questionable for, mostly, phonetic and historical reasons.

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<sup>1</sup> These are the places where the language is still used today: Lithuanian *Trakai*, and Ukrainian *Halyč*. In the paper we are going to use the Polish names for them, namely: *Troki* and *Halicz*.

<sup>2</sup> Dictionaries compiled before were only concerned with one dialect each, and included just a small part of the Karaim vocabulary: Kowalski 1929; Mardkowicz 1935.

2. First, let us discuss the problem of words which are mentioned in the dictionary as Polish borrowings in the Crimean-Karaim language, namely *aso* ‘ace’, *balsam* ‘balsam, balm’, *vali* ‘but’ and *iskarlat* ‘scarlet’. Their etymologies should first of all be dealt with in regard to the lack of mutual contacts between the Polish language and the Crimean linguistic world.

2.1. The origin of Crimean-Karaim *aso* ‘ace’ (Baskakov 81) is an extraordinary case. The word is used only in the Crimean dialect of Karaim, and there side by side with *birli* ‘ace’ (Baskakov 121). In spite of the fact that in the Polish dialects spoken in Silesia the word form *aso*<sup>3</sup> does exist (with the same meaning), we can appropriately disregard it for geographical reasons. Since the widely spread phenomenon among the Turkic languages, according to which *o* in native words appears only in the first syllable, also concerns the Karaim vocabulary, the final *-o* cannot have been added on Karaim soil.<sup>4</sup> In Russian and Ukrainian we have *tuz*, which means that the Karaim word could not have been taken from the East-Slavic languages. Turkish in Anatolia has the word *as* – but again without the final *-o*.

The only language which has *aso*, except for the mentioned Polish dialects, is Bulgarian.<sup>5</sup> According to the Bulgarian etymological dictionary, Bulg. *aso* came through Gr. *ἄσος* ~ *ἄσσος* from Ital. *asso*. Thus, the idea that KarK. *aso* derived from Ital. *asso*,<sup>6</sup> or Gr. *ἄσος* ~ *ἄσσος* (more likely the former) must not be entirely dismissed, because the Italians could have brought the word to the Crimea during their mercantile contacts.<sup>7</sup>

2.2. The word *balsam* ‘balsam, balm’ (Baskakov 101), too, is used only in the Crimean-Karaim dialect.<sup>8</sup> Today in Russian we have *balʹzam* – with a voiced consonant, characteristic also of the dialects, where we find the following forms: *balʹžjan*, *balʹzan*, *balʹzjam* (Filin 1966: 89). Since the Karaim language

<sup>3</sup> Pol. *as* > Pol. dial. *aso*, changed its grammatical gender from masculine into neuter (Reichan 174).

<sup>4</sup> See: Dubiński 177.

<sup>5</sup> Also: *as*, *asak* (Georgiev 17).

<sup>6</sup> Ital. *asso* < Lat. *ās* ‘Roman monetary unit’ (de Felice 333).

<sup>7</sup> From the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century until the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see: Quirini-Popławska 81-89.

<sup>8</sup> Also: KarK. *mehlem* (Baskakov 416) ‘balsam, medicine’ (= Baskakov 403: KarH. *malham*, KarT. *malhem* ‘ointment’, Baskakov 415: KarK. *melhem* id. < ar. مرهم *marham* (Lane 1172) / pers. مرهم *marham* (Eilers 228) ‘ointment’), KarK. *otjam* (Baskakov 434) ‘balsam’ (<? Tk. *ot* + *jäm*, cf. Uyg., Čag., Ott. etc. *ot* ‘plant, grass, medicinal herb’, Trkm., Yak. *ot* ‘grass’, Čuv. *utâ*, *vutâ* ‘hay’, Uyg., Čag. etc. *äm*, *im*, *jäm* ‘medicine, quackery’, Koib., Kmk. etc. *em* ‘a kind of medicine’, KazT. *im* ‘medicine, all sorts of medicines’). The last one is also used in Troki and Halicz.

usually keeps the voiced and voiceless consonants in loanwords unchanged,<sup>9</sup> the Karaim word for balsam cannot have been taken from Russ. *balzám*, as it sounds today. On the other hand, if one turns to Barchudarov, Sorokin and Meľnyčuk, one can find words used in Old and Great Russian attested with a voiceless spirant, namely: Barchudarov 68-69: *balsam*, *valsam* (16<sup>th</sup> cent.); Meľnyčuk 130: *balsam*" (17<sup>th</sup> cent.); Sorokin 134-135: *balsam*, *baľsam* (18<sup>th</sup> cent.).

