

Libraries in Russia
History of the Library of the Academy of Sciences
from Peter the Great to Present

Valerii Leonov

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***To the People of the Academy
of Sciences Library (BAN)***

FOREWORD

Libraries in Russia affords Western readers a unique insight not only into the history of the Library of the Academy of Sciences (BAN) in St.Petersburg, but also into three centuries of Russian librarianship, its roots traced back to the foundation of the Russian Empire.

With his historical study, Valerii Leonov - director of BAN since 1988 - draws on documents and primary materials that have either never been published previously, or else ceased to be available after the revolution. In this way, he can be seen to have made a significant and necessary contribution within the field of the historical reappraisal in Russia, casting light on numerous 'grey areas' in the wake of seventy years of socialist historiography, which shaped even the history of librarianship. Leonov has repeatedly been praised in the Russian specialist press for this particular contribution.

Some readers may have accused Leonov's first work that was translated into English, *The Library Syndrome* (München, Saur Verlag, 1999. 295 p.), of focusing excessively on internal power struggles, intrigues and recriminations within the Library of the Academy of Sciences. This new study, however, offers a rigorous scholarly and scientific discussion and analysis of the Library's history.

For Leonov, a library is far more than simply a site for acquisition, preservation and making available of information. He regards it rather as a living entity, akin to a human being, that passes through various stages of development determined by internal developmental cycles. Rhythms and cycles - in Leonov's terminology, even the 'pulse' of a library - are intrinsically bound up in the life and signification of a book, and in the dissemination of information; although he cites other determining factors besides these. For example, he also firmly believes that a library's history is dependent above all on those who work there and leave their imprint on it. Thus, Leonov views institutional history not merely from the standpoint of a historian, but also that of a biographer, positing direct links between those who influenced BAN at various times and events within the Library.

The history of BAN commences with Peter the Great's appointment of its first director, the German Johann Daniel Schumacher. After long years of service, Schumacher found himself the subject of recriminations, and his reputation under fire, when a number of leading academics including Mikhail Lomonosov put their names to a petition accusing him of embezzlement, preferential treatment of foreign academics, and theft of library holdings. Although the case against Schumacher was dropped due to lack of evidence, he never recovered from these years of personal upheaval and tribulation.

The figure of Schumacher opens the way for Leonov to broach the relationship between foreign and domestic interests, a subject matter that offers deep insights into the development of Russian culture, and which continues to play a defining role to this day. The interplay of Western and National influences does not characterize only the work of an institution such as the Library of the Academy of Sciences, of course; rather, the effects, positioning and posturing that result from such interplay have exemplified — and still exemplify — a broader cultural position. Foreign readers are generally struck by the emotional harshness that tends to distinguish the ensuing clashes and debacles, as well as by the career- and even life-threatening consequences that frequently follow.

Leonov undertakes an impressive exposition of the parallels between this area of the BAN's history and the period of reprisals extending from 1929 to the late 1930's, in which he also draws on his own experiences during the 1980's. Within this discussion, it is the documents recording victims of Stalinist purges in purely statistical terms which prove most shocking: in 1931, fourteen library employees were given ten-year prison camp sentences, and three more executed by firing squad. By the end of the decade, 648 employees of the Academy of Sciences — almost half the entire workforce — had been discharged, and further prison camp sentences handed out.

We are also privy for the first time to eyewitness testimonies describing the period of the blockade when, despite hunger, sickness and death, the safeguarding and evacuation of holdings retained utmost priority. Furthermore, Leonov discusses the appalling fires of 1901 and, in particular — with its memory still fresh in our minds — 1988, both of which left an indelible mark on the library.

Who at this point would not relish the opportunity to document the history of a library and its employees? As a foreigner who has lived in Russia and worked in the area of library services here for almost five years, I expressed my willingness to write this foreword following numerous collaborations between Valerii Leonov, in his capacity as director of BAN, and the Information and Library Services section of the Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes. Over the years, it has been my privilege to get to know and to value Valerii Leonov not merely as a colleague, but also as an adviser and a friend. Through his advice and assistance, many hazy areas have been clarified, several stony ways smoothed over, and numerous hurdles cleared.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1714, while Peter the Great was working on his book collection, he realised that the specific character of Russia and its national problems were different from those of France, England and America, as reflected in their main libraries. As a result of Peter the Great's musings, his collection became the core of the future Library of the Academy of Sciences (Biblioteka Akademii Nauk - BAN). His pivotal ideas, if not so discernible to an outside observer, were in fact a leap through the cultural time-space abyss. They marked a transition from the first Old Russian public library in Kiev (which embodied seven centuries of library tradition) to a modern national library in St.Petersburg. The importance of this transition has never been fully appreciated.

Peter the Great, the establisher of BAN, was the tsar, the head of the Russian State. His Old Russia predecessor had been the Kievan prince Yaroslav Mudry (the Wise). Both of these men offered splendid examples of marked individuality in the library culture of Russia.

Peter's theme of "*Science and Enlightenment*" was born during his travels abroad, for the concept was not traditionally Russian. During his forty-three years of rule the country had only enjoyed one year of true peace, and only later the form and the funds to realize his ideas came forth.

Young Russia was unsparing in her efforts and spent a lot of funds to organize a library of the new type in its northern capital. During its first forty years of life this library succeeded in forming the language of communication between the academic science of St.Petersburg and the West, and thus to become an international centre of attraction for the scientific and social thought that offered a comfortable information environment open for and available to foreign partners.

The reader of BAN is something else yet — a surprising phenomenon of Russian culture that kept forming together with the library. Moreover, BAN also includes its staff: librarians, bibliographers, historians, philologists — individuals that passed through all BAN's life, gave BAN their best years and left an ineffaceable trace in it.

BAN is an imprescriptible part of St.Petersburg, reflecting all the great transformations and miseries the city went through. The first national library of the State became a model, an example to be imitated in all the succeeding large libraries of Europe and America. 6 years later (in 1720) the Royal Library would open to the readers in Paris; in 1795 that library would be renamed the National Library by the Convent. In another 16 years the British Museum Library would be founded in London (1753). Finally, the end of the XVIII century would be known for the foundation of two more libraries — the Imperial Public Library (St.Petersburg, 1795) and the USA Library of Congress (1800). This is an excellent paradigm! "*The existing Imperial Library of the Imperial Academy of Sciences that occupies the area of different departments and consists of many thousand books in various languages and which at this Reigning St.Petersburg began to develop under the Sovereign decree of the Emperor Peter the Great from 1714 and was connected together with the Imperial Academy of Sciences in 1724*"¹, rightfully stands first there.

¹ Bogdanov A.I. Opisanie Sanktpeterburga. 1749-1751 gg. SPb., 1907. P. 165.

What do we know about it? Do we know the true, real character of this great library? And if we do, what was it like in its childhood, the green years, the mature age? BAN was fated to be the leader, the first to stand against the attacks of authorities, to accrue experience in survival, and to share it with others, progressively transforming into the biggest national library in the world. But what is the meaning of all this? What is in store for BAN, and what will be its future?

To answer these questions, one has to try to reconstruct BAN's life without any speculations and excogitations, building a kind of a document drama closest to reality, delving into its past and sensing the heartbeat of that time. It would seem that only the historians might have the power to carry out that tremendous work: they are the masters of reconstructing scientifically an object long gone. Now, as a librarian I am interested not in the historians' opinion on some specific library issues (though it is important also), but in the history of BANs' life perceived by a man working in that library. In other words, I am interested in the process of "evolving" of this marvelous phenomenon of Russian science and culture.

