

An Unsuspected Bust of Alexander Menshikov

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THE SUBJECT of this article is the spectacular life-size wooden bust of a man acquired by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1996. Gazing slightly down and to his right, the man wears an opulently curled wig whose middle parting continues down the back of the head in two rows of tight curls (Figures 1, 2). The strict symmetry of the wig is broken by its elongated ends flowing over the front and back of the sitter's respective left and right shoulders. Complementing the effusion of curls is the elaborate interplay of quadruple bow and lace jabot. The right pauldron displays medallion portraits of Alexander the Great on the front and Livia Drusilla, wife of the Divine Augustus (Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus), on the back. On the left pauldron are the Roman emperor Trajan on the front and his wife, Plotina, on the back. The two ovals in relief framed by acanthus and laurel on the front of the armor allude to ancient victories, the one on the bust's right illustrating Alexander the Great and Hephaestion before the tent of Darius and the one on his left the Justice of Trajan. These pictorial references are framed by genii, acanthus friezes, and classicizing as well as plain moldings. Leafy acanthus also dominates the two large shield-shaped plates on the back of the pauldrons. Here the leaves are tied together in bundles to form sheaflike arrangements. The sculpture was made from at least six large wooden parts and many smaller ones, all held together by wrought-iron clamps (Figure 3). The actual carving is a tour de force, with much undercutting and a wealth of detailed surface tooling. The armor's low relief emulates embossed metalwork. The painstaking polishing of the wood replicates skin, and paint was applied to mark the irises of the eyes. Drilling and deep undercutting enhance the curls sculpted in the round. The surfaces of those areas that strive to capture the

appearance of textiles as well as the matte background of the acanthus decoration are punched and engraved. The turned circular wood base is a later replacement. Some smaller areas have been repaired and filled with substitute woods or colored wax.

The bust was first documented in the sale catalogue of the collection of Baronne Cassel van Doorn in Paris in 1956 as "École française. XVII^e siècle. Buste d'homme en armure, coiffé d'une perruque bouclée."¹ The dealers Leopold and Ruth Blumka bought it at the Cassel van Doorn sale, and it long remained in their private collection in New York City. In 1965 Theodor Müller, who linked the bust to South Netherlandish miniature sculpture, called the piece "Flemish," thereby moving its possible origin northward.² This attribution was questioned by Christian Theuerkauff, who related the bust to North Italian carvings.³ The Metropolitan Museum acquired the sculpture as a "bust of an unknown gentleman" at the estate auction of Ruth Blumka.⁴ Its acquisition prompted Philippe de Montebello to write of "a highly original portrait of a man with an unforgettable physiognomy and peruke, the bust of a military commander. . . . [It] is of unknown authorship and subject but also of clearly superior workmanship and invention . . . ; we have, after all, all the time in the world in which to study the piece and learn its origin and sculptor."⁵

After the Metropolitan acquired the bust, James David Draper made a tentative attribution of it to the Austrian school, about 1685–95. Draper observed, "The author and the subject of this stupendous bust remain mysterious. The likeliest clues to eventually identifying both lie in the images on the fanciful parade armor, although it is generically of a sixteenth-century North Italian type, as if to ensure a traditional frame of reference worthy of the sitter. The scenes on the breastplate are of the Family of Darius before Alexander the Great and the Justice of Trajan. These incidents from ancient victories in the East would have provided a fitting parallel for a latter-day

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Figure 1. Swiss, Austrian, or German sculptor, active in Russia ca. 1703–4. Bust of Alexander Menshikov, 1703–4. Red pine, H. (with socle) 78.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Wrightsman Fund, 1996 (1996.7)



Figure 2. Back view of bust in Figure 1

campaign; the most applicable would have been the war against the Turks, culminating in the Siege of Vienna in 1683.⁶

Before Draper, the bust had been thought to be made out of boxwood, but its sheer scale and elaboration would make it unique in that medium. Boxwood, a relatively hard wood, was preferred for small objects and statuettes, rarely more than six or seven inches high. Testing by the Center for Wood Anatomy Research in Madison, Wisconsin, revealed a surprising result: the material proved to be Scot's pine or red pine (*Pinus sylvestris*).⁷ The natural reddish brown color was intensified by a light stain to imitate the far more pre-

cious and difficult to obtain boxwood. Red pine is fairly common in Scotland, Scandinavia, northern Germany, and the Baltic countries, as well as in parts of Russia, and is moderately heavy and strong. However, the material has a tendency to shrink quite a bit "but is not difficult to dry and stays in place well when seasoned."⁸ Stocks of wood correctly cured, that is, carefully dried over a long period of time, were treasured by sculptors and craftsmen all over Europe and often were handed down from generation to generation. Therefore it would not be surprising if several decades elapsed between the felling of the tree and the time the block was actually used in a workshop.



Figure 3. Bust in Figure 1 disassembled (possibly in the 1960s) (photo: Blumka Gallery, New York)

Portraits of military commanders have to be studied with the understanding that the sitter was often on campaign and could not pose for a long period. Artists worked from sketches as well as from memory and sometimes had to consult other works of art to commemorate these men who were frequently on the move. Differences, occasionally considerable ones, between the way the model actually looked and the finished portrait often could not be avoided, so that caution with any identification is to be recommended. Then, too, conventions of portrait busts, such as pose, fashions of dress, including armor and wigs, and medium have to be taken into account.

