

Final Report
*AKTION ÖSTERREICH – TSCHECHISCHE
REPUBLIK*
89p7

From the Himalaya to the Hindukush - on a
critical approach to Czech and Austrian
research in Asian borderlands

Aims:

The aim of this bilateral project, carried out by members of the Asian Department, Palacký University Olomouc and the Center for Interdisciplinary Research and Documentation of Inner and South Asian Cultural History (CIRDIS, University of Vienna), was the intensive exchange of ideas and approaches to interconnections in the borderland regions of the Himalaya and the Hindukush.

The project took place in Olomouc as well as in Vienna and was mainly focused on topics such as methods of field research in multi-ethnic border areas, the critical handling of historical object collections and archives, and the development of innovative strategies for the provision of research documentation and materials. The scientific exchange was designed as an intensive multi-day meeting of senior and young scientists in the form of two workshops open to the public, intensive discussion rounds, as well as archive and museums visits and the study of objects in small groups in Olomouc and Vienna.

Report Workshop Olomouc

19/10/2021

The Austrian delegation arrived in Olomouc by train at 11am and proceeded to the Filozofická fakulta UP at tř. Svobody 26/686, in order to visit the Asian Department and collect their daily allowance, allocated by AKTION.

At the Státní Okresní Archiv Olomouc, with the help of Olga Luňáčková and the archival staff, the Austrian colleagues identified four addresses of residence of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz in the town of Olomouc (Wellnerova 4, Zelená 22 and 80-82, Herderova 10 (today Puškinova 10)) by consulting the registration forms of his household in the collection of the Státní Okresní Archiv. They were also able to inspect his elementary school's report cards. The school was located in the district of Nová Ulice (Neugasse). Afterwards, we visited the Muzeum umění in the center of Olomouc as well as the Palacký University Library at Biskupské nám. 1/842.

In the end of the day, the Austrian and Czech colleagues enjoyed an informal dinner at The Kathmandu Nepali Restaurant at Dolní nám. 25/40, which allowed for a lively exchange regarding food and cultural transfer in the Tibetan plateau and the Himalaya.

20/10/2021

On Wednesday, the workshop was officially launched with opening remarks by Ondřej Kučera and Ute Wallenböck, both Palacký University. The opening remarks were followed by Ondřej Kučera giving a general overview of Archives in Czech Republic, with focus on Olomouc. This presentation was an excellent introduction into the intrinsic and complex system of archival conversation in the city and kray of Olomouc. The lively exchange on archival and district research in Olomouc was then followed by a presentation on borderland Studies in the Himalayas: Culture Areas and Cultural Transfers, held by Martin Gaenszle (Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna). This talk featured amongst others the transborder phenomenon of religious leaders, in the Tibetan-Nepali borderland. Uwe Niebuhr gave a presentation on the Czech-Austrian Collector René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, covering his childhood in Moravia, his time of study in Vienna and his subsequent ethnographic expeditions in the Himalaya, as well as his numerous publications and collections in the Weltmuseum Wien in Vienna. After the lunch break, Stephanie Ziehaus, (Palacký University) gave a talk on Russian Imperial archives, framed as nodes of knowledge in Inner Asia, covering Russian State Archives in the Altay Region, Chita Oblast, Tuva and Burjatia Republic as well as Amur Oblast, with a special focus on the study of Inner Asia. During the following discussion, Luboš Bělka (Palacký University) raised the important point of



the Russian Geographical Society and the ethnographic and research trips it organized into the Himalaya. Afterwards, Aleksandra Apic and Verena Widorn (University of Vienna) presented on Documentation in a Multi-Medial Archive. While Verena Widorn concentrated on the various types of collection material (ranging from audio and videos to images and physical items), Aleksandra Apic presented an overview on the collection assembled by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, now held in the Weltmuseum Wien. She also gave an overview on the current state of organization and management of the collection, conducted by Uwe Niebuhr and herself. The workshop was closed with a discussion, led by Luboš Bělka and Ute Wallenböck, both Palacký University.



21/10/2021



The excursion first led us from Olomouc to Opava (German Troppau), where we visited the house, listed as residence of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's father in February 1921. Afterwards, we went to Velké Hoštice (German Groß Hoschütz), visiting the birth house of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, born 29. June 1923, as well as the castle of Velké Hoštice. Velké Hoštice is located in the former German speaking enclave of Hlučínska that showcases a turbulent episode of borderland history between Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. In Ostrava, we visited not only the church in

Hrušov, where the parents of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz got married, but also the "Lorenz House" at Verdunska 7/636, a known permanent address of the family of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's mother's family, as well as the chocolate and confectionery factory Zett, where Nebesky-Wojkowitz's uncle worked as manager and foreman during the German occupation in World War 2.

