

Simon Franklin

**Three Types of Asymmetry
in the Muscovite Engagement with Print**

Summary:

Muscovite awareness and use of printed books both predated and extended beyond the scope of native Muscovite printing. The three types of ‘asymmetry’ explored in this survey relate to the wider reception of print in Muscovy. The first and most widely noted is the chronological and cultural mismatch between the spread of print culture in Russia and in Western Europe. The second is the differential chronology and repertoire of local print production by comparison with the use of imported printed materials. The third – the main focus of the survey – is the phenomenon of “reverse technology transfer”, whereby West European printed materials were appropriated into manuscript culture in Muscovy. Examples are adduced from diverse and unrelated fields: medical knowledge, newspapers, and biblical illustration. Taken together, these patterns of asymmetry not only pose a challenge to “techno-determinist” approaches to the history of writing and print, but reflect a distinctive ecology of media, a distinctive set of cultural filters in the translation of print to Muscovy.

Key words:

Russia

Muscovy

Printing

Engraving

Early Modern history

The history of Russian printing is only part of the history of print in Russia. Histories of print in Russia tend to focus on local production: that is, on the history of Russian printing. However, no less pertinent is the story of Russian awareness of, uses of, and cultural responses to, material printed elsewhere. In order to analyze the specific features of the history of Russian printing, we need to set it in its proper contexts, to take a holistic view of Russian encounters with the relevant technologies and their products. The mode of doing so, in this brief survey, will be to highlight three characteristic patterns of difference – asymmetries – between Muscovite and West European engagements with the technology of print. This is a discursive artifice, not a systematic analysis.¹ However, artificial though it may be, it can serve as a heuristic device through which to reach beyond the proximate causes of events in the mid to late sixteenth century and to track some of the ways in which, over the course of at least two centuries, Russia's response to print poses a challenge to more familiar, somewhat “techno-determinist” Western-based assumptions about the social and cultural implications of changes in information technologies.²

In the present study the three asymmetries will not be accorded equal attention. The first will be merely noted, the second will be briefly illustrated, the third will be the main focus of attention. The imbalance is not an indication of their relative importance, but of their degrees of prominence in existing scholarship. I start by outlining the most familiar, but concentrate subsequently on the asymmetry that has least commonly been identified or investigated.

The first and the best known of these asymmetries is the mismatch between the patterns of the spread of print culture in Russia and in Western Europe: the fact that knowledge of, and availability of, the technology of print did not spark an equivalent “print revolution” in Muscovy. While historians of print culture in Western Europe have an ample agenda merely trying to map the very rapid proliferation of the

¹ The title of this deliberately essay echoes that of an article by Ihor Ševčenko, “Three Paradoxes of the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission,” *Slavic Review*, 23 (1964): 220-36, which constructs an equivalent device to elucidate aspects of the early phases of Slavonic writing.

² The classic analysis remains that of Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change. Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

technology in the second half of the fifteenth century, their colleagues in Russia, in sharp contrast, have to puzzle over printing's late and stuttering start, over the discontinuities in its development, over the limitations in its repertoire, over its distinctive institutional underpinning. Why was there no Muscovite printing for a hundred years after Gutenberg? And why, even then, did local printing not immediately become established as a continuous tradition? Why, for the first 150 years, was the repertoire of native print so astonishingly (by West European standards) narrow, as the technology was adopted almost exclusively for devotional purposes? Why, indeed, did even the Petrine reforms to the look and the repertoire of printing still not amount to a print revolution (since both the appearance and the repertoire were still defined from above by a monopoly supplier)?³ Why was there no significant proliferation of presses until the end of the 18th century? These are among the standard— though still troublesome - questions provoked by acquaintance with the basic chronological and institutional history of Russian printing. Several of them are addressed, directly and indirectly, in other contributions to the present volume.

The second asymmetry is the mismatch between local print production and the engagement with the technology through its imported products. West European printed books were known and used in Russia from the late fifteenth century, long before any printing presses operated in Russia. In the compilation of the Gennadian Bible of 1499 (the earliest version of a complete Bible in Slavonic), sections which had previously been lacking or were unobtainable were translated from Latin printed books.⁴ Nor were early translations from printed books limited to the biblical. They

³ Pace James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 260, 297, according to whom the Petrine reforms “entailed the full implantation in Russia of the European Print Revolution.” Cracraft implies that the print revolution was about the contents of books, while ignoring its essential driver: a diffuse market for the hire of a technology.

⁴ See Francis J. Thomson, “The Slavonic Translation of the Old Testament,” in Jože Krašovec (ed.), *The Interpretation of the Bible* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series, 289; Lubljana and Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1998), esp. 655-65. On the dissemination of the translations of individual books see V.A. Romodanovskaia, “O tseliakh sozdaniia gennadiievskoi Biblii kak pervogo

include, for example, the *Ars minor* of Donatus, on the eight parts of speech, which was probably the most widely disseminated work of its type in the late Middle Ages;⁵ or the anti-Jewish *Rationes breves* by Samuel of Morocco (from the edition printed in Cologne in 1493; a note in three of the manuscripts indicates that the translation must have been completed by 1503/4);⁶ in 1521, a controversial *Almanac* of Johannes Stöffler, predicting a deluge; and, in 1534, the herbal (*Hortus sanitatis*) of Johann von Cuba.⁷

We therefore have to distinguish sharply between Russia as a *producer* and Russia as a *consumer* of print cultures. This begs the question of how, in Moscow (or indeed Novgorod) the foreign technology was viewed. For over half a century Russia engaged with the products of the technology without adopting the technology itself. More than that: Novgorodian and Muscovite elites had direct contact with bearers of the technology (that is, with people who had been involved in printing in Western Europe – most notably Bartholomaeus Ghotan and Maksim Grek)⁸ yet continued to ignore their expertise. One can speculate as to why this might have been, but the sources are ungenerous. Despite the presence of printed books, references to print in

polnogo russkogo bibleiskogo kodeksa,” in S.A. Semiachko, ed., *Knizhnye tseny Drevnei Rusi. Severnorusskie monastyri* (St Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2001), 278-305.

⁵ V.S. Tomelleri, ed., *Der russische Donat: vom lateinischen Lehrbuch zur russischen Grammatik* (Bausteine zur slavischen Philologie. Neue Folge, Reihe B, 18; Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2002).

