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*Translated by Elena Bobrova*

## **Trust but verify: to the issue of "scientific study" of the Roerich Baltic pedigree.**

Would that one be a historian if he starts off his work already in the intent to prove one thing or another, which is seeming to him or profitable for him? We know a lot of paid writings implemented but in a spasm of prejudices. Those guises have no value. Sooner or later, someone fair by nature will prove all the fraud committed for the sake of self-hood or corruptibility. Always and in all, it is better to err to the side of good than to the side of bad. But even this quality needs to be cultivated inside yourself in inexhaustible patience, by night and day.

*Nicholas Roerich "NAT-OG-DAG"*

### **Instead of a foreword**

Today it is extremely difficult to conduct genealogical research, going back to the depth of centuries, for many reasons. An independent work in archives takes great deal of time while a professional service is costly. Therefore, when a few years ago an article by I. Silars "Nicholas Roerich's ancestors. Legends and archival evidence" appeared on the website of the Latvian State Historical Archives (hereinafter LSHA) and was later published in the collection of articles "The Roerichs: myths and facts" [1], many began to refer to it. The data provided by this article appeared on some genealogical sites around the world. Apparently, their owners, assured of both the solidity of the Latvian institution and the editors' academic regalia, did not doubt the veracity of the information proposed. Although, the weak evidence base of the author and the disrespectful tone of the article in relation to the great man, together with the

explicit desire to detect in the biography of Nicholas Roerich anything discrediting his name - all that should have alerted the scientific editors.

Unfortunately, such are the realities of modern life that they have completely pushed such an ephemeral category as ethical approach towards persons involved into investigations, out of editors' arsenal. So, one day I. Silars, a physician by profession, found himself within the walls of the LSHA and, probably, could not resist the temptation to associate his name with the name of a prominent man. As a result, an opus signed 'absolutely scientific' saw the light, ending with the words: "Each of us is free to choose what to believe, the legend or the testimony of original documents. But, as stated in an old Russian proverb, trust but verify." [2] We did not trust the aforesaid material and checked, step by step, the arguments of I. Silars. As a result, we have found out that only few documents and only one not fully confirmed conjecture are worthy of attention in this paper. All the rest is a bizarre ligature of fiction and fantasies expressed in the subjunctive mood and flavoured with a fair share of cynicism.

### **"Here again, he appeared in Rus <...> from the Kostroma city"**

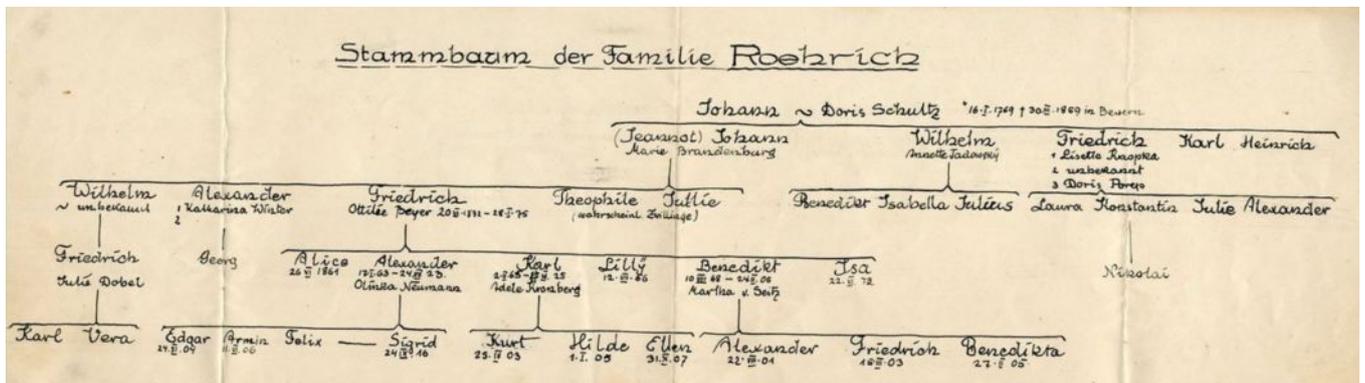
The human race can be viewed from two perspectives: the historical and the legendary. The second one is no less true than the first one.

*Victor Hugo*

Our research began after perusal of the book by Ernst von Waldenfels "Nicholas Roerich: art, power and the occult". [3] In its first chapter, the point of view of I. Silars on Nicholas Roerich's male lineage was uncritically expounded. As it turned out, Waldenfels has never visited Latvia, never worked in the archives, and never met any of the known in the country experts on Roerich. Our acquaintance with the article by I. Silars amazed even more. It appeared that this local historian, as he calls himself, was unfamiliar either with Nicholas Roerich's Latvian ancestry, or with the works of the great man about whom he undertook to write an article. In addition

to all, he allegedly caught in a lie the oldest member of the Roerich movement, now honorary chairman of the Latvian Roerich Society, Gunta Rudzite. As if she "referred to Roerich Fund at the Liepaja Museum of History and Art <...>, but as the deputy director of the Museum informed the author [I. Silars], such a fund had never existed there, at least over the last 35 years." [4]

So, we had to ask Gunta Rudzite to clarify the situation, and there revealed a striking moment which can not be called otherwise than a hand of fate. Mr. Silars, who is considered, as show the quantity of references to his article, expert on the Roerich genealogy, remained ignorant about the existence of the all-important collection of documents, letters, photographs and the family tree of the Roerichs, which shed light on the history of this large and friendly family. The "Roerich Fund" originated back in the 1960's at the Liepaja Museum of History and Art. At that time Isabella Roerich, granddaughter of Johann Roerich (elder brother of Friedrich Roerich, grandfather of Nicholas Roerich) was still alive; she worked as a teacher at Hartwig gymnasium in Liepaja. [5] She compiled a family tree showing the Baltic branch of the Roerich family.



*Baltic branch of the Roerich family. From Roerich Fund of the Liepaja Museum of History and Art.*

*Compiled by Isabella Roerich (Isa), granddaughter of Johann Roerich.*

Years passed, the fund was disbanded and the documents were scattered over various museum folders. One day, I. Silars asked honorary chairman of the Latvian Roerich Society, Gunta Rudzite. Delighted by his seemingly genuine interest in the

Roerich family, she told him about everything in detail. But her counterpart did not consider it necessary to visit the Museum personally and just called there. The employee who picked up the phone was incompetent in the matter; his response to Mr. Silars has been quoted above. As a result, a large and interesting collection of letters, family photographs and other important documents escaped the attention of the researcher. At the same time, this episode revealed a negative feature of his handwriting: to suspect in a lie anyone who appreciates the work of Roerich. Let us quote one passage from the article by I. Silars: "Then G. Rudzite refers to Nicholas Roerich who allegedly once said: 'It is a pity my father did not leave records. If only my great-grandfather had described his military affairs in the time of Peter, it would have been extremely valuable.' Here, the author (G. Rudzite) neither says when and to whom N. Roerich expressed such an idea, nor provides any reference to the source." [6] It would have taken Mr. Silars only a few minutes to check out this quote, because almost all the works of Nicholas Roerich are now available in the electronic form. But since he, apparently, did not have time to do it, here we provide the reference to Nicholas Roerich's essay "The sowing". [7]

Let us note that the ancestor of the artist, who, according to a family legend, entered the service of Tsar Peter the Great who granted him a manor near Kostroma, evokes I. Silars' rejection. The desire to somehow humiliate Nicholas Roerich is so great that he concludes with a reckless phrase: "That is why there appeared, I suppose not without his [Nicholas Roerich - aut.] involvement, the legends well-known to us today about the 'high-born ancestors' of the Roerichs - Swedish generals, Vikings and the founder of Rus Rurik, as well as the 'ancient' coat of arms of the Roerich clan." [8]

Indeed, their family legend includes a noble family from Sweden, as well as an ancestor who obtained a country seat near Kostroma and settled there. Nicholas Roerich, who studied seriously his genealogy, answered the question of the famous Russian art historian and researcher of ancient monuments Baron Wrangel: "Dear Nikolay Nikolayevich,

"Last year you asked my biographical information. I remember that I mentioned Courland. Now *I have had to engage in our genealogy* [emphasis added – aut.], and it turned out that Courland was a pure accident for our family. The origin is Swedish, it went through Pomerania, while Courland was a meaningless stop." [9]

