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### IMPERIAL RUSSIAN CORONATION ALBUMS<sup>1</sup>

The descriptions (*Opisanii*) of the coronations of Russian emperors and empresses represent a valuable source for understanding the culture and mentality of Russian monarchy. While the events and personages are amply if dryly summarized in other sources, such as newspapers, the descriptions give a unique account from the point of view of the monarch and the court. They present the coronations as the rulers wished them to be seen, by contemporaries as well as by posterity. Produced in luxurious volumes, richly illustrated with engravings and (or) lithographs, they provide visual as well as verbal statements of the evolving mythology of monarchy and empire. Although the religious ceremonies remained basically the same over this period, the rituals and celebrations assumed different meanings with each reign. These are revealed in the changing representations of the coronation presented in the albums.

The first *opisanie* of a coronation, was issued by Peter the Great to justify and celebrate the crowning of his wife, the Empress Catherine Alekseevna in 1724. The first luxury volumes marking the event were published in 1730 and 1745 to commemorate the coronations of the Empress's Anna Ioannovna and Elizabeth Petrovna. Preparations for a similar volume after Catherine II's coronation in 1762 were halted, perhaps due to considerations of cost. The *opisanie* ultimately appeared in the published version of the *Kamer-fur'erskiĭ Zhurnal* for 1762; the illustrations by de Veilly were printed in the 1790s and in separate editions during the nineteenth century. The practice of issuing published *opisanii* then fell into disuse until the publication in 1828 of an album

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to mark the coronation of Nicholas I in Paris. The coronations of Alexander II in 1856, of Alexander III in 1883 and Nicholas II in 1896 were all commemorated with albums, each of which gives characteristic expression to the new tsar's rule.

Scholars are fortunate to have at their disposal several excellent collections of Russian coronation albums in the United States. The Slavic and Baltic Division of the New York Public Library, the newly created Hillwood Museum Library in Washington D.C. have nearly complete collections (The Slavic and Baltic Division lacks only the Nicholas I album, the Hillwood Library only Anna Ioannovna's). The Library of Congress and the Getty Center Library have several albums, while individual albums may be found at Princeton University, Cornell University and the University of Wisconsin.

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The *Opisanie* that Peter the Great issued in 1724 for the coronation of the Empress Catherine represented as much an innovation as the crowning of an empress and the new European style regalia introduced at the ceremony.<sup>2</sup> It was a secular publication, printed at the Senate presses in Petersburg as well as the Synodal press in Moscow, that commemorated what previously had been a religious event. Previously, the account of each coronation was given in a *Chin venchania* and included descriptions of the religious ceremonies as well as the processions to and from the cathedrals. Peter's volume encompassed the total event of the coronation: the arrival of the emperor, the promulgation of the event of the ceremony, the parades and celebrations after the religious services. It made the religious ritual an event of secular import, justifying and glorifying the power of the all-Russian tsar. In addition, by publishing the account in a volume to be circulated among the public, Peter gave the event an aspect of permanence that the account in the newspaper, *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* could not provide. With it, the coronation became a state as well as an ecclesiastical act that figured in the historical mythology of the new Petrine absolute state.

Peter's *Opisanie*, indeed, shows a clear shift of focus from the religious ceremonies, to the celebrations surrounding the event. The account of Catherine's procession to the Voznesenskii Convent in the Kremlin to visit the graves of her female «ancestors» takes up almost as much space as the description of the ceremonies in the Assumption Cathedral. It includes precise and lengthy descriptions of the uniforms of the Cavalier-Guards, and the livery of the courtiers, pages and servants. The account of the feast in the Palace of Facets is just as long as the description of the religious ceremonies and includes mention of the names of the court officials participating in the banquet, a clear sign of their standing in the court. The *Opisanie* continues with accounts of the feast for the people on the Kremlin square, the ceremonies of greetings to the empress in the palace. The events concluded with a

<sup>2</sup> *Opisanie koronatsii s.v. Ekateriny Aleksievny...* (St. Petersburg 1724, Moscow 1725). For complete titles see *Svodnyi katalog russkoi knigi grazhdanskoi poloviny XVIII veka* (Moscow, 1964), 2: 356.

«great festival» on Tsaritsyn Lug, celebrated with «magnificence and richness (s magnifitsentsieiu i bogatstvom)» and later, «deep at night, reached its conclusion with the igniting of splendid and really skilful fireworks».<sup>1</sup>

The text of the description was evidently composed with European readers in mind, though it appeared only in a Russian edition. It gave elementary explanations of the setting and the character of the decorations of the cathedral. The Kremlin was the «fortress in the center of Moscow» in which the ancestors of the empress had lived. The cathedral was decorated «in the most costly array allowed by Greek law (for Greek law does not allow images of the saints to be covered by any tapestries or other ornaments)».<sup>2</sup> The descriptions of the items of regalia at the end emphasized their sumptuousness and costliness with clear reference to western standards. The orb, the *Opisanie* made clear was patterned precisely on a Roman model. Statements about the lavishness and elegance of candelabra in the cathedral, and the banquet hall in the Palace of Facets, scope of the celebrations, showed that the coronation had become a means to show that Russia could rival the west in taste and magnificence as well as military power.

