The Civil Orthography and Literacy During Peter the Great's Reign: What Really Changed?

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Аннотация: *Гражданский шрифт и грамотность при Петре Великом: что на самом деле изменилось?* В 1708 году, как известно, появился новый так называемый «гражданский шрифт», и Петр I сразу приказал отдать ему предпочтение во всех публикациях, кроме литургических изданий. В статье анализируются конкретные педагогические последствия, главным образом в течение первых четырех десятилетий XVIII века, а именно: обучение грамотности (тексты, новые vs. традиционные системы преподавания), опыт вновь созданных школ, и т.д.; делается вывод, что произошедшие изменения оказались незначительными.

Ключевые слова: абецедарий, гражданский шрифт, цифирные школы, епархиальные школы, Феофан Прокопович, грамматический метод, гражданственность, Петр I, букварь

1. Introduction

This essay endeavors to interweave the histories of orthographies, schools, schooling, and literacy during the Petrine era into a single narrative. It begins with a familiar trope, the master narrative of *renovatio*, the tectonic fault line that broke apart ancient Russia and ushered in an aggressively secularizing modernity. Peter the Great initiated (or at the very least vastly accelerated) a dynamic multi-dimensional modernization of language, education, and culture more generally, the "Petrine revolution in Russian Culture" as James Cracraft put it (Cracraft 2004, see in particular, "Lexical Proliferation" and "Dictionaries and Grammars,", 276–92). Its effect was defining, according to this scenario, setting Russian culture, especially literate and learned culture, toward a more secular, lay-centered path that within a few short decades transformed Russia's noble serving men into educated, beardless, wig-adorned, salon-attending devotees of the world of letters.

There are counter narratives, of course, and in recent years secularization as master narrative has been subject to some searching revisionism, both for its teleology and for minimizing the continued vitality of religious discourses. Apropos education, to give just one example, Max Okenfuss (Okenfuss 1985, 321–44) described what he saw as the unintended consequences of introducing formal structures of education into early modern Russia. Its notable achievements notwithstanding, Okenfuss suggested, the creation of formal and quite exclusive

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schools, academies, and seminaries had a divisive impact on Russian society, in effect making formal education a marker for separating out the sons of nobles and other elites from the population overall so as to create de facto what he termed "social castes". Still, the episteme of Petrine modernization remains largely intact.

The new orthography, the so-called "civil alphabet" (гражданский шрифт), came into existence in 1707 with the expectation that it would quickly supplant the existing orthography (кириллица) for most non-liturgical publications, thereby becoming the alphabet of choice for all things secular. This is more-or-less what happened, a transition that made the new alphabet a centerpiece in the Russian narrative of cultural modernization, the reformed alphabet, much like the revised calendar and introduction of arabic numerals a few years earlier, contributed to bringing core elements of Russian culture into line with Europe in general, and paved the way for a slow but steady increase in literacy, reading, and secularity. It has received a great deal of scholarly attention over the generations, in particular the prolific works of the Soviet scholar A. G. Shitsgal (e.g., Шицгал 1958; 1965).

Much of the literature has focused on the thinking behind the reform, its penetration into the publicly visible world of print, the "graphosphere" in Simon Franklin's apt characterization[1] (Franklin 2019, 276–92), the semiotic shift that the new alphabet constituted for Russian letters and its long-term role in reshaping worldviews of educated Russia. Thus, in a 1986 article, *Peter I's Alphabetic Reform as A Semiotic Transformation*, the late Viktor Zhivov discerningly characterized the creation of the reformed alphabet as a basic aspect of Peter's wide-ranging efforts to create "a new culture," itself a keystone of the emperor's reshaping Russian institutional life (Живов 1986). For Zhivov, the new alphabet constituted a fundamental semiotic intervention, a defining signifier of a new Russia, not an absolute rupture to be sure since many letters remained unchanged and the old orthography continued as the primary — but not exclusive — medium for church books[2], but still a major change in how the language was written (Кислова 2010, 78–85; Кислова 2011, 78–89). In a similar vein, Olga Kosheleva has argued that the civil orthography was intended by Peter to be a part of his exhortations on behalf of *grazhdanstvennost'*, or "a sense of citizenship" among his subjects (Кошелева 2011a, 278–90).

For the educated or reading minority, true enough, but by general consensus they constituted a tiny fraction of the population. What about everyone else? Kosheleva readily acknowledges that the audience for this ethos was both elite and exceedingly small, but the power was in its claim, she suggested, inculcating the image of the state as "instructor," rather than in its immediate reach. For the illiterate mass of the tsar's subjects one can only guess whether this image took hold, but our interest here is the semi-or passively-literate, those with a real but highly

[1] Franklin defines 'graphosphere' as "the space of the visible word … disseminated and displayed through visible signs." (Franklin 2019, 1).

[2] Kislova uncovered manuscript service books produced in the new orthography for the use of seamen, and a few sermons appeared simultaneously in both orthographies.

circumscribed capacity to absorb the written word. What discernible impact did *grazhdanstvennost'*, as manifested in the reformed orthography, have on them? Did the combined advent of the civil orthography and the onset of classroom education have a demonstrable effect upon how literacy was taught in the 1710s and 1720s? Did it penetrate the educational ladder, especially the initial rungs at which learning to read was primary and beyond which few pupils proceeded? Did the advent of the civil orthography and the flurry of new schools opened during the early eighteenth century affect the teaching and — more importantly — the *learning* of the written language at its most basic level? If so, for whom and how many during the decades under discussion? What sources might we employ, and how ought we to assess them, particularly for a realm such as Muscovy, whose level of popular literacy was, so far as one can tell, quite low and whose dominant extra-institutional mode of teaching the language left a sparse paper trail?

