

## EUROPEAN COLLECTIONS FROM RYŪKYŪ/OKINAWA

*Josef KREINER, Bonn*

Among the arts and crafts of the former independent Kingdom of Ryūkyū (12th/13th century–1879), it was especially lacquer art which caught the attention of European collectors once this chain of islands, stretching between Kyūshū in the north to Taiwan in the south, came to be known to the Europeans. As early as the turn of the 16th century to the beginning of the 17th century, six quite unusual rectangular wooden trays in black lacquer and decorat-

ed with flowers, birds, squirrels, and some Christian motifs like the pelican in *haku-e* and *raden* techniques had been brought to Portugal where they are kept today at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon (Inv. nos. 1, 2, 20, 44 band) and in private ownership. Formerly, they had been kept at various monasteries in Portugal (Fig. 1).

Even earlier than this, a small bowl with a flower and bird design in *haku-e* on cinnabar



Figure 1. Ryūkyūan lacquer tray (Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Inv. no. 1 band, photo Arnaldo Soares)



Figure 2. Bowl, cinnabar lacquer with *haku-e* painting of flowers and birds, 16th century (Ambras, Inv. no. PA 543)

lacquer which apparently came from Okinawa was mentioned in an inventory of the *Kunst-kammer* of Ferdinand II of Tyrol at Ambras Castle near Innsbruck (Inv. no. PA 543; Fig. 2). It may have entered the Hapsburg collection via Spain and its colonies in the Philippines and Macao. Both these items are of considerable importance also for the history of Okinawan lacquer technique and have been thoroughly studied by Arakawa Hirokazu, an authority on Okinawan lacquer art (ARAKAWA 1996: 211–215).

Other valuable pieces of Ryūkyūan lacquerware are held at the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden (a mirror stand in *haku-e*; see also ARAKAWA 1996: 207–208) and at the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum in Braunschweig (Brunswick). The eminent Japanese lacquer collection of Elector Duke Anton Ulrich of Brunswick (1633–1714),

acquired through the Dutch East India Company in the Netherlands and assembled in the castle of Salzdahlum, built 1681 to 1694, includes about 18 pieces of Ryūkyūan lacquerware (DIESINGER 1990; nos. 24, 30–32, 61–63, 66, 67, 96–98, 178–184). The lacquer cabinet at the Braunschweigisches Landesmuseum für Geschichte und Volkstum, Inv. no. VM 6131, is also an outstanding piece and belongs to this group; for the collection of the Anton Ulrich-Museum see also the paper by Regine MARTH in volume II.

During the 18th century, Ryūkyū disappeared from European view, only to be redis-



Figure 3. Lacquered box with carrying frame, inlay of mother-of-pearl, early 19th cent., Siebold collection (Leiden, Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Inv. no. 1-1914)



Figure 4. Pail cover, *tākū*, red lacquer with *chinkin*-design of peonies, Siebold collection (Munich, Museum für Völkerkunde, Inv. no. S 4592)

covered again by the early explorers of the Pacific, William Robert Broughton and Jean-François Galaup, Comte de Lapérouse at the turn of the 18th to the 19th century. The report of Captain Basil Hall of *H.M.S. Lyra* on his visit to Naha, Okinawa, in 1816 (*Account of a Voyage to the West Coast of Corea and the Great Loo-Choo Island*, London 1818) was received with great interest in Europe and inspired a new wave of publications as well as political aspirations into the archipelago. But it was Philipp Franz von Siebold, the great European scientist and collector, who assembled and brought back to Europe the first collection of Okinawan art and ethnography after more than a century during his stay between 1823 and 1829 as a medical doctor on the Dutch outpost on Dejima/Nagasaki. He was also the first to incorporate items other than lacquerware into his collection. Siebold's Ryūkyū collection may have been

acquired with the good help of his 'friend', the *daimyō* Shimazu Shigehide of Satsuma. Thirty-eight items are presently kept at the Rijksmuseum of Ethnology in Leiden, among them 16 pieces of lacquerware (for instance, a very fine picnic box in red lacquer, Inv. no. 1-4212; and a set of 3 lidded soup bowls, each shaped like an aubergine, Inv. no. 1-2039); also a box, black lacquer with inlay of mother-of-pearl (Fig. 3); six pieces of textiles (rolls of linen and banana tree fabric); 9 fans and 5 coins. Three more pieces of lacquerware are included in the Siebold collection at the State Museum of Ethnology in Munich. They are obviously of better quality than the Leiden pieces, such as a *tākū* pail cover, red lacquered with a *chinkin* design of peonies (Inv. no. S



