

Book Review: O. S. Sapozhnikova "Sergius Shelonin, a Russian Scribe of the 17th Century. Editorial Activity". Moscow; St. Petersburg: Alliance-Archeo, 2010. 560 p.

The monograph of the Candidate of Philological Sciences O.S. Sapozhnikova is dedicated to the life and works of an outstanding Russian scribe of the 17th century, Sergius Shelonin. Spending many years within the walls of the Solovetsky Monastery, Sergius devoted much of his life to reading: he carefully studied the theological, historical and grammatical literature available at the time in the monastery library. He also edited numerous works, primarily spiritual in nature. Therefore, from the very first pages, the reader is plunged into the world of Old Russian book learning, of which Shelonin was a brilliant exponent. It is a world of handwritten codices, printed books, monastic scriptoria, glosses and interpolations. At the same time, one cannot say that Sergius was a complete recluse. It is quite likely that he was personally acquainted with the prophet Habakkuk and was a member of the social circle of renowned religious figures of his era, was familiar with Simon Azarin, the writer Simeon Shakhovsky, the theologian Ivan Nasedka, Arseny Sukhanov, and others. Sergius had a direct bearing on printing activity in Moscow, preparing for publication a number of particularly popular and sought-after works in Russia. In general, according to the author, the era in which Serguis Shelonin lived and worked was the so-called Golden Age of "Ancient Cyrillic culture", the peak of its creative and spiritual possibilities, which was abruptly interrupted as a result of reform in the church and the schism that ensued shortly afterwards.

The first chapter of this work is a detailed historiographical review which sheds light upon the fact that Sergius Shelonin's work started attracting the attention of scientists of the 20th century when "scientific reference books and general works on Russian churches and ancient hagiography" first made mention of the Solovestky scribe. The author of the monograph also dwells on the current state of development of this problem. On the basis of the achievements of previous historiography she formulates the objective of her research, namely, "to illustrate through the example of a number of works the high scientific level of Serguis Shelonin's editorial skills, honed over years of work under the supervision of the Patriarch Joseph of Moscow, skills which turned out to be useful in the era of opposition to Patriarch Nikon's reforms". Furthermore, the author intends to "show the importance of studying the methods of work of the Solovetsky scribe for a number of areas of medieval studies" (p. 27).

O.S. Sapozhnikova's monograph draws on a large number of sources, some of which have been introduced into scientific circulation for the first time (p. 28). The materials in question include Sergius Shelonin's manuscripts and drafts. In the second chapter, the researcher attempts to reconstruct Sergius Shelonin's biography, which still has a lot of blind spots. The author presents data on Shelonin's parents, describes "the Solovetsky period" of his life as well as the years of his stay in Moscow and his

subsequent return to the Solovetsky Islands. Sergius Shelonin allegedly died at a ripe old age "no later than the end of 1664" (p. 67). The fact that this is a philological-archeographical study does not prevent the author from successfully illuminating a complex of typically historical and anthropological subjects. These include, for example, research on anthroponymy, which presents interesting thoughts about the etymology of the nickname "Shelonin", the origin of which still remains obscure. No less interesting is the opinion of the author about Sergius Shelonin's handwriting and autographs. Sergius Shelonin's "Azbukovnik" of 1653 gives us a clue about his handwriting, which was described as uneven and trembling, from which one can assume that Sergius had poor eyesight. Apparently, Shelonin might have used glasses, whose purchase was documented by the Solovetsky Monastery.

Chapters 4 and 5 present a careful analysis of Sergius' editorial and printing activity. An attentive reader will encounter a large number of names of manuscripts and printed books which the Solovetsky scribe worked with. Basically, Sergius Shelonin had to deal with a whole body of texts translated from Greek, which included paterica (from Jerusalem, Egypt and Scythia) and writings of the Byzantine theologian John of Damascus, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent" by John of Sinai, and Western Russian and Ukrainian publications.

