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<title>The Testament politique of Nicholas I?

<subtitle>Monarchical propaganda and the birth of a national collection

<running header>The Testament Politique of Nicholas I?

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This article explores the symbolic function of ritual and collecting during the political rule of Tsar Nicholas I through a close reading of the unpublished letters of the protégés of the emperor in decisive roles at the Society for the Encouragement of the Culture of the Fine Arts in Finland. The author explores how long-established aspects of the psychology of authority and monarchical propaganda were performed and expressed, and how they were deployed in the image creation and governance of the empire. The author demonstrates how Romantic nationalism was viewed in an ambivalent light by the government, and how the essentially ancien régime outlook of an enlightened autocrat came to be reconciled with the radical views of the nationalists.

Prince [Menshikov] . . . me fit aussi voir un document très curieux, le Testament des Son Aïeul, adressé à Pierre 2^d. L'Empereur le lui a remis ces jours passés. Il y a tout plein de bons conseils adressés au Tzar, qui était encore très jeune, et à son presque fils, qu'il engage à travailler et à être utile à sa patrie. C'est un document parfaitement rédigé, et qui, malgres sa vétuste, peut servir de règle à plus d'une Souverain. C'est un Ouvrage Classique.¹

Nicholas Riasanovsky has contended that, in order to comprehend the political agenda of Tsar Nicholas I, it is necessary to understand that his policies represented, in their fundamentals, the ideology of the *ancien régimes* that had ruled most of Europe for centuries past; in other words, they embodied a great deal of Russian and wider European history and they reflected the cultural climate of the period.² Further, as a national identity is constituted only in part by political power – the other half encompassing culture and the arts³ – cultural matters became a major force in protecting national interests and prestige in the international arena; cultural politics, in particular, were closely connected to security policy, serving as the conservator and guardian of public tranquillity.⁴ For Nicholas, who had a particular preoccupation with the maintenance of order, this alliance served to protect the stability of the Russian Empire and to preserve the monarchy from the threat of revolution, change and chaos; in particular it kept at bay the moral and political evils that lurked in the form of nationalist demands.

While not particularly rich in detail, the epigraph quoted above provides the three cardinal concepts – religion, autocracy and nation – in which this principle was rooted. Autocracy was represented by the enlightened autocrat (the emperor himself) who, as a young orphan, had been educated and moulded to become, like his subjects, useful to the *patria*; to the testament, that is religion in a broad cultural sense, symbolizing the position of tradition and the need to preserve the established system.⁵ On the other hand, the nation is represented by Peter the Great, whose central position in the doctrine was unassailable. He appeared in the guise of ‘a man whom all the world

spoke of but nobody had seen’⁶ – Prince Alexander Menshikov, one of the wealthiest *seigneurs* in the empire, minister and governor-general of the Grand Duchy of Finland between 1831 and 1855 and the great-grandson of Peter the Great’s favourite, whose mere name, for historical reasons, reflected the ‘national element’. He was a ‘metaphorical man’ and an *homme national*, whose advice Nicholas always sought when there was a question concerning the function of a ‘truly national’ character.⁷ Crucially important in the passage quoted above is also the cosmopolitan and European element of the imperial administration: the French-speaking Russian court, with its multinational background, is exemplified here by the prince’s daily visitor, Count and State Secretary for Finnish Affairs Alexander Armfelt. The object being observed by the prince and Armfelt are observing is perhaps a manuscript (possibly a *testament politique*),⁸ containing ancient advice for Russian monarchs, recently added by Nicholas to Menshikov’s library.

This essay explores the elaborate cultural programme of Nicholas I’s imperial bureaucracy through a close reading of the founding documents and the correspondence of statesmen occupying key roles at the Society for the Encouragement of the Culture of the Fine Arts in Finland, founded in 1846 by the emperor, which maintained its original purpose with the founding of a national museum – the Finnish National Gallery.⁹ Turning away from traditional assertions concerning the society, which have considered it quite separately from Nicholas’s political rule,¹⁰ this article recognizes the political and symbolic function of collecting and Nicholas’s engagement with cultural politics, exemplifying the society as a cultural means by which to operate in and dominate the political milieu.¹¹ The society allows us to see how ritual and display, ancient elements in the psychology of authority, were performed and expressed, and affirmed by both the nation’s and monarchy’s cult during the process of its foundation. The evidence left by the protégés of the emperor¹² are particularly useful for showing the means by which the balance between the essentially dynastic and *ancien régime* outlook of an enlightened autocrat and his aides was maintained against (or balanced with) the burgeoning ambitions of Romantic nationalism. Annexed

to the Russian Empire from 1809 to 1917, the administration of the Grand Duchy of Finland depended greatly on these trusted protégés of the emperor. The territories of the Russian Empire differed greatly from each other: the central bureaucracy and authority were never united, and as will be seen, this could – and usually did – have to do with differences among the local officials and their understanding of the prevailing situation.¹³

While the traditional view has deemed the ‘national’ orientation of the society not to be the main focus of its early years – through 1858 – when it developed primarily as a collection of ‘foreign sample works’ and detached from the political authority,¹⁴ this study sheds light on how Romantic nationalism held an ambivalent position in the eyes of the government; the official sense of nationality leaned selectively on early Romantic nationalism, providing it fitted well with the state’s doctrines and when it acted in the empire’s interests.¹⁵ The aim here is not to study the objects the society acquired nor to reconstruct its collections, but rather to analyse its birth as a political statement, at the centre of a dynastic arrangement that is simultaneously both imperial and proto-national.¹⁶

It is first necessary to understand how Nicholas I’s government understood nationality. The emperor and his aides understood nationality in dynastic terms, in the sense of continuity and legitimacy, not in the radical Romantic sense. Nicholas I never openly aligned with the Romantic nationalists, and nationalist ideas never truly affected the ministers and other high office-holders or penetrated the government.¹⁷ Nicholas could count on the allegiance of the court aristocrats and the state officials, including many non-Russians. This, called by Riasanovsky the ‘dynastic wing’, echoed the politically conservative orientation of the emperor and followed the typical pattern of Nicholas’s preference for men with a military background. A characteristic expression of Nicholaevan policies lay in the prevention of subversion, guided not only the police (the Third Department of His Majesty’s Own Chancery) but more especially the Ministry of Education. It is no coincidence that the ‘proper’ development of the societies of art in the empire were guaranteed by

elites such as the head of the gendarmes Alexander Benckendorf and the Society of Russia; in Finland, in addition to Armfelt, the principal figures were Senator and Lieutenant-General Casimir von Kothen, Senator and Procurator Carl Johan Walleen, and Privy Councillor Emil Stjernvall-Walleen. All of these personalities echo the complexity of Nicholas's cultural policies, which were characteristic of the creator of the doctrine, Count Sergei Uvarov himself.¹⁸ European-minded, forward-thinking aristocrats keenly identified with the existing regime, travelled extensively in Europe and spent considerable time in major European cities. All were committed Francophiles; all used French in their correspondence and read European philosophers – typical in educated Russian society of the time. In these hands, while the character and the rhetoric of the Société des Beaux-Arts remained secure and compatible with official attitudes to nationalism, the society grew to become a suitable yet subtle source of political legitimization and identity affirmation for a cultural empire.

