

The Swedish-Indian Catechism

*Some Notes**

by ISAK COLLIJN

THE LUTHERAN CATECHISM which was translated into the so-called American-Virginian language, and to which are appended two Indian-Swedish vocabularies was printed in Stockholm, 1696, for use in missionary work amongst the Indians in the Colony of New Sweden. It may well be considered one of the most remarkable books ever published in our country. The Swedish colonial power in America was already shattered when the Catechism was issued, it is true, but the greater part of it had been used in manuscript, while the Colony yet enjoyed its time of prosperity, and it continued to be of importance as missionary work carried on, though the Colony was no longer under Swedish supremacy. The work of conversion amongst the Indians in New Sweden is noteworthy, to the extent, that it may be said to be one of the first attempts at Lutheran missionary work, on the whole, outside Europe.

Though by no means one of our greatest literary rarities—there being some twenty copies existing in public and private libraries—the Swedish-American Catechism would seem worthy of being published and spread in connection with the approaching New Sweden Jubilee, in an easily available facsimile edition which will tend to remind us of the contribution of missionary work made by our countrymen in the colonized regions.

In 1619 and later, such books as prayer books and primers were issued in the Lapp language for the Swedish Mission in Lapland. In 1628, the Lutheran Catechism was published in Russian, at Stockholm—“after God Almighty hath graciously bestowed upon us Russian subjects”—and in Finnish, in 1644, also in the Cyrillic alphabet, for use in the Finnish-Russian boundary districts. Apart from these publications is the American-Virginian Catechism of 1696, the first given out in a “barbaric” language for missionary work outside Swedish territory. Thus it became the forerunner of the many Lutheran text-books and religious tracts issued later by Swedish missionaries in African, Asiatic and other exotic languages.

*Reprinted from: *Martin Luther's Little Catechism*. Facsimile of the Stockholm Edition, 1696. With notes by Isak Collijn. Stockholm: Ivar Haeggström, 1937.

This Indian translation of Luther's little Catechism which is, besides, an adapted and revised version of the same, was made by the Swedish clergyman Johannes Campanius who performed religious duties in New Sweden between the years 1642-1648.

Johannes Campanius often attached *Holmiensis* to his name as he originated from Stockholm. He was born in that city on August 15th, 1601, and was the son of Jonas Persson, bell-ringer in Klara Parish. After his studies at the Stockholm "Gymnasium," he matriculated at Uppsala University (1627), graduating Sept. 27th, 1635. On Feb. 8th 1642, Professor Laurentius Fornelius conferred upon him the degree of M. A. In 1633, he was ordained by Archbishop Lenæus, and the following year he came to Russia as chaplain to a Swedish Embassy, in which also Andreas Bureus took part. After having served (1635) as schoolmaster at Norrtälje and later, as chaplain to the Stockholm Orphanage, he was called (Feb. 3rd 1642) by Klas Fleming, High Admiral of the Realm, to accompany the newly appointed Governor, Johan Printz, to New Sweden. He accepted this offer, because of "the desire he had, through travel, to get to see foreign countries."

It was with the fifth expedition that Campanius, on board the *Fama*, set out upon his journey to New Sweden. Another clergyman, Israel Fluviander by name, and a relation of Governor Printz, was also on board. Owing to storms, the voyage proved to be a bad one, and lasted not less than six months. On arrival at New Sweden, Printz had a new fort erected on the island of Tinicum, called Fort New Gothenburg, as well as a small block-house church, and Campanius was appointed chaplain to the garrison. Printz also built a dwelling on the island, which got the name of Printz Hall. In 1645, the fort and church were destroyed by fire, but the following year the church was rebuilt on a larger scale, and on Sept. 4th it was consecrated by Campanius and Fluviander. To Campanius was allotted a piece of land in the settlement Uppland, on which he lived with his family who had accompanied him out. He was married to Margareta Persdotter with whom he had seven children. In order to augment his meagre salary of ten R.D. per month, he is said to have raised cattle on his farm.

