



Photographs for the Tsar: The Pioneering Color Photography of Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii Commissioned by Tsar Nicholas II

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Dust jacket notes: "The photographs in this extraordinary book are the work of a previously unknown pioneer in early 20th century photography, Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii -- commissioned by Tsar Nicholas II in 1909 to travel throughout the Russian Empire photographing things of interest and significance. To view these color images of an era we are accustomed to seeing in sepia tones is an experience of cultural shock -- a trip in a visual time machine to a vanished and exotic world that looks as though it had been captured by the photographer only yesterday. Prokudin-Gorskii, a chemist as well as a photographer, developed one of the earliest processes for taking color pictures and was the editor for many years of a St. Petersburg journal, *The Amateur Photographer*. During the six years he executed the Tsar's commission, he traveled vast distances in a special railway car outfitted with a darkroom -- to the Urals, the Caucasus, the Ukraine, Siberia, Finland, and as far east as Turkestan. Eminent in his own country, he became one of the countless emigres to flee Russia in 1918, disappearing into relative obscurity in Norway, and later in England and France. Like imperial society, he too was a victim of the upheaval of the Revolution. Prokudin-Gorskii managed to bring out of Russia his collection of nearly 2000 glass-plate negatives. This book, produced with the cooperation of the Library of Congress, contains 120 of his finest color photographs -- including the only extant photo in color of Leo Tolstoy. Another 120 have been reproduced in sepia from black-and-white prints. *Photographs for the Tsar* is a landmark, destined to become a classic in its field."

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