Figure 5. Burial urn *zushigami*, Tsuboya ware (Vienna, Museum für Völkerkunde, Inv. no. 37 438)

459a; Fig. 4) or a beautiful large round tray (Inv. no. S 22) of black lacquered wood with mother-of-pearl inlay and a design of clouds and a dragon. A comparable tray in Europe is owned only by the Museum of East Asian Art in Berlin (Inv. no. 1970-9, donated by Sammy Y. Lee). These trays might have been manufactured as tribute presents for the Chinese emperors.

Siebold's second son, Heinrich (Henry) von Siebold, who stayed with the Austro-Hungarian Legation at Tokyo from 1869 to 1896, became interested in Ryūkyū through his studies in Japanese archaeology and ethnogenesis, proposing in his *Notes on Japanese Archaeology* (Yokohama: C. Levy

1878) that one stratum of an early rice-growing culture had reached Japan via this chain of islands. While Henry von Siebold never visited Okinawa, he included more than 100 items from Ryūkyū which he probably acquired through Japanese friends into his vast collections of Japanese arts and crafts as well as ethnographical objects which in part he donated to Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I in 1889 (now at the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna) and, in part sometime later to the Viennese Museum of Applied Art (MAK). Especially interesting are the 118 items of the 106 inventory numbers (Inv. nos. 34,759;



Figure 6. *Bingata*-dyed kimono for aristocratic women (Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, Inv. no. ID 6678)

34,762; 36,878; 37,314–27,318; 37,320–37,380; 37,382–37,418; 37,759; 37,762) held by the Museum of Ethnology, because they include, apart from 37 pieces of lacquerware, an even larger amount of 67 pieces of ceramics. To this, ten more items (Inv. nos. 29,926–29,935) from the collection of Wenzel Svoboda of *H.M.S. Aurora* should be included, as they had been given to Svoboda by Henry von Siebold in Yokohama in 1887. This is a rare and representative collection of *Tsuboya-yaki* in Europe, including teapots, sake bottles, plates, and one roofed burial urn in the shape of a house (*zushigami*, Inv. no. 37,438; Fig. 6; pub-

lished by HABERLAND 1893; JANATA 1965, no. 1342; and DEUTSCHES INSTITUT FÜR JAPANSTUDIEN 1992, no. 61). Other burial urns are kept in Oxford (Pitt Rivers Museum (Inv. no. II.9), donated by Basil Hall Chamberlain in 1896, one green-glazed urn in the shape of a house and the other, round and unglazed, CHAMBERLAIN 1895) and at Leiden (Rijksmuseum of Ethnology in Leiden, Inv. no. 4151-122, collection of Cornelius Ouwehand from 1965/6). The Viennese collection of Tsuboya ceramics has been replenished in the early 1990s (see the contribution by Bettina ZORN in volume II).

Other ceramics are to be found only at the Musée de l'Homme, Paris, in the collection of Baron Guy Fain, a former French diplomat who visited Okinawa in 1939. Of the 48 items (Inv. nos. 47.1.1–47.1.48) of this collection, 32 are ceramics, some from the Tsuboya kiln, and some so-called *Ryūkyū koten yaki*, a queer looking earthenware ordered by an antique dealer coming from Nara (BEILLEVAIRE 1996: 126).

A small collection of present-day Tsuboya ceramics (18 nos.) is held by the Náprstek Museum at Prague (see the contribution by Alice KRAEMEROVA in volume II).

