A COLLECTION OF WATERCOLOURS BY JOHANN JACOB FALKESSEN (1803–1883)
A SWISS ARTIST IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE
Johann Jakob Falkeisen: a Swiss artist in the Ottoman Empire

This recently rediscovered group of watercolours sheds new light on early industrial development in Turkey, providing a unique visual record of the area in and around Bursa and into the workings of industries at the heart of the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Swiss artist Johann Jakob Falkeisen was born in Basel in 1804. After studying at Paris, Falkeisen went to Milán to further his career as an artist and worked with Caspar David Friedrich. He returned to Switzerland and travelled to the Levant in 1831–1832, where he worked as a curatorial assistant at the Kunstmuseum in Basel. He was a professional artist, but also a miner and a businessman, which provided him with a unique perspective.

Falkeisen took the opportunity to travel in Bursa in 1835, visiting Athens and Constanta on the way. In Bursa, he was in touch with the factory which was being run by his brother, who was at the Austrian Consulate for Bursa. The Falkeisen family bought the factory together with the Tasciyan, a French entrepreneur called Nicolas, who had sold the factory in 1835. The factory was the first steam-powered silk-spinning factory in Turkey and manufactured silk thread.

Johann Jakob Falkeisen lived in Turkey until 1855 when the family factory was destroyed by fire as a result of an explosion. He then moved to Constantinople where he worked as a curator at the Kunstmuseum and began to illustrate local life. He travelled to the islands of Asia Minor, to the islands of the Aegean Sea, and to the islands of the Dardanelles. He also travelled to the lakes of the Taurus Mountains, to the Charybdis, and to the Karabagh. He also travelled to the islands of the Aegean Sea, to the islands of the Dardanelles, and to the islands of the Taurus Mountains. He also travelled to the lakes of the Taurus Mountains, to the Charybdis, and to the Karabagh.

Falkeisen's first collection belonged to the Kunstmuseum in Basel and consists of eighty-two drawings by Falkeisen, the majority of which are watercolours and drawings of Turkey. These drawings in black leather with gilt tooling are entitled 'Reise Erinnerungen' and provide a unique visual record of the area in and around Bursa and into the workings of industries at the heart of the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the nineteenth century.

This recently rediscovered group of watercolours sheds new light on early industrial development in Turkey, providing a unique visual record of the area in and around Bursa and into the workings of industries at the heart of the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the nineteenth century. Falkeisen's first collection, also owned by the Kunstmuseum, was a record of Bursa and the surrounding area at a critical moment in industrial history and an important record of the links between the Ottoman Empire and the business community of Europe.

In general, travel in the Ottoman Empire at this time was very convenient for visiting foreigners as a result of the levies and taxes that were imposed. A customs barrier could be avoided by paying a fee of 20 piastres, which was the equivalent of 10 francs. The levies were not particularly burdensome but the taxes were calculated at 10 per cent of the value of the goods. These taxes were paid at the border between Turkey and Thrace.

Private factories contributed to economic growth throughout the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. In Bursa there were many factories at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which was mainly due to the fact that in Bursa there were more carpet factories than in any other place in the Ottoman Empire. The factories were well-equipped with machinery, which was imported from Britain, and the factory owners were able to produce goods at a lower cost than in Turkey. The factories were well-equipped with machinery, which was imported from Britain, and the factory owners were able to produce goods at a lower cost than in Turkey. The factories were well-equipped with machinery, which was imported from Britain, and the factory owners were able to produce goods at a lower cost than in Turkey.

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Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)

An encampment by a case with hot springs near Bursa, Turkey

Signed l.r.: J J Falkeisen fect, watercolour over pencil heightened with white, gum arabic and touches of gold, with a black line border, inscribed on label attached to previous backboard:


[In the year 1848 Conrad von Muralt (who was not yet married to Luisa Hess) visited his nephew, Robert von Muralt, who was a few years younger than him. They were always like brothers together in Bursa, where Robert worked for 2 years in the silk industry. From there they made an excursion to the hot springs in the neighbourhood and Robert cooked omlettes.]

15.5 x 34.5 cm

Provenance (nos. 1-4)

Private collection, Switzerland until 2009

On the west side of Bursa and in the village of Çekirge are hot spring baths containing sulphur and iron which flow from Mount Olympus. The sources of the five hot springs, known in ancient times as ‘Ráche’, are very probably remnants of the Roman period when the first development of the hot springs began.

