



## A FAMILY PORTRAIT: ENRIQUE STANKO VRÁZ AND THE QING ARISTOCRACY DURING THE BOXER REBELLION

Helena Heroldová<sup>1</sup> – Jiřina Todorovová

**ABSTRACT:** The Czech traveller and photographer Enrique Stanko Vráz (1860–1932) spent three spring months in China during the Boxer Uprising in 1901. He was amongst the first travellers – photo-reporters. He preferred realistic photographs as the best proof of capturing the world around him. In Beijing, he took several hundred photographs including the Manchu aristocratic families. Among them, he photographed Prince Su (1866–1922), an important late Qing statesman, and his family. The study discusses Prince Su’s family photographs in relations to Vráz’s notes and travel books.

**KEY WORDS:** Enrique Stanko Vráz – old photographs from China – Boxer Rebellion – Prince Su family

### Introduction: The Mysterious Mr. Vráz

The National Museum – Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures keeps an extensive photographic estate of the traveller Enrique Stanko Vráz (1860–1932) that contains several hundreds of photographs from China. Vráz visited the country twice. During his short first visit in 1896 he stopped in Nanking from where he continued via Singapore to Borneo and New Guinea. For his second visit he stayed for three months, from January to April 1901, which he deliberately chose at that time. Western press fanned the readers’ attention with stories about the nationalist and anti-foreigners Boxer Rebellion, and Vráz, an intrepid traveller, could not miss the opportunity to

---

<sup>1</sup> Contact: Helena Heroldová, National Museum – Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures, Prague, Czech Republic; e-mail: helena\_heroldova@nm.cz. This work was financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic (DKRVO 2017/33, National Museum 00023272).

become a witness to those turbulent times. After his arrival to Beijing, E. S. Vráz – who was known among his contemporaries as a charming person – made friends with missionaries and military officers of foreign armies, as well as becoming acquainted with members of Manchu aristocratic families. Therefore, he gained access to imperial palaces abandoned during the Boxer Rebellion, and he was also admitted to mansions of Manchu families and was granted to take photos there.

Vráz's congeniality is evident from his travel book published in 1904. Its style was light and readable; however, Vráz easily mingled description, fictional narrative, as well as trivialities and gossips. However, the travel book and its later version from 1940 are to this day the only existing source for Vráz's sojourn in Beijing that are not fragmentary and depicted his visit more or less consistently. Unfortunately, his personal travel diaries are lost today.<sup>2</sup> Despite his estate that is kept in the Náprstek Museum Archives being rather large, there are only a few documents dealing with his stay in China. The authenticity of his travels and the extent and nature of his activities in Beijing are confirmed by his large photographic collection. Although the photo collection remains the main source for research about Vráz, the lack of reliable written sources still makes him an enigmatic person even today.<sup>3</sup>

Although Vráz belonged to a few Czech speaking travellers who are still known today among Czech audiences, and popular articles about him appear regularly in Czech press, scholarly studies are rather scarce (Todorovová 2016: 10–11).<sup>4</sup> A monograph focused on his life was published in 2006 (Todorovová 2006), and a later article dealt with his lecturing and the glass slides he had used for his lectures. The history of his photo collection was presented, and question of Vráz's authorship of the photos was discussed, since Vráz used his own photographs as well as pictures produced by specialised companies (Todorovová 2016: 9–10). The studies about Vráz's life and travels formed one source for the present study. The other source is represented by the ongoing research in late Qing dynasty material culture in the Náprstek Museum, namely the Han Chinese and Manchu dress (Heroldová 2017). During the research, the importance of various visual sources including traditional painting, prints and photographs was emphasized, and Vráz's photo collection of group portraits for the study of the late Qing dynasty dressing habits was especially accentuated (Heroldová 2017: 19–24). Although the presented study is based on two large sources – Vráz's photo collection and research into late Qing material culture – it focuses only on a small part of his vast photographic estate. It is devoted to identification of one aristocratic family he had met and photographed during his visit in Beijing in 1901. Vráz's photo collection is compared with the existing written sources in

---

<sup>2</sup> Vráz's daughter Vlasta (1902–1989) published a book that summarised his life and travels. She used personal documents, letters, as well as his diaries. However, her style is narrative rather than documentary. She presented his father as a great, although unrecognised traveller. The part about Vráz's travel to China during the Boxer Rebellion focused on his missionary friends and places he visited. See Vrázová 1937: 219–224.

<sup>3</sup> Even during his life, Vráz carefully built a reputation of a mysterious personage, possibly in order to beat the fierce competition among travellers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Bohemia. Vráz deliberately gave misleading information about his origin and life and resisted any inquiries about him. The name he used is a pseudonym, neither the date nor place of his birth is certain (Todorovová 2006: 5–8).

<sup>4</sup> Two exhibitions about Vráz were held in the Náprstek Museum: *Enrique Stanko Vráz v Číně – fotografie z roku 1901* [*Enrique Stanko Vráz in China – photographs from 1901*] – 12 October 2006–31 December 2006, author: Jiřina Todorovová; *Zaniklý svět na fotografiích E. St. Vráze* [*Bygone world in photographs of E. St. Vráz*] – 4 November 2016–22 January 2017, authors: Jiřina Todorovová – Jan Šejbl.

order to depict his stay in more detail, and especially to recognise one of his acquaintances, Prince Su, a member of the highest Manchu aristocracy, an important statesman of the Late Qing dynasty. Vráz mentioned him in his travel book; his name appeared in Vráz's notes, as well as several photographs of him in Vráz's photo collection. Prince Su was also photographed by other photographers, where the pictures are still published today, however, often without the photographers' credits.<sup>5</sup> The identification of Vráz as one of the photographers contributes to a better understanding of their as well as Vráz's works, and is a testament to both Vráz's relationships as well as activities in Beijing during the end of the Boxer Rebellion.

