

The First Russian Printed Textbooks

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Abstract The article presents materials indicating the need to return to the question of the place of the first secular printed textbooks in the history of Russian education and culture. These textbooks were compiled and published abroad by Ilya Fedorovich Kopievsky (c. 1651–1714) on the initiative of Peter the Great. The first seven of them came out from the printing shop of the Amsterdam merchant Jan Thessing (1659–1701) who received the czar's privilege to sell his printed materials in Russia. The succeeding two were published in other Amsterdam printing shops, and the last one was printed in Polish Stolzenberg. Thanks to these textbooks, the general Russian reader was able to get acquainted for the first time with the basics of scientific knowledge in history, geography, mathematics, astronomy, navigation, warfare, and linguistics. Five interrelated matters support the need to return to the topic in question: 1) the historical circumstances of the appearance of Kopievsky — Thessing's books; 2) their topics and content; 3) their place in the repertoire of the early 18th-century Russian readers; 4) their distribution in Russia; 5) the number of their copies preserved in libraries today. The article concludes that contrary to common opinion these books played a noteworthy role in the Petrine reforms of education and culture.

Keywords history of education, educational literature, book printing, Peter the Great, Ilya Kopievsky, Jan Thessing.

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Whether the Dutch editions have done much for
the “general benefit and profit of the Nation”
is utterly unknown...
[Translated from Russian]

D.I. Pisarev “Poor Russian Thought” (1862)¹

**1. Historical
Circumstances
Surrounding the
Publication
of the First
Russian Printed
Textbooks**

While in Holland during the Grand Embassy, Peter the Great decided to start publishing educational literature in Russian there — ‘for the general benefit and profit of the nation, and for the teaching of all kinds of arts and education,’ as stated in his decree.² He appointed the merchant Jan Thessing to execute his plan, granting him a monopoly on selling this literature in Russia. Since Thessing lacked the necessary knowledge to establish a Russian printing house and print books in Cyrillic, he brought in a native of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Ilya Fedorovich Kopievsky (Kopievich), who was teaching ‘various arts’ to Russian nobles and volunteers in Amsterdam at the time. Being well educated and fluent in several languages — Church Slavonic, Ruthenian (West Russian), spoken ‘Muscovite’, Latin, Dutch, Polish, and to some extent German and Ancient Greek, he became the main executor of Peter’s plan [Pekarskiy, 1862. Vol. 1; Bykova, 1958. P. 318–341; Nowak, 1970; Zaretskiy, 2021a]. In less than a year and a half Kopievsky compiled, translated, and published in Thessing’s printing house seven short textbooks in various branches of knowledge. After his split from Thessing, Kopievsky continued publishing and printed three more books in Amsterdam, and then another one, his eleventh, in Stolzenberg, a suburb of Gdańsk.³

**2. Kopievsky —
Thessing Editions**

Some researchers believe that under Peter’s decree, in addition to these eleven books, Kopievsky could have published other books that have not survived [Bykova, 1958. P. 282, 295]. How well-founded is this assumption? It is known that Kopievsky compiled and printed three lists with the names of his books.⁴ The first list, in Russian and Latin, was attached to his petition to Peter of 18 December 1699; the second one, also bilingual, was included in *Latina gram-*

¹ Pisarev D.I. (1995) *Bednaya russkaya mysl’* (‘Nauka i literatura v Rossii pri Petre Velikom’). Issledovanie P. Pekarskogo) [Poor Russian Thought (‘Science and Literature in Russia under Peter the Great’. A study by P. Pekarskiy)]. Pisarev D.I. *Sochineniya v chetyrekh tomakh* [Works in Four Volumes], vol. 2. Moscow: GIKhL, p. 85.

² *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii*. T. 4. 1700–1712 [Complete Collection of the Laws of the Russian Empire. Vol. 4. 1700–1712]. St. Petersburg: Tip. 2 Otd. Sobstv. e. i. v. kantselyarii, 1830, p. 7.

³ The most detailed description of Kopievsky’s books is compiled by T.A. Bykova in [Bykova, 1958].

