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UKRAINIAN PRONUNCIATION OF THE 18TH-CENTURY RUSSIAN CLERGY Issues of Existence and Status¹

Abstract: The paper deals with issues of the retention of their Ukrainian pronunciation by those representatives of the 18th-century Russian Orthodox Church who were Ukrainians by origin. The possible sources for the reconstruction of the actual pronunciation of the Russian ecclesiastical circles (surviving letters and personal documents, materials from seminaries, homilies, and contemporaries' notes) have been analysed. As a result of the research, the author concludes that the style of pronunciation in individual genres of ecclesiastical discourse (in particular, the genre of a homily) did not always correspond with the high Church Slavonic style of pronunciation; the preacher's personal position could contribute to the preservation of elements of the living pronunciation even at the court. Simon Todorsky and Dimitry Sechenov are examples of such a position in the mid-18th century. The research enables us to perceive the role and place of the Ukrainian language in the Russian culture of the 18th century in a new way.

Keywords: Russian, Ukrainian, 18th century, pronunciation, sermon.

1. Introduction

As a rule, the interaction of the Russian literary and the Ukrainian languages in the spiritual discourse of the 18th century attracts little attention of researchers. The historical aspects of the Ukrainian influence on the Russian ecclesiastical culture have been examined in K.V. Harlampovič's *Ukrainian Influence on the Russian Ecclesiastical Life* (Harlampovič/Харлампович 1914), and individual aspects were noted in works dedicated to the activity of some authors (for example, Kutina's works about Feofan Prokopovich's writings – (Kutina/Кутина 1982)), but such works are very few.

The interaction of the Russian and Ukrainian languages in the 18th century was happening, first and foremost, in the ecclesiastical sphere, because the vast majority of the mid-18-century clergy were of Ukrainian origin and were educated in Ukraine, and the fact manifested itself in the texts they wrote in Church Slavonic and Ukrainian. This influence was sometimes noted in 19-century researches in Church Slavonic, for example:

They reformed or at least significantly influenced practically everything: theology, amending the sacred and liturgical texts, printing, the issues of the Raskol, church administration, homilies, church, social, and home singing, printed music, the appearance of the eparches' houses, their way of life, carriages and harnesses, the clothes of the ministers (cantors, for example), the appearance and composition of schools, disciplines and methods of teaching, composition of libraries, spelling, pronunciation in oral speech and in reading (the Church soft *z* instead of the hard one), social games and entertainments, etc, etc. (Bezsonov/Безсонов 1871:VI).

In this research, we seek to answer the following question: was it possible for the clergy working in Moscow and St. Petersburg to retain their Ukrainian pronunciation, what was the status of such pronunciation in the society, and how was it perceived.

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2. Ukrainian Pronunciation in Seminaries: Evidence and Facts

The Ukrainian pronunciation in the speech of the clergy is rather difficult to trace.

The contemporaries and the nearest posterity noted the presence of the Ukrainian pronunciation in seminaries, because until the second half of the 18th century the seminary tutors were mostly graduates of Kiev Academy and various Ukrainian seminaries. But all evidence is fragmentary. For example, this is how an anonymous author in mid-19th century describes the language environment in a seminary:

Their [the Ukrainian teachers' – E.K.] dedication to their language was so profound that even in their classes they mocked the forms of the Russian speech and forced the students to speak they way they spoke themselves, for example, they told them to say “у Києви” instead of “в Києве” (Znamenskij/Знаменский 1881:435).

Harlampovič, too, writes about this effect:

[...] the Western Russian literature and teachers who taught in the Russian schools for decades also taught their Russian students a special language: a language with a distinct addition of South-Western Russian words and even construction of speech. (Harlampovič/Харлампович 1914:XIII).

How much evidence to this widespread opinion of the 19th century church historians can be found in 18th century documents?

Educated clergy often wrote their letters in Latin, more rarely in Greek or German. It is clear that this means of communication was usual for educated clergy. Besides, under the conditions of constant court интриг, Latin was the most secure language for personal correspondence. Thus, Prokopovich wrote his letter telling about his problems and debts in Latin. Writing to his correspondent, he uses a very significant phrase: “Your request on paper (I was surprised it wasn't in Latin) was a doubled grief for me [...]” (T-skij/Т-ский 1865:266).

In other words, his close friend's letter containing his personal problems in Russian, looked surprising to Prokopovich, and this is very important for characterization of the language environment of this age. The tradition of personal letters in foreign languages was widespread among educated clergy at least until mid-18th century; a significant part of Simon Todorsky's surviving personal letters was written in Latin, Greek, or German (Šmidt/Шмидт 2001:255-257).