A lively party was evidently in progress the evening that Falkeisen, who included a self-portrait and is the figure seated near the fire with a white cloak, drew this watercolour. The figure in a green suit and cap, who appears to be identified as Robert von Muralt, is cooking omlettes over the campfire and is included in two of the drawings of the Cave Grotte, including the one at the threshold of the house, suggesting he lived there. Landerer, identified in the label, is wearing a local cloak and holds a letter in front of him. The barrel of raki and the empty bottles attest to a good supply of drink.

The details of the trunk, clothes line, blankets and saddle bags provide an evocative record of the camping trip. The horses can be seen grazing beyond the campfire. The local guides, guards and other servants who accompanied the European visitors would also appear to have been relaxing and enjoying the evening.
Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)
A market and mosque, Bandirma, Turkey

Signed l.l.: J. J. Falkeisen fect, watercolour over traces of pencil heightened with touches of white and gild arabic, with a black line border, inscribed in Old German on a label attached to previous backboard: Bandirma türkisches dorff am Murmurer Meer/Markt und Mosche. gemalt 1852 von J.J. Falkeisen von Basel.
23.5 x 31.5 cm

Bandirma is a city in Balıkesir province in northwestern Turkey on the Sea of Marmara and a trading point between İzmir and Istanbul. Another version of this watercolour dated 1852 is included in an unpublished album of the work of Falkeisen in the collection of the Kunstmuseum, Basel. A further pencil drawing of the subject, squared for transfer is also included in the album which also contains another watercolour of the port showing boats being unloaded.
Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)

A caravan by a pavilion outside a town, probably near Bursa, Turkey

Signed l.r.: J. Falkeisen, watercolour over pencil heightened with touches of white and gum arabic, with a black line border

24.2 x 33.2 cm

There are two drawings for this and the following watercolour in the album in the Kunstmuseum, Basel, one showing a figure firing a gun at the front of a slightly larger caravan and another with a different figure group containing musicians. This suggests that it was a place of some importance which Falkeisen visited often and can be presumed to be near Bursa. It may have been a place to break a journey and rest the horses, who could drink from the nearby river.

Circle of Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)

A pavilion outside a town, probably near Bursa, Turkey

Watercolour over pencil, with touches of white and gum arabic and a black line border

25.7 x 35.2 cm

The quality of this drawing seems a little less good than the previous view of the same place by Falkeisen and it may be that it is by one of his friends, to whom he was giving instruction in watercolour.
THE PRODUCTION OF WINE AND RAKI

This set of six recently rediscovered watercolours illustrates the production of wine and raki at the Cave Grotte near Bursa, and the office of the firm of Falkeisen and Corney and shops in the city itself. These important watercolour document very precisely how wine and raki were made and traded at this vineyard and contain delightful and closely observed details of everyday life in mid-nineteenth century Turkey.

The extensive inscriptions by J.J. Falkeisen are in a mixture of French and German, as would be natural for a Swiss artist.

5

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)
Lieu où l'on fait le Vin de la Cave Grotte
Watercolour over pencil with gum arabic, and a black line border, inscribed verso: Lieu où l'on fait le Vin de la Cave Grotte 21 x 25.8 cm

The artist carefully records the grape presses in a distillery in the mountains where the local workers are treading the grapes and using a screw press. The costume of the workers are recorded in meticulous detail.

In the Ottoman Empire until the nineteenth century, meyhanes run by Greeks and Albanians would mainly serve wine along with meats, due to religious restrictions imposed by various sultans. The more liberal atmosphere of the Tanzimat period (1839–1876) saw meyhane attendance among Muslims rise considerably, and raki became a favorite drink. By the end of the century, raki took its current standard form and its consumption exceeded that of wine.

During this period, raki was produced by the distillation of grape pomace obtained during wine fermentation as illustrated in this group of watercolours. When the amount of pomace was not sufficient, alcohol imported from Europe would be added. If aniseed was not added, it was called flat raki (“straight raki”), while raki prepared by adding gum mastic was called saz raki (“gum raki”) or mastikha.

