

»[...] underlasse auch nit mich in Portugal vnnd ander orten umb frömbde sachen zu bewerben«¹

Hans Khevenhüller and Habsburg Menageries in Vienna and Prague

Hans Khevenhüller, imperial ambassador in Spain from 1574 to 1606, was the political representative of the Austrian Habsburg court in Iberia (Cat. No. 1.15). On a private level, he functioned as intermediary and personal agent for his Habsburg patrons, contributing significantly to the *Kunstkammern*, menageries and gardens created in Vienna, Prague, Graz and Munich. His thirty-three residency as diplomat at the Spanish court transformed Habsburg collecting in the late Renaissance.² Without Khevenhüller's dedication and intervention, Maximilian II, Rudolf II and Archduke Ferdinand II would never have acquired such superlative objects and animals for their collections and menageries.

A true Renaissance man with cultivated tastes and a discerning eye, Khevenhüller was responsible for the procurement of wild animals, luxury goods, commodities like bezoars (*Ill.* 2), seeds, flowers and plants from Portuguese Asia, Brazil and the Americas, which he shipped under difficult circumstances from Iberia to Central Europe. His network of merchants in Lisbon, Seville and Goa proved invaluable, and he depended upon reliable informants in Iberia, America and India, taking advantage of Fugger agents: Konrad Rott based in Lisbon, and Ferdinand Cron, who resided for 37 years in Portuguese India. Cron linked Cochin, Goa and the Far East with Lisbon and Khevenhüller in Madrid.³ When Maximilian II's son, Archduke Albrecht, served as Viceroy of Portugal from 1583 to 1593, he became another conduit Khevenhüller tapped into for the benefit of Habsburg consumers in Innsbruck, Vienna and Prague. Khevenhüller built up an extensive network, rewarding well those who helped him with his shopping. His scouts in Seville and Lisbon had standing orders to buy at these ports anything rare or unusual. Through his international contacts, Khevenhüller was connected to all critical hotspots of the Portuguese and Spanish trading empires, advised when and where flora, fauna and exotica were for sale. As Khevenhüller reassured Maximilian II in 1575: »Gleichfalls hab ich widerumben nach Lisboa avisiert [...] alles was frembd zu hannden zu bringen, zu erkhauffen und mier zu überschicken.«⁴

Collections of live animals became an extension of the *Kunstkammer* outdoors, set in gardens planted with newly imported flora. Maximilian II's return to Vienna in 1552, from Spain where he had served as regent, with *Süleyman* the elephant (Cat. Nos. 3.1, 3.7) and exotic parrots in his baggage, inspired him to build a country pleasure palace,



Werkstatt
oni und Sebastiano
ung von Schloss
illa imperialis») im
lorenz. 1565. //
vanni Lombardi,
ese), fresco: Castle
villa imperialis») im
to Vecchio in
lan Gschwend.)

Kaiserebersdorf, on the outskirts of his capital (Cat. No. 1.7). Modeled after Spanish hunting lodges, El Pardo and especially Aranjuez (Cat. No. 1.8),⁵ Kaiserebersdorf became Maximilian's »menagerie,« as he christened it,⁶ adorned with fountains, grottoes, antique sculpture and garden pavilions. Here Maximilian cultivated his passion for flowers, herbs and vegetables from Iberia, Asia and the Americas, along with his stables where *Süleyman* was installed as the first exotic live display. Later joined by a lynx, camels from Constantinople, ostrich, lions, civet cats and monkeys supplied by Khevenhüller.⁷ Specialized animal handlers were engaged for the expanding menagerie, while three Flemish gardeners were hired.⁸

The Habsburgs placed great value upon their imported flora, fauna and wild pets. This painting of Archduke Albrecht and his spouse, Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia depicts the archducal couple visiting a luxurious collector's cabinet filled, as their *Kunstkammer* in the Brussels Coudenberg palace was, with rarities, paintings and scientific instruments. They are surrounded with their favorite pet dogs and imported monkeys (marmoset and capuchin) (Cat. No. 3.13). This painting reflects how Maximilian III's rooms at Kaiserebersdorf were appointed and objects displayed on tables.

