

Tiled Interiors on Paper: Trade Catalogues as a Key Source to Understand the Use of Floor and Wall Tiles in European Interiors¹

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—— The enormous popularity of decorated industrial wall and floor tiles in Europe in the years 1840–1940 is strongly linked to the standardization, technical quality, and aesthetic variety of the products that were well marketed through often lavishly colored trade catalogues.

More than the study of existing tile schemes in interiors, a systematic study of these trade catalogues leads to a better understanding of the general use of tile in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century interior. They inform us about factories and offer invaluable information on the technical and aesthetic evolution of tiles. They help us to date the designs and acquire a better knowledge of changes in taste in applying them. They are also a valuable source for documenting differences and similarities between factories and countries in matters of tile design and reveal opportunities to better understand the global export success or stylistic influence of many European factories in other countries on the continent as well as overseas.

In this paper a general and theoretical approach is elucidated by referring to concrete cases based on a research collection of more than 600 tile catalogues from all over the world.

Keywords: interior design; industrial design; architectural history; trade catalogues; ceramic wall tiles; ceramic floor tiles.

¹ This article is the result of research done for my doctoral thesis based on an extensive collection of tile catalogues, and of a series of lectures on this theme held in Amersfoort (NL) – 21.09.2012 – Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed. Interieurplatform Archiefbronnen; The Hague (NL) – 22.02.2013 – Dutch Postgraduate School for Art History (OSK) Studiedag Historische Binnenruimten; Middelkerke (B) – 27.09.2014 – ETWIE studiedag Van Affiche tot Zakenkrant; Brussels (B) – 29.11.2019 – RANN International symposium Interiors of the Art Nouveau period and Lisbon (P) – 21.04.2021 – Azlab#66 conference.



1. Title page of one of many versions of the illustrated catalogue of architectural ornaments by the Joseph Beunat firm of Sarrebourg and Paris (Fr) that was continuously updated from 1810 until 1838 (Collection Mario Baeck)

Vieno iš daugelio Josepha Beunat firmos (Sarbūras ir Paryžius, Prancūzija) iliustruotų architektūrinių ornamentų katalogų titulinis puslapis, Mario Baecko kolekcija

1. Trade catalogues and the evolution of their study

Trade catalogues – as part of the broad spectrum of commercial printed matter – have been around since the sixteenth century.² They originated in the practice of bundling together loose printed sheets with illustrated product overviews. From the second half of the eighteenth century, the publishing of trade catalogues gradually became a regular part of the business practice of firms, including metal ware factories³ and artificial stone manufacturers, such as Eleanor Coade,⁴ as well as producers of

² Theodore R. Crom, *Trade Catalogues, 1542–1842* (Melrose - Florida: T.R. Crom, 1989).

³ W. A. Young, *Old English pattern books of the metal trades: a descriptive catalogue of the collection in the V&A Museum* (London: HMSO, 1913).

⁴ *A Descriptive Catalogue of Coade's Artificial Stone Manufactory, At King's Arms Stairs, Narrow-Wall, Lambeth: Opposite White-hall Stairs. With Prices Affixed* (London: at the Manufactory & J. Strahan, 1784). Online available at <https://archive.org/details/DescriptiveCatalogueOfCoadesArtificialStoneManufactory>.

ceramics and terracotta objects, such as Josiah Wedgwood⁵ in England or Joseph Beunat and his successor Heilighenthal⁶ in France. Particularly in the case of large and heavy objects, catalogues were an easier means of informing the potential customer of what was on offer, especially if they resided elsewhere in the country or even abroad.

The scientific interest in trade catalogues as an object of study in its own right, and no longer as a special form of collectible printed matter, only really commenced around 1980, following a few older and bibliographical-oriented publications on trade catalogues in 1934,⁷ 1960,⁸ and 1971.⁹

Over the following decades in the United States, articles and studies increasingly appeared that used commercial catalogues as a valuable resource for general and theoretical research into the evolution of technology, commerce, advertising, consumer behavior, and many other aspects of human activity,¹⁰ including some specifically targeted on architecture and interior design.¹¹

5 *A catalogue of cameos intaglios, medals, and bas-reliefs; with a general account of vases and other ornaments, after the antique, made by Wedgwood and Bentley; and sold at their rooms in Great Newport-Street, London* (London: Cadel, Robson and Parker, 1773).

6 *Recueil des dessins d'ornemens d'architecture de la manufacture de J. Jos. Heilighenthal à Strasbourg, successeur du Sr. Jos. Beunat de Sarrebourg contenant tout ce qui a rapport à la décoration des appartements, tels que panneaux, dessins de portes, dessus de glaces, frises, pilastres, montants, rosaces, entablements, moulures, ecoinçons, modillons, & c. bound with Tarif des ornemens d'architecture de la manufacture de J. Jos. Heilighenthal, à Strasbourg, successeur de M. Jos. Beunat, à Sarrebourg (Meurthe), breveté d'invention et de perfectionnement* (Strasbourg: De l'Imprimerie de F.G. Levrault, s.a.). Online available at <https://archive.org/details/RecueilDesDessinsDornementsDarchitectureDeLaManufactureDeJ.Jos> with an incorrect bibliographical description.

7 Granville Meixell, *The Trade Catalog Collection: A Manual with Source Lists* (New York: Special Libraries Association, 1934).

8 Lawrence B. Romaine, *A guide to American trade catalogues 1744–1900* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1960/1 – reprinted New York: Dover, 1990). The University of California, Santa Barbara keeps the Romaine Trade Catalog Collection: <https://www.library.ucsb.edu/special-collections/collections/lawrence-b-romaine-trade-catalog-collection>.

9 J. Bunston, *A bibliography of 120 pattern books and trade catalogues in the Library of the Victoria & Albert Museum* (London: National Art Library, 1971).

10 For a fairly recent general overview for the English-speaking world, with further bibliographic references, see: Linda Seckelson et. al., “Trade Catalogs: opportunities and Challenges”, *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America*, vol. 34 (fall 2015): 267–300.

