

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 knjižica* (Little traveller's companion book), a prayer book for Orthodox laymen.

Malaja podorožnaja knjižica 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 knjižica*. 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 knjižica*, 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 knjižica* 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 knjižica* is well justified by the small

1. See A. Nadson, 'Kniha Skaryny ũ Kapenhahienie', *Božym šlacham*, 5, London, 1971, pp. 9-11.

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 knjižica* 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, 1957, 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; *Sestodnevec'*, containing selected proper, or variable, parts of daily offices for every day of the week; and finally *Posledovanie cerkovnaho 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

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.

3. For the description of the *Malaja podorožnaja knižica* (without *paschalia*) see: I. Karataev, 'Opisanie slavjano-russkich knig napečatanych kirillovskimi bukvami', *Sbornik otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti*, XXXV, 2, StP., 1883, No. 19, pp. 59-67; A. Koršunaŭ, 'Krotki kamientaryj da vydaŭniaŭ Francyska Skaryny', in: Francysk Skaryna, *Pradmovy i pašlastoŭi*, Minsk, 1969, pp. 222-32; V. Tumaš, 'Biblijahrafija skarynijany', *Zapisy* (Biełaruski Instytut navuki i mastactva), 5, Munich, 1970, pp. 196-7.

The first serious study of the contents of the *Malaja podorožnaja knižica* was made by P. Vladimirov in his *Doktor Francisk Skorina, ego perevody, pečatnye izdaniya 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

Sestodnevec': 36, 4, (4)

Sobranie: 20

Table of contents: (3)

Altogether the book has 435 folios.

5. See E. Nemirovskij, 'Slavjanskije inkunabuly i paleotipy kirillovskogo šrifta v knigočraniliščach Sovetskogo Sojuza', *Sovetskoe slavjanovedenie*, 1, Moscow, 1968, p. 19; A. Koršunaŭ, 'Litaraturna-publicystyčnaja spadčyna Francyska Skaryny', in: Francysk Skaryna, *Pradmovy i pašlastoŭi*, p. 192. Of the three copies of Skaryna's *Akafisty* which are in the Saltykov-Ščedrin Library in Leningrad, the Royal Library in Copenhagen and the Jagiellońska 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: *Pisanyj reči v sei maloj podorožnoi knižice po rjadu vkratce položeny 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.⁶ 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'.⁷

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 ozdoby ũ vydaŕniah Skaryny', *Čatyrochsoŕlećcie bieŕaruskaha druku*, Minsk, 1926, pp. 180-227.

7. V. Stasov, 'Razbor rukopisnogo soćinenija g. Rovinskogo "Russkie gravery i ich proizvedenija s 1564 g. do osnovanija Akademii Chudožestv"', *Otćet o sed'mom prisuždenii nagrads grafa Uvarova*, StP., 1864, p. 32.

might have been cut specially for the Vilna editions.⁸ 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.⁹

Certain authors studying the ornaments in the Moscow editions of Ivan Fedorov and Piotr Mscislavec have noted their dependence on Mekenem.¹⁰ Moreover, it has been shown that previously similar ornaments had begun to appear in Muscovite manuscript books as early as 1524.¹¹ Kiselev in an article published posthumously in 1965, was the first to suggest that Mekenem's alphabet might have found its way to Moscow from Vilna, whither it was brought by Skaryna.¹² At that time, however, it was not known when Skaryna arrived in Vilna. Now, thanks to the Copenhagen copy of the *Malaja podorožnaja knjižica*, 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 knjižica* is basically what it known as *Psaltyr' 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 Vukovič.¹³ 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

8. Vladimirov, *op. cit.*, p. 176; Ščakacichin, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

9. A. Nekrasov hinted at the possible influence of Mekenem on the ornaments in Skaryna's Prague editions. See his 'Ornament slavjanskich pečatnykh izdaniij XV-XVI v.', *Drevnosti. Trudy slavjanskoj komissii Imperatorskogo obščestva*, V, Moscow, 1911. Protokoly, p. 53.

10. See A. Nekrasov, 'Pervopečatnaja knižnaja gravjura', *Ivan Fedorov — pervopečatnik*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1936, p. 81.

