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РОМСКИЙ ЯЗЫК В СИСТЕМЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ БОЛГАРИИ

ХРИСТО КЮЧУКОВ

Представленная здесь статья затрагивает проблемы преподавания ромского языка в Болгарии за последние 20 лет. Автор рассматривает образование ромских детей в историческом плане, а также анализирует современные проблемы. Процесс десегрегации ромских учеников в сравнение с изучением ромского языка дискутируется тоже. В конце работы автор приводит причины, объясняющие неуспех обучения ромского языка как родной язык.

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A NEW OLD TEXT IN ROMANI: LORD'S PRAYER, 1622

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In this paper the discovery is discussed of an early text in Romani printed in 1622 and 1637, where it was called "Nubian". The text is clearly Romani, even though much of the text remains unclear. The text probably goes back to an earlier version of unknown provenience. The context of the publication is discussed, including the author, other old texts in Romani and the collection of texts of the Lord's prayer around 1600. The 1622 source also gives a version of the Lord's Prayer in "Gypsy", but it is unclear what language it constitutes.

Key words: text, history, Lord's Prayer, Oratio Dominica, older sources, Romani, linguistics, philology, Gypsy language, Jean Baptiste Gramaye, Nubian

Older texts in Romani

This paper describes the discovery of a previously unknown text in Romani. The details of the text are not clear, but there is no doubt that the text represents one of the oldest printed sources in Romani.

A number of pre-1650 texts and glossaries in Romani have been known for quite a while. Miklosich (1874) was the first to identify and list them. The oldest text known then was Andrew Borde's (also Boorde) dialogue in Romani ("Egipt speeche"), printed around 1547 (see Crofton 1907). In 1597 Bonaventura Vulcanius published a list of words in the

language of "Nubians, called Gypsies [Cingaros] by the Italians" ("De Nubianos erronibus, quos Itali Cingaros appellant") in his book about the Goths.

After Miklosich, a modest number of new word lists and texts from before 1650 have been found, most of them in manuscript, which have since been published. Those are the word lists and brief phrases in the *Winchester Records* of 1616 (see Bakker 1997 and Bakker 2002 for an analysis), the Van Ewsum pre-1570 manuscript list of 53 words and phrases recorded in the northeastern part of the Netherlands (analyzed by Kluyver 1899-1900, 1910; see also Bakker 2001). Quite recently, a word list even older than these has been discovered in archives in Germany, dated 1515 (see Knauer 2010), the oldest known source of the Romani language. Piasere (1994) presents an analysis of a brief text from 1646 in an Italian theatre play (see also Ranking 1930). In addition, there is a brief text with accompanying musical notation from Hungary dating from the 1600s – the interpretation of the text is unclear, however (printed in Bakker & Kyuchukov, eds. 2000). Also worth mentioning is the first text preserved outside Western Europe, collected in Western Thrace in 1668 by Evliya Çelebi (Dankoff 1991, analyzed by Friedman and Dankoff 1991). These are all the pre-1670 sources known for Romani.

In this paper I want to discuss a newly discovered old text, a version of the Lord's Prayer in Romani from 1622, and reprinted in 1637.

A text from 1622 and a copy from 1637

I encountered this new old text in Romani, which has been printed at least twice, by chance. If we take into consideration where it was published, it is somewhat mysterious that this text was not identified earlier as being Romani by researchers in the 19th century. I first encountered a copy of the text in a book about Africa. Like some other early texts, it is found in a book about a region not relevant for the history of the Gypsies.

