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*A 17th-Century Russian Medical Handbook: Some
Linguistic Observations*

Siedemnastowieczny staroruski traktat medyczny. Kilka uwag
lingwistycznych

In 1935 Andrzej Glaber of Kobylin published his Polish version of a Latin treatise ascribed to Aristotle and other sages on questions of anatomy, diet, physiology and physiognomy under the title: *Problemata aristotelis, gadki z pisma wielkiego filozofa Aristotela i też inszych mędrców tak przyrodzonej, jak i lekarskiej nauki...*¹ In the late seventeenth century a Russian translation of Glaber's text was made, entitled: *Problemata, sireč gadanija ili sovo-prošenija različnyje ot knigi velikogo filozofa Aristotelja i inych mudrych, jakože jestestvennyje, takoże i vračevskije chitrosti...*² The following observations are based on a reading of this source as extant in ms. f. 205/162 of the Lenin Library, Moscow.³

The language of the source is Russian Church Slavonic. The text is lucid, the syntax orderly, the vocabulary basically Church Slavonic, with an admixture of Polish and Latin elements, several of ultimate Greek, and

¹ See I. Chrzanowski, *Historia literatury niepodległej Polski (965–1795)*, Warszawa 1971, p. 100–101.

² I. U. Budovnic, *Slovar' russkoj, ukraińskiej, belorusskoj pis'mennosti i literatury do XVIII veka*, Moskva 1962, p. 272.

³ References to this manuscript will be by folio number only. Quotation marks are used for close transliteration of the original text; italics, where the exact spelling is not necessarily preserved. Initial Cyrillic is transliterated as *je-*, although its phonetic value in loanwords may have been *e-*, e.g. *jepatika*.

one of apparent Arabic derivation. Phonetic and morphological adaptation helps to soften the impact of the unfamiliar.

The translator or copyist seems to have known the Greek language. At least he was acquainted with the Church Slavonic orthographic tradition based on the phonetic value of certain letters in Byzantine Greek. Hence his largely, but not entirely successful reconstructions of forms corresponding to Polish-Latin *problemata* and *biblioteka*. Here fricative *v* and *f* (orthographically represented by Greek theta) are substituted for *b* and *t* of the Western tradition, but the vowel *e* remains as the Latin and Polish reflex of Greek eta (η), and the Byzantine equivalent is not restored: *provmemata* (f. 3), *viuiofeku*, acc. sing. (f. 6). The translator restores the Greek fricative *ch* in some cases where 16th-century Polish favoured a plosive: *cholera*, *cholerik* for Polish *kolera*, *koleryk*.

As an example of the style of the translation we could take the passage on baldness, with its accompanying proverb in a crisp Polish and an expanded Church Slavonic version:

"[...] łysina ukazuje kompleksyję, to jest złożenie przyrodzenia z kolery. A kolerycy z przyrodzenia swego chytry bywają, według dawnej przypowieści: strzeż się zawsze łysiego, więcej lisowatego, nad wszystkie szepietliwego; [...]" (Gadki 15)

"[...] plěšivstvo pokazujet kompleksiju, sirě(č) složenije jestestva iz cholery; cholericy že obšče po jestestvu svojemu chitry byvajut po drevnej pripověsti:

Ašče bl[a]go sam sebe oboščeši stajati

o(t) plěšivago tščisja sebe sochranjati.

Prače že vlasly lisu podobny imušča.

prezlějša že jazyka šepetliva sušča." (f. 14 v.)⁴

Here we observe a readiness to accept Latin elements (*kompleksiju*), together with their Polish equivalents, appropriately modified by the substitution of Church Slavonic morphemes (*složenije*), the attempt to restore original features of words of Greek derivation (*cholery*, *cholericy*, with initial *ch*), and literary convention, which, partly for morphological reasons but chiefly because of the laboured phraseology, could not accommodate the proverb in a laconic frame but expanded the first part from seven to twenty six and the second from fifteen to twenty-five syllables.

⁴ A rough English translation of the proverb might read: (from the Polish) Have no dealings with the bald, (even less with the red-haired), and most of all beware the lisper (from the Church Slavonic). If for yourself you yearn attainment of prosperity, (be sure to shun bald men with the utmost severity); and even more avoid those whose locks a fox recall (and like the plague evade the lisper's whisper most of all).

