LONDON CERAMIC CIRCLE at Morley College Occasional Paper No 5

Josiah Wedgwood's
Green Frog service

Its life in Russia (and elsewhere) from 1774 to the present day

Chesme Palace at Kekerekeksinen, (probably) in the 1790s,
by J-B Traversay (*Encyclopaedia of Saint Petersburg*)

Gabriel Newfield

INTRODUCTORY NOTICES

This short monograph was first published in 2009. More recently a comprehensive review was carried out, largely completed early in 2022: new material was added, claims clarified and errors corrected. I also tried to make it easier to read. This included relegating more argument and detail to the Notes, signed in the text like this: [**27**]. Minor references that could now be out of date, such as that a named person may have changed their job, retired or died, were mostly left as they were. On the possibility of further revision, see **Feedback** box on page 42.

Most of the copies of the original version – all printed hard copies, no more than 100 in all – were given away, many to the people and organisations named or referred to on the next page or in the main text. This revised version is normally available only *online* and *free,* from me on request, and from the London Ceramic Circle as Occasional Paper No 5 (see also **Copyright** below).

Abbreviations are marked as appropriate. There are only two conventional initialisms, ´SHM` for the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg (many references) and ´V&A` for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (a few). Russian words, including the names of people and places, have been transliterated, and a few have also been anglicised, notably *Ekaterina*, shown as Catherine, and the city`s name, shown as St or Saint Petersburg. All suffixes transliterated as -sky and -skiy are shown as -sky. Distances shown between places are very approximate straight line distances.

The service has sometimes, entirely reasonably, been called 'Josiah Wedgwood *and Thomas Bentley's* Green Frog service`, since they were partners in the firm, the sole partners, when the service was commissioned, and when it was later delivered to St Petersburg. Settled practice, however, describes the firm's wares as ˋWedgwoodˊ, and has used this word as shorthand for the firm's name, including the period of the partnership, which ran from 1768 till Bentley's untimely death in 1780. Although Bentley contributed much, it was Wedgwood who, in 1759, founded the firm which, bearing his name, survived till 2009, its 250th year. In that same year it virtually collapsed, and as a result lost its identity as an independent manufacturer of ceramics. Branded products are still being sold, but most are now made abroad. Its later years, both pre- and post-collapse, have received much comment, but a definitive account remains to be written. The crisis also threatened survival of the Wedgwood Museum, a curated repository of ceramics and other items associated with the firm. When, in 2014, as a result of a national campaign, it was rescued, its status was radically altered and it acquired an opaque new name, the *V&A Wedgwood Collection*, though many still think of it by its former name, which accurately describes what it was and is, and is used here.

The painting on the front cover shows the palace the service was made for. This is where, from the late 1770s, it was displayed and used by the Russian Empress, Catherine II (´Catherine the Great`). The images – on several later pages, on what would otherwise have been blank spaces – of a double-headed eagle, a heraldic symbol of empire, show how Russia has altered it over time. Russia began using it in 1472, when Grand Prince of Muscovy Ivan III (´Ivan the Great` /1440 –1505) first used it in his seal. Ever since Russia emerged as a state it has figured in its coat of arms, apart from the Soviet Union (USSR) period when it was replaced as the state emblem by the hammer and sickle. The photograph on the back cover shows what the service`s pieces look like.

Continued on next page, below **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am particularly indebted to Robin Gurnett, Peter Hayden and Michael Raeburn. I owe thanks also to a number of people and organisations: James Boyle, Helen Espir, Minnie Holdaway and Pat Latham; the British Library, the National Art Library and the library of the Royal Institute of British Architects; and all whose works I have cited.

I am grateful to the people and organisations who own or have created the illustrations shown, and in particular to Helen Espir, the UK Government Art Collection, the State Hermitage Museum (St Petersburg), Inverkeithing Museum, Sergius Kuzmin, Pensoft Publishers, Saint-Petersburg.com, the publishers of the *Encyclopaedia of Saint Petersburg (Likhachev Foundation),* the Russian Information Network, Peter Sobolev, the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), the Wedgwood Museum (at Barlaston, near Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire) and Wolfgang Wüster.

In my investigation, described in Appendix 3, into the place name *Kekerekeksinen*, I received invaluable advice and encouragement from Lars-Gunnar Larsson. I owe thanks also to Peter Hayden, Jyrki Kalliokoski, Manja Lehto, Eeva Leinonen, Terttu Nevalainen and Michael Raeburn; Graham Camfield of the British Library of Political and Economic Science (London School of Economics), Wojciech Janik of the library of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (University College London), and Helen Sullivan of the Slavic Reference Service of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and the cultural affairs section of the Finnish embassy in London.

I have benefited from a number of websites, including the website of the State Hermitage Museum and the former website of the Wedgwood Museum. I have made careful use of Wikipedia.

In acknowledging, here and in the following pages, my use of sources and illustrations, in seeking and obtaining permissions , and having regard to the work`s publication arrangements (see previous page), I believe I have kept within the bounds of accepted fair dealing. Please contact me if I am mistaken, so that (wherever appropriate and possible) I can make amends. Should a significant change in publication arrangements be planned or considered, the people and organisations concerned will be (re-)consulted.

To all who have helped me, knowingly and unknowingly, living and dead, many thanks. I remain wholly responsible for all errors.

Continued from previous page:

Empress Catherine II (1729–96) [oil painting (detail)] by Richard Brampton, 1782 (SHM)

Josiah Wedgwood (1730–95) [enamel on Wedgwood ceramic] by George Stubbs, 1780 (Wedgwood Museum)

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1 What, why and how

In the former Russian imperial capital, the city of Saint Petersburg, there survives a large and unusual dinner and dessert service made for the Russian ruler, Empress Catherine II (ʻCatherine the Great`/1729–96) (henceforth ʻCatherine`), at the Staffordshire pottery, then already gaining national and international recognition, set up in 1759 by the English master potter Josiah Wedgwood (1730–95). Since early last century the service has been widely known as the Green Frog service (henceforth ´the service`). Accounts of it have usually focused on how it was made and decorated in England in 1773 and 1774, referring only briefly to what happened to it after it reached Russia. This short monograph [**1**] is chiefly about its life in Russia, with special reference to people and places in and around St Petersburg, including the Empress herself [**2**]; the imperial Winter Palace, to which Catherine gave a new (French) name, ´the Hermitage`; the complex of buildings, including the Winter Palace, that is now the State Hermitage Museum (henceforth ʻSHMʼ); and the much smaller palace for which the service was made, situated to the south of Catherine`s St Petersburg at a place known as Kekerekeksinen. The words ´(and elsewhere)` in the monograph`s title reflect the fact that pieces from the service have at least twice been lent for special exhibitions in places outside Russia. (And this could happen again.)

Anyone writing on this topic today must acknowledge the importance of two publications of the 1990s, the definitive work written and edited by Michael Raeburn and others, wholly on the service (Raeburn *et al.* 1995); and the work edited by Hilary Young, containing much material on the service, that accompanied the Victoria and Albert museum's (henceforth ´V&A`) 1995 ´Genius of Wedgwood` exhibition (Young 1995). I am indebted to the contributors to these works, and in particular to Ludmila Voronikhina (latterly Senior Research Associate at the SHM) and Lydia Liackhova (Curator of European Ceramics at the SHM), for their contributions on the service's history in Russia, and to Michael Raeburn.

Most of the primary sources on the topic are in Russian, Swedish, Finnish and Turkish, which I do not have, so I have had to rely heavily on secondary sources, augmented by translations of primary sources and personal communications. While my account inevitably overlaps with Voronikhina's (1995) and Liackhova's (1995), it differs from theirs as I have explored byways with the aim of illuminating matters related, both directly and indirectly, to the service's life in Russia, including information, some of which will be unfamiliar to many non-Russian readers, on the historical and topographical context. A few examples. When the service was commissioned, the palace where it was to be kept and used had not yet been built. I show where it was to be located, and try to explain why it was to be built at that place and at that time, and how frogs come into the story. I also describe what sort of palace it was; why, in its first few years, it had three different names, Kekerekeksinsky Palace, La Grenouillère, and Chesmensky (or Chesme) Palace; what the connection was between the palace and the naval battle of Chesme in the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-74; why this battle was important to Russia; and hence why, when the service was in use in Catherine`s lifetime, it is known to have been referred to as ´the Chesme glazed earthenware serviceʼ. In addressing these topics I inevitably introduce material that does not figure in Voronikhina's or Liackhova's accounts.

What prompted me to venture into this field? I had two main reasons. When I visited St Petersburg some years ago I failed to find the palace for which the service had been made. I was so ignorant that I did not even know its present name, nor where to look, although it is

in fact quite easy to find (see Appendix 1 on page 32). My other reason was that I was dismayed to find misinformation about the service being propagated by reputable sources. Some examples. In the massive two volumes on masterpieces in the SHM's collections, edited by Vitaly Suslov [**3**], it is stated that the service was commissioned from Wedgwood in 1770, but that there was then a long delay while negotiations took place about the price to be paid, which is why work did not begin till 1773 (Suslov 1994:II:565). Yet it is known that Catherine's commission did not reach Staffordshire till March 1773 and that work then began at once, without waiting for agreement on price.[**4**] It is true that work did stop, at the end of May, and was not resumed until the end of July, when news came that St Petersburg had agreed the price. So there was a delay, but of only two months, a short time for a big contract achieved without the aid of email or telephone, or even airmail.

Another example. On the back of a replica plate from the service produced around 1995 for the Wedgwood Collectors' Society of New York, it is stated that the service 'was intended for [a palace] near Petrodvorets…`. Better known as Peterhof ('Peter's Court'), Petrodvorets refers to a small cluster of adjacent palaces established by Tsar Peter I (´Peter the Great` /1672–1725) to the west of St Petersburg, on the south coast of the Gulf of Finland. Yet the service was actually made for an inland palace south of St Petersburg, some distance from Peterhof. Aileen Dawson (1995:98), Robin Reilly (1995:191) and the firm of Wedgwood itself (2010:2) have made a similar error. And again, a number of quite recent sources say, correctly, that the service`s palace became in the 1830s a refuge for old soldiers, and go on to say, mistakenly, that this remains its chief use. Armed with the overconfidence of the keen amateur historian, I resolved to try to put together an accurate account, free as far as possible from factual errors, with all guesses or speculations clearly marked.

I have tried to give a reasonably full account, but there remain gaps in our knowledge, not all attributable to my shortcomings as an investigator. Since some unanswered questions are unobvious, I make no apology for drawing attention to them in the text, and have also summarised them (see Appendix 2 on page 33). I assume no prior knowledge of Josiah Wedgwood or his work as a potter. With the general reader in mind, I have as far as possible avoided use of technical terms, as the story ranges over a number of fields, including business history, the topography of the St Petersburg region, language studies and linguistics, and Russian political, naval and architectural history. There are many illustrations, but very few – only one each – of Catherine, Josiah and how the service looked. Readers who would like to see pictures of these are recommended to seek images online. For the service, just enter ´the Green Frog service`. You will be deluged!

Where I give actual dates of events in pre-revolutionary Russia, or which rely on older Russian sources, I give them in the Old Style (O.S.), except where otherwise stated. Remember that Russia did not adopt the Gregorian calendar until 1918**.**[**5**]

2 The service: a brief life

Taken as a whole, what sort of life has the service had? It is fair to say that its life has been pretty uneventful, which may be one reason why not that much has been (or could be) written about it. Its fairly quiet life must also have contributed to its substantial survival for nearly two hundred and fifty years, despite the danger of breakage that inevitably faces ceramic items (especially functional items like the service, made to be used), a number of wars and revolutions, and the hazard of being moved several times, including two trips to England, in 1909 when a number of pieces were lent by Tsar Nicholas II for the firm of Wedgwood`s jubilee exhibition, held to mark the 150$^{th}$ anniversary of Josiah Wedgwood`s first setting up in business on his own; and in 1995 when about 300 pieces were lent by the

SHM to the V&A for its 'Genius of Wedgwood' exhibition, held to mark the 200th anniversary of Josiah`s death in 1795. The most dramatic incident in its life occurred in 1777, soon after its installation in the newly built Kekerekeksinsky Palace, when 95 pieces were stolen. (Most were quickly recovered.) It was only in use from that year to 1796, the year of Catherine`s death, a period of 19 years, less than 10% of its lifetime. After her death it was neglected and largely forgotten for over 100 years, until it was rediscovered early last century. For safety`s sake it was later twice evacuated, to Moscow from 1917 to 1921, and to Ekaterinburg [known as Sverdlovsk from 1924 to 1991] from 1941 to 1945. In 1921 the entire surviving service was brought together at the SHM, and it has been in the SHM`s care ever since. Some pieces are always on display in the SHM and, as mentioned above, pieces have been lent for special exhibitions elsewhere, though most are held in the SHM`s own reserve area most of the time.

3 The service's origins and character

Josiah Wedgwood had been introduced to the Russian imperial court through the good offices of the British ambassador, Lord Cathcart (1721–76), who had 'secured the friendship and even affection of the Russian Empress…`, and his wife, Jane (1722–71), who was also befriended by Catherine (Hamish Scott [in DNB] 2004)**.**[**6**] The service was commissioned from Josiah and his partner, Thomas Bentley (1730–80), on behalf of Catherine, in March 1773, by Alexander Baxter, a Scottish member of the Russia Company, who was Russian consul-general in England**.**[**7**] Scott says that Catherine's commissioning the service was partly the result of Jane Cathcart's efforts (2004). This may well be true, and Jane`s efforts could certainly have directly influenced Catherine in 1770. when she had ordered from Wedgwood the so-called ´Husk` service (it had wheat husks in its borders), a much simpler and smaller dinner and dessert service, but her unfortunate death in St Petersburg in November 1771 has a bearing on the kind of influence she can have had on Catherine`s later decision on the Frog service.

Although Catherine never visited Britain, she had an insatiable appetite for the neo-Gothic, for English gardens and British design, all of which are exemplified in the service and in the new palace for which it was intended. Unusually for such a client at that time, the service was to be made not of porcelain but of earthenware, a special cream-coloured earthenware that Wedgwood had invented some years earlier. (In 1766 Queen Charlotte, wife of the British monarch, King George III, had so admired it that she had granted him permission to call it Queen's Ware in her honour, and to style himself Potter to Her Majesty.) The pieces of the service were to be painted to show views of British scenery and notable buildings of England, Scotland and Wales (though not Ireland), and each piece was to show a different view ('real views and real buildings')**.[8]** It was largely finished by June 1774, when it was displayed at the firm's new London showrooms in Greek Street in Soho (admission only by ticket), though at this time 150 pieces were yet to be painted. It was soon completed, packed (in 22 crates), and despatched, finally arriving in St Petersburg early in October 1774, when payment was approved there**.**[**9**] According to present day SHM sources, it consisted of a dinner service of 680 pieces and a dessert service of 264 pieces, a total of 944 pieces. Each piece bore one or more views, painted on-glaze in monochrome enamel, a total of 1,222 views. Present day Wedgwood sources give slightly bigger numbers, 952 pieces and 1,244 views**.**[**10**] The monochrome purplish-black (dark sepia) colour used for painting the pieces was at the time called 'mulberry black' or 'delicate black'.

