



fig.1 Cornelius Krieghoff, *German Winter Scene: A Prussian Forester Talking to Children in a Sleigh* (after Petter Gabriel Wickenberg), c.1845, oil on canvas, 38 x 65 cm, Private Collection. (Photo: Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto)

SOME DISCOVERIES FOLLOWING UPON THE PUBLICATION AND EXHIBITION OF *KRIEGHOFF: IMAGES OF CANADA* RELATING TO THE ARTIST'S MONTREAL PERIOD

One of the ambiguous delights following the presentation of a body of intense research is that new material inevitably comes to light. People whose interest had been piqued by the publication of *Krieghoff: Images of Canada* in November 1999 or by the exhibition it accompanied across Canada over the next two years, brought a provocative bit of early-twentieth-century Quebec City gossip and four noteworthy paintings to my attention. The group portrait *The Shakespeare Club* discussed elsewhere in this volume by my colleague at the McCord Museum, Conrad Graham, also surfaced in response to the exhibition. This new information expands our understanding of the ten years Krieghoff spent in Montreal before moving to Quebec. It also suggests that much of what has been recorded as the artist's "flowering" in the "old capital," both in terms of a key personal relationship and his development as a painter, had been fundamentally established in Montreal.

Of the four works brought to my notice, one, the earliest, we thought we knew about before our recent study. Laurier Lacroix reported in 1992 that Swedish painter Petter Gabriel Wickenberg's *German Winter Scene: A Prussian Forester Talking to Children in a Sleigh* (fig.2) that Krieghoff had copied in the Musée du Luxembourg probably early in 1845, is now in the Louvre. Lacroix also then suggested that an image of Krieghoff's copy, which we know was included in the 1847 exhibition of the Montreal Society of Artists, is depicted in the upper-left corner of the famous *An Officer's Room in Montreal*. This work seems to reveal that Krieghoff copied only the central portion of the large Wickenberg canvas.¹

A couple who live east of Toronto contacted me in January 2000 with the news they had a signed Krieghoff that looks just like the Wickenberg reproduced in the new Krieghoff book. They had bought the painting at auction in London, Ontario about ten years earlier. It is indeed a copy of essentially the entire composition of the Wickenberg, although the proportions of the two canvases are quite different (fig.1). Krieghoff gives more prominence to the narrative and less to the wonderful skyscape, and the copy is only a bit larger than one-quarter the size of the original. Even allowing for the fact that the Krieghoff needed cleaning when I viewed it, clearly it falls far short of the Wickenberg painting in conveying a silvery winter light, both in the sky and in its reflection off the ice and snow. It is,



fig.2 Petter Gabriel Wickenberg, **German Winter Scene: A Prussian Forester Talking to Children in a Sleigh**, 1841, oil on canvas, 130 x 195 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, purchased from the Salon of 1841 (8527). (Photo: L'Agence photographique de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris)

in comparison, lugubrious and crude, coarse in the details of the figures and the little set pieces such as the pile of ice blocks in the lower left corner. In the Wickenberg they sparkle, trapping light; in the Krieghoff they become heavy concrete forms. His handling overall is heavier, more generalized; his forms more rounded than Wickenberg's. Krieghoff's copy of the Wickenberg is a discovery that affirms our growing sense of the early stages of the Canadian painter's artistic development. Similar signs are also evident in his copy of Curt Grolig's *Marine View - Moonlight*, now in the National Gallery of Canada, that he also made in Paris during the winter of 1844-45.²

In my essay in the book *Krieghoff: Images of Canada* entitled "The Development of a Canadian Artist," I stress the rapid improvement in the level of his technical skills and point to the obvious shift to a warmer, more romantic palette and compositions in the Quebec period. The firmly-dated copy of the Wickenberg allows us to focus more clearly on Krieghoff's technical and stylistic development during the Montreal years. We can plot more precisely the beginnings, in both his treatment of landscape and in portraiture, of that more romantic taste that would serve him so well in Quebec. I will now focus on a small group of dated landscapes of the Montreal years and will then discuss three portraits of the same period that have surfaced since the organization of the exhibition.

