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Readings of a pioneer

Johann Conrad Fischer and the books of the Iron Library

Christopher Zoller-Blundell

Johann Conrad Fischer lived a very literary life. His own published writings, the seven brilliant travel journals, are scattered with references to works read, taken along as travel companions, or acquired during a journey. However, the extensive library he is thought to have accumulated is now dispersed and no index survives. As part of the special exhibition at the Iron Library marking the 250th anniversary of his birth, research was undertaken to identify and display titles in the library's collection either that were Fischer's or that he is known to have read. Hints in the journals combined with provenance research have so far identified 47 titles. Though a partial reconstruction of an otherwise vast reading history, it has revealed captivating fragmentary glimpses into an intellectual landscape and personal reading history that went far beyond the particulars of metal alloys and industry.

In 1844, the industrialist, scientist, and politician Johann Conrad Fischer (1773–1854) published an account of his journeyman's travels in the early 1790s. It was a journey that had taken him from his hometown Schaffhausen (Switzerland) northwards through the Holy Roman Empire, and then even further north up

through Denmark and into Sweden before heading over the North Sea to England. While this was not the classic leisurely *Bildungsreise* of his era (Fischer was after all plying his trade underway as a coppersmith), it was nonetheless the adventure that was to profoundly influence his life, mould his perspective on industry, and encourage his later travels.

Fischer leaves the reader in no doubt that his was a mind for whom literature was of great import.

Fischer's travel literature

Reflecting on these wanderings after half a century's interlude and wanting to explain his mindset upon venturing out, Fischer could not help but highlight within the first pages those books that had been an important part of his education or that he had read intentionally in preparation. With this he leaves the reader in no doubt that his was a mind for whom literature, especially of the worldly, informative, and scientific kind, was of great import. Who else would have read Jablonski's

1 Fischer's distinctive signature inscription, "J.C. Fischer, Oberst Lt.".



2 The round and usually amethyst purple stamp of the Villa Berg library of Georg Fischer III.

"Conversational Lexicon" cover to cover or taken "The Complete Guide to Algebra" by Leonhard Euler (1707–1783) for company?¹

The trend continues throughout his other journals. These are scattered with references to works read, taken along as travel companions, or acquired during a journey. In the case of some publications, such as "Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology" by William Buckland (1784–1856), his acquisition of the volumes serves as the basis of an anecdote.² Some works are accepted respectfully, albeit reluctantly, and attempted to be returned almost as quickly, such as a London Tract Society pamphlet with "two tales of conversion", that was forced upon Fischer within the inescapable confines of a rolling carriage on the way to Basel by a certain Mrs. Watson in 1845.³ Others are mentioned as the purchases of a free moment, as with "The Register of Arts and Sciences", a technological journal acquired in a bookshop on London's Paternoster Row in 1827.⁴

Libraries, meanwhile, find mention as refuges from his industrious travels. Of the private library at the Leeds mansion of his friend Benjamin Gott (1762–1840), Fischer writes:

"With its exquisitely bound works both ancient and modern, its fine paintings and engravings, its busts of Carrara marble standing on columns of coloured marble with white pedestals and furnishings of a piece, this room was a haven for the mind of anyone seeking respite from the travails of daily business."⁵

Indications of other acquisitions simply leave readers guessing. When finishing up his time in London toward the end of his journeyman's travels, Fischer notes that his

father generously sent him the sum of 70 pounds sterling "to buy books, clothes and tools on [his] departure".⁶ None of the titles acquired with this book money are revealed, but as this sum would nowadays have a purchasing power estimated to be around 7700 pounds, there were likely quite a few of them.⁷

By his later life, and by any usual reckoning, Fischer had lived at least three lives, perhaps even four. He was an industrialist whose enterprises, not to mention those of his children, were thriving. He was a scientist who had experimented alongside Michael Faraday (1791–1867) and developed industry-changing specialist alloys, such as malleable cast iron. He was a politician who had served as the first elected president of his hometown. And he was a travel journalist whose published observations of the Industrial Revolution were as valued in his time as they are today for their insight into this formative era. In light of this, and with such reading habits as those described in his journals, it would be a surprise if Fischer had not accumulated a substantial collection of print works by the time of his death in 1854.

