Introduction

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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 economic 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

2 Grigorowicz 1978, 113; Scherzer 1872 and 1873.

3 Lee 2001, 86.

4 Blake and Pettit 1873, 7.

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 crucial, 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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