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Artefacts from East Asia in public collections

Approaches from Austria

After the annexation of Austria to the National Socialist German Reich, Caroline Czeczowiczka (1896–1979) and her husband, the industrialist Edwin Czeczowiczka (1877–1971), had to flee to England because of their Jewish origins. During a stay in Vienna in 1953, Caroline Czeczowiczka visited the Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) and discovered in a display case two valuable Chinese tomb figures from her own art collection, which had been expropriated during the National Socialist era. The Viennese dealer Anton Exner (1882–1952), who specialized in artefacts from East Asia, had imported the two pieces from China in 1927 and subsequently sold them to the Czeczowiczkas.

In 1946, the two tomb figures had gone to the Staatliche Kunstgewerbemuseum in Vienna (later MAK) as part of an extensive donation made by Anton Exner. Subsequently, the museum refused to return them to their former owners, arguing that it had acquired them “in good faith”. Under the title “Arisierte Grabfiguren in der Museums vitrine” (“Aryanized grave figures in the museum showcase”), the newspaper *Neues Österreich* reported in detail on the ensuing restitution proceedings at the end of 1953. Kommerzialrat Förster¹, another dealer specializing in East Asian artefacts, had heavily incriminated Anton Exner, pointing to the fact that Exner had been the only expert on East Asian art in Vienna after 1938 and had appraised numerous objects owned by persecuted Jews, also buying items at his own appraisal prices. After the annexation, Anton Exner and his son Walter (1911–2003), whose collecting passion had become almost obsessive, endeavoured to establish a new museum dedicated to East Asian art in Vienna (a project that was not realized). Förster confirmed that the two unique Chinese tomb figures – a princess from the Tang period and two war horses – had without any doubt belonged to the Czeczowiczka family. Finally, a settlement was reached and the two figures were restituted in 1959.²

Anton and Walter Exner also built up the most important private collection of East Asian artefacts in Austria in the interwar period. There was no major exhibition dedicated to such objects in which the Exner collection was not prominently represented with loans. The majority of the collection finally ended up in two Viennese museums (see below). The Austrian Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) owns around 3,700 items from this source, covering practically all branches and periods of Far Eastern art, especially of China and Japan, while the Weltmuseum Wien lists artefacts of this provenance under 177 inventory numbers.³



Fig. 1 Buddhist deity (Jizō), bronze, gold-plated, 1318, from the Exner collection in the MAK, Vienna © MAK

Anton and Walter Exner's collections in the two museums was the subject of intensive provenance research under the Austrian Art Restitution Act.⁴ The aim was to identify objects that had possibly been seized during or as a result of the National Socialist rule. It is thought that the majority of the Exner collection was acquired during journeys by the Exners to Asia and that only a smaller part came from acquisitions in Western countries. But precisely this smaller part would have been – in theory – of particular interest for the provenance research, as problematic acquisitions during the National Socialist era could not be ruled out. Conversely, all objects that the Exners had provably and directly acquired in Asia could be classified as “unobjectionable” in the meaning of the Art Restitution Act.⁵ But this seemingly simple scheme proved to be of little help in practice, because there is not a single object in these huge collections with a clear indication of provenance.

Moreover, this approach would hardly have yielded any insights with regard to the circumstances under which the Exners acquired the artefacts in Asia. Very little is known about this or about their business partners there and their relationship with the local authorities. These questions are gaining in importance, however, in the growing debate on colonial looted property in public collections.

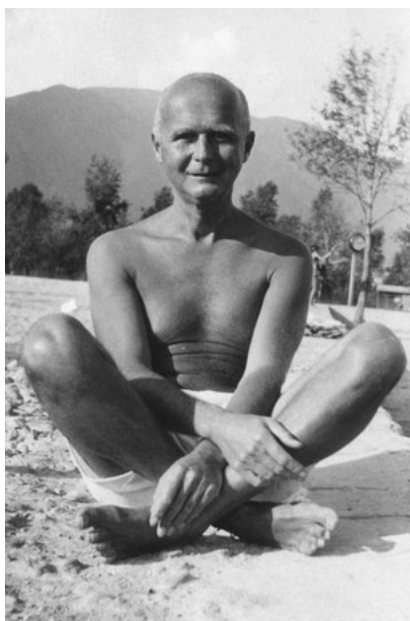


Fig. 2 The banker and collector Eduard von der Heydt on Monte Verità in Ascona, 1930 (Eduard von der Heydt am Lido di Ascona, Museum Rietberg, Zürich)

Another extensive and prominent collection of non-European art, especially from Asia, was assembled by Eduard von der Heydt (1882–1964). Born in Wuppertal, Germany, von der Heydt was a politically conservative banker and a status-conscious aristocrat, but at the same time led the life of a bohemian and cosmopolitan. After the end of the Second World War, he dedicated his large non-European collection to the city of Zürich, which opened the Museum Rietberg in 1952 to create a worthy location for it.⁶

As far as the information on provenance is concerned, there are some major differences between the Exner and the von der Heydt collections. Although von der Heydt was interested throughout his life with art from all over the world – New Guinea, Japan, China, India, Egypt, the Congo, Cameroon and Mexico – he never once travelled to any of these countries, but assembled his collection

from around 1920 through purchases from gallery owners in European capitals and occasionally in New York, in particular from C. T. Loo (see below) and Paul Mallon in Paris and New York.

Von der Heydt's collection in the Rietberg Museum in Zurich is also the subject of intensive provenance research. It is much better documented than the Exner collection, since inventories were created at an early stage, recording also when and from whom von der Heydt had purchased the respective items. Notwithstanding these fundamental differences, the same problem arises when it comes to another crucial aspect: the circumstances of acquisition in the respective countries of origin remain largely unclear.

Since objects from East Asia can be found in practically all ethnological museums and museums of applied arts around the world, these institutions face similar challenges. In this context, it is worthwhile reviewing the historical development.

Colonial exploitation in Asia

Trade relations between East Asia and Europe have existed since antiquity. Silk and spices in particular reached Europe via the Silk Road; later it was mainly porcelain and tea. The opening up of a direct sea route by the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century laid the foundation for the organized export of East Asian goods and crafts – initially of objects produced according to Western models – to Europe.

But the activities of Western traders were subject to severe restrictions. Until the forced opening of China in 1842, foreigners were allowed to trade there only between October and March on a small peninsula in Canton and exclusively with “export goods”. According to Christine Howald, original objects, which were considered works of art in China itself, were not allowed to be traded. As she points out, this also had to do with the social function of art in China, which reflected the hierarchies there and was not intended for the eyes of foreigners.

Initially, the interest of the Chinese in European products was low, while foreign traders had to pay high taxes exclusively in silver for their activities in China and for imports, which in turn led to a shortage of silver on the world market. The British therefore had begun to import opium, produced as a monopoly by their East India Company in Bengal and easy to transport, to China and to use it as means of payment. The Chinese government’s ban on the opium trade because of the far-reaching health and social consequences led to the First Opium War (1839–42). The British Navy defeated the Chinese thanks to its technologically superior ships and weapons. After conquering strategically important coastal cities, the British government forced China to sign the Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking) in 1842 and the Treaty of Humen in 1843, the first of the “unequal treaties”. Through these, China lost sovereignty over its own foreign trade and had to open its own markets to Britain and other European powers.

These events initiated the decline of China, until then the unchallenged hegemonic power of Asia, into an informal colony of foreign countries. China had to accept the presence of these powers with extraterritorial rights and their own jurisdiction in the treaty ports (for example in Canton and Shanghai).⁷ In the course of the nineteenth century, up to eighty such ports had to be made accessible to Europeans, Americans, Russians and the Japanese. The merchants were followed by diplomats, missionaries, doctors and experts, some of whom created the first extensive Asian collections.