But also to be highlighted here is a different but related kind of work undertaken by the society in the development and propagation of official policy – work performed by professors, pedagogues and publicists. Relationships with historians, journalists and publicists were crucial for the Romanovs' indirect management system, as typified by the society's long-term secretary, professor, poet and editor of the journal *Helsingfors Tidningar*,¹⁹ Zacharias Topelius, a representative of what might be called the 'Romantic wing'. Although the relationship between the emperor and those who spoke out on behalf of the 'nation' and who expressed excessively patriotic feelings might be considered contentious, it is argued that the political values and ideals of the emperor and the diplomats representing the dynastic wing, 'éclairé, calme et raisonnable',²⁰ played a crucial role and were reflected in the image politics of the Société des Beaux-Arts, exemplified by its promotion through the journal edited by Topelius.²¹ This version of Romantic Nationalism was the 'correct' version of patriotism,²² a powerful undercurrent that marked the society's first twenty years. In this respect, we must take into consideration the society's possible propaganda role, even

if it was a narrow one. A parallel can be found between the traditional monarchical propaganda and the role of the society as an organ of non-verbal propaganda; the imperial policy, ‘to censor and to sponsor’, was fundamental to the existence of both.²³

To summarize, the Grand Duchy’s cultural agenda began to take shape around the society, which set standards for the training of young artists and provided a model for the regions throughout Finland. The society’s collection initially grew as a collection of sample works primarily for its own drawing schools, situated both in Åbo (Turku) and Helsinki. A typical collecting practice involved selling works traditionally considered to be of ‘lesser value’ through a lottery – often the works of dilettantes and students in the drawing schools – while leaving the remainder for the (non-official) collection-in-formation. Scholars have persistently divorced these dispersed items from permanent holdings, leaving a considerable amount of early archival information and purchases out of consideration. It is here argued that this methodological distortion – a comparatively recent phenomenon and a reflection of presentism – may have obscured information on the themes and the individual painters originally promoted by the society, as well as the degree to which a national penchant can be said to have existed.

When analysing the purchase lists and official documents from the first twenty years of the society’s existence, and not discriminating between items dispersed by lottery from purchases bought in for the still embryo collection, it is possible to discern the society’s corporate preferences.²⁴ The documents also allow us to identify this orientation by examining the earliest regulations and statutes, which attest that the society was founded specifically to support domestic talents.²⁵ To this end we may cite the first account of the Society’s activities, made during Casimir von Kothén’s chairmanship, which listed purchases during the first five years as follows: ‘domestic artists or dilettantes 179 versus foreign works 19.’²⁶ As will be seen, this early domestic content largely echoes the official Nicholaevan ideal (nation, autocracy and religion), with a major emphasis on nation. The national themes mostly consisted of studies of peasant life and peasant

cabin interiors, depicted in their customary ambience and habits; nature studies and depictions of birds; and Nordic landscapes. In many cases, the themes and the individual painters once officially supported by the monarch – such as Robert Wilhelm Ekman and the von Wright brothers – seem to provide a national image with a visual fabric that reflected the acceptable version of Nicholaevan patriotism and official nationality; unsurprisingly, the same emphases can be found in Topelius’s commentaries for his *Helsingfors Tidningar*. In addition to domestic themes, a singular early interest was displayed in biblical paintings, usually made by dilettantes and students of the society’s drawing schools. To put it briefly, while the Society always remained open to foreign works, and although its preference for domestic topics intensified in the late 1850s, the original ‘founding idea’ was to draw attention to the status of domestic art and culture.

The myth of chaos, the Enlightenment, and the nation

The Society’s founding manifesto, drafted by senator Carl Johan Walleen, defined the institution both in civic and national terms, including its mission, regulations and list of members, and it highlighted two major key concepts: the Enlightenment and the nation. The importance of the following passages lies also in the fact that by its own declaration and by the commentaries of Topelius the monarchical view was implicitly promoted by using the myth of chaos (i.e. earlier rule) and its supposed transformation into civilization (by the current regime) – highly characteristic of the official doctrine of nationhood.

In Walleen’s document, in the judicious encouragement of the fine arts, adopted from the French educational model, the Russian monarch acted as a civilizing force.²⁷ The ideal for both the monarch and the people was to produce for the public good and not to live in idleness; ‘the encouragement and protection of the monarch has never lacked in anything that is good and useful’.²⁸ This European overtone, so characteristic of Nicholaevan cultural policies,²⁹ appeared in an almost Voltairean form: ‘what most proves the well-being of a nation is the flourishing state in

which its arts and sciences are found; the truth and beauty, science and art, are the basis of civilization, and neither one or the other can alone achieve this high goal, which demands an intimate union of both'. The current state of material prosperity enabled intellectual culture to flourish under the 'guise of two magnanimous Monarchs, the previously unfavourable destiny of Finland brightened, and at this time of quiet and peaceful progress it is time to open fine arts as an asylum in our country, which the past stormy times had not allowed it to find.'³⁰ This stressing of the supreme value of art and culture, which necessarily completed the state's identity, reflected the Nicholaevan application of the principal themes of the Enlightenment, and specifically its understanding as a sort of social contract between states – not on the basis of political importance, but instead on the degree of cultural and intellectual power.³¹ To summarize, besides the promotion of a national identity, the foundation was articulated as a philanthropic activity; in fact, the documents maintained the valorization of the monarch well into the late 1870s.³²

Comparing these documents with those Topelius presented and promoted in *Helsingfors Tidningar*, the same crucial timing and the myth of chaos – the 'ripe' moment for the national feeling to awaken, when the 'lost' nationality should be encouraged – clearly emerged. The more restrained tone of the official documents became more colourful in Topelius's treatment, while nationality acquired Romantic connotations.³³ By equating the society to a spring rising from the frosty ground, Topelius also valorized the Enlightenment ideal and the monarch's enlightened protection of the arts³⁴ which, he later stated, 'prevented the arctic nation and its future of the arts from falling into despair'.³⁵ Topelius drew a picture of a nurturing cultivation period, one 'which in the North always arrives late', and which therefore took time before producing its first fruits of genius; it thus needed careful preparation in advance.³⁶ As enabled by the prosperity that flowed from 'forty years of peace', Topelius envisioned a distinct painting school built on Nordic nature scenes; where were subjects more worthy of the brush to be found, he asked, than winter nights in a Nordic forest, surrounded by the night sky, the stars and the northern lights. Such an endeavour

could not be achieved by art societies alone; art collections and an art academy were also required.³⁷ However, in Topelius's treatment of the foundation, and specifically in his validation of the nation's 'maturity', and even its status and cultural importance among other national schools,³⁸ there was present a strong cultural patriotism typical for an official nationality narrative. According to Topelius, the development of an autonomous local culture had not hitherto obtained the level of its 'southern' predecessors, not because of the lack of skills among his compatriots, but because of the 'harsh and stormy childhood days', the long trials and the struggle for material self-reliance, that is, due to simple historical, and – as this essay suggests – political delays.³⁹

But the confluence of the right timing with political and cultural climates may be even better illustrated in another, slightly later document, the Administrative System of Prince Menshikov,⁴⁰ which specifically described the cultural milieu from the perspective of the political milieu and the field of education under political demands. Teeming with moral lessons intended to instruct and edify the reader, and clearly pointing to the doctrine's theoretician Uvarov's concept of *haute culture* (which is always preceded by a 'formless chaos' before transforming into civilisation),⁴¹ the document outlined the historical development of the area from the moment the local administration changed from Swedish to Russian control. It links the concept of chaos to the myth of suppression and the Swedish regime – which allegedly deprived the nation of the possibility of gradual evolution – where the concepts of good and the bad became virtually 'relative questions'. But the document was also remarkable in that it expressed a strong sense of Russian self-criticism, even guilt, through its use of patriotic rhetoric and by drawing an unfavourable picture of the tsarist functionary, the tyranny of the *chinovnik*.⁴² This demoralization affected the attitudes of the high bureaucracy at His Majesty's Service – a corrupt mentality involving self-interest rather than service to the country, in which the spirits of luxe, speculation and nepotism increased until the 'ancient principle of morality' fell into oblivion. The document saw the general abandonment of the 'old customs' and the 'secularization of public instruction as being highly problematic in a country

where education was traditionally a duty of the clergy'. This sphere of enlightenment, therefore, should rest *à l'ancienne*.⁴³ The thinking of Nicholas I and of Menshikov, in the Administrative System of Prince Menshikov, are summarized in the following:

*N'imposez pas au peuple votre protection, Mais donnez-la entiere quand il la demande.*⁴⁴

[Do not impose on people your protection, but give it entirely when they ask for it.]