As we see, the Roerich clan came from Sweden, but Nicholas Roerich did not mention the rank of his great-grandfather in any of his works. So, we leave the Swedish general on Mr. Silars' conscience, as well as another statement of his: "...The great-grandfather <...> could not serve in the army of the Swedish king..." [10] His great-grandfather, due to the fact that by the time of his birth the Northern War had ended, could not, really, serve in the Swedish army, but his great-great-grandfather might well have. So, Nicholas Roerich makes a clear distinction between the terms 'great-grandfather' and 'great-great-grandfather'. We read in his "Diary Sheets": "Another episode refers to the time of Peter the Great. My *great-great-grandfather* [emphasis added – aut.], being the commandant of a fortress, refused to destroy a suburban church, behind which there was an offensive. Because of this fact, which happened because of his deep religiosity, he had a lot of trouble at his service." [11]

Let us note that the ancient Russian city of Kostroma from Roerich legends was immortalized by the writer A.M. Remizov in his tale "The stone-burg of Roerich" [12]. In 20th century, several people contacted the well-known local historian of Kostroma A.A. Grigorov for the information about the Kostroma track in the Roerich family legend. The first one was a writer who lived in Harbin, Vs.N. Ivanov, author of a famous book "Roerich - artist and thinker" [13]. Here, we provide the answers of the most authoritative regional specialist to his requests:

"A.A. Grigorov – Vs.N. Ivanov

"November 2, 1971 Kostroma

"You write about Roerich. Here, in the Kostroma province, particularly in Galich district, in 18th century there were landowners the Roerichs; I've tried to establish if there is any relationship between those distant Roerichs and Svetoslav Roerich, but nothing has been found. And these Galich Roerichs disappeared from the Kostroma

land in the 30's of 19th century. <...> Where will you publish "Meetings with Roerich"? And when can we expect the release? I'm all curious about everything, I have such an inconsumable interest in everything that concerns our country and its sons." [14]

Another letter is addressed to the prominent Russian genealogist and local historian V.P. Khokhlov:

"A.A. Grigorov – V.P. Khokhlov

"February 8, 1984 Kostroma

"Now about the Roerichs. I know these Galich noblemen, since in the affairs of the Nobility Assembly, there were their documents and their family was inscribed in the Kostroma genealogical book. The "Alexandrov" estate in Galich district belonged to them. Vladimir Kasperovich, as marked in my file cabinet, applied for registration with his wife and children in the genealogical book. <...> In the personal fund of the Vas'kov family, the neighbours and close acquaintances of the Roerichs, there are a lot of documents on that family: letters, various legal documents, etc. I intended to see all this in detail, because I expected that *artist Nicholas Roerich came from exactly that clan* [emphasis added – aut.]" [15]

The brothers Vladimir and Ivan Roerich feature in the data-bank on migration of Germans in pre-revolutionary Russia by Eric Amburger, professor of Munich University. [16] Both of them served in one of the most brilliant and privileged regiments of the Russian Army, the Guards heavy cavalry. As it is known, only the men of noble origin could be taken there.

Below we provide information from the second volume of "Collection of biographies of Cavalier-Guards":

"Vladimir Kasparovich Roerich 1st, 1777-?, from the nobility of Kostroma province, entered the service on January 4, 1797 as chevalier garde in Cavalry squadrons; in October 1798, as a cadet in Moscow Hussars (Police) Squadron; in 1799 as a military officer, to the staff of Moscow Police; September 29, 1800

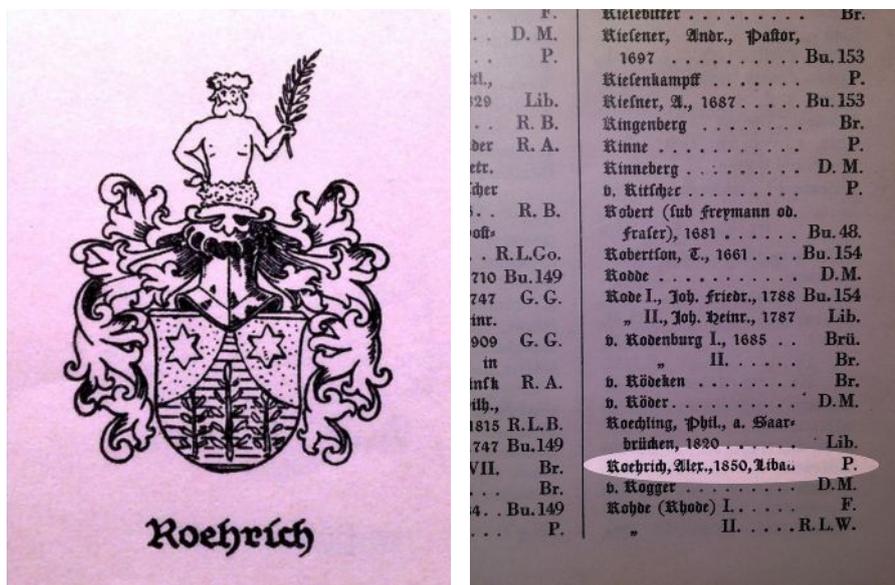
dismissed from the service due to illness; in 1807 was appointed a treasurer in Galich. Had 17 souls in the Vaganova village, Galich district."

"Ivan Kasparovich Roerich 2nd, 1780-?, native of Moscow, of Greek confession, from the youths of Kostroma province, Galich district, where he had with his brother 64 souls; on January 4, 1797 was granted as chevalier garde in Cavalry squadrons, after disbandment of which entered Moscow Hussar Squadrons as a cadet. June 18, 1799 entered the staff of Moscow Police." [17]

Nicholas Roerich knew about his relatives who lived near Kostroma. Rihard Rudzitis wrote in one of his books "Meetings with George Roerich": "During World War I, a young sister of mercy came from Kostroma to Nicholas [Roerich], as to a relative, and handed a letter from her mother." [18] Nicholas Roerich said: "My grandfather was twelve years old at the Borodino, while his brothers had already been cavalier-guards and participated in the battle." [19] In other words, in 1812 when his grandfather, i.e. Friedrich Roerich, was 12 years old, his cousins were fighting with the army of Napoleon. There is reason to assume that the cousins of Friedrich Roerich, grandfather of Nicholas Roerich, were Vladimir Kasperovich Roerich and Ivan Kasperovich Roerich. [20] Therefore, the Baltic and the Kostroma branches of the Roerich family could well be in kinship.

To test this hypothesis, an official request was made to the Kostroma State Archive. At the same time, the colleagues of the Saint-Petersburg branch of the International Centre of the Roerichs were searching documents on cavalier-guards. The findings from these two cities complemented one another. The Roerich aristocratic family did live near Kostroma, in the ancient Russian town of Galich, in 18-19th centuries: "In the index of noble families of the Kostroma province, the Roerich kin is listed in the second part. <...> The second part of the provincial genealogical book contained the names of nobles who got nobility through the military service." [21] As we can see, the ancestors of Nicholas Roerich, despite the assertions of I. Silars, were nobles.

As the research on this topic has not been completed yet, let us dwell on it. And let us proceed to the next topic, the coat of arms of the Roerichs. Nicholas Roerich was well aware of the really ancient coat of arms of his clan. In Paris and in Russia he was constantly gathering details about it, particularly by heraldic colours. Here is one of his letters to his brother Boris Konstantinovich: "If Lily comes to you, then don't forget to ask her to get from Riga our coat of arms (just a wax imprint, but well-marked); it seems, I'll be able to find out some details here, because the coat of arms seems to be of 9th or 10th century." [22]



*Roerich coat of arms. From documents of Alexander Roerich.*

*Published in «Beitrag zur Baltischen Wappenkunde» (Collection of coats of arms of Livonia, Estonia and Courland).*

*Right: Page from this book which highlights "Roerich, Alex., 1850, Libau (Liepaja)".*

In the autumn 2014, the Roerich coat of arms was found in Riga, in the book which contained coats of arms of civilians (burgers) and noble families not registered in the country. [23] It belonged to Alexander Roerich and had in its basis two heraldic colours of Sweden - yellow and blue. [24]

As we see, I. Silars indulged in wishful thinking. Nicholas Roerich did have high-born ancestors, and quite real. The Latvian local historian did not seriously study the history of the legendary Roerich clan, he is absolutely incompetent in the subject. His attack against Nicholas Roerich: "That is why there appeared, I suppose,

not without his involvement, the legends well-known to us today about the 'high-born ancestors' of the Roerichs... ", is not sure in its basis, as it conflicts with the existing archival documents.