4 The service's original home in Russia: a palace with three names

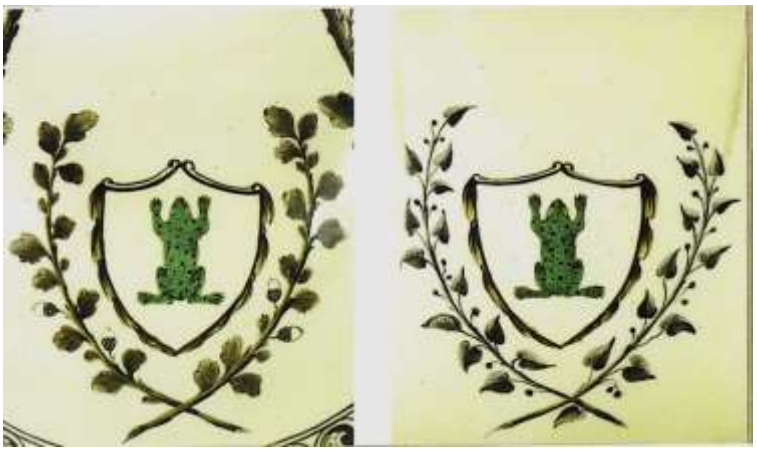

Figure 1 The service's frogs
On the left**:** as on the dinner service , wreathed in oak
On the right: as on the dessert service, wreathed in ivy

At Catherine's direction all the pieces of the service were to bear the image of a green frog (Fig **1**), and every image was to be exactly the same, a stylised frog within a frame in the shape of a heraldic shield. The context of her decision was that, from the outset, it was her intention that the service would be kept and used at a new palace, not yet built, to be located at a place she knew well and which was noted for its marshy ground populated by frogs. (On its own there being frogs at the place does not, of course, explain her wanting an image of a frog on every piece: see page 9 and [**19**].) The place selected has been described as a wayside stop or staging post on the journey from the Winter Palace (Fig **2**) in St Petersburg to the Summer Palace (Fig **3**) at Tsarskoe Selo (´Tsar's village`).[**11**] It lay about 11 km (7 ml) south of the Winter Palace, while Tsarskoe Selo lay about 18 km (11 ml) further south from the stop.

Figure 2 Winter Palace (Hermitage) at St Petersburg (Peter Sobolev, after 1997)

Figure 3 Summer Palace (Catherine Palace) at Tsarskoe Selo (now Pushkin) (Peter Sobolev, 2002)

At this time St Petersburg was still young, having only been founded by Peter the Great, initially as a fortress, in 1703, and designated by him as Russia's capital – in place of Moscow – only nine years later.[**12**] Remember how big Russia was in the 18th century (and still is), and how close St Petersburg lay to its western edge (Fig **4**). It is not surprising that, in Russia, St Petersburg has been known as its 'Window on the West'. Remember too that

during Catherine's reign Russia`s empire – its sphere of dominion over adjacent and nearby territories – expanded further, especially towards the west, coming to include all or large parts of present day Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Poland and Ukraine. One of Peter's reasons for choosing this location was that he wanted to consolidate Russia`s control over the Swedish (Baltic) province of Ingria (Fig **5**). The Russian conquest – more correctly, re-conquest – of Ingria was not completed until the summer of that year (1703), and the new capital city was to be established near its heart. At that time the province`s population is said to have consisted chiefly of Finnish speakers. A few years later, in 1710, the entire province was renamed St Petersburg.[**13**]

Figure 4 Outline map of the present Russian Federation (Russian Information Network, 2000-2004)

Figure 5 Outline map of historical Ingria

The place chosen by Catherine for construction of the new palace was largely deserted, consisting of marshy ground overgrown with shrubbery and inhabited by frogs. Numerous published accounts say that the place was known to the local population as Kekerekeksinen, and that this was the Finnish word for 'frog-marsh'. There was a raised mound there, on which stood a wooden building which courtiers, and Catherine herself, sometimes jokingly referred to as the Kekerekeksinsky or imperial *dacha.* (The *dacha* of a reigning emperor or empress would be expected to be much grander, as at Tsarskoe Selo or Peterhof.) The new palace was to be built on the same mound. Like the wooden building it was not intended for residential use, but as a transit establishment that could provide rest and refreshment for travellers. Also as a place where occasional special banquets could be given.

There is a puzzle about the site`s name. There is no reason to doubt that both the court and the local population knew it as Kekerekeksinen, that it was a frog marsh, and that the locals spoke one or more of the Finnic languages. What is problematic are the associated claims: that *kekerekeksinen* was a Finnish word, and that it meant 'frog-marsh'. Having consulted scholars familiar with the history of the Finno-Ugric languages, I have concluded that both claims, though they receive support from reputable sources, including the SHM and the Wedgwood Museum, are unsubstantiated and misleading, and that the true position is both complicated and elusive. (This topic may be of limited interest to some readers and is discussed separately: see Appendix 3 on pages 33-41.)

Why did Catherine choose this place for the new palace? The site was attractively isolated, and in its tamed naturalness more like the setting for a pastoral idyll than a real wilderness with its hidden perils. Perhaps Catherine wanted something grander, or the wooden building was getting beyond repair, or both? It is on record that court parties regularly stopped at the site when travelling between St Petersburg and Tsarskoe Selo, sometimes staying for as little as an hour. The entire journey took well under a day, and the site was

conveniently located (Fig **6**) for a lunch stop or a mid-morning break. So if a new palace was to be built, why find a new site when the existing one had pleasant associations?

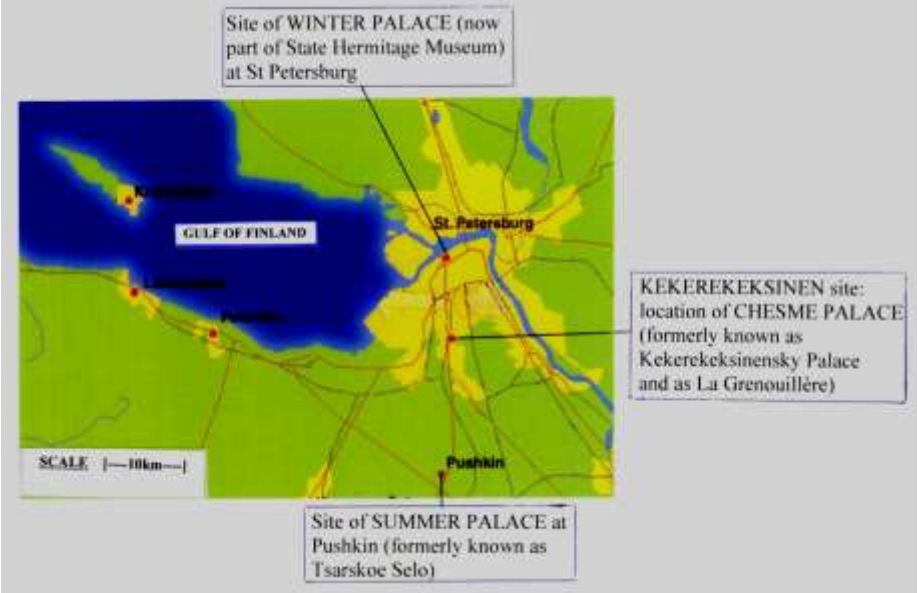

Figure 6 Outline map showing the relative positions of the Winter Palace (in St Petersburg, as it was in the 18th century); Chesme Palace, the service`s original home at Kekerekeksinen (now embedded in greatly expanded modern St Petersburg); and the Summer Palace (at Pushkin, formerly Tsarskoe Selo)

There is, however, another possible reason. There is a legend that after the great Russian naval victory over the Turkish fleet at Çeşme [modern Turkish; transliterated Russian 'Chesme'] in the eastern Aegean Sea in June 1770, a messenger had been dispatched to bring the glorious news to Catherine. Finding that she had left the Hermitage and was on her way to Tsarskoe Selo, he hurried after her, catching up with her at Kekerekeksinen. Such was her joy that she decided then and there to commemorate the victory by building a new palace on the site of her meeting with the messenger.

Could this be true? Even if we make wildly optimistic assumptions, the supposed messenger could not have reached Catherine till mid- or late July, the battle having taken place over three days, from 24 to 26 June 1770 (O.S**.).** In his short history of Tsarskoe Selo, published to mark the 200th anniversary of the founding of ´the village`, Sergei Viltchkovsky says that Catherine almost always celebrated her birthday on the 21st of April (O.S.) at Tsarskoe Selo; also that 'from 1763, Catherine, except for two or three years, lived at Tsarskoe Selo during spring and summer…` (Viltchkovsky 1910). It is also on record that, some years, she made several, usually brief, return visits to St Petersburg. So if the legend is true, it is perfectly possible that Catherine had migrated to Tsarskoe Selo as usual in the spring, had returned to St Petersburg during July, and was on her way back to Tsarskoe Selo when the messenger caught up with her. The diaries of courtiers, the *Kamerfuriersky Zhurnal* daily ceremonial register (henceforth, for convenience, 'the court circular'), and Catherine`s own memoirs would surely have mentioned such a momentous incident. However, while I am not aware of any such reference, this could simply be because I have been unable to check – that I have failed to check – the court circular and other documents for the relevant period.

I am inclined to treat the legend not as a proven – or unproven – record of historic fact but more as a mythical affirmation that there was a definite connection between the two events, the naval victory and construction of the new palace. And there is little doubt that they were connected. We know that Catherine commissioned the service in March 1773, and that, around this time, she also commissioned the architect Yuri Velten (1730–1801) (Fig **7**) to design the new palace.[**14**] We also know that at this time the plans for the palace had not been finalised. What I have tried unsuccessfully to find out is when Catherine first had the idea of having a new palace built, and whether, when she did, she already had it in mind that it might in some way mark the naval victory. That she was determined to commemorate the victory is beyond doubt. There is a Chesme Hall within the Grand Palace at Peterhof, decorated with twelve large paintings depicting phases of the battle, work on which began in 1771; and a Chesme Column at Tsarskoe Selo, designed in 1771, though erected a few years later.[**15**] And, as we shall see, it was later massively commemorated at the Kekerekeksinen site, by the erection of Chesme Church and by giving the palace a new name, Chesmensky Palace, in 1780, although, like the old wooden building, it too was informally known as the imperial *dacha*.

Figure 7 Yuri Velten (1797) by Stepan Semyonovich Shchukin (c1754–1828)

Just as I failed to find out when Catherine first thought of having a new palace, I have also failed to find out whether there was a time gap between when she first thought of commissioning the service, and March 1773, when it was actually commissioned. It may be that Catherine first thought of both early in 1773, and then at once commissioned them. It is possible, though, that she had thought of them before, even several years before, but at that earlier period had had more pressing matters demanding her attention, such as growing unrest among the peasantry [**16**], the big outbreak of bubonic plague in Moscow in 1771, the intractable problems of Russia's international relations, and the continuing war with Ottoman Turkey. (The peace treaty that ended the war was not signed till July 1774.) She had also, as is well known, a wide range of cultural and intellectual interests, which showed itself in her obsession with collecting, constructing and commissioning – her 3Cs – and, powerful as she was, could not do everything at once. It is apparent, however, that affairs of state never stopped her completely. Her mania for collecting paintings, for instance, actually reached its peak in the late 1760s and early 70s. While it would help to have a time series showing the year by year level of Catherine's 3Cs activity in the 1770s, it may be that we will never know exactly when she first thought of commissioning the palace and the service. Did she ever consider the possibility of the service being made by any maker other than Wedgwood? The strict answer to this question has to be that we do not know. Robin Reilly observes, however, that by the time the service was commissioned the name of Wedgwood was firmly established at the Russian court. He suggests 'it is doubtful whether the Empress would have been content to commission the service from any other manufacturer, even if another could have been found to undertake it`. (Reilly 1989:88)

The new palace was to be in the English style, 'designed as a two-storied [moated] Gothic castle on a triangular plan with round turrets at each corner and a large round tower in the centre; in its original form it had a rusticated ground floor, lancet windows and battlemented parapets.` (Voronikhina 1995:14) Much has been written on Velten's sources, and it has been suggested that his design was based on Longford Castle in Wiltshire, which was also one of the English buildings used to decorate a piece of the service (a round cover). Wedgwood's source for the decoration on the cover was a painting by George Lambert (1699/1700–1765), (Fig **8**).

Figure 8 Longford Castle from the South West (detail), George Lambert (1743) (UK Government Art Collection)

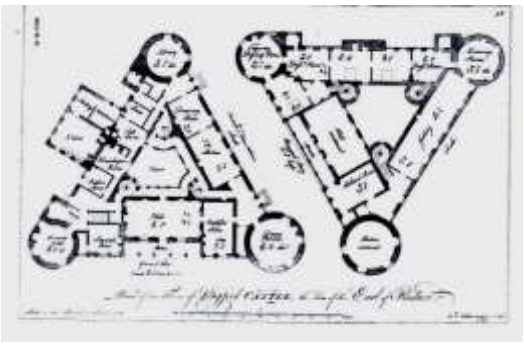

Figure 9 Plan of Longford Castle, from *Vitruvius Britannicus*, Volume 5

Longford Castle had been built around 1590. An important difference between the two buildings was the absence in the castle of a central tower. Velten may have been familiar with the castle from Volume 5 of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, which had been published in 1771 (Fig **9**).[**17**]

Compare the castle with Velten's designs for the new palace (Figs **10** and **11**).

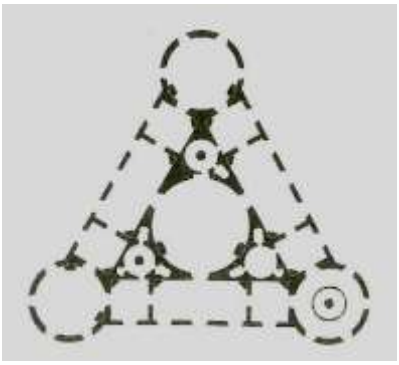

Figure 10 Chesme Palace: Plan (Velten 1774)

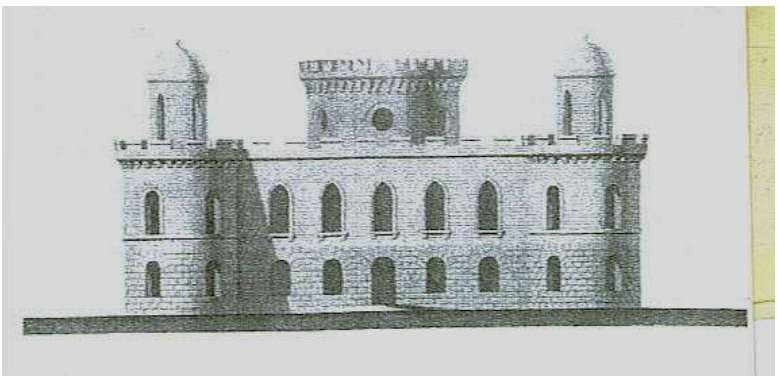

Figure 11 Chesme Palace: Elevation (Velten 1774)

There is controversy as to whether Longford Castle was Velten's chief source. I do not intend to enter that debate, though it is worth noting – as we have seen – that while the plans of the two buildings are indeed similar, there are greater differences in their elevations, and that comparing them is not helped by the fact that both have been modified since they were first built. Some scholars have suggested that (old) Inveraray Castle was a major influence on Velten; indeed Dmitri Shvidkovsky (2007:238) describes it, without

qualification, as *the* model for Chesme Palace, although in his earlier book (1996:188) he had argued against the Inveraray connection.

