The Calvinist Bukvar' of Trinity College Dublin

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Polata Knigopisnaia

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There are only two Slavonic manuscripts in Trinity College Library in Dublin. Both are of a religious nature. One is a chasovnik or chasosllov showing great signs of wear, which I have not studied in detail. The other, which shows no signs of wear, is the one which forms the subject of this paper.

It was given to the College in December 1706 by an alumnus called Alexander Jephson. This gentleman graduated B.A. in 1685\(^1\), but from then until 1703 nothing is known about him. He then appears as master of the free (i.e. parish) school of Camberwell, South London, and was presumably curate of that parish (St. Giles): extant records show him as curate from 1708 to 1710, and he was succeeded as master of the school in 1713. There is no evidence that he had orientalist interests or other reasons to acquire the manuscript or even that he travelled on the Continent. The furthest we can go in elucidating its route to Dublin is to note that the manuscript had a previous owner, whose initials IS are inscribed twice on the front cover.

The lack of circumstantial evidence about the manuscript means that we have to have recourse to a close examination of its internal features: I shall therefore begin with a description of these, and proceed to a tentative dating and a suggestion as to the manuscript's purpose.

It consists of 196 pages, formed from eleven 16-page gatherings, one 12-page and finally one 8-page gathering. It is interesting to note that, given the decreasing size of the gatherings, the scribe (there is only one) seems to have misjudged how many pages he required as he neared the end of the work: a large section (about 5 pages-worth) of text is omitted at page 180 and from page 181 there is clear evidence of space-saving abbreviations increase in number, and the frequent word "oTBeT" (this is a catechism section) no longer gets a line to itself. One wonders why the

\(^{1}\) I wish to express my gratitude to the late Professor Anne Pennington without whose enthusiastic energy this manuscript would probably have remained even longer unexplored, and to Father Alexander Nadson and Dr Ralph Cleminson whose comments on a previous version of this paper, read to a meeting of the Medieval Studies Group in November 1982, were of the greatest assistance in producing the present version.
scribe could not have added another eight-page gathering - each gathering is numbered, in cyrillic numerals by the same scribe, and one would have supposed that the volume was bound after the writing was completed. The evidence as to the sequence of writing and binding is contradictory.

The binding is with wooden boards, covered with leather decorated in a similar manner to, for example, the chasovniki of 1626 and 1633 which I have seen in the British Library. The spine, with the inscription "Servian Grammar", dates from 1902 when the volume was vamped.

The paper is uniform throughout, with a Strasbourg Lily watermark and a countermark in the form of the initials LR: the former suggests a date 1680 to 1700 and provenance Holland or London although a similar mark has been dated as early as 1625. The countermark suggests late 17th century, and England. There was, however, an extensive trade in paper to Muscovy in the late 17th century.

The style of writing aims at a copy of that of 17th century imprints, except perhaps for the letter V which mostly occurs in a single-rectangle shape. There is moderate use of red, as again in 17th century imprints, but apart from certain enlarged initials, particularly in the second section (which is a service of vespers), there is no other decoration. It was carefully (but not necessarily accurately) executed.

The text is in the form of the East Slavonic bukvar’ or reading primer. It consists of a compilation of sections:

1. Начинное учение человеком хотящим учитися книг богоственного писания: pages 9-20
2. Начало вечерне: pages 21-42 (line 2)
3. Перевод с исповеди веры недерлянских церквей сиречь кальвинских: pages 45-153

Pages 1-2, 4-8, 42 (most) 44, 154, 193-196 are blank.

Page 3 contains the Latin inscription recording the gift of the book to the College.

I will discuss these sections in sequence, and try to identify the sources from which they were copied.

1. I have been helped in identification of the source of the first section (начальное учение) by a classification of East Slavonic primers drawn up by Ralph Cleminson. Our text corresponds most closely to his
Group 4, which contains exclusively Moscow imprints of the second half of the 17th century and is characterised by shortness (one 16-page gathering) and contents (linguistic section only).

The three extant editions of this group which Cleminson has traced 1669, 1688 and 1698 - bear a close resemblance to the first section of the Dublin manuscript both in wording and particularly in the sequence of sub-sections: title - invocation - alphabet - 2-letter syllables - 3-letter syllables with r - names of letters - abbreviated forms pod titlami - numerals - accents and punctuation.

