

THE RUSSIAN *SECRET OF SECRETS* AND PATRIARCH NIKON'S BOOK CURSE

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Abstract: The topic of book curses has not hitherto been discussed in *Incantatio* and is often ignored in the wider literature on magic and magic charms, perhaps because it is neither folklore nor literature. Book curses can serve two purposes. The obvious one is to try to prevent the theft of books by terrifying potential thieves; the less obvious one is to attract readers or buyers with promises of secret or forbidden knowledge. In our article, we shall examine one of each kind found together in a single Russian volume.

Key words: Secret of secrets, Russia, book curses, Patriarch Nikon, classical inheritance

Book curses, as they are normally called in English, are a small but distinct category of written charm added to a manuscript or printed book. They are usually found at the beginning on the inside cover or flyleaf, or in the colophon. In their strongest form they call on God, or some other supernatural power, to punish physically or by anathema or by eternal damnation, anyone stealing or damaging the book, or even reading its 'secret' content if they are not initiates or 'worthy' persons. Such curses may be quite elaborate and inven-

tive, while in their mildest form they are not really curses at all but simply admonitions to late returners of borrowed books.

Book curses were known in the ancient world and more commonly in Greek, Arabic, and West European medieval manuscripts and later in early printed books. Medieval manuscripts and early printed books were expensive, and book curses were an attempt by their owners or custodians to protect a valuable and perhaps sacred asset. Book curses were normally written by the scribe of a manuscript, or by its owner or a librarian, i.e. they were written and read by literate people. There is a good general article with a bibliography on the subject (but nothing on Slavic book curses) in Wikipedia (US/UK) in the entry 'book curse'.¹

Russia and the Orthodox areas of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania (now mostly in Ukraine and Belarus) have a tradition of book curses from about the fourteenth century onwards which is very similar in its essentials to that of Western Europe, which may have been its immediate source. In general, scholarly literature on inscriptions in manuscripts and printed books has tended to treat the book curse more as a brief note in a library catalogue than as a category of magic charm.

In this article I shall discuss two Russian book curses, one specific to a particular work, and the other found in a single copy of the same work, ostensibly written by Patriarch Nikon. This work is the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets*, in Arabic *Kitāb sirr al-asrār*, in Hebrew *Sod ha sodot*, in Russian *Tajnaaja tajnyh*. This is a fifteenth-century translation of the Hebrew version into early Ukrainian, but more widely diffused in a later sixteenth-century Russified version. It contains an ancient book curse that is actually an integral part of the text.

The *Secret of Secrets* is a work originally written in Arabic, probably in the tenth century, but claiming to be a collection of secret letters written by Aristotle to his erstwhile pupil Alexander of Macedon about statecraft and all the branches of knowledge, practical, scientific, military, medical, magical, astrological and alchemical, which he would need to become a great king now that he had conquered Persia. There is a Short Form of the text and a

later expanded Long Form of the text but we are concerned here only with Short Form.

There is in fact no known Greek version of the *Secret of Secrets*, and the identity of the real author or authors (the text could well be a gradual compilation from various sources) is not known. Although no genuine works of Aristotle were published in Russian translation until the eighteenth century, Aristotle and Alexander were familiar figures to Russian readers from the Old Russian translation of the *Alexander Romance* and the Russian chronicles, and are generally seen as positive figures. Aristotle is even given prophetic status by his inclusion in the series of icons of the Old Testament prophets in the Dormition Cathedral in the Moscow Kremlin. The ‘translator’s’ preface in the *Secret of Secrets* in all versions goes even further in its adulation of Aristotle – it says: ‘And it is found in the books of the Hellenes that the Lord said to him: You should rather be called an angel than learned in innumerable sciences.’²

The *Secret of Secrets* was widely known and read from the twelfth century onwards in most European countries both in Latin (over 600 extant copies³) and many vernacular versions. The main text has a preface that usually states, falsely, that it was written by Yaḥyā (or Yūhannā) ibn al-Biṭrīq (Patrikii/Patrekii in the Ukrainian/Russian version), a well-known ninth/tenth-century Assyrian translator from Greek into Syriac or Arabic. This ‘translator’ claims to have sought and found the work in a Greek manuscript written in gold letters and hidden in a mysterious temple of Hermes (or Aesculapius) in Egypt (finding secret books, scrolls, inscriptions or hidden treasure in secret caves and oriental temples are *topoi* of this genre). This manuscript, he says, he translated into Arabic at the bidding of the Caliph al-Manṣūr.

