Dutch & Flemish art in Russia
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Introduction

EGBERT HAVERKAMP-BEGEMANN

CODART brings together museum curators from different institutions with different experiences and different interests. The organisation aims to foster discussions and an exchange of information and ideas, so that professional colleagues have an opportunity to learn from each other, an opportunity they often lack. With Russia as the focus, I am reminded of the establishment of cultural ties between Russia - then the Soviet Union - and the Netherlands that had been disrupted by the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War. In 1956, now more than forty years ago, curators could talk to each other and visit each other for the first time. It was a most welcome opportunity, inevitably restricted to very few people, but it marked the beginning of a slowly growing trend that has resulted in the participation of Russian curators in the international network of colleagues from the Netherlands and many other countries. The catalyst to this process, not surprisingly because of the admiration he has enjoyed for centuries all over the world, was no one less than Rembrandt.

To celebrate his 350th birthday, in 1956 Amsterdam and Rotterdam organised an international loan exhibition, or rather two exhibitions, one of paintings and one of drawings. (A third exhibition, of etchings, was based on the collection of the Amsterdam print room). The paintings were shown first in Amsterdam, and the drawings, simultaneously, first in Rotterdam. Halfway through, the venues were alternated. It may not have been the very first time that the Hermitage or the Pushkin Museum lent a work of art to the West, but the mutual exchange of no less than six Rembrandt paintings between the Soviet Union and the Netherlands was the first of that magnitude between the two countries. What this opening in a wall of silence and inaccessibility meant at the time is difficult to imagine now that exchanges of works of art are routine and curators travel from one country to another frequently.

For the exhibitions in 1956, the six Rembrandt paintings travelling each way had to be accompanied. The Dutchmen travelling to Leningrad to fetch the Dutch ones were Dr. Mr. F.J. Duparc, representing the Dutch Government as 'Hoofd Bureau
Musea en Archieven van het Ministerie van Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen’, Arthur van Schendel, curator of paintings at the Rijksmuseum, and myself, curator at the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam. Since commercial flights between Leningrad and Amsterdam did not exist or were not suitable, the Dutch airline company KLM arranged for a special plane to transport the paintings and us couriers. Things were a little primitive, as it turned out when the plane starting the return flight had to turn back on account of some precaution or other).

The ten days in Leningrad and Moscow were unforgettable. Seeing paintings and drawings in the Hermitage and the Pushkin Museum, and visiting other museums, the former tsarist palaces, and some of the main architectural monuments in both cities at that time was a most exceptional and revealing experience. A new world opened up for us. We were struck by the high quality of the art, by the excellent care the works of art received, and by the judicious reconstruction and restoration of so many of the palaces destroyed by the German army during the Second World War. The trip was greatly facilitated by the hospitality and the excellent guidance of the local curators, and became a very fruitful professional experience.

Their scholarship and professionalism was most impressive. They were on top of their fields of specialisation. Frequently they knew the literature on particular issues much better than we did. They had new ideas for the interpretation of the art of the past. Personally I was most struck by the expertise of young colleagues in the field of Netherlandish paintings, like Yuri Ivanovich Kuznetsov and Irina Vladimirovna Linnik (then not yet married to each other). He planned to devote his scholarly life to Jan Steen, connecting him with Dutch literature and society in a way we were not yet prepared to adopt in the West. He had to abandon this project because of a lack of travel opportunities. Irina Linnik had already done, and still does so much for Dutch art, for Caravaggists and others. Of the older generation I, of course, admired Mikhail Vasilievich Dobroklonski, who was one of the very small group of European specialists in drawings active in the 1920s and 1930s, and G.G. Grim, who was the leading historian of architecture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Particularly memorable was Vladimir Franchevich Levinson-Lessing. He was a most remarkable, knowledgeable art historian. He also was the authority on the history of the Hermitage and of
collecting in Russia since the seventeenth century. A book on the subject by him was published posthumously. With his director, Dr. M.I. Artamonov, Levinson-Lessing came to Holland at that time, for the counter-transport of the Rembrandt paintings, and I accompanied him through the collections of the Boijmans Museum. Never had I been so strongly impressed by an art historian’s broad professional knowledge. Whether the objects we saw were Spanish majolica, medieval glass, European prints, or paintings of any century, his unfailing ability to name time, place of origin, or artist, and to place the works in context was unparalleled. The idea that Russian scholarship did not count, caused by the political distance and cultural seclusion of the country, proved to be a complete fallacy.

I have had numerous opportunities to visit our Russian colleagues since then, and I feel a certain familiarity with the country (also because family circumstances placed me there in my early youth). I can assure you that professional know-how, expertise, and scholarship are continuing in the remarkable tradition that was revealed to my companions and me in 1956 when we had the pleasure of participating in the first post-war cultural exchange between Russia and Holland. The following essays give a chance to learn about specific parts and the history of the collections in St. Petersburg and Moscow and various other parts of the country.

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Late 19th-century private collections in Moscow and their fate between 1918 and 1924

MARINA SENENKO

The subject of this essay is exceedingly broad. It touches not only upon the history of numerous collections and museums but also on the various kinds of art presented there. However, as the scale of this essay is limited and my research is focused on painting, I will address mainly the history of collections of painting. The examples I will use are all paintings from the Pushkin Art Museum that were formerly in private collections.

The history of Moscow collections of Western European art can be traced back to the 18th century. The richest collections, belonging to Russian noble families - such as the Princes Yusupov, Golitsin and others - were found in palaces and country seats in and around Moscow. The first Museum of Fine Arts, opened to the public in 1810, was the gallery of the municipal hospital, built by one of the Golitsin counts. It did not last long. Nor did other private galleries opened in the first half of the 19th century.

Educated nobles, however, who were interested in literature and the fine arts, discussed the possibility of founding a Moscow museum of the history of classical art. The necessity for such a museum, meeting the cultural needs of the people, was persistently spoken and written of after 1857, the year when an art history department was established at the University of Moscow. As a result, in 1861 the Ministry of Education decided to transfer the museum founded by Count Rumyantsev in St. Petersburg to Moscow and to establish a new public museum in Moscow. Two hundred Western European paintings in the Hermitage were selected for the new museum. The famous Christ appearing to the people by Alexander Ivanov was also removed to Moscow.

The Public Museum and the Rumyantsev Museum opened in 1862. They were housed in one building and had a joint managing board. Both institutions commonly went under the name of the ‘Rumyantsev Museum’. Each of them included various collections and a library. Initially, the picture gallery consisted mainly of Italian, Flemish and Dutch paintings. Among the latter were The feast of Esther by Rembrandt and Lot and his daughters by Arent
Exterior and interior of the Rumyantsev Museum, Moscow
de Gelder. The foundation of this first state public museum in Moscow made quite an impression. Muscovites with private collections began to donate individual works of art and even entire collections to the institution.

In the second half of the 19th century, Moscow and its surroundings still housed various old collections belonging to noble families. Part of the very rich collection of Prince Yusupov was kept at his estate at Arkhangelskoye, while the other part was in St. Petersburg as of 1831. The Kuskovo and Ostankino estates of the Sheremetev counts also boasted picture galleries. In Ostafievo, which belonged to Prince Viazemsky and then to the counts of Sheremetev, was yet another outstanding collection of paintings. The Moscow collection of the Golitsin princes even enjoyed the status of a museum from the 1860s to the 1880s. In 1886, however, it was sold to the state and removed to the Hermitage. Some of the collections displayed in the city mansions of the nobles were of the highest artistic level. For instance, that of the Mosolovs, which was later sold to an engraver with a

Rembrandt, *Ahasuerus, Haman and Esther*, signed and dated 1660. Oil on canvas, 73 x 94 cm.
passion for Dutch prints, who even reproduced Rembrandt paintings in etching himself. Fine collections belonged to the Mukhanovs, Khomyakov, Isakov, Trofimovich, and many others.

However, the most characteristic phenomenon of Moscow cultural life in the second half of the 19th century was the formation of prominent collections of art among the middle class. Several generations of dedicated individuals directed the energy and abilities that had brought them success in industry and trade to the collecting of works of art. Among the oldest families in this group were the Tretyakovs, Soldatenkov, Kokorev, Brocard, Zubalov, and among the youngest the Morozov brothers, the Ryabushinskys and the Shchukins. These collectors (and many others as well) were closely associated with artists, musicians and university professors. As a rule, they linked collecting with the idea of public education. Thus, they organised exhibitions, founded new museums and donated or bequeathed works of art to existing ones. Significantly, the Kokorev family opened a private museum of fine art to the public at the same time as the Rumyantsev Museum. The picture gallery of Pavel Tretyakov, with its collection of Russian painting, and Sergey Tretyakov’s collection of 19th-century Western European painting were donated to the city of Moscow in 1892. Pyotr Shchukin created and opened to the public the Museum of Russian Relics of the Past, which later became a branch of the Museum of History. Henry Brocard, the owner of a perfumery, exhibited his wide-ranging collection of painting and applied art at the Upper Stalls on Red Square.

Ivan Morozov and Sergey Shchukin were undoubtedly the most sensitive collectors in the city. They understood the spirit of their time and had a feeling for the new tendencies in art. They assembled wonderful collections of modern French painting in their houses. Shchukin’s collection was open to visitors.

In 1901 Soldatenkov bequeathed his large collection of Russian painting to the Rumyantsev Museum, whose picture gallery increased by a factor of seven in the 50 years of its existence. The Khomyakov donation, also made in 1901, was crucial to the Italian section of the Rumyantsev Museum. It included 14 works by 14th and 15th-century Italian painters who were not previously represented in the museum. In 1902 General Trofimovich’s daughter donated 63 pictures, mostly by Dutch and Flemish painters, in memory of her father to the Rumyantsev Museum. In 1903 Dmitry Shchukin donated 19 pictures by painters of various
schools, including the Dutch school; in 1913 the museum received 21 pictures from the Isakov collection; in 1914 a collection of painting, drawing and sculpture was bequeathed by Mosolov; and in 1917, 40 pictures from the collection of the oil baron Zubalov were donated by his widow and son.

In 1915 the fine arts section of the Rumyantsev Museum, headed since 1910 by Nikolai Romanov, professor of art history at the Moscow University, was given a new building for its picture gallery. In the same year the Society of the Friends of the Museum was established, to which many collectors instantly flocked. In 1915 the Society organised a large exhibition of Western European painting from Moscow private collections, at which the Dutch school was widely represented.

With its collections of painting and sculpture and its printroom, the Rumyantsev Museum could meet only part of the requirements of the educated Moscow public. A museum of classical art was also deemed necessary. The philologist Ivan Tsvetaev worked out plans for such a museum exhibiting copies and casts of masterpieces of art from ancient times to the Renaissance. He was a professor at the Moscow University, as well as head of the department of fine arts (1883-1900) and later (1900-1910) director of
Jan Wijnants, *Landscape*, signed and dated 1665. Oil on canvas, 85 x 103.5 cm. (Gift by Lev Zubalov jr.)
the Rumyantsev Museum.

Owing to his enthusiasm and energy, the project was endowed by financiers and rich merchants. The building was erected on Volkhonka Street, and casts of famous masterpieces of sculpture were made and brought to Moscow. When the museum opened to the public in 1912 it also contained original works of art. These were from the Golenishev collection of ancient Egyptian relics, purchased by the state, and the collection of Italian painting of the 13th-15th centuries donated by Shchukin. The museum was managed by Moscow University and was considered an educational institution.

Thus, on the eve of the Revolution, Moscow had a museum of casts and some original works - where one could become acquainted with the history of art up to the Renaissance - and two museums with extensive collections of Russian painting from the 18th century on, as well as fine specimens of Western European painting from the early Renaissance to the 19th century. I leave out of consideration the Museum of History with its very rich collections, because it is a subject of its own. In addition to the public museums, the city also boasted many private collections, ranging from ancient Russian icons to the most daring experiments of modern Western European schools. Exhibitions of old and modern painting were regularly organised. Naturally, a market for art and antiques also emerged, but its links with the European
market were broken off by the First World War. The October Revolution plunged the museums into utter confusion. The education of the illiterate and ignorant poor classes of society was proclaimed one of the most important goals of the moment, and so the art world was called upon to help the Revolution. The authorities demanded that the museums should play an active role in this aim, and financially supported this project. Not a few people in the art world were sincerely carried away by the challenge of cultural education. Some saw the Revolution as a rare opportunity for a general reorganisation of the Russian museums. These projects could sometimes take extreme forms. One plan, for example - the Kremlin Acropolis - called for the transfer of all the treasures of the Moscow museums to the Kremlin.

As early as 1918 work had begun on a project that was eventually to be effectuated, namely the institution of three major museums in Moscow: one for Russian art, one for Western European art, and one for Oriental art. In addition, there were to be a number of supplementary museums, such as the Museum of History. All the holdings of all the Moscow collections were to be distributed among these museums. At first the project seemed completely unrealistic, but in the end it was used. The 1920s were the period of utopian planning.

This was one side of the story. There was another, less idealistic side as well. Even in 1917 it was clear that the art treasures belonging to the royal palaces, rich mansions and estates were in danger of being plundered or even destroyed; the Provisional Government and the city council of Moscow organised committees for the seizure and preservation of the royal property in Petrograd and Moscow. In October and months following the danger increased. With fighting and shooting going on in the streets and armed robbery the order of the day, anarchists invaded splendid mansions and ignorant soldiers confiscated the property of wealthy families. It was inevitable that works of art would be lost and damaged. The problem was recognised not only by the owners and the curators of museums: the entire art world and
many of the authorities also understood the extent of the crisis.

Many owners brought their collections to the relatively safe museums for safekeeping. Among the works that entered the Rumyantsev Museum were some that had been shown at the 1915 exhibition. These included more than 30 Italian, Dutch and Flemish paintings that belonged to Govorov; and paintings, furniture and porcelain belonging to a member of the Museum Friends Society, Gorshanov. One of these was the genuine though uncharacteristic still life *A breakfast* by Abraham van Beijeren. Four boxes with paintings and prints were brought from the house of the Gabrichevskys, who had inherited a collection assembled in the mid-19th century. (One of its rarities was a *Smoker* signed by Jurriaen van Streeck). The chairman of the Museum Friends Society, Count Chreptowicz-Butenev, also

Abraham van Beijeren, *A breakfast*, signed ‘AvB’. Oil on panel, 74 x 60 cm.

(From the collection of Vladimir Gorshanov, entered the Rumyantsev Museum after the revolution)
transferred his paintings to the Rumyantsev Museum. In 1914 these works had been brought to Moscow from the family’s country seat in Minsk province, where they decorated the palace of Count Joachim Chreptowicz, the last chancellor of the Great Lithuanian principality. Among them were wonderful panoramic landscapes by Jan van Kessel and Philips Koninck.

It was assumed that the objects would be returned to their owners in due time, but this soon became problematical. The situation in the Tretyakov Gallery was the same. There, in 1918, a conflict arose between the director, artist and art critic Igor Grabar, and his staff. Grabar wished to return the property to their rightful owners, but the staff did not. In 1922 the People’s Commissariat of Education sent out aggressive letters prohibiting the museums from returning such collections to their owners. In spite of this, the Rumyantsev Museum returned some of the exhibits as late as 1922-23. In effect, however, the art that was entrusted to the museums under these conditions was confiscated, whether the owners remained in Russia or emigrated.

To get an idea of the enormous numbers of the works of art that entered the Rumyantsev Museum in this period, one should also consider the other forms of transfer that took place in 1919-20. Not only owners, but also officials and volunteers sometimes brought endangered works of art to the museums. This was

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Philips Koninck, View in Gelderland. Oil on canvas, 131 x 161 cm.

(From the collection of Constantin Chreptowicz-Butenev, entered the Rumyantsev Museum after the revolution)
particularly the case of property left behind by emigrants who abandoned their mansions and estates as well as of the art in banks, pawnshops and shops. The Rumyantsev Museum acquired more than one interesting collection in this way. One example is the collection of Maria Gracheva, a woman who had earlier presented the museum a painting by Bramer. Among the works she left in a pawnshop were paintings by Swanevelt and Knüpfer.

The museum lacked space for the display of the newly received collections. In January 1918 an honorary member of the museum, Lev Zubalov Junior, proposed using his father’s mansion as an annex. He was given a safe conduct, and in this way a branch of the Rumyantsev Museum came into being. At first only works intended for the Rumyantsev Museum were brought to the Zubalov mansion, but this house soon became one of the depositaries of the State Museum Fund, which I will discuss below. For several years this branch of the Rumyantsev Museum and depository of the State Museum Fund were regarded as one institution and managed by the same keeper - Lev Zubalov Junior. At a given moment, however, the branch of the Rumyantsev Museum was disbanded. This episode is only one of the many complications that have to be sorted out in reconstructing the complex history of post-Revolutionary activities involving art and museums.

The epoch was marked by several kinds of contradictory changes. Collections were being destroyed and dispersed, while an incredible number of new museums were being founded.

Herman van Swanevelt, *Morning or The holy women*. Oil on panel, 46 x 64 cm.

(From the collection of M. Gracheva, entered the Rumyantsev Museum after the revolution)
There were ongoing efforts to rescue works of art and transfer them to museums, but the groups and committees busy doing this were involved in endless disputes and quarrels. This mess simply cannot be described in a few words. All I can do now is to give a few examples.

The above-mentioned safe conduct given to Lev Zubalov Junior was an important document in the winter of 1917-18. All owners of more or less interesting objects d’arts did their best to obtain one. The Bolsheviks propagated the slogan ‘Art belongs to the People,’ but this sentiment was not translated into actual law. The first document of this kind was contained in a telegram sent by Lenin to the representative of one of the local Soviets on the 19th of December 1917. It stated ‘The estates are the property of the People’ and ordered the recipient to draw up a list of all objects of value in former family estates and to preserve them in a safe place. Anyway, particularly in the early stages of the Revolution, institutions responsible for the preservation of works of art took it upon themselves to protect private collections from confiscation and damage.
Immediately after the October upheaval and in the beginning of 1918, at least five commissions and committees for the preservation of the works of art were established. The first two were the Committee for the Preservation of Works of Art and of Monuments of the Past, the members of which were mostly architects and artists, which reported to the Moscow Soviet, and the Committee of the People’s Commissariat of Property. A little later the People’s Commissariat of Education formed the ‘Section for the Management of Museums and Preservation of the Works of Art and Monuments of the Past’, usually called the Museum Section. The functionaries in the Museum Section were specialists such as art historians and museum curators. The Section later was put in charge of all museums and private collections, although the Committee of the Moscow Soviet continued to operate for several years.

These three committees were involved in constant disputes. Their bureaucratic behaviour hindered the solving of the complicated practical problems facing them. The Committee of the Moscow Soviet, which met in the Kremlin, took responsibility for gathering and preserving valuable property abandoned by wealthy emigrants. The committee was also put in charge of historical monuments, buildings and collections still in the possession of private owners. One of the instruments at their disposal was the safe-conduct. An owner in possession of such a document was protected from eviction, and his goods from requisition. The safe-conduct was employed on quite a large scale. In the month of September 1918 alone, 29 were issued for collections, 46 for libraries and 116 for artists’ studios. By the beginning of 1918 all the best collections had already been safeguarded. For example, as early as February, Count Sheremetev thanked the Committee of the Moscow Soviet for its care of Kuskovo. In this period the rights of collectors were more or less recognised. In March 1918, a resolution of the Committee referred to several important collections, including those of Ivan Morozov, Sergey Shchukin and Dmitry Shchukin, as having been donated to the Republic of Russia but as being in the possession of their former owners. The collections were being nationalised little by little. This is obvious from a succession of decrees issued by the government in 1918.

The decree of 3 June declared the nationalisation of the Tretyakov Gallery, which until then belonged to the city of Moscow. The decree of 5 November announced the nationalisation of the gallery of Sergey Shchukin, with its outstanding collection of
modern Western European painting. The decree of 19 December declared the nationalisation of Ivan Morozov’s famous collection of modern Western European art, the icons belonging to Ivan Ostroukhov, and Alexey Morozov’s porcelain. The nationalisation of the museum-estates Arkhangelskoje, Kuskovo and Ostankino was also decreed.

It did not take long before the collections that had been proclaimed to be national property were opened to the public. The formal basis for this was provided by the decree of 19 September 1918, which prohibited the export and ordered the registration and preservation of works of art and antiquities in general, and that of 5 October, which specified that this applied to goods owned by private persons, societies and institutions. No decree ever ordered the total nationalisation of works of art. Nevertheless, within one short year most known collections passed to the state. Only collections that people were not aware of sometimes remained in the possession of their owners, and indeed some of them still belong to their heirs. Private ownership of art was also facilitated by the continued functioning of a commercial art market in Russia, which made it possible for new collections to be formed. This actually began to happen in the 1920s. However, that is a subject for a different paper.

The least painful part of the nationalisation process was the transformation of large mansions that were luxuriously decorated and furnished and full of art works into public museums. Such was the destiny of many country seats in the immediate vicinity of Moscow. Estates in the provinces generally met a different fate. At best, the art works were removed. For example, officials managed to remove the objects of value from the estate of Prince Baryatinsky in the Province of Kursk. Some of the mansions and country seats that were opened to the public after the Revolution are still functioning museums to this very day. That is the case of Arkhangelskoye, Kuskovo, Ostankino, Abramtsevo and Muranovo. Many others (Ostafievo is an example) were closed within a few years and turned into hospitals, sanatoriums or other institutions. The paintings, sculptures and other works of art in these estates were passed on to Moscow museums and the State Museum Fund.