Identifying works from Fischer's library

Unfortunately, little is known about Fischer's library or indeed libraries. It is an important question, as to whether he had separate home and works collections. The home library – kept in his inevitable study or as a room in and of its own right – is a mystery. No specific provision was made to conserve it after his death and if an inventory of his books ever existed, then it is still to be found. No list of works is provided in the documents dealing with the divi-

EB Nr.:	
Einband:	
Illustrationsverfasser:	Anthon, George David:
	EM/Bt 76 fol.
Eingangsdatum:	Gründliche und deutliche Anweisung zu der Civil Bau=Kunst, Darinnen gezeiget wird wie man die Fünff Ordnungen In eine gute Uebereinstimmung brinen, und in allen Wercken der Bau=Kunst, nach den Fünff ältesten und besten Bau=Meistern, nemlich: Vitruvius, Serlio, Palladio, Scamozzi, Vignola und den Römischen Antiquitäten geschickt anbringen soll. = Grundrig og tydelig Anviisning til den Civile Bygnings=Kunst... / Anthon, George David. - Kobenhavn : Nicolas Moller, 1759. - 36x25,5 cm, 1 Kupfertafeln; 24 S.
Lieferant:	
Gestehungspreis:	
Versicherungswert:	
Bemerkungen:	Eingangsdatum: 16.07.92. Herkunft: Werkarchiv, aus ehemaligem Besitz der Fischer-Familie. Preis: 2240.-- Restaurationskosten 1991. V'wert: 5000.--.

7886 A E/B 76-4000 KSH

3 An invaluable source of information: the old library index cards.

sion of his estate, despite a level of explicit detail given on his wishes for who should inherit such things as his bedding. Not even a total number of volumes is given.⁸ The absence of provisions might suggest that a home library was seen as something that did not require specific rules for its inheritance and a natural part of the estate entailed to his heir and inheritor of the house. From here the books would have eventually found their way to the Villa Berg, the Fischer family home built on Schaffhausen's Geissberg in the late 19th century, along with other works acquired by the family after 1854.

Unfortunately, no list of works is provided in the documents dealing with the division of his estate.

It is probable that Fischer had further smaller libraries at his works. His foundry for steel casting, set up in 1802, was a place of experimentation and so it would have been unusual had he not kept a small collection of texts about metallurgy and production processes at hand there. Research in the 1950s touched on speculation that an 1834 fire that destroyed part of his works in the Schaffhausen Mühltal – a fire also known to have destroyed some diaries – might also have incinerated a store of books relevant to his works.⁹ If this were indeed the case, then whatever books survived together with any acquired after the fire would likely still have been kept on site as a part of the information store required for the day-to-day. After Fischer's death, it is conceivable that these collections would have been considered part and parcel of the production sites that were taken over by his sons.

To be brief, the question of what happened to Fischer's library or libraries after his death and before individual works surfaced during research is a field of interesting speculation but mostly unfounded conjecture. The only fact that remains is that the media that constituted the collection shaped by his life and interests became dispersed after 1854. For their identification we therefore have to rely upon other means, namely the tools of provenance research.

Provenance research enriches scholarly inquiry by illuminating the social networks and cultural milieu in which books circulated.

Provenance research holds profound significance for libraries housing old and rare books. At its core, it delves into the journey of a book from its creation to its current resting place, shedding light on its previous owners, collectors, and any significant events it may have witnessed along the way. It is a vital tool in unravelling the intricate history and cultural value embedded within each volume. By tracing ownership records, annotations, bookplates, stamps, and inscriptions in individual volumes, provenance research enriches scholarly inquiry by offering glimpses into the lives and interests of past owners, illuminating their intellectual pursuits, social networks, and cultural milieu. This deeper contextual understanding enhances the scholarly value of rare books, enabling researchers to explore not only the texts themselves but also the broader historical and cultural contexts in which they circulated and which they possibly influenced.



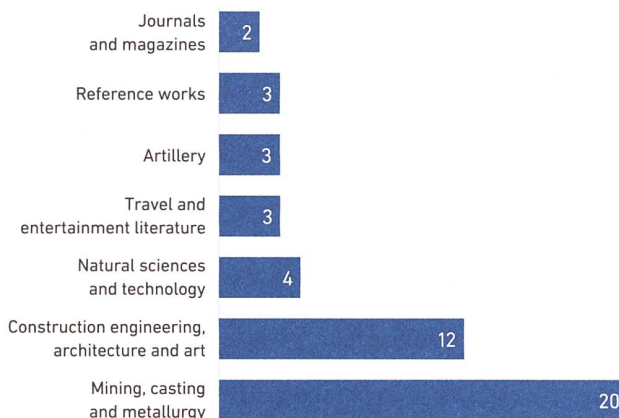
4 The exhibition in the Iron Library's collection of old and rare works, each green placeholder marking the position of a book Fischer is known to have read or owned.

In the case of Fischer, he is known to have inscribed his name on the title pages of some volumes. His signature, as with his author name on his own published volumes, is given as "J.C. Fischer, Oberst Lt.". Fischer was a lieutenant colonel of the artillery, and this postnominal helps us in identifying a book as having been his and not his father's or eldest son's, who were both also called Johann Conrad Fischer but never held equivalent rank. In addition to his inscription, another means of identifying potential books is the library stamp of Georg Fischer III's Villa Berg library in the late-19th century. The stamp is very distinctive, its invariable blue-purple round form comprising a circle with the words "VILLA BERG" framed in a double ring by "GEORG FISCHER * SCHAFFHAUSEN *".