One important digression. For many a year, while elaborating the BANs' theme, I did not consider it possible to publish anything on its history. As a rule, I confined myself to reports on conferences or to small articles devoted to isolated facts of BAN's complex life. Never mind your utterances on or your perception of the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Whether you exalt in it, overthrow it or render it mediocre, you are constantly haunted by the thought that you are forcing an open door. You have a kind of *déjà vu*: something that had been told and retold in textbooks, monographs, articles and dissertations. This way or another BAN is always within hearing — at least in St. Petersburg, as Nikolai Gogol would have said, and not only in the library environment. And all the while one has a gnawing feeling that nobody knows or wants to know the real life of the library.

Thirty-six years passed since a collective monograph *"History of the Library of the USSR Academy of Sciences. 1714-1964"* ("Istoriya Biblioteki Akademii nauk SSSR. 1714 - 1964" M.; L.: Nauka, 1964. 599 P.) had been written. That fundamental work, compiled mostly by historians, people from BAN's staff and printed in 3200 copies, had a strange lot too. It is hard to believe: that such a book of unique value has passed unnoticed in our library literature. But yes, looking through the leading Soviet publications of 1964-1966 (*"Librarian"*, *"Libraries of the USSR: Experience of Work"*, *"Library-Bibliographical Information of Libraries of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the Academies of the Union Republics"*, *"Book: Research and Materials"*, *"Soviet Bibliography"*, *"Technical Libraries"*) I found no reaction to the *"History..."*, except the synopsis in the *"New Books"* section of the collective *"Libraries of the USSR: Experience of Work"* (1965. N28. P. 164).

Foreign colleagues, apparently attendees at the 250-th anniversary of BAN at the Leningrad A.S. Pushkin Academic Theatre reacted to that book with short reports or summaries. The *"Library of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. 1964-1968"* bibliographical index compiled by N.A. Laskeev cites six references to the *"History..."* in library publications of the Deutsche Demokratische Republik, Hungary, Poland, Belgium, Rumania, and Bundesrepublik Deutschland. I failed to find any factual analysis of that book. Why?

Was it because it was written by bibliologists and historians, not by librarians, or were there grave "ideological considerations"? It is difficult to find a formal explanation if one recalls the occasion, the time when it was edited, its publishing body, and the quality of publication... Apparently, the reasons must have been numerous.

The fact was that the “*History...*” had passed unnoticed, and so much for it. Soviet library specialists had failed to comprehend in its depth the singular cultural event of the XVIII century — the emergence of the first Russian national library or to understand its consequences. Hardly a person is qualified to do it today. A poor perception of the causes of BANs’ emergence tinted the understanding of its specific functions. While reading scientific and educational literature or looking through reference books one gets a impression that from the moment BAN was born it either developed apart from the national library environment or pursued “its own way”, intentionally withholding from active contacts with that environment. Of course, both impressions are wrong. One fact is evident: the world history of librarianship of the XVIII-XX centuries may only be known and expounded if one takes into consideration the influence of the Library of the Academy of Sciences.

Since the publication of that book momentous events had reshaped the political map of our country. The three decades elapsed have changed the world, and the generation of the late 1990-ies sees and perceives the past differently than the people of the 1960-ies. Many new sources of data on different aspects of the library and book science, bibliography appeared; censorship was relieved; archives inaccessible during the Soviet period were opened; studies of highly specialized problems were published. In other words, now we may study BAN easily and without the prohibitions of our recent past.

One may begin studying this enormous library in the same manner one might study the city of St.Petersburg: start with the landmarks, survey the buildings holding it and gradually penetrate its inner life. Thus even a superficial excursion to locations of the future library of the Academy of Sciences (the Summer Palace, the Kikiny Palaty (Chambers), the University Embankment, the Demidov House, Birzhevaya Liniya) would draw our attention to small details that turn out to be very important for understanding its history.

Let us spend a while in three periods: XVIII century — BAN is the only public and scientific library in Russia; from XIX century up to 1921 BAN is divided into the Russian and the Foreign departments; from 1921 on it is in the stage of constant structural reorganization. A short chronicle of the main events looks approximately as follows. The Tsar-reformer, tsar-innovator Peter I had been aware of the necessity to create a library in the new Russian capital and became its organizer himself. It kept growing, won its first fame so that Diderot wrote about BAN in the 2-nd volume of his “*Encyclopaedia*”; it became a full-fledged national book depository to receive depository copies not only of academic publications, but also of all the publications in Russia.

In 1795 the foundation of another St.Petersburg library, the Imperial Pubic Library, was announced. It was to reflect quite noticeably on the further formation and development of BAN. During the XIX and the beginning of the XX centuries BAN gradually lapsed into background. Its division into two independent departments further aggravated its unsteady position. Since 1921 BAN fell into the grip of bureaucracy; together with the Academy of Sciences as a whole it weathered through accusations of serving first the tsars and then the Bolsheviki and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.). The Library was chronically short of money and premises, floods and fires threaten it. Generally, it may be regarded as one more sacrifice science and culture suffered not only through the Soviet period, but through the perestroika and the modern reforms in Russia as well. Even so superficial a glance at the Library that never adapted to the regime and turned out to be “epactal, redundant” prompts the researcher to study and analyze every period of its life. Is that life a down curve? How to understand this? What lies further - hopelessness?

Let us go upstream to the source, to the prologue, to the concepts of the founder of the Library and the Academy of Sciences and Arts first. The prologue chants that the sovereign library formed earlier than the Academy. Before claiming anything, we will show two possible ways of that formation. The first, coming from the depth of the middle ages, goes the traditional Russian way; the second follows Peter's ideas. It seems that the tsar's concepts formed spontaneously, originating from his own education, his impressions gained abroad and his correspondence with the scholars and public persons of the time.

One thing was clear anyway — the new tsar library had to belong, as before, to the Monarch, but at the same time be public, that is, generally available, so that two days a week the entry would be "free for anyone". Even today one can hardly overestimate the significance of that fact. A small advertisement in the St.Petersburg "*Vedomosti*" (*The Gazette*) of November 26, 1728, (N 95. P.383-384) had started the most important rule of library work in Russia — that of general availability of the national book depository to all its readers.

The chronicle of life of the sovereign library and of the Academy of Sciences, available to researchers, accurately and punctually documents, not unlike an encyclopaedia, both Russian life and science from the XVIII through the beginning of the XX centuries. That is a peculiar encyclopaedia: everything went into St.Petersburg, the city called to consolidate the state-formed national science and culture with the foreign. And the main function of the Library was to form a new type of scholar — a Russian closely connected with world scientific thought through all the accessible sources regardless of the language.

Thus to grasp the principles of BAN forming as a national library one has not only to take in Peter's intellectual world, but to absorb the origins of Russian book-learning, to see its distinctive features different from those in Western Europe. This is the key to understand BAN's peculiarity as a new type of library that formed by fusing home and foreign traditions and cultures on the principles of interrelating the "native" with the "foreign". Initially it oriented towards the foreign cultural standard (which seemed natural in the tsar's library with its specially hired foreigners). Then, cut from its roots on the Russian ground, the "foreign" filled with national contents and formed a heteronomic cultural phenomenon.