In order to address these questions, this essay ventures away from semiotics and exegesis, inquiring instead into the decidedly more prosaic question of whether and to what extent the reformed orthography affected experiences of learning to read during the first decades of the eighteenth century. Organizationally the essay follows a simple template, 1) a review of the pedagogies of literacy and texts, both old and new, that were available at the time within East Slavic Orthodoxy; 2) a review of the state of the literature about Petrine education (schools, students), with particular attention paid to the place of literacy instruction. 3) a numbers-centric publishing history (imprints, press runs, modes of circulation, etc.) of the relevant pedagogical texts — abecedaria, primers, breviaries, teaching psalters, etc. — to ascertain how deeply the texts employing the new orthography penetrated the so-called ladder of literacy. This mode of analysis, interconnecting schooling, print, and textual exegesis is not entirely new, witness the splendid recent collection of essays edited by Tendriakova and Bezrogov (Безрогов и Тендрякова 2015), several of which have informed this essay. While such sources and methodologies have their limits, they do provide a valuable picture of the trajectories of demand and the interpenetration of orthographies and schooling.

2. Pedagogies and Texts of Literacy

Both the prescribed mode of teaching basic literacy in Muscovy, dating at least to the sixteenth century, and its core texts have been extensively charted. As delineated in an undated 24-page treatise entitled *Instructions for teachers concerning how to teach literacy for scripture and divine truth to children* (Ягич 1896, 500–04)[3], the primary text was the abecedarium (азбука), typically twelve-to-twenty-four pages in octavo and with large print (Thomas 1984, 32–47; Marker 1989, 1–19). Lengthier primers (буквари), both printed and manuscript, also circulated, but

[3] «Наказание ко учителем како им оучити детей грамоте и детем оучитися божественному писанию и разумению». There are several manuscript copies in various repositories. The full published text is in Ягич (1986, 500–04).

in far fewer copies and less widely. Instruction employed the so-called "letter-syllable" (букво-слагательная) method whereby students were slowly introduced to the letters and the sounds associated with them. They then moved on to syllables, again with emphasis on phonics, and then to single-syllabic and multi-syllabic words. The final lessons included brief sentences, ending with a one or two-page passage almost invariably drawn from prayers or the New Testament (Извеков 1872, 723–50).

This pedagogy focused entirely on rudimentary and passive literacy, emphasizing phonics and memorization, rather than content or overall meaning. The treatise made this explicit: the goal was to recognize the words of God on the written page, and then to pronounce them correctly. At this level basic literacy did not include writing, or even learning how to pen the alphabet. Rather it consisted of repetition: letters, syllables and sounds, and the ability to recite aloud through memorization what one had read. Understanding the overall meanings of texts remained completely external to this approach to literacy. Although nowhere stated, the implied audience was clerical children or children hoping to become clergy, and the end goal was the lectionary. Once students had mastered the abecedarium, they were thought to have a command of simple sentences such that they could proceed to the Breviary (Часослов), and then to the school (учебный) psalter, and for both texts the pedagogy focused almost entirely on memorizing Scripture. One assumes from the press runs that at each step up the ladder of literacy the number of students shrank significantly, but there is no available way of knowing that for certain. Once again, though, the pedagogy privileged repetitive reading and correct intonation, sound over understanding. The goal was to memorize the text in full and to be able to recite it correctly within the church service. Whether this schema was followed in practice is impossible to document in any systematic way, although Kosheleva has surmised that it may well have been, based upon the fragmentary comments that she has uncovered in various archives. Still, as she acknowledges, the archival evidence is slim.

In the early eighteenth century several leading clerics, including Fedor Polikarpov, Feodosii Ianovskii, and Feofan Prokopovich, as well as Peter himself, endeavored to break with Russian Orthodoxy's accepted pedagogy traditional method, arguing — quite correctly — that it generated little understanding of either divine or human reasoning. They proposed a different pedagogy, one which they termed the "grammar method" which would reverse the process, emphasizing content over sound, meaning over memorization. Prokopovich was particularly strident on this subject, insisting that the traditional method was inappropriate for clerical children, many of whom would go on to serve as clerics themselves. Its insistence that merely knowing *how* to chant God's words with the correct phrasing and intonation left children ignorant of the *meanings* of the Scriptural texts, let alone the theological foundations of those texts[4]. He worried that without an un-

[4] «А воспитание такое в России, кто не видит как скудно.» «За лишением добраго воспитаниия, когда читать и писать научились глухое тое искусство обращают на орудие злобы… »

derstanding of the meanings of texts, this type of rote-based reading would leave them susceptible to the seductions of clever schismatics and other false teachings. If their training was to be moved into classrooms, he argued, they should be taught to read for content, an outcome that the grammatical method would facilitate (he was less emphatic when it came to laity and village-based ABCs). That was the plan, and it was with that intention that he crafted his famous primer-cum-catechism, *A Student's First Lessons* (Первое учение отроком).

Opinions have ranged widely as to whether these prescriptions gained traction, but to date there have been precious few social histories of the Petrine classroom that might anchor these opinions more concretely. This is beginning to change, as some recent archival studies have provided glimpses of pedagogical *practices* of literacy, at least in a handful of Petrine-era schools. While it is premature to generalize, there do appear to be recurring patterns. First, irrespective of their stated raison d'être, be it navigational, arithmetic, or religious, Latin, Greek, or Kirillitsa, and notwithstanding the nominal qualifications of those who enrolled, instruction almost invariably included classes in basic literacy, and these typically were the most highly enrolled. Abecedaria and breviaries remained in ongoing and considerable demand. Secondly, in nearly all sites that have been studied, the traditional ladder of literacy (Primer-Breviary-Teaching Psalter) remained the standard. Comments by officials on the scene give the impression that levels of literacy among beginning students were quite low, and in many instances nonexistent. Thirdly, while the evidence is sketchy, it seems that the grammatical method made minimal limited headway in these early schoolrooms (Kosheleva 2014, 34–6; Kislova 2015, 78–81; Кислова 2019, 34–6). In part this outcome derived from an acute shortage of instructors familiar with the grammar method. That is only one part of the story, however. Even when commanded to switch by a decree of 1722, and in some cases even after being supplied with sufficient copies of Prokopovich's Primer, instructors typically employed what they were familiar with and what they trusted, the traditional memorization-cum-enunciation based ladder of literacy.