Several collections of Russian and Western European art were parcelled out among the so-called Proletarian Museums. The development of these institutions was closely connected to the activities of the State Museum Fund. The task of the Committee of
the Moscow Soviet and the Museum Section of the People’s Commissariat of Education was not limited to registration of the collections and the issuing of safe-conducts. It also extended to the distribution of the numerous art works in state possession. Art that had been requisitioned or abandoned by owners who had emigrated, fled or been arrested; rarities discovered in antique shops, pawnshops, banks, etc., were removed partly to museums and partly to other premises designated by the city. Among them were the building of the English Club and several private houses. As mentioned above, the Zubalov mansion, situated near the Red Gates, was also a depository of the State Museum Fund. For this purpose it was equipped with a diesel power station, which was a great advantage in 1918-1922, when the winters were very cold. The staff of the depository managed to keep the temperature in the rooms six or ten degrees above zero, which was quite an achievement in post-Revolutionary Moscow. From 1924 until its disbandment in 1928, the Zubalov mansion was a central depository of the State Museum Fund. In that decade it received thousands of art works. The staff worked hard registering all the objects, systematising them, making inventories, and organising various exhibitions. The situation was much the same in the other depositories.
In 1918 a proposal was made to distribute all the accumulated art works among Proletarian Museums to be established in each of the districts of Moscow. This idea was realised with feverish haste. Eight Proletarian Museums, some with sections and annexes, were opened in about a year and a half. Some of the annexes were the houses or flats of collectors, turned into museums. Among them was the house of Brocard with an interesting collection which I will discuss below. Another was a mere curiosity: a little wooden mansion furnished in the mid-19th century, now renamed The Museum of Everyday Life of the Past. Its owners, the brother of the prominent Russian poet Vladislav Khodasevich and his wife, were appointed curators of the museum, with a charter that prohibited them from receiving more than five visitors at a time.

As a rule, to house a Proletarian Museum, the officials had to find a suitable building and then fill it with various collections and art works. As the exhibits were gathered in the district where the museum was being organised, this led to chance combinations that could be quite peculiar. To offset this effect, the displays from local sources would often be supplemented with works from the State Museum Fund. This was not the end of the story, however. In their urge to improve the mix, officials would remove and replace the paintings and sculptures, furniture and china again and again, transporting them by cart from one museum to another. This ceaseless migration of works of art went on in Moscow for four or five years. In the report of one of the Proletarian Museums, opened in the autumn of 1918, it is stated that up to the autumn of 1919, 400 carts were used to deliver art works to the museum and transport them to other institutions. The following year 10,000 objects were delivered to that museum by 68 carts. The staff made lists, drew up statements, the works were exhibited, and then several months later everything had to be changed again. Though the public attended the Proletarian Museums with pleasure, they did not last long. They suffered financial difficulties; the local authorities often wanted to use their buildings for other purposes; and the gap between dream and reality was all too apparent in most of them. The Proletarian Museums were not all closed down at the same time. When one closed, others were eager to claim its property, and so the migrations continued for quite a long period.

In the case of some of the Proletarian Museums we are quite well informed. One of these was the First Proletarian Museum, which was opened on Bolshaya Dmitrovka Street on the first
anniversary of the Great October Revolution. Like the others, this museum was very much the product of its time. The curators tried to place as many exhibits as possible in the available rooms. Lack of space did not deter them. They wanted to acquaint the public with as many possible kinds and national schools of art. There were rooms devoted to Russian, Western European and Oriental art; there were paintings, sculptures and icons, applied art, furniture, carpets and arms. The guides were instructed to tell visitors about the distinguishing features of the national schools of art, and to point out examples of mutual influence between cultures. That, at least, was the idea. In reality, all they could do was to evoke the feeling of a collector’s cabinet, filled to the brim with miscellaneous objects. Moreover, the displays constantly changed. In 1919 the First Proletarian Museum received a large collection of Western European painting, a chapel of icons and many works of applied art. At the end of 1921, however, it exhibited an assemblage of Russian and Oriental porcelain and a collection of Russian painting, from icons to the 20th century. The Western European paintings brought to the First Proletarian Museum in the spring of 1919 had been removed soon after to the newly organised Fifth Proletarian Museum of the Rogozhsko-Simonovsky district outside the centre
of Moscow, not far from Taganskaya Square. At first this museum was supposed to show Russian painting and applied art, but shortly after it was founded the above-mentioned collection of Western European painting was brought there. Most of the paintings came from the former collection of Ludwig Mandl, about which we know very little. A partner in an important trading firm, Mandl owned paintings from various schools. In 1909 he presented two Russian pictures to the Rumyantsev Museum. His main interest lay in Flemish and Dutch masters. Mandl owned paintings such as *King Solomon meets the Queen of Sheba* by Hans Vredeman de Vries, an *Allegory of taste* by Jan Brueghel, *The King drinks* by David Ryckaert, and a *Fish still life* by Pieter de Putter. In addition to the Mandl collection, the Fifth Proletarian Museum also displayed objects from other important Moscow collections such as that of Kristi. This, indeed, made it possible to form quite a representative exposition of European painting, occupying most of the rooms in the house.

Unfortunately, we have neither photographs nor plans of the hanging. Judging from the surviving evidence and documents, we can say that furniture and objects of applied art were exhibited together with paintings in the Fifth (as well as the First) Proletarian Museum and that an attempt was made to represent all kinds of
art, all epochs and all national schools. The museum had a pronounced educational function. Its curators gave lectures and organised excursions and concerts. The museum ran an art school and gave courses on the history of art. In this way it functioned as a cultural centre for the Rogozhsko-Simonovsky district. Despite the hardships of life at the time, the museum and its programmes were well attended. For example, from 28 August to 4 September 1922(?) it was visited by 175 people; a lecture was given on 'The art of the 17th century in the works of Dutch and Flemish painters' and a concert called 'The night of moods' was organised. It is noteworthy that all of this was done by one man. A statement drawn up after an official inspection states that there was only one specialist on art there, the artist Nikolay Khodataev, the appointed head of the museum. He was responsible for the registration and preservation of the objects, and for all excursions and lectures. He lived in the same building where the museum was housed, with his wife and five untrained assistants. Their mode of life was quite patriarchal. There was no strict differentiation between the living quarters and the museum.
premises. Receipts for the delivery of works of art were written by hand on scraps of paper. Nikolay Khodataev seems to have been a genuine enthusiast. He persistently tried to get new exhibits for his museum and to build a library of books on art. In 1920-22 he managed to acquire paintings, china, furniture and books from the First, Third, Fourth and Sixth Proletarian Museums. At first the Fifth Museum was subordinated to the District Soviet, but in 1923 it was passed on to the People’s Commissariat of Education and was declared a branch of the Tretyakov Gallery. All objects not belonging to the Russian school were taken away at that point. The independent-minded Khodataev was discharged by the managing board of the gallery. With that, the days of the museum were counted. When it was closed in the summer of 1925, it was the last existing Proletarian Museum.

The history of the Fifth Proletarian Museum typifies Moscow museum life in the beginning of the 1920s. We are better informed about it because its records are still preserved in the archives, while many of the other little museums have left no traces of their activities. After the Fifth Proletarian Museum was disbanded, its collection of Western European painting was removed to the picture gallery of the Museum of Fine Arts, founded in 1924.
To conclude these remarks about the Proletarian Museums, let us look at the most interesting of the mansions put to this purpose: that of Alexander Brocard, with its collection of Western European art. In 1920-22 it was proclaimed a branch of the Second Proletarian Museum of the Zamoskvoretsky district, also called the Museum of the Relics of the Past. The owner of the house was a son of Henry Brocard, mentioned above. The old Brocard’s collecting activities began with a chance purchase in 1872. In the following 20 years he built up one of the most important collections of art in Moscow. The nicest, kindest and most eccentric of all Moscow art-lovers, as one of his acquaintances, an antique dealer, called him in his memoirs, Henry Brocard could not refuse buying

Rembrandt,
*Christ driving the moneylenders from the temple*, signed and dated ‘RF 1626’.
Oil on panel, 43 x 32 cm.

(From the collection of Brocard)
any work offered by a poor or very persistent seller. He bought paintings, miniatures and objects of applied art indiscriminately; among them were masterpieces and rare paintings such as The old coquette by Bernardo Strozzi and Christ driving the money lenders from the Temple by Rembrandt. Henry Brocard and subsequently his widow showed the collection to the public; in the very beginning of the 20th century it was divided into three parts which passed to the collector’s sons, Alexander and Emile, and his son-in-law Pavel Giraud (who inherited the Rembrandt). The eldest son, Alexander, installed his part of the collection in his mansion. The house was even provided with a top lit room, so that when it was converted into a museum no serious changes were necessary. Paintings were exhibited there together with objects of applied art. As a journalist wrote in 1922: 'Undoubtedly genuine works hang side by side with the mediocre, and the old-fashioned mechanical bird-titters in cages divert the visitors' attention from the pictures.'

Though its out of date and amateurish atmosphere could be a little trying, the Brocard Museum of the Relics of the Past compared favourably with most other Proletarian Museums, if only because it presented to the public a genuine private collection, formed naturally and not artificially reconstituted. The collection had a distinctive character and its artistic level was relatively high. The discerning visitor could concentrate on the best exhibits from various schools. Among them were The flagellation by Johann Koerbecke, a landscape by Antonio Francesco Peruzzini with figures by Alessandro Magnasco, a portrait attributed to Corneille de Lyon, The ball by Marten Pepijn, Saint John the Baptist preaching by Alexander Keirincx, Head of a girl supposedly by Cornelis de Vos, and a Family portrait by Johannes Mijtens.
Johannes Mijtens, *Family portrait*, signed ‘Myten’. Oil on canvas, 105 x 134 cm.

(From the museum in the mansion of Alexander Brocard)

Marten Pepijn, *Ball*, signed ‘MP in et F’. Oil on copper, 50 x 64 cm.

(From the museum in the mansion of Alexander Brocard)
The disbanding of the Proletarian Museums in 1922-1924 coincided with other, far more important changes in Moscow’s museum life. At this point, plans drafted as far back as 1918 began to be carried out. The Tretyakov Gallery became the major Museum of National Art, and the Russian part of the collection of the Rumyantsev Museum was moved there. At first, a plan was devised to concentrate all the old masters in the Rumyantsev Museum and even to move part of the Hermitage collection there. However, this did not come to pass. Instead, in 1923 it was decided to disband the picture gallery of the Rumyantsev Museum altogether. The Museum Section of the People’s Commissariat of Education suggested that the Central Museum of Western Art should be incorporated in the Museum of Fine Arts, founded by Ivan Tsvetaev (by then, it was no longer subordinate to the Moscow University, but supervised by the Commissariat of Education). In the autumn of 1923 a resolution to this effect was issued by the government, followed by another one in March 1924 concerning the reorganisation of the Museum of Fine Arts (renamed in 1937, it is well known in Europe now as the Pushkin Museum). This institution was now to receive the Western European art from the Picture Gallery of the Rumyantsev Museum (including the private collections which entered it in 1918-20), the printroom of the Rumyantsev Museum and the collections of Brocard, Mandl and Dmitry Shchukin. The transfer of the Western European paintings from the Hermitage was also mentioned in this document.

The new picture gallery of the Museum of Fine Arts, better known as the Pushkin Museum, was opened on 11 November 1924, at a time when the formation of the holdings was still in progress. The museum also received works from other sources. Foremost was the State Museum Fund, the acquisitions from which included objects from Moscow private collections that had already been through the
Proletarian Museums. The Museum of Fine Arts also received works from several estate museums, some of which lost their museum status at the end of the 1920s, and from Moscow museums (for instance the 19th-century Western European paintings from the collection of Sergey Tretyakov).

The acquisition by the Museum of Fine Arts of many wonderful paintings from the Hermitage, in several installments, goes beyond the limits of this paper. Nor can we deal with the fate of the acquisitions that somehow left the Museum of Fine Arts. Suffice it to say that in the 1920s and particularly in the 1930s some of the exhibits were removed to other museums and some were sold through antique shops.

In conclusion, I would like to dwell in detail on the collection of Dmitry Shchukin, which is crucial to the Department of Dutch painting of the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, as the museum has since been renamed. Dmitry Shchukin belonged to a famous family of wealthy merchants. Nowadays, he is less known than his brothers Sergey and Pyotr. Sergey Shchukin, whose taste was revolutionary for the epoch, collected modern French painting from the Impressionists to Matisse and Picasso. Pyotr was one of the first to collect old Russian art. He erected two museum buildings, which were bequeathed to the city. Compared to his brothers, Dmitry Shchukin’s taste may seem more traditional. Nevertheless, his collection was really remarkable. Dmitry Shchukin took active part in the family business, but his main occupation was art collecting. He began with applied art, then got interested in bronze sculpture of the 16th-18th centuries and miniatures. Eventually he turned entirely to old master paintings and drawings. His passion for collecting was permanent and
persistent. Dmitry frequented Moscow’s antique shops and often went abroad to visit antiquarians and auctions. He had his own agents and contacts with other collectors, with whom he sometimes exchanged pictures. He also bought books on art history and consulted with painters, art-lovers and art historians in Russia as well as abroad. Wilhelm von Bode was one of his principal advisers and friends.

Dmitry Shchukin’s collection was kept in his Moscow mansion. Like the Brocard collection it was a kind of house museum. Unfortunately, we have no full description of how the art in this house museum was displayed, but it was more systematic than the house of Brocard. The dining room was decorated with Dutch still lifes, and the drawing-room with landscapes and genre scenes. What we do have is the list of the works that later entered the Museum of Fine Arts and some other Russian museums. The story of Dmitry Shchukin’s collection can be regarded as the final chapter of the history of private collecting in Moscow. It embodied Moscow taste in western painting with its preference for France and Holland. Many Shchukin works had passed through earlier Russian collections. An example is the provenance of Shchukin’s Philips Wouwerman. This picture from the collection of the Duke
of Orléans, was sold in London and then, through the English dealer Tioro, came to Russia, where it was purchased by Mosolov before it entered the Shchukin collection. Both the picture by Adriaen van de Velde and *The pothouse* by Teniers have similar provenances. The latter passed through the collections of Vassilchikov, Tuchkov and Vlassov before being acquired by Shchukin. The works by Jacob van Ruisdael and Saftleven were formerly in the collection of the Golitsin family; the Abraham van Beyeren was purchased from the collection of Prince Obolensky; and the Jan van Goyen from the widow of the Russian writer Dmitry Grigorovich. Some pictures were bought or exchanged in Moscow from famous local collectors such as Trofimovich, Brocard and others.

Among the Moscow collectors who became intimate friends of Dmitry Shchukin were Shaivechivich, who wrote the first small article devoted to the Shchukin collection, and Mosolov. Shchukin often purchased pictures through Moscow antique dealers, with whom he had easy-going relations. Thus, he bought his famous *Head of a girl* by Boucher for 100 roubles and a box of cigars. Every year Shchukin travelled abroad, where he bought pictures himself (for
example, the Avercamp in Vienna) or through his agents, especially Mikhail Savostin, who acquired the two capriccios by Guardi.

As mentioned above, Shchukin often donated pictures to the Rumyantsev Museum and was planning to bequeath his entire collection to it. After the Revolution Shchukin was one of the first to get a safe-conduct. This was undoubtedly linked to his stated intention of donating his collection to the state. His collection was transformed into the Museum of Old Western Art and opened to the public before the end of 1918. Shchukin became a curator in the department of arts of the Moscow Soviet. Thereafter he worked for the Museum Section of the People's Commissariat of Education while at the same time remaining the curator of his own museum. The Museum of Old Western Art only existed until 1921, when the house was converted to other purposes and the collection was transported to the lower floor of the house of Ivan Morozov. Shchukin lived in a small room in that house until his death. When his collection passed to the Museum of Fine Arts, he was appointed one of the curators of the Picture Gallery. His life

Adriaen van de Velde, *A herd*, signed and dated ‘A v Velde F 1663’. Oil on canvas, 32.7 x 38.6 cm.

(From the collection of Dmitry Shchukin)
was far from easy. Although no longer a well-to-do person, he continued to donate books and prints to the Museum of Fine Arts. In 1926 he presented one more picture to the museum, a *Vanitas* by Vincent van der Vinne. When Dmitry Shchukin died in 1932 he was totally blind.

Today the Dmitry Shchukin collection forms a part of the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. It includes not only pictures, but also sculptures, furniture and applied art. The porcelain collection was transferred to the estate museum of Kuskovo. While the collector considered himself an expert in Dutch and French painting, his range of interests was wider. He was also interested in Italian art from the early Renaissance on. Many of the masterpieces in our Italian department came from his collection. These include the *Virgin and child with saints* by Rossello di Jacopo Franchi, the only work in Russia by this master, and the statuette by Jacopo Sansovino. The room devoted to 18th-century Italian painting contains two marvellous capriccios by Guardi and a *View of Königstein castle* by Bernardo Bellotto from the Shchukin collection. The pride of the museum’s French department - the *Head of a girl* by Boucher, the *Lady in the garden* by Lancret and a grisaille by
Chardin - are Shchukin paintings as well. The choice of French masters in his collection was truly exquisite. He admired not only the paintings of Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard and Robert but also appreciated the high artistic value of their drawings, examples of which are now in the museum’s department of prints and drawings. The room devoted to French art of the 17th-18th centuries is richly decorated with furniture and sculptures from the Shchukin collection. Among them are small replicas of bronze groups by Gaspar Marsy, François Girardon, Pierre Lepautre, authentic replicas of the Cupid by Falconet and the portrait bust of Adélaïde de Savoye by Antoine Coysevox.

The most important contribution of Dmitry Shchukin to the collections of the Pushkin Museum consists of pictures of the
northern schools. The earliest group includes pieces by the Master of Lichtenstein Castle, *The Silver Age* by Lucas Cranach and German wooden sculptures of the 16th century; a *Christ* by Jan Mostaert, *The road to Calvary* by Michel Sittow and portraits by Adriaen Key. The Flemish painting that was the star attraction in Shchukin’s collection is the *Cupid* formerly given to Van Dyck but now considered to be an old replica. Shchukin possessed three masterpieces by Teniers and a still life by Jan Davidsz. de Heem. More than 40 pictures by Dutch masters testify to the collector’s acute taste and fine flair, as well as his good sense in consulting experts such as Wilhelm von Bode. The attributions of some of the pictures have necessarily been changed. For instance, *A music lesson* formerly ascribed to Ter Borch is now considered a school work. In general, however, Shchukin’s choices have stood the test of time. Particularly noteworthy are


(From the collection of Dmitry Shchukin)
The interior of a church by Jan van der Vucht, The interior of the New Church in Delft by Hendrick van Vliet, the Skating scene by Hendrick Avercamp (the only Avercamp in Russia), the View of the Waal River by Van Goyen and The return of the hunters by Philips Wouwerman.

Shchukin’s predilection for Dutch still lifes enriched our collection with a Breakfast by Pieter Claesz., a magnificent picture by Willem Kalf and a Vanitas by Matthias Withoos, as well as by a Fish still life by Van Beyeren and works by Van Streeck, Jacob van Walscapelle and the aforementioned Vanitas by Van der Vinne. Dmitry Shchukin also owned important examples of history painting, rounding out the display of the Dutch school in the museum: The martyrdom of Saint Stephen by Bartholomeus Breenbergh and Pilate washing his hands by Nicolaes Knüpfer. This enumeration of some important pictures from Dmitry Shchukin’s collection should give an idea of its significance for our museum, and this brief sketch of his collection in a sense completes the history of collecting in Moscow before the Revolution.

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Among 19th-century Russian collectors, Prince Pavel (Paul) Viazemsky stands alone in many respects. He came from an old noble family, grew up in a highly cultural milieu, and associated with the leading literary figures of his time. Moreover, he was a diplomat and a scientist conversant with both the Russian and the European mediaeval heritage. His collecting activities reflected the entire gamut of his varied intellectual pursuits.

The Viazemsky family was said to descend from the legendary Norman chief Rurik, who was invited to Russia in the 9th century by the people of Novgorod. According to the annals, the people said: ‘Our land is rich, but there is no order in it, come and rule over us.’ Until the end of the 16th century, the Russian tsars were descendants of Rurik as were some families whose lineage went back to independent princes of the Middle Ages. Such were the Viazemsky, whose principality, including the town of Viazma, was situated at the north of the Russian territories. The region had been a battlefield for centuries. Although the Viazemsky had lost their ancient power and grandeur by the 18th century, they were still a very rich and respected old princely family, full of contempt for the new nobility that surrounded the throne after the accession of Peter the Great. For a Viazemsky prince, mediaeval history was not a matter academic but rather of personal interest. Among the family icons was an image of their ancestress, Princess Juliania Viazemskaya, who was murdered in a 13th-century struggle and who was proclaimed a saint of the Russian Church.

In the late 18th century, Prince Andrey Viazemsky served in the Russian army fighting the Turks. Later he was governor of Nizhni Novgorod, however his independent and critical disposition hindered his career. In 1792 he bought the manor of Ostafievo to the south of Moscow and in 1800-02 built a large and beautiful house there as a summer residence. The name of the architect is not known, but he was clearly a highly professional member of the architectural school flourishing in Moscow at the epoch. The style reflects late classical taste, elaborating on an 18th-century type of palace with open colonnades leading to two side pavilions.
Particularly noteworthy is a large oval reception room with French windows giving onto the park. Between the main entrance and the oval room there is the handsome vestibule that would later contain an important part of the Viazemsky collection.

Prince Andrey died in 1807 and was succeeded by his only son Piotr Andreevitch Viazemsky (1790-1878). The latter joined the Russian army as a volunteer during the French invasion of 1812 and was decorated for his courage. He married Princess Vera Gagarina in 1811. The bride was not very beautiful, but had a very cheerful and steadfast disposition, qualities that would later stand her in good stead during the course of her turbulent married life.

