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**GERHARD FRIEDRICH MÜLLER AND
THE GENESIS OF ETHNOGRAPHY IN SIBERIA**

ABSTRACT. This article analyzes the genesis of ethnography as a description of peoples (*Völker*, or *narody*) during the Early Enlightenment in Russia. Although its rise and further development in later eighteenth-century Russia and other countries of Europe and the USA will also be discussed, the focus will be on developments in the first half of the eighteenth century. The path-breaking role of Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705–1783), one of the founding fathers of systematic ethnography, is outlined. Central in the genesis of ethnography were large multidisciplinary research expeditions to Northern Asia, dispatched by the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, and its museum, the *Kunstkamera*, where the results landed. This museum is one of the largest and certainly the oldest ethnographic museum in the world. The main argument of this article is that systematic ethnography emerged in Siberia as a result of the interplay between German-speaking historians and naturalists and Russian scholars and administrators. The limitations of this research are also indicated. Russian anthropologists could be more confident about their subject. Ethnography has been, and still is, a powerful research program for more than 280 years. In retrospect, Russian anthropologists were right to focus on *etnografia* as a subject. Ethnography is the essence of sociocultural anthropology, the key to understanding other people and ourselves.

KEY WORDS: *etnografia*, research expeditions, Russian Empire, interplay of German and Russian scholars, *Kunstkamera*, ethnographic museums, history of anthropology

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In contrast to anthropology, which was a Renaissance invention (De Angelis 2010), ethnography and its younger sister, ethnology, were products of the Enlightenment. In my book *Before Boas* (2015), I demonstrated that the genesis of ethnography and ethnology took place in “the German Enlightenment,” that is, during the long eighteenth century. While ethnography as a description of peoples (*Völker*, or *narody*) emerged during the Early Enlightenment in Siberia (Northern Asia), ethnology was formulated as the general study of peoples or nations during the Late Enlightenment in Göttingen (Northern Germany) and Vienna (Austria). Both studies, the first descriptive, the second general, referred to a new field of scholarship denoted in German with the terms *Völker-Beschreibung* (1740) and *Völkerkunde* (1771–1775), in neo-Greek with the terms *ethnographia* (1767) and *ethnologia* (1781–1783). All of these concepts were newly coined; together they pointed to a new field of academic theory and practice, implicating one or more research programs.

In the following, I will review these developments, concentrating on the research carried out in eighteenth-century Russia, especially under the influence of Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705–1783), one of the founding fathers of systematic ethnography, and connect this process with the *Kunstkamera* and the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, founded in 1714 and 1724–1725, respectively. My thesis is that ethnography was born in Siberia as the result of the interaction between German-speaking historians and naturalists and Russian scholars and administrators. The interplay between Germans and Russians was very productive. I shall deal with the following developments: the foundation of the *Kunstkamera* and the Academy of Sciences; the early and later Academic Expeditions in Russia; Müller’s ethnographic program from 1732 to 1747; Müller’s successors and the shift from ethnography to ethnology in the 1770s and 1780s; and the relation between early ethnography and the *Kunstkamera* in St. Petersburg. The main gaps in the research will also be indicated.

THE KUNSTKAMERA AND THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

The *Kunstkamera* in St. Petersburg, officially called “Museum Imperialis Petropolitani,” was founded in 1714 by Peter the Great (1672–1725) as part of his program to promote science and education in a reformed Russia. Its first collections comprised the tsar’s personal collections, anatomical and natural history collections purchased in Western Europe, and the scientific collections of the Apothecary Chancellery (*Aptekarskii Prikaz*). Peter the Great envisioned the *Kunstkamera* as a three-dimensional encyclopedia in the form of a museum, including workshops and a library. The collections he acquired during his first trip to Western Europe, the Grand Embassy (1697–1698), were purchased as part of this vision. The tsar was not interested in art as such but in collecting knowledge (Driessen-van het Reve 2006; Дриссен-ван хет Reve 2015).

From 1706 on the *Aptekarskii Prikaz* was directed by the Scottish-born physician Robert Erskine (1677–1718). Areskine, as he was called in Russia, reformed it into one of the first places in Russia in which the natural sciences were developed. He became head of the *Kunstkamera* and the Imperial Library in 1714. Two years later, he was appointed the tsar's *archiater*, or “imperial physician.” Until his premature death, Areskine was the main science organizer in Russia. He initiated the first scientific expeditions from 1710 on (see below). In 1718, the tsar issued a decree (*ukaz*) to collect all things “remarkable” and send them to the *Kunstkamera*.

After the court had moved from Moscow to St. Petersburg in 1712, the collections were housed in the Summer Palace in 1714. From 1719 on they were located in the Kikin mansion under the supervision of the Alsatian Johann Daniel Schumacher (1690–1761), who served as librarian. The museum was moved to a specially constructed building on Vasilevskii Island in 1728, where it remains to the present day. Now called the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (*Kunstkamera*), it included anatomical, zoological, botanical, and mineralogical collections, a coins collection (*Münzkabinett*), paintings, artefacts and religious objects of various peoples of Russia and of the entire world, archaeological findings and other artificial rarities (*artificialia*), a Gottorp globe, technical instruments, and a library. The anatomical and natural history collections were the most voluminous; the collection of artefacts began to increase after the academic expeditions were dispatched, at first by the *Aptekarskii Prikaz*, from 1725 on by the Academy of Sciences.