Draper's hypothesis suggested paths of further research, focusing on soldiers active in the successful repulsion of the Turkish threat at the end of the seventeenth century: Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736) and the so-called *Türkenlouis*, Margrave Ludwig

Wilhelm I of Baden (1655–1708).⁹ About 1707 the margrave, who served as commander of the imperial troops along the upper Rhine, was portrayed dressed in a way similar to the man in the bust, wearing a triple bow over his armor and a full periwig, characterized by woolly curls (Figure 4). However, the margrave's facial features seen here, especially the shape of the eyebrows and the nose, are different from those of the bust. Such exuberant wigs, so full at the top as to resemble a bonnet, were fashionable only between about 1680 and 1710 at the latest (Figure 5).¹⁰

Although numerous busts exist that demonstrate this fashion for full wigs,¹¹ none of these possible models led to an identification. Subsequent study of northern and eastern European portraits, related prints, and sculptures took us even farther east: to the remarkable bronze bust of Alexander Menshikov, modeled between 1716 and 1717 by Carlo Bartolomeo Rastrelli (Figure 6).



Figure 4. Johan Georg Seiller (1663–1740). *Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm I of Baden (1655–1708)*, ca. 1707. Engraving. Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe (photo: Badisches Landesmuseum)

The armor on Rastrelli's bronze illustrates the Crossing of the River Granicus by Alexander the Great on the front plate of the right pauldron so prominently that it can hardly be overlooked. The first name of the sitter, Alexander, is no coincidence. The question arose: could the New York bust be another portrait of this Russian nobleman? Although Menshikov was, as we shall see, the most powerful man in Russia after Peter the Great, earlier portraits of him are extremely rare and only occasionally illustrated. Thus, identifying the Metropolitan's bust as Menshikov is presented here for further discussion.

Ninel V. Kaliagina, who published the most comprehensive study of the prince's iconography, briefly described his physiognomy: "Especially expressive is Menshikov's face, with its high forehead and the peculiar shape of his eyes under very thick eyebrows. He had a large nose with a small hook, very thin and tight lips, a round, cleft chin which reflected his strong willpower and energy."¹² Kaliagina emphasized that his long, narrow face "had thick straight eyebrows."¹³ The unusual slimness of the bust's face could be explained by Menshikov's affliction with pulmonary lung disease, which was accompanied by severe bleedings from the throat. This caused also a great fluctuation of his body



Figure 5. *The Barber-Wigmaker's Attire*. Etching from Nicolas de L'Armessin, *Habit des metiers et professions* (Paris, ca. 1697). Sammlung Schwarzkopf, Hamburg, no. 322 (photo: after Maria Jedding-Gersterling, ed., *Hairstyles* [Hamburg, 1988], fig. 200)

weight, resulting in a countenance that was by turns bloated or emaciated. Contemporary physicians denied the fact that Menshikov had tuberculosis,¹⁴ although his symptoms might suggest otherwise.

The main facial features of the bust seem to agree with those in most of the other portraits of Menshikov known to date, although, as intimated above, the number of similar specific details varies from portrait to portrait. The bust is most comparable to the early portraits (despite the bust's thin eyebrows and lack of moustache), especially an enamel by Musikijski of about 1709 (Figure 7), an etching by Simon Londini, about 1710 (Figure 8), and a painting of about 1716–20 (Figure 9). These share the elongated oval of the face, the cleft chin, the tight lips, and the high forehead. The bust's side view (Figure 10) could almost be slipped into the profiles by Solomon Gouin, 1707 and about 1710–11 (Figures 11, 12), and the etching by Martin Berningerroth (Figure 13). Here the long, pointed nose and the curved bridge of the nose are nearly congruent.¹⁵ In later years Menshikov's appear-



Figure 6. Carlo Bartolomeo Rastrelli (1675–1744). *Alexander Menshikov*, later cast of bust modeled 1716–17. Bronze, H. 109 cm. The State Hermitage, Menshikov Palace Museum, Saint Petersburg, ЭРСК-209 (photo: The State Hermitage)



Figure 7. Grigorij Semjonovitj Musikijski (1670/71–after 1739). *Alexander Menshikov*, ca. 1709. Enamel on copper, mounted with gold, 3.5 x 2.7 cm. The State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, GE, ERR-3804 (photo: The State Hermitage)

ance changed because of a substantial weight gain (Figure 6).

Despite his obscure origins, Alexander Danilovich Menshikov (1673–1729) rose to a position of great eminence. His father seems to have served as a non-commissioned officer in the Russian army. Alexander's name appears in 1693 in the second rank of bombardiers of the Prebrazhensky regiment, a sign that at that point he already stood close to "bombardier Piter," as Peter the Great liked to be called. Other sources mention that Menshikov started his career as a pastry cook's apprentice selling pies and was hand-picked by Peter because of his extraordinary good looks and abilities to adapt, chameleon-like, to new situations. Moreover, they became "inseparable"¹⁶ and shared a tent at Azov in 1696. "Aleksasha" (as Peter called him) accompanied the tsar on his famous "Grand Embassy" in 1697–98, when he visited Germany, Holland, England, and Austria.