The core underlying sphere in which the nascent society and its key actors operated was the Fennoman movement (Finnish nationalism). As noted by the third chairman of the society, Casimir von Kothen, Romantic nationalism did not merely threaten the existing order and the principles of monarchy; it was dangerous because it was anti-cosmopolitan and largely anti-European, adopting a hostile disposition toward everything considered 'foreign' and cosmopolitan. Von Kothen's view of the socio-political context is significant, as it reflects fairly precisely the strong pro-European stance typical of Nicholas's cultural policies⁴⁵ and, most importantly, he looked at things from a security perspective.⁴⁶ An intensely moral and uncompromising general, von Kothen can be considered an incarnation of the 'immutability' of Nicholas I's regime. He saw his position beside the *Maitre* as a 'sacred duty'.⁴⁷ Recalling his appointment to the emperor's service, von Kothen noted that Nicholas had, as if symbolically referring to the principle of *status quo*, urged him 'to remain always the same';⁴⁸ his own son, Alexander II, was later able to affirm with a sense of irony: 'they have not changed at all'.⁴⁹ Toward the end of Alexander II's era, when the battle with the nationalists was lost, von Kothen declared that only Armfelt, Stjernvall-Walleen and von Kothen were left among the 'governmental men' of Finland.⁵⁰ This idea echoed nearly word-for-word a notion expressed in one of Uvarov's essays, in which Prince de Ligne declares to M. de Talleyrand, 'All in all, there is only you and me left', signifying the irrevocable end of the *ancien régime* and the loss of the 'spiritual and talented men of the past'.⁵¹

The father-child metaphor – the birth of a collection

In keeping with Nicholas's stated militaristic spirit, the society's establishment can be seen to have been closely connected to the symbolism of the defence of the empire, and its foundation narrative linked to the symbolic communication so characteristic of Nicholas's regime: the metaphor of a child tsarevich.⁵² The emperor's indirect control over and organization of the society, which he assumed through both a paternal and a military nature, was demonstrated during its early development, as negotiated by Carl Johan Walleen and as narrated by his stepson, Emil Stjernvall-Walleen – *harpocrates*, guardian of secrets, as he called himself.⁵³ Stjernvall-Walleen had been Alexander II's brother-in-arms in the Pavlovsky Guard Regiment and travelled with him during his Grand Tour of Italy between 1837 and 1838, when the future emperor had also tried to persuade Armfelt to join them.⁵⁴ Stjernvall-Walleen spent most of his working life in Peterhof, where he held a formal position as secretary of the Imperial Alexander University's affairs, while in reality acting as an 'official for special assignments' and adviser to the future emperor. His sister married the mining magnate and collector Paul Demidov the elder, whose only son, Paul Demidov the younger, was Stjernvall-Walleen's nephew. After Demidov the elder's death, and especially in the latter years of Demidov's brother, Anatoly Demidov, Stjernvall-Walleen spent long periods at the Demidov estates, occasionally taking responsibility for the mining concern, since his sister Aurora had inherited the childless Anatoly's wealth and business.⁵⁵

The foundation of the Society appears closely connected to Nicholas's special relationship with the Finnish Guards' Rifle Battalion, a unit of the Imperial Guards. While participating annually in the exercises in Krasnoye Selo, the Guards had previously been taken under the personal protection of the emperor and the grand duke,⁵⁶ a status further confirmed in the summer of 1845. Nicholas named his newly born grandson, Alexander Alexandrovich (the future Alexander III) as the Guards' honorary commander. Stjernvall-Walleen wrote of how, on the morning after this

naming, Prince Menshikov and some officers of the battalion entered the Tsarevich's nursery, presented themselves to the sleeping infant and his mother, and lifted the child from his mother's arms.⁵⁷ Somewhat later that same summer, Nicholas nicknamed his grandson 'Finlandais'.⁵⁸ Later, Carl Johan Walleen visited Grand Duke Alexander Nicholaevich's private suite and informed him that, to commemorate this occasion,⁵⁹ a charity would be established in Helsinki – the Society for the Encouragement of the Culture of the Fine Arts.⁶⁰

In late January 1846,⁶¹ the painter Magnus von Wright, along with thirteen other founding members and their leader, Walleen, gathered in the faculty room of Alexander University in Helsinki to be admitted to the society. In 1849, the society commissioned a painting from Robert Wilhelm Ekman, delivered by Armfelt to Nicholas in 1851; it depicted a recruiting scene showing members of the Life Guards in a peasant cabin in the county of Häme, where an old veteran gives some final advice to a young peasant who is enlisting in the Finnish Rifle Battalion.⁶² Furthermore, the infant tsarevich can be connected to Ferdinand von Wright's work *Mallards*, which was said to have been 'marvelled at by the society's high patron'.⁶³ Though it is difficult to define precisely which painting or watercolour, and which of several mallards, were marvelled at by the young patron, Ferdinand von Wright did visit St Petersburg in the same month as the tsarevich's birth, March 1845. Some days after his departure for Russia, his brother, Magnus, forwarded Ferdinand's *Ringdove* and *Mallard*. In addition, there are reports of another *Mallard* finished by Ferdinand in March 1847,⁶⁴ and yet another mention of two more Ferdinand von Wright bird depictions, which would be offered to the infant protector as 'proof of what Finnish art since the society's establishment has produced.'⁶⁵ According to the mediating practice that later became highly typical for Count Armfelt, the count himself may have presented the *Mallards* to the tsarevich in either 1845 or 1847.⁶⁶

While Helsinki was the headquarters of the society and the core site of membership,⁶⁷ it should be stressed here that the decision-making and implementation of the politics of the society

were, for a long time, ‘guaranteed’ by these aristocrats native to Finland Proper (Armfelt, Walleen, Stjernvall-Walleen, von Kothen), those whose family histories had been intimately connected with the Russian regime and the emperor since the country’s annexation, and many of whom were also educated at the Academy of Turku. Indeed, the first-known proposal for the establishment of the society, dating from 1834, can be connected to several members of the so-called Turku Romantics, a literary–political society that manifested a Romantically rooted idealism and early national consciousness.⁶⁸ Hence on one hand, these individuals had a longstanding and developed understanding of the principles of statecraft and policymaking, but on the other, their origins also bore the legacy of the ‘birthplace’ of Fennomania; in the society’s tenth anniversary report, Topelius, in fact, acclaimed Åbo [Turku] to be the ‘cradle of Finnish civilization’.⁶⁹

Alexander Armfelt well exemplified this controversy; in his youth, he had been connected to the Turku Romantics, though in his later years he moderated his position.⁷⁰ Although Armfelt never held any formal role in the society (beyond his membership), because of his political position he facilitated most of the contacts between the society and artists on the one hand and the emperor(s) on the other; he remained in charge of translating the principles of autocracy into practice in the field of culture for the remainder of his life.⁷¹ Armfelt can certainly be connected to the political promotion and favouring of the project from at least 1839, as ‘no other individual more powerfully could elicit this objective, than His Excellency, Alexander Armfelt’.⁷² An industrious and loyal diplomat who had been raised by French clerics, Armfelt, however, ‘had seen too much of the world and was too critical in nature to fall into a blind or servile patriotism, or being a puppet’.⁷³ Armfelt’s fascination and Nicholas I’s memory are illustrated in his first encounter with Nicholas which occurred right after his arrival in St Petersburg on a November evening in 1832, in front of his apartment on the bank of Neva near the Winter Palace. Armfelt had sensed someone looking at him in the darkness: *‘Il faut vous dire que j’ai rencontré l’Empereur l’autre jour devant ma maison.* S: M: [Sa Majesté] *m’a beaucoup fixé, mais il m’était impossible de croire qu’Elle me*

reconnaisait'.⁷⁴ The day after, Nicholas, who had seen Armfelt only once before, asked Armfelt's chief if he had arrived, saying that he believed he had seen him the day before.

