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EDWARD TRYJARSKI

ON THE KERMES AND ITS PRODUCTION IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The present description of a primitive production of a red dye-stuff known as kermes, or crimson, originated in the first half of the seventeenth century in Lvov and can be found in a manuscript kept in the State Archives in Kiev¹. Its author is Andrzej Torosowicz, a Polish Armenian living in Lvov, a brother of Mikołaj (Nicolas) Torosowicz, the future archbishop of Lvov and the person number one of the Union of the Polish Armenians with Rome (ca. 1626-1686). His manuscript written, or rather finished in 1626, is an alchemic treatise mainly devoted to alchemy and its fundamental problems: the finding of the philosophers' stone and the transmuting of less precious metals into more precious, mainly in gold². At the same time, personal interests of the author go often beyond this domain and concern other aspects of natural phenomena, to mention fruits and flowers growing, phytotherapy or giving everyday practical advices. As a result, we are able to find in the manuscript more or less precise descriptions of a number of plants, the ways of their growing, collecting, drying, boiling etc. All those descriptions and receipts should be examined by competent specialists in natural sciences. These procedure should, however, be preceded by preparing the very text by the philologists. The reason is that the manuscript in question embraces texts in three languages: Old Polish, Latin and Armeno-Kipchak. It is general knowledge that the last was the main language of the Torosowicz family. The question is of one of the Turkic lan-

¹ Former Tśscentral'nyj gosudarstvennyj istoričeskij arhiv USRR, actually Central Archives of Ukraine in Kiev (F. 228, op. 1, no. 89).

² The title of the manuscript reads (in Polish) as follows: *W Imie Boga Wszzechmogącego w Trojcy iedynego. Secreta z Ogrodu Philozowskiego zebrane prawdziwe o Kamieniu Błogosławionim Philozowskim. Z wykładem. Pisane Roku Panskiego 1626.*

guages belonging to the Kipchak group, a vernacular that had been borrowed by the Armenian refugees settled down in the Crimea who had borrowed it from the local Turkic population and then transferred to Kamenets, Lvov and other localities of the South-East Poland. It has been also known that the same language was used for talking and writing during about two hundred years (16th-17th centuries). The texts formulated in that language by Andrzej Torosowicz and presenting his contribution to various domains of natural sciences offer, at the same time, interesting terms belonging to botany, zoology, astronomy etc. and thus present precious material for our better knowledge of the language in question.

The studies on the mentioned manuscript that had been undertaken up to the present concern mainly the author himself, his alchemical activity, a general character of his treatise and some particular questions contained in it³. The actual remarks concern only one matter which, however, has been presented by the author in two languages: Old Polish and Armeno-Kipchak. The question concerns botany, zoology and a practical craft production of a very desired red dye-stuff used broadly for textiles. It has been known that the dye-stuff in question, called kermes, was intensively produced in Poland and that this fact has been mirrored in the Latin name of the insect used for that purpose, viz. *Porphyrophora polonica* (Coccina, Homoptera). It has been also known that the primitive way of producing this dye-stuff from the larvae of the mentioned insect was mainly applied in the Middle Ages, viz. up to the discovery of America, when a new method of producing a similar dye-stuff from the cochineal was invented.

The present text indicates that on the vast territories of South-East Europe the earlier method of producing the kermes has not been abandoned but, on the contrary, it was continued to at least the first half of the seventeenth century. The encyclopaedias, or other similar sources, do not indi-

³ The first description of the manuscript has been given by A.M. Garkavets, *Dve novonajdennye armjano-kypčakskie rukopisi*, [in:] *Tjurkologičeskij sbornik* 1977 [Moskva 1981], pp. 76-80. The following papers on the same manuscript have been printed or are in printing: E. Tryjarski, *Andrzej Torosowicz et son traité d'alchimie*, RO LIII,1, pp. 9-19, the same, *Armeno-Kipchak Alchemical Terminology in a Manuscript from the 17th Century*; the same, *O pobożnym alchemiku lwowskim i znaczeniu jego zapisów dla badań językoznawczych*, "Biuletyn Ormiańskiego Towarzystwa Kulturalnego" 24/25, 2001, pp. 47-59; the same, *About a Pious Alchemist from Lvov and the Significance of his Texts for Linguistic Studies. A Summary*; the same, *Two Prayers of an Armenian Alchemist from Lvov*; the same, *How to prepare potent infusions of herbs and other medicines*; the same, *Armeno-Kipchak Advices about Growing of Fruits and Flowers (17th Century)*, [in:] *De Dunhuang à Istanbul Hommage à James Russel Hamilton présenté par Louis Bazin et Peter Zieme*, Silk Road Studies V, Turnhout 2001, pp. 367-378.

cate as a rule more precisely the area in which the plant and the insect in question were propagated. With so greater interest we learn from the author of the manuscript that the kermes "Can be found in Rus", and in Podolia, and in Ukraine, in Lithuania, and in Volyhnia there is a plenty of it".