Catherine I's coronation album was published to justify Peter's crowning of his wife and the westernization of the regalia, dresses and celebrations. It was a celebration of the new principles of monarchy after Peter had eliminated the principle of dynastic succession. The albums for Anna Ioannovna's and Elizabeth Petrona's succession had the same purpose: in a period of uncertain claims to the throne, they revealed how the reigning empress was dedicated to the well-being of the nation and how her coronation brought general rejoicing. Illustrations now replaced words in showing the resplendence of the regalia, the dress, and the scene, making the album itself a work of art.

The model for the Russian volumes appears to have been the lavishly illustrated account published in 1723 for the coronation of the twelve year old Louis XV in Paris. France too was in the midst of a political crisis of a noble resurgence. Referred to as «le premier monument d'un règne», the volume contained engravings of various stages of the ceremonies from la levée du roi through the royal feast. It also contained allegorical representations of the meaning of the rituals and depictions of the costumes of the king, the peers and the guards in attendance.<sup>3</sup>

The coronation albums of the empresses Anna and Elizabeth were also intended as initial monuments of their reigns. The planning and production of the volumes were placed under the direction of the empress's high advisors. V. N. Tatishchev, who had sided with Anna against the *verkhovniki* in the Supreme Privy Council, and was oberceremonienmeister at her coronation, assumed responsibility for the 1730 volume. Elizabeth's Procurator-General, N. Iu. Trubetskoi directed the elaborate preparations for her journal. The librarian of the Academy of Science, Johann Shumacher, supervised the preparation of the engravings

<sup>1</sup> *Opisanie koronatsii c.v. Ekateriny Alekseevny...* 77—78.

<sup>2</sup> *Opisanie koronatsii c.v. Ekateriny Alekseevny...* 3—4.

<sup>3</sup> *Le sacre de Louis XV, roi de France et de Navarre dans l'Eglise de Reims (Paris, 1723)*; Rudolf H. Wackernagel, *Der französische Kronungswagen von 1696—1825* (Berlin, 1966), 160.

and the actual publication of both volumes. The most skilled engravers in Russia labored over the plates for the volume, under specific directions from the empresses and her advisors. They produced volumes that used the techniques of book production and engraving to create works of political art to embellish the claims of their sovereign.

The Opisanie published in 1730 to mark the coronation of Anna Ioannovna was the smallest of the coronation albums, measuring about 32 by 21 centimeters, with 46 pages of text.<sup>6</sup> It has deeply embossed brown leather covers with gold-highlighted Imperial eagle front and back. The typeface used is very delicate and ornate. The endpapers are fancifully flowered, with rich blues, reds, and golds. It was published in an edition of five-hundred copies.

The illustrations make clear that the celebration of the empress's coronation was as important as the rites themselves. The text emphasized her claims by birth to the throne. Vignettes on the back of the title page of the promulgation ceremony and the feast for the people indicate the rejoicing that justified such claims. Of the nineteen engravings, ten are of the items of regalia, the procession to the cathedral and one of the crowning itself. The others depict the announcement of the coronation by heralds, an innovation of the coronation of 1727, the reception of ambassadors and the fireworks, depicted in two elaborate foldout engravings.

The most striking feature of Anna's album is the prominence of the empress herself. This contrasts with the Louis XV volume where the monarch is barely discernible in the midst of his courtiers, and guards and the vastness of the cathedral. Anna is shown in full length in the frontispiece engraving by Christian Albert Wortmann, after a drawing of the court painter, Louis Caravaque. Anna stands in the palace, an imposing presence in her décolleté coronation gown, holding the orb and scepter. A statue of a Cupid or satyr looks down upon her from the wall. The empress, although small in size, is conspicuous in the illustrations of the procession to the cathedral and the crowning, her features highlighted in the midst of the dozens of other small, identical figures surrounding her.

The engravings of the procession from the palace to the Assumption Cathedral, and the moment of crowning both give a sense of enormous scale and space. In the engraving of the procession (Plate No. 12) a large fold out illustration signed by Ottomar Elliger, the figures, the empress among them, are dwarfed by the expanse of the square and the height of the cathedral. The procession moves in groups across the square, cavalier-guards, deputies from various provinces, courtiers, and high officials. Numbers, discretely placed above the figures, refer to the designations of particular groups and individuals in the text. The square is partly empty. Some spectators stand in the square and others crowd the galleries of the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great.

