



Fig. 2 A woman from Föhr, adorned with ribbon and furs, who is to become a godmother (THC 3435).\*

# FACES OF RUSSIA'S EMPIRE

## THE BERGHOLTZ COLLECTION OF ETHNOGRAPHIC IMAGES FROM THE EARLY 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AT THE SWEDISH NATIONAL MUSEUM

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### abstract

The Division of Prints and Drawings of the Swedish National Museum contains a collection with just over 200 hand painted images of the peoples of the Russian Empire which, up to the present time, has been largely unknown to scholars. The images, dating from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, are associated with the name of Friedrich Wilhelm Bergholtz (1699–1772) a courtier and collector who served as a tutor to the Grand Duke Petr Fedorovich (the future Peter III). In this article, the authors describe the contents of the collection, consider its possible origin, and assess its significance, particularly with regard to its depictions of Siberian peoples and Ukrainians.

**KEYWORDS:** Russia, 18<sup>th</sup> century, ethnographic images, costume drawings, Friedrich Wilhelm Bergholtz

\* Images marked with an asterisk are available on the National Museum's online database: <http://collection.nationalmuseum.se>

Secular representational art came late to Russia. Depictions of the human figure in medieval Russian culture were viewed almost exclusively in a spiritual framework as a path to the divine through the medium of icon painting. Even the chronicles, with their miniature illustrations of historical events, aimed more toward symbolic truth than literal representation. Secular portraiture first appeared in Russia in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and only gradually gained acceptance among the elite in the century and a half that followed. Even during the reign of Peter the Great (r. 1682–1725), which brought, as James Cracraft has argued, a revolution in the use of visual images, art tended to be directed toward the visualization of power, either through portraiture, maps and military drawings, or allegorical compositions.<sup>1</sup> Depictions of ordinary people – their physiognomies, costumes, dwellings, religious practices and everyday life – were rare in early 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia. Images portraying life in the distant and nearly unexplored peripheries of the Empire were all the more unusual.

A large collection, therefore, of detailed ethnographic images dating from the 1730–1740s, depicting a broad range of peoples, religions, and cultures from throughout the Russian Empire, would be a rare and valuable resource. Just such a collection, in

fact, has been lying practically unnoticed for almost 250 years in the vaults of the Swedish National Museum in Stockholm. In the Museum's Division of Prints and Drawings two leather-bound volumes can be found containing just over two hundred hand painted, brightly colored, watercolors and oils depicting folk "types" and costumes from throughout the Empire. The collection is associated with the name of Friedrich Wilhelm Bergholtz (1699–1772), a courtier to the Duke of Holstein, who served as a tutor to the future Peter III in the first years of the reign of the Empress Elizabeth and later sought a Swedish pension after having been expelled from the Russian Empire in 1746. Bergholtz is better known for his collection, also housed in the Swedish National Museum, of architectural drawings of St. Petersburg and other Russian cities which constitute a unique house by house record of the Russian urban landscape. In 1963, the Swedish art historian Björn H. Hallström published a catalogue of the architectural drawings which included a biographical sketch on Bergholtz and reproductions of some of the drawings.<sup>2</sup> Seemingly as an afterthought, Hallström included an index of the ethnographic drawings compiled by Peter Pfab, a young scholar of Slavic languages and literatures. The index lists the drawings by inventory number and provides transcriptions of the captions accompanying each picture. No additional information is provided about the images, nor were they reproduced or even described.

Hallström's catalogue came to the attention of Edward Kasinec through his conversations with the historian James Cracraft going back to the early 1970s. In 2005, Kasinec travelled to Stockholm and viewed the original ethnographic drawings. The visit led to two short articles published in the journals *Ab Imperio* and *Sibirica*, the latter of which included black and white reproductions of three images from the collection.<sup>3</sup> A return visit in 2017 convinced Kasinec that more needed to be done to research and publicize the collection and toward that end he brought it to the attention of Nathaniel Knight, a specialist in the history of Russian ethnography. Knight was able to view the collection in Stockholm and take digital photographs, setting the stage for more detailed study of the images. Consultations with Han Vermeulen, the eminent historian of anthropology, shed additional light on the collection.

**ABOVE AND BEYOND** their intrinsic value and interest, the ethnographic images in the Bergholtz collection give rise to a host of intriguing questions. Who produced the images? Why and when were they assembled into an album? What was Bergholtz's role? And how did they end up in Sweden? Another avenue of investigation concerns parallel images. While it is certain that the Bergholtz images themselves have remained unpublished up to the present day (the only exception being the three images published in black and white by Kasinec and Kreslins in their article in *Sibirica*) a number of engravings produced in Russia and abroad through the 1770s show strong resemblances to images in the Bergholtz collection. How can these recurring images be

explained? Were these secondary images copied directly from the Bergholtz albums, or were both the Bergholtz images and their parallels copies of now lost prototypes? Who might have had access to these images or the originals that they were based on, and why have these originals not been located?

We do not have definitive answers to these and other questions, and, given the inevitable loss of sources over almost 300 years, it is likely that some of the mysteries surrounding the Bergholtz collection may never be resolved. But our collaborative investigations have revealed connections and correspondences that allow us to offer some informed conjectures as to the origins, sources and significance of the Bergholtz collection.

