

Title: From Manuscript to Source: Tracing Kuzmin's Bibliographical Notes

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The bibliographical notations of M. Kuzmin in his working notebooks are of enormous potential importance for an understanding of how the writer was inspired by and adapted source materials that were collected by him in the course of appropriate bibliographical studies before completing each of his 'stylised' history-based novels. My co-author and I attempted to identify the actual book or journal sources to which Kuzmin's notation refer. The results of our efforts were published in 2009. They seem to be the first step in the vast research project of analyzing Kuzmin's transformation of source materials into his novels.

However, the task of deciphering his bibliographical notations was extremely complicated and riddled with false leads. Not only was Kuzmin's handwriting difficult to decipher, but the references were frequently incomplete, abbreviated, misspelled and/or incorrect in details such as dates or book publishers. Often Kuzmin's notes do not allow researchers to determine exactly which edition of a particular work he used or intended to use, especially when such works were subject to many re-editions and/or reprints. Kuzmin often refers to authors only by their last names when in fact several authors bearing that name were active at the same time; for example he does not distinguish in terms of spelling between the British novelist <Lawrence> Sterne and the Austrian historian <Maximilian> Stern. Moreover, his reference to a monograph by Berger de Xivrey (1838) which is itself a part of a larger book is both incomplete and inaccurate. These facts lead to the conclusion that some of Kuzmin's bibliographical notations in his notebooks refer to books and journals that he found and only intended to read. At least certain portions of the writer's bibliographical lists originate from an unknown source. It is a situation very similar to Kuzmin's reference in his letter to Georgii Chicherin to a contemporary publication of a formerly unknown Gnostic text by the French scholar Amelineau (referred to by Kuzmin as 'Amelinau'), with such cryptic abbreviations 'd. Insc. et b. l.' which cannot be identified with any publications of this scholar. This means that Kuzmin had referred to a text never seen by him *de visu*.

This project is of vast academic import for a more profound understanding of the creative processes of one of the greatest modern Russian writers. It is particularly significant at a time when Kuzmin has become the beacon for studies of affectional and sexual diversity both in Russia and in the West, while at the same time growing constantly in stature among both Russian and Western literary scholars.