



Národní knihovna České republiky
Slovanská knihovna

**KATALOG
STARÝCH RUSKÝCH TISKŮ
Z FONDŮ SLOVANSKÉ KNIHOVNY
tištěných azbukou**

Díl II: 1776–1787

Sestavila Františka Sokolová

Praha 2008

KATALOGIZACE V KNIZE – NÁRODNÍ KNIHOVNA ČR

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Katalog starých ruských tisků z fondů Slovanské knihovny tištěných azbukou. Díl II., 1776–1787 / sestavila Františka Sokolová. – 1. vyd. – Praha : Národní knihovna ČR – Slovanská knihovna, 2007. – 441 s. – (Bibliografie Slovanské knihovny ; 71)
ISBN 978-80-7050-542-7

094/099(=161.1) * 003.349.3:003.344 * (470+571) * (437.311)

- Národní knihovna České republiky. Slovanská knihovna
- ruské staré tisky – 1776–1787 – Česko
- azbuka (písmo) – Rusko – 18. stol.
- Praha (Česko)
- katalogy

094 – Staré tisky [12]

1. vydání

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ISBN 978-80-7050-542-7

FOREWORD

In the 1st volume of this catalogue published in 2004 we have discussed the Russian prints printed in Cyrillic since 1710. The so called *grazhdanka*, “civic” script, which we call today Cyrillic, was created on order of Peter the Great for books of lay nature (it was in use since 1708). These were to serve Peter’s reforms, which aimed at establishing a modern Russian absolutist state. In contrast with the Church Cyrillic, the *grazhdanka* is simple and practical. Two further volumes of catalogue of old Russian prints of the Slavonic Library will cover the books printed from 1779 till 1800 as well as journals.

We would like to stress again that most of the processed prints belong to the so called Smirdin Library, which is one of our most precious collections. In 1932 the Czechoslovak government purchased a remnant – approximately one tenth – of the famous library of Saint Petersburg’s publisher, bookseller and bibliographer Alexander Smirdin (1795–1857) in Riga for the Slavonic Library. Most of these books were from different disciplines than humanities.

The Slavonic Library was purchasing old and new precious Russian prints especially in the Soviet Union already from the 1920s via the Czechoslovak consulate in Moscow. For financial reasons the Soviet Russia was selling off its cultural heritage including visual arts. The Slavonic Library came with the idea to reconstruct as much as possible the famous Smirdin Library on the bases of Smirdin’s published catalogues. Despite the considerable energy invested into the project, the original intention was not fully realised, and therefore we can find old Russian prints in other sections too – for example in Section O (general), R (Russian) and in the safe.

The books that truly belonged to the lending library of merchant A. Smirdin in Saint Petersburg have characteristic *exlibris*: older engraved, newer printed. We include into this category also books of later owners of the library, we can find *exlibris* of V. Plavilshchikov and I. Krashennikov. It needs to be said that this publication describes only old prints up to 1800, but in the library of merchant A. Smirdin there are books up to the mid 19th century.

Those prints, which do not have the mentioned *exlibris*, were stamped “Biblioteka Smirdina” by the Slavonic Library, and do not belong to the original Smirdin collection; they are a mere addition to it, which is true also for the prints with different shelf-mark than *Sm*.

The prints described in the 1st volume of our catalogue document the effort to introduce the civil script to all aspects of life, from technical subjects to translations, academic publications or original Russian fiction. This effort corresponded with the practical need of the absolutist ruler to communicate with his officials and the army. The printing press contributed to the development of literary Russian, with following key stages: prints of Peter the Great period, production of the printing press of the Academy of Sciences (since 1728) and flourishing of typographic art in the time of Elisabeth (Yelisaveta) II (1741–1762). M. Lomonosov initiated establishment of printing press of the Moscow University in 1756, which published not only academic or scholarly publications (Tatishchev's *History of Russia*, works by Lomonosov), but also dictionaries, philosophy (Erasmus of Rotterdam, J. J. Rousseau), novels and poetry (M. M. Cheraskov), theatre plays (Molière) or Komenský's *Orbis pictus*.