A few words about the genre of the present book. I see it as a novel-analysis based on notes, documents and comments. I suppose three centuries of life of a large universal scientific library offer ample ground for it. It is not only a work describing well- or little-known historical events, it involves the lives of many a person. It is so interesting and fascinating to follow the stages of creation of BAN through subjective perceptions of an individual. Furthermore, intruding so into the history and life of BAN entails enormous responsibility and a system of strict inner control on the author's part throughout his narration.

This book contains a lot of documents, mostly published, some — archive. Some of them are only known from special publications, others haven't been republished for a century, so familiarizing the reader with them is a difficult point. That is why I attached complete documents in some cases. Stating my own point of view on the problem, my vision and interpretation precedes such quotations.

It is not offhand that I invite the interested reader to step in with me to study the library life in Russia through the example of one of its largest collections, the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Please, make your own conclusions. It would be very interesting to compare them with mine. And then perchance there will appear a new book.

CHAPTER I

LIBRARY PROCESS: THE BEGINNING

The library space formed by the first national Russian library in the XVIII century originates in Russian book-learning, in the times when Old Russian literature and, respectively, the library traditions began to shape. We have to look into those times intently.

Never touching the controversial problem of native writing in heathen Rus or denying the availability of Old Slavonic, Greek and other texts there, one should agree that it was only after its official baptism in 998 that books started to circulate in Rus on a large scale. *“Christian belief — M. P. Pogodin wrote — also became the source of our education, the only source, in contrast to Western nations that had, beside their Christian faith and even before its introduction inherited the strong and versatile Greek and Roman education,”*¹. So a book in Old Slavonic became a symbol of Christianity and education, of a new way of life in the consciousness of an ancient Russian².

Experts note that works of Old Russian literature were mostly anonymous. Some disappeared quickly, but parts people liked were included in new works, while yet others went through several centuries of readings and rewritings. As in folklore, “platitudes” gained special attention. Literature thus “behaving” itself, its registration and keeping was another duty for the first librarians.

With the advent of the book a need arose for its special repository so as to reuse it (it would be called ‘book depository’ later). Literature process gradually fusing with manuscript life budded in the library process that has been going on for several centuries since then.

Mind you, that despite A.N. Vaneev’s assertion that the history of librarianship in the XI-XVII century Russia is one of the better studied periods, it still has many many blanks.³ The history of books and that of librarianship of the period was studied by S.A. Belokurov, N.P. Likhatchev, S.P. Luppov, N.N. Rozov, B.V. Sapunov, M.I. Sluhovsky, A.A. Zimin, A.N. Vaneev and many, many others. However, scientifically describing the library process and merging these informative but isolated researches into some system that would relate in time the literature and the library processes still lies ahead. From the historical point of view this problem seems to be the central one for me.

Beside its abstract ideal the library process also has a material aspect to be subjected to scientific research. It includes chronologically studying those facts and circumstances that came together to facilitate the evolution of book as a phenomenon of culture and art, the rising

¹ Pogodin M.P. *Obrazovanie i gramotnost’ v drevnem periode russkoj istorii* // Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniya. 1871. Chast’ 153, yanvar’. P. 1.

² Kalugin V.V. «K’NIGY»: Otnoshenie drevnerusskikh pisatelej k knige // *Drevnerusskaya literatura: Izobrazhenie obchestva*. M., 1991. P. 85.

³ Vaneev A.N. *Razvitie bibliotekovedcheskoj mysli v Rossii v XI-XVIII vekah* / S.-Peterb. gos.in-t kul’tury. SPb., 1992. P. 6.

of book collections and their topics; examining bibliognosts' (chirographists', authors', librarians') personalities; analyzing the literacy of the population, readers' interests and the peculiarities of their perception of literature; studying the history of libraries and classifying their collections, that of book exchange; the influence of typography on the development of librarianship.

To feel the pulse of the library process, to catch its rhythm and cycle one has to identify its places of origin in the cultural centres, to understand the circumstances forming the machinery of its movement, to determine the causes of acceleration or deceleration of its development.

Quite a number of publications examine those subjects but one should consider the facts already ascertained by historians and philologists and shift one's point of view so as to perceive afresh the familiar works of literature and those by the library scholars and find among the various accounts those referring to our subject.

That is a hard task requiring thorough and laborious work. In my view these difficulties and the respective inner state of a researcher are best presented by Pavel Simoni in an introduction to his work (Pavel Simoni was a Member of the Imperial Moscow Archaeological Society, the Imperial Russian Geographical Society and a Member-Correspondent of the Imperial Society of Lovers of Old Literature and Art and the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society⁴).

Beside the fundamental works by P. Simoni note several major studies of literary monuments in the cultural centers of Old Russia. In 1914, while planning a program of studying manuscripts Academician N.K. Nikolsky, rigorous in all his historical judgments, wrote: *"Whatever tasks the historian of Old Russian literature outlines for himself and whatever borders he draws for those literary works that are bound to get on the list of his original sources, it is beyond his powers to refute the observation that, to the extent best available for modern study, the history of our Pre-Petrine polite letters had been most tightly connected to the lot of library book of old times ... Library calendars, inventories, and other such documents related to bibliology of Old Russia still fail to attract a well-deserved attention. They had not been collected, had seen almost no publications or sufficient studies in spite of the fact that the history of old libraries is the history of those 'think tanks' in which regional writing with its local interests had been developing in the old days"*⁵.

N.K. Nikolsky succeeded with his outlined program only partially. Times of involution were coming: World War I, then the February and the October Revolutions of 1917. After the sudden death of A.A. Shakhmatov on August 16, 1920 Nikolsky accepted the Library of the Academy of Sciences (1920-1924).

Sixteen years after N.K. Nikolsky another famous Russian historian A.A. Zimin developed a similar program: *"...only imagining the actual composition of the monuments that were created, existed and were preserved in this or that cultural centre — he asserted — one may understand their meaning in Russian history"*⁶.

⁴ Simoni P.K. K istorii obihoda knigopisca, pereplechika i ikonnago pisca pri knizhnom i ikonnom stroenii... Vyp. 1. SPb., 1906. P. I-III, VII. In his other, earlier work P. Simoni set himself the task of *"...exposition of slow process of gradual evolution from the general profession of bibliognost-bookscriber chiefly — special craftsman, artist-bookbinder"* (P. XI). See: Simoni P.K., Opyt svedenii po istorii i tehnike knigoperepletnogo hudozhestva na Rusi, preimuschestvenno v dopetrovskoye vremya, s XI po XIII stoletie vkluchitelno: Texty, Materialy, Snimki. SPb., 1903. 307 p.

⁵ Nikolsky N.K. Rukopisnaya knizhnost' drevnerusskikh bibliotek (XI-XVII vv.): Materialy dlya slovary vladel'cev rukopisej, piscov, perevodchikov, spravschikov i knigohranitelej. Vyp. 1. (A-B). SPb., 1914. P. III, VIII.

⁶ Zimin A.A. Iz istorii sobraniya rukopisnykh knig Iosifo-Volokolamskogo monastyrya // Zapiski Otdela Rukopisey Gos. bibl. im. Lenina. Vyp. 38. M., 1977. P. 15.