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In general the translation exhibits a readiness to accent the innovatory Graeco-Latin terminology coupled with the resources to form calques of Polish neologisms, while Church Slavonic, as the backbone of seventeenth-century literary Russian, serves to preserve the language from saturation by foreign elements.

Common Slavonic supplied and adequate vocabulary for the visible and the main internal parts of the body.⁵ Where phonological divergence has occurred between Church Slavonic and East Slavonic the former is preferred: *brada*, *vlasy*, *glava*, *črěvo*, and in other semantic sectors: *drěvo*. *Mleko* (f. 55) spelt with *e*, not *jat*⁷, could be regarded as an orthographic Polonism, at least; the pleophonic variant is used of male fish roe: "moloka ispuskajut" (f. 115 v.), translating Polish "mlech wypuszczają" (Gadki 88). For reasons of derivational clarity *molotija* (f. 34) is preferred to Church Slavonic *mlětija*.

The translator is happy to retain information about the meaning and derivation of the innovative Graeco-Latin terminology. Oesophagus, we are told, means, 'swallower': "jelli(n)ski isofagus, jako pogłoščajuščaja" (f. 46), "po grecku zową Isophagus, jakoby połykający" (Gadki 37). The vertebrae are known in Latin as *spondilia* and the Poles call them *pacierze*: "v chre(b)té jest' množestvo sostavov, jaže latinski gl[agol] jutsja ipondilia [*sic!*]; poljacy že patery naricaju(t)" (f. 59 v.), "w grzbiecie jest wiele stawów, które po łacinie zową Spondilia, Polacy paciermi zowią: (Gadki 46).

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The molars are so-called from a Latin verb meaning 'to grind': "moljates [*sic!*] ot molotija, polski že trenovyja o(t) trenija, ili sotrenija" (f. 34), "po łacinie ... molares od melcia, po polsku trzonowe od trzenia albo ścierania" (Gadki 28). For the chambers of the brain the existing Greek loanword *komora* 'vault' is used (f. 59 v.) and the Polish example of a diminutive form, *komórka* (Gadki 46), is not followed; the Greek name of one of these chambers is given and explained: "komora mózgu, jaže fantazia gl[agol]etsja, sirěč' smyšlenije divny(ch) veščej" (f. 59 v.), "komórka ... którą fantyzyą zową, to jest zmyślanie dziwnych rzeczy" (Gadki 46). The cornea, pupil and retina closely follow their Polish names: *rogovaja* (*pleva*), *jagodica*, *paučina* (f. 19–19 v.) for Pol. *rogowa* (*błonka*), *jagodowa*, *pajęczyna* (Gadki 18).

⁵ For further discussion of the question see: H. Lemming, "Polish and Polish-Latin medical terms in pre-petrine Russian", *Slavonic and East European Review*, London, XLII (1963), pp. 89–109.

The four cardinal humours, whose relative proportions in mediaeval physiology determine the temperament of the individual, exhibit in the Church Slavonic text the same mixture of native and borrowed words as in Polish and, incidentally, English; blood is designated by a native word, the other three by terms of Greek origin: "krov' cholera, flegma, meljancholia, jaze gl[agol]etsja černaja cholera" (f. 62 v. -63), translating Polish *krew*, *kolera*, *flegma*, *melankolia*, *którą też zową czarną kolerą* (Gadki 49), 'blood, choler (or bile), phlegm, melancholy, which they also call black bile'. The human characters dominated or determined by the various humours have names based on Greek adjectives which originally had desinential stress. The text, however, favours root stress of the Latin tradition: *choléricy*, *flegmáticy*, *meljanchólicy* (f. 135). The derived adjective *meljancholičeskije* (f. 8 v.) is of the established and still popular Church Slavonic type, with suffix *-ičesk-* preferred to *-iczn-* of Polish *melankoliczny*.