Everything from seeds to a rhinoceros passed Khevenhüller's personal inspection, receiving his stamp of approval before acquisition and shipment to Central European courts. The logistics involved in shipping these exotic creatures, either by land or by sea, involved incredible planning and organization on Khevenhüller's part. Without his loyal servant and Master of the Horse, Pedro Fuerte (Cat. No. 6.13), none of these wild animals would have made the journey alive to their imperial menageries in Austria and Bohemia (Essay Dobalová).

Khevenhüller hired anonymous artists in Madrid or Lisbon to make drawings or watercolors of exotic animals or Spanish horses he earmarked for Vienna or Prague, which were appended to his letters, filled with descriptions of the sizes, shapes, colors and characteristics of the creatures or equines he was buying. Several of Khevenhüller's animal »portraits« have survived, pasted into an album, a paper museum Maximilian III once owned, filled with depictions of animals, birds, flowers, fruit and insects.⁹

European merchants stationed at specific trading posts in Portuguese Asia, Brazil and Mexico played decisive roles for Khevenhüller. One indispensable contact closer to Madrid was the merchant-dealer-jeweler, Nathaniel Jung in Lisbon, who assisted Khevenhüller for years in acquiring extraordinary bezoar stones and diamonds from India.¹⁰ Archduke Ferdinand II profited from this business association: Khevenhüller sending him bezoars and »healing« stones later recorded in his 1596 inventory.¹¹ Quantities of minerals and bezoars were dispatched by Khevenhüller to Prague, since these headed the shopping lists sent to him. Philip II of Spain gave Rudolf II one stone in 1579, described as a »large bezoar mounted with a gold band.«¹² Rudolf knew no limits when buying bezoars. Khevenhüller had orders to purchase at all costs, even when he had no money to buy.¹³

Khevenhüller's correspondence is full of precise details regarding ships, cargoes and sea captains, many of whom he knew personally. In 1571, he added for Maximilian III a detailed report about choice emeralds from Peru. In a ship recently returned from America, skippered by Pero Sánchez, four extraordinary, large emeralds are minutely described on three folios. One prize composite Columbian emerald cluster or *handstein* – a Renaissance fake – made its way to Archduke Ferdinand II's Ambras *Kunstkammer* with Khevenhüller's intercession.¹⁴



Bildnis
rd
00.
esy of

Khevenhüller likewise recruited Jung to buy for the Viennese court any rare, exotic animal brought with the fleets returning to Lisbon – »was selzames von Thieren aus India ankhommnen.«¹⁵ Through Jung, Khevenhüller purchased in 1575 an African zebra for Maximilian II which he hoped »would please him,« since it was first reserved for Pope Gregory XIII's Belvedere menagerie.¹⁶ The ambassador had to exert diplomatic clout to have it sent to Vienna instead. When the imperial courtier Wolf Rumpf visited the Spanish court in 1575, Khevenhüller ordered him to Lisbon to buy »new, strange animals« for the emperor.¹⁷ Two small animals from Brazil, perhaps a now extinct ape-like creature the Tupinambá Indians called *coati*, was procured that same year in Lisbon,¹⁸ whose »portrait« Khevenhüller immediately sent on to Maximilian II. As Khevenhüller wrote, »the baby was five weeks old, the male adult mean and extremely hard to handle.«¹⁹ At least one of these animals must have survived the journey, as the court artist Georg Hoefnagel later executed a watercolor of this curious creature in Vienna.²⁰ Khevenhüller and Jung corresponded so regularly, their personal couriers made the route between Lisbon and Madrid nearly every day.

Aside from Jung, Khevenhüller used additional Portuguese connections to source animals. In 1576, the Portuguese ambassador in Spain, Duarte de Castelo Branco and Catherine of Austria, were enlisted to help Khevenhüller find a small Asian bull for Maximilian II's Indian cow (Essay Seidl)²¹. The Portuguese queen was asked to send it on to the emperor's wife, Maria of Austria. From Lisbon, a steady flow of animals left for Vienna and Prague between 1550-1606: Asian elephants (*Süleyman* and *Emanuel*) (Cat. Nos. 3.1, 3.7), lions, civets, cheetahs (Cat. No. 2.10), a zebra, assorted parrots, African and Brazilian monkeys (Cat. No. 3.13), a cockatoo, even an African blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*) (Cat. No. 6.7).²² The most exclusive birds Khevenhüller supplied were falcons known as *aplomados* from Central America, which appear portrayed with a Habsburg prince.²³ Collecting such rare birds and exclusive hunting dogs bred at various European courts remained a Habsburg prerogative.