Campanius soon became the spiritual guide of the entire colony. He is the most eminent of the Swedish clergy who served New Sweden in its earlier days. He was a particularly zealous worker, and made extensive journeys round about the colony where widely

stretched settlements lay, to preach the word of God and perform his ecclesiastic duties. Simultaneously, he studied the country, made astronomical and climatic observations, collected facts concerning the animal and vegetable world, and interested himself in the manners, customs and language etc, of the Indian people. Undoubtedly it was his intention to gather material for a future description of these regions, but he never lived to enjoy the same. This fell to the lot of his grandson, Thomas Campanius Holm, the engraver who, on the foundation of his grandfather's notes wrote a "Kort beskrifning om provincien Nya Sverige uti America, som nu förtjden af the Engelske kallas Pennsylvania." This work was published in Stockholm 1702, and contained a number of the Author's illustrations and engravings. In the preface of the book, Thomas Campanius writes the following: "some years ago when I began to go through the papers and writings of my lamented grandfather Joh. Campanius Holms, I found not only various rare and remarkable facts about the situation and character of the country of America itself, but also information as to its people and their language, etc. To prevent the same from being destroyed, or from passing into oblivion, I began, at once, in spare moments, to put them together. This I did, assisted not only by my father Johan C. Holm, who lived at this time, but also with the aid of the writings and accounts of other learned and reliable men. Some order achieved, I then got several eminent men who were interested in this work, to evince their good opinion and judgment on the same."

Campanius also learnt the Indian language. The Indians who peopled the shores of the Delaware were of the Algonquian-Indian tribe. It was from these that the Swedish colonists, arriving at Delaware on the Kalmare Nyckel and Fågel Grip, the end of March, 1638, through the agency of Peter Minuit the expedition's leader, acquired the piece of land from which New Sweden was to grow. Minuit, a German by birth, had lived in Delaware before. Between 1626 and 1632, he was in the service of a Dutch Company and therefore knew these districts and their conditions very well. The Indians who inhabited those parts where now are the present States of New Jersey and Pennsylvania and parts of New York, called themselves *Lenâpe* or *Lenilenâpe*, which implies "real men." The Swedes called them *Renappi*, River Indians or quite simply, our Indians. West and North of the Swedish settlements lived Indians of the Iroquoian tribe with villages and forts. These were called *Minquas* but, by the Dutch,

Mingwe, whilst the Swedes corrupted the name into *Minquesser* or *Mynkussar* of whom they made a distinction between the black and the white. And with these wild Indians were the Swedes also on good terms and carried on trade.

The language which Campanius learned was that of the Algonquian Indians.¹ At first, Swedish-Dutch colonists may have served as teachers, amongst whom were Commissioner Huygen and Gregorius van Dyck. Having won the friendship of the Indians, Campanius continued his studies on his own and soon was able to converse with, and interest them in religious things. An attempt to take Indian boys into his home for instruction failed as they fled almost immediately back to their tribe. The idea of sending Indians home to Sweden as an object of demonstration was not successful either, due to the inacceptability of the Indians' terms. The Swedish Government with Per Brahe, the Younger, at its head, warmly interested itself for missionary work among the Indians of New Sweden and for their conversion to the Lutheran Faith, as may be seen, for instance, in the instructions given to Printz the 15th Aug. 1642.

Campanius' Indian studies opened a way for carrying out these endeavours and won, therefore, both consideration and recognition from the Swedish authorities. He seems to have favoured the theory which holds that the Indians originated from the Jews and that their language has affinity with the Hebrew. He compiled a small vocabulary in Algonquian-Indian, a "Vocabularium barbaro-virgineorum" which contained the everyday conversational phrases, numerals, etc. It was printed, later, as appendix to the American-Virginian Catechism, and is also to be found in Thomas Campanius' description of America where, contained in the fourth chapter is "En Orde- och Samtals-Bok på de Americaners Språk wid Nya Sverige." Campanius also drew up a small vocabulary of words belonging to the Minquas' language which is included in the Catechism under the heading "Vocabula mahakuassica." This same is to be found in Thomas Campanius' book p. 180-190, in a chapter "Om the mynqueser eller mynckussar och theras språk." It was during his sojourn in New Sweden that Campanius set about the task of translating Luther's little Catechism into Algonquian Indian, but it was not completed, however, when, on account of ill-health and reduced working capacity, he begged to be recalled to Sweden. The harrassing excursions to the settlements and Indians, through miles of unbeaten tracts had overtaxed his strength, and he considered that younger men should

replace him. One single clergyman was inadequate to the work out there in the colony. Already, Jan. 30th, 1647, he had written to the Archbishop asking permission to return home and, in recompense for his labours be given some appointment in the homeland, which would enable him to support himself and his wife and numerous little children.

