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KITAB, COSSACKS, AND LINGUISTIC ECUMENISM
IN EARLY MODERN LITHUANIA AND POLAND

1. Introduction

(a) The Historical Setting

Time frame of ethno-linguistic and cultural tolerance:

Late 14th c. (Muslim Tatars founded first communities in Lithuania)

1569 (the emergence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (PLC) as a constitutional union of Lithuania and Poland)

1648–58 (the Cossack Uprisings)

(b) The Ethnic and Demographic Setting

Autochthonous Players: Poles
Lithuanians
Ruthenians (Ukrainians, Belarusians)
Latvians

Smaller ('colonial') Players: Germans, Jews, Tatars, Karaites, Armenians, u.a.

Queries:

- What is the nature of the ethno-linguistic and cultural relationships in the PLC?
- What brought down this state by the end of the 'Era of Tolerance'?
- How did the 'mechanisms' of tolerance work?
- Code-switching
- Script-switching
- Bilingualism vs. diglossia
- Ecumenical debates

2. Classification of Languages?

- autochthonous languages/peoples: Slavic (Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian) and Baltic (Old Prussian, Latvian, Lithuanian);
- colonial languages: German, Yiddish, Romani, Tatar, Karaite, Armenian;
- liturgical languages: Latin (Catholics), Church Slavonic (Orthodox, Uniates), Hebrew (Ashkenazic Jews, Karaites), Arabic (Lithuanian Tatars), Old Armenian (Armenians);
- secular [small] languages: Polish, Ruthenian, Lithuanian vs. Czech, French, Italian, and Greek

Reczek (1989)

Bednarczuk (1993, 1997)

‘linguistic community’ (‘wspólnota komunikatywna’) in reference to communal languages or ethnolects (‘etnolekty’) traditionally singled out for this linguistic area

Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian ethno-linguistic and cultural area

3. Before 1569: A Tandem of Major Players?

Following the Tatar invasion of Rus’ in the 13th c. and Lithuania’s subsequent annexation of Russian lands, the enlarged GDL became a multiethnic entity

The *rusьkij jazyk* played a unifying role between the pagan Lithuanian realm at the core and the Christian Slavic component:

Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Polish settlers

only 10% of the GDL was populated by ethnic Lithuanians

Lithuanin-Ruthenian or Ruthenian-Lithuanian polity (Plochy 2006, 87, Danylenko 2011)

3.1. Ruthenian-Lithuanian Bilingualism?

(a) Ruthenian as a written language vs. Lithuanian as a spoken one

The Lithuanian *Statutes* of 1529, 1566, and 1588, as well as various legal entries were written in Ruthenian

Slavic suffix *-ovič*, *-evič*:

Narbutovič or *Rimgailovič* (Lith. *Norbutaitis* and *Rimgalaitis*) in the parish books of St. John Cathedral in Vilnius under the years 1602–16

Pol. *Mickiewicz*, *Sienkiewicz*, *Kuryłowicz* from Ruthenian (Belarusian) or from Lithuanian in Belarusianized forms (Safarewicz 1982, Shevelov 1968)

Was it a case of language (code)-switching?

(b) The influence of Lithuanian on the *rusьkij jazyk* within the GDL was conceivably minimal (Stang 1935: 146–47)

In Middle Belarusian Žuraŭski (1970: 146–50) counted only forty reliable Lithuanian borrowings

In Middle Polish Urbutis (1969), and Dini (1997: 282) found up to 300-450 Lithuanianisms

(c) A multi-layered system of Slavic loanwords, comprising East Slavic proper, Polish or loanwords mediated by Polish.

Almost three quarters of old borrowings are likely to be of either Belarusian or Polish provenance (Dini 1997). By the 20th c., however, of about 3,000 Slavicisms, chosen by Skardžius (1931), only 10% appear in standard modern Lithuanian, about 35% are found in various dialects; all the remaining loanwords, 55%, are now unknown or very rarely encountered (Zinkevičius 1998: 245).