11. See A. Sidorov, *Drevnerusskaja knižnaja gravjura*, Moscow, 1951, p. 82.

12. N. P. Kiselev, 'Proischoždenie moskovskogo staropečatnogo ornamenta', *Kniga*, XI, Moscow, 1965, pp. 190-1.

13. See the description of these editions in Karataev, *op. cit.*, Nos. 8 & 18. Another Venice edition, the *Molitvoslov* of 1520 should also be mentioned (Karataev, *op. cit.*, No. 17; also S. Novakovič, 'Božidara Vukoviča zbornici na putnike', *Glasnik srpskog učenog društva*, 45, Belgrade, 1872, pp. 129-67). 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 *Psaltyr' s vossledovaniem* see A. Gorskij, K. Nevostruev, *Opisanie slavjanskich 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 Tessaonica (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.¹⁴ 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 *kannonik* ('hymnal') of 1457; in all three cases they are attributed to Isidore (Filaret, *Istoričeskij obzor pesnopenicev i pesnopenija Grečeskoj Cerkvi*, Černigov, 1864, 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 knjižica* — 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 sedmicu*, 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 knjižica*.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):

Malaja podorožnaja knjižica

Voizbrannyi voevodo živodavče Christe, pobedu na vrahi naša oružie nam pokazal esi, prevelikii krest svoi svetom sostavljeni i česnyi, tem že izbavivšesja ot zlych, blahodarstvennaja vospevaem krestu tvoemu svetomu hlalohjušče: Raduisja, kreste česnyi, kroviju Hospoda našeho Isusa Christa iskroplenyi.¹⁸

Akafisty 1628

Vozbrannij Voevodo živodavče Christe carju, pobedu na vrahy svoe oružie nam pokazal esi, na nebesi prevelik Krest svetom sostavljen, seho radi izbavlešesja ot zol blahodarstvenno počitaem Krest tvoj svjatyj, no jako imušče deržavu nepobedimuju, ot vsjakich nas strastij svobodni, da zovem ti: Radujsja, Kreste prečestnyj.

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

15. For the most comprehensive survey of all *akafists*, including those published by Skaryna, see A. Popov, *Pravoslavnye Russkie akafisty, izdannye s blagoslovenija Svjatejšago Sinoda, Kazan'*, 1903. 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 Psaltyr'* 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.¹⁹ Skaryna'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, Mahiloŭ 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.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 Joanu Predteči*), is very rare. Its modified version was published only once after Skaryna, in Kiev in 1677.²¹ 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 1628.²²

19. Here is the opening stanza of the hymn:

O treblažennyj kreste i vsečestnyj, tebe poklanaemsja
vernii i veličaem, radujuščesja o Božestvennom
vozvyšenii tvoem; no jako pobeditel'noe i oružie
nepobedimoe, ogradi i pokryj tvoeju blagodatiju
zovuščija ti: Radujsja, drevo treblažennoe.

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 this *akafist* (Malzev, *op. cit.*, p. 795 *et seq.*) is a version of the prayer after the canon of the Holy Cross in Skaryna's *Malaja podorožnaja knjižica*. It is not found in Greek editions.

20. Filaret, *op. cit.*, p. 448; also *Polnyj 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. Stojanovič, *Katalog rukopisa i starich štampnich kniga*. Zbirka Srpske kraljevske akademie. Belgrade, 1901, No. 74).

21. Popov, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

22. Here are the opening stanzas of the two hymns:

Malaja podorožnaja knjižica

Dostoinyi svedetelju Christov, o tobe ubo evanhelist hlaholet', byst' čelovek poslan ot Boha, imja emu Ioann, sei priide vo svedetel'stvo, da svedetel'stvet' o svete, da vsi veru imut' emu; tem že i my verujuščie vo Christa po tvoemu svedetel'stvu poem tomu vsi: Alliluiua.

Akafisty 1628 (Isidore')

Vozbrannomu i teplomu zastupleniju tvoemu, izbavleni tobou vsi ot skorbi, dolžnoe ti poem blahodarenie; no jako imejaj derznovenie ko Hospodu, ot vsjakich strastij nas svobodi, da zovem: Radujsja, čestnyj Predteče.

