

## INTERLUDE

MAY 1935–OCTOBER 1936

After the brief lecture tour in Japan,<sup>440</sup> Olov and Ronny departed from Yokohama on the MS *Tatsuta Maru* on 25 April, bound for San Francisco. The journey took thirteen days, and a menu card kept in their personal archive gives some sense of the opulent standard on board. For the “farewell dinner” on 6 May there were, apart from a generous selection of hors d’œuvres and fruit, twenty-four dishes. Soup was followed by a Salmon Supreme Monte Carlo, Green Turtle Newburg Melba, Noisette de Pre Sale, a Raised Game Pie St Hubert, and Asparagus Mayonnaise Chantilly. For mains there was Beef à la Française, Roast Suckling Pig with sausage meat stuffing and baked apples, Roast Young Turkey, Boiled Swift Premium Ham, Beans, Cauliflower, and Potatoes – boiled, browned and snowflaked. Added to that was a cold buffet and salad, followed by sweets in the form of Plum Pudding Mt Fuji, Mince Pie with Apple Meringue, Iced Pineapple Queen Style, Bavaroise Ceylon, an Ornamented Farewell Cake, and a savoury Cheese Soufflé.<sup>441</sup> Olov and Ronny travelled first class, and enjoyed the company of their fellow cosmopolitan travellers. They arrived in San Francisco on 8 May, departed again after ten days with the legendary SS *Île de France*, and arrived in Paris on 24 May.

Once back, there was no time for rest. At the Cernuschi Museum they immediately set out to unpack and organize their finds for the impending exhibition. Four weeks after their arrival in Paris, Ronny wrote a postcard

---

440. The lectures were noticed in Japanese press, and some of these clippings have been kept in NAA: Janse 2001-29.

441. Menu card for farewell dinner on MS *Tatsuta Maru*, 6 May 1935. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

to Barbro and Birger Nerman in Stockholm, to mark the occasion of their daughter Elisabeth's first birthday. It is here quoted in original Swedish (translation in the note), because its unique style gives a rare glimpse of Ronny's own voice, and conveys a sense of intimacy, rush and exhilaration that will inevitably be lost in translation:

Käraste Barbro och Birger,

De bästa och hjärtligaste hälsningar och lyckönskningar till vår lilla ettårig Elisabeth! Tysand kyssar, de ömaste! Tack so mycket för vänliga brevet. Snart skall vi svara men nu, förlåt, kan vi absolut inte göra det. Vi förberedda en utställning på museet av Olles fynd. Det är enastående fynd. Olle ha funnit saker som gör en revolution i arkeologin, påstår man. [...]

Er tillg vän Ronny<sup>442</sup>

They worked hard and were too busy to write letters, but they were also excited about the upcoming exhibition. Their finds – officially Olov's – seemed to be about to revolutionize archaeology, and their display would be the showstopper at the grand reopening of the Cernuschi Museum. So they had every reason to be both content and excited.

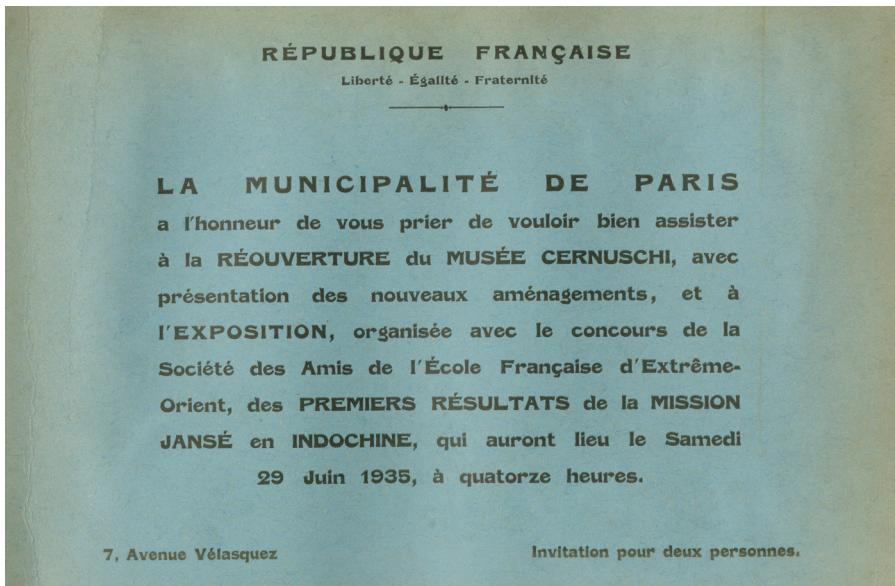
Ten days after Ronny wrote her postcard, on Saturday afternoon, 29 June 1935, the Cernuschi Museum opened its doors after four months of renovation work. The Parisian press joined in praise of the new museum,<sup>443</sup> and wrote that the architect Pierre Fournier had made a complete metamorphosis of the interior of the museum, from the earlier dark panelling and heavy warm-coloured velvet textiles, to a light, strict and