The *Kunstkamera* and the *Aptekarskii Prikaz* were the cornerstones on which the Academy of Sciences was founded. Although the tsar had advisers in Britain, where the Royal Society had been founded in 1660, and in France, the seat of the Académie des Sciences created in 1666, the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) played an important role. Leibniz had convinced Frederick I to establish an Academy of Sciences at Berlin in 1700 and became its first president. Leibniz met Peter the Great at least five times on four locations: Torgau 1711, Karlsbad 1712, Bad Pyrmont and Herrenhausen 1716. He submitted memoirs to develop the arts and sciences in Russia to the tsar and his entourage in 1708, 1711, 1712 and 1716. Due to the Great Northern War (1700–1721), the Academy's foundation had been delayed. The proposal to establish it was finally brought before the Imperial Senate in St. Petersburg in January 1724; its statute was ratified by Peter the Great in February that same year. Unfortunately, the tsar died unexpectedly in February 1725, before the Academy could be inaugurated. His widow and successor, Catherine I, oversaw its opening in December 1725.

The Academy of Sciences (*Akademia Nauk*) was the jewel in the crown of Peter's educational reforms. It had three “classes” (*Mathematica*, *Physica*, *Historia*) and included a grammar school (*Gymnasium*), a museum, a library and an observatory. A planned university materialized at Moscow in

1755, later also in St. Petersburg. Originally housed in a mansion where the academicians worked and the first academic sessions were held from 1725 on, the Academy moved to a palace next to the *Kunstkamera* in 1728 and to a newly-built classical edifice on the other side of the *Kunstkamera* in 1789. Scholars from France, Switzerland, Scotland, Sweden, Holland, Denmark or Germany were invited to work at the Academy. Of the Academy's seventeen foundational members, twelve hailed from the universities of Halle and Leipzig, centres of higher learning in Central Germany (Mühlpfordt 2011). The Academy's first president was Laurentius Blumentrost Jr. (1692–1755), a German physician born in Moscow who had studied in Halle, Oxford and Leiden. By 1800 the Imperial Academy had 108 members, 24 of whom were Russian and 68 German-speaking.

EARLY ACADEMIC EXPEDITIONS IN RUSSIA

Even before the Academy's foundation, scientific expeditions had been sent out through the expanding Russian Empire. Alexander Bekovich-Cherkassky surveyed from the Caspian Sea to the Khanate of Khiva in 1714–1717; Lorenz Lange travelled to China in 1715, 1719, 1720–1722; Gottlob Schober visited Kazan, Astrakhan, Persia and the Caspian Sea in 1717–1720; Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt travelled through Siberia up to the borders with Mongolia and China between 1719 and 1727; Johann Christian Buxbaum traversed Turkey, Armenia, Dagestan, the Caucasus and Astrakhan in 1724–1727. This range of destinations (the Caspian Sea, China, Siberia, Astrakhan, the Caucasus) suggests a careful plan, probably designed by Areskine with the support of the tsar (Vermeulen 2015: 113–116). There were other explorers, as well as Russian scouts and surveyors, but Schober, Messerschmidt and Buxbaum were physicians, who had studied medicine and natural history at the Protestant universities of Leipzig, Jena, Wittenberg or Halle. They were explicitly hired to conduct scientific research in carefully selected regions.

Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt (1685–1735) was a pioneer in the exploration of Siberia and a “research traveller” (*Forschungsreisender*). Born in Danzig (Gdansk), he had studied medicine in Jena and Halle, where Friedrich Hoffmann had been his teacher. After defending his PhD thesis at Halle in 1713, Messerschmidt returned to Danzig to practise medicine. The naturalist Johann Philipp Breyne recommended him to Peter the Great and Areskine during the tsar's second European tour, visiting Danzig in March 1716. Arriving in St. Petersburg two years later, Messerschmidt signed a contract in November 1718 for an expedition in which he would travel to Siberia and study the country's (1) geography; (2) natural history; (3) medicine, including medicinal plants and epidemic diseases; (4) peoples and [their] languages; (5) monuments and antiquities; and (6) [collect] everything remarkable (Pekarskii 1862: 351; Winter 1953: 318). This extremely broad brief was probably designed by

Areskine. Due to his ill health, Areskine's duties were taken over by Johann Deodat Blumentrost (1678–1756), head of the Apothecary Chancellery from 1718 to 1721 and the Medical Chancellery from 1721 to 1830, and his brother, Laurentius Blumentrost Jr., by then *archiater* and head of the *Kunstkamera* and later president of the Academy of Sciences.

From March 1719 to March 1727 Messerschmidt traveled to and through Siberia during an expedition that lasted eight years. During the first year, Messerschmidt was accompanied by Philipp Johan Tabbert, a Swedish officer and cartographer of German ancestry, later known as Strahlenberg, and the latter's nephew Karl Gustav Schulman, a draftsman. From Tobolsk they travelled to Krasnoyarsk and Mangazeya, where the Swedes took their leave on account of the peace treaty between Russia and Sweden concluded in 1721. From May 1722 on, Messerschmidt continued his journey with three Russian students and two German servants. They made their way from Irkutsk through the Transbaikal area and along the Chinese and Mongolian frontiers up to Argunsk. From there they journeyed back to Irkutsk and Yeniseisk. Using the winter breaks in Abakan (1721–1722), Krasnoyarsk (1722–1723), Irkutsk (1723–1724), Chitinsk (1724–1725), and Samarov-yam (1725–1726) to order his notes, Messerschmidt drafted outlines of works he planned to publish after his return. In Chitinsk, he had reorganized his research into seven fields: “geography, philology, antiquarian monuments, mineralogy, botany, zoology, and medicine”. Departing for Tobolsk in February 1726, he stayed there for a month to organize his collections and dispatch them to the Medical Chancellery in St. Petersburg. He returned through the Urals to the European parts of Russia and sojourned in Solikamsk for eight months, before travelling back via Moscow to St. Petersburg.

