

**READING RUSSIA.
A HISTORY OF READING
IN MODERN RUSSIA**

Volume 1

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di/segni

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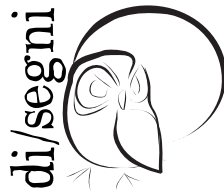
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HOW MIGHT WE WRITE A HISTORY OF READING IN PRE-EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIA?

DANIEL C. WAUGH

My contribution to this volume is something of an outlier as the only chapter dealing with the subject of reading in Russia prior to the eighteenth century, leaving one to wonder whether those who would focus on the early period are on the same page as colleagues who work on the subject in the 'modern' period. Do we have similar kinds of evidence, and are the ways in which we might analyze it similar or perhaps rather different? Whereas the other chapters here can focus on relatively narrow periods or subjects, if my task is to say something about a good many centuries from the time when formal literacy first arrived amongst the East Slavs with Christianity, I can at best sketch out some ideas. My focus here will be on Slavic writing, not on writing in languages of other peoples who lived in or near the territories of Russia. I am going to use 'Russia' as a shorthand for the territories that at one time or another also included parts of today's Ukraine, Belorussia and the Baltic region. For the most part, following a summary about the earlier evidence, my focus will be on the Muscovite period (roughly from the fifteenth down through the seventeenth centuries).

My examples will be some rather specific case studies, from which broader generalization may yet be premature. I must leave discussion of theoretical literature on reading to others.¹ Gary Marker's chapter provides conceptual insights which can both be brought to bear on my material (as he does in some examples) and may serve to highlight issues treated in many of the other contributions to this volume. My contribution is in a sense much narrower in its focus, the emphasis being on the practical realities of how the

¹ A good, short introduction to some of the challenges in analyzing readership is R. Chartier, "Reading Matter and 'Popular' Reading: From the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century," in G. Cavallo, R. Chartier (eds.), *A History of Reading in the West*, tr. by L. G. Cochrane (Amherst MA, 1999), 269-283, 432-436.

‘pre-modern’ material has been or might better be studied. It may turn out that the challenges faced in trying to write about reading in the pre-modern period are in fact not so different after all from those faced by scholars who work on the later centuries.

Perhaps we can all agree on some basics. To analyze reading, we need to know what texts were available, who possessed or accessed them, and how they used them. The third of these tasks is certainly the most difficult. It helps, of course, to have some understanding of what we may mean by ‘texts’ and ‘reading.’ Do we confine ourselves to words on the written page (or otherwise inscribed, for example, in graffiti or on an icon or mural)? Or should we not also explore the ways in which individuals who lack the formal literacy to read text on a page might nonetheless learn of its content through oral transmission, visual representation, or other means? Arguably, without considering the various non-written ways a text might be transmitted, we may be unable to say much about the real impact of any text on its ‘readers.’ In particular, there is the danger of relying too much on statistics of the numbers of copies of a particular work and their distribution as a way of determining readership, where even (especially?) in the modern period, we have quite persuasive evidence that readership might considerably exceed the relatively small numbers of copies of a given text.

A further word of caution is in order here. Apart from being able to document what readers actually accessed and what they did with it, naturally we wish to know about attitudes toward reading. Prescriptive texts about the value or dangers of reading are indeed of interest. But they are limited in value, I would argue, if we cannot then document the degree to which they were absorbed and followed.

There is a very large literature about the ‘book culture’ of early Russia.² Some of the key questions addressed include what the repertoire of written works was and how it changed over time, what was to be found in specific book collections (a.k.a. libraries), how authors and copyists went about their tasks and with what result. It is important to understand that the printing of books in Russia began only in the middle of the sixteenth century, and,

² I can but cite a few of the titles which provide a starting point for further study. The currently authoritative guide to authors and works is *Slovar’ knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi*, 4 vols. in 9 (Leningrad, St. Petersburg, 1987-2017). On the introduction and forms of writing in early Russia, see S. Franklin, *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, c. 950-1300* (Cambridge, 2002). See also his “Literacy and Documentation in Early Medieval Russia,” *Speculum*, 60/1 (1985), 1-38. More generally, see N. N. Rozov, *Kniga Drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1977) and Idem, *Kniga v Rossii v XV veke* (Leningrad, 1981). The more recent book by two leading scholars, L. V. Stoliarova and S. M. Kashtanov, *Kniga v Drevnei Rusi (XI-XVI vv.)* (Moscow, 2010) includes a compact overview but focuses in greatest detail on aspects of the codicological study of the early manuscripts and on specific examples of the earliest scriptoria which can be documented. There is some overlap between it and the monograph by Stoliarova, *Drevnerusskie nadpisi XI-XIV vekov na pergamennykh kodeksakh* (Moscow, 1998), which explores in depth what we can learn from the inscriptions on the earliest codices in Russia.

even if the numbers of printed books by the end of the seventeenth century were substantial (on this, more below), manuscript books continued to be very important. Furthermore, despite some improvement by the end of the seventeenth century, as near as one can tell (the evidence is hard to quantify) the formal literacy levels across the population remained very low. Oral transmission of knowledge continued to be essential for most of the population, a fact which then complicates considerably any effort to assess the impact of ‘reading.’ Even if we were to confine our subject to the written word, the very uneven preservation of written texts and (especially for the earliest centuries) the paucity of copies of them is a serious obstacle to research.

I. WRITING AND ITS USES IN EARLY RUSSIA—THE FIRST CENTURIES

While the beginnings of formal Slavic literacy date to the middle of the ninth century, it was only with the introduction of Christianity amongst the East Slavs in the late tenth century that Slavic writing began to spread in our Russia, and then first and foremost in connection with the needs of the Church. What is probably the earliest example of a Slavic text of any substance produced in Russian territory is a wax tablet with portions of two of the Psalms found in the northern town of Novgorod and dating from around the year 1000.³ The earliest dated Slavic manuscript also is from Novgorod, a large parchment *Aprakos* Gospel, commissioned by one of the local elite in 1056. The currently authoritative descriptive catalog of Slaviano-Russian manuscript books found in the libraries of the former USSR includes 494 entries for the period up to the fourteenth century, the collection containing almost without exception church service books or other writings of religious content, a few certainly in formats and combinations that might well have been read privately.⁴ How many such books might have once existed in Russia in this period can never be known. One should be cautious about arguments *ex silentio* which assume much of the book stock of pre-thirteenth-century Russia was destroyed during the Mongol invasion and thus speculate about there having been large numbers of books beyond

³ There is some epigraphic material that appears to antedate the Novgorod tablet, but is at best insufficient to prove much about the use of formal Slavic literacy in Russia prior to Prince Vladimir’s conversion in 988-89. For a discussion of this evidence, see Franklin, *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus* and also A. A. Medyntseva, *Gramotnost’ v Drevnei Rusi (Po pamiatnikam epigrafiki X-pervoï poloviny XIII veka)* (Moscow, 2000).

⁴ *Svodnyi katalog slaviano-russkikh rukopisnykh knig, khraniashchikhsia v SSSR XI-XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1984). For the continuation of this ongoing project, see *Svodnyi katalog slaviano-russkikh rukopisnykh knig, khraniashchikhsia v Rossii, stranakh SNG i Baltii. XIV vek. Vyp. 1 (Apokalipsis-Letopis’ Lavrent’evskaia)* (Moscow, 2002). Naturally manuscripts which made their way outside of Russia would have to be added here, but the Russian holdings certainly form the largest part of the extant collections of interest for our subject.

the very basic selection necessary for the Church to function.⁵ We have no meaningful data to indicate whether there were library collections of any substance. If such existed, they were probably to be found only in or near a few major towns. As the more sober assessments of the range of available texts in these early centuries have emphasized, the scope of all the formal written knowledge in early Russia probably did not exceed what might have been found in a single monastic library in Byzantium, and there certainly was nothing like the range of genres that an educated Byzantine might easily have accessed.⁶

This is not to say that there was no application of writing beyond Church circles. Laws began to be written down, even if their earliest copies are of substantially later date than the time they were composed.⁷ The recording of narrative chronicles began some time before the end of the eleventh century, though their earliest copies date from the fourteenth century. There are a very few early charters or their copies, and there was quite a bit of communication for various purposes, often amongst laymen, as attested in writings preserved on birchbark starting in the eleventh century. The birchbark texts include documentation about economic dealings, private notes amongst members of families and the like. To what degree they may have been written and then read by professional scribes (that is, not necessarily by the senders or recipients themselves) is difficult to know.⁸ In discussions of early Russian literacy, there has been a tendency to relegate ‘practical’ literacy such as is evidenced on the birchbarks and in the growing body of government paperwork to a separate box, leaving one still rather poorly informed as to how it was possible for the burgeoning Muscovite bureaucracy

5 See Rozov’s sensible attempt to provide perspective on statistics, among them the wild suggestions by B. V. Sapunov (*Kniga Drevnei Rusi*, 78-85).

6 For a reasoned characterization of the content of the repertoire of books in the earliest centuries, see Stoliarova and Kashtanov, *Kniga*, Ch. 2. Francis J. Thomson has written pointedly about the limited repertoire of the books compared to what was available in Byzantium, the most pertinent essays reprinted in his *The Reception of Byzantine Culture in Mediaeval Russia* (Aldershot, 1999). For a more positive take on what the surviving manuscript evidence may tell us, see W. R. Veder, “Old Russia’s ‘Intellectual Silence’ Reconsidered,” in M. S. Flier, D. Rowland (eds.), *Medieval Russian Culture*, Vol. 2, California Slavic Studies XIX (Berkeley, 1994), 18-28. Veder’s point is that the limited and often very cryptic selections (a kaleidoscope) from longer texts which are to be found in the few surviving early florilegia may suggest the existence of a rather open-ended kind of creativity, for which only a few signals were needed to stimulate new thinking and original analysis.

7 For a good overview of the early Russian laws, see D. H. Kaiser, *The Growth of the Law in Medieval Russia* (Princeton, 1980).

8 The largest number of the birchbark documents has been found in medieval Novgorod, published in an ongoing series, *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste*, 12 vols. to date (Moscow, 1953-2015), with a substantial portion also collected in the appendix to A. A. Zalizniak, *Drevnenovgorodskii dialekt* (Moscow, 1995). For a popular overview of these documents and their significance, written by one of the most important scholars who has worked on Novgorod, see V. L. Ianin, *Ia poslal tebe berestu...* (Moscow, 1965; 2nd ed. 1975).

of the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries to recruit and/or train those with the requisite skills to ensure it could function.