Menshikov's meteoric rise coincided with one of the most exciting periods in Russian history. The country was on the verge of becoming a European power that could no longer be ignored by Western sovereigns. It was a time of rapid and intensive Europeanization, best



Figure 8. Jean Simon Londini (1675–1751). *Alexander Menshikov*, ca. 1710. Etching. The State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, Г-14498 (photo: The State Hermitage)



Figure 9. *Alexander Menshikov*, ca. 1716–20. Oil on canvas, 62 x 51 cm. In the Winter Palace until 1859. The State Hermitage, Menshikov Palace Museum, Saint Petersburg, Г-29879 (photo: The State Hermitage)

documented by Peter's ban on traditional Russian costumes in connection with an extensive reform of dress and hairstyles (Ukas of August 20, 1700), such as the introduction of wigs.¹⁷ The Muscovite traditionalists bitterly opposed this movement, which resulted in a climate of tension accompanied by the ever-present danger of rebellion. Menshikov's commitment to reform, his personal bravery, and his military qualities, exhibited in the Russian attack on the Swedish fortress Slotburg, later renamed Schlüßelburg, in 1702, made him an invaluable ally for the tsar. Even the most difficult tasks entrusted to him were executed quickly, with no questions asked. The tsar expressed his appreciation by appointing Menshikov governor of Schlüßelburg and knighting him in 1703. Already in 1702 the Holy Roman Emperor had granted Menshikov the title of count and later (December 1705) prince. In February 1712 the prince acted as master of ceremonies at Peter's wedding to Catherine,

who had been Menshikov's own mistress before the tsar discovered her attractions and appropriated her for himself.¹⁸ In the years to come Menshikov's steadily growing influence was accompanied by the temptation of embezzlement. During Peter's lifetime the prince managed to evade serious charges of corruption that were brought against him by countless enemies. The tsar punished him several times for his excessive accumulation of wealth and the ruthless measures he took to reach his goals, but each time Menshikov was able to regain his sovereign's trust and friendship. At the tsar's death in January 1725, Catherine assumed power as Catherine I (1725–27) and Menshikov no longer played second fiddle. Now he virtually ruled the country on the tsaritsa's behalf. A partial translation of his title in 1726 reads, "Illustrious Prince of the Holy Roman Empire and Russian Realm and Duke of Izhora, Marshal of Her Imperial Majesty of all Russia and Commanding General Field Marshal



Figure 10. Side view of bust in Figure 1

of the Armies, Actual Privy Councilor, President of the State War College, Governor-General of the Provinces of Saint Petersburg, Vice-Admiral of the White Flag of the Fleet of all Russia, Knight of the Orders of Saint Andrew, the Elephant, the White and Black Eagles.”¹⁹

On the death of the tsaritsa on May 16, 1727, Peter the Great’s grandson was declared her successor. Menshikov literally took possession of the minor Peter II (1715–1730) and lodged him in his own palace on Vasily Island. He planned a double wedding by which his daughter Marie Alexandrovna would be given to the tsar and his own son would wed Princess Natalia Alexejevna, the tsar’s sister.²⁰ The scheme would ultimately have ensured that his family would meld with the Romanov dynasty. This forced his opponents into action, which was followed by a political rebellion of the old aristocracy. Alexander Menshikov—stripped of all his possessions and titles—was exiled with his family to northern Siberia. He died on November 12, 1729, and was buried in a modest wooden church in Berezov, which he had helped to build with his own hands.²¹

Menshikov worked hard to overcome his humble beginnings. The highs and lows in the life of this fascinating character, who reinvented himself several times, were so extreme that one wonders why Hollywood has ignored the story of Alexander Menshikov. Lindsey



Figure 11. Solomon Guin (active 1696/97–1720). *Alexander Menshikov*, 1707. Carved and turned ivory, Diam. 5.6 cm. Inscription: PRINCEPS. ALEXANDER. MENTZIKOF; monogram G under the arm. Staatliche Museen Kassel, B/VI, 18 (photo: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen)



Figure 12. Solomon Guin. *Alexander Menshikov*, ca. 1710–11. Carved and turned ivory, Diam. 9 cm. Signed GOUIN under the arm. The State Hermitage, Menshikov Palace Museum, Saint Petersburg (photo: The State Hermitage)



Figure 13. Martin Berningerorth (1670–1733). *Alexander Menshikov*, ca. 1710. Etching. The State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg (photo: The State Hermitage)

Hughes wrote, “By the end of his career he had built up a sort of state within a state, 3,000 villages and seven towns spread over forty-two districts, in Russia, the Baltic, Ukraine, and Poland, with more than 300,000 serfs (the richest man in Russia in 1700, Prince Cherkassky, had only 33,000). Menshikov’s collection of 143 pictures was impressive by Russian standards.”²² Inventories taken after his exile listed jewelry and precious objects worth more than 800,000 rubles, as well as plate of solid gold and silver-gilt.²³

The prince reveled in luxury. The Menshikov Palace, the first stone building erected in Saint Petersburg and constructed on a more lavish scale than that of the imperial Winter Palace, was often borrowed by Peter I for state occasions.²⁴ Menshikov assembled an enormous wardrobe of Western costumes, wigs, and other fashionable accessories.

