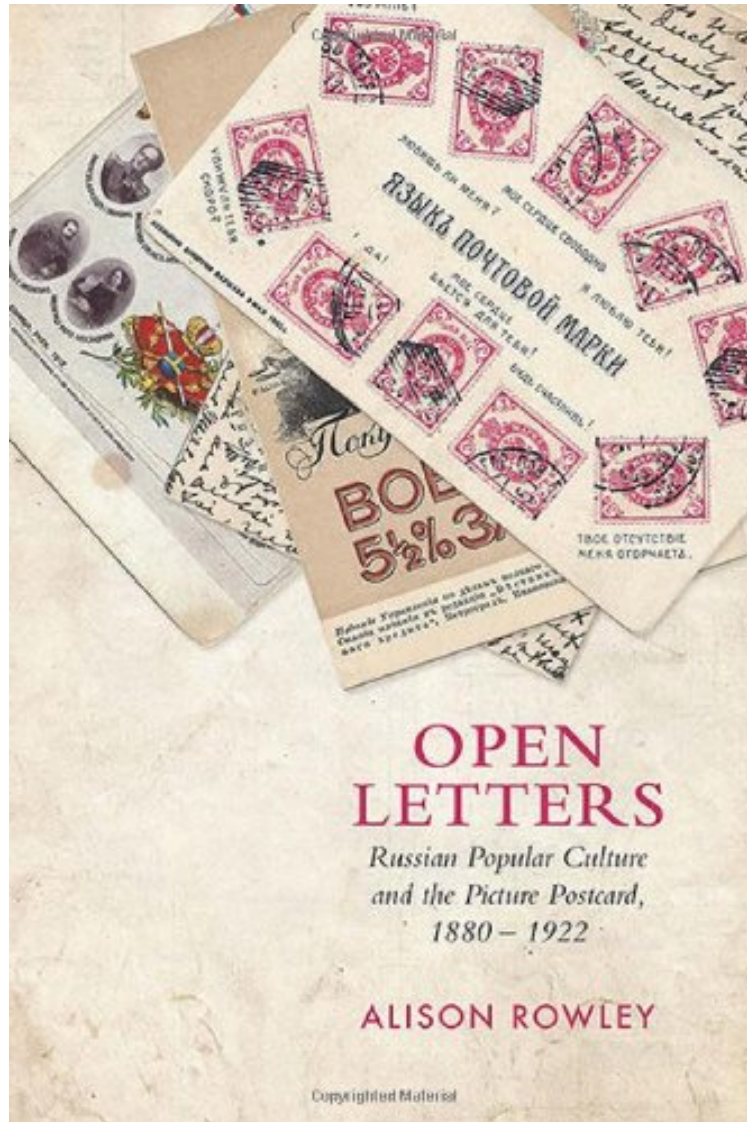


Alison Rowley

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Open Letters: Russian Popular Culture and the Picture Postcard 1880-1922

Alison Rowley : **Open Letters: Russian Popular Culture and the Picture Postcard 1880-1922** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Open Letters: Russian Popular Culture and the Picture Postcard 1880-1922:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Extraordinary Book!By BagelchipAn Extraordinary Book, not only for cartophilians, but also for everyone who who has any interest in late 19th / early 20th century. Extremely readable.

During the fin-de-siècle and early revolutionary eras, picture postcards were an important medium of communication for Russians of all backgrounds. In *Open Letters*, the most comprehensive study of Russian picture postcards to date,

Alison Rowley uses this medium to explore a variety of aspects of Russian popular culture. The book is lavishly illustrated with more than 130 images, most of which have never been published before. Through her examinations of postcards, Rowley addresses a diverse range of topics: how landscape postcards conveyed notions of imperialism; the role of postcards in the rise of celebrity culture; depictions of the body on erotic and pornographic postcards; how postcards were employed to promote differing interpretations of the First World War; and the use of postcards by revolutionary groups seeking to overthrow the Tsarist government. Rowley determines the extent to which Russia was embedded in Europe-wide cultural trends by situating the Russian case within a larger European context.

What Alison Rowley in *Open Letters* does well is provide a welcome overview of the postcard industry and introduce a new visual source to Russian scholars as well as ways to interpret these images. For that we are all in her debt.

(Christine Ruane *The Russian* vol 73:04:2014) Intriguing and beautifully produced book. (Alice Nakhimovsky *Slavic* vol 74:02:2015) This is an important and fascinating glimpse into the complementary construction of private lives and public assumption in late imperial Russia. (Louise McReynolds *Revolutionary Russia* vol 27:02:2014) *Open Letters* is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the historiography of Russian popular culture of early twentieth century, which goes some way towards confirming the postcard as a significant cultural artifact both with and of history. (Andy

Byford *Slavonic East European* vol 92:04:2014) Entering the world of Russian post cards allows one to savor something of the times in which they circulated and to sample an occasional message from one person to another. This book will be warmly welcomed by historians and students interested in Russia. (Jeffrey Brooks *The Journal of Modern*

History, vol 87:03:2015) *Open Letters* is a wonderful contribution to Russian history, rich in insights into popular culture and shedding new light on a host of topics of central concern to scholars in the field. In comparison to western scholarship, Russian historiography has been slower to delve into cultural history using such resources as postcards, advertising, and popular entertainment, and so Alison Rowley's book is an important contribution to an emerging field.

It will find an eager audience among Russian historians, as well as European and American historians interested in comparative approaches to cultural history. (Sally West, Truman State University) Well-written and provided with fascinating illustrations, *Open Letters* is a major contribution to Russian history and cultural studies. The scholarship is very impressive: the author makes reference to a tremendously wide range of literary, artistic, and cultural sources dealing with all aspects of Russian life (and death), from gardens to pornography. (Jonathan D. Smele, Queen Mary, University of London) About the Author Alison Rowley is an associate professor in the Department of History at

Concordia University.