Armfelt sealed tight, personal bonds with the society's key actors. He was closely in touch with the von Wright painter-brothers from the early 1840s, while for example, Magnus von Wright, an artist member of the society who ran curatorial errands during its early years, collaborated closely with its secretary, Zacharias Topelius, and was a close friend of painter Robert Wilhelm Ekman, who worked as a teacher in the society's drawing school in Turku. Under the protection of Armfelt, Magnus von Wright⁷⁵ (for example) enjoyed a personal annual grant from the emperor, beginning in 1836,⁷⁶ and Armfelt backed his appointment as conservator of the Imperial Alexander University's ornithology collections. Furthermore, to perfect von Wright's conservation skills in his work for the Zoological Museum in Helsinki, Armfelt arranged for him to receive an imperial travel grant both to Stockholm's Riksmuseet and the Zoological Museum in St Petersburg.⁷⁷ Armfelt also planned to send von Wright to Siberia with his protector and the founder of the university's ornithology collection, Evert Bonsdorff,⁷⁸ but this idea was never realized. In the summer 1850, Armfelt commissioned Magnus von Wright to paint a series of views of inland Finnish cities to be presented to Nicholas, and in January 1856, two of Ferdinand's paintings were sent to Armfelt to be 'shown to the emperor'. Again in 1854, during the visit of the emperor and the heir to Helsinki, Armfelt acquired a landscape by Ferdinand von Wright for the heir.⁷⁹ On the occasion of the society's twentieth anniversary, Armfelt requested all the necessary records from the Society, so that he could prepare a document affirming the significance part of the imperial patronage (see detail in Fig. 1).⁸⁰

In addition to the ritual in the tsarevich's nursery, mentioned previously, Topelius, too, used the concepts of the nursing mother and 'motherly arms', equating the young nation with the young heir by referring to a 'child in the cradle of his protector'.⁸¹ He reminds us that the tsarevich was still young when 'the society had the good fortune to grow up along with the tsarevich, to that

appreciation of beauty which belongs to the youth'.⁸² The cradle was also noted in the 1860s, when Topelius predicted that the 'obvious future is approaching, when the first fruits are to be recognized as genuine expressions of the life of the Finnish nation'. With this, Topelius implies not only the national culture's developing autonomy, but also the nation's distancing from the Russian Empire. This time, however, the child in the cradle is depicted using themes from the Kalevala myth; both the child in the cradle and the art of Finland had grown up, and fine art, like the mythical infant Kullervo, threw off its swaddling clothes and outgrew its protector's narrow cradle.⁸³ Kullervo, a defiant and wanton boy with golden hair and blue stockings who, when only three days old, tore off his clothing and smashed his cradle; his family had been killed by another tribe, who decided Kullervo too must die, but the small boy with magical powers survived unharmed, despite all attempts on his life.⁸⁴ A similar reference to the dual historical identity of Finland was also made by Alexander II, during the distancing period noted by Topelius. The emperor sent a painting by David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl to be added to the society's collection which formerly had belonged to the Imperial Hermitage. It depicted a crucial moment in the founding of the Russian Empire, featuring Charles XII of Sweden on horseback during the Swedish defeat at the Battle of Poltava, symbolizing also the downfall of the Swedish Empire.⁸⁵ To summarise, the establishment of the society represented, besides nation, two important characteristics of autocracy, namely the paternal and fatherly guidance of the monarch, but also Nicholas's special preference for militarism and a military outlook.⁸⁶

The adolescence and early maturity of Finnish art mentioned by Topelius came about immediately following Armfelt's death in 1876, when Stjernvall-Walleen succeeded to Armfelt's post and requested that what might be considered the first mature fruits from the society's drawing school should be bestowed upon Alexander II. He asked specifically for the newly purchased painting by Gunnar Berndtson,⁸⁷ *La presentation du tableau*⁸⁸ (Fig. 2), as he had in mind presenting it as a gift to 'His Majesty the Emperor-Grand Duke'.⁸⁹ After a long discussion, the executive board

unanimously consented to release the painting, but it wholly and exclusively declared that the object should be handed over to the emperor.⁹⁰

Between these two temporally distant gifts, that is, the ‘humble’ recruiting scene featuring the Life Guards and the luxurious *La Presentation du tableau*, a repertoire of a few accepted themes (peasant cabin interiors, nature and bird depictions, landscapes) seems to have been privileged from the beginning of the Society’s history to an emblematic position. That this pattern later repeats itself can be confirmed by Topelius’s selections in *Helsingfors Tidningar*. Topelius’s selections in the journal roughly followed the information in the society’s minutes, although not all the painters purchased by the society were noted there. Nevertheless, from the particular interest bestowed on the provinces, tribes and the peasantry, and the attribution of particular value to pictures by the von Wrights and Ekman, we can recognize the affinity between the society’s promoted Romantic concept of nature and Topelius’s own literary works. Topelius’s synthesis in his own literary works was to politicise nature and incorporate it into the national development project, even though his strong emphasis on fairytales and storytelling obscured the fact that he pursued cultural politics in areas quite distinct from his poetry.⁹¹ Yet this same emphasis on national character with a strong moralistic basis was also a characteristic of the official nationality doctrine: Uvarov understood the status of poetry in all traditions, in the sense that poetry should be gathered directly from the ‘mouths of its priests’.⁹² According to Topelius, too, the image of folk poets peacefully reading their poems in a dark peasant cabin were considered the epitome of Finnish poetry and of home life – simple, humble and truthful.⁹³ In suggesting that the educated classes should turn to the interior and to the woods, Topelius the enlightener’s aim was two-fold: to civilize the ‘common people’ while enhancing the elite’s consciousness of the nation.⁹⁴ History and geography were further elements that constantly intervened in each other's territory; according to Topelius, it was only through them that the mutual influence of nature on the people and the people on nature could be understood. This

political element was to be sought for ‘within oneself’ and not outside, as hitherto had been the case, through nature and through Christianity, specifically in its Scandinavian variant.⁹⁵

In the von Wright brothers’ idealization of nature, in their landscapes and scenic works, there are numerous affinities with Topelius’s own poetry; many of these are ‘narrated’ from a bird’s eye perspective. Indeed, Matti Klinge has noted that it is typical for Russian descriptions of Finland at this time to express a utopian and idyllic view.⁹⁶ The pristine geographical landscape and the related concepts of simplicity and the gentle tranquillity of its people had attracted Russian interest⁹⁷ since the reign of Alexander I and echoed the aesthetic and idealistic image of Finland’s people and nature, a state later referred to as ‘Runebergian-Topelian’.⁹⁸ One favoured and much-praised location in the landscapes and interior scenes promoted by Topelius is the county of Savo. He noted that it ‘touched the illiterate, it brought to mind the fatherland, where you felt at home’.⁹⁹ ‘There is something strange about it; although we have come so far from nature, yet we always feel it, like a city dweller when he opens his window and is fanned by the first spring breeze from the forest . . .’¹⁰⁰ In addition to Ekman and the von Wright brothers, Topelius gave a similar endorsement to the ‘first’ Finnish landscape painter, Werner Holmberg. The overall significance of the Nordic landscape for the society was underlined by Alexander II himself, following Holmberg’s death: when the painter’s widow bestowed on the society Holmberg’s final finished painting, the emperor compensated her with a jewel-encrusted brooch.¹⁰¹

