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Slavic languages in contact, 9: *Surzhyk* in Evliya Çelebi's 'Book of Travels' (17th century)¹

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¹ This article was read at a Slavistic conference organized in Pobierowo by the University of Szczecin, May, 25–27th, 2023. During the conference, I greatly benefited from discussions with Adam Fałowski, as well as from conversations with Oksana Baraniwska (both: Cracow). I sincerely thank them for their time.

This article was reviewed by two people. Reviewer 1 expects me to determine the functions of Evliya Çelebi's glosses in the text. It is impossible because there is no Ukrainian text in the *Seyâhatnâme*. The word material consists of single glosses and a few sentences. His other critical remark concerns my choice of exclusively East Slavic languages as the comparative background. The question elaborated in the article is whether all words classified by Evliya Çelebi (and Robert Dankoff) as Ukrainian really *are* Ukrainian, rather than Russian or Belarussian. The idea that they could be confused with West or South Slavic words is extremely unlikely.

Reviewer 2 has made some valuable remarks. Most of his or her comments have been incorporated into the main text of this article but one is of a more general nature and therefore I would like to present it briefly here: What did Evliya Çelebi call the Ukrainian language? That is a very reasonable question. I used the term "Ukrainian" after Robert Dankoff, the editor of the *Seyâhatnâme*. Evliya Çelebi himself gave place names but he generally did not give exact language names.

As to the suggestion that I could or should also present Evliya Çelebi's biographical data and describe his itinerary I have to say so much has been written, and in various languages, about Evliya Çelebi and his work that I believe such a repetition would be redundant. For an interested reader I would suggest to see Dankoff/Tezcan's bibliography (2012) as well as Tveritina/Zeltjakov (1961) Grigor'jeva/Zeltjakov (1979). In Polish, two publications should be

1. Introduction

Ukrainian is the only East Slavic language attested by name in the renowned *Seyāhatnāme*, the ‘Book of Travels’ by Evliya Çelebi (1611–1682 or 1683). This lexical material, collected in 1656 or, at any rate, around the middle of the 17th century, and adduced in the form of both words and phrases, sometimes even sentences, has hitherto received but scant attention in Slavic studies and mostly remained unknown to specialists in East Slavic languages. A good example is Volodymyr Sičynśkyj who collected all the descriptions of Ukraine made by non-Ukrainian authors. His book, first published in 1938, includes an abundance of information ranging from 9th century Arabic notes to West European reports from the end of the 19th century, but Evliya Çelebi is never mentioned. The situation has not changed even after Robert Dankoff (1991) published his *Evliya Çelebi Glossary* containing foreign and unusual words in the *Seyāhatnāme*.

2. Words and comments

Initially, my aim was to present all the Ukrainian words with some comments. However, it soon turned out that they could be divided into three groups. The first group consists of words with typically Ukrainian features, for instance ²:

- [1] EÇ *şobaq* ‘dog’ (D 83, 120) = Ukr. *sobáka* [sɔ-] id., as contrasted with Russ. *sobáka* [sǎ-], BRus. *sabáka* id.
- [2] EÇ *vohoň* [= -ŋ]³ ‘fire’ (D 120) = Ukr. *vohón* id., in contrast to Russ. *ogón*, BRus. *ahón* id.
- [3] EÇ *xorilqa* ‘Polish arrack’ (D 97) = Ukr. *horilka* id., in contrast to BRus. *harélka* id. (no Russian equivalent exists)

Some other words display no specifically Ukrainian features. They can be called simply ‘East Slavic words.’ Examples:

recommended: Abrahamowicz/Dubiński/Płaskowicka-Rymkiewicz (1969, 2018) and Kwoka (2021).

² The Ukrainian words from *Seyāhatnāme* are adduced here in the transcription used by R. Dankoff and based on modern Turkish orthography. Its most characteristic features are as follows: ⟨ç⟩ = č, ⟨ş⟩ = š, ⟨ı⟩ = y = Russ. *ы*. The acute accent in letters ⟨á⟩ and ⟨é⟩ should be ignored while reading. It denotes graphic peculiarities observable in the Arabic script (see Dankoff 1991: 1, fn. 1). Similarly, the distinction between letters with an underdot and those without, e.g. ⟨ş⟩ vs ⟨s⟩, refers to the use of a different letter in the Arabic script.