The most important and comprehensive collection from Ryūkyū had been ordered by Adolf Bastian, founding director of the Museum of Ethnology in Berlin (now called the Ethnological Museum) in the early 1880s just after the demise of the kingdom and its annexation to Japan as one of its newly created prefectures. Bastian, in fear of a sudden and rapid cultural adaptation to the quick modernising Japanese culture, asked the German Legation in Tokyo to order a comprehensive collection of traditional Ryūkyūan cultural objects. This was done through the help of the Japanese government. The collection was probably made by Ishizawa Hyōgo, Nomura Michiyasu and Kimura Asaaki (Chōshō) (SASAKI 2002: 14-17), but only roughly one half (543 items of 469 inventory numbers; Inv. nos.

6,557 to 7,099) were sent to Berlin, while the other half came in Japanese possession and is kept now at the Tokyo National Museum (see SASAKI 2003: 15, URASOE-SHI BIJUTSUKAN 2003; Sasaki suggests that the second part was collected separately by order of a forerunner of the present Tokyo National Museum, but this seems unlikely to me when comparing the quite complementary character of the collections). As far as it can be checked against the Berlin inventory list, the collection was done in a very systematic manner, documenting, for instance, textiles and clothing of men and women of all social classes (Fig. 6) in winter and summer, for festivals as well as for

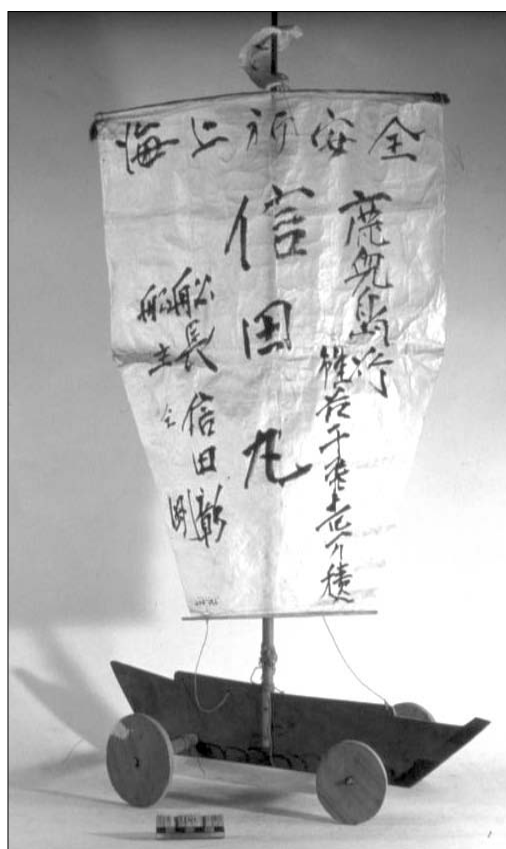


Figure 7. Toy for the boys' festival *otoko no sekku* from Akuseki Island, Tokara chain (Vienna, Museum für Völkerkunde, Inv. no. 144 051)

every day life, and labelling each item in the Ryūkyūan language. Due to losses at the end of World War II, only 112 pieces of textiles in 65 sets of clothes are preserved (some parts of the collection are reported to be kept in St. Petersburg now). While the collection also comprises some 46 ethnographical items (household utensils, models of agricultural tools etc.), and 19 watercolours mounted as hanging scrolls (pictures of ships, a sugar mill, musical instruments), the most valuable part is, without question, the kimonos and textiles (for a description of the collection in Berlin see also the report by Siegmur NAHSER in volume II).

After World War II, a Dutch dealer in Japanese antiques, Jaap Langewis (first stationed during the 1950s in Kyoto, after 1960 in Zaandam, the Netherlands), collected and sold Okinawan textiles, kimonos as well as textile fragments to a number of European museums. All in all, 292 items in 19 museums from London (Victoria & Albert Museum), Germany (Textile Museum in Krefeld and others), Denmark, the Netherlands (Leiden), Sweden and Switzerland (Museum of Ethnology, Basel) were purchased from Langewis between 1956/7 and 1963. The majority is kept in Basel (some 191 items). Nothing is known about the origin of these collections nor of antiques dealer Jaap Langewis, but a thorough study of the dispersed items may shed some light on these questions (see KREINER 1996: 320–321; also BROWN 1996: 131–132).