Prince Piotr was a poet who wrote fine lyrical and satirical verse. He was a wit and a popular society figure, and, unfortunately, a gambler as well. In a letter to his wife he confesses to having lost half a million rubles at cards in a single night - an enormous sum for that or any period. His house in Moscow burned down during the French occupation in 1812, and Ostafievo became the main family residence. Prince Piotr would invite his literary friends to stay there. Among his visitors were all of the leading writers.
J.L. Voille, Portrait of Andrey Viazemsky

K. Reichel, Portrait of Piotr Viazemsky

A. Pushkin, Portrait of Vera Viazemskaya

A. Pushkin, Portrait of Piotr Viazemsky
and critics of the time, including Pushkin and Gogol. Pushkin was a close friend of both the master and the mistress of the house. A half-sister of Prince Piotr was married to the great Russian historian Karamzin, who would stay with the Viazemsky for months and years writing his classic History of the Russian State. Guests from all circles were entertained at lavish receptions, fancy-dress balls and theatricals while the best Moscow singers and dancers were invited to perform at great expense. As a result, the prince ran up huge debts, and was compelled to stop entertaining on such a scale and change his way of living. An attempt to enter state service soon failed: Piotr Viazemsky was dismissed for his freethinking and exiled from St. Petersburg to Ostafievo. He resumed his career later, but it was never his primary concern.

The couple had only one son, Prince Pavel Petrovitch Viazemsky (1820-1888), whose person and activities constitute the theme of this paper. No doubt, his family background stimulated the prince’s interest in the mediaeval history of Russia, Byzantium and Western Europe. He grew up in a brilliant intellectual atmosphere, which allowed him to later take an honourable place in the scientific and cultural developments of his time.

From 1840 to 1856, Pavel Viazemsky served in the Russian
diplomatic service at the embassies of Istanbul, The Hague, Karlsruhe and Vienna. He used his stay in each city to gather information in various fields that appealed to him. In Istanbul he looked for the mementos of old Byzantine culture, the main source of intellectual life in mediaeval Russia. His interest in mediaeval Greek manuscripts was particularly acute, anticipating his later activities as a specialist in the old written language of Russia. His stay in The Hague acquainted him with the famous collection of King William II and inspired him to form a similar collection of Gothic art for himself. (The word ‘Gothic’ is here used as it was in his time, meaning both mediaeval and Northern Renaissance art without distinction.)

In 1848, while still in Istanbul, Prince Pavel Viazemsky married the young widow Maria Boeck (née Stolypina), a famous - and rich - society beauty. He had ample means and used them freely to acquire the exquisite and rare objects that caught his sophisticated eye. Later he continued collecting Gothic - and other - art during his stays in Germany and Austria. One such acquisition was a pair of shutters with singing angels, dated 1517, by Suess von Kulmbach. They turned up under that name at an auction in Cologne. We do not know whether Viazemsky bought them at the auction itself or some time later from a subsequent owner. The shutters now belong to the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. Their attribution is still accepted, and the date regarded as marking a turning point in the artist’s career.

When he returned to Russia in 1856, Pavel Viazemsky brought with him a large collection of considerable importance. For instance, there were two altarpiece shutters with St. Joseph of Arimathea and Mary Magdalene, which in 1854 had been sold from the Hermitage together with about a thousand paintings that Emperor Nicholas I considered unworthy of the collection. At the auction they were listed as German school, but in fact are by
Pieter Coecke van Aelst or his studio. The Pushkin Museum bought them from a private owner in 1973. The subject matter, the material data (transferred from wood to canvas) and especially the unusually tall and narrow dimensions made it possible to identify them as the works mentioned in the Hermitage auction for Hans Süß von Kulmbach, *Angels*. Oil on panel, 114 x 46 cm. Moscow, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts.
Pieter Coecke van Aelst,
*Saint Joseph of Arimathea.*
Oil on canvas, 81 x 31.3 cm. Moscow, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts

Pieter Coecke van Aelst,
*Mary Magdalene.* Oil on canvas, 81 x 31.3 cm. Moscow, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts
list. This was later confirmed when we spotted them on an old photograph of a drawing room at Ostafievo.

In 1861 Piotr Viazemsky gave Ostafievo to his son Prince Pavel, who needed the house for his growing family and who had the means to maintain it. In due course he installed his collections there. There were large numbers of Western paintings and sculptures, prints and drawings, manuscripts and incunabula, furniture and folk art. The house contained a huge library of about 32,000 volumes as well as the family archives, including his father’s correspondence with his literary friends.

Once in Russia, Viazemsky resumed his official career. From 1856 on he was active at the Ministry of Education. In 1862 he became a censor for foreign literature, later he was the head of the Publications Department, and he ended up as the senator for matters of heraldry, which in Russia was a lifetime appointment. His personal interests were mainly focussed on mediaeval Russian literature, on which he published several studies. In 1877 he was one of the founders of the Society of Devotees of Ancient Manuscript Literature. In fact, he was elected its president, a post
he held until his death. He also published two volumes of material on Pushkin from the Ostafievo archives, adding his personal recollections of the poet.

In the course of time Viazemsky's collecting activities shifted to old Russian manuscripts and other objects of national medieval art and culture. He was one of the first to recognise the great artistic value of old icons, which at the time were seen mostly as testimonies of traditional folk and church beliefs, far beneath European standards of professional art.

The distribution of the Viazemsky collections in the house was remarkable for its combination of the methodical and the fanciful. There was a special room for the icons, memorial rooms devoted to Pushkin and Karamzin and to the owner's father, the poet Piotr Viazemsky. The varied collection of old Russian, eastern and western arms was centred in the dining room. *Objets d'art* of all kinds were spread through the various drawing rooms. The heart of the house was the so-called Gothic Hall, a large vestibule between the main entrance and the oval ballroom. It contained mostly German and Netherlandish works of art of the 15th and 16th centuries, placed closely together and nearly covering the walls. The place of honour given to Gothic art testifies to its importance in the eyes of the owner. He also possessed a number of outstanding Italian paintings, ranging from a 14th-century Florentine triptych to a *St. Sebastian* by Guercino and a *Crucifixion* by Magnasco. His French pictures were less important to him, and he later gave them to his son-in-law, Count Sergey Sheremetev.

After Prince Pavel's death in 1888, Ostafievo was inherited by his only son, Prince Piotr Pavlovitch Viazemsky, who showed little interest in the place. He transferred some paintings to his house in St. Petersburg, neglected Ostafievo
and even rented it to a wealthy but uneducated merchant, to the horror of Moscow intellectuals and high society. At the end of the century he sold Ostafievo to his brother-in-law, the above-mentioned Count Sergey Dmitrievitch Sheremetev (1844-1918). The latter, too, was an intellectual and an aristocrat. A very rich man, he owned two other beautiful country houses near Moscow, Ostankino and Kuskovo, which contained large collections of objets d’art. He was an historian with a special interest in archival research. He edited the publication of the complete works of his wife’s grandfather, the poet Piotr Viazemsky, and other material in the Ostafievo archives. He also published a book of memoirs of his father-in-law Prince Pavel in 1888, the year of the latter’s death, and succeeded him as President of the Society of Devotes of Ancient Manuscript Literature.

Count Sergey Sheremetev and his wife Ecatherina Pavlovna (née Viazemskaya) felt that, with its memories and treasures, Ostafievo had a particular meaning not only for their family, but also for the public as an important centre of Russian culture. They tried to restore the interiors to their condition at the time of Prince Pavel, and the public was allowed to visit on certain days. Sheremetev commissioned a catalogue of the library and an inventory of the works of art. The latter, describing about 600 paintings and sculptures, was completed in 1902. Although the inventory fortunately survived in the Moscow archives, it is nonetheless very often impossible to identify existing objects with those mentioned in it. A great help is provided by the photographs that were taken of the rooms, which enabled us to identify a painting by Pieter Aertsen on the wall of a drawing room, and the shutters by Coecke van Aelst in another. Both artists’ names were unknown to the cataloguer, so that without the photographs we would still be in the dark, as is the case with many other works as well.
Between them, the lists and photographs help us to form an idea of Ostafievo at the turn of the 20th century. Sheremetev intended his restoration of the house as a sort of homage to his father-in-law. Yet tastes and habits were changing. In the photographs of the drawing room can be discerned several paintings that do not belong in a Gothic Hall. Yet how can we be certain whether or not they hung there originally. In any case, it would seem that nothing new was brought into the house, though a number of paintings were removed to other Sheremetev residences. The striking character of the Gothic Hall was probably somewhat diluted, yet Ostafievo still housed the most important private collection of Gothic art in the country, in some respects competing with imperial treasures in the Hermitage.

Sergey Sheremetev died in 1918 and was succeeded by his son Dmitriy Sergeevitch. Following the decree to nationalize the great art collections, Ostafievo was established as a museum, and its owner appointed as curator. By 1924 it was decided that the museum should be mainly dedicated to the history of Russian literature. The most important works of art were moved to the museum of Fine Arts (later the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts) in Moscow. A list of them (c. 30 objects) is found in the Pushkin
Museum archives.

Despite public protest, the museum of Ostafievo was closed in 1930, and the building employed for other uses. The collections were divided between several museums, libraries and archives. In some cases the objects themselves dictated the destination. Accordingly, the memorial objects connected with Pushkin went to the so-called Pushkin House in St. Petersburg (the poet’s last residence). Some were scattered among the smaller art and history museums in the region. Some were given to the Moscow Museum for Religion and Atheism, from which in 1935 the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts received a group of Gothic paintings including *Christ and the Samaritan Woman*, now attributed to Pieter Aertsen. It is impossible to ascertain the fate of many of the works mentioned in the list of 1902. Quite a number appear to have passed into private hands.

Nowadays, Ostafievo is being repaired with the aim of re-opening it as a museum, but the historical house has lost its contents. Perhaps some of the manuscripts or drawings could be re-installed there in the form of copies or even, in the case of minor paintings from local museums, in the original. However, the dazzling cultural...
complex brought together by the Viazemsky and maintained by
the Sheremetevs will never be recuperated.

The significance of the Viazemsky home is broader than that of art collecting alone. In Russia, the Romantic enthusiasm for the mediaeval past had a specific tinge: it represented a sort of opposition to the official trend of taking part in western politics, imitating western technical achievements and ways of living, admiring Paris fashion, etc. The Viazemsky diluted this antithesis. They themselves were part of the great Russian historical past, but at the same time they were highly cultivated European intellectuals. They were very familiar with Germany, the native land of the Romantic movement, and owned a collection of watercolours by Caspar David Friedrich (now in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts). The collections of Prince Pavel Viazemsky reflect both the national and the western trends. As a scholar he studied old Russian manuscripts, while in the field of western Gothic art he proved to be an extremely gifted amateur. What did he know and what did he think about the works of art that took his fancy? The Viazemsky papers in the Moscow archives have never been studied thoroughly from this standpoint. Perhaps a future
researcher would find the keys there to the names and the values Prince Pavel Viazemsky attached to his purchases. A comparison of the attributions of the mid-19th century to those of 1902 and of the present time would be most revealing.

The image of Ostafievo would be distorted were we to think of it only as a sort of museum. In reality it was the home of a large family. Many family souvenirs and portraits, as well as photographs of the Ostafievo rooms, belong to Ekaterina Vassilievna Sheremeteva, the granddaughter of the last owner. She is still living in Moscow.

Xenia Egorova († 1999) was the curator of the department of Flemish art of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow
The history of the Hermitage collection of Dutch and Flemish drawings spans more than two centuries. Like many other sections of the museum, it owes its foundation and a significant share of its riches to the all embracing passion for collecting of Empress Catherine II (1762-1796). During the early years of the museum's existence, the empress acquired a number of important collections which formed the basis of the Cabinet of Drawings, and included works from all of the leading European schools.

Catherine II founded her museum essentially from scratch. She did not consider the modest acquisitions of Peter the Great and Empress Elizabeth a basis for her Hermitage. Nor did the collections of European drawings which had been in St. Petersburg since the beginning of the 18th century have any direct relationship to the appearance of the Hermitage Cabinet of Drawings. Randomly assembled and somewhat varied in composition, these small early collections should nonetheless be mentioned, for they consisted mainly of Dutch and Flemish drawings, some of which later entered the Hermitage.

The most famous works in these pre-Hermitage Petersburg collections are two albums from the early 18th century. One contains 42 careful, almost calligraphic, pen drawings by the Dutch marine painter Adriaen van Salm, showing ships, ports and sea battles. The album came from the personal library of Peter the Great, who may have purchased it directly from the artist. The second belonged to a Dutch engraver working in the Russian service, Adriaen Schoonebeeck, and was sold by his heirs to the Library of the Academy of Sciences in 1738, and entered the Hermitage in the 20th century. Plans, working drawings and sketches by Schoonebeeck himself cover the pages, alongside works by his father Romeyn de Hooghe, his stepson the engraver Pieter Pickaert, and a number of other artists who remain largely unidentified. Another two albums now in the collection, the origins of which are not known, became part of the Hermitage inventory in the early 19th century; judging by their bindings and paper, they
were put together in Russia no later than the mid-18th century. They contain a disorganised selection of mediocre drawings from different schools, among which we can nonetheless identify a few works of artistic value, including drawings by Anthonie Waterloo, from the circle of Frans Floris and from the workshop of Jan van Scorel.1

The modesty of these historical rarities, which offer interesting evidence of the first steps in the collecting of European drawings in Russia, only emphasizes the scale and importance of Catherine II's collecting activities. In creating the drawings section of her Hermitage, the empress used her favourite method, already tried and tested in the formation of the Picture Gallery, namely the acquisition of famous European collections wholesale. The first such purchase was in 1768, when the Russian envoy in Paris, Prince Dmitry Golitsin, informed the empress that the entire collection of Count Carl Cobenzl of Brussels was for sale. The date of this purchase officially marks the foundation of the Cabinet of Drawings.

Count Carl Cobenzl (1712-1770) was an important Austrian diplomat and statesman. He was in Brussels as head of the administration of the Austrian Netherlands from 1753 on, with the rank of Plenipotentiary Minister to Empress Maria Theresa. His

Jan Brueghel I, *Winter landscape*, 1611. Pen and brown wash, brush and grey and light blue wash, 19.2 x 27 cm.

(Source of entry: collection of Count Cobenzl, Brussels, 1768)
collection, assembled in Brussels, consisted of a small picture gallery, excellent in terms of composition, and close to 4,000 drawings from all the main schools. In essence, it was a readymade museum of Western European drawing; already systematised and in model order. All the drawings were glued onto identical dark lilac passe partouts in five standard formats, classified by author and school and set in alphabetical order in specially prepared, richly decorated folders and wooden boxes. Some of these folders and boxes are still used today for their original purpose - the storage of drawings. A specially engraved cartouche on the passe partout bore the name of the suggested author and the collection was accompanied by a bound manuscript catalogue.

The quality of the collection was somewhat uneven, splendid masterpieces keeping company with average and even downright weak works. Clearly neither Cobenzl himself, nor his artistic advisers, had a fine understanding of the relative values of drawings (the count's picture gallery was far more strictly selected). A feature of dilettante collecting in the 18th century was a particular fondness for carefully finished drawings, which led to the acquisition of numerous copies of paintings and engravings, perceived as originals by the artists themselves. Nor was the catalogue a model of professionalism. It was compiled by the count's nephew, Johann Philipp Cobenzl, who became a famous diplomat and whose memoirs provide an interesting reference to this task:

'La principale de mes occupations cependant était dès le commencement de soigner une collection de dessins originaux qu'il faisait des plus illustres peintres anciens. Dessinant moi même passablement bien, il me trouva propre cette besogne. J'arrangeais ces dessins d'après les maîtres et les différentes écoles, je les collais sur papier, je les encadrais, je les distribuais...'


(Source of entry: collection of Count Cobenzl, Brussels, 1768)
Such a 'domestic' approach to cataloguing the huge collection, without the aid of specialists, meant that the catalogue reflects the collector's own opinions, with all the mistakes and exaggerations this naturally entails. While some attributions (clearly those traditionally attached to the drawings) were not without justification, many others were the fruits of the purest fantasy. Dozens of very average sheets were baselessly attributed to Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, Van Eyck, Dürer, Veronese and Rembrandt. These naive identifications - which would have been questioned by experts had the collection been sold publicly - were taken at face value in Russia, with its total lack of a tradition of connoisseurship in European drawings. Even 100 years later they were reproduced without any reservations in the first printed catalogues of the Hermitage drawings. This is an important point, for it had a negative impact on the fate of the Hermitage collection: it created a false perception of the collection's exhaustive nature, which thus did not require any particular effort to supplement it or to fill in lacunae.

Though uneven, and not living up to its pretensions to universality, Count Cobenzl's collection was an extremely lucky and important acquisition for the museum. It enriched the Hermitage with a vast quantity of excellent drawings, laying firm foundations for the imperial graphic collection. Without touching here upon the superb selection of works by Italian, German and, particularly, French masters, we should stress the richness of the Flemish section, embracing three centuries of the national school. While the 15th and 16th centuries, despite the
presence of odd works of interest, are covered only in a somewhat fragmentary fashion, the history of Flemish drawing from the turn of the 16th-17th centuries is reflected in the Cobenzl collection without any significant lacunae at all. Of the sheets listed under the name of Rubens, no less than 20 are in fact originals by the great artist, while many others came from his workshop. Portrait studies by Van Dyck, a large gouache by Roelant Savery (Kermess), watercolours and gouaches by Jacob Jordaens and Joannes Fijt, are among the best and most significant works by these artists. Also worthy of special attention are the drawings by Jan Brueghel, Sebastiaen Vrancx, Frans Francken II, Lucas van Uden, David Teniers the Younger, along with numerous sheets by Abraham van Diepenbeeck and Jan Erasmus Quellinus. Count Cobenzl eagerly bought and commissioned drawings from contemporary artists in Flanders, thanks to which the standard of the Hermitage's collection of Flemish drawings from the first half and middle of the 18th century exceeds that of most other such collections outside Belgium.

Dutch drawings in the Cobenzl collection were far fewer in number and were not so systematically selected. Nonetheless, from this source the Hermitage gained significant works such as Rembrandt's *Landscape with a rider*, Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem's *After the Deluge*, Hendrick Goltzius' *Courtesan* and a number of good landscape drawings by Hendrick Avercamp, Nicolaes Berchem, Herman van Swanevelt, Bartholomeus Breenbergh, Herman Saftleven, and Frederic de Moucheron.
Almost immediately after the purchase of the Cobenzl collection, in 1769 Catherine acquired that of Count Brühl, in Dresden. For many years, Count Heinrich Brühl, prime minister to Augustus III, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, had been in charge of buying art for the Dresden Gallery, assembling his own collection at the same time. After his death Catherine acquired it en masse from his heirs. In addition to roughly 600 pictures, St. Petersburg also gained volumes containing engravings and 14 in folio albums with 1,020 original drawings from various eras and schools.

For his own collection, Count Brühl was advised by his secretary, the notable connoisseur Carl Heinrich von Heinecken, which accounts for the relatively high quality of its content. However, for Brühl drawings were not the most important part of his collection and they seem to have been acquired almost as a matter of chance. The nature of the resulting collection was markedly different to that of Count Cobenzl: it did not pretend to completeness or order; the albums were filled randomly, probably simply in the order in which the pieces were acquired. While it contained fewer truly outstanding masterpieces, the overall selection was stricter and the attributions, noted in pencil below each sheet, more modest and in general closer to the truth.4

Alongside the dominant (in terms of quantity) works from the Italian and French schools, Dutch masters were well represented in the Brühl collection. From this source came Rembrandt's Winter landscape and Aelbert Cuyp's Houses and carriages along a
riverbank; a rare signed sheet by Pieter Cornelisz. van Rijck, 
*Kitchen scene (Christ at Emmaus)*; high quality works by the later 
Mannerist artists Abraham Bloemaert, Paulus van Vianen, David 
Vinckboons and Gilles de Hondecoeter; works by Adriaen van 
Ostade, Philips Koninck, Bartholomeus Breenbergh, Willem 
Schellinks, Joris van der Haagen, Ludolf Backhuyzen, Cornelis 
Troost; a series of designs for engravings by Claes Moeyaert; a 
large group of figure studies by Cornelis Bega; around 30 
landscape drawings by Jacob Esselens, and so on. Among the 
less numerous Flemish sheets in the Brühl collection we should 
note nine good drawings by Jordaens as well as a number of 
landscapes, including large ones by Jan Frans van Bloemen.

The next important event was the acquisition, several years later, 
of an excellent group of Dutch drawings from the 17th and early 18th 
centuries, consisting of 120 high quality sheets in a superb state of 
preservation. Before entering the Hermitage, many had passed 
through the hands of famous Dutch collectors. The precise date and 
source of this vital acquisition remains unclear. Nonetheless, some 
light is shed on the subject by the recently discovered fact that all 
the drawings were sold at auction in Amsterdam on 29 March 1773 as 
part of the collection of Dionis 
Muilman, and were acquired by the 
Paris collector and dealer Fouquet. 

Fouquet may simply have been 
acting as an agent for Russia’s envoy 
in Holland - since 1769 Prince Dmitry 
Golitsin, whose interest in drawings 
was evident when he organised the 
purchase of the Cobenzl collection. 
This is, however, sheer speculation. 
Fouquet acquired many other draw- 
ings at the same auction which did 
not end up in St. Petersburg, so our 
drawings may have passed to the 
Russian empress (directly from him 
or via others) somewhat later by 
other means.