## The content of the Bergholtz collection

The two leather-bound folios that make up the Bergholtz collection contain some 207 separate images averaging roughly 22 by 16 centimeters in size. The images are executed in watercolor and oil on heavy paper pasted into the pages of the folio. The well-worn bindings appear to be undated but are consistent with binding styles from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The only date that appears in the folios is 1863 when the volumes were transferred from the Swedish Royal Museum into the newly founded Swedish National Museum. The images themselves also bear a small round stamp usually on the bottom right corner with the letters KM indicating that they had once been housed in the Royal Palaces (Kungliga Majestät). More research is needed into the provenance of the collection within the Museum, but it appears that the earliest reference to the

Bergholtz materials dates back to 1790 when the King's private collection of art was consolidated into the Royal Museum.<sup>4</sup>

The images were created by several different artists working in distinct styles and fall into six or seven clearly defined groups based on the style and geographic locations. The *initial* group (fig. 1) contains images from the Baltic region and Finland. A *second* group (fig. 2), unique in that it is the only set of images from outside the Russian Empire, depicts the inhabitants of the North Frisian islands of Föhr and Sylt off the coast of the Duchy of Holstein. Both the Baltic and Holstein images correspond well to the widespread European genre of costume drawing. The figures are depicted head on with little or no accompanying background imagery, and considerable attention is paid to the detailed depiction of garments, including the elaborate headgear. The *third* group of images, showing the people of Russia proper, departs somewhat from this model. While costumes are still highlighted, a broader variety of occupations and activities are depicted. A striking set of images portray Russian Orthodox clergy in their liturgical robes, but also illustrate the sacraments of the Orthodox church from baptism to burial (fig. 3). Other images show characteristic trades and occupations: a Muscovite clerk in an old-style chancery, carpenters building a house, street vendors of various sorts, and peasants engaged in different aspects of the agricul-

**“THE IMAGES WERE CREATED BY SEVERAL DIFFERENT ARTISTS WORKING IN DISTINCT STYLES.”**

tural cycle. Some of these paintings are reminiscent of the genre of urban “cries” which had become popular in the 1730s,<sup>5</sup> (fig. 4) while the religious images evoke comparisons with Bernard Picart’s groundbreaking “Religious Ceremonies and Customs of All the Peoples of the World” published in seven volumes starting in 1723.<sup>6</sup> Several of the Russian images have a historical focus, harkening back to the last decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in their depictions of various ranks of the *streltsy*, Muscovite musketeer regiments abolished by Peter I in 1698.

**FROM RUSSIA PROPER**, the collection moves to a *fourth* group reflecting the southern periphery of the Empire. A small number (fig. 5) of exquisitely executed paintings depict the costumes of a Georgian nobleman and woman along with an attendant. A larger group of images from Astrakhan [5] highlight the ethnic diversity of the region. In addition to showing the nomads of the surrounding steppe – the Kalmyks, Kaisaks (Kazakhs) and Nogais (referred to as “Yurt” Tatars), the images depict the variety of trading peoples who would have passed through Astrakhan in the course of their business – Bukharans, Georgians, Greeks, Persians and even Hindus. (fig. 6) The Astrakhan images are painted in a less refined style more reminiscent of folk art but are strikingly vivid and lively. Most figures are depicted in groups and scenes of daily life and household implements appear. In addition to the German language captions found on all of the images, likely in Bergholtz’s hand, the Astrakhan images also include Russian language captions in orthography and script consistent with the immediate post-Petrine era.

The *next group* [6] of images takes the viewer eastward, starting from the Middle Volga region and then extending across the Urals and through Siberia as far as Yakutsk to the north and the Transbaikal region to the south. The images are executed in a consistent artistic style similar to that of some of the Russian images. As with the other images, close attention is paid to costume, but the artist also took pains to show characteristic details of lifestyle and occupations. Settled peoples are portrayed, for example, with houses in the background, while nomadic peoples are depicted on horseback or in front of circular dwellings resembling yurts. (fig. 7) Some of the images highlight indigenous religion, including several striking depictions of eastern Siberian shamans. Others show adaptation to the harsh environment including hunting equipment, sleds and winter costumes.

The *final set* of images [7] focuses specifically on Ukraine and is distinct not only in terms of the location, but also their artistic medium. While all the other images are executed in watercolor, the Ukrainian images are painted in oil directly on paper. Due to the unstable medium, many of the images are in need of conservation. Nonetheless the paintings are vivid and revealing. While specific locations are not mentioned in the captions, the images capture a broad swath of Ukrainian society both urban and rural, from ordinary peasants to wealthy noblemen. (fig. 8) As with the Russian images, costumes are depicted in colorful detail, yet the images show distinctive occupations as well, especially connected with agriculture. The images also reveal the ethnic diversity of Ukraine in the 1740s. Alongside ordinary Ukrainians, the



Fig. 1 Bride and Groom from the Järva district in Estonia (THC 3418).\*



Fig. 3 The last rites as practiced by the common people at a Russian funeral (THC 3461).



Fig. 4 A seller of buckwheat cakes (grechniki). (THC 3496).\*



Fig. 5 A Georgian nobleman and noblewoman in their costumes (THC 3498-99).



Fig. 6 Two Constantinople merchants who are doing business in Astrakhan (THC 3553).\*

artist depicts Poles, Zaporozhian Cossacks, Greeks, Armenians, Wallachians and even Roma (Ziegener). (fig. 9)

### How and when were the images created?

If we accept that the images in the Bergholtz collection date from no later than the 1740s, their historical significance becomes immediately apparent. In many instances these would be among the earliest images of their kind in existence. But how do we know that these images actually are from the 1740s, and what evidence is there to connect them with the figure of Friedrich Wilhelm Bergholtz? On the face of it, the evidence appears slim. Bergholtz's name does not appear anywhere in the two albums, nor does there appear to be a paper trail establishing Bergholtz as the source from which the Swedish royal family received the albums. The case for Bergholtz's role, admittedly, is circumstantial, but strong, nonetheless. The core fact tying Bergholtz to the Stockholm images is the connection between the ethnographic albums and the larger collection of Russian architectural images also in the Swedish National Museum. Björn Hallström, who had access to Bergholtz's correspondence and other handwritten archival documents, clearly affirms that the captions on the architectural drawings are in Bergholtz's hand.<sup>7</sup> The captions on the ethnographic drawings appear to be in the same hand. (fig. 10)

