

**“It is always the same mixture...”\*<sup>1</sup>**

## **The Antiques Dealer Salomon Weininger and Vienna Counterfeiting in the Age of Historicism**

**By Paulus Rainer**

“To the horror of his audience he opined that he values a successful counterfeit just as much as an original.”<sup>2</sup> With these words in 1885 Bruno Bucher, Vice Director of the kaiserlich königlichen Österreichischen Museum für Kunst und Industrie (Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Decorative Arts = kkÖM), cited the view of German architect Gottfried Semper (1803 – 1879). In his speech Bucher contradicted the opinion of Semper, a leading theoretician and reformer of the decorative arts in the age of historicism. But in the art and trade scene of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Semper’s opinion regarding copy and original was not an isolated one. An increased nationalism in the European states combined with an easy comparison of national art and industrial production at the world expositions had brought about – first in England and shortly after also in the Habsburg monarchy – institutional endeavors for improvements of local decorative arts production. In London the South Kensington Museum (today the Victoria & Albert) was established as early as 1851 as a museum dedicated to the decorative art trades with an associated school with the aim to provide a better education for artisans.

In Vienna the English model was copied in 1863 with the founding of the kkÖM, today the Museum für Angewandte Kunst (Museum of Applied Arts = MAK). The mission of this institution, which was enlarged with a school for decorative arts in 1867, was to elevate public taste as well as to educate a new generation of artists and artisans. The study of historical models and techniques here was a strict requirement; and initially it was irrelevant if the model to be studied was an original, a photograph or a galvano-plastic copy. Of note here is that the first inventoried goldsmiths’ work of the new museum was a cup and cover that was an electrotyped copy made by Carl Haas (1825–1880).<sup>3</sup>

- Translation of Paulus Rainer: “Es ist immer dieselbe Melange” Der Antiquitätenhändler Salomon Weininger und das Wiener Kunstfälscherwesen im Zeitalter des Historismus” from German to English by Dr. Dorothea Burstyn. I would like to thank Dr. W. P. Hood Jr. for proofreading the manuscript.

1. These were the words Court president Franz Schwaiger used to explain the principles of the “Weininger Style” to the jurors in the trial against Franz Discart, Salomon Weininger and Moritz Grundemann, February 21-26, 1877, see Neue Freie Presse, February 24, 1877, 7.



In an age of euphorical eclecticism the ability to produce authentic looking copies was indeed seen as a success in advancing artistic production; but soon the problems accompanying this output were recognized. In 1869 an article “Counterfeiting of old art objects” was published in reports of the kkÖM outlining the status quo of counterfeiting.<sup>4</sup> The author noted that: “.....everywhere inventive minds and skillful hands are busy copying furniture, weapons, faience and goldsmiths’ works; in short everything that can be copied is reproduced in the most authentic way possible. I don’t have to mention that modern advances of technical science and chemistry are useful tools in this respect.” In Paris and Vienna artisans are busy copying “German 16<sup>th</sup> century works in Kehlheim stone (pièrre de Munich).” Furniture is copied in Venice, Cologne, Paris and Brussels.<sup>5</sup> The centers for copying old weapons are Stuttgart, Paris, Nuremberg and Munich. “Goldsmiths’ works in the style of Rudolph II.....are a speciality of Paris and Viennese artisans. These are mostly objects made of rock crystal with enameled settings which are offered to a Russian and English clientele in fashionable spas and in Frankfurt.”<sup>6</sup>

Foremost among fakers was the Paris goldsmith and restorer Alfred André (1839–1919).<sup>7</sup> In Vienna the name of Salomon Weininger surfaces; it was he who was suspected – after the often quoted 1974 essay by John E. Hayward<sup>8</sup> – to be the man behind almost every 19<sup>th</sup> century Viennese forgery. And indeed Salomon Weininger was responsible for a number of fakes; additionally he was also found guilty of theft and fraud in two spectacular and much reported court cases. But he was neither the thus-described “master faker”<sup>9</sup> nor the “fraudulent, scrupleless jeweler” who received “especially precious objects from the royal treasury for restoration.”<sup>10</sup> As will be shown in this essay, Salomon Weininger was a skillful and well-connected antiques dealer who understood how to use to his advantage the special circumstances of the era of historicism. Within the vast reservoir of artisans trained to imitate historic styles he found a few willing artists to work for him. The general eclectic interests and the propagation of imitating historic styles offered an ideal climate; the production of copies was the daily bread of many artisans.

Today we know that most of the fakes ordered by Weininger remained undetected during his lifetime. During his interrogations and trials beginning in 1876 he only admitted what was already known or what seemed promising for a milder sentence. Both court cases against Weininger dealt with his activities connected with the muse-

2. Brunner Bucher, “Mit Gunst” *Aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart der Handwerker*, Leipzig 1886, 119
3. Elisabeth Schmuttermeier: *Japanische, Indisch, Persisch, Europäisch....Die Anfänge der Metallsammlung*, in exhibition catalogue: Peter Noever (Editor) *Kunst und Industrie, Die Anfänge des Museums für Angewandte Kunst in Wien*, Wien 2000, 159
4. F.L.Ueber *Fälschung alter Kunstgegenstände* in: Mittheilungen des k.k.Österreichischen fuer Kunst und Industrie III, 1869, 17-24.
5. F.L. 1869, *ibid*, 20
6. F.L. 1869, *ibid* 21
7. See Rudolf Distelberger: *Alfred André* in: Exhibition catalogue Rudolf Distelberger, Alison Luchs, Philippe Verdier, Timothy H. Wilson, *Western Decorative Arts Part I: Medieval, Renaissance, and Historicizing Styles Including Metalwork, Enamels and Ceramics*, Washington (National Gallery of Art) 1993, 282-287
8. John F. Hayward, *Salomon Weininger, Master Faker*, in: *Connoisseur* 169, November 1974, 170-179
9. Hayward 1974, *ibid*,
10. Arpad Weixlgärtner: *Führer durch die Geistliche Schatzkammer*, 1929,8,note 2.

um of the Palais Modena, Vienna. Here he borrowed from the so-called Estense Collection various objects, had them copied and then replaced the originals with the copies. Similar were his activities regarding objects in the Ecclesiastical Treasury in the Vienna Hofburg, today part of the collections of the Kunsthistorische Museum. Thanks to its holdings of thousands of reliquaries, devotional items, paintings, liturgical objects and vestments of high artistic value, the Ecclesiastical Treasury is one of the world's most important sacred collections. Due to Weininger's activities it suffered several painful losses. Today we know that the holdings of the Ecclesiastical Treasury include at least fourteen forgeries or *pasticci* of copied and original parts. This essay will deal with some of these objects but mainly with Weininger as a person, his methods and modus operandi. It will also discuss the results of the extensive research of the trial protocols and the court reporting in local newspapers. This will not only shine a light on Weininger's activities but also illustrate the Viennese art production scene and collecting activities in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Salomon Weininger, the man

Salomon Weininger was born in 1822 in Hradisch (Hradištê), today Slovenia, the son of Jewish parents Bernard (Bernath) Weininger and Amalia Poggonek, later, married Weiß.<sup>11</sup> He worked as a merchant from 1841 to 1847 in the city of Krems (Lower Austria). In 1851 he was a founding member of the local Jewish prayer house and its first overseer.<sup>12</sup> A year later he purchased property at Dreifaltigkeitsplatz 3 as well as a vineyard which made him the first Jewish property owner in Krems after the 1848 Revolution.