⁴ Published in [Pekarskiy, 1862. Vol. 1. P. 523–526].

matica, which he published the following year; the third one, containing only Latin titles, was put by Kopievsky at the end of *Rukovedenie v grammatyku* ('Introduction to Grammar') of 1706. Kopievsky divided each of these lists into three parts: books already published, publications in progress, and books planned for publication. Since some of the books marked as published cannot be found in any bibliographies or library catalogues, researchers have concluded that these books had not survived. However, certain personality traits of Kopievsky give reason to suggest that his lists reflected his wishful thinking, that is, he referred to books that were just about to be printed as published.⁵

Below I provide brief bibliographic descriptions of the eleven surviving works, the attribution of which raises no doubts. Their contents indicate that all of them, apart from the panegyric on the capture of Azov (No. 9), were textbooks. The translation of Aesop's fables (No. 6) is no exception: the bilingual content of the book and the moral messages of the ancient Greek writer's work point to its educational function.⁶

1. *A world history textbook*: Kopievsky I.F. *Vvedenie kratkoe vo vsyakuyu istoriyu po chinu istorichnomu ot sozdaniya mira yasno i sovershenno spisannoe* [A Short Introduction to Universal History in accordance with the Historical Order from the Creation of the World, Clearly and Perfectly Presented]. Amsterdam: Tip. Ivana Andreeva Tessinga, 10 April 1699. 70 p.

2. *An arithmetic textbook*: Kopievsky I.F. *Kratkoe i poleznoe rukovedenie vo aritmetiku* [A Concise and Useful Guide on Arithmetic]. Amsterdam: Tip. Ivana Andreeva Tessinga, 15 April 1699. 48 p., 3350 copies.

3. *An astronomy textbook*: Kopievsky I.F. *Ugotovanie i tolkovanie yasnoe i zelo izryadnoe, krasnoobraznago poverstaniya krugov nebesnykh* [Clear and Very Fair Design and Interpretation of the Miraculous Circulation of the Circles of Heaven]. Amsterdam: Tip. Ivana Andreeva Tessinga, 1699. 41 p.

4–5. *Two trilingual thematic dictionaries*:⁷ Kopievsky I.F. *Nomenklator na russkom, latinskome i nemetskom yazyke* [Nomenclator in Russian, Latin, and German]. Amsterdam: Tipografiya Yana Tesin-

⁵ It has also been suggested that Kopievsky might have been involved in the preparation of at least two editions not included in any of his three lists: *Svyatcy* [Menologium]. Amsterdam: Tip. I.A. Tessinga, 1702; *Simvol i Emblemata* [Symbols and Emblemata]. Amsterdam: Henricum Westenum, 1705. However, these assumptions are not supported by documentary evidence. Some distinctive traits of Kopievsky's personality are described in [Zaretskiy, 2021a. P. 64–65].

⁶ Bibliographic descriptions are compiled based on the standard of the Russian State Library.

⁷ The title pages of both dictionaries have not survived; their descriptions, compiled from Kopievsky's book lists, are given according to [Bykova, 1958. P. 284, 285].

ga, 1700. 127 p.; Kopievsky I.F. Nomenklator na russkom, latinskom i gollandskom yazykakh [Nomenclator in Russian, Latin, and Dutch]. Amsterdam: Tipografiya Yana Tessinga, 1700. 127 p.

6. *Aesop's Fables in Latin and Russian, translated by Kopievsky and accompanied by his commentaries. Enclosed is a translation of the ancient Greek parody poem the 'Batrachomyomachia': Pritchi Ezopovy* [Aesop's Fables]. Amsterdam: Tip. Ivana Andreeva Tesinga, 1700. 148 p.

7. *An abridged translation of the military treatise by Byzantine Emperor Leo VI the Wise with appended excerpts from 'Institutorum Rei Militaris Libri VIII' by Szymon Starowolski and from works by other authors: Leo VI the Wise, or The Philosopher. Kratkoe sobranie pokazuyushchee del voinskikh obuchenie* [A Brief Exposition on Military Training]. Amsterdam: Tip. Ivana Andreeva Tessinga, 1 January 1700. 166 p.

8. *A Latin textbook for the 'Slavonic-Russian nation': Kopievsky I.F. Latina grammatica in usum scholarum celeberrimae gentis sclavonico-rosseanae adornata*. Amsterdam: [Tip. Kopievskogo], 1700. 500 p.