Biological terms of uncommon occurrence in 17th-century Russian sources include: *pory* (f. 10), Pol. *pory* 'pores'; *mammach* loc. pl. (f. 55), 'woman's breasts', *puls* (f. 66), 'pulse'. The names of the chief veins are given Slavonic glosses: *cefalika* — *glavnaja* (*žila*); *jepatika* — *utrobnaja*; *pulmatika* — *pljučnaja*; *zafena* — *denna*; *mediana* — *srednjaja* (f. 69); *cephalica* — *glówna*; *epatica* — *wątrobna*, *pulmatica* — *plúcna*; *zaphena* — *denna*; *mediana* — *szrednia* (Gadki 53). The scientific terms are taken from Polish without alteration; there is no effort to restore pure Greek forms by substituting *ke-* for *ce-* in *cefalika* or *i* for *e* in *jepatika* (Gk. *hēpatikē*; the hybrid form *pulmatica*, with Latin root and Greek suffix, and the Arabism *zaphena* are accepted *it face value*. Among the glosses Polish influence can be seen in *denna* with *e* from a back jer which would have given *o* in East Slavonic, if indeed as is generally accepted the adjective derives from **dəno*; in fact "žila denna" for Pol. "żyła denna" suggests transliteration rather than translation, and this would not be surprising since the Arabism (possibly of ultimate Greek derivation) would not have helped to elucidate the Polish phrase.⁶ On the other hand *utrobnaja*, referring explicitly to the liver, appears to be a semantic calque of Pol. *wątroba*. Sreznevskij's materials supply no evidence for this sense of Old Russian *utroba*, which seems to refer to other internal organs.

⁶ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'saphena' specifically rejects derivation from Greek *saphēnēs*, pointing out that this adjective refers only to mental clarity; however, it seems not impossible that Arabic *ṣāfin* 'saphena vein' could have undergone the necessary semantic development after borrowing. This is a matter for further investigation by an orientalist. Voicing of initial *s-* in *zafena* may have been due to German influence, which can be seen also in the loanwords *kaldun* 'cow's stomach' (f. 48), *ljager* (mis-spelt *ljaver*) 'sediment' (f. 107 v.), *nyrki* 'kidneys' (f. 77 v.), *jarmuž* 'cooked vegetables' (f. 125 v.).

In the description of physical attributes two Latin abstract nouns are used. In answer to the question: "česo radi ramena su(t) krugly", 'why are arms round', the reply is given: "ibo kruglaja figura jest' udobnëjšaja ko obraščeniju i dviženiju" (f. 47 v.), 'for their round shape is more convenient for turning and movement'. The second is *proporcja* defined as "dostojnoje sostojanije členov" (f. 81), 'the proper constitution of the members'. A third abstract noun of Latin derivation is *kompleksia* 'temperament', which occurs a number of times.

The names of diseases are met usually in the discussion of the body part affected. Several retain their Graeco-Latin form, with Polish explanations rendered into Church Slavonic. Apoplexy occurs twice with differing definitions: *zapomnënije* 'amnesia' (f. 39) and *vnezapnaja smert'* 'sudden death' (f. 109); in other seventeenth-century medical sources it is defined as *razlabenije* 'enfeeblement' (Zmejev ms 3) or *skoraja smert'* 'swift death' (Zmejev ms 9). Two phonetic features show the Polish-Latin transmission of the form *apopleksia*: root stress and the reflex of Greek eta. Arthritis is denoted by a name derived from the Greek adjective *artheritikos* 'of the joints': *artetika* (f. 124 v.), *artetika* (Gadki 94), a form which has apparently arisen through the loss by dissimilation of the second *r* of *arthretica*, attested in the Latin-Polish dictionary of Bartłomiej of Bydgoszcz, 1521 (SXVI I 218). Syncope is explained by a more familiar term of Greek origin: "sinkopis s[e]r(d)ca, jako obšče vsi naricaju(t), kordiaka, tjažest' i udušenje s[e]r(d)[e]čnoje" (f. 66), "sincopis serca, to jest (jako pospolicie zową) kordyaka, tcica i duszność serdeczna" (Gadki 52); the retention of the Latin inflection of the accusative singular in "sinkopim" (f. 66), "sincopim" (Gadki 51) reflects the relative infamiliarity of the term. We note that the translator retains the Polish-Latin form *kord-* in *kordiaka* and does not restore the original Greek vocalism of *kard-*.