The totality of the evidence from the early centuries attests to the fact there were literate individuals, in some cases ones whose writings suggest they were acquainted with a number of different texts. Extant manuscripts (such as those containing homiletic works or legal texts) may indicate copyists had in hand several books or separate texts from which they produced a compilation, that process perforce requiring a kind of reading. However, there is little indication of how literacy could have been acquired and whether it was particularly valued. The idea that reading might be undertaken to stimulate the intellect or for pleasure was arguably not part of the culture, even if there are the occasional statements about the value of books and, allegedly, the devotion even of princes to learning.

One of the best recent overviews of book culture in early Russia prior to the introduction of the printing press suggests that its earliest ‘church’ period lasts through to the end of the fourteenth century, before giving way to a ‘church and monastery’ period lasting from the fifteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century.⁹ In contrast to the earliest of these periods, the second one certainly sees a considerable expansion in the number of books preserved (and presumably the numbers produced), the emergence of more centers of book production and ones more widely distributed than in the earlier period, and the broadening of the content of books. This is the period when we begin to see the proliferation of what have been termed *chet’i sborniki*, that is miscellanies which arguably were put together for private reading and were not part of the repertoire necessary for liturgical practice (on them, see the discussion below). At least to some extent (as had been the case in the Islamic world earlier), the adoption of paper as a writing medium facilitated the spread of texts—it was a lot cheaper than parchment, even if in the first centuries of its use in Russia it all was imported. The first major library we can confidently document in Russia was that of the Kirillo-Belozerskii Monastery, from which we still have a good many books that were in its original collection.

2. BOOKS AND READING IN THE KIRILLO-BELOZERSKII MONASTERY

The example of the Kirillov Monastery illustrates many aspects of the challenges in studying reading in pre-Modern Russia and also the methodologies which enable scholars to say a great deal about that subject. Founded in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century on the rather remote White Lake (Beloe ozero) in Northern Russia, originally as a location for escape from this world following the models of the early ascetic desert Fathers, the

⁹ Stoliarova and Kashtanov, *Kniga*, Ch. 2.

monastery grew rapidly into a sizeable cenobitic institution which enjoyed elite patronage and became a center of book production and learning.¹⁰ The descriptive listing of its books compiled in the 1480s was the first such library catalog produced in Russia, and a remarkably sophisticated one at that, listing more than 200 volumes. The collection continued to grow, with the inventories compiled in the seventeenth century eventually including more than 1900 entries, this after a good many of the monastery's books had been transferred elsewhere. While we have other substantial inventories of books in Russian monastic collections for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a distinctive feature of the Kirillov collection is the fact that so much of its early holdings remained intact and/or can be identified in extant manuscripts today. Thus the study of these books can reveal a great deal about the book production within a fifteenth-century institution, a production that required reading of the books, and writing that enables one to explore the significance of that reading. Very often when analyzing one of the books written or compiled by a Kirillov monk, we can also consult directly the exact copy of a work he had been reading and citing.

Of course one of the key challenges if we wish to be able to undertake this kind of analysis is to establish what books might have been available. Contemporary inventories are not always helpful, since, more often than not, their descriptions are so cryptic it is impossible to know for sure which extant book might correspond to one that is listed. Inscriptions on books naturally are an important source, colophons sometimes identifying copyists; once we have a copy in an identifiable hand, it may be possible to identify other copies by the same scribe, even if he did not sign his work. Often inscriptions indicate ownership by or donation to a particular collection. Evidence such as this has long been mined in the study of early Slavic book culture, although systematic collection of such data is a relatively recent and, as yet, very incomplete process.

In the case of the Kirillov books, the recent work by M. A. Shibaev has now raised their codicological study (that is the study of the totality of evidence about any individual book's history) to a new level, thanks to his meticulous analysis of the paper evidence. Up to now, it has been commonplace to describe watermarks in manuscript books with reference to albums in which similar ones have been depicted and identified, where possible from dated books. Given the usual qualifications about the degree of similarity and the possibility that batches of paper were used over a good many years, such evidence can help to narrow down the date range for a manuscript book.

¹⁰ A good, compact overview of the most important work on the Kirillov library is in M. A. Shibaev, *Rukopisi Kirillo-Belozerskogo monastyria XV veka. Istoriko-kodikologicheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow, St. Petersburg, 2013), 7-14. Shibaev has raised questions about the traditional dating of the founding of the monastery to as early as 1397; see his "K voprosu o rannikh etapakh formirovaniia biblioteki Kirillo-Belozerskogo monastyria," *Drevniaia Rus'. Voprosy medievistiki*, 43 (2011), 1, 31-35.

Using new imaging techniques, Shibaev has managed to record each and every watermark in his corpus of Kirillov codices (not just the ones that match published album images) and then, in conjunction with his careful classification of the different manuscript hands, has been able to determine with some confidence the exact sequencing and interconnection in the production of manuscripts that were in the monastery and on which various scribes worked.¹¹ In other words, going beyond the evidence of texts (but also taking that into account), he is able to connect with physical evidence what otherwise might be seen as a set of discrete books. In the process, he has been able to expand our knowledge of copying and authorship within this ‘reading community.’

Shibaev’s work points the way to what needs to be done if we can hope to move beyond the example of one textual community and connect it with others. After all, books traveled. Many years ago Nikolai N. Rozov advocated the idea that we could write a geography of books in Russia, plotting their origins and migrations.¹² The sophisticated codicological tools now available to us may in fact be able to tell us a lot about where many books were produced and thus the ultimate source of ones that then turned up in

¹¹ Another example of the elucidation of watermarks for a specific collection, but one based on the less thorough and less accurate older method of tracing them is E.V. Krushel’nitskaia, “Filigrani na bumage dokumentov i rukopisnykh knig, sozdannykh v Solovetskom monastyre v XVI v.” in *Knizhnye tsenry Drevnei Rusi: Knizhniki i rukopisi Solovetskogo monastyrnia* (St. Petersburg, 2004), 3-153. I can claim no credit for these recent studies, but I would nonetheless note that I was interested in the potential for using paper evidence in this fashion decades ago and made some suggestions about it at the time, even if they failed to inspire any meaningful follow-up. See my “Soviet Watermark Studies – Achievements and Prospects,” *Kritika*, 6/2 (1970), 78-111; summary and partial translation by Theo Gerardy in *IPH Information* (Bulletin of the International Association of Paper Historians), N. F., Jhrg. 5, Nr. 3 (1971), 62-66. I was told that a translation of this article into Russian circulated in, e.g., the manuscript division of the Lenin Library (now RGB). The article elicited several responses in print by Russian watermark specialists. In the oral discussions following D. S. Likhachev’s keynote address at the Tikhomirov Readings in Moscow in 1972 (see *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1972 god*, 256-257), I reiterated my recommendations; some of the material also entered into the paper (never published) which I gave to a specially convened session of the Sector of Old Russian Literature in Pushkinskii Dom on 19 September 1975: “O proekte primeneniia vychislitel’nykh mashin v sostavlenii kataloga opisaniia drevnerusskikh rukopisei” (see *TODRL* 40 [1985], 450).

¹² N. N. Rozov, “Ob issledovanii geograficheskogo rasprostraneniia rukopisnoi knigi (po materialam Sofiiskoi biblioteki),” in *Puti izucheniia drevnerusskoi literatury i pis’mennosti* (Leningrad, 1970), 160-170. For a recent indication of what is possible, see A. S. Usachev, “O geografii napisaniia russkikh rukopisnykh knig v XVI veke (materialy k istorii knigi v Rossii),” *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana*, 17, 1 (2015), 141-167. Usachev’s impressive systematization of data about sixteenth-century Muscovite manuscripts with dated inscriptions has now just appeared: *Knigopisanie v Rossii XVI veka: po materialam datirovannykh vykhodnykh zapisei*, 2 vols. (Moscow, St. Petersburg, 2018). As he emphasizes, codicological study of most of these books still lies ahead, and his conclusions are but tentative. Nonetheless, his observations about the apparently small number of copyists of entire books and his mapping of the widely dispersed locations where the copies were made are of considerable interest.

another location, if not necessarily how they got there.¹³ To do this is going to require a huge amount of labor over many years and ideally the computerization of all the data.

In fact, there has been some progress in putting standard European watermark catalogs online, though a more ambitious project was abandoned. Shibaev's imaging technology feeds the information directly into a computerized database, which is exactly what we need. Such work would be part of the larger project of getting all old Russian manuscript descriptions on line. A lot has been done now by way of preparing for the creation of such an electronic catalogue, though whether it will in fact contain all the essential details and when it might ever be realized remains to be seen.¹⁴ As always, the quality of what comes out of a computer is governed by the quality of what is put in. There has been much progress in cataloguing Russian collections previously not described, but we are still a long way from having a comprehensive command of what is out there. Even some of the most recent catalogues produced by well-informed scholars fall short of what ideally we should have.¹⁵ Were we to have a truly comprehensive database of manuscripts, the task of writing about readership might be a lot easier. I certainly will not live long enough to see that day.

Even before Shibaev's study, Robert Romanchuk was able to write a substantial analysis of the Kirillov reading community which provides one of the best examples of what can in fact be said about actual reading and its impact in early Russia.¹⁶ As Romachuk shows, drawing on his excellent knowledge of the Byzantine texts, there was a clear idea of the stages through

13 For comparative purposes here, one might look at the challenges faced by archaeologists, as summarized by Marcus Milwright (*An Introduction to Islamic Archaeology* [Edinburgh, 2010], 158): "[T]he analysis of spatial distribution...is limited by the fact that, other than in exceptional circumstances, we cannot know precisely what modes of exchange resulted in the movement of an artefact from its place of manufacture (if known) to its place of deposition." In fact the tools we can apply to the study of books arguably are much more likely to yield results.