When looking for texts and traces of the Lingua Franca, the pidgin once used in the Mediterranean, I consulted a book about the history of Africa. There I noted a few words suspiciously close to Romani in a chapter about the Nubians, a population group of Southern Egypt. I found in a book in French published in 1637, an encyclopedic overview of all what was known about the African continent at that time (Davity 1637). In a section devoted to the

Nubian Kingdom ("Royavme de Nvbie"), Davity writes about the language of Nubians (my translation from French):

"They have a language of their own, but their Mass or Liturgy is according to Genebrard in the Tangian ("Tangique") language as well as in those of the Bugians ("Bugiens"). Others say that they hold the divine service in the language of the Egyptians, Coptic or Coptites ("Ekupti ou Koptites"). But in order to provide a comparison of this language with the others, I pass on the Lord's Prayer that Gramaye has published of this kind." (Davity 1637: 375)

In the margin of the text, the author gives a reference to the 16th century book about languages by Konrad Gesner ("Vvaser Com ad Mithrid, Gesn."), but this is probably the wrong source. Gessner's book (Gessner 1555) indeed contains a dozen versions of the Lord's Prayer, but none of them is in Nubian, and none in Romani. There appears to be a fairly elaborate section in the book about what he calls the language of the Gypsies ("Zigaris vel Ciganis Erronibus, ut vulgum quidam uocant, nostri Zigyner", i.e. Zingaris or travelling Gigans, as they call them in the vernacular, our Zigeuner). That chapter, however, deals exclusively with Rotwelsch, the ingroup speech of peripatetic groups in Germany and neighbouring countries (see Kluge 1901, Siewert 1996, Matras 1998b). The Gessner word list does not contain a single word of Romani, even though some Romani words entered Rotwelsch at a later stage.

The next note in the margin in Davity reads: "Orat Domin. 100 ling", and that is in fact an abbreviation of a book written by the Belgian scholar Jean Baptiste Gramaye, who is mentioned in Davity's text. Gramaye will be discussed below. The text of the Lord's Prayer in Davity is clearly Romani, even though many parts are unclear. This is a facsimile of the text of the Lord's prayer in "Nubian", i.e. Romani, in Figure 1.

**Ea deia i Deuel Sonakais albaft, abprecht cralift. Precht polna adeuel i forofa.
Mantzme pilfe Schur. Spiafe pferdare ho biacafe pferdoes. Nau fogefe aspocfela
spaxenfe & beinck. Amen.**

Figure 1. The Lord's Prayer in "Nubian" in d'Avity 1637.

The text reads:

Ea desia i Deuel Sonakais albast, abprechst cralist.

Prechst polna adeuel i forosa.

Manrmse pilse Schur.

Spiase pserdase ho sbiacase pferdoes.

Nau fogese aspocscela spacxense & beinck. Amen.

There are a number of clear Romani words that fit the text of the Lord's Prayer, like *devel* "God", *beinck* "devil". The word *Sonakai* must be the Romani word for "Gold". My first impression was that it was an imperfect copy of an earlier source, in which such grave copying errors were made that these have led to the unintelligibility of most of the text. Since a source was mentioned, this led me to a quest for Gramaye, which was apparently Davity's source. At first it was impossible to locate Gramaye's book in library catalogues, and in fact some people appear to have doubted the existence of this book by Gramaye. Davity had copied several versions of the Lord's Prayer from Gramaye, and 19th century scholars were aware of references to Gramaye's book. Nève (1854), for instance, assumed that it existed, on the basis of circumstantial evidence, such as mention in other publications. Gramaye's book was, after d'Avity, later cited in Vincent (1927: 240). Vincent was the first who could confirm its existence: he reported that he had an (incomplete) copy in his hands, which he described in his article, but unfortunately he did not mention where he had seen it. The whereabouts of this copy is unknown.

In 2010 I finally found out that the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel possessed a copy, and a photographic copy was kindly provided by the library, so that I could compare Davity with the original text in Gramaye. Before providing that, I will give some information about the author, Jean Baptiste Gramaye.

Jean Baptiste Gramaye

The original publicist who had the text printed in Davity's book, was known as a historian (see e.g. Ronvaux, no date) rather than a linguist. He was a prolific writer who published histories of Asia and Africa (see Swiggers 2001) and histories of at least half a dozen of Belgian cities. Only two of his books deal specifically with languages. Gramaye (1622b) is a

comparative study of 16 writing systems of the world as known at that time (Swiggers 2001). In that book, Gramaye also announces a study of 137 peoples and their languages as well. According to Swiggers this goal was never realized, unless his other book of the same year is the one he refers to, and that is the one that contains the Romani text. The Latin title of the book (Gramaye 1622, see Figure 2) translates as:

The Lord's Prayer expressed in more than 100 different languages or dialects, from various praised authors in a book on writing and languages from the whole world.

