



## Special wishes for the members of Antwerp Zoo; 65 years of history in pictures (1850-1914)

## Besondere Glückwünsche für die Mitglieder des Zoos Antwerpen; 65 Jahre Geschichte in Bildern (1850-1914)

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Received 29 November 2011

### Abstract

Antwerp Zoo in Belgium was founded in 1843 and is one of the oldest zoos in the world. It is part of the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp (RZSA) which also manages Planckendael Wild Animal Park, De Zegge Nature Reserve, Flanders Congress and Concert Center and – since 2009 – Blankenberge Serpentarium - a reptile collection.

During its almost 175 years existence the RZSA and Antwerp Zoo in particular went through periods with many highlights but also years with great difficulties. The early years till the start of World War I Antwerp Zoo went through a period that was important for the present zoological garden. The expansion and lay out of the park, the construction of buildings for visitors or to house animals, the offer for visitors to welcome them: much of it still exists or can still be noticed in the park or as part of the day to day operations of Antwerp Zoo and RZSA.

For the young society, it was important to have a significant and satisfied membership. Members gave the RZSA not only a key appearance but their financial contributions were also needed for the further development of the gardens. To pamper the members from 1850 on a special annual wishing card was offered to them. This initiative came to an end in 1914. With a few exceptions all of them were very nicely illustrated with pictures of the animals, new constructions or other illustrations which illustrate the development of the zoological garden.

The article describes in detail 62 (of 65) known wishing cards, analyzing the relevance of the illustrations for each year. Very often newly arrived species or new constructions are shown. As far as possible more details of these species were gathered. And the future existence of buildings and enclosures and the development of the gardens were also examined.

We can conclude that the period before World War I was one with many highlights for Antwerp Zoo. The special whishing cards are very important historical documents and they continue to illustrate the evolution the Zoo went through during the first seventy years.

**Keywords:** Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp; Antwerp Zoo; zoo history; porcelain cards; nineteenth century

## Introduction

The Antwerp Zoo, one of the oldest zoos in the world, celebrates its 175th anniversary within a few years. In 1993, following the 150th anniversary a book about its history was published. The extensive archives of the Zoo were an important source of information for this publication. But there are also other opportunities to learn about the history of the Antwerp Zoo.

For examples the extensive photographic archive that can be consulted online ([www.beeldbankzoo.be](http://www.beeldbankzoo.be)). This archive provides interested parties the opportunity to become acquainted with the expansion and the history the zoo went through during the last century. One limitation is however that this website is in Dutch. When we want to explore the period further back in the past we are able to do so by other documents which are present in the archives and which illustrate a significant part of the expansion and the history of Antwerp Zoo.

In 1850, several years after the opening of the zoo in 1843, the society begins to distribute “wishing cards” to its members. These members are usually the richer - and French-speaking - Antwerp bourgeoisie because workers did not get access to the zoo in the early period. Other zoos like Artis (Amsterdam, Netherlands) and the lost zoo in Ghent (Belgium) had a similar access policy. In Antwerp these “wishes” to the members were not made on the occasion of a new calendar year but at the start of a new “fiscal year”. In the 19th century, it was common for staff to offer such an illustrated card to members at the start of a new year. It is unclear whether this happened as a result of extending the membership or for some other reason. With the first cards wishes to the members were still present but after a few years this part of the text was left out. This form of communication with members of the RZSA lasted 65 years and forms the basis of this historical survey which also focuses on the changes that the zoo went through and special events that took place between 1850 and 1915.

Initially members were offered porcelain cards. Porcelain cards are so named not because they were porcelain, but because they resemble porcelain and whatever their age they not lose their beauty. They were usually used for business cards, menus, awards, concert programs, etc. They were in fact business cards from stores, factories, professionals, societies. It is obvious that those porcelain cards were distributed by people of upper class (in terms of richer) origin because the price must have been quite high. The earliest porcelain cards were created around 1825 and in the 1870s they gradually disappeared because it was realized that working with color powders and lead oxides was a health hazard to the printers. Curiously porcelain cards were almost exclusively manufactured in Belgium with Ghent, Brussels and Bruges as the main centres. Porcelain cards are printed matter based on lithography.

After several years porcelain cards disappeared and other printing techniques were used. Although porcelain cards varied in sizes, with the new design they switched to a larger size (approx. A3). Shortly after the turn of the century they changed again and from then on the members received a publication with photographs.

These unique publications allow us to become acquainted with a particular period of Antwerp Zoo, a period in which the zoo flourished. On the basis of some striking porcelain cards and lithographs we will look back on a period of more than 60 years, a period that ended at the beginning of World War I. Through these lithographs we learn about events that occurred during that period or of new buildings. Most of these buildings no longer exist and often the only (good) images are found on these porcelain cards and other publications for members. Alas, no copies of three editions or information about them was found in the archives of Antwerp Zoo.

Antwerp Zoo was not the only zoo that distributed such “wishing cards”. A few years after this initiative was started in Antwerp the Ghent Zoo took the same initiative. Possibly because of the problems that the Ghent Zoo had to keep their heads above water they stopped distributing these cards in 1899, half a decade before the zoo would close its doors in 1904.

On the first editions (1850 to 1854) of the cards there is no date. Based on their design and the depicted animals and enclosures we tried to determine the year of publication as accurately as possible.

As a source of information relating to the animal collection, we used a species list which was compiled by Agatha Gijzen (1960). This publication lists when mammal species were kept for the first time in the Antwerp Zoo. For birds and other animals in the collection a similar list does not exist. Interesting data were also frequently found in the minutes of the Board of RZSA. These reports, handwritten and in French, are conserved in the city archives of Antwerp. In compiling this review some differences were found between the list of Gijzen and the minutes of the Board.

## Description of the “wishing cards” (Figs. 1–62)

**1850:** The Antwerp Zoo opened its gates on the 21st of July 1843 for the first time and a few years later, in 1850, they started distributing greeting cards to members of the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp. The first porcelain card which was delivered to members was adorned by a garland in which a snake, a monkey and some birds are depicted. In the garland the following message, in French, is presented (translated):



Litho de Joseph Ratinckx, rempart S<sup>e</sup>-Catherine Anvers.

Fig. 1. 1850.



Litho: Litho JOSEPH RATINCKX, rempart S<sup>e</sup>-Catherine Anvers.

Fig. 2. 1851.



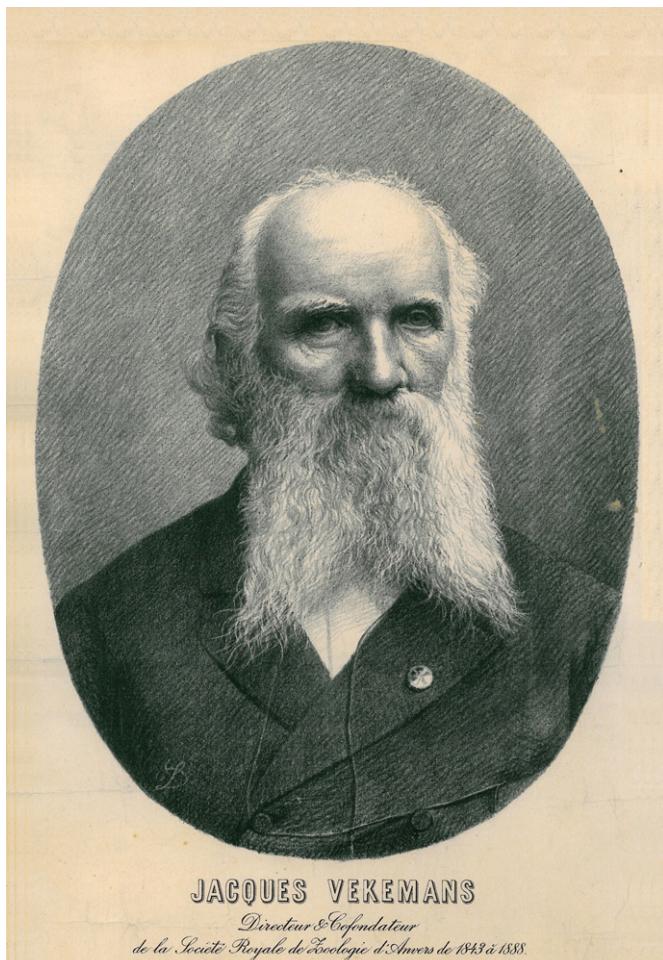
Lith. de Joseph Flatinckx, rempart S<sup>e</sup> Catherine, Anvers.

