

Father Ioann Veniaminov—A Self-taught Scholar from the Aleutian Islands

Panu Hallamaa

In 1835 the Imperial Academy of Sciences received for its consideration a description of a grammar of a language from the most remote part of the Russian Empire, written by a simple parish priest from Unalashka in Russian America. This work was called «An attempt to describe the grammar of the Fox Island Aleut language», written by Pastor Ioann Veniaminov, who had been living among the Aleuts between 1824 and 1834. Veniaminov's educational background was a humble one—he had only attended the Irkutsk Spiritual Seminary prior to his ordination as a priest and assignment to the local church of Annunciation. Yet he was to make a great impression on the community of learned men in Russia during the next decade and a half.

In its 1836 report, the Imperial Academy of Sciences deemed the work of Fr. Veniaminov worthy of one of the Demidov prizes for the year 1835, though only a half a prize or an «incentive prize», probably due to the fact that there was no sufficiently competent linguist in St. Petersburg to evaluate his work or to dedicate time to its evaluation.

The work of Mr. Veniaminov has been arranged according to a systematical order, which he has applied in a rigorous fashion, as is already evident from its table of contents; steps commonly followed in the construction of grammars have been followed in this work. Also two detailed conjugation tables have been appended to it, one illustrating the prefixal conjugation of verbs, [and] the other one illustrating the infixal conjugation of verbs. The Russian or Church Slavonic alphabet has been chosen as the basis for the orthography of the Aleut words, as is appropriate, with the addition of some letters; in addition certain signs have been used for the marking of stress and similar purposes. At the end of the work the author has added a sample of an Aleut dictionary, likewise compiled by himself.

Such is the opinion of Academician [Isaac-Jacob] *Schmidt* on this work; however, he cannot engage himself in the critical appraisal of a grammar describing a language which is completely foreign to him. But the systematical order which characterizes the work of the esteemed author, a wish to obtain from him a dictionary of this dialect of the Aleut language, which will soon become completely obsolete, highly praiseworthy work in the research orientation which has been recently adopted in comparative linguistics, and finally, the most complimentary reports from such persons, who have had the opportunity to observe the industriousness of the noble-minded Fr. Veniaminov, both for the benefit of science, by collecting interesting information, and by tending the flock entrusted to his care and taking care of its welfare by disseminating useful

knowledge and moral enlightenment—all this has given reason for the Academy to award an incentive prize to this work.

Those who had furnished the Academy of Sciences with the most complimentary reports on the activities of Fr. Veniaminov most certainly included two eminent persons, Rear-Admiral Friedrich Lütke, whose travel account and atlas from his round-the-world voyage, published in 1835, was the foremost of the works awarded the Demidov prize in 1836, and Ferdinand Friedrich Georg Ludwig von Wrangell, the Highest Administrator (*главный правитель*) of the Russian colonies in America during 1830–35, and soon to become a rear admiral, too. Both men had seen results of Veniaminov's linguistic field work as it was in progress. Lütke included elements of Veniaminov's Aleut grammar and samples of Aleut vocabulary in his travel account (Lütke 1835: 237–247), and von Wrangell had included word lists, undoubtedly from Veniaminov, and Veniaminov's observations on the Aleuts when he had sent his own essays on the Russian colonies in America to Karl Ernst von Baër, who then compiled from them a book entitled *Statistische und ethnographische Nachrichten über die Russischen Besitzungen an der Nordwestküste von Amerika* and published under von Wrangell's name in 1839. Von Wrangell had been so impressed with Veniaminov's abilities that he had insisted that the latter become the resident priest of Novo-Arkhangel'sk, the capital of Russian America, and thus was responsible for the fact that Veniaminov would be able to do first-hand field work with yet another native tribe of Russian America, the Kolosh, who are today known by their own ethnonym as the Tlingit.

Who was this man, who was to make a lasting impression on both Russian and international science from a remote place in the North Pacific, which did not offer even trees for the building of houses not to speak of any other usual preconditions for the practice of science?

Veniaminov was born Ivan Evseevich Popov in a small village named Anga near Irkutsk in 1797. His father died in 1803 when young Ivan was five and a half years old. At the age of 9 he was sent to study at the Irkutsk seminary, where he was given a new surname by the rector of the seminary, who wanted to avoid all the confusion arising from the fact that there were numerous students in his institution whose name was Ivan Popov. Thus around 1814 Ivan Evseevich Popov of Anga (as he had been called until then) became Ivan Evseevich Veniaminov, in honor of the recently deceased Bishop Veniamin of Irkutsk. (Gromov 1863: 26–28; Veniaminov 1863: 163; Barsukov 1883: 5–6.)