9. *A panegyric on the capture of Azov: Kopievsky I.F. Slava torzhestv i znamen pobed / Gloria triumphorum & trophaeorum* [Glory of Celebrations and Banners of Victories / Gloria triumphorum & trophaeorum]. Amsterdam: Tip. I.F. Kopievskogo, 12 October 1700. 32 p.

10. *A translation of the Dutch navigation guidebook: Degraf A. Kni-ga uchashchaya morskogo plavaniya* [A Navigation Guidebook]. Amsterdam: Pech. Avraam Breman, 24 November 1701. 147 p.

11. *A Russian language textbook for foreigners: Rukovedenie v grammatyku, vo slayanorosiyskuyu ili Moskovskuyu / Manuductio in grammaticam, in Sclavonico Rosseanam seu Moscoviticam* [An Introduction to Slavic Russian or Muscovite Grammar / Manuductio in grammaticam, in Sclavonico Rosseanam seu Moscoviticam]. Stolzenberg: Pech. F. Goltzius, 1706. 80 p.

3. The Educational Literature Repertoire of Russian Readers

The title pages of the above books alone show their special place among the printed materials available in Russia in the early 18th century. By the time they were out of print, the available educational literature was practically limited to the handbooks of Church Slavonic, published in Moscow and aimed primarily at teaching reading liturgical books, and, to a lesser extent, writing. These ABC books, primers, and grammar books contained prayers, brief accounts of the lives of the saints, excerpts from the books of the Bible, creeds, lists of sins and virtues, and passages from works of orthodox church hierarchs. This kind of educational literature did not imply that those learning the Church Slavonic language from it would read secular books. The religious content and corresponding purpose of these textbooks is clearly evidenced by their titles: *Nachal'noe uchenie chelovekom, hotyashchym razumeti bozhestvennogo pisaniya* [The Basics for Those Willing to Understand the Holy Scripture]

(1634, 1637); *Grammatiki slavenskiya pravilnoe Sintagma* [Slavonic Grammar with Correct Syntax] by Meletius Smotrytsky (1648) (1st edition — Yev'ye, 1619); *Bukvar' yazyka slavenska, sirech' nachalo ucheniya detem, hotyashchym uchitisya chteniyu pisanij* [A Primer of Slavonic Language, that is, the Basics for Children Willing to Learn Reading the Scriptures] (1657, 1664); *Bukvar' yazyka slavenska, pisanij chteniya uchitisya hotyashchym* [A Primer of Slavonic Language, for Those Willing to Learn Reading the Scriptures] (1667, 1669); *Bukvar' yazyka slavenska, sirech' nachalo ucheniya detem, hotyashchym uchitisya chteniyu pisanij* [A Primer of Slavonic Language, that is, the Basics for Children Willing to Learn Reading the Scriptures] by Symeon Polotsky (1679); *Bukvar' yazyka slavenska ('Azbuka s oratsiye')*⁸ [A Primer of Slavonic Language ('ABC Book with Orations'⁹)] (1679); *Bukvar' slavenorossiyskikh pismen ustavnnykh i skoropisnykh, grecheskikh zhe latinskikh i polskikh, so obrazovanmi veshchey, i so nravouchitelnyimi stikhami* [A Primer of Slavic-Russian Scripts, Uncial (Ustav) and Cursive (Skoropis'), as well as Greek, Latin, and Polish, with Illustrations and Moral Verses] by Karion Istomin (1694); *Bukvar' yazyka slavenska hotyashchym detem uchitisya chteniya pisanij nachalo vsekh pismen dostolepnoe nachertanie: K semu i inyya glavizny potrebnyya vo obuchenii dolzhnosti khristianskiya s dushespasitelnoyu polzoyu*¹⁰ [A Primer of the Slavonic Language for Children Willing to Learn Reading the Scriptures, Proper Writing of all Letters: As well as Other Chapters Necessary for Teaching the Christian Duties for the Salvation of the Soul] by Karion Istomin (1696) [Nemirovskiy, Shustova, 2015]. Of all the publications of the Moscow Print Yard, only two were secular books: a warfare textbook¹¹ and a code of laws of the Tsardom of Russia (Rus').¹² In addition to books published in Moscow, Russian readers of the 17th century also had some access to those published in the printing houses of South-Western Rus'. However, the overwhelming majority of them were also liturgical literature. The only exception was Innokentiy Gizel's *Synopsis*, first printed in the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra in 1674 and reissued there at least twice until the beginning of the 18th century.¹³

⁸ The title of the book is restored by researchers; there is no title in the print edition.

