

Paperwork¹⁸

↳ PANDORA'S BOX

17TH INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
PAVILION OF TURKEY

CURATORIAL TEAM

Architecture¹² as² Measure⁷
Ölçü⁴ Olarak⁶ Mimarlık⁸

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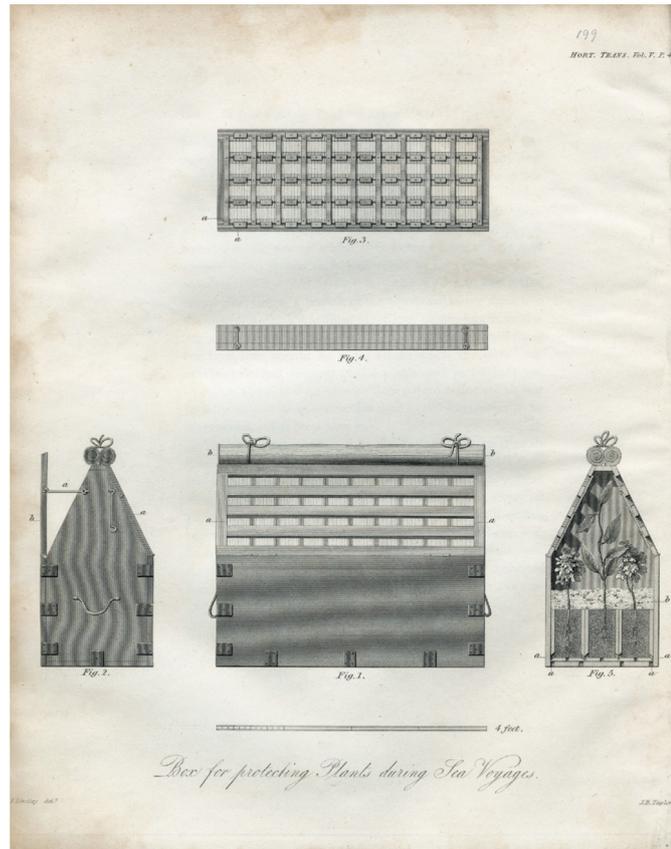


Image source: John Lindley, "Instructions for Packing Living Plants in Foreign Countries, Especially within the Tropics; and Directions for Their Treatment during the Voyage to Europe," Transactions of the Horticultural Society of London 5 (1824).

Described in this 1824 illustration as a "Box for protecting Plants during Sea voyages," the Wardian case allowed living plants to travel throughout the British Empire, transforming economies and ecologies around the world in the process.¹ Recalling the story of Pandora's fatal container, this simple terrarium box has given birth to a sinister cadre of contemporary logistical technologies like the shipping container,² the shipping palette, and even entire companies like Uline,³ which specialize in producing the "stuff" that contains, insulates, ties down, and fits out goods for global shipping. Just as the Wardian base traveled internationally according to imperial and colonial interests, these contemporary logistical technologies also perform dual roles, toggling between accommodating the frictionless flow of goods in the amniotic fluid of globalization while re-inscribing national power through regulatory frictions.

This duality is most precisely expressed through a Republic of Turkey customs document titled "Regulation on Plant Quarantine," which contains various lists of thousands of plants, plant products, and harmful organisms from dozens of different countries, all of which trigger a state of quarantine upon

1 See Luke Keogh, *The Wardian Case: How a Simple Box Moved Plants and Changed the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

2 Mark Levinson, *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

3 Stephanie Sauland Danny Hakim. "The Most Powerful Conservative Couple You've Never Heard Of," *The New York Times*. June 7, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/07/us/politics/liz-dick-uihleim-republican-donors.html>.

their entrance into Turkish borders. Most importantly, quarantine is a state of ambiguity: it is the unknown biological risk of the disease or the contaminant that makes the quarantine regulation uniquely robust and expansive.

The customs document spends 37 of its 74 pages describing the biological dangers of the very material used in shipping pallets: wood.⁴ Biological suspicion of the pallets themselves is extended to the goods they carry, meaning that many of the materials crossing Turkey's borders fall under the purview of plant quarantine regulations. Here, wood, the material of a technology meant to aid in the movement of goods, becomes an alibi for state interests to stop the movement of those goods themselves. This policy echoes the way quarantine regulations have historically been wielded as a punitive tool to re-inscribe territorial boundaries before and even more so now during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵ As our contemporary political climate increasingly sees mechanisms of logistical friction as proxies for national conflict through "spheres of influence," "trade wars," and "vaccine nationalism," the contemporary offspring of the Wardian case, like the humble wooden shipping pallet, might become sites of international contention as instruments to exert national power through.

4 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, "Regulation on Plant Quarantine," TC Resmi Gazete [Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey], no. 28131 (December 2011).

5 Nicola Twilley and Geoff Manaugh, *Until Proven Safe: The History and Future of Quarantine* (Los Angeles: MCD, 2021).