Next we hear about Weininger in 1853; his storage rooms had burned down on the evening of May 3. Two weeks later a report was published in the local press; its author "S.T." related somewhat obscurely an attack on Weininger in connection with the store rooms fire describing Weininger as "an honored family man" of "philanthropic disposition" who was forced to flee a "satanic mob." Three men had threatened to beat him up.<sup>13</sup> After the city council wanted to start an investigation of the case, Weininger published a retraction in the local press. Here Weininger denied ever having been attacked, saying on the contrary the citizens of Krems had hurried to help extinguish the fire.<sup>14</sup> This incident is of importance as it mentions Weininger's name in connection with a court case for the first time. Obviously he was not quite innocent in the matter as he was sentenced to a 15 fl. fine for actions involving fire hazards.<sup>15</sup>

11. In the trial there were doubts about Weininger's place of birth as there were two birth certificates, one of 1826 Mislitz, Moravia and the other 1822 Hradisch, Hungary. Weininger insisted to have been born in Mislitz, but the Court decided on Hradisch as his birthplace. This essay shares this opinion since Weininger's birthplace is given as Hradisch in the death book of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Vienna. (Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv Fotosammlung, IKG Sterbebuch, A 988/3)

12. For more on Weininger's residence in Krems, see also Hannelore Hrtschka, *Die Geschichte der Juden in Krems an der Donau von den Anfängen bis zu 1938*, thesis University Vienna, 1978, Vol.2,352

13. Hrtschka, 1978, *ibid*, endnote 12, Vol.1, 243f., Vol.2, 218 f.

14. Die Presse, No.120, May 22 1853, 11

15. Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (City archive Vienna)



Then, only little is known of Weininger until 1855. He sold his property at Dreifaltigkeitsplatz 3 in 1855 and moved to Vienna<sup>16</sup> where he again came into conflict with the law. This time his punishment was much harsher. On April 24, 1856, the Imperial Regional Court of Vienna sentenced Weininger to eight years in a dungeon for fraudulent bankruptcy.<sup>17</sup>

After being released from prison in 1863, he used “a small capital of several 100 fl. raised by his relatives”<sup>18</sup> to start an antiques dealership. This venture succeeded and Weininger soon became affluent.<sup>19</sup> The main business was derived from sales of Viennese porcelain. When the famous Vienna Porcelain Manufactory closed its doors, Weininger and a Hungarian partner S... cunningly bought “...most of the stock of white, unpainted porcelain,” which they then had painted by “young porcelain painters with pretty old Viennese patterns copied from museum pieces. Sometimes minor damages were added. Since they also had purchased a lot of unglazed seconds, they had stock at their disposal which could last years.”<sup>20</sup> As both the unpainted white pieces as well as the seconds bore the original mark of the Vienna Porcelain Manufactory, Weininger and his partner sold the newly painted pieces as authentic Old Viennese porcelain. It can be assumed that this “business” showed a healthy profit margin.

Not all Weininger’s activities were unlawful or fraudulent. Legal business dealings included the sale of two Brussels gobelins (Manufactory W. Seghers, Brussels, circa 1550; MAK Inventory numbers T 1746-1871 and T1747-1871) to the kkÖM in 1871 for the immense price of 1300fl.<sup>21</sup> Because of tempting profits Weininger’s criminal potential seemed to gain the upper hand, and more and more he focused on metal objects. He had copies made by young Viennese artists and artisans which he sold profitably.

16. The exact date of Weininger’s move to Vienna is unknown but it has to be before his son’s Leopold birthdate, January 31, 1854. Leopold is registered as being born in Vienna. I want to thank Wolf-Erik Eckstein for this information. Leopold Weininger is only mentioned in the Viennese address book in 1865, but only tenants and owners are registered there, not persons who lived in the same household. From 1865 to 1867 Leopold Weininger is living at Untere Donaustrasse 25, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Viennese district, and from 1868-1870 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> district, Pfeffergasse 7, 1873 to 1874 he lives in Rudolfsheim,

Arnsteig 19. His profession is given as “businessman”) In the Vienna professional directory “Lehmann” he is listed as having premises at Beatrixgasse 28,3<sup>rd</sup> district as “antique dealer”. Salomon Weininger is listed at the same address, as *antiquities dealer*.

17. Exact data for this trial cannot be given since the proceedings are not available, and there are no press reports.

18. Indictment, May 10 1876, City archives Vienna LGSt. Vienna, A 11, Vt.2727/1877, fol.29v.

19. Ibid, it is noted therein that Weininger is affluent.

20. Paul Eudel, Bruno Bucher, Arthur Roessler: *Fälscherkünste*. Nach der autorisierten Ausgabe von Bruno Bucher, Neu herausgegeben und ergänzt von Arthur Roessler, Leipzig 1909, 145. Roessler claimed to have received the information from the daughter of Weininger’s partner “S”. Bucher gives a similar description of Weininger’s methods, but does not mention a partner “S...”. see also Paul Eudel, Bruno Bucher: *Die Fälscherkünste, Le Truquage*, Leipzig 1885, 135 f. also see Waltraud Neuwirth: *Wiener Porzellan, Original, Kopie, Verfälschung, Fälschung*, Vienna 1979, 63, 353,371

21. For this information I am grateful to Angela Völcker.

22. See: *Katalog der galvanoplastischen Reproduktionen, ausgeführt im galvanoplastischen Atelier des kais.königl.österreich. Museums in Wien*, geleitet von Herrn C. Haas, k.k. Hofmetallwaaren-Fabrikant, Neubau, Dreilaufgasse 2, Vienna, no date

23. Gabriele Fabian-kowitzsch, *Das Vermittlungsprogramm des k. k. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie*, in AK Wien 2000, 180,

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to produce and sell authentic copies of precious objects was not seen as a criminal offence as it would be today; on the contrary, galvano-plastic reproductions of metal objects were produced and sold officially by the “galvanoplastischen Atelier” (galvano-plastic studio) of the kkÖM.<sup>23</sup> Detailed plaster casts offered as room decoration could be bought at the museum. The museum’s copying activities were not limited to the museum’s holdings, but also included reproductions of loans from the royal and other aristocratic collections.<sup>24</sup> With the sale of these reproductions the museum not only satisfied the emerging bourgeoisie’s great demand for “antiquities” but was also faithful to its mission to raise public taste.<sup>25</sup>

Since copies to educate the public were sold officially it would not have been an offense if private dealers did likewise. Thus it is not surprising that Weininger testified that “many monasteries gave him orders to have reproductions made,”<sup>26</sup> and that “he had access to many collections”<sup>27</sup> as well as official permission to copy art objects. His sponsor in this respect was the honorable Beda Dudik (1815–1890), imperial councilor, historiographer and Benedictine monk. Dudik’s relationship with Weininger dated back to 1870, and they had many business dealings after that. At the Vienna World Exposition in 1873, Dudik was responsible for the Moravian Department of the “Pavillon des Amateurs.” Here Dudik included some of the objects of Weininger, whose collection he described “as astounding and surprising.”<sup>28</sup> On Dudik’s recommendation Weininger got permission to copy items from the family collection of Count Daun.<sup>29</sup> And it was this honored and educated Benedictine monk who got Weininger “permission to borrow and copy antique objects from the museum of the Duke of Modena, Francis V of Austria-Este (1819 – 1875).”<sup>30</sup>

The fact that Weininger had the institutions’ and owners’ expressed permission to copy their art objects has been ignored or omitted by every author who wrote about Weininger to date. Paul Eudel does not mention this nor do Bruno Bucher, Arthur Roessler, Leo Planiscig, Ernst Kris, John F. Hayward or Renate Eikelmann.<sup>31</sup> Of course none of these authors dealt with Weininger’s activities extensively. But it should be emphasized here that Weininger was offered the models from the institutions and owners, and their copying was approved. Weininger’s vast forgery activities can only be understood given the special circumstances of his time. The step from legal copying to illegal forgery was just a small one, and in the beginning Weininger worked in a grey area between these two poles.