The Short Version of the *Secret of Secrets* was translated from Arabic into Hebrew, probably in Spain at some time in or after the twelfth century. This Hebrew version was then translated into early Ukrainian or Belorussian (the common language of the East Slavic population of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania), almost certainly by a Jewish scholar in Kyiv, Zechariah ben Aharon ha-Kohen, probably with a Slav helper, in the second half of the fifteenth century

(before 1483).⁴ The earliest extant copy is probably of Belorussian provenance, slightly Polonized, from c.1560, but there are many later Russified copies. This Slavic translation also contains, as interpolations, three large extracts of medical works by Maimonides (*On Lethal Drugs*, *On Coitus* and *On Asthma*), and a physiognomy from Razes, *Ad Almansorem*, all of which appear to have been previously inserted into the Hebrew source used by the translator into Slavic.

The 'Arabic translator's' preface in the *Secret of Secrets*, mentioned above, is addressed to Caliph al-Manṣūr, and is followed by a second preface, supposedly written by Aristotle himself. This second preface is in the form of a reply by Aristotle to Alexander's letter requesting a written summary of all Aristotle's wise teachings. He concludes his message thus:

[0.4.8] но во истиннѹ знаменавахом тайны раверене и печатлѣни притчѣми дабы не пала книга нша сѣѧ в' рѣкѣ недостоинныхъ . [0.4.9] да внегда изведѣють то, что имѣ бѣгъ не сдилъ вдати. но бы хто а разорилъ завѣтъ того хтожъ мене тое крыл . [0.4.10] а такожъ та заприсагаю, яко и мене априсагали ш сѣю вѣщѣ. [0.4.11] а хто оуведавъ сѣю вещь тайнѹю. ѡкрыеть недостоинимъ. Оущепень [var. анафема] есть сего с'вета и вного. гѣи силам оуховаи наѣ ѡ сего аминъ.⁵

[0.4.8] ... *For in fact we have (only) hinted at the secrets scattered and sealed (therein) by means of parables, lest this our book should fall into the hands of the unworthy, [0.4.9] for if they should learn that which God has not permitted them to know, then I would be breaking the covenant of him who revealed it to me, [0.4.10] and I thus adjure you, just as I was made to swear in this matter. [0.4.11] And if anyone should learn this secret and disclose it to the unworthy, he shall be banned [var. anathema] from this world and the next. Lord of Hosts, defend us from this, Amen.*

[The Russian and English texts here come from the edition of Ryan and Taube (2019), 88–9.]

This, as far as I can discover, is the first Russian non-clerical anathema, despite its reference to God, and the first book curse in a non-religious Russian text.

Even more interesting for both charm historians and historians of Russia, is the fact that one seventeenth-century manuscript copy of the Russian *Secret of Secrets* (MS MOSCOW, State Historical Museum, Synodal Collection 359) contains, in addition to the curse quoted above, a second, purely Russian book curse, together with the name of its author. This is a leather-bound quarto manuscript containing only one text. It has “Sija kniga Tajnaja tajnyh” (*This book is the Secret of Secrets*) stamped on the spine. There is a donation inscription (*vkładnaja*) at the beginning on the flyleaf which states, presumably truthfully but possibly by one of his scribes, that it was written by Patriarch Nikon and that he had copied the text “with his own hand” and placed the book in the Resurrection New Jerusalem Monastery.⁶ Nikon had founded this monastery near Moscow in 1656 and collected a large library there.

Several of the older Russian catalogues of manuscript collections containing manuscripts owned or donated by Patriarch Nikon mention his donation inscription and book curse, and a few print the text, but all agree that the text of the curse is almost identical in all manuscripts. However, some later information is available. Of particular help have been a 1962 article by L. M. Kostjuhina on inscriptions in manuscripts in the Resurrection New Jerusalem Monastery library, and two recent Russian works, one a doctoral dissertation by V. P. Bogdanov (2023), and the other an extensive research paper by G. M. Zelenskaja and S. K. Sevast’janova (2021).⁷ Although not devoted specifically to book curses, or treating book curses as a category of magic charm, or even mentioning the particular manuscript under discussion here, these do cast some new light on inscriptions in Russian manuscripts in general and early printed books in Russia, and include the texts of some book curses.