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 vsech voistinu svjatych bolšomu, iže pače
vsech sogrešaju bezakonnovavšich, penie prinošaju

Finally there is the 'Akafist of the Most Sweet Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ' (*Akafist presladkomu Imeni Hospoda Našeho Isusa Christa*), also called by Skaryna 'The Praise of the Name of Jesus' (*Pochvala Imenju Isusovu*). It is found only in the *Malaja podorožnaja knjižica*, and is interesting because of its undoubted relationship to the 'Akafist of the Most Sweet Jesus' (*Akafist 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:

**Akafist of the Name of Jesus
(Mal. podor. knjižica)**

Ikos 4.²³ Knjaz' nekyj prišed klanjašesja tobe, Isuse, hlahlolja, jako dšči moja umirajet', no prišed vozloži na nju ruku svoju i oživet'; i my, carju, pripadaem tobe, oživi nas miloserdiem svoim, da vozveličim tja pojušče: Isuse, vyšnich sozdatelju; Isuse, nižnich otkupitelju; Isuse, preispodnich pobeditelju; Isuse, vseho stvorenja ukrasitelju; Isuse presladkii, duši moeja vtešenie; Isuse predrahyi, uma moeho prosveščenje; Isuse predobryi, serca moeho veselie; Isuse presil'nyi, tela moeho zdravie; Isuse, spasi mja i pomilui mja; Isuse, svetom večnym prosveti mja; Isuse, vo carstvo nebesnoe vovedi mja; Isuse velikočelovekoljubče, prosti bezakonuju dušu moju.

**Akafist of the Sweet Jesus
(Akafisty 1628)**

Ikos 4. Slyša slepyj, Hospodi, mimochodjašča tja putem, vopijaše, Isuse Syne Davidov pomiluj mja; i prizvav, otverz esi oce eho. Prosveti ubo milostiju si oce myslenne serdca i mene vopijušča ti i hlahljušča: Isuse, vyšnich sozdatelju; Isuse, nižnich iskupitelju; Isuse, preispodnich potrebitelju; Isuse, vseja tvari ukrasitelju; Isuse, duša moeja utešitelju; Isuse, umu moemu prosvetitelju; Isuse, serdču moemu veselie; Isuse, telu moemu zdravie; Isuse, spase moj, spasi mja; Isuse, svete moj, prosveti mja; Isuse, muki vsjakija izbavi mja; Isuse, spasi mja nedostojna; Isuse, Syne Božij, pomiluj mja.

Of the remaining hymns the 'Akafist (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 after you 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

ti Ioanne, jako ubo imyj drznovenie ko Gospodu, ot vsech mja bed svobodi, da zovu ti: Radujse 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 *akafist* of Saint John the Baptist attributed to Isidore was printed in the Cetinje *Psaltyr* of 1495 (See Karataev, *op. cit.*, No. 8).

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:



Two of the prayers in the *Akafisty* section are by Saint Cyril of Turaŭ. 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 povsednevnye* published in 1596 by the Vilna Orthodox Confraternity, and again in 1601 in Vilna by the Mamonič press in the book of the same name.²⁵ 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 Turaŭ 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 vsja strany zapadnyi svoim telesem slavne prosveščaeši*). Saint Cyril would have been not a little



Malaja podorožnaja knjižica

Ikos 7 (St. Peter)

Raduisja, Isusom ljubimi apostole Petre, eho že radi mirskaja opustivyi; raduisja, Božii namesniče, i toho dlja duhovnyja voljubivyi.

Ikos 11 (St. Peter)

Raduisja, Rimu velikaho pochvalo, kroviju svetoju svoeju i posvjativyi; raduisja, Rimu slavnaho hlavo, pastyrja stada Christova po sobe v nem ostavivyi.

Ikos 12 (St. Paul)

Raduisja, ty Nerona carja rimskaho posramil i ženu eho na veru Christovu navratil; raduisja, ty vo prechval'nom Rime vkupe s namesnikom Isusovym mučenje prinjal.

Akafisty 1628

Raduisja, Bohom izbrannyj Apostole Petre, eho že radi zemnych oboživyi. Raduisja, eho že radi obohativyi duhovnoju blahodatiju.

Raduisja, Rimu velikaja pochvalo, v nem že tečeniju kraj naveršiv, ko nebesi stopy proster.