Or, in the original Latin:

Oratio Dominica centum et amplius diversis expressa linguis seu dialectis, ex varijs auctoribus laudatis in libro de litteris et linguis Vniuersi orbis.

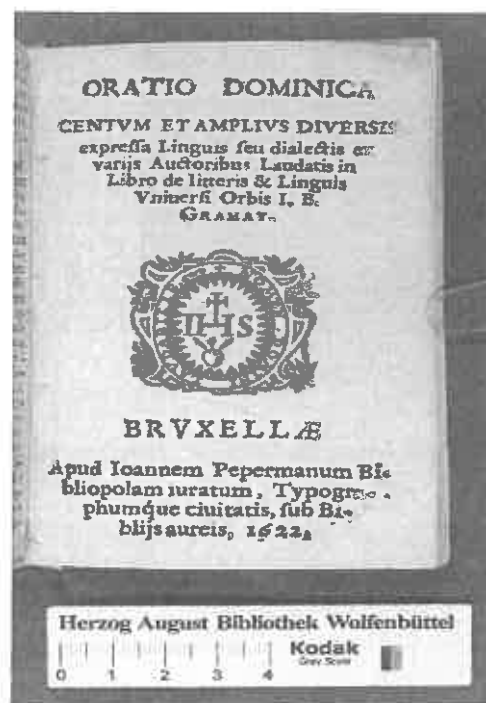


Figure 2. The cover of Gramaye 1622 (courtesy Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel)

There are not 137 languages in this book, but only 107, or in fact even fewer as some languages are listed several times under different names (e.g. *Cantabrie* and *Vascones* for Basque). In some cases several variants are given for one language (e.g. the *Scoti* and *In: Scoti* texts differ only in details). The text that was the source of Davity's quote is listed in Gramaye (1622a) on page B1recto as the language of the *Nubiani* "Nubians" (see Figure 3a and 3b). It is printed in Gothic type, for unknown reasons (some other versions of the Lord's Prayer are in Roman type).