In 1991 the Pushkin House published a collection of articles "Book Centres of Old Russia. XI-XVI centuries". In the introduction to that book R.P. Dmitrieva notes: "...observations on the vital activities of book centres, on the work of certain chirographists and collectors of private libraries, collected by researchers, point to constant interrelations within the circle of bibliologists of Old Russia, from the XI through XVI centuries. Through all the historical periods the main literature corps was known to the reading world of Old Russia" (P.15-16)⁷.

Now, what had this 'main literature corps' been during the conception stage of the library process we are interested in, first of all during the XI-XIV centuries? Beside the data from the sources listed above we note that from works by B.V. Sapunov⁸, N.N. Rozov⁹, L. P. Zhukovskaya¹⁰ who obtained it during their studies, and from the materials collected by the Archaeographical Commission.

According to B.V. Sapunov's data first published in mid-1950-ies and then repeated in his final monograph of 1978, the gross volume of book funds in Old Russia remained within 130-140 thousand volumes up to the middle of the XIII century. In his calculations Sapunov used the materials on construction of church buildings yielded by historians and archaeologists. He came to the conclusion that in 250 years since 988 "about 10,000 churches were built and supplied with books in Russia, including approximately 300-500 monastery churches". In his opinion, at least eight books were needed to conduct church services. Thus 90 thousand books were needed for ecclesiastic services. With the account of menologies and secular literature that number increased to 130-140 thousand books (P. 82-83).

N.N. Rozov argued with B.V. Sapunov doubting his method of calculating the number of urban and rural churches and churches in feudal mansions. Moreover, he believed that only in some individual cases was a church restored after a fire re-supplied with books. N.N. Rozov explained the prevalence of B.V. Sapunov's data in publications by the impression the incredibly big number of Russian books of the XI-XIII centuries produced on some Russian researchers. Another reason was a poor state of statistics on old Russian books in general (P. 79-81).

From the middle of the 1960-ies statistics became more accurate. According to estimates by the Archaeographical Commission from 1965, 1,493 manuscripts of the XI-XIV centuries, preserved completely or in part, were revealed in 38 organizations, 960 Russian ones among them. 424 of those are kept in the Saltykov-Schedrin State Public Library, 306 — in the Historical Museum in Moscow, 262 — in the Russian State Library, 165 — in the Central Archive of Old Acts in Moscow, and 152 — in BAN¹¹.

In the beginning of the 1970-ies while working with books that have come down to our days L.P. Zhukovskaya reached conclusions not unlike B.V. Sapunov's: "*The number of manuscripts written in Old Russia up to the XIV century* — she wrote—... numbered about 100 thousand, and together with those brought from the South Slavonic countries it had to exceed that number" (P. 80).

The next step is dividing the total book stock into three groups: 1) divine service books, 2) religious and 3) semi-secular and secular literature. Thus we have not only an idea about the literature corps of the XI-XIV centuries but an attempt to systematize it, though very simplified. What may one conclude on the basis of these data?

⁷ Knizhnye centry Drevnej Rusi. XI-XVI vv.: Raznye aspekty issledovaniya / Red. D.S. Likhatchev. SPb.: Nauka, 1991. 365 p.

⁸ Sapunov B.V. Kniga v Rossii v XI-XIII vv. / Pod red. S.P. Luppova. L.: Nauka, 1978. 231 p.

⁹ Rozov N.N. Kniga Drevnej Rusi (XI-XIV vv.). M.: Kniga, 1977. 122 p.

¹⁰ Zhukovskaya L.P. Skol'ko knig bylo v Drevnej Rusi? // Russkaya rech'. 1971. N 1. P. 73-80.

¹¹ Arheograficheskij ezhegodnik za 1965 g. M., 1966. P. 177-272.

The Pre-Mongol period book collection spread through 10 thousand churches and monasteries requires some special attention. Within the scope of our study it forms the essence of the notion of "existence of literature". When saying "existence" I mean special skills of literature preservation, accumulation and dissemination, which together ensured literature movement through society. The library process was rising through that "existence" and it seems that it sprang up quite soon after the beginning of the literature process. *"The Word was in the Beginning"....* It is impossible to specify the exact date it happened in Russia, but most probably the process origins go back to the middle of the XI century.

In order to move along the library path, let us turn to the repertoire of Old Russian literature, very difficult to grasp from the remains of a 100 thousand strong collection of those times. The hard times of foreign invasions, wars and internal conflicts had come to Russia¹², towns and books burning in their fires. *"We don't know, — O.V. Tvorogov writes, — what Pre-Mongol collections of books had been ruined then"*¹³.

What remains from the XI-XIII centuries are 498 Slavonic-Russian manuscripts, including pieces, all revealed and scientifically described, 376 of them being biblical or meant for divine services¹⁴.

As for the library process and the existence of books, hagiology, annals, legends, divine service writings and instructive words remain the only source by which one may reconstruct the social ideas and spirits, level of education and knowledge prevalent and available in that remote past.

As to its function, Old Russian book-learning had a double role. On the one hand, together with churches and monasteries it emerged as a way to render and keep safe the Christian faith, while on the other, as emphasized in a special study by M.S. Kiseleva, Old Russian book-learning *"was the only way of existence, rendering and preservation of knowledge, because Old Russia had no other such forms (educational, theological, scientific). So, in spite of an oft-repeated motive of self-humiliation a bibliologist in Old Russia was necessarily a teacher called upon by God. Another position gradually crystallized inside this teacher's one, similar to it at first glance but opposite to it in fact. A bibliologist was also a guru. He advised princes, and up to the certain time tsars also, estimating the events, taking the role of the defendant of human deeds in God's eye"*¹⁵.

As a way to preserve and transfer Christian faith Biblical texts carried the divine word itself and were considered samples, the standard of language use. One aimed at attaining it in one's individual creative work. *"Theoretically, all the readers' demands, diverse in genre — V. V. Kalugin supposes — could be satisfied by confession literature alone"*¹⁶. It performed the main book function: to become the means of saving the soul, to portray an 'ideal' human being. So secular literature not pursuing didactic goals did not deserve any serious attention, while 'false' writings abnegated by church fell outside the bounds of the official book system. *"All that serves not the sake of good, but the sake of embroidery, is subject to accusation of*

¹² According to V.V. Mavrodin, only during XIII-first half of XV c. the Russians endured more than 160 wars with external enemies. See.: Mavrodin V.V. *Obrazovanie russkogo mnogonacional'nogo gosudarstva*. M.; L., 1939. P. 124.

¹³ Tvorogov O.V. *Prinyatie hristianstva na Rusi i drevnerusskaya literatura // Vvedenie christianstva na Rusi*. M., 1987. P. 153.

¹⁴ See: Kalugin V.V. *«K'NIGY»...* P. 90.

¹⁵ Kiseleva M.S. *Drevnerusskie knizhniki i vlast' // Voprosy filosofii*. 1998. N7. P. 127.

¹⁶ See: Kalugin V.V. *«K'NIGY»...* P. 89.

worldliness". These words of Vassili the Great, one of the Fathers of Church determined many an attitude of Old Russian society towards the works of writing¹⁷.

Hence, when the sources of the XI-XIV centuries tell us about the use of books they speak not about reading in general but that of religious texts, first of all the Holy Writ as a means of saving the soul. This explains the fact that confessional literature, in particular the Gospel, the Apostle and the Psalter remained better preserved than the monuments of secular writing, though fails to reflect the diversity and wealth of the total book stock at the same time. *"The mistake of many library and museum workers — B. V. Sapunov notes — lies in the fact that they directly estimate dissemination of some or other book or monument in antiquity by the degree of its preservation. Rather one should assume an inverse picture: the most popular, most read books had been preserved much worse because of their prevalence and 'readability'."*¹⁸.