Upon his return, the climate for research had changed. Catherine I died in May 1727, the interest in scholarship declined and the government was low on finances. Messerschmidt was forced to hand over all his journals and field material to the *Kunstkamera*. He submitted a plan for processing his notes and collections to the Academy of Sciences, but received no support. In February 1728 his collections were examined by a committee of the Academy, including the *Kunstkamera*'s supervisor Schumacher, the astronomer and cartographer Joseph-Nicolas Delisle, the botanists Johann Amman and Johann Georg Gmelin, and the historians Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer and Gerhard Friedrich Müller. It took these scholars two weeks to catalogue Messerschmidt's collections. Although they have never been published, and only his journals form the period March 1721–April 1726 have been included in a truncated edition (Messerschmidt 1962–1977), his notes and journals were well preserved in the Academy's archive and served later academic travellers as documentation for their own journeys.

Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705–1783) especially was impressed by Messerschmidt's results. After studying history at Leipzig under Johann

Burkhard Mencke, Müller had travelled to Russia in 1725 and was only a junior scholar at the Academy when he joined its commission to sort out Messerschmidt's collections. He later recalled that it "exceeded all expectations to what extent the Imperial *Kunstammer* had been expanded by indigenous natural specimens and artistic rarities [collected by] Mr. Messerschmidt's zeal" (Müller 1890: 147, 150–151). Müller's interest in Siberia probably increased as a result of evaluating Messerschmidt's collections. However, while the physician Messerschmidt paid attention to Siberian peoples, their languages and antiquities, he had not been able to condense his ethnographic observations into a single manuscript and he never considered ethnography a separate subject. The historian Müller set out to do this during his fieldwork in Siberia.

THE SECOND KAMCHATKA EXPEDITION

The Second Bering or Second Kamchatka Expedition (1733–1743), like its predecessor, the First Kamchatka Expedition (1725–1730), aimed at establishing if Asia and America were connected by land, or if there was a passage through the Arctic to China and India. As Vitus Bering had been unable to sail north enough and had not seen America's west coast due to fog, he suggested a second expedition to settle the issue of a land bridge. Its aims were to find the Northeast Passage through the Arctic Ocean, to explore and chart America's northwestern coast and any possible islands between Asia and America (like the legendary Joao da Gama Land or the island Jezo), chart the Russian Empire's Arctic coastline, and ascertain a southern sea route along the Sea of Okhotsk towards the Amur River delta. Both the first and the second expedition were naval operations, directed by the Admiralty and the Senate.

Unlike his first exploration, Bering's second expedition included scholars from the Academy of Sciences, commissioned to describe Siberia's native population and its nature. It was especially due to Ivan Kirilovich Kirilov (c. 1689–1737), first secretary of the Senate, that scientific inquiries were added to the expedition's aims (Hoffmann 2005: 72). Kirilov had been ordered by the tsar to oversee the mapping of the empire (Kirilov 1977) and supervised both the Second Kamchatka and the First Orenburg Expedition (1734–1737). In June 1732, the Senate issued an *ukaz* to the Academy of Sciences to suggest a professor for making astronomical observations during the Kamchatka expedition and, as Siberia had been unexplored, for other inquiries as well, including "a faithful description of the peoples and their manners as well as of the fruits of the earth" (Hintzsche 2004: 24, 27). The Academy recommended Louis Delisle de la Croyère (1687–1741) for the astronomical and cartographic survey, but suggested that a second professor, Johann Georg Gmelin (1709–1755), be added to study the realms of nature. While Academy members were drawing up instructions for their participation, Müller contributed an instruction for historical research: "De historia gentium" (On the history of peoples,

November 1732). When Gmelin withdrew his participation, due to ill health, Müller talked to Bering, who increased his interest in the expedition. Bering recommended him to Kirilov, who urged Müller to apply. Müller applied to the Academy in February 1733 and the Senate approved his participation in March. When Gmelin rejoined the expedition in June, Müller's contract was honoured. Thus, three professors from each of the Academy's divisions joined the expedition (Müller 1890: 263, 270–271; Hintzsche 2004: 199–200; see Fig. 1).

During most of their ten-year trip Gmelin and Müller traveled together, focusing on the natural history and the political (or civil) history of Siberia, respectively (Fig. 2 and 3).

Müller's education had been deeply historical and during the expedition he kept an expedition journal, making up 5 large folio volumes (Elert 1999: 40), and he collected material on the history, geography, and ethnography of Siberia. Although the latter field was named *ethnographia* three decades later (Schöpferlin 1767, Thilo 1767), Müller did use the term *Völker-Beschreibung*, a “description of peoples,” to denote the field he envisaged. He planned to write three books. Only his history of Siberia appeared during his lifetime (Müller 1761–1763). While his geography of Siberia remains in manuscript, Müller's description of Siberian peoples has recently appeared thanks to Eugen Helimski, Aleksandr Elert and Wieland Hintzsche in two interrelated versions: the first, arranged according to peoples, appeared in 2003 and 2018; the second, arranged according to subjects, in 2009 and 2010.

Apart from these ethnographies and his 1732 instruction “on the history of peoples”, Müller wrote at least 3 other instructions for ethnographic research.



Fig. 1. Müller's Itinerary during the Second Kamchatka Expedition, 1733-1743 (From Vermeulen 2015: 150). © Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale), Germany



Fig. 2. Johann Georg Gmelin — Mezzotint engraving by Johann Jacob Haid, 1760, after a painting by Wolfgang Dietrich Majer. From Wikimedia Commons (public domain)