3. Sites of Learning and the Dawn of Schools

There is a broad consensus that the teaching of reading and writing in Muscovy was carried out almost entirely by local clerics or individual monastics, irregularly and in small groups, and with little or no oversight by central authorities (e.g., Володихин 1993). Kosheleva succinctly captures Muscovy's circumstance in her notion of "apprenticeship" (ученичество), that acknowledges the appearance of some small groupings of students, but that sees these clusterings as fully consistent with the traditional, intimate person-to-person mode of instruction (Коше-

Первое учение отроком, Introduction, nonnumbered. ("Who can fail to see how impoverished this type of education is in Russia." "Because of the lack of a good education, when [children] study reading and writing, they turn this dim knowledge into an instrument of evil…")

лева 2011b, 82–4). In the parlance of the time the word "школа" referred not to a physical school per se but to the process of instruction. Educated churchmen may have been familiar with the *concept* of a classroom (witness the imagery in Vasilii Burtsev's illustrated 1634 primer, in which the word `училище' (`school') appears, accompanied by a picture of a group of four students sitting together at a table, books in hand. Their instructor sits alongside them but is shown punishing a fifth student (seen kneeling at his feet) with a whipping stick (розга). This image also appeared in later texts. But images were one thing; physical sites were quite another. To be sure, extra-institutional instruction was hardly unique to Muscovy or to Orthodoxy in general, as Margarita Korzo recently pointed out has in an essay on Catholic education in the Polish Commonwealth (Корзо 2020, 1–3). Still, Muscovy stood at one extreme of the spectrum.

The one glaring exception to this pattern was the Kyivan metropolia, an exception that continued to be true for decades after its incorporation into the Muscovite state. The challenges posed by Greek-rite Catholicism (Uniates) and more generally by the Counterreformation in Poland generated a dramatic response even amid escalating violence from both church and lay authorities, most prominently in the legendary reforms of the metropolitan Petro Mohyla: new seminaries with a largely Latinate Jesuitical curriculum. But the push for schools had begun a good deal earlier, in the 1570s, with the creation of Ruthenian Orthodox confraternities. Run largely by diocesan officials and with decidedly faith-centered curricula, by the time of Mohyla confraternal schools were already in operation in multiple Ruthenian towns and cities — once again following the Catholic example — and some of these established schools for members of the urban laity as well as for future clerics (Isaievych 2006, chapter 4 "The Confraternities and Education", 141–99). The effect was substantial, and by the late seventeenth century, even against the backdrop of considerable violence, formal education took root among key sectors of Ruthenian society, with rather large schools in multiple locales.

Eventually, of course Muscovite schools did come into existence. Generations of scholars for some reason have devoted no small attention to debating which one was first, when, and where. A century ago, N. F. Kapterev sought — and failed — to put the topic to rest, insisting — on quite solid ground — that the first school as such was the so-called typographical school, established within the Pechatnyi dvor in 1681 or 1682 (Каптерев 1914). True, there are examples dating back to the 1620s of Greek prelates being invited to Moscow to instruct small groups of literate Muscovite clergy and chancellery officials to read and eventually translate Greek texts (Фонкич 2009, 18–27, 82–9; Лаврентьев 1991, 176)[5]. But these hardly constituted schools in the conventional sense.

[5] Over the years there has been no shortage of candidates, dating to the 1630s and even earlier, but these have not held up to scrutiny. Fedyukin has been dismissive of this pursuit, deeming it "ahistorical" and "inappropriate" (Fedyukin 2019, 28). Kosheleva has written a more intensive summary of generations of this historiography of Muscovite education, but she too is critical (Kosheleva 2019, 191–217).

Recent studies of Muscovite schooling have generally confirmed Kapterev's conclusion and added important insights. The typographical school and its successor academies did attract a considerable number of pupils. Initial enrollments in the typographical school totaled about 30–40 students (Володихин 1993, 25). The numbers quickly rose to between 150 and 170 students in the Slavonic classes over the next few years, and as many as 60 of these attended the Greek classes. By the beginning of 1686 the student body had reached 235 (Фонкич 2009, 128). It appears that students often went straight from the typographical school into jobs at Pechatnyi dvor as correctors and as typesetters, positions for which there was considerable demand. Whether that single source of work explains the flow of students or not, the fact remains that the typographical school had quickly established itself. Of course, the arrival of the Leichoudes brothers from Greece in spring 1685 quickly led to a decline and ultimately transfer of the resources of the typographical school to the Bogoiavlenskii Monastery where the Leichoudes were located. For our purposes, however, the mere existence of these Moscow schools is what matters, along with the apparent willingness of clerics to send their sons there.

So, what classes did they take and what books were in greatest demand? Most of the scholarship, reasonably enough, focuses on the new advanced classes, Greek, Latin, Rhetoric, etc., because these were the sites of genuine change. Fonkich's rigorous archival work, along with that of Ramazanova, has uncovered several documents that described in detail the classes and book purchases for the Greek classes, which after all were the nominal raison d`etre for the school's creation for which books had to be imported, primarily from Constantinople (Фонкич 2009, 146–55; 162–64). Volodikhin estimated that between 1681 and 1685 as many as 600 books and manuscripts were purchased, and he surmises that about two thirds were Greek (Володихин 1993, 43).

