Skaryna’s Prayer Book

BY

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The first Byelorussian printer Francis Skaryna (c. 1485-1540) is known chiefly as the editor of Biblical texts. There is, however, one book which stands apart from all his other publications. It is the Malaja podorožnaja knižica (Little traveller’s companion book), a prayer book for Orthodox laymen.

Malaja podorožnaja knižica belongs to the Vilna period of Skaryna’s life. He came there from Prague where between 1517 and 1519 he had published 23 books of the Old Testament. In Vilna he established a printing press, the first in that city, from which he produced two books: Deanija i poslanija apostolskaja (Acts and Epistles of the Apostles) and Malaja podorožnaja knižica. The colophon in Deanija reveals that this book was published in March 1525, at which time Skaryna’s printing press was operating in the house of the mayor of Vilna, Jakub Babič. The date of the publication of the Malaja podorožnaja knižica, which has no colophon, was until recently unknown. The reason for this was that all known copies of the book were incomplete. In particular not one of them contained the paschalia, or calendar of moveable feasts, with the help of which, in the absence of any colophon, it would have been possible to determine the date of publication. It was only in 1971 that the present writer, whilst examining the microfilm of a practically unknown copy of the Malaja podorožnaja knižica belonging to the Royal Library in Copenhagen, found that it contained the missing paschalia for the years 1523-43.1 Since the paschalia usually starts with the year following the year of publication, it was possible to establish the latter date as 1522.

The name Malaja podorožnaja knižica is well justified by the small


The present writer is grateful to Prof. Moshé Altbauer of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem for first bringing to his attention the existence of a copy of Malaja podorožnaja knižica in Copenhagen. In fact, however, the existence of that copy was for the first time noted by Helene Crone in her article ‘Gamle Slaviske Tryk i det Kongelige Bibliotek’ in Fund og Forskning, IV, Copenhagen, 1937, p. 61. Unfortunately this valuable information has remained largely unnoticed to the present day.
format of the book, which made it easy for a man to carry about with him.² Probably Skaryna, who himself came from a merchant family, had in mind when publishing this book the needs of Byelorussian merchants who at that period were beginning to emerge as powerful patrons of the Orthodox Church, but whose business made it necessary for them to undertake long journeys in countries where they could find no church of their own.

The book is divided into five large sections³: Psaltyr', or the Book of Psalms, together with ten canticles from the Old and New Testament; Časoslovec or the Book of Hours, containing ordinary, or unchangeable, parts of daily church offices; Akafisty, consisting of a number of religious hymns and prayers; Šestodnevec, containing selected proper, or variable, parts of daily offices for every day of the week; and finally Posledovanie cerkovnago sobranija, or a short church calendar. In addition to this there is a detailed table of contents at the end of the book.

The Psaltyr' and Posledovanie sobranija may be considered as complete books in their own right, each with its own title page, a postword and separate consecutive numbering of folios. Other sections are divided into smaller parts. The Akafisty is the most characteristic in this respect. It consists of 16 parts, each with its own numbering of pages (some parts in the right-hand top corner, the others in the bottom), a postword, and some even with a title page.⁴ A few authors have suggested that certain parts might have at first appeared as separate editions, and only later were collected into one book.⁵ The

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2. There are two dimensions of the printed surface to the pages in the book: in the Psaltyr' and Časoslovec the pages contain 20 lines and measure 10.2 x 6.5 cm.; in the remaining sections they consist of 19 lines and measure 9.7 x 6.4 cm. The height of the ordinary type is under 0.2 cm.


The first serious study of the contents of the Malaja podorožnaja knižica was made by P. Vladimirov in his Doktor Francisk Skorina, ego perevody, pečatnje izdanija i jazyk, StP, 1888, pp. 189-200. His treatment of the Akafisty, however, is very inadequate and unreliable.

4. The numbering of the folios of the book is as follows:
   Psaltyr': 140
   Časoslovec': 28, 28, (4)
   Akafisty: 12, 8, 12, 8, 12, 8, 12, 8, 16, 8, 12, 8, 16, 8, 12, 8
   Šestodnevec': 36, 4, (4)
   Sobranie: 20
   Table of contents: (3)
   Altogether the book has 435 folios.

5. See E. Nemirovskij, ‘Slavjanskie inkunabuly i paleotipy kirillovskogo šrifta v knigočramiliščax Sovetskago Sojuza’, Sovetskoje slavjanovedenie, 1, Moscow, 1969, p. 19; A. Koršunač, ‘Litaraturna-publicystčnaja spadčyna Francyxska Skaryny’, in: Francyksk Skaryna, Pradmovy i pašlaštou, p. 192. Of the three copies of Skaryna’s Akafisty which are in the Saltykov-Sčedrin Library in Leningrad, the Royal Library in Copenhagen and the Jagiellonska Library in Cracow (the last one incomplete) respectively, each has its parts.
absence of any title page to the whole book (it is not known whether it remains to be discovered or was never in fact printed), and of any colophon, seems to indicate that this was the case. In fact the title of the book is known from the heading of the table of contents: *Pisanji reči v sei maloi podorožnoi knižice po rjadu vkratce položenj sut*. There is little doubt, however, that Skaryna conceived the book as one whole. This can be seen from the presence of the detailed table of contents and from the cross-references in the text, referring the reader from one part of the book to the other.

