

# Guide to the Alexandre Polovtsoff Papers

MS 403



compiled by Staff of Manuscripts and Archives

March 1983

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
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**CALL NUMBER:** MS 403

**CREATOR:** Polovtsoff, Alexandre, 1867-

**TITLE:** Alexandre Polovtsoff papers

**DATES:** 1918-1934

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.5 linear feet (6 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** The materials are in Russian, French, and English.

**SUMMARY:** Notes, manuscripts, and transcript copies of Alexandre Polovtsoff's (1867-1934) writings after his emigration from Russia in 1918. Included are autobiographical materials, articles on Russian art, the imperial palaces, and Russian historical figures; also, translations of the *Journal de Voyage en Russie* by Francisco de Miranda, and *The Curse of Wit* by A. S. Griboedov.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0403>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0403>.

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Deposited by Madame Sophie Polovtsoff, 1964.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

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## Preferred Citation

Alexandre Polovtsoff Papers (MS 403). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Born in St. Petersburg in 1867, Polovtsoff grew up amid the cultivated society of the era; as a young man, he served several years in the cavalry (1888-1892), afterwards entering the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where he held responsible positions and travelled extensively through Russia and the outlying provinces. He also served as a foreign diplomat, one of his more protracted assignments being a post with the Russian Embassy in Bombay, 1906-1909. He maintained an active interest in Russian art and engaged in such activities as the organization of the Exhibition of Russian Art in London in 1935, also writing several articles and speeches on the subject.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection consists primarily of notes, manuscripts and typescript copies of the writings of Alexandre Polovtsoff, between the time of his emigration from Russia in 1918 and his death. His autobiographical works contain reminiscences from his youth and accounts of his later official work. His book, *Les trésors d'art en Russie sous le régime bolchéviste*, published in Paris, 1919, and found here in manuscript form as "Le Bolchévisme et les palais impériaux," describes his efforts to protect the imperial palaces of Russia immediately after the Revolution in 1917, before his emigration.

The bulk of the collection consists of various historical writings. The only one of these works to have been published is *Les Favoris de Catherine la Grande*, Paris, 1939; but the collection contains an extended study of Peter the Great, and articles, sketches, and notes on various Russian monarchs and other historical figures. There are also some translations: the *Journal de Voyage en Russie* of Don Francisco de Miranda (from Spanish), and *The Curse of Witof* A. S. Griboedov (from Russian).

## Collection Contents

### Inventory of the Papers

Historical writings: Peter I, emperor of Russia, 1672-1725; Catherine I, empress of Russia, d. 1727; Elizabeth, empress of Russia, 1709-1762

b. 1, f. 1a	<a href="#">Notes on Peter I (notebook)</a>
b. 1, f. 1b	<a href="#">"Pierre le Grand vu par un témoin étranger" [Bergholz] (notebook)</a>
b. 1, f. 1c	<a href="#">Petr Veliki? [Peter the Great] p.257-272, "L'oeuvre de Pierre le Grand..." [On Elizabeth, empress of Russia] (notebook)</a>
b. 1, f. 2	<a href="#">Petr Veliki? [Peter the Great] Vol. I (typescript)</a>
b. 1, f. 3	<a href="#">Petr Veliki? [Peter the Great] Vol. II (typescript)</a>
b. 1, f. 4	Catherine I of Russia" and "The daughter of Peter the Great (Elizabeth, Empress of Russia)" A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.
b. 1, f. 4	"Catherine I of Russia" (typescript)
b. 1, f. 4	"The daughter of Peter the Great (Elizabeth, Empress of Russia)" (notebook)
Historical writings: Catherine II, empress of Russia, 1729-1796; Paul I, emperor of Russia, 1754-1801; Marie Feodorovna, empress consort of Paul I, 1759-1828	
b. 2, f. 1a	Notes on <i>Les Favoris de la Grande Catherine</i> (notebook) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.
b. 2, f. 1b	Notes on <i>Les Favoris de Catherine II</i> (13 p., typescript) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.
b. 2, f. 1c	"Lettres de Catherine II a Mlle. Liouvchine," 22 Aug 1771 - 1775 (notebook, copy by Polovtsoff) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.
b. 2, f. 1	"Lettres de Mlle. Liouvchine a Catherine II," winter 1771 - 9 Apr 1780 (copy by Polovtsoff)
b. 2, f. 1	"Yubileĭ Smol'nogo" [On Smolny, convent school founded by Catherine II]
b. 2, f. 1	"Catherine II et Mlle. Liouvchine" (notebook)
b. 2, f. 1	"Ob jednoĭ knige" [Review of <i>Les Favoris de Catherine II</i> ] (typescript, carbon copy)
b. 2, f. 1	"Catherine II" (typescript)
b. 2, f. 2	<i>Les Favoris de Catherine II</i> (typescript)
b. 2, f. 3a	"Le Voyage du Comte et de la Comtesse du Nord" [Paul I and Marie Feodorovna] (notebook) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.