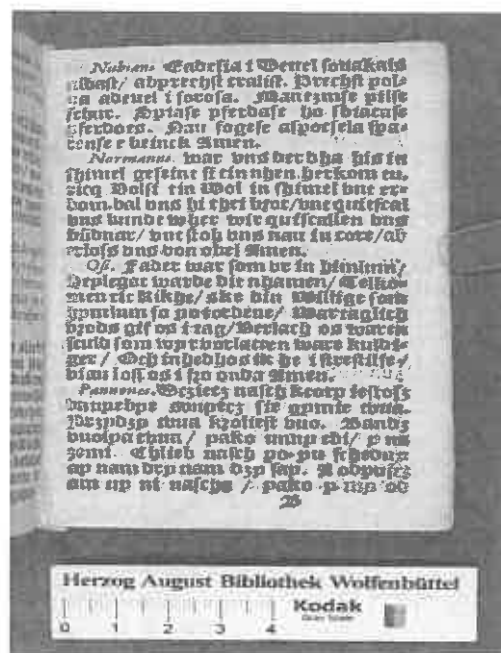


Figure 3. The Lord's Prayer in the language of the "Nubiani" in Gramaye 1622

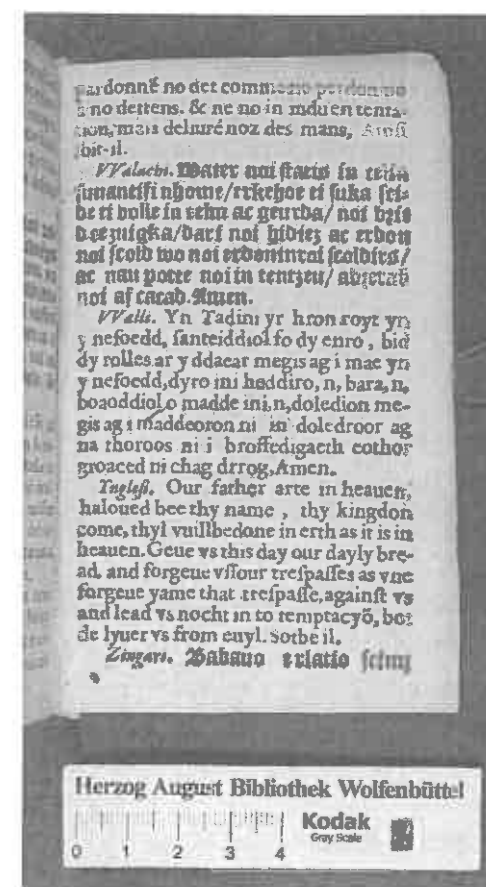


Figure 4a. The Lord's Prayer in the Zingari "Gypsy" language in Gramaye (1622) – not Romani, but...? (first part)



Figure 4b. The Lord's Prayer in the "Gypsy" language in Gramaye (1622) – not Romani, but...? (second part)

The Gramaye Romani text: a preliminary interpretation

The compiler clearly had trouble eliciting the text from a Romani speaker. Traces of the grammar of Romani are absent or at least unclear. The translation into Romani is at best a paraphrase of the original text of the prayer. Unfortunately the prayer is abbreviated in comparison to the original Lord's Prayer, which makes the interpretation extra difficult, as it is not clear what is left out. Here we can only offer a beginning of an interpretation. The only words that can be interpreted with certainty at this point are: (a) *deuel* (R. *devel*) "God", *kral-* (R. *kral* "King"), *sonakais* (R. *sonakai* "gold"), *Manrmse* contains R. *manro* "bread", *beinck* (R. *benk* "devil"), *forosa* (R. *foros* "town"). The spaces between words here differ from the original text. Here I have added some further translations of words that are less certain.

- (1) *Ea de sia deuel Sonakais al bast,*
Give God gold(en) hand?
- (2) *ab prechst cralist.*
Come Kingdom
- (3) *Prechst polna adeuel i forosa.*
Heaven God in? Towns
- (4) *ManrOmse pil se Schur.*
Bread drink ? ?
- (5) *Spiaze pserdase ho sbiacase pfer does.*
Forgive? Sins that forgive sins
- (6) *Nau fogese aspoc sela spacxense & beinck.*
Forgive? Power? Devil
- (7) *Amen*

The following Romani words seem to figure in this text, including rather uncertain ones.

<i>av-</i>	come (general Romani)
<i>boliben</i>	heaven (Northern: Sinti, North Russia, Baltic)
<i>d-, del</i>	give (general Romani)
<i>Devel</i>	God (general Romani)
<i>?doš</i>	guilt, sin (general Romani)
<i>foros</i>	town (general Romani)
<i>manro, maro</i>	bread (general Romani: -nr- cluster more conservative and widespread)
<i>pi-</i>	drink (general Romani)
<i>sonakaj</i>	gold (general Romani)
<i>?vast</i>	hand (general Romani)
<i>silá</i>	power (Northern: Sinti, Finland; also South Slavic languages)

The identification of further words could contribute to a clearer idea of the dialectal origin, and perhaps it could shed light on the integration of loanwords, if the frequent *-se* element would be a verbal loan marker, or an instrumental case marker. Two words, *polna/boliben* and *zila/sela*, if rightly identified, point to a Northern dialect. The two Northern words link this text with Sinti. This is not surprising, as the Northern dialects are spoken by those who entered Europe in a first set of immigrations, preceding the year 1600.

Line (4) could be intended as: *manro jasa pilas??* "we eat bread and we drink ???" (*thud* "milk?").

Lines (5) and (6) perhaps contain the Sinti Romani word *proser-* "to forgive, allow".