14 See, e.g., E. V. Krushel'nitskaia, "Opisanie rukopisei biblioteki Solovetskogo monastyria v sisteme elektronnoho kataloga: zadachi, opyty, problemy, perspektivy," and L. V. Emel'ianova, "Informatsionno-poiskovaia sistema 'Depozitarii'—instrument dlia registratsii i issledovaniia rukopisnykh materialov," 436-456 and 457-465 respectively, in *Knizhnye tsenry Drevnei Rusi: Knizhniki i rukopisi Solovetskogo monastyria* (St. Petersburg, 2004). It is clear that the system devised in the U.S. by the Library of Congress many years ago fell far short of what we really need, even though it has been used to register the manuscripts and their facsimiles in the Hilandar Collection at the Ohio State University.

15 An example here would be the several volumes of the ongoing catalog of the Pogodin Collection in the Russian National Library, a project that took years to get off the ground and is still a long way from completion.

16 R. Romanchuk, *Byzantine Hermeneutics and Pedagogy in the Russian North: Monks and Masters at the Kirillo-Belozerskii Monastery, 1397-1501* (Toronto, Buffalo, 2007). I first read Romanchuk only after seeing Gary Marker's draft paper for the Milan conference. See his comments on Romanchuk's study in the current version of his essay, where he makes the point that surely at least in monastic contexts in Muscovy there were other such reading communities. The questions of how they may have been connected, books were exchanged, and so on, still require much study.

which monks in training were to pass, where one important element was the knowledge of key church texts and the actual reading of them, once the novice had achieved a certain level of understanding. In this context then, it is possible to explain the significance of the books accumulated at Kirillov, their content specifically oriented to support not only basic ritual functions but a program of pedagogy. It might be difficult to find a better example than this of how reading was applied and focused. Over time, with the growth and changes in the monastery, some of the original goals changed, and that in turn also contributed to changes in the content of the monastery books and the degree to which certain monks looked farther afield to supplement what they already had in hand.

Placing this material in a broader context, Romanchuk confronts boldly the much-debated question of the supposed “intellectual silence of Rus,” posed long ago by Georges Florovsky.¹⁷ On the one extreme is scholarship such as that by Francis Thomson (cited above in n. 6) about the poverty of content of the Russian libraries (even when compared with Byzantine monastic ones). On the other hand, there is the tendency that was prevalent in so much of the otherwise very substantial Soviet-era scholarship, to seek out pre-Renaissance or Renaissance elements in the interests of Russian bookmen, most notably in the apparently encyclopedic curiosity and collecting of the Kirillov monk Efrosin.¹⁸ Romanchuk finds here some middle ground, rejecting the idea of intellectual silence, but at the same time showing how Kirillov was neither Byzantium redux nor a Russian version of Florence.

The Kirillov library in fact is not the only monastic collection we can document extensively.¹⁹ Considerable effort has gone into identifying the books of such collections (whether or not included in the contemporary inventories) with ones which have survived to the present, since only then, by being able to consult them, may it be possible to establish patterns of how they were used. For example, we have now a pretty complete idea of the books

17 G. Florovsky, “The Problem of Old Russian Culture,” *Slavic Review*, 21 (1962), 1-15, an essay which provoked a variety of responses. Florovsky was mainly concerned with what he saw as the absence of any development of systematic theology amongst early Russian churchmen. In particular, see William Veder’s response, cited in n. 6 above.

18 On Efrosin and his books, with references to all but the most recent work, see *Slovar’ knizhnikov*, 2/1, 227-236; 2/3, 103-105; Shibaev, *Rukopisi*, Ch. 5. On the books and their production at Kirillov, see various essays in the valuable irregular series, *Knizhnye tsenry Drevnei Rusi*, one volume of which (St. Petersburg, 2014) is devoted entirely to that monastery. Any study of early Russian books and bookmen will need to look closely at all of the volumes in this ongoing series, several of which are specific to the book culture of the Solovki Monastery.

19 On some of the other most significant monastic libraries, see M. V. Kukushkina, *Monastyrskie biblioteki Russkogo Severa. Ocherki po istorii knizhnoi kul’tury XVI-XVII vekov* (Leningrad, 1977), where one can find additional references to the published inventories and related studies. A good example of how one must go about reconstructing the contents of a monastic library that has now been dispersed is M. D. Kagan, “Istoriia biblioteki Ferapontova monastyrnia,” in *Knizhnye tsenry Drevnei Rusi. XI-XVI vv. Raznye aspekty issledovaniia* (St. Petersburg, 1991), 99-135.

from the St. Joseph of Volokolamsk Monastery, many of which indeed can be identified as the direct sources for various writings and compilations by Muscovite bookmen. For the Solovki Monastery on the White Sea, there are several early inventories, and a fair amount of the collection survived intact down into modern times. The organization of the Solovki inventories in the seventeenth century suggests that they were compiled specifically with readers' needs in mind—that is, to serve as finding aids and not just records of the monastery's possessions.²⁰ As with Kirillov, Solovki offers possibilities for delineating the histories of individual bookmen, learning about the acquisition of books for its library, and seeing exactly how readers of the monastery's books incorporated that reading into what they wrote. It is possible, for example, to trace the history of its local chronicle writing from the sixteenth down to the nineteenth century, given the preservation of various versions of the texts which were then supplemented by each new generation. A recent monograph on Sergei Shelonin, who worked at the Moscow Printing Yard editing and correcting its publications in between his long residences at Solovki, documents his literary activity from evidence in Solovki books, many of which he himself donated to the monastery.²¹ When the Solovki monks, shortly after Shelonin's death, took a stand against Nikon's reforms, an important polemical tract they composed drew heavily on books we still have that were in the monastery's library.²²

A cautionary note is in order here. Even when we might undertake a close examination of texts composed by a given author and in which there are quotations from other sources we can identify, we may be left with questions about what this reveals about *reading*. The writings of Semen Shakhovskoi, a literate elite layman in the seventeenth century who was well versed in Orthodox texts, illustrate the problem. Some of his compositions are little more than pastiches of quotations (which should not surprise us for a Muscovite author), but many of them, not quite accurate, probably came from memory, not from copying a written text.²³ So, how did he learn those texts? Did he read them at some point on the page, or, in the case of works that would have formed a regular part of Church services, did he simply have them etched in his mind by virtue of having heard them regularly? An

20 There is an interesting parallel here in the medieval Arab world, where the cataloging of privately-endowed libraries that opened their doors to readers from out in society seems to have been designed to facilitate finding books one might wish to consult. See K. Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh, 2012; pb. ed. 2013), 152-155.

21 O. S. Sapozhnikova, *Russkii knizhnik XVII veka Sergii Shelonin: Redaktorskaia deiatel'nost'* (Moscow, St. Petersburg, 2010).

22 N. Iu. Bubnov, "Rabota drevnerusskikh knizhnikov v monastyrskoi biblioteke (Istochniki solovetskogo 'Skazaniia... o novykh knigakh' 1667 g.)," in *Kniga i ee rasprostraneniia v Rossii v XVI-XVIII vv. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Leningrad, 1985), 37-58.

23 On Shakhovskoi as a writer, see E. L. Keenan, "Semen Shakhovskoi and the Condition of Orthodoxy," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 12-13 (1988/89), 795-815.

analogous point about what constitutes ‘original’ writing in Russia (thereby revealing something about an ‘author’s’ reading) has been made with regard to the miscellanies we discuss below, the point being that the collection of works by others of itself represents a kind of reader response and creative act, even if those who were responsible for the compilations themselves did not then proceed to compose their own works drawing upon that reading.

The kind of analysis Romanchuk and others have been doing can move us away from the otherwise stark contrast that is suggested when we compare prescriptive texts relating to reading and book learning for laymen in what we might loosely term the ‘Renaissance’ (whether or not that term really fits for Muscovy). On the one hand, Leon Battista Alberti’s *Della Famiglia*, a book of advice for elite Florentines in the fifteenth century, admonishes that “It is a father’s duty...to punish his children and make them wise and virtuous.”²⁴ But the fathers should also “see to it that their sons pursue the study of letters assiduously” (p. 86), which, as he goes on to elaborate, means learning to read and write perfectly, studying arithmetic and geometry and the works of the Classical authors. In contrast, the Muscovite manual of household management, the *Domostroi*, compiled around the middle of the sixteenth century probably as a guide to proper conduct for the Muscovite servitor class, in the first instance stresses Orthodox values and respect for authority, be it that of Church and autocrat or of paterfamilias. The upbringing of sons gets particular attention, where the advice (at least partially echoing Alberti) famously is “наказуи дети во юности, покоять ты на старость твою” (“discipline/punish children while they are young, so that they will give you peace in your old age”).²⁵ For both sons and daughters, the important thing is to instill in them the fear of God and “учити их рукоделию, отцу сыновъ, а матере дщери” (“teach them manual labor, the father instructing the sons, the mother the daughters”). So education at least for laymen means keeping young hands busy, not book learning, hardly a surprise in a Muscovy where there was no school system and probably most members of that servitor class were functionally illiterate. It should not surprise us that there are few well-documented examples of literate lay authors in sixteenth-century Muscovy, even if by the time of someone like Shakhovskoi a century later, their numbers would increase.

Beyond someone like the monk Efrosin, whose wide-ranging curiosity still fits most comfortably in an Orthodox framework, the few examples we have of Muscovite encounters with those who possessed Western Renaissance (as opposed to Byzantine Orthodox) learning must give us pause. One such individual, also an Orthodox monk, was Maksim the Greek (born Michael Trivolis), who spent time in Renaissance Venice and then in a Dominican

²⁴ *The Albertis of Florence: Leon Battista Alberti’s Della Famiglia*, tr. with an introd. and notes by G. A. Guarino (Lewisburg, 1971), 77.

²⁵ V. V. Kolesov, V. V. Rozhdestvenskaia (eds.), *Domostroi* (St. Petersburg, 2000), 28.