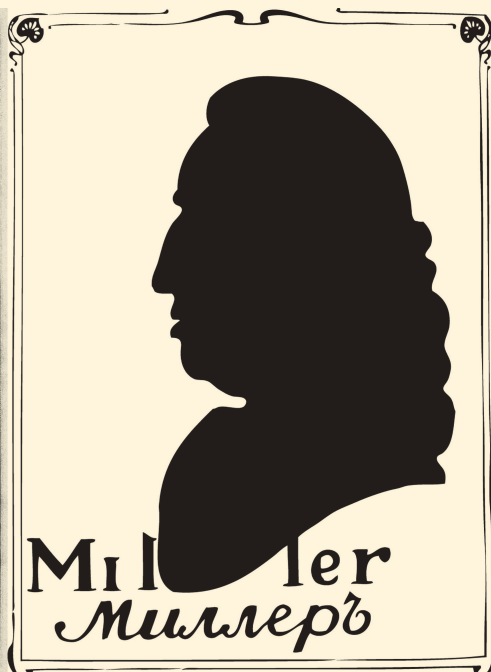


Fig. 3. Gerhard Friedrich Müller (Miller) — Silhouette by unknown artist
© State Historical Museum, Dashkov Collection, Moscow, Russia

However, as Gmelin and Müller were unable to travel to Kamchatka, due to a shortage of provisions in Okhotsk, they sent Stepan Petrovich Krasheninnikov (1713?–1755) to Kamchatka in June 1737. While Gmelin instructed his student Krasheninnikov to study the natural history of the peninsula, Müller briefed him to describe the history, languages, religion, settlements, diet, and diseases of the Tungus (Evenks), Lamuts (Evens), and Gilyaks (Nivkh) near the Sea of Okhotsk and the “Kamtschadalen” (Itelmens), Koryaks, and “Kurilen” (Ainu) on Kamchatka, and to collect their dress (Hintzsche 2001: 25, n. 19; Bucher 2002: 79–82). In March 1738 Müller sent Krasheninnikov an additional instruction comprising 219 “Questions on the description of peoples, their manners and customs” on Kamchatka (Bucher 2002: 85–87). This document was so fundamental that the Russian historian Aleksandr Andreev opined that Gmelin had used it as a basis for his own travel account (Elert 1999: 24, cited by Bucher 2002: 88 n. 292).

In February 1739, the naturalist Georg Wilhelm Steller (1709–1746) left for the same destination. As Steller was to replace Gmelin, the latter gave him a list of fifty instructions. Müller added just two, instructing Steller to study the

way of life of the Buryats in the Irkutsk area and the Tungus and Yakuts along the Lena and around Yakutsk, describe their behaviour, religious ideas, and political history. In addition, he had to ask the artist Johann Christian Berckhan to draw them in front of their homes (*yurts*), both with kitchen and shamanistic tools; and to collect their dress (item 18). Identical instructions dealt with communities in the Okhotsk area, where Steller was to study the Lamuts, Koryaks, Tungus and Gilyaks (item 32). But Müller also instructed him to supervise Krasheninnikov's studies on Kamchatka and ensure that a complete "natural and political history" of the peninsula was written (item 37). He received a copy of Krasheninnikov's instructions in order to review the student's investigations, take him under his command, and draw up a plan for the remaining research (Hintzsche 2001: 85, 94).

Although contemporary pictures of Steller have never been found, a recent artist impression by a painter from Steller's place of birth in Southern Germany (Mittelfranken) is provided here accompanied by a well-known portrait of Krasheninnikov (Fig. 4 and 5).

In 1740, after seven years of research in western, northern and central Siberia, Müller wrote an instruction for Johann Eberhard Fischer (1697–1771), a historian sent to replace him. In this elaborate instruction Müller summed up everything that had to be investigated in relation to Siberia's history and

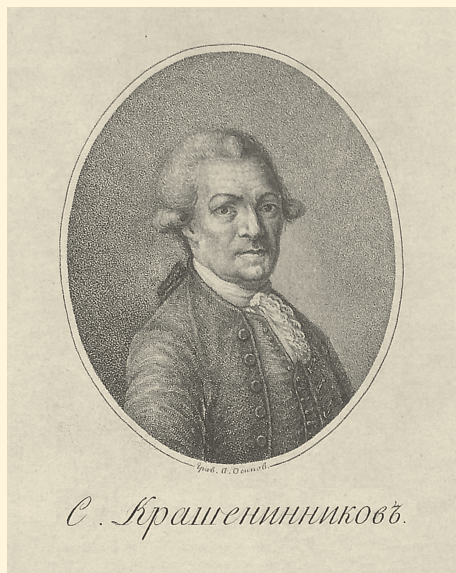


Fig. 4. Stepan Petrovich Krasheninnikov — Engraving by A. Osipov, early 19th century
© St. Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences



Fig. 5. Georg Wilhelm Steller — Artist impression by Gerhard Riessbeck, 2008
© Gerhard Riessbeck, Bad Windsheim, Germany

geography, including archaeology, ethnography, and linguistics. This instruction comprised 1 287 items in six parts, three appendices, and a vocabulary to “collect the dialects of the peoples.” The sixth part including 923 items instructed Fischer to study and describe “the manners and customs of [Siberia’s] peoples” (Müller 2018: 374–423).

Müller concluded it with this summary: “To improve understanding in such a *Völker-Beschreibung* [description of peoples], one needs to consult all authors and travel accounts reporting on the manners and customs of the other Asian, African and American peoples and compare them at all levels”; such a comparison would facilitate a broader “description of peoples” and present all peoples as “interconnected” (Müller 1900: 83; 2018: 423).

Just as Steller was accompanied by the draftsman Berckhan and the student Aleksei Petrovich Gorlanov, Fischer traveled with the Swedish translator Jacob Johann Lindenau (1706–1794), who later separated from him to conduct research on his own.