Construction of the new palace began in 1774 and was completed in 1777. Once it was finished the service could be installed in it. Since the service had arrived in St Petersburg in 1774, it is natural to ask what had happened to it during the years the palace was being built. Was it exhibited at the Winter Palace or elsewhere, or was it merely checked, repacked and put into store awaiting transit? The circumstantial evidence is that it was not exhibited.[**18**] And its transfer from St Petersburg to the new palace? We know that in Russia in the 18th century many roads were poor – rutted and very bumpy – making transport of ceramics often safer in winter by smoother-running sledges along snow-covered roads. It is on record, however, that around 1774 Catherine had ordered that the roads near St Petersburg should be improved, including the road from the Hermitage to Tsarskoe Selo. I have failed to find evidence on when or how the service`s transfer took place, once building the new palace was complete. It must, however, have been transferred without significant delay, since we know it was used in June 1777 for a special dinner held at the palace (see page 13 below).

Initially the official name of the new palace was Kekerekeksinsky Palace, though Catherine herself spoke of it (and the site itself) as La Grenouillère, a French word, dating from the 16th century, for a marsh or swamp populated by frogs. She was still doing so in 1779, according to the then British envoy-extraordinary, Sir James Harris (1746–1820), in a letter to his father about a visit he had made to the palace on 20 May 1779 (O.S.). While there Catherine had shown him the service, and in the same letter he describes it, observing that, as we know, each piece bore the image of a frog. But why? (Liackhova 1995:208) [**19**]

What did the palace look like during Catherine`s reign? On the next page I show two images of its exterior, both probably made fairly soon after it was completed. I think the first one (Fig **12**) is almost certainly a tidied-up, prettified portrayal of the scene. I found the second (Fig **13**) in the online version of the *Encyclopaedia of Saint Petersburg*, which states that it was painted by a J B Traversay (see box on page 11). It offers a more plausible image of what the palace may have looked like at the time, given what we know about the site. Both also show the new church – about which more below – to the left of the palace. In her biography of Josiah Wedgwood, Eliza Meteyard described this palace as 'the most fantastic, and yet most beautiful of [Catherine's] country retreats`. (1866:II:305)

What I cannot do is show any paintings, drawings, engravings, photographs or other images of what the palace looked like inside, since all my attempts to find such images have failed. There is, however, no shortage of written accounts, including some from the 1780s and 90s. 'One of the attractions of the palace was the collection of full-length portraits of all the reigning kings and queens of Europe and their families – of course including Catherine herself – placed in the central hall and in ten rooms around it. On the upper parts of the walls there were marble bas-reliefs portraying all the Russian rulers and monarchs [from the 9th century onwards].` (Voronikhina 1995:14) She mentions several such accounts, including an early (1782) one by Svetlov.

* * * * *

Figure 12 Chesme Palace and Church at Kekerekeksinen in the late 18th century, by an unknown artist

Figure 13 Chesme Palace and Church at Kekerekeksinen

Painted by J-B Traversay, (probably) in the 1790s (*Encyclopaedia of Saint Petersburg*)

The marquis de Traversay There was a French family called Prévost de Sansac that could trace its noble origins back to the 11th century. A member of this family, Jean-Baptiste (1754–1831), was a professional sailor who served in the navies of France and Russia. As a young officer he served with distinction in the French navy in what Americans call the Revolutionary War of 1775–1783. Around 1788 he received from King Louis XVI the hereditary title of marquis de Traversay, by a process loosely comparable with that involved in the revival of dormant British peerages, including success in identifying a sufficient number of noble ancestors in preceding centuries. In 1790 he left France for his and his family's safety to live in Switzerland, and it was while there that his name was put forward to Catherine, with the approval of King Louis, in response to a request from her, as part of her continuing programme of strengthening the leadership of the Russian navy. He visited Russia for the first time in May 1791, staying till August, and again in July 1793, when he returned to live and work there permanently. It is reasonable to assume that the amateur painter 'J B Traversay` and the naval officer 'Jean-Baptiste, marquis de Traversay' were one and the same person, so the picture (Fig **13**) must have been painted in the summer of 1791, or in or after the summer of 1793, but not, as stated in the *Encyclopaedia of Saint Petersburg,* in the 1780s. In the early 19th century, by then known as Ivan Ivanovich de Traversay, he was made Grand Admiral of the Black Sea, and later became minister of naval affairs in the Russian government. Only in 1996 did he become the subject of a full-length biography, written by one of his direct descendants, Madeleine du Chatenet (née Traversay) (du Chatenet 1996).

5 The battle of Chesme of June 1770 and its place in Russian history

On 24 June 1780 (O.S.) Catherine officially renamed the palace, this date having been chosen to mark the 10th anniversary of the naval battle that had resulted in defeat of the Turkish fleet during the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-74. (This was one of twelve wars waged between the Russian and Ottoman empires between 1568 and 1918.) The battle, in the bay of Çeşme and the nearby strait, was possibly Russia`s greatest ever naval victory, and certainly one of Turkey's greatest naval defeats.

Figure 14 Map of part of the Aegean Sea

Çeşme is a town on the Aegean coast of Turkey. In the map (Fig **14**) it is near the tip of the peninsula that juts westward into the Aegean. The tip is only about 7 km (4 ml) from the – now Greek – island of Chios (Khios), and only about 75 km (46 ml) west of the Turkish city of İzmir (Smyrna until 1923). It takes its name from the Turkish word 'çeşme', which can mean 'spring', of which there were many in the area.

Admiral 'Sir' Samuel Greig [20] The battle of Chesme figures also in British naval history, since the sailors of the Russian fleet included several British (chiefly Scottish) officers. With the ending of the Seven Years War in 1763 there were many British naval officers languishing on land on half-pay. In that year Catherine sent a request to Britain to lend her some competent naval officers to improve the Russian fleet, also holding out the prospect of rapid promotion. Samuel Grieg (1736–88), born in Inverkeithing, a small coastal town and former royal burgh in the kingdom of Fife, was the most notable of the five selected. He went to Russia at once. At Chesme he was both a commander of ships in the battle and adviser to the Russian commander-in-chief, Admiral Count Aleksei Grigorievitch Orlov (1737–1808), who later confided to Catherine 'that he knew nothing about sea affairs; that even at Chesme he had done nothing himself; and that Greig had done everything` (Richard Warner [in DNB] 2004).[**21**] Greig later played a large part in strengthening the Russian navy through the introduction of major organisational reforms in several areas, including ship construction, naval discipline, methods of arming warships and naval training. During a home visit in 1777 he was granted the Freedom of the city of Edinburgh, and in 1782 was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, though it seems he never became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He died of a fever during the Russo-Swedish war of 1788–90, after he had led Russia`s fleet in the battle of Hogland. He was given a state funeral and is buried in a grand Palladian mausoleum (designed and erected on Catherine`s orders) in the Lutheran cathedral in Reval (Tallinn since 1918) in Estonia, at the time a governorate of the Russian empire. At the time of his death he was Grand Admiral Greig and had received many honours from Catherine, including honorary membership of the imperial Academy of Sciences and knighthoods of the orders of St George, St Anna, St Vladimir and St Andrew. He is remembered in Russia as 'the father of the Russian navy`. His portrait (Fig **15**) by Ivan Argunov (1729–1802) is now in the museum at his birthplace. Priscilla Roosevelt says that Argunov, a leading court painter of the day, was a member of a family of talented serfs which produced three painters and two architects. She says they were treated quite well but poorly paid (1995:247).

Figure 15 Admiral Samuel Greig (1773) by Ivan Petrovitch Argunov (Inverkeithing Museum)

The battle has been described as Turkey's greatest naval defeat since the 3rd battle of Lepanto of 1571, in which Turkey is said to have lost 20,000 dead and wounded, and 190 ships sunk or captured.[**22**] Russian accounts give the number of Turkish dead at Çeşme as 11,000 and Russian dead as under 600, with similarly disproportionate losses of ships. The victory was in itself a major success for Russia, but Its greater significance was that until 1769 no Russian warship had ever entered the Mediterranean, that previous encounters in April and May of 1770 had been minor, making Chesme – reverting now to the Russian transliteration – her first ever big naval battle in the Mediterranean, and her most decisive ever naval victory over Turkey. The achievement was stupendous, the more so considering the long and challenging voyage, taking from four to six months, that the Russian fleet had had to make, mostly by sail but possibly also sometimes requiring rowing, from the far north, via the North Atlantic, the Strait of Gibraltar and most of the Mediterranean.[**23**] It was also symbolically important, given Russia`s peculiar position as a huge country that, for much of its history, had been virtually landlocked, hemmed in to the north by ice, to the

west by the Swedes and to the south by the Ottomans. So it is not all that surprising that Catherine was determined to mark the victory grandly, in buildings, paintings and other memorials. [**24**]

6 Chesme Church

On the same day that Catherine renamed the palace (24 June 1780 [O.S.]), she consecrated a new Russian Orthodox church (Fig **16**), dedicated to St John the Baptist, to be known as Chesmenskaya (or Chesme) Church. Also designed by Yuri Velten, it was built close to the palace, over the period from 1777 to 1780, its foundations having been laid soon after completion of the palace. Both are major examples of Gothic revival (neo-Gothic) buildings in or near St Petersburg. In Russia its architectural style is sometimes referred to as pseudo-Gothic.

Figure 16 Chesme Church

7 The service in use: ceremony and spectacle

There are few references to the service in use – who ate from it and when they did so – though an early description of the palace, from 1782, singles out the service as one of its highlights. Lydia Liackhova says that during the first few years of the palace's existence Catherine paid periodic visits, most being brief stops *en route* between St Petersburg and Tsarskoe Selo, which gave her an opportunity to relax but did not involve the kind of entertaining that might have called for use of the service. In what follows, I draw heavily on Liackhova's account of when and how the service was used (1995). The court circular, describing the occasion of the visit (mentioned above) by Sir James Harris in May 1779, says that Catherine 'deigned to drink coffee with both the gathered retinue and accompanying persons, and the duration of her visit to the palace was over an hour`. Presumably the service was not used on that occasion since it contains no cups. The same entry in the court circular indicates that the service was at this time seen chiefly as a cabinet service, intended more for display than use. During the spring and summer of this year (1779) it seems that Catherine dropped in at the palace on several occasions, usually taking coffee there.

The new palace was not only the place where Catherine's made brief halts, nor was the service just a conversation item. It was used, though not often, on special occasions, especially the banquets associated with grand ceremonies. In 1777, soon after construction of the palace was complete, King Gustavus III of Sweden (1746–92) (Fig **17**), a first cousin of Catherine's, visited Russia for a month, under the assumed name of Count Gotland, and attended the ceremonial laying of the foundations of Chesme Church on 6 June (probably O.S.).[**25**] The ceremony was followed by dinner for 36 at the palace, when 'the table was laid with a glazed earthenware service`. Since no other dinner service was kept at the palace this must have been the Frog service, and was perhaps its first use for such an event.

The service was again used on 24 June 1780 (O.S.), the 10th anniversary of the battle of Chesme, when Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II (1741–90) (Fig **18**) visited St Petersburg under the assumed name of Count Falkenstein, and was present when the church was consecrated and the palace`s name changed.[**26**] At the ceremonial lunch that followed the consecration the number at table was 56. (Numbers are discussed below.) The official account again refers to the ´glazed earthenware service`. And the following year, again on 24 June (O.S.), after the ceremonial service commemorating the Chesme victory, presumably held at

Figure 17
King Gustavus III
of Sweden

Figure 18
Holy Roman Emperor
Joseph II

Figure 19
King Stanislaus II Augustus
of Poland

the church, Catherine gave a banquet at the palace, this time for 53 persons. In 1782 and 1783 Catherine stopped at the palace on 24 June, but no banquets were given, and from June 1784 the ceremonies and related celebrations marking the anniversary of the victory were held at Tsarskoe Selo.[**27**]

The palace seems to have been used only briefly for other substantial court activities. On 18 February 1791 [probably O.S.] there was a 'sleigh procession`, followed by lunch for 105 persons, including of course Catherine herself, using ´the Chesme glazed earthenware service`. (This may be the first time that the court circular referred to the service as the Chesme service.) A traveller who visited the palace in 1794 described it as a 'pleasure palace`. (Georgi 1794) On 10 February 1795 [probably O.S.] there was another sleigh procession, with Catherine and a myriad of grand dukes and duchesses and other elevated persons, and this time there were 112 place-settings for lunch.

Since the service had been planned and made to serve only 50 persons, extra pieces must usually have been required when the number at table was to exceed this number. It seems that the difference was made up with pieces made by the Imperial Porcelain Manufactory (established with that name in St Petersburg in 1744). They were said to be in the style of the Wedgwood service, but with a number of differences, including some use of gilding. This factory is still producing wares, and in 2005, after a number of name changes over the years, reverted to its original name. I have been unable to find an estimate of the number of extra pieces that were made. Moreover, although the service was intended for 50 persons, it contained 288 flat plates, 120 soup plates and 144 dessert plates. To judge how many extra pieces were needed on any specific occasion, one would have to have some idea of how many plates and other dishes were likely to be used by and for each person at table in St Petersburg court circles in the later 18th century. This in turn would depend on the

number of courses, the number of dishes (including serving dishes) required for each course, and the extent to which dishes were changed for every course. Are there surviving documents – diaries, menus or notes on court etiquette – which would make it possible to arrive at a credible estimate? And when extra pieces were ordered, for how many additional persons was provision being made, and was the size of the order boosted to allow for breakages?