---

442. Postcard from Ronny Janse to Barbro and Birger Nerman, 19 June 1935. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941. In English translation: Dearest Barbro and Birger, / All the best and heartfelt greetings and felicitations to our little one-year Elisabeth! Thousand kisses, the most tender! Thank you so much for the kind letter. We shall soon respond but now, sorry, we can absolutely not. We are preparing an exhibition at the museum of Olle's finds. They are outstanding finds. Olle have found things that make a revolution in archaeology, so they say. [...] Your devoted friend, Ronny.

443. *Beaux-Arts: Le Journal des Arts*, 5 July 1935: "Au Musée Cernuschi renové: Les découvertes archéologique de M. O. Jansé"; *La Semaine de Paris*, 5–11 July 1935: "La Réouverture du Musée Cernuschi."; *Le Temps*, 7 July 1935: "Art et Curiosité: On expose, dans les salles remises à neuf du musée Cernuschi, les premiers résultats de la mission Jansé"; *Le Figaro*, n.d.: (Raymond Lécuyer), "Au Musée Cernuschi Transformé: Une Exposition d'art chinois de haute époque."; *La Liberté*, n.d.: (René Chavance), "La réouverture du Musée Cernuschi et les premiers résultats de la mission Jansé."

Fig. 43. Invitation card to the reopening of Cernuschi Museum in June 1935.



elegant contemporary design, “in accordance with the latest museographic principles”.<sup>444</sup> The driving force behind the transformation was the museum’s new director René Grousset, who wanted to emphasize the didactic and allow the museum to be a place for learning. In focus was the temporary display of finds from Olov Janse’s Indochina expedition.

It was indeed a brave move by René Grousset, from the fine collectible Asian art that was the museum’s trademark, to archaeological objects that were valued by their age and original authenticity, rather than masterful artistry.<sup>445</sup> The new display was, however, well received and the press reports talk enthusiastically of Janse as a fortunate excavator who with great skill had brought a rich booty of ancient objects for the benefit of the French nation. The objects most frequently mentioned in the press are the kneeling figurine from Lach-truong, a tripod with a pheasant head, a bronze drum, and clay farm models skilfully reassembled by Monsieur Mercier at the Louis Finot Museum in Hanoi.<sup>446</sup>

444. *Le Figaro*, n.d.: (Raymond Lécuyer), “Au Musée Cernuschi Transformé: Une Exposition d’art chinois de haute époque”.

445. In the chapter “Memorabilia” we discuss the situation for Janse’s collections at the Cernuschi Museum today, and notice that the tension between “fine art” and archaeological collections has lingered in the museum to this day.

446. *Le Temps*, 7 July 1935: “Art et Curiosité: On expose, dans les salles remises à neuf du musée Cernuschi, les premiers résultats de la mission Jansé”; *Le Figaro*, n.d.: (Raymond Lécuyer), “Au Musée Cernuschi Transformé: Une Exposition d’art chinois de

Soon after the successful opening of their exhibition, Ronny and Olov left Paris for a much-desired vacation in Sweden. They arrived in Stockholm on 11 July, and continued straight on to the Janse family's summer house at Skagshamn near Valdemarsvik, where they stayed for a month to relax before returning again to Stockholm.<sup>447</sup>