Unfortunately, as both Fonkich and Volodikhin discovered, the paper trail for the Slavonic classes is sparse, even though it appears that these were the starting point for a large proportion of the students. Pozdeeva, for example, (Поздеева 2011 2, 581–87) includes documents from Pechatnyi dvor, confirming that it periodically supplied the school with copies of abecedaria, breviaries, and psalters, and Epistles i.e., the first books in the ladder of literacy. One assumes, therefore, that the Slavonic classes functioned to teach future typesetters and copyeditors how to read and write Russian script (*kirillitsa*) before sending a subset of them on to the more demanding Greek classes. But this remains rather speculative. A similar pattern seems to have prevailed after the responsibility was transferred to the Leichuodes. The school began with 100 students and quickly rose to 600, an indication of substantial interest. Those numbers fluctuated considerably, and, although hard numbers are not available, by all accounts the proportion of students who proceeded from the introductory classes in *kirillitsa* to the Greco-Latin curriculum in rhetoric, theology, natural philosophy, etc. appears to have been low. Thus, one may surmise that for most of the first waves of students the Leichuodes' schools were essentially sites of reading and writing in Cyrillic.

Another important vein of scholarship has attempted to elucidate the ambitious projects to create institutionalized schooling within both church and state, and to formulate updated pedagogies. This voluminous literature includes searching exegeses of new grammars, primers, lexicons, and other textbooks[6]. Studies such as these are enormously helpful in contextualizing the books themselves, both within East Slavic Orthodoxy and within pedagogical philosophies and prescriptions of the wider European *Respublica literaria*. We know a great deal about the prescriptive or programmatic side of the subject, with detailed explications of specific texts (Leontii Magnitskii's *Arifmetika*, Fedor Polikarpov-Orlov's *Grammar* and his *Three Language Lexicon*, Feofan Prokopovich's *Primer* et al.), the intended modes of instruction, institutional changes, and the like.

Closely related are the histories of schools and schooling. For the Petrine period much of the work has focused on the many projects for establishing of new sites of teaching (including literacy instruction), many of which did come to fruition, thereby significantly changing the institutional landscape of Russian education. Igor Fedyukin has written in detail about the men behind reform projects and their schemes ("the enterprisers" or "прожектеры") (Fedyukin 2019; see also Федюкин et al. 2015). His study conveys a surprising fluidity within the Petrine court, such that these enterprisers, Russian and non-Russian alike, had a good deal of success in peddling their projects. All of this is immensely important in understanding the intentions of reformers, their successes, and the political culture within which they acted.

How then might one transition from the focus on projects and enterprisers, or textual analysis, to what were often the very different experiences of reading and writing in the classroom itself? This is a formidable challenge. Polikarpov's *Lexicon*, for example, intended as a basic reference for generations of future seminarians, appeared in 1704 with an ambitious press run of 2400, identical to the run of his three-alphabet primer printed in 1701 with which it was meant to be paired (Рамазанова 2013b, 78–88; Averjanova and Bezrogov 2015, 123–40). But notwithstanding aggressive early effort to circulate the volume to institutions and dioceses, two decades later the Moscow Typography still had 1500 unsold copies left in its storehouse, and demand at that point was virtually nil. Presumably other repositories also had stocks of unsold copies. No additional printings appeared throughout the rest of the eighteenth century (Быкова и Гуревич 1958, no. 38; РГИА ф. 796, оп. 58, но. 53 1777,13–13об.; Пекарский 2 1862, 641). Similarly, Magnitskii's widely extolled *Arifmetika*, a text which Bragone has analyzed in depth (Bragone 2008, 67–76; Bragone 2011, 1–28), appeared in a run of 2400. Copies were immediately sent to the newly opened School of Navigation, where it indeed entered the curriculum, as it did in some

[6] This discussion mostly does not include the handful of advanced academies founded in these years, whose curricula typically assumed prior literacy or more and which tended to be directed to elite sectors of society. Instead, it focuses on courses of instruction within institutions wholly or largely devoted to primary education.

other Petrine state-sponsored technical schools founded (Быкова и Гуревич 1955, 86; Fedyukin 2015, 72–77ff). But available sales figures show that outside this circumscribed milieu *Arifmetika* generated sparse demand, while the older (1682, reprinted in 1714) and more elementary booklet, *Книга считания удобного*, continued to generate modest but steady demand throughout most of Peter's reign (Пекарский 2 1862, 267, 681–94; Нечаев 1956, 160–61, XXI). And, like Polikarpov's masterworks, *Arifmetika* was not reprinted during the eighteenth century.

All of this implies a considerable disjuncture between mandated norms or projects on one hand, and the experiences of learning on the other. One approach to unpacking this conundrum has been to examine enrollments course-by course so as to determine, irrespective of the prescribed curricula, how many students enrolled, how many of them advanced, and whether they completed the prescribed curriculum.

The "cypher" schools are a good place to start. Begun in 1714, their stated function was relatively modest, i.e., to teach them to recognize Arabic numbers (цифиры), to learn the mechanics of arithmetic, and then to advance to elementary geometry in principle to the children of merchants and other townsfolk, particularly those "most eager to study" (Нечаев 1956, 36 [ПСЗ 2762 and 2778]; Чистович 1883, XXX–XXXII; see also Быкова и Гуревич 1955, no.115).