Though modest in scale, this 
acquisition contributed immeasurably 
to the level of the Hermitage
collection of Dutch drawings. For the first time it included sheets from truly elite 18th-century collections that had passed through the testing grounds of auctions and expert assessments and which in general were correctly attributed. The individual responsible for choosing this particular group of works remains unknown, but the selection does not make a random appearance: with only odd exceptions, the drawings were by famous 17th-century landscape artists, their quantity and variety providing a very full picture of the development of the leading Dutch genre. From this source the Hermitage gained a number of works which are the pride of the museum, including nine drawings by Jacob Ruysdael, two by Meindert Hobbema (only ten drawings by him are known), three by Aert van der Neer (about 20 drawings by him are known) as well as high quality sheets by Jan van Goyen, Bartholomeus Breenbergh, Lambert Doomer, Roelant Roghman, Abraham Furnerius, Herman Saftleven, Simon de Vlieger and Jan Weenix. To these should be added three sheets then attributed to Rembrandt but now given to his school (which in no way diminishes their artistic merits), good subject drawings by Adriaen van de Venne and Cornelis Troost, and finally a curious group of early 18th-century topographical watercolours.
During these same years, while the nucleus of the Hermitage collection was crystallising, another major collection of European drawings was taking shape in St. Petersburg. This belonged to the Imperial Academy of Arts and was also under the direct patronage of Catherine II. Later, in the 20th century, a considerable part of it flowed into the Hermitage Cabinet of Drawings.

The basis of the academic collection was formed by 6,979 drawings which, according to the archives, were 'brought by His Excellency the President of the Academy from foreign lands' in 1767 and 'donated by Her Imperial Majesty to this Academy' in 1767. Many circumstances surrounding this acquisition remain unclear. For instance, we have no idea when this vast collection of European drawings came into the hands of Ivan Betskoy - then president of the academy, where they were acquired and how they arrived in Russia.

Ivan Betskoy (1703-1795) was an influential courtier at the court of Catherine II. He occupied a series of important state posts and enjoyed the empress’s unswerving trust and favour. Unlike many of his peers, to our knowledge he showed no particular passion for collecting, although his occupation brought him into regular contact with the arts. As of 1762 Betskoy was in

Lambert Doomer, *Bridge across the Loire at Amboise*, second half of the 1640s. Pen and brown wash, brush and brown and grey wash, 23.1 x 41.1 cm.

(Source of entry: collection of Dionis Muilman, Amsterdam, before 1797)
charge of all educational institutions in Russia, including the Academy of Arts - which he headed for over 30 years - and he worked hard to supplement the academic library and the museum of plaster casts. Official correspondence relating to artistic commissions for the court and acquisitions for the Hermitage was also his responsibility.

Betskoy himself enjoyed a European upbringing and education. He was the illegitimate son of a Swedish baroness and Peter the Great's field marshal Prince Trubetskoj (who spent 18 years as a prisoner of war in Sweden during the Northern War), and he grew up in Stockholm. On his father's return to Russia, Betskoy was sent to study in Copenhagen and went on, during his service in the collegiate of foreign affairs, to spend many years at different European courts. Between 1756 and 1761 he was in Paris, where he had long standing connections in literary and artistic circles. It is possible that he formed his collection at this time.

We cannot, however, exclude a different version of its genesis: namely, that the drawings making up the so called 'Betskoy Collection' were not in fact his personal property, but were acquired at the empress's orders - and paid for by her, as suggested by the archives - as study material for the Academy of

Allaert van Everdingen, *Landscape with a boat*, between 1640 and 1652. Watercolour over sketch in black chalk, 15 x 23 cm.

(Source of entry: collection of Dionis Muilman, Amsterdam, before 1797)
Arts. One argument in favour of such a version is the very nature of the collection when it arrived in 1767, which created the impression of having been a simultaneous purchase of the entire stock of a single or even several antiquarians. Vast - numerically speaking - and extremely varied in composition, the collection was totally unsorted: no attempt was made to attach particular names to the drawings, to determine their national school or even the century to which they belonged. Many strange things are encountered in the history of collecting; nonetheless, such a wholesale purchase of many thousands of anonymous sheets seems an unusual act for this dry and rational man who had never shown any interest in collecting. It is more like the logical action of a middleman, fulfilling a commission to purchase as much varied visual material as possible for drawing classes at the newly founded Academy of Arts. The drawings were most likely acquired in Holland, as suggested by the strong numerical predominance of works from the Dutch school, and also the word 'Haarlem' written on the back of a number of them. The latter reinforces the doubts regarding Betskoy’s direct participation in the purchase, for there is no information to the effect that he ever made a trip to Holland.

In the Academy of Arts the drawings were given similar mounts and stamped with a special collector’s mark⁶; they were sorted by subject and mounted on the pages of 31 albums. No indications of authorship or school were given, even in obvious cases where

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Karel van Mander, *Courtly scene in a palace garden*, c. 1600. Pen and brush and brown wash over preparatory drawing in black chalk, 27 x 49.3 cm.

(Source of entry: collection of the Academy of Arts, 1924)
the work was signed. The collection was subsequently totally forgotten and eventually thought to be lost. It was rediscovered purely by chance during a study of the library storerooms in the Academy of Arts during the autumn of 1923. Hermitage employees Vladimir Levinson Lessing and Mikhail Dobroklonsky selected around 2,000 of the best works, which were transferred to the Hermitage in exchange for duplicate prints in January 1924.

Only the total isolation of post-revolutionary Russia can explain why the discovery of the 'Betskoy Collection' did not become a sensation worldwide. Of course, three quarters of it was composed - in the words of Levinson Lessing - of 'utter rubbish', but among this 'rubbish' on the pages of the newly found albums were hundreds of excellent previously unknown works. The selection made for the Hermitage counted drawings from all the main European schools, including now famous works by Ercole Roberti, Dürer, Bellange, Poussin and Claude Lorrain. And yet, most numerous and important were the additions to the museum's Dutch and Flemish collections. They included Actor standing, probably the best drawing by Rembrandt in the Hermitage, a large selection of works by Jordaens and Fijt, marvellous pieces by Aelbert Cuyp, Berchem, Doomer, Roghman, Govert Flinck and many other 17th century masters. Even more significant were the works of the early period - for the first time the Hermitage boasted drawings by artists such as Aertgen van Leyden, Pieter Cornelisz. Kunst, Cornelis Massijs, and Dirk Vellert. Meanwhile, the section

Hendrik de Clerck, Allegory of the twelve years' truce, c. 1609. Pen and brush and brown wash, gouache and gold, 25.4 x 33.6 cm.

(Source of entry: collection of the Academy of Arts, 1924)
of northern Mannerism was enriched with sheets by Bartholomeus Spranger, Karel van Mander, Frederik Sustris, Roelant Savery, Hendrick de Clerk, Lodewijk Toeput and entire sets of drawings by Adriaen Bloemaert and Jacques de Gheyn II.

A few words should also be said concerning the historical value of the 'Betskoy Collection' as a single complex. Thanks to its original unsorted nature, this vast mass of drawings, endlessly varied in quality and purpose, affords unique insight into the antiquarian trade of the mid-18th century. It provides modern scholars the opportunity of peering into the shop of some dealer of the 1760s and observing all that had accumulated over decades - including works which, due to lack of interest, would otherwise have had little chance of surviving into the 20th century. All kinds of working sketches, drawings marked up for transfer to another medium, technical and training drawings, amateur drawings, endless copies of the most varied models (often lost), not to speak of a multitude of totally professional works now impossible to identify, when taken together, present a picture of rare breadth illustrating the practical use of drawings in Europe (above all the Netherlands) between the 16th century and the first half of the 18th century.

In addition to the drawings received from Ivan Betskoy in 1767, the collection of the Academy of Arts was also home to a large number of other valuable sheets which arrived in Russia during the reign of Catherine II. Works by Dutch and Flemish masters were relatively few in number, yet mention should be made of several excellent drawings from the celebrated collection of Jean de Jullienne in Paris, whose precise date and source of acquisition remain a mystery. Among these were Pentecost by Van Dyck, Christ's miracles of healing by Jordaens and Study for two canons from a procession of knights of the Order of the Garter by Peter Lely (all transferred to the Hermitage in 1924).
Catherine’s interest in the museum of the Academy of Arts often prompted her to transfer works of art there that had originally been acquired for the Hermitage. This mainly concerned paintings, but also some fairly important graphic works, monumental cartoons for which no place could be found in the picture gallery or the Cabinet of Drawings. Several of these including cartoons by Anton Raphael Mengs, perished in a fire in the Academy Museum in 1906, but a number returned safely to the Hermitage in the 1920s. Among them are eight monumental works in gouache on paper, preparatory cartoons for tapestries produced jointly by Abraham van Diepenbeeck and Peter Boel. Rare in terms of their size and excellent state of preservation, these 17th-century pieces are thought to have arrived in Russia in 1777 with the English adventuress and bigamist, the Duchess of Kingston and subsequently - perhaps after her death - been acquired by Catherine, possibly having been in the possession of Prince Grigory Potemkin in the interim.

Along with these large works the empress also banished to the Academy what, without exaggeration, is one of her most precious acquisitions in all her years of collecting. This is a huge drawing by Goltzius, Bacchus, Venus and Ceres, done in pen on primed canvas (returned to the Hermitage in 1924), a unique masterpiece. In 1604, Karel van Mander described it as Goltzius' most outstanding work and, indeed, it passed through the hands of Emperor Rudolf II, Queen Christina of Sweden, and Cardinal Mazarin, before entering the collection of Pierre Crozat in Paris at the end of the 17th century. Along with other famous canvases from this gallery, which Catherine II purchased wholesale in 1772, it arrived in St. Petersburg, but did not become part of the Hermitage inventory and soon found its way to the Academy of Arts. Perhaps the empress was acting upon the advice of Denis Peter Lely, Two canons from a procession of knights of the Order of the Garter, mid-1660s. Black and white chalk on greyish-blue paper, 49 x 36 cm.

(Source of entry: collection of the Academy of Arts, 1924)
Diderot, then visiting St. Petersburg, and an important member of her team of advisers and intermediaries in the purchase of art. He wrote an official note criticising the collection in the Academy of Arts, seeking to convince Catherine that paintings should be added to it to form a ‘tableaux d’école’, at which students could look to acquire a real taste for drawing. Goltzius’ masterpiece was ideally suited to this purpose, and this may have been the reason leading to the strange decision to banish it from the Hermitage.

Catherine II's death in 1796 marked the end of an era. While Catherine's successors to the Russian throne did much to add to the picture gallery and departments of the Hermitage, all active

Hendrick Goltzius, *Bacchus, Venus and Ceres*, 1606. Pen and brown wash on grounded canvas, 228 x 170 cm.

(Source of entry: collection of the Academy of Arts, 1924)
acquisition of Western European drawings for the imperial collections ceased. This was partly due to the conviction mentioned above that the collections acquired for the museum when it was founded were rich enough in themselves. Indicative of this were the words of Count Dmitry Buturlin, who was in charge of the Hermitage in the early 1800s. A man of great erudition, a collector and bibliophile, author of weighty and intelligent ‘Notes’ on the state of the Hermitage, he sincerely considered that the Cabinet of Drawings ‘is less in need of expansion than other areas, and does not even require further expenditure and care such as is necessary for the other collections. It will be sufficient merely not to reject chance offerings, when such a happy chance should present itself in the future, but we should rather wait such an occasion than seek it.’8

Such a view of affairs naturally put a brake on the growth of the Hermitage drawings collection. Throughout the entire 19th century it was added to only very slowly, without any particular plan, mainly through acquisitions of architectural drawings and sheets of a topographical nature. Practically nothing from the Dutch and Flemish schools entered the collection of drawings. Two watercolours by Adriaen van Ostade, which came from the collection of Luigi Grassi in 1862, and one by Jacob de Wit, purchased as part of the Library of Prince Lobanov Rostovsky in 1897, are the sole items added to this section throughout the whole of the 120 years between the death of Catherine and the Revolution of 1917 worth mentioning.

Lack of new major acquisitions for the Hermitage did not, however, mean that the flow of Netherlandish drawings to Russia ceased during these years. Throughout the 19th and early 20th century, drawings, also Dutch and Flemish ones, continued to arrive in St. Petersburg, not for state collections but rather through the activities of private collectors. By the mid-19th century, private graphic collections - which had been extremely rare in 18th-century Russia - were increasingly common, and by 1900 both St. Petersburg and Moscow had rich markets in old prints and drawings, with permanent ties with antiquarians in Paris and other European capitals, and an established circle of connoisseurs who could serve as experts. A whole series of new collections appeared, some of them small and assembled with very modest means, but well chosen and bearing the mark of the taste and personality of the collector. Unfortunately the period of Russian private collecting
of works on paper proved to be short lived - the development of this phenomenon covered just a few decades. Nonetheless, by 1917 various St. Petersburg collections boasted a vast number of Western European drawings and they were to provide additions to museums and ensure the functioning of an antiquarian market in Russia over the next 80 years, right up to the present day.

The fate of St. Petersburg private collections of prints and drawings was varied after the Revolution. Some were taken abroad by their owners, others were split up, yet others confiscated and sold on the export market. A far from insignificant part, however, remained in the country and entered state museums, above all the Hermitage, noticeably enriching the Cabinet of Drawings. They included some fine additions, which made it possible to fill lacunae in Catherine's original collection of old Dutch and Flemish masters.

Of great significance to the museum was the relatively small collection of Nikolay Vorobyov, bequeathed to the museum in 1924. This included 117 generally high-quality sheets of various schools. In addition to four superb drawings by Jordaens, good works by Jan van Goyen, Willem van de Velde the Younger, Jacob van der Ulft, Sebastiaen Vrancx and other 17th- and 18th-century masters, the Hermitage gained eight extremely rare Flemish drawings and miniatures from the 15th century, a period previously almost totally unrepresented in the museum.

Valuable Dutch and Flemish drawings also came from the extensive (around 2,500 sheets) collection of the Princes

Tobias Verhaecht,
*Landscape with Tobie and Angel*, 1617. Pen and brown wash, brush and light blue wash, 17.9 x 27.1 cm.

(Source of entry: collection of the Academy of Arts, 1924)
Yusupov, which was nationalised after the Revolution. Based on acquisitions by Catherine's famous contemporary, the patron and collector Prince Nikolay Yusupov, like other Russian 18th-century collections it was somewhat uneven in quality. The greater part consisted of Italian drawings, as well as several dozen Netherlandish works, including important pieces such as Rembrandt's *The parable of the wicked servant*, a superb *Landscape with ruins, a bridge and a column* by Jan van de Velde, drawings by Gerrit Honthorst, Isaak van Ostade, Jan Both, Maerten de Vos and Abraham van Diepenbeeck.

Only a fraction of one of St Petersburg's best private collections entered the Hermitage after the Revolution: namely that of Prince Vladimir Argutinsky Dolgoruky, a marvellous connoisseur of Russian and European drawing who had ties to many important Russian cultural figures of the early part of the century. Argutinsky Dolgoruky put together an outstanding collection, the better part of which - including works by Rembrandt, Pieter Bruegel, Barend van Orley, Gerard ter Borch the Elder, Jacques de Gheyn, and Jan van Goyen - was taken abroad before the Revolution and sold by the owner at auctions in London and Amsterdam in 1923 and 1925. When he left for Paris in 1920, the collector gave those drawings which remained in Russia to the Russian Museum, from where the works by European artists were later sent to the Hermitage. The majority

Jacob Jordaens, *The light once loved by me, I give, dear child, to thee*, 1650's. Pen and brown wash, brush and brown and blue wash over sketch in black chalk, 13 x 20.1 cm.

(Source of entry: collection of A.N. Vorobyov, 1924)
were French and Italian, but there were also some Netherlandish sheets, including a large series of superb studies by Adriaen Bloemaert and several other drawings from the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries: Goltzius' *Diana and Actaeon*, drawings by Pieter Candid, Maerten de Vos, and so forth.

The most numerous and most important of all the post Revolutionary accessions (excluding those transferred from the Academy of Arts in 1924) was the vast graphic collection of the Library of the Central School for Technical Drawing of Baron Stieglitz. Founded in 1876 and financed by the famous industrialist Alexander Stieglitz, it not only had the largest museum of applied and decorative art in Russia but also an extensive collection of prints and drawings. Its core consisted of the collections of Alfred Beurdeley, Michel Carré and André Denis Bérard, all from Paris, acquired between 1888 and 1891 at the initiative of Alexander Polovtsov, a Russian statesman and patron, and for many years honorary trustee and chairman of the school's council. Later, the collection was regularly supplemented with purchases both on the Russian and the European markets, and with the addition of the personal collections of Polovtsov himself and of Grand Duchess Ekaterina Mikhaylovna. By 1917 the collections of the Stieglitz School counted over 9,000 drawings, mainly designs for the decorative and applied arts, architectural drawings, sketches for theatrical sets and so on, as well as a considerable number of sheets without any direct relation to the decorative arts. After the Revolution the museum and library of the Stieglitz School became a branch of the Hermitage and in the course of the 1920s and first half of the 1930s the bulk of the drawings was moved to the Hermitage.

Although the bulk of works in this collection was French, it also included a good number of excellent sheets that enriched other sections. A particularly valuable acquisition for the museum, for instance, was a group of 16th-century drawings by Netherlandish artists previously unrepresented in the Hermitage, such as Bernard van Orley, Jan Swart van Groningen, Hans Vredeman de Vries, Hans Collaert, and Hendrick van Cleve. Numerous sheets by Dutch 17th century artists (mainly from the collections of Polovtsov and Grand Duchess Ekaterina Mikhaylovna) included works by Adriaen van de Velde, Jan and Andries Both, Bartholomeus Breenbergh, Jan van Goyen, Isaac van Ostade, Allaert van Everdingen, Anthonie Waterloo, Jan Asselijn, Willem Schellinks and many other major masters. The 18th century was
very well represented in the Stieglitz collection and also contained some very good Dutch sheets: a group of sketches for ceiling paintings by Jacob de Wit, Mattheus Terwesten, Elias van Nijmegen, and numerous drawings by Isaac de Moucheron, Jan van Huysum, and so forth.

Another source of acquisitions in the 1920s was the State Museum Fund (SMF), an organisation set up shortly after the Revolution with the aim of gathering and then allocating artistic valuables nationalised by the new government. Originally the best works entering the fund were meant to supplement the collections of the central museums in St. Petersburg and Moscow, while the rest would found a network of museums in the provinces. These plans, however, were only partially realised. By the mid-1920s the export of works of art was providing a regular source of income to the USSR state budget and the majority of the items in the fund were sold on the export market.

Through the State Museums Fund, the Hermitage received drawings from a large number of renowned Petersburg collections (many of these works were initially given to the Russian Museum and only later transferred to the Hermitage). Superb pastels by Cornelis Troost and Jacob Beys came from the Oliv collection - Oliv had a private museum of 18th-century art, from which the Hermitage also received numerous paintings and examples of applied art. From the collection of Ivan Mordvinov, in addition to good Italian works, came an important early drawing by Abraham Bloemaert, *The death of the Niobides*, and from the collection of A.M. Korf a very interesting example of Haarlem Mannerism, *Acis and Galatea* attributed to Gerrit Pietersz. Sweelink.

In many cases, however, it is impossible to establish the identity of the previous owners of drawings whose provenance is recorded as the State Museum Fund. Records of museum acquisitions in the 1920s are full of abbreviations and references which tell us almost nothing: 'Via the SMF', 'from Antikvariat' (the agency responsible for selling art abroad), 'from the Department for the Preservation of Monuments of Antiquity' and so on. For instance, we cannot identify the source of important museum acquisitions such as *The bronze serpent* by Hans Speckaert or *The knife grinder* and *The snowball fight* by Jan van Goyen.

Parallel to the endless flow of acquisitions to the museum in the 1920s and 1930s there was also an outflow of gifts and transfers. Many drawings, including Dutch and Flemish ones,
were - in accordance with state plans for the establishment of provincial museums - transferred to the State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, to museums in Krasnodar and Khabarovsk, and towns in the Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia. The quality of the drawings selected for such dispersal was generally not very high, with the exception of a few sheets which went to Moscow, including some good Flemish drawings from the Cobenzl collection, notably superb pieces by Rubens.

Great losses were incurred through the practice of sending drawings for sale abroad. During the second half of the 1920s, as other sources of works dried up, the bodies responsible for USSR foreign trade declared an interest in state museum collections. The overall number of drawings (like that of the paintings, sculptures, prints, coins and works of applied art) cannot be calculated with any precision since at first the sales largely affected new acquisitions and many pieces were given over to Gostorg, the state trading company, without ever having entered the Hermitage inventories. But then attention shifted to the main collections. At auctions in Leipzig and Vienna in 1931 and 1932, around 300 excellent pieces from the Hermitage were sold, many of which had been in the museum since the 18th century. Among the losses in the Netherlandish section were works by leading masters: Ruysdael, Van Goyen, Fijt, Jordaens, Doomer, and Bloemaert, among others. Naturally this dealt a serious blow to

Jan van Goyen, 
Snowball fight, 1625.
Brush and brown and grey wash,
14.6 x 25.7 cm.
(Source of entry: 'Department for the Preservation of Works of Art and Antiquities', 1921)
the Hermitage collection, although the Cabinet of Drawings suffered somewhat less than the picture gallery, which lost many of its most important masterpieces. One important positive factor was that the Hermitage's collection of works on paper was then relatively unknown: experts from Western auction houses, consultants from the Commissariat for External Trade - none of them had an accurate idea of its composition. When they came to choose drawings they were forced to work with the Hermitage's curators, who were thus able to influence the selection. It should be noted that with few exceptions the pieces sent for auction were by artists whose work was well represented in the collection, and moreover, these pieces were often not the best examples of their work in the museum.

The overall balance of losses and acquisitions in the Netherlandish drawings collection during the first two decades after the Revolution is, nonetheless, to the museum's advantage. The collection grew considerably both in number and in terms of the artists represented and by the mid-1930s had more or less assumed its present scale and composition.