A key event behind the growing enthusiasm for East Asian arts and crafts in Europe was paradoxically the looting and destruction of China’s most beautiful palace complex, the old Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan – “Garden of Perfect Brightness”) in the northwest of Beijing at the end of the Second Opium War (1856–60), in October 1860, by French and British army regiments.⁸

The British natural scientist, ornithologist and zoologist Robert Swinhoe (1836–1877), who had accompanied the army of his country as a translator, published his impressions in his *Narrative of the North China Campaign of 1860*.⁹ The report provides vivid testimony of the ruthless actions of the soldiers and their greed for booty. In 1862, the journal *Oesterreichischer Soldatenfreund: Zeitschrift für militärische Interessen* published excerpts from Swinhoe's account in German translation.

General Montauban, the commander-in-chief of the French expeditionary corps in China, had led Swinhoe through the Summer Palace.¹⁰ Montauban had collected some of the most splendid items found there (at the time called “curiosities”) to be distributed between the Queen of Great Britain and the French Emperor. According to Swinhoe, the French officers began to grab anything that caught their eye. Montauban repeatedly gave assurance that he had strictly forbidden his troops from looting until the British general Sir Hope Grant (1808–75)¹¹ arrived with his troops, so that everyone would have an equal chance of getting a part of the loot. But, as Swinhoe critically noted, the order was not obeyed, while the smallest infringements by locals were immediately punished. A Chinese man who had stolen a pair of old shoes from the imperial buildings was beaten by the general with a Spanish cane. Swinhoe continued to report on the events of 7 October 1860, when the Summer Palace was exposed to excessive looting by all:

“[...] the General now made no objection to looting. [...] the place was open to ravages of any and all. What a terrible scene of destruction presented itself! [...] Officers and men, English and French, were rushing about in a most unbecoming manner, each eager for the acquisition of valuables. Most of the Frenchmen were armed with large clubs, and what they could not carry away, they smashed to atoms.”¹²

It was not possible to move all the loot away, and so locals also participated in the raid:

“Chinesen aus den umliegenden Dörfern drängten sich haufenweise herbei, und vergrößerten die Zahl der Beutelustigen, und Hunderte derselben gingen den ganzen Tag über mit schwerer Beute beladen ab und zu. Nachdem die Plünderung einige Zeit gedauert, wurden die leicht tragbaren werthvollen Gegenstände seltener, und bald griff man die Eingebornen auf als Träger für die größeren Seltenheiten.”¹³

According to Swinhoe, French soldiers had begun a flourishing trade in precious looted items:

“Man durfte den ersten besten französischen Soldaten nur fragen, ob er etwas zu verkaufen habe, und bald brachte er goldene Uhren, Juwelenschnüre, Nephrit-Ornamente oder Pelze zum Vorschein, und viele britische Offiziere, welche verfügbare Dollars hatten, fanden schnell Mittel, dieselben für Gegenstände größeren Werths im französischen Lager auszutauschen.”¹⁴

When the French had completed their work of destruction inside the palace, they set fire to the Emperor's private flat, as Swinhoe further reported. The soldiers had also extended their looting to the surrounding villages.

There was much dissatisfaction among the different members of the British army, whose shares of the prey had turned out to be very uneven. In order to compensate for those whose duties had prevented them from sharing in the work of spoliation, orders were issued to call in all the loot acquired by the officers, appealing to their honour. A sale was then organized of all the articles collected by a commission and the booty called in:

“Eine Kommission von Beute-Aufsehern war von Sir Hope Grant zu dem Zweck gebildet worden, um Seltsamkeiten zu sammeln und zum Besten des Heers über dieselben zu verfügen; die Offiziere, aus denen sie bestand, waren den ganzen Tag hindurch mit der Auswahl des noch unbeschädigt Gebliebenen beschäftigt, während Hunderte anderer auf eigene Rechnung Beute machten.”¹⁵

All the British loot was first collected and then displayed at the British headquarters, the Lama Temple at Andingmen. Among the treasures on display were jade ornaments, bronzes, gold and silver figures and statuettes, fine collections of furs and immense quantities of silk and crape of various colours, with several of the imperial yellow, a colour that, according to Chinese law, was reserved exclusively for the use of the Emperor.

The loot was auctioned on the spot and the sums of money obtained distributed “fairly”. Each of the officers and other enlisted men had the option of reacquiring their spoils at a price determined by the commission. The two auctions lasted from 10 to 12 October 1860 and the prices achieved were “fabulous”. Of the 93,000 dollars raised, two-thirds was reserved for the officers, according to Swinhoe. The money was to be distributed in proportionate shares to all those who had served actively in the capture of the palace.

As Howald notes in a commentary, Swinhoe, as a member of the British corps, was particularly critical of the French actions. His account also makes clear that in addition to items of high material value, artefacts of great political symbolism, such as state robes or seals, attracted particular interest.

Normally, after looting in the war effort, all objects were inventoried and a public auction was organized after the return to England, where every sale was recorded. Subsequently, the prize money was distributed to the army members involved in the war campaign according to their ranks. However, after the looting of the Summer Palace in 1860, the British army did not follow the usual procedure. In Beijing, the auctions as well as the distribution of the prize money were carried out on the spot. Looted objects were converted into prizes (bonuses) for military merit and thus had a military-legal status.¹⁶

Many of the stolen items made their way to Europe, where some of them were sold at large auctions in London and Paris from the beginning of 1861. This brought hitherto completely unknown types of objects to the European market. Today it is no longer possible to determine how many artefacts from the Summer Palace were transferred to Europe at that time – about one million objects according to the estimates of Western scholars, one and a half million according to Chinese figures. It is also difficult to determine who exactly took most of the objects from the old Summer Palace, as Howald emphasizes: “Did an allied Western soldier, i.e. a Briton or a Frenchman or an Indian – many Indians served in the British army – steal the object, or was it the Chinese residents? It is also extremely difficult to trace the circumstances under which it reached Europe and how it then came onto the market.”¹⁷

Austria-Hungary's ambitions in the Far East

The accession of Wilhelm II also marked the beginning of an era of German imperialistic politics. In November 1897, German troops occupied Kiautschou in the south of the Shandong Peninsula. With the treaty of 6 March 1898, the Qing Dynasty “leased” the bay with the capital Tsingtao to the German Empire for ninety-nine years and granted it full sovereignty over the area. Kiautschou was placed under imperial protection and thus resembled the other colonies of the German Empire in legal terms.¹⁸

Industrialization and the modern imperialism of the nineteenth century with the division of the world into spheres of influence of different great powers were also important triggers for Austria-Hungary's interest in the East Asian region. While large parts of Africa were formally divided among the European states, they initially sought informal rule through economic penetration in East Asia.

The forced opening of Chinese ports in 1842 and of Japanese ports in 1854 had nurtured the hopes of Austrian merchants for lucrative trade relations with the East Asian countries and for opening up new sales markets for domestic products and manufactures. An important impulse was the circumnavigation of the world by the frigate *Novara* from 1857 to 1859.¹⁹ The collection of artefacts assembled during the journey could be publicly viewed in the Augarten in Vienna in 1860/61.²⁰

Even before the return of the *Novara*, the Trieste chamber of commerce in particular pushed for the conclusion of trade and shipping agreements with China, Japan and Siam. The commander of the *Novara*, Bernhard Freiherr von Wüllerstorff-Urbair (1816–1883), who became minister of trade in 1865, assumed that such treaties could only be enforced by military means. One of the main goals of the East Asia expedition approved by Emperor Franz Josef I in 1868 was to protect the rights of Austrian subjects in countries in the Far East said to be “situated outside the zone of modern civilization”, by concluding favourable peace, trade and shipping treaties, following the example of other European nations and of the United States of North America.²¹ In October 1868, the frigate *Donau* and the corvette *Erzherzog Friedrich* set sail from Trieste. However, contracts concluded with Siam, China and Japan in 1869 and the establishment of Austro-Hungarian delegations in China and Japan did not bring the hoped-for economic success.