Against this background of Topelius eagerly publicizing the monarch’s generosity as a patron of culture, and embellishing his personal *gloire*, might Topelius’s commentaries on paintings be understood as vehicles for statements planted by the monarchy? And further, given Armfelt’s long-standing attention to the exercise of patronage, and his position as a select initiate holding the confidence of the monarch, might the society be considered as an organ of non-verbal propaganda? Joseph Klaitis contends that relationships forged by the courtier (Armfelt, Stjernvall-Walleen, von

Kothen) and the measure of emotional patriotism of the man of letters (Topelius), may indeed be taken as signs of a distinctly propagandist programme.¹⁰²

Topelius's true position may actually be revealed by Casimir von Kothen himself. When the most active form of nationalism raised its head in Finland after the Crimean War, and Alexander II asked von Kothen to indicate the 'remedy for the existing ills in society',¹⁰³ von Kothen gave him a striking answer: he directed the emperor's gaze not to the field of politics, but exclusively to the field of culture. According to von Kothen, the ill lay neither with the West nor with the national poets, but rather with the 'underground machinations, the coup of an occult power'.¹⁰⁴ While Topelius, whom von Kothen 'knew as well as his own pockets',¹⁰⁵ had traditionally advocated for the loyalty of Finland to Russia, Topelius had recently become so 'persecuted by Fennomans and radical progressists' that 'in the end, he too had been obliged to cast himself into the ranks of Fennomans', no doubt thinking that 'only under this banner would it be possible to continue to live in Finland'. To all this should also be added the influence of Scandinavism, which added pressure from Sweden.¹⁰⁶ In the same way, Topelius himself wrote to Armfelt of having become a target for conflicting passions: he was accused both of being a paid agent, showing too-favourable treatment of Russia, and of 'seeking the political crown of a martyr and abusing his power for personal gain.'¹⁰⁷

Topelius's texts were occasionally used for to wield influence. For example, during a period of high international tension, the Crimean War, the governor-general of Finland, Platon Rokassovsky, ordered a French translation of Topelius's text to rebut the negative representation of Russia on the European stage and arranged for it to be published in Brussels in *L'Indépendance Belge*.¹⁰⁸ Likewise, during the post-Crimean War period, *aide-de-camp* Alexey Tolstoy and Count Karl Nesselrode, via Stjernvall-Walleen, commissioned Topelius to write of a heroic ruler in the '*Le Nord*' (possibly *L'Écho du Nord*), regarding the emperor's visit to Helsinki.¹⁰⁹ For von Kothen, who often divided ideas and their proponents rigidly between good and evil, Topelius represented

good, moral and God-fearing qualities. Following Klinge, Topelius never was a Fennoman in the rigid sense, although he was often under suspicion. In other words, Topelius represented the movement's most cautious wing, and according to Klinge he was a moderate centrist. However, being a monarchist in a 'Bonapartist manner' – 'deriving from and returning to the people' – fitted well to the current political circumstances (Caesarism).¹¹⁰

Conclusions

Engaging intellectuals from the outside and under government supervision was typical for the rationale of Nicholas I and his heirs' policies on culture, education and science. While on the international scene Nicholas emerged as a foe of nationalism, this article has demonstrated that at home his treatment appeared much more complex if not ambivalent. Despite having similar goals, however, the official view never shared the Romantic nationalist meaning. Yet, numerous individual bonds were sealed between the society, its key actors, painters and patrons.

On the whole, relationships with historians, journalists and publicists were crucial for the Romanovs' indirect management efforts, and for Uvarov in particular. In Russia, Uvarov supported those authors whose views he shared. If and when the Romanovs sought out new sources of political legitimization, these sources always had to be compatible with the official view on nationalism.¹¹¹ Helsinki and Topelius were no exceptions in this sphere. Moreover, at this particular time, numerous other actors were present in Helsinki in the fluid arena between culture, politics and diplomacy. For example, the French writer Léouzon Leduc, who frequented the gatherings held by the key families of the 1840s and 1850s and who also mediated the sale of von Wright's watercolours to an unidentified French minister, was originally sent to Russia and Finland to search for a specific type of marble for Napoleon Bonaparte's sarcophagus, but he too soon developed a Finnish 'addiction'.¹¹² Leduc had a close liaison with Uvarov; all he knew of the manuscripts he studied, he owed to Uvarov's assistance and generosity.¹¹³

Examining both the purchase lists and official minutes of the society, drafted mostly by Topelius from 1848 onward, and the editorial ‘commentaries’ by Topelius published in *Helsingfors Tidningar*, it is possible to attest that cautious Topelius understood the limits of what was permissible in the press within the domain of nationality. Like in his poetry, Topelius’s capacity to idealize and to render poetic every subject he touched enabled him to express patriotic sentiments and to promote those painters and themes that provided the supposedly ‘correct’ patriotic and national image while not expressing ambitions that were too far-reaching. In other words, the context of where and when the society was founded has a great deal to do with opinion-formers, public relations and image creation; the image of the Russian Empire among the Finnish and, in particular, before the European audience: men of letters enhanced the power and prestige of men of state, and they had vast capacity to shape opinions.¹¹⁴ Facilitated by Topelius, the society aimed for a broad Enlightenment scenario, complemented by patriotic rhetoric and promotion of the prestige of domestic art.

The emperor’s benevolence in giving a supreme gift, the acquisition of aesthetic excellence and knowledge, and the ‘conquest’ of collecting practice, as here ‘guaranteed’ by the throne,¹¹⁵ represented the central government’s commitment to the initiation of an independent culture and modern nation; at the same time, it was connected to Russia’s image and prestige on the world stage, while also representing the monarch’s civilizing mission in the Enlightenment tradition. In other words, the society’s initiation ritual gave visible form to the monarchy and to the cults it represented. It belonged to the symbolic practice of Russian administrative nationalization and its symbolic practices, symbolizing both the Russian presence in the Grand Duchy and Finland’s position within the empire.¹¹⁶ The early moderate nationalism represented here by the society had the same ambivalent position in the eyes of the government as Russian nationalism, and while its most radical form was never endorsed by the state, as Klinge has noted, ‘Finland was necessary for Russia’.¹¹⁷ Primarily for its location, driven by geopolitical and security interests and in ways

similar to the Polish question, the Grand Duchy was important for Russian politics; Romantic nationalism had a strategic importance for the government's policies and served as a bulwark to the conservative, autocratic state.¹¹⁸

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List of figure captions

Fig. 1. Chronicle describing stages of the Society for the Encouragement of the Culture of the Fine Arts (or simply, the Society) from 1843 to 1865 for the patron of the Society, Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovich. 8 pages. Detail of document. Archive of the Finnish Art Society 1846-1839. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery. Photo: Finnish National Gallery.

Fig. 2. Gunnar Berndtson, *Art Connoisseurs in the Louvre*, 1879, Gösta Serlachius Fine Arts Foundation, Mänttä, Finland. Photo: Vesa Aaltonen.

Note and references

¹ National Archive, Helsinki (henceforth NA), Alexander Armfelt II collection (henceforth AAI). Alexander Armfelt (henceforth A. Armfelt) to Sigrid Armfelt, 27 April 1833.

² The following sources have been used extensively in this article: N. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825–1855* (Berkeley, 1959), pp. 213, 237, 268; N. V. Riasanovsky, *The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought* (Oxford, 1992), p. 87; N. V. Riasanovsky, *Russian Identities: A Historical Survey* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 131–2; J. Klaitis, *Printed Propaganda under Louis XIV:*

Absolute Monarchy and Public Opinion (Princeton, 1976), pp. 77-87, 279-95; M. Klinge, *Idylli ja Uhka. Topeliuksen aatteita ja politiikkaa* (Porvoo, 1998), pp. 313-24. See also C. Geertz's, 'Centers, kings, and charisma: reflections on the symbolics of power', in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, ed. C. Geertz (New York, 1983), pp. 123-146.