The next important library problem of the existence of books in Pre-Mongol Russia is that of education and erudition of the Russian people, their manner of reading and readers' comprehension of hand-written texts. Compared to historical-literary researches there is considerably less material available on these questions. In my view, however, scholars have enough information to study the library aspect of the data at their disposal. That data peculiarity is that they are scattered through very different documents, remain non-systematized, fragmented and never serve the specific aim of author's study. They should be comprehensively researched starting with facts from the original works of the time in the context of the Russian-Slavonic cultural relations with the Western world and the Byzantium.

Comparing tidings on any given event from various chronicles we must remember that beside editing and commenting they were subjected to more substantial revisions for a long time as well. Returning to specific analysis of the book existence in the documents from post-Mongol period, one should consider individual partiality and biases of the authors to past events. One may find abundant material on this and other subjects in a book by one of the leading historians of our time - Ya.S. Lurie. He comes to the conclusion that the annals of the XV-XVI centuries cannot be considered reliable sources on history of the Oldest Russia¹⁹.

Let us discuss the question of literacy of the Russian people. It is quite within reason to suggest that if the XI-XIII centuries text corps included 130-140 thousand items, then the level of literacy had to be rather high. Until quite recently (the early 1950-ies) we had rather fragmented data on the question from written sources²⁰. As for results of special research, on the whole they did not offer any convincing evidence of widely spread literacy either. I mean the publications by M.P. Pogodin, A.I. Sobolevsky, V.N. Peretz²¹, first of all.

In his article *"The Erudition"* (1904) professor V.N. Peretz concluded the following: *"For us the picture of erudition in Old Russia presents a desert in which one sometimes happens to*

¹⁷ Kuskov V.V. *Istoriya drevnerusskoj literatury*. 4-e izd. M., 1982. P. 5-6.

¹⁸ Sapunov B.V. *Kniga v Rossii...* P. 153.

¹⁹ Lurie Ya.S. *Istoriya Rossii v letopisanii i v vospriyatii novogo vremeni // Rossiya drevnyaya i Rossiya novaya*. SPb., 1997. P. 99.

²⁰ Thus, in Commentaries to *"Nestor's Chronicle"* under year 1030 we read: *"the late chronicles, going back to Novgorodsko-Sophijsky anaclystic summary of the thirties of XV century, after a report about Yaroslav's campaign against chiud' there is the following story, apparently old: "And when came to Novgorod, gathered 300 of leader's and priest's children to learn books"* (PVL. SPb., 1966. P. 480). In the hagiologies of some Novgorod saints written in the middle ages, is told that they went to schools.

²¹ See: Pogodin M.P. *Obrazovanie i gramotnost' v drevnem periode russkoj istorii // Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosvetsheniya*. 1871. Chast'. 153, yanvar'. P. 1-28; Sobolevsky A.I. *Obrazovannost' Moskovskoj Rusi XV-XVII vekov*. SPb., 1892. 23 p.; Peretz V.N. *Obrazovannost' /Kniga dlya chteniya po russkoj istorii*. T. 1. M., 1904. P. 533-549.

meet oases — circles of people who are more or less educated by the standards of these times; sometimes those educated people even seem to be some solitary figures dwarfed to insignificance among the mass of not only uneducated, but simply illiterate people". And further: "In any case we have no reasons to suppose that the degree of literacy among the commoners of the XI-XIV centuries was higher than in the XIX century, before the reforms of Alexander II, when literate people in the country were few" (P. 537).

It was only during the last 50 years that the works of archaeologists, historians, philologists, and art critics radically changed our notion of literacy in the XI-XIII century Russia. The discoveries of birch-bark scrolls in Novgorod and then in other towns showed that the living language heard across the wide areas of Old Russia was not unified. The language of church literature was Church Slavonic. Only practical and legal documents were written in the proper Old Russian, the living language of communication. That of the annals and fiction usually combined the elements of Church Slavonic and proper Russian. It is extremely important that among the eight hundred extra birch-bark scrolls known by now more than 280 belong to the XI-XII centuries. These scrolls were used for everyday purposes and are valuable as documentary evidence of those days²².

As an example I will quote two messages from the remote past. The first one dates from the beginning of the XII century (N 424):

"The letter from Gurgy to father and mother. When sold the homestead go here — to Smolensk or Kiev: grain is cheap there. If you don't go, send a message to me, how are you".

Gurgy wrote the letter in Smolensk (this text comments are by V.L. Yanin, a historian), but he himself intended to go further, to Kiev. His parents, when having sold their homestead, could join him in Smolensk, but could also go to Kiev. What for? What might be a need to liquidate the homestead in Novgorod and migrate to the South? The letter gives us an unambiguous answer to this question: *"cheap grain"*²³.

The second message is from the XIV century (the scroll N 271): *"My obedience to the fellow sponsor and my friend Maxim from Jacob"*. Jacob is in need of oats and asks Maxim to buy it for him from Andrey. If the latter agrees to sell oats, it would require a kind of note from him, maybe a notice of receipt. But what is most interesting is another of Jacob's recourses to Maxim: *"Send me some good reading matter"*.

This is how V.L. Yanin interprets that phrase: *"He needs an interesting book. A divine service book cannot be implied here. If Jacob needed a book for divine service, he would have accurately named it because selection of such books was strictly regulated. Jacob needed some entertaining reading matter. Maybe it was the annals or some military story. Or it was a translated work of fiction. Or it was a legend of some war saint, which for a medieval reader was same as a novel of adventure for a modern one. Maxim knows the taste of his fellow sponsor and his friend Jacob and will decide himself what book he has to choose for Jacob to enjoy."*

From this letter we find for the first time that literacy was so widespread in Novgorod that some people developed a taste and a desire to read. Jacob's letter is written in a natural, easy, living language of an intellectual person. But this letter is also important in describing our Maxim — V. L. Yanin emphasizes. — A man capable of selecting an interesting book for his friend undoubtedly had to have an interesting library himself, an outstanding detail in itself.

²² See: Zaliznyak A.A. Posleslovie lingvista // Yanin V.L. Ya poslal tebe berestu... 3-e izd., ispr. i dop. M., 1998. P. 437-439.

²³ Yanin V.L. Ya poslal tebe berestu... P. 210-211.

Moreover, he should have been quite a good person if his friends were not shy to bother him with their requests"²⁴.

In the process of Christian book education based on a lot of available writings of Byzantine-Bulgarian origin that elaborated on cosmogony, ethics, human psychology, behavior and interrelation with the environment such "book-learning" gained the greatest respect in Russia. Publications by V.P. Adrianova-Peretz, N.N. Rozov, B.V. Sapunov, V.V. Kalugin²⁵ offer important information on the attitudes of writers and readers of Old Russia to reading and treat it from a point of view interesting for us.

Please consider some distinctive features of reading, as our ancestors knew it.

1. Reading theological literature was considered to be a public duty, a "collegiate" doing and not an individual engagement in Old Russia; it had to be not simple reading, but a "scrutiny" of subject matter under the guidance of scholars and righteous edifiers since these were the only persons capable of reaching the reading essence.