Interesting is also the enumeration of plants on the roots of which the *Porphyrophora polonica* used to live. Their botanical names can be, as a rule, defined *grosso modo* by means of Old Polish dictionaries but we cannot be always sure about their scientific and popular English equivalents. Thus Pol. *biedrzeniec* (or *wiedrzeniec*) is defined in SłSP. as *Pimpinella Saxifraga* L. while the Stanisławski's Dictionary translates this name as *Pimpinella*, anise, and it distinguishes: *biedrzeniec mniejszy* (*pospolity*) (smaller or common) *Pimpinella Saxifraga* 'burnet saxifrage'. Professional botanical literature is more reliable. According to W. Szafer, S. Kulczyński, B. Pawłowski (*Rośliny polskie*, Warszawa, 1988, sixth edition, pp. 444-445) the question is of *Pimpinella* L., represented by *Pimpinella maior* (L.) Huds., *Pimpinella magna* L., and *Pimpinella anisum* L.

The omission of a necessary comma in the original text makes that the adjective *poziumkowy* (normally *poziomkowy*, from *poziomka* 'wild strawberry' *Fragaria* L. with: *Fragaria vesca* L., *Fragaria moschata* Duch., *Fragaria elatior* Ehrh. and *Fragaria viridis* Duch.) can be associated with the following *mysie uszka* (Pl.). According to SłW., the last term designates a plant also called *jastrzębiec* 'hawkweed'. If fact, we find in the cited *Rośliny polskie* (Part II, pp. 759-760) *Hieracium* L. and *Hieracium auricula*. As far as the plants called in Polish *niedośpiątkowe* are concerned, the term derives from the plant name *niedośpiątek* (*Centunculus* L., in particular *Centunculus minimus* L.). Pol. *zyto* (=żyto) designates rye (*Secale* L.), most probably its popular variety (*Secale cereale*).

In the case of the Pol. *sklenicznik* the question is, according to SłW., of *szklennicznik*, or *pomurnik*, a plant equally known as *pomurne ziele* (*Parietaria*). Most propagated is *Parietaria officinalis*.

It should be observed in this place that the Polish word *czerwiec* (earlier also *czyrwiec*), has, according to SłW., three meanings. The botanical meaning comprises: a) *Sceleranthus annuus* L., b) *Polygonum Persicaria* L., and c) *Pimpinella Saxifraga* L. while the zoological one designates an insect producing the red dye-stuff *Porphyrophora Polonica* L. Two other meanings of the same word are: 'a dye-stuff used for colouring red the textile, *coccus*, *color coccinus*' and 'month of June'. Let us add to the botanical point that the authors of *Rośliny polskie* (Part I, pp. 141-142) indicate: *Scleranthus perennis* L., *Scleranthus annuus* L. and *Scleranthus uncinatus* Schur.

It is worth mentioning that the word *chermes* used in the coption (in Polish more often known as *kermes*, or *kiermes*) is an equivalent of English *kermes*. One of its meanings belongs to zoology. According to SłW., it designs an insect *Coccus illicis* (hemipteral, belonging to *Coccidae*). As far as the etymology of the word is concerned, the same dictionary indicates Fr. *kermes* and Germ. *Kermes*, from Arab. *kirmiz* = czerwiec. This etymology should be verified and supplemented. A. Dauzat gives the following explanation: '*kermes* (1600, O. de Serres; *al-kermes*, 1646, Rab.), empr. à l'esp. *al-kermes*, de l'arabe *al.-qirmiz*, mot persan' (*Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*, 1938). The mention of the Persian origin of the word makes us suppose that it has been borrowed by the Polish from Turkic languages rather than from French or German. According to Andrzej Torosowicz the Polish Armenians (speaking Armeno-Kipchak) used to call *kermes* by the general Turkic word *čičak* 'flower'.

Abbreviations

Arab. - Arabic; E.B. - *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1996; Fr. - French; Germ. - German; l.m. - left margin; Pol. - Polish; r.m. - right margin; SłSP. - *Słownik Staropolski*, Warszawa, from 1953; SłW. - Karłowicz - Kryński - Niedzwiedzki, *Słownik języka polskiego*, Warszawa 1900-1927. *Słownik Stanisławskiego* - J. Stanisławski, *Wielki słownik angielsko-polski*, Warszawa 1964.

