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THE URUMS OF THE NORTH AZOV SEA REGION

On the basis of a wide range of sources, the aspirant presents the integrated ethnographic research of Priazovye Greeks (Turkic-phonetic). The aspirant has carried out comparative and generalizing analysis of the state of the dialects as well as the ritual and the musical habits of the ethnos. A special emphasis is laid on the analysis of field ethnographic materials the aspirant has collected from villages. The research also expands on the current condition of Mariupol Urums' ethnic culture.

Key words: *ethno-cultural ties, the Urums, the Roumeis, ritual habits, Hellenic phones, Turkic phones, ethno-national processes, traditional culture, transformation.*

The Greeks of Mariupol' living on the Azov area of Ukraine take their roots from the town they founded. In the year of 1778 the Christian Greeks of the Crimean Khanate moved on to the territory of Mariupol' district of Ekaterinoslav province. They were headed by Metropolitan Ignaty, the initiator of the migration. Having abandoned their prosperous Crimea. 18 thousand Greeks obtained an administrative and religious autonomy in the Azov area. Nowadays the number of Greeks living in Donetsk region run third in its ethnic structure (1,6 %). According to the population roll of 1989 the number of Greeks equaled 98 thousand people, but according to the population roll of 2001 the number decreased to 92,6 thousand people due to migrations to Greece [23; 24; 25].

The contemporary Urum community is available as part of the Greek population clustered in 29 villages of Donetsk District as well as in one of the villages of Zaporizhzhya District and in Mariupol. According to our calculations and to the All-Ukrainian Population Register of 2001, the number of the Azov Turkic Greeks amounts to 40.000 people [21].

The Urum language of the North Azov is split into four dialects which reflect complicated ethno-historical processes. With reference to the influence various language elements have on those dialects, they can be divided into the following types: the Kipchak-Polovets dialects spread in such villages as V. Novosilka, Starobesheve and Mangush, the Kipchak-Oguz dialects – in such villages as Staromlynivka, Bogatir and Ulakli, the Oguz-Kipchak dialects – Granitne, Starolaspa, Komar and Starognativka, and the Oguz dialects – spread in Mariupol and in Sary Krim [1, c. 14]. The everyday language spoken by residents of each of those Urum villages has peculiarities of its own. The dialects used by the Turkic Greeks have preserved the lexical relicts. Therefore the researchers of the language and the ethnic history of Mariupol Greeks take a special interest in them.

The source is ethnographical field study carried out in the Azov Greek villages and the materials found in the national archives and museums in Ukraine and in Russia [13; 14; 17; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29; 30].

The Turkic Greeks call themselves the Greeks. But it is Urum that is a more ancient endo-ethnonym, which is more applicable to them (it emerged in Asia Minor and became widely spread in the Crimea). It comes from such a term as Rum introduced by the Moslem Turks (the Seljuk) in order to name the residents of the Ottoman Empire who were Orthodox and spoke Greek [2, p. 456-457]. The Turkic-speaking Greeks acquired such an exo-ethnonym as the Urums. In the long run, they even started calling themselves that way. In fact, the terms Urum and Rum are akin. Greek researchers assume that the etymology of these words comes from “Ρωμαίος” – ο κάτοικος της Βυζαντινής Αυτοκρατορίας [3, p. 500].

The Turkish scientific literature emphasizes the fact that the exoethnonym urum 'lar comes from the Turkic Greeks who, at the time of the Byzantine Empire migrated, mainly from Anatolia, to the southern shore of the Crimea, where the Urums began to speak the southern dialect of the Crimean Tatars' language [4, p. 99]. But one must take into account that the ethnonym Urum was conferred on a number of mixed ethnic groups who nowadays live in various regions down the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea coasts, having a long history, though being immigrants from Asia Minor. Today the researchers carry out different strategies in the study of that ethnonym.

Today there are various ethnonyms meant to name the Urums: Urum – Greek; Urum Alhi – the Greek nation; Urumnuh – the Greeks, the Urums, the Greek population; Urumlar – is becoming Greek. In 2001-2007, in the framework of the study of ethnic self-identity and contemporary lingual condition, we examined such villages as Mangush, Stary Krim, Staromlynivka (Kremeniovka) and Granitne (Karan). We interviewed 1234 residents of the aforementioned villages. As for our questionnaires, The Urums' choices in considering the graph "Specify your nationality" looked as follows: Greek (72 per cent, the majority), occasionally Urum (19 per cent) and rarely Greek Tatar (9 per cent). According to our field study, the Urums call their language Urum dili or Urum tili.