It was possible to identify some lexical items, but what about grammatical items? This is virtually impossible: there are no clearly interpretable function words or nominal or verbal endings. There are no visible traces of the definite or indefinite articles *o*, *e*, *i* or their oblique forms, and those should have been there. Plural markers and case markers seem to be absent as well. The word *forosa* may seem to have a Romani plural marker *-a*, but this word must have an athematic plural marker such as *-urja*, as it is a loanword from Greek. Neither is the *-a* in *polna* likely to be a plural marker, as a plural form of "heaven" is not usual. The nouns *sonakais* and *kralist* in the text are clearly from *sonakaj* "gold" and *kral* "King", but there are no Romani endings *-s* or *-st* that could be the sources for these endings. A number of words, possibly verbs, end in *-ese* or *-ase* or *-se*. This could in principle be the first person plural present ending *-asa*, but this does not seem to be compatible with the meaning of the original text of the Lord's Prayer. The word *pil* could be the verb *pi-* "to drink", in third person present *piel* "he/she drinks", but that is not easily compatible with the original text of the prayer. Word order in Romani is fairly free, and hence there is nothing that can be called unusual in this text from a syntactic point of view, at least. Other than that, the text is not written in a grammatical form of Romani, even if we do not consider the untranslatable words. Whether this is because of the field situation, in which the transcriber just misinterpreted much of the communication, or whether the Romani speaker just focused on translating the words, with no concern for correct grammar, or was not particularly interested in this exercise, is impossible

to say. A remote possibility of a reduced form of Romani in a pidgin form cannot be excluded, but that is also unlikely, especially since a few endings seem to recur.

Unfortunately, much of the text remains at this point undeciphered. On the other hand, the quantity of clearly identifiable words that roughly fit the meaning of the Prayer leave no doubt that the language of the Prayer is Romani. Grammatical properties, such as function words or grammatical endings, however, cannot be deducted from the text.

Why was the text not discovered before?

It is somewhat enigmatic, why the Romani text, either from Davity or from Gramaye, was never mentioned before as an early source of Romani. Researchers familiar with Romani had had both sources in hand. Adelung and Vater, in their four-volume overview of the languages of the world published in the early 1800s, refer to Davity in their work, but not in connection with Romani (p. 652). They also mention other works by Davity, but not specifically his 1637 *Description Générale d l'Afrique* (General description of Africa). They even mention the presence of 21 versions of the Lord's Prayer, some of which are quoted from Gramaye, in Davity's posthumous seven-volume *Les Etats, Empires, Royaumes du Monde* (the states, empires and kingdoms of the world) (Davity 1660). They mention six versions taken from Gramaye in this work: Chinese, Moroccan, Coptic, Angolan, Melindanic (an Afro-Asiatic language of Ethiopia, Adelung 1806a: 382) and Abyssinian.

Adelung & Vater, in their 1806-1817 overviews of the languages of the world, used the Lord's Prayer as a comparandum for all the languages in their book. There was a long tradition of collecting versions of this text in different languages, going back at least to 1555, when Konrad Gessner gave the text in almost two dozen languages, which would provide researchers with a source for comparison. Adelung & Vater were familiar with the existence of Gramaye's collection of the Lord's Prayers. They list several others, but not the Nubiani one. They discuss Gramaye as a collector of Lord's Prayers on p. 652-653, where it appears that they have not had Gramaye's book in their hands.

One could say that the origin of the text was hidden, as the language was not identified as Romani, but was called "Nubian". However, the same misnomer of *Nubians* for Roma, or rather the identification of Nubians with Gypsies, had taken place also several decades earlier

in Vulcanius' Romani materials of 1597 (see above). The label "Nubians" could be expected to be linked with Gypsies both in 1622 and 1637, but this apparently did not happen.

Even more intriguing, is the fact that the text in Davity right below the version of the Lord's Prayer in the language of the "Nubiani", refers to the Roma (p. 375-376), a group that Adelung also had shown an interest in (Adelung 1806a: 237-252).