## Historical writings: Catherine II, empress of Russia, 1729-1796; [...] (continued)

b. 2, f. 3b	"Yubile? Smol'nogo" (notebook) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy. See: box 2, folder 1
b. 2, f. 3c	"The Count and Countess of the North" [Paul I and Marie Feodorovna] A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.
b. 2, f. 3	"To many people the Exhibition of Russian Art at Belgrave Square...." (notebook)
b. 2, f. 3	"Un Portrait inédit de la Comtesse du Nord" [Marie Feodorovna] (typescript)
Historical writings: Various figures in Russian history	
b. 3, f. 1	"Pushkin – peve Rossii" [On A. S. Pushkin (1799-1837)]
b. 3, f. 1	"Les Chinois quoique beaucoup plus libre à une époque reculée que nous..." [essay on early conditions in Russia] (notebook)
b. 3, f. 1	Copy of letter of Count Alexander Andreevich Bezborodko to "Mesdemoiselles les grises, de la Communauté de Demoiselles Nobles" St. Petersburg, 3 May 1770 (manuscript) Bezborodko (1746-1799) was head of dept. of foreign affairs and advisor to Catherine II and Paul I.
b. 3, f. 1	"Extraits des Memoires de Photius," copied from "Archives Russes," 1869, page 937 Archimandrite Photius (Peter Nikitich Spasky, 1792-1838) was a reactionary ecclesiastical leader during the reign of Alexander I.
b. 3, f. 1	Essay (in Russian) on Count Ilarion Ivanovich Vorontsov-Dashkov Vorontsov-Dashkov (1837-1916) was minister of the imperial household and later viceroy of the Caucasus. <a href="#">See also: box 4, folder 2</a>
b. 3, f. 1	Extraits des memoires d'A. Gribovsky (écrits en 1830) [On the court of Catherine II]
b. 3, f. 1	Notes on Catherine II (notebook)
b. 3, f. 1	"Romanoff (Dynasty)"
b. 3, f. 1	"Un Grand Seigneur Russe Jacobin" [Stroganoff, Alexander, count, 1733-1795] (typescript)
b. 3, f. 1	"Polovt's'y" by Alexander Saltykov (newspaper clipping, probably printed in Paris, 1935)
b. 3, f. 2	"Un espagnol à la cour de Catherine II" [Don Francisco de Miranda] (typescript, carbon copy)
b. 3, f. 2	<i>Journal de Voyage en Russie</i> by Don Francisco de Miranda [trans. by A. A. Polovtsoff and Léon Bobrinsky] (typescript)
b. 3, f. 3	Vol. 1
b. 3, f. 4	Vol. 2

Writings on the imperial palaces and Russian art

See also: [box 2, folder 3](#) [box 5, folder 1](#)