Raduisja, iže vencenosnaho Nerona nikakože usumnesja, no i vinočerpca toho verna vo Christa Isusa sotvori. Raduisja, iže krajnim udvleniem nevernyja voiny vo veru privlekl, v sečenii bo tvoem krov i mleko množajše istočil esi.

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.

25. A. Nadson, 'Malitaŭnik Mamoniča 1601 h.', *Božym šlacham*, London, 1970, 1, pp. 8-12; 2, pp. 5-6.

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'neišaja 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.²⁶ 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 cerkovnaho sobraniija* (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 *svjatcy*) 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 uschodnieslavianskaha vieršaskładańnia', 450 *hod bietaruskaha knihadrukavańnia*, 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 prestupnoe 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, hruden', prosinec', ljuty, marec', kveten', mai, čirvec', lipec', serpen'; and of the signs of the Zodiac (beginning with Virgo): Deva, Vaha, Skorpie, Strelec', Koziroh, 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.²⁸ Some later publications, such as Mamonič's *Molitvy povsednevnyje* of 1601 and *Poluustav* 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 *paschalia* (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 (A. Gorskiĭ, K. Nevostruev, *op. cit.*, I, 1855, No. 1, p. 162; III, 1, 1889, No. 405, 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 povesednevnye*.

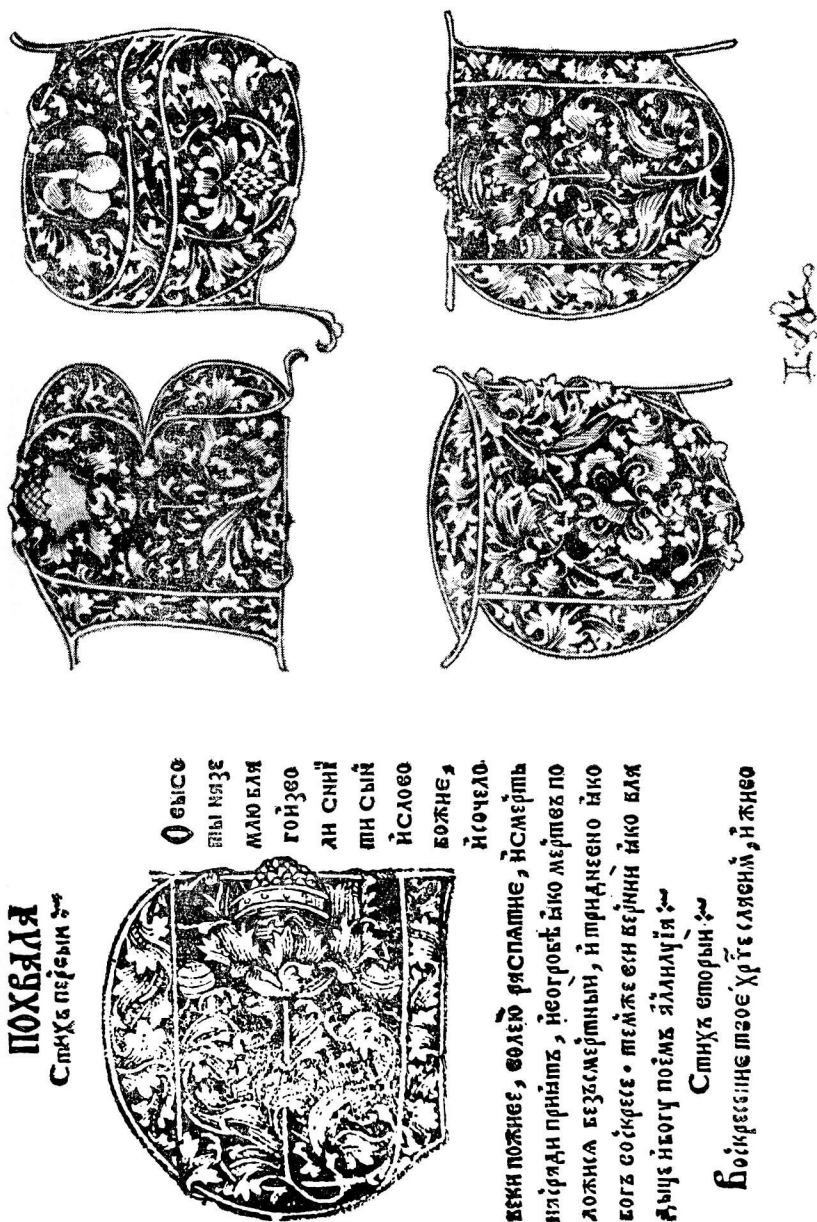


fig. 2. A page from Israhel van Mekenem's ornamental alphabet.

