

East Asian Art in the Wake of the Vienna World's Fair of 1873

Edited by
Lukas Nickel
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Introduction

Lukas Nickel and Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik

When Vienna announced its intention to hold a World's Fair starting on 1 May 1873, many observers may have viewed the city as an unlikely candidate to host such an international event. The first four World's Fairs had been staged in London and Paris, capitals seen by many as the main economic, political, and cultural centres of Europe, and, as they led vast colonial empires, of the world. Over the preceding centuries, both France and England had profited enormously from their far-reaching control of overseas territories, which allowed them to accumulate the wealth, influence, and status that had put them in the position to host a global fair.

Austria-Hungary, though one of the largest European states at the time, with a territory reaching from Galicia in modern-day Ukraine and Poland, Transylvania in modern-day Romania, to the shores of the Mediterranean in modern-day Italy, had much less global prestige. It was a fragile political structure that struggled to keep together the multitude of peoples, tongues, confessions, and traditions that composed its two main entities, the Austrian Empire and Hungarian Kingdom. The state held no colonies abroad, participated little in the lucrative long-distance trade, and had barely any political influence beyond the borders of Europe.

What is more, the Dual Monarchy experienced an identity crisis. A few years before the exhibition, the Habsburg ruling house had lost its nominal rulership over the German states. With wars

and political moves culminating in the Treaty of Versailles of 1871, Prussia had succeeded in forming a German national state under her rule that excluded Austria. The multi-ethnic Dual Monarchy had to find a new definition for itself that gave credit to the various non-Germanophone groups that formed the majority of its population and had started insisting on their national identities. While Britain and France, and more recently the German empire, could justify a claim to be nation-states, recent history forced Austro-Hungary to redefine its self-understanding.

The country managed to turn the apparent disadvantage into a promise. The empire had changed its public image by embracing the diversity of its population. A treaty forged in 1867 gave the Hungarian kingdom far-reaching self-control. The two units pursued largely independent domestic policies, sharing only the military, a foreign office, a ministry of finance, and the head of state. A constitution (*Staatsgrundgesetz*) for the non-Hungarian parts of the country guaranteed its citizens extensive civil rights and granted equality to all the nationalities and languages of its ethnic groups (*Volksstämme*).¹ The seminal constitution followed the demands of the 1848 revolution and laid the foundation for legislation well beyond the collapse of the imperial rule in 1918.

The process of redefinition was helped by the fact that the country lived through a period of

1 *Staatsgrundgesetz* 1867, 396.

unprecedented economic growth. Railways began crisscrossing the vast state, widespread industrialisation transformed the formerly agricultural economy, and stock market shares offered huge returns. The city of Vienna razed its medieval ramparts to accommodate a fast-growing population and, by building the grand boulevard Ring lined with hotels, banks, museums, and offices, transformed itself into a modern metropolis. The term *Gründerzeit* (founder's years) still today stands for a period of rapid urbanisation and economic prosperity in Austria.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 held even more promise for Austria-Hungary as it put the country into an advantageous position in the competition for trade between Europe and South and East Asia. The canal cut travel times from the Mediterranean port of Trieste to Bombay by a staggering 37 days, making it a journey of just 21 days, turning the Austrian Lloyd into a fast-growing global shipping company. The empire seized the opportunity the new transport links offered by deploying in 1869 the "Imperial Expedition to East Asia and South America" under Admiral Anton Petz (1819–1885), a diplomatic mission that was to establish official diplomatic ties with China, Japan, and Siam, and to secure regular consular services in a range of countries.²

After signing a trade agreement with China in September 1869, Austria-Hungary opened a consulate in Shanghai with diplomats responsible for China, Siam, and Japan. Over the following decades, more and more Austro-Hungarian military and merchant ships sailed into East Asia. In the early 20th century, the Dual Monarchy even secured a small share in the division of the territory in the East China Sea between foreign imperialist powers. As a participant in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901) by eight foreign powers, Austria-Hungary was granted the right to a concession in the central part of the harbour city of Tianjin. Although the Lloyd failed to establish a direct shipping connection between the Austrian port of Trieste and the Tianjin concession, and although the Tianjin concession did not generate any major eco-

nomic benefits,³ the concession had a great symbolic value in placing the Austro-Hungarian Empire among the great imperial powers.

Back in 1873, the spectacle of the World's Fair was an attempt to reflect the reinvention of Austria-Hungary. The empire was able to present itself as a modern state that welcomed diversity and benefited from its position between Europe and the East. From the outset, the organisers placed a strong emphasis on the inclusion of non-European states. The director of the exhibition, Wilhelm Freiherr von Schwarz-Senborn (1816–1903), established in the directorate a special division to handle engagement with Asian countries, the "*Comité für den Orient und Ostasien*", headed by the experienced diplomat and consul general in Constantinople, Josef Ritter von Schwegel (1836–1914). Its efforts were most successful in encouraging Turkey, Egypt, and Persia to supply extensive displays and spectacular exhibition buildings. Morocco, Tunisia, Qing China, and Meiji Japan participated in a World's Fair for the first time.

The exhibition organisers showed particular interest and pride in including East Asian states. A report for American observers during the exhibition's planning phase supports this point: the original design of the exhibition grounds provided Japan and China on one side and the USA on the other with the same amount of space for displaying their exhibits—1,350 m² each.⁴ Although the areas provided to these countries changed later on, the initial allocation of equal space to East Asia on the one hand and the USA on the other clearly reflects the Viennese intention to grant China and Japan exceptional importance. Furthermore, the foreign ministry made sure that its newly established representative in China, the minister in residence Heinrich Calice (1831–1912), urged the Qing government to arrange its own exhibition, rather than relying on second-hand shows staged by Europeans as had been the case in earlier World's Fairs. When, after a slow start, the preparations turned fruitful and the amount of cargo announced from China went

³ Lee 2001, 86.

⁴ Blake and Pettit 1873, 7.

² Grigorowicz 1978, 113; Scherzer 1872 and 1873.

beyond expectations, the exhibition directorate willingly erected an extension to significantly expand the gallery space originally granted to China. Japan proved itself more receptive to the Austrian suggestions and proactively designed a spectacular exhibition. Thrilled by the positive Japanese reaction, the organisers offered the country a gallery more than three times the size of the ones for Persia or Romania, plus an extensive outdoor area for the construction of a Japanese landscape garden, a shopping mall, and a Shintō shrine.

Since the World's Fair was hampered from the outset by a stock market crash, a Cholera epidemic, adverse weather conditions, and severe delays in the construction process, it turned out to be much less lucrative and popular than expected. Still, the public greeted the Japanese and Chinese presentations with enthusiasm. The event became consequential well beyond the closing ceremony in autumn 1873, as it helped generate broad interest in East Asian material culture. The *Comité für den Orient und Ostasien*, which had developed plans during the World's Fair for a permanent institution informing the Austrian businesses and the public about products, culture, and trade in Asia, founded an *Orientalisches Museum* in July 1874.⁵ Other public collections began to include East Asian material, some of which were derived from the World's Fair. Private collectors across the Dual Monarchy began assembling material with the intention of building museums. Much of the newly arriving material came through Trieste, a city with long-standing connections to China and Japan.

Research conducted for this book shows that much of the collecting practice was shaped by individual agents. One such person was Josef Haas (1847–1896), who learned Chinese as a young consular officer in Hong Kong and later Shanghai, and went on to become a high-ranking diplomat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to China and Korea. He contributed his expertise and several objects to the 1873 exhibition, and continued to play a cru-

cial, though little acknowledged role in the sourcing and shaping of East Asia collections in the late 19th century. Haas and his wife Eleonore's (1866–1943) contributions to collecting East Asian material for the Dual Monarchy are now scattered across Slovenian, Hungarian, and Austrian institutions.

This volume is based on a project that brought together scholars from various parts of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. It investigates the legacy of the World's Fair for collecting East Asian art in central Europe. Largely based on a grass-roots investigation in archives and museums, it sheds new light on the strategies institutions and individuals pursued in their quest to assemble material from China and Japan. The book is divided into three thematic sections that attempt to address the above-mentioned topics. It begins with a section dealing with the World's Fair itself. The first paper, by Lukas Nickel, examines in detail the process of creating the Chinese pavilion, along with its features and design. He draws on correspondence between diplomatic and political representatives of China and Austria-Hungary, in particular Heinrich Calice (1831–1912), Robert Hart (1835–1911), and Gustav Overbeck (1830–1894), as well as on contemporary photographs, catalogues, and newspaper reports. The paper illustrates the role played by the Qing government, Chinese officials, and some businessmen in the selection of artefacts to be exhibited and thus contributes to the century-long discourse on China's agency in the pavilion's orchestration.

The second paper, by Agnes Schwanzer, focuses on the Japanese participation in the fair and its social gatherings. She highlights the skilful interaction of the Japanese delegation with the Austrian political representatives, the fair's organisers, and the public, and demonstrates that the careful preparation for the exhibition and the selection of objects allowed Japan to present itself as a modern country and facilitated the establishment of future diplomatic and trade relations. Her paper is based on a comprehensive analysis of the press of the time, as the major newspapers constantly reported on various aspects of the fair. In addition, she

5 Gruber et al 2018, 28; Ministerium für Cultus und Unterricht, and Wilhelm von Werbecker 1902, 191–92; Griesmayr 1968.

analyses the correspondence of Archduke Rainer (1827–1913) and sheds light on the processes of dissemination and exchange of Japanese objects at the fair.

Bettina Zorn continues the investigation into the background of the Japanese participation in the Vienna World's Fair. Basing her argument within the historical context of the Meiji period, the author identifies developments that influenced the Japanese selection of objects for the 1873 fair by focusing on the perception and translation of Western terms such as “art” or “museum”. For the Japanese, the terminology was of great importance as they had to ensure that the objects, products and other artefacts would meet the fair's criteria.

The second part of the volume examines the role the Vienna World's Fair played in the dissemination and promotion of ideas, concepts, and notions about East Asian cultures and societies in the ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse landscape of the Dual Monarchy. It contains three papers that show the gradual emergence of East Asian material in public museums or private collections.

The first paper, by Johannes Wieninger, examines the founding phase of today's MAK—Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna, then named the Imperial-Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (*k. k. Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie*). As the MAK houses one of the most extensive collections of East Asian art and decorative arts in Austria today, it is important to understand its initial acquisition policy under its first director Rudolf Eitelberger (1817–1885). The author analyses Eitelberger's directives and policies at the museum and shows that his commitment to non-European topics remained largely marginal, beyond his interest in Chinese enamel works. The author bases his investigation on an examination of all extant records on acquisitions of East Asian objects and books about East Asia, as well as on exhibitions, talks, and publications of the Eitelberger period, and provides a comprehensive list of his findings in historical order.

Michela Messina discusses the significance of Trieste, Austria-Hungary's most important trading port, for the dissemination of East Asian cultures

in the Dual Monarchy. She demonstrates that Trieste had a special position as one of the first cities to come into contact with East Asian cultures, a position facilitated by the founding of the Austrian Lloyd shipping company and the opening of the Suez Canal. In the 19th century, when Austria-Hungary began to play an increasingly important role in East Asia, almost everyone in Trieste owned an object of Asian origin.

Filip Suchomel examines how the Vienna World's Fair triggered the establishment of the first museum institutions on the other side of Austro-Hungarian territory, in Bohemia and Moravia, at the end of the 19th century. His paper traces the lively collecting activities of the middle and upper classes in Czech society, starting with the first public Asian collection of Vojta Náprstek (1826–1894), whose circle of friends was one of the most important sources of information on Asian cultures, and continuing the establishment of further museums under of the fair.

Helena Motoh analyses the correspondence between the Franciscan missionary Peter Baptist Turk (1874–1944), who was stationed in Wuhan in China in the early 20th century, and the director of the Carniolan Provincial Museum in Ljubljana, in order to examine the missionary's role in the acquisition of Chinese objects for this museum. The correspondence sheds light on the perception of East Asian objects and the distinction between ethnographic and religious topics, as well as on the institutions' collection strategies. The author also relates the correspondence to the inventory list and current holdings of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum (Ljubljana), and compares the collection with other collections of Franciscan missionaries in Slovenia and neighbouring countries, in order to examine differences in the collecting agendas of museum institutions and missionaries.

The last part of the book traces the contribution diplomats made to the East Asian exhibitions at the fair and to East Asian material for various museums and other institutions in Austria-Hungary. The first paper in this section, written by Tina Berdajs, deals with Josef Schwegel, the well-known

Austro-Hungarian diplomat and politician of Slovene descent, who was appointed Head of the Committee for the Orient and East Asia, and traces his role in readying the “Orient und Ostasien” section at the fair. A particular focus lies on researching the provenance of a Japanese lidded cup that found its way into the ceramics collection of the National Museum of Slovenia as part of Schwegel’s legacy, and his connection to Japanese objects exhibited at the fair in Vienna.

The second paper, by Györgyi Fajcsák, pursues the curious case of the Chinese moon gate in the garden of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts in Budapest. The moon gate was erected by Ferenc Hopp (1833–1919) with the help of Josef Haas, as can be seen from the surviving correspondence and the accompanying pictorial and written documents. Haas further sourced and provided other garden items such as drum chairs and vases. This case study clearly shows the important role Haas played in equipping public and private museums with East Asian material in Austria-Hungary.

The last paper in this book, by Barbara Trnovec and Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik, reconstructs the life of Eleonore Haas, the wife of Josef Haas, based on archival material preserved in Celje and Vienna, and examines her role in her husband’s collecting activities. After her marriage, she lived in Shanghai for seven years (1889–1896) until Haas’s death. She then travelled back to Austria and in 1913 moved to Mozirje, a small town in northern Slovenia, where she lived until her death in 1943. She brought a large collection with her, which was dispersed after her death. The authors trace the collection’s path using oral history and interviews, and attempt to characterize the Haas’s private collection.

This book aims at highlighting the role the Vienna World’s Fair played in the spread of East Asian objects in Austria-Hungary. It draws on archival material, correspondence, newspaper articles, inventories, and many other documents, most of which have been comprehensively analysed here for the first time. We hope you enjoy reading it.

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As editors, we are grateful to all those who participated in these events. In particular, we are deeply indebted to the authors of this book, who made remarkable contributions and were also extraordinarily patient during the editorial process.

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on the Chinese gallery. We finally want to mention Alexandra Nachescu, M.A., who shared her expertise and diligently guided several project members into the unfathomable depths of the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.

We are pleased to share this new research on the history of collecting with the academic community and all those interested in East Asian art, and hope that our readers will enjoy this book.

Lukas Nickel and Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik

Part 1

The Vienna World's Fair and East Asia

The Chinese Gallery at the Vienna World's Fair of 1873 and Late Habsburg Exhibition Diplomacy

Lukas Nickel

The Vienna World's Fair (*Weltausstellung*) of 1873 is often regarded as the first international exhibition at which China was formally represented.¹ The show certainly constituted the largest and most comprehensive display there had ever been of the art, industry and natural produce of China. It was an event of enormous consequence, leading to the establishment of public and private collections of Chinese material culture across Europe, and shaping European perceptions of China during the *Gründerzeit* years, a period of unprecedented economic growth and confidence. What is more, it arguably determined the Chinese approach to World's Fairs for decades to come.

This chapter takes a close look at the important event. Making use of hitherto little-regarded diplomatic correspondence between the Austro-Hungarian representatives in Shanghai and Hong Kong, the Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry, Chinese officials, and other actors, preserved in archives in Vienna and Taipei, this text will first trace the process through which the exhibition came into being and capture the activities of the brains behind the show: Heinrich Calice, Robert Hart and Gustav Overbeck. It will

then investigate the character and composition of the display and attempt a reconstruction of its layout, based on close examination of contemporary photographs, newspaper reports, and catalogues. Finally, it will make a fresh contribution to the century-long discourse around the extent to which the Chinese empire exercised agency over the display, focusing on evidence that has often been overlooked, and arguing that, while the concept and contents of the exhibition relied almost exclusively on Europeans, the Chinese government—at least retrospectively—did indeed take ownership of the event.

Vienna and the “Orient”

At the early World's Fairs (beginning with the “Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations” in London in 1851, followed by exhibitions in Paris in 1855, London in 1862 and Paris in 1867) it cannot be said that presentations of Chinese material did not play a prominent role. Each of the four exhibitions included a “China court”, “grande exposition chinoise” or “salon chinois”. In 1851, a China gallery occupied a position right in the centre of London's Crystal Palace, opposite the main entrance. The fourth fair in Paris featured Chinese galleries in two separate spaces in the Champs de Mars building, and a garden area consisting of several “chinoise” halls and pavilions

¹ Unless noted otherwise all translations in the text are by the author. As most documents used here have not yet been transcribed and as the Kurrentschrift customary for 19th century German handwriting is often difficult to decipher, all quotations from such documents shall be provided in both German transcription and English translation.

where Chinese persons served tea and staged theatre performances.² In 19th-century Europe, an “Exposition Universelle” or “International Exhibition” true to its name inevitably required the presence of China.

The Qing imperial court, though, took no active role in the first four World’s Fairs. In the case of the Paris exhibition of 1867, we know of a formal notification that had been sent to China, which had resulted in little more than an imperial decree ordering the Superintendent-Ministers of Trade for the Northern Ports and Southern Ports (*Nanbei tongshang dachen* 南北通商大臣) to inform their subordinates and local traders and producers of the Paris show, and offering tax exemptions for exhibits.³ No exhibitors from China had come forward, however, so that it was not the Chinese government but London and Paris merchants, collectors and diplomats with contacts to or knowledge of East Asia who had furnished the stalls featuring trade goods and collectibles from China. As a result, those exhibitions are often seen as projecting a China that was a construct of the European imagination, rather than offering actual insight into Chinese contemporary industry and culture.

The organisers of the *Weltausstellung* in Vienna in 1873 intended to run things differently. The city, at the time, was re-inventing itself as a modern metropolis connecting western Europe and the Orient, a vague geographic term that included the Balkans, Russia, northern Africa, and most of Asia. The opening of the Vienna World’s Fair took place after years of growing economic optimism and political aspiration in Vienna and across the Dual Monarchy. Vienna’s medieval ramparts had been demolished and replaced by the grand boulevard Ring, from which rows of multi-storey apartment blocks began sprawling in every direction. The

population had expanded dramatically, numbering more than a million inhabitants by 1873.⁴ An administrative compromise with the Hungarian part of the empire had brought about internal stability, and a closer alliance with Germany had resulted in a more powerful political position in Europe. Modern railway lines began to criss-cross the country, facilitating an increasing industrialisation. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the quickly developing steam navigation had reduced transport costs and travel time to Asia considerably, and promised to turn the Austrian port in the Mediterranean, Trieste, into a crucial hub for European trade with South and East Asia.

The director of the *Weltausstellung*, the diplomat Wilhelm Freiherr von Schwarz-Senborn (1816–1903), a person who had a long experience with World’s Fairs, placed great emphasis on the proper inclusion of the states of the East.⁵ Schwarz-Senborn established a special division for the Orient and East Asia in the directorate of the fair, headed by the Austrian consul general in Constantinople, Josef Ritter von Schwegel (1836–1914). Schwarz-Senborn’s and Schwegel’s quest to involve additional countries met with impressive success. The exhibition attracted 35 participating nations, with “oriental” states such as Turkey, Egypt and Persia supplying extensive displays and grand exhibition buildings. Morocco and Tunisia attended an international exhibition for the first time.

The importance given to the East becomes most apparent in the design of the monumental main gate to the exhibition grounds. Its pillars carried the names and crests in laurel wreaths of 10 nations. Among the countries the organisers chose to promote at this exalted location, we find Turkey, Persia, and, on the lower right, Japan and China (figs. 1a and 1b).

2 Gubitosi 2023; Martin 2019.

3 Duchesne de Bellecourt (1867, 710, 714) indicated that the emperor had rejected the invitation, a claim that is not entirely correct. For the actions of the Chinese government regarding the 1867 exhibition see the letter from Prince Gong to Calice, 12 August 1872, HHSTA, 145, F34 S.R. Unless otherwise noted, all letters referred to in this text come from this location in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.

4 Wien Geschichte Wiki n.d.

5 Schwarz Senborn had served as “General-Commissär” of the Austrian exhibition at the London World’s Fair in 1862, and had been involved in the Paris exhibition of 1867, see Engel and Rotter (1873, 105).



Fig. 1a: György Klösz (1844–1913). Main gate to the World's Fair area in the Prater with crest of China and Japan on the lower right, 1873, photograph, 30.5×40.3 cm. Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 56564/2, CCo. <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/en/object/128210/>

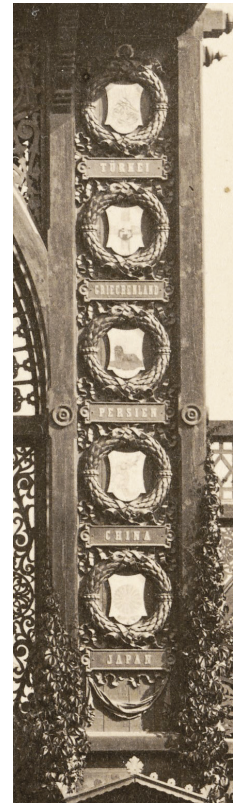


Fig. 1b: The crests of Turkey, Greece, Persia, China and Japan, detail of fig. 1a.

China was a theme in multiple areas of the *Weltausstellung*. The Chinese gallery was located at the eastern end of the gigantic *Industriepalast* (industrial palace) building, in a transept north of the *Längengalerie* (long gallery) close to the east gate (fig. 2). China and Japan were among the four countries that contributed a quantity of material to the “Pavillon des kleinen Kindes”, an additional exhibition on early learning housed in a pavilion north of the *Industriepalast*, and were given one room each in the building.⁶ The “Pavillon des Amateurs”, designed to present ancient arts and crafts from private collections, included substantial amounts of Chinese cloisonné and porcelain provided by two Viennese collectors, the industrialist Altgraf Hugo Karl Franz zu Salm-Reifferscheidt (1832–1890) and the owner of a tea shop,

Carl Trau (1811–1887), and, apparently, by a Persian prince whose name unfortunately remains a mystery.⁷ Then there was the contribution of the Cercle Oriental, an association of businessmen and diplomats that aimed to promote trade with the countries of the East. The group had erected in the Prater a multi-storey building in a fanciful mixture of architectural elements from Turkey, Persia and China. It contained a coffee shop, a library, meeting rooms, a translation and information office, currency exchange facilities, and two exhibition halls. Two rooms on the upper floors, decorated in a lavish Oriental fashion, were meant to serve representatives of Eastern countries as a *pied-à-terre* on the exhibition grounds.⁸

6 Stramm 1873, 1; *General-Catalog* 1873, 827.

7 Birnbacher 2023. For the collection of the “Persian prince and minister” in the pavilion, see Lind (1873, 308).

8 *General-Catalog* 1873, 826–27.



Fig. 2: Carl Waage (1800–1873). The *Industriepalast* and the World's Fair area in the Prater, 1873, lithography on paper, 19.8×26.8 cm. Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 60231, CCo. <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/objekt/472613/>

This chapter will deal mainly with the show in the *Industriepalast*, which was the most representative and widely acknowledged exhibition of Chinese products.

Involving China

The actions that led to the installation of a grand Chinese exhibition at the 1873 World's Fair shall be traced here in some detail as they have so far been insufficiently understood. Previous research has focused primarily on the agency of Chinese institutions and of some foreigners in the service of the Chinese government. Files discovered in the Austrian state archives allow us to reconstruct the train of events in much more detail, revealing it as far more complex than commonly assumed.

To ensure the active participation of China and Japan, Schwarz-Senborn contacted Heinrich Joseph

Aloys Graf von Calice (1831–1912), who, at the time, was travelling in East Asia as part of the Austro-Hungarian expedition to East Asia of 1868–1871 and had assumed the role of consul general and provisional diplomatic agent in November 1869. As representative of the k.u.k.⁹ Foreign Ministry, Calice was the highest-ranking Austrian diplomat in East Asia, and it became his task to approach the governments of China, Japan and Siam regarding the World's Fair. From April 1871, the ministry appointed Calice as Minister in Residence and consul general in Shanghai, from where he was to develop the k.u.k. consular service in these three countries.¹⁰

Calice informed the Beijing authorities of the plans for a World's Fair very early, on 21 October

⁹ K.u.k. stood for *kaiserlich und königlich*, i.e. imperial and royal, as a marker of joint institutions of the two parts of the Dual Monarchy, Austria and Hungary, from 1867 to 1918.

¹⁰ For the complex process that led to the installation of Calice, see Lehner (1995, 157–68); Goldinger (1957, 94); for the expedition, see Scherzer (1872, 1873).

1870, only a few months after the Austrian emperor Franz Joseph I (1830–1916) had approved the request to hold the exhibition.¹¹ The first reaction was encouraging. The Chinese government wrote back almost immediately, on 26 October, and agreed to Calice's requests to make announcements regarding the show, encourage businesses to participate, and to grant tariff exemptions to contributors who might come forward.¹²

The Chinese government charged the *Zongli Yamen* 總理衙門, the ministry handling foreign affairs, with the preparations. As had been the case in 1867, the ministry informed the Superintendent-Ministers of Trade, who in turn notified the Customs Service and local officials about Viennese plans to hold an international exhibition, instructing them “to make known to Chinese merchants and others concerned, that they will be at liberty to send whatever they may desire to exhibit free of Export duty from the Treaty Ports”.¹³ The information moved down the bureaucratic ladder fairly quickly, but without much urgency. On 25 November, for instance, the circuit intendant of Shanghai made a public proclamation, and local port commissioners received their first notices on 31 December 1870.¹⁴

The proclamations failed to generate much interest among the Chinese public, which was still little acquainted with the concept of international exhibitions, and officials hesitated over whether to get involved. While Japan grasped the opportunity to actively craft its image and shape how it was perceived on an international stage, the Chinese government showed little ambition to take matters into its own hands. There was a clear danger that

the Chinese nation would remain on the sidelines and not present a national show, as had been the case in earlier international exhibitions. This was still the case in early 1872, just a year before the opening ceremony of the *Weltausstellung*. In April, the director, Schwarz-Senborn, intervened with the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Ministry, urgently raising concerns about the lack of progress the Chinese exhibition was making.¹⁵

At the time of Schwarz-Senborn's intervention, Calice, who had been formally installed in Shanghai as Minister in Residence of the Dual Monarchy in November 1871, was promoting the cause of the *Weltausstellung* in Japan and later Siam. After receiving the note on his return to China in late Spring 1872, Calice launched into a flurry of activity. His first move was to approach the governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi, Ruilin 瑞麟 (who held the office—a position also referred to as viceroy, *Liangguang zongdu* 兩廣總督—from 1865 to 1874) and other Chinese dignitaries from the region to ask them to submit their significant private art collections for display in Vienna.¹⁶ He then pressed the new Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary, Gyula Andrassy (1823–1890), to grant free transport facilities for submissions.¹⁷ He made the young interpreter of the consulate, Josef Haas (1847–1896), translate into Chinese and annotate the official *Weltausstellung* programme and sent it to the imperial government and other officials.¹⁸ On 4 July alone, he penned more than 50 letters in several languages to engage stakeholders across the country: firstly, nine identical letters to the k.u.k. acting consuls in port cities along the Chinese coast, asking not only

11 Intentions to hold a *Weltausstellung* in Vienna were voiced from 1868. The Austrian emperor approved the request on 24 May 1870. Engel and Rotter (1873, 4); Pemsel (1989, 16–22).

12 For a discussion of the character of the notification and reply, see Tsai Weipin (2022, 8–9).

13 Translation by Robert Hart in Letter to Calice, 5 July 1871.

14 See the translation of the proclamation by Josef Haas 10/H.P. (China), ex 1871, and the letter from Hart to Calice, 5 July 1871, quoting Circular 24 of 31 December 1870, Inspectorate General of Customs.

15 Letter from Schwarz-Senborn to k.u.k. foreign ministry, 9 April 1872.

16 Letter from Calice to Andrassy, 6 September 1872.

17 Calice to Andrassy, 6 June 1872.

18 On Haas, see the most concise notes in Führer (2001, 65, 67–68), based on Georg Lehner. Translation by Josef Haas: *Aoguo gonghui tang wenjian Tongzhi shiyi nian si yue fanyi guanxiashi zuo* 奥国公会堂文件同治十一年四月翻译官夏士作 (*The Documents of the Austrian World's Fair, Made by the Translator Haas in the 4th Month of the Year Tongzhi 11* (1872)).

for exhibits but also for their support in the endeavour to interest the local authorities in the exhibition, even suggesting that the officials should turn to their superiors for further instructions.¹⁹ Apparently, he hoped that some pressure from below might help convince officials in Beijing. On the same day, 18 letters went out to missionaries in many parts of China. The letters, some written in French and some in Italian, urged the missionaries to ask Chinese Christians to participate “in the cause of progress and civilisation” in order to earn “sympathy from all who share an interest in their pious work”. In most letters, Calice even included specific suggestions for exhibits of significance for the locality.²⁰ He dispatched a copy of these letters to the French minister to China, François Henri Louis de Geofroi (or Geofroy, 1822–1899).²¹ Still on 4 July, he contacted the Shanghai representatives of eight maritime freight companies, enquiring about their willingness to transport exhibits for free or at a reduced cost.²² A few days later, he posted a request to the president of the Shanghai chamber of commerce, suggesting that the chamber as an institution might take an active role in arranging the exhibition.²³

Later in the month, Calice travelled to Beijing to personally promote to the government the issue of the Chinese presence at the *Weltausstellung*. Apparently, there had been little communication on the matter between him and the Peking authorities in the preceding two years. This is indicated by the fact that, in the submission to the court

which he wrote during the trip, Calice refers to the last note he had received regarding the World's Fair (following common practice in diplomatic exchanges), giving the date as 26 October 1870, the day the *Yamen* had sent the reply to the initial announcement.²⁴ On this visit, Calice first went to Tianjin to meet the powerful statesman Li Hongzhang (李鴻章, 1823–1901), at the time Superintendent-minister of Trade for the northern ports and Viceroy of Zhili province, who was known as a promoter of modernisation who shaped much of China's foreign policy. Unfortunately, there is no record of this exchange, although we do have details of meetings Calice held in Beijing with the influential prince Gong (恭親王 or Yixin 奕訢, 1833–1898) and other *Zongli Yamen* officials, in his detailed report to the k.u.k. foreign minister and in two submissions to Gong dated 28 July and 2 August 1872 (fig. 3). One submission contained a detailed elaboration of the *Weltausstellung* project, its organisation, the provisions made for foreign participants, and the benefits he saw in such an enterprise.²⁵ The texts further indicate that Calice urged Prince Gong and the *Zongli Yamen* officials to follow the examples of Japan and other countries in setting up a special national commission to arrange the Chinese exhibition in Vienna, and in sending a group of official representatives to the *Weltausstellung*. He further asked for the involvement of all provincial governors (viceroys) in addition to the Superintendent-ministers of Trade, and requested the establishment of central collecting points for submissions in Shanghai and Canton. Envisaging a grand show that included crucial resources and products of industry from across the entire empire, he even assembled and presented to Gong a list that detailed desirable items from each province of China, and suggested that the Chinese government itself should contribute objects of imperial significance, such as newly published maps, weapons from the imperial armoury in Taiyuan, a throne and official

19 Letter from Calice to acting consuls in Kiukiang, Chefoo, Tamsui, Taiwan, Newchang, Hankow, Amoy, Swatow and Ningpo, 4 July 1872.

20 Letter from Calice (in French) to Monseigneurs Dubart in Chi-li, Languillat in Kiang-nan, Desflèches, Pinchon and Lepley in Sse-tchuen, Ponsot in Yün-nan, Lions in Kouitchéau, Chauveau in Thibet, Bray in Kiangsi, Guierry in Tche-kiang, Bax in Mongolia, and (in Italian) to Monseigneurs Navarro in Hu-nan, Zanoli in Hu-pe, Chiai in Shen-si, Monagassa in Shan-si, Cosi in Shan-tung, Tagliabue in Chi-li, Volonteri in Honan, 4 July 1872.

21 Calice to Geofroi, 4 July 1872.

22 Calice to freight companies, 4 July 1872.

23 Calice to president of Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, 8 July 1872.

24 Calice to Gong and ZLYM, 28 July 1872.

25 Calice to Gong, 28 July 1872. For the annotated transcript, see Nickel 2023.

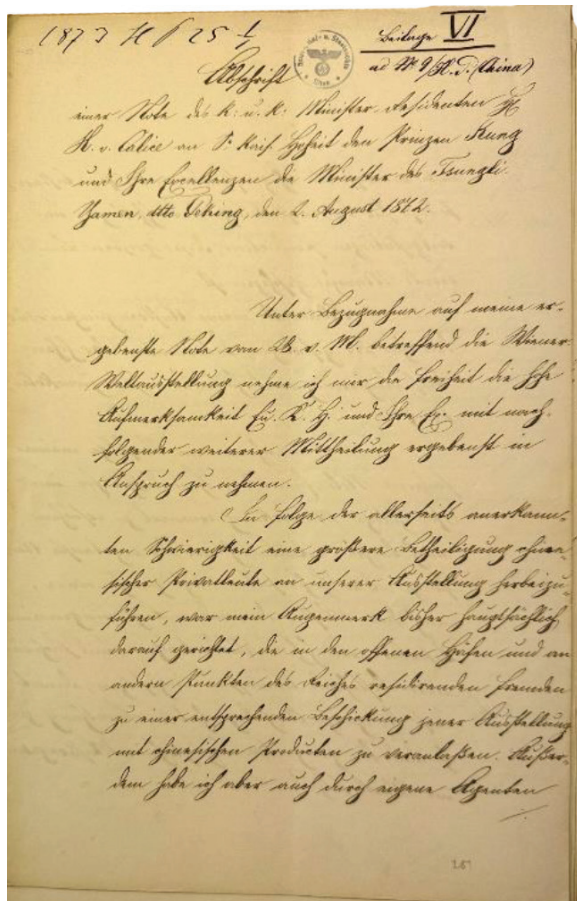


Fig. 3: Archival copy of letter from Calice to his imperial highness Prince Gong and their excellences the ministers of the Zongli Yamen, dated 2 August 1872, page 1. HHSTA, 145, F34 S.R. Photograph by the author.

chariot, and porcelain from the imperial factories in Jingdezhen.²⁶

Calice's main priority, however, was to involve the Chinese Maritime Customs Service (*Da Qing huangjia haiguan zong shuiwusi* 大清皇家海關總稅務司, hereafter CMCS), the body that oversaw the administration of trade at the ports that allowed foreign vessels. At the time, the CMCS, which understood itself as China's most advanced ministry, employed Western (mainly British) expertise to generate duty and tax revenues for the Chinese state. The CMCS had informed its local offices about the *Weltausstellung* as early as 1870,

but had not so far taken any active role.²⁷ On 4 July, Calice wrote to the CMCS's long-serving head, the British Inspector General Robert Hart (1835–1911), with a request for samples and trade statistics that would fit section 7 of the official programme, which was “to show the international exchange of products, a representation of the commerce and trade of the world.”²⁸

Calice assumed correctly that the challenge of contributing to this particular theme of the world exhibition would capture the attention of the capable administrator Hart. On 5 August, Hart replied: “I have the honor to state that the attempt will be made to give effect to your wish, but I am afraid that the shortness of the notice will interfere with the value and the completeness of the Customs' contribution.” He included in his letter a circular which he had distributed two days earlier to the port commissioners detailing his minute instructions regarding the preparation for the show.²⁹ Judging from the dates of the exchanges, Hart became active before Gong or the *Zongli Yamen* had a chance to react to Calice's suggestions or issue any order to the CMCS. Somewhat sneakily, in his submission of 2 August, Calice asked Gong for permission to contact the CMCS, about four weeks after he had actually approached Hart.³⁰

Still, while providing tentative answers to many of Calice's requests, the *Zongli Yamen* seems to have been perfectly happy to cede responsibility for the exhibition to the CMCS.³¹ Calice's initiative to involve Hart proved to be consequential, as the presentation that Hart assembled in Vienna became the blueprint for China's participation in many international exhibitions over the following decades.³²

Robert Hart set out to accomplish his part in the first official Chinese display at a World's Fair

27 Hart to Calice, 5 July 1871, quoting Circular 24 of 31 December 1870, Inspectorate General of Customs.

28 Calice to Hart, 4 July 1872.

29 Hart to Calice, 5 August 1872.

30 Calice to Gong and ZLYM, 2 August 1872.

31 Gong to Calice, 12 August 1872.

32 For a discussion of the role of the CMCS in later exhibitions, see Tsai Weipin (2022, 5–6).

26 Calice to Gong and ZLYM, 28 July and 2 August 1872.

with the utmost bureaucratic efficiency. Closely following Calice's suggestions and following to the letter the guidance given in section 7 of the programme, he decided to arrange the exhibition around the fourteen harbour cities that welcomed foreign trade at the time, planning for no less than an encyclopaedic collection of all goods traded at each port (both imported and exported) on board foreign vessels (the Customs Service had little control over the local commerce on Chinese ships). He required local CMCS representatives to purchase samples of three groups of objects: items imported from abroad, items exported abroad, and items traded along the Chinese coast, which were to be marked as classes A, B, and C respectively. Each sample was to be listed in catalogues arranged according to the classification system published by the organisers of the Viennese World's Fair. The catalogues would include the name of each object in English, German and Chinese, comments on its "origin, nature or method of preparation" and its various usages, as well as information on places of production and consumption, the value, and statistical trade data for the year 1871.³³ Finally the commissioners added labels to each object that contained some of the information from the catalogue.

Hart's idea was to showcase "a complete set of specimens of the complete trade of each individual port",³⁴ which made his show something close to a scientific and statistical enterprise visualising the state of maritime trade of China. His collection included anything that was shipped in and out of the ports, ranging from established trade goods such as enamels, porcelains, wood-carvings, tea and silks, to much more mundane objects such as coal and wood samples, silk waste,³⁵ scrap paper,³⁶ human hair,³⁷ old copper coins used for medical

purposes³⁸ and even human excrement.³⁹ Other exhibits which some visitors may have been surprised to find in the Chinese gallery were watches and clocks produced in America and imported into China,⁴⁰ or a large set of samples of wool and cotton fabrics made in Britain and other parts of Europe, that had been shipped to Shanghai.⁴¹ Hart's plan was clearly an endeavour of scientific quality that aimed at visualising the state of Chinese trade for the display of world trade announced in section 7 of the Viennese programme: a category, incidentally, with which few other countries bothered to engage. Further, it certainly served to underline to his superiors and the public the efficiency and importance of the CMCS.⁴² It stretches the imagination, however, to envisage this material being exhibited as representative of China.

In November 1872, following Calice's suggestion, Hart relieved the commissioner of the port of Canton, Edward Charles Bowra (1841–1874), of his regular duties and ordered him to serve as organiser of the CMCS show for Vienna.⁴³ Bowra realised that the assembly of trade samples, however complete and comprehensive it may have been, might fail to form an attraction for the Viennese audience. He thus created a fourth class of items (next to goods imported from abroad, goods exported overseas, and items shipped in coastal trade) whose purpose was not to illustrate trade statistics but to give some insight into Chinese society and social environment at the specific port, a class D he called "Detached and Miscellaneous Specimens of Articles used in, or peculiar to the locality".⁴⁴ This special class included, in the case of the Tientsin (Tianjin) port, locally used felt stockings and rain-proof reed coats, passenger and goods carts and

33 See the most thoughtful assessment of the *Port Catalogues* in Tsai Weipin (2022).

34 Circular by Robert Hart, quoted in *The London and China Telegraph* 1873, suppl. 2.

35 *Port Catalogues* 1873, 70.

36 *Ibid.*, 474.

37 *Canton Catalogue* 1873, 14.

38 *Port Catalogues* 1873, 142.

39 *Ibid.*, 146.

40 *Ibid.*, 280.

41 *Ibid.*, 180–86.

42 The significance of international exhibitions for the CMCS discusses Zhan Qinghua (2010, 83–86).

43 Calice suggested Bowra in a letter to Hart, 15 September 1872. On Bowra's activities see Baird 2015.

44 *Port Catalogues* 1873, vii.

litters, a fire engine and a wheelbarrow, large sets of locally famous clay figurines showing popular customs and theatre scenes, paintings on glass and nautical and architectural models.⁴⁵ Exhibits of this class proved to be highly popular in Vienna. Many observers praised the technical ingenuity of the wheelbarrow, and the German journalist Julius Rodenberg (1831–1914) spent much of his time in the gallery examining the figurines.⁴⁶ Later in the process, Hart and Bowra even deviated one step further from the original plan. From January 1873, they added classes E and F and authorised commissioners “to receive and forward to Vienna curious or valuable miscellaneous objects” belonging to private owners,⁴⁷ leading to the inclusion of private collections of curios and antiquities intended for the *Exhibition des Amateurs* (section 24, Objects of Fine Arts of the Past). The new submissions included the famous antique collection of Archdeacon John Henry Gray (1823–1890) for the port of Canton, and the Shanghai port listed 20 “Curios exhibited by R.H. Boyce, Esquire” (apparently Robert H. Boyce, an architect and surveyor in the Works Department of the British Foreign Office who was active in China between 1867 and 1900)⁴⁸ in addition to 145 more “curios” collected by a certain Shanghai banker named as Hoo Taou-tai (see below), and items by G. C. Stent (the translator and employee of the Maritime Customs Service George Carter Stent, 1833–1884). More artworks were assigned to section 23, “Art applied to Religion”.⁴⁹

The inclusion of art and antiques promised to make the exhibition much more palatable to a European audience. Hart, however, even after the display had been installed in Vienna, remained stubbornly convinced that none but the trade samples of classes A to C had any scientific significance and that the contribution to section 7 was the only one

that mattered, regarding the collectors’ items he felt forced to include with thinly veiled contempt. In his introduction to the *China Trade Statistics* discussed below, at least, he explained that:

The Chinese collection, under the letters D. E. and F. contains some attractive and interesting articles, but it is under the letters A. B. and C. that what is really valuable is to be found. Whoever desires to study the ‘international exchange of products’ will do well to cast an eye on that homely but complete array of samples and specimens, for, supplemented by Catalogue and Special Statistics, it will be found to explain the mutual wants which Foreign Countries and China in turn feel and in turn supply, and also to indicate, to some extent, the nature of the traffic kept up between some important points in the Empire itself. That the collection is but a small contribution to be sent from China, is apparent; but it is to be remembered that only one experiment has been attempted, namely, to assist in the illustration of ‘the international exchange of products.’⁵⁰

The CMCS collected the exhibits in the ports of Shanghai and Canton and shipped them to Trieste. As the Austrian frigate *Fasana* that had been assigned to take on board the cargo from Japan, China and Siam proved too small, the shipment had to be split into various batches and transported by commercial steamers. Hart appointed a group of six employees—Charles Hannen (unknown dates), Emile de Champs (unknown dates), Edward Bangs Drew (1843–1924), Gustav Detring (1842–1913), Bowra and William Cartwright (unknown dates)—to take care of the shipment and the setting up of the exhibition in Vienna. He sent them with precise instructions even regarding the uniforms they were to have tailored in Vienna.⁵¹

Previous research based on the publications and notes left by the CMCS has concluded that

⁴⁵ Ibid., 34–37.

⁴⁶ Rodenberg 1873.

⁴⁷ Circular no 13 of 1872, quoted in *Port Catalogues* 1873, VIII.

⁴⁸ *Port Catalogues* 1873, 288.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 296.

⁵⁰ *China Trade Statistics* 1873, 5.

⁵¹ Tsai Weipin 2022, 18.

Robert Hart was the brain behind the Chinese exhibition in Vienna. The correspondence in the state archives, however, makes clear that it was Heinrich Calice's vision that guided many of Hart's decisions. The idea that Hart might go beyond a mere presentation of the state of Chinese trade and include private collections, for instance, came from Calice, after he received Archdeacon Gray's offer of his collection. It was Calice who had urged Hart to make Bowra a "special agent" for the CMCS Vienna exhibition, and to send a group of CMCS representatives to Vienna.⁵² Calice befriended Bowra early in the process, and appears to have discussed with him frequently the design and progress of the CMCS section of the exhibition, giving advice and pointing out possible obstacles. Calice also remained in close contact with several other CMCS port commissioners.⁵³ He even put into Hart's mind the idea of procuring a "magnificent entrance gate" to the Chinese exhibition, although what Calice envisaged was "a full frontispiece of a Peking-shop" rather than the *pailou* (牌樓) honorary gate that Hart finally had installed.⁵⁴

Although Hart largely accepted his advice, Calice did not leave the creation of the Chinese gallery solely in his hands and those of the CMCS. He remained determined to present the products of the art, industry and natural resources of the whole nation and procure an exhibition representative of China, not just a display of trade goods handled in Treaty Ports, such as the CMCS was able to provide. To this end, in addition to the section assembled by Hart, Calice prepared a second section for the Chinese pavilion. He continued to collect the submissions provided by the Christian missions working in the interior of China, the Austrian consulates, and several other stakeholders. This group was shaped by what might be called an ethnographic approach. The display that came together included agricultural produce, staples and everyday products that were of significance locally—missionaries from Inner Mongolia province, for instance, sent

Mongolian costumes, cutlery, pots, a shotgun, arrows, wooden cups and two yurts, while the Hubei mission provided local tobacco, cotton, silk, and baste fibre samples as well as ordinary household utensils and jewellery⁵⁵—thus giving an insight into everyday life in parts of China that were, at the time, little known to Europeans.

This second section included items supplied by several individuals, notably the translator of the Austrian embassy, Josef Haas, the Austrian consul Rudolf Schlick, and the silk inspector August Mertens (dates for both unknown). Carl Heinrich Bismarck (1839–1879), translator at the German embassy in Beijing, had sent samples of all stages of cloisonné-making, along with detailed descriptions of the manufacturing process. The *General-Catalog* listed one more, rather enigmatic, supplier, a certain "Kia-li-che in Shanghai".⁵⁶ This may very well be a transcription of Calice's Chinese name Jia Li Zhi 嘉理治, but it remains unclear why he would disguise his own contributions in the official publications. "Kia-li-che" provided collections of "ordinary glass wares", a "complete set" of wax and tallow candles, artificial flowers and a model of a Chinese mansion.

A third section of the Chinese gallery was organised by the tradesman, adventurer and Austrian consul in Hong Kong, Gustav Ritter von Overbeck (1830–1894).⁵⁷ Overbeck had begun to prepare his presentation as early as October 1871.⁵⁸ Apparently, he was keen to take a leading role in the arrangement of the China exhibition. As he put it in a letter in 1872, he was convinced "that one cannot count on any kind of participation on the side of the Chinese trade and manufacturing circles as exhibitors of national or industrial products".⁵⁹

52 Calice to Hart, 15 September 1872.

53 Calice to Bowra, 12 September 1872.

54 Calice to Hart, 15 September 1872.

55 *General-Catalog* 1873, 761.

56 *Ibid.*, 761–62.

57 Nachescu 2023; Lehner 1995, 95–103.

58 Schwarz-Senborn to Ministerium des Äusseren, 19 October 1871.

59 "daß auf irgend eine Beteiligung des chinesischen Handels- und Gewerbestandes, als Aussteller von Landes- und Industrieproducten, durchaus nicht zu rechnen ist." Letter from Overbeck to Minister des kaiserlichen Hofes und des Äusseren, 20 February 1872.

Overbeck had invited a diverse group of his business associates to contribute material. The contributors were foreign merchants who had representations in mainland Chinese port cities or in Taiwan. Two, however, were not based in China and bizarrely sent Japanese and Philippine goods to the Chinese pavilion. In addition, Overbeck provided a large number of objects himself, notably various kinds of hardwood furniture, soapstone, ivory and lacquer objects, porcelain and some maps and a series of paintings.⁶⁰

Overbeck emblazoned the gate to the China courtyard and several other entrances with his own name in large letters, which contrasts starkly with Calice's presumed attempts to hide his name in the catalogues. His personal contributions centred on Chinese products but also included objects of other origin that were likely to attract European buyers, such as lacquer boxes, teacups, and lamps made in Japan, paper from Korea and an Indian writing set. These observations suggest that for Overbeck, desire for commercial gain and social recognition may have been a stronger incentive for participating in the Vienna World's Fair than the wish to appropriately represent Chinese culture. His stance calls to mind a comment made by the art historian Rudolf Eitelberger (1817–1885) in 1870 during the run-up to the *Weltausstellung*: “Ambitious and vain men from all strata of society grow from the ground like mushrooms when there is talk of a World's Fair. One desires a title, the second an Order, and the third needs the advertisement a World's Fair offers for other purposes.”⁶¹ Indeed, the items presented in Overbeck's section were intended for sale, and before the exhibition had ended he had lobbied successfully to be elevated to the rank of *Freiherr* (Baron).

Overbeck's section in the Chinese court featured prominently in newspaper reports and in the photographs of the *Weltausstellung*. Hence, some contemporary journalists and modern researchers formed the impression that his contribution had

formed the core of the Chinese display.⁶² In fact, what made the Chinese exhibition significant and different from what had been attempted at previous World's Fairs were the other displays—the ambitious trade exhibition by the CMCS and the more comprehensive and ethnographic show by Calice.

What Did the Chinese Exhibition Look Like?

In their original plans, the Vienna organisers had placed the Chinese gallery in a part of the second-to-last transept (No XII b) at the very eastern end of the *Industriepalast*, the most impressive building inside the exhibition compound (fig. 2). The position of the gallery fitted the geographical approach taken in Vienna, which put Germany, as the state in the centre of Europe, in the Rotunda, France, Britain and the US in the western long gallery, and Austria, Hungary and “oriental” states such as Turkey, Persia, Romania, Tunisia, Siam, China and Japan in the eastern long gallery. When it became clear that the large quantity of goods shipped from China would not fit into the transept hall, the organisers decided to cover part of the courtyard between the transept of China and Persia and that of Japan with a roof, supported by two rows of cast iron columns and conveniently lighted by large ceiling windows.

The last-minute remodelling of the exhibition space and the late arrival of some shipments delayed the installation of the specimens and forced the Chinese gallery to remain closed until well after the official opening of the *Weltausstellung* on 1 May. The public were given access to the hall in the transept at some point in May 1873, and after frantic preparations, the courtyard finally opened its doors on 11 June.⁶³

A ground plan of the Chinese exhibition has yet to be discovered, but a close examination of the

60 Overbeck 1873, 30 and 49.

61 Eitelberger 1871 28. I am grateful to Alexandra Nachescu for pointing me to this text.

62 See, for instance, the extensive reports in the *Tetschen-Bodenbacher Anzeiger* (1873a; 1873b; 1873c), that do not even acknowledge the installations by the CMCS and Calice, and Pemsel (1989, 50).

63 *Wiener Weltausstellungs-Zeitung* 1873, Supplement.

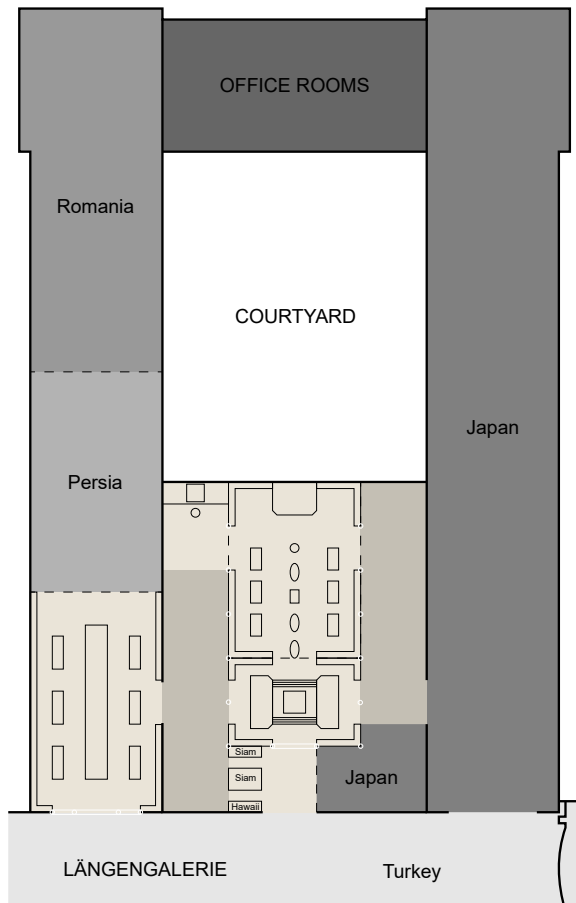


Fig. 4: Tentative reconstruction of the Chinese space in the Industriepalast. Beige areas show the Chinese exhibition, dark beige areas indicate undocumented sections of the Chinese exhibition. Reconstruction by the author, sketch by Denise Gubitosi.

photographs appears to make a tentative reconstruction feasible. The hall in the transept probably measured 15x25 m. The makeshift roof covered about half the courtyard, measuring approximately 30x37.5m. The expansion added more than 1,100m² to the exhibition, almost quadrupling the space originally assigned to China.⁶⁴ Smaller sections on the southern side of the courtyard were ceded to the display cabinet of Hawaii, a cabinet and a table

⁶⁴ A ground plan of the Chinese exhibition has yet to be discovered, so my estimates of its size remain tentative. Judging from a detailed examination of the photographs and a calculation of the outer dimensions of the *Industriepalast*, the hall in the transept measured 15x25 m. The makeshift roof covered about half the courtyard, measuring approximately 30x37.5 m.

of the Siam exhibition, and a part of the Japanese exhibition (fig. 4).

The main entrance to the Chinese gallery framed a tall, carved and partly gilt wooden gateway, modelled on a traditional Chinese gate of honour, the *pailou* 牌樓 (fig. 5). It featured green curved roofs with wide eaves and bracket sets, the circular symbol of *yin* and *yang*, a pair of curling dragons, and—in gold on red ground—the words “China” in Latin letters and *Da Qing Guo* 大清國 in large Chinese characters. A fitting couplet said to come from Confucius completed the assembly. It read *lai bai gong ye* 來百工也 (“attract the skilled craftsmen”) and *rou yuanren ye* 柔遠人也 (“treat those distant from you with gentleness”): two phrases that were part of a longer sentence outlining the proper virtues of rulers of states from the classic *Zhongyong* 中庸 (*Doctrine of the Mean*).⁶⁵ At the time, hardly anyone in Vienna was able to read Chinese, but design and characters sufficiently projected recognisable symbols of Chineseness and marked the entrance as unmistakably Chinese. The green flag of the CMCS crowned the gate. Three portals framed by yellow curtains led into the transept hall which contained the first part of the CMCS exhibition.⁶⁶

Photographs of the time provide a good idea of the layout of the hall. A long row of tables in the centre, two rows of high glass-fronted cupboards topped by Chinese-style roofs and two more table rows along the walls formed four corridors through which the audience could pass to inspect the exhibits. Porcelain vases, plates of monumental dimensions, bronzes and tall models of pagodas crowded the tabletops. The cupboards seem to have contained thematic displays, with the first two on the left displaying bolts of cloth, and the last one on the right containing fans and wood carvings. Large numbers of figurines stood under glass covers. Judging from the large number of enamels, porcelains and pagoda models, it appears that it was the collections of Archdeacon Gray and other collectors that dominated this first room of

⁶⁵ Translation by Robert Eno 2016, 32.

⁶⁶ Rodenberg 1875, 64–65.



Fig. 5: György Klösz (1844–1913). Honorary gate at entrance to CMCS transept, 1873, photograph, 9.8×14 cm. Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 174005/8, CCo. <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/objekt/343763/>



Fig. 6: Michael Frankenstein (1843–1918). Wiener Photographen-Association, The CMCS transept seen from the north, 1873, photograph, 20×25.5 cm. Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 78080/419, CCo. <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/objekt/1028604/>



Fig. 7: Michael Frankenstein (1843–1918). Wiener Photographen-Association, North end of western nave of the Chinese courtyard with furniture and paintings belonging to the CMCS section, 1873, photograph, 20.4×25.4 cm. Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 52334/16, CCo. <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/objekt/422635/>

the CMCS show. The six tall pagoda models on the central table, at least, were part of Gray's property (fig. 6).⁶⁷ A portal to the right led into the courtyard where the CMCS display continued.

Two rows of cast-iron columns divided the courtyard into three naves. While the central nave appears on multiple photographs, much of the design and content of the side naves remain unclear. The second part of the CMCS exhibition of trade samples began opposite the doorway from the transept. Long tables presented seeds, plant samples, minerals and a collection of wood specimens. Others showed all stages of tea and tobacco production, while cabinets to both sides featured leather

goods, paper products such as artificial flowers and fans, and assortments of brushes, ink and coloured paints. The CMCS show extended, according to one report, along the western nave towards the north. The text speaks of assemblies of silk, leatherware, and wood samples. The side nave may have contained a whole group of tools and machines mentioned in the *General-Catalog* but not visible in photographs, such as a plough, an irrigation machine, a water mill, a weaving loom and a spinning wheel.⁶⁸ Some photographs show the northern end of this nave, featuring a large wooden bed, furniture, carpets, nautical models and a considerable number of drawings and paintings hanging from

⁶⁷ *Canton Catalogue* 1873, 48.

⁶⁸ *General-Catalog* 1873, 760.



Fig. 8: Wiener Photographen-Association, Central nave of the Chinese courtyard, seen from the north, 1873, photograph, 10.3×11.5 cm. Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 174006/26, CCo. <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/objekt/344070/>

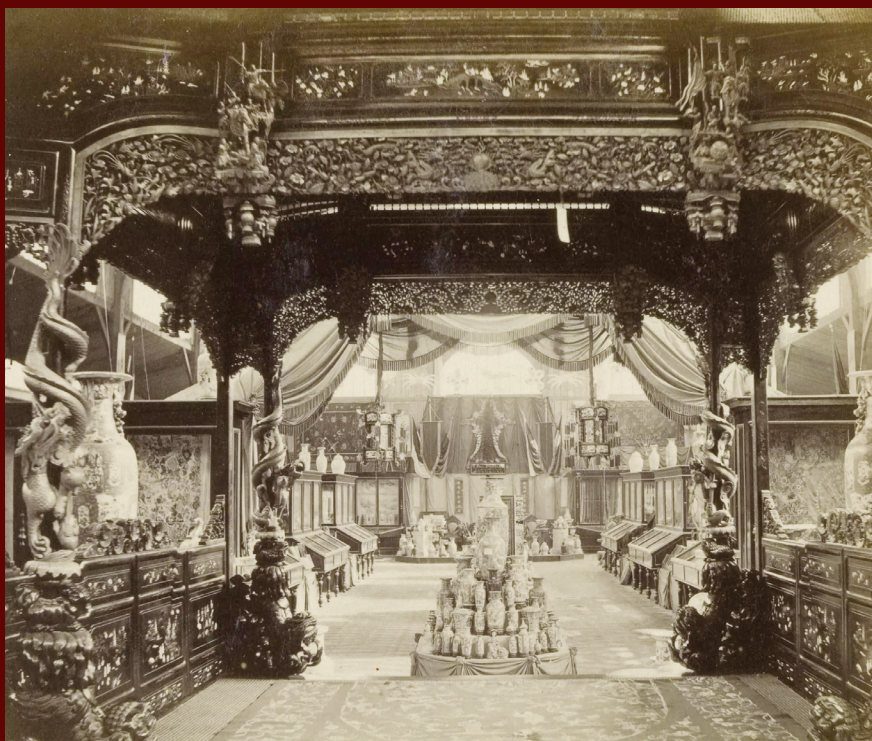


Fig. 9: Wiener Photographen-Association, Central nave of Chinese courtyard, seen from the south, 1873, photograph, 10.6×11.2 cm. Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 174006/32, CCo. <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/objekt/344082/>

makeshift walls (fig. 7). The Ningbo bed decorated with carvings, inlay and drawings was certainly one of the bulkiest exhibits in the CMCS show. Apparently it was part of Bowra's property.⁶⁹

We do not know what proportion of the goods that the CMCS had collected at the ports and brought to Vienna was actually displayed. The shipment from China was substantial—the number of objects included in the almost 500 pages of the *Port Catalogues of the Chinese Customs' Collection at the Austro-Hungarian Universal Exhibition, 1873; To Illustrate the International Exchange of Products, published by Order of the Inspector General of Chinese Maritime Customs*, hereafter the *Port Catalogues*, cannot be precisely determined, but the port of Canton alone listed 279 entries, many of which refer to whole sets of objects, plus a further 1,247 entries referring to the property of private owners.⁷⁰ Even if the space originally assigned to China had been expanded considerably, we may safely assume that the final exhibition showed only a selection of the items shipped to Vienna.

Further, it remains unclear if the limited space in the *Industriepalast* allowed a separate installation for each of the 14 Treaty Ports as originally intended by Robert Hart. The *General-Catalog* and reports in newspapers, at least, do not refer to fourteen distinct displays. The layout we can infer from the few detailed descriptions of the Chinese galleries seems in fact to have been adjusted to the order suggested in the *Weltausstellung* programme, which had sorted all crafts and industries into 26 groups. Hence, tables presented wood samples, tea and tobacco products, and showcases featured silk fabrics, leather goods, paper samples, brushes, pigments and ink, as well as porcelain.⁷¹ In the end, the exhibition arranged by the CMCS received praise from some journalists, that is, at least before

the full show had actually opened.⁷² Later, a more critical observer called the CMCS exhibition merely a collection of “interesting but unattractive treasures”.⁷³ Robert Hart himself, however, who remained in Shanghai and learned about what had gone on in Vienna only through the reports sent by the commissioners present in Austria, considered the exhibition “a decided success”.⁷⁴

No photographs or descriptions of the eastern nave have survived, but the central nave of the Chinese courtyard building features in multiple depictions (figs. 8 and 9). A dark, fancifully draped curtain divided the large area into a northern and a southern space. Calice's section was assigned to the northern part, although it is currently not possible to identify specific objects from his collection on the photographs. A report speaks of cabinets showing artefacts and natural specimens along the walls and in two additional rows of double-sided glass cases parallel to it, plus displays of porcelain in the centre. It also mentions the presence of the missionaries' collections in showcases on the main wall; it remains unclear which wall that may have been,⁷⁵ but it is likely that the ordinary agricultural tools placed on top of some cabinets and the small objects visible inside (fig. 10) had been contributed by the missionaries. One may speculate that large-scale exhibits such as the two Mongolian yurts stood in the photographically undocumented eastern nave, or were not presented at all.

The group of tables, armchairs and porcelain screens at the northern wall and the huge number of vases on the tables in the centre of the room probably belonged to Overbeck's section. The lack of clear separation between Calice's and Overbeck's sections may result from the fact that both had put the arrangement of the display into the hands of the same agent, the company Gebrüder Schönberger, an emporium run by Hugo

69 *Port Catalogues* 1873, 319.

70 For the *Port Catalogues*, see the discussion below, Baird (2011, 155–59), and the excellent study by Tsai Weipin (2022, 20–26).

71 *General-Catalog* 1873, 757–61; *Wiener Weltausstellungs-Zeitung* 1873, Beilage; *Tetschen-Bodenbacher Anzeiger* 1873c, 295–96.

72 *The London and China Telegraph* 1873a, Supplement: 1.

73 *The London and China Telegraph* 1873b, 551.

74 Unpublished diary of Robert Hart, 22 July 1873, quoted in Pitman 2002, 42.

75 “China in der Weltausstellung” in *Wiener Weltausstellungs-Zeitung* 1873, Beilage.



Fig. 10: György Klösz (1844–1913). Wiener Photographen-Association, Northern side of the courtyard with the section arranged by Calice, 1873, photograph, 10.6×11.2 cm. Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 56729/4, CCO. <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/objekt/128374/>

(1838–1900) und Victor (1844–1893) Schönberger. Victor Schönberger had participated in the 1869 Austro-Hungarian expedition to East Asia and South America and knew Calice and Overbeck personally. The company was to handle the sale of Overbeck's items after the exhibition, and soon made a name for itself as a leading trader in East Asian objects in Vienna.⁷⁶

The bulk of the display assembled by Overbeck occupied the front part of the courtyard, that is, the southern area accessible through a wide gate from the Turkish exhibition in the long gallery (fig. 11). The gate stood inside the courtyard, leaving space for a table and two cabinets containing the displays of Siam and Hawaii to the left. On the right-hand side, a curtain of Japanese fabrics visible on the photograph indicates

the outer edge of the Japanese exhibition. Overbeck's section was dominated by a monumental carved wooden bedstead, inlaid with ivory, that was raised on a central platform, with steps leading up to it on the northern and southern sides (fig. 12). Assemblies of tables, chairs, carpets, and cupboards were arranged to resemble living rooms at the four corners of the platform. Porcelain and enamel bowls, vases, pagoda models and sculptures covered most of the tables as well as the remaining surfaces of the platform and the stairs, making a decidedly crowded impression. Picture scrolls and framed paintings hung from the ceiling and makeshift walls were covered with curtains. Here we do not find any indication that the composition followed the groupings of the programme. One may imagine that, on the contrary, the display was arranged so as to profile

⁷⁶ Ibid.



Fig. 11: György Klösz (1844–1913). Entrance to the Chinese courtyard and the Overbeck section seen from the Turkish exhibition in the long gallery, 1873, photograph, 9.8×13.8 cm, Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 174005/54, CCo. <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/objekt/343914/>

the various trading companies who had joined Overbeck's section to enhance their business in Europe. Regarding the furniture, one observer noted that it did not look genuinely Chinese, but seemed to be adjusted to European taste, and claimed that the appearance of the objects suggested "some kind of middle ground between Chinese and diverse European styles. The various motifs overlap and create bastard products with a sometimes unpleasant, sometimes capricious and interesting touch".⁷⁷

In setting up the show, the Schönbergers may have faced the same challenge as the CMCS

⁷⁷ "eine Art Mittelstufe zwischen chinesischem und mannigfachem europäischen Style. Die verschiedenen Motive kreuzen sich und bringen Bastardproducte hervor, die oft unangenehm berühren, oft auch capriciös und interessant sind." *Tetschen-Bodenbacher Anzeiger* 1873c, 307.

exhibition managers. Again, it is difficult to establish precise numbers of exhibits but it is apparent that the quantity of items sent from Asia was substantial. We have little information on the size of Calice's section and many of the 1,558 entries in Overbeck's *Special Catalog* refer to groups of objects. The trading house Carlowitz und Company from Canton alone provided two large and four small dark wood tables, a sofa, fourteen chairs, and four seats. Its vast collection of porcelain included 626 enamelled vases, some of which were close to one metre tall, and 430 porcelain figurines.⁷⁸ The photographs of the crowded central nave of the courtyard give the impression of a shop salesroom rather than an exhibition presenting the natural resources and industry of a nation

⁷⁸ Overbeck 1873, 27–28; Lott 1874, 48.

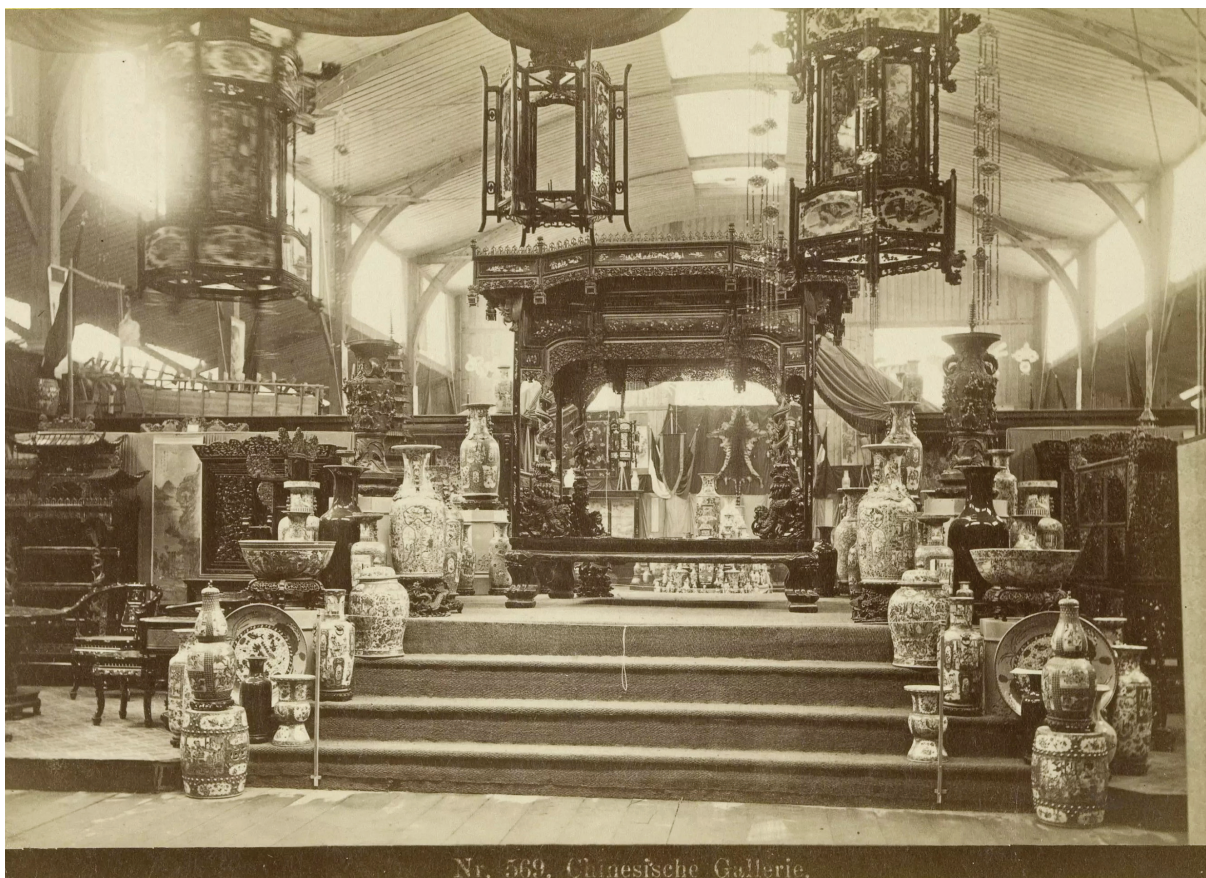


Fig. 12: Michael Frankenstein (1843–1918). Wiener Photographen-Association, Platform with bedstead in the Overbeck section of the Chinese courtyard, 1873, photograph, 9.7×14 cm. Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 174004/5, CCo. <https://sammlung.wien-museum.at/objekt/347711/>

to the world. In this regard, the Schönberger display came close to what had been done at earlier World's Fairs.⁷⁹ Rather bluntly, one unnamed observer described Overbeck's Chinese exhibition as "a sort of bazaar, full of objects of curiosity and merit, illustrating the knick-knacks and minor objects of art which enter into Chinese ordinary life".⁸⁰

The objects in each of the three sections bore labels as well as markers that indicated if they had been sold already. In the CMCS section, the exhibits had pre-printed labels in standardised format that were partly filled out manually. They indicated the number of the group according to the World's Fair programme, a letter for the class according to

Hart's categorisation, the port from which the object originated, its number in the *Port Catalogues*, as well as its name and price. Some of these labels are still extant. A lacquered cigar case now kept in the Weltmuseum Wien was part of a consignment of "Lacquered Ware" listed as number 137 from the port of Foochow (Fuzhou).⁸¹ Another pair of examples, held in the Technische Museum Wien, are a figure of a bird made of painted charcoal that bears a label from Foochow⁸², and a small box containing a Guanyin figure made of the pith of the rice paper plant, *Tetrapanax papyrifer*, marked as no 5 of class D from the port of Amoy (Xiamen).⁸³ We do not know yet what kind of labels Calice's

79 Gubitosi 2023.

80 *The London and China Telegraph* 1873b, 551.

81 *Port Catalogues* 1873, 342, see Budweiser (2023, fig. 13).

82 Hemmelmayer 2023.

83 *Port Catalogues* 1873, 399; see Kayal (2023).

suppliers employed, but we do have some of the labels that the contributors of Overbeck's section applied to their exhibits.⁸⁴

Some thought had been given to the protection of the exhibits. Cords separated objects from the areas that were accessible to visitors. Signs in four languages asked viewers not to touch the objects, an order given emphasis by the presence of an Austrian security officer in the gallery.⁸⁵

Financially, the Chinese show was apparently a success. Rodenberg complained that many of the more attractive exhibits bore signs reading "verkauft, Lord Dudley" even before the exhibition had officially opened.⁸⁶ This label probably referred to William Ward, 1st Earl of Dudley (1817–1885), an exceptionally rich English mining magnate who attended the opening of the show with his wife in early May.⁸⁷ We do not have sales records from Vienna, but Jennifer Pitman has shown from the purchase receipts for the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia of 1876—the next international exhibition in which the CMCS participated—that the Chinese sales in that year were significant:⁸⁸ cloisonné and ceramics proved the most popular, commanding the highest returns in absolute numbers, while furniture virtually sold out. Most of the jade items and half of the silk exhibits, on the other hand, had to be returned to China.

In Vienna, the CMCS commission was in a position to donate the extraordinary sum of 10,000 Gulden, equivalent to 20,000 *Weltausstellung* entry tickets or more than 130,000 Euro in modern money,⁸⁹ for a concert at the prestigious Musikverein. Directed and performed by the most acclaimed conductors and musicians such as the director of the Hofoper, Johann Herbeck (1831–1877), and Johann Strauss jun. (1855–1899), the

concert presented music by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and the Donauwalzer. With an audience of 1,700 invited guests, the "Chinesisches Abschlusskonzert" on 4 November became the social event of the season.⁹⁰

Catalogues

The *Wiener Weltausstellung* surpassed its predecessors not just in size and ambition, but also in the vast number of publications produced to document the event. Many of the reports and catalogues contain valuable information on the Chinese gallery. Most still await scientific scrutiny, but it may be helpful at this point to make a few remarks on the publications.

The most comprehensive publication of the *Weltausstellung* was the *Officieller Ausstellungs-Bericht*.⁹¹ The authors—more than one hundred professionals, intellectuals and officials from all over Austria-Hungary—completed the last of its 95 volumes only in 1878. Structured not by nation but according to the sections and sub-sections of the programme, the series refers to Chinese contributions in almost every volume.

Then there was the *Officieller General-Catalog*. Its more than 800 pages were arranged by country. The information on the Chinese gallery is extremely condensed, covering just eight pages.⁹² Still, the catalogue is especially valuable as it lists the exhibits of the three sections of the Chinese show separately, thus giving some insight into Calice's section for which no special catalogue was collated.

Robert Hart and the CMCS produced the extensive catalogue mentioned above, the *Port Catalogues*. One might be tempted to say that the *Port Catalogues* were the crucial output of the CMCS exercise, with the objects constituting more of an adjunct to the catalogue than a comprehensible exhibition.

84 Grünsteidl 2023, fig. 2.

85 Rodenberg 1875, 72.

86 Ibid., 73.

87 See the text by Agnes Schwanzer in this volume.

88 Pitman 2002, 55.

89 For tentative valuations of the Gulden, see <https://www.eurologisch.at/docroot/waehrungsrechner/#/> and <https://www.1133.at/document/view/id/475>.

90 Pemsel 1989, 85; Riccobono 2023a; *Neue Illustrierte Zeitung* 1873, 4; Helm 1873.

91 For the types of publications during the *Weltausstellung*, see Pemsel (1989, 63–64).

92 *General-Catalog* 1873, 757–65.

The 500-page *Port Catalogues* were published only after the exhibition had ended, printed in Shanghai with an introduction by Robert Hart dating from December 1873. A draft had been finished as early as January, and Bowra had been tasked with editing it on his journey to Trieste and printing it in Vienna.⁹³ This apparently did not happen. During the exhibition, however, several visitors mentioned having seen a catalogue. This may refer to a manuscript that had been made available to the public.⁹⁴

The manuscript shown at the exhibition may have been much more extensive than the printed version available now. The journalist Julius Rodenberg used information he had found in the catalogue manuscript provided in the Chinese gallery as the basis for his detailed discussion of plays that were apparently performed by two sets of theatre figurines from Tianjin. The catalogue version printed in December 1873, however, reserves just a few terse lines for these objects, with no reference to any stage play.⁹⁵ It is thus likely that Hart omitted or condensed some information when preparing the *Port Catalogues* for print.

An additional catalogue has so far been largely overlooked. The *Catalogue of Articles Collected at the Port of Canton by Order of the Inspector General of Customs, For Transmission to the Austro-Hungarian Exhibition of 1873* provides much of the same information as the Canton section of the *Port Catalogues*, including the annex with a text on “Sericulture de Canton” submitted by the German company Arnhold, Karberg & Cie, a firm Jacob Arnhold, Peter Karberg and Alexander Levysohn had established in Hong Kong and Canton in

1866.⁹⁶ The catalogue was compiled by the CMCS clerk at Canton, the German sinologist Friedrich Hirth (1845–1927) and printed in March 1873, in very good time for the opening of the Vienna fair.⁹⁷ It appears to be a *tiré-à-part* of the Canton contribution to the *Port Catalogues* with comparable contents, but presented in different format. As none of the visitors to the exhibition mentioned seeing this particular publication it remains unclear if the book was distributed during the *Weltausstellung*. Further, there is no indication if any other of the 14 ports had an individual catalogue printed.