In succeeding years the museum continued to make purchases on the internal market and receive gifts from collectors, but these were of a chance nature and modest in character. Several successful acquisitions in the 1970s and 1980s of works important to the museum are sheets by Spranger, Jan Lievens, Pieter Molijn, Samuel van Hoogstraten and Willem van de Velde the Younger. In part, they originally came from the famous collection of Andrey Somov, curator of the Hermitage picture gallery at the end of the 19th century. The museum was also able to purchase an 18th-century album which included rare sheets by 16th-century masters: the Master of Small Landscapes, Hans Bol and Roelant Savery. In 1982, the widow of the renown early 20th-century St. Petersburg collector, Stepan Yaremich, gave nine good drawings by Adriaen Bloemaert - a mere fragment of the once extensive Netherlandish section of Yaremich's collection. His Italian drawings were purchased by the Hermitage in 1918, the French ones were sold by the owner at auction in Paris. As regards the Dutch and Flemish sheets, some of which were outstanding, they simply disappeared from sight after the Revolution. Finally, the last notable acquisition was the View of Treviso by Joris Hoefnagel - a master previously unrepresented in the Hermitage - purchased in 1996.
Presently, the Hermitage has approximately 3,000 drawings by old Dutch and Flemish masters - a large collection, varied in quality and occupying an important place in the context of surviving Netherlandish works in collections worldwide. The history of its formation, which differs greatly from that of other large European and American collections, has left a profound mark determining its strong and its weak sides. At least three quarters of the Hermitage collection is made up of the acquisitions of Catherine II. To this day, the tastes and preferences of the 18th century are clearly felt in the imbalance between various sections, the extreme richness of one and the chance composition of another. For all of their significance, post Revolutionary acquisitions were not able to fully correct this inherent disproportion.

The earliest stage in the development of a national school is represented by a group of roughly 15 or so drawings and miniatures from the 15th century. This selection includes several magnificent pieces and we should not misunderstand the apparently modest numbers - 15th-century Netherlandish drawings are few and even major collections usually have only odd examples. With two or three exceptions, all the 15th-century sheets entered the Hermitage in the 1920s, most of them from the same source, the Vorobyov collection mentioned above.

Greater in terms of quantity are drawings from the first half and middle of the 16th century - several dozen works in all - yet this part of the collection has serious lacunae. There are no works at all by the most outstanding masters, by Jan Gossaert, Lucas van Leyden or Pieter Bruegel, and no undoubted works by Jan van Scorel or Maarten van Heemskerck. Perhaps this explains why, until very recently, this part of the collection has attracted little attention and (like the 15th-century drawings) is almost totally unpublished. It nonetheless contains more than a few interesting sheets, among them valuable works by Leiden and Antwerp artists of the 1510s and 1520s, landscape drawings by predecessors and contemporaries of Bruegel, a number of Flemish and Dutch designs for stained glass, works by the Netherlandish 'Romanists', including Frans Floris and masters of his circle. The origins of these sheets are varied, but most arrived in Russia with the 'Betskoy Collection'.

From the second half of the 16th century onwards, the number of Netherlandish drawings increases sharply. Northern Mannerism is very fully covered, and some masters such as Hans Bol,
Maerten de Vos, Lodewyk Toeput and Jacques de Gheyn II are amply represented. The main body of the drawings in this section and all of the most outstanding masterpieces - works by Hendrick Goltzius, Cornelis van Haarlem, Karel van Mander, Jan Wierix, Roelant Savery - entered Russia during the reign of Catherine II. Acquisitions in the 1920s made only insignificant additions to this part of the collection, although a number of new names were introduced, Joachim Wtewael, Paul Bril, among others.

Extremely important and worthy of particular mention is the collection of works by Abraham Bloemaert, over 50 sheets, many of them double sided, which affords an exhaustive image of the work of this brilliant draughtsman, who is considered to be one of the founders of the practice of drawing from life in Holland. Many of these sheets were acquired by Catherine, but in the 20th century the quantity roughly doubled in size thanks to additions from the Argutinsky Dolgoruky and Yaremich collections.

Of the wealth of Flemish drawings of the 17th and first half of the 18th century much has already been said in connection with the acquisition of the Cobenzl collection. With the addition of acquisitions from other sources - large groups of drawings by Joannes Fijt, Jacob Jordaens and Gillis Neyts from the ‘Betskoy Collection’, Jordaens from the Brühl collection, and several sheets from later private collections - this section is the most numerous and representative of all in the Netherlandish collection. It includes almost all the notable masters of the Flemish Baroque, many of them with dozens of works. The selections of sheets by Rubens and by Jordaens in particular are among the richest in the world.

Dutch 17th-century drawings are less numerous than the
Flemish and the coverage is less systematic, but the collection is nonetheless extensive, with a wealth of very high quality works. The taste of collectors in both the 18th and 19th centuries to acquire finished Dutch landscape drawings, produced specially for sale, clearly influenced the make up of the collection. Landscape drawings are in the majority, forming the most valuable and the best selected part of the Dutch collection. Other genres are less fully represented, although the main tendencies in the development of the national school and the most important names are all reflected in some way. Of the numerous drawings that entered the Hermitage under the name of Rembrandt at different times, contemporary scholars now leave only four to the master himself, the rest joining the numerous works by pupils and followers.

The selection of Dutch 18th-century drawings and watercolours was formed mainly through 1920s acquisitions. To this day it remains comparatively unknown even to specialists: with only rare exceptions, sheets from this period have not been included in Hermitage exhibitions or reflected in publications. At the same time, although not large, the collection of 18th-century Dutch

Joannes Fijt, *The fox hunt*, mid-17th century. Gouache over sketch in black chalk on yellowish-grey paper, 51 x 51.8 cm.

(Source of entry: collection of Count Cobenzl, Brussels, 1768)
works is quite varied and representative. In addition to six pastels and drawings by Cornelis Troost, there are many works by Jacob de Wit, Isaac de Moucheron and Jan van Huiysum, as well as drawings and watercolours by Jacob Cats, Egbert van Drielst, Hendrik Kobell, Paulus van Liender, Cornelis Pronk, Aart Schouman and other leading masters.

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1 An interesting group of Dutch and Flemish drawings which came to St. Petersburg during the first years after the city’s foundation almost immediately entered the Academy of Sciences, where they still are. The library of the academy houses the so called ‘Book of Vinius’, an album of engravings and drawings assembled in the late 17th century by one of Peter the Great’s companions, containing, among other things, a selection of works by Jan Lievens and a series of compositional sketches by Nicolaus Knüpfer. Divided between the Academy Archive and the Botanical Institute is a large collection (around 200 sheets) of excellent botanical watercolours by Maria Sybilla Merian, acquired by Peter the Great in Amsterdam in 1716.


3 A.R. Von Arneth, Graf Philipp Cobenzl und seine Memoiren, Vienna 1885, p. 79.

4 The majority of these drawings are still in the Brühl albums, although some of the most important ones were removed in the 20th century for exhibition purposes.

5 S. Yaremich, Russkaya akademicheskaya khudozhestvennaya schola v XVIII v (Russian Academic Art in the 18th Century), Moscow & St. Petersburg 1934, note 52, pp. 88-89.


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The perception of Rembrandt and his work in Russia

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The perception of Rembrandt’s works in Russia and the influence of that perception on Russian culture is one of only a few subjects not yet covered by Western literature on Rembrandt.

Russian 18th- and 19th-century art is almost totally unrepresented in picture galleries abroad and is virtually unknown. Attention is rarely paid to it by specialists in Dutch art, making all the more pleasant a recent article by Alison Hilton entitled ‘Rembrandt, Rubens and Repin’.1 Russian art historians themselves have also largely ignored the influence of the great Dutchman on Russian masters. It would seem that Russian painting, which in the 18th and 19th centuries was mainly oriented towards Italian and French models, provides little material for direct comparison with the art of the Netherlands. The cult of Raphael and Guido Reni, clearly evident in the work of the academic school, has been far more frequently studied.

However, this does not mean that the subject of Rembrandt has never come up in Russian art-historical literature. References to his influence are scattered throughout monographs on Russian painters and in studies of Rembrandt’s pictures in the museums of St. Petersburg and Moscow.2 This interest, though, is limited to a mere general assertion of similarity (often only very approximately understood) to ‘Rembrandt’s style’. The sole work devoted to the assessment of Rembrandt by Russian 19th-century artists and critics is a small article of 1957 by I.E. Vertsman.3 A number of new resources and observations allow us to considerably broaden our conception of how Rembrandt’s paintings were perceived in the Russian arts. Of particular interest here are incidents of similar interpretations of Rembrandt’s images in works both artistic and literary. Writings by philologists (unlike those of art historians) have picked up a good number of cases where Rembrandt’s name is mentioned in poetry. Worthy of particular attention is a book by the Dutch Slavist Jan Paul Hinrichs, From ‘The Night Watch’ to Huizinga: Russian Poets on the Netherlands, published in 1994.4 This is the first book to gather together the abundant but
highly varied literary material.

This essay has no pretension of being conclusive or incontrovertible. Rather, the author seeks to clarify how profoundly art of the 18th and early 19th centuries was influenced by an acquaintance with the numerous works by Rembrandt which had by then arrived in Russia and how the myth of the great artist was transformed when it reached Russian soil.

By the end of the 18th century, Petersburg had what was perhaps one of the most extensive collections of works by Rembrandt in Europe. Catherine the Great’s Hermitage listed 58 paintings attributed to the Dutch master. Even these were not the first works to arrive in Russia under the name of Rembrandt. We know that in the first quarter of the 18th century Peter the Great’s collection included three paintings by the master: *David’s parting from Jonathan* (fig.1), which hung in the Tsar’s favourite summer residence, the Monplaisir pavilion at Peterhof, and two canvases...
in the Imperial Kunstkammer in St. Petersburg, a surviving *Adoration of the Magi* (in fact a weak copy) and *Christ showing his wounds to his disciples*. The first two are now in the Hermitage; the last is known only from descriptions.

Acquaintance with the art of Rembrandt was still largely second-hand at this time. The majority of paintings that then arrived in Russia were in fact works by pupils, imitators and copyists. The inclusion of copies alongside originals is no surprise, for in the early 18th century Russians were taking only their first steps in connoisseurship and questions of authenticity were barely considered. It was simply important to own an image that brought the collector closer to the European cultural tradition. Listed in the inventory of paintings acquired in the 1740s by Count Pyotr Borisovich Sheremetev (1713-1787) for his Fountain House in St. Petersburg, for instance, we find the following: 'Portrait of a woman who has the nose and mouth of a parrot, around her a painting by the famed painter Rembrandt and a portrait of Mr Burgav (Herman Boerhaave?)'. The way the paintings were hung indicates that they were valued for their unusual or curious subject matter, as had been the case in the Kunstkammer of Peter the Great.

Clearly, only the odd canvas was accessible, and then only to a very limited group of people. This cannot be considered evidence of serious interest in Rembrandt. Nonetheless, the mention of Rembrandt's name three times in descriptions of the very earliest Russian collections is worthy of note.

After the death of Peter the Great, the collecting of paintings in Russia ceased for nearly two decades. Many canvases formerly hung in palaces were despatched to storerooms and almost totally forgotten. Purchases for the Russian court were revived only with the accession to the throne of Elizabeth, Peter the Great's daughter, in 1741. As we know, this monarch had an exclusive preference for Venetian decorative painting. The sole supposed Rembrandt acquired during this period arrived from Prague as part of a large collection which in 1745 was hung in the imperial palace at Tsarskoe Selo. The painting was recorded in documents as *Young man in half-armour combing his hair*. Like many other apocryphal 'Rembrandts,' this painting cannot be identified today. Most of these were depictions of old men and women ('tronies'), a description so general as to defy precise identification.

From the middle of the 18th century on, Rembrandt began to play a more tangible role in Russian artistic life. The key event in
this development was the founding of the Academy of Art in St. Petersburg in 1757. We know that pupils started at the Academy at the age of six and went through five courses, each of which lasted three years. The teaching programme included the study of Western European paintings and the final stage involved the copying of originals. There is documentary evidence that as early as 1766 these study copies were available for sale on the Petersburg market. Works to be copied were chosen from the Academy’s own collection, formed on the basis of the private gallery of its first President, Chancellor Ivan Shuvalov. Among the 100 canvases from the Shuvalov collection documents record Rembrandt’s Uriah, The appearance of the angel to St. Anne, and The parable of the vineyard (probably the so-called Young man with a bunch of grapes, fig. 2).

From the second half of the 1770s, students of the Academy were also allowed to copy works in Catherine the Great’s
Hermitage. Visits were initially permitted only during the summer period while the Empress was at her country residence. Unfortunately, no early copies have survived. Judging by recently published lists, clear preference was given to the Italian and French schools, as was totally natural for an institution which took the Académie Royale in Paris as its model.

Nonetheless, the most commonly selected models included numerous mentions of two compositions in the Academy then attributed to Rembrandt. One of them, Young man with a bunch of grapes, belongs to the school of Rembrandt and is now in the Hermitage reserve collection. The title of the second, Old woman looking through glasses and plucking a fowl, is perfectly in keeping with a composition now known in two versions in foreign collections. These two works in the Academy confirm that the assessment of Rembrandt's style was based largely on single-figure genre compositions.

In the late 1770s, aspiring artists could gain a broader and undoubtedly clearer conception of the art of Rembrandt from the rich holdings of the Hermitage. There was also an extremely large and varied collection of drawings and prints in the Academy of Arts. Original works from this collection were lent to students, who took them away for copying and critical commentary, and might often keep them for years. Fyodor Alexeev (1753/4-1824), who later earned himself the title of the Russian Canaletto, is recorded as having on loan a drawing by Rembrandt from 1767 to 1773, showing Vertumnus and Pomona.

Works suggested to students as models were not limited by the Academy in terms of subject or school, as we can tell from a manuscript by Prince Dmitry Golitsyn of 1766. In his Description of the famous works of schools and their artists he wrote: 'Make your brush daring and soft, but whether it be even as Correggio’s or uneven and rough like Rembrandt’s, it should be flowing.' Prince Dmitry Alexeevich Golitsyn (1734-1803) was responsible for the first mentions of Rembrandt in Russia in theoretical works and he it was who acquired masterpieces by the Dutch master for the Hermitage. Of particular importance was his purchase of the Crozat de Thiers collection for Catherine the Great in 1772. Suffice it to recall that this brought in The parable of the vineyard, The Holy Family and Danaë (all three still in the Hermitage); Portrait of an old man with a staff and the so-called Pallas Athena, known also as Alexander the Great or Warrior (Museo Calouste
Gulbenkian, Lisbon); and two works which were for many years considered autograph: *Joseph accused by Potiphar’s wife* and *Girl with a broom* (National Gallery of Art, Washington). In France, the Rembrandts in the Baron de Thiers collection were deservedly famous, as we can tell from the copies of *The Holy Family*, *The parable of the vineyard* and *Girl with a broom* by masters such as Charles Coypel and Jean Honoré Fragonard. The literature indicates that Fragonard was also able to copy the famous *Danaë* (for more information on this subject see the articles of Jean Cailleux). Much less well known is the fact that among the visitors to the gallery in 1765 was the Russian painter Anton Losenko (1737-1773). In his *Journal of noble works seen in Paris in 1765* he mentioned: ‘In the house of (Crozat) Baron de Thiers: *Tax-farmer paying his workers* [The parable of the vineyard]. Reproduction of light in the painting extremely good, by Rembrandt. Also *Portrait of Rembrandt’s father* [Old warrior], the colours are quite natural and he had an expert mastery of the brush. By Rembrandt.’ This would seem to be the earliest of a long series of references to Rembrandt in the diaries and letters of Russian artists.

The taste for Dutch and Flemish painting at the Petersburg Academy brought sharp criticism from Denis Diderot. On his arrival in St. Petersburg in 1773, he acquainted himself with the way artists were taught and expressed particular dissatisfaction with the habit of copying Teniers, Rembrandt and other 17th-century painters from the Netherlands. Such works could not, in his opinion, inculcate a sublime manner and great taste. Far more suitable for their development were the works of Poussin purchased for the Hermitage through his mediation (*Landscape with Polyphemus* and *Landscape with Hercules and Cacus* [the latter now in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow]). But the range of Rembrandt compositions in use at the Academy gradually widened: according to published documents, by the end of the century it included also *David and Uriah*, *Portrait of an old man*, and *Portrait of an old woman*.

In his famous notes on the fine arts in Russia, Jacob Staehlin (1709-1785) expressed high praise for the art of Rembrandt. In the middle of the 18th century Staehlin assembled a mass of information about the master’s paintings, not only in imperial but also in private collections. The authors of the first Russian-language treatises on art theory only mention Rembrandt in passing.
Neither Pyotr Chekalevsky in his *Thoughts on the free arts with a description of some works by Russian artists* (St. Petersburg, 1792) nor Ivan Urvanov in his *Short handbook to the mastery of drawing and painting of a historical nature, based on observation and experiment* (St. Petersburg, 1793), pay any attention to the Dutch master. We find several passages referring to him in the book *Understanding of contemporary painting, serving as a basis to judge the works of painters, and notes on portraits. The first translated from the Italian and the second from the French* by the Collegiate Assessor Arkhip [Matveevich] Ivanov (St. Petersburg, 1789). This text, a free translation of the famous work of Roger de Piles (Abrégé de la vie..., 1699), particularly noted Rembrandt’s great skill as a colourist: ‘In order to understand it [colour] we must look how it was used by Titian, Rubens, van Dyck and Rembrandt, for their art is most marvellous.’ Ivanov also noted the freedom and unfinished nature of Rembrandt’s drawings which, ‘although they are not very correct, however they always have their merits, for they contain much intellect and character’.

French aesthetic thought, of which Diderot was an authoritative representative, could not but affect the way Rembrandt was perceived in Russia. The first treatises repeat rather closely (or are simply translations of) the works of Roger de Piles and Dezallier d’Argenville (Abrégé de la vie..., 1745-52). Within the borders of 18th-century aesthetics, Rembrandt, admired as one of the greatest painters of all times, was censured by Diderot among others for his ‘bizarre’ taste (which Diderot described as ‘ignoble’), for his unattractive sitters and incorrect drawing. This assessment remained in force for quite a long time. In the published list of Rembrandt’s paintings in the Academy of Arts of 1842, we find the following commentary: ‘In general all these works by Rembrandt are marked by extreme force of drawing,
energetic brushwork, effect, the skilful application of paints, their brilliant and characteristic expression. The composition of historical paintings have neither majesty nor naturalness, nor elegance, we can see only imagination and majesty in the manner of painting.27

On the whole, the 18th century in Russia, a period marked by the consolidation of the academic school, was a time of introduction to and mastery of European models. A vast role was played by collections of paintings, where Rembrandt was among the most revered masters. Nonetheless, instances even of mere imitation of his art were extremely rare during the neo-classical period in Russia, and we can mention but a few examples. The young Feodosy Yanenko (1762-1809) depicted himself in a Self-portrait of 1792 (Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, fig. 3) wearing a metal helmet and breastplate, a favourite costume of Rembrandt’s figures in the 1630s. Such fantastical attire suggests that attention was being paid to the Dutch artist’s repertoire. A possible prototype can be seen in a work in the Hermitage attributed to Ferdinand Bol, but then to Rembrandt, Young officer (fig. 4).28 This example is all the more notable in that the attire of Rembrandt’s heroes was totally out of keeping with accepted norms. Fifty years later, in 1841, the journal Pamyatnik iskusstv [Artistic Monument] continued to criticise Rembrandt’s incorrect taste in costume: ‘Everyone knows how Rembrandt dressed his figures. His turbans, sleeves, slippers, halberds, his vast rubies, gold and silver jewellery simply make us laugh.’29

At the dawn of the 19th century, Romantic mysticism and melancholy reached Russia, introducing a new, unprecedented sentiment in Russian culture. Rembrandt’s images and the myth surrounding the artist himself proved to be in keeping with the new mood. This is reflected in both Russian painting and literature, on the
pages of artistic journals, and in diaries and letters. Probably the most striking example of Rembrandt’s profound effect on Russian painters of this period is the story of Orest Kiprensky’s *Portrait of the artist’s father (Portrait of Adam Schwalbe)* of 1804 (Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, fig. 5). During his second Italian journey, in October 1830, Kiprensky took part in an exhibition in Naples which was open to foreign painters. He presented three works, including his early *Portrait of the artist’s father*. The painting aroused doubt and suspicion. As the artist related in a letter home, Italian experts suspected that he was passing off a work by an old master as his own.30 ‘[...] The portrait of my father they took for a masterpiece by Rubens, others thought Van Dyck, and one Alberti was pleased to suggest Rembrandt.’31 A special commission was appointed to resolve the matter, and decreed that this painting is of course an imitation of Rembrandt, since in the dark tones of the body and in the depiction of fur we can pick out the diligence and imperfections of the imitator, very far from the master’s freedom and transparency of colour, but able nonetheless to easily mislead those who have not a sufficient comprehension of painting.’32 This apparently improbable tale is totally confirmed both by information from Russian envoys to Naples and Rome, and by material in the Vatican archives. It was also widely reported in Petersburg society. The story concluded with the purchase of the work by Emperor Nicholas I for the Hermitage in 1835.33 In the Hermitage gallery Kiprensky’s *Portrait of the artist’s father* hung not far from Rembrandt’s *Polish nobleman* (the so-called ‘Jan Sobiesky’), which Irina Linnik sees as the possible prototype ‘that inspired the Russian artist’.34 We should note that in the extensive correspondence between witnesses of the Neapolitan story, Rembrandt is listed amongst several possible makers of the painting and only gradually emerges as the sole name, a good indication of the somewhat limited nature of Italian connoisseurship of works by northern masters.
Another work by Kiprensky also evoked associations with the name of Rembrandt, a portrait of Senator Alexey Ivanovich Korsakov which for many years figured in the literature as \textit{Reading by candlelight} (c.1808; Picture Gallery, Tomsk). The sitter was first identified by Russian art historians in 1985 on the basis of the perfect correspondence between the composition and a description of the painting in a poem by Count Dmitry Khvostov: ‘He sits, resting on his elbows, by the fire, Perhaps resolving some dispute of the Muses. All think that he, his gaze fixed intently, is engaged in mute conversation with Rembrandt.’\textsuperscript{35}

The name of Rembrandt is not only a symbol of the sublime in art, but directly draws the reader’s attention to Korsakov’s famous passion for collecting. His picture gallery, one of the most valuable in Russia (it included Leonardo da Vinci’s \textit{Benois Madonna}), was sold after his death in 1821.\textsuperscript{36} Among its masterpieces was Rembrandt’s \textit{Crucifixion}, the very painting with which Korsakov is perceived to be ‘engaged in mute conversation’. All traces of the work, however, have since been lost.