Fig. 3. 1852.



Imp. Lith. de Joseph Flatinckx, Rempart S<sup>e</sup> Catherine, Anvers.

Fig. 4. 1853.



JACQUES VEKEMANS

*Directeur & Co-fondateur  
de la Société Royale de Zoologie d'Anvers de 1843 à 1888.*

Fig. 37. 1889-1890.

*With true satisfaction we see the first days of the new year coming because it allows us to express our sincere wishes for achieving your aspirations.*

*May you all during this year find abundant and true pleasures in the lap of our society, and enjoy a very good health and perfect happiness in all that you undertake.*

*This is the wish of your devoted servants.*

P. Lemmes, C.F. Dumont

*Concierge and messenger of the RZSA*

**1851:** With some changes the wishes of the previous year were repeated. The card reads as follows:

Monsieur,

L'année sociale qui commence,

Nous arrive avec une légitime espérance,  
Penétrés des sentiments de la plus vive reconnaissance,  
Et animés d'estime de la plus juste confiance,  
Nous venons comme serviteurs fidèles et dévoué,  
Vous témoignez des vœux avec sincérité,  
Pour la continuation d'une parfait santé,  
Ainsi qu'à votre chère et honorable société,  
C'est la notre plus douce satisfaction,  
Que de multiplier nos félicitations,  
Pour tous vos désirs à l'accomplissement,  
D'une source de prospérité qui coule abondament,  
Et de tout ce qui peut vous être agréable,  
C'est le souhait de vos dévoués serviteurs.

P. Lemmes, C.F. Dumont,

Concierge & Commissionnaire de la Société Royale de Zoologie d'Anvers

Interestingly, this card now also provides some information about animal species which are kept in the zoo. Illustrations of ostriches (or emus?) in their enclosure and a bear pit. The ostrich enclosure was located at the front of the zoo, about the location of the present flamingo pool. The purchase of ostriches is mentioned for the first time in the minutes of the Board in 1846. Earlier, in 1844, the Board mentions the necessity of an enclosure for bears, which suggest that at that time an animal will be acquired. The minutes of May 1846 mention the existence of a new exhibit for bears and the minutes of September 1846 state that a brown bear has died. Until a separate enclosure for these animals was built in 1850 the bears were probably kept in the natural history museum. The first bear enclosure was located near the pond where the cormorants are now kept and adjacent to the elephant enclosure which was extended a few years ago. The construction of the bear enclosure was preceded by extensive consultations regarding its location, size and cost. A small deer stable is also depicted. Another special feature is the picture of a giraffe. A male giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*) was housed in May 1850 for the first time. Already in 1848 a proposal was made to exchange one of the three chimpanzees of the zoo for a giraffe from London Zoo. Whether the animals were eventually exchanged is not clear. The small stable on the card was most likely meant for another species as it could not possible accommodate a giraffe. How the giraffe was housed is not clear on this porcelain card. A view of Antwerp and a passing train illustrate the relationship of the zoo with the city and the nearby railway.

**1852:** Besides the decoration of the card featuring some birds, a giraffe and the bear pit are more prominently displayed. Although the bear enclosure is larger, only the bear pit with a climbing tree is depicted again. From three cave-like dens, overgrown with ivy, which also could be viewed by visitors via the exterior of the building, the animals had access to the pit. Between the giraffe and the bear pit a lama is shown. This species was first kept in 1846. Less prominent but again present on the porcelain card is a view of the city of Antwerp. Compared with the card of 1851 the message for the members is shorter.

**1853:** The comprehensive wishes are replaced by a shorter message that - subject to some minor changes – will be used over the next years: “*Le concierge, Le commissionnaire et les domestiques du Jardin de la Société Royale de Zoologie d'Anvers, à Messieurs les membres*

*à l'occasion de la nouvelle année social*". Despite the small picture, the size of the giraffe house is striking. In July 1853 the Board decided to buy a female giraffe, to form a pair with the male already present. In 1852 visitors can see the first elephant in the Zoo and the 1853 card depicts this animal, an Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), immediately. The card does not show us how the elephant was kept. The zoo archives include an architect's draft for giraffe and elephant enclosures, separated by an exotic building. This design of 1852 was however not realized. The young elephant named "Jacqueline" came from Akyab (now Sittwe, in Burma) and will stay in de zoo for 28 years. Its skeleton would later be displayed in the natural history museum and is now one of the attractions in the Egyptian temple. To renew the commitment of the Zoo with the city the Antwerp coat of arms is also featured on the card.

**1854:** The card for the members is illustrated with a special view of the garden: the giraffe standing by its enclosure, exhibits for the bears and the bear-pit and in the background the natural history museum in neoclassic style. Engineer A. Demarbaix and architect A. Lambeau designed this first building. It was opened 10 years earlier, in 1844. Building a museum was an explicit agreement with Jacques Kets, the first director of the Antwerp Zoo, who wanted to show his collection of stuffed animals and other natural history curiosities. It housed not only the extensive collection of the director but also a number of live animals. On the lower floor predators and reptiles were kept. The archives hold a design from 1854 of a large cage that would be built in front of the museum. The goal was to alternate between lions and tigers and to move them from their enclosure in the building to this special enclosure outside. This cage was however never realized. According to this design lions, tigers and also hyenas (spotted hyena *Crocuta crocuta*) were kept in the museum at that time. According to A. Gijzen (1960) the first spotted hyena (and also striped hyena) in Antwerp was kept in 1852. However, the minutes of the Board, dated 21 October 1847, already mentioned that the zoo bought a young hyena. A species is not mentioned. The minutes also contain a notice about tigers. Director Kets states that he hired someone to do surveillance at the tiger cage. A reason for this was not given. In front of the natural history museum visitors observe the elephant. As shown on the card a pond was present between the giraffes and the bear enclosure. We see swans, ducks, pelicans and a few herons. Surprisingly among the birds a crocodile is depicted.

**1855:** For the first time a date is mentioned on the porcelain card. The first natural history museum is again depicted, however now complete, and also the bear enclosures and bear pit are still among the main attractions of the Zoo. The card is also illustrated with an aviary for flamingos. This aviary was to be demolished after a few years to make space for the carnivore house. The "monkey palace", situated on the eastern side of the museum, is also shown and was one of the most popular attractions for visitors. This monkey house dated from 1845 and was, like the museum, designed by A. Demarbaix and A. Lambeau. Both buildings share the same style. Typical of monkey buildings of this period is the semi-circular terrace with latticed bars. In winter, all animals could be seen inside, in crowded cages. Two years later, the first orang-utan and chimpanzee were housed. In February 1847 news about a Sumatran orang-utan on board of a ship in the port of Rotterdam reaches Antwerp. Assistant director Vekemans is immediately instructed to go and look at the animal and to decide whether it is suitable to buy. He bought the orang-utan for 800, - francs (which today would represent about 4600 euros) and the Antwerp Zoo will receive its first orang-utan on February 22. A

few months later, in May 1847, a chimpanzee is purchased from a ship captain for 1000 francs (today about 5700 euros). From the minutes of the Board of September 1847 we learn that the animal is housed in the Swiss Chalet in a room opposite the kitchen of director Kets. The chimp died early in December 1847 from bronchitis. Soon after the stocking of the monkey house it is decided to build an aviary for birds of prey and other birds at the back of the building. This aviary is mentioned on the 1861 zoo map. In 1856 a large aviary for birds of prey was built at a different location, so it is not known which species were housed in the aviary behind the monkey house. In 1881 this building was destroyed by fire and the entire collection, 79 animals including an orang-utan, was lost. In 1883, at the same location a new and larger monkey house replaced the previous one.

