N.M. KARAMZIN'S LINGUISTIC OBSERVATIONS IN HIS 'HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN STATE'

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The *History of the Russian State* (I.G.R.), by N.M. Karamzin, does not only supply the historian of the Russian language with very valuable material contained in numerous interpolations of old texts. One can also come — in this fundamental work on history — upon some linguistic observations which precede by a century and over the results of linguistic research of a much later period.

Some very significant observations by N.M. Karamzin concerning the history of certain Russian words, which the author seemed to have dropped quite casually in the Commentary to the basic text of his I.G.R., have somehow been overlooked by the historians of Russian languague and are still ignored even in very reliable and fundamental works on the development of Russian vocabulary.

Here we shall try to emphasize the scientific reliability of certain linguistic conclusions achieved by Karamzin in his analysis of a non-authentic *gramota* ascribed to the Galitian prince Lev Danilovič, dated March 8, 1301 (I.G.R., vol. IV, com. 203, pp.77-79). Those observations anticipate the results only quite recently obtained by linguistics in the research of inter-slavic word migration.

Re-editing the text of this *gramota* first published by K. Chodykiewicz (1770, pp.V-V$_2$), Karamzin italicized words and expressions in it which "either where not in common usage in the Old Russian language or else where not used in accordance with the Russian pronunciation".

Besides some quite obvious Ukrainian borrowings (*esmo* instead of *esmy*, 1st pers. pl. not according with the singular subjet *A se ja knjaz' Lev'*[1]; *budučim"* instead of *budušČim"*; *poživati* in the sense of "use";

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[1] This disagreement by itself does not yet testify to the fact that the *gramota* is apocryphal, as a similar phenomenon can also be observed sometimes in genuine Old Ukrainian *gramoty*,

ustupatisja, ustupit' with the Ukrainian form *u-*, from Old Russian *v-*; *bulo* instead of *bylo*) and some polonisms (*osoblivii*, cf. Pol. *osobliwy*; *vyznača-juči*, cf. Pol. *wyznaczając*; cerkov' *stolečnaja*, cf. Pol. *stołeczny*)², Karamzin also had doubts about the genuin East Slavic origin of such words as *pravo* and *granica*, a fact that was scientifically identified and proved only in the 20th c.

N.S. Trubeckoj was the first after Karamzin, as far as we know, to stress that the Russian *pravo* is not a word of Common Slavic origin (though at present it exists in all Slavic languages), but was a borrowing from the Polish *prawo*, which in its turn is a calque from the Germ. *Recht* (1927, pp. 79-80). This point of view was later accepted by V.V. Vinogradov (1934/1982, p. 40, without reference to Trubeckoj). But this fact was not reported in any of the Russian ethimological dictionaries, in which *pravo* is still regarded as a Common Slavic derivation from *prav''-*: genuine (Vasmer, II, p.423; Fasmer-Trubačev, III, p. 352; KES², p.360; CES, p.365). Only a very thorough examination of the word *pravo* in the Eastern Slavic languages allowed the researchers to reject the firmly established conception of its Common Slavic origin and to trace its migration from the West to the East: in Old Ukrainian literary works the word *pravo* appears at the end of the 15th c. (Srezn., II, col. 1348; SSUM II, pp.220-221), and under the influence of the West-Russian chancellery language of the Polish-Lithuanian State it is introduced in the documents on foreign affairs of the Muscovite State. In these documents it has been detected since 1495 and up

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(though in a later period - beginning with the 2nd half of the 14th c.). It can be accounted for by a contamination of two different burocratic traditions in heading *gramoty*, one being Old Russian ("Se az" ..." + narration in the 1st pers. sing.), and the other Polish-Latin ("Nos..." + narration in the 1st pers. plur. - *pluralis maiestatis*). Cf., e.g., in a *gramota* of the city of Peremysl': "A se ja Februn" voevoda peremysl'skii. poznavam" to našim" list[om]"..." (Peščak 1974, N. 53, pp. 106-108) or also in a *gramota* of the Zakarpatie of 1404: "Se az" pan" radul" [...] daemo vedomo sim" našim" lištom'..." (Rusanivs'kij, 1965, N. 65, pp. 133-134). In Moldavian *gramoty* even three different traditions may be interlaced - the Old Russian, the Polish-Latin and the Bulgarian (the latter having undergone the influence of the voevodas from Valachia region). Cf. f.i., in a *gramota* from a Moldavian voevoda Aleksander of 1422: "[...] az" Aleksandr" voevoda [...] činim" znamenito [...] eže blagoproizvoli gospodstvo mi" (Rusanivs'kij, 1965, N. 34, p.75) - in this case, to the disagreement of *az"* with the plural form of the verb *cinim"* is added a construction *gospodstvo mi* + narration in the 3rd pers. sing. In the present article only the linguistic argumentation of Karamzin will be analysed. The non-authenticity of the *gramota* was proved by him also with the help of historic argumentations. (On the *gramoty* by Lev Danilovič cf. also: Gruševs'kij, 1902, 1904; Linničenko, 1904; Gens'ors'kij, 1969).

