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Author's Subject: new reprint of Dosifei on Solovki

Date Written: Tue, 26 Nov 2013 10:30:56 -0800

Date Posted: Wed, 26 Nov 2013 13:30:56 -0500

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[EarlySlavic&month=1311&week=d&msg=dHRiFtmxOaAXs5KQY9LXRA&user=&pw=>](http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-EarlySlavic&month=1311&week=d&msg=dHRiFtmxOaAXs5KQY9LXRA&user=&pw=>)

Geograficheskoe, istoricheskoe i statisticheskoe opisanie pervoklassnogo stavropigial'nogo Solovetskogo monastyria, sostavlennoe arkhimandritom Dosifeem. Reprintnoe vosproizvedenie izdaniia 1836 goda. Spaso-Preobrazhenskii Solovetskii stavropigial'nyi muzhskoi monastyr', 2011. 736 pp. ISBN 978-5-91942-013-2.

A facsimile reprint of a 19th-century publication ordinarily might just be listed without comment, but I think this one merits special attention, not the least of the reasons being that it is a testimony to the rebirth of the Solovki Monastery complex as a religious institution after its sad history of having been turned into an outpost of the Gulag in the early Soviet period (one of its best known inmates was D. S. Likhachev). The monastery also reprinted in 2011 the 1881 description by Archimandrite Meletii and in 2010 reproduced the 1847 edition of Dosifei's much-cited "Chronicle" (see below). The volume reviewed here is a photo facsimile, scanned from a copy in the monastery's museum, detailed to the showing of the frayed edges of the pages and printed on paper that captures the feel of a 19th-century book.

As the current Archimandrite of the monastery writes in his preface here, Archimandrite Dosifei (Nemchinov), who served in that post from 1826 to 1836, was "the monastery's Karamzin." An anonymous foreword "From the Publisher" sketches Dosifei's career. Then, citing T. A. Tutova's valuable overview of the history of the monastery archive in *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1984*, the foreword indicates that the third section of this book was largely the work of the monk Kassian (Vasilii Voskresenskii), who was charged by Dosifei with putting the monastery archive in order and copying the rich collection of documents in it. All in all, the three volumes of the 1836 *Opisanie* was a landmark in the documentation of one of the largest and most important of the Russian monasteries at what has to have been one of the quieter moments in its eventful history.

There is, of course, a long history of the compilation of inventories of churches and monasteries in Russia, often in the pre-modern period carried out with impressive thoroughness. As some of those subscribed to H-EarlySlavic know, these descriptions today are valuable source material for reconstructing what once was, but almost universally no longer is (at least in the locations that were then described). Dosifei's lengthy opus only in part resembles most of those earlier descriptions, in that he was really interested in writing a history of the monastery and contextualizing it with reference to its geographical setting, rather than cataloging each and every item it owned. Thus he opens with a long excursus on physical and human geography before recounting in considerable detail (often with long quotations from the documents in the archive) its history down to the beginning of the 19th

century. At the same time he was writing this, Dosifei compiled a "Chronicle" of the monastery's history, a work which combines a number of the early chronicles kept there and which he then continued down into the modern era. So much for the idea that chronicle writing in Russia died by the end of the 17th century! The Chronicle went through several editions and now the reprint mentioned above. Dosifei's *Opisanie* is also valuable for the architecture, thorough to the extent of including measurements of buildings. As did earlier such descriptions, he covers icons and at least a selection of what he considered to be important manuscripts, the library in his time of over 4000 volumes too much to describe more fully. The third large section of the volume under review here (it was the third volume of the original edition) is a collection of what was then deemed the most important charters in the monastery's archive.

Solovki's memorable history includes the period in the middle of the 16th century when Filipp (Kolychev) briefly headed the monastery before going off to become head of the Russian church and fall victim to the *Oprichnina*; and the siege of 1668-1676 launched against the monks who had refused to accept the Nikonian reforms. The monastery was substantially ruined but then rebuilt. Its archive and library miraculously survived, only to be chipped away at and then carted off in crates – in 1854, the most important of the manuscript books ended up in Kazan; in 1917, after B. D. Grekov's inventory and with the closure of the monastery in 1920, everything else was removed, with the bulk of the archive now in RGADA f. 1201, but significant collections in various other repositories both in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Soon after the Soviet takeover of the monastery, a fire gutted its main buildings.

So, one of the largest church libraries and archives, and most important collections of icons and church accoutrements in Russia was dispersed (see Tutova's article for references to current locations). That history is an instructive example of what happened to the other church collections in Russia, those of lesser stature often leaving little written record to enable us to reconstruct them. .

Of course much has been written and published from the Solovki trove. A few dozen of the documents appeared in the important 19th-century series such as *AAE*, *AI* and *DAI*, but the first attempt at their full publication was two volumes in 1988 and 1990 of the *Akty Solovetskogo monastyria*, covering 1479-1584 and containing nearly 900 documents. Might we hope for a continuation??. Thanks to V. I. Koretskii, O. L. Novikova (and even yours truly) we now have modern editions of a number of the most important early Solovki chronicles. Apart from the monastery itself, they contain unique, if cryptic, information for the history of the Russian North. O. V. Panchenko recently published the *Khronograf* compiled by one of the most important of the 17th-century bookmen of Solovki, Sergei Shelonin, about whom we now also have a substantial monograph by O. S. Sapozhnikova. There is a facsimile edition of an illuminated copy of the "Tale about the Solovki uprising." M. V. Kukushkina published and studied the early library inventories for the monastery, and three substantial volumes of the series *Knizhnye tsentry Drevnei Rusi* (2001, 2004 and 2010) have been devoted to its books and bookmen.

The richness of the Solovki material has even inspired several American

dissertations: Leslie Powers' never-published one from the Univ. of Kansas (1972), Roy Robson's (published in 2004 as *Solovki*, offering a sweeping overview of the history down to modern times), and Jennifer Spock's (Yale 1999), from which we now have a number of valuable articles (see esp. the recent one in *Russian History* [2012]). For a poetic evocation of the architecture, visit Bill Brumfield's narrated slide show <http://rbth.ru/articles/2010/08/25/solovki_audio_slide_show_04900.html> or look for his book published by Kvadriga in 2008.

One of the highest priorities for Solovki would be a complete, modern description of all its books. The 4-volume description (1881-1910) of the manuscripts that ended up in Kazan in the 1850s (and are now in RNB) is incomplete and obsolete. About a decade ago, there was at least some idea being floated concerning a possible electronic descriptive catalog. Ideally, of course, all the manuscripts would be available in full in digital form.

Of course Dosifei would probably be delighted to know how much already has been done with the Solovki material to whose recording and organization he contributed so much. His description of 1836 is not merely of antiquarian interest, can still be consulted with profit, and might yet inspire new research.