## E. S. Vráz during the Boxer Rebellion

Vráz arrived in China early in 1901; where he stayed for three months until 24 April when he set out for Korea. On 23 January he left Shanghai by ship, four days later arriving in the Shandong peninsula. He stayed three days in the city of Tiencin, and after a night in the Shanhaiguan he arrived in Beijing on 2 February.<sup>6</sup> At that time the Boxer Rebellion – the reason why he travelled to China – was already coming to its end. A lack of funds delayed his journey; for when he gathered the necessary amount of money the political situation in China had already changed.<sup>7</sup> Although he did not witness the development of the uprising, he eventually profited from his late arrival. The city was occupied by intervention troops; the Imperial Court had fled to the city of Xi'an in Central China. Foreigners could visit the places that were previously hardly accessible, including imperial palaces and gardens, the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace.

The violent, nationalist and anti-governmental Boxer Rebellion (Yihetuan yundong 義和團運動) arose in 1899 coincidentally against the background of Emperor Guangxu's 光緒 (1875–1908) unsuccessful attempt to modernize the country (1898), and the growing political, economic and military conflicts of China with foreign powers. The Rebellion erupted not far away from the capital city of Beijing in the Shantung Peninsula in northern China, where international ports and territories were under the control of the foreign powers. The so-called Boxers came from the rural, poor, and illiterate strata of the society. They focused on fighting against foreigners and Christian missionaries whom they accused of the Empire's decline. The Boxers acted ferociously, in 1900 they invaded Beijing and besieged the district where foreigners lived, setting their houses, shops and Christian missions and churches on fire. The Qing imperial administration and the court split; some members of the government believed they could control the Boxers and use them against the foreign powers. In order to guard the capital, armed Manchu units were established by members of the imperial clan. However, the private

<sup>5</sup> See for example *Shanqi* 善耆 – <https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/善耆> [23 April 2018]; *Jin Moyu's father Aisin Gioro Shanqi was the 10<sup>th</sup> Prince Su of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911)* – [http://china.org.cn/photos/2014-05/28/content\\_32514685\\_3.htm](http://china.org.cn/photos/2014-05/28/content_32514685_3.htm) [23 April 2018].

<sup>6</sup> Notebook-calendar. Archives of the Náprstek Museum (hereinafter abbreviated as ANpM), Personal collection Enrique Stanko Vráz, Inv. No. 9.

<sup>7</sup> *Přál by si být tam, kde tvoří se dějiny. Nemá však peněz na cestu. Než podaří se mu vypůjčiti potřebnou částku, Číňané jsou odraženi, a bílá vojska zachránila bělochy a pokřtěné Číňany před skoro neodoratným vyhladověním a uhořením.* [He wished to be there where history was made. But he does not have enough money to travel. Before he could borrow the necessary amount, the Chinese are thrown off, and white troops rescued white men and Christian Chinese from almost inevitable starvation and death in fire.] (Vrázová 1937: 219).

units served various goals. When the German ambassador, Baron Klemens von Ketteler (1853–1900), headed to the imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 20 June, his armed party ran into a Manchu banner-man unit, where von Ketteler was killed in the fire-fight. Consequently, the troops of the Eight-National Alliance (Britain, France, Russia, the United States of America, Italy, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Japan) organised military interventions and defeated the Boxers. In February 1901 two of the Boxer leaders were executed. In September 1901, the Final Protocol was signed, and the Qing government, among other things, undertook to pay war reparations, expanded the privileges of foreigners in China and allowed the presence of foreign troops in its territory.

## E. S. Vráz's Notes and Travel Books

His first days in Beijing are captured in Vráz's notes and travel books. After arriving to Beijing, he spent his first night in an empty mansion of a duke, the *Emperor's nephew* [císarův synovec] called either *Džau* or *Džan*<sup>8</sup> (Vráz 1904: 80). Two days later he moved to the Hadamen area, today's Chongwenmen 崇文門 in the south-eastern part of the inner Beijing that was under the Italian administration. He lived in today's Dengshikou 燈市口 area, *Don Si Kó* street according to Vráz, where he stayed in a mansion of a *Mongolian prince* [mongolský princ] whom he called *Bej Dzu*<sup>9</sup> (Vráz 1904: 83, 114; 1940: 174). In a postcard to his friend Bohumil Bauše<sup>10</sup> dated 6 February, he wrote: *I am in Beijing for almost a week, and live in 'a palace' of duke Čuan, a slaughter of Christians [...]* [sem v Pekingu už týden a bydlím v 'paláci' vévody Čuana, pobíječe křesťanů (...)].<sup>11</sup> According to a stenogram transcription of Vráz's lecture provided by a certain F. B. Khem, Vráz lived in a house of a Mongolian prince *Bej-dzu* who ordered to *kill many Chinese Christians* [povražditi mnoho křesťanů čínských], and the photograph that accompanied the lecture presented: [...]*a dwelling of a Chinese riches of the highest standing is perfectly illustrated by a library in the palace of Prince Čvang. He was the Leader of the Boxers; they probably not without his knowledge committed countless atrocities. After the conquest of Beijing by the army of united powers the prince left for fear of 'white devils' [and] about them people talked unbelievable, almost terrible news. For example, they are sorcerers and eat children.*<sup>12</sup> According to the description, Vráz probably mentioned *Zaixun* 載勳, Prince *Zhuang* 莊 (1853–1901) who committed suicide on 21 February, after being stripped of his ranks for being one of the masterminds of the Boxers. *Zaixun*, the Prince of the First Rank, strongly advocated for using the Boxers against Foreign powers. His title *Zhuang* in a distorted

<sup>8</sup> The text of the study contains parts in Czech language. Vráz's notes from his correspondence, travel books and photographs as well as excerpts from the travel book written by his daughter in Czech language are given in *italics*. Chinese names in *italics* are given exactly in the same form as in Vráz's notes. It is important to note that Vráz's transcription of Chinese was based on spoken language and did not follow any usual system. Chinese characters in the traditional form are added to accompany names of Chinese persons and places, as they are known today.

<sup>9</sup> *Gūsai beise* (Prince of the Blood of the fourth degree), the title of the male member of the top Manchu aristocracy, one of the highest six ranks (Norman 2013: 155).

<sup>10</sup> Bohumil Bauše (1845–1924), a high school teacher, translator and trailblazer of natural sciences.