⁶ A.I. Sobolevskii, *Perevodnaia literatura Moskovskoi Rusi XIV-XVII vekov. Bibliograficheskie materialy* (Sbornik Otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti, LXXIV.1; St Petersburg: Akademiia Nauk, 1903; repr. Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprints, 1966), 192; N. Angermann, “Neues über Nicolaus Bulow und sein Wirken in Moskauer Russland,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 17 (1969): 408-19.

⁷ See T.A. Isachenko, *Perevodnaia moskovskaia knizhnost' XV-XVII vv.* (Moscow: Pashkov dom, 2009), 128-82.

⁸ David B. Miller, “The Lübeckers Bartholomäus Ghotan and Nicolaus Bulow in Novgorod and Moscow and the Problem of Early Western Influences on Russian Culture,” *Viator*, 9 (1978): 395-412. On Maksim Grek see below.

the pre-Fedorov period are notably sparse. In the early 1500s Nicolaus Bulow names his printed source edition in the colophon to one of his translations.⁹ Perhaps not surprisingly, a very small cluster of such references is associated with Maksim Grek. Andrei Kurbskii recalls, albeit many years later, how, in the mid-1550s Maksim had told him that, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the treasures of Greek theology had been taken for preservation to Venice, where the grateful and knowledge-hungry Italians translated them into Latin, printed them (*daiut v druk*) in large quantities, distributed them throughout the Western lands, and made them available for purchase at accessible prices (*lekhkoiu tsenoiu*).¹⁰ For Maksim (in Kurbskii's retelling) the Venetian printers' actions are represented as entirely positive. As we shall see, the story was subsequently recycled as a warning against texts corrupted by Latins.¹¹

Maksim evidently had printed books in his personal collection, and was happy to talk about them, but, aside from Kurbskii's later recollection, there is little indication of discussion about the nature or benefits of the technology. An exception which, in a sense, proves the rule is to be found in a letter from Maksim to Vasiliu Mikhailovich Tuchkov, who commissioned many of his translations.¹² Maksim begins: "you have bid me explain the meaning of the emblem which you saw in a printed book." The emblem is the Aldine device of an anchor with a fish twisting round its shaft. This episode attracts attention because it includes Maksim's brief autobiographical digression on his past association with the *friazin* Aldus Manutius in Venice, but Tuchkov himself asked about a point of design, about an emblem, not about printing. Maksim explains: the anchor represents firm faith, the fish represents the soul. The story thus underscores the second "asymmetry": that in the pre-Fedorov age, even when Russians were actively using printed materials, or (as in the case of

⁹ See above, note 6. Note that the colophon gives the date of the source edition according to the Western calendar (1493), but the date of the manuscript is stated *anno mundi* (7012 = 1503/4).

¹⁰ *Biblioteka literatury Drevnei Rusi*, 11 (St Petersburg: Nauka, 2001), 564.

¹¹ See David A. Frick, "Sailing to Byzantium: Greek Texts and the Establishment of Authority in Early Modern Muscovy," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 19 (1995): 139-40.

¹² Text (in two versions) in D.M. Bulanin, *Perevody i poslaniia Maksima Greka* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), 198-9.

Tuchkov) looking at them with curiosity, there is little evidence explicit of interest in the medium itself. If we exclude printers' own colophons,¹³ the status of print as such – as opposed to manuscript – became actively thematized only in the mid-17th century.¹⁴

The third type of asymmetry, which will now be the main focus of this survey, is to some extent consequent upon the second type. Russian engagement with imported print culture involved, more often than not, reception of the product, but not of the medium. Again and again, in patterns repeated over the course of at least two hundred years, we can observe a phenomenon which might be called technological reversal, or reverse technology transfer: the stimulus or input was West European and printed, but the local product or output reverted to manuscript.

One might start to illustrate this third type of asymmetry from the late fifteenth century, with the use of Latin and German printed books in the compilation of the Gennadian Bible of 1499. However, to do so would be to risk a kind of tautology: the Gennadian Bible was produced before Russian printing, so obviously it was in manuscript. I will focus here on a later period, from the mid to late 17th century, when local printing was already long established, so that options were in principle available. Three examples of “reverse technology transfer” are offered, in a sequence from the simplest to the most complex and nuanced. They relate to the reception of three quite distinct types of imported printed materials: medical texts, newspapers, and biblical illustrations. The inclusion of biblical illustrations might seem peculiar in a survey of verbal texts, but they turn out to be surprisingly relevant to the topic.

The first area of reverse technological transfer is medical knowledge. The institutional base was governmental: the Apothecary Chancery (*Aptekarskii prikaz*) and the court. The intermediaries were western medical practitioners resident in Moscow; and the recognized sources and guarantors of their expertise were western printed books.

In Muscovy the more or less regular presence of foreign medical experts seems to date from the late 15th century. Their institutionalization may be traced from

¹³ A.N. Robinson et al., eds., *Russkaia staropechatnaia literatura (XVI – pervaiia chetvert' XVIII v.). Tematika i stilistika predislovii i posleslovii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981).

¹⁴ See below.

the second half of the sixteenth century, though the records of the Apothecary Chancery survive only from the late 1620s onwards.¹⁵ From the mid seventeenth century we know quite a lot about these foreign experts: their origins, the requirements for their qualifications, and many episodes of their practice in Muscovy.¹⁶ They were trained at West European institutions using common printed textbooks of the age. And they brought books with them. These imported books formed the basis of a medical reference library at the Chancery.¹⁷ The medics at the Chancery were, by and large, a self-contained and isolated group. Their main job was to look after the health of the Tsar and his family and entourage. They were set apart also because of their working language, which was Latin. Their services were not widely available, nor were their recipes widely distributed. However, they were not entirely sealed off from a wider audience. Some of their print-based expertise did filter outwards. For example, practitioners at the Chancery were consulted in, and provided written reports for, witchcraft trials; they produced handbooks of pharmacological advice for the army and for some private patrons, and perhaps also some texts with general medical advice for households. These were small, late, but

¹⁵ See Clare Griffin, *The Production and Consumption of Medical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century Russia: The Apothecary Chancery* (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University College London, 2012), 6-7; also, mainly on the eighteenth century, Anthony Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva. Chapters from the Lives of the British in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 120-58.

¹⁶ Maria V. Unkovskaya, *Brief Lives. A Handbook of Medical Practitioners in Muscovy, 1620-1701* (London: The Wellcome Trust, 1999). For the fullest account of foreign practitioners in Muscovy see Sabine Dumschatt, *Ausländische Mediziner im Moskauer Rußland* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa, 67; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2006).