On the surface this network grew rapidly, especially in the Ural mining region, enrolling a total of 2051 students during its first decade, almost half of whom were clerical children. But success proved hard to come by. As a rule, the new institutions found it necessary to include basic literacy classes, and typically these classes had the largest number of pupils. Many — perhaps most — never advanced beyond basic literacy, and one large cohort did not even get that far. By the time of the survey only 302 completed the course of instruction, 507 were still enrolled, and 933 clerical children, were withdrawn and directed to study at archbishops' houses, and 309 others departed, apparently still illiterate and non-numerate. In Ekaterinburg, for example, a cypher school opened in the early 1720s. By 1727 well over half of these students had made it no further than introductory literacy or — according to the reports — had not learned anything at all (Нечаев 1956, 36–7, 62).

Other newly opened schools have left sketchier paper trails, but they too seem to have experienced a major disparity between prescription and actual study, enrollment, and completion. Between 1712 and 1725 in Tula 255 potential apprentices took classes in a classroom set up in the local armory, with the goal of providing them with a relatively advanced training. Few could read, and the armory was forced to focus on teaching basic literacy (Нечаев 1956, 27–9). The artillery schools, established by decree in 1701, enrolled hundreds of students over its first two decades, most of whom began and ended their course of study in the «словесная школа» studying the Slavic abecedarium, breviary, and psalter. An apparently small subset of them then went on to learn to write (Нечаев 1956, 32–4). Several of the artillery schools, as well as the initial mining schools started in the Urals under the aegis of V. N. Tatishchev, as well as other nominal-

ly technical schools, struggled to keep their students, an endeavor that typically entailed teaching literacy before moving ahead. In Ekaterinburg, a school established in 1724 to teach mathematics and drafting experienced a sharp decline from initial enrollments, and most of those who remained stood on the lower rungs of the ladder of literacy. A 1726 survey showed 100 students in residence, half of whom were learning to read. By 1727 it was down to 66 students, all but 19 of whom were in literacy classes (1 studying abecedarium, 53 Breviary, 2 Psalter, 10 writing). A 1737 survey of nine schools in the Urals region shows that all but one taught literacy exclusively or almost exclusively (Нечаев 1956, 44–63, 75, 117). So far as one can tell, literacy instruction in these state-initiated institutions generally employed the traditional texts, familiar learning modes, and most importantly the old orthography. This was true of mining, cypher, factory, and garrison schools, designed to train students for relatively technical or specialized labor, and it was as true after 1708 as it was before. What we see, then, are multiple indicators of a sharp disconnect between pedagogical discourses and classroom practices.

Diocesan ("archbishops'") schools had begun to appear ad hoc early in the century, and their numbers grew once they gained formal recognition in the latter years of Peter's reign. Quite a few subsequently evolved into Latin-based seminaries after the reorganization of clerical education in 1737. Recall that Prokopovich and others had insisted that those preparing for the priesthood needed to be better and more formally educated, made explicit in *Dukhovnyi Reglament* and Imperial decrees, and this command seems to have had some effect (Нечаев 1956, 41). The initial core of students consisted largely of the sons of priests (поповичи) withdrawn from the cypher schools, supplemented by those from the lower urban ranks. Here they may have pursued arithmetic, but the core of the introductory curriculum focused on reading religious texts in the old orthography («славянское чтение»), and, for those who remained long enough, writing. Grammar and Syntax were also a part of the stated curriculum. These schools appear to have relied primarily on abecedaria and breviaries for literacy. Some of the schools also listed an unspecified "bukvar'" (*perhaps* Prokopovich's, although some older ones, printed and manuscript, were in circulation) as a separate course of study for students at some stage after the breviary.

Some of the older scholarship examined these schools one-by-one. Their work sketches a picture of modest success, albeit varying widely from one diocese to the next. The pattern emerges clearly in a retrospective survey of all the Empire's village and Diocesan Schools commissioned in 1727 by the Supreme Privy Council. Not surprisingly, Ruthenian Dioceses had a more robust network with multiple schools with relatively large aggregate enrollments (an aggregate of 654 in Kyiv Collegium; 257 in Chernihiv; 420 in Belgorod), and greater access to higher subject, including Latin. So too did Novgorod (1007 students since 1706) and Moscow (108 in Russia classes in 1727, 35 in Greek, 362 in Latin) (Пекарский 1862 2, 109–13; Чистович 1883, XXXIII–XLIII). Elsewhere, though, the numbers were far smaller, as were the course offerings. Even the capital's Aleksandr Nevskii Monastery's school, which had enrolled 118 students in its first six years,

quite a few of whom were sons of laity, experienced a flight of forty-two of them, officially because of disinterest in their studies or "suffering" («скорбь») (Пекарский 1862. 21, 112). Similarly, in Riazan', 59 of the 96 students enrolled in 1722 immediately ran away! But, in contrast to the cypher schools, aggregate numbers tended to remain stable, or even grow, from one year to the next, and enrollments proceeded from one class to the next, with the majority working their way up the ladder of literacy, not infrequently including writing. Anecdotal evidence, such as schoolboy verses moaning about life and punishment in the classrooms, suggests that those who stayed the course did indeed learn to read and write. The survey also shows students in some of the schools advancing to classes in Arithmetic and Grammar, albeit with little indication of what those courses constituted (Пекарский 1862 1, 108–21).

To summarize: Peter's reign most assuredly witnessed the emergence of multiple schools in the physical sense, a great many of which necessarily began with basic literacy instruction irrespective of their nominal purpose. That in itself is momentous. Even so, the great majority of literacy instruction remained informal and extramural, as it would continue to be throughout the eighteenth century, conducted by local clergy with no formal training, and almost completely untouched by new texts, new methods, and new orthographies. By the time of Peter's death in 1725, so far as one can tell, classroom-based literacy instruction by and large followed traditional texts and pedagogies. It may well be that students who stayed the course could assimilate the new orthography on their own, something that will require considerable archival research to determine. But, outside the new elite academies and some of the technical schools, that transition to *grazhdanstvennost'* appears not to have been embedded in their courses.