**1856:** Approximately 15 years after its opening, the Antwerp Zoo is developing very rapidly and that is clearly noticeable by the number of newly completed exhibits on this porcelain card. Near the site of a former farmhouse enclosures for giraffe and elephant were constructed. A high stable was built for the giraffe. As shown on the 1854 card this building was located very close to the bear enclosures. The roof of the farmhouse burned down in 1853 and had to be renewed. Although both species shortly thereafter will move to a new and permanent location until then they found shelter in the farm. According to a plan of 1861 lions were to be housed here afterwards. The director of the zoo lived in the zoo. For him in 1846 an impressive executive residence (architect A. Lambeau) was built which was described as a "Swiss chalet". On the card of 1856 we find an image of this impressive wooden building. After some time, part of the house was used to serve coffee and cakes to the increasing number of visitors. The oldest exhibit still surviving until today is the former aviaries for birds of prey which were also designed by Charles Servais in 1856. In 1957, the northern section of these aviaries was somewhat reduced in size. However, since a few years, birds are no longer kept here. On the card the entire aviary is shown. Again, a small exhibit with two (presumably) deer is depicted. It is a different enclosure than the one we find on the card of 1851. Based on the image on the card two smaller constructions could however not be identified.

**1857:** On this card we find top left a picture of what was presumably the former zoo entrance. In 1855 the zoo acquired the skeleton of a whale that stranded in 1851 on the Dutch Wadden Island of Vlieland. Remarkably, this whale skeleton will be one of the first ever been exhibited to the public. On this porcelain card we find a drawing of the skeleton in 1856 under a zinc roof. The first location where this skeleton was positioned was near the present Cape buffalo enclosure near the impressive cattle house. The 22 m long skeleton will be relocated within the zoo several times in the course of history. However, during the past ten years it is no longer visible to the visitors of the zoo. It now hangs as a superb decoration in the Darwin Hall, one of the rooms in the society-owned and operated concert and conference centre. Clearly featured is the Egyptian Temple from 1856 where elephants, giraffes and other species are housed. Today, the Egyptian Temple is the oldest remaining building in the zoo. The building was designed by Charles Servais and inaugurated by King Leopold I. Inside the temple the skeleton of Jacqueline - the first Asian elephant in the zoo, who lived from 1852 to 1880 – was and still is exhibited. Furthermore, there are also two smaller pictures of enclosures, however it was not possible to identify the species these housed, but possibly it is a part of the exhibit for small carnivores and a small wolf pen. The first wolf was exhibited in 1846. The Antwerp City coat of arms is again featured.

**1858:** Surrounded by various animals such as a lion, a tiger, a bear, a baboon, some birds (including pelicans, raptors and a crown crane) and finally a crocodile two buildings are shown. At the top the second – long since gone – bar-restaurant designed by Servais. Already in 1844 the first bar was built to a design by architect Lambeau. In 1851 this ‘cabin Javanais’ was replaced by a Moorish cafe. Because of the many zoo visitors it was soon too small and had to be enlarged after five years. In 1856 the royal family paid it a visit. One year after the card that featured the outside of the Egyptian Temple we now get a glimpse of the inside. Since this striking building came into use in 1856, elephants and giraffes have always been housed here. The picture shows that in the early years rhinos, camels or dromedaries and zebras were also kept here. From 1919 till well after World War II the okapis would also be housed here. Originally the middle of the building held a small pond. It disappeared in 1893 and the vacant space was used for some stone benches and the skeleton of the Asian elephant ‘Jacqueline’.

**1859:** Unlike the previous cards which show the gardens and buildings, this greeting card is sober. This time no pictures of buildings, but only a few species. Several species are featured: pelican, flamingo, duck, ibis, falcon, baboon, lion and tiger and - presumably - a lizard.

**1860:** On the 1860 card again a picture of the Egyptian temple is featured, certainly at that time the most impressive building in the booming zoo. At its inauguration in 1856 the building was completely white. Only in 1860 it was decided to make murals. The painting of the front porch with hieroglyphics was completed by the end of 1861. The decoration with hieroglyphic writing were provided with the help of Dr. Delgeur. They tell the story of the temple and how it was donated to the city of Antwerp. The card also shows several animals like snake, vulture, pig, elephant and giraffe.

**1861:** Animals are again the theme of this card. So we can spot zebras, ibex, wildebeest and two eland. In the background we see a small building, probably the stables of these animals. A red deer is also shown in all its magnificence. Together with a zebra, this species was kept for the first time in 1861. The Antwerp Zoo is also known for its lay out of the park and the large collection of plants, shrubs and trees, including some rare species. The 1861 card shows a Giant agave (*Agave americana*). Antwerp Zoo had a specimen of this plant which occurs in Central America. In our climate it is necessary to keep this plant from frost during winter so that he can flourish during the summer months. Jacques Kets probably received this rare plant from Linden, later director of the Brussels zoo, after a journey (1841-1845) from Latin America of which he brought plants belonging to over 2400 species. In 1860 this agave bloomed. The one-time growth of this agave is characterized by a fast-growing stalk. On May 31 the plant in the zoo had a length of 1.06 meters, two months later 5.62 m, and in November it had reached full bloom with a height of 7.15 meters and a bunch of flowers with 32 branches and 6,148 flowers. The plant was transferred to the Egyptian temple where visitors could admire the unique event from a small stand.

**1862:** In 1861, an oriental style antelope house, designed by Charles Servais, got into use. A picture of this building is shown on the card of 1862. At the end of World War II, in 1944, the building would be completely destroyed. After the war it was not rebuilt. Because of limited financial resources it was not possible to restore immediately all the damage after the war or to take down the destroyed buildings. The last remnants of the antelope building will only disappear in the early 1950s. As well as the antelope house a number of animals

are depicted: a bird of prey, a small elephant, a chimpanzee on the back of a camel and a few birds on a pond.

**1863:** While still beautifully decorated and finished the porcelain cards provide for several years less and less information about the development of the zoo. On this card a simple garden view is complemented by a number of images of birds including mainly parrots, pheasants, partridges and a heron. A squirrel and - presumably - a flying squirrel are also featured. To emphasize the bond with the city of Antwerp at the top of the card a bird of prey is depicted with in its talons the port city's coat of arms.

**1864:** On this card only one species is depicted, a pair of lions with two cubs. Lions were kept since 1847 and were regularly bred. In the margin we find, very unobtrusive, the images of the Egyptian Temple - now with decoration of the portal - and the natural history museum. In the early years, lions were housed on various locations within the zoo. On the ground floor of the natural history museum several predators, including lions, were kept. But also in the middle of the Zoo there was another enclosure for these felids.

**1865:** It remains unclear why the card is so different from all previous and all next ones. The fact is that the print was on normal paper, limited to the always present wishes and distributed with a simple decoration. Was it because of lacking financial resources, did they forget about the printing or was there another reason, the fact is that that this print is very simple. A possible explanation lies in the death of Jacques Kets on February 1, 1865 so perhaps it was decided to keep it sober.

**1866:** In 1866, the enclosure of the mouflon is well illustrated on this map. It could not be traced when this enclosure was built, but around the turn of the century a more impressive exhibit for this species will be built on approximately the same location. The first mouflon were kept at Antwerp Zoo in 1852.

**1867:** With this card for the first time not animals or their housing are featured. This card features the statue which was donated by Jacques Kets, the first director. The title of this statue is 'Indian hunter returning from the hunt'. The image suggests an Indian carrying a deer carcass. With his right hand he holds the animal by its legs. The sculpture is the work of Joseph Geefs, an artist of whom Antwerp Zoo has several works. Jacques Kets died on February 1, 1865 at the age of 79 and is succeeded by Jacques Vekemans. The impressive statue can still be admired at the zoo.

**1868:** With the 25th anniversary of the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp, a striking card is published. The image of the Egyptian Temple with in the foreground a few animals is a more traditional concept. Remarkably however, the monkeys are depicted in a playful, almost human way while putting up the date '1868' on the card. Though the front porch of the Egyptian temple was already decorated this is not visible on this card.