The engraving of the crowning, the only rite of the coronation depicted, (Plate 13) gives a great, indeed highly exaggerated sense of

<sup>6</sup> *Opisanie koronatsii s.v. Imp., samoderzhitsy vserossiiskoi Anna Ioannovny.* (St. Petersburg, 1730); *Svodnyi Katalog*, 2: 356-57. The illustrations are listed in *F. A. Vereshchagin, Russkie illustrirovannye izdaniia XVIII i XIX stoletii* (St. Petersburg, 1898), 168-69.

the spaciousness of the cathedral. The empress is shown on her throne after the crowning, being blessed by the archbishop. All look towards her; she is the cynosure of attention, the center of the expanse. The album also contains illustrations of the various items of regalia and coronation vessels revealing in images, rather than words, the jeweled resplendence of the ceremony. The last illustration is a vignette of Anna receiving ambassadors.

Elizabeth's coronation album celebrated the return of Petrine Russia in symbols and displays. The album is considerably larger, more richly illustrated, and imposing than the volume published for Anna's coronation. The dimensions are approximately 47 by 28 centimeters and there are 168 pages of text and 52 illustrations. The cover of the Russian version is made of a nut-brown leather, deeply embossed with a gold highlighted monogram of Elizabeth, a Roman numeral I, entwined by an arboreal E, surmounted by a crown. The text and engravings are printed on heavy rag paper pages, with an uneven texture. Rich, dark inks were used for both the illustrations and the print. Ornately illuminated letters of various types are printed on the title page. The German version, also available at the New York Public Library, was given exclusively as gifts, has a more luxurious finish, with the leather-binding, with Elizabeth's initials, impressed originally in gold on the front.<sup>7</sup> The album was initially to be published in an edition of 1200 copies, 600 in Russian, 300 in French and 300 in German. Shumacher, however, reasoned that since the plates were ready, the cost of individual volumes could be reduced by increasing the edition to over 2000. He suggested that they be sent to colleges, offices, chancelleries and monasteries, «in which these books will be kept for the eternal honor and glory of Her Imperial Majesty». The price would be enough to defray the costs and the delivery.<sup>8</sup>

That the celebrations and particularly the processions were principal subjects of the volume is clear from the title, *Obstoiatel'noe opisaniie tarzhestvennykh poriadkov blagopoluchnogo vshestviia v tsarstvuiushchii grad Moskvu i sviashchennishago koronovaniia imp. Elizavety Petrovny.* Twenty-seven of the fifty-two illustrations are of the processions, triumphal columns celebrations, and fireworks; twenty-five depict the coronation ceremonies, items of regalia, and plans of the cathedral. As in Anna's album the crowning is the only rite in the cathedral that is depicted. The album endeavored to encompass the total event of the coronation, the celebration of the return of the Petrine era, the age of gold, of Astraea. In his instruction to the Academy, Trubetskoi indicated that the volume was to begin with a vignette of a view of Moscow since «by permission of Her Imperial Majesty this celebration was performed in the ruling city of Moscow», and to close with a vignette of the masquerade, «as the conclusion of the coronation, since this celebration thus came to a conclusion».<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the text of the album begins

<sup>7</sup> Russian Svodnyi Katalog, 4789; Sv. K. I. K. 1632.

<sup>8</sup> *Materialy dlia istorii Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk* (St. Petersburg, 1895), 5: 1025, 7: 620—21. Svodnyi Katalog indicates the final total of 1550 copies which is somewhat lower than the number suggested by Shumacher.

<sup>9</sup> *Obstoiatel'noe opisaniie tarzhestvennykh poriadkov blagopoluchnogo vshestviia v tsarstvuiushchii grad Moskvu i sviashchennishago koronovaniia imp. Elizavety Petrovny* (St. Petersburg, 1744). See Svodnyi katalog, 2: 300.

<sup>10</sup> *Materialy*...., 7: 30.

with a miniature scene of the Kremlin, the Moscow river, and surrounding region and ends on page 128 with a witty vignette of the masquerade dance floor, with costumed figures deftly turning lets and forsoes.

«This coronation description (*opisanie*) is the chief masterpiece of Russian engraving under Elizabeth», the jurist and art historian, Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Rovinskii wrote, and the engravings are indeed numerous and extraordinary.<sup>11</sup> The frontispiece portrait of the Empress, engraved by Johannes Stenglin after a portrait by Caravaque presents her in the same pose as Anna in the 1730 volume. Again the empress stands prominent, deçoileté; an angel in the form of a Cupid adorns the wall. The engravers were I. A. Sokolov, Wortmann and G. A. Kalachov, while Johann Elias Grimmel was responsible for providing the sketches. But for the most part the volume was the masterpiece of Ivan Sokolov who executed twenty-five of the volume's plates.

