

THE BYČKOV PSALTER

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Academician Afanasij Feodorovič Byčkov (1818—1899), archivist and librarian of the St. Petersburg Public Library, acquired an important personal collection of manuscripts, which came to the library after his death. Among them was a parchment fascicle, eight leaves (four sheets) in rather poor condition, containing psalms XVII:35 to XXIV:19. The indefatigable Izmail I. Sreznevskij recognized it as an eleventh century Russian psalter and published the text in full, with the parallel text from the equally ancient Tolstoj Psalter, and a linguistic and textual commentary (1875). Later, his son, Vjačeslav I. Sreznevskij, in his dissertation on the history of the text of the Slavonic psalter, again emphasized the antiquity of the Byčkov Psalter. Modern consensus places Byč. (Leningrad Pub. Lib.: Q π I 73) among the twenty-five oldest manuscripts surviving from Rus'.¹

The elder Sreznevskij has earned the gratitude of Slavists for discovering particularly important manuscripts among the vast collections he was able to examine, and for his famous series of *Svedenija i zamečanija o maloizvestnyx i neizvestnyx pamjatnikax* (91 items, 1867—1881), which first brought many manuscripts and problems to the attention of scholars. Yet he was not a careful editor, and his published texts are unsuitable for close linguistic analyses. Many of the works he brought to light have been published in full by later scholars, but much, of the work that he started

¹ Byč. is No. 28 in the »Predvaritel'nyj spisok slavjano-russkix rukopisej XI—XIV vv., xranjaščixsja v SSSR« (Arxeografičeskij ežegodnik AN SSSR za 1965 g.); ten of the previous items are South Slavic. The nature of the list cannot reflect the consensus of expert opinion about absolute chronology, but I have seen no evidence that anyone has disputed the early dating for Byč.

remains to be done; moreover, much that has been done can be reassessed in the light of new evidence.

One therefore welcomes the publication of photographs of all sixteen pages of the Byčkov Psalter in a new series established in Szeged: *Monumenta Linguae Russicae Vetustae*, redigunt V. V. Kolesov et E. H. Tóth (see Tóth 1972). Tóth has given an extensive account of some orthographical and morphological features, but there is more to be said.²

Tóth does not give a summary of scribal mistakes, although this information is vital when attempting to weigh linguistic and textual evidence. The scribe of Byč. was not particularly careful (I leave out of consideration the scribe who wrote the red initials, psalm-headings, and *gadanija*). He made the usual sort of mistake, and sometimes he corrected his own errors: e. g. *мо* for *мон* (1r2), *спсении* for *-юнь* (4r2), *пърпѣхъ* for *търпѣхъ* (8r6); *Привоздиша* with *г* added above line (5v6), *састоупленинѣ* with initial *с* corrected to *з* (5v13).

Sreznevskij took note of the work of a scribe using Serbian orthography, probably in the 13th or 14th century, who restored letters, words, and whole lines which had presumably faded. Yet the photographs show that the text in places was carefully retouched much earlier, by one or more scribes who on the whole strove to follow the shapes of the fading letters. One can see that in some cases the retoucher misinterpreted the faint lines; thus for instance 4v3, *лицѣ* where the curving vertical line of the *ѣ* and the generally deviant shape of this letter strongly suggests that the original scribe correctly wrote *ѣ* here (*лицѣ* : ps. XX:13). Further, there is at least one case suggesting more than one layer of correction. In ps. XXI:32 we expect *рождѣшннѣ*, but the Bologne Psalter has *рождѣшннѣ*. Byč. 6v7 appears to have had both *рождѣшннѣ* and *родѣшннѣ*, and I submit that the spacing of the letters indicates original *ждѣ* and not *дѣ*. On the other hand, the most recent »corrector« has produced something Sreznevskij read as *родѣшннѣ*. Yet the tail of a *щ* is clearly visible, though not retouched: Tóth reads *родомѣшннѣ*. I suggest then (1) original *рождѣшннѣ*, (2) modified to *родѣшннѣ* either by the original scribe or a contemporary corrector, and then (3) ineptly emended by a restorer some years or decades later.