³ As to the use of non-Slavic *ŋ* for Slavic *ń* cf. also the opposite direction: the use of Slavic *ń* for non-Slavic *ŋ*, for instance in Polish *budyń* = English *pudding*, Polish *żeńszeń* = English *ginseng*.

- [4] EÇ *deseq* 'ten' (D 120) < **desyēt* < **desyat* = Ukr. Russ. *désjať* but ≠ BRus. *dzésjać* id.⁴
- [5] EÇ *düveyk* (or *devyek*)⁵ 'nine' (D 120) < **devyēt* < **devyat* = Ukr. *dévjať*, Russ. *dévjať* but ≠ BRus. *dzévjać* id.
- [6] EÇ *ısfınyá* 'pig' (D 120) = Ukr. *svinjá*, Russ. *svinjá*, BRus. *svinnjá* id.
- [7] EÇ *piyak* 'five' (D 120) < **piyat* = Ukr. *pjať*, Russ. *pjať*, BRus. *pjać* id.
- [8] EÇ *turi* 'three' (D 120) = Ukr. BRus. *try*, Russ. *tri* id.

The most surprising and most interesting group, however, is another one, namely the one that contains words which were recorded by Evliya Çelebi as Ukrainian but which nevertheless display non-Ukrainian features. These are:

- [9] EÇ *çasnoq* 'garlic' (D 120) = Ukr. *časnýk*, Russ. *česnók* id. – Presumably, the form *çasnoq* resulted from a contamination of the Ukrainian and the Russian forms.
- [10] EÇ *huleb* ~ *hulib* (D 120) = Ukr. *xlib* = Russ. BRus. *xleb* id. – The coexistence of both of these forms points to language contacts between the Ukrainians and other East Slavs in the 17th-century, a fact that will prove important below.
- [11] EÇ *odin* 'one' (D 120). – It is not entirely clear how the notation in the Arabic script should be read, that is *odin* or *odın* because the difference between *i* and *ı* is difficult to make in this alphabet; here, the choice of the consonant letter “د = dāl” (which usually, albeit not always, precedes palatal vowels in Turkish) rather than “ض = źād” (mostly, albeit not always, preceding velar vowels) for *-d-* is decisive. Thus, Russ. *odın* 'one' rather than Ukr. *odýn* id. can be viewed as a possible etymon of this word.
- [12] EÇ *qon* 'horse' (D 120) = Russ. BRus. *koń* id. but ≠ Ukr. *kiń* id.
- [13] EÇ *sém* 'seven' (D 120) = Russ. *sem*, BRus. *sem* id. but ≠ Ukr. *sym* id.
- [14] EÇ *şéseq* 'six' (D 120) < **şeset* = Russ. *šest* 'id. but ≠ Ukr. *šist*', BRus. *šesć* id.
- [15] EÇ *vosım* 'eight' (D 120) = Russ. *vósem*, Brus. *vósem*, possibly contaminated with Ukr. *visim* id.

The following examples should be treated with special caution:

⁴ There are four examples of the change Slavic *-t' >* Turkish *-k* (*deseq*, *düveyk*, *piyak*, *şesek*) and one for Slavic *-d' >* Turkish *-g* (*sag*). No Slavic *-t'*, *-d'* was rendered by Turkish *-t*, *-d*. To the best of my knowledge, this phenomenon has not been as yet explained. A partially similar one can be observed in the Transnistrian Ukrainian dialect of the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast with its *kisto* for the literary *tisto* 'dough', *kişytysja* for the literary *tışytysja* 'to enjoy, be happy', and so on (O. Baraniwska, personal communication); here, however, the change occurs in the anlaut rather than in the auslaut and, besides, it can be understood as a result of dissimilation *t' – t > k' – t*. Reviewer 2 kindly emphasizes that Z. Stieber (1938 [1974], 1982) also writes about this phenomenon, but does not explain it.

⁵ I would much prefer the variant *devyek* and cannot actually explain why Dankoff put the rather weird form *düveyk* in first place.