It appears that Adelung and Vater had found six versions of the Lord's Prayer in Davity's works, but they do not refer to d'Avity's 1637 book *Description Générale de l'Afrique*. This book contains information about the whole African continent. A description of the Nubian Kingdom is given on p. 375-377. The Nubian people live in the southern part of Egypt and Northern Sudan. The author starts with a discussion of the names given to their Kingdom, where he remarks that "some people say that it is also called Little Egypt" – which is the name of the area some Roma said that they came from when they first arrived in Europe. Even though it is certain that the ancestors of the Roma did not come from Egypt or Nubia, there was a tradition linking a Roma homeland with Egyptians and Nubians. Davity discusses some aspects of the history and geography, and then, under the heading of contemporary customs, he also discusses their language, here is a facsimile in the original French in Figure 5:

Il ont vne langue particuliere: mais leur Messe, ou Liturgie est selon Genebrard
 en langue Tangique: aussi bien que celle des Bugiens. Les autres¹ disent qu'ils cele-
 broient le divin service en la langue des Egyptiens E! kupti, ou Koptics. Mais afin de
 vous faire voir la conformité de ceste langue avec les autres, ie vous communique la
 Patenostre que Gramaye a publiée en ceste sorte.²
 Ea deſis i Deuel Sonakais albaſt, abprecht craliſt. Precht polna adeuel i forofa.
 Mantzmſe piſſe Schur. Spiaſe pferdaſe ho ſbiacaſe pferdoes. Nau fogeſe aſpocſela
 ſpachenſe & beinck. Amen.

1 Haythou
biſt. Orientis
C. 14.
2 Vater
Com ad Mi-
thrid. Geſu.

Figure 5: Description of the language of the Nubians of Africa, from d'Avity 1637

Interestingly, this is followed by a description of Gypsies, based on Vulcanius. He discusses the "language of those travelers who say that they came from Little Egypt" and writes that "some people think that they have a jargon made for fun, after the countries where they are staying".

Mais il me ſemble que ceſte derniere bande n'a rien de commun avec nos Bohe-
 miens: & pour dire mon aduis ſur ce ſubieſt, ie puis aſſeurer que ce n'eſt qu'un pur
 ramas de perſonnes vagabondes, qui ſont de diuers pays, ainſi qu'ils m'ont aduoué.
 Quant à leur langage il eſt fort particulier, & n'a rien d'approchant du noſtre. Il eſt
 vray qu'il ſe peut faire que beaucoup de mots des pays qu'ils ont pratiqué ſe ſont
 glifféz parmy leur langage, ainſi que Vvafere dit de quelques vns. Mais ie m'eſton-
 ne ſur tout de tant de mots que Geſner a mis cōme appartenans à ceſte langue, d'au-
 tant qu'ils ſont bien peu déguiſez, & tiennent tous de l'Allemand. De ſorte que ie
 croiroy que ce ſeroit pluſtoſt un jargon de quelque Narquois du pays que la langue
 des Bohemiens, qui n'a point de rapport en France avec la Françoisſe. Pour con-

Figure 6: Description of the language of the Gypsies (Bohémiens), from d'Avity 1637

Davity's discussion of the language of the Gypsies is somewhat confusing as it is not clear what groups he is talking about, or what language. He refers to Gessner, and Gessner was one author who confused Romani and Rotwelsch, the latter a secret language with Jewish, Romance and (later) a few Romani elements (Kluge 1901, Matras 1998). Gessner (1555: 71-72) lists the language of the Gypsies among the made-up languages ("De Lingvis Qvibvsdam & uocabulis fictitijs"), and he does not quote a single word in that section, only the name of the language "Rotwelsch". In the end of the book, however, he publishes a fairly extensive word list of Rotwelsch after announcing words from the language of the Gypsies and Travellers from a book (p. 74-77). Not a single one of these Rotwelsch words is of Romani origin, however, even though a few Romani words became part of this secret language later (See contributions in Matras 1998a).

VOCABULA LINGVAE
 fictitiæ Zigarorum et mendicorum, ex li-
 bello cuius paulò antè men-
 tionem fecimus.

The source of Gramaye's Romani Lord's Prayer

Where did Gramaye get his Lord's Prayer from? In the title of his book he states that they are taken from "praised authors". Indeed it can be shown that some of his versions are copied directly from Gessner, but what about the rest?

It should be said here that there were many collections of the Lord's Prayer through the ages, already beginning in the 1500s, and the specimens in Gramaye's book were apparently not copied a lot into later collections – probably not at all directly from him, due to the rarity of the book. Some of the names of the languages are obscure. More work on this book is needed, also on his sources.