Campanius' request was granted when a clergyman Lars Lockenius, by name, was found and elected his successor. The 16th May, 1648, Campanius and his family boarded the sailing vessel *Svanen* and after, what, in those days, was considered a speedy voyage, arrived at Gothenburg, on July 3rd. Pending some suitable place of retreat he was appointed (Aug. 5th) chaplain to the Admiralty at Skeppsholmen. The following year, he became vicar of Frösthult and Härnevi in the Diocese of Uppsala where he officiated till his death on Sept. 17th, 1683. He lies buried in the chancel of Frösthult Church, to the right of the altar, where an inscribed tombstone preserves the memory of the first Swedish missionary in America. The inscription is in Latin but there are also a few words in the Indian language. He performed his ecclesiastic duties with fidelity and zeal and gained the affection of his parishioners. It should not be omitted that amongst the positions of trust which Campanius enjoyed was a membership of Parliament, to which he was elected in 1672.

His earlier interests, however, were not forgotten in the business of his new office. He completed and revised his translation of the American-Virginian Catechism and, in 1656, sent it with a dedication to King Karl X Gustav, in the hope that it would be duly published and forthwith circulated in America. In 1655, on the 15th of Sept., Governor Rising had surrendered to the superior power of the Dutch, and New Sweden was lost to the Mother Country. The conversion of the Indians was now no longer of vital importance, and the interest in missionary work had cooled in high places.

The Catechism was thus not published during Campanius' lifetime but, in the year 1696, when, through the influence of Jesper Svedberg, interest in the Indian mission at Delaware reawakened, the book was printed and given out.

The cure of the soul was very much neglected in the old Swedish Colony during the latter half of the 17th century and calls for clergy and books soon reached the Mother Country. There was a considerable delay before measures were taken. It was mainly thanks to Jesper Svedberg, then dean of Uppsala Cathedral, that King Karl XIth's in-

terest in the hopeless spiritual condition of the former Colony was roused. Svedberg was told to select suitable clergy for the mission. His choice fell firstly on three young men, Anders Rudman, Erik Björk and Jonas Aurén who, at the beginning of 1697, betook themselves, via London, over to New Sweden. They had with them a quantity of printed literature including Bibles, hand-books and religious tracts such as *Andliga Skattkammare* and *Paradislustgård* by Arndt. On Acrelius' list are mentioned, for instance, 300 small Catechisms and 400 primers bound in wood. In addition, there were 500 copies of the Indian Catechism, just issued. A further 100 copes appear to have been sent over later. The three said clergymen were followed by others and new collections of books were also despatched.

The publication of Johan Campanius' translation of the Catechism was primarily and undoubtedly due to his grandson, Thomas Campanius Holm who both took charge of and put to good use the papers his grandfather left behind him. Thomas Campanius matriculated at Uppsala 1686, and afterwards devoted his interest to engraving and cartography. After having for some time "designed and copied at the Archives of Antiquities" with no salary, he was, in July, 1693, appointed scribe. The same year he received promotion to the position of draughtsman-in-ordinary. According to one of Peringskiölds reports, dated Jan. 9th, 1695, had Thomas Holm executed designs for seals and Royal Arms, etc, and also taken part in several journeys in order to copy runic stones. He remained in the service of the Archives till his decease on July 28th, 1702. Among Holm's work there is an engraved map of New Sweden by Peter Lindeström who lived in the settlements between 1653-1655. He was an engineer and wrote a "*Geographia Americana*" which is preserved in manuscript in the Royal Archives. The original map hung in the Royal Council Chamber but perished in the fire which destroyed the Palace, in 1697. This engraving is to be found both in the Catechism and in his own "*Kort beskrifning om provincien Nya Sverige*." In 1702, this work was published and the same year marks the decease of Thomas Campanius, as already mentioned.