Sokolov's four engravings of the processions to and from the Kremlin, are *tour de force* of artistic representation and engraving. The most striking is the immense fold-out illustration of the triumphal entry into Moscow (Plate 5). The first rendering of the entry procession in a coronation album, it makes clear allusion was to the triumphs of Peter's reign, particularly the Poltava triumph of 1709. The entry, Trubetskoï wrote in his instructions was to be depicted on a single large sheet, after an engraving of Peter's time «according to the example of the triumphal entry in Moscow after the battle of Poltava of the emperor Peter the Great, whose blessed memory is worthy of eternal glory and other processions similar to this...»<sup>12</sup>

Several hundred tiny figures, all rendered in profile, weave in a snaking line across the space of the fold out from the country palace depicted on the top, through the triumphal arches, towards the Kremlin. There are covered sledges, hundreds of horsemen, carriages, marching guardsmen, noblemen, courtiers, and servants in livery. Perspective was abandoned in showing the soldiers for it would obscure «free look of the ceremony». Only the empress is shown full face, through the window of her carriage, and only her escort is presented in perspective, according to specific instructions from above.<sup>13</sup> The technique set the empress and her entourage apart from the rest of the procession, showing the hierarchy of the court. The next plate (6) shows the empress and her escort in perspective in greatly magnified detail. Again, the text designates the various groups and includes the notable figures in the court by numbers placed on the plate.

There is no background except for the representations of the empress's suburban palaces at the top of the page, the beginning of the procession. The court and the express constitute the significant presence here; Moscow is invisible, banished from the scene. The absence of the physical scene is even more remarkable in the illustration of the procession to the Assumption Cathedral (Plate 26). Even the Kremlin is omitted here, as the principle figures and groups, clearly marked make

<sup>11</sup> D. A. Rovinskii, *Podrobnui slovar' ruskikh graverov XVI—XIX vv.* (St. Petersburg, 1895), 2: 949—52. Rovinskii provides a complete list of fifty-two illustrations.

<sup>12</sup> *Materialy*...., 7: 37

<sup>13</sup> *Materialy*...., 5: 1026.

their way from one significant place — the Kremlin palace, to the other, the Assumption Cathedral. The procession to the Palace of Facets follows the same form. The illustrations are meant to present the important individuals, figuring in the new reign. They represent authority in the form of a procession, the elite surrounding the figure of the sovereign.

The centrality of the entry procession in Elizabeth's coronation is indicated by the elaborate engravings of the triumphal arches by Sokolov, the only such illustrations to appear in a coronation volume. The album contains full renderings of the four triumphal arches erected along the route of the entry procession in addition to details of the emblems, devices and allegories decorating the arches. The significance of the various symbols are explained precisely in the text. The volume thus provides an elaborate statement of the pretensions and symbolic content of the monarchy in mid-eighteenth century Russia and the role the coronation was to play.

For example, the principal illustration on the rear facade on the column on Miasnitskii Street depicts Providence, as a beautiful woman pointing to the throne, with the inscription «Native born». Illustrations on the sides indicate the extent of the realm and the international glory of the empress. On the right, allegorical female figures represent the parts of the empire, Moscow, Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siberia held a map of the empire, with the inscription «This is your property». On the left, the world, in the person of four allegorical figures of the continents sitting on a globe, rejoices. The explanation states that Europe was most happy of the four, indicating where the ruling empress looked for approval. A picture of Apollo and the muses on Parnassus had the legend «Now we will not remain silent». Figures of Mars and Neptune, together with the Saints Boris and Gleb also ornamented the structure, showing the empress as an exemplification of both pagan and Christian ideals.<sup>14</sup> The album, as the title suggests, commemorated both secular rejoicing, and «the most sacred coronation» of the empress.

The depictions of the ceremonies of promulgation and crowning make rigorous use of the technique of perspective according to instructions from editors, who found the initial drawings lacking. Perspective was the technique favored by the absolute monarchs of western Europe to show the hierarchical gradations of their courts. The lines of perspective converged at the eyes of the monarch; those close to him viewed the world more or less as he did, with important objects appearing large, lessers ones, smaller in the distance.<sup>15</sup> The initial version of the announcement ceremony failed to meet these demands. An editorial committee that included Shumacher, Stenglin, and Grimmerl complained that the figures had no proportions and were so scattered across the square that the «promulgation has nothing to do with them». There should be a great multitude of people which should be disposed in a proper manner. The final version presents a square receding according to the laws of perspective with the cavalry men arranged neatly into four rectangles while others circle behind them. The heralds are in the front

<sup>14</sup> *Obst. opisaniie*, pp. 144—46; Chakiriv, pp. 121—12.

<sup>15</sup> *Roi Strong, Splendor at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and the Theater of Power* (Boston, 1973), 73—74.

of a picture, while groups of spectators, vaguely suggested in the fore and rear ground, look on.

The members of the committee, seconded by Trubetskoi, also objected to lack of perspective in the preliminary sketches for the engraving of the crowning ceremony. They wanted all attention to focus on the event, in the manner of a theatrical presentation, and requested that the court stage designer, Girolamo Bon revise the drawings.<sup>16</sup> The engraving (Plate 11) uses perspective to good effect, giving a sense somewhat exaggerated, of considerable depth and soaring height. The walls of the cathedral appear covered with paintings and the icons on the iconostasis are suggested. Elizabeth, her features much more delicately delineated than in Anna's album, sits in the vast space, all eyes focused upon her. As in Anna's album, this is the only moment of the coronation rites to appear in the illustrations.