### **"They understood each other in the language of the heart"**

From time immemorial, like amber placers on the Kurzeme coast of the Baltic Sea, settled aliens from near and distant countries. No one knew what fair wind had brought them to this harsh land of granite boulders and forest thickets. Having loved it with all their heart, they called it their homeland, and the local tribes, their brothers and sisters. And no one asked the strangers what kind of tribe they were, or why their language was unlike the one of the Curonians and the Livs. They understood each other in the language of the heart.

*Excerpt from the greeting card for the centennial anniversary of Friedrich Roerich, made in the spirit of Scandinavian scalds by his Latvian friends. (From the essay by G.-I. Karklin "The ever-burning light of spirituality")*

Under what circumstances the ancestors of Nicholas Roerich on the paternal line left their native land, and when they settled down to live in Livonia, unfortunately, is not known. It is considered that this happened after the Great Northern War. Around the middle of 18th century, the great-grandfather of the artist, Johann Roerich, married Doris (short name from German *Dorothea*) née Schultz with whom he had several sons. Isabella Roerich, mentioned at the beginning of our article, indicated in her pedigree the three — Johann, Wilhelm and Friedrich, while the dates of birth of other two sons, George Reinhold and Karl, were published in the Adjusted pedigree. [25] The place of their birth, Grobiņa (Grobini - "splinter" in the language of the Cours tribe that lived in the south-eastern coast of the Baltic Sea from 5th to 16th centuries; the name of Courland comes from them), is of great interest for the researchers. Modern Grobiņa (Seeburg - germ.) is a small town with the population of about five thousand people, 11 km away from Liepāja (Libau - germ.,

Libava - rus.), the third largest city in Latvia. In the period between 650-800, there was a small fishing village. Whereas Grobiņa was a large sea port where ships came from different countries. In the early 20th century, three Viking burials were found in this area during the excavations. Household items, weapons, etc., found in two graves, corresponded to the objects which had been found previously on Gotland island. But as H. Arbman, a known Swedish archaeologist, wrote: "Quite different traits were peculiar to the third field. There were mounds erected above its burial places, whereas objects found in the graves of this type indicate contacts between natives of Grobinja [sic. - auth.] and inhabitants of the Lake Mälaren valley in central Sweden." [26]

In other words, long ago Vikings paved a sea route to the lands of Courland. [27] No wonder that in 1901 when, as stated by the Latvian art historian G.-I. Karklin, Friedrich Roerich celebrated his 100th birthday, "according to the Scandinavian custom, the hero of the day was ridden on a boat with red sails along the Gulf of Riga." [28] In the same essay, the author continues: "The Latvian folk poetess Mirdza Kempe, native of this region, recalled that her great-grandfather learned to make such boats under a sail from one of Scandinavians Hasenpoth, by surname Roerich. Is this a coincidence or a relative thread?" [29]

Whatever it was, since the middle of 18th century, the Roerich family settled firmly in Courland, in the vicinity of Liepāja. The eldest son of Johann and Doris Roerich, also Johann, a master on leather crafts, together with his wife Marie Brandenburg and son Alexander, lived in Bunk (Funckenhoff – germ.) estate that their family rented for many years. [30]

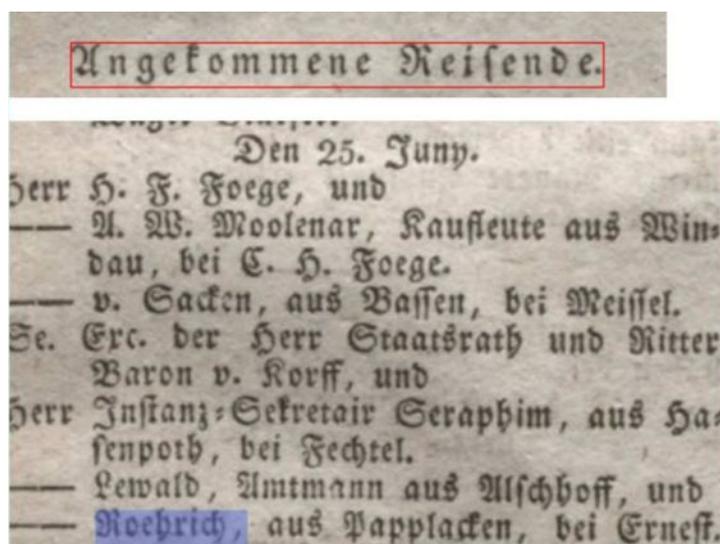


*Funckenhoff (now Bunk) Estate near Liepāja*

The middle son Wilhelm started his career as a manager at the estate of Kleine Gramzden, performing from time to time the duties of praepostor there. [31] Only in the second half of his life, he moved to Inflyanty [32], Estate Bewern (Bebrene near Daugavpils - the present-day). It housed the estate of Count Michael Plater-Ziberg who was formerly vice-governor of Vilno (Vilnius - the present-day), and who proposed Wilhelm Roerich the position of manager. [33] While the youngest son of Johann and Doris, Friedrich Roerich, settled in Papplacken for 10 years since 1828 or so.

From the archival documents it follows that he served as a manager in the Domains of Barons von der Ropp. Besides, for several years he cooperated with the court of Papplacken district by publishing from time to time messages on cases considered there in the German press. [34] These judicial reports allowed F. Roerich to keep abreast of local news and might bring a small income.

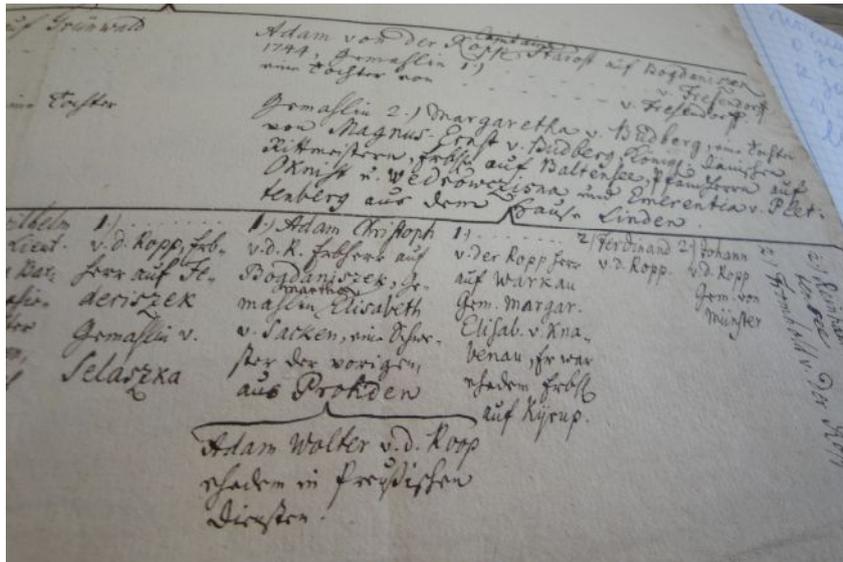
As we can see, the three brothers Roerich, including Friedrich, grandfather of Nicholas Roerich, had prestigious jobs for that time. Good managers and tenants of manor houses valued very highly, because the revenues of Baltic nobles who often dwelt in Europe depended on their honesty and professionalism.



*First mention of Friedrich Roerich from Papplacken Estate in German periodicals.  
Libausches Wochenblatt, № 51 of 06.26.1829*

But the Roerichs could not get an estate at their disposal in the Baltic of that time, as it required to have a lot of money for its maintenance. Furthermore, according to the order existed, it was necessary to attach an aristocratic pedigree to a petition to the Ministry of State Property. But it was not always possible to prove gentility, even for those who had the upper hand in this land for centuries. The King-of-arms office founded by Peter I, in 1848 was transformed into the Department of Heraldry which went meticulously into details on each family member. This is well illustrated by the family archives of the barons of blue blood — the Roenne, the Ropp, the Schulz, the Taube, the Weymarn, and others who had kindred or friendly relations with the Roerichs. [35] In each archive folder, there is a voluminous pile of papers concerning their family tree: inquiry letters, patronymic signatures, sketches of coats of arms.