In the case of Nikon’s copy of the *Secret of Secrets*, in the same hand as the donation inscription by Nikon, there is a book curse directed at anyone stealing or hiding the book. It is found on consecutive lower margins of the first few pages of the manuscript with just a

few words of the curse on each page (this method of adding marginal notes to the main text is also found in other manuscripts). The curse cites the Biblical accounts of the deaths by divine intervention of Ananias and Sapphira, a husband and wife who tried to cheat the apostles by withholding part of the money they had received for a piece of land which should have been given to the whole Christian community, and were both struck down by God for lying about their deceit (Acts 5:1–11); and also Achar the son of Karmi, who was struck down by God for stealing blessed things (1 Chronicles 2:7 – an obscure passage variously translated in different versions of the Bible). Nikon threatens the curse of God, spiritual and physical punishment, and perpetual torment. Presumably he had difficulty in finding more appropriate Biblical episodes, if there are any.

This book curse, with only minor variations of wording, appears to have been included in most of Nikon's many donation inscriptions in religious manuscripts and printed books – indeed, he appears to have been responsible for a considerable proportion of the book curses of seventeenth-century Russia. Nikon seems to have adopted this book curse, with its Biblical references, as a feature of his manuscript donation inscriptions before he became patriarch, although the reference to Ananias and Sapphira is also found in a shorter and slightly milder book curse at the end of the donation inscription in a 1645 multi-volume printed *Menaion* that was apparently placed in the library of the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod by Nikon, at that time Metropolitan of that city.⁸ The inscription ends:

кто будет забыв страх божий зделает святотатство и тех
книг хто возмет книгу и того судит Бог в день судныи
яко ж Ананию и Сапфиру

*[Whoever forgets the wrath of God and commits a sacrilege
and takes one of these books, that person will be judged at
the Day of Judgment as were Ananias and Sapphira].*

I can find no record that these curses with these Biblical references occur anywhere in Russian manuscripts or books except in those donated by Nikon.

The most wordy specimen of Nikon's book curse reads⁹:

Лета 7169 [1661] сию книгу положил в дом святого и живоноснаго Воскресения Господа бога нашего Иисуса Христа Новаго Иерусалима смиренный Никон, божиею милостию патриарх, а кто восхощет ю усвоити, яко же Ахарь сын Хармиев, или утаить, яко же Анания и Сапфира, да отымет от него господь бог святую свою милость и затворит двери святых щедрот своих, да придет на него неблагословение и клятва и казнь божия телесная и душевная в нынешнем веце и будущем вечная мука, а кто сие писание каким злым умышлением спишет от книги сея, да испишет его имя господь бог от книги животныя.

(MS MOSCOW, State Historical Museum, Synodal Collection, 1003, Weekly Gospels)

[In the year 1661 this book was placed in the House of the holy and life-bringing Resurrection of the Lord our God Jesus Christ of the New Jerusalem by the humble Nikon, by the grace of God Patriarch, and if anyone should seek to steal it, like Achar the son of Karmi, or hide it, like Ananias and Sapphira, then the Lord God shall withhold his holy grace and lock the doors of his holy munificence, and there shall come upon him the imprecation and curse and punishment of God, and eternal torment both physical and spiritual in this life and the next, and if anyone should copy any of the text of this book with evil intent then the Lord God will expunge his name from the Book of Life.]

This book curse is interesting in several ways. It does not appear to be recorded in Russia before Nikon and it always cites the two biblical episodes mentioned above, one from the Old Testament, the other from the New Testament. The references are simply to the names of the persons involved – the chapter and verse and contexts are not given. Both these episodes appear to be cited in order to justify

putting such a ferocious curse on book thieves, and were chosen because in the Biblical episodes cited, God had destroyed those who stole property that had been set aside for religious purposes.

This curse, with very minor differences but the same Biblical references, is also found in many other manuscripts, almost all liturgical or religious in content, as part of the donation inscription of Patriarch Nikon, a prolific donor of manuscripts, printed books, and 'holy objects' to churches, cathedrals, and monasteries. However, in neither of these Biblical episodes is there any mention of the theft or disclosure of the secret contents of books, and the *Secret of Secrets* is not remotely a religious work or 'holy object', even if it had been presented to a monastery library by a Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. It is certainly curious that a book curse otherwise inscribed only in 'holy' books or vessels used in the liturgy, altar cloths, icons, bells etc.), should have been used in the *Secret of Secrets*, thereby raising it by implication to the status of an ecclesiastically approved work.