¹⁷ E.A. Savel'eva, *Katalog knig iz sobraniia Aptekarskogo prikaza* (St. Petersburg: Alfaret, 2006), describes 124 books from the collection, which then passed to the Academy of Sciences. Note that the library was not restricted to medical texts. It included, for example, Bibles in Latin and Italian, a copy of the Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493, Tycho Brache's *Epistolarum astronomicarum libri*, and the collected works of Cicero.

not entirely negligible signs of what Clare Griffin calls the Chancery's role in "knowledge production" in late Muscovy.

The relevant point here concerns the medium of such "knowledge production". While the "input" sources of knowledge for the Apothecary Chancery were printed, their "outputs" were entirely in manuscript form. This was knowledge transfer with technological reversion: a continuation, albeit in a more formally institutionalized context, of the practice that, with respect to medical texts, had started with the translation of the printed herbal in 1534.¹⁸

The transition to native print took place very gradually, in a sequence that can be traced over the full course of the eighteenth century. In Peter the Great's military hospital school, run from 1707 by Nicholas Bidloo from Leiden, the books were imported (the quality of the library was noted by a Danish visitor in 1710), the instructors were foreign, the pupils were Russian, the mode of instruction was dictation, the language of instruction was Latin. By mid century medical textbooks had begun to be printed in Russia – but in Latin, such as the *Syllabus seu index omnium partium corporis humanae figuris illustratus: in usum studiosorum qui in nosocomiiis Petropolitanis aluntur*, published by the Academy of Sciences in 1744 (and consisting substantially of anatomical illustrations). Next came translations. In 1757 the Academy printed a Russian version of Lorenz Heister's *Compendium anatomicum*.¹⁹ No original Russian anatomical textbook was printed until 1801.²⁰

The second area of reverse technological transfer involves newspapers. The institutional base was again governmental: the Ambassadorial (or Diplomatic) Chancery (*Posol'skii prikaz*) and the court. The printed sources were West European

¹⁸ See above, note 7.

¹⁹ *Svodnyi katalog russkoi knigi grazhdanskoi pechaty XVIII veka (1725-1800)*, 1 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennaia biblioteka SSSR imeni V. I. Lenina, 1963), 207 (no. 1289).

²⁰ See Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1998), 312-16; Mirko Grmek, "The History of Medical Education in Russia," in C.D. O'Malley, ed., *The History of Medical Education* (UCLA Forum in Medical Sciences, 12; Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1970), 303-27.

newspapers. The manuscript outputs were the local summaries known as *vesti-kuranty*.

West European newspapers were brought to Moscow by Russian and foreign merchants and envoys at least from the early 1620s.²¹ The first imports were occasional, but they became more frequent. From the late 1650s the import of West European newspapers was, in effect, an official policy. In the 1660s the establishment of postal services to the West, via Riga and Vilnius, enabled the Tsar to place an order for the supply of newspapers every two weeks. In the late 1660s there were more or less regular deliveries of nine German and six Dutch papers.²²

What does this unprecedented activity signify? A growing popular interest in current events in Western Europe, fed by the availability of and expanding demand for newspapers? No. The newspapers' points of origin were diverse and widespread, but in Muscovy they were narrowly channelled to a single destination for a single purpose: to the government, as sources of data for use in the compilation of intelligence reports. The newspapers were translated at the Ambassadorial Chancery, whose staff then put together digests. These digests of the press were not for general distribution. Just two manuscript copies were normally made. Thus on the one hand it might seem that Muscovy was rather quickly alerted to one of the latest developments in West European print culture – indeed, to one of the developments most conducive to making print culture popularly accessible. On the other hand: in practice the products of imported print culture were once again translated only into local manuscript culture, and in this case into a manuscript culture so restricted, so exclusive, so inaccessible to any but the narrowest elite, that it seems the very antithesis of the original function of its Western source. The texts were imported, but not the technology, the purpose, the genre or the spirit. A medium for the popularization of print was contextually filtered so as to become a medium for

²¹ Ingrid Maier, *Vesti-kuranty. 1656 g., 1660-1662 gg., 1664-1670 gg.: Chast' 2.*

Inostrannye originaly k russkim tekstam (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskikh kul'tur, 2008), 54-57, 74-87.

²² Maier, *Vesti-Kuranty*, 57-60; S.M. Shamin, *Kuranty XVII stoletia. Evropeiskaia pressa v Rossii i vozniknovenie russkoi periodicheskoi pechati* (Moscow, St. Petersburg: Al'ians-Arkheo, 2011), 74-92.

exclusive government intelligence. This is not merely a reversion of technology, but a complete inversion of function.

Such was the case in general. However, an awareness of West European newspapers and pamphlets was not quite so tightly self-contained as might be implied by their distillation into the *kuranty*. Here too, as with print-based medical knowledge, some seepage of information did occur. Muscovite officials with access to the *kuranty* did sometimes copy, or commission copies of, information which happened to be of wider interest or utility.²³ However, more intriguing than the occasional leakage of content is a “literary” allusion to the genre itself. In 1647 the anonymous author of a Russian story of a polemic with Lutherans (in the context of a failed negotiation for a possible marriage of the tsarevna Irina Mikhailovna to a Danish prince in 1644) remarks, as if anticipating criticism for writing such a narrative: “In foreign (*nemetskikh*) lands tales of military deeds are written and printed in books and on broadsides (*na listakh*). Why are we slow, or afraid, or ashamed, to write and print about what happens in the Russian land?”²⁴ The mention of printed Western broadsides (*listy*) with narratives of current events may well be a reference to newspapers. If so, then not only do the anonymous author’s remarks constitute a rare sign that Muscovite awareness of West European printed newspapers did spread beyond their immediate official users; they also provide a highly unusual example of explicit criticism of the absence of such products of print culture in mid-seventeenth-century Moscow.

The first two examples of our third type of asymmetry have an important feature in common: they relate to government activities, overseen and controlled by the Tsar and the relevant chancery (*prikaz*). They represent “top-down” engagement with print cultures, where the State both required and restricted access to the primary printed “input” material. The third example – biblical engravings – is more complex,

²³ E.g. Shamin, *Kuranty XVII stoletia*, 281-309; Daniel Clarke Waugh, *The Great Turkes Defiance. On the History of the Apocryphal Correspondence of the Ottoman Sultan in its Muscovite and Russian Variants* (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers Inc., 1978).