Similarly, in the second half of the 20th century, three large collections of ethnographical character were brought together in the course of ethnological field research in Okinawa; The first was collected by the author of this paper, Josef Kreiner, during field work on Kakeroma Island, Amami Ōshima, on Akuseki Island in the Tokara chain (Fig. 7), Hateruma Island and in the northern part of Okinawan main island in 1962/3. It comprises 79 items (Inv. nos.

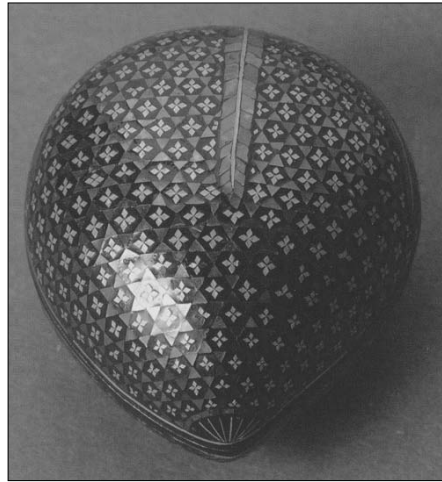


Figure 8. Small box for incense *kōgo*, black lacquer with mother-of-pearl inlay and sheet gold (Münster, Museum für Lackkunst, Inv. no. AS-CH-6-45)

144,020–144,092; 146,565; 157,468; 157,409; 157,471), agricultural and fishing tools, religious objects from the *norō*-cult and masks, which are held at the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna. The second was made by Cornelius Ouwehand who collected intensively during his field work on Hateruma Island in 1965/6 (154 items mainly from Hateruma, as well as from Ishigaki, Naha/Okinawa; Tsuboya



Figure 9. Small globular box, black lacquer with inlay of mother-of-pearl, sheet gold and silver (Münster, Museum für Lackkunst, Inv. no. AS-CH-6-37)

ceramics, textiles, household utensils, agricultural tools). Ouwehand's collection is kept at the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden (Inv. nos. 4151-1 to 4151-134, 4151-143 to 4151-166). The last one was assembled by Arne Røkkum of the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Oslo (Inv. nos. 45,256–45,303; 45,545-45,548; 54,583) while doing field research on Yonaguni Island in 1980/1. The 58 items comprise 14 pieces of lacquerware, 11 pieces of ceramic, some textiles, and ethnographic objects (RØKKUM 1996).

In the field of art, the wonderful collections of Sir Harry Garner (1891–1977) deserve special mention, which are now kept at the Department of Japanese Antiquities of the British Museum (3 pieces, Inv. nos. 1974, 2-6, 63, 74, 81: one octagonal two-tiered food



Figure 10. Arm chair, cinnabar lacquer with black and golden lacquer painting, landscapes and figures; 18/19th century (Münster, Museum für Lackkunst; Inv. no. AS-RY-a-1)

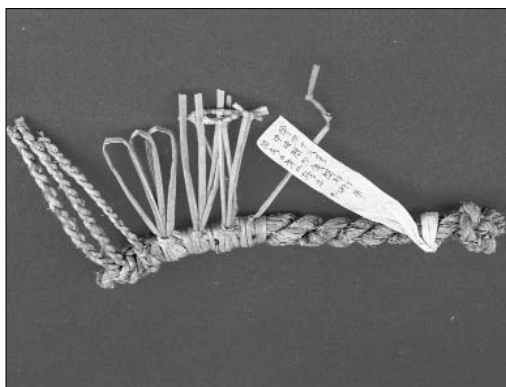


Figure 11. *Warazan*, calculating string of straw, about 1930 (Bonn, Arithmeum)