In the spring of 1817 Veniaminov had completed his studies and was ready to be sent to the Moscow Spiritual Academy, when he decided to marry. The forces of nature intervened at this point in his favor. The ice of the river Angara were just about to break up, and Veniaminov at the seminary was on one side of the river, and the rector in his residence on

the other side. No communication was possible for several days, and during this time Veniaminov married, without the consent of his rector, who no doubt would have denied permission for this ceremony. (Veniaminov 1863: 163.)

For some years Veniaminov served as a member of clergy in the church of Annunciation in Irkutsk, until in 1823 something unexpected happened in his parish. A man named Ivan Kriukov, who had spent 40 years among the Aleuts in the American colonies, came to Irkutsk, and Veniaminov served as the father confessor for him and his family. At the same time Bishop Mikhail of Irkutsk had received orders to find a priest to be sent to the island of Unalashka in America. Everyone in the diocese refused to go, and it seemed that the bishop would be unable to carry out his orders. Then, as Kriukov was bidding farewell to the bishop, Veniaminov happened to be present, and Kriukov once more told the bishop how eagerly the Aleuts pray and listen to the word of God—which Veniaminov no doubt had heard from him several times—when «suddenly, to be frank, a burning desire to go to such people filled me completely». But the bishop, who had just been in a difficult situation with no one willing to go to America, upon hearing of Veniaminov's wish to go, only replied: «We'll see.» (Gromov 1863: 28–29; Veniaminov 1863: 164–165.)

Almost as soon as he had arrived in Unalashka in 1824, Veniaminov decided that he should try to translate into the language of the Aleuts «something from the Holy Scriptures», and thus, in 1826, he first translated a short catechism and then, from 1828, the Gospel of St. Matthew. When Veniaminov finally was able to get the catechism printed, it turned out that «due to certain unavoidable reasons a great many printing errors crept into it, and therefore I decided to try to have it printed again, overseen personally by myself» (Veniaminov to N. A. Protasov, June 28th, 1839). It may have been that the number of printing errors in the first catechism was so great that Veniaminov saw it unfit for distribution and destroyed the entire printing, as no surviving copy is known to exist (Krauss 1990: 207).

At the end of 1838, having spent the last four years in Novo-Arkhangel'sk, Veniaminov left for St. Petersburg, arriving in Kronstadt on June 22, the following year (Barsukov 1883: 105–106). Here he submitted to the Holy Synod his «Review of the Orthodox Church in the Russian settlements in America, with my thoughts concerning the improvement of her condition». Apparently this report, though without Veniaminov's suggestions, was printed by the *Журналь министерства народнаго просвѣщенія* (Ж.М.Н.П.) in 1840, where it was introduced with the following words by the editors (extract):

In the vast land of Russia there are still half-savage peoples, which still have a long way to go towards enlightenment, they are still on the very first step on this

way. But our hearts nevertheless rejoice with the knowledge that year by year the divine light of the Gospel is spread further and further among them. With their simple, childlike mind they receive the eternal truths of God's saving revelation, which henceforth shall serve as a reliable guide in the progress of their intellectual life and which at this moment enhance their moral life, providing them with happiness of the heart even before their minds have comprehended the benefits of education, which indeed is necessary in order to consolidate the good of the society, but which truly is useful only through the influence of the holy faith.

The peoples, living in Northern America and adjacent islands under the sceptre of the Russian Empire present us with such a comforting sight, of which the article written by Archpriest Ioann Veniaminov and presented here offers us a proof [...] (*Ж.М.Н.П.*, vol. 26, № 6, pp. 15–16.)

Subsequently, the article was published as a monograph in the same year by the Academy of Sciences, and in 1857 by Sturdza (chapter 6, pp. 200–242), and finally in *Творения Иннокентія* in 1886. The publication by the Academy of Sciences was reviewed by the *Литературная газета* (№ 5, 1841, p. 20), with the following words of introduction:

We still know so little about the state of Christianity in Russian America that even the minutest information on it, even though it be incomplete and sometimes mathematically imprecise, is graciously accepted by our experts and received with joy. Therefore we can hope that Mr. Veniaminov's book, the subject of which is such a new one and close to the heart of every Russian, would gain the full attention and acceptance of the reading public, and all the more so, because it has been written with such care and such attention to details; his account is based partly on facts, partly on reports by eyewitnesses and on the observations of the author himself, who has lived there for more than ten years and has been in recent times one of the most zealous workers in the holy task of converting the savages into the path of salvation offered by the true faith. (*Кони* 1841: 20.)