Text Polish Part

Laus Deo semper

*Chermes albo karmazyn farba **

- 5 *Karmazin farba iest czirwona, barzo szliczna. Są abowiem
ziarnka rumiane w ziemy, przy korzunkach zioł niektorich,
zwłaszcza Biedrzoncowich, poziomkowich Myszach uszek
albo niedospialkowich przy korzunkach zyta, sklenicznika
które tyz dniem y noczu nayr.wiemy [?] także wielu innych
ziul. Te czerwcem naszym zowią, dla tego iż gdzie by **
przystojnego czasu nie by[ll]y zbier[a]ne czerw albo hrobaczky
10 w nich zal[e]gają szie y wniwecz ie obracaią co zaraz bywa
na początku czerwca. te tedy czasu swego przistojnego****

*kopaią y zbieraią asuszą ie na iarkim sluncu - albo
więc wpiecu gorucym po piecziwie chleba żeby szie****
czirw w nich nie zamnoził.*

- 15 *Czas zbierania w Maiu tilko te ziarnka, a nie winey
czas bywaią kopane y zbierane, bo tilko wtim miesziacu
nayduia szie (Te chrobaczky są które w czirwcu lataią*****)
Te iagudki albo ziarnka rumiane spod korzunkuw zeb
rawszy wlozicz ie wgarnek nie szklaney y wierch dobrze
20 zalepiwszy na przisku gorącym***** postawicz y często zdiaw
szy garniec sprzisku ruszacz aby szie wręku trasł żeby
skie ziarna to wszistkie dobrze szie wysmazili albo wyschli
Albo iako groch prazą tak ie prazicz.*

- * On the right margin an Armeno-Kipchak gloss. See in Armeno-Kipchak Part.
** On the right margin: czerwiec.
*** On the right margin: *znayduie szie w Ruszi y na podolu y na ukrainie y wlitwie tego wiele y na wolyniu.*
**** On the right margin: *wgarncu zaspuntowawszy może i w garncu poliwanim.*
***** Above the line: *stych ziarnek robaczky szie staią*
***** Above the line: *cieplim.*

The same text in a modernized Polish transcription

*Laus Deo semper Chermes albo karmazyn farba **

- 5 *Karmazyn farba jest czerwona, bardzo śliczna. Są albowiem
ziarnka rumiane w ziemi, przy korzonkach ziół niektórych,
zwłaszcza biedrzońcowych, poziomkowych myszych uszek
albo niedośpialkowych przy korzonkach żyta, sklenicznika,
które też dniem i noca (na)rwiemy [?], także wielu innych
ziół. Te czerwcem nasi zowią, dlatego iż gdzie by **
przystojnego czasu nie były zbierane czerw albo hrobaczki
10 w nich zalegają się i w niwecz je obracają, co zaraz bywa
na początku czerwca. Te tedy czasu swego przystojnego ***
kop(a)ią i zbierają a suszą je na jarkim słońcu albo*

wieć w piecu gorącym po pieczywie chleba, żeby się ****
czerw w nich nie zamnożył.

15 Czas zbierania w maju - tylko te ziarenka - a nie w inny
czas bywają kopane i zbierane, bo tylko w tym miesiącu
(z)najdują się. Te (ch)robaczki są, które w czerwcu latają*****.

20 Te jagódki albo ziarenka rumiane spod korzonków zeb-
rawszy włożyć je w garnek nie szklany i wierch dobrze
zalepiwszy na przysku gorącym***** postawić i często - zdjawa-
szy garniec z przysku -

(po) ruszać, aby się w ręku trząsł, żeby
się ziarna te wszystkie dobrze (się) wysmażyły albo wyschły.
Albo jak groch prażą, tak je prażyć.

* On the right margin an Armeno-Kipchak gloss. See in Armeno-Kipchak Part.

** On the right margin: czerwec.

*** On the right margin: znajduje się w Rusi, i na Podolu, i na Ukrainie, i w Litwie tego wiele i na Wołyniu.

**** On the right margin: w garncu zaszpunktowawszy; może (być) i w garncu polewanym.

***** Above the line: z tych ziarenek robaczki się stają.

***** Above the line: ciepłym.

Armeno-Kipchak Part (Continuation of the main text)

25 *bu xurugandan songra jebérma proba uçun stım*
bolga čiçak' jerinda satılir mi
bu jol bila da neçik' ašaha bolur oldurma sizin-
da bolgan bu zjarnk' alarniing xurtlarni
xoyma k' endlarin çolmak' i[ç]ina jarimına deg da us-
tun çolmak' ning k' etan bila bahlama da ustuna
30 *çolmak' ning sjonđurmagan k' iradz ežgan sēpma*
da ust bila ahačtan ol k' iradzni japma k' i bek'
turgay songra ol çolmak' ni xoyma isi prisk' usna
da biraz isitirsa k' ot' jurma çolmak' ni da silk' ma neçik'
vlašnj horoxnu prazit etk' ansa silk' arlar da
35 *jana [us]na ot xoyma çolmak' ni da jana prazit etma*

bunu [ol] xadr [?] etma çaxsi upraziçça bolga[y]
zjarnk' alar
burulk' an ja burç

On the right margin: *čiçak' tir bizimça*
kirmiz t'jurk' ça

On the right margin:
bolur bu danalar-
dan sok' išlama
da songra distilo-
vat etma sok' tan
suvnu da ol suv-
nu jana jengil otta
xurutma da xu-
ruganin ezip salma
bahir usna tērdžiba
bolur sok' nu da t'jok'-
ma eritk' an bahir us-
na ja bahi[r]ni ičina
sok' nung biširma