Further records, in addition to the journals, that have given us information about the books that Fischer read or owned are to be found in the archives of the Iron Library. These are in the correspondence and in particular the old index cards that note certain books as former property of the family that entered the collection through donations from the company Werkarchiv.

Fischer's books in the Iron Library

The project to translate, annotate, illustrate and publish a digital edition of Fischer's travel journals had meant delving into the library's collection to research images, for example machines that he described or places that he visited, and the process turned up exemplars of titles that he had read, and some that had even originated in his personal library. In preparation for the special exhibition to mark the 250th anniversary of his birth, research was undertaken to see just how many more works there were in the Iron Library's holdings that could be traced to Fischer or linked with his reading history.



Graph The different subjects covered by books owned or read by Johann Conrad Fischer and to be found in the Iron Library.

So far 47 titles that were likely in Fischer's property, or that he is known to have read, have been found in the Iron Library. Considering the collection's specialism and his, there are no doubt many more. It should be stressed that this was an attempt not to reconstruct Fischer's library but to glimpse into his reading history. The resulting display has become a cornerstone of the current exhibition, each title marked on its shelf in the Ernst Müller room by a small green placeholder bearing Fischer's silhouette.

So far 47 titles that Fischer owned or is known to have read have been found in the Iron Library.

Needless to say, the readings of Fischer the metallurgist contained literature on the foundry business, ferrous metallurgy, the natural sciences and practical technology. Fischer the artillerist's interests are represented too. However, also to be found are volumes on the fine arts and architecture, travelogues, and magazines of Fischer the traveller.

Here follow several highlights, identified by provenance research or picked out from the journals, that give an insight into Fischer's life, interests, and perspective on the world.

"Alphabeti Maioris" by Johann Merken, 1785

Merken's volume is best described as an early textbook for those of school age.¹⁰ A compendious miscellany of the Enlightenment era's must-know things and practical knowledge, it is brimming with the high expectations of an educated member of late-18th-century society. Within can

Allenberg bei Dünn.

10 Angermund.

3 16 Bensberg.

7 8 10 Beyenburg.

12 20 6 17 Blankenberg.

9 15 6 19 Bonn.

2 9 6 5 13 Burg.

6 10 3 14 7 5 6 Cöln a/R.

14 4 15 14 20 16 12 11 Creyfeld.

5 8 8 4 15 13 3 8 11 Cronenberg.

12 15 20 9 27 25 15 20 18 12 Dortmund.

6 18 6 11 7 11 9 7 19 8 19 Dravenderhowe.

1 13 5 4 11 10 2 6 14 3 12 6 Dünn.

10 3 10 10 15 12 8 8 4 7 15 15 10 Düsseldorf.

13 3 15 13 20 17 11 12 4 20 15 20 13 5 Duisburg.

7 5 12 6 17 14 4 10 8 3 12 13 6 5 7 Düsseldorf.

7 18 7 11 7 9 10 10 21 12 17 8 6 16 20 14 Eckenhausen.

5 7 10 4 17 15 4 10 10 10 5 6 9 2 20 Elberfeld.

8 5 10 8 15 12 6 7 6 5 14 14 8 2 7 3 16 4 Erkrath.

12 5 17 10 22 20 11 15 7 9 7 18 12 7 4 6 18 7 8 Essen.

6 8 11 3 18 16 5 11 25 10 21 5 7 10 3 11 1 5 8 Gemarcken.

9 4 11 9 14 12 7 7 6 6 15 15 9 1 6 4 9 5 1 7 6 Gerresheim.

3 13 15 8 7 7 5 3 12 7 16 7 4 8 18 9 7 8 10 14 9 11 Gladbeck by Wilkum.

6 5 9 6 15 13 3 8 9 12 11 5 5 8 2 12 2 3 7 3 4 6 Graeffrath.

6 5 10 7 15 13 4 8 8 3 13 12 6 4 7 12 13 3 2 7 4 3 8 12 Gruthen.

13 13 11 20 15 12 13 8 16 16 25 15 14 10 13 13 24 16 12 17 11 11 15 14 Gulich.

6 6 9 7 14 12 4 7 8 3 14 12 6 4 8 2 13 3 2 8 4 3 7 14 1 14 Haan.

10 7 15 5 22 19 8 14 12 7 0 15 10 8 10 4 15 4 6 6 3 7 14 6 6 18 7 Hattingen.

9 7 7 11 12 8 5 3 8 6 17 12 8 4 9 6 14 7 5 22 8 5 5 6 3 10 4 11 Hiltropf.