11 Herbert Mitchell and Frank G. Matero, *The Architectural Trade Catalog in America, 1850–1950: Selections from the Avery Library* (New York: Avery Library, 1985). Online available at https://digital.hagley.org/08007394_architectural_trade_cat & Daniel D. Reiff, *Houses from books: treatise, pattern books, and catalogs in American architecture, 1738–1950: a history and guide* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

That trade catalogues are an interesting source specifically for art-historical research into interiors was stated in 1984 by E. Richard McKinstry in his *Introduction to Trade Catalogues at Winterthur*: “House decoration, both architectural and that relating to the arrangement of furnishings, can be better understood by using catalogues.”¹² In this he was aligning himself with Kenneth L. Ames, chairman of the office of Advanced Studies at Winterthur, who a few years earlier, in 1978, had indicated that one of the main reasons for this was the fact that trade catalogues “can provide a scholar with more images of thoroughly documented artifacts than he could hope to gather in years of scouring museums, historical societies and private collections.”¹³ Not mentioned by Ames nor McKinstry is the fact that even extensive field research into *in situ* realizations, which is without a doubt also crucial in this type of research, can never provide the same comprehensive picture as trade catalogues because many interior applications have disappeared or have been strongly modified over the years. Furthermore, they can rarely be dated with great precision, and they are usually very difficult to access, even for scientific research, especially when it concerns interiors in private residences.

In Europe, the interest in trade catalogues in general and their usefulness for art-historical research grew more or less in parallel with the United States, thanks to various more general publications in Germany,¹⁴ the Netherlands,¹⁵ Great Britain,¹⁶ France,¹⁷ and Belgium.¹⁸ Only a few

¹² E. Richard McKinstry, *Trade Catalogues at Winterthur. A Guide to the Literature of Merchandising 1750 to 1980* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1984), IX.

¹³ Kenneth L. Ames, “Meaning in Artifacts: Hall Furnishings in Victorian America”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 9 (1978), 1:26.

¹⁴ Ottfried Dascher, ed., *Mein Feld ist die Welt. Musterbücher und Kataloge 1784–1914* (Dortmund: Stiftung Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv, 1984).

¹⁵ H. Baudet, et al., *Geordend en gedrukt. Vier eeuwen Nederlandse handelscatalogi (Grafisch Nederland 1985)* (Amsterdam: Koninklijk Verbond van grafische Ondernemingen, 1985).

¹⁶ Victoria and Albert Museum, *Trade Catalogs in the Victoria & Albert Museum* (London: Mindata, 1986); Gaye Smith, *Trade Catalogues: A Hundred Years, 1850–1949* (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University Library, 1992).

¹⁷ *Pages d'or de l'édition publicitaire: catalogues illustrés au service des entreprises* (Paris: Agence culturelle de Paris, 1987) [Exhibition catalogue, held at the Bibliothèque Forney]; Alain Cotterau, Jean-Pierre Daviet and Laurent Thévenot, “Les imprimés d'entreprises à la Bibliothèque nationale: une mine à décourvir pour la recherche scientifique”, in *Archives d'entreprises du XIXe siècle, industrie mécanique, industrie textile. (Etudes et inventaires, 13)* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1989), V–XIII.

¹⁸ Katrien Vanbrabant and Johan David, “Handelscatalogi, reclame als bron voor de geschiedenis van de technieken [Trade catalogues, advertising as a source for the history of the techniques]”, in *Erfgoed van Industrie en Techniek*, 16 (2007), 1:2–11.

studies focused on architecture and interior design, especially in Great Britain¹⁹ and France.²⁰

2. Tile catalogues as an important resource for research on ceramic tiles

Within this evolution, studies of the ceramic tile industry in which extensive use is made of trade catalogues remained rare. Although, on occasions, at least a few trade catalogues are used in detailed studies of a specific company or sector.²¹ In architectural and interior studies, however, these are only rarely examined in a more exhaustive and systematic manner.²²

2.1. Research on the production of tiles and architectural ceramics in individual factories

One of the first European studies on architectural ceramics that gave full attention to trade catalogues as a crucial source for a better understanding of the production of one or more ceramic manufacturers was a 1977 article by the German researcher Gerhard Dietrich.²³ By making extensive use of the commercial catalogues available at the time, Dietrich was able to bring a fairly comprehensive picture of the production of ceramic

¹⁹ Elizabeth McMurray, *At home in the thirties: the EKCO Collection of trade catalogues* (London: National Art Library Victoria & Albert Museum, 1995) [Exhibition catalogue]; Helen C. Long, *Victorian Houses and their Details. The role of publications in their building and decoration* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 2002). Online available at https://ia800708.us.archive.org/25/items/Victorian_Houses_and_their_Details/Victorian_Houses_and_their_Details.pdf.

²⁰ Valérie Nègre, “Catalogues de fabricants et innovation dans le bâtiment au XIXe siècle”, in Natacha Coquerie et al., ed., *Artisans, Industrie. Nouvelles révolutions du Moyen-Age à nos jours* (Lyon: ENS éditions, 2004), 421–431; Valerie Nègre, *L'Ornement en série. Architecture, terre cuite et carton-pierre* (Liège: Mardaga, 2006).

²¹ A good example of this type of studies is Luc Dunias, *Les Perrusson-Desfontaines. Industriels céramistes et leur résidence d'Écuisses* (Le Creusot: Ecomusée Le Creusot-Montceau, 2004) which contains a chronological list of trade catalogues of this French firm that produced architectural ceramics and plain and encaustic floor tiles but doesn't make extensive use of this source. Since publication of this study, many catalogues of this firm have been digitised and made accessible via the *Portail Archives Numériques et Données de la Recherche de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme de Dijon* via, <https://pandor.u-bourgogne.fr> when searching on “Perrusson-Desfontaines”.

²² A good example of this type of studies is Dalia Klajumienė, *Vilniaus gyvenamųjų namų interjerų dekoru elementai nuo klasicizmo iki modernio* [*Elements of interior decoration of Vilnius residential houses from classicism to modern*] (Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2015) in which extensive use is made of pattern books, trade advertisements and trade catalogues.

²³ Gerhard Dietrich, “Kunst und Kommerz. Werbung als Kunsthistorische Quelle: Die Keramiker Alexandre Bigot und Louis d'Emile Muller”, in *Keramos. Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft der Keramikfreunden E.V. Düsseldorf*, Heft 77 (1977): 33–47.

A

Teleph: 801-40 Catalogue n°2: Construction et Décoration Architecturale.