Monastery in Florence before entering a monastery on Mt. Athos.²⁶ When he was sent to Moscow toward the end of the first quarter of the sixteenth century to assist in translation of Greek church texts into Slavonic, he ran afoul of the authorities, ostensibly for mistakes in the rather complicated translation process, but presumably also for lecturing the Muscovites on their ways. Maksim left behind a large corpus of writings, which showed his familiarity with the Greek Classics, an erudition that evoked little response later, even though a good many copies of his works were made. If Maksim was read, it seems to have been primarily for his moralizing sentiments and for his defense of what he considered to be proper Orthodox conduct.²⁷

3. THE PRINTING PRESS: AN AGENT OF CULTURAL CHANGE IN MUSCOVY?

A second example is that of the first printer in Muscovy whom we know by name, Ivan Fedorov.²⁸ Printing began in Muscovy in the 1550s with a few church texts deemed necessary to replace books consumed by a major fire in Moscow and to support the extension of Orthodoxy into newly conquered lands to the east and south where the non-Russian inhabitants were Muslims.²⁹ Who were the first printers is not known, and those earliest editions they produced were technically not very polished products. However, by the beginning of the 1560s, one Ivan Fedorov (probably a Belorussian or Ukrainian) had arrived in Moscow, having previously received a Renaissance education in Krakow. The few books he and his collaborator produced in Moscow show a much greater mastery of the printing art than the books published by his predecessor. Like his predecessor, Fedorov was tasked with producing books for the Church. That is, unlike in the Renaissance West, where it has been argued printing soon became one of the main agents

²⁶ A good introduction to Maksim is J. V. Haney, *From Italy to Muscovy: The Life and Works of Maxim the Greek* (München, 1973), although there is much else to be said on the basis of more recent study of the corpus of works attributed to Maksim.

²⁷ See I. Shevchenko, "Byzantium and the Eastern Slavs after 1453," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 2/1 (1978), 5-25; here p. 14: "It gives one food for thought about the Muscovy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to realize that this highly cultured Byzantine was long revered in Russia for his statements on the sign of the cross, whereas his classical references were never picked up."

²⁸ On the beginnings of printing in Moscow, see E. L. Nemirovskii, *Vozniknovenie knigopечатaniia v Moskve. Ivan Fedorov* (Moscow, 1964); on Fedorov's activity in Ukraine, see Idem, *Nachalo knigopечатaniia na Ukraine. Ivan Fedorov* (Moscow, 1974). For new research on Fedorov, see the collection of articles edited by Sergei Bogatyrev as a special number of the journal *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 51, 2-3 (2017) under the title *The Journeys of Ivan Fedorov: New Perspectives on Early Cyrillic Printing*.

²⁹ Opinions vary about the reasons for the introduction of printing; for the most recent assessment, see A. S. Usachev, "O vozmozhnykh prichinakh nachala knigopечатaniia v Rossii: Predvaritel'nye zamechaniia," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 51, 2-3 (2017), 229-247, where he emphasizes concern over the need for standardization of Church books as the first priority.

of cultural change, in Muscovy it was an agent for reinforcing the cultural status quo.³⁰ While we do not know the details, Fedorov did not last long in Moscow and decamped to the Orthodox areas of Ukraine (then part of Lithuania-Poland). It was only after arriving there, where there was demand for textbooks for Orthodox schools set up to block the inroads of Roman Catholicism, that Fedorov then published the first Slavonic primer in 1574.³¹ He also would print the first full edition of a Slavonic Bible in 1581, a book that was certainly valued by those who could obtain it in later decades, even though, unlike in the Protestant world, there was not the same emphasis among the Orthodox regarding the importance of reading the scriptures.³²

Indeed, the beginnings of printing in Muscovy were modest. After all, Gutenberg's press was already a century in the past, and printing of Slavic books had arrived in Poland before the end of the fifteenth century.³³ The number of books printed in Muscovy before 1600 was very small, and the repertoire limited to a few texts essential for Orthodox practice. Even as one moves down through the seventeenth century, the apparently almost exclusive emphasis in Muscovite printing on books with religious content might cast some doubt on the weight we should place on the printed word

30 The classic statement of the impact of printing on the Renaissance is E. L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe*, 2 vols. in 1 (Cambridge, 1980; original ed. 1979). Her work has provoked some criticism for pushing the argument too far. In contextualizing the Russian example with reference to the "communication revolution" elsewhere, Aleksandr Filyushkin emphasizes the "lack of public demand for information," the result being that the processes to be found elsewhere appeared in Russia only with a delay of some centuries. See his "Why Did Muscovy Not Participate in the 'Communication Revolution' in the Sixteenth Century? Causes and Effects," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 51, 2-3 (2017), 339-350.

31 The preservation of textbooks such as primers from this period is very poor almost everywhere, since presumably they wore out from constant use and then were discarded and replaced by newer printings. Fedorov's primer became known from a copy that surfaced in a private collection only toward the middle of the twentieth century, when it was offered to the State Lenin Library in Moscow. Not having any proof that such a book was genuine, the Soviet book specialists rejected it; it came instead to Harvard's Houghton Library in the Kilgour Collection in 1953. Roman Jakobson's careful study of the text along with a publication of a facsimile established its authenticity and secured its place in the pantheon of early East Slavic imprints. See R. Jakobson, "Ivan Fedorov's Primer," with an appendix by W. A. Jackson, *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 9/1 (1955), 5-45 (the facsimile on 24 pp. inserted between pp. 16 and 17). Interestingly, there is some evidence to suggest that the book had once been in the collection of Count Grigorii S. Stroganov (d. 1910), whose Muscovite ancestors had noteworthy book collections (see below). A second copy of the 1574 primer has more recently been discovered in the collections of the British Library.

32 On the 1581 Bible, see R. Mathiesen, "The Making of the Ostrih Bible," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 29, 1 (1981), 71-110. The next full edition of the Slavonic Bible appeared in Moscow only in 1663.

33 For the history of the earliest Cyrillic printing in Poland, see E. L. Nemirovskii, *Nachalo slavianskogo knigopechataniia* (Moscow, 1971), and Idem, *Istoriia slavianskogo kirillovskogo knigopechataniia XV-nachala XVII veka. Kn 1: Vozniknovenie slavianskogo knigopechataniia* (Moscow, 2003).

there in any assessment of literacy and reading.³⁴ Those who have focused on the processes of ‘westernization’ of traditional Russia have been happy enough to tout the beginnings of Muscovite printing, even if the content and significance of what was produced did not quite seem to fit any paradigm of ‘modernization’. In recent decades though, our understanding of this subject has undergone considerable re-assessment.³⁵

There are a number of related questions here: how many books were actually produced and in what specific subjects; how and where were they distributed; what can we know about who owned them; what evidence is there for how they were used?

Arguably the most significant evidence cited in the recent reassessments of the impact of printing in Muscovy is the fact that very sizeable percentages of the books published in the seventeenth century were in categories most agree related to the acquisition of basic literacy. The acquisition of literacy involved starting with a primer or alphabet book, generally short with only one or two full texts, and moving on to the Breviary (*chasovnik*), which contained the basics of church service and responses, followed by the Psalter, usually in an ‘explanatory’ version. To learn the rudiments of the alphabet did not necessarily mean advancing to being able to read beyond what may have been painfully slow ability to make out letters and pronounce syllables that would make a word comprehensible. To a degree, even if a learner were to move to the more advanced stages of this educational sequence, rote memorization of texts most likely was the way he mastered what was in the Breviary and Psalter. How this then might transfer to being able to read independently an unfamiliar text is difficult to know. Even having mastered

34 The standard catalog of early Moscow Cyrillic imprints is A. S. Zěrnova, *Knigi kirillovskoi pečati, izdannye v Moskve v XVI-XVII vv.: Svodnyi katalog* (Moscow, 1958), though it now has been supplemented by the work of I. V. Pozdeeva and others. Exceptions to the printing of books with religious content included the major seventeenth-century compendium of laws, the *Sobornoe Ulozhenie of 1649*, and a military instruction manual. On the printed legal codex, see L. A. Timoshina, “Staropechatnye izdaniia Ulozheniia 1649 goda i prikaznye uchrezhdeniia sere diny XVII veka, in *Fedorovskie chteniia. 2005* (Moscow, 2005), 296-304. As Simon Franklin has explored, the printing of short forms for bureaucratic use also was undertaken; see his “K voprosu o malykh zhanrakh kirillichesko i pečati,” in *450 let Apostolu Ivana Fedorova. Istoriia rannego knigopechataniia v Rossii (pamiatniki, istochniki, traditsii izucheniia)*, ed. D. N. Ramanzanova (Moscow, 2016), 428-439.

35 An introduction to some of the issues here is G. Marker, “Russia and the ‘Printing Revolution’: Notes and Observations,” *Slavic Review*, 41 (1982), 266-284, in which he discusses publication of books in Moscow in the seventeenth-century that would have been used for instructional purposes. For a very different approach to the Muscovite encounter with print, see S. Franklin, “Three Types of Asymmetry in the Muscovite Engagement with Print,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 51, 2-3 (2017), 351-375, where his concern is not the content of what was printed in Muscovy but rather the way in which imported imprints were received, with a kind of “reverse technology transfer” of their translations being confined to manuscript copying and thus very limited in their distribution. Franklin’s article includes a long section on the relationship between printed imagery (engravings) in the imported books and caption text, which often was translated and juxtaposed to the printed originals.

the Psalter would not necessarily make the Muscovite learner into an active reader, where the Psalter in and of itself might be recited or consulted for a variety of purposes (e.g., for divination). Moreover, learning to read did not necessarily mean learning to write.³⁶ The acquisition of literacy following this pattern might occur in something like a ‘monastery classroom’ or, one assumes, simply through individual tutelage, but there was no such thing as a school system. The acquisition of literacy for practical functions of administration might well have been through a process of ‘apprenticeship’.³⁷

Nonetheless, we now have some impressive statistics regarding the printing of the basic ‘instructional’ books, a fact which has led Irina V. Pozdeeva and others to emphasize that there was a substantial effort underway in seventeenth-century Muscovy to provide basic literacy education. Between 1615 and 1652, some 350,000 books came off the Moscow presses, of which more than 100,000 were ‘instructional’ books (*knigi dlia obucheniia*—the three noted above plus the *Kanonnik*). From 1652 to 1700, some 35% of the editions put out by the Printing Yard were ‘instructional’, a total of over half a million copies, of which nearly 260,000 were primers.³⁸ The records of the Moscow Printing Yard which Pozdeeva has mined indicate not only the size of each edition, but the speed with which it sold and who the purchasers were. ‘Instructional’ books sold out quickly; in many cases, a single individual might buy up dozens of them, though for what ultimate destination is hard to learn.