George Williamson, of whom more below, says, mistakenly, that the service was also customarily used to mark the arrival of new British ambassadors and other visitors. [**28**]

I found only one other significant reference to the service in this period of its life. This was in the diary of the former king of Poland, Stanislaus II Augustus (1732–98) who, as Count Stanislaus Poniatowski, had been Catherine's lover in the 1750s, and who was shown round the palace in 1797 by her son, the new Tsar, Paul I (1754–1801). (Fig **19**) [**29**]

Why are records of the service in use so meagre? Except on special occasions, it is unrealistic to expect it to have been mentioned. If Catherine visited the palace, accompanied by only a few other people, as we know she sometimes did, and made some use of the service, the court circular would no doubt record the visit, but it would be asking too much to expect it to go into such detail as to say, for instance, that 'the Empress took lunch using dishes from the Chesme glazed earthenware service`. Moreover, if the British views decorating the pieces, especially the plates, were to be appreciated, which was probably Catherine`s wish, it would have been easier for them to be handled, examined and admired when the service was not in use. And we should not forget that the painted decoration was done with on-glaze enamel, which would not stand up to heavy use. Michael Raeburn (personal communication) has observed that, even so, a few pieces have suffered badly through use.

Another point to bear in mind is that while the service was seen as special by Catherine, and is so regarded by many students of ceramic history today, for most people for most of its active life the service was probably viewed as just one of many useful domestic items of good quality in the imperial household. Indeed, to jump ahead in time for a moment, Liackhova quotes an 1896 letter from a senior member of the Court Marshal's department in St Petersburg which is a model of faint praise: 'Although [it]...is not a work of any particular artistic significance, its importance as a historical rarity is indubitable` (1995:212). It was not only in Russia that the service failed to gain unqualified approval. In June 1774, the very well-connected Mary Delany, having visited the London preview exhibition, had described it disparagingly as 'crockery ware`. More recently, W B Honey (1948:3) was equally dismissive, describing the service, which he saw as Wedgwood's only important attempt to make use of 'the art of the porcelain-painter, of the miniaturist in enamels`, as 'artistically a failure`.[**30**]

8 The service after Catherine's death in 1796: neglect and rediscovery

It is unsurprising that nothing was heard of the service in use after Catherine's death, since most of the people who knew of it were probably not interested in it, and many others were probably unaware of its existence. It is unlikely to have been used while it remained at Chesme Palace. After its removal from the palace it could have been used, but no records have come to light which suggest that it was. And when it came into the care of the SHM it would then, like most objects in most museums, be there so that it could be kept safe, if necessary conserved, possibly (or definitely) displayed, but certainly not to be used.

After Catherine's death, the palace was deserted, though I came across a charmingly implausible and totally unfounded suggestion that the palace and the surrounding area had come into the hands of Count Aleksei Orlov, and had become famed for its race-track and for his summer garden parties.[**31**] In 1828 an English traveller**,** Dr Augustus Bozzi Granville**,** FRS (1783–1872), reported, in the published journal of his travels, that the imperial apartments 'are in a dilapidated state, and entirely stripped of furniture`. The service remained at the palace, chiefly in the same three large sideboards where it had been kept in Catherine's day, until 1830, when it was removed, by order of Tsar Nicholas I (1796–1855), to the English Palace at Peterhof. As mentioned above, Peterhof lies to the west of St Petersburg on the Gulf of Finland, about 25 km (16 ml) from the Winter Palace. A few pieces (one example of each type) were transferred in 1879 to the Cottage Palace at Peterhof, where they remained until 1921 when they were finally acquired by the SHM. There they were reunited with the rest of the service which, having remained at the English Palace till September 1912 (see next page), had then been transferred to the SHM. In the same year some pieces from the service were lent to a Petersburg-based imperial institution, the Academy of Arts, for inclusion in a special exhibition being held to celebrate Wedgwood ceramics. At the SHM some pieces are always on display, about 60 at present, but most are in the reserve area in large storage cupboards. Below are early 21st century photographs of two of these cupboards, piled high with pieces from the service (Figs **20** and **21**), and the adjacent cupboard containing pieces of Du Paquier porcelain with, in front of it, Dr Lydia Liackhova, Curator of European Ceramics (Fig **22**).

Figures 20 & 21 Part of the Green Frog service in its storage cupboards Figure 22 Dr Lydia Liackhova
In the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (Photographer: Helen Espir)

The present account has described the service's movements over time. It must be stressed, however, that for most of the period from Catherine's death till the early years of the 20th century it was neglected and largely forgotten, and might have stayed out of sight had it not been for the persistence of an English art expert of the day, George Charles Williamson (1858–1942), who first became interested in the service in 1906. He wrote twice about the service, first in a big book devoted entirely to it, published in 1909, and later in a chapter of a further book, published in 1925. The chapter gives more details of the circumstances of the service's rediscovery: he himself saw it as 'enter[ing] more fully into personal details' than he had thought appropriate in the earlier book (1925: 218). In the following account I draw on both these sources. (I found him a frustrating source of information. While usually clear on the order of events and providing full details of his own contributions, he seldom offers even approximate dates.) He visited Russia on several occasions, and says he had

already established a relationship with the Russian Emperor (Tsar Nicholas II /1868–1918), before the latter began to investigate the service.

At an early stage he consulted Frank Wedgwood, a director of the firm, about the fate of the service and was told that as far as he (Wedgwood) knew it no longer existed. This spurred him to send off a flurry of letters asking about the service to a number of officials and palaces in Russia. All who replied assured him that the service was no longer in existence, and one high official angrily told him to stop asking questions. Exasperated, and doubting that he was being told the truth, he next wrote, via the British foreign office, direct to the Emperor, who replied 'speedily', saying that '[he] had never before heard of the service … and would have inquiries started at once concerning its whereabouts`. (1925:221) Shortly afterwards, Williamson received a further letter, which told him 'that the service had been found … in an underground pantry in one of the palaces at Peterhof, a room that had not been opened for perhaps seventy years or more`. (1925:221-222)

The service must have made an impression on the Emperor, for he directed that it be put on show in the English Palace at Peterhof, in well-designed vitrines (glass display cabinets) made for the purpose. These are illustrated by Williamson. (1909: plate facing page 4) (Fig **23**). It is uncertain how many pieces were exhibited. Williamson clearly believed that it was everything: 'The whole of the service has now been removed from the place where it was hidden, and occupies a series of fine vitrines in the English Palace at Peterhof.` (1909:5) In the vitrines the pieces were set out upon velvet, 'as to the colour of which I [Williamson] had the honour to be consulted`. (1925:225) Around this time 'further applications were made to the Emperor, and the interest of Her Imperial Majesty, the [dowager] Empress Maria Feodorovna was sought`. (1909:4)[**32**] These included a request – which was granted – that pieces from the service be lent for a jubilee exhibition being organised by the firm in 1909, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Josiah`s setting up in business on his own. [**33**]

Figure 23 Pieces from the Green Frog service in a vitrine at Peterhof (from Williamson 1909)

Williamson`s work culminated in December with the publication of his book on the service. (1909) It contains a complete catalogue of the pieces and views, and illustrations of over 120 pieces, based on photographs taken specially for the book by Tsar Nicholas's own photographer.[**34**] The same month pieces from the service were put on show at the jubilee exhibition in London.[**35**] Williamson had been invited to go to Russia to collect pieces for the exhibition, but had been unable to go because he was ill at the time, and Frank Wedgwood had gone instead, 'to receive the pieces that were placed at his disposal by the Emperor`.(1925:223) It appears that he was given some discretion in selecting these pieces. There has been some doubt about the number of pieces lent, but thirty-four is probably the correct number. The illustrated catalogue for the exhibition, issued by the firm, lists 34 pieces, bearing a total of 49 views (Wedgwood 1909); Williamson (1909) listed 26 pieces bearing 37 views, but later (1925:229) gave the number of pieces lent as 34; and Voronikhina (1995:16), possibly relying on the earlier accounts, also gives the number as 34.

When the service was 'mislaid', so also was the catalogue Thomas Bentley had prepared, which had accompanied it when it was delivered to Russia in 1774 (see [**10**]). Unlike the service itself, it has never been found. In the absence of a catalogue, it would have been impossible to check reliably what was present and what was missing from the rediscovered service. Once again Williamson came to the rescue. He tried to find a copy in England, and asserts, giving no details, that he tracked one down among a mass of waste paper in Liverpool. He says he had it copied and printed, and that when the pieces that had been lent were returned to Russia after the jubilee exhibition, 'a number of copies of the unique [reprinted] catalogue` were sent as well, by Williamson himself (1925:229).

Over the years a number of pieces have gone missing, though it is not known to what extent this has been due to accidental loss, breakage, theft, sale, or some other (unlikely) cause. In 1830, when the service was removed from Chesme Palace, 836 pieces remained. In the year 2000 the number of pieces held by the SHM was 767, indicating a cumulative loss since 1774 of about 19%. The number of flat plates and ice cups that have failed to survive is disproportionately high. Michael Raeburn has pointed out (personal communication) the remarkable fact that none of the pieces catalogued by Williamson for his 1909 book went missing over the next 80 years or so, despite revolutions, wars and sieges. Not all, however, was rosy. In the introductory essay that he wrote for the catalogue of the jubilee exhibition, Arthur Hayden (see [**35**] below) commented on the condition of the service: 'As may be imagined, many pieces of so large a service have been broken in use, and some of those shown [at the exhibition] have met with nasty accidents, made almost invisible by careful restoration by [a] Mr Abbott of Kingston-on-Thames`.(Wedgwood 1909:5) ´Restoration` is also mentioned by Williamson, who says that when the service was rediscovered, it was noted that many of the pieces were damaged, including missing handles and knobs. During his visit to Russia it seems that Frank Wedgwood offered to get these missing parts replaced, the firm having retained the original moulds and drawings. It may be, therefore, that the pieces brought to England for the exhibition, some of which had been worked on by the Mr Abbott mentioned by Hayden, were accompanied by a further number of damaged pieces brought over for the attention of the firm itself. (1925:223)

And the service's condition today? In 1995, when approximately 300 pieces lent for the V&A's exhibition were displayed behind thick glass in sealed cases, they appeared to be in good condition. (If pieces had received conservation this should have been visible, but could have been concealed.) What of the 480 or so pieces that were not lent? Recent published accounts do not say when the condition of the service was last assessed, nor whether a condition report was then prepared.[**36**]

There is also the matter of how the service was referred to. While it was being made, Josiah Wedgwood called it ´the Russian service'. In Russia it was at first ´the earthenware service` or ´the glazed earthenware service` and later ´the Chesme glazed earthenware service'. Only in the 20th century did it acquire its present informal name, again perhaps thanks in part to Williamson, though he referred to it in his 1909 book as 'the Imperial Russian dinner service'. When the book was reviewed by Nicolai Rothstein in February 1910, in the Russian journal *Starye Gody* (´The Bygone Years`), the term 'Green Frog service' was in the title of the review, and this may be the first time the service was referred to in print by this name. The name has certainly caught on, as it is a good name: amusingly out of the ordinary, uniquely accurate, and immediately understandable in Russia, England and elsewhere.

It is possible that Williamson, through his book, was partly responsible for the confusion in some quarters, mentioned on page 2 above, about the location of the palace, for he writes: 'The service was intended for use in the palace of La Grenouillière, which now forms part of the Palace of *Peterhof,* near St Petersburg`. (1909:7: my emphasis) [**37**]

Williamson gives an enticing footnote to his account of the service, saying that the hugely rich American financier, banker and art collector, John Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), 'made a determined effort to try and purchase the service from the Emperor, but was not of course successful`.(1925:233) Had Morgan succeeded, it might have ended up not in the SHM in Russia but in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York! (For more on Morgan's relationship with Williamson, see [**34**].)

Having been rediscovered, the service has not again been entirely forgotten in Russia. It, together with the palace and the church, especially the latter, feature as minor sights on the St Petersburg tourist trail, and it has been described generously on the SHM`s website. It is also occasionally singled out for public mention, such as when pieces from the service were included in a special exhibition, *A Sentimental Journey - Wedgwood in Russia*, held at the SHM from December 2012 to March 2013. This was an example of the Russian custom of celebrating significant anniversaries, as it had been deliberately planned to mark the centenary of the Wedgwood exhibition held in 1912 at the imperial Academy of Arts (see page 16 above). As mentioned on pages 2 and 3, pieces have twice been lent for special exhibitions to be held in England, but I have failed to find out whether any have been lent to be shown in any other countries, or shown anywhere else in Russia.

9 Later history of the palaces and the places where they were located

Some place names have changed. Tsarskoe Selo became Detskoe Selo (´Children's village`) after the 1917 revolution and later, in 1937, was renamed Pushkin. This marked the centenary of the death of Alexander Pushkin (1799 – 1837), the Russian poet, dramatist and writer of stories. He had been in the first intake of thirty pupils at the *lycée* which had operated in an annexe to Catherine Palace from 1811 to 1843 (see [**11**]) to provide a liberal education for boys 'of the best families, who should afterwards occupy important posts in the Imperial Service`.(Viltchkovsky 1910)[**38**] St Petersburg, after almost 90 years as Petrograd and then Leningrad, became, in 1991, after a referendum, St Petersburg again. Peterhof, as already mentioned, was for some years from 1944 known by its Russianised name of Petrodvorets until, in 1997, its official name was changed back to Peterhof. In this case both names continue in use. The Winter Palace, its external appearance virtually unchanged since Catherine's reign, now forms part of the SHM.

The palace and the church built on the frog marsh remain in being – unlike the marsh itself.[**39**] The church was badly damaged during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45 (as it is known in Russia) and was later well-restored (1970–75). For some years it was a branch of the Central Naval Museum, with displays focused on the battle of Chesme, but since 1991 it has again been a place of public worship, while continuing to show naval displays.

And the palace. From Catherine's death in 1796 until the early 1830s it seems to have been largely unused. In 1812, under Tsar Alexander I (1777– 1825) the circular room on the ground floor was converted into a church, and in 1825 Alexander's body lay there in state on its way back to St Petersburg for his funeral. It was occupied during the summers of 1827 and 1828 by young girls from a charitable institution, while their own building was

being reconstructed. In 1832–34, by decision of Tsar Nicholas I (1796–1855), it was converted into a hospital and almshouse for old soldiers, initially chiefly veterans of Napoleon's invasion of Russia (the Patriotic War of 1812). Apart from removal of the battlements on the central tower, conversion left its external appearance largely unchanged. Its size and structure were, however, greatly altered, residential space being created by adding a wing at each of the three turreted corners, each on its own looking as big (see Fig **27** below) as the original palace. In providing both medical care and sheltered accommodation it became known informally as ´the invalids house`. It seems to have continued in use as a refuge for old soldiers well into the last century, though I have failed to find out when their admission ended and when any were last in residence. Some accounts say that the body of Rasputin lay there in 1916 after his assassination. In the 1930s the Road Transport Institute was located at the palace. After the War of 1941–45, and again in 2015, significant restoration work was carried out. Since the late 1940s it has been occupied by one of the St Petersburg campuses of the State University of Aerospace Instrumentation (SUAI), an institution bigger and covering a broader range of subjects than its name suggests.