Hart published another weighty monograph for the Austro-Hungarian exhibition, namely, the 360-page *China Trade Statistics of the Treaty Ports, For the Period 1863–1872, Compiled for the Austro-Hungarian Universal Exhibition, Vienna, 1873: To illustrate the International Exchange of Products* (hereafter *China Trade Statistics*). The volume available to the author of this chapter contained forewords by Robert Hart dated 25 July and 12 December 1873, suggesting that it was published only after the exhibition had ended. Nevertheless, the fact that Detring was able to send 24 copies of the *China Trade Statistics* to the Austrian Foreign Ministry from his Vienna office on 8 December indicates that some volumes may have been printed earlier.⁹⁸

A special catalogue for the second section arranged by Calice, however, never materialised, even though it had been announced in newspaper reports.⁹⁹ Some missionaries and other contributors had prepared lists and contextual notes for their submissions. The Catholic mission of Eastern Tibet, for instance, added a “räsonierenden Catalog” which consul Schlick forwarded to Vienna.¹⁰⁰ In the exhibition, though, viewers had to rely on the large labels visible in some of the

93 Schlick to Andrassy, 16 January 1873.

94 Rodenberg 1875, 71; *The Times* 1873, 5.

95 *Port Catalogues* 1873, 35; Rodenberg 1875, 99–107; Riccobono 2023b. Some researchers misunderstood Rodenberg’s writings as descriptions of plays performed inside the Chinese gallery (Kaminski 2011, 15), though there is no record of any theatre performances staged at the exhibition. In addition to the Tianjin figurines, the Chinkiang (Zhenjiang in Jiangsu) port commissioner provided a model of a Chinese theatre, which Rodenberg may have seen as well, see *Port Catalogues* (1873, 119).

96 Smith 1994, *passim*.

97 *Canton Catalogue* 1873.

98 Detring to Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, 8 December 1873; Löwenthal (1873, 36 and 44) refers to statistical material available in the Cercle Oriental.

99 *Die Presse* (1873a, Beilage: 9), for instance, announced the publication of the special catalogues for sections 1 and 2 “in a few weeks time”.

100 Schlick to Andrassy, 16 January 1873.

photographs, and on the brief listings in the *Officieller General-Catalog*.

For the third section, Overbeck produced a *Special Catalog der chinesischen Ausstellung, III. Abtheilung*. His catalogue, which was hastily collated, turned out to be the only one that came out more or less on time, becoming available just a few days after the opening of the Chinese courtyard on 11 June 1873.¹⁰¹

How Chinese was the Chinese Exhibition?

In current Austrian and German scholarship and popular literature there is one recurrent piece of misinformation regarding the World's Fair in Vienna that needs correcting. Many texts claim that the Chinese emperor had turned down the Austrian invitation to participate in the exhibition.¹⁰² The only scholar who added a verifiable reference to the claim is Jutta Pemsel in her landmark study *Die Wiener Weltausstellung von 1873*, but in the document box in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv she refers to, there is nothing among the hundreds of handwritten notes it contains to substantiate this assertion.¹⁰³ What is more, the emperor was not in the position to decline the invitation, as there had been no formal invitation in the first place. As was common practice in World's Fairs, the events were announced, but participation was not “by invitation only”. Instead, the organisers expected nations to come forward and declare their willingness to take part. Calice followed this procedure. He merely informed the Chinese government and requested the passing on of information and the granting of tax exemptions, but there was no invitation which China could choose to accept or decline. In August 1872, after Calice personally urged the *Zongli Yamen* to direct the preparations of the show, its directors and Prince Gong answered,

according to Calice: “We have considered the proposal and feel that we nurture the desire to participate in the matter at hand.” However, no concrete action followed this positive note.¹⁰⁴

Although the *Wiener Weltausstellung* was the first international exhibition in which—through the participation of its Customs Office—China had some formal representation, the important event does appear to have taken place without much involvement of native Chinese. The persons responsible for the display were Europeans, even if some of them worked in the service of the Chinese government. Most individual contributors, again, were foreigners, though all of them lived in East Asia and knew China well.¹⁰⁵

Again, there is no record of Chinese visitors attending the fair—besides a certain Soan-pan, a Chinese assistant to one of the CMCS officers, who had handled the prayer- and calculating machines in the Chinese gallery and was mentioned by Julius Rodenberg.¹⁰⁶ We know of no commentaries in Chinese publications of the time.¹⁰⁷ The Chinese public began to take note of international shows abroad only in 1876 when Chinese travellers first reported on the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. From the 1890s, exhibitions became part of the Chinese political rhetoric, and it was at this time that ideas of holding fairs on Chinese soil began to emerge.¹⁰⁸ In 1910, shortly before the collapse of the Qing imperial house, China finally opened the first World's Fair of her own in Nanjing.¹⁰⁹

101 Overbeck 1873.

102 Payer 2009, 45; Kaminski 2011, 42; Gethmann and Eckhard 2023, 10.

103 Pemsel 1989, 50.

104 “Wir sind mit uns zu Rathe gegangen und finden, daß wir den aufrichtigen Wunsch hegen, in der Sache mitzuwirken.” Letter from Prince Gong to Calice, 12 August 1872.

105 For the question of whether the Chinese presence at the Vienna show can be regarded as a formal representation by the Chinese state, see also Wu Songdi (2009, 43–48).

106 Rodenberg 1873.

107 I rely here on the excellent study by Hyungju Hur (2012, 23–35).

108 Hyungju Hur 2021, 23–36. For the Chinese presence in Philadelphia, see Pitman (2002). A list of international exhibitions and the modes of native Chinese participation therein is provided by Chao Yu-chih (1996, 289–94).

109 The “*Nanyang quanye hui* 南洋勸業會” (Exhibition of all Trades of Nanyang) opened its doors on 5 June 1910. Godley 1978.

The apparent lack of interest in the 1873 World's Fair in Vienna among the Chinese government and public alike, despite all the efforts on the part of Austrian diplomats, generated some discussion at the time. In a circular to his commissioners, Hart expressed his fear that "on the Chinese side, apathy, and, on the foreign, the difficulty of doing anything considerable, will have severally tended to make a credible display impossible".¹¹⁰ Prince Gong himself argued that rulers should not concern themselves with commercial matters of the lower classes. "It follows the nature of things that the low-ranking professions of crafts and trade should be at liberty to decide how to pursue their businesses; the state whose sole task is ruling these people shall not interfere in their matters of business."¹¹¹ Calice noted in Gong a general ignorance regarding the benefit of competition in commercial—that is, non-literary—matters and quoted him as saying: "If some other person has a better coat than I, fine, then he keeps his and I keep mine."¹¹² Still, Calice was considerate enough to acknowledge that negative experiences with European powers in recent history, such as the plundering of the Summer Palace in Beijing by French and British troops in 1860, had an influence on Gong's position. In the same letter, he cites Gong's answer to the French *chargé d'affaires* Henry de Bellonet (1831–1881) who had suggested China's participation in the Exposition Universelle of 1867: "What? You want us to send valuable things to your exhibition? I gathered that since the plundering of the Summer Palace you have more of the sort in France than we have in China."¹¹³

110 CMCS Circular No 4 of 1872.

111 "Es liegt nun zwar in der Natur der Sache, daß es den untergeordneten Gewerben der Handwerker und Handeltreibenden überlassen bleiben muß, über die Art und Weise, wie sie ihre Geschäfte betreiben wollen, selbstständig zu disponieren, und daß der Staat, dem nur obliegt, diese Leute zu regieren, sich mit den Erwerbsverhältnissen derselben nicht befassen kann." Gong to Calice, 12 August 1872.

112 "Wenn ein Anderer einen beßren Rock hat als ich, gut, so behält er den seinigen und ich den meinigen." Calice to Andrassy, 6 September 1872.

113 "Was? Sie begehren dass wir werthvolle Dinge zu Ihrer Ausstellung schicken? Ich dächte seit der Plünderung des

Overbeck, on the other hand, in a blunt comment to the Austrian minister of Foreign Affairs, saw the reason for the Chinese inaction in a sense of superiority he perceived in China:

The belief deeply rooted in people and government in being superior on every level to anything foreign has so far frustrated any effort to introduce to China the world-shaking ideas of modern times. It would be a waste of energy to attempt to impress on the Chinese ruling circles the importance and enormous significance of a national enterprise such as the Vienna World's Fair for the cultural development of our time.¹¹⁴

This author argues, nevertheless, that the assumption that the Chinese gallery in the *Weltausstellung* was merely an affair of foreigners—a stage simply projecting European imagination rather than Chinese reality, as arguably had been the case in earlier international exhibitions—is an oversimplification. In support of this argument, three points are submitted for consideration.

First of all, the exhibitors were not exclusively foreign. On the contrary, they included several prominent Chinese individuals: the *Port Catalogues* mentioned one "Shanghai banker Hoo Taou-tai" who sent a large consignment of high-quality porcelain, silks, and especially cloisonné, of which Bowra said: "The collection sent to Vienna is undoubtedly the largest and most complete ever seen in Europe."¹¹⁵ As *daotai* 道臺 refers

Sommerpalastes haben Sie mehr dergleichen in Frankreich als wir in China." Calice to Andrassy, 6 September 1872.

114 "An dem im Volke und Regierung festgewurzelten Glauben an die eigene Ueberlegenheit, in jedweder Beziehung über alles was der fremde angehört, scheiterte bisher jeder Versuch, den weltbewegenden Ideen der Neuzeit in China Eingang zu verschaffen, und würde es aus diesem Grunde auch verlorene Mühe sein, den chinesischen Regierungskreisen die Wichtigkeit und hohe Bedeutung für die Cultur-Entwicklung unserer Zeit eines solchen National-Unternehmens wie die Wiener-Weltausstellung begreiflich machen zu wollen." Overbeck to Minister des kaiserlichen Hofes und des Äusseren, 20 February 1872.

115 Bowra 1874, 719.

not to a first name but to the municipal position of Circuit Intendant and was more widely used as an honorary address, the person in question has so far proved difficult to identify. But there are some clues. The transliterations Hu and Hoo are essentially interchangeable, and in a letter, Bowra calls the cloisonné and silks of a certain Hu a “valuable—indeed unique—collection”. He also complained that the value of Hu’s collection had mysteriously increased considerably in value on the 100-mile journey from Hangzhou to Shanghai, adding to Bowra’s financial risk, as he had personally offered to grant security for the insurance of the collection.¹¹⁶ In the same letter, Bowra calls Hu a man of “wealth, position, and liberality”. Several letters by Bowra, Calice and Hart talk of Hoo’s shrewd business skills and mention a business base in Hangzhou. An assessment by a British merchant describes him more precisely as “the richest banker in China [and] the largest silk-cultivator in the Central Provinces”.¹¹⁷ There was indeed a banker surnamed Hoo or Hu who was fabulously rich, ran a network of banks in numerous cities including Hangzhou, had extensive business ties to foreigners, and held (or purchased) official positions. It is likely that “Hoo Taou-tai” is the illustrious Hu Guangyong 胡光墉, also known as Hu Xueyan 胡雪岩 (ca 1825–1885), a man with assets estimated at between 10 and 20 million Taels or 3.2 to 7.2 million British pounds.¹¹⁸ He traded in silk extensively until his manipulation of the silk market led to the Shanghai banking crises and his own bankruptcy in 1883.¹¹⁹ As he negotiated substantial foreign loans for the Chinese government, often secured by the revenues of the CMCS, he was certainly well acquainted with diplomats or foreign officials such as Calice or Hart, and it is easy to

imagine that he would understand the potential of World’s Fairs.¹²⁰ Three years later, at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, Hu Guangyong (there spelling his name as Hu Kwang Yung) became one of the most successful exhibitors, and many of his antiques ended up in American collections.¹²¹

The second Chinese contributor was listed in Calice’s section of the *General-Catalog* as “Shen Ping C’heng Tao-tai von Shanghai”. He provided a collection of machines and utensils for silk production and a book on the silk industry.¹²² This was probably the official and scholar Shen Bingcheng 沈秉成 (1823–1895) who served as *daotai* of Shanghai from 1872–1875. He authored a monograph on sericulture, *Essential Compilation of Silkworms and Mulberry Trees* (*Cansang jiyao* 蠶桑輯要)¹²³ which may well be the book given to Calice and mentioned in his report.

The contemporary publications mention several other individuals with Chinese-sounding names which are more difficult to trace. The *Canton Catalogue* describes a group of five screens and eight silk-embroidered pictures as the “property of Look-Moong-Soong, one of the deputies of H.E. the Superintendent of Customs, Canton”, a person who has so far proved unidentifiable.¹²⁴ His position in the CMCS hierarchy suggests that he may have been not just an exhibitor but also one of the organisers of the show. The *Port Catalogues* further list contributions by a certain Kuang Shin-hsing for Ningbo and Shin Shaongan for Fuzhou.¹²⁵

116 Bowra to Schlick, 3 February 1873.

117 Letter from a certain E.C. Bourne of 9 September 1873, quoted in Baird 2015, 137.

118 Li 1981, 88. This was between 32.5 and 65 million fl in Austrian currency at the time (see *Canton Catalogue* 1873, III), equating to between 456 and 912 million Euro in modern money, according to <https://finanzbildung.oenb.at/docroot/waehrungsrechner/#/>.

119 Li 1981, 88.

120 For Hu Guangyong, see Paul Sheehan (2018, 42–51). The character of Gray’s and Hu’s contributions is elaborated in Baird (2015).

121 Pitman 2002, *passim*. Pitman was the first to suggest that Hu had exhibited items in Vienna, though without citing the source of her information (ibid., 50). Shen Huifen (2004, 110) adduced a quote from the leading Chinese newspaper *Shunbao* 申報 of 1 February 1875 indicating that Hu had sent objects to Vienna.

122 *General-Catalog* 1873, 761; *Port Catalogues* 1873, 283; the book is mentioned only in a letter from Calice to Andrassy, 6 September 1872.

123 Shen Bingcheng 1871.

124 *Canton Catalogue* 1873, 46.

125 *Port Catalogues* 1873, 319, 351.

The *General-Catalog* refers to several Chinese companies as contributors, such as the Canton silversmith Hoa-Ching (active between 1820s and 1880s) who had sent an ivory model of a boat, sandalwood chess boards and figures, and silverware,¹²⁶ or the well-known Canton luxury dealer Leeching (active 1840s to 1880s) who exhibited silver and gold jewellery and ivory ornaments.¹²⁷ The *Canton Catalogue* included the Honam and Canton companies Hoa-Ching, Acum, Yut-Shing and Ushing under the section “Class E, property of various owners, for sale”.¹²⁸ As Overbeck’s *Special-Catalogue* lists Hoa-Ching and Leeching not independently, but as “Erzeuger” under the auspices of Carlowitz & Co, the flourishing trading house of the German merchant Richard von Carlowitz (1817–1886) in Canton,¹²⁹ it remains unclear whether they indeed took an active role as exhibitors. In some cases, the catalogues may have failed to credit Chinese vendors clearly. The monumental bedstead in Overbeck’s section may represent such an instance. An identical (or, more probably, the same) bed was on sale at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia three years later, marked as provided by the Ningbo company Song Sing Kong.¹³⁰ In Vienna, the company (spelled Sung Sing-cung in the *Port Catalogues*) had contributed some furniture as part of the Ningbo section.¹³¹

A second point with a bearing on the discussion of agency is a curious letter that Prince Gong sent to Calice in July 1873. In highly formal language, the prince and nine members of the *Zongli Yamen* (each of them mentioned by name and rank) acknowledge the receipt of a report by Robert Hart regarding the measures he had taken in preparation of the *Weltausstellung*, and of a list of the CMCS representatives (all six mentioned by name) sent to Vienna. The prince and the *Yamen* officials add

that they felt it appropriate to inform the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Residence of the matter by providing him with a copy of the report.¹³²

At first glance, the contents of the message appear fairly dry and unremarkable. The experienced diplomat Calice, however, found it necessary to dispatch a translation to the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister Andrassy immediately after receipt, pointing out the dramatically obvious: by sending this letter in all its diplomatic decorum, the Chinese government took ownership of the CMCS exhibition, and formally accepted the CMCS officers who travelled to Vienna *as representatives of China*. In an accompanying note, Calice explains “it provides me with special satisfaction that the Chinese government has finally come out to formally adopt the measures at hand that were arranged with their approval and their money.”¹³³

A final point is raised by a report in the newspaper *Die Presse*, according to which the Chinese Imperial court awarded honours in March 1878 to leading personalities of the *Weltausstellung* and numerous persons who had been involved in the creation of the Chinese display. Prince Gong announced on the occasion of a talk given by Robert Hart of the CMCS that the emperor of China had awarded the Order of the Dragon to fifteen persons. Among those honoured were Schwarz-Senborn, Schwegel, and Calice for the first class; Scherzer, Hochstetter, Scala and a certain Karl von Werbeck (probably Gustav Overbeck) for the second class, and Hugo Schönberger for the third class. Gong designated it “as a sign of acknowledgement for the special interest given to the Chinese empire during the Vienna World’s Fair of 1873”.¹³⁴ As the Chinese government established its first formal western-style diplomatic decoration, the Order of the Double Dragon, only in 1881, this may have

126 *General-Catalog* 1873, 764; Overbeck 1873, 32.

127 *General-Catalog* 1873, 763. For the companies see Shen Huifen (2004, 110).

128 *Canton Catalogue* 1873, 45–46.

129 Mak 2005, 66; Overbeck 1873, 32.

130 Pitman 2002, fig. 9.

131 *Port Catalogues* 1873, 319.

132 See Calice’s account in letter from Calice to Andrassy, 23 October 1873.

133 “es gereicht mir daher zur besonderen Genugthuung, daß die chinesische Regierung die in Rede stehenden Maßregeln, welche mit ihrer Zustimmung und mit ihrem Gelde getroffen worden sind, nun auch nach Aussen hin formell adoptirt hat.” Calice to Andrassy, 23 October 1873.

134 *Die Presse* 1878b, 9.

been a version of the early type of Dragon Order that had been used since 1862.¹³⁵ The early Dragon Order originally served as a medal honouring foreign soldiers for supporting the Qing government against internal uprisings such as the Taiping rebellion. The award to the Vienna organisers of 1878 appears to be the first known instance in which China used this western practice as a diplomatic device. Furthermore, it indicates that five years after the exhibition had closed its doors, the Chinese government finally assumed some agency in the first representation of China at a World's Fair. With the participation of Chinese contributors, the official adoption of the exhibition, and the diplomatic honours bestowed by the imperial court, the Chinese gallery at the 1873 *Weltausstellung* became, after all, a Chinese affair.

Conclusion

This article set out to trace the process whereby the Chinese exhibition at the Vienna World's Fair came into being. By demonstrating that the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Ministry saw it as its task to assure a broad presence of "oriental" and East Asian states at the event, it has shown that the Austro-Hungarian approach to the World's Fair was very different from what had been attempted at earlier international exhibitions.

To achieve the participation of China, the highest-ranking Austro-Hungarian diplomat in East Asia, the recently installed Minister in Residence Heinrich Calice, employed all means available in his diplomatic toolbox. His efforts were greeted with much hesitation, not only by the public and lower administration, who were not willing to take an active role without clear instructions from central government, but also by the state representatives who regarded the fair merely as a matter for merchants, seeing no reason to involve themselves and direct the representation of China. Only very

late in the process did the *Zongli Yamen* gradually come to revise its stance and take some agency regarding the Chinese presence in Vienna.

In 1872, confronted by dragging feet and an unwillingness to get involved, and facing extreme time pressure with less than a year to go before the opening of the exhibition, Calice hatched a second plan to bring a Chinese pavilion into being. He brought together three parties with different agendas, that organised three largely independent sections in the Chinese gallery of the *Industriepalast*: the Chinese Maritime Customs Service under Robert Hart, which intended to accurately present the state of trade in and out of the international ports of China; a group of businessmen with connections to the Austrian consul in Hong Kong, Gustav Overbeck, providing merchandise for sale in Europe, and Calice's own group consisting of missionaries, lower level diplomats and private persons, whose function was to give an insight into the products and natural resources of the vast empire beyond the port cities open to foreigners. Despite his decisive influence, in the public-facing elements of the exhibition Calice kept his role almost invisible and took care to refer all honours to the CMCS.

The resulting show became so extensive that the area in the *Industriepalast* originally assigned to China had to be significantly enlarged. This paper presents a tentative reconstruction of the space for the first time.

Calice managed to make the gallery the largest and most comprehensive show of Chinese raw materials, crafts, industrial products and art works ever staged. It became widely acknowledged and well received, and provided the seed of many East Asian collections in Europe. One of Calice's achievements, however, remained less visible: he introduced the Chinese Customs Office, businessmen such as Hu Guangyong and several trading houses to the concept of international exhibitions, and turned World's Fairs into an issue the Chinese government had to take note of. The CMCS and many Chinese agents who first appeared at the Vienna fair went on to join the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 and later international

135 UBS AG 2008, 150; Chinese Medal Blog 2009. I am grateful for this information to Daniel Krause of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ordenskunde e.V.

shows. The Austro-Hungarian efforts to include the Orient and East Asia were, in this regard, a decided success.

Archival Sources

Unless otherwise noted, all archival documents and letters referred to in this text are collected in the box: HH-STA, 145, F34 S.R. in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.

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The Social Side of the Vienna World's Fair: A New Perspective on Japan's Participation, Networking, and Exhibit Management in 1873

Agnes Schwanzer

Introduction¹

In the 19th century, industrialised nations used World's Fairs² as a platform to showcase their own artistic and cultural successes through elaborate Fairs. But the exhibits were not the sole motivation for people to undertake the journey to such events. They attended these events with the intention of engaging with the organisers or making contacts with other participants in their professional fields. A significant aspect of such events was the role played by those tasked with organising and presenting the Fair. Today, the influence exerted by the host, the representatives of countries and companies, and the visiting public is less tangible than that of objects originating from the Fairs that have since entered museum collections. Therefore, this article will discuss the Japanese participation and its social gatherings at the Vienna World's Fair.

In 1873, a prominent contribution came from Japan, whose newly established Meiji government was participating in a World's Fair for the first time. Japan presented a rich collection of objects on display. Its exhibits, displayed in Vienna, were then subsequently distributed to institutions

throughout the continent. But it also participated with the aim of establishing new economic ties and utilised its objects as a means of establishing contacts, as this text will show.

The purpose of this text is to illuminate the interaction of the Japanese delegation with the Austrian representatives and to demonstrate how the Japanese delegation prepared and utilised its exhibits to the World's Fair to advance the country's industry, enriching its collections, and establishing future diplomatic and trade connections.

For this it is of interest how the delegation of 72 people, led by Sano Tsunetami 佐野常民 (1822–1902), was received in Vienna. With the help of extensive newspaper collections and archive materials, the author will put the involvement of the Japanese officials in diplomatic and social meetings and events held around the World's Fair into more detailed terms. With these materials, it is possible to reconstruct the day-to-day activities of the Japanese delegations during the year 1873. This enables the tracing of their social interactions and acquaintances with individual representatives of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and European diplomats.

This reconstruction is made possible by the comprehensive coverage of the press in 1873, which resulted in a vast archive of newspaper cuttings. Major newspapers provided extensive coverage of all aspects related to the Fair. Columns such as “Vom Weltausstellungsplatze” (From the World

1 I would like to thank my co-editor Lukas Nickel, Alexandra Nachescu, and the peer reviewers for the helpful and constructive feedback on this text.

2 Historically, the term “Exhibition” or “Exposition” was always used in the official title from the first Great Exhibition in London 1851 until the first third of the 20th century.



Fig. 1: Adele Perlmutter (1845–1941), Erzherzog Rainer Ferdinand von Österreich (1827–1913), 1871, photography on supporting cardboard/albumen paper, 10,4 cm x 6,5 cm. Wien Museum, inv. no. 49804/304.

Exhibition Site)³ in the *Neues Fremden-Blatt* provided daily accounts of the weather, events, festivals, princely visitors, and daily visitor numbers. The reporters were on site, documenting the visits of notable personalities, often noting which items they inspected. The press also covered the numerous evening events. These social reports, which might today be dismissed as gossip columns, are of value as historical material to make the period's social life more tangible.⁴

As our focus is on the interactions of the Japanese delegation, especially with the representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the people responsible for organising the Fair, the first part of this study will introduce the organising structure of the Austro-Hungarian World's Fair. The personnel involved and the overarching and unifying role played by those "officially" representing the World Exhibition Commission will be explained. The highest representatives of the Fair, Protector Archduke Karl Ludwig of Austria (1833–1896) and President Archduke Rainer of Austria (1827–1913) (see fig. 1), as well as the First Palace Minister Prince Konstantin von Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst (1828–1896), and Vice President of the World's Fair, are of key importance for establishing the social character and therefore examining this aspect of the 1873 World's Fair in Vienna in greater detail.

The second and main part attempts to situate the Japanese in this social context. Reconstructing the evening events they attended gives us insight into how Sano Tsunetami and other members of the Japanese delegation (fig. 2) introduced themselves to Vienna's social and diplomatic circles. How they were received in Vienna in 1873 helps us understand this personal dimension of the World's Fair, which was instrumental in facilitating the exchange of object and forging new connections. This section will further demonstrate how the

relationships established in Vienna would come to reap benefits for Japan after the end of the World's Fair.

The final part will illuminate the processes behind the acquisition and exchange of Japanese Fair objects using the correspondence of Archduke Rainer. Japan used the objects as active exchange commodities for its cultural and political self-promotion thereby attracting interested parties eager to secure Japanese products. Both the networks established by the Japanese and the Archduke's personal dedication to the Museum of Art and Industry played a more central role in the formation of the Japanese collections in Vienna than previously known.

Ultimately, the success of World's Fairs is not only determined by the presentation of new inventions or the final revenue from ticket sales, but also by the potential of social networks that can be established at the gathering. This study thus focuses on the social perspective of the event "World's Fair", which served as a platform for diplomats and collectors working with East Asia to establish contacts and how these relationships influenced the exchange and inclusion of objects that are in museum collections today.

The Fair's Representative Organisation, and the Social Spaces for the Foreign Guests

For a period of six months, from 1 May to 2 November 1873, Vienna was perceived as a meeting place for all participating nations. In order to serve as an international platform, the World's Fair required a considerable number of personnel to organise, prepare for, and execute its ambitious programme. These tasks were the responsibility of the Exhibition Directorate General (*Generaldirection*), which was entrusted with the independent management of the Fair's undertakings.⁵ The organisational apparatus for the World's Fair under

3 All German to English translations were made by the author.

4 This monopoly on reporting is the journalist's subjective opinion and can bias the report in an overly negative or positive direction.

5 *Wiener Kommunal-Kalender und städtisches Jahrbuch* 1874, 280.



Fig. 2: The Japanese exhibition commission at the Vienna World's Fair, Studio Adele in Vienna, 1 January 1874. In the centre Sano Tsunetami 佐野常民 (1822–1902), Gottfried Wagener (1831–1892) to the left. Photography, private Alfred Moser (Moser 2019, 79).

the leadership of Director General (*k. k. General-Director*), Willhelm von Schwarz Senborn (1816–1903), who was appointed in 1871, formed committees and sub-committees and administered by the various departments and country commissions.⁶ The work for the World's Fair was divided into 20 departments.⁷ Starting with the departments finance, construction, and space allocation, preparations were made in these departments.

The organisers placed particular emphasis on the participation of countries of the “Orient” and

East Asia. Department 18 was responsible for the participation of foreign countries, while a separate department, Department 19, was in charge of the participation of the Orient and East Asia (*Beteiligung des Orients und Ost-Asiens*). The latter was led by Consul General Josef von Schwegel (1836–1914). The consuls of the participating countries provided assistance to Schwegel. Heinrich von Calice (1831–1912), who had served as General Consul in Shanghai and Minister in Residence since 1871, was responsible for overseeing the contributions of East Asian countries, namely China, Japan, and Siam.⁸

The organisational apparatus of the Exhibition Directorate General comprising several committees had a mainly representational counterpart in the Imperial Exhibition Commission (*Kaiserliche Ausstellung-Commission*). The directorate and commission were assigned to different state

⁶ For the exhibition “[...] numerous other committees were set up abroad and, in the kingdoms, and countries of the monarchy. These acted as contacts for supplying the exhibition, communicating transport conditions and space issues, but also for disseminating the programme. As a rule, these organisations were already existing chambers of commerce or trade whose members knew each other from meetings on joint political initiatives and participation in previous world exhibitions.” (Milchram 2014, 121)

⁷ *Wiener Kommunal-Kalender und städtisches Jahrbuch 1874*, 284.

⁸ Österreichisches Handelsmuseum 1900, 2–3.

representatives. Director Schwarz-Senborn was formally subordinate to the Minister of Trade, while Archduke Rainer was responsible to the monarch. The Commission, formed by Protector, President, and several Vice-Presidents, was not responsible for organizational decisions but for social and representative tasks. Upon granting permission for the Fair's organisation, Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830–1916) appointed two members of his closest circle as the project's figureheads.⁹ His brother Archduke Karl Ludwig was appointed Protector, while his cousin, Archduke Rainer, was appointed President of the Commission. Next to Director Schwarz-Senborn, these two figures were the most prominent individuals connected to the forthcoming event. Together with eight vice presidents and 215 other representatives from authorities and institutions, they formed the Imperial Fair Commission, which served as “[...] the external representation of the [...] World Exhibition and for the consultation of general questions of principle concerning the Exhibition [...]”.¹⁰ Their roles and tasks for the Fair were of a more social nature, namely establishing relationships and promoting the event.

The highest-ranking representative, Protector Archduke Karl Ludwig, was the second younger brother of Emperor Franz Joseph. He had a military career and served as governor of Tyrol and Vorarlberg between 1850 and 1861. Thereafter he was no longer engaged in political duties, except for representing the Emperor on all official occasions as representative of the Imperial House. This role earned him the title “Exhibition Archduke” (*Ausstellungs-Erzherzog*).¹¹ He served as the repre-

sentative and protector of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's delegation at earlier and later World's Fairs.¹²

The other imperial appointee, President Archduke Rainer, was the grand cousin of Emperor Franz Joseph.¹³ In 1857, the Emperor appointed him Chairman of the Imperial Council and nominally Prime Minister between 1861 and 1865.¹⁴ He already had experience and connections that he could bring to the role as president and was also personally highly interested in science and education. In 1861, he was appointed Curator of the Vienna Academy of Science. Following the attendance at the World's Fair in London in 1862, he and Rudolf Eitelberger von Eldelberg (1817–1885) brought back the idea of establishing a museum of applied arts, based on the model of the Kensington Museum (Victoria and Albert Museum) in London. Together with Eitelberger, a Professor of Art History at the University of Vienna, they founded the new Imperial Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (*k.k. Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie*, today known as Austrian Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna) in 1863, with Eitelberger as Director and Rainer as Protector.¹⁵ His appointment as president of the Fair was the optimal selection for the Emperor, given his background in politics and scientific interests. Rainer's dual role as President of the World's Fair and Protector of the Museum of Art and Industry

and exhibitions, such as the Austrian Red Cross Society, the Geographical Society, the Lower Austrian Trade Association, etc. For a complete list of the protectorates of Archduke Karl Ludwig, see Lindheim (1897, 373–76). After the Vienna exhibition, he became Protector of the Oriental Museum, newly founded by the members of the Committee for the Orient and East Asia (Comite für den Orient und Ostasien) with objects from the World Exhibition. Until its dissolution in 1907, this museum housed an extensive collection from the Near and Far East in Vienna.

12 Lindheim 1897, 239–65.

13 Leopold II (1747–1792), was the grandfather of Archduke Rainer, and the great-grandfather of Emperor Franz Josef, so Rainer's father and Franz Josef's grandfather were brothers.

14 *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950* 1983, 395–96; Führmann 1985, 58–82.

15 For more on this topic see Wieninger in this volume.

9 Pemsel 1989, 19; Weltausstellung 1873 in Wien 1873, 18.

10 “Zur Repräsentirung der mit der Allerhöchsten Entschliessung vom 24. Mai 1870 Allernädigst angeordneten, am 1. Mai 1873 in Wien im Prater zu eröffnenden Weltausstellung nach Aussen und zur Berathung allgemeiner principieller, die Ausstellung betreffenden Fragen, [...]” The proclamation of the Ministry of Trade of 29 September 1871, *Regierungsblatt* no. 111, announced the organisational statute for the World Exhibition (in *Compass finanzielles Jahrbuch* 1873, 69; Weltausstellung 1873 Wien 1873, 21–24).

11 *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950* 1965, 240. He was Protector of countless associations, societies,

positioned him as a central figure within the social fabric of the World's Fair as well as within the activities and negotiations surrounding the exchange of objects that occurred behind the scenes. This will be examined further in the third part of this analysis.

The roles of Protector and President lacked concrete definitions of tasks within the organisational statutes of the World's Fair. Although the Presidents presided over committee sessions, they had no explicit authority to make decisions. Rainer exerted significant influence on the overall conception of the World's Fair, particularly with regard to its role as an educational tool for the public. The guiding principles of the Vienna Fair, namely "Culture and Education", were highly promoted by Rainer. Through his initiative, 42 lectures were held during the World's Fair on the topics and materials presented by the participating nations.¹⁶ In a letter dated 20 March 1873, he set forth his intentions, making reference to the "Orient" as an example of an area where experts were needed in order to capitalise on the World's Fair for Austria's industries: "The Oriental section, [...] must be placed in the hands of a man who knows the conditions, industries and commercial interests there; [...]"¹⁷ His position as president afforded him a high level of insight into planning and organising the Fair.

The role of the Protector for the Fair had a symbolic function. The role of Protector in general was a common position in the 19th century, yet there is no consistent definition of its duties. In the case of Archduke Rainer as Protector of the Museum of Art and Industry, the museum's founding statutes, from 1863, provide a more detailed delineation of his role:

§ 16. [...] He has the task of promoting and developing the museum in all directions; he appoints the members of the Board of the Curators and the Correspondents, he or the deputy appointed by him from the members of the Board of the Curators chairs the meetings of the same, through him the reports go to the Minister of State, and the decrees of the latter to the Director.¹⁸

As the press reported extensively about the Protector and President, they may serve as an example to illustrate the importance of social encounters and the complex webs of interactions between participants World's Fair. The responsibilities of Protector and President included promoting the Fair to the general public and to foreign countries,¹⁹ as well as acting as the event's highest representatives during the official opening on 1 May 1873, the award ceremony on 18 August,²⁰ and the closing ceremony on 1 November in the Rotunda.

The Fair was officially inaugurated by Emperor Franz Joseph in a ceremony held in the Rotunda at the request of the Protector Karl Ludwig.²¹ Subsequently, further speeches were delivered by Prime Minister Adolf von Auersperg (1821–1885) and Mayor of Vienna, Cajetan Felder (1814–1894).²²

16 Pemsel 1989, 88; von Schwarz-Senborn 1873-1874, 3; Österreichisches Handelsmuseum 1900, 8.

17 Eitelberger Personalia Folder, Letter 20 March 1873, Inv. 23.531. "Die orientalische Abtheilung z. B. muß in die Hände eines Mannes gegeben werden der die dortigen Verhältnisse, Industrien u Handels-Interessen kennt, dieselbe ist eine der Wichtigsten."

18 Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie 1871, 30. "§ 16 Der Protector wird von Sr. Majestät dem Kaiser ernannt. Er hat die Aufgabe, sich die Förderung und Entwicklung des Museums nach allen Richtungen hin angelegen sein zu lassen; er ernennt die Mitglieder des Curatoriums und die Correspondenten, er oder der von ihm aus den Mitgliedern des Curatoriums ernannte Stellvertreter führt den Vorsitz in den Sitzungen desselben, durch ihn gehen die Berichte an den Staatsminister und die Erlässe dieses Letzteren an den Director."

19 In preparation to the Vienna Exhibition Archduke Karl Ludwig travelled to England, Germany, and Constantinople to promote the upcoming event (Pemsel 1989, 44–45). During such visits, for example to Constantinople in 1872, he oversaw the progress of the Turkish section's organisations and personally selected objects to send to Vienna and obtained assurance that his wishes were being fulfilled (von Schwarz-Senborn 1871-1872, 122/387).

20 *Wiener Kommunal-Kalender und städtisches Jahrbuch* 1874, 281.

21 *Ibid.*, 294–97.

22 *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* 1873b, 2–3.

Thereafter, the imperial couple, Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth (1837–1898), together with their guests, undertook a tour of the Fair halls, accompanied by Director Schwarz-Senborn and the archdukes.

This official guided tour through the Fair site was the first of dozens of comparable viewings the protector and president had to conduct. They guided royal guests through the buildings and gardens and introduced the exhibitors to them (fig. 3). The important and time-consuming task was of a private but still highly official nature. The list of heads of state and monarchs visiting the Fair in Vienna was extensive. In 1873, the Shah of Persia/Iran, the Tsar of Russia, the Emperor of Germany, as well as the Queen of Spain, the Queen of Greece, the Queen of Belgium, and the Empress of Germany, visited Vienna. Additionally, numerous members of royal houses and the aristocracy stayed in the city over the summer, accompanied by their entourages.²³

Rainer proceeded to undertake a series of tours with the distinguished royal guests, including the King Viktor Emanuel II. (1820–1878),²⁴ the Empress Augusta of the German Empire,²⁵ and the Nāser ad-Din, Shah of Persia/Iran on 2 August. Following this visit, Rainer and the Shah engaged in a conversation in the Persian House, as documented in the Shah's personal diary.²⁶

Protector and president fulfilled their duties even before the Fair opened. During the construction period, on 9 March, Archduke Rainer and Director Schwarz-Senborn guided Emperor Franz Joseph and his family on a site visit. Rainer introduced foreign delegation members to them, including

the English Commissaire Mr. Owen [Philip Cunliffe-Owen] [...], the Japanese Mr. Segizugawa [Sekikawa Akekiyo] and Comratz [Komatsu Terumori], the Egyptian Professor Brugsch [Heinrich Brugsch], the Chinese Commissaire Mr. Dertino [Gustav Detring], [...], and the Turkish Architect Mr. Montani [Pietro Montani], and many more [...].²⁷

As president Archduke Rainer was involved in and informed on every detail of the preparations of the Fair and was therefore able to inform the royal guests about every aspect of the event. His detailed knowledge is evidenced by his correspondence with Rudolf Eitelberger, in which he also provided updates on the construction process and the status of interior furnishings in the individual country pavilions.²⁸ To facilitate inquiries regarding the purchase of objects from the Fair for the Museum of Art and Industry, he cultivated relationships with the heads and experts of the country commissions. This will be further discussed in the final section.²⁹

During the course of the World's Fair, a variety of social events were held in Vienna on a weekly basis, including receptions, banquets, evening gatherings, balls, operas, theatre performances, and concert evenings.³⁰ Furthermore, fifteen congresses

23 For a complete list of royal visitors, see *Wiener Kommunal-Kalender und städtisches Jahrbuch* (1874, 299–300). The court ceremonial required for them to be received and escorted through the exhibition rooms by the highest representatives, Emperor Franz Joseph, Director General Schwarz-Senborn, and the Archdukes.

24 *Neues Fremden-Blatt* 1873m, 4–5.

25 *Neues Fremden-Blatt (Abendausgabe)* 1873l, 1.

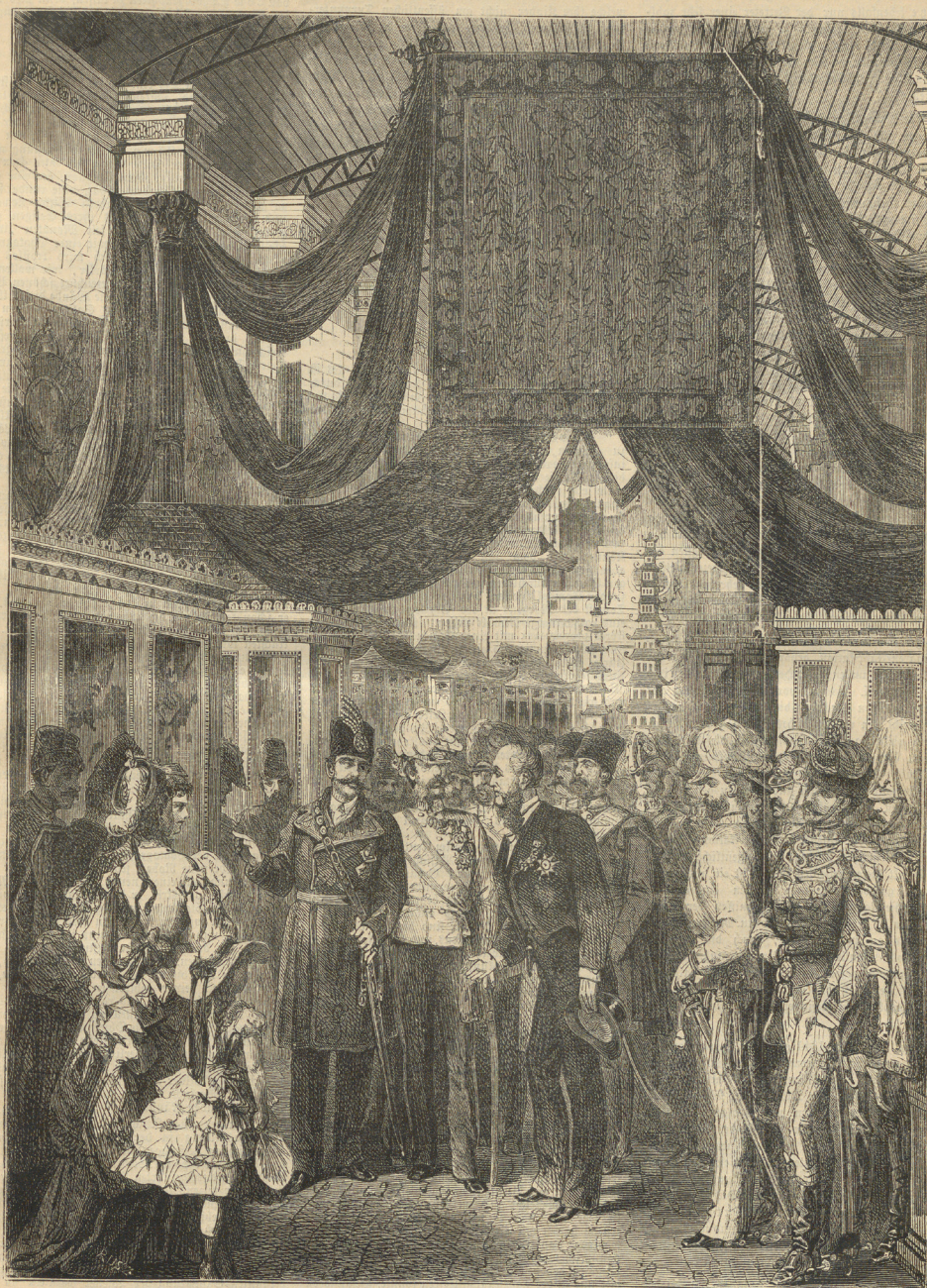
26 Nāṣiraddīn Šāh 1874, 2–3.

27 *Neues Fremden-Blatt* 1873g, 1. “[...] den englischen Kommissär Herrn Owen, [...] die japanesischen Herren Segizugaba und Chomatz, den ägyptischen Herrn Professor Brusch, den chinesischen Kommissär Herrn Detrino [...] den türkischen Architekten Herrn Montani und viele Andere [...]”

28 Eitelberger Personalia Folder Letter 8 April 1873, Inv. 23.532.

29 Eitelberger Personalia Folder Letter 21 May 1873, Inv. 23.530.

30 These lavish and extravagant evenings of society's upper circles were held during a time when the population was suffering the consequences of the stock market crash of 9 May 1873. Just a few days after the opening, this shattered the optimism that had been fuelled before the exhibition. Hotels and dedicated accommodations built for the event remained empty. Citizens who had furnished their flats for private rental lacked paying guests, investing their savings in vain and ultimately losing them. The prices for living expenses and food hit these people particularly hard, as the value of their real wages collapsed. The numbers of visitors



Der Besuch des Schahs von Persien in der Weltausstellung, Persische Abtheilung. (Siehe Seite 164.)

Fig. 3: Der Besuch des Schahs von Persien in der Weltausstellung, Persische Abtheilung. 1873, paper/woodblockprint, Allgemeine Illustrierte Weltausstellungs-Zeitung, 10. August 1873, Jg. 4, Nr. 11, p. 169. Wienbibliothek im Rathaus C-3961.

took place as part of the World's Fair, encompassing subjects such as patent law, coinage, international medical congresses, and the first International Congress of Art History.³¹ The social programme of the World's Fair was notably diverse, offering a valuable platform for networking between prominent figures from diverse sectors, including industry and culture.

The Imperial Court also prepared to receive an international audience, offering them an extensive programme of social events. The extant correspondence, preserved in the State Archives, bears witness to the meticulous preparations and the organisational efforts made by the Austro-Hungarian imperial court for the monarchs and heads of state in Vienna.³² The accommodation of the aristocrats and the entertainment programme were the responsibility of the First Palace Minister (*Erster Obersthofmeister*) Prince Konstantin von Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst (1828–1896). After a military career, Hohenlohe was appointed First Palace Minister in 1867 and was responsible for the administration of the imperial court's properties, staff, and household. His office held responsibility for the buildings of the imperial court, which included the new Ringstrasse buildings being constructed at this time, such as the imperial museums and theatres, as well as the construction of the World's Fair buildings.³³

Hohenlohe was appointed Vice President of the World's Fair Commission with responsibility for foreign guests.³⁴ The Imperial Obersthofmeister's Office saw to the accommodation, sent invitations to the court and to social events, and arranged entertainment (including opera tickets)

for visiting foreign state guests.³⁵ This placed him directly below Archduke Rainer in the Commission's hierarchy and first of a total of eight Vice Presidents, ahead of Count Gyula Andrássy (1823–1890), the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Monarchy.

The social programme of events at the Imperial Court was particularly busy during the early days of May. The opening gala dinner on 1 May was the first event in a series of similar occasions.³⁶ Further dinners were hosted frequently by other members of the imperial household. In addition, the court entertained royal visitors at luncheon gatherings and dejeuners in the Kaiserpavillion.

All trips and visits were coordinated with the Obersthofmeister's Office under Prince Hohenlohe. A document entitled "Recapitulation of the People Catered for at Larger Court Banquets and Court Parties" dated 22 November 1873 enumerates the number of people hosted by the court for the entirety of the Fair, amounting to 43,519.³⁷ The organisational apparatus for the social activities serves to illustrate the importance that was attached to this representational aspect of the World's Fair in Vienna.

Beyond the events arranged for the top political echelons of visitors, there was a multitude of events for wider social circles. Prince Hohenlohe, for instance, as First Palace Minister, and his wife Marie von Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst (1837–1920) hosted, every Saturday in May and June 1873, soirees

only recovered towards the end of the summer (Felder Personalien Folder 1887, 5–6, 13–14; Eigner 2014, 88–89; Maryška 2014, 108–09; Breuss 2014, 158–162).

31 *Wiener Kommunal-Kalender und städtisches Jahrbuch* 1874, 282.

32 *Neuere Zeremonialakten* NZA 338–45.

33 Winkelhofer-Thyri 2013, 191–92. His contribution to cultural policy is under-explored to this day.

34 *Wiener Kommunal-Kalender und städtisches Jahrbuch* 1874, 281.

35 Documents and correspondence on Organisation of the Imperial Obersthofmeister's Office are preserved at the Austrian State Archives. See *Neuere Zeremonialakten* NZA 338–50. The aristocrats were housed in castles and palaces. Head Masters of Ceremonies (*k.k. Ober-Ceremonienmeister*) were assigned to them as organisers and coordinators for their household, personal audiences, and evening invitations. Boxes were reserved for the guests in the Viennese theatres and opera houses. (*Neuere Zeremonialakten* NZA 338, WWA Vorbereitungen).

36 For a complete list, see *Wiener Kommunal-Kalender und städtisches Jahrbuch* (1874, 301–02).

37 *Neuere Zeremonialakten* NZA 350. This figure includes the catering in the lodgings of the high nobility, their entourage and servants. "Recapitulation über die bei größeren Hofafeln und Hoffesten beköstigten Personen."

at the Palais Augarten.³⁸ The Hohenlohes played a central role in Viennese social life, hosting a salon and sponsoring artists.

The guest lists for these evenings in 1873 are still extant in the Austrian State Archives. They are of interest because they demonstrate that these soirees were not only frequented by the Emperor and his guests, but also regularly by the exhibitors and diplomatic representatives of the exhibiting countries. In the following, we will focus on the Japanese delegation at these social events, and how promising the personal connections made at such events were for Japan's delegation members.

The Imperial Japanese Exhibition Commission and Their Networking during the World's Fair 1873

The Vienna World's Fair was Japan's first participation at a World's Fair, under the Meiji government. It is precisely this circumstance—the arrival of a group of people who previously had little or no personal relationship with the host country and its social figures in society and spent about a year in Austria—that provides an interesting case study into Japan's newly emerging relationships and makes it an ideal subject for this social study. The example of Japan should also be emphasised as a country that prepared its appearance at the World's Fair exceptionally well so as to present itself as a “modern” nation and to gain future advantages from the new contacts made.

The delegation of the Imperial Japanese Commission, appointed by the Japanese government, consisted of about 72 members.³⁹ Sano Tsunetami 佐野常民 was the head of the delegation and Minister in Residence to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and his activities during the Fair are of great importance for the presentation and the engagement of Japan in Vienna. In addition, it is

important to trace the activities of several other members of the Japanese Exhibition Commission in 1873, which supported him in several ways. This includes, on the one hand, the Japanese delegation members who arrived in Vienna to initiate preparations for the Fair and on the other the Europeans whom Japan had employed as advisers for the Fair.

Apart from the Japanese exhibition commission, another group of Japanese representatives was present in Vienna in 1873 during the time of the exhibition. The ambassadors of the Iwakura Mission, who had been traveling through the countries of the West since 1871 to conclude new diplomatic treaties, also visited Vienna briefly at the time of the Fair. They were able to make direct use of the newly established networks of the Japanese Exhibition Commission in Vienna and establish important contacts.

Sano Tsunetami was born in the province of Saga and, by the Fair, had already achieved a varied career. Among other things, he studied archaeology and surgery, founded a school, and underwent naval training. In 1867, he had already worked on the commission for the Paris World's Fair. During the preparations for the Vienna Fair, Sano summarised the key points for Japan's participation in the preparations for the event, in a *Memorandum on Exhibits for the Austrian Exposition* (*Okoku hakurankai shuppin ni kansuru ukagaisho* 奥国博覧会出品に関する伺書)⁴⁰: To create interest in Japanese products, to determine the status of the European industry and acquire expertise in specialised fields, to build up its own collection in Japan, and to assess the value of Japanese products for export. All to promote Japan's overseas trade.⁴¹ Sano brought his experience of international Fairs to Vienna and a clear idea of what Japan's participation should achieve.

The Japanese government appointed several European consultants to assist with the organisation of the Japanese exhibition part. These included the Siebold brothers, Alexander (1846–1911) and

38 3 May, 10 May, 17 May, 24 May, 14 June 1873 (Neuere Ze-remonialakten NZA 350).

39 Commission Impériale Japonaise 1873, 49–51, 77–84; Tanaka and Hirayama 1897, “Appendix”, 2, 4–9.

40 Kutsuzawa 2018, 8.

41 Published in French in Sano (1873, 58–59); “Summary” in Kutsuzawa (2018, 8).

Heinrich (1852–1908), and Gottfried Wagener (1831–1892). Heinrich von Siebold assisted Minister Sano as an interpreter and, as we shall see, used his position to promote himself in the Japanese delegation's newly established network of contacts. Several members of the Japanese delegation spoke German, French, or English,⁴² so that they were not dependent on Western advisers and translators.

The main part of the Japanese Exhibition Commission arrived in Vienna in March 1873. Two men, Sekikawa Akekiyo 開澤明清 (1843–1897) and Komatsu Terumori 小松燾盛 (1848–1893), arrived in Vienna before the main delegation to make initial preparations.⁴³ Sekikawa Akekiyo left Japan on 1 December 1872 and arrived in January to start setting up the Japanese pavilion and the accommodation of the members of the Imperial Japanese Exhibition Commission in Vienna.⁴⁴ This preparations included liaising with the Vienna press and providing the journalists and newspapers with a pre-list of Japanese exhibits and articles about them.⁴⁵ This became crucial to Japan's image in the press and certainly decisive for the later popularity of its commissioners and goods among the Viennese public. Komatsu Terumori arrived in February from Paris to support the preparations.⁴⁶ He studied medicine and law at the University of Heidelberg,⁴⁷ was employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and later became a judge at the Supreme Court in Tokyo.⁴⁸ He spoke German, which served to support Sekikawa.

Viennese newspapers reported several meetings between Japanese commissioners and members of the Austrian Exhibition Commission or the imperial family. As mentioned above, Director Schwarz-Senborn and Archduke Rainer

introduced various state commissioners,⁴⁹ including Sekikawa Akekiyo and Komatsu Terumori from Japan to the imperial couple Franz Josef and Elisabeth on the occasion of their first tour of the Fair's site. This was the earliest traceable meeting of the Emperor and Archduke Rainer with members of the Japanese delegation.

After this first meeting, Sekikawa and Komatsu were invited to a banquet hosted by Archduke Karl Ludwig, on 15 March. Other guests included the Director General Baron Schwarz-Senborn, the German Exhibition commissioners, the silk manufacturer Joseph von Reckenschuß (1810–1888), the president of the trade association and Austrian industrialist Baron Franz von Wertheim (1814–1883),⁵⁰ governor of the Austrian National Bank Baron Josef von Pipitz (1798–1877), and an unidentified Exhibition commissioner for China.⁵¹ The article in *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* gives no details on the topics discussed at the meeting, but the people invited and, above all, their institutional positions suggest that one subject may have been further trade and relations of Austria-Hungary and Germany with East Asia. Sekizawa and Komatsu had the task of receiving foreigners and investigating overseas trade.⁵² In this sense, the informal meeting with representatives of Austrian companies may have advanced Japan's economic ambitions.

When Sano and the main part of the Japanese delegation arrived on 24 March,⁵³ Sekizawa and Komatsu were already in close contact with the press, the Exhibition management and representatives of Austrian industry and commerce. Viennese

42 Tanaka and Hirayama 1897, "Appendix", 2.

43 *Neues Fremden-Blatt* 1873c, [2]; *ibid.*, 1873f, [7]; *ibid.*, 1873d, 5; *ibid.*, 1873e, 5.

44 Commission Impériale Japonaise 1873, 62.

45 Kutsuzawa, 2018, 9.

46 *Neues Fremden-Blatt* 1873e, 5.

47 An article with a portrait of Komatsu appeared in the *Allgemeine illustrierte Weltausstellungs-Zeitung* 1873b, 159.

48 Japan Centre for Historical Records n.d.

49 *Neues Fremden-Blatt* 1873g, 1.

50 Baron Wertheim was among the initiators for the Exhibition in Vienna.

51 *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* 1873a, 3.

52 Tanaka and Hirayama 1897, "Appendix", 2.

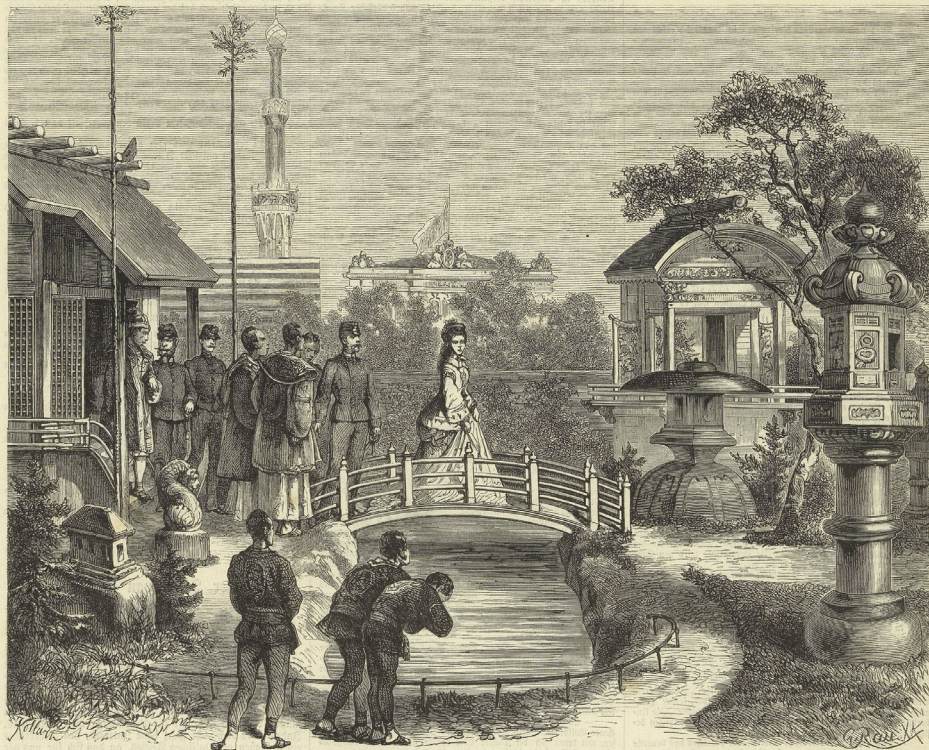
53 The Japanese exhibition commission, consisting of 70 people, embarked in Japan on 23 January 1873 with the exhibition goods (Commission Impériale Japonaise 1873, 63). The French steamship *Phase* transported the cargo and landed in Trieste on 22 March 1873. In Trieste, the exhibits were loaded onto the train and transported to Vienna, where they finally arrived two days later, on 24 March (*Neue Freie Presse* 1873a, 6).

ten den ganzen Weg. Von Mitradan aus bestand der Zug aus zwölf Wagons, wozu ein kleiner kaiserlicher Wagon für den kaiserlichen Esken, seinen Hofmeister und drei andere Beamten; dann fünf Wagen für Minister, den persönlichen Bedienten in Petersburg und den Sekretär des Schahs, die Minister der öffentlichen Bauten, des Auswärtigen, den Ceremonienmeister und Kammerherren. Der neunte Wagon war für die Familie des Kaisers, die nächsten für zwei Leibärzte, acht höhere Hof- und Kammerherren, den Chef der Leibgarde und zwei Dolmetschen und drei Frauen bedient; im letzten Wagon befand sich die Leibwache und das Dienstpersonal, russische Dienerschaft und zwei Leibjäger, große Waagen und Räder. Der Kriegsminister ist zu Hause geblieben und leitet die Regierung, außer ihm sind alle Minister mitgereist. Als Geschenk für den russischen Kaiser brachte er zwei Kabinen von seltener Größe und reizendem Farbenpiel mit, deren Werth ungeschätzbar ist, außerdem Pferde. Die Porzellanfabrik des Schahs ist mit Brillanten und kostbaren Steinen besetzt, deren Werth auf 2½ Millionen

geschätzt wird! Die Reisekasse wurde auf 9 Millionen Tausend (a 2 Rubel 97 Kopfen) eingeschlagen.

Montags den 7. 19. Mai, Mittags 12 Uhr, traf der Schah, von den höchsten Behörden eingeholt, auf dem rüchlichen Bahnhof in Moskau ein, der Zug und Lokomotive waren mit Fahnen und Blumen geschmückt, bejagelten der Bahnhof, wo die Musik die persische Hymne spielte: Hail! Dolgorufi wandte sich mit folgenden Bewillkommungs- worten in französischer Sprache an den Schah: „Euer Majestät! Als Stellvertreter Ihrer Majestät des Kaisers an diesem Tage habe ich die Ehre, Euer Majestät bei der glücklichen Ankunft in der alten Hauptstadt des russischen Reiches zu bewillkommen. Moskau ist stolz darauf, daß es vor allen anderen europäischen Hauptstädten die Ehre hat, den Ersten der persischen Monarchen, der zum Wohle seines Landes eine Reise in's Ausland unternommen hat, in seinen Mauern begrüßen zu dürfen, und es hofft, bei Eurer Majestät in angenehmer Erinnerung zu bleiben.“ Der Schah erwiderte darauf (auch in französischer

Sprache): „Mir ist es besonders angenehm, meine ausländische Reise mit dem Besuche des Reichs meines Freundes, des Kaisers von Rußland, anzutreten.“ Darauf reichte er dem Kaiser die Hand, eine Geste, die nach persischem Brauche nur Mitgliedern des regierenden Hauses zu Theil wird und die in den Annalen des persischen Hofes als Unikum verzeichnet werden dürfte. In einem vergoldeten Wagon, mit sechs weißen Pferden bespannt, wurde er in Moskau eingeholt, die Straßen waren festlich geschmückt mit Fahnen, Leuchtern und Dolmetschen, der Zug bis zum Kreml von Gendarmen und Polizei abgeperrt, das kaiserliche Wetter begünstigte den Einzug, halb Moskau war auf den Beinen. Der Schah grüßte freundlich nach allen Seiten, hinter ihm fuhr die ganze Suite in einer unabhörbaren Reihe offener Wagen mit kaiserlichen Dolmetschen in Galanform. Die höchsten Militär- und Civilbedienten, voraus der Oberpostmeister und zwei berühmte Feuerwerkskünstler, gaben das Geleite. Der Schah benutzte die unteren Räume des kaiserlichen Palais, nebst ihm dürfen nur sechzehn Personen



Wiener Weltausstellung. Der Garten der Japanesen und dessen Eröffnung durch das österreichische Kaiserpaar. Originalzeichnung von F. Kollarz. (S. 702.)

unter einem Dache wohnen. Vom Kaiser waren für seinen Hof 15.000 Rubel täglich angewiesen, extra 1000 Rubel täglich für mehrere Dienerschaft, die im Hotel d'Europe untergebracht war. Der Aufenthalt in Moskau dauerte drei Tage und zwei Nächte.

Am ersten Abend wohnte er der Vorstellung des Ballets Snegurka (Schneeflocke) bei; bei der Rückkehr waren der Theaterplatz und die Straßen bis zum Kreml festlich erleuchtet; am zweiten Tag besuchte er das armeische Institut, das Findelhaus, die große Erbsenkirche, die Museen, und Abends war großer Ball bei dem Generalgouverneur Fürsten Dolgorufi; am dritten Tag besichtigte der Schah einige Fabriken, wozu ein Mandat der Feuerwerke mit dampfenden Luftballons und Abends die Abreise erfolgte. Die Kengierde weckte in den moskauer Tagen namentlich das Verhältniß zu seinen Frauen, von dem man sich die wunderbarsten Dinge erzählt. Der „Nord“ plaudert nun viele Darstellungsgeheimnisse aus, die wir unsern Lesern nicht vorzuenthalten wollen. Auf seiner Reise von Mitradan nach Moskau war der Schah, der wohl gehört haben möchte, daß

die Moskauer über das Institut der Ehe ihre eigenen Ansichten haben, sehr bezaubert um die Unterbringung seiner drei ihn begleitenden Gemahlinnen. Der Telegraph selbst wurde in dieser zarten Angelegenheit kurz in Anspruch genommen. Endlich war festgestellt, daß die Damen unter dem Titel von Dienstmädchen in seiner Nähe einlogiert werden sollten. Aber im letzten Augenblicke gewann die Ueberzeugung beim Schah Platz, daß viele Gemahlinnen gegen die beschränkten europäischen Annehmlichkeiten noch nicht genügt; er entschied demgemäß, daß die Damen außerhalb der Stadt in einer Villa wohnen sollten. Diese fanden aber ein solches Arrangement sehr langweilig und schickten ihren Oberkammerdiener zum Gehirten unter den lebhaftesten Klagen über ihre unpassende Wohnung. Der Schah drückte seinen Ministern ob dieses Mangels an Fürsorge in ziemlich ungewandter Weise seinen Zorn aus und befahl, augenblicklich seine Gemahlinnen zu ihm zu führen. Das moskauer Publikum hatte in Folge dieser Anträge das Unglück, den Schah, welcher sich persönlich von dem vossenden Unterthemen seiner Frauen überzeugen wollte, erst eine Stunde

nach der angelegten Zeit in der kaiserlichen Lage erscheinen zu sehen. Das Weitere entspann sich im Dunkel des Geheimnisses, und da der Korrespondent des „Nord“ unterläßt, seine Quellen anzugeben, so muß ihm die Vertretung seiner Mittheilungen überlassen bleiben. Es soll nämlich der Schah nach seiner Rückkehr aus dem Theater etwas unvorsichtige Offenbarungen über die im Ballet empfangenen Eindrücke gemacht haben. Die Damen gaben unvorhergesehen ihrer eifersüchtigen Entrüstung Ausdruck; die Kavaliere gingen sogar so weit, energisch den Befehl des Kaisers für den folgenden Tag zu verlangen. Als aber an diesem Tage der Schah wieder ohne seine Frauen in's Ballet und nachher auf den Ball des Fürsten Dolgorufi ging, wo die blühendsten Frauenangelegenheiten verhandelt wurden, so brach die Scandal-Revolution offen aus. Die Damen schlugen einen Ton an, der dem Schah denn doch zu arg war; einige Stunden vor seiner Abreise nach Petersburg wurden sie auf der russischen Eisenbahn nach Persien zurückgeführt. Das Ministerium, quergestellt vom Scandal arg bedrängt, blieb schließlich Sieger.

Fig. 4: Franz Kollarz (Kolář), „Der Garten der Japanesen und dessen Eröffnung durch das österreichische Kaiserpaar“ (The Japanese Garden and its Opening by the Imperial Couple); paper/woodblockprint, 39,4 cm x 29,6 cm. Illustration in Über Land und Meer, 15. Jg., Nr. 40, p. 784, 1873. Wien Museum inv. no. 209475.

newspapers announced the arrival of the Japanese delegation and printed a list of names to introduce the members to the Viennese public before their arrival. The delegation then moved into their quarters in a building at Opernring⁵⁴ and immediately began to set up the Exhibition pavilion and the garden. Interactions with the people of Vienna took place at the Fair, at events such as the Citizen's Ball on 17 April⁵⁵ and during numerous visits by the Japanese craftsmen and students to factories and businesses in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy,⁵⁶ giving Japan a social and media presence that the people of Vienna had not seen before.

Shortly before the Fair's opening, Minister Sano was introduced to the Emperor Franz Josef on 28 April, with Alexander von Siebold acting as interpreter.⁵⁷ It was probably during this meeting that Sano invited the Emperor to visit the Japanese garden on 5 May, for Japanese Children's Day (*Kodomo No Hi* 子供の日). So, the Emperor, the Empress, and their son, Archduke Rudolf (1858–1889), came to the garden and inspected the installation. Sano arranged for the Emperor and his wife to be the first to cross the newly built stone bridge and approach the Shinto shrine, which contained replicas of the Three Sacred Treasures (*Sanshunoshinki* 三種の神器), the imperial regalia of Japan.⁵⁸ On her way back, the empress crossed the bridge alone, which provided a picturesque vista for the accompanying journalists and sketchers. A newspaper soon published the now famous illustration of the Empress crossing the stone bridge in the garden (fig. 4).⁵⁹ This illustration and many

press reports about the visit and the Imperial Family's special act of attention prove Sano's public relations strategy to be highly successful.

On the evening of the opening day, Minister Sano and Commissioners Seikikawa and Komatsu were invited to the gala dinner. In the magnificent ceremonial hall of the Hofburg, 165 people were seated around a U-shaped table (fig. 5).⁶⁰ The imperial family and the heads of state present were surrounded by the Austro-Hungarian aristocracy, government representatives, and exhibitor commissioners. A four-course meal and a variety of desserts were served and the evening was rounded off by a concert program consisting mainly of Strauss.⁶¹ The surviving seating plan shows that Minister Sano, Sekikawa, and Komatsu were seated between the exhibition commission's representatives from Russia, Sweden, Norway, British India, Italy, and Portugal.

This introduction of the country commissioners at the table encouraged them to socialise with each other, from the very beginning of the Fair. And on occasions like this, new contacts were quickly made in the highest circles of Viennese society. Mayor Felder, for example, sat next to Gustav Detring (1842–1913), the Costumes Commissioner for China.⁶² Felder recalled in his memoirs his acquaintance with the European representatives for China. "I was very interested in these gentlemen and was taught by them about many incorrect ideas that I still held about China's country and people, despite my emancipation from the prejudices customary in the country."⁶³

54 *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* 1873d, 11.

55 *Neues Wiener Blatt* 1873a, 4.

56 The educational program was also part of Japan's preparations to gain knowledge of European industry, sciences, political and administrative processes (Fux, *Österreichisch-Japanische Gesellschaft*, and *Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst* 1973, 15).

57 *Neues Wiener Blatt* 1873b, 4.

58 *Neue Freie Presse* 1873b, 7; *Neues Wiener Blatt* 1873c, 3.

59 *Über Land und Meer* 1873, 785. The article (ibid., 792) describes the scene of the illustration as the moment of the opening of the bridge by the imperial couple, Empress Elisabeth striding ahead and the Emperor following. However, this contradicts the reports in Austrian newspapers, in

which the Emperor is the first to cross the bridge, and the perspective of the illustration in its spatial depiction of the Japanese Garden does not match the first crossing of the bridge towards the Shinto shrine (left in the fig. 4). The illustration rather shows the company, led by the empress, on its way back.

60 *Neuere Zeremonialakten* NZA 350, *Places arrangements for the Gala-Dinner, Schönbrunn Palace on 1 May 1873*.

61 *Neuere Zeremonialakten* NZA 350, *Gala-Dinner bei Eröffnung der Wiener-Weltausstellung am 1. Mai 1873*, Dinner Menu and Concert Program, 1. Mai 1873.

62 *Neuere Zeremonialakten* NZA 350. The guest list was published in *Neues Fremden-Blatt* 1873h, 3–4.

63 Felder *Personalien* Folder 1887, 30.

The opening dinner was a highly official meeting with representatives of states and monarchs to which Sano was invited. Another was the court reception on 11 May, where all foreign exhibitors were officially received by the Emperor and Empress, including Sano and nine members of the Japanese delegation.⁶⁴ Both events were formal ceremonies at the highest level of Viennese society, and again an opportunity to network with other groups of people or to deepen contacts, as all exhibitors were invited to the event.

Another platform for the Japanese delegation members was found in the weekly soirees held by First Palace Minister Prince Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst (1828–1896), which took place in a more informal setting and were attended by a broad circle of people. Exhibitors and representatives of the Austro-Hungarian government and society were able to mingle more freely, and the Japanese representatives were often invited guests.

To provide an insight into the frequency and status of the people who attended the Hohenlohe's soirees, this text will present a selection from the guest lists to dinners in May and June. In many ways, this selection of people was either in close contact with the Japanese delegation or involved in the acquisition of objects from East Asia for public or private collections, some of which will be discussed below.

The first of these weekly soirees, on the evening of 3 May, was attended by the Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth, Albert the Prince of Wales (1841–1910), Archduke Rainer and his wife Marie Karoline (1825–1915), Archduke Karl Ludwig, William Ward Earl of Dudley (1817–1885) and his wife Georgina Countess of Dudley (1846–1929), the American envoy John Jay Knox Jr (1828–1892). Also present were Baron Maximilian von Gagern (1810–1889), uncle to the Siebold brothers, along with Minister Sano and Baron Alexander von Siebold from the Japanese Delegation. Further guests from Austrian Hungarian society included Foreign Minister Count Andrassy, Baron Nathaniel Meyer von Rothschild

(1836–1905), Baron Wertheim, and Count Edmund Zichy (1811–1894). Various other representatives of the foreign legations were also present. The handwritten guest list counts 401 people.⁶⁵

Baron Siebold also attended for Japan the second reception on 10 May, along with Archduke Rainer, Trade Minister Anton Banhans (1825–1902) and Archduke Karl Ludwig. At the third soiree, on 17 May, the Japanese commissioners were not present, but among the invited guests were Baron von Gagern, Rudolf Eitelberger, Baron Schwegel, Minister in Residence Calice, and the “four Chinese commissaries,”⁶⁶ who were not mentioned by name in the handwritten guest list. The fourth soiree on 24 May was again attended by Baron Gagern, Archduke Rainer and Archduchess Marie, Count Edmund Zichy, and Princess Pauline von Metternich (1836–1921).

The soiree on 14 June saw a large Japanese presence: the members of the Iwakura mission, Iwakura Tomomi 岩倉 具視 (1825–1883), Ito Hirobumi 伊藤 博文 (1841–1909), Yamagoutchi Naoyoshi 山口尚芳 (1839–1894), Kurimoto Teijiro 栗本貞次郎 (1839–1881), and Ando Taro 安藤郎 (1846–1924), as well as two Japanese ambassadors from London and Paris, Minister Sano, the Siebold brothers Alexander and Heinrich, Minister in Residence Calice, and the commissioners Komatsu Terumori and Tanake Yoshio 田中芳男 (1838–1916). Archduke Rainer and his wife Archduchess Marie Karoline were also present.⁶⁷

65 Neuere Zeremonialakten NZA 350, *Empfänge bei S. D. dem k. k. Ersten Oberhofmeister Fürsten zu Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst 1873, 3 May.*

66 Neuere Zeremonialakten NZA 350, *Empfänge bei S. D. dem k. k. Ersten Oberhofmeister Fürsten zu Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst 1873, 17 May*, “4 chinesische Commissäre”. See also *Neues Fremden-Blatt* (1873j, 2). Charles Hannen (1833–1922), Edward Bangs Drew (1843–1924), Edward Charles Bowra (1841–1874) and Gustav Detring (1842–1913) acted as official representatives for the Chinese section. See: *Weltausstellung 1873 Wien (1873); Liste der in Wien anwesenden Mitglieder und Funktionäre ausländischer Regierungs-Commissionen*, Wien, Kaiserl. Königl. Hof- u. Staatsdr., 6.

67 Neuere Zeremonialakten NZA 350, *Empfänge bei S. D. dem k. k. Ersten Oberhofmeister Fürsten zu Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst 1873, 24 May and 14 June 1873.*

64 Neuere Zeremonialakten NZA 350.

The Hohenlohe's soirees, specially hosted for guests of the World's Fair, provided a broad and informal framework for meeting a wide range of people in the first few weeks after the opening. Here, Minister Sano had the opportunity to introduce himself to important representatives of Austria and other countries and to forge friendly relations for effective cooperation in the future.⁶⁸ These examples show that, within a short period of time, there were many interactions between the Fair's representatives and organisers and the representatives of the visiting countries. The Japanese commissioners would have the opportunity to encounter many of these people once again during the course of the exhibition, thereby fostering personal connections, a network that was to facilitate and be manifested in the exchange of exhibition objects.

The Iwakura Mission Newly Made Contacts during the Vienna Fair

The year 1873 was an important one in terms of Japan's foreign relations. In addition to the Exhibition commissioners that travelled to the World's Fair, the ambassadors of the Iwakura Mission had been travelling to western countries since 1871. During the first half of 1873, they visited various cities in Europe. In June 1873, Iwakura Tomomi and other members visited Vienna.⁶⁹ The diplomatic mission's purpose was the renegotiation of Japan's trade contracts with Western countries, including Austria-Hungary,⁷⁰ but it conveniently coincided with the World's Fair.

Iwakura was received by the Austro-Hungarian Court with a similar degree of attention accorded to princes and high-ranking guests from European royal houses. Their programme in Vienna was relatively straightforward.⁷¹ They attended official audiences with Emperor Franz Joseph and Foreign Minister Count Andrássy, which formed the mission's original purpose.⁷² In the evenings, they were invited to dinners at the Palace of Schönbrunn, to a party of the American envoy John Jay Knox Jr. (1828–1892), and to a gala dinner hosted by Count Andrássy.⁷³ On Saturday 14 June, they visited the World's Fair during the daytime, then proceeded to the soirée of Prince Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst. Additionally, they attended audiences with Crown Prince Rudolph and several archdukes.⁷⁴

During their stay and through their social connections, the Japanese delegation and the Iwakura mission happened to meet Lorenz von Stein (1815–1890), a prominent German constitutional law scholar. The Meiji government aimed to establish a constitution based on the model of western states, for which the Prussian-German model of a constitutional monarchy was regarded as primary. Later, Prime Minister Ito Hirobumi 伊藤 博文 (1841–1909) brought in Lorenz von Stein as a foreign advisor in the 1880s to help draft the Meiji Constitution.