coffer, cinnabar lacquer with litharge painting, with a design of birds and a camellia from the 17th century; a cinnabar lacquered stand for a *temmoku* tea bowl from the 16th century; and a chest of drawers of black lacquered wood with mother-of-pearl inlay). To this may also belong a cylindrical coffer of black or green lacquered wood with gilt line engraving and perforated copper cover from the 16th/17th century (Inv. no. 1974, 2-26, 93). All four items are of outstanding beauty and have been published several times (OKINAWA TIMES 1989: nos. 38, 17, 68, 4; DEUTSCHES INSTITUT FÜR JAPANSTUDIEN 1992: nos. 97, 96, 91, 132). In March 1974, Sir Harry and Lady Garner donated another 12 pieces of valuable lacquerware to the Victoria & Albert Museum (Inv. nos. FE 68, 72, 79-83, 85, 86, 93-95, 1974). For Sir Harry Garner's collection see also his essay (GARNER 1972).

The lacquer collection of Carl Cords (1879–1945) of Danzig (Gdansk), donated to the Museum für Kunsthandwerk (Museum of Arts and Crafts) in Frankfurt in 1943 (Inv. nos. 10,914, 11,199, 11,211, 11,214, 11,215, 11,217, 11,220-11,230, 11,239, 11,240, 11,245, 11,246, 11,250-11,268, 11,270-11,277, 11,281, 11,286, 11,287), includes 51 pieces of Ryūkyū

lacquer, mostly black lacquer with mother-of-pearl inlay (partly published by GABBERT 1978; Inv. nos. 16,33, 40, 41, 61, 67-74, 65-83, 86-89, 91). The Frankfurt museum owns also 17 items of lacquerware (*mitsuda-e*, *tsuikin*, *raden*, *baku-e*, and other techniques) from Okinawa in the collection of former German ambassador Ernst-Arthur Voretzsch (1868–1963), assembled between 1928 and 1933, and donated in 1959.

Another important collection of lacquer art is housed in the BASF Museum of Lacquer Art at Münster, where the collections of the former Herbig-Haarhaus Co., Cologne (14 items) and of Kurt Herberts (1901–1989; also 14 items) have been brought together. Münster houses some very small, but beautifully decorated boxes with mother-of-pearl inlay (Fig. 8, Fig. 9) as well as an armchair of cinnabar lacquer with black and golden lacquer painting in a landscape design, which may stem from the



Figure 12. Fan-shaped board; exhibited at the Vienna World Exhibition 1873 (Vienna, MAK, Inv. no. Or 3374)

Country	Museums	Collections	Items
1. Austria	3	15	221 (14.6%)
2. Belgium	1	2	3 (0.2%)
3. Czech Republic	2	5	30 (1.9%)
4. Denmark	2	3	4 (0.3%)
5. France	2	4	47 (3.1%)
6. FR Germany	21	35	529 (34.9%)
7. Hungary	1	1	8 (0.5%)
8. Ireland	1	1	4 (0.3%)
9. Italy	2	2	3 (0.2%)
10. The Netherlands	3	21	242 (16.0%)
11. Norway	1	2	60 (3.9%)
12. Poland	1	1	2 (0.1%)
13. Portugal	2	2	8 (0.5%)
14. Russia	1	1	2 (0.1%)

Table 1, *continued*

15. Spain	1	2	9 (0.6%)
16. Sweden	1	1	5 (0.3%)
17. Switzerland	2	9	204 (13.4%)
18. United Kingdom	8	44	131 (8.6)
Total numbers	55	151	1,512 (100%)

18th/early 19th century but is in any case a unique example in the world (Inv. no. As-Ry-a-1, formerly a pair; DEUTSCHES INSTITUT FÜR JAPANSTUDIEN 1992: no. 140; FIG. 10). A much smaller, but not withstanding impressive quantity of Ryūkyūan lacquer art belongs to the Museum of East Asian Art in Cologne (5 items from the collection of Adolf Fischer, 1856–1914; Inv. nos. E 49, 58, 65, 68, 224).