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

Я́РХІЯНГЕЛОУЎ?

мя, я́рдзіса зоре дывові́дняя чэлабече
 скіня О́чмя • Я́рдзіса шыбо зь сь ня
 спявенік спясенню, я́рдзіса прыздаі
 сьціа коешенню • Я́рдзіса я́рдзіста
 еўрымы па дятелю, я́рдзіса шыкашчы
 няса ізводантлю • Я́рдзіса ніко тобоў
 мыль просешытса, я́рдзіса ніко тобоў
 печаль шгонаеса • Я́рдзіса я́рхуні́рці
 же мнхуніае совсеми небесныч сьламя ?

Кондзяка еторын ?

Бндаще теюю кряголю пресебтачу я́р
 хангеле болнн, еси земнн дненіса прісе
 лавнн дбо теюю Обря́з непостнжнн ннн
 ндненн нзлаетса, невецестенному бо
 жтб есегда прядстолі́ зра я́лану́та ?

Ікоза еторын ?

Я́рзма дярці ннма бжтвеннн, мнхуні
 леннчлннче, нсеух прядстпашелю чннн
 нзбшн нншуха сьбурнуха нкобн мннн ?

РЯДОСТИ

Кондзяка первын ?

Я́рхуніае гур мнхуніау, нсемаз небесннм
 чномз песнн прнноснма, О́нн дбо няса ш
 скорей всегда нзьявлнлють, сегордан н
 хвалннмта я́рхуніспрнннже, совсеми дчхн
 светнннн, гау еседа ржнтелю счужншннн
 еыбо прядстолшн свашннн іго швсакнх
 няса бездэ संबоднше, дьвонзопннела кбн
 но свнннн я́лану́та ?

Ікоза первын ?

Я́нтелз прядспятшель О́гненнннчннн
 ты іси мнхуніае нчнчлннче, божественнм
 блнстнла светомз, О́зрнраешн есеух саю
 боеню поўннхз тобе Снче • Я́рдзіса зель
 здо мнрб светоносннла, я́рдзіса свешче
 знкону светознчннла • Я́рдзіса гбнннпел
 ннх бесок пяденне, я́рдзіса согрешнлю
 цнху мннн возседаенне • Я́рдзіса снн
 те непостнжнннннн бжтвеннннн помнсло