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9 4 11 8 16 15 7 11 7 5 11 15 9 4 5 2 16 4 3 4 5 4 9 4 3 14 4 5 8 5 Hilgenhaus.

8 3 10 8 15 15 6 10 6 5 12 4 8 3 5 3 16 4 2 5 5 3 8 4 2 13 3 5 7 4 1 Homberg.

4 12 6 3 13 12 3 8 15 5 10 7 2 10 14 6 7 5 9 11 4 10 6 5 6 21 6 8 9 8 9 9 Hückerwagen.

12 1 12 11 17 14 9 9 3 8 15 17 10 2 3 5 18 7 4 6 8 3 9 6 5 12 6 9 6 5 4 3 12 Kaiserswerd.

11 3 13 9 22 18 8 13 8 7 9 17 10 5 4 3 17 5 5 3 6 8 15 5 4 21 6 4 10 6 1 2 10 5 Kettwig.

8 6 19 5 20 17 7 12 10 5 9 13 8 6 9 3 13 3 5 3 4 5 13 4 4 16 5 2 9 6 3 4 8 7 4 Langenberg.

5 10 8 2 15 12 3 8 13 3 10 7 2 9 12 4 8 3 7 9 2 8 6 3 6 18 6 7 10 7 7 2 10 8 6 Lennep.

5 9 6 8 11 10 2 5 10 4 15 9 4 5 11 6 16 5 4 11 6 3 4 3 4 13 3 10 3 3 7 7 5 9 8 8 5 Leichlingen.

11 17 6 20 3 12 7 18 15 27 8 8 15 20 17 14 10 15 22 17 15 9 14 15 15 14 20 12 13 10 15 15 16 20 20 17 11 Lewenberg.

5 17 4 8 7 12 9 10 20 11 23 2 4 15 19 13 6 11 14 18 12 15 7 12 14 19 13 15 12 13 16 13 4 18 19 14 6 10 10 Lintlow.

3 9 8 15 15 14 2 9 11 2 12 8 3 5 7 11 4 9 2 6 9 2 7 7 4 5 17 5 6 8 5 6 3 3 8 7 5 4 5 18 7 Lüthringhausen.

6 4 9 7 14 14 5 9 7 4 12 12 7 3 6 12 15 3 15 6 4 2 7 2 1 13 2 5 6 3 2 12 8 4 4 5 6 5 14 13 Mettmann.

3 10 3 13 8 6 5 1 12 7 10 8 4 7 12 9 12 9 7 14 8 8 2 6 7 9 6 13 3 5 8 7 8 9 14 12 8 3 8 7 9 6 Mühlheim am R.

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12 5 11 11 13 12 10 6 4 9 17 15 11 12 6 7 12 8 4 9 9 3 10 7 6 8 6 10 4 4 6 5 13 4 7 8 11 7 13 17 9 5 8 6 Nuyss.

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7 5 12 5 19 16 6 11 9 4 10 14 7 5 7 1 14 2 3 4 5 4 10 3 15 4 3 6 5 2 3 7 6 3 1 5 6 16 13 4 2 8 5 7 3 5 4.

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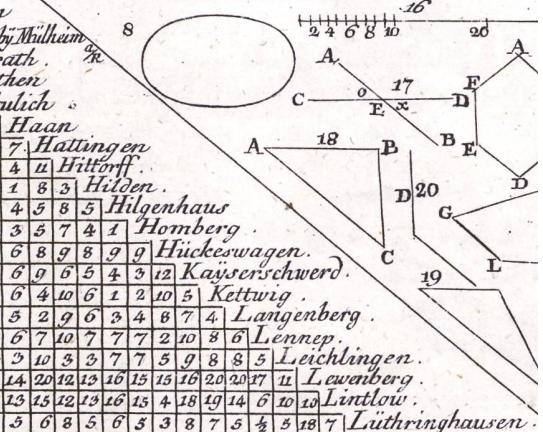
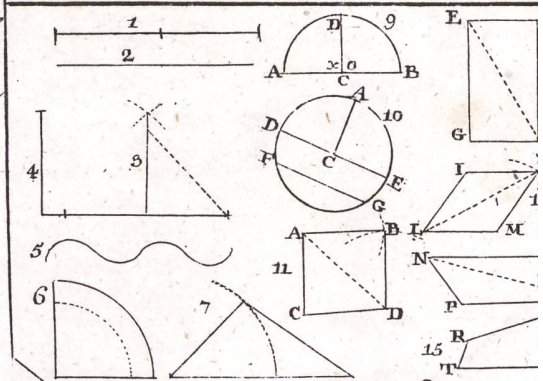
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Distanz oder Stunden Zeiger

der mehresten Dörffer und Städte
des Hertzogthum Bergs
und etlicher angrenzenden
Städten.