We do not have enough evidence to determine the time of the emergence or the formation of the Urum dialects. But in our view, in the Byzantine period of their ethnic history, the Greeks of Asia Minor and the Greeks of the Crimea spoke Greek. Creation of the Ottoman Empire brought about lingual assimilation of the Greeks of Asia Minor and their loss of mother tongue. Later, they switched to Turkic. The pre-Crimean period of the Urums' history is obviously unknown – none of the existing versions is evidenced by any kind of source. We assume that the version of Mariupol Greeks' split into the Turkic and the Hellenic Greeks had better be viewed from the early pre-Crimean period. The main version that today's scientists get attributed to is that the Greeks' split into two language groups occurred at the time of the medieval Crimea.

As far as the Crimean period of the Urums' ethnic history is concerned, the state of things remained the same with the creation of the Crimean Khanate. But the influence of the Turkic language became stronger, thus gradually squeezing out the Greek language as a tool of interethnic communication on the peninsula. After the South Crimea acceded to the Ottoman Empire, most of its population spoke Turkic. But the Urum writing, based on the Greek alphabet, became very widely spread in the aforementioned period. Today we have a variety of sources, such as translations of Christian texts [5, p. 5], student books on Greek and correspondence. The Greeks' switch to Turkic was overwhelming both in the Crimean Khanate and all over the Ottoman Empire. An example of that switch is the folk lore of the nations of different ethno-confessional identity living together on the same territory in Asia Minor and in the Crimea. Thus a constituent part of the epic genre of the Urum folk lore is medieval Kipchak-Oguz massals (dastans) with transparent plots and singing monologs and dialogues. The Urums' epic works evidence deep historical ties of the Urum language with other languages of the West-Hun merger of vernaculars: medieval massals (dastans) concerned with such heroes as Apshiche Garibe, Arzu and Gambere, Ter-oglu. Very popular with Mariupol Urums is the epic story of Ter-oglu, which for many centuries has been touring the Turkic-speaking nations. Neither the lingual distinctions nor the national cultures or religions obstructed the dissemination of that story on a huge areal, where it is known as "Ker-oglu", "Ger-oglu" or "Kur-oglu" [6, p. 5]. In spite of coincidence in the plot and similarity of the stories, the versions popular with different Turkic nations are all unique in terms of freshness and novelty. This epic is very much noteworthy as part of the Urum and the Tatar folk lore. It came to Turkey from the Crimean peninsula, which is evidenced by the

research theses concerned with the Turkish folk lore [7, p. 77]. The development of the Urum songs was affected by the Ottoman trend, which was widely spread in the medieval Crimea.

At the early stage of the Azov period (the late 18th – the 19th century) the Urums spoke their dialects, whereas the written language was performed by letters of the Greek alphabet. In the course of our study, we found a number of documents written in the Urum language.

The Manuscript Department of the National V. Vernadsky Library of Ukraine holds a textbook titled as “Reading Gospels All the Year Around”, published in the early 19th century, written in the Urum language but in Greek letters [8, p. 191]. The Urum language is rather frequent in the documents taken from the Greek Court of Mariupol as well as in Mariupol Regional Studies Museum [9, p. 352-353]. They are written in Greek letters and date back to 1811, 1846 and 1874. Each one of those documents, though written in Greek letters, is primarily based on the Turkic lexis. There are also very many Greek and even Russian words there. Nevertheless we cannot say for sure what Turkic language (Turkic, Tatar or some other) was used, because we have no specialized research for this question to be answered. The attempts of understanding the available Urum texts were not very much successful.

The Urum songs date back to the early 19th century. They are brought together in the so called Khartakhai’s collection – a collection of Urum texts written in Greek letters. Among many others is the song “Αχ χιζιμ χιζιμ!” [10, p. 42], which remains most popular even nowadays. Moreover a similar song “Vai kurtsits, kurtsits” is popular even with the Rumei population. The both versions can be translated as “Oh, my baby girl”; the rhythm and the content are alike.

