



**Bulgarian
Numismatic
Journal**

THE SPÖTTL COLLECTION

MIKA VIKTORIA BOROS

КОЛЕКЦИЯТА ШПЪОТЛ

МИКА ВИКТОРИЯ БОРОС

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.11076697



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

<https://bulgnj.com>
ISSN: 2815-4827

The Spöttl Collection

Mika Viktoria BOROS

Museum of Cultural History,
University of Oslo
mika.boros@khm.uio.no
ORCID: 0009-0006-4288-6454

Колекцията Шпöтл

Мика Виктория БОРОС

Музей на културната история,
Университет Осло
mika.boros@khm.uio.no
ORCID: 0009-0006-4288-6454

Abstract: The second half of the 19th century was a time of great visible change for Vienna. The city walls were torn down, new representative buildings were built, and the population grew rapidly. People became aware of the transformation and the desire to hold on to the old arose. The city thus started collecting objects in order to preserve its history. This collection included objects of ordinary citizens, as opposed to the aristocracy whose history was preserved in the imperial collection. As part of this activity, in 1862 the city council decided to establish a numismatic collection. With a small annual budget and public donations, several hundred coins and medals were collected in the years preceding the opening of the "Historic Museum of the city of Vienna" in 1887.

In the following years the collection grew mainly through private donations, but none of these was greater or more important than the legacy of Ignaz Spöttl (1834–1892). He provided his hometown with over 5100 numismatic objects. It focusses on the Austrian Empire, but some more exotic pieces were also included. Medals make up about 1/5 of the collection.

Although Spöttl was an artist, his main interests lay in all things historical. He conducted some archaeological excavations in the vicinity of Vienna, was a member of anthropological and numismatic clubs, and wrote several scientific articles. Holding no academic title, he was never fully acknowledged by scholars during his lifetime.

The passion for collecting was inherited in the Spöttl family. Ignaz' mother and grandmother also collected antiquities. He also collected archaeological and anthropological artefacts, which he left to other Viennese museums.

Some of the items in the collection were lost during World War II but it is possible to reconstruct the missing objects through the inventory books. Today, the collection is the historical core of the numismatic collection of the Vienna Museum and contains some of its most valuable items.

Keywords: Vienna Museum, Numismatic Collections, Cultural History, Ignaz Spöttl



This article deals with the numismatic collection of Ignaz Spöttl, which he left to the city of Vienna when he died childless in 1892. The collection consists of just under 5,200 numismatic objects spanning the time and space of the Habsburg Empire, with medals making up about a fifth of the collection. The paper focuses on the history of the Spöttl family, as they have been collecting coins for at least three generations, each adding to the collection and passing it on to the next generation.

The history of the collection discussed here can be traced back to Maria Anna Spöttl (née Strassern, 1766–1822), the grandmother of Ignaz Spöttl (1836–1892), who bequeathed the collection to the city of Vienna. One of his obituaries (Schalk 1893) even says that the collection goes back as far as the year 1765. This would suggest that it was older even than Maria Anna herself, possibly stemming from her father, Josef Strassern (died 1807) or her mother Maria Magdalena (née Wolf) (Schalk 1893, 427; Files of the Wien Museum number GZ/Prot.-Nr. 82/1892 and 395/1892).