Official and semiofficial letters (requests, congratulations, accounts of events) were written in Russian or hybrid Church Slavonic. But they were often dictated or composed by clerks and only signed by their authors (for example, Arseny Matsevich's letters to Empress Elizabeth from Tobolsk congratulating her with her ascension to the throne). They could also survive as copies made by the clerks which the authors retained (Feofan Prokopovich's letter chastising Archbishop of Ryazan Lavrenty Gorka can serve as an example (see Kislova/Kislova 2009)). Such texts can contain individual Ukrainisms or not contain any of them, they are unrepresentative for the speech of the church hierarchs, because they are not their autographs.

Can we use texts which survived in seminaries' archives for our analysis? On the whole, documents created by seminary students seldom contain valuable information on the living speech: most often, these texts are copied from printed or handwritten originals and largely influenced by them.

An interesting example is a handwritten collection of 1751-1754 comprising an almost complete copy of the first volume of M.V. Lomonosov's works. It's impossible to establish where exactly this collection was created, but the handwriting of one of the clerks has a number of markers of oral speech. These are the akanje (*сма^тря*) and devocalisation of sonants before breath consonants (*хрента, присутстви^и, отсутстви^и* – instead of *присудстви^и* and *отсудстви^и* in an edition published in

1751). These markers contradict the hypothesis of the clerk's Ukrainian or Southern Russian origin: there is no akanye and assimilative devocalisation of sonants before breath consonants (Moldovan/Молдован 2005:513, 520). At the same time, a number of spellings in the writings of the same clerk clearly correspond with the Ukrainian language. They are as follows: *пришельцов* instead of *пришельцев* (spelling usual for the Ukrainian orthography of that period, see (Žiteckij/Житецкий 1889:84)), replacement of *и/ы* (*сильних, умилни*).

In the text rewritten by the first clerk, we also see 6 examples reflecting fricative pronunciation of <г>: *умяхчить, хроб, Махмет, слуг плачевный* instead of *слух; погоды* instead of *походы; сверхъ* instead of *сверзь*. But the examples of *з // х* show not so much Ukrainian as Church Slavonic and the “high” Russian literary pronunciation:

[...] in high speeches, all words should contain the phoneme <г> with her realisers: [γ-х], in everyday speech, the phoneme <г> with her realisers [г-к] [...] it was the church pronunciation (both in the 18th century and later) that the faucal sonant was always fricative (Panov/Панов 2002:287-298).

Thus, the fragments rewritten by the first clerk evidence his Eastern Russian origin and, at the same time, the presence of some pronunciation norms marked now as Ukrainian which he acquired (from his teachers, probably). This confirms the свидетельства of the 19th century historians of a strong influence of the Ukrainian teachers on the type of language accepted in seminaries.

At the same time, in the handwriting of Nikifor Leontievsky, the second clerk working on the collection, there are no Ukrainian markers; but there are no markers of the Russian oral speech either. The only example of the akanje (*крававий*) can be just a slip of pen. Thus, the fragments rewritten in his hand little reflects the living pronunciation, possibly in connection with more strict orthographic training.

Of all texts of the Church discourse, the most informative material for analysis is the homilies created and written down by the church hierarchs themselves. They are never anonymous, and their authors are always known; they survived as manuscripts, because in accordance with Elizabeth Petrovna's decree dated March 31, 1742, the preacher was obliged to submit the text he wrote himself to the printing house for printing (Kislova/Кислова 2011:63-64). Thus, the homilies give the most authentic information on their authors' style of pronunciation.

3. Homilies and the Issue of Pronunciation of Church Slavonic Texts

Studies of the 18th century pronunciation norms traditionally consider only the literary pronunciation – that is, the secular one. Only M.V. Panov is reconstructing the peculiarities of the Church Slavonic pronunciation. In his opinion, liturgy and homily on the whole are within the boundaries of the strict Church Slavonic pronunciation, and in the course of the 18th century they only slightly come closer with the Russian language (Panov/Панов 2002:323). M.V. Panov notes the influence of the Ukrainian pronunciation only in the 2nd half of the 17th century (ibid:334). He considers the pronunciation of *щ* as [ш'ч'] and the fricative *з* in the high pronunciation style of the Russian language the result of the Ukrainian pronunciation system (ibid:365).

Just how much do the texts of the surviving homilies correspond with these provisions?

3.1. Manuscripts of the homilies and their peculiarities

A significant number of autographs of homilies sent for publication have survived in the archive of the Sinodal Typography in the РГАДА. Their comparison with the published

texts allows to draw conclusions not only on the living pronunciation of the authors, but also on the tendencies of publishers' policy and the attitude towards the markers of the living speech, both Russian and Ukrainian.