22/10/2021

The highlight of the last day was the visit of the newly opened Material Culture Lab at Palacký University. Natalia Ryzhova (Palacký University) joined us too. Monika Arnez (Palacký University) welcomed us, and then gave the floor to Zdeněk Trávníček, who introduced us to his work in the lab as well as the lab's equipment: the X-ray fluorescence spectrometer, the scanning electron microscopy, the Raman microscope, as well as the Infrared spectrometer.

After a last informal meeting to discuss the program the Vienna, the members of Vienna University were leaving in the afternoon.



Report Workshop Vienna

8/11/2021

Since the members of Czech delegation of the Palacký University arrived from different destinations with the various train delays, just an informal meeting in a restaurant took place, where the past event in Olomouc was reviewed and vividly discussed.

9/11/2021



The Czech delegation of the Palacký University – Luboš Bělka, Ute Wallenböck, Stephanie Ziehaus – and research associate Olaf Günther were received at the CIRDIS headquarter by Verena Widorn and Uwe Niebuhr. They were presented with the physical archival collection of WHAV (Western Himalaya Archive Vienna), including slides, microfilm, texts, and images, as well as with the technical equipment used to digitize the

considerable collection. Verena Widorn also showed the visitors the different digital databases of the HAV (The Himalaya Archive Vienna). Afterwards, Czech and Austrian colleagues proceeded to the OEAD offices in Ebendorferstraße 7, to collect their per diem, and then made their way to the Weltmuseum. On the road, the delegation visited historic landmarks of Viennese and Austrian history in the first district.

After lunch, Uwe Niebuhr presented the Collection of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz. First, Uwe Niebuhr gave an insight into the textual material, including study utensils and notebooks, manuscripts, letters



and inventory lists. Then, together with Christian Schicklgruber (Curator South-, Southeast Asian and Himalayan Collections and former director of Weltmuseum Wien), the Czech delegation visited the storage rooms of the Museum, with a special focus on the Himalaya Collection. Colleagues were able to first-hand inspect utensils of daily use, collected by Nebesky-Wojkowitz in the Himalaya, such as beer brewing containers, baskets, jewelry, ritual masks and

prayer wheels etc.

After this incredibly insightful visit, the delegation returned to the area of the Uni Campus and attended the film screening and lecture by Luboš Bělka at the Department of ISTB (Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies). Luboš Bělka gave an introduction on the two Czech Army filmmakers Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš as well as on the organization and history of their expedition to Tibet. The audience, including students of the University of Vienna and lecturers from the ISTB, then were presented with a screening of the film: “The Road into Tibet” (55 min). The film was discussed as an historical object, showcasing the final stage of Ganden Phodrang Period, as a research object, serving as a travel record of Czech travelers in Tibet, as well as a piece of political Chinese propaganda.

10/11/2021

The next day, the Workshop "Politics of Exhibitions and Museum Collections" was launched at 9:30am with opening remarks by Martin Gaenzle and Christian Schicklgruber, who both formally welcomed the Czech colleagues from Palacký University Olomouc to Vienna and the Weltmuseum Wien. The first presenter was Luboš Bělka, who continued the subject from yesterday's film screening and now presented on the museum exhibition organized as a result of Vladimír Sís' and Josef Vaniš' filmmaking expedition into Tibet. The exhibition “Unknown Tibet” was showcased in 1956 in the Náprstek Museum in Prague and presented to a Czech audience for the first time objects and images of Tibet, Tibetan Buddhism and culture. Narratively, it followed the film “The Road into Tibet”, in that it showed the socialist building up of Tibet. Luboš Bělka presented a rich fundus of photographs and descriptions of the 1956 exhibition. Following Luboš Bělka, Verena Widorn and Uwe Niebuhr presented on a similar contemporary exhibition to “Unknown Tibet”, namely Austria's First Exhibition on Nepal in 1957, organized at the Weltmuseum Wien by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz with objects from his expeditions to Nepal. It was especially fruitful to compare these two exhibitions, especially in the context of their time and place. While one was the product of the close and friendly cooperation between the USSR and Communist China, intended for a specifically Czech audience and not accessible to a public west of the iron curtain, made first and foremost by filmmakers interested in filmmaking, the other one was the result of ethnographic fieldwork and expedition by a trained scientist, interested in Tibetan culture and language, intended for a Viennese as well as foreign audience and connected to a previous exhibition on Nepal in Geneva in 1953. After a short coffee break, talks continued with Olaf Günther giving a presentation on the Ethnographical Collection of Altenburg, Thüringen. First, Olaf Günther presented