Das A.B.C. der Geometria oder A mehr andren Wissenschaften, nebst der



5 A human measure: distance expressed by hours travelled on foot between key settlements of the Duchy of Berg in the Rhineland.

be found comments on poetry and poetic forms, the anatomy of neoclassical architecture, conventions for portraiture, and exemplary copperplate monograms in florid ribbons that spill across the pages. Geometry is introduced as a means for measuring land, alongside which is presented another means of comprehending distance: a most wonderful table giving the time in hours travelled on foot between the key settlements of the Duchy of Berg, the Rhineland province surrounding Düsseldorf.

While the Villa Berg stamp on the flyleaf clearly indicates its provenance in the library of the Fischer family home, it is a fine example of the ambiguities presented by provenance research. The publication date would allow for the likelihood that it is a relic of the childhood of Johann Conrad Fischer. It is not difficult to imagine a younger Johann Conrad poring over these pages, imagining his journeyman years ahead, tracing his finger along the table's grid lines to find the times between destinations. However, there are no markings or inscriptions that confirm his ownership of the book at this early stage of his life.

The flyleaf, meanwhile, is graffitied in sepia ink. It looks as though it has been used in place of a spare piece of paper or was perhaps mistaken for an open notebook and used for testing the flow of a pen nib. Who does not recognize the squiggles, scratchings and random pen strokes, or the simple test of writing out a sequence of numbers and half-written names from their own school days? Within these jottings is a clue, too. Just legible are two names: "Conrad" and what looks like "Maria": the names of two of Fischer's children. If the book were from their father's childhood, then there is a suggestion from the scribbles that he passed it on to them. Perhaps it was acquired later on for his children to learn from. Maybe they are Fischer's own jottings. Regardless, it offers the mind's eye a scene of home life that we too can recognize.

Potentially preparing Fischer for a pleasant surprise later in life, no mention is made of the possibilities of ginger beer.

"Konversations Lexicon"

by Johann Theodor Jablonski, 1721

Jablonski's "Conversational Lexicon" as it was known to Fischer, or to use its full translated title the "General lexicon of the arts and sciences: or brief description of the realm of nature, the heavens and celestial bodies, the air, the earth, together with the known plants, animals, stones and earths, the sea and the creatures living therein", as mentioned above, is one of the books Fischer read to learn about the world he was to travel through as a journeyman.¹¹ Conversational lexica were a genre of reference works which, as their name rightly infers, imparted information in a relatable, non-specialist but comprehensive manner, suitable for the niveau of discussion in a respect-

able salon. There is a copy in the Iron Library but the old index cards show that it was not acquired from the Fischer family, nor does it show any signs of having been in their possession. There is a copy in the Schaffhausen City Library's historical holdings, however, and so it is possible that it was this copy that Fischer borrowed.¹²

At the bottom of page 317 of the Lexicon and carrying well over to the next side is an entry for "Ingber, Ingwer" – ginger – which describes the propagation of the root and its preservation in either sugar or brine, as well as its culinary and medicinal applications.¹³ Showing the limitations of Jablonski's knowledge and potentially preparing Fischer for a pleasant surprise later in life, no mention is made of the possibilities of ginger beer. This beverage was a discovery of Fischer's travels in England and became a firm favourite.¹⁴

"Über den Betrieb der Hochöfen, Cupolöfen etc. mit erhitzter Gebläseluft" by Carl Hartmann, 1834