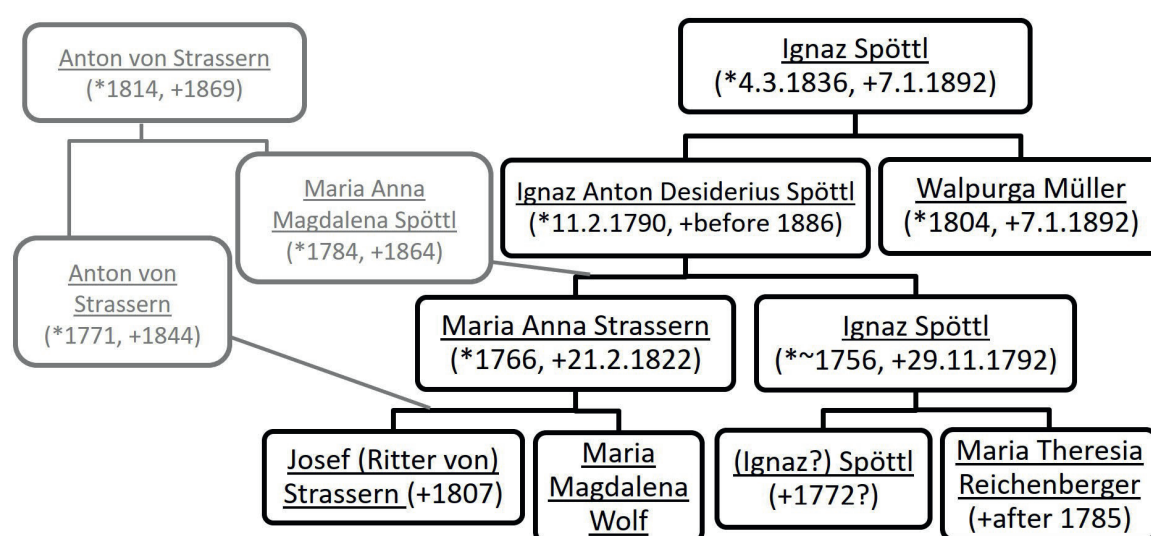


Fig. 1. The Spöttl family tree.

Josef Strassern came from a humble background, but he managed to procure a good position at the royal court in Vienna. He was even knighted for his more than 25 years of service as a gunsmith to Emperor Joseph II in 1787. With the title also came land – the estate Kottlingbrunn. Most of his wealth, however, came from a different source. Josef Strassern was also the owner of a successful silver and porcelain lottery business in Vienna (Doll 1825, 240; Kneschke 1857, 359; Kneschke 1870, 77–78; Blümml, Gugitz, 1922, 87–105; Groner 1965, 151; Ehrlich 2012).

Maria Anna Strassern married the merchant Ignaz Spöttl (~1756–1792), ten years her senior, at the fair age of 17. He was the son of (Ignaz?) Spöttl and Maria Theresia (née Reichenberger), the owners of the store *Zum grünen Fassl*, which was situated in a prime location in the inner city of Vienna (today Kohlmarkt 8–10) and sold luxury food products (Ziegler 1836, 42; Schimmer 1849, 54; Blümml, Gugitz 1922, 104–105, 222–237; Groner 1965, 151; Torabi 2011, xvi; Wien Geschichte Wiki 2021).

Anna Maria and Ignaz Spöttl had two children, Maria Anna Magdalena (1784–1864) and Ignaz Anton Desiderius (1790–before 1886). Maria Anna married her maternal uncle, Anton von Strassern (1771–1844), with whom she had a son (Anton, 1814–1869) who was then the last in the von Strassern line (Schön 1890, 294). However, Anna Maria's marriage to Spöttl was not a happy one. She felt she had married beneath her station, particularly since her father was enno-

bled. Therefore, she did everything to raise her social status. This included her having multiple affairs with influential men—both during her marriage and as a widow. One of these affair partners, Count Dominik Andreas von Kaunitz (1739–1812), was even alleged to have fathered her son, Ignaz Desiderius. Spöttl tried to stop his wife's adulterous lifestyle with little success, not least because he died young and left Anna Maria a wealthy widow at just 26 (Wurzbach 1879, 278; Blümml, Gugitz 1922, 104–105, 222–237; Haas 1952, 124; Knötig 2012, 14–16, 83).

The biggest scandal regarding Anna Maria's affairs was no doubt the one where the high-ranking diplomat father and son pair Franz Georg Carl (1746–1818) and Wenzel Lothar (1773–1859) von Metternich took out their rivalry about her in an open duel on the street in front of *Zum grünen Fassl* in 1787, despite both of them being married at the time. Within a short time, multiple theatre plays about the incident and related circumstances were written and performed. This made the newly-gentled von Strassern family the laughingstock of society (Kotzebue 1805; Blümml, Gugitz 1922, 104–105, 222–237; Haas 1952, 1224–125; Kotzebue et al. 1972, 575; Ehrlich 2012; Knötig 2012, 14–16, 83).