Not only Krasheninnikov and Steller, but also Fischer and Lindenau produced works that are full of ethnographic information. Krasheninnikov’s description of Kamchatka (1755) reported on geographical, economic, ethnographic, and political-historical conditions. Its third part was titled “On the Peoples of Kamchatka.” The book was edited by Müller, who added two chapters and a map; it appeared a few months after Krasheninnikov’s death. Fischer’s history of Siberia (1768) has a long introduction on “the principal peoples of Siberia and those at its borders”; he also compiled a “Vocabularium Sibiricum” that contains linguistic material from 34 Siberian languages. Steller’s description of Kamchatka (1774) has two parts, dealing with physical subjects (chapters 1–18) and ethnographic topics (chapters 19–37). Although Steller did not use the term “ethnography” nor its German equivalent, he described the Itelmens, Koryaks, Chukchi, Lamuts (Evens) and “Kuschi” (Kuriles) in detail — just as Müller had requested. Lindenau wrote a description that his editors subtitled as “historical-ethnographic materials on Siberian and Northeastern peoples” (Lindenau 1983). He even recorded the texts of the Tungus (Evenki) shamanic chants in their native language with German translations (Znamenski 2007). This leads to the conclusion that Müller’s instructions had been followed to the letter and that his efforts had indeed produced the research results he aimed for.

MÜLLER’S ETHNOGRAPHIC PROGRAM

Müller turned into an ethnographer during the Second Kamchatka Expedition. Much more than Messerschmidt, who was a physician and a naturalist interested in medicine and natural history, Müller investigated the history, geography, and ethnography of Siberia. Müller described the peoples of Siberia both individually and in a thematic-comparative manner. In his

instruction to Fischer, written in Surgut in the summer of 1740, he focused on the (non-Russian) peoples of Siberia and their “manners and customs” (*Sitten und Gebräuche*). Two centuries later, the historian Andreev noted in 1937 that Müller’s questions had not yet been fully answered (Bucher 2002: 12). Mark Kosven, the only Russian historian prior to Elert (1999) to discuss Müller’s 1740 instruction in detail, concluded: “Müller’s program is an outstanding ethnographic document. There is no doubt that it could be fruitfully used in modern ethnographic fieldwork even today” (Kosven 1961: 182; Bucher 2002: 106). And Elert (1996: 38) wrote: “Until today Müller as an ethnographer is evaluated only on the basis of the few ethnographic materials in the published parts of his history of Siberia. Yet, in that work, in accordance with its nature, Müller did not pay attention to the material and spiritual culture of Siberian peoples but to their ethnic history, the manner in which they had been incorporated into the Russian state.” His *Sibirische Geschichte* (1761–1763) and *Sibirskaja istoriia* (1763–1764) contain so little ethnography because he planned to publish a separate volume on Siberian peoples.

As a result, Müller’s ethnography has been evaluated as rather dim. Historians with inside knowledge of the archives knew that he had conducted ethnographic research, but there was no published evidence. Elert was one of the first to rediscover Müller’s ethnographic manuscripts and publish his “Description of Siberian Peoples” (*Beschreibung der sibirischen Völker*). Müller composed this text after his return from the Siberian journey, in 1743–1745, on the basis of an earlier manuscript, “Notes on Siberian Peoples” (*Nachrichten über Völker Sibiriens*), written in the field, c. 1736–1737. While the latter is an ethnographic description according to peoples visited (Müller 2003; 2018), the former reorganizes that material according to subjects in order to systematically compare customs and manners (Müller 2009; 2010). During his lifetime, Müller only published a few ethnographic articles. The most extensive was his “Report on three pagan peoples, the Cheremis, Chuvash and Votyak [Udmurt], living in the vicinity of the city of Kazan,” published in 1759 but completed in 1733, being based on his research in Kazan.

As to why Müller refrained from publishing his ethnographic texts, one can only speculate (Elert 1999: 59; Hoffmann 2005: 254). Just as in the case of Messerschmidt, Müller was discouraged from publishing because of the climate in the Academy of Sciences, riddled with conflict and competition. Hintzsche (2010) confirms that Müller planned to write three books about his Siberian research. However, as there was no real interest in a work on Siberian peoples, he felt no need to prepare his comparative synthesis for publication.

However, on the basis of his ethnographic texts and his instructions, we now know for certain that he had actively carried out ethnographic research during the Second Kamchatka Expedition and that he had instructed his colleagues and assistants, both German and Russian, to study the peoples of Siberia in the same empirical and comprehensive manner.

Visiting all regional centers, Müller interviewed specialists, such as shamans, collected materials, including word lists, statistical data, archaeological sites (*kurgans*), artefacts, etc. During the expedition he developed historical-critical and comparative methods. He transferred these to his fellow travellers and instructed them in very concrete ways to study aspects of peoples they would encounter in regions he could not visit himself.

Rejecting the previous tradition of travelogues that included ethnographic information, Müller called the travel reports of Adam Brand on the inhabitants of Livonia and Estonia, Johannes Scheffer on the Lapps, Adam Olearius on peoples in the Volga region, Cornelis de Bruyn on the Samoyeds, J. B. Müller on the Ostyaks, as well as Eberhard Isbrand Ides and Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg on various peoples of Siberia “incomplete” (*unvollständig*) (Müller 2010: 5). This is significant: he was unable to use these reports for his comparative project because they were not complete.

Müller wrote this in a preface he planned for his 1759 article on the peoples in the vicinity of Kazan. This preface, written c. 1744–1745, and the final paragraphs of his 1740 instructions for Fischer indicate that Müller’s program consisted of three steps: (1) ethnographic descriptions, as detailed as possible; (2) a systematic comparison, both among contemporary peoples and between such peoples and their ancestors; and (3) a “most general description of peoples” in time to come (Müller 2010: 5).

The first two steps, to describe all peoples of Siberia in order to compare them among each other and with peoples of other regions, enabled him to make an internal and an external comparison. His ethnographic research program envisaged a series of ethnographic studies, of *all aspects of all Siberian peoples*, including those that had become extinct, followed by their comparison with “other Asian, African, and American peoples.” In the preface planned for his 1759 article Müller stated that he took the comparative work of Joseph-François Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages Américains, comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* (1724) as his model (Müller 2010: 5). There is little doubt that Müller adopted Lafitau’s comparative project and wanted to collect all sources that could shed light on Siberia’s peoples for the purpose of comparing them to other peoples. But his ultimate aim, indeed, his vision for the future was to arrive at a “most general description of peoples,” that is, a general ethnology based on a series of ethnographies.