Our first evidence of Krieghoff in the city is an advertisement in the *Pilot* in February of 1846. There are no "pure" landscapes from the Montreal years. The nearest is the "estate portrait" of the *Seigneurie at Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade* (McCord Museum), which is the earliest dated Montreal work and painted for the Hale family in 1846. I will not discuss this commission here as it is complicated by having been based on earlier sketches by Catherine Hale and is one of four related views of Hale residences, not all of which now seem to be by Krieghoff as once believed.³ Nor will I look at the landscape settings for the series of Mohawk family groupings that all seem to have been painted between 1848 and 1851. The depictions of *habitants* in winter settings are more numerous and cover a wider range chronologically as they date in basic concept to his copy after Wickenberg, painted a full year before Krieghoff can securely be placed in Montreal. That prototype, it nonetheless must be stressed, was one of the works by which he chose to represent himself when he exhibited with the Montreal Society of Artists in January 1847.

The earliest dated outdoor scenes of Montreal-region *habitant* life are of 1848 and *Return from the Village* in the Thomson Collection, Toronto, is of that year.⁴ Comparing it with the copy of the Wickenberg and again allowing for the condition of the earlier painting, we can see that the handling in the later work is a bit more refined. However, Krieghoff still models his forms – figures as well as objects – by darkening all their peripheral edges, virtually outlining them in black in a manner similar to the Paris copy; and again, as in the copy, the blocks of ice on the surface of the frozen stream are unconvincing. He is, nevertheless, moving towards greater

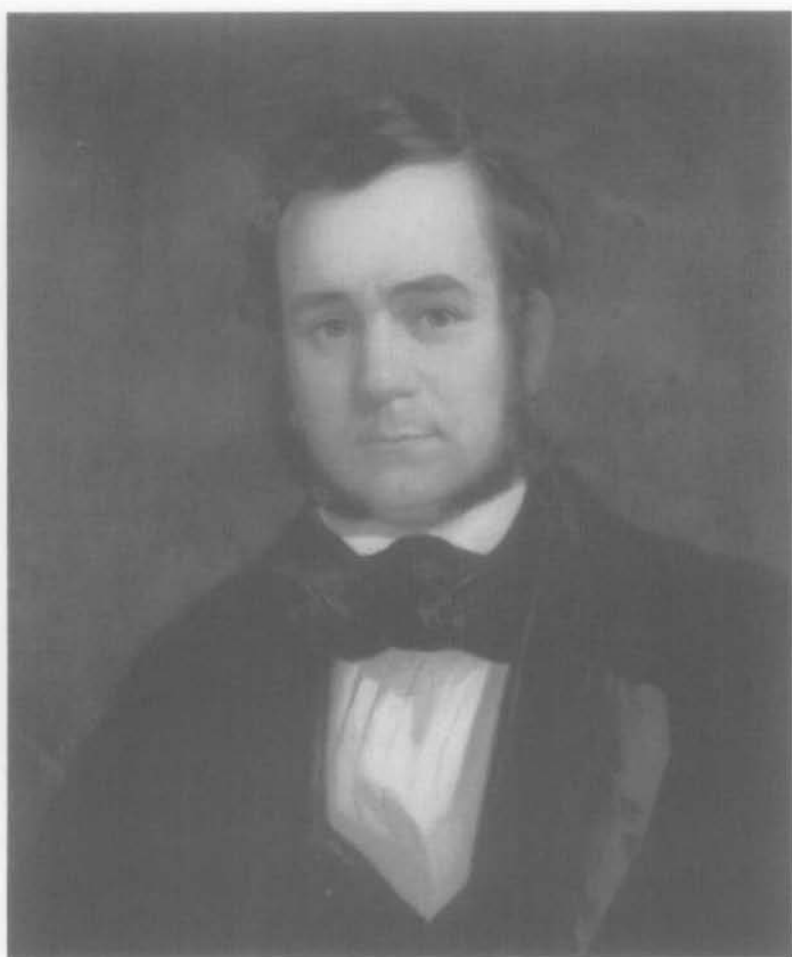


fig.3 Cornelius Krieghoff, *John Leeming*, c.1847, oil on canvas, mounted on board, 80 x 60 cm, Private Collection. (Photo: Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto)

overall luminosity as is even clearer in the famous *Winter Landscape* of 1849, now in the National Gallery of Canada. The painting was originally owned by his Montreal friend, John Young (the gentleman blowing smoke in the *Shakspeare Club* group portrait).⁵ By 1849, Krieghoff is also working very hard to integrate his figures; he has softened the edges; and we do not feel that everything is picked out in dark outline. The ice blocks are more convincing and they are now trapping the light.