*Malaja podorožnaja knižica* is a fine example of early printing and compares favourably with Skaryna's Prague editions which are noted for their high artistic qualities. It is printed in black and red. The letters of the type are of a very original and distinctive design, characteristic of books printed by Skaryna. The upper-case letters used in the titles and headings are the same in *Malaja podorožnaja knižica* as in the Prague editions, but the ordinary type is smaller and more elegant, with some letters (in particular ‘a’, ‘t’, ‘z’ and hard sign) having a different form. There is a great number of initial letters engraved in square or rectangular blocks with floral or animal designs in the background. The larger of these letters are the same as in Prague editions, but the smaller ones are found only in books published in Vilna. A distinctive feature of these latter are the so-called *zastavicy*, as they are called by Skaryna himself, or long narrow ornamental strips running across the page and separating the various texts. The fine and delicate design of these *zastavicy*, and of the initial letters, made the 19th century Russian art historian Stasov call *Malaja podorožnaja knižica* a 'Slav Elzevier'.

There are also five woodcuts in the book, all in the *Akafisty* section. They depict: the Mother of God with the Infant Jesus and, below, two crowned figures, probably representing David and Solomon (left-hand side of the title page of the *Akafisty*); the Baptism of Christ (front page of the *canon* of St. John the Baptist); the Annunciation (title page of the *akafist* of the Mother of God); the Mother of God with the Infant Jesus and a company of angels (title page of the *akafist* of the Name of Jesus); and the young Jesus teaching in the Temple (front page of the *canon* of Jesus; cf. the frontispiece). All engravings are in a distinctively western style.

The initial letter ‘C’ in the *akafist* of the Tomb of Our Lord (cf. Appendix, fig. 1) is unlike any other letter in Skaryna's books. Some authors, such as Vladimirov and Ščakacichin, have thought that it

arranged in a different order. This seems to provide an additional indication that the parts were bound together after being published as separate editions.

6. For the study of typographical and artistic aspects of Skaryna's books see Vladimirov, op. cit., pp. 68-82 (Prague editions) and pp. 173-8 (Vilna editions); M. Ščakacichin, *'Hraviury i azdoby ú vydaniach Skaryny', Cataurochotlecie bielaruskaha druku*, Minsk, 1926, pp. 180-227.

7. V. Stasov, 'Razbor rukopisnogo sočinenija g. Rovinskogo “Russkie gravery i ich proizvedenija s 1564 g. do osnovanija Akademii Chudožestv”', *Otchet o sede'm prisuzdenii nagrad grafu Uvarova*, StP., 1864, p. 32.
might have been cut specially for the Vilna editions. In fact it is not the Cyrillic ‘C’ at all but an adapted Latin ‘U’ from the ornamental alphabet designed by the North German engraver Israhel van Mekenem (d. 1503) (Cf. Appendix, fig. 2). The alphabet enjoyed certain popularity in the West, and Skaryna, who spent a great part of his life there, could have easily obtained a copy.

Certain authors studying the ornaments in the Moscow editions of Ivan Fedorov and Piotr Mscislawec have noted their dependence on Mekenem. Moreover, it has been shown that previously similar ornaments had begun to appear in Muscovite manuscript books as early as 1524. Kiselev in an article published posthumously in 1965, was the first to suggest than Mekenem’s alphabet might have found its way to Moscow from Vilna, whither it was brought by Skaryna. At that time, however, it was not known when Skaryna arrived in Vilna. Now, thanks to the Copenhagen copy of the Malaja podorožnaja knižica, it has been established that he was in that city at least as early as 1522, and thus Kiselev’s hypothesis receives additional support.

From the point of view of the contents Malaja podorožnaja knižica is basically what it known as Psaltir’s vossledovaniem. Manuscript collections of this kind were known among the Slavs, and at least two appeared in printed form before Skaryna — one in 1495 in Cetinje in Montenegro and the other in 1519-20 in Venice by the Serbian publisher Božidar Vuković. The contents varied slightly from book to book, but they usually consisted of the Book of Psalms, followed by selected texts of church offices and the calendar.

Skaryna’s book differs from its predecessors in the richness of its contents and its ‘lay’ character. The latter is seen in the presence of the whole section Akafisty intended primarily for private devotion, and in Posledovanie sobranija which contains information exceeding strictly ecclesiastical requirements. It is also evident in changes made by Skaryna to certain rubrics and even texts of prayers in order to attenuate their monastic flavour. Thus in the prayer after Vespers the

11. See A. Sidorov, Drevnerusskaja knižnaja gravjura, Moscow, 1951, p. 82.
13. See the description of these editions in Karataev, op. cit., Nos. 8 & 16. Another Venice edition, the Molitvoslov of 1520 should also be mentioned (Karataev, op. cit., No. 17; also S. Novaković, ‘Božidara Vukovića zborniči na putnik’, Glasnik srpskog učenog društva, 45, Belgrade, 1872, pp. 129–77). It would be interesting to ascertain whether Skaryna knew of these editions (especially the Venetian ones) and to what extent he was influenced by them. Unfortunately they were inaccessible to the present writer. For the description of some manuscript copies of Psaltir’s vossledovaniem, see A. Gorski, K. Nevostruev, Opisanie slavjanskih rukopisej Moskovskoj Sinodal’noj biblioteki, III, 1, Moscow, 1869, Nos. 406–411.
expression ‘O Heavenly King... preserve well this holy monastery’ becomes in Skaryna ‘O Heavenly King... preserve well your holy Church’.

