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The Manchu Collection in the Jagiellonian University Library

Abstract

The present paper describes the Manchu Collection in the Jagiellonian University Library in Cracow which was a part of the former Prussian State Library in Berlin. The historical Manchu collection comprised over 300 items (call numbers, including “duplicates” of the same title). The paper offers a historical sketch of the forming of the collection as well as short description of some interesting items.

Keywords: Manchu, book collection, Prussian State Library in Berlin, Jagiellonian Library

A considerable portion of the collections of the former Prussian State Library (today: Berlin State Library, Prussian Cultural Foundation) was moved away from Berlin and stored for safekeeping in castles and mansions East of the Oder River during World War II. After the War, this territory became Polish and the books came into the custody of the Jagiellonian University Library where they are still today. This was fortunate because the collection escaped destruction and neglect. “Collection” here just means “a large number of books”, not books on the same subject. Thus it was not the complete older Manchu section that found its way to Cracow – another portion was stored in the Western zones, still another part in the Russian zone of post-war Germany. Eventually, the Manchu books were consolidated in Marburg (West Germany, later transferred to West Berlin), and East Berlin (German State Library, GDR). The surviving catalogue files were kept in East Berlin, and during the period of cold war access to this important information was practically impossible. Therefore it was a major achievement when Walter Fuchs

(1902–1979) published a union catalogue of Manchu books in Germany in 1966, which included the Manchu holdings in both East and West Berlin. When the Manchu catalogue of the Berlin State Library was published in 2014 (including the Cracow holdings), the cataloguing was largely done from scratch, analyzing and harmonizing information from historical files and trying to establish the whereabouts of individual copies.

The present situation is excellent for a revival of Manchu studies as owing to the munificence of the German Research Association (DFG) the Berlin historical Chinese and Manchu holdings and the Tibetan Pander Collection as well, were scanned and are now in the process of being mounted on the internet, becoming available to scholars worldwide free of charge, in good technical quality. Thus the historical Berlin Manchu collection is virtually united (including the Cracow holdings), except of course, for the few actual war losses.

As to the number of books in question, the historical Manchu collection comprised over 300 items (call numbers, including “duplicates” of the same title); the 2014 catalogue contains almost 500 call numbers as the collection grew by the addition of material acquired from the estates of Erich Haenisch and S. A. Polevoj, respectively, and a rich Sibe collection, acquired from Giovanni Stary.

A brief survey of the collection may require a sketch of its history. The first Manchu book in the library of the Great Elector of Brandenburg, the predecessor of the present Berlin State Library, was a forecast of a sun eclipse in 1669 by the astronomer to the Manchu court, the Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688) [Ms. sin. 22]. It is mentioned in a printed catalogue of the Chinese collection of the library, of approximately 1683, compiled by the Provost of Bernau, Andreas Müller (1630–1694), one of the first such catalogues in Europe, and the first printed catalogue of holdings of the Berlin library.


4 Sergej Aleksandrovic Polevoj (1886–1971) studied Chinese at the Oriental Institute at Vladivostok and St. Petersburg University, taught at the universities of Nanking and Peking; he was arrested after the Japanese invasion of 1937 and was allowed to leave the country in 1939; on the invitation of Serge Elisseeff he then worked at Harvard University. He is particularly known for his book on the Chinese press (*Periodičeskaja pečat’ v Kitae. Izd. i pečat’ Vostoč. inst., Vladivostok 1913. 190 pp., 20 pl.*) and his Russian-Chinese dictionary of scientific terms (*Russko-kitajskij slovar’ juriđičeskich, političeskich, ekonomičeskich, filosofskich i dr. naučnych terminov*. Xin E-Hua cidian 新俄華辭典 Sostavil S.A. Polevoj, Peking 1927, 626, 24 pp., with index and suppl.) The Commercial Press in Shanghai published his translation of Mongolian fairy-tales in 1933: *Menggu minjian gushi* 蒙古民間故事.


II. 1. Andreas Müller, *Catalogus librorum sinicorum Bibliothecae electorals brandenburgicae*. Berolini ca. 1683.

While the Great Elector’s interest in East Asia was mainly triggered by his hope of entering the profitable trade with that part of the world (and where could one find better information on China than in original Chinese books!) his successors were less interested in Chinese literature. Julius Klaproth\(^7\) (1783–1835) who authored a sumptuous catalogue of Chinese and Manchu books of the then Royal Library, in 1810 (published in 1822)\(^8\) remarked that only he himself added to the Manchu collection, mainly items that he had collected on a trip along the Chinese border. The following catalogue of the Chinese and Manchu books,\(^9\) by Wilhelm Schott, only reports 2 further Manchu additions. The bulk of the historical Manchu books entered the library at the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century:

- F.W.K. Müller\(^10\) (1863–1930), outstanding linguist who played a major role in deciphering findings from the Turfan expeditions, bought quite a number of Manchu books in Peking in 1901. (Slg. Müller).