4. Publishing History and Numbers

We turn now to the publishing history itself (printings, press runs, etc.), both before and after the civil orthography had been introduced. The basic information derives from Synodal records and periodic inventories, especially the extensive inventory of Moscow imprints dating back to the 1620s that was completed in January 1777 (РГИА опись 58, no.43), materials that I have relied upon in earlier work. These are augmented by recent bibliographic works (Гусева 2010; Немировский и Шустова 2015; Шицкова и Земцова 2015) that have compiled updated checklists of relevant publications from throughout the East Slavic world, some of which include materials from previously unexamined archival records. These have been checked against, and revised as needed, by figures given in Luppov (Луппов 1974) as well as periodic sales and inventory data reproduced by Chistovich, Pekarskii, and others. These records have enabled me to construct a relatively detailed longue durée publishing history — albeit *not* a reading or learning history — of pedagogical texts from Pechatnyi dvor, and from the Synodal and Aleksandr Nevskii typographies in St. Petersburg. The goal here is to see whether these checklists might reveal any discernible patterns that would indicate either pedagogical continuity or change.

Tab. 1 – Literacy Texts Printed in Kirillitsa from Moscow Typographies, 1650–1724.

	Total (T)	Annual Average (A)	T	A	T	A
1650–74	75,600	3,024	40,800	1,632	22,320	890
1675–99	@ 192,000	7,680	85,200	3,400	56,800	2,275
1700–24	@ 200,000	8,000	70,000	2,800	38,000	1,520

*Abecedaria constitute the overwhelming majority of this total, well over ninety percent for most decades The Moscow-press did publish a variety of longer primers (буквари) as well, but infrequently, at least until the very end of Peter's reign. Their elaborate ornamentation, additional texts, or inclusion of Greek and Roman alphabets suggest that they were intended for select audiences or repositories, rather than to be "read to pieces" as were the inexpensive (costing just a few den'gi) and highly perishable abecedaria.

**The 1777 inventory typically identifies psalters as either "следованная» ("Lectionary"), i.e., used in church services, or «учебная» i.e., pedagogical, the latter constituting most of the printings and typically commanding larger runs than the lectionaries. Some imprints, though, are listed simply as "psalter", with no indication of their specific use. This chart includes only those identified as «учебные».

As we see, the trajectory of Moscow imprints shows a steady rise in the per annum average publication of literacy texts, throughout the second half of the seventeenth century, more than doubling for each of the three steps in the ladder of literacy. The numbers for abecedaria are particularly striking, about 3,000 per annum until about 1670 and then growing steadily over the last three decades to a peak of 36,000 in 1700 alone, with an annual average of over 9,000 in the 1690s. Since these were reprinted almost exclusively based on demand within dioceses and parishes, it seems very likely that the number of children learning ABCs in the late seventeenth century, while still miniscule, was rising. For breviaries and teaching psalters the rise is unmistakable, but less dramatic, an indication that while more people were learning their basic ABCs so as to recognize some words, the number learning to read on their own likely did not increase very much. We should keep in mind the fact that Pechatnyi dvor based its reprintings of these texts on declining inventory, an indication that the tapered climb up the ladder of literacy remained remarkably constant over these fifty years. The chart also reveals a vaguely consistent ratio among the three texts. During the third quarter the ratios between abecedaria and breviaries and between breviaries and psalters were both slightly less than 2:1. In the last quarter the ratios changed slightly, with about 2.25 abecedaria printed for each breviary and conversely 1.5 psalters per breviary. The ratio of abecedaria to psalters stayed constant throughout these decades at about 3.4 abecedaria for each psalter printed, suggesting perhaps that a larger proportion of those who reached the breviary were continuing their studies. (Unfortunately, press run figures are not available for Ruthenian and Belarusian imprints of that period, thus making a detailed comparison impossible.)

Looking more closely at year-by-year production during the totality of Peter's reign, roughly 1690–1725, (see the appendices) shows considerable fluctuations from one year to the next. In some years a great many were produced, followed by a few years in which there were modest runs, or no runs at all. For example, the Moscow Typography printed 36,000 abecedaria in 1700 alone, followed by five years during which it produced none. In 1706 it had two printings totaling 19,200 copies, then a decline until 1709–10 when it produced 26,000, followed by two fallow years. This pattern reflects the fact that abecedaria were essentially a demand-based publication. Unlike most other schoolbooks, abecedaria were intended for the students' personal use, to be "read to pieces." This helps explain why so few copies have survived: they simply never made their way into repositories. Thus, relative to other texts supplies ran out quickly, and the Moscow press responded by printing in bulk and then waited until supplies ran low before reissuing.

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century the pattern seems to have changed, especially after about 1710. While the aggregate number of abecedaria per annum grew slightly, to approximately 8,000 copies, the number of breviaries and psalters declined, and the ratio of abecedaria to psalters widened significantly to about 5.3:1. Although these numbers say precious little about literacy *per se* (or even about how the books were in fact used), they do suggest something of a disruption. But, if so, of what sort, and why? Why, in the midst of a determined official pursuit of more schooling would the publication of abecedaria plateau and the demand for breviaries and teaching psalters seemingly decline? We need to keep in mind that new typographies had opened, mostly in St. Petersburg, and they too produced schoolbooks. Might they have counterbalanced the disruptions in Moscow imprints? In addition, Peter's reign generated entirely new literacy texts, first among them being Feofan Prokopovich's *Pervoe uchenie otrokom* and the composite *Iunosti chestnoe zertsalo*, both of which were published and disseminated at Peter's command. Abecedaria were also being printed in St. Petersburg, including some in in the new orthography. Before drawing any conclusions, therefore, we need to take all of these into account.

