

Národní knihovna České republiky
Slovanská knihovna

**KATALOG
STARÝCH RUSKÝCH TISKŮ
Z FONDŮ SLOVANSKÉ KNIHOVNY
tištěných azbukou**

Díl I: 1710–1775

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FOREWORD

“Studying political history, the development of literature or academic disciplines in a given time of the 18th – 20th centuries, the press often than not offers the most secure initial overview. It tells us what was debated in the society – and what was silenced. The press is an important intersection of the lived reality...” (Ivan Savický)

In Russia the 18th century and particularly its beginning is a time of great epochal social reforms in political, economic, religious and other spheres. The goal of the reforms is to move Russia closer to the European development. This century is also a time of beginnings of a new literary language, an official language of an enormous state. The modern Russian literature in the national language too originates in this period.

Until Peter’s reform of the alphabet in the early 18th century, the Church Cyrillic had been used in print. The Church Cyrillic was difficult to use in the daily life, particularly as the need of the absolutist state for direct communication with the bureaucracy, the army and with the population in general became a necessity.

Peter the Great wanted to simplify the Cyrillic and as a result a new so called “civic” Cyrillic, or “grazhdanskaia azbuka” (nowadays simply called azbuka), was eventually created from the Cyrillic italics, taking into the account the Roman letters. This print has been used for the Russian books of lay content in Moscow from 1708 and in Petersburg from 1712 onwards. The first such a book was “Geometria slavenski Zemlemerie” by Burkhard v. Pürkenstein.

During the reign of Peter the Great the lay and church spheres separated sharply due among others to the print, though the state of course controlled the church publishing as well. There were very few printing houses in Russia’s large territory – state or church (synod) ones in Moscow and in Petersburg (Sankt Peterburg); the situation somewhat improved in the last third of the 18th century, when the number of printing houses increased: Veitbrekht and Shnor in Petersburg (est. 1776), in Moscow Breitkopf (1780), Meier (est. 1783). The well known enlightener N. Novikov rented the print house of the Moscow university and printed the newspaper *Moskovskie vedomosti* in 1779–1789. Since 1783 free publishing houses had been allowed, which led to the considerable growth of the print in the cities. From the metropolises the prints spread further into the countryside (Gatchina, Jaroslavl, Kaluga, Vor-

nezh, Kostroma, Kursk, Nizhny Novgorod, Perm, Smolensk, Tambov, Tobolsk), though some of them were printing very little or even vanished. The Russian language publications were printed in Kiev, Riga and other cities of the Russian empire; abroad the Russian books were produced by Breitkopf in Leipzig. In the period 1781–1789 Grigor Khaldaryan printed in Armenian in Petersburg and later moved to Astrachan.

In the church sphere the traditional Cyrillic was used further, particularly for the prayer books and the Bible (in Church Slavonic), but in a more general church production too, which preserved in its high style Russian certain late version of Church Slavonic. Azbuka was however used, particularly from the second half of the 18th century onwards, also for the translations of religious publications and for some sermons. From the European perspective, it is puzzling that Koran was published in Russian in Petersburg already in 1716 and again at the end of the century, whereas the publishing of the translation of the Bible met for another one hundred years with so great obstacles that even Alexandr I, the victor over Napoleon, could not succeed. On his order, the Biblical Society started to publish the Gospel and several Old-Testament books at the beginning of the 1820s. The entire Russian Bible was published only in the 1860s.

The Slavonic Library Collection

As far as the books printed in the Church Cyrillic and Glagolitic alphabet are concerned, the Slavonic Library of the National Library of the Czech Republic published a catalogue “Cyrilské a hlaholské staré tisky v českých knihovnách“ (Cyrillic and Glagolitic Old Prints in Czech Libraries) in 1997, which describes these rare Church-Slavonic, South-Slavonic and East-Slavonic (therefore also Russian) prints preserved in the Czech Republic.

This Catalogue is dedicated mostly to the books with lay content printed in Russian on the territory of the Russian empire in the 18th century. It is a sequel to the catalogue from 1997 as a number of Russian books were published in the early 18th century also in the Church Cyrillic (for instance Aritmetika by Magnitsky), but its scope is limited to the holdings of the Slavonic Library at the National Library of the Czech Republic.

This first volume includes old Russian prints until 1775. We plan to publish a sequel of this catalogue, which will reach the year 1800. A separate volume will be dedicated to the 18th century Russian periodicals in the Slavonic Library collection.