It is noteworthy that the Urum language was considered sometimes as Turkish, sometimes as Tatar. In describing the household habits of Mariupol Greeks in 1874, A. Antorinov wrote the following: “...in some villages Greek is spoken, whereas other villages speak Turkish” [11, p. 46]. In 1891 V. Gof, a public school teacher, said that the residents of Komar “speak Turkish”. But later he added that their language was a mixture of Turkish, Tatar and some other language [12, арк. 1]. G. Timoshevsky, Headmaster of Mariupol Alexander Lyceum, considers the Urum language purely Tatar. In his words, “those who speak the Tatar vernacular can neither speak nor understand Greek” [13, p. 38]. A number of Urum texts aided by Russian transcription were published in the collection titled as “Mariupol and Its Vicinity” [14]. Still, they are not thoroughly studied by researchers.

After the deportation, in the course of almost 150 years, despite having no national schools, the Urums managed to preserve their mother tongue. We made that conclusion on the basis of the survey of the national minorities among the Greek population conducted in the 1920s. The survey report emphasizes “Dominance of the mother tongue in everyday life”. According to it, Russian could be heard only in local government or at a local rally [15, p. 61]. It was discovered that young people had a very good command of Russian, whereas Greek housewives’ Russian was much poorer. Urum writing was not even spoken about. But archives present evidence to Urum writing being practiced in villages: “As far as Urum writing is concerned, it did not exist; only a few people who were students of Greek schools 5 years ago can write and read their mother tongue” [16, p. 63]. In the 1920s Urum oral speech was widely used and was part and parcel of the Azov Turkic Greeks’ spiritual life. Especially popular were local singers and poets who remembered and performed folk lore, which had been transferred from generation to generation. Those were such stories as “Ashik-Gorib”, “Alim” and others. The villages enjoyed “Turkish-Tatar” theater performances. However manifestations of preserved Greek traditional culture as well as works of art written in mother tongue were not encouraged by the government. An example is an excerpt from the

“Report of the Supreme Soviet Executive Committee on the survey of the Greek population in Mariupol District”, which has it that “It is surprising but the local governments do not encourage manifestations of national cultures. Moreover, they sometimes obstruct their development, providing no assistance or even prohibiting Greek theater performances, etc.” It is also emphasized that through lack of Greek printed sources, mother tongue is being forgotten and elderly people keep songs and stories written in the late 19th century in their notebooks” [15, p. 38].

Since the mid 1920s the situation changed. The Soviet central government ordered the local governments to encourage and develop the Greek national culture. Emphasis was laid on dissemination of the Greek language among the Greek population. But unlike the Rumei dialects, which were taught at that time, the Urum dialects went beyond the scientists’ attention. As it was mentioned above, in 1925 N. Derzhavin, Director of Comparative Studies of Literatures and Languages of the West and the East for Leningrad State University, suggested sending expeditions in order to survey the Greek villages of Mariupol vicinity. For a short period of time, 12 expeditions were sent for the purpose of studying the language of the Hellenic Greeks [17, p. 24-29]. But the paradox is that the study of the language of the Turkic Greeks was linked to comparing them to the language of the Crimean Tatars. Most probably, it was not on account of lack of researchers. It was through rejection of the Urum language due to the priorities of foreign policy.

No scientific description of the Urum language was made. But having compared a number of lexical units in such Urum villages as Mangush, St. Karan and St. Ignativka, the Supreme Soviet Executive Committee made a conclusion that “in the Turkic-Tatar language there is no great difference between separate villages” [15, p. 33]. Now we do not know whether there were experts in the Turkic language among the Committee members. The thing is that Urum residents of those villages were asked to read the “Turkish-Tatar books”, which were very familiar to the readers. Then the Urum lexis was compared with the Crimean Tatar lexis, but on the basis of just one student book: “No doubt, the Turkish-Tatar villages speak one language. To what extent that language was similar to the language of the Crimean Tatars– the Committee compared it with language of the Crimean Tatars, using the “aid” on teaching the Crimean Tatar language (A. Odabash and I.S. Kaya, Crimizdat Publishers, 1924) and found almost full similarity – at least at the rate of 90 per cent. If the difference exists, it is too small and primarily lies in Mariupol Greek Tatars’ using the sound “h” instead of the sound “k”, typical of the Crimean Tatar language; girls living in Mariupol villages for example, say “hyz” instead of the Crimean “kyz”. There are quite a few words – one or two words among 30 or 40, that are not used here” [15, акр. 33]. The survey refers to the Urum language, which is not investigated to the greatest extent, as to Turkish-Tatar, because there is “...much similarity of Mariupol Tatar language with the Turkish-Tatar language. The Greek Tatars of Mariupol speak almost fluently to the Turks when they call at their bakers’ and grocers”. However there were very few reasons behind those conclusions because of lack of printed literature, which could serve as evidence.

