

Slavic Review  
43/1 (1984): 94-95

---

KNIGA V ROSSII V XV VEKE. By *N. N. Rozov*. Edited by *S. P. Luppov*. Leningrad: Nauka, 1981. xvi, 133 pp. Illustrations. 80 kopecks, paper.

Nikolai Nikolaevich Rozov is one of the most prolific contributors to the substantial recent Soviet literature on the early history of the book in Russia. His *The Book in Russia in the 15th Century* is part of a loosely coordinated series being published by the Library of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The authors of books in this series must attempt to overcome the awkwardness of chronological boundaries that have little to do with the subject but nonetheless seem to have considerable freedom to pursue those aspects of the material that interest them personally. Rozov fortunately does not share the penchant of other contributors to the series—S. P. Luppov and notably B. V. Sapunov—for often meaningless statistics and theoretical reconstructions of the volume or makeup of early Russian book collections. Rather, he concerns himself with topics for which he can find evidence in the manuscripts he has devoted his life to studying—determining who was commissioning, copying, or reading the books, what was in libraries, and what the artistic features of the manuscript book were. Some characteristics of the fifteenth century seem to distinguish it from earlier times—a more diverse group of people ordering and copying books, and noteworthy changes in the style and possibly the function of decoration—but on the whole Rozov's book is more valuable for its details than for its broad conclusions.

Like too many of his colleagues, he is least satisfactory in discussing the content of the books. Symptomatic of the problem is his willingness to accept the late M. I. Slukhovskii's narrow definition of old Russian libraries that excludes collections of books needed for church services. Hence it is possible to make the remarkable assertion that church service books did not reflect the reading interests of those who used them in their official duties. One wonders whether the significant religious culture of Russian (or, for that matter, any other traditional) society will ever receive its due in the Soviet Union.

There are a few curious errors. Feofan Grek becomes a "great Russian artist" and Sergei of Radonezh (who died in 1392) a "contemporary" of Joseph Sanin (who was born in 1439). The book is supplied with useful appendixes listing all dated fifteenth-century Russian manuscripts as well as the names of fifteenth-century copyists and persons who commissioned books that have been recorded in colophons and inscriptions.

DANIEL CLARKE WAUGH  
*University of Washington*

BIBLIOTEKA IVANA GROZNOGO: REKONSTRUKTSIIA I BIBLIOGRAFI-  
CHESKOE OPISANIE. Edited by S. O. Shmidt. Compiled by N. N. Zarubin.  
Annotation and supplement by A. A. Amosov. Leningrad: Nauka, 1982. 159 pp.  
1.20 rubles.

A handful of sources whose validity has repeatedly been questioned stimulated debate in the nineteenth century over the possible existence of a royal library in Tsar Ivan IV's Muscovy—a library rich in rare manuscripts of the Greek and Latin classics. With the publication of S. A. Belokurov's monumental study in 1898 and in the absence of any new evidence, the skeptics' views prevailed until the late M. N. Tikhomirov in 1960 put the weight of his authority behind the idea that the library existed. Despite the fact that we still have no new evidence, as the book under review indicates, current Soviet opinion now supports Tikhomirov's position.

Although somewhat misleadingly titled, *The Library of Ivan Groznyi* is a useful volume. The bulk of the book is a study completed in 1938 by N. N. Zarubin (who died during the siege of Leningrad). A specialist in the history of the book in Russia, Zarubin provides a good review of the literature on the subject of Ivan's library and a long, annotated list of books that are in some way connected with Ivan. As the editors of Zarubin's work point out, his principles for inclusion of a title in that list are not very clear or consistent. Only some of the works allegedly written by Ivan are there, and most of the entries are books Ivan gave or received as gifts. There is actually little in the list that can be construed as comprising part of the tsar's library, and the most interesting items are precisely the vague listings of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew books from the few dubious sources that began the library controversy. As Belokurov and more recently B. L. Fonkich have established, there is so far no trace of any such books having survived.

A. A. Amosov, a Leningrad scholar who has done several valuable studies on the sixteenth-century manuscript book and libraries, prepared the Zarubin study for publication and has provided essays updating the survey of the literature on Ivan's library. These essays discuss (rather inconclusively) publicistic works he supposes were in the royal library and summarize the current state of our knowledge about the sources for the famous illuminated chronicle undertaken apparently at Ivan's behest (hence, sources that might be listed among reading "available to the tsar," whatever that is supposed to tell us). Amosov has also identified, where possible, the current locations of books in the Zarubin list and provided additional information about them. In his introduction to the volume, its editor S. O. Shmidt offers his own thoughts on the library.

If the intent of those who produced the book was to strengthen the case for the existence of Ivan's library, they have failed. The careful reader will not mistake Zarubin's list for a "reconstruction" of Ivan's library and will realize that many of the assumptions made about what books Ivan may have read or written are based on wishful thinking. The normal rules of evidence, alas, are too often suspended when scholars deal with the Terrible Tsar.

DANIEL CLARKE WAUGH  
*University of Washington*