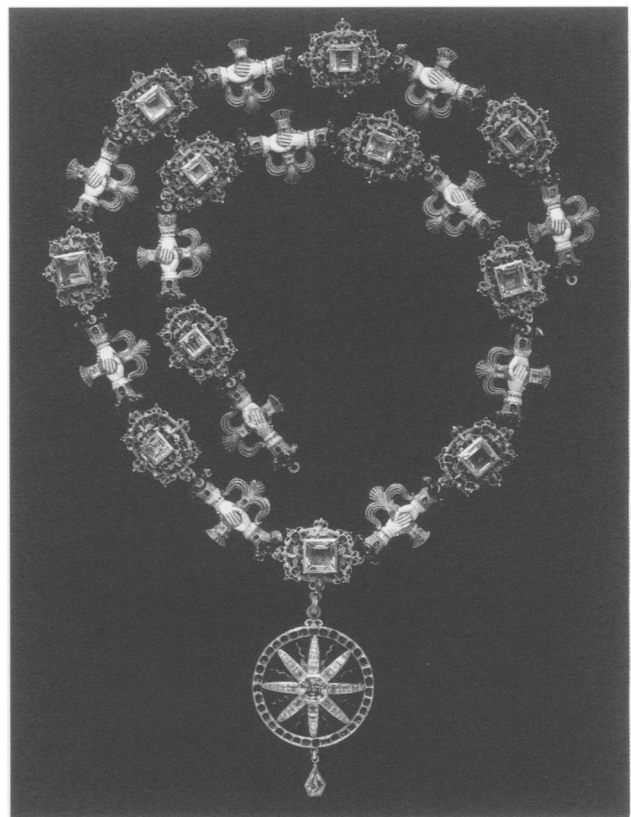


Figure 14. Antonij Groot the Elder (1585–1614). Chain and badge of the Swedish Royal Order of Jehova, 1606. Gold, enamel, rock crystal, and garnets; L. chain 132 cm, badge Diam. 7 cm. Royal Armory, Stockholm, LRK 31/21–2 (photo: Royal Armory)

Bearing in mind the exaggerated wig of the present bust, we learn from the eighteenth-century traveler Bruce that in 1702 two wigs were purchased for Peter at a cost of 10 rubles, while at the same time Menshikov bought eight periwigs in the latest fashion for the considerable sum of 62 rubles. In 1705 the overall spending for luxury textile imports for Peter and his favorite amounted to 1,225 rubles. Of this the tsar was satisfied with a mere fourteen *Arshin* (0.71 meter) of modest fabric for his personal wardrobe, whereas the lion’s share of the expense was spent on luxurious *Stoff*—taffeta, other precious silks, and lace—for Menshikov, his sister, and his spouse, as well as her sisters.²⁵

These details prove that the collecting and display of Western art and fashion were important to Menshikov. The prince’s wants and buying power helped establish an embryonic market for such art, which was a critical factor in its diffusion and institutionalization in Russia, characterized by James Cracraft as the “Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery.”²⁶

This is the background against which the bust, which we propose to identify as representing Menshikov, is to



Figure 15. Alexander the Great, detail of bust in Figure 1



Figure 17. Trajan, detail of bust in Figure 1

be understood. The story of his life and personal taste together with his need to invent an appropriate ancestral line for himself explain the bust's complex iconography and its material. Wood, rather than marble or bronze, may be a surprising choice to Western eyes, but

wood had an exalted status in Russia. First, there was a long-standing preference on the part of the inhabitants of eastern countries for wood. To be Russian was virtually synonymous with appreciation for this main natural resource and major building material. As Jan



Figure 16. Tetradrachm, Greek, issued before 323 B.C., depicting Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.). Staatliche Museen Kassel, M5 (photo: after Peter Gercke and Bernd Hamborg, *Antike Münzen* [Kassel, 1985], p. 1, fig. 5v)



Figure 18. Sesterce, Rome, issued 103–11, depicting Trajan (53–117). Inscription: IMP[ERATORI] CAES[ARI] NERVAE TRAJANO AVG[USTO] GER[MANICO] DACICO PM TRP COS V PP. Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (photo: after Peter Robert Franke, *Römische Kaiserporträts im Münzbild* [Munich, 1961], no. 16)



Figure 19. Livia Drusilla, detail of bust in Figure 1



Figure 20. Plotina, detail of bust in Figure 1

Struys observed in 1668–69, “the best craftsmen are carpenters, who make everything in this country.”²⁷ Red pine was harvested locally and was readily available. Second and more particularly, Menshikov was a connoisseur of complicated wood carvings and marquetry. For example, he frequently entertained the tsar in his so-called Walnut Study, his private *studiolo*.²⁸ In addition, he installed a turnery near the Grand Chamber in his palace. This demonstrated another intimate connection to Peter, whose hobbies included turning wood, ivory, horn, and tortoiseshell. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, turning was an important part of a princely education and considered a suitable entertainment for accomplished courtiers and statesmen.²⁹

The pictorial program of the armor closely reflects the sitter’s personal career and his search for pedigree. The armor is generically based on a North Italian parade type of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century,³⁰ yet is distinguished by the leafy acanthus bundles in the form of sheaves on the back (Figure 2). This motif could allude to the sheaf that is part of the Swedish Vasa crest (Figure 14).³¹ If so, it would commemorate Menshikov’s expulsion of the Swedish army from the area known today as Saint Petersburg (the siege of Schlüsselburg in 1702).³²

The medallions are directly traceable to ancient sources. Alexander the Great’s profile (Figure 15) was copied literally from a very well known Greek coin, a

silver tetradrachm, that survived in many examples (Figure 16).³³ The images of Trajan (Figure 17) and Plotina (Figure 20) were copied from Roman sesterces (Figures 18, 21). Trajan was a particularly fitting model



Figure 21. Sesterce, Rome, issued 112–17, depicting Plotina (70–122). Inscription: PLOTINA AVGVSTA IMP[ERATORIS] TRAIANI [UXOR]. Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (photo: after Franke, *Römische Kaiserporträts im Münzbild*, no. 17)



Figure 22. Justice of Trajan, detail of bust in Figure 1



Figure 23. Jean LePaudre (1616–1682). Engraving of *The Justice of Trajan*. Detail of a wall decoration, from *Œuvres* (Paris: Mariette, n.d.), vol. 1, pl. 36. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1933 (33.84[1])

for Menshikov, for, like the Russian, the Roman was a soldier born and bred. His father had fought his way up from humble beginnings to the consulship. Due to Trajan's many victories and the empire's eastern expansion (the coin in Figure 18 was issued between 103 and 111 to celebrate Trajan's eastern victory after the Dacian war in 101 and the establishment of the new eastern provinces³⁴), his reign was celebrated as the beginning of Rome's Golden Age. An auspicious period in history can be connected to Menshikov as well through his close association with Peter the Great. Peter was called both Tsar-Emperor and "bombardier Piter" and expanded Russia's borders through ceaseless military campaigns. Thus his reign was celebrated as the Golden Age of Russia.³⁵