One of the last of the Montreal-period exterior *habitant* scenes is actually set on the river ice at Quebec, *Sleigh Race on the St. Lawrence at Quebec* of 1852 (Thomson Collection).⁶ Even more than *Winter Landscape*, it has the romantic scale of the Quebec paintings. It achieves a more effective depiction of a specific atmosphere and the small figures are convincingly *within* the vast landscape. The handling is so much finer than that in the Paris copy: light, delicate and, by comparison, inspired. Seven years separate the two. Is his progress over that period of time impressive? That is hard to say. However he has achieved a confident integrated image, spatially convincing and with an atmosphere that reflects close observation. This all happened while he was resident in Montreal.

Three other paintings that surfaced following the organization of the exhibition also affirm our emerging understanding of his Montreal development. Two came to light about the same time as the copy after Wickenberg and the third about a year after that. The portraits of John Leeming (1814-75) (fig.3), his wife, Sarah (1814-88) (fig.4), and their daughter Emily Anne (fig.5) have the added appeal of bringing substance to an important relationship during the Montreal years. *Leeming and his wife arrived in Canada from England in June 1840. He was an auctioneer and a prominent cultural figure who began selling Krieghoff paintings early in 1848 and, by the time the painter left the city, Leeming seems to have been his principal agent. As with the copy after Wickenberg, I already knew of the portraits of John and Sarah.*⁷ In the late 1960s, J. Russell Harper corresponded with the then-owner, a descendant of John Leeming. I was unable to trace the Leeming heirs until they came forward after reading of the "now lost" portraits in the Krieghoff book. Since the family lived near Toronto, I was able to examine the paintings. The canvases had been cleaned and mounted on light composition board, probably in the twenties. They had clearly been cut down at that time and an inscription from about 1950 on the backing explains that the figures had once been full-length. I think it more likely that, if this is so, they were three-quarter, seated figures, similar to some other Krieghoffs of the period. The signatures presumably were lost with the cutting but the family has never doubted their authorship. The evidence for it, I agreed, is in the paintings.

The portrait of *Emily Anne Leeming* was brought to my attention a year later and is also still with a Leeming descendent. The image is a head and shoulders on canvas, also now mounted on board (although much more recently, in the



fig. 4 Cornelius Krieghoff, Sara Leeming, c.1847, oil on canvas, mounted on board, 80 x 60 cm, Private Collection. (Photo: Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto)

late eighties), and has no evidence of a signature. The three portraits became separated two generations ago and the owners of John and Sarah were unaware of the existence of Emily Anne. She was the second of three children, all girls. The eldest, remembered only as Lizzie, was born in 1842 and lived into the twentieth century but never married. Emily Anne was born either in December 1844 or January 1845 and died in mid-June 1847. Frances Sarah was born just the month before on 7 May 1847. She later married Henry Wilkes Walker in Montreal and the paintings have descended through branches of their line.⁸

The portraits may have been painted before Emily Anne's death in June 1847 or, if hers is a posthumous portrait based on a daguerreotype, they could have been painted the following year when John Leeming began his business association with Krieghoff. Either date is consistent with our sense of the artist's evolving style during the Montreal years and his authorship is clear in certain of the portraits' characteristic features. Notice particularly how the mouths are constructed, especially John's, and the way the arc of the eye moves in a continuous line, turning sharply to delineate the nose. Note also the red patch that stands for John's ear and the only slightly more articulated mass of flesh that serves for Emily Anne's. Krieghoff's earliest known paintings, the small watercolour portraits of Étienne Sévère Filiatrault and his wife done in Boucherville in 1840-41 and now in the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, show a similar approach to the construction of physiognomy. This is especially evident in Mme Filiatrault's eyes, nose, mouth, and her husband's ear.⁹ The splendid pair of Krieghoff portraits of William Williamson and his wife, each with one of their children, reveal exactly the same characteristics, particularly evident in Mrs. Williamson's facial features and her husband's ear.¹⁰ However, they are much more sophisticated in general conception and finish. The portraits were painted in Toronto, probably in the early summer of 1844 and are now in the Royal Ontario Museum. While they are works of great appeal, demonstrating real ability despite their dry, provincial Biedermeier taste, it is clear from the way the young boy's head is set that Krieghoff lacked basic academic training. As we noticed with the earliest landscapes, he silhouettes each distinct form with a dark outline, virtually draining all sense of atmosphere from the picture.