24. In the catalogue of galvano-plastic reproductions objects from the following institutions are reproduced: k.k.Antikenkabinett, k.k. Treasury, St.Peter in Salzburg, Monastery Klosterneuburg, Treasury of the German Order, Marcus Library, Venice and Louvre, Paris.

25. See also the § 1 der Statuten des k. k. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie,

March 31, 1864, printed in: Kathrin Pokorny, *Zur Gründungsgeschichte des k.k. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie*, in AK Wien 2000, , 52,

26. Court report, June 8, 1876 in Neue Freie Presse, June 9.1876, No.4233

27. Court report, February 22, 1877 in: Wiener Abendpost, February 22 1877, No.43

28. Court report , June 8, 1876, in Neue Freie Presse, evening edition, Feb.22, 1877, No.4487

29. Court report, February 22, 1877 in: Wiener Abendpost, February 22, 1877, No.43

30. Indictment, May 10,1876, ibid

31. See Eudel, Bucher 1885, Eudel, Bucher, Roessler 1909; Leo Planiscig, Ernst Kris, in :exhibition catalogue V. *Ausstel-*

*lung: Gefälschte Kunstwerke*, Wien (Kunsthistorisches Museum) 1937; Hayward 1974 ibid, Renate Eikelmann, *Franko-flämische Emailplastik des Spätmittelalters*, thesis University Munich 1984, published 1995, 616

## Weininger's activities at the Museum Palais Modena and his trial 1876

Weininger was allowed to borrow small bronzes from the Duke of Modena Museum. This museum was in the Palais Modena, Beatrixgasse, 3<sup>rd</sup> district of Vienna, that would be demolished in 1916. Until 1904 it was not open to the public. At this time the museum housed part of a musical instruments collection, as well as decorative arts objects, a collections of arms and armors, and some of the sculptures of the Estense Collection. Francis V, Duke of Modena, had transferred these to Vienna after having to leave Italy due to the loss of the battle at Magenta (1859).<sup>32</sup> By approaching Archduke Wilhelm Franz Karl of Habsburg-Lothringen to use his influence with Duke Francis V, Dudik got permission for Weininger to borrow Modena objects to copy. As Dudik testified at the trial, he believed that Weininger was "avidly supporting local art," as "imitation raises the quality of the artisan production."<sup>33</sup> In this respect Dudik was in harmony with the dominant zeitgeist, which also explains the activities of the kkÖM.

Yet in the end it was this permission to borrow and copy art objects from the Estense Collection and the resulting profit that became Weininger's undoing. As approved, he borrowed objects from the collection and had them copied. He then returned the copies instead of the originals to the museum. The originals were subsequently sold at a high profit. These activities were finally discovered and led to two trials. Weininger was sentenced to five years of heavy prison labor in 1876 for fraud, and in 1877 he was sentenced to an additional two years and deportation as an accessory to fraud and embezzlement. The author's extensive study of the court proceedings and the related press reports allows for the first time an exact description of the forgers and their methods. This seems especially important since it is suspected that the better part of Weininger's fakes are still undiscovered and are awaiting identification.

Weininger's exchange of originals with copies in the museum of the Palais Modena was not immediately detected. After the duke's death November 20, 1875, two appraisers, Heinrich Kuwas and Matthias Löscher, made an inventory of the museum's collections. Around this time certain rumors circulated in Vienna that "in the duke's museum originals had been replaced by copies,"<sup>36</sup> which the appraisers ignored.

But shortly after having finished the inventory the armorer Johann Böck offered for sale two shields to Matthias Löscher. He immediately noticed the striking similarity with shields in the Modena collection

32. Francis V art collection was inherited by the successor to the throne Archduke Franz Ferdinand. After the end of the Habsburg monarchy a part was incorporated in the Kunsthistorische Museum, the balance – above all the collection of arms and armors is now in Castle Konopiště, also see Leo Planiscig: *Die Estense Kunstsammlung, Vol.1: Skulpturen und Plastiken des Mittelalters*

*und der Renaissance, Vienna 1919, V-VIII*

33. Court report February 22, 1877, in Wiener Abendpost, February 22, 1877, No.43

34. Renate Eikermann thesis' gives some facts of the Weininger trial. She also wanted to write a study about Weininger, but this came never to fruition. Eikermann 1984/1995, 616

35. The inventory was done in February 1876, but the appraisers encountered very difficult working conditions, the museum's rooms were filled with very strong fumes, "that one could not see properly and a longer stay in the rooms was impossible, the smell of a fire lasted throughout the time of the appraisals." City Archives, LGSt.Vienna, A 11/1877, fol.190

36. Court report, June 8.1876 in: Neue Freie Presse, June 9, 1876, No.4233



Fig.1 Shield with a scene of Hercules battling Hydra, Detail, Italian, 16th century, now in the armory of Castle Konopiště

that he had appraised just a short while before. As he related his belief that these shields must have been part of the museum's collection, the armorer was surprised and insisted that he himself had fashioned these shields and that Weininger had supplied the original model. Löscher purchased the shields, brought them to the museum and detected to his surprise that one of the shields in the Modena collection must also be a copy. As he had appraised the shield as original he now reported this to the authorities. Viktor Knight of Raindl, the agent acting for the heir of Francis V had the shield newly appraised, and as it was confirmed to be a forgery, the museum was sealed on March 27.<sup>37</sup> An official investigation was started.

The suspect Salomon Weiniger was interrogated by the police first on April 10, and had to appear at the Imperial Circuit Court June 8, 1876, a scant two months later. He was charged with fraud.<sup>38</sup> The prosecution charged Weininger with the exchange first of the shield which was described as "a knight's iron shield chased with a scene of Hercules battling Hydra with several border medallions featuring various battle scenes, valued at at least 5000fl., museum number 214." (Fig.1)<sup>39</sup> Next Weininger was charged with the exchange of "an old Italian (Roman) helmet, museum number 213, valued at 5000fl," and similarly with "two iron stirrup shoes, museum number 135, valued at 500 fl."<sup>40</sup> The original stirrup shoes were found in Weininger's apartment. The original shield surfaced with stock exchange agent Wilhelm Mattersdorf, to whom Weininger had offered it along with other antiques. The helmet had been sold and could not be returned. Weininger had received all three objects officially either from the duke's private secretary and curator of the museum, Francis Knight of Discart, or the custodian of the museum, Wenzel Bazant.