In conclusion of its review, the *Литературная газета* (№ 6, p. 20) states the following:

We have with joy read the announcement of the forthcoming work *Записки объ островахъ Уналашкинскаго отдѣла* by the esteemed Fr. Veniaminov, and we wait impatiently for its publication. The name of the author and his proficiency in this subject matter are a guarantee of the usefulness of these notes and of the pleasure we hope they will provide us.

This massive work, published in 1840 in three volumes and containing the results of fourteen years of data gathering, was soon to receive rave reviews from the press in St. Petersburg. The first volume describes the Unalashka area, which also includes some of the mainland from «Aliaska» (modern Alaska Peninsula), from the point of view of the natural sciences. Veniaminov has included in this part observations from several explorers who visited the area before and during his stay there.

The second part, which attracted more attention from the reviewers, describes the inhabitants of the area in detail, covering both the material culture and the intellectual aspects of these people, including their character, customs, religious faiths, traditions, etc. The third part contains Fr. Iakov Netsvetov's short description of the Atkan Aleuts and Veniaminov's somewhat longer notes on the Kolosh.

The more matter-of-fact style reviews include one published in the *Журналъ министерства народнаго просвѣщенія* and another one in the report of the Academy of Sciences on the occasion of the awarding of the Demidov prizes, in which Baron von Wrangell expresses his views on Veniaminov's work. The first-mentioned anonymous review first gives some basic information on the Russian colonies in America and the position of the Unalashka area within that territory. Thereafter follows a review of Veniaminov's description from the point of view of the natural sciences. Von Wrangell, whose career in Russian America spanned more than a decade and a half and who thus intimately knew the area, was more critical in his comments on this part of Veniaminov's work (von Wrangell 1841):

As we now proceed to a closer examination of the first part of the work, it must be pointed out that the it contains detailed information that is now for the first time being presented to the public and deserves all the more attention from geographers, naturalists and hydrographers, because it deals with a country on which we until now have had only very little information available. [...] In order to render his notes more complete, the author has, however, added to his own observations also those made by learned travellers, although in my opinion science would have gained more if the material contained in the notes of Veniaminov had on the contrary been used in the works of these learned men.—The merits of Veniaminov's book are not at all related to the completeness and systematical order of presentation, but specifically to the richness of the materials in it, and if the author has had as his objective to compile a complete, systematically arranged description of the islands of the Unalashka district, then he has not achieved this goal.—He does even himself, however, write in his foreword, that his notes «are nothing more than materials which have not been subjected to any kind of treatment whatsoever».—The second shortcoming in the first part of the work being reviewed I consider to be the lack of indication of the sources that have been used for its facts and observations: we are not able to see when they are based on the observations of the author himself and when we are being presented with matters that have been heard from other persons. (von Wrangell 1841: 262–263.)

von Wrangell does nevertheless give Veniaminov credit also concerning the first part of the book:

While living permanently for ten years in the Unalashka district, pastor Veniaminov has undertaken many journeys on the islands he has described, and having a mind very keen for observations, he has directed his attention to all subjects of study that have appeared before his eyes, collected meticulously

information from the Natives, whose language he is able to understand, and thus he has been in the position to take in a massive amount of facts and observations, incomparably more than what has been possible for other travellers, who have only visited Unalashka, so to say, in transit, and this has enabled him to compensate for the insufficiencies in his scientific training. (Ibid., p. 263.)

Concerning the second, ethnographic part of Veniaminov's *Записки*, von Wrangell states the following:

It seems that what comes to the reliability of observations, the clarity of presentation and the multifaceted and detailed nature of description, this part of the work leaves nothing to be desired. This rich collection of facts, with which we are able to achieve a complete understanding of the character, customs and the real way of life of a people in transit from the state of savagery to civilization, is all the more valuable, because the author neither repeats observations that are already known nor relates the stories and thoughts of others, but communicates to us the results of his own studies, in which he has been engaged for ten years among the people he describes. We dare say that no future explorers will find anything to add to this collection of data on the characteristics and customs of the Aleuts; in any case Veniaminov's diligence, patience and sharp faculties of observation will serve as a guarantee of this [conviction]. (Ibid., p. 269–270.)

von Wrangell comments only briefly on the third part, and in that part only on the «Observations on the Kolosh», but one can sense from his words an unequivocal pleasure on obtaining information on a people among which he had lived during his tenure as the Highest Administrator and of which there was virtually nothing in the book published under his name (von Wrangell 1839):

Although these observations, as far as their completeness is concerned, do not equal the description of the Aleuts, they are more interesting and important in the sense that their subject matter is a people that is still independent and of which until now we have had no reliable information, a people, who have retained their oral traditions, customs and beliefs much more intact than the Aleuts have. (von Wrangell 1841: 271.)