Anna Maria used her wealth and freedom (for a woman of that time) to acquire a great amount of luxury goods, most of which were auctioned off when she died in 1822. One of the more prominent lots in this auction (amongst more curious items such as a solid silver chamber pot), was her coin collection. In the auction catalogue's foreword, it is said that the collection was organised after Media's system. Additionally, a copy of the catalogue, now in possession of the library of the city of Vienna, sports a handwritten note from her grandson Ignaz Spöttl on the first page. It tells the reader that these objects were but the duplicates of the main collection, which was inherited by her son Ignaz Desiderius, who then gave it to his son, respectively (Bermann, Stöckl 1822; Trau 1893(a), 225; Schalk 1895, 251; Ehrlich 2012).



Fig. 2. 1 1/2 Taler 1541/1565, Maximilian II/Ferdinand I, Kremnitz, Inv.-No: HMW 3871, Wien Museum, CC BY 3.0 AT.

Not much information could be gathered about Ignaz Desiderius Spöttl. Like his mother, he had a passion for collecting and thus had a coin collection even before he inherited hers (Blümml, Gugitz, 1922, 414–415). It is the author's belief that the coins bearing the small monogram of the initials IS stem from his part of the collection (see Fig. 2).

No further information could be gathered about Ignaz Desiderius' wife Walpurga's (née Müller, 1804–1892) family line. She serenely shared his great passion for collecting antiques and numismatics in particular. Walpurga outlived her husband but was very close to her only son, Ignaz Spöttl (1836–1892), with whom she lived. They died on the same day, the mother surviving her son by only a few hours. After their deaths, their possessions (those that were not left to museums by way of his will) were auctioned off. This included Walpurga's own extensive coin collection. It can only be speculated that, had the elderly woman died before her son, he would have inherited her possessions, and consequently a much larger collection would have been gifted to the museum after his death (Nentwich 1892, 1; Cubasch 1893; Schalk 1893, 426–430, Trau 1893(a), 225; Trau 1893(b), 233; Domanig 1895, 296).



Fig. 3. Medal of Walpurga Spöttl for her 87th in 1891 birthday by Anton Scharff, Inv.-No: HMW 3808, Wien Museum, CC BY 3.0 AT.

Ignaz Spöttl trained as a painter at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Vienna, but he also had inherited the passion for collecting coins and other historic objects from his parents. As he was wealthy enough, he could pursue his passions freely without having to rely on painting or any other day job for income. Therefore, he was a member of several clubs, such as the Numismatic and the Anthropological Society of Vienna, and even led several archaeological excavations in and around Lower Austria. It was also of utmost importance to him to pass on his gathered knowledge. He accomplished this by holding several speeches on various topics for the societies of which he was a member—often accompanied by objects of his collections for illustration. He also wrote a number of small papers. Nonetheless, he was never fully acknowledged by scholars of his time. This changed somewhat after his death. Most of his collections went to public institutions posthumously, so they could serve as instructional material for research and exhibitions. This way, it became known just how methodically structured his collection work was (Sedleczyko 1888, 223; Hauer 1892, 9; Nentwich 1892, 1; Files of the Wien Museum number GZ/Prot.-Nr. 82/1892 and 395/1892; Schalk 1893, 236–430; Tietze et al. 1911, xii; Hinkel, Sykora 1977, 89; Endres et al. 2005, 362; Ehrentraud 2007, 27; Lochner 2013, 21–22; Winter 2013, 26).



Fig. 4. Medal of Ignaz Spöttl for his 50th in 1886 birthday by Anton Scharff, Inv.-No: HMW 76422, Wien Museum, CC BY 3.0 AT.

The circumstances in which the collection came into the Wien Museum's possession are documented by a correspondence between the court that handled Spöttl's will and the director of the museum at the time (Files of the Wien Museum number GZ/Prot.-Nr. 82/1892 and 395/1892). In those letters the museum is informed about the content of Spöttl's will, leaving his complete numismatic collection to "his hometown" under the condition that it would be made accessible to the public. This then happened (in part) soon after the acquisition, when Spöttl's objects were included in the museum's display of Austria's monetary history at the end of the 19th century (Schusser 1987, 36–37).