<sup>11</sup> ANpM, Personal collection Enrique Stanko Vráz, Inv. No. 9.

<sup>12</sup> [Obydlí čínského boháče vrstev nejvyšších znázorněno jest dokonale z jedné části touto knihovnou v paláci prince Čvanga. Byl náčelníkem Boxerů, kteří asi nikoli bez jeho vědomí dopouštěli se ukrutenství nesčetných. Po dobytí Pekingu vojskem spojených velmocí princ prchl ze strachu před 'bílymi ďábly', o nichž mezi lidem kolovaly zprávy neuvěřitelné, přímo hrozné. Na příklad, že jsou čaroději a že děti pojídají.] ANpM, Personal collection Enrique Stanko Vráz, Inv. No. 8/2.

Czech language pronunciation and transcription can appear as *čvang* or *čuan* in Vráz's notes. Moreover, even his title *qinwang* 親王 (Prince of the First Rank) can be erroneously pronounced and transcribed as *čvang*.

The above-mentioned postcard to his friend represents one of a few authentic examples of Vráz's voice. Transcription of his lecture as well as his travel books were edited by a third person, the extent of their alternations is hardly known. The result of this means any existing sources with reliable "Vráz" opinions about the political situation in China are today rather scarce.<sup>13</sup> Although Vráz was a prolific writer of travel books, he paid more attention to the depiction of street life than to political and social events. As far as information about his sojourn in Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion is concerned, his travel book *Čína, Cestopisné črty* [*China, Travel Sketches*] can be considered the most relevant source. His book was published in the third volume of a series *Cesty světem* [*Travel Around the World*] in 1904 by the publishing house Bursík and Kohout in Prague. The book appeared in a revised edition in 1940 by Toužimský & Moravec Publishing house with pictures by the famous painter and illustrator Zdeněk Burian (1905–1981) under the title *Bílý ďábel v Pekingu. Toulky a dobrodružství v Číně* [*White Devil in Beijing. Wanderings and Adventures in China*] in Czech. Although both travel books are based on the same source and repeat information in similar ways, their general styles are different. The 1904 issue is a poetic and emotional description of China including various aspects of traditional Chinese culture, such as music, geography, medicine, traditional courtesy, Chinese names, and cooking. In general Vráz depicted Chinese people with respect, however he also found them strange in their habits and lifestyle. He described customs such as a wedding and a funeral; he also depicted his visits to the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace, which he made in mid-February (Vráz 1904: 322).<sup>14</sup> The 1940 version repeated the structure of the earlier issue, but the style was fictional, even including short stories and fictional dialogues. However, it is important to note that the editor of the 1940 issue was an author named Kuzma,<sup>15</sup> whose name appeared in many titles of the Toužimský & Moravec Publishing House of the era.<sup>16</sup> The scope of the editor's interventions is not clear, the authorship of fictional parts remains uncertain. The same as in the 1904 edition, the travel book paid more attention to Vráz's Czech and foreign friends,<sup>17</sup> and his Chinese servants, i.e. people he met on a

<sup>13</sup> A few notes about Chinese political situation are found in Vlasta Vrázová's book. However, it is not known to what extent they reflect Vlasta Vrázová's own opinion. The notes depict Vráz's mixed feelings of fascination and hatred towards China, as well as repeat the idea of dangers of the Chinese to the Western world.

<sup>14</sup> For the comparison see the travel books by Josef Kořenský (1848–1937) who travelled around the world several times, and visited China during his long journey to Australia in 1900–1901. Kořenský was a teacher and an author of numerous informative books.

<sup>15</sup> The pen-name, probably Josef Novotný (1900–1967), an author of adventure, mystery and history novels, as well as editor of collections of Czech folk tales.

<sup>16</sup> The Publishing house worked since 1933 to 1949. Its production specialised on adventure novels for young readers, especially for boys.

<sup>17</sup> In his notes, travel books and photographs descriptions Vráz often mentioned missionaries Arthur Henderson Smith (1845–1932), an author of a two volumes book about Boxer Rebellion entitled *China in Convulsion*, who credited "Prof. E. St. Vraz" as the author of the book photos, and his roommate dr. Smith, a surgeon and a missionary. Vlasta Vrázová (Vrázová 1937: 222) also names William Alexander Parsons Martin (1827–1916), a missionary and an important figure of modern Chinese education. He served as the president of the government language school Tongwenguan 同文館, and later he was appointed the president of the precursor of Beijing University.

regular basis, than to high-ranking Chinese and Manchu officials he had met socially. The meetings with Chinese and Manchu families he mentioned only briefly. For example, he spent approximately “twenty minutes” at a visit to a second rank official called *Lii*, however, the visit served as an overture to a long explanation on traditional names and courtesy (Vráz 1904: 163–169).<sup>18</sup> Notes about Manchu families accompany photographs published in the travel books, yet detailed information in the text is often lacking. For example, a picture shows a cart pulled by a donkey with a sitting lady surrounded by a family of a Manchu official of the lowest rank [*rodina mandžuského úředníka nejnižší třídy*] (Vráz 1904: 167),<sup>19</sup> and the portrait of an high-rank Manchu official is accompanied with a description: *Prince Čing* [...] personally paid attention to Vráz on one of his visits [*Princ Čing (...) věnoval se osobně Vrázovi v Pekingu přijedné z jeho návštěv*](Vráz 1904: 221). The *princ Čing* was probably Yikuang 奕劻, Prince Qing 慶 (1838–1917), the moderate politician, sympathetic to foreigners who negotiated and signed the Boxer Protocol in 1901. Ten years later, he became the Prime Minister of the Imperial Cabinet, the first Cabinet before the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911.

## The Photographer E. S. Vráz

Although the existing written sources about Vráz’s visit to China are either fragmentary or unreliable, there is a large photo collection dealing with his sojourn in Beijing. Vráz belonged amongst the first travellers who used photography (Todorovová 2016: 8).<sup>20</sup> One can say that he promoted his hobby to the professional level and became a traveller – photo-reporter. He preferred the realistic photography that served for disseminating of information. For him photography was the ultimate means of documenting reality. On this count, there is a surprising difference between his realistic approach in photography and a narrative and poetic literary treatment of reality in his travel book.