To assess what this means for our knowledge of reading in Muscovy requires that we look beyond the production and sale statistics. The research Pozdeeva and others have been doing also includes careful descriptions of extant copies of the printed books in various libraries and archives. The key

36 The same seems to have been true elsewhere in Europe at the time, but arguably had not been the case in the medieval Arab world where the patterns of reading and learning to write in important cases were substantially different from those found in Russia. For the interesting comparative perspective from the Arab Middle East, see Hirschler, *The Written Word*. Among the significant differences between the Arabic and Slavic cases is the fact that in the Islamic world there are written ‘certificates’ attesting to an individual’s having read a particular text; a good many of these certificates indicate precisely who the individuals were and what was their place in the social spectrum.

37 On the nature of such education in ‘early modern’ Russia, see the various works by Ol’ga E. Kosheleva cited in MARKER, “The Eighteenth Century: From Reading Communities to the Reading Public,” in the present volume. A useful summary of her conclusions is in her “Obuchenie v russkoi srednevekovoi pravoslavnoi traditsii,” in *Odissei. Chelovek v istorii* (Moscow, 2012), 47-72. On what most scholars consider to be the first formally organized educational institution in Muscovite Russia, see N. A. Chrissidis, *An Academy at the Court of the Tsars: Greek Scholars and Jesuit Education in Early Modern Russia* (DeKalb, ILL, 2016).

38 I.V. Pozdeeva, *Chelovek. Kniga. Istoriia. Moskovskaia pechat’ XVII veka* (Moscow, 2016), 57, 154, 206, 213. For an idea of the approach to compiling into a computerized database and analyzing the statistics on the sale and distribution of books from the Moscow Printing Yard, see V. P. Pushkov, L. V. Pushkov, “Opyt postroeniia bazy dannykh ‘Knizhnyi rynek Moskvyy 1636/37 g.’ Po dannym arkhiva Prikaza knigopechatnogo dela,” in *Fedorovskie chteniia. 2005* (Moscow, 2005), 356-368.

data here are inscriptions on the books, indicating who owned them, or marginal notations which might point to what parts of a text attracted attention or how the presumed reader reacted to the text.³⁹ Unfortunately, the evidence of notations leaves many questions unanswered. Ownership does not necessarily equate with readership.⁴⁰ In fact many of the inscriptions tell us no more than that someone sold the book or donated it (donations usually being to a religious institution). Analysis of the other kinds of notations for the most part still lies ahead and will require detailed study if we are ever to hope to say anything meaningful about what such marginalia really mean. At very least though, we now have a great deal of evidence about ownership and distribution of printed books, which made their way to any number of often remote locations scattered around Muscovy.

We might agree with Pozdeeva that the printed book in Muscovy was a (though not necessarily ‘the’) key element in the development and strengthening of a national culture which at its core was Orthodox Christian. At various levels of society and in a wide range of activities in daily life, Orthodox belief and ritual might play an important part and be reinforced by the texts in the printed books. As she demonstrates, some of the introductions or colophons to the books were important in reinforcing the claims of divinely-inspired political authority. Yet, in the absence of additional data, all this still leaves us short of learning as much as we would like about actual readership and the impact of the books on the reader.

The kind of study which is needed to begin to fill in the gaps can be illustrated in a recent book on the history of the first printed collection of canon law in Muscovy, the *Kormchaia kniga* of 1649-52.⁴¹ The authors of this study (principally E. V. Beliakova) begin by examining the centuries-long earlier history of the translation and copying of various versions of the canon laws amongst the Slavs, in order to determine what version was used in the Moscow edition. As this analysis makes clear, knowledge of the various versions of canon law and its supplements was obligatory for bishops and their staffs, and over time con-

39 For published collections of owners’ inscriptions, see S. P. Luppov, *Chitateli izdaniia Moskovskoi tipografii v seredine XVII veka. Publikatsiia dokumentov i issledovanie* (Leningrad, 1983). For the holdings of the Library of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, we now also have L. I. Kiseleva (ed.), *Korpus zapisei na staropechatnykh knigakh. Vypusk 1. Zapisi na knigakh kirillicheskogo shrifta, napechatannykh v Moskve v XVI-XVII vv.* (St. Petersburg, 1992). The best current descriptions of early printed books in Russian repositories routinely include the texts of the owners’ inscriptions. See, for example, *Moskovskie kirillovskie izdaniia XVI-XVII vv. v sobraniakh RGADA. Katalog. Vypusk 1. 1556-1625 gg.; Vypusk 2. 1626-1650* (Moscow, 1996, 2002). For additional references see MARKER, “The Eighteenth Century: From Reading Communities to the Reading Public,” in the present volume.

40 A striking illustration of this point is cited by Gary Marker in his chapter: Prince Aleksandr D. Menshikov, a close collaborator of Peter the Great, affected many of the trappings of European culture, accumulated a large library and was concerned that even his daughters acquire literacy in French. However, it appears he was functionally illiterate.

41 E. V. Beliakova, L. V. Moshkova, T. A. Oparina. *Kormchaia kniga: ot rukopisnoi traditsii k pervomu pechatnomu izdaniiu* (Moscow, St. Petersburg, 2017).

scious editing and re-combination of texts was undertaken in order to meet the needs of Church administration and society. At very least, such activity implies active reading and absorption of texts, even absent explicit statements explaining the thinking that led to editorial decisions. We should emphasize here how daunting a task it is to undertake such analysis, as manuscript genealogies are complex, and many of the texts are very large. To have a particular prescriptive text of course may not tell us anything about the degree to which its admonitions were followed in practice.

The decision in the middle of the seventeenth century to print a collection of canon law seems to have been a response to a perceived need to supply sees and their parishes at a time when the church authorities in Moscow were attempting to strengthen uniform centralized control. That is, there was an awareness of the necessity of having such texts for reference and guidance. In the case of the printed *Kormchaia kniga*, the main manuscript on which the edition was based has been preserved, replete with editorial marginalia and instructions to the printers. So here we have concrete evidence of how reading and interpretation translated into the production of a particular book, even if such notations do not necessarily get us into the deeper layers of the thinking of those who much have read and been familiar with the texts in question. We do know the names of a good many of the individuals who were involved in the making of this edition. It is possible in the case of canon law to demonstrate from other documentation how it was applied in practice, although there is much yet to be done in such study.

Close textual analysis then is essential if we are to learn about readership in Muscovy. Many other examples might be adduced, where the study of individual texts and their transmission has been undertaken, though often more attention has been paid to the beginning of textual tradition than to its later stages, which might be the ones that would tell us the most about readership as copies proliferated. Such studies usually move us away from the body of evidence that Pozdeeva has emphasized, since for the most part we are talking about manuscript copies, and the content of texts may go well beyond the 'religious' emphasis of most of the Muscovite printed books. In fact though, it is somewhat artificial to draw any kind of dividing line between the uses of printed as opposed to manuscript books. As Marker suggests in his chapter below, we still need to analyze the function of the continuing production of manuscript books well into the period when the printed word had become central to intellectual life in Russia.

4. LAY LITERACY AND READING IN MUSCOVY

Pozdeeva's work focused on countering the otherwise prevalent narrative of much of Soviet-era scholarship which sought to emphasize 'secular' lit-

erature and in the process failed to appreciate the ways in which ‘religious’ texts were central to Muscovite culture. Not the least of the problems with that dominant narrative was its failure to engage effectively with the question of whether one might reasonably classify any given text or book in an apparently rigid dichotomy between ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ and whether in fact the reading patterns one might seek to determine for laymen and for clerics were substantially different.

As an example, consider the Book of Royal Degrees (*Stepennaia kniga*), which many have treated as a work of ‘history’, despite the fact that its presentation of the history of Russia down to the time of its compilation in the middle of the sixteenth century might better be described as princely hagiography. Clearly the church hierarchs were involved in its creation, even if the recent very detailed analyses of the editorial processes fail to agree on details about the interrelationships of extant texts and their manuscripts and what, exactly, the intent was in producing the book.⁴² Was it read and by whom? As Nancy Kollmann has stressed, we have a great deal to learn about how it was used.⁴³

I would note in passing here a recent collection of essays about visual sources (especially the multitudinous miniatures illustrating an encyclopedic royal historical compilation, the so-called *Litsevoi svod*, which is contemporaneous with the *Stepennaia kniga*) that includes interesting evidence of how the artists drew on written sources such as the *Stepennaia kniga* even if the illustrations which resulted then did not in fact explicitly illustrate the text to which they were attached.⁴⁴ The subject of such pictorial evidence for the reading that must have been done by those who created and/or commissioned it (not to mention the subject of the reception of the visual by

42 The now authoritative edition is N. N. Pokrovskii, G. D. Lenkhoff (eds.), *Stepennaia kniga tsarskogo rodosloviia po drevneishim spiskam. Tekst i kommentarii v 3-kh tomakh* (Moscow, 2007-2012). The differing views on the textual history may be found in A. V. Sirenov, *Stepennaia kniga. Istoriiia teksta* (Moscow, 2007) and A. S. Usachev, *Stepennaia kniga i drevnerusskaia knizhnost' vremeni mitropolita Makariiia* (Moscow, St. Petersburg, 2009). Concerning them see the review by Gail Lenhoff, “Current Research on the Stepennaja kniga: Consensus, Controversies, Questions,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 61 (2013), 438-443, in which she highlights Usachev’s contributions based on careful codicological analysis. Sirenov’s *Stepennaia kniga i russkaia istoricheskaia mysl' XVI-XVII vv.* (Moscow, St. Petersburg, 2010) attempts to assess the impact of the text in later Muscovite historiography, but, judging from Lenhoff’s critical comments, leaves a great deal to be desired. Sirenov and N. N. Pokrovskii have produced an edition of the *Latukhinskaia Stepennaia Kniga. 1676 god* (Moscow, 2012), an important step in making available the still largely unpublished large seventeenth-century Muscovite historical compilations.

43 See N. S. Kollmann, “On Advising Princes in Early Modern Russia: Literacy and Performance,” in G. Lenhoff, A. Kleimola (eds.), *The Book of Royal Degrees and the Genesis of Russian Historical Consciousness*, UCLA Slavic Studies, N.S., VII (Bloomington, IND, 2011), 341-348; esp. 346-347. This volume contains a number of stimulating papers from a conference on the *Stepennaia kniga*.