Occasionally Khevenhüller competed with colleagues to satisfy requests from Vienna. The imperial ambassador in Constantinople, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, brought to the Viennese court in 1562 a civet cat, Khevenhüller was proud to say it was not »as beautiful or as black speckled« as the one he has just acquired for Maximilian.²⁴ Until the emperor's unexpected death in October 1576, Khevenhüller was continuously buying animals for Kaiserebersdorf (III. 3): a lion, lioness, six Irish hunting dogs, a small monkey, a strange spotted animal (a *coati*?), American turkeys, *apolmado* falcons and African partridges.²⁵

Khevenhüller with the indispensable Pedro Fuerte acted as the principal intermediary for the transfer of Spanish horses bred in Andalusia to Central Europe. Shipping horses was riddled with logistical problems. Ferdinand II, one of Khevenhüller's clients, requested safe conduct in 1562 for the imperial servant, Gregorio de Guinea, to buy him horses in Spain. Archduke Karl II, another major buyer, involved with horse breeding, founded in 1580 a stud farm in Lippiza with Khevenhüller's horses. A splendid equine portrait of Archduke Albrecht's Spanish stallion, the pride of his stable, symbolizes his princely magnificence (III. 4).

German courts profited from ties with Khevenhüller. The Bavarian dukes, Albrecht V and Wilhelm V, depended upon relatives in Madrid and Lisbon, along with Khevenhüller, to build up their collections and menageries in the Munich Residenz and Trausnitz castle in Landshut (Cat. No. 1.12). Their purchases were often supervised

by Khevenhüller before shipment to Bavaria. Anthonio Meyting, an Augsburg Fugger agent, Khevenhüller's counterpart, was likewise responsible for acquisitions for the Munich court (Cat. No. 6.10). He crisscrossed Iberia and Bavaria for 35 years procuring *exotica*.²⁶ Meyting supplied Munich with lemon trees, woven mats from Asia, probably from Japan (the first Tatami mats documented in a Renaissance German collection), and a feather »painting« of St. John the Baptist, an Amerindian object made in Michoacán, Mexico (Cat. No. 5.1).

Even after Maximilian II's death, Khevenhüller's role as cultural agent did not cease, but only increased with Rudolf II's accession, the emperor being insatiable in his quest for wild animals, bezoars, luxury goods and Spanish horses.²⁷ Khevenhüller worked incessantly to meet his demands, often under extreme financial duress. His servants were always traveling between Madrid and Central Europe, delivering *exotica*, wild animals and horses. His servant, Hans Hilliprant, was sent to Lisbon to buy: seven parrots, wild cats including a civet and a black slave boy, all destined for Prague in 1579. Khevenhüller sent with this shipment, eight hunting dogs (*galgos*), two »portraits« of an Asian porcupine (*porco spino*), two emerald clusters, a carved rhinoceros horn cup, and the portrayal of the rhinoceros, called »The Marvel of Lisbon,« which arrived in Lisbon in 1577 (Cat. No. 2.2).²⁸

Khevenhüller bridged Iberia and its overseas empires with Central Europe, imprinting his connoisseurship upon Habsburg collections, gardens and menageries. Lisbon was one commercial port the ambassador exploited. The complex acquisitions network he deployed, afforded his patrons the unique opportunity to buy exclusive items, explaining how showcase animals, and African, Asian and American curiosities entered collections in Central Europe. Khevenhüller's role as intermediary has only begun to be understood.

1 Vienna, Austrian State Archives, Haus-, Hof- und Saatsarchiv (HHStA), Spanien, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Karton 9, fol. 283v, letter from Khevenhüller to Maximilian II, August 26, 1576.

2 Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, *Diplomacy, Global Transfers & Connoisseurship. Hans Khevenhüller (1538-1608), Imperial Ambassador in Renaissance Spain* (forthcoming in 2016).

