

PAVEL MIKHAILOV 1786–1840: VOYAGES TO THE SOUTH POLE. E. Petrova (Editor). 2012. St Petersburg: Palace editions. 143 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 978-3-86384-064-8. Price unknown.

This is the English edition of a bilingual publication by the Russian Museum in St Petersburg. Unlike similar books it does not, apparently, reflect a recent exhibition of the artist's work. The book includes reproductions of 209 drawings and watercolours by Pavel Nikolayevich Mikhailov, most of which were created during or soon after his two voyages in the service of the Imperial Russian Navy, the first with Bellingshausen to the Southern Ocean and the South Pacific in 1819–1821, and the second with Stanyukovich to the North Pacific in 1826–1829. Additional material includes a biographical article by N. Solomatina and a 374 entry catalogue of Mikhailov's surviving works. The title is misleading, since Mikhailov made only one voyage 'to the South Pole'.

Production values are high, but perhaps not up to the excellent standard of other publications from the Russian Museum (Laks 2009). The format, smaller than A4, and number of images mean that many are rather small. Mikhailov often used both sides of a sheet of card, and the editors have chosen to show this, in most cases, by printing the *verso* abutting and above or below the *recto*, but upside down, as if the card had been folded. This may be a Russian convention, but it strikes the unfamiliar reader as unnecessarily awkward.

Solomatina draws attention to a 'small watercolour, depicting century old ice' (page 7), as having been painted on 16 January 1820, the date on which she holds that Bellingshausen discovered Antarctica. Such an image would certainly be of historical interest, but due to an editorial oversight it has not been included. Even more disconcertingly, it does not appear in

the catalogue. Unless, perhaps, Solomatina is referring to one of the drawings in catalogue entries 38, 40 and 42 which are dated 4 January 1820 (O.S.), or 16 January (Gregorian). Conceivably, she may then have misunderstood a reference in the literature to the popularly accepted discovery date of 16 January 1820 as if it were Gregorian, in other words 4 January (O.S.). Whereas that mooted discovery date is actually 16 January (O.S.) or 28 January (Gregorian), for which no drawings are listed. Indeed there are none from 9 January to 1 March 1820 (O.S.), one of the most important phases of the expedition.

In general the selection of pictures is generous, especially for Bellingshausen's expedition, which receives the lion's share. As previously recommended in this journal (Bulkeley 2011) it includes pieces from both extant collections of Mikhailov's work, held by the Russian Museum and the State Historical Museum. The information alongside each picture includes its (unexplained) Old Style date if known. For museum inventory numbers and relevant sheet numbers in Bellingshausen's *Atlas*, readers are cross-referred to the catalogue. Much of that information, however, has been left in Russian, or even hybridised, with the museum name in English but the inventory number in Russian.

Despite such minor shortcomings, the abundance of previously unknown images constitutes a major contribution to knowledge of both expeditions. Historians of exploration and ethnography will draw on this source for years to come. (Rip Bulkeley, 38 Lonsdale Road, Oxford, OX2 7EW (rip@igy50.net)).

References

- Bulkeley, R. 2011. Pictures from an Antarctic expedition: Pavel Mikhailov and the Bellingshausen voyage. *Polar Record* doi:10.1017/S003224741100074X.
- Laks, A. (editor). 2009. *Vokrug sveta s mol'byertom [Around the world with an easel]*. St Petersburg: Palace Editions.