His estate amounts to eight thousand slides, negatives and positives (Todorovová 2016: 6). The amount of his photographs illustrates a wide range of themes and his documentary approach. The collection of 717 photographs from China show landscapes, cities and every-day life of Chinese people from various social and ethnic backgrounds. However, although he was the author of the majority of photographs, he also used images by other photographers, and many pictures he bought from companies that specialized in producing and selling photographs as it was common (Todorovová 2006: 19–20; 2016: 9–10).

Many photographs exist in duplicate and multiple versions, and some slides are in black-and-white and coloured versions. Many glass slides bear inscriptions. Some are written in sweeping, scarcely legible handwriting – the same as notes in Vráz’s notebooks. There are also inscription on strips of paper glued to the plates that were written with neat and tidy letters by his daughter. Although the inscription represents a valuable source of information, like Vráz’s travel books they contain only vague and superficial information, as if they served only as means to refresh one’s memory, to remind of places, events and persons he had met, than to provide a precise description.

---

<sup>18</sup> See picture As I 7013 – <http://vademecum.nm.cz/nm/> [23 April 2018].

<sup>19</sup> See picture As I 7022 – <http://vademecum.nm.cz/nm/> [23 April 2018].

<sup>20</sup> As for the history, styles and use of photography in China. See Cody 2011; Suchomel and Suchomelová 2011.



## Vráz's Photographs of Manchu Families

For the purpose of the study, several dozens of photographs were browsed in order to identify the Manchu families whom Vráz photographed. Due to the analyses of the photographs, together with the descriptions and his travel book, it is possible to recognise the closest family circle of Prince Su household, and distinguish it from other Manchu families. The photographs can be divided into several groups.

1. Portraits of Prince Su [Plates 6, 9]
2. Prince Su family, identified in Vráz's notes [Plates 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11], (photos As I 7028, As I 7039, As I 7044, As I 7073, As I 7174, As I 7283, As I 9259, As II 1720, As II 1737, As II 1738, As II 1742, As II 1785).<sup>21</sup>

The pictures mostly show women, children and male servants. Single portraits show standing ladies in a traditional rock garden. Arranged group portraits of sitting ladies are taken in the family mansion courtyard. The ladies wear traditional Qing dynasty Manchu garments – long gowns with vests adorned with heavy embroidery, and elaborated Manchu hairstyle with jewellery and silk flowers.

Children of various ages appear on group photographs; however, some photos show only children (As I 7742, As I 7743, As II 1829 and As II 1843). One picture shows Prince Su's three sons training with rifles, with a Western soldier in uniform standing next to them (As I 7177).<sup>22</sup>

3. Other family/families<sup>23</sup> (As I 7013, As I 7022, As I 7033, As I 7036, As I 7090, As I 7144, As I 7149, As I 7176, As I 7285, As I 7288, As I 7298, As I 7310, As I 7311, As I 7737, As I 7741, As II 1718, As II 1838, As II 1938).<sup>24</sup>

Photographs capture at least one other family. They show a large variety of persons, their garments and settings. There are single portraits of ladies, group pictures and couples with small children. Some persons wear expensive elaborate multicoloured Manchu gowns, jackets and vests, while others wear simple garment. The dwellings also show various styles and different level of social rank of its inhabitants.

### E. S. Vráz and Prince Su Family

The title Prince Su 肅 refers to Shanqi 善耆, one of the Prince Qing Cabinet members, Vráz also visited and photographed (Vráz 1940: 323). In Vráz's words: *I was also a frequent guest of the Uncle of Chinese Emperor, Prince Su* [Býval jsem i častým hostem strýce císaře čínského, prince Su'a] (Vráz 1904: 369). However, as was usual in his travel books, Vráz dealt with trivialities that could be of interest to his readers. Although Prince Su was an

<sup>21</sup> The Inventory Numbers refer to the photographs not published in this study. See <http://vademecum.nm.cz/nm/> [23 April 2018].

<sup>22</sup> The pictures of Prince Su's sons are described in the list of photographs kept in the Náprstek Museum Archives. The list divided his photographs according to the topics to various sections. In the section *Peking Typy žen, děti a různé* [Beijing. Types of women, children and miscellaneous], the photographs of Prince Su's sons were described: *synové prince Sú-a, hrající si na vojáky* [sons of Prince Sú (!), playing soldiers], and *synové prince Sua hrající si na pruské vojáky* [sons of Prince Su, playing Prussian soldiers]. ANpM, Personal collection Enrique Stanko Vráz, Inv. No. 10/1–4, Inv. No. 10/1–32. See photo As I 7177 – <http://vademecum.nm.cz/nm/> [23 April 2018], see also Smith 1901: 266–267.

<sup>23</sup> It is possible to assume that some group photographs capture Prince Su household staff and servants. Unfortunately, this is a presumption that can not be fully verified.

<sup>24</sup> See <http://vademecum.nm.cz/nm/> [23 April 2018].

important political figure, Vráz preferred to describe dishes on the Prince Su's festive table rather than his formidable political career and his role during the Boxer Rebellion.

Shanqi (1866–1922) came from the Aisin Gioro 愛新覺羅 Imperial clan. Since 1898 he held the title Prince Su of the First Rank (Heshuo Su qinwang 和碩肅親王). The title belonged among the twelve highest aristocratic lineages, the so called *iron cap* princes (*perpetual heritability*, shixiwangti 世襲罔替) those ranks did not diminished with every new generation as it was usual within Manchu aristocracy. The first holder of the title was Hooge 豪格 (1609–1648), the eldest son of the second emperor of the Qing dynasty who bestowed him the title in 1636. Shanqi was a prominent figure of the late Qing and early Republic politics, a pro-imperial statesman who planned to establish a Manchu state in Manchuria after the fall of the Qing dynasty (Li 2003: 91–93).