² Tóth lists previous works devoted to or touching on Byč. He was unaware of my dissertation (Lunt 1950), which includes a summary section on Byč.

One hopes that the folia can be photographed with the special techniques which made possible the recent edition of the *Izbornik* of 1076 (Golyšenko 1965), another manuscript which had been repeatedly retouched and »corrected« over the centuries. For the time being, I should like to offer some possible emendations, particularly in view of textual problems which were not raised by Tóth.

While Byč. on the whole represents the same tradition as the glagolitic OCS Sinai Psalter and the Bulgarian Pogodin Psalter of about 1200 and the Macedonian Bologne Psalter of about 1235, there are peculiarities pointing to what Pogorelov (1901) tentatively called the *ruskaja redakcija*, on the basis of the Simeon Psalter (ca. 1280), the Psalter of 1296, and various later East Slavic psalters. In fact some of these readings appear in the Bucarest Psalter of 1346 and the Munich Psalter of about 1385, both Serbian by origin.³

We must consider the possibility that textual variants may be partly the work of the original scribe of Byč., and partly innovations made (I would guess) in the 12th century by the corrector(s). Thus 5r2 (ps. XXI:8) reads оустынама и похываша for Sin. оусты своиѣ п. I submit that here Byč. originally agreed with Sin., but has been revised. At 6v13 (XXII:3) Byč. is unique: на стѣза правдыѣѣ (Sin. стѣзѣ правдыѣ, Buc. Mon. стѣзоу правды). Here I suggest that Byč. had правдыѣ, »corrected« — with omitted ѣ, not quite in keeping with the original scribal usage — to an adjective, but not the one traditionally belonging to this passage. At 2r11 (XVIII:5), the final ѣ in коньѣ may be a mistaken retouching of original and expected ѣ. In прославьтъ (6r1, XXI:24) for imperative *-ite*, the first ѣ is surely the result of retouching; the second is not so certain, but this could be one of several instances in Byč. where the scribe's inattention has caused grammatical endings to change the meaning of a sentence. (For example, 2v20, XVIII:14 оудолѣють for plural, cf. Buc. Mon. оудолѣють, Sin. older оудовѣѣють [so Pog.] but в then erased.)

V. I. Sreznevskij and after him Tóth were aware of spellings that seem unlikely before 1100, and simply declared that the clear paleographical indications overrode these details. I am skeptical

³ Professor Moshé Altbauer of Jerusalem informs me that also the oldest Serbian psalter, Sinai codex Slav. 7 (13th c.) has many of the same variants. Let me take this opportunity to thank Prof. Altbauer for his help in arranging my 1971 visit to Sinai, and for excellent photos of Sinai codex Slav. 6: see below.

that our purely paleographical criteria at present allow us to date a manuscript with certainty in any ten or twenty-year period between 1070 and 1200 or so without careful consideration of orthography and grammar. Therefore I find it hard to dismiss the *акн* of 1v2 (XVII:43) as an unmotivated error with *н* for *ъ*: such a spelling is surely indicative of later usage. The word *aky* is not found in most early psalters (Sin., Pog., Bon.), and stands apart from the Moravian-Macedonian tradition. At Byč. 5v1 (XXI:16) *акъ* surely is the retoucher's modification of original *акъ н* (cf. Buc. *акъ н*). As for *акн*, I believe again that it represents a change from *акъ*. If this is not the case, then it may be taken to stand for *акъ н* (cf. Pog.) with simple omission of the *о*.⁴