**1869:** After the death of Jacques Kets in 1865, Jacques Vekemans is appointed as second director of the Antwerp Zoo. Vekemans clearly did not want to fall short behind his predecessor and in 1869 he also donated a sculpture to the Society. The statue - again by Geefs - depicts an 'Indian rider attacked by two jaguars'. Two jaguars have lodged their teeth into the neck of a horse while one of them also grips the Indian in the leg. Again, this dramatic statue is still on view in the Antwerp Zoo.

**1870:** Lady Amherst's pheasant. Vekemans - who at the start of the Antwerp Zoo was appointed as deputy director and in 1865 succeeded his cousin - could boast of natural talents.

Under his leadership the animal collection of the young zoo grew considerably. He set up several breeding programs for exotic animals in the belief that they could adapt themselves to our climate. Vekemans was the first to acclimatize the Lady Amherst's pheasant. It is therefore not surprising that the Zoo puts this beautiful pheasant species on a picture offered to the members of the Society. Soon after the start of the zoo it had a varied collection of peacocks and pheasants. A pheasantry was first operated near the site of the current tiger exhibit. To make way for the big cat house, these aviaries were demolished and the birds moved to a new pheasantry on the other side of the zoo.

**1871:** No picture or any other information could be found in the archives of the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp.

**1872-1873:** One of the finest lithographs was published in 1872. The extraordinary birth of a giraffe was the reason to display the parents together with their new born and a zookeeper. The animal was born on June 10, 1871 and was 2.55 m at birth. It was the first time that these animals were bred in Antwerp, only preceded by the Schönbrunn Zoo Vienna (1858) and London Zoo (1864). Unlike the monochrome porcelain cards, this lithography is in color.

**1873-1874:** Subject of this lithography is a pair of argus pheasants, the female in the water, the male on a branch. It is unknown if the card features the argus pheasant as a new species to the collection. Pheasants previously were merely decorative features. On the 1876 map they have disappeared and new aviaries are located where they are still today, north of the cattle house. Until recently, these housed peafowl, including Congo peafowl.

**1874-1875:** Giant anteater. In her survey, "Liste des mammifères", Agatha Gijzen lists this species as first kept in Antwerp in 1893. If this is correct it is strange that this remarkable animal is already pictured in 1874 on a card for the members of the Society. Possibly it is a typing error and the species was already kept in 1873. No further information was found in the archives. Surprisingly the animal is shown in a natural habitat and not in an enclosure in the zoo.

**1875-1876:** On 18 October 1874 three tiger cubs were born at Antwerp Zoo. As the picture shows these were reared by a dog. The image is by the artist Charles Verlat who was very famous in Belgium. He often painted in the Zoo where he found his muse. The Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp owns an extensive collection of the artist's drawings and paintings. Soon after the start of the Zoo tigers were kept for the first time in 1846. Throughout its history, the Zoo housed various subspecies of tigers. In the early years there were Siberian tigers. 50 years later, the zoo claimed to have "*Felis tigris mongolica*", a taxon now included in the Amur (or Siberian) tiger *P. t. altaica*. In 1904 the zoo even kept Javan tiger (*P.t. virgata*), a subspecies now completely exterminated.

**1876-1877:** This map, distributed to members differs from the porcelain cards and lithographs which had been distributed up to then. This map, the first official map that was published, is a very interesting document. It not only shows which animals were housed on what locations but it also announces some projects which were in the pipeline.

The following projects are listed:

- sea lions, listed as a project that will be completed the same year
- hippos

- pheasantry
- carnivore house
- building for large ruminants

The oldest known map dates from 1861. This map was published in: E. Gens (1861), *Promenade au jardin zoologique d'Anvers*. When both maps are examined and compared it is interesting to notice the evolution that the Antwerp Zoo went through in that short period of about 15 years.

**1877-1878:** In 1876 an enclosure with a pool - designed by architect Charles Servais - was built for the sea lions. The exhibit consisted of a large masonry tank, a cave and a ramp that led to a platform from where a zookeeper could feed the animals. What species is shown on the picture is unclear. According to the inventory of Agatha Gijzen (1960) the Antwerp Zoo received in 1879 the first Patagonian sea lions and California sea lions followed until 1921. An article by Rudy Reinhard in 'Bongo' dealing with the seal species in Berlin Zoo brings an answer. The author mentions that Berlin zoo had obtained a sea lion from Antwerp in 1876. So we can assume Antwerp Zoo already had this species years before the date that was mentioned by A. Gijzen. With the sea lions there is what looks like a seal sharing the exhibit. Seals were kept in Antwerp Zoo since 1847. However, they are not mentioned on the 1861 map and it is not known where they were housed. This first seal exhibit was partly demolished in 1954. The rockwork disappeared but the brick basin was maintained. The new design was of a more sleek design. It now had a slope on both sides along which the animals could get on the platform. Under this platform an indoor pen was located. In 2000 the sea lions moved into the former dolphinarium. The brick basin, the only remnant of the sea lions enclosure that was not demolished, still exists but it disappeared under a thick layer of soil and planting and was transformed into a new exhibit for ring-tailed lemurs and red ruffed lemurs.

**1878-1879:** A large group of mouflon was housed in a romantic landscape with ruins and a dilapidated aquaduct. This exhibit was built in 1878 by architect Charles Servais. It was demolished over 30 years later, in 1908, when the mixed enclosure for ungulates - the Panorama Park - was constructed. After a renovation of almost two years this enclosure was recently transformed into Lions of the Kalahari, an exhibit for lions, meerkat and yellow mongoose. In 2011 the lions moved from their small and unattractive enclosure to this new and ten times larger exhibit. In recent years mouflons are no longer kept in Antwerp Zoo.

**1879-1880:** Close to the enclosure of the mouflons a yak exhibit was built at the same time. This enclosure also disappeared when construction of the panorama park for ungulates started in 1908. In the extensive art collection of the RZSA we find a painting of the Yaks' park in the Antwerp Zoo, about 1880, by the painter Louis Derickx.

**1880-1881:** The two images gives a nice view of the former carnivore house, in use since 1876. Charles Servais again designed this building along the lines of a similar building in the Berlin Zoo. Visitors could see the carnivores (mainly big cats) both in indoor and outdoor exhibits. From 1885 until the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century visitors could observe snakes and crocodiles in this building also. The reptile house was not open until 1911. The carnivore building was heavily damaged by the impact of a V-bomb, but after World War II it was restored. However the building disappeared in 1967 when the Jubilee Complex - on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the Antwerp Zoo - was built here. Besides a Nocturama

(nocturnal exhibit) and Dolphinarium the collection of felids and bears was housed in this jubilee building, which also held a part (and currently all) of the raptor collection. The only structures remaining from this house are the stone lions, designed by sculptor Alphonse Van Beurden, together with the pillars. When the building was demolished in 1967, the stone lions were carefully removed and later replaced on two locations in the garden. In 1993 the statues were replaced again and they moved to the main gate to decorate the new visitors entrance which was designed on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Zoo. The columns' already moved to Planckendael Wild Animal Park earlier and served for a long time as ornamental feature. Recently they were removed to make way for the major new elephant enclosure which will open in 2012.

**1881-1882:** Information about this publication or a picture were not found in the archives of the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp.

**1882-1883:** Information about this publication or a picture were not found in the archives of the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp.

**1883-1884:** This litho shows two images (an inside and an outside view) of the new monkey house that was put into use in 1883. Two years earlier, the night of 11 to 12 January 1881, the former and first monkey building was destroyed by fire. The entire primate collection died in the inferno. Remarkably, cows were also kept in this new and larger building. Tuberculosis was a serious health hazard and by keeping ruminants in the same building it was hoped to prevent monkeys from getting infected with TB. Normally this building was scheduled to undergo substantial changes in 1910 but due to lack of funds and the First World War this project was not started. Over the years, a number of adjustments were made. Thus the cow stables disappeared and new monkey cages were built. In the winter of 1950-1951, a number of major repairs were carried out in house. This work had been essential to improve the animal housing although the management hoped to build a new and much larger monkey house as soon as possible. Eventually the building remained in use until 1975. On March 21, 1978 the current monkey house opened. Near the entrance of the monkey house the visitors find a cast iron column from the former building. The oval room then rested on twelve similar columns with a small fountain in the middle.