The two sections just mentioned are the most interesting in the whole book.

The Akafisty contains eight pairs of religious hymns — each pair consisting of an akafist and a canon — and some prayers connected with those hymns.

The canon is a well-known form of religious hymnody in the Byzantine Church. It was developed from the 8th century onwards by various Greek ecclesiastical writers, amongst whom were John Damascene, Joseph the Hymnographer, Joseph of Tessalonica (or Kyr Joseph) and Theoktistos from the monastery of Studion, whose names are mentioned by Skaryna in the table of contents in his Malaja podorožnaja knižica. It is an integral part of Mattins and some other daily offices, and can also be sung in conjunction with the akafist.

The word akafist is the Slavonic adaptation of the Greek Akathistos hymnos (literally ‘hymn during which one must not sit’), as the Greeks call the famous hymn in honour of the Mother of God, attributed to the 7th century Patriarch of Constantinople Sergius. It consists of 24 stanzas of varying length beginning with consecutive letters of the Greek alphabet. This alphabetical order is not preserved in the Slavonic version. The alternate stanzas contain each twelve praises of the Mother of God and end in each case with the acclamation ‘Hail, Bride undefiled’. The remaining twelve stanzas end with an ‘Alleluia’. The liturgical use of the hymn is limited, but it has become very popular among the Christians of Byzantine rite as a form of private devotion. Its Slavonic translation dates from at least the 12th century. Later, other hymns in honour of Our Lord and various saints were composed in imitation of the Akathistos hymnos. Some of the better known are attributed to the 14th century Patriarch of Constantinople Isidore Bukharis (d. 1349) who is said to have written hymns in honour of the Archangels, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Nicholas, the Apostles and the Assumption of the Mother of God. The authorship of other hymns remains uncertain, but most probably they were composed by Slavonic writers, for it

14. Isidore is said to be the author of all five above mentioned hymns in Vilna Akafisty of 1628. According to Archbishop Filaret of Černigov, the Slavonic versions of the first three of these akafists are found in two manuscripts of 1407 and 1430, and the remaining two in a manuscript kunnosik (‘hymnal’) of 1457; in all three cases they are attributed to Isidore (Filaret, Istoričeskij obzor pesnopevcev i pesnopenija Grečeskoj Cerkvi, Černigov, 1884, p. 446). The same writer asserts that two other unspecified manuscripts, as well as Skaryna, name Isidore as the author of an akafist of the Holy Cross (ibid.). In fact nothing of this kind is found in Skaryna, who gives no names of the authors of any of the akafists published by him. It may be, however, that Isidore was the author of an akafist of the Holy Cross different from the work of the same name in the Malaja podorožnaja knižica, as seems to be the case with the akafist of Saint John the Baptist (see below, note 22). About the authorship of the akafist of the Apostles see note 24.
was among the Slavs that they enjoyed a certain popularity under the general name of akafists.\(^{15}\)

Certain single akafists had been published before Skaryna,\(^{16}\) but he was the first to produce a collection of them. There are in all eight akafists with their corresponding canons in his Malaja podorožnaja knižica — of the Tomb of Our Lord, the Archangels, Saint John the Baptist, the Mother of God, the Apostles, Saint Nicholas, the Holy Cross and the Name of Jesus — one for each day of the week beginning from Sunday and two (Apostles and Saint Nicholas) for Thursday. It was not until the 17th century that similar collections began to be published in Byelorussia and the Ukraine. The earliest important such collection was the book entitled Akafisty v nich že kanony, stichiry i stichovny na vsju sedmiciu, published in 1628 in the printing press of the Orthodox monastery of the Holy Spirit in Vilna. It contained ten akafists, six of which were different versions of hymns published in the Malaja podorožnaja knižica.\(^{17}\) The nature and extent of the differences can be seen by comparing texts of the opening stanza of the akafist of the Holy Cross in both editions (for another example cf. Appendix, figs. 3 and 4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malaja podorožnaja knižica</th>
<th>Akafisty 1628</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vozbrannyj voevodo živodavče Christe, pobedu na vrah naoružie nam pokazal esi, prevelikii krest svoi svetom sostavljenyi i česnyi, tem že izbavivšesja ot zlych, blahodarstvennaja vospevaem krestu svoemu svetomu hlaholjuščie: Raduisja, kreste česnyi, kroviju Hospoda našeho Isusa Christa iskropleniy.(^{18})</td>
<td>Vozbrannyj Vœvodvo živodavče Christi carju, pobedu na vrahı svoe oružie nam pokazal esi, na nebesi prevelik Krest svetom sostavljen, seho radi izbavivšesja ot zol blahodarstvenno počitаем Krest tvoj svjaty, no jako imiuše deržavu nepobedimju, ot vsjakih nas strastij svobodi, da zovem ti: Raduisja, Kreste prečestny.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four akafists are of particular interest. They are all made known for the first time through Skaryna’s publication, and their origin and authorship remain unknown. One of them is the ‘Akafist of the Holy and Lifegiving Cross’ (Akafist česnomu i životvorjaščemu Krestu) mentioned above, also called by Skaryna ‘The Praise of the Holy Cross’ (Pochvala česnomu Krestu). In the Greek ‘Great Book of Hours’ (Horologion mega) there is a hymn called ‘Twenty four stanzas of the

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15. For the most comprehensive survey of all akafists, including those published by Skaryna, see A. Popov, Pravoslavnye Russkie akafisty, izdannye s blagoslavlenija Svjatešago Sinoda, Kazan’, 1908. Pages 34-68 are of particular relevance to the present study.