10 A visual interlude

This section consists of photographs of Chesme Palace and its added wings, now part of SUAI`s estate, as they have survived to early in the 21st century, starting with some taken in the summer of 2005 by Peter Sobolev (Figs **24**, **25** & **26**). He says: ´When I started to take pictures the security guard came out and tried to prevent me. But he couldn`t find a reason why I shouldn`t take the pictures...` [**40**]

Figure 24 The original palace (Chesme Palace) in 2005 (Photographer: Peter Sobolev)

Figure 25 Part of the expanded palace

Figure 26 Part of one of the added wings

Views of Chesme Palace in 2005 (Photographer: Peter Sobolev)

The black and white photograph below (Fig **27**) is not dated. I have, however, seen another (much poorer) photograph of the same scene, dated 1950, and having compared them can confirm that this photograph shows the original palace as it looked around that time, flanked by two of the three added wings. What is striking is the area of open ground in front of the buildings, featureless apart from a few young trees, in marked contrast with the scene in the second photograph (Fig **29**) on the next page.

Figure 27 Chesme Palace, (probably) in the mid-20th century (SHM)

1667

1730

1800

This photograph (Fig **28**) was taken by Saint-Petersburg-com, a web-based company only set up in 2001. It too shows an elevation of the original palace early in the 21st century.

Figure 28 The original palace, early in the 21st century (Saint-Petersburg.com)

The remarkable aerial photograph below (Fig **29**), taken by the same company, probably around the same time, shows the palace and the church, now surrounded by a dense wood, yet only a step away from the massive urban sprawl of redeveloped southern St Petersburg. It again shows how close palace and church are to one another.

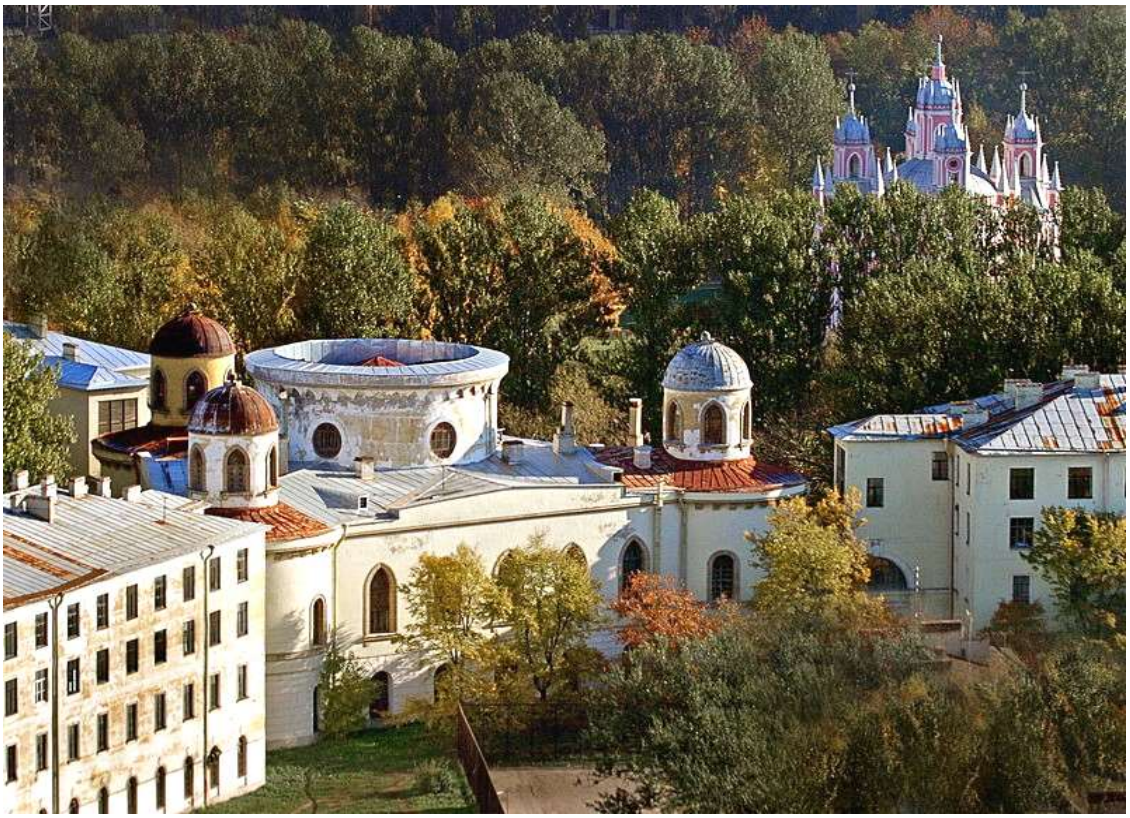

Figure 29 Aerial view of the palace and the church, early in the 21st century (Saint-Petersburg.com)

It is interesting to compare the photographs in this section with the 18th century pictures on page 10 above. In examining them, we should bear in mind that the palace is triangular, its three sides similar to one another, so when we look at images showing a side view they may not all be showing the same side.

11 Russia and St Petersburg: then and now

The tendency to idealise the unhistoric past has a particular relevance to the tale I have told. Russian society in Catherine's time was founded on the autocratic power of the ruler, the hereditary privileges of the nobility, almost inconceivable disparities in wealth, and the institution of serfdom which condemned most of the peasantry to a lifetime of permanent deprivation.[**41**] This should be remembered as we observe what has changed since the late 1700s. Where once the pastoral peace of the frog marsh would have been disturbed only by sounds of the countryside, such as the singing of birds and, of course, the croaking of frogs, it lies now in an area which, under plans made during the Stalin period, was to be greatly developed, in a largely unsuccessful attempt to create a new city centre within a long-established heavy industrial area to the south of the historic centre by the river Neva. Almost out of sight among the trees, palace and church are now surrounded by the roar of heavy traffic and other trappings of a big 21st century city: schools and hospitals, hotels and restaurants, department stores, a sport and concert complex, huge public buildings, enormous residential blocks, great roads, two Metro stations and massive patriotic memorials such as Catherine herself might have commissioned. By contrast the old imperial centre of the city, with its many canals, still lined by grand palaces, churches, museums, monuments, statues and other architectural gems, reminds us that St Petersburg is one of several northern European cities that has been dubbed 'the Venice of the North'. Over the past century Russia`s view of its Tsarist past has been volatile, ambivalent and complex. What should outsiders make of it? I leave you, the reader, to judge for yourself.

Notes

[1] The year 2009 was doubly important for the firm of Wedgwood. It marked the 250th anniversary of Josiah Wedgwood`s first setting up in business on his own, on the 1st of May 1759 at the Ivy House works at Burslem in Staffordshire; and a critical stage in the collapse of the firm as an independent ceramic manufacturer. This short monograph grew out of lectures I gave, in anticipation of the anniversary, to the Wedgwood Society of Great Britain in 2007 and the Morley College Ceramic Circle (now the London Ceramic Circle at Morley College) in 2008. A shorter version was published by the Wedgwood Society (Newfield 2009).

[2] From 1547, when Ivan IV, Grand Prince of Muscovy (´Ivan the Terrible`/1530–84), assumed the title of Tsar, all the rulers of Russia bore that title until, in 1721, Peter the Great was acclaimed `*Imperator* [Emperor] *of all the Russias*`, and bore that title for the last four years of his life. The new title, and *Imperatrina* for woman rulers and consorts, was then borne by all his successors, though the titles Tsar and Tsarina remained in use. The first reigning Empress was Peter's second wife, Catherine (1684–1727). On Peter's death she had been elected to succeed him, though she was related to the imperial family only by marriage. Her succession created a precedent from which a princess of the small German principality of Anhalt-Zerbst later benefited. In 1745 this princess, Sophie Friederike Auguste, aged only 16, was received into the Orthodox church, renamed *Ekaterina* (Catherine), and married by arrangement to the heir to the Russian throne, a grandson of Peter the Great, also called Peter. Years later much happened quickly (all dates N.S.): on 5 January 1762 Empress Elizabeth died and Peter became Emperor; on 9 July, he was forced to abdicate and his

young wife was proclaimed (reigning) Empress Catherine II in his stead; on 17 July, he was dead, allegedly murdered; and on 22 September she was ceremonially crowned. Her being a woman would not in itself have impeded her accession, since at this time both court and country had become accustomed to woman rulers, empresses having ruled Russia for 33 of the 37 years since the death of Peter the Great: Catherine I (1725–27), Anna (1730–40) and Elizabeth (1741–62).

[3] Suslov ran the SHM in the gap between Boris Borisovitch Piotrovsky (1908–90), Director from 1964 to 1990, and his son, Mikhail Borisovitch Piotrovky, (1944–), Director since 1992.

[4] Wedgwood acted quickly, eager to undertake Catherine's commission because of the prestige to be gained. Later in the month, he referred to her, in a letter to Bentley dated 23 March 1773, as 'my Great Patroness in the North', not how one would expect him to have described her if he intended to enter into prolonged haggling over price. (The two frequently communicated like this, by letter, since Wedgwood was based in Staffordshire while Bentley was most of the time in London.)

[5] It was only in 1700, by decision of Peter the Great, that Russia adopted the Julian calendar. This was also the year in which many (non-Catholic) European countries at last began to adopt the further calendar reforms that had been promulgated by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. Having only just adopted the Julian calendar, Russia's failure to adopt the Gregorian reforms at this time, while it was an opportunity missed, is perhaps understandable.

[6] Lieutenant General Sir Charles Schaw Cathcart, 9th Lord Cathcart, KT, was a Scottish peer who, after a successful military career but with no previous diplomatic experience, served as British ambassador to the imperial Russian court from 1768 to 1772. His wife, a sister of Sir William Hamilton, the antiquarian and husband of Nelson`s Emma, introduced Catherine to her brother's antiquarian work and was active in assisting Josiah Wedgwood in his attempts to find a market in Russia (Scott 2004). Her death, allegedly in childbirth, left her husband to care for their six children. (Her name is disputed. Scott refers to her as´Jean`, but most sources have her as´Jane`, as she was known in her lifetime. *Burke's Peerage* hedges its bets and has her as Jean *and* Jane.)

[7] The Russia (or Muscovy) Company was a chartered trading company, the first major English joint-stock trading company, which operated from 1555 to 1917. Baxter had been granted its freedom in 1752. The consul-general post was new, created with the object of promoting Russia's commercial interests in Britain, and Baxter was its first holder. In January 1773 he was in St Petersburg, making one of his periodic visits to Russia, when he received formal notification of his appointment, and it was probably during this visit that Catherine instructed him to commission the service from Josiah Wedgwood on her behalf. He served as consul-general for 30 years, from 1773 to 1803. He lived in style in Kensington, then a London suburb, with a portrait of Catherine, painted in Russia and perhaps a present from her, hanging in one of his drawing rooms. For his services as intermediary between Catherine and Wedgwood in 1773 he received a commission of 10% and several of the imperfect pieces of the Frog service. (Main source: Cross 2001)

[8] The quoted words are in a letter to Bentley dated 29 March, less than a week later (see [**4**] above). Alluding to Catherine's commission, his tone is anxious, as if protesting 'Will we really have to decorate *all* these pieces with pictures of real views and real buildings?`.

[9] According to Voronikhina (1995:13) the total amount paid by Catherine was 16,406 roubles (and 46 kopeks), then equivalent, she says, to £2,700. Blake Roberts (Raeburn *et al.* 1995:41) says that the account submitted had been for £2,290 (and 12 shillings and 4 pence), and offers a possible explanation for the difference.

[10] These Wedgwood figures accord with traditional English accounts, which seem to have been derived chiefly from the catalogue which Thomas Bentley prepared for Catherine in 1774. The catalogue had a long and effusive title: *Catalogue and General Description of a Complete Service of Porcelain* [sic] *or Queen's Ware … All Painted in Enamel, and Executed according to the Orders and Instructions of the Most Illustrious Patroness of the Arts … by Her Imperial Majesty's Very Humble and Most Grateful Servants. Wedgwood and Bentley, 1784.* It identified each view, assigned a

catalogue number to every piece, and also gave every piece a reference number which was painted in brown enamel on the reverse. Often the two numbers were the same. The discrepancy between the Hermitage figures and the Wedgwood figures is explained largely by a supposed miscalculation on Bentley's part, and by inclusion in the Wedgwood figures of eight spoons which, according to the SHM, were never found.

[11] The main Summer Palace building at Tsarskoe Selo had been completed in 1756. It was later named Catherine Palace, after Empress Catherine I.

[12] Small happenings in 1703 played a part in what is now called 'the founding of St Petersburg by Peter the Great` – including the building of a wooden church within the precincts of a new fortress. The conventional story in Russia is that it was by cutting a sod to mark the start of construction of the fortress, on 16 May 1703 (O.S.) [27 May N.S.], that Peter founded the city. Construction of the church began soon afterwards, on 29 June 1703 (O.S.), and the church was dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul, this being their feast day in the Christian calendar. It has been suggested that Peter chose 29 June because it was also his own name day. Peter referred to the church, and later the fortress (previously unnamed), and then the entire growing settlement, by several similar Dutch-sounding names, including *Sankt Piter Burkh* and *Sankt Pieterburch(t)* (his spelling was not consistent). Some authorities link his name choice with the contact he had had with Dutch people from early in his life and the time he had spent in the Dutch republic. Later, under his successors, the name of the new soon-to-be city was Germanised as *Sankt-Peterburg*.

The founding of St Petersburg was a remarkably bold move: the creation, by an army of serfs, involving great loss of life, on a bleak mosquito-ridden flood plain, of what quickly became a city and port where, hundreds of years earlier, the Swedes had also built a fortress, albeit a short-lived one. Its designation by Peter as Russia's capital in 1712 meant it became his chief place of residence and the centre of government, and hence the place where many members of the court were expected to live. By the time he died in 1725 its population was about 40,000, and it continued to grow rapidly. It has been generally accepted that at Catherine's accession in 1762 its population had risen to about 120,000, and that when she died in 1796 it was about 220,000. George Munro warns, however, that such estimates should be treated with great caution and regarded as very approximate. He argues that the 1762 figure is an overestimate, the true figure probably being closer to 100,000; and that the 1796 figure is almost certainly an underestimate, the true figure being closer to 250,000 (2008:49-52). By 1800 it was one of the ten biggest cities in Europe.

[13] Ingria – the land of the Ingrians – has also been known as Ingermanland. This was the name by which the region was known to the Swedes, who referred to its ancient Finnic inhabitants as Ingers. In some contexts both names were used to refer to the same geographical entity, and the Swedish name continued to be used by Russia into the 20th century for some official purposes. In the course of its history Ingria changed hands several times. In the modern period, under a peace treaty between Russia and Sweden in 1617, it had been annexed to Sweden. The Russian conquest of the other two Swedish Baltic provinces, Estonia and Livonia, was not completed until September 1710 when, as mentioned above, Ingria was given its new name. At the end of the Great Northern War, which lasted from 1700 to 1721, all three provinces were formally ceded to Russia.

