

National Research University Higher School of Economics

as a manuscript

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**SIMEON OF POLOTSK — THE FIRST COURT WRITER:
WORKING ON DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL TEXTS**

**PhD Thesis Summary
for the purpose of obtaining
Philosophy Doctor in Philology and Linguistics HSE**

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General Thesis Description

One of the most prominent and well-known mediators of the Western literary tradition at the court of Moscow Tzars in the second half of the 17th cent. was the first court poet and preacher Samuil Gavrilovich Petrovskij-Sitnianovich, known under the name of Simeon of Polotsk (1629–1680). In 1664, with the help of *okolnichij* Fiodor Mikhailovich Rtischev Simeon moved to Moscow from Polotsk. His status and position at the Tzar court was unique. While his living was provided by the Tzar, Simeon was in fact the first Russian writer who received money for his writing activity; first Russian court preacher, who pronounced and published his own sermons; first private person of a middle rank, who was in charge of a publishing house accountable to him only.

During the reign of the Tzar Aleksej Mikhailovich, and later his son Fiodor Alekseevich, both secular and religious elite cultivated the vogue of Polish court culture: clothing, literature, music, etc. Having moved to Moscow, well-educated and familiar to foreign way of life Simeon happened to be the right place at the right time — his knowledge and skills allowed him to acquire and keep his unique position and status at the Tzar court and in the Russian feudal society of the second half of the 17th cent.

Simeon's literary legacy is huge: it encompasses works of various textual genres, with poems forming the core. He wrote several plays for a court theatre, oratory prose, about two hundred letters, narrations, theological treatises, catecheses, sermons, and testaments.

Research Rationale

The thesis focuses upon two types of texts produced by Simeon — sermons and testaments, since they are thought to be the most interesting and promising from the point of view of author's work with a literary tradition of another culture and

confession. Both West-European sermon of the 16th cent. and Polish Baroque sermon of the 17th cent., that served Simeon as models, were more separating from the Medieval homily and becoming more and more individual texts, in which personality and views of their authors found their reflection.

The role of Simeon's sermons in the literary process of the pre-Petrine Russia is rather interesting. *Obied* and *Vecherya* became a transition link between Russian Medieval literature and Russian literature of early Modern and Modern times. The social-cultural context of his activity required Simeon's sermons to solve two mutually exclusive tasks: on the one hand, they had to correspond to Orthodox literary tradition; on the other hand — to match the vogue on everything Polish at court.

Undoubtedly, *Obied* and *Vecherya* demonstrate Simeon's professional skill as a preacher and writer: his wide reading and erudition, skill in working with borrowed text and in adapting it to his needs. Structural organization of his books of sermons demonstrates his independence as an author — we see not copying or mechanical transfer of texts of another language and culture, but rather a high level of authorial adaptation and re-thinking of existing homiletic traditions.

The second type of texts which we addressed in our research was testaments, composed by Simeon for himself and for five other people. Moscow testaments of the Early Modern time are a precious source for study of such philological aspects as genre and literary form, influence of foreign traditions and so on. Simeon's testaments are not only documents and private acts, they are also a literary work; that is why the facts derived from them have to be carefully interpreted with the consideration of the rules of literary etiquette and custom. Among known Moscow testaments of the time the testaments written by Simeon stand out with their textual form, that unites in the space of a single text traditional for church hierarchs morals and a detailed *dispositio*. This textual form is characteristic of Polish and West Russian literary traditions, and

thus is considered to be a borrowing and needs to be carefully investigated.

Originality and contribution

The collections of sermons *Obied* and *Vecherya* by Simeon of Polotsk were analyzed as a single corpus for the first time: structure of the books, choice of sermon days in relation to Polish homiletic models were studied; the place of sermon in the Orthodox Christian liturgy was analyzed. The corpus of biblical quotations in the book *Obied* was formed and organized in a form of a catalogue with an index. In addition, moral *exempla* coming from *Obied* and *Vecherya* were systematized and studied as a corpus for the first time; the main attention was paid to animalistic *exempla* forming a special homiletic “beastuary”. Simeon's testaments were for the first time analyzed as part of his literary legacy and in comparison to Polish-Lithuanian model.