44 The essays, introduced by Brian Boeck, and written by Sergey Bogatyrev, Nancy Shields Kollmann and Isolde Thyrêt are in *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 19, 1

its ‘readers’ who might not have formal literacy in the written word) merits separate discussion.

The *Stepennaia kniga* was never printed in Muscovy, but a good many copies were made and in turn served as sources for other narrative texts, including ones that arguably were closer to what we might today consider to be ‘secular’ history. Unlike in the mid-sixteenth century at the time of its creation, which was in the hands of literate clerics, in the seventeenth century, Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich launched a project to compose a continuation of the *Stepennaia kniga*, the work to be done by laymen appointed to a special government department created specifically for that purpose.⁴⁵ Little progress was made, one of the reasons seeming to have been the difficulty in locating manuscript copies of the *Stepennaia kniga* in various monastic libraries where they were sought. It is somewhat unclear how the Tsar envisaged the book they were to produce. It certainly might have reinforced the message that was conveyed in some of the introductions and afterwords of the books being printed in Moscow—namely the idea that Moscow was the ‘Third Rome’ whose rulers were to fulfill the Divine mandate on earth by defending the one, true Orthodox faith.

5. LIBRARIES

As we look beyond monastic libraries to determine the contents of other book collections in Muscovy, we encounter a number of difficulties, some already familiar from the discussion above. We might well start by asking, for example, whether Muscovite rulers collected books, and, if so, which ones. It is possible to document collections of secular elites elsewhere in Europe: an example is that of the King of Hungary, Matthias Corvinus, in the late fifteenth century, a collection that has been dispersed and partially destroyed, but much of which can be reconstructed.

Much ink has been spilled on whether Tsar Ivan IV (r. 1533-1584) had a library, including Classical works that are otherwise unattested.⁴⁶ I remain

(2018), 9-114. In particular note Kollmann’s treatment of the *Litsevoi svod* as a kind of graphic novel, and Thyrdet’s evidence about conscious textual choices for the illustrations relating to the life of Evdokiia Donskaia. The emphasis here is on the creative process, not on reader response; in fact, the *Litsevoi svod*, never finished and never copied, had but a limited ‘readership’ even if there is some evidence about the artistic conventions in it having influenced subsequent Muscovite painting.

⁴⁵ S. A. Belokurov, “O Zapisnom prikaze (‘Zapisyvati stepeni i grani tsarstvennye’). 1657-1659 gg,” in Idem, *Iz dukhovnoi zhizni moskovskogo obshchestva XVII v.* (Moscow, 1902), 53-84 (reprinted from *Chteniiia v Obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh*, 1900, bk. 3, sec. ii).

⁴⁶ For my take on Ivan’s alleged library, with citation of the most relevant scholarship, see “The Unsolved Problem of Tsar Ivan IV’s Library,” *Russian History*, 14/1-4 (1987), 395-408; also my review of N. N. Zarubin, *Biblioteka Ivana Groznogo: Rekonstruktsiia i bibliograficheskoe opisaniie*, in *Slavic Review*, 43, 1 (1984), 95. For a vigorous argument supporting the idea that Ivan had a wonderful library of the Classical authors, see A. A. Amosov, “‘Antichnaia’ biblioteka

skeptical about the evidence (and adhere to the minority view that he may not have been functionally literate, even if he had a book collection). To date, no books have been found which can be matched with the all too vague reports about his collection, even if the writings attributed to him suggest that their author was familiar with at least some of the standard church texts.⁴⁷

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the second Romanov, Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich (r. 1645-1676) was literate and had a rather voracious curiosity about a good many subjects. As yet there is no agreement about what might have constituted his library beyond a few devotional books. I have argued that the collection of materials assembled in his Privy Chancery, an institution that died with him, was in fact his library.⁴⁸ It contained a wide range of material, much of it documentation about affairs of state including the religious disputes of the middle of the seventeenth century, but also an extensive file of descriptive and news accounts about foreign countries. In this regard, it was substantially different from anything that can be securely documented for the collections of any of his predecessors in the Kremlin. Perhaps we are left to conclude that for much of the Muscovite period, whether or not they were literate, the Muscovite rulers were more concerned with practical matters than with reading, even if they were interested in supporting the writing and production of texts in support of Orthodoxy.

Among the most prominent elite families in Muscovy who patronized book production and accumulated book collections were the Stroganovs. Entrepreneurs who made their fortune from exploiting the resources of the Russian North in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (salt, furs, mining), the Stroganovs commissioned the building and decoration of churches, had workshops producing icons and embroideries for Church use, and supported scriptoria that produced often lavish copies of books ranging over a number of genres. The Stroganovs had an interest in chronicling the conquest of Siberia (in which they had been involved), and their craftsmen created works whose painted decoration borrowed from Western motifs and styles.

Ivana Groznogo. K voprosu o dostovernosti sokhranivshikhsia izvestii ob inoiazychnom fonde biblioteki moskovskikh gosudarei," in *Knizhnoe delo v Rossii v XVI-XIX vekakh. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Leningrad, 1980), 6-31.

⁴⁷ The skeptical (and not widely accepted) view about whether Ivan was even literate was forcefully articulated by E. L. Keenan, *The Kurbskii-Groznyi Apocrypha: The Seventeenth-Century Genesis of the "Correspondence" Attributed to Prince A. M. Kurbskii and Tsar Ivan IV*, with an Appendix by D. C. Waugh (Cambridge, MA, 1971). Various texts other than the letters addressed to Kurbskii have been incautiously attributed to Ivan. Among them is a didactic religious text known as the *Reply to Rokyta*, which was an official response in defense of Orthodoxy delivered to a minister of the Czech Brethren after a 'debate' with the Tsar in Moscow in 1570. While the manuscript (now in Harvard's Houghton Library) very likely is the one actually handed to Rokyta, my examination of it and its text, which is little more than a catechism of Orthodox belief, finds nothing to suggest Ivan was the 'author.' Cf., however, V. Tumins, *Tsar Ivan IV's Reply to Jan Rokyta* (The Hague, 1971).

⁴⁸ "The Library of Aleksei Mikhailovich," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 38 (1986), 299-324.

The Stroganov paterfamilias in the sixteenth century, Anika, had a collection of books that then was divided amongst three of his heirs, who in turn supplemented the holdings. The recent detailed study of the Stroganov collections by Natalia A. Mudrova traces the history of the collections, using both the contemporary inventories and related documents and, importantly, identifying extant books whose inscriptions or other codicological evidence connect them with the Stroganov holdings.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, there is little here to shed light on the reading habits of the Stroganovs, although perhaps further study of the individual books may tell us something. In fact, for the most part, it seems the family's patronage of book production and their collections were for the purpose of being able to make donations of the books to religious institutions. In some ways then, this evidence can be read as supporting Pozdeeva's point about the key role of Muscovite books in reinforcing the Orthodox cultural values of society at all levels.

There were certainly other libraries in seventeenth-century Muscovy, some held by laymen and in many cases collections which contained a range of genres, not just the standard repertoire of Orthodox literature. Much of the evidence comes from the last third or so of the seventeenth century, a time when interaction with the West was beginning to have a major impact both on the policies of the government and on the cultural tastes of the Muscovite elite. We know, for example, that the Ambassadorial Office (the *Posol'skii prikaz*) had a book collection, which included Western imprints, and that it was producing translations of some of the books, in the first instance for the royal family, but presumably also for key officials. A number of those individuals were clearly literate; some even knew a language other than Russian. Among those who owned and read books were important Muscovite statesmen: Afanasii Ordin-Nashchokin, Artemon Matveev, and Vasilii Golitsyn. We have occasional evidence about their borrowing or loaning books, in some cases from residents of the foreign community in Moscow.

This broadening of interests extended even to conservative clerics, a noteworthy example being Afanasii, Archbishop of Kholmogory, who borrowed and arranged copying of books for his substantial library and had a demonstrable curiosity about a range of subjects.⁵⁰ That he was a voracious reader is certain, and it has been possible to demonstrate how he used at least some of what he read. Among the most important book collections the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century were those assembled

49 N. A. Mudrova. *Biblioteka Stroganovykh (vtoraia polovina XVI-nachalo XVIII v.)* (Ekaterinburg, 2015).

50 The substantial study on Afanasii by V. M. Veriuzhskii, published over a century ago, retains its value in part for its information about his library: *Afanasii, arkhiepiskop kholmogorskii. Ego zhizn' i trudy v sviazi s istoriei Kholmogorskoii eparkhii za pervye 20 let ee sushchestvovaniia i voobshche russkoi tserkvi v kontse XVII veka* (St. Petersburg, 1908), esp. Ch. VI. See also the recent work by T. V. Panich, especially *Literaturnoe tvorchestvo Afanasiia Kholmogorskogo. "Estestvennonauchnye" sochineniia* (Novosibirsk, 1996).

by Ruthenian (Ukrainian, Belarusian) clerics, who became prominent hierarchs in the Russian Orthodox Church. As Gary Marker indicates, these learned men, even if they might not always have seen eye to eye, carried on extensive correspondence that documents how they formed a kind of ‘republic of letters’ in which ideas and books were exchanged. That correspondence should prove a valuable source of evidence about reading in Russia in the Petrine period and beyond.