Apart from the East-Slavic words, KarK. *balsam* could also be explained by Turkish *balsam*. Taking into consideration that the Ottoman influence, until the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, had the preponderance over the Russian impact on the Crimea, the Turkish origin of the word seems more probable. Thus: KarK. *balsam* < Ott. *balsam* < Gr. *βάλσαμον* ‘balsam’ (Frisk 217) < Hebr. *bāšām* = Ar. *bašām* ‘balm tree’, but we should remember that the Russian origin of the word is also possible: KarK. *balsam* < GrRuss. *balsam* < ORuss. *balsam* (Černych 69-70) < Gr. *βάλσαμον* < Hebr. *bāšām* = Ar. *bašām*.

2.3. Tadeusz Kowalski was the first to point out the possible Arabic-Persian origin of KarT. *vali* ‘but, however’ (Baskakov 155), noting also that its Polish origin is doubtful.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, Baskakov’s dictionary takes account only of the Polish etymology omitting the possible Arabic-Persian one. That is why we would like to concentrate on the latter.

The Crimean-Karaim conjunction, which occurs also in Halicz and Troki as *vale*, is most likely an inheritance from Pers. *ولی vali* ‘but, yet, however’.<sup>11</sup> The word in Persian was taken from Ar. *لاكن lākin* id., where the conjunction is very often used with *و wa* ‘and’ in front of it (i.e. *والاكن walākin*).<sup>12</sup> Pers. *vali* seems to be a short form for *valākin* or *valikan*, and could have been borrowed into Karaim as a result of the strong Persian<sup>13</sup> influence in the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>14</sup> The forms with final *-e* in Troki and Halicz-Karaim are to be explained by the contamination with Pol. *ale* ‘but’, and Ukr. *ale* id.<sup>15</sup> The existence

<sup>9</sup> Cf.: KarT. *cenzor* < Slav. *cenzor* ‘censor’ (Baskakov 613), KarH. *ksionze* < Pol. *książę* (Baskakov 342) ‘duke’, KarT. *ksonška* < Pol. *książka* [-ška] ‘book’ (Baskakov 342), KarT. *podvonska* < Pol. *podwiązka* [-ska] ‘garter’ (Baskakov 448) etc.

<sup>10</sup> See: Kowalski 1929: 279: “? pol. *ale*, ar.-p. *والى walī*”.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. also Eilers 7: “*والى valikan*, *لاكن lāken*, *ليكن līkan*”, and Steingass 1481: “*والى wa-lek*, *ليكن wa-lekin*”, Steingass 1135: “*ليكة leka*”. All the words have the same meaning.

<sup>12</sup> See: Wehr 1137. Let us just mention that, with the same meaning, this variant of the conjunction was also taken into Karaim as: *lakin* (Baskakov 398), *ljakin* (Baskakov 400), but was used only in the Crimea.

<sup>13</sup> Also Arabic, with the dominance of Persian elements.

<sup>14</sup> Let us merely mention that other Persian conjunctions were also borrowed into Karaim in this period, e.g. *eger* ‘if’ (Baskakov 653), *ki* ‘because, in order to’ (Baskakov 316).

<sup>15</sup> The source of the Karaim conjunction should not be sought in Polish *ale*, not only in view of its occurrence in all of the three dialects of the Karaim language but also because, in Polish dialects, the form for ‘but’ with an initial *v-* does not appear.

of etymologically identical forms of this word in both East and West-Karaim languages corroborates the theory of its Persian origin since such a situation is typical of an early impact in the history of the Karaims, before their language split into different dialects.<sup>16</sup> Summarising what has been said above, the following scheme may be presented: Ar. *walākin* > Pers. *valikan* > Pers. *vali* > KarK. *vali* (↔ Pol., Ukr. *ale* > KarH. *vale*, KarT. *vale*).

**2.4.** The word for ‘scarlet’ sounds *szkarlat* in Polish. Since in Karaim the opposition of *š* and *s* in Slavic loanwords is always preserved,<sup>17</sup> and because of the geographical distance, KarK. *iskarlat* (Baskakov 207) could not possibly have been taken from Polish. On the other hand, in Russian we have *skarlat*, *skarlat* (Vasmer 633-634), and also Anatolian Turkish has *iskarlat*, *iskarlat*. It would therefore seem appropriate to regard the Karaim word as a Russian or Turkish loanword. As we also know that both the Turkish and Russian words are borrowed from Ital. *scarlatto*, we can make the following scheme: Pers. *saqalāt* (Steingass 687) = Ar. *siqlāt*, *siqillāt* (Lokotsch 142, TESz 553) ‘scarlet cloth’ > Gr. *σιγιλᾶτος* (TESz 553) > MLat. *sigillatum* > *scarlatum* ‘scarlet’ > Ital. *scarlatto* > Ott. *iskarlat* / Russ. *skarlat* > KarK. *iskarlat*.<sup>18</sup>

**3.** Let us now discuss these Crimean-Karaim words whose Russian origin may be doubtful, namely *ütü* ‘iron’ and *eskemle* ‘bench’.