Aleksandr Elert (1999) regards Müller as “the first ethnographer” and Wieland Hintzsche (2010) calls him “the true father of scientific ethnology.” I gave him credit as “a founder of ethnography on five counts: (1) he conducted ethnographic research while participating in the Second Kamchatka Expedition and described Siberian peoples during and after the expedition; (2) he launched an ethnological program for Siberia that was descriptive, comprehensive, systematic, and comparative; (3) he developed ethnographic methods and wrote instructions for students and colleagues; (4) he inspired other scholars to conduct

ethnographic research; and (5) he invented a theoretical concept for this type of study, which he coined *Völker-Beschreibung*” (Vermeulen 2015: 132).

Systematic ethnography began in Siberia with Müller and his colleagues, students, and assistants during the Second Kamchatka Expedition. Müller’s program for the *description of all aspects of all Siberian peoples* was based on the work of Leibniz, who did much to develop science and the arts in Russia. Leibniz’s ethno-linguistic work, to collect language specimens in order to arrive at the unknown “origins of nations,” and establish relations of affinity between them, provided the basis for ethnography in Russia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It gave these scholars a head start over competitors from other learned nations, who compared peoples on the basis of their manners and customs, or even “national characters,” which is more speculative and judgmental than a comparison based on languages (Vermeulen 2015). This ethno-linguistic basis was characteristic for both German and Russian scholars of this emerging research tradition.

MÜLLER’S SUCCESSORS: FROM ETHNOGRAPHY TO ETHNOLOGY

Müller stood at the basis of a rich and profound tradition in the history of science that developed rapidly both in Russia and in Germany. Müller’s influence was both direct, such as on Steller, Krasheninnikov and Petr Rychkov, who took part in the First Orenburg Expedition and whose work Müller edited; and indirect, such as on Pallas and Schlözer. Again, as in the case of the early expeditions, the interplay between Russian and German or German-speaking scholars and administrators was important. While in the Early Enlightenment Messerschmidt, Müller, Gmelin, Steller and Fischer found their Russian counterparts in Kirilov, Tatishchev, Rychkov, Krasheninnikov and Fedor Soimonov, in the later period the names of Pallas and Lepechin were symbolic for the cooperation.

Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811) was one of the leaders of the “Physical Expeditions,” being part of the so-called Academic Expeditions of 1768–1774. Five groups of scholars and students investigated the Asian and European parts of the Russian Empire. The other groups were led by Johann Anton Gmelin (1745–1781), Samuel Gottlieb Gmelin (1745–1774), Ivan Ivanovich Lepechin (1740–1802) and Johann Peter Falck (1727–1774), who was succeeded by Johann Gottlieb Georgi (1729–1802). Müller followed these expeditions with great interest, talked to Pallas in July 1768 when the latter visited Moscow, and often acted as intermediary between the expedition members in the field and the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. This time, thanks to improved conditions under Catherine the Great (1729–1796), all reports were published — some even while the expedition members were still underway.

Another difference was that all group leaders were naturalists, that is, physicians with an interest in natural history, whereas in the earlier case Müller and Fischer had been historians. However, just as during the Second Kamchatka Expeditions, the members of the “Physical Expeditions” carried out research not only on the three realms of nature but also on the peoples or the regions visited, their customs, manners, religious ideas, monuments and antiquities. This was significant for the research undertaken in the Russian Empire at the time: ethnography was conducted by both historians and natural historians.

A direct indication of Müller’s influence is that Georgi and Falck used his concept *Völker-Beschreibung* in their publications, while Pallas included it in his journal, *Neue Nordische Beyträge zur physikalischen und geographischen Erd- und Völkerbeschreibung, Naturgeschichte und Ökonomie* (7 vols. 1781–1793). Continuing Müller’s research program, Pallas and Georgi built on the foundations for ethnographic research he had laid.

This research tradition even included the work of the physician Carl Heinrich Merck (1761–1799), who took part as a naturalist in the Billings-Sarychev expedition of 1785–1795 (Dahlmann 2009; 2014; Ordubadi 2016).

While the tradition in Russia remained ethnographic, a former assistant of Müller, the historian August Ludwig Schlözer (1735–1809) made the shift from ethnography to ethnology. Schlözer had a great interest in historical linguistics, had worked at the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg between 1761 and 1767 and even lived in Müller’s house from 1761 to 1762 (Winter 1961). He expanded Müller’s program, transformed the latter’s *Völker-Beschreibung* into a general ethnology and coined the term *Völkerkunde*. He introduced the concepts *ethnographisch* (ethnographic) and *Völkerkunde* (ethnology) to scholarly discourse at Göttingen University in 1771–1772. Schlözer also developed “an ethnographic method” (*ethnographische Methode*) as one of the four methods of “world history” in 1772. Schlözer’s *Völkerkunde* was pragmatic, systematic-theoretical and comprehensive; his ethnology was based on a (linguistic) ethnography. Schlözer and his senior colleague Johann Christoph Gatterer (1727–1799) were the first to define and circumscribe the field from 1771 on. *Völkerkunde* became a central focus of attention at the University of Göttingen.

From 1781 on, Schlözer’s *Völkerkunde* was transformed into *ethnologia* by the historian and librarian Adam Frantisek Kollár (1718–1783), director of the court library in Vienna (Austria). Kollár knew Schlözer’s work and introduced the term *ethnologia* in 1781–1783. In the latter year he defined “ethnologia” as: “a study of peoples and nations, or, that study of learned men in which they inquire into the origins, languages, customs and institutes of various nations, and finally into the fatherland and ancient seats, in order to be able better to judge the peoples and nations in their own times” (Kollár 1783 Vol. 1: 80).

