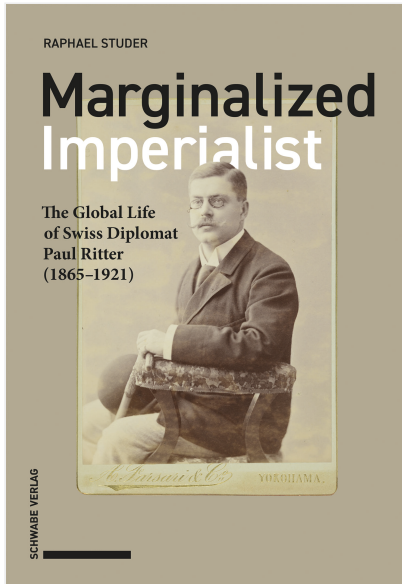


Japan Seen Through the Eyes of the First Swiss Ambassador



Raphael Studer

Marginalized Imperialist

Swiss diplomat Paul Ritter served in Japan in the crucial period between 1892 and 1909 when the country rapidly modernized and became a great power. Based on a wide array of private and public primary sources, this biography explores how Basel-born Ritter perceived this dramatic change and interacted with locals, both suffering and profiting from his bourgeois habitus. Applying the concept of a “global life,” the study demonstrates how individual Swiss and Switzerland as a country were material and ideological accomplices in Western imperialism thanks to a discrete policy of “colonialism without colonies.” A self-proclaimed specialist on East Asia, Ritter decisively shaped the region’s image in his home country. Finally, the book also covers the years from 1909 until 1917 when Ritter was serving as minister to the US throughout the First World War. In the crucible of anti-German hysteria, the diplomat’s pronounced pro-German attitude proved to be his downfall.

Geschichte

Raphael Studer, born in Switzerland, graduated from Osaka University with a PhD in 2024. He has published articles in various journals, including on the history of transimperial networks of German speakers in Asia and Basel history. He has received a number of Japanese scholarships and was bestowed the 2020 Osaka University Graduate School of Letters Award.

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