The oval relief of the Justice of Trajan on Menshikov's armor (Figure 22) illustrates the virtues of a magnanimous and righteous ruler, a common theme in Baroque imagery.³⁶ The composition is a variation of a print by Hans Sebald Beham (1500–1550) of 1537,³⁷ which had already been copied in sixteenth-century metalwork.³⁸ For the present depiction a contemporary inspiration may be the adaptation of a related design by Jean LePaudre, the master of volutes and acanthus, published in the first volume of his *Œuvres*

(Figure 23; compare especially the characterization of Trajan, on horseback and wearing the laurel crown).³⁹

Armor in Baroque portraiture and imagery often employs the deeds of Alexander the Great⁴⁰ or the Roman Caesars to glorify the later commanders, but usually triumphal scenes are depicted. Menshikov's interest in an emperor who had conquered the world by the time he was thirty (and who happened to share his first name) is not surprising. It could be that Livia Drusilla, wife of Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus (Figure 19), appears on the armor's right back pauldron because she was mistakenly identified as Roxanne, Alexander the Great's wife. More pertinent, however, is the depiction of Alexander at the tent of Darius (Figure 24), a story that was told in greatest detail by the first-century historian Quintus Curtius Rufus. After the Battle of Issus (333 B.C.), Darius's family was captured by the Macedonian army. Alexander sent messengers to announce to the family of the defeated king of Persia that he was on his way to visit them. Leaving his entourage behind he approached the tent accompanied only by his intimate friend Hephaestion. As a friend Hephaestion alone enjoyed the privilege of serving Alexander as a counselor, using this privilege prudently, avoiding all appearance of presumption, and always giving the impression that he acted with the king's



Figure 24. Alexander the Great and Hephaestion at the tent of Darius, detail of bust in Figure 1

permission. The Persian queens and princesses, mistaking the taller man for Alexander, paid homage to Hephaestion. When one of the eunuchs pointed out Alexander, Sisigambis, the mother of Darius, fell at his feet to beg pardon. Alexander raised the woman to her feet and said, "You were not mistaken, mother, for this man too is Alexander."⁴¹ He then reassured the royal women and treated them with marked clemency. Baroque imagery often emphasized Alexander's magnanimity and his splendid gesture to Hephaestion with its accompanying words, "this man too is Alexander."⁴² The tale was extolled as a moral exemplum of the willingness to share glory and possession with a comrade, worthy of emulation by those in exalted positions. The primary

source for this emphasis on a specific detail of the story was another first-century writer, Valerius Maximus.⁴³

The relief's message is obvious: Menshikov's service to Peter the Great recalls Hephaestion's friendship with the Macedonian king and thus one link in a series relating the accomplishments of Menshikov's career to the glory of Alexander the Great. Other instances include the triumphal arch that was erected in front of the Menshikov Palace to commemorate the prince's victory over the city of Derpt in 1704, which was decorated with depictions of Alexander the Great's triumphs.⁴⁴ Lindsey Hughes has noted that in 1706

to mark the victory [of Kalisz], verses were composed in Menshikov's honour, likening him to the faithful servant of Alexander the Great [Hephaestion]. He is accorded honours equal to King Augustus, and rich rewards and laurels are predicted. . . . The years 1708–9 were a high point for Menshikov, especially his exploits at Perevolochna, where he rounded up the remnants of the Swedish Army. 'The Victory Wreath', a poem presented by the citizens of L'vov, declared: 'You are the equal of the great Alexander.' In 1709 Feofan Prokopovich delivered and published a speech in honour of Menshikov's visit to the Kiev Academy based on the text 'Let us praise famous men', comparing the prince's service to Peter to Joseph's services to Pharaoh, David's to Jonathan, and [Hephaestion's] to Alexander.⁴⁵

The composition of the relief oval on the bust (Figure 24) is based on a famous painting by Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), which was begun by order of Louis XIV in 1661 and subsequently engraved. *The Tent of Darius* is one of a series of five paintings illustrating events from the campaigns of Alexander the

Figure 25. Simon Gribelin (1661–1733) after Charles Le Brun, *Tent of Darius*. Engraving. The New York Public Library (photo: after Donald Posner, "Charles Le Brun's Triumph of Alexander," *Art Bulletin* 41, no. 3 [September 1959], fig. 1)





Figure 26. Johann Peter Frölicher (1662–1723) and workshop. Choir stalls of the cloister of Saint Urban, Switzerland, 1700–1706 (photo: Denkmalpflege, Kanton Luzern)

Great.⁴⁶ The paintings were already a paradigm in the seventeenth century and copied in frescoes, tapestries, and prints, the last since 1673, for example, by Gerard Edelinck (1640–1707) and Simon Gribelin (Figure 25). A printed or drawn copy of the painting could have been taken to Moscow by Adriaan Schoonebeeck (ca. 1658–1705).⁴⁷ Peter I had visited Schoonebeeck in Amsterdam during his Grand Embassy of 1697–98 and had hired him in May 1698 to work in Russia. In Moscow the master etcher and designer set up the first real print shop in the country,⁴⁸ and Peter personally commissioned a long series of etchings celebrating victorious sieges. To celebrate the victory of Schlüsselburg, several triumphal arches for Peter the Great and the commanders of the army, including Alexander Menshikov, were erected between 1702 and 1704 in Moscow under the artistic direction of Schoonebeeck. The ornamental vocabulary of Schoonebeeck's work documents his familiarity with the inventions of Jean LePautre, which are reflected in the Trajan relief as well as in the acanthus decoration of the bust.⁴⁹ Given his experience and his personal work for Peter and Menshikov, Schoonebeeck could very well have been responsible for the program of the bust's decoration.