- [16] EÇ *day mni* ‘give me’ (D 120) = Ukr. *daj meni*, Russ. *daj mne* id. – Possibly a sort of contamination.
- [17] EÇ *iduzdiro* ‘go in health’ (D 120) = Ukr. *jtí zdoróv*, Russ. *idi zdoróv* [zdã-] id. – The phrase is partially distorted. It may be viewed as a notation of the Russian expression in Ukraine.
- [18] EÇ *qurıça* ‘hen’ < **kurica* = Russ. *kúrica*, BRus. *kúryca* id. – The Ukrainian standard word for ‘hen’ is *kúrka*. The Ukrainian form *kúricja* is only adduced in ESUM (3: 150) in the 20th century which means that this variant has possibly been borrowed from Russian in recent times rather than inherited from Old Ukrainian. If this is the case, the word **kurica* was used by Evliya Çelebi’s informant as a Ukrainian one even though it probably was a borrowing from Russian.

Very special cases are two hydronyms:

- [19] EÇ *vodabuh* (D 120) ~ *Voda-boh* (D 96) ‘[river] Bug.’ – The use of *voda*, a Slavic word with the general meaning of ‘water’ in place of a more specialized one, such as *reka* or *rička* ‘river’, is a little surprising. More important is, however, the typically Ukrainian pronunciation of the letter <g> = *h* [ɦ]. The notation *vodabuh* should be, thus, considered a Ukrainian word.
- [20] EÇ *vodanipir* (D 96, 120) ‘[river] Dnieper.’ – Even though the Dnieper is usually associated with Ukraine its Ukrainian name *Dnipró* is far less used in English than *Dnieper*, a reflex of the Russian form *Dnepr* [ˈdnʲepər]. Also Evliya Çelebi’s notation *-nipir* cannot be directly derived from Ukrainian *Dnipró*. But there are three possible explanations for EÇ *-nipir*: (a) it is a reflex of older Ukrainian forms *Dnipr* and *Dniper*; (b) it reflects the Russian form *Dnepr* with its relatively high (or, middle) *-e-*; (c) it results from a contamination of the Ukrainian form with the Russian one. – Incidentally, the modern English spelling *Dnieper* seems to be a graphical contamination of the Polish spelling *Dniepr* and the East Slavic pronunciation [-nipər].

3. Conclusion

All the examples [9] – [15] as well as partially [16] – [19] seem to reflect, besides purely Ukrainian material, two groups of East Slavic words (1° non-Ukrainian East Slavic lexemes; 2° Ukrainian-Russian contaminations, or less likely Ukrainian-Belarussian ones) and, thus, to point to a mixed character of the Ukrainian language that Evliya Çelebi became exposed to during his travels.

My conclusion is that the mixed language noted by Evliya Çelebi may be viewed as an early phase of the so-called *surzhyk*, and its beginnings may, thus, be dated to the mid-17th century (or even somewhat earlier). Niklas Bernsand’s (2001: 41a) opinion has been that:

The linguistic varieties known as surzhyk emerged when Ukrainian peasants from the end of the 18th century increasingly came into contact with a Russian-speaking environment, a development that was closely knit to the modernisation of Ukrainian society.

Gerd Hentschel and Tilmann Reuther (2020: 106) are of the same opinion:

Spätestens seit den 1860er Jahren der Zarenzeit, wohl aber partiell auch schon seit dem späten 18. Jahrhundert [...] passten sich auf diesem Territorium lebende Sprecher*innen des Ukrainischen [...] an eine [...] klar russischsprachige Umgebung an.

Thanks to Evliya Çelebi the emergence of *surzhyk* can, I would think, be antedated by about 150 years.

4. Appendix. Ukrainian words in the *Seyāḥatnāme*

**boh* ~ **buh* → *ışpaşıyo*; *poda yuz doro*; *pomahay bo*.

Buh ~ *Boh* → *vodabuh*.

časnoq 'garlic' (D 120) = Ukr. *časnyk* id., Russ. *česnok* id. – See [9].

čátri 'four' (D 120) = ? Ukr. *čotýry* id.; cf. BRus. *čatýry* id.

çı bula [!] 'onion' (D 120) = Ukr. *cybúlja* id.

çiduz çizdiro 'how are you?' (D 120) = Ukr. *čy duž čy zdoróv?* '[are you] strong and healthy?'