Nikon was not the first to use these Biblical references in a curse, nor is it specific to Russia – the episode of Ananias and Sapphira is mentioned in a Latin curse in the tenth-century Noyon Cathedral sacramentary in the British Library (Add MS 82956) in which anyone stealing from the cathedral is condemned to burn in hell together with other figures of Biblical opprobrium Dathan and Abiram (opponents of Moses), and Judas Iscariot. This increases the possibility that Nikon took his book curse from a much earlier Western source, although admittedly the episode of Ananias and Sapphira has been a topic of lively theological debate since early Christianity and is still an occasional topic of discussion on the internet, both in English and in Russian.

Was Nikon trying to provide himself with a very tenuous scriptural justification for copying the obviously pagan and partly magical *Secret of Secrets* and protecting it with a lethal book curse which he normally employed only to protect Christian sacred objects? This could certainly be seen as inappropriate for a patriarch, and quite risky in view of the strength of the opposition to Nikon's reforms and the attempts by his enemies to find misdemeanours to accuse

him of, even if his book curse could conceivably be just a scholarly amusement following some West European models.

Avoiding ecclesiastical censure was also perhaps the reason Nikon omitted from his copy of the *Secret of Secrets* the onomantic table which predicted the outcome of conflicts by a form of numerology.¹⁰ This was certainly heretical and banned in 1551 in the *Stoglav*,¹¹ and was also, probably for the same reason, omitted from all copies of the Latin *Secretum secretorum*. Russian canon law with regard to magic and divination and other pagan ‘Hellenic’ practices, and which was also used in civil law cases up to the eighteenth century, was still derived from the Greek canons of the Quinisext Council convened in 692 (the Synod in Trullo – not accepted in the Western Church).

Patriarch Nikon’s book curse was not the only example of his use of Biblical texts in a curse. In 1658, just after he had vacated the patriarchate, Nikon was involved in a legal dispute over church land with a *stol’nik* (palace rank below boyar) Roman Fedorovič Boborykin, and attempted to intimidate his opponent by placing a curse on him. Boris Uspenskij, who has examined this episode in detail, points out that the manipulation of sacred texts so that they can be used for magical purposes constitutes semeiotic anti-behaviour, and thereby converts the text into an anti-prayer, i.e. a curse.¹² Uspenskij discusses Nikon’s probable knowledge of the various kinds of semeiotic inversion in Russian folk magic but favours, as a possible influence on Nikon, an obscure ritual in the Greek Orthodox Church (found in the 13th –17th cc.) which Nikon, as an ardent grecophile, may well have been aware of. This elaborate ritual – more magical than religious – is called in Greek *psalmokatara* ‘psalm curse’ and was used to anathematize criminals and heretics and condemn them to death from a painful disease.¹³

In the case of Boborykin, Nikon put together excerpts from Psalms 35, 69, 109 (Russian 34, 68, 108) in which King David calls upon God to protect him from, or punish, evil and deceitful and slanderous enemies. Psalmomancy in various forms was in fact widely used in magical procedures among Jews and Christians, including Russian Orthodox,¹⁴ and when Nikon included this concatenation of psalm

fragments in a church service in the presence of Boborykin, the latter must have understood, or was told, that this was a veiled curse aimed at him. Boborykin retaliated by making the very serious formal accusation that Nikon had placed a curse on the Tsar and all his family. At the investigation which led to his removal from office Nikon denied this and said that his purpose was in fact to attack Boborykin himself.

Patriarch Nikon (1605–1681), seventh Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, was head of the Russian Orthodox Church from 1652 to 1666, in the reign of Tsar Aleksej Mihailovič (r. 1645–1676). He was of humble origin, a scholar and statesman and in many ways a reformer, in particular, in his attempts to bring the texts and practices of the Russian Orthodox Church more into line with the Greek. He was a friend and close adviser to the tsar, and for some time almost equal to the tsar in power. However, he was very authoritarian and made many enemies among the more conservative members of the court and the clergy such as the vituperative polemicist, the Archpriest Avvakum. Nikon was eventually removed from his post by a synod of bishops and foreign patriarchs, exiled, and reduced to the status of a simple monk. His reforms were nevertheless enacted, and he was pardoned in his old age.