Tóth (p. 90) contends that Byč. was written in the south of Rus', because of *ь* for *ъ* in *скърба*, *истъргнеть* and *сакъцю*. A glance in Sreznevskij's *Materials* s. v. *съсъць* indicates that *съсъц-* must have been the normal spelling in Rus', for it occurs in all sorts of texts, including the 11th-c. Novgorod *minei*. The great majority of 11th—12th c. manuscripts from Rus' are written in a rather neutral Slavonic standard language, and variants like *-tъrg-* and *skъrb-* are insufficient as indicators of any one locality. On the other hand, the absence of *жг* or *жч* spellings (like *дъжгъ*, *дъжчъ*) seems to rule out Novgorod or Galicia-Volynia, and the absence of a confusion between *ц* and *ч* rules out the northwestern Polock-Pskov area.⁵ The Byčkov Psalter is typical of the standard language of

⁴ Sobolevskij 130 cites two examples of spelled *кн* from the Jur'ev Gospel ca. 1120, others from 1144 and 1164. From the Lěstvica (Lenin Lib., Rum. 198) of the mid-12th c. or shortly thereafter he cites three examples of the word *акн*: it should be noted that they all occur in the immediate vicinity of several examples of the expected *акъ*.

The general aspect of Rum. 198 is very similar to that of Byč.; this strengthens my surmise that a scribe from about 1150, in retouching a manuscript from about 1090, might very well produce precisely the kind of hybrid we have in Byč. As for the adverb *aky* 'like, as', it is generally absent in most Macedonian and Serbian Slavonic texts, especially the psalters, but frequent in Suprasliensis and such manuscripts of Rus' as the *Izborniki* of 1073 and 1076 and the Sermons of Gregory of Nazianz. It would thus seem to be a characteristic of eastern (Preslav?) OCS. Yet, as I can report through the kindness of Dr. Anica Nazor of the Staroslavenski Institut, there are some fifty examples in varied Croatian glagolitic texts. This word, its use and its synonyms, deserves a special study.

⁵ It must be emphasized that there is no clear set of criteria for determining OR »dialects« and that many of the important early mss. have been ascribed to different regions (and times) by different experts. After more

Rus': but one must remember that a fragment may lack details that a larger manuscript might furnish, cf. the different habits of the scribes in the Ostromir Gospel and the Arxangel'sk Gospel of 1092 (Lunt 1950).

In fact, the eight leaves of the Byčkov fascicle are no longer to be regarded as an isolated fragment. In 1971 I was able to visit St. Catherine's Monastery on Sinai. My specific aim was to examine the glagolitic Old Church Slavonic psalter, but I wished to look at least briefly at manuscripts which seemed from my study of microfilms and published commentaries to be especially interesting. Codex Sinai Slavonic 6, a psalter dated variously from the 12th to the 13th century by earlier investigators, struck me particularly by its generally archaic aspect. On my return to Cambridge, I chanced on V. I. Sreznevskij's reproduction of a page from the Byčkov Psalter and I recognized the hand. A quick check proved me right: *Sinai Slav. 6 and the Byčkov Psalter are parts of a single codex.* B/S6 (as I shall designate this codex) then takes its place as the third most complete old psalter, after the glagolitic OCS Ps. Sin. (about 90 % of the psalter text) and the Tolstoj Psalter (Leningrad Pub. Lib., F π I 23; about 87 % of the text). B/S6 lacks psalms I—XVII:34; CV:47—CXI:10 and CXXXIV:13—CXLI:7 (about 19% of the text), but it has parts of the Canticles (the beginning of I, Exodus XV:1—11; the end of V, Isaiah XXVI:14—20; VI, Jonah II:3—10; and the beginning of VII, Dan. III:26—32): it thus provides the oldest Slavonic version of psalms CXLII:10—CLI and some of the Canticles.⁶

than a century of scholarly investigation, basic questions remain open. Particularly instructive in this regard are the meticulous notes and discussion about individual mss. and the history of their study by N. B. Tixomirov, in his »Katalog russkix i slavjanskix pergamennyx rukopisej XI—XII vv.« (of the Lenin Library), in *Zapiski otdela rukopisej GBL*, vols. 25, 27 and 30. Again and again he points out that scholars fail to take note of scribal habits, of the possibility of mechanical error, of the likelihood of misunderstanding of the text, and of the totality of information furnished by a given scribe or manuscript.