In the second half of the 18th century the book market was fairly developed offering translated but also original publication of various academic and technical subjects, entertaining and educational books as well as various genres of fiction. Russian, the official language of the Russian Empire, is becoming a literary language. The number of printing presses and bookshops, however, was very limited and the selection of book titles rather haphazard. The French novels were particularly popular; France, which then represented the centre of the world, attracted the higher classes, which of course knew French. The ideas of enlightenment also spread through translations which were tolerated or even encouraged by Empress Catherine II. She was a writer herself and tried initially to play role of enlightened ruler; she kept contact with Voltaire and Diderot, admired them and was admired by them. Since the mid-century the first periodicals had appeared. During the reign of Empress Catherine II even satirical journals were published (she published the first of these herself anonymously), which for a limited time had offered polemics, criticism and satire, till they became potentially dangerous. Next to encyclopaedists, there appeared religious, mystical and free-mason literature (for instance Saint-Martin) as well.

An important and necessary step in the development of Russian book printing was the permission to establish private printing presses by Catherine II in 1783 (before that, there were only state or religious printing presses). Already since 1776 there had been printing presses of Vejtbrecht and Šnor in Saint Petersburg and of Brejtkopf (since 1780) and Meijer (since 1783) in

Moscow. Catherine's permission allowed the expansion of the printing press into other cities of Russia.

N. Novikov (1744–1818), a writer and publicist, was in his time the most important book publisher in Russia with a formative influence on the Russian book culture of the second period of the 18th century. In this way he also contributed substantially to the development of Russian thought and emergence of public opinion in Russia.

Due to his importance for book culture and also because in 2008 is the 190th anniversary of his death, it is proper to sketch the principal outlines of his life and work here. His publishing activities covered the 1770s and 1780s, which corresponds roughly with the time focus of this catalogue.

In his young age Novikov was a supporter of Catherine II. He became famous as a satirist publishing a short lived journals, which fell victims to displeasure of Empress Catherine II, the admirer of Voltaire and Encyclopaedists, who actually initiated the publication of an anonymous satirical journal (*Vsiakaia vsiachina*, 1769–1770), and Novikov had the courage to disagree with her in his satirical journals in 1769–1773. His satire, in contrast with that of Catherine, was a social one, he always strongly supported abolition of serfdom. Novikov's journals will be subject of one or our future volumes of the catalogue. Let us just mention that Novikov founded first Russian journal for children *Detskoie chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma* (1785–1789) and first philosophical journal *Utrennii svet* (1777–1780). The most important of his periodicals was *Drevniaia rossiiskaia vivliofika* (1773–1775), which published ancient Russian literary works. All the mentioned Novikov's periodicals and several others are part of the collection of the Slavonic Library.

After the suppression of Pugachev's uprising in 1775 he became a free mason. The betterment of the society through spread of knowledge in Russia, increase of popular enlightenment, improvement of morals and philanthropic work became now his goal. He belonged to the stream of free-masons who stress the inner spirituality. He was "martinist" – a supporter of French theosopher and freemason L. C. de Saint-Martin. Politically he supported constitutional monarchy; he was no revolutionary.

Next to his translation, literary and charity works, Novikov devoted himself primarily to spreading of book culture as publisher, editor and bibliographer. With its more than three hundred entries his *Opyt istoricheskogo slovaria o rossiiskikh pisateliakh* (Spb. 1772) represents the first Russian bio-bibliographical dictionary. In the dictionary there are not only Russian authors but also a virtually unknown Baroque mystic of the first quarter of the

18th century, the Kiev Igumen Varlaam Golenkovsky as well as unpublished works. The journal *Sanktpeterburgskie uchenye vedomosti na 1777 god* too dealt with bibliography, literary criticism and published reviews. Novikov was a great organiser and was able to surround himself with likely minded people with similar goals: He founded the association of publishers “Obshchestvo, staraiushcheesia o napechatanii knig” (1773), “Druzheskoie uchenoie obshchestvo” and others.

On the initiative of the dean of Moscow University, poet and freemason M. Kheraskov, Novikov left Saint Petersburg and moved to Moscow in 1779. He rented there the printing press of the Moscow University for ten years. He founded a typographical society “Tipografaskaia kompaniia” in Moscow in 1784, who owned two further printing presses. Therefore Novikov could continue for some time in his publishing after he was forced out of the University printing press in 1789.