²⁴ From the *Povest’ o konchine tsaria Mikhaila Feodorovicha*, cited in Shamin, *Kuranty XVII stoletia*, 79; also *Slovar’ knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi*, 3 (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1998), 3: 140.

less self-contained, less neatly constricted, and in some ways more revealing. The reception of biblical engravings differs from the reception of newspapers, or of medical textbooks, in that it was not limited to or controlled or initiated by any branch of government, or indeed by any one institution. The phenomenon was far more diffuse and diverse, the influence far deeper. Yet aspects are analogous, especially with regard to the phenomenon of technological reversion.

For present purposes the engravings in question are not individual prints, but large suites of biblical illustrations: picture-Bibles, often with two or three hundred plates, mostly but not exclusively printed in Holland. In Russian scholarship probably the best known specimens of the genre are the albums of engravings published in Amsterdam by Claes Visscher (Nicolas Joannes Piscator; 1587-1652) and his descendants – his son and grandson, also called Nicolas Joannes. The principal editions of “Piscator’s Bible” (as it has come to be known) are those of 1639, 1643, 1650 and 1674. Other cycles are associated with the names of Matthaeus Merian, Peter van der Borch, Pieter Schut, and others. Just to confuse matters, later editions of Merian’s and other illustrations were published by the Visschers (or the Piscatores). Piscator and Merian became the best known names, but the genre was, of course, earlier, and some 16th-century suites were also known and used in late-seventeenth-century Moscow, such as those by Hieronymus Wierix, published with Hieronymus Natalis’s *Evangelicae historiae imagines* in Antwerp in 1593.

The objects themselves circulated quite widely. The presence of such an album became a fairly common feature of any substantial collection of books: from the Kremlin Armoury, to provincial monasteries, to the houses of merchants.²⁵ What were they for? What did Russians make of them, and do with them? In conformity with the triadic habits of the present survey, I will consider the reception of such suites of engravings under three headings: first the pictorial, then the verbal, and finally what might be called the generic.

With regard to the pictorial reception, it would be hard to overstate the extent to which imported biblical engravings permeated diverse areas of Russian visual culture in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It is now almost exactly

²⁵ See O.A. Belobrova, “O bibliiakh s graviurami v russkikh bibliotekakh vtoroi poloviny XVII-nachala XVIII v.,” in Semiachko, *Knizhnye tsentry Drevnei Rusi. Severnorusskie monastyri*, 306-22; see also below, note 32.

a hundred years since Grabar persuasively showed affinities between “Piscator’s Bible” and the late seventeenth-century frescoes in the churches of Iaroslavl, associated with Gurii Nikitin and others.²⁶ Western biblical engravings have also been identified among the sources for icons and frescoes in several Moscow churches, as well as in Rostov, Kostroma, Vologda, and Uglich,²⁷ not to mention book illustrations, popular prints, even decorated enamelware.²⁸ On the boundaries of visual and verbal culture, it has been argued that suites of biblical illustrations even

²⁶ I.E. Grabar’, *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva. Tom VI. Zhivopis. Tom 1. Do-petrovskaia epokha* (Moscow: I. Knebel’, n.d.), 515-34. See the summary of older scholarship in James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 94-98.

²⁷ See e.g. I.L. Buseva-Davydova, “Novye ikonograficheskie istochniki russkoi zhivopisi XVII v.,” in A.L. Batalov, ed., *Russkoe iskusstvo pozdnego srednevekov’ia. Obraz i smysl* (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia khudozhestv, 1993), 190-206; also, e.g., V.G. Briusova, *Freski Iaroslavlia XVII-nachala XVIII veka* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1983); N.G. Pervukhin, *Tserkov’ Il’i Proroka v Iaroslavle* (Moscow: Izd. K.F. Nekrasova, 1915, repr. with commentaries, Iaroslavl’: Izd. Aleksandr Rutman, 2002); E.L. Shumilina, *Stenopis’ 1690 goda Vvedenskogo sobora Tolgskogo monastyria (Istoriia, atributsiia, ikonografiia)* (Avtoref. Diss; St Petersburg: Gos. Akademicheskii institut zhivopisi, skul’ptury i arkhitektury imeni I. E. Repina, 2007), 26-46. On influential Dutch engravings other than Piscator and Merian see I.L. Bochkova (Sen’kevich), “Retseptsiiia niderlandskoi graviury v vostochnoslavianskoi ikonopisi i altarnoi zhivopisi XVII veka,” in M.E. Ermakova, ed., *Iskusstvo knigi i graviura v khudozhestvennoi kul’ture* (Moscow: Pashkov dom, 2014), 124-31.

²⁸ On two such examples of “Usol’sk” enamelled silver bowls, in the collections of the Walters Art Gallery and of the Kremlin Armoury, see Anne Odom, *Russian Enamels. Kievan Rus to Faberge* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd., 1996), nos. 12, 13 (pp. 42-45); images and brief descriptions also available online at <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/24647/bowl-with-judah-and-lion-surrounded-by-scened-from-the-book-of-esther/> and <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/11757/drinking-bowl-2/>; I.A. Bobrovnitskaia, “Emalevaia chashka iz kolleksii Oruzheinoi palaty,” *Muzei. Khudozhestvennye sobraniia SSSR*, 8 (1987), 111-21.

influenced early court theatre.²⁹ There is no need to dwell on this. Modes of assimilation and appropriation were not uniform. There was a spectrum ranging from, at one end, straightforward copying, to, at the other end, the accumulation of a kind of memory-bank of pictorial details which could be retrieved and recombined irrespective of their original iconographic contexts. Examples of the first type can be found among the very earliest Muscovite copper engravings, made by Vasiliĭ Andreev in the 1680s and 1690s. Andreev's Dormition and Assumption are remarkably precise copies of originals by Hieronymus Wierix, as is his "Mirror of a Sinner", versions of which became standard components of the Russian compilation known as the *Sinodik*, (readings and images on the theme of death and remembrance), which was widespread both as an engraved block-book and in manuscript until well into the nineteenth century.³⁰ So exact are Andreev's renderings that, when the same images are encountered elsewhere, it can be hard to tell whether the illustrators were also following Wierix, or whether they were in fact copying Andreev's copies.

