

E D I T O R I A L

That many interesting and valuable East Slavonic books are to be found preserved in British libraries has been amply shown by the research of J. Simmons of Oxford University. Those printed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the XVIth and XVIIth century, frequently contain panegyric verses, which are of considerable interest to the student of Middle-Byelorussian literature. Catalogues of the verses have been made in the past, the most comprehensive being by Peretz and Karataev, and many have been published by A. Koršunaū in his collection *Chrestamatyja pa staražytnaj bielaruskaj litaratury* (Miensk 1959). However, the little-known New Testament printed in the Holy Ghost Monastery Vilnia in 1623 contains a panegyric verse on the arms of the Sapieha family with which neither Karataev nor Koršunaū appear to have been familiar. The title-page of the Vilnia New Testament reads as follows:

Новый Завѣтъ Господа нашего Ис. Хѣ
 Ново во мнозѣ з греческаго Тщаниемъ
 Иноков С. обще обител
 Сошествія Прес. и жив Духа
 исправленный
 в немже псалтырь
 на прѣди
 в Вилнѣ року ахкг

The Sapieha arms together with the verse in question appear as a frontispiece to the Testament, and because of the relative rarity of published verse from this period, it has been thought worthwhile reproducing the text together with a translation.

Клейноть гербовъ совытый, з двоякой цноты
 Домом зацным наданы естъ: пре дѣлность, труд, поты
 Двема кресты з стрѣлюю дом Сапеговъ славныхъ:
 Бог, Свѣтъ, Моужство, Очизна, з вѣков стародавнихъ
 Вы выешыли: крестами врага души громать
 Противников Отчизны, стрѣлюю огоньть.

The rich jewel of blazoned arms with double virtue — two crosses with an arrow — was granted to noble houses for courage, toil and sweat. God, the world, manly virtue and their country from ancient ages did exalt the house of famed Sapieha; with crosses they confounded the souls of their adversaries and with arrows drove forth the foes of the fatherland.