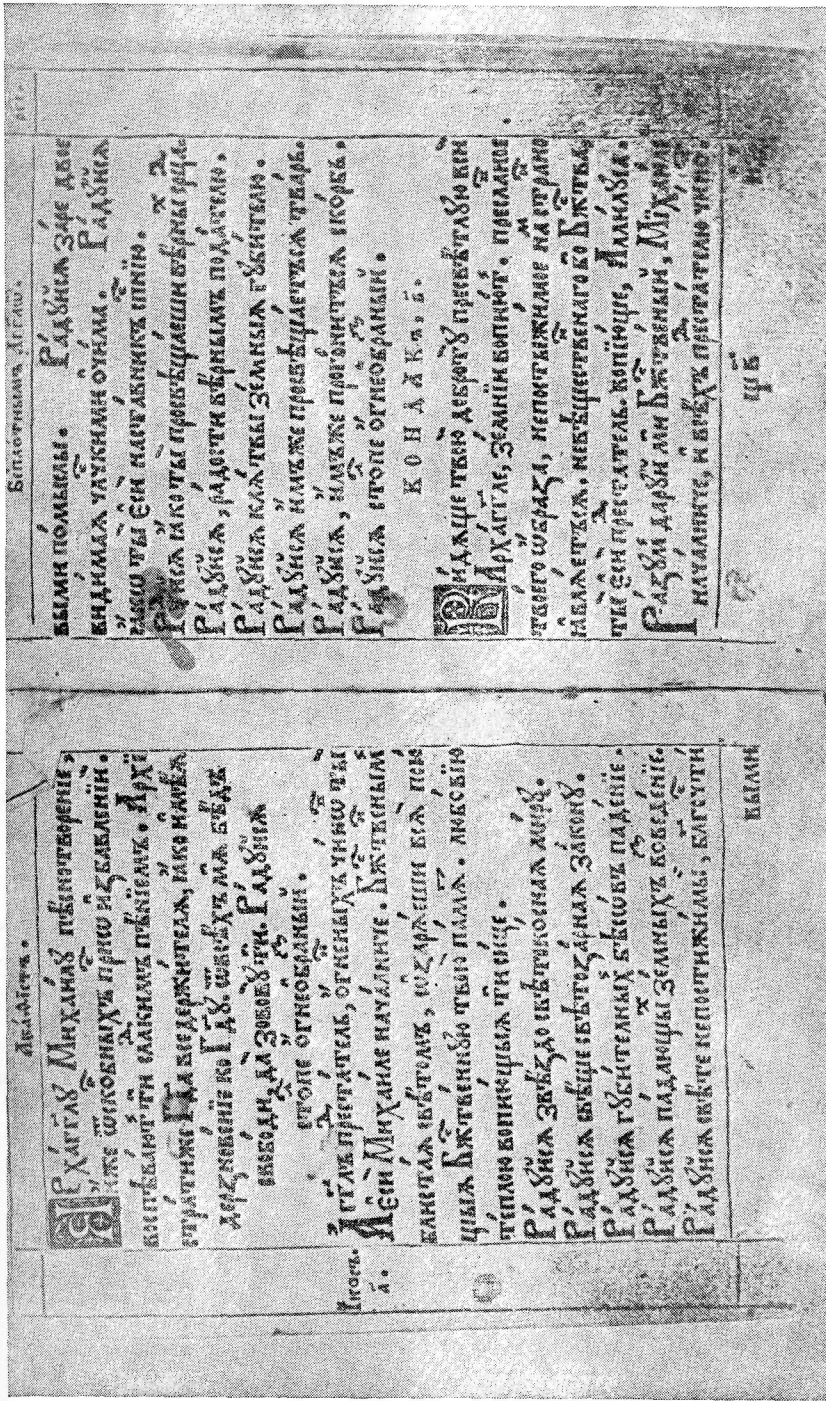


fig. 4. Akafisty, Vilna 1628. Beginning of the akafist of the Archangels.

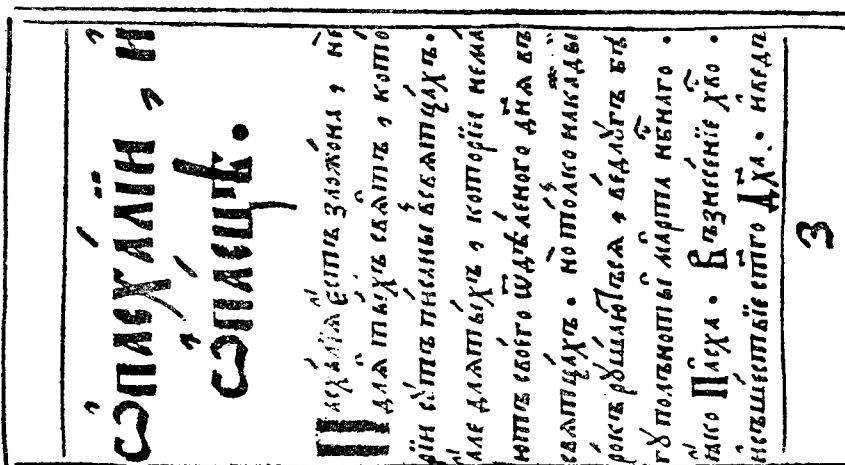
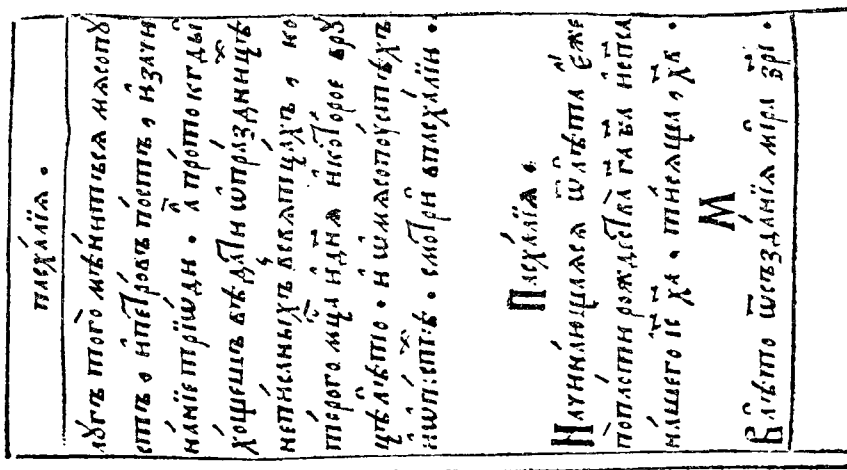