China’s loss of control of Korea to Japan after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 was used by European states, including Austria, to increase their influence in China. Territories were occupied and railway concessions distributed among the various powers. China was thus finally about to sink to the status of a colony.²² The American missionaries in particular had stirred up trouble by interfering with the Chinese local communities and family traditions, while pursuing real economic interests. The Chinese did not benefit from technology, because it was in the service of foreigners. The railways made thousands of coolies unemployed, and the ancestral graves of their ancestors were not spared during construction work.²³

By the end of the nineteenth century, resistance to foreign interference formed, especially in the northern provinces of China, with a secret society called Yihetuan, later known abroad as the Boxers, gaining particular prominence. The movement emerged as a kind of self-defence organization and had a strong mystical component. Eventually, what today would be called an anti-imperialist element came more and more to the fore.

At the end of 1899, an uprising rapidly spread towards the major cities of Beijing and Tianjin. Railway and telegraph lines were destroyed, foreign engineers and missionaries as well as Chinese Christians were killed. In June 1900, strong Boxer units were assembled in Beijing. After the German envoy Clemens von Ketteler (1853–1900)

was assassinated, Emperor Wilhelm II called for the bloody suppression of the Boxer Rebellion by German troops. On 10 June, an allied force of around 2,000 men under British Vice-Admiral Edward Hobart Seymour (1840–1929) set off for Beijing, but had to withdraw to Tianjin after skirmishes with the Boxers. On 21 June, China declared war on the eleven foreign powers involved, among them England, France, Russia, Japan, Austria, Italy, the USA and the German Empire. This marked the beginning of a siege of the legation quarter of Beijing that lasted about eight weeks. The Austrian cruiser *Zenta* also sent small numbers of troops to protect the legation. On 14 July 1900, Tianjin was captured by the allied forces. In August, a relief army of 18,000 troops made up of newly landed troops marched into Beijing and liberated the besieged legation quarter. The resistance of the militarily inexperienced Boxers quickly collapsed. Emperor Ci Xi fled, and the battle was decided in favour of the foreign troops. They subsequently undertook “punitive expeditions” in the wider surroundings of the city until the beginning of 1901.²⁴

The great indignation abroad about the atrocities allegedly committed by the Chinese was also reflected in Austrian press reports. The *Neues Wiener Journal* wrote: “The abomination has become a reality – of that there can be no doubt. All envoys and foreigners in Peking have been brutally slaughtered. (‘Das Gräßliche ist – darüber kann kaum ein Zweifel mehr herrschen – Ereigniß geworden. Alle Gesandten und Fremden überhaupt in Peking sind grausam hingeschlachtet.’)²⁵

One of the few Europeans who did not join in the condemnation of China at that time was the representative of Austria-Hungary in China, Arthur von Rosthorn (1862–1945). He had studied Sinology and afterwards worked for the Chinese customs service. After Japan’s war of aggression against China and the peace treaty of 1895, which was unfavourable for China, Austria-Hungary had decided that the legation in Tokyo should no longer also be responsible for China. In 1896, Rosthorn, who had been appointed legation secretary, was made responsible for setting up the new legation as chargé d’affaires. Rosthorn was an opponent of the foreign policy of aggression in China and was able to prevent the implementation of plans by the Navy Section in the War Ministry in Vienna to occupy a Chinese port.

During the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, Rosthorn was in charge of the legation in Beijing and narrowly escaped death with his wife Paula.

Von Rosthorn later affirmed that during the Rebellion no serious attempt had ever been made by the Chinese to storm the legations.²⁶ He wrote: “I myself have been known to say that if I were Chinese, I would be a Boxer.” (“Ich selbst habe zuweilen den Ausspruch getan: wenn ich ein Chinese wäre, wäre ich ein Boxer.”)²⁷ He also



Fig. 3 Arthur and Paula von Rosthorn in front of their Chinese house © Österreichisches Institut für China- und Südostasienforschung

summarized the humiliations China had experienced at the hands of foreign powers since the First Opium War:

“In den 60 Jahren seines Verkehrs mit dem Auslande hatte China von den europäischen Mächten nie etwas anderes als Schaden und Demütigung erfahren. Der Opiumkrieg im Jahre 1842, der englisch-französische Feldzug im Jahr 1859²⁸ [...], in welchem der Sommerpalast bei Peking zerstört und geplündert wurde, [...] waren nur einige der empfindlichsten Schläge, welche China innerhalb der relativ kurzen Periode seiner internationalen Beziehungen erlitt. Die Übergriffe der Fremden erhielten einen neuen Impuls durch den chinesisch-japanischen Krieg im Jahre 1894, welcher die militärische Schwäche Chinas erwies und zu der Annahme führte, dass die Aufteilung des Reiches unter die fremden Mächte nur eine Frage der Zeit sei. [...] Selbst Österreich-Ungarn und Italien trugen sich mit dem Gedanken, Küstenpunkte zu besetzen. Nicht genug, diese Häfen als Flottenstützpunkte erworben zu haben, steckten die

fremden Mächte auch das Hinterland derselben als ihre Einflusssphären ab [...]”²⁹

Arthur von Rosthorn’s wife, Paula von Rosthorn (1873–1967), expressed her indignation at the atrocities committed by the foreign powers during the Boxer rebellion even more blatantly:

“Die zahlreichen gemischten Truppen, es haben sich außer den österreichischen und italienischen Detachements noch 600 Russen und 600 Sikhs angeschlossen, fanden so gut wie keinen Widerstand und verbreiteten sich über das ganze Stadtviertel, das angeblich ausschließlich von Boxern bewohnt sein sollte. Nun begann ein entsetzliches Morden, Brennen und Rauben. Erbarmungslos wurde alles niedergemacht, Männer, Frauen und Kinder, alles Wertvolle geraubt und dann [wurden] die Häuser in Brand gesteckt. Solche Episoden [...] gereichen den Europäern nicht zur Ehre.”³⁰

Peaceful citizens were forced through violence and threats to hand over items, the search for weapons served as a pretext for extortion, and non-transportable objects were vandalized. Paula von Rosthorn described with particular indignation the involvement of civilians:

“Und nicht nur das Militär plünderte nach Kräften, sondern auch Zivilisten, Leute der besten Gesellschaft, [...] verlegten sich auf den Raub im großen Stil. Sie zogen morgens mit mehreren Wagen aus und brachten sie abends beutebeladen wieder heim. [...] Arthur hatte täglich die heftigsten Diskussionen über dieses Kapitel, da er seine Ansichten über solche Handlungen sehr offen aussprach.”³¹

She mentioned an Italian volunteer from an aristocratic family, who returned from his foray in the evening with three carts loaded with silks, precious furs and baskets of silver shoes. Another young man who was employed at the customs, receiving his salary from the Chinese, went from house to house every day and forced the owners at gunpoint to hand over all their cash. Later he lived in Shanghai as a respected and wealthy man.³²

Paula von Rosthorn pointed out that the missionaries had also looted excessively, mentioning the Catholic bishop of Peking, Alphonse Favier, in particular. On the occasion of a visit to the Peitang (the Catholic Church of the Redeemer in Beijing) after the siege, the Rosthorns had seen there large quantities of precious objects that came either from the imperial city or from the palaces of the imperial princes.³³

Although its involvement was small compared with that of the other great powers involved, the Habsburg Monarchy participated in the international intervention to suppress the Yihetuan movement, albeit only with naval forces. Austro-Hungarian units took part in the defence of the legation quarter in Beijing, the failed Seymour expedition to relieve the legations, the battles for the European establishments in Tianjin, the capture of the Taku Forts and some of the expeditions of the allies to the surroundings of Beijing after the liberation of the legations.