The incomplete illustrations for Catherine II's coronation indicated their different character. Engravings were by A. Ia. Kolpashonikov, S. Putimtsev, G. T. Kharitonov, and A. I. Kazachinskii after drawings by Jean Louis de Veilly.<sup>17</sup> The use of perspective and shading creates a more realistic, less otherworldly sense of the proceedings. They now ignore the mass of the cathedral and draw the eye of the viewer to the few figures engaged in the scene, expressing the personal drama of the ritual rather than the spectacle of the totality. The participants are clustered around the empress, the high elite close to the throne. The drawings emphasized the central importance of the person of the empress and those close to her. The procession to the Assumption Cathedral includes only the Red Staircase (*Krasnœ Kryl'so*) and the figures in the immediate vicinity. For the first time, the reading of the credo, the anointment, and even the taking of communion within the sanctuary are illustrated. She is shown in massive coronation gown and mantle taking communion at the altar as the courtiers peer in. This remarkable illustration was meant to make clear to all that the Lutheran princess, was being given the clerical status now given to her predecessors. A series of memoranda appended to the coronation description confirmed that the empresses Anna and Elizabeth had followed this rite, with the implication that Catherine should as well.<sup>18</sup>

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Albums were not issued for the coronations of Paul I in 1797 and Alexander I in 1801. This may be explained by the elimination of the doubts about the succession after Paul's accession and more austere attitude towards court festivities that prevailed, particularly during Alexander's reign. The practice was resumed with Nicholas I's coronation in 1826. The album, published in Paris in 1828 at the house

<sup>16</sup> *Materialy dlia istorii Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk* (St. Petersburg, 1889) 5: 1027; (St. Petersburg, 1895) 7: 40, 776. Materialy provides no first name or patronymic for Bon.

<sup>17</sup> The illustrations in the Slavic and Baltic Division of the New York Public Library were published as a supplement to the description, printed in *Kamer-fur'erskii tseremonial'nyi zhurnal* (St. Petersburg, 18...), vol. 63.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 63: 196-206.



of Didot, sought to portray the stability and popularity of the monarchy to a European audience after the uncertainties over Nicholas's succession and the Decembrist revolt.<sup>19</sup> The volume is extremely modest compared to Elizabeth's album and the album issued for Alexander II's coronation in 1856. It is 66 centimeters in length and 50 centimeters in width with only fourteen pages of text and fourteen plates. Russian readers could find more complete descriptions in the newspapers and in the sentimental account published by P. P. Svin'in in *Otechestvennye Zapiski*.<sup>20</sup>

The author of the brief text, one Henry Graf (whom I have been unable to identify), described the coronation from the point of view of a western admirer of Russian monarchy. Henry Graf explained the ceremony's importance and the monuments of the Kremlin to those who knew little of Russia. Graf presented the coronation as a demonstration of the religious and popular grounding of the monarchy; it becomes a Russian counterpart to the coronation of Charles X in 1825. The coronation of Nicholas was to redeem the Russian monarchy from the revolutionary efforts of the Decembrists, much as the coronation of Charles X sought to replenish the religious sources of French monarchy after the defeat of the revolution.

The album also marks the return to the emphasis on luxury and magnificence as a sign of autocratic power, after the more austere manner of Paul and Alexander. Graf did not spare his rhetoric in describing the magnificence of the setting, the regalia, and the celebrations and fireworks that followed. The French title, *Vues des cérémonies*, makes clear that the plates were of the greatest importance; the picturesque and exotic aspect of the events was to appeal to the European reader and to place the Russian emperor who had crushed an uprising, in a touching picturesque setting. The scenes were drawn on the spot by the best artists of the country, who were the lithographer Louis Courtin and the artist, Victor Adam. The art is of cruder character than that encountered in other volumes. The figures, even of the tsar and the empress, are somewhat awkward and artless, as if the artists were imitating a popular style. Of the fourteen plates, three present plans of the grounds of the Kremlin and Devich'e pole, and eleven the various events. There are lithographs of the departure from the Petrovskii Palace on the entry into the Moscow Kremlin and the ceremony of announcement by the heralds on Red Square.

Only one plate is included of a ceremony in the cathedral – that is the crowning of the emperor, according to the caption (Plate 7). But we see not the crowning of the emperor but the tsarevich Constantine Pavlovich embracing his brother, the emperor, after the crowning, an act of affection and homage, that was meant to dispel lingering uncertainties about Constantine's acceptance of his younger brother's accession. Other plates show the departure from the cathedral and the return to the palace

<sup>19</sup> *Vues des cérémonies les plus intéressantes du couronnement de leurs majestés Impériales l'empereur Nicolas Ier et l'impératrice Alexandra à Moscou* (Paris, 1828). Vereshchagin, 168. Also a Russian edition, *Opisanie koronatsii Ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv Imperatora Nikolai i Imperatitsy Aleksandry v Moskve v 1826* (Paris, 1828). This also was published at the firm of Didot and seems from the description to correspond to the French edition.