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1904

B

GRANDE TUILERIE D'IVRY FONDÉE en 1854
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PL. M



BUREAU À PARIS, 3, RUE HALÉVY

2 A, B.

Title page and one of the few colour plates with architectural ornaments of the 1904 *Catalogue N° 2 Construction et Décoration Architecturale* from the Emile Muller & Cie factory in Ivry near Paris (Fr) (Collection Mario Baeck)

„Emile Muller & Cie“ fabriko (Ivry prie Paryžiaus, Prancūzija) 1904 m. katalogo *Catalogue N° 2 Construction et Décoration Architecturale* titulinis puslapis ir viena iš keleto spalvotų reprodukcijų su architektūriniais ornamentais, Mario Baecko kolekcija

wall claddings and tiles for interiors and exteriors by two French firms – that of Alexandre Bigot in Paris and Mers and the much larger company of Emile Muller in Ivry – and make interesting comparisons. In my own research of 2005 into the production of the Manufacture de Céramiques Décoratives – Majoliques de Hasselt, a detailed study of preserved trade catalogues proved to be an important aid in a better understanding of the importance of this leading Belgian company in the period from 1895 to 1914 and shed more light into the exact relation with its forerunner, the Brussels based company of Henri Baudoux & Cie from which many tile models were acquired.²⁴ A fairly recent study with a comparable approach in which, for the first time in Europe, the available trade catalogues from one particular company are analyzed in detail – almost page by page – is the 2016 study by the Portuguese researcher Francisco Queroz, which is devoted to the production of architectural ceramics and ceramic floor and wall tiles in Devezas.²⁵

2.2. Research on a specific type of tile production in one country

Much broader in scope, and therefore of much greater significance for a better understanding of the tile production of a particular country or region over various centuries, is the groundbreaking study by the Dutch researcher Jan Pluis, in collaboration with Dr Daniël Hanekuijk, Piet Bolwerk, and Jan van Loo, which was published for the first time in 1997 and revised and enlarged in 2013.²⁶ Based on a wide-ranging study of thousands of tiles – *in situ*, in museums and private collections, or illustrated in the professional literature – the assembled research corpus was systematically compared with the data collected from systematic research of both the original hand-drawn and colored pattern or model books for exclusive use in the various companies themselves as well as from the available published trade catalogues that were printed on behalf of the main tile manufacturers from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, probably starting from about 1885. In this way a systematic classification of the Dutch tin-glazed tile designs over the period from 1570 to 1930 could be established.

²⁴ Mario Baeck, *Ravissant. Hasseltse bouwkeraamiek uit de belle époque 1895–1954* [*Ravishing. Building ceramics made in Hasselt from the belle époque 1895–1954*] (Hasselt: VUHK, 2005).

²⁵ Francisco Queiroz, *Os Catalogos da Fabrica das Devezas* [*The Trade Catalogues of the Devezas Firm*] (Lisboa: Chiado Editora, 2016).

²⁶ Jan Pluis et al., *De Nederlandse Tegel. Decors en benamingen: The Dutch Tile. Designs and Names. 1570–1930* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 1997/1, 1998/2 revised, 2013/3 revised and enlarged).



3.

Colour plate with traditional Dutch tin glaze tiles out of the 1920s edition of a trade catalogue by the N.V. Faience en Tegelfabriek Westraven v/h Gebr. Ravesteijn in Utrecht (NL). Number 77 is a tile design by the British arts & crafts designer William Morris (Collection Mario Baeck)

Spalvota reprodukcija, vaizduojanti tradicines olandiškas glazūruotas plyteles, iš „N. V. Faience en Tegelfabriek Westraven v/h Gebr. Ravesteijn“ kompanijos (Utrechtas, Nyderlandai) prekybinio katalogo 1920 m. leidimo. Nr. 77 – britų menų ir amatų dizainerio Williama Morriso sukurtas plytelių modelis, Mario Baecko kolekcija

Additional research in English and German trade catalogues and in the specialist literature on the Spanish and Portuguese production made it possible to identify many international parallels and mutual influences. It is a pity that the more modern decors, in particular those of the Art Nouveau period and later, were explicitly not included in this study. Despite this small limitation, the research forms a solid basis for further scientific research into the distribution of designs for tin-glazed tiles from the indicated period in the remainder of Europe.

2.3. Research on the production of architectural ceramics in general in a specific country

Although of a very different nature, research by the French academic Anne Maillard on the rich collection of trade catalogues of architectural ceramics held by the Musée de la céramique architecturale in Auneuil²⁷ – a collection that today is kept in the Musée départemental

²⁷ Anne Maillard, *La Céramique architecturale à travers les catalogues de fabricants 1840–1940. Un inventaire raisonné de la collection du Musée de la céramique architecturale à Auneuil* (Paris: Septima, 1999).

de l'Oise in Beauvais – is also broad in scope. Her study, published in 1999, fully focuses on the trade catalogues themselves and starts with a brief investigation into the representativeness of this collection – which has since been expanded and includes more than 200 items – by siting it within what then was known to be kept in French public collections. She then outlines the documentary importance of this comprehensive collection and briefly discusses what such a collection can mean in terms of providing a better knowledge of the various companies, their geographical location, their commercial policy, and the products themselves. In the second part, Maillard discusses the trade catalogues by sector, including those of floor and wall tile production and architectural façade cladding, in addition to roof tile and brick production, stoves and fireplace cladding, sanitary appliances, refractory products, and machine production for all these sectors. Finally, in the third part she gives an overview of the trade catalogues available in the collection per company, together with a short historical note on each firm based partly on data found in the various catalogues but enriched with information from other sources.

In her study Maillard briefly points out that in these trade catalogues, valuable data are to be found that are difficult to find elsewhere – as I personally experienced in my own research on the evolution of the Belgian floor and wall tile industry.²⁸ Information can indeed be found on very diverse aspects difficult to find elsewhere, such as the location of sales outlets and warehouses, commercial representations at home and abroad, pricing policy and trade discounts, packaging and transport costs, and awards earned at world, international, national and regional exhibitions as well as data on the quality of the products through the occasional inclusion of test reports and recommendations from architects and engineers. Trade catalogues also regularly reveal a great deal of information on the appearance,

²⁸ Mario Baeck and Bart Verbrugge, *De Belgische Art Nouveau en Art Deco wandtegels 1880–1940 (M&L-cahier; 3)* [*The Belgian Art Nouveau and Art Deco wall tiles 1880–1940*] (Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, afdeling Monumenten en Landschappen, 1996); Mario Baeck, *Splendeurs domestiques. Les carrelages de sol et de mur en céramique et en ciment en Belgique. (Les dossiers de l'IPW, 11)* (Namur: Institut du Patrimoine wallon, 2013); Mario Baeck, *De schoonheid van het materiaal. Ontwikkeling van de Belgische industriële tegel (1840–1980) in een Europese context. Proefschrift voorgelegd tot het bekomen van de graad van Doctor in de kunstwetenschappen* [*The beauty of the material. Development of the Belgian industrial tile production (1840–1980) in a European context. Dissertation submitted to obtain the degree of Doctor of Art Sciences*] (Gent: author, 2015).