In the Slavonic Library, the Russian literature of the 18th century is located in the fond of Russian books; the rare prints are mostly locked in the safe. The majority of the old Russian prints of the 18th century can be found in the fond of Smirdin's library, which contains not only the old prints but also the 19th century literature.

A. F. Smirdin (1795–1857) was a publisher and an owner of a famous bookshop on Nevski prospekt in Petersburg. His bookshop, which he took over in 1825 after the death of V. A. Plavilshchikov, was in its time an important cultural centre, where the books could be also borrowed. It served also as a reading room (large library of Russian literature with its own catalogue published by Smirdin in 1828) and a literary café or club, which served as a meeting place for the key authors of the time (Pushkin; almanac *Novosel'je*, published 1833–1834).

Majority of the rare prints from the fiction collection of Smirdin's library was preserved in Russia. Smirdin's library was bought by bookseller Kümme (Kimmel) in the 1870s and brought to Riga. When in 1932 the Czechoslovak state was buying in Riga the rest of Smirdin's library, it was a mere torso with books that had not yet found a buyer (11 262 book units). They represented according to I. Savický (see Savický III) less than one tenth of the original library Plavilshchikov – Smirdin – Krasheninnikov (without Ovsyannikov's, Olkhin's and Cherkesov's books). To a large extent the books were outdated and often from other disciplines than humanities. In the 1930s however these books were becoming historically valuable. Besides since 1920s Czechoslovakia was buying old Russian and Church-Slavonic prints through its mission in Moscow, so the original Smirdin's collection was enlarged by the help of the call-numbers of Smirdin's catalogue. The Slavonic Library originally intended to reconstruct Smirdin's library. This plan was later abandoned. The books bought in SSSR or acquired sooner by other means have only the local Prague stamp "Biblioteka Smirdina", in contrast to the books from Smirdin's library with the original labels, usually containing characteristic engravings. The books with the labels of V. Plavilshchikov and P. Krasheninnikov belong to the original volumes of the Smirdin's library.

During the reign of Peter the Great (since 1725) the majority of the books published were focused on building of the modern absolutist state: books with political (for instance numerous tsar's decrees, also in reprints), military

and technical content as well as textbooks of mathematics, architecture, history, geography etc. Many of these were translations. There was very little of fiction published, mostly panegyrics written in syllabic verse. There were about 900 Russian editions all together published during the reign of Peter the Great; the Slavonic Library has 15 of these rare old prints.

Besides editions printed in civic azbuka and church Cyrillic, foreign language books (books in German, French, Latin, Dutch printed in Petersburg and in Turkish in Astrakhan) were also published. These were mostly panegyrics, decrees and political proclamations.

In the next period of the first half of the 18th century, the content of the Russian print production is similar – primarily the inner politics (significant part consists of official decrees) and translations. The typographic and graphic standards reached high levels under the reign of Peter's daughter tsar Elizabeth II (1741–62). The reign of Catherine II (1762–1796) was initially characterised by enlightenment efforts; in 1783 the free printing presses were allowed. Russia tried rapidly to catch up with the West in various areas. The impact of French philosophers and particularly of the encyclopaedists was considerable – until the French Revolution.

In the 18th century, the translations had great significance for the development of the Russian literary language and literature. The language of the translations is more sublime, ever more local authors published in the scientific and technical spheres. Local scientific disciplines are emerging.

In 1725 the Petersburg Academy of Science was established and from 1728 onwards it had its own press, which printed in Latin, German and Russian. In the Russian Empire, three and half thousand foreign language titles were published in the 18th century. For instance in Russia only, 11 works of the mathematician Leonhard Euler in Russian translations and 10 in German, French and Latin originals appeared next to four works of Swedish botanist Karl Linné in Russian translations and one in Latin original (debates in Petersburg Academy of Science in 1760). Mikhail Lomonosov, one of the most important founders of the Russian natural sciences, philology, history and literature (he wrote also poetry and drama) published 16 foreign-language works in Russian Empire and Germany, but most of his enormous work was published in Russian Empire (some 60 items). Russian was becoming a language of science.