In Moscow, Novikov focused on printing valuable books for broader city and countryside strata; besides that he also printed the university publications, academic literature, many translations, but also freemason and mystical literature as well as the Church Fathers.

As a patriot, he stood against “galomania”, i.e. parroting of French habits and fashions that was popular among the higher social classes and ambitious individuals. He stressed the quality of the books, he disliked the poor quality French novels, even though he himself was translating from French. He valued highly the old Russian learning and in this way he was close to the simple Russian reader.

During the decade that Novikov worked at the Moscow University printing press, the press published one third of all the Russian production and it prospered financially. Due to his effort, the number of bookshops increased too. Novikov made profit on the books and traded with them on a large scale.

Already in 1785 Catherine II ordered that a list of all Novikov’s publications was compiled and considered by a special committee as well as by Moscow Metropolitan Platon. Though he blamed a part of those publications, the Metropolitan did not oppose Novikov, on the contrary, he claim that Novikov was an exemplary Christian: “I pray to the Good God, that in the entire world there would be more such Christians as Novikov.” Shortly before the French Revolution Catherine II started to persecute freemasons; it was probably only Novikov who suffered as a consequence. In 1786 an order was issued to withdraw 6 freemason books from the sale (most importantly the treaty by Saint-Martin published by the Typographical Society). In 1787 the books

published by Novikov were labelled as harmful, confiscated and burned. The Typographical Society was dissolved in 1791. In 1792 Novikov was arrested in dramatic fashion and in May he was sent to Shlisselburg Fortress without trial. Catherine II order that he should be imprisoned for fifteen years for “loathsome dissent, selfish trickery, freemasonry, links to Duke of Brunswick and Grand Duke Paul”. After the death of Catherine II in 1796, Novikov was released on the order of Paul I but he was not allow to publish books any more. The imprisonment broke Novikov physically but not spiritually. Till his death he took care of his serves at his estates in Avdotiino.

Novikov’s philanthropic activities included the organisation of assistance to victims of famine in 1787, foundation of two schools for pupils of non-aristocratic origin in Saint Petersburg and of the first public library in Moscow, which was open for everyone and for free.

Novikov is well known to Czech readers particularly due to the entry in the encyclopaedia *Ottův slovník naučný*, which is a shortened version of the entry in an old Russian encyclopaedia Brockhaus-Efron. T. G. Masaryk (*The Spirit of Russia*, vol. 1) praised Novikov as one of the leading freemasons in Russia with far-reaching cultural importance for he spread the ideas of enlightenment.

The mutual correspondence of Josef Dobrovský and Fortunát Durich (Durych) was published by the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague in 1895. We learn from this book that in 1787 Durych wrote to Dobrovský from Vienna about the review of monk Khrabr, which he found in the 1st volume of N. Novikov’s publication *Povestvovatel drevnostei rossiiskikh* from 1773, and about his book *Opyt istoricheskogo slovaria o Rossiiskikh pisateliakh* from 1772. All these books were in Viennese Imperial Library, where Durych was employed and could made excerpts for the works of both the slavists. In October 1792 Dobrovský wrote to Durych from his research journey to Saint Petersburg how sorry he felt for Novikov, who was imprisoned for possession of forbidden books. In April 1793 Dobrovský praised Novikov for his publishing achievements in the Moscow University printing press, where many excellent works were published. The Czech contemporaries of N. Novikov, our first Slavists Fortunát Durich [Durych] and Josef Dobrovský, were aware of his activities, writing, as well as his sad fate.

As a final remark we can add that all the three publications of N. Novikov that F. Durych had at his disposal in Vienna are now owned by the Slavonic Library.

F. Sokolová

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Řídí Lukáš Babka

Katalog starých ruských tisků z fondů Slovanské knihovny tištěných azbukou Díl II: 1776–1787

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Vydala Národní knihovna ČR – Slovanská knihovna

1. vydání

Praha 2008

Technická redakce: Alena Diasová

Návrh obálky: Alena Křesalová

Vytisklo Polygrafické středisko NK ČR

Distribuce: Národní knihovna ČR – Slovanská knihovna

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