5a

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)
Plan de la Cave Grotte
Inscribed l.c.: Plan de la Cave Grotte, with a key, a scale and a compass, pen and black ink over pencil and watercolour, extensive inscribed verso: Place actuelle dans la Cave Grotte pour un quantitatif (?)/de e.ner 7231, soit 289,240 ... de Vin savoie / 7 Tanneaux F à ... 7. f 49/5 “ E ” “ .. 40/51 “ D ” “ 12- 612/55 “ A ” “ 56 , 3080/15 “ B “ 60, 900/7 “ C ” 3(?)00.300/3 “ H “ 400.1200 / 7231 21 x 25.8 cm

This detailed plan shows the precision which characterises the organisation of this well-run wine and spirits business. There are no records of Corney’s involvement in the Corney and Barrow archives housed in the London Metropolitan Archive which suggest it may have been a small concern for local consumption. Illustration as evidenced in this group of watercolours. When the amount of pomace was not sufficient, alcohol imported from Europe would be added.

21 x 25.8 cm
Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)
Anti Local et Distillation de l'Eau de vie de la Cave Grotte

Watercolour over pencil with gum arabic and a black line border, inscribed verso: Anti Local et Distillation de l'Eau de vie de la Cave Grotte
21 x 25.8 cm

This work shows the hearth where the distilling of the alcohol is being carried out, from the crushed grape skins and grape residue, the fermenting jug having been fermented with water. The European in the background appears to be Robert von Muralt, who worked in Turkey for two years in the late 1840s, as recorded on a label attached to the backboard of the old frame stora of this group of watercolours.
Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)
Intérieure supérieur de la Cave Grotte

Watercolour over pencil with gum arabic and touches of gold, with a black line border, inscribed verso: Intérieure supérieur de la Cave Grotte
21 x 25.8 cm

Some very large barrels can be seen stored in the well organised cellar in the caves, guarded by an immaculately dressed guard with a hookah.
8 Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)
Jardin de la maison d’habitation et réservoir d’eau de la Cave Grotte
Watercolour over pencil heightened with white and gum arabic, with a black line border, inscribed verso: Jardin de la maison d’habitation et réservoir d’eau de la Cave Grotte
21 x 25.8 cm

Robert von Muralt stands outside the house outside the cave at dusk, perhaps painted with his wife and children at the door, a fountain playing in the foreground. The terraced garden and fountain show a green fingered gardener has been at work and a charming home has been created at the foot of the cliffs. The sky has turned pink and the mountains appear purple as the sun sets.
9

Johann Jakob Falkeisen (Swiss, 1804-1883)
Bureau et magasins de Falkeisen & Corney
dans le Mahmoud Pacha Chan à Brusa

Watercolour over traces of pencil with gum arabic, the barrels inscribed FC or MF 1820, with
a black line border, inscribed verso Bureau et magasins de Falkeisen & Corney dans le
Mahmoud Pacha Chan à Brusa
21 x 25.8 cm

The two Europeans standing at the door under the plaque reading FC, the offices of Falkeisen and Corney in the
Mahmoud Pacha Chan are presumably Falkeisen and Corney or possibly senior employees. Many bales of
cloth wrapped in a striped material can be seen strewn around and the stacked sacks may contain silk cocoons.
The locked door with a Star of David above on the right of the composition appears to show the entrance to a small
synagogue.

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Karen Taylor has been working with paintings and drawings for over thirty years. She works as a fine art adviser, agent and dealer, offering independent, impartial advice to collectors and museums all over the world on buying, selling and all areas of collection management.

After graduating from Brasenose College, Oxford, where she read history, she joined Sotheby’s British Paintings department and spent nearly ten years there. She ran the topographical and travel picture sales, where she built up the Greek and Turkish areas, and also specialised in British drawings and watercolours.

In 1993 she joined Spink’s picture department. Here she expanded her interest in Oriental, Indian and Far Eastern art and organised exhibitions of Oriental paintings and nineteenth-century British paintings and contemporary artists. She also represented Spink at international art fairs in Paris, New York, Hong Kong and Singapore, amongst others, and served on the prestigious Grosvenor House Art & Antiques Fair picture vetting committee.

Based in Sydney for several years, where she renewed her interest in Australian art, Karen headed up Spink Australia before returning to London. Since 2001, she has been running her own fine art consultancy, handling British paintings and drawings of all periods, typically placing pieces privately and working with many of the world’s major museums.

She can provide valuations for all purposes and advice on insurance, framing, conservation, lighting and display, storage and logistics.

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