³ A state's identity is considered incomplete when one or the other is absent. Becoming a 'historically' important, state requires the presence of both spheres. Sergei Uvarov, *Études de philologie et de critique, par M. Ouvaroff* (Paris, 1844), p. 411. See also Voltaire, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV. Édition Classique* (Paris, 1888), pp. 1-3.

⁴ Riasanovsky, op. cit. [2005] (note 2), pp. 145-6; C. H. Whittaker, 'The ideology of Sergei Uvarov: an interpretive essay', *Russian Review* 37 (1978), pp. 169-72.

⁵ Riasanovsky, op. cit. [1959] (note 2), p. 213; R. S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and ceremony in Russian monarchy from Peter the Great to the abdication of Nicholas* (Princeton, 2006), passim; R. Wortman, *Visual Texts, Ceremonial Texts, Texts of Exploration: Collected articles on the representation of Russian monarchy*, ed. G. Marker (Boston, 2014), 139-44.

⁶ L. L. Le Duc, *La Question Russe : I. Le Prince Menschikoff. II. L'Église gréco-russe. III. La russe devant L'Europe* (Paris, 1853), pp. ii, 6-11

⁷ Le Duc, op. cit. (note 6), pp. ii, 6-11. Prince Menshikov lived a solitary life in an opulent palace in St Petersburg, under the emperor's eye and was known to receive 'strangers' only rarely.

⁸ The object represents the concept of the invisible; as it is old, it constitutes a reminder of past events, and it comes from a particular individual (the emperor). In brief, it represents the legacy of an entire tradition. K. Pomian, 'The collection: between the visible and the invisible', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. S. M. Pearce (London, 1994), p. 172.

⁹ The Society had an international model with an organization, structure and (some) goals similar to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (1754) in England, the Société des Amis des Arts (1790) in France, the Kunstvereine in Germany, and the Imperial Society for the Encouragement of Arts (1826) in Russia. Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki (henceforth FNG), Archive Collections, Archive of the Finnish Art Society (henceforth AFAS), Monseigneur, 26 February/10 March 1846; Monseigneur, 3 May 1869; Monseigneur, 2 May 1873.

¹⁰ J. J. Tikkanen, *Finska Konstföreningen 1846-1896* (Helsingfors, 1896), p. 11; C. G. Estlander, *De Bildande konsternas historia från slutet af adertonde århundradet till 1867* (Helsingfors, 1925), pp. 547-8; H-L. Paloposki, 'Suomen Taideyhdistyksen kokoelman alkuvaiheet. Kilpailua arpajaisten kanssa', in *Ateneum 1993*, ed. S. Laitala (Helsinki, 1993), pp. 3-23; S. Pettersson, *Suomen Taideyhdistyksestä Ateneumiin. Fredrik Cygnaeus, Carl Gustaf Estlander ja taidekokoelman roolit* (Helsinki, 2008), p. 73, 297-298; J. Rassi, 'Ei kansa elä vain leivästä'. Suomen Taideyhdistyksen ja taiteen kannattajakunnan muotoutuminen Helsingissä 1846-1865', MA thesis, University of Helsinki (2010).

¹¹ K. Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 38.

¹² The collection of letters received by Alexander Armfelt in the National Archive in Helsinki is an invaluable resource on the Russian imperial bureaucracy. Very rarely stated, however, is the fact that this period of Finnish history is mostly recorded in French.

¹³ Wortman, op. cit. [2014] (note 5), pp. 47-8.

¹⁴ Pettersson, op. cit. (note 10), pp. 110–14, 298; Rassi, op. cit. (note 10), pp. 35-6. Jukka Ervamaa makes an exception in this canon. J. Ervamaa, ‘Kuvataide autonomian alkuajalla’, in *Ars. Suomen taide 3*, ed. S. Sarajas-Korte (Keuruu, 1989), p. 90.

¹⁵ Riasanovsky, op. cit. [1959] (note 2), pp. 226-33; A. Miller and S. Dobrynin (eds.), *Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the methodology of historical research* (Budapest, 2008), p. 212; M. Klinge, *Ylioppilaskunnan Historia. Ensimmäinen Osa 1828–1852* (Porvoo, 1967), p. 17, 100.

¹⁶ Both dimensions are central in the creation of a canonical ‘national image’. A. D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 101–4; T. Bennett, ‘Museums, nations, empires, religions’, in *National Museums and Nation-Building in Europe 1750-2010: Mobilization and Legitimacy, Continuity and Change*, ed. P. Aronsson and G. Elgenius (London, 2014), p. 68, 82-3.

¹⁷ Riasanovsky, op. cit. [1959] (note 2), p. 145.

¹⁸ S. Uvarov, *Esquisses politiques et littéraires par M. Le Comte Ouvaroff* (Paris, 1848), pp. 8-12, 55-89; Riasanovsky, op. cit. [2005] (note 2), p. 142; Riasanovsky, op. cit. [1959] (note 2), pp. 71–2, 170; L. Leger, ‘L’Académie des sciences de Petrograd du XVIII^e au XX^e siècle’, *Journal des Savants* 6 (1919), p. 314 ; P. Pletnev, ‘Pamiati grafa S.S. Uvarova, prezidenta Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk’, *Uchenye zapiski* 2 (1856), pp. liii–cxxxv.

¹⁹ Topelius worked for the journal as an editor and journalist from 1842 to 1860. Z. Topelius, *Ljungblommor. Utgiven av Carola Herberts under medverkan av Clas Zilliacus* (Helsingfors, 2010), pp. 9–10; M. Klinge, op. cit. [1998] (note 2), p. 267.

²⁰ NA, AAIL, Emil Stjernvall-Walleen (henceforth Stjernvall-Walleen) to A. Armfelt, 18/30 November 1856; Platon Rokassovsky to A. Armfelt, 2/14 April 1862.

²¹ This displacement has also been called bureaucratic patriotism. See R. Schweitzer, ‘Der “bürokratische Patriotismus”, *Kalevala* und *Fänrik Ståhls sägner*: (Über-)Lebenskräfte der Autonomie Finnlands in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts’, in *1809 und die Folgen: Finnland zwischen Schweden, Russland und Deutschland*, ed. J. Hecker-Stampehl et al. (Berlin, 2011), pp. 121–42.

²² See Smith, op. cit. (note 16), pp. 101-66; Bennett, op. cit. (note 16), p. 67-68; Klaitis, op. cit. (note 2), p. 142, 288 ; E. Dziembowski, ‘La propagande et la politisation de l’espace public en France pendant la guerre de Sept Ans et la guerre d’Indépendance américaine’, in *La politique par les armes: Conflits internationaux et politisation (XV^e–XIX^e siècle)*, ed. L. Bourquin et al. (Rennes, 2013), pp. 245–57; E. Dziembowski, *Un nouveau patriotisme français: La France face à la puissance anglaise à l’époque de la guerre de Sept Ans* (Oxford, 1998), p. 369.

²³ Klaitis, op. cit. (note 2), pp. 3-35.

²⁴ FNG, AFAS. Board meetings, lottery- and purchase lists between 10 March 1847 and 8 March 1864.

²⁵ Statutes of 1846, 2§, and renewal of the statutes 1849, §8. FNG, AFAS, Règlement, 26 February/10 March 1846; Statutes, 1 February 1849.

²⁶ FNG, AFAS, Statistisk Tablå, undated; Annual Report, 10 March 1847.