5. Civil Abecedaria

Civil abecedaria (identified in the records as «гражданские учебные азбуки» sometimes adding «с нравоучениями») began to appear in print not long after the introduction of the new orthography. Several scholars have examined them, and while figures differ, the overall profiles are more-or-less consistent. Bykova and Gurevich citing Gavrilov (Гаврилов 1911, 41) and Brailovskii (Брайловский 1894, 254) list nine printing of civil abecedaria between 1710 and 1725; Luppov (Луппов 1973, 96) says there were ten[7]. These appeared either as stand-

[7] Быкова, Гуревич 1955, nos. 32, 137, 176, 226, 237, 261, 336, 753, 879. Summarizing the archival entries Brailovskii says the following: «В 1709 году напечатаны: 1) в Феврале

alone volumes or, less commonly, as appendages to *Iunosti chestnoe zertsalo* (first published in 1717).

It is not clear whether all of the St. Petersburg imprints were in the new orthography, but either way they do not affect the overall picture very much, especially since they very likely went overwhelmingly to state institutions within the capital itself. According to Gavrilov, runs ranged from 200 copies in 1714 to 2902 copies in 1723, with a total of about 7300 during that time (Гаврилов 1911, 41).

Tab. 2 – Civil abecedaria 1714–23.

Year	Print Run	Price per copy
1714	200	8 den'gi (one den'ga equaled half a kopeck)
1715	688	6 den'gi
1717–18	1200	5 den'gi
1721	2400	5 den'gi
1723	2902	5 den'gi

Luppov gives somewhat lower figures (just over 3,000 between 1714 and 1722). But whatever the actual number, these totals paled in comparison to those of the traditional abecedarium. More to the point, there was no specific follow-up text in the civil orthography, no articulated "civil" ladder of literacy onto which they could have climbed. We also have fragmentary records of sales in St. Petersburg. Pekarskii's appendix, for example, includes lists of books for sale from the book shop of the St. Petersburg Press in the early 1720s, but these are only intermittently disaggregated by old and new orthography, year of publication, number of available copies, and prices (Пекарский 2 1862, «Ведомости книгамъ продававшимся в Петербурге», 681–94). Among them one finds abecedaria, often in quantities of several hundred, but without any clear indication of whether they are in the old or new orthography. Similarly, Luppov (Луппов 1973, 145) lists the following figures for literacy texts from 1714–22 showing both the press runs the number of copies distributed.

12 заводов азбук…» (Брайловский 1894, 254). He does not provide a description and does not indicate in which type it was produced. Bykova and Gurevich include this as a civil-type publication (#18a). Were this correct this would have been an exceptional press run, since one *zavod* equaled 1200 copies, a run of 14,400! But in all likelihood, they made an honest mistake. There are no known copies of this purported issue, and no archival descriptions of its contents. The 1777 inventory, which *does* typically disaggregate between old and new type faces, shows an abecedarium for 1709 (p. 16) with a run of 14,000, but includes it among the *church* orthographic imprints rather than civil ones. It also shows that a civil-type abecedarium was published in the *previous* year (p. 15) 1708, but with a very modest run of 500.

Tab. 3 – Literacy texts 1714–22.

Title	Aggregate Press Run	Total Distributed	Total per annum
Юности честное зерцало	1900	1548	193
Учебные азбуки	3088	2512	314
Псалтыри учебные	1200	265	33
Часословы учебные	1268	1090	133

Once more, it is not clear whether the abecedaria in question were old or new orthography (psalters and breviaries, of course, were printed in the old.). Regardless, while they may have had a discernible presence within the capital and one or two state schools elsewhere, the picture for the Empire overall is little changed. Thus, there remains only Prokopovich's text as a potential counterbalance.

6. Prokopovich's Primer

Pervoe uchenie otrokom was first published in 1720 in the newly opened typography of the Alexander Nevskii Monastery, with great fanfare and considerable financial support from both church and crown. As a букварь (primer), identified as such in the Synodal records, one would expect it to become a centerpiece of literacy instruction, perhaps ultimately an alternative to or replacement for the азбука учебная. Prokopovich himself said as much: his introduction to the text was directed to parents and others responsible for the upbringing of children, and it explicitly exhorted them to employ his book as *the* primer of choice in raising and educating children to ensure that they would have a proper understanding of God's words and their true meaning, thereby avoiding the superstitions and ignorance that was, in his view, widespread in Russia. In that spirit the Synod decreed that it be read aloud in churches at the service of St. Ephraim of Syria in late January.

The original publishing plan had been correspondingly ambitious. Alexander Nevskii Typography professed that it had the capacity to produce up to 14,000 copies per year, and it expected that at least 10,000 copies would be printed annually. These would be sent to dioceses, and through them to parishes, throughout the Empire, as well as to several repositories and state institutions. However, the actual runs were much smaller, typically 1200 copies or fewer. There were eleven printings between 1721 and 1725 totaling approximately 11,000 copies, including three printings in 1724 with a total run of 2851, a large aggregate to be sure but nothing close to what had been proposed. (Пекарский 2 1862, 549–50, Приложение С, 694). Information on actual circulation is more episodic, but it too does not comport with what had been prescribed. Firstly, the primer was expensive, 35 kopecks per copy as opposed to 1–3 kopecks per copy of the азбука, far more than most parishioners could afford (Луппов 1973, 149). Many, perhaps most copies were distributed gratis by fiat, and these went directly to state schools and to bishops, and from there to parishes to be read aloud in services. Perhaps some copies ended up in the hands of clerical school children (although there is scant

evidence of that), but there simply would not have been sufficient supply for it to circulate much beyond the specific schools to which they were sent.