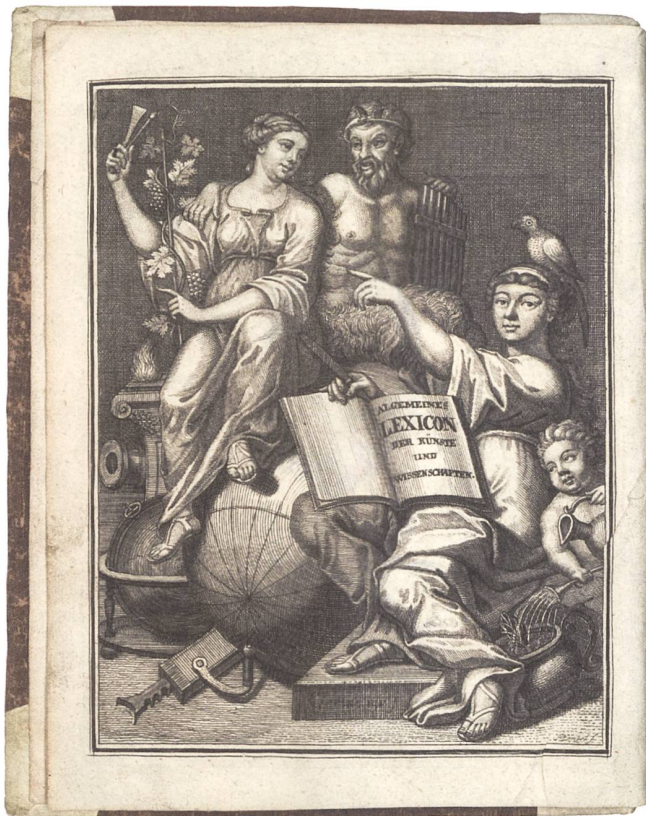
This treatise on the operation of blast and cupola furnaces was one of the definitive works in the German language on one of the Industrial Revolution's defining technologies.¹⁵ The author, Carl Hartmann (1796–1863), was among the most respected and acclaimed mineralogists and metallurgists of his time and the Commissioner of Mines for the Duchy of Brunswick. A prolific writer and translator of technical works from France and England too, the Iron Library has 44 titles by him. This 1834 title is known to have been Fischer's as it has both his inscription and the stamp of the Villa Berg library. One other of Hartmann's works has been linked to Fischer, but it is very likely that he was well acquainted with many more of these publications. These were, after all, works directly concerned with Fischer's main business: the production of advanced steel and iron alloys, such as malleable cast iron and hard steels that were ideal for the dies used to strike ornate medals and coins. As to what it tells us of Fischer, it indicates that he remained curious about other methods beyond those that he himself had devised, and that he was not stuck in his ways and remained well informed. This is no new observation of his life and character, as these qualities come through clearly in his journals; however, it is a qualification of them from another source.

These were works directly concerned with Fischer's main pursuit: the production of advanced steel and iron alloys.

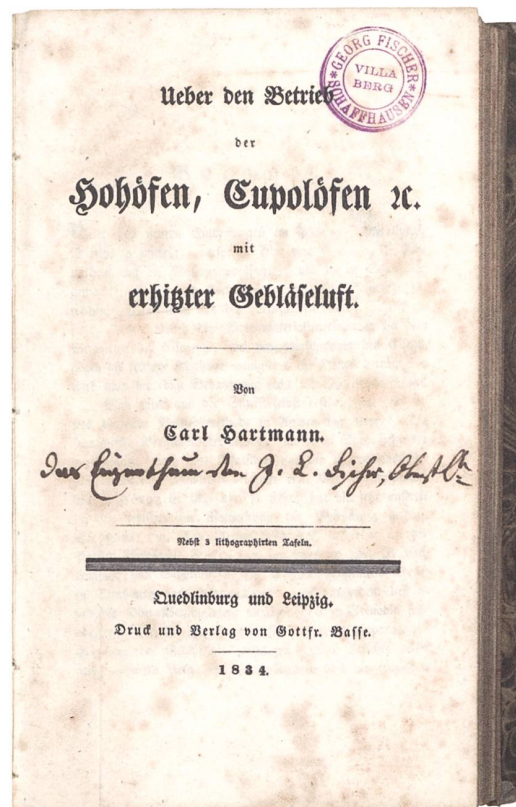
"Neue Curiöse Geschütz-Beschreibung"

by Michael Mieth, 1705

Another book identified as a likely candidate through the presence of a Villa Berg stamp is a 1705 treatise on artillery and gun making by Michael Mieth.¹⁶ There is once



6 All knowledge on Jablonski's frontispiece: globes to signify wide-reaching knowledge, a gun barrel and instrument to symbolize technical information, Pan for music and wine, and the muses for the arts.



7 A definitive text of its time: Hartmann's 1834 treatise on blast and cupola furnaces.

again an ambiguity as there are no further markings beyond the stamp. The book's age, however, allows the possibility that it may even have been a family heirloom when it came into Fischer's hands. His father, Johann Conrad Fischer the Elder (1721–1811), had worked in London at the Royal Brass Foundry in Woolwich, producing artillery pieces under its Schaffhausen-born director Andrew Schalch (1723–1783). Though already an old text by the time Fischer was born, it nonetheless describes a craft that had changed little in many respects by the time that he would have been studying artillery in the 1790s. Artillery was an expensive and highly prized resource, and while the dimensions, bores and decorative features of gun barrels changed, the means of production did not, nor did the alloys of the metals, insofar as bronze guns were concerned. Together with books such as Joseph Furtenbach's 1643 "Büchsenmeisterei-Schul" and the 1777 "Mémoires d'artillerie" by Heinrich Otto Scheel, which Fischer is also known to have possessed, he would have had a very well-grounded oversight of the history, means of production and deployment of artillery by the powers of continental Europe. Artillerists were among the most respected of the military branches, especially during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Bonaparte himself was an artillery officer. The branch's specialism demanded high training in manufacturing and mathematics, technical skill, general industriousness, and complex budgetary responsibility.¹⁷ It was a qualification and indi-

cator of esteem that was good for business. These books give a background and explain how well-versed Fischer was in the field, and just how neatly he could comprehend and describe the artillery production sites visited in his journals.