<sup>20</sup> «Istoricheskoe opisanie Sviaschennogo Koronovaniia». *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (1827), Vol. 31.

across red square, the imperial family returning to the palace after the procession and the regalia. Two plates are devoted to the popular feast on Devich'e Pole, one showing the mass scene, the other of a table set neatly with plates and flowers for the people. The final illustration, of the emperor's and empress's departure (Plate 14) emphasizes their simplicity and closeness to the people. Nicholas and Alexandra sit in a small *calèche* with only one servant and the coachman in attendance. They are in immediate contact with the people, without the protection of Guards' Regiments, Craff stresses in the text. The art tried to present a visual answer to the notion of the Russian emperor as a despot and to show him as a ruler beloved by his subjects and secure in their midst.

Following the example of Nicholas's album, nineteenth century descriptions albums make different types statements about Russian monarchy than their eighteenth century predecessors. They argue and demonstrate the vitality and popularity of the principle of monarchy in Russia rather than the virtues of the particular monarch. They celebrate the religious and popular grounding of the dynasty rather than the benefits accompanying the new reign. The title of Alexander II's album, is printed in large old, Church-Slavonic orthography in gold-leaf, red and black.<sup>21</sup> The national elements, however, are largely decorative, (Alexander even refused a proposal to use old slavonic letters in the text) in what was the most lavish and ostentatious of all the albums. The volume is 90 by 67, «of such immense size», Sacherevell Sitwell wrote, «that the term „elephant folio" has no meaning, and, indeed, this may be the largest book that ever issued from the printing press».<sup>22</sup>

No cost was spared in the production of the book, published once more by the Academy of Arts and under the direction of its Vice-President, Prince G. G. Gagarin. Special large type was cast for the volume. The one-hundred and twenty-five pages of the volume were printed on Chinese paper. The album was prepared not merely for the rich but for the diplomatic elite and the aristocracy of Europe. Two hundred volumes were published in Russian, two hundred in French, for high figures in the court and foreigner guests attending the ceremony. The cost of production was 123000 rubles. It was clearly not an instrument of mass publicity, but an expression of the unity of rulers and aristocracy that Alexander sought to appeal at a moment when Russia was isolated on the international scene.<sup>23</sup>

The album contains fifty-two illustrations, fifteen in color lithography, the remainder in black and white lithography and engraving. They are the work of such artists as Timm, Zichy, and Mongetti. The copious art work tried to give an impression of every part of the coronation. «Not works of art, but fascinating in their improbability», Sitwell wrote. Black and white illustrations in the text reproduce the smaller scenes, following the emperor through the stages of the ceremony. The illustrations are numerous both of the religious services,

<sup>21</sup> Описание вселашченноешаго коронованія Іхъ Императорскихъ Величествъ Государя Императора Александра Второго і Императрицы Маріи Александровны Царя Руссіи (n.p., 1856)

<sup>22</sup> ИИИА, 472-64-69, т. 78. Sacherevell Sitwell, *Valse des fleurs: A Day in St. Petersburg and Ball at the Winter Palace in 1868* (London, 1941), 64.

<sup>23</sup> ИИИА, 477-65-113, т. 1. Yereshchagin, 625; Obol'taninov, 2: 384-85 has a complete list of illustrations.

and of the balls, which are illustrated profusely. A sketch by V. F. Timm shows the emperor walking from his carriage to his initial residence in the city, the Petrovskii Dvoretz. A full black and white engraving after a sketch by M. A. Zichy, presents a montage of the entry procession — scenes of Alexander's leaving the Petrovskii Palace, the empress in her carriage passing by the grandstand, the Kremlin Towers, Red Square and the statue to Minin and Pozharskii.

The large color illustrations present scenes of the tsar and tsaritsa appearing before inspired spectators. Considerable space is devoted to showing the empress. Alexander II and Maria Aleksandrovna are presented on the second plate, in a painting by Zichy. The two are shown full-length in separate oval medallions with lattice design between them. The empress wears her coronation robe and crown. Alexander stands in his mantle, the regalia resting at his side. The other illustrations also emphasize the empress's role in the ceremony. Zichy depicts Alexander's crowning of the empress while there is no depiction of his own crowning. Timm's painting of the anointment shows the empress bowing devoutly a few feet behind Alexander as he receives the chrism on his brow.