[14] The chosen architect, Yuri Matveevich Velten, otherwise known as Georg Friedrich Velten (or Veldten, was born of German parentage in St Petersburg. His father, Matthias Velten, had migrated to Russia and joined the staff of a Petersburg-based imperial institution, the then new Academy of Sciences. Early in Yuri Velten`s professional career he worked under architect Bartolomeo Francesco Rastrelli (1700–71), whose own major projects in St Petersburg included the Winter Palace, the Smolny Monastery and, at Tsarskoe Selo, the Catherine Palace. From 1789 until his death Velten was Director of another Petersburg-based imperial institution, the Academy of Arts, which had been founded by Empress Elizabeth in 1757.

[15] The twelve paintings in the Chesme Hall at Peterhof were painted over the period 1771–73 by the German landscape painter, Jacob Philippe Hackaert (1737–1807). Around the same time the

English marine painter, Richard Paton (1716/17 – 1791), was commissioned to paint four huge pictures of the battle which were displayed at the Hermitage and then, in 1779, transferred to the Throne Room at Peterhof. There are also memorials at Gatchina Palace: the Chesme Obelisk, commissioned by Catherine around 1775, and the Chesme Gallery, constructed some years later.

[16] Peasant risings became common in Russia, with over 50 in the 1760s alone. In 1773 a rising began which continued until January 1775 when, after many battles, its chief leader, Emelyan Pugachev, was executed. This was much the biggest rising in Russian history: it is estimated that between 9,000 and 10,000 rebels were killed in just one important battle in late 1774. Catherine initiated fewer major building projects in the 1770s than in the preceding or subsequent decades, which lends circumstantial support to the suggestion that Pugachev's rebellion and other state problems diverted her attention at this time, as well as soaking up tax revenues (Munro 2008:251-2). There is no reason to doubt the strength of her longer-term commitment to construction, illustrated by a remark she made in July 1770 in a letter: 'I found Petersburg virtually wooden and will leave its buildings dressed in marble`.

[17] Volumes 4 (1765) & 5 (1771) of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, by John Woolfe, James Gandon & Matthias Darly, are entirely separate from Volumes 1, 2 & 3, published between 1715 and 1725 under different authorship. In their introduction to Volume 5, the authors state that construction of the original Longford Castle had been completed in 1591, but that 'the many and great alterations it has undergone, have hardly left any other traces of the original, than its triangular form` (Woolfe *et al.* 1771:10). It has been suggested that the Russian architect Vasiliy Neelov, who was sent to England by Catherine for six months in 1771 to study landscaping, may have brought a copy of the newly-published book (Volume 5) back with him when he returned to Russia (Roosevelt 1995:37).

[18] The gist of the argument is that if the service had been exhibited in St Petersburg while it was awaiting transfer to the new palace, this would have been mentioned in contemporary accounts, but no such accounts have been found, and it is reasonable to infer, for the reasons given below, that they have not been found because they do not exist: that the service was not exhibited. An observer whose voluminous correspondence has been published was Robert (later Sir Robert) Gunning (1731–1816), who succeeded Lord Cathcart as British representative at the Russian court from June 1772 to early 1776. (He is said to have become one of Catherine's favourites and to have had many private audiences.) Thus he was in post when the service arrived in St Petersburg and for some time afterwards. In diplomatic letters to his Minister in London he mentions occasions when services were commissioned by Catherine or received as gifts by her, including a porcelain service from Frederick the Great of Prussia which, in August 1772, was 'exposed in the Palace for several days; where persons of every Rank have been admitted to see it` (Raeburn 1995a:42). Raeburn observes that during Catherine's reign imperial taste had political significance, and that some incidents that might be regarded as casual occurrences are more properly construed as 'considered acts of cultural politics`. This makes it all the more reasonable to surmise that if the Green Frog service had been put on display at this time, this would have been a deliberate act which would have been mentioned in the court circular; that contemporary observers, both courtiers and others, would have been aware of it; that some of these observers would have referred to the event in letters, journals or other written records; and that some of these records would have survived. And if they had survived, who can doubt that Voronikhina or Liackhova would have found some of them?

[19] We may never know definitely why Catherine wanted every piece of the service to bear the image of a frog. She was certainly not averse to them. For example, indulging her weakness for inventing legends, she mischievously adapted the Russian folktale of the frog princess by claiming that the princess had once lived at the palace at Kekerekeksinen (Shvidkovsky 2007:238). It is easier to guess why she wanted the service's frogs to be green, since it is reasonable to suppose that the resident frogs were European Marsh Frogs (*Rana ridibunda*). (I am indebted to Professor Lars-Gunnar Larsson of Uppsala University [personal communication] for this information.) This frog, prevalent in Ingria, is water-dwelling and often green-coloured, so it is understandable that Catherine, having decided she wanted frogs on the service, should have directed that they be green.

[20] Although Greig was honoured by Catherine with a number of Russian knighthoods, he did not hold any British knighthood, and the quotation marks around 'Sír` reflect uncertainty about how he should be referred to within Great Britain. In Scotland he is commonly known simply as Admiral Samuel Greig.

[21] In December 1775, notwithstanding his earlier confession to her, Catherine gave Aleksei Orlov 5,000 serfs as a reward for the victory at Chesme. (At the time of his death his estate included 30,000 serfs.) She also granted him the honour of being allowed to add the name of the victory to his family name, which thus became Orlov-Chesmensky. He was one of the five brothers who, led by his elder brother, Grigori Grigorievitch Orlov (1734–1783), were involved in the conspiracy which, in 1762, had resulted in the enforced abdication and subsequent death (alleged murder) of Catherine`s husband, Tsar Peter III, and her accession as Empress. Although she was well disposed towards Aleksei, it was Grigori who was one of her lovers and father of her illegitimate son.

[22] Lepanto in now known as the Gulf of Corinth. The 1571 battle has been described as one of the key events of modern European history, since it decisively frustrated further Turkish advance into Europe. The Turkish fleet was defeated in the battle by the so-called Holy League, an alliance of the Papal States, Spain, Savoy, the Knights of Malta, and the republics of Genoa and Venice.

[23] Initially there were two squadrons. The first set sail early in August 1769 from Kronstadt, the Russian naval base on Kotlin island in the Gulf of Finland, about 30 km (19 ml) to the west of St Petersburg. Sailing via the Baltic Sea, the Kattegat, the Skagerrak and the North Sea, most of its ships reached the Mediterranean by mid-December. I have failed to find out the point of departure of the second, though it too almost certainly set off from there or from somewhere else in the Baltic. Having set sail in October 1769, it reached the Mediterranean early in May 1770. In all, In the course of the war, five squadrons were sent to the Mediterranean (Anderson 1954:44).

[24] Russia has been described as a victim of the 'tyranny of geography'. Arkhangelsk (Archangel), once Russia's main port, was in the Arctic and icebound half the year. While the creation of St Petersburg had been intended by Peter to provide a better alternative, the vagaries of Russia's relations with Sweden meant that passage of its ships through the Baltic Sea was subject to disruption. And Turkey dominated the Black Sea, especially after 1453 when Constantinople (now Istanbul), the Byzantine imperial capital, had finally fallen to Mehmet II, the young Ottoman Sultan. (There is a connection between the fall of Constantinople and Russia`s adoption in 1472 of the double-headed eagle as its symbol of empire, but that`s a story for another day.) Thus, for centuries, Russia was partly landlocked, lacking permanent access to a warm water port, until her victory in the war of 1768–74 led to a massive improvement in her situation. The peace treaty that formally ended the war, signed in Bulgaria by representatives of the Russian and Ottoman empires on 21 July 1774 (N.S.), granted Russia sovereignty of several seaports on the Sea of Azov and on the Black Sea itself, thus giving her access to the Black Sea; removed restrictions on passage by her merchant ships across the Black Sea; and gave these ships the right to sail to and from the Mediterranean, freely and all year round, via the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles.

[25] Gustavus was not one of Catherine's friends, nor one of her former lovers. He was later assassinated while attending a masked ball. (Verdi's opera *Un Ballo in Maschera* is loosely based on his assassination.)

[26] Joseph attended against the wish of his mother, the Austrian empress Maria Theresa. This was not the only time he had assumed the name of Count Falkenstein.

[27] The custom of commemorating the battle began on its first anniversary on 24 June 1771, when the College of Admiralty held a grand *fête* in St Petersburg. All who attended were given a specially minted medal bearing inscriptions praising Aleksei Orlov ('…conqueror and exterminator of the Turkish fleet`) and lauding the victory ('It was the happiness and joy of Russia…`).

[28] Williamson says: '[Catherine] clearly used the service upon many occasions, especially when she desired to honour the English [*sic*] ambassador or any English visitor, and for a while in the Russian

Court it was the custom that when a new English [sic] Ambassador was accredited, the Wedgwood service was used at the first dinner party at which he was present`. (1909:38) Williamson tells this story again in his later book, adding that he came across it while carrying out a search at the British Museum (1925:221), though he does not identify his source. I am sure he was wrong in thinking this custom involved the Frog service. If there was such a custom, it would have been at a different palace using a different Wedgwood service, probably the Husk service (see page 3 above).

[29] Catherine had secured her former lover`s election as King of Poland in 1764. After his abdication in 1795 he lived in Russia, in greatly reduced circumstances, as a pensioner of Catherine and, after her death, of Paul, until he died there in 1798.

[30] Judgments remain divided. Mary Delany's remark was in a letter to her niece on 7 June 1774: 'I am so giddy with looking over such a quantity of crockery ware.` (Dahn 2000, quoting Hall 1862, Vol IV:594-5) The judgment of Lady Grey, who also visited the June 1774 preview, was a little more favourable: 'The whole together does not make a Shew nor strike you at first with beauty, being only painted with Black Colour heightened with a Purplish cast, but each piece is separately extremely pretty and generally very well executed.` (Young 1995:126, quoting Raeburn 1992:458) George Williamson, who saw himself as the service's´rediscoverer` (see pages 16–19 *passim*), was obviously smitten: 'It was not only the most celebrated dinner-service in Europe, but in certain respects it was one of the most beautiful that was ever made.` (1925:228) The opinion of C A Johnson, on the other hand, seems closer to Honey's: 'Modern taste has difficulty in appreciating the artistic significance of this service, which was made in a fairly humble, and dull, earthenware and painted in a dull mulberry colour, apart from one splash of bright green on each piece`. (1979:132)

[31] This claim was made in 1991 by Patricia Roosevelt: 'Alexei Orlov-Chesmenskii (hero of the battle of Chesmé), for instance, was famed not just for the race-track at his Gothic palace, Chesmé, outside St Petersburg, but for summer garden parties to which anyone with "decent dress and a respectable appearance" (as one visitor put it) could come`. (1991:9) As authority for her claim she cites Dr Robert Lyall (1825:505), who lived for some years in Russia. What Lyall actually said, however, is that Alexei Orlov was enormously rich, that close to his house in Moscow he had his own race-track where horse races were regularly held, and that he held festivals and promenades in summer in his gardens in Moscow. In Lyall's account there is no suggestion that any of the brothers ever lived at Chesme Palace or had estates there. A few years later Roosevelt corrected her mistake when an 'adapted version` of the article was published (1995:140).

[32] Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna (1847–1928) was the widow of Nicholas's father, Tsar Alexander III. Her early life echoed Catherine`s over a century earlier (see [**2**] above). Born Princess Dagmar of Denmark, she too had been renamed and married (aged 18) to the heir to the Russian throne. (Her elder sister also married the heir to a throne, eventually becoming, as Queen Alexandra, the wife and then widow of British King Edward VII.)

[33] Voronikhina says that after being brought from Russia, the pieces lent were shown first at Etruria, the firm's chief manufacturing base from 1769 to 1940 in what is now the Staffordshire city of Stoke-on-Trent, before being transferred to London for the jubilee exhibition (1995:16).

[34] The book's cover price on publication was twenty-five shillings. Even allowing for inflation, this seems low for a high quality, expensively produced, large quarto volume which contained 73 photographic plates and was published in a limited edition of only 310 copies. Williamson was Art Editor at Bell's (his publishers) at the time: did Bell`s perhaps subsidise publication? Other possibilities are that Williamson himself subsidised it. Or that it was assisted by Morgan: Williamson had supported Morgan in his collecting, and says that Morgan asked to have certain plates in colour and to have two special copies of the book printed on vellum (1925:233). He also dedicated his later book to Morgan (1925). The book seems to have been a model of speedy production: its dedication, signed by Williamson, is dated November 1909 and it was published the next month. I found only one review, in the *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* (Vol 17, No 90, September 1910:375-6). The reviewer was unenthusiastic, clearly a lover of porcelain with little time for pottery.

[35] This was a happy conjunction, the jubilee exhibition with its illustrated catalogue (Wedgwood 1909) and the publication of Williamson's book (1909). The catalogue contained an introductory essay by Arthur Hayden (1868 –1946), a prolific writer on antiques and author of the series of 'Chats' books, including *Chats on English China* and *Chats on Old English Earthenware.* We know it was only Williamson's request that had persuaded Tsar Nicholas to lend pieces for the exhibition. Then we find Hayden (1909:2) welcoming the forthcoming book, while Williamson (1909: xi & 4) refers approvingly to the forthcoming exhibition. The conjunction continued: the V&A library accessioned the book on the 22nd December 1909, and the exhibition catalogue, a gift from the firm, on the 23rd.

[36] Reports will normally cover imperfections of all kinds – damage, deterioration and making/manufacturing defects – and provide details of items that are in perfect or almost perfect condition, items that required intervention and have been well conserved, and any imperfect items that have received no or minimal attention. Reports may also indicate whether any damage or deterioration occurred, or may have occurred, while items were in their present location.

The possibility of damage to its ceramic collection is a constant worry for the curatorial staff of any great museum, and there is no reason to suppose that the SHM is an exception. Everybody knows that ceramic objects can easily suffer damage in normal use or while being moved. What is less widely appreciated is how easily ceramics can be harmed, even within the peaceful environment of a museum, where they are typically housed in such seemingly safe refuges as locked display cases or on strong shelves in reserve areas inaccessible to visitors. Hazards that can harm intact pots or disturb previous attempts at conservation include inappropriate illumination, humidity or ventilation; mould spores, chemicals or other pollutants carried in the atmosphere; fluctuations in ambient temperature; and use of unsuitable methods or materials by previous conservators or the designers/constructors of the refuges themselves. Being subjected to vibration and being knocked or bumped into are also significant hazards, all the greater when space is limited and pots are displayed or stored close to one another or actually in contact. Other things being equal, moreover, earthenware is generally less robust than porcelain or stoneware and, as noted above, on-glaze enamel decoration is particularly vulnerable to mechanical damage.