Each object was signed out to Weininger with the promise that he was liable for possible damage. This approach was chosen after the Duke of Modena had insisted that his secretary speak with “His Highness Prince Albrecht as to what precautions would be necessary for lending art objects for the purpose of copying, as this could be fraught with danger for the owner; after all, the copying and profitable sale of art object copies could be compared to coin forgeries.”<sup>42</sup>

The Duke of Modena had set effective loan rules; their control and strict application was to be executed by a person of his confidence, his private secretary and curator of his museums, Francis of Discart. The role that Discart played in this connection was not pursued at the 1876 trial.

The copied objects were held as *corpora delicti* at court. During the trial their methods of production was described. First photographs and plaster casts of the loaned items were made. Then these plus the originals were given to armorer Johann Böck and artisans Ludwig Kranner and Eduard Grünes to make copies. The blanks were made by metal worker Eduard Wessely, while Eduard Grünes was responsible for chasing and finishing. Damascening was executed by Joseph Wölfel. Weininger had been introduced to Böck by goldsmith Karl Bender, whose role will be disclosed further on.<sup>43</sup> According to the opinion of Eduard Freiherr von Sacken, then director of the Imperial Royal Ambras collections, this way deceptively good copies were produced.

During the trial another event which shines a light on Weininger’s business dealings and relations was discussed. The antiques dealer Georg Plach, who advised the Rothschild family in their antique collecting, testified that Weininger had offered to him a helmet with the remark that “it would be suitable for Baron Rothschild.” Plach recognized this helmet as the one from the Modena collection, and “as Weininger had had former business dealings with the Rothschilds on Plach’s advice,”<sup>44</sup> Plach understood this as an offer for sale. The court decided that this testimony was not clear enough, and did not make further charges. Remarkable in this respect is Plach’s testimony to former business connections between Weininger and Rothschild.

Seen from a historic perspective Weininger’s trial left many questions unanswered. Only the Modena shield, the helmet and the stirrup shoes – proven as fakes in the pre-trial investigations – were subjects of the trial. “Two shields, weapons, bowls, etc.”<sup>45</sup> that Weininger had given to stock exchange agent Mattersdorfer were not dealt with, nor was Weininger’s offer of the helmet to Plach/Rothschild consid-

37. Indictment: Victor von Raindl, March 27, 1876, City Archives LGSt. Vienna, A11, Vr.2727/1877, fol.38

38. All information about the trial against Weininger, June 8, 1876 are taken from the indictment, the court proceedings and further files at City Archives, *ibid*, as well as from court reports in *Wiener Zeitung*, June 9, 1876, No.131, 5 f. and of the *Neue Freie Presse*, June 8, 1876, No.4232 and June9, 1876, No.4233

39. The shield is now in the collection of Castle Kopopiste, Czech Republic, see also Ludise Letosnikova: *Die Rüstammer im Schloss Konopiste*, Prague 1970, 14.

40. Vienna City Archives, LGSt, Vienna, A11, Vt.2727/1877, fol.29

41. Indictment May 10, 1876, City Archives, LGSt. Vienna, A 11, Vr.2727/1877, fol.30

42. Court report in *Wiener Zeitung*, February 24, 1877, No.44, 6

43. Court report in *Wiener Zeitung*, *ibid*

44. Court proceedings, June 8, 1876, Vienna City Archives, A11, Vr.2727/1877, fol.46

45. Court report in *Neue Freie Presse*, 9.June 1876



46. All information is taken from *Tagebuch über die beim k. k. Landesgericht anhängige Untersuchung gegen Salomon Weininger, Franz Discart, Graf Moritz Grundemann*, (Diary of the proceedings at the regional court against Salomon Weininger, Franz Discart and Count Grundemann) Vienna City Archives, LGSt., Vienna, A11, Vr. 2727/1877, 1-15 v.
47. Re antiques dealer Murray Marks see Clive Wainright, "A gather and disposer of other men's stuffe", *Murray Marks, connoisseur and curiosity dealer in Journal of the History of Collections* 14, No.1, 2002, 161-176
48. Court report in *Neue Freie Presse*, February 7, 1877
49. *Tagebuch* (Diary) fol.8v."26.9. Prison Director Report about the disciplinary punishment of S. Weininger.
50. City Archives, LGSt. Vienna, A11, Vr.2727/1877, fol.122v.
51. Court report in *Neue Freie Presse*, February 21, 1877, 2
52. City Archives, LGSt.Vienna, A11, Vr.2727/1877, 120 f.
53. Court report in *Prager Tagblatt*, February 23, 1877, 3

ered. It is clear that the trial should not be seen as a complete investigation of Weininger's forgery activities. It was impossible to expose the full extent of Weininger's criminal business dealings since the pre-trial investigation lasted not even two months. But the charges were enough to sentence the perpetrator to five years of prison "made more stringent with a day of fasting instead of chains." Furthermore Weininger had to pay damage costs of 7000fl for the sale of the helmet as well as the costs for a new appraisal of all items in the Modena museum. Weininger could not be sentenced to the deportation sought by the prosecution, since his citizenship could not be ascertained.

### The 1877 trial

After Weininger's sentencing Simon Grünwald and Eduard Grünes filed petitions for nullity as well as clemency; neither was heard. Weininger was released on bail of 18000fl,<sup>46</sup> but his freedom was of short duration. A scant month later, on July 14, London antiques dealer Murray Marks reported Weininger to the authorities,<sup>47</sup> claiming fraud regarding the purchase of two altars. Weininger and his son Leopold were arrested, Weiniger was re-imprisoned, and a more thorough investigation started. Weininger's apartments in Hütteldorf and Vienna were searched, many witnesses and suspects interrogated, and a new investigation of the Modena collection was ordered. Further replacements were now found. Due to the new investigations and findings Weininger felt driven into a corner and planned a prison escape. Thus he "tried to bribe prison personnel to facilitate an escape."<sup>48</sup> His plan to escape was unsuccessful, and Weininger was put in chains.<sup>49</sup>

Further investigations brought about new accusations. Decisive pointers came from Weininger's testimonies. In the new trial on February 21, 1877, at the Imperial Circuit Court not only Weininger but also the Duke of Modena's former private secretary and curator of the museum, Franz of Discart, was charged. Implicated was also Moritz Count Grundemann, who had to appear in court.

Discart was charged with theft; he had removed objects valued at 23800 fl without permission. As Weininger had instigated the theft and had returned forgeries instead of the originals to Discart, he was charged with accessory to the theft. Furthermore Weininger was charged with outright theft. At the World Exposition 1873, he had stolen a gold chain with 12 smaller and 11 larger white and blue enameled buttons belonging to Count Daun from a case in the Moravian Department of the "Pavillon des Amateurs." An additional charge against Weininger concerned the production of two altars in 1874 and 1875, which "he had fashioned by arti-



sans in the style of the beginning 17<sup>th</sup> century made from gold, silver and precious stones.”<sup>50</sup> Weininger had instructed his son to sell these forgeries as authentic objects to London antiques dealer Emanuel Marks. Weininger also got Count Grundemann to attest in writing to the provenance of these altars as having been property of an aristocratic family. The official appraisal stated the value of these altars to be 30000 fl. Marks had sold the altars for £ 20000 (=254000 fl) and had suffered a loss of 224000 fl.