It is also thanks to this correspondence that we know of the existence of the original inventory books of Spöttl's collection because they were requested by the museum to make the inventorying process of the objects easier. The letters make it seem as if the Salzburg portion was kept a bit separate from the main collection, having been documented in a separate inventory. This would not be astounding, as Spöttl—being a very patriotic man—set out to collect objects specifically from his home country (the by-then still vast Habsburg Empire), and Salzburg had just become a part of it in 1816. Within his self-defined restrictions, however, he did try to collect as complete and systematic a picture of the monetary history as possible—in contrast to his mother and grandmother, who tended to collect only valuable and rare pieces. This does not say that his collection does not hold such. Spöttl certainly had an eye and the means for collecting extremely fine, rare, and valuable coins and medals (Bermann, Stöckl, 1822; Cubasch 1893; Schalk 1893, 426–430).

Things get more uncertain where the wooden cabinet in which the collection is kept is concerned. The matter comes up in the previously mentioned letters, where the director of the museum is asked whether he wants to buy the cabinet, as it was not considered to be a part of the collection and thus not given to the museum by way of the inheritance. Unfortunately, we do not have the answer to that question, and as a result do not know whether the cabinet now housing the coins is the original or was manufactured after the museum acquired the collection. However, it was certainly intended for this very collection, as the drawers have labels indicating their content, and there is a brass plaque on the head of the cabinet reading "*Vermächtnis des Mahlers Ignaz Spöttl an seine Vaterstadt*" (Legacy of the painter Ignaz Spöttl to his hometown) (Files of the Wien Museum number GZ/Prot.-Nr. 82/1892 and 395/1892).

We also know that the system in which the collection is laid out stems from Spöttl, as it was not changed when the collection was integrated in the museum in 1892 and 1893. The many original coin tickets that are still with the objects underline this.

Spöttl organised his collection in chapters of the Austrian Empire's regions: Austria (general—here, the museum created the sub-groups for the mints in Vienna, St. Pölten, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Carniola, Moravia, Günzburg, and Lombardo-Venetia), Styria, Carinthia, Tyrol, Bohemia, Silesia, archbishopric Olomouc, Hungary, Transylvania, Vienna (medals), and Salzburg (Schalk 1893, 430; Schusser 1987, 36–37).

Most of the collection's objects are modern coins; coins from the Middle Ages make up a smaller portion, while there are only five antique coins (one Celtic and four from the Roman Empire). Medals comprise about a fifth of the collection, while there are also eight pieces of paper money (Wiener Banco Zettel; Wien Museum's inventory books Inv.-No. 3001–7742, Boros, Hartner 2019, 17–25).

The collection's history certainly does not end with its arrival in the museum. Sadly though, not the entire collection has remained in the museum to this day. About 500 coins, most of them from the Spöttl Collection, were given to the coin cabinet of Vienna's Museum of Fine Arts as part of an exchange of objects between several Austrian museums in 1935. Of these, plaster casts were produced to substitute and document the absent pieces. About 1,800 of the museum's numismatic objects were lost when the collection was moved to Schloss Schönborn for safekeeping during the World War II and back to the museum after the war had ended. Approximately 90 objects from the Spöttl Collection were lost in that way. This leaves 4,512 of the original (about) 5,188 numismatic objects of the collection still in the museum. It is, however, absolutely possible to reconstruct which pieces were given away and/or lost through the museum's impeccable inventory books and records, as well as the previously mentioned plaster casts (Files of the Wien Museum number GZ/Prot.-Nr. 82/1892 and 395/1892; Schusser 1987, 36–37, Wien Museum's inventory books Inv.-No. 3001–7742).

After several years of being slightly forgotten, work on the museum's numismatic collection was taken up again by the author in early 2018. Modern standards of conservation and organisation have been introduced, but most importantly, digitisation of the objects was started. In autumn 2020, the homepage of the museum's online collection (Wien Museum 2021) was

launched, where one can already find around 2,000 numismatic objects (about half of that number from the Spöttl Collection) with high-resolution photographs, which are free to download and reuse. As work continues, more objects are being uploaded constantly. By making the objects and the information they hold as widely accessible as possible, the museum supports research and knowledge. This is in full accordance with Spöttl's will, whose express wish was that his work and collection should be used for public education.