By 1847, the likely date of the Leeming portraits, Krieghoff's trouble with painting ears persists, even in a copy. We can see this in the portrait of Lord Metcalfe (Musée du Château Ramezay) after the print of an Alvah Bradish painting.¹¹ This large painting also demonstrates that Krieghoff's growing concern to create a convincing atmospheric environment for his sitter leads to looser handling and a coarsening of the forms, but nonetheless to a warmer, more romantic style. It must be noted that 1847 was a big year for Krieghoff portraits (no wonder he seems to have been able to truly apply himself to *habitant* scenes only a year later). In 1847, he received a commission to paint the large *Dr. Daniel Arnoldi*, now with the



fig.5 Cornelius Krieghoff, *Emily Anne Leeming*, c.1847, oil on canvas, mounted on board, 52 x 45 cm, Private Collection. (Photo: Ostrom Photography, Westport, Ontario)

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Quebec, Montreal, and also completed a portrait of Queen Victoria after Sir George Hayter (now lost), commissioned by Peter McGill for the Legislative Assembly.¹² A small full-length of Lt. Robert McClure pictured in his arctic furs on the frozen ice of the St. Lawrence in front of Montreal dates from the same year and possibly as well, the small intimate portrayals of Judge John Fletcher and that of his wife with her grand-niece.¹³ The Leeming portraits fit well into this company, perhaps standing out slightly because they are so warm and direct – particularly that of John which is so full of feeling. As fine as they are, however, and as strongly as they point the direction of Krieghoff's development as a painter, they fade beside the wonderful *Portrait of John Budden* (fig.6), also of 1847 and now in a Toronto private collection.

Krieghoff's most compelling portrait, the highly romantic full-length depiction of his longtime friend and business associate, John Sherring Budden (1826-1918) is a work that has so far escaped convincing interpretation. Budden was a Quebec City auctioneer, a partner in the firm Maxham & Co. that regularly represented the painter's interests during the Quebec years. The portrait shows Budden, who was then twenty-one, as a dashing, handsome man; a sportsman entirely at ease in nature, and with himself. The details of his features as well as his clothing and particularly his footwear, are superb and the landscape setting, although cursory, is warm and romantically earthy. The painting is by far Krieghoff's most ambitious portrait and shows every evidence of having been his personal response to a friend.

The main outline of the story of Krieghoff's years in Quebec City derives from Budden's reminiscences a half-century later to the artist's first biographer, G.M. Fairchild Jr. As I have noted in the recent Krieghoff book, it is perhaps as a consequence of this source that Budden looms so very large in the tale.¹⁴ It was at his "instigation," as Fairchild wrote in 1907, that Krieghoff moved to Quebec where "both took up their residence in a most picturesque little cottage at Mount Pleasant."¹⁵ Krieghoff's family, his wife and daughter, are essentially absent from Fairchild's chronicle. The artist's next serious biographer, Marius Barbeau, who first tackled the subject in the mid-thirties and published his last word on Krieghoff in 1962, was even more emphatic than Fairchild regarding Budden's role during the Quebec years. He wrote: "The prevailing influence on him from now on no longer remains Louise [as Barbeau understood his wife Émilie's name to be], who vanishes almost completely from the scene. The role is transferred to John Budden, his patron and friend with whom he enjoyed a gay existence from 1855 to 1864."¹⁶ When I included this quotation in my text in *Krieghoff: Images of Canada*, I paused and careful readers will recall that I remarked in a footnote that "The word 'gay' would not likely then have carried for Barbeau the sexual connotation it does for us today." I nonetheless also thought that even as early as 1962 the general editor of Barbeau's little book, Allan Jarvis, who previously



fig.6 Cornelius Krieghoff, **John Budden**, 1847, oil on canvas, 58 x 74 cm, Private Collection, Toronto. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa)

(1955-60) had been Director of the National Gallery of Canada, and whom I later knew and who was gay, *would* have understood and presumably condoned the connotation. So, although I was surprised, I still was not *very* surprised when, at the launch of our Krieghoff book in Toronto in the fall of 1999, a man approached me and introduced himself as John Fairchild, the great-grandson of the earliest biographer. He asked me if I knew why Krieghoff had left Quebec so suddenly in 1863. I replied that it had been reported in the Toronto *Globe* at the time that he was moving to Europe for his health. Fairchild responded that as well as that might be, he believed that it was because the artist had been discovered in a homosexual relationship with John Budden.