During his patriarchate Nikon assumed control of the state printing house (Pečatnyj Dvor) and installed like-minded scholars with some knowledge of Latin and Greek (often from areas in present-day Ukraine or Belarus) as the *spravščiki*, the ‘correctors’ who were the senior officials responsible for what was published. I mention this, not as an aside, but because at least two of these important officials also owned manuscripts of the Russian *Secret of Secrets* (the priest Nikifor Semeonov, and later the ill-fated Silvester Medvedev). The eccentric monk historian Timofej Kamenevič-Rvovskij (Petrov), of the same period and with links to this circle, also made a copy of the Russian *Secret of Secrets* with emendations and comments on the text.¹⁵ It is assumed that Tsar Aleksej Mihailovič himself had a copy, since he quotes it in correspondence.¹⁶

All of these, from the Tsar downwards, appear to have accepted the *Secret of Secrets* as a genuine work on statecraft and science

written by Aristotle. It seems the Printing House was even at one point preparing to publish it as a printed book – it appears in the form of an accurate list of the chapter headings from the *Secret of Secrets* in a printed catalogue of works considered worthy of translation and publication, without a title, but ascribed to Aristotle.¹⁷ The acceptance in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Russia of the *Secret of Secrets* as an authentic work of Aristotle is less anachronistic than it might at first seem. The fact that the *Secret of Secrets* was dismissed from the corpus of authentic works of Aristotle by most Italian humanist scholars fairly early in the Renaissance does not mean that it was universally regarded as spurious. On the contrary, it continued to be very popular. The last scholarly Latin edition was published in 1555 by Francesco Storella,¹⁸ but vernacular editions continued to appear as late as the eighteenth century, and copies of the work, both in Latin and vernacular translations, could be found in the libraries of scholars, universities, prelates, and rulers all over Europe. For example, the last printed version of an English translation of the *Secret of Secrets* was published in 1719. Its elaborate title page and dedication are worth quoting:¹⁹

Aristotle's secret of secrets contracted; being the sum of his advice to Alexander the Great, about the preservation of health and government. Formerly translated out of the original Greek [sic!] into Latin, and divers other languages; and being very scarce, is now faithfully rendred into English, for the good of mankind. Collected by a gentleman, a lover of his country, Edinburgh?, 1719.

The Dedication on the verso of title page reads:

Unto the Right Honourable Sir David Dalrymple of Hails, His Majesty's Advocate, and Dean of Faculty, and to the remanent members of the Honourable Faculty of Advocates; this second edition of Aristotle's advice to Alexander the Great, is humbly presented and dedicated by S. A. B.²⁰

This continuing level of interest in England and Scotland in the eighteenth century may perhaps indicate that the interest shown by the Tsar, Patriarch, and the educated Russian elite in church and state in the seventeenth century is evidence that the *Secret of Secrets*, with or without book curses, was not so much a Russian anachronism as a potentially important influence in the history of Russian political thought in the turbulent seventeenth century, and certainly not merely an archaic medieval curiosity associated with the sect of Judaizers of the fifteenth/sixteenth century in Novgorod and Moscow, as the *Secret of Secrets* has often been portrayed.

NOTES

¹ The classic book-length study is Marc Drogin's *Anathema!: Mediaeval Scribes and the History of Book Curses*, Totowa NJ, 1983. It does not mention Russian book curses.

² For detailed discussion of this passage see W. F. Ryan and Moshe Taube, *The Secret of Secrets: The East Slavic Version. Introduction, Text, Annotated Translation, and Slavic Index*, Warburg Institute Studies and Texts, 7, London, 2019, §V.2.iv. 'Aristotle as Prophet and Angel'.

³ See C. B. Schmitt and D. Knox, *Pseudo-Aristoteles Latinus: A Guide to Latin Works Falsely Attributed to Aristotle Before 1500*, Warburg Institute Surveys & Texts 12, London, 1985, p. 56. The authors list 96 pseudo-Aristotelian texts and estimate that more spurious Aristotelian works were read in this period than genuine works of Aristotle. There is no comparable survey of vernacular *spuria*.