fig. 6. Molitvy pousedneuye, Vilna, 1601. Introduction to the paschalia.

Я́РХАНГЕЛОМЪ

Шесалого зля • Стыи бєланин я́рхнїтраїтї
 же мнѣялє първын полкосоуѣче бѣнносуѣ
 ныа тройя, прїстѣяннїче я́рхннїтеяю ро
 дѣ хрєсїянїскому, Ѡснїеычѣдєсы есю
 есєлєнїюу • Сохрѣннїа нынѣ шєсалого я
 скѡшеннѣ злото, я шѣдєлѣ непрїдѣзнєнѣ • Ш
 ерїзнслѣхѣя ѡшнѣ мойхѣ, дѣслѣшѣ япо
 рѣзѣмєю божн слоесєя дѣшєполѣзнѣа • я
 прорзрю внїтрѣнєнѣя Ѡчнїя, я познїю вєл
 грєхн моа ѣже злєдєяхѣхѣ прохѣдан боднѣхѣ
 жнєотїа моєго, я прогнєзѣхѣхѣ незлєбнєнѣяго
 ядогѣотєрѣлѣнѣяго сотворнїтєлѣа своєго
 ѣмѣже прѣдѣстойтѣ невєснѣе слнлѣ, нєвє
 прєстєпєннї ѡсты прєстѣю прїносѣцє пє
 снѣ • дѣяпо молѣлєлѣ Ѡмнє нєдѣстѣннѣмѣ
 рѣзѣмєю бо, яко болѣе вєсалого чєлѣвѣкѣя
 злѣа нєпоѣбнѣя янєнѣялѣа прѣдѣз бѣгомы
 сотворї • нонє шѣчѣюсѣ свєдѣнї дологѣ
 рѣннѣа почннѣ, я нѣмнлѣогрѣднє єго слнлѣ
 нїдєюсѣа • Стыи я́рхн҃гєлє гєрїлє рѣдѣотн

КАНОНЪ

Стыи я́рхн҃гєлєскнє грѣнїстѣлѣ, нынѣ нємоу
 чнѣ шѣе рѣжєстѣе слѣвѣтѣ, вѣчнїцѣе
 стѣятѣ нннѣ познїрѣюцє, янєсєлнѣ єго нѣ.
 сырїрѣсєлѣ, тєбє вѣгорѣднїцє поюѣтѣ

Конєцѣ канонѣ я́рхн҃гєломѣ



МОЛИТВА Я́РХАНГЕЛОМЪ

Глєнѣа пѣчєнѣ

Блѣмѣ яко кѣзстѣпнїкѣмѣ я́рхн҃
 ннїтєлѣя жнѣоптѣнѣшєго, язѣ Ѡ
 кнѣнннѣ ямногѣгрєшнѣ ямарєкѣ,
 прїпѣдѣю молѣлєлѣа проклѣнѣвѣшєн
 ямлѣотн, вѣдѣчн божн вєлнчѣвѣя стнї янѣ
 гєлн • прѣстѣлѣ чѣснѣннѣ жнѣсоннѣчѣлнѣа
 трѣнїцє стрѣшнѣ Ѡстѣпнѣюцє, нєнѣзрєчєнѣ
 нѣю сѣлѣтѣстнѣю болѣтѣвєннѣа слѣвѣ Ѡбє
 лнстѣяѣн • молнїтє прѣмѣлѣнѣяго нєсєцє
 я́рхн҃го чєлѣвєкѣмѣбѣчѣя бѣгѣ, дѣнѣзлѣннѣтн янѣ