Above and beyond the captions, other evidence links the ethnographic drawings to Bergholtz and his circle. The inclusion of the images from the North Frisian islands of Föhr and Sylt are strongly suggestive of a connection with the Duchy of Holstein. Not only did Bergholtz serve in the Holstein court from a young age, the Grand Duke Peter (1728–1762), for whom he worked as tutor, retained his title as Duke of Holstein and by many accounts felt a deeper loyalty to his native Holstein than to the Russian Empire which he was destined to rule as Peter III. Another intriguing hint can be found in the caption to image #3536 in Hallström's catalogue which mentions the name "Herr Graf von Brümmer" [Otto Friedrich von Brümmer, 1690–1752], Bergholtz's inseparable companion. The two had met in Russia in the 1720s and served together in the Holstein court in the 1730s. Both came to Russia in 1742 with the Grand Duke Peter to serve as his tutors, both were dismissed by the Grand Duke following his marriage and both were expelled from Russia in 1746. After their departure, the two shared a common household in the North German town of Wismar which at the time was under Swedish rule. The mention of Brümmer's name supports the notion that the caption writer was someone in Brümmer's circle (i.e. Bergholtz) and also ties the captions to the period in which Brümmer was active in Russia. The date 1746 also appears in a mysterious inscription in image #3547 that reads "1746 anno significavi Astrachanaei Josephus Sablurowskij." While the name Josephus Sablurowskij remains obscure as does the larger significance of the note (which is written separately from the regular caption) it does help to place the image chronologically. And whatever the significance of 1746 may have been for Sablurowskij, it was certainly significant for Bergholtz and Brümmer.

None of these pieces of evidence in and of themselves would be sufficient to definitively establish Bergholtz as the source of the ethnographic images, but taken as a whole, they add up to a strong circumstantial case that Bergholtz assembled the collection of images, wrote the captions and later donated the albums to the Swedish crown.

**ASSUMING THAT IT WAS** Bergholtz who created the collection, there remains the question of why he would have done this – for what purpose was the collection assembled? One possibility is that Bergholtz, knowing he would be expelled from Russia, deliberately brought with him materials that he knew to be of “intelligence” value to the state or states that would host him. In fact, the drawings passed on by Bergholtz would almost certainly have been viewed as sensitive at the time. Detailed plans of city streets and building facades in St. Petersburg and Moscow could have been of use to Swedish diplomats, spies and even, possibly, an invading army.<sup>8</sup> Even information on the peoples of Siberia was considered a state secret.<sup>9</sup> It is unlikely, however, that Bergholtz could have assembled such an extensive collection on short notice under immediate threat of deportation. A far more likely scenario is that he assembled both the architectural and the ethnographic images over the course of several years while serving in Russia. One possibility, which we believe deserves serious consideration, is that Bergholtz’s activities as a collector were an outgrowth of his primary occupation in Russia – serving as tutor to the Grand Duke Peter.

Teaching the young Grand Duke must have been a formidable challenge for his tutors. Even taking with a grain of salt Catherine the Great’s biased portrayal of him as little more than an imbecile,<sup>10</sup> the extant accounts make it clear that book learning was not his strong suit. Although Bergholtz and Brümmer left no direct evidence of their pedagogical methods and challenges, their colleague, Jacob Stählin (1709–1785), left a brief but revealing account.<sup>11</sup> Peter, according to Stählin, was not lacking in intelligence, but was immature, impatient and constantly prone to distraction. In order to hold his attention, Stählin notes, his teachers made frequent use of visual materials. Globes, maps, models and even an elaborate “fortification cabinet” were all brought to bear in the struggle to evoke and sustain the interest of the young man. Drawings and paintings played an important part in this pedagogical approach. Stählin describes a secret set of large format folios entitled “Forces of Empire” showing all the fortifications “from Riga to the Turkish, Persian and Chinese borders, in plan and in profile with their locations and surroundings.” Not only did Stählin use these illustrations to teach military science, they also served as an entry into discussions of history and geography. Illustrations also played a major part in the everyday amusements of the Grand Duke. Stählin writes:

**In the evenings, when the Grand Duke was not called to the Empress or to a court reception, the tutor [Stählin] entertained him with large volumes from the Academy [of Sciences] Library, especially those which contained instructive illustrations, [...] as well as**



Fig. 7 A Buryat rider in all his armor at Irkutsk. Buryat winter yurts shown in background (THC 3527).

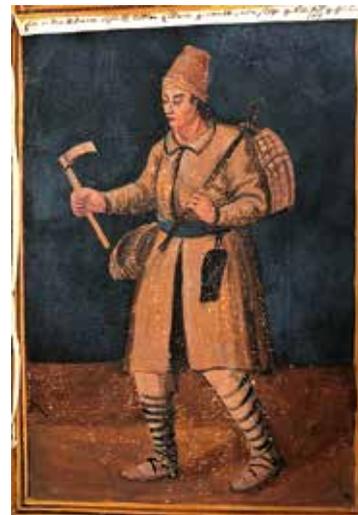


Fig. 8 A Ukrainian Lütwin (Belarusian) collecting honey from his beehives (THC 3592).