his theoretical framework of “post-humanities”, focusing on Timothy Morton and his theory of “hyper-objectivity”, then proceeded to give examples from the Ethnographical Collection of Altenburg, such as for example a Japanese opium pipe, which he connected to the broader region of Amuria and Manchuria and the Russian ethnographer Arseniev. Natasha Kimmert then presented on her research of the Akhnur Group of clay-based heads in the context of British colonialism and antiquity trade, tracing the collection history from the Lahore antiquity market in eastern Pakistan to its dispersing to the US, Great Britain and other countries. Ute Wallenböck concluded the workshop with her presentation on the *qinwang* Mansion in contemporary Henan Mongol Autonomous County, Qinghai Province. Ute Wallenböck contrasted the mansion of Tashi Tsering, the Last Mongol Queen of 'Sogpo' (Henan) and its museum presentation to the Museum of Local History of Henan autonomous County, which showcases the strategic promotion of collective Memory among the Tibetan-speaking Mongol ethnic group in the area. Afterwards, the discussion focused on critical approaches to Politics of exhibitions and museum collections. The workshop was attended by Luboš Bělka, Ute Wallenböck, Stephanie Ziehaus (Palacký University), Olaf Günther, and Aleksandra Apic, Martin Gaenzle, Natasha Kimmert, Uwe Niebuhr, Verena Widorn (University of Vienna), as well as third-party audience members. After lunch, the Czech delegation was introduced to the textiles/conservation department of the museum by Julia Zeindl (Weltmuseum Wien), who showcased some textile objects, collected by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz through his three Himalaya expeditions in the 1950s.



Afterwards, Austrian and Czech colleagues proceeded to the book presentation on Buddhist cultural heritage in Mustang, Nepal, at the ISTB, Aula am Campus, at 18:00pm. The publication was presented by the co-authors Christian Luczanits (SOAS, University of London) and Markus Viehbeck (ISTB, University of Vienna), who showcased the two manuscript collections in the Buddhist monastery Namgyal from the late 13th/14th century, their visual illuminations, as well as a critical ^{Text} analysis of traditional Tibetan Kanjur canon.



Verena Widorn presided over the following discussion.

11/11/2021

At 9:00am, the Czech and Austrian delegations attended a guided tour through the Military History Museum (Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Arsenal) by Stephanie Ziehaus. Among the vast collection of military objects and memorabilia, the emphasis was laid on objects with ties to Central and East Asia, wherein Ms. Ziehaus especially pointed out the Ottoman reflective bows, objects, and photographs from Boxer Rebellion in Beijing 1900, as well as the Chinese/Korean wool coat of a defected Austrian prisoner of war from the 1st world war. The event concluded after lunch

Results:

Through this very successful project and the fruitful discussions in Olomouc and Vienna, the already loosely existing cooperation between the Austrian and Czech delegations was deepened and extended to the next generation of scientists through the participation of PhD students. Different data were exchanged and possible joint projects of long-term archiving of research data were discussed. Thanks to the help and support of the Czech colleagues, the visit of archives and places connected with René Nebesky-Wojkowitz and his family was particularly successful for the Austrian delegation.

Two joint publication projects are planned for next year 2022:

1. participation in an exhibition plus catalog in the framework of the 16th IATS in Prague (curated and edited by Luboš Bělka).


2. joint publication on the Tibet exhibition in Prague 1956 and the Nepal exhibition in Vienna 1957 for the Archivband 71 of the Weltmuseum Vienna.

Additional remarks:

Due to various circumstances, for instance ending of work contracts, new jobs at different places outside of Palacký University Olomouc, we had to make some changes of the Czech team members: 1) The Ph.D. student Katerina Konecna was replaced by Stephanie Ziehaus, Junior researcher, Sinofon project. 2) Tereza Motalova was replaced by Olga Luňáčková, administrator of the Department of Asian Studies. 3) And Martin Soukup was replaced by Luboš Bělka, senior researcher, Sinofon project. 4) Olaf Günther was only able to attend the event in Vienna, hence, Natalia Ryzhova (key and excellent researcher, Sinofon project) and Monika Arnez (excellent researcher, Sinofon project as well as Associate Professor for Asian Anthropology) supported the Czech team in Olomouc.