Thus, due to the Committee members, the Urums were forced to learn the Crimean Tatar language, which in no way appealed to them. Eventually, the problem of the language of school instruction arose on the agenda. The national schools were ordered to use the Crimean Tatar language since the Urums had borrowed their language from the Crimean Turks and Tatars. As a result, in order to name the language of the Urum Greeks, such a term as “the Greek Tatar language” was introduced. The Turkic Greeks were named Greek Tatars respectively. The term “Greek Tatars” is used even nowadays. But in our view, it is artificial and it does not reflect the existing state of affairs.

Besides, the quality of the teaching staff was rather poor in the Urum schools. The teachers lacked competence. Some of them did not even have a good command of the language. To give you an idea, let us consider the situation one of the vicinities was once faced by. That situation was typical of other primary educational institutions as well. In 1926 – 1927, in the Urum villages of Stalino District there were 16 schools, where the total number of students equaled 2605 (8 – 9 years old – 88,4 per cent; 8 – 11 years old – 86 per cent; 8 – 15 years old – 62,7 per cent; 8–15 років – 62,7 %). The total number of teachers equaled 62; among them 41 per cent were non-Greek teachers, 29 were Urum and 6 were Rumei. One of the teachers was capable of teaching Hellenic Greek. This example evidences the fact that it was impossible to disseminate the Turkic language with the help of teachers, because most of them did not know the Urum language.

In 1928 the new Turkic alphabet began being disseminated among the Turkic-Tatar and the Greek-Tatar national minorities of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (the so called latinization) [18, арк. 21, 24]. It is noteworthy that formation of the Urum literary language based on the new Turkic alphabet was of dull and unified character. The general trend of the national cultural policy as regards to the Turkic languages aimed to eliminate the Arabic borrowings and to introduce Russian and international words [19, p. 202]. No doubt, the reforms introduced to the Urum language caused the spelling standards and the phonological constitution to be destroyed, which led to loss of many lexical units that had been accumulated with centuries passing by.

To train teachers for the Urum schools, experts in the Crimean Tatar language (from the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of the Crimea) were invited. There was a supply of “recommended books in the Greek-Tatar language” as well. Those measures just aggravated the Turkic Greeks’ learning conditions, because the native speakers spoke four different dialects and because of some essential particularities of the Crimean Tatar language.

The Urums could not understand the spelling dictionaries of the Crimean Tatar language purchased for the Urum schools [20]. In reading up for the classes of mother tongue, many of the students could not understand the meanings of the words when they were learning poems by heart [21]. Over all, the introduction of the uniform Turkic alphabet did not promote preservation of mother tongue. As for the researchers of the Urum dialects, it made their job really hard [22].

For the purpose of training teachers for local Greek-Tatar schools, summer courses were held, where lectures on history and culture were given. On graduation from comprehensive school, the Turkic Greeks were sent to the Crimean educational institutions for them to be able to go on for further education. In 1928 – 1929, there were 12 primary and 4 comprehensive schools in the Urum villages, where there were 45 teachers and 2605 students. Later Professor O. Garkavets, a researcher of the Urum sayings, emphasized the negative effects of mindless introduction of the Crimean Tatar language to schools meant for the Azov Greeks, which resulted from lack of experts in the Turkic languages in the dialectological expeditions. The Urum speech was not very much similar to the Crimean Tatar language: Greek elements were still there. Therefore school instructions given in the Crimean Tatar language caused the Greek population to become indignant, because the language that was imposed on the Urum settlements performed neither the communicative nor the cognitive function. Nor did it perform the consolidating function, i.e. it did not help unite the Turkic Greeks who spoke different dialects.

We would go so far as to lay an emphasis on the fact that the Urums were not unanimous in their attitudes to the introduction of the Crimean Tatar language. The older generation considered education based on the Crimean Tatar language to be too insufficient

for their children to be able to rise in the world. Our field study holds evidence to the fact that some parents and their children favored education obtained from Russian schools, because the young people might have an opportunity of better communication by updating their competence and by entering into new professions. In fact, when in the early 1950s the national schools began being closed down, the Urum population did not feel really sorry [23].