Since Grundemann had written the aforementioned letters and Weininger had given him approximately 60000 fl. to pay his debts, Grundemann was charged with accessory to fraud. Regarding the objects from the museum Modena, only those for which a monetary value could be established were included.<sup>51</sup> The list of corpora delicti contained: "a. an acid-etched gilt plate armor decorated with an image of Madonna, value 800 fl; b. an armor with acid etched stripes, value 200 fl; c. an acid-etched round shield, its upper part decorated with twisted iron wire , value 50 fl;

d. an iron body armor decorated with a lion head, value 3000 fl; e. an old-Italian style sword with open blade, value 500 fl; f. a horse armor, value 600 fl; g. a flintlock, value 1000fl.; h. a damascened iron rosary, a so-called "Zehnter" (sic), (Fig. 2) value 1000fl; i. an antique bottle inlaid with rock crystal, value 500 fl; k. a sword with lion head grips, value 400 fl; l. a saber with a gilt basket and decorated with small amourette heads (Piccinino blade) value 300 fl; m. a Spanish saber with half grip (Piccinino blade), value 600 fl.; n. a long saber with triangular cross section, a so-called tuck (tank breaker) with basket, value 800 fl; o. a wheel lock rifle inlaid with ivory and gold, value 5000 fl; p. two wheel lock pistols, inlaid with ivory, value 3000 fl; q. two pistols made by Lazarino Cominazzo, value 1600 fl; r. a gilt souvenir card case (porte-cartes) decorated with miniature portraits of Louis XVI and his sister, value 2000 fl; s. a gold card case (porte-cartes) decorated with two child portraits, value 500 fl; t. an enameled 'Ecce homo,' value 200 fl; u. a flint lock decorated with a deer's head and snake, value 150 fl; and v. two pistols with iron grips (Lazarino Cominazzo), value 1600 fl." <sup>52</sup>

A report in the *Prager Tagblatt* (Prague Daily) describes in detail the display of the various objects in the court rooms: "All antiques and imitations were displayed in the court room on the landing of the staircase that leads to the bench. Three armors were mounted on the wall behind the bench; three shields were displayed on the stairs landing below an arrangement of crossed swords with groupings of pistols and smaller objects on each side. A wonderfully ivory- decorated rifle is a true masterpiece. The two altars are displayed in locked showcases left of the staircase."<sup>53</sup>



Fig. 2 "Zehner"—Rosary, Italian, circa 1580, Vienna, Kunsthistorische Museum, Kunstammer, Inv.No. KK 8011

During the trial it became clear that Weininger and Discart cooperated closely in producing the forgeries. Discart's part was to hand over various museum objects to Weininger; the details of the copying process had already become known during the first trial. As previously reported, Weininger had received Duke of Modena's "permission to borrow small bronzes for the purpose of copying."<sup>54</sup> Discart expanded this permission greatly upon "promises to receive one imitation of each loaned object, and additional commission payments."<sup>55</sup>

To avoid the exchange of an original with a copy Weininger had to sign a receipt which contained a clause holding Weininger liable for damage. It was now clear why this precaution was rendered ineffective since Discart had control over the return of the loan objects. The cooperation of an antiques dealer and curator made an easy exchange of the originals possible. The fact that Weininger resided just opposite the Palais Modena on Beatrixgasse facilitated the transport of objects from the museum and the return of copies. During the trial it became clear that Weininger and Discart were creative in their endeavors. A rifle that Weininger wanted to have copied was sown into a sofa and with a furniture exchange smuggled out of the museum and into Weininger's apartment. Other objects were either sent to Weininger, or he had them picked up. Weininger testified that he "had received circa 100 objects for which he paid Discart 70000 fl."<sup>56</sup>

The originals were sold through Paris and London dealers. As Emanuel Marks testified, Weininger had a business connection with him and his son Murray. Marks took higher priced objects on consignment while lower priced merchandise was bought immediately for resale. Thus the rifle which was sent to Weininger in a sofa was detected at Marks. Furthermore a shield, a body armor, a sword with lion head grips, a horse armor and flint lock were found on Marks' premises – all displayed as corpora delicti during the trial. Weininger testified further that he also had sold the enameled "Ecce homo" to Marks. In Paris Weininger had business relations with Oppenheim Frères; here an acid-etched armor was found –all these found objects were subjects of the charges against Weininger. A further Paris business contact was the antiques dealer Bousier, but unfortunately the court proceedings do not give details about the extent of these dealings. Along with his business contacts in Paris and London, Weininger sold his "antiques" also in Vienna. Using his contacts to Viennese dealers, as for instance Georg Plach, he tried to approach financially strong clients to whom he did not have direct access. The Rothschilds were such clients; as ascertained in the first trial Wein-

54. Court report in Wiener Zeitung, February 22, 1877, 5

55. Court report in Wiener Zeitung, February 22, 1877, 5

56. Court report in Neue Freie Presse, February 21, 1877, 2

inger had tried to sell the Roman helmet from the Estense Collection to Nathaniel de Rothschild using Plach as a go-between.

### **Two altars in style and taste, second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century**

With the help of Marks, Weininger had sold one of the altars to Alphonse de Rothschild, a sale which triggered legal proceedings against Weininger. The sale took several years to complete. In 1874 Weininger had shown Emanuel Marks parts of the altar (a vase, a wing of the altar and an angel) during a visit to Vienna. Weininger claimed that these pieces came from an old aristocratic family; being short of cash he could not buy the entire altar but hoped to soon be able to complete the deal and would give Marks the first right of refusal. Marks took parts of the altar to London to show to his sons. In 1875 Weininger brought both altars to London and offered them to Marks for a price of £ 30000. In March 1875 Marks informed Weininger that he would be able to sell the altars to Richard Wallace for £ 25000, but the sale depended on a certificate of authenticity and provenance.

Now Weininger had his childhood friend Moritz Count Grundemann write a letter, dated May 26, 1875, stating that both altars had been his family's property since 1629. Grundemann's letters were addressed to his London cousin Count Teck, so that Marks would get the same information should he ever try to inquire. The invented provenance would thus be covered from all possible sides. A goldsmith tested the altars and found that some of its parts were just silver-gilt and not solid gold. Obviously this was enough reason for Richard Wallace to back out of the deal. Marks now bought the altars in partnership with art dealer Henry Durlacher for a reduced price of £ 20000. Before closing the deal Durlacher insisted on a further assessment of the altars by August W. Franks, the curator of the British Museum. As Franks only found some restorations but had no doubt as of the authenticity, Durlacher arranged the sale of the altars to Alphonse de Rothschild in Paris. Alphonse had had the altars a few months when Nathaniel de Rothschild paid him a visit. When Nathaniel saw the altars he noted that these must be a forgery as he had seen them at Weininger in Vienna. The altars were returned to Durlacher and Marks for a refund. Before that Emanuel Marks had sent his son Murray to Vienna to shed light on the authenticity of the altars, and Weininger nearly convinced him. But after Nathaniel de Rothschild told Murray Marks that "Weininger was professionally involved in forgery and that he should report this case to the authorities,"<sup>57</sup> Marks followed this advice and brought legal action against Salomon Weininger on July 14, 1876.

57. City Archives, LGSt. Vienna, A11, Vr.2727/1877, 155v.

Trial preparations brought about a further assessment of the altars, and it was found that the decoration included white and blue rosettes. These were immediately recognized as being from Count Daun's chain stolen at the Vienna World Exposition 1873. An official investigation had been started against Weininger for theft of the chain in 1873 but was stopped shortly afterward due to lack of evidence. As now there was evidence that Weininger had taken the chain, yet another charge of theft was added against the antiques dealer.