The Vienna fair provided the context in which the first acquaintance between Lorenz von Stein and the Japanese representatives was made. During the World's Fair, the Siebold brothers' uncle, Maximilian von Gager, hosted an open diplomatic salon every Monday and Thursday at his residence

68 Fux, *Österreichisch-Japanische Gesellschaft*, and *Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst* 1973, 14.

69 The main part of the Iwakura-Mission stayed in Vienna between 4 June and 18 June 1873. See Kume and Pantzer (2002, 283–350). A part of the group under Tanaka Fujimaro 田中 不二麿 (1845–1909) arrived in Vienna as early as January (*Neues Fremden-Blatt* 1873a, [2]; *ibid.* 1873b, 4–5), and another part of the Iwakura Mission under Kido Takayoshi 木戸 孝允 (1833–1877) stayed between 29 April and 5 May 1873, and was present at the Exhibition opening day. See Kido (1983, 318–22).

70 Kume and Pantzer 2002, XV.

71 *Neuere Zeremonialakten* NZA 338, 339, 342.

72 Kume and Pantzer 2002, 477–86; Lorenz 1944, 177.

73 *Neues Wiener Blatt* 1873d, 3; *ibid.* 1873e, 3; *ibid.* 1873f, 3.

74 Kume and Pantzer 2002, 507. One notable distinction is that the men of the Iwakura Mission members were not official Imperial Court guests but were in Vienna for diplomatic purposes. Therefore, their stay and daily schedule in Vienna were not coordinated by the Obersthofmeister's Office but were managed independently by the Japanese delegation.

in Landstrasse,⁷⁵ which Lorenz von Stein frequented. Gagern, a lawyer who had been in the Austrian civil service since 1855, had held various positions in the Foreign Ministry, and was appointed Privy Councillor in 1873. He was entrusted by Foreign Minister Count Andrassy with “[...] the social care of foreign guests of distinction [...]”, as Reinhold Lorenz explains.⁷⁶ It seems reasonable to posit that Gagern’s acquaintance with Sano and other Japanese commissioners’ dates from Sano’s and the Siebold brothers’ arrival in Vienna, given that they attended the soirees of Prince Hohenlohe together. No guest lists survive from the Gagern salons, but it seems likely that the Japanese representatives also frequented this event. In the 1880s, Ito Hirobumi visited Stein in Vienna again to seek his counsel in the drafting of the new Japanese constitution.

This example illustrates the formation of new relationships through personal connections. Stein was likely brought into contact with the Japanese ministers through his shared expertise with Gagern and Gagern’s familial relation to the Siebold brothers.

Aftermath of the Network Activity of the Japan Exhibition Commission

The extensive reporting in the daily newspapers, has facilitated the reconstruction of numerous meetings held during the delegation’s tenure in Vienna. Sano was a regular attendee at social gatherings and musical performances, including those hosted for Empress Augusta of Germany and Count and

Countess Andrassy.⁷⁷ Concurrently, the Japanese pavilion and the gardens were visited by numerous prominent members of royal families.

As the Viennese public was increasingly fascinated by Japanese culture and products, the Japanese delegation also put on social events, assuming the role of hosts for the Austro-Hungarian Society, to express gratitude for the warm reception they had received. On 25 October, Sano Tsunetami, who was then serving as Ambassador to Austria-Hungary, hosted a dinner at the Hotel Imperial in honour of Trade Minister Banhans and Director Schwarz-Senborn, to which “[...] a number of illustrious personalities from home and abroad with whom the Japanese Commission came into contact during the duration of the World’s Fair were also invited”.⁷⁸ As was customary, official toasts were proffered in honour of the monarchs, both Austrian and Japanese, and to the two guests of honour.

The Minister [Sano] noted the great satisfaction with which the members of the Embassy were filled that they had found such an extremely friendly reception in Vienna, and it was a source of satisfaction to them, especially through the establishment of the Committee for the Orient and East Asia, to be able to take home with them the certainty that this was a place where they could establish new business contacts and receive the most unselfish information on questions of all kinds.⁷⁹

75 *Die Presse* 1873, 7.

76 Lorenz 1944, 184. “[...] der gesellschaftlichen Betreuung der auswärtigen Gäste von Rang [...]” Fux, Österreichisch-Japanische Gesellschaft, and Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst 1973, 15; *Hessische Biografie* n.d. Gagern was also active in the organisational apparatus of the World Exhibition. In February 1872, he was elected chairman of Department XIX—Civic Residence, for the participation of the Orient (*Die Neue Zeit: Olmüzer politische Zeitung* 1872, 6). He was therefore not only connected to East Asia through the professional choice of his nephews, but also had a professional interest in the countries of the Asian continent.

77 *Neues Wiener Blatt* 1873g, 2; *Deutsche Zeitung* 1873, 1–2.

78 *Neue Freie Presse* 1873d, 5. “[...] eine Anzahl illustrier Persönlichkeiten des In- und Auslandes geladen war, mit denen die japanesische Commission während der Dauer der Weltausstellung in Berührung kam.”

79 *Ibid.* “Der Minister [Sano] constatirte die hohe Befriedigung, mit welcher es die Mitglieder der Botschaft erfüllte, daß sie in Wien eine so überaus freundliche Aufnahme fanden, und er gereiche ihnen zu Genugthuung, besonders durch die Errichtung des Comités für den Orient und Ostasien die Gewißheit mit nach Hause nehmen und dort weiter verbreiten zu können, daß hier ein Ort sei, wo sie neue Handelsverbindungen anknüpfen und über Fragen aller Art die uneigennützigste Auskunft erhalten können.”

In his own words, Sano acknowledged the warm welcome he received and the new relationships he established during the course of the Fair.

To mark the conclusion of the World's Fair on the evening of 1 November, a concert was held by the Japanese in their garden. At 4 PM, the official closure of the rotunda and Fair halls commenced. The Emperor, Director, President, and Protector conducted their final tours. The foghorn sounded as an acoustic signal thereby declaring the Fair complete. The Japanese garden, where a concert was held, was illuminated by hundreds of lanterns and the festivities continued well into the night.⁸⁰

On 11 November, Minister Sano arranged a final celebration in honour of the Emperor of Japan's birthday. The event, a banquet, featured five small theatrical performances. Traditional Japanese music, dance, and plays were performed by Japanese artists in the rooms decorated with flags, flowers, and images of the Emperor and Empress of Japan were also displayed.⁸¹

Upon the conclusion of the Fair period, the roles of guest and host were reversed, signifying Japan's reciprocation for the numerous initial invitations they had received and the favourable reception by the people of Vienna. To conclude their participation at the Fair, the Japanese government demonstrated its gratitude with gifts.⁸² Swords and other valuable objects were presented to those individuals who had rendered outstanding services to Japan. Among the recipients were the two highest representatives of the Fair, Archdukes Karl Ludwig and Rainer,⁸³ as well as Direktor Schwarz-Senborn and Consul General Schwegel, head of Division 19 for the participation of the Orient and East Asia. The gifts

included Japanese arts and crafts specialities, such as porcelain, lacquerware, and silk fabrics, as well as the finest Japanese tea.⁸⁴

Following the successful networking of the Japanese Commission at the World's Fair, a tragic incident occurred. In the early months of 1874, the Japanese delegation departed from Vienna, having sold or exchanged all items from their Fair. They only brought back with them the culturally important objects, and therefore not those for sale, such as the Golden Shachihoko (*Shachihoko hoko* 鯨鯢), as well as products purchased from Europe. These were conveyed back to Japan on the ship *Nil*, which had been loaded in Shanghai and was to ferry them to Tokyo. But shortly before reaching its destination, off the Izu Peninsula, the *Nil* sank, along with most of its crew members and passengers.⁸⁵ The commission members were not on board when the disaster took place on the night of 20 March 1874, in the form of a storm.⁸⁶ However, when the news reached Vienna, "The Japanese Exhibition Commission drowned"⁸⁷ was the headline e.g. of the *Neues Wiener Blatt* on 3 April 1874. This was later revealed to be a false report. The "obituary", written touchingly, albeit hastily, for the Japanese and published alongside the headline, reflected the sympathy felt by the Viennese press and is likely to have caused shock and sympathy among some readers. In truth, the commission members were still alive, but the boxes full of exhibit items had sunk.

It is evident that Sano's social activities in Vienna, which had contributed to the popularity of the Japanese delegation, also facilitated the establishment of long-term amicable relations. Austria and England, among others, provided replacements for the European products the Japanese delegation had taken with them for the purposes of advancing their industry and enriching the collection of the newly founded Tokyo National Museum. This occurred over the course of 1874. A collection

80 *Neues Wiener Blatt* 1873h, 4.

81 *Illustrierten Wiener Extrablatt* 1873, 4. Article with detailed description of the listed performances.

82 In 1873, Japan did not yet have a national order but awarded gifts of honour. The change to honours by medals came with the introduction of the Order of the Rising Sun in 1875.

83 Tanaka and Hirayama 1897, 45–46.

84 *Neues Wiener Tagblatt (Abendblatt)* 1873, [19].

85 Polak 2013, 117.

86 *Deutsche Zeitung* 1874a, 1.

87 *Neues Wiener Blatt* 1874, 3.

“[...] of agricultural equipment and machinery, as well as horticultural equipment [...]” was dispatched by the Austrian Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture to Japan.⁸⁸ In addition, the artefacts recovered from the *Nil* in 1875, mainly objects that had withstood the effects of the seawater, were also incorporated into the Tokyo National Museum’s collections.⁸⁹

The Austrian government’s decision to assist the country on the other side of the world following the shipwreck and the loss of the objects was made in light of their successful collaboration during the World’s Fair. In the context of contemporary social interaction, this cannot be viewed without consideration of the contacts that Sano and his delegation had made and cultivated within the Austrian government during this time. The European representatives, among them trade minister Anton Banhans, now perceived it as their duty to provide assistance in their newly forged friendship with the Japanese delegation members. The loss of the ship’s cargo, without a replacement from Europe, would have resulted in a less successful outcome for Japan following the World Exhibition, as one of the Japanese government’s aims was to learn from advanced European industry and use the machinery and technology that it had taken back to Japan to modernise the country.⁹⁰

Meetings between the representatives of the Fair and the imperial family with the exhibitors were held on several occasions, particularly during the initial months of May and June. Sano, as the Minister in Residence and therefore highest representative of Japan in Vienna, frequented ceremonial receptions at the Austro-Hungarian court or among representatives of other courts, such as the Prince of Wales.⁹¹ The imperial house treated Japan (as a country that was new on the diplomatic stage) and Sano with the greatest decorum, and the Viennese public welcomed the Japanese at many events. Japan made efforts to establish a presence on the

international stage during the Fair, and the social gatherings provided opportunities to informally deepen networks with Austrian and foreign aristocratic families and politicians.

The aforementioned groups of people—the first delegation members in Vienna Sekizawa and Komatsu, Minister Sano and the Siebold Brothers, and the members of the Iwakura delegation—engaged in social interactions at various levels of society and were able to gain the attention and approval of these groups. Sekizawa and Komatsu proactively sought dialogue with representatives of Austro-Hungarian industry and commerce with the intention of disseminating information regarding Japan’s willingness to establish trade relations at the earliest possible convenience. Minister Sano approached the Emperor of Austria-Hungary at the first reception and persuaded him to make a public appearance in the Japanese garden during the first days of the Fair. This has remained widely known to this day. At the soirees of Prince Hohenlohe, Minister Sano and the men of the Iwakura Mission frequently encountered prominent figures from Austrian social circles, integrating them into Vienna’s social fabric. Ultimately, their attendance at the diplomatic salons of Foreign Minister Count Andrassy and presumably Gagern, who established the acquaintance between Lorenz von Stein and Japanese delegation members, exemplifies a specific level of relations, materialized by their shared professional expertise. Viennese society was receptive to foreign visitors during the World’s Fair. The upper representatives of Austrian society extended a lavish welcome to their guests, facilitating their integration into the social circles. The Japanese delegation was swiftly embraced by these circles.

The unfortunate *Nil* accident paradoxically provides evidence of the efficacy of the Japanese public relations efforts. Japan’s growing popularity in Vienna, coupled with the delegation’s familiarity with European representatives, facilitated the provision of replacements for the sunken goods and laid the foundation for mutually beneficial future trade relations with Japan.

88 *Deutsche Zeitung* 1874b, 4; *Neues Wiener Blatt* 1875, 3.

89 Polak 2013, 141.

90 Kutsuzawa 2018, 7.

91 *Neues Fremden-Blatt* 1873i, 2.

The Object Exchange between the Japanese Exhibition Commission and the Austrian Museum of Arts and Industry

One of Japan's principal objectives at the Vienna World's Fair was to secure European objects for the newly founded Tokyo National Museum, to enrich the museum's collections. Rather than purchasing them, Japan's strategy was to exchange Japanese exhibits for European goods. In 1873 the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry, obtained objects from Japan under the direction of its founding director Rudolph Eitelberger (1817–1885). Archduke Rainer played a significant, yet understudied role in these acquisitions from the World's Fair. Examining the Archduke's letters and the newspaper reports on his activities can lead to a more profound understanding of the acquisitions.⁹²

The idea of an exchange of objects was first publicised in an article by Arthur von Scala (1845–1909), who was Secretary of the Committee for the Orient and East Asia and later Director of the Oriental Museum, founded in 1874 after the Vienna Fair, through the Committee members for the Orient and East Asia.⁹³ The Japanese proposal of an object exchange was published in the *Internationale Ausstellungs-Zeitung* in the early days of May. In the article, Scala praised Gottfried Wagener (1831–1892) for proposing an exchange that would allow Japan to obtain objects for the future Tokyo National Museum.⁹⁴ Gottfried Wagener was a European attaché of the Japanese commission. Originally from Germany, he was a natural scientist and technician; he relocated to Japan in 1868, where he taught science and German. For the Vienna Fair, Wagener was tasked with examining the intended exhibits from

Japan and appointed to introduce the techniques, like porcelain production to visitors at the site.⁹⁵

The exchange of objects proved to be a beneficial and efficient means of achieving the two key objectives of the Japanese government's participation in the World's Fair: firstly, to present Japan as a modern country seeking trade connections, and secondly, to obtain machinery and examples for further industrial development. Scala's article makes it clear that this exchange option was available to all interested parties. Following the exchange, it was anticipated that both parties would emerge with beneficial new business relationships.

The acquisition of objects for the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry was driven by its protector, Archduke Rainer. He and the museum's director, Rudolf Eitelberger (fig. 6), had established and expanded the museum. Numerous letters written by the Archduke have been preserved in Eitelberger's estate, providing an insight into his involvement with the museum and his collaboration with Eitelberger, spanning the period from 1867 until the death of Eitelberger in 1884.⁹⁶ Fourteen letters, written between March and December, can be dated to 1873, and the content of these letters primarily revolves around the World's Fair, in particular detailing the most important contacts he made for purchasing objects for the museum. From his letters, it can be concluded that there was competition between European museums for acquiring exhibit items, and that Japan's objects were particularly popular.

92 Rainer left no diary or memoirs. It was not until Dietlinde Frühmann's dissertation in 1985 that we received a better overview of the course of his life and, above all, his work as Prime Minister and as a curator at the Academy of Sciences. Frühmann only deals very little with its function as Protector of the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry. See Frühmann (1985).

93 Österreichisches Handelsmuseum 1900, 13.

94 von Scala 1872, 2.

95 Tanaka and Hirayama 1897, "Appendix", 6. Wagner gave several lectures on Japanese production and industry as part of the world exhibition program. On 27 May he presented a lecture on the Japanese porcelain industry to the Geographical Society of Vienna (*Neues Fremden-Blatt* 1873k, 3). On 17 October 1873, he talked before the Lower Austrian Trade Association, for which he used the Japanese objects as illustrative material (*Neue Freie Presse*, 16 October 1873d, 6). Together with members of the Japanese delegation, he visited companies and facilities to explain the processes to the Japanese as an interpreter (*Fremden-Blatt (Abend-Blatt)* 1873, [30]).

96 Eitelberger Personalia Folder, Correspondence with Archduke Rainer 1864–1884. Unfortunately, the letters Eitelberger sent to Rainer are missing, so only half of their correspondence can be presented.



Fig. 6: Ludwig Angerer (photographer) (1827–1879), Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg, Kunsthistoriker und erster Ordinarius für Kunstgeschichte an der Universität Wien, around 1860–1865. Photography on supporting cardboard/albumen paper, 9,2×5,8 cm. Wien Museum, inv. no. 102540/10.

It is evident that acquiring Japanese exhibit items was one of the museum's primary objectives from its inception. Scala's article arouses a desire for Japanese objects, particularly given that they were available through exchange rather than solely through purchase. Rainer met with Heinrich von Calice, Minister in Residence for China, Japan, and Siam, and discussed potential acquisitions from the Japanese pavilion. Calice "[...] promised me everything, [...]", he wrote to Eitelberger on 23 May.⁹⁷

The next letter contained in Eitelberger's estate concerning the Japanese objects was written by Heinrich von Siebold to Eitelberger on 1 June 1873:

Only a few days after receiving your honoured letter of the 19th of May did I have the opportunity to inform the Japanese Minister Sano of the wish of His Imperial Highness Archduke Rainer and yours to enter into an exchange concerning the Japanese objects, as he has been suffering [an illness] for some time.

I am now instructed to inform Your Excellency that Mr Sano, taking great interest in the settlement of the matter in question, is prepared to respond to your proposal later with pleasure.⁹⁸

Siebold confirms Eitelberger Minister Sano's interest and shared his informal agreement regarding an exchange of objects with the Austrian Museum. This letter refers to an earlier one, sent by Eitelberger to Sano, in which he presumably makes the museum's official request. Unfortunately, this, as well as the official agreement by Sano, is no longer preserved. But a letter Rainer sent to Eitelberger on 18 July 1873 (fig.7) shows this agreement occurred. Rainer wrote more specifically that they must hurry choosing the desired objects.

I have spoken to the Japanese interpreter H. Siebold. Go and see him so that you can tell him about the desirable objects for the museum. Mr Sano wants to set up a museum in Japan, so he wants to use his more valuable objects for exchange. He is mainly looking for educational and technical objects. He has already received applications from Germany, so there is no time to lose.⁹⁹

So, in the months May and June 1873, Director Eitelberger and Archduke Rainer conducted negotiations with Sano, the head of the Japanese Exhibition Commission, through Heinrich von Siebold. By early June, Eitelberger and Rainer had secured Sano's agreement to the exchange of objects. By mid-July, Eitelberger was able to select the objects for the museum himself.

This letter provides further insight into the process of acquiring objects during the World's Fair. Rainer had spoken directly to Heinrich von Siebold and thus was aware of Sano's plans through his firsthand account, as well as what kind of objects he wanted in return, namely sample goods, devices, and machines. Furthermore, Rainer learned that there was competition between the countries to procure

97 Eitelberger Personalia Folder, Letter 23 May 1873, Inv. 23.541 "[...] versprach mir Alles, [...]". A similar message can be read in the letter of 26 May, concerning an assurance from the English head of department, Philip Cunliffe-Owen (1828–1894), the director of the Kensington Museum (Eitelberger Personalia Folder, Letter 26 May 1873, Inv. 23.540).

98 "Nach Empfang Ihres geehrten Schreibens vom 19.ten v. M. habe ich erst von einigen Tagen Gelegenheit gefunden den japanischen Minister Sano von dem Wunsche Sr. Kais. Hohheit Erzherzog Rainer, und dem Ihrigen, in Betreff der japanischen Gegenstände einen Tausch einzugehen, in Kenntnis setzen können, da derselbe längere Zeit leidend. Ich bin nun beauftragt Euer Hochwohlgeboren mitzuteilen daß Herr Sano in der Erledigung der in Rede stehenden Angelegenheit großes Interesse nehmend, mit Vergnügen später auf Ihren Vorschlag einzugehen bereit ist." (Eitelberger Personalia Folder, Letter 1 June 1873, Inv. 21.765)

99 "Mit dem japanischen Dolmetsch H. Siebold habe ich gesprochen. Suchen Sie ihn auf, damit sie ihm die für das Museum wünschenswerthen Gegenstände bezeichnen können. Mister Sano will in Japan ein Museum errichten, daher seine werthvolleren Gegenstände zum Tausche verwenden. Er sucht hauptsächlich Unterrichts u technische Gegenstände. Von Deutschland hat er bereits Anträge erhalten, es ist daher keine Zeit zu verlieren." (Eitelberger Personalia Folder, Letter 18 July 1873, Inv. 23.544)

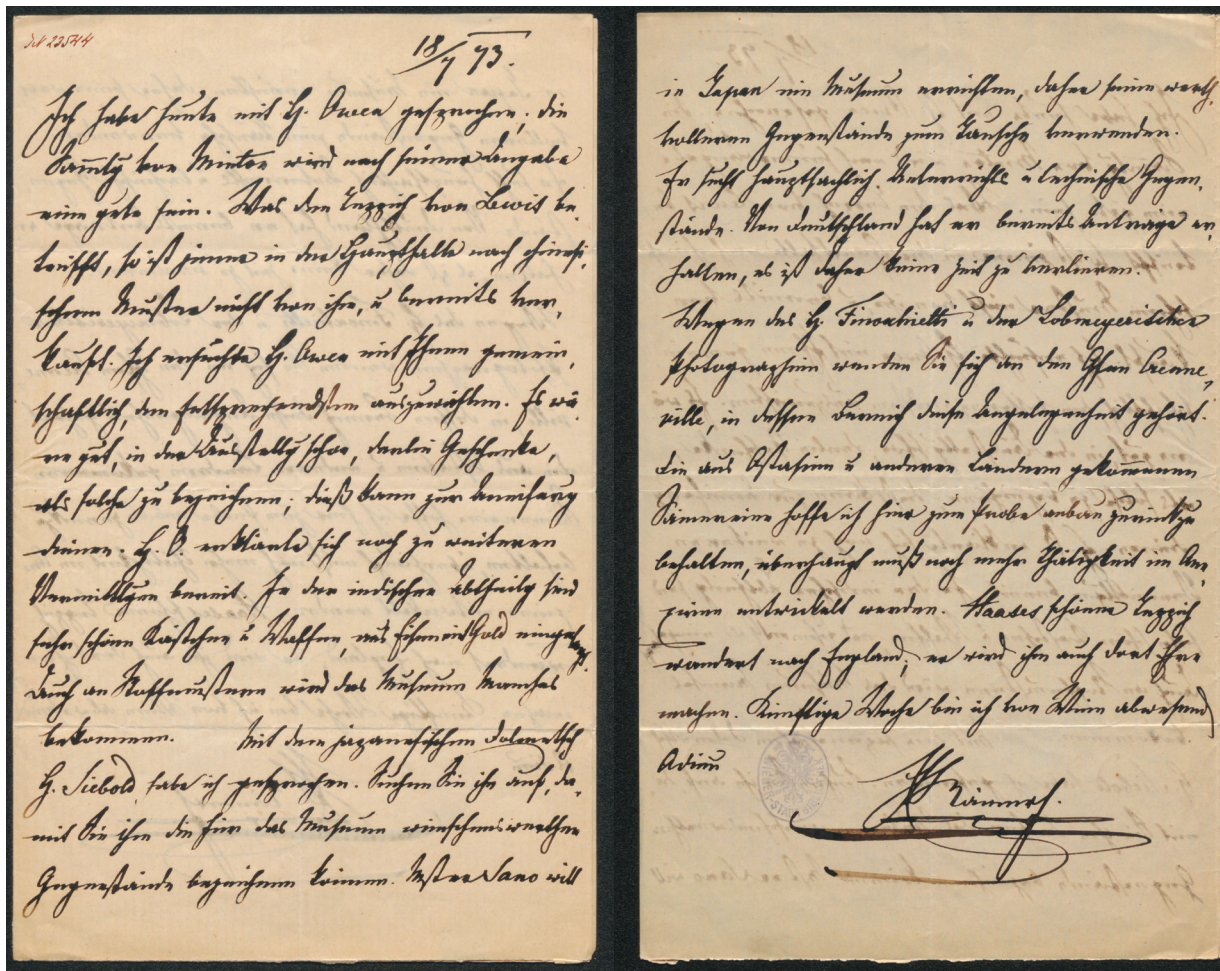


Fig. 7: Archduke Rainer (1827–1913). Letter to Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg, 18 July 1873; paper, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, inv. no. 23.544.

the exhibits for themselves. The precise nature of these offers and the extent to which the countries' exhibition managers may have exploited this competitive situation to their advantage remains unknown.

Japan's active marketing of their objects as products of exchange with European products for the collection of the new museum in Tokyo reached many people and was apparently so well received that a scramble for the best pieces ensued. Rainer's letters demonstrate the necessity for rapid actions to secure Japanese objects.

This interaction shows also the important position played by the President of the Fair. He frequently assumed the role of a mediator, facilitating the establishment of favourable relations

between the countries. Additionally, he ensured the museum's interests in the procurement of exhibits. Rainer's dynamic approach, his consistent engagement with the Fair, and his dedication to fostering connections rendered him a highly effective advocate for the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry. Moreover, the Japanese commission was particularly accommodating to the host country, presumably with plans for future relations in mind.

The *Mittheilungen des Österreichischen Museums, Monatsschrift für Kunst und Gewerbe* (Announcements of the Austrian Museum, Monthly Journal for Arts and Crafts) immediately announced the first acquisitions from the World's Fair. In the July issue, we read about the acquired exhibits from

Japan and other countries, that Archduke Rainer had approached and described in his letters.¹⁰⁰ His lobbying efforts were therefore successful, and the first exhibit collections—comprising objects of art and craft, particularly porcelains, lacquers, and textiles—were integrated into the museum collection in July. Unfortunately, there are no known sources currently indicating which objects Japan received in exchange from the Museum of Art and Industry.

In October, the *Neue Freie Presse* published a list of private donors of various textile goods, tools for the production of textiles, or army equipment, that the Japanese won for their exchange. This list included Karl von Offermann (1850–1908), the textile manufacturer from Brno¹⁰¹ (Czech Republic), Baron Wertheim, and others.¹⁰²

The Ethnological Museum of Berlin was similarly keen to participate in an object swap with the Japanese delegation. Through the intermediary of Gottfried Wagener, the Ethnological Museum received an extensive collection of artefacts from the Ainu (the indigenous people of Hokkaido). In return, it sent illustrations and photographs of objects of applied art.¹⁰³ The Japanese exhibits arrived in Berlin in January 1874. The objects in return were dispatched by the museum in July 1874.¹⁰⁴ Since the object exchange between the Museum of Art and Industry and the Japanese Exhibition Commission is not fully documented, it is unclear

which objects Japan received, the Ethnological Museum of Berlin offers a complete example, including the objects that Japan received in exchange.

By employing the strategy of object exchange, Minister Sano was able to bring many objects to Japan for the new museum in Tokyo, eliminating the need for him to approach the institutions individually to request them. Like other exhibitors, the Japanese delegation wanted to learn and gain knowledge through the platform of the World's Fair. To achieve this goal, new knowledge and technology, and therefore products, tools, and machines, had to be acquired to contribute to Japan's industrial development and their own museum collections. Both could be achieved by means of Japan's exhibits. Initially, they served as a presentation of Japan's own country at the Fair and, later, by exchanging the same objects for European products, a cost-effective way of acquiring Western products was established. The plan Sano outlined at the beginning was to generate strong public interest in Japanese products and thus attract as many exchange partners as possible.

To promote the objects, the future exported goods, and thereby their country, the Japanese delegation members required contacts and access to social spaces and events surrounding the World's Fair. They attended various events or invited relevant people to engage with them directly. Through their presence and active participation on the international stage, they were able to gain support for their exchange initiative to facilitate trade links for the future of Japan.

This promotion of Japan and negotiations regarding object acquisitions occurred concurrently, and, moreover, how the negotiating parties presented themselves also influenced the trajectory of future relationships, as evidenced by the example of Heinrich von Siebold.

Heinrich von Siebold was to become an important collector of Japanese art for Austria and Germany. For Sano and the delegation, he acted primarily as an interpreter, a position he had already held in 1872, during the visit of the Austrian

100 Kaiserlich-Königliches Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie 1873a, 409. See also the *ibid.* (1873b, 471), and annual report *Jahresbericht des k.k. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie für 1873* (1873, 23–24).

101 The textile manufacturer Karl von Offermann (1850–1908), from Brno, Czech Republic, was a member of the Moravian Trade Association. He purchased Exhibits from the Vienna World Exhibition and donated those to the new *Mährisches Gewerbemuseum* (Moravian Museum of Decorative Arts, today part of the Moravska Gallery, Brno) in 1874. See *Mährisches Gewerbemuseum* (1874). The Moravian Museum opened in December 1873 and Archduke Rainer became protector (*Neues Fremden-Blatt* 1873o, 4). See also Husseinová (2011, 90–93).

102 *Neue Freie Presse* 1873e, 2.

103 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, Acquisition Files 176/74.

104 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, Acquisition Files 1087/74, 1268/74.

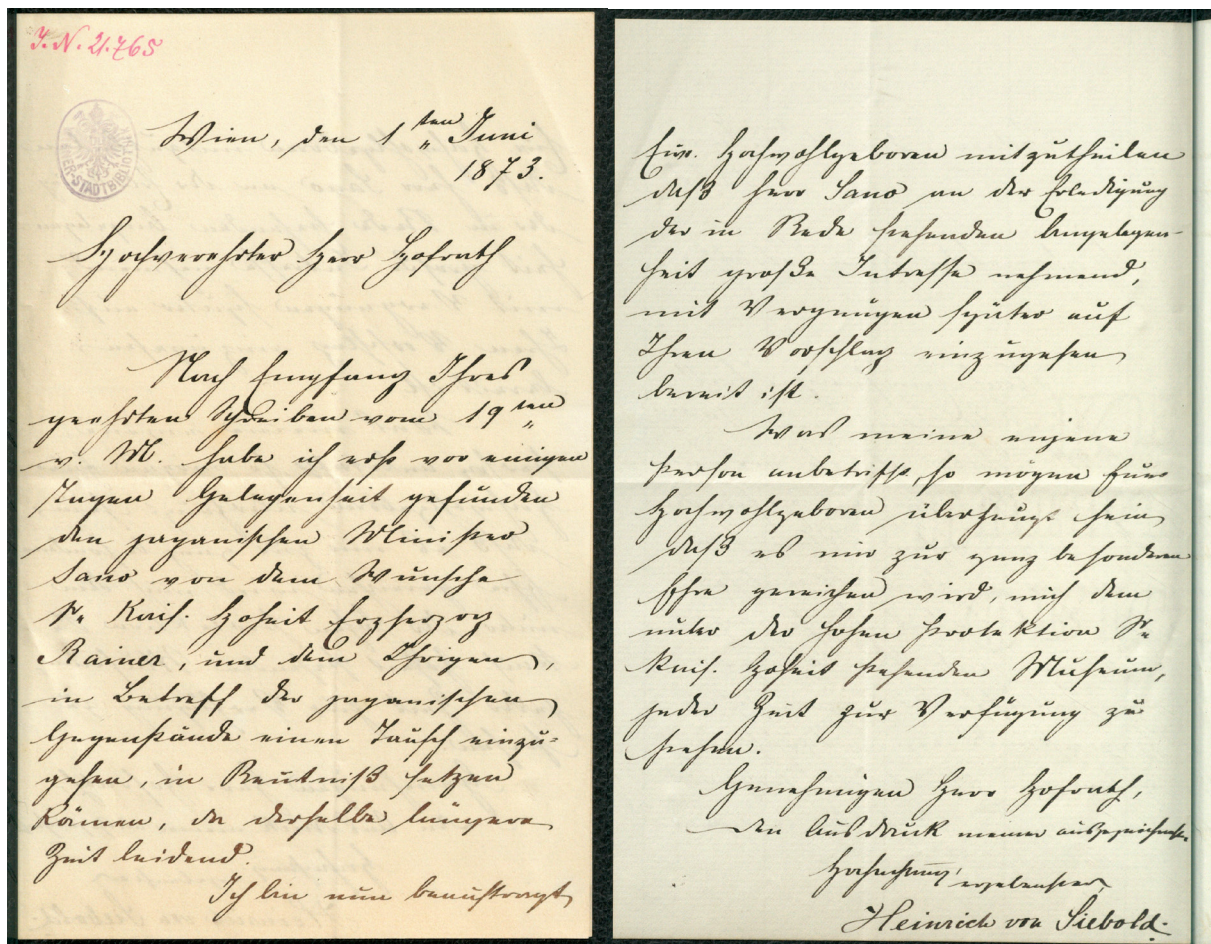


Fig. 8: Heinrich von Siebold (1852–1908). Letter to Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg, 1 June 1873, paper, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, inv. no. 21.765.

Minister in Residence Calice to Japan.¹⁰⁵ In Vienna, he handled the German language correspondence of Minister Sano, which enabled him to act as an intermediary and thus establish links with European collections.

The letter Heinrich von Siebold sent to Eitelberger on 1 June 1873 ends with his following offer:

As far as my own person is concerned, Your Highness may be convinced that it will be a very special honour for me to make myself available at any time for the benefit of the high patronage of His Imperial Highness's

[Archduke Rainer's] Museum.

[...] Heinrich von Siebold.¹⁰⁶ (See fig. 8)

Siebold capitalised on the numerous occasions when he was in attendance at both the Fair and corollary social events to foster connections with a broad range of people. As an interpreter working on the negotiations for the objects, he was able to present himself in a favourable light and make a competent impression on the Austrians. His

¹⁰⁵ To Siebold, see Hidaka, Zorn, Arakawa, and Weltmuseum Wien (2020, 19).

¹⁰⁶ "Was meine eigene Person anbetrifft, so mögen Euer Hochwohlgeborenen überzeugt sein daß es mir zur ganz besonderen Ehre gereichen wird, mich dem Nutze der hohen Protektion Sr. Kais. Hoheit stehenden Museum, jeder Zeit zur Verfügung zu stehen." Eitelberger Personalia Folder, Letter Siebold 1 June 1873, Inv. 21764.

letter to Eitelberger provides an illustrative example of the social networking opportunities the Fair provided. Siebold proactively sought to establish a collaborative relationship with Eitelberger and the museum, in order to work with them in the further. Apparently satisfied with his assistance in the mediation of the objects, Archduke Rainer appointed him correspondent to the museum in October 1873, while the Fair was still in progress.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

The Vienna Fair had fulfilled its purpose in terms of fostering social and diplomatic interactions. Through the event, both the foreign contributors and local institutions enriched their collections and it enabled visitors and hosts to establish important new contacts and conduct satisfying exchanges. The dual role of Archduke Rainer, serving as both the President of the World's Fair and the Protector of the Museum of Art and Industry, exemplifies the significance of social connections in the context of negotiating exhibits. The social interactions between high-ranking Austro-Hungarian and Japanese representatives, both at the Fair and in the evenings, occurred concurrently with the negotiations for object exchanges. The opportunity to discuss these matters accelerated the settlement process. Only two months passed between the initial request of the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry in May and the choice and delivery of Japanese objects in July. Considering the multiplicity of concurrent events in the first months of the Fair, and the considerable number of countries from which the museum acquired objects, the swiftness with which these objects were relocated is noteworthy. The swaps were made possible this quickly through Japan's active self-promotion as represented by Sano, and the active mediation service of Archduke Rainer.

The establishment of trade relations with the European continent was the driving idea for Japan's diplomatic efforts, which were facilitated by the

utilisation of press media, the trading of goods, and the forging of personal acquaintances. The Japanese conducted their participation not only with a large selection of goods, but also by a considerable number of delegation members, it sent. Japan presented itself as a state with the ability to combine cultural and economic interests, and to appear in Vienna with a progressive and future-orientated mindset. This appearance was perceived very positively by the population and was the reason for Japan's successful contribution to the 1873 World's Fair.

The potential for establishing new contacts and forging international networks, relationships, and partnerships in specialist fields appears never to have been greater in the 19th century than particularly at a World's Fair. The Vienna World's Fair provided Japan, the "newcomers", with the ideal platform to establish contacts and deepen and consolidate these over the course of the Fair, especially with Austria-Hungary, but also with exhibitors and guests from other countries.

The Emperor and the heads of state and representatives of the exhibiting countries, who enlivened the various events, were at the centre of social life. Members of the foreign commissions also celebrated festivals and holidays specific to their culture in Vienna, hereby contributing country-specific additions to the evening programme. These spaces harboured the social potential of the World's Fairs, perhaps best represented by the example of determined men such as Heinrich von Siebold, who presented themselves and strived for professional advancement. Without the World's Fair as an occasion, without the social events and gatherings, and, without the salons of the Viennese aristocracy or bourgeoisie, some encounters may have unfolded differently, or perhaps not at all, as the example of Japan shows.

The purpose of a World's Fair was not merely to showcase exhibit items, but also to promote interpersonal relationships. Between an object's unveiling at one of the Fair's pavilions and its acquisition by a museum stood a myriad of exchanges and interactions between people. The importance of these human entanglements in the history of Austrian collections remains a rich topic for further examination.

107 *Neues Wiener Tagblatt (Abendblatt)* 1873c, 3; *Neues Fremden-Blatt (Abendausgabe)* October 1873n, 2.

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Japan's Policy and Preparatory Work for the Vienna World's Fair in 1873

Bettina Zorn

Introduction

The Vienna World's Fair¹ in 1873 was the fifth world's fair held and the first event that Japan attended as a nation under the Meiji Government (1868–1912). The concept of world's fairs as product performance shows was first introduced to Japan in the 19th century, after the American navy had forced the country to abandon the national seclusion it had maintained during the Edo period (1600–1868). With an understanding of the historical context at the outset of the Meiji period, as outlined in this article, it is possible to identify the trends influencing the Japanese selection of exhibits for the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, and the distinctive characteristics of the items chosen. A significant contribution was made by the state-organised surveys and the Imperial Japanese commission for the realisation of the World's Fair, which employed additional foreign advisers to convey European taste. The paper will discuss how the responsible party in Japan used various commissions to organise the preparations for the country's participation in the 1873 Vienna World's Fair. It is important to note that the preparation time was relatively limited, and that the Japanese players had no prior experience

of participating in an international event of this kind. The issue of translating Western terms like “art” and “museum” will be addressed. The terminology was of great importance for the Japanese side, as it was necessary to ascertain which products, objects and items would meet the criteria set out in the Vienna 1872 catalogue. This investigation will draw upon Japanese historical sources, with a view to establishing a correlation between these and surviving Japanese exhibits from the 1873 Vienna World's Fair.

One Idea Behind the Concept of World's Fairs

In the mid-19th century, the first world's fair was held in London under the motto “Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations” (1851). This was followed by further world's fairs in 1855 in Paris, 1862 again in London, and in 1867 for the second time in Paris. In May 1870, Emperor Franz Joseph proclaimed and signed the following decree: “I authorise that the organisation of an international fair, opening in spring and dedicated to the products of agriculture, industry and the (visual and fine) arts in Vienna may be arranged.”²

1 The author prefers the term “exhibition” for 19th century world exhibitions to “fair”, which seems more suitable for 20th century world's fairs. The first international event in London had, after all, been called the “Great Exhibition”. But for consistency within this publication, the term “fair” is used.

2 “Ich genehmige, dass die Abhaltung einer im Frühjahr 1873 eröffnenden internationalen Ausstellung von Erzeugnissen der Landwirtschaft, der Industrie und der bildenden Künste in Wien vorbereitet werde. Den Regierungen der fremden Staaten ist von der beabsichtigten Ausstellung durch

In January 1871 Wilhelm Freiherr von (Baron) Schwarz-Senborn (1816–1903) was appointed General Director for the planning and organising committee of the Vienna World's Fair. As the head of a committee comprising over two hundred members, he was responsible for the programme, guidelines and the spatial arrangements.³

The phenomenon of world's fairs was a concomitant of the age of industrialisation in Europe. Since their institution, world's fairs have proved a forum for competition in terms of technological innovations, inventions and trade. From the mid-19th century, as the demand for labour in urban areas grew and the population increased, neighbourhoods in large cities were demolished and replaced by high-density residential housing, and urban space expanded in consequence.

Vienna was not spared the urban planning upheavals that had already swept through European capitals. From the 1860s onwards, the city underwent a significant transformation, giving a new appearance to many streets, such as the Ringstrasse boulevard with its newly erected magnificent and representative buildings. Vienna was experiencing rapid population growth due to labour migration, promising economic and social rise for its residents. A sense of modernisation was in the air. Vienna celebrated the advent of a new era, something it had in common with the newly emerging nation in the East, the Japanese Empire of the Meiji period. The prominence of art and culture alongside industry, commerce, and agriculture had become a significant topic since the previous world's fair in Paris. It was evident that civic educational awareness should be accorded the same importance as trade and industry, and that it should also be showcased here. The idea was also to be reflected in the conceptual framework developed in preparation for the world's fair in Vienna. Art could be considered a stimulant

for industry, arts and crafts. This was beneficial to countries in East Asia, as well as Persia or Egypt.⁴

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the aesthetic development of the arts and crafts, along with the artistic design of everyday objects, became a significant topic at world's fairs. A state-sponsored reform of the arts and crafts sector in Europe led to the establishment of museums of decorative arts.⁵ The objective of these establishments was to cultivate a sense of aesthetic discernment⁶ ("guter Geschmack") among both producers and consumers, thereby facilitating the sale of products both domestically and internationally. The common thread linking these museums is that they were established following world's fairs, at which their directors had bought and acquired exhibits for their collections.⁷

The opening of the Vienna Fair at the beginning of May 1873 coincided with a significant stock market crash and the outbreak of a cholera epidemic,⁸ with the result that there were fewer visitors and less income than had been anticipated. Despite these challenges, it can be argued that the Vienna World's Fair served as a catalyst, accelerating social, political and economic dynamics for both the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary and the Japanese Empire.

Meinen Minister des Äußeren unverweilt Mittheilung zu machen." Quoted in Leemann (2014, 120).

3 See text by A. Schwanzer in this publication, pp. 45–74.

4 Hollein and Wakita 2024, 8.

5 Early foundations of European museums for applied art include: South Kensington Museum founded in 1852, London; K.K. Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie founded in 1863 in Vienna; Musée des Arts décoratifs founded in 1864 in Paris; Deutsches Gewerbemuseum zu Berlin founded in 1867; Bayrisches Gewerbemuseum in Nürnberg founded in 1869; Magyar Iparművészeti Múzeum in Budapest founded in 1872; Kunstgewerbemuseum Leipzig founded in 1874; Kunstgewerbemuseum Hamburg founded in 1874; Kunstgewerbemuseum Zurich founded in 1875.

6 French products at that time set the standard for good taste.

7 Museums of decorative art as well as trade museums (Gewerbemuseen) acted as major buyers at world exhibitions. See Orosz (2014, 180).

8 Plener 2014, 127.

Japan's Knowledge of (World's) Fairs and Exhibitions

It was through the Dutch East India Company, VOC (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie), which had a trade post on Dejima Island off the coast of Nagasaki, that Japan became aware of the first “Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations” in the last decades of the self-imposed seclusion which it had maintained for several centuries. In the summer of 1851, the Dutch, acting as Japan's informants on the outside world, told the shogun in their annual report on foreign affairs about the successful fair held in London. The Dutch and British had sent some Japanese exhibits to London without involving or informing the Shogunate.⁹ The Shogunate was similarly excluded from the 1862 exhibition in London, and as in the first London Exhibition, it was once again Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809–1897), the British envoy to Japan, who assembled the “Japanese Court” at the exhibition. Alcock, who began his diplomatic career in China between the years 1844 and 1856, arrived in Japan in 1858, having been appointed British consul general. In his book *Art and Art Industries in Japan*, published in 1878 he recalls the circumstances under which he obtained objects in compliance with the instructions that followed the official announcement of the great International Exhibition of 1862 in London. At the end of the Edo period, the government of Japan under the ruling elite of the shogun and the *daimyō*, and still constrained by the *Sakoku* edict (*Sakoku-rei* 鎖国令) in force since 1638,¹⁰ deemed it unnecessary to engage in an international exchange of information regarding national products. In the end, Alcock seizes the initiative: “Finding it thus impossible to count upon co-operation or assistance from natives or foreigners in a work the importance of which was manifested to me, I determined to undertake the

task myself, rather than permit Japan to be unrepresented.”¹¹ Alcock himself had therefore chosen the Japanese items to be presented at the London General Exhibition.

The 1862 exhibition included over 600 pieces, which a Japanese delegation touring the West on a diplomatic mission observed were of poor quality, containing a mixture of Chinese and Japanese objects in the same gallery.¹² The Japanese experts expressed their dissatisfaction with the choice of Japanese exhibits made by foreigners. At the two London exhibitions, in particular, the colonial powers assumed responsibility for the representation of goods and products for colonised regions and states that did not correspond to Western imperialist ideas of independent and autonomous states. Self-presentation and presentation by a second party are, of course, mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, this practice continued to be applied for some time; the representation of the Chinese Empire on the stage of world's fairs was essentially an interpretation as seen through foreign eyes. Once Japan had come to realise this, she took steps to act in a self-determined manner.

The Tokugawa shogunate (1600–1868) upheld the policy of *sakoku* 鎖國, self-imposed isolation, which prohibited foreigners from entering Japan. The scope of exchange and trade was limited not only in scale but also in extent, restricted exclusively to the Chinese Empire, the Ryukyu Kingdom, the Korean Kingdom and the Dutch residing at the island of Dejima, off the coast of Nagasaki, Kyushu. The policy of national seclusion was brought to an end in 1852/1853 when Commodore Matthew C. Perry of the United States Navy threatened Japan's sovereignty through the use of gunboat diplomacy. In the following year, 1854, Perry established diplomatic relations with the shogunate with the intention of negotiating trade agreements. These negotiations ultimately resulted in the Convention of Kanagawa, an unequal treaty for Japan. At this juncture, Japan began to encounter novel foreign products. In his luggage, Perry had brought gifts

9 Hedinger 2011, 51.

10 “Sakoku” meaning closed country (see below). The edict prohibited foreign missionary activities and imposed strict regulations on keeping foreign trade to a minimum, etc.

11 Alcock 1878, 2.

12 Hedinger 2011, 51.

with which he hoped to surprise and impress the Japanese, in the form of a “full-sized industrial exhibition” including items such as

printing presses, high-pressure pumps, mowing machines. Threshers, looms, mills to spin cotton, [...]. A railroad had been brought, disassembled. Unpacked and inspected now, there was the cute little locomotive with tender, a fifty-person car tricked out in imperial luxury, and several miles of rails.¹³

These items had been presented by the United States at the 1851 London Great Exhibition. In return, the Americans received items including paintings and lacquerware, which are still kept today in the collection of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington.¹⁴

In the following years, the shogunate was compelled to enter into unequal treaties with Western colonial powers, as evidenced by their actions in the Chinese Empire during the opium wars. The Netherlands, Russia, Great Britain and France all signed unequal treaties with Japan in favour of themselves, followed by Portugal, Prussia, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland.

The Swiss delegation arrived in Japan in 1863, a time of inner political upheaval and the inevitable decline of the Tokugawa Shogunate.¹⁵ In order to attract attention, the Swiss resorted to an industrial exhibition, a small display of various Swiss products (“petite exposition des divers produits de l’industrie Suisse”), with the intention of impressing Japan by the superiority of its industry. The Swiss selected items that had been exhibited at the 1862 London World’s Fair and had been awarded prizes, including a stained glass painting. The Swiss presented Japanese officials with Swiss knives and scissors or a stereoscope. Subsequently, in February 1864 they were able to sign a treaty comparable

to the one that the Prussians had negotiated with Japan.¹⁶

The French Empire maintained cordial relations with the Shogunate, while the British were on good terms with the Daimyō of the Satsuma and Chōshū domains (Kyushu). For the 1867 World’s Fair, the Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu 徳川 慶喜 (1837–1913) accepted an invitation to Paris from the French government. He underscored the importance of participation for the Japanese by appointing his younger brother, Tokugawa Akitake 徳川 昭武 (1853–1910), as head of the Japanese delegation to Paris. Akitake was only 15 years old at the time and had been accompanied by a group of high officials from Japan and Alexander von Siebold (1846–1911) as interpreter.¹⁷ The official presentation by the shogunate focused on objects of arts and craftsmanship, for which they received 24 awards at the Paris World’s Fair. Delegations from the Satsuma, Saga and Chōshū domains had independently sent their representatives to Paris, without informing the Japanese committee. They were allocated individual pavilions apart from the main exhibition hall. A third Japanese party at the Paris Fair was that of the Japanese merchant Shimizu Usaburō 清水卯三郎 (1829–1910) who exhibited a Japanese tea house.¹⁸ As a consequence of the tensions prevailing among the Japanese delegation, the Japanese presentation in Paris ultimately resulted in a spatial separation of the attending parties on the exhibition site. None of the locations designated for the Japanese delegation at the exhibition site had been designed by Japanese experts. The 1867 Paris World’s Fair was the first at which country pavilions were presented under their own management,¹⁹ although this was not the case for Japan. The delegations had not yet returned to Japan when, as a result of political instability, political power shifted from the Shogun to the Japanese Emperor, the *Tennō* 天皇.

13 Ibid., 34.

14 See Print, GA (n.d.).

15 Hammitzsch 1984, 448.

16 Hedinger 2011, 47.

17 Ibid., 57.

18 Ibid., 60.

19 Wieninger 2024, 13.

Preparatory Work on the Japanese Side and Definition of Terms

The participation in the Paris World's Fair, the experience of foreign players acting as third-party presenters, the shift in Japanese politics, and the threat of foreign supremacy all led to a general weighing up in Japan of the pros and cons of the adoption of foreign ideas. Fairs played a key role here. Western fairs held great fascination for Japan, and at the beginning of the 1870s, the idea was realised and put into practice, with national fairs starting not only in cities such as Kyoto and Tokyo but also in provincial towns. The concept of the fair was tailored to Japan's own needs. Due to the social upheaval from the Edo period to the Meiji period, which had brought major social changes, new solutions for social issues needed to be found. The once powerful samurai elite, with its own etiquette concerning rank, had disintegrated, as had its supporters. Specialised professionals were unable to find any purchasers for their products. The decline in demand for goods and services in various sectors, including metalworking, textile production, leatherworking, and others resulted in the unemployment of numerous craftspeople. Additionally, the loss of solvent clients and subsequent bankruptcy of merchants further exacerbated the economic downturn. In light of these developments, it became evident that novel solutions were required. One potential solution was the establishments of fairs. A public notice in Kyoto announced that in Western countries fairs were being held of newly invented machines alongside antique instruments on which knowledge was based, leading to inventions and subsequent profit.²⁰ It was therefore necessary to find an appropriate Japanese term for the new concept of fairs. In an attempt to convey its essence, various translations were proposed, including a phonetic transcription of the English term "exhibition", or characters that referenced a Chinese concept *hakurankai* 博覧会, which translates as "accumulation of knowledge, erudition". It is the author's assumption that the term *hakurankai* was discussed among Japanese scholars, perhaps with

reference to the historical Chinese term *bogu* 博古, "discourse on antiquities" and "studying the old",²¹ an occupation to which nobles, scholars, Buddhist monks and later also wealthy merchants devoted themselves. From today's Western perspective, this preoccupation with valuable artefacts from antiquity, *bogu*, can be regarded as a form of engagement with art, even though those involved at that time did not speak of art as such. A research project currently being carried out discusses terms such as *bowu* 博物 and *meishu* 美術 in the context of 19th-century China.²² Further research is needed to trace the development of new terms based on traditional Chinese concepts and their adaptation in Japan during the mid-19th century, following the discourse of history of ideas in 19th-century Europe.²³ In contrast, Japanese historians have highlighted the direct link between the emergence of the neologism "art" as a neologism and the translation of the official German version of the Vienna World's Fair catalogue.²⁴

The Concept of Art—The Art of Translation On "Art"

It is crucial to acknowledge that the concept of "art" in East Asia, which originated in China as early as the 4th century, differs from the Western concept. In East Asia, the moral and emotional aspect of the "concept of art" is at least as important as any aesthetic connotation of the term "art" itself. This applies to China as well as Japan.²⁵ An ability and excellence in writing is manifested in

20 Hedinger 2011, 66.

21 During the Song dynasty (960–1279) and later times the "Illustration of antiquities from the Xuanhe period" (*Xuanhe bogu tu* 宣和博古圖) by Wang Fu 王黼 (1079–1126) was well known.

22 At the 25th Biennial Conference 2024 of the European Association for Chinese Studies a panel with the title "*Bowu* 博物" and "*Meishu* 美術" was organised by Ornella De Nigris (Sienna University), Renata Vinci (University of Palermo, Metche project) and Cheng Wen-Huei (National Chengchi University).

23 Hedinger 2011, 55.

24 Suzuki 2022, 29.

25 For a general discussion on the Chinese theory of art, see Lin (1967, 34).

calligraphy, painting and the expression of poetry, and is regarded as an indication of a cultivated personality. For the Chinese art historian Teng Gu 滕固 (1901–1941) “art is seen as an expressive outlet for scholars in their spare time”.²⁶

In the 1870s, Japan was confronted with the Western concept of art and the question: “What is (fine) art?” or “What does art involve?” This discourse lasted for decades. On 25 May 1882, an article in the Japanese newspaper *Tokyo Daily News* (*Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun* 東京日日新聞) stated:

While the arts of Japan originated some two thousand years ago, the term *bijutsu* 美術 [fine arts] is of recent origin [having been coined] in 1872. Accordingly, people ... are under the mistaken impression that there is no fine art in our country What Western thought calls the *fine arts* is simply that which is noble in air, beautiful in colours, elegant in form, harmonious in tone, admirable in meaning, tasteful in subject, well proportioned, appropriately organised ... and while satisfying all these aspects is generally pleasing to the eye. It soothes the thoughts even as it excites the spirit ... suppressing mean and ungenerous feelings in the appreciator. Thus all the countries place great value on it, for its rise and fall also tells the rise and fall of [nations].²⁷

The discussion about the term “art” from the point of view of East Asian experts continued into the 20th century, seeking to differentiate the Eastern definition from the Western one. It could be seen as an attempt to legitimise the thousand-year-old tradition and developments of art in East Asia and to provide a counterpoint to the Western perspective.

On Related Terms “Arts and Crafts”

In addition to the inherent difficulty in translating the term “fine art”, the term “arts and crafts” presented another challenge, namely, the need to convey the concept of applied craftsmanship to an everyday item, excellently executed in (East) Asia for thousands of years in materials such as silk, metal, ceramic or lacquerware.

In this context, it is important to note the role played by Gottfried Wagener (1831–1892) in advising the Japanese commission responsible for the preparatory work for the 1873 World’s Fair. A scientist trained in the fields of physics and geology, he arrived in Japan in 1868 as a technical adviser. During his tenure in Japan, he became interested in the ceramic workshops at Arita, and in 1871 was invited to Tokyo to teach physics and chemistry. Wagener held Japanese traditional craftsmanship and its products in such high regard that he recommended that artistic craftwork *bijutsu kōgei* 美術工芸 be exhibited. He considered the technical aspect of artistic craftwork, of which Japan demonstrated its mastery to great effect, to be of great importance.²⁸ In his later reports, such as “The Tokyo Museum’s Report” (*Tōkyō hakubutsukan hōkoku* 東京博物館報告) and “The Art Museum in Respect to Arts and Various Crafts” (*Geijutsu hyaku kō-jō bijutsu hakubutsukan ni-tsuki iteno hōkoku* 芸術百工上美術博物館ニ付イテノ報告) of 20 February 1875, he was to use the term *geijutsu bu* 藝術部—(fine) arts, a term with connotations of artistic skills and craftsmanship—alongside the term *bijutsu hakubutsukan* 美術博物館 for art museum.²⁹

It comes as no surprise that the classification of (typically) traditional Japanese products including arts and crafts into the 26 groups specified by the Austrian-Hungarian commission proved problematic. This argument can be illustrated by looking at the listings in the original German catalogue sent out prior to 1873 by the committee from Vienna:

26 Bush 1971, 1.

27 Satō 2011, 5.

28 Tokyo National Museum n.d.

29 National Archive of Japan 2021.

- Group I. Mining and metallurgy (*Bergbau und Hüttenwesen*)
- Group II. Agriculture and forestry, wine and fruit growing and horticulture, agricultural machinery (*Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Wein- und Obstbau und Gartenbau, landwirtschaftliche Maschinen*)
- Group III. Chemical industry (*Chemische Industrie*)
- Group IV. Food and beverages as industrial production (*Nahrungs- und Genussmittel als Erzeugnisse der Industrie*)
- Group V. Textile and clothing industry (*Textil- und Bekleidungs-Industrie*)
- Group VI. Leather and rubber industry (*Leeder- und Kautschuk-Industrie*)
- Group VII. Metal industry (*Metall-Industrie*)
- Group VIII. Wood industry (*Holz-Industrie*)
- Group IX. Industry of stone, clay and glassware (*Stein-, Thon- und Glas-Industrie*)
- Group X. Haberdashery industry/mercery (*Kurzwaren-Industrie*)
- Group XI. Paper industry (*Papier-Fabrication*)
- Group XII. Graphic arts and commercial drawing (*Graphische Künste und gewerbliches Zeichnen*)
- Group XIII. Mechanical engineering and means of transport (*Maschinenwesen und Transportmittel*)
- Group XIV. Scientific instruments (*Wissenschaftliche Instrumente*)
- Group XV. Musical instruments (*Musikalische Instrumente*)
- Group XVI. Army (*Heereswesen*)
- Group XVII. Marines (*Marinewesen*)
- Group XVIII. Building and civil engineering (*Bau- und Civil-Ingenieurswesen*)
- Group XIX. The bourgeois house with interior furnishings and decorations (*Das bürgerliche Wohnhaus mit seiner inneren Einrichtung und Ausschmückung*)
- Group XX. The farmhouse with its furnishings and equipment (*Das Bauernhaus mit seiner Einrichtung und seinen Geräthen*)
- Group XXI. National domestic industry (*Nationale Hausindustrie*)
- Group XXII. Presentation of the effectiveness of museums for decorative arts (*Darstellung der Wirksamkeit der Museen für Kunstgewerbe*)
- Group XXIII. Ecclesiastical art (*Kirchliche Kunst*)
- Group XXIV. Objects of art and decorative arts of earlier times (*Objekte der Kunst und Kunstgewerbe früherer Zeiten*)
- Group XXV. Contemporary visual art (*Bildende Kunst der Gegenwart*)
- Group XXVI. Education, teaching and training systems (*Erziehungs-, Unterrichts-, und Bildungswesen*)³⁰

The Viennese organiser thought that lacquerware of the highest quality, which was not known or commonly used in Europe, except among the European nobility, should most appropriately be included in group X, “Haberdashery”. However, from a contemporary perspective, group XXIV, objects of art and decorative arts of earlier times, would be considered more suitable. Group X can be understood as a conglomeration of various items. So far no archive material sheds light on this problem. A tenuous argument could be made that Group X was the most suitable group to which the aforementioned object categories could be assigned, certainly the easiest, according to the Viennese specification. Whereas alternative categorisations were available for items such as ceramics, metal or textiles, none appeared to be suitable for lacquerware, probably because of its rarity. This was to change for later world’s fairs such as the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, when (Japanese) lacquerware became an important export commodity.

Japanese members of delegations to the West had observed that, in addition to new technical inventions, knowledge of antique instruments was

³⁰ Weltausstellung 1873 in Wien.

crucial for achieving progress and the economic success associated with it. It was similarly apparent that the concept of “art” would play a pivotal role at the forthcoming world’s fair in Vienna in 1873. Upon examination of the categorisation of the catalogue sent to each invited nation, it becomes evident that the term “art” is referenced in several groups: Group XII “Graphic arts and commercial drawing”, Group XXII “Presentation of the effectiveness of museums for decorative arts”. (Japan did not equip and supply this category, as in 1872 no museum of decorative art existed in the country.) Group XXIII “Ecclesiastical art”, Group XXIV “Objects of art and decorative arts of earlier times”, and Group XXV “Contemporary visual art”.

The Importance of Ancient Artefacts

The new legal and political structure set up at the beginning of the Meiji period saw the establishment of a number of ministries dealing with cultural affairs.³¹ The Grand Council of State (*dajōkan* 太政官) had been the highest governing body since 1868. The Ministry of the Imperial Household (*kunai shō* 宮内省), established in 1869, the Ministry of Industry (*kōbu shō* 工部省), established in 1870, and the Ministry of Education (*monbu shō* 文部省), established in 1871, oversaw cultural activities. In the autumn of 1871, as the Meiji era reached its fourth year, a bureau of museums was established. On 23 May 1871, the Grand Council of State issued a proclamation entitled, “Preservation of Antique Vessels and Old Objects from Various Regions” (*Koki kyūbutsu kaku chihō ni oite hozon* 古器旧物各地方ニ於テ保存) (abbr. “Antique”). In all, 31 categories were identified by the state as worthy of preservation:

1. Ritual implement section: shields, arms, and other items used in Shinto rituals, etc.
2. Old jade and jewellery section: comma-shaped beads, cylindrical beads, glass, crystal, and the like.

3. Stone arrowhead [*sekido*] and stone axe [*rai-fu*, literally, thunder god’s axe] section: stone arrowheads, stone axes, stone rods [*hekire-kichin*, literally, thunder god’s drum rods], stone daggers, spoon-shaped scraper stones [*tengunomeshigai*, literally, rice-spoon of the long-nosed goblin Tengu], etc.
4. Old mirror and old bell section: old mirrors, old bells, etc.
5. Copper³² vessel section: *tei*³³[Ch. *ding*], *shaku*³⁴[Ch. *jue*], and various other copper [and bronze] vessels.
6. Old roofing tile section: famous things [*meibutsu*] and old tiles in general regardless of fame.
7. Weaponry section: swords, bows and arrows, banners used on the battle-field, helmets and armour, harnesses, ancient weapons made of bronze [*ka*³⁵, Ch. *ge*, and *geki*³⁶, Ch. *ji*], pairs of large and small swords [*daishō*], guns, bullets, drums used on the battlefield [*senko*], horns used on the battlefield, etc.
8. Old calligraphy and painting section: things of fame, portraiture, hanging scrolls, handscrolls, albums of exemplary calligraphy [*tekagami*], etc.
9. Old book and old sutra section: books and pictures concerned with the past, old woodblock prints and old manuscripts, and other items, including popular novels [*gesaku*], predating the middle past [*chūko*] and therefore belonging to the ancients.
10. Tablet section: *hengaku* tablets in shrines and Buddhist temples, as well as tablets of calligraphy and paintings by notable persons.
11. Musical instrument section: traverse flutes, pan pipes [*shō*], recorders [*hichiriki*], bass drums, gongs [*shōko*], hand drums tapped

31 For an overview of organisations and ministries at the beginning of Meiji period see fig. 4 in Satō (2011, 51).

32 A better term would be bronze.

33 鼎. A small side note here, as the article is about the adoption of concepts: Chinese bronze age vessels found their way as collectible items into Japanese collectors’ circles.

34 爵.

35 戈.

36 戟.

- with sticks [*kakko*], transverse harps [*sō*], ancient Japanese transverse harps [*wagon*], lutes [*biwa*], transverse harps [*shitsunokoto*], masks, and other objects such as *noh* costumes [*sarugaku*] and instruments belonging to various dance and music practices.
12. Bell inscription epitaph section, and ink rubbings of exemplary calligraphy of the past [*hōjō*, Ch. *fatie*]: old things, both famous and not.
 13. Seal section: ancient seals, etc.
 14. Stationery section: writing desks, ink slabs, carbon ink, brush racks, ink slab screens, etc.
 15. Agricultural implement section: examples from ancient times.
 16. Carpentry tool section: same as above.
 17. Carriage and palanquin section: carriages, palanquins, bamboo palanquins, etc.
 18. Furniture section: bedding furniture, screens, lanterns and candlesticks, keys and locks, kitchen utensils, tableware, smoking utensils, etc.
 19. Textile section: old gold brocade, fabric fragments from antiquity, etc.
 20. Clothing and ornamentation section: official uniforms, daily clothes, mountain dwellers' clothes, clothes for women, hair ornaments such as combs and hairpins, umbrellas and woven hats, raincoats, containers [*inrō*], purses [*kinchaku*], sandals and clogs, etc.
 21. Leatherwork section: various kinds of leather goods and old leather with dyed patterns.
 22. Coins and paper money section: old gold, silver, and ancient coins, paper money, etc.
 23. Metalwork section: various vessels and items made of copper, brass, copper alloy with tin and lead [*shakudō*], bronze, pure gold [*shikon*], iron, tin, etc.
 24. Ceramic section: pottery and porcelain from various countries, etc.
 25. Lacquerware section: various lacquerware vessels decorated with sprinkled metal powder [*makie*], lacquer inlaid with mother-of-pearl, red lacquer carvings [*tsuishu*, Ch. *tihong*], etc.
 26. Measurement tool section: balances, pairs of scales, measuring rods, dry and liquid measures, Japanese abacuses, and other ancient tools.
 27. Section of utensils used in tea ceremony, incense-smelling ceremony, and flower arrangements: charcoal brazier, tea kettle, and utensils used in tea making such as bowls, utensils used in incense-smelling ceremonies such as incense containers and incense burners, utensils used in flower arrangements such as flower vases and flower vessel stands.
 28. Amusement section: *go* board game, *shogi* board game, *sugoroku* pachisi, *kemari* football, board games [*yasasuguri*], pitch-and toss with arrows and a pot [*tōko*], toy bows, throwing fans, poem cards [*karuta*], etc.
 29. Section of toys for children such as *hina* dolls and carp banners, other human figures: dolls protecting small children [*hōko*, *amagatsu*], dolls displayed for the girls' festival [*hina*], wooden dolls, earthenware dolls, Nara dolls, and others; and various toys for children's play.
 30. Old Buddhist statues and implements section: Buddhist statues, cylindrical containers of sutras, five ornaments for the altar consisting of an incense burner and a pair of flower vases and candlesticks, bells hung under the eaves at the four corners of a building roof [*hōchaku*], and other old Buddhist items.
 31. Fossil section: fossils of animals, bones, horns, and tusks of animals, seashells, etc.

The above objects are presented regardless of their origin in or outside Japan, from the age of the gods [*jindai*] to the recent past.³⁷

The list aligns with the Japanese concept of valuable items, which provides a lens for examining preferred objects as art objects that fit into the Viennese categories. In earlier times, private connoisseurship had been known in East Asia for a thousand years as one aspect of relating to precious

37 National Archive of Japan, 2016. The translation of categories is cited from Suzuki (2022, 22, 23) on the discussion of *kokikyūbutsu* 古器旧物.

objects which in the West would have fallen under the category of “art” and/or “decorative art”. Taking the above-mentioned example of lacquerware of the highest quality in the case of “Antique”, category 25 is attributed to the lacquerware section. If one were to apply the Western concept of art to the Japanese “Antique” List, categories 2 to 13 listing ritual items, old jade and jewellery, archaeological stone weapons and tools, ancient mirrors and bells, bronze age vessels, ancient roof tiles, ancient weaponry, old calligraphy and painting, old books and sutra, ritual tablets, musical performance items, ancient inscriptions as well as the categories 19 to 25 listing antique brocade fabric, clothing and ornamentation, traditional leatherwork, ancient coins, metalwork, ceramic and porcelain and lastly, lacquerware, would fall under the Western category of art and decorative art. Table 1 (below) illustrates the objects that fall into the categories outlined in the Vienna exhibition catalogue.

Since the Edo period, some individuals, for example members of the leading ruling elite such as the *daimyō* families, scholars of traditional or Western studies, in particular *rangaku* 蘭学³⁸, or simply people, shrines or Buddhist temples with means, had already taken up collecting activities. One notable collector was Hosokawa Shigekata 細川重賢 (1720–1785), the eighth head of the Hosokawa Daimyō family, who had a keen interest in the field of natural history and played a pivotal role in the formation of a comprehensive collection of related material.³⁹ Edward Sylvester Morse (1838–1925) in his book *Japan Day by Day* (1917) was later to recall categories collected by the Japanese: “pottery, porcelain, coins, swords, kakemono (pictures), pieces of brocade, stone implements, and roofing tiles. [...] A few collected shells, corals, and the like”.⁴⁰ The cartographer and antiquarian Matsuura Takeshirō 松浦武四郎 (1818–1888) is also worth mentioning as a collector of “stone

implements, comma-shaped beads, bronze wares, old seals, old coins, and the like”.⁴¹ These collectors’ items from archaeological periods such as the Bronze Age and from historical periods had also attracted a circle of connoisseurs in Japan for centuries, even though they might not have called their acquisitions an “art collection”. Once more, the close connection between diverse antique artefacts, as classified in Japan, and the category that at the Vienna World’s Fair would be classified under Group XXIV, objects of art and decorative arts of earlier times, is evident, even though in the Japanese context the word “art” is not used.

At the beginning of the Meiji period, however, a state-sponsored initiative was launched to collect “data of things past”. It was precisely at the beginning of the 1870s, shortly before the preparations for the Vienna World’s Fair, that a comprehensive programme of measures was initiated and implemented with the objective of collecting and preserving information on cultural heritage in Japan.

However, the state organisation for the preservation and protection of antiquities and old objects was established with the intention of facilitating the modernisation of connoisseurship. In order to qualify for state protection, it was thought, the objects in question needed to be categorised using scientific and modern methods. The scientific methods employed included the recording of objects by location and owner, the documentation of objects with drawings and photographs, and the attempt to determine their age objectively. The objective was to ensure that the information obtained was accessible to a wider circle of interested parties. Subsequently, a number of journals were established, including the art magazine *Kokka* 國華, first published in 1889 and still in circulation today.

A decade earlier, in 1879, Sano Tsunetami 佐野常民 (1822–1902), a prominent Meiji government politician (who will be discussed in more detail later), assumed a prominent role in the establishment of the *Ryūchi kai* 龍池会, the Association of the Dragon Pond, forerunner of the Japan Art

38 The character *ran* 蘭 is an abbreviation for *oranda* 和蘭 meaning Holland, Netherlands. *Rangaku* 蘭学 means Dutch learning.

39 Kaneko 2019, 16.

40 Morse 1917, 107.

41 Suzuki 2022, 128.

Association.⁴² Sano Tsunetami, who had already visited the Paris World's Fair in 1867 and the Vienna World's Fair in 1873, had become a highly experienced expert trained in Western Learning. He was receptive to novel concepts, including the Western notion of “art”, which he encountered during his two visits to world's fairs in Paris and Vienna.

In May 1871, the government announced a programme for the preservation of relics. From May to October of the following year, following a decision by the Ministry of Education, an inspection and research project on treasures in shrines and old temples was initiated.⁴³ This campaign was known as the *jinshin kensa* 壬申検査 or *Jinshin survey* (abbr. “Jinshin Survey”) named after the calendric period according to the Chinese sexagenary cycle. A prominent figure entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the inspection was Ninagawa Noritane 蜷川式胤 (1835–1882). His father had been appointed to the Tōji Temple 東寺 in Kyōto, where Ninagawa resided during his formative years. In 1869, Ninagawa Noritane was employed by the Meiji Government, and in 1872, he joined the Museum Bureau of the Ministry of Education. He is regarded as one of the principal figures in the establishment of the Tokyo National Museum, which was founded in 1872.⁴⁴ The “Jinshin Survey” was led by officials from the Ministry of Education and experts in their respective fields: notable figures included Machida Hisanari 町田久成 (1838–1897), Uchida Masao 内田 正雄 (1839–1876), the painter Takahashi Yuichi 高橋 由一 (1828–1894) who had trained

in the Kanō school and developed a Western style of painting named *yōga* 洋画, the architect Kaichirō Kashiwagi 柏木貨一郎 (1841–1898), and the photographer Yokoyama Matsusaburo 横山 松三郎 (1838–1884). On 27 May, the group departed from Tokyo for an investigation of the shrines and temples located in Ise, Nara, Kyoto, Shiga and Mie. On 12 August, a noteworthy event occurred in Nara. With the agreement of the Nara prefectural office, officials in charge of temple affairs, and priests of the Tōdai-ji, the decision was made to break the seal of the Imperial treasure house of the Tōdai-ji Temple 東大寺 at the Shōsō-in 正倉院 in Nara for only the second time in its history. The Shōsō-in houses a collection of Buddhist artefacts, weaponry, clothing and accessories, musical instruments and masks, official manuscripts and archive material, which were in the possession of empress Kōmyō 光明 皇后 (701–760) and were subsequently transferred to the Tōdai-ji. Sketches of the items in the collection, which had been stored in the *Kensakuin* 竊索院 storehouse and opened for the first time in 1830, were made available to the public. The tenth to the twenty-fourth volume of the “Jinshin Survey” catalogue of temple and shrine treasures provide a meticulous record of the objects kept at Tōdai Temple in 1872, in the form of sketches, rubbings and text. Photographs and stereoscopic images were appended to the report, which is currently kept at Tokyo National Museum.⁴⁵

Upon examination of the archive material from the “Jinshin Survey”, which enumerates the objects in accordance with their respective locations and whose documentation includes rubbings of the objects’ details and photographic evidence, we encounter the familiar categorisation and grouping of objects. This includes photographs of buildings and architectural models, such as a series of three- and five-storey pagodas and a model of the Ise Shrine. The list of artefacts considered as “treasures” includes paintings, some of which are very old, ancient silver incense burners, ancient tiles, antique money, antique jade, and objects made of

42 The *Ryūchi kai* in 1887 was renamed *Nihon bijutsu kyōkai* 日本美術協会 “Japan Art Association”.

43 Suzuki 2022, 61.

44 Some exhibitions at the Tokyo National Museum had recently been dedicated to Ninagawa Noritane’s work: the survey of Edo Castle, the *Photographs of Edo Castle*, for instance, or the organisation of the Yushima Seido Exposition in Tokyo, an important exhibition in the run-up to the preparation for the 1873 Vienna World Exhibition. Objects and archive material are kept in the collection of Tokyo National Museum: “Speaking to the Future Series, Historical Records Compiled by Museum Founder, Ninagawa Noritane” (see Tokyo National Museum 2009), and “140th Anniversary Thematic Exhibitions: The Protection of Cultural Properties by the Museum Founder, Ninagawa Noritane” (see Tokyo National Museum 2012).

45 “Jinshin Survey Catalogue of Temple and Shrine Treasures” and “Shōsōin”, see E-Museum (n.d.a; n.d.b).

precious stones (quartz), ancient mirrors and bells, masks and musical instruments such as flutes and drums of various kinds. Furthermore, we find seals, an assortment of weapons, including both short and long swords, garments, ritual implements, and a variety of lacquerware vessels and ivory utensils, such as measures.

A comparison of the two cultural programmes, “Antique” and the “Jinshin Survey”, reveals the presence of object groups that are shared between the two, including ritual implements, old jade and jewellery, old paintings, ancient tiles, ancient mirrors and bells, and so forth.

This preliminary work on the Japanese side enabled the start for official preparations for the Vienna World’s Fair. A comparison of the various procedures and campaigns undertaken by the Meiji Government with the catalogue for the preparation of the 1873 Vienna World’s Fair, as issued by the General Directorate of the Vienna World’s Fair,⁴⁶ reveals significant overlaps and similarities in content, particularly in the fields of art, historical objects and antiquities. From the Japanese perspective, it is evident that the 1873 catalogue categories were populated with object groups from earlier surveys (“Antique”, “Jinshin Survey”) that were deemed suitable.

Evidence in the Choice of Items for the 1873 World’s Fair

A comparison of objects presented by the Japanese government at the Vienna World’s Fair, as documented in the *Catalogue of the Imperial Japanese Exhibition in Vienna (Niho teikoku shuppin mokuroku 日本帝國出品目錄)* (abbr. “Catalog 1873”)⁴⁷ from 1873, reveals a striking correspondence with the lists in “Antique” and the “Jinshin Survey”. Since spring 2022, a team at the Weltmuseum Wien in Austria has been engaged in the creation of a database, accessible via the museum’s

website,⁴⁸ which records the exhibits sent by the Japanese Government to the 1873 Vienna World’s Fair. The database contains 6,875 entries so far. The data set encompasses objects that are held in Viennese museum collections and in public collections accessible worldwide. The official Japanese exhibition catalogue, published in German,⁴⁹ formed the basis and framework for the database, as no authorised Japanese version exists to date.⁵⁰ All historical and recent data are linked virtually, and further information regarding workshops, producers, artists, and other pertinent information will be incorporated in the future. The database is available in three languages: German, Japanese and English.

A systematic examination of the list of “Antique”, reveals the existence of distinct groups of objects which can be aligned with the official “Catalog 1873”. For example:

The object groups No 6: Old roofing tile section and No 7: Weaponry section: swords, bows and arrows, etc. in “Antique” correspond to the group XXIV in “Catalog 1873”: Nos 1–15 Two-handed swords, armour from ancient times, saddles, stirrups, horse bridles from ancient times, etc. and No 46 Temple roof tiling from ancient times.