size, and evolution of the company buildings, the available machinery, and occasionally also about the production method and production numbers. Occasionally, the images in the catalogues provide a better insight into the composition of the workforce (which comprised men, women, and children) and exceptionally even offers images of the staff areas for lunch, medical care, and personal hygiene.²⁹ It is evident that we always learn more about the products themselves, about their appearance and – especially when several catalogues of the same factory are available – about their evolution within a particular factory. This also applies to the sizes, the quality ranges, the prices, the names, the variation within the offer, the evolution of the factory brands, external designers, if any,³⁰ and more generally to the collaboration between the factory, the architect-designer, and the customer-client. Frequently, the manufacturer suggests the means of application and provides technical data regarding installation and maintenance. Lists of realizations, whether or not supported by photos, are also included and offer opportunities for concrete *in situ* research.

2.4. Research on tile applications in exteriors and interiors

The different aspects indicated by Maillard make it clear that trade catalogues offer many possibilities for solid research into tile applications in interiors and exteriors. For example, they can assist in providing an

²⁹ See the many factory photos published by Gilliot & Cie in their *Tarif Général N° 30* of 1914 illustrated and commented in: Mario Baeck, “Zwoegen voor schoonheid. Arbeid in de keramische vloeren wandtegefabriek Gilliot & Cie Hemiksem 1897–1978 [Toiling for beauty. Labor in the ceramic floor and wall tile factory Gilliot & Cie Hemiksem 1897–1978]”, in Tony Oost & Harry van Royen, ed., *Vrouwen en kinderen eerst! Sociale aspecten van de baksteennijverheid in Vlaanderen. Bijdragen van het tweede baksteencongres, gehouden op 21 en 22 oktober 2011 in Congrescentrum De Pitte, Provinciaal Recreatiedomein De Schorre, Boom (Post Factum. Jaarboek voor Geschiedenis en Volkskunde. Monografie 2) [Women and children first! Social aspects of the brick industry in Flanders. Contributions from the second brick congress, held on 21 and 22 October 2011 in De Pitte Congress Center, Provincial Recreation Area De Schorre, Boom]* (Antwerpen: Provinciebestuur, 2012), 170–203; online available at https://www.academia.edu/49109904/Zwoegen_voor_schoonheid_Arbeid_in_de_keramische_vloer_en_wandtegefabriek_Gilliot_and_Cie_Hemiksem_1897_1978.

³⁰ Thanks to clear indications printed on many catalogue sheets from Gilliot & Cie in Hemiksem (Belgium) the important role of the French designer Henri Bonnerot around 1911 could be brought to light in the article: Mario Baeck, “Henri André Bonnerot (1881–1914), begaafd ontwerper van tegelpanelen voor de Manufactures de Céramiques d’Hemixem, Gilliot & Cie – deel 1” [Henri André Bonnerot (1881–1914), gifted designer of tile panels for the Manufactures de Céramiques d’Hemixem, Gilliot & Cie - part 1], in *Heymissen. Driemaandelijks tijdschrift van de Heemkundige kring Heymissen v.z.w.*, 30 (2020), 4:13–19; “deel 2” [part 2], *Heymissen. Driemaandelijks tijdschrift van de Heemkundige kring Heymissen v.z.w.*, 31 (2021), 1:19–26.

A



B



4 A, B.

The front and back pages of the 1908 trade catalogue of the Franco-Belgian firm of Léon De Smet & Cie of Canteleu near Lille (Fr) offers a wealth of information on the production, the participations at industrial exhibitions, and press marks at the back of their tiles. A rubber stamp indicates that the firm changed owner after 1908 and came under the direction of Jean Van Overstraeten (Collection Mario Baeck)

1908 m. prancūzų ir belgų firmos „Léon De Smet & Cie of Canteleu“ (netoli Lilio, Prancūzija) prekybos katalogo pirmas ir ketvirtas viršeliai suteikia daug informacijos apie plytelių gamybą, firmos dalyvavimą pramonės parodose ir antspaudus kitoje plytelių pusėje. Guminis antspaudas nurodo, kad firmos savininkas pasikeitė po 1908 m., pradėjus jai vadovauti Jeanui van Overstraeteni, Mario Baeko kolekcija

exact identification and greater understanding of the object studied because they offer the possibility of determining with certainty the provenance and approximate date of in situ materials without the need to dismantle them. This is clearly demonstrated in various recent studies on tiling schemes in entrance porches, entrance halls, and interiors of homes all over Europe, including those from Germany,³¹ Switzerland,³² Russia,³³ Poland,³⁴ Lithuania,³⁵ and Turkey,³⁶ to name just a few countries less widely mentioned in publications on the subject written in English.

By studying a multitude of tile catalogues of one country over a longer period, we also gain insight into fundamental changes in the layouts of floor and wall tile patterns and wainscoting and into changes in shape and size of the various tile types. A practical example for this specific aspect – which also shows that the research of commercial tile catalogues can be an important aid in restorations or partial reconstructions of historical interiors – is the restoration project for the Brussels residence and studio of Victor Horta, Rue Americaine 27 in Saint-Gilles, built between 1898 and 1900.

In the period between the end of the original construction work and 1911, the house was renovated three times. In preparation for the planned restoration, identification of the wall and floor tiles found in the basement

31 Birte Gaethke and Manuela Junghölder, *Wo Mauertumen blühen. Jugendstilfliesen in Kieler Hauweiseingängen* (Husum: Husum Druck und Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004); Birte Gaethke, *Hamburgs Mauerblumen. Jugendstilfliesen in Hamburger Hauweiseingängen* (Husum: Husum Druck und Verlagsgesellschaft, 2010).

32 Björn Arvidsson and Fabienne Fravato, *La belle époque de l'ornement Genève 1890–1920* (S.l.: Infolio, 2015).

33 Vera Borisovna Korkina, *Keramicheskoye ubranstvo inter'yerov dokhodnykh domov Peterburga na rubezhe XIX–XX vv. (magisterskaya dissertatsiya)* [*Ceramic decoration of the interiors of apartment houses in St. Petersburg (Master thesis)*] (Saint Petersburg: State University of Industrial Technologies and Design, 2019).