Even such a well-known in the Russian Empire clan as von der Ropp inscribed into matricula of the Pskov, Voronezh, Courland, St. Petersburg and other provinces, had to carry on an endless correspondence to obtain the necessary information to confirm their bloodline.



Patronymic signatures of Barons von der Ropp (one of 82 pages).  
LSHA. F.1100. Op.11. D.21.

As mentioned above, the Roerich Baltic family had a coat of arms. Moreover, it is an undeniable fact that the brothers Roerich, especially Wilhelm and Friedrich, enjoyed respect, trust and assistance of Baltic nobility. This can be seen according to the relationships that existed between them. Thus, the spouses Julius Ropp and Isabella Plater-Ziberg were godparents of Wilhelm's children named accordingly Isabella and Julius. While Baroness Laura von der Ropp christened the daughter of Friedrich Roerich, Laura, and her husband Johann and son Theophile christened the son of Friedrich, Karl. Also, family members by name Osten-Sacken who lived earlier in Pomerania, Baron Alexander Roenne and other notable persons of Courland acted as godparents for the Roerich family. This is not surprising, since in the Baltic States people attached great importance to godparents. In case of parents' death, they adopted their godchildren, provided their education and trousseau.

A glimpse into the Roerich family history shows that the descendants of the three brothers - Johann, Wilhelm and Friedrich Roerich, were respected people. Friedrich Roerich's nephew, also Friedrich [36], served all his life at the magistrate of Grobiņa where he had the reputation of a very decent man.

His sons also left a good memory in Liepāja. The elder Alexander [37] owned a pharmacy, and the junior Benedikt Oscar [38] worked as a military doctor and died

during the war with Japan. The middle son, Karl Roerich, graduated from the law faculty of Moscow University. He then served at the Moscow Regional Court and in 1894 became secretary of the Department of Land Registry. In his obituary published in German, one can read: "He held this important post until 1915, when his office was relocated to Courland. After his return home, he went to work at the office of the notary Iohswich [in Liepaja — auth.]. With the death of [Karl - auth.] Roerich, we lost a man with a steadfast sense of duty and an extraordinary purity of life-views." [39]



*Family portrait of Friedrich Roerich's nephew, also Friedrich Roerich, secretary of the Grobiņa City Magistrate.  
Second left, second row: Isabella Roerich, compiler of the Roerich genealogical tree.  
Rightmost: Doctor Benedikt and his wife Martha von Seitz.*

As we can see, the relatives of Nicholas Roerich got accustomed on the Latvian ground and enjoyed a good reputation in the community. As well as their children: Edgar wrote books, Armin was an engineer, Carolina Hilda married the latter Eduard Dressler, Kurt served as a cashier at the Riga post-office. [40] In 1939, before the Second World War, almost all of them left Latvia and settled in Germany. Part of the family settled in Munich, where they have lived up to this day.

**"What's in my name for you?"**

The baptismal certificate is the surest document on the first and the last names. <...> The first name as well as the last name, certainly, could change, but it required a valid reason and the highest resolution, that is the sanction of the monarch. The one willing to change his or her name filled a petition to His Majesty at the Office of Petitions <...> and got a waiver or authorization.

*Excerpt from the letter of N. Andreyeva, PhD in Historical Sciences, consultant, specialist in Baltic nobility, expert of the Likhachev International Charity Foundation, addressed to O. Starovoytova. April 24, 2014*

As we can see, virtually nothing is known to I. Silars about the Baltic relatives of Nicholas Roerich, for the whole layer of important documents from museums, archives and periodicals was not taken into account. Unfortunately, he also tends to interpret data for the worse. For example, he tries to draw readers' attention to a supposedly low origin of the Roerichs. Thus, he actively promotes the hypothesis that the great-grandfather of Nicholas Roerich was Johann Kristian, a tailor from Alschwangen who had several sons. I. Silars found their names, such as the name of Fritz, in a statement about a tax payment in the town of Hasenpoth in 1811. [41] The mentioned tailor was 52 years old in the same year. [42]

Meanwhile, the archival documents found by the Latvian Roerich Society do not confirm the accuracy of this information. Here is an example. Johann Kristian Roerich, a tailor from Alschwangen, was baptized on September 11, 1763 in Valtayki (Nouhausen – germ.) and died on April 27, 1820, in Vecpils (Altenburg – germ.). [43] It means that in 1811, he was 48 years old instead of 52, and at the time of death, respectively 57 rather than 60 years old. Apparently, I. Silars discovered only the document about the death of the tailor, while the baptismal certificate (usually the rite was performed a week or two after birth) escaped his attention.

According to the next argument of I. Silars, the said Fritz is the grandfather of Nicholas Roerich. Here, the Latvian author did not bother that any other information about the child was missing. In another archival document he found the name of a

certain Friedrich Siegmund Paul Rörich, who was born in Alschwangen in 1806 and baptised in the same year in Ēdole. [44] From this fact he makes such a conclusion: "Since in the period from 1778 to 1811 only one Roerich was baptised in the parish of Ēdole, it becomes clear that we are talking about Friedrich Siegmund Paul Rörich <...>, the son of the tailor Rörich from Alschwangen." He supports the finding with a sentence from another document: "Friedrich Paul Rörich, born in Alschwangen, baptised on June 17, 1806." [45]

It is possible that the mentioned young man, indeed, was the son of the tailor from Alschwangen. But the details on Friedrich Siegmund Paul's life are traceable only until his 18 years. As well as there is no documentary evidence that he had at least any relation to the grandfather of Nicholas Roerich. Here, we offer a few arguments.

The first argument is that the age of Friedrich Siegmund Paul does not coincide with the age of Friedrich Roerich. Nicholas Roerich indicated more than once the age of his grandfather: "I always remember how my grandfather loved Riga and chose it his residence for the last fifty years of his life; he died at 104 years old." [46] And more: "My grandfather Fedor Ivanovich lived one hundred and five years." [47] The art historian G.-I. Karklin agrees with Nicholas Roerich. She knew, by the words of woodcarver Arthur Birzniek, that Friedrich Roerich's centenary was celebrated in 1901. In the death certificate of F. Roerich it is stated that he died in 1905. [48] If we consider all the statements on the age of F. Roerich, it turns out that he was born in the period from 1800 to 1803, not in 1806.

The second argument: I. Silars does not provide sufficient evidence base. The used documents lack the information that would confirm certain arguments and conclusions of his. Other factual sources are secondary, while many of the basic documents, as we have seen and will see, are not given at all.

Consider the same Friedrich Siegmund Paul Rörich. The information about the baptism and confirmation of that child is frequent in the article of I. Silars. According to the expert on Baltic nobility N. Andreyeva (see the epigraph to this chapter), the baptismal certificate was the most important document of the time. So, if the

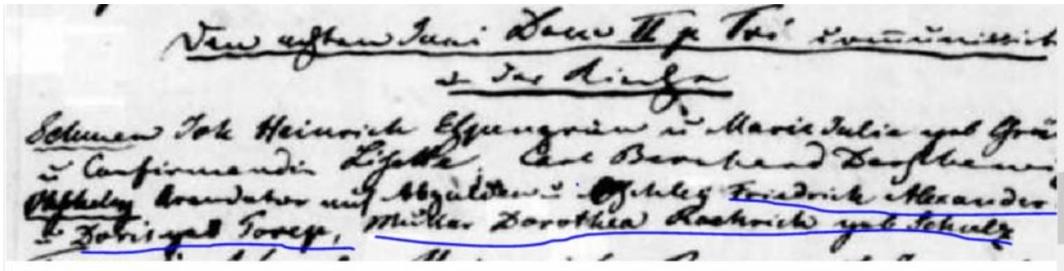
aforesaid young man were indeed our Friedrich Roerich, then the name of his mother, Doris Roerich née Schulz, should have been written in his baptismal certificate. In that case, the issue could be removed. The great-grandmother of Nicholas Roerich lived a long life, more than 90 years. Together with her husband Johann, she takes the first line in the Liepaja family tree, her name is also mentioned in the pages of a number of archival documents. But I. Silars is in no hurry to inform readers of this fact. Why not? Because the baptismal certificate found by I. Silars determines the Alschwangen tailor as father, but says nothing about the mother.