In February 1901, Austro-Hungarian units occupied a modest settlement – 2,500 square metres of land – in Tianjin.³⁴ However, this enterprise ultimately cost the Austrian state far more than it yielded. *Die Fackel* (edited by Karl Kraus) published a very critical letter from an Austrian living in Beijing, who called it wishful thinking to believe that Austrian merchants would settle here – in a poor Chinese district, three kilometres from the international business centre. The only achievement so far, he wrote, was the issuance of a licence for a lottery shop (“Lottokollektur”).³⁵

Japanese artefacts on the European art market

Under the Treaty of Kanagawa, concluded with the US Navy under Commodore Matthew Perry in 1854, Japan was also forced to open ports to a foreign power, thus ending its isolation policy after 220 years. The “unequal” American-Japanese Treaty of Friendship and Commerce – or Harris Treaty – was signed in 1858. It unilaterally granted the United States concessions in Japan, such as extraterritoriality of its nationals and reduced tariffs on the import of US goods. Similar agreements were negotiated soon after with Russia and Great Britain.

The “unequal treaties” with Asian countries also opened up the possibility for foreign powers to deal in authentic Asian objects, which until then had not been accessible to foreigners at all.³⁶

Masako Yamamoto Maezaki underlines the close connection between the following developments inside the Japanese society and the growing boom in the trade in Japanese art. The end of the rule of the shogun – the hereditary military nobility of the samurai – after 270 years and the Meiji Restoration in 1868 ushered in a period of profound political, social and ideological change inspired by Western models. The formerly influential samurai families, as well as temple and shrine caretakers, who had held social and economic power during the Edo period, were forced into poverty. This fact and anti-religious currents had the consequence that splendid temples were demolished and their treasures sold off at giveaway prices. The effect of Westernization

also meant that most of these decorative artworks had no value in the national art market in Japan at the time.

Foreign experts invited to Japan during the early Meiji period to work as teachers and to introduce scientific know-how and new technologies began acquiring masterpieces of Japanese art. The 1870s were the perfect decade for foreigners visiting Japan and wishing to acquire fine Japanese art items at low prices. They often brought them back to their home countries and donated them to their national museums. Today, these collections form the core of Japanese art collections in the West. They contain items that are extremely rare and cannot be found in Japan anymore, as well as precious pieces of national treasure status whose sale and export from Japan would not be permitted now.

After the Meiji Restoration, the government promoted domestic industries in Japan and foreign exports at international exhibitions and through art dealers abroad. After the end of the World's Fair in Vienna in 1873, the semi-state-owned First Japanese Manufacturing and Trading Company (Kiritsumō Kaisha) was founded in Japan, with branches in Paris and New York. The Company, whose establishment was also intended to promote Japan's political prestige, ordered metalwork, ceramics, lacquerware, embroidery and so on from famous domestic artists for export. In 1881 it had to close down after power struggles within the Meiji government.³⁷ Some dealers who had already established themselves in Europe continued there on their own, such as Hayashi Tadamasa (1853–1906), who lived in Paris from 1878. He supplied much of Western Europe with Ukiyoe prints, selling also to Impressionist artists such as Claude Monet and to Vincent van Gogh.³⁸ Other export-oriented dealers were supported by the government, such as Ikeda Seisuke (1839–1900) and his son of the same name, who opened the Japanese Gallery in London in 1881, together with the telegraph engineer Thomas Joseph Larkin (1848–1915). The gallery originally traded in contemporary Japanese paintings and later also in Chinese art. A series of advertisements in the London *Times* referred to the recent Boxer Rebellion in China: “Chinese war loot – before disposing of loot, it is advisable to have it valued by an expert.”³⁹

Hayashi and Ikeda's businesses paved the way for other Japanese dealers in the West, who acted without the support of the Japanese government. The most successful firm, Yamanaka & Co., with outlets in London, Paris and several American cities, played a central role in the East Asian market in the West from about 1910 until the 1930s, dealing in extremely high quality objects from the entire East Asian region as well as kimonos and furniture made in its own factory. It also published specialist books, promoted exhibitions and supported research.⁴⁰

From 1910 onwards, the main interest in the West gradually shifted from Japanese to Chinese art. This change was the result, above all, of new legal export restrictions imposed by the Japanese government on high-quality objects as well as the political upheavals in China following the Xinhai Revolution in 1911 and the founding of the first Chinese Republic in 1912. They ended the reign of the last Manchu emperor from the Qing dynasty and thus, after more than 2,100 years, also the old Chinese empire.⁴¹

One of the most influential figures in the trade in Asian art in Europe since the beginning of the twentieth century was the Chinese C. T. Loo (1880–1957). He came to Paris with the diplomatic corps in 1902, opened a shop for Asian art there and soon founded branches in Shanghai, Beijing and New York. In Paris, Loo conducted

his business in a pagoda he had built in the elegant 8th arrondissement. Loo's business strategies also contributed largely to his success. Word spread quickly that his Beijing shop served generous meals once a week. This attracted people from near and far, who offered Loo objects for sale. The Chinese ambassador to France later became director general of the Customs Bureau in China. When the export of antiques was banned after the establishment of the Chinese Republic, Loo was able to continue exporting valuable objects because of his close relationship with him.⁴²



Fig. 4 The art dealer C. T. Loo in the 1910s © Loo Family Photographs, FSA.A2010.07, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Gift of Janine Loo Pierre-Emmanuel, 2010, FSA_A2010.07_02

East Asian art in Austria: Collecting and trading in the first half of the twentieth century

Paradoxically, the events in Beijing in 1860, when “cultural admiration was mixed with the harsh reality of a brutal war”,⁴³ played a major role in an Asian euphoria in Europe. The enthusiasm of collectors was further inspired by the two World’s Fairs in Paris in 1867 and in Vienna in 1873. More than forty countries, including Egypt, China, Japan, Persia and Thailand, took part in the World’s Fair in the Vienna Prater. These countries wanted to present their cultures and hoped to link up with the Western economy.

According to Herbert Fux, Japan’s entrance into the modern industrial age and its unique rise to become a world economic and military power began at the World’s Fair in Vienna.⁴⁴ The Japanese delegation of around eighty people, including craftsmen, diplomats and scholars, recreated a Shinto shrine and a Japanese garden in the Japanese gallery, which was a magnet for the public and helped Japanese art to achieve a breakthrough in German-speaking countries. The World’s Fairs also marked the beginning of the Japonism wave in Europe. Subsequently, numerous new dealers specializing in East Asian art established themselves, initially mainly in Paris. French artists were particularly enthusiastic about Japanese woodblock prints. In 1868, there were only five “curio” shops in Paris selling objects from China and Japan; ten years later, there were already thirty-six.⁴⁵

Around the turn of the century, there was also a veritable East Asia euphoria among private and state collectors in Germany. Thirty-two auctions and eighteen exhibitions of East Asian art took place between 1900 and 1913 alone. By 1933, forty or so dealers had established themselves in Germany, offering goods from East Asia, the leading ones being China-Bohlken, Dr. Otto Burchhard & Co. GmbH and Edgar Worch. East Asian items found their way into almost all upper middle-class collections in the first quarter of the twentieth century.⁴⁶

The most important dealer in East Asian artefacts in Vienna during the interwar period was the aforementioned Anton Exner. He and his son Walter also built up the most extensive and valuable private collection in Austria with objects of this origin. During the First World War, Anton Exner made important contacts for his future career in the Chinese quarter of New York. On his way back to Europe on a freighter in 1910, he took advantage of the numerous stops in Asian ports to buy local arts and crafts. The embroidered Japanese blouses in particular sold like hot cakes in Vienna. Motivated by this success, Exner started to make buying trips to East Asia almost every year. In 1911, he set up his first shop for East Asian arts and crafts in Vienna.