Sixteenth-century Polish knew six synonyms for epilepsy, according to SXVI VI 556. Of these two appear in the text: *jepilepsia* (f. 126 v.), "skorb ... svjatago Vale(n)tija" (f. 107 v.) for *epilepsia* (Gadki 96), "niemoc ... świętego Walentego" (Gadki 81). Various types of gout bear the names of the joints affected: "v bedrach ... stiatika, ... v kolënach genogra, v golenjach pedogra, v rukach chirogra" (f. 124), "przy biodrach ... sciatika, gdy w kolanach tedy genogra, w głożniech podogra, w ręku — chirogra" (Gadki 94). Transliteration of Polish *ci* by *ti*, normally justified in words of Slavonic derivation, is etymologically erroneous in the Latin loanword *sciatica*, itself a deformation of *ischiatrica*. Other clinical terms noted include *inkubus* (f. 39), *paraliż* 'paralysis' (f. 39 v.), *ryma* 'rheum' (f. 43), *febra* 'fever' (f. 73), *fłjuks* 'flux' (f. 161) of Greek or Latin deriva-

tion, and *dna nožnaja* 'podagra' (f. 123 v.) and *nežit* 'catarrh' (f. 143) from Polish.

Calques encountered in the translation fall into the two categories of morphological neologism and semantic adaptation of existing words. The former are identifiable within the limits of lexico-graphical resources and the researcher's own reading; the latter category often remains dubious, since the germ of the semantic development may be latent in earlier senses of a word. The phrase "nužnoje izgl[agol]anije sloves" (f. 40) for "trudne wymawianie słów" (Gadki 32) clearly refers to difficulty in articulation. The citations given by Sreznevskij II 1051 and supplement 124 attest the verb *izlagolati* only in the earlier senses of 'to utter; to express'. Therefore there are grounds for regarding *izglagolanije* in our text as a semantic calque. Polish *herbarz* 'herbal' is rendered by two words, which can both be regarded as calques: *travnik* (f. 113), a term already in use, and *zelejniki* (f. 132 v.), which appears to be an innovation in this benign sense, having been used earlier in a list of books banned by the church (Sreznevskij I 969). Other examples are *orēchi italijskija* (f. 150) for *orzechy włoskie* (Gadki 113) 'walnuts' and the unusual adjective *objatni* (f. 51) for *obojętni* (Gadki 40) 'ambidextrous'.

Since the calque is an attractive mode for the introduction of new words and new concepts, which it helps to explain and assimilate, it plays a significant role in the translation, especially of scientific works demanding a new terminology. As the present text has passed from Greek through Latin and Polish to Church Slavonic, it contains accretions, which have been brought in at various stages. A stratographical study of this material would reveal some interesting relationships and could throw light on the linguistic knowledge and competence of the translator. Thus his rendering of Polish *herbarz* 'herbal' as *travnik* or *zelejniki* demands a knowledge of the derivation of Latin *herbarius* and the equation, *herba* = *trawa* or *zel'je*. On the other hand he does not slavishly follow the practice. For example *ignis persicus* 'Persian fire' is presented in the Polish text as a Latinism equivalent to the vernacular *franka*: "[niemoc], którą łacinnicy *ignis persicus*, a lud poospolity franką zowie albo łamaniem" (Gadki 94). Both terms show a readiness to impute misfortune to foreign agency. However, the Church Slavonic version drops the Latinism with its Persian reference: "[bolēzn'], juže latini ogn' adskij naricajut" (f. 124 v.). He uses a calque of Polish *ogień piekielny*, a term of frequent occurrence in sixteenth-century sources other than Gadki (see SVI XXI 72). The translator may have been familiar with the term in other medical sources, e.g. "ignis persykus — pekel'nyj ogon", Zmejev ms 9.

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STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł traktuje o języku i leksyce XVII-wiecznego staroruskiego przekładu XVI-wiecznej polskiej wersji traktatu o anatomii i fizjologii, wydanej w r. 1535 przez Andrzeja Glabera z Kobylina. Język zabytku ma cechy fonetyczne i morfologiczne cerkiewno-słowiańskie: *broda, vlasy, glava* itd. Tłumacz chętnie adoptuje terminy greckiego, łacińskiego i polskiego pochodzenia, występujące w oryginale: *cholera, cholerki, flegma, flegmatik, meljancholija, melancholik, paraliż, pory; febra, figura, fljuksus, inkobus, proporcija, puls; nežit, pateri, žila denna*. Notuje się kalki morfologiczne: *ovjatni* (obojętni, to jest 'oburęczni'), *travnik* (herbarz); oraz semantyczne: *izglagolati* (wymawiać)