The sections No 8. Old calligraphy and paintings and No 9. Old books and old sutra of “Antique” overlap with Nos 23–25 and 27–43 Paintings of famous painters from ancient times and Nos 44 & 45, Relics from the temple of Kamakura and Printed Buddhist texts, from group XXIV in “Catalog 1873”.

No 11 The Musical instrument section in “Antique” corresponds to group XV Musical instruments Nos 1–31 in “Catalog 1873”.

No 14. The Stationery section in “Antique” is well represented in terms of photographs (fig. 1) accompanying “Catalog 1873”.

48 “Database of the Japanese Exhibits at the Vienna World Exhibition of 1873”, see Weltmuseum (n.d.a); “Japanese Exhibits at the Vienna World Exhibition 1873”, see Weltmuseum (n.d.b); “Sammlung Weltausstellung Japan”, see Weltmuseum (Wien n.d.c).

49 “Catalog 1873” 1873.

50 A wealth of historical archive and source material is available at the Tokyo National Museum.

46 Weltausstellung 1873 in Wien 1873.

47 “Catalog 1873” 1873. Some examples are given below.



Fig. 1: Photo album accompanying "Catalog 1873", "Assortiment pour écrire" [sic]. Private ownership.



Fig. 2: Photo album accompanying "Catalog 1873", "Cuir peint de Tokio et de Himedji et Ouvrage en cuir". Private ownership.

No 19. and 20. The Textile section and the Clothing and ornament section in “Antique” correspond to one of the largest exhibit groups in “Catalog 1873”, group V Textile and clothing industry, contributing a total of 1,674 exhibits to the Vienna World’s Fair. During the research phase of the database project, it became clear that the tracing of the textiles was a major challenge. Only a few of the 1,674 textile items have so far been located.

No 21. The Leatherwork section in “Antique” corresponds to Group VI Leather industry, with 106 items appearing in the “Catalog 1873”, where they are also well illustrated with photographs (fig. 2). It is not clear to what extent the reference in “Antique” to the Metal work section (No 23) can be considered an equivalent to the “Metal industry” (Group VII) in “Catalog 1873”, which comprises 748 items. While the majority of metalware manufacturers from Japan are mentioned in the catalogue as contributing their goods to the Fair, we also hear of the private collection of a prince from the Matsudeira clan 松平氏 being exhibited in Vienna. This may also be a reference to the list No 23. in “Antique”. A comprehensive analysis of the Japanese source material is needed to answer this question.

Another important category at the World’s Fair, Group IX, Industry of stone, clay and glassware (“Catalog 1873”), was undoubtedly driven by commercial considerations. 384 items appear in it from List No 24. Ceramic section in the “Antique” survey.

One category within “Antique” that proved difficult to assign to a particular group at the Vienna World’s Fair was the No 25. Lacquerware section, which included objects decorated in various traditional Japanese lacquerware techniques such as *maki-e* 蒔絵. These were grouped together under Group X Haberdashery industry/mercery,⁵¹ unlikely as it might seem that this was an appropriate place for the high-quality lacquerware items selected by the Japanese. Be that as it may, we have been able to add to the database several of the objects surviving worldwide from this group, the third

largest sent to Vienna, with 635 items.⁵² In subsequent world’s fairs, Japanese lacquerware work was allocated a dedicated space.

No 26, the Measurement tool section in “Antique”, corresponds to Group XIV of “Catalog 1873”. This group includes scientific instruments numbered 8–15: Collection of measuring rods, weights, dry and liquid measures, Japanese abacuses, and other related items.

No 27, the section of Utensils used in tea ceremonies, incense-smelling ceremonies, and flower arrangements in “Antique” is well documented in the “Catalog 1873”,⁵³ with written records in group VII Metal industry, Nos 421–441, and group IV Food and beverages as industrial production, Nos 332–462, as well as with the image shown in fig. 3.

No 28. The Amusement section in “Antique” includes various board games, which appear in multiple groups in “Catalog 1873”, such as X, Haberdashery, Nos 168 and 189, and group XIX The middle-class house with interior furnishings and decorations, Nos 35–40.

No 29. Many items from the Toys for children section in “Antique” were exhibited at the World’s Fair, where a pavilion dedicated to the child was constructed. In Nos 593–635 of group X in “Catalog 1873”, Haberdashery, toys, a variety of dolls for the girls’ or boys’ festivals, spinning tops, and shuttlecocks are listed (fig. 4).

No 30, the Old Buddhist statues and implements section in “Antique” is represented in group XXIII, Ecclesiastical art, Nos 16–22 among others.

There is as yet no definitive evidence that the final section of “Antique”, No 31, Fossils, was represented at the Vienna World’s Fair. It will be necessary to cross-check the Japanese archive material.

The “Jinshin Survey” of 1872 also influenced the selection of objects for the Vienna World’s Fair. The photo album that accompanied the official “Catalog 1873” presents a series of photographs showcasing traditional architecture, including the palace in Kyoto, a series on five-storied Pagodas, and a model of the Ise shrine (figs. 5a, 5b, 5c).

51 Haberdashery/mercery is defined as a commercial establishment engaged in the import and trade of textiles, notions (haberdashery), and other miscellaneous items.

52 Weltmuseum 2024a.

53 Weltmuseum 2024b.

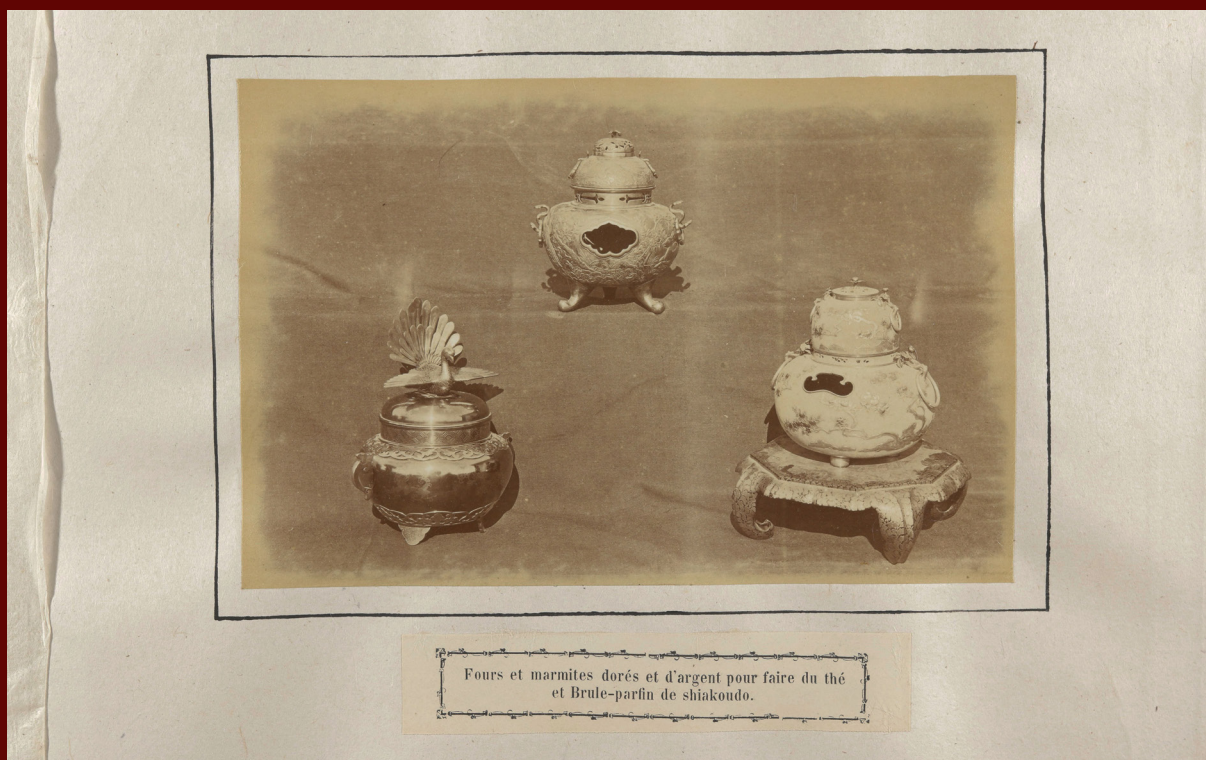


Fig. 3: Photo album accompanying "Catalog 1873", "Fours et marmites dorés et d'argent pour faire du thé et Brule-parfin de shiakoudo". Private ownership.



Fig. 4: Photo album accompanying "Catalog 1873", "Joujous pour la fête de garçon et de fille". Private ownership.

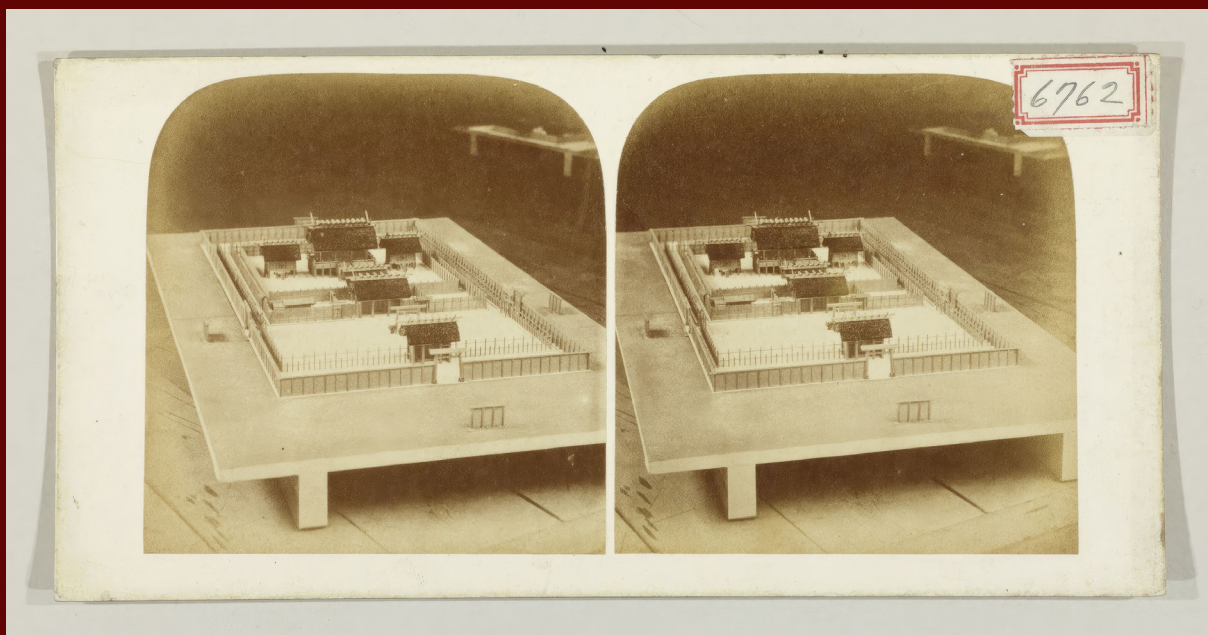


Fig. 5a: "Jinshin Survey", stereoscope "Miniature of the Inner Shrine of Ise Jingū (Ise Grand Shrine)". ColBase: Integrated Collections Database of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, Japan. https://emuseum.nich.go.jp/detail?content_base_id=100817&content_part_id=023&content_pict_id=0&langId=en&webView=o

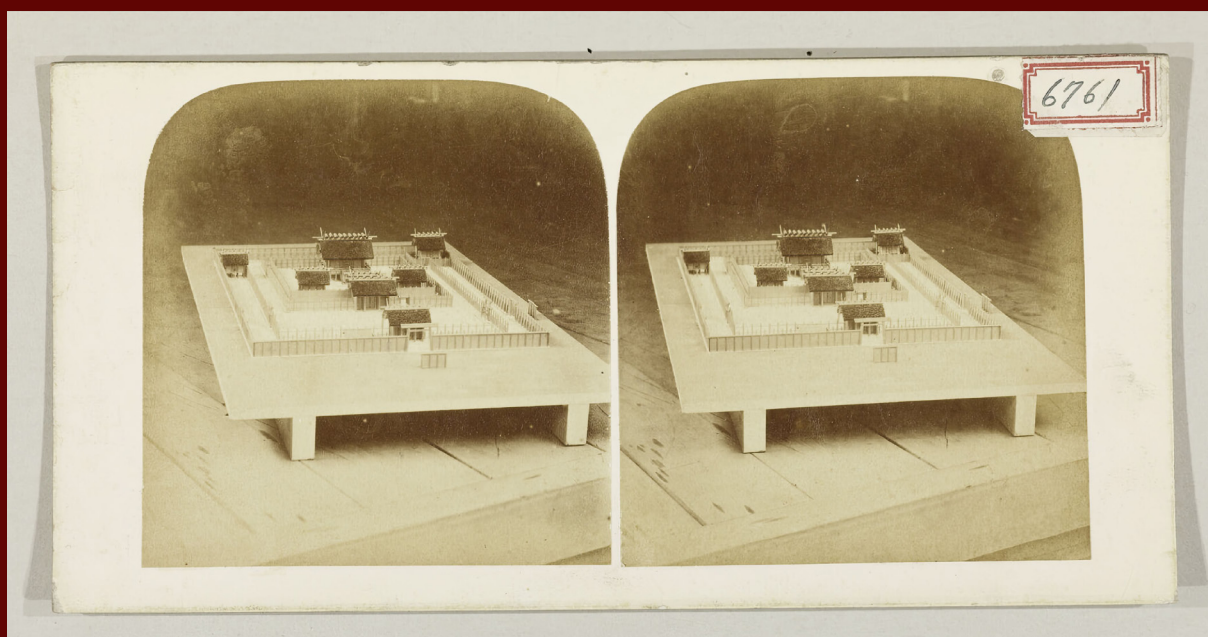


Fig. 5b: "Jinshin survey", stereoscope "Miniature of the Outer Shrine of Ise Jingū (Ise Grand Shrine)". ColBase: Integrated Collections Database of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, Japan. https://emuseum.nich.go.jp/detail?langId=en&webView=o&content_base_id=100817&content_part_id=22&content_pict_id=1

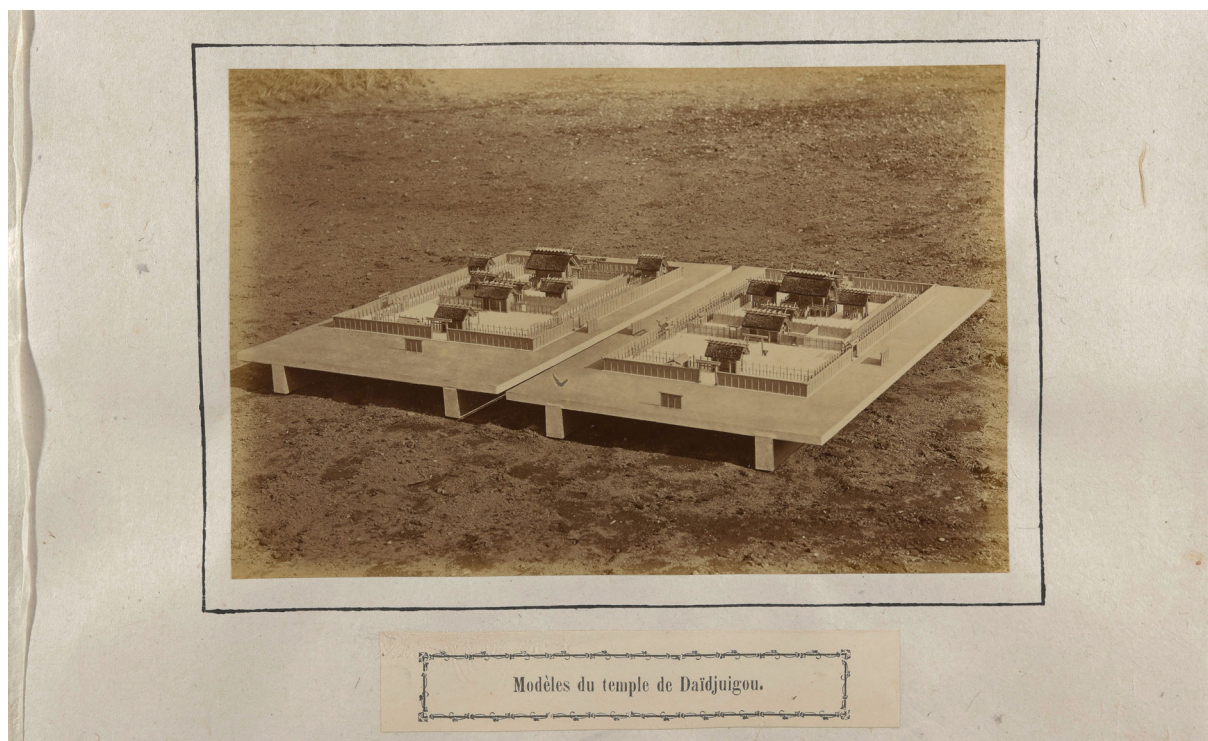


Fig. 5c: Photo album accompanying "Catalog 1873", "Modèles du temple de Daïdjiugou". Private ownership.

The contribution of Ninagawa Noritane is noteworthy, too, as he was actively engaged in the documentation process for the "Jinshin Survey". In his capacity as an antiquarian, he amassed a collection of artefacts that corresponded to the "Antique" list. Prior to 1873, he was already in contact with Heinrich von Siebold (1852–1908) and acted as an adviser to him. The young Siebold himself, like his brother Alexander, was a member of the Japanese committee that was responsible for preparing for the Vienna World's Fair. As more recent research has demonstrated,⁵⁴ Ninagawa Noritane deliberately selected historical or antique items that he encountered during his studies and investigations. He was closely involved, for instance, with the "Jinshin Survey" and, in particular, with the opening of the Shōsō-in, the Imperial treasure house in Nara. It appears that Ninagawa had already indirectly assumed an active role as a mediator of Japanese culture for the West prior to 1873. This is evidenced by his contact with foreigners

such as Heinrich von Siebold. Items from the Vienna World's Fair groups XXIII Ecclesiastical art, and XXIV Objects of art and decorative arts of earlier times, for example, could be used to illustrate this point. The collection of Weltmuseum Wien contains gifts from Ninagawa to Heinrich von Siebold, as well as gifts to other European museums via von Siebold, dating from 1874. A note concerning No 45 in group XXIV, for instance, refers to the dispatch of a diminutive wooden pagoda bearing the dharani sutra 百万塔陀羅尼 *hyakumantō darani*,⁵⁵ to the Vienna World's Fair. This is one of the one million small three-story pagodas dating from 770 commissioned by Empress Shōtoku 称徳天皇 (718–794) and stored in different temples, including Tōdai-ji in Nara and Hōryū-ji in Kyoto. Both temples were extensively studied by Ninagawa during the "Jinshin Survey". The small wooden pagoda with a dharani sutra, (fig. 6), Inv. No 36871 at Weltmuseum Wien bears

⁵⁴ Hidaka 2021, 189; Wakita 2021, 171.

⁵⁵ Weltmuseum Wien 2024c; "Catalog 1873"; in Japanese sources it is mentioned that this item comes from a museum.



Fig. 6: Diminutive pagoda, wood, dating from 770. KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien, Collection Heinrich von Siebold, Inv. No. 36871.



Fig. 7: Buddhist figure Shaka Nyorai 釈迦如来像, wood, lacquer, late Heian period. KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien, Collection Heinrich von Siebold, Inv. No. 36784. Photographer Clemens Radauer.

Table 1: Overview of Correlating Object Groups Found in “Antique”, “Jinshin Survey” and “Catalog 1873”

| “Antique” (1871) | “Jinshin Survey” (1872) | “Catalog 1873” |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Ritual implement section | Ritual Implements (Photo documentation) | Group XXIV (objects of art and decorative arts of earlier times) |
| 6. Old roofing tile section | Old roof tiles (Document) | Group XXIV (art) |
| 7. Weaponry section | Weapons (Photo document, album) | Group XXIV (art) |
| 8. Old calligraphy, etc. sect. | Paintings (Rubblings, documentation) | Group XXIV (art) |
| 9. Old books and sutra sect. | (Rubblings, documentation) | Group XXIV (art) |
| 11. Musical section | Musical instruments (documentation) | Group XV (Musical instruments) |
| 14. Stationery section | | Group X (Haberdashery) |
| 18. Furniture section | | Group VIII, X (Haberdashery) |
| 19. Textile section | Garment (documentation) | Group V |
| 20. Clothing, etc. section | | Group V, X (Haberdashery) |
| 21. Leatherwork | | Group VI |
| 22. Coins etc. section | Antique coins (documentation) | Group XXIV (art) |
| 23. Metalwork section | | Group VII |
| 24. Ceramic section | | Group IX |
| 25. Lacquerware section | Lacquerware vessels (documentation) | Group X (Haberdashery) |
| 26. Measurement tool section | Ivory utensils | Group XIV |
| 27. Ceremonial utensils sect. | Ancient silver incense burner | Group IV, VII |
| 28. Amusement section | (Rubblings, documentation) | Group X, XIX |
| 29. Children’s toy section | | Group X |
| 30. Old Buddhist statue sect. | (Rubblings, documentation) | Group XXIII (ecclesiastical art) |

an inscription by Ninagawa: “Purchased in Kyoto in Meiji 7 [1874], Ninagawa Noritane, Second Residence, Tatsunokuchi Dōsan-chō, Tokyo”.⁵⁶

It is not possible to prove that the small pagoda *hyakumantō darani* in the collection of Weltmuseum Wien is the same one that was exhibited in Vienna in 1873. Ninagawa might also have acquired the pagoda after the exhibits returned to Japan and presented it to Heinrich von Siebold with his inscription. It is similarly conceivable that a number

of pagodas were removed from the Tōdai-ji temple (Nara) or the Hōryūji temple in Kyoto) during the “Jinshin Survey”, “purchased” by Ninagawa and presented to Heinrich von Siebold in 1874. In addition to the aforementioned items, Ninagawa presented von Siebold with a number of other antique objects. A small Buddhist figure of a standing Shaka Nyorai 釈迦如来像 with an inscription by Ninagawa was recently discovered at Weltmuseum Wien, (fig. 7), Inv. No 36784. Originally owned by the powerful Taira clan 平氏 *Heishi*, it is believed to date from the end of the Heian period

⁵⁶ The inscription is read by Hidaka, Kaori and published in Hidaka (2021, 195).

(794–1185). This may also have belonged to category 30 in the Old Buddhist statues and implements section. Further research is required.

The tabular list below is designed to demonstrate once more the interconnectivity between the disparate campaign activities of 1871 and 1872 in Japan and the assortment of objects showcased at the Vienna World's Fair.

Finally, we shall take a look at the preparatory work of the Japanese exhibition commission, as recorded in the French-language catalogue, printed in early January 1873 in Yokohama.⁵⁷ In spring 1872, meetings were held on a regular basis between the Imperial Japanese commission and foreign representatives like the Italian Minister Count Alessandro Fè d'Ostiani (1825–1905), and members of the Austrian-Hungarian commission. To advertise the World's Fair, members were dispatched to various locations throughout the country. On 30 June, the chancellor of the Ministry of Public Works, Sano Tsunetami, became head of the Imperial Japanese commission for the Vienna World's Fair. Sano had himself attended the 1867 Paris World's Fair accompanied by the young Alexander von Siebold as interpreter. Gottfried Wagener, professor at the Western Learning College *Daigaku Nankō* 大学南校, was sent to Kyoto with members of the commission, presumably to investigate local kilns and choose ceramics for Vienna. We also know that it was on Wagener's advice that a set of lacquerware interior furnishings was chosen to accompany the house model of a "warrior", here a high-ranking samurai, a daimyō⁵⁸ *buke hinagata* 武家雛形 for Group XIX "The bourgeois house with interior furnishings and decorations". The idea was to enable Viennese visitors to imagine a domestic interior

of the Japanese bourgeois—in this case, the former ruling—class. One strategy adopted by the commission, inspired by a proposal of Alexander von Siebold, was to exhibit "Massive things" to attract visitors' attention.⁵⁹ Among these "massive" objects on display were the golden *shachihoko* 鯨鯢, a roof ridge end in the shape of a mythical fish-like animal, which the "Jinshin Survey" recorded as already dismantled from the roof of Nagoya Castle (fig. 8), papier-mâché replicas of the Great Buddha of Kamakura, and the five-stored Pagoda of Yana-ka Tennōji Temple 天王寺Tokyo (fig. 9), a large drum, and large lanterns:⁶⁰ exhibits that proved to be impressive and were well received by the Viennese audience.

The preliminary work carried out by Japanese officials in the early years of the Meiji Government for a World's Fair, an event of both economic and political significance, proved to be beneficial. The Vienna World's Fair was the first international event in which Japan participated, having analysed previous experiences, sought advice from international experts and addressed the conceptual aspects of a world's fair in a novel manner.

As a member of the Iwakura Mission, Kume Kunitake 久米 邦武 (1839–1932) would discover when he attended the event, that Japan's contribution to the Vienna World's Fair was highly praised by visitors. He would later state that this was due to the uniqueness of the products, such as textiles and paper, and that the size of the precisely crafted ceramics led to astonished looks.⁶¹

Japan's contribution to the World's Fair was officially acknowledged, with the country receiving numerous medals and awards for the products presented. A total of 198 medals and awards were bestowed upon Japan.⁶² The impact of Japan's participation at the Vienna World's Fair was to be reflected in future developments and to yield a lively exchange in business, culture and politics.

57 Recent research has shown that the French-language catalogue "Notice sur l'empire du Japon et sur sa participation à l'Exposition Universelle de Vienne, 1873, Publiée par la Commission Impériale Japonaise, Accompagnée d'un Album Photographique, Yokohama, Imprimerie de C. Lévy, Imprimeur-Editeur 1873" was written by Gottfried Wagener as his obituary from 1893 in OAG-Mitteilungen reveals, see Ostasiatische Gesellschaft Tokyo (OAG) (1897, 361).

58 "Model of a Daimyo residency Weltmuseum *buke hinagata* 武家雛形." See Wien online collection 2017.

59 Katada 2019, 269.

60 Kinoshita 1993, 29.

61 Pantzer 2002, 336.

62 Hedinger 2011, 85.



Fig. 8: Photo album accompanying "Catalog 1873", "Poisson de l'or". Private ownership.

Conclusion

In advance of the Vienna World's Fair, the Japanese delegation encountered the challenge of aligning Western concepts with the appropriate Japanese terminology, particularly in the case of the term "art", which was perceived as a novel concept in Japan. Prior to the preparatory work for the Vienna World's Fair, the German catalogue published by the Viennese committee had to be translated into Japanese. This was necessary in order to ensure that appropriate items were assigned to each of the 26 groups presented at the fair. As evidenced by the two surveys, "Preservation of Antique Vessels and old Objects from Various Regions" and the inspection and research project on treasures in shrines

and old temples, the "Jinshin Survey", the concept of objects designated as "art" in the West had existed for centuries in Japan as collectible items, referred to as "treasures".

The policy and preparatory work carried out by the Japanese members for the 1873 Vienna World's Fair proved to be successful, largely due to the preliminary cultural protection measures that were put in place by the new Meiji Government. At this point in the investigation, some of the objects classified under the category of "art" can be identified on the basis of images from the illustrated album or can be found in public collections. They are publicly available in the database of Weltmuseum Wien.

Modèle à $\frac{1}{10}$ de la tour de Janaka à Tokio.



Fig. 9: Photo album accompanying "Catalog 1873", "Modèle à 1/10 de la tour de Janaka à Tokio". Private ownership.

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Part 2

Collecting East Asia in Austria-Hungary

“Very Poorly Represented in the Museum”: East Asia in the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry under the Directorate of Rudolf Eitelberger 1864–1885

Johannes Wieninger

Introduction

Publications on the founding phase of today’s MAK—Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna primarily deal with Rudolf Eitelberger (1817–1885), this institution’s first director. For more than twenty years, he was the “leader” of this museum and determined its structures and working methods, many of which are still effective today.

A museum’s expert staff is intensively involved in its programme in that they are often asked to develop and implement their own initiatives, but the director has always set the central themes and made the final decisions—Viennese museums function according to this system, and probably many others as well. We can therefore speak of a personally formed “Eitelberger era” within the period from the founding of the museum in 1863 until his death in 1885.

The MAK or Museum of Applied Arts houses one of the most extensive collections of East Asian art and decorative arts in the Germanophone world and beyond. We take for granted this museum’s aim to present global connections in technology and art and make them visible. However, a museum’s concept is subject to constant change. Alignments grow and change over time, often against the intentions of the founders. Formerly “revolutionary” ideas become stale and they are changed either slowly or sometimes even radically upon a decisive break.

This article aims to shed more light on the early days of this institution, which was founded as the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry. Namely, it answers questions such as: What significance did products from East Asia have in the more than twenty years of Eitelberger’s directorate? What opportunities did this museum offer a potentially interested audience to get information about East Asia and its productions? During Eitelberger’s era, i.e. the founding phase of the museum, was there a perceived need to include art objects from East Asia in this “model collection”?

It is important to take a detailed look at the Imperial Royal Museum’s goals and activities. Inventories, catalogues, book lists, and publications were reviewed line by line, which has never been done before in depth. In this way, a real and vivid picture of this time opens up to us. The detailed list is preceded by a presentation of the ideas behind the museum’s founding as well as references to the possibilities of including products from East Asia in the programme.

The Founding of the Museum

The Austrian Museum of Art and Industry—now the Museum of Applied Art—in Vienna¹

¹ Over time, the name of the museum has changed: The Imperial-Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (k. k. Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie), which opened in 1864, was subsequently known by the following names: Austrian Museum of Art and Industry

was founded in 1863 (declaration of intent) and opened in 1864. Following several foreign models and also predecessor institutions with similar goals in Austria itself, it was intended to be a “useful museum” for the promotion of the quality and international competitiveness of industrial products.²

Inspired by the Great London Exposition in 1862 and the South Kensington Museum Rudolf Eitelberger projected a concept for a museum of decorative arts in Vienna based on the model of this Museum in London. In 1864, it was finally opened under his leadership.³

In a lecture⁴ in the early summer of 1863, Eitelberger outlined his museum concept and set out its goals:

We can study the technique independently and, like other nations, we can also build on the great examples of past stylistic periods. Hence it will be a question above all that what we have, and as far as we have it, as complete and incomplete as it will be, be established, arranged, made accessible to

contemplation, contemplation, and study in the freest and most liberal manner. That is the one purpose that this museum has to fulfill. Another purpose ... consists in the fact that ... to give the Austrian industrialists themselves the opportunity to exhibit particularly excellent objects. ... A space is to be created where what is created by the Austrian industrialists is also seen by the Austrians.⁵

The aim of this “Austrian Museum”, as it has been called since its foundation, was the creation of a national institute for the promotion of the national art industry.

... when we enter into this new museum, and we see the old objects in it, these old objects will not be exhibited for the sake of antiquity; for because of their antiquity they belong in a cabinet of antiquities, in an antiquarian museum, but they are exhibited because of the art form, or because of the material, or because of the technique.⁶

(Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie, 1918–1938), State Arts and Crafts Museum in Vienna (Staatliches Kunstgewerbemuseum in Wien, 1938–1947), Austrian Museum of Applied Arts (Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, 1947–1990), MAK—Austrian Museum of Applied Arts, abbreviated as MAK. (MAK—Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst; Kurzform, MAK, ca. 1990–2018). Since 2018, the museum has been known as the MAK—Museum of Applied Arts (MAK – Museum für angewandte Kunst).

- 2 Since the late 18th century, efforts to promote the national art industry have been made throughout Europe. With regard to Austria, a few institutions are mentioned incompletely:

1807 Imperial Royal National Factory Products Cabinet in Vienna (k.k. National Fabriksprodukten-Kabinett);

1811 Joanneum in Graz, Museum and Educational Institution;

1835 General or Central Trade Producers Exhibition in the rooms of the Vienna Hofburg on the order of Emperor Franz I;

1838 Foundation of the “Austrian Trade Association” (Österreichischen Gewerbevereines), (from 1839 “Lower Austrian Trade Association”, (Niederösterreichischer Gewerbeverein)). See Pokorny-Nagel (2000).

- 3 Kernbauer and Pokorny-Nagel 2019.

- 4 Eitelberger 1863a, 601–18.

Eitelberger deliberately neglected the historical aspect of objects in favour of timeless exemplars of technology and design. Just as Gottfried Semper (1803–1879) depicted antiquity as his ideal,⁷ for Eitelberger it was the architecture and ornament of the Italian and French Renaissance, which is why he acquired an extensive collection of ornamental engravings as early as 1863.⁸

It is thus also understandable that the museum’s inventory entries omit time indications. And why, in the “exhibitions”, as they were listed monthly in the *MKI* (*Mittheilungen des k. k. Österreichischen Museum für Kunst und Industrie*), objects were apparently put together without regard to type, origin, or time of origin.

As an example, a list of such an exhibition in the year 1867 is quoted from *MKI* 2, no. 19: 329:

5 Ibid., 606.

6 Ibid., 605.

7 Semper 1860–1863, vol.1, XV.

8 Eitelberger 1863b, 689–94.

(Newly exhibited items.) March 13th:

A tea service of Chinese porcelain with mounting of gold and enamel, property of Count Waldstein; a landscape painting by Marko, property of the Baron von Metzburg; a porcelain bowl and a wedding ring, inscribed 'Martino Luthero', property of Mrs. Krug of Nidda;

two miniature portraits from the possession of Count Marasse; a bowl with reliefs of terracotta, Venetian, 16th century, property of the Herrn Adamberger; the curvature of a bronze pastoral with enamel, 12th century, property of St. Peter's Abbey in Salzburg; a relief from the 12th century and a traveling altar with depictions from the Passion story in gilded silver and enamel, 15th century, property of the cathedral treasury in Salzburg;

Finally, the fifth series of glass objects destined for the Paris exhibition by the firm of J. & L. Lobmeyr and a cloth mosaic carpet made by Franz Pekarek.—At the same time, a collection of woven fabrics and embroideries from the museum's collection of fabric samples was presented, which are used to illustrate the lectures of the Custos J. Falke on the history of weaving and embroidery.⁹

In this lecture of 1863, Eitelberger felt compelled to cite the "Orient" as an example with an argumentation worthy of discussion—at least from today's point of view:

We see this at every World's Fair. Who will win the prize in terms of ornamentation at the World's Fair? If we wish to be frank and honest, we must say, above all, the nations of the East, now semi-barbarous, or abandoned from the height of civilization, and these Oriental nations because even today, in their sunken state, they are in a certain respect the bearers of a thousand-year-old

culture, and because they have the style of those ornaments, which has stood the test of time for thousands of years, is still maintained today. That is why fashion is not so dangerous in those countries, and fashion does not exist, because the principle of art has not been corrupted by fashion ...¹⁰

Eitelberger thus attested to a cultural standstill in non-European countries, which could therefore hardly make a positive contribution to the further development of art and industry. His remarks raised doubts in advance as to whether he would also include Asian/East Asian works in his museum concept.

Gottfried Semper, the Theoretician

Gottfried Semper (1803–1879) was the theoretician and Rudolf Eitelberger the practitioner who realized the idea of a new type of museum. Let us therefore take a brief look at the writings of Gottfried Semper, who must be regarded as the mediator between arts and crafts museums on the European continent.

Inspired by the first World's Fair (Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations) in London in 1851 and the subsequent South Kensington Museum, now the V&A Museum, he developed a concept for an "ideal museum" during his stay in London (1850–1855), which, however, remained stuck in a manuscript that was not ready for printing. Semper's original manuscript is apparently lost, but two copies exist; one in the National Art Library at the V&A Museum, which is dated 1852, the same year as the original,

10 Eitelberger 1863a: 605. It is not clear whether Eitelberger's term "Orient" also included East, Southeast, and South Asia. However, from the museum's activities over the next twenty years, the more intensive study of the products of Southwest and Central Asia can be observed. More attention is also paid to India, which explains the interest in acquiring the paintings from the Hamzanama. Over the course of time, however, a large part of the Indian objects were given away/exchanged, so that the important group of Hamzanama illustrations seems isolated today.

9 Eitelberger 1863b, 689–94.

and the Viennese copy, which was probably replicated in 1855 after the London exemplar. In 1867, Semper dedicated this copy to the museum; the donation was arranged by architect Josef Zitek (1832–1909), who was associated with the Viennese Museum.¹¹

Semper himself doubted that his “ideal museum” could be realized:

... A Complete and Universal Collection must give, so to speak the longitudinal Section, the transverse Section, and the plan of the entire Science of Culture; it must show how things were done in all times; how they are done at present in all Countries of the earth; and why they are done in one or another Way, according to Circumstances; it must give the history, the ethnography, and the Philosophy of Culture.

... Such an ideal Collection will perhaps never be practicable, nor would it yet be desirable to try it; but special Collections of whatever kind they may be, should be considered as forming parts of this great ideal Collection, and the System adopted for their Organization should be based upon this principle.¹²

To illustrate his ideas, he listed objects from collections scattered throughout Europe. It is already noticeable in this work that the historical component played a subordinate role. Objects from Asia were mentioned only occasionally, without any discernible systematics.

For instance, the list under the topic “drinking vessels” looks like this:

Goblets were the favourite forms for the Drinking Vessels with the people of the Northern and western Europe in the middle ages. We have still a great many Vessels

of the kind in stoneware, Tin, Silver, Glass, Crystal, and other Materials. The best manufacturers of such Vessels were in Germany and Belgium. Specimens in the German Collections and everywhere.

The Arabian Turkish & Indian Goblets or Drinking Vessels for hot potions are not flat on the bottom, and have separate stands or holders like Egg Cups, these stands are often tastefully chased & ornamented. The Chinese Vessels of this Class are well known, they have been the prototypes for our modern Tea and Coffee Cups ...¹³

So Semper dared to look beyond Europe’s borders from time to time. In 1860 and then again in 1863—during his stay in Zurich—Semper published his magnum opus *The Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or Practical Aesthetics*.¹⁴ The starting points for his reflections were textiles and ceramics as well as tectonics in their original form.

In the first part on textile art, Semper dealt with the structure of the Chinese house and its ornamental decoration.¹⁵ As a source for his reflections, he cited a manuscript from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, which he was apparently able to study during a stay on his escape to London: *Essai sur l’architecture Chinois*, a two-volume, richly illustrated work, dated around 1750–1760, apparently compiled by Jesuit missionaries and brought to Europe.¹⁶

In detailed drawings, the architectural structure of the pagoda, residential house, and palace is depicted, from the simplest tools to the richest room decorations.

In general, Semper describes Chinese architecture as it was reported to him by the missionaries.

11 Nicka 2007, 7–9; Noever 2007.

12 Noever 2007, 55. (The original English quotes by Gottfried Semper have been taken over without modifications.)

13 Ibid., 181.

14 Semper 1860–1863.

15 Ibid., vol.1, 241–56.

16 *Essai sur l’architecture chinoise* c. 1750–1760. Semper cites yet another source for his studies: Chambers (1776).

In the second part, he devoted himself to ceramics, whose artistic zenith he considered in the European classical period. His view of Asia, on the other hand, was unflattering:

... Let us now turn our gaze back to those oldest Eastern cultures, where pottery had been guided from time immemorial into quite a different course by the above-mentioned tools. The ancient invention of the potter's wheel had brought about the negative effect of impoverishing and depreciating the pottery, without a new idea of art. Pottery was despised in Egypt, as well as probably also in Asia, and was practiced only by servants, it only served the need, or it created cheap substitutes for precious magnificent objects made of metal and precious stones. Here it acquired a thoroughly industrial tendency, and in this it achieved more than it had ever attained, or even aspired to, with the Greeks. But it was reserved for them to revive the degraded art by the same instrument that, handled by the barbarian slave hands (skillful but without real art), brought about its decay. Unlike the barbarians, pottery was a free art for the Greeks; they were held in such high esteem that medals were struck for excellent potters and monuments were erected to them.¹⁷

Semper's view of the East was not unclouded by prejudices; if he found an object that seemed to fit into his argumentation, he mentioned it, but otherwise he concentrated on the Western art industry.

Missed Opportunities— The Eitelberger Era 1864–1885

From 1863 to 1885, three major events occurred that gave the Museum of Art and Industry the opportunity to reorient itself, and in some cases even the will to do so can be observed. From 1869 to

1871, the so-called East Asia Expedition¹⁸ took place and, during preparations for the expedition, Eitelberger showed interest in acquiring objects and, above all, photographs of them.¹⁹

If this expedition is carried out, which can hardly be doubted at present, it will touch countries whose arts and crafts activity is still relatively very poorly represented in the museum, and in which that healthy sense of colour and form of ornamentation and good taste in general has been preserved in all products, from the finest luxury work down to the ordinary objects of daily use, the further development and naturalization of the Austrian Museum in the patriotic arts and crafts is the focus of the efforts of the Austrian Museum.

The use of this expedition for the purposes of the Austrian Empire Museums thus appeared to be a matter of great importance, as a scarcely recurring opportunity to establish new and significant connections.²⁰

However, this much-heralded interest bore little fruit. Only a few objects found their way into the collection and there were no exhibitions. The numerous photographs by Wilhelm Burger (1844–1920), the expedition's official photographer, still provide insight into the prevailing interests in East Asia. Alongside numerous single prints, the museum's library keeps the luxury album for Emperor Franz Joseph, who donated it to the museum.

The next opportunity came just a few years later: many Asian countries were represented at the

18 Scherzer 1872.

19 From the very beginning, a plaster workshop and a photo studio were planned in order to be able to document objects from other collections (see note 6).

20 Quoted from a letter dated 1 July 1868 from Rudolf Eitelberger to the Ministry of Trade, archive of the MAK Museum of Applied Arts. The expedition set off from Trieste on 18 October 1868. On 18 October 1869, it ended with its departure from Yokohama Harbor. But some members of the delegation stayed in Japan fulfilling other duties and completing other journeys, returning to Vienna only in 1871. See Scherzer (1872).

17 Semper 1860-1863, vol. 2, 134.

Vienna World's Fair in 1873 with numerous and varied objects and material samples. The museum made purchases, but the majority of the acquisitions were donations from state commissions or producers and dealers.²¹

The museum did not take part in the World's Fair but held the first congress of art historians with a focus on the Renaissance.²²

This openly shown lack of interest certainly contributed to the founding of the Oriental Museum, which gave the Museum of Art and Industry a great and active competitor.²³

Finally, in 1883, Heinrich Siebold (1852–1908) set up an exhibition of art industrial objects from Japan, wrote a small catalogue—and the museum only half-heartedly tried to acquire the objects—which was ultimately neglected “for budgetary reasons.”²⁴

Around 1880, a veritable Japanese boom began in Europe's most important cities, driven by artists and the antiquity trade.²⁵

The major museums of decorative arts, for example in London and Hamburg, have long recognized the importance of East Asian works for the further development of Western art, and even the Museum of Decorative Arts in Budapest, which was only founded in 1872 based on the Viennese model, was able to be one of the main lenders for the “historical bronze exhibition” with its East Asian holdings in 1883.

Especially the “Historische Bronze-Ausstellung” (Historical Bronze Exhibition) at the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry attests to the museum's passivity. The detailed catalogue²⁶ lists 1657 objects and describes them briefly but

precisely. In addition to the preponderance of European works of art, 63 numbers are described as Persian, Arabic, or Ottoman, and 275 (!) metalworks are listed as originating from Eastern, Southeastern, and South Asian regions, mainly from China and Japan.

The largest lenders of the last group were Count Edmund Zichy with 90 objects, the art dealer Carl Trau followed with 73 loans, 44 works were borrowed from the Budapest Museum of Decorative Arts, 18 objects were provided by Heinrich Siebold, and 9 pieces came from the ethnographic cabinet of the Natural History Museum, from which today's World Museum emerged in 1928.²⁷

Not a single Asian object from the collection of the Museum of Art and Industry was shown.

Since the late 1870s, Western European historians and artists have come together in various arts and craft movements and have had an impact on the major cultural institutions with their efforts to reform. The idea that united them was the theme of “ornament”, which had been around since the World's Fairs—Owen Jones' (1809–1874) *Grammar of Ornaments* (1856) was inspired by the 1851 Great Exhibition and opened up a new world for many artists; subsequently these ideas spread over Europe, but this development occurred much later in Vienna.

Eitelberger's successors had to catch up, and it was only under the directorate of Arthur Scala (1845–1909) that a major contemporary step was taken towards a reorientation determining the museum's future through the takeover of the collection of the Oriental Museum/Trade Museum and through a more active exhibiting policy.

The mere fact that, with the help of the German and French art dealer S. Bing (1838–1905), he organized Europe's most extensive exhibition on Hokusai at the Museum for Art and Industry, illustrates this long overdue turnaround.²⁸

There was a generational change in the staff and a change in the direction of art history and museum policy. As early as 1860, Gottfried Semper

21 Wieninger 2014.

22 Murr 2022. The congress reports were published in the *Mitteilungen des k. k. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie* (MKI 8, no. 96 - MKI 9, no 100).

23 Wieninger 2012.

24 The objects on display in 1883 are now in the collection of the Weltmuseum; Siebold donated them to the Trademuseum in 1892, from where they were transferred to today's Weltmuseum Wien. Wieninger 2021a; 2021b.

25 Wieninger 2024.

26 von Frimmel 1883.

27 Zorn 2005.

28 Hirschler 1901.

hinted in the preface to *The Style* that there were two groups of historians/art historians:²⁹ one school he called the neo-Gothic, even romantic direction, including restoration approaches, whose most important representatives were located in England and France, and the other, the so-called classical school, which also included archaeology, was the more forward-facing. And, of course, he saw himself as one of the main representatives of this direction, and we can confidently count Eitelberger among them too.³⁰

While the classical school dominated cultural life in the Germanophone world until the 1880s—Semper died at the age of 76 in 1879, Eitelberger at the age of 68 in 1885—in the 1890s, a much younger generation took over, for whom European classicism, be it antiquity or the Renaissance, no longer held such a unique position. They looked to England and France, where, certainly also under the influence of the world exhibitions but also of colonialist activities, a more generous understanding of world art was already possible.

In 1897, the 52-year-old Arthur Scala moved from the Trade Museum to the Museum of Art and Industry as director and, together with artists and students from the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Arts and Crafts), paved the way for reforms.³¹ With the acquisition of the majority of the collection of the Handelsmuseum, he also changed the museum's character and created the basis for the acquisition and donations of further Asian collections over the course of the 20th century.

Conclusion

Semper and Eitelberger were both preferring classical art and architecture—one shaped architecture,

the other teaching at the university, technical schools and the museum landscape.³² Eitelberger attended the 1862 World's Fair in London and came back with great enthusiasm for the idea of creating a national institute for the promotion of art and industry, along the lines of the Kensington Collection.

The engagement with non-European topics was marginal under his leadership, with the museum's interest limited to Western antiquity, Byzantium, and India, i.e. all "cradles of so-called classical culture". East Asia is present in singular pieces, and Eitelberger was only half-heartedly involved in the donation of larger collections of Asian origin. Any attempt to recognize a clear rhyme or reason in the few acquisitions or accepted donations fails. The most likely indication is that there was an interest in Chinese enamel work for a short period. The purchase of porcelain duplicates from the Dresden collection was a stroke of luck, but was not expanded by further acquisitions.

It is characteristic of the Viennese situation that the Museum of Art and Industry did not participate in the Vienna World's Fair in 1873, but instead Eitelberger hosted the first international art historians' congress to discuss museum-related problems.

However, the Vienna World's Fair encouraged a younger generation to look beyond the borders and enrich Viennese cultural life with non-European works. With the founding of the Oriental Museum (later renamed the Trade Museum) in 1874, a more open institution emerged under the "guise" of promoting international industrial and trade relations.

29 Semper 1860-1863, vol.1, XV.

30 In the same preface, Semper mentions "Three necessary conditions of formal beauty: 1. Symmetry; 2. Proportionality; 3. Direction", which he derived from nature. Of course, with these conditions of art and architecture, it is difficult to approach the art of East Asia (Semper 1860-1863, vol.1, XXIV).

31 Wieninger, 2000.

32 On this topic, see Semper's introduction in *Der Stil* (Semper 1860-1863, vol.1, XV). He describes three "schools" that look at art and architecture from different aspects:

a) The Materialists, under the influence of the natural sciences and mathematics, which strives for "truth to materials", an ideal of Western antiquity.
b) Historians, under the influence of art history and the antiquarian research. They are in favour to imitate art ideals of long ago or foreign peoples with the most critical stylistic fidelity.
c) The Schematists and Purists who are under the influence of speculative philosophy. Semper considers this group to be insignificant, which is why for him the "materialists" (those preferring classical art and architecture) and the "historians" dominate the discussion in the 2nd half of the 19th century.

Although the young founding director Arthur von Scala did not have his own museum building, he took every opportunity to stage highly acclaimed exhibitions and brought new topics into art history (including with curators from the Museum of Art and Industry, e.g. Alois Riegl). He left the Handelsmuseum at exactly the right time and took over the management of the Museum of Art and Industry.³³

Even if it can be guessed from what has been stated so far that Asia, especially East Asia, did not play a major role in Eitelberger's museum world, an attempt will be made to list in detail and historical order which objects were added to the collection, along with their sources, what was exhibited and published, and what literature was added to the museum's large library. Therefore, the following lists are divided into five groups according to the activities of the museum: Collections, Library, Exhibition, Publications, and Lectures.

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³³ Wieninger 2000; 2012.

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List of Activities

Collection

The inventories are compartmentalized by materials. From the founding of the museum until 1885, there are the following entries (approximate % of total collection items given in parentheses):

- BJ (Bijou/Jewellery): out of 986 objects, 25 from East Asia (2.5%)
- BR (Bronze): out of 197 objects, 2 from East Asia (1%)
- EI (*Eisen*/iron): out of 370 objects, none from East Asia
- EM (*Email*/ émail cloisonné): out of 131 objects, 25 from East Asia (23%)
- GL (*Glas*/glass): of 1514 objects, 62 from East Asia (4%)
- GO (*Gold, Edelmetalle*/gold, precious metals): out of 630 objects, 63 from East Asia (10%)
- H (Holzarbeiten/woodwork): out of 315 objects, 7 from East Asia (2%)
- KE (*Keramik*/ceramics): out of 3400 objects, 96 from East Asia (3%)
- KI (Kunstblätter/prints and drawings): out of 3400 objects, 63 from East Asia (2%)
- KU (*Kupfer, Messing*/copper, brass): out of 382 objects, 13 from East Asia (3%)
- LA (*Lack*/lacquer ware): of 121 objects, 53 from East Asia (43%)
- LE (*Leder*/leather): of 239 objects, 24 from East Asia (10%)
- MAL (*Malerei*/painting): out of 55 objects, one from East Asia (1%)
- T (*Textilien*/Textile): out of 4000 objects, 75 from East Asia (1.8%)

Not all objects are still in the collection, as there were several exchanges with other collections and collectors. Some items were also discarded and these are marked with the note “(null)”.

Since the inventories largely omit temporal information, it was not added to the list.³⁴

Library

The library is considered the “backbone” of the museum. Of the approximately 8000 books acquired up until 1885, only 8 were on East Asian topics (approx. 0.1%).³⁵

Exhibitions

At the beginning, there were only a few exhibitions in the modern sense, the first of which were probably “The Heraldic-Genealogical-Spragistic Exhibition” of the “ADLER” association in 1878 and the “Historical Bronze Exhibition” in 1883.³⁶

However, there were continuous, almost weekly, presentations of objects—“newly exhibited objects”—of various kinds, which were also listed monthly in the *MKI*. According to these rubrics, the objects are listed here. It can be observed that many objects were exhibited and subsequently acquired for the collection.

Publication

With the monthly issues of the *Mittheilungen des k. k. Österreichischen Museum für Kunst und Industrie*,³⁷ the museum created a periodical publication

in which a wide variety of activities were archivally noted. Lectures were written down in more extensive contributions and were thus preserved.

The articles on East Asian objects, techniques, and smaller exhibitions can usually be found in the regular section “Kleinere Mitteilungen (Minor Communications)”, which in turn is divided into personal news, newly exhibited objects, and other news, also from friendly institutions.

Lectures

In October 1885, Jacob von Falke gave a lecture in honour of the late director Rudolf Eitelberger and mentioned in the introduction that 220 public lectures had taken place in the course of the museum’s history. Of these, only four (-1.8%) were devoted to East Asian topics.³⁸

List of Activities in Historical Order

1864

Collection

EM 1 vase Chinese, purchased by Carl Trau (see fig. 1)

Library

Alcock, Rutherford. 1862. *Catalogue of Works of Industry and Art, Sent from Japan*. London: Clowes.

Alcock, Rutherford. 1862. Specimens of Japanese Papers, which the Extraordinary Ambassador to the Japanese Court, Mr. Rutherford, Brought to Alcock at the London World Industrial Exhibition of 1862. Gift of the Count of Hohenbruck (Arthur Adolf Schwäger von Hohenbruck).

Alcock, Rutherford (attributed). 1862. Sample of Chinese papers (same layout as the sample book of Japanese papers). Gift of the Count of Hohenbruck (Arthur Adolf Schwäger von Hohenbruck).

1865

Collection

KE 109 Plate with coat of arms, Chinese, acquisition unknown

³⁴ The preserved objects are available in the museum’s online database (<https://sammlung.mak.at/en>).

³⁵ *Katalog der Bibliothek des K. K. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie* 1883. Under the chapter “Egypt, Orient, America”, 45 publications are listed. (The other data up to 1885 were provided to the author by the library’s staff.) In the private library of R. Eitelberger, which was incorporated into the museum library, there are no publications on East Asian topics. The library’s online catalogue: <https://search-mak.obvsg.at/primo-explore/search?vid=MAK>.

³⁶ von Frimmel 1883.

³⁷ *Mittheilungen des k. k. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie* (*Monatsschrift für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe*).

³⁸ Falke 1885.



Fig. 1: Basin, China, Wanli period (1573–1619). Bronze with émail cloisonné. MAK Inv. no: EM1. Photo: © MAK/Nathan Murrell.

KE 110 Smoker, Lion, acquisition unknown
 KE 111 – 128 Porcelain, Chinese, from the porcelain factory (k.k. Aerarial Porzellanmanufaktur, Viennese porcelain factory)
 KE 299 Cup, China, porcelain factory (null)
 KE 439 Tea Bowl, purchased from Carl Trau
 KE 491 Mug, Chinese, purchased from Mrs. R. Schloszau
 KI 525 – KI 527 Photos of Chinese bronzes from the Edmund Zichy Collection

1866

Collection

KE 492 Saucer, Japanese, porcelain factory (null)
 KE 655 – KE 677 Chinese and Japanese porcelain, porcelain factory
 BJ 9 Jewellery, Silver u Feathers, China, gift from Kraft (?)
 Donation of a Chinese house altar (so-called Josshouse) from Shanghai.
 MKI 2, no. 15: 254
 Has not been inventoried, (null)

Library

Jones, Owen. 1866. *Examples of Chinese Ornament: Selected from Objects in the South Kensington Museum and Other Collections*. London: Gilbert.
 Julien, Stanislas. 1856. *Histoire et fabrication de la porcelaine chinoise et augmenté d'un Mémoire sur la porcelaine du Japon*. Trad. du japonais par J.(ohann Joseph) Hoffmann. Paris: Mallet-Bachelier.

1867

Collection

GO 151 Damascened vessel, Chinese, acquisition unknown
 KE 988 Pot, Chinese, acquisition unknown
 KE 1015, KE 1016 Two flowerpots, Chinese, purchased from Emilie Allesch
 KE 1982, KE 1083 Two cups and saucers, Chinese, acquisition unknown
 KE 1122 Bowl, Chinese, purchased from Spengel/Munich
 KE1201 – KE 1203 Porcelain, Chinese and Japanese, porcelain factory

KE 1907 Plate, Chinese, porcelain factory
 BJ 11 Flower Holder Silver Filigree, Chinese, Paris Universal Exhibition
 T 1161 and T 1162 Two bandages, Japanese, Paris Universal Exhibition
 T1164 – T 1168 Five ribbons, Japanese, Paris Universal Exhibition
 Purchase of printed and painted Chinese papers
MKI 2, no. 18: 311

First list of objects acquired at the Paris Universal Exhibition (1867).

MKI 2, no. 22: 387–88

Including:

- 16. Two bandages (all the same, silk knitted), Japanese
- 18. Five ribbons of silk, Japanese
- 21. Fans. Round Disc, Japanese
- 22. Handkerchief. Silk, Chinese
- 23. Paper knife ivory, Chinese
- 24. Flower holder silver filigree, Chinese

Library

De Montblanc, Charles Descatons. 1867. *Le Japon tel qu'il est*. Paris: Bertrand

Exhibitions

A Chinese tea service with a mount of gold and enamel from a private collection

MKI 2, no. 19: 329

Chinese and Indian works (ivory, mosaic, glass, etc.) from private collections

MKI 2, no. 20: 345

Samples of Japanese color printing on paper” property of Carl Trau

MKI 2, no. 24: 424

Publications

Japanese and Chinese porcelain at the Exhibition of the Industrieverein in Graz.

MKI 2, no. 20: 347

Falke, Jacob. *Die Epochen der Seidenindustrie (The Epochs of the Silk Industry)*.

MKI 2, no. 19: 321–25

1868

Collection

EM 26 Vase hexagonal, Chinese, purchased from Carl Trau

KE 1308 Bowl, Chinese, acquisition unknown

KE 1366 – KE 1383 Chinese and Japanese porcelain, purchased from the Japanese Museum, Dresden

Library

Berg, Albert. 1864. *Ansichten aus Japan, China und Siam. Die Preussische Expedition nach Ost-Asien. (Views from Japan, China, and Siam. The Prussian Expedition to East Asia)*. Berlin: Verlag der kgl. Geheimen Ober-Hofbuchdruckerei.

Gottfried Semper donates his manuscript “Ideal Museum of Metallotechnics.”

MKI 3, no. 28: 83

Exhibition

Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese porcelain objects

MKI 3, no. 36: 259

1869

Collection

EM 29 Plate, Japanese, purchased at the Gasselich auction

EM 37 Vase, ancient Chinese, acquisition unknown

GO 193 Vase, purchased from Karl Scherzer

KE 1395 and KE 1395 Two bowls, Chinese, purchased from Carl Trau

KE 1427 – KE1447 Chinese porcelain, acquisition unknown

KE 1538 Brick, China Nanking, gift from Derobe, Dubois & Comp., Paris (null)

KE 1922 – KE 1932 Porcelain objects China and Japan, acquisition unknown

LA 19 Plate, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau

LA 20 Box, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau

LA 21 and LA 22 Two “sets for tea”, 7 and 13 pieces, purchased from Carl Trau

LA 23 Writing Box, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau

LA 24 Plate red, Chinese, purchased by Derobe, Dubois & Comp., Paris

LE 45 – LE 48 Samples of colourful printed leather, Japanese, acquisition unknown

BJ 44 – BJ 46 rings, China, purchased in Singapore by Karl Scherzer

Gifts to the museum: a plate, Chinese lacquer work and a brick from the Porcelain Tower in Nanking (also mentioned under “Newly Exhibited Objects.” *MKI 5*, no. 50: 39)

MKI 5, no. 50: 38

Exhibition

Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese porcelain objects from private collections (*MKI 4*, no. 48: 502)

Publications

East Asian Expedition

MKI 4, no. 40: 336

From the East Asian Expedition

MKI 4, no. 44: 424

From the East Asian Expedition

MKI 5, no. 49: 9

From the East Asian Expedition

MKI 5, no. 50: 40

From the East Asian Expedition

MKI 5, no. 52: 81

1870

Collection

BR 197 Girandole Japanese purchased, acquisition unknown

EM 39 Belt Buckle, Ancient Chinese, purchased from Expedition

EM 40, 41, 42 Bronze Vases from China, purchased from Expedition

EM 50 Bottle, ancient Chinese, gift from Archduke Rainer

GO 135, 136 Two Swords with Scabbards, Japanese, gift from Militzer (Millitzer) in Nagasaki

GO 140, 141 Two Vases, Chinese, Purchased from Karl Scherzer

GO 147 Vase, Chinese, acquisition unknown

KE 1542 – KE 1545 Ceramics Chinese, East Asia Expedition

KE 1552 Two teapots, brown, Chinese, Expedition

KE 1588 – 1599 Ceramics, Chinese and Japanese, Expedition, (partly null)

KE 1610 Plate China, purchased from Millwich in Gröbming

KE 1933 – KE 1938 Ceramics, Chinese and Japanese, Expedition

KI 2146 Watercolour, depicting a vase by émail cloisonné from the private collection of the British envoy Sir Rutherford Alcock in Beijing (see fig. 2)

ME 106 – ME 110 Altarpiece, candlestick, jugs, Chinese, purchased through the Ministry of Agriculture (null)

ME 118 – ME 121 Vessels, Siamese, Chinese, by Karl Scherzer (null)

LA 39 Vessel, Japan, gift from Baron Eugen Ransonnet (null)

LA 40 Tea box ..., gift from Baron Eugen Ransonnet

LA 45 – LA 50 lacquer objects, Japan, gift from Mr. Millitzer (Militzer), Nagasaki

T 1559 – T1581 Textiles, Chinese and Japanese, purchased from Expedition

Library

Chambers, William. 1776. *Traité des édifices, meubles, habits, machines et ustensiles des Chinois, ... compris une description de leurs temples, maisons, jardins, etc.* Paris: Chez le Sieur Le Rouge

Julien, Stanislas, and Paul Champion. 1869. *Industries anciennes et modernes de l'empire chinois: d'après des notices trad. du chinois par Stanislas Julien et accompagnées de notices industrielles et scientifiques par Paul Champion.* Paris: E. Lacroix

Humbert-Droz, Aimé. 1870. *Le Japon illustré: ouvrage contenant 476 vues, scènes, types, monuments et paysages.* Paris: Hachette

Exhibitions

A group of Japanese bronze objects acquired by the East Asian Expedition

MKI 5, no. 52: 88

Enamel, porcelain, and lacquer objects from Java, Japan, and China from private collections.

Chinese chessboard made of ivory pieces ... from the property of His Royal Highness Archduke Rudolf

Japanese robes and embroidery, sent in by the East Asian Expedition

MKI 5, no. 53: 111

Japanese armour from private ownership

The gifts of the Mikado of Japan to His Majesty the Emperor and Empress

30 pieces of Japanese bronze objects from private collections

MKI 5, no. 55: 138

Japanese fabric and Chinese fans, property of Arthur Skala (Scala)

MKI 5, no. 56: 156

A group of vessels and utensils, old Chinese works of different eras in émail cloisonné from the possession of the old count Salm

MKI 5, no. 57: 168

Two large round plates and two vases in the shape of elephants, ancient Chinese cell enamel work, property of Carl Trau (a “vase in the shape of an elephant” found its way into the museum’s collection via the collection Exner, Inv. No. EM 475)

MKI 5, no. 59: 212

Cabinet in which the Japanese commercial treaty was brought to Vienna, Japanese lacquerwork; two Japanese swords; tobacco box of a Japanese noble man and other lacquerwork. A group of colossal Chinese porcelain vases

MKI 6, no. 61: 259

A group of artificial flowers, modern Japanese works. Japanese Terracotta Figurines



Fig. 2: Watercolour, Vase of émail cloisonné from the private collection of the British envoy Sir Rutherford Alcock in Beijing. Beijing(?), before 1869. MAK Inv. no: KI 2146. Photo: © MAK.

MKI 6, no. 62: 279

A big group of Japanese paintings and wallpapers

MKI 6, no. 63: 297

Publications

Friedrich Lippmann. *Eine Studie über chinesische Email-Vasen, Teil 1 (A Study of Chinese Enamel Vases, Part 1)*.

MKI 5, no. 60: 213–21

Friedrich Lippmann. *Eine Studie über chinesische Email-Vasen, Teil 2 (A Study of Chinese Enamel Vases, Part 2)*.

MKI 6, no. 61: 235–46

Friedrich Lippmann. *Eine Studie über chinesische Email-Vasen, Teil 3 (Schluss) (A Study of Chinese Enamel Vases, Part 3)*.

MKI 6, no. 63: 285–92

Also published as a stand-alone publication by the museum in the same year.

1871

Collection

EM 53 Plate Chinese, purchased from Blum

EM 57 Tea kettle Chinese, purchased from Kunsthandlung Pickert, Nuremberg (null)

KI 13660 Album with photographs of Siam, China, and Japan by Wilhelm Burger, taken on the East Asia expedition of the “Imperial and Royal Mission to East Asia” 1868–1871

Gift from His Majesty the Emperor (not inventoried until 1883) (see fig. 3)

T 1728 – T 1732 silk fabrics, Japanese, gift from His Majesty the (Japanese) Emperor (Mikado)

Exhibitions

Photographic album of the East Asian Expedition, property of His Majesty the Emperor

MKI 6, no. 66: 353

Samples of Japanese silk fabrics (brocade) which the Taikun sent to His Majesty the Emperor; His Majesty's gift to the museum

MKI 6, no. 67: 373

A Chinese Enamel Plate

MKI 6, no. 68: 391

Étagère and cassette by lacquer, modern Chinese work; a pair of porcelain vases with lacquer painting, a few larger ones completely covered with lacquer, Chinese, private property

MKI 6, no. 72: 471

1872

Collection

KE 1972 Jug, Delft or China, purchased from Kunsthandlung Pickert in Nuremberg

KE 1973 Jug set in gilt copper, China, purchased from Kunsthandlung Pickert in Nuremberg

KE 1985 Bowl, Chinese, purchased from Kuhn, Munich

Library

Feuillet de Conches, Félix. 1856. *Les peintres européens en Chine et les peintres chinois*. Paris: Dubuisson.

Exhibitions

Addendum to the Catalogue of the Exhibition of Reproducing Drawing Arts

Chinese Woodblock Print “Harvest Scene”

MKI 7, no. 82: 149

Gallery II in the Museum

(Includes Chinese and Japanese ceramics)

MKI 7, no. 83: 162–63

Publications

Ilg, Albert. *Einiges über die Technik orientalischer Lackarbeiten. größtenteils nach Berichten französischer Missionare, Teil 1 (Notes on the Technique of Oriental Lacquer Work, Mostly Based on Reports from French Missionaries, Part 1)*.

MKI 7, no. 79: 74–77

Ilg, Albert. *Einiges über die Technik orientalischer Lackarbeiten. größtenteils nach Berichten französischer Missionare, Teil 2 (Notes on the technique of oriental lacquer work, mostly based on reports from French missionaries, Part 2)*.

MKI 7, no. 80: 92–99

1873

Collection

BJ 90 – BJ 93 Eight pairs of shirt buttons, enamel, Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair

BJ 94 Bracelet with 8 balls, Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair

BJ 96 and BJ 98 Scarf rings, Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair

BJ 97 Two shirt buttons, Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair

BJ 131 Filigree Pieces (Pendant), Chinese, purchased at the World's Fair



Fig. 3: Wilhelm J. Burger: "Jakonin's wife". Photo, albumin print from the East Asian Expedition, 1868–1871. MAK Inv. no: KI 13660-32-11. Photo: © MAK.



Fig. 4: Writing box (*suzuribako*) with drawer. Japan, before 1873. Lacquer on wood (*maki-e*). MAK Inv. no: LA 69. Purchased from Heinrich Siebold at the Vienna World's Fair (1873). Photo: © MAK/Aslan Kudrnofsky.

BJ 132 – BJ 134 Brooches, Chinese, purchased at the World's Fair (null)
 EM 62 Two upper and lower shells with cell enamel, Japan, purchased at the World's Fair
 EM 63 Handle Vase with Cell Enamel, Japan, purchased at the World's Fair
 EM 81 Table top with cell enamel, Chinese, purchased at the World's Fair (null)
 EM 82 Two vases with cell enamel, Chinese, Purchased at the World's Fair (null)
 GO 249 Sword fittings (Fuchi and Kashira), Japanese, acquisition unknown
 GO 250 Bowl, Japanese, acquisition unknown (null)
 GO 251 34 Sword fittings (Fuchi and Kashira), Japan, acquired at the World's Fair
 GO 252 Knife (Kogatana) Japan, acquired at the World's Fair
 H 307 Box, Chinese, purchased at the World's Fair (null)
 H 308 Base, Chinese purchased at the World's Fair

H 309 Makeup box, Chinese, purchased at the World Fair (null)
 H 312 Small table, Chinese, purchased at the World's Fair (null)
 H 313 Armchair, Chinese, purchased at the World's Fair (null)
 KE 2031 Teapot, Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair (null)
 KE 2064 – 2069 Ceramic objects, Japanese, gifts from the Japanese Commission at the World's Fair (KE 2065 and KE 2068 null)
 KE 2071 Porcelain plate with landscape (Fuji) in blue, Japanese, gift from the Japanese Commission at the World's Fair
 KE 2072 Picture with relief, God of Wealth, Japanese, gift from Heinrich Siebold (null)
 KE 2073 Porcelain Attachment, Japanese, gift from Heinrich Siebold
 LA 51 Can, Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair

LA 56 Plate, circular (fan-shaped wall decoration), gift from the Japanese Commission at the World's Fair
 LA 57 Sample of Japanese lacquer painting under glass and frame, gift from the Japanese Commission at the World's Fair
 LA 69 Writing cassette, Japanese, purchased from Heinrich Siebold (from the World's Fair) (see fig. 4)
 LA 70 Table (?) with cranes, Japanese, purchased from Heinrich Siebold (null)
 LA 71 Medicine box (Inro), Japanese, purchased from Heinrich Siebold
 LA 72 Box, red lacquer, Japanese, purchased from Heinrich Siebold (null)
 LA 73 Letterbox, Japanese, purchased from Heinrich Siebold
 LA 74 Oblong box with the coat of arms of the emperor, Japanese, purchased from Heinrich Siebold (null)
 T 2001 Yellow silk fabric, Chinese, gift from the World's Fair
 T 2002 Red silk fabric, Chinese, gift from the World's Fair (null)
 T 2008 Japanese Brown Gold Brocade, gift from the Japanese Commission at the World's Fair
 T 2023 Japanese Pattern Book with Fabric Samples, gift from the Japanese Commission at the World's Fair

Publications

Appointment of Heinrich v. Siebold as Correspondent of the Museum

MKI 8, no. 98: 504

The Oriental Museum in Vienna

MKI 8, no. 99: 510-11

Exhibitions

A Japanese saddle, Chinese table, carved screen walls

MKI 8, no. 99: 538

1874

Collection

BJ 141, Four balls, iron with silver, Japanese, acquired at the World's Fair
 BJ 142 Three balls, iron with gold, Japanese, acquired at the World's Fair
 BJ 149 Four damascened balls, Japanese, acquired at the World's Fair
 GL 1939–1951 Glass objects, Japan, acquired at the World's Fair (null)
 GO 299 Vase, Chinese, acquired at the World's Fair

GO 300 Vase, Chinese, acquired at the World's Fair
 GO 301, 302, 303 Two bottles, one jug, Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair (null)
 GO 308 Jug in the shape of a tree branch, Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair
 GO 310 Mixed group of sword fittings, Japanese, gift from Heinrich Siebold
 H 314, 315 Screens, Chinese, purchased at the World's Fair (null)
 KE 2076 Bowl, Chinese, gift from Dr Pollak
 KE 2085 Tea caddy, Chinese, gift from Dr Pollak
 KE 2086 Bowl, Chinese, gift from Dr Pollak
 KE 2087 Bowl, Chinese, gift from Dr Pollak
 KE 2089 Pot with ivory lid (tea box, Jap. chaire), Japanese, gift from Heinrich Siebold
 KE 2090 Bottle, Japanese, gift from Heinrich Siebold (null)
 KE 2251 Vase with relief, Chinese, acquisition unknown
 KE 2252 Vase blue and gold, Chinese, World's Fair
 KE 2253 Vase celadon, Chinese, World's Fair
 KE 2254 Vase celadon, Chinese, World's Fair
 KE 2255 Vase scrawled, Chinese, World's Fair
 KE 2256 Vase white and blue, Japanese, World's Fair
 KE 2257 Bowl Japanese, World's Fair (null)
 KE 2258 – KE 2265 Chinese ceramic objects, World's Fair (see fig. 5)
 KE 2266 – KE 2270 Japanese ceramic objects, World's Fair
 KE 2278, KE 2279 Two bowls, Japanese, gift from Dr Pollak (null)
 KE 2282 – KE 2286 Five bowls, Chinese, World's Fair (KE 2283 null)
 ME 235 – 239 Pewter objects, Chinese, World's Fair (null)
 LA 75 Can, ancient Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair
 LA 78, LA 79 Two boxes, brown, Chinese, purchased at the World's Fair (null)
 LA 80 Writing box with bamboo decoration (Jap. *su-zuribako*), Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair
 LA 81 Writing box in the form of a stringed instrument (Jap. *koto*), Japanese, purchased at the World's Fair
 LA 82 Stand of colourful lacquer with porcelain pot, Japanese purchased at the World's Fair (Stand lost, porcelain pot newly inventoried as KE 11115)
 LA 83 Lidded box with compass, Chinese, purchased at the World's Fair
 LE 69 Japanese leather saddle, gift from Heinrich Siebold
 LE 70 Blanket, finely openwork (cartridge), Japanese, acquired at the World's Fair
 LE 71 – LE 76 Leather samples, Japanese, acquired at the World's Fair



Fig. 5: Dish. Porcelain painted in cobalt blue under the glaze. China, Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), mid-14th century. MAK Inv. no: KE 2259. Purchased at the Vienna World's Fair (1873). Foto: © MAK/Georg Mayer.

Acquisitions at the World's Fair

MKI 9, no. 100: 23–24

Japanese ceramic and metal goods, gift of Heinrich Siebold

MKI 9, no. 102: 65

Siebold Heinrich: Little container (Jap. *chaire*) from the Tscha No Yu Society

MKI 9, no. 103: 77–79

Library

von Overbeck, Gustav. 1873. *Special-Catalog der chinesischen Ausstellung—Hongkong: III. Abtheilung: Boden-, Industrie- & Kunst-Produkte* (Special Catalog of the Chinese Exposition – Hong Kong: III. Department: Soil, Industrial & Art Products). Wien: Schönberger.

Notice sur l'Empire du Japon et sur sa participation à l'Exposition universelle de Vienne, 1873. 1873. Yokohama: Imprimerie de C. Lévy.

Catalog der kaiserlich japanischen Ausstellung (Catalog of the Imperial Japanese Exposition). 1873. Wien: Verl. der Japanischen Ausstellungs-Commission.

von Bavier, Ernst von. 1874. *Japan's Seidenzucht, Seidenhandel und Seiden-Industrie* (Japan's Silk Farming, Silk Trade, and Silk Industry). Zürich: Orell, Füssli.

Publication

Oriental Museum

MKI 9, no. 111: 256

1875

Collection

BJ 156 – BJ 158 Hairpins, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau

EM 93, 94, 95 Three Bowls, Japan, purchased from Carl Trau

LA 84 Plate, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau
La 85 and La 86 Two plates, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau (null)
LA 87 Cup, Japanese, purchased from Liebermann (null)
T 2366 – T2372 Tableaux with samples of Japanese fabrics, subsequently inventoried, acquisition unknown

Library

Palliser, Bury. 1875. *The China Collector's Pocket Companion*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low, & Searle.
von Kudriaffsky, Eufemia. 1874. *Japan – vier Vorträge nebst einem Anhang japanischer Original-Predigten (Japan—Four Lectures and an Appendix of Original Japanese Sermons)*. Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller.