črevik 'shoe' (D 120) = Ukr. *čerevýk* id. – The reading *čre-* (<**čere-*) seems uncertain.

day mni 'bring me' (D 120) = Ukr. *daj meni* 'give me', ros. *daj mne* id. – See [16].

deseq 'ten' (D 120) = Ukr. Russ. *désjat* id. – See [4].

devyek → *düveyk*

divey '2' (D 120). – Possibly a contamination of Ukr. *dva* 'two' and *dvoje* 'two, duo'.

didqo 'devil' (D 120) = Ukr. *did'ko* id.

didqo holopça 'devil boy' (D 120) = Ukr. *did'ko xlópcja* (< gen. *xlópeć*) id. – Cf. *hulopça*.

**Dnibr* → *vodanipir*.

**duž* → *çiduz çizdiro*.

düveyk (or *devyek* – M.S.) 'nine' (D 120) = Ukr. *dévjat*', Russ. *dévjat*' id. – See [5].

ḥatman, *xatman* (*xoṭman*) 'hetman (cossack title)' (D 42, 120) = Ukr. *hétmán*, Rus. *gétman*, BRus. *hétman* id.

huleb ‘bread’ (D 120) ~ *hilib* [in: *hilibá prnés* ‘bring bread’ (D 120) = Ukr. *хліба принесі* id.] = Ukr. *chlib* id., Russ., BRus. *chleb* id., Pol. *chleb* id. – See [10].

hilopçá ~ *holopçá* ‘a little boy’ (D 120) = Ukr. *chlópcja*, gen. < *chlópec* id. – Cf. *didqo holopçá*; *hulap*.

hodi ‘come [imperative sg.]’ (D 120) = Ukr. *chodý* id.

hodiv → *qudi hodiv çe*.

holopçá → *hilopçá*

holova → *naşuru to biholova*.

huc isfnyá ‘eat [a/the] pig [imperative]’ (D 120). – The word *huc* is unclear.

hulap ‘boy’ (D 44: « < Ukr. *hlap*» [!]) = Ukr. *xlop* ‘peasant; man’. – Cf. *hilopçá*.

isfiçqá ‘candle’ (D 120) = Ukr. *svíčka* id.

isfnyá ‘pig’ (D 120) = Ukr. *svinjá*, Russ. *svinjá*, BRus. *svinnjá* id. – See [6]. – Cf. *mujiq isfnyá*.

islivi ‘plum’ (D 120) = Ukr. *slývy*, pl. < *slýva* id.

işpaşıyo ‘good-bye [parting phrase]’ (D 120; fn. 4: «For **işpaşıbo* [...]; thank you») = Ukr. *spasýbu* ~ *spasýbi(h)* ‘thank you’ (< *spasý* ‘save [imperative]’ + *boh* ‘God’). – The Arabic notation can also be read *işpaşıyu* which makes the connection with the Ukr. *spasýbu* quite probable.

iduzdiro ‘go in health’ (D 120) = Ukr. *jtí zdoróv*, Russ. *idi zdăróv* id. – See [17].h

loziçá (certainly pro: **lojiçá*) ‘spoon’ (D 120) < **lojiçka* < ? Ukr. *lózec̣ka* ‘anat. xiphoid process, metasternum’ (lit.: ‘little spoon’), Russ. *lózec̣ka* ‘1. little spoon; 2. xiphoid process, metasternum’. – Reviewer 2 is certainly right when he concerns the medical meaning of the Ukrainian word as a relatively new borrowing from Russian.

maşlá ‘butter’ (D 120) = Ukr., Russ. *másla* (gen. < *máslo* id., as in *kilográm másla* ‘kilogram of butter,’ and so on).

**matı*, acc. *matir* → *yäbut oymaker*.

med ‘mead’ (D 56, 120) = Ukr. *med* ‘1. honey; 2. mead’.

mni → *day mni*.

mujiq ‘muzhik; name for the cossack and Christian peasant population of South Russia’ (D 58) = Ukr. *mužik* id. – Cf. *mujiq isfnyá*.

mujiq isfnyá [!] (D 120: ‘hey Jew pig’ = Ukr. *mužik svynjá*, lit. ‘peasant-pig’. – The variant *isfnyá* is certainly a misprint for *isfnyá* (see above).

napregu nis ‘I’ll fart in your nose’ (D 120) = Ukr. *naperdžú [tobí v/na] nis* id. – The form *napregu* may be misread for **napergu*. The notation -g- for Ukr. -dž- is unclear. Does it reflect a process parallel to the *d’ > ğ* change in some Ukrainian areals?, cf. Stieber 1938 [= 1974: 444].