2. The scribe was obliged to share with others what he read. *"Book honoring is good, o brothers, for any Christian"; "with all one's heart" and "sensible eyes" should one apprehend what one reads"*²⁶.

3. The reader of theological books had to aspire to kind acts as the texts he read instructed him to do. We read in *"The Nestor's Chronicles"* under 1037: *"If you diligently look for wisdom in the books, then you'll find great use for your soul. Because the one who reads the books often, he does talk with God or with the saints. The one who reads prophetic discussions, and the gospel, and apostolic instructions, and the hagiology of saintly fathers, he does find great help for his soul"*.

4. "Irreverence to books" was considered to be the main source of many a sin and misery. The Novgorod chronicler said definitely: *"wise man without a book is similar to a stronghold standing without a counterforce: if there is a wind, it shall fall"*²⁷.

5. Along with the need for ecclesiastic writings, the storage vault for eternal values, diverse life situations evoked in readers in Old Russia a yearning for secular, lay books of a different origin. Lists of abnegated works not recognized by the church started to appear; their reading declared sinful.

... Having written the above I decided to surface for a moment after immersing into "book-learning". Images and various associations that must have sprung in the conscious of readers in Old Russia as they internalized instructions, in particular those from ecclesiastic books always interested me. Fine arts yield many examples of those readers' reflections. I would like in particular to tell about one of the XII century masterpieces from Staraya (Old) Ladoga, a town about 120 km east of St. Petersburg.

On October 8, 1998, the St. Petersburg Scientific Center of RAS convened a field meeting there, and we familiarized ourselves in passing with wonderful monuments of old architecture, especially the Georgievskaya (St. George) Church and its unique frescoes. The one best preserved in all the temple cycle devoted to St. George is *"St. George and the Dragon"*. In that church the plot routinely depicting the one-on-one combat of the holy warrior finds an uncommon interpretation. The plot and its artistic rendering are deeply impressive.

²⁴ Yanin V.L. Ya poslal tebe berestu... P. 144-146.

²⁵ See: Adrianova-Peretz V.P. K voprosu o krughe chteniya drevnerusskogo pisatelya // Trudy Otd. drevnerus. lit. T. 28. L., 1974. P. 3-29; Rozov N.N. Kniga Drevnej Rusi (XI-XIV vv.). M., 1977. P. 18-34; Sapunov B.V. Kniga v Rossii... P. 110-162; Kalugin V.V. «K'NIGY». P. 94-109.

²⁶ Izbornik, 1076 g. M., 1965. P. 151;156.

²⁷ See: Novgorodskaya pervaya letopis' starshego i mladshego izvodov. M.;L., 1950. P. 561.

To describe it let us call upon the authors of the book *"Old Ladoga — the Ancient Capital of Russia"* by A.N. Kirpichnikov and V.D. Sarabianov:

"The central part of the composition is taken up by a majestic image of the holy equestrian warrior with a banner in his hand. He is dressed in a suit of armor and behind his back there flutters a dark-red mantle decorated with stars. His huge figure, roughly twice as big as those of other characters, is perceived as an image of an ethereal messenger. By the horse's legs we see the dragon led by a tsarevna who keeps him on a leash. "And the terrible dragon, it followed her, — tells the legend,— crawling upon the ground like a lamb to a slaughter". In the top corner of the composition there is a town-wall from which the tsar and the tsarina are watching the event with their retinue.

*Perceived outwardly as a narrative illustration to an instructive story so often found in medieval literature, this fresco has a deeper imagery as well. St. George, portrayed in the Byzantine tradition as a martyr or a combat-ready victorious warrior, the patron of the native troops, appears flying quite different colors here. Behind the scene of armorial triumph one can behold a new meaning: earthly evil, its bearer the dragon emerging as a purveyor of death and decay cannot be defeated by force. Force brings forth violence, so the evil can only be overcome by humility and faith. And the fresco characters represent these eternal ideals of Christianity exactly. Undoubtedly in the "militant gallantry - humility" antithesis the latter is principal"*²⁸.

But let us return to how all that had been read and perceived by an Old Russian reader. In library language, we are interested to learn what we can about that reader's contemporaneous environment and literature. Publications on that subject are even fewer. I would like to turn to the three well-known works, cornerstone in my view, by V.P. Adrianova-Peretz, M.M. Peschak and O.V. Tvorogov.

*"In writers' statements on and estimates of the environment — V. P. Adrianova-Peretz stresses— we look for traces of their acquaintance with that book-learning from which they and, thereby, their readers derived their religious, philosophical, naturalistic, historical-geographical knowledge. No private libraries have survived from those times; only through notes in various manuscripts do we learn the names of compilers of composite books, those of copyists and book owners. Thus the hard problem emerges of identifying — even though in general — the circle of reading of Russian writers and readers. For each writer, even though anonymous, this problem is solved on the basis of his own works. As for the readers one has to search for the answer among the notes in books, in part judge it by the degree of prevalence of copies of each separate work or its extracts, even look for its after-sounds left in spoken language"*²⁹.

Selecting *"Izmaragd"*, one of the most popular books of the Russian Middle Ages of the XIV-XVI centuries for the object of her study the author shows that it had been an original encyclopaedia for "home" reading, not an ecclesiastic work chiefly addressed to "lay" people. The predominant form of the "words" is hortative, touching a specific topic: "on alms", "on obedience", "on anger", "on envy", "on the rich and the disgraceful". It contains practical admonishments addressed to a "reasonable" head of the house: how to behave oneself in the court of law, where to ask for assistance, descriptions of the "offences" that may be caused to him or his household. In fact, turning to methodological significance of Adrianova-Peretz research

²⁸ Kirpichnikov A.N., Sarabianov V.D. *Staraya Ladoga — drevnyaya stolitsa Rusi*. SPb.: Slaviya, 1996. P. 121.

²⁹ See: Adrianova-Peretz V.P. *K voprosu o krugozhdenii...* P. 3.

we may see that, taking "Izmaragd" as an example she describes the processes of forming of world outlook, defines the tasks of literature and elaborates on verbalization means of an Old Russian writer and hence — his readers.

Another author, the well-known Ukrainian linguist and literary scholar M.M. Peschak studied annals from the XI-XVII centuries conducting a linguistic-semantic analysis of old texts³⁰. In her monograph she described the process of reconstructing the compositional structure of handwritten materials determining the "native" and the "alien" in an author's text by quoting. She also showed peculiarities of "explicating" the subject matter and the formal text features such as primary and secondary (bibliographical) information that helps to identify such elements as contents and synopsis. Describing the structure of the chronicle text M.M. Peschak singled out introductory, main and final parts. One of her conclusions is the following: *"history of scientific literature confirms an existing objective regularity: the more generalized is the description of scientific problems in the book, the more harmonized is the way it is presented in the main text; meanwhile, the more concrete is the object investigated by the author, the more broken is his presentation of material, and, strange though it may seem, such a text is perceived with difficulty by the reader. Syntax plays a great role in delimiting the harmonized vs. the broken exposition of written texts ... Rhythm and melodics at the disposal of the Old Russian chirographists had been used as disjunctive symbols to emphasize their statements. As testified by East-Slavonic monuments the arsenal of such symbols was wide enough"* (P. 194).

Two works by O.V. Tvorogov devoted to reading and perception of the Old Russian texts attracted my attention. Accurate and clear assertions in the first make it in fact a program of a comprehensive study³¹.