⁹ Here: texts of greetings on the occasion of major Christian feasts.

¹⁰ The title of the book is restored by researchers; the print edition does not contain any title.

¹¹ Wallhausen J.J. von. *Uchenie i khitrost' ratnogo stroeniia pekhotnykh lyudey* [Exercises and Strategies relating to the Military Formations of Infantry Men]. Moscow: Pechatnyj Dvor, 26 August 1647.

¹² *Sobornoe ulozhenie tsarya Alekseya Mikhaylovicha* [Council Code of Tsar Alexey Mikhaylovich]. Moscow: Pechatnyj Dvor, 29 January 1649.

¹³ *Mechta o russkom edinstve*. Kievskiy sinopsis (1674) [The Dream of Russian Unity. Kyiv Synopsis (1674)]. Moscow: Evropa, 2006. In Moscow and St. Petersburg, *Synopsis* was first published only in 1836.

4. Kopievsky's Textbooks in Russia

It is generally believed that the textbooks printed in Amsterdam were not widespread in Russia and did not play a significant role in Petrine cultural reforms. Many scholars in the second half of the last century suggested that Peter had not been satisfied with their subject matter and content, that their scientific component did not stand up to any scrutiny, and that they were written in poor Russian. Based on such assessments, some researchers argued that publishing Russian books abroad would never have succeeded [Department of History of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1964. P. 134]. T.A. Bykova put forward two main arguments in support of this view: the unsatisfactory content of these books and their limited circulation in Russia [Bykova, 1958. P. 340–341].¹⁴ How convincing do these arguments sound today?

T.A. Bykova suggests that Kopievsky — Thessing's books were poorly known in Russia because some of the copies could have been lost while in transit to Arkhangelsk. As Bykova does not provide any arguments to support her hypothesis, it does not seem convincing enough. My attempts to find at least indirect references to such losses in the documents on the trade of Dutch merchants in Russia and historical literature have yielded no result [Zakharov, 1996; Veluvenkamp, 2006].

As for the unsatisfactory quality of the content — the 'scientific shallowness' and 'educational deficiency' of the books — on closer examination, these conclusions also raise doubt. T.A. Bykova argues two main points in their support. Her first argument is that *Rukovedenie vo aritmetiku* [A Guide on Arithmetic] was inferior to Magnitsky's *Arithmetic* in terms of content.¹⁵ Her second point is that Ernst Glück, a famous educator of Peter the Great's time, pointed out many errors in *Latina grammatica* [Bykova, 1958. P. 341]. While both can be certainly considered shortcomings, they could have hardly been the cause of the low demand for these books in Russia. Magnitsky's textbook was issued four years after the publication of *Arithmetic* in Amsterdam. Furthermore, Russian readers could not evaluate the merits and demerits of the Latin grammar textbook, as they simply had not seen any books on Latin grammar before — in contrast to Ernst Glück, who had studied at Wittenberg and Leipzig Universities.

Later, historians put forward another argument in support of the view that Kopievsky — Thessing's books, which brought European scholarship to Russia, were little known: their distribution would have been hindered by the orthodoxy of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the overall traditionalism of Russian culture. These distinctive features of Russian society have supposedly been the

¹⁴ The statement about their low importance in the Petrine reforms is also found in the studies of foreign authors [Cracraft, 2004. P. 265].