**3.1.** As regards KarK. *ütü* ‘iron’, the same word occurs in Karaim used in Troki: *ütü*, and Halicz: *iti*. Its Russian provenance suggested in Baskakov 592 seems questionable for the following reasons: in Slavic loanwords the final stops have consistently been preserved, so if it were a Russian borrowing, we would expect Russ. *utjug* (< Tkc. *ütüg* id.) to yield Kar. *\*utüg* ~ *\*utuk*.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, there is no reason for Russ. *u* > KarH. *i*, and on the other hand we know that Tkc. *ü* corresponds regularly to KarH. *i*. The occurrence of the word in all three dialects also shows that it belongs to the oldest layer of the vocabulary.

<sup>16</sup> In the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century; see: Abrahamowicz 3-5.

<sup>17</sup> Cf.: KarK. *baraš* < Russ. *barašek* ‘sheep’ (Baskakov 102), KarT. *šklenka* < Pol. *szklanka* ‘glass’ (Baskakov 647), KarH. *šlahita* < Pol. *szlachta* ‘nobility’ (Baskakov 647), KarT. *šnur* < Pol. *sznur* ‘rope’ (Baskakov 647), KarT. *ščodry* ‘generous, wealthy’ < Pol. *szczodry* ‘generous’ (Baskakov 648) etc.

<sup>18</sup> Originally, the word had the meaning of a colouring matter extracted from *Purpura*, later it started to mean a special kind of cloth which was stained with this dye. Finally, it began to be used in the meaning ‘bright red colour, scarlet’.

<sup>19</sup> Cf.: KarT. *posag* < Pol. *posag* ‘dower’ (Baskakov 448), KarT. *burak* < Pol. *burak* ‘beetroot’ (Baskakov 141), KarT. *krupnik* < Pol. *krupnik* ‘barley soup’ (Baskakov 341), KarH. *kubok* < Russ. *kubok* ‘cup’ (Baskakov 342) etc. Voiced final stops in Russian and Polish are always pronounced as voiceless.

Considering that the root *üt-* ‘to burn, scorch’ figures in a whole range of Turkic languages,<sup>20</sup> the word seems to be native in Karaim.

3.2. KarK. *eskemle* ‘bench’ (Baskakov 669) seems to be of Turkish origin, and to derive from Ott. *iskemle* ‘chair’. The word *iskemle* (Baskakov 207) is also used in Crimean-Karaim with the meaning of ‘chair’. It is known that Russ. *skañja* comes from Gr. *σκάμνον*, just like the Turkish variant (Stachowski 277-278). It would be rather astonishing if Russ. *-ñja* had yielded KarK. *-mle*. Therefore, the most obvious explanation appears to be that KarK. *eskemle* < Ott. *iskemle* < Gr. *σκάμνον* > Russ. *skañja*.

4. Finally, let us focus on these words whose Slavic origin seems questionable: KarK. *majys* ‘May’, *tapta-* ‘to trample, tread’ and *fyšne* ‘cherry’.

4.1. The presence of *majys* for ‘May’ (Baskakov 402; Levi 48) in Crimean-Karaim is rather astonishing inasmuch as the Karaim dialects have their own names for months of Hebrew origin.<sup>21</sup> As in Russian we have *maj*, without *-ys*, the most obvious explanation is that *majys* was taken over into Karaim from Ott. *mayıs* (< Gr. *Μάης* < Lat. *Maius*; Stephano 509). *Majys* is the only Karaim name of month of Ottoman origin. Surely it was used in addition to the traditional names of months, which is due to the lasting Ottoman influence in the Crimea.

4.2. The KarK. verb *tapta-* ‘to trample, tread’ (Baskakov 513) is also used in Halicz and Troki, which shows that the word had been used in Karaim before this language split into dialects. As a matter of fact the onomatopoeic root *tap-*, *tep-* meaning ‘to tread on / upon, to trample, to kick’ is used all among the Turkic languages,<sup>22</sup> so probably the Karaim word belongs to the Turkic onomatopoeic group of words. A similar group of onomatopoeic words can also be found in the Uralic languages.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Tksh., Az., Kmk., Usb. dial., Kirg., Kzk., Kmnd., Čag. *üt-*, Tat., Bšk. *üt-*, Čuv. *vēt-*, Kzk., Kklp. *üjt-*, Krč.-Blk. *üjüt-* etc. (ÉSTJa 640); Az. *ütü* ‘iron’, Balk. *itü*, *itüü* id., Bšk. *ütek* id., Kirg. *ütik* id., Ott. *ötü*, *ütü* id. etc.; cf. also NPers. *اوتو* *otu* etc. ‘iron’ < Tkc. (Az.) *ütü* id. (Doerfer 9-10); Trkm. *üti* ‘iron’ (Räsänen 524).