As already stated in the first trial, Beda Dudik, the Benedictine monk responsible for the Moravian Department of the "Pavillon des Amateurs" at the Vienna World Exposition of 1873, had also included some of Weininger's objects. He also asked Weininger to help with the set-up and take-down of the exhibition. His confidence in Weininger had been "so total" that Dudik even "let Weininger oversee the operations and gave him the keys"<sup>58</sup> during his absences. After the exhibition closed, de-installation and packing started November 3, and Weininger and his cousin Hermann Blau helped with the packing. As the container with Count Daun's art objects arrived in Brünn (Brno) November 17, the etui for the chain was empty. An investigation was started on November 21; Dudik, Weininger and Blau were interrogated. Count Daun was very suspicious of Weininger, since "Mr. Gubash and Mr. Camesina in Vienna and Schnabel in Brünn had warned him,"<sup>59</sup> but the investigation of Weininger showed no definite result.

In the new trial Weininger declared convincingly that the chain had been packed with his objects by mistake. After having detected the mistake after months, he did not have the courage to return the chain. The jurors bought this explanation. A 10:2 vote found Weininger not guilty in this case. But Weininger was convicted unanimously of fraud according to §§ 197,200, 201 c, Criminal Law.

Franz of Discart was not convicted of theft as he had lent "antiquities from the museum of Duke of Modena" with a jurors vote of 6:6, but he was found unanimously guilty of embezzlement according to § 183 Criminal Law. Therefore Weininger could not be found guilty as accessory to theft and was only convicted as accessory to embezzlement according to §§ 5 and 183 Criminal Law.

Weininger was not found guilty of fraud regarding the sale of the two altars to Marks with a juror vote of 5:7. Moritz Count Grundemann went free. Discart was sentenced to three years of heavy prison labor with one monthly day of fasting, followed by deportation and the loss of his

58. Court report in *Neue Freie Presse*, evening edition, February 22, 1877, 3

59. Court report in *Neue Freie Presse*, evening edition, *ibid*

order of the Iron Cross, III Class. Weininger received an additional prison sentence of two years with a monthly day of fasting and deportation. Both defendants had to pay damages and return embezzled objects to the museum. An extenuating circumstance for Weininger was his testimony which had led to Discart's sentencing.

### Weininger's specialists

While the first trial illustrated the way forgeries were produced, the second trial offered even more information, as it was accompanied by widespread press coverage. Here also the testimonies of the various artists and artisans were reported in detail. It was always emphasized that Vienna can be proud "to have artists and artisans who can produce imitations on a par with the standards of the time the originals were made."<sup>60</sup> Even the prosecutor Count Lamezan noted "that the antiquities' copies are due to the beautiful workmanship, which is a credit to the workers and their industry."<sup>61</sup> Thanks to the court records some of these honorable craftsmen can now be named.

From the first trial we know the names of armorer Johann Böck, the artisans Ludwig Kranner and Eduard Grünes, and the metal workers Eduard Wessely and Josef Wölfel. These five testified that they had produced the three armors which were subjects of the first trial. The second trial showed that Weininger's range of copies was much larger. Now we hear not only of armory and weapons but also of goldsmithing works. The most intricate works were of course the two altars, but copies of carved rock crystal and other glass objects as well as one enameled work, the "Ecce homo," were discussed. It is clear that the circle of workers producing these fakes must have been much larger. As making imitations was not a crime in itself, the various artists were invited only to testify as witnesses, and some of them were quite willing to give detailed information about their work.

An important witness was Simon Grünwald, who had received a business license as gold worker in 1873 and worked from 1891 as master goldsmith. Significantly Grünwald was married to one of Weininger's nieces and was furthermore a specialist in making gold and silver objets de vertu as well as enameled 'antique' imitations.<sup>62</sup> He testified that he had received a rosette from Daun's chain from which he fashioned copies. He also had been responsible for the various additions and assembling of the two altars, which took six weeks. He copied the damascened rosary from the Estense Collection twice;<sup>63</sup> the original had been found on his premises. Grünwald also stated that he had replaced

60. Thomas Grimm, *Modernes "G'raffelwerk"* (modern junk), Essay about the trial in *Wiener Sonn-und Montags-Zeitung*, February 25, 1877

61. Court report in *Wiener Abendpost*, Insert in *Wiener Zeitung*, February 26, 1877, 3

62. According to the master lists from 1892 Grünwald was specialized in gold and silver decorative objects as well as enameled antique reproductions, he also held a patent for an electric lighter and produced decorations for electric chandeliers, see Elisabeth Schmuttermeier, *Wiener Gold-und Silberschmiede von 1781 bis 1921 und ihre Punzen*, CD-ROM, Vienna (MAK) 2005

63. City Archives, LGSt Vienna, A 11, Vr.2727/1877, 152 v.

64. Schmuttermeier 2005, *ibid*

the Modena child portraits of a card case with those of Louis XVI and his sister. The new miniatures proved to be too big so he had cut them to make them fit. Weininger added that the wings of the altars and a silver cast of the original figure of St. Peter were still with Grünwald.

A further witness was Karl Bender. He had received his business license in 1874 as a gold worker and worked from 1891 as master goldsmith. According to the business directory's master lists, Bender specialized from 1892 on, just as Grünwald, in silver and gold objets de vertu as well as "smalls in stone and enamels."<sup>64</sup> Bender testified that he had also made copies of the rosettes belonging to Count Daun's chain, along with having fashioned the niche and the gold statues of apostles Paul and John standing in the big altar.

The armorer Johann Böck testified that he had made the stirrup shoes, the Roman helmet and the shield – all subjects of the first trial – on recommendation of Bender. Furthermore he claimed to have made "the armor with acid-etched stripes, the horse armors and both imitations of the shield with twisted wire decoration."<sup>65</sup>

Hermann Weinstock, who had been officially registered as a gold worker from 1860-1869, testified that he had made a crystal bottle, two vases and some parts of the smaller altar for Weininger. He explained a new process of counterfeiting: "new was combined with old to complete a forgery; for instance an antique crystal bottle was given a new setting, or old jewels were taken from their original wood and applied to new wood; new jewels were then replaced on the old wood. Beside other orders he had made copies of four altar wings using authentic models."<sup>66</sup> Weinstock had also been given rosettes of Count Daun's chain for copying.