¹⁵ Magnitsky L.F. *Arithmetic*. Moscow: Sinodal'naya tip., January 1703.

main reason for the failure of Peter's enlightenment project [Okenfuss, 1998. P. 21]. This conclusion was based exclusively on the opinions of individual writers of the Church, supported by the idea of the unity of the Russian culture at the time of Peter the Great. Meanwhile, recent research shows clearly that Russian culture was far from homogeneous and that a significant proportion of Russian society was keen to embrace European scientific knowledge. As an example of this cultural heterogeneity, Daniel Waugh pointed to the studies of Semyon Popov — a sexton in the city of Khlynov who had copied two books by Kopievsky [Waugh, 2003. P. 101, 102, 270, 271].¹⁶ The interest of Russian people in European scientific knowledge is also evidenced by numerous ownership records on printed copies of these textbooks, made in the first half of the 18th century by nobles, public servants, church ministers, merchants, and students.¹⁷

The conclusion about the low popularity of the Amsterdam textbooks in Russia is also based on the data from bibliographers of the 19th and 20th centuries, primarily on the calculations of the number of copies available in the main Russian libraries and the opinions of those who compiled the catalogues of Russian early printed books. The latter usually added to the descriptions of these editions notes such as 'the book is exceedingly rare', 'is very rare', and so on. Today, however, we know that many more copies of these textbooks have survived than previously thought (as will be demonstrated below).

Currently, we also know much more about the books' distribution and in whose hands they ended up. Traditionally, some copies were distributed 'without charge' to Peter, members of his family, as well as laity and clergy in the tsar's inner circle. A certain number of copies went to government institutions: the Posol'sky Prikaz ('Ambassadorial Office') and the Moscow Print Yard. Bibliographers discovered Kopievsky — Thessing's textbooks in the book collections of D.M. Golitsyn, J.D. Bruce, and Iov, the metropolitan of Veliky Novgorod and Velikiye Luki [Zaretskiy, 2021b. P. 1415–1419]. However, the main part of their print runs distributed by 'free trade' in Moscow, Arkhangelsk, and other cities got into the hands of various 'eager' readers about whom only fragmentary information is preserved [Zaretskiy, 2022].

Much more is known about prominent readers of these books. One of the first readers of Kopievsky–Thessing's editions in Mos-

¹⁶ The mass practice of copying printed books continued in Russia at least until the end of the 18th century. One of the reasons was the relative cheapness of manuscript copies [Luppov, 1970. P. 107–108]. However, it would have undoubtedly waned if not for the poor development of the book market and the lack of effective ways to inform readers about the publications entering it.

¹⁷ Some of them can be found in the bibliographic descriptions of the books: [Bykova, 1958].

cow was Fedor Polikarpov-Orlov, a proofreader at the Moscow Print Yard. His *Primer*, printing of which started on 28 December 1700, was based on the German version of *Nomenclator* by Kopievsky, published in the first half of the same year [Pekarskiy, 1862. Vol. 1. P. 20]. In addition to *Nomenclator*, Polikarpov had also read *Pritchi Ezopovy* [Aesop's Fables], also published in 1700: in his *Primer*, he referred to Aesop's 'typographically visual' fables.¹⁸ There is evidence that *Rukovedenie v grammatyku* [Introduction to Grammar] was used to teach Russian at the Ustyug Seminary and that in 1718 this book was going to be used at the Latin Catholic school in the German Quarter in Moscow¹⁹ [Bezrogov, 2018. P. 280. Note 13].

Of all the Amsterdam editions, we know the most about the distribution of *Latina grammatica* in Russia. Soon after its publication, Ernst Glück bought several copies for his school, despite his critical attitude to the book [Winter, 1953. P. 377]. Apparently, in early 18th century Russia, the book was in great demand, at least in Moscow. In one of his letters dated 1704, the German philologist Heinrich Ludolf informed the theologian and educator August Francke that no more copies could be found in Moscow [Ibid. P. 215]. There is some evidence that this textbook was used in Novgorod for teaching Latin [Grigoreva, Salonikov, 2008. P. 201]. It can be assumed that in other Russian cities, it was also used for educational purposes. At least, one of its copies, which is currently kept at the Margarita Rudomino All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature, has numerous readers' marks in different handwritings from the 18th century.

Ownership inscriptions and markings on the textbooks printed in Amsterdam are a valuable and still understudied source of information about their fate in Russia. They allow us not only to identify the readers of these books but also to trace the geography of their distribution. According to my preliminary calculations, besides the two capitals, these textbooks were in circulation in another eight Russian cities: Arkhangelsk, Veliky Novgorod, Veliky Ustyug, Vyatka (Khl'ynov), Nizhny Novgorod, Pustozersk, Tver, and Yaroslavl [Zaretskiy, 2022].

