Compilation of *Musci* in *Symbolae sinicae* in the light of H. Handel-Mazzetti’s letters to V. F. Brotherus

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1914, Austrian botanist Heinrich Freiherr von Handel-Mazzetti travelled to China to collect plants in Yunnan and Sichuan provinces. After the outbreak of the World War I he could not travel back to Europe, but was obliged to stay in China throughout the war, in 1914–1918. He collected plants and other material mostly in Yunnan and Sichuan, but was forced to travel through Guizhou to Hunan, where he made excursions. He was mainly a vascular plant taxonomist, but paid special attention to cryptogams as well. Previous to his departure for China, he had asked Viktor Ferdinand Brotherus, the Finnish bryologist, whether Brotherus would help him in the identification of the mosses he aimed to collect in China. After Handel-Mazzetti’s return to Vienna, he repeated his proposal, and Brotherus agreed. The cooperation resulted in two preliminary publications (Brotherus 1922, 1924a) and culminated in the publication of Musci in Handel-Mazzetti’s series Symbolae sinicae (Brotherus 1929).

During their mutual cooperation in 1907–1928, H. Handel-Mazzetti sent 40 letters, postcards or official documents to V. F. Brotherus. These are preserved in the National Library of Finland (previously the Library of the University of Helsinki). On the basis of these letters I describe the relationship of these two scientists and the compilation work of Musci in Symbolae sinicae.

An annotated checklist of mosses collected by Handel-Mazzetti in China in 1914–1918, and described by Brotherus in 1922–1929 was published in the volume 8 of the series Bryobrothera (Cao & Koponen 2004). Additions to this checklist are in Appendix 3.