To be an artillerist was a qualification
and indicator of esteem that was good
for business.

Bradshaw's Railway Companion, 1841

On the 30th July 1845, during a rainy afternoon in the library of the Gott mansion in Leeds, Fischer spent some time studying a map of the train lines and steamers of Great Britain and pondering the breadth of information before him, even about steam boat departures to Alexandria and Constantinople.¹⁸ The map was a fold-out on flimsy scritta paper and accompanied a copy of "Bradshaw's Railway and Steam Navigation Guide" that he had acquired in London a few days earlier.¹⁹ The line on the map that had brought Fischer to Leeds was one of the oldest and best-established in the country and a regular service could be well assured. Within Bradshaw's pocket-sized format are the timetables for the departures and arrivals of railway lines and steam ships that were operated by independent and competing companies, with little to no

national coordination. The publication alone was a wonder of compilation and precision, considering the heated competition between the operators. For one who had travelled on foot or by carriage for much of his life, and for much of it also relying upon measures and estimations of distance of the sort given in *Alphabeti Maioris*, as Fischer long had, we can well comprehend how astounding the guide's depth, exactness and possibilities must have been for him: as astounding as the discovery of Google Maps was to those of us who can remember travel planning before smartphone apps. No copy of Bradshaw's Guide precisely matching his description has been found, not even digitized, but an early 1841 edition was acquired for the exhibition.²⁰

Summary

In summary, the combination of the journals and provenance research has provided a partial reconstruction of an intriguing personal reading history. While much of Fischer's character is already known, the findings of this research have added more weight to the observation that his was a keen and enquiring mind not at all limited to his business interests. The resulting component to the exhibition has also added a new dimension to the Ernst Müller room's shelves – a personal note that is not always immediately present in such rare book collections, and a way of bringing a human dimension to a collection with 750 years' breadth of information.



8 The frontispiece of Mieth's artillery treatise, showing an imagined scene of war in which all conceivable forms and applications of artillery are simultaneously depicted.



Names of railways in England, as numbered in the Map.

	Miles	Amount of share		Miles	Amount of share
1. Birmingham & Derby Junction ..	38½	£ 100	21. Manchester and Birmingham ..	45	£70
2. Birmingham and Gloucester ..	52	100	21. Manchester & Birmingham Ex ..	70	
3. Birmingham, Bristol, & Thames Junction ..	3	20	22. Manchester and Leeds ..	60	100
4. Bolton and Leigh ..	10	100	23. Manchester, Bolton, & Bury ..	10	100
5. Kenyon and Leigh ..	76	100	24. Maryport and Carlisle ..	28	50
6. Bolton and Preston ..	14	50	25. Midland Counties ..	67	100
7. Chester and Birkenhead ..	15	50	26. Newcastle and Carlisle ..	61	100
8. Chester and Crewe ..	18	50	27. Newcastle and North Shields ..	63	50
9. Cromford and High Peak ..	32½	—	28. North Midland ..	72	100
10. Croydon ..	10	—	29. North Union ..	22	75
11. Eastern Counties ..	126	25	30. Northern and Eastern ..	52	100
12. Grand Junction ..	97	—	31. St. Helen's and Runcorn Gap ..	8	100
13. Great North of England ..	74	100	32. Sheffield and Manchester ..	40	100
14. Great Western ..	117	100	33. Sheffield and Rotherham ..	6	25
15. Hull and Selby ..	30	50	34. Stockton and Darlington ..	25	100
16. Lancaster and Preston Junction ..	20	50	35. York and North Midland ..	23	50
17. Leeds and Swannington ..	16	50	36. South Eastern and Dover ..	67	50
18. Liverpool and Manchester ..	31	100	37. Canterbury and Whitstable ..	6	50
19. London and Birmingham ..	112	100	38. Greenwich ..	4	20
20. London and Southampton ..	76	—	39. Preston and Wyre ..	19	50
			40. Taff Vale ..	—	—
			41. Manchester & Bolton Extension ..	—	—
			42. London and Brighton ..	46	50

9 Bradshaw's map of the complete railways of England, similar to that which Fischer spent a rainy afternoon studying.

About the author

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Christopher Zoller-Blundell has been the academic librarian of the Iron Library since 2019. After studying archaeology and human paleopathology at the University of Durham, he began work on a PhD in the history of archaeology and the international scientific organizations of the League of Nations at the University of Heidelberg and at the International Graduate Center for the Study of Culture in Giessen. Between 2015 and 2019 he worked in various university and county archives, as well as for the library of a private art gallery. He is a member of the Biblosuisse Rare Books Working Group and the Lake Constance Association of One Person Libraries.