Research objective is to study methods of Simeon's author work with texts of another cultural and literary tradition through the example of his sermons and testaments which stayed in line with requirements of the Orthodox church from the one hand and were considered to be in vogue by the Tzar and his court – from the other hand.

Research questions and tasks:

- 1) to define the place of Simeon's sermon as a literary genre in the Russian literary process of the 17th cent.: to identify and describe his predecessors and followers, to establish its relation to South-West Russian¹ and European homiletic traditions;
- 2) to define the place of the sermon that was re-introduced by Simeon in the context of an Orthodox Christian liturgy;
- 3) to describe structural and pragmatic features of the sermon genre that was re-introduced by Simeon: structure of books of sermons *Obied* and *Vecherya* and

¹ Hereinafter the term South-West Russian defines anything related to or coming from south-west borderland territories that during the 17th cent. belonged to Russia, the Great Duchy of Lithuania and Poland. Nowadays these are mainly territories of modern Ukraine and Belarus.

- choice of sermon days;
- 4) to describe the role of biblical text in Simeon's sermons and testaments: to identify and analyze biblical quotations and their functions;
 - 5) to analyze Simeon's methods of working with borrowed text: to describe mechanism of *exempla* construction, their sources and functions;
 - 6) to identify characteristic features of pragmatics and genre of the testaments, written by Simeon;
 - 7) to study monastic bequeathing practices in a cross-cultural perspective.

Sources

The thesis is built upon published texts of sermons; drafts and proofread copies were also used, when possible. In our research we used the following old-printed books: *Obied* from the Muzej knigi of the Russian State Library; *Večerja* from the Muzej knigi of the Russian State Library and from the Department of rare books and manuscripts of the Moscow State University. We also addressed the following sermons: *Pouchenie o blagogoveinom stoianii v khrame...* (Moscow, Pechatnyi dvor, ca. 1668) и *Dva poucheniia...* (Moscow, Pechatnyi dvor, ca. 1668), and three sermons written on the holiday Our Lady of Kazan².

One of the interesting sources for understanding of the structure of the Simeon's books of sermons is poetic menology (*Miesiatseslov*), published in 1680 and re-published in 1882. Several West-European and Polish 16th–17th cc. collections of sermons were addressed for analysis of structure and composition of *Obied* and *Večerya*. Russian, South-West Russian, Lithuanian, and Polish testaments were used in manuscripts and in editions beginning from the 19th cent.

Two copies of Simeon's testaments are found in the two following codices: State Historical museum, Manuscript department, Uvarovskoe collection #167 и State

² Russian state archive of ancient acts, f. 196. inv. 1. c. 679-4°

Historical museum, Manuscript department, Uvarovskoe collection #247. Three testaments, written by Simeon for metropolitans and a boyar (Bogdan Matveevich Khitrovo), are known in two copies each. In addition, there exist four introductory parts for testaments, that exist separately in the codex State Historical museum, Manuscript department, Uvarovskoe collection #229.

Recent debates

Simeon's sermons and testaments have often been overshadowed in research by his poetic works — only some of numerous researches who addressed Simeon's literary legacy, focused on his theological and teaching works and on his prose in general. Simeon's correspondence was discussed in several articles (*Peter Rolland* 1985, 1993; *O. N. Lazarenko*, 2004) and a doctoral thesis (*I. F. Podtergera*, 2002). Simeon's oratory prose, testaments, contributing acts, and translations have been researched in fragments only.

Simeon's sermons and testaments were partially studied first in the 19th cent. (*V. F. Pevnitskiy*, *V. E. Popov*, *I. A. Tatarskiy*, *K. V. Kharlampovich*), and then in the modern time (*M. S. Kiseleva*, *M. A. Korzo*, *L. I. Sazonova*). *A. A. Morozov* in his article identified the question of relation of Simeon's literary works with Baroque (1982). Important general articles were written by *A. S. Yeleonskaya* (1982, 1989), who placed Simeon's sermons in the literary process of the pre-Petrine Russia and described his work on preparation of *Obied* and *Vecherya* for publishing. The article by *Ye. V. Gradoboynikova* discusses geographical distribution of *Obied* and *Vecherya* in the 18th–19th cc.