On the right margin:
da bolgay l....] čiçak'

English translation

Old Polish Part

Glory be always to God
Kermes or crimson dye-stuff

Kermes is a red, very nice dye-stuff. There are namely red grains (found) in the ground - (near)by small roots of a number of herbs - especially of those belonging to the groups of anise, and of wild strawberry, to "mice's ears" or to the group of the herb of the genus Centunculus, close to small roots of the rye, to (the plant) belonging to Parietaria that we will pluck [?] by day and by night, also (to) many other herbs. The ours call them czerwec (scleranth) [6] since if they are not gathered in a due time grub [7] or small worms breed inside them and bring them to nought, what happens just at

the beginning of June. And thus in due time they dig out and gather, and dry them in a strong sun, or in a hot (warm) oven after the bread baking that the grub might not propagate in them. The time of gathering (them): only in May, and not in another time those small grains are being digged out and gathered because exclusively in that (time) they can be found. (These are small worms which in June fly up all around. This worms origin from those grains). After having plucked those berries, or red grains, from under the roots, put them into a pot, made not of glass, and after having well sealed up the top put on hot fire-brand (ashes) and often taking off the pot from the fire-brand move it that it might be shaken in a hand, that all those grains might be well roasted, or dried. Or else they should be scorched like peas.

Armeno-Kipchak Part

This being dried (you should) send it to be tested to know whether the kermes could be sold on the spot. And, in the way indicated below, kill the insects from (of) the grains you have with you, put them into a pot half-full, wrap up the top of the pot with linen (cloth), scatter upon the rag (some) scumbled quicklime, and cover from above this quicklime with wood (a board ?) so that it might hold fast. Afterwards put this pot on hot burning coals. When it warms up a bit, take the pot off and shake it up just as they shake up parching peas. Then put the pot again on the fire and parch it again until it is well parched (and) the grains have become shrivelled or (are) like pepper.

On the right margin:

- * According to us *čičak* (flower), in Turkish: *kirmiz* (red).
- ** The scale insect (or: scleranth) .
- *** It can be found in Rus', and in Podolia, and in Ukraine, and there is plenty of it in Lituania, and in Volhynia.
- **** after having well bunged up; it may be also an unglazed pot.
- ***** Produce (press out) the juice out of those grains, then distil water from the juice, and put that water again on a light fire, dissicate (the product), and when dissicated, scumble (it) and throw it on a copper utensil. Make a test of the juice pouring the molten (substance) on a copper utensil or boil the juice in a copper utensil.
- ***** And (let) be kermes.

Index of Armeno-Kipchak words

- ahač* wood, timber, wooden tool, stick, handle 31 .
- ašaha* down, under, below 26
- bahir*, *bahi[r]* copper, a copper utensil r.m.
- bahla-* to wrap up, to tie up 29
- bək'* very; strongly, firmly, solidly 31
- bila* with, by means of 29, 3
- biraz* a little, a bit 33
- bišir-* to cook, to bake r.m.
- bizimča* according to us, in our language r.m.
- bol-* to be, to exist, to happen, to become 25, 26, 27, r.m.
- bu* this 24, 26, 27, 36, r.m.
- burul-* to twist oneself about, to be twisted, to wring 37
- čičak'* kermes (lit. flower) 25, r.m.
- čolmak'* pot 28, 29, 32, 33, 35
- čoprak* (baby's) napkin 30
- čaxsi* well, good 36
- da* and 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36, r.m.
- dana* grain r.m.
- dég* up to, until 28
- distilovat ét-* r.m.
- érit-* to make melt, to make dissolve r.m.
- éz-* to crush, to grind, to squash 30, r.m.
- horox* pea, peas 34
- ič* (*ičina*) interior, inside 28, r.m.
- isi* hot 32
- isitti[r]-* to heat up, to warm up 33
- išla-* to produce r.m.
- ja* or r.m.
- jana* again, anew 35, r.m.
- jap-* to cover, to shut 31
- jarim* half 28
- jebër-* to send 24
- jengil* light r.m.
- jer* place, spot 25
- jol* way, manner, rule, method 25
- k'endi* oneself, self, own 28
- k'etan* linen, flax 29
- k'iradz* lime 30, 31