For summary information on our knowledge about Russian libraries in the seventeenth century, one may still usefully consult a study by Sergei P. Luppov, one of a series of volumes he devoted to the book culture of the Muscovite and immediate post-Muscovite period.⁵¹ However, his interpretive framework is that of the Soviet-era in the emphasis on trying to make much of the in fact limited information about book ownership amongst laymen. Luppov likes statistics, ones which prove to be rather un-helpful for understanding the reading interests of those who owned books. He shoehorns pre-modern book holdings into modern categories of knowledge (“history,” “geography,” etc.), even if, we would have to think, those were not the categories which bear any relevance to the way an individual would have perceived the content of a given book. We do have to give Luppov credit though for being one of the first to compile and publish information about book ownership, based on inscriptions, even if, under the somewhat misleading title suggesting that such data may tell us who readers were.⁵²

6. THE STUDY OF MANUSCRIPT MISCELLANIES AS A WINDOW INTO RUSSIAN READING

Any analysis of reading in Muscovy must be based on close examination not simply of individual books containing single texts, but miscellanies (florilegia) where multiple works have been brought together in a single binding. While there has long been an awareness of the importance of such collections, given the large numbers of them which have survived, the analytical focus on trying to derive from them information about reading might reasonably be dated back only several decades. A programmatic article by the eminent specialist on early Russian literature, Dmitrii S. Likhachev, underscored the importance of studying “convoy”—that is the context of works accompanying any individual text which frequently would have come down

⁵¹ S. P. Luppov, *Kniga v Rossii v XVII veke. Knigoizdatel'stvo. Knigotorgovlia. Rasprostranenie knig sredi razlichnykh sloev naseleniia. Knizhnye sobraniia chastnykh lits. Biblioteki* (Leningrad, 1970). The continuation volume for Peter the Great's reign is Idem, *Kniga v Rossii v pervoi chetverti XVIII veka* (Leningrad, 1973). Research in manuscript collections continues to turn up new information on private libraries. See, for example, I. A. Poliakov, “Stol'nik kniaz' S. V. Romodanovskoi i ego biblioteka,” *Peterburgskii istoricheskii zhurnal*, 14, 2 (2017), 194-205.

⁵² Luppov, *Chitateli izdaniia Moskovskoi tipografii*.

to us only as part of some larger book.⁵³ His point was that the convoy might tell us something about the context in which a specific text would have been understood by its copyist or owner. In trying to move away from lumping books into what ultimately are the unhelpful categories of ‘secular’ as opposed to ‘religious’, Soviet-era scholars began to emphasize the importance of miscellanies which they characterize as “*chet’i sborniki*,” that is books that clearly would not have served a liturgical function but rather might be imagined to have been created for individual reading.⁵⁴ These could and did, of course, contain works in many genres, the books for the most part having been copied and/or kept by clerics and Orthodox institutions.

The recent study by Irina M. Gritsevskaiia (cited as well in Gary Marker’s chapter below) offers one of the best introductions to the ways in which the evidence of the *chet’i sborniki* might be analyzed, even if her book may only very indirectly tell us about ‘reading’.⁵⁵ She opens with a compact but widely ranging review of the literature on the study of manuscript miscellanies and then summarizes her observations (spelled out in detail in a separate monograph⁵⁶) regarding the indexes of permitted and forbidden books, texts which exist in various redactions and were frequently copied in Russian monasteries. On the one hand, she seems to view such lists as evidence of actual reading, with the differences among copies reflecting what was available and being used. On the other hand, as she carefully points out, many of these prescriptive lists in fact merely repeat what would have been obsolete guidance (produced elsewhere in the Byzantine Orthodox world) from an earlier era. Thus, it can be difficult to correlate recommended authors with copies of their works which any given institution might have held.

What this then means, if one is wanting to write about readers and reading, is that codicological analysis of extant books is essential (the sort of thing, as indicated above, which Shibaev and others who have worked on the Kirillov books have been doing). Before proceeding to some detailed examples of such analysis, Gritsevskaiia undertakes to refine the typological analysis of *chet’i sborniki*. That is, they are not all of one ilk. Some had more or less stable content, whereas others might incorporate only a few ‘standard’ texts mixed in with other works. The delineation of the different types might then enable one to suggest, at least in theory, how they were used in different reading contexts. Some might have been primarily for collective reading, where groups of monks would hear a text read aloud, even if not actually following it on the written page. An example could be collections of monastic rules and texts re-

53 D. S. Likhachev, “Izuchenie sostava sbornikov dlia vyiasneniia istorii teksta proizvedeniia,” *TODRL*, 18 (1962), 3-12.

54 R. P. Dmitrieva, “Chet’i sborniki XV v. kak zhanr,” *TODRL*, 27 (1972), 150-180.

55 I. M. Gritsevskaiia, *Chtenie i chet’i sborniki v drevnerusskikh monastyriakh XV-XVII vv.* (St. Petersburg, 2012). Important parts of the book were anticipated in a number of her articles which she lists in the bibliography.

56 I. M. Gritsevskaiia, *Indeksy istinnykh knig* (St. Petersburg, 2003).

garding the enforcement of their norms. Other collections might more probably have been for silent individual reading, their content perhaps less stable and much more diverse. As Gritsevskaiia admits, the boundaries between the different types and their likely use often are quite fuzzy.

What she says about the more diverse (and, one might suggest, ‘open-ended’) collections is of real interest, where to some degree she is invoking the ideas of Veder about the possible ways in which a ‘kaleidoscope’ of texts might have stimulated the creation of other works. Recent work on medieval Arabic reading suggests there are some parallels in that, as the social composition of readers in the Arab Middle East expanded, the production of manuscripts of very diverse content (libraries in and of themselves) seems to have proliferated.⁵⁷ Conceivably this is what may emerge from our Russian evidence as we move down through the seventeenth century and beyond.

Her study makes it very clear that careful codicological analysis combined with textological study are essential if we are to hope to say something about readership and the impact of reading. For any and all miscellanies, we always must address the question of when the works they contain came together in order to be able to comment on the possible intent of their compilers or copyists, who, it tends to be assumed, were also their readers. Often the collection of works into a single book may not in fact have been done anywhere near the time when an owner of any one of the parts inscribed his name or when the copies were made. Miscellanies may have been put in their present form only in some later century.⁵⁸ In that event then, a collection of seventeenth-century texts may tell us about reading interests not in that century but in, say, the nineteenth. Unfortunately, much of the Muscovite manuscript legacy including such miscellanies still awaits proper codicological analysis. Published catalogs for some of the key collections in many cases are over a century old, produced in a time when such analysis was not being undertaken, and many of the most recent catalogs are too cryptic to tell us much more than what texts are to be found in any given book. As Pozdeeva determined in her project on provincial libraries, the keepers of those collections lacked the training to do a proper job of description and analysis.⁵⁹

The information we might want about ownership and, potentially, readership more often than not is to be found in monographic study of particular texts, which generally include manuscript descriptions and where possible

⁵⁷ See Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 186-188.

⁵⁸ See my articles on the collecting activity of the famous nineteenth-century scholar Pavel M. Stroev, many of whose books containing important, often unique copies of seventeenth century texts are collections he himself put together in order to group the works thematically, even if they came from distinctly separate sources: D. K. Uo [Waugh], “K izucheniiu istorii rukopisnogo sobraniia P. M. Stroeva,” *TODRL*, 30 (1976), 184-203; 32 (1977), 133-164.

⁵⁹ In his address at the “Tikhomirov Readings” in Moscow in 1972, Dmitrii S. Likhachev lamented not only the general lack of progress in the description of Russian manuscript collections but more specifically the fact that in the provincial repositories sometimes there was

will try to say something about who possessed copies or used them. In my own experience though, this kind of analysis may yield far too little. Indeed, manuscripts brought together in their current form around the time the individual text copies were made may have no particular thematic focus. Do we then conclude their producers or readers simply were eclectic in their tastes and might have been stimulated to think in creative ways about new subjects? In my work on Muscovite *turcica* (works with ‘Turkish’ themes), I was able to identify a few examples of collections that contained more than one such text.⁶⁰ Furthermore, some of the collections could be attributed to the circles of the elite who were connected with the Ambassadorial Office—for example, some manuscripts included texts translated from foreign newspapers or pamphlets that increasingly were being obtained by the government. In one or two cases, the works that interested me even are found in books connected with the above-mentioned Archbishop Afanasii Kholmogorskii.⁶¹ But, *as yet*, such evidence is sparse and scattered, arguably insufficient to enable us to write a larger history of reading in Muscovy and how it changed over time.

The example of the foreign news translations contains material relevant to any attempt to understand what reading might have involved in Muscovy at least in a narrow circle of individuals.⁶² The acquisition of foreign news, often in the form of printed or manuscript newspapers and separates, can be traced back into the sixteenth century, but it was only with establishment of an international postal connection to the West in the mid-1660s that the acquisition of such material and the mechanisms for processing it were regularized. The foreign texts had to be read by the professional translators in the Ambassadorial Office, many of whom were not ethnic Russians even if they may have grown up in Muscovy. The procedure was that after reading the original text and relying on his understanding of what was important news for the government (which meant, among other things, some knowledge of the international context for the news reports), the translator would

no one who could even decipher the old Russian cursive handwriting. See D. S. Likhachev, “Zadachi sostavleniia metodik opisaniia slaviano-russkikh rukopisei,” *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1972 god* (Moscow, 1974), 234-255. Granted, much has been accomplished since then.

60 See my *The Great Turkes Defiance. On the History of the Apocryphal Correspondence of the Ottoman Sultan in its Muscovite and Russian Variants*, with a foreword by Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev (Columbus, O, 1978).

61 New information about Afanasii’s acquisition of some of these texts, is in T. A. Bazarova, “Prishla pochta is-pod Azova...: pis’m’a uchastnikov Azovskikh pokhodov (1695-1696) v Nauchno-istoricheskome archive SPbII RAN,” *Istoriia voennogo dela: issledovaniia i istochniki. Spetsial’nyi vypusk X* (2019). *Azovskie pokhody 1695 i 1696 gg.*, ch. 1, 1-22 (http://www.reenactor.ru/ARH/PDF/Bazarova_14.pdf, last accessed 11 February 2021).

62 For a current overview of what we know about the news translations, with references to the now extensive literature, see Ingrid Maier, Daniel Waugh, “Muscovy and the European Information Revolution: Creating the Mechanisms for Obtaining Foreign News,” in S. Franklin, K. Bowers (eds.), *Information and Empire: Mechanisms of Communication in Russia, 1600-1850* (Cambridge, 2017), 77-112. The authors are currently completing a book-length study of foreign news in Muscovy, which will include a discussion of readership.

render the German or Dutch (the most common languages of the sources) into Russian, but usually in some abbreviated or summary fashion. The resulting compendia (termed the *kuranty*) then might be edited by a secretary before being read to the Tsar, with his boyars (key noble advisers) listening in the antechamber. Even though some, incautiously I would argue, are wont to talk about the ‘readers of foreign news’ in Moscow, suggesting perhaps there were many more of them than the sources would indicate, we nonetheless have here a readership, at least some of whom did not actually look at the texts on paper but heard them read. The tsar, who was perfectly capable of reading the texts themselves, heard them read, but also kept written copies for, one might assume, possible silent reading if he wanted to consult something. The reading out loud of written news texts is also something we can document for Western Europe, where often an inn or coffeehouse was the place where people (literate or not) gathered to learn the latest reports.⁶³ In such situations, whether or not the news was deemed for privileged consumption only (as was the case in Muscovy), we can assume some further transmission of it orally occurred.