**1884-1885:** Garden view with young visitors. In the previous editions animals, garden views, enclosures or buildings were highlighted. Against the background of the "Panorama" now junior zoo visitors are the main subject of this image. The picture illustrates a variety of animal rides available to children visiting the zoo, for example in a cart pulled by a few goats and on the backs of ponies, a camel and even an elephant. The rides started in 1879. This form of "entertainment" continued for several decades but was eventually abandoned. The children's rides with camels and an elephant were ended around 1950 because of safety concerns after an incident with an elephant that had become uncontrollable for a short while (happily without casualties). The pony rides disappeared only in the 1980's. In fact, a number of present day senior zoo keepers once started their career as a student working on the pony and donkey rides. In the background the "Panorama of the Battle of Wörth" is depicted. This was a private attraction which was demolished in the winter 1905-1906. Notice the two small buildings on either side of the building. These small buildings were part of an aviary. The aviary itself was demolish to build the Panorama but the small buildings remained. The facades of them can still be seen today.

**1885-1886:** Panorama of Wörth. At the place where in 1876 a waterfowl aviary was designed by Servais in 1881 the ‘Panorama of the battle of Wörth’ was built. Already the 4th of May 1880 the RZSA signed an agreement with the “Société Anonyme du Panorama Anversois” for the construction and management of a panorama in the zoo. This association would acquire the land behind the zoo (Ploegstraat) from the Leclef family. After a period of 25 years, this land together with the still to create panorama rotunda would become the property of the RZSA. Servais was again the architect and he designed a building in Indian-Moorish style. It was a hex decagon about 38 m wide and 29 m high. The picture shows the main entrance along the side of the Ploegstraat (back of the zoo). Members of the RZSA and zoo visitors could however use another entrance on the garden side (see image 1884-1885). Alfred Cluysenaar painted the Panorama of the Battle of Wörth. The impressive painting suggested a crucial and particularly bloody episode in the Franco-Prussian war, fought on August 6, 1870. In 1905 the concession is stopped. Although there was interest to continue the operation the building was demolished after 25 years of operation because the zoo management had other plans with that part of the park. The RZSA bought the large painting and its accessories for 10.000 francs to have it auctioned afterwards. Remarkably on this picture the message which is usually present has been exceptionally omitted.

**1886-1887:** Exhibits for reindeer and elk. On the card of 1876 we notice a reindeer enclosure behind the Egyptian Temple. This is demolished some years later and Charles Servais in 1886 designed on the same place a brick building for elk. The facade is mostly covered with wooden beams and pseudo-lattice. The successor of Servais, Thielens, will expand the construction along the left side in 1900. During World War II the building was damaged and after the war considerable repairs were necessary. Later, among other species, lamas are housed here. On the picture the enclosure to the left contains reindeer and the one to the right side elk. Reindeer have been kept since 1847 and elk since 1861. At present, the outer enclosures disappeared and the stables are no longer used for housing animals. It is one of the oldest buildings in the zoo that is still standing.

**1887-1888:** Stable for deer. The exhibit looks like the small deer enclosure on the porcelain card of 1856. Presumably it stood at the location where later the Moorish Temple was built. The maps of the zoo of 1861 and 1876 show that deer were kept on different locations in the zoo. However, exactly where this exhibit was located has still to be determined.

**1888-1889:** Hippo house. Inside view on the pool and stable with the hippos. The first plans for constructing a building for hippo dated from 1876 but construction had to wait another 10 years. The 1885 World Fair brought a lot more income for Antwerp Zoo and it was thus possible to start a hippo house. The building, with three pools, was constructed in neobabylonian style. It was partially destroyed by a bomb during World War II. A few years later, in 1952, the building was rebuilt by architect Grosemans. It was partially covered in artificial rockwork. Hippos could be seen for the first time in 1878 and were then housed in the Egyptian Temple. In 1881 a young pair of hippos was bought. With the arrival of these animals a new pavilion became even more urgent. The picture shows both adult animals and a calf. No doubt this is perhaps one of the first or the first hippos born in Antwerp Zoo. In 1884 for the first time pygmy hippos were kept.

**1889-1890:** Jacques Vekemans, director and co-founder of the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp. This lithograph is undoubtedly a tribute to Vekemans who until his death on February 24, 1888, was the second director of Antwerp Zoo. Nephew of the first director Jacques Kets, Vekemans was his deputy from the start of the zoo. At his death he succeeded his uncle as director. Jacques Vekemans was recognized for his great work zeal. Under his leadership the animal collection grew considerably. He was also the initiator and driving force behind the annual auctions of animals which were organized in the zoo. Because of this event Antwerp Zoo became an annual meeting place for directors of major European zoos. One anecdote we may not forget to mention. When the zoo in Brussels stood on the verge of bankruptcy the Antwerp Zoo bought two of their elephants. Vekemans went to Brussels to collect them personally and he came with the two animals on foot back to Antwerp! On 24 April 1888, Vekemans was succeeded by François L'Hoest, the first of a family dynasty of three generations of Antwerp Zoo directors, and the grandfather of Dr. Michel L'Hoëst jr, the first and last zoologist ever to have been in the post of general director (in charge until WW II).

**1890-1891:** Garden view overlooking the Egyptian Temple. The decoration of the building which was missing on some previous images is now present. In an enclosure in front of the temple lamas were housed. The animals were kept in simple enclosures which now house deer. Around this period new enclosures for lamas and alpacas were constructed behind the Egyptian temple. The row of deer enclosures date from 1872 and 1900. The design was modified several times after World War II and partly renovated.

**1891-1892:** The old bear enclosures (with bear pit); built in 1849 - and of which several times an image is present on the first porcelain cards - were demolished in 1890. In 1891 a picture of this exhibit looks back on the first years of its existence. According to Gijzen (1960) at least four bear species were kept. Even before the construction of the bear exhibits Antwerp Zoo housed - in 1846 for the first time – American blackbear (*Ursus americanus*) and (Eurasian?) brown bear (*Ursus arctos*). Sun bear, Polar bear and Asiatic black bear were to join the collection in 1848, 1851 and 1854 respectively. In 1898, *Ursus japonicus* was added to the species (now the endangered Japanese subspecies of the Eurasian brown bear). Later when the new bear enclosures were built other species followed. Exactly where bears were kept before the bear enclosures were completed in 1849 is not completely clear. Considering that a few animals were housed in the first museum, the first bears may also have been kept here.

**1892-1893:** Immediately after the demolition of the old enclosures the construction of new bear exhibits started. More solid and larger exhibits inspired by Berlin Zoo were built on the same location. It is the last project by Charles Servais who dies in 1892 to be succeeded by Emile Thielens. A bear pit is not reconstructed. The bear cages continue to stay in operation on this location for about 75 years and, after standing empty for several years, were demolished in 1972. Two species of bears moved to the carnivore exhibits in the Jubilee Complex. One of the world's largest single zoo buildings, the Jubilee Complex was built on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Antwerp Zoo in 1968. The image shows among other polar bears. Striking feature of the design is that the cages are designed as "fairground tents" and that few straight edges or lines are present. The three exhibits all have a pool in the middle.



Fig. 47. 1899-1900.



Fig. 48. 1900-1901.