The large enthralled figures with rapt faces who occupy the foreground of these lithographs demonstrate the popular love that was supposed to surround the tsar. Zichy's painting of the entry into Moscow is framed by the grandstand where large figures show animation and excitement at the appearance of the tsar. Facing towards the tsar is a peasant woman in folk dress and a tiara hat. Before the spectators, we see large figures of the last row of the Cavalier-Guards, proud mustachioed men dressed in elegant white uniforms and gold helmets. Alexander appears in middle-ground riding towards us in his green general uniform and cape, the center of the picture, behind him, before the many blue figures of his suite suggested behind him. Zichy's depiction of Alexander crowning the empress, views from over the bare shoulders of the ladies-of-the-court, in their wedding dress. In the foreground, guardsmen, cadets, and a young lady in a bright pink dress watch intently. The depths of the cathedral fade into a romantic blue haze. F. Blanchard's rendering of the fireworks uses the same motif. The display of fireworks, clouds of red and white, provide a background for the group of peasants and tribesman, at the side of the tsar's pavilion. A bearded man raises his hand in wonder, a horse rears, others look with interest or wonder. Still others mill about and engage in conversation.<sup>24</sup>

Alexander III's coronation album contains more explicit mass and national appeals in behalf of the monarchy. This is the first album printed under the direction of Ekspeditsia Zagolovlenia Gosudarstvennykh Bumag, which possessed advanced technical capacities.<sup>25</sup> The format is simple and relatively unostentatious signaling the more frugal and austere manner of the new tsar. It is smaller, 67×54 centimeters, and modestly bound with twenty-six colored plates. The

<sup>24</sup> Sitwell, 65. Blanchard's painting is reproduced in *Trofil Golc*, *Prizhivanie v Rossii* (Moscow, 1988), 162.

<sup>25</sup> *Opisanie sviaschennogo koronovaniia Ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv Gosudarin Imperatora Aleksandra tret'ego i Gosudaryni Imperatritsy Marii Fedorovny Vneli Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1883).

text is brief, sixty-five pages, of which only eleven describe the ceremonies of the coronation themselves. 300 copies were published in Russia, 200 in Franch. Another volume, by V. V. Komarov, provided an account for mass readership, with a history of the coronation and a detailed description of all the events. It also contained photographs of scenes of Moscow, the emperor and empress and some of the officials attending.<sup>26</sup>

The title is again printed in old orthography, but here the national elements are more prominent. The brief text emphasizes the national significance of the event. «It is this sacred, solemn, and all-national act, that gives expression to the historical union of the Tsar with his State, his precept with his church, that is with the soul and conscience of his people, and finally, the union of the Tsar and the people with the Tsar of Tsars, in whose hands rests the fates of tsars and peoples».<sup>27</sup> The Slavic revival lettering is continued — now encompassing a larger part of the text, now serving less as an exotic flourish of decoration as a sign of national character. For the first time in a coronation album, there are artistic references to the pre-Petrine coronations — small historical sketches of Muscovite scenes, of the bringing of regalia and the Muscovite tsar at his coronation feast. The program for the gala performance of «Life for the Tsar», showing the Kremlin towers, was also in old Russian style.

The color illustrations reproduced by chromolithography, are in realistic style. The painters comprise several *peredvizhniki* K. A. Savitskii, N. N. Karazin, I. N. Kramskoi, V. D. Polenov, V. V. Vereshchagin and K. E. Makovskii. The artists focus on the massive figure of Alexander himself whose person becomes the overpowering presence in the album. The full page portrait by A. P. Sokolov of Alexander on his coronation throne in mantle, holding the orb and scepter, was the first of its kind in a coronation album. Sokolov's painting allows no distance between the viewer and the looming impassive figure of the emperor. Kramskoi's rendering of the moment of crowning is also close up, focused completely on Alexander who occupies almost two thirds of the picture. The emperor dwarfs the clergymen at his side, his beard and balding head dominating the picture. The cathedral is a mere blur in the background. Alexander has an intimidating, crushing aspect but his face is soft and pallid. Kramskoi's painting of the tsar's taking of communion in the altar has a similar ambiguity. Alexander is the central overpowering presence upon whom all attention is focused, but he takes the wafer with caution and humility. His figure is both mighty and feeble.

Other paintings also center on the emperor and empress to the exclusion of the surroundings. Makovskii's painting of the people's feast on Khodynskoe pole shows the reviewing stand, and little of the people. The emperor stands proud in his long boots and Russian cap, while the empress wears a bonnet and bustle. Also notable are the many paintings of military ceremonies, appearing for the first time in a coronation album. They show the emperor at the consecration of the standards of the

<sup>26</sup> V. Komarov, V pamiat' sviashchenitogo koronovaniia gosudarii imperatou Aleksandra III i gosudarii imperatritsy Marii Fedorovny (St. Petersburg, 1883).

<sup>27</sup> Opisanie sviashchenitogo koronovaniia, 2.