The 1669 edition differs only by omitting chelovekom from the title, by having the post-Nikonian form of "Jesus" (with double Ii-) in the invocation, by having an additional, embellished 'a' and a tailed form of 'z' in the alphabet, and a different letter-order at the end of the alphabet, and by having some minor differences in the abbreviations pod titlom (where the Dublin manuscript has the post-Nikonian form of "Jesus"). The 1688 edition has chelovekom in the title, but a different invocation; it has three forms of the letter 'a', two of 'z' in the alphabet, the order of which is as in 1669; in the forms pod titlom there are minor differences from the Dublin version, but these do not necessarily coincide with those of the 1669 edition. The 1698 edition is very close to the 1688 edition.

Of the divergences from Group 4 editions perhaps the most fundamental is the letter-order at the end of the alphabet. There is apparently, however, a high degree of variability in this area even within Cleminson's groups and subgroups, and this particular feature therefore is insignificant by comparison with the divergences from the linguistic sections of editions from other groups. The Dublin manuscript, in common with Group 4, has no reverse-order alphabet, no random-order alphabet, no morphological paradigms, no acrostic, no 3-letter syllables with 'l' (all as in Moscow 1637); the title does not include the word "bukvar!" and there are no reading passages between the forms pod titlom and the numeral (as in Moscow 1657 and 1664).

The source for the first section must therefore be a Moscow short-format primer of the second half of the 17th century. If only because of the invocation, I am inclined to suggest that it may be an imprint closer to 1669 than to 1688, or at least prior to the latter.

2. The second section is a service of vespers (Nachalo vecherni) taken from a chasovnik.

The history of printed часовники (identified by this title as by, for example, Zernova) basically spans the period from the very end of the 16th
century to the Nikonian reforms. In Muscovy, the chasovnik then seems to have been discontinued in favour of the more extensive and detailed chasoslov and sluzhebnik. According to Zernova, the last Moscow chasovnik was printed in 1654. However, outside Muscovy chasovniki continued to be printed, for example in Mogilev in 1701 and 1713. The 1701 Mogilev edition, of which there is a copy in the British Museum, explicitly states that it is based on two pre-Nikonian Moscow chasovniki, of 1615 and of the period 1645-1652. It would appear that the use of pre-Nikonian chasovniki in the preparation of these editions was significant for their users, presumably Old Believers. While I have not studied this area thoroughly, the content of post-Nikonian chasoslovy differs markedly.

Close study of the structural, morphological and orthographical features of our manuscript and of a representative selection of mostly, but not exclusively, Muscovite chasovniki allows us to identify the source of the former as Muscovite, and of the early 1640's. It is possible, of course, that this may not be a direct source, since the comment in the Mogilev 1701 edition suggests that in the Belorussian/Lithuanian area, pre-Nikonian chasovniki were copied and even reprinted, and that such a work could be the direct source of our manuscript.

There are two major changes or omissions made by our scribe: between the prayer of St. Anphinogenos and the evening prayer there are no variations for each day of the week, and on page 42 the text breaks off with about 190 words to go, including the prayer of St. Ephraim and the dismissal/benediction section (which indicates multiple obeisances). It would have been possible to fit this latter passage in to the three and three-quarters pages left blank before the third section of the manuscript.

We would suggest that the first omission was caused by the absence in reformed churches of daily services on a regular basis, and the second omission by the inappropriateness of multiple obeisances in the form of worship practiced in those churches. Perhaps it was intended to elaborate a more appropriate benediction section for the end of the service, which was never completed. Of importance, however, is the fact that an essentially orthodox form of worship (although the high proportion of Psalms in this service could be seen as ecumenical) and a pre-Nikonian source were chosen.

3. The third and fourth sections of our manuscript may be taken together.

The third section consists of a translation into moderately accurate Russian Church Slavonic of the Belgic Confession as approved by the Synod
of Dort in 1618/19. This was originally composed in French, about 1560 and then soon translated into Latin, Dutch and German. The fourth section consists of a similar translation of a shortened version or compendium of the Heidelberg Catechism, which was itself originally composed in German, again about 1560, with translations into Latin, Dutch and Greek. The Heidelberg Catechism was similarly approved by the Synod of Dort. It should be noted that the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism were effectively accepted only in the Low Countries where they formed the doctrinal basis of the Dutch Reformed Church: the presence at the Synod of Dort of theologians from England, Switzerland, the Palatinate, Hesse and Bremen had no influence on their acceptance in those lands or elsewhere. In particular, no theologians attended from the Polish-Lithuanian Calvinist churches. The use of the shortened version of the catechism strengthens the Dutch connection, as again its currency and acceptance was restricted to this area.