Fig. 9 A Ukrainian Ziegenger (Roma) (THC 3605).

various mathematical and physical tools and models from the *Kunstkamera*, along with samples from the three realms of the natural world.”<sup>12</sup>

AN ALBUM WITH colorful and engaging illustrations of the peoples of the Empire including Holstein would have been entirely consistent with this pedagogical approach. The same could be said, incidentally, about the architectural drawings and plans which Bergholtz also collected. Hallström and later scholars, in fact, have noted the correspondence between the locations depicted in the architectural drawings and the movements of the Imperial court in the period when Bergholtz was serving as Peter’s tutor.<sup>13</sup> In particular, the presence of both architectural drawings of Kiev and the extraordinary collection of Ukrainian ethnographic images suggests a likely connection to the court trip to Kiev in the summer of 1744, which Catherine the Great describes in her memoirs. Elizaveta Stanuikovich-Denisova suggests that Bergholtz may have intended to create an album-atlas to “memorialize and glorify the house of Holstein” possibly with the intention of presenting it to Peter when he came to the throne.<sup>14</sup> Hallström, in turn, suggests that Bergholtz may have had an interest in publishing a series of engravings on Russia, an ambition that, if true, was never realized.<sup>15</sup> But we should also consider that these collections may have had their origin as pedagogical materials used to teach the Grand Duke. Peter, by all accounts, was indifferent to, if not actively disdainful of his future subjects in the Russian Empire. Materials to better acquaint the heir to the throne with the peoples whom he would soon be ruling would have been of obvious utility to his teachers, and given his propensity for visual learning, an album of engaging, well-executed drawings would have been the perfect medium. It is clear from Stählin’s memoir that the tutors were given almost unlimited funds and unrestricted access to state institutions including the museums and libraries of the Academy of Sciences in their search for materials to enrich the Grand Duke’s education. Bergholtz’s position as tutor would have provided him with the means to assemble the Stockholm collection and given him good reason to undertake the project.

### Revelations of the Bergholtz collection: Siberia and Ukraine

Apart from its immediate historical and artistic significance, the ethnographic images in the Bergholtz collection shed light on several significant questions. The Siberian images, in particular, may hold the key to a longstanding mystery. During the time that Bergholtz, Brümmer and Stählin were attempting to educate the Grand Duke Peter, the largest and most significant scientific expedition to Siberia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was concluding its activities. Known as the Second Kamchatka Expedition, the undertaking, led by the historian Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705–1783) and the naturalist Johann Gottfried Gmelin (1709–1755), brought

together over 500 participants, from world renowned scientists to ordinary soldiers and sailors, in a quest to draw the vast Siberian expanses into the realm of science. Three professional artists accompanied the scientists, many of whom were themselves capable draftsmen. The artists were provided with detailed instructions compiled by Müller himself and received additional guidance from Georg (1673–1740) and Maria-Dorothea Gsell (d. 1743) who ran the Academy of Sciences workshop for scientific illustration.<sup>16</sup> Depiction of the human inhabitants of Siberia together with their dwellings, household implements, and other attributes of daily life was a major aspect of the artists’ assignment. Yet of the mass of illustrations which we can only assume must have been produced by the expedition, it appears that almost nothing has survived. Beyond a few exceptions – the illustrations for Stepan Krashenninikov’s *Description of Kamchatka* (1755), a series of city panoramas and a set of botanical illustrations – scholars are unable to account for the images produced by the expedition’s artists. A likely explanation for this absence is the catastrophic fire that destroyed a good portion of the Academy of Science’s museum, the *Kunstkamera*, in 1747. Many of the

artifacts collected by the expedition are known to have been destroyed in the fire, and it is likely that illustrations were also destroyed.<sup>17</sup>

Examining the Siberian drawings in the Bergholtz collection, however, a curious correlation comes to light. The locations mentioned in the captions correspond closely to the path followed by the historical-geographical branch of the expedition lead by G. F. Müller. Could these images, taken out of Russia by Bergholtz in 1746, constitute a rare remnant

of the illustrations produced for the Second Kamchatka expedition? The evidence that we have uncovered suggests that this is in fact the case.

In May of 1734, the leadership of the Second Kamchatka expedition sent a shipment of artifacts to the Imperial Senate. The inventory of the shipment makes reference to a set of eight drawings showing women’s costumes of the peoples of the Middle Volga Region.<sup>18</sup> The costumes are shown from front and back and depict women of the Cheremis’ (Mari), Chuvash, Votiak (Udmurt) and Kazan Tatar peoples. It appears that G. F. Müller intended these drawings to accompany a work he was preparing on the non-Christian peoples of the Middle Volga Region. Although Müller drafted the manuscript in 1733, it was not published until the 1750s when it appeared first in Russian and then in German in Müller’s *Sammlung Russische Geschichte*.<sup>19</sup> It was not until 1791, eight years after Müller’s death, that a full separate edition appeared in Russian with eight engraved illustrations corresponding exactly to the drawings described in the inventory from 1734.<sup>20</sup> These eight illustrations are nearly identical to the drawings that appear in the Bergholtz collection under the inventory numbers THC 3505–3512. The only differences are the backgrounds and the medium: the Bergholtz collection images

**“BERGHOLTZ’S POSITION AS TUTOR WOULD HAVE PROVIDED HIM WITH THE MEANS TO ASSEMBLE THE STOCKHOLM COLLECTION.”**

are watercolors, while the 1791 Müller illustrations are engravings. Otherwise, the models, poses, costumes, and ornaments are almost identical. (Fig. 11) From this correspondence, we can conclude that the drawings on which the Bergholtz watercolors were based were produced no later than 1734, and that they were the same drawings that served as the basis for the engravings that appeared in the 1791 edition of Müller's work on the Volga peoples.