3 Annemarie Jordan Gschwend – Almudena Pérez de Tudela, »Exotica Habsburgica. La Casa de Austria y las colecciones exóticas en el Renacimiento temprano.« In: Carlos Martínez Shaw (Ed.), *Oriente en Palacio. Tesoros asiáticos en las colecciones reales españolas*, Madrid, 2003, pp. 27–44; Annemarie Jordan Gschwend – Johannes Beltz (Eds.), *Elfenbeine aus Ceylon. Luxusgüter für Katharina von Österreich, 1507–1578*, Zürich, 2010, p. 104.

4 HHStA, Spanien, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Karton 9, 281.

5 Jordan Gschwend – Beltz 2010 (quoted note 3), pp. 150–151, cat. no. 63.

6 Ursula Giese, *Wiener Menagerien. Ebersdorf, Neugebäude, Belvedere, Schönbrunn*, Vienna, 1962, p. 18: the moniker »menagerie« was first used to designate a Renaissance garden retreat. Also Thomas Just, »Kaiser Maximilian I. und die Wildschweine aus den Praterauen – Kaiserebersdorf als Jagdschloss und Tiergehege der Habsburger.« In: *Fundort Wien. Berichte zur Archäologie* 3: 2000, pp. 178–185; Ian Linder – Michael Schulz, »Die Bedeutung der Hochzeit von Johanna von Österreich und Francesco de Medici für die Bauforschung am Schloss Kaiserebersdorf.« In: *Fundort Wien. Berichte zur Archäologie* 3: 2000, pp. 168–177.

7 HHStA, Verhandlungsakten [...] Hofstaatsakten Maximilian II, for lemons sent to Prague in October of 1558.

8 Giese 1962 (quoted note 6), pp. 18–20; HHStA, Familienakten, Vermögensgegenstände, Karton 15 (October 1563).

9 Vienna, Austrian National Library, Department of manuscripts and rare books, Cod. min. 42. Cf. Manfred Staudinger, »Arcimboldo et Ulisse Aldrovandi.« In: Exhibition Catalogue Sylvia Ferino (Ed.), *Arcimboldo 1526-1593*, Paris (Musée du Luxembourg), 2007/2008 – Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum), 2008, pp. 113–117; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Arcimboldo. Visual Jokes, Natural History and Still-Life Painting*, Chicago, 2009, pp. 115–147; Exhibition Catalogue Christina Weiler (Ed.), *Von Fischen, Vögeln und Reptilien. Meisterwerke aus den kaiserlichen Sammlungen*, Vienna (Austrian National Library), 2011, pp. 168–215. Also essay by Sandbichler here.