Preobrazhenskii and Semenovskii Regiments, the religious parade, the parade of the Semenovskii Regiment, and the feast for the regiments at Sokolniki.<sup>28</sup> These paintings display the new simplified Russian style uniforms that Alexander III introduced. The emperor appears as a commanding figure, in his distinctive military dress, on horseback and wearing Russian boots and hat. The last coronation album, for Nicholas II's coronation in 1896, was published under the Ministry of the Court and Appanages in the *Ekspeditsia Zagotovleniia Gosudarstvennykh Bumag*. It was published for a broader public: 1300 volumes were published in Russian, 350 in French. As its title *Coronation Collection* (*Koronnatsionnyi Sbornik*) indicates, the album is not simply an *opisanie* but an assortment of mementos and illustrations of the events, photographs of the participants, and the usual accounts of the rituals and celebrations. It fills two volumes, each 43 by 83 centimeters; the same materials appeared in the one volume French edition.<sup>29</sup> The cost of volume 165905 far exceeded estimates the cost of the previous two albums. The opening 132 pages of the first volume are devoted to an illustrated history of coronation ceremonies. The description of the coronation and the coronation festivities takes up only the second half—272 pages—of the first volume; of these fewer than fifty are used to describe the ceremonies on the day of the coronation. The remainder relate the celebrations around the event and describe the parades at the conclusion. The second volume includes photographs of foreign delegations and estate delegations from Russia and full color facsimiles of several of the menus and theater programs for the event. The *Sbornik* has become a souvenir of a international social and cultural fête, the occasion for which was the ceremony of coronation. At a moment when the religious consecration of the emperor was assuming increasing importance in official ideology, the event itself was becoming a part of the international competition of spectacle and display, in which Nicholas II appeared as the centerpiece.

The styles of the illustrations are varied. As in Alexander III's coronation album old-Russian or pseudo-Russian motifs were prominent. «Slavonized» lettering introduces the various sections. The cover by N. S. Samokish has the Russian seal, surrounded with an old Russian floral motif. At the top is a medal showing the profile of the emperor and empress. Victor Vasnetsov designed lettering and floral motifs for a number of the pages, and an old Russian style menu for one of the feasts. A. Riabushkin contributed the program for Life for the Tsar. The historical introduction and the description of the coronation are illustrated profusely with hundreds of drawings and lithographs. Illustrations in the text by E. and N. Samokish-Sudkovskii give rather literal renderings of the particular ceremonies and events. E. Samokish-Sudkovskaiia's black and white drawing of Nicholas crowing Alexandra

<sup>28</sup> In addition a special album was published containing the assembling, disposition, and responsibilities of the military units gathered for the coronation. *Opisanie sbora i zaniatii voiak pod Moskvou vo vremia sviashchennogo koronovaniia Bli Imperatorskikh Velichestv v 1883 godu* (St. Petersburg, 1883).

<sup>29</sup> V. S. Krivonozko (ed.), *Koronovanie v Moskve: 14 maia 1896* (St. Petersburg, 1899), 2 volumes. The French version, *Les solennités du saint couronnement...*, is available at the New York Public Library and the Library of Congress. ИИИА, 472-65-113-1. 31, 472-65-1100-1. 204.

following Vasnetsov's title page to the description of events, states at the outset the prominence of the marital bond in the ceremonies. But the artistic highlights of the volume are undoubtedly the remarkable watercolors, reproduced beautifully in chromolithography, including works by V. A. Serov (1), E. Repin, Albert Nikolaevich Benois, K. E. Makovskii and A. Riabushkin.

The use of water color lends an element of lightness and iridescence lacking in the rather monolithic forms of earlier lithographs. Impressionist and Art Nouveau influences are evident, the promptings of artistic expression dominating the figures and ceremonies depicted. The artists present the coronation as a magnificent show of color and light. Serov turns the anointment ceremony into a study of color and form of the white robes of the tsar and the blue of the courtiers, the yellow of the clergy, with patches of red visible from the rear of the cathedral. The flattening of perspective and the glitter of the candelabra produces an effect of airiness and bustle that hardly conforms to the solemnity of the occasion. Riabushkin's painting of Nicholas descending from the Red Staircase (*Krasnue Kryl'tso*) highlights red and brick colors lending the scene an almost guilt-like appearance, while Albert Benois gives a sense of the shimmering of the water and the colors of the sky during the illumination. Repin captures the stiffness and awkwardness of Nicholas's meeting with *the starshiny*. The peasants stand in a row. The emperor, evidently awkward, looks away from them as if trying to avoid their gaze.<sup>10</sup>

Russian coronation albums give us valuable glimpses into the mental world of Russian monarchy. They reveal how the coronation, the principal ceremony of Russian monarchy, consecrated the dominant political views, religious beliefs, and artistic tastes of each reign as attributes of god-ordained authority. Eighteenth century albums placed the coronation in a context of secular celebrations for the monarch who promised an era of prosperity and happiness. The albums of the nineteenth century emphasized the historical and religious significance of the coronation, which they presented as a national and religious act. They used art to show the solemn moments of the ceremony and the splendor of the celebrations, to enshrine the event in a book that would preserve a recollection of the ruler during these inspiring moments at the beginning of his or her reign.

<sup>10</sup> *Kriwko* 1: 267 (Serov), 274 (Riabushkin), 285 (Benois), 327-28 (Repin).