Ute Wallenböck
Olomouc, November 29, 2021



Martin Gaenzle
Vienna, November 30, 2021

Programm Olomouc: 19.-22. October 2021

Palacký University
Department of Asian Studies

Tuesday

11:00
Arrival in Olomouc

11:30
Leave luggage in Olga's office

12:00
Lunch

13:30
Státní Okresní Archiv - Stadtarchiv Olomouc

16:00
Museum
Muzeum umění - Kunstmuseum
(Olomouc)

19:00 Dinner

Wednesday

9:00
Opening Remarks
Ondřej Kučera
Ute Wallenböck
(Palacký University Olomouc)

9:15
General overview of Archives in Czech Republic with focus on Olomouc
Ondřej Kučera (Palacký University Olomouc)

10:00
Borderland Studies in the Himalayas: Culture Areas and Cultural Transfers
Martin Gaenzle (University of Vienna)

10:45
Tea/Coffee

11:00

The Czech-Austrian Collector René Nebesky-Wojkowitz
Uwe Niebuhr (University of Vienna)

11:45
Lunch

13:15
Russian Imperial archives: nodes of knowledge in Inner Asia
Stephanie Ziehaus (Palacký University Olomouc)

14:00
Documentation in a Multi-Medial Archive
Aleksandra Apic/Verena Widorn (University of Vienna)

14:45
Tea/Coffe

15:30
Discussion
Discussants: **Luboš Bělka & Ute Wallenböck**
(Palacký University Olomouc)

19:00
Dinner

Thursday

9:00 - 18:00
Excursion:
Olomouc - Troppau - Velké Hoštice -
Ostrava - Olomouc

Archiv-research:
Zemský archiv v Opavě - Landesarchiv in Troppau

Friday

10:00
Material Culture Lab
Monika Arnez (Palacký University Olomouc)

12:00
Lunch / Informal gathering

14:00
Departure to Vienna

PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN STUDIES

AKTION AT-CZ: From the Himalaya to the Hindukush – on a critical approach to Czech and Austrian research in the Asian borderlands

Olomouc Workshop
20 October 2021
Tř. Svobody 26, room No. 2.40

9:00

Opening Remarks

Ondřej Kučera

Ute Wallenböck

(Palacký University Olomouc)

9:15

General overview of Archives in Czech Republic with focus on Olomouc

Ondřej Kučera (Palacký University Olomouc)

10:00

Borderland Studies in the Himalayas: Culture Areas and Cultural Transfers

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Lunch

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Discussion

Discussants: **Luboš Bělka** (Palacký University Olomouc)

Ute Wallenböck (Palacký University Olomouc)



AKTION AT-CZ: FROM THE HIMALAYA TO THE HINDUKUSH - ON A CRITICAL APPROACH TO CZECH AND AUSTRIAN RESEARCH IN ASIAN BORDERLANDS

University of Vienna & Weltmuseum Wien
VIENNA PROGRAMME: 8-11 NOVEMBER 2021

CIRDIS (Department of Art History, Spitalgasse 2-4, Courtyard 9.2, 1090 Wien)
Weltmuseum Wien (WMW) (Heldenplatz, 1010 Wien)

ISTB (Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, Spitalgasse 2-4, Courtyard 2.7, 1090 Wien)

Monday

Arrival in Vienna

Welcome gathering

Tuesday

9:30-11:00

CIRDIS

Presentation of CIRDIS and HAV (Collection & Archive & Database)

Verena Widorn (University of Vienna)

11:15

OEAD – Walk through city to the Weltmuseum Wien

13:00

WMW

Lunch (cook café & bistro)

14:00-17:00

WMW

Collection of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz

Uwe Niebuhr/Aleksandra Apic (University of Vienna)

Himalaya Collection (storage rooms and permanent exhibition)

Christian Schicklgruber (Weltmuseum Wien)

18:00

ISTB, SR 1

Film screening and lecture

Czechoslovak Army Filmmakers V. Sís and J. Vaniš (1953-1955) in Tibet: A Unique Visual and Textual Documentary about the Final Stage of Ganden Phodrang Period

Luboš Bělka (Palacký University Olomouc)

20:00

Dinner (Königshofer)