5. Extant Copies

Since thorough work on the identification of Kopievsky — Thessing's books in book collections has only recently begun, there is no accurate information about their numbers yet.²⁰ Nevertheless, preli-

¹⁸ Polikarpov-Orlov F.P. Bukvar' slaveno-greko-latinskiy [A Slavonic-Greek-Latin Primer]. Moscow: Sinodal'naya tip., June 1701. P. 5.

¹⁹ Stroev P.M. Opisanie staropechatnykh knig slavyanskikh, sluzhashchee dopolnieniem k opisaniyam bibliotek grafa F.A. Tolstova i kuptsa I.N. Tsarskogo [Description of Early Printed Slavonic Books Supplementing the Description of the Libraries of Count F.A. Tolstoy and Merchant I.N. Tsarsky]. Moscow: Tip. S. Selivanovskogo, 1841. P. 220.

²⁰ For the first work in this area, see: [Melnichek, 2014].

minary calculations using the electronic and card catalogues of the Russian and foreign libraries indicate that their number is much higher than previously thought. Below I present the results of these calculations, including an indication of the total number of identified copies; the number of copies in Russian library stacks (specifying their names); the number of copies outside of Russia (specifying the country only).²¹

Vvedenie kratkoe vo vsyakuyu istoriyu [A Short Introduction to Universal History] — 21. In Russia: RSL²² — 1; NLR — 3; RASL — 2; SHM — 2; RGADA — 1; YMP — 1; private collection (?) — 1.²³ Outside of Russia: Netherlands — 6; UK — 1; Germany — 1; Canada — 1; Ukraine — 1.²⁴

Kratkoe i poleznoe rukovedenie vo aritmetiku [A Concise and Useful Guide on Arithmetic] — 7. In Russia: RSL — 1; NLR — 2; RASL — 1; SHM — 1. Outside of Russia: Germany — 1; USA — 1.

Ugotovanie i tolkovanie yasnoe i zelo izryadnoe [Clear and Very Fair Design and Interpretation] — 4. In Russia: NLR — 1; RASL — 1; RSL* — 1; SH — 1.²⁵

Nomenklator na russskom, latinskom i nemetskom yazyke [Nomenclator in Russian, Latin, and German] — 8. In Russia: RSL — 1; NLR — 2; RASL — 1; NGOUNB — 1; YMP — 1. Outside of Russia: Sweden — 1; France — 1.²⁶

²¹ The author would be sincerely grateful to the readers of the article for any information about the copies of Kopievsky — Thessing's books that are not included in this list.

²² Hereinafter the following abbreviations are used: RSL — the Russian State Library; NLR — the National Library of Russia; RASL — the Russian Academy of Sciences Library; SHM — the State Historical Museum; RGADA — the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts; YMP — the Yaroslavl Museum-Preserve; SH — the State Hermitage Museum; NGOUNB — the Nizhny Novgorod State Regional Universal Scientific Library named after V.I. Lenin; IRLI — the Institute of Russian Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences; KM — the Kolomenskoe Museum-Reserve; SPbU — the M. Gorky Scientific Library of St. Petersburg University; NMR — the Novgorod Museum-Reserve; SPbIH RAS — the St. Petersburg Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Sciences; ODNB — Odesa National Scientific Library.

²³ The book was sold on 13 February 2020 in Moscow at an auction of the Litfund House: <https://www.litfund.ru/auction/204/3/>

²⁴ The copy was identified using the following catalogue: Petrov S.O. (1958) *Slavyanskie knigi kirillovskoy pechati XV–XVIII vv.: Opisanie knig, khranyashchikhsya v Gos. publichnoy b-ke USSR* [Slavonic Books in Cyrillic type of the 15th–18th Centuries: Description of Books in the State Public Library of the Ukrainian SSR]. Kyiv: Izd-vo Akad. nauk USSR. P. 91.

²⁵ Hereinafter an asterisk indicates copies unknown to the author, which were identified by A.A. Melnichek [2014. P. 156–161].