It may be assumed that Thomas Campanius approached the famous orientalist Gustaf Peringer, Professor at Uppsala University, with the project of the publication of the Catechism. Liljeblad, who was appointed Royal Secretary and censor librorum in 1695, became Royal Librarian in 1703. There is a memorial preserved in the Royal Archives drawn up by Liljeblad, in which he points out "that the *Lutheri Catechismus* is to hand, translated into the American or

West-Indian language, which should appreciably serve unto Everlasting Light, Swedish Christians out in America as well as Barbarians and pagans, if, at this time, it be brought to the printer's and sent over to the poor people." He also describes in this same memorial, the method Johan Campanius used in the translation of the Catechism. "Concerning the method of the translation has the Author first rendered the American language in Latin letters, distinguished the words with commata and puncta, and indicated with certain accents when syllables shall be long or short. To each and every commandment, prayer or quotation from the Bible is appended an interpretation in Swedish. The Catechism is followed by a Vocabularium in American with a Swedish interpretation which should be of great service both to the learned as well as to the interested, in that it shews the characteristics of that Barbaric language; and it should also be of advantage to those who travel from Europe to America. Thereupon follow phrases and colloquia from the said language which are undoubtedly according to the manners of speech of that Barbaric people. Next has the Author added an Indicem of many Barbaric words which, together with the greater part of the language, he indicates as being based upon and originating from Hebrew. Lastly, there is a Vocabularium of the Munquessic language, the Barbarians of which have daily intercourse with the Swedes, with whom they carry on trade out in America." The publishing expenses, he says, should amount to about 300 silver R.D. He suggests that the map which hangs in the Royal Council Chamber "be copied in engraving" and placed preceding the Catechism to which a prefix shall be appended. He adds that the Campanii heirs express their humble trust that the King will graciously consider their petition. There is an affirmed notification on the memorial, which indicates that the request is granted and states that a letter was despatched to the Exchequer Apr. 17th, 1696, ordering 300 silver R.D. to be paid to the secretary, Liljeblad. The Catechism was published in an edition of over 600 copies, in the press of Buchardi. A part of the edition, at least, was bound in brown paper with Karl XIth's monogram in gold, on both sides of the cover. The preface is written by Liljeblad who also superintended the printing and had charge of the linguistic revision. One of the two copies of the Catechism belonging to the Royal Library has been in the possession of Liljeblad himself.

Campanius' Catechism was in all probability not put to so much use as the Author in his day, and the publisher, later, had hoped. We have direct information, however, that it was used in missionary

work amongst the Indians. The trustworthy Carl Springer, who arrived at Delaware at the close of the 17th century, used it. He read from it to the Indians and instructed their children in it, but it is uncertain as to whether any Indian allowed himself to be baptized or taken into the Lutheran Church. Rudman, one of the clergymen sent out by Svedberg, writes in a letter that the Indians "are very disposed to hearing the Catechismum, printed in their language, which our people, as if in their own tongue, are able to read to them. . ." That the Indian mission, in spite of the existing friendship between the Swedes and the Indians—which served afterwards as a model for William Penn and his English Quakers—gave no greater result than it did, is undoubtedly due to the decimation of the Indians which followed, and their withdrawal from the tracts taken by the Whites.

The Catechism is printed in small octavo with an engraved frontispiece, 8 unnumbered pages containing the printed title and preface, also 160 numbered pages. The frontispiece faces the page with the printed title. A socle, bearing the crowned and laurel-wreathed Swedish Arms is flanked on the left by a figure representing Svea and, on the right, is an Indian in full feather array. The title is engraved on the socle, in three lines: CATECHISMVS LUTHERI || *SVECIO—AMERICANA*. || At the top, in a gloriolate, is Jehovah's name in Hebrew letters, and a scroll bearing the inscriptions: REMOTIS VT LVCEAT. The engraving is signed at the bottom on the left El. Br. inv., on the right, E Reitz sc. The design has thus been executed by the celebrated numismatist and assessor at the Archives, Elias Brenner († 1717). The printed title on the next page is as follows: LUTHERI || *Catechismus / || Öfversatt || på || American-Virginiske || Språket ||*. Beneath this is a wood-cut: the arms of Sweden in a crowned shield held by two lions: Stockholm / || Tryckt uthi thet af Kongl. May:tt privileg. || BURCHARDI Tryckeri / af J. J. Genath / f. || ANNO MDCXCVI. || The lines 1-2, 7, 10, are printed in red. On page 133 is a new title-page for the small vocabulary: VOCABULARIUM || BARBARO- || VIRGINEO- || RUM. || *Additis paffim locutioni- || bus & obfervationibus Hifto || ricis brevioribus ad linguæ plenio- || rem notitiam. ||* (Vignette). Anno MDCXCVI. || Lastly, on p. 155, beneath an ornament, the heading: VOCABULA || MAHA KUASSICA. ||

The Burchardi printing house which was founded at Stockholm, in 1693, by Georg Gottlieb Burchardi, was one of the most prominent printing houses in this country at the end of the 17th and begin-

ning of the 18th centuries. It was equipped with first-class type material from Frankfurt A.M. A very competent factor working here was Johan Jacob Genath, whose name also appears on the title-page of the Catechism. The type-setting of the Indian text with a number of indication letters, was assuredly no easy task, and required a good deal of skill. The pages are framed with lines at the top and outer margins.