3.2. Church-Slavonic–Ruthenian parallelism

“Foolish Rus”: Church Slavonic was losing its intelligibility

Two solutions to this problem:

- (i) at the initial stage, Church Slavonic texts were printed/copied in parallel with their Ruthenian versions
- (ii) Church Slavonic originals, save perhaps for the Old Testament, tended to be subsequently translated and printed in the *prostaja mova*

Church Slavonic	Ruthenian
Милосерѣдовавъ же господь раба того, пустьи: е̄ го, ѹдолъгъ, w(т)путьи е̄ му	И ѹмилосерѣдильсе пань челаѣтникъ того, путьиль е̄ го. ѹ долъгъ, w(т)путьиль е̄ му
Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt (Mt 18:27)	

Was is it bilingualism?

4. After 1569: A Clinch of Major Players?

The *rusьkij jazykъ* loses its privileged status as guaranteed in the 2nd Lithuanian Statute of 1566 because of:

- (a) influx of Polish gentry
- (b) Polonization of the local nobility

Ruthenian becomes a Polish language written in Cyrillic

4.1. Polish–Ruthenian parallelism:

- (a) *Kazanie svjatoho Kirilla Patriarъxi ierusalimъskoho* [...] / *Kazanie ś. Cyrylla Patryarchy Ierozolimskiego* [...] (1596) by Stefan Zyzanij (Karataev 1883, 265-68),
- (b) the Volhynian Arian Valentyn Nehalevs’kyj’s [Niegaliewski] Ruthenian translation of the 1581 Polish Gospel, which the Calvinist Marcin Czechowić had published in Cracow in 1577 (Nazarevskij 1911, 23)

Czechowić’s original	Nehalevs’kyj’s “transliteration”

Ponieważ wiele ich za to się brało, żeby porządna wydali powieść o sprawach tych o których vnas żadney wątpliwości nie masz	Понева(ж) много ихъ за тоє сѧ брало, жебы порѧдную выдали пове(ст) в справахъ тыхъ в которыхъ у на(с) жа(д)ное небезпечности не машь
Many of them took this upon to be capable of authoring a solid narrative about which you do not have any doubt	

Script-switching?

4.2. Lithuanian Tatars

Muslim Tatars founded communities in the GDL in the early 14th c.

Arabic script with extra Turkish and Persian characters used to render a local Slavic language – which one?

Arabic		Latin symbol	Slavic
name	grapheme		sound pattern
<i>tā'</i>	ت	<i>t</i>	sharp voiceless dental stop: /t'/
<i>ūā'</i>	ط	<i>ū</i>	voiceless dental stop: /t/
<i>âā'</i>	ح	<i>â</i>	fricative velar: /x/
<i>dze</i>	د	<i>dz</i>	voiced dental affricate: /dz/
<i>kāf</i>	ك	<i>k</i>	sharp velar stop: /k'/
<i>qāf</i>	ق	<i>q</i>	voiceless velar stop: /k/
<i>thā'</i>	ث	<i>ṯ</i>	sharp voiceless fricative alveolar: /s'/
<i>sīn</i>	س	<i>s</i>	sharp voiceless fricative alveolar: /s'/
<i>ṣīn</i>	سین	<i>ṣ</i>	sharp voiceless fricative alveolar: /s'/
<i>÷āḍ</i>	ص	<i>÷</i>	voiceless fricative alveolar: /s/
<i>ûā</i>	ظ	<i>û</i>	voiced fricative alveolar: /z/
<i>Ûāḍ</i>	ض	<i>Û</i>	voiced fricative alveolar: /z/
<i>zāy</i>	ز	<i>z</i>	sharp voiced fricative alveolar: /z'/
<i>dhāl</i>	ذ	<i>ḍ</i>	sharp voiced fricative alveolar: /z'/
<i>yā'</i>	ی	<i>y</i>	alveopalatal semivowel: /j/
<i>wāw</i>	و	<i>w</i>	bilabial semivowel: /w/

There are twenty five *muṣtedžeb*s in the *nemaz*.

(14) dwadecat i pat / perwiy /hledeti ū nemaze /-tōyūči (1b)

First, while staying in the *nemaz*, you [must] look

[fol.2a] (1) na ūōye mesce /hdeh ūdždeh poqlōnitišā / drūhiy /hledeti ū ruku'ede
at that place, where you [should] bow in a *šedždeh* / second, in the *ruku'e*,
you [must] look (Kitab, 18th c.)