Exhibitions

Chinese and Oriental gallantry objects
MKI 10, no. 113: 294
Two Japanese bronze chandeliers
Japanese Gold Lacquer Cassette
MKI 10, no. 116: 354
19 pieces of older Japanese sword guards (Jap. *Tsuba*), property of Carl Trau
MKI 10, no. 117: 366

Publication

The Oriental Museum in Vienna
MKI 10, no. 117: 357–58

Lectures

Reg. Rat Exner (Wilhelm Franz Exner): “Technologische aus Japan (Technological Things from Japan)”
MKI 10, no. 122: 439
“Summary of the lecture”
MKI 11, no. 127: 73

1876

Collection

EM 97 Mug, émail cloisonné, Chinese, purchased from Liebermann, Vienna
Em 98, 99 Two vases, Chinese, purchased from Liebermann, Vienna
KE 2558 Tea bowl, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau
KE 2559 Tea bowl, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau (null)
KE 2565 and KE 2566 Two vases Satsuma, Japanese, purchased from Liebermann

KE 2660 and KE 2661 Two bowls, Japanese purchased from Am... Ratoliska
LA 88 Irregular Shaped Box, Japanese, Purchased from Liebermann
La 89 Box, red, Japanese, purchased from Liebermann (null)
LE 98 – LE 100 Papers, colourfully printed, Chinese, acquisition unknown
(newly inventoried under KI 14404)
LE 101 – LE 110 Papers colourfully printed, Japanese, acquisition unknown
(newly inventoried under KI 14403)
T 2802 Chinese lady's slipper embroidered, gift from Mrs. Pick
T 2871 A pair of Chinese stockings, acquisition unknown
T 2872 A pair of Chinese socks, acquisition unknown

Exhibitions

Japanese wood carvings, private property
MKI 11, no. 124: 19
Chinese and Japanese art industrial objects, lacquer and tortoiseshell work, porcelain, enamels, Miako lacquers, Satsuma porcelain, ivory carvings and wallpaper paintings, large bronze figure of a Buddha, embroidered Chinese blanket, property of Mr. Liebermann
MKI 11, no. 126: 60
Japanese enamel vases, property of the museum
MKI 11, no. 127: 75
Collection of Chinese and Japanese art industrial objects, property of Mr. Liebermann
MKI 11, no. 129: 114
Two Japanese porcelain bowls from the 18th century
MKI 11, no. 134: 203

Publications

Oriental Museum
MKI 11, no. 124: 17–18
Japanese Recipes for Lacquer Work (According to an Original Source)
MKI 11, no. 133: 174–77

Lectures

Wilhelm Franz Exner: “Technologisches aus Japan I (Technological Things from Japan I)”
MKI 11, no. 134: 184–99
Wilhelm Franz Exner: “Technologisches aus Japan II (Technological things from Japan II)”
MKI 11, no. 135: 208–14

1877

Collection

- GO 368 – 397 Mixed group of Tsuba, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau
GO 398 Can, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau
GO 410 – 413 Napkin rings, Japanese, purchased at Posonyi's auction (all null), Checken Pozsonyi?
KI 3023 277 Photographs and heliotypes from the Berlin Kunstgewerbemuseum, including 10 photographs of Chinese and Japanese objects, donation
T 3026 Chinese embroidery, purchased from Sigmund Helbing in Munich

Exhibitions

- Chinese porcelain from a private collection
Japanese glass bottles decorated with metal and lacquer
MKI 12, no. 138: 51
30 Japanese Engravings in Iron
MKI 12, no. 139: 66
Eight different Japanese objects, property of Carl Trau
MKI 12, no. 142: 113
Lamp, Chinese
MKI 12, no. 146: 185

1878

Collection

- EM 114 Two vases, Japan, purchased at the Paris exhibition
EM 121 Two vases, Japan, gift of Baron Hirsch (possibly Baron Maurice de Hirsch)
EM 122 Two lidded vases, Japan, gift from Baron Hirsch (null)
KE 2786 – KE 2790 Tea bowls, Chinese, purchased at the Keglevich auction
KE 2791 – KE 2795 Various bowls, Japanese, purchased at the Keglevich auction (null)

Exhibitions

- Ernst v. Hartmann-Franzenshuld
“The Heraldic-Genealogical-Spherical Exhibition” of the Association “ADLER” in Vienna, opened on 17 April 1878 in the rooms of the k. k. Oesterr. Museum. A brief overview. Part I.
MKI 13, no. 152 (Beilage/Supplement)
Ernst v. Hartmann-Franzenshuld
“The heraldic-genealogical-spherical exhibition” of the association “ADLER” in Vienna, opened on 17 April 1878 in the rooms of the k. k. Oesterr.

- Museum. A brief overview. Part II.
Oriental ... and Japanese heraldic art, main exhibitors
Carl Trau, Edmund Zichy, and others
MKI 13, no. 153 (Beilage/Supplement)

1879

Collection

- EM 113 Bowl, Japan, purchased from Carl Trau
GO 451, 452 Two Vases, Japanese, gift from Baron Hirsch
GO 453 Tin, Japanese, gift from Baron Hirsch
KE 2856 and KE 2857 Two vases, Japanese, acquired at the Paris Exhibition (null)

Library

- Le Japon: à l'Exposition universelle de 1878. 1: Géographie et histoire du Japon; 2: Art, éducation et enseignement, industrie, productions, agriculture et horticulture.* 1878. Paris: publ. sous la direction de la Commission Impériale japonaise

Exhibition

- Japanese and Persian enamels, property of Edmund Zichy
MKI 14, no. 167: 398

Publications

- Chinesisches Glas im Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin (Sammlung von Brandt)*
MKI 14, no. 168: 423
Tschudi Hugo: Die Kunst in Japan Teil I
(Art in Japan, part I)
MKI 14, no. 170: 450–56
Tschudi Hugo: Die Kunst in Japan Teil II (Schluss)
(Art in Japan, part II)
MKI 14, no. 171: 475–79

1880

Collection

- GL 1473 – 1515 Glasses, China, purchased from the Kunstgewerbemuseum Berlin (mostly null)
MAL 55 Panneau with fruits, watercolour painting, Japanese, gift from the Prince of Liechtenstein (null)
T 3319 – T 3333 Chinese silk fabrics (but they are Japanese), from the Brandt Collection, procured by the Berlin Gewerbemuseum (some null)
T 3348 and T 3349 Two large plates with Chinese embroideries, acquisition unknown

Additions to the collection of older Chinese fabrics with gold paper
MKI 15, no. 174: 55

Exhibitions

Collection of older Chinese glasswork and silk fabrics, property of the museum; Japanese ivory box, gift to the museum

MKI 15, no. 174: 54

Japanese objects in porcelain and lacquer, property of J. Becker

MKI 15, no. 177: 111

Publications

Opening of the Oriental Museum

MKI 15, no. 172: 17–18

1881

Collection

BJ 742, 743 Two brooches, Japanese, purchased from Richard Bucher, London

GO 511 Business Card Holder, Japanese, Gift from the Prince of Liechtenstein

GO 514 Vase, Japanese, purchased from Galerie Miethke

GO 515 Two vases, Japanese, purchased from Galerie Miethke

GO 521 Business Card Holder, Japanese, gift from the Prince of Liechtenstein

KE 3051 Jug, Chinese, purchased from Schafrank (null)

1882

Collection

EM 128 Bowl, Japan, purchased from Kohn (null)

GO 543 – 547 Electroplates after Japanese originals, purchased from Christoffe Paris (Go 544 and 547 null)

KE 3121 and KE 3122 Two Vase, Chinese, Purchased from Haas and Sons

KE 3123 and KE 3124 Two pumpkin bottles, Japanese, purchased from Haas and Sons

KE 3331 Bowl, Satsuma, Japanese, acquisition unknown

KI 3940 10 Chinese paintings on rice paper, gift from His Majesty the Emperor

LA 111 – LA 116 Six plates with samples of lacquer work, Japanese, gift from Heinrich Siebold

1883

Collection

GO 582 Electroplate after Japanese original, purchased from Christoffe Paris

KE 3131 – KE 3142 Ceramic objects, Japanese, purchased from the department store Ernst Wahlliss (partly null)

KE 3147 Bowl, Chinese, purchased from Count Edmund Zichy

KE 3172 – KE 3175 Bowls, Satsuma, Japanese, purchased from Carl Trau

KI 4000 City Maps of Yedo and Yokohama

LA 117 – LA 119 Three plates with samples of old Japanese lacquer samples, gift from Heinrich Siebold

Library

Herdtle, Hermann. 1883. *Ostasiatische Bronze-Gefäße und Geräthe in Umrissen: ein Beitrag zur Gefäßlehre. Zum Studium und zur Nachbildung für Kunstindustrie und gewerbliche Lehranstalten (East Asian Bronze Vessels and Utensils: A Contribution to Morphology. For Study and Reproduction for the Art Industry and Commercial Schools)*. Wien: Hölder.

Audsley, George Ashdown. 1882. *The Ornamental Arts of Japan*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington.

Gonse, Louis. 1883. *L'art japonais*. Paris: Quantin.

Publications

Katalog der Bibliothek des K. K. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie: Ausgegeben im December 1883 (Catalogue of the Library of the Imperial and Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry).

Katalog der historischen Bronze-Ausstellung im k. k. österr. Museum für Kunst und Industrie (Catalogue of the historical bronze exhibition in the k. k. österr. Museum of Art and Industry). 1883. "Objekte aus Ostasien Kat., No. 1292–1567." Wien: Verlag des k.k. Österreichischen Museums. https://hauspublikationen.mak.at/viewer/image/AC06633473/1/LOG_0000/ (see fig. 6)

Review of Herdtle, Hermann. 1883.

MKI 18, no. 217: 523

Donation of Objects from the Exhibition Of Art-Industrial Objects from Japan by Heinrich Siebold

MKI 18, no. 217: 525–26



Fig. 6: Victor Angerer (Photographer). Photography "Two Equestrian Statuettes, Japanese." Catalogue number 1526, 1527 "Historical Bronzes" exhibition in 1883. On loan from Edmund Zichy, (the figures are Chinese). MAK Inv. no. KI 4207-6, Photo: © MAK.

Exhibitions

"Historische Bronze-Ausstellung im k.k. Österreichischen Museum für Kunst und Industrie (Historical Bronze Exhibition)"

2. Kapitel Ostasien

MKI 18, no. 208: 297–99

"Exhibition of Art-Industrial Objects from Japan"

Explanations by Heinrich Siebold, owner of the objects

MKI 18, no. 214: 441–445 (see fig. 7)

1884

Collection

Ke 3350 Plate, Chinese, Gift from the Prince of Liechtenstein

KI 4068 40 Photographs by Raimund Stillfried

Library

Bowes, James Lord. 1884. *Japanese Enamels*. Liverpool: Marples & Co. Ltd.

Publications

Japanese exhibition in Berlin (opening planned for 1 May 1885)

MKI 19, no. 228: 212

Rudolf Eitelberger: *The Export Museums*

MKI 19, no. 229: 228–29

Jakob Falke: *The Oriental-Ceramic Exhibition at the Oriental Museum Part I*

MKI 19, no. 231: 268–73

1
überhaupt
Lack und Lackarbeiten.

ganz
In keinem Lande der Welt gibt es Lack-
Kunst einen so hohen Grad von Vollkom-
menheit erreicht, als in Japan. In be-
sondere Höhe der Materialien, denn
man dazu bedarf, als Lack, Lack-
holz, Silber, die besten und irrisirenden
Korallen Muscheln, die besten, zähen, feinen
Holzarten, Eßkastanien, Magnoliaknospen,
weiße Alnusblätter, schwarze Eßkastanienblätter
und andere Poliermittel, Tische und
Lackstücke sind die Geschicklichkeit
im Malen und Vergolden und Lasuren, das
Schiff und die Gebäude sind die feinsten
japanische Lackierung, Bronze in Lack
beim Auftragen der verschiedensten
Lasuren und der verschiedenen
weisen der zu bewerkstelligen Lackarbeiten,
die Befestigung in der Holz der feinen
Lasuren, der natürlichen Lasuren und

Fig. 7: Page from Heinrich Siebold's catalogue for his "Exhibition of Art-Industrial Objects from Japan" at the museum in 1883. MAK Archive. Photo: © MAK.

1885

Collection

- EM 130 Vase, Japanese, purchased at the exhibition in Nuremberg (“Internationale Ausstellung von Arbeiten aus edlen Metallen und Legierungen (International Exhibition of Works of Precious Metals and Alloys)”, Nuremberg 1885)
- EM 131 Vase, Japanese, purchased at the exhibition in Nuremberg
- GO 626 Incense burner, deer, Japanese, purchased from Engelsrath Vienna
- GO 630 Bottle, Japanese, purchased at the exhibition in Nuremberg
- KE 3354 – KE 3356 Bowls, Chinese, acquisition unknown

Library

- Gonse, Louis, Joseph Karabacek, and O(ctave) du Sartel. 1885. *Sammlung von Abbildungen keramischer Objecte aus dem nahen und fernen Oriente (Collection of illustrations of ceramic objects from the Near and Far Orient)*. Wien: Verl. d. Oriental. Museums.
- Kumsch, Emil. 1885. *Japan-Album – Decorative japanische Handzeichnungen im Königlichen Kunstgewerbe-Museum zu Dresden (Japan-Album-Decorative Japanese hand drawings in the Royal Museum of Decorative Arts in Dresden)*. Leipzig: Hessling.

Publications

- Jakob Falke. *Die orientalisch-keramische Ausstellung im Orientalischen Museum. Besprechung Teil II (Schluss) (The Oriental-Ceramic Exhibition at the Oriental Museum. Review Part II)*.
MKI 20, no. 232: 296–304
- Hans Macht: *Über Email und dessen Verwendung zu kunstgewerblichen Zwecken II (Schluss)* Textfassung des Vortrages, Teil II zu chinesischen und japanischen Arbeiten (*On Émail Cloisonné and its Use for Arts and Crafts Part II*. Text Version of the Lecture, part II on Chinese and Japanese works).
MKI 20, no. 236: 398–406

Exhibitions

- “Chinese Celadon Bowls, property of Theodor Graf”
- “Japanese Porcelain with European Silver Mount”
MKI 20, no. 233: 327

“Japanese Enamel and Bronze Vessels Purchased at the Nuremberg Exhibition” (“International Exhibition of Works of Precious Metals and Alloys”, Nuremberg 1885)

MKI 20, no. 243: 553

Lectures

- Jakob Falke: “Chinese and Japanese Porcelain”
MKI 20, on. 232: 304
- Bruno Bucher: “On Japanese Arts”
MKI 20, no. 242: 531

Trieste and Asia: Overseas Ties of the Habsburg Port City (18th–20th Centuries)

Michela Messina

The Museum of Oriental Art in Trieste

“Asia begins southeast of Vienna”.¹ This phrase, attributed to Prince Metternich (1773–1859), highlights how the lands to the east of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was geographically and historically on the border between Europe and Asia, were seen by Europeans as a more or less far East, simultaneously menacing and attractive: a counterpart to a West which at that time considered itself the only repository of civilization.

As a Free Port of the Habsburg monarchy from the early 18th century, Trieste held a privileged position as a docking port for goods and people, making it one of the first places to have contact with East Asian cultures. We find concrete evidence of this today in the city’s Civic Museum of Oriental Art: by the 19th century, almost everybody in Trieste possessed items of Asian provenance, even if we cannot always call them “collectors”. The Zanella and Morpurgo collections are the exception to the rule.

Encounters between these worlds were characterised by fear and attraction. People transfer their desires onto what is new and unusual, and this is borne out by the collection of Trieste’s new Museum of Oriental Art, which hosts the artistic, archaeological and ethnographic collections of Asian origin of the former Municipal Museum of

Antiquity, founded in 1873. This new museum, which was inaugurated on 8 March 2001, is the first to be specifically dedicated to Oriental art in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region and one of the few existing in Italy. It is owned by the Municipality of Trieste and is part of the museum complex Civic Museums of History and Art, which documents the history of the city since its foundation. The Museum of Oriental Art is housed inside the eighteenth century Palazzetto Leo, not far from the main square of Trieste, Piazza dell’Unità d’Italia.

The artefacts that found their way to the nineteenth-century Museum varied in type, antiquity and quality: the interests of collectors depended on their individual taste, economic possibilities and inclinations. The collection thus ranges from ethnography—souvenirs and curious objects—to Chinese and Japanese porcelain, and Japanese prints and weapons. While some items—such as Japanese prints—have been considered of artistic interest since the beginning, others—such as the collection of Chinese porcelain, today one of the most important Italian nuclei of Chinese export porcelain—have come to acquire value, thanks to the confluence in the museum context with similar objects in thematic nuclei and to the new perspectives provided by studies in the historical-cultural and anthropological fields.

In this essay, I intend to retrace the reasons why Trieste is one of the few Italian cities to host a Museum of Oriental Art, and the way in which

1 Augustat and Blumauer 2017, 91.

this is a direct expression of its history over the last three centuries. It is a story of landings, journeys, geographical discoveries and trade, which explains why so many men and women acquired East Asian goods and later donated them to the local museum.²

The Birth of the Free Port and an Austrian East India Company

To understand why Trieste is in the peculiar position of hosting a museum of this sort, we must trace its relationship with the sea from the 18th century onwards. Here, Trieste and Austria-Hungary were in a very different position from the contemporary maritime—and colonial—powers. In fact, Austria was not a colonial power at all: it did not have long-lasting commercial companies such as the British East India Company or the Dutch VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* or Dutch East India Company) which from the 17th century effectively established commercial—and subsequently colonial—monopolies in India and Indonesia respectively.

The Habsburg Monarchy did not have colonial ambitions in the strict sense, partly because its internal economic development was insufficiently robust and partly because its administration concentrated on the attempt to keep many ethnic groups together. Nevertheless, it was also in the interests of the Monarchy to obtain a share of the international trade between Europe and East Asia.

The Monarchy's first venture in this direction was as early as 1719, following the concession of the Free Port, with the creation of the *Compagnia per i commerci d'Oriente* (Eastern Trade Company), which was then called the *Imperiale Compagnia Orientale privilegiata* (Privileged Imperial Oriental Company), whose field of activity was to be focused principally on the Austrian coast and specifically on Trieste, Rijeka, Bakar and

Kraljevica. By “the East” was meant the Levant: the countries of Western Asia were to become the outlet and supply markets of the new Company. One of the privileges granted was in fact the monopoly of trade with Turkey. By 1725, however, the Company was already facing a crisis; around 1740 its activity ceased.³

In 1722, sanction was given to the grant of the *Compagnia imperiale e reale delle Indie* (Imperial and Royal India Company), based in Ostend, in the Austrian Netherlands. The most important of its provisions was a monopoly on trade with the East and West Indies and with Africa. In its first years of activity, the Company achieved success that exceeded even the most optimistic predictions. Above all, trade with China brought in substantial profits. However, under pressure from the various shipping companies protected by the great naval powers—the Netherlands and Britain—who saw their economic interests being prejudiced, the Company was soon forced to stop trading, and was dissolved in 1731.⁴

It was not until the 1770s that the imperial government found another entry into the Asian market. The first loads of Chinese goods arrived in Trieste thanks to the vision and business acumen of an active British merchant of Dutch origin in India, by name of William Bolts (1739–1808),⁵ who had begun his career as an employee of the East India Company and later became an independent trader. He linked his name to a 1772 book, *Considerations on India Affairs*, which detailed the East India Company's administration in Bengal.

In 1775, Bolts offered his services to the imperial government, proposing to re-establish Austrian trade with India from the Adriatic port of Trieste. His proposal was accepted by the government of Empress Maria Theresa, and 1776 saw the birth of the *Compagnia delle Indie* (India Company; or *Compagnie des Indes*), also called the *Compagnia*

² These topics have already been partially explored by me in Messina (2019; 2021). Other fundamental sources are the volumes Crusvar (2001) and Dénes et al. (2020).

³ Babudieri 1966, 22–23.

⁴ Space constraints prevent my telling the story of the company and its demise in more detail. For further information, see Babudieri (1966, 14–23).

⁵ Wanner 2012, 182.

Imperiale Asiatica di Trieste (Imperial Asian Company of Trieste; or *Compagnie Impériale Asiatique de Trieste*) or *Société de Commerce d'Asie et d'Afrique* (Asian and African Trading Company). The aim of the new Company was to sell products of Austrian manufacture (fabrics, weapons and ammunition, iron, copper, glass and precious fabrics) in the Indies, without the need for foreign intermediaries, and to supply Austria with foreign goods (coffee, indigo, sugar, silk, rhubarb, cotton, drugs and perfumes from Arabia and fabrics from India), thus ensuring that these Indian and Chinese products were also marketed in Italy and in countries that had commercial connections with Trieste. This venture required substantial capital, which Bolts sought in the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium), finding it in Antwerp banker Charles Proli (1723–1786) and his associates. Despite the name of the Company, the first ship set sail from and returned to Livorno, and for several years, none called at Trieste on either leg of her voyage.⁶

Nonetheless, we do have Bolts to thank for the first docking of East Asian goods in Trieste: on 23 or 30 September 1780, the Fürst Kaunitz, purchased by him in India, arrived in Trieste from Canton (Guangzhou), carrying the following goods, as we read in a document from the Historical Archives of the Chamber of Commerce of Trieste: “gelamine, Japon wood, cinchona root, pint papers, under-cups with black paint, linez [*sic*] that is half-satin with flowers, embroidered *polonaises*, coloured porcelain, turquoise porcelain.”⁷ The arrival of the Chinese goods aroused so much interest in the city that it was mentioned several times by the governor of Trieste, Karl von Zinzendorf (1739–1813) in his diaries, between 3 and 24 October 1780 and again on 14 and 23 November 1780.⁸ As the Habsburg governor of Trieste, Karl von Zinzendorf met the captain of the ship, who presented him with “three views of Canton, of Whampoa island and of Macau, painted in oil” (23

October;⁹ he would have them framed in February of the following year). Zinzendorf also writes that some ladies who were friends of his had bought tea, ivory objects and ink (4 October) from the crew members of the ship, who had also offered for sale “small Chinese statues and animal figures” (13 October).¹⁰ Furthermore, the merchants of the city filled their warehouses with many Chinese goods such as “Nanjing silks [...], lacquer, very heavy but badly designed embroidered fabrics, [...] furniture paper. The way of Chinese packaging is admirable [...]” (23 November).¹¹

Despite his many successes, Bolts’ enterprise was loss-making, overall. In 1781, therefore, at an audience with Emperor Joseph II, Bolts and Proli agreed to the transformation of their partnership into a joint-stock company. On 27 August, the *Compagnia Imperiale di Trieste e Anversa per il Commercio d’Asia* (Imperial Company of Trieste and Antwerp for Asian Commerce, or *Société Impériale pour le Commerce Asiatique de Trieste et d’Anvers*) was founded, a joint-stock company which focused on the tea trade in China, under the direction of the Proli group. In an attempt to gain space in this market, which promised to be profitable, Proli’s group sent five ships to Canton (Guangzhou).¹² However, things did not go as hoped. In January 1785, the Company suspended all payments and shortly thereafter was declared bankrupt, taking the Proli bank with it. The failure, which was sensational at the time, led Charles de Proli to commit suicide, in 1786.¹³

Bolts, who had already found himself bankrupt in mid-1782, had no more capital to play with, but he nevertheless managed to exploit his reputation as an expert in oriental trade in order to found a new joint-stock company in 1783, the *Società triestina* (Triestine Company). In September 1783, the vessel Cobenzell armed by the *Società triestina*

6 Gilibert 2003, 10.

7 Babudieri 1966, 67 note 63; Babudieri 1989, 232 note 9; Gilibert 2003, 16.

8 Klingenstein, Faber and Trampus 2009, 742–51, 761, 765.

9 Ibid., 745.

10 Ibid., 747.

11 Ibid., 765.

12 The logbook of one of them was recently discovered, see Garofalo (2021).

13 Babudieri 1966, 42, 44 note 20, 70.

left Trieste for Marseille, where she collected most of her cargo. Having rounded the Cape of Good Hope, she headed for the Malabar Coast in India, arriving in Bombay in August 1785, and then set course for China. The Cobenzell left Canton (Guangzhou) on 23 January 1786 and returned to Trieste on 16 February 1786 loaded with “saltpetre [an essential element for the production of gunpowder], tea, camphor, coffee, pepper and other merchandise”.¹⁴

The sources are silent on the topic of far Eastern travel for a few decades, until we hear of the voyage of the frigate S.M. Carolina, which left Trieste on 11 September 1820 to transport a diplomat to Brazil—where Maria Leopoldina Josefa Carolina of Habsburg-Lorraine (1797–1826), daughter of Francis I, was queen—and sail on to China, carrying a shipment of mercury, docking in Gibraltar, Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, Batavia (Jakarta), Singapore, Macau and Canton (Guangzhou). It was in connection with this voyage that the first commercial treaties were signed with the Chinese government. On 7 July 1822, the S.M. Carolina returned to Trieste, loaded with “oriental” objects, according to the Trieste historian Giuseppe Caprin: an event that caused the passion for Chinese style to flourish in Trieste.¹⁵

The Austrian Lloyd Company and the New Routes from Trieste

As navigation changed with the introduction of steam, resourceful private entrepreneurs were quick to take advantage of the new opportunities. Bankers and merchants such as Giovanni Guglielmo Sartorio (1789–1871) and Carl Ludwig von Bruck (1798–1860) were among those who founded the *Società del Lloyd Austriaco* / *Österreichischer Lloyd* (Austrian Lloyd Company) in 1833, for insurance purposes.¹⁶ In 1836, the *Società di Navigazione a vapore del Lloyd Austriaco*

/ *Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft des Österreichischen Lloyd* (Austrian Lloyd Steam Navigation Company) of Trieste was set up, with the aim of connecting the port with regular lines served by Trieste steamships with the territories of the Levant, a natural expansion area for traffic of the Upper Adriatic.¹⁷

In 1837, regular services to Constantinople and Alexandria were inaugurated.¹⁸ The voyage of the paddle steamer Arciduca Lodovico to Constantinople, which began on 16 May 1837, was the first for a Lloyd's ship, sent to the Levant to announce to the Governments and Agencies the beginning of steam navigation: after calling at the ports of Ancona, Patras, Piraeus and Smyrna, she arrived in Constantinople on 30 May 1837. In 1848, Lloyd inaugurated the direct service to Alexandria, where it linked up with the steamboats arriving from Bombay, Calcutta and East Asia.¹⁹

Before 1869, however, the year of the inauguration of the Suez Canal, hardly any direct trade took place between Trieste, India and China. Only occasionally would a few foreign ships arrive to unload or load goods destined for trade with those distant countries.²⁰ The Trieste mercantile class was aware of this: the Deputation of the Trieste Stock Exchange had once again been exploring the relevant mercantile opportunities, establishing in 1842 a *Missione esploratrice del commercio nelle Indie Orientali per il Mar Rosso a spese dello Stabilimento di Consegna delle merci previa approvazione dell'eccelso Governo* (Mission to explore trade in the East Indies for the Red Sea at the expense of the Delivery Establishment of goods subject to the approval of the exalted Government) which was entrusted to the Dane Peter Erichsen.²¹

In this context and in the same period—the 1840s—the time was ripe for the establishment of

¹⁴ Ibid., 73; King 2011, 249.

¹⁵ Caprin 1888, 98 note 1.

¹⁶ Crusvar 2001, 19.

¹⁷ *Il Lloyd* 1938, 554; Crusvar 2001, 19; Museo del Turismo 2006, 139.

¹⁸ *Il Lloyd* 1938, 89; Crusvar 2001, 27.

¹⁹ Brandi 1995–1996, 53–54.

²⁰ *Il Lloyd* 1938, 338.

²¹ Babudieri 1966; Brandi 1995–1996, 34–37; Zanlorenzi 2010.

a particular and pioneering commercial activity in Trieste: Adolf Wünsch's shop, known as the *Gabinetto cinese Wünsch* (Wünsch Chinese Cabinet).²² This opened in 1843 as a pastry shop on the city's main street, Contrada del Corso (now Corso Italia), and by 1847, according to Pacifico Valussi, it housed objects from the Celestial Empire:

China is fashionable, just as tea, opium and even Chinese art are fashionable: therefore it is not to doubt whether even this class of readers will rush there spontaneously, as long as the shop windows continue to be adorned with the works that have come to us from the Celestial Empire.²³

Mentioned in city guides from the 1850s, the Wünsch shop was organised as follows: the refined pastry counter was located on the ground floor, while on the first floor there was an exhibition room of East Asian objects with a sales cabinet. The collection, which contained a large variety of Chinese, Indian and Japanese artistic and industrial objects, could be visited for the price of 20 carantani, which would then be subtracted from the cost of any purchases. Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Habsburg (1832-1867) frequented the shop and purchased goods there between 1853 and 1863, and the store was such a feature that in 1856 he took his brother, Emperor Franz Joseph, there during a visit to the city.²⁴

It is in this Archduke Maximilian, with his love of travel and his curiosity about distant cultures, that we find the key man who influenced and embedded the taste for the "exotic" in Trieste. The voyage of the frigate *Novara*, a circumnavigation of the globe with diplomatic and scientific purposes, commissioned by him as admiral of the Austrian Navy (30 April 1857–26 August 1859), was the

first scientific expedition on a planetary scale of the Austrian Imperial Navy (*K. u. K. Kriegsmarine*), and was to be of fundamental importance for the subsequent development of the scientific-exploratory activities of the Austrian Navy.

The three-masted frigate with mixed sail-steam propulsion, originally built as a military ship in the Venice arsenal, weighed anchor in Trieste on 20 April 1857 and sailed through the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, from Madeira to Rio de Janeiro and back, heading on towards Cape Town and across the Indian Ocean, via Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Madras (now Chennai) in southern India, to the Nicobar Islands, Singapore, Manila (Philippines), Hong Kong and Shanghai. The visits to the Far East took place between 8 January and 11 August 1858. Sailing south, the *Novara* headed towards the Solomon Islands, up to Australia (Sydney) and New Zealand, then eastwards in the Pacific to Tahiti and southward again to Cape Horn. She returned to Trieste on 26 August 1859.²⁵ In March 1860, the "curiosities" collected during the trip were exhibited in Trieste; some of them are still in the city's museums: naturalistic specimens from the expedition are preserved today in the Civic Museum of Natural History of Trieste.²⁶

A few years earlier, in 1853, Japan had been forced to open up to the West. However, it was too early for Maximilian to travel to the Empire of the Rising Sun: relations between Japan and the USA, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and the Netherlands were first sanctioned by the Ansei treaties in 1858, and until 1867 Japan went through a long and turbulent period of transition, from the shogunate to the imperial regime, which was restored to power in 1868: the change of government which today is known as the "Meiji Restoration". The ripple effect of these events made itself felt in Trieste, as we read in the *Notice* published in *L'Osservatore triestino* on 9 April 1856: "the respectable public and in particular lovers of curiosities from China and Japan are warned that a batch of these objects

22 Crusvar 1998, 27–28, 34; Turina 2020, 114.

23 Valussi 1847.

24 Adolf Wünsch died in Trieste at the end of 1890: the shop was closed and, two years later, the entire *Chinese Cabinet* collection was auctioned in Vienna by Hugo Othmar Miethke. See *Katalog* (1892).

25 The most recent book about the *Novara* expedition is *Kosmos* (2024).

26 *Kosmos* 2024, 162–63, 172–75.



Fig. 1: Eugenio Scomparini (Trieste 1845–1913), *The Fabricci family*, c. 1880, Oil on Canvas, 68,5 x 107 cm. Trieste, History and Art Museums, inv. CMSA 13/5279.

in a beautiful assortment arrived here and is on sale at very low prices”.²⁷ This short record in the local newspaper is a sign of the beginning of the inflow—only a trickle, at this stage—of Japanese items to Trieste and of the interest they aroused among the wealthy.

Thanks to coeval paintings, and the houses of the 19th-century Triestine bourgeoisie which are now preserved as museums (such as the Sartorio and Morpurgo Museums), we can imagine the interiors of the houses in Trieste at the time, dotted with East Asian objects which allowed their owners to travel at least with their minds. The painting by Eugenio Scomparini (1845–1913) entitled *The Fabricci family* (ca. 1880) (fig. 1), for example, shows an extraordinary cross-section of an upper-class interior in Trieste at the end of the

19th century: prominent among the meticulously depicted furnishings is a large Japanese porcelain vase, in Imari style from the manufacture of Arita, which rests on a table in the corner. It is very similar to those belonging to Pasquale Revoltella and still exhibited in the museum of the same name (fig. 3). A similar arrangement appears in the Sartorio Civic Museum of Trieste: in Paolina’s living room there are still two large Satsuma porcelain vases and two Chinese porcelain vases.

The house of Mario Morpurgo de Nilma (1867–1943) (fig. 2), now the Morpurgo Civic Museum, is an example—one might even say a fossil—of an upper-class residence in Trieste from the second half of the nineteenth century. Although he never ventured to travel to distant lands, Morpurgo was the main collector of East Asian art in Trieste, responsible for an important

²⁷ Crusvar 1998, 24.



Fig. 2: House of Mario Morpurgo de Nilma, via M.R. Imbriani 5, Trieste. Studio, 1927, Trieste. History and Art Museums Photo Library, inv. F11017. Photograph by Pietro Opiglia.

collection of prints and surimono of Ukiyo-e. His studio housed the Japanese prints which are now exhibited at the Civic Museum of Oriental Art. Unfortunately, his collection did not survive in its entirety, since the transfer to the Municipality which he had indicated in his last Will and testament of 1941 took place in 1943 during the Second World War, in the shadow of the racial laws (Mario Morpurgo, although a convert to Catholicism, was of Jewish origin). With Trieste included in the Nazi *Adriatisches Küstenland*, the apartment was occupied by the SS in November 1943; many artefacts that were raided at the time have been only partially recovered. Today, there remain two large Chinese *famille rose* vases, while some porcelain pieces are exhibited in the Civic Museum of Oriental Art.

Trieste is the Gateway to Asia: Diplomats, Archdukes and Noblemen Set Sail for Japan

In 1868, in emulation of the other Western powers that were ratifying commercial treaties with Japan, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy sent an expedition to East Asia and South America, made up of the corvette S.M. Erzherzog Friedrich (launched on 11 September 1857 in Venice), and the frigate S.M. Donau (launched on 20 November 1856 in Trieste). The departure of the two ships from Trieste took place on 18 October 1868;²⁸ the aims of the expedition were to negotiate commercial treaties suitable for a great European monarchy, to establish a consular service, both in East Asia (Siam/Thailand, China, Japan) and in South America, and to collect “navigational”, scientific and ethnographic information on these distant lands, to be brought back for the benefit of Austrian citizens. The expedition went down in history as the “East Asian Expedition”.

Since the Suez Canal was not to open for another year, the ships passed through Gibraltar,

rounded the Cape of Good Hope and stopped over in Singapore, Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam), Macau, Hong Kong, Canton (Guangzhou) and Shanghai. The Erzherzog Friedrich reached Nagasaki on 6 September 1869, and the Donau on 16 September. On 6 October, they dropped anchor in Tokyo Bay. Exactly one year after their departure from Trieste, on 18 October 1869, the “Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation” between Japan and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was signed, establishing the first official diplomatic relations between the two countries.²⁹

The signatory to the “Treaty” on behalf of the Monarchy was Admiral Anton von Petz (1819–1885) who had been directly appointed by Emperor Franz Joseph as head of the expedition and plenipotentiary ambassador. He ended his military career as Commander of the Maritime District of Trieste, where he died on 7 May 1885, being buried in the local military cemetery.

Among the members of the expedition was Baron Enrico de Calice or Heinrich von Calice (1831–1912),³⁰ a native of Gorizia. As consul general in China and Japan, he effectively became the first representative of Austria-Hungary in Japan, where he remained until 1873. Before graduating in law and political science in Vienna, he had done a year of forensic practice at the Maritime Court of Trieste in 1853 and subsequently attended the Austrian Consular Academy at the Central Maritime Authority of Trieste, between 1855 and 1856.

In preparation for the ratification of the Treaty, an official exchange of gifts had taken place, on 16 October 1869, when the Japanese emperor received the Austro-Hungarian delegation in Tokyo. The most prestigious gifts were life-size Carrara marble statues of Franz Joseph and Elizabeth (Sisi) and a Bösendorfer piano. In addition, the Japanese were given an ornamental Hungarian saddle, Lobmeyr crystal vases, glass chalices and cups, a collection of coins from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, a camera and some photo albums, and scores of Austro-Hungarian songs.

28 Centro Regionale Studi di Storia militare antica e moderna Trieste 2010, 134–35.

29 Dénes 2020, 31–32.

30 Vidic 2017.



Fig. 3: Japan, Vase in Imari style, 19th century. Porcelain, overglaze polychrome Enamels, height 78 cm. Bequest of Pasquale Revoltella, 1872. Trieste, Revoltella Museum, inv. 1427.

The expedition left Japan on 4 November 1869, returning to the Mediterranean through the newly inaugurated Suez Canal. While the Donau continued to South America, where further treaties were signed, to return to Pula in March 1871, the Erzherzog Friedrich was forced to return to Trieste, after being damaged by a typhoon in the Canal.³¹

Following the ratification of the Japanese-Austrian treaty and other treaties by Emperor Franz Joseph on 8 June 1871, the corvette S.M. Fasana (launched on 22 January 1870 in Trieste, jewel of the San Marco shipyard) was deputed to sail to East Asia to Siam (now Thailand), China and Japan to ratify the treaties.³² Having left Pula on 4 August 1871, she made the journey, thanks to the opening of the Suez Canal, in the drastically reduced time of three months: on 12 January 1872, one day after disembarking in Yokohama, Enrico de Calice delivered the ratified treaty in person to the Meiji-Emperor. It was a solemn ceremony and, above all, the first international agreement to bear the seal of the divine *Tennō* (天皇). At the same time, Japan was warmly invited to take part in the future *Weltausstellung* in Vienna. Despite some doubts, the government accepted in February 1872, convinced by the argument that it was the right time to show the world how different Japan was from China, and how much autonomy the nation enjoyed.

The opening of the Suez Canal on 17 November 1869, one month after the signing of the treaty with Japan, represented a crucial turning point for the development of trade between Trieste and the Far East. Trieste was a key partner in the project, through the work of entrepreneur and economist Pasquale Revoltella (1795–1869), who had invested in the venture. Since 1864,³³ he had been insisting on the need to open up trade with East Asia, urging the Viennese bureaucracy to explore new opportunities and to establish a diplomatic presence in Siam (now Thailand), China and Japan.

Rewarded by the Emperor Franz Joseph with the title of baron in 1867, Revoltella was able to see the first fruits of his sound advice in 1868, but his premature death on 8 September 1869 prevented his witnessing the Canal's completion. He was also interested in East Asian objects: today, in the collections of the Revoltella Museum in Trieste, some East Asian objects are still preserved, such as two pairs of Japanese porcelain vases in Imari style from the Arita manufacture (inv. 1427-1428; inv. 1504-1505) (fig. 3) and a pair of Japanese bronze vases (inv. 1474-1475). Some small Chinese-produced ivory, lacquer and bronze objects are also on display in the library. It is not known how the baron acquired them, in particular the Japanese ones: he might have purchased them from the Wunsch shop or received them as a gift, perhaps from Archduke Maximilian himself, with whom he shared a bond of friendship.

From the moment of the opening of the Suez Canal, Austrian Lloyd's network of communication began to spread across the Far East: creating regular connections with Bombay (1873), Ceylon and Calcutta (1879), Singapore (1880), Hong Kong (1880), Shanghai (1892), Kobe and Yokohama (1893). In 1878, agencies of the Company were opened in Bombay (which became the main agency in 1887), Calcutta, Madras and Colombo.³⁴

From this period onwards, thanks to port activity and Lloyd's connections, Trieste regularly dispatched goods and people to the East and welcomed them to Europe, starting with the items sent from Tokyo for the Vienna *Weltausstellung* of 1873, which passed through the port of Trieste in 1872.³⁵

Although Japan had already participated in the exhibitions in London in 1862 and in Paris in 1867, Vienna was where the new Meiji government made its first official appearance, thus laying the ground for the new way Japan wished to be viewed from the outside. Japan had two objectives: to bring high-quality Japanese goods (particularly artisanal) to the attention of the entire world and

31 Dénes 2020, 37.

32 Centro Regionale Studi di Storia militare antica e moderna Trieste 2010, 136.

33 Revoltella 1864.

34 Brandi 1995-1996, 70.

35 Kutsuzawa 2018, 9; Turina 2020, 114.

thus increase exports, and to learn more about Western science and technology in order to adopt its methodologies in Japan.

The walls of the Japanese exposition were decorated with purple fabrics and brightly coloured paper lanterns. At the entrance, visitors were greeted by an enormous golden female dolphin, with the tail extending upwards beyond her head, brought from the south tower of Nagoya Castle; it was surrounded by metal floor vases and bronze statues of cranes,³⁶ which we can imagine as similar to the censer crane dating back to around 1880 in the Museum of Oriental Art (inv. CMSA 41198). Japanese bronzes were particularly appreciated by Western collectors, who had already had the opportunity to admire them during the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1867; furthermore cranes like this were among the most common export objects, often found in private collections of the second half of the nineteenth century.³⁷ Today, similar specimens are preserved at the Stibbert Museum in Florence, the Chiossone Museum in Genoa and the Musée Cernuschi in Paris. Trieste is no exception: the crane in the Museum of Oriental Art comes from the collection of Antonio Caccia (1829–1893), a literary man, musician and collector who at his death left numerous works of art to the Municipality of Trieste, today divided between the Civic Museums of History and Art and the Revoltella Museum.

Access to Japanese markets did not result in any particular increase in the Monarchy's economy,³⁸ but the opening of new trade routes, the opportunity for Austro-Hungarian citizens to visit Japan and the information and materials that reached the nations on the Danube from the Far East nevertheless fuelled a growing interest in Japan.

Although there were few Japanese visitors to the Monarchy (with the exception of the delegation to the *Weltausstellung* of 1873), the real benefit of the exposition was that the general public could now

read travelogues about Japan, see images of the country, and marvel at the objects collected there.

After the forced opening of the Japanese borders, the European aristocracy and upper classes began to extend their travels to take in the Land of the Rising Sun, whether for economic purposes, scientific research, cultural curiosity or simple prestige.³⁹ Trieste became the port of departure of choice for these memorable journeys. It is remarkable how many of them can be associated with holdings in European museums.

The first high-profile traveller to leave, on 16 September 1887, was Enrico di Borbone-Parma, Count of Bardi (1851–1905) who left Trieste, accompanied by his wife and some friends, to undertake a “voyage around the world” of which Japan was to be one of the key stops.⁴⁰ Arriving in the Japanese archipelago on 20 February 1889, he made an eight-month stay, returning at the end of September 1889 with a vast collection of items purchased in the Far East, which became the foundational nucleus of today's Museum of Oriental Art in Venice. And it was precisely to Trieste that the over 1,500 boxes with almost 30,000 objects were sent, to remain in the city until the end of 1889, that is, until the prince decided to place the goods in the Vendramin Calergi palace in Venice.⁴¹

A few years later, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Este (1863–1914) made an expedition around the world on the cruiser Kaiserin Elisabeth, sailing on 15 December 1892 from Trieste through the Suez Canal to the Indian Ocean, and on to Ceylon and India. From Calcutta, the ship went on to the Pacific via Singapore and Java and through the Torres Strait and the Thursday Islands. Between May and June 1893, the Kaiserin Elisabeth took the heir to the throne to Australia, New Caledonia and the Southern Solomon Islands; after a stop in south-eastern New Guinea, she called at the Maluku Islands, Sarawak in Borneo, Singapore, Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Macau. On July 29, the expedition reached Nagasaki, whence the Austrian

36 Fajcsák 2020, 64–65.

37 I wish to thank Martina Becattini, curator of the Stibbert Museum in Florence, for this useful information.

38 Dénes 2020, 37.

39 Boscolo Marchi 2020, 188.

40 Ibid. 2020.

41 Ibid., 189.

cruiser returned to Trieste without her illustrious passengers. For thirty-five days (29 July–5 September 1893), Franz Ferdinand and his entourage stayed in Japan, where Heinrich von Siebold, the collector who had been the intermediary for many of Enrico di Borbone's acquisitions four years earlier, was secretary of the Austrian legation.⁴² The Archduke continued his journey on the steamer *Empress of China*, stopping in Vancouver on the west coast of Canada,⁴³ and returning to Le Havre on 19 October 1893. In addition to a vast number of ethnographic objects, plants and animals, the expedition also brought home from this trip more than 1,500 photographs and albums, now preserved in the Photographic Collection of the Weltmuseum in Vienna.⁴⁴

Triestines on Board: Their Journeys and Their Stays in Asia

These eminent travellers were not, however, the first to embark from Trieste for the Far East. From the ratification of the commercial treaty, in the mid-1870s, up till the outbreak of the First World War, many Triestines found their way to Japan: rich bourgeois and businessmen, Lloyd's officials, captains and crew members, such as on-board doctors, thanks to whom the city's museum collections have been enriched with East Asian goods.

The position of accredited on-board doctor gave those with medical qualifications unparalleled opportunities. For Carlo de Marchesetti (1850–1926),⁴⁵ a Triestine doctor, paleo-ethnologist and botanist, the voyage opened up research pathways that led to his becoming Director of the Natural History Museum of Trieste. On 1 October 1875, Marchesetti set sail from Trieste on the Lloyd's steamer *Hungaria* as ship's doctor, officially tasked with studying endemic tropical diseases and related therapies *in situ*. After calling at Egypt and

Arabia, he descended the western coast of India to Tellicherry, stopping at Bombay, Goa, New Goa, Pangjim and Karwar. In the places he visited and even during the voyage, whenever the ship was in harbour, he collected plants and other specimens and took multiple notes to meet the commitment he had made to study infectious diseases, flora and the natural world in India.⁴⁶ He also went inland, visiting the mountains of Coorg (now Kodagu district) and Sattari. The petrified forest he found in the latter location not only made his name, but also awoke in him a renewed interest in the paleo-ethnological sciences, which he would later develop in parallel with his botanical research (Marchesetti is in fact known chiefly for his research in the field of prehistory and protohistory in Venezia Giulia and Istria; he went on to take responsibility for the first scientific contribution on the history of the Castellieri, the typical protohistoric settlements of Karst areas). On 10 April 1876 he set out for Europe aboard the *Ettore*,⁴⁷ and a few months later he became director of the Natural History Museum.

The subtle irony of his words in a letter from January 1876 shows something of how the Habsburg Empire was perceived:

As soon as I have some time I want to write a little article to make the position of an Austrian in the Indies known and how well Austria is known in those regions. At least by presenting myself as an Italian one knows which people I belong to, while saying here that I am Austrian is almost as if one were to say I come from the Principality of Liechtenstein or from Hesse-Cassel.⁴⁸

It is perhaps salutary to reflect that these tiny states and the Habsburg Empire might have been

⁴² Ibid., 192.

⁴³ Schicklgruber 2017, 63–64.

⁴⁴ Welt Museum Wien. n.d.

⁴⁵ Moser 2015, 295, 307–08 note 6.

⁴⁶ Marchesetti's letter to Muzio de Tommasini, illegible location, 22 February 1876, Archive of Natural History Museum of Trieste.

⁴⁷ Marchesetti's letter to Muzio de Tommasini, Bombay, 10 April 1876, Archive of Natural History Museum of Trieste.

⁴⁸ Marchesetti's letter to Muzio de Tommasini, Tellicherry, 19 January 1876, Archive of Natural History Museum of Trieste.



Fig. 4: Tanjore [or Thanjavur], southern India, Reverse painting featuring Viṣṇu with his wife Lakṣmī, 19th century, Tempera on Glass, 35 x 25 cm. Purchase from Carlo de Marchesetti, 1 March 1881. Trieste, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. CMSA 14792.

much of a muchness in the Far East at this stage, before the diffusion of Austrian Lloyd, probably because of the Monarchy's lack of interest in colonialist expansion.

In 1880, Marchesetti left Trieste again for his second expedition to the East, with the aim of expanding the Museum's collections. This trip, which should have led him to Hong Kong, was less successful than the first, however, because he was obliged to stop in Singapore (1881) with a serious illness.⁴⁹

On 1 March 1881, Carlo de Marchesetti sold to the Museum of Antiquities of Trieste about a hundred Chinese and Indian objects, evidently collected during the two trips. Some of them, including notably six tempera reverse paintings on glass depicting Indian divinities, made in Tanjore (Thanjavur) in southern India in the 19th century, are preserved in the Civic Museum of Oriental Art (inv. CMSA 14791-14796) (fig. 4). Again in 1881, Carlo de Marchesetti gave the speech *Trieste e il commercio orientale* (Trieste and Oriental Trade), published in 1882, which reported on the first decade of trade with India since the opening of the Suez Canal.⁵⁰

By contrast, the Triestine who was responsible for the main nucleus of the collections of the Civic Museum of Oriental Art (in particular the holdings of Chinese silk and porcelain) spent a long time in the Far East and had the opportunity to assemble his own collection during his stay. This was Carlo Zanella (1853–1900),⁵¹ Lloyd's agent in Hong Kong, Singapore and Bombay in the years when more and more routes to the East were being established. The original extent of his donation is documented by a letter dated 9 July 1900 and by the so-called “Elenco degli oggetti componenti il legato del fu Carlo Zanella. Giugno 1900” (List of Objects that Make Up the Legacy of the Late Carlo Zanella. June 1900), a list drafted by the director of the Museum, Alberto Puschi,⁵² of 1,005 objects, mostly from Chi-

na, Japan and India, along with coins and medals, including Asian ones. Today, because of the lack of original photographic documentation and the limited number of original labels or references marked on the objects, only a fifth of those objects can be identified. Such matches as can be made are based on short, often very general descriptions. The collection is basically heterogeneous, comprising a mixture of applied art and ethnographic objects, mostly of Chinese and Japanese origin: vases and sculptures made of porcelain, metal, bone, ivory, tortoise shell and wood; weapons; musical instruments; clothing; tapestry hangings; and furniture.

Carlo Zanella was based in Hong Kong on behalf of the Austrian Lloyd from 1884 to 1894, first as assistant to the local agent and then as the principal agent in the Far East, with an interruption between 1892 and 1893, when he was transferred to Singapore. We know that he had started to gather East Asian objects thanks to a notice of auction of the furnishings of his Singapore home, which took place on 1 July 1893 and included “Japanese bric-a-brac stands” and “wall scrolls.”⁵³ After Hong Kong, Zanella spent some time in Bombay and retired in 1896 or 1897. He died suddenly and prematurely in Trieste on 23 April 1900. His obituary spoke of “an unobtrusive man, [who] endeared himself to all with whom he came in contact. He [...] was himself of unusually wide and cultured reading.”⁵⁴

Let us not forget that—in the words of a politician of the time—the representatives of the Austrian Lloyd were regarded as deputy ambassadors of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, enjoying the same status as the British East India Company representatives. In some places in the East, Lloyd's representatives were almost sovereign: effectively, envoys of a great foreign power.⁵⁵

The first real diplomat we know of is a person who contributed greatly to the building of relationships between Trieste and Japan, namely the landowner and businessman Georg von Hütterott

49 Moser 2015, 295–96, 308 note 10.

50 Brandi 1995-1996, 70 note 21.

51 Messina 2019, 11–12.

52 Folder *Elenchi doni. Legato Zanella*, Archive of History and Art Museums, Trieste.

53 *The Singapore Free Press* 1893.

54 *The Straits Times* 1900, 3.

55 Museo del Turismo 2006, 138–39.

(1852–1910).⁵⁶ In 1879, when he was only 27 years old, von Hütterott was appointed Honorary Consul of Japan for Austria-Hungary, based in Trieste, probably the first and certainly the youngest Japanese imperial consul in Europe (the consul in Venice was appointed in 1880).

What qualified Georg von Hütterott for the post was the two-year journey he had already made around the world in 1874, through Calcutta, Ceylon, Singapore, Java, Canton and Hong Kong to Japan, where he made a protracted stay before continuing his journey to the west coast of the United States. After crossing North America, he participated in the International Exhibition in Philadelphia as official representative of the city of Trieste before his return home.

Just under ten years later, on 1 November 1883, von Hütterott and his wife Marie Henriette embarked for Japan on the Austrian Lloyd steamship *Orion*, reaching Nagasaki on New Year's Day of 1884. As well as travelling around the country, the couple also dedicated themselves to the study of the Japanese language. Their diaries and correspondence demonstrate how they had both been captivated by the charm of a country in the midst of an industrial revolution, yet still largely linked to a feudal culture: a dedication to Japan that was even honoured by Emperor Meiji, who awarded Georg the *Kyokujitsu-shō* (Order of the Rising Sun) in February 1885, on the grounds of his “commitment to the diffusion and dissemination of interest in Japanese culture”.⁵⁷ During their time in Japan, Hütterott compiled his study on the manufacturing of *katanas* and Japanese blades, of which he was a passionate collector (dated “Tokio, December 1884” and signed “Georg Hütterott, Kaiserlich Japanischer Consul in Triest”),⁵⁸ while his wife kept a travel diary and wrote a sensitive analysis of the condition of Japanese women, entitled *Die Frau in Japan*. They left Yokohama in January 1885 and, after a two-month stop in Ceylon, returned to Trieste in May 1885.⁵⁹

56 Marić 2005, 6; Zanlorenzi 2006, 662.

57 Zanlorenzi 2006, 675–76.

58 Hütterott 2005 [1884–1888].

59 Marić 2005; Zanlorenzi 2010, 420.

Thanks to von Hütterott, a new “Treaty of Friendship and Trade” between Japan and the Austro-Hungarian Empire was signed in 1897.⁶⁰ He was also closely involved in the nine-day courtesy visit to Trieste and the Empire paid by a team of the Japanese navy in September 1907. The *Tsukuba* (14,000 t armoured cruiser) and the *Chitose*, two ships of the Imperial Japanese Navy, docked in the port of Trieste on the return leg of a cruise to the United States and Europe, which took place between 1 April and 16 November 1907. The delegation, commanded by Vice Admiral Ijuin Gorō (1852–1921), had officially attended the Jamestown Exposition, an international fair organised to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the foundation of the colony of Virginia. After reaching Trieste on 5 September, the guests were treated to excursions and banquets (at the Hotel de la Ville, Villa Necker, Villa Revoltella, Hotel Obelisco) and a concert by the Japanese imperial troupe, who performed almost exclusively Western music in the Piazza Grande (now Piazza dell’Unità d’Italia). On September 11, 1907, a delegation of the crews and the commander of the naval squadron went to Vienna to be received by Kaiser Franz Josef.

Although Georg von Hütterott lived in Trieste until his death in 1910, what remains of the Japanese collection he put together is today preserved in the Museum of the City of Rovinj, in Istria, where he had begun to build a splendid estate on the island of Sant’Andrea in 1890, and where his widow and her youngest daughter Barbara moved in 1927. This may explain why Trieste retains little memory of him, despite his great importance for the economic and industrial history of the city. In fact, it should not be forgotten that, at the end of the 19th century, along with Adolf Wunsch and Vittorio Serravallo, he was among the main promoters of the *Società Austriaca di Pesca e Piscicoltura Marina* (Austrian Society of Marine Fishing and Fish Farming), which was responsible for the establishment of a Fishing Museum which was the embryo of the current Maritime Museum.⁶¹

60 Zanlorenzi 2010, 424.

61 Zanlorenzi 2007, 359.

The objects preserved in Rovinj represent only a part of the Georg von Hütterott collection.⁶² In particular, nothing remains of the Japanese weapons section, with the exception of three bows and nineteen spears currently on display in the Civic Museum of Oriental Art in Trieste. These were donated by his widow to the Revoltella Museum in 1934 and were delivered to the Civic Museum of History and Art of Trieste in 1962, passing to the Civic Museum of Oriental Art in 2001.⁶³

More information has recently come to light about the background to another important collection, thanks to the discovery of a newspaper article concerning the voyage round the world in 1895–1896 of Baron Rosario Currò jr (1851–1929),⁶⁴ a rich philanthropist and Trieste-born collector of Sicilian origin. Currò made important bequests to the Revoltella Museum and the Museums of History and Art: terracottas, Greek vases, Etruscan bronzes, Roman glass, coins and medals, historical chests, furniture, caskets, majolica, porcelain, clocks, bas-reliefs, miniatures, weapons, twenty-five painted tables and canvases, and objects from the Far East. Japanese, Indian and a few Chinese objects appear both in his legacy and in some previous donations to the Trieste civic museums (fig. 5). His trip around the world followed the route of Franz Ferdinand from a few years earlier, with a stop in Japan. The departure is jokingly described as follows:

Yesterday, in the afternoon, Messrs. Dr. Vittorio Serravallo and Francesco Pohlutka, i.r. Lieutenantcy Advisor embarked on the Lloyd's steamship 'Gisella' to take a short trip ... which will last eight months. Those two gentlemen intend to visit India, China and Japan, then returning to Trieste via America. Baron Rosario Currò boarded with them and wanted to accompany them for a short walk ... all the way to India.⁶⁵

We know that Currò did in fact travel on with his two companions; in May 1896 the three landed in Honolulu and subsequently in San Francisco.⁶⁶ Vittorio Serravallo (1858–1929) is an interesting character: a pharmacist and trader in goods imported from European colonies (such as coffee, tea, spices, sugar, cocoa and chocolate). He was also the inventor of a new recipe for Ferrochina, a popular restorative tonic, which he called *Vino di China ferruginoso Serravallo* (Serravallo ferruginous cinchona wine, prepared from cinchona bark from Borneo, Java and Sumatra, mixed with white wine from Alcamo in Sicily). After opening a production plant in 1895, he created copious advertising material to promote his product in every imaginable language, and used his contacts from the trip around the world to establish a vast worldwide sales network.⁶⁷ The plant was active until 1988.

Early in the twentieth century, another doctor followed in the footsteps of the doctor and paleo-ethnologist Marchesetti. Francesco Isidoro Pepeu (1887–1971) who belonged to an eminent Trieste family of distinguished collectors, graduated in medicine in 1910 and embarked as a ship's doctor on Lloyd's steamships in the Middle East and East Asia. On one of his trips in 1912, he stopped in Shanghai to visit his sister and brother-in-law, a Lloyd's Inspector, like Carlo Zanella. Four Chinese porcelain containers from the 18th century, recently donated by his nephew Giancarlo Pepeu to the Civic Museum of Oriental Art (fig. 6), bear witness to this journey.⁶⁸

Francesco Pepeu was an eclectic character: as well as an esteemed doctor, he was also a traveller, passionate art collector and amateur photographer, as evidenced by numerous donations to the Civic Museums. The assets donated by his nephew include a large photographic corpus, today preserved

62 Marić 2005.

63 Zanlorenzi 2006, 689–91.

64 *Il Piccolo del Mattino* 1895, 3.

65 Ibid.

66 *Honolulu Pacific Commercial Advertiser* 1896, 1; *The Hawaiian Gazette* 1896, 8; *The San Francisco Call* 1896, 7.

67 Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage n.d.; J. Serravallo (1913), which is a collection of advertisements and reviews of the *Ferrochina Serravallo*, in multiple languages.

68 Messina 2019, 140 cat. NE 3, NE 4; 142 cat. NE 6; 147 cat. NE 13.



Fig. 5: Kyoto, Kinkōzan workshop, Awata-style Satsuma ware. Small baluster vase, last quarter of 19th-early 20th century, Earthenware, overglaze old and polychrome Enamels, height 15 cm, diameter 11 cm. Bequest of Rosario Currò, 24 June 1929. Trieste, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. CMSA 30011.



Fig. 6: China, Small "apple green" vase, Qing dynasty, late Qianlong period (1736–1795) or later. Porcelain, "apple green" copper oxide crackle Glaze, height 13,3 cm, diameter 10,8 cm, donated by Pepeu family, 29 September 2016. Trieste, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. CMSA 41148.

in the Photo Library, which also includes albums of travel photographs, the purpose of which was to fix and preserve the memory of the places visited in the Far East, India and Africa. Unfortunately, his youthful trip to China is not documented, but his 1925 trip to India, again as a ship's doctor, is immortalised in a series of photographs recording his journey from Delhi to Jaipur. These testify to his ethno-anthropological interest, focusing on people's daily lives rather than on the stops of the Grand Tour, thus documenting the living conditions in India in the 1920s.⁶⁹

In the wake of the establishment of diplomatic-economic relations with European states, the Japanese government hired selected outsiders, known as "*o-yatoi gaikokujin*" (お雇い外国人), to take part in the great Meiji restoration by spending a few years in Japan to work on improving the quality and competitiveness of their sector of expertise in the newly formed Japanese economic system. Amerigo Hofmann (1875–1945),⁷⁰ for instance, who graduated as a forestry engineer from the *Hochschule für Bodenkultur* (High School for Soil Culture) in Vienna and is remembered as the pioneer of Italian forestry, was invited to Japan in his thirties in 1904 as Professor of Forestry Hydraulics at the University of Tokyo. He remained there until 1909, putting what he was teaching into practice by successfully landscaping badlands in a catchment basin not far from the city of Nagoya. Today the site is jealously preserved, with Hofmann's systematising work enclosed and held up as an example in the Hofmann Work Memorial Park in Nagoya.⁷¹ During his stay in Japan the government also tasked Hofmann with various missions to Korea and Taiwan, then Japanese dependencies, including the conduct of a census of *Laurus camphora* (camphor) plants in Taiwan. In 1913, he published *Aus den Waldungen des Fernen Ostens* (*In the Woods of the Far East*).⁷² He donated a cabinet containing a collection of 579 nocturnal and

diurnal Japanese butterflies to the Natural History Museum of Trieste (inv. L/L1 -L12).

At the other end of the spectrum, Trieste collections are indebted to the response of turn-of-the-century visual artists to the Far East. Many felt—as Gauguin did—the call of distant lands. The painter Amalia Goldmann Besso (1856–1932) was one of these. During the world tour which she made in the company of her nephew, the journalist Salvatore Besso (1884–1912), she stopped in Japan in August 1910 and stayed till early 1911, after crossing Russia and China on the Trans-Siberian Railway.⁷³

During her stay in Tokyo, Goldmann Besso decided to take painting lessons from the master Hama, with whom she remained in contact by letter, and whose tuition informed her "Impressions", small-format and quickly executed tablets, with views of villages crossed with luminous brushstrokes, today preserved at the Marco Besso Foundation in Rome. The Trieste museums do not possess such works by Amalia Goldmann Besso, but on 8 September 1926, she donated the first three Japanese prints to the collections (inv. CMSA SNR 1570, CMSA SNR 1571, CMSA SNR 1572, notably "Yokkaichi, Miegawa 四日市三重川" (Yokkaichi: Mie River) by Utagawa Hiroshige 歌川 広重 (ca. 1833–1834), which is part of the series "Tōkaidō gojusan tsugi no uchi 東海道五十三次" (The Series of the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō) (fig. 7). Until then, the Trieste museum's Japanese print collection had been slow to take shape. We hear only of the purchase of two *ehon* by Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾 北斎 (1760–1849) in 1881, including volume III of "Fugaku hyakkei 富嶽百景三編" (One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji), and of the receipt of prints from the painter Argio Orell, the greatest Trieste exponent of Japonism and a collector of Japanese woodcuts, as part of an exchange in the following year.⁷⁴

The painter Vittorio Bolaffio (1883–1931) left Paris for Trieste in early 1912, having decided to embark as a stoker on the Lloyd Triestino ships. Bolaffio was a pupil of Giovanni Fattori and

69 Colecchia 2020.

70 Gabbrielli 2005, 133–34.

71 Ibid., 134.

72 Hofmann 2013.

73 Spagnoletto 2020.

74 Zanlorenzi 2009.



Fig. 7: Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858), “Yokkaichi: Mie River” (Yokkaichi Miegawa 四日市 三重川), from “The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road” (Tōkaidō gojūsan tsugi no uchi 東海道五十三次之内), ca. 1833–1834, Color woodblock print (nishikie), 220 x 345 mm (ōban), donated by Amalia Goldmann Besso, 8 September 1926. Trieste, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. CMSA SNR1571.

a friend of Amedeo Modigliani who, in Paris in 1910, had introduced him to the works of Matisse, Cézanne and Gauguin. From his first voyage, with stops in India, Java, Singapore and Japan, he brought back lively sketches of local life and port scenes, as well as some paintings set in Singapore. The only one of these works preserved in Trieste is “La Cinesina” (Chinese Girl), formerly in the Malabotta collection and today owned by the Revoltella Museum.⁷⁵ The trip to the Far East was decisive for the luminous rendering of Bolaffio’s works: the piercing light of midday or the polarised light of sunsets over the sea would never abandon him again.

By “the Far East” travellers understood far more than simply China, India or Japan. Gioachino De

Grassi (1838–1904)⁷⁶ who arrived in Siam (now Thailand) from Koper in 1870, founded a construction company which quickly earned the esteem of the royal family, and became Siam’s most prolific architect of that era for twenty years. He had a Siamese-style family tomb built for his brother Antonio in the cemetery of Koper. In 1883, he was joined by Giulio Stoelker (1856–1914), designer-builder from Trieste, and brother of Amalia Stoelker, Gioachino’s future wife. Both stayed in Siam until 1893, planning the country’s first railway, across the Malay peninsula to Singapore. Giulio Stoelker’s great-grandson, Giulio Schizzi, has generously donated family photographs and documents to the Photo Library of the Civic Museums of History and Art of Trieste.

⁷⁵ Gregorat 2017, 58–61.

⁷⁶ Nalesini 1998.



Fig. 8: Japan, Satsuma ware, tea or coffee set, end of 19th century. Porcelain, overglaze gold and polychrome Enamels, donated by Sergio and Anna degli Ivanissevich, 18 September 2013. Trieste, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. CMSA 40309/a-b, 40310/a-b, 40311, 40312/a-f, 40313/a-f.

One did not, however, have to be an archduke, nobleman, doctor or commander to travel on Lloyd's ships to the Far East and return with objects of an exotic flavour.

At the turn of the 20th century, nearly every Triestine who was at sea, from ship's cooks to Lloyd's engine drivers, purchased souvenirs of the Far East—especially tea or coffee sets—for their family, to the point where they are to be found in almost every house in Trieste (fig. 8). Lovingly preserved by descendants as precious memories, in some cases these objects were donated by enlightened heirs to the Civic Museum of Oriental Art, following its inauguration in 2001. If their artistic value is often relative, their historical and anthropological interest is very high: these are mass-produced porcelains, created for export and therefore designed to satisfy the image that the West had of the East: applied art artefacts in which Japanese artisans, in a dizzying game of mirrors, offered their

clients their personal representation of exoticism.

Speaking of “games of mirrors”, let us conclude by recalling an engraving which shows the flip side of this analysis: not only did Japan become known in Trieste, but Trieste was also of consequence in Japan. In the 6th volume of *Yochi shiryaku* (*Outlines of World Geography or Short Description of the World*) by Uchida Masao 内田 正雄 (1839–1876), published in Tokyo in 1871—the most used geography text in the early Meiji era, which was strongly influential in the opening of the Japanese to the world—we find a view of Trieste,⁷⁷ among the eight views dedicated to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The only cities represented are Vienna, Trieste and Budapest, because at the time Trieste—now a medium-size city—was actually the fourth city of the empire, after Vienna, Budapest and Prague.

Thanks to its status as a Free Port within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, 18th- and

⁷⁷ Ildikó Farkas 2020, 49.

19th-century Trieste was characterised as the privileged location for connections with Asia. While the first attempts to establish colonial-style trade in the nineteenth century were not commercially successful—although they allowed the arrival of Chinese objects into the city which sparked the curiosity of the wealthier citizens—the foundation of a powerful shipping company such as Austrian Lloyd and the opening of the Suez Canal made a decisive difference: Trieste became the privileged port of call of the Empire for goods and people from the Far East, in particular India, China and Japan. The Civic Museum of Oriental Art is the mirror of this reality: far from being an “exotic” entity in the cultural ground of Trieste or the result of the collecting passion of a particularly keen, culturally up-to-date or economically advantaged individual, it is the concrete reflection of the particular geographical, political and economic situation enjoyed by the city.

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The Influence of World's Fairs on the Formation of Japanese and Chinese Collections in Bohemia and Moravia in the Late 19th Century

Filip Suchomel

Introduction¹

The World's Fairs were an important milestone in the development of industry and society as a whole, as they inspired many industries and crafts around the world to develop rapidly. This was also the case in Bohemia and Moravia, in the lands of the Czech Crown, part of the Habsburg Monarchy. The exhibitions also prompted the creation of the first industrial museums aimed at improving the standards of art and design education with regard to their applicability in industry. The first institution of this type, the South Kensington Museum, founded in 1852, served as an example of good practice, presenting not only historical objects but also contemporary innovative products. The development of these activities and the search for new and unusual approaches stimulated an increased interest in distant regions, particularly East and Southeast Asia. India, China and Japan and the products they presented received unprecedented attention at world's fairs from the beginning. Visitors to these exhibitions from Central Europe also noticed other innovative approaches in the production and decoration of handicrafts and works of art from East Asia, further deepening their interest in gaining a better understanding of

these distant lands. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 shortened travel times to remote areas of Asia, creating new opportunities for exploration.

Travel was in vogue, and journeys to distant China and Japan, formerly within the reach of none but the wealthiest noble families, were becoming more accessible, thanks to the introduction of direct shipping connections by the Austrian Lloyd Company. Indeed, Lloyd demonstrated its success by erecting a stand-alone pavilion at the World's Fair in Vienna with a sailing-ship mast on the roof, which was certainly impossible to overlook. Closely linked to this period was the development of the Austro-Hungarian navy, which had the ambition to regularly "show its flag" in all the world's major ports, including those in East Asia. Members of the navy played a very important role in the promotion of foreign cultures, bringing back from their voyages not only various souvenirs but also important works of art, which later became part of the emerging collections of many new museums. It is surprising how many such collections were created in Bohemia and Moravia, even though this part of Cisleithania had no direct access to the sea.

The aim of this paper is to present the specific responses to the First World's Fair in Bohemia and Moravia, and to show how they helped to establish the first museum institutions there and what role objects of non-European origin played in these activities. We will also focus on the specific role of the newly emerging museums in mediating the

1 The present research was supported by the Czech Science Foundation Project: Circulation of knowledge as a basis for multiculturalism and its role in a transformation of the Czech art Industry in the 1850s–1920s. Project No. 23-05248S.

knowledge of distant cultures in Czech territory at the end of the 19th century.

Vojta Náprstek and His Circle: Establishment of the First Public Asian Collection in the Czech Lands

Even in the case of the Czech lands, the World's Fairs played a significant role in introducing the culture of distant countries. The first exhibitions, at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851 and the Palais d'Industrie in Paris four years later, did not yet have a direct impact on the development of Central Europe. However, the knowledge they made available led to significant innovations in the products of many Czech and Moravian traditional producers.² However, the International Exhibition of 1862 in London certainly played a pivotal role in the thirst for new knowledge in the Czech environment. It was his visit to London and the International Exhibition there that greatly influenced the Czech ethnographer and patriot Vojta Náprstek (1826–1894) and strengthened his interest in creating an institution similar to the Kensington Museum in Prague. After his return, he therefore organised the Industrial Exhibition on Střelecký Island in Prague at the end of the same year, where he and his companions, especially Antonín Frič (1832–1913), exhibited some of the innovative objects he had collected during his previous trip. The exhibition was a great success, attracting 9,992 visitors.³

The exhibition on the Střelecký Island mainly presented objects brought by Vojta Náprstek directly from London. In the photographs preserved in the Náprstek Museum, we can identify, for example, a Chinese inlaid table with an architectural motif and a group of figures, porcelain vessels and

vases probably of Chinese (Japanese) origin, a Chinese lantern, a fan or framed woodblocks of Japanese beauties.⁴ Even after the end of the exhibition, Náprstek kept up his educational activities, with a view to introducing various industrial innovations to a wide audience. In May 1863, he even held a special lecture on Japan on Střelecký Island, which he illustrated with real examples of Japanese arts and crafts production.⁵ The success of the lecture was reported by *Národní listy*, the most important Czech periodical, whose editor described the atmosphere in the hall as follows:

Then he [Náprstek] showed various objects – brought from Japan and donated to the Czech Industrial Museum, such as: metal mirrors, various kinds of money, pipes from which even the ladies smoke, very fine tobacco, which was immediately stuffed and smoked around the hall for the purpose of demonstrative teaching, to the general amusement of the audience.

And he continues:

The beautiful porcelain vessels, the tea in a solid cube, the exquisite yet cheap cloth for the dresses, the artful embroidery on the frames, the flowers of Japan, lent by the kindness of Mr. Fiala,⁶ the gardener, attracted universal attention ... While Mr. Náprstek and his numerous assistants were presenting the articles, many visitors were still looking at the stereoscopes and at pictures of Japan and China, exhibited and displayed under the great gallery; these were from the collection of the scholar Siebold...⁷

2 Czech manufacturers had been successfully presenting themselves at world's fairs since the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, where, for example, 14 Czech companies participated in the glass sector alone. Knowledge gained from other exhibitors was soon integrated into their own production. See Mergl (2012, 149).

3 Kodym 1955, 58.

4 See inscription on the Náprstek museum photo coll. No. 176.114.

5 *Národní listy* 1863.

6 This is very likely to be Josef Fiala (1817–1884) or his brother Eduard Fiala the Elder (dates unknown), both artistic gardeners active in Prague in the 3rd quarter of the 19th century.

7 *Národní listy* 1863.



Fig. 1: Unknown photographer. Industrial Exhibition on Střelecký Island in Prague in 1862. Stereoscopic card, albumen print, 1862. Private collection.

Náprstek did not hesitate to enliven the lecture with the use of older pictorial material, which came from the works of the German traveller and physician Philip Franz Siebold (1796–1866), who resided as a doctor of the Factory on the Dejima Island in Nagasaki in the 1820s.⁸

The success of the first exhibition convinced Náprstek and his friends to organise a second Industrial Exhibition in the same place a year later, where, in addition to technical achievements such as sewing machines or refrigerators, they also displayed a number of exhibits representing the production of distant countries, including East Asia, which he had acquired through his educational activities, especially from among his compatriots.

As can be seen in the photo, this exhibition included examples of Japanese lacquer work and East Asian porcelain. The exhibition catalogue contains a list of 4,019 items, including several from areas outside Europe.⁹ The Chinese and Japanese products exhibited were not only from the collection of Vojta Náprstek, but were also supplied by other contributors and donors—František Mráček

(1828–1896), Otakar Breuer (1835–1893) or František Všecká (1819–1903). Mentioned here are, for example, a Japanese umbrella; a Chinese table inlaid with mother-of-pearl, a Chinese salon chandelier, Chinese trays, a Chinese box, a junk cage, Chinese vases, a lamp, porcelain plates, cups, a white and black pagoda, Chinese clay figures, Chinese ivory vases, Chinese fans, Chinese soap, baskets and others. A large collection of 60 mostly Chinese (but according to the photographs also Japanese) objects including baskets, fans, porcelain dishes, lacquerware, etc. was presented at the exhibition by V. J. Löschner (?–?), a court merchant in decorative goods and lamps whose shop was located in the U Sixtů House on Prague's Old Town Square.¹⁰

The exhibits from these two exhibitions became the basis for the establishment of the Industrial Museum, now the Náprstek Museum in Prague. The first steps towards its foundation were taken as early as 1862, but the whole process of establishing the museum took a long time. Its originally industrial character also changed later on, when Náprstek increasingly turned his attention to objects from non-European countries,

8 Siebold 1832–1852.

9 Katalog 1863.

10 Woitschová 2018, 54



Fig. 2: Unknown photographer. The Second Industrial and School Exhibition on Střelecký Island in Prague in 1863. Albumen print, 1862. Private collection.

including East Asia. Although Náprstek and his friends sought to officially establish the museum as early as 1863, they did not receive permission from Vienna, and so their activities focused mainly on collecting objects.¹¹ Initially, it was contacts with Czech compatriots abroad that helped build the collection. Among the first exhibits recorded in the museum's inventories were also Japanese and Chinese goods, often examples of arts and crafts or ethnographic material. One of the important donors in this area, for example, was František Mráček, a native of Central Moravia who visited far eastern Siberia and the Amur

region around 1860, on which occasion, it seems, he also went to Japan, probably visiting Hakodate. He handed over the objects from this trip to Náprstek in 1863, thus laying the foundations of the Japanese collection.¹² Of the goods he collected, we can mention, for example, the Nagasaki medicine box decorated with lacquer and mother-of-pearl, which has survived to the present day (see fig. 3). Other Japanese goods soon followed. These included not only Japanese woodblock

¹¹ Ibid., 38.

¹² The collection of František Mráček was exhibited in Olomouc in April 1863. It was probably one of the first specialised exhibitions of Japanese and Chinese objects in Moravia. See Hánová (2008, 178).



Fig. 3: Case for porcelain medicine flasks. Wood covered in natural lacquer decorated in *aogai*, *hiramakie*, *takamakie* and *nashiji* techniques. Japan 1850s. Donated by František Mráček in 1863. Courtesy of the Náprstek Museum in Prague.

prints—mostly of the period—but also examples of lacquer-decorated objects, fans, porcelain and contemporary ethnographical material.

Since the official establishment of the museum was still pending, Náprstek supported the education of the museum curator Alois Studnička (1842–1927), whom he sent in 1865 to study the exhibition strategies of British museums. Two years later he also sent him to the World's Fair in Paris.¹³ The museum did not at first have a permanent seat, and it was not until 1872 that Náprstek managed to exhibit the objects collected so far in the premises of the family brewery in Prague on

the Betlémské Square. It is known that Náprstek also visited the World's Fair in Vienna in September 1873, but unfortunately we do not know if he was impressed by it, although Klára Wotschová mentions that he was shopping there.¹⁴ Only a year later, on 16 May 1874, Náprstek finally managed to expand the temporary premises of the museum and open them to the public for the first time on special days. The exhibitions were divided according to the geographical areas of origin of the objects into three units called America, Africa, and China and Japan.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., 44.

¹⁵ Ibid., 46.

¹³ Woitschová 2018, 42.