The author pays particular attention to Sergius Shelonin's methodology of source criticism that was no less developed than in Western Europe during the Enlightenment. Thus, critical review of the texts of "An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith" by John of Damascus shows the highest level of education and methodological competence on the part of the Russian scribe, as the nature of his marginalia is analogous to the method of Leo Allatius (1584-1667), a great Western European scholar and Doctor of Divinity. Allatius also prepared works of the Fathers of the Church for publication, compiled comments, made analyses of numerous texts. It turns out that "the ancient scribe, who did not have the originals of works by Byzantine authors and used only the Old Russian book collection, i.e. the same collection, only translated into the Church Slavonic language, revealed for his Western colleagues the majority of works that served as sources for John of Damascus' writings. Sergius' notes in the margins of his books can be considered as condensed versions of very detailed source criticism" (p. 228). In our opinion, the researcher's conclusion concerning the fact that "the condescending attitude towards learned ancient scribes sometimes encountered in modern science suggests an underestimation of book criticism or a lack of familiarity with it" (p. 230) seems completely reasonable.

Equally valuable was Sergius Shelonin's contribution to the genre of lexicography. He compiled the so-called "Azbukovnik", a grand encyclopedia, the content of which is reminiscent of Byzantine lexicons. According to O.S. Sapozhnikova, "Sergius' "Azbukovnik" can be called a kind of code of East Slavic Orthodox culture, as it is in his work that evaluation of events, historical facts, geographical realia and symbols from the point of view of the Orthodox tradition become the most important trends" (p. 391). This work includes 16.110 word entries, and, in fairness, it must be said that in terms of its volume, "Azbukovnik" is as impressive as, for instance, dictionaries compiled by the historian and linguist Charles du Fresne, sieur Ducange.

Chapter 6 focuses on the development of pre-reform Russian book printing, whose apotheosis was a publishing program initiated by Patriarch Joseph of Moscow. The chapter also dwells on Sergius Shelonin's place in the intellectual elite of the time. The author comes to the conclusion that "Sergius' role in the intellectual activity of the 1640s was significant as he belonged to a representative circle of Moscow scribes who were instrumental in implementation of the State and Church policy of the time" (p. 436).

The final part of O.S. Sapozhnikova's monograph sums up the results of her research, the author once again highlighting the extraordinarily complex and developed world of ancient book culture. Sergius Shelonin is "one of the most striking examples of the type of church scholars who by the mid 17th century had been brought together through the efforts of the hierarchs of the Russian Church to edit and publish written heritage, and to make lists of printed books produced in large quantities, which was a great contribution to the improvement of public education. This association of scribes, who worked quite well under Patriarch Joseph, could have developed into a scientific school in the 17th century, as was the case with the Bollandists" (p. 472). The researcher also shows how the Russian Orthodox Church schism halted the development of this "paternal Cyrillic" tradition. And Sergius Shelonin, who worked for the glory, purity and truth of Russian Orthodoxy, according to "the nature of his activity, is now included among those who are called early proponents of the Old Believers" (p. 473).

Thus, the Old Believers of later times became the followers of publishers and printers of the Principality of Moscow in the mid 17th century, who were led by Patriarch Joseph. From then on, the followers of Patriarch Nikon's reformers and intellectuals of southern Russian origin began to occupy a dominant position, and Russian book culture finally took a path towards Westernization. The historian S.M. Solovyev characterized the period in question in the following way: "After eight centuries of movement to the East, Russia sharply turned to the West [...]". It is not surprising that one of Sergius Shelonin's works, namely "The Alphabetical Patericon", was published by the Old Believers only in 1791.

All in all, the book makes a good impression, and not only due to its design. Its major merit is its content which can be described as exciting, sometimes even gripping, in terms of the courage with which the researcher draws conclusions. However, while reading the monograph the author of this review expected to see in it more reflection on what is called the history of mentalities, or, in Fernand Braudel's words, "the structures of everyday life". Still, this book did not disappoint the author of these lines because the writer has managed to faithfully convey the atmosphere of the epoch.

The undoubted advantage of the book is its annex containing extended comments on Sergius Shelonin's manuscripts, indexes of names and titles of books printed before the 17th century, which all greatly facilitated its accessibility.

Olga Sapozhnikova's monograph is a thorough and solid investigation, for it significantly extends our knowledge of Muscovy and can be considered a major contribution to the study of the history and spiritual culture of Russian civilization.

M.S. Demintsev