⁴ See Moshe Taube, 'The Kievan Jew Zechariah and the Astronomical Works of the Judaizers', in W. Moskovich et al., eds, *Jews and Slavs*, 3, Jerusalem, 1995, pp. 168–98. See also Ryan and Taube, *Secret of Secrets*, §IV.3.

⁵ The Slavic version of this passage is a fairly faithful rendering of the Hebrew which, in its turn, is a fairly faithful rendering of the Arabic:

[Paris, BnF, ms. arabe 2421, f. 4a–b]

انباتك عقي الي ئة موتك مل اى ناعم لاكل تزوع وة روظ حمل اارسل اكل تزم رانام او (0.4.8)
هلل ام هلل عجي مل ام لى لوع لطي ف (0.4.9) ني رب جت مة نى رل فو نى دس فم روج يدي اب اذھ

ארס תחצפו ואל עזא יזל דהעל תרתח דק נוקיפ דמפל מהצטרא לו דמל על אל
הרס עזא נמפ (0.4.11) יל דהע אמק הציפח יפ ליל דהע אנו (0.4.10) יל הלל דהע
התמחב אנו יל דמל עזא דל עמ עבא עאוס נע נמ ארי ע והפ

(0.4.8) *And indeed I only encoded the restricted secrets for you and revealed hidden meanings to you, so that this book of ours would not fall into the hands of tyrannical corruptors and arrogant evil princes (0.4.9) For then they would have access to what God did not make them worthy of knowing, nor did He allow them to understand, so I would have betrayed the covenant that was imposed on me and exposed a secret that God revealed to me. (0.4.10) And I entrust you to keep it just as it was entrusted to me (0.4.11) And whoever discloses his secret is not safe from a bad and swift consequence [or punishment]. May God protect you and us in His mercy.*

[Translation by Moshe Taube. Section numbering as in Ryan and Taube, *Secret of Secrets*]

[M. Gaster, 'The Hebrew Version of the Secretum Secretorum: A Medieval Treatise ascribed to Aristotle', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1907–8.]

סיריה ידיל הז ונירפס לופי יתלבל סימותחה סינינעה יתלשמו תורזופמה תודוסה יתזמר סנמאו.
סניבהלה סהב הצר אלו ותוא תעדל תושר לאה סהל ותנ אלש ועדיו. סירבגתמה סיעשרהו סידספמה
ימו. הז לע יתוא ועיבשהש ומכ רעבישמ ינאו. ילא לאה ותוא הליגש דוס הלגמו תירב רפמ יתייה זאו
וימחרב ונליציו רליצי לאה. רהמ שנועה עורמ חטבומ וניא ונפצמ הלגיו ודוס עידויש

[Gaster's English translation]

'These various and scattered secrets have I merely indicated by tokens, and the sealed things have I clothed in likenesses, lest this our book fall into the hands of those proud men who destroy and of the wicked who covet power. They will then see that permission has been withheld from them to understand it, nor was it our intent that they know of it. And I would be breaking the covenant by revealing the secret which God has revealed to me. And I conjure thee, just as I have been conjured upon this subject (not to reveal it), and whoever knows this secret and reveals its hidden meaning is sure of a swift, bad punishment, from which the Lord keep thee and us and grant us mercy.'

I am very grateful to my friend and occasional collaborator Professor Moshe Taube for reading drafts of this article and sending me this note which adds clarity to the earlier history of this book curse.

⁶ There is no mention of the book curse in the entry for this manuscript in the most modern catalogue of the Synodal collection: T. N. Protas'eva,

Opisanie rukopisej Sinodal'nogo sobranija (ne vošedših v opisanie A. V. Gorskogo i K. I. Nevostrueva), čast' I, Moscow, 1970, pp. 11–12.

⁷ L. M. Kostjuhina, 'Zapisi XIII–XVIII vv. na rukopisjah Voskresenskogo monastyrja', *Arheografičeskij ežegodnik za 1960 god*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 230–90; Vladimir Pavlovič Bogdanov, *Zapisi na knigah kak istočnik po istorii knižnoi kul'tury (na materiale staropečatnyh kirilličeskikh izdanij konca XV–XVII vekov)*, 2023 (online), pp. 94–132; G. M. Zelenskaja and S. K. Sevast'janova, 'Korpus nadpisej Patriarha Nikona na "svjatyh veščah": voprosy tekstologii i arhitekturno-hudožestvennogo oformlenija', *Germe-nevika drevnerusskoj literatury*, sbornik 20, Moscow, 2021, pp. 479–547. I am very grateful to my friend Professor Andrej Toporkov for his invaluable and extensive bibliographical assistance in preparing this article, and in particular for drawing important recent publications to my attention.