naşuru to biholova ‘I’ll shit on your head’ (D 120) < **naşuru tobi holova* = Ukr. *násraju tobí [na] hólovu* id.

nipir → *vodanipir*.

nis → *napregu nis*.

oçsa → *yäbut oçsa*.

odin 'one' (D 120) = Ukr. *odýn*, Russ. *odín* id. – See [11].

oveçqa 'sheep' (D 120) = Ukr. *ovéčka* id.

parboq 'a big (older) lad' (D 120) = Ukr. *párubok* id.

pije 'village' (D 66: = "Муjiq") = Ukr. ?

piyak 'five' (D 120) = Ukr. *pjáí*, Russ. *pjaí*, BRus. *pjać* id. – See [7].

poda yuz doro 'caleyküm selām' (D 120, fn. 3: «For 'God give health!' [or for *bud' zdorov* 'Be healthy!' [!]]») < **po[h] dayu zdoro[v'ja]* = ukr. *Boh daj zdoróv'ja* 'God give health!'

poloniyye 'a type of arrack' (D 67) = ? Ukr. *polýn* ~ *polýń* 'wormwood'.

pomahay bo 'good morning' (D 120) = Ukr. *pomahaj Boh*, lit. 'God help [you].'

poniki (D 67: „error for *poqovnik*?) → *poqovnik*.

poqovnik 'title of a Polish official' (D 67) = Ukr. *polkóvnik* < Pol. *pulkownik* 'colonel'. – Cf. *poniki*, *potnik*.

potnik 'a cossack official' (D 67: "error for *şotnik*? or for *poqovnik*?"). – See *poqovnik*; *sotnik*.

prines → *huleb*.

pur yur – The word is listed with no meaning (D 120) and omitted from the dictionary.

Qamaniçsa (D 70, 120) ~ *qamaniçse* (DS 120) 'geogr. Kamianets [? Podilskyi]' < **Kamanĩsa* < **Kamyant̃sa* = Ukr. *Kám'jancjá*, gen. < *Kám'janéc*. – Possibly distorted by association with Serbo-Croatian *qamaniçsa* [= *kamanica*, pro: *kamenica*] 'stone', also known to Evliya Çelebi (D 70).

qoblaq 'mare' (D 74, 120) < **qobılaq* = Ukr. *kobýla* id., contaminated with Turkish *kısrak* id.

qon 'horse' (D 120) = Russ. BRus. *koń* id. but ≠ Ukr. *kiń* id. – See [12].

qudı hodiv çe 'where did you go?' (D 120) = Ukr. *kudý* 'whereto' + *xodýl* 'went' + *çe* '?'.

qudıydeş 'where are you [sg.] going?' (D 120) < **qudı ydeş* = Ukr. *kudý* 'whereto' + *jdeş* 'you [sg.] go'.

qurıça 'hen' (D 120) = Russ. *kúrica* id., BRus. *kúryca* id.; ≠ Ukr. *kýpka* id., but cf. the Ukr. (20th century) variant *kýpúçya* id. (probably a modern loan from Russian, ESUM 3: 150). – See [18].

ruşá 'pear' (D 120) = Ukr. *hrúša*, Russ. *grúša* id.

sag 'sit' [imperative sg.] (D 120) = Ukr. *şjad'* id. – Cf. *sedı*. – See fn. 4.

sedı 'sit' [imperative sg.] (D 120) = Ukr. *sedy* id. – Cf. *sag*.

sém ‘seven’ (D 120) = BRus. *sem* id., Russ. *sem* id.; ≠ Ukr. *sym* id. – See [13]. – Cf. *vosim*.

şobaq ‘dog’ (D 83, 120) = Ukr. *sobáka* [so-], Russ. *sobáka* [sǎ-] *cobáka* id. – See [1]. – Cf. *usqurvisı şobaq*.

şotnik ‘a cossack official’ (D 84: “Ukrainian *sotnik* ‘captain’”). – The Ukrainian form is *sótnyk* rather than *sótnik*, so that a form such as **şotnuq* or **şotniq* should be expected.