M. S. Kiseleva addressed certain aspect of Simeon's sermons from books *Obied* и *Vecherya* in articles, devoted to “inner” and “sacral” history (2014), bestiary metaphors and metaphor of book as spiritual nurture (2011), the image of time and history (2010). *A. S. Demin* made a significant contribution to the study of Simeon's sermons by looking at them from the point of view of “writer vs. society” (1985).

Old Russian testaments have always interested researches beginning from the 19th cent. (*P. I. Belyaev, S. M. Kashtanov, G. V. Semenchenko*). In modern Polish scholarship special attention should be paid to the book by *W. Zielecka-Mikołajczyk*, devoted to testaments of Orthodox Christians and Uniates in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th–17th cc. (2012). *T. V. Panich* published several articles on genre and stylistic features of testaments of Russian patriarchs and metropolitans of the 15th–17th cc.

The copy of the Simeon's testament has been known to researches from the 19th cent. We have discovered the second copy of his testament in the manuscript # 167-4^o from the Uvarovskoe collection of the Manuscript Department of the State Historical Museum. Metropolitans' testaments, published for the first time in the 19th cent., were studied multiple times, but never in relation to Simeon's literary work.

Evaluation

This topic was finalized and accepted by the academic board of School of Philology, Humanities Department, National research university Higher school of Economics. Principal results of the research were presented at Russian and international conferences at the period from 2014 to 2017: at National research university Higher school of Economics (youth scientific conference *Text-Commentary-Interpretation, Russian literature in comparative perspective*), at the Institute for history and Institute for archaeology of the Russian Academy of Science (conference *Medieval personality in written and archaeological sources: Muscovite Rus', Russian Empire and their neighbors*), in Pontifical Liturgical Institute of St. Anselm, Rome, Italy (conference *Monasticism and Economy: Rediscovering an approach to work and poverty*), in Pontifical University of John Paul II, Cracow, Poland (international conference *Historia chrześcijaństwa w źródłach*), in Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia (international conference of young philologists conference in Tartu). Research results have been published in 5 articles, including 3 in peer-

reviewed journals, general volume 3,53 t. u.

Thesis Structure and Wordpage

The thesis consists of introduction, four chapters, conclusion, bibliography, and four appendices. The main text of the thesis takes 332 pages. Bibliography includes 109 published and 10 unpublished sources; 336 academic works, from them 94 in foreign languages. The thesis contains 3 tables and 2 images. Appendices count 485 pages.

THESIS CONTENTS

The Introduction includes the rationale, objective and tasks, originality and contribution of the research.

Chapter 1. Without predecessors? Sermons by Simeon of Polotsk in the Orthodox context, which contains 3 paragraphs, is devoted to the analyses of the place of Simeon's sermons in the literary process and Orthodox liturgy at the 2nd half of the 17th cent. **Paragraph 1** encompasses a brief historico-philological review of the phenomenon of the early Russian sermon of the 17th cent. and especially of the Baroque scholastic sermon. An attempt is made to place Simeon's sermons in the Russian literary process of the time — to trace back origins of the Russian sermons, to describe its connection to the South-West Russian scholastic sermon and to the West-European and Polish sermon of the 16th–17th cc. **Paragraph 2** deals with structure and composition of the books *Obied* and *Vecherya*. Both structure and composition, treated as a literary-cultural phenomenon, were formed on the crossing of three cultural spheres: Orthodox church custom, life of the royal family and the Tzar court with their special worship of saints, and Roman Catholic literary tradition. Simeon's sermons are discussed in the context of Orthodox liturgy: an attempt is made to define the time of sermon pronounciation during the Sunday service. **Paragraph 3** discusses structural organization of the books *Obied* and *Vecherya*: choice of sermon days, their sequence, basis on which sermons were combined in

cycles. Structure of the books is discussed from the point of view that the direct copying of composition of Polish or West-European sermons books would be impossible not only because of confessional differences, but mainly because of technical differences between Roman Catholic and Orthodox church calendars; thus, models of another literary tradition inevitably required certain degree of adaptation of model texts. The conducted analysis demonstrates that *Obied* composition reflects a well-structured and clear Orthodox calendar canon, that is well-coordinated with service books and has no local variations and Roman Catholic borrowings.