²⁷ G. Dulac, 'The empress, the *philosophes*, and the fine arts', in *Catherine the Great Art for Empire. Masterpieces from the State Hermitage Museum*, ed. N. Bondil (Montréal, 2005), p. 180; Voltaire, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 324–8, 423–40; Voltaire, *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire 16. Histoire de l'Empire de Russie* (Paris, 1878), pp. 463–9; G. Dulac et al. (eds.), *La Culture française et les archives russes. Une image de l'Europe au XVIII^e siècle* (Ferney-Voltaire, 2004).

²⁸ FNG, AFAS, Monseigneur, 26 February/10 March 1846. See also, Règlement de la Société pour l'encouragement de la culture des beaux-arts en Finland (henceforth Règlement), 26 February/10 March 1846; Société pour l'encouragement de la culture des beaux-arts en Finland, Membres etc., 26 February/10 March 1846.

²⁹ Riasanovsky, op. cit. [1959] (note 2), p. 167–68; Miller and Dobrynin, op. cit. (note 15), p. 146.

³⁰ FNG, AFAS, Monseigneur, 26 February/10 March 1846.

³¹ Uvarov, op. cit. (note 18), p. 210.

³² FNG, AFAS, Monseigneur, 2 May 1873.

³³ *Helsingfors Tidningar* published the annual reports of the Society, but in addition to these, there were larger and more detailed analyses of individual purchases and exhibitions. These can be read as editorial commentaries by Topelius on the Society's official inventories.

³⁴ *Helsingfors Tidningar* (13 March 1847).

³⁵ FNG, AFAS, Annual Reports of 10 March 1861, 10 March 1865, 11 March 1867, and 10 March 1869.

³⁶ FNG, AFAS, Annual Report, 10 March 1864; Voltaire, (op. cit.) (note 3), p. 438.

³⁷ *Helsingfors Tidningar* (31 January 1846).

³⁸ *Helsingfors Tidningar* (14 March 1849); F. Cygnaeus, *Samlade arbeten VI. Literatur-historiska och blandade arbeten* (Helsingfors, 1889), p. 428.

³⁹ The 'poverty' motif is typical of Topelius, with its implied positive values. *Helsingfors Tidningar* (31 January 1846); P. Alhoniemi, in *Religion, Myth, and Folklore in the World's Epics. Kalevala and its Predecessors*, ed. L. Honko (Berlin, 1990), p. 240; A. Monnier, 'La naissance d'une idéologie nationaliste en Russie au siècle des Lumières', *Revue des études slaves* 52 (1979), p. 270.

⁴⁰ NA, AAIL, Constantin Fischer to A. Armfelt [letter titled *Système administratif du Prince Menchikoff*], 9 December 1855.

⁴¹ Uvarov, op. cit. (note 18), pp. 22, 66–67, 236.

⁴² Stjernvall-Walleen referred to the same concept, with ‘l’esprit de la Tschinomanie’; NA, AAIL, Stjernvall-Walleen to A. Armfelt, 18/30, no month, 1873. F-X. Coquin, ‘Un être méconnu: Le fonctionnaire tsariste’, *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 9 (1968), pp. 227–29.

⁴³ NA, AAIL, Constantin Fischer to A. Armfelt, 4 December 1855.

⁴⁴ NA, AII, Constantin Fischer to A. Armfelt [*Système administratif du Prince Menchikoff*], 9 December 1855.

⁴⁵ NA, AAIL, Kothen to A. Armfelt, 6 January 1870.

⁴⁶ NA, AAIL, for example, Casimir von Kothen (henceforth Kothen) to A. Armfelt, 2/14 October 1839, 1 October 1846, 7 February 1847, 2 March 1847.

⁴⁷ NA, AAIL, Kothen to A. Armfelt, 2/14 October 1839, in particular 21 May 1859.

⁴⁸ ‘J’espère que Vous serez toujours le même’, von Kothen posthumously informed Nicholas to have noted. NA, AAIL, Kothen to A. Armfelt, 21 May 1859.

⁴⁹ Alexander II occasionally left comments on letters received by Armfelt. ‘...ils n’ont changé en rien et que j’aime à compter sur son zèle et son dévouement...’ NA, AAIL, Kothen to A. Armfelt, 3/15 May 1859.

⁵⁰ NA, AAIL, Kothen to A. Armfelt, 4 December 1872.

⁵¹ Uvarov, op. cit. (note 3), p. 375.

⁵² Wortman, op. cit. [2006] (note 5), p. 136.

⁵³ NA, AAIL, Stjernvall-Walleen to A. Armfelt, 30 May/11 June 1857.

⁵⁴ NA, AAIL, Stjernvall-Walleen to A. Armfelt, 26 November 1838.

⁵⁵ NA, AAIL, Stjernvall-Walleen to A. Armfelt, 20 April 1865; Stjernvall-Walleen to A. Armfelt, 28 December 1868.

⁵⁶ NA, AAIL, Kothen to A. Armfelt, 6 May 1840, 18/26 June 1840.

⁵⁷ NA, AAIL, Stjernvall-Walleen to A. Armfelt, 13/25 June 1845.

⁵⁸ NA, AAIL, Stjernvall-Walleen to A. Armfelt, 23 June/5 July 1845.

⁵⁹ FNG, AFAS, Monseigneur, 26 February/10 March 1846; NA, AAIL, Carl Johan Walleen to A. Armfelt, 7/21 March 1846, 17/29 April 1846.

⁶⁰ Petr Pletnev to Yakov Grot, 6 March 1846 and Yakov Grot to Pyotr Pletnyov, 9 March 1846, in published correspondence between Pletnev and Grot. W. Groundstroem, *Utdrag ur J. Grots brevväxling med P. Pletnjov angående Finska förhållanden vid medlet av 1800-talet. II* (Helsingfors, 1915).

⁶¹ Diary entry of 27 January 1846 in Magnus von Wright, *Dagbok 1841–1849*, A. Leikola et al. (eds.) (Helsinki, 1999); FNG, AFAS, Monseigneur, 26 February/10 March 1846.

⁶² FNG, AFAS, Memorial, 1/13 December 1851; Board Meetings, 11 February 1852 and 25 May 1849.

⁶³ FNG, AFAS, 1847 Purchased and Allotted Paintings, undated.

⁶⁴ Diary entries of 15 March 1845, 25 March 1845, 29 March 1845, 8 March 1847 in von Wright, op. cit. (note 61).

⁶⁵ FNG, AFAS, Annual Report, 10 March 1847. The author has inquired if the recruiting scene and a possible *Mallard* would be noted in Hermitage inventories.

⁶⁶ The custodian of the Imperial Palace in Helsinki confirmed Armfelt's role in the acquisition of works for the Imperial Palace: '...this did not depend on me, but on Mr. Count [Armfelt], and him making a proposal to His Majesty the Emperor.' NA, AAIL, Johan Mauritz Nordenstam to A. Armfelt, 29 December 1866.

⁶⁷ Rassi, op. cit. (note 10), p. 4.

⁶⁸ Members of this circle included an influential developer of a national cultural political program, professor J. J. Tengström, national poet Johan L. Runeberg, professor and poet Johan Gabriel Linsén, and senator O. W. Klinckowström, whose collection was later purchased and donated to the Society by its infant protector, in honour of Nicholas I; FNG, AFAS, 18 June 1834.

⁶⁹ FNG, AFAS, 16 June 1846; 10 March 1856; *Åbo Tidningar* (13 June 1846); L. Kallio, 'J.V. Snellman's Philosophie der Persönlichkeit', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Helsinki (Helsinki, 2017), pp. 50–56.

⁷⁰ H. Hirn, *Alexander Armfelt. Början av en statsmannabana 1832–1841* (Helsingfors, 1948), pp. 180–81. See also P. Alhoniemi, *Isänmaan korkeat veisut. Turun ja Helsingin romantiikan runouden patrioottiset ja kansalliset motiivipiirit* (Helsinki, 1969).

⁷¹ FNG, AFAS, Annual Report, 10 March 1876.