**A FURTHER CONNECTION** between the Second Kamchatka Expedition and the Bergholtz collection is revealed in the inventory of a shipment of maps, diagrams and drawings sent by Müller to the Academy of Sciences in September 1746. The inventory includes a list of 28 drawings of peoples of the Volga region and Siberia, starting with the same eight drawings that were submitted in 1734. The additional drawings also correspond closely to the images in the Bergholtz collection, both in their subjects and in the order of their presentation. But if the drawings in the Bergholtz collection are the same as the ones Müller collected, why did Müller report returning them to the Academy of Sciences several months after Bergholtz and Brümmer had been expelled from Russia? The simplest explanation would be that the images in the Bergholtz collection are copies of originals, most likely drawn by one of the artists assigned to the expedition.<sup>21</sup> The drawings in the 1746 inventory are marked "for the *Description of Peoples*" [*Zu der Beschreibung der Völker*] suggesting that Müller intended the images to serve as illustrations for a larger project on the peoples of Siberia. Initially, Müller had compiled detailed descriptions of each group (the same peoples depicted in the Bergholtz collection), which he brought together in the manuscript volume *Nachrichten über Völker Sibiriens*.<sup>22</sup> Müller's notes, in turn served as the basis for his *Beschreibung der sibirischen Völker*, a thematically organized analysis of the customs and characteristics of Siberian peoples, which Müller drafted between 1736 and 1740 while still in Siberia.<sup>23</sup> Neither of these works were published in Müller's lifetime. Müller returned from Siberia to a hostile climate in the Academy of Sciences. Not only was he not rewarded for his prodigious research, his materials, painstakingly gathered over a ten-year period, were greeted largely with indifference. In the period from 1744–1746, Müller presented a number of works to the academy including his *Description of Siberian Peoples*, which he submitted in April of 1745, but none of these works other than the first book of his *History of Siberia* made their way into print.<sup>24</sup> During this period, in his work at the Academy of Sciences, Müller would almost certainly have crossed paths with Jacob Stählin who was supervising the Academy's project to create a Russian atlas in which Müller also participated. It is possible that Müller also knew Bergholtz through German circles in St. Petersburg. One way or another, it appears that either Stählin or Bergholtz was able to gain access to Müller's collection of drawings of Siberian peoples, make high quality watercolor copies, and return the originals in time for Müller to submit them to the Academy of Sciences in September 1746. A slight complication with this hypothesis is the fact that the Bergholtz collection includes nine additional images not mentioned



Fig. 10 Handwriting of F. W. Bergholtz. Top: caption to THC 9076:90 (Palace of Police Chief Tatishcheff); Bottom: caption to THC 3472 (An Old Believer). Numerous additional examples of Bergholtz's hand can be found in the captions to the architectural drawings on the Swedish National Museum's online collection.



Fig. 11 Cheremis' (Mari) woman living Kazan Province. Left, THC 3505\*; Right, engraved illustration from G. F. Müller [Müller], *Opisanie zhivushchikh v Kazanskoj gubernii iazychesikh narodov* (St. Petersburg, 1791).



Fig. 12 A Young Ukrainian city dweller (THC 3573).



Fig. 13 Left: THC 3491 v—A peasant with his flail in hand; Right, J. B. Le Prince, “Executioner of the Streltsy” in *Les Strelits: Encienne et seule milice de Russie jusqu’au temps de Pierre le Grand* (1764).



Fig. 14 Mongol Shaman with arrow. Left: THC 3450 – A Mongolian shaman who pierces his clothing with an arrow; Right: A Tungus Shaman from the River Argun. J. G. Georgi, *Opisanie vseh obitaiushchikh v Rossiiskom gosudarstve narodov* (1777–1778; 1799).

in the 1746 inventory.<sup>25</sup> It is possible, though not probable, that the Bergholtz images are the originals and that Müller submitted copies to the Academy. More likely, the original drawings were lost or destroyed and consequently never returned to Müller.

Regardless of the still obscure details, our findings show, we believe irrefutably, that the Siberian images in the Bergholtz collection were created as part of the Second Kamchatka Expedition. This places them among the only surviving visual records of a landmark expedition and probably the earliest representations of many of the native peoples depicted in the images. This is, we believe, a major discovery that adds a critical new component to our knowledge of this key episode in the exploration of Siberia.

**ANOTHER ELEMENT** of the Bergholtz collection which may be of considerable historical significance are the images of Ukraine (group 7 above). While we do not have direct evidence, it is highly likely that the Ukrainian portraits are connected with the visit undertaken by the court of the Empress Elizabeth (r. 1741–1762) to Kiev in the summer of 1744. Among the travelers was the recently arrived fifteen-year-old Princess Sophie Auguste Friederike of Anhalt-Zerbst, the future Catherine the Great (r. 1762–1796). In her memoirs, Catherine describes the trip in humorous terms, with Grand Marshall Brümmer and Grand Chancellor Bergholtz as the butt of her fiancé Peter’s pranks.<sup>26</sup> The Kiev trip also figures in the architectural drawings in the Bergholtz collection. Numerous sketches and architectural plans from the trip can be found in a collection of amateur pencil drawings which Hallström believes may well have been the work of Bergholtz himself.<sup>27</sup> Many of the drawings depict the small town of Kozelets, where the group spent a considerable amount of time before travelling onward to Kiev itself.

Kozelets was, in fact the hometown of Count Alexei Razumovsky (1709–1771), Elizabeth’s unofficial husband. Born a simple Cossack, Razumovsky was recruited at a young age to sing in the Imperial Capella. There he attracted the attention of Elizabeth and the two became inseparable. Soon after Elizabeth came to power in a palace coup in 1742, the couple, it was rumored, were secretly married at an estate outside of Moscow. Although Razumovsky did not have much to offer in the way of political acumen, he used his influence with Elizabeth to advance the fortunes of his native Ukraine, to which he was deeply devoted. Elizabeth’s trip to Kiev in 1744 may have represented a first attempt on Razumovsky’s part to draw the Empress’s attention to his native land and improve its political status. If this was his goal, he seems to have largely succeeded. Within a few years, Elizabeth agreed to restore the Ukrainian Hetmanate to its formerly autonomous status and appoint Alexei’s younger brother Kyrill (1728–1803) as Hetman.