РЯДОСТН

врысьлінія когородце, розмноженне
 сь нозь і зрайлвз • Рядуіса препеня
 сяро, і обещанне есехз пророковз • Ря
 дуіса прѣмудраа главо, инявченне хри
 с товъ хъз постоловз • Рядуіса прѣсвѣ
 тлаа хваало, и влягодати чепырема зѣва
 и гелнн томъ • Рядуіса превелннкаа сн
 ло, и дзозостн свѣтлмъ мученикомъ • Ря
 дуіса прѣлюбезнаа тѣшнн, и зоудѣржа
 ине ченывъ ісповѣданкомъ • Рядуіса
 прѣсыкоаа спєно, и терпенне бо голюбн
 шь ма і нѣ хомъ • Рядуіса прѣиснаа зо
 ре, и убравшенне чнстымъ дѣснрямъ • Ря
 дуіса прѣпнхуаа бурє, и зяступленне сн
 рымъ вѣоенцяма • Рядуіса штешеннє
 я выє му і мѣрпымъ • бундѣ сомноу бо
 есагон поп рѣе моєи • ала прѣселнков
 рѣдоснн пєоєи юже і мєла і сь прнзачн
 тнн слоа вѣажа, услышн недостоинчу

ПРЕСНОСТЕ

Молнвѣя нѣвожннѣа ко прѣсвѣтлєи
 когородннч мѣрнн полѣа фнстѣ : ~



Рядуіса прѣнѣсвѣтєншѣа
 мѣрнє, служєннчє лнвоиа
 чялыаа шроїа • Рядуіса
 прѣнѣсоиєншѣаа лнлнє, оє
 люєннчє створнпєла бога шїа • Ряду
 іса прѣчнстѣа дєвнчє, мѣтн гѣа нѣшєго
 і сѣа хрїа • Рядуіса прѣдмѣнєннѣа голу
 бнчє, хопн вѣтєшншєла свѣтєго дѣхѣ • Ря
 дуіса прѣнѣдостоиєншѣаа госполє, нєє
 єєлнє лнковъ і нгєлєскнхъ • Рядуіса прѣнѣ
 ітємнєншѣаа вєжє, и мучєннє соєрѣннєи
 єєобєскнхъ • Рядуіса прѣкрєснѣаа дѣцєро
 и рѣзрѣшєннє грѣховъ і дѣамовыхъ • Ряду
 іса прѣкрєпкѣаа вєро, и ізннцєннє калѣобъ
 зѣєвнныхъ • Рядуіса прѣєлѣєнѣаа цѣрєчє
 лѣдѣяннє есєхз пѣнрнрѣховъ • Рядуіса
 зѣє

fig. 8. *Malaja podorožnaja knjižica*, Prayer to the Mother of God after the *akafist*.

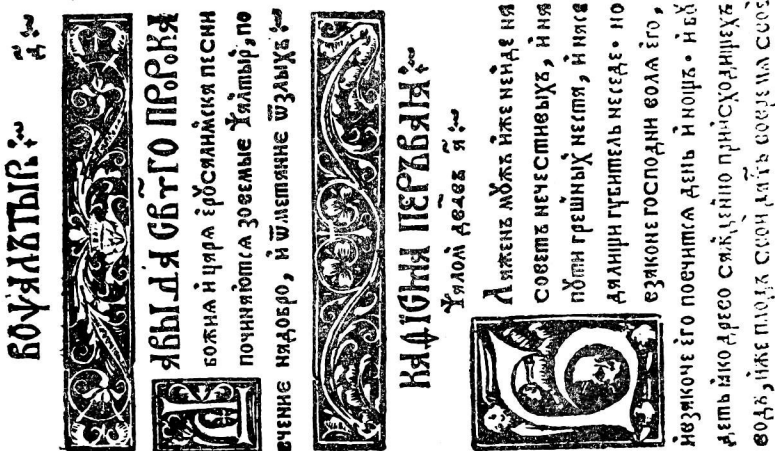


fig. 8a. *Malaja podorožnaja knižica*. Prayer to the Mother of God after the *akafist*. (End).

fig. 9. *Malaja podorožnaja knižica*. Beginning of Psalm 1.