As Gary Marker notes, the old paradigm of searching out the routes to modernity has pretty much shaped the literature on Russian reading since the Enlightenment.⁶⁴ Indeed, there can be no question but that the world that lay ahead for Russia was one which ultimately would be fundamentally different from that of Muscovy. Certainly some of what I have surveyed above, including the case of the *kuranty*, fits nicely into such an interpretive scheme. However, there is much here to demonstrate how one-sided it can be. The scholarship on literacy and reading may rightly emphasize how central their development and spread throughout all levels of society was in the making of the modern world. However, there also is evidence that certain reading communities which placed a high value on books and reading did so precisely in order to strengthen their adherence to traditional (if you wish, ‘pre-modern’) values.⁶⁵ The case of the Old Believers, the religious schismatics who broke with the Orthodox Church in the middle of the seventeenth century in the face of the Nikonian reforms of ritual and text, is an example of this. Paradoxically it is precisely thanks to the diligence of the

63 See A. Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know about Itself* (New Haven, London, 2014), Ch. II; A. Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford, 2000), 352-353, 374-380.

64 See MARKER, “The Eighteenth Century: From Reading Communities to the Reading Public,” in the present volume, for references. For my perhaps idiosyncratic take on the discussion insofar as it relates to the Petrine era, see D. C. Waugh, “We Have Never Been Modern: Approaches to the Study of Russia in the Age of Peter the Great,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 49, 3 (2001), 321-345.

65 For some comparative perspective on the role of literacy, see J. Goody, I. Watt, “The Consequences of Literacy,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 5 (1993), 304-345, and R. Horton, “African Traditional Thought and Western Science,” *Africa*, 37, 1-2 (1967), 50-71, 155-187.

Old Believers in preserving and copying the pre-Nikonian books that we can learn a great deal about readership amongst rural village inhabitants in Russia beginning in the late seventeenth century and moving down to modern times.

It may never be possible to come up with any meaningful statistics to document the degree to which there was non-elite literacy in Muscovy. But there certainly are some suggestive examples, such as the Popovs and a few other families in the Pinega region.⁶⁶ We now know quite a bit about a few such peasant libraries, small as they were, which were actively used collections of books and documents. In these cases, a lot of the documentation may date from the eighteenth, nineteenth and even twentieth centuries, but there is some material from the seventeenth, and the involvement with their books of several generations of any one of the families can offer interesting perspectives on the continuities and changes in reading habits. Are those few instances exceptional though, reflecting something about the distinct culture of the Russian North where many of the Old Believers took refuge, or do we know about them simply because the state of preservation of books in that region is better than for other areas? Only further research can answer such questions.

I would conclude by reviewing briefly one very specific example which demonstrates what we might be able learn about reading in ‘late Muscovy.’ While it would be presumptuous to suggest this case study lends itself to broader generalization, at very least it may highlight the ambiguities of how we might interpret such evidence. My ‘hero’ here (around whom I have written a substantial book) is an Orthodox sacristan Semen Popov, whose activity spans the late-seventeenth-early eighteenth century divide that too glibly has been used to demarcate the ‘old’ and ‘new’ Russias. Popov was a provincial, in the town of Khlynov (later Viatka, now Kirov) north of Kazan’ on the way into the western foothills of the Urals.⁶⁷ While communication between the Viatka region and the Russian capitals was relatively slow and infrequent, nonetheless there is plenty of evidence to demonstrate how books and texts produced elsewhere penetrated the region. As an individual known locally for his literacy and respected for his position, Popov was

66 On the Popovs, see N. V. Savel’eva, “Biblioteka pinezhan Popovykh,” in *Knizhnye tsentry Drevnei Rusi. XVII vek. Raznye aspekty issledovaniia* (St. Petersburg, 1994): 266-314; more generally on those northern village collections, Idem, *Pinezhskaia knizhno-rukopisnaia traditsiia XVIII nachala XX vv.*, T. 1. *Ocherk istorii formirovaniia pinezhskoi knizhno-rukopisnoi traditsii. Opisanie rukopisnykh istochnikov* (St. Petersburg, 2003). For another example, see B. N. Morozov, “Arkhiv torgovykh krest’ian Shanginykh,” *Sovetskie arkhivy*, 1980/2, 57-61. For a careful analysis of Old Believer book culture in its first decades, see N. Iu. Bubnov, *Starobraidcheskaia kniga v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XVII v.* (St. Petersburg, 1995).

67 On Popov and his books, see D. K. Uo [Waugh], *Istoriia odnoi knigi. Viatka i “ne-sovremennost’” v russkoi kul’ture petrovskogo vremeni.* (St. Petersburg, 2003), and note as well Gary Marker’s cautionary remark at the end of his review in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 53 (2005), 116-118.

enlisted in fiscal administrative tasks devised as part of Peter the Great's reforms. His career, and indeed his literary interests, defy any attempt to pigeonhole him in a 'religious' or 'secular' box.

We know quite a bit about the texts he owned and read, and can reasonably posit his authorship of certain works. Marginal notations in his hand often indicate what interested him in a particular text, and in some cases his inscriptions identify from whom he obtained a copy of it. The town censuses generally enable us to say more about the 'reading community' of which he was a part.

Popov kept himself informed of the news, much of it coming in the first printed Russian newspapers, the *Vedomosti* Peter the Great began to have published starting in late 1702. Popov's collection of these texts (mostly manuscript copies, not the printed originals) is one of the largest assembled in any one place in early eighteenth-century Russia and includes what is apparently a unique (manuscript) copy of first number of the *Vedomosti*. Among these products of Petrine officially sponsored propaganda in his collection were copies of a few of the texts issued in conjunction with the public celebrations of Russian victories in the Northern War.⁶⁸ He certainly read some of the important Church texts, presumably in part because a knowledge of them was relevant to his profession but also because he could use them in his own writings. The collected hagiographic tales of the *Prolog* (Synaxarion) were particularly relevant for him. So also was the *Stepennaia kniga* and one of the major seventeenth-century historical compilations, the so-called *Chronograph of 1617*. The emphasis in Popov's writing on local history seems to have been to demonstrate the divinely-sanctioned place of Viatka in the larger order of things. While not a 'fledgling of Peter's nest,' as were many famous members of the Tsar's entourage, Popov was arguably far from a unique example of a man of the Petrine era, caught between the modernizing pressures of the state and the culture and traditions of the Russia that had not yet really been much changed by any 'march to modernity.'

To study reading in 'pre-modern' Russia (I cannot avoid that descriptor, much as I would like to) is going to require a lot of work, where, as much as possible, we need to free ourselves from some of the pre-conceptions as to what we would hope to find, and to recognize that what turns up may in fact call into question that which we thought we knew. The picture which emerges is likely to be a messy one. Yet at least a good many of the questions

68 Popov had a manuscript copy made from the printed text of Iosif Turoboiskii's description of the triumphal arch erected for the celebration in November 1703 as well as a manuscript copy of the published program for the play "Revnost' Pravoslaviia" mounted by the Moscow Academy in February 1704, both of the manuscript copies having been obtained from the same *viatchanin*, Osip Tepliashin in May 1704. For details, see Uo [Waugh], *Istoriia odnoi knigi*, esp. 99-113.

we might reasonably ask are ones which probably are relevant to any inquiry about reading, whatever the period and place it is to be found.

Not the least of the tasks here is going to be to look closely at the intersection between oral and written culture. Analyses of formally composed works such as saints' lives may reveal how written sources are interwoven with oral testimony, with orally transmitted legend and so on. To understand this then tempers how we would understand the impact of reading a written text. In work I have been doing recently, attempting to determine how news was communicated in Muscovy, I have found very interesting evidence (documented in written sources about the responses to the Stenka Razin rebellion) about how information may move back and forth between the written and the oral, where responses of the literate to both forms of communication can be established.⁶⁹ Furthermore, we have a lot of evidence, still to be systematized, on how the posting or reading aloud of a written text may reach well beyond the circle of those who possessed formal literacy.

As Simon Franklin has put it, "the culture of the written word and the culture of the spoken word overlap, interact modify and modulate each other. Writing does not obliterate speech and memory, but rather the functions of each are affected by the presence of the other."⁷⁰ I would suggest this insight is essential to keep in mind if we wish to learn about reading and readers, whether in Muscovy or even beyond in the most recent centuries. In his chapter below, where he cites hard statistics on print runs of tens of thousands of the thick journals during the Thaw of the late 1950s and early 1960s, Denis Kozlov emphasizes that the size of those editions was inadequate to meet demand. Thus, "one needs to examine other practices of reading, such as collective reading, sharing of printed matter, reading in public or institutional libraries, and other similar ways of accessing the printed word. This is where statistics reaches its limit, because such unorthodox practices of reading and information exchange obviously cannot be quantified."⁷¹ I am not sure I would label such practices as "unorthodox," but we can probably all agree that in many ways the methodologies we employ in studying Muscovite practices are just as relevant to modern times.

69 See my "What was News and How Was It Communicated in Pre-modern Russia?" in Franklin, Bowers (eds.), *Information and Empire*, 213-252, esp. 236-250.

70 Franklin, *Writing*, 9. In the medieval Arab world, there is interesting evidence about the relationship between the written and spoken word, where in oral recitations of texts, to which a broad cross-section of society might be invited, the listeners might as well be following along in a written copy of what was being recited and could thereby raise criticisms of omissions or errors by the reciter. See Hirschler, *The Written Word*, esp. Ch. 2. Hirschler prefers the term "aural" to "oral" in his analysis, since a great deal of his evidence pertains to what the 'readers' would have heard. That is, his emphasis is not on the production of the spoken word, but its reception.

71 KOZLOV, "Reading During the Thaw: Subscription to Literary Periodicals as Evidence for an Intellectual History of Soviet Society," vol. 3, 206.

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