In 1914, after the beginning of the First World War, he was stuck in the USA. After having been interned as an “enemy alien”, he opened a shop for Asian artefacts in New

York City. Soon after his return to Vienna at the end of 1919, he became a state-certified appraiser of East Asian art in the Dorotheum auction house – a position he was to hold for around a quarter of a century.

In 1936, Anton Exner's son Walter Exner left for a one-year stay in Beijing, where he founded the "Siebenberg Verlag", specialized in publications on East Asia. A booklet, written by himself ("III chinesische Zeichen für den Kunstkenner – ein Taschenbuch für den Käufer von Curios"), contained tips for buyers of local "curiosities".

Anton and Walter Exner had dedicated their lives to East Asian art and – although not academics – had acquired outstanding knowledge in this field. Both were also committed National Socialists who had belonged to the NSDAP even during the period of the party ban before 1938. Walter Exner was also a member of the SA, the SS and its security service, the SD. According to his own account, he was employed by the SD in Vienna as an "expert in East Asian art" and was supposed to prevent the export of valuable objects – most probably from Jewish owners.

At the beginning of 1939, Anton Exner gave part of his collection – around 2,200 items – on loan to the then Staatliche Kunstgewerbemuseum in Vienna (now MAK). In 1944, he converted it into a lifetime loan and a donation *causa mortis* by means of a notarial deed, without informing his son, the co-owner, who had enlisted in the Deutsche Wehrmacht. As the museum director, Richard Ernst (1885–1955), noted in a letter to the Reichsstatthalterei, most of the collection had been gathered in the Far East at great sacrifice, sometimes at the risk of Anton Exner's life. The rest would come from major auctions in Berlin, Paris, London and New York.⁴⁷



Fig. 5 Anton Exner with Qi Baishi in the painter's studio in Beijing, 1931 © Institut für China- und Südostasienforschung

At that time, several articles about Anton Exner and his collection were published in Austrian newspapers. The *Kleine Volkszeitung* spoke of priceless treasures and reported on Exner's adventurous journeys. Exner told the journalist that he had travelled in Asia together with plague and cholera patients and fallen victim to robbers. He also reported on the sumptuous meals put on by Chinese business friends. This was probably the only, albeit very imprecise, reference to his affiliates that he ever made:

“Aber nicht weniger gefährlich wie das Reisen können auch die Gastmähler chinesischer Geschäftsfreunde sein. Sie bestehen aus mindestens 40 Gängen und dauern stundenlang. Dabei muß nicht nur von jedem Gang genommen werden, sondern der Gastgeber stopft noch je nach Ansehen des Gastfreundes diesem mehr oder weniger viele Leckerbissen in den Mund; die müssen hinunter! ‘Umsonst’, lächelt abschließend Herr Exner mit einem Blick nach seinen Sammlungen, ‘sind eben diese herrlichen Stücke nicht zu haben.’”⁴⁸

In 1944, the *Illustrierte Kronen-Zeitung* reported that during Anton Exner's first visit to China, the dynasty [inverted commas in the original] still ruled there. Soon after, the political upheaval took place and a favourable period for European art dealers began, as many art treasures came onto the market.⁴⁹

After the Second World War, the Kunstgewerbemuseum made every effort to acquire the rest of the Exner collection. Anton Exner was arrested in June 1945 as a former National Socialist and proceedings were initiated against him by the Volksgericht in Vienna.⁵⁰ In a written statement to the police, Exner offered to donate the remaining objects of his collection to the Republic of Austria, and in 1946 the dedication was made legally binding. The Volksgericht case against him was eventually dropped. It seems quite possible that the donation was a factor in this respect.

After his father's death in 1952, Walter Exner transferred his share of the inheritance to the Federal Republic of Germany. In the following years, he built up a new collection, which included around 2,000 East Asian woodblock prints. From 1956 to 1977 he ran a private museum in Frankenu (Hesse) and later in nearby Bad Wildungen. After the closure of the museum and the death of Walter Exner in 2003, most of the objects were sold by the family.⁵¹

The growing enthusiasm for the ancient Asian cultures also had led to the founding of the Verein der Freunde asiatischer Kunst und Kultur in Wien (Society of Friends of Asian art and culture in Vienna) in 1925 on the initiative of the art historian Melanie Stiassny (1878–1966)⁵² and Arthur Rosthorn. It organized a number of exhibitions

in cooperation with local museums, especially the Kunstgewerbemuseum and the Albertina.

After the opening of the Museum für Völkerkunde (Museum of Ethnology) in Vienna in 1928, existing conflicts about the arrangement of Asian objects became more acute. The members of the society defended their view that art objects from East Asia should be presented separately in ethnographic museums and not mixed with the mass of other items.⁵³ Art museums, arts and crafts museums and sporadically also ethnological museums had begun to exhibit works of non-European cultures in the same way as Western art. For the collector Eduard von der Heydt, for example, there was only one art: the art of the whole world in its great diversity, *ars una*. This universalist approach had become popular in the early 1920s. Objects previously exhibited only in their ethnological context in ethnological museums and in cabinets of curiosities (Kunstkammern) were now regarded as works of art. The definition of art based on Western perspectives and aesthetics was imposed on the unknown, foreign works, regardless of whether the respective cultures had their own concept of art.⁵⁴

In 1928, Stiassny published an article on East Asian art on the Viennese market in the art magazine *Belvedere* on East Asian art on the Viennese market. She pointed out that the major cities of the Old and the New World were now opening their own museums for East Asian art or at least highlighted these kind of objects in separate exhibition halls, because they recognized the great artistic significance of ancient Asian cultures. In the new Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna, by contrast, a high-quality sculpture of Chinese antiquity would still hang next to a Chinese braid. Accordingly, the Viennese art trade also neglected Asian art, Stiassny complained. She therefore considered it a particularly positive development that the antique dealer Alexander Förster had organized a sales exhibition in which East Asian art treasures were presented in a suitable artistic setting. Förster, who had become a connoisseur in this field through study, now presented major examples of the most important epochs of Chinese art in his sales rooms in the city of Vienna. According to Stiassny, the oldest artefacts on display, including burial objects made of fired clay, dated from the Han period (from 206 BC to 220 AD). She referred to the traditional Chinese idea that the soul of the deceased had to find in the grave everything they had used during their lifetime in order to continue their existence.⁵⁵

According to the Viennese China expert Gerd Kaminski, the A. Förster company carried out its own excavations in China during the interwar period.⁵⁶

However, valuable objects from the Far East also turned up in other Viennese art dealers' shops. An article published in 1931 in the *Neues Wiener Journal* dealt with a Buddha figure made of milk-green transparent Manchurian emerald that supposedly dated from the seventeenth century. A missionary had offered it to the antique dealer Richard Leitner (1874–1953). Finally, it was purchased for 200 dollars by one of his

colleagues, Emil Sokal from Baden near Vienna.⁵⁷ The object aroused special interest not so much because of its artistic merit but on account of the material, which was said to be the second-largest emerald in the world, weighing 1745 carats.⁵⁸

A month later, the *Prager Tagblatt* revealed more details. The figure with the Mongolian features of a golem, only head and upper body, was not a Buddha, but the representation of a “Chinese bigwig” (“Bonzen”). Sokal meanwhile assumed a value of 40,000 dollars for the statue. He reported that the seller had introduced himself as a German lay brother of the Protestant mission in Manchuria and said that he had bought the statue there, including its three-and-a-half-kilo gold base, from a Chinese man. He then sold the pedestal for 4,000 dollars. Since he did not dare to offer the figure in China, he took it back to his home country.⁵⁹

Research challenges

As this article reveals, artists, collectors, scholars and also broader strata of the populations in the Western world became enthusiastic about the ancient advanced civilizations of Asia after the end of the nineteenth century. It is striking, however, that despite this appreciation, hardly anyone seemed to be interested in the circumstances under which the artefacts were acquired in the countries of origin and how they arrived in Europe or America. Nor did Melanie Stiassny, who deeply admired the cultures of East Asia, find anything wrong with the fact that funerary objects from China were sold in a Viennese shop, although she herself referred to the importance they played in the religious beliefs of the local population.