Let's examine Simon Todorsky's manuscript *God's Special Blessing* written in 1745 (РГАДА, ф. 381, оп. 1. д. 587). It was published in 1745 in Moscow Typography (in the Church Slavonic Orthography) and in the typography of the Academy of Sciences (in the civil orthography). While the principles of handling the author's text were different, the two typographies consistently corrected all markers of the author's Ukrainian pronunciation in the manuscript:

- 1) Replacement of и / ы (14 examples: *премудрія* instead of *премудрыя*, *сокрилися*, *обикшаго*, *сицевим*, *Анныну*, *дивними*, *златимы*, *користмы*, *Императорскимы*, *Героичнымы*, *государствамы*, *победоноснымы*, *сокрилися*, *толикимы*).
- 2) Replacement of ѣ / и (1 example: *смотримъ* instead of *смотримь*)
- 3) Replacement of в / у (1 example: *устолномъ* instead of *въ стольномъ*)
- 4) Replacement of е / о after sibilants (6 examples: *упадшое*, *высочайшое* instead of *высочайшее*, *о будуцомъ*; *в'чомъ*, *чого*, *большое* instead of *большее*).

In the manuscript, we see the preposition з instead of из / съ (*з'Его*, *з Голитиндіи*, *з Высочайшаго*). It was consistently corrected, too.

The manuscript of the homily said by Todorsky two years later, on November 25, 1747, has also survived. This is Simon Todorsky's *Word on the Day of Ascension to the Throne*. It enables us to evaluate the changes in Todorsky's style of speech in these two years.

But February 1748, the autograph was sent from St. Petersburg to Moscow typography. The surviving archive file (РГАДА, ф. 371, оп.1. д. 589) is unique because it contains all stages of preparation and editor's work on the text characteristic for this period.

Upon receipt of the manuscript, the text was rewritten in the standard Church Slavonic orthography. After this, the orthographic correction was performed. It was discussed in the Synodal Office and was written on the margins in vermilion ink. After this, the text, rewritten as a fair copy with the approved corrections, was sent to St. Petersburg for approval with enclosed letter of Ivan Murinov, director of the typography (РГАДА, ф. 381, оп.1, д. 589):

[...] которая [проповедь – Е.К.] по получении по исправлению во орфографии и напечатанию отдана в правильную, но во оной приправке справщик в неких речах посумнелися, чего и разрешению 8 числа сего месяца вносил я Святейшего правительствующего Синода в кантор, и в присутствии Его преосвященства и честнейших отцов архимандритов рассуждено напечатать так как при сем во включенной копии киноварная приправка значить, всепокорнейше прошу Его преосвященству [Симону Тодорскому – Е.К.] объявить и изволит ли так утвердить, пожаловать с первою почтою приказать со уведомлением оную копию возвратить².

For convenience, all corrections introduced by the Sinodal Office were written out once again in a table and enclosed with the letter (33 items total). Todorsky removed most of the corrections, refusing the suggested editing. However, by the end of the text he ceased to remove the corrections and agreed to all the proposals as a whole, which was noted in the cover letter written by Yakov Levanidov:

² Upon receipt and pre-printing correction of orthography, this homily was given to the proofreaders, but the proofreader had doubts about some of the corrections, so on 8th day of this months I informed the Office of the Holy Synod thereof. In the presence of the Right Reverend and the archimandrites, it was decided to print the text with the corrections indicated in the enclosed copy in vermilion ink (red in colour). I humbly ask to show this to the Right Reverend for his approval, and, should he approve, to return the copy with notice with the first post.

Его преосвященству казал, изволил опробовать печатать оную с тем, как в ней киноварная приписка значит, которую для того при сем сообща, остаюсь с почтением³.

Corrections requiring the author's consent included significant graphic and orthographic positions: the use of letters *i / u / v*, *ϕ / θ*, corrections of endings of plural adjectives and suffixes of the comparative degree, corrections of some endings of nouns. At the same time, a number of corrections (punctuation marks, the use of *o* and *ω*) were introduced mechanically, during the first rewriting of the text, and therefore required no discussion.

Two years later, Todorsky's Ukrainian pronunciation appears to have lost its brightest features: in this manuscript, there are no examples of replacement of *ь / u* or *в / y*, and the replacement of *ы / и*, which is often seen in the 1745 text, is also gone. The only surviving sign of the living pronunciation is the use of *o* instead of *e* after sibilants and *ц* in stressed and unstressed position, but the examples are few: *чомь, происходящомь*. The correctors consistently replaced them with spellings with the letter *e*: *чемь, происходящемь*. The use of *з* instead of propositions *из / съ*: *з всего же > со всего же* is also retained.