şéseek ‘six’ (D 120) = Russ. *şest*’ id.; ≠ Ukr. *şist*’ id., BRus. *şesć* id. – See [14].

tiri ‘3’ (D 120) = Ukr. BRus. *try*, Russ. *tri* id. – Evliya Çelebi’s notation can also be read *tiri*. – See [8].

tobi → *naşuru to biholova*.

**tvoja* → *yäbut oymaker*.

usqurvisı şobaq ‘hey pimp dog’ (D 120) = Pol. *skurwysyn* ‘vulg. son of a bitch’ + Ukr. *sobáka* ‘dog’. The English translation is completely inaccurate. – Cf. *şobaq*.

**utqá* → *utvá*.

utvá (pro: **utqá*) ‘duck’ (D 120) = Ukr. *vútka* id., Russ. *útka* id. – The word-initial notation can also be read *vut-*.

voda ‘water’ (D 120) = Ukr. *vodá* id.; ≠ Russ. *vodá* [vǎ-], BRus. *vadá* id.

vodabuh (D 120) ~ *Voda-boh* (D 96) ‘river Bug’ = Ukr. *voda* ‘water’ + *Buh* ‘Bug’. – See [19].

vodanipir (D 120, 96) ‘river Dnieper’ = Ukr. *vodá* ‘water’ + *nipir* < **nipr* < **Dnipr* = Ukr. *Дніпрó* = Russ. *Днепр* ‘Dnieper’. – See [20].

vohoñ [= -ñ] ‘fire’ (D 120) = Ukr. *vohón* id.; ≠ Russ. *ogón* [ǎg-], BRus. *ahón* id. – See [2].

vornik ‘a cossack official’ (D 96: “< Ukrainian *dvornik*”). – The Ukrainian term is *vórnyk* ‘a rank for an official in 16th century Moldavia’ rather than *dvornik*.

vosim ‘eight’ (D 120). – Probably a contamination of Ukr. *visim* id., Russ. *vósem* id. and BRus. *vósem* id. – See [15]. – Cf. *sem*.

xatman → *hatman*.

xorilqa ‘Polish arrack’ (D 97) = Ukr. *horílka* ‘vodka;’ ≠ BRus. *harélka* id. – See [3].

xořman → *hatman*.

yabloqa (D 98) ~ *yabluqá* (D 120) ‘apple’ = Ukr. *jábluka*, pl. < *jábluko*, sg. id., but Russ. *jábloko* [-lǎkǎ], sg. (> pl. *jábluki* [-lǎki]) id. – Both *o* and *u* are marked by the same character (ɟ) called “vav” in Turkish. Dankoff’s decision to read *-o-* on page 98 but *-u-* on page 120 is arbitrary.

yäbut oçsa ‘I’ll fuck your father’ (D 120) < ? Ukr. *(*neháj*) *jibút* (*tvohó*) *otecjá* ‘let them fuck your father’ ~ Russ. *(*pust*) *jebút* [*tvojegó*] *otcá* id.

yäbut oymaker 'I'll fuck your mother' (D 120) = ? Ukr. **(neháj) jibúť (tv)ojú mátir*
let them fuck your mather'.

ydeş → *qudiydeş*

zaporosqa 'threshold; cossack sailor' (D 102: "Ukrainian *zaporozhka*"). – Probably a contamination of the Ukrainian *Zaporóžka* (*Sič*) 'Zaporozhian Sich' and Ukr. *porih* 'threshold.'

**zdorov* → *çıduz çızdıro; iduzdiro; poda yuz doru*.

References

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Summary

Slavic languages in contact, 9: *Surzhyk* in Evliya Çelebi's 'Book of Travels' (17th century)

Evliya Çelebi's *Seyāhatnāme*, i.e. 'Book of Travels', contains, among others, a handful of Slavic words that are marked as Ukrainian. As a matter of fact, some of them display mixed features, probably resulting from the contamination of Ukrainian and Russian variants. Such hybrid words (e.g., [9] below) are attested together with purely Ukrainian (e.g., [2]) and purely Russian (e.g., [18]) forms. This situation prompted this author to classify Evliya Çelebi's lexical materials as *surzhyk* vocabulary and, thus, antedate the emergence of *surzhyk* (see section 3).

Keywords: Surzhyk, Ukrainian, Evliya Çelebi, lexicology.