Linguistically, there are clear indications that the translation was made from the Dutch version of the confession and shortened catechism: thus магометист for Dutch mahomentisten, despite 17th century Russian магометане (compare in the French version mahometans, in the Latin mahumentani), превращения for the Dutch Wederdooperen (French anabaptistes, Latin Anabaptistae); Наследие for Dutch navolging ("imitation"), вместо for om niet (which really means "gratis, for nothing" although om often has a causal value), точка (p. 131) for alleen ("only" is omitted in the French and Latin versions), and the erroneous translation ташаде for te voorderen (20th century spelling te voorderen "to advance": compare Dutch voorder "therefore"). In places there is evidence of reference to the Latin version (e.g. p. 55 правила братья for de waerheyt, Latin Dei veritas).

There is another, almost identical, copy of the translation of the confession and shortened catechism which has Dutch connections of a different kind. This is in Helsinki University Library, is cursive, and follows a Russian translation (with heavy Belorussian influence) of a description of the triumphal gates at The Hague for the victorious return in 1691 of William of Orange from the campaign in Ireland. While the two items in the Helsinki manuscript are by different hands, the dating and geographical connections are I think significant for our purposes. Begunov has ascribed the translation of Описание торжественных врат to Elias Kopievsky, to whom we shall return.
A comparative study of the Dutch originals of the confession and catechism and the Dublin and Helsinki manuscripts reveals several points about the original translation and its further copying.

To take the original translation first (as it is reflected in features shared by the Dublin and Helsinki manuscripts), one notes a certain amount of simplification and omissions, some of which are minor, such as the omissions of "fig" before "leaf" on page 98, some of which are more serious. There are a few, apparently unmotivated, additions. There are also some clear misunderstandings of the Dutch text, especially in more syntactically complex passages.

As examples we may compare the Slavonic, Dutch and Latin versions of passages on pages 67 and 107:

p.67

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slavonic</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Latin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Иже в число триехъ лицъ стихъ трцы подобіемъ величествъ и славъ ойей и сномвнъ истинныъ вбчы нын бгъ</td>
<td>welcke in orden is der derde Persoon der Dryvuldicheyt: eenes-selvigen wesens, eiusdem essentiae, Majesteyt ende Eerlicheyt met den Vader ende den Sone, zijnde waerachtich ende eeuwich God.</td>
<td>qui ordine tertia est Trinitatis Persona, gloriae et maiestatis cum Patre et Filio, Ideoque et ipse verus et aeternus Deus est.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, "third" is misinterpreted as "three", the three genitives "essence, majesty and glory" (only the first is marked in Dutch) become "in the manner (essence?) of the majesty and glory", and the Dutch participle "being" is omitted (the Latin text rephrases this also). The resultant Slavonic text is not very accurate, even if a general meaning can be extracted from its syntax.

p.107

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slavonic</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Latin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>когд обрбтвемъ иже насъ возлюбиъ и животъ свой за насъ далъ</td>
<td>wien souden wy connen .. qui nos magis vinden, die ons meer beminde, dan hy die zijn leven voor ons gelaten heeft.</td>
<td>diligat quam qui vitam suam pro nobis posuit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, "more... than he who" is omitted: again the original text is distorted.

There are perhaps 40 or 50 such inaccuracies in the original translation, not all by any means as serious as these, and most seem unmotivated, although on page 134 the doctrines of the Anabaptists are glossed over by "ине двойцы крещаются". In addition, there are a similar number of distortions shared by the Dublin and Helsinki manuscripts but where the original translation can be extrapolated and identified as more or less accurate.
Some of the omissions I ascribe to the original translation could be transferred to an intermediate copyist. And finally, the Dublin manuscript shows upwards of 80 further errors, most involving only one or two letters in a word: these are often evidently caused by the copying of a cursive manuscript by someone who did not particularly understand what he was writing. Thus we note errors caused by loss of superscripts, confusion of resolved superscripts (especially \(^l\) and \(t\): soglasitsya for soglasilsya for example), and confusion of hard and soft signs. Having said all that, one is impressed by the accuracy of the accentuation marks, which are entered by the same hand concurrently with the main text. This I can only explain by the positing of an intermediate copy from a cursive version, with accentuation marks entered by someone who was versed in Church Slavonic but who, however, did not bother to correct all the errors perpetrated by this copyist.