AKTION AT-CZ: FROM THE HIMALAYA TO THE HINDUKUSH - ON A CRITICAL
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2.7, 1090 Wien)

Wednesday

9.30-13:45

WMW, DG 41

Workshop "Politics of Exhibitions and Museum Collections"
(see additional programme)

Luboš Bělka, Olaf Günther, Ute Wallenböck, Stephanie Ziehaus (Palacký
University Olomouc)

**Aleksandra Apic, Martin Gaenzle, Natasha Kimmet, Uwe Niebuhr, Verena
Widorn** (University of Vienna)

14:00

Lunch (burg.ring¹)

15:00

WMW

Textiles/Conservation Department
Julia Zeindl (Weltmuseum Wien)

18:00-20:00

ISTB, Aula am Campus, Courtyard 1.11
Buddhistisches Kulturerbe in Mustang, Nepal (book presentation and discussion)
Christian Luczanits (SOAS, University of London)
Markus Viehbeck (ISTB, University of Vienna)
Verena Widorn (CIRDIS, University of Vienna)

20:30

Dinner (Solo Pizza e Bierra)

Thursday

9:00

Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (Arsenal, Ghegastraße, 1030 Wien)
Stephanie Ziehaus (Palacký University Olomouc)

Farewell gathering

Departure from Vienna



FILM SCREENING

CESTA VEDE DO TIBETU (OmeU)

Vladimír Sís and Josef Vaniš in Tibet (1953–1955): A Unique Visual and Textual Documentary about the Final Stage of Ganden Phodrang Period

with an introduction by **LUBOŠ BĚLKA** (Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic)

The first and only western visitors to Lhasa after a three-year gap following the visit of Lowell Thomas (1949) and Heinrich Harrer/Peter Aufschnaiter (1950) were Czechoslovak filmmakers Vladimír Sís (1925–2001) and Josef Vaniš (1927–2009), who stayed in Tibet for ten months in 1954–1955. They shot an hour's documentary film in cooperation with the People's Liberation Army Film Studio which premiered in 1956 as *Cesta vede do Tibetu* (On the Road through Tibet).

The testimonies obtained from the unpublished diaries accompanied with not yet published photographs represent a unique documentary material illustrating the 1950s' Tibet before the uprising. Vaniš and Sís were rare witnesses of the last stage of the Ganden Phodrang period (1642–1959), and therefore their information concerning various aspects of the then Tibet is quite exceptional.

[Bitte beachten Sie die aktuellen Corona Regeln \(derzeit: 2,5G\)](#)

Tuesday, 9. November 2021, 18.00 Uhr

INSTITUT FÜR SÜDASIEN-, TIBET- UND BUDDHISMUSKUNDE // Seminarraum 1

AAKH, Hof 2.7 // Spitalgasse 2–4 // Wien 1090

AKTION AT-CZ : FROM THE HIMALAYA TO THE HINDUKUSH

on a Critical Approach to Czech and Austrian Research in Asian Borderlands

WORKSHOP

Politics of Exhibitions and Museum Collections

9.30

Opening Remarks

Martin Gaenzle (University of Vienna, CIRDIS)

Christian Schicklgruber (Weltmuseum Wien)

9.40

Unknown Tibet 1956 – The First Exhibition about the Snow Kingdom in Prague

Luboš Bělka (Palacký University Olomouc)

10.20

Representing Himalayan Cultures – Austria's First Exhibition on Nepal in 1957

Verena Widorn/Uwe Niebuhr (University of Vienna)

11.00

Tea/Coffee

11.30

Anthropological Approach to Objects –

Examplifying the Ethnographical Collection of Altenburg, Thüringen

Olaf Günther (Palacký University Olomouc)

12.10

From the Lahore Antiquities Market to the World –

Tracing the Collection History of the Akhnur Group of Buddhist Clay-based Sculpture

Natasha Kimmet (University of Vienna)

12.50

China's Museums of Local History and Collective Memory –

The qinwang Mansion in contemporary Henan Mongol Autonomous County, Qinghai Province

Ute Wallenböck (Palacký University Olomouc)

13.30

Final Discussion

MITTWOCH, 10. NOVEMBER 2021 // WELTMUSEUM WIEN // Heldenplatz // Wien 1010 // DG 41

Bitte beachten Sie die aktuellen Corona Regeln (derzeit: 2,5G)



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CIRDIS

Center for Interdisciplinary Research and
Documentation of Inner and South Asian
Cultural History at the University of Vienna