Whereas the more scientifically oriented reviewers, such as von Wrangell and the *Журналъ министерства народнаго просвѣщенія* drew their readers attention equally to both the first and second part of Veniaminov's book, a journal representing a more popular approach, that is *Маяк* («Maiak» 'lighthouse') of S. Burachek, concentrated only on the second part. After the usual introductory information, Burachek writes:

Civilization and enlightenment—and I am not the first one to state this—have crippled man in Europe, parts of Asia and in large parts of America to the extent that we have completely lost our faith in any goodness and sublimeness in man, and we shall no doubt soon create our own mythology, which consists of the

exploits of philanthropy, honesty, modesty, truthfulness and purity—contrary to the ancients, who created their mythologies basing them on the exploits of sin and lawlessness [i.e. cunningness and shrewdness]—for we have already long ago transformed their mythology into our daily reality, and we are ready to consider all unselfish acts as fables, at least our Messrs. aestheticians have solemnly given up all that is good, virtuous and respectable in mankind, considering such things impossibilities, and grant only one possibility for man: *youthful licentiousness* and *savage violence*, which will *ravage* the mind of the trusting reader.

How surprised we then are, when the author of the book we are reviewing leads us into a completely different world and shows us living people, before whom we are saved from shame only by the fact that they belong to another world, not to our world. And these people are—Aleuts! (Burachek 1841: 217.)

Burachek is also impressed with the «extraordinary truthfulness, profoundness, exactness of inquiry and the plain style of writing» that is characteristic of Fr. Veniaminov's *Зануцки*. Having stated this, he embarks upon a thirty-page string of quotes from the description of the abilities, character, customs and religious faith of the Aleuts, including, of course, a synopsis of the Orthodox missionary work in the Russian territories in America.

Burachek was of the opinion that Veniaminov's *Зануцки* was such an important work that «it will surely be translated into all European languages even before Russians will through their experiences be assured of its rare merits». This was not to be the case, though. However, it was noted by Adolf Erman's journal in Berlin in 1842 in a long review (Lowe 1842) comprising 37 pages, of which 12 pages were devoted to Part I, 18 pages to Part II, and 7 pages to the Kolosh. This review was published seven years later in French in the *Nouvelles Annales des Voyages et des Sciences géographiques* in Paris. One curious thing about this review is that the «Ugalakhmiut» (i.e. the Eyak) are expressly mentioned in the list of the tribes of Russian America and thus introduced to the Western world, yet American science never noted them before 1930, when they were rediscovered by Frederica de Laguna. It may also be noted that it took 142 years for Burachek's prediction to become at least partially true: *Зануцки* was finally published in English in 1984 under the title *Notes on the Islands of the Unalashka District*.

In 1846 Veniaminov's two linguistic works, viz. «An Attempt to Construct a Grammar of the Aleut Language of the Fox Islands» (Veniaminov 1846a) and «Observations on the Kolosh and Kad'iak Languages and to Some Extent also Other Languages of Russian America» (Veniaminov 1846b), were published in St. Petersburg by the Academy of Sciences. A review of these by «P. B.» was published in the *Журналъ министерства народнаго просвѣщенія* in 1848, but already the previous year Hans Georg Conon von Gabelentz (1847) had mentioned them in his review of literature on the languages of the North American Indian tribes:

The extreme north of America is inhabited by an Eskimo tribe which can be found throughout Greenland, the Labrador coast, the mouth of the MacKenzie River, in the Bering Strait, in Alaschka [Alaska Peninsula], in Kad'iak and in the extreme northeastern corner of Asia near the sedentary Chukchi. Only the languages found on the northwestern coast and islands of America, that is, Aleut, Kenai, Ugaliakhmiut and Kolosh seem to be distinct from the first-mentioned and also distinct from each other. The grammars of the Aleut, Kolosh and Kad'iak languages recently published by the Russian missionary Veniaminov shall undoubtedly shed light on this matter. The American Missionary Society does not seem to have extended its activities to the inhabitants of this cold region. (von Gabelentz 1847: 514.)