During the summer the Swedish press reported on their homecoming, with comments about the expedition, the Cernuschi exhibition in Paris, and the collection that had arrived at the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm.<sup>448</sup> An article in his hometown paper *Norrköpings Tidningar* characterizes the Swedish interest with the subtitles "Professor Janse visits Sweden after 8 months research journey in the East"; "Hitherto unknown culture discovered"; and "Rich archaeological and ethnographic collections". An apparently content, if not complacent, Professor Janse is interviewed:

It has been a very rewarding research expedition, emphasizes Prof. Janse. It is of course not every day one discovers a previously unknown culture.<sup>449</sup>

But he was not only doing interviews about his results, he also spent the summer and autumn writing long popular articles about his expedition and findings. One article was published in two parts in the *Illustrated London News*,<sup>450</sup> and another as a series of three articles in *Norrköpings Tidningar*.<sup>451</sup> The latter article series is in some parts identical with the text in his memoirs (published twenty-four years later)<sup>452</sup> revealing that parts of the memoir text were written as early as 1935.

---

haute époque."; *La Liberté*, n.d: (René Chavance), "La réouverture du Musée Cernuschi et les premiers résultats de la mission Jansé".

447. Letter from O. Janse to T. Nerman, 15 July 1935. Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek. Ture Nerman 3.1.7. Postcard from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 25 July 1935. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941.

448. E.g. *Dagens Nyheter*, 6 August 1935: "Mission O. Jansé i museum Cernuschi."; Östergötlands Dagblad, 7 August 1935: "Kinas gamla värld."; *Norrköpings Tidningar*, 14 August 1935: "Hem från Indokina."

449. *Norrköpings Tidningar*, 14 August 1935: In the Swedish original: "Det har varit en mycket givande forskningsresa, betonar prof. Janse. Det är ju inte var dag man upptäcker en förut okänd kultur."

450. Janse 1935a–b.

451. Janse 1935c–e.

452. Janse 1959.

Let us stop here for a moment and reflect on the press reports of their first expedition. Viewed from a national comparative perspective, they reveal interesting differences in how Janse's work was invested with meaning, in the Indochinese, Swedish, and French mass media.

In the French-speaking Indochinese press, Janse is referred to as an *illustre* or *éminent savant*, and described as a delegate from the French national museums. His gentle, smiling personality is a recurring theme. Much focus is on Dong Son and its indigenous or "Indonesian" origin, comparable to the native Muong people, and Janse suggests here for the first time officially the denomination "Dongsonian" for this archaeological culture. The excavations of Han tombs are repeatedly referred to as less important. The kneeling figurine is, however, mentioned as their most important find, with reference to the expert opinions of George Coédès and Victor Goloubew at the EFEO. A second important issue in the Indochinese press is the future location of the excavated collections. Janse has to explain that the majority of objects, and certainly all the unique pieces, will be returned to Indochina after the exhibition at the Cernuschi Museum in Paris, and only a collection of duplicates will be kept in Paris. He also explains in this context that it is necessary to offer something to the museums of Paris in return for their generous support of his expedition.<sup>453</sup>

In the Swedish press, Janse is referred to as *the Swedish professor* or *Norrköpingspojken* – "the Norrköping lad", and is portrayed as a brave explorer of godforsaken lands and a discoverer of unknown cultures. Much focus is here on the ethnographic collections he sent to the Stockholm Museum of Ethnography. Another recurring theme is his meetings with exotic tribes, which are described in a paternalistic, often humorous tone. The archaeological focus is here on the excavations of Han graves, which are described as particularly rich and advanced, while Dong Son is mentioned only in passing. Both the Han tombs and Dong Son are here featured in

---

453. E.g. *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, 19 March 1935: "Anciennes sépultures du Tonkin et du Nord-Annam: Conférence de M. O. Janse"; *La Presse Indochinoise Saïgon*, 3 April 1935: "Une intéressante conférence de H. O. Jause"; *Le Populaire de l'Indochine*, Huynh Cong-Can, 3 April 1935: "La conférence du Dr. Janse sur les récentes fouilles archéologiques dans le Tonkin et le Nord-Annam"; *L'Opinion*, 3 April 1935: "Conférence du Dr. O. Janse à la Philharmonique"; *L'Impartial*, 3 April 1935: "La belle conférence du Dr O. Janse sur les fouilles archéologiques au Tonkin".

terms of the discovery (Swe: *upptäckt*) of an unknown culture, described as a hybrid between Chinese and indigenous culture.<sup>454</sup>