Such omissions of names in parish documents are not uncommon, and the reason is often the negligence of church officials. Since the baptismal certificate was considered the most important document in Russian provinces, it was required, according to the rules, to specify therein the full name of the baby, the names of parents and their place of work. If there were any special circumstances, they were recorded, too. For example, a mother died in childbirth, a gentleman acknowledged a child born out of wedlock as his. The record ended with the list of godparents' names, professions and titles.

Since the found baptismal certificate does not contain mother's name, perhaps the marriage certificate of the tailor Johann could help to establish the truth. If he had married Doris Schulz, the assumption that he, exactly, was the great-grandfather of Nicholas Roerich could move to the category of exact facts. But that important document is not provided by I. Silars.

There is a third compelling reason why the version about the Alschwangen tailor as great-grandfather of the Roerich Baltic pedigree and his son Friedrich Siegmund Paul Rörich as grandfather of Nicholas Roerich is crumbling. Thus, on the basis of some archival data, I. Silars informs that the Papplacken estate manager was Friedrich Alexander Roerich. Then he begs the question that Friedrich Siegmund Paul Rörich and Friedrich Alexander Roerich were one and the same person. However, according to the documents, Friedrich Siegmund Paul Rörich does not transit any other episode of the Roerichs' life. Friedrich Alexander Roerich, instead, has a direct relation to it. In particular, from the record found in a church of Tukums it follows

that he was attending the communion with his wife Doris Porep and his mother Dorothea Roerich. [49]



*Record from a book of a church in Tukums: Friedrich Alexander Roerich is attending the communion with his wife Doris Porep and his mother Dorothea Roerich née Schultz.*

In this case, the identification of the personality of Friedrich Alexander Roerich with the personality of Nicholas Roerich's grandfather is justified, because the same names of his mother and wife are listed in the Roerich family tree stored at the Liepaja Museum of History and Art.

At this point, let us make a small digression to tell the readers how the identification by name is carried out. Since ancient times in Germany, children were given several names. All of them were recorded in a certain order in the baptismal certificate, forming a so-called full name, wherein the first one was considered the chief. In everyday life the names were used freely. Thus, if a child got used to some name (not necessarily the first), further he kept being called the same way. In adulthood, everyone decided for oneself.

Let us see, how it works on the example of Johann Roerich's great-grandson who, according to Isabella Roerich, is called Edgar. We learn from periodicals that his full name is Edgar Karl Julius Roerich. [50] He could, at his will, introduce himself as Julius, Karl, Edgar-Julius, or select any other combination of his names, with or without a hyphen. But the newspaper chronicle shows that he prefers the chief name Edgar. [51]

However, the freedom in the use of names immediately came to an end as soon as the case concerned formal aspects of life, such as marriage, travel abroad, litigation, etc. In these cases, only a full name was used for personal identification, in

the form as it was listed in the baptismal certificate. That is, if Friedrich Siegmund Paul Rörich were really the grandfather of Nicholas Roerich, the name of Alexander should have been listed in his baptismal certificate, for example Friedrich Alexander Sigmund Paul Rörich. But only the name of Friedrich Siegmund Paul is written in the document presented by I. Silars. Yet, the baptismal certificate with a fully inscribed name was considered the main document for issuance of the passport. And if, for example, Friedrich Siegmund Paul had wished to get an inheritance, left for Friedrich Alexander Sigmund Paul, or to pass the border of a foreign state under this name, a conflict could not be avoided.

Finally, such a significant detail: Friedrich Roerich is often referred to as Fedor Ivanovich Roerich by the researchers. Indeed, when entering the service in Imperial Russia, German nobles changed their complex names to more euphonious. This was usually done in the Russian manner. For example, Friedrich became Fedor, and the patronymic was taken after his father's name. In this case, the name of Friedrich's father was Johann, in Russian Ivan, hence Fedor Ivanovich, and his brother Wilhelm became Vasily Ivanovich.

**"The father of N.K. [Roerich] was the son from the first marriage of his grandfather"**

Soon after the first article "Nicholas Roerich's ancestors: legends and historical evidence", I. Silars writes another one entitled "Nikolaja Rēriha vectēvs - Rērihs vai von der Rops?" [52] ("Nicholas Roerich's grandfather: Friedrich Roerich or Baron von der Ropp?"), to develop the theme. But if in the first paper, at least some documents, though of secondary nature, were given, this time the story about Baron Eduard von der Ropp's fatherhood is nothing more than an invention. So, he sets out a theory that K.F. Roerich's mother was the maid of Baroness Laura von der Ropp named Charlotte Schuhschel, and his father was the son of Baroness, Eduard von der Ropp who lived in Saint-Petersburg.

The facts show that the story by I. Silars has no value, because it is not backed up by any conclusive evidence, nor by references to any new sources. But we had to delve into the subject, since chairman of the Latvian Roerich Society Alvilis Hartmanis outlined his vision of events in the article "Konstantin Roerich is indeed the son of Friedrich Roerich". [53] On the one hand, it is based on documents that escaped the attention of I. Silars and like any other point of view, it has a right to exist. On the other hand, to our knowledge, no researcher so far has had any evidence of the baptism or the birth of K.F. Roerich, which would contain information about his parents. Only on that basis, the version could be transferred into the category of exact facts.

To understand that difficult situation, let us look at the available documents. In the archive of the Lutheran community of the village Krute, there was found a record that at the beginning of July 1837, a certain Constantin Christoph Traugott Glaubert was baptised there. I. Silars draws attention to the strangeness of this record: "... It is the last one and does not correspond to the chronological order of entries for this year." [54] He comments on this fact as follows: "... The main thing is not that, but the content ..." [55] This strangeness does catch the eye, but the content of the document is most ordinary. According to it, the child's mother is an unmarried maid of Papplacken estate, Charlotte Schuhschel, while father's name is not indicated. Further in the text follow the names and places of work of godparents. The name of Roerich in the document does not appear at all. However, precisely on the basis of that document, I. Silars concludes that Friedrich Roerich was the father of Constantin Christoph.

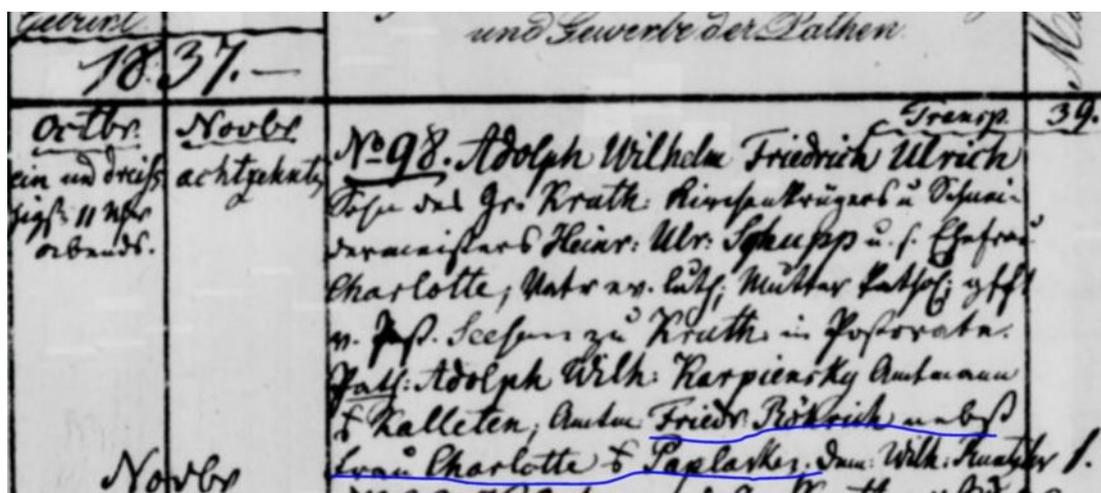
And now a few words about the family life of Friedrich Roerich. In the Liepaja family tree [56], Isabella Roerich indicated the name of a certain Lisette Knopke. Who was this woman, was she bound by ties of marriage with Friedrich Roerich or was she his bride? Any information about it has not been found yet.