Figure 27. Detail of choir stalls in Figure 26 (photo: after Peter Felder, *Barockplastik der Schweiz* [Basel and Stuttgart, 1988], p. 112)



The identity of the carver is even more elusive than that of the sitter. A tentative attribution has been suggested by Serge O. Androsov of the State Hermitage in Saint Petersburg, who has put forward a sculptor named Franz Ludwig Ziegler or Zingler.⁵⁰ Any attribution to Ziegler must rest on circumstantial evidence, however, since there are no documented works by him. The relevant factors are these. Despite the lack of documentation of Ziegler's arrival in Russia, we can deduce that he went to Moscow about 1692, for in 1702 he had been there about ten years, working for the Department of the Admiralty and Marine, possibly making wood carvings for ships. In February 1702 Ziegler asked Peter the Great for permission to visit other countries with the aim of inviting various artists to Russia.⁵¹ Alexander Menshikov personally gave the sculptor the money for his travels in the presence of Peter the Great, an act that demonstrates a certain relationship among Peter the Great, Menshikov, and Ziegler. In November 1703 Ziegler returned to Russia with three sculptors, two from Austria (Konrad Gan and Erkhart Egelkrasol) and one from Nuremberg (Konrad Ossner), and with one painter from Spain (Giacomo Banchio). Ziegler continued to work in Moscow and also in Saint Petersburg until 1725, when he was allowed to leave, excused by his old age.

Ziegler was most likely of Swiss origin. On November 17, 1702, the town of Solothurn (north of Bern) granted the burgher of Solothurn and sculptor Franz Ludwig Ziegler a pass "to Paris and elsewhere."⁵² The town of Solothurn had in the sixteenth century established diplomatic relations with France. These close ties may have prompted Ziegler to ask for a special passport. While back in Solothurn he may have visited the nearby cloister of Saint Urban to see the choir stalls then being carved by the sculptor Johan Peter Fröhlicher (Figures 26, 27). Although there is no evidence of a direct connection between Ziegler and Fröhlicher, the choir stalls offer tantalizing stylistic comparison with the bust. The figural parts of the backrests, like some of the reliefs on the bust, are based on designs by Jean LePaudre.⁵³ The works also share a similarly nervous linearity and density of carving, together with a sumptuous use of acanthus. The speculative nature of the attribution of the bust to Ziegler is underscored by the fact that other Western sculptors were also working in Moscow. Four master carvers are listed among the specialists hired by the Grand Embassy and by Ziegler himself.⁵⁴

In 1703 Alexander Menshikov received the order of Saint Andrew, the highest military medal in tsarist Russia. The absence on the bust of this prestigious award—shown in nearly all later portraits—may give the terminus

ante quem for the creation of the bust if we accept the subject as Menshikov, which a host of reasons now seems to warrant. The iconography of the bust suggests that it was commissioned to commemorate Menshikov's victory over the Swedish army at Schlösselburg in 1702. The design could have been approved shortly afterward but the actual execution not completed until 1703–4. This dating would accord with Ziegler's movements. If he was the sculptor, he could not have begun work on the bust until late in 1703, because he was abroad from early 1702 to November 1703.

The newly identified bust of Alexander Danilovich Menshikov can be seen as the ultimate embodiment of the prince's personality and extravagance and as a remarkable instrument of propaganda created to celebrate the military commander's accomplishments. The fashionable details, such as his clean-shaven face, stylish wig, and bow, and the pictorial scenes reflect Menshikov's commitment to the latest in Western costume and to flattering his idol and friend Peter the Great. The bust is to be counted among the most important statements of its kind in all of Baroque sculpture.

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NOTES

1. Galerie Charpentier, Paris, sale cat., May 30, 1956, lot 71.
2. Theodor Müller, "Eine Gruppe vlämischer Kleinskulpturen des 17. Jahrhunderts und ihre Konsonanzen," in *Festschrift für Herbert von Einem zum 16 Februar 1965* (Berlin, 1965), p. 175, pl. 35, fig. 5.
3. Christian Theuerkauff, "Johann Ignaz Bendl: Sculptor and Medalist," *MMJ* 26 (1991), p. 271 n. 108.
4. Sotheby's, New York, sale cat., January 9–10, 1996, lot 103; illus. in reverse p. 131.
5. Philippe de Montebello, "Director's Note," in "Recent Acquisitions," *MMAB* 54 (Fall 1996), p. 6.