Typology of texts:

Qur'ān

tefsir 'commentary on the Qur'ān', viz. the book of the Qur'ān written in Arabic with an interlinear translation in the vernacular (in all known cases, in Polish)

tedžvid, a treatise on how to read the Qur'ān

xamail, a collection of prayers in Arabic or Turkish with an explanation of some rites in a Slavic vernacular

dalawars (from a Turkish plural form *dua-lar* 'prayers')

kitab, known also as Belarusianized *kicjab* or *kicjob*, a collection of ritual prescriptions, stories and moral precepts, apocrypha and other narratives

4.2.1. Religious Ecumenism?

An excerpt from the 17th-century *Kitab*:

Ja xōdīna šujū knihū is faršijskōhō i s tureckōhō jazika na ruś@ij jezik perelōžil dle nevmilix / žeb jim pō dnū / ā mene xōdinū dōbrimī mōlitvamī uspōmonali ā tōj kniže še vmīle (41a) (116th c. cf. Miškinene 2001, 108)

'I, Xodyna, translated this book from the Persian and Turkish languages into the Russian language for the ignorant [believers] so that they can use it every day, and remember me with the help of kind prayers, and be familiar with this book'

Contents of the *Kitab*:

- (a) various narratives about prophet Mohammad and his disciples
- (b) minor narratives reflecting polemics with the Jews and Christians
- (c) borrowing of some Christian narratives and interpretations

[**Religious**] "ecumenism in the treatment of sources of the two religions" (Drozd 1997)

The Lithuanian Tatars prefaced their collections with chapters from the book of Genesis, supplemented by the corresponding verses from the Qur'ān in Arabic and their Polish translation

Ethnic tensions?

Piotr Czyżewski, *Alkoran Tatarski* (1616), *Alfurkan Tatarski* (1617, 1640, etc.)

cf. Pol. *furkanie*, whence ‘*Das tatarische Gesause (Geschwirre, Geschnurre)*’
(Suter 2004, 19)

4.2.2. Linguistic ecumenism

(a) The Lithuanian Tatars used Polish along with the *prostaja mova* in confessional and secular texts correspondingly (Danylenko 2006b)

A polemical adaptation by a Lithuanian Tatar of Krzysztof Pussman’s *Historyja barzo cudna i ku widzeniu potrzebna o stworzeniu nieba i ziemie* [...] (1543, first published in 1551) (Drozd 1997, 22-23) may be identified as a kind of *tefsir*

It contains Qur’ānic verses in Arabic along with their Polish translation, supplemented with quotes from the Old Testament. By that time the Arabic of the Qur’ān became incomprehensible to the Lithuanian Tatars, whence the interlinear translation into Polish (Karskij 1922, 2; Suter 2004, 9) or borderland Polish (*polszczyzna kresowa*) revealing a substantial East Slavic substratum.

(b) having abandoned their mother tongue(s) in the early 16th c., the Lithuanian Tatars switched to the local East Slavic vernacular but retained the Turko-Arabic script as a marker of their identity

Language and script choice in the minor speech communities of Tatars, Armenians, and Karaites was likely to be derivative of the cultural and socio-linguistic environment shaped by the local Orthodox Ruthenians interacting with the Catholics, Protestants, and later the Uniates.

5. Ukrainian Cossacks

Gente Ruthenus, natione Polonus?

The Ruthenian gentry were confined to a closed and very traditional space defined by local culture, Eastern Christian tradition, and native language epitomized by *Cyrillic script*.

Stanisław Orzechowski (1513–66): ‘Poland is my parent, the Church is my mother, Ruthenia is my nourisher, Peremyśl’ is my fatherland, [...] and Rus’ is my birthplace’ (Chimaera: 6)

Ethnic Lithuanian identity gradually became subordinate to Polish national identity, since the Lithuanian *boyars* were inclined to full participation in the Polish political privileges, expediently opting for Polish as a new state language (Zinkevičius 1988: 112–14).

The equalization of noble rights went hand in hand with linguistic and cultural Polonization.

The Cossack uprising and the proclamation of a Cossack Hetmanate were results of the increasing social and religious pressure from the Commonwealth

Conclusions

- Language and script choice by Tatars, Armenians, and Karaites was derivative of the cultural and socio-linguistic environment shaped by the local Orthodox Ruthenians interacting with the Catholics and Protestants
- The multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual Polish nation was vertically weak in the 16th-17th c. (Plokhly, Danylenko)
- A love triangle of Lithuanians, Poles, and Ruthenians failed and influenced the type of interrelations among all other players

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