



**PALAIS
LIECHTENSTEIN**
The Princely Collections

THE PRINCELY LIBRARY

THE HISTORY OF THE PRINCELY LIBRARY

The history of the library and its classicistic furnishings which convey an insight into contemporary tastes in the late 18th century is equally as interesting as that of the holdings of books and prints collected over centuries and generations that it contains.

Designed by Joseph Hardtmuth (1758–1816) and measuring 56 metres in length, this triple-aisled library articulated by two rows of Ionic columns was originally part of the former Liechtenstein Palace on Herrengasse and was one of Vienna's major sights. Completed in 1791, the furnishings were the work of the cabinetmaker Josef Vogl, while the stucco work was executed by Martin Karl Keller and the sculptures were carved by Johann Martin Fischer, among others.

The entailed residence of the Liechtenstein family on Herrengasse, a palace that had been erected during the Baroque age, was adapted and extended during the regime of Prince Alois I von Liechtenstein (1759–1805) by the architects Joseph Meissl the Elder (1730–1790) and his nephew Joseph Hardtmuth in the early classicistic style between 1788 and 1792. Besides the library as one of the jewels of its interior, the palace also contained the administrative offices of the princely estates and from 1846 a casino for the nobility. In 1872, at the instigation of Ludwig Bösendorfer, the former riding school was converted into a concert hall known as the Bösendorfer Hall whose outstanding acoustics were highly prized by world-famous pianists such as Franz Liszt, Arthur Rubinstein and Julius Epstein.

After the Liechtenstein CITY PALACE on Bankgasse was modernised in the mid-19th century, the princely family gradually lost interest in the palace on Herrengasse. It was eventually sold in 1913 and completely demolished a year later. Between 1931–1933 Vienna's first multi-storeyed building was erected on the site.

Between 1912 and 1914 the classicistic library from the palace on Herrengasse was transferred to the GARDEN PALACE in the Rossau quarter and skilfully adapted by Gustav Ritter von Neumann for the Gentlemen's Apartments, which had completely different proportions. This entailed raising the floor level and introducing a gallery. The books were shelved according to aesthetic considerations, i.e. the colour of the bindings. These range from plain vellum to gold-tooled leather bindings and decorative Baroque paper bindings.

Following thorough restoration of the library between 2000 and 2003 a particularly magnificent item from the Princely Collections was installed here: an Empire clock by Johann Caspar Hartmann dating from 1795. In the form of a *tempietto*, it is made of white marble, granite, lapis lazuli and ormolu.

The Baroque fresco decoration in the Library by Johann Michael Rottmayr is an illustrative example of the glorification of the prince who commissioned the palace. Like the frescos in the Ladies Apartments, the Sala Terrena and the two stairways, it was painted between 1705 and 1708. The mythological subject of the *Presentation of the Golden Fleece to Jason* alludes to the investing of Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein with the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1693. The two other ceiling medallions depict the *Sacrifice of Aeneas* and *The Ascension of Alexander*.

THE PRINCELY COLLECTION OF PRECIOUS BOOKS

The library of the Princes of Liechtenstein today contains around 100,000 volumes from all fields of knowledge from the 15th to the 19th century and reflects the political functions, material riches and influence of the House of Liechtenstein as well as the personal interests of individual family members.

Around 1800 the Liechtenstein collection of books, numbering approximately 40,000 volumes, was among the largest and most valuable libraries in Austria, ranking with the libraries owned by Emperor Franz and those of the court and the university. In the early 18th century it became part of entailed Liechtenstein family estate and was expanded considerably during the 19th century. An inventory from 1931, which today also serves as the basis for digital cataloguing of the holdings, conveys an impression of the library's compass, focuses of interest and the particularly valuable volumes it contains.

Hartmann II (1544–1585) had already amassed a collection of approximately 230 works. His son Karl I (1569–1627) acquired among other items a collection of music comprising 130 volumes. Prince Karl Eusebius (1611–1684) concentrated his acquisitions for the library on architecture and horse breeding, while his son Prince Johann Adam Andreas I (1662–1712) focused on writings on economy as well as on art and architecture. In 1711 he also decreed that the library should become part of the entailed and thus inalienable family estate. Prince Joseph Wenzel (1696–1772) had the holdings of the Library sifted in 1749 and the books moved to the Liechtenstein CITY PALACE on Bankgasse.

Under Prince Alois I (1795–1805) the library was set up in the family residence on Herrengasse. He acquired whole libraries, including that of Canon Rulle of Florence in 1791 and that of Prince Carl de Ligne in 1793. Under Prince Johann I (1760–1836) the library of Count Walsegg was added in 1831 and in 1883 the renowned Hauslab collection numbering around 20,000 volumes, 10,000 maps and 20,000 engravings was acquired by Prince Johann II (1840–1929). By the time the library was moved to the palace in the Rossau quarter in 1912–1914, it contained an approximate total of 100,000 volumes, of which some 1,000 were lost during the last war and around 20,000 were sold together with the extensive collection of maps by Prince Franz Joseph II (1906–1989) in 1949.

The following list contains a selection of works from the princely library from the fields of art, architecture, botany, zoology, medicine, geography, military strategy and history:

- Sebastiano Serlio (1475–1554), *Architettura di Sebastiano Serlio / Bolognese / in sei Libri divisa*
- Maria Sybilla Merian (1647–1717), *Dissertatio de Generatione et Metamorphosibus Insectorum Surinamensum*
- Athanasius Kircher (1601–1680), *Obeliscus Pamphilius, Hoc est: interpretatio Obelisci hieroglyphici.*
- Domenico de Rossi (1659–1730), *Raccolta di Statue antiche e moderne, Data in Luce sotto i Gloriosi auspici della santità di N.S. Papa Clemente XI.*
- Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723), *Entwurf einer historischen Architectur, In Abbildung unterschiedener berühmten Gebäude, des Alterthums, und fremder Völcker, [...]*
- Salomon Kleiner (1700–1761), *Vera et accurata delineatio omnium Templorum et Coenobiorum quae tam in Caesarea Urbe ac Sede Vienna Austriae, quam in circumjacentibus Suburbys ejus reperiuntur*
- Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564), *Opera omnia Anatomica & Chirurgica*
- Denis Diderot (1713–1784) and Jean Baptiste le Rond, known as d'Alembert (1717–1783), *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des Sciences, des Arts Libéraux, et les Arts Mécaniques*