Before Gramaye, at least a dozen authors had collections of versions of the Lord's Prayer in their printed works, among them Duret (1613), Georgievitz (1566), Gessner (1555), Megiser (1603), Roccha (1592), Waser, Pistorius Mauer (1621) (see the listing of collections in Adelung 1806b: 645ff). It was impossible to check all these books for a possible source for Gramaye.

On the other hand, it could be that Gramaye collected it himself. He has travelled in Europe and North Africa at the least. In his book on writing systems of the world (Gramaye1622b), he indicated that he obtained at least some versions through personal contacts or correspondence. The Coptic version for instance "communicavit mihi Aegyptiaco et Nilotico sermone Bapt. Fererius sequens" (Bapt. Fererius communicated to me the Egyptian and Nile prayer). The one from Thessaloniki was communicated to him by the bishop in Brussels ("communicavit mihi Episcopus Montis Sancti Bruxellae hoc anno 1622 versatus, quae talis est"). (Both quotes are from Vincent (1927: 242).

If it is the case that Gramaye used a published source, it should be possible to track down an earlier text of the Prayer. However, dozens of books – most of them difficult to get hold of – with versions of the Lord's Prayer in various languages, had been published before Gramaye. I leave that to others.

Conclusions

The text of the Lord's Prayer in the language of the "Nubians", published in 1622, and copied in 1637, is one of the earliest texts in Romani, the third source to appear in print, and the oldest religious text. Most likely the 1622 author copied it from an earlier source, but that one

has not been located. The text is difficult to interpret, but the presence of a handful of clear Romani words leaves no doubt that it is in Romani.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Germany, for making a scanned version of the book available. I also like to thank the library for their permission to add facsimiles of the title pages of the book and the relevant page in this article. The Call Number (Signatur) of the book is P 465. 12° Helmst. (8). I am grateful to Ian Hancock and Hristo Kyuchukov for their comments.

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НОВЫЙ СТАРИННЫЙ ТЕКСТ НА ЦЫГАНСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ: МОЛИТВА ГОСПОДНЯ, 1622

ПЕТЕР БАКЕР

В настоящей работе рассматривается найденный ранний текст на ромском языке, который называется "Nubian" и датируется 1622 и 1637 годами. Несмотря на то, что большая часть текста видна неотчетливо, это действительно текст на ромском языке. Возможно, он восходит к ранней версии неизвестного источника. Обсуждение затрагивает содержание публикации, включая автора, а также другие старые тексты на ромском языке и собрание текстов молитвы господней (приблизительно 1600 год). Источник, датируемый 1622 годом, дает также версию молитвы господней на цыганском языке, но при этом неясно, какой действительно язык установлен.

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PORTRAITS

THE FIRST ROMANI NOVELIST: MATÉO MAXIMOFF

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Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra

*"The world would be inundated with Romani writers, if the Roma could write! Just some of the fantastic stories on paper that my uncles used to tell about life in Russia! No word would have to be changed – it would be enough to put them on paper as the Roma were passing them on amongst themselves."*¹

Excerpts from an interview of Milena Hübschmannová and Hana Šebková with Matéo Maximoff in 1997 in Paris.

Writing as a challenge

In his interview with prominent Czech Romologist Milena Hübschmannová and Hana Šebková, the Romani writer Matéo Maximoff expressed his strong desire and need of the Romani nation to acquire literary. He himself has succeeded in this respect, but in his novels he demonstrates his need to keep promulgating this idea amongst others. He therefore often puts this desire in the words of his heroes, making them speak on behalf of the acquisition and application of writing as a means of capturing traditional Romani culture. Milena Hübschmannová speaks about it in the following lines: *"The first Maximoff's novel, The Ursitors (Les Ursitory), was published in 1946. The book's success demonstrated the author's ability to write and substantiated his prevailing, latent desire to tell stories, release his imagination, and promote his mission in an unprecedented form for the Roma people – in*

¹ Hübschmannová, 2005, p. 103