At the moment, all corrections of the Ukrainian spellings required the author's approval and were not corrected mechanically; Todorsky continued to defend his variants in the beginning of the text.

The lexical Ukrainisms were corrected only when they had an evident Russian or Church Slavonic equivalent, i. e., the text was changed insignificantly: *урази > поразу* (Simon Todorsky's *Word on the Day of Ascension to the Throne*, November 25, 1747). Other lexical Ukrainisms, which were rather few in number, could be retained in the texts of the homilies, for example, [...] *тицлся искоренити неправду* [...] *со всеми злыми ея нащадками* – i. e., *descendants*; Simon Todorsky's *Word on Peter Fedorovich's Birthday*, 1743).

According to L.L. Kutina, in the 1710 to 1720s the publishing practice was tolerant towards Ukrainisms: "The printing correction of this period leaves Ukrainisms (especially phonetic and lexical) practically untouched" (Kutina/Кутина 1982:6). Thus, we see that in mid-18th century the publishing policy was already different: phonetical Ukrainisms were carefully corrected, and lexical Ukrainisms were corrected only when their Russian equivalents were obvious.

How popular were Ukrainisms in the texts of homilies by other authors?

It is clear that the manifesting of signs of the preacher's living speech into the text was conditioned by his writing skills and knowledge of the Church Slavonic graphic and orthographic rules. But his personal position towards his own speech peculiarities was also important. Thus, Todorsky retains some Ukrainisms in his speech practice, while in the manuscripts of homilies of other preachers born in Ukraine and educated in Kiev Academy (Arseny Mogilyansky, Afanasy Volkhovsky, Stefan Savitsky, etc) there are no speech markers.

Dimitry Sechenov was one of the few authors whose texts also reflected the living speech. Born in Great Russia, educated in Moscow Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy, in his autographs he regularly reflected signs of the Russian pronunciation: *akanje* (*абидимых, елика, можна*), different types of assimilation (*збѣдным, боятца*), omission of unsounded consonants (*сонца, россиских*).

Thus, we can assume that the author's personal position had a great influence on the intromission of signs of the living speech into the text of a homily, where specific Russian and Ukrainian pronunciation was equally opposed to the classical Church Slavonic one. In Todorsky's case such position was probably connected with the tradition of pietism with

³ I showed the text to the Right Reverend, and he gave his permission to printing the homily with the corrections in vermilion ink which I send with this letter. Yours sincerely.

regard to the living language: Todorsky studied at Halle and was connected with the пиеитисты in many ways even after his return to Russia. But Sechenov's autographs show that this type of Church pronunciation was not limited to a single example. Todorsky was probably one of the brightest preachers of this type, but not the only one.

Are there any contemporaries' свидетельства about this type of pronunciation? How did the society regard it?

3.2. Contemporaries' свидетельства and the society's estimation

Many reviews of the preachers by contemporaries and nearest posterity are found in dictionaries (for example, N.I. Novikov's *Опыт исторического словаря о российских писателях*, Eugene Volkhovitinov's *Словарь исторический о бывших в России писателях духовного чина*, etc). They often noted the recognition of this or that preacher by the public, and in some cases the language of the homilies is characterised, but nothing is said about pronunciation. Thus, N.I. Novikov wrote about Dimitry Sechenov's homily as about:

[...] несусловную, но стязавшуюся о истинном словеси божий и о прямых заповедех евангельских⁴ (Novikov/Новиков 1951:353).

Even A.P. Sumarokov who wrote *Of the Russian Spiritual Eloquence* said nothing about the pronunciation style of his contemporaries' homilies, although he noted some peculiarities of Feofan Prokopovich's language:

[...] his [Feofan Prokopovich's – E.K.] works are slightly disfigured by the Ukrainian expressions and the foreign words the necessity for which I cannot perceive, but they are remarkable for the other purity (Sumarokov/Сумароков 1787:278).

It is likely that in the 18th century the peculiarities of the language of homilies were discussed only in case of clear deviations, which was just what lexical Ukrainisms were considered to be in the second half of the 18th century. Only in the 19th century the authors of dictionaries of spiritual writers would start to consider the language of homilies from the point of view of opposition of the Russian and Church Slavonic languages, but obviously not touching upon the subject of pronunciation. Thus, Filaret (Gumilevsky) characterised Dimitry Sechenov's homilies as follows:

His language is rather clear and free, bot bound by either Latin or Slavic, close to the ordinary, but correct Russian speech (Filaret/Филарет 1861:47).