<sup>21</sup> See: Baskakov 681-682, Kowalski 1930: 4-15: *Ijar* (= April-May), *Sivan* (= May-June). The months have also their names of Turkic origin, namely *Kural-aj* for *Ijar* and *Başkuskan-aj* for *Sivan*.

<sup>22</sup> Uyg. *täp-* ‘to step, tread’, Čag. *täp-* ‘to kick, to push with leg’, Kirg., Kzk. *tep-* ‘to trample down’, Čuv. *tap-* ‘to tread’, KazT. *tip-* id., Koib. *teb-* id., Tof. *tef-* id., Tuv. *tev-* id., Yak. *täp-*, *täb-* id. etc. (Räsänen 474); SOgh. *tup* ‘a’ ‘? kick’ (Doerfer/Hesche 189); Tksh. *tep-* ‘to tread on / upon, trample’, Tksh. *tupış* *tupış* (*gelmek*) ‘to patter, come with pattering steps’. In Crimean-Karaim also: *taptar et-* (Baskakov 513).

<sup>23</sup> Finn. *taputta-* ‘to knock, clap’ (Rédei 509); Hung. *tapos* ‘to tread on’, Hung. *topog* ‘to patter, stamp’, Hung. *toporzékol* ‘to be stamping one’s feet, to prance’, Hung. *toppant* ‘to stamp’, Zyr. *topjödny* ‘to patter’, Zyr. *tapedni* ‘to run with small steps, patter’, Voty. *tapirt-* ‘to stamp’, JurSam. *tappariš* ‘to step, kick’ etc. (TESz 846).

4.3. KarK. *fyšne* ‘cherry’ (Baskakov 595) is most likely of Turkish origin since we have Ott. *višne* with the final *-e*. On the other hand, KarT. *višnja* can be explained only through Slavic languages (Pol. *wiśnia*, Russ. *višnja*). In Halicz-Karaim this word is not used. Thus, we can say that the word for ‘cherry’ entered Karaim through two channels: KarK. *fyšne* < Ott. *višne* < Bulg. *višnja* = Pol. *wiśnia*, Russ. *višnja* > KarT. *višnja*.

Michał Németh  
 Uniwersytet Jagielloński  
 Instytut Filologii Orientalnej  
 Zakład Turkologii  
 al. Mickiewicza 9/11  
 PL – 31-120 Kraków

#### A b b r e v i a t i o n s

**Ar.** = Arabic, **Az.** = Azerbaijani, **Balk.** = Balkar, **Bšk.** = Bashkir, **Bulg.** = Bulgarian, **Čag.** = Chaghatay, **Čuv.** = Chuvash, **Gr.** = Greek, **GrRuss.** = Great Russian, **Hebr.** = Hebrew, **Hung.** = Hungarian, **Ital.** = Italian, **JurSam.** = Yurak-Samojed, **Kar.** = Karaim, **KarH.** = Halicz-Karaim, **KarK.** = Crimean-Karaim, **KarT.** = Troki-Karaim, **KazT.** = Kazan-Tatar, **Kirg.** = Kirghiz, **Kklp.** = Karakalpak, **Kmk.** = Kumük, **Kmnd.** = Kumandin, **Koib.** = Koibal, **Krč.-Blk.** = Karachay-Balkar, **Kzk.** = Kazakh, **Lat.** = Latin, **MLat.** = Middle Latin, **NPers.** = New Persian, **ORuss.** = Old Russian, **Ott.** = Ottoman, **Pers.** = Persian, **Pol.** = Polish, **Pol. dial.** = dialectal Polish, **Russ.** = Russian, **Slav.** = Slavic, **SOgh.** = South-Oghuz, **Tat.** = Tatar, **Tkc.** = Turkic, **Tksh.** = Turkish, **Tof.** = Tofalar, **Trkm.** = Turkmen, **Tuv.** = Tuvinian, **Ukr.** = Ukrainian, **Usb. dial.** = dialectal Uzbek, **Uyg.** = Uygur, **Voty.** = Votyak, **Yak.** = Yakut, **Zyr.** = Zyryan

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