16. Judging from Karataev’s descriptions of early Slavonic printed books, only two akafists were published before Skaryna — of the Mother of God, and an akafist of Saint John the Baptist attributed to Isidore, which was printed in the Cetinje Psaltir’ of 1495.

17. The book (see the description in Karataev, op. cit., No. 352; also Popov, op. cit., p. 36) contains the following akafists: of the Sweet Jesus, the Mother of God, the Tomb of Our Lord, the Archangels, Saint John the Baptist, the Assumption of the Mother of God, the Apostles, Saint Nicholas, the Holy Cross, and All Saints. A copy of the Akafisty of 1628 is found in the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

18. The Cyrillic ‘r’ in Skaryna and other books from Byelorussia is here consistently transliterated as ‘h’.
Holy Cross', written in the form of an akafist. A Slavonic version of this hymn is known.\textsuperscript{19} Skarya's akafist of the Holy Cross is a completely different work.

The second hymn is the 'Akafist (or Praise) of the Lifebearing Tomb of Our Lord' (Akafist (Pochvala) živonosnomu Hrobu Hospodnju). It was popular in Byelorussia and the Ukraine in the 17th century, and was reprinted several times in collections published in Vilna, Mahiloù and Kiev. In Russia it was condemned by the Orthodox Church authorities at the beginning of the 18th century on the grounds of its alleged unsuitability for recitation on Sundays.\textsuperscript{20}

The 'Akafist of the Holy and Glorious Prophet, Precursor and Baptist of the Lord John' (Akafist česnomu i vsechvalnomu Proroku Predteči i Krestitelju Hospodnju Ioannu), or 'The Joys of Saint John the Baptist' (Radosti Ioanu Predteči), is very rare. Its modified version was published only once after Skarya, in Kiev in 1677.\textsuperscript{21} It is a work different from the better known hymn of the same name attributed to the Patriarch Isidore. The Slavonic version of the latter is found in the Vilna Akafisty of 1628.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} Here is the opening stanza of the hymn:

O trebilaženny krestie i vsečestnyi, tebe poklanaemsja
vernii i veličnem, radujuščesja o Božestvennom
vozyveshī tvoem; no jako pobeditel'noe i oružie
nepobedimoe, ogradi i pokryj tvociej blagodatiu
zovuščija ti: Raduješja, drevo trebilažennoe.

A. Malzev reprinted this hymn in his Andachtsbuch der Orthodox-Katholischen Kirche des Morgenlands (Berlin, 1895, pp. 781-94) from a Počaev edition of 1809. Popov (op. cit., p. 66) records an earlier edition of 1776. Like many other akafists, it appears to have been known in Byelorussia and the Ukraine, and not in Russia. An interesting point is that the prayer after the akafist (Malzev, op. cit., p. 795 et seq.) is a version of the prayer after the canon of the Holy Cross in Skarya's Malaja podorožnaja knižica. It is not found in Greek editions.

\textsuperscript{20} Filaret, op. cit., p. 448; also Polnuy pravoslavnyj enciklopedičeskij slovar', I, STP., 1913, p. 87.

The akafist of the Tomb of Our Lord was also known among the South Slavs. Its text is found in a Serbian manuscript of the 16-17th centuries (see L. Stojanović, Katalog rukopisa i starich Stampnych kniga. Zbirka Srpske kraljevske akademije. Belgrade, 1901, No. 74).

\textsuperscript{21} Popov, op. cit., p. 59.

\textsuperscript{22} Here are the opening stanzas of the two hymns:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Malaja podorožnaja knižica}

Dostojnyj svedetelju Christov, o tobe
ubo evanheist kłahloet', byst' čelovek
poslań boha, imja emu Ioann, sel
pridie vo svedetelstvo, da svedetel'-
stvuet' o svete, da vsej verui imet' Lenu;
tem že i my veruššie vo Christa po
tvoemu svedetelstvu poem tomu vse;
Alliluia.

\item \textbf{Akafisty 1628 (Isidore')}

Vozbrannomu i teplomu zastupleniju
tvoemu, izbavljeni toboju vsej skorbi,
dolžne ti poem blahodarenie; no jako
imejaj derzvenieno ko Hospodu, ot
všjakich strastij nas svobodi, da
zovem: Raduješja, čestnyj Predteče.

