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Syracuse University receives gift of 'Illustrated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible' from the Russian Federation

The Consul General of the Russian Federation in New York, Hon. Igor Leonidovich Golubovskiy, presented Syracuse University with a copy of "The Illustrated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible" (Russian title: Лицевой летописный свод XVI века) at a ceremony in Bird Library on May 1.

The multivolume set is a color facsimile of the largest compilation of historical information ever assembled in medieval Russia. The manuscript is thought to have been created between 1568 and 1576 and was commissioned by Ivan the Terrible for the purposes of educating his children.

Golubovskiy was accompanied by Cyril E. Geacintov, a Syracuse University alumnus and president of the Russian Nobility Association, who helped to arrange the gift. Andrew Gordon, senior vice president and chief human resources officer, accepted the gift on behalf of Chancellor Kent Syverud. Dean of Libraries David Seaman introduced Golubovskiy, who spoke about the benefits of cultural exchanges such as this in normalizing relationships and increasing understanding. Also in attendance was Michael Perekrestov, seminary librarian and director and curator of collections at the Foundation of Russian History, Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary, in Jordanville, New York.

Consul General Russian Igor Leonidovich Golubovskiy, second from left, presented Special Collections with "The Illustrated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible." Pictured from left are Andrew Gordon, senior vice president and chief human resources officer; Golubovskiy; Cyril E. Geacintov, a Syracuse University alumnus and president of the Russian Nobility Association; and Dean of Libraries David Seaman.

Participating faculty and University officials included Dean Karin Ruhlandt, Senior Associate Dean Gerry Greenberg, Professor Erika Haber and Professor Zofia Sztachmiller from the College of Arts and Sciences; Patricia Burak, director of the Lillian and Emanuel Sutzker Center for International Services; and Maxwell School professors Brian Taylor and Michael Wasylenko. Lucy Mulrone, senior director of Special Collections, showcased a curated selection of special collections holdings related to Russia.

"We are grateful to the Russian Federation for this remarkable gift, which will provide our students and faculty with an important new resource for the study of Russian history, the medieval period and art history," said Dean of Libraries David Seaman.

The work is divided into three main series: biblical history, universal history and Russian history. The facsimiles themselves include the original wording and a translation of the text into modern Russian. The literal meaning of the Russian title is "face chronicle," alluding to the more than 16,000 miniatures that it contains.

"The collection as a whole will bring Russian medieval history to life for students in a way that only original texts can," says Erika Haber, associate professor of Russian Language, Literature and Culture. "Since the books are written in the old orthography and translated to modern Russian, they will be of interest to our language students as an example of the old Russian alphabet and writing system. The fabulous illustrations will of course provide context and aid the students in creating meaning."

This work complements Western medieval manuscript resources held by the Special Collections Research Center and can be viewed there.

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