Previous attempts to chart the interrelationships of the languages in North America had mostly been based on word lists and comparisons of vocabulary. Now there was about to be a possibility for a change. As the *Журналь министерства народного просвещения* writes in 1848:

It would be unnecessary to assure our readers of the reliability of the information presented by the author and especially of his knowledge of the Aleut language, since he himself is a native [*sic*]. The linguistic data gathered by him no longer consist of collections of word lists, which is evident already from the name of the book; but the dictionaries which the author has put together, especially his Aleut dictionary, have been supplied with explanations which provide introductions to the etymologies of the language. For the Aleut grammar the author has used the model of the Russian grammar, but as he at the same time has consulted his own, living, practical knowledge of the Aleut language, he has had at every step to make a note of the sharp differences with respect to that model and those circumstances, which do not conform to that model. [...] Thus due to the author's living knowledge of the language the [grammatical] model foreign to this language has not been able to conceal the natural characteristics of this language. There is no doubt that the grammar of this language could not be reworked in a different way; the attempt of the author will as such undoubtedly serve as a most excellent aid in the achievement of this objective, and it will also facilitate the comprehension of the materials contained in the dictionaries and the literary experiments in the Aleut language. [...]

Even if the Aleut grammar did not have anything to do with Americans [i.e. American Indians], it is nevertheless a remarkable work within our scientific literature, since it forms the first specimen of the structure of «polysynthetic» languages. It must be noted that the progress of linguistics is to a great extent dependent upon the knowledge of languages such as this. It has contributed to the emancipation of linguistics from being limited exclusively to the Graeko-Roman conception of grammar, and it has gradually taught linguists to penetrate into linguistic facts without prejudices. This experiment, which is important from the point of view of the whole history of science, is possible to repeat, and every linguist ought to repeat it, and one of the most suitable languages for such experiments is the Aleut language. In such an experiment it is not possible to apply any preconceived theories of language, and the scholar will notice, that he will have to base his research only on the facts of the language under scrutiny; through this he will train himself in the use of the analytic method and in a strict deduction which is not distorted by preconceived ideas. [...] [Such experiments] may bear fruit not only in the study of the languages of non-Russian peoples but

perhaps also in the study of our fatherland's own languages, which is by no means free from theoretical and other prejudices.

The review of the second work, on the other languages of Russian America, consists mainly of a repetition of what Veniaminov had already said in the third part of his *Зануски* (Part III, p. 144), namely that

All the languages of our part of America are divided, on the basis of their structure (in as much as it has been possible to ascertain) [сколько можно было узнать] into two main types, which differ completely from one another, namely, into the Unalashkan type and the Kolosh type.

Then follows a quote, which is almost identical to what Veniaminov says after the above statement in his *Зануски*, outlining the differences (four main differences) and the one similarity (the numerals in the Kad'iak and Kolosh languages). The reviewer fails to notice that his quotes are virtually identical to what Veniaminov wrote already in his *Зануски*, and, in saying that «having grasped these data and taking into account the above-quoted words of Mr. Gabelentz, one must conclude that the Unalashkan type of our author belong to the Eskimo stock», he is also guilty of overlooking Veniaminov's remark in *Зануски* (part III, p. 145), that «according to the observations of Mr. Chamisso the Kad'iak language is a Greenlandic language (cf. Kotzebue's travel account)». (One must remember here, that Veniaminov included all the Eskimo languages in Russia under the term «Kad'iak language»). However, whether or not Chamisso or someone else had mentioned to Veniaminov of Rasmus Rask's conclusion from 1819 that Aleut and Greenlandic belong to the same language family, is yet to be documented.

Veniaminov's merits, nevertheless, do include the realization that Aleut and the Eskimo languages belong to the same language group (if not to the same language family). He was also possibly the first to suggest that most of the American Indian languages in the region he studied belong to a single group on the basis of their structure, anticipating their grouping into the Athabascan-Eyak-Tlingit family. To Veniaminov's discredit one may say that he does not seem to have known the basic method of historical-comparative linguistics already well formulated by the time his linguistic works were being printed—the method of establishing sound correspondences between cognate words. But perhaps he no longer had time to work on such additional evidence after his stay in St. Petersburg and Moscow ended in 1841.