And finally, in the French press he is referred to as a *savant archéologique suédois, mais Français de cœur et d'adoption*<sup>455</sup> – a distinguished archaeologist of Swedish birth, but French by heart and adoption – and his contribution to the French nation is repeatedly acknowledged. Janse likewise repeatedly emphasizes the greatness of French values and French presence, which has made Indochina *une oasis de paix et de travail* – an oasis of peace and good work.<sup>456</sup> He is quoted several times describing Indochina as an ancient crossroads of several civilizatory currents, but when it comes to his archaeological work, most focus is on his excavations of Han tombs. When Dong Son is mentioned, it is in terms of an Indonesian culture under strong influence from the Chinese Han. The kneeling figurine from Lach-truong is also given some attention, as in the Indochinese press. The French press mentions regularly the “ample” or “rich” “booty” he brought to Paris, and shows a particular interest in particular artefacts, such as the house models. This interest could, however, be explained to some extent by the fact that most of these articles have the new exhibition at the Cernuschi Museum as their main object. On the same note, Mr Mercier at the Louis Finot Museum in Hanoi is often mentioned in the French press, for his skilful reassembling of the fragmented pieces on display in Paris.<sup>457</sup>

In summary, the Indochinese, Swedish, and French press reports concentrate on three different aspects of Janse’s personal identity: In Indochina the gentle and distinguished scholar, in Sweden the hometown lad-cum-successful explorer, and in France his French nationality (by heart and adoption). They report differently on his scientific findings: In Indochina the focus is on Dong Son and its links to present native culture,

---

454. E.g. *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 8 May 1935: “Svensken vän med urfolket i Indokina: Professor Janse på hemväg efter enastående upplevelser i Fjärran Östern”; *Dagens Nyheter* 6 August 1935; *Östergötlands Dagblad*, 7 August 1935; *Norrköpings Tidningar*, 14 August 1935; *Svenska Dagbladet*, 20 November 1935: “300 etnografika hit från Franska Indokina. Prof. Janses första kollektion till Etnografiska museet”; *Social-Demokraten*, 1 October 1936: “Guldkalven är kinesisk predikstol: Asiatisk kurios skall utställas i oktober”.

455. *La nouvelle dépêche*, 29 June 1935: “Retour d’Indochine, M. Jansé nous parle de sa mission”.

456. Janse 1936.

457. *La nouvelle dépêche*, 29 June 1935: “Retour d’Indochine, M. Jansé nous parle de sa mission.”

in Sweden on ethnographic exploration and the discovery of hitherto unknown hybrid cultures, while in France the emphasis is on Han colonization and Indochina as a crossroad, hence a place for meeting and mingling of important cultural currents from elsewhere. And finally, the three national press contexts have different views on the most important results of the expedition: in Indochina there is a concern for the placement of the findings, in Sweden the focus is on the ethnographic collections shipped to Stockholm, and in France much positive attention is given to the “ample booty” of artefacts brought to France by the expedition. Altogether, these different foci offer insights as to how Indochina as a place of interest was valued and conceptualized by the newspaper-reading public in the three national contexts.

Of particular importance for us is also to see how Janse was aware of, and cunningly manoeuvred through and between these sometimes conflicting discourses. Hence he was not a passive, scientifically objective projection screen to stories produced by national media, but he actively adjusted to the three different contexts. We see it in interviews (which could have been manipulated by the journalists, but still reveal choices of themes and words that demonstrate considerable adjustment skills), but even more importantly in the texts he himself authored for newspapers and popular magazines.

\*

As the summer came to an end, Olov and Ronny left Sweden and travelled back to Paris where they arrived on 2 September. They continued working with their collections at the Cernuschi Museum – “an interesting but time-consuming task”.<sup>458</sup> At the end of October, the Swedish Crown Prince (later King Gustaf VI Adolf) paid them a visit, and stayed five days in Paris. The day after his departure, Olov wrote to Birger Nerman:

I have now spent every day with the Crown Prince, who arrived here on the 22nd and left yesterday. On the 25th we had a function at Musée Cernuschi, which the Crown Prince was kind enough to attend. He stayed at the museum for about 3 hours and studied every detail of the collections. Afterwards we had tea. The

---

<sup>458</sup> Letter from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 12 October 1935. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941.