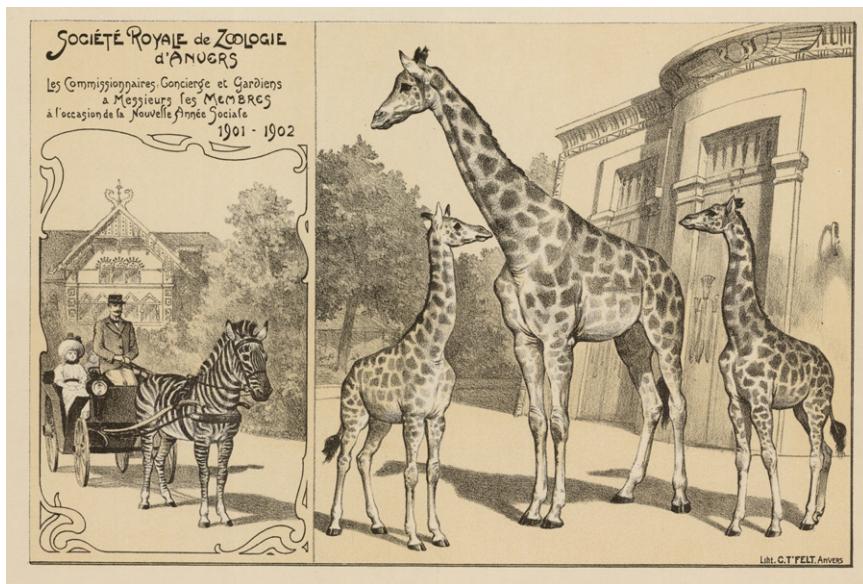


Fig. 49. 1901-1902.



Fig. 50. 1902-1903.

placed. In the lower and biggest park lama's, donkeys, ponies and camels were housed. After a two year renovation the zoo's lions have now taken up residence in this fabulous enclosure.

**1894-1895:** View of a path. On the lithograph children riding an elephant and two ponies, each accompanied by a zookeeper. Some beautifully dressed ladies observe the scene. Because animals and animal enclosures are missing on this picture it is not possible to determine which part of the zoo is shown. Perhaps it is the path behind the deer enclosures. The first maps of the zoo shows that large areas have not been used to house animals. In these parts still a lot of shrubs and trees were present. When the zoo had more or less its present size and more and more animal enclosures were constructed the zoo site was landscaped to include more open spaces and beautiful views.

**1895-1896:** View of the building with banquet halls, natural history museum and winter garden. This impressive building was realized in the period 1895-1897. To have the possibility to build this new building, the old museum had to be demolished in 1893. The building on the picture still exists but some differences are noticeable in the present situation. The two most notable changes are the access to the winter garden which in this picture is at the side of the garden. At present there is a connection from the entrance hall that led to the former museum and a second entrance is located in the central hall from which the monkey house can also be visited. The second difference is that visitors could walk on top of the covered terrace and at the same height along part of the winter garden. From the winter garden two access doors led to these walkways.

**1896-1897:** Whereas previous card designs were based on a drawing, an engraving, lithography,... now for the first time photography is used. The picture shows the stunning interior of the bird house. This building for exotic birds, designed by Emile Thielens, was built in 1893. The building consisted at that time of a monumental hall, a high nave and two lower aisles. The vestibule as well as the large hall were richly decorated with friezes and stained-glass windows. Around the building a new visitor path was laid out. This allowed visitors a close-up view of the aviaries with exotic birds. In World War II the bird house was severely damaged. In 1950 it was almost completely renovated and also expanded. Only the fin-de-siècle façade still shows the original entrance of the building.

**1897-1898:** In 1896, the children of Jan Van Bellingen, a former alderman of the city of Antwerp, donated the statue "Prometheus chained to a rock attacked by an eagle" by the artist Jef Lambeaux to the Antwerp Zoo, in remembrance of their father. The sculpture represents the eagle which steals Prometheus' liver. The scene refers to Greek mythology. This sculpture is still part of the artistic heritage of the zoo and is situated in a plant bed at one of the corners of the bird house. Without doubt, tourists who visit Antwerp know the most famous work of this artist: the "Brabo" monument in front of the City Hall on the Grote Markt. In the background we see vaguely the former bandstand.

**1898-1899:** After a construction period lasting a few years, in 1897 the new society building was inaugurated by King Leopold II. This building includes among other things a large music hall, a restaurant, a monumental marble staircase to the natural history museum, the imposing marble hall and the winter garden. In the beginning the great music hall could only be reached via the zoo. A few years later an official entrance from the Astridplein was realized. This entrance at the Astridplein still exists but is now used as a service entrance. The fin-de-siècle music hall was badly damaged during World War II and also was no longer

up to modern standards of the time. The RZSA board decided to build a new complex of concert and conference halls. The present concert hall – Queen Elisabeth Hall - was officially inaugurated in 1960 but was already in use some time earlier. The architecture of the winter garden is partly of stone and with striking open iron and glass structures, and crowned by a glass dome. Inside on all sides a wrought iron gallery is constructed with a decorative handrail. The music hall as well as the other rooms were equipped with hundreds of square meters of stained glass with art nouveau motifs. The impact of a V-bomb in 1945 destroyed almost all the windows, the glass dome and the interior of the conservatory. In 1947 the glass dome was restored.

**1899-1900:** Main theme in this image is an Indian rhinoceros. This first specimen of this species was kept from 1861 till its death in 1898 (a remarkable captive record at that time). In 1868, a keeper was killed by this Indian rhino (the only lethal accident with a rhino in the history of European zoos?). In 1898 a new dairy farm was built. An image of this building, as we still know it, is also present on this greeting card. The decision of the board of the Society to build a separate dairy farm was taken because the members expressed an interest in buying fresh milk. At the current location of the new lion exhibit (formerly Panorama park), around 1860 the farm of the Zoo was situated. Reportedly cows grazed at the pastures of the neighbouring Ploegstraat. They produced milk for the mammals of the zoo. At the suggestion of Director Vekemans in 1880 a first dairy pavilion was constructed, where members of the zoological society could purchase milk at a reduced rate. The Antwerp Zoo had cows, part of which were kept in the new dairy farm and the rest were housed in a second cow stable at the backside of the zoo.

**1900-1901:** This card also makes us acquainted with the new dairy farm which was built in 1898 together with accommodation for kangaroos. A view on visitors on the terrace enjoying a glass of milk, an inside view of the bar room and a view of the stable which was open to visitors. The dairy farm was located next to the primate house because it was felt that the presence of ruminants could prevent tuberculosis in primates. Part of the cows of the Zoo were housed here and produced a well-known quality milk. From a technical and hygienic point of view, this building was considered a model farm. Not only in the rooms and on the terrace of the dairy farm fresh milk was served but it was also delivered at home in special, hygienic porcelain milk churns. Deliveries were by horse and cart. Milk delivered at home was 10 cents more expensive than in the zoo. The healthy full cream milk was highly appreciated and many children of the Antwerp middle class were brought up on it. The milk of the Zoo was however much more expensive than that which was commercially available. From 1934, the milk distribution was abandoned. At present this building holds partly an education centre with classrooms and a planetarium and partly office space.

**1901-1902:** The Antwerp Zoo is known for its success in breeding giraffe. Already in 1871 the zoo was one of the first zoos in the world to breed this species. The zoo gladly shows their breeding results in this picture of two youngsters and one adult. An earlier card (1884-1885) already acquainted us with entertainment possibilities for the youngest visitors. That is now again the case. Of particular notice is a ride in a card pulled by a zebra.

**1902-1903:** Between 1899 and 1903 the building with the distinctive wide art nouveau façade at the Astridplein was realized. The last part, the monumental entrance to the zoo is also completed in 1903. With the completion of the building with offices and restaurant,

Antwerp Zoo now has an impressive entrance on the Astridplein. Except for a few small details this building remains as originally built. The facade is even more extensive than is shown on this image and runs through to the entrance of the former music hall. The house number 19, the entrance to the former music hall along the Astridplein is now a service entrance for the complete halls complex. A door and several shops that were originally present have disappeared in the course of the years. The whole building was designed by architect Emile Thielens and realized in collaboration with architect Emiel van Averbeke. A recognizable view is the sculpture “Camel driver” by sculptor Josué Dupon on top at the corner of the administration building. In 1900 this statue was hoisted up at a height of 21 m.