Kiprensky’s prints and drawings include a similarly strong reference to the legacy of the Dutch master. He copied one of Rembrandt’s etchings (Bartsch 291) in his \textit{gryphonage} in the Russian Museum. An album of 1807, also in the Russian Museum, has an outline sketch of the \textit{Old man in red} (fig. 6) in which Rembrandt’s worthy and wise figure (fig. 7) is given keenly tragic features, in accordance with
Romantic aesthetics: the look in the disproportionately enlarged eyes endows the face an excessive exaltation and tension lacking in the original.

The Romantic interpretation of Rembrandt's art was reflected in literature in the 1830s, the most famous example being a verse by the outstanding Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov, *On a painting by Rembrandt* (1830). This is thought to have been inspired by the painting *A young Capuchin monk (Portrait of Titus)*, now in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. In the 19th century the painting, known as *Portrait of a Young Man as St. Francis*, belonged to Count Alexander Sergeevich Stroganov, a major collector and famous patron of the arts.37

Lermontov may well have known Rembrandt’s painting through a painted copy or from the engraved publication of the Stroganov Gallery published in 1807 (fig. 8). Thus the argument that the poet first arrived in St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1832, while his poem is dated to 1830, cannot be seen as a serious argument against the identification of the painting as the source for the literary work.38

Lermontov opens his poem with an address to the artist, the gloomy genius: ‘You understood, oh gloomy genius, That sorrowful, inexplicable dream, The gust of passion and inspiration...’ In Lermontov’s poem, the figure in the painting bears the stamp of profound spiritual anguish, of melancholic meditation, and he becomes now ‘a fugitive in the dress of a holy monk’, now a portrait of the artist himself (‘or haps in years of suffering thou didst depict thyself’).39

Rembrandt’s canvas draws the poet with an unusual psychological effect. Neoclassical aesthetics demanded that reason should
control man’s instincts and his emotions; for Lermontov, the art of Rembrandt opened up the element of the subconscious. The unusual nature of the Dutch master’s images, which had given rise to so much censure in the 18th century, was ideally suited to the Romantic poet.

Exaggeration, hyperbolic feelings, fits of passion, all are reflected in many works executed à la Rembrandt in accordance with the new artistic taste. They became fashionable in Russian painting and graphics in the 1820s and 1830s. Even the life of the imperial family was touched by the interest in Rembrandt. We know that Grand Duchess Anna Pavlovna (1795-1865), daughter of Emperor Paul, copied one of Rembrandt’s paintings in the Hermitage, Old woman teaching a child (currently attributed to Willem Drost and entitled Timothy and Lois; Hermitage Museum, fig. 9). This may have been part of an extensive educational

FIG. 9
Willem Drost (in the Hermitage gallery of the 18th and 19th century as Rembrandt), Timothy and Lois (Anne and Samuel?), St. Petersburg, the State Hermitage Museum
program to prepare Anna Pavlovna for her forthcoming move to the Netherlands after her marriage in 1816 to the Crown Prince of the Netherlands, the future Willem II. The copy remained at Pavlovsk Palace (near St. Petersburg) right up to the start of the Second World War.

Russian variations on the theme of Rembrandt’s art are often quite naive, but provide evidence of a deep and sincere reverence for his skill. Such are the works of Alexander Orlovsky (1777-1832). The drawing *The Raising of Lazarus*, 1809, State Museum of Russian Art, Kiev (fig. 10) is based on the composition of an etching by Rembrandt of 1632 [Bartsch 73]. Orlovsky’s *Old man in a red cap*, 1806, Muzeum Narodowe, Kraków (fig. 11) is based on Rembrandt’s painting in the Hermitage (fig. 7). Orlovsky was famed for his lithographs of Russian life, but he had studied in his native Poland in the studio of Jan Piotr Norblin, a passionate admirer of the great Dutch artist. Orlovsky remained faithful to this style throughout his life.42

In speaking of Rembrandt’s influence within Russia, mention must be made of the outstanding Ukrainian painter and poet Taras Shevchenko. According to one of contemporaries (V. V. Tarnovsky), Shevchenko was even called the ‘Russian Rembrandt’ by his fellow students at the Academy of Arts because of his reverence for the Dutch artist.43 There are too few surviving works by Shevchenko to confirm the justice of the nickname but evidence of a careful study of Rembrandt’s works can be found not only in his 1858 etching after the Hermitage *Parable of the vineyard* but
also in his own original engraving of 1844, *Gifts in Chigirin*.

During the first third of the 19th century, Rembrandt’s images also began to appear on works of applied art. At the beginning of the century the Petersburg Tapestry Manufactory produced a tapestry showing ‘Jan Sobiesky’ (fig. 12), then one of the most famous works in the Hermitage (now National Gallery of Art, Washington). A copy of another painting, *Young woman with earrings* (fig. 13), was reproduced in the 1830s on a porcelain vase, a favourite element of interior decoration during the reign of Nicholas I (the only known example of this vase is in the State Museum of Ceramics, Kuskovo, Moscow, fig. 14).

Rembrandt’s name is often mentioned in poems and prose during the first half of the century, notably in the 1830s. This was probably facilitated to no small degree by a heightened interest in the phenomenon of the creative personality: suffice it to look at the very titles of stories published at this time: Gogol’s *Portrait*, Shevchenko’s *The painter* and Nikolay Polevoy’s *The artist*.

Several curious facts contain indications of a more direct interest in the Dutch master.

One of the most famous lines in all of Russian poetry comes from *House in Kolomna* (1832-1833) by the great Alexander Pushkin. He describes one of his heroines thus: ‘Old Woman. (I have a hundred times seen precisely such faces in the paintings of Rembrandt.)’ This reference is sufficient for the reader to conjure up a sentimental picture of a worthy old woman, of the kind seen in many variations in Rembrandt’s late works. Pushkin also, however, uses the name of Rembrandt in connection with a more complex series of associations in his *A journey to Arzrum at the time of the 1829 campaign*. He describes the wild countryside of the Caucasus, which reminds him of ‘the rape
of Ganymede, a strange painting by Rembrandt. The very gorge was lit totally according to his taste. Gloomy magic - to use Pushkin’s words - and the majesty of the mountainous landscape were seen through the prism of the ‘strange’ Ganymede, which Pushkin may have known from the engraving by Christian Schulz or from a painted copy. The painting conveys a sense of head-spinning height, not in the landscape background, but in the figure of the child, crying in fear and helplessly swinging in the air. This was the enthralling feeling Pushkin experienced when he looked upon the deep and narrow gorge. Perhaps this reflects the specific nature of Russian quotations of Rembrandt motifs, which differ from examples in European Romanticism. The strange fantasy of Rembrandt’s paintings was intertwined in the Russian consciousness with the exotic world of the Caucasus, a perpetual source of inspiration.

Reproductive engravings of Rembrandt’s paintings were undoubtedly an important source for information about the artist in Russian society. As far back as 1789, Arkhip Ivanov, in the section ‘On the benefit and use of prints’, had noted that ‘they show us distant objects as if they were before our very eyes, things which we could not see without most difficult journeys, or without the need for great expense’.

It is interesting that at the very time that *Journey to Arzrum* was being written, *The Rape of Ganymede* inspired the attention
of another famous artist, Karl Briullov. This is all the more curious because Briullov was a master of precise drawing and bright decorative colouring, his style having been formed under the strong influence of the Bolognese school and of Flemish 17th-century painting. At first sight it seems unlikely that the work of this artist could have links with Rembrandt's style. Yet a private collection in St. Petersburg contains an unpublished copy of the Ganymede made by Briullov in the late 1830s (oil on canvas, 45 x 34 cm, signed). Taken from an engraving, it was enhanced by the artist's own recollections of his visit to the gallery in Dresden during a journey back to Russia from Italy. In keeping with contemporary taste, Rembrandt's composition was corrected in the academic style and given an abundance of decorative pink. Reminiscences of Rembrandt are also aroused by the Portrait of Katerina Tittoni (dated 1851; private collection, Western Europe). Briullov's interest becomes clear when we recall that it was he who said 'Rembrandt is a god! He has stolen the sun's rays.'

Analysing Russian interest in works by the Dutch master, it becomes clear that this was manifested in the most varied art forms during the first half of the 19th century. The strongest and most unusual expression of this is to be found in the literary tradition. I would like to put forward a hypothesis not previously noted in the literature. In their rich oriental dress, Rembrandt's exotic figures made a great impression during the Romantic era. The Russian public knew these works in particular from numerous engraved reproductions as well as from paintings in the Hermitage, such as the Man in Turkish dress. This calls to mind a passage in one of Nikolay Gogol's most amazing and excellent stories, The portrait. It relates the story of a talented young painter, which has given rise to numerous interpretations in the scholarly literature. At the very beginning of the story, the hero's attention is captured by chance in a shop by a portrait, described thus: 'It was of an old man with a face the colour of bronze, with sunken cheeks, a sickly face; the features would seem to have been caught in a moment of convulsive movement and to reflect a most southern passion. The midday sun was imprinted upon them. The figure was draped in broad Asiatic costume. How damaged and dusty was this portrait, but when he was able to clear the dust from the face, he saw the traces of a sublime artist. The portrait appeared to be unfinished; but the force of the brush was striking. Most unusual of all were the eyes: it would seem that to these the
artist applied all the force of his brush and all his diligent zeal.\textsuperscript{53} We should note that both in subject (an oriental old man in broad ‘Asiatic’ costume) and in manner of execution, the portrait Gogol describes quite clearly summons up an image irrevocably tied to the art of Rembrandt and ‘mass produced’ in the work of his followers. There is another important feature in this portrait, totally in accord with Rembrandt’s compositions: the unusual eyes, which are fixed fast upon Chartkov, the young artist. This preoccupation recurs in the description of Rembrandt’s old men in a poem by Osip Mandelstam of 1931: ‘I enter the marvellous dens of museums, with their devilish leering Rembrandts.’ Mandelstam stresses the disturbing note that he, a poet of the 20th century, saw in Rembrandt’s figures. In yet another poem, Mandelstam speaks directly of Rembrandt’s paintings: ‘They trouble one not for good, they trouble one without it.’ It is interesting that Gogol’s story was published in 1832, at the height of fascination with the style \textit{à la} Rembrandt in Russia. This was also the period of Gogol’s most pronounced sensitivity to the fine arts. We do not claim that Gogol was inspired by a particular original by Rembrandt. The painting behind the story (if it had a real source at all) may have been by a Russian artist, for the portrait described represents an archetypal Rembrandt image, an archetype that appears in the mind’s eye as one reads.

Variations, imitations or interpretations of Rembrandtesque images in Russian art are even to be found in the works of artists who were concerned with totally different subjects, the ideal of patriarchal Russian life. \textit{Young woman looking through a window} or \textit{The treasurer’s wife} by Vasily Tropinin (1841, Russian Museum,

FIG. 15
Vasily Tropinin, \textit{Young woman looking through a window}, 1841, St. Petersburg, The State Russian Museum
fig. 15), a standard work in the Russian consciousness, can rightly be included among the numerous European compositions which are adaptations of Rembrandt’s *Girl at a window* of 1645 (Dulwich College Picture Gallery, London). In contrast to the other types of Rembrandtness in Russia we have discussed so far, this latter-day version of the woman in the window has a quality that French 18th-century treatises describe as *agréable*. At bottom, this means that the female figures had a coquettish expression and a low décolleté. The direct source of inspiration for Tropinin may have been a painting by Ferdinand Bol in the Rembrandt Room of the Hermitage (fig. 16). We know that the artist was closely acquainted with this collection for he made a copy of ‘Jan Sobiesky’, now in the Art and History Museum, Dmitrov.

Another quite evident example of such borrowings is *Abraham’s sacrifice* (1849, Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, fig. 17) by Yevgraf (Gerhardt von) Reutern (1794-1865), which for many years hung in the Russian Painting Room of the Imperial Hermitage. Its closeness to Rembrandt’s composition (fig. 18) makes any further commentary superfluous.

In the second half of the 19th century, Russian art was marked by a rejection of academic norms, a cult of truth to life and an interest in acute social themes. In this atmosphere, the relation of Russia to the classical heritage of the West became a subject of sharp dispute. The great debate between the Westernisers and the Slavophiles split society into two camps. There was keen discussion of the subject of Russian uniqueness versus borrowings from European culture. Against this politicised background there
was a notable desire to make artistic collections accessible for the enlightenment of a wider circle of people. In the middle of the 19th century the Hermitage became a public museum, and anthologies of reproductive prints were produced in large quantities. Among them was a series of etchings by Nikolay Mosolov devoted to the Rembrandt Room in the New Hermitage. Meanwhile an outstanding collection of Rembrandt prints was being put together in St. Petersburg by the lawyer Dmitry Rovinsky. From 1854 the explorer and geographer Pyotr Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky took up a new hobby, the collection of Dutch 17th-century paintings.

In this fresh Russian artistic environment Rembrandt, too, came to be perceived differently. Now the taste was not for imitations in the spirit known as *genre de Rembrandt*, presuming an interest in whimsical and exotic subjects, but for skill in conveying the sitter’s psychological characteristics and a range of feelings such as those found in late Rembrandt paintings. Figures submerged in their own internal world, their faces reflecting melancholy concentration and sorrow were seen as unusually close to the psychology of the Russians, ancient qualities in the Russian national character. Without the influence of these features...
we cannot imagine the achievements of Russian portraiture, such as Ivan Kramskoy’s *Portrait of Vladimir Solovyov* (1885, Russian Museum, St. Petersburg), in which the natural pose, the gesture of the hands and the lack of setting all concentrate our attention on the psychological state of the man himself.

The greatest admiration for Rembrandt’s legacy appears among the artists who studied in the studio of Pavel Chistyakov (1832-1919). This artist has gone down in the history of Russian art as an outstanding teacher who trained a whole series of talented masters. Despite its Russian subject one of his famous paintings, *The Boyar* (1876, fig. 19), was immediately perceived by the public as Rembrandtesque. The Moscow collector Pavel Tretyakov acquired it for his gallery of Russian painting in 1877 (now the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow).

Chistyakov contributed to the development of such dissimilar creative individuals as Ilya Repin, Mikhail Vrubel and Valentin Serov, the cream of the Russian school at the beginning of the 20th century. Undoubtedly, they were all to a greater or lesser degree subject to the influence of Rembrandt. The main source of satisfaction for this interest during the early years was the Hermitage (the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow has a copy by Repin of the Hermitage *Portrait of an old woman*, while the Russian Museum has a drawing by Serov of the same portrait and a sketch on the subject of *The return of the prodigal son*). Later, artists saw many works by Rembrandt during journeys abroad. At times their diaries and notes record a sense of surprise. In a letter from Serov, written in The Hague in July 1885, we read: ‘It is strange, I always thought that here, in this place, I would see many good works by Rembrandt and suddenly in the museum in Amsterdam I see only five works, of which just two are indeed excellent, the

FIG. 19
Pavel Christyakov, *The boyar*, 1876, Moscow, The Tretyakov Gallery
others being nothing out of the ordinary. I keep remembering in amazement how many marvellous portraits by Rembrandt we have in the Hermitage. Although it's not a new story of course. It's the same in the Crimea, only not with painting but with grapes: good grapes are more difficult to find in the Crimea than in St. Petersburg, unless you are acquainted with the owner of the vineyards.60

Russian art of the beginning of this century, for all the variety of individual styles, did not lose its inherent traditionalism. Of very great interest here are certain echoes of Rembrandt in the work of Mikhail Vrubel, an artist of the Russian Symbolist trend. In his Girl with a carpet in the background (Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow), we are reminded of Rembrandt's images of women by the female figure with a cascade of long hair falling onto her shoulders, the pearls, the oriental carpet, by the warm shades of dark red, as if this were a translation of the subject of 'the Jewish bride' into the language of 20th-century art. The impression is reinforced by his other works. Vrubel's skilful drawings (Russian Museum, St. Petersburg) at times copy very closely the style of Rembrandt's etchings of the 1630s.61

A characteristic example of the way in which Rembrandt was taken up can be seen in the work of academician Leonid Pasternak (1862-1945), father of the poet Boris Pasternak. Rembrandt literally suffuses many of Pasternak's drawings. In his private collection in Moscow was a painted sketch for a Danaë
inspired by the Hermitage masterpiece (fig. 20). Strangely, this is the sole known Russian picture which directly reflects admiration of this particular painting. We should recall that Rembrandt’s work, which lay for many years forgotten in the Hermitage, was re-exhibited only in the middle of the 19th century. The Russian writer Ivan Turgenev, who saw it in 1868, wrote in a letter to Pauline Viardot: ‘Rembrandt’s Danaë, for all its shockingness, created a very strong impression on me. It is devilishly strong, colourful, bright. And how stereotyped is Briullov’s Last Day [of Pompeii].’ The image of Rembrandt’s Danaë appears at the turn of the century in the engravings of Vasily Mate (Basil Matthée; 1856-1917) and his studio.

Pasternak left us yet another piece of evidence, totally in accordance with the literary treatment of Rembrandt: he devoted a book to the artist. His monograph on Rembrandt was written in Moscow during a time of extreme difficulty, between 1918 and 1920, immediately after the Revolution, when civil war and famine raged. It was published in Berlin in 1923 in a run of 1,000 numbered copies. Pasternak accompanied the rare edition with his own graphic portrait of Rembrandt. The book’s theme was an analysis of Rembrandt’s paintings in which, according to the author, marvellous features from the heart of the Jewish people are conveyed with such love and profundity. Among them particular attention is given to The return of the prodigal son (fig. 21). From its first appearance in Russia this monumental canvas occupied a very special place in the Hermitage. Staehlin described it as ‘one of [Rembrandt’s] greatest originals which the great artist ever created.’ All the old descriptions of the Hermitage picture gallery, like all the memoirs of the foreigners who visited Russia’s northern capital, express consistent admiration for the work. The very earliest depiction...
of it is perhaps in a drawing by Giacomo Quarenghi of 1800 (fig. 22), an aborted project for rehanging the Hermitage gallery. Later the painting was to be the permanent central object in a special Rembrandt Room, a room which in fact moved three times, being originally in the Old Hermitage and later in the New Hermitage (fig. 23).

In the Russian consciousness the significance of this scene (taken from the traditionally didactic New Testament parable of the repentant sinner) acquires a new interpretation. In the 20th century the picture was taken up and mentioned particularly frequently. To this painting Russian literature owes marvellous lines by Osip Mandelstam: we know that Rembrandt was one of his favourite artists. According to Nadezhda Mandelstam, widow of the poet, the epithet in the poem ‘I shall abandon the land - raspberry caress - which magically colours the gesture of touch’ - was a recollection of the colour of the father’s clothing in Rembrandt’s painting. Mandelstam also devoted a famous poem to the artist, ‘As a martyr of light and shade, Rembrandt’ (1931), which has become the subject of a vast number of literary studies.

The stormy and tragic history of Russian culture in the 20th century transformed Rembrandt’s Return of the prodigal son into a deeply symbolic work, turning it from a biblical scene into a symbol of the end of earthly sufferings. One confirmation of this is to be found in the recollections of the historian Nikolay Antsiferov (1889-1958), author of the renowned book, The soul of St.Petersburg. An outstanding scholar passionately devoted
to the Italian Renaissance, he was arrested in the early 1930s and spent five years in the camps on the Solovetsky Islands. Years later he was allowed to return to Leningrad. This is how he describes his return to his native city: ‘We arrived so early that the trams were still not running. With sacks over our shoulders we set off to the Greves [the family of an old university professor, Antsiferov's tutor]. Ivan Mikhaylovich opened the door and embraced me. And at that moment I recalled Rembrandt’s *Prodigal son*. Here was I, exhausted by a long journey of almost five years, kneeling before him, and he lovingly placed his hands upon me.’

Thus Rembrandt’s painting entered not only the artistic consciousness but the whole Russian outlook in the 20th century.

The examples cited above provide far from an exhaustive survey of clear and hidden quotations from Rembrandt in Russian art of the 18th to 20th centuries. In the eternal duality of Russian artistic culture, of which Dostoevsky wrote ‘We have two native lands. One is Russia, the other Europe,’ the artist occupies a unique and perhaps even now not fully comprehended role.

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3 I.E. Vertsman, ‘Rembrandt v otsenke russkikh khudozhnikov i kritikov XIX veka’ (Rembrandt in the eyes of Russian artists and critics in the 19th century), Vestnik istori mirovoy kultury (Bulletin of the history of world culture) 3 (1957), pp. 33-44.


5 Older sources provide differing information. According to the manuscript catalogue compiled by E. Munich between 1773 and 1785 (Hermitage archives), there were 58. Other, earlier, authors such as J.G. Georgi (Versuch einer Beschreibung der Russischen Kayserlichen Residenzstadt St. Petersburg und der Merkwurdigkeiten der Gegend, 2 vols., St. Petersburg 1794), list 59 works.

6 Exhib. cat. Peter de Grote en Holland: culturele en wetenschappelijke betrekkingen tussen Rusland en Nederland ten tijde van tsaar Peter de Grote, Amsterdam (Amsterdams Historisch Museum) 1997, nr. 103.