Chapter 2. Barokowa 'mania' cytowania — corpus of biblical quotations in sermons by Simeon of Polotsk, which consists of five paragraphs, is devoted to the derived from *Obied* corpus of biblical quotations and quotations from the works of the Church Fathers which is studied in comparison to the Polish phenomenon of the Baroque vogue of citation, which was also widespread among South-West Russian preachers. In **Paragraph 1** the short characteristic is given to biblical quotations in Simeon's sermons: their sources and functions are described. The conducted analysis of biblical quotations allowed to identify their source, which is *Moscow Bible* published in 1663 and partially — *Ostrog Bible*. Also functions of biblical quotations were identified. **Paragraph 2** focuses on the corpus of biblical quotations coming from the book *Obied*, which was composed during the research. In this paragraph definitions for *quotation*, *exact quotation*, *partial quotation*, *adaptation*, *allusion* are given. Types of biblical quotations, referencing techniques, and aspects influencing the choice of a quotation type are discussed. **Paragraph 3** is devoted to the qualitative analysis of biblical quotations from the book *Obied*. The conducted research allowed to identify the books of the Bible from which Simeon took his quotations. By using less known Bible texts Simeon demonstrated his erudition. It was also found out that in choosing Bible books for citing Simeon followed Orthodox tradition only partially, while also considering Polish and European models. In the final part of the paragraph a short description and analysis of quotations taken from

works by Church Fathers are provided. **Paragraph 4** discusses the changes which Simeon made in texts of biblical quotations in the book *Obied*. Significant number of these changes is motivated through unclear or faulty original text, rhetoric or stylistic characteristics of the Baroque literary style, sermon pragmatics and rhetoric, position of the author, reference to Polish and Latin texts. We have identified three main groups of the changes that Simeon introduced into biblical quotations: 1) linguistically meaningful changes; 2) changes that are connected to sermon rhetoric and pragmatics; 3) ambiguous changes. In **paragraph 5** exegetic techniques used by Simeon are described — “Quadrige” or the “fourfold sense”, typology, etymology, and paraphrase.

Chapter 3. “Way of perception through images”: *exempla* in sermons by Simeon of Polotsk consists of 3 paragraphs and discusses the phenomenon of “borrowed text” in Simeon's sermons; this chapter deals with *exempla* — a rhetoric argument in a form of a short moral comparison (analogy is drawn between a sinner/righteous man and an animal or a natural phenomenon as magnet for example) or metaphor, used in sermons for convincing and entertaining readers. The texts that entered Simeon's sermons in form of such *exempla* can be characterized as transitional between the Medieval knowledge and scientific and philosophical ideas of the early Modern time. **Paragraph 1** discusses these *exempla* in the context of South-Russian, Polish, and West European homiletics. The definition of *exemplum* is given, its functions are discussed; its structure and possible sources are described. **Paragraph 2** consistently analyses mythological, hagiographic, natural, animalistic and “everyday” *exempla*. Characteristic features and sources of each group were described. **Paragraph 3** is devoted to the analysis of the techniques which Simeon used for creating his Baroque *exempla*. We have identified and described eight most frequent techniques.

Chapter 4. “The language of death”: a testament in a literary context, that consists of 4 paragraphs, is devoted to philological analysis of genre of testaments,

written by Simeon, in comparison to West Russian and Polish models. In **Paragraph 1** pre-Petrine Russian bequeathing traditions and the testament genre which was formed and stabilized by the second half of the 17th cent. are discussed in comparison to South-West Russian, Lithuanian, and Polish testaments. In addition, analysis of sources is provided, and a brief review of Simeon's social relations and network is given in connection to those people for whom Simeon wrote the testaments. In **Paragraph 2** genre of Simeon's testaments is analyzed in the context of South-West Russian, Lithuanian, and Polish traditions. Special attention is paid to the legal status of the testaments. Detailed description and analysis of the Baroque testament introductory parts, copying those which appeared in Poland in the 16th-17th cc., is given. **Paragraph 3** analyses *dispositio* of Simeon's personal testament: it consists of burial arrangements which include the desirable burial place, list of funeral expenses, list of charity distributions, and after-death distributions to monasteries and churches. In **Paragraph 4** *dispositio* of Simeon's personal testament is discussed in the context of legal practices of the time.