The repressions of 1937 and the Nazi invasion added to the recession of the Urum language. The Greeks started to dispose of literature printed in their mother tongue in order to save their families from death. We found it out from V. Borota, an Urum poet who was born in Starognativka. At the time of the interview, V. Borota told us about the fascists who came to his home village. At that time many valuable Urum books were burnt down. Our field study of 1990 – 2003 can testify to that. Thus far, we have not yet found any of the Urum books published in the prewar period in any of the Greek families. Most of the population has just a partial command of the Urum language of everyday use. Yet we have found signs of everyday Urum speech in such villages as Karan and Sary Krim with representatives of three generations [23]: the older family members, born in the 1920s, speak Urum to each other; their children (born in the 1940s – 1950s) understand their parents with no problem, though it is really hard for them to express themselves, using a dialect; the younger generation (the 1970s – 1980s) can understand just a few utterances, using just a few separate words. According to other results of our field study, the Urum language is most widely used in such villages as Starobesheve and Starognativka, least widely used – in Mangush. In Mariupol, founded by the Turkic Greeks, out of the 90 families interviewed, 70 do not speak Urum at all. In 8 families a dialect is used in the form of separate clichés, proverbs or expressions due to the older family members (such as grandmother or grandfather) brought from Urum villages for the purpose of care and maintenance. In 12 families the Urum language exists just in the form of a few specialized words related to their traditional culture [24]. All this was caused by a number of external and internal factors. Today the language of the Turkic Greeks functions inside the family or can be heard at amateur folk concerts. The Azov Greeks' writing is based on the Cyrillic alphabet, which became the basis for the Urum alphabet. However, even nowadays neither high nor higher education based on the Urum language is accessible. Maybe, that is why even nowadays this language is far from being well preserved: the quality of its preservation on the Azov Sea coast is much lower than that of the Rumei language. Almost the 50-year long ban on the Urum population caused the nation's culture to suffer big losses. In the Soviet times, the Urum language did not perform its social functions except one – speaking inside the family. As a result, its stylistics underwent recession and huge layers of words related to the traditional culture were lost for ever.

As seen from the above mentioned examples, one of the Greeks of Mariupol' development peculiarities is the influence of the direct participation of Algean World in the closest connection with the peoples of the Asia. Therefore the Crimean - Minor Asian and the Balkan regions are definitely to be in the sphere of the scientific interests of those who study the ethnic history of the Greeks of Mariupol', it is only area! research work of enumerated scientific trends that can answer a lot of questions.

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УРУМИ ПРИАЗОВСЬКОГО РЕГІОНУ

У 1778 році відбулося переселення християн із Кримського ханства, в ході якого близько 19 тисяч урумів залишили Крим та заснували місто Маріуполь (1780) й 10 сел. Мова та традиційна культура надазовських урумів формувалася у контексті їхніх етнокультурних зв'язків з народами Середземномор'я, Малої Азії, Криму та Надазов'я.

У сучасній побутовій мові мешканців урумських населених пунктів є свої особливості. Чотири діалекти урумів зберігають лексичні релікти, тому викликають інтерес у дослідників мови та етнічної історії. На основі зібраної лексики культурно-побутової сфери ми з'ясували, що словниковий склад урумів здебільшого формується із тюркських слів, але серед них є багато слів з давньогрецької та новогрецької мови, а також перські, арабські та слов'янські. Нині діалекти побутує у формі окремих кліше, прислів'їв, виразів, іноді функціонує в сімейному побуті, лунає у виступах самодіяльних фольклорних колективів .

Аналіз польових етнографічних досліджень показує, що матеріальна культура маріупольських урумів – це складний синтез, що уявляється нам як результат багатовікової культурної взаємодії і взаємовпливу балканських, малоазійських народів із тюркомовними, які прийшли з Середньої Азії. З іншого боку, після міграції до Надазов'я, уруми протягом двохсот років вбирали у свій побут елементи традиційної культури слов'янських народів, які мешкали поруч. Нині в матеріальній культурі урумів на тлі збереження малоазійсько-кримської традиційності переважають українські і російські елементи.

Ключові слова: *етнокультурні зв'язки, уруми, румеї, обрядовість, еллінофони, тюркофони, етнонаціональні процеси, традиційна культура, трансформація.*

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