He went on to explain that Budden had been a close friend of his great-great-grandfather, G.M. Fairchild Sr., a wealthy American who had settled in Quebec City in the early 1840s to establish a lumber mill. According to family tradition, he had harboured both Krieghoff and Budden at his grand summer home, Ravenscliffe on Cap Rouge Road. Fairchild Jr., who inherited the bulk of his father's fortune including Ravenscliffe, continued the friendship with Budden. He took his own life in 1912 and although John Fairchild has no evidence of the actual nature of the relationship between Krieghoff and Budden nor of Budden's relationship to his great-grandfather, he wonders if it pertained to his suicide. All he has is the vague information relayed by allusion and innuendo through three generations of his family. He also knew that, not untypically, his family was incapable of any real discussion of sexuality or of suicide.

There is no more that is definitively known, although I am convinced that Barbeau was reflecting his awareness of these same rumours when he wrote about the Krieghoff-Budden relationship in 1962. Indeed, the Quebec City Directory for 1854-55 lists Cap Rouge Road as Krieghoff's country address. Budden is not listed that year. Krieghoff also maintained a city address on St. John Street, but his country address changed to Mount Pleasant in 1856. Budden is also listed at Mount Pleasant in 1857. So it is possible that the two lived together, part of the time at least, until 1858 when Krieghoff is listed as residing only at 11 Grande Allée. There is no documentation that his wife ever lived in Quebec City until the couple returned together from Europe in 1870, although there is no record that she lived elsewhere either. Only one document and some reports place their daughter in the city in the early sixties and nothing suggests she was there before that time.

The portrait of Budden is dated 1847, signed on the sweatband of the hat and initialled and dated lower left of that. I have not been able to view the date with special lighting or under magnification, but noted it first on the occasion of the 1967 *Three Hundred Years of Canadian Art* exhibition in Ottawa and confirmed it in 1999. This places the start of their friendship in Montreal, essentially at the beginning of Krieghoff's effective career in Canada. As Conrad Graham points out, this chronology is supported by Budden's inclusion in the group portrait of *The*



fig.7 Cornelius Krieghoff, *The Narrows on Lake St. Charles*, 1859, oil on canvas, 36 x 53 cm, The Thomson Collection, Art Gallery of Ontario. (Photo: Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto)



fig.8 Cornelius Krieghoff, *Death of the Moose at Sunset. Lake Famine South of Quebec*, 1859, oil on canvas, 36 x 53 cm, Glenbow Collection, Calgary, Alberta, anonymous donation, 1981 (81.7.1). (Photo: Glenbow Collection, Calgary)

Shakspeare Club. Krieghoff depicted Budden at least twice more. According to an early inscription on the stretcher, he is at the centre of the figure grouping in *The Narrows on Lake St. Charles* (fig.7) of 1859 in the Thomson Collection. Krieghoff is shown seated with his back to us, gazing up at Budden, and their mutual friend James Gibb is to the right.¹⁷ The principal roles are somewhat reversed in *Death of the Moose at Sunset, Lake Famine South of Quebec* (fig.8), also of 1859 (Glenbow Museum, Calgary). Budden's back is now to us and the artist is facing out, but Gibb is still watching from the side.¹⁸

It is not good history, of course, to speculate on rumour and gossip and on the treacherous ground of circumstantial evidence. But just imagine what a boon it would be to Queer Studies in Canada if we could confidently interpret these images within a homoerotic context.

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Notes

This article is a blend of two papers, "Some Discoveries Following Upon the Recent Krieghoff Publication and Exhibition," delivered at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 30 September 2000, for the colloquium *François-Marc Gagnon, professeur épormyable*, and "Krieghoff in Montreal," delivered at the McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal, 20 September 2001, for the colloquium *Inside/Out: Cornelius Krieghoff*.

1 See Laurier LACROIX's entry for, "An Officer's Room in Montreal," in *Painting in Quebec, 1820-1850. New Views, New Perspectives*, ed. Mario BÉLAND (Quebec: Musée du Québec, 1992), 339-41.

2 Dennis REID, *Krieghoff: Images of Canada* (Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre/Art Gallery of Ontario, 1999), 53, plate 5.

3 REID, *Krieghoff*, 66-7, plate 41.

4 *Ibid.*, plate 155.

5 See Pierre B. LANDRY, ed., *Catalogue of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Canadian Art*, vol. II (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1994), 385.