⁶ Note that the Evgenij Psalter (see Kolesov), 20 folia from an 11th-c. codex written in Rus', nearly fills B/S6's gap in the Canticles, providing the end of II (Deut. XXXII: 36—43), III, IV, and the beginning of V (Isaiah XXVI:9—14a). Evg. agrees with the Bologne Psalter in placing Hannah's Prayer (I Samuel II:1—10) in fourth place, after Habbakuk's prayer (III. 2—19), against the traditional order exemplified in the Pogodin and many later psalters.

Further, much of Sin. 6 was written by scribes other than the one who wrote Byč. and the first part of Sin. 6. The slight variations in orthography offer important supplementary information about the codex as a whole. The final 92 folia were written by a scribe who follows the older tradition where κ is employed freely and ѡ occasionally, but without regard to etymology. Moreover, for ψ he occasionally writes шт , which is uncommon even in the early period and indicates in any case an archaic protograph. Most significant, however, is the confusion of ц and ч , e. g. рѡцѣ , вѡцелл , for рѡчѣ , вѡчелл . Such spellings point to a non-southern origin for the scribe, but no evidence favoring any specific region of Rus' seems to be available in the spelling, language, or ornamentation of the manuscript.

Again, one discerns at least two layers of renewal of the faded writing of the original: the earlier retoucher (or retouchers) had habits close enough to those of the original scribe so that he (or they) usually followed faithfully the shape of the letters that needed to be renewed. A later correcter (or very likely more than one) was less careful and had more specifically Serbian spelling habits.

The extensive text proves that the textual changes resulting in what Pogorelov calls the *ruskaja redakcija* were, on the whole, introduced by editors whose work had been done before this Byčkov/Sinai 6 codex reached its present form. Publication of the whole text is planned by Professor Altbauer. When it is done, specialists will be better able to determine the time and perhaps the place this redaction of the Slavonic psalter was made.

Postscriptum. A brief visit to St. Catherine's (January 1975) and a close analysis of the entire text of B/S6 have persuaded me that the 12th-c. retouchers or correctors probably did not emend the text substantially. I suggest rather that B/S6 represents an early Bulgarian redaction of the psalter which corresponds to the Gospel and Apostol text-types Voskresenskij termed the »second redaction«. What Pogorelov hesitantly called the »ruskaja redakcija« of the psalter is thus a part of the cultural heritage which Rus' received from the bookmen of Preslav.

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Sažetak

BYČKOVLJEV PSALTIR

Osam folija *Byčkovljeva psaltira* (Lenjingrad, Javna biblioteka) prijepis je iz 11. st., koji je dotjerivan u 12. st. Autor članka nazire da su u to doba učinjene i neke korekture, koje tekst približavaju tzv. *ruskoj redakciji* psaltira. Iz ortografije se ne vidi u koje se područje Kijevske Rusije može smjestiti.

Međutim autor je otkrio da taj sveščić pripada gotovo kompletnom psaltiru koji se nalazi u manastiru Sv. Katarine na Sinaju: codex slav. 6. Ostali pisari koji su sudjelovali u pisanju psaltira upotrebljavali su čak arhaičniju ortografiju, a jedan od njih je miješao č i c: to pokazuje da pisar nije bio iz Kijeva ili Galicije-Volinije. Mnogi dijelovi su dotjerivani (i možda korigirani) u 12. st., ali je jasno da su se mnoga čitanja tipično *ruske redakcije* nalazila u originalu 11. st.

U postskriptumu autor zaključuje da je ruska redakcija zapravo bugarska iz Simeonova doba.