But why were Veniaminov's linguistic works not published earlier? The notes of the meeting of the Academy of Sciences from September 16, 1836, indicate that

A letter from September 10th was read, with which Rear Admiral Lütke has sent in the name of Fr. Veniaminov of Novo-Arkhangel'sk a Dictionary of the Aleut

language, serving as an addition to the Grammar of the said language, also compiled by the same author. The meeting decided to publish the Dictionary together with the Grammar, the printing of which has already commenced. (Ж.М.Н.П., vol. XII, № X, pp. 321, 1836.)

Did Veniaminov perhaps advise the Academy of Sciences to postpone the printing of these works when he saw that Aleut materials could not be successfully printed without his supervision (cf. Veniaminov to N. A. Protasov, June 28th, 1839)?

Of Veniaminov's religious works in the Aleut language, the «Aleut Catechism» and the «Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven» (the original title in Russian, from 1833, having been *Краткое показание пути въ Царствіе Небесное для Алеутъ*), were printed in 1840 in St. Petersburg and Moscow, respectively, under Veniaminov's supervision, and the Aleut Gospel of St. Matthew finally in 1848. Understandably it is difficult, if not impossible, to find contemporary reviews of these works.

Although Veniaminov's merits in linguistics and ethnography are solid and lasting and will remain so (as has often been pointed out by Dr. Michael Krauss and the late Professor Knut Bergsland), it is within the sphere of religion that his impact has been the greatest. The Holy Synod had commissioned him to write «Instructions to Priests Assigned to Convert Adherents of Different Faiths and (partly) to Guide those Recently Converted to the Christian Faith.» Although not printed until 1881 (and reprinted in 1886), these instructions were used throughout Russia as guidelines of missionary work (Barsukov 1883: 116). A manuscript version of this document was found in the Valamo Monastery in Finland, addressed to Fr. Iakov Netsvetov as he was being assigned to serve on the Yukon in 1845. The following quote illustrates the importance Veniaminov put on linguistic and translation work and to the efforts to teach literacy to the Natives:

The translation of one of the Books of the Holy Bible into the language of your parishioners, and the teaching of them, at least 50 persons, to read (the translated text) will serve as a sufficient proof of your diligence and be an accomplishment, which is worthy of the highest awards granted to clergymen. (*Наставление*, MS, p. 17.)

The most popular and widespread of Veniaminov's writings, however, has been the Russian version of his *Краткое показание*, renamed *Указание пути въ Царствіе Небесное*, published for the first time in St. Petersburg in 1841. At least 40 printings of this work—as far as I have been able to document—appeared in Russia until the Revolution. The printing history is a mess, since the work was printed in at least four different places, and most publishers ignored the other publications in the numbering of their editions. In the 1990s this work

again became popular in Russia, with the 1990, 1991 and 1997 editions totalling 200,000 copies, not including at least two printings for which figures were not given. The *Журналъ министерства народнаго просвѣщенія* published a review of the work in 1842, consisting mainly of long quotes, but stating also the following:

[The book] has been written for newly baptized Christians, and it has been printed separately, as a large edition, in Moscow in the Aleut language. A hope to bring spiritual benefits to all citizens has forced it to be published also in the Russian language. Here we can see an example of the plainness, with which the preacher is used to direct his words to the simple hearts of his listeners. And this plainness, which imitates the plainness of the Gospels, serves as if to lift us up to the Christian faith of the first centuries. We read and become convinced of the fact that truth has no need for beauty, for it is in itself already eloquent; what is needed is only clarity of style and a burning zeal to attend to the salvation of one's neighbour. Looking at the book at hand from this point of view, we can see that it is useful for all of us, but it must be especially instructive reading for peasants. (P. 2-3.)

Указаніе was translated to Greek under the name *Ὁδηγός εἰς τὴν Βασιλείαν τῶν Οὐρανῶν*, published in 1843 in Odessa, and curiously enough, it was noticed by the *New York Observer* the following year, through a report by their correspondent in Constantinople. This was no doubt due more to the overview of the missionary effort of the Russians in America (apparently similar to the one included in the German translation of 1848, also published in Odessa) than to the contents of *Указаніе* itself. The writer is apparently a protestant, as is evident from the beginning of his report:

We have before us a pamphlet published the last year at the Imperial Printing office at Odessa in Russia, to which so much importance has been attached by the Greek Clergy, that it has been translated from Russian into Greek for the sake of a wider circulation. It is entitled the «Way of Salvation», being a tract which was prepared for circulation among various Indian tribes of North America. The tract itself we rejoice to say is in general unexceptionable in doctrine, though of course deficient in many points. Throughout, Jesus Christ alone is shown as the Saviour and the Holy Spirit as the sanctifier. But this tract is preceded by a long preface which gives a full account of the history and present state of missionary operations at the Aleutian islands and on the North West Coast: and we propose to give your readers a view of its contents. We shall often adopt the pious and evangelical language of the missionaries, upon which we would by no means wish needlessly to invoke any suspicion of its hypocrisy, notwithstanding some who are well acquainted with modern Russian missions would think that much ought to be abated from it. He would rather cordially admit the sincerity and zeal of these missionaries, taking care to remember that their piety is connected with fundamental errors, of which the fruits will appear ultimately in their converts.

Указаніе was also translated into Yakut (1858), Chinese (1881), reportedly to Arabic (perhaps twice, the latter edition being from 1886),

Finnish (1885, 1899, 1935), reportedly to Japanese (ca. 1895), partially to Shor (1884), Chuvash (1893), Tlingit (1901), Tatar (1910), and finally to Western languages, in complete translations: English (various editions beginning from 1952), German (new, 1998), Estonian (1999), and also again to Finnish (1997, unpublished).

What remains to be done is to investigate what are the actual contents of *Краткое показание пути въ Царствіе Небесное для Алеутъ* and how do they differ from the Russian *Указание пути въ Царствіе Небесное*. The original Russian manuscript version of *Краткое показание* was located by Michael Krauss in the Alaska State Historical Archives in Juneau, and, if translated, it could serve not only as materials for a study of Veniaminov's theological thinking but also as a resource to be consulted as the Aleut *Указание* is being translated into English by the Alaska Native Language Center, a task which may not otherwise be accomplished, given the fact that there may no longer be anyone alive competent enough in Aleut to translate it, and this including the Aleuts themselves.

Veniaminov himself, after the death of his wife, which took place on November 25, 1839, in Irkutsk (Barsukov 1883: 111), was tonsured a monk a year later, then elevated to the rank of Archimandrite and on December 15, 1840 consecrated as Bishop Innokentii of Kamchatka, the Kuriles and the Aleutians. When it was pointed out to the Czar Nicholas I, who had decided against the name of «Bishop of North America and Kamchatka», that there were no churches in the Kurile Islands, he merely replied: «Build them!» (Barsukov 1883: 125–128.)

As Veniaminov was leaving for his diocese in North America and to the morally exemplary Aleuts, von Wrangell (1841: 270), quoting from Veniaminov's *Зануцки*, made the following remark:

«If one could wish the Aleuts something to improve their state, then specifically and exclusively only that from *the moral point of view* their character would always remain unchanged and that the spirit of Christianity would become more and more deeply rooted in them, and from *the material aspect of life* one can only wish them *forests*.» In order to finish the exploits begun by Pastor Veniaminov and in order to achieve the above mentioned improvement of the state of the Aleuts, he has now himself left for the northwestern shores of America in the capacity of Bishop Innokentii, equipped with the highest spiritual authority—and the professional skills of a forester.

The implication contained in Veniaminov's words, which von Wrangell here wished to restate, was that, apart from the Christian faith, Russians had nothing but vices to offer to the Aleuts. One may note that this was also evident from the minute transgressions Veniaminov mentioned as the «worst sins» the Aleuts would relate to him during confessions.

Whether due to the demands set by his extremely large diocese or the fire which sometime before 1863 destroyed his papers, Bishop Innokentii was never able to fulfill the wish expressed by the *Журналь министерства народнаго просвѣщенія* that he in the future would write descriptions of other parts of Russian America that would equal his *Записки* on the Eastern Aleutian Islands.

Apart from the reception of Veniaminov's works in Russia by his contemporaries, one may finally add a few notes of how Veniaminov was received by the scientific community in the United States in the 20th century. Veniaminov's «Aleut grammar» and *Записки* were translated by Richard Henry Geoghegan sometime between 1903 and 1943 (Pierce in Veniaminov 1984: xvi). The grammar was published in 1944, after Geoghegan's death, apparently for military purposes, and under Geoghegan's, not Veniaminov's name. The English manuscript translation of *Записки* allowed Ransom to write a two-page review of it in 1945, concentrating entirely on the ancient religious beliefs of the Aleuts, as related by Veniaminov.