[37] Williamson also contributes here to the uncertainty about the spelling of 'grenouillère` which has infected English sources ever since the 18th century. Which is right, the 'ère` form or the 'ière` form? Williamson continued to use 'ière` (1925:223). According to Voronikhina, Catherine used 'ère` (1995:14), while Liackhova cites James Harris, writing in June 1777, as using 'ière` (1995:208). In the 19th century Eliza Meteyard also went for 'ière` (1866:II:274). The Wedgwood Museum has not been consistent: its former Director, Gaye Blake Roberts, has used 'ère` (Raeburn *et al.* 1995:38) and this form has been used within the Museum, which says in a display caption that the service 'was intended for a Russian palace called La Grenouillère…`, but the Museum`s own website has gone for 'ière`. Kelly says that 'English writers have *usually* referred to the palace as La Grenouillière` (my emphasis) (1980:557). However *Robert*, the authoritative French dictionary, gives the word as 'grenouillère` and offers not the faintest hint of a possible alternative spelling, so this long-lasting´War of the Word`, like some real wars, may be the result of a mistake.

[38] This *lycée*, known as the *Imperial Lyceum*, was founded by Tsar Alexander I. It was transferred to St Petersburg in 1844 and remained in operation there until 1917.

[39] Nowadays, when Russian sources refer to them, or the battle, in English, they usually do so as *Chesme*, though the forms *Chesma, Chesmen*, *Chesman* and *Chesmé* are also sometimes used.

[40] Peter Yurievich Sobolev is a one-man wonder who, armed only with his camera and his *Wandering Camera* website, has since the 1990s produced a visual history of innumerable places and buildings in and around St Petersburg, echoing the number and variety of the British images on the Green Frog service itself.

* * * * *

[41] Estimates of the extent of serfdom vary considerably, partly because of the existence of more than one category of unfree peasants. A census in 1719 conducted by Peter the Great found that about 80% of peasants were unfree. By 1857, when there was another census, true private serfs had dropped to about 37% of the Russian population, but state peasants, who were nominally free but whose freedom of movement was restricted, accounted for another 37%.

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Appendix 1 – How to find Chesme Palace and Chesme Church in St Petersburg today

Both lie near one another in what is now Greater St Petersburg, about 11 km (7 ml) due south of the SHM, towards the north of *Moskovsky rayon* (Moscow District), between *Moskovsky prospekt* (Moscow Avenue) to the west and *prospekt Yuriya Gagarina* (Yury Gagarin Avenue) to the east, just north of *Moskovskaya ploshchad* (Moscow Square). **(***Moskovsky prospekt* is a section of the great M10 highway that runs all the way from the border with Finland to Moscow.**)** The nearest Metro stations are *Moskovskaya* (Moscow) and *Park Pobedy* (Victory Park).

The palace's address is *ulitsa Gastello 15* (15 Gastello Street). It is generally referred to in English as Chesme (or Chesmensky) Palace. It is harder to find than the church, as it is now totally embedded within the buildings of the Chesme site of the State University of Aerospace Instrumentation (SUAI). Searchers are advised to ask directions to the State University or to the palace itself, and then look out for its distinctive central tower or one of its turrets, clearly visible from outside the University`s perimeter (see Figures 24– 29 on pages 20–22 above). It is <u>not</u> open to visitors.

The church`s address is *ulitsa Lensoveta 12* (12 Lensoveta Street). It is generally referred to in English as Chesme Church, or the Church of St John the Baptist at Chesme Palace. It is impossible to miss, standing by itself with no other buildings nearby, its entire outer surface covered with vertical white ribs against a pink background, looking like a gigantic piece of *patisserie*. It is open to visitors.

1825

1830

Appendix 2 – Some unanswered questions **[**This list is probably incomplete: there may be ´unknown unknowns`, and I may have failed to notice other more obvious gaps**.]**

When did Catherine first think of commissioning the service? [see page 7]

When did Catherine first think of building the palace where the service was to be kept? [see pages 4–7 *passim,* and [**16**] on page 26]

Is there any truth in the legend about the messenger bringing glorious news? [see page 6]

Why did Catherine want every piece of the service to bear the image of a frog?
[see pages 4 & 9, and [**19**] on page 26]

What happened to the service between its arrival in Russia in 1774 and its transfer to the new palace, after construction of the latter was completed in 1777?
[see page 9, and [**18**] on page 26]

When and how was the service transferred to the new palace? [see page 9]

What did the palace`s interior look like in the 18th century? There are plenty of written descriptions, but are there surviving paintings, engravings, (later) photographs, or other images? If they exist, where are they and can they be seen? [see page 9]

How many extra pieces were made in St Petersburg to augment the service on occasions when the number at table was expected to exceed 50? Were extra pieces also made to allow for breakage? If so, how many? [see pages 14 & 15]

Was publication of George Williamson's 1909 book on the service subsidised?
If so, by whom? [see [**34**] on pages 28 & 29]

Has a report been prepared assessing the present condition of the service? If so, what does it tell us and can it be seen? [see page 18, and [**36**] on page 29]

Pieces from the service have been shown at special exhibitions in England, and in St Petersburg itself. Have pieces ever been shown elsewhere? [see page 19]

When did the admission of veterans to Chesme Palace end? When were any last in residence? [see page 20]

There are also questions about the place name Kekerekeksinen.
[see page 5, and Appendix 3 below]

Appendix 3 – Kekerekeksinen: the enigma of an 18th century Ingrian place name

[This Appendix is about Kekerekeksinen as a word, with only passing reference to the place. In order to make it largely self-contained, with its own Notes and Bibliography, some material from the main text is repeated in the first section here.**]**

Where it happened

The service, now widely known as the Green Frog service, was commissioned by the Russian Empress Catherine II (´Catherine the Great`) in 1773 and, unusually with such a service for such a client at that time, was to be made of earthenware. From the outset it was her intention that it would be kept and used at a new palace, not yet built, to be located at a place she knew well which consisted chiefly of marshy ground populated by frogs. The place lay about 11 km (7 ml) south of the Winter Palace, itself located in the heart of the young city of Saint Petersburg. The city had only been established in 1703, by Tsar Peter I (´Peter the Great`), in the Swedish (Baltic) province of Ingria, the Russian conquest – more correctly, re-conquest – of which had not been completed until the summer of that year. A few years later, in 1710, the entire province had been renamed St Petersburg.[**1**]

Numerous accounts, from the 1770s to the present day, say that in the 18th century the indigenous inhabitants of Ingria were mainly speakers of Finnish, that the place was known to them as Kekerekeksinen – henceforth, for brevity and where appropriate, "the´K` word" – and that this was the Finnish word for a frog marsh. (Begin by saying each syllable separately: 'keck-urry-keck-sinn-enn`.) There was a raised mound there, on which stood a long-established wooden building that courtiers, and Catherine herself, sometimes referred to as the Kekerekeksinsky or imperial *dacha*. The new palace was built, over the period 1774 to 1777, on the same mound. Initially its official name was Kekerekeksinsky Palace, though Catherine spoke of it, and the site, as La Grenouillère, a French word for a marsh or swamp populated by frogs. A few years later, in 1780, the palace's official name was changed to Chesme Palace.

The enigma of the´K` word

The claims about the word have not hitherto, it seems, been contested or seen as problematic, and so have not been examined, with a single recent and striking exception.[**2**] Examination reveals a very different position, complicated and puzzling. There is no reason to doubt that in the 18th century the Russian court and the local population called the place Kekerekeksinen.[**3**] Did the locals speak Finnish? It is safer to say that they spoke one or more of the Baltic-Finnic languages of the Finno-Ugric language family that were in colloquial use in Ingria in the 17th and 18th centuries**:** Ingrian Finnish; also Izhorian, Vepsian and Votic.[**4**] And clearly the new palace was built on a frog marsh. It is the associated claims that are problematic: that *kekerekeksinen* was a Finnish word; and that, while indeed the name of the place, it also had a particular meaning,´frog marsh`. 'Kekerekeks` sounds very different from *sammakko*, the usual Finnish word for´frog`, and from *suo*, the word for´marsh`, though the *'*-inen` suffix is typically Finnish.[**5**] The claims are, however, supported by reputable sources, including the State Hermitage Museum (SHM) in St Petersburg and – until 2014, when it became the *V&A Wedgwood Collection* – the Wedgwood Museum`s website. The evidence I have found suggests that both claims are unsubstantiated and misleading.

I came to this view after approaching several scholars familiar with the Finnic languages. I first contacted Jyrki Kalliokoski**,**[**6**] who consulted major Finnish reference works and colleagues familiar with the history and meaning of Finnish words. He told me that none of the latter had come across the´K` word. In his opinion, though the word had a Finnish structure, it had no discernible meaning and sounded like a nonsense word. Manja Lehto, who has written extensively on the languages of Ingria, also saw it as a nonsense word, and had found no evidence of it in any of the original languages of the St Petersburg region**.**[**7**] We are all familiar with pseudowords, words that have no accepted meaning and appear in no dictionary, but could only belong to a specific language, such as many of the invented words in Lewis Carroll`s´English` poem *Jabberwocky* (itself a pseudoword).[**8**]

Yet if this is true, why does virtually every published account say, without qualification, that the´K` word means 'frog marsh`? Ludmila Voronikhina of the SHM, for example, cites an old (1777) Russian source, which states that the palace was built '… in a place called Kekerekeksinen, the Finnish for Frog Marsh` (1995:9). And Lydia Liackhova, also of the SHM: '… Kekerekeksinen being the Finnish…for frog marsh…` (1995:207). The terms of the claim are precise: not that the´K` word meant frog marsh in an unspecified Finnic language but that it did so in Finnish. The same claim can be found in many other places**.**[**9**] **[10**] I suspect this is

an instance of a common phenomenon: once a statement, true or false, appears in print, later writers often simply copy it, sometimes even using the same words, especially when it comes from a reputable author or the publication itself is regarded as generally reliable. (Or perhaps some were struggling to meet a deadline, or were just lazy.)

Was the ´K` word an onomatopoeia?

If the ´K` word was not a Finnish word that meant frog marsh, what was it? Any credible explanation must acknowledge that there was a frog marsh, that the word was a place name used by the local inhabitants when they referred to it, and that the languages they spoke were Finnic. What else is known? We know that the propensity of people to give names to places is virtually universal among human societies. We know there are many different kinds of place name, and that some refer to a significant feature of the place that bears the name. We also know that this may be no more than a characteristic sound, such as the rushing of water, the roaring of wind or the sound made by birds or animals that inhabit the place. The latter may be, for instance, the familiar cawing of crows, the howling of wolves, or the croaking of frogs. Place names are sometimes found, onomatopoeic names, that attempt to simulate such sounds. And as with all onomatopoeic words, the constituent elements of these names typically have no prior meaning in the relevant language.

In 1985 Peter Hayden suggested that the place name Kekerekeksinen was an onomatopoeia simulating the sound of frogs croaking: **'***kekere-keks*-inen, *kekere-keks***-**inen` (1985:19-20).[**11**] Without suggesting a direct link, he pointed to a similarity between this sound and the sound attributed to croaking frogs by Aristophanes in his play *The Frogs* (first performed in Athens around 405 BCE). A rough English translation of what Aristophanes's frogs repeatedly chant is: *brekekekèx-koàx-koáx, brekekekèx-koàx-koáx.*

Rana ridibunda (European Marsh Frog)
Photographer: Wolfgang Wüster 2004
Copyright © Wolfgang Wüster

Rana ridibunda (European Marsh Frog)
Photographer: Sergius Kuzmin 1999
Copyright © Pensoft Publishers

The testimony of Lars-Gunnar Larsson lends support to Hayden's hypothesis.[**12**] He has observed that when people represent a sound onomatopoeically, they tend to do so in a way that reflects the sound patterns of their own language. As evidence he points to the different ways in which the croaking of frogs of the same species is represented in various European languages**.**[**13**] He has also pointed out that different frog species make different sounds. What were the frogs at Kekerekeksinen? He suggests that they were almost certainly the European Marsh Frog (*Rana ridibunda*, also known as *Pelophylax ridibundus*). This species is known to have been prevalent in Ingria, and members of the species are generally green. (To see many more photographs, go to *Rana ridibunda* online.)

It is reasonable to suppose, moreover, that when the Latin name '*ridibunda*`, meaning 'laughing`, was assigned to the species in the 18th century, this was because the distinctive sound made by the frogs resembled the sound of human laughter or chuckling. And if *kekere-keks* is an attempted onomatopoeic representation of this sound, it is hardly surprising that it bears no resemblance to *sammakko*, since the latter, even were it also onomatopoeic, would more likely be simulating the sound made by other frog species commoner further north on the Finnish mainland. Larsson has observed that *kekere-keks* resembles more closely the Hungarian representation, of which he gives two examples, *brekekeksz* from a 1788 source, and a contemporary example, *brekeg-rekeg*. There is a marked difference between the main Finnish representation – *kurr-kurr-kroak* – and the Hungarian representations. The closer resemblance between *kekere-keks* (Ingria) and *brekeg-rekeg* (Hungary) is more plausibly explained, he suggests, by the fact that *Rana ridibunda* is the main frog species in both places.

An additional comment bearing on Hayden's onomatopoeia hypothesis is provided by Alan Sommerstein in his edition of *The Frogs* (1997). He agrees that Aristophanes was attempting to represent onomatopoeically the sound made by *Rana ridibunda*.

Was Kekerekeksinen an onomatopoeia? My provisional conclusion is that *kekere-keks* was probably an onomatopoeic coinage that attempted to simulate the sound made by the abundant local frogs, and that by adding *-inen* a new word, *kekerekeksinen*, came into use, which in turn became the name of the place. There are, however, other possibilities.

Other possible explanations

If the place name Kekerekeksinen was, or was derived from, an onomatopoeia, how can we account for the emergence of the claim that it was the Finnish word for a frog marsh? Could the claim have arisen through a misunderstanding between recently arrived incomers and members of the local population? When people who speak different languages meet, and each has a good command of the other's language, effective communication can take place and the likelihood of communication failure is not much greater than between native speakers of the same language. By contrast, when each knows nothing of the other's language, the scope for verbal communication of any kind is limited. In between, where each has a partial command of the other's language, communication can take place but misunderstandings readily occur, the more so if each wants it to appear that their mastery of the language of the other is greater than is actually the case, or mistakenly believes this to be so. And the more complicated the topic of verbal exchange the greater the risk, especially if one party has asked questions and fails to appreciate that they lack a simple answer.

This could have been the situation when Russian or Swedish incomers were trying to enter into conversation with the local inhabitants before – perhaps a long time before – Catherine`s reign. Suppose they wanted to know about the locals and about the place, and asked questions. The locals could have been uncertain how much the incomers wanted to know, and could have begun by trying to convey basic facts, such as that they were a Finnic people; that the place was a frog marsh; and that the whole, including any building on it, was called Kekerekeksinen. One can imagine their finding it harder to explain that while this word might appear to be Finnish, it did not figure in any Finnic lexicon, and that its sound and structure were probably inspired by the croaking of the frogs on the marsh.