\end{itemize}

There exist manuscript copies of a third akafist of Saint John the Baptist, also sometimes attributed to Isidore (Popov, op. cit., p. 61), which begins thus:

Iže ot vseh volšinu svjatyh bolšomu, iže pače
vseh sogrešaju bezakonnovavših, penie prinošaju
Finally there is the 'Akaist of the Most Sweet Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ' (Akaist presladkomu Imeni Hospoda Našeho Isusa Christa), also called by Skaryna 'The Praise of the Name of Jesus' (Pochvāla Imenju Isusovu). It is found only in the Malaja podorožnaja knižica, and is interesting because of its undoubted relationship to the 'Akaist of the Most Sweet Jesus' (Akaist Isusu Sladčajšemu) which became popular in Byelorussia in the 17th century. The two hymns are different, but display certain striking textual similarities, as the following extracts show:

Akaist of the Name of Jesus (Mal. podor. knižica)

Iкос 4.23 Knjaz' nekjy prisiš klanjašja tobe, Isuse, hlaholja, jako dšči moja umirajet', no prisiš vloži na nju ruku svoju i ožive; i my, carju, pripadaem tobe, oživi nas miloserdjem svoim, da vovelijem tja pojušče: Isuse, všichši sozdajelju; Isuse, nižišč otkupitelju; Isuse, prespodnih pobeditelju; Isuse, všeh stvorenjenja ukrasilju; Isuse presladkii, duši moje vtešenje; Isuse predradhi, uma mocho prosveščenje; Isuse predobryi, serca mohe veselie; Isuse preslišni, tela moho zdravie; Isuse, spasi mja i pomilui mja; Isuse, svetom večnym prospecti mja; Isuse, vo carsto-vo nebesno vovedi mja; Isuse velikočelovekoljubče, proši bezakonju dušu moju.

Akaist of the Sweet Jesus (Akaisty 1628)

Iкос 4. Slyša slepyj, Hospodi, mimochodjašča tja putem, vopijaše, Isuse Syne Davidov pomiluj mja; i prizvav, otverz es oce eho. Prosveto ubi milostiju s i oce mysljenie serdca i mene vopijušča ti i hlaholjušča: Isuse, vši- nich sozdajelju; Isuse, nižinišč iskupitelju; Isuse, prespodnih potrebitelju; Isuse, všeh tvari ukrasiliš; Isuse, duša moja utešitelju; Isuse, umu moemu prosvetitelju; Isuse, serdcu moemu veselie; Isuse, telu moemu zdravie; Isuse, spase moi, spasi mja; Isuse, svete moi, prosveti mja; Isuse, muki vsakaki izbavi mja; Isuse, spasi mja nedostojna; Isuse, Syne Božij, pomiluj mja.

Of the remaining hymns the 'Akaist (or Joys) of the Apostles' should be mentioned. It contains the following praises of Saint Peter: 'Hail, Vicar of God, for whose sake you have loved spiritual things', and 'Hail, the head of glorious Rome, who have left there under the shepherd of the flock of Christ'; and of Saint Paul: 'Hail, you who suffered martyrdom in glorious Rome together with the Vicar of Jesus'. It is not usual to find such expressions in a prayer book intended for the Orthodox, and indeed in the subsequent editions they were altered or omitted altogether.24

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23. The Slavs give the name ikos to the stanzas containing praises, and call the other stanzas kondak; The Greeks use the name oikos indistinctly for all stanzas of the hymn.

24. It is interesting to compare the corresponding passages in greater detail.

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ti Ioanne, jako ubo imyi držmovenie ko Gospodu, ot vseh mja bed svobodi, da zovu ti: Raduje propovedniče blagodati.

The text of this hymn is found in a Serbian manuscript of the 16-17th century in the Francis Skaryna Byelorussian Library in London. An akaist of Saint John the Baptist attributed to Isidore was printed in the Cetinje Psalter of 1495 (See Karataev, op. cit., No. 8).
Two of the prayers in the Akafisty section are by Saint Cyril of Turań. They are the prayers to the Archangels (cf. Appendix, fig. 7) and to the Apostles, each to be recited after their respective canon. The sermons and prayers of this 12th century saint were very popular among the East Slavs, particularly in his native Byelorussia. A collection of 21 of his prayers was printed in the book Molitvy posvednevnuye published in 1596 by the Vilna Orthodox Confraternity, and again in 1601 in Vilna by the Mamonich press in the book of the same name. They were reprinted a few times during the 17th century. Moreover, single prayers of Saint Cyril were included in various books, such as the Vilna Akafisty of 1628 or Poluustav of 1695. Skaryna’s publication precedes them all by over seventy years.

The prayers of Saint Cyril of Turań are long and penitential in character. Skaryna abbreviated them, and made certain changes in the text. These changes are particularly evident in the prayer to the Apostles, in which Saint Mark is described as ‘the glory of Venice’ (Venetiskaja pochvalo), and Saint James is praised in the following words: ‘Saint James, brother of John, first martyr among the Apostles, who with your relics gloriously enlighten Spain and all countries of the West’ (iže Ispaniju i usja strany zapadnyi svoim telesem slavne prosvešťaeši). Saint Cyril would have been not a little

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Malaja podorožnaja kničica

Ikos 7 (St. Peter)

Rадуїсja, Ісуса жубимі в апостоле Петрe, еho же radi мірskajу opustivyi; радуїсja, Božі n commons, i toho dľja duhovnyja vozjubivyl.

Ikos 11 (St. Peter)

Rадуїсja, Риму великаho pochvalo, krovjju svetoju svoju i posvятivyi; радуїsja, Римu slavnahо hlavo, postyrja stada Christova po sobe v nem ostavivy.