We can only speculate as to the role the ethnographic images may have played in these events, but whoever assembled them clearly went to great lengths to present a rich cross section of Ukrainian society. (Fig. 12) The choice of medium, oil paint on paper, also suggests an effort to create particularly bright and striking images that would leave a strong impression. Perhaps the paintings were presented by proponents of the Hetmanate,

eager to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the ascendancy of Razumovsky by highlighting the distinctiveness of Ukrainian society. It is also possible that Bergholtz may have commissioned the paintings while in Ukraine to memorialize the impressions of the trip for the young Grand Duke and his future wife. Whatever the circumstances surrounding the creation of the images, what we can say with certainty is that the paintings may be the earliest such depictions of Ukrainian people. Previously, the earliest Ukrainian ethnographic imagery was thought to be a collection of watercolors housed in the Volodymyr Vernadsky Library in Kiev which were published in 1847 in Aleksander Rigelman's *History of Ukraine* but were likely produced in the 1770s.<sup>28</sup> A collection of remarkably vivid and diverse images of the Ukrainian population predating by at least 30 years the earliest previously known comparable material is of enormous significance not only from the perspective of art history, but for Ukrainian culture more broadly.

### The Bergholtz collection: parallel images and copies

We have argued that the images in the Stockholm collection were probably taken from Russia by Bergholtz at the time of his expulsion from the Russian Empire in 1746. The fact that at least some of the images were likely copies, however, complicates the picture. It appears that at least some of the original drawings may have remained in Russia, where they served as models for later copies closely resembling the Bergholtz images. These parallel images can only be found for some parts of the collection. We were not able to find any such correspondences related to the Baltic, Astrakhan and Ukrainian images. The parallel images that do appear are all related to the Russian and Siberian collections. The clearest parallels to the Russian images in the Bergholtz collection can be found in the engravings of Jean Baptiste LePrince (1734–1781).

LePrince spent four years in Russia starting in 1758 during which time he taught at the Academy of Arts, participated in the decoration of the Winter Palace and undertook several expeditions to portray Russian costumes and national types.<sup>29</sup> He returned to France with a large collection of drawings which he continued to publish as engravings in the decade following his voyage. Most of LePrince's drawings appear to be original works; however, it is evident that he also worked from earlier visual sources. Among these sources were drawings which may also have served as models for some of the depictions of Russian subjects in the Bergholtz collection.

In 1764, LePrince published a collection of engravings entitled the *Les Strelits* which purported to represent various ranks and roles within the Muscovite musketeer regiments, the streltsy, disbanded by Peter the Great after their abortive uprising in 1698. LePrince's depictions are almost identical to the set of images in the Russian section of the Bergholtz collection which also show depictions of old Muscovy. In the same year, LePrince published

a set of engravings of the Russian clergy which closely resemble images in the Bergholtz collection. While LePrince introduces subtle differences in facial features, the poses, costumes and props in LePrince's engravings are nearly identical to the Bergholtz images.<sup>30</sup> (fig. 13)

We have no direct evidence as to how LePrince may have gained access to the Bergholtz images (or their sources). It is worth noting, however, that his position in St. Petersburg, teaching in the Academy of Arts, could easily have brought him into contact with officials from the Academy of Sciences. Jacob Stählin, the Grand Duke's former tutor and colleague of Bergholtz, was himself an acclaimed engraver and would almost certainly have been interested in the work of the talented young Frenchman. He may well have allowed LePrince to copy images he had at his disposal related to the images Bergholtz had brought to Sweden.

**IN ADDITION TO** his albums on the Streltsy and the clergy, LePrince produced numerous engravings of images from Russia proper as well as Siberia. A large number of his Russian images appear to have been original works, but the Siberian images, most of which were published as illustrations to the Abbé Jean-Baptiste Chappe d'Auteroche's *Voyage en Sibirie* (1768), are largely derivative, raising questions as to whether LePrince actually traveled to Siberia. But if LePrince's Siberian images were copied from earlier

sources, they are notably lacking in identifying details. Both the Bergholtz images and LePrince's engravings, for example, include images of a Samoyed mother and her child, however the details are entirely different and LePrince's representation is almost entirely lacking in ethnographic verisimilitude. A much closer correspondence, however, can be found in another

set of images created by the engraver Christopher Melchior Roth (1720–1798) which found their way into the most emblematic visual representation of the peoples of the Russian Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Johann Gottlieb Georgi's (1729–1802) *Description of all the Peoples Inhabiting the Russian Empire*.

Roth, an engraver from Nuremberg who served for ten years in the Academy of Sciences, set about in the mid-1770s to publish a series of engravings under the title *Russia Revealed, a Collection of the Costumes of all the Peoples Inhabiting the Russian Empire*. His publication drew the attention of the naturalist Johann Gottlieb Georgi, recently returned from travels in Siberia as part of the major academic expedition directed by Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811). Georgi proposed to combine Roth's engravings with ethnographic descriptions of the various peoples to create a comprehensive ethnographic encyclopedia summing up the research carried out on the peoples of the Empire since the start of the century.<sup>31</sup> Both Roth and Georgi were affiliated with the Academy of Sciences, giving them access to the Academy's collection of drawings and artifacts, including the illustrations G. F. Müller had prepared for his still unpublished "Description of all the Peoples of Russia." Müller had been obliged to turn over his materials to the Academy of Sciences and had evidently lost