At least some of the objects from the Exner and von der Heydt collections and in museums all over the world might well have come from the two central looting campaigns in China and thus have a colonial deprivation context. The first of these lootings, that of the Beijing Summer Palace in 1860, can be comparatively clearly pinned down in terms of geography and time and is, according to Christine Howald, well documented. In the following years, large parts of the loot found their way into European museum collections and, also through purchases, onto the art market. In 1861 and 1862 alone, seventeen auctions were held in London and eleven in Paris at which looted property was offered. The auction catalogues are an important source for research and the possible traceability of objects.

Far more difficult to identify are the artefacts stolen after the suppression of the Boxer movement and their pathways to the Western market. Looting took place for almost a whole year in 1900/01 throughout northern China, both in imperial compounds and state institutions as well as from private individuals and traders. The

objects looted at that time are much more difficult to trace. Howald points out that the provenance indication “Beijing, c. 1900” may indicate a problematic origin.⁶⁰

For more than twenty years, the People’s Republic of China has been trying at enormous cost to retrieve its cultural heritage from Western countries through buybacks at auctions and economic deals as well as by legal means. China celebrated every repatriation (concerning by now more than 150,000 artefacts) as a late triumph over the former colonial powers. However, the author and journalist Minh An Szabó de Bucs points out that the majority of these items were stolen by Chinese criminals and taken out of the country illegally during the previous thirty years. Since the demand for Asian artefacts in the West is high, looting of poorly guarded temples, tombs and provincial museums has long been a problem for the state-controlled and funded National Cultural Heritage Authority and the National Treasure Fund. Additionally, according to Szabó de Bucs, more cultural treasures were destroyed by China’s own countrymen during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) than had been taken abroad by invaders in the previous century. During the Cultural Revolution, not only material treasures were destroyed, but also the appreciation of the country’s own culture.⁶¹

The difficulties in clarifying the exact origin and circumstances of the acquisition of ethnographic objects, including antiquities from East Asia, are often insurmountable. We frequently have to deal with items of the same appearance produced in large numbers. Markings and inscriptions on the objects were either never there or have disappeared. In addition, forgeries of excellent quality circulate in large numbers on the art market. And there is still a lack of comprehensive basic research on the players and networks among collectors and dealers in this field and on the developments in the art market since the mid-nineteenth century concerning artefacts of East Asian origin. Most of the sources are not yet accessible, estates no longer exist or are not open to scholars. Research in Asian archives is difficult, especially – but not exclusively – for foreigners. Language skills, background knowledge in the history and the art history of these countries are indispensable. There has been little research so far as to which objects came onto the market in China at what time and who the respective players were.⁶² Furthermore, it often remains unclear under what conditions objects were exported from the respective countries.

The aforementioned Society of Friends of Asian art and culture in Vienna included renowned art historians, museum experts and art dealers as well as numerous people with a private interest in this subject, as can be seen from a list of members from 1931. In 1938, the society was brought into line by the National Socialists and lost its importance after the numerous Jewish members were expelled. They had to flee from

Austria or were murdered in the Shoah. Melanie Stiassny, for example, then lived in exile in Switzerland, Edwin Czechowiczka and his wife Caroline in England. On the other hand, some of the non-Jewish members of the society, such as Anton Exner or Richard Ernst, were able to expand their careers under the National Socialist regime and to profit from the violent expropriation measures.

Museums and public collections also came into possession of countless objects from the property of persecuted people through favourable purchases, gifts and allocations. The tasks of provenance research in the sense of the Austrian Art Restitution Act of 1998 are to track down such problematic acquisitions and subsequently to return the respective objects.

For some years now, however, the discussion about unlawful acquisitions has no longer been limited to objects that were seized in the context of or as a result of National Socialist rule. Rather, a focus is increasingly shifting to works of art, antiquities and other objects that were looted in a colonial context or were exported from the respective countries of origin under questionable conditions. As a result, a new branch of provenance research that deals precisely with these issues is being established.

Many fundamental questions that arise from this are still unresolved, and detailed legal frameworks are also lacking. In addition, the two forms of provenance research and restitution claims may overlap, which also entails problematic aspects and opens up new fields of conflict. What would happen, for example, if objects that should be restituted according to the Art Restitution Act were, at the same time, reclaimed as colonial looted property by a non-European state? What would it mean if, after restitution, such objects were handed over by the heirs to an auction house for sale?

What is certain, however, as I have tried to show in this article, is that in the interwar period, non-Jewish and Jewish collectors and dealers alike lacked the appropriate sensitivity with regard to the origin and acquisition circumstances of ethnographic objects or works of art from non-western cultures. In the recent past, this attitude is slowly beginning to change, especially in the field of museums, but also among a broader public.

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Notes

- 1 Förster's first name was not mentioned in the article. The reference is to one of the partners of the company A. Förster, most likely Paul Förster (1897–1985).
- 2 “Arisierte Grabfiguren in der Museumsvitrine: Rückstellungsprozess eines emigrierten Wiener Ehepaares gegen die Republik Österreich – Nazi-Schätzmeister ‘sammelte’ für ein geplantes Asiatisches Museum”, in *Neues Österreich*, 23 December 1953; Gabriele Anderl, “Anton und Walter Exner – Kunsthändler, Stifter, Nationalsozialisten”, in Eva Blimlinger and Heinz Schödl (eds.), *Die Praxis des Sammelns: Personen und Institutionen im Fokus der Provenienzforschung*, Schriftenreihe der Kommission für Provenienzforschung 5 (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar, 2014), 339–405, passim, 404; Gabriele Anderl, “Anton Exner, Walter Exner”, in *Lexikon der österreichischen Provenienzforschung* (www.lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/exner-anton; www.lexikon-provenienzforschung.org/exner-walter) (1 March 2021); Sophie Lillie, *Was einmal war: Handbuch der enteigneten Kunstsammlungen Wiens* (Vienna, 2003), 274–9.
- 3 Anderl, Anton und Walter Exner; Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung (ed.), “Zum Gedenken an Anton Exner, 1882-1952, Festvorträge im Österreichischen Museum für Angewandte Kunst”, Vienna, 1982.
- 4 The provenance research on the Exner collection at the MAK and the Weltmuseum Wien was carried out by Gabriele Anderl. A digital record of the Exner objects at the MAK was created for the first time by Leonhard Weidinger, who also prepared some dossiers on restitutions in the post-war era.
- 5 The Federal Art Restitution Act on the return of works of art in Austrian national museums and collections (Bundesgesetz über die Rückgabe von Kunstgegenständen aus den Österreichischen Bundesmuseen und Sammlungen) was passed in 1998. Under this law, confiscated works of art and cultural objects still in the possession of the state can be returned to the original owners or the heirs. The Commission for Provenance Research was established in 1998 for the purpose of systematically inventorying the state collections and unearthing looted objects. The aforementioned law and the associated provenance research refer exclusively to objects that were seized during or as a result of National Socialist rule.
- 6 Eduard von der Heydt. “Ars una”: der Gründungssammler des Museums Rietberg, <https://rietberg.ch/stories/3233> (1 March 2021); Esther Tisa Francini, “‘Ein Füllhorn künstlerischer Schätze’ – Die Sammlung außereuropäischer Kunst von Eduard von der Heydt”, in Eberhard Illner (ed.), *Eduard von der Heydt: Kunstsammler, Bankier, Mäzen*, (Munich/London/New York, 2013), 136–99, 219–27; Alexander von Przychowski and Esther Tisa Francini, “Provenance Research into the Collection of Chinese Art at the Museum Rietberg: Switzerland and the Transnational History of the Art Market and Art Collections”, in *Journal for Art Market Studies* 3 (2018), <http://www.fokum-jams.org>; DOI 10.23690/jams.v2i4.79. The first catalogues of von der Heydt's collection date from 1932 (William Cohn, *Asiatische Plastik. Sammlung Baron Eduard von der Heydt*, Berlin 1932; Eckart von Sydow, *Kunst der Naturvölker. Sammlung Baron Eduard von der Heydt*, Berlin 1932). I would like to thank Christine Hunziker and Sarah Csernay (Museum Rietberg) for providing photographic material for this article and Esther Tisa Francini for collegial support. Tisa Francini is responsible for provenance research in the Museum Rietberg since 2008. She curated

exhibitions on the history of the collection and provenance research, dealing especially with object biographies and the acquisition contexts.