Crown Prince was very kind and seemed content with his visit. As a souvenir of the same, he was presented with a collection of Indochinese artefacts, which I excavated or obtained during my expedition. The Crown Prince will probably donate the collection to the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities.<sup>459</sup>

Just as Janse guessed, the souvenir collection was later donated to the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities.<sup>460</sup> The visit was important for Janse, since it gave him a chance to spend time with the Crown Prince who nurtured a serious interest in archaeology and art history, for which he held a high reputation in Sweden and abroad. A keen collector and friend of Johan Gunnar Andersson's, he was also an influential board member of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. Owing to the Crown Prince's high reputation among collectors and museum officials, the attention he paid to Janse's work gave it a stamp of special importance and quality, in both France and Sweden. In the spring the following year, the French museologist Georges-Henri Rivi  re (founder of the *Mus  e d'Etnographie Trocad  ro* (MET) and later founder of ICOM) was interviewed during a visit to Stockholm:

I congratulate your country on having a Crown Prince with both an interest in and a knowledge of art. [...] Some time ago he visited Dr Olof Jantse's interesting exhibition at the Cernuschi Museum in Paris. Indeed, Dr Jantse is one of my best friends, says the Frenchman.<sup>461</sup>

---

459. Letter from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 28 October 1935. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941. In the Swedish original: "Jag har dagligen varit med Kronprinsen, som kom hit den 22 och reste i g  r. Den 25 dennes hade vi en tillst  llning p   Mus  e Cernuschi, som Kronprinsen hade v  nligheten   vervara. Han stannade p   museet i c:a 3 timmar och studerade samlingarne i minsta detalj. D  refter intogs t  . Kronprinsen var mycket v  lvillig och f  ref  ll n  jd med sitt bes  k. Till minne av detsamma   verl  mnades till honom en samling indokinesiska fornsaker, som jag gr  vde upp eller f  r  rvat under min expedition. F  rmodligen kommer Kronprinsen   verl  mna samlingen till   .S."

460. See also the chapter "Memorabilia"; Solheim 2002; Prior 2003; Miyamoto 2003.

461. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 8 March 1936: "Nordiska museet deltar i Parisutst  llningen? Ros   t Nordiska museet och Skansen fr  n fransk museiman". In the Swedish original: "Jag lyck  nskar ert land till att ha en konstintresserad och konstf  rst  ndig kronprins [...] F  r n  gon tid sedan bes  kte han dr Olof Jantse[sic] intressanta utst  llning i Cernuschi-museet i Paris. Jo, dr Jantse   r en av mina b  sta v  nner, forts  tter fransmannen."



The year 1935 ended on a high. Olov and Ronny enjoyed life in Paris and pursued their work at the Cernuschi Museum. The exhibition continued to attract positive attention and the Crown Prince's visit gave it an extra boost of importance and flair. Ronny, who had suffered from furunculosis with repeated skin infections since their time in Indochina, was now almost recovered. The political situation in the world also enhanced the feeling of relative calm and stability. On this note Olov wrote, in a letter to his socialist friend Ture Nerman:

It is looking good in the big world, right now. Mussolini seems, however, to have a difficult time civilizing the oil wells in Abyssinia. The Pope stays quiet in the name of Christian love. It is feeble.<sup>462</sup>

And 1936 began in much the same mood. On 10 January the City of Paris announced its decision to allocate 30,000 francs to a second expedition to Indochina. The first, which had been granted 25,000 francs by the City of Paris in 1934, was in the official announcement referred to as a tremendous success. Interestingly, success was in this context counted in monetary value alone. The renowned Sinologists Paul Pelliot and Henri Maspero were quoted estimating the market value of the collections brought to the Parisian museums at around 500,000 francs – twenty times the sum granted for the expedition expenses – and in the announcement it is concluded that “[a] refusal of this request for funding would put the City of Paris at risk of losing the benefits of an exceptional archaeological opportunity”.<sup>463</sup> Contrary to (some of) the media rhetoric speaking of scientific achievements and important discoveries of unknown cultures, and against the explicit native Indochinese interest in the future location of the excavated collections, the argument here is thus based entirely on the estimated *monetary* value of the collections kept in Paris.