So far, so straightforward. More revealing, however, are the floating fragments. For example, consider the page for the letter *iu* in the 1694 edition of the engraved primer (*bukvar'*) of Karion Istomin (fig. 1).³¹ Four figures are represented: a young man and a young woman, labelled as such (*iunosha*, *iunotka*), a statue of a female figure on a plinth, with the caption "Juno, a pagan goddess" (*Iunona boginia poganskaia*), and, larger than the others, an uncaptioned figure of a young man with a bow and arrows. The archer turns out to be an exact copy of the figure of Joseph from

²⁹ I.M. Kudriavtsev, ed., *Artakserksovo deistvo* (Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1957), 36-38 and illustrations between pp. 144 and 145.

³⁰ M.E. Ermakova, O.R. Khromov, *Russkaia graviura na medi vtoroi poloviny XVII – pervoi treti XVIII veka* (Moskva, Sankt-Peterburg). *Opisanie kollektsii otdela izoizdaniĭ* (Moscow: Indrik, 2004), 12-14 (nos. 3-5); cf. the prototypes in Hieronymus Natalis, *Evangelicae historiae imagines* (Antwerp, 1593), 150, 152; for Wierix's *speculum peccatoris* see e.g.

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3017904&partId=1

³¹ Available online at <http://istomin1694.narod.ru/36.jpg>

Piscator's Bible (fig. 2).³² It is not clear who, if anybody, would have recognised the figure as Joseph, or whether such an identification was intended.³³ The figure is yet another youth. The fact that it is copied from a western engraving indicates the extent to which images from Piscator had become appropriated, context-free, into the visual toolkit.

A still more remarkable example, though here in a devotional context, is the imagery of an eighteenth-century icon of the nativity of the Mother of God. The "piscatorial" allusions in this icon have been impressively analysed by I.V. Sosnovtseva from the Russian Museum in St Petersburg.³⁴ Its overall composition is not borrowed from an equivalent image in any imported suites of engravings. However, if we look closely at the details, a strange pattern begins to emerge. It is as if the painter had before him, or in his memory, disembodied, decontextualised fragments from Piscator, which he recombines at will, to no obvious semantic purpose. Thus a figure of a servant girl carrying two vessels is taken from Piscator's picture of Rebecca serving Abraham. A somewhat inconspicuous table in a small room in the background of the Russian icon turns out to be exactly the table that appears in Piscator's image of a scene from the story of Jacob and Esau. The bed is copied, more or less, from yet another of Piscator's plates. And so on. Here, again, the

³² *Theatrum biblicum*, ed. Nicolaus Piscator (Visscher); 1674 edition, fol. 59, according to the MS foliation in the copy in the Russian Museum in St Petersburg: GRM DR/GR - 78. Note that several plates in this copy bear the earliest known ownership stamp of a merchant: AK (= Aleksei Korobeinikov), 1736: see O.V. Vlasova, E.L. Balashova, *Vladel'cheskie znaki na graviurakh i litografiakh. Na materiale Otdela graviury Gosudarstvennogo Russkogo muzeia* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003), 10.

³³ I am grateful to Irina Voznesenskaia (personal communication) for the ingenious suggestion that the image may be an esoteric allusion to the formation of the Cyrillic letter 'iu': the letter links 'I' and 'O' ('IO'), which also happen to be the first two letters of the name *Iosif*.

³⁴ I.V. Sosnovtseva, "Ikony iz Oranienbauma v sobranii Russkogo muzeia," in *Stranitsy istorii otechestvennogo iskusstva. XIX. Sbornik statei po materialam nauchnoi konferentsii* (St. Petersburg: Palace Editions, 2011), 70-89.

imported plates feed into the general pictorial vocabulary, rather than into the iconography.

The second type of reception of the biblical engravings was verbal. Verbal responses can be divided into two sub-types: written references *to* such albums; and writing *in* such albums.

References *to* imported prints are, again, well known as part of the polemical or administrative literature on iconography in the mid to late seventeenth century. Around 1656-58 Iosif Vladimirov wrote a treatise on images, partly in the form of an epistle to Simon Ushakov, partly as a polemic addressed to a certain Ioann Pleshkovich.³⁵ Iosif Vladimirov's treatise is among the rare examples of detailed Muscovite theoretical writing on religious imagery. Iosif draws attention to the virtue of images which are "life-like" (*zhivopodobno*), and points to examples from outside Russia: the practice of drawing from nature; and the admirable life-like images, even of living persons, which some foreigners produce in print. At the point at which he mentions printed images, Iosif appends a list of engravings from Piscator's Bible.³⁶ At a more practical level, on 5 February 1685 Ivan Saltanov, who was in charge of the school of painting at the Kremlin Armoury, asked Petr Sheremet'ev to buy an engraved Bible for the school, as a source of pictorial models for the students (*dlia obrastsa i oznamenki*). The fact that Sheremet'ev was quickly able to acquire a copy (for two roubles) implies reasonable availability on the market.³⁷ The fact that a

³⁵ E.S. Ovchinnikova, "Iosif Vladimirov. Traktat ob iskusstve," in V.N. Lazarev et al., eds., *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo. XVII vek* (Moscow: Nauka, 1964), 9-61. Briefly on Iosif's career see I.A. Kochetkov, ed., *Slovar' russkikh ikonopistsev XI-XVII vekov* (Moscow: Indrik, 2003), 125-7.

³⁶ Ovchinnikova, "Iosif Vladimirov," 45, and *ibid.*, 3, n.11 (Ovchinnikova refers to the list in this footnote but does not include it in her edition). A.A. Saltykov, "Esteticheskie vzgliady Iosifa Vladimirova (po "Poslaniiu k Simonu Ushakovu)," *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* (hereafter, *TODRL*), 28 (1974): 271-88. See also the remarks of Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery*, 82-4.

³⁷ A.V. Sirenov, "Dokumenty po istorii knizhnogo dela v Oruzheinoi palate XVII v. (iz neopublikovannykh materialov A. I. Uspenskogo)," in *Istoriografiia, istochnikovedeniie, istoriia Rossii X-XX vv. Sbornik statei v chest' Sergeia*

western engraved Bible was required for the official Kremlin curriculum for students of painting is eloquent evidence of its status.

Striking though such references to imported illustrations may be, the handwritten marginalia and annotations *in* the albums themselves are far more numerous, subtle and diverse. As responses to the imported pictures, these are about as direct as one can get.

