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EARLY-PRINTED CHURCH SLAVONIC
PSALTERS IN SWEDISH COLLECTIONS

Per Ambrosiani (Sweden)

The Church Slavonic Psalter was one of the most widespread texts in the Slavic medieval cultures. Originally disseminated in numerous manuscripts, after the introduction of printing it became one of the most frequent Church Slavonic texts to appear in print, either in separate form or printed together with, for example, the New Testament, or as included in printed Bibles. Church Slavonic Psalters were printed in many Slavic printing houses located in major cities such as, for example, Moscow, Kiev and Vilna but also in non-Slavic centres such as Bucharest, Tübingen and Venice. Today, the most important collections of Church Slavonic printed Psalters are to be found in the Slavic countries, but there are also significant collections in western Europe and the United States. The focus in the present article will be on printed Church Slavonic Psalters in Swedish collections. Sweden has a long history of close contacts, both military and peaceful, with Slavic countries, mainly Russia and Poland, and during the seventeenth century several valuable collections of Slavic manuscripts and early-printed books were transferred to Sweden, sometimes peacefully, but more often as different kinds of war trophies.

1 For example, among the 498 Cyrillic editions printed in Moscow between 1555 and 1700 reported in Зернова 1958, approximately 13% (67 editions) are labelled either Псалтирь or Псалтирь с восследованием.

2 The Swedish collections of Church Slavonic manuscripts, manuscript fragments and early printed books are being described within the project Digitalised Descriptions of Slavic Cyrillic Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in Swedish Libraries and Archives, see Ambrosiani, Granberg 2010; Ambrosiani 2014.

3 See Walde 1916–1920. Some of the “Swedish” Church Slavonic Psalter manuscripts have been studied by Mary MacRobert, cf. MacRobert 1992.
In the Swedish repositories there are copies of at least twenty-nine Church Slavonic Psalter editions. 4 Twenty-six of these are at Uppsala University Library (UUB), but there are also copies in Gothenburg, Strängnäs and Linköping. 5 While most of the Psalters in the Swedish collections were printed in Moscow, several of them were printed in Kiev and a few in Kutein, Lviv, Mahilyow, Univ, Vilna and Venice.

A. Psalters printed in Moscow

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4 In addition, Kjellberg 1951 reports two unidentified Psalters, one at UUB (Kjellberg 1951: no. 251, UUB, Ksl. 251) and one at the National Library of Sweden (Kjellberg 1951: no. 252a, present location unknown).
5 The text of the Psalter is present also in the copies of three Church Slavonic Bibles preserved in Swedish repositories: the 1581 Ostrih Bible (copies at Gothenburg University Library, see Granberg, Varpio 2009: no. 3; the Swedish National Library, Stockholm, see Kjellberg 1951: no. 6a; Uppsala University Library, see Kjellberg 1951: no. 6; Strängnäs Cathedral Library, see Lundgren 2017: no. 1), the 1663 Moscow Bible (copies at Lund University Library, see Kjellberg 1951: no. 78a; Uppsala University Library, see Kjellberg 1951: no. 77, 78; Västerås City Library, see Kjellberg 1951: no. 78b), and a 1779 Kiev Bible (one copy at Linköping City Library, see Kjellberg 1951: no. 236b).


16. Psalter, Moscow 1717 (October 7226), UUB, Ksl. 83. Kjellberg 1951: no. 210; Aurivillius 1814: 18; Glubokovskij 1918. Provenance: Nils Bonde (1685–1760) || This edition is not attested in the standard inventories such as Каратцев 1861 or Гусева 2010.

B. Psalters printed in Kiev


18. Psalter and appendices/Poluustav, Kiev 1643, UUB, Ksl. 7. Kjellberg 1951: no. 44 (“Poluustav”); Aurivillius 1814: 18; Glubokovskij 1918; Trypućko

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6 I am grateful to Antoaneta Granberg, who has identified the provenance of this copy as well as that of several other copies that were included in the Bergius collection (cf. below).

7 On the title page there is a Cyrillic inscription “Веденихъ Елвендал”, probably referring to the owner of the book before it was included in Bergius’ collection.

8 Count Nils Bonde was taken prisoner at the battle between Sweden and Russia in Perevoločna in 1709 and spent until 1721 as prisoner of war in Russia, see Carlquist 1925. On the pastedown of the front cover there is the following inscription: “Moskva: den 30 Martij 1718. 30 Cop.”


21. Poluustav/Psalter and appendices, Kiev 1691. Two copies of this edition have been attested in Swedish collections, one at Uppsala University Library (UUB, Ksl. 48. Kjellberg 1951: no. 137 (Poluustav); Aurivillius 1814: 18 (Psalterium); Glubokovskij 1918), and one earlier at the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm, location now unknown (Kjellberg 1951: no. 137a). Both unknown provenance || Запаско, Ісаєвич 1981: no. 667 (Poluustav); Cleminson et al. 2000: no. 151 (Psalter and appendices).


C. Other Psalters


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⁹ According to Jacobowsky, Sparfwenfeldt bought the book in Venice in the autumn of 1692, see Jacobowsky 1932: 207. It was donated to Uppsala University Library by Sparfwenfeldt in 1721–22, see Index 1722: 326 “Psalterium Davidis Illyrice, Venet. 1638”, Catalogue 1722: no. 61.