Thus, from the 1770s and 1780s on, *Völkerkunde* or *ethnologia* was introduced by historians working in academic centres in Göttingen and Vienna.

This is a main difference with the ethnography (*Völker-Beschreibung*) that had emerged from the field in Siberia.

Schlözer was an inventor of *Völkerkunde* and, like Müller, very influential. Schlözer had hundreds of students. The brothers Grimm and the brothers Humboldt attended his lectures in Göttingen. His German followers included Fulda, Sprengel, Canzler and Norrmann, who developed a (general) *Völkerkunde*. Through Schlözer's lectures and his publications these new ideas were exported into the world. Göttingen became a centre of radiation for both *Völkerkunde* and *Anthropologie*, the physical anthropology of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840).

Schlözer's Russian followers included Nikolai Karamzin, Nikolai Gogol, Mikhail Kachenovsky, Mikhail Pogodin, and Sergei Soloviev. In Prague Josef Dobrovský was influenced by his work; in Hungary Sámuel Gyarmathi and János Csaplovics.

On the basis of these data one arrives at the following schematic table of the conceptualization of ethnography and ethnology, a new study and a new vocabulary:

- * *Völker-Beschreibung* 1740 (Müller in Surgut, Siberia; Pallas 1781)
 - ethnographia 1767 (Schöpferlin and Thilo in Nördlingen, Swabia)
- * *Völkerkunde* 1771–1775 (Schlözer in Göttingen)
 - ethnologia 1781–1783 (Kollár in Vienna) (Vermeulen 2015: 354–355, 447).

Interesting is that all these scholars were historians, not philosophers or naturalists. Note that the German terms *Völker-Beschreibung* and *Völkerkunde* appeared earlier than their neo-Greek equivalents.

Subsequently, the term *Volkskunde* was introduced in Leiden (1776) and Göttingen (1782), while the term *folk-lore* was coined by William Thoms in London in 1846.

In Russia, the term *etnografiya* appeared in the journal *Sibirskii Vestnik* of 1824 and the *Moskovskii Telegraf* of 1825, edited by Nikolai A. Polevoi (Tokarev 1951–1952; 1966: 185). These relatively late references are puzzling, as ethnography had been introduced in Russia from the 1740s on and made waves during the Physical Expeditions of 1768–1774. One would expect earlier references to the neo-Greek concepts, but apparently these have not been found.

EARLY ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE KUNSTKAMERA

These developments are to be distinguished from a later period in the history of ethnography, ethnology, and anthropology, namely, their institutionalization in museums, journals, societies, chairs, ethnological institutes, and anthropological departments. Most of these developments took place during the nineteenth century, when the subject became established. In *Before Boas*, I also pay attention

to these developments and present a table of ethnographic museums in the nineteenth century in which the *Kunstkamera* and its sequel, the Ethnographic Museum, occupies the first and foremost position (Vermeulen 2015: 426–427). Founded in 1714, the *Kunstkamera* became an independent institution in 1836 under the name Ethnographic Museum. It was the first museum in the world to acquire this name, which I find significant. The *Kunstkamera* was the main storehouse for all results from the early and later academic expeditions, including manuscripts, reports, drawings, natural curiosities, and artefacts. It served as the main point of reference for all explorers returning from the expeditions and the academicians working in the Academy of Sciences next door. It was the first ethnographic museum in the world. Yet, its early history is not well known, apart from the work of Tatyana V. Stanyukovich (1953; 1964), which should be translated into English. I would support an extension of the 3D representation of the early *Kunstkamera* on the Internet with an exposition of all ethnographic objects collected during the Second Kamchatka Expedition.

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated earlier (Vermeulen 2015, 2016, 2018), ethnology and its older sister ethnography emerged during the eighteenth century in three stages: (1) “ethnography” was begun as field research by historians and naturalists in Siberia during the 1730s and 1740s; (2) generalized as “ethnology” by historians in Göttingen and Vienna during the 1770s and 1780s; and (3) subsequently adopted by scholars in other centres of knowledge in Europe and the USA.

While ethnology was developed in the academies of Europe, ethnography was begun in the field of Siberia.

This is an important result of recent research. The ethnography developed by Müller, his colleagues Gmelin, Steller and Fischer, their students such as Krashenninikov or assistants such as Lindenau during the 1730s and 1740s in Siberia (Northern Asia) was practice-based and theory-laden. Müller defined the field as a descriptive and comparative study of all Siberian peoples (*Völker, narody*) with the ultimate aim of enabling an internal comparison, within Siberia, and an external comparison, with peoples of other continents.

This ethnographic program caught on rapidly, not only in Russia, with the academic expeditions of Pallas and others of 1768–1774, but also in other parts of the world: first in what are now Germany and Austria and was the Holy Roman Empire until 1810, later in neighbouring countries such as Hungary, Slovakia, the Netherlands, France, and in overseas countries such as the USA (ethnological, 1802–1803) and ultimately the United Kingdom (Vermeulen 2015).

It is significant that these developments took place in Russia and that ethnography grew into such an important tradition in the Russian Empire and

the *Kunstkamera*. The interplay between Russian and German or German-speaking scholars and administrators during the early years of the modern Russian Empire was extremely productive. Müller responded to an initiative of Kirilov, secretary of the Imperial Senate, to expand the aims of the Second Bering Expedition with a contingent of scientists from the Academy of Sciences. He reported to his superiors in St. Petersburg, both at the Senate and the Academy, instructed his collaborators to conduct this same kind of research, make drawings and collect artefacts, and saw too it that the results were sent to the Academy and its museum, the *Kunstkamera*.