34 Katarzyna Komar-Michalczyk, “Posadzkowe płytki w kamienicach i budynkach użyteczności publicznej na prądzie na przełomie XIX i XX w” [Floor Tiles in Tenement Houses and Public Buildings in Warsaw’s Praga District at the Turn of the 20th Century], in *Dziedzictwo na nowo odkrywane. Detal architektoniczny 1850–1939 [Discovering Heritage Again. Architectural Detail 1850–1939]* (Warschau: Hereditas Foundation, 2014), 183–223; Katarzyna Komar-Michalczyk, “Posadzkowe płytki ceramiczne i cementowe w zaborze rosyjskim na przełomie XIX i XX w” [Ceramic and Cement Floor Tiles in the Russian Partition at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries], in *Dziedzictwo na nowo odkrywane. Detal architektoniczny 1850–1939 [Discovering Heritage Again. Architectural Detail 1850–1939]* (Warschau: Hereditas Foundation, 2014), 317–349.

35 Dalia Klajumienė, “Architectural Ceramics of Vilnius: local and imported industrial products in the 19th–early 20th century and their attribution”, *Архитектурная керамика мира: Architectural Ceramics of the World*, 2 (2019): 46–87.

36 Aynur Çiftçi, “The imported tiles and architectural ceramics used in 19th–20th century Istanbul’s buildings”, in Jerzy Jasieńko, ed., *Structural Analysis of Historical Constructions* (Wrocław: DWE, 2012), 1060–1070.

kitchen after removal of the more recent additions was necessary to map out the different options. Based on my research, the older wall tiles have all been identified with the help of tile catalogues.³⁷ The wall tiles appeared to be faïence tiles from the range of Boch Frères, La Louvière, amongst them the series “Paysage bleu” after a design by Charles Mouzin (1895–1896). The original octagonal floor tiles were also found to be made by Boch Frères in the period from 1890 to 1929. A more precise dating was found by studying the development of the laying patterns in Boch Frères catalogues. It was established that these patterns changed profoundly after 1908: from that year on, borders with geometric motifs were chosen instead of borders with intricate decorative patterns. The floor pattern design was of the intricate decorative type and could therefore be considered fairly safely as belonging to the original construction period. Based on the remaining, now identified, and relatively dated tiles, an accurate reconstruction of the floor and wall tiling could subsequently be realized.

2.5. Techniques for putting trade catalogues in chronological order and the added value for research

This example also makes clear that the value of trade catalogues as a source for systematic research is greatly increased if several publications of the same company are available and arranged in chronological order. This is usually possible after detailed study of several editions of the catalogues of one specific factory. Various elements may be important, each of which requires careful attention. Sometimes the year of publication is printed on the cover or is indicated in the inside of the publication by some means, for example, by a date placed at the end of the textual introduction or on a bound tariff list, or by an image of a tile panel indicating the year. The recipient of the catalogues (a wholesaler, an architect, or a builder) frequently inscribed in handwriting the date of receipt on the cover or inside. Additionally, *post quem* or *ante quem* dating can usually be applied by looking at the announcement of awards earned at important industrial exhibitions or by the dates supplied on attached price lists in which the model numbers from the catalogue are included. Many companies deliberately

³⁷ Mario Baeck, *Hortamuseum Elsene – identificatie en datering wanden vloerbetegelingen [Hortamuseum Ixelles – identification and dating of wall and floor tilings]* (O.-L.-V.-Waver: author, 2009) [unpublished report].

A





B



C



D

26 BOCH FRÈRES, A BRUXELLES			
DÉNOMINATION DES DESSINS	1 ^{er}	2 ^e	3 ^e
	Choix	Choix	Choix
	PAR MÈTRE CARRÉ		
	non placé		
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
 <p>Octogones unis avec remplissages bleus unis . . . 46 oct. et 46 rempl. = 1 mètre carré env.</p>	10.00	8.00	6.00
 <p>526. Demi-filet . . .</p>	17.50	12.50	

5 A-D.

Wall and floor tiles by Boch Frères La Louvière (B) and Maubeuge (Fr) found at the private residence of Victor Horta in Brussels during restoration works identified by research in the trade catalogues of this firm (Musée Victor Horta & collection Mario Baeck)

„Boch Frères La Louvière“ (Belgija) ir „Maubeuge“ (Prancūzija) firmų gamybos sienų ir grindų plytelės Victorio Hortos privačioje rezidencijoje Briuselyje, vykstant restauracijos darbams. Gaminiai buvo identifikuoti pagal šių kompanijų prekybos katalogus, Victorio Hortos muziejus, Mario Baecko kolekcija

chose not to date their catalogues so that they would not be considered obsolete too quickly, instead providing them with a number or letter code where Album 1 naturally precedes Album 2 or where Album A precedes an Album B or C from the same company. There are, however, a few exceptions as letter codes were also used to distinguish catalogues aimed at various user groups (e.g., for the internal market as opposed to the export market or for professionals rather than the general public). Additionally, even small changes in factory names, addresses, telegraph codes, or telephone numbers or the increase of indicated production numbers are in many cases a great help. If none of these indications are present, we can place the catalogues of one company in a logical chronology by looking at the highest model number shown in each individual catalogue. However, we must take into account that large manufacturers occasionally proceeded to completely renumber the individual designs in their offer. And finally, in some countries it is also possible to rely on the data being found in registration lists of tile designs to protect them against unauthorized copying. The added value of such time-intensive research in order to arrive at a collection of dated catalogues is quite large. The study of such an ensemble of exact or relatively datable catalogues allows for a fairly precise analysis of the supply side over time, both at the level of an individual factory and at that of several factories within one country, in both cases with the possibility of studying mutual influences.

For example, in my own research I was able to document in detail the relatively late appearance, from about 1905 onwards, of Art Nouveau motifs in floor tile catalogues of Belgian factories, together with the continuing supply of these motifs, in parallel with motifs in all possible earlier neo-styles, until about 1929,³⁸ long after the style had gone out of fashion.