The first level of annotations are the captions. Some of the imported engravings provided no explanation other than the Biblical reference, and perhaps a very brief label. Some had integral descriptions, as often as not in verse. On copies of the albums that ended up in Russia it is common to find prose or verse captions added in manuscript in the lower margins. Some are free-standing explanations where none is present in the original. Others are independent texts *despite* the presence of a caption in the original. Thus, for example, the caption in Piscator for the illustration of Abigail bearing gifts to assuage the anger of David³⁸ is in the form of an elegaic couplet with references to “gifts of Ceres and Bacchus” (i.e. bread and wine); in one of the sets of Russian marginalia a translator/editor provided a prosaic explanation of the episode, without the classicising allusions.³⁹ Others rendered a Latin original into Slavonic prose or verse. And the process of cultural appropriation went further: some of these sets of captions, whether in verse or in prose, were then separated from the source illustrations and Latin texts which generated them. They were copied out as separate, free-standing, quite extensive cycles or compositions. Verse cycles were composed by leading literati. In 1679 Mardarii Khonykov wrote verse captions – some based on translations from the Latin, others newly invented – to Piscator’s Bible. He added a verse address to the reader, with an acrostic of his own name.⁴⁰ A

Nikolaevicha Kistereva (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskikh kul’tur, 2008), 127-58 (esp. document no. 50, pp. 154-5).

³⁸ I Samuel 25 (= I Kings 25 in the Septuagint).

³⁹ *Theatrum biblicum*, MS foliation, 124. The engraved Latin caption reads: *Davidi, Abigail cognoscens probra mariti, // Et Bacchi, et Cereris, mittere dona parat*. In the handwritten Slavonic this becomes *Avigel na goru voskhodiashchi dary s soboiu nosit, imi zhe by mogla Davida sebe primiriti*.

⁴⁰ O.A. Belobrova, “Virshi Mardarii Khonykova k graviuram Biblii Piskatora,” *TODRL*, 46 (1993): 334-435.

cycle of verse captions to the engravings of Matthaeus Merian is attributed to Simeon Polotskii.⁴¹ Both cycles broke free of the engravings which prompted them, and were copied in manuscripts simply as continuous verse texts. In this form they ceased to be verbal embellishments to the printed pictorial cycle. They became works of verbal display in their own right, part of the history of Russian *belles lettres*. Indeed, even prose captions could migrate beyond their immediate contexts. A manuscript miscellany from the late seventeenth century includes the texts of three separate sets of mainly prose renditions of Latin captions to biblical engravings, including two different sets of captions to the engravings issued by Piscator.⁴²

It should be stressed that the composition of prose and verse captions was by no means a characteristically Russian pursuit. On the contrary: in this, too, the Muscovite authors were assimilating West European practice of the day (or of yesterday). Piscator's engravings generally included brief Latin captions in prose or verse, but a more extreme specimen of the fashion is the suite of *Icones biblicae* issued in Amsterdam in 1659 by Danckert Danckerts. The pictures are mostly attributed to Merian, but here the balance of picture and text is unusual. The illustrations take up half of each page, while the other half, for each of the 248 pictures, consists of quatrains in Latin, French, German, English and Dutch, as well as prose explanations in Dutch.⁴³ This is just one indication of the international market

⁴¹ O. A. Belobrova, "Drevnerusskie virshi k graviuram Mattiasa Meriana," *TODRL*, 44 (1990): 443-479; Belobrova, "Simeon Polotskii – avtor virsh k graviuram Biblii Mattiasa Meriana," *TODRL*, 49 (1996): 526-28. For the text in context see Anthony Hippisley and Lydia L. Sazonova, eds., *Simeon Polockij. Vertograd mnogocvetnyi*, 3 (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2000), 452-510.

⁴² In general on the inscriptions see O. A. Belobrova, "O drevnerusskikh podpisiakh k nekotorym niderlandskim tsel'nogravirovannym izdaniiam XVII v.," *TODRL*, 43 (1990): 70-8. The manuscript is BAN, Arkh. D. 409, fols. 333-410v: see O. A. Belobrova, "Bibliia Piskatora v sobranii Biblioteki Akademii nauk SSSP," in *Materialy i soobshcheniia po fondam otdela rukopisnoi i redkoi knigi*. 1985, ed. M. V. Kukushkina (Leningrad: Nauka, 1987), 184-216 (including publication of the first of the two sets of Piscator captions, pp. 197-216).

⁴³ The albums were issued in a variety of formats: with text and image together on a page, or with texts and images on facing pages. For the former see the copy in the

for such publications in Western Europe. Polyglot captions were not rare, polyglot title pages were common.⁴⁴

These general captions were not the only marginalia. The albums were used, studied, puzzled over. A page may well contain different types of annotation in several hands, added over several decades. For example, a reader might choose to annotate the images by adding a manuscript key to the identification of figures, based on letters of the Latin alphabet.⁴⁵ Here, too, the form of annotation is not invented locally but is analogous to (though not necessarily copied directly from) printed keys which can be found in some of the albums themselves, such as the engravings of Hieronymus Wierix.

The range of correlations between text and caption can be seen by comparing various treatments of images of the the scene generally known as the Old Testament Trinity. In *Genesis* (XVIII.1-15) Abraham receives the three travelers, who tell him that Sarah will give birth. Sarah, listening from the entrance to Abraham's tent, laughs inwardly at their words. Merian represents the guests in the guise of visibly weary humans, Piscator as majestic angels. In their narrative and locational specificity both seem manifestly at odds with Muscovite Old Testament Trinity compositions starting with Rublev, yet Russian readers were attentive to both. Danckerts's polyglot edition of 1659 uses Merian's image – or rather, a mirror reversal of Merian's image - with printed captions in Dutch prose and with verse quatrains in five languages (fig. 3). Fig. 4 shows the image from an album of Merian's engravings, with a brief manuscript Russian prose caption. In fig. 5 the version of the scene from the 1674 edition of Piscator's Bible is accompanied by a Russian manuscript caption in the

British Library, shelfmark 3129.h.8; for the latter see the copy in the Folger Library, available through Early English Books Online:

http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=V170899&discovery_service=primo

⁴⁴ See e.g. G.E. Bentley, jr., "Images of the Word: Separately Published English Bible Illustrations 1539–1830," *Studies in Bibliography*, 47 (1994): 103–28; esp. Plate 4.

Note that the title page of Danckerts's 1659 edition of Merian gives the title in five languages: *Icones biblicae*, *Biblische Figuren*, *Figures de la Bible*, *Figgers of the Bible*, and *Bybel Printen*.