7 Musei imperialis petropolitani, vol. II, Pars prima: petropolitanea, 1741, p. 160, nr. 17: ‘Christus sectoribus suis vulnera monstrans a Rembrantio pictus alt. 1 ped. 6 unc. Lat. 2 ped.’ This may have been a copy of Rembrandt’s The incredulity of St. Thomas, now in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

8 RGADA (Russian State Archive of Ancient Arts, Moscow), fund 1287, chast 3, delo 4869. Published in V.A. Rakina, ‘Sheremetyev sobirateli zapadnoevropeyckoy zhivopisi’ (The Sheremetyevs as collectors of western European painting), in the anthology Chastnoe kollektsionirovanie v Rossi (Private collecting in Russia), Moscow 1995, issue XXXVII, p. 20.

9 Zapiski Yakoba Shtelina ob izyashchnykh iskusstvakh v Rossi (Jacob Staehlins notes on the fine arts in Russia), Moscow 1990, vol. II, p. 41, nr. 27.

10 D.A. Rovinsky, ‘Akademiya khudozhestv do vremen Ekateriny II’ (The Academy of Arts before the reign of Catherine II), Otechestvennye zapiski (Notes from the fatherland), 1855, vol. 102, October.


12 The role of Ivan Shuvalov in the establishment of the Academy of Arts has been covered in detail in the Russian-language literature. See, for instance, P. Bartenev, I.I. Shuvalov, Moscov 1857.

13 P.N. Petrov (ed.), Sbornik materialov dlya istorii Imperatorskoy S-Peterburgskoy Akademii khudozhestv za sto let eya sushchestvovaniya (Anthology of material on the history of the Imperial St. Petersburg Academy of Arts over the hundred years of its existence), St. Petersburg 1865, vol. 1, p. 4.

14 O.V. Mikats, Kopirovanie v Ermitazhe kak shkola masterstva russkikh khudozhnikov XVIII-XIX vekov (Copying in the Hermitage as a school of craftsmanship for Russian artists in the 18th and 19th centuries), St. Petersburg 1996, p. 11.

15 Barent Fabritius (?), Young man with a bunch of grapes, oil on wood, 42.5 x 44
cm., St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, inv. nr. 3655, was in 18th-century catalogues attributed to Rembrandt. See the list of copies published in L.N. Tselishcheva, Stepan Semenovich Shchukin: 1762-1828, Leningrad 1979, pp. 238-239. On the role of this painting in the Academy’s education programs, see Y.V. Bruk, U istokov russkogo zhanra: XVIII vek (At the source of Russian genre painting: 18th century), Moscow 1990.

16 The painting did not enter the Academy from the Shuvalov collection but was transferred in 1765 from the gallery of Oraniembau Palace, near St. Petersburg. A description of a painting at Oraniembau, Old woman with a fowl, made by Jacob Staehlin some time before 1762, coincides precisely with the composition of An old woman who, looking through glasses, plucks a fowl. The painting was for many years mistakenly attributed to Arent de Gelder, Davaco, 1994, Nr. R67 and R68. We can not exclude the possibility that the work in Russia was a third version of the same composition. Its further fate is unknown.

17 The main body of the Academy collection of drawings was made up of the vast (around 7,000 sheets) collection of Ivan Betskoy (1703-1795), acquired in 1767 by Catherine the Great specially for the Academy of Arts. For its further fate see Alexei Larionov, Dutch and Flemish old master drawings in the Hermitage: a brief history of the collection, St. Petersburg 1999, pp. 29-32.

18 N. Moleva and E. Belyutin, Pedagogicheskaya sistema Akademii khudozhhestv XVIII veka (The teaching system at the Academy of Arts in the 18th century), Moscow 1956, p. 144. Unfortunately the authors do not indicate the source in which this document is cited.

19 Cited in A.L. Kaganovich, Anton Losenko i russkoe iskusstvo serediny XVIII veka (Anton Losenko and Russian art in the mid-18th century), Leningrad n.d., p. 121.


23 ‘Russkaya akademicheskaya khudozhestvennaya shkola v XVIII veke’ (The Russian academic school of art in the 18th century), Izvestiya GAIMK (News of the state academy of the history of material culture), issue 123, Moscow and Leningrad, p. 106. Nonetheless, through the mediation of Diderot the Hermitage acquired famous canvases by Rembrandt which had once been in renowned Paris collections.


25 For commentaries on these publications see A.P. Valitskaya, Russkaya estetika XVIII veka (Russian 18th-century aesthetics), Moscow 1983.

26 ‘Il me semble que Rembrandt aurait du écrire au bas de toutes ses compositions: Per foramen vidit et pinxit; sans quoi on n’entend pas comment des ombres aussi fortes peuvent entourer une figure aussi vigoureusement éclairée.’ Denis Diderot, Œuvres, t. IV, Paris 1994, pp. 1041-1042.

27 Imperatorskaya Akademiya khudozhhestv: ukazatel nakhodyashchikhsya i predmetov (The imperial academy of arts: index of works there, arranged by
alphabet according to the artist names and by subject), St. Petersburg 1842.

28 This painting by Ferdinand Bol (inv. nr. 778) is one of the very earliest acquisitions in Russia to arrive with an attribution to Rembrandt. Staehlin wrote that amongst the works which arrived in 1764 as part of the collection of Johann Gottzkowski was a ‘Rembrandt, Two portraits of Netherlandish officers, one with a halberd’ (Zapiski Yakoba Shtelina, vol. 2, p. 99). The work is not mentioned in the monograph by Albert Blankert, Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680), een leerling van Rembrandt, Den Haag 1976.

29 Pamyatnik iskusstv: tetrad vosmaya (Monument of the arts: eight book), 1841, p. 70.

30 The episode with Kiprensky’s Portrait of the artist’s father has been described repeatedly in the Russian literature. The most detailed documentary study of the story is in Orest Kiprensky: perepiska dokumenty, svidetelstva sovremennikov (Orest Kiprensky: correspondence, documents, evidence of his contemporaries), compiled and with commentaries by Y.V. Bruk, E.N. Petrova, St. Petersburg 1994, pp. 2, 96, 98, 108-110.

31 Ibid., p. 173.

32 Ibid., pp. 267-268.

33 Until 1898 the painting hung in the gallery of the Russian school in the Hermitage.

34 I.V. Linnik, ‘Kiprensky i iskusstvo Zapada’ (Kiprensky and Western art), Gosudarstvennyy Russkiy muzey: Orest Kiprensky, novye materially i issledovaniya (State Russian Museum: Orest Kiprensky, new materials and research), St. Petersburg 1993, p. 70.

35 Polnoe sobranie stikhotvoreniy grafa Khvostova (Complete collection of poems by count Khvostov), vol. 3, Poslaniya k raznym litsam (Messages to various people), St. Petersburg 1829, pp. 88-89. For more detail see Gosudarstvennyy Russkiy muzey: Orest Adamovich Kiprensky (1782-1836), K 200 letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya, zhivopis (State Russian Museum: Orest Adamovich Kiprensky (1782-1836), on the 200th anniversary of his birth, painting), Leningrad 1988, pp. 80-81.

36 P.P. Svinin, ‘Rasprodazha kartinnoy galerei A.I. Korsakova’ (The sale of A.I. Korsakov’s picture gallery), Otechestvennye zapiski (Notes from the fatherland), 1822, nr. 26.

37 Rembrandt’s painting is first mentioned in the Stroganov collection in the catalogue of 1800. An engraving of it was included in a special publication of 1807: Collection d’estampes d’après quelques tableaux de la galerie de Son Exc. Mr. le Comte A. Stroganoff gravées du trait par des jeunes artistes de l’Académie des Beaux-Arts à Saint-Pétersbourg, St. Petersburg 1807.

38 In Lermontov’s work we repeatedly come across the name of Rembrandt. For instance, in ‘Princess Ligovskaya’, the poet includes the Dutch artist’s name in an ironic dialogue which takes place between the heroine and a pompous society ignoramus: ‘It was a painting, rather average, but which had become valuable because its paints had faded and the varnish cracked. It had three figures: an old, grey man seated on a velvet chair, embracing with one hand a young woman and holding a glass of wine in the other. She, seeming to suffer his coarse attentions unwillingly, turned to the side, pressing her finger to her lips and straining her eyes to the half-opened door, from behind which two eyes and a knife shone in the dark. The Princess looked attentively at this painting for several minutes, and at last asked the diplomat to explain its content. The diplomat removed a lorgnette from behind his cravat. He screwed up his eyes. Turned them in different
directions at the dark canvas and concluded that this must have been a copy from Rembrandt or Murillo.' In M. Yu. Lermontov: polnoe sobranie sochineniy (M. Yu. Lermontov: complete collected works), edited and with notes by Professor D.I. Abramovic, 4. vols., 1910-1913, vol. 4, p. 172. This curious description contains some details which coincide with the canvas famous as *Self-portrait of Rembrandt with Saskia on his knees* (The prodigal son in a tavern) from the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden. Was this a coincidence, or evidence of Lermontovs knowledge of Rembrandt's composition? Engravings were undoubtedly an important source of knowledge about the artist and we know the existence of at least two 18th-century prints reproducing this particular composition. See J. Bruyn *et al, A corpus of Rembrandt paintings*, vol. III, 1989, A 111. These sheets may have been in the possession of Russian collectors.


41 On the pages of a copy of the Hermitage catalogue of 1901, now in the library of the Western European department of the Hermitage, we find notes by the keeper of the picture gallery, James Schmidt, mentioning a copy by Grand Duchess Anna Pavlovna. The copy was indeed made around 1816. It would seem to have perished in the Second World War.


45 Exhib. cat. *Russkiy farfor: 250 let istorii* (Russian porcelain: 250 years of history), Moscow 1995, nr. 84.

46 Much less frequently mentioned in the literature is that the image of Rembrandt’s old women also arise on the pages of Lermontov’s poem ‘Sashka’ (1836):

“All slept, only rarely in the windows did a candle appear, the flickering outline of an old woman from Rembrandt’s paintings”


47 Pushkin, Op. cit. note 40, vol. 8, pp. 451-452 (for more detailed discussion of this quotation see Hinrichs, Op. cit. note 4, p. 11). Evidence of Pushkins interest in Rembrandt is provided by a letter from E.I. Filosofova of 1832, in which she writes that ‘he (Pushkin) asked them to name a day on which he would come to see the Rembrandts, whose work he admires’. Cited in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* (Literary heritage), vol. 58, 1958, pp. 108-110.

48 The author is grateful to G.N. Goldovsky who drew attention to the Briullov copy. There is some interest in a note in the diary of Taras Shevchenko for 5 May: ‘In
the Hermitage I met a fellow student at the Academy, [G.K.] Mikhaylov, former
favourite of K.P. Briullov. Going round the picture and the antique galleries, we
dropped into ‘London’ for breakfast. Until he left Rome for Madrid, Mikhaylov had
often seen K.P. Briullov in Rome and told of his amazing, unheard of stinginess.
The great Briullov outdid the Great Rembrandt in this secret mystery.’ The note is
evidence of the theory, widely accepted in the Russian 19th-century art world, that
Rembrandt was a miser. T.G. Shevchenko, Dnevnik (Diary), Moscow and
Leningrad 1931, p. 291.
50 K.P. Bryullov v pismakh, dokumentakh i vospominaniyah sovremennikov (K.P. Bryullov in letters, documents and the reminiscences of contemporaries), compiled
51 This work is now attributed to Rembrandt and his workshop (probably Govaert
Flinck), and bears the more correct title Man in oriental costume. Arthur K.
Wheelock Jr., Dutch paintings of the seventeenth century: the collection of the
52 N.B. Gogol, Sobranie sochineniy v 6 tomakh (collected works in 6 volumes),
53 Osip Mandelstam’s poem ‘I am far from the patriarch’ of 1931. There are very
interesting but controversial commentaries to Mandelstam’s works mentioning
Rembrandt’s name in S.V. Polyakova, ‘Oleynikov i ob Oleynikove’ i drugie raboty
po russkoy literature (‘Oleynikov and about Oleynikov’ and other works on Russian
literature), St. Petersburg 1997. The author of the present article does not share
Polyakova’s opinion regarding the pets painted sources. The epithet ‘devilish
Rembrandts’ reads in Russian ‘Kashchey-like Rembrandts’, a reference to the
awful figure from Russian folklore, Kashchey the Immortal. Polyakova understands
the reference as being a hint at the priceless nature of Rembrandt’s paintings for
Kashchey was also keeper of unheard of riches. In fact, its appearance may have
been inspired by the nature of the Hermitage collection, which was particularly rich
in late portraits of old men and women. The author is more likely to be reflecting
on the disturbing (even frightening) image which is the embodiment of death.
Polyakova’s commentaries include several inaccuracies. For instance,
Rembrandt’s Danaë does not include a casket, as described by Polyakova, and
‘raspberry caress’ can only refer to the colour of the father’s robe in the Prodigal
Son, not to the son, since the central figure in Rembrandt’s painting is of course
wearing rags.
54 See Exhib. cat. Paintings & their context IV: Rembrandt’s Girl at a window,
London (Dulwich College Picture Gallery) 1993.
57 Polnoe sobranie gravury Rembrandta so vsemi raznitsami v otpechatkakh: 100
fototipiy bez retushi (Complete collection of Rembrandt’s engravings, with all the
differences between prints: 100 phototypes without retouching), collected and
sorted by D. Rovinsky, 3 vols., St. Petersburg 1890.
58 V.M. Garshin, ‘Vtoraya vystavka obshchestva vystavok khudozhestvennykh
proizvedeniy’ (The second exhibition of the society of exhibitions of works of art),
Russkie pisateli ob izobrazitelnom iskusstve (Russian writers on fine art),


60 From Valentin Serov's letter to O.G. Trubnikova, 19 July 1885, the Hague. Cited in *Valentin Serov v perepiske, dokumentakh, intervyy* (Valentin Serov in correspondence, documents, interviews), Leningrad 1985, vol. 1, p. 60.


63 A rare etching from Rembrandt's *Danaë*, the work of Nikolay Kondrashin (1881-?), a pupil of Vasily Mate, is in the library of the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, St. Petersburg.


65 Ibid., p. 79.


67 The State Hermitage Museum, inv. nr. OP 742.


71 Many art historical works of the Soviet period treat Rembrandt's late work as that of a lone rebel whose democratic sympathies were sharply in contrast to the bourgeois world which surrounded him. See, for instance, A.I. Bassekhes, ‘Pravda zhizni’ (Truth to life), in: *Zhizn: teatr, skulptura, zhivopis, grafika; sbornik iskustvovedcheskich rabot* (Over 40 years: theatre, sculpture, painting, graphics; anthology of art historical works), Moscow 1976. This tendency gave rise to numerous speculations in Soviet/Russian literature.
Ever since the time of Peter the Great, each new generation of art collectors and amateurs in Russia has had a strong interest in European old masters, especially those of the Dutch and Flemish schools. In addition to the famous collections of masterpieces in the Hermitage and the imperial palaces in and around St. Petersburg, there were many private collections of Dutch and Flemish art belonging to aristocrats and merchants. They were kept in both their city and country homes and estates in almost every region of our vast country. From the late 18th century until the Revolution of November 1917, each successive generation of art lovers in Russia actively and ambitiously collected old masters, mainly Italian but also Dutch and Flemish works of the 17th and 18th centuries. In time, many of these collections were sold at estate auctions or via art dealers, not only in St. Petersburg and Moscow, but in various provincial centres as well. Some were even dispersed in Europe, for instance the famous collection of Paul Delaroff, which was sold in Paris in 1914.

In general, Russian collectors of old master paintings can be divided into two main categories. The most numerous group is that of the noblemen and rich merchants. They were interested in European art mainly as a form of self-fashioning, as a demonstration of their European education and of the prosperity of their town and country estates. In the 19th and early 20th century a new category of collectors emerged in the middle class circles of society. This phenomenon manifested itself not only in St. Petersburg and Moscow but also even more pronouncedly in provincial centres like Saratov, Kazan, Smolensk, Tambov, Nizhni Novgorod, Tver and Serpukhov. By way of exception - but a very important exception - there were also collectors in the Siberian towns of Perm, Omsk and Irkutsk, old cultural centres located at a great distance from the capitals of Russia.

Because of their comparatively small dimensions, reasonable price and captivating subjects, paintings of the Flemish and especially Dutch schools made up the bulk of these collections.
The artistic merits of these pictures - largely the work of minor, sometimes rare and little-known masters - were for the most part of a very high order. It is on the basis of these private collections that many city galleries and art museums came into being. Thus, the State Art Museum in Saratov, the first public art museum in provincial Russia, was founded in 1877, when the famous landscape painter and collector Aleksei Bogoliubov presented his large collection of works by European artists to the township. The municipality sponsored the erection of the museum building. The foundation stone was laid on 1 May 1883 and the Saratov Art Museum was opened to the public on 29 June 1885. The museum’s evident preference for Dutch landscape and genre paintings is a reflection of its founder’s taste. Good collections of Dutch and Flemish painting can also be found in the Smolensk Art Museum as well as in the museum of Kazan. The Dutch section there is based on a collection that once belonged to Alexandr Likhatchiov, a professor at the local university.

Shortly after the October Revolution, Lenin instituted decrees ordering the nationalisation and preservation of art treasures and the ‘democratisation’ of all art institutions. These measures led to a more systematic acquisition of works of art and their redistribution among the country’s museums. The popularisation of outstanding art works among the broadest possible masses now became government policy. During this period the existing state collections were consolidated and new ones were created. New museums were founded in Ulyanov, Tambov, Serpukhov, Kursk, Tula, Voronezh and other provincial towns. The Soviet government’s prime achievement in the museum field, though, was the organisation of art galleries in the outlying areas of the former Russian Empire, in the cities of Central Asia, Siberia and the Far East. Today their holdings of Dutch and Flemish art include works of high and in some cases outstanding artistic merit. Paintings such as Hendrick Terbrugghe’s *Christ crowned with thorns* in Irkutsk, Jan van Scorel’s *Madonna and child* in Tambov and an oil sketch by Jan Steen in Khabarovsk give some indication of the quality and importance of the collections in these museums.

This development also had its disadvantages. The great distance between the provincial centres and the capital cities cut off the collections from the world network of researchers. Moreover, the provincial museums were unable to hire skilled curators in the field of old master paintings. Usually, the curators
responsible for European paintings would consult scholars from the Hermitage and the Pushkin Museum concerning their collections. In this regard it is a great pleasure for me to honour the important contribution in this field by two outstanding scholars from the Hermitage - the late Yuri Kuznetzov* and his wife Irena Linnik. In the course of three decades from 1960 on, Yuri and Irena assisted curators in many provincial museums and galleries. They stimulated catalogues of the European paintings from the collections in Smolensk, Krasnodar, Kursk, Nizhni Novgorod, Perm and Ulyanov that were compiled by local curators and published. In this respect, last but not least, special mention should be made of the publication of the large volume on Dutch painting in Soviet museums, prepared by Kuznetzov and Linnik and published by Aurora Art Publishers in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) in 1982.

I would like to call attention to some of the many other Dutch and Flemish paintings in Russian provincial museums. Most of them are unpublished and therefore unknown to Western scholars who have not visited the vast Russian country.

VORONEZH MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

In the Voronezh Museum of Fine Arts two beautiful double-sided wings of a destroyed portable altarpiece by an unknown Netherlandish painter of the first quarter of the 16th century are preserved. The basis of the Voronezh collection of old master paintings are works evacuated there because of the threat of military operations in the First World War in 1918 from the Imperial University of Yuriev in Estonia (better known under the Estonian name of Tartu, or the old German name of Dorpat). Depicted are the male and female donors of the altarpiece, together with their patron saints Augustine and Barbara (oak, 47 x 15 cm each).

In one of their publications, Kuznetzov and Linnik included a Still life by Pieter Claesz. and a work by Samuel van Hoogstraten in Voronezh. Other paintings there that merit study are a fantastic Rocky landscape attributed to Tobias Verhaecht, a monogrammed Still life with fruit by Willem Fredericksz. van Royen (canvas, 33 x 33 cm) and a marvellous representation of a Groom with a horse by David Teniers the Younger (transferred from panel to canvas, 20.5 x 15.5 cm).

NIZHNI NOVGOROD ART MUSEUM

Another first-rank example of Teniers’ style is found in the
outstanding collection of the Nizhni Novgorod Art Museum. This is a large composition known as *The sheepfold* (panel, 105.5 x 136 cm). It is signed both by Teniers, who was responsible for the figures and the animals, and by an unknown monogrammist who executed the sheepfold’s interior.

Also in this collection are Jan Victors’ *Tobias curing his blind father* (canvas, 115 x 138 cm), Otto Marseus van Schrieck’s *Butterflies, lizards and autumn leaves*, signed and dated March 31, 1669 (canvas, 60.5 x 49 cm), and a *Portrait of an unknown man* from 1645, formerly attributed to Jan Cornelisz. Verspronck (panel, 81 x 58.5 cm). Finally, I would like to mention a signed and dated (1636) panel of *Queen Artemisia* by the Haarlem artist Pieter de Grebber (93.5 x 81.5 cm).

**KALUGA AND OMSK MUSEUMS OF FINE ARTS**

Other works by Pieter de Grebber are *Merodach-baladan offering a present to King Hezekiah* (canvas 97 x 146 cm), reproduced in Kuznetsov and Linnik) in the Kaluga Museum of Fine Arts and an unpublished *Head of a girl* in the Omsk Museum of Fine Arts.