Bibliography

- Bermann J., Stöckl, F. H., 1822. Verzeichnis einer Münzsammlung bestehend in Antiquen, Gold, Silber, Bronze, Blei und Zinn, Medaillen und Thaler, wie auch Groschen, nebst Lipperts Dactilothek der geschnittenen Steine des Alterthums, in Gyps-Abdrücken, und einer Anzahl Münzbücher, und Käsen, welche 1822 am Kohlmarkt Nro. 260, im 1. Stocke, liciationsweise in Conv. Münze hindagegeben werden. F. H. Stöckl, Kunsthändler, Vienna.
- Blümml, E. K., Gugitz, G., 1922. Von Leuten und Zeiten im alten Wien. Gerlach & Wiedling, Vienna.
- Böheim, W., 1892. Vereinsangelegenheiten. Monatsblatt des Alterthums-Vereins zu Wien 3 (February), 160.
- Boros, M., Hartner, J., 2019. Frühmittelalterliche Glanzstücke des Wien Museums. Zwei merowingische Tremisses aus der Sammlung Spöttl. Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Numismatischen Gesellschaft 59 (1): 17–25.
- Cubasch, H. jun., 1893. Auctions-Verzeichnis enthaltend jenen Theil der nachgelassenen Sammlung des sel. Herren Ignaz Spöttl, welcher nicht in das Eigenthum des kaiserlichen Museums und der Stadt Wien übergang, sowie der Goldmünzen-Sammlung der Mutter des Verstorbenen, der Frau Walpurga Spöttl in Wien. Verlag von H. Cubasch, Vienna.
- Doll, A., 1825. Historische und topographische Darstellung von Baden und dem Stifte Heiligenkreuz mit ihrer Umgebung. Anton Doll, Vienna.
- Domanig, C., 1895. Anton Scharff, k. u. k. Kammermedailleur. NZ 26, 271–320.
- Ehrentraud, A., 2007. Ignaz Joseph Pleyel. Von Ruppersthal in die Welt. Versuch einer biographischen Zusammenschau. Wieser, Klagenfurt.
- Ehrlich, A., 2012. Auf den Spuren der Josefine Mutzenbacher. Eine Sittengeschichte. Amalthea Signum Verlag GmbH, Vienna.
- Endres, W., Grieshofer, F. J., Plöckinger, V., 2005. Keramik als Zeichen regionaler Identität: Beiträge des 36. Internationalen Hafnerei-Symposiums des Arbeitskreises für Keramikforschung vom 21. bis 26.09.2003 in Kittsee. Selbstverlag des Österreichischen Museums für Volkskunde, Vienna, Kittsee.
- Erbstein, J., 1885. Köhler-Denkmal. Blätter für Münzfreunde. Correspondenzblatt des deutschen Münzforscher-Vereins 129 (21), 1196–1197.
- Groner, R., 1965. Wien wie es war. Ein Nachschlagewerk für Freunde des alten und neuen Wien. Molden, Munich.
- Haas, R., 1951. Anton Eberl, in: Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum (Ed.), Mozart-Jahrbuch. Bärenreiter-Verlag, Salzburg, 123–130.
- Handel-Mazzetti, V. Freiherr von., 1913. Die Herren von Schleunz in Niederösterreich und ihre Beziehungen zum Lande ob der Enns. Jahrbuch der Kais. Kön. Heraldischen Gesellschaft „Adler“ 9 (23), 1–8.
- Hauer, F. Ritter von., 1892. Annalen des K. K. Naturhistorischen Hofmuseums 8. Alfred Hödler, Vienna.
- Helfert, J. A., 1889. Mitteilungen der K. K. Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Kunst- und historischen Denkmale, 15. Kubasta und Voigt, Vienna.
- Hinkel, R., Sykora, B., 1977. Heimat Floridsdorf: mit erstem Floridsdorfer Straßenverzeichnis. Eipeldauer, Vienna.