²⁶ As both *Nomenclators* were printed with no title pages, identifying and describing them is problematic. In the Bibliothèque nationale de France, for example, the German version of *Nomenclator* is described by the Latin title of its first section: *De Deo et spiritibus...*: <https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb333399206>

Nomenklator na russkom, latinskom i gollandskom yazykakh [Nomenclator in Russian, Latin, and Dutch] — 8. In Russia: RSL — 3; NLR — 3; SHM — 1; RASL* — 1.

Pritchi Ezopovy [Aesop's Fables] — 5. In Russia: RSL — 1; NLR — 1; SHM — 1; IRLI* — 1. Outside of Russia: UK — 1.

Leo VI the Wise. *Kratkoe sobranie...* [A Brief Exposition] — 19. In Russia: RSL — 8; NLR — 4; RASL — 1; SHM — 2; KM — 1; RGADA* — 1. Outside of Russia: Germany — 2.

Latina grammatica — 24. In Russia: RSL — 6; NLR — 1; RASL — 1; SHM — 3; SPbU — 1; YMP* — 1. Outside of Russia: France — 1; UK — 1; Germany — 1; Denmark — 2; Netherlands — 6.

Slava torzhestv i znamen pobed [Glory of Celebrations and Banners of Victories] — 6. In Russia: RSL — 1; NLR — 1; RASL — 1; SHM — 1; SPbIH RAS* — 1; ODNB* — 1.

Kniga uchashchaya morskogo plavaniya [A Navigation Guide-book] — 7. In Russia: RSL — 1; NLR — 2; RASL — 1; KM — 1; NMR — 1; RGADA* — 1.

Rukovedenie v grammatyku [Introduction to Grammar] — 4. In Russia: RSL — 2; NLR — 1. Outside of Russia: Germany — 1.

What can these numbers tell us about the prevalence of the Amsterdam textbooks in Russia in the early 18th century? Given that at least some of them had a print run of thousands of copies, not many have survived. It does not mean, however, that they were little available to Russian readers. The number of extant copies depends on various circumstances and is not always an indicator of the book's former level of popularity. The more so when it comes to educational literature, which wears out especially quickly. Moreover, the textbooks in question were thin and not of excellent printing quality, which is why their owners were unlikely to put them in expensive bindings and store them with special care.

To give a better-reasoned answer to the above question, one could compare the number of extant copies of one of Kopievsky — Thessing's textbooks with, for instance, 2,400 copies of *Arithmetic* by Magnitsky published by the Moscow Print Yard. Such a comparison would not be meaningful, however: *Arithmetic*, superior to the Amsterdam editions in volume, content, and printing quality, was of much greater value to readers and, therefore, had better prospects of surviving over time.

When comparing the books printed in Amsterdam with Russian-language books of the early 18th century in terms of the number of extant copies, it should be kept in mind that Kopievsky — Thessing's textbooks were only the starting point in Peter's ambitious enlightenment project. Soon after their publication, Russian readers saw a massive influx of scientific literature, published not as distant as in Amsterdam, but in Moscow and St Petersburg. This inflow inevitably pushed the unpretentious Amsterdam

editions to the periphery of the readers' attention. Yet they were not forgotten and continued to serve as an important source of knowledge until the last decades of the eighteenth century.²⁷

**6. 'General
benefit and profit
of the Nation'**

The above shows clearly that Peter's project to publish Russian textbooks in Amsterdam was a certain success. But how significant was it and what role have these textbooks played in the emergence of the new Russian culture? Today it is difficult to find a definitive answer to these questions — as it is to any other question related to a long and complicated process of displacing manuscript books in the readers' repertoire with printed ones. This process should not be reduced, as is often the case, only to a multiple increase in their number and variety.²⁸ Another important aspect was that printed books did not depend on the scribe's will and were totally identical,²⁹ so that the knowledge they contained not only spread at an unprecedented speed but was also unified [Burke, 2000. P. 11].