- 7 Christine Howald, “Problematische Provenienzen? Ostasiatika in deutschen Sammlungen”, lecture, written version: https://www.museum-folkwang.de/fileadmin/_BE_Gruppe_Folkwang/Bilder/Forschung/Research_Forum_Blog/weltweit_sammeln/MF_Vortrag_Howald_Rev2A_2019-4-26.pdf (1 March 2021); for numerous case studies see *Journal of Art Market Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1018), *Asian Art: Markets, Provenance, History* (with an introduction by Christine Howald and Alexander Hofmann); Christine Howald, “The Power of Provenance. Marketing and Pricing of Chinese Looted Art on the European Market (1860–1862)” in Bénédicte Savoy et al. (eds.), *Acquiring Cultures: Histories of World Art on Western Markets* (Berlin/Boston 2018), 241–65; Julia Lovell, *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China* (London et al. 2011). Christine Howald is deputy director of the Zentralarchiv (Central Archive) and provenance researcher for the Asia collections at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (National Museums in Berlin) and heads the research focus Tracing East Asian Art (TEAA) at Technische Universität Berlin. Her projects focus on the European market for East Asian art and colonial withdrawal contexts in Asia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She is the co-founder of the international network and workshop series *Provenance Research on East Asian Art*. I would like to thank her for numerous references.
- 8 In the BBC report “The palace of shame that makes China angry”, Chris Bowlby spoke of “a deep, unhealed historical wound in the UK’s relation with China” (<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30810596>, 1 March 2021). The place of the former palace is described as China’s ground zero. The author of this report is a descendant of Thomas Bowlby, one of the first British foreign correspondents. The destruction of the old Summer Palace in 1860 was also the revenge by Britain for his torture and death at Chinese hands.

In December 1860, the Austrian daily newspaper *Die Presse* reported on the capture of Beijing by the Anglo-French expedition and the looting of the imperial summer palace located beyond the ramparts of the capital, containing enormous treasures of all kinds. Beijing consisted of several cities, nested within each other, and two parts, the Imperial city (Kingching, embracing enormous gardens with artificial lakes and hills, temples and the palaces of the mandarins) and the Chinese city. The innermost city, the imperial palace, had a circumference of almost four kilometres (“Die Einnahme von Peking”, in *Die Presse*, 12 December 1860, 3).
- 9 Robert Swinhoe, *Narrative of the North China Campaign of 1860: Containing Personal Experiences of Chinese Character, and of the Moral and Social Condition of the Country; Together with a Description of the Interior of Peking* (London 1861); for excerpts see <https://translanth.hypotheses.org/ueber/swinhoe> (1 March 2021).
- 10 “Die Plünderung des k. [kaiserlichen] Sommerpalastes bei Peking durch die Alliierten im Jahre 1860”, *Oesterreichischer Soldatenfreund* (excerpt from Robert Swinhoe’s *North China Campaign of 1860*), 22 January 1862, 53–4.
- 11 General Hope Grant fought in various colonial wars, including the First Opium War. In the Second Opium War, he led 11,000 British and Indian troops into China and entered Beijing on 13 October 1860.
- 12 Swinhoe, *Narrative* (excerpts).

- 13 Swinhoe, “Plünderung”, Schluss (conclusion) in *Oesterreichischer Soldatenfreund*, 25 January 1862, 59–60. Since Swinhoe’s book is not available in Austrian libraries and only excerpts from it can be found on the previously cited website, the quotes are taken from the German translations published in the journal *Oesterreichischer Soldatenfreund*.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 “Swinhoe: Narrative of the North China Campaign of 1860 (1861), kommentiert von Christine Howald”, in *Translocations: Anthologie: Eine Sammlung kommentierter Quellentexte zu Kulturgutverlagerungen seit der Antike*, <https://translanth.hypotheses.org/ueber/swinhoe>, published in 2018, as in December 2020; see also Howald, “The Power of Provenance”; Ines Eben von Racknitz, *Die Plünderung des Yuanming yuan. Imperiale Beutenahme im britisch-französischen Chinafeldzug von 1860* (Stuttgart, 2012); Erik Ringmar, *Liberal Barbarism: The European Destruction of the Palace of the Emperor of China* (New York, 2013).
- 17 Interview Gabriele Anderl with Christine Howald, 2018 (translated by Gabriele Anderl).
- 18 “Die Entstehung der ‘Musterkolonie’ Kiautschou”, <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Content/Virtuelle-Ausstellungen/Die-Entstehung-Der-Musterkolonie-Kiautschou/die-entstehung-der-musterkolonie-kiautschou.html> (1 March 2021).
- 19 On the *Novara* expedition, see the contribution by Christa Riedl-Dorn in this volume.
- 20 Andrea Brandstätter, “Verein der Freunde Asiatischer Kunst und Kultur in Wien: Ein Beitrag zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte über die Entstehung ethnologisch orientierter Ostasienforschung in Österreich in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts”, diss., University of Vienna, 2000, 7–13; Ferdinand von Hochstetter’s *gesammelte Reise-Berichte von der Erdumsegelung der Fregatte “Novara”: 1857–1859* (Vienna, 1885); Karl von Scherzer, *Fachmännische Berichte über die österreichisch-ungarische Expedition nach Siam, China und Japan, 1868–1971* (Stuttgart, 1872); Peter Pantzer, *Österreichs erster Handelsdelegierter in Japan: das Japan-Tagebuch des Karl Ritter von Scherzer 1869* (Munich, 2019). The geologist Ferdinand von Hochstetter (1829–1884) was a member of the scientific commission on board the *Novara*. The explorer and diplomat Karl (Carl) von Scherzer (1821–1903) participated in the *Novara* expedition as a scribe and a trade commissioner. In 1869 he accompanied the Austrian expedition to East Asia.
- 21 “[...] außer der Zone moderner Civilisation im fernen Osten gelegener Länder”, quoted by Brandstätter, *Verein der Freunde Asiatischer Kunst*, 10.
- 22 Brandstätter, *Verein der Freunde Asiatischer Kunst*, 10–11; Gerd Kaminski and Else Unterrieder, *Von Österreichern und Chinesen* (Vienna, 1980), 120–67.
- 23 Kaminski and Unterrieder, *Von Österreichern und Chinesen*, 406.
- 24 Ibid., 401–431. On the Boxer Rebellion see also: Das Bundesarchiv im Internet, “Deutschlands Adler im Reich des Drachen – Deutschland und China im Zeitalter des Kolonialismus” – Teil 6 Boxeraufstand, <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Content/Virtuelle-Ausstellungen/Deutschlands-Adler-Im-Reich-Des-Drachen-Deutschland-Und-China-Im-Zeitalter-Des-Kolonialismus-Teil-6-Boxeraufstand/deutschlands-adler-im-reich-des-drachen-deutschland-und-china-im-zeitalter-des-kolonialismus-teil-6-boxeraufstand.html%20> (1 March 2021); Gerd Kaminski, *Der Boxeraufstand – entlarvter Mythos* (Vienna, 2000); Georg Lehner and Monika Lehner, *Öster-*