⁴⁵ E. g. *Theatrum biblicum*, MS fols. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 etc.

form of a dodekasyllabic verse couplet.⁴⁶ In fig. 6 the same picture from a different copy of Piscator's Bible is surrounded by multiple Russian handwritten captions, paraphrases and index keys. The text in the lower margin of this copy of Piscator's Bible follows one of the prose renditions of the Latin captions that are also found in separate manuscripts, and the identical text (with minor variants) is also the source of the Russian caption added to the image from Merian's Bible shown in fig. 4.⁴⁷

The most remarkable, idiosyncratic and revealing set of marginalia is that found in a copy of Piscator which belonged to Iosif, archimandrite of the Monastery of John the Baptist at Krasnaia Sloboda in Penza province. Iosif's Piscator is peculiarly resonant in a number of ways. One form of resonance relates to its provenance. Before becoming archimandrite in Krasnaia Sloboda, Iosif had been, from 1691 to 1699, abbot of the Monastery of the Savior in Iaroslavl'.⁴⁸ It is plausible, by analogy with another of the books in his collection, that Iosif acquired the Piscator in Iaroslavl' in the 1690s. It would be nice to imagine that this surviving copy of the Dutch engravings may have played its part in the cultural appropriations reflected in the Iaroslavl' frescoes. But that is speculation. Less speculative is the other form of resonance, which is generated by what Iosif himself wrote in the margins of the book.

Iosif's approach to marginalia is, as far as I am aware, unique. Rather than record his purchase, ownership, or donation in a brief inscription distributed across the first few leaves, as was normal in seventeenth-century Muscovy, Iosif's habit was to write a continuous inscription across the lower margins of every leaf in the book; indeed, on every side of every leaf. Two of his books survive thus inscribed. Both inscriptions date from 1706. One of the books, as it happens, was a *khronograf*, a

⁴⁶ Note that this Russian couplet alters the sense of the Latin caption by implying that Sarah's laughter signified the moment of conception: *smekhom vo chreve zachinaet* – she conceives in her womb through laughter: State Hermitage, inv. U.250/1-432, fol. 27.

⁴⁷ See BAN Arkh. D. 109, fol. 403: from the second (and unpublished) set of Piscator captions in this manuscript. The translations in this version are distinguished by their word-for-word literalism.

⁴⁸ O.A. Belobrova, "Iosif," in *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi*, 3 (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1993), 2: 105-7.

compilation of world history: 634 leaves, or 1268 pages, with Iosif's inscriptions throughout.⁴⁹ The other is Iosif's copy of Piscator's Bible.⁵⁰ To call these "marginal inscriptions" is barely adequate to the scale. They are substantial compositions. Generically they are hard to characterize. They are somewhat improvised, often repetitive, occasionally formal, linguistically in places almost chatty. Iosif includes, for example, an inventory of the monastery's valuable possessions, a record of his own donations, and an account of a theft in 1702. One of their functions was security: to make sure that every page bore the marks of the books' rightful ownership and location. Iosif repeatedly states that he has given the books not just to the monastery but specifically to its library, and that the books are on no account to be removed from there. He directs his strongest invective against the practice of lending books to laymen, who mistreat them to the point of destruction,⁵¹ and then don't give them back. The most dire divine vengeance will be inflicted upon anyone who removes the books from the monastery.

So, Iosif's copy of the Piscator engravings was to be kept in the monastery's library. Iosif helpfully describes the room, since part of his epic of marginalia in the *khronograf* consists of a tour of the monastery: the library is not a shelf-lined room, but a place with four iron-clad trunks filled with books, and another trunk with the monastery's administrative archive of documents.⁵² The album of biblical engravings was to be kept safe in its trunk. But what were the monks supposed to do with it? The

⁴⁹ T.N. Protas'eva, "Zapis' v khronografe XVII v.," in *Novoe o proshlom nashei strany. Pamiati akademika M.N. Tikhomirova* (Moscow: Nauka, 1967), 320-28.

⁵⁰ A.G. Sakovich, "Neizvestnyi ekzempiar Biblii Piskatora iz Predtecheva monastyria Krasnoi Slobody Temnikovskogo uezda Riazanskoi mitropolii," in *Pamiatniki kul'tury. Novye otkrytiia. Pis'mennost'. Iskusstvo. Arkheologiia. Ezhegodnik 1990* (Moscow: Krug, 1992), 18-27; A.V. Gamlitskii, "K voprosu o drevnerusskom chitatele sviashchennykh knig (Bibliia Piskatora. Ekzempiar GMII i RGB)," in *Bibliia v kul'ture i iskusstve. Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii "Vipperovskie chteniia – 1995". Vyp. 28*, ed. I. E. Danilova (Moscow: GMII, 1996), 137-151.

⁵¹ E.g., among many repetitions: *V mirskie domy knigi davat' ne dlia chego... Se est' zloe knigam ubiistvo'*, in Sakovich, "Neizvestnyi ekzempiar," 20.

⁵² Protas'eva, "Zapis' v khronografe," 326-7.

answer to this question can be considered in the final section of the present survey, on the “generic” responses.

Almost all the responses discussed above are examples of what one might call “reverse technology transfer”: that is, when an imported product of print culture was assimilated into Muscovite non-print cultures, whether of painting or of manuscripts. In some instances the assimilation of print to manuscript resulted in the creation of hybrids, such as a seventeenth-century manuscript of a *khronograf* which was interleaved with nearly four hundred printed illustrations taken from the 1643 edition of Piscator’s Bible.⁵³ Thus far, the “print to print” specimens have been either fragmentary, like the figure of Joseph in Karion Istomin’s primer, or limited to a few individual images, such as those copied by Vasilii Andreev. What happens if we step away from individual images and fragments and consider the “Piscatorial” genre as such, the genre – so popular in Western Europe – of suites or albums of Biblical engravings?

The fullest East Slav attempt at an equivalent printed pictorial cycle was not Muscovite. Between 1645 and 1649 the monk Il’ia, at the Caves monastery in Kyiv, produced a substantial set of woodcuts for a Bible album comparable in scale to the Western versions. With allowances for the “translation” from copper engraving to woodcut, the illustrations were clearly modeled on one of the West European printed suites.⁵⁴ The history of publication and distribution is unknown. It has been surmised that, although Il’ia may well have prepared blocks for a complete Bible, he never actually printed and published the pictures.⁵⁵ The few surviving copies of Il’ia’s cycle are printed on paper dated close to the end of the seventeenth century, and are composite cycles in which Il’ia’s 132 Old Testament scenes were combined with other mid-century Ukrainian engravings of New Testament scenes.⁵⁶

No Muscovite equivalent appeared until significantly later. Some relatively small-scale cycles were produced. Leontii Bunin used imported prints quite

⁵³ Belobrova, “O bibliiakh s graviurami,” 313-21.