While the publication of the Amsterdam textbooks was certainly not a central event in the cultural history of the Peter the Great period, there is no doubt that they played a notable role in it. These were the first secular printed textbooks, which provided hundreds or even thousands of Russians access to new actionable knowledge.³⁰ With the help of the arithmetic textbook, the Russian-Latin-German and Russian-Latin-Dutch dictionaries, the textbooks of Latin grammar, world history, warfare, astronomy, and navigation, the general Russian reader first got acquainted with the elements of the seventeenth-century sciences, saw the Russian star chart and read the translation of the ancient classics (Aesop). In these textbooks, the readers first encountered translations and

²⁷ T.A. Bykova provides some evidence of it. She found the following ownership inscription on the copy of *Kniga uchashchaya morskogo plavaniya* [A Navigation Guidebook] from the collection of the Russian National Library: 'Chernomorskago grebnago flota shturmana praporshchich'ya ranga Ivana Rudneva 1795 goda genvarya 29 chisla v gorode Nikolaev' ('Belongs to Ivan Rudnev, navigator of the praporshchik rank in the Black Sea Galley Fleet, born 29 January 1795 in the city of Nikolaev') [Bykova, 1958. P. 292].

²⁸ Although the influence of the mass transition from the manuscript to the printed book on the development of Russian culture in the 18th century raised the attention of book historians as early as the 1970s [Luppov, 1975], today this important subject of social history of knowledge remains understudied. Historians have studied almost exclusively the place of the printed book in the culture of eighteenth-century Russia [Marker, 1985; Cracraft, 2004. P. 257–276].

²⁹ Gorfunkel A.H., Nikolaev N.I. (1984) *Neotchuzhdaemaya tsennost'*. Rasskazy o knizhnykh redkostyakh universitetskoy biblioteki [An Inalienable Asset. Accounts of Book Rarities from the University Library]. Leningrad: Izd-vo Leningradskogo universiteta. P. 6.

³⁰ On the absence of scientific and technical literature in the repertoire of Russian readers before 1700, see: [Danilevskiy, 1954. P. 27].

interpretations of categories, terms, and concepts used by European scientists.³¹

The publication of these books marked the beginning of an important change in the repertoire of Russian printing products, followed by a drastic transformation of the entire Russian cultural landscape: they became the first signs of 'such a new phenomenon in the spiritual life of Russian society as scientific knowledge' [Bogoslavskiy, 1948. P. 299].

Book historians also point out the innovations introduced by the Amsterdam editions to Russian book printing. They used a new Cyrillic typeface, which became the prototype of the so-called civil script, and for the first time featured Arabic numerals and a European-type title page with emphasized title and imprint. Kopievsky is credited with the creation of the first printed bibliography of Russian books, which also became the first Russian individual bibliography [Sidorov, 1946. P. 126; Zdobnov, 1955. P. 50–51; Shitsgal, 1985. P. 31, 32, 34, 42, 43, 56, 58].

Since the Amsterdam textbooks were produced in a printed format in mass circulation, the knowledge they provided spread far beyond the two capitals and became available to people of all estates, ages, and occupations. This knowledge did indeed contribute to the development of Russian science: in the first decades of the 18th century the German-language *Nomenclator* was revised and republished in Saint Petersburg, and *Vvedenie kratkoe* [A Short Introduction] was used by the Monastyrsky Prikaz (Monastic Office) in the writing of a new Russian history conceived by Peter the Great.³² Thus, they have brought certain 'profit' and 'benefit to the Nation', albeit not very visible today. They made only a first modest contribution to the major changes that took place in Russian culture in the eighteenth century.

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³¹ Particularly in medicine: [Zagrekova, 2008]. On the various innovations of Kopievsky's editions see: [Pekarsky, 1862. Vol. 1. P. 289; Vol. 2. P. 47; Danilevskiy, 1954. P. 27–29; Nowak, 1970. P. 84–85; Berezkina, 2011. P. 120].

³² See the latest edition of *Nomenclator* under a new title: Kopievsky I.F. *Latino Rossiyskaya i nemetskaya slovesnaya kniga* [Latin-Russian and German Word Book]. St. Petersburg: Tip. Akad. nauk, 1732. *Vvedenie kratkoe* is mentioned under the name 'printed chronicle' in the archival documents relating to one of Peter's historiographical projects [Sirenov, 2010. P. 347, 357, 507].

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