6. James David Draper, in "Recent Acquisitions," *MMAB* 54 (Fall 1996), p. 31.
7. Wood identification conducted by J. Thomas Quirk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Madison, Wisconsin, March 17, 1996.
8. *Handbook of Wood and Wood-Based Materials* (New York, 1989), pp. 16–17; see also A. J. Panshin and Carl de Zeeuw, *Textbook of Wood Technology* (New York, 1970), vol. 1, p. 461; R. Bruce Hoadley, *Identifying Wood: Accurate Results with Simple Tools* (Newtown, Conn., 1990), pp. 148–49.
- The wood was submitted to Carbon-14 dating by Dr. George Bonani, Institute of Particle Physics, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich, Switzerland, March 28, 1996. He concluded that the tree from which the wood came was cut down "1667, at the latest."
9. For portraits of the margrave on medals, see Friedrich Wielandt and Joachim Zeitz, *Die Medaillen des Hauses Baden* (Karlsruhe, 1980), pp. 41–55.
10. Maria Jedding-Gersterling, ed., *Hairstyles* (Hamburg, 1988), figs. 191, 197, 200; Richard Corson, *Fashion in Hair*, 8th ed. (London, 1995), pl. 61; Jean-Marie Pinçon, *Odiot* (Paris, 1990), p. 23, illus. of Louis XIV in 1684.
11. Frida Schottmüller, *Die Bildwerke in Stein, Holz, Ton und Wachs*, 2nd ed. (Berlin and Leipzig, 1933), vol. 1, pp. 212, 227; *Von der Kunstkammer zum Museum: Plastik aus dem Schlossmuseum Gotha*, exh. cat. (Duisburg and Gotha, 1987), p. 126, no. 77; Yves Bottineau, *El Arte cortesano en la España de Felipe V (1700–1746)* (Madrid, 1986), fig. cxxviii; Theuerkauff, "Johann Ignaz Bendl," figs. 5, 22, 28, and 42 (W. Koeppe related this last somewhat academic bust in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art to Neapolitan sculptures; it may depict the duke Carafa of Maddaloni; see *The Treasure of San Gennaro: Baroque Silver from Naples*, exh. cat. [Naples, 1987], p. 62, fig. 21).
12. Ninel V. Kaliazina, "Materialy dlia ikonografi i A. D. Menshikova," in *Kul'tura i iskusstvo petrovskogo vremeni*, ed. G. I. Komelova (Leningrad, 1977), p. 71; Dimitri Rowinskii, in *Slovar' russkikh gravirovannykh portretov* (Saint Petersburg, 1887), vol. 2, pp. 1271–79.
13. Kaliazina, "Materialy," p. 82.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 83 n. 28.
15. Other portraits, debatable as to whether they depict Menshikov, can be mentioned: for example, Arvid Julius, *Jean Cavalier* (Uppsala and Stockholm, 1926), p. 138, no. 20; XXXIe *oude kunst- en antiekbeurs*, Delft, October 19–November 7, 1979 (Delft, 1979), p. 35, fig. 4; Christian Theuerkauff, *Die Bildwerke in Elfenbein des 16.–19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1986), pp. 138–40.
- A computer program that is used by forensic scientists yielded results that encouraged us in our identification of Menshikov. Different views were scanned and fed into a computer program that is usually used to determine the identity of a corpse. A "positive result of identification" is about 72%, whereas 87.8% of the main facial features of the bust were shown to be congruent with other portraits of Menshikov. We would like to thank Prof. Dr. Rudolph Berg-Wagen, Bonn, for his help.
16. N. A. Baklanova, "Velikoe posol'stvo za granitse v 1697–1698 g.g.," in A. I. Andreev, ed., *Petr Velikii: Sbornik statei* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1947), pp. 47–48; Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven and London, 1998), pp. 432–41.
17. Hughes, *Russia*, pp. 280–88; see also Henry Vallotton, *Peter der Grosse: Russlands Aufstieg zur Grossmacht* (Munich, 1996), p. 162. Vallotton notes that the new fashion rules of Peter I were comparable to Alexander the Great's edict creating a new national costume by melding Persian and Macedonian details.
18. Heinrich Christoph von Reimers, *St. Petersburg, am Ende seines ersten Jahrhunderts* (Saint Petersburg, 1805), vol. 1, pp. 183–97.
19. N. I. Pavlenko, *Poluderkhavnyi vlastelin: Istoricheskaja khronika o zhizni spodvizhnika Petra Pervogo A. D. Menshikova* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 23–24; see *Historische Nachricht von dem ehemahligen grossen Russischen Staats-Ministro, Alexandro Danielowiz, Fürst von Menzikof* (1728; copy of the example preserved at the Staatsbibliothek, Munich; we thank Jens Burk, Munich, for his research and his help in obtaining the copy); D. A. W. von Helbig, *Russische Günstlinge*, ed. Max Bauer (Munich and Berlin, 1917), pp. 23–41.
20. Reimers, *St. Petersburg*, p. 181.
21. P. V. Ovchinnikov, "Krushenie 'poluderkhavnogo vlastelina,'" *Voprosy Istorii* 6, no. 9 (1970), pp. 87–104.
22. Hughes, *Russia*, p. 439.
23. *Historische Nachrichten*, p. 70.
24. N. V. Kaliazina et al., *Dvorets Menshikova* (Moscow, 1986); James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Architecture* (Chicago, 1988), fig. 97; P. Lauritzen and H. Lhansson, "Historic Houses: Menshikov Palace, a Princely Relic of Peter the Great's Imperial St. Petersburg," *Architectural Digest* (October 1991), pp. 76–81.
25. F. Bruce, *Nachrichten von seinen Reisen* (Leipzig, 1784), pp. 88–90; see N. I. Pavlenko, *Aleksandr Danilovich Menshikov* (Moscow, 1981), p. 25.
26. James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery* (Chicago, 1997), p. 216.
27. Cracraft, *Architecture*, p. 34.
28. Kaliazina et al., *Dvorets*, nos. 83–85.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 50–53; Klaus Maurice, *Sovereigns as Turners: Materials on a Machine Art by Princes* (Zurich, 1985), p. 95.
30. See, for example, Stuart W. Pyhrr and José-A. Godoy, *Heroic Armor of the Italian Renaissance: Filippo Negroli and His Contemporaries*, exh. cat., MMA (New York, 1998), esp. nos. 27, 30, 50, 62.
31. Michael Conforti and Guy Walton, eds., *Royal Treasures of Sweden, 1550–1700*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C., and Minneapolis, 1988), no. 11; we thank Mogens Bencard of the Royal Collection, Copenhagen, for his advice (letter to W. Koeppe, April 11, 1996). As early as 1655 Italian parade armor is mentioned in the inventory of the Swedish Royal Armory, in which some pieces are still preserved today (see *Royal Treasures*, no. 9).
32. For the Swedish-Russian War, see Michael Roberts, *The Swedish Imperial Experience 1560–1718* (London and New York, 1979), and *Peter den store och Karl XII i krig och fred*, exh. cat. (Stockholm, 1998).
33. Christiane Lukakis and Hans Ottomeyer, *Hercules: Tugendheld und Herrscherideal* (Kassel, 1997), p. 31.
34. Peter Robert Franke, *Römische Kaiserporträts im Münzbild* (Munich, 1961), p. 37, nos. 16, 17.
35. Russian coin designs showing Peter the Great in profile as a Roman emperor are documented as early as 1699 (see Cracraft, *Imagery*, p. 268). The tsar developed an interest in antiquities and ancient coins during the Grand Embassy of 1696–97, after which he started a collection. He was especially impressed by the collection of Greek and Roman coins of Jakob Vilde in Amsterdam; O. Neverov, "Pamiatniki antichnogo iskusstva v Rossii Petrovskogo vremeni," in *Kul'tura i iskusstvo petrovskogo vremeni*.
36. A. Pigler, *Barockthemen* (Budapest, 1956), vol. 2, pp. 357–59.
37. *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 15 (New York, 1978), no. 82; F. W. H. Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts ca. 1400–1700*, vol. 3 (Amsterdam, 1954), p. 60.