This was a comprehensive and highly systematic program, ultimately comparative. Ethnography was a study of national diversity (*ethnos*), of *Völkervielfalt*. Ethnography and ethnology originated in the eighteenth century, both as a research program and as concepts (*ethnographia*, *ethnologia*), emanating from the field of history. Anthropology was an entirely different subject, focusing on racial diversity in the domain of natural history (biology).

However, this is not the final word on the subject. This article was written with little use of Russian sources, as my knowledge of Russian is limited. The findings are largely based on editions of German originals published by Winter (1953; 1961), Hintzsche (2001; 2004; 2010; 2018), Hoffmann (1995; 2005), Helinski (2003; 2005) and Dahlmann (2006; 2009a; 2009b; 2014), or on translations of Russian originals, such as Golder (1922–1925), Black (1983; 1986; 1989; Black, Buse 1989) and Buse, Frost (1988; 2003), etc. Therefore, the findings and conclusions should be checked with those of Russian historians.

We would like to know more. What happened to the periodic reports? Who read them and profited from them? To what extent were they helpful to the administrators in Tobolsk and Irkutsk or the Senate in St. Petersburg? Why were the results never published? Whose idea was it to describe all peoples and their languages: Areskine, the Blumentrost brothers, Peter the Great? Was this a new idea? What was the precise phrasing of the request: *narody*? What happened to the objects sent to the *Kunstkamera*? Many of them went up in flames during the fire of December 1747. But they must have been catalogued, drawn and exhibited.

It is only due to the work of Alerksandr Elert in Novosibirsk and Wieland Hintzsche in Halle (Saale) that the extent of Müller's ethnographic program has finally become clear. With the details now known, due to the published manuscripts of Müller (2003; 2009; 2010; 2018), and his instructions to associates and students, it would be important to restudy the publications of Pekarskii (1862), Pypin (1890–1892), Andreev (1937; 1959; 1999), Stanyukovich (1953; 1964; 1978), Kosven (1961), Potapov (1966), Tokarev (1966), and more recent ones by Kamenskii (1996), Ilizarov (2006), Tunkina (2017), Kopaneva (2017), etc.

Personally, I am not convinced that the prevalent idea that Russian science was an offspring from German scholarship is valid for the early period

discussed. During the later eighteenth century German scholars formed a major part of the academic staff and German was the lingua franca in the Academy of Sciences. Yet, in the Early Enlightenment Germans were not the leading actors. Osterman, Blumentrost, Schumacher, Euler and later Taubert held strategic positions in the Senate and the Academy. However, in Russian administration and science, Peter I Alekseevich, Saltykov, Areskine, Kirilov, Tatischev, Prokopovich and Lomonosov were key, with Ryckhov and Krasheninnikov in supporting roles. Therefore, the interplay between these actors was fruitful and should be the object of further research.

Russia had the first ethnographic museum in the world (1836), the first ethnographic chair (1837), the first ethnographic section of a Geographical Society (1845), and the first systematic program for the description of all Siberian peoples (1740), to compare them both along themselves and with those of other parts of Russia and the rest of the world. Thus, Russian anthropologists could be more confident about their subject. Ethnography has been, and still is a powerful research program, for more than 280 years. From the 1730s to the 2010s is a long time span. In retrospect, Russian anthropologists were right to focus on *etnografia* as a subject. Ethnography is the essence of sociocultural anthropology, the key to understanding other people and ourselves. Today, the world is even more complicated. With globalization, neo-liberalism, migration, transnationalism, and diaspora movements enormous dynamics are at play. There is thus abundant reason to suggest that ethnography still has an important mission to fulfill — especially in multicultural, heterogeneous societies.

* This article is based on a lecture with a slightly different title presented by video conferencing to the “International Conference Dedicated to the Centennial of Tatyana V. Stanyukovich,” held at the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 26–27 September 2016. I am grateful to Maria V. Stanyukovich for inviting me to contribute to this conference and to Andrei V. Golovnev for relaunching this journal *Etnografia* and for suggesting to contribute an article. I thank Jutta Turner (Halle/Saale, Germany) for drawing the map and Robert Busschots (Leiden, The Netherlands) for enhancing the illustrations.

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ГЕРАРД ФРИДРИХ МИЛЛЕР И СТАНОВЛЕНИЕ ЭТНОГРАФИИ В СИБИРИ

АННОТАЦИЯ. В статье анализируется становление этнографии как описания народов (Völker) в эпоху Раннего Просвещения в России. Рассматривается зарождение и дальнейшее развитие этнографии во второй половине XVIII в. в России, странах Европы и США, однако основной акцент делается на событиях первой половины XVIII в. Подчеркивается новаторская роль Герарда Фридриха Миллера (1705–1783), одного из отцов-основателей систематической этнографии. Центральной вехой в становлении российской этнографии стали крупные междисциплинарные исследовательские экспедиции в Северную Азию, организованные Санкт-Петербургской академией наук и музеем, находящемся в ее ведении — Кунсткамерой, куда были доставлены экспедиционные материалы. Кунсткамера — один из

крупнейших этнографических музеев мира и, бесспорно, старейший. Основная идея статьи в том, что систематическая этнография возникла в Сибири в результате взаимодействия между немецкими историками и естествоведами, с одной стороны, и русскими учеными и административными лицами — с другой. Указываются и недостатки этих исследований. Российские ученые могли быть более настойчивыми в утверждении предмета их исследований. На протяжении более 280 лет этнография была — и до сих пор остается — серьезной сферой научных изысканий. Оглядываясь назад, можно сказать, что русские антропологи не ошиблись, выбрав этнографию в качестве предмета изучения. Этнография — это основа социокультурной антропологии, ключ к пониманию других и себя самих.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: этнография, исследовательские экспедиции, Российская империя, взаимодействие немецких и русских ученых, Кунсткамера, этнографические музеи, история антропологии

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