In 1901, Prince Su was involved in the New Policies (Xinzheng 新政), a large-scale reform implemented during the last years of the Qing dynasty in order to revive the Empire after the defeat during the Boxer Rebellion. The reforms included military and judicial systems. Prince Su was in charge of the city security system during the Rebellion (Strand 1993: 68), and envisaged the establishment of the metropolitan police according to the European and Japanese models that drew heavily on German and French ideas (Asen 2016: 5).<sup>25</sup>

## Conclusion: E. S. Vráz's Visual Voice

Although Prince Su was the member of the imperial clan and a notable politician, Vráz devoted only a few lines to him in his travel book. Moreover, his written voice passed through his publishers and editors, and was without doubt influenced by demands of his readership. However, there is Vráz's large photo collection including the pictures of Manchu aristocracy that testifies to Vráz's approach. Vráz's congeniality helped him to establish a friendly atmosphere and to persuade the members of aristocratic families to be photographed. As opposed to his travel books, his photo collection from Beijing in 1901 represented his true voice – visual, realistic, documentary – yet friendly and pleasant.

Despite the fragmentary written sources, it was due to his photo collection, its size and especially its range of topics, quality and approach that enabled Enrique Stanko Vráz to surpass many of his contemporaries among travellers. Vráz may have presented himself as a mysterious figure during his lifetime that manipulated the facts in his life and mingled reality and fiction in his writings, however, his photographic collection proved his work as a genuine photographer-reporter.

---

<sup>25</sup> Prince Su's close collaborator and family friend was Naniwa Kawashima 川島浪速 (1865–1949), a dubious Japanese adventurer who sought fortune and wealth in China. Like many other Japanese men who lived in China's great coastal cities, he absorbed Chinese culture as well as dreamed about the great Japanese Empire in Asia. Naniwa Kawashima established a training school for police officers in Beijing in April 1901 (Strand 1993: 67–68). In the following decade, he became a step-father to one of Prince Su's daughters (Shanqi had twenty one sons and seventeen daughters), Aisin Gioro Xianyu 愛新覺羅顯玕 (190? 1907?–1948? 1978?) called Dongzhen 東珍 and JinBihui 金璧輝. Dongzhen adopted the Japanese name Kawashima Yoshiko 川島芳子, and became a Japanese spy in China and in the Japanese puppet state Manchukuo. After the World War II she was allegedly executed in China. See Birnbaum 2015; Edwards 2016: 91–116.



## CATALOGUE

### Pl. 1

Sheet from Vráz's notebook, pencil inscription.<sup>26</sup>

English translation:

What to photograph.

Prince *Su* Prince *Čing*.

Palace *Sú Wan Fú*.

Prince *Duan*'s Palace.

Prince *Džuan* Palace.

### Pl. 2

Group portrait<sup>27</sup>

Glass plate negative, 18 x 13 cm

E. St. Vráz, 1901

Inv. No. As I 35-V<sup>28</sup>

The portrait is taken in the courtyard of a traditional house. Two women in traditional Manchu clothing are sitting at the forefront. Their winter garments are quilted and lined. Both women wear long gowns and short jackets with embroidered hems. On their heads there are traditional Manchu headdress. One of the women is wearing a nail guard and holding a handkerchief.

The women, the boy and the man with a moustache in the far left appear on other pictures depicting the family.

Inscription:

*E. St. Vráz, the commander of the Austrian troops in Beijing and Count von Thun in the "palace" the dwelling of the Manchu family. Vráz<sup>29</sup>*

### Pl. 3

Group portrait

Glass plate negative, 18 x 13 cm

E. St. Vráz, 1901

Inv. No. As I 36-V

Women of various ages and two boys on a house terrace.

Inscription:

*E. St. Vráz, Beijing, Manchu women and girls (in typical costumes) of a Mandarin class, Vráz lived among them. E. St. Vráz<sup>30</sup>*

---

<sup>26</sup> ANpM, Personal collection Enrique Stanko Vráz, Inv. No. 8/5.

<sup>27</sup> Published in Heroldová 2017: 24, Fig. 7.

<sup>28</sup> The Plates are arranged according to the Inventory Numbers. However, the Inventory Numbers are not related to the original times and topics of the pictures. Vráz's original inscriptions in Czech language are given in the footnotes. Photographs that exist in several versions are labelled with letters "a", "b", etc, and Vráz's inscriptions are given accordingly.

<sup>29</sup> [E. St. Vráz, *velitel rakouské posádky v Pekingu a hrabě Thun v "paláci" přibytku mandžuské rodiny. Vráz.*]

<sup>30</sup> [E. St. Vráz, *Peking, Mandžuské ženy a dívky (v typických krojích) střední třídy mandarinů, mezi nimiž žil Vráz. E. St. Vráz.*]

#### Pl. 4

Lady in a garden

Glass plate negative, 18 x 13 cm

E. St. Vráz, 1901

Inv. No. As I 74-V

The Manchu lady in a winter gown and a jacket in the traditional garden with rocks.

Inscription:

*E. St. Vráz, Beijing, in the mansions of Manchu nobility, where I was a welcomed guest – a typical hairstyle – artificial flowers, an eben crest, Kingfisher feathers, in silver or in gold, ivory, mother-of-pearl. E. St. Vráz<sup>31</sup>*

#### Pl. 5

Lady with flowers in her hair

Glass plate negative, a) 17 x 8,5 cm, b) 20 x 12,5 cm

E. St. Vráz, 1901

Inv. No. As I 7015a (As I 7015 b)

The Manchu lady wears gowns and jackets in several layers. A jade pendant is hanging from her collar hem. Her hairstyle is adorned with large man-made flowers.

The lady appeared also in the Plates 2 and 3.

Inscriptions:

a) *E. Vráz, Beijing, in the mansions of my friend, a Manchu Mandarin, the daughter of his, see hairstyle, costume of hers, she is rather pretty but much make-up*

b) *E. St. Vráz, Beijing, a daughter of a Manchu prince<sup>32</sup>*

#### Pl. 6

Prince Su

Glass plate negative, 20 x 12,5 cm

E. St. Vráz, 1901

Inv. No. As I 7032b (As I 7032 a)

The portrait of Prince Su. He sits in a plain informal robe, without the obligatory hat but wearing a typical Manchu hairstyle with a half-shaven head and a braid.