6 REID, *Krieghoff*, plate 21.

7 *Ibid.*, 68.

8 The information concerning the Leeming children and later history is courtesy of the owner of the portrait of Emily Anne Leeming.

9 REID, *Krieghoff*, plates 1 and 2.

10 *Ibid.*, plates 4 and 5.

11 *Ibid.*, plate 103.

12 For the Arnoldi portrait see BÉLAND, *Painting in Quebec*, 344; for the copy of Hayter see REID, *Krieghoff*, 69 and 71.

13 For the McClure portrait, see REID, *Krieghoff*, plate 43 and the Fletchers 67.

14 *Ibid.*, 70.

15 G.M. FAIRCHILD, *From My Quebec Scrap-Book* (Quebec: Frank Carrel, 1907), 123.

16 Marius BARBEAU, *Cornelius Krieghoff*, The Gallery of Canadian Art Series, no. 1 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1962), 9.

17 REID, *Krieghoff*, 77-8. Another fascinating piece of information to surface recently is the likelihood that the guide seated in the stern of the far canoe, identified in the inscription as "Old Gabriel," is actually the Huron painter Zacharie Vincent according to Guy Sioui Durand, Université Laval.

18 *Ibid.*, 78.

QUELQUES DÉCOUVERTES À LA SUITE DE L'EXPOSITION ET DU CATALOGUE *KRIEGHOFF: IMAGES DU CANADA, SUR LA PÉRIODE MONTRÉALAISE DE L'ARTISTE*

Un des charmes ambigus qui suivent souvent la présentation du fruit d'une intense recherche, est l'apparition de matériel nouveau suscité par une publication ou une exposition. La publication, en novembre 1999, de *Krieghoff: Images du Canada* a révélé des anecdotes intéressantes sur la ville de Québec au début du XX^e siècle ainsi que cinq tableaux dignes de mention. Ces nouvelles informations élargissent notre compréhension de la décennie que l'artiste a passée à Montréal avant de déménager à Québec. Elles suggèrent que beaucoup de ce qui a été considéré comme son «épanouissement» dans la «vieille capitale», aussi bien en termes d'une relation personnelle importante que de son développement comme peintre, avait, pour l'essentiel, pris naissance à Montréal. Le plus ancien des «nouveaux» tableaux est une copie d'un paysage du peintre suédois Petter Gabriel Wickenberg que Krieghoff avait peint au Musée du Luxembourg, probablement au début de 1845. Il l'a exposé à la Montreal Society of Artists en janvier 1847, un an exactement après que sa résidence dans la ville puisse être établie avec certitude. En comparaison de l'œuvre de Wickenberg, c'est un tableau lugubre et primitif, aux détails grossiers, portant la marque d'un artiste à ses débuts. Les scènes d'extérieur de la vie des «habitants» de la région de Montréal datent de 1848, année du *Le Retour du village*, ou on peut voir que le traitement est déjà un peu plus raffiné, bien qu'il cerne encore ses formes d'un trait pratiquement noir, comme pour sa copie de Paris. Il se dirige toutefois vers une plus grande luminosité générale, comme le montre clairement le fameux *Scène d'hiver* de 1849. Il s'applique à intégrer les figures, adoucissant les contours de sorte qu'on ne sent pas que tout est souligné d'un trait sombre. *Course de traîneaux sur le Saint-Laurent, à Québec*, daté de 1852, une des dernières scènes rurales de la période montréalaise, montre déjà les proportions de style romantique qui sont la marque des tableaux ultérieurs de Québec, de petits personnages dans un vaste panorama, et la représentation efficace d'une certaine atmosphère qui enveloppe les figures. Le traitement d'ensemble est beaucoup plus raffiné que la copie parisienne, léger, délicat et, en comparaison, inspiré. Il avait réalisé une illustration convaincante, intégrée, un espace réaliste et

une atmosphère qui suggère l'expérience. Tout cela s'est produit alors qu'il résidait à Montréal.