- Peking Sammlung [Peking Collection] – the books were given as a deposit of the “War Administration” [Office] to the library and were accessioned as of the end of 1909 by agreement of the Office of the Court Marshall.\(^11\) These folio volumes are carefully written manuscripts from the Palace, unfortunately incomplete.

- The acquisition of the Moellendorff Collection in 1911 was of particular importance. Paul Georg von Moellendorff\(^12\) (1847–1901) had been working for the Chinese Maritime Customs, then as interpreter in the German foreign service, then as official in the viceroy Li Hongzhang’s service; he is still being remembered in Korea for his good services to help Korea on its way to reform and modernization. As he met with strong opposition he returned to the Customs and became a Commissioner at Ningbo. As a keen linguist he published the first comprehensive survey of Manchu literature, based largely on his own personal collection.\(^12\)

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Erich Hauer13 (1878–1936), Professor of Chinese and Manchu at Berlin University, helped to acquire 18 still missing works14 in Peking, and Walter Simon15 (1893–1981), librarian at the University Library of Berlin, managed to buy further desiderata in Peking in 1933.

The Annual Report of the Library provides some more detailed information on the latter additions:

Among the 18 Manchu works which were acquired on the basis of an offer from Peking there are 5 manuscripts of recent date which however have some claim to originality and a number of rare old printed items of Manchu literature, so far missing in our considerable collection, as the long sought for Manchu editions of the Book of Documents and the Four Classical Books with the daily commentaries of the Prince’s School [Guozijian] *Rijiang Shujing* 日講書經 of 1680 and *Rijiang Sishu* 日講四書 of 1675 in fine folio editions, also the oldest translation of the book of Odes 日講詩經 in a folio edition of 1654, and important Manchu translation of the Code of the Qing dynasty: *Daicing gurun-i fafun-i bithe* in an edition of 1740 (20 fascicles in 2°). (Annual Report for 1930/31.)

The acquisitions in the field of Manchu literature which double its previous size, are very important. This is to be acknowledged with pleasure, regarding a literature that is doomed to extinction, and whose records are being offered increasingly scarcely and will also in China soon completely disappear from the book market. The so far already rich Manchu collection is fortunately further enriched by comprehensive administrative and political works of the early Manchu period, like the statutes of that time, the decrees of all emperors, the regulations of the Ministry for the vassal peoples and the complete text of the history and organization of the Eight Banners of which only fragments were there. A manuscript acquired together with these works comprises edicts of the emperors of the 19th century in Manchu and Chinese parallel fashion in 40 stout quarto fascicles. The remaining works have literary, philological, military, philosophical and encyclopedic contents, some have been hardly known so far. We owe this extension of our holdings to the successful efforts of Prof. Walter Simon who spent the previous year as exchange librarian in Peking.16 (Annual Report for 1933/34.)

These historical notes show that at the beginning the Berlin Manchu collection was rather accidental and fragmentary but as of the turn to the 20th century determined efforts were made to build a Manchu library in a systematic fashion. This may be due to the fact that already during the 19th century when neither Chinese nor Manchu was taught at German universities regularly except for Berlin, most scholars studied in Paris with Jean-Pierre Abel Rémusat17 (1788–1832) and Stanislas Julien18 (1797–1873) who both

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emphasized the importance of Manchu, like their colleague Julius Klaproth (1783–1835) who lived in Paris on a Prussian grant. This Manchu tradition was carried on by Wilhelm Schott at the university of Berlin, and after him by Wilhelm Grube (1855–1908), a disciple of V. P. Vasil’ev (1818–1900) in St. Petersburg and Georg von der Gabelentz (1840–1893) in Leipzig, and further by Grube’s disciples Berthold Laufer (1874–1934) and Erich Haenisch (1880–1966). An important advocate of Manchu was the eminent linguist Hans Conon von der Gabelentz (1807–1874) to whom we owe the first scholarly grammar and the first practical dictionary of Manchu. This tradition had an impact also on the collection building of German libraries.

As pointed out, approximately one third of the Berlin historical Manchu collection is now in the custody of the Jagiellonian Library. As to its contents it is a rather random selection, and therefore it is difficult to provide a just appreciation of this portion in its own right, without the context of the other portions. At least it can be justly said that it provides an excellent basis for Manchu studies in a country where there are not many Manchu holdings. The use of the books has become much easier through the mentioned 2014 catalogue, and the availability of the texts on the internet removes all previous barriers which might have hampered a revival of Manchu studies in Poland and elsewhere. Poland has a tradition of Manchu studies, too, starting with Józef Kowalewski (1801–1878) and culminating with Władysław Kotwicz (1872–1944) who spent much effort on the preparation of a union catalogue of Manchu books; unfortunately the 1,000 pp. manuscript was never published. This tradition was carried on by Stanisław

26 There are some Manjurica in the Archive of Władysław Kotwicz in the Archive of Science of the PAS and PAAS in Cracow and some Manchu books are kept at the Library of Mongolian and Tibetan Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw – communication of Jerzy Tulisow from the University of Warsaw.
29 See, however, W. Kotwicz, Sur le besoin d’une bibliographie complète de la littérature mandchoue, “Rocznik Orientalistyczny”, vol. 6, (1928), pp. 61–75.