In 2000, the Arithmeum in Bonn was presented an outstanding and very rare collection of Okinawan straw calculating strings (*warazan*; Fig. 11) by Prof. Takara Kurayoshi of Ryūkyū University (see also the paper by Ina PRINZ in volume II).

To sum up this short summary: According to a survey conducted by the Institute of Japanese Studies at the University of Bonn, about 1,500 items from Ryūkyū/Okinawa are currently kept in museums all over Europe (see Table 1). Nearly one half of them are held in museums in Germany, followed by those in the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland. There is ample room to assume that more items might be found in course of re-study by specialists, as it is especially and extremely difficult to differentiate Okinawan lacquerware, for instance black lacquer with mother-of-pearl inlay, from other examples made elsewhere. A detailed listing of all museums and collections studied up to now is given by KREINER (1996: 275–325).

Geographically, the European collections cover nearly all parts of the island chain,

including the Tokara (in Vienna), Amami (Vienna, but also included in some of the textile collections), Okinawa and Yaeyama (Hamburg, Oslo, Leiden, Vienna) with the only exemption of the Miyako Group.

Textiles make up 31.6% of all collections, but this includes not only kimonos (best examples at the Victoria & Albert Museum, in Leiden and Berlin) but also many small textile fragments *kireji* (for instance, Basel). Ethnographical items follow with 28.9% (Vienna, Leiden, Oslo, but also at the Hamburg Museum of Ethnology: one collection acquired from the Umlauff curio shop in 1907, perhaps collected by the Norwegian captain Adrian Jacobsen from Yonaguni Island, 51 items). Most valuable are the 387 items of lacquerware (=26.1%), as has already been pointed out above (Fig. 12). Ceramics are relatively rare, only 170 items (11.5%) can be tracked down, foremost in Vienna, Paris and Prague (see above), but also in some of the ethnographic collections.

Paintings are even more difficult to locate. The Linden-Museum in Stuttgart owns a hanging scroll by the well-known Ryūkyūan painter In Genryō (1718–1767) dated to 1748 in the collection of Erwin Baelz (Inv. no. B 28 286; CROISSANT 1978: no. 18; DEUTSCHES INSTITUT FÜR JAPANSTUDIEN 1992: no. 42).

Some watercolours mounted as hanging scrolls in the collection in Berlin have already been mentioned. The Oriental and India Office of the British Library owns the hand scroll *Ryūkyū sōgaku-zu* (*Musical Entertain-*

ments from Ryūkyū, Inv. no. Or. 961) and the British Museum a set of two hand scrolls by Kanō Shunko (?–1726), some 60 m in total length, from the 1886-collection of William Anderson (1842–1900), *Ryūkyū-koku ryōshi tojō no gyōretsu ezu (Pictures of the Procession of Two Ryūkyūan Emissaries on Their Way to Edo Castle)*, dated Hōei 7, equivalent to 1710 (Inv. no. JP. 1402, 1403; KŌDANSHA 1987, I: 241–243). Otherwise, paintings from Okinawa are rare in European collections.

Compared with holdings in museums of the United States of America and Canada, those in Europe are nearly double in number (1,512 items compared to 796 items in America); many of them are older in terms of their first acquisition (Lisbon, Innsbruck, Brunswick, Leiden) while those in America start with Admiral Perry's visit to Okinawa and concentrate on the decades after World War II. Interesting is that in American collections, ceramics at 20.2% are much more numerous than lacquerware (13.2%). Ethnographic collections (especially at the Peabody Essex Museum) at 39.8% lead the list in America (see KREINER 1996b: 327ff.).

For an overview of *inrō* from Ryūkyū in European collections, I refer to the contribution by Heinz and Else KRESS in this volume as well as to the catalogue *Inrō of the Ryūkyūs, Lacquered Medicine Container* by Else and Heinz KRESS, with an introduction by Josef Kreiner from the Institute for Japanese Studies of the University of Bonn, published in 2002.

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