- Kneschke, E. H., 1857. Die Wappen der Deutschen Freiheitlichen und Adeligen Familien 4. T. O. Weigel, Leipzig.
- Kneschke, E. H., 1870. Neues allgemeines Deutsches Adels-Lexicon 9. Friedrich Voigt, Leipzig.
- Knötig, U., 2012. Ferdinand Eberl – ein Wiener Dramatiker in der Theaterszene des späten 18. Jahrhunderts. Diploma Thesis, University of Vienna.
- Kotzebue, A. von., 1805. Die Beyden Klingsberg: ein Lustspiel in 4 Aufzügen. Johann Baptist Wallishausser, Vienna.
- Kotzebue, A. von., 1972. Schauspiele, edited by Jürg Mathes and Benno von Wiese. Athenäum, Frankfurt am Main.
- Lochner, M., 2013. Bestattungssitten auf Gräberfeldern der mitteldonauländischen Urnenfelderkultur, in: Lochner, M., Ruppenstein, F. (Eds.), Brandbestattungen von der mittleren Donau bis zur Ägäis zwischen 1300 und 750 v. Chr. Akten des internationalen Symposiums an der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, 11.–12. Februar 2010. Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, Vienna, 11–30.
- Nentwich, J., 1892. Ignaz Spöttl. Mitteilungen des Clubs der Münz- und Medaillenfreunde in Wien. Fachblatt für Numismatik 20 (January), 1.
- Schalk, K., 1893. Ignaz Spöttl. Wiener Kommunalkalender und städtisches Jahrbuch. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Wien 21 (31), 426–430.
- Schalk, K., 1895. Zur Geschichte der Spöttel'schen Sammlung. Monatsblatt der numismatischen Gesellschaft in Wien 145 (August), 251.
- Schimmer, K. A., 1849. Ausführliche Häuser-Chronik der inneren Stadt Wien. Verlag von Matthäus Kuppitsch, Vienna.
- Schön, T., 1890. Beantwortungen. Monatsblatt der Kais. Kön. Heraldischen Gesellschaft „Adler“ 119 (November), 294.
- Schusser, A., 1987. Die Numismatische Sammlung, in: Deutschmann, W. (Ed.), Hundert Jahre Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien. Eigenverlag der Museen der Stadt Wien, Vienna, 36–37.
- Sedleczyko, H., Frick, W., Fromme, C., 1888. Personalnachrichten. Wiener Illustrierte Garten-Zeitung 13 (May), 223.
- Tietze, H., Hoernes, M., Krahuletz, J., 1911. Die Denkmale des politischen Bezirkes Horn in Niederösterreich. A. Scholl, Vienna.
- Torabi, S., 2011. Der Wiener Kohlmarkt – Eine Analyse der Kapitalisierungszinssätze und anderen bewertungsrelevanten Faktoren. Masters Thesis, TU Vienna.
- Trau, F., 1892(a). Nachruf. Monatsblatt der Numismatischen Gesellschaft in Wien 102 (January), 96, 100.
- Trau, F., 1892(b). Im Naturhistorischen Hofmuseum“. Monatsblatt der Numismatischen Gesellschaft in Wien 105 (April), 127.
- Trau, F., 1893(a). Ein Salzburger Rübenthaler. Monatsblatt der Numismatischen Gesellschaft in Wien 117 (April), 225.
- Trau, F., 1893(b). Zwei Münzauktionen in Wien. Monatsblatt der Numismatischen Gesellschaft in Wien 118 (May), 233.
- Wien Geschichte Wiki, 2021. „Zum gruenen Fassl“. [https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Zum_gr%C3%BCnen_Fassel_\(1_Kohlmarkt_8-10\)](https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Zum_gr%C3%BCnen_Fassel_(1_Kohlmarkt_8-10)) (accessed 2.2.2021).
- Wien Museum, 2021. „Online Sammlung“. <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/> (accessed 2.2.2021).
- Winter, H., 2013. Die Medaillen und Schaumünzen der Kaiser und Könige aus dem Haus Habsburg im Münzkabinett des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien Band I. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna,
- Wurzbach, C., 1879. Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Österreich 39. Verlag der k. k.

Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, Vienna.

Ziegler, A., 1836. Häuser-Schema der kaiserl. königl. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien. Anton Ziegler Verlag, Vienna.