**1903-1904:** This picture shows us again various aspects of the zoo. Although Antwerp Zoo will inaugurate a reptile house in 1911, these animals were already kept much earlier. Among other places a few species were kept in the former natural history museum. When this building was demolished, the reptiles moved to the carnivore house, where already some large terrariums were present. In 1903 a new series of smaller terrariums was constructed in the central part of the carnivore house. The picture gives us an inside view. For the second time a giant anteater is depicted. As already mentioned earlier (image 1874-1875) there is doubt as to when this species was kept for the first time in Antwerp Zoo. In 2009, the Antwerp Zoo had its first elephant birth. ‘Kai Mook’ quickly became a media star and the calf caused a striking increase in visitor attendance. However, young elephants had already been kept earlier at Antwerp Zoo. These were obtained through animal trade and temporarily housed here before being moving on to another destination. A practice which has for many years been abandoned, but which at that time was quite common. The image shows a young African elephant and a zookeeper near the Egyptian Temple. The hieroglyphs on the façade are also clearly visible.

**1904-1905:** ‘Extrait du n° 489 de la “Revue Universelle Internationale Illustrée” du 20 janvier’. In contrast to the previous editions, in 1904 a small brochure is offered to members of the Society. A remarkable offer, aimed at promoting Antwerp. The brochure does not contain a map. The contents describes the history of the zoo, the presence of various buildings, the development of the park and the animals which are kept.

The ten following years the design will look different again. With the 1896-1897 image of the bird house for the first – and so far only – time a photo was depicted. With the last series of publications which were offered to the members of the RZSA only photographs are used. It is always a small picture booklet (a card folded in three) in which the members can find photos of new buildings or remarkable animals in the Zoo.

**1905-1906:** This picture card is notable for different reasons. Not only a new lay-out is used but also because a stuffed animal is shown, and because the card is not dated. For quite some time, this lack of a date made it unclear which okapi was depicted. In the zoo archives 1905-1906 was noted as the publication date of this card but because the first living okapi in Antwerp was not welcomed until 1919 it could not be the animal on this picture. The illustrated okapi could have been the first okapi in the zoo, but from another archive picture we know that this was a young animal, which died after 50 days. An adult animal only arrived some years later. As we know that the RZSA no longer distributed these cards to members after 1914, it could not be an okapi that was kept later than this date. A stuffed okapi, part of the collection of the natural history museum which closed in

2000, had always been considered the first or second okapi in the zoo's collection. A recent contact with the Royal Museum for Central-Africa (Tervuren) explains things. The stuffed okapi was received from them on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1903 - a male animal from the Ibina forest, Ituri, that was killed on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1902. Together with this animal the Tervuren museum received on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1903 a number of animal specimens, including four other okapis. Very quickly this animal was mounted and moved to the natural history museum of Antwerp Zoo. As we know now the noted date 1905-1906 is correct and it is indeed the first okapi at Antwerp Zoo, however it was a dead animal.

On the inside of the photo card we find pictures of the Egyptian Temple, the new bear enclosures, the natural history museum and winter garden and a view on the garden with pelicans and the hippo house.

**1906-1907:** The cover picture shows again the distinctive main entrance of the Zoo. This entrance was completed in 1903 and welcomes zoo visitors for over 100 years now. This view – well known to many visitors - is not only defined by the main building with the statue of sculptor Josué Dupon on top but also because of the two rectangular pavilions which were used for many years as ticket booths. Although ticket sale and control now happens beyond these two small buildings they still define the street view on the Astridplein. On both pavilions a mosaic by the artist Henri Verbeucken is featured, on the left side a tiger fighting with a snake and on the right side a roaring lion. On top of each small building again a sculpture of Josué Dupon can be found, on the left side "Two pelicans on the bow of a wrecked ship" and on the right "Two vultures on an elephants head".

Inside the photo card we find pictures of two young hippos, a picture of the statue "Taken by surprise in the bath" by the sculptor Alfons Van Beurden, an African lion and a garden view of the large lake with in the background the hippo house.

**1907-1908:** Originally, a large pond was located in front of the dairy farm. This pond was removed in 1937 and replaced by the so-called "Flemish Garden", a tranquil resting place for many visitors. The sunken garden is dissected in four parts by pathways and in the middle a well is situated. The building is among other things now used as an education centre with several classrooms and a planetarium. Every year thousands of pupils are taught about various topics relating to animals, nature conservation and the universe. On the right side a building for smaller mammals is located that was built at the same moment as the dairy farm and where among other animals babirusa, kangaroos and various smaller carnivores (genets, binturong, fennecs) were kept. For some years now Congo peafowl are housed on this location.

Inside this photo card we find the following pictures: the large aviary which was located in front of the cattle house, a Malayan tapir, two moose and final a Griffon vulture. Malayan tapirs were housed in the Zoo in 1902 for the first time. Finally also a picture of a botanical exhibition in the former music hall.

**1908-1909:** On the cover a remarkable photo of a Caspian tiger, also named Persian tiger. This subspecies was housed in Antwerp Zoo for the first time in 1904. The subspecies is extinct now. The Caspian tiger was not the only remarkable tiger subspecies kept at Antwerp Zoo. In 1901 the zoo also housed a Javan tiger. This subspecies is also extinct now.

Inside the card there are images of the former large aviary which was situated on the side of the present enclosures for zebra and Cape buffalo, a Burchell's and a Grèvy's zebra in

the same exhibit, a view of the large pond and a photo of a young Indian rhinoceros. The Burchell's zebra was kept for the first time in 1862, details of the grèvy's zebra were not found. When the first Indian rhinoceros died in 1898 the zoo received a new, young animal of this species in 1907.

**1909-1910:** From the beginning, Antwerp Zoo devoted a lot of attention for the landscaping and the planting of the garden. Special corners were created or depending on the period of the year a seasonal planting was applied.

Inside the card we find images of an American bison, lechwe, Arabian oryx and swans on a pond. Finally a view of the enclosures of the giraffes and zebras which were – and in the case of the giraffes still are - housed in the Egyptian temple. According to the species list by A. Gijzen (1960), lechwe were part of the animal collection for the first time in 1922. But the picture on this card proves that it happened at least 12 years earlier. Arabian oryx were first kept in the Zoo already in 1854.

**1910-1911:** On the cover the winning design for a poster is shown - the work of mr. George V. Elliot. However the zoo will never use this poster.

Inside three photos are depicted of the cattle house; a view on the enclosures, an inside view of the stables and finally the backside of the building as seen from the Ploegstraat. It is easy to see why the new cattle house gets so much attention. In 1868 the zoo already had a building for these animals which was designed by the architect Charles Servais. Only a few details about this building can be found in the archives of the Zoo. It was accessible to visitors depending on the weather conditions. The animals could be seen in their 7 stables or outside in their enclosures. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this building was replaced by a new and twice as large version in the same location. It was not just an animal exhibit but was also used as a feed storage. In 1908 the new cattle house was inaugurated. Ever since the large aviary in front of this building was demolished in 1935, the impressive cattle house can be seen in all his glory.

**1911-1912:** The Board of the Society decided in 1908 to build an aquarium. Architect Thielens, the designer of many buildings in the zoo, was also appointed for this building and he delivered a plan in 1909. That same year the construction started. In 1911, the new aquarium was inaugurated. It still consists of a freshwater and a marine section plus a small tropical room. For over a 100 years, water treatment is done by biological filtration. The press was ecstatic at the inauguration. Thus, the aquarium was defined in a special edition of "Petit Journal de Paris" as "(...) the most comprehensive and the best in design in the world". Above the entrance a part of the reptile house can be seen which was opened a few weeks after the aquarium building was inaugurated.

Inside the photo card are some pictures of the reptile house and the panoramic park which is also constructed in the same period. Finally, another three smaller photographs of the entrance hall, the large aquarium hall and the smaller tropical section in the aquarium.

**1912-1913:** Although the Antwerp Zoo already kept reptiles earlier it took until 1911 for a dedicated reptile house to be inaugurated. This happened shortly after the official inauguration of the aquarium. Reptiles had indeed already been part of the animal collection shortly after the opening of the zoo. Crocodiles were kept in the natural history museum. These animals moved in 1885 to the carnivore house. In the beginning the reptiles in the carnivore house were housed near the entrance, on the right side, the side of the Central Station. In 1903 new terrariums are built in the middle of the building. The reptiles will be

housed here until the impressive new reptile house, located above the aquarium, went into service.