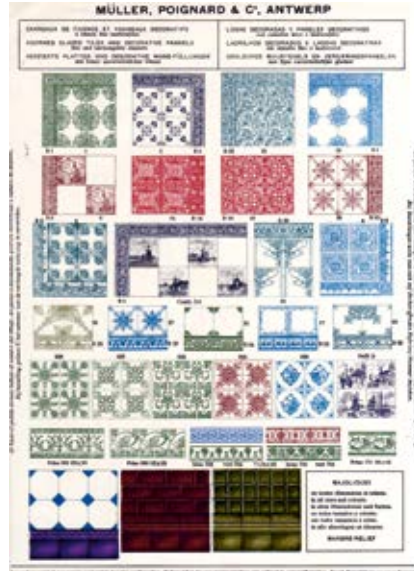
The evolution of style between various countries and the mutual influence in the development of this between them can also be mapped in a more systematic way with excellent results. My own research showed that not only are the catalogues of factories from a given city or region in my own country important in the study of historical *in situ* floor or wall tiles,

³⁸ Mario Baeck, "The Flourishing of Belgian Ornamental Tiles and Tile Panels in the Art Nouveau Period", *Journal of the Tiles & Architectural Ceramics Society*, 20 (2014): 14–25 which is a revised version of the conference text published in Lluís Bosch i Mireia Freixa, ed., *ICDF International Congress: proceedings: actes, actas: actes* (Barcelona: cDF, 2013), http://www.artnouveau.eu/admin_ponencies/functions/upload/uploads/Mario_Baek.pdf.

A



B



C



7 A–C.
 Export catalogue for the years 1913–1914 by the Antwerp (B) based Muller, Poignard & Cie export firm in 6 languages presenting a selection of ceramic wall tiles by Sphinx Maastricht (NL) and La Dyle in Wijgmaal (B) and of encaustic floor tiles by Gilliot & Cie in Hemiksem near Antwerp (B) that were exported all over the world (Collection Mario Baeck)

Antverpeno „Muller, Poignard & Cie“ (Belgija) firmos 1913–1914 m. eksporto katalogas šešiomis kalbomis, pristatantis „Sphinx Maastricht“ (Nyderlandai) ir „La Dyle“ (Belgija) kompanijų keramines sienų plyteles ir „Gilliot & Cie“ kompanijos (Hemiksemas prie Antverpeno, Belgija) enkaustika dekoruotas grindų plyteles, kurios buvo eksportuojamos po visą pasaulį, Mario Baeco kolekcija

production amounting to 19 to 20 million pieces per year, were shipped to distant destinations in Latin America and Asia.⁴⁰

40 Mario Baeck, *Vloern wandtegels, een verhaal van import en export. Thema-artikel voor de website Open Monumentendag Vlaanderen 2006* [*Floor and wall tiles, a story of import and export. Thematic article for the website Open Monuments Day Flanders 2006*], online available at https://www.academia.edu/349061/Vloer_en_wandtegels_een_verhaal_van_import_en_export.

Belgian investors – as well as those from Great-Britain in Commonwealth countries – laid the foundations for several important factories abroad, such as the Marywil factory in Radom, now in Poland.

Furthermore, the Belgian tile industry was influential in the field of design. In my research, many examples of motifs copied from Belgian catalogues – with or without minor changes – have already been found in catalogues of Spanish, Portuguese, and Japanese tile factories.⁴¹ The same goes for the English, German, and French tile industries, which have also been very influential in the field of tile design as well as through their exports. This is confirmed, for example, by Agnieszka Partridge's recent doctoral research into historic tile applications in Krakow, which were largely imported.⁴² It is not without reason that in the title of her study she refers explicitly to Europe as a whole as a place of origin of many of the Krakow tiled interiors.

3. Tile catalogues: a difficult-to-find research resource

The added value of a more systematic study of trade catalogues may have become clear from the above. However, there are many difficulties in assembling an extensive and representative research corpus of relevant trade catalogues. Indeed, they are quite difficult to find and to obtain access to. Trade catalogues were and still are very rarely consciously and systematically acquired by libraries, research institutes and archives, although there has been a gradual change in recent decades. A central catalogue of such materials does not exist, and trade catalogues are often not even included in the existing central and individual indices of libraries and archival institutions. Searches in digital databases are also made more difficult by the lack of unambiguous terminology for the trade catalogue as phenomenon. We find them in most languages catalogued under various names in various spellings. For example, in (American) English they can be found not only with the search term trade catalog/catalogue, but they are also to

41 Mario Baeck, *Belgian Influences on Spanish and Portuguese Tile Production of the Late 19th and early 20th Centuries*, Queremos Saber O Que Andam A Estudar! Investigação Em Azulejo [We want to know what you are studying!] Azulejo Research – 13 de Novembro de 2019 Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa – November 13, 2019 School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon. Abstract: https://blogazlab.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/azlab52_mario_baeck-1.pdf.

42 Agnieszka Partridge, *Potęga ornamentu. Europejska ceramika artystyczna w budownictwie z lat 1840–1939 i jej przykłady w obiektach architektury Krakowa* [The power of ornament. European art ceramics in 1840–1939 buildings with examples of Krakow architecture] (Krakow: Universitas, 2017).

be found under the labels sales catalog/catalogue or commercial catalog/catalogue. In French they can be found under the terms catalogue commercial/industriel/d'entreprise/de vente, in German under Musterbuch or (Produkt)katalog, and in Dutch under the labels handelscatalogus, bedrijfs-catalogus of verkoop(s)catalogus. Other terms are used in other languages.

Moreover, in institutions where there are large numbers of catalogues, bibliographic descriptions are rarely sufficiently detailed owing to the fact that the typical way of cataloguing monographs, series works, and periodicals is completely inadequate. With a title alone, which often remains identical for many editions of trade catalogues from the same factory, there is insufficient data to determine whether or not the copy described is already known. For example, there is usually no mention of the company printing the catalogue, which is very often mentioned on commercial publications, and that can be distinctive. The date of publication is often problematic because it is far too broad and not reliable enough owing to the lack of essential research. The format or pagination is either not mentioned or not stated clearly enough (that is to say, most of the time only the numbered pages are incorporated while the ancillary pages are left out). Seldom, *lacunae* (as cut outs or removed pages) or loose inserts (e.g., additional explanations of price increases or reductions, price and tariff lists, and the like) are included, account is not taken of meaningful indications that point to past users, or the frequent evidence is seen of the use of rubber stamps for designs removed from regular offer.

Furthermore, the at times high price of rare, luxuriously illustrated trade catalogues bought from knowledgeable antiquarian dealers give rise to a great reluctance to release these in fully digitized form, even when they are required for serious scientific research. This phenomenon is not only found among private collectors but even in renowned institutions. Moreover, valuable private collections, which were usually laboriously and carefully assembled over a long period of time, are sadly frequently dispersed when sold by heirs.