¹⁰ Similarly to the British Library copy described by Cleminson et al. 2000, the UUB copy includes the unnumbered leaf with the title of the book.


Approximately one hundred of the early printed Church Slavonic books that today belong to Uppsala University Library were acquired by the library in 1708 from the recently deceased Nicolaus Bergius’ collection of manuscripts and printed books (Bergius died in 1706, and most of his collection was acquired by Uppsala University Library, see Davidsson 1956: 129; Birgegård, Hedlund 2019: 18). Among the twenty-nine Psalters discussed in the present article, approximately half can be attributed with more or less certainty to this collection (nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 24, 25, 27). Of these, six books are marked with red Gustavianum shelf marks (nos. 1, 2, 8, 10, 14, 15), which indicates that they were present in Uppsala University Library at the time the library was located in the Gustavianum building in Uppsala, that is, before the 1840s, when the existing main building of the library was built. The remaining Uppsala Psalters have, with a few exceptions, a less clear provenance. However, the majority must have been present in the library already at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as they are listed in Aurivillius 1814 (p. 18: nos. 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27). The 1638 Venice Psalter, reported in Aurivillius 1814: 20, was included in the 1721–1722 donation to the library by Johann Gabriel Sparfwenfeldt. Simeon Polotsky’s Psalter (no. 9), however, was acquired as late as in 1938 through the book exchange between Uppsala University Library and the Russian State Library in Moscow. Of the three Psalters presently located in other repositories than Uppsala University Library (nos. 3, 4, 28), two were acquired from individual persons (nos. 3, 28), whereas the Gothenburg University Library Psalter (no. 4), was bought by Erik Mesterton, librarian at the Gothenburg City Library, at the Moscow antiquarian bookshop Mosknigtorg (see Granberg, Varpio 2009: 11).

How do the Swedish collections of printed Church Slavonic Psalters compare with other collections outside the Slavic countries? For the seventeenth century, for which the Swedish collections contain copies of twenty-eight editions, Sokolová 1997 records only five Cyrillic Psalter editions in Czech repositories (nos. 56, 60, 94, 104, 106 [cyr.]). Of these, all except no. 60 are also represented in the Swedish collections. For the same period, Cleminson et al. 2000 record fourteen Cyrillic Psalter editions (nos. 62, 74, 77, 89, 94, 95, 110, 113, 132, 133, 138, 146, 151, 152). However, of these fourteen only four (nos. 89, 95, 151, 152) are represented in the Swedish collections. Thus, among the twenty-eight editions included in the Swedish collections, as many as twenty-four are attested neither
in Sokolová 1997 nor in Cleminson et al. 2000. This group includes all the Moscow Psalters except Simeon Polotsky’s 1680 edition (no. 9), but only two of the six Kiev editions. A few of the editions represented in the Swedish collections seem to be comparably rare: for example, for the 1642 Kutein Psalter (no. 27) Halenčanka reports, in addition to the copy at the UUB, only a single copy at the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg; for the 1692 Univ Psalter (no. 28) Zapasko & Isajevyč report only one copy at the Russian State Library in Moscow, whereas the UUB copy is not mentioned; the 1717 Moscow Psalter (no. 16) is, possibly, not attested in any of the standard inventories.

As we have seen, approximately half of the Psalters in the Swedish collections were printed in Moscow. This contrasts with the early British and Irish collections, for which Cleminson et al. 2000 note the predominance of East Slavonic editions, but also that the majority of these editions were not printed in Moscow but in Ukrainian and Belarusian/Lithuanian centres (Cleminson et al. 2000: xxix–xxxi). It is difficult to find convincing reasons for this difference, but one candidate might be the many contacts between the neighbouring countries Russia and Sweden during the seventeenth century, including the Swedish occupation of Novgorod 1611–1619, the inclusion of Ingria in the Swedish realm during most of the seventeenth century and the military conflicts between Sweden and Russia during the Great Northern War 1700–1721.

The Swedish collections of early printed Church Slavonic Psalters are not impressive when it comes to numbers, but still offer a representative sample of East Slavonic editions from the seventeenth century. Most of the books, particularly those at Uppsala University Library, were acquired by the library already at the beginning of the eighteenth century and have thus been at the same location for more than two hundred years. As I have tried to show in the present article, the Swedish collections bear witness both to the early spread of Cyrillic printed books outside their countries of origin as well as to an important period in the history of early western and northern European book collecting.

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EARLY PRINTED CHURCH SLAVONIC PSALTERS IN SWEDISH COLLECTIONS

(Summary)

The article presents 29 printed Church Slavonic Psalters from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries currently preserved at Uppsala University Library and other Swedish repositories. Approximately half of the books were printed in Moscow, whereas the remaining books were printed in Kiev, Lviv, Vilna and other important printing centres during this period. The Swedish collections of early printed Church Slavonic Psalters are not impressive when it comes to numbers, but they offer insight in the early spread of Cyrillic printed books outside their countries of origin as well as in an important period in the history of book collecting in northern Europe.

Keywords: Psalter, Church Slavonic, Swedish collections, Uppsala University Library.

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Umeå University
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