The photograph shows how the portrait was made. Prince Su is sitting in front of a white cloth; the photo also captured the hand of a man in a Western suit who held the cloth.

Inscriptions:

a) *E. St. Vráz, Beijing, Prince Su, Peking, prince Su, the Uncle of the Chinese Emperor, I was the guest with him; we exchanged visiting cards and photoportraits. Photo E. St. Vráz*

b) *E. St. Vráz, Beijing, my friend (even the host), with whom we exchanged visiting cards and photoportraits. Prince Su, the Uncle of the the Emperor<sup>33</sup>*

---

<sup>31</sup> [E. St. Vráz, Peking, v příbytcích mandžuské šlechty, kde jsem býval vítaným hostem – účes typický, umělé květiny, hřeben ebenový, peříčka ptáků leďnáčků, ve stříbře neb ve zlatě zasazené, slonovina, perleť. E. St. Vráz.]

<sup>32</sup> [a) E. Vráz, Peking, v příbytku mého přítele mandžuského mandarina, dcera jeho, viz účes, kroj její, ona dosti hezká ač mnoho malovaná b) E. St. Vráz, Peking, dcera mandžuského prince.]

<sup>33</sup> [a) E. St. Vráz, Peking, princ Su, strýc císaře čínského, byl jsem hostem u něho; vyměnili jsme si navštívenky a podobanky. Foto E. St. Vráz b) E. St. Vráz, Peking, můj přítel (ba I hostitel), s nímž vizitky a fotografie jsme si vyměnili. Princ Su, strýc císaře.]

## Pl. 7

Lady with a handkerchief

Glass plate negative, 20 x 12.5 cm

E. St. Vráz, 1901

Inv. No. As I 7038d (As I 7038 a,b,c)

Lady standing in the rocky garden, holding a handkerchief in her hand.

Inscriptions:

a) E. St. Vráz, Beijing, in the garden of a Manchu (noble) middle-class Mandarin; see the costume, his daughter's hairstyle and peculiarities of the odd „rocks-like“ garden

b) E. St. Vráz, Beijing, in the palace of a Manchu Prince, daughter of his – a rarity of me being a guest, a family protector (Amer. Flag), and photographed them<sup>34</sup>

c) E. St. Vráz, Beijing, the Mandarin's daughter

d) E. St. Vráz, Beijing, the host's daughter, a Mandarin, in a garden of her father, see the oddity of the rock garden<sup>35</sup>

## Pl. 8

Prince Su's son

Glass plate negative, 20 x 12,5 cm

E. St. Vráz, 1901

Inv. No. As I 7044 b (As I 7044 a)

The photograph shows a group in the rock garden of a traditional mansion. A boy, around fifteen-years-old, in a long gown and a sleeveless vest appears also in other photographs. A young lady wears a quilted gown and a jacket with a distinctive hem. Her headdress is in the Manchu style but without adornment. The servant is dressed in a dark robe, a long-sleeved jacket, socks and cloth shoes and a round cap on his head.

Inscriptions:

a) E. St. Vráz, Beijing, in the pre-courtyard of a Manchu dignitary, the highest rank

b) E. St. Vráz, Beijing, in one of the courtyards of the Palace of Prince Su, the uncle of the Emperor<sup>36</sup>

## Pl. 9

Prince Su in a dragon gown

Glass plate negative, 20 x 12,5 cm

E. St. Vráz, 1901

Inv. No. As I 7083 b (As I 7083 a, c)

Prince Su is stands in a courtyard of the mansion with a rock garden. He wears a neat semi-formal robe with a winter hat, a surcoat with round dragon insignia worn by the

<sup>34</sup> Vyzbrojen americkým pasem a zvláštním průvodním listem z Washingtonu [...] [Armed with an American passport and a special cover note from Washington (...)] (Vrázová 1937: 219).

<sup>35</sup> [a] E. St. Vráz, Peking, v zahradě manžuského (patricije) mandarína střední třídy; viz kroj, účes jeho dcery a zvláštnosti svérázné «polokamenné» zahrádky. b) E. St. Vráz, Peking, v paláci manžuského prince, dcera jeho – vzácnost, že jsem byl hostem, ochráncem rodiny (amer. vlajka) a mohl je fotografovat. c) E. St. Vráz, Peking, dcera mandarínova. d) E. St. Vráz, Peking, dcera hostile (!) mého, mandarína, v zahradě svého otce, vizkamenný svéráz zahrady.]

<sup>36</sup> [a] E. St. Vráz, Peking, v před nádvoří manžuského hodnostáře, nejvyšší hodností. b) E. St. Vráz, Peking, v jednom z nádvoří paláce prince (sic!) Sû-a, strýce císaře.]

members of Manchu aristocracy. Around his neck he holds a Buddhist rosary with pendants.

Inscriptions:

- a) *E. St. Vráz, Beijing, my friend Prince Su (the uncle of the Chinese Emperor) in one of tiny gardens in his palaces (small but rather numerous)*
- b) *E. St. Vráz, Beijing, the uncle of the Emperor Prince Su, my host in the courtyard of one of his tiny mansions "Palaces"*
- c) *E. St. Vráz, Beijing, Prince Su, the uncle of the Chinese Emperor*<sup>37</sup>

#### Pl. 10

Two ladies and a boy

Glass plate negative, 17,5 x 12,5 cm

E. St. Vráz, 1901

Inv. No. As I 7085 b (As I 7083 a)

A group of Manchu's in the courtyard of a mansion.

Inscriptions:

- a) *E. St. Vráz, Beijing, a family of a Manchu Mandarin, where I lived*
- b) *E. St. Vráz, Beijing, in a family of Manchu aristocracy*<sup>38</sup>

#### Pl. 11

Two ladies, a boy and a servant

Glass plate diapositive, 17 x 8,5 cm

E. St. Vráz, 1901

Inv. No. As II 1724

Two Manchu's ladies in winter gowns in the entry to the courtyard of a mansion. Unlike the Plate 10, they wear headdresses with elaborate adornment and man-made silk flowers.