In **conclusion** the results of the research are presented.

Results and Conclusions

Simeon's literary works can be described as a unique phenomenon for Russian literary process of the 2nd half of the 17th cent. Undoubtedly Simeon drew on West European and Polish models in working on literary texts dedicated to the Tzar and the court. My research encompasses two types of texts produced by Simeon — sermons and testaments (last wills), since these texts allow to study at a different level his techniques of working with Polish and West European homiletics and private acts in all their variety.

Re-introduction of oral sermon into church service in Muscovy in the 2nd half of the 17th cent. became possible largely due to efforts made by Simeon. He created a sermon type, that was in line both with Orthodox canon and the vogue of the Tzar

court. With no originally Russian preaching tradition existing at the time, Simeon had to consult European – that largely meant Roman Catholic — sermons to deal with such issues as defining structure of sermon collections and finding place for his sermons in the church service. However, structure and composition of both *Vecherya* and *Obied* do not copy mechanically Polish tradition and are based primarily on Orthodox church calendar. It is highly important, that Simeon was the first of Russian and south-west Russian preachers, who attempted to compile a universal book of Sunday sermons.

Lavish Bible quoting as seen in *Obied* clearly originates in Polish and West-European sermon style and may be brought into correlation with *barokowa mania cytowania* — stylistic method exploited by Polish preachers. On the superficial level quotation techniques used by Simeon follow in the steps of the Orthodox Christian literary tradition. However, the deeper study of changes made by him in biblical quotations demonstrate his vast usage of Polish and Latin translations of the Bible.

Technique of creating *exempla* include an exact borrowing, retelling, mechanic division of the original text in several small *exempla*, further development and extension of the original text, adding of an explanatory author remark, etc.

Five testaments, written by Simeon in the last quarter of the 17th cent., stand out from the other testaments of the time with their clear orientation of Polish-Lithuanian testament tradition. Genre of the testaments, written by Simeon of Polotsk, originates in the Polish-Lithuanian tradition of private acts, and substantially differs from testament types which existed in Moscow formal literature of the time. The characteristic features of these testaments are an extensive *dispositio*, absence of vast moral and teaching narrations, Baroque-style introductory part, and stylistics in general.

Works published in peer-reviewed journals and journals:

1. Preobrazhenskaya A. (2018) Authorial changes to the biblical text: quotations in sermons by Simeon of Polotsk. *Slověne = Словѣне*. 7(1). 115–147.
2. Preobrazhenskaya A. (2018, in print) “Beastlike people”: moral exempla in sermons by Simeon of Polotsk. *Jezikoslovni zapiski*.
3. Preobrazhenskaya A. (2015) “Prezhde smerti naipache vnezapnyia i naprasnyia”: dukhovnaia gramota Simeona Polotskogo. *Drevniaia Rus'. Voprosy medievistiki*. 2. 115–132.

Other published works:

1. Preobrazhenskaya A. (2106) Bibleiskii tekst v prostranstve barochnoi propovedi: “Obed dushevnyi” Simeona Polotskogo. In: *Russkaya philologiya. 27: Sbornik nauchnykh rabot molodykh philologov*. Tartu: Tartu University Press. 25–35.
2. Preobrazhenskaya A. (2016) K interpretatsii odnoi dukhovnoi gramoty XVII veka: chastnaia zhizn' Simeona Polotskogo. In: *Srednevekovaia lichnost' v pis'mennykh i arkheologicheskikh istochnikakh: Moskovskaia Rus', Rossiiskaia Imperiia i ikh sosedi: materialy nauch. konf. Institut rossiiskoi istorii RAN*. 178–183.
3. Preobrazhenskaya A. (2016) “Cast Thy Burden upon the Lord, and He Shall Sustain Thee”: Consolatory Letter Practices at the Muscovy Tsar’s Court in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century. *Ceræ: An Australasian Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*. 3. 1–21.
4. Preobrazhenskaya A. (2015) The Culture of Quoting in Simeon Polotsky's Epistles: Biblical Texts and Liturgical Books. *Textus et Studia*. 4(4). 127–141.