After this, two translations relating to the Russian church in America appeared in the 1970s, first in 1972 a translation of Veniaminov's 1840 «Condition of the Orthodox Church in Russian America», and then in 1976 a translation of another report on the condition of the church, originally printed in the Annual Report of the Russian-American Company for the Year 1857 (Veniaminov 1858).

When *Записки* finally appeared in English in 1984, largely retranslated, a review that was a page and a half long, written by William Laughlin (1986), appeared in *Ethnohistory*. Although Laughlin greets the English edition as «welcome», he directs his attention only on Veniaminov's pioneering proposal concerning the former existence of the Bering land bridge, on Veniaminov's alleged lack of ability to uncover the ancient religious beliefs of the Aleuts due to his status as a clergyman, and finally to Veniaminov's flawed comments on the physical anthropology of the Aleuts. The impression is that Veniaminov's Russian (and even German and French) contemporaries had much higher regard for him than 20th century American anthropologists ever did. The fact remains that linguists, such as Knut Bergsland and Michael Krauss, have always appreciated Veniaminov's scientific achievements higher than scholars of other fields.

Works by Ioann Veniaminov (Innokentii)

- 1833 *Краткое показаніе пути въ Царствіе Небесное для Алеутовъ*. Manuscript.
 1839 «Character-züge der Aleuten von den Fuchs-Inseln», von Joan Weniaminow in Unalashka, in: von Wrangell (1839), chapter VIII, pp. 177–225.
 1840a «Состояніе православной церкви въ Америкѣ.» *Журналь министерства народнаго просвѣщенія*, ч. XXVI, № 6, с. 16–48.

- 1840b *Записки объ островахъ Уналашкинскаго отдѣла*. Санкт-Петербургъ. Three volumes.
- 1840c *Указаніе пути въ царствіе небесное на Алеутско-Лисьевскомъ языкѣ*. Москва.
- 1840d *Начатки христіанскаго ученія или краткая священная исторія и краткій христіанскій катихизисъ съ русскаго языка на Алеутско-Лисьевскій перевелъ Священникъ Іоаннъ Веніаминовъ [...]* СПб.
- 1841a *Указаніе пути въ царствіе небесное*. Бесѣда, изъ поученій къ новопросвѣщеннымъ христіанамъ. Ситхинскаго Михаило-Архангельскаго Собора Протоіерея Іоанна Веніаминова (что нынѣ Преосвященный Иннокентій, Епископъ Камчатскій, Курильскій и Алеутскій). Санктпетербургъ.
- 1841b [1881/1886] *Наставленіе священнику, назначаемому для обращенія иноверныхъ и руководствованія обращенныхъ въ христіанскую вѣру*. See Барсуковъ (ed.), (1886).
- 1846a *Опытъ Грамматики Алеутско-Лисьевскаго азыка*. Императорская Академія Наукъ, СПб.
- 1846b *Замѣчанія о Колошенскомъ и Кадьякскомъ языкахъ и отчасти о прочихъ Россійско-Американскихъ языкахъ*. Императорская Академія Наукъ, СПб.
- 1848a *Господа нашего Іисуса Христа Евангеліе, написанное апостоломъ Матѳеємъ*. Съ Русскаго языка на Алеутско-Лисьевской перевелъ Священникъ Іоаннъ Веніаминовъ [...]
- 1848b *Wegweiser zum Himmelreich [...]* *Nebst einem Auszuge aus seinen Missionsberichten*. Odessa. [German translation of Veniaminov (1841a), with the additional anonymous «Missionen von Kamtschatka. Einige glaubwürdige Berichte über die Fortschritte der russischen Kirche in den Inseln und Gegenden des russischen Amerika».]
- 1858 «О состояніи Православной церкви въ Американскихъ Колоніяхъ въ настоящее время.» *Отчетъ Россійско-Американской компаніи за 1857 годъ*. СПб.
- 1863 «Поправки къ статьѣ: Черты для будущей біографіи.» *Духовная бесѣда*, т. XVII, № 22, с. 159–167, СПб.
- 1944 *The Aleut Grammar*. [English translation of Veniaminov (1846a), published under Geoghegan's name.]
- 1972 «The Condition of the Orthodox Church in Russian America.» Transl. Robert Nichols & Robert Croskey. *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 2, pp. 41–54. [English translation of Veniaminov (1840a).]
- 1976 «The Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska: Innokentii Veniaminov's Supplementary Account.» *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1, pp. 26–29. [English translation of Veniaminov (1858)].
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