⁷² NA, AAIL, Nils Abraham Gylden to A. Amfelt, 20 July 1839, 3 July 1841, 18 December 1841. Diary entries of 29 November 1841, 19 December 1842 in von Wright, op. cit. (note 61).

⁷³ Hirn, op. cit. (note 70), p. 137; C. von Bonsdorff, 'Ministerstatssekreteraren Greve Alexander Armfelts memoarer', *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* 14 (1929), p. 77.

⁷⁴ NA, AAIL, A. Armfelt to Sigrid Armfelt, 15 November 1832.

⁷⁵ Magnus cured and prepared birds for the University's collection, but he owned a private collection of 58 birds, too. Diary entry of 21 April 1854, in Magnus von Wright, *Dagbok 1850-1862*, A. Leikola et al. (eds.) (Helsinki, 1999); I. Riihimäki, 'How an artisan became an artist – an overview of the early stage of Finnish art education', *Finnish National Gallery Research* 2 (2018), pp. 1–22.

⁷⁶ FNG, AFAS, Stormäktigaste [Most Powerful], undated; Diary entry of 27 January 1836, in Magnus von Wright, *Dagbok 1835-1840*, ed. A. Leikola et al. (Helsinki, 1999).

⁷⁷ Diary entries of 5 September 1843, 14 March 1845, and 23 May 1845 in von Wright, op. cit. (note 61); Diary entry of 19 January 1850 in von Wright, op. cit. (note 75).

⁷⁸ Later, Topelius attributed the foundation of the university's 'unique of its kind, outstanding bird collection' to Magnus von Wright; NA, AAIL, Z. Topelius to A. Armfelt, 15 May 1866.

⁷⁹ Diary entries of 15 July 1850, 13 November 1850, 15 March 1854, 16 March 1854, 21 January 1856, and 14 February 1857 in von Wright, op. cit. (note 75).

⁸⁰ FNG, AFAS, Undated, Unpaginated Chronicle from 1843 to 1865; NA, AAI, Fredrik Cygnaeus to A. Armfelt, 14 October 1865.

⁸¹ FNG, AFAS, Annual Report, 10 March 1864.

⁸² FNG, AFAS, Allenådig[a]ste Storfurste [Gracious Grand Duke], undated.

⁸³ FNG, AFAS, Annual Report, 10 March 1864, 10 March 1866. Distancing is also noted in Tikkanen, op. cit. (note 10), p. 202.

⁸⁴ Topelius explained the Kullervo myth using the ancient conceptualisation of the religion and state, depicting religion as wisdom understood as magic and placing the state here to Kullervo's [Finland] lack of family and love. *Helsingfors Tidningar* (18 June 1851); *Helsingfors Tidningar* (21 June 1851).

⁸⁵ FNG, AFAS, To the Direction of the Finnish Art Society, 13/25 June 1872; Board Meeting, 11 September 1872.

⁸⁶ Riasanovsky, op. cit. [1959] (note 2), pp. 192-93; Wortman, op. cit. [2006] (note 5), p. 164.

⁸⁷ Like painter Albert Edelfelt, who was later a commissioned artist for the Romanovs, Gunnar Berndtson was among the first internationally renowned painters educated by the Society.

⁸⁸ The painting, exhibited in the Paris Salon of the spring 1879, is currently known as *Art Connoisseurs in the Louvre* (1879) and belongs to Gösta Serlachius Fine Arts Foundation (Serlachius Museums, Finland).

⁸⁹ FNG, AFAS, Board Meeting, 14 December 1879.

⁹⁰ FNG, AFAS, Meeting of the Purchasing Committee, 18 October 1879; Board Meeting, 14 December 1879.

⁹¹ Z. Topelius, op. cit. (note 19), pp. 45, 75, 90, 101; M. Klinge, op. cit. (note 2), pp. 308, 344, 416; Klinge, op. cit. (note 15), pp. 93, 95; V. Vasenius, *Zacharias Topelius. Hans lif och skaldegärning. Tredje delen* (Helsingfors, 1918), p. 69.

⁹² Uvarov, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 325, 363; Uvarov, op. cit. (note 18), pp. 12–13.

⁹³ For example, Ekman's painting *Pentti Lyytinen recites poems in a cottage in Savo* (1848). *Helsingfors Tidningar* (1 April 1848), *Helsingfors Tidningar* (21 April 1858).

⁹⁴ Klinge, op. cit. (note 15), pp. 114–25; Vasenius, op. cit. (note 91), p. 226; Z. Topelius, *Contes finlandais: Recits pour la jeunesse*, tans. E. Girod-Hoskier (Geneva, 1908), pp. x, xi.

⁹⁵ Z. Topelius, *Föreläsningar i Geografi och Historia*, utgivna av Jens Grandell (Helsingfors, 2017), pp. 7, 14.

⁹⁶ Klinge, op. cit. (note 2), pp. 351–54.

⁹⁷ NA, AAI, Alexandrine de Rokassovsky to A. Armfelt, 10 July, undated by year.

⁹⁸ Klinge, op. cit. (note 2), p. 159.

⁹⁹ *Helsingfors Tidningar* (24 April 1852).

¹⁰⁰ *Helsingfors Tidningar* (12 April 1856).

¹⁰¹ FNG, AFAS, Zacharias Topelius (signed), 1 December 1862; Alexander Armfelt (signed), 9/15 November 1862; *Helsingfors Tidningar* (15 December 1862).

¹⁰² Klaitis, op. cit. (note 2), 87.

¹⁰³ Alexander II's pencil comment: 'Je voudrais qu'il indique les moyens pour remédier au mal'. NA, AAIL, Kothen to A. Armfelt, 12/24 April 1860.

¹⁰⁴ NA, AAIL, Kothen to A. Armfelt, 3 March 1855.

¹⁰⁵ NA, AAIL, Kothen to A. Armfelt, 10/22 May 1860.

¹⁰⁶ NA, AAIL, Stjernvall-Walleen to A. Armfelt, 6 May 1854.

¹⁰⁷ NA, AAIL, Zacharias Topelius to A. Armfelt, 21 January 1858.

¹⁰⁸ NA, AAIL, Stjernvall-Walleen to A. Armfelt, 8/20 May 1854, 21 May/2 June 1854.

¹⁰⁹ NA, AAIL, Stjernvall-Walleen to A. Armfelt, 20 March 1856.

¹¹⁰ Klinge, op. cit. (note 2), pp. 324, 339–45, 386.

¹¹¹ Miller and Dobrynin, op. cit. (note 15), p. 165.

¹¹² Leger, op. cit. (note 18), p. 315; *Litteraturblad för allmän medborgerlig bildning* (1 January 1851).

¹¹³ L. L. Leduc, *Études sur la Russie et le Nord de l'Europe: récits et souvenirs* (Paris, 1853), pp. 292–93.

¹¹⁴ Klaitis, op. cit. (note 2), pp. 292, 294; Wortman, op. cit. [2014] (note 5), p. 144.

¹¹⁵ S. Pearce, 'Towards modernist collecting: some European practices of the long term', *Nordisk Museologi* 2 (1993), p. 97.

¹¹⁶ Miller and Dobrynin, op. cit. (note 15), pp. 47, 60–61, 167; See also R. G. Suny, 'The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, "national" identity, and theories of empire', in *A State of Nations: Empire and nation-making in the age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. R. G. Suny and T. Martin (Oxford, 2001), p. 41.

¹¹⁷ Klinge, quoting Count Shuvalov's notion to Napoleon I, in Klinge, op. cit. (note 2), p. 355.

¹¹⁸ A. Walicki, 'The slavophile thinkers and the Polish question in 1863', in *Polish Encounters, Russian Identity*, ed. D. L. Ransel and B. Shallcross (Bloomington, IL, 2005), p. 94.