Ikos 12 (St. Paul)

Rадуїsja, ty Nerona carja римskаho posrami i жenu eho на veru Christovu navratиl; радуїsja, ty vo прechvalnom Rime vkupe s namensnikom Isusovym mučenie prinjal.

Aкafisty 1628

Rадуїsja, Bohom izbrannyj Apostole Petre, eho же radi zemnych oboživyi. Радуїsja, eho же radi obohativij duchovnoju blahodatiju.

Rадуїsja, Римu велkajу pochvalo, v nem же tečenju kraj naveršiv, ko nebesi stopy prosper.

Rадуїsja, iže vencenosnaha Nerona nikakоže usumnesja, no i vinočepca toho verna vo Christa Isusa sotvori. Радуїsja, iže krajnym udivleniem neveryja voiny vo veru privlek, v sečenii bo tvom krov i mleko množajši istočil es.

The Akafisty 1628 version gives the impression of having been forcibly altered without much regard to the meaning.

The akafist of the Apostles is usually attributed to the Patriarch Isidore. One serious objection to this is the fact that among all Slavonic texts of the akafists it is the only one with its stanzas beginning each with a consecutive letter of the Cyrillic alphabet — a feat difficult enough to achieve in an original work and almost impossible in a translation.

surprised to learn such interesting particulars about the apostles in question.

The ‘Pious prayer to the Most Holy Mother of God Mary after the akafist’ (Cf. Appendix, figs. 8, 8a), or rather the first part of it, may be considered to be a poem. Although it is written continuously, the division into lines is indicated, and there is also an attempt at rhyming. This can be clearly seen if the prayer is rewritten in the following manner:

Raduisja, prenasveteišaja Marie,
    Služebnice živonačal’naja Troica;
Raduisja, prenavon’eišaja lilie,
    Obljubenice stvoritelja Boha Otca etc.

In his Prague editions Skaryna left three examples of verse writing, which, although of little artistic value, must be considered the beginning of Byelorussian poetry, and of East Slavonic poetry in general. It may be that the prayer to the Mother of God is also Skaryna’s own composition, especially since it contains more Byelorussian linguistic elements than most of the other texts in the Malaja podorožnaja knižica.

The Posledovanie cerkovnaha sobranija (calendar) can now at last be studied in its entirety thanks to the Copenhagen copy of the Malaja podorožnaja knižica. Its contents are best described by Skaryna himself:

‘A short calendar of saints, containing the division of time on our earth — how many hours and minutes there are in the days and nights of the year, and how the hour of the day and night is lengthened — all this is written there. At the end there is a paschalia for several years, concluding this problem of feasts. Moreover, if in any year a disappearance of the moon or eclipse of the sun occurs, then you will find the month, day and hour of this disappearance of the moon or eclipse of the sun written down without error in the paschalia’.

The whole section consists of 20 consecutively numbered leaves including the title page. The calendar of fixed feasts (the so-called svijatcy) begins on the reverse of the first folio. It is divided into months, beginning with September, which is the first month of the year in the Byzantine calendar. On the reverse of the 13th folio there is a preface to the paschalia (cf. Appendix, fig. 5), and the remaining pages are occupied by the paschalia itself for the years 1523-43. At the bottom of the last page there is the following postword: ‘This short calendar of saints and paschalia was produced in the famous city of Vilna by Doctor Francis Skaryna (Dokonany sut’ sie vokratce svetci i poskalija doktorom Franciskom Skorinoju vo slavnom meste Vilenskom).

In the calendar of the fixed feasts each month is preceded by a short informative note giving its name in the vernacular, the number

26. More about Skaryna’s verses see P. N. Bierkaŭ, ‘F. Skaryna i pačatak uschodnieslavianstka vieršasklađańnia’, 450 hod bielaruskaha knihadruka-
vańnia, Minsk, 1968, pp. 245-62.
of days, the respective lengths of day and night and the movement of the sun through the signs of the Zodiac,27 e.g.: ‘The month of September, called Vresen’; has 30 days; in the beginning the day is 12 hours 54 minutes long and the night 11 hours 6 minutes; the signs of the sun’s path are Virgo and Libra; ‘The month of December, called Prosinec’ has 31 days; the day at the beginning of the month has 7 hours and the night 17; the signs of the Sun are Sagittarius and Capricorn’. Additional information is found under various dates inside the calendar: ‘On this day the sun enters the sign of Libra, and the day is equal to the night (14 Sept.)’; ‘On this day the sun enters the sign of Capricorn, and the day begins to increase and the night decrease. It is the longest night (of the year) having 17 hour 10 minutes (13 Dec.)’; ‘On this day the sun enters the sign of Pisces (9 Feb.)’; ‘The night has 13 hours and the day 11 (24 Feb.)’; ‘On this day the sun enters the heavenly sign of Cancer. It is the longest day (of the year) having 17 hours 10 minutes. From this day the night will begin to increase (12 June)’.

The paschalia (cf. Appendix, fig. 5) contains first of all traditional information about the dates of Easter and other moveable feasts and fast periods associated with it. It also gives the days of the week on which certain important fixed feasts, such as Christmas or Annunciation, fall in a given year. Alongside the year calculated from the birth of Christ, the traditional year ‘from the beginning of the world’ is also given, which in 1523 was 7031.