Another witness, the engraver Georg Kuthmayer, had seen Count Daun's chain at Bender's studio and seen yet another gold worker, Mr. Haber, making copies of the rosettes. Kuthmayer had made the setting for the niche of the altar, had copied the flint lock from the Modena museum as well as a saber and breast armor and copied the links of Count Daun's chain. He also did finishing work on a cast of a Christ statue. To a related question by the Court president, Kuthmayer explained: "The finished Christ statue was mounted on the cross where the original had been and the original statue was mounted on a new cross." The Court president then clarified for the jurors the "Weininger-Style":<sup>67</sup> "It is always the same mixture. The Old with the New. The new Christ with the old cross and the old Christ with the new cross."<sup>68</sup>

65. City Archives LGSt. Vienna, A 11, Vr.2727/1877, fol.191 f.

66. Court report in Wiener Zeitung, February 24, 1877, 6

67. Court report in Neue Freie Presse, February 25, 1877, 7

68. Court report in Neue Freie Presse, February 24, 1877, 7

The Christ figure was cast by Weininger's brother Karl, who was also called as witness. He was a trained gold caster and testified that he had cast a gold Christ figure, twelve apostle figures, two side wings of an altar, both similar to the altars in question, as well as an apostle figure, St. Peter with his key. The latter was cast in silver while the side wings "just as the originals were cast in a silver-gold alloy."<sup>69</sup> These casts were not the one shown in the court room. As for the exhibited pieces in the courtroom, he claimed to have cast the gold apostle figures John and Paul from original gold models while he used a wax model for the wings of the angel on the bigger altar. The woodworks for both altars were made by artisan-carpenter Johann Eder. Eder had made two further altar wings for Weininger as well as a frame for a "Shepherd's scene."<sup>70</sup>

Along with the verbal testimonies of the various goldsmiths and metal worker were the written testimonies of gem cutter Josef Pelda<sup>71</sup> and glass and gem grinder Franz Schadek, which were read during the trial. Pelda had sold "several precious stones cut and set like original antiques."<sup>72</sup> Pelda also had delivered the small figures applied on top of the altars as well as the two crystal pillars, which were cut from old crystal chandeliers. Franz Schadek had also supplied works made to Weininger's requirements.

Considering these entire testimonies one can detect a cooperation of various specialists not unlike a manufactory the works of which Weininger coordinated. Each artist or artisan was only responsible for a small part of the finished product; they worked separately and supplied their goods to Weininger. The armorer Johann Böck played a major part in forging of weapons and armory. Other metal work was done by Eduard Wessely, while the decoration of surfaces with chasing, etching and damascening was done by Eduard Grünes and Joseph Wölfel.

More complicated and work-intensive was the copying of goldsmiths' works; the workers had to use original materials like silver, gold and precious stones. Most parts were cast by Karl Kuthmayer; the finishing work was done by Karl Bender, Simon Grünwald and Georg Kuthmayer. Bender and Grünwald were responsible for the enameling work. Hermann Weinstock was not part of a team but delivered goods he had made. Woodworking was done by artisan-carpenter Johann Eder. Precious stones and their settings came from gem cutter Josef Pelda; grinding of stones and glass was done by Franz Schadek. Curiously, many of Weininger's suppliers, Karl Bender, Simon Grünwald, Georg Kuthmayer and Hermann Weinstock, had copied parts of Count Daun's chain. As

69. Court report in *Neue Freie Presse*, February 24, 1877, 7

70. Court report in *Neue Freie Presse*, *ibid.* It is possible that this shepherd's scene is a holy water font in the *Ecclesiastical Treasury* (Inv.No. D 188) which features a central enameled scene depicting the adoration of shepherds after Joseph Heintz.

71. Court reports in the *Wiener Zeitung* called this person "Joseph Felder", in *Neue Freie Presse*, his name is given as "Joseph Pelder", the court proceedings state his name as "Joseph Pelda."

72. Court reports in *Wiener Zeitung*, February 24, 1877, 6.



previously mentioned, an obscure Mr. Haber had copied rosettes of the chain in Bender's workshop. Obviously parts of this chain were much in demand, since they were ideally suited as decoration on wood and metal objects, indeed both altars having rosette applications.

Weininger's closest working relationship seems to have been with Bender, Grünwald and Weinstock. Bender and Weinstock assisted Weininger in convincing Murray Marks at his Vienna visit that the altars were indeed genuine.<sup>73</sup> The major link in Weininger's "forgery operations" was without doubt Grünwald. Weininger's relative, he was married to one of Weininger's nieces, and Weininger's total confidence in Grünwald might have contributed to his having a leading position in Weininger's "firm." He held the reins; he oversaw the assembling of all forged parts or made the pasticcio of old and new.<sup>74</sup> Significantly Grünwald was first to petition for mercy after Weininger's sentencing in 1876.<sup>75</sup> Other relatives might also have played an active role in Weininger's forgery business.

The proceedings of the 1877 trial showed that Leopold Weininger worked with his father, but Leopold had not appeared in court due to sickness. His written testimony explained that he had no knowledge of his father's business dealings and only had followed orders. The jurors believed this. But if one considers Leopold's later career, his testimony seems questionable. Leopold Weininger received his business license for silver-, gold- and jewelry works in 1883.<sup>76</sup> As such a license required one to have worked six to ten years as a journeyman, it is presumed that Leopold had already worked as such for a goldsmith during the time the Weininger forgeries were produced. This was intentionally omitted during the trial.<sup>77</sup> In 1892 Leopold received a business licence as jeweller and master gold-and silversmith; just like Grünwald he specialized in "enamel and antique imitations."<sup>78</sup>

Little is known about Nathan Weininger, Salomon Weininger's brother.<sup>79</sup> He received his business license as gold worker as late as 1880,<sup>80</sup> which means that he must have worked as a journeyman as early as 1874. The 1876 Viennese business directory "Lehmann" lists him as gold and silver assayer.<sup>81</sup> To date a cooperation of both Leopold and Nathan with Salomon cannot be proven, but there is a strong possibility that both were involved in his illegal operations.

### **Forgeries and goldsmiths' works as subjects of the trials**

The majority of forgeries dealt with in the trials concerned armors and weapons; the originals of these items are now in the collection in the armory in Castle Konopiště.<sup>82</sup> The main focus of this essay is the forgeries

73. As Nathaniel de Rothschild doubted the altars to be genuine Emanuel Marks sent his son Murray to Vienna to make inquiries. First Salomon Weininger, then Bender and Weinstock were called to the Hotel Metropol to assess the altars. They stated that some of the parts were new but all in all the pieces were authentic. Weinstock contradicted himself so often that Marks ignored his comments, see also court protocol, City Archives LGSt.Vienna, A11, Vr.2727/1877, fol.155

74. Other artists might have assembled pieces in the same way, but the altars are surely Grünwald's work.

75. See the Tagebuch (Diary) fol.17v.

76. Schmuttermeier 2005, *ibid*

77. This might have been a favor of the prosecution granted for forthcoming testimony.

78. Schmuttermeier, 2005, *ibid*

79. Hruschka 1978, *ibid*, Vol.2, 352

80. Schmuttermeier 2005,

81. Lehmann 1859 ff.

82. Archduke Franz Ferdinand transferred the Estense Collection to Castle Konopiste, see Letosnikova 1970, *ibid*

of goldsmith's works, as these can give useful pointers to other possible and as yet undeciphered forged Weininger works remaining in private and institutional collections.

The few goldsmiths' works from the Palais Modena named in the trials came with the transfer of the Estense Collection to the Vienna Kunsthistorische Museum in 1922. The "gold souvenir card case (porte-cartes)" mentioned in the trial is now in the Kunstammer of the museum (Inv.No.KK 8269). The oval miniatures on the front and back sides are signed by Louis Marie Sicard and feature the portraits of King Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette.<sup>83</sup> (Fig. 3) According to Weininger's testimony this card case was originally fitted with two Modena child portraits that Grünwald had replaced with the royal portraits. A close examination of the card case shows no signs of such a manipulation. It is questionable that such a replacement ever took place. Maybe Weininger told this version in order not to have to explain a missing second card case.