---

462. Letter from O. Janse to T. Nerman, 27 December 1935. Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek. Ture Nerman 3.1.7. In the Swedish original: “Det ser fint ut i stora världen, just nu. Mussolini tycks emellertid få det besvärligt att civilisera oljekällorna i Abyssinien. Påven tiger i den kristliga kärlekens namn. Det är ynkligt.”

463. Bulletin Municipal Officielle, 10 January 1936. In the French original: “Refuser le credit qui nous est demandé serait pour la Ville de Paris risques de perdre le bénéfice d’une occasion archéologique exceptionnelle”. The same argument is found in *Svenska Dagbladet*, 3 July 1936: (Adolf Schück), “Svensk succé i Paris.”

For Olov and Ronny Janse, this was fantastic news. Having already secured 30,000 francs from the French National Museums, and 20,000 francs from the French Ministry of Education (which meant a total of 80,000 francs), they could now safely proceed with their preparations for a second expedition.<sup>464</sup>

In early February they left Paris and travelled to London, to visit the *International Exhibition of Chinese Art* at Burlington House. The exhibition was organized by the Royal Academy of Arts and was “the largest exhibition of Chinese art ever mounted”, with over four hundred thousand visitors between November 1935 and March 1936. The exhibition was organized chronologically, with each of the sixteen galleries devoted to objects from one or two ancient or historical dynasties.<sup>465</sup> The exhibition also had considerable political effects. Although sceptical about the prevailing Western dominance and appropriation of Chinese art and archaeology through imperial treaties,<sup>466</sup> the Chinese government contributed an official collection, hoping that the exhibition would “demonstrate the grandeur of the Chinese nation to a worldwide audience” and would help to raise sympathy for the Chinese in their resistance against the Japanese colonization of Manchukuo.<sup>467</sup> In addition to the official Chinese collections, the exhibition displayed objects from 240 collectors across the world (including Janse’s friends Johan Gunnar Andersson and C.T. Loo), most of whom were sponsored by their governments.<sup>468</sup> The exhibition was something of a PR success for China, and has been regarded as a milestone in the discipline of Chinese Art History. But it was also subject to critique from high-profile cosmopolitan Chinese intellectuals like Lin Yutang, who argued that it had contributed to an unfortunate idea of Chinese culture as essentially primitive and historically stagnant, in contrast to the modern West.<sup>469</sup> Ronny and Olov Janse stayed one week in London at the luxury Washington Mayfair Hotel while they visited the Chinese exhibition. Letters say that they were delighted with what they saw there, and that they took the opportunity to also

---

464. The “Ordre de Mission” was signed on 18 September 1936 by Henri Verne. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

465. Steuber 2006:528.

466. Steuber 2006:529–530.

467. Fan 2012.

468. Steuber 2006:528–531.

469. See a more elaborate discussion of Lin Yutang’s critique against the exhibition as a display of a simplistic Western view of a “primitive” China, in Fan 2012.

see some private collections in London before returning to France.<sup>470</sup>

Upon their return to Paris, Olov stepped in as Acting Director of the Cernuschi Museum, while René Grousset was in London.<sup>471</sup> They planned to leave for Indochina in the autumn to arrive at the end of the monsoon rains, just in time for the dry season that was the most suitable for excavation. Awaiting the departure they continued their work at the Cernuschi Museum, and Olov lectured about the results of his expedition in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and in Sweden. The luminous projections of film and still photographs appear to have been a particularly attractive feature of the lectures, and are regularly mentioned in advertisements and media reports.<sup>472</sup>

Already in early May they left Paris for a summer break in Sweden. They spent some of the time in the summer house in Skagshamn, but also took the opportunity to reconnect with the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm. In a newspaper interview in August, Olov says that the main reason why they were in Stockholm was that Johan Gunnar Andersson had requested his assistance in putting together a monograph on Chinese Hsin Tien ceramics. In the interview, he also seized the opportunity to emphasize Andersson's great importance for his work in Indochina:

It may seem peculiar, concludes Professor Janse, that I have chosen to work in Indochina of all places. Therefore I wish to take the opportunity to say that I first and foremost have my teacher and friend, Professor J.G. Andersson, to thank for the fact that I began to take an interest in the archaeology of Indochina and East Asia. Several years ago, Professor Andersson observed during a visit to museums in France, some prehistoric bronze artefacts that appeared related to other bronze artefacts from Southwest-

---

470. Postcard from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 11 February 1936. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941; Letter from O. Janse to T. Nerman, n.d., in Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek. Ture Nerman 3.1.7. Letter from O. Janse to M. Mauss, 19 February 1936. Fonds Marcel Mauss au Collège de France: mauss-janse-0026.pdf

471. Letter from O. Janse to M. Mauss, 19 February 1936. Ibid.

472. E.g. Musée Guimet, 19 January 1936; The Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Paris, 19 February 1936; L'Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 25 March 1936; Institut français/Maison Descartes in Amsterdam, 8 May 1936; Alliance française/Grand Hotel Stockholm, 13 May 1936. Invitation cards or press reports of all these lectures are found in NAA: Janse 2001-29.

ern China, which the Professor had incorporated in the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities' rich collections of Chinese bronzes. Upon request by Professor Andersson I came to study these artefacts on behalf of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, and thereby my interest in East Asian art and culture was awakened.<sup>473</sup>

A new phase, with a new incentive, appears to be taking shape here during the summer of 1936. The thought of becoming the Director of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities after Andersson's retirement might have crossed Olov's (and Ronny's) mind(s) much earlier, but here in the summer of 1936 we see for the first time indications that this had become a major motive for their work in Indochina. Perhaps it was sparked by the great success of the first expedition and the Cernuschi exhibition, or the time spent with the influential Crown Prince in Paris. But it could just as well have been driven by the insecure employment situation in Paris or a longing to return to a safe base in Sweden. Letters indicate that Olov's father Thure was getting weaker by age, and Ronny's family was struggling in Stalin's Soviet Union. Or it was a combination of these and other circumstances that made them set their sights on the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities at this particular point in time. With this new incentive, whatever its reasons were, Olov was now keen to officially mark his strong relation to Andersson – his “teacher and friend”. In the article quoted above, we see how he places both Andersson and the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities firmly inside his Indochina project by making them the very reason for and origin of the expedition. Since there are no previous references to Andersson and the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities as prime movers for the Indochina project, this must be understood as a piece of strategic storytelling.

---

<sup>473</sup>. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 6 August 1936: “Prof. Janse på expedition i 8 månader”. In the Swedish original: “Det kan synas egendomligt, slutar professor Janse, att jag just slagit mig på Indokina. Jag vill därför passa på tillfället att tala om, att det i främsta rummet är min lärare och vän, professor J.G. Andersson, som jag har att tacka för, att jag överhuvud kom att ägna mig åt Indokinas och Östasiens arkeologi. För flera år sedan hade professor Andersson under en resa till Frankrike i några museer där observerat diverse förhistoriska bronsföremål från Indokina, vilka delvis visade släktskap med andra bronsföremål från sydvästra Kina, som av professorn införlivades med Östasiatiska samlingarnas oerhört rika bestånd av kinesiska bronser. På anmodan av professor Andersson kom jag att närmare studera dessa föremål för Östasiatiska samlingarnas räkning, och därigenom var det som mitt intresse väcktes för den östasiatiska konsten och kulturen.”

At the end of August they left Sweden and returned to Paris. Before the departure they had a Swedish special passport (no. 256) issued by the Foreign Office in Stockholm,<sup>474</sup> at the request of Gerhard Lindblom (1887–1969), Director of the Ethnographic Museum (Swe: *Statens Ethnografiska Museum*). In an extensive letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lindblom emphasizes the importance of Janse's first expedition to Indochina, and the rich collections of 250 objects that it had rendered to the Ethnographic Museum. To facilitate Janse's next expedition, when he was expected to continue the acquisitions and thus work for a state institution, Lindblom argued that it was reasonable that he was granted an official passport.<sup>475</sup>

On the way to Paris they took the opportunity to make a stop and visit the Crown Prince at the royal summer retreat Sofiero. In a letter to Birger Nerman, Olov writes about the meeting:

At Sofiero I met the Crown Prince, who was as considerate as ever, and asked if I would not like to stay permanently in Sweden after this second expedition. I am honestly happy that I had the opportunity to speak undisturbed with the Crown Prince, who apparently is already well informed about what is going on. [...] The other day I sent an offprint re. the excavations in Indochina. Birger was kind enough to offer to review it in *Svenska Dagbladet*. It would be very helpful if Birger could arrange for the review to be published before H.R.H. and J.G.A. travel abroad, i.e. the first days of October.<sup>476</sup>

---

474. The passport, which included both Ronny and Olov, was issued on 24 August 1936. See also letter from O. Janse to S. Elisséeff, 23 September 1940. Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass. Correspondence, 1938–1940.