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Related article in the Ferrum archive:

"Wo kommen unsere Bücher her? Provenienzen in der Eisenbibliothek" by Florian Ruhland in Ferrum 91/2019

Annotations

- 1 Johann Conrad Fischer, Travel Journal 1794, Frankfurt–Chemnitz, spring 1792 to spring 1793, in: Travel Reports of a Pioneer: Digital edition of the travel journals of Johann Conrad Fischer 1794–1851, published by Franziska Eggimann, edited by Franziska Eggimann, Nicolau Lutz, Valerija Rukavina and Christopher Zoller-Blundell, Schlatt 2023, Version 1.2 (<https://johannconradfischer.com/en/1794/4>, status 11.4.2024).
- 2 Fischer, Travel Journal 1825, The adventure with the pocketbook, 12 July 1825, in: Travel Reports of a Pioneer (as n. 1, <https://johannconradfischer.com/en/1825/68>).
- 3 Fischer, Travel Journal 1845, Schaffhausen–Basel, 14 July 1845, in: Travel Reports of a Pioneer (as n. 1, <https://johannconradfischer.com/en/1845/3>).
- 4 Fischer, Travel Journal 1827, Fischer procures specialist literature, 10 October 1827, in: Travel Reports of a Pioneer (as n. 1, <https://johannconradfischer.com/en/1825-1827/16>).
- 5 Fischer, Travel Journal 1845, A soirée at Mr. Gott's, 28 July 1845, in: Travel Reports of a Pioneer (as n. 1, <https://johannconradfischer.com/en/1845/18>).
- 6 Fischer (see n. 1).
- 7 Bank of England Historical Inflation Calculator (<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>, status 11.4.2024).
- 8 The inventories of Fischer's estate can be found in the Corporate Archives of Georg Fischer Ltd under the following signatures: GFA 1/145.9 : Inventar und Erbteilung, GFA 1/148.1 : Freundschaftliches Inventarium über die Hinterlassenschaft.
- 9 O. Merz, J.C. Fischer und die Literatur seiner Zeit, in: Nachrichten aus der Eisen-Bibliothek der Georg-Fischer-Aktiengesellschaft, 6:1956, p. 22–24.
- 10 Johann Merken, Des Libri Artificiosi Alphabeti Maioris, oder: neu inventirten Kunst- Schreib und Zeichenbuchs, Mülheim am Rhein 1785.

11 Johann Theodor Jablonski, Allgemeines Lexicon der Künste und Wissenschaften : oder kurtze Beschreibung des Reichs der Natur, der Himmel und himmlischen Körper, der Lufft, der Erden, samt denen bekannten Gewächsen, der Thiere, Steine und Ertze, des Meeres und der darinn lebenden Geschöpfe, Leipzig 1721.

12 Schaffhausen Stadtbibliothek, Historical holdings, shelf mark Gym 765.

13 Jablonski (see n. 11), p. 317 f.

14 Ginger beer is first mentioned in the 1825 journal. See: Fischer: Travel Journal 1825, Fischer in the London Journal for Arts and Sciences, 10 June 1825, in: Travel Reports of a Pioneer (as n. 1, <https://johannconradfischer.com/en/1825/13>).

15 Carl Friedrich Alexander Hartmann, Über den Betrieb der Hochöfen, Cupolöfen etc. Mit erhitzter Gebläseluft: nebst 3 lithographische Tafeln, Leipzig 1834.

16 Michael Mieth, Neue Curiöse Geschütz-Beschreibung : Worinnen nicht allein ausführlich gehandelt wird von unterschiedlichen Manieren und Gestaltten derer Giess-Oefen, darinnen allerhand Arten Stücke, Hauptzen und Mörser etc. zu Giessen, Dresden/Leipzig 1705.

17 Andrew Roberts, Napoleon the Great, London 2015, p. 73.

18 Fischer, Travel Journal 1845, Some observations on railways, 30 July 1845, in: Travel Reports of a Pioneer (as n. 1, <https://johannconradfischer.com/en/1845/20>).

19 Ibid.

20 Bradshaw's Railway Companion: Containing the times of departure, fares, etc. of the railways in England and also Hackney Coach fares from the principal railway stations, illustrated with maps of the country through which the railways pass, and plans of London, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester, Manchester 1841.

Image Credits

1 Eisenbibliothek, EM/Es 28a.

2 Eisenbibliothek, EM/Bt 48.

3 Eisenbibliothek.

4 Nik Hunger, 2023.

5 Eisenbibliothek, EM/Bt 48.

6 Eisenbibliothek, EM/Aa 29.

7 Eisenbibliothek, EM/Es 28a.

8 Eisenbibliothek, EM/P 758.

9 Eisenbibliothek, EM/Rb 589.