A second "gold souvenir (porte-cartes)" indeed features child portraits, specifically those of Dauphin Louis Joseph (or the Dauphin Louis Charles) and Princess Maria Thérèse. This card case, made circa 1786/87 in Paris, was originally also in the collections of the Kunsthistorische Museum, but is now held in the MAK, Vienna (Inv.No.KHM 467).<sup>84</sup>



Fig. 3 Card case (Porte-cartes), Miniature depicting Louis XVI, Paris, circa 1786, by Louis Marie Sicard

Vienna, Kunsthistorische Museum, Kunstammer,

Inv. No. KK8269

83. According to the court reports Louis' sister is depicted. A very similar piece is in the Metropolitan Museum, NYC, Inv. No.17.190.1287a-c. Here is also a snuff box with a comparable miniature by Sicard featuring the portrait of Louis XVI. (Inv.No.17.190.1156)

84. The MAK received this piece in exchange. For this information I am grateful to Elisabeth Schmuttermeier.

The damascened iron rosary Zehner that Grünwald copied at least twice is now in the *Kunstkammer* of the *Kunsthistorische Museum* (Inv.No.KK8011, Fig.2). The whereabouts of an “antique bottle with crystal inlay” and the enameled figure ‘*Ecce homo*’ are to date unknown. The enameled piece, probably a full figure with *email en ronde bosse*, could not be recovered at trial time. The form of the bottle can only be guessed considering the court proceedings and inventory description in the *Estense Collection*; possibly it had the appearance of “a rock crystal bottle-shaped vase with cover with an enameled silver setting.”<sup>85</sup> The original silver setting was fitted “with a new crystal body,”<sup>86</sup> while a new Weininger setting was applied to the antique bottle body.

The whereabouts of the two altars that Weininger had sold to Marks are to date unknown. It is known that after the trial the appraiser Martin Löscher exhibited and charged an entrance fee to see those “antique” altars so prominently dealt with in the trials.<sup>87</sup> Löscher was one of the appraisers hired after the death of Duke of Modena, Francis V, to inventory the *Modena collections*. He was also called as a witness at the trial. Obviously he knew how to profit from the public interest in these altars. But what happened to the altars after the exhibition closed cannot be reconstructed. It is assumed that Löscher benefited further by an eventual sale, and that the altars are today – completely undetected – in a private or public collection.

Given the witnesses’ testimonies and the appraisers’ statement a relatively clear picture of the altars’ appearances can be drawn. Moritz Count Grundeman gave a detailed description of the two pieces in a letter to his cousin: “Both altars are gold-enameled, one decorated with small figures (St. Peter, Paul, John, the upper part featuring the Madonna with two angels and a vase), the other very similar and decorated with two angels and a vase, the upper part showing a chased religious scene; both altars are richly decorated with pearls, rubies, diamonds and emeralds.”<sup>88</sup> The court records stated that the altars were executed in gold, silver and precious stones and that the finished work was valued at 30000 fl. According to an appraisal 18000 fl. were spent on material while the work costs amounted to 12000 fl. The models for the altars were probably the richly figured house altars of Southern Germany, the inspiration for them probably being the Albrecht V altar in the Munich Residence or the reliquary altars made by Miseroni in his Milan and Prague workshops now in the *Ecclesiastical Treasury Vienna* (Inv.No. Kap 221 and Kap 222). Just like them the Weininger altars rested on an ebony pedestal, decorated with enameled figures and featured domi-

85. Quoted from an inventory:  
*Inventar des Museums  
Weiland Seiner königlichen  
Hoheit des Herrn Erzherzog  
Franz V, Herzog von Modena,*  
No.576, Vienna, *Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstkammer*

86. Quoted from an inventory  
*Unterschiedliche meist kleine  
Gegenstände der Estensischen  
Sammlung,* Vienna, *Kunsthistorisches Museum, Kunstkammer*

87. Court report in *Neue Freie  
Presse,* March 20, 1877, 7

88. Court report in *Neue Freie  
Presse,* February 22, 1877

nating pillars. Art experts Eduard Freiherr von Sacken and Albert Ilg stated during the trial that the larger of the two altars was “a stylistic incongruity inspired by Rudolph II objects”<sup>89</sup> (Sacken) and that “it belongs to the *kind of renaissance* which is so-called Rudolph II but was mostly practiced in Italy and in Munich”<sup>90</sup> (Ilg).

The larger altar’s ebony pedestal was made by Johann Eder. It featured pearls, precious stones and white and blue enameled rosettes in the style of Count Daun’s chain. The enameled gold statues of the apostles John and Paul were placed in a niche, accompanied by St. Peter with his attribute, the key. All expert opinion declared the figure of St. Peter to be new, as the key “was three quarters as large as the figure and had the form of a simple cupboard key.”<sup>91</sup> The niche featured rock crystal pillars on either side and could be closed by folding the altar wings. The enamel on the altar wings was also declared new because of its bright appearance. The upper part of the altar was applied with the figure of Madonna with two angels and a vase.

Fewer details are known for the smaller altar. What is clear is only that it was also a winged altar with an ebony base with enameled decoration and rock crystal pillars, two angels and a vase and a chased metal middle plate, the theme of which is not described.

### Identified forged works by Weininger\*\*

Weininger’s forged goldsmiths’ works show a wide variety. The pieces differ greatly regarding technique, style and topics. Following is a discussion of some of the objects known to be fakes but which were not included in the trials.

### The counterfeits in the Ecclesiastical Treasury

Among the objects that can now be identified as originating in Weininger’s circle are several goldsmiths’ works in the Ecclesiastical Treasury Vienna. To prove Weininger’s connection to these forgeries is difficult especially since they remained undetected during his lifetime. One of the main reasons can probably be found in the fact that the supervision of the Ecclesiastical Treasury collections was transferred from the Royal Chamberlain Office to the Hofburg Palace priest in 1782.<sup>92</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries the Ecclesiastical and Imperial Treasury collections were main attractions which visitors could see by paying a tip.<sup>93</sup> In 1782 these collections of the Ecclesiastical Treasury were brought to the sacristy of the Hofburg Palace chapel and thereafter not open to the public. The Hofburg Palace priest now had to decide which objects of this immense collection would be suitable for liturgical purposes; the rest were just stored away.

89. Court report Wiener Abendpost, insert Wiener Zeitung, February 24, 1877, 3

90. Court report in Wiener Zeitung, February 25, 1877

91. Court report in Neue Freie Presse, February 25, 1877, 7.

92. Emperor Joseph II separated the Imperial from the Ecclesiastical Treasury, the latter was put under supervision of the Hofburg Palace priest. June 27, 1782 the objects of the Ecclesiastical Treasury were handed over to Hofburg Palace priest Kronberger to store in the sacristy, a list of the objects is in the Kunsthistorische Museum, Kunstkammer.

\*\* The original article discusses many examples of fakes in the Ecclesiastical Treasury, for the translation only four examples were chosen which are of interest to the Anglo-American reader as either the fakes or the originals are in British or American Museums.

93. The tip for visiting the Treasury was 25 fl. see also Johann Basilius Küchelbecker, *Allerneueste Nachricht vom Römisch Kayserlichen Hofe nebst einer ausführlichen historischen Beschreibung der Kayserlichen Residenz-Stadt Wien und der umliegenden Oerter*, Hannover 1730, 883