To return, however, to inaccuracies of the original translation, perhaps the most interesting is to be found on page 116.

While "edicts" and "bodily punishment" are lost, "expulsion and prohibition" (гонение и запрещение) are added. I have already, in connection with the first two sections, noted pre-Nikonian features in them. Although, if it is motivated, this addition is unique, it is possible to see in it a reflection of the Old Believers' situation in the late 17th century. (Having said that,
one should note that article 36 of the confession asserts that God instituted rulers to keep temporal and spiritual peace and good order — perhaps not so palatable to the Old Believers.)

Further and perhaps conclusive evidence of the Old Believer influence on our text is the consistent use of single-i Isus for "Jesus". In the whole manuscript there is just one lapse from this, and that is in the pod titlom section at the beginning already referred to. (The Helsinki manuscript shows rather more use of double-i Iisus, but is still predominantly pre-Nikonian in this.)

One may also note that, whereas the vespers are clearly copied from a printed text, the biblical quotes in the confession and catechism are obviously dragged out of a more or less rusty memory: the Ten Commandments are good, but we also find: "энъ есъ путь истинный и животь, rather than и истина; and worse.

Reflections in the Dublin and Helsinki manuscripts of the phonetic and morphological characteristics of the original translator of the confession and catechism suggest that he was from the Belorussian or Smolensk area; both manuscripts have an overlay of features from elsewhere, and the Dublin manuscript in particular seems to "overcorrect" the west-Russianisms.

Thus we find akanye and yakanye: запогам for instrumental singular; милосердия for the accusative singular; but more often in hypercorrection: Без начального, плод чрево маринно, тело (nom. plural); безо всякого взирание дел их this -ме ending is frequent for genitive singular of neuter nouns in -me; also — with the hard-ending from -we for slavonic feminine genitive singular adjectives). The Helsinki manuscript shares these features, but is less given to hypercorrection: specific words in both manuscripts do not necessarily coincide.

The Helsinki manuscript also shows what we may term ukanye, which may be a Smolensk or S-W Belorussian feature: спрою for спрою, фуртуне for фортуне. The Dublin manuscript only reflects this in hypercorrection: спрою for спрою, совершенно for совершенно.

Yat' and e under stress are not distinguished.

There is a hint of chokanye in the Helsinki manuscript only: ищемся for исцелимся, о человекъех.

There are indications in both manuscripts that 9 was fricative.

The ikanye which occurs may be viewed as an overlay introduced by intermediate copyist. It is more frequent in the Helsinki manuscript (приражает
for прераждает, грихи) than in the Dublin manuscript (неприимбымом, блинши).

There is one instance in the Dublin manuscript of an error which might be ascribable to the copyist's not being a "native cyrillic writer": натура for натура, but since this occurs in a foreign word, we are not convinced of this. Against it one must note the cyrillic numeration of gatherings and the accuracy of the accentuation marks.

Morphological features which we can ascribe to the original translation are personal pronoun accusative-genitives in -е or -ě: for example: без мене, от себе - six of these survive to the Dublin manuscript, a further eight are changed to -ya (mostly accusatives) but remain in -е or -ě in Helsinki, while a further seven are changed to -ya in both Dublin and Helsinki.

Another southern (including western) morphological feature of the original translation is the confusion of the neuter and feminine declensions: вѣчное сила occurs several times, but could be attributed to hypercorrect akanye. Clearer examples are: от той свѣтлости в котором их сотворил бог, совокупля божественное свое естество с человѣческою, сим приятием лица сыновней. This feature survives to differing extents in both manuscripts.

Conclusions

From what I have been saying about these sources, and in particular the начальное учение of the 1660's to 80's, it is clear that the date of compilation of the Dublin manuscript is in the later 17th century, probably, given the paper dating, in the 1680's or 1690's. This would conform to the absence of any marks of use before the manuscript was deposited in Dublin in 1706.

It is possible that it was simply intended as a specimen of an exotic language for one of the scholars of the period with orientalist interests. Two factors contradict this view: firstly, the Muscovite-style leather-on-wooden-boards binding and the clearly liturgically determined omission from the vespers section, which was never completed.