Náprstek was a proponent of innovation and novelty and his aim was primarily to enlighten Czech thinking in the social, economic and political sense. That is why, in 1865, he was one of the founders of the American Ladies' Club,¹⁶ one of the first Czech associations ever, through which he created a platform for the promotion of emancipation, including the mediation of information from abroad, including from the Far East. Náprstek's fascination with East Asian cultures deepened over the years, and his collections of objects of Japanese and Chinese provenance grew rapidly, thanks also to the travellers whom Náprstek personally supported and whose activities he regularly followed and promoted. In the premises of his house U Halánků in Prague's Old Town, representatives of the young Czech intelligentsia, such as František Ladislav Rieger (1818–1903), František Palacký (1798–1876), Jan Evangelista Purkyně (1787–1869) and Karolína Světlá (1830–1899), met, while the first Czech travellers Emil Holub (1847–1902), Enrique Stanko Vráz (1860–1932), Otokar Feistmantel (1848–1891), Pavel Durdík (1843–1903), Václav Stejskal (1851–1934) and Josef Kořenský (1847–1938) often joined the company. It is thanks to their activities that the museum's collections grew, although compromise was sometimes unavoidable. In the 1880s, Náprstek was finally able to build a special museum building to display all the exhibits that had been collected up to that point, and in 1891, after all the collections had been moved in, the Náprstek Industrial Museum was opened to the public.¹⁷ Thanks to the foresight of Náprstek, who set up a foundation to finance the museum, to which he contributed part of his fortune, the museum was able to continue its activities after his death in 1894 and expand its collections. His wife, Josefa Náprstková (1838–1907), also contributed significantly. She took over the management of the museum and library after her husband's death, and had the museum building rebuilt and enlarged and its surroundings landscaped.

A very important group among the people interested in Japanese and Chinese art who belonged to Vojta Náprstek's circle of friends consisted of artists, who had usually first encountered Japanese and Chinese products during their stays in western metropolises, mostly in Paris. They met regularly and often in Náprstek's museum and in this way, a society with a deep interest in foreign art, including that of Japan and China, was naturally created.¹⁸ Zdenka Braunerová (1858–1934), who lived in Paris, stands out among the Japanophile artists, as does her friend, Julius Zeyer (1841–1901), a representative of poetic japonisme in Czech literature, who also surrounded himself with dozens of Japanese and Chinese artworks. Braunerová was influenced by her visit to the World's Fairs in Paris in 1878 and 1889.¹⁹ From her letter to Mrs. Náprstková written in February 1891 we learn that she regularly visited the store of Samuel Bing.²⁰ "I finally went to Bing's a few days ago. He is known to have the most beautiful art, even though it is very expensive. I was there once with Mr. Zeyer and we admired the whole two-storey building crammed from top to bottom with Japanese objects."²¹ Braunerová's love for Japanese art was born after her visit to the World's Fair in Paris in 1878, when she was able to admire the successful Japanese presentation, and her interest in Japanese painting and woodblock prints continued later on.²² From the above note in Braunerová's letter, however, we can deduce that for middle-class Czech collectors, Japanese products offered in specialised stores were often too expensive, so that they probably had to settle for a cheaper alternative.

18 Let us mention at least the painters Antonín Chittussi (1847–1891) and Zdenka Braunerová, who were regular guests at Náprstek's house since 1880s.

19 Šášinková 2013, 13.

20 Bing's first store, called *L'Art japonais*, at 19 rue Chauchat, Paris, opened in 1884 and closed in 1894, being replaced by *Maison de l' Art Nouveau* in December 1895, in the same location but with entry from 22 rue de Provence. It is therefore clear that Braunerová visited the *L'Art japonais* store. See Hánová (2008, 129).

21 See Hánová (2008, 12).

22 Šášinková 2013, 13.

16 Secká 2012.

17 Woitschová 2018, 48.

World's Fair in Vienna and Reflection of Asian Presentations in Bohemia and Moravia

The circle of Vojta Náprstek's friends was undoubtedly one of the main sources of information about distant lands and their cultures, but during the last third of the 19th century, information about the East also filtered through by other means. The most important of these is undoubtedly the World's Fair in Vienna in 1873, the resonance of which reverberated throughout Austria-Hungary, including the Czech lands. Let me quote an article published on 9 June 1873 in *Národní listy*, one of the most important Czech daily newspapers at the time.

Not only Europe is represented here, but also America and Australia ... more important is the representation of Asia and Africa, or those countries, partly European, which we include under the name of 'Orient' or East. ... But what is particularly outstanding is what has been sent from Japan and China; Japan in particular has taken pains to be represented as fully and worthily as possible. To this end the Emperor of Japan arranged for a special preliminary exhibition in his capital, 'Jeddah' last year. This, then, or an abundant selection of it, is to be found in Vienna, brought by sea by a journey of several thousand miles ...²³

With these words, in a column devoted to the World's Fair in Vienna in June 1873, a newspaper correspondent recorded his impression of the representation of China, and especially Japan, in lavishly conceived national presentations, which were unprecedented in Europe up to that time.

It would seem, therefore, that a month after the official opening of the exhibition, this part of the Fair became one of the highlights of the whole exhibition enterprise, known not only in the capital of the monarchy but also in provincial Prague. The successful attractive presentation of novelties and

world conveniences made up for the somewhat constrained impression of the first opening day, 1 May 1873, whose ceremony took place in a somewhat complicated atmosphere. The day before, the city had been paralysed by a strike of fiacres and the metropolis thrown into traffic chaos.²⁴ Moreover, although the magnificent exhibition grounds were completed on time, many of the exhibits failed to be finally installed by 1 May, remaining packed in crates as the goods were delivered late. Thus, a First of May feature from the same periodical mentions that "... even the one hundredth (100th) piece is not finished inside to this day and that ... what is finished so far is not worth an eye roll"²⁵ This fortunately did not apply to the Japanese exhibits, which were set up on time despite some difficulties.

Moreover, just a few days after the opening of the exhibition, Austria-Hungary had to deal with another cruel problem, namely, the crash of the Vienna Stock Exchange on 9 May 1873. The bubble of false expansion, insolvencies and strange manipulations could no longer be sustained, and this distressing situation caused the collapse of several Viennese banks, causing a shortage of money on the financial markets. Although the beginning of the spectacular event was somewhat embarrassing, the situation soon changed, because the exhibition, after its final completion, offered visitors a truly extraordinary experience, among which we can undoubtedly include the Chinese and especially the Japanese section. These national presentations became very popular among visitors, thanks to the successful attractive exhibition concept. Soon, therefore, the abashed impressions from the first days of the exhibition were completely obliterated by new information about a unique exhibition experience, which had so far been unprecedented in the Habsburg Monarchy.²⁶

The Czech media space was soon flooded with a number of new articles about these distant lands, their history, culture, and art. It was Japan that attracted the most attention with its spectacular

23 *Národní listy* 1873a.

24 *Národní listy* 1873b.

25 Ibid.

26 *Národní listy* 1873a.

presentation. In *Národní listy*, the prominent Czech writer Jan Neruda (1834–1891)²⁷ published a collection of six feuilletons titled simply “From Japan”,²⁸ in which he reported extensively on Japanese history, customs and culture, and described in detail even parts of the Japanese exhibition itself. It is thanks to Neruda that we can better understand how the Central Europeans were impressed not only by the presentation of Japanese realities that were completely unknown to them until then, including unique examples of traditional buildings giving the impression of a Japanese city, and by the characteristic Japanese garden, which was one of the most admired parts of the exterior exhibition, but also by their first meeting with the Japanese craftsmen who built and prepared the exhibition project in Vienna.

The exhibition section dedicated to traditional merchants’ buildings was also used for the actual sale of souvenirs of Japanese origin, which were among the most important items sold at the World’s Fair. It was in this way that the first items from the exhibition found their way into Czech and Moravian collections. Neruda, in the aforementioned set of articles, notes that in these spaces intended for the sale of souvenirs,

the exhibition visitors are now a teeming crowd. They are buying Japanese relics, porcelain plates and buttons, bronze jugs of strange forms, or at least an oval fan with a bamboo hoop and woven with bast fibre ... They have had to wait quite a long time. The merchant had already opened once, but our committee came and closed it again. He hadn’t paid the duty, and the poor man didn’t even know what the duty was²⁹

27 Neruda was a prominent writer, pioneer of Czech critical realism, publicist, prose writer and poet. The most extensive part of his work is connected with journalistic activities; he wrote more than 2,000 columns, including travel notes from abroad.

28 Neruda 1873a; Neruda 1873b; Neruda 1873c; Neruda 1873d; Neruda 1873e; Neruda 1873f.

29 Neruda 1873c.

The famous bazaar, at which original Japanese items could be purchased at affordable prices, was located within the Japanese national presentation in the exterior part of the complex. This particular venue played an important part in promoting knowledge of Japanese culture, as the goods on offer allowed visitors to own a piece of the “real Japan”, thus spreading awareness of unique products, including the more common mass-produced ones, to a wide range of buyers. It was here that items which would later become part of newly built art collections were purchased.

Establishment of Museums and Acquisition of Objects from the Vienna World’s Fair in the Czech Lands

It is quite obvious that their visit to the World’s Fair triggered the need for important industrialists from Brno and Liberec to create an institution that would help spread innovative ideas in their region as well. It is therefore no coincidence that the first steps towards establishing museum institutions in both cities were taken just a few days after the opening of the event in Vienna. From the outset, the strategy of both institutions was to document good practice not only in European craftsmanship but also in works from distant countries, including China and Japan. In terms of Japanese craft, for example, purchases from the bazaar mentioned above were undoubtedly significant among the initial acquisitions, since they did not ruin the buyers financially and, on the contrary, allowed interesting non-traditional production methods to be shown.³⁰

Although these exhibits were still few in number in the first and second years after these two museums were founded, it appears that the presentation of the East Asian countries at the Fair had an important influence on the direction of their collecting activities. It is undoubtedly worth noting the fact that the members of the museum

30 Suchomel and Palata 2000, 99–109; Suchomel 2024.



Fig. 4: Wan rice bowl with a lid. Wood covered in natural lacquer decorated in makie techniques. Japan 1850–1870. Courtesy of the North Bohemian Museum in Liberec.

curatorial staff who were involved in the selection of objects for the newly established institutions at the World's Fair focused in great detail on objects of non-European provenance, especially, of course, from Japan and, to some extent, from China and India. For example, according to contemporary records, in 1873 the collections of the Liberec Museum reportedly included, in addition to a large number of objects of European

provenance, at least 17 Japanese objects, the same number of Chinese objects and 3 Indian exhibits.³¹ However, in reality, even the items classified as Chinese in the records were actually of Japanese

31 See Purchases by the Board of Directors of the North Bohemian Industrial Museum in Liberec at the World Exhibition in Vienna 1873 /for oriental collections/Inv. no. KŠ 26 – 39, Š 180, 454, D 965, Š 383–385, Š 388, Š 390, Š 432–434, KC 988, D 913, D 915, D 918, D 920–D924, D 912, D 919, D 967.



| Fig. 5: Baskets. Bamboo splits. Japan and China, early 1870s. Courtesy of the North Bohemian Museum in Liberec.



Fig. 6: Slim two-level vase. Stoneware. Japan, Kyoto, third quarter of the 19th century. Courtesy of the North Bohemian Museum in Liberec.

provenance. Although these were not exceptional or unique works, but rather small examples of craft production, their inclusion in the newly formed collections was still of great importance for their direction in the following years. In the case of

Liberec, the inventory included eight examples of small lacquer works, among which, for example, were a wan-type bowl with a lid decorated with *makie* techniques, (see fig. 4) several bowls, mostly of the *kōgo* type, and smaller trays and saucers, most of them again decorated with the *makie* technique. Japanese hair pins were also part of this set, and an object of particular importance was a *tsubo* jar with a lid made of tin for storing tea, which was donated to the museum directly by the Japanese exhibition committee.³² The first purchase included a Japanese bronze washbasin with silver inlay, and a case embellished with bright-coloured paper.³³

The products classified as Chinese but in reality, mostly Japanese, were mainly examples of smaller handicrafts made of bamboo or straw in the form of various boxes, bowls and baskets (see fig. 5). The collection of Asian art in Liberec grew rapidly in the following years and was one of the most interesting in Bohemia at the time. In terms of the Japanese collections alone, the museum acquired over 200 exhibits during its first 30 years of existence.³⁴ This became the core of the Asian collection, representing a very comprehensive collection of examples of contemporary material in particular, which was however also supplemented with the acquisition of older wares. The curators of the museums purchased the wares at western markets, most commonly by shopping from Samuel Bing in Paris, Holme and Co. in London or C. Smitz and Co. in Berlin. Among all the interesting acquisitions, we should point out at least a few, for example a deep bowl which was bought in London in 1884, decorated with enamel glaze with chrysanthemum patterns in the Kutani style, a four-sided vase or a lotus flower-shaped vase, all purchased from Samuel Bing in Paris a year earlier (see fig. 6).³⁵

³² Suchomel and Palata 2000, 76.

³³ Ibid., 101.

³⁴ For descriptions of Japanese objects in the North Bohemian Museum in Liberec, see Suchomel and Palata (2000, 119–40).

³⁵ Suchomel and Palata 2000.

Many exhibits were loaned to the collections by Heinrich Liebieg (1839–1904), an important local businessman who played a significant role in the foundation of the museum. Liebieg was also a significant collector of arts and crafts from all over the world, who left his entire collection to the museum in 1904. As early as 1882, the collection was enriched by the addition of Japanese cloisonné of Nagoya production, including examples of more modern Japanese ware produced by the Ozeki manufactory (fig. 7). Bronze wares and other metal work were also seminal to the collection-creating process. The museum obtained examples of work by Kōmai, a Kyoto company, and a number of bronzes, mostly from the collection of Heinrich Liebieg himself, who also bought these works in Paris. Since Liberec was the centre of the textile and fashion jewellery industries, it is understandable that fabric samples and swatches and various small items of jewellery such as hair accessories were also among the wares obtained, as they could give new impulses for innovation to local companies. A collection of sword guards, most of which were also collected before the end of the 19th century, might have also served as an inspiration.³⁶

In addition to the creation of its own collection, the North Bohemian Museum has made the staging of special exhibitions, including presentations of East Asian arts and crafts, central to its activities from the beginning. As early as 1883, for example, the museum presented a collection of Oriental arts and crafts on loan from the Oriental Museum in Vienna, which was headed by Heinrich Liebieg's brother-in-law Arthur von Scala (1845–1909). The exhibition featured Japanese porcelain, lacquer work, bamboo baskets, and leather products, among other Asian items, while various silk embroideries, filigree jewellery, metal objects, pewter utensils and ceramics were presented from China. Throughout the period 1884–1886 the Liberec museum organised a series of displays of its partial collection of Japanese (and sometimes Chinese) bronzes, pottery, porcelain, lacquerware, carved ivory sculptures, hair pins, bamboo baskets, pattern

books, weapons and their fittings and paintings on paper and silk. The museum curator at that time, Wilhelm Daniel Vivié (1848–1919), took a great interest in Asia and purposefully expanded the collections with Asian exhibits. He was aware of their potential for the development of the local industry in Liberec and even offered these objects as an inspiration to various interested local entrepreneurs. The objects of greatest interest were Japanese and Chinese bronzes, porcelain and, significantly, various fabrics, given the importance of textile production to the Liberec region. The interest in Japanese textiles is evidenced by the fact that the next major display of Japanese art was the exhibition of Japanese *katagami* stencils opened in Liberec in 1893 by Gustav Pazaurek (1865–1935) who had taken over as curator of the museum.³⁷

The development of the museum's Asian collections continued into the very early 20th century, but began to decline after World War I. Sadly, in the 1920s, a severe financial crisis forced the museum to say goodbye to some of the exhibits from its collection. The board of trustees attempted to resolve the complex situation by a way of a lottery in which some of the collection items served as prizes. (For example, a Japanese bronze washbasin with non-ferrous metal inlays, also acquired in Vienna in 1873.) Moreover, in 1969, a large part of the collection gathered from 1873 to the end of the 19th century (over 200 exhibits) which had been on long-term loan to the Oriental Collection of the National Gallery in Prague after World War II, with the aim of uniting the most important Asian items under one institution, was destroyed in a fire at the Benešov nad Ploučnicí castle. The objects that survived the fire remained permanently in the National Gallery's collections, including several objects acquired in Vienna.

As at the Liberec museum, representatives of the newly established Brno Industrial Museum also purchased several Asian works at the World's Fair in Vienna; from inventory records, it is possible to identify a total of 8 Japanese and 3 Indian artefacts acquired in Vienna (see figs. 8 and 9), which were

36 Suchomel 2019, 323.

37 Suchomel and Palata 2000, 103.



Fig. 7: Three-legged incense burner with openwork body. Silver decorated with transparent and translucent enamels. Japan ca. 1885. Courtesy of the North Bohemian Museum in Liberec.



Fig. 8: Japanese objects acquired for the Museum of Applied Arts in Brno from the World Exhibition in Vienna in 1873. Courtesy of the Moravian Gallery in Brno.

intended to document the development of crafts in distant destinations and help the further development of craft production in Moravia, as the newly established Gewerbe Museum had as its main goal the promotion of new forms in the art industry.³⁸ Even in this small collection, the largest component consisted of examples of lacquer work, especially small bowls and jars of a similar character to those in the Liberec museum. These objects were complemented by several ceramic vessels, presenting new trends in the decoration of stoneware and porcelain in Japan. Although these Asian products were relatively modest in number, they formed the basis of the Asian collection in the Brno industrial museum, which continued to expand in the following years.

However, objects from the world's fairs were also acquired for the museum's collections from other

sources. Among the important donors of the first Chinese and Japanese objects in Brno, Karl von Offermann (1820–1894), owner of textile factories and court supplier of military uniforms, who regularly participated in world exhibitions in London, Paris and Vienna, as a member of the expert juries, appears repeatedly in the inventory records.³⁹ Offermann undoubtedly qualified as a progressive entrepreneur of the time, as he swiftly recognised the significance of regular exhibition presentations in the context of the further development of industrial production, and therefore actively participated in both Austrian and later Austro-Hungarian exhibition ventures.⁴⁰

³⁹ Suchomel 2024.

⁴⁰ Karl Julius Josef von Offermann (1820–1894) and his brother Theodor (1822–1892) actively participated in the museum's development from the 1870s until their deaths in the 1890s. For further details on the Offermann family's other activities, see Šulová (1994) or Schmidtbauer (1978).

³⁸ Suchomel 2024, 13.



Fig. 9: Japanese baskets acquired for the Museum of Applied Arts in Brno from the Vienna World Fair in 1873. Courtesy of the Moravian Gallery in Brno.

A year after the end of the World's Fair, in 1874 and 1875, Offermann donated to the museum in Brno a total of 32 objects which probably came from his collecting activities at the Vienna Fair itself or at earlier events in which he had actively participated.⁴¹ He was interested in specimens of Chinese fabrics, Chinese shoes, stockings and hats, and leather articles. A traditional Japanese fan or a Chinese parasol were also part of this generous gift. Examples of Japanese basketry, lacquerware, Chinese ceramics and a traditional Chinese pipe formed an important part of his donation. In addition to the Far East, however, the Middle East and Arabia are also represented in this collection. It was the elegance of these art objects that captivated him at the Vienna World's Fair. Such examples were exhibited

in large numbers at the Japanese Bazaar and at the exhibition itself. His brother Theodor was also keen to support the museum's efforts, actively pursuing opportunities to develop and shape the museum's collections, including through the acquisition of new collections.

In the first years of the museum's existence, we also encounter other important donations which most probably originated at the World's Fair in Vienna. Here we should mention the Chinese textile screen⁴² demonstrating characteristic Chinese embroidery and the exhibits donated by the Moravian Association for the Promotion of Handicrafts, which again contained samples of East Asian fabrics or examples of handicrafts from Arabic regions. Some of

⁴¹ See Moravian Gallery in Brno, inv. nos. U581, U824, U826, U827, U831-840, U843-845, U848, U849, U851-854ab, U856-859, U861-863, U1228-U1229.

⁴² See Moravian Gallery in Brno, inv. no. U117 purchased in 1873 from the Vienna exhibition. https://sbirky.moravska-galerie.cz/dilo/CZE:MG.U_117. Accessed December 1, 2024.

these items were also added to the collections later, as evidenced, for example, by the inventory entry for subtle lace from the Syrian region which was purchased at the World's Fair, but not recorded as in the museum's possession until 1876.⁴³

The first ten years of the Brno Museum of Applied Arts were thus marked by the addition to its collections of Japanese and Chinese artefacts not exceeding ca. 106 items—mainly examples of lacquerware, ceramics, bamboo and fine fabrics, which represented an important part of the emerging collection. Although purchases of East Asian objects for the museum's collections were modest, the first major exhibition of non-European objects from the Oriental Museum in Vienna presented at the museum as early as 1877 was a great success. For example, the *Brünner Zeitung* dated 12 April 1877 published the following:

The travelling exhibition of the Oriental Museum in Vienna features braids from Tunis, China, and Japan, Persian calico, fabrics from Tunis, Egypt, Turkey, China, and Japan, uniforms from Turkey and Tunis, Japanese fire-fighting suits (both fireproof and waterproof), embroideries from China and Egypt, Japan and Persia, edgings from Tunis and Japan, and lace from Smyrna. Further specimens include samples of Tunisian and Chinese footwear and collections of lacquerware, porcelain, wood, and bronzes, as well as items made of soapstone from China and Japan; also, a rich collection of paper from China and Japan, and a vast collection of other commercial objects, assembled by His Excellency, Count Edmund Zichy [...].⁴⁴

East Asia ultimately remained of paramount importance to the museum throughout the following years,⁴⁵ as evidenced by the fact that in 1883, only

six years later, it presented the Brno public with yet another demonstration of its non-European collection, albeit this time in a much more comprehensive form. Instead of relying on a travelling exhibition showcasing its metropolitan collections, the museum approached prominent dealers and collectors. In contrast to 1877, this show was supplemented by a detailed catalogue⁴⁶ equipped with itemised descriptions of all exhibits on display. This reveals that a total of 1,071 items were on show for public viewing, which, in many cases, consisted of more than one example, and whose compilation was made possible only by the considerable support given by both public institutions and individuals who were willing to loan their collections for display. The exhibits included textiles, lacquerware, ceramics and porcelain, metalwork, bamboo weave work, objects made of wood, and works of graphic art and painting from the Far East from several private collectors. The show also included 164 items from the museum's own collection. The 1883 Brno exhibition no doubt provided further impetus for the expansion of the museum's non-European art collections; the Japanese collection, for example, grew by almost 120 exhibits between 1883 and 1900.⁴⁷ While donations from art collectors and dealers remained essential, the majority of these new objects were now being purposefully purchased by the museum, giving the impression that the institution's financial situation had stabilised.

But let us return to Vienna in 1873. Visiting the World's Fair was the cultural and social event of the season and it is likely that many visitors took home memories in the form of souvenirs. For example, if we look at some of the collections housed in former noblemen's mansions in Bohemia, we can also find

43 See Moravian Gallery in Brno, inv. no. U1531. https://sbirky.moravska-galerie.cz/dilo/CZE:MG.U_1531. Accessed December 1, 2024.

44 *Brünner Zeitung* 1877.

45 However, items of non-European provenance were also

displayed in smaller configurations at other museum exhibitions, often as gifts or loans from private collectors. Such was the case, for instance, in 1881, when according to an article in the *Mährisch-Schlesischer Correspondent*, the museum exhibited a Japanese "Caffette [...] eine herrliche Arbeit japanesischer Lackindustrie", which had once again been donated to the museum by the dealer A. M. Mandl. Cf. *Mährisch-Schlesischer Correspondent* (1881).

46 Catalog 1883.

47 Suchomel 2024.

objects that come from visits to the Fair, as is evident, for example, in the basketry and papier-mâché works from the Richard Metternich (1829–1895) collection housed at Kynžvart Castle and purchased in 1873.⁴⁸

The Fair, which aroused strong interest throughout the monarchy, probably played a role in the development of the activities of some Czech and Moravian entrepreneurs. Let us remember at least Vilém Staněk (ca.1853–1893) (see fig.10), who soon after 1873 opened his tea and alcoholic beverages shop in Prague, in which, probably thanks to the influence of the exhibition, he supplemented his product range with other trade goods from distant countries, including Japan and China. During his business trips abroad, he became interested in the possibilities of importing East Asian goods to Prague, including Japanese and Chinese handicrafts. He then resold these goods from the late 1870s in a specialised shop in Prague on Vladislavova Street, which he regularly advertised in various Czech magazines.⁴⁹ In the 1880s Staněk held several special sales exhibitions of his Chinese and Japanese items, including bamboo items, embroidery, cotton blankets, Japanese paper and paper products, lacquerware, coloured photographs, Satsuma pottery, cloisonné, netsuke buttons, and embroidered screens, which, as advertised, were goods imported directly from his own branch warehouses in Hong Kong and Yokohama.⁵⁰

However, Staněk's company was not the first business to import Japanese and Chinese goods into the Czech territory. In the South Moravian metropolis of Brno, Japanese and Chinese arts and crafts goods were already available before the establishment of the Museum of Applied Arts in Brno, from at least the early 1860s, when Adolf M. Mandl (1831–?) opened a shop selling spirits, tea and exotic goods.⁵¹ While we cannot pinpoint the exact date on which the shop first began to offer this range of art, it would appear likely to have been around the year 1863, or 1864 at the very latest, as the article

mentioned above draws the reader's attention to the fact that "[...] for over ten years now, the renowned shop of Mr. A. M. Mandl has been offering a large selection of Chinese and Japanese goods".⁵² Mandl was offering a variety of art objects of Japanese and Chinese provenance at his store during the early 1870s, as the correspondent emphatically mentions:

Here one will find beautiful vases of various shapes. Plates, bowls, flowerpots, tea sets, tea bowls, artistically crafted baskets, boxes, jars, glove boxes, various lacquered and natural wood objects, teapots of all shapes and sizes, lamps and lanterns for both interior decoration and practical use. A true speciality to remark upon are the Chinese and Japanese bronzes depicting a wide range of human and animal characters, followed by cloisonné enamel and, finally, figurines of carved ivory. This brief list, which affords but a cursory account of the abundant and exquisite collection of Asian wares which visitors to Mandl's Tea Shop may choose from, is sufficient to attract the attention of the many lovers of trifles and curiosities.⁵³

Mandl, who is later repeatedly referred to as either the donor or the source of the Japanese and Chinese porcelain objects held in the Museum of Applied Arts in Brno, was undoubtedly a significant driving force—in the current sense of the word, an influencer—promoting interest in Asian cultures among the general Brno public. His shop was perhaps one of the first—if not the very first—in this country to spark a widespread interest in Asian products and art pieces. Its success inspired the activities of other Brno merchants in the late 1870s and early 1880s.⁵⁴

Much as in Liberec or Brno, other museum institutions were founded towards the end of the 19th century, which also bought items of Japanese and Chinese art and craft for their fresh collections,

48 Suchomel 2025.

49 Štembera 1996.

50 Hánová 2008, 125. See also *Národní listy* (1889a; 1889b).

51 Suchomel 2024, 7.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.



Fig. 10: Emanuel Staněk. Advertising poster for Vilém Staněk's shop in Prague. Colour lithograph 1888. Private collection.

both those of a historical character and contemporary works. In 1881, the museum in the small Central Bohemian town of Čáslav acquired the collection of Josef Kaunický (1820–1908), originally a local joiner who in 1850–1875 had worked as a master of piano manufacture for Broadwood, a London company.⁵⁵ Kaunický was also influenced by visiting world exhibitions, where he became acquainted with the modern produce and traditional cultures of distant countries such as China and Japan. We know that he personally visited the World's Fairs in London in 1862, Dublin in 1865 and Paris in 1867, where he was able to encounter the products of non-European nations on a large scale.⁵⁶ During his stay abroad he acquired some oriental wares and thereby created a compact collection. However, he also made purchases in Vilém Staněk's shop selling oriental goods and tea in Prague. His collection eventually included contemporary Japanese wares, armour, lacquered and wooden bowls, porcelain or bamboo wares, which were a regular component of Japanese collections at the time, making them mostly ethnographic wares and not top works of art.

In the late 1870s, 1880s and 1890s, other regional museums were created which, among other things, also bought goods of Japanese or Chinese origin. The most important of these was the *Západočeské museum v Plzni* (the West Bohemian Museum in Pilsen), founded in 1878, which exhibited its first objects of Asian provenance in the first two years of its existence. The museum collected Asian craft systematically until the First World War, creating a small, comprehensive collection, based on porcelain, lacquerware, ivory, examples of weapons and their fittings, armour, and Japanese woodblock prints. We should also mention the *Slezské muzeum v Opavě* (Silesian Museum in Opava / *Das Schlesische Landesmuseum*),⁵⁷ founded in 1882, which also collected a very interesting set of Chinese and Japanese artefacts from the beginning. However, this collection was almost completely destroyed during the Second World War, as

the museum was completely burnt down due to war operations in 1945.

Less important Asian collections were created in other museum institutions, where the artefacts were often acquired as special examples of exceptional designs. Here we should not omit the *Jihočeské muzeum* (South Bohemian Museum) in České Budějovice (founded 1877 as *Stadtmuseum* in Budweis), the *Jihomoravské muzeum* (South Moravian Museum) in Znojmo (founded 1878 as *Südmährisches Museum* in Znaim), *Regionální muzeum* (the Regional Museum) in Teplice (*Regionalmuseum* in Teplitz 1894), or *Regionální muzeum* (the Regional Museum) in Děčín (founded in 1892 as the *Stadtmuseum* in Tätschen and opened to the public in 1908) and a number of other small institutions where Japanese and Chinese objects made up a small, marginal and yet important component of the assets, that gave an idea of the art and crafts of these remote lands.

Most of these institutions, however, did not expand their non-European collections during the 20th century.

Opening of New Sea Routes to Asia as a Further Impetus for Collecting East Asian Objects

If we talk about the beginnings of modern collecting of Japanese and Chinese objects in the Czech lands, it is necessary to mention the first travellers who, thanks to new opportunities, were able to reach countries that had been practically inaccessible only a few decades earlier. It was the discovery of the propeller and steam power and not least the shortening of the route to Asia thanks to the Suez Canal that enabled the quick development of maritime transport and with that also new possibilities of travel. Representatives of the landed nobility would travel to the Far East and bring back interesting artefacts which enriched their existing collections.

It was, in fact, navy personnel who were among the first to have the opportunity to learn in situ about the culture and customs of distant nations, and who

⁵⁵ Sajvera 2006, 38.

⁵⁶ Suchomel 2019.

⁵⁷ *Schlesisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Gewerbe*.



Fig. 11: Unknown photographers. Costumes from China. A sheet from an album of Chinese photographs purchased by Heinrich Wawra in the early 1870s. Private collection.

brought back from their travels the first more complete collections of various objects from the destinations they visited, especially after the Suez Canal was opened and travel to the Far East was greatly simplified. Here it is necessary to mention the physician Heinrich Wawra von Fernsee (1831–1887), who visited the Far East in the service of the navy in 1868–1869 aboard the frigate *Donau* and later privately in 1872–1873, and his colleague, Erwin Dubský (1836–1909), who as first mate of the corvette *Erzherzog Friedrich* took part in the round-the-world expedition of 1874–1876, during which the crew visited Southeast Asia, China and Japan. Among Wawra's collections, we should mention in particular the unique set of more than 500 historical photographs that he purchased during his two trips to document the geography of the places he visited, as well as the local people and their customs. The collection contains photographs not only by Wilhelm Burger, the official photographer of the 1868 *Donau* frigate expedition, but also by a number of other photographers who operated studios in the Asian open ports (fig.11).⁵⁸

58 Suchomel and Suchomelová 2011.

If we look at Erwin Dubský's collection, which is now housed in Lysice Castle, it is striking that the largest part of it consists of objects from Japan, although the expedition also spent many days in Siam, China and the American continent. Why didn't Dubský bring back objects from other parts of the world in larger numbers? It seems that Japanese goods were greatly admired thanks to the fame of their successful presentation at the Vienna Exhibition, whether they were traditional Japanese porcelain, lacquerware, cloisonné, woodcarvings or various Japanese weapons (see fig.12).

Although Dubský mentions the exhibition only in passing in his diary of this trip, it is clear that, like most of his contemporaries, he also visited the World's Fair. Seeing the Japanese exhibition probably influenced him greatly in his choice of souvenirs during his travels.⁵⁹ This is also evidenced by the mention of the Vienna exhibition in another travelogue entitled *Um die Erde: Reiseskizzen von der Erdumseglung mit S. M. Corvette "Erzherzog Friedrich" in den Jahren 1874, 1875 und 1876*, published

59 Suchomel 2022.



Fig. 12: Case and vases decorated with cloisonné technique. Japan early 1870s. Collection of Erwin Dubský, Lysice Castle. Courtesy of Lysice castle administrative office.

in Vienna in 1878 by Josef Lehnert (1841–1896), a colleague of Erwin Dubský from the crew of the corvette *Erzherzog Friedrich*.⁶⁰ In connection with the World's Fair in Vienna, Lehnert mentions the extraordinary interest aroused among visitors by some of the foreign objects on display, such as Chinese carved ivory concentric balls or Japanese folding fans of the *ogi* type from Kyoto.⁶¹ All these references in contemporary literature confirm how strongly the World's Fair shaped the way distant countries were ultimately perceived, and how it influenced the contemporary view of quality products from Japan. The Japanese presentation at the Fair was certainly one of the most attractive, and this awakened the interest of Central Europeans in finding out more about this distant country.

⁶⁰ Lehnert 1878.

⁶¹ Lehnert 1878, 244 and 465.

We can see, then, that it was the Vienna World's Fair that was chiefly responsible for the growing thirst in the Habsburg Monarchy for knowledge of distant lands. Of greatest interest were the countries of East Asia, China and, above all, Japan, whose presentation at the exhibition was very popular. Influenced by their experiences at the World's Fair, the industrialist and representative of the Austrian noble family Josef Doblhoff (1844–1928) and his friend, the painter Julius Blaas (1845–1922), even set off for the Far East before the Fair ended in October 1873. In his diary, *Tagebuchblätter von einer Reise nach Ostasien 1873–1874*, which was published in book form shortly after his return to Europe, Doblhoff (1874/1875) notes that it was the Vienna exhibition that aroused his desire to explore new lands. Doblhoff mentions the World's Fair several times in the book, and it is clear that



Fig. 13: Václav Stejskal's collection of Japanese and Chinese objects arranged in his villa in Hostomice pod Brdy in the 1930s. Private collection.

he was particularly impressed by the Far Eastern presentations.⁶²

An important figure associated with Japan, and also with the presentation at the World's Fair in Vienna, was the Czech-Austrian, Raimund von Stillfried-Ratenicz (1839–1911), who spent several years in Japan. This native of Chomutov in West Bohemia opened his own photographic studio in Yokohama in 1871 and made a significant contribution to the development of Japanese photography.⁶³ Even before the Vienna exhibition, he had already made himself known by two significant activities that greatly influenced his subsequent successful career running a major photographic studio. First and foremost was the fact that he was the first to photograph the Emperor of Japan in January 1872.⁶⁴ The main aim of this semi-illegal activity was to monetise these unique images, which caused a truly international scandal and forced the Japanese authorities to commission official portraits of the then monarch and empress. Stillfried's next major work was the first photographs of the indigenous Ainu people of Hokkaido, which documented the very different indigenous culture of the Japanese island.⁶⁵ Stillfried played a key role in fostering connections between his homeland and distant Japan. Most Austrian visitors to Japan at the time met him as a fellow countryman, and Doblhoff, Blaas, Dubský, Lehnert and, only a little later, another aristocrat, Joseph Zichy, did so likewise. Stillfried helped them get around in unfamiliar surroundings, and thanks to him, they all took larger sets of photographs that became the basis of their collections of Japanese and Chinese art.

Stillfried's high-quality albumen images depicting Japan's most famous sites were among the top photographic works of their time. The most interesting part of his work, however, was undoubtedly the hand-coloured portraits of

Japanese beauties and the arranged images depicting traditional Japanese crafts, customs or habits, where Stillfried's painterly training—which one would not expect from a former Austrian army officer—was fully evident. Thanks to the contacts he made with compatriots, Stillfried's photographs have been preserved to this day in the collection of Erwin Dubský at Lysice Castle and in the estate of Josef Doblhoff, now housed in Baden near Vienna. Stillfried's pictures essentially served at that time to help Europeans better understand Japanese realities. This was also helped by their public presentation, for example at the exhibition of Dubský's collection from his round-the-world trip, and the 1876 display in Lysice, which became a real attraction of the Moravian countryside. Raimund Stillfried was something of a fixture for Austrian visitors to Japan, and so it is not surprising that we find information about meetings with him in reports of other travellers, such as Richard Drasche-Wartimberg (1850–1923) or Josef Zichy (1841–1924) and Gustav (1852–1925) Zichy in the mid-1870s.⁶⁶ They, too, acquired Stillfried's photographs for their collections, either in loose-leaf form or in albums, but here their collections have not survived in their entirety.

Speaking of travellers to the distant lands of the Far East, we should also mention other representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Navy. One of them was Václav Stejskal (1851–1934), a quartermaster on the *Aurora* cruiser, who visited Japan in 1888 and brought home a collection of over 500 items which he donated to the Náprstek Museum in the 1930s.⁶⁷ These were again wares commonly available in traditional “curioshops” in Yokohama or Tokyo, related to military nobility (armour, weapons), and also, for example, models of buildings, bamboo baskets, clothes, porcelain and lacquerware.

At the end of this survey of important Czech and Moravian collectors of East Asian objects in the 19th century, we should not omit two other travellers associated with Vojta Náprstek (1826–1894).

62 Doblhoff 1874–1875. (Japan is described in the vol. 3, pp. 1–174 with 3 photographs after oil paintings by Julius Blaas done in Yokohama, March 1874.)

63 Gartlan 2016.

64 Ibid., 72–103.

65 Ibid., 104–41.

66 Suchomel 2023, 201.

67 Suchomelová and Suchomel 2005.

These were Enrique Stanko Vráz (1860–1932), who donated a large collection of objects from Africa, America and Asia to the Náprstek museum, supplemented by his unique photographs taken in China and Korea in 1900, and, above all, Josef Kořenský (1847–1938), who was already well educated about the Far East through regular meetings with Vojta Náprstek and his circle when he set off on his journey. Náprstek even prepared a list of specific things that the museum was at that time most interested in, for example samples of cloisonné production. The black-and-white and the hand-coloured photographs purchased throughout his 1893–1894 round-the-world trip also played a significant role in Kořenský's collection. After his return to his homeland, the traveller used them during his extensive lecturing activities, so that the population not only in the large Czech and Moravian cities but also in the countryside learned about Japan, China and other countries.

Conclusion

The second half of the 19th century thus brought completely new impulses to the thirst for knowledge of non-European cultures in Bohemia and Moravia, as elsewhere in Europe. The World's Fairs, which aimed to promote progress and technical innovation, sparked increased interest in distant lands not only among manufacturers and traders, who found in the presentations incentives for new innovative steps, but also among the general public, whether they were direct visitors to these exhibitions or just readers of the daily press. In Bohemia, it was undoubtedly Vojta Náprstek and his circle of acquaintances and friends who were most instrumental in raising awareness in this field and were behind the origin of the collections of the Náprstek Museum, the largest Czech institution dedicated to the study of cultures from outside Europe.

The Vienna World's Fair and its Japanese and Chinese presentations provided the impetus for the creation and development of new business

activities with goods from these distant lands, which increasingly found their way into Czech and Moravian households in the form of either home accessories or souvenir fashion artefacts. New specialised shops were established not only in the Austrian capital itself, but also on the periphery—in Prague, Brno or Budapest—leading to a widespread interest in collecting foreign artefacts, which often amazed not only with their noble, detailed precision workmanship, but also with exotic decor themes. The newly established museums of applied arts in Liberec, Brno and Prague acquired not only examples of European production, but also products from East Asia which were to become a source of inspiration for local production. As in Western Europe, travelogues of those who could visit distant places became bestsellers in Austria-Hungary. It was during these business or sightseeing trips that the first comprehensive collections from the Far East were assembled, which are still preserved in Bohemia and Moravia today, not only in the aforementioned Náprstek Museum, but also in other public collections.

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Missionaries as Museum Suppliers: Peter Baptist Turk (OFM) and His Collection in the Rudolfinum Museum in Ljubljana

Helena Motoh

Introduction¹

In the early decades of Slovenian museum institutions, collecting non-European objects was part of the agenda, but compared to their role models, the state institutions in Vienna, the 1821 established Estate Museum of Carniola² in Ljubljana had no means of systematically purchasing such collections. For the first hundred years of its existence, the museum relied on outside help in procuring its non-European collections, with missionaries in North America, Africa, and Asia turning out to be the most convenient source for them. In the 19th century, the first two extensive non-European collections were sent to the museum by missionaries Friderik Baraga (1797–1868) from North America³ and Ignacij Knoblehar (1819–1858) from Sudan,⁴ while the first extensive collection of East Asian objects was supplied to

the museum by the Franciscan Peter Baptist Turk (1874–1944) in 1912 and 1913.

This chapter presents an analysis of recently discovered correspondence between this last missionary and the director of the Provincial Museum of Carniola – Rudolfinum, which reveals an example of the complex relationship between missionaries as suppliers of artefacts and the museum trying to become a representative provincial institution. The chapter is organised into three parts. In the first part, I present Turk's life and writings to illustrate the intellectual background in which his collecting practices were based. In the second part, I analyse the correspondence between Turk and Josip Mantuani (1860–1933), the director of the Rudolfinum. In the third part, I match the correspondence with the outcome, based on the inventory lists and the collections in their current state as kept by the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana. I try to compare the Turk collection with similar Franciscan missionary collections in Slovenia and today's neighbouring countries to determine whether it is possible to pinpoint the difference between collections constructed based on the agenda of a civil state institution and those collected by Franciscan missionaries for the purposes of missionary work and propaganda. Finally, the results of this analysis will be explored in order to identify some possible approaches to analysing missionary collections and their relation to secular institutions.

1 The research for this paper was carried out as part of the projects *Orphaned Objects: Examining East Asian Objects outside Organised Collecting Practices in Slovenia* (2021–2024) (J6-3133) and *Between a Mission and a Museum: Missionary Collections in Slovenia and their Significance Today* (2025–2027) (J6-60114), both funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency.

2 The museum subsequently changed its name several times, became Provincial Museum of Carniola – Rudolfinum in 1882 and then National Museum in 1921. In 1923, the Ethnographic Museum separated from the National Museum and became its own institution. Today, the former is named the National Museum of Slovenia, while the latter is the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

3 Cf. Frelih (2010).

4 Cf. Frelih (2009).

Peter Baptist Turk and His Writings

Peter Baptist Turk was born as Martin Turk on 29 October 1874 in the small village of Toplice in what is today southeastern Slovenia (at the time part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). He joined the Franciscan order⁵ at the age of 21 and spent his noviciate year in Trsat (today part of the Croatian port town of Rijeka).⁶ He was vested and given the name of Peter Baptist⁷ in 1895. In 1901, during the third year of his subsequent theology studies in Ljubljana, he met the visiting bishop from China.⁸ Vincenzo Epifanio Carlassare (1884–1909)⁹, at the time a missionary bishop in Hubei, made a stop at the Franciscan monastery in Ljubljana on his way to Venice and Rome. Meeting with Carlassare had a deciding impact on Turk, convincing him to finish his studies in only three more months so as to depart for China as soon as possible. In early December 1901, he travelled to Genova together with the lay brother Urban Žele.¹⁰ After a few days, they sailed off to Asia and reached China a month later. Turk was appointed to the vicariate of East Hubei with three key centres: Wuchang 武昌, Hankou 漢口, and Hanyang 漢陽 (today all merged into the

city of Wuhan). Within a few months, he was sent to a missionary outpost in the Qizhou 蕪州 prefecture on the northern banks of the Yangzi River. In the following years, he moved several times to various smaller missionary stations east and southeast of Hankou.¹¹ He never returned to Slovenia and died in Hankou in 1944, where he is also buried.

Having been a missionary in and around Hankou in the first half of the 20th century also contributed to the complex and turbulent experience Turk had as a foreign missionary there. Arriving in China in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion, he witnessed the revolutionary movement and the events during the Wuchang uprising,¹² the battles of the Northern Expedition, the fights between the Guomindang and the Communist units, and the events during WWII. In the autumn of 1931, he was even kidnapped by a communist group, held for ransom, and then released after the sum of “1000 Chinese dollars” was paid by the diocese.¹³

The turbulent times Peter Baptist Turk personally lived through unfortunately also contribute to the difficulties in researching the details of his life and work in China today. Reconstructing his biography is a challenge due to an almost virtual absence of archival material. Because he died in China during the Second World War, his personal belongings as well as any of his documents seem to have never reached the Ljubljana Franciscan monastery, as was the common practice following the death of missionaries.¹⁴ On the other hand, Turk

5 By Turk's time, the Franciscan mission in China already had a long history. The first attempts at launching a mission to Chinese lands spanned back to the times of the Yuan dynasty, and organised mission started forming in the early Qing (17th century) and became the largest Roman Catholic missionary enterprise in China in the 19th century (cf. Tiedemann 2016, 1–46). The Slovenian Franciscans' 20th-century missionary presence in China began with Peter Baptist Turk (departed in 1901 to Hankou) and Veselko Kovač (departed in 1902 to Shandong province).

6 P. Angelik 1934, 306–07.

7 Unfortunately, no records on Martin Turk's decision on his monastic name are preserved, but the choice of “Peter Baptist” seems by no means to be a random one: St. Peter the Baptist was a Spanish-born Franciscan who ended his life as a martyr crucified near Nagasaki and is considered part of the so-called “Martyrs of Japan” (see <https://www.saintbenedict.com/catholic-resources/the-japanese-martyrs/>).

8 P. Angelik 1934, 306.

9 The news about Carlassare's visit were published in daily newspapers (*Slovenec* 1901). More information on Carlassare cf. Catholic Hierarchy n.d.

10 P. Angelik 1934, 306.

11 He reports on these in his letters, published in *Cvetje z vrtov sv. Frančiška*. Unfortunately, many place names are undecipherable from his rather vague phonetic transcriptions into Slovenian. He does seem to mention Luotian county, Xishui county, etc., so he must have stayed mostly in smaller towns and villages on the northern side of the Yangzi River, downstream from today's Wuhan.

12 The Wuchang uprising was a rebellion against the Qing dynasty that happened in Wuchang, today a part of Wuhan, in October 1911 and began the revolution that overthrew the last Chinese imperial dynasty.

13 *Cvetje z vrtov sv. Frančiška* 1932, 15–16.

14 For example, the belongings of fellow missionary in Hubei, Engelhard Avbelj, who died in 1928, arrived back in

was a prolific writer and a regular correspondent of the Slovenian Catholic press. Most of his contributions, mainly in the form of letters, were published in the *Flowers from the Garden of Saint Francis* (*Cvetje z vrtov sv. Frančiška*), a Franciscan journal that was issued monthly from 1890 to 1944. Not only Turk, but other Slovenian Franciscan missionaries published their letters and texts there, and missionary topics made an important part of the journal. His letters began being published in 1906 and went on almost until his death, with the last one published in 1942. The publication practice, which is evident from other similar published missionary letters and texts,¹⁵ was that the editors cut the missionaries' longer letters into several parts and then published them in consecutive journal issues, which sometimes caused a considerable gap between the time the letters were written and the time they were published. Some of the long delays and the anachronistic publication of newer letters before older ones could also be attributed to problems of long-distance postal delivery. Turk's first letter, published in 1906, for example, dates to February 1902, the first winter of his arrival to China. He was most prolific in his writings in the first decade of his missionary work, and then again in the late 1920s and early 1930s, which coincided with the turbulent historical events. Otherwise, he mostly kept to the standard longer letters sent once per year, often in December or January, as some kind of a yearly report for the journal's readers, some of whom were also his donors.

Not at all surprisingly, he mostly focuses on a detailed description of the practicalities of his missionary work. He keeps the reader informed about his travels from one missionary post to the other, presenting in detail the hardships of such travel—the long distances he had to traverse on foot,¹⁶ the

dangerous storms when travelling by boat, and the hazardous mountain travels in a sedan,¹⁷ where he was almost killed by his opium-smoking carriers. He talks about the conversions and the lives of the converts, the methods he used when working with the common people and when dealing with the “mandarins” or officials, and the difficulties he faced when trying to spread the gospel. He frequently refers to an example of an especially troublesome mountainous missionary outpost of “Lo-tien” (probably 羅田 in northeastern Hubei province), virtually abandoned by the missionaries since the local people killed two missionaries there.¹⁸ Andrew “Šu,”¹⁹ one of his most loyal Chinese converts, is mentioned as the first missionary who dared to return there after a long time. The name Andrew Šu can later also be seen in relation to Turk's collection, since he is personally listed as the donor of a few important pieces.²⁰ It is also interesting that Andrew Šu is mentioned in relation to one of Turk's fairly common topics: the relation of Catholic missionaries to other religions. He allegedly transformed the pagoda in “Tun-san-chun” into a Catholic missionary outpost.²¹ Criticism of the corruption and debauchery among Buddhist monks (he uses the term “bonci”, i.e. “bonzes”) is quite common in his writings as well.²² Turk does not fail to mention the Catholic missionaries' competition, namely Protestant missionaries, and criticizes their rigidity to and distance from the common people, which Turk saw as a result of their wealth and aloof manners.²³ The turbulent times are also reflected in his writing, in which he combines documentary style—trying to inform the Slovenian reader about the developments in China—with some strategic reflections. These reflections

Ljubljana after his death and are now kept by the Franciscan monastery.

15 Cf. Jelnikar and Motoh (2021).

16 The published letter of 24 January 1906. The letters are referred to by dating provided in the letters. For bibliographical information and the date of publication please refer to the bibliography list.

17 The published letter of the New Year 1907.

18 The published letter of 24 January 1906.

19 In the Slovenian text “Andrej Šu”; probably the Chinese surname was “Shu” or “Xu”.

20 Cf. 1912/13 entries from the Inventory book of Rudolfinum (kept in the Archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Ljubljana).

21 The published letter of 8 January 1909.

22 See for example the published letter of 8 January 1909.

23 See for example the published letter of 8 January 1909.

can be seen most clearly in his assessments of the reform movement in China—the movement of Chinese intellectuals who advocated for political and societal reforms and wanted to modernise Chinese society. Turk praises this movement for having a common enemy in Confucianism and other traditional religions, but is also sceptical of their critical attitude towards religion in general.²⁴

Turk's writing interestingly reflects the composition of his collection. The collection consists of two large groups of objects: religious (Turk often simply calls them “idols”) and ethnographic. Despite dealing with non-Christian religions daily, apart from the above-mentioned criticism of Buddhism, he rarely explores the original religions of the communities he works with. When speaking of Buddhists, he interestingly mentions, that “they pray for long hours, immobile like a stone”.²⁵ Interested in non-Christian religions mostly *per negationem*, he often describes how successful he and his fellow missionaries are in convincing the locals to get rid of their “idols”. He even goes further to explain how the missionaries demonstratively “throw the idols in the fire”²⁶ if they caught their converts turning back to their worship in the time between two of the missionary's visits. One can only speculate as to whether some of the numerous religious figurines amassed in the Turk collection may have originated from these punitive displays of ideological power. Compared to scarce remarks about religious practices and objects, the ethnographic material, which is also well represented in his collection, is described in more detail in Turk's writing. He writes extensively about the practices and habits of the Chinese. The ethnographic content is more prevalent in his early letters, while in the latter ones it is overshadowed by the political situation and the war.

His descriptions of the particular aspects of Chinese culture are often related to the practical challenges he encountered. He goes, for example, into great length in explaining why it was so

difficult to procure the necessary amounts of the sacramental wine, the reason being that the Chinese did not grow a lot of fruit-bearing trees and preferred to plant tea and grain crops.²⁷ As part of the explanation, he mentions the terrace system of rice growing as one of the typical agricultural practices in China.²⁸ Similarly, he mentions Chinese rituals and habits especially when contradicting the Christian ones, but nevertheless explains them rather precisely. He talks, for example, about the standards of polite communication—how to meet and greet people of different ranks, what etiquette and seating arrangements are followed at banquets, how the Chinese say the New Year's greetings, and what presents were customary.²⁹ He also explains in some detail the calendar system and the difference between the European and the Chinese New Year, and presents some of the traditional activities related to the New Year's celebrations (carrying the dragon, fireworks, firecrackers, etc.).³⁰ The funerary rites are also mentioned along with the mourning practices, again comparing them to Christian traditions.³¹ In this and many other instances, Turk also focuses on a historically and anthropologically interesting topic of the hybrid practices of Chinese converts, e.g. by describing how they celebrate Christmas, how they bury their dead, etc. Some other characteristics of the Chinese culture are also mentioned, such as the insignia for official ranking (with the mandarin hat buttons),³² the practice of foot binding,³³ and the street theatre shows.³⁴ Turk also goes into detail in describing the opium smoking practices³⁵ and it is evident from his writing that in his missionary work he had first-hand experience with the detrimental effects that opium use had on Chinese families and individuals.

27 The published letter of 1 May 1926.

28 The published letter of 8 March 1903.

29 See *ibid.* and published letter of 25 August 1902.

30 The published letter of 7 February 1903.

31 The published letter of 25 August 1902.

32 The published letter of 8 March 1903.

33 The published letter of 4 February 1902.

34 The published letter of 7 February 1903.

35 The published letter of 24 January 1906.

24 The published letter of 19 January 1908.

25 The published letter of 4 February 1902.

26 The published letter of 27 July 1905.

Correspondence between the Missionary and the Museum Director

The distinction between ethnographic and religious topics also played an important part in the correspondence between Turk and the director of the Provincial Museum of Carniola, Josip Mantuani. The surviving correspondence available to this day consists of six letters, kept by the Slovenian National Museum.³⁶ Only one letter draft by director Josip Mantuani is preserved (dated 23 September 1912), along with five letters received from Turk (dated 31 May, 3 September, 8 September, and 9 November 1912, and 21 January 1913). There must have been several letters sent by Mantuani to Turk, but their drafts (or the letters received by the missionary) are unfortunately lost. In the first preserved letter by Turk, we see that the previous correspondence in one or more letters by Mantuani (or via some other way of communication, possibly a common correspondent) obviously revolved around Mantuani's expressed wish for the missionary to help him by sending "several idols and other things used by the Chinese pagans, for the museum", or at least this was how Turk summarized Mantuani's wish in his earliest preserved letter. This wish can be seen in light of the director's general efforts to build up a comprehensive collection for the Rudolfinum.

Josip Mantuani, himself an art and music historian, took up the position of the director of the central museum institution of Carniola in 1909 and set upon completing its rather small collections by organising and sponsoring several similar undertakings.³⁷ He was most active in building an archaeological collection—which can be traced throughout the first years of his director's mandate—by establishing connections with a large number of local priests and other lay archaeology enthusiasts who started providing him with archaeological discoveries found all over the territory of Carniola. He did the same for the natural history collection by

collecting specimens of local flora and fauna, establishing an in-house taxidermy workshop and joining the regional initiative to catch poisonous snakes.

The Carniolian ethnographical collection also grew under his lead, as he built up a small network of local suppliers who went around their villages to buy up examples of old traditional clothing, tools, furniture, etc.³⁸ Mantuani's reform of the museum largely followed Max Dvořák's guidelines for provincial museums and therefore emphasized the presentation of local history, ethnography, and natural environment.³⁹ On the other hand, his approach to the non-European collections and objects was much less systematic. In the early 20th century, Rudolfinum already had a few non-European collections: most notably the larger collections given to the museum by two prominent missionaries. Friderik Baraga's North American collection, which was first exhibited at the museum in 1837, was followed in 1850 by a collection of objects from Sudan, sent by Ignacij Knoblehar. East Asia was underrepresented, with only a smaller number of individual porcelain pieces, which came to the museum through private owners in Ljubljana.⁴⁰ Interestingly, his decision to commission a Chinese ethnographical collection was a unique exception to his collecting policies, since it was virtually omitted in his official plans and reports for the museum⁴¹ and was not followed by any similar attempts to procure non-European collections.⁴²

36 A short article on this correspondence was published by Mitja Potočnik (see Potočnik 2013).

37 For more information on Mantuani's career as museum director, cf. Stele (1933), and Höfler and Cerkovnik (2012).

38 A large number of letters documenting this phase of Mantuani's work at the museum can be found in the archive of the National Museum of Slovenia, as part of unsorted documents folders (labeled "Muzejski arhiv") for the period from 1909 onwards.

39 Mahnič 2016, 199–200.

40 Cf. Berdajs (2020).

41 Cf. Archive of the Republic of Slovenia. Mantuani, Josip (1912; 1922).

42 Understanding Mantuani's rather ambiguous actions in this period would require further research, but his interest for East Asian objects, which did not fit with the general agenda he followed, might have also been influenced by his personal experience of museum institutions in Vienna, where he started his studies shortly after the Vienna World's Fair and where he then spent almost three decades of his life. The archival documents have so far unfortunately not revealed any explicit information on this connection.

His correspondence with Turk quickly goes beyond the simple task of providing “several idols and other things”. In his letter of 31 May 1912,⁴³ Turk already responds with a demand for clearer instructions, reminding Mantuani that “there are countless types of idols” in China. The missionary proposes that they both buy Henri Doré’s *Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine*, a recently published book series⁴⁴ on the topic, that they could then use in their communication, so that Mantuani could point out which types of “idols” he wanted and Turk could then find the correct ones. In addition to that, Turk proposes providing “other Chinese things that could serve you and the other folklorists to better understand this weird Chinese nation”, as well as geological and natural history objects. In the closing part of the letter, he also asks for a clarification on how much the museum is willing to spend for the “idols”, reminding Mantuani that the price greatly varies according to the objects’ “artistic quality, material, and rarity”. He added that wooden idols could also be acquired very cheap or even for free, but he doubted “that you would be satisfied with such wooden stuff of low artistic quality”. Judging from the collection acquired, as will be seen later, they must have achieved some type of compromise, since the collection of “idols” contains both a larger number of rudimentary wooden statues as well as a few higher quality bronze and porcelain sculptures.

From the following two letters (a longer one on 3 pages and a very short one on 8 September 1912), we see that Turk obviously soon sent out a smaller box of “idols and some other things”, as he says in his letter of 3 September, where he enquires

as to whether the museum received the package from July that year. Along with these, he notes that he had sent an official’s hat, “used in summer by the officials during the imperial times”. A remark is of course included on the historical shift that was happening right in front of the missionary’s eyes. After having witnessed the events of the Wuchang uprising, Turk penned this letter just half year after the last emperor abdicated. He notes that these types of hats “in use by the previous rulers, are completely rejected by the republican party”. At the end of the letter, Turk apologizes for the lower quality everyday objects he sent by saying that “to fully understand the Chinese habits and Chinese life, both the good and the bad should be observed”.

By the end of the same month, on 23 September 1912, Mantuani, refers to the early September letter by Turk, and responds that he had “unfortunately not yet received the package”. He continues by expressing his wishes for the Chinese collection. “Anything will be very welcome”, he adds, “since we have nothing but a few broken parasols”. Most importantly, he continues, the museum was eager for “folkloristic objects, either of religious or profane-cultural nature, e.g. idols, sacrificial vessels, images and woodcuts, amulets; then tools, perhaps some original weapons, ornaments, bones and stones, cast images, clothes, etc.”.

Turk’s reply of 9 November 1912 again confirms his attempt to “willingly, out of gratitude for the dear homeland, respond to his [Mantuani’s] wishes and the noble enthusiasm for the museum’s scientific development”. Turk announces that he will, together with his fellow missionary, also a Slovenian, Engelhard Avbelj (1887–1928), send a larger shipment of objects at the beginning of the following year. In this letter, apart from Avbelj, Turk also mentions the other fellow missionary in Hankou, the Chinese convert Andrew Šu, who owned a luxurious silk carpet and several honorary officials’ baldachins. These objects, says Turk, could also be a great addition to the museum collection.

The last document in the archive, written by Turk on 21 January 1913, is a list of twelve sent objects (including Andrew Šu’s silk carpet and

43 All correspondence between Turk and Mantuani is kept as part of unsorted documents in the folders “Muzejski arhiv” from 1912/2 and 1913/1 in the archive of the National Museum of Slovenia.

44 The multiple part book series (Doré 1911) started to be published just the year before in the Jesuit workshops of Zikawei (Xujiahui) in Shanghai. The Xujiahui Jesuit missionary centre had workshops that were connected to their orphanage and served as training facilities for the orphans to obtain professional skills in woodcarving, painting, sculpture, printing, metal work, etc. (cf. Ma 2018; Motoh 2020a; De Caro 2023).

two baldachins, along with “approx. 15 idols”, 2 swords, an incense burner, chopsticks, a pipe, and some other smaller objects). The old Rudolfinum inventory book, however, lists many more objects received from Peter Baptist Turk, so we can suppose that the other items were either contained in the first mentioned shipment sent in the summer of 1912, or were sent later, but the correspondence about them has not survived.

Between the Wish List and the Collection

Based on the Rudolfinum inventory book entries from 1912 and 1913, Turk sent back approximately 120 objects, of which approximately 100 can still be identified today.⁴⁵ If tentatively looking for logic as to which objects went missing, we can see that these were mostly smaller objects (jewellery, hairpins, chains) and fabric items (clothing, home textiles), maybe due to the different systems of labelling these types of objects (often the inventory numbers were not written on the objects themselves). The objects that remain in the collection are otherwise easy to recognize by the dual inventory numbers⁴⁶ clearly written on them, while many also have an attached cardboard tag with an attribution to Peter Baptist Turk.

Despite the missing part of the collection, the existing array of objects still gives a very clear image of the result of Turk’s and Mantuani’s attempts. The initial desired typology of items, suggested by Turk and then more explicitly listed by Mantuani, is clearly reflected in the preserved collection and obviously even more in the Rudolfinum’s old inventory list.

⁴⁵ Approximate numbers are due to the differences in inventory registrations—sometimes the same objects seem to be grouped and sometimes listed separately, which, along with their very vague descriptions, makes the exact number almost impossible to reconstruct.

⁴⁶ Most of the objects bear two inventory numbers: the original Rudolfinum number and the new inventarisatation number they got after 1923 in the newly established Ethnographic Museum.

The number of religious sculptures, those that might be classified by Turk and Mantuani as “idols”, is considerable: altogether 34 are listed in the 1912/13 inventory list, and 30 can still be found in the museum today. They vary greatly in quality and artistic expression, which attests to Turk’s previously quoted explanation in one of his letters. By material, wooden sculptures prevail, and these are mostly—but not exclusively—also more crudely shaped. Three of the religious sculptures are made in bronze⁴⁷ and are cast and shaped with more precision. All of them are also Buddhist, one depicting Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara/Guanyin (fig. 3), one depicting Śākyamuni Buddha, and the third one probably depicting Buddha Amitabha.

On the other hand, the larger array of wooden figurines is much more diverse. There are several Buddhist figurines, but also typical characters of Daoist provenance and those venerated in folk religion. We find for example, several examples of Wenchang 文昌, the deity representing culture and literature (fig. 4), two examples of Songzi Niangniang 送子娘娘, (a female fertility deity, often merged with the Guanyin image), a figure of an alleged “deity of the Yangzi River”, etc. How Turk labelled the sculptures tells us a lot about his understanding of Chinese religion. On one hand, he wrote the names of the deities on the objects themselves or even pasted pieces of paper with handwritten explanations onto them. This museum-intended approach also tells us that he was interested in the names and the use of those “idols”. On the wooden image of Songzi Niangniang for example, he writes, “Goddess Sun-cè-njan-njan. Pagan women go to her for marital happiness”. Similarly, a wooden board relief of the Buddhist guardian Weituo 韋馱 with a jewelled sword (figs. 5 and 6) is explained as “the idol Wei-t’ung (vej-thun). Carved into a wooden board, it is carried on the back of bonzes to chase the evil spirits out of the pagan houses, they do this three times every year: in their first, seventh, and tenth month, on the full moon”.

⁴⁷ Two more bronze “Buddha idols” are mentioned by the inventory, but are now missing.



Fig. 1: Coal burner with inventory numbers and Turk's explanation. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.



Fig. 2: An attached tag marking objects from Turk's collection (the name is written wrong, Jan. (ez) instead of Peter). Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.



| Fig. 3: Cast bronze sculpture of Avalokiteśvara/Guanyin. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.



| Fig. 4: Wooden sculpture of Wenchang. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

From his writing, however, it seems like the distinction between the Buddhist and the Daoist religious practices—and their “idols” was not an important one for Turk. It is difficult to say whether he distinguished between different traditions, while it does seem that for him the entirety of the pagan practices was seen more as a continuum, also perhaps reflecting the fluid co-existence of different religious traditions and syncretic religious practices he encountered. He does identify Buddhist sculptures to represent “idol Buda” (Buddha) and he names “Kvan-in” (Guanyin) figurines, but they seem to be subsumed to the general category of “idols”. He talks about “bonci” (a Slovene derivative of “bonzes”) both in his explanations of the objects themselves as well as in his published writings,⁴⁸ but it is unclear whether this only means Buddhist monks or also the dignitaries of Daoist and Confucian temples.

Porcelain is also present in Turk’s collection of “idols”. Two porcelain figures were listed and are still in the collection. One is a vividly coloured *famille rose* figure of a seated Guandi 關帝, the other is an image of Guanyin 觀音 (fig. 7). The latter, labelled as “Cou-se” by Turk, is made in what seems to be *dehua* style milky white porcelain and shows the remains of gilding and lacquer decoration.⁴⁹ One of the other curious pieces Turk collected is a wooden tablet (figs. 8 and 9), used, according to Turk’s pasted explanation on the back of the board, as a symbolic means of protecting the shop and its owners, ensuring the blessing of “Čao-kun-min”. His transcription most probably refers to Zhao Gongming 趙公明, one of the historical identifications of the deity of Wealth, Caishen 財神, to whom the text on the wooden tablet also refers.⁵⁰

48 See for example the published letter of 4 February 1902.

49 An interesting element of this figurine, one that Turk was probably not aware of, is that the decoration on her chest is shaped as a cross-shaped arrangement of five dots, connected with a heart-shaped pendant. These could point to the figurine actually representing a cryptic image of Mother Mary (cf. Turnbull 1998). This claim, however, as well as the possible source of this figurine and its relation to the cryptic Christianity in Japan, would require extensive further research.

50 The central text reads: *ben dian hu Fucai* 本店護福財 (This shop is protected by the God of Fortune and Wealth), this

From the listed examples, we can see that Turk put a lot of effort into presenting in at least some detail China’s religious landscape as he knew it in the region where he worked. The initial plan to use Doré’s book as a common guideline for purchase between Mantuani and Turk seems not to have been realized or perhaps it was only Turk who was using it in his descriptions of the statues. The book is never mentioned again in their correspondence. Another aspect of Turk’s collection of religious objects is however significant. As often the case with missionary collections, Turk’s selection of objects—inadvertently—preserves the religious reality of the people he was working amongst, including the new converts who refused to completely give up their previous venerative practices. We can only speculate whether some of these “idols” could be the same he mentions to have repeatedly confiscated from the non-conforming Chinese converts, but from the quality and style of the pieces, many of them could be items in use by common countryside families.

In the collection, we also see that Turk perhaps tried to go in the direction of Mantuani’s wishes to send him “sacrificial vessels” by adding several other religious objects related to the practices of incense burning. Two incense burners are listed in the inventory, of which one tin incense burner is still in the collection today, accompanied by a number of candles, incense sticks, and an elaborate *bagua* 八卦⁵¹ and *taijitu* 太極圖⁵² decorated tin box for incense (fig. 10), which was labelled as having been donated by Andrew Šu. Several rudimentary iron temple bells are also included in the collection. Perhaps a victim of the unmatched taxonomies, the desired category of “amulets” remained empty, although some previously mentioned objects could be interpreted to have protective and auspicious properties. The category of “images and

message confirmed by the side text using the two components of the phrase *zhao cai jin bao* 招財進寶 (attract wealth).

51 *Bagua* is an arrangement of eight trigrams, based on the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易经).

52 *Taijitu*, i.e. the “diagram of The Great Ultimate”, is the graphic representation of the complementary dynamics of *yin* and *yang*.



| Fig. 5: Carved image of Weituo on wooden board. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

林

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To je malik:
Wei - Lung (vej-thun)
v dolbini na deski
ga ponci prenasajo
na hrbtu in v njim
po pag, hišah, preganjanju,
jo škodljive duhove,
in picer po trikrat
na leto: v prvem, rednem
in drugem lunarnem mesecu
na dan polne lune.

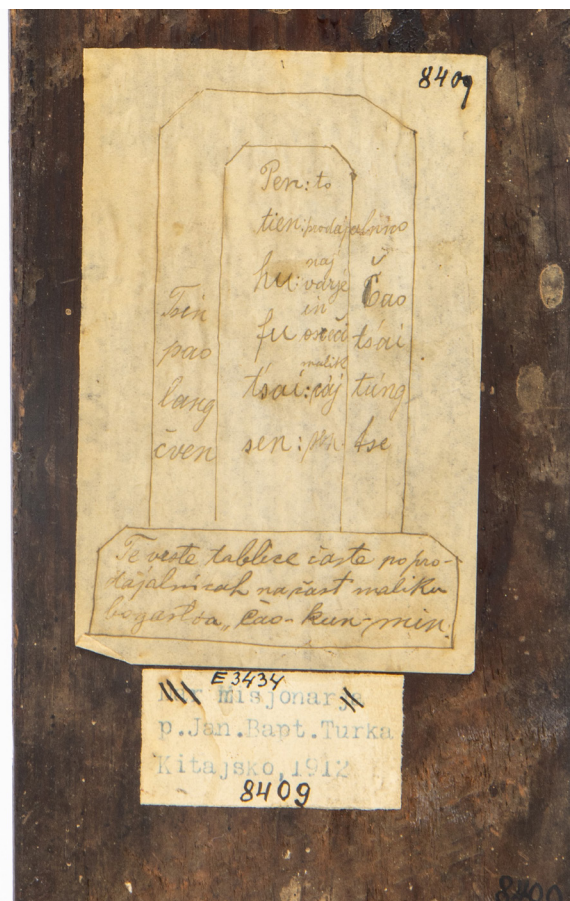
Mr. misijonar
p. Jan. Bapt. Turka
Kitajsko, 1912
8408

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Fig. 6: Turk's explanation on the back of the Weituo image. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.



| Fig. 7: Porcelain sculpture of Guanyin. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.



Figures 8 and 9: Wooden tablet ensuring Zhao Gongming's protection, front and back. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

woodcuts" from Mantuani's wish list is represented in Turk's collection by a set of 12 scrolls, of which 8 are brush paintings and 4 are calligraphies.

In the more ethnographic (or in Mantuani's terminology, "profane-cultural folkloristic objects") category, Turk deviated more from what the museum director wished for, also providing a lot of objects upon his own initiative. He collected none of the desired tools and only two examples of weapons: a sword and a double sword. These two swords, judging from the rudimentary shape and very low quality of production, both seem to be mock weapons, maybe used for theatrical performances (also partly hinted at in the missionaries' shipping list⁵³). Of the other types of objects that

Mantuani wanted the missionary to provide, we only find a substantial number in the broad category of "clothing", where Turk sent smaller silk items (purses, embroidered ornaments, attachments), shoes, and the before-mentioned official's hat. In addition to these, the original inventory also lists two fans, silver jewellery (earrings, rings, etc.), and a pair of glasses. The 1912/13 inventory also lists an object interestingly defined as a "rectangular hat of the Chinese dignitaries". In fact, the object (fig. 11) is a *jijin* 祭巾⁵⁴, a ceremonial hat worn by

53 In the "List of the things sent these days to Rudolfinum Museum", dated January 1913 and signed by Peter Baptist Turk

and Engelhard Avbelj, two swords are mentioned, namely "an antique sword" and "a sword to be used in both hands for war plays, but also useful to scare off thieves and robbers" (Archive of the National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana. Correspondence between Turk and Mantuani).

54 The invention of this special ceremonial hat is usually ascribed to Giulio Aleni (cf. Badea et al. 2020).



| Fig. 10: Incense box. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

the Catholic priests in China, used by the Jesuits as well as the Franciscans. The presence of *jijin* in missionary collections in Europe is remarkably common, and there is a similar object even in the related collection by Turk's fellow missionary Engelhard Avbelj,⁵⁵ which probably was worn by Avbelj himself. It is difficult to assess whether the rectangular hat in Turk's collection could be a hat that was in personal use by Peter Baptist Turk, but, along with his fellow missionary priests, he must have used a *jijin* in his daily work as well. What might have been the cause for a partly misleading description is of course difficult to claim.

Turk's collection, however, is especially interesting in the array of objects that were obviously

acquired at his own initiative. Already among the textile objects, we find some very interesting items; the most notable is a pair of *wanminsān* 萬民傘, honorary umbrellas or baldachins.⁵⁶ Turk himself writes about these two pieces in his letters to Mantuani:

He [Andrew Šu] also owns several honorary official's umbrellas called wan-min-san that he received in different places by the Christians and the pagans for his contributions.⁵⁷

55 The Avbelj collection kept by the Franciscan monastery in Ljubljana is much smaller than Turk's collection and mostly consists of his personal belongings, i.e. the *jijin* and liturgical books in Chinese, but also two incense burners, some coins, and a pair of female silk slippers.

56 Gao and Weightman 2012, 207.

57 Letter of 9 November 1912 (Archive of the National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana. Correspondence between Turk and Mantuani).



Fig. 11: *Jijin*. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

In addition to two ceremonial baldachins, Turk also sent the accompanying top pieces, ornate metal decorations that were put on top of the bamboo stick holding the baldechin. One (fig. 12) depicts a crane standing among lotus flowers; the other (fig. 13) is shaped as a vessel and decorated with dragons and other ornaments. A similar *wanminsan* crane-shaped ornament is kept by the Weltmuseum in Vienna (in the collection of J. J. Henningsen).⁵⁸

Among Turk's most interesting additions to the collection are the many varieties of paper money, even strings of paper "coins". Of the other unique items of Chinese culture, Turk sent several chopsticks and two brass hand/feet warmers, an unusual object we often find in similar collections.⁵⁹ Only one wooden lacquer object is included in the collection, a nicely decorated red lacquer box. The box is decorated with a gold drawing of a phoenix and a peony, and other flower shrubs, symbolizing

happiness and joy.⁶⁰ A few pieces of smoking paraphernalia are also included, including a slender tobacco pipe and a decorated leather tobacco pouch.

It is difficult to track the sources of the objects Turk collected for the museum, but most of these are not of high artistic quality nor do they demonstrate elaborate craftsmanship. Many of the objects are very rudimentary; such is the case for the metal vessels and bells, while the collection of paintings is also of very low artistic quality. The ethnographic material as well as the religious statues seem like they were obtained through local sources and were not intended for foreigners' export purchase, which matches well with Turk's itineraries as we know them so far—he spent most of his time in the village and small town settings around Hankou. The religious statues and objects, however, are mostly crudely designed and show wear related to their previous extensive use in home or village temple settings, which makes this type of collection significantly different from those of wealthier and more socially distinguished collectors of the time, where the religious statues are mostly from urban settings and/or were bought either newly made or carefully preserved.

58 See <https://www.weltmuseumwien.at/object/?detailID=448607> (Accessed December 1, 2023).

59 See for example, the early 20th century collection of Ivan Skušek Jr. in the same museum (Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana).

60 Bjaaland Welch 2008, 83.



| Figs. 12: Metal decoration for the top of the *wanminsang* baldachins. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.



Figs. 13: Metal decoration for the top of the *wanminsang* baldachins. Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

Museification of missionary collections

The term “missionary collection” is not unequivocal, as Turk’s case shows: it can mean both a collection assembled by a missionary and/or a collection assembled in the missionary context for missionary purposes. It can also originate in the missionary setting of the missions or not, as “missionary exhibitions” sometimes also included locally produced craftwork, which was then sold to collect money for the missions. For Turk’s collection, the term “missionary” is limited to mean a collection that originated in the missions and was collected by a missionary, but was not collected for missionary purposes. Not only in this, but also in its content Turk’s collection differs from previous missionary collections in Slovenia. As is evident from the short review, the variety of objects in Turk’s collection is considerable, with a balance of religious and ethnological objects. Previous large missionary collections in Slovenia included very few religious objects⁶¹ and the same holds for the—much smaller—collection of Turk’s missionary colleague Engelhard Avbelj (see above). Judging from the correspondence, and the comparison between the museum director’s wishes and the resulting collection, it becomes evident that the presence of the collection’s religious content was largely motivated by the director’s wishes, while the missionary collector took much more initiative in the domain of the “profane” ethnographic items. In a seemingly paradoxical twist, the missionary collected more religious objects because he was trying to serve the needs and wishes of a secular institution. The repulsion felt by active missionaries such as Turk toward the “idols” could of course be one of the reasons why they would not collect them at their own initiative and only did so when following the agenda of a museum institution.