- 10 HHStA, Spanien, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Karton 9, 1576, 287, for a letter Khevenhüller received from Jung with a: »schreiben der Thier und das Lapis bezoar.« For Jung see Jordan Gschwend – Beltz 2010 (quoted note 3), pp. 98–99.
- 11 Almudena Pérez de Tudela – Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, »Luxury Goods for Royal Collectors: Exotica, princely gifts and rare animals exchanged between the Iberian courts and Central Europe in the Renaissance (1560–1612).« In: Helmut Trnek – Sabine Haag (Eds.), *Exotica. Portugals Entdeckungen im Spiegel fürstlicher Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Renaissance. Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien*, Vol. 3: 2001, p. 61, n. 229–231.
- 12 Karl Rudolf, »Die Kunstbestrebungen Kaiser Maximilian II. im Spannungsfeld zwischen Madrid und Wien. Untersuchungen zu den Sammlungen der österreichischen und spanischen Habsburger.« In: *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 91: 1995, p. 171, fig. 146; Pérez de Tudela – Jordan Gschwend 2001 (quoted note 11), p. 51.
- 13 Hans von Voltolini (Ed.), »Urkunden und Regesten aus dem K. u. K. Haus-, Hof- und Staats-Archiv in Wien.« In: *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 15: 1894, Reg. 12426.
- 14 Exhibition Catalogue Wilfried Seipel (Ed.), *Die Entdeckung der Natur. Naturalien in den Kunstkammern des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Innsbruck (Schloss Ambras), 2006, pp. 164–166, cat. no. 3.9.
- 15 HHStA, Spanien, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Karton 9, 190 (August 1575).
- 16 HHStA, Spanien, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Karton 9, 146v: »ain gar schöne schwartz und weiss sheckete mula, unangesehen sy solche dem Papst schicken wellen, herauspracht, verhoff sy werde Euer Kay. Mt. gefallen und angenemb sein.«
- 17 HHStA, Spanien, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Karton 9, 179v: »hett er allerlay neu und frembd sachen von Thieren [...] für Euer Kay. Mt. bekhommen kin.«
- 18 Different from present coatis (genus *Nasua nasua*) this lost species died out by the late 16th century.
- 19 HHStA, Spanien, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Karton 9, 219v: »Hiemit hab Ich derselben der Indianischen Tierl formb vnd gröss conterfeth davon Euer Kay. Mt. ich zuvor geschrieben übersenden wollen. Das Jung ist bey fünff Wochen alt, das Mändl so pös das auch ainen Mann mit seinem anlauffen und stossen zuschaffen gibt.«
- 20 Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, *The Story of Süleyman. Celebrity Elephants and other Exotic Animals in Renaissance Portugal*, Zürich – Philadelphia, 2010, p. 36, fig. 30. Also: <http://documenta.rudolphina.org/Essays/Coati.html> (9.4.2015).
- 21 HHStA, Spanien, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Karton 9, 252: »[...] umb ain clain stierle für das indianisch Khuele mit Höchstem Vleiss beworben und aines erfragt solches hat der Don Duarte [de Castelo Branco] in Portugal, die sachen bei hiesiger Portugesischer Potschafft anbracht, der mier zuegesagt solches solle mit den sachen so die Khönigin daselbs der Khayserin zu schicken vermaint mitgesendet werden.«
- 22 Portrayed by Giuseppe Arcimboldo in his 1563 *Terra*; see Exhibition Catalogue Sylvia Ferino (Ed.), *Arcimboldo 1526-1593*, Paris (Musée du Luxembourg), 2007/2008 – Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum), 2008, p. 106.
- 23 Portrait of Archduke Wenzel (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Picture Gallery, inv. 3186); Exh. Cat. Vienna 2011 (quoted note 9), 184-185.
- 24 HHStA, Spanien, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Karton 9, fol. 244v–245r: »Gleichfalls hab ich [...] auch ain ander Käzl, vast auf die Art wie der Busbeckh [Busbecq] ains mit von Constantinopl pracht hat, aber durchaus schwarz sprenckhlt vnnnd vill schöner, schaffens Euer Mt., sollens zu pester gelegenheit überschickht werden.«
- 25 HHStA, Spanien, Diplomatische Korrespondenz, Karton 9, 312r: »Auf das aber Euer Kay. Mt. wissen, was ich derzeit derselben von Thier gehörig beyhandden, habe ichs hienach verzeichnen wellen. Erstlich ain haimblichen Löben vnnnd ain Löbin, sechs Irrlendische Hund von Francesco Yvarra, dazu ich zweyer noch täglich gewartendt, drey indianische Rephünner, ain clains Mörkhäzl, ain annder frembdt scheckhet Thierl vnnnd zwen schwarz Vögl aus India zimblich gross mit roten Schnäbl, so gewächs von furmb ainer feigen auf dem Kopf haben [American turkey] vnnnd bin dergleichen gattung wie obvermeldt noch täglich mer gewartendt. Die zwen Alanos [aplomados] so zue Barcelona Euer Kay. Mt. gehörig vorhandden gewest, sein alberait des Octavio Gonzaga Dinner dieselben mit über zufüeren [...].«
- 26 Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, »Exotica for the Munich Kunstkammer. Anthonio Meyting: Fugger agent, Art dealer and Ducal ambassador in Spain.« In: Georg Laue (Ed.), *Exotica. Kunstkammer Georg Laue*, Munich, 2012, pp. 8–28.
- 27 Rudolf was known as a glutton (*golosissimo*) for horses. See Almudena Pérez de Tudela – Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, »Renaissance Menageries. Exotic Animals and Pets at the Habsburg Courts in Iberia and Central Europe.« In: Karl A. E. Enenkel – Paul J. Smith (Eds.), *Intersections. Yearbook for Early Modern Studies. Representations of Animals in Early Modern Europe*, Vol. 7: 2007, No. 2, p. 439.
- 28 Pérez de Tudela – Jordan Gschwend 2001 (quoted note 11), pp. 49-50.