Between the Preface and the beginning of the Catechism is the little engraved map of New Sweden, by P. Lindeström. In a cartouche, to the right, at the bottom is to be read, engraved: Anno 1654 och 1655 || Är denna Novæ Sveciæ Carta med || dess Riviers och Landz situation ock || beskaffenhet aftagen och till Carts || förd af P. Lindström || Ingin: fortif: || Beneath the map, in the middle: Th: Campanius Holm fecit. At the top, in a scroll is: NOVA SVEDIA hodie dicta PENNSYLVANIA. On the map are inserted figures of Indians, animals, trees and plants. This map is, as a rule, not to be found in the copies which have been preserved to our day.

It is difficult to estimate the value of the translation of the Catechism from a philological point of view. According to Acrelius there are certain faults—for instance, the letter R, which does not exist in the Indian language is replaced by L—but the merits of the translation should not be diminished thereby. It has been a useful instrument in Swedish Missionary work in the short history of our American Colony, and should therefore be brought to mind at the approaching Jubilee, as also should the zealous Author's memory be revived and honoured.

In this connection it might be of interest to mention some Swedish poems, written and published in the Indian language for special occasions.

The first is a very brief gratulatory poem (2 leaves in 4°). It contains only eight lines, with a Swedish translation by the above mentioned and well-known Andreas Rudman, clergyman in New Sweden. It was dedicated to Magnus Aurivillius on his matriculation at Uppsala, 1700. Aurivillius is apostrophised with the word "sackemán" which in the Indian tongue implies "chieftain," but here in Rudman's translation means "Sir."

The other is a supplement to a greater burial poem and bears the somewhat strange title, "Örnens wäg i wädret" (The way of the eagle in the air). It was composed by Laur. Älfwik for the funeral of Mrs. Maria Agneta Örnstedt, wife of Lieutenant Colonel Magnus Skäta, in 1721. It is printed on two folio leaves and is dated, Uppsala,

1724. On the last page is contained an "Ode Americana" in the Indian language. Lars Elfvik was vicar in the Diocese of Norrala in 1727, but died insane, 1738. During 1718-1719 he officiated as chaplain to the Navy. As to whether he visited New Sweden and gained some knowledge of the Indian language there, is unknown.

In writing this treatise the following works have mainly been consulted.

I. ACRELIUS, *Beskrifning om de Svenska församlingars forna och närvarande tilstånd, uti det så kallade Nya Sverige*. Stockh. 1759.—TH. CAMPANIUS HOLM, *Kort beskrifning om provincien Nya Sverige uti America*. Stockh. 1702.—N. JACOBSON, *Svenskar och indianer*, Stockh.—Upps. 1922; the same in *Svenskt biograf. lex.*, VII (1927), pp. 259-263, Art. Campanius.—A. JOHNSON, *The Swedish settlements on the Delaware 1638-1664*. Vols I-II. Lancaster—New York, 1911.—CHR. WARD, *The Dutch and Swedes on the Delaware 1609-64*. Philad. 1930.—For Thomas Campanius Holm see H. SCHÜCK, *KGL. VITTERHETS HISTORIE O. ANTIKVITETS AKADEMIEN*, IV (1935), s. 29 f., 40, 62.

NOTES

1. J. C. PILLING, *Bibliography of the algonquian languages*: Washington: Bureau of Ethnology, 1891. "The Algonquian speaking peoples covered a greater extent of country, perhaps, than those of any other of the linguistic stocks of North America, stretching from Labrador to the Rocky Mountains, and from the Churchill River of Hudson Bay to Pamlico Sound in North Carolina; and the literature of their languages is by far the greatest in extent of any stocks north of Mexico". The Catechism of Campanius is described here p. 65.



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