If it was intended for practical use as a reading primer in a reformed community within an East Slavonic speaking area, we must see in it a realisation by some members or other of the reformed, Calvinist church that an opening to the Old Believers might be possible, either within the movement towards Christian reconciliation or otherwise. Hence the use of the pre-Nikonian chasovnik (it is possible, however, to explain this as the only text available to the compiler of the manuscript), and the pre-Nikonian features of the translation of the confession and catechism, especially Isus.
Further evidence that it was intended for Old Believers is its use of Church Slavonic rather than vernacular Russian, which one would have thought any protestant church would have followed: compare Pastor Glück's translation of the Bible into "the simple Russian language" at the same period; the earlier Catechism printed at Nesvizh in the 1560's.

The question of where the manuscript was compiled takes us into spheres of greater speculation: it is possible to consider Muscovy itself, the Belorussian-Lithuanian area, or the Netherlands.

The first two would be areas where Old Believers could be found who might be receptive to calvinism. With the coming to full power of Peter the First, his espousal of western ideas and his use of the idea of Christian unity against the Turks (e.g. 1695), it might have been thought that the official Orthodox church's control of the religious affairs of the population of Muscovy would be weakened. The fact that the manuscript was never completed and used would suggest that it was soon realised that this was a vain hope, although antipathy by the Old Believers themselves would also surely have been encountered.

While the Orthodox church's control over the Russian-speaking (in the widest sense) population of Belorussia-Lithuania was much weaker, the apparent absence of the Dutch in any numbers and Dutch Reformed Church doctrine from this area probably precludes it as the provenance and intended destination of our manuscript, despite the existence of calvinist churches at Vitebsk, Zuhran, Rakov, Minsk and Bykhov in the late 17th century.

We must therefore seriously consider the Netherlands itself as the place of compilation, with the intention, never realised, of its export for use in Belorussia-Lithuania or Muscovy itself (with the above caveat).

For this, we need the cannibalisation of the binding of a Russian volume, the presence of a circa 1640 chasovnik (possibly a later one from Belorussia), the export of a later 17th century primer, and the presence of a translator of Belorussian (including Smolensk) origin versed in Church Slavonic, along with others more or less proficient in Russian as copyists from time to time.

One prime candidate as translator must, I think, be Elias Kopievsky or Kopiewicz. The title-page of the Ode on the victory at Azov (1700) qualifies him as "духовного чицу реформатския вѣры" A Dutch document qualifies him "polonus in presentiarum habitans Amstelodami"; he called himself "verbi dei minister polonus" in a letter to A.G. Francke; Ludolf knew him as a "letauer"; Leibnitz in 1701 mentions Kopievsky as a Lithuanian of the Reformed faith who knows "slavonicum literale" Unbegaun, however, was somewhat dismissive of
Kopievsky's knowledge of Church Slavonic as exemplified in the grammar of 1706. The 1958 Описание изданий напечатанных кириллицей suggests that Kopievsky's exile from Poland-Lithuania may have been due to the suppression of Socinianism in 1660, but there is also a possibility that he studied in Moscow in the 1660's: his exile in this case could be due to an attachment to pre-Nikonian doctrine. (One should note, however, that he returned to Russia in about 1710 and undertook official work there). The Belorussian-Smolensk features of the original translation of the confession and catechism could well be due to Kopievsky's native speech, the later copyists possibly being some of the Muscovite Russians who came west to study more technological subjects in Holland.

Kopievsky would have perhaps had the pre-Nikonian chasovnik in his library, and the Russian binding for our volume, and possibly the начальное учение section was brought back from Moscow by the foreigner (perhaps "IS" himself) who commissioned or even copied the volume himself. It is intriguing, but certainly going beyond the bounds of acceptable speculation, to conjecture that this might have been a certain Johann Strachn (or John Strachan?) IS whose name appears as one of the owners of the copy of the 1688 начальное учение which is now in the British Museum Library. I know nothing more about him: he does not figure in Geraldine Phipps' list of Britons in 17th century Russia.

That our manuscript was never put to its intended use amongst the Old Believers of Muscovy or Belorussia-Lithuania must have been due to a change of circumstance. Possibly the frequent message coming out of Peter's Russia that no religious books in Russian or Slavonic were to be imported dissuaded the compiler from his purpose; possibly the commissioner-compiler (if he were IS) died, leaving Jephson to buy the manuscript and transfer it to Dublin.
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