Since 1703 the first printed newspaper in Russia, "Vedomosti" was published in Petersburg initially under the editorship of the Peter the Great himself. Originally, the newspaper was printed in two types of Church alphabet in

Moscow. Since 1710 it had been printed also in *grazhdanka* (azbuka) and Church Cyrillic, and from 1717 only in *grazhdanka*. This irregular periodical appeared from 1711 till 1727 sometimes in Moscow, sometimes in Petersburg (and a digest reprinted in Moscow) and contained various news from Russia and abroad; in the two last years it was published by Collegium of Foreign Affairs. The newspaper “Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti” were originally published twice weekly as a translation of “St. Peterburgische Zeitung” by the Petersburg Academy of Science since 1728. The Moscow University published “Moskovskie vedomosti” in 1756–1800.

The study of economy had a great importance for the development of reforms in Russia. In 1765 “Volnoie ekonomicheskoe obshchestvo” as one of the first economic societies in the world was founded and played important role in studying and solving of economic problems of Russia. The society published both periodicals and monographs. In 1966 the Slavonic Library published a booklet about the society written by I. Savický (see Savický I), from which we are reprinting eight pages concerning its publishing activities in the 18th century as an appendix to this book.

As far as the fiction is concerned – and not only fiction – we have to bear in mind that in Russia there always existed literature in manuscripts, as was the case also in the 19th and 20th century. The so called tales, which were often fantastic stories about foreign lands, adventurers and mythical heroes of local provenience or originating from medieval and other western literature, were copied in the 18th century often only by handwriting. The great Russian poet Antioch Kantemir, the son of Moldavian prince Dimitrii, the historian of Ottoman Porta, died in 1744 without ever seeing his famous Satires published (published under Katherine II in 1762); it was however known from manuscripts and foreign-language editions.

The modern Russian literary language took shape gradually with the development of new academic disciplines and especially of literature under the strong influence of the spoken language and foreign literary tradition.

From 1725 till 1800 nine and half thousand editions and more then eight hundred periodicals (newspapers, journals, calendars, almanacs) were published in Russia itself (meaning the contemporary Russia without Ukraine etc.).

The oldest Russian book printed in azbuka in the collection of Slavonic Library (according to the catalogue of Bykova and Gurevich it is already the

43rd edition printed in azbuka) was published in Moscow in 1710. It was written in French by an Amsterdam engraver and publisher A. Schoonebeek who worked later in Russia. The book deals with military and aristocratic ranks, uniforms etc.

“Kratkoe rukovodstvo k krasnorechiyu“ (Spb. 1748) is the oldest book by the brilliant polyhistor M. V. Lomonosov preserved in the Slavonic Library. The library also holds very interesting work of V. K. Trediakovsky – “Razgovor mezhdru chuzhestrannym chelovekom i rossiiskim ob orphographii...” (Sankt Peterburg, 1748) and his „Tilemakhida“ (a translation of Fénélon, Sankt Peterburg, 1766). The Slavonic Library collection of Russian fiction of the 18th century is not very numerous (for instance works by Lomonosov, Sumarokov, Cherkasov, Karamzin) and the same goes for the translations of the world literature (Beaumarchais, Gessner, Homer, Horatius, “Lazarillo de Tormes”, Lesage, Lessing, Marmontel, Montesquieu, Ovidius, Racine, Richardson, Shakespeare, Swift, Young and others). The philosophy is represented only in fragments by for instance Hume, Locke, Rousseau and Voltaire (mostly his plays). The censorship was confiscating for instance freemason literature (Saint-Martin), but also the works of Anselm of Canterbury and Thomas à Kempis. The library does not have the first volume of “Slovo o polku Igoreve” – The Tale of Igor’s Campaign (Moscow 1800) but only the 1805 edition. Nevertheless, the library holds one copy of Macpherson’s Ossian (Moskva 1792).

We ought to end by paying due respect and gratitude to the employees of the Slavonic Library, who worked on cataloguing of these prints. In the Second World War period, the processing was done by dr. Karel Mikula, M. Andreieva and dr. Jan Frček. In 1966 after several-years-long break, the work on cataloguing was renewed. Mykhailo Bashmak compiled cumulative catalogue of the Sm section according to the numbers of Smirdin’s catalogue with shortened description. This work was taken over by dr. Ivan Savický, who catalogued significant part of Smirdin’s fond. At the end of 1970s the work was again interrupted and renewed for few years in the 1980s (Helena Musatová catalogued the books published in the 19th century, F. Sokolová the earlier period). The cataloguing is still in progress.

F. Sokolová

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