The complex character of Turk’s collection and his inclusion of religious objects, though, seem to also be based on a related historical phenomenon,

namely, the trend of the museification of missionary collections. The 1910s and 1920s were a period when the previously heterogeneous practices of gathering random objects from the missions became an organized and well-structured undertaking. These collections were not only used for promotional purposes and as a tool to collect resources for the missions, but started to take on an educational role for the general public. Among the backdrop of trade fairs, World’s Fairs, and finally the influential Vatican Missionary exhibition in 1925,⁶² missionary collections gradually followed the trend of presenting their destination countries in a comprehensive fashion.⁶³ We see this trend in the Slovenian territory in the establishment of several “missionary museums”, which then followed the structural standards of other museum institutions: including the comprehensive typology of objects, ranging from naturalia through ethnographic materials to religious objects.⁶⁴ When describing the making of a similar collection by Italian Franciscans in Hubei (now kept in the convent of St. Roch in Rovereto), Federica Bosio mentions a similar transitional situation.⁶⁵ The Franciscan missionary collector in Hubei, Father Ruggero Covi (1877–1925), initially focused on collecting minerals of China, only to be motivated to start collecting cultural items, especially those representing Chinese religions by his provincial, so that the collection could be used for museum purposes. The resulting Franciscan collection in Rovereto is structurally surprisingly similar to Turk’s collection in Ljubljana, presenting the rich local

61 Cf. Frelih (2009; 2010).

62 The Vatican Missionary Exhibition of 1925, (officially “Pontifical Missionary Exhibition”) was organized in the Lateran Palace under Pope Pius XI to show the missionary efforts of the Catholic Church worldwide, while also presenting the variety of World’s cultures and religions. In the presentation of the latter, an important influence was that of Wilhelm Schmidt, who was invited by Pius XI to put together the ethnological exhibition, since in Schmidt’s views many world religions exhibited traits of common original monotheism, *Urmonotheismus* (cf. Dries 2016; Howes, Jones and Spriggs 2022, 347)

63 Cf. Gasparotto (2017) and Sánchez Gómez (2006).

64 Motoh 2020b.

65 Bosio et al. 2023, 45.

ethnographical material along with what seem to be locally sourced (and used) rudimentary religious figurines. The museification and institutionalization of missionary collections therefore seem to have introduced a shift in typology: from the types of objects that would present the everyday reality of the missionary work to those that represented the destination cultures in general. After the shift, the role of missionaries was seen also as that of educator and informer—a view especially stressed after the Vatican 1925 exhibition – and the propaganda goal, while still very present, was then underplayed. Due to the special situation in which it was assembled, Turk's collection can therefore be seen as an earlier precursor of the trend that prevailed in the missionary collecting practices from the late 1920s onwards.

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Part 3

Shaping East Asian Collections – Contribution by Diplomats

Josef Schwegel (1836–1914) and His Legacy: Vienna World's Fair and its Connections to Slovenia

Tina Berdajs

Introduction¹

Josef Schwegel's (1836–1914) involvement in staging the exhibitions of the “oriental”² countries at the Vienna World's Fair in 1873 was undoubtedly a significant contribution to the cultural exchange between East and West during the late 19th century. Hailing from Carniola, today a part of Slovenia, he is still today one of the most recognizable and “famous” Slovenes working as a diplomat and politician in the 19th-century Austro-Hungarian Empire. As a person most knowledgeable about the Orient, he was (in his own words) tasked with putting together the Oriental Department at the Vienna World's Fair, which took place in 1873.³ His official position was the head of the division for the Orient and East Asia in the directorate of the World's Fair.⁴ The Oriental Department, or the *Orientalische Abteilung* (in older sources often referred to as the “Oriental pavilion”), was

a significant large exhibition space dedicated to showcasing the cultural and industrial achievements of the East.

The exhibition space was divided into different sections, each section was dedicated to showcasing the exhibition from each of the participating nations. Exhibition sections (or pavilions) showcased objects and artefacts from various Middle Eastern and East Asian cultures as well as North Africa, highlighting their artistry, craftsmanship, and cultural significance. Schwegel's dedication to his organizational work aimed to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of Eastern cultures among fair visitors and, more importantly, to lay the groundwork for future fruitful trade relations with these places.

One of the lasting legacies of Schwegel's work was the cooperative effort resulting in the establishment of the Oriental Museum in Vienna (later *Handelsmuseum*),⁵ which served as a repository for many of the objects displayed at the World's Fair. The museum provided a valuable resource for scholars, collectors, and enthusiasts. However, the museum's closure in 1907 and the dispersal of its collection posed a challenge for historians and researchers seeking to trace the provenance of these objects.⁶

In 2018, research commenced on the East Asian ceramics kept at the National Museum of

1 The research for this paper was carried out as part of the project *Orphaned Objects: Examining East Asian Objects outside Organised Collecting Practices in Slovenia* (2021–2024) (J6-3133) funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency.

2 The term geographically encompassed the large area spanning roughly from the Balkans, including north Africa and the Middle East, and all the way to East Asia (cf. Lukas Nickel's paper (2024) in this monograph). Hereinafter the term “Orient” should be understood as such.

3 Schwegel 2007, 52.

4 Nickel 2024, (in this book).

5 Schwegel 2007, 54.

6 Museum of Applied Arts n.d. a.

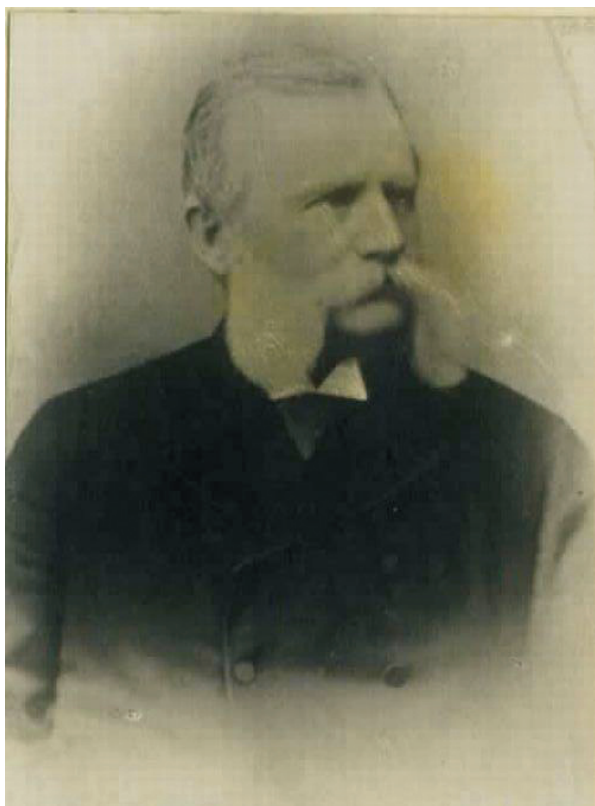


Fig. 1: Portrait of Josef Schwegel (1863–1914). Photograph. A collection of depictions of famous Slovenians NUK (Zbirka upodobitev znanih Slovencev NUK). National and University Library (NUK), Ljubljana.

Slovenia. It was discovered that the museum's Ceramics Collection houses approximately 240 pieces of Chinese and Japanese ceramics. The majority of the pieces fall into the category of export ceramics intended for Western markets dating from the 19th to the early 20th century. Among these objects was also a Japanese lidded cup from the legacy of Josef Schwegel. The discovery of this cup at the National Museum of Slovenia reignited interest in his contributions to the Vienna World's Fair and what happened following the Fair's success. Provenance research on the cup involved a meticulous examination of its design, markings, and materials, as well as comparisons with identical cups held in the Asia Collection of the Museum for Applied Arts in Vienna (MAK) and several tea caddies bearing the same type of label kept in the collection of the Vienna Museum of Technology.

Josef Baron von Schwegel: Diplomat and Collector

Josef Schwegel (fig. 1) (throughout different sources and publications we find several versions of his name, such as Josef Schwegel, Joseph Ritter von Schwegel, as well as Slovenian versions Jožef Švegel and Jožef Žvegel) was born to a peasant family in a small village named Zgornje Gorje near the town of Bled in today's north-western Slovenia, where he also attended primary school. Later, from 1846 to 1854, he attended secondary or grammar school in Ljubljana. To pursue his higher education, he relocated to Vienna, at first wanting to study medicine. Only later did he abandon the study of medicine to attend the Oriental Academy, a place for future Austrian diplomats. The Oriental Academy was founded in 1754 based on the Imperial Order by Empress Maria Theresa, with the intention of strengthening Austria's commercial and cultural ties with the Middle East and the Balkans.⁷ To prepare students for careers as diplomats and merchants, the curriculum placed a strong emphasis on general sciences, political science, and languages like Persian, Arabic, and Turkish.⁸ His studies there most strongly influenced his later life and work. In 1859, he finished his training at the Oriental Academy in Vienna and was employed as a diplomat of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.⁹

As Car and Kamin Kajfež write, in terms of diplomacy, he was an expert on Southeastern Europe and the African part of the Turkish Empire. His most notable career achievement, and what he is most known for, was serving as Austro-Hungarian consul in Alexandria, Egypt and Istanbul for ten years, all the way until his appointment as one of the key organisers involved in putting on the 1873 World's Fair in Vienna.¹⁰

Especially during his stay in Egypt, Schwegel established numerous contacts with influential political figures and bankers. In his memoir, Schwegel

⁷ Gruber 2014, 131.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Rugále and Preinfalk 2010, 170.

¹⁰ Car and Kamin Kajfež 2022, 31.

writes that during his stay in Egypt he “found and established his happiness”.¹¹ His great emotional involvement with the land of Egypt is also notable in his personal coat of arms, whose centre is dominated by the Egyptian sphinx.

In 1868, in Alexandria, Schwegel married Maria von Battisti di San Giorgio (1848–1933), and a year later their only child, a daughter named Maria (lovingly called Mici), was born in Egypt.¹² In 1869, Schwegel also bought a large property near his place of birth in today’s Slovenia. In Rečica near Bled, he bought a mansion with a large surrounding property called Grimšče (*Grimschitzhof*), named after the last owners, the Grimschitz family. He employed the well-known architect Max Fabiani (1865–1962) to repair and rework the mansion. Besides the Grimšče, Schwegel also owned a palace in Vienna and a seaside villa in Volosko, Croatia.¹³

At his later post at the embassy in Istanbul, he also mentions working with many of his colleagues from the Oriental Academy in Vienna.¹⁴ His connections, extended work in Egypt and Turkey, and his knowledge of the Middle East and East Asia undoubtedly helped him get the position among the organizers of the World’s Fair in Vienna in 1873. Recent research into the high decorations he received for his work shows that he was the most highly decorated official at the time whose origin was the area of present-day Slovenia.¹⁵ He was ennobled to Ritter in 1870 and later also acquired his noble title of baron in 1875 for his activities and achievements in the field of diplomacy and service to the state during the time of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.¹⁶ Among the higher titles and medals Schwegel received for his contributions to the World’s Fair and especially to setting up the Oriental Department, he also received a high decoration of the Order of the Rising Sun (*Kyokujitsu-shō*

旭日章).¹⁷ The Order of the Rising Sun was Japan’s first national decoration, created in 1875.

Interestingly, Schwegel as a student also worked at the Estate Museum of Carniola (*Krainisch Ständisches Museum*, today National Museum of Slovenia) and for a while even lived with Karl Deschmann (1821–1889), politician, archaeologist, and, at the time, curator at the Estate Museum of Carniola.¹⁸ His time spent there may have ignited a passion for collecting and preserving cultural artefacts, which manifested later in his life. Over the years, he amassed an impressive collection mainly of Egyptian artefacts, which he bought from sellers during the time of his service in Egypt.¹⁹

Schwegel died in 1914 with no surviving children of his own and therefore appointed his nephew Ivan Schwegel (1875–1962) as the heir of his fortune and properties.²⁰ In his will from 1914, he also chose to bequest his entire collection to the National Museum of Slovenia as a way of giving back to the Carniolan people and ensuring that others could continue to enjoy and learn from the items he had acquired through the years. In 1936, the National Museum of Slovenia received a sizeable bequest from Baron Schwegel with the final selection made by his widow.²¹ A large part of that bequest was represented by various Egyptian objects. His experience working at the museum as a young man might have played quite a significant role in his decision to leave such a meaningful legacy.²²

Schwegel, the Oriental Department, and What Came Next

In 1871, Schwegel (at the time consul general in Istanbul) was officially invited by Baron Wilhelm von Schwarz-Senborn (1816–1903) to take over

11 Schwegel 2007, 48.

12 The daughter passed away at the age of six of diphtheria (Rugále and Preinfalk 2010, 172).

13 Rugále and Preinfalk 2010, 170–72.

14 Schwegel 2007, 48.

15 Car and Kamin Kajfež 2022, 21.

16 Rugále and Preinfalk 2010, 170.

17 Car and Kamin Kajfež 2022, 29.

18 Bojc 2014.

19 Furlan 2018, 18; Car and Kamin Kajfež 2022, 21.

20 Rugále and Preinfalk 2010, 172.

21 Furlan 2018, 18; Šmitek 1986, 18.

22 Car and Kamin Kajfež 2022, 21.

the organization and management of the Oriental department, or so-called “Oriental pavilion”, of the Vienna fair. In preparation, Schwegel travelled to Egypt, Anatolia, and Syria in 1871 and 1872.²³ He expressed his excitement at the appointment, describing it as “a most excellent task”, especially from the viewpoint of further developing relations with the East.²⁴ It is confirmed by Bernhard Singer’s 1878 publication *Unsere Orient-Interessen* (*Our Interests in the Orient*), which discusses how Austria’s economic and colonial interests in the Orient not so much territorial ambitions, drove the country to present the Orient on such a large scale within the scope of the World’s Fair in 1873.²⁵

Schwegel volunteered to completely take over readying the pavilions for the Near East and East Asia, starting with Morocco, Tunis, and Egypt, following that with the pavilion for the Ottoman Empire, and finishing with China and Japan.²⁶ Returning to Vienna in 1872, he “invested all his strength into the World’s Fair,”²⁷ through which he also mentions numerous personal audiences with the Emperor discussing the Fair. About his work, he wrote:

I made connections with all the countries from Morocco to Japan, from Abyssinia to Persia, and inland Asia. It was a great pleasure for me to achieve the set goal to such an extent, as it had not happened at any of the previous World exhibitions, neither in London nor in Paris. *Ex Oriente Lux* was the slogan given to me by my patron Prokesch as he sent me on my way. I followed the

motto faithfully and saw with great satisfaction how the Orient, in all its splendour and charm, presented itself to Western Europe and, above all, to my homeland.²⁸

The World’s Fair in Vienna was held from 1 May until 2 November at the Prater, a park located next to the Danube. It stood apart from earlier international expositions due to its programming emphasis on international trade with the East, whereas the major exhibitions in Paris (1867) and London (1862) emphasized the portrayal of technological innovations and manufactured products in an attempt to showcase their host countries as leading colonial and industrial powers.²⁹ The main goal of the Eastern countries’ participation in the Vienna World’s Fair was to further develop and strengthen the trade ties made possible by the new maritime access to the Red Sea following the Suez Canal’s opening in 1869.³⁰

As regards this paper, Japan’s participation is of special importance. In January 1872, the Austro-Hungarian envoy sent a formal invitation to the Japanese government.³¹ With only a year and three months until the exhibition’s opening in Vienna, Japan did not have much time to prepare for the Fair. However, Japan succeeded in doing so, and with great success. The new Japanese government’s efforts to modernize the nation benefited greatly from the Vienna World’s Fair. Japanese participation at the Vienna World’s Fair was directed by the Exhibition Bureau (*Hakurankai Jimukyoku* 博覽會事務局).³² The Bureau’s primary responsibility was to choose Japanese masterpieces and noteworthy domestic goods for the Vienna displays, as well as handle the coordination of all aspects of the

23 Schwegel 2007, 50; Gruber et al. 2012, 45–46.

24 Schwegel 2007, 52.

25 Gethmann and Eckhard 2023, 7–8.

26 Schwegel 2007, 52; in his memoir, Schwegel writes he kept extended correspondence regarding preparations for and later the success of his work on the Vienna World’s Fair, but it is not known if it still exists. Slovene ethnologist and anthropologist Zmago Šmitek writes that Schwegel’s correspondence was among the things bequeathed to the National Museum of Slovenia, but it is yet unknown if there were any letters regarding the above subject (Šmitek 1986, 18).

27 Schwegel 2007, 53.

28 Schwegel 2007, 52.

29 Gethmann and Eckhard 2023, 8.

30 One of the leading figures in this project was also Josef Schwegel as the Austrian consul in Alexandria. He had been instrumental in the establishment of consular relations when the Suez Canal opened (Gethmann and Eckhard 2023, 9).

31 Jahn 2004, 18.

32 Ibid.

Japanese exhibition between Tokyo and Vienna.³³ Gisela Jahn writes:

Such exhibitions required Japan to tailor its products to prevailing international standards. Initially, the country chose to represent the quality and character of its decorative arts by works specially created for the purpose.³⁴

The purpose of this enthusiastic participation was also an attempt to “bridge the gap” with the Western countries and in terms of arts and crafts this meant “preserving local styles and promoting the skills and needs of craftsmen and, on the other hand, catering for foreign taste by cultivating an ‘export style’”.³⁵ From Japan, a total of 72 people, including 41 civil servants and interpreters, 25 architecture builders and landscape gardeners, and 6 foreigners were sent to Vienna. All the members of the Japanese delegation travelled to Europe by way of sea and stayed in Austria for one whole year.³⁶ Traditional and ornamental artworks, including ceramics, cloisonne ware, lacquer ware, and textiles, were on display at the Japanese exhibition. Separate from the main display was a recreation of a Japanese garden, complete with a shrine, and, thanks to the growing interest in Japan at the time, it was said to be particularly popular with the visitors.³⁷

Regarding Japanese ceramics, it is said they “offered a great contrast to China”.³⁸ The Reports describe eleven different types of ceramics that were sent by the Japanese Association of Painters on Pottery and Porcelain, with its headquarters in Edo (in the records Anglicised as Yeddo), to be exhibited at the Vienna World’s Fair and show the work of its members.³⁹ The report on this part

of the exhibition concludes with the following words by Archer⁴⁰: “Altogether to the lover of pottery and porcelain, the Japanese collection was most interesting and instructive, and many medals were awarded.”⁴¹ The sentiment speaks to the impressiveness and positive reception of the exhibitions of pottery and porcelain of East Asian origin, which also seems to reflect the similar sentiments of which, in a more general sense, Schweigel also wrote in his memoirs.⁴² It is clear that Schweigel saw his finished work on the Oriental department as a great success (and apparently so did his superiors); however, the World’s Fair itself as a whole was hindered from achieving economic success due to a stock market crash on 9 May 1873 and the outbreak of cholera infections in Vienna at the time.⁴³

During the World’s Fair, he also established the Committee for the Orient and East Asia (*Comité für den Orient und Ost-Asien*) and put it in charge of examining goods for their suitability for trade and initiating new trade relationships.⁴⁴ The intention was to take as much advantage of the Exhibition as possible for the country’s economic and industrial interests.⁴⁵ In an effort to give the Austrian industry “a thousand ideas” the Committee for the Orient and East Asia was entrusted with scrutinizing the oriental and East Asian exhibits during the Fair.⁴⁶ The committee was part of a

33 Pantzer 2018, 27–28; Jahn 2004, 18.

34 Jahn 2004, 16.

35 Ibid., 19.

36 Cf. Agnes Schwanzer’s paper in this volume.

37 Tokyo National Museum, 2004–2024; Gethmann and Eckhard 2023, 11.

38 Archer 1874, 149.

39 Ibid., 152.

40 Thomas Croxson Archer (1817–1885), professor and director of the Industrial Museum of Scotland (later Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art).

41 Archer 1874, 153.

42 Schweigel 2007, 52.

43 Gruber et al. 2012, 44–45.

44 Schweigel 2007, 55; Gethmann and Eckhard 2023, 10.

45 His original intentions seem not to have been realized to his complete satisfaction, since he wrote in his later years, “But perhaps, on the evening of my life, I will finally be able to bring this institution, which was the fruit of my activity at the World’s Fair, by some other way than the one I originally intended, to the promotion and advancement of our economic and political interests in the East” (Schweigel 2007, 55; translation by author).

46 Gethmann and Eckhard 2023, 19; Curatorium Österreichisches Handelsmuseum 1900, 9.

圖之部內口入所品對本日館本場會覽博國澳

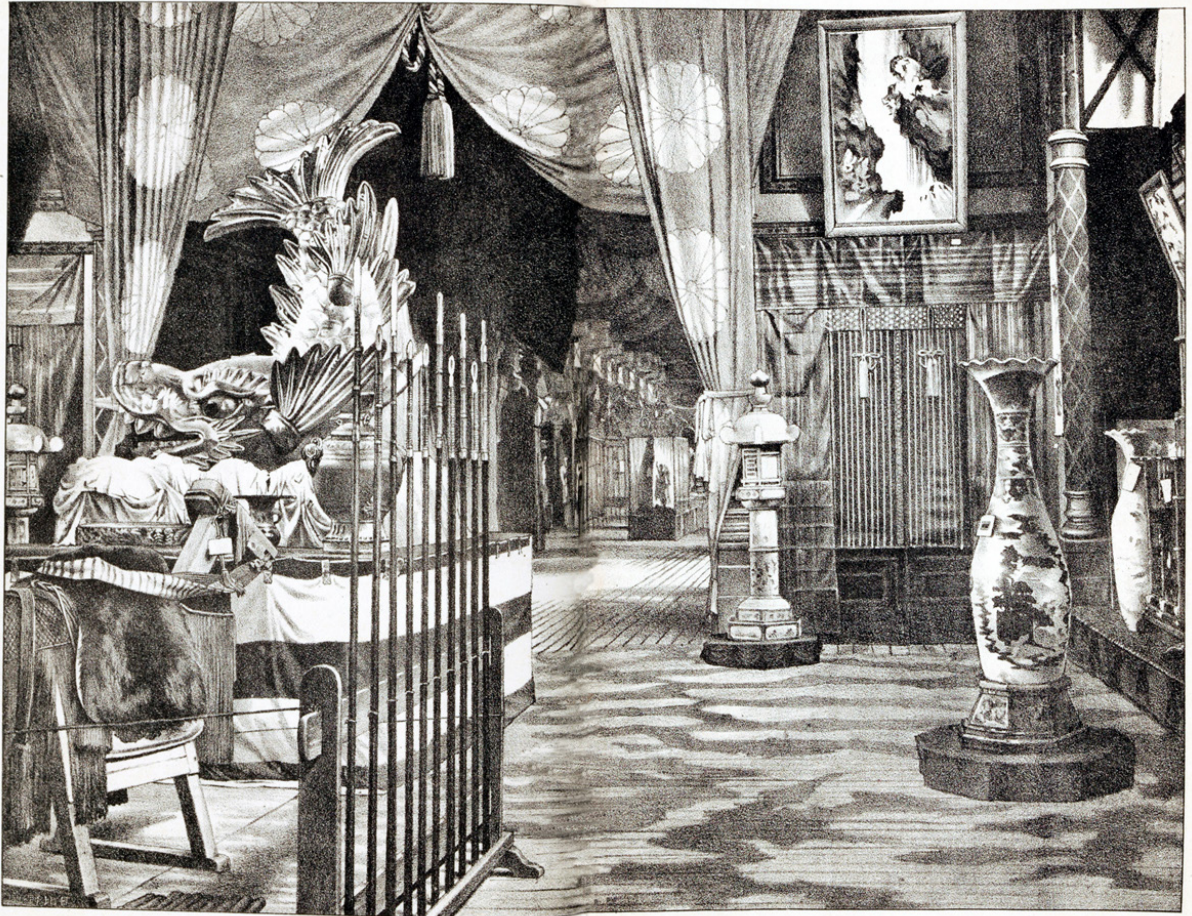


Fig. 2: Illustration of the entrance to the Japanese pavilion. Unknown author. Wikimedia, public domain (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese_pavilion_in_Expo_1873.jpg).

larger association called *Cercle Oriental*,⁴⁷ consisting of diplomats, economists, manufacturers, and politicians.⁴⁸

After the Fair's end, the committee only grew bigger and stronger and presented the base for the establishment of a new museum.⁴⁹ On 21 October 1874, one year after the exhibition, the committee and the *Cercle Oriental* thus assembled again, this time going by the name of Oriental Museum

(*Orientalisches Museum*).⁵⁰ The museum was founded in Vienna with the intention of spreading knowledge about the Middle East and Asia. Its heart was a large pavilion, which originally stood at the eastern part of the World's Fair. It held a library, several galleries, and a collection of art objects acquired during the mentioned exhibition.⁵¹ China, Japan, Tunisia, and to a lesser extent Turkey all donated numerous objects from the exhibition to the museum.⁵² The museum received these objects either through exchanges or as gifts, most of them from the Oriental

47 *Cercle Oriental* provided both a house for the fair's trade delegation as well as an educational museum, demonstrating the potentials and varieties of oriental(ized) art (Gethmann and Eckhard 2023, 21).

48 Gethmann and Eckhard 2023, 19.

49 Schwegel 2007, 54.

50 Gethmann and Eckhard 2023, 22.

51 Ersoy 2015, 47.

52 Schwegel 2007, 54.

and East Asian section of the World's Fair.⁵³ In 1886, the Oriental Museum's name was changed to Trade Museum (*k. k. Österreichisches Handelsmuseum*), which housed a commercial, an arts and crafts, and an oriental arts and crafts collection. As Gruber et al. write, the museum collections were regularly added to with exceptional items like rugs, silk garments, and metal and ceramic objects, and in 1892 even took over the rich Japanese collection of Heinrich von Siebold (1852–1908).⁵⁴

After the closure of the *Handelsmuseum* in 1907, the objects ended up at various other Austrian museums, and new connections are still being discovered. The majority of objects from the former Oriental Museum are today housed in the Asian Collection of the Museum of Applied Arts (*Museum für Angewandte Kunst*), in the collection of the Technical Museum Vienna (*Technisches Museum Wien*), and at the World Museum (*Weltmuseum Wien*) in Vienna.⁵⁵

While many of the paths that these objects took to these various museums are still unclear and in need of additional attention, the Vienna Technical Museum has conducted expansive research into objects that came to the museum by way of the Vienna World's Fair and later the *Handelsmuseum*. As Susanne Gruber et al. write:

The first indication that certain objects from the commodity collection of the Vienna Technical Museum were on display at the Vienna World Exhibition in 1873 came from labels on sample books with Japanese silk fabrics [...] Another clue was found on a label attached to wooden tea caddies. The accompanying pendant has "Cercle Oriental." printed on the back [...] It can therefore be assumed with a high degree of certainty that these two groups of objects come from the holdings of the 1873 World Exhibition.⁵⁶

53 Gruber et al. 2012, 51–52.

54 Ibid., 52.

55 Gruber 2013, 89; 2014, 132.

56 Gruber et al. 2012, 88.

Specific labels used by old museums can provide valuable information for tracing the provenance of individual objects or groups of objects, in this case, the objects that were originally exhibited at the Vienna World's Fair in 1873. By examining these labels, researchers can uncover important clues about the object's history and help us with objects' provenance research. This was also the case in researching a Japanese cup from the Ceramics Collection at the National Museum of Slovenia, which came to the museum as part of Schwegel's legacy.

Schwegel's Cup at the National Museum of Slovenia and the Connection to Vienna World's Fair

According to written sources, individuals and whole families belonging to the Carniolan nobility first started to acquire Chinese porcelain in the early 17th century.⁵⁷ To the higher Carniolan social strata, porcelain of East Asian origin was only available through trading networks within Europe and not through direct contact with China or Japan. Estate inventories⁵⁸ of wealthy noble and burgher families and individuals held at the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia allow us to trace the presence of porcelain in Carniola back to the early 17th century. The earliest document confirming the presence of porcelain is the estate inventory of Georg (Jurij) Bittorfer⁵⁹ (?–1618) from 1618.⁶⁰ Bittorfer was a lawyer living in Ljubljana who was ennobled in 1615, three

57 Kos 2009, 155.

58 Estate inventories were legal documents recording all material possessions of a certain, usually wealthy, person as well as what would happen to these possessions upon this person's death. The earliest document of this kind in Slovene lands is dated 3 June 1548. It must be noted that estate inventories were only necessary in cases where the descendants of the deceased person were still minors at the time of their ancestor's death, and a third person would be appointed as executor of the inherited estate until the descendant came of age (Žvanut 1994, 186).

59 In the few sources that mention him, both the German (Georg Bittorfer) and the Slovene version (Jurij Bittorfer) of his name is used, sometimes within the same document.

60 Kos 2009, 155.

years before his death.⁶¹ Among the items mentioned is one porcelain bowl. This is the first documented piece of Chinese (or any East Asian) porcelain in Slovenia. At the time, porcelain was mostly owned by the Carniolan aristocracy: they were the ones who could, at the time, afford such luxury objects of high prestige. Porcelain was, of course, considered a prestigious and exotic commodity because of its complex manufacturing process and because it had to be imported from East Asia until the 18th century.

Most of these porcelains and other ceramics gradually found their way to the museum. What is today known as the National Museum of Slovenia was founded as a regional museum for the Austrian region populated by a majority of Slovenes, namely Carniola. It was officially called the Estate Museum of Carniola (*Krainisch Ständisches Museum*).⁶² Soon after the museum's establishment, in 1823, the governor of Carniola Josef Kamilo Schmidburg (1779–1846) sent a formal letter to his “homeland's friends of science” (*An die Literatoren und Freunde der Wissenschaften in Krain*), asking them to donate objects for the new museum.⁶³ In this way, donating antiques, documents, and artefacts also became an expression of patriotic consciousness and a source of pride as well as a display of status. As a result, the museum received several hundred objects, including East Asian ceramics and other objects of East Asian origin.⁶⁴ These early donations mark the start of the collection of ceramics at the National Museum of Slovenia.⁶⁵ Under the directive of Emperor Francis I (1804–1835), the museum was renamed the Provincial Museum of Carniola or *Krainisches Landesmuseum* in 1826.⁶⁶

61 Žvanut 1994, 162.

62 For more on first established museums and their roles in the 19th century, see Kos (2020); Kos 2020, 17.

63 Kos 2020, 19–20.

64 Kos 2017, 153–54.

65 Berdajs 2023, 153.

66 In 1882, the museum was renamed the Regional Museum for Carniola – Rudolfinum (*Krainisches Landesmuseum – Rudolfinum*) in honour of the heir to the throne, later, in 1921 it was renamed the National Museum. In 1997 The National Museum was renamed the National Museum of Slovenia (National Museum of Slovenia n.d.).

At the time, museum inventory records were not kept regularly, so it is unfortunately impossible to fully document the types and numbers of objects. Starting in 1831, however, the museum published all monetary donations and object acquisitions in a special column entitled “Landes-Museum in Laibach” in *Illyrisches Blatt*, a culturally oriented weekly supplement to the paper *Laibacher Zeitung*.⁶⁷ East Asian porcelains soon began to appear on the published lists, together with the names of their original owners. While research on the objects themselves is still in progress, several porcelain pieces from the collection have been directly connected to members of the Carniolan aristocracy, including several prominent 19th-century individuals (for example donors such as Count (1771–1844) and Countess Hochenwart (1762–1853), Baroness Lazarini (1794–1833), and Viktor Smole (1842–1885), among others), as well as a single Japanese cup bequeathed by Josef Schwegel, today housed in the Ceramics Collection of the mentioned museum.

Ceramics of East Asian origin comprise only a smaller part of a bigger Ceramics Collection kept at the National Museum of Slovenia, however, it is still one of the biggest collections of East Asian objects in the country. According to current research and identification, it consists of approximately 240 objects of Chinese and Japanese origin. Of these, approximately two-thirds are of Chinese and one-third of Japanese origin. A majority of pieces identified to be Chinese or Japanese in origin fall into the greater grouping of objects made specifically for export to Western (in this case European) markets.

In recent years, when the research on the Ceramics Collection at the National Museum of Slovenia was underway, a Japanese porcelain cup was also found to have been a part of Schwegel's bequest. In 1936, the National Museum of Slovenia received a sizeable collection from Schwegel (mostly consisting of Egyptian statues), with the final selection having been made by his widow.⁶⁸ Among the documents and objects, the museum also received a small

67 Kos 2017, 154.

68 Šmitek 1986, 18.

Japanese bowl with a lid.⁶⁹ The cup (or bowl) and its lid are decorated in a somewhat atypical Japanese Imari style⁷⁰ with a repeating pattern of stylized floral motifs in overglaze red and gilt that strongly resemble heraldic signs (fig. 3).⁷¹ On the bottom of the cup there is also the small, stylized Japanese character *fuku* 福 (fig. 4) in underglaze blue, meaning “happiness”. The small *fuku* mark is a good indicator that the porcelain object was made in Arita 有田, a small town in the Saga 佐賀 Prefecture on the island of Kyūshū 九州 that is well known for its ceramics workshops throughout history. This type of porcelain was largely made according to the taste of the European aristocracy and therefore fits the category of export porcelain. Due to its popularity abroad, many companies made Imari-style porcelain, but almost none of it bears any markings indicating by who or where it was made.⁷²

There was some basic information provided with the lidded cup, which is still kept in the museum’s storage along with the object: a small printed label, damaged, but still providing information on the type of porcelain as being “Imari” (fig. 4).

Additional research on the object’s provenance can be conducted through information provided via the online collection of the Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) in Vienna. In their Asia Collection, we can find an identical lidded cup as well as some interesting information (fig. 6).

The MAK data states that the identical object found its way to their collection when the *Handelsmuseum* closed, and it is dated as old as “at least

1873”, which is the year the World’s Fair was held in Vienna.⁷³ In this case, the labels can give us additional insight into the object’s history. The bowl kept at MAK and the bowl kept at the National Museum of Slovenia both have old printed labels on brown paper added. The labels include an inscription reading “*Teschale mit Deckel aus Imari*”, meaning “Tea bowl with lid from Imari”. While this gives us additional confirmation as to the object’s origin, it also confirms that both objects came from the collection of the former *Handelsmuseum*, as the brown labels match those used by the mentioned institution.⁷⁴

This fact can also through the extensive research conducted on the objects and labels connected to the Vienna World’s Fair and its legacy conducted by the Vienna Museum of Technology and Susanne Gruber (fig. 7).

Comparing the labels shows that they adhere to the same format and printing font, and have identically constructed inventory numbers in their upper left part, with the object’s name below. Upon confirmation that these kinds of labels were used in the former *Handelsmuseum*, we can confirm, that Schwegel’s Japanese cup (as well as the identical cup kept at MAK) was once a part of the collection of the Oriental Museum, where it most likely came via the Vienna World’s Fair in 1873. By researching the history of Josef Schwegel, his connection to the Vienna World’s Fair, as well as the different paths many objects took after the event, we managed to greatly enrich the provenance data of the lidded Japanese cup kept at the National Museum of Slovenia. It was made in Arita, Japan, most likely in the second half of the 19th century. Then it was transported to Europe, to Vienna, as part of the Japanese exhibition at the World’s Fair. Later, the cup became a part of the Oriental Museum’s collection and, in the end, somehow came into Schwegel’s possession. Schwegel’s bequest

69 At the time of writing, the mentioned Japanese porcelain cup is the only object of East Asian origins included in the collection of objects in the so-called Schwegel Collection held at the National Museum of Ljubljana.

70 Imari style is a decorative style of Japanese porcelain, which is named after the Japanese port of the same name (Imari 伊万里), from which, from the second half of the 17th century onwards, Japanese porcelain and other ceramics were exported to the port of the coastal city of Nagasaki 長崎 (and from there to Europe and later to America). The term is commonly used to describe porcelains made at the kilns near Arita.

71 Kos 2017, 302.

72 Impey 2003, 31–33; Rotondo-McCord and Buften 1997, 8–16; Schiffer 2000, 13.

73 Museum of Applied Arts n.d. b.

74 The labels were compared with the help of Dr. Bettina Zorn during an online workshop *East Asian Art in the Wake of the 1873 Vienna World’s Fair* (13 June 2023) on new research being conducted on the topic of the 1873 Vienna World’s Fair and its legacy.



Fig. 3: Lidded cup (or bowl). Glazed porcelain with red and gold overglaze decoration and a *fuku* 福 ("happiness") mark in underglaze blue. H: 8.8 cm; Ø: 11.5 cm. Japan. Meiji period. 18th or 19th century. Bequest of Josef Schwegel. Ceramics collection. N 15177 and N 15178. National Museum of Slovenia.



Fig. 4: *Fuku* mark on the lid. Bequest of Josef Schwegel. Ceramics collection. N 15177 and N 15178. National Museum of Slovenia.



Fig. 5: The torn label indicating the object has come from Imari or is decorated in Imari style. National Museum of Slovenia.



Fig. 6: Lidded cup (or bowl). Glazed porcelain with red and gold overglaze decoration and a *fuku* 福 ("happiness") mark in underglaze blue. H (bowl): 6.1 cm; Ø (bowl): 11.7 cm; h (lid): 3 cm; Ø (lid): 10.1 cm. Arita, Japan. Meiji period. 18th or 19th century. Asia Collection. OR 975. Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna.



Fig. 7: Japanese tea caddies (4 pieces). Wood. H: 7.5 cm; W: 14.5 cm; D: 22.5 cm. Tokyo, Japan. Meiji period. 18th or 19th century. Warenkundesammlung. 78982 1-4. Vienna Museum of Technology (Technisches Museum Wien).

made it part of the Ceramics Collection at the National Museum of Slovenia, where it is still kept today. The question of how Schwegel actually acquired the cup, which was obviously once already part of a museum collection, remains unknown. In his memoirs, Schwegel notes that, along with the many accolades he received for the organization of the Oriental department at the Vienna World's Fair, he specifically mentions an honorary gift he received from the government of Japan, which included two porcelain vases and a lacquer box.⁷⁵ The cup seems not to be connected with the mentioned gift.

⁷⁵ Schwegel 2007, 54.

Conclusion

Through an overview of Schwegel's life and work and through the methodological approach of comparison, we were able to establish a connection between the cup from the National Museum of Slovenia and its complicated and dynamic provenance linked to the Vienna World's Fair, shedding light on its journey from Japan, to Europe, and finally its current location in Slovenia. This research not only highlighted the historical significance of Schwegel's work through analysis of reports and literature about the Fair, but also complemented these facts with a personal look at Schwegel himself through reading the parts of his memoirs where he subjectively described his work and his views of the project.

The lidded Japanese cup, which catalysed a more detailed and complete review of his life and his position among Slovene bequestors of East Asian objects that are today part of Slovene museum collections, is only one of the many different objects (but the only object of East Asian origin) Schwegel bequeathed to the National Museum of Slovenia. However, even just this one object showed the richness and complicated paths of object histories and provenances, and illuminated a direct connection between present-day Slovenia and the 1873 Vienna World's Fair. This newfound connection suggests that there may be more artefacts and objects from the Fair scattered across various collections at Slovene museums and other public institutions, waiting to be identified and linked back to this pivotal event in history. However, delving deeper into this topic requires extensive research and investigation, as the lack of sources and documentation presents a significant challenge to unravelling the provenance of many objects, even if their mere appearance strongly suggests the link to the World's Fair in Vienna.

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- že vseeno« (Josef Baron von Schwegel, a diplomat: "... I Have Awarded Abundant Orders, Among Them Grand and Small Crosses, and Decorations of All Kinds, Which Some People are Very Happy About, but Which I Eventually Grew to Not Care About")." *Argo* 65 (2): 20–31.
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Ferenc Hopp, Josef Haas and the Making of the Moongate in the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Budapest

Györgyi Fajcsák

On entering the interesting summer home, we immediately notice the garden, the like of which exists nowhere else in the capital, or even in the country. It is as if a part of smiling-heavened Japan had been wafted here by magic to the very centre of the capital. Exuberant Oriental climbing plants and rare flowers, competing in rich, colourful splendour, capture our attention, while peeking out to surprise us from between the bushes and the flowers are Hindu idols, Chinese and Japanese vases and sculptures, among them a remarkable elephant carved out of sienite and a stone monument weighing down upon a tortoise. At the entrance is a round-portalled Chinese ornamental gate, full of beautiful statuettes. There is even a Japanese bamboo bridge, and in one corner of the garden, a little Japanese garden hut. ... The exotic garden is itself one of the most fascinating attractions of our capital city.¹

The article from which this paragraph was taken was published in a popular Hungarian weekly in 1911. It clearly demonstrates that the Oriental Garden of the wealthy globe-trotter Ferenc Hopp (1833–1919), bordering the main avenue in Budapest, was popular and well known in the capital before the First World War. The garden was

immediately celebrated for its special atmosphere.² Hopp filled it with exotic plants and curious objects which were the wonder of the contemporary press.

The largest and most spectacular object in the villa garden was the Chinese moon gate which was erected by the founder of the museum, Ferenc Hopp, with the help of Josef Haas (1847–1896) who was the vice-consul and subsequently consul of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Shanghai between 1883 and 1896. Their surviving correspondence and related pictorial and written documents (16 items in the Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts) are remarkable not only for the way they show us the “nuts and bolts” of how such a monument was constructed, but also for the insight they give into cooperation between peers in the late 19th century. They also prove that there was direct contact between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and China.

Ferenc Hopp, the Founder of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Budapest

Ferenc Hopp was a patron of the arts, an art collector and photographer as well as one of the most travelled and well-to-do men in Hungary during the age of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

1 *Vasárnapi Újság* [Sunday Times] 1911, 28.

2 Bagi, Fajcsák and Válóczy 2023.



Fig. 1: Mór Erdélyi (?): Ferenc Hopp in front of the moon gate in his garden, Budapest, c. 1895. Photograph Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts.

(1867–1918).³ He was born in Fulnek (now Czech Republic) and in 1845 was sent as an optician's apprentice to the company of Stefano Calderoni in Pest. Later, he worked for Weinberger Opticians in Vienna (1853–1855) and Benoit Kahn Opticians in New York (1857–1861). In 1862, after returning to Pest, he became a partner in the Calderoni Company, which he took over in 1864. The company, which first traded in optician products, soon became the best-equipped photography shop in Budapest. Ferenc Hopp not only bought in the newest models, but as a photographer himself, gained a detailed knowledge of the equipment he sold through his experiments in domestic photography. In 1871, Calderoni and Company joined in the booming production of school equipment that responded to the Eötvös educational reforms enacted by the Hungarian politician József Eötvös (1813–1871) and began to sell a wide range of teaching tools and visual aids for schools. This proved highly profitable for the firm. Hopp organised the Hungarian production of school visual aids, and, commissioned by the state, supplied schools with these and with optical instruments.

Hopp attended the World's Fairs in Paris in 1867, 1878, 1889 and 1900, in Vienna in 1873, and in Chicago in 1893. The items that featured in the exhibitions, especially the Paris World's Fairs of 1867 and 1878 and the Vienna World's Fair (*Weltausstellung*) of 1873—such as woodcuts, small (lacquer) objects, enamelled metal objects, textiles and pieces of furniture—served many as a starting point for appreciating East Asian art, and gave Ferenc Hopp and other Hungarian travellers the impetus to set off for East Asia and discover other cultures and civilizations.⁴ The *Weltausstellung* in Vienna in 1873 marked a breakthrough for Japanese representation at the World's Fairs, for this was the first time that Japan exhibited in its own right and according to a home-grown concept. The new Meiji government made its first official appearance in Vienna, and this event played an important part in determining the way Japonisme

developed in Central Europe, changing forever Japan's place in the world and the way the nation was viewed by outsiders.⁵

There were numerous Hungarians among the globe-trotters who were driven by a desire to get to know East Asia and the world in general. The Hungarian Geographical Society (established in 1872) played a crucial role in helping them prepare for their journeys, and frequently published their accounts of them afterwards. From 1876 on, Ferenc Hopp travelled extensively (North and Central America, 1876; Western basin of the Mediterranean Sea, 1878; European tour, 1880, etc.). Between 1882 and 1914, he travelled around the world five times (1882–1883, 1894, 1903, 1905, 1913–1914).

Japan was his favourite destination in Asia. He was not alone in his interest in the island country, which had recently been forced to open its borders: there was a general pursuit of encyclopaedic knowledge about the Meiji period (1867–1912), while at the same time, Japonisme was extremely fashionable and the purchase of Japanese art works had become feverish. Hopp visited Japan and China three times (in 1883, in 1903, and in 1913–1914). He regularly selected artefacts from the *curio* shops in Asia.

In the second half of the 19th century, Japanese art served as an artistic example for European collectors of Oriental artefacts. Japanese objects were appreciated for their technical perfection, in particular their use of material and modelling. As Japan underwent the process of modernisation, European interest in China cooled; Chinese art lost some of its value in comparison to that of Japan. However, as soon as attention turned towards the traditions and historical origins of Japanese art—namely, Chinese art—the situation took a radical turn.

Hopp stepped on Chinese soil for the first time in March 1883. Hong Kong, the southern seaport founded under British colonial rule, was his first station. After visiting Macao, he sailed up the Pearl River to Canton (Guangzhou), taking

3 For his life and activity, see Ferenczy (2008).

4 Fajcsák 2007a.

5 Yoshida 1990; Nagamatsu 2008; Fajcsák 2020.

in the sights of this truly Chinese city on foot and by palanquin in two and a half days.⁶ Canton enchanted him. “I would like to stay here longer,” he wrote home.⁷ He found it much more interesting than he had been led to expect. On his return to Hong Kong, he bought his first Chinese keepsakes (including carvings and ceramics) and sent home a box of curiosities, before leaving on 22 March to sail north along the coast of China aboard the Douglas steamer.⁸

After a stopover in Amoy (Xiamen), he put into port in Foochow (Fuzhou), the capital of Fujian Province, on 25 March 1883.

I arrived here at one yesterday by way of Swatow and Amoy, and sail on to Shanghai tomorrow aboard the China Merchants Steamer, the *Hal-Shin*, arriving on 31 March, hopefully in good health. Today I went to the Chinese city and was taken on a five-hour tour by palanquin. I am very pleased with my guide. I have been able to observe real Chinese life in this city.⁹

He arrived in Wenzhou on 28 March and on 30 March reached Shanghai, where he stayed at the Hotel de Colonie. He met a number of foreigners in the city: “... I had lunch with Min-Youg-Ilk,¹⁰ a Korean prince, with ministerial counsellor Li Tau-Yuan, as well with our consul, Mr Haas, the Japanese head consul, Mr Shimigawa,¹¹ and the Korean foreign minister, Mr T. [sic] G. v.

Möllendorff.”¹² A few days later he sailed north to Tianjin and from there he travelled to Beijing and the Great Wall.¹³

According to Hopp’s letters, he arrived in Beijing on 9 April 1883, where, besides seeing the important sights, he bought a considerable number of objects. In the Beijing guidebook¹⁴ found in his library Hopp marked the places he saw. He visited the Great Lama Temple (雍和宮 *Yonghegong*), the Confucius Temple (孔廟 *Kongmiao*), the Drum Tower (鼓樓 *Gulou*) and the Bell Tower (鐘樓 *Zhonglou*), the Temple of Heaven (天壇 *Tiantan*), the Marble or Marco Polo Bridge (盧溝橋 *Lugou-qiao*), the Astronomical Observatory (古觀象台 *Guguan xiangtai*), and the embassies of every nation. He probably also visited the Buddhist shrines of Fragrant Hills (香山 *Xiangshan*). According to his journal, he made his purchases in the bazaar and in curio shops, and availed himself of the services of P. Kierulff, as advertised at the end of the guidebook. He bought, among other things, porcelain Buddhist altar ornaments (Hopp Museum inv. nos. 1303 and 2100, for 60 and 72 crowns), a 17th-century late-Ming blue and white flask vase (inv. no. 2397, for 60 crowns) and a pair of cloisonné enamel vases (inv. nos. 1519 and 5961, for 40 crowns). He also found in curio shops objects such as a jardiniere from the Qianlong period (inv. no. 1249, for 150 crowns) and a tile with the eight Buddhist fortune signs and swastikas (inv. no. 5369),¹⁵ which have survived in his collection. In another letter, dated 20 April, he mentions that he brought

6 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.144 Letter of Ferenc Hopp to his colleague, Julius Singer from Canton on 19 March 1883.

7 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1678/1 Postcard of Ferenc Hopp to Emil Reichardt from Canton to Budapest on 19 March 1883.

8 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.164 Letter of Ferenc Hopp to Calderoni Company from Hong Kong on 22 March 1883.

9 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.165 Postcard of Ferenc Hopp from Fuzhou on 26 March 1883.

10 Min Young-hwan 민영환, 閔泳煥 (1861–1905).

11 Shinagawa Tadamichi 品川忠道 (1841–1891).

12 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1524. Letter of Ferenc Hopp dated Peking, 20 April 1883; Paul Georg von Möllendorff (1847–1901) was a German linguist and diplomat. In 1869 he joined the Imperial Maritime Customs Service in Shanghai. From 1882 he acted as adviser to the Korean government.

13 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.199. Greeting card of Ferenc Hopp to his nephew, Ferenc Lux from Beijing on 20 April 1883; Fajcsák 2008, 116–35.

14 *Guide for Tourists to Peking and its Environs* 1876. Key to the Plan of the City of Peking. P. Kierulff advertises his hotel, his shop selling travel accessories, and its services in acquiring curios.

15 Fajcsák 2007b, Cat No. 135.



Fig. 2: Anonymous: Ferenc Hopp at the Great Wall of China and his attendants. China, 1883. Illustration from the Jubilee Album Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFA_A. 383.

away a large brick¹⁶ from the Great Wall. “I already packed my purchases yesterday, in two days I am returning to Tientsin and Shanghai.”¹⁷ In addition to these purchases, now in the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, we know from written sources that Hopp also bought pieces of Chinese attire (women’s shoes, child’s dress) and other cloisonné enamels, bronzes and pieces of porcelain.

Hopp returned to Shanghai at the beginning of May. “I spent the whole day on Monday in Hotel

Keller packing so I could send home the curiosities I bought in Peking...”¹⁸ On 4 May he left Shanghai for Japan. One object is a reminder of his last days in Shanghai. Josef Haas, Austria–Hungary’s vice-consul at the time, gave him a white-glazed tile from the famous “white tower” of Nanjing as a gift, with the following inscription: “Present from Josef Haas, Austro–Hungarian vice-consul, to Ferenc Hopp, 2 May 1883.”¹⁹

16 It is preserved to date in the Chinese collection of the Hopp Museum, Inv. no.: HFM_713.1-2.

17 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A. 199.

18 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.146. Letter of Ferenc Hopp to his colleague Julius Singer from Shanghai on 1 May 1883.

19 Fajcsák 2011, Cat. No. 133. The Porcelain Tower of Nanjing was one of those Chinese historic buildings that became exceedingly famous in Europe. The Da Bao’en monastery

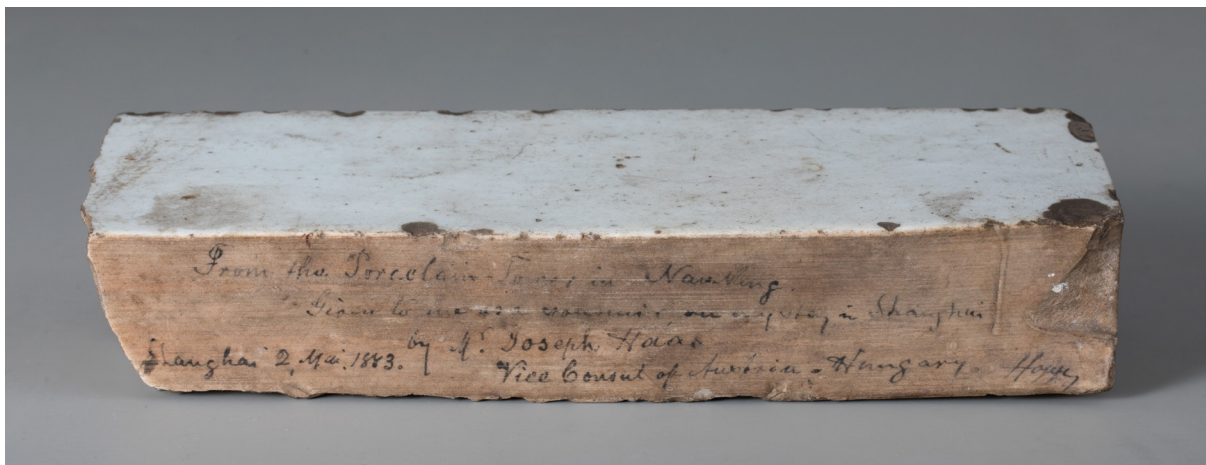


Fig. 3: Rectangular porcelain tile from the porcelain tower in Nanjing and its inscription. Porcelain with white glaze, China, Ming period, 1420s Nanjing, from the pagoda of the *Da Bao'en* monastery. L.: 23.7 cm, W.: 7.7 cm. Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFM_584.

Ferenc Hopp completed his first trip around the world in 1882–1883. In 1885, needing more and more space for his ever-expanding collection, he bought a villa with a garden on the Andrassy Avenue in Budapest. From this time on, he started to transform his garden into one of the most magical sights of the city. Nowhere in his surviving correspondence or papers does Ferenc Hopp ever mention where he first encountered monuments or statues such as those he put up in his garden. However, his decision to build an ornamental Chinese garden gate and purchase a stele standing on a tortoise must have stemmed from personal experience. Probably his first trip to China gave him the main inspiration. On his first tour of the globe,

Hopp had visited the famous botanical gardens in Buitenzorg (now Bogor, Indonesia), a Dutch colonial city on West Java. It seems more than probable that the experience moved him so deeply that he decided to create similar surroundings of his own in Budapest.

Josef Haas, a Diplomat of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and China officially established diplomatic relations in 1869. Until 1883, however, it was held by British diplomats and then by the German ambassador Max von Brandt (1835–1920), who was Germany's ambassador to Beijing from 1875 to 1893. China did not send a representative to the capital of the Monarchy, Vienna until 1902,²⁰ the Monarchy soon sent a diplomat to the Heavenly Kingdom (Consul General Heinrich Freiherr von Calice 1831–1912), using the opportunity provided by the treaty and the administration of foreign affairs to establish a consulate in Shanghai in

(大報恩寺 *Da bao'en si*) stood on the Zhubao Mountain, outside the walls of Nanjing, China's capital in the early Ming period. It was Emperor Yongle (reigned 1403–1424) who ordered the pagoda of the Buddhist monastery to be built in commemoration of his parents.

The pagoda had been destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion (1853–1854). Numerous foreign travellers took home larger or smaller pieces of the ruins as souvenirs. L-shaped porcelain tiles, coated with white glaze on one side, constituted the characteristic casing material of the pagoda. This gift piece is a glazed part of such an L-shaped unit. White porcelain was exceedingly expensive, and, as such, was rarely used as building material in China. The tiles were made in the Zhushan Imperial manufacture, Jingdezhen. For analogies, see Harrison-Hall (2001, Chapter 18, Items 9 and 10).

20 Józsa 1966, 48. Li Fengbao 李鳳苞 (1834–1887) appointed to Ambassador of China in Berlin and from there he represented the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1878 to 1884. In 1884 Xu Jingcheng 許景澄 (1845–1900) became the Ambassador of China who also based in Berlin.

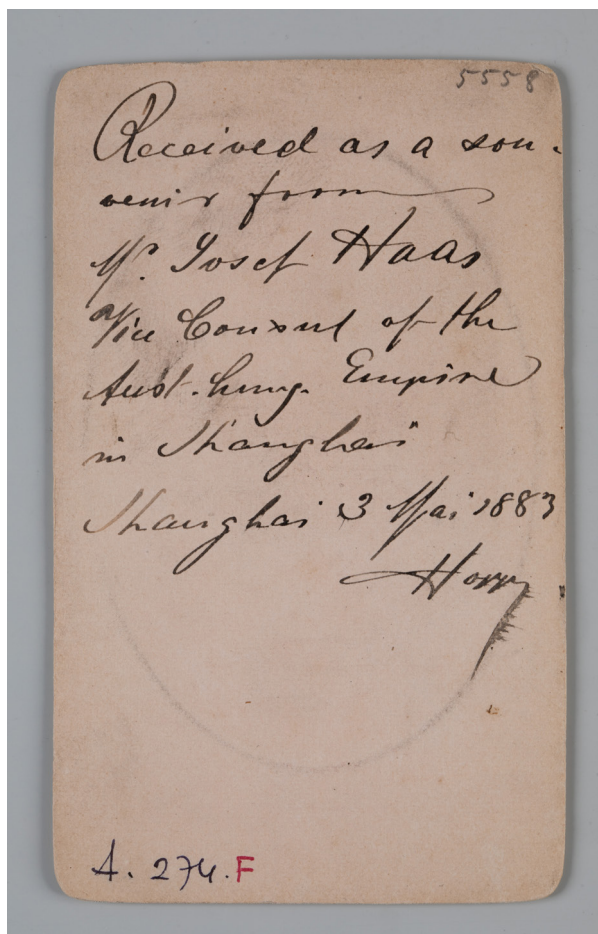


Fig. 4: Portrait of Josef Haas. Photograph. Shanghai, around 1880. Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFA_A.274.

December 1869. At the Vienna *Weltausstellung* in 1873, the Chinese government offered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs two appointment certificates for maritime customs officers.²¹ The Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service, which had been established in 1854, was controlled by the Chinese central government, but at senior levels the Service was largely staffed by foreigners. Its main aim was to collect maritime trade taxes,

but its responsibilities included domestic customs administration, postal administration, harbour and waterway management, weather reporting and the like, operating in the southern Chinese ports such as Shanghai, Canton, Ningbo, Xiamen and Fuzhou. Officers from the Monarchy served in Shanghai.

Austro-Hungarian consular representation in Hong Kong had deeper roots: Baron Gustav von Overbeck (1830–1894) was given a consular commission as early as 1864, when he was charged with representing the Monarchy in this important city of the British Empire.

In Shanghai, Rudolf Schlick (1837–1902) was the Consul of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

²¹ The Hungarian representative of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was Ödön Faragó (1853–1925), a Hungarian customs officer who had worked at the service of the Chinese Empire for several years. He travelled extensively in the region of the Yangtze, and visited major cities (Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin). He wrote reports of his experiences on a regular basis (Faragó 1874; 1877; 1879; 1880; 1882).

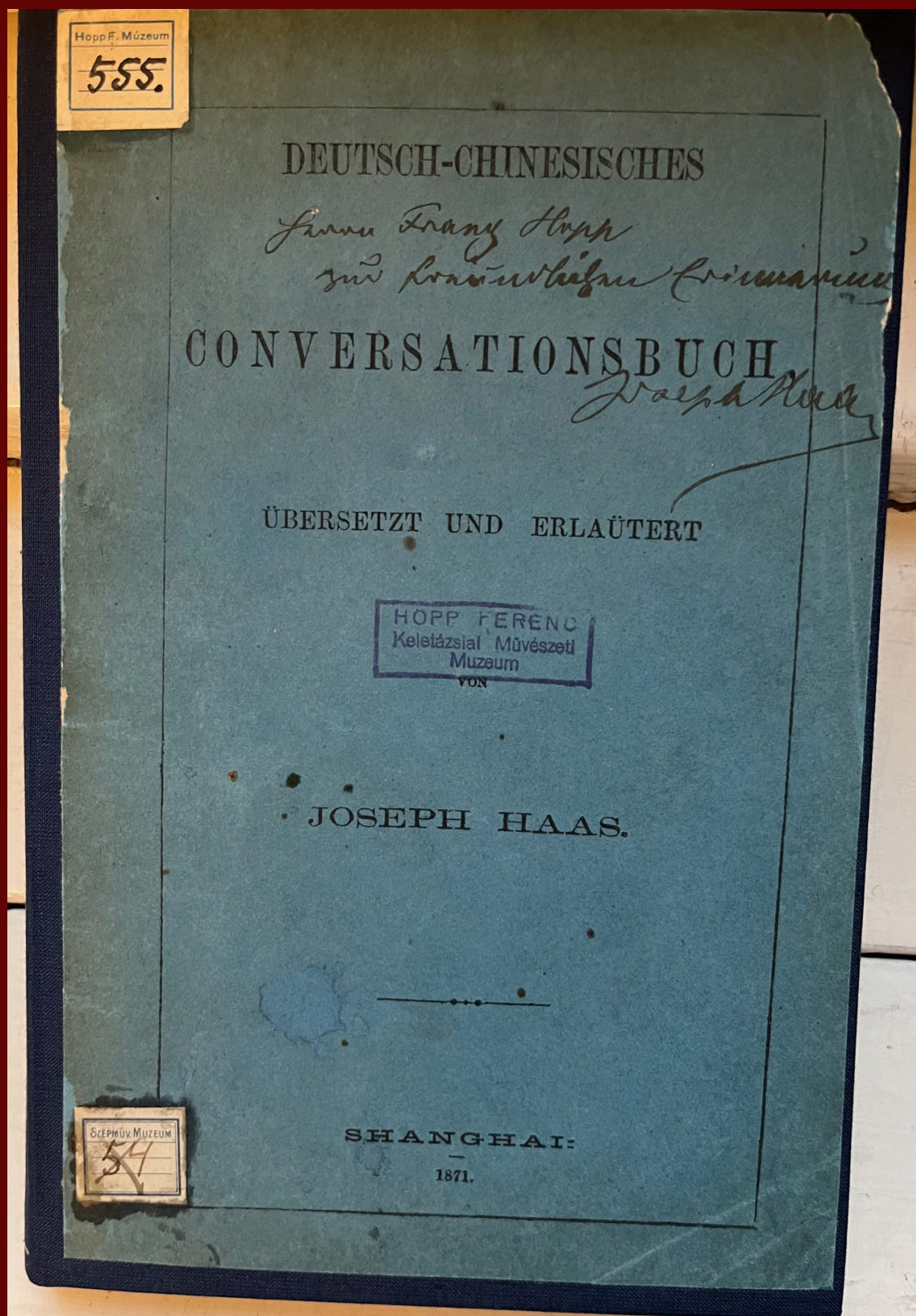


Fig. 5: *Deutsch-Chinesisches Conversationsbuch* with dedication of Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp, Shanghai, 1871. Library of Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Inv. No.: 484.

between 1868–1872.²² It was in this last year that he was joined there by a compatriot who was to spend long decades as a diplomat in China: Josef Haas.

Josef Haas was born into a diplomatic family in Tokat (Anatolia) in 1847. The son of a diplomat, Josef studied in the Theresianum in Vienna, graduating in 1865. In December 1866, aged just nineteen, he arrived in Hong Kong, where he seems to have enjoyed the patronage of Baron Gustav von Overbeck. Haas studied Chinese in Canton, Beijing and Shanghai and, while still in his early twenties, started to work as an interpreter and linguist in the diplomatic service of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. He served in Shanghai from 1872 and later became the vice-consul of the Monarchy in Shanghai. He was charged with the establishment of the Korean Customs Service, and in 1882–1885 had close contact with Paul Georg von Möllendorf (1847–1901), who served as a Deputy Minister at the Korean court. Möllendorf invited Mr Haas to Korea where he worked at the Korean Commissioner of Customs in 1883–1884. After returning to Shanghai, he was appointed consul of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy in August 1885, which office he held until his death in 1896.

Haas was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and supported the Natural History Museum in Vienna. He was the translator and editor of the *Deutsch-Chinesisches Conversationsbuch* (German Chinese Conversation book) which was published by the Presbyterian Mission-Press in 1870 and later by Kelly und Walsh²³ in Shanghai in 1882. (One dedicated copy was given to Ferenc Hopp.²⁴) His monograph, *Über den Handel Chinas* (About China's Trade) was published in Vienna in 1895.

Haas had close contact with travellers who visited China, and he offered to assist Ferenc Hopp in ordering the Chinese stone slabs and architectural ceramic elements he needed for the moon gate.

Correspondence of Ferenc Hopp and Josef Haas

Ferenc Hopp met Josef Haas in Shanghai in the spring of 1883. From this time on, they remained in contact and the history of the moon gate and other monuments of the Hopp garden can be followed in their German-language correspondence (see list of all letters and documents in the appendix). Josef Haas's help was crucial in enabling Mr Hopp to bring his ideas for the garden to fruition.

Mr Hopp must have written about his wish for a moon gate and sent draft sketches in 1887. This letter has not survived, but Josef Haas's response, dated 28 January 1888, is housed in the Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts.²⁵ Concerning the gate, Josef Haas wrote:

... I immediately set to work dealing with your request for materials for the construction of a Chinese garden gate. Based on the dimensions given in your sketch, the cost of procuring the materials would be as follows: roof tiles \$ 20; ornaments \$ 10; 4 dragons and 1 sphere \$ 10; 2 lions 2' high \$ 20; stone slabs A B C \$ 20; 1 Buddha \$ 30; the latter is available only in wood at a height of 4 feet; model wheelbarrows \$ 4. The work would require around 4–5 weeks—after the interruption of the Chinese New Year. I therefore believe that I can send the objects no later than the beginning of March.²⁶

22 For more about his appointment, see the document in the Hungarian National Archives (MNL), Budapest, inv. no. 1872-3/1145/.

23 Shanghai-based publisher of foreign- (mainly English-) language books. Founded in 1876.

24 Library of Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 484 (inv. no. 555). The dedicated copy was published in 1870 or 1871. Both dates can be found in the book.

25 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1671/75. Letter of Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Shanghai on 28 January 1888.

26 "... Bezüglich Ihres Wunsches wegen Materialien zur Anfertigung einer chines. Gartenpforte habe ich mich sofort in Arbeit gesetzt. Nach den in Ihrer Skizze gegebenen Dimensionen würde die Anschaffung der Materialien wie folgt betragen: Dachziegel \$ 20; Ornamente \$ 10; 4 Drachen und

This implies that the elements of the moon gate were manufactured by early March 1888. There is no written evidence from 1888 for their shipping, or their delivery, but a delivery note from August 1890 has survived, listing three crates of ceramics that Haas had dispatched to Ferenc Hopp in Trieste.²⁷ We also have a letter written by Josef Haas²⁸ which mentions three trunks of Chinese objects which arrived in the port of Trieste from Hong Kong. Payment was to be made in Trieste through Ritter von Peruzzi, the father of Haas's wife, through whom accounts were often settled.

These crates may well have contained the ceramic and stone decorations used on the moon gate (especially the roof tiles, ornaments, dragons, lions, stone slabs and the sphere) because no other objects were registered in the Hopp collection as coming from Josef Haas.

The correspondence between Ferenc Hopp and Josef Haas also fills us in on the acquisition of another East Asian monument for the garden.²⁹ In a letter of 1890 (in which he complained that many of his letters did not receive a response) Josef Haas asked Ferenc Hopp to choose between the designs submitted to him by Emil von Hirsch (1837–1917), deputy consul of the Monarchy in Yokohama (1889–1890). Two slightly different designs, signed by Yokomizo Toyokichi (1865–?), a stonemason and engineer from Yokohama, were posted to Mr Hopp. Both drawings show a carved stone statue of a tortoise carrying on its

back a stone stele with three Chinese characters, although they differ in form and inscription.³⁰ One was approved by Hopp's seal and executed with minor modifications (with the three Chinese characters *Penglai kui* 蓬莱龜) in the early 1890s. The carved stone statue of a tortoise can still be seen in the rear garden of the Hopp villa. An old photograph shows that it once carried on its back a stone stele inscribed with three characters: Turtle carrying the Island of the Immortals (Penglai). Unfortunately, the stele disappeared in the Second World War. The surviving tortoise base is testimony to the dedicated assistance Mr Haas gave Ferenc Hopp with his purchases of East Asian art.

Ferenc Hopp further decorated his garden with Chinese drum chairs, vases and ceramic flower holders which were also ordered through the consul. Another document probably related to the furnishing of the garden is a price list of Chinese vases sent by Josef Haas in November 1890.

The last traces of their correspondence are two cards from Josef Haas: one with Happy New Year wishes from Shanghai dated 1894³¹ (see fig. 8) and greetings sent from Graz, dated 29 December 1895.³² Josef Haas died on 26 August 1896 while swimming near the coastal city of Ningbo (China).

Chinese Moon Gate

At the entrance to the garden, Mr Hopp planned to construct a moon gate (月亮門 *yueliangmen*), modelled on the round gateways he had come across in gardens when he travelled in China. The name derives from the round opening which recalls

1 Kugel \$ 10; 2 Löwen 2' hoch \$ 20; Steinplatten A B C \$ 20; 1 Buddha \$ 30; letzterer ist nur aus Holz zu bekommen 4 Fuss hoch; Schubkarren Modell \$ 4. Die Arbeit wird circa 4-5 Wochen in Anspruch nehmen – nachdem das chinesische Neujahr dazwischenkommt. Ich glaube daher spätestens Anfang März die Objekte senden zu können."

27 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1679/20. Delivery Note of David Sassoon about three chests of Chinese goods which were sent by Joseph Haas to Trieste.

28 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.84 Letter of Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp on 11 September 1888.

29 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A. 84. Letter of Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp on 11 September 1888.

30 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.88; A.89. Two drawings of the stone tortoise stele sent by Joseph Haas in his letter dated 11 September 1888

31 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts A. 271. Folded New Year's greeting card with photo glued on the inside, sent by Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp in 1894. The photo shows a wide street decorated with lampions, with passers-by in warm clothes.

32 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts A.87. Postcard from Graz to Budapest.



Figs. 6 and 7: Two drawings of the turtle stele. Drawings, late 19th century. Seal of Mr Hopp on one drawing (HFA_A.89). Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; HFA_A.88; HFA_A.89.

the full moon. In traditional Chinese architecture, moon gates are built embedded into walls, as openings to gardens and houses. Legend has it that there was a belief in ancient China that there were two moons in the sky. When these moons perfectly aligned with each other, a portal would open and form a connection between the Heavens and the Earth. In the past, these spherical gates were normally found in upper-class homes, to make them look more inviting for visitors, though later moon gates built in the West were often free-standing structures. The earliest description of the Budapest moon gate comes from 1895,³³ but it was built in 1890–1891 by the Hungarian architect Géza Györgyi (1851–1934)³⁴ who subsequently played

a part in designing an extension to the villa in 1906. He and Ferenc Hopp had known each other for decades. It was also Györgyi Géza who installed the embellishments on the moon gate.

The main structure is of brick, with a base of several rows of facing bricks below a section of wall which is plastered and painted yellow, with inset stone tablets. The round central opening in the wall is faced by a circle of bricks, topped by a ceramic tile decorated with a flower motif and the Chinese character for long life (壽 *shou*).³⁵ The carved and painted wooden bracket set on top of the gate, which

33 *Jubilee album* 1895, 8.

34 *Ibid.*

35 According to archive photos, the rear of the moon gate opening also once had a ceramic tile at the top, like the one visible on the front today (see, e.g., the *Jubilee Album* 1895), whereas the front was originally adorned with a polyhedral keystone, which—for reasons unknown—Hopp replaced in the early 1900s with a new ceramic decoration.



Fig. 8: Postcard from Shanghai, around 1890. Paper, 10 x 14.9 cm. Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFA_A 271.

consists of multiple sections, recalling the ornate roofs of Chinese buildings and gates, is covered in decorative green-glazed tubular tiles.³⁶

For the transition between the gate and the roof, Hopp commissioned a long colourful ceramic frieze consisting of five parts (see fig. 10) which was made at the Shiwan kilns and ceramic manufacturers (石灣窯 *Shi wan yao*). The symmetrically structured, multi-figural composition, depicting stage scenes from Cantonese opera, is arranged so as to be viewed from one main perspective. The actors are modelled wearing elaborately decorated costumes, and their faces are partly painted. Canton was a prosperous centre of trade and culture in this period, and cornices decorated with dynamic, figural scenes often show episodes of Cantonese operas or other popular pieces of literature. By the 19th century, Cantonese stage performance had become highly stylised: gestures were determined by strict choreography and facial expressions were supplanted by masks or make-up. The face made up in conformity with stage rules revealed the personality of a character: black is a sign of a coarse and violent person, white denotes an evil one—as does

a goatee—while a man with a moustache is a noble-minded hero. Comic figures have a white spot on their noses and a curling moustache. Female characters and heroes in love, however, do not have mask-like make-up. The rich details of costumes and the great variety of strictly regimented gestures are strongly emphasised by the architectural elements on the frame and the colourful carpet of flowers on and around it.

The Shiwan workshop which made the ceramics for the moon gate is situated southwest of Foshan, in the vicinity of Guangzhou (Guangdong Province), South China. This workshop started to produce its heavy-bodied, thickly glazed ceramics as early as the Tang period; large quantities were manufactured from the Ming period onwards. Originally, it made gigantic vessels suitable for transporting food, mainly for export to Southeast Asia and Korea (Martabani ware). In the 18th and 19th centuries, production of ceramic roof figures and sculptural decorations increased in importance, and Shiwan's name became closely associated with architectural ceramics, enjoying a heyday from the end of the 19th century until the 1920s.³⁷

36 Bagi, Fajcsák and Válóczy 2023, 82–85, 78–81.

37 Till 2006, 105–08.



Fig. 9: Moon gate in the garden of the Ferenc Hopp Museum, 2020. Digital photograph. Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts.



Fig. 10: Ornamental mouldings of cornice: stage scenes. Earthenware, coloured glaze and cold painting 19th century; Shiwan, Guangdong province, China. Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFM_64.61.



Fig. 11: Ornamental mouldings of cornice: stage scenes. Earthenware, coloured glaze and cold painting, 19th century; Shiwan, Guangdong province, China. H.: 70 cm, 69.5 cm; W.: 29 cm. Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFM_9596. 1–2.



Fig. 12: Ceramic roof figure: dragon fish with tail. Moulded earthenware, green, yellow, white, blue glaze (damaged), late 19th century; Shiwan, Guangdong province, China. H.: 29.5 cm; L.: 39 cm (head); H.: 37 cm; L.: 45 cm (tail). Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFM_781.

The local clay is exceedingly easy to shape; consequently, in terms of plasticity and richness of detail, Shiwan ceramics excel those produced in other Chinese workshops, as the composition and modelling of these ornamental cornice mouldings vividly illustrate.

Figural stage scenes in the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts storage depict six figures in splendid stage costumes, some with make-up in conformity with their operatic roles. The collection of Chinese ceramics contains two more figural stage scenes which were intended for the decoration of the moon gate cornice³⁸ (see fig. 11). With the help of some contemporary photographs and surviving ornamental ceramic elements, including fish-dragon profiles³⁹ (see fig. 12), which were never incorporated into the structure, we can form an idea of Hopp's original design—sketched out in a letter to Haas, but never fully realised—which was to top off the ridge and edges of the roof with ceramic fish dragons and buttons.

The museum storage also houses four dragon heads and several units of body and tail which were ordered for the decoration of the moon gate. The heads are of two sizes. The dragon-like creatures have enormous mouths, bulging eyes and tentacles above their eyes. Their scaled bodies resemble those of fish; they have side fins and high tails. In the end, the ceramic ridge was replaced with carved wooden beams, presumably because there was not enough knowledge around in Budapest at the time about how to fix the ceramic profiles safely to the roof.

Three stone tablets are built into the wall of the moon gate. The horizontal tablet above the opening

is inscribed with Chinese characters which are read from right to left:

佛蘭士哈樓 (*Fo lan shi ha lou*)
'House of Ferenc Hopp'

The two symmetrically installed vertical stone tablets bear a traditional Chinese couplet (對聯 *duilian*) consisting of two sentences with a parallel structure. The good wishes on the right-hand side are read before those on the left (see fig. 13):

門前喜氣三千丈
戶外春光十二時 (*Men qian xi qi san qian zhang / Hu wai chun guang shi er shi*)
Around my gate may joy flow to infinity,
And may good cheer flourish for eternity.⁴⁰

The moon gate is flanked by a pair of stone *fó* lions⁴¹, which Ferenc Hopp obtained from China together with the elements of the moon gate.⁴² These are the traditional guardians of the entrances to Chinese shrines and palaces; the lion and lioness are always shown together. The lion rests one paw on a magical sphere, while the lioness is shown with her cub climbing on her.⁴³

38 An interesting comparison can be found in the roof of the Mak Po Temple, which still stands in Hong Kong today. Taking this as a basis, it is possible to reconstruct the arrangement of the roof decorations on the moon gate in the gardens of the Hopp Museum. Both multi-figural stage scenes and the fish-dragon outlines were intended to adorn the ridge of the roof. See the ceramic friezes: Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, inv. nos. HFM_9596.1–2.