A few interesting items from the collection may be briefly introduced:

**Ms. sin. 23**

This is allegedly a letter that the young Kangxi emperor addressed to emperor Leopold I. as also reported in an early source: Litterae Tartaro-Sinicae quas misit Sinarum & Tartariae Chanus per Patrem e S.J. ad Leopoldum Imperatorem. Two letters from emperor Leopold (19th May 1682) are mentioned, one to the Elector, and one to Andreas Müller, the Orientalist, who was to interpret the Chinese letter. When the sinologist Eva Kraft dealt with the issue she could not clarify the matter because she had no access to the original. The matter sounded more than interesting – an unknown letter from the Kangxi emperor to the Holy Roman emperor? It turns out, however, to be the Manchu version of an honorific diploma for the outstanding Jesuit Johann Adam Schall’s ancestors, issued by the Shunzhi emperor in 1551. It is a copy in Andreas Müller’s hand of the scroll of the „patent“; this Manchu version seems to be otherwise unknown. The original should be found in Vienna but has not yet been identified.

**LS 92**

This is a unique manuscript translation of the now well-known Chinese erotic novel Rou putuan 肉蒲図 under the title Žeo pu tuwan-i bithe. It comprises 15 chapters of which ch. 8–10 are missing. It was first described by Klaproth in his Verzeichniss. The flyleaf has a note in Klaproth’s hand: Histoire de Vey-yann-schen. Roman ecrit en Mandchou. Manuscrit., thus indicating that the book went through his hands. In his early years Klaproth bought and sold and exchanged Chinese and Manchu books.

**NS 1541**

Han-i araha Jakôn gósai Manjusai mukôn hala be uheri ejehe bithe. This is a comprehensive imperially commissioned genealogical handbook of the Manchu clans of the Eight Banners, in 80 chapters. In Manchu only. With an imperial preface dated 1745.

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34 H. Walravens, Schall von Bell, Johann Adam, “Neue Deutsche Biographie” 22 (2005), pp. 551–552.

Il. 6. Han-i araha Jakôn gösai Manjusai mukôn hala be uheri ejehe. 1745. In Manchu only. NS 1541.

II. 8. *Han-i araha Gu wen yuwan giyan bithe.* 1685/86. In Manchu only. Moell. 44.
Möll. 44

*Han-i araha Gu wen yuwan giyan bithe.* This is the imperially commissioned anthology of classical literature in Manchu translation by Minggong. 64 chapters (debeltin). In Manchu only. Imperial preface dated 1685/86. First samples were already given by Aleksej Leont’ev\(^{36}\) (1716–1786) in his *Kitajskija myslì* in 1772. The whole anthology was republished, partly in transcription, partly in facsimile by Martin Gimm.\(^{37}\)

**Pander C7–C16**

*Han-i araha Manju Nikan Tanggôt hergen-i kamciha amba g’anjur nomun-i uheri tarni* 10 fascicles from the very rare trilingual Dhâraṇî edition. Leporelli (folding books).\(^{38}\)

**P.S.3-3a**

*Hesei toktobuha Daicing gurun-i uheri kooli bithe.* Palace manuscript.

[Qinding Da Qing huidian 欽定大清會典] Tao 1–5. 7. 10.

Statutes of the Qing empire. [1818.]

*Hesei toktobuha Daicing gurun-i uheri kooli-i baita hacin bithe.* Palace manuscript.

[欽定大清會典事例 Qinding Da Qing huidian shili]


Statutes and regulations of the Qing empire. Manchu only. [1818.]

**P.S. 8**

*Jun gar-i ba be necihiyeme toktobuha bodogon-i bithe*


**P.T. 785**

*Han-i araha Manju Nikan Monggo Tanggôt hergen-i kamciha amba g’anjur nomun-i uheri tarni*

Quadrilingual Dhâraṇî collection. Incomplete.\(^{39}\)

**Müller 59**


\(^{39}\) This work was reprinted by the Commercial Press in 1929. A more recent reprint is: *Sanskrit Texts from the Imperial Palace at Peking in the Manchurian, Chinese, Mongolian and Tibetan Scripts,* Edited by Lokesh Chandra from the collection of Raghu Vira, Pt. 1–22, (Śata-piṭaka series 71), Institute for the Advancement of Science and Culture 1966–1976, New Delhi.
This excellent work became very influential in Europe through Father Mailla’s French rendering:


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