Catherine II is the author of the only свидетельство of the peculiarities of the Church pronunciation. Before her Orthodox confirmation she, still little knowing Russian, was learning the Creed from Simon Todorsky (who in 1742 became the tutor to the heir and then his bride) in order to recite it during the rite. She was also continuing to learn Russian with Adodurov. At some point, the difference between the Ukrainian and the Russian pronunciation became obvious to the young Catherine, and she turned for advice to her groom, Grand Duke Peter Fedorovich, who had lived in Russia a bit longer and should have known the difficulties of the language situation better⁵. This is her account of this story:

The Bishop of Pskov has written my statement of faith; he translated it into German, and I was learning it by heart, like a parrot; I only knew a few everyday expressions then, but since my arrival, i.e. since February, Adodurov, who is now a senator, was teaching me Russian. As the Bishop of Pskov with whom I was learning my statement of faith had a Ukrainian pronunciation, and Adodurov pronounced words the way everyone pronounces them in Russian, I was often giving these gentlemen

⁴ [...] meaningful and caring of the true word of the God and the commandments of the Gospel.

⁵ Catherine's attention to the peculiarities of the Russian pronunciation and the differences was probably the result of the linguistic situation in Germany in that period and the variety of German dialects.

an occasion to correct me; both of them wanted me to pronounce words the way they did it. Seeing that these gentlemen did not agree between them, I told the Grand Duke about it, and he advised me to listen to Adodurov. Otherwise, said he, people will laugh at your Ukrainian pronunciation. He made me to repeat my statement of faith, and I recited it, first in Ukrainian, and then in Russian. He advised me to retain the last pronunciation, and so I did, despite the Bishop of Pskov, who, however, thought himself right (Ekaterina/Екатерина 1907:48-49).

The clash of the two points of view on the Ukrainian pronunciation is significant in this quotation: Todorsky not only retains his Ukrainian church pronunciation, he “thinks himself right” when teaching Catherine this pronunciation. The secular persons (Adodurov and Grand Duke Peter Fedorovich) found such pronunciation in a secular person (Catherine) неуместным and even ridiculous. The choice of the Russian pronunciation, as the Grand Duke advised, proved to be right:

They say I recited my statement of faith perfectly; I was speaking loudly and clearly, and pronounced everything very well and right... (Ibid:49).

But it should be noted that these accounts do not characterize the clergy’s Ukrainian pronunciation negatively. It was probably seen as quite natural and wasn’t considered inappropriate anyway. Catherine and Peter Fedorovich did not reprove the Bishop of Pskov for his wrong pronunciation. It is significant that Todorsky himself wasn’t ashamed of his pronunciation and considered it correct, continuing to insist on his variants.

Todorsky’s position is probably connected with the ideas of pietism with which he became acquainted while studying at the university of Halle. A. Franke’s ideology proposed the use of living languages for translation of key church texts. Thus, in early 18th century, Arndt’s *True Christianity* was translated and published in Halle in Polish, Czech, and hybrid Church Slavonic (the latter being made by Simon Todorsky). The university of Halle’s publishing house published the New Testament in Czech (1709) and the full Bible in Czech (1722) and Polish (1726) (Gawthrop 1993:192). So, for Todorsky, the use of the elements of the living language in Church discourse had ideological reasons. It would be interesting to know Dimitry Sechenov’s attitude towards the ideas of pietism, but not information on this issue has been found so far.

4. Conclusions

Thus, after consideration of the surviving texts and contemporaries’ accounts, the issue of the Ukrainian pronunciation in the Church discourse appears to be more complex.

First, some representatives of the clergy could say their homilies not in the Church Slavonic pronunciation style, but with the “oral” pronunciation, Russian or Ukrainian. The society appears to not criticise such pronunciation: in mid-18th century the contemporaries only criticize the lexical Ukrainisms in Feofan Prokopovich’s homilies: they were already considered ill-suited for the Church style. At the same time, in the beginning of the century orthographical Ukrainisms were most often omitted, and by the middle of the century they were последовательно removed both in civil and Church Slavonic printing. Let us also note that secular persons considered the Ukrainian pronunciation ridiculous and incorrect.

Second, individual elements of the Ukrainian pronunciation could be adopted by seminary students from their Ukrainian tutors and, under the conditions of a weak orthographic training, they could even find their way into the copied texts. The general influence of the Ukrainian language in the church community was noted in the 19th century and often denounced.

Thus, the issue of the definitively negative attitude of the Russian nobility towards Ukrainisms and Ukrainian pronunciation appears to be more complex than it was thought traditionally.

Abbreviations

РГАДА Российский государственный архив древних актов.

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