How and when Friedrich Roerich came to Papplacken, a place near the modern city of Priekule, is unknown, too. However, in June 1829 he was among the guests arrived to Liepaja, where he introduced himself to the press as a manager of

Papplacken estate of Barons von der Ropp. [57] Soon, a new job as a clerk at the court of Papplacken district added to his obligations. Since 1830, declarations and statements on matters discussed there appeared regularly in the press of that time under his signature. [58] On June 14, 1832 Friedrich Roerich got married to a widow of a tailor, Charlotte Kalkau née Melk who lived in Papplacken. [59] The compiler of the family tree Isabella Roerich knew about this marriage of Friedrich Roerich, but apparently without details, because she indicated “unbekannt” (germ.: unknown) on the second line after the name of Lisette Knopke.

On July 1, 1837 Freidrich Roerich had a son Konstantin Roerich. The certificates of his baptism and birth issued by the magistrate of Hasenpoth (Aizpute) existed. They were attached to the petition of Baron A. Ropp [60] who, at the request of Friedrich Roerich, determined the 12-year-old child to study at the Technological Institute in Saint-Petersburg in 1849. [61]

By the way, I. Silars emphasizes twice in his article that Charlotte Kalkau was childless. [62] But this word can be interpreted in two ways. Either the woman generally could not have children because of some physiological or other reasons, or she could but did not have them for some time. The second interpretation is applicable to Charlotte Kalkau, as in the first marriage she gave birth to a son, Ernest Friedrich, who died shortly after birth. [63] Five months passed since the birth of Konstantin, and it is an undeniable fact that the couple were still living together. In an official document it is stated that on November 18, 1837, Friedrich and Charlotte Roerich attended as godparents the christening of the innkeeper Schupp's child. [64]



*Baptismal certificate of the innkeeper Schupp's son featuring Friedrich Roerich and his wife Charlotte Kalkau.*

Then, as it appears from the death certificate of Charlotte Kalkau (in the marital status indicated 'divorced'), the couple broke up. [65] The cause and the date of divorce are unknown, but Charlotte Roerich never remarried, having kept the surname of her spouse until the end of her days. Did the ex-wife stay in Papplacken or leave it, alone or with a child? Or was the baby left in the care of his father and (or) his grandmother Doris Schultz? Documentary evidences which could allow us to answer these questions have not been found yet. However, the estate manager, who was a public person by rank, continued appearing on the pages of newspapers. They show that Friedrich Roerich worked on in Papplacken a few more years. The last judicial report with his signature is dated March 1841. [66] Presumably since 1842, he moved from place to place in search of a new work. In the last known newspaper report about him, instead of the usual additions to his position and the last name 'F. Roerich manager of Papplacken', there is an indication 'aus Livland' (from Livland). [67]

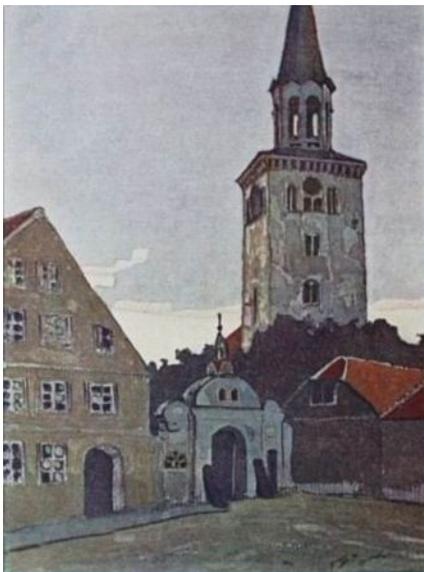


*Papplacken Estate in Courland.*



*Papplacken Estate from the garden.*

The Papplacken period of life seemed to be receding into the past. However, a sad page was left there. After the divorce with his wife Charlotte Kalkau, Friedrich Alexander Roerich and the maid of Baroness von der Ropp Charlotte Schuhschel were tied by close relationships for a short period of time. In 1838, their first son was born and died a month later; in 1840 their second child, apparently, suffered the same fate. The estate manager of Papplacken acknowledged both his sons. [68] On May 13, 1843, Friedrich Roerich's wedding with Doris née Porep took place in Trinity Church in the capital of Courland Mitau (Mitau - germ., Jelgava - the present-day). [69]





*Nicholas Roerich. Mitau. Square. 1903 oil*

*Jelgava in 2014. Tower.  
All that has remained from Trinity Church.*

Thus, today it is known that Fedor Ivanovich Roerich had two spouses. He divorced his first wife Charlotte Kalkau presumably in 1838. He lived in a marriage with his second wife Doris Porep for more than 60 years and had six children from her. [70]

And now let us see, what Nicholas Roerich and Helena Roerich knew about their Baltic relatives. In the summer 1900, Nicholas Roerich's father Konstantin was taken to hospital. Due to illness, the doctor asked the artist a series of questions about his father's childhood years. Nicholas Roerich replied: "He was educated in a private school and did not complete the course at the Technological Institute, due to material condition of his father [Fedor Ivanovich Roerich - auth.]. His father divorced his wife and remarried when the patient was in early childhood. First time, the patient lived with his stepmother and later, with his uncle." [71] In other words, Konstantin Fedorovich was enrolled in the Technological Institute in Saint-Petersburg in 1849 and was educated at the private school located at this institution. However, the artist's father was not graduated from the institute, because a few years later, due to financial difficulties, Fedor (Friedrich) Ivanovich became unable to pay for his son's education. As to the second sentence, we understand its meaning as follows: Friedrich Roerich

"divorced his wife" (Charlotte Kalkau) and "remarried" in 1843, when Konstantin was 6 years old. So, indeed, "the patient was in early childhood" and "first time, he lived with his stepmother", Doris Porep. The names of Friedrich's spouses were not mentioned in this text, but it is logical that if Doris Porep was his stepmother, his mother was the first wife, Charlotte Kalkau.



*Friedrich Roerich with his wife Doris and their son. Tukums, 1866*

On October 28, 1901 Nicholas Roerich married Elena Ivanovna Shaposhnikova. [72] From the published works of both spouses, very little is known about their Baltic relatives, except for Fedor Ivanovich Roerich, Nicholas Roerich's grandfather who lived and worked in Riga in the second half of 19th century. This is not surprising when you consider that between the grandfather and the grandson there was a difference of more than 70 years, and that after the October Revolution, the life of the artist's family proceeded abroad. Yet, one letter of Helena Roerich contains information of high importance.

The situation was as follows: in 1937-1938, the physician S.N. Rudinskiy was visiting a member of the Latvian Roerich Society, E.A. Zilbersdorf, at his place in Daugavpils. The wife of the latter lived not far from Estate Bewern, once owned by

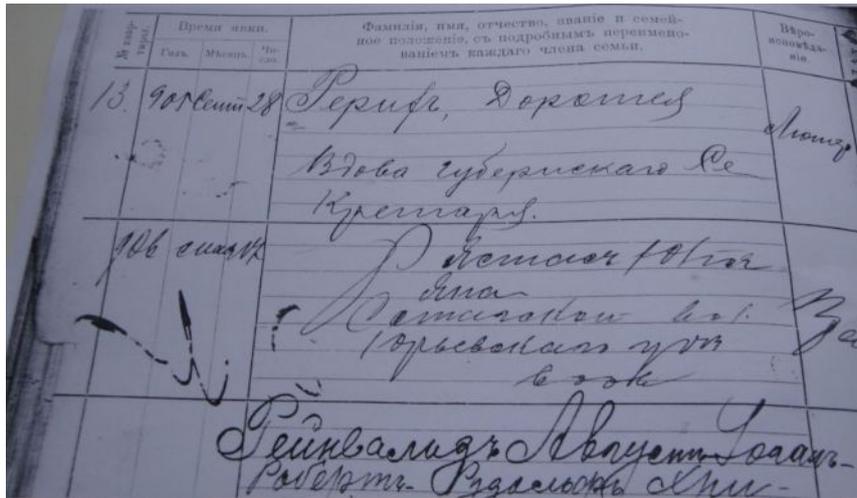
the counts Plater-Ziberg. As mentioned above, one hundred years ago, in 1838, there settled a family of the estate manager Wilhelm Roerich (in Russian: Vasily Ivanovich Roerich) whose eldest son, Benedikt Wilhelm Oscar, was a physician. Apparently, S.N. Rudinskiy found out some interesting information about him and reported it to Helena Roerich living in the Himalayas. Helena Roerich in her letter dated March 8, 1938 answered:

"Thank you as well for sending the photographs of Benedikt Vasilyevich Roerich. What a nice face he has! Unfortunately, *we have never heard about him, nor about his sister. We did not know that the grandfather of N.K. [Roerich] had a brother. The father of N.K. [Roerich] was the son from the first marriage of his grandfather; from the second wife, his grandfather had two daughters and one unfortunate son Alexander who went missing. Benedikt Vasilyevich, probably, is the son of the brother of N.K. [Roerich]'s grandfather. Is there any offspring from his sister Isabella Vasilyevna von Guldenbalk de Hildebrandt?* [emphasis added — aut.]" [73]

Thus, Helena Roerich reported several details, important for the researchers: "*from the second wife, his grandfather had two daughters and one unfortunate son Alexander who went missing* [emphasis added — aut.]" [74] Indeed, only three of the six children of Friedrich Roerich survived to adulthood. By the end of 19th century, Laura, widowed, served as a home teacher in Riga and lived with her elderly parents; Julia lived with her husband and children in Saint-Petersburg, and Alexander went to Moscow where he got married and died. [75]

Likewise, Helena Roerich answered to the question which is the subject of this chapter: "*The father of N.K. [Roerich] was the son from the first marriage of his grandfather* [emphasis added – aut.]" [76] In the first marriage, Fedor Ivanovich Roerich, as has been stated, was married to Charlotte Kalkau.