475. Letter from G. Lindblom to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Swe: *Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet*), 25 August 1936. Riksarkivet. Box. Utrikesdepartementet 1920 års dossier-system P 1188. Mapp: Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet. Avd: P, Grupp: 90, Mål: F XXXIX. Tillämpning av svensk passlagstiftning. Passutfärdande av K.U.D och dess underlyd. myndigheter.

476. Letter from O. Janse to B. Nerman, 9 September 1936. Riksarkivet. Kartong 3. Korrespondens Brev III 1935–1941. In the Swedish original: "På Sofiero träffade jag Kronprinsen, som var idel välvilja och som själv tog upp frågan om jag inte ville stanna definitivt i Sverige efter denna andra expedition. Jag är uppriktigt glad att jag fick tillfälle att i lugn och ro tala med Kronprinsen, som tydligen redan är mycket väl underrättad om vad som händer och sker. [...] Sände häromdagen ett särtryck ang. grävningarna i Indokina. Birger var nog vänlig lova recensera detsamma i Sv. Dagbl. Det vore mycket

The letter confirms that Janse was now working actively through personal and official channels, directly aimed at the Crown Prince and Andersson – the two actors with the most influence on the matter – to promote himself as a candidate for the upcoming post at the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. The confident tone indicates that he was quite certain, at this point, of a positive outcome.

They arrived in Paris on the last day of August, and proceeded after a couple of days to Toulouse and the French Prehistory Congress,<sup>477</sup> where Janse represented the EFEO and on 14 September presented a paper on his research in Indochina. The paper focused on his results from Dong Son and the spectacular finds from Lach-truong, and as usual he used projections of film and photographs in his presentation.<sup>478</sup> When the conference was over, they returned to Paris to make some final arrangements before their departure for Indochina.

\*

Now, something (or rather, a series of things) occurred which marks the beginning of a mood change around the end of September – from euphoria to crisis. We are not entirely sure about what exactly happened to Ronny and Olov at this point in time, but it is clear that one factor was a sudden dramatic fall of the franc as a consequence of political instability around Léon Blum's socialist government in France. In a letter to Marcel Mauss, Olov writes:

For different reasons I will have to rush my departure for Indochina. The fall of the franc will force me to shorten my stay. I have serial misfortune at the moment, but hope that this mission will get me out of this bad phase.<sup>479</sup>

---

vänligt om Birger kunde ombestyras att recensionen publiceras innan H.K.H. och J.G.A. reser utomlands, d.v.s. de första dagarna av oktober.”

477. Congrès préhistorique de France, Toulouse, 13–20 September 1936. [http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/bspf\\_0249-7638\\_1936\\_num\\_33\\_9\\_4485](http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/bspf_0249-7638_1936_num_33_9_4485), accessed 18 April 2018.

478. “Congrès Préhistorique de France”. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

479. Letter from O. Janse to M. Mauss, n.d., Fonds Marcel Mauss au Collège de France: mauss-janse-0027.pdf. In the French original: “Pour différentes raisons je vais être obligé de brusquer mon départ pour l’Indochine. La chute du franc me forcera d’y

So with urgency and a sense of anxiety they rushed off to Marseille. On 16 October 1936 – the same day that a display of their collections opened at the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm – they embarked on the SS *Maréchal Joffre* bound for Saigon. The film, shot onboard the ship and at the stops along the way, indicates that they were still in good mood and excited to be on the way to Indochina again.<sup>480</sup>

---

abrégé mon séjour. J'ai en ce moment des malheurs en série. J'espère néanmoins que cette mission me fera sortir de cette mauvaise passe."

480. Swedish Television Archive. © SVT Arkiv.