I singled out four separate aspects of the work. The first is the way a problem is stated. The author formulates the task as follows: 1) what concrete facts or indirect evidences allow us to judge the character of past literature perception by its contemporaries, 2) we are interested not in the historical literary process, but specifically in that perception of literature by the reader. It is especially difficult to answer that question with respect to literature of the remote past, yet unfamiliar with such a true mirror of literary life as criticism.

The second aspect touches upon peculiarities of the research itself. If we, O.V. Tvorogov writes, set out to reveal the reader's perception, that is either his interest in problems, or admiration of aesthetic merits of a work of literature, we have to remember the strict limitations on the repertoire of Old Russian book-learning, especially during the older period: there had been books needed for the divine service or books included in the obligatory repertoire of monastery libraries. Such material is not very promising for solving the question that interests us. To pronounce our judgments we have to select such material that is either not an obligatory part of Christian book-learning, or permits monuments of the same genre or even the same subject to compete. Particularly outstanding are the cases when a work of literature had been read and copied in spite of an official prohibition.

The third aspect of O.V. Tvorogov's program for studying readers' perception is interesting for its prompts on the possible sources of research. First of all these are the Old Russian anthologies — collections of works of literature, constructed according to certain subject or calendar principles that reflect the varying readers' demands. One may obtain objective material analyzing the mutual influence of literary monuments. *"The most ostensive example — the*

³⁰ Peschak M.M. Rozvitok davn'orus'kogo i staroukrains'kogo naukovogo tekstu. Kiev: Ukrainoznavstvo, 1994. 270 p.

³¹ Tvorogov O.V. Ob izuchenii chitatel'skogo vospriyatiya literatury // Klassicheskoe nasledie i sovremennost'. L., 1980. P. 55-59.

author emphasizes — is not even the influence of “*The Lay of Igor’s Warfare*” upon “*Zadonschina*”, but the influence of “*Zadonschina*” upon the other work of literature about the Kulikovskaya battle — “*The Saga of the Mamay Battle*”. The latter has some fragments included from the text of “*Zadonschina*” which attracted the attention of the author with their aesthetic features: bright imagery, colorful comparisons and figures of speech”. If several versions of the monument have been preserved in the form of thorough revisions, paraphrases, if it gained new features, changed the plot, all this is a cogent argument in favor of its popularity, offering material to judge as to what exactly attracted the Old Russian readers, which characteristics of the plot or peculiarities of style had developed.

The forth aspect of the program touches upon interpreting the results obtained. The author warns: it may seem that all he says isn’t new and that similar observations were already made. But they refer to judgments on separate monuments. The moment we elevate to wider generalizations, we start treading trickier grounds. Material of stable collections, of apocrypha, of the translated hagiography has not been drawn on yet. We usually solve the question of readers’ perception in passing. Meanwhile, a special study of inventories of monastery and private libraries, registration and analysis of readers’ notes in Old Russian books is necessary. And it will not be the history of literature but the history of social thought or rather that of social tastes and social psychology, concludes O.V. Tvorogov.

I will add that the author succeeded in realizing his program in another article where he analyzed the repertoire of translated hagiology of the XII-XIV centuries. Mind you, hagiology of that time depicted the original “real world”. There, writes S.V. Polyakova, an expert in the Byzantine hagiography “*political events, details of economic life, intrigues at the court find their reflection... We are visiting Imperial Palaces, craftsman shops, pirate ships, sinister shelters of magicians, estates of the rich, dungeons, rural hovels and taverns*”³². O.V. Tvorogov adds: “*...hagiology acts develop in the vast area from Italy to Caucasus, from Greece to Syria, Egypt and the mysterious lands at oecumene’s end... Saints always move from town to town, cross the seas, trudge through stony deserts, reach mysterious dwellings of the blessed and even the Heaven itself*”³³. Basing on the analysis of facts reflected in many monuments that coexisted in the XII-XIV centuries the author comes to the conclusion that studying translated hagiology is extraordinary important for reconstructing the historical, aesthetic and literary profile of the Old Russian readers (P. 225).

And yet, and still... Reading these studies by well-known authors I could not find an answer to the question that always interested me: if “*The Lay of Igor’s Warfare*” is the monument of the XII century, the pearl of world culture and so on, then why do we find no references to it as a source in the circle of reading of Old Russian writers and readers? No traces tell us whether it was known or read in the XII-XIV centuries. From the library point of view this question is central.

In search of an answer I went again with a fine comb through the fundamental work by V.P. Adrianova-Peretz³⁴. She never touches on the “reader’s” theme there at all! Varvara Pavlovna starts with the text of “*The Lay*”, carefully analyzes its vocabulary, phraseology, folklore and literary traditions of the XI-XII centuries. She compares “*The Lay*” with other monuments of the time: translations (“*Chronicle*” by Georgy Amartol, “*History of the Judaic War*” by Joseph

³² Polyakova S.V. Vizantijskie legendy kak literaturnoe yavlenie // Vizantijskie legendy / Izd. podgot. S. V. Polyakova. L., 1972. P. 245-246. (Literaturnye pamyatniki).

³³ Tvorogov O.V. Drevnerusskie chet’i sborniki XII-XIV vv. Stat’ya vtoraya: Pamyatniki agiografii // Trudy Otd. drevnerussk. lit. T. 44. L., 1990. P. 196-225.

³⁴ Adrianova-Peretz V.P. «Slovo o polku Igoreve» i pamyatniki russkoj literatury XI-XIII vekov. L.: Nauka, 1968. 202 p.

Flavius), Russian texts ("Word" by Daniil Zatochnik, "Analecta" by Svyatoslav, "Hortative" by Vladimir Monomakh) and many others. And naturally she corroborates connections of "The Lay" with the poetics, history and events of those days. "The poetical talent of the author — writes V.P. Adrianova-Peretz — had been the only power to raise "The Lay of Igor's Warfare" so high over everything circumfluent that even in our days it continues to participate actively in the life of Soviet and foreign polite letters and fine arts" (P. 40).

What sort of unlimited height was it to remain unattainable and to leave no trace among the literate, moreover quite educated Old Russian reader as we saw above? I repeat once more: while reading about literature perception in the Pre-Mongol period I could find no references to "The Lay". Why? Did the researchers really disregard that fact earlier or was it glossed over intentionally? Or was the Moscow historian A.A. Zimin right to consider "The Lay of Igor's Warfare" to have been written in the end of the XVIII century³⁵? Unfortunately, his manuscript has not yet been published in full (45 printer's sheets) up to now. Too bad.

Despite the "escort duty" of polemic articles by the advocates of "The Lay"³⁶ I picked two essential facts from what has been published of A.A. Zimin that seemed to be very important in dating the time of creation of this work of literature.

1) "Pushkin regarded "The Lay" as an old monument. At the same time he wrote that Igor's song looked a solitary monument in the desert of our old polite letters". Now we know that Old Russian writing had never been a desert, but *with a clear vision of a genius Pushkin felt the sharp antithesis between "The Lay" and other monuments of old literature* (my italics - V.L.) (P. 136).