² The mentioned polonisms are not to be found in Old Ukrainian *gramoty* of the 14th-15th cc. This can easily be proved to us, Karamzin's readers of today, by the new *Dictionary of the Old Ukrainian Language of the 14th-15th cc.* (SSUM, I-II), while the glossary to the Ukrainian *gramoty* edited by M.M. Peščak (1974, pp. 150-197) can only mislead the reader, as it comprises also the apocryphal *gramoty* of prince Lev (NN. 1-2, 4-5, pp. 9-20), including that of March 8, 1301 (N. 4, pp. 12-18).

to the end of the 17th c., but it is used only in contexts concerning foreign countries; the Russian literary language borrows the term *pravo* only at the beginning of the 18th c. (Kochman, 1977, pp. 76-77). The first time the word *pravo* was mentioned within a Great Russian context is in the *Choždenie na Florentijskij Sobor*, written by an unknown citizen of Suzdal', member of the diplomatic mission of the Russian Church to the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1439). This document has been preserved in the manuscripts of both the 15th c. and of a later period[3], but even in the latter source the word *pravo* is used only in reference to definitely foreign notions (in this case relevant to the area of the Baltic Sea and Germany): "I tu ego [Mitropolita Isidora - A.Z.] sretil biskup jur'evskyj s velikoju čestiju, *po svoemu pravu nemeckomu*", "i monastyr' be ženskyj, *po ich pravu* edin, velmi čjuden" (Kazakova, 1970, p. 63). Using the word *pravo*, the author of the *Choždenie* identified it with the Old Russian (Church Slavic) term *zakon*" meaning "a combination of rules and norms of behaviour dictated by one or another religion" (cf. SRJa, V, p.217). Thus, the final introduction of the word *pravo* into the Russian literary wordstock in the early 18th c. was preceded by a rather long period of its usage as an exotism to denote some definitely alien — neither Russian nor relevant to Orthodox Christian Church — law ("zakon"). The history of the word in Great Russian literary texts testifies to the fact that it has not been borrowed by the Russian language directly from the Polish (as according to Trubeckoj and Vinogradov after him), but to the West Russian (Old Ukrainian and Belorussian) language.

Karamzin's idea that the word *granica* was not of Eastern Slavic origin was made evident by the fact that he italicized the word in the text of the *gramota* allegedly written by prince Lev. This intuition has also been confirmed by later linguistic research, but many ethimological dictionaries of various Slavic languages still continue to regard it as a Common Slavic derivation from **grana, *gran*" (Vasmer I, p.304; Fasmer-Trubačev, I, p.452; Machek[3], p.183; Sławski I, pp.339-340; KES[2], p.113; ESRJa, I/4, p.160; CES, p.111-112; ESSJa, VII, p.106-107; BER, I, p.274, ESUM I, p. 584).

Kochman has proved that the word *granica* has been borrowed by the East Russian languages from Polish. In West Russian literary texts it has been identified as early as the 14th c., while in Great Russian texts it is to be found only in texts dating from the 15th c. and, at first, it was only found in the *gramoty* of Pskov and in political documents concerning the diplomatic relations with the Polish-Lithuanian State (Kochman, 1975, pp.62-68).

Kochman's conclusion is confirmed also by the vocabulary contained in the *Choždenie na Florentijskij Sobor*, which applies the word *granica* on-

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[3] On the history of the text of this manuscript and its historical and cultural significance, cf.: Kazakova 1970, pp. 60-62; 1980, pp. 8-52). In another article (Zoltán, 1985) we analyse the West Russian words in the Great Russian text about the Council of Florence.

ly to the border with Poland: "i toj Ljublev' ostanočnyj est' gorodok ugoreskyj, stoit *na ljadskoj granici*" (Kazakova, 1970, p.71). To denote the border between the territories of Great Russia the same author resorts to the word *rubež* which was quite commonly used in Great Russian literary texts of that period: "i pskoviči sretoša ego [Mitropolita Isidora - A.Z.] *na rubiži* i počtiša ego velmi" (Kazakova, 1970, p. 63).

Thus we can state that throughout the period between the 15th and the 17th c. both the word *granica* and the word *pravo* existed, we may say, only in the outlying areas of the Great Russian vocabulary as a kind of exotism, and only in the 18th c. were firmly established in the bulk of Russian literary vocabulary, from where they penetrated into South Slavic dialects.

Linguistics today must strive a lot of effort to solve problems which for Karamzin, in his time, must have seemed quite obvious and not requiring lengthy argumentation. To appreciate the observations made by Karamzin in the early 19th c. in their real value, one should not forget that he had no historical or ethimological dictionary whatsoever: the composition of such works collecting all the knowledge about the origin and the history of the Russian literary wordstock was to come only some decades later.

It is by no means our desire to overestimate Karamzin's linguistic intuition and erudition (he did after all overlook certain points in the analysis of the apocryphal *gramota*)[4]; we would like nevertheless to stress the fact that he was an extremely well-read and learned man in everything concerning Old Russian texts, and that he was exceptionally conscientious and reliable in his treatment of the sources.

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[4] Certain words were not identified by Karamzin as polonisms. These were f.i. the word *predok* ("a za naša predki i za nas" milostivago Boga *prositi*" - the verb *prositi* must have been italicised only because it substitutes the word *moliti* which we would rather expect in that context; on the origin of the Russian *predok* from the West Slavonic through the Polish, cf.: Kochman, 1975, pp. 114-115; on Ivan the Terrible's opposition of his own *praroditelej* to the foreign *predkam*, cf.: Zoltán, 1983, p.341) and the word *pisar'* ("ikonnii pisarove" instead of the expected *ikonopiscy*; on the origin of the Russian *pisar'* cf.: Kochman, II, pp. 72-73).

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