38. Ingrid Weber, *Deutsche, niederländische und französische Renaissanceplaketten* (Munich, 1975), nos. 149.2, 562.
39. Jean LePaudre, *Œuvres* (Paris: Mariette, n.d.), vol. 1, pl. 36. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1933 (33.84[1]).
40. See, for example, Peter Volk, "Alexander der Grosse überschreitet den Granikos," *Jahresbericht 1994*, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich (1994), p. 20.
41. Quintus Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander*, 3.12.15–26 (Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, Mass., 1946], vol. 1, pp. 141–45); this book was in widespread use for royal education in the absolutist period. It is documented that Charles XII of Sweden, Peter the Great's rival, owned a copy (see Vallotton, *Peter der Grosse*, p. 162); see also Donald Posner, "Charles Le Brun's Triumph of Alexander," *Art Bulletin* 41, no. 3 (September 1959), pp. 237–48.
42. J. P. Richter, "The Family of Darius by Paolo Veronese," *Burlington Magazine* 62 (1933), pp. 181–83.
43. Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium*, 3.7.2.
44. E. B. Mozgovaia, "I. P. Zarudnuy, and A. D. Menshikov," in *Russian Culture of the First Quarter of the Eighteenth Century: Menshikov Palace* (in Russian) (Saint Petersburg, 1992), p. 106.
45. Hughes, *Russia*, p. 436–37.
46. Posner, "LeBrun," p. 237–38.
47. F. W. H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts ca. 1450–1700*, vol. 26 (Amsterdam, 1982), pp. 23–46, with further references.
48. Hughes, *Russia*, p. 169.
49. Boris Borzin, *Rospisi Petrovskogo vremeny* (Leningrad, 1986), pp. 151–87; Schoonebeeck may have visited Berlin on his way to Moscow, where Andreas Schlüter was incorporating much of LePaudre's invention in the decoration of the new palace, the Stadtschloss; see Christiane Keisch, *Das Grosse Silberbuffet aus dem Rittersaal des Berliner Schlosses* (Berlin, 1997).
50. Serge Androssov graciously shared with us his research at the State Russian Archive of Ancient Acts and in the Department of Manuscripts at the Russian State Library, Moscow, and particularly in Posolkii prikaz (folio 158, documents of diplomatic corps) and Prikaznye dela starych let (folio 141, Cabinet orders), Kabinet Petra I (folio 9), A. D. Menshikov (folio 198), Viesd inostranzev v Rosiu (folio 150, records of immigration of foreigners into Russia). Information about Ziegler or Zingler comes from a letter from Androssov to Olga Raggio, July 12, 1998, Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts.
51. Other sources quote the documents incorrectly and mention that the tsar asked Ziegler to travel; see A. Mikhailov, "Podmoklovskaja Rotonda Klassicheskie veiania v iskusstvie Petrovskogo vremeny," *Iskusstvo*, no. 9 (1985), pp. 64–70, who notes in relation to Ziegler that in "1702 Peter the Great sent abroad from Moscow the sculptor Franz Ziegler with an order to buy foreign goods and to hire for Russian service two painters and four carvers."
52. Erika Erni, "Johann Peter Frölicher (1662–1723): Ein Solothurner Barockbildhauer," *Jahrbuch für Solothurnische Geschichte* 50 (1977), p. 16 n. 8; and Peter Felder, *Barockplastik der Schweiz* (Basel and Stuttgart, 1988), p. 315.
53. Erni, "Johann Peter Frölicher," figs. 11, 12; for this artistic environment, see Erni's, "Johann Wolfgang Fröhlicher (1653–1700): Ein Bildhauer aus Solothurn in Frankfurt," in *Unsere Kunstdenkmäler*, Gesellschaft für Schweizerische Kunstgeschichte 24 (1973), pp. 320–34, figs. 2, 13.
54. Hughes, *Russia*, p. 335 n. 132.