Misinterpreting what they had heard, the incomers may have believed they had been told that *kekerekeksinen* was the Finnish word for a frog marsh. I do not know if this actually happened, but it could have. And if it did, perhaps more than once, the misunderstanding could then have been repeated, perhaps many times, by the incomers – who were likely to have been seen as of higher status than the locals, and their testimony likely to have been seen as credible – and in time have become firmly established. The process could have been reinforced if the incomers, having come to believe that the ´K` word was, or was derived from, a Finnic word meaning ´frog marsh`, had told the probably less well educated locals that this was the case, and the locals had accepted as fact what they had been told.

The question remains, can we be sure that Kekerekeksinen was probably an onomatopoeia and nothing else? While this seems the most likely explanation, there are other possibilities. One is that when the local inhabitants referred to Kekerekeksinen, they were using a historic place name which, in a Finnic language once spoken in the area but no longer spoken there, had meant ´frog marsh`. Another is that some of the locals spoke a Finnic language in which the ´K` word did mean 'frog marsh'.[**14**] Over the centuries there had been major population movements, so either of these guesses could be true, especially as the Finnic languages spoken in Ingria at this period are imperfectly documented. My modest linguistic talents have prevented me from investigating these possibilities myself, since there are no sources accessible to me on the history of the languages of Ingria or on ancient Ingrian place names**.**[**15**] In any case, as Larsson has pointed out (personal communication), there are, to the best of his knowledge, no dictionaries of Ingrian Finnish, or of the other languages spoken in Ingria during or prior to the 18th century, that would help in solving the puzzle.[**16**] Moreover, as is well known, the fact that a search for something has so far been unsuccessful cannot in itself count as evidence that it does not exist, whether it be the yeti, the Higgs boson, a black swan, the planet Neptune – or the meaning of a strange word. Hence, in spite of the evidence to the contrary provided by Lehto and others (see page 34 above), it is impossible to disprove conclusively the notion that in the past there may have been a local word, something like *kekerekeks*, that had a definite meaning, 'frog' or 'frog marsh', and was in use in Ingria in or before the 18th century; and that it was from this word that the marsh eventually got its name.

Another possibility is that the ´K` word could have been deliberately invented. Like, for instance, the words in Lewis Carroll`s *Jabberwocky* (see page 34 above) and ´quark` (invented by James Joyce), words that were known but essentially meaningless, a few of which, years later, acquired a clear and accepted meaning (´quark`, in particle physics). Could the ´K` word be such a word, coined by incomers and only later adopted by the locals? Suppose that when the wooden building on the frog marsh was erected or first used, courtiers or other incomers had suggested calling the place (or the building itself, as discussed below) something like Kekerekeksinen, perhaps initially as a nonce word, deliberately inventing an onomatopoeia, and at the same time giving it a Finnish twist – the distinctive -inen at the end – to reflect its location, perhaps for the amusement of one of Catherine`s predecessors. This is only a conjecture, but it is in principle testable, since it would be possible to examine the site, and surviving documents of the period, seeking evidence on when the wooden building was erected or first used; whether it, or the place, ever had a different name; when the ´K` word was first used; and who it was first used by, the incomers or the locals.

This conjecture points to yet another possibility. Is the assumption correct, that the frog marsh acquired, or already possessed, a name that was later given to the wooden building, or was it the building`s name that was given to the marsh? If the latter, this would be an instance of the common phenomenon of a smaller unit giving its name to a larger one, as when a local natural feature or man-made structure gives its name to a village, town or other human settlement, which in turn may give its name to an even larger political or administrative division. Familiar examples are the English counties whose name originated from a special place on a river, stream or other wet area where crossing was – or had been made – possible, convenient and reasonably safe, for people and/or animals, by means of a ford or bridge. And the English counties whose modern name is derived from a Roman fort, fortress or similar encampment (from *castrum* or *castra*).[**17**] In Russia we need look no further than St Petersburg itself, where a name given originally to a wooden church, and then to a fortress, became within a few years the name of the imperial capital city and of the province where the city was located. So we could also investigate the plausible, and in principle testable, hypothesis that the frog marsh acquired its name from the wooden building, making it all the less likely that the´K` word ever meant´frog marsh`.

The enigma unravelled?

There are plausible conjectures that tend to undermine the enduring claims about the word, and it is tempting to conclude that Kekerekeksinen was probably a place name of onomato-poeic origin; that the local inhabitants, speakers of a Finnic language, had given it to the frog marsh; and that, though it was used to refer to the marsh, it had no meaning on its own. Also that the word`s possessing Finnic features, and reflecting the pervasive sound made by the resident frogs, is hardly surprising. The conjectures fail, however, to undermine the claims conclusively, while at the same time there are arguments that can be advanced in their support, and powerful practical reasons why it may be impossible to refute decisively the unverified assumptions on which these arguments depend.[**18**] So a definitive solution remains elusive. But it has surely been shown that, unqualified, the claims are not tenable. Nobody, it seems, has produced evidence that the´K` word was a Finnish word, or that it had a meaning in any of the languages spoken in Ingria in the 18th century or earlier.

Notes

[1] Ingria, the land of the Ingrians, was also known as Ingermanland. This was the name by which the region was known to the Swedes, who referred to its ancient Finnic inhabitants as Ingers. In some contexts the names were used interchangeably to refer to the same geographical entity. Ingria was formally ceded to Russia in 1721 at the end of the Great Northern War.

[2] Matthew Sweet, in a couple of mocking sentences, outlines why he finds the claims implausible (2014). Vanity – and the way he expresses his doubts – tempt me to wonder whether he had perhaps seen a copy of the original (2009) version of this monograph.

[3] The Russian architectural historian Dmitri Shvidkovsky claims, without citing a source, that in doing so they were using a name it already possessed in the 17th century (1996:187), when Ingria was under Swedish dominion. (It had been Swedish from 1617 to 1703 and at various earlier periods.) However, although Finnish is one of Sweden`s minority languages and the form of the name is Finnic, further evidence would be needed to confirm the suggestion that it originated during

one of these periods of heightened Swedish influence. I am still hoping to find evidence on when the ´K` word was first used as a place name.

[4] The accounts I have found, all from Russian or English sources, say without qualification that they were speakers of Finnish.

[5] Modern dictionaries of standard Finnish give only one word, *sammakko,* for 'frog'. My attempts to discover whether there were others were largely unsuccessful. I found only one, mentioned by Terho Itkonen in his article (1983) on the dialectal history of Finnish and other Finno-Ugric languages. He offers *konnikkainen* as a dialectal word for ´frog`, but gives no detail on when or where it was in use.

[6] Personal communication (2007) from Professor Kalliokoski, professor of Finnish Language and head of the department of Finnish, Finno-Ugric and Scandinavian Languages at the University of Helsinki.

[7] Personal communication (2008) from Dr Lehto, then lecturing in Finno-Ugric Languages at the University of Lund (Sweden) and author of *Ingrian Finnish: dialect preservation and change* (Monograph No 23 in the series: Studia Uralica Upsaliensia) Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1996. She has also been responsible for the Ingrian section of an ongoing 'Database for endangered Finno-Ugric languages` project, sponsored by the University of Helsinki.

[8] First published in *Through the Looking-Glass, and what Alice found there* (1871). It begins:

> `Twas brillig and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
> all mimsy were the borogoves, and the mome raths outgrabe.

[9] Anthony Cross 'The palace was called Kekerekeksinskii [sic], deriving from the Finnish word meaning "frog marsh"…` (1997:266). *Encyclopaedia of Saint Petersburg* '… built in Kekerekeksinen, meaning "frog marsh" in Finnish, …` under heading 'Chesme Palace` (2003 and continuing). Peter Hayden 'The green frog device which…derives from the Finnish name for the place, Kekerekeksinen` (1985:19). Tristram Hunt ´… Kekerekeksinen being the Finnish for frog mound` (2021:151). C A Johnson '… it was destined for the palace of La Grenouillère (from the Finnish name of the place, Kekerekeksin [sic], "a place of many frogs") …` (1979:124). Alison Kelly '… the site, which has been known, in Finnish, as Kekerikeksinsk [sic], or frog marsh.` (1980:557). A & V Kennett 'The site of the palace had a Finnish name, Kekerekeksinen, meaning "frog marsh" …` (1973:76). Dmitri Shvidkovsky 'The spot where the castle stood had been known in Finnish, since before the days of Peter the Great, as Kekerekekshi [sic], or the Marsh of Frogs …` (1996:187). State Hermitage Museum (St Petersburg) 'La Grenouillère, as Catherine called the palace (translating the Finnish name, meaning "frog marsh", into French) …` (website: 2006 and continuing, under heading 'The Dinner Set for the Russian Empress: the later history of the Green Frog Service'). Marina Vaizey´The local Finnish name of the spot … was "Kekerekeksinen" … meaning "" frog marsh", …` (2016:51). Wedgwood Museum '… a place called Kekerekeksinen, the Finnish for Frog Marsh.`, under several headings, including 'Trade with Russia` (website: 2008, and continuing to 2014, when its status and official name were altered and the original website ceased to exist). [In addition, social media and a number of websites have provided platforms or direct support for the claim: see online, for instance, the BBC, Facebook, Google Books, and the National Trust. Wikipedia also offers several entries, including, under Chesme Church, ´… area that was known as kekerekeksinen (Finnish: frog swamp) …` (21.12.2021).]

[10] Ludmila Voronikhina (1995:9) says: 'The explanation is given in the Appendix to the *Kamer-Furiersky Zhurnal*, 1777, V, St Petersburg, 1881, p.48.` (1995:9). The *Kamer-fur'erskii tseremonial'nyi Zhurnal* – its full title – was a ceremonial register, a sort of court circular, launched in 1695, giving day-by-day details of court activities. I found that, although the 1777 volume had been

reissued in 1881, both original and reissue were remarkably hard to find, and my many attempts to get access to the relevant page were unsuccessful. For a long time I had been assuming that the explanation mentioned by Voronikhina was of the origin and meaning of the ´K` word, which was why I had thought it essential to track down a copy so that I could examine the exact wording. I am indebted to Michael Raeburn (personal communication, 2013) for pointing out that I had misread Voronikhina and that the explanation she was referring to was actually for Catherine`s choice of a green frog to decorate the service. Raeburn is co-editor and joint author of a superb volume, the only complete, definitive and fully illustrated account of the Green Frog service (Raeburn *et al.* 1995)

[11] Personal communications (2007 and 2008) from Peter Hayden, lecturer and writer. He has written extensively on Russian parks and gardens (1985 and 2005).

[12] Personal communications (2008 and 2009) from Professor Larsson, now professor emeritus of Finno-Ugric Languages at Uppsala University (Sweden). He has been general editor of the series Studia Uralica Upsaliensia, based at his university. I am greatly indebted to him for his comments on earlier drafts, for a number of valuable suggestions, and for his advice on what is known and – just as important – what is not known, about language use in Ingria in the 18th century. He also shares with me an interest in frogs. Of particular relevance to the mystery of the ´K` word is his contri-lbution to a *Festschrift* (2008).

[13] Some present day examples (not all Larsson's) of how the sounds made by some common frog species have been represented in some European languages: Bulgarian and Lithuanian: *kva-kva*; Czech: *kvá-kvá;* English: *quack-quack*; Estonian: *krooks-krooks*; Finnish: *kurr-kurr-kroak*; French: *croak-croak*; German: *quak-quak*; Italian: *cra-cra*; Russian: *kva-kat.*

[14] I am not going to enter the continuing and sometimes acrimonious debate about the difference between a language and a dialect. I merely observe that use of the term 'dialect' often goes with ascription of inferior status. The old Russian claim, for instance, that Ukrainian was a dialect of Russian was undoubtedly a claim that it was not a true language and so was of less value. It seems that some of the Finnish scholars who have defined Ingrian Finnish as a dialect of standard Finnish have based their judgment as much on social and political as on linguistic criteria. In this paper Ingrian Finnish is seen as the main colloquial language of the speech community of Ingrian Finns.

[15] It would be useful to possess a good reading knowledge of Russian, Swedish and Finnish; and desirable to be thoroughly familiar with the languages spoken in Ingria in the 17th and 18th centuries. The latter would be hard to achieve since, as noted above, there were several such languages, they are generally not well-documented, and there is dialectal variation.

[16] Dictionaries exist for a number of the languages that were in use in Ingria in or before the 18th century, when the ´K` word may have originated, but they are not comprehensive historical dictionaries of the kind that are needed. There are three main reasons for this. First, there is an inescapable dearth of old written sources in which old words may be found. Second, though they contain ancient forms and words, like all dictionaries they are incomplete, since lexicographers can never fully capture a spoken language: there will always be omissions, including words they have missed and words they have judged insufficiently established to warrant inclusion. And third, like all of us, their compilers are fallible.

[17] Some English examples: `ford` and ´bridge` counties: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire; ´fort' and `fortress` counties: Cheshire; Gloucestershire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Worcestershire. Also a number of cities and towns, such as: Bradford and Chelmsford; Trowbridge and Uxbridge; Doncaster and Winchester.

[18] I remain convinced that this is true, but have failed dismally to persuade others. At the time, I sent copies of the first (2009) version of this Appendix to many key people and organisations, including most of those then named or referred to in the Acknowledgments section (on page iv above) or in the Appendix itself, but the problematic claims about the´K` word are still being advanced, without qualification, often in the same places. I found only one small exception (see page 34, and Note [**2**] on page 38 above).

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Feedback

Please send comments, suggestions, enquiries, requests and all other messages to: gabrielnewfield@tiscali.co.uk,

I will be grateful to any reader who can –

- suggest further plausible speculations or possible lines of enquiry,
- help to fill gaps in my account by offering additional non-trivial information,
- suggest others whom I might approach for advice,
- draw my attention to any dubious, misleading or factually incorrect statements.

As far as possible all messages will be acknowledged. In the light of continuing self-criticism, comments received and further investigation the work will be further revised, so later versions may differ from this one, which was first issued in September 2022.

Gabriel Newfield was a university teacher. "I have always had, and have retained, a number of interests outside academic life, including various kinds of voluntary work. After retiring from full-time employment I became seriously involved in several new and wholly unrelated pursuits, especially the study and conservation of ceramics and, until recently, long-distance walking. I am now quite old (92) and live in St Albans in Hertfordshire (England)."

1883

1917
Republican coat of arms

In the early 1990s, after the USSR (Soviet Union) fell apart, the new Russian Federation restored the two-headed eagle to the Russian coat of arms. Resplendent in gold against a deep red background, it is an entirely new version, easily viewable online. It can also be saved and printed, but only, as far as I have been able to ascertain, on payment of a fee.

Serving dish, painted view, with image of a green frog in border, in V&A (London)

This dish, not part of the service, is shown as an example of what pieces of the service look like. It was made by Wedgwood in the early 1770s, at the same time as the service, but not sent to Russia. The painted view shows the gardens at Sir Francis Dashwood`s West Wycombe estate in Buckinghamshire. It was copied from an engraving by William Woollett (1735–1785), which must have been made when the gardens were quite new, as they had only been laid out in the mid-1700s.