⁸ Service Menaion for September, Moscow, Pečatnyj Dvor, 1645. See Bogdanov, *Zapisi*, p. 238 (n. 7 above).

⁹ Quoted from Kostjuhina, 'Zapisi', No. 44.

¹⁰ See Ryan and Taube, *Secret of Secrets*, §V.2.viii and *ad indicem*.

¹¹ The Church Council of 100 chapters, 1551, Ch. 14 Question 22 'On evil heresies'. See Ryan and Taube, *Secret of Secrets*, p. 10, and W. F. Ryan, 'Ivan the Terrible, the *Stoglav*, and Russian Magic', in *Russian Magic at the British Library: Books, Manuscripts, Scholars, Travellers*, The Panizzi Lectures 2005, London, 2005, pp. 43–68, *passim*.

¹² Boris Uspenskij, 'Ėpizod iz dela Patriarha Nikona (Stranička iz istorii grečesko-russkikh cerkovnyh svjazej)', in Boris Uspenskij, *Ėtjudy o russkoj istorii*, Azbuka, St Petersburg, pp. 371–92.

¹³ The details of this ritual are given in Uspenskij, 'Ėpizod', pp. 378–80.

¹⁴ A. A. Turilov, 'Biblejskie knigi v narodnoj kul'ture vostočnyh slavjan (K istorii Psaltyri kak gadatel'noj i magičeskoj knigi)', *Jews and Slavs*, 2, Jerusalem, 1994, pp. 77–86; also Ryan, *Bathhouse*, see index s.v. 'Psalm'.

¹⁵ Moshe Taube and William Francis Ryan, "Chancellor Timofej Kamenevič and the Russification of the Тайная тайных", *Sub specie aeternitatis: Sbornik naučnyh statej k 60-letiju Vadima Borisoviča Krysko*, ed. by I. M. Ladyženskij, M. A. Puzina, IRJa im. V. V. Vinogradova RAN, Moscow, 2021, pp. 779–808.

¹⁶ Ryan and Taube, *Secret of Secrets*, p. 65.

¹⁷ *Oglavlenie knig, kto ih složil* ("Table of Contents of Books and Who Wrote Them"), Moscow, 1665–6.

¹⁸ See Charles B. Schmitt, ‘Francesco Storella and the Last Printed Edition of the Latin *Secretum Secretorum* (1555)’, in *Pseudo-Aristotle, the Secret of Secrets. Sources and Influences*, ed. W. F. Ryan and Charles B. Schmitt, Warburg Institute Surveys IX, Warburg Institute, London, 1982, pp. 124–31. For a more general but thorough survey of the diffusion of the *Secret of Secrets* in the West see Steven J. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets. The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages*, Ann Arbor, MI, 2003. See also *Trajectoires européennes du Secretum secretorum du Pseudo-Aristote (XIIIe–XVIe siècle)*, ed. by Margaret Bridges, Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, Jean-Yves Tilliette, Turnhout, 2015.

¹⁹ This is the ‘Walwyn’ version, appendix B in Mahmoud Manzalaoui, *Secretum Secretorum: Nine English Versions*, Early English Text Society 276, Oxford, 1977, Vol. 1, Text (Vol. 2, which was to contain the notes was, alas, not written). The Walwyn version was originally published in London in 1702 by H. Walwyn. It excludes several sections of the original *Secret of Secrets*, and all the occult material, but preserves ‘Aristotle’s’ letter containing the book curse to protect the book from ‘infidels’. Manzalaoui did not record this Scottish second edition.

²⁰ The dedicatee was Sir David Dalrymple, 1st Baronet of Hailes (1665–1721), Scottish advocate, prominent politician, collector, and bibliophile, who sat in the Parliaments of both Scotland and England. He was one of the Commissioners who negotiated the union of Scotland and England in 1702, and again in 1706. S.A.B. has not been identified.

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BIO

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