- reich-Ungarn und der “Boxeraufstand” in China (Innsbruck/Vienna, 2002; Mechthild Leutner (ed.), *Kolonialkrieg in China: die Niederschlagung der Boxerbewegung 1900–1901* (Berlin, 2007); Peter Fleming, *Die Belagerung zu Peking: Zur Geschichte des Boxer-Aufstandes* (Frankfurt/M., 1997).
- 25 “Wirren in China”, *Neues Wiener Journal*, 16 July 1900, 2.
- 26 On Arthur von Rosthorn see Kaminski and Unterrieder, *Von Österreichern und Chinesen*, 329–63, 401–31.
- 27 Arthur von Rosthorn, “Wer waren die Boxer?” in Alexander Pechmann (ed.), *Peking 1900: Paula von Rosthorns Erinnerungen an den Boxeraufstand – März bis August 1900*, (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar, 2001), 11–20, 15.
- 28 The “punitive expedition” of 1858–1860 was about enforcing the Treaty of Tientsin, including the establishment of treaty ports, legations and freedom of movement for missionaries.
- 29 Von Rosthorn, Wer waren die Boxer, 12–13.
- 30 Paula von Rosthorn, Boxer-Tagebuch, quoted by Kaminski and Unterrieder, *Von Österreichern und Chinesen*, 410.
- 31 Ibid, *Erinnerungen*, 88–9.
- 32 Ibid, 89–90.
- 33 Ibid, 90.
- 34 Michael Obst, review of Georg Lehner and Monika Lehner, Österreich-Ungarn und der “Boxeraufstand” in China, Vienna, 2002, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2004-1-133.pdf%20> (1 March 2021).
- 35 Quoted by Kaminski and Unterrieder, *Von Österreichern und Chinesen*, 419–20.
- 36 Brandstätter, Verein der Freunde Asiatischer Kunst, 9; Wikipedia entries on the Treaty of Kanagawa and the Harris Treaty (1 March 2021).
- 37 Masako Yamamoto Maezaki, “Innovative Trading Strategies for Japanese Art: Ikeda Seisuke, Yamanaka & Co. and their Overseas Branches (1870s–1930s)”, in Bénédicte Savoy et al., *Acquiring Cultures*, 223–38.
- 38 Ibid; <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG1578>; Musée d’Orsay, Tadamas Hayashi, https://www.musee-orsay.fr/de/kollektionen/werkbeschreibungen/skulptur/commentaire_id/tadamas-hayashi-20649 (1 March 2021).
- 39 Maezaki, Innovative Trading Strategies; University of Leeds, Antique Dealers: The British Antique Trade in the 20th Century, T. J. Larkin, <https://antiquetrade.leeds.ac.uk/dealerships/36964>; Freer|Sackler Smithsonian, T. J. Larkin, Dealer in Chinese and Japanese Art, <https://asia.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09//Larkin-Thomas-Joseph.pdf>; Smoking Samurai, Artists, Seisuke Ikeda, www.smokingsamurai.com/ikeda_seisuke.html (1 March 2021).
- 40 Maezaki, Innovative Trading Strategies, 232–7.
- 41 Ibid, 233.
- 42 “Wie viel kostet ein Buddha? Asiatische Altertümer auf dem europäischen Kunstmarkt”, radio feature by Gabriele Anderl, ORF, Radio Ö1, *Dimensionen*, 16 March 2018; Interview Gabriele Anderl with Christine Howald, 2018; C. T. Loo Revisited, webinar, 3 December 2020 (<https://>

- asia.si.edu/research/scholarly-programs/c-t-loo-revisited/, 1 March 2021); Dorota Chudzicka, “The Dealer and the Museum: C. T. Loo (1880–1957), the Freer Gallery of Art and the American Asian Art Market in the 1930s and 1940s”, in Eva Blimlinger and Monika Mayer (eds.), *Kunst sammeln, Kunst handeln: Beiträge des Internationalen Symposiums in Wien* (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar, 2012), 243–54.
- 43 Chris Bowlby, “The palace of shame that makes China angry”, BBC News, 2 February 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30810596> (1 March 2021).
- 44 Herbert Fux, introduction to *Japan auf der Weltausstellung in Wien 1873*, exh. cat., Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst (Vienna, 1973), 8, quoted by Brandstätter, “Verein”, 11; Anna Minichberger, “Die Japanischen Lackarbeiten der Wiener Weltausstellung von 1873 im Österreichischen Museum für Angewandte Kunst”, master’s diss., University of Vienna, 2007.
- 45 Howald, “Problematische Provenienzen”, 3.
- 46 Ibid, 5; Patrizia Jirka-Schmitz, “The trade in Far Eastern art in Berlin during the Weimar Republic (1918–1933)”, in *Art Market Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2018), <http://www.fokum-jams.org>; DOI 10.23690/jams.v2i3.57.
- 47 Letter from Richard Ernst to the Reichsstatthalter in Vienna, 21 March 1944, quoted by: Anderl, Anton und Walter Exner. 386.
- 48 “Ein Sechshauser durchquerte neunundzwanzigmal Asien: Unschätzbare Kunstwerke unter Abenteuern gesammelt”, *Kleine Volkszeitung*, 26 October 1941, 5.
- 49 F. J., “Im Land, wo Mensch und Fisch auf Bäumen leben: Siebzehn Reisen nach Ostasien – Besuch beim Kunstsammler Anton Exner”, *Illustrierte Kronen-Zeitung*, 15 June 1944, 4.
- 50 The case also concerned the “Aryanization” of Wilma Werner’s antique shop by Anton Exner’s daughter, Edith Schmaelz. Under the aegis of her father, she had transformed it into a shop specializing in Asian art, mainly supplied by Anton Exner.
- 51 Anderl, Anton und Walter Exner, 393, 398–400.
- 52 Melanie Stiassny, “Neuerwerbungen chinesischer Plastik in der Ethnographischen Sammlung des Naturhistorischen Staatsmuseums in Wien”, *Wiener Beiträge zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte Asiens*, 1926, vol. 2, 35–46.
- 53 Brandstätter, Verein der Freunde Asiatischer Kunst, 21–5; Barbara Plankensteiner, “‘Völlige Fühllosigkeit dem Künstlerischen gegenüber...’: Der Streit um den ‘asiatischen Kunstsaal’ anlässlich der Neueröffnung des Museums für Völkerkunde in Wien im Jahre 1928”, in *Archiv (für Völkerkunde)* 53 (2003), 1–26.
- 54 Tisa Francini, Ein Füllhorn künstlerischer Schätze, 138.
- 55 Melanie Stiassny, “Ostasiatische Kunst am Wiener Markt”, in *Belvedere*, 1928, part 1, main part, 116–17.
- 56 Information from Gerd Kaminski, April 2021. I would like to thank him for information on this article and the Österreichisches Institut für China und Südostasienforschung (Austrian Institute for Research on China and Southeast Asia) for providing photographic material for it.
- 57 “Das Geheimnis des grünen Buddhas: Ein Ingenieur aus Baden bei Wien hat den Riesensmaragd gekauft”, *Neues Wiener Journal*, 12 September 1931, 7.

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- 61 Minh An Szabó de Bucs, “Komplett mit Mumie”, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 17 April 2020; Minh An Szabó de Bucs, “Der entführte Tiger”, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 3 August 2018. I would like to thank Minh An Szabó de Bucs for information.
- 62 Interview Gabriele Anderl mit Christine Howald, “Problematische Provenienzen”.