A novel feature in Skaryna’s paschalia was the astronomical information about the eclipses of the sun and moon. Thus in 1523: ‘There will be a complete disappearance of the moon on the first day of March at half of the ninth hour in the afternoon; and another disappearance of the whole moon will be on 25 August three hours after midnight’; and in 1530: ‘There will be disappearance of the entire moon on the 16th day of October at the sixth hour after midnight; and another eclipse of the greater part of the sun on 28 March at half of the sixth (hour) before noon’. The most interesting information is provided under the year 1524: ‘In this year there will be no disappearance of the sun or moon, but there will be a conjunction of all seven wandering stars in the heavenly sign of Pisces in the month of February, which signify, by the leave of God, great changes in the future for the kingdoms, laws, people and all creatures born on earth and in water, the like of which has never happened before’.

Starting with the year 1524 Skaryna’s paschalia indicates also whether a given year is a leap year (Leto prestupnœ ili visekst) or in what order it comes after the leap year.

Skaryna’s Sobranie is thus a unique mixture of a traditional Byzantine church calendar and a Western European almanac. The practice of giving respective lengths of day and night in a given

27. These are Skaryna’s names for the months in the vernacular, beginning with September: vresen’, listopad, hrudeni, prosinec, ljut, marec, kveten, mai, čirvec, lipen, serpen; and of the signs of the Zodiac (beginning with Virgo): Deva, Vaha, Skorpje, Strelec, Koziro, Vodolei, Riby (also Ryby), Oven, Telec, Bliznec, Rak, Lev.
month was general in East Slavonic church calendars, although the information was usually not so exact as in that of Skaryna. Some later publications, such as Mamonič’s Molitvy povsednevnye of 1601 and Potuustav published in Vilna in 1695 by the Orthodox monastery of the Holy Spirit, have, perhaps thanks to the example of Skaryna, given the vernacular names of the months. Mamonič’s preface to the paschalía (cf. Appendix, fig. 6) seems also to be modelled on that of Skaryna. There is, however, no other early Byelorussian, or in general East Slavonic, publication which contains a wealth of astronomical information comparable to that in the Malaja podorožnaja knižica.

The language of the Malaja podorožnaja knižica, unlike Skaryna’s Prague editions in which Byelorussian was extensively used, is, with few exceptions, Church Slavonic. This was only to be expected in a book consisting mainly of liturgical texts and such parts of the Bible which, like the psalms, were widely used in liturgical prayer and were therefore more familiar to the readers in their Church Slavonic form. While retaining, however, the Church Slavonic language, Skaryna made it easier to understand by a judicious choice of words common to both languages, or even substituting certain unintelligible words with their Byelorussian equivalents. The orthography of the book, unlike its language, reflects several phonetical features of the Byelorussian language and has much in common with the orthography of contemporary Byelorussian manuscripts, both religious and secular.

Skaryna’s Malaja podorožnaja knižica contains much that is new and original. It will no doubt continue for a long time to attract the attention of religious writers, philologists and all those interested in the history of art, early printing and Byelorussian culture in general. Among the problems awaiting a solution are the question of Skaryna’s sources — both eastern and western — and to what extent the contents of the book reflects local Byelorussian religious customs and usage.

Although Malaja podorožnaja knižica differs from all other of Skaryna’s publications, it has one thing in common with them. If it had a title page, it would not be surprising to find on it the same words as are written on the title page of Skaryna’s Bible, namely that the book was produced ‘for the glory of God and the good instruction of the common people’.

28. Some manuscript Slav church calendars also had the names of the signs of the Zodiac and few other astronomical facts, but at the same time they contained information about propitious and evil days, and gave advice on matters such as the best time to sow crops or to bleed a person (А. Gorskij, K. Nevostrev, op. cit., I, 1855, No. 1, p. 162; III, 1, 1859, No. 403, p. 420). It was probably Skaryna’s medical training — he held a degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Padua — that prevented him from including similar information in his calendar.
APPENDIX

The author wishes to thank the Librarian of the Royal Library in Copenhagen for his permission to include illustrations from the Malaja podorožnaja knižica and Akafisty; and to the Librarian of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for allowing reproductions from the Molitvy pousdnevnuye.

fig. 1. Malaja podorožnaja knižica. Beginning of the akgafi of the Tomb of Our Lord.

fig. 2. A page from Israel van Mekename's ornamental alphabet.
РЯДОГИ

Кондака первын

Архангела михаила, небесныя небесным
цином певний приносимы, они бы ниса щ
скорбен всегда извиваюсть, сего ради и
укривлата Архангела, совсеми душ
светыми, гда вседержителю служашиам
выбо представлами святими его великих
ниса Господа свободное, дивоознама кой
но свянием залиты.

Иосиф первын

Архангела представлений огненным чином
мысы михаила началячий, божественным
всевласти святома, освящён есеха клю
всено ладящих тове сице, радуйся же и
всем постоянно радуйся свяще
зикну святозрения, радуйся губитель
вых вовек падение, радуйся смерти
щих людей вознесение, радуйся свет
ше непостижимым, житиями помысло

АРХАНГЕЛОВИ!