**“THE PAINTINGS MAY BE THE EARLIEST SUCH DEPICTIONS OF UKRAINIAN PEOPLE.”**

track of the images, but when Georgi published his volume, Müller recognized his drawings. In his history of the Second Kamchatka Expedition, Müller recalls an incident in which he met an elderly Mongolian Shaman who performed a trick in which he seemed to draw an arrow through his midsection while in a deep trance. Müller questioned the man and uncovered the ruse, and then brought in an artist to record the scene. “I had it drawn,” he wrote, “and the figure can be found in the pictures accompanying Mr. Georgi’s Descriptions of the Peoples of Russia. The copper engraver Roth has obtained my drawings, I do not know how, from the academy.”<sup>32</sup> The same drawing of a Shaman with an arrow piecing his waist appears among the Bergholtz images. (fig. 14) In fact, a number of Roth’s engravings of the peoples of the Middle Volga and Siberia clearly resemble images in the Bergholtz collection. Roth, to be sure, was not an exact copyist. He made little effort to reproduce the precise poses, backgrounds and individual features, but the details of costumes show undeniable correlations. In all, seventeen of Roth’s engravings (of the 100 published in Georgi’s compendium) can be associated with images from the Bergholtz collection.<sup>33</sup> It is interesting to note that Georgi’s captions do not always correspond to Bergholtz’s notations. Different locations are given for some of the images and ethnic identifications do not always correspond. This suggests that Roth may have obtained Müller’s images, but not the accompanying descriptions. It is also worth noting that none of the images in the Bergholtz collection that are missing from Müller’s 1746 inventory appear in the Roth engravings. This reinforces the supposition that the originals were lost before Müller submitted the inventory and drawings.

**AFTER THE PUBLICATION** of Georgi’s volumes in the late 1770s, no further appearances of the Bergholtz images have been identified. The one exception is the 1791 publication of the Müller’s study of the peoples of the Middle Volga region with its eight engravings corresponding to the images Müller reported submitting to the Imperial Senate in 1734. Most likely the plates from which the images were printed were engraved much earlier, perhaps by the same artist who created the original drawings. Some of the images from the famous collection of ethnographic miniatures created by the Imperial Porcelain Works, likely at the behest of Catherine the Great, harken back to Müller’s images, but via Roth’s engravings on which the collection was based.<sup>34</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, drawings, which could not be directly reproduced, were often seen as disposable raw materials for engravings which constituted the final permanent iteration. It is plausible, therefore, that the drawings which Roth attained from the Academy of Sciences never made it back to their repository but were lost or destroyed in the process of creating the engravings. This would explain why no traces of the images have been detected in the Archive of the Academy of Sciences, the Kunstkamera or any other Russian archive and why, consequently, they remained unknown to scholars almost up to the present day. The fact that a set of beautifully executed copies survived undetected in the Swedish National Museum is a remarkable piece of good fortune that, among other things, sheds a revealing new

light on the sources of Roth’s iconic images of the peoples of the Russian Empire.<sup>35</sup>

## Concluding thoughts

A great deal more research is needed to arrive at a fuller understanding of the origins of the Bergholtz collection, the artists responsible for its images, and the circumstances surrounding its creation and preservation in Stockholm. The Swedish National Museum has taken an important first step in facilitating this study by making digital reproductions of some of the images available on its online database.<sup>36</sup> We hope very much that this work will continue and that soon the entire collection will be available in electronic form to scholars around the world. Already, the collection has expanded our knowledge in a number of important areas. Many questions remain, however, and it will take the collective effort of numerous scholars to fully unlock the mysteries of the Bergholtz collection. ✕

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- 2 Björn H Hallström, *Russian Architectural Drawings in the Nationalmuseum* (Stockholm, 1963).
- 3 Edward Kasinec and Janis A. Kreslins, Sr. “Little-Known Images of Folk Costumes and Types of the Peoples of Russia in the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.” *Ab Imperio*, 4 (2008): 562–564; Edward Kasinec and Janis A. Kreslins, Sr. “Little-known images of folk costumes and types of Russia’s peoples in the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm”, *Sibirica: Interdisciplinary Journal of Siberian Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2010): 73–83.
- 4 Hallström cites as his source *Catalogue Des Dessins Originaux Des plus Fameux Maitres De toutes les Ecoles Qui se conservent la Bibliotheque Royale De Stockholm*, compiled by “Kongl. Bibliothecarien och Canzlirådet Wilde, NM – A92. See Hallström, 14.