Inscription:

*E. St. Vráz, Beijing, here I lived and with my presence I protected the family of a Manchu dignitary*<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> [a] *E. St. Vráz, Peking, přítel můj princ Sû (strýc císaře čínského) v jedné ze zahrádek paláců svých (malých sice ale dosti četných).* b) *E. St. Vráz, Peking, strýc císaře princ Sû, můj hostitel v nádvoří jedné ze svých budoviček "paláců".* c) *E. St. Vráz, Peking, princ Sû, strýc císaře čínského.*]

<sup>38</sup> [a] *E. St. Vráz, Peking, rodina manžuského (sic!) mandarina, kde jsem bydlel.* b) *E. St. Vráz, Peking, v rodině manžuské (sic!) šlechty.*]

<sup>39</sup> [E. St. Vráz, Peking, zde bydlel jsem a přítomností chránil jsem rodinu manžuského (sic!) hodnostáře.]

## Sources:

Archive of the Náprstek Museum (ANpM), List of photographs. Personal collection  
Eriquer Stanko Vráz, Inv. No. 10/1–4, 10/1–32; Notebook-calendar. Personal collection  
Eriquer Stanko Vráz, Inv. No. 9; Notebook. Personal collection Eriquer Stanko Vráz, Inv.  
No. 8/5; Postcard. Personal collection Eriquer Stanko Vráz, Inv. No. 9; Stenogram  
transcription. Personal collection Eriquer Stanko Vráz, Inv. No. 8/2.

## Literature:

### Asen, Daniel

2016 *Death in Beijing. Murder and Forensic Science in Republican China*. Cambridge:  
Cambridge University Press;

### Birnbaum, Phyllis

2015 *Manchu Princess, Japanese Spy: The Story of Kawashima Yoshiko, the Cross-Dressing  
Spy Who Commanded Her Own Army*. New York: Columbia University Press;

### Cody, Jeffrey W. – Terpak Frances

2011 *Brush and Shutter: Early Photography in China*. Berkeley: The Getty Research  
Institute;

### Edwards, Louise

2016 *Women Warriors and Wartime Spies of China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

### Heroldová, Helena

2017 *Between Cultures. Manchu and Han Dress of the Late Qing Dynasty in the Náprstek  
Museum Collection*. Prague: National Museum;

### Narango, Li – Cribb, Robert B.

2003 *Imperial Japan and National Identities in Asia, 1895-1945*. Psychology Press;

### Norman, Jerry

2013 *A Comprehensive Manchu-English Dictionary*. Harvard-Yenching Institute Mono-  
graph Series 85. Cambridge: Harvard University Press;

### Smith, Arthur Henderson

1901 *China in Convulsion*, Two volumes. New York: Fleming J. Fevell Company;

### Strand, David

1993 *Riskshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s*. Berkeley, Los Angeles,  
London: University of California Press;

### Suchomel, Filip – Suchomelová, Marcela

2011 *... and the Chinese cliffs emerged out of the mist: perception and image of China in early  
photographs*. Řevnice: Arbor vitae, Prague: Academy of Arts, Design and  
Architecture;

### Todorovová, Jiřina

2006 *Enrique Stanko Vráz. Záhadný cestovatel fotograf*. Praha: Národní muzeum;

2016 "Public Presentation of Non-European Cultures at the Turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>  
Centuries. Part 1: An Analysis of the Collection of Vráz's Glass slides in the  
Photographic Collections of the Náprstek Museum", in: *Annals of the Náprstek  
Museum* 37/1, pp. 3–16;

### Vráz, Enrique Stanko

1904 *Čína. Cestopisné črty*. Praha: Bursík a Kohout;

1940 *Bílý ďábel v Pekingu. Toulky a dobrodružství v Číně*. Praha: Toužimský & Moravec;

## Vrázová, Vlasta

1937 Život a cesty E. St. Vráze. Z jeho soukromých deníků, korespondence, záznamů a ústního vyprávění sepsala. Praha: Československá grafická unie, a.s.

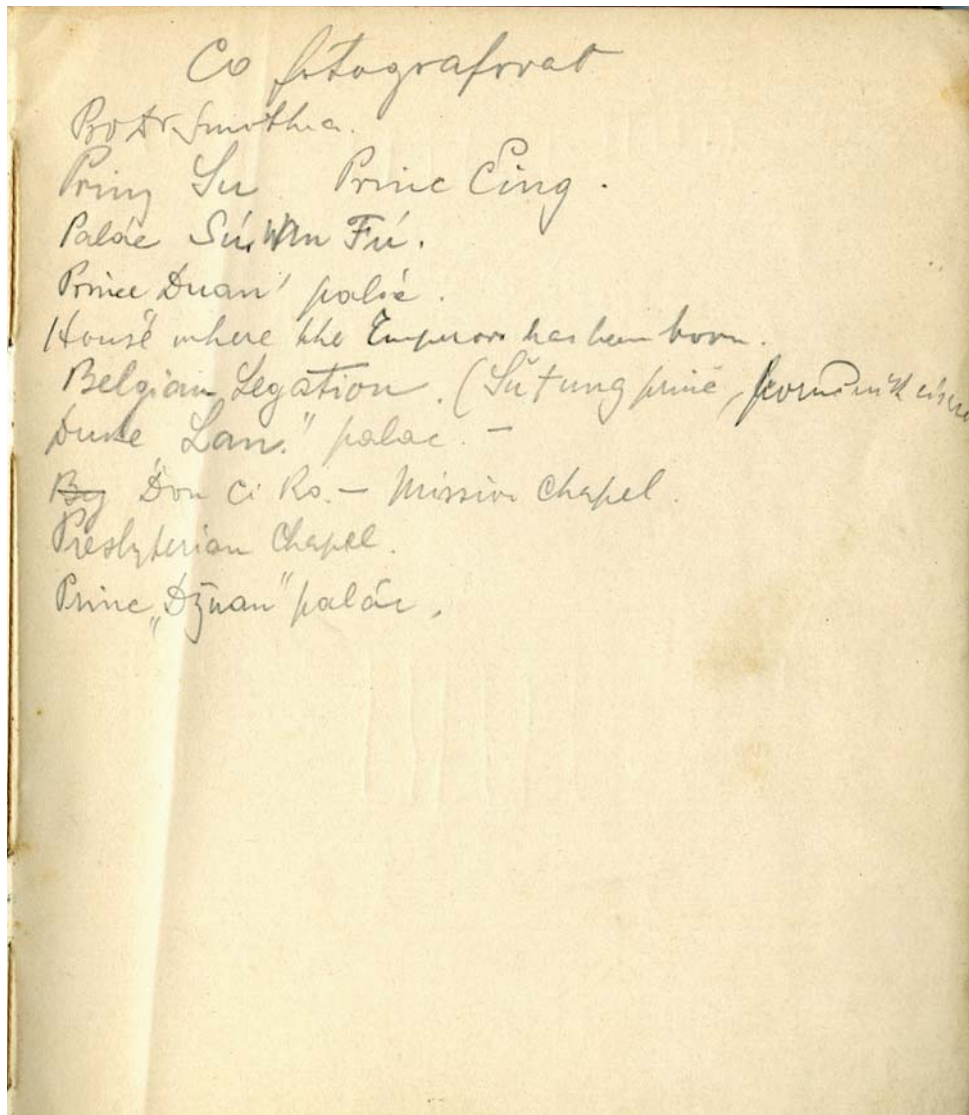
### Internet Resources:

Jin Moyu's father Aisin Gioro Shanqi was the 10<sup>th</sup> Prince Su of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911)

– [http://china.org.cn/photos/2014-05/28/content\\_32514685\\_3.htm](http://china.org.cn/photos/2014-05/28/content_32514685_3.htm);

National Museum – <http://vademecum.nm.cz/nm/>;

Shanqi 善耆 – <https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/善耆>.



Pl. 1





MATERIALIA

Pl. 2



Pl. 3



Pl. 4



Pl. 5

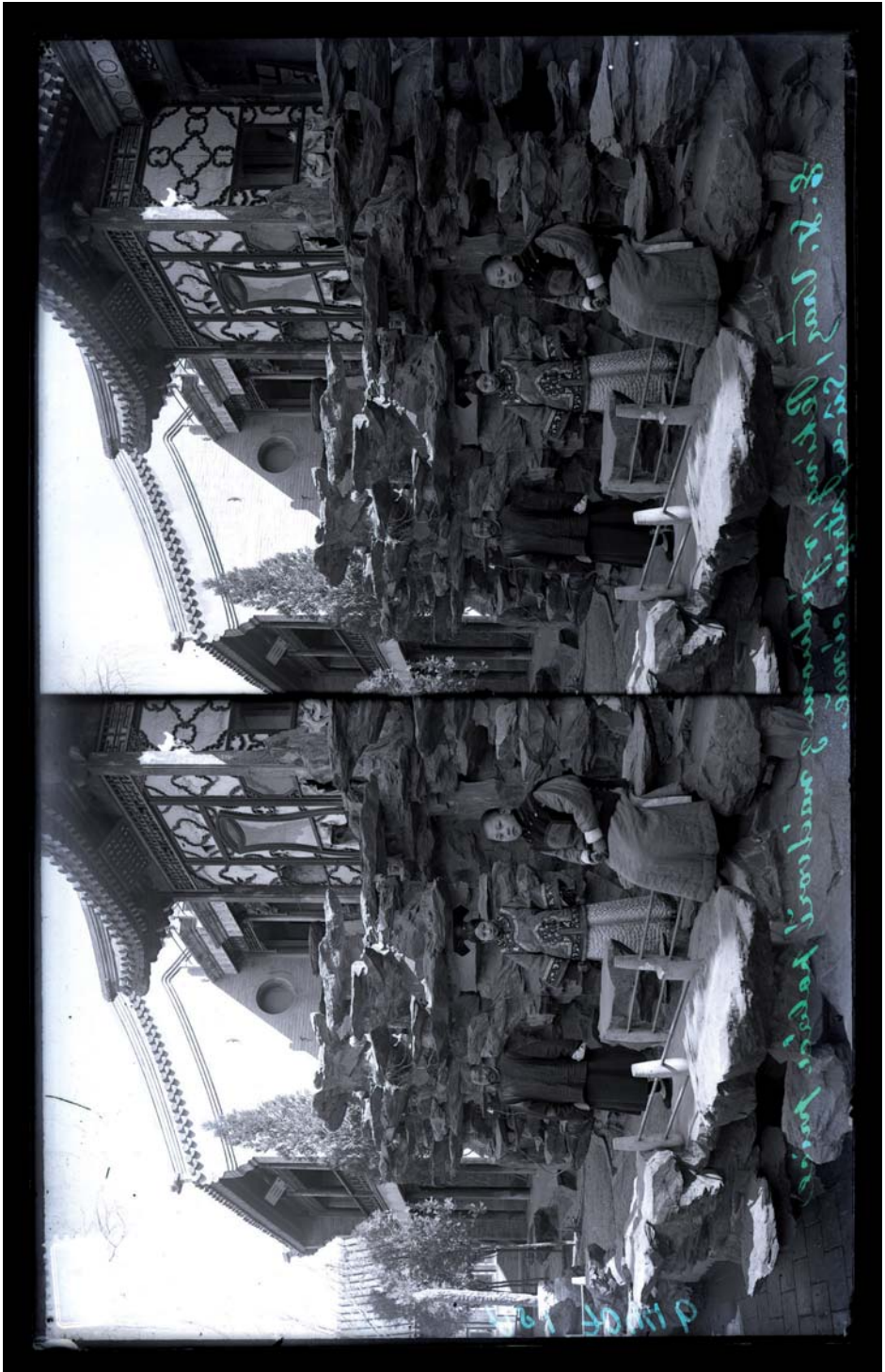




Pl. 6







Pl. 8



Pl. 9



Pl. 10





Pl. 11