**ART MUSEUM OF SMOLENSK**

An important collection of Dutch and Flemish paintings is preserved in the Art Museum of Smolensk as well. In addition to the *Family portrait* from 1681 by Eglon van der Neer (canvas, 67 x 55.5 cm), a *Portrait of a man* by Nicolaes Eliasz. Pickenoy (panel 100.3 x 72.7 cm) and a *Landscape* by Jan Asselijn reproduced in one of Linnik’s books, the Art Museum of Smolensk owns *A glass with flowers* marked with the monogram of Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder (panel, 25.2 x 18.5 cm.), the *Portrait of a girl* attributed to Dirck van Santvoort or Govaert Flinck (panel, 65 x 36 cm) and a *Lavish still life* attributed to Simon Luttichuys (canvas, 94 x 107.9 cm).
PENZA ART GALLERY
The same artist, Simon Luttichuys, is represented in the Penza Art Gallery with a monogrammed *Still life of a dessert* (canvas, 50.5 x 44 cm).

KAZAN MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Kuznetzov and Linnik published a *Portrait of a gentleman* by Simon’s brother Isaack Luttichuys from the Museum of Fine Arts in Kazan (panel, 65.5 x 50 cm).

ARKHANGELSKOYE PALACE
The collections in the palace museums near Moscow are often relatively unknown. The Arkhangelskoye Palace once housed the famous collection of Prince Yusupov. Most of those works are now in the Hermitage, but the palace still houses an important, unpublished *Parable of the rich man and Lazarus* by an unknown Caravagesque Flemish master (Gerard Duffet?), monogrammed and dated VD (or JD) 1641 (canvas, 114 x 125 cm). Arkhangelskoye also houses a *Destruction of Troy* by Gerard de Lairesse, monogrammed and dated GL 97, 1697 (canvas, 102 x 118 cm).
SARATOV MUSEUM OF ART

The old master paintings collection in the Saratov Museum of Art includes *A Riverside walk* (panel, 59 x 93 cm) by the Antwerp artist Louis de Caullery. Along with some outstanding works by Matthias Stomer (*The Adoration of the Shepherds*, canvas, 105 x 129 cm) and a copy after Karel du Jardin now in the Rijksmuseum (*On the farm*, canvas, 41 x 55 cm), Saratov owns panels by relatively little-known artists, such as Pieter van Noort (*Sewing*, panel 29 x 38 cm) and Arnoldus Verbuys (*Lady with a letter*, panel 45.5 x 33 cm).

SERPUKHOV, MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND ART

The Willaerts family is represented with a rare *Fish market on the seacoast*, signed by Isaac Willaerts (canvas, 35.5 x 67 cm), in the Museum of History and Art in Serpukhov, a small town in the Moscow area. Indeed, the very interesting Serpukhov collection is typical for provincial museums located in central Russia. It was created around the collection of the local merchant Anna Maraeva, which was nationalised in 1919. Among the more important paintings in Serpukhov are *A scholar in his study* by Isaac de Jouderville, one of Rembrandt’s first pupils (canvas, 53 x 71 cm). This painting was first recognised and published by Yuri Kuznetsov as a representation of the very obscure subject *Melancholia Secunda*. This interpretation is based on Erwin Panofsky’s theory.
that Dürer’s famous print depicts *Melancholia Prima*.

Other interesting works in Serpukhov are the large canvas *The Queen of Sheba before Solomon* by Frans Francken II (panel, 146 x 243 cm). This painting was not available when Ursula Härting wrote her book on Francken. Another version of this composition, also unpublished, is in the Kharkov Museum of Fine Arts. In Serpukhov we also find the panel *Road through the dunes* by the Haarlem landscapist Guillaume Dubois (canvas, 33 x 45 cm), a *Vanitas* allegory by the Antwerp artist Jan Boeckhorst, called Langejan (panel, 137 x 220 cm) and a small *Still life with fruit* signed by David Cornelisz. de Heem (canvas, 31 x 25 cm). This little-known member of the famous Dutch-Flemish family of still life painters worked in Antwerp and was the son of Cornelis de Heem.

Other provincial museums that own interesting Netherlandish paintings are:

Attributed to Jan Symonsz. Pynas, *Prophet Elysha and Ne’eman*, Riazan Art Museum

**RIAZAN ART MUSEUM**

The Riazan Art Museum owns a panel of the comparatively rare subject *Prophet Elisha and Ne’eman*, attributed to the Amsterdam Pre-Rembrandtist Jan Pynas.
PERM ART GALLERY

Jacob Gerrritsz. Cuyp, *Portrait of a lady* (panel, 52 x 43 cm). This portrait was formerly preserved in the Gatchina Palace, and was transferred to Perm in 1941. The location of the pendant *Portrait of a Gentleman*, first published in 1916 by the Russian connoisseur and collector Vasily Rshavinsky, is presently unknown.

TULA ART GALLERY

The Tula Art Gallery houses a *Rural landscape* by Abraham Teniers and a *Dead game* by Jan Vonck, signed and dated 1656 (panel, 64.7 x 48.4 cm). Tula also owns the perfectly preserved panel of *Road in the forest* by the Antwerp artist Abraham Govaerts. I published it more than 20 years ago in Russian, but it continues to escape the attention of foreign scholars. In fact, this is one of the artist’s finest landscapes.

In conclusion, some general points can be made. Dutch and Flemish paintings are found in numerous provincial museums in Russia. However, in comparison with regional museums in Germany, France or the United States, the Russian institutions contain fewer works by great masters and have no works by Rembrandt, Vermeer or Frans Hals. Thus, their primary art-historical value lies in a predominance of very attractive and high quality works by minor, in many cases little-known artists. Imagine how useful it would be to compile a general catalogue of all the Dutch and Flemish paintings in Russian museums outside St. Petersburg and Moscow, comparable to Peter Sutton’s well-known book *Dutch Art in America*. In preparation of such a project, it would help to organise an exhibition of 60 or 80 of the most important paintings from these museums, with careful art-historical and technical examination of each work. This project, as essential as it seems to me, will present a challenge to scholars and curators in the years to come.

* This paper is dedicated to the memory of the late Dr. Yuri Kuznetzov of the Hermitage Museum. He was my teacher and supporter and, first of all, of course, an outstanding scholar. He was the first art historian to devote serious attention to Dutch and Flemish paintings in Russian provincial museums.

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Russian collections of Dutch and Flemish art in art history in the west

RUDI EKKART

An introduction to ‘Russian collections of Dutch and Flemish art and the western world’ could be simply reduced to the conclusion that the wealth of treasures of Dutch and Flemish art in Russia is unsufficiently known to art historians in the west. The rich holdings of Russian museums are rarely systematically taken into account in western research elsewhere, nor do they stimulate new research, as is the case for our Russian colleagues. Naturally, many works of art in Russian collections have been mentioned and even reproduced in publications world wide, especially the masterpieces of the greatest artists, such as for instance the Rembrandts in the Hermitage. Every serious scholar in the field can mention dozens of other important works in the St. Petersburg collections and at least some in the Pushkin Museum, yet is hardly aware of the full scope of these collections and knows virtually nothing about the holdings of the other Russian museums mentioned in the essay by Vadim Sadkov. Moreover, it is clear, that the majority know the Russian treasures only from photographs and reproductions and from information in earlier literature and, moreover, have only actually seen a few of them at international exhibitions.

A random sample of references to works in Russian museums regularly mentioned in western art-historical literature reveals that they generally concern paintings (as well as drawings) that were already incorporated in the literature before the First World War, and especially to those that were illustrated prior to that time. Before the First World War there was, of course, one important handicap preventing art historians from the other European countries from becoming acquainted with the Russian collections, namely the distance. On the other hand, apart from the many private collections and the treasures in the imperial palaces, the majority of paintings on public display were concentrated in the Hermitage. An exception, however, were the approximately 100 Dutch and Flemish paintings from that museum that had already been transferred to the Rumyantsev Museum in Moscow in 1862.

The great pioneer to explore Russia was, of course, Gustav Waagen, who published his still valuable book *Die Gemäldesammlung*
in der Kaiserlichen Eremitage zu St. Petersburg in 1864 (reprinted in 1870). As far as I can see, his contemporary Théophile Thoré, never seems to have visited Russia. Waagen was followed by his Berlin successor Wilhelm Bode, who published his book on masterpieces of the Dutch school in the Hermitage in 1873. In the following decades most serious scholars of Dutch and Flemish art visited St. Petersburg at least once and sometimes even found their way to other cities. One thinks, for example, of Cornelis Hofstede de Groot and Abraham Bredius. The latter visited Russia in 1897 and reported about it in the magazine De Nederlandsche Spectator. He began as follows: 'When I was finally in a position to enjoy the treasures of old Dutch art in St. Petersburg, I never expected to encounter so many beautiful and completely unknown works on my way'. Bredius first visited Warsaw, Kraków and Moscow before going to St. Petersburg and was so excited about all the unknown paintings he had seen before even reaching the Hermitage - including Rembrandt’s Polish Rider, that he forgot to say anything about the museum itself.

For visitors like Bredius and Hofstede de Groot, it was a blessing that catalogues of the paintings of the museum had been published as of 1863, including editions in French, such as Somof’s catalogue of 1901, with extensive descriptions of more than 1,000 Dutch and Flemish paintings in the Hermitage, followed by short comments. The catalogue, however, was not illustrated, but paintings that had been photographed by one of the international art photographers of that time, for instance Braun, Hanfstängel or the Berlin Photograhic Society, were listed as such in the catalogue. In the years before and after 1900 several books were published with selected reproductions of paintings from the museum, including the
volume by Baron Wrangell. In this context I should also refer to the fact that in the late 19th and early 20th century, catalogues of several other Russian public collections and of some important private collections were also printed. Of the latter group, the 1906 catalogue of the Semyonov collection deserves to be mentioned together with the more general publications by the same collector on Dutch and Flemish paintings in Russia. Semyonov’s extensive collection was acquired for the Hermitage in 1915. Also crucial was the famous exhibition in St. Petersburg of 466 paintings from palaces and private collections organised in 1909 and followed in 1910 by a book in French written by, among others, Weiner, Liphart and Wrangell with rather extensive observations about the works on view and a selection of plates. Among the exhibits were several hundred Dutch and Flemish paintings.

It is useful to realise that quite a number of partly illustrated publications on Netherlandish painting in Russian public and private collections existed before the October Revolution. In addition, scholars like Bode, Bredius and Hofstede de Groot had discussed individual paintings they had studied in Russia in many of their publications. Together with the selected photographs by German and other photographers, these catalogues and other publications constituted the main source of information for art historians from all over the world who never visited Russia and usually had no up-to-date information about the holdings of the Russian museums. I think that Hofstede de Groot’s systematic photographic documentation and his innumerable notes, together with his ten-volume catalogues-raisonnés of 40 Dutch painters, played a crucial role in forming what I would like to call the ‘Canon’ of Dutch and Flemish works of art in Russia. During his life, he gave free access to his documentation to serious scholars and after his death it became the base of the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (RKD, Netherlands Institute for Art History) where, mostly thanks to the generosity of Frits Lugt, Hofstede de Groot’s material was complemented with rare catalogues and other Russian publications that had been missing in his bequest. Paintings not known from photographs or reproductions in the RKD, Witt or Frick have often been forgotten in the art-historical literature. For the 15th and 16th century, Friedländer’s extensive photographic archive equals that of Hofstede de Groot’s in terms of its importance. Paintings not found in the photo-archives, but mentioned in earlier Russian
catalogues, are sometimes referred to in Thieme-Becker and related reference works, at times inspiring art historians to try to obtain a photograph, though not always leading to the desired result. Of course there were direct contacts between European and American art historians and their Russian colleagues between the First and the Second World War (for example, in the 1920s the vice-curateur of Netherlandish paintings in the Hermitage, Pappé, published in *Oud Holland* and *The Burlington Magazine*), but not to such a degree that close collaboration was possible.

The confusion concerning the museum holdings among western art historians was intensified by the fact that many former private collections or parts of them were taken over by the state and that museum collections were reshuffled in the 1920s, resulting in extensive transfers from the Hermitage to the Pushkin Museum and numerous provincial museums. Moreover, around 1930, paintings were sold to strengthen the financial position of the Soviet Republic, partly by auction, but mostly by private contract. As a result, nobody knew for sure whether paintings mentioned in old catalogues were still in the same collections, or even still in Russia. Hofstede de Groot made this lack of knowledge clear in the last volumes of his *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis* with references such as ‘Sammlung Stroganoff’ (or another private collection), ‘jetzt wahrscheinlich verstaatlicht’. This problem is most visible in monographs with *catalogues raisonnés*, including only vague information about paintings known from earlier publications and missing paintings that - in some cases - had long been in public Russian collections. In the years between the two World Wars publications about the Russian collections were rather limited: some catalogues of smaller museum collections came out but did not reach, as far as I can see, many people abroad, and for the rest there were several exhibition catalogues and articles about individual paintings or small groups of paintings.

This situation only changed in the mid-1950s, when a lot of activities were initiated leading to the two-volume catalogue of the Hermitage of 1958, the catalogue of the Pushkin Museum of 1961 and of about ten smaller museum collections between 1955 and 1961. Moreover, the publication of yearbooks and bulletins by the Hermitage commenced in the 1950s and important exhibition catalogues saw the light of day, with that of *Rembrandt and his contemporaries* of 1956 being one of the first. In the same year, an important loan of Rembrandt paintings for the Rembrandt
exhibition in Amsterdam made clear that cultural relations had entered a new phase. Without in any way detracting from the merits of other individuals, Yuri Kuznetsov and Irene Linnik should first be mentioned here. The stream of catalogues and other publications did not stop. The Hermitage published a new two-volume catalogue in 1976-1981 and launched a series of scholarly catalogues of the Western European paintings in English, in which Nikolai N. Nikulin’s volume on 15th and 16th-century Netherlandish painting came out in 1989. The most recent additions to this list are the fully illustrated general catalogue of the Pushkin Museum of 1995, Xenia Egorova’s catalogue of the Flemish paintings of 1998 and Marina Senenko’s catalogue of the Dutch paintings of 2000.

Despite the prodigious efforts of our Russian colleagues and the quality of their work, their catalogues only achieved part of the results they had hoped for. Except for Nikulin’s catalogue of 15th and 16th-century Netherlandish paintings in St. Petersburg, they were published in Russian, thereby reaching only a small part of the international art-historical world. I hasten to add that these catalogues are extremely useful to all serious scholars, especially when they - like the recent Moscow catalogues - are fully illustrated and made accessible to non-Russian readers by means of indexes. Nonetheless, especially with the scholarly catalogues, we lack the possibilities for exchanging information on the basis of the entries on the individual paintings. We simply must find funding to have these existing Russian texts translated in English.

The second and even larger problem we are still confronted with, is the impossibility of acquiring a complete overview in word and image of the Dutch and Flemish paintings and drawings in Russian museums and in the museums of the other former Soviet republics. We are speaking here about a substantial part of the heritage of the art of the Netherlands from the 15th century up to about 1900, and especially of that of the 17th century. First of all, of course, is the Hermitage, which undoubtedly has the largest collection of Dutch and Flemish art outside the Netherlands. Using the 1981 catalogue I came to a number of nearly 1800 Dutch and Flemish paintings by nearly 650 different painters. Of course, the Rijksmuseum collection is larger, as is the one of the former Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst, now the Instituut Collectie Nederland (Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage), but, to be honest, the latter is more of an administrative than a physical entity. Excluding the modern part of the collection, even the Royal
Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels have a smaller number of Flemish and Dutch paintings than the Hermitage. The Louvre, known worldwide as having one of the richest collections in this field, only comes to 65% of the numbers of the Hermitage collection (interestingly enough also representing about two-third of the number of artists found in St. Petersburg). In the top ten of large concentrations of paintings from the Low Countries outside of Belgium and the Netherlands we find other very rich museums, like those in Berlin and, perhaps somewhat surprisingly Budapest. Following them is the Pushkin Museum with about 680 Dutch and Flemish paintings, roughly the same number as the famous collection of the London National Gallery. For the sake of comparison, these numbers are clearly higher than any museum in the United States, including the largest Netherlandish collection there in Philadelphia. Of course, numbers are not everything. Quality cannot be inventoried in this way, but we all know that even the average quality of the Hermitage collection is very high.

To the numbers of paintings in the Hermitage and Pushkin Museums we must add those in other Russian public collections, only some of which can be estimated with the help of printed catalogues. These collections represent an important contribution to the total number of Dutch and Flemish paintings we have to take into account. A rich and very welcome contribution to our knowledge of the many collections is the beautiful album of Dutch Painting in Soviet Museums by Yuri Kuznetsov and Irene Linnik first published in 1982 and containing a wealth of good reproductions, many of which came as a great surprise, even to the specialists. However, it is only an anthology of the material. The companion volume dedicated to the 15th and 16th century, Nikolai N. Nikulin’s Netherlandish Paintings in Soviet Museums of 1987, is also useful. Nonetheless, I must repeat what I said above concerning the period before the Second World War, namely that while these and the many other publications that have appeared in the last 40 years thanks to the efforts of our Russian colleagues added significantly to our knowledge of the holdings of Russian collections, only part of these holdings is easily accessible to art historians all over the world. Sadkov’s essay (see page 112-119), makes it abundantly clear how much there is still to be discovered.

Speaking on the basis of my own research, I have to say that I cannot obtain a more or less complete impression of what important cornerstones might be found in Russia. Even in the
Hermitage there are still plenty of paintings of key importance for my research of which I have never seen a photograph and of which I have only the concise catalogue texts and in some cases my memories and notes from my visits to the galleries and depots in the 1970s. And I am only speaking about the paintings I know thanks to the information in the catalogues or my own notes. Naturally, a systematic inspection of the enormous collection would uncover so much new visual material and so much more knowledge about the holdings of other museums. I say this with the full realisation that I am better acquainted with the Russian collections than the average western art historian, thanks to an enduring interest and the fact that I work in an institute with one of the best collections of photographs and literature about Russian museums outside Russia.

In conclusion, it is clear that more complete information about the rich holdings of Russian public collections of Dutch and Flemish art will be just as important to western art historians as to their Russian colleagues, since it will serve as an essential base for future collaboration and exchange of knowledge. An inventory of paintings and drawings from the Low Countries in museums in Russia and in the other former Soviet Republics is urgently needed. However, it is nearly impossible to plan the production of a series of inventory volumes aiming at completeness in a more or less realistic way without an inexhaustible supply of funds. The only realistic way of achieving this goal is with computer technology, building up a digital inventory with textual information and images, even if for the time being the textual information is relatively complete in some instances, and cursory in others. Such a database will combine both information already known but scattered over many not always easily accessible sources, and new information, to be collected on the spot with the help of the curators of the Russian museums. The first phase should concentrate mainly on paintings, not excluding the possibility that rare information about drawings uncovered along the way could also be recorded. Systematic work on drawings, however, could be considered later once the painting project has gotten off the ground. The realisation of this project depends on collaboration between Russian and western specialists. Moreover, I think that the RKD and its computer system could be a useful instrument in achieving this goal. We are attempting to get financial support from the Dutch government to finance part of the work, and
judging from the discussions held so far, I am cautiously optimistic about the results of these efforts. With the help of art historians conversant with Russian, we could start to enter into the database the available information, which is scattered throughout the many relevant catalogues and other publications and, not to forget, in our photo boxes, introducing photographs of works still missing that could easily be made with the help of the Russian museums. I sincerely hope that colleagues from the Hermitage and the Pushkin Museum with important documentation about either entire collections or individual items would be willing to make that material available for incorporation into the database and that we will benefit from the support of curators at smaller museums who have photographs and reliable basic information about their collections, which is not yet available in printed catalogues.

This would facilitate the creation of a database that though still far from complete, would already be an initial, useful tool for all art historians and which would profit from the remarks and additional notes submitted by its users. Given the fact that such a database might be consulted via the Internet, it will also assist people to determine what kind of work is still necessary with regard to a given collection that is described only partially, if at all. I realise that it will take quite a long time to make the database as complete as possible, since it might be necessary to organise expeditions with Russian and/or Dutch specialists to assist local curators without enough specialised knowledge to fill in the gaps. When there are no good photographic services on the spot, a photographer should accompany such an expedition.

Naturally, it is impossible to make a reliable calculation of the time and money needed for all later phases of such a project. My hope is that - inspired by the CODART ideals - specialists at the larger Russian museums and the RKD, assisted by Lia Gorter’s Stichting Cultuur Inventarisatie (Foundation for Cultural Inventory), will join forces and receive the necessary financial support so that we can launch the earlier phases. The growing database will than become an ideal source for all kind of projects, including exhibitions, a Russian counterpart to Peter Sutton’s guide of American museums, and for other publications, for example about specific parts of the collected material.

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CODART is an international council for curators of Dutch and Flemish art. Its aim is to further cooperation in the study and display of art from the Low Countries. CODART brings together in a single organization the hundreds of people in countries all over the world who are in charge of collections of art from the Netherlands and Flanders. CODART maintains a website with links to museums, curators and exhibitions of Dutch and Flemish art and organizes an annual conference in March and a study trip. CODART was begun in January 1998 by the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage upon the suggestion of the American-Dutch art historian Gary Schwartz. It is a non-profit organization, funded by the Dutch and the Flemish governments.

The Amsterdam based Foundation for Cultural Inventory was called into being in 1997. It is a non-profit organization, dependent on gifts and project bound grants. The Foundation is focussing on documenting lesser known museum collections of Dutch and Flemish art in non-West European and North American countries. Amongst its projects in Russia is the publication of the English edition of the catalogue of Dutch paintings in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, scheduled for the end of 2005. Subsequently, the Foundation will be involved in the translation and publication of the catalogues of Flemish paintings and Dutch and Flemish drawings. In cooperation with the Pushkin Museum the Foundation is making inventories of the collections of Dutch and Flemish paintings in Russian regional museums. Other countries where the Foundation is involved in the making of inventories are India, Cuba, Serbia and Estonia. These projects can be accompanied by other activities, such as the training of restorers, the remodeling of the museum, or the organization of an exhibition.