

1. Выписать ключевые предложения из текста и разобрать по составу.

Выполненное задание отправлять на почту ogtroitskaya@mail.ru

The Picture Gallery constitutes the Hermitage's principal section, as also the oldest in point of time. It came into being with the acquisition, in 1764, of 225 paintings by Western European masters from the Berlin merchant Gotzkowsky. Over the next two centuries the Museum's collection increased to 8,000 pictures. Practically all schools and trends that were ever in vogue in Western Europe since the beginnings of easel painting down to the middle of the twentieth century are represented in this collection. The numerous masterpieces on exhibit or in storage have brought the gallery world-wide fame. Every year, more than 3,000,000 visitors from all over the Soviet Union and many foreign countries discover for themselves the celebrated creations of the artistic genius of the peoples of Western Europe.

The first specimens of Western European painting began to reach the shores of the Neva shortly after the founding of the new Russian capital by Peter I. That was a period when Russia's contacts with Western European culture and art had already fallen into a pattern: young Russian artists were perfecting their skills in France and Italy; painters from Germany, France and Switzerland were being invited to work in St Petersburg; and the first purchases of canvases were being made in Holland and Belgium. In 1716, for instance, 121 pictures were bought for Peter I in Holland by Osip Solovyov and 117 were acquired at the same time in Brussels and Antwerp by a commercial agent named Yuri Kologrivov. Shortly after that the collection was augmented by 119 more canvases sent to Peter I by two English merchants, Evan and Elsen. Predominant in Peter I's collections were Dutch and Flemish paintings. Jacob Stählin, the tsar's biographer, recorded that his favourite artists were Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Jan Steen, Wouwerman, Brueghel, van der Werff, and van Ostade, and that his

best-liked subjects were genre scenes depicting "Dutch rustics". These Dutch proclivities should not be taken as merely reflecting the personal tastes of Peter "the shipmaster": the burgher democracy of Holland, which had found such vigorous expression in that country's painting, had much in common with the progressive reforms in the field of culture and home life that were being introduced by the tsar in line with the course of national development.

The early part of the eighteenth century saw the establishment of picture galleries in St Petersburg and Peterhof, notably in the Monplaisir Palace which as a court collection may be regarded as the prototype of the Hermitage. The artistic level of these galleries was not all that could be desired, yet some of their exhibits were of outstanding merit and were later added to the "golden fund" of the Hermitage. One such canvas was Rembrandt's *David and Jonathan*, originally exhibited in the Monplaisir, but transferred in 1882 to the Hermitage. This, incidentally, was the first Rembrandt to arrive in Russia.

In the mid-eighteenth century the most significant collection of Western European paintings was to be found in the palace gallery in Tsarskoye Selo (now Pushkin). The Picture Hall of this palace contained 115 canvases, mostly belonging to German, Dutch and Flemish masters, with a sprinkling of French and Italian works, purchased by Georg Grooth, a German painter, at the request of Empress Elizabeth. Among these canvases, some of which were even second-rate, there were quite valuable pieces, such as *Danaë* by Jacques Blanchard, *Church Interior* by Emanuel de Witte and *Family Group*, an important work by Daniel Schultz of Danzig transferred to the Hermitage in 1937.

Many famous Western European collections came to St Petersburg during the reign of Catherine II. Russia, by then, had passed through two stages of art collecting, which had done much to pave the way for the inauguration of the Hermitage.

While it did contain several first-rate canvases by Rembrandt, Rubens, Hals, and Snyders, the Gotzkowsky collection, which formed the original nucleus of the Hermitage, was no different in respect of artistic merit from the purchases made by Peter I and Elizabeth. The