Finally, in chapter II of the "Case of student N.K. Roerich" a question about his father Konstantin Fedorovich Roerich: "From what rank does he come from?" was followed by the answer: "Son of a provincial secretary." [77]



*Page from the house register of house №88 on Suvorov (now Kr. Baron) street in Riga. Entry for apartment №13: "Dorothea Roerich, widow of a provincial secretary". LSHA. F.2942. Op.2. D.7599. P.125. Doris Roerich moved into that house two months after the death of Friedrich Roerich and lived there for the last six months of her life.*

We have presented to the readers a version based on points of view of three generations of the Roerichs: F.I. Roerich, K.F. Roerich, N.K. Roerich and E.I. Roerich. The word 'version' is put here, because it is necessary to have evidence of the baptism and the birth of Konstantin Fedorovich Roerich. The document with the name of a certain Constantin Christoph Traugott Glaubert, to which I. Silars appeals, is doubtful, because, in his own words: 1) The record about the baptism "is the last one and does not correspond to the chronological order of entries for this year." [78]; 2) The name 'Roerich' does not feature in it. I. Silars does not have any other evidence base on the subject.



*House №88 on Kr. Baron street (Suvorov street at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century) nowadays.*

### **Friedrich Roerich: "He was my most beloved son"**

Thank You for your friendly message that reminded me of Your beloved Dad, he pleased me with the same surprises. **He was my most beloved son**, and You, with your kind soul, remind me of him. You, too, take the first place in my heart.

*Letter from F. Roerich to N. Roerich. January 7, 1902 Riga*

Now consider what kind of "evidence" is offered by I. Silars who believes Baron Eduard von der Ropp to be K.F. Roerich's father. Some lines from the obituary of Laura von der Ropp, who died in September 1849, served him as impetus for such a turn in the plot. The cordial and hospitable hostess of Papplacken was loved by people in the region. The poem dedicated to the Baroness, composed by her relatives and friends, held the entire front page of the weekly newspaper - an unprecedented case in the province! [79] There was such a phrase: "She was inherent in an absolutely courageous spirit rarely found, a noble heart that few have, a wonderful character full of love for people, tolerance for weaknesses of others and rigour to her own weaknesses." [80]

That place evoked the writer's imagination, having encouraged him "to look at the history of mysterious paternity of Konstantin from a new perspective." [81] The child had "the names Constantin Christoph Traugott Glaubert, downright amazing for an illegitimate child. His father is not mentioned in the metric book of the church." [82] (At this point, I. Silars put a pathetic "sic!", although exactly the same missing of mother's name in the certificate of Friedrich Siegmund Paul did not confuse him at all). Maybe because Friedrich Roerich was not his father. Then who? A true parent is Eduard von der Ropp, the third son of Baroness Laura; precisely because he determined the boy to the Technological Institute in Saint- Petersburg.

### Stammtafel VII

V. **Johann Friedrich Adam von der Ropp** (= V. 8 a. Stammt. VI), ~ Mitau 1778 II. 24., † Ribau 1856 XI. 5., a. Weiß- u. Gemauert-Pommusch, Lufian (Lit.), Berghof, Papladden, Kreismarichall zu Goldbingen; ∞ Barwen 1797 I. 30. Anna Maria Ernestine Charlotte Laura v. Seefeld, \* Papladden 1778 IX. 16., † Papladden 1849 IX. 7., a. Papladden, †. d. Otto, a. Papladden, u. d. Charlotte v. Keyierlingf

VI. 1. u. 2. siehe Anmerkungen	4.—6. siehe Anmerkungen	8. u. 9. siehe Anmerkungen	10. Werner <b>Eduard</b> , * 1810 II. 28., [† St. Petersburg] 1869 XII. 23., a. Schabino, russ. Wirtl. Staatsrat; ∞ 1839 XI. 8. Johanna Helene Elisabeth v. Peuder, * 1816 III. 9., † St. Petersburg 1893 III. 21., †. d. Johann, russ. Senator, u. d. Caroline v. Weymarn	11. Leon Christian Ewald (Ludwig), * 1811 IV. 6., † 1856 IV. 27., Ing.-Major; ∞ 1849 II. 23. Theresie Eleonore Charlotte Constanze Louise Bar. v. Medem, * 1818 XII. 10., † St. Petersburg 1904 X. 20., †. d. Johann u. d. Dorothea v. Kleist	12. <b>Joseph August Heinrich</b> , siehe Stammsfolge G Haus Vormsajten	13. u. 14. siehe Anmerkungen	15. Friedrich Ernst <b>Theophil</b> Ludwig, siehe Stammsfolge H Haus Fischröden
3. Emmerich <b>Julius</b> , siehe Stammsfolge E Haus Papladden	7. Friedrich Adam <b>Emil</b> , siehe Stammsfolge F						

*Family tree of Baron Johann and Baroness Laura von der Ropp.  
Number 10 indicates their tenth child Werner Eduard von der Ropp, patron of K.F. Roerich.  
Genealogisches Handbuch der baltischen Ritterschafte. P. 923*

It was his weaknesses that mother tolerated. "However, it could be a mutual love that was not destined to be crowned with marriage. The lovers were separated by the class abyss..." [83] argues the novelist. He sincerely sympathizes with the master's son. And the flight of fantasy draws farther and farther to the path of fiction, promising a canvas for the narrative. So, the master reached agreement with the manager. He would leave the legitimate wife (Charlotte Kalkau) and enter into a civil marriage with the maid. [84] In return, the Ropps would give money to rent estates and take care of the grandson. And their son Eduard would solicit for the child in Saint- Petersburg. "It was he, not Friedrich Roerich, who humbly asks the heads of

Saint-Petersburg Institute of Technology to admit <...> Konstantin Roerich 'among paying boarders' and pays his expenses," [85] concludes the writer.

Eventually, after all this tricky wordplay, erected on a shaky ground of fabrications and fantasies, follows a "scientific" conclusion: the documents "with sufficient certainty indicate that the real father of Konstantin was the offspring of the owner of the same estate, Eduard von der Ropp." [86]

Here, the editors comment: "This statement, in order to become an undeniable fact, requires a genetic examination of the remains of Eduard von der Ropp and Konstantin Roerich buried in St. Petersburg." [87]

So, how to establish the truth when it comes to such a delicate matter? Given that I. Silars speaks only in the subjunctive mood, without bothering to collect evidence. For example, Eduard von der Ropp "could freely visit his parents <...> and at the same time seduce the maid of the estate." [88] But 'could' does not mean that he "was in Papplacken in October or November 1836, nine months before the birth of the child." At least, his article does not contain any evidence in this regard.

The doubts intensified when a leave warrant issued to Eduard von der Ropp, the namesake and kinsman of our Eduard, was found in the fund of the Ropp family in the Latvian Archives. The Officer of Life Guards of the Semenov regiment stationed in Red Selo needed to get out to Saint-Petersburg just for three days. And for that, he had to sign a permission from a commander of the regiment and a regimental adjutant of the headquarters. While in the version offered to us, the man had to get first to Riga, and from there, to such a backwater district as Papplacken near the town of Libau.