2) "Quite recently G.A. Lesskis, a linguist detected an interesting objective relation between the length of a sentence and the dating of a work of literature. According to his observations sentences in Old Russian literary monuments are considerably longer than in literary works of the XVIII century, on the average. By that parameter, taking "Zadonschina" to correspond to Old Russian tales "The Lay of Igor's Warfare" should belong to the literature circle of the XVIII century. Characters in old monuments speak directly in phrases of 16-18 words, whereas in Igor's song they utter 11,9 and Radischev's characters only use 10,8. "Zadonschina"'s author's continuous narration stretches for 18-22 words, and that of "The Lay" for 11,6. Radischev scores 12,5. Methods of mathematical linguistics may solve the dispute on the dating of creation of Igor's song yet." (P. 147).

I will add another fact, the third in favor of A.A. Zimin's concept: references are absent in literature that would touch on the reaction of writers and readers of the XII-XIV centuries to "The Lay of Igor's Warfare".

³⁵ Zimin A.A. *Kogda bylo napisano «Slovo»? // Voprosy literatury.* 1967. N3. P. 135-152.

³⁶ See: *Voprosy literatury.* 1967. N 3. P. 133-134; 153-176.

To readers interested in discussion problems around "The Lay...", advisable is to acquaint themselves with publications in two issues of the magazine "Russkaya literatura" of 1994: To the history of the dispute on the authenticity of "The Lay of Igor's Warfare": From Academician D.S. Likhatchev's correspondence / (L.V. Sokolova's publication) // *Rus. lit.* 1994. N2. P. 232-268; N 3. P. 213-245.

Ya.S Lurie was right, writing in his memories about Zimin: "The book had not been published not only in the end of 1964, when Khrushchev was overthrown. It was not published in the following years also. It is not published up to now. 'Doctor Zhivago', 'Archipelago GULag' and volumes of "The Red Wheel", Trotsky's writings and Melgunov's 'The Red terror' have been published. But Zimin's 'The Lay of Igor's Warfare' turned out to be more dangerous, then all of them". See: Lurie Ya.S. From memories about Alexandr Alexandrovich Zimin // *Odissey*, 1993. M.: Nauka, 1994. P. 201.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGINALITY OF RUSSIAN LIBRARY CULTURE

Today, in spite of the diversity of actual information of historical and literature nature, library science has neither a common theory of the library process nor a description of the dynamics of book circulation in Old Russian society. It would seem that this problem might be now solved: scholarly works are under no prohibitions now and no outward circumstances limit such studies. The only barrier to consider at every step is the formidable layer of concepts and steady traditions of presenting the material in scientific literature.

There is a cohort of outstanding Russian bibliognosts, their activities widely known: Yaroslav Mudry, Vladimir Monomakh, Ilarion... As to those other chirographists, translators, writers whose works replenished the libraries not only of Kiev and Novgorod but also of many monasteries and princes' countryseats, we know quite little about them. Discovering new facts, finding new names in the process of studying the lives of old libraries — or the “brain centers”, as Academician N.K. Nikolsky had called them, will continue. However I do not plan to write my own version of library history.

In this chapter I'd like to substantiate the thesis that a special phenomenon in the sphere of culture — Russian library culture — sprang to life with the conception of the library process in the country. Sources testify that it formed off the beaten track and not only aimed at developing literature itself but originated in the general problems of the Russian history and the history of Russian culture. To clarify my train of thought to the reader I will introduce two pieces touching on the declared theme. The first is the “*Tragedy of the Russian Culture*”¹ — an article by a Russian philologist P.M. Bicilli, little-known to the modern reader:

“The fact that Russia fell behind Europe in its development and had to overtake it in a hurry then was a great disaster in terms of Civilization. Now, as a matter of Culture, it had been the greatest gift of fortune. Culture follows its own progress of a kind, irregular, non-rectilinear, without the need to realize any consciously stated goals. That progress consists in accumulating the results of spiritual experience, in enriching the reserve of spiritual incentives and creative potentials... Culture is tragic by its own nature and so it is unusual for it to flow quietly and idyllically, without obstacles and dangers. Otherwise it becomes threatened with yet the most horrible and overwhelming danger — to be imperceptibly, gradually sucked

¹ The article was published in 1933, in the magazine “Sovremennye zapiski” (N 53. P. 297-309). In 1990 it was published in the magazine “Ruskaya literatura” (N 2. P. 134-154). I quote P.M. Bicilli's work (as published in 1996). See: Bicilli P.M. Tragediya Ruskoy kultury // Izbr. trudy po filologii. M.: Nasledie, 1996. P. 147-157.

in by civilization, as it happened time after time with certain European cultures. Being their heiress, the Russian culture ran its wealth with true royal ease...

The more mature is the culture, the more distinct become its tragic problems, the more compellingly they are forced to the conscious — and the more urgent becomes the need to free one's spirit from the depressing anxiety...

The extraordinary, unparalleled freedom of development of the Russian culture, its apparent, outward disorder, irregularity along with its utmost perfection, - by no means is all that an indicator of some immanent characteristic of "the Russian soul" (or "ame slave"). Culture is just the soul being created and becoming national, its peculiarities determined by the sociological texture of the nation. Only this fact is of importance to the historian of culture. In the context of the philosophy of culture another circumstance becomes significant. The historical mission of Russia is that, due to a specific texture of the Russian society, its culture has become "pure". Among all the European countries of the Christian cultural circle Russia has appeared to be the only country where culture affected civilization just barely and thus did not degenerate into civilization completely. Therefore its tragic ruin instead of a gradual fade into arteriosclerosis; and that is why it ennobles the result of European culture and its ruin guarantees a global Renaissance, impossible without great upheavals, without an excruciating awareness of the tragedy of the Spirit awakening (P. 147; 149; 157)".

The second piece is taken from a book by a contemporary author, B.A. Uspensky². It is devoted to the perception of secular vs. ecclesiastic powers in Russia.

"Russia has always been explicitly oriented towards foreign culture. At first it looked to Byzantium, then — towards the West. The reforms of Saint Vladimir that marked initiation of Russia to the Byzantine civilization, and the reforms of Peter I that declared the initiation of Russia to civilization of the Western Europe bear a principal resemblance. In fact these reforms are similar in character, the only difference being the cultural reference point. First, the principle of "ex Oriente lux" is declared and then — "ex Occidente lux". In both cases however the values are set from the outside and a necessarily conscious absorption of foreign cultural models and conceptual schemes is presupposed. The problem of the old vs. the new comes in the guise of the native vs. the alien, and the cultural development permeates via internalization of a foreign experience.

Now, when striking the Russian soil these models usually interpenetrate to form something essentially new, distinct from both the adopted culture (that is, the culture of the country of its origin) and the culture of the recipient. In the result this orientation towards a foreign culture strongly facilitates the development of an originally Russian culture.

This orientation towards a foreign cultural standard has brought certain texts (both in the narrow linguistic and the wide semiotic sense) to Russia to express the assimilated cultural tradition. Here though they functioned out of their historical-cultural context that had caused their initial appearance in their due time. Moreover, they were actually adopted to recreate the appropriate cultural context. The cultural set, the ideological task thus left reality behind and was actually called to create new reality.

Specifically, the orientation towards the Byzantine culture had led to the appearance of certain rituals somehow related to the concept of power; ...the Russians adopted the ritual and filled it with substance. Naturally that semantic substance did not necessarily correspond to the initial one. The rituals borrowed from Byzantium or created in the process of orienta-

² Uspensky B.A. Tsar' i patriarh: Harizma vlasti v Rossii (Vizantijskaya model' i ee russkoe pereosmyslenie). M.: Shkola «Yazyki russkoj kul'tury», 1988. 680 p.