However, there are some bright spots for the aspiring researcher. Worldwide, given the insight that such material is relevant for scientific

research, there is also a growing willingness to make the existing collections, often long dormant in the reserves, more accessible by making them easier to find as well as by making full text available. Within the scope of this article, it is not the intention to discuss systematically and in detail all major collections of trade catalogues. Increasingly, specifically developed general digital guidelines are available for this purpose and provide a good starting point for researchers who are more broadly interested in general trade catalogues rather than those for ceramic floor and wall tiles.⁴³

For those wishing to conduct research in these latter areas, there are some very interesting starting points worldwide. In the United States, there are initiatives such as that provided by the American Winterthur Library,⁴⁴ which offers various fully digitized Belgian, English, and French tile catalogues; the Building Technology Heritage Library (BTHL),⁴⁵ which includes many integrally accessible English, Spanish, and French tile catalogues; the collection of the Thomas Watson Library of the Metropolitan Museum⁴⁶ with various Belgian, English, and French tile catalogues, all of course next to many American catalogues. In Canada, the collection of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) included in the above-mentioned BTHL is of importance, with English, French, German, Italian, and Austro-Hungarian catalogues. In Australia, a notable collection is that of the Historic Houses Trust/Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection of the Sydney Living Museums, with various English, French, Italian, and Spanish catalogues.⁴⁷

In the majority of European libraries and archives, trade catalogues are much less accessible and often difficult to find, even in countries with an important tile production tradition. Although most national digitization programs now make available millions of full-text searchable pages from books, magazines, and newspapers, they hardly pay any attention to this specific source. In the National Art Library⁴⁸ of the Victoria and Albert

⁴³ Good example are the information page on Trade catalogue resources of the American Library of Congress: <https://guides.loc.gov/trade-catalogs/online-resources> or that of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries Trade Literature Collection: <https://library.si.edu/trade-literature>.

⁴⁴ <http://archive.org/details/winterthurlibrary> when searching on “tiles” or “carreaux”.

⁴⁵ <http://archive.org/details/buildingtechnologyheritagelibrary> when searching on “tiles”.

⁴⁶ <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/libraries-and-research-centers/watson-digital-collections/rare-materials-in-the-met-libraries/trade-catalogs>.

⁴⁷ <http://collection.hht.net.au/> searching on “trade catalogues”. See also: <https://archive.org/details/slmtradecatalogues>.

⁴⁸ <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/n/national-art-library-trade-catalogues-collection/>.

Museum in London, for example, many tile catalogues in the database are found under the label “trade catalogues,” but these have not yet been digitized, so a visit to London remains necessary for researchers interested in them. The Spanish Institut de Promocio Ceràmica (IPC)⁴⁹ manages one of the richest collections of commercial catalogues in the wide field of the ceramic industry, with many Spanish tile catalogues as well as a wide selection of Belgian, German, English, French, and Portuguese ones, which can also only be consulted on site. However, through the collection database it is possible to see a number of images per catalogue, which provides a reasonable idea of what is on offer.

Among the partly digitally accessible collections, three initiatives can be mentioned for research into tile catalogues. The Repertorium van de Belgische Handelscatalogi (RCB)⁵⁰ [Repertory of the Belgian Trade Catalogues], kept at the Museum of Older Techniques (MOT) in Grimbergen, Flanders, contains Belgian tile catalogues of many important factories that exported large parts of their production. In France, part of the collection of trade catalogues of the famous Bibliothèque Forney⁵¹ in Paris has recently been made accessible, with several fully digitized English and German tile catalogues in addition to many French ones. Finally, there is the German Archiv Historische Dachziegel⁵² with an excellent website that, in addition to a wealth of catalogues from brick and roof tile manufacturers, also provides several tile-related catalogues.

4. Desirable evolutions in the field of historical tile catalogue research

In order to facilitate research into the European tile industry on the basis of historical tile catalogues, it seems appropriate that the above-mentioned evolution towards broader digital accessibility should be continued and that more collection managers can be persuaded to share their possessions in this area in a digital fashion. Specialized tile museums, archival institutions with important company archives of long since closed

⁴⁹ http://www.ipc.org.es/centro_documentacion/catalogoteca.html.

⁵⁰ <https://www.mot.be/en/opzoeken/rcb> and for more information on this collection: <https://www.mot.be/webhdfs/v1/website/opzoeken/lectuur/artikels/the-repertory-of-belgian-trade-catalogues.pdf>.

⁵¹ <https://bibliotheques-specialisees.paris.fr/search> searching on „catalogue commercial“ carrelages.

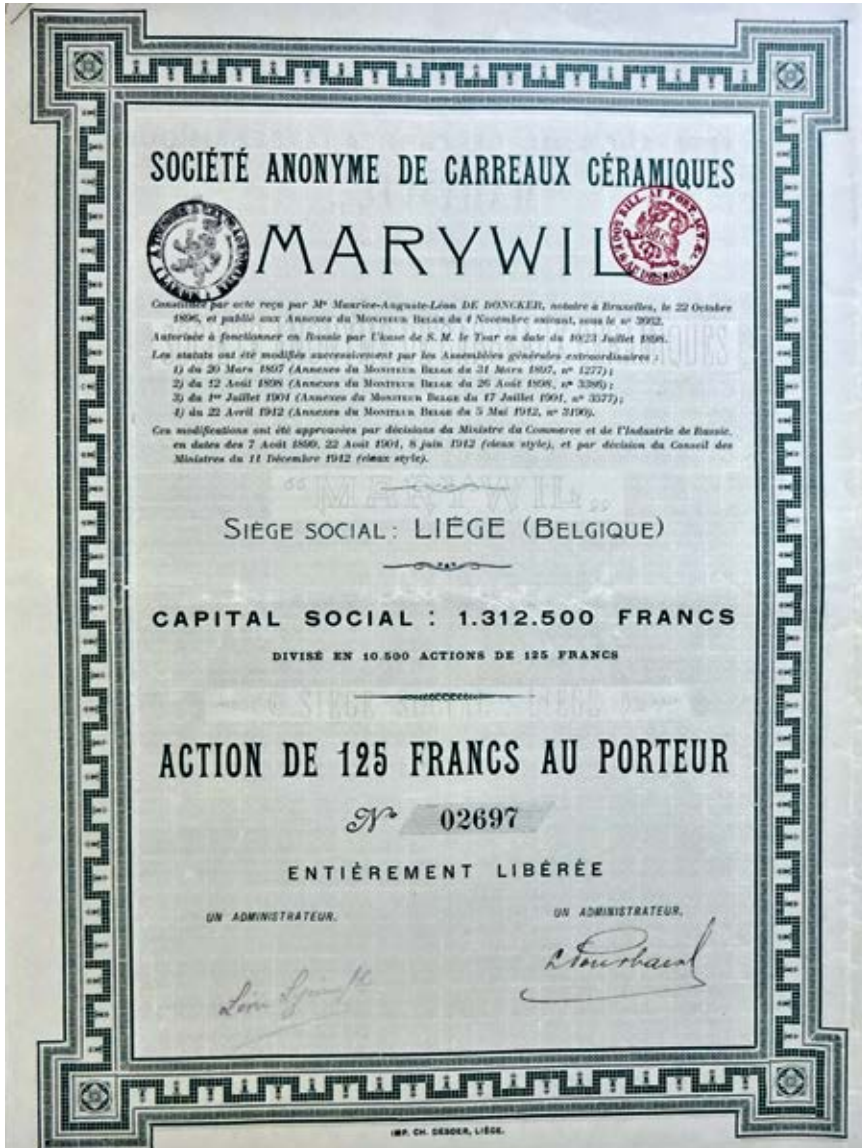
⁵² <http://dachziegelarchiv.de/index.html>.