ми, радуйся зоре дивовидениям человечес
ским ойнама, радуйся твоем юже
святого спасителя, радуйся пречи
святого изведение, радуйся радости
весьмы мислама, радуйся святонза
ниса, радуйся всесвятому, радуйся, енко твоему
мишь пречеслению, радуйся енко твоему
печали извивающи, радуйся Архангелам
жемихайле совсеми небесными сияниями.

Кондака вторын

Видяще твою иже причисленную и
хвалебства божия, вси земны диваместа паде
весьмы енко твоей убо всех непостэмама ми
помощи изведение, небесными сияниями во
жити иже при вмерши замыслу.

Иосиф вторын

Радуйся Архангела вже небесным, ми
же началячий, есеха представлений чином
и земле ниса, святых житиями, огнами же

fig. 3. Malaja podorožnaja knizica. Beginning of the akafist of the Archangels.
Пасхалы

Малая подороznaja knizhica. Beginning of the paschalia.

Лето 3. 10000 лет, круг солнца. Лето 3.
Природженные дни полторы тысячи 3.
Нижний 3. Масляная 3 неделя 3 дня.
Идёт нач. 3 неделя 3 ноля.
А при том 3 неделя 3 ноля.
Георгиевские.

Пасхалы

То есть...
fig. 6. Molitvy povednevnyc, Vilna, 1601. Introduction to the paschalia.
канон

Сыны ангеловские пребываются, нынѣ немолчную своими устами славить, сочинить стоять мнѣ познавшѣйшему, я вѣселья его надъ сырыми емѣя, твое богородицѣ почеть.

Конецъ канонъ Архангеломъ.

молитва Архангеломъ:

глубина покорнаго

Боже мой, изъ троннаго твоего, исповѣдать тайнѣйственныхъ жесточайшаго, языческой многорѣчию общирной, прыгая въ молитвѣ дыхатель болѣзни молоть; святой великѣй печения станина глашествующихъ чѣсныхъ жесточайшѣйшихъ троихъ страшно славящегося, ненарушенно обильно болѣзни славы обѣстѣнныхъ молитвѣ прѣжнему и нынѣ другому человѣколюбцу бога, дѣйствительной нынѣ

ярхангеломъ:

гласа въ землѣ два; Сынъ всесвятаго Архангела, всегда полнозвучнымъ ясно слышащемъ троицѣ, прыгающаго ангеловъ во власти Христовой, освященныя еще вечныя, сохраненныя нынѣ вселенскаго и скованенныя злато, и плода непримѣннаго; я вѣрнѣй слушаю вѣдущихъ моихъ, и слышаю и по разумѣю ея слова превосходнаго и прозрѣю въ стрѣляющемъ очнемъ, и въ ней всѣ грѣхи мои; въ землѣ Воскресеніе, и прими и всѣ грѣхи моихъ; проходи воднымъ жестомъ моего, и прими и всѣ грѣхи моихъ превозмогательно и пройдешь небесного сотворенія твоего, въ прошь повелѣшемъ небесныхъ силъ, небесныхъ властимъ яснѣйшая приносишемъ песнь; дѣйствительная, и миросоздаваемыхъ; закрытого въ вселенскаго человѣка здѣлана неподвижная нѣмѣя, пребывая богомъ сотворилъ наказаніе страданія и небесные жилища его; Сынъ Архангела гласа ради.
ПРЕДСТОЯЩЕ

молитвы небесных воцарившее
которыми мир не познается.

Явился слово Божие: Мирствие, служение живущих честных пророков. Рядукса преподал в духовное, чистоты сих пророков. Рядукса преподел в духовное, и славословии всему миру. Рядукса преподел в духовное, и славословии всему миру.

РЯДОТСЯ

приближение к городам, размножение
честных пророков. Рядукса преподал в духовное, и чистоты сих пророков. Рядукса преподел в духовное, и славословии всему миру. Рядукса преподел в духовное, и славословии всему миру.

fig. 8. Malaja podorožnaja knižica. Prayer to the Mother of God after the akafist.
Прежде всего, помните о святой печали,
для моих, сего передей стихозефев,
дышу моё своё святой, тело мое вздыхан,
розвы мой созвети, делом мое неприем невминуемы мои святей
мысль мою молитвы образит, сердце мое и все братья исполняя, память мою узаймей, егого душевен, очи мое княжеский воехан
совесть мой исправлю и оставит, не хотят племенные явлений, похожие в горение, смятение с несущееся горение, веды княжества и извести, глашу мечи княжества надобны, смирён плачли и пещерны, неприемны, огнень вечного созводы, по достоин старим приимы, радостям духом
внешняя поимы, радостям вечным сподобимо. Разуму откровения миро
где столы возвын вечною

йдимы.

fig. 8a. Malaja podorožnaja knižica. Prayer to the Mother of God after the akafist. (End).

Bojalkyts.):

гавы і адтого пряка божна і цара іроксиянська писи починяються зазвичай уламок по ечинне надорож, и жемчугове ізайца.

Каціча першава

Укладаў 6

Лицэн жыва й не мнае на своеве нечестивых, и ня полны грешных нетами, и няя дялніці гуцевіч несегене и не

вякоже гасподин воля его, неожале его поечно день и ночь, и ней

день им арко спадкуячи присущиних

воду, иже поча своя дать совем на своє