## Writings on the imperial palaces and Russian art (continued)

- b. 4, f. 1a "St. Petersburg, cité impériale" (notebook)  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.
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- b. 4, f. 1b "Krasota S. Peterburga" (notebook)  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.
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- b. 4, f. 2a "Russian Art, a historical survey"  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.
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- b. 4, f. 2b "Graf I. I. Vorontsov" [Count I. I. Vorontsov, (1837-1916)] (notebook)  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.
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- b. 4, f. 2 "Some Notes on the St. Petersburg Tapestry Works"
- 
- b. 4, f. 3a "A Propos du palais de Pavlovsk" (notebook)  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.
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- b. 4, f. 3b "Versailles et les Résidences Impériales de Russie" (printed illustrations, 2 p., 1922)  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.
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- b. 4, f. 3c "Palais Russes du XVIII s." (typescript, carbon copy)  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.
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- b. 4, f. 3d "Versailles et les Résidences Impériales de Russie" (manuscript)  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.
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- b. 4, f. 3e "Je vais vous parler des palais impériales de Russie..." (typescript, carbon copy)  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.
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- b. 4, f. 4 "Exhibition of Russian Art" (printed catalogue, London, 1935)
- 
- b. 4, f. 4 "Une exposition retrospective d'art russe vient de s'ouvrir à Londres..."  
[See also: box 2, folder 3](#)  
[See also: box 5, folder 1](#)

## Autobiographical material

- b. 5, f. 1 "Imperial Palaces under Bolshevism" (notebook)
- 
- b. 5, f. 1 Autobiographical Notes ("Je commence à écrire ces notes...") (notebook)
- 
- b. 5, f. 1 Bolshévisme et les palais impériaux (notebook)
- 
- b. 5, f. 1 "They have no virtue" [on the Bolshevik Revolution, and its effect on industry] (manuscript)

## Autobiographical material (continued)

- b. 5, f. 2 "Vospominanie" [Memoirs] (typescript, carbon copy)  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.

## Miscellaneous

1024-after 1075, m. Henry I of France

empress consort of Napoleon III, 1826-1920

Giovanna I, queen of Naples, d.1382; Giovanna II, queen of Naples

Chudleigh, Elizabeth, countess of Bristol, calling herself Duchess of Kingston, 1720-1788

- b. 6, f. 1a "Anna Yaroslavna Queen of France" (notebook)
- b. 6, f. 1b Notes sur l'Impératrice Eugénie (manuscript)  
A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at [beinecke.library@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu) to request access to the digital copy.
- b. 6, f. 1c "Two Angevin Queens" (typescript, carbon copy)
- b. 6, f. 1d "The Duchess of Kingston" [apparently notes for a movie scenario] (notebook)
- b. 6, f. 2 "Internationale avant la lettre"
- b. 6, f. 2 "The Spell of the Throne in Russia" (notebook)
- b. 6, f. 2 "Le Comte Alexander Matveievitch Dimitriev-Mamonov, 1758-1803"
- b. 6, f. 2 Une Internationale avant la lettre (texte écourté) (notebook)
- b. 6, f. 2 "Rasprodazha [?] Ėrmitazha"
- b. 6, f. 2 Le Musée d'Ajaccio
- b. 6, f. 2 *The Curse of Wit* by A. S. Griboyedov, 1795-1829 [trans. A. A. Polovtsoff]
- b. 6, f. 3 Acts I-III (notebook)
- b. 6, f. 3 Act IV (notebook)
- b. 6, f. 3 Typescript
- Miscellaneous notes & notebooks
- b. 6, f. 4 Manuscript, 6 pieces
- b. 6, f. 4 Manuscript, 10 pages
- b. 6, f. 4 Manuscript, 9 pages
- b. 6, f. 4 Manuscript, 15 pages
- b. 6, f. 4 Notebooks ["No. 2 and No. 3"]



## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Geographic Names**

Europe  
Soviet Union -- History

### **Subjects**

Historians

### **Names**

Catherine, Empress of Russia, II, 1729-1796  
Griboyedov, Aleksandr Sergeevich, 1795-1829  
Miranda, Francisco de, 1750-1816  
Peter, Emperor of Russia, I, 1672-1725  
Polovtsoff, Alexandre, 1867-