But we did not need to find out whether the young Baron crossed the border of the Courland Province in the autumn 1836. The "scientific" construction collapsed under the pressure of a plurality of archival documents. Thus, it turned out that Eduard von der Ropp, who was graduated from the Institute of Railway Engineers (a boarding school modelled on military cadet schools) was a man of war. Therefore, contrary to the assertions of I. Silars, he did not have any freedom of movement. Trips across the Russian Empire required permission from immediate superiors,

while travels abroad required a permit from the sovereign. Fortunately, we managed to find the "Formulary list on the service of collegiate councillor von der Ropp, a caretaker of Oboukhov City Hospital", with a special column XIII – vacation. Thence, it is clear that Baron Eduard von der Ropp went outside Saint-Petersburg only "from November 9, 1834 till February 27, 1835", and then "for 6 months, from April 13, 1839, due to illness, to southern Germany and Italy." [89]

As you can see, in October-November 1836 Eduard von der Ropp did not come to Papplacken to see his parents and therefore could not "seduce" Charlotte Schuschel. Konstantin Fedorovich's father was Fedor Ivanovich Roerich who personally witnessed this fact. In a letter to Nicholas Roerich (see the epigraph to this chapter), there is a sentence: "*He was my most beloved son* [emphasis added – aut.]" [90]

This is how the undeniable facts have dispelled the figments about the fatherhood of Baron Eduard von der Ropp. Just like Friedrich Roerich, that worthy man, father of seven children who bestowed honours for the fifteen years of exemplary service [91], as follows from his Formulary list, was slandered.

Observe another characteristic feature leading to wrong conclusions. The article claiming the status of scientific research, completely lacks such an important factor as historical context. People make their plans, decisions and take certain actions against the background of social life, within the existing conditions. Let us illustrate this with an example. I. Silars bases his assumption of Baron Eduard von der Ropp's paternity on a single fact. Why isn't it Friedrich Roerich who applies for admission of Konstantin Fedorovich to the educational institution, "but collegiate assessor Baron von der Ropp? Why him? Maybe, Friedrich Roerich was not the real father of Konstantin." [92] Meanwhile, the answer is simple. The barons Ropp had close family ties with the Roerichs as godparents of their children. Let us recall once again that Baron Johann and his son Theophile baptised the son of Friedrich Roerich, Karl [93]; his wife Baroness Laura was a godmother to their daughter Laura [94]; their eldest son Julius Hemmerich von der Ropp and his wife Isabella became godparents of Fedor Ivanovich's nephews named in honour of them, Isabella and

Julius [95]. Wilhelm Roerich, their father, served at that time as an estate manager in Bewern, owned by the parents of Isabella, the counts Plater-Ziberg. Kinship among Baltic nobility was highly valued.

In addition, it was found that of all the Ropp from Papplacken and of all their close relatives, only Eduard von der Ropp was 'our man in Saint-Petersburg'. He often visited government offices of the northern capital on affairs of kindred. In the social and political situation that developed in Russia by 1849, Fedor Ivanovich's cares for his son in Saint-Petersburg, definitely, would remain fruitless. Below we will explain why. But at home, in Courland, the father thoroughly took care about the future of his child and his studies in the northern capital.

We begin with the mentioned petition. Top left is listed №118; on the right, the date of application: July 30, 1849. Next up is the following text:

"To the economic committee of the Technological Institute

"Baron von Ropp, collegiate assessor

"Explanation:

"Wanting to educate juvenile Konstantin Roerich, assigned to the city of Hasenpoth of the Courland Province, in the sciences taught in this institution, I humbly request the Chief of Institute to accept the said Roerich among the self-paid boarders. Herewith, I give 75 rubles forward for half a year for his support and 30 rubles for his initial training, total one hundred and five rubles; also the certificates of birth and baptism, as well as the passport issued by the Hasenpoth magistrate.

Collegiate assessor A. Ropp."

Under the signature, there is a following remark: "These one hundred and five rubles adds Konstantin Roerich." [96]

The text is revealing in many ways. Note the main point: the child had with him documents issued in accordance with the rules adopted in the Russian Empire. To make a passport for travelling outside Courland, his father was required to submit the certificate of birth of his son in Hasenpoth and the baptismal certificate to the city

council, and he did it. This document could not be issued without the certificate of registration, as we call it today, which was required to pay taxes, including for minor children. Therefore, Konstantin Fedorovich was assigned to a petty-bourgeois salary in the city of Hasenpoth, Courland. Fedor Ivanovich prudently recorded his heir among the merchants. That step required money, but it was important for social status in the future, because the merchant class, rated after the nobility and the clergy, had a lot of privileges.

Konstantin Fedorovich was registered as "a merchant of the IIIrd guild from Hasenpoth", when he was getting married to Maria Kalashnikova from the Pskov province, the town of Ostrov. [97] Then I. Silars says concerning Baron Ropp: "It was he who <...> paid his [Konstantin Roerich's - auth.] expenses." [98] This categorical statement, as we shall see, turned out to be false. The one hundred and five rubles mentioned in the petition, which "adds Konstantin Roerich", should have lead the author to the conclusion that father was paying for education of his son. The mediator Baron Aleksey Ivanovich Ropp (this is the name adopted by Eduard von der Ropp in Russia, see ref. 60) just passed the necessary amount, and he did so on behalf of the future boarder. The same was meant by the term 'svoekoshtny' ('self-paid'). [99] The facts are irrefutable evidence that the senior Roerich, indeed, as stated in the above-quoted letter from January 7, 1902, was very fond of his first child. That is why, he shouldered a heavy burden of tuition fees at the prestigious institution, although in 1849 he was the sole breadwinner of a large family. The following circumstances, in our view, served as reason for that. In 19th century all the interested in acquiring knowledge in Russia were divided into self-paid students and state-students. During the reign of Nicholas I, the conditions of education deteriorated dramatically. In particular, state-students used to be directed for six years to the most remote corners of the empire after their graduation. In case of their refusal, there followed a crackdown, up to an order to return the money spent on their education. [100] Self-paid pensioners were entitled to leave an educational institution and to get a job as desired. The archival documents show that Konstantin had poor health, so his father's choice was due to concern for his welfare.

But there was a problem which Friedrich Roerich could not solve. Self-paid students in Russia, due to their independence, were distinguished by their love of freedom and freethinking. Tsar Nicholas wrote (June 9, 1845) in a memorandum of Minister of Education: "Figure out if there is a way to make it difficult to access to gymnasia for commoners." [101] They figured out quickly, by raising tuition fees and limiting the number of places, specifically for self-paid boarders. In the years 1848-1849, Europe was shaken by the social revolution, which troubled the sovereign. In that situation, to arrange the boy even to the paid places, moreover, to the Technological Institute patronized by the monarch, it required a respectable intercessor of a noble title and high rank. Is it any wonder that it was Eduard von der Ropp, whose family estate was the place where the child took his first steps?

Finally, we present another archival document belonged to Aleksey Ivanovich von der Ropp which leaves no stone unturned in the theory of I. Silars: "... The request for the release of K. Roerich from the Institute (of Technology):

"The father of a student of the entrusted to you Institute, Konstantin Roerich, in his absence asked me to take his son from the Institute, both because of poor health and lack of resources to keep on his tuition..." [102]

This text does not admit arbitrary interpretations. Aleksey Ivanovich von der Ropp personally testifies: the child's father is Friedrich Roerich, and it was he who paid for the boy's education out of his pocket. He had to interrupt his studies due to financial difficulties. As we remember, Nicholas Roerich, familiar with the situation from the words of his grandfather, confirmed the foregoing words of the baron: "He was educated in a private school and did not complete the course at the Technological Institute, due to the material condition of his father." [103]



*Zhabino Estate owned by Baron Eduard von der Ropp near Saint-Petersburg.*

So, thanks to the new archive findings unknown to I. Silars, his construction built on a shaky foundation has crumbled. Unfortunately, today such a tricky wordplay is being used by other unscrupulous authors as a method of scientific proof. On the other hand, we must recognize that if Mr. Silars had not had strong desire to cast a shadow on a good name of Nicholas Roerich, we would hardly have managed to carry out such extensive research. For, as Helena Roerich rightly remarked about the enemies, if it were not for them, "the grateful humanity would have buried all the best initiatives." [104]

*P.S. The spelling of proper names and surnames is given according to German documents.*

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