Trois autres tableaux qui ont fait surface à la suite de l'exposition confirment également notre nouvelle compréhension de l'évolution montréalaise de Krieghoff. Ce sont le portrait de John Leeming, commissaire-priseur et figure éminente de la scène culturelle, qui avait commencé à vendre les toiles de Krieghoff en 1848, et ceux de sa femme, Sarah et de leur fille Emily Anne. Ils ne sont pas signés (d'après certains indices les toiles auraient été coupées), mais le style de Krieghoff est identifiable par certaines caractéristiques. Notons en particulier comment les bouches sont construites, spécialement celle de John, et la manière dont l'arc des yeux suit une ligne continue, tournant brusquement pour dessiner le nez. Notons aussi la forme rouge qui représente l'oreille de John et la masse de chair à peine plus articulée pour celle d'Emily Anne. Les plus anciens tableaux que nous connaissions de Krieghoff, les petites aquarelles d'Étienne Sévère Filiatrault et de sa femme faites à Boucherville en 1840-1841, montrent un traitement semblable de la construction de la physionomie, particulièrement évident dans les yeux, le nez et la bouche de Mme Filiatrault ainsi que dans l'oreille de son mari. Les superbes portraits de William Williamson et de sa femme, chacun avec un de leurs enfants, ont été peints par Krieghoff à Toronto, probablement au début de l'été 1844, et sont beaucoup plus raffinés dans leur conception générale et leur finition, mais révèlent exactement les mêmes caractéristiques. Et comme nous l'avons vu dans les premiers paysages, il cerne chaque forme distincte d'un trait sombre, ôtant virtuellement au tableau tout sens de l'atmosphère. En 1847, date probable des portraits de la famille Leeming, on peut constater que, même sur une copie, comme le portrait de Lord Metcalfé d'après une gravure d'un tableau d'Alvah Bradish, Krieghoff a toujours des problèmes avec les oreilles. On peut voir aussi, dans ce grand tableau, que son souci croissant de créer un environnement convaincant pour son modèle conduit à un traitement plus flou et à des formes plus grossières, mais néanmoins à un style plus chaleureux, plus romantique. Nous connaissons six autres portraits peints par Krieghoff en 1847, et ceux de la famille Leeming cadrent bien avec eux, s'en démarquant peut-être légèrement parce qu'ils sont si chaleureux et directs, surtout le portrait de John. Tout excellents qu'ils soient cependant, ils pâlisent à côté du merveilleux portrait de John Budden, également de 1847. C'est le portrait le plus attachant peint par Krieghoff, une représentation hautement romantique, en pied, de son ami de longue date et associé, partenaire de la société Maxham & Co. qui représentait les intérêts de l'artiste durant ses années à Québec.

Les premiers biographes de Krieghoff, G.M. Fairchild Jr en 1907 et Marius Barbeau en 1934 et plus tard en 1962, ont beaucoup parlé de son amitié avec Budden durant les années à Québec, mais j'ai tout de même été étonné lorsque, à la suite du lancement du livre sur Krieghoff en 1999, l'arrière petit-fils de Fairchild m'a informé que, selon une tradition familiale, Krieghoff aurait quitté Québec

subitement, en 1863, parce qu'on l'avait surpris dans une relation homosexuelle avec Budden. Les inscriptions dans les bottins de la ville au cours de cette période appuient l'idée d'une certaine proximité entre les deux. De plus, il n'y a pas de documents qui laisseraient supposer que la femme de Krieghoff demeurait à Québec avant qu'ils ne reviennent ensemble d'Europe en 1870 (bien qu'il ne s'en trouve pas non plus qui suggèrent qu'elle ait résidé ailleurs). Un seul document et quelques rapports situent leur fille à Québec au début des années soixante, alors que rien ne laisse entendre qu'elle y ait résidé avant cette époque. Le portrait de Budden date de 1847, ce qui situe le début de leur amitié à Montréal virtuellement au début de la carrière de Krieghoff au Canada, chronologie qu'appuie la présence de Budden dans le portrait de groupe *The Shakspeare Club* par Krieghoff. Il a représenté Budden au moins deux autres fois, plus de dix ans plus tard, au centre du groupe de Krieghoff et de ses amis dans *L'Étranglement du Lac Saint-Charles* de 1859, et encore avec les mêmes personnages dans *Mort de l'original au couchant, lac Famine, au sud de Québec*, aussi de 1859. Naturellement, ce n'est pas faire de la bonne histoire que de spéculer sur des rumeurs et des potins et sur le terrain dangereux des preuves circonstanciées. Mais imaginons un peu quel avantage se serait pour l'étude de l'homosexualité au Canada si on pouvait avec certitude interpréter ces images dans un contexte homoérotique.

Traduction: Élise Bonnette