⁵⁴ For a list of the plates see D.A. Rovinskii, *Podrobnyi slovar’ russkikh graverov XVI-XIX vv.* (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia nauk, 1895), cols. 285-89.

⁵⁵ S. A. Klepikov, “Russkie gravirovannye knigi XVII-XVIII vekov,” in *Kniga. Issledovaniia i materialy*, 9 (1964): 151-2.

⁵⁶ Rovinskii, *Podrobnyi slovar’*, cols. 543-5.

extensively, as, for example, in his cycle of twelve Apostles (copied from engravings by Hedrik Goltzius which were incorporated into Piscator editions). But complete biblical albums are another matter. There were none. Indeed, the suite of illustrations which is sometimes described as Russia's first pictorial Bible, executed between 1692 and 1696 by Vasilii Koren, consists of just of thirty six woodcuts with scenes from Genesis and Revelations.⁵⁷ The first substantial local generic equivalent was produced by Dmitrii Pastukhov and Grigorii Tepchegorskii, probably around 1720, although the earliest surviving sheets are from a re-issue of 1732-4. Pastukhov and Tepchegorskii followed Merian, while adding Simeon Polotskii's Russian verse captions on each plate⁵⁸ – which also means that this set of engravings could be said to contain the first printed edition Simeon Polotskii's biblical cycle of verses.

Why, when the biblical albums seeped into so many areas of Russian cultural production, was there no Muscovite imitation of the genre itself, no substantial Muscovite cycle of printed biblical illustrations?

One plain and plausible answer might be that complete local cycles were unnecessary, since the imported albums themselves already met the need. Perhaps. But there is another dimension to the question, or to a possible answer. The difference in the production of Biblical illustrations may in part be related to the differences in the presence and status of the Bible itself. To put it crudely: in the relevant parts of Western Europe the large-scale engraved cycles provided illustrations to a book that had been central to print culture since Gutenberg. The *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (ISTC) lists some fifty editions of the Latin Bible before 1500, plus further printings in German, French, Italian and Czech.⁵⁹ The Bible was already the most widely printed single book, even before its production and dissemination were strongly boosted by the Reformation and the proliferation of vernacular Bibles. It is

⁵⁷ A.G. Sakovich, ed., *Narodnaia gravirovannaia kniga Vasiliia Korenia 1692-1696; and Bibliia Vasiliia Korenia 1692-1696 iz gosudarstvennoi Publichnoi biblioteki im. M. E. Saltykova-Shchedrina v Leningrade* [V 4.2], 2 vols. (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1983). The first volume is a study, the second a facsimile.

⁵⁸ Klepikov, "Russkie gravirovannye knigi," 164-66. For full publication of these extracts see D.A. Rovinskii, *Russkie narodnye kartinki*, 5 vols. (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk, 1881), 3: 259-68 (no. 811).

⁵⁹ <http://istc.bl.uk/search/search.html>

probably no coincidence that the first edition of Piscator's set of plates appeared in 1639, two years after the publication of the Dutch State Bible (the first translation of the Bible into Dutch direct from Hebrew and Greek). In Muscovy, by extreme contrast, the imported albums illustrated a book which barely existed as such. It is ironic that, although the earliest significant Russian use of printed books was for the compilation of a complete Bible (Gennadii's manuscript version of 1499), complete printed Bibles were not produced regularly in Russia until the second half of the 18th century. The sole exception, throughout the intervening two-and-a-half centuries, was the Moscow edition of 1663, which was issued in run of 2400 copies and never reprinted.⁶⁰ One could argue that there was no equivalent genre of full Biblical illustrations because there was no equivalent genre of full Biblical texts. Thus, although the imported albums were translated into a broad range of Muscovite forms and contexts, a "straight" translation into an equivalent generic form and function was difficult, if not impossible.

Nevertheless there is some evidence of an *awareness*, in Russia, of what some of the equivalent functions might be. Or rather, of what one of the equivalent functions might be. In Western Europe suites of Biblical illustrations were not, of course, mono-functional in their relations to the printed text of the Bible. For example, they could serve as pictorial models, as they did in Russia. They were a means of disseminating images from the tradition of religious painting. They could serve as reminders of, or substitutes for, the printed text in its absence, or for people who could not read it. Or they might be used alongside the physical text, whether in parallel volumes or – in particular – bound together with and interleaved with the printed text so as to form so-called "extra-illustrated" editions.

Russian evidence for the use of the suites of illustrations alongside full printed texts is not entirely absent. The *khronograf* interleaved with Piscator's engravings represents, in a sense, a generically equivalent use, albeit alongside a manuscript text. More intriguing, however, are the marginalia in the copy of Piscator which Iosif donated to the monastic library in Krasnaia Sloboda. We recall that Iosif insisted that the volume be kept securely in the monastery's library. The curious feature, for

⁶⁰ On the 1663 Bible as both innovative and anomalous see Simon Franklin, "Printing Moscow: Significances of the Frontispiece to the 1663 Bible," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 88 (2010): 73-95.

present purposes, it that Iosif also donated a *printed* Bible, a “reading” (*chet’ii*) copy; and he expected the monks to look at the two together.⁶¹ This “reading” Bible must have been either an imported copy of the Ostroh version or the 1663 Moscow edition. The noteworthy point is that Iosif’s inscription is the *only* source which indicates this type of Russian usage of the imported engravings, analogous to one of their West European uses – as pictures alongside a full printed text.

This extensive excursus brings us back, therefore, to Ivan Fedorov and to Moscow’s non-Gutenbergian moment, to the asymmetries of Fedorov’s time and of Russian encounters with print both before and after his time. Products of West European print culture were appropriated deeply and diversely into areas of culture where Muscovite print culture either did not yet exist or to which it did not yet extend. This was not just a delay in embarking on a similar journey. It reflects a different structure of engagement with the technologies of writing and print, a different ecology of media, a distinctive set of cultural filters in the translation of print to Russia.

⁶¹ *Byt’ knige sei v knigokhranitel’noi v pol’zu bo obiteli chtushchim i sluzhashchim obshcha so chet’eiu Bibliieiu*: cited in Sakovich, “Neizvestnyi ekzempiar,” 19.