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- 6 Bernard Picart, *Cérémonies et Coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde*, 7 vols. (Amsterdam: Jean-Frédéric Bernard, 1723–1743). On Picart see Lynn Hunt, Margaret C. Jacob and Wijnand Mijnhardt, *The Book the Changed Europe: Picart and Bernard's Religious Ceremonies of the World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2010).
- 7 Hallström, 12.
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- 9 Han Vermeulen, *Before Boas: The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015) 155–156.
- 10 Catherine II, Empress of Russia, *The Memoirs of Catherine the Great*, Mark Cruse, and Hilde Hoogenboom, translators, (New York: Modern Library, 2005).
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- 12 Shtelin, 79.
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- 16 On the Gsells see Vermeulen, 162–163.
- 17 Fortunately, a large number of watercolors depicting the objects on display in the Kunstkamera were preserved. An overview and analysis of these images has recently been published: *The Paper Museum of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg c. 1725–1760: Introduction and Interpretation*, Renée E. Kistemaker, Natalya P. Kopaneva, Dobra J. Meijers, Georgy V. Villinbakhov, eds. (Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences, 2005). The volume focuses primarily on the representation of physical artifacts. There is no mention of a collection of ethnographic drawings.
- 18 Wieland Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente zur 2. Kamčatka expedition – Akademiegruppe; Quellen zur Geschichte Sibiriens und Alaskas aus russischen Archiven*, Bd. 5 (Halle: Franckesche Stiftungen, 2006), 281.
- 19 Vermeulen, *Before Boas*, 173.
- 20 G. F. Müller [Müller], *Opisanie zhivushchikh v Kazanskoi gubernii iazycheskikh narodov* (St. Petersburg, 1791).
- 21 It is interesting to note that the 1734 inventory, according to Wieland Hintzsche, was written in the hand of Johann Wilhelm Lürsenius (1704–v1771), one of the three expedition artists. Perhaps these were his works. Hintzsche, ed., *Dokumente*, p. 281.
- 22 Vermeulen, 177–178. The volume has been published as Gerhard Friedrich Müller, *Nachrichten Über Völker Sibiriens (1736–1742)*. Eugen Helinski, and Hartmut Katz, eds., *Hamburger Sibirische Und Finnougrische Materialien*, v. 2. (Hamburg: Institut für Finnougristik/Uralistik, 2003).
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- 24 A. I. Andreev, "Trudy G. F. Millera o Sibiri," in G. F. Müller, *Istoriia Sibiri*, izd. 2–e, (Moscow: Vostochnaia literature, 1999), t. 1, p. 81.
- 25 The additional images appear, on the basis of a comparison of the 1746 inventory with the Hallström catalogue, to be as follows (numeration as given in the Pfab inventory in Hallström): THC 3519, Tartarisches Mädgen, zu Kusnez; THC 3520 Tartarisches Mädgen, zu Kusnez; THC 3530 Brazkisches Mädgen; THC 3531 Brazkisches Mädgen, von hinten zu; THC 3532 Brazkische Frau, mit Ihrer Tochter, zu Selenginsk; THC 3534 Tungusisches weib, des Kimskischen (should be Ilimskischen—an apparent misreading by Pfab) Gebiehtes; THC 3535 Jakuzkischer Tunguse; THC 3536 Ein junger, Jakuzkischer Tunguse welchen der Herr Graf von Brümmer geschenckt bekommen; THC 3538 Bratzkischer Schaman, zu Udinskoy Ostrog von hinten zu. One image listed as #27 in the 1746 inventory (Tatarische Heidnische Opfferung) does not appear to have been included in the Bergholz collection.
- 26 Catherine, 14–15.
- 27 Hallström, 12–13.
- 28 Aleksandr Rigel'man, *Letopisnoe povestvovanie o Maloi Rossii i eia narode i kozakakh vooobshche*, (Moscow: v Universitetskoi tipografii, 1847).
- 29 On LePrince and his activities in Russia see Elena Vishlenkova, *Vizual'noe narodovedenie imperii, ili 'uvidet Russkogo dano ne kazhdomu* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2011), 72–78.
- 30 It is possible that versions of the Muscovite images copied by LePrince in his album on the *streltsy* may be housed in other repositories. The *Horizon History of Russia* (New York: American Heritage, 1970) contains four of the images of *streltsy* (158–159) that appear in LePrince's album. In style and content, they are almost identical to those in the Bergholz collection. The images are credited to the British Museum, but we have been unable to verify the source.
- 31 On Roth and Georgi's publications see Vishlenkova, 48–61.
- 32 *Materialy dlia istorii Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*. (Sankt Petersburg : Tip Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1885–1900), t.6, p. 409. (Courtesy of Han Vermeulin)
- 33 The correspondences are as follows. Numeration of the plates follows the 1799 Russian language edition of Georgi's *Opisanie* and the Pfab inventory in Hallström's catalogue. #11 Cheremiska women – THC 3505; #12 – Cheremis' woman from the back – THC 3506; #22 – Ostiak from the Ob River – THC 3524; #27 – Kazan Tatar Woman – 9THC 3511; #28 Kazan Tatar Woman from the back – THC 3512; #29 Chatskaia Tatarka – THC 3516 (Tatar woman from Tomsk); #33 – Siberian Bukharan – THC 3513 (Tobolsk Bukharin); #37 Barabinskaiia Devka – THC 3515 (Tatar maiden from Tobolsk); #46 – Tatar maiden from Kuznetz–THC 3519; #47 – Tatar maiden from Kuznetz, from the back – THC 3520; #48 – Tatar girl from Kuznets – THC 3517; #49 – Tatar girl from the back – THC 3518; #58 – Samoyed woman with child – THC 3525; #59 – Tungus hunter – THC 3535; #62–9 Tungus Shaman from Argun river (with arrow) THC 3540 (Mongolian shaman piercing his clothes with an arrow); #80 Bratsk (Buryat) maiden at the Udinskoe settlement – THC 3528; #81 Bratsk maiden from the back; THC 3529; #86 Mongolian Shaman – THC 3541.
- 34 Vishlenkova, 64–65.
- 35 For example, the linkages put forth by A. E. Zhabreva in the various collections of Russian costume drawings, would have to be significantly revised taking into account the Bergholz images. See A. E. Zhabreva, "Izobrazheniia kostiumov narodov Rossii v inostrannykh izdaniakh XVIII – nachala XIX veka," in *Istorko-bibliograficheskie issledovaniia: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, vyp. 10 (St. Petersburg, 2006), 275.
- 36 See <http://emp-web-84.zetcom.ch/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternaInterface&module=exhibition&moduleFunction=result&filterName=filter.tours.all>. The search engine for the museum's database is somewhat cumbersome, but the words "Dräktkiss Ryssland" in the quick search box should produce the images. The database can also be searched by inventory number. Many images remain to be digitized and the museum has apparently left empty placeholders under the corresponding inventory numbers.