39 Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, inv. no. HFM_447, HFM_498, HFM_507, HFM_508, HFM_509, HFM_529, HFM_781, HFM_1347, HFM_4300.

40 This is the English version of the Hungarian text translated from the Chinese by Prof. Barnabás Csongor.

41 Inv. no.: HFM_64.89.1 (lion), HFM_64.89.2 (lioness); China, second half of nineteenth century; height: 56.6 cm; width: 23 cm; depth: 31 cm.

42 See letter written by Joseph Haas (HMA 1671_75). The price of the two lions was 20 US dollars.

43 Bagi, Fajcsák and Válóczy 2023, 82–85.



Fig. 13: Pair of *fo*-lions and the Chinese couplet (Chinese: *duilian*) with good wishes on the moon gate. Photograph, late 19th century. Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts.

List of Documents Related to the correspondence of Josef Haas and Ferenc Hopp in the Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts⁴⁴

| Inventory number | Type of document | Title and date | Material/ Technique | Dimension |
|------------------|------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| HFA_A.81. | Letter | Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Shanghai 15 July 1890 | paper, handwritten | 1 sheet, 4 pages |
| HFA_A.82. | Document | Appendix to the letter of Josef Haas Price list 13 November 1890 | paper, handwritten | height: 20.5 cm width: 11.2 cm |
| HFA_A.83. | Letter | Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp 9 May 1890 | paper, handwritten | 1 sheet, 3 pages |
| HFA_A.84. | Letter | Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp about sending three crates of Chinese wares and a stone tortoise 9 November 1890 | paper, handwritten | 1 sheet, 2 pages |
| HFA_A.85. | letter | Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp about everyday matters 6 November 1890 | paper, handwritten | 1 sheet, 4 pages |
| HFA_A.86.1. | letter | Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp about sending consols 27 November 1890 | paper, handwritten | 1 sheet, 4 pages |
| HFA_A.86.2. | letter | Envelope 27 November 1890 | paper, handwritten | height: 9 cm width: 14 cm |
| HFA_A.87. | postcard | Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Graz 29 November 1895 | paper, handwritten | height: 9 cm width: 14 cm |
| HFA_A.88. | drawing | Drawing of the stele on a tortoise 11 September 1890 | paper, graphical | 1 sheet |
| HFA_A.89. | drawing | Drawing of the stele on a tortoise 11 September 1890 | paper, graphical | 1 sheet |
| HFA_A.271. | postcard | Josef Haas New Year Greetings from Shanghai 1894 | paper, handwritten | height: 10 cm width: 14.9 cm |
| HFA_A.274. | photograph | A. E. Mortl (?): Josef Haas, 1883 | albumin, photograph | height: 9 cm width: 5.8 cm |
| HFA_A.1671.75. | letter | Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Shanghai 28 January 1888 | paper, handwritten | 1 sheet, 3 pages |
| HFA_A.1679.20. | document | Delivery Note of David Sassoon about three chests of Chinese goods which were sent by Josef Haas to Trieste 18 August 1890 | paper, document filled with handwritten notes | 1 sheet, 2 pages |
| HFA_A.4060. | letter | Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Shanghai 28 May 1890 | paper, handwritten | 1 sheet, 4 pages |
| HFA_A.4237. | postcard | Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Vienna 13 November 1895 | paper, handwritten | height: 14 cm width: 9.1 cm |

⁴⁴ I would like to thank Judit Bagi for compiling the list.

For Chinese designers, moon gates play an important role in the organisation of space, for they expand the boundaries of the different sections of a garden, each of which is usually of modest size and separated from the others by walls. Thanks to a moon gate, the view and the plants on the other side of the wall, seen through the circular frame, are partly “brought over” to the side where the observer is standing. In the garden of the Hopp Villa, the view along the axis of the moon gate leads the eye to a Jain shrine. This is entirely unique: only in Budapest, in a garden dedicated to admirers of Asiatic art, can a Chinese moon gate and an Indian shrine be seen together.⁴⁵

Ferenc Hopp died in 1919 in his villa. By the terms of his will, he bequeathed to the Hungarian state his valuable collection of Asiatic art and his villa with its oriental-style garden. The special feature of his collecting activities had been the oriental plants (e.g. ginkgo and bamboo) and Asian artefacts, mainly stone sculptures. They are clear evidence for the intensive interest in the Orient in the late 19th century, as well as testifying in spectacular fashion to the international communication and trans-border cooperation that characterised the era of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy.

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Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.144 Letter of Ferenc Hopp to his colleague, Julius Singer from Canton on 19 March 1883.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1678/1 Postcard of Ferenc Hopp to Emil Reichardt from Canton to Budapest on 19 March 1883.

⁴⁵ Another moon gate was later built in Budapest, in the Chinese-style fence surrounding the Simonyi–Semadam Villa (13 Bolyai utca, 2nd District, Budapest, constructed in 1931) which belonged to a former prime minister of Hungary, Sándor Simonyi–Semadam (1864–1946). Simonyi–Semadam’s interest in Asia, his journeys to that part of the world, and his taste for Asian art, were just as much a part of Hungary’s complex system of connections with oriental art in the interwar period as the fence, with its distinctive Chinese architectural flavor. Cf. Fajcsák (2017).

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.164 Letter of Ferenc Hopp to Calderoni Company from Hong Kong on 22 March 1883.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.165 Postcard of Ferenc Hopp from Fuzhou on 26 March 1883.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1524. Letter of Ferenc Hopp dated Peking, 20 April 1883.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1671/75. Letter of Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Shanghai on 28 January 1888.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.84 Letter of Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp on 11 September 1888.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.88;

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.89.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.146.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A. 199.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A. 271

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, inv. no. HFA_A.274.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, *Jubilee Album*, inv. no. HFA_A. 383.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1679/20.

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Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Chinese Collection, inv. no. HFM_2397.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Chinese Collection inv. no. HFM_1519 and HFM_5961.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Chinese Collection, inv. no. HFM_1249.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Chinese Collection, inv. no. HFM_5369.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Chinese Collection, inv. no. HFM_713.1-2.

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Eleonore Haas: The Lost Chinese Heritage in Mozirje

Barbara Trnovec and Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik

Introduction¹

In the first half of the 20th century, individual travellers and Austro-Hungarian sailors, who were among the first from the present-day Slovenia to travel to East Asia, returned with single pieces or entire collections of Chinese or Japanese objects. Among them were an Austro-Hungarian naval officer, Ivan Skušek Jr. (1877–1947), who

with his Japanese wife Tsuneko Kondō Kawase (1893–1963) brought back a large collection of Chinese objects in 1920, and the world traveller Alma Karlin (1889–1950), who returned to Celje in 1927. Both invited people to visit their homes, which were decorated with East Asian porcelain, textiles, sculptures, furniture and other everyday objects. Yet at the same time, not far from Celje, where people visited Karlin's house to see "exotic" objects, there was another collection of Chinese artefacts kept more or less secretly in the paint factory in Mozirje. It belonged to Eleonore von Haas (1866–1943), widow of Josef von Haas (1847–1896), a diplomat who represented Austria-Hungary in China for almost 30 years and served as Consul General in Shanghai from 1892 to 1896 (fig. 1).

Whereas Karlin, who, due to her financial constraints and the nature of travelling, could only acquire what were essentially souvenirs sold at famous tourist sites, the collection in Mozirje brought together valuable porcelain pieces, religious sculptures, bronze objects and beautifully embroidered textiles—objects that most museums at the time were trying to acquire. Nevertheless, the Mozirje collection was far less widely visited than those of Karlin and Skušek. Very few people were aware of its existence, and by and large, this is still the case today. Eleonore Haas, who brought the collection to Mozirje, also remains unknown, and apart from a short

¹ The research for this paper was carried out as part of the projects *Orphaned Objects: Examining East Asian Objects outside Organised Collecting Practices in Slovenia* (2021–2024) (J6-3133) and the core research funding programme *Asian languages and Cultures* (P6-0243), all funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency. The authors would like to thank Cvetka Marjanovič and Sergeja Marjanovič Pregelj, Matija Blagojevič and Marija Janko for sharing their memories of Eleonore Haas, their photographic material and preserved objects with us. We would also like to thank Ana Zidanšek from the Library of Slovenske Konjice and the amateur researcher Sebastian Habicht, who helped us in researching the identity of Ritter Pertazzi. We would also like to thank Bettina Zorn from the Weltmuseum in Vienna for providing access to the Haas collection in the museum, Niko Hudelja from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana for transcribing and translating part of Haas's correspondence, Alexandra Nachescu for interesting discussions and valuable information about Josef Haas, and Abigail Graham for her thorough reading of the text and for pointing out the name Max Eduard Goepfert (Göpfert) as a signature on one of the photographs. Finally, we would like to thank the Historical Archive Celje for permission to publish the photographs and postcards from the Eleonore von Haas personalia folder (SI-ZAC/1008) and the Weltmuseum in Vienna for permission to publish the image of the bronze drum.



LEOPOLD BUDE
K. u. K. HOF-PHOTOGRAPH

GRAZ.

Fig. 1: Eleonore Haas with her father Friedrich Ritter Pertazzi and her husband Josef Haas. Photograph taken by Leopold Bude, Graz, 1889 (?). SI-ZAC/1008, signature 2. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.

paragraph in the book by Ralf Čeplak Mencin,² nothing has been written about her life and collecting activities. Even the name of her husband, Josef Haas, who played an important role in diplomatic and trade relations between China and Austria-Hungary in the late 19th century and was one of the main suppliers of Chinese objects to several museums in Austria-Hungary, is not well known.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to reconstruct the life of Eleonore Haas, whom Josef Haas met in 1889 during one of the only two longer holidays he took during his nearly thirty years of service in China. After their marriage, she lived in Shanghai for seven years (1889–1896) until Haas's unfortunate death. She then travelled back to Vienna and Graz and in 1913 moved in with her relatives, the Goričar family, in Mozirje (then Prassberg), a small town in northern Slovenia, where she lived until her death in 1943.

Who was Eleonore Haas? What was her social life and network like in Shanghai? What role did she play in Shanghai society and to what extent was she involved with her husband's activities—above all, with his collecting? What is the size and the nature of the collection and what kind of objects did she or they favour? How and where were the objects acquired? How did the collection get to Mozirje and how did she live with the collection and the objects? What happened to the collection and where is it today? We pursue these questions by using documents and photographic material from Slovenian and Austrian archives as well as oral history methods and interviews with people from Mozirje who still remember her, to present the first study on the life and collection of Eleonore Haas.

In the Vivid Memories of Marija Janko

Eleonore Haas, widow of the Austro-Hungarian Consul General Josef Haas, was born *Edle*³ von Pertazzi. She died in 1943 in Mozirje, in Slovenia.

89-year-old Marija Janko, known as Pekova Marija, who as a child lived in the same house as Eleonore and continues to live there today, recalls:

She was sitting at the table in her room that morning, waiting for the bus. She was ready to travel, to move to Graz. She had all her things packed. I remember well that there was a plate with sliced tomatoes on the table in front of her. As every morning, breakfast was prepared for her by her *bedinar'ca*⁴ Urška Tavčar. Frau Haas suddenly leaned against the table and then fell forward. It was the first corpse in my life.⁵

Marija Janko was a nine-year-old girl at the time, but has vivid memories of Eleonore Haas, who lived in her parents' house, so that they communicated on a daily basis. As can be seen from the register of deaths, Eleonore died of a stroke on 23 August 1943, at her home at Prassberg 111 (as it then was), at the age of 77.⁶

Marija Janko is now the oldest resident of the old downtown in Mozirje. "I was born in this house, I've lived in this house all my life, and I hope I'll die here as well," she says. The house was built in 1911 for the Štrucl family, who lived in the United States of America at the time. They were economic migrants. They intended to return to Mozirje, but that did not happen. In 1929, the house was sold to the Mozirje baker Franc Pečnik, father of Marija Janko.

At that time, along with the house, my father also 'got' Eleonore Haas, or Lola, as she was called. She had lived in this house since 1913, when she moved from Graz to Mozirje. I don't know what kind of arrangement she had with the previous owners, nor what kind of arrangement she had with my father. The

2 Čeplak Mencin 2012, 86, 90.

3 *Edle* (German), noble.

4 *Bedinar'ca* or server, distortion of German, from the verb *bedienen*, to serve.

5 Marija Janko (b. 1934) was interviewed by Barbara Trnovec in Mozirje on 19 August 2023.

6 The information is listed in the Register of the deaths Mozirje 1942–1944 (*Mrliška knjiga umrlih Mozirje 1942–1944*).



Fig. 2: Pečnik's house in Mozirje, where Eleonore Haas lived until 1943. Photograph kept by Matija Blagojevič in Mozirje.

house was designed and built for the Štrucl family, at their behest, by Lola's relative Matija Goričar. Since the house was empty, he probably agreed with the owners to rent a part of the house to his widowed relative.

Eleonore Haas then lived in this house for thirty years, until her death (fig. 2). According to Marija Janko, Eleonore was very kind, always very well groomed, had a distinctly upright posture, and commanded respect. She spoke German, never Slovenian, even though her mother was Slovenian. She is said to have known five languages, including English and French, but she certainly also knew Italian. Marija Janko remembers that on one occasion she translated something from German into Italian. Every day she went to lunch at the inn *Pri pošti*, in the centre of Mozirje, where she had her permanent table. At the same time, Eleonore Haas was considered to be something special and was the subject of rumours.

Rumours spread around Mozirje that she had lived in China and that she was a widow because her husband had been eaten by a shark. But what stuck in my memory the most was her tiger. In the room on the floor she had a carpet, a huge tiger, with a huge head and huge teeth. Every now and then, Urška hung it over the stair railing, at the entrance to the house, in order to 'cripple' it. The news of this spread like wildfire throughout Mozirje every time, and everyone came to see the tiger. How we children were afraid of it!

According to Marija Janko, Eleonore Haas lived in two rooms, to the right of the main entrance to the house. But she had another room upstairs where she kept things she didn't use. "We didn't go to her apartment as children, but I saw through the open front door that she had a lot of everything. I don't remember the details, but I know that her



| Fig. 3: One of two rooms with Chinese objects in Mozirje. Photograph kept by Matija Blagojevič in Mozirje.

apartment was furnished with furniture and objects that she brought from China.” This is confirmed by the photos that have been preserved of some objects and ambient photos taken in her apartment (fig. 3).⁷

Eleonore in Family Lore

How is it that the cosmopolitan Eleonore Haas, widow of the Consul General of Austria-Hungary—polyglot, interpreter for the Chinese language, sinologist, and collector Josef Haas, with whom she spent seven years in Shanghai—came to live in Mozirje in the first place? She was 47 years old at the time. “Economic reasons were most probably very likely behind this. We know that Eleonore, who returned to Vienna after her husband’s death, fought for his pension. For now, it is not known how successful she was. Based on the fact that she first moved from Vienna to Graz, and then to Mozirje in 1913, we can conclude that she did so because life was much cheaper here,” explains Matija Blagojevič.⁸

At that time, Mozirje was a small market town in the Savinjska valley. In 1900 it had only 537 inhabitants,⁹ but it had a cosmopolitan character. This was the home of Eleonore’s relatives, the enterprising, wealthy, successful, educated and influential Goričars, who welcomed her warmly. Mozirje was a popular resort at the time—there was a swimming pool, a tennis court, and a mountain hut in Golte—visited by holidaymakers from all over the monarchy, including many from Vienna. In such a milieu, Eleonore Haas certainly felt comfortable, according to Matija Blagojevič and Cvetka Marjanovič.¹⁰

Eleonore Haas was close to her Mozirje relatives. Even today, their descendants cherish her memory. “When I think of Lola, the first thing I think about is how tragically her husband died. He was eaten by a shark in China and only a bloody stain on the surface of the sea was left behind,” says Cvetka Marjanovič.

I talked about Lola with several relatives, but my mother-in-law Draga told me the most. Among other things, how she met her future husband. Josef was a friend of her father, Friedrich Ritter von Pertazzi, also a diplomat. Once, when Josef visited Friedrich in Graz, he met Lola by chance. She had just returned home to pick up the sheet music she forgot to take to her piano lesson. It was love at first sight on his part. They got married in Shanghai, dressed in tangerine-coloured clothes. He was more than twenty years older than her, but back then such age differences were commonplace. They had no children. We didn’t discuss why not.¹¹

Haas had been married before, to the Englishwoman Margaret Jane Wogan (the ceremony took place in Shanghai on 6 April 1874, in a Catholic church there)¹² but his first wife, who suffered from epilepsy and amnesia, had died.¹³ He married Eleonore von Pertazzi on 9 November 1889 in Graz.¹⁴

Diplomatic Families and their Biographies

Josef von Haas and Eleonore von Pertazzi both came from diplomatic families. Eleonore was the daughter of the Austro-Hungarian diplomat,

7 These photos are kept by Matija Blagojevič from Mozirje, a librarian, museum co-worker and expert on the history of Mozirje. He is the nephew of Marija Mary Blagojevič, née Goričar, great-granddaughter of Marija Goričar, who was Eleonore Haas’s aunt.

8 An interview with him in Mozirje on 19 August 2023—followed by several phone conversations—conducted by Barbara Trnovec.

9 Videčnik 1996, 13.

10 Cvetka Marjanovič is the widow of Nikolaj Marjanovič, son of Draga Marjanovič, née Goričar, great-granddaughter of the aforementioned Marija Goričar, Eleonore’s aunt.

She was interviewed by Barbara Trnovec in Mozirje on 19 August 2023.

11 Cvetka Marjanovič, interviewed by Barbara Trnovec in Mozirje, on 19 August 2023.

12 Deusch 2017, 309.

13 Ibid., 310; Josef Haas Personalia Folder.

14 Deusch 2017, 310.

Friedrich Ritter von Pertazzi, born in 1828 in Vienna,¹⁵ and Frančiška von Pertazzi, *née* Repin, in 1838 in Vojnik.¹⁶ Eleonore was born on 31 May 1866 in the city of Ruse (also Rostok, as written in the Mozirje Register of deaths 1942–1944), on the Danube River in Bulgaria, the present-day Romanian-Bulgarian border, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire.

According to Engelbert Deusch, author of a monograph on Austro-Hungarian consuls in the period 1825–1918, Friedrich Ritter Pertazzi graduated with honours from the Imperial and Royal Oriental Academy in Vienna (*k. k. Orientalische Akademie*)¹⁷ and in 1854 obtained a position as an interpreter in Constantinople. He was known in diplomatic circles as a noble, kind-hearted man, musically talented and extremely knowledgeable. In 1870, he was awarded the title of Knight of the Iron Crown III (Order of the Iron Crown of the third degree). In 1879–1880, however, he ruined his reputation due to drunkenness and debts. His daughter Eleonore and son Friedrich also suffered the consequences. He was initially sent on sick leave, and in 1881—at the age of only 53—he was retired.¹⁸

Josef Haas was the son of the Austro-Hungarian consul Ferdinand Haas, born in 1820 in Prague.¹⁹ A comparison of diplomatic biographies led to the interesting discovery that in 1857 both Josef's and Eleonore's fathers served at the consulate in the city of Ruse.²⁰ At that time, Josef Haas (b.1847) was about ten years old.²¹ In all probability, this was where the acquaintance between the two families originated.

The diplomatic biography of Josef Haas is extremely rich. In October 1865, at the age of eighteen, he applied for admission to the Imperial and Royal Oriental Academy (*k.k. Orientalische Akademie*) as an external student, highlighting his language skills: in addition to German, French and Italian, he had an excellent command of Greek and understood Turkish. He was accepted, and on 30 September 1866, by decree, he was sent to Hong Kong to learn Chinese. He arrived there on 18 December 1866 and thus began his extremely successful thirty-year diplomatic career in East Asia.²² From October 1888 to October 1889 he was granted longer leave. During this time, he attended, among other things, the Congress of Orientalists in Stockholm, but he also extended his leave in order to marry Eleonore Pertazzi, on 9 November of the same year in Graz. Together, they then travelled to Shanghai and lived there until his untimely death. He drowned on 26 July 1896 off the island of Putuo (普陀), at the age of 49.²³ Cvetka Marjanovič has a copy of a newspaper article published on 27 July 1937 in *The Shanghai Times*, from which we learn that on the 41st anniversary of his death, a few old friends gathered to commemorate Josef Haas at the French Cemetery in Shanghai on Avenue Joffre (now Central Huaihai Road 淮海路), next to the obelisk dedicated to “one of the leading Shanghai figures of the second half of the 19th century”.²⁴ The obelisk was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria-Hungary.

Life in Shanghai in the Early 1890s

When Eleonore arrived in Shanghai, the city had already become one of the largest cities in China and was the leading centre for trade, finance and

15 Ibid., 501. It is sometimes stated that her father came from Slovenske Konjice in Slovenia (Čeplak Mencin 2012, 86–87; Blagojevič, interview on 19 August 2023), but this is not true.

16 Krstna knjiga/Taufbuch, Vojnik, 1824–1840, 177.

17 The Academy of Oriental Languages was founded in 1753–1754 by Maria Theresia. This institution is the predecessor of the famous Vienna Diplomatic Academy.

18 Deusch 2017, 501.

19 Ibid., 307.

20 Ibid., 307, 501.

21 Neff 2020, 51.

22 Deusch 2017, 308–09.

23 In Memoriam: Josef Ritter von Haas, SI-ZAC/1008, Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje; Deusch 2017, 308.

24 Krause 1937. The same copy of the article is also held in the Celje Historical Archive.



Fig. 4: Postcard of Huangpu Road in Shanghai. Issued 1907–1918. From The New York Public Library. Accessed 7 February 2024. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/c261eb5f-965a-1446-e040-e00a1806116e>



Fig. 5: Eleonore and Josef Haas on the balcony of the consulate of Austria-Hungary in Shanghai, China. 1889–1896. SI-ZAC/1008, signature 7. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.

industry. It was one of the five ports opened to foreign trade after the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 and soon became the most important distribution point for more than half of the goods exchanged between China and the rest of the world.²⁵ The rapid economic development and growth of a mixed-nationality population also led to social, cultural and artistic activities in the city. The foreigners, whose number rose to more than 5,000 by 1895,²⁶ lived mainly in the Anglo-American Settlement (renamed International Settlement in 1899) and the French Concession, located north of the Huangpu River (黃浦江), formerly known as the Whangpoo River. Huangpu (Whangpoo) Road (fig. 4), north of the confluence of the Huangpu River and Suzhou Creek, was also the location of the consulates of Austria-Hungary, Germany, US and Japan. The Austro-Hungarian Consulate was located at 44–46 Huangpu Road in the immediate vicinity of the US consulate.²⁷ This was where Eleonore lived during her stay in Shanghai. Although some of the consuls and other diplomats lived in adjoining residential buildings, the Haases seem to have lived on the upper floor of the consulate, as we can see from the photograph showing Eleanore next to her husband on the consulate balcony, with the inscription on the back “am Balkon, Lola ü. ihr Mann im ihren Heim” (fig. 5).

This situated Eleonore close to the social and cultural centres where foreigners gathered. Nearby was the famous Astor House Hotel, Shanghai’s leading hotel, which also served as a dynamic hub for foreigners (fig. 6). Across the Garden Bridge (now Waibaidu Bridge 外白渡橋) over the Suzhou Creek were the HBM (British) Consulate, the Public Garden and several roads leading inland from the Bund (a waterfront area and historical district in central Shanghai), among which Nanjing Road (or Maloo Road) was the most important. The buildings of several banks, telegraph and telephone companies, business houses (*hong* 行) as well as the Kelly & Walsh bookstore, the Custom

House and the Shanghai Club were erected along the Bund. The townscape and public view that Eleonore Haas enjoyed in Shanghai must have been somewhat different from those of residents and tourists even in the early 20th century, as some of the buildings and monuments were constructed during her time in the city. There were several construction sites and opening ceremonies which she would certainly have known about, even if she did not attend them. Just one year after her arrival, a statue of the British diplomat Harry Smith Parkes (1828–1885) was unveiled. The new Custom House was built in 1893 in the Tudor style with a clock tower in the centre of the building and the Central Police Station was built in 1891–1894 in the early Renaissance style. Construction work would also have continued apace between 1894 and 1896, for the French Consulate and the new Town Hall and market were completed in the year of Eleonore’s husband’s death, 1896, when she left Shanghai.²⁸ The Yangtszepoo neighbourhood (now Yangshupu Road 楊樹浦路), the main industrial area of old Shanghai, with factories, docks and shipyards along the river, also made its appearance in the last decade of the 19th century, with spinning mills opening around 1897 and the Yangtszepoo police station in 1890.²⁹ In addition to the foreign buildings, Chinese-style buildings were also constructed during Eleonore’s time in Shanghai. These included the famous Shanse Bankers’ Guild House with three courtyards and four main buildings, built in 1892, which according to the 1904 Shanghai travel guide was a must-see.³⁰

Not only in the Chinese part of the city, but also in the foreign settlements, there were many other Chinese buildings, temples, opium shops, Cantonese teahouses, restaurants, theatres, and a variety of shops with fine Chinese silk and embroidery, clothes, headdresses, jewellery, shoes, Chinese antiques and curiosities, including second-hand shops and pawnshops where one could buy high-quality items cheaply. Moreover, Eleonore lived in one of

25 Cartwright 1908a, 368.

26 Xiong 2022, 26.

27 Darwent 1904, x.

28 Ibid., 7–15.

29 Ibid., 65.

30 Ibid., 54.



Fig. 6: Postcard of Astor House Hotel, Shanghai, circa 1890. Issued 1907–1918. From The New York Public Library. Accessed 7 February 2024. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/c261eb5f-965e-1446-e040-e00a1806116e>

the busiest areas, with thousands of vehicles passing the Garden Bridge every day and a multitude of boats travelling through the arch.³¹ According to the 1904 travel guide, this district, which lies between the Suzhou and Hongkou (虹口) creeks (now Yujing pu 俞涇浦), boasted the most picturesque medley of foreign and Chinese life, not only in Shanghai but in any other treaty port. One could watch small animals being transported to market on bamboo trays, fruit and vegetables being landed from boats, people packing and carrying things away on bamboo.³² The shops near the Garden Bridge were mainly Chinese and Japanese, as the Japanese community also lived mainly in this part of the International Settlement.

This was the scene in which Eleonore found herself after moving to Shanghai in 1889. The cosmopolitan character of Shanghai as a place where

people from different countries came together, and the advantages it offered to foreigners, certainly made a great impression on the twenty-three-year-old, who had not been directly exposed to Chinese or Japanese culture or society before her marriage. We know little about her childhood, but the fact that she was born on the Romanian-Bulgarian border as the daughter of an Austro-Hungarian diplomat in the then Ottoman Empire and later moved to Graz, where she met Josef Haas, shows that she grew up in a cosmopolitan spirit of different cultures and suggests she could move between new countries with relative ease. Although Shanghai had no electric tramway in her time, there was a permanent water supply provided by two private companies and electricity had been in use since 1882.³³ All this enabled Shanghai residents to live comfortably and, according to H. A. Cartwright, author and assistant editor of a series of early 20th

31 Ibid., 27.

32 Ibid., 40–42.

33 Cartwright 1908a, 371.

century impressions of various countries, “enjoy every comfort and convenience to be found in the most progressive European cities”.³⁴ Exceptional facilities were created for all forms of outdoor recreation and numerous clubs were founded to encourage social interaction. In his impressions of Shanghai, H. A. Cartwright concludes that “the monotony which is characteristic of life in the East is absent from Shanghai, which is often styled the ‘Paris of the Orient’ in recognition of its gaiety”.³⁵

Eleonore Haas’s Network in Shanghai and her Social Activities

As the wife of a highly respected diplomat, Eleonore played a prominent role in the social life of the community and championed the interests of her compatriots in a variety of ways, thus supporting her husband’s activities. Josef Haas, who was appointed Consul General in 1892,³⁶ three years after their marriage, not only represented foreign trade abroad, protected Austrian citizens and thus served domestic interests, but was also highly praised as a beloved, friendly and respected personality.³⁷ It was common at the time to complain that consuls were poorly educated, that they did not speak foreign languages fluently, and that their social behaviour was inappropriate,³⁸ but none of this applied to Josef Haas. On the contrary, he was a highly educated man, who spoke fluent Chinese and was praised as the most knowledgeable sinologist.³⁹ In his mid-twenties, he had translated the programme of the 1873 Vienna World’s Fair into a very sophisticated semi-classical Chinese,⁴⁰ for which he was awarded the Golden Cross of Merit

with the Crown,⁴¹ and had gone on to compile a German-Chinese dictionary and publish many articles.⁴² As was ideally expected of consuls, Haas was also familiar with the law, domestic and foreign policy and the principles of business management. This was reflected in his appointment as foreign assessor at the Mixed Court,⁴³ which was responsible for trials against Chinese who had committed offences in the foreign settlements. According to Cartwright, an assessor sat six days a week: the British consular representative for three days, the representative of the United States for two, and the Austro-Hungarian (or, in his absence, the German) representative for one day.⁴⁴

We can therefore assume that Eleonore’s entry into Shanghai high society was certainly initiated by her highly esteemed husband, but the postcards and greetings sent to her many years later, after her husband’s death, by many important diplomats and other foreigners of all nationalities, show the genuine connections she made and the important role she played during the seven years she lived in Shanghai. Her personalia folder, where her personal papers are kept in the Celje Historical Archive, contains photographs, postcards and many other documents which she brought with her on her move to Mozirje. Researching these documents allows us to reconstruct her life and activities and thus unravel the mystery surrounding this woman and her collection in Mozirje. It also gives us an insight into the personal life of her husband, beyond what we learn from the official reports and correspondence that Haas submitted to the Austrian government.

Cabinet cards make up a large part of the contents of Eleonore Haas’s folder in the Celje archive. This is a specific style of photographic portrait that emerged towards the end of the 19th century. The rapid development of photography in the 19th century, followed by the proliferation of

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., 372.

36 In Memoriam: Josef Ritter von Haas, SI-ZAC/1008, Fond Eleonore von Haas, Celje Historical Archive.

37 Cf. Neff (2020, 52–53).

38 Frank Johnson 2018, 168.

39 Ibid.

40 The English programme of the world exhibition and Haas’s translation into Chinese are kept in Eleonore’s personalia folder in the Celje Historical Archive.

41 Deusch 2017, 308.

42 For more on Haas’s life and work see Neff (2020) and Obuchová (2009).

43 Deusch 2017, 309.

44 Cartwright 1908b, 401.

photographic studios, led to large businesses offering studio portraits in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Nagasaki, Yokohama and other major cities in Asia. Compared to the *carte de visite*, the photographic format widely used previously, the cabinet card was larger and featured a logo and the name of the photo studio on the back. Some of the cabinet cards in Eleonore's folder are decorated on the reverse with a large, ornate text in italics which, together with the signature, confirms that they were produced in the last two decades of the 19th century. Most of the cabinet cards show men, in the standard "western" format, with only head and shoulders. A few of them have beautifully designed backgrounds.⁴⁵ Of course, a fashionable photo portrait raises many questions about the person in the photo—when and where it was taken, what the occasion was, who would receive copies and on what occasions—but it nevertheless also reveals a connection between the subject of the photo and its owner. In the case of Eleonore's collection of cabinet cards, which are sometimes inscribed or signed, it is clear that they were given to the Haases by people who knew them. Among them were Madame Blondin, Bertha Blondin, Tomaso di Savoia, Häuler L. (?), Emil S. Fischer, Carl Pietzük, Josef Hay junior, officer Biera, G. Mailasher (?), Pierre Burg (?), Emil Hirsch, Arthur Rosthorn, Leopold Jedina, Max Eduard Goepfert (Göpfert) and many others whose identity requires further research.

While the list of members in the clubs or other public institutions in which Haas was active shows the many influential people he knew and worked with in Shanghai, the names on the cabinet cards allow us to reconstruct the network of people he and his wife socialised with and with whom they probably had closer relationships. It is illuminating to look briefly at the personalities involved.

Emil Sigmund Fischer (1865–1945) worked as an accountant at the Deutsch-Asiatische Bank in Shanghai from 1894 to 1898.⁴⁶ He was born in Vienna and moved to China in 1894 after living

for several years in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and New York, where his parents had settled. He spent the next 50 years in China, mainly in Tianjin, where he worked in trade, accounting and finance and specialised in the Chinese economy. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Hotung Baugesellschaft, a construction company founded in 1906 in the Austro-Hungarian concession in Tianjin.⁴⁷ He was also appointed advisor to the commissioner for China at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915.⁴⁸ He travelled extensively in China and wrote several geographical reports for the Austrian Geographical Society and also books about his travels. In one of his most comprehensive books, *Travels in China 1894–1940*, he described his first encounter with Eleonore and Josef Haas:

When I first had arrived from America in Shanghai, in the Spring of 1894, immediately on descending the gangplank of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha steamer which had brought me from Japan, I went to leave visiting cards at the Austro-Hungarian Consulate General in front of our Steamer's Jetty. The Consul General, the late Joseph von Haas, sent word that he would not hear of my going away to a Hotel. Haas knew of me and of my expected arrival; he made me stay, although a Consular party was just sitting down to Tiffin. Mr. and Mrs. von Haas had on that occasion an elderly Doctor at table, who that morning had returned from a Great Journey into the largest and westernmost of all Provinces of China, Szechwan.⁴⁹

This encounter sowed the seeds of a lifelong friendship. Fischer clearly remained in contact with Eleonore Haas after her husband's death and was aware of her situation after she returned to Europe, as is evident from an entry in the personal index of his 1941 travel book:

⁴⁵ Thiriez 1999, 80.

⁴⁶ Fischer 1941, 278.

⁴⁷ Wright and Cartwright 1908, 751.

⁴⁸ Fischer 1941, 167.

⁴⁹ Fischer 1941, ii.



Fig. 7: Emil S. Fischer, photo in Sze-yuen-Ming studio, Shanghai. Hand inscription on the back: "Seinem geschätzten Gönner u. Förderer, Herrn General Consul v. Haas u. Frau, In tiefer Hochschätzung von Privato Emil S Fischer, Shanghai Voluntar Corps (?) 1894/1896". SI-ZAC/1008, signature 6. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.



Fig. 8: Emil S. Fischer, unknown photographer. Hand inscription on the back: "Emil S. Fischer nahe dem See Bad Strande von Pei Tai Ho in 1937". SI-ZAC/1008, signature 6. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.



Fig. 10: Max Eduard Göpfert with two Japanese women, Kōzaburō Tamamura studio in Yokohama, Japan. Hand inscription on the back: "Nicht der Sehnsucht nach japanischem Thee aber Japans Specialitäten habe das Opfer gebracht. To Mrs & Mr Josef v. Haas From M. Goepfert 2./3. 95". SI-ZAC/1008, signature 15. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.

in Vienna and glassworks in Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, Russian Poland and the German Empire. We see him in three hand-coloured photos (two from 1895, one undated), wearing Japanese clothes and posing with stylishly dressed girls, probably geishas, in a typical Japanese setting of the time. These photographs come from the studio of Kōzaburō Tamamura (1856–1923?) in Yokohama, Japan, who specialised in tourist photographs and souvenir photo albums. On the reverse side Göpfert wrote his greetings or simply "Raritäten Specialitäten aus Japan" to Mrs & Mr Josef v. Haas. However, we cannot assume with certainty that they were sent to the Haases from Yokohama. It could be that the photos were presented when the friends met on a special occasion in 1895. Similarly, Bertha Blondin's cabinet card was produced in the Japanese studio Kudanzaka in Tokyo, while the handwritten captions were written in Shanghai in 1890. In 1896, the Haases also received greetings in

French from Pierre Burg (?), sent from Tianjin on a cabinet card produced in the studio of the Japanese photographer Kusakabe Kimbei (1841–1934). This confirms that their circle of friends was not limited to the Austrian expatriate community in Shanghai—where in 1890 only 48 Austrians and Hungarians were living⁵⁴—but that they belonged to an internationally mixed community, living and working in various cities in East Asia.

Eleonore certainly knew the spouses of other diplomats, officials or Shanghai residents and socialised with them, as is shown by the few group photos portraying them at social gatherings. Her collection of menus—of which she was an avid collector—reveals a few more names, such as Mrs Sylva, Maria Malerie or Ms Kremer, but apart from these names her female friends mostly remain anonymous. The Japanese women whose portraits can be found in her collection have also

⁵⁴ Ibid., 448.



Fig. 11: Photograph of Japanese woman (Mori?) with a child. T. Suzuki in Shanghai, China, late 19th century. SI-ZAC/1008, signature 16. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.



Photographers

Fig. 12: Portrait of Chinese woman with two children. Inscription L. Yang. Late 19th century. SI-ZAC/1008, signature 16. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.



Fig. 13: Portrait of a Chinese woman at a table with a cut flower in a vase and a fan in her hand. Studio in Nanjing Road, China, late 19th century. SI-ZAC/1008, signature 9. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.

lost their identities over time. Only a pencil inscription on the reverse (e.g. Ohana, Kikunoisan, Odaisan) sometimes gives them back the names by which they were known to Eleonore or by which she remembered them. The Japanese community lived in the same part of the international settlement, so it is not surprising that she also formed deeper friendships with Japanese women. A photo of Mori, a Japanese woman who was probably married to a foreigner, suggests that she and Eleonore must have had a special relationship (fig. 11).

This reinforces our conclusion that the Haases' circle of friends went beyond Europeans or Americans and included several Chinese and Japanese. It is interesting to note that while there are a number of portraits of Japanese women, Chinese women are largely absent from Eleonore's photographic legacy. Japanese women, who were also part of the expatriate community, had a different status from native Chinese women, who were mostly excluded from all activities outside the home and other social gatherings. There are only two photographs of Chinese women: one pictured with two children beside her in front of the entrance of a Chinese house or other Chinese building (fig. 12) and a beautiful young woman sitting modestly at a table with a cut flower in a vase and a fan in her hand (fig. 13).

While the former may have had a closer relationship to Eleonore, perhaps as the wife of one of her husband's Chinese colleagues in the consulate or other public service, the latter displays a standard pose for Chinese women, whose photos were initially commissioned for private use but soon turned into a commodity produced specifically for the foreign market, usually without the consent or even knowledge of the person in the photograph.⁵⁵ They were transformed into exotic objects, visually attractive for foreign buyers. This therefore makes it unlikely that the woman in the hand-coloured photo was an acquaintance of Eleonore. A similar colonial photographic trend also developed in Japan and many Japanese photographers depicted

Japanese women, in the tradition of the Japanese artists who portrayed beautiful women in ink and colour on silk or paper.⁵⁶ However, the photographs of Japanese women that form part of Eleonore's legacy are not representative of this commercial photographic tradition. They are more personal, and the sitters are mostly photographed in studios in Shanghai, dressed in a kimono, in a modest, elegant and respectful pose and without a pompous background (fig. 14). Handwritten inscriptions with names on some cards also bear witness to the fact that the women belonged to Eleonore's social circle in Shanghai.

While Chinese women are almost absent from Eleonore's legacy, there are several photographs of Chinese men, some with handwritten dedications, sent or given to her after she had already returned to Europe. The greetings are generally in German or French, but Li Dianzhang 李殿璋 (Litiantischang) also wrote a dedication in Chinese, “哈士夫人晒存李殿璋敬赠, 戊申三月” (“Mrs Haas, respectfully presented by Li Dianzhang in March of the Wushen year”) as well as German (fig. 15). This raises the question of whether Eleonore learnt Chinese during her time in Shanghai. In her personalia folder there are some Chinese documents and papers, one of which deals with the laws and regulations of the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), which could speak in favour of her knowing Chinese, but they could also have belonged to her husband, so it is difficult to say for sure. However, the fact that Li Dianzhang wrote the dedication and her name in Chinese indicates that she may have had at least a basic knowledge of the Chinese language or that she was expected to appreciate a note written in Chinese characters.

Li Dianzhang was the Qing government attaché at the embassy in Austria.⁵⁷ He and Eleonore probably met on 1 March 1908, as the signature on his photo indicates. It is difficult to say whether she already knew him from Shanghai or met him only after her return, but she certainly had friendly contact with representatives of the Chinese Qing

55 Cf. Thiriez (1999).

56 Cf. Wakita and Wang (2022, 11–48).

57 Jing and Tian 2020, 75.



Fig. 14: Portrait of a Japanese women Ohana (?), Ye Chung in Shanghai, China, late 19th century. Hand inscription on the back: "Ohana". SI-ZAC/1008, signature 16. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.



Fig. 15: Li Dianzhang, photograph atelier Franc Knes, Vienna, Austria, around 1908. Hand inscription on the back: "Frau General Consul L. Haas zur freundlichen Erinnerung an C. G. Litiantchang, 1 März 1908. 哈士夫人晒存李殿璋敬赠". SI-ZAC/1008, signature 16. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.

government in Vienna, as evidenced by another two photographs in the collection. The official in the photo dated 4 June 1903 has not been identified, but the portrait dated 24 April 1905 (fig. 16) is of Yang Cheng (Yangtcheng), who according to Emil Fischer was “Shanghai’s Foreign Office Commissioner and ex-Minister of China to Austria.”⁵⁸ The inscription on the back of his photograph, dedicated to “Frau General-Consul von Haas”, reveals that it was given to her in Vienna in 1905, confirming that he was in Vienna at the time, most probably serving as the Minister to Austria. Fischer described him as an old friend who helped him obtain the necessary permits to travel to the interior of China.⁵⁹ Given Fischer’s close friendship with the Haases, it is very likely that they all knew each other from Shanghai and that Yang Cheng also belonged to their inner circle of friends.

Another prominent Chinese colleague, Yinchang 廕昌 (1859–1928), who signed his name as Yintchang on the back of his photo, with the dedication “zur freundlichen Erinnerung” and the date 21 May 1891, was a military official and ambassador to Germany who was also appointed the first Minister of War in the late Qing dynasty. He had previously enrolled at the Royal Prussian Military Academy and was sent to the 84th Austrian Infantry Regiment in Vienna as a lieutenant in 1883.⁶⁰ Upon his return to China, he played an important role in negotiating the German claim to Jiaozhou Bay 膠州灣 (Kiautschou Bay) and the harbour of Qingdao in Shandong as a result of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and led the negotiations with Germany on the railway and mining agreements in Shandong Province and the Qingdao concession.⁶¹

Other Chinese colleagues whose photos or postcards are preserved in Eleonore’s folder include Ma Yongfa 馬永發 (Ma Yung Fah), a native of Nanhai (南海) in Guangdong, a diplomat in the late Qing dynasty and the Republic of China,

who held several positions in the consular service in Korea, including as consul there, in Chongjin,⁶² Yang Yulou (photo from the studio in Shanghai), Liu Weh Kwei (on horseback), Liu (?) Ching and several others whose identification is difficult due to the scarcity of data.

Eleonore probably formed most of her Chinese acquaintances through the network of her husband, whose diplomatic work certainly required cooperation with Chinese representatives of various public and state institutions. He is photographed with his Chinese colleague, Judge Cheng (Tseng), whose close relationship with Haas and whose work with him at court sessions are described in the books by Leopold Jedina and Gustav Kreitner, writing about their experiences and contact with Asia.⁶³ They depict Haas as fulfilling his duties as foreign assessor, assisting the Chinese magistrate in the Mixed Court (as mentioned above) in a friendly, conscientious, righteous and impartial manner, so that he was held in high esteem not only by foreigners but also by the Chinese. Not only was Eleonore’s husband respected, however, but the many greetings and dedications she herself received after her return to Europe show that she was also held in high esteem by the Chinese.

Naval officers or commanders of the Austro-Hungarian ships that sailed to East Asian waters also played a special part in the Haases’ life. Not only Josef but also Eleonore was photographed several times with ships’ officers. In one photo, she is sitting on a wooden desk chair, wearing an elegant white dress, a modern round hat and holding a fan in her hand (fig. 17). The inscription reads: “Lola Haas am Bord der ‘Zriny’ 90. Nanking”. Another group photo shows her in the same dress, surrounded by the Zrinyi crew, with Josef Haas in the background. Apart from visiting the crew on the ship, the Haases also invited them to the consulate, as the next two photos from Eleonore’s legacy show (figs. 18 and 19). Here, we see the officers or other crew members of the *Fasana*, who had probably been invited to a party at the consulate

58 Fischer 1941, iii.

59 Ibid.

60 Seuberlich 1971, 569–83.

61 MacMurray 1921, 236–63.

62 *Waibu Zhoukan* 1934, 36.

63 Kaminski and Unterrieder 1980, 275.



Fig. 16: Yang Cheng (Yangtcheng), atelier Thurmann, Vienna, Austria, around 1905. Hand inscription on the back: "Frau General-Consul von Haas Zum freundlichen Andenken Yangtcheng. Wien, den 24. April, 1905". SI-ZAC/1008, signature 16. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.



Fig. 19: Sunday party in front of the Austro-Hungarian Consulate, Shanghai, China, 1888. Hand inscription on the back: "Sonntagspartie vor dem austr.-ung. Ge. Consulate, Shanghai 1888". SI-ZAC/1008, signature 7. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.

by Consul General Haas. The same group of people is photographed again in front of the building in a wittily placed vertical composition with Haas in the front. The inscription reads, “Sonntagspartie vor dem austr.-ung. Ge. Consulate, Shanghai 1888”. Although this photo was taken before Eleonore’s arrival in Shanghai, Haas’s friendly attitude, which was praised by many officers and seamen,⁶⁴ certainly continued after his return from holiday in Europe with his new wife. Eleonore’s personalia folder contains further photographs or documents confirming his and/or their friendly relations with the crews of the *Aurora*, *Zriny*, *Fasana*, and *Kaiserin Elisabeth* and the Spanish warship *Ulloa*.

The naval officer and author Leopold Jedina (1849–1924) seems to have had a special relationship with Josef Haas, as he appears several times in Eleonore’s photographic material, although it is not certain whether she had the opportunity to meet him. Leopold Jedina was an officer on the corvette *Fasana* in East Asia in the years 1887–1889, just two years before Eleonore moved to Shanghai. He was also an instructor of Archduke Leopold Ferdinand, a member of the Habsburg ruling family of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, who was on board the *Fasana* at the time. Jedina later wrote a comprehensive book, *An Asiens Küsten und Fürstenhöfen. Tagebuchblätter von der Reise Sr. Maj. Schiffes ‘Fasana’ und über den Aufenthalt an asiatischen Höfen in den Jahren 1887, 1888 und 1889*, which was published in Vienna and Olomouc in 1891 and in which he vividly describes the voyage of the corvette *Fasana*. He praised Haas as a self-sacrificing, friendly host and accomplished sinologist who, thanks to his 23-year stay, knew the language and customs of the country like no other.⁶⁵

We get a good picture of Josef and Eleonore’s organised social life and the network of people and institutions with which they interacted from the photographs of their activities (e.g. playing tennis, visiting the botanical garden, attending theatre performances and weddings) and—a

special feature indeed—from a collection of more than 40 menus. This certainly deserves to be explored further. For the purposes of this chapter, we will deal only with the various institutional social structures with which the Haases identified. The most interesting—and the one that does not appear in any of the official or state reports—is Freemasonry. The three menus of installation banquets and dinners, all held at the Shanghai Club in December of the three years 1892, 1893 and 1894, show that Josef Haas served as a “Worshipful Brother” in the Northern Lodge of China, No. 570 E.C. and the Tuscan Lodge, No. 1027 (fig. 20). Both lodges were English lodges under the District Grand Master of Northern China, with their headquarters in the Masonic Hall on the Bund, built in 1867.⁶⁶ The Masonic Club, founded in 1882, had a library, reading room, billiard room, bar and other facilities. In the late 19th century, Freemasonry was so influential and flourished in Shanghai to such an extent that plans were made to expand it.⁶⁷ One of its important tasks was running the charity fund, which supported the public schools, known as Masonic schools by 1893, and awarded scholarships.⁶⁸ According to the 1904 travel guide, “the Masonic Body has taken a prominent part in the most striking public functions in Shanghai, such as the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria.”⁶⁹

Membership of two lodges is a clear indication of Haas’s role in these activities. Josef and Eleonore Haas were thus active members of their social circles and cultivated good relations with prominent and representative personalities from England, Scotland, North America, France and other countries. The menu collection reveals they were invited to several important events organised by Shanghai’s international high society. One of these was the Caledonian Ball, held at the Shanghai Club on 1 December 1890. The menu shows the badge of the Order of the Thistle with

64 Benko 1892, 48; Kaminski and Unterrieder 1980, 193.

65 Kaminski and Unterrieder 1980, 193.

66 Cartwright 1908a, 386.

67 Ibid., 390.

68 Ibid.

69 Darwent 1904, 152.

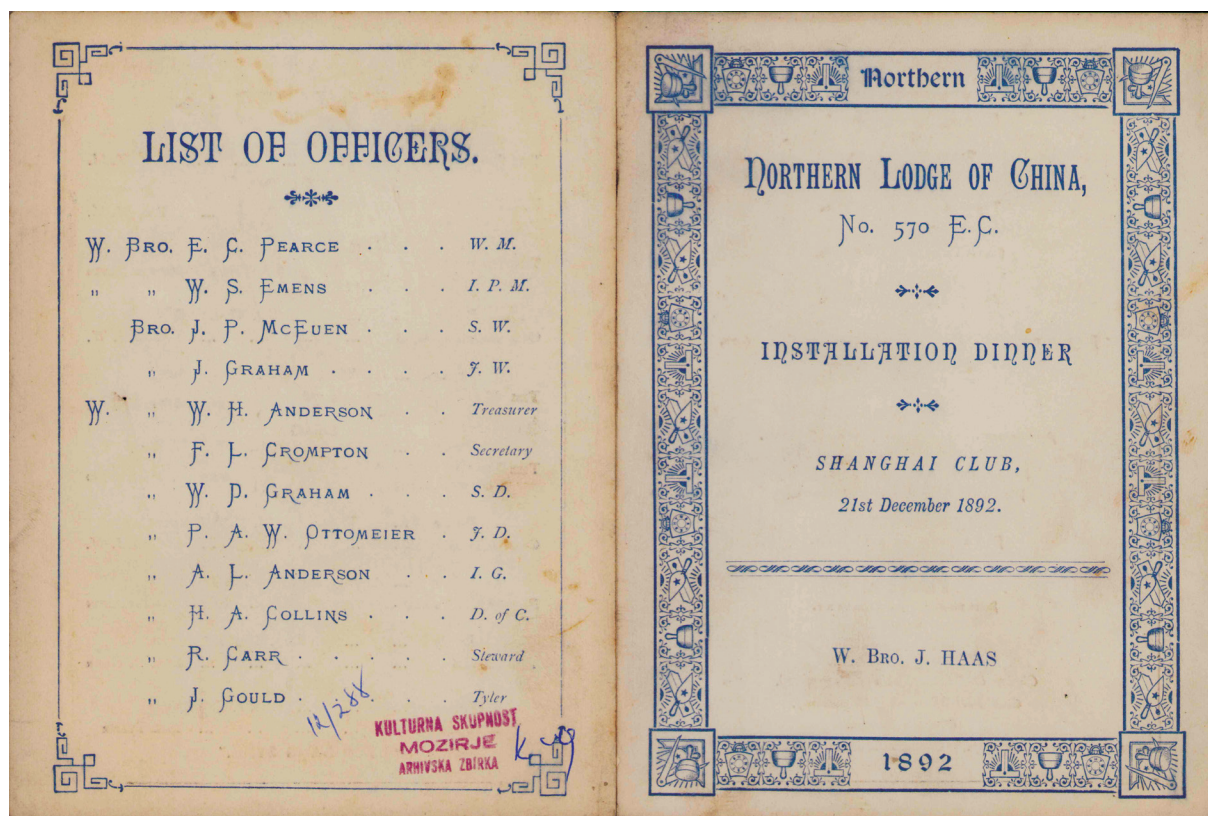


Fig. 20: Front and back cover of the invitation to the installation dinner of the Northern Lodge of China, No. 570 E.C., Shanghai Club, Shanghai, China. 21. 12. 1892. SI-ZAC/1008, signature 29. Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.

St Andrew with the saltire and the Latin motto *Nemo me impune lacessit* ("No one attacks me with impunity"). On 19 December 1894, they attended the Jubilee dinner 1844–1894, which also took place at the Shanghai Club and was most probably organised by the American community, according to the inscription "John A. Lowell" and "Boston, USA" on the left-hand side of the menu.

Both events were held at the Shanghai Club, which was formed in 1862 and was soon to become the largest and most influential gentlemen's club in Shanghai.⁷⁰ In the 19th century, social life was organised around various institutional sports, music, theatre, and masonic and other clubs. In addition to the Shanghai Club, there were many others, such as the Country Club, the Club Concordia, the Masonic Club, the Recreation Club, the Polo Club (to name but a few), which provided

opportunities for the promotion and exchange of political, social and cultural views and, above all, gave people the chance to meet others. The Shanghai Club soon became the centre of business and social life in the foreign settlement. To become a member, a candidate needed either to have lived in Shanghai for six months or to have been a member of another recognised club.⁷¹ Josef Haas was certainly eligible for membership, if not even for honorary membership, a position reserved for ministers, consuls-general, consuls and judges, who could become honorary members at the invitation of the committee,⁷² as confirmed by invitations to several distinguished events in the three-storey red-brick building in the Bund.

The collection of menus in Eleonore's folder thus offers an unparalleled insight into the world of

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Wright and Cartwright 1908, 166.

⁷⁰ Cartwright 1908a, 388.

official social gatherings, dinners, inaugurations and balls, giving a glimpse into the network of institutions and individuals in which the Haases moved. Furthermore, a sketched seating arrangement drawn on the back of two menus shows that Eleonore was also the hostess of such dinners, at the consulate or other venues. Grand diplomatic lunches and receptions were held at the consulate, as confirmed by the handwritten inscriptions on the postcards from Shanghai that Emil Fischer sent to Eleonore (fig. 9). We also get an idea of the Haases' friendly relations with the French community from an invitation to the "Grande Fête Champêtre"—Great Country Festival—organised on Sunday 28 June in honour of Pierre Paul Mignard by the Friends of Duty and Pleasure, under the patronage of the established authorities and with the support of the Orphéon Municipal de Shanghai. The event, which took place in Wusong 吳淞 (Woosung), a treaty port about 20 km north of the present-day city centre of Shanghai, celebrated the inauguration of Pierre's Dock, which was followed by a large banquet in the guardroom and the planting of the first trees in Paul Park. We can infer that the Haases took part in other inauguration ceremonies of newly constructed buildings or parks, too. Their attachment to the French community is also reflected in the menus of the first-class Hôtel des Colonies, situated in the French settlement in Rue Montauban.⁷³

Eleonore Haas would probably have climbed even higher in the social ladder, had it not been for a tragic swimming accident. While on holiday on the island of Putuo, opposite Ningpo, with Eleonore and their friends—Italian consul Ernesto Ghisi, his wife, Mrs Dr. Edkins, Pastor Hackmann, their friend Brandt from the customs department, and a few others—Josef Haas drowned in the sea on 26 July 1896.⁷⁴ The newspaper report preserved in Eleonore's legacy blamed Haas's death on the same typhoon that caused the death of the crew of the German ship *Itis*, which was shipwrecked off the

coast of Shandong.⁷⁵ In November 1898, the *Itis* monument was unveiled in Shanghai to commemorate the death of the crew,⁷⁶ as was a stone obelisk in memory of Josef Haas in the old French cemetery, erected by imperial order of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Ministry. Eleonore did not see the monument, but she was surely aware of it. Haas's popularity and the lasting respect in which he was held is abundantly clear from the fact that some of the Haases' surviving friends gathered here 41 years later, to mark the anniversary of his death.⁷⁷

The Path of the Valuable Collection of Objects

After her husband's death, Eleonore Haas left China. From Shanghai she travelled to Vienna, from there to Graz and then in 1913 to Mozirje.⁷⁸ She and her valuable collection of objects probably travelled by ship from Shanghai to Trieste, and from there by train to Vienna. Later, they would again have been taken by train to Graz and then Celje. From Celje the journey continued by wagon to Mozirje. According to Matija Blagojevič and Cvetka Marjanovič, "Lola came to Mozirje with huge boxes".⁷⁹ This is also indirectly confirmed by Marija Janko's testimony.

Eleonore deposited any boxes with items she did not need or could not use in the paint factory in Mozirje, which was then owned by the Graz industrialist Friedrich Hocke⁸⁰ and which passed

⁷³ Ibid., ix.

⁷⁴ In Memoriam: Josef Ritter von Haas, SI-ZAC/1008, Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.

⁷⁵ Drowned at Sea, SI-ZAC/1008, Fond Eleonore von Haas, Historical Archive Celje.

⁷⁶ Darwent 1904, 6.

⁷⁷ Krause 1937.

⁷⁸ Čeplak Mencin 2012, 90.

⁷⁹ Interviewed by Barbara Trnovec, in Mozirje, on 19 August 2023.

⁸⁰ The company Kemična industrija Mozirje was founded in 1898 by the Graz industrialist Friedrich Hocke. After the First World War, it was taken over by Alojz Goričar, who lived locally, and who then, together with his companions, founded the company Savinjska tovarna barv in lesnih izdelkov Goričar & drugi, which produced earthen paints and wood products. It was nationalised in 1948 and the state company Kemična industrija Mozirje was founded.

to her relative Alojz Goričar after the First World War. She completely furnished the apartment in Štrucl (see above), or Pečnik's house, in which she lived later, with furniture and decorative and useful items that she brought from China. She kept part of her collection in an extra room in this house, while the remaining boxes remained in the factory.

In all, Eleonore kept the objects she brought from China for almost four decades, or until the end of her life. On the basis of the collected testimonies and the preserved material—mostly photographs and documents, and few objects—we can conclude with a very high probability that she was well aware of the value of this collection. At no time in her life did she attempt to sell or give away any objects that she brought to Mozirje, making only the occasional gift of an individual item, and she cared faithfully for it through peace and war. In the 1940s, she intended to take it with her to Graz, but death overtook her.

In 1943, immediately after Eleonore's death, part of her collection was taken by truck to Graz by her relative, Olga Kieslinger, née Goričar. According to Matija Blagojevič and Cvetka Marjanovič, this part of her collection was later fragmented, and the greater part is now most probably preserved somewhere near Innsbruck.⁸¹ Photographs of some of these objects in Graz are kept by Cvetka Marjanovič in Mozirje. The part of the collection that remained in the factory in Mozirje passed into the hands of the last owners of the factory, Bruno (1894–1972) and Fani Goričar (1899–1979). According to various, more or less credible testimonies,⁸² they took from the factory several wooden crates containing items from the collection to their house in the centre of Mozirje after the factory was nationalised in 1948. During Bruno and Fani Goričar's lifetime and especially after their death, the items from the collection were scattered

in many different directions. It is said that objects from the house were also carried around by children from the town, who even organised several flea markets. It is very likely that further research along these paths will lead to the discovery of some objects from the Haas collection, but the only objects from Eleonore's collection in Mozirje currently known to the authors are a few items that she gave to Ani Goričar, Nikolaj Marjanovič's grandmother, which are now in the possession of his wife Cvetka Marjanovič. A textile with embroidered orchids is also in the possession of her daughter Sergeja Marjanovič Pregelj. Apart from that, Matija Blagojevič has some photos and documents that he inherited from his aunt Marija Mary Goričar, the Mozirje Library possesses a translation of the programme of the Vienna World's Fair of 1873 into Chinese by Josef Haas, dated 1872, and some handmade drawings, while Eleonore's personal papers, photographs, postcards and other documents are kept in her personalia folder in the Celje Historical Archive, as discussed above.

The Nature and Acquisition of the Collection: Eleonore's Role in Collecting Activities

Besides enquiring into the current whereabouts of the items in Eleonore's collection, we should also consider how she acquired them, and whether she played an important part in assembling the collection alongside her husband. Although the surviving documents in Celje reveal Eleonore's network of acquaintances and close friends and the significant role she played in Shanghai high society, they tell us nothing about her collecting activities. And yet she managed the transport of many boxes full of all kinds of Chinese artefacts not only to Vienna, but also to a small provincial town in Styria in what was then Austria-Hungary. Although only a few smaller objects are currently known to the authors of this chapter, the surviving photographs of her house and the house of her relatives in Graz, who took over part of her

After joining Cinkarna, the company was renamed Kemija Celje and became a unit of Cinkarna (Kamra 2013).

81 Interviewed by Barbara Trnovec, in Mozirje, on 19 August 2023.

82 They are based on conversations with various interlocutors from Mozirje, conducted by Barbara Trnovec in the period July–September 2024.



Figs. 21a and 21b: Set of porcelain and of decorative plates, photographed in Mozirje or Celje. 1913–1943. Collection of Eleonore Haas. Photographs kept by Matija Blagojevič in Mozirje.

collection after her death, show a wide variety of objects, including porcelain vases and plates, Buddhist sculptures and other religious artefacts, incense burners, bronze bells, silk robes with embroidery, embroidered screens and even carved furniture (figs. 3, 21–29). Were all these objects acquired by Eleonore or are they an inheritance from her husband? Were they both closely involved in the collecting activities?

Further research in Josef Haas's personalia folder, which is kept in the State Archives in Vienna, shows that he bequeathed several boxes of Chinese artefacts, books and other curiosities to his wife. In the section of his Will entitled *Verhaltung bei Ausführung meines Testamentes* ("Conduct in the execution of my Will"), he clearly instructed the

Schönbergers, who kept the boxes, to hand them over to his wife:

The Schönbergers also have a few boxes that should be given to my wife without further ado; they contain artefacts (?), books and curiosities. The Schönbergers have kindly taken custody of the boxes; there is also a box of mine in the Court Museum for safe-keeping (books, bronze drum), which my wife is to take with her. I ask my wife not to give it to the Court Museum. I have done more for the museum than any other consul. The museum [those responsible there] lacks gratitude.⁸³

83 Josef Haas Personalia Folder. Austrian State Archive.



Fig. 22: Bronze incense burner. China. Qing dynasty (?). Collection of Eleonore Haas. Kept in Graz (?). Photograph kept by Cvetka Marjanovič in Mozirje.

In the same document we also read the instructions to his wife to “take the boxes in the custody of Mr Eiter to Europe”, while another box of precious bronzes was placed in the custody of Giuseppe Bassevi in Trieste, a businessman who had founded a large sugar export company.⁸⁴ This makes it very likely, therefore, that many of the boxes Eleonore brought to Mozirje were bequeathed to her by her husband. Josef Haas was one of the main suppliers of Chinese objects to the Natural History Museum in Vienna and other museums in Austria-Hungary. The shipping documents kept in the archives of the Viennese Natural History Museum show that he sent at least 68 crates of natural history, ethnographic, zoological and other museum objects

from Shanghai or Hong Kong to Trieste via the Austro-Hungarian Lloyd’s Steamship Company.⁸⁵ During his one-year service in Korea (1883–1884), he also acquired Korean objects for the Natural History Museum, including three Korean skulls from graves in or near Seoul.⁸⁶ According to the *Chronicle & Directory for China, Japan & the Philippines* of 1877, Haas was also the only representative for the Art Union of Bohemia.⁸⁷ His input can also be seen in Budapest in the garden of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, where he supported Ferenc Hopp (1833–1919) with the construction of the Chinese Moon Gate, the most representative part of the villa’s garden, by helping him to buy roof tiles, decorations, stone lions and stone tablets directly from China.⁸⁸

It is safe to assume that Josef Haas was also the author of the anonymous 52-page study in the Celje Historical Archive on Chinese numismatics and the early history of China from the legendary Chinese ruler Yandi 炎帝 to the middle period of the Tang dynasty (618–907), given his excellent command of the Chinese language, and the fact that he was also a member of the Numismatic Society in Vienna and the renowned North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in Shanghai.⁸⁹ Although it was difficult to become a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, as members had to be recommended and approved by the Council, Haas joined as early as 1869 and served as Vice-President from 1882, later even being appointed Honorary Librarian.⁹⁰ His contribution to the Society is also mentioned by Arnold Wright and H. A. Cartwright, in the context of

85 1 box of scientific objects, 7 boxes of natural historical objects, 3 boxes of sundries, 2 boxes of Chinese household items, 5 boxes of museum goods, 6 packages of zoological objects, 29 packages of ethnographical objects, 14 packages containing ethnographical and zoological objects and 1 case containing herbarium (Haas Josef, Archive of the Natural History Museum, Vienna).

86 Neff 2020, 60.

87 “The Shanghai Directory” 1877, 291.

88 See chapter in this book by Gyorgyi Fajcsák.

89 Deusch 2017, 308.

90 Neff 2020, 52, 55 and 64; Deusch 2017, 308.

84 (*Neuigkeits*) *Welt Blatt* 1909, 8.

the detailed description of the treaty harbours in China which they published in 1908.⁹¹

Josef Haas was thus certainly the main agent for the Austro-Hungarian institutions in their search for Chinese artefacts. In recognition of his achievements in enriching the collections of the Natural History Museum in Vienna, he was even awarded the Order of the Iron Crown III Class in 1889.⁹² It is interesting to note, however, that the correspondence between Haas and the Natural History Museum intensified after 1890, one year after his marriage to Eleonore.⁹³ Moreover, all 68 crates of objects sent to the Natural History Museum, whose shipping records have been preserved, were sent between 1890 and 1895, the time when Eleonore was with him in Shanghai.⁹⁴ Was he supported and encouraged by his wife after her arrival in Shanghai? As Haas was busy with numerous commercial, business, diplomatic and other matters and worked intensively from morning to night,⁹⁵ it is quite possible that Eleonore took over some of his responsibilities related to the selection and acquisition of objects.

When Eleonore arrived in the multinational and cosmopolitan city of Shanghai, she will have found herself at the centre of a dynamic art market, with numerous Chinese and Japanese shops selling various types of objects. This must have made a significant impact as she started a new life, trying to adapt to a new culture that was so different from anything she had experienced before. The 1904 travel guide to Shanghai directs the tourist to many Chinese, Japanese and Indian “curiosities” with “high-class goods”, mostly located along Nanjing Road, with some also on Jiangsu (Kiangse) or Sichuan (Szechuen) Roads. They offered a variety of items, such as silver and gold, but also “Cantonese silks, blackwood and porcelain, ivory, jewellery,

Ningpo inlaid work.”⁹⁶ The guidebook specifically mentions shops with Chinese brass, porcelain, inlaid work, cloisonné bamboo, and lacquerware, and refers to Lee Tai on Nanjing Road or shops on Jiangsu and Sichuan Roads. There were also shops in the French settlement, and the guide advises travellers to visit the numerous pawnbrokers, too.⁹⁷ Eleonore would certainly have been familiar with the variety of merchants, from whom she most probably bought beautifully embroidered silk robes, as we can see from the surviving photographs and four pieces of embroidered textiles preserved in Mozirje. One of them shows a woman’s jacket embroidered with flowers on blue silk (fig. 23), two others present decorative ribbons with flowers, bats, butterflies, pavilions and other motifs with auspicious meanings, while a silk embroidery in frame depicts orchids. The inscription (*Guangxu jiu nian xing yue* 光绪九年杏月) dates this piece to February of the ninth year of the Guangxu Emperor (1875–1908), i.e. 1883. The inscription below (*Shenmen shenshi zhu* 沈門沈氏助) indicates the workshop, or that it was made in the Shen embroidery style. This is one of the traditional craft traditions of embroidery, which originated in the city of Suzhou in southern China, near Shanghai. Other photographs showing Eleonore and her friends in Chinese clothing and with fans indicate that she had quite a large collection of Chinese clothing, shoes, hats and other textiles, including imperial and official robes with rank badges. She must have chosen many of these herself. She was surrounded by high society, in a milieu in which it was customary to decorate one’s home with Chinese antiques.

Considering how Eleonore furnished her home in Mozirje—and the effort she must have put into transporting the objects across the globe, given the long distance, long journey time and paucity of travel options—it is very likely that Chinese objects also found their way into the decoration of her married living quarters in Shanghai, although there are no photographs to confirm this. We do

91 Cartwright 1908a, 386.

92 Deusch 2017, 310.

93 See Haas Josef, Archive of the Natural History Museum, Vienna.

94 Ibid.

95 Kaminski 1980, 274.

96 Darwent 1904, xviii, xix.

97 Ibid, xix.



Fig. 23: Woman's jacket embroidered with flowers on blue silk, China, Qing dynasty. Collection of Eleonore Haas. Kept by Cvetka Marjanovič in Mozirje.

have a photograph of Eleonore posing with a friend in Chinese dress in front of a four-panel folding screen with embroidered bird-and-flower motifs, but it is not clear where it was taken. It could be from Shanghai, but her flats in Vienna or Graz are also possible locations (fig. 24).

The two black-and-white photographs of Eleonore's house in Mozirje do, however, provide a valuable insight into how she displayed Chinese objects, which objects she favoured and how her collection defined her living space (figs. 3 and 25). Both are undated and they contain no information about the precise location, but it is clear that two different rooms were furnished with Chinese artefacts. This is consistent with the statement by Marija Janko, who mentioned that Eleonore lived in two rooms, while at the same time she had another room upstairs where she kept other artefacts. In addition, the arrangement of the furniture and the framed pictures on the walls confirm that two of the photographed rooms were her living quarters. In both living rooms, there was a western-style

table in the centre of the room with several pieces of porcelain on it. The display cabinets next to the wall in both rooms were filled with porcelain and cloisonné vases, jars and bowls, as well as Buddhist sculptures. Various types of vessels were also placed above the two cabinets. The display cabinet with the Buddhist sculptures is richly carved and decorated with many motifs and has numerous open shelves, cabinets and drawers. It features a type of furniture known in China as *duobaoge* 多寶閣 ("shelf of many treasures or display cabinet"), which appeared in the Qing dynasty and was used specifically to display antiques in multiple compartments, while still giving the whole arrangement the appearance of a single unit. Eleonore achieved a similar effect by placing two Buddhist figures in the centre of the two open shelves and placing other objects next to them. Next to the cabinet was a large porcelain vase with a large porcelain bowl on top. In the other photo, with four friends in Chinese dress, we see a large porcelain plate on the wall above the silk hanging depicting immortals.



Fig. 24: Eleonore and her friend in front of the panel. Photographed in Shanghai, Vienna or Graz, late 19th or early 20th century. Photograph kept by Matija Blagojevič in Mozirje.



Fig. 25: One of two rooms with Chinese objects in Mozirje. Photograph kept by Matija Blagojevič in Mozirje.

Four further black-and-white photographs show four different sets of objects: porcelain vases, decorative plates, Buddhist and other religious sculptures, and textile pieces (figs. 21, 26 and 27). The photographs were taken in Mozirje or Celje. It seems that Eleonore grouped the most representative objects into four sets, probably in order to take photographs. The photograph of sculptures reveals quite a number of seated Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, that might date back to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). One of them is Cundī, a female Indian Buddhist deity who is depicted with eighteen arms, each wielding a tool symbolising skilful means, while eighteen arms also represent the eighteen merits for attaining Buddhahood. There are also some other sculptures of popular belief, such as the god of longevity Shouxing (壽星), one of the three stellar gods collectively known as Fulusou (福祿壽). He is usually depicted as a bearded old man with a high forehead. Other attributes

include a curved staff, a peach of immortality, a tortoise and a stag as further symbols of longevity. While these are all old black-and-white photographs, the colour photographs from Graz give an insight into the richness of colour in her home as well as the type of objects she displayed. As far as porcelain is concerned, she seems to have favoured blue-and-white porcelain, although several other coloured porcelain vases also adorned her living spaces (fig. 29).

All this places Eleonore among the more systematic collectors who are able to organise and compare their acquired objects in order to distinguish some details and make identifications.⁹⁸ She was clearly personally attached to the objects and probably played an important role in their acquisition. Moreover, although she gave some objects to her friends and relatives on special occasions, she did not give or sell a single object from her

⁹⁸ Pearce 1992, 84.



Fig. 26: Set of Buddhist and other religious sculptures. Photograph in Mozirje or Celje. 1913–1943. Collection of Eleonore Haas. Photograph kept by Matija Blagojevič in Mozirje.

extensive collection to museums—which would certainly have been interested in acquiring them—but preferred to keep the collection in its entirety at home despite her financial issues. There is only one object in the Weltmuseum (formerly a department of the Natural History Museum) in Vienna that Eleonore sold after her husband's death. It is the bronze drum (fig. 28). This must be the drum that Haas had mentioned in his Will with the request that it not be given to the museum, as he had already sent and donated more to the museum than any other consul. As it was already in the Natural History Museum together with European, Japanese and Chinese books at the time of Haas' death, Eleonore probably decided to sell it for practical reasons. She also sold books to the



Fig. 27: Set of textile pieces with embroidery. Photograph in Mozirje or Celje. 1913–1943. Collection of Eleonore Haas. Photograph kept by Matija Blagojevič in Mozirje.

Natural History Museum and the Court Library, as can be seen from the correspondence of 1898 between Franz Heger (1853–1931), the Head of the Anthropological-Ethnographic department of the Natural History Museum, and Rudolf Geyer, who worked in the Court Library.⁹⁹

Conclusion

We can conclude that Eleonore Haas was not just a passive observer of her husband's collecting activities for the museums but must have played an active role in selecting the objects, probably also those that were packed in the boxes for the Natural History

⁹⁹ Heger 1898; Geyer 1898.

Museum. Most of these “ethnographic” objects, as they were labelled in the shipping documents, are now in the Weltmuseum in Vienna. It is interesting to note that the Haas collection in the museum today (e.g. porcelain and cloisonné vases and other vessels, religious sculptures, and silk embroideries) contains objects similar in type, style and decoration to those Eleonore kept at home. Her personal taste and her preference for blue-and-white porcelain, Buddhist sculptures and silk embroideries are thus also reflected in the collection of the Weltmuseum.

How large Eleonore’s collection was, how it was dispersed and where it ended up will be the subject of further research. As already mentioned, she brought so many objects to Mozirje that she had to store them in the factory. Part of the collection went to Austria, part was scattered around Mozirje. How many pieces she had already passed on to her friends and relatives in Vienna and Graz is difficult to say, but as is so often the case when objects are

transported and moved—in her case not just to one place, but to several—some were most probably lost. What kind of objects were kept in the factory also requires further investigation, but we can infer from the selection with which Eleonore furnished her house and from the Haas collection in the Weltmuseum that the boxes would have contained similar types of objects, or simply objects that did not fit into the furnishings of her home because of their size, value or character. There must also have been more valuable bronzes. According to Haas’ Will, Eleonore should have taken charge of another box of bronzes that was kept in Trieste. Questions relating to the numismatic collection also remain unanswered. A comprehensive study on numismatics, which deals in detail with coins from different periods and contains sketches of various coins, is kept in Eleonore’s personalia folder in Celje. This would indicate that the Haases had also acquired a coin collection. A letter from the Austro-Hungarian



Fig. 28: Bronze drum. D. 47,7 cm; H. 28 cm, China. Collection of Eleonore Haas, inv. no. 63484. Weltmuseum Wien. Photograph by Clemens Radauer. ©KHM-Museumsverband.



Fig. 29: Porcelain vase. China, Qing dynasty. Collection of Eleonore Haas. Kept in Graz. Photograph kept by Cvetka Marjanovič in Mozirje.

consulate in Shanghai dated 30 November 1897 reveals that Eleonore was to receive a box of coins from Shanghai, as they had not managed to sell them after Josef Haas's death.¹⁰⁰ Whether or not she received them remains a mystery. Perhaps they were stored together with many other objects in the paint factory in Mozirje.

A more in-depth analysis of the size and value of her collection will therefore not be possible unless the items from her collection which have been scattered across Slovenia and Austria can be discovered and identified, piece by piece. In addition to the textiles mentioned above, there are currently only a few objects left in Mozirje: a small porcelain cup set into a metal mug, a metal vase and a wooden plaque with the inscription expressing blessing

and hope that the moon will always be round and people will always be healthy (*yue xi chang yuan ren xi jian* 月喜長圓人喜健).¹⁰¹ The rest can only be seen in old photographs, which makes it difficult to accurately assess the collection. However, the surviving photographs show that the collection comprises blue and white porcelain, some of which was probably made in Jingdezhen (景德鎮) during the Kangxi period (r. 1661–1722), bronze and porcelain sculptures, that might date back to Ming dynasty, embroidered textiles, particularly Qing imperial and official robes with rank badges and richly carved furniture from Qing dynasty. The objects were systematically arranged in sets that show a preference for four types of objects: porcelain, plates, sculptures and textiles. Whilst some of them, such as embroidery, furniture and some porcelain vases, were contemporary and date from the 19th century, others—especially Buddhist sculptures and blue-and-white porcelain—date from earlier periods. All in all, we hold out hopes that one of the many trails we are pursuing will lead to the missing treasures that will allow us to analyse Eleonore's collection in more detail.

100 Letter from General Consulate in Shanghai, dated 30 November 1897. Josef Haas Personalia Folder.

101 There were a pair of wooden plaques, one was taken to Graz.

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