There were exceptions, of course. Still, a handful of archbishops' schools and academies did put it to use. In Riazan', for example, where Prokopovich's ally Gavriil Buzhinskii had arrived in 1726, 128 students enrolled in the archbishop's school were recorded in 1727 as studying "bukvar'". The rosters do not specify that the bukvar' in question was Prokopovich's, but it is reasonable to assume that it was. A handful of others (Suzdal', Smolensk, Viatka, Pskov, Kolmogory) also reported offering classes in "bukvar'", usually just before or after the Psalter (i.e., as an addendum to traditional literacy instruction rather than a replacement) but with no indication of how many students were enrolled, what bukvar' they employed, or how it was taught. Most dioceses, though, made no mention of it. And even assuming they had received copies, few instructors had any formal training in teaching, and no familiarity with the "grammar method." By default, teaching by rote remained as the norm for quite some time. In addition, Prokopovich's primer met widespread resistance within the clergy, both white and black, many of whom angrily condemned the book as "destructive of ancient customs" (Пекарский 1862 1, 180; Kosheleva 2010, 121–22). State-sponsored schools, which fell directly under governmental authority and were recipients of official largesse, did have copies available. But even there we see stumbling blocks. In 1736, for example, V. N. Tatishchev had expressed his intention to replace the abecedarium and Breviary with *Iunosti chestnoe zertsalo* and the Primer in the Ural Mining schools. But he soon set that plan aside, and students there continued to use the older texts at least into the mid-1740s (Нечаев 1956, 120).

In short, while both the Primer and *Iunosti chestnoe zertsalo* unquestionably constituted significant textual accomplishments and were both acknowledged and hotly contested among literate monastic clergy and service elites, the evidence strongly suggests that, official dictates notwithstanding, they had minimal presence in provincial or diocesan literacy instruction, neither in Peter's days nor in the ensuing decades.

7. Conclusion

The available evidence, however incomplete, indicates that neither the civil orthography nor the newly prescribed pedagogies penetrated very deeply into the teaching of Russia's ABCs for several decades after its initiation. From that perspective it seems quite unlikely that *grazhdanstvennost'* as orthography or written language, had much impact on minimally or functionally literate children, the vast majority of whom continued to be taught by village tutors or in diocesan schools, few of whose instructors were able or willing to teach in the newly prescribed ways. It seems equally the case that the appearance of schools, important as it was for its own sake, did little or nothing to increase literacy rates within the overall population in the Petrine or post-Petrine decades. If anything, Peter's reign had a disruptive impact on the ladder of literacy: a very modest increase in the printing of abecedaria offset by an absolute decline in the number of breviaries and

teaching psalters in circulation. Considering the physical dislocations brought on by the long Northern War, disproportionally affecting teens and young men, it is not unreasonable to imagine that overall male literacy actually declined in the first quarter of the eighteenth century relative to where it had been in the previous decades. While the civil orthography and civil primers did not in themselves cause these disruptions, they likely exacerbated them by widening the gap between basic — old texts, old orthographic — literacy and reading per se, particularly the inculcation of reading as *grazhdanstvennost'*.

Appendix 1

Checklists of printings and press runs of abecedaria (азбуки учебные) from the Moscow Typography in Peter's reign, 1690–1725. Unless otherwise noted, the source is the Synodal inventory of 1777 (РГИА Ф. 796 оп. 58, d. 43). The figures listed in this inventory are consistent with those given in Guseva (Гусева 2010, 23–4) and Nemirovskii and Shustova (Немировский и Шустова 2015, 244–81).

Year	Number of printings	Total
1690	3	19,200
1691	2	19,200
1692	–	–
1693	1	14,400
1694	–	–
1695	–	–
1696	1	12,200
1697	–	–
1698	–	–
1699	–	–
1700	1	36,000
1701	–	–
1702	–	–
1703	–	–
1704	–	–
1705	–	–
1706	2	18,000
1707	1	4,800
1708	–	–
1709	1	14,000
1710	1	12,000
1711	–	–

Year	Number of printings	Total
1712	–	–
1713	2	19,200
1714	–	–
1715	1	12,000
1716	1	2,400
1717	–	–
1718	–	–
1719	1	12,000
1720	–	–
1721	1	12,000
1722	1	14,400
1723	1	14,400
1724	1	14,400

Appendix 2

Abecedaria from the Moscow Typography in the post-Petrine era, 1725–1740.

Year	Printings	Total Copies
1725	1	1,200
1726	–	–
1727	–	–
1728	–	–
1729	–	–
1730	–	–
1731	2	24,000
1732	1	24,000
1733	–	–
1734	2	26,400
1735	–	–
1736	–	–
1737	1	24,000
1738	–	–
1739	2	4,800
1740	–	–

Appendix 3

Recorded imprints of abecedaria in the civil orthography (гражданские азбуки), Moscow and St. Petersburg, 1708–1725 (those that were printed as supplements to *Юности честное зерцало*) are marked with an asterisk *).

Year	City of Publication	Press runs (if known)
1708 or 1710	Moscow	500 (from 1777 РГИА Synod inventory)
1714	St. Petersburg	200 (Гаврилов 1911, 41)
1715	St. Petersburg	688 (Гаврилов 1911, 41)
1717*	St. Petersburg	at least 1200 (Гаврилов 1911, XXI–XXII)
1717*	St. Petersburg	600
1718	St. Petersburg	1200 (Гаврилов 1911, 41)
1719*	St. Petersburg	1200
1723 or 1724*	Moscow	600 (from 1777 РГИА Synod inventory)
1725	?	?

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