tile factories, and companies still active with a large historical archive all still maintain extremely valuable and often unique material in this field. A pan-European digitization initiative therefore seems more than desirable.

Finally, one important consideration must still be made. The research of trade catalogues – as the results of my own doctoral research have shown – can be greatly enriched within a broader investigation of commercial printing in general. This includes address books (with concise but data-ble data), advertisements (which are intended to market the company or its products and are often not only beautifully illustrated but also accurately dated), company magazines (both those for employees, through which we can learn more about working conditions, and these for the general public, mostly with product information), company memorial books (in which the history of a company – albeit rarely critically – is described, often with attention to the evolution of products), letters and invoices (often with images of the factory and information about its products and its participations in world exhibitions, etc.), patents (providing information on innovations in the manufacturing process), sample books or boxes made for itinerant sales representatives and for architects (with samples of the products bearing product identification numbers), shares certificates (often containing information about the corporate purpose of the company, about founders, etc.), and annual reports (that provide much financial data).

That such thorough research based on commercial printing in all its diversity can also be important for better understanding the use of the more recent production of building materials in general was recently demonstrated in a fascinating and very useful study on post-war building materials in houses in Brussels from 1945 to 1975.⁵³ This shows that the study of trade catalogues will continue in the future to be more than useful in helping to meet the need for knowledge about rapidly evolving building materials, including tiles. It should certainly encourage research institutions and (national) repository libraries to collect contemporary trade catalogues alongside historical trade literature in a more systematic manner and to make them available as widely as possible, preferably in digital form.

⁵³ Stephanie van de Voorde, Inge Bertels and Ine Wouters, *Post-war building materials in housing in Brussels: Naoorlogse bouwmaterialen in woningen in Brussel: Matériaux de construction d'après-guerre dans l'habitation à Bruxelles 1945–1975* (Brussel: Vrije Universiteit, 2015).



9.

A share of the S.A. de Carreaux Cermiques Marywill administrated in Liège (B) but with a factory in Radom (P) offers many details about the administrative changes the firm underwent between 1896 and 1912 (Collection Mario Baeck)

„S. A. de Carreaux Cermiques Marywill“ kompanijos, kurios valdyba buvo įsikūrusi Lježe (Belgija), o fabrikas – Radome (Lenkija), akcija atskleidžia nemažai detalių apie administracinius kompanijos pokyčius 1896–1912 m., Mario Baeko kolekcija

5. Conclusion

Based on a broad analysis of the international publications on trade catalogues and published research, it could be established in the above reflections that from the late 1970s onwards, a consciousness was growing about their importance for research on ceramic tiles, not only for acquiring better knowledge about the production of tiles and architectural ceramics in individual factories, about a specific type of tile production, or about the production of architectural ceramics in a specific country, but also in research on tile applications in exteriors and interiors. It could further be established that applying a diverse set of techniques for putting trade catalogues in chronological order as much as possible leads to much added value for tile research in many areas. However, it is also demonstrated by reflecting on the many practical difficulties of data collection that tile catalogues are, due to several factors, unmistakably still a difficult-to-find research resource. The examples of some good practices presented at the end of the text show a positive evolution during recent decades and even years that lead to better access of trade catalogues in general, and tile catalogues in particular, which in turn opens interesting perspectives for innovative research on tiles and their use.

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Santrauka

Plytelių interjerai popieriuje. Prekybos katalogai kaip svarbiausias informacijos apie grindų ir sienų plytelių naudojimą Europos interjeruose šaltinis

Mario Baeck

Reikšminiai žodžiai: interjero dizainas, pramoninis dizainas, architektūros istorija, prekybos katalogai, keraminės sienų plytelės, keraminės grindų plytelės.

Didžiulis dekoruotų pramoninių sienų ir grindų plytelių populiarumas Europoje 1840–1940 m. yra glaudžiai susijęs su šių produktų, kurie buvo tikslingai reklamuojami neretai gausiai iliustruotuose prekybos kataloguose, standartizacija, technine kokybe ir estetinė įvairovė. Prekybos katalogai gali mums padėti suprasti plytelių naudojimą XIX–XX a. interjeruose geriau nei išlikusios interjero plytelių schemas, kurios atspindi tik labai mažą dalį to, kas kadaise buvo įgyvendinta. Iš plytelių katalogų galime sužinoti apie daugelį fabriku, kurie gamino šiuos prašmatnius statybinius elementus, ir giliau suvokti įvairius būdus, kaip šios medžiagos buvo naudojamos. Be to, galime rasti įvairios informacijos apie plytelių techninę ir estetinę evoliuciją, jie gali mums padėti tiksliau datuoti plytelių modelius. Taigi prekybos katalogai yra labai svarbūs norint suprasti, kaip keitėsi interjero architektūros skonis ir kada skonio pokyčiai pasiekė architektus ir jų klientus. Jie yra vertingas šaltinis, geriau atskleidžiantis plytelių dizaino skirtumus arba įtakas įvairiose šalyse. Kai kurie prekybos katalogai suteikia vertingos informacijos ir apie daugelio svarbių fabriku tarptautinį prekybos atstovų arba importo kompanijų tinklą. Taigi jie atveria galimybes įvertinti daugelio Europos fabriku eksporto į kitas Europos ir užjūrio šalis sėkmę. Straipsnyje bendras teorinis požiūris papildomas konkrečiais pavyzdžiais, remiantis daugiau kaip 600 plytelių katalogų iš viso pasaulio kolekcija.