Most of the photos inside also have the reptile house as a subject. Additionally, there is a picture of the thars.

**1913-1914:** On the first page of this photo card a sulphur-crested cockatoo is depicted. As it happened often at that time the bird was fixed with a chain on the metal perch which also had a small food bowl. Because the birds were within reach of the visitors they were often fed by them.

In this picture card almost exclusive animals are depicted. Besides photo's of an addax, a gnu, a moose and a white water buffalo also a view of the garden, seen from the terrace of the dairy farm, is present. The addax were kept for the first time in 1861.

**1914-1915:** Also on this last picture card almost exclusively animals are depicted. On the cover we notice two East African oryx, a species which was first kept in 1859. Inside mainly photo's of reptiles (a black tegu, a shingleback, an Indian or spectacled cobra, a red-tailed green ratsnake and finally an Indian python). A last illustration gives a view on the garden with in the background a series of aviaries.

## Conclusion

These publications of the RZSA, whatever the lay-out in which they were distributed to the members, provide a fascinating view on the evolution and the events which the Antwerp Zoo went through during a period of 65 years. Soon, Antwerp Zoo will exist for 175 years (2018). Without doubt the 1850-1914 years discussed in this article were a period of striking development for the zoo.

Copies of these documents are preserved in the 'Felixarchief' (Antwerp City Archives), in the Royal Library in Brussels and the Plantin Moretus Museum in Antwerp and they can be consulted by anyone interested (by appointment). Unfortunately, a complete series of these valuable historic publications is not held anywhere, and for the three images (1871, 1881-1882 and 1882-1883) the subject is not known.

## Zusammenfassung

Der Zoo Antwerpen, einer der ältesten Tiergärten der Welt, feiert in ein paar Jahren sein 175-jähriges Bestehen. Zum Anlass des 150-jährigen Bestehens wurde im Jahr 1993 ein Buch über die besondere Geschichte des Zoos in Antwerpen herausgegeben. Das umfangreiche Archiv war eine wichtige Informationsquelle für diese Publikation. Es gibt aber auch noch andere Möglichkeiten, um die Geschichte des Zoos Antwerpen kennen zu lernen. Zum Beispiel kann das umfangreiche Fotoarchiv online eingesehen werden ([www.beeldbankzoo.be](http://www.beeldbankzoo.be)). Dieses Fotoarchiv bietet Interessierten die Möglichkeit, sich vor allem mit der Ausbreitung, die der Zoo im vorigen Jahrhundert erfuhr, vertraut zu machen. Allerdings ist die Zugänglichkeit eingeschränkt, da diese Website nur auf Niederländisch existiert. Wenn wir uns in eine weiter zurück liegende Periode vertiefen wollen, gibt es im

Archiv andere Dokumente, die einen wichtigen Teil der Ausbreitung und Geschichte des Zoos Antwerpen veranschaulichen.

Einige Jahre nach Eröffnung des Zoos im Jahre 1843, wurde 1850 mit der Herausgabe von ‘Glückwunschkarten’ an die Mitglieder des Zoos begonnen. Diese Mitglieder gehörten ausnahmslos dem reichen – und französischsprachigen – Antwerpener Bürgertum an, denn Arbeiter hatten in den Anfangsjahren keinen Zugang zum Zoo. Diese Glückwünsche wurden den Mitgliedern nicht etwa zu Beginn eines neuen Kalenderjahres überbracht, sondern bei Beginn eines neuen ‘Gesellschaftlichen Jahres’. In den ersten Karten wurden auch noch wirklich Glückwünsche an die Mitglieder überbracht, aber schon bald wurde dieser Teil im Text gestrichen. Diese Form der Kommunikation zwischen der Königlichen Zoologischen Gesellschaft von Antwerpen (KMDA) und ihren Mitgliedern währte 65 Jahre und formt die Basis dieser historischen Übersicht, wobei die Evolution aufgezeigt wird, die der Zoo erfuhr. Des Weiteren werden besondere Ereignisse, die sich zwischen 1850 und 1915 ereigneten, vorgestellt.

Am Anfang wurden den Mitgliedern Porzellankarten angeboten. Porzellankarten heißen nicht etwa so, weil sie aus Porzellan wären, sondern weil sie aussehen wie Porzellan und auch mit der Zeit nichts von ihrer Schönheit verlieren. Die frühesten Porzellankarten entstanden um 1825, und in den 70er Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts wurde ihre Produktion langsam eingestellt, da man erkannte, dass die Arbeit mit den Farbpudern und Bleioxiden für die Drucker doch nicht so gesund war. Auffallend ist, dass Porzellankarten fast ausschließlich in Belgien produziert wurden, mit Gent, Brüssel und Brügge als Produktionszentren.

Nach einigen Jahren verschwanden die Porzellankarten und wurden andere Drucktechniken benutzt. Obwohl bei den Porzellankarten die Maße der Karte wechselten, hat man bei den neuen Entwürfen ein größeres Format (ungefähr A3) gewählt. Zu Beginn des neuen Jahrhunderts wurde das Format erneut geändert und ab dann bekamen die Mitglieder ein kleines Druckerzeugnis mit Foto.

Durch diese einzigartigen Ausgaben können wir eine Periode des Zoos Antwerpen kennenlernen, in der sich dieser in einer 65-jährigen Blütezeit befand. Anhand einiger auffallender Porzellankarten und Lithografien durchlaufen wir eine Periode von über 65 Jahren. Eine Periode die mit Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges zu Ende ging. Auf diesen Lithografien können wir Ereignisse sehen, die in dieser Periode stattfanden, aber auch eine Anzahl Gebäude. Von diesen Letzten sind die meisten inzwischen verschwunden und oft sind dies die einzigen Abbildungen, die es davon gibt.

Der Zoo Antwerpen war übrigens nicht der einzige Tiergarten, der solche Neujahrskarten austeilte. Einige Jahre nachdem man in Antwerpen damit begonnen hatte, wurden auch durch den Zoo in Gent Neujahrskarten herausgegeben. 1899 hat man diese Ausgaben eingestellt, was möglicherweise daran lag, dass der Zoo Gent bereits Schwierigkeiten hatte und ums Überleben kämpfte. Im Jahr 1904 musste er dann auch schließen.

Auf den ersten Ausgaben (1850 bis 1854) der Glückwunschkarten findet sich keine Jahreszahl. Anhand des Entwurfes und der abgebildeten Tiere wird versucht, das Jahr so gut wie möglich zu bestimmen.

Als Quelle für den Tierbestand wurde oft die Inventurliste benutzt, die durch Agatha Gijzen zusammengestellt und 1960 publiziert wurde. In dieser Inventurliste ist zu sehen, wann Säugetierarten zum ersten Mal im Zoo Antwerpen gezeigt wurden. Für Vögel und

andere Tiere gibt es leider keine vergleichbare Übersicht. Interessante Informationen wurden auch öfters in den Versammlungsprotokollen des Vorstandes der KMDA gefunden. Diese handschriftlich auf Französisch verfassten Berichte werden im Stadtarchiv gelagert.

Exemplare dieser Dokumente werden im Felixarchiv (Archiv der Stadt Antwerpen), im Druckkabinett in Brüssel und im Museum Plantin-Moretus in Antwerpen bewahrt. Interessierte können diese Dokumente auf Anfrage einsehen. Auffallend und schade ist, dass es nirgends eine vollständige Serie dieser historisch wertvollen Publikationen gibt. Bei drei Karten weiß man außerdem nicht wovon diese handeln.

## Acknowledgement

Words of thanks go to the ‘Felixarchief’ for providing the illustrations and to Harry Schram for his valuable help with the translation. Words of gratitude also go to Wim Wenden of the Royal Museum for Central-Africa for the details concerning the okapi which is depicted on the picture card 1905-